City of Duluth
Planning Division

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Memorandum

Date: November 10, 2015

To: Heritage Preservation Commission

From: Jenn Reed Moses, Planner II

RE: PL 15-175 – Historic Resource Designation of St. Peter's Church

Planning Commission role: This is on your agenda because the Heritage Preservation Commission is required to review, hold a public hearing, and make a recommendation on any property or district proposed for designation as Duluth Historic Landmark.

Designation process: The application was received November 6, 2015. The public hearing will be held at the November 24, 2015 HPC meeting. Planning Commission will review it at its December 8, 2015 meeting, and it will be on the December 22 HPC agenda for formal recommendation to City Council. City Council will make the final decision on the designation.

Criteria for historic designation: See attached for criteria listed in the UDC (Section 50-37.8). The nomination information compiled by the applicant is attached and addresses these criteria.

Note: Applicant is not including the entire parcel in the historic designation, but is only including the portion of the parcel abutting W 3rd Street (shown highlighted in orange on the attached map).

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N 8th Ave W
W 2nd St
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ST PETERS CHURCH
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UNKNOWN
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KIVELA RICHARD D
010-1240-00310
DEVLIEGER JOEY & STEPHANIE
010-1240-00380
LAMALIHO
010-1240-00340
NELSON GREGGA
010-1240-00330
DEVLIEGER JOEY & STEPHANIE
010-1240-00180
THIES & TALLE MANAGEMENT INC
010-1240-00160
THIES & TALLE MANAGEMENT INC
010-1240-00285
CHIDA SCOTT C
010-1240-00282
010-1240-00287
010-1240-00265
010-1305-00030
GRAMS CAROL ENBERG
010-1305-00020
UNKNOWN
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UNKNOWN
010-1360-00030
IRVING WILLIAM H & PATRICIA
010-1360-00025
PERCY WILLIAM G & SHEGAN J
010-1270-01620
ALLYAR REBECCA J
010-1270-01610
SWOR JOSHUA F
010-1270-01600
YOUNG KEVIN
010-1270-01590
TOMECK PAULE
010-1270-01550
FERRAIN THOMAS & COLLEEN
010-1270-01500
CARINO GARY S
010-1270-01790
GUNDERSON NORINE I
010-1270-01780
BUSKER ROBERT W & YVONNE M
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010-1270-01800
LAURIN VERNON E JR
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BURRESS DAVID M
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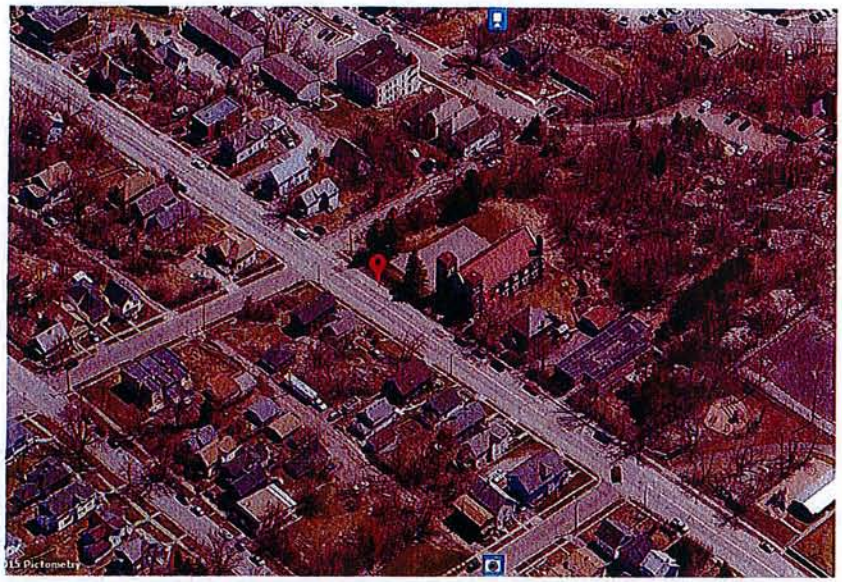
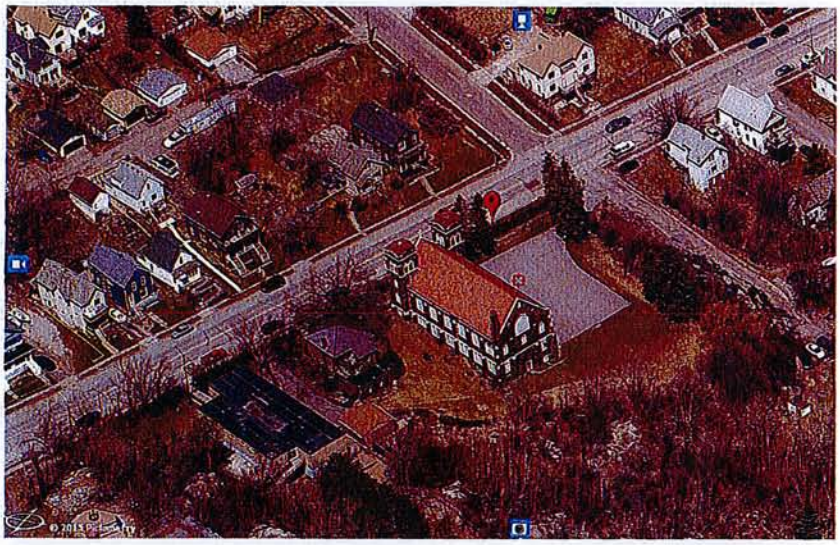
St. Peter's Church – 810 W 3rd Street

