

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

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FILE NAME: 275 E. 4<sup>th</sup> Street  
DATE OF APPLICATION: March 7, 2013  
APPLICANT: Lunning Wende Associates  
OWNER: Wheeler Cleveland Hague Partnership/275 NW  
DATE OF PUBLIC HEARING: March 28, 2013  
HPC SITE/DISTRICT: Historic Lowertown Heritage Preservation District  
CATEGORY: New Construction and Alteration  
CLASSIFICATION: Building permit  
STAFF INVESTIGATION AND REPORT: Amy Spong  
DATE: March 20, 2013

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**A. SITE DESCRIPTION:**

The building, commonly called the Northwestern Building, is a large, eight-story Classical Revival Style brick structure with an elaborate classical cornice and a rusticated granite base. There are carved panels between the top floor windows. It was designed by Charles Frost and constructed in 1916 as an office building for the Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis and Omaha Railroad. The building is significant as one of several railroad related buildings in St. Paul designed by Chicago architect Charles Frost. The other commissions were the Union Depot and Railroad and Bank Building. This site is considered contributing to the Lowertown Historic District.

The Period of Significance for the Historic Lowertown Heritage Preservation District spans from 1867-1929. The National Register nomination form for the district states: *Lowertown is not only architecturally significant, but significant in the history of landscape architecture and city planning due to dramatic street pattern and grade changes which were made in the 1870s, and due to the fact that a park encompassing an entire city block has been preserved since the 1880s in the midst of a large warehouse and industrial area with tightly clustered buildings.* The streetscape was also planned out of utility and allowed for shipping of goods by carriage and later by truck. Building facades with elevated first floors often had internal (integrated) loading docks and trucks would back up to them while other areas had external docks (often blocking or integrated into the sidewalk) for loading.

The open space behind the Northwestern Building has always been an open service/utilitarian area. There was a Fire Station to the north and this "alley" might have been used for bringing horses down to the lower level or the back of the fire station. The grade has been altered as early pictures show a possible slope from the sidewalk. Staff is not clear if this space was ever a public alley but it currently is private and portions of it are owned by Northwestern and the new Market Lofts.

**B. PROPOSED CHANGES:**

The applicant is proposing to alter three openings on the rear (north) elevation that faces the private "alley." Two windows will become a larger service openings for trash and a third window will become a door. The upper three-pane window sashes will remain while the lower sash, sill, and brick will be removed to accommodate the doors. The new overhead door will be flush and metal but finish wasn't specified. The new entry door and frame is proposed to be aluminum.

The applicant is also proposing permanent elements in the "alley" space to the north of the building. This space will continue to provide access to the restaurant inside and also serve as seasonal patio. The permanent elements include a rock-face block wall, vegetated green screen panels, a gas fireplace, steel light poles and tension cables attached to a metal "cover"

along the north wall. This metal piece also serves to hide some external conduit. A sign/screen element is proposed but content details were not provided. Items that are also planned but not permanently attached are planters, patio tables and chairs. The surface material is currently asphalt and the proposed will also be asphalt. It is unknown if historically this area had brick or stone, especially since the Northwestern Building basement extends out underneath this space.

### **C. BACKGROUND:**

Staff met with Mr. Wende on February 13<sup>th</sup> to discuss the proposal and give feedback for submitting to the HPC. The project is funded by STAR funds, a City loan and the owner.

The Greater Lowertown Master Plan Summary was adopted by the City Council in 2012 and amended to the City Comprehensive Plan. The complete Plan was adopted by the Capital River Council. The following goals and strategies should be taken under consideration and relate to this current proposal:

#### **Historic Preservation**

*Goal 9.2 Continue to preserve the historic character of the Historic District.*

*Goal 9.5 Welcome and celebrate changes and investments in Lowertown by managing them within the strong historic fabric.*

*Strategy 9.1 Apply the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Treatment of Historic Properties and the local Design Review Guidelines to all repair, alteration, new construction and demolition in the Historic District.*

*Strategy 9.7 Conduct a study on historic streetscape and infrastructure to inform future open space and streetscape proposals.*

#### **Land Use & Urban Design**

*Goal 3.4 Welcome new investments that enhance and augment the unique qualities of Lowertown.*

### **D. GUIDELINE CITATIONS:**

#### **ARTICLE VI. - HISTORIC LOWERTOWN HERITAGE PRESERVATION DISTRICT**

##### **Lowertown Historic District Design Review Guidelines, Sec. 74-112**

#### **I. New Construction**

##### **A. Setback - Siting**

*There should be no more than a 5% variation in setback from existing adjacent buildings. The proportion of built edge to open space should preserve the plane of the street wall, particularly along the streets facing Mears Park and the Farmer's Market.*

