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## Request for Proposals

The City of Excelsior is pursuing listing the Christ Scientist Church located at 106 Center Street on the National Historic Register. This Request for Proposals is being issued for the purpose of engaging an experienced architectural historian/consultant that meets the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards to assist the City in producing a National Register property evaluation.

Release date: August 23, 2023

Due Date: Responsive proposals may be delivered by hand, by U.S. Mail, or electronically submitted (via the email address below) and must be *received* by the City by 5 pm on September 13, 2023.

Contact Information: City of Excelsior, City Hall, 350 Highway 7, Suite 230, Excelsior MN 55331; Attn: Kevin Staunton ([kstaunton@excelsiormn.org](mailto:kstaunton@excelsiormn.org)).

### **Who We Are and Project Introduction:**

The City of Excelsior places a high value on preservation of its heritage. Founded in 1854, the community recognizes that the city's historic resources help define its character and differentiate it from other communities. The preservation of the community's historic buildings is a high priority for the city's residents - the city's current comprehensive plan includes a chapter on Historic Preservation and notes (in the opening paragraph of the chapter) that a recent community survey ranked maintaining historic buildings as the 2nd highest priority for city investment.

Consistent with this value, the city has invested considerable time, effort, and funding into preserving its historic buildings. Using its local authority, it has designated its Downtown as historic. The Downtown Historic District includes 78 total properties; of which, 56 buildings and one site are considered to be contributing. In addition, at least 25 other sites and buildings throughout the City have been designated as historic Landmarks using the city's local authority. On top of that local designation, a portion of the Downtown Historic District and two properties are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The city also has an active heritage preservation commission that meets at least monthly and considers site alteration permit requests from owners of Landmarks or properties within the Downtown Historic District, provides recommendations to the city council on treatment of historically designated city-owned sites and resources, and evaluates potential designations of historic sites and structures. The commission's efforts are supported by city staff resources, reflecting the community's priority of investing in historic preservation.

The First Church of Christ, Scientist is the latest example of the city's investment in protecting its historic buildings. Described in the Historic Designation Form drafted as part of its local designation as a Landmark in 2022, as "an outstanding representative of its era," the church building is the only Midcentury Modern architecture that has not been significantly altered since its period of significance from 1951-1965. The absence of any material modifications to the building since a compatible addition was constructed in 1965 (at the end of its period of significance) have maintained its historic integrity.



In 2021, after the church decided to cease operations, it entered into a purchase agreement with a developer who proposed to demolish the building and build housing in its place. Before any specific approvals of the purchaser's proposed housing had been completed, members of the heritage preservation commission nominated the building for local designation as a Landmark. The church and developer objected to the designation, claiming that it would compromise the value of their real estate transaction. Rather than back down, the city agreed to purchase the building. It was recommended for designation by the Heritage Preservation Commission shortly thereafter and formally designated as a local Landmark in 2022.

In April of 2023, the Excelsior City Council decided that the future use of the building should be an Arts and Culture Center. The city has engaged a development partner to assist in converting the building to such a use. It is anticipated that this future use will be income producing for the eventual owner of the property. In order to provide additional protection to the historic character of the building and gain access to tax credits or grants to facilitate the conversion of the building to its new use, the city wants to pursue listing on the National Register. Evaluating the building's eligibility for such a listing is the first step in that process. The city is seeking a grant to assist in properly completing this step.

### **The Project**

This Request for Proposals is being issued for the purpose of engaging an experienced architectural historian/consultant that meets the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards to assist the City in producing a National Register property evaluation which, must, at a minimum, include the following:

- A summary of research, identification, and evaluation methodologies, including but not limited to referencing applicable Multiple Property Documentation Forms and historic contexts;
- A narrative property description;
- A Statement of Significance, including Period of Significance, Area of Significance, and Level of Significance;
- A narrative discussing the appropriate Criteria for Evaluation;
- A discussion of applicable historic contexts relating to the property;
- A discussion of contributing and non-contributing resources as appropriate;
- A list of major bibliographic references;
- Additional documentation such as maps or photographs; and
- A completed inventory form for the property.

The property evaluation must generally conform with the Minnesota Historical and Cultural Grants Manual for Fiscal Years 2024-2025 (the "Grants Manual"). Specifically, it must satisfy the requirements of the Guidelines: Historic Preservation Projects – Structured: National Register Evaluation section of the Grants Manual.



Given that this is the beginning of a long process, the City wants to move as quickly as possible. Proposals should include an expected time frame for completion of the project.

### **Qualifications**

The project must be conducted under the supervision of personnel meeting the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards. Responses to this request shall include a statement of qualifications demonstrating the proposer's ability to satisfy this requirement. Responsive proposals must certify that they have not been debarred, suspended or otherwise excluded from or ineligible for participation in Federal assistance programs under Executive Order 12549, Debarment and Suspension.

### **Budget**

The City of Excelsior has applied for a Minnesota Historical and Cultural Heritage Grant. Responsive proposals should provide a proposed not-to-exceed budget for the project including component tasks, time expected to be spent on the component tasks, and the anticipated costs of each task. The Consultant chosen by the City shall be required to comply with requirements of any grants secured by the City for this project including the requirements of the Minnesota Historical and Cultural Heritage Grants Manual for Fiscal Years 2024-2025.

### **Timeline for Deliverables; Track Record of Success**

Proposals shall include an anticipated timeline for completion, a description of previous successful projects seeking similar results, and a description of the approach the proposer will take to completing the project.

### **Evaluation and Selection of Consultant**

City staff will evaluate and select a Consultant. Proposals shall be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Demonstrated understanding of the services being requested and the community's needs;
- Experience and capabilities for Project Management for similar projects;
- Experience and qualifications;
- Ability and track record of timely and successful completion of similar projects; and
- Projected Cost.

The City anticipates selecting a Consultant on or before October 1, 2023. The City reserves the right to reject all proposals.