



## **Request for City Council Committee Action from the Department of Community Planning & Economic Development – Planning Division**

**Date:** February 26, 2009

**To:** Council Member Gary Schiff, Chair, Zoning and Planning Committee  
Members of the Committee

**Referral to:** Zoning and Planning Committee

**Subject:** The applicant's attorney, Dan Kennedy, is appealing the Heritage Preservation Commission decision denying a Demolition of Historic Resource application for the Pauline Fjelde residence at 3009 Park Avenue South.

**Recommendation:** The Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) at their January 13 meeting unanimously adopted the staff recommendation (vote was 7-0) and denied the Demolition of a Historic Resource application, established interim protection; and directed the Planning Director to prepare or cause to be prepared a designation study for the Pauline Fjelde residence at 3009 Park Avenue South.

**Previous Directives:** N/A

**Prepared or Submitted by:** Aaron Hanauer, Senior Planner, 612-673-2494

**Approved by:** Jack Byers, Planning Supervisor, 612-673-2634

**Presenters in Committee:** Aaron Hanauer, Senior Planner

### **Financial Impact (Check those that apply)**

- No financial impact (If checked, go directly to Background/Supporting Information).
- Action requires an appropriation increase to the \_\_\_\_\_ Capital Budget or \_\_\_\_\_ Operating Budget.
- Action provides increased revenue for appropriation increase.
- Action requires use of contingency or reserves.
- Business Plan: \_\_\_\_\_ Action is within the plan. \_\_\_\_\_ Action requires a change to plan.
- Other financial impact (Explain):
- Request provided to department's finance contact when provided to the Committee Coordinator.

**Community Impact (use any categories that apply)**

**Ward:** 8

**Neighborhood Notification:** The Central Area Neighborhood Development Organization was notified of this application by letter, mailed on February 6, 2009

**City Goals:** See staff report.

**Comprehensive Plan:** See staff report.

**Zoning Code:** See staff report.

**Living Wage/Job Linkage:** Not applicable.

**Other:** Not applicable.

***Background/Supporting Information Attached:***

The applicant, James Schoffman, and the applicant's attorney, Dan Kennedy, are appealing the January 13 HPC decision to deny the Demolition of a Historic Resource application for the Pauline Fjelde residence at 3009 Park Avenue South, establish interim protection, and direct the Planning Director to prepare or cause to be prepared a designation study for this property. (see Appendix C for reason for appealing).

***Supporting Material***

Appendix A: Heritage Preservation Commission Hearing Testimony and Actions

Appendix B: Staff Report and Staff Report Appendices A-I

Appendix C: Appeal Application

Appendix D: Applicant information Submitted at Public Hearing

**CITY OF MINNEAPOLIS  
CPED PLANNING DIVISION  
HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION STAFF REPORT**

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FILE NAME: 3009 Park Avenue, Pauline Fjelde Residence

DATE OF APPLICATION: December 23, 2008

APPLICANT: Jakris Ltd. (James Schoffman), 651-686-7603

PUBLICATION OF STAFF REPORT: January 6, 2009

DATE OF HEARING: January 13, 2009

APPEAL PERIOD EXPIRATION: January 23, 2009

CATEGORY: Historic Resource

CLASSIFICATION: Demolition of a Historic Resource

STAFF INVESTIGATION AND REPORT: Aaron Hanauer, (612) 673-2494

DATE: January 6, 2009

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## **A. BACKGROUND**

On October 8, 2008, One Call Contracting submitted a Wrecking Permit application for 3009 Park Avenue. The house located at 3009 Park Avenue is a 2 ½-story gable-front duplex designed in a vernacular style with stucco clad walls and a composition shingle roof. On November 6, 2008 staff informed the Applicant that 3009 Park Avenue was a historic resource, based upon the home's association with Pauline Fjelde, a prominent artist, Norwegian immigrant, and single woman who was born in 1861 and died in 1923. On November 21, 2008, the owner, James Schoffman, submitted an application for the demolition of a historic resource. He intends to replace the building and garage with grass.

## **B. DESCRIPTION**

The Pauline Fjelde House, located at 3009 Park Avenue, was constructed as a duplex in 1907 for Ms. Fjelde by builder/contractor Olof Eneroth. It was designed by Boehme & Cordella who were also the architects of the Swan Turnblad House (American Swedish Institute), a historic landmark, and Gluek's Restaurant a contributing structure to the North Loop Warehouse Historic District.

This building is a 2 ½-story residence designed in a vernacular style common to this block and the city in general (see Attachment B8.1-B8.4 for images of elevations and Attachment D for oblique aerial). Composition shingles cap a medium-pitch, gable front roof possessing a full pediment and wide eave overhangs. Stucco clads the exterior walls. The window trim and the window openings appear to be unaltered with the exception of the front elevation second floor window that was converted into a door opening which leads to a tiny balcony. However, it appears that most window sashes have been replaced. Visual evidence indicates the original doors leading into the front and rear of the building have also been replaced. The first-floor entryway sits atop a full-width deck constructed atop a high masonry foundation. Three Dish Network television antennae surround a two-story bay projecting out of the south side of the building. A detached garage constructed in 1986 at the rear of the lot is the only other structure onsite.

## **C. PROPOSED CHANGES**

The Applicant is applying for approval to demolish this building. In order for the application to be deemed complete, a site plan was required from the Applicant. The Applicant submitted a site plan indicating that he will replace the building with grass (Attachment B5). The Applicant had indicated earlier that his eventual goal is to use this site to construct a parking lot for patrons of the commercial property immediately to the north at 701 Lake Street East.

701 East Lake Street currently has no off-street parking and was likely built without off-street parking in 1922. Since the building was built prior to the 1963 Zoning Code, which was the first year the zoning code established off-street parking, it possesses grandfathered parking rights. Therefore, if the property wants to maintain being a retail operation it is likely it will not be required to provide off-street parking.

The subject property, 3009 Park Avenue, is currently zoned R2B. The proposed grass yard is a permitted use in this zoning district, however, parking lots are not. To construct a parking lot on this site, the Applicant would have to apply for a Rezoning and Conditional Use Permit and be heard in front of the City Planning Commission. Neither application has been submitted to CPED-Planning.

In addition to the proposed grass yard, the Applicant has verbally indicated his willingness to commemorate the site as the location of Pauline Fjelde's residence by installing a flagpole with the state flag and a plaque explaining the significance of Ms. Fjelde. The Applicant has not indicated whether he would be willing to fly and maintain the original state flag design associated with Ms. Fjelde, but it should be noted that the original flag design was changed for reasons including cost, weight, and durability.