##### **H. Landscaping and Street Furniture**

*When lots are used for green space or parking, a visual hole in the street "wall" may result. Landscape treatment can eliminate this potential problem by providing a wall of enclosure for the street. Traditional street elements of the area, such as granite curbs, should be preserved. New street furniture should complement the scale and character of the area.*

#### **II Restoration and Rehabilitation, 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 of architectural features is not permitted.*
- 2. 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, color, texture and appearance. Duplication of original design based on physical or pictorial evidence is preferable to using conjectural or period designs or using part of other buildings.*

3. *Distinctive stylistic features or examples of skilled craftsmanship characteristic of structures of a period should be treated sensitively. Furthermore, if changes in use of a building are contemplated, they should be accomplished with minimum alteration to the structure and fabric.*
4. *In general, it is expected that buildings will be restored to their original appearance. However, alterations to buildings are sometimes significant because they reflect the history of the building and the district. This significance should be respected, and restoration to an 'original' appearance may not always be desirable. All buildings should be recognized as products of their own time and not be altered to resemble buildings from another era.*

**A. Masonry and walls.**

- a. *Use of materials: Original masonry and mortar should be retained whenever possible without the application of any surface treatment. A similar material should be used to repair or replace, where necessary, deteriorated masonry. New masonry added to the structure or site, such as new foundations or retaining walls, should be compatible with the color, texture, and bonding of the original or existing masonry. Formstone, stucco, wood or metal siding or paneling should not be used.*
- c. *Repointing: Repointing should only be done on those mortar joints where there is evidence of moisture problems or when sufficient mortar is missing to allow water to stand on the mortar joint. Using pneumatic hammers to move mortar can seriously damage the adjacent brick. Vertical joints should be hand chiseled. When repointing, it is important to use the same materials as the existing mortar. This includes matching the color, texture, coefficients of expansion and contraction, and ingredient ratio of the original mortar mix, creating a bond similar to the original. A professional mortar analysis can give this information. Repointing with Portland cement mortar may create a bond stronger than is appropriate for the building materials, possibly resulting in cracking or other damage. Old mortar should be duplicated in joint size, method of applications and joint profile.*

**B. Windows and doors.**

- a. *Openings: Existing window and door openings should be retained. New window and door openings should not be introduced into the principal visible elevations. Enlarging or reducing window or door openings to fit stock window sash or new stock door sizes should not be done. Infilling of window openings may be permissible on minor facades if standard sizes approximate the size and proportions of the opening. Generally, a minor facade will be considered as any facade not facing the street and not having the ornamentation and higher quality materials usually associated with street facades.*
- e. *Lintels, arches and sills: Lintels, sills, architraves, pediments, hoods and steps should be retained or repaired if possible. Existing colors and textures should be matched when repairing these elements.*

**III. Signs and accessories.** *Signs should be compatible with the character of the District, and blend with the character of the structures on or near which they are placed. Signs should not conceal architectural detail, clutter or detract from the intended facade; but rather complement the overall design of the building and the period in which it was built.*

**D. Lighting.** *Location of exterior lights should be appropriate to the structure. Subdued lighting is preferred.*

**The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation (1990)**

**\*\*EXCERPT\*\***

**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.*

*-Protecting buildings, paving, iron fencing, etc. against arson and vandalism before rehabilitation work begins by erecting protective fencing and installing alarm systems that are keyed into local protection agencies.*

*-Evaluating the overall condition of building, streetscape and landscape materials to determine whether more than protection and maintenance are required, that is, if repairs to features will be necessary.*

*-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.*

#### **Design for Missing Historic Features**

*-Designing and constructing a new feature of the building streetscape, or landscape when the historic feature is completely missing, such as row house steps, a porch, streetlight, or terrace. It may be a restoration based on historical, pictorial, and physical documentation; or be a new design that is compatible with the historic character of the district or neighborhood.*

#### **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.*

*-Destroying streetscape and landscape features by widening existing streets, changing paving material, or introducing inappropriately located new streets or parking lots.*

*-Removing or relocating historic buildings, or features of the streetscape and landscape, thus destroying the historic relationship between buildings, features and open space.*

*-Stripping features from buildings or the streetscape such as wood siding, iron fencing, or terra cotta balusters; or removing or destroying landscape features, including plant material.*

*-Failing to undertake adequate measures to assure the preservation of building, streetscape, and landscape features.*

*-Replacing an entire feature of the building, streetscape, or landscape such as a porch, walkway, or streetlight, when repair of materials and limited replacement of deteriorated or missing parts are appropriate.*

*-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**

*-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.*

#### **E. FINDINGS:**

1. On March 22, 1984, the Historic Lowertown Heritage Preservation District was established under Ordinance No. 17120, § 2. 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 exterior work within designated heritage preservation sites §73.04.(4).
2. **Classification of the streetscape and building.** The building is classified as Contributing to the architectural character and integrity of the Historic Lowertown Heritage Preservation District. Historic streetscape elements, if present, also contribute to and support the architectural character and integrity of the District.
3. **Alteration of openings.** A minor facade, or secondary elevation, is considered to be any facade not facing the street and not having the ornamentation and higher quality materials usually associated with street facades. The openings proposed for alteration do appear to be original openings and the guidelines recommend against changing original openings, however, the façade is considered minor and the changes are set back from the public right of way. The proposal complies with the guidelines and preserving the upper three sashes preserve part of the original windows and rhythm of the openings.

