CITY OF SAINT PAUL
HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION RESOLUTION
FILE NAME: *2009* Downtown Historic Façade Improvement Program
DATE: February 24, 2011

WHEREAS, the City of Saint Paul has declared as a matter of public policy, in Chapter 73 of the Saint Paul Legislative Code, "that the preservation, protection, perpetuation and use of areas, places, building, structures and other objects having special historical, community or aesthetic interest or value is a public necessity and is required in the interest of the health, prosperity, safety and welfare of the people;" and

WHEREAS, Chapter 73 also establishes the Saint Paul Heritage Preservation Commission and states that it "shall serve as an advisory body to the mayor and city council on municipal heritage preservation matters;" and

WHEREAS, the City Council approved a PILOT 2008 Downtown Facade Improvement Program that provided $2,040,000 for façade improvements to historic buildings in downtown, financed by special assessments against approved properties. There is a remaining balance of $920,539 and the City Council has authorized a 2009 Facade Improvement Program with funding awards up to $902,489 in accordance with the Council-approved Guidelines; and

WHEREAS, the 2009 Facade Program incorporates involvement by the HPC whereby the HPC will review, rank and make recommendations to the City Council on application awards. The HPC is to use the following criteria for their recommendations:

1. Historic significance and integrity of the property;
2. Demonstrated need;
3. The project's scope of work and compliance with historic standards; and

WHEREAS, four applications were received for the following properties:

1. Hotel Lowry, at 345 Wabasha Street
2. St. Paul Athletic Club, at 340 Cedar Street
3. Seestedt's Carpet (Manners-Motz Plumbing Co.), at 282 E. Sixth Street
4. The Great Northern (James J. Hill Office Building), at 300 Wall Street; and

WHEREAS, the following proposals and requested amounts are:

1. Hotel Lowry: masonry repairs, storefront rehabilitation, select window repair/replacement and new entrance canopies for a requested amount of **$475,000**;
2. St. Paul Athletic Club: masonry repairs, new railings on third floor and new windows on floors 5 through 9 for a requested amount of **$395,000**;
3. Seestedt's Carpet: masonry paint removal and cleaning, select brick replacement and repointing for a requested amount of **$168,650**;
4. The Great Northern: comprehensive cleaning, repointing and select brick, stone and terra cotta replacement for a requested amount of **$500,000**; and

WHEREAS, the HPC considered the applications and made the following findings related to the three criteria state above:

1. *Historic Significance and Integrity*. All four buildings have historic significance. Both the Great Northern (pivotal) and Seestedt's (contributing) are located within the local and National Register Lowertown Historic District. Both the Athletic Club and Hotel Lowry have been

determined eligible for listing on the National Register. All four buildings retain a high level of architectural and historical integrity. In some cases (Lowry and Athletic Club) the applications propose items that will restore missing architectural features which, if executed appropriately, will only increase the integrity of the property. In the case of Seestedt's, the proposal to remove paint will restore integrity that was lost when the paint was applied to the brick.

2. *Demonstrated Need*. Typically, items proposed as facade improvements fall into three categories:

(1) Items that preserve, repair and/or slow deterioration of existing historic fabric,
(2) Items that recreate/restore missing architectural features, or
(3) Items proposing new features that were not historically part of the original design.

Items under (1) were considered as having the highest priority, then items under (2) being secondary in priority. Items that fall under (3) may be important in supporting a new use for an historic building, but are prioritized after items (1) and (2).

Seestedt's. Seestedt's received orders from the Fire Inspection Division of DSI to repair the alley elevation on May 10, 2010. HPC staff and DSI staff have been working with the property owner to come up with a Scope of Work. The demonstrated need is apparent as the paint that has been present on the masonry for many years has trapped moisture and the parapet suffers from deferred maintenance. There is a retail flooring business on the first floor of the building. The masonry work for this project falls under (1) above.

Lowry Hotel. The first and second floors of this building are currently not occupied. The upper floors have been rental units and more recently the owner has offered two floors of student housing to McNally Smith students. The owner would like to expand to three floors for student housing and the current storefront plans would accommodate space for a restaurant. Items proposed for the exterior elevations fall under all three categories above. The masonry work is item (1) and the new second floor windows, entrances and entrance canopies fall under category (2). The remaining new storefronts will not be a replication of the original and this falls under category (3).