Site Photos





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4. Registration of historic sites.
   The city clerk shall record or file with the county recorder the legal description of all properties affected by the council action. The city clerk shall also distribute an official list of all locally designated historic preservation landmarks and districts to the land use supervisor and the state historic preservation officer;

C. Criteria.

Historic preservation landmarks and districts shall only be designated when the property or properties are found to meet one of the following criteria:

1. It has character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the city, state, or the United States;
2. Its location was a site of a significant historical event;
3. It is identified with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the culture or development of the city, state, or the United States;
4. It embodies a distinguishing characteristic of an architectural type;
5. It is identified as the work of an architect or master builder whose individual work has influenced the development of the city or state;
6. It embodies elements of architectural design, detail, materials or craftsmanship that represents significant architectural innovation;
7. Its unique location or singular physical characteristics represents an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood, community or city. (Ord. No. 10041, 8-16-2010, § 11; Ord. No. 10044, 8-16-2010, § 6; Ord. No. 10225, 5-28-2013, § 10; Ord. No. 10261, 12-9-2013, § 1.)

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CITY OF DULUTH
HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION
LANDMARK DESIGNATION

I. Name of Property
   A. Historic: St. Peter's Italian Church
   B. Common: St Peter's Church

II. Location
   A. Address: 810 West Third Street
   B. Legal Description: Outlot 3, AUDITOR'S THIRD DIVISION OUTLOTS, St. Louis County, Minnesota

III. Classification
   A. Type of Property: Church
   B. Current Use: Vacant
   C. Current Zoning: R- 2 Urban Residential

IV. A. Current Owner: Jeffrey T. Larson (signed purchase agreement, close on
V. 11/23/2016)
   B. Address: 11947 E. State Rd. 13
   Maple, WI. 54854

VI. Property Status
   A. Occupied/Vacant: Vacant
   B. Assessed Value: Land $53,800
   Bldg $56,400
   Total $110,200
   C. Condition: Fair

VII. Historical Background
   A. Year Built: 1925-1927
   B. Architect: Peter Summers
   C. Original Site: yes
   D. Altered/Unaltered: Partially altered
   E. Architectural Style: Romanesque/Gothic Revival

VIII. Description of Property
St. Peter's Church is located on the southeast corner of Eighth Avenue West and Third Street in a residential neighborhood. The lot is 160 feet wide by 269 feet in depth, and the building measures 56 feet wide and 105 feet deep. The two story stone church is rectangular with two - three story square towers on the front façade corners and has a steeply pitched gable roof. It features concrete trim.

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The square cut stones are laid in irregular courses and in shades of black, brown and tan, commonly called "Duluth bluestone". The 18 inch thick stones give the massive feel of the Romanesque Revival style, but the Gothic pointed windows, some with panel tracery, and stone buttresses give a Gothic Revival look. The buttresses are on the corners of the towers and between windows on the rear, east and west sides. Diagonal buttresses are located on the rear corners. Buttresses are decorated with concrete water tables, and a concrete string course runs above the first floor side windows and across the rear of the building.