## **D. NECESSITY OF DEMOLITION**

The Minneapolis Code of Ordinances, Title 23, Heritage Preservation, Chapter 599 Heritage Preservation Regulations states that before approving the demolition of a property determined to be an historic resource, the commission shall make findings that the demolition is necessary to correct an unsafe or dangerous condition on the property, or that there are no reasonable alternatives to the demolition. In determining whether reasonable alternatives exist, the commission shall consider, but not be limited to the significance of the property, the integrity of the property and the economic value or usefulness of the existing structure, including its current use, costs of renovation and feasible alternative uses. The commission may delay a final decision for a reasonable period of time to allow parties interested in preserving the historic resource a reasonable opportunity to act to protect it.

### **D1. UNSAFE OR DANGEROUS CONDITION**

The Applicant has not demonstrated that the demolition of 3009 Park Avenue is necessary to correct an unsafe or dangerous condition. No structural analysis was submitted which provides details of the work that is required. The applicant states that the reason for demolition is that, "The structure has been abandoned and the foreclosed property has extensive water damage (see Attachment B3)."

Even though a structural analysis was not submitted, the Applicant did estimate that the rehabilitation cost to bring the property up to code would be between \$375,000 to \$450,000; however, a detailed scope of work was not included to show how these figures were calculated (see Attachment B3). In addition, the applicant provided a cost estimate by Urban Works Architectural Firm. Urban Works estimated the rehabilitation cost to be \$595,000. This estimate is based on general square foot rehabilitation costs (see

Attachment B8). The applicant also submitted images detailing the interior condition of the property that (see Attachment B10-B20).

## **D2. REASONABLE ALTERNATIVES TO DEMOLITION**

The applicant has not demonstrated that rehabilitation is unreasonable.

The applicant alleges that the best use for the building is to be demolished. He cites general cost estimates for rehabilitation but has not estimated expected rental income for the property, which was substantial enough to keep the multi-family residence in use for over one-hundred years. Furthermore, the subject property appears to surpass local and national thresholds for significance and integrity required for designation.

### **D2a. SIGNIFICANCE**

The subject property appears eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places and eligible for designation as City of Minneapolis landmark due to its association with the life of a person significant to the city and state's past: Pauline Fjelde (National Register criterion B and local criterion 2).

Pauline Gerhardine Fjelde was born in Aalesund, Norway, in 1861 and immigrated to the United States in 1887. Along with her brother Jacob and sister Thomane, she found great success as an artist in Minneapolis. In 1893, Ms. Fjelde was commissioned with her sister, Thomane, to embroider the first state flag (used from 1893 to 1957). Fjelde's handiwork won her numerous awards and enabled her to support herself through a commercial embroidering enterprise in downtown Minneapolis. Most notably, her work on the state flag won Fjelde and her sister a gold medal at the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893 in Chicago, held to mark the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Columbus' voyage to America (see Attachment C1 and C6-C7). After living in various rented spaces, this single woman paid \$7500 to construct a duplex at 3009 Park Avenue in 1907. While residing here she began her magnum opus: the lauded Hiawatha tapestry. Woven in the Gobelin method, the 9' x 8.5' tapestry took over a decade to complete (see Attachment C10). The home symbolizes the upward mobility of not only a single woman but also a Norwegian immigrant during a period of time when both demographic groups experienced difficulty establishing themselves.

The building's period of significance is 1907-1918, the time from when Ms. Fjelde had the building constructed until she moved to an existing house at 4715 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue S.

Of any building left in Minneapolis, this building maintains the strongest association with Pauline Fjelde. The Reeve, Syndicate and Wilmac buildings, where Fjelde's embroidery business was housed for periods of time, are no longer in existence. The Reeve Building's site at 4<sup>th</sup> Street and Nicollet Avenue has changed radically, most recently with the construction of the Central Library and previously with the construction of a parking garage, parking lot, and a 1965 office building. Fjelde also worked in the Syndicate Building at 6<sup>th</sup> Street and Nicollet Avenue, but that edifice was destroyed by a fire in 1911. The Wilmac Building at 719 Nicollet Avenue was demolished sometime between 1951 and 1972 when the IDS Center was constructed onsite. Ms. Fjelde was a boarder in various properties until she paid to have 3009 Park Avenue constructed in 1907.

While her final residence prior to her death, 4715 15<sup>th</sup> Ave, is still in existence, it is not as strongly associated with her. Although she completed the Hiawatha Tapestry in this home, the residence was constructed by a different owner and Fjelde lived in the 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue house only during the final four years of her life.

Currently only eleven Minneapolis landmarks provide tangible evidence of the influence of historically significant women: the Frank and Karen Brooberg Residence, the Little Sisters of the Poor Home for the Aged, the Maternity Hospital, the Lena O. Smith House, the Woman's Club of Minneapolis, the Handicraft Guild Building, the Franklin Branch Library, the Hosmer Branch Library, the Old East Lake Library, the Linden Hills Branch Library, and the Roosevelt Branch Library. The latter five are associated with librarian Gratia Countryman. While the Handicraft Guild Building is associated with many local artists, Pauline Fjelde was not affiliated with this institution.

The subject property is likely not eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places nor eligible for designation as a City of Minneapolis landmark per the following criterion:

*Local Criteria 1 and 3, National Register Criterion A:* At this time, the property does not appear to be associated with significant events or with periods that exemplify broad patterns of cultural, political, economic or social history nor is it associated with distinctive elements of city identity. This multi-family residential building's placement immediately south of Lake Street reflects the development pattern associated with this commercial corridor that began in the early 1880s. The smaller lot size, greater density, and provision for rental housing is an element of this portion of Park Avenue that markedly contrasts with the large lots and big, spread out single family residences just north of Lake Street. Nevertheless, this development pattern is not in and of itself historically significant since the pattern represents the basic way development occurs in most communities.

*Local Criteria 4 and 6, National Register Criterion C:* The property does not embody the distinctive characteristics of an architectural or engineering type or style, or method of construction, nor does the property exemplify works of master builders, engineers, designers, artists, craftsmen or architects. Designed in a vernacular style common throughout the city of Minneapolis and this block of Park Avenue, the structure lacks the architectural details and original features of numerous better remaining examples. Although the renowned architectural firm of Boehme and Cordella designed the home, the property's association with this architectural firm is neither the best example of this firm's work (the Swan Turnblad House is the best residential example) nor the most representative since this design mimics the design of numerous homes on this block and throughout the City of Minneapolis, many of which were built with no architect whatsoever.

*Local Criterion 5:* The property does not exemplify a landscape design or development pattern distinguished by innovation, rarity, uniqueness or quality of design or detail. The majority of the lot contains impermeable surfaces (a building, a structure, and paved areas). No other vegetation besides grass and weeds exists on the lot.

