

**CITY OF SAINT PAUL
HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION STAFF REPORT**

FILE NAME: 767 Fourth Street East
DATE OF APPLICATION: September 15, 2015
APPLICANT: Saint Paul Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA)
OWNER: HRA
DATE OF PUBLIC HEARING: October 8, 2015
HPC SITE/DISTRICT: Dayton's Bluff Heritage Preservation District
CATEGORY: Contributing
CLASSIFICATION: Demolition Permit
STAFF INVESTIGATION AND REPORT: Christine Boulware
DATE: October 6, 2015

A. SITE DESCRIPTION: The Peterson-Burke House, at 767 Fourth Street East, is a one-and-one-half story, frame house constructed in 1884 by A. Peterson for a cost of \$1,500. The home was erected on a limestone foundation and is characterized by a cross-gabled hipped roof. Fenestration consists of single and paired, one-over-one double-hung windows and a bay window on the first floor of the west elevation. The original shed-roofed front porch has been partially enclosed. Although wrapped in aluminum siding, the layout and form recall Queen Anne or stick-style pattern book houses of the era. The property is categorized as contributing to the Dayton's Bluff Heritage Preservation District.

B. PROPERTY HISTORY AND CONTEXT: Although Mr. Peterson is listed as the first owner of the home, he is never listed at that address in city directories, with the first person mentioned being M.A. Burke in 1885. Mr. Burke constructed a \$200, one-story addition onto the rear of the home in 1886. According to the Historic Property Inventory compiled by the HPC in April of 1989, George Burke was listed as clerk for the CMSP Freight Depot, and Thomas Burke was listed as a druggist for Mary A. Simpson.¹ The Burkes appear to have been a socially active family as evidenced by 1880s and 1890s articles in *The Saint Paul Daily Globe*.

The Burkes sold their home around the turn of the twentieth century, as the next available article concerning the home in the May 7, 1901 edition of the *Saint Paul Daily Globe* announced that, "Rev. and Mrs. C. E. Schutte have issued invitations for a reception to be held at their home, 767 East Fourth Street. Mr. Schutte was recently appointed pastor of St. Peter's Episcopal Church" located across the street from the residence.²

By 1902, the home had passed into the possession of E. A. Dornfeld, who extended the one-story rear addition yet again that same year at a cost of \$150. Mr. Dornfeld was listed as a "city salesman" in the Minnesota Census of 1905. As of 1943, he was still listed as the owner of the home. Sometime after World War II, the property was remodeled into a duplex and the front porch was enclosed up to the double-leaf front doors, and the entirety of the exterior is now clad in white aluminum siding on clapboard. The neighboring Julius Coney House, constructed in 1888, was demolished in 2012 as ordered by the City Council given its Vacant Category III status. The HPC did not review and comment on this demolition.

C. PROPOSED CHANGES: The applicant proposes to raze the residence; there are no current

¹ City Directory via Saint Paul Heritage Preservation Commission Property Inventory Form for 767 Fourth Street E.

² "The Social World", *The Saint Paul Daily Globe*. May 7, 1901, Page 2, Image 2.

plans for new construction. The lot would be graded and seeded.

D. TIMELINE:

- July 23, 1992 - the Dayton's Bluff Heritage Preservation District was designated by the City Council for Heritage Preservation and established under Ordinance No. 17942 (Council File #92-900) April 12, 2010 - the property became a Category 2 vacant building
- August 24, 2005 - the property became a Category 2 vacant building
- January 3, 2006 - Code Compliance Report issued
- July 9, 2009 - the HRA purchased the property for \$15,300 with NSP funds
- July-October 2012 – preliminary plans and scope-of-work were prepared, but ultimately did not move forward. The proposal had a total development cost of \$460,500, with a projected sale of the renovated house at \$165,500 for a subsidy request of \$295,000. This also assumed a land cost write-down to \$0.
- Inspiring Communities RFPs were released on October 15, 2013 and November 3, 2014 and no proposals were received.
- Fall 2014 – the chimney on the west roof plane collapsed and was removed.
- September 15, 2015 – The HRA applied to the HPC for demolition of the property.

E. GUIDELINE CITATIONS:

Dayton's Bluff Historic District Guidelines

Leg. Code § 74.87. General principles.

