

## CPED STAFF REPORT

Prepared for the Heritage Planning Commission  
HPC Agenda Item #6  
July 28, 2015  
BZH-28544

### HERITAGE PRESERVATION APPLICATION SUMMARY

*Property Location:* Portions of the 2400 block of Colfax Avenue South, the 2300 and 2400 blocks of Bryant Avenue South, Aldrich Avenue South, 811 and 911 24th Street West

*Project Name:* Lowry Hill East Historic Residential District

*Prepared By:* Alex Young, Intern City Planner, (612) 673-2118, with John Smoley Ph.D., Senior City Planner, (612) 673-2830

*Applicant:* Council Member Lisa Bender

*Project Contact:* Alex Young

*Ward:* 10

*Neighborhood:* Lowry Hill East / Wedge

*Request:* Nomination for Designation as a Historic District

### HISTORIC PROPERTY INFORMATION

<b>Current Name</b>	Lowry Hill East
<b>Historic Name</b>	Lowry Hill East
<b>Historic Address</b>	Portions of the 2400 block of Colfax Avenue South, the 2300 and 2400 blocks of Bryant Avenue South, Aldrich Avenue South, 811 and 911 24th Street West
<b>Original Construction Date</b>	1882 - 1913
<b>Original Architects</b>	William Kenyon, Edward Stebbins, William Channing Whitney, and others
<b>Original Builders</b>	T.P. Healy, Henry Ingham, and others
<b>Original Engineer</b>	Not applicable
<b>Historic Use</b>	Residential
<b>Current Use</b>	Residential
<b>Proposed Use</b>	Not applicable

<b>CLASSIFICATION</b>	
<b>Local Historic District</b>	The Lowry Hill East Residential Historic District
<b>Period of Significance</b>	1882 - 1913
<b>Criteria of Significance</b>	1, 4, 6
<b>Date of Local Designation</b>	TBD
<b>Date of National Register Listing</b>	Not applicable
<b>Applicable Design Guidelines</b>	TBD

**SUMMARY**

**BACKGROUND**

The Lowry Hill East Residential Historic District is a largely intact collection of late nineteenth and early twentieth century single family residences emblematic of streetcar related development. This district comprises the work of prominent local architects and builders primarily in the Queen Anne and Colonial Revival architectural styles. In 2005 the Lowry Hill East Neighborhood Association commissioned a study authored by Carole Zellie entitled “The Wedge Neighborhood of Minneapolis Lowry Hill East Historic Context Study.” This report found that there was a potential residential historic district comprised of homes on both sides of Bryant Avenue South in between West 24<sup>th</sup> and West 25<sup>th</sup> Streets. It recommended further study into this area to see if it could be eligible for landmark designation. In July of 2008, Mead & Hunt prepared a report for the City of Minneapolis entitled “Historic Resource Inventory: Historic Resources in the Loring Park and Elliot Park Neighborhoods, Re-survey of Lowry Hill East Neighborhood.” The evaluators recommended that this portion of the Lowry Hill East neighborhood be incorporated as a local historic district with expanded boundaries and a draft designation study was prepared.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Staff has received verbal votes of support for the nomination at a September 22, 2014 public meeting and since then, along with questions and comments from concerned owners. Several property owners have also requested to participate in the development of design guidelines. The nominator noted similar things during a weekend door knocking effort in early January. At the time of the nomination hearing before the Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission on February 17, 2015 staff had received four letters from individual property owners – two in favor of inclusion in the district and two against. Those are attached. At an April 30, 2015 meeting with property owners, staff solicited feedback and answered questions, noting that streetscapes can be preserved through design guidelines; additions are permitted in historic district, ideally at the rear of properties; historic district design guidelines do not alleviate the need to comply with Building and Zoning codes; rezoning is not part of this study; areas outside of the proposed district were not recommended for designation in 2005 and 2008, nor did the current evaluators find strong evidence to expand the district boundaries; and groups of property owners may nominate themselves as a conservation district. Staff received additional comments during two comment periods in April, May, and June when the study was posted online. Copies of those comments are attached.