*Local Criterion 7, National Register Criterion D:* The property has not yielded, nor is it likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history. Not being located along known indigenous transportation routes or waterways, the site in question contains little potential to yield information important in prehistory. The relative simplicity and commonality of this building's design indicates that the residence contains little potential to yield information important in prehistory.

## **D2b. INTEGRITY**

The National Register traditionally recognizes a property's integrity through seven aspects or qualities: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association (see attachment F for description of each). The building possesses integrity, as evident in its retention of six of the seven aspects of integrity.

*Location:* The original Building Permit for this home notes that the building was constructed onsite, indicating the building maintains integrity of location.

*Design:* Visual evidence and Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps indicate that a full width front porch and small side porch have been removed (see attachments C19-C21). The full-width front porch has been replaced with an open deck, balustrade, and covered entryway that cover an area roughly similar to the original porch. The basic design of the exterior building remains intact, thus the building possesses integrity of design.

*Setting:* The property's integrity of setting remains intact. The home continues to stand on the border of a residential district and commercial corridor along Lake Street.

*Materials:* The building does not possess integrity of materials. Building Permit records indicate that the building's original cladding was replaced with stucco in 1946 (see attachment C22-C23). In 1995 the owner replaced the soffit, fascia, and gutters. Numerous windows and doors have been replaced. Reroofings were conducted in 1974 and 1981.

*Workmanship:* This building was built with few flourishes, but integrity of workmanship is still evident in the existing trim around a set of windows in the pediment of the front elevation.

*Feeling:* The building's integrity of feeling remains. The subject property continues to serve its original function as a residential property on the border of a residential district and commercial corridor. In addition, the subject property is a similar design, scale, size, and massing as the neighboring properties to the south. Even though the front elevation has been altered, the property's expression of a particular period of time is evident.

*Association:* The property's integrity of association remains. Even though Fjelde's association with this property exists only in written records and the lot changed owners over thirty times between 1926 and 1995 (see attachment C17 and C18), this property was the property that Ms. Fjelde lived in during her major achievements.

*Interior Integrity:* Visual evidence indicates extensive deterioration and interior alterations clearly not dating back to the building's period of significance. Indeed, few features inside the building appear old enough to date back to the construction of the building in 1907. The building's interior is not suitable for designation.

## **D2c. ECONOMIC VALUE OR USEFULNESS OF THE EXISTING STRUCTURE**

The City of Minneapolis recognizes that the subject property now consists of four units on this R2B lot. The Applicant submitted an estimate from Urbanworks Architecture LLC that indicates the cost to bring the building up to code is \$594,670 (Attachment B7-B8). The Applicant provides an expected

scope of work and cost estimates; however, the Applicant does not provide detailed figures in deriving these numbers.

Hennepin County Assessor records indicate the value of the building and garage as of January 2, 2007 is \$272,300 and the value of the land is \$116,700. The total value of the property is \$389,000. The Applicant has indicated that he purchased the property in 2008 for \$125,000. No Zoning Code permitted uses exist that authorize the utilization of the building in its current state.

#### **E. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

CPED notified property owners within 350 feet of the Demolition of Historic Resource application on December 31, 2008. As of January 6, 2009, there has been one letter submitted in opposition of the demolition (see Appendix G).

#### **F. APPLICABLE POLICIES**

The following are policies from The Minneapolis Plan: Minneapolis's Comprehensive Plan, adopted in 1999 that are applicable to this application:

Policy 1.7: "Minneapolis will recognize and celebrate its history." This policy is supported by the following implementation step "encourage new developments to retain historic structures, incorporating them into new development rather than demolishing them."

Policy 4.14: "Minneapolis will maintain the quality and unique character of the city's housing stock, thus maintaining the character of the vast majority of residential blocks in the city." This policy is supported by the following implementation step "encourage adaptive re-use, retrofit and renovation projects that make the city's housing stock competitive on the regional market."

#### **G. APPLICABLE ORDINANCES**

##### ***Chapter 599. Heritage Preservation Regulation***

#### **ARTICLE V. DESIGNATION**

**599.210. Designation criteria.** The following criteria shall be considered in determining whether a property is worthy of designation as a landmark or historic district because of its historical, cultural, architectural, archaeological or engineering significance:

- (1) The property is associated with significant events or with periods that exemplify broad patterns of cultural, political, economic or social history.
- (2) The property is associated with the lives of significant persons or groups.
- (3) The property contains or is associated with distinctive elements of city identity.
- (4) The property embodies the distinctive characteristics of an architectural or engineering type or style, or method of construction.

- (5) The property exemplifies a landscape design or development pattern distinguished by innovation, rarity, uniqueness or quality of design or detail.
- (6) The property exemplifies works of master builders, engineers, designers, artists, craftsmen or architects.
- (7) The property has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**599.230. Commission decision on nomination.** The commission shall review all complete nomination applications. If the commission determines that a nominated property appears to meet at least one of the criteria for designation contained in section 599.210, the commission may direct the planning director to commence a designation study of the property. (2001-Or-029, § 1, 3-2-01)

**599.240. Interim protection.** (a) Purpose. Interim protection is established to protect a nominated property from destruction or inappropriate alteration during the designation process.

(b) *Effective date.* Interim protection shall be in effect from the date of the commission's decision to commence a designation study of a nominated property until the city council makes a decision regarding the designation of the property, or for twelve (12) months, whichever comes first. Interim protection may be extended for such additional periods as the commission may deem appropriate and necessary to protect the designation process, not exceeding a total additional period of eighteen (18) months. The commission shall hold a public hearing on a proposed extension of interim protection as provided in section 599.170.

(c) *Scope of restrictions.* During the interim protection period, no alteration or minor alteration of a nominated property shall be allowed except where authorized by a certificate of appropriateness or a certificate of no change, as provided in this chapter. (2001-Or-029, § 1, 3-2-01)

## **ARTICLE VIII. HISTORIC RESOURCES**

**599.440. Purpose.** This article is established to protect historic resources from destruction by providing the planning director with authority to identify historic resources and to review and approve or deny all proposed demolitions of property.

**599.450. Identification of historic resources** The planning director shall identify properties that are believed to meet at least one of the criteria for designation contained in section 599.210, but that have not been designated. In determining whether a property is an historic resource, the planning director may refer to building permits and other property information regularly maintained by the director of inspections, property inventories prepared by or directed to be prepared by the planning director, observations of the property by the planning director or any other source of information reasonably believed to be relevant to such determination.