4. **New construction for patio.** The Historic Lowertown Heritage Preservation District Design Review Guidelines state "*Traditional street elements of the area...should be preserved.*" (§74-112.I.H) and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation recommend, "*Retaining the historic relationship between buildings, and streetscape and landscape features...*" The area proposed for new construction has always been open and the current proposal keeps the space open but improves its finishes for a new use. Early Sanborn Maps show a narrower area than current. The new Market Lofts building is not built up to the property line where the old fire station originally was.

**Historic fabric.** There does not appear to be any historic materials being proposed for removal as part of this project. The Market Lofts project required documenting the remains of the fire station wall and then allowed for its removal. The current surface is asphalt and the proposed new will also be asphalt. Some analysis should be completed to determine if historic pavers or cobbles are still present and there should be discussion about salvaging them for possible reuse.

5. The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation recommend against "*Introducing a new building, streetscape or landscape feature that is out of scale or otherwise inappropriate to the setting's historic character.*"

**Block wall.** A rock face block wall was approved by the HPC as part of the Market Lofts project. The proposed rock-face block wall will match the existing and complies with the guidelines. The new wall will not be highly visible as it extends perpendicularly from the public sidewalk and is recessed.

**Landscaping.** Historically, plantings were kept to Mear's Park (Smith Park) and the rest of Lowertown was a warehousing district. Street trees have become part of Lowertown's landscape but when new plantings are proposed they should also be appropriate to the character of the District. New plantings should not be designed in a formal way but reflect the utilitarian nature of the District. The proposed landscaping is in between two buildings and not in front of them or blocking prominent views. The HPC does not regulate plantings but they may comment on their appropriateness given the placement and character of the district.

**Planters and mesh screen.** The mesh screen wall that will be mostly green during warmer months is not a traditional element found in Lowertown. Given the placement between the two buildings, being recessed from the public right of way, and its perpendicular position to the street and sidewalk, the feature will not be *out of scale* or highly visible. The feature, along with the lights, is located approximately in the same plane as the wall of the fire station and recalls the early width of the "alley."

**Lights.** The proposed lights are of a modern design and through their placement, define the patio space and also recall the early width of the "alley." There were two different designs noted on the drawings and it should be clarified which model is proposed. Either fixture complies with the guidelines as they will not be out of scale or inappropriate in this proposal. The guidelines for lighting state "*Subdued lighting is preferred.*"

**Fireplace and cables.** The fireplace is set back from the street and complies with the guidelines. If feasible, salvaged brick or stone should be used. The cables are being attached to the lights and a new metal cover along the brick wall. This cover will hide modern conduit and will not negatively impact the wall, provided the installation is through mortar joints as much as feasible.

**Planters and Street Furniture.** The HPC does not review planters and furniture that are not permanently fixed but the guideline states "*New street furniture should complement the scale and character of the area.*"

6. ***Impact on view sheds and street views.*** The new elements in the patio area will be visible from the public right of way but will not negatively impact the architectural integrity or character of the Northwestern Building.
7. The proposal will not have an adverse affect on the program for the preservation and architectural control of the Historic Lowertown Heritage Preservation District (Leg. Code §73.06 (e)) provided the conditions are met.

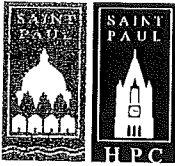
**F. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Based on the findings, staff recommends approval of the application to alter openings and construct an outdoor patio, provided the following conditions are met:

1. Documentation shall be provided regarding the presence of brick or cobbles. HPC staff will be notified of the findings and if historic materials are found, discussions regarding salvaging the materials and incorporating them into the new design shall take place.
2. Final material colors and finishes shall be submitted to staff for review and approval. There shall be no shiny metal finishes. Repointing and brick repair around the new openings shall comply with applicable standards for masonry work. A mortar specification shall be submitted to staff for review.
3. Any signage for the proposed free-standing sign shall be submitted to staff for review and approval.
4. Any revisions to the approved plans shall be submitted to staff and/or the HPC for consideration.
5. The stamped approved plans shall remain on site for the duration of the project along with the HPC conditional approval letter.