(1) All work should be of a character and quality that maintains the distinguishing features of the building and the environment. The removal or alteration of distinctive architectural features should be avoided as should alterations that have no historical basis and which seek to create an earlier appearance. The restoration of altered original features, if documentable, is encouraged.

(2) Changes which may have taken place in the course of time are evidence of the history and development of a building, structure, or site and its environment. These changes may have acquired significance in their own right, and this significance shall be recognized and respected.

(3) Deteriorated architectural features should be repaired rather than replaced whenever possible. In the event of replacement, new materials should match the original in composition, design (including consideration of proportion, texture and detail), color and overall appearance.

(4) New additions or alterations to structures should be constructed in such a manner that if such additions or alterations were to be removed in the future, the form and integrity of the original structure would be unimpaired.

(5) The impact of alterations or additions on individual buildings as well as on the surrounding streetscape will be considered; major alterations to buildings which occupy a corner lot or are otherwise prominently sited should be avoided.

(6) New construction should be compatible with the historic and architectural character of the district.

§ 74.90. – New construction and additions.

- (j) Demolition. Demolition permits will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and will be determined by the category of building (pivotal, contributing and noncontributing) and its importance to the district, the structural condition of the building and the economic viability of the structure.

§ 73.06(i)(2): Demolition

When reviewing proposals for demolition of structures within the district, the Heritage Preservation Commission refers to § 73.06 (i)(2) of the Saint Paul Legislative Code which states the following:

In the case of the proposed demolition of a building, prior to approval of said demolition, the commission shall make written findings on the following: the architectural and historical merit of the building, the effect of the demolition on surrounding buildings, the effect of any proposed new construction on the remainder of the building (in case of partial demolition) and on surrounding buildings, and the economic value or usefulness of the building as it now exists or if altered or modified in comparison with the value or usefulness of any proposed structures designated to replace the present building or buildings.

SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR'S STANDARDS FOR REHABILITATION

District/Neighborhood

Recommended:

- Identifying, retaining, and preserving buildings, and streetscape, and landscape features which are important in defining the overall historic character of the district or neighborhood. Such features can include streets, alleys, paving, walkways, street lights, signs, benches, parks and gardens, and trees.
- Retaining the historic relationship between buildings, and streetscape and landscape features such as a town square comprised of row houses and stores surrounding a communal park or open space.
- Protecting and maintaining the historic masonry, wood, and architectural metals which comprise building and streetscape features, through appropriate surface treatments such as cleaning, rust removal, limited paint removal, and reapplication of protective coating systems; and protecting and maintaining landscape features, including plant material.
- Repairing features of the building, streetscape, or landscape by reinforcing the historic materials. Repair will also generally include the replacement in kind - or with a compatible substitute material - of those extensively deteriorated or missing parts of features when there are surviving prototypes such as porch balustrades, paving materials, or streetlight standards.
- Replacing in kind an entire feature of the building, streetscape, or landscape that is too deteriorated to repair - when the overall form and detailing are still evident - using the physical evidence to guide the new work. This could include a storefront, a walkway, or a garden. If using the same kind of material is not technically or economically feasible, then a compatible substitute material may be considered.

Alterations/Additions for the New Use

- Designing required new parking so that it is as unobtrusive as possible, i.e., on side streets or at the rear of buildings. "Shared" parking should also be planned so that several businesses' can utilize one parking area as opposed to introducing random, multiple lots.
- Designing and constructing new additions to historic buildings when required by the new use. New work should be compatible with the historic character of the district or neighborhood in terms of size, scale, design, material, color, and texture.
- Removing non-significant buildings, additions, or streetscape and landscape features which detract from the historic character of the district or the neighborhood.

Not Recommended:

- Removing or radically changing those features of the district or neighborhood which are important in defining the overall historic character so that, as a result, the character is diminished.

- Removing or relocating historic buildings, or features of the streetscape and landscape, thus destroying the historic relationship between buildings, features and open space.
- Failing to undertake adequate measures to assure the preservation of building, streetscape, and landscape features.
- Removing a feature of the building, streetscape, or landscape that is unrepairable and not replacing it; or replacing it with a new feature that does not convey the same visual appearance.

