



# CPED STAFF REPORT

Prepared for the Heritage Preservation Commission

HPC Agenda Item #1  
 September 29, 2015  
 BZH-27790

## HERITAGE PRESERVATION APPLICATION SUMMARY

*Property Location:* 2445 Park Avenue  
*Project Name:* Anson Brooks Mansion  
*Prepared By:* [Paul Mogush](#), AICP, Principal City Planner, (612) 673-2074  
*Applicant:* Commissioner Sue Hunter Weir, Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission  
*Project Contact:* Paul Mogush  
*Ward:* 6  
*Neighborhood:* Phillips West  
*Request:* Local Historic Designation of the Anson Brooks Mansion at 2445 Park Avenue

## HISTORIC PROPERTY INFORMATION

<b>Current Name</b>	Unnamed Multitenant Office Building
<b>Historic Name</b>	Anson Brooks Mansion
<b>Historic Address</b>	2445 Park Avenue
<b>Original Construction Date</b>	1907
<b>Original Architect</b>	Long & Long
<b>Original Builder</b>	C.F. Haglin
<b>Original Engineer</b>	Unknown
<b>Historic Use</b>	Residence
<b>Current Use</b>	Office
<b>Proposed Use</b>	Office

<b>Date Application Deemed Complete</b>	N/A	<b>Date Extension Letter Sent</b>	N/A
<b>End of 60-Day Decision Period</b>	N/A	<b>End of 120-Day Decision Period</b>	N/A

**CLASSIFICATION**

<b>Local Historic District</b>	N/A
<b>Period of Significance</b>	1907-1940
<b>Criteria of Significance</b>	1, 2, 3, 4, and 6
<b>Date of Local Designation</b>	TBD
<b>Date of National Register Listing</b>	N/A
<b>Applicable Design Guidelines</b>	N/A

**BACKGROUND**

On July 9, 2013 the Heritage Preservation Commission approved Commissioner Hunter Weir’s nomination of the residence at 2445 Park Avenue South for consideration as an individual landmark, established interim protection, and directed the Planning Director to prepare or cause to be prepared a designation study. On April 29, 2014, the Heritage Preservation approved a six-month extension to complete the study and continued interim protection until January 9, 2015, or until a decision is made on the designation, whichever is sooner.

Community Planning and Economic Development (CPED) staff scoped the designation study, and Commissioner Hunter Weir and Ryan Knoke conducted the research. CPED finalized the study and is bringing it through the review process for City Council designation of the property. The designation study has been presented for review to both the State Historic Preservation Office and the Minneapolis City Planning Commission.

**CONSISTENCY WITH CITY OF MINNEAPOLIS ADOPTED PLANS AND POLICIES**

Title 23, Chapter 599.260 of 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 relevant policies of *The Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth*.

- Policy 3.7 states, “Maintain the quality, safety and unique character of the city’s housing stock.” The subject property serves as an enduring example of Minneapolis’ safe, and unique housing; and example that has thrived for over a century.
- Policy 8.1 states, “Preserve, maintain, and designate districts, landmarks, and historic resources which serve as reminders of the city’s architecture history, and culture.” Implementation step 8.1.1 continues, “Protect historic resources from modifications that are not sensitive to their historic significance.” Designating the Brooks mansion as a historic landmark would directly meet the intent and goal of Policy 8.1. The protections placed on the property as a result of designation would serve to meet policy objective 8.1.1.

*The effect of the proposed designation on the surrounding area:* Designation of the Brooks Mansion will keep intact one of the last remaining mansions on the “Golden Mile,” on a block face of Park Avenue that remains mostly residential

*The consistency of the proposed designation with applicable development plans or development objectives adopted by the City Council:* The property does not lie within the boundary of any adopted development plans or small area plans.

## 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 Anson Brooks Mansion 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.**

Park Avenue between Franklin Avenue and East 28<sup>th</sup> Street in the era of Anson Brooks was known as Minneapolis' "Golden Mile." It was one of 35 architect-designed homes built for several of the City's wealthiest and most prominent businessmen and civic leaders. By the 1920s the wealthy residents of Park Avenue had begun to move to other, less busy, areas of the city. Many of their former homes came to house commercial and non-profit organizations and over the years the majority of homes along Park Avenue were demolished. Only eight of them remain today.

### **Criterion #2: The property is associated with the lives of significant persons or groups.**

The Brooks residence is significant for Anson Brooks and members of his family. Anson Strong Brooks made his fortune in both the grain and lumber milling industries. In 1896, Anson Brooks and two of his brothers, Dwight and Lester, started the Brooks Brothers Milling Company. In 1901 they partnered with M. J. Scanlon and Henry E. Gipson and by 1903, Brooks-Scanlon had become the largest lumber sawmilling operation in the Northwest.

Brooks was also prominent in a number of civic organizations, most notably the Chamber of Commerce. He was one of a number of prominent citizens who arranged to have the Father of Waters sculpture brought from Italy to Minneapolis where it is prominently displayed in the rotunda of Minneapolis City Hall.

### **Criterion #3: The property contains or is associated with distinctive elements of city or neighborhood identity.**

Park Avenue