**G. ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Applications with photos and plans
2. Historic photos and maps
3. Written testimony- none received



Saint Paul Heritage Preservation Commission  
Department of Planning and Economic Development  
25 Fourth Street West, Suite 1400  
Saint Paul, MN 55102  
Phone: (651) 266-9078

## HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION DESIGN REVIEW APPLICATION

This application must be completed in addition to the appropriate city permit application if the affected property is an individually designated landmark or located within an historic district. For applications that must be reviewed by the Heritage Preservation Commission refer to the HPC Meeting schedule for meeting dates and deadlines.

### 1. CATEGORY

Please check the category that best describes the proposed work

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Repair/Rehabilitation | <input type="checkbox"/> Sign/Awning          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New Construction/Addition/<br>Alteration |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Moving                | <input type="checkbox"/> Fence/Retaining Wall | <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Application Review Only                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Demolition            | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____          |  |

### 2. PROJECT ADDRESS

Street and number: 275 E. 4<sup>TH</sup> ST. Zip Code: 55101

### 3. APPLICANT INFORMATION

Name of contact person: SCOTT WENDE  
Company: LUNNING WENDE ASSOCIATES  
Street and number: 257 E. 4<sup>TH</sup> STREET, SUITE 620  
City: SAINT PAUL State: MN Zip Code: 55101  
Phone number: (651) 221,0915 e-mail: SCOTT@LUNNINGWENDE.COM

### 4. PROPERTY OWNER(S) INFORMATION (If different from applicant)

Name: WHEELER CLEVELAND HAGUE PARTNERSHIP/275 NW  
Street and number: 275 EAST 4<sup>TH</sup> STREET  
City: SAINT PAUL State: MN Zip Code: 55101  
Phone number: (651) 767.4121 e-mail: AHAF DAHL@HBGLTD.NET



5. PROJECT ARCHITECT (If applicable)

Contact person: SCOTT WENDE

Company: LUNNING WENDE ASSOCIATES

Street and number: 275 EAST 4TH STREET

City: SAINT PAUL State: MN Zip Code: 55101

Phone number: (651) 221.0915 e-mail: SCOTT@LUNNINGWENDE.COM

6. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Completely describe ALL exterior changes being proposed for the property. Include changes to architectural details such as windows, doors, siding, railings, steps, trim, roof, foundation or porches. Attach specifications for doors, windows, lighting and other features, if applicable, including color and material samples.

THE PROJECT INVOLVES THE ADDITION OF A FEW PERMANENT ELEMENTS TO AN ALLEY SPACE, OWNED BY THE BUILDING OWNERS. THE FINISHED SPACE WILL BE A SEASONAL RESTAURANT PATIO.

THE PERMANENT ELEMENTS WILL INCLUDE LIGHT POLES, VEGETATED GREEN SCREEN PANEL WALLS, A NATURAL GAS LINEAR BURNER FIREPLACE, AND TENSION CABLES FROM THE LIGHT POLES TO THE BUILDING.

*Attach additional sheets if necessary*

7. ATTACHMENTS

Refer to the *Design Review Process sheet* for required information or attachments.

**\*\*INCOMPLETE APPLICATIONS WILL BE RETURNED\*\***

ARE THE NECESSARY ATTACHMENTS AND INFORMATION INCLUDED?

☒ YES

Will any federal money be used in this project?

YES

☐

NO

☒

Are you applying for the Investment Tax Credits?

YES

☐

NO

☒

I, the undersigned, understand that the Design Review Application is limited to the aforementioned work to the affected property. I further understand that any additional exterior work to be done under my ownership must be submitted by application to the St. Paul Heritage Preservation Commission. Any unauthorized work will be required to be removed.

Signature of applicant: Scott Wende Date: 3/6/2013

Signature of owner: Ardis Skypdale, agent Date: 3/6/2013

**FOR HPC OFFICE USE ONLY**

Date received: 3-7-13

FILE NO. 13-006

District: LT / Individual Site: \_\_\_\_\_

Contributing/Non-contributing/Pivotal/Supportive/:

Type of work: Minor/Moderate/Major

\_\_\_\_ Requires staff review

Supporting data: YES NO  
Complete application: YES NO

The following condition(s) must be met in order for application to conform to preservation program:

It has been determined that the work to be performed pursuant to the application does not adversely affect the program for preservation and architectural control of the heritage preservation district or site (Ch.73.06).

\_\_\_\_\_  
HPC staff approval

Date \_\_\_\_\_

✓  
\_\_\_\_ Requires Commission review

Submitted:

- ☐ 3 Sets of Plans
- ☒ 15 Sets of Plans reduced to 8 1/2" by 11" or 11" by 17"
- ☐ Photographs
- ☐ City Permit Application
- ☒ Complete HPC Design Review application

Hearing Date set for: 3.28.13

City Permit # \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_