Design for Missing Historic Features

- Introducing a new building, streetscape or landscape feature that is out of scale or otherwise inappropriate to the setting's historic character, e.g., replacing picket fencing with chain link fencing

Alterations/Additions for the New Use

- Placing parking facilities directly adjacent to historic buildings which cause the removal of historic plantings, relocation of paths and walkways, or blocking of alleys.
- Introducing new construction into historic districts that is visually incompatible or that destroys historic relationships within the district or neighborhood.
- Removing a historic building, building feature, or landscape or streetscape feature that is important in defining the overall historic character of the district or the neighborhood.

F. FINDINGS:

1. On July 23, 1992, the Dayton's Bluff Heritage Preservation District was established under Ordinance No. 17942 (Council File #92-900). The Heritage Preservation Commission shall protect the architectural character of heritage preservation sites through review and approval or denial of applications for city permits for demolition within designated heritage preservation sites **§73.04.(4)**.
2. **The category of the building.** The Peterson-Burke House at 767 Fourth Street East is categorized as contributing to the Dayton's Bluff Heritage Preservation District.
3. **Leg. Code § 74.90.(j)** - The Preservation Program for the Dayton's Bluff Heritage Preservation District states that consideration of demolitions will be determined by the category of building (pivotal, contributing and non-contributing), its importance to the district, the structural condition of the building and the economic viability of the structure.
4. **The importance of the building to the district.** The building's integrity has been compromised; however, it is categorized as contributing to the district's architectural and historical character. The building is important to the district and in a rehabilitated state would enhance the character of the district.

The Peterson-Burke House was constructed in 1884 with additional building permits issued in 1884, 1885, 1886, 1902, 1937, and 1943 during and shortly after the Period of Significance for the Dayton's Bluff Heritage Preservation District (1857-1930).

The Dayton's Bluff Historic District Handbook states the following:

In the 1880s, and particularly during the peak years 1882-1884, Dayton's Bluff became a densely-built urban neighborhood. The construction of a series of bridges and the extension of streetcar service brought a new and diverse population to the bluff. Factory and railroad workers purchased small lots and erected a great variety of single and multiple-family houses. The newly-arrived settlers included recent immigrants from Sweden, Ireland, and Germany, but German-Americans were the predominant group. They joined a large contingent of well-established German-American business owners...

The residential context of this structure is fair-to-good, as it is on the block of Fourth Street which retains many of its buildings constructed during the Period of Significance. Comparing

the Sanborn Map to current aerial images, one residence was constructed or moved to the block at the southwest corner of Fourth and Arcade after 1925. Three houses have been demolished since 1925: 763 (2012), 764, and 781-83 Fourth Street.

Staff did not find any historical associations, other than Mr. Peterson, the Burkes, Rev. and Mrs. C. E. Schutte, and E. A. Dornfeld that have contributed in some way to Saint Paul's history and development or an architect or association with an important event, with this property. The 1989 Dayton's Bluff inventory form did not identify other individuals.

The 1903-25 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map for this site indicates the footprint of the building and property, which has been slightly altered since 1925 with the enclosure of a portion of the front porch and the removal of the garage. Removal of this building would be the fourth principle structure removed on the block since 1925, and the second removed since the designation of the heritage preservation district (1992). The map shows that the building was used as a single-family dwelling through 1925. There was one other building constructed or moved to on this block around or after the Period of Significance. There is no alley and the property sits several feet above the sidewalk and the yard is retained by limestone and concrete block retaining walls at the sidewalk.

HPC staff considers the architectural integrity to be poor; the aluminum siding and wrap would need to be removed for staff to accurately assess the presence and condition of historic fabric and detailing.

5. **Structural condition of the building.** The current structural condition of the building is considered poor but the recent report did not note any imminent structural danger. The building has been classified as vacant since August 24, 2005 and the lack of maintenance and mothballing/stabilization is evident.

A Code Compliance Report was issued on January 3, 2006. Some of the items noted in the report include: anchor post to beams in basement, install tempered glass in stairway landing window, repair or replace deteriorated sash/broken glass/sash holders/putty, provide complete storms and screens, paint interior and exterior as necessary, provide hand and guardrails on all stairways and steps.

HPC staff conducted a site visit on October 1, 2015. Most of the original/early architectural or decorative features of the interior have been removed. Some original and early, double-hung windows are intact, along with the interior doors, casings, and moldings. The original balustrade rails and newels are also extant, but the spindles enclosed or removed. The exterior features of the house have been covered with aluminum and aluminum wrap. Staff observed general deferred maintenance. Staff cannot assess the condition of the original exterior materials given that they are not visible.