**599.460. Review of demolition permits.** The planning director shall review all applications for a demolition permit to determine whether the affected property is an historic resource. If the planning director determines that the property is not an historic resource, the demolition permit shall be approved. If the planning director determines that the property is an historic resource, the demolition permit shall not be issued without review and approval by the commission following a public hearing as provided in section 599.170.

**599.470. Application for demolition of historic resource.** An application for demolition of an historic resource shall be filed on a form approved by the planning director and shall be accompanied by all required supporting information, as specified in section 599.160.

**599.480. Commission decision.** (a) *In general.* If the commission determines that the property is not an historic resource, the commission shall approve the demolition permit. If the commission determines that the property is an historic resource, the commission shall deny the demolition permit and direct the planning director to commence a designation study of the property, as provided in section 599.230, or shall approve the demolition permit as provided in this section.

(b) *Destruction of historic resource.* Before approving the demolition of a property determined to be an historic resource, the commission shall make findings that the demolition is necessary to correct an unsafe or dangerous condition on the property, or that there are no reasonable alternatives to the demolition. In determining whether reasonable alternatives exist, the commission shall consider, but not be limited to, the significance of the property, the integrity of the property and the economic value or usefulness of the existing structure, including its current use, costs of renovation and feasible alternative uses. The commission may delay a final decision for a reasonable period of time to allow parties interested in preserving the historic resource a reasonable opportunity to act to protect it.

(c) *Mitigation plan.* The commission may require a mitigation plan as a condition of any approval for demolition of an historic resource. Such plan may include the documentation of the property by measured drawings, photographic recording, historical research or other means appropriate to the significance of the property. Such plan also may include the salvage and preservation of specified building materials, architectural details, ornaments, fixtures and similar items for use in restoration elsewhere.

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

#### **Building Site**

##### **Recommended:**

-Identifying, retaining, and preserving buildings and their features as well as features of the site that are important in defining its overall historic character. Site features can include driveways, walkways, lighting, fencing, signs, benches, fountains, wells, terraces, canal systems, plants and trees, berms, and drainage or irrigation ditches; and archeological features that are important in defining the history of the site.

-Retaining the historic relationship between buildings, landscape features, and open space.

-Providing continued protection of masonry, wood, and architectural metals which comprise building and site features through appropriate surface treatments such as cleaning, rust removal, limited paint removal, and re-application of protective coating systems; and continued protection and maintenance of landscape features, including plant material.

##### **Not Recommended:**

-Removing or radically changing buildings and their features or site features which are important in defining the overall historic character of the building site so that, as a result, the character is diminished.

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

-Removing a historic building in a complex, a building feature, or a site feature which is important in defining the historic character of the site.

## **H. FINDINGS**

1. The subject property is a historic resource.
2. The demolition is not necessary to correct an unsafe or dangerous condition on the property.
3. Rehabilitation is a reasonable alternative to a demolition where long-term use of a property is not specific.
4. The Pauline Fjelde Residence appears eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places due its association with the life of a person significant to the City and state's past (Pauline Fjelde) (National Register criterion B). The subject property maintains the strongest association with Pauline Fjelde of any known building left standing in Minneapolis.
5. The Pauline Fjelde Residence appears eligible for designation as City of Minneapolis Landmark due its association with the life of a person significant to the City and state's past (Pauline Fjelde) (local criterion 2). The subject property maintains the strongest association with Pauline Fjelde of any known building left standing in Minneapolis.
6. The building possesses integrity, as evident in its retention of six (location, design, setting, workmanship, feeling, and association) of the seven (location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association) aspects of integrity.
7. The building is currently vacant and has experienced substantial neglect that has led to its deteriorated state.
8. The Applicant submitted an estimate from Urbanworks Architecture LLC that indicates the cost to bring the building up to code is \$594,670 (Attachment B7-B8). The Applicant provides an expected scope of work and cost estimates; however, the Applicant does not provide detailed figures in deriving these numbers.
9. A parking lot is not a feasible use for this property as it is currently zoned. Parking lots are not permitted in the R2B zoning district. The Applicant has not applied for the Rezone and Conditional Use Permit that would be required to install a parking lot on this property. The commercial property to the north has no minimum off-street parking requirement and has survived with no off-street parking since its construction in 1922.
10. The commission may delay a final decision for a reasonable period of time to allow parties interested in preserving the historic resource a reasonable opportunity to act to protect it.

## **I. STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

CPED recommends that the Heritage Preservation Commission **adopt** staff findings and: deny the demolition application of the property at 3009 Park Avenue; establish interim protection; and direct the Planning Director to prepare or cause to be prepared a designation study.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

- A. Vicinity map
- B. Application
- C. Staff Research
- D. Aerial
- E. Resident Research
- F. National Register Bulletin: Integrity
- G. Public Comments
- H. Addendum: Additional Public Comments
- I. Addendum: Applicant Additional Information

## **Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission**

**January 13, 2009, Room 317 City Hall**

**Staff: Aaron Hanauer/John Smoley**

**Planning Supervisor: Jack Byers**

**Date of Appeal: February 12, 2009**

### **ITEM SUMMARY**

**Address:** 3009 Park Avenue South, Pauline Fjelde House – Historic Resource, Ward 8

**Description:** Application for demolition of an historic resource.

**Action:** Heritage Preservation Commission **adopted** staff findings and **denied** the demolition application of the property at 3009 Park Avenue; **established** interim protection; and **directed** the Planning Director to prepare or cause to be prepared a designation study.

### **TRANSCRIPTION**

**Chair Larsen:** We will move to our presentation items for the evening. We have two items, then. Our first item is 3009 Park Avenue South, Pauline Fjelde House, historic resource, ward 8, staff Aaron Hanauer.

**Staff Hanauer:** Good afternoon, Commissioners. For the Pauline Fjelde residence, 3009 Park Avenue South, it's a demolition of an historic resource application. John Smoley and I will be presenting this evening. John Smoley did a lot of the research and writing of the staff report, so he'll be providing the background, significance, and then I'll come back and do the summary of the demolition analysis. After that, we'll be happy to answer any questions, so I'll turn it over to John.

**Staff Smoley:** Good evening, Mr. Chair, members of the Commission, my name is John Smoley. As Aaron mentioned, I'll be briefing you on the section of the staff report that really establishes the eligibility of this property, 3009 Park Avenue South, as a historic resource.