All windows have painted concrete surrounds but at present all church windows are boarded up. Tower windows on the third story are louvered but originally were open. The 1885 bell from St Jean Baptiste Church hangs in the east tower belfry. The double front entrance doors are covered with a steel door, a small door leads into the basement from the rear, and an original door is located on the first story of the east tower. All door surrounds are concrete.

The church has been modified with a wood ramp and iron railings across the west front and with a five by ten foot cinder block addition which covers an original door on the east side.

IX. Present Condition

Stone walls appear stable. The concrete trim is cracking in some places. Windows are boarded up and the roof reportedly is leaking.

X. Statement of Significance

St. Peter's Church represents the cultural heritage of the Italian immigrants who settled in Duluth beginning in the 1880s in an area between 10th and 14th Avenue West and from Michigan to Fourth Streets, known as "Little Italy". These Italian Americans desired a Catholic church where Italian was spoken, and in 1905 "St. Peter's Italian Church, Duluth", was incorporated as a "personal" church which could be established for reasons of language or nationality as opposed to a "territorial" church which serves a definite neighborhood. The 1885 St Jean Baptiste Church on West 11th Avenue and Superior Street was purchased and served the Italian community until the early 1920s when it appeared the City of Duluth would extend West Superior Street through the church property.

In 1924 the St. Peter's congregation purchased land on Third Street and West

Eighth Avenue. The following year they began excavation. Many of the parish Italians were skilled stone masons and bricklayers who volunteered to

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build the church according to plans by architect Peter Summers who was the son of Duluth's first Italian immigrant. The Italians harvested the stone for the walls and towers from a hillside near Twin Ponds and worked for two years until completion in 1927 and the dedication and first mass on Sunday, December 18, 1927.

In addition to St. Peter's, the skilled Italian artsans were responsible for many of Duluth's fine stone structures: Enger Tower, bridges of Seven Bridges Road, Glen Avon Church, Tower Hall on St Scholastica's campus and bluestone foundations and retaining walls throughout the city.

XI. Findings on Designation Criteria: The following criteria are established by ordinance as the basis for designation of a site/district, with the requirement that the property proposed for designation meet at least one of the criteria.

A. "It has character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the City of Duluth, State of Minnesota, or United States."

Finding: Immigrant Italian stone masons and brick layers who built many of Duluth's stone buildings, bridges, walls and foundations, built their own Church, worshipped there and retained their cultural characteristics in organizations such as the Italian-American club.

B. "Its location was the site of a significant historical event."

Finding: This criterion is not met by the subject property.

C. "It is identified with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the cultural development of the City of Duluth, State of Minnesota or United States."

Finding: St. Peter's was the center of spiritual and social life of Duluth's Italian immigrants. They supplied the labor to build the church. The Sons of Italy Brass Band played at funerals from the church. Italian women created lace altar cloths; they cleaned the church and prepared feasts for celebrations of saints' days. The Italian-American Club was organized in the early 1930s for fellowship and to promote Italian heritage. The group met at St. Peter's and raised funds for maintenance of the church. Many of Duluth's grocery, fruit and confectionery stores were run by Italians.

D. "It embodies a distinguishing characteristic of an architectural type."

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Finding: This is the only Duluth example of a Romanesque/Gothic Revival Church built from native stone.

E. "It is identified as the work an an architect or master builder whose individual work has influenced the development of the City of Duluth or the State of Minnesota.

Finding: This criterion is not met by the subject property.

F. "It embodies elements of architectural design, detail, materials and craftsmanship which represent significant architectural innovation."

Finding: This criterion is not met by the subject property.

G. "Its unique location or singular physical characteristics represent an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood, community or the City as a whole."

Finding: St. Peter's is an established visual feature of the neighborhood with its striking stone façade.

XII. Conclusions:

A. Points in favor: The building meets four out of seven criteria for designation whereas only one must be met to be eligible.

B. Points in opposition: None

XIII. Attachments

A. Location Map
B. Photos
C. Bibliography

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Bibliography

"New Catholic Church for Italian Residents Being Erected by Members of Congregation in Spare Time", Duluth Herald: April 29, 1927

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