On September 14, 2015, structural engineering firm, Mattson Macdonald Young, submitted a report to the HRA that summarized the observed conditions of the property. The report notes the retaining walls around the house are tipping and the concrete block wall at the driveway has deflected and is in poor condition, as there is a large tree growing between the walls at the driveway and the stairs. The front porch is showing signs of deterioration and damage. The report details the demolished chimney and the poor condition of the roof including sagging at the porch, west elevation, back soffits and fascia, and a hole in the roof where the demolished chimney intersects. There is spalling in areas of the exterior limestone foundation and the interior foundation has been sheet-rocked and is covered with mold. The report identifies water damage throughout the house. The report summarized that 767 Fourth Street East is in generally poor condition based on visually observed conditions. The report summarized that repairs are possible, but would likely be relatively costly.

6. **The economic viability of the structure.** One preliminary proposal for rehabilitation was received in 2012 for a total development cost at \$460,500. The proposal did not progress

beyond preliminary plans and scope-of-work. PED staff indicated that the developer requested the land cost written down to \$0 and a subsidy of \$295,000. The current economic viability of the structure cannot be fully determined given that a rehabilitation estimate was not updated or provided for review with this application. HPC staff did not evaluate or review the 2012 development proposal for which included a preliminary rehabilitation estimate.

The HRA estimates the demolition costs to be \$15,000. The HRA purchased the property on February 16, 2010 for \$29,500 with NSP funds. In 2014, Ramsey County estimated the 2015 land value at \$13,700 and the building value at \$19,600. In 2015, Ramsey County estimated the 2016 land value at \$10,800 and the building value at \$39,00. The 2,136 square foot property is sited on the north side of Fourth between Maple and Hope and the parcel size is 40 ft. wide by 120 ft. deep (.11 acres).

The property is currently zoned RTI. The previous use was a duplex, but the property has been vacant for over one year and would need to be rehabilitated as a single family home.

7. The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation recommend against removing buildings that are important in defining the overall historic character of the district or the neighborhood. Given the contributing categorization, even with poor architectural integrity, and fair-to-good context, HPC staff finds that the building reinforces the District's architectural and historic character. The Standards also recommend against destroying historic relationships between buildings and open space. The demolition of the building would have a significant impact on the relationship of residential buildings along Plum Street.
8. The Dayton's Bluff Heritage Preservation District Design Guidelines, General Principle (1) states all work should be of a character and quality that maintains the distinguishing features of the building and the environment. The removal or alteration of distinctive architectural features should be avoided... The proposal to demolish this property does not comply with the guidelines as loss of the property would result in the loss of historic character.
9. This property is in the anticipated Area of Potential Effect for the Gold Line BRT and will be evaluated for National Register Eligibility. Proceeding evaluation, determined effects will be evaluated for impacts with potential mitigation.
10. HPC staff finds that the proposed demolition of the Peterson-Burke House at 767 Fourth Street East may adversely affect the Program for the Preservation and architectural control of the Dayton's Bluff Heritage Preservation District (Leg. Code §73.06 (e)) for reasons outlined in the findings which include: contributing classification, poor condition, poor architectural integrity, and lack of rehabilitation estimates. A vacant lot would have a negative impact on the Dayton's Bluff Heritage Preservation District and the loss of historic fabric is irreversible.

G. STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS: STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS: Based on the findings, staff recommends approval of the demolition permit application provided the following condition(s) are met:

1. Prior to demolition, the applicant shall remove non-original siding and wrap to reveal the historic exterior of the residence and the building shall be documented following the Minnesota Historic Property Record (MHPR) archival photo documentation standards prior to demolition, at the owner's expense. Two copies of the 2012 HPC reviewed plans in 11" x 17" format will be accepted in lieu of as-built drawings. Two copies of the documentation shall be forwarded to the HPC in both printed form and as TIFF files on an archival quality CD (one copy of the documentation to be delivered to the Ramsey County Historically Society.)

H. ATTACHMENTS

1. HPC Design Review Application
2. Applicant Submittals:
 - a. Structural Report and Photographs

- b. Exterior Photographs
- 3. January 3, 2006 Code Compliance Report
- 4. 2012 Rehabilitation proposal from Marpe Construction
- 5. 2015 Photographs
- 6. Aerial Photographs
- 7. 1903-25 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map