On November 21, 2008, the property owner, James Schoffman, submitted an application for the demolition of an historic resource. He intends to replace 3009 Park Ave S, both the home and the garage, with grass. The Pauline Fjelde residence, located at 3009 Park Avenue, was constructed as a duplex in 1907. This building is a 2 ½ story residence designed in a vernacular style common to this block and the city in general. A detached garage constructed in 1986 at the rear of this lot is the only other structure on site. The subject property appears eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places and eligible for designation as a City of Minneapolis landmark due to its association with the life of a person significant to the city and state's past, Pauline Fjelde. Pauline Gerhardine Fjelde was born in Norway in 1861 and immigrated to the United States in 1887. Along with her brother Jacob and sister Thomane, she found great success as an artist in Minneapolis including embroidering the first state flag. Her handiwork won her numerous awards and enabled her to support herself through a commercial embroidery enterprise in downtown Minneapolis. After living in various rented spaces, this single woman paid \$7,500 to construct a duplex at 3009 Park Avenue in 1907. While residing here she began her magnum opus, the lauded Hiawatha tapestry which took over a decade to complete. 3009 Park Avenue symbolizes the upward mobility of not only a single woman but also a Norwegian immigrant during a period of time when both groups experienced difficulty establishing themselves. Of any building left in Minneapolis, this building maintains the strongest association with Pauline Fjelde - the Reeve, Syndicate, and Wilmac buildings (where Fjelde's embroidery business was housed) have all been demolished. Ms. Fjelde was a boarder in various properties until she paid to have 3009 Park Avenue constructed in 1907. While her final residence prior to her death, 4715 15<sup>th</sup> Ave, is still in existence, it is not as strongly associated with her. Although she completed the Hiawatha Tapestry in this home, the residence

was constructed by a different owner and Fjelde lived in the 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue house only during the final four years of her life. Currently only eleven Minneapolis landmarks provide tangible evidence of the influence of historically significant women, five are associated with librarian Gratia Countryman.

In terms of integrity, the National Register traditionally recognizes a property's integrity through seven aspects: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. This building possesses integrity, as evident in its retention of six of the seven aspects. Only in terms of materials is this building lacking due to numerous interior and exterior changes. For that reason, the building's interior is not suitable for designation.

I'll now be followed by my colleague, Aaron Hanauer, who will discuss the proposed demolition of this property.

**Staff Hanauer:** I apologize that this isn't going to show up, but I'll just point to the subject property. The applicant also, Mr. Schoffman, as John alluded to, would like to return this to a pre-built state. There's been e-mails also for the potential of this becoming surface parking lot for the property that he owns to the north, 701 East Lake Street. Now, in reviewing, as the ordinance states, the demolition of an historic resource, there's two possibilities of this being granted. One, that the demolition is necessary to correct an unsafe or dangerous condition, or two that no reasonable alternatives exist. For the unsafe or dangerous condition threshold, staff did not see that the applicant met these requirements. The cost estimates as they are shown in the report, \$375,000 to \$596,000 were the estimates for the rehabilitation. The applicant in the addendum packet submitted more details on how those numbers came about. However, in that information and in the original application that the applicant submitted, no structural analysis was shown that this place was deficient, so with that staff did not see them meeting that threshold of an unsafe or dangerous condition. For the second possibility, no reasonable alternatives to demolition, once again staff did not see that they met those requirements and what the ordinance states. The analysis for no reasonable alternatives includes the significance, integrity, and economic value or usefulness. John went over the significance and the integrity, as for the economic value and usefulness the specific dollar amount of how much this property is worth is likely hard to be agreed upon. However, the applicant showed that they purchased the property for \$125,000 in 2008. Hennepin County shows its value at \$389,000 both land and property and went over the cost estimates that the applicant submitted. The applicant also, however, did not submit information on how they could not make this work such as a pro forma that would just show staff how this was not a possibility of maintaining the structure. I just want to point out with the discussion with the parking lot, if that does come up, there are a number of issues with having a surface parking lot at the subject property. It's zoned R2B, it would need a number of land use requirements, and if questions come up I'll be happy to answer that. But I also want to make clear that staff does not see that this property as 701 East Lake Street requires off-street parking since there are grandfathered parking spaces.

To summarize, staff felt that the subject property met the designation criteria and did not see that the applicant, Mr. Schoffman, met the threshold for proving that this was an unsafe condition or that no reasonable alternatives exist. Therefore, staff is recommending that HPC adopt staff findings, deny the demolition application, establish interim protection, and direct the planning director to prepare or cause to be prepared a designation study. In your addendum packet you also saw a number of public comments received. With that, this concludes our presentation. I'll be happy to answer questions that you might have.

**Chair Larsen:** Alright, thank you, Mr. Hanauer. Any questions of staff at this time? Commissioner Kelley.

**Commissioner Kelley:** Thanks for the report, Mr. Hanauer. I was curious as to how this property was flagged. There's been no designation study or anything like that yet, right?

**Staff Hanauer:** That is correct, Chair Larsen and Commissioner Kelley. As far as the way that it was flagged, for any property that comes into the city for demolition, a wrecking permit is submitted. That is when, by ordinance, staff does a review of historic significance and found out the information that we brought forward today.

**Chair Larsen:** Please let the record show that Commissioner Harrison has arrived. Commissioner Anderson.

**Commissioner Anderson:** Mr. Hanauer, for a little more information from Mr. Kelley's question, had there been any study of this property before the attention came because of the wrecking permit?

**Staff Hanauer:** If my colleague, John Smoley, has any additional comments to add, please come up, but in 2001 a CLG survey was conducted and at that point this was in that survey area. However, as we have pointed out, with this 2001 survey there was, it was our first survey done and improvements have been made since that time.

**Commissioner Anderson:** So there had been a little attention, though minor, given to this property before the wrecking permit was submitted?

**Staff Hanauer:** In that 2001 survey, it did not have the amount of information about Pauline Fjelde ...

**Staff Smoley:** But if I could add, Mr. Chair and members of the Commission, it did state in this survey, this reconnaissance level survey, which is a very broad based survey designed to take a look at large numbers of properties in general and identify areas of future study. It did identify this property as an area that should be studied in the future.

**Chair Larsen:** Ok, any additional questions of staff before we open up the public hearing? Doesn't look like it, great. We will open up the public hearing. If the applicant wishes to speak, I'd love to hear from them if they wish. Otherwise, how many people are here to speak on behalf or in opposition to this demolition, raise your hands. Ok, alright, how many of you submitted e-mails? Ok, well we've got the e-mails so I think we're kind of covered there. Let's hear from the applicant or the representative and then we can hear from others that have not given testimony in either way and then we'll go from there. Please step forward.

