

THOMPSON HOME CONVERSION TO STUDENT HOUSING DESIGN AUTHORIZATION

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board of Governors authorize the President, or his designee, to award contracts to begin design phase activities for eventual construction to convert the Thompson Home into residential student housing for a cost not to exceed \$350,000. Funding for this project will be provided from the housing maintenance reserve.

Background and Project Description

The Thompson Home was built in 1874 to provide a home for aged women. The elegant and substantial structure, containing forty rooms, formally opened October 22, 1884. Designed by George Mason, one of the best-known architects of the period, Thompson Home is a Victorian structure in the Queen Anne style and is listed as an official Historic Detroit Landmark. Sunrooms were added in 1914 and additional quarters for the staff were built in the 1950s. An addition built in 1964 created a five bed infirmary adjoining the home on its south was the gift of Mr. and Mrs. Benson Ford.

The School of Social Work has occupied the Thompson Home since 1990. The building was renovated just prior to their move-in by creating offices and support space yet keeping some of the unique architectural detail in feature spaces located in the front half of the building. The School of Social Work relocated to 5447 Woodward in January 2016, when the renovation of that building was completed.

The conversion of Thompson Home to student housing is part of a multi-year housing plan to expand the capacity of university-controlled housing from 3000 to 3750 beds by 2021. Existing demand exceeds current capacity, indicated by fall semester housing waitlists for the past two years and verified by a housing market demand study concluded in December 2014. For fall 2016, 150 beds of leased off-campus housing will be added to existing capacity, followed by the opening of Thompson Home for fall 2017.

This request is for design authorization that will lead to the eventual conversion of Thompson Home into a residence hall, with a planned opening in fall 2017. The assumed occupancy in a renovated Thompson Home would be approximately 65, organized around an academic learning community theme. The anticipated project scope includes selective interior demolition, the removal of hazardous materials, and new partitions with improved sound attenuation. A new stair tower will be created to provide required emergency egress pathways, and other life safety and electrical upgrades may be required to satisfy applicable codes for residence halls. A new bathroom core and community kitchen will also be constructed on each floor along with a kitchen in the lower level with space for group dinners. Recent mechanical system upgrades will be adjusted to the new use, and the technology infrastructure will be upgraded to meet current standards. Multiple lounge and study spaces are anticipated as well.

All contracts for this project will be awarded in accordance with university policies and procedures.