**Proposed District Property Addresses**

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2400 Colfax Ave S	2444 Bryant Ave S
2404 Colfax Ave S	2447 Bryant Ave S
2408 Colfax Ave S	2439 Bryant Ave S
2410 Colfax Ave S	2433 Bryant Ave S
2416 Colfax Ave S	2429 Bryant Ave S
2420 Colfax Ave S	2425 Bryant Ave S
2424 Colfax Ave S	2421 Bryant Ave S
2428 Colfax Ave S	2417 Bryant Ave S
2432 Colfax Ave S	2415 Bryant Ave S
2440 Colfax Ave S	2409 Bryant Ave S
2447 Colfax Ave S	2405 Bryant Ave S
2441 Colfax Ave S	2401 Bryant Ave S / 811 24 <sup>th</sup> ST W
2437 Colfax Ave S	2400 Aldrich Ave S
2433 Colfax Ave S	2406 Aldrich Ave S
2429 Colfax Ave S	2412 Aldrich Ave S
2425 Colfax Ave S	2416 Aldrich Ave S
2419 Colfax Ave S	2344 Aldrich Ave S
2417 Colfax Ave S	2316 Aldrich Ave S
2415 Colfax Ave S	2323 Bryant Ave S
2409 Colfax Ave S	2317 Bryant Ave S #1
2405 Colfax Ave S	2317 Bryant Ave S #2
911 24 <sup>th</sup> St W	2317 Bryant Ave S #3
2400 Bryant Ave S	2317 Bryant Ave S #4
2408 Bryant Ave S	2317 Bryant Ave S #5
2412 Bryant Ave S	2317 Bryant Ave S #6
2416 Bryant Ave S	2311 Bryant Ave S
2420 Bryant Ave S	2309 Bryant Ave S
2424 Bryant Ave S	
2428 Bryant Ave S	
2432 Bryant Ave S	
2436 Bryant Ave S	
2442 Bryant Ave S	

## CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED PLANS AND POLICIES

Title 23, Chapter 599.260 of the Minneapolis Code of Ordinances requires the planning director to submit all proposed designations to the Minneapolis City Planning Commission for review and comment on the proposed designation. In its review, the City Planning Commission shall consider but not be limited to the following factors:

- (1) The relationship of the proposed designation to the city's comprehensive plan
- (2) The effect of the proposed designation on the surrounding area
- (3) The consistency of the proposed designation with applicable development plans or development objectives adopted by the City Council

The designation of the subject property meets the following relevant policies of *The Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth*:

**Heritage Preservation Policy 8.1: Preserve, maintain, and designate districts, landmarks, and historic resources which serve as reminders of the city's architecture, history, and culture.**

8.1.1 Protect historic resources from modifications that are not sensitive to their historic significance.

By designating this district as a landmark, the City will require the preservation of an area significant to the City for its association with the Minneapolis streetcar system, master architects and master builders, and historic architectural styles.

**Heritage Preservation Policy 8.10: Promote the benefits of preservation as an economic development tool and a method to achieve greater environmental sustainability and city vitality.**

8.10.5 Prioritize the reuse of the city's historic buildings as a strategy for sustainable development.

Oftentimes, the greenest building is the one already built. By designating this district and protecting it from any demolition in the future, embodied energy is conserved that would be otherwise spent in any potential demolition and construction of a new structure on this site. Therefore, this energy is conserved for future uses.

**Heritage Preservation Policy 8.12: Raise awareness of the history of Minneapolis and promote the quality of the built environment.**

The residences within this district communicate the story of a period of growth early in city history that is significant. The housing is of high quality and is worthy of preservation in perpetuity.

*The effect of the proposed designation on the surrounding area:* The designation will preserve the cohesive fabric of this largely intact collection of Victorian and period revival homes by ensuring that alterations and future development within the district is compatible with its existing character. By protecting the collection of homes in the Lowry Hill East Residential Historic

District, the City will ensure that the streetscapes of the surrounding area will be able to evolve while the essential character of this district is retained.