**Kristin Schoffman:** Thank you, Chair and Commissioners, for allowing us the opportunity to speak tonight. I am Kristin Schoffman and this is my husband James Schoffman. We are the current owners of the property on 3009 Park Avenue and 7017 East Lake Street. My husband and I are small business owners and have owned the commercial property on Lake Street for ten years. We cleaned up and renovated the property formerly known, or previously owned, by Farris Alexander, who is with U S video. We take pride in owning our property and managing this block on Lake Street. We are hands on landlords and are very concerned about the type of tenant mix that comes into our building. We have a great relationship with our tenants and our tenants have included many church groups and groups that have reached out into the community. As neighbors, we were concerned about the vacant lot and the vacant status of 3009 Park. There had been multiple break-ins and vagrants that had been hanging around. Wanting to improve the park and Lake corridor, we purchased the property at 3009 Park this past August. We did our due diligence, checked title work, historical register, checked to see if it had been nominated, and there was no mention of any potential connection to a historic figure. So you can imagine our surprise to learn of Pauline Fjelde. Since then we have learned a lot about her. We feel the building at 3009 Park Avenue does not meet the threshold for designation as a historical resource and that the economic viability of making the structure habitable is past. We are also concerned of the safety of the vacant house in the neighborhood. I would respectfully request your careful consideration and support in approving the demolition application. I will now introduce architect Tod Elkins of Urban Works Architecture to speak on some of the facts of the application.

**Tod Elkins:** Thank you, I'm Tod Elkins, partner in Urban Works Architecture. I live at 418 5<sup>th</sup> Street SE which is a residence in a designated historic district in Minneapolis, so I'm quite familiar with the good work you do, Chair and Commissioners. There are two points I'd like to make about this property and Pauline Fjelde. Her life is important with what she's done in both Minneapolis and Minnesota with both the flag and the Hiawatha tapestry. But I want to be clear, the flag was not done when this building was built nor does it have any association with her time living at this residence. Two, the Hiawatha tapestry, which took over a decade to complete, which was completed shortly after her death, part of it was done while she resided here, however there is no direct connection that any effort on the tapestry was done at 3009 Park Avenue. Conversely her other house, 4715 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue South, which is still around, still in good shape, it was a house that she had built and had resided in, her last 4-5 years of life, which also stayed in her family until 1979, was where the tapestry is actually shown to be hung in the residence, so there is a direct connection. Just to show you, if you can see, it is the large tapestry that is located on the far wall and is located in the living room and resided there. Currently the tapestry is on display in a museum at Luther College. If I may, I'd like to quote the National Register. We would agree that the reason that 3009 Park Avenue is even being considered is because of Pauline Fjelde. But that is not enough to designate this as historic. It needs to be associated

with the important historical context and retaining the historical integrity of those features necessary to convey its significance. Unfortunately the house at 3009 and unfortunately here I'm in disagreement with the staff report, does not comply with 6 of the 7 areas to keep it consistently with this integrity, and I'd like to go through those one by one.

As you see this is the current condition of the house. I have a couple images of the house that show it when it was built. I'm sorry it's a little bit rough, but as you can see it doesn't really look very similar to what it once did. There was a front porch with a second floor deck on it, quite articulated as well as a very articulated side porch. I have a detail of that. What I'd like to point out that this shows is that out of the seven items of integrity mentioned in the report that they say this contains six, I would argue that this contains one, just its location. The duplex was owned by Pauline for nine years. She resided in it for 5 of those 9 years, the other 4 years spent in Europe visiting family and learning about the arts & crafts. In regards to 9, the exterior walls of this building are now plaster, sort of the stucco,, I'm sorry, stucco which is sort of the vinyl siding of the '40s. Originally it was wood clabbered. As you can see then entry door to the sides of that door now were leaded glass windows. Now there is nothing there. In the staff report it noted that the opening on the second floor where there's a door now for a small porch, was not original when in fact actually it was original because the upper level of this was a deck, so I would submit to you that the study done has not been very complete or wholly accurate. In regards to materials, original windows are not there, the trim on the siding is a hodge podge added after the fact, the window openings are not the same size, there are pieces of plywood that have been used as trim. Obviously along with materials the workmanship is not remaining of this old historic property and in regards to the last two, feeling, which is described by the National Register as the quality that a historic property has in evoking the aesthetic or historic sense of the past time period. I would think that we could all agree that the current property in its current boarded state does not reflect the time of when Pauline Fjelde lived here. Finally we come to the association with the person for which the property is being considered. The guidelines note that a direct link between the property and the person should be maintained. She resided here five years, she owned it for 9 years. Since she owned it, there have been over 30 owners. Basically owning it less than 3 years in time. Its been abandoned, since 2006 no one has lived in there. It's currently a legal four-plex but it had been operating as an illegal five-plex. It is challenging condition, so the point is that we agree that Pauline is a wonderful person. She did some great things, however we suggest that the building at 4715 15<sup>th</sup> Ave S is a better more direct representation, if you feel that a study should be done to remember the history of Pauline Fjelde with a historic resource as a building versus this property. In regards to issues of economic viability currently, we believe we had presented enough information given the large amount of cost in renovating this, given what the rents would be. I'd like to turn this over to Daniel Kennedy who will speak more to the economic viability of the property. I'd be happy to answer any questions. Thank you.

**Daniel Kennedy:** Good afternoon, Mr. Chair and Commissioners, I'm Daniel Kennedy, 4103 East Lake Street. I'm going to talk about the three options for this house, which is basically leave it standing, move it, or tear it down. As a starting point, the staff report talks about the economic value and says, and I quote, no zoning code permitted uses exists that authorize the utilization of the building in its current state. So that's where we are right now. Nobody can use the building as it is. Something has to be done. If the house remains standing, it will continue to be the nuisance that it was before the Schoffmans bought it, and when I say nuisance I mean that the city has flagged it as a nuisance and fined the former owner \$6,000 for having a vacant property that was dangerous. It has no running water, it has no heat, it has no plumbing. People continue to try, sometimes successfully, to break in. At least one person has started a fire in the property to stay warm, so this is a dangerous property, as left, and if there's a study it will continue to be in that state during the time of the study. The staff report says that rehabilitation is a reasonable alternative, but it really is too expensive. The initial estimates of \$375,000 to \$425,000 turned out on further analysis to be low. We have two estimates, one from a contractor and one from an architect, both of which said will be just shy of \$600,000 to rehabilitate this property. Why is it so much for a property that's only valued at \$389,000? Well there are three reasons. First there was a remodeling already that took place. A remodeling that was not done particularly well. There is a kitchen in the basement that should not be there that will have to be removed. There is plumbing that goes through stairs, that would have to be changed, And obviously walls that were changed would have to be changed. We have too many kitchens, too many ... it's not configured for a duplex any more. So that's one reason. The second reason is before the Schoffmans bought it, it was on the market for 412 days, during which time it was vacant. It was left over winter, with the utilities on. This meant that the pipes burst. Bursting of the pipes not only destroyed the plumbing system and the water system. It also led to severe water damage and now mold

