

November 1, 2013

Connie Christenson, Director
Office of Innovation and Economic Development
Department of Employment and Economic Development
332 Minnesota Street, Suite E2040
St. Paul, MN 55101

RE: Lowertown Ballpark – Schematic Design
St. Paul, Ramsey County
SHPO Number: 2013-0116

Dear Ms. Christenson:

Thank you for submitting the Schematic Design for the Lowertown Ballpark. We have also received an archaeological report from Summit Envirosolutions entitled *Archaeological Monitoring and Visual Reconnaissance for the Lowertown Ballpark Project, Saint Paul, Ramsey County, Minnesota*. This information is being reviewed pursuant to the responsibilities given the Minnesota Historical Society by the Minnesota Historic Sites Act and the Minnesota Field Archaeology Act.

We have reviewed the submitted archaeological monitoring report and agree with the consultant's recommendation that the identified site is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. No further archaeological survey work is necessary for this project.

As you are aware, the Lowertown Ballpark is immediately adjacent to the Lowertown Historic District, which is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. We have reviewed the schematic design for the ballpark taking the adjacent historic district into consideration and have the following comments:

Though the proposed structure is differentiated from the historic buildings within the district, the schematic design presented is generally not compatible with the Lowertown Historic District in scale and massing. Generally, new construction in or adjacent to historic districts should be both differentiated *and* compatible with the district in order to meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties. The schematic design presented has a massing affinity much more closely resembling a Modernist structure from the 1950's rather than with a turn of the century warehouse structure.

The Lowertown Historic District is primarily comprised of massive, multistory (5-8), brick buildings with smaller punched window and door openings. These historic buildings generally have a clear base, a middle section, and a top section. The attempt to minimize the proposed ballpark structure into a series of small buildings minimizes the structure's massing. The broken-up design of smaller 1-2 story structures, along with the open design of the Suite Level – Pavilion, presents a massing that is overly differentiated from the characteristics of the historic district. Regarding this, we would recommend a more solid and robust construction that perhaps utilizes brick or stone masonry.

As mentioned above, window and door openings in the historic district are generally characterized by smaller punched openings within solid brick walls. The proposed building has a large curtain wall, which is not compatible with the historic district.

While the proposed Lowertown Ballpark will be clad in materials that individually exist in the historic district, they appear to be used in contrary ways. Many of the Lowertown Historic District buildings

contain metal in specific elements, such as a connector piece at a timber structural member or a light fire escape assembly, but those elements do not translate to an overall exterior metal cladding system. It is quite true that metal cladding is used in some industrial settings, but not in the Lowertown Historic District during its period of significance. The submission includes photos of historic materials around the historic district - most of which are brick or other masonry. However, there is little brick or stone masonry being proposed for the ballpark. Though rusted steel panels may be similar in color to many of the bricks in the historic district, they do not have the same character.

Please consider our comments as the design for this facility moves forward. We are aware that there is a Lowertown Ballpark Design and Construction Committee that is actively involved in reviewing the schematic design as well. We expect that any suggestions and concerns raised by this committee are being taken into consideration by your agency. If you have specific questions regarding our design review, please contact Natascha Wiener at (651) 259-3462. Feel free to contact me at (651) 259-3456 with general questions or concerns.

Sincerely,



Sarah Beimers, Manager
Government Programs and Compliance

cc: Natascha Wiener, SHPO
Logan Gerken, Ryan Companies
Jared Olson, Ryan Companies
Laurie Ollila, Summit Envirosolutions
Jody Martinez, Parks and Recreation, City of St. Paul
Cecile Bedor, Planning and Economic Development, City of St. Paul
Amy Spong, St. Paul Heritage Preservation Commission
John Mannillo
Bill Hosko