*The consistency of the proposed designation with applicable development plans or development objectives adopted by the City Council:* The Lowry Hill East Residential Historic District does not fall within the boundaries of any adopted small area plan or any other adopted development plan.

## LOCAL DESIGNATION CRITERIA

Title 23, Chapter 599.210 of Minneapolis Code of Ordinances list seven criteria which shall be considered in determining whether a property is worthy of local designation as a landmark because of its historical, cultural, architectural, archaeological or engineering significance. The Lowry Hill East Residential Historic District meets the following designation criteria:

**Criterion #1: The property is associated with significant events or with periods that exemplify broad patterns of cultural, political, economic or social history.**

The Lowry Hill East Residential Historic District appears to be historically significant due to its associations with broad patterns of residential development related to the expansion of the Minneapolis streetcar system as discussed in part two of the designation study.

**Criterion #4: The property embodies the distinctive characteristics of an architectural or engineering type or style, or method of construction.**

The district embodies the distinctive characteristics of the Queen Anne and Colonial Revival architectural styles as discussed in part two of the designation study.

**Criterion #6: The property exemplifies works of master builders, engineers, designers, artists, craftsmen or architects.**

The district appears to exemplify the work of master architects, designers, and builders as discussed in part two of the designation study.

## REVIEWS AND COMMENTS

The Preservation Chapter of the Minneapolis Code of Ordinances (Chapter 599) requires that the designation be submitted to the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) for review and comment.

*State Historic Preservation Office*

The Preservation Chapter of the Minneapolis Code of Ordinances (Chapter 599) requires that the designation be submitted to the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) for review and comment. Staff sent a draft of this Designation Study to the SHPO for review and comment on May 6, 2015.

In a letter dated July 5, 2015 (attached) SHPO provided comments on the designation and stated:

“The Lowry Hill East Residential Historic District consists of 55 buildings located predominantly in the 2400 blocks of Bryant Avenue and Colfax Avenue South... This collection of mostly single family houses retains its historic integrity to form a cohesive concentration of buildings with continuity of plan, design and materials. This area is significant for its association with the expansion of Minneapolis’ streetcar system. The neighborhood represents an intact example of a ‘streetcar suburb’ in which development followed the growth of public transit service. The district’s cohesive grouping of houses merits additional significance architecturally for its well-conserved examples of Colonial Revival and Queen Anne style dwellings. Many of the houses were designed for middle class and upper middle class residents by a group of well-known architects and builders who had profound impact on the built environment of Minneapolis... The combination of Lowry Hill East’s importance for its historical development, and its status as a manifestation of the turn-of-the-century architectural moment, enables the Lowry Hill East Residential Historic District to be an ideal candidate for local designation.”

### *City Planning Commission*

Chapter 599 of the Minneapolis Code of Ordinances also requires that the designation be submitted to the Minneapolis City Planning Commission (CPC) for review and comment. The Ordinance states that the city planning commission shall consider, but not be limited to, the following factors:

- (1) The relationship of the proposed designation to the city's comprehensive plan.
- (2) The effect of the proposed designation on the surrounding area.
- (3) The consistency of the proposed designation with applicable development plans or developments adopted by the city council.

The designation study was presented to the CPC on June 18, 2015. The CPC found that the proposed designation was consistent with the City of Minneapolis’ Comprehensive Plan and applicable development plans and objectives adopted by the City Council. Furthermore, the CPC found that the proposed designation would have a positive effect on the surrounding neighborhood. A copy of the memorandum submitted to the CPC is attached to this report.

## RECOMMENDATION

The Department of Community Planning and Economic Development recommends that the Heritage Preservation Commission and City Council adopt staff findings for the local designation of the Lowry Hill East Residential Historic District:

### **A. Historic District Designation.**

Recommended motion: **Recommend to approve** the local designation of the Lowry Hill East Residential Historic District subject to the following conditions:

1. The Lowry Hill East Residential Historic District includes the 55 properties listed in the designation study.
2. The designation includes the entire exterior of the buildings.

## ATTACHMENTS

1. Lowry Hill East Residential Historic District designation study