issues, so that would have to be addressed in any remediation. The third reason is that the reconstruction would have to meet the current code for the property. This is an old house and there's much that would be done that would have to be done in order to bring this house up to current standards. It would basically touch every area of the house. Now that \$600,000 required for that work does not bring back the turned spindles on the porches, it doesn't bring back the porches at all. It doesn't bring back the stonework, it doesn't bring back the clabbered siding, it just deals with the inside of the house. The outside as already acknowledged in the staff report is not the same as it was. And the inside would have no trace of Pauline Fjelde at all. So we would have a completely different house. Now the question in front of the commission is, is this a reasonable alternative? If it costs \$600,000 to remodel a house that has been purchased for \$130,000 – can it be sold for \$730,000? Not in this market and not in that location. Both units are two bedrooms, one bath. It's just not that valuable. But then you look at the other side of the question, could you get enough in rent, because this is a rental property and has been used as a rental property through the 30 some owners that have had it in the last 90 years. Well, the Minneapolis Public Housing Authority issues reports and for the end of 2008, these are the two-bedroom rates here, you find that the fair market value for a 2-bedroom is \$873. Minneapolis Public Housing Authority is willing to pay \$960. If we look historically at rental rates for 2-bedroom, one bath units in the city of Minneapolis we see that it's been relatively consistent at about \$900-\$1,000 from 2001-2008. Now I added one figure to this that wasn't in the original data. That last point where it has a dramatic up tick is where it would have to go in order to pay for the cost of remodeling and purchase, \$730,000. If you take that and amortize it over 30 years for a 30 year loan at a very small percentage of 6%, which is very hard to get for an investment property, that's how much you would have to get for each unit in order to pay just for the purchase and renovation. That doesn't cover taxes, doesn't cover maintenance, doesn't cover utilities, that's just for – you can't get that, it is many times as much as you can get for this property. So there's no way to pay for the renovation that is being suggested.

The second alternative is very quick. Mr. Schoffman and Mrs. Schoffman have offered this property for sale for \$1 and offered to give \$10,000 to anybody who will move it. There are no takers because the cost of renovation is so high.

The third alternative is to demolish the property. The immediate plan is to put grass here, but it's in the report and the Schoffmans have made no secret of the fact that they would like in the very near future to put a parking lot here. The staff report is incorrect in this regard, in terms of whether this property can be used as a parking lot. There are currently three lots that are concerned here. The top lot, lot 28, and half of lot 27 are the current building at 701 East Lake Street. The other half of lot 27 is a 20-ft alley. So by razing the building we have 60 feet to work with – 40 ft on the 3009 lot and 20 feet on the alley. The 20 feet on the alley is zoned commercial, the other is R2B. So let's assume no rezoning right now. If you have the parking lot designed somewhat like this, behind the building, half of that parking would be on commercially zoned lot, C2. Half of that parking would be on R2B lot. An R2B lot does not mean it can only be used for residential. An R2B lot means it can be used for things that are permitted in R2B. In R2B you can have some commercial uses such as a daycare or a church, and a church has been attended at this property before, at 701, so it's not unfeasible that this property could be used for parking without rezoning. However, I will tell you that we do have enough signatures from neighbors within the 100-ft radius to submit this for rezoning to C2 for the specific use as a parking lot. So the neighbors have expressed their support in that way for rezoning. This would be an amenity to this neighborhood, a huge amenity to Lake Street. There is no off-street parking. It's not enough to have grandfather rights, those are phantom spaces, you need a spot where someone can park if you have commercial real estate on Lake Street, if you have a retail store. This building at 701 is partially vacant, it has been for years and the properties around it are partially vacant. One of the reasons is because people are going to places where they can actually park. We need to change that along Lake Street, the whole corridor, and this is one way we can do that. The Schoffmans have said that they would be willing to put up a plaque and a flag pole at the site to commemorate the achievements of Pauline Fjelde. That would be an appropriate way to honor somebody, instead of having a house that wasn't the same house that she built and isn't in very good condition sitting there. This would be a way to educate people and put the lot to good use. The city has flagged this property in 2001 but took no action. We think that is still best to take no action in terms of preserving this house as a monument. Not just because it's just the wrong way to honor her but because if there is a house to honor her it's the one that is in good condition and that she actually finished what I think was called her magnum opus, where she finished that work. It was also owned not only by her but by her sister, Thomane Fjelde, who is the other person who embroidered the state flag. So it's been owned by two people of statewide significance.

And finally the cost. The cost makes it cost prohibitive to actually keep this building around. So we would respectfully ask for you to grant the demolition permit so that we can put this property to a better use. Thank you very much.

**Chair Larsen:** Thank you. I do have a question for you. You've talked about two bedroom one bath units, and indicated this building I think currently has five units, not that that's legal at the moment but it sounds as though there must be more than four bedrooms in the entire house at the moment. Correct?

**Daniel Kennedy:** Well the basement units are not legal units, not legal bedrooms.

**Chair Larsen:** Could they be converted to be such?

**Daniel Kennedy:** I don't know about one side, on the south side, but I know on the north side they could not. I don't know on what side of the house they are ... because the north side actually is only ...

**Chair Larsen:** Adjacent to the alley, correct?

**Daniel Kennedy:** ... from the property line, so you wouldn't have room for a ...

**Chair Larsen:** Is there a third floor space?

**Daniel Kennedy:** There is a third floor space.

**Chair Larsen:** And that currently has some bedrooms there?

**Daniel Kennedy:** I think all the bedrooms are on the first and second floors.

**Chair Larsen:** I guess what I'm getting at, is there an opportunity to make multi level, two multi-level units?

**Daniel Kennedy:** I don't know, I doubt that you could have the first floor and the basement. The second floor and the attic might be a possibility.

**Chair Larsen:** Ok, that could create some additional bedrooms and bring in some additional rent.

**Daniel Kennedy:** If you could do that, yes, but you would still be ... I could put up this chart again to show the three bedroom ... they're still too low.

**Chair Larsen:** No that's not necessary. Alright, any questions for the applicant at this time? Thank you very much. Is there anybody that wishes to speak for or against this application, please step forward. If you have submitted an e-mail, we do request that you remain seated at this time until we get through some of the others, thank you.