***Great Northern*.** The building was rehabilitated into market-rate condos from 2001-2003. The building permit records show the estimated construction cost was $16.1 million. HPC records show that a detailed masonry repair specification was approved as well as reconstruction of the parapet and several first floor window arches that had been altered. In 2008, the condo association got HPC staff approval to lower the chimney by 6 courses, repoint and make other masonry repairs with a construction estimate of $62,000. It does seem evident from the photos submitted by the contractor that some of the work completed earlier did not comply with the approved specification manual. The need, however, to address the deterioration of the stone base at the sidewalk is demonstrated by the photos. Records were not on file that a concrete curb to cover the deterioration of the soft sandstone was ever approved. It also appears that salt and snow removal has further compromised the stone base allowing for water infiltration.

***Athletic Club*.** Until recently, the building housed Lifetime Fitness. Some of the floors are still occupied by other tenants. The owner plans to reopen the Athletic Club on April 1st. Items for masonry repair and cleaning fall under category (1) and replacing original windows on floors 5th through the 9th (if replacement is warranted) would be category (1). Reconstructing 3rd floor railings that were originally present is category (2).

3. *Scope of Work and Compliance with Historic Standards*.
Seestedt's. The applicant has submitted a scope of work for masonry restoration and based on the information received, the work complies with the general intent of the SOI Standards for Rehabilitation. The cleaning of masonry and chemical paint stripping must be done with the gentlest means possible and the application lists using high pressure water for the cleaning and paint removal. This does not comply with the Standards. Staff could conditionally approve the proposal provided a low pressure be used and a mortar mix be submitted to staff for review prior to work commencing. The repointing work must also closely match the original in color, texture, strength, composition and joint profile.

Lowry Hotel. A scope of work was submitted for the masonry proposal and drawings have been submitted for the windows, entrances and entrance canopies. At the time of the first HPC review, staff did not have complete drawings for all the details and stated concern for the proposed storefront windows that they did not comply with applicable guidelines. The owner and staff met in December of 2009 and new updated drawings were submitted. The latest plans for the storefront windows comply with the intent of the Standards. Staff would need to review again the drawings given that time has passed and could approve the full proposal with general conditions.

***Great Northern*.** A scope of work was submitted with sample specifications and several photos documenting existing conditions. The proposal to repoint 100% of the joints at the brick does not comply with the SOI Standards that do not recommend "Removing non-deteriorated mortar joints from sound joints, then repointing the entire buildings to achieve a uniform appearance." Staff could conditionally approve the proposal provided the specification for selective brick repointing be utilized and not 100%. In order to justify full repointing of the brick, the applicant may want to commission drawings by an architect to visually demonstrate areas where work is needed. The concrete curb removal, proposed patching and "Dutchman" stone and terra cotta repair is necessary and staff could conditionally approve the proposal.

***Athletic Club*.** A scope of work was submitted for the masonry proposal and only original drawings were submitted. At the time of the first HPC review, the staff report stated that not enough information was received in order to determine full compliance with applicable guidelines. No additional information has been received for the full proposal. A window schedule would be required to determine if replacement is warranted; and

WHEREAS, the HPC at their February 24, 2011 Meeting heard from each of the owner's or owner's representatives regarding their proposals and the staff recommendation. The owner for the Lowry Hotel and the Athletic Club Building, John Rupp, withdrew his application for the Athletic Club Building in order for more funds to go to the Lowry Hotel Building. The HPC accepted the withdrawal of the application for the Athletic Club and discussed their recommendation based on the withdrawal; now

FINALLY, BE IT RESOLVED, that of the $902,489 remaining for the Façade Improvement Program the Saint Paul Heritage Preservation Commission recommends to the City Council the following amounts be allocated in this manner with priority being given in the order indicated:

1. **Seestedt's: Approving the full assessment request for the masonry work of $168,650,** provided the work fully complies with the applicable SOI Standards for Rehabilitation;

2. **The Hotel Lowry: Approving a partial assessment in the amount of $350,000**

specifically for masonry work, the Wabasha and 4th Street Entrances, and the remaining toward the storefront openings then 2nd Floor windows, provided the work fully complies with the applicable SOI Standards for Rehabilitation;

3. **Great Northern: Approving a partial assessment in the amount of $383,839** specifically for the stone base and terra cotta repairs and the remaining toward the repointing of the brick, provided the work fully complies with the applicable SOI Standards for Rehabilitation.

MOVED BY	**Manning**
SECONDED BY	**Dana**
IN FAVOR	**11**
AGAINST	**0**
ABSTAIN	**0**