**Joyce Wisdom:** Mr. Chair, Commissioners, Joyce Wisdom, representing the Lake Street Council. We have a business association for the length of Lake Street from Lake Calhoun to the Mississippi. Mr. Kennedy talked about the parking issues on Lake Street, we do have those issues the length of Lake Street. Probably our two biggest reasons where we have difficulty filling our storefronts is a perception of high crime and a lack of parking. We deal with it in all areas in all 13 neighborhoods that we work with. We have known about Mr. Schoffman's intent to purchase this building before he purchased it with the intent of doing the demolition and creating parking for a building, 1920s building, that is really one of our somewhat finer buildings on Lake Street. It's a nice brick storefront, but he's had a very difficult time keeping it full. A big part of that is a lack of parking. I believe he has the realtor here tonight to address it as well, but we wanted to let you know and there are other board members here from our organization, that we support the demolition and the creation of parking as another one of those small solutions to a big problem. Thank you.

**Chair Larsen:** Alright, thank you. Is there anybody else that wishes to speak either for or against this application, please step forward.

**Ted Muller:** Commissioner Larsen and the rest of the board, my name is Ted Muller, I am a property owner on Lake Street, formerly executive director of the Lake Street Council before Joyce, also co-chair with Julie Ingebretsen of the Bloom City Lakes Business Association. My company, MMS Properties, has been developing commercial property in and around Lake Street for 12 years. We have fought the parking issue from day one with the city. The city has come back and said the only way that we can provide additional parking for the business people is to become creative and do it on our own. There's no city money or city budget to provide public parking anywhere on the East Lake corridor, so we have to rely on guys like Jim Schoffman to come in and figure out ways to create the additional parking to make these businesses successful. We can't allow the business people to suffer with lack of parking. When we renovated Lake Street, which I think everybody is familiar with, we put bump outs to provide a more beautiful setting for Lake Street. That further reduced the amount of public parking available on the street. So we need to support people like Jim when he comes in with a well constructed plan to build private parking for the area. I'd be happy to answer any questions.

**Chair Larsen:** Thank you.

**Julie Ingebretsen:** Hi, good evening, I'm Julie Ingebretsen. I have a store on 16<sup>th</sup> and East Lake, just a few blocks from this property. I'm on the Lake Street council also and I guess a couple things I'd like to talk about. One is Pauline, being a Norwegian immigrant I'm very interested in her and it's been really fun getting to know about her. She is important, she's really important to the history of this community, and I'm glad to see that she's getting some attention. I haven't been able to figure out why saving this house is going to do that, it just doesn't make any sense to me. It's not going to be a memorial to her, it's not going to help people know about her. So anyway, that part of this whole thing doesn't jive in my brain. Another thing I would like to mention is just the whole issue of the relationship between the neighborhood and the commercial properties on Lake Street and how important it is for us to be in sync with each other and support each other and how it's so important to the health of the neighborhoods for the commercial properties to be successful. This is really important, having an empty building on the corner of Park and Lake is bad for the neighborhood. It looks bad, it behaves badly, it doesn't work and I think it would be a much better use of that property at 3009 to have good parking, good pretty parking, and have rear entrances to the building that look nice and are lit, would be much safer place. And I guess I'll just close by saying I would commit my business to doing something to help preserve the memory of Pauline Fjelde. I think that's really an important thing to do and it fits right in to our mission so I think that would be a great thing to promise. Thanks.

**Chair Larsen:** Thanks. I'd like to point out that we just want to make sure that we're focusing comments specifically related to the history of the structure, so that when we look at potential future use, that really doesn't come into our purview. We're really looking at how this property is significant for its original builder and owner and not so much what would be used if it wasn't there. So I think that's the important thing to keep in mind.

**Elizabeth Gales:** Good evening, Chair Larsen and Commissioners, my name is Elizabeth Gales and I reside at 5709 Lyndale Avenue South. I'm here tonight as a board member from Preserve Minneapolis, a non-profit group whose mission it is to promote preservation throughout the entire city of Minneapolis. This house and issue came to our attention through several residents in the central neighborhood where the house is located. We just have a brief statement tonight. We are concerned that the demolition of the house at 3009 Park Avenue for a surface parking lot would have an adverse affect on the immediate neighborhood's historic character. The residents of the central neighborhood have identified preservation of the urban residential character of their neighborhood as important to them. They have formally included it in their neighborhood strategic plan. Demolition of 3009 Park Avenue also has the potential to negatively impact adjacent properties. Once a precedent is set for demolishing a building, it is often easier for the argument to be made to demolish neighboring buildings. As we've heard tonight, this property may be eligible for designation as a Minneapolis historic landmark. Initial research conducted by many concerned citizens links the house to Pauline Fjelde, a talented Norwegian American artisan and a single successful business woman who was able to finance the construction of this house in 1907, it's quite remarkable. The number of local historic landmarks in this city associated with women is deplorably small, as we heard tonight. Recognition of a property that may yield historic information for immigrant and women's history would be an important contribution to

Minneapolis' overall history. Preserve Minneapolis encourages the Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission to request a full designation study of this house and to give it a fair hearing.

**Chair Larsen:** Thank you, is there anybody else?

**Brian Finstad:** Hello, my name is Brian Finstad, I'm a resident of central neighborhood and I want to thank the commissioners for letting me speak. I just wanted to say off the bat for one, Mr. Schoffman is not a small business owner, he's a very large scale real estate investor and speculator and I wanted to speak about the speculative nature of the purchase in consideration of the cost figures that he's talking about. Mr. Schoffman did something that was very speculative in nature. He bought the house for way beyond what he should have bought it for and the reason he did it is because he didn't figure in any rehab costs because he figured he didn't have to figure in any rehab costs because his plan was to turn it into a parking lot. Honestly, being somebody who lives in one of the blocks immediately adjacent to Lake Street I take offense to that. We've had a lot of commercial encroachment into our blocks. That commercial encroachment has blighted many of our blocks, and we've had some of our residential fabric removed for surface parking for business projects that still are sitting there vacant with the surface parking. So as an absorption issue I just don't buy that. I just think that he was doing something that was speculative, it was not a guarantee. He needs to make application for a wrecking permit, part of that process is the potential that there is something historic and would need this review. Another part, obviously, is that it needs to be rezoned and I would hate to see us lose an important part of our history to get somebody off the hook that's a major real estate speculator and investor that did something that wasn't a guarantee. Speculation is not something that you can hang your hat on and I wouldn't want to see that be the basis for us losing a valuable piece of our history.

**Chair Larsen:** Thank you, is there anybody else who wishes to speak either for or against this application, please step forward.

*(remaining testimony and actual roll call vote missing due to mechanical malfunction of the recording equipment)*

**Commissioner Anderson** made a **motion** to **adopt** staff findings and **deny** demolition, **second** by **Commissioner Lemmon**.

Motion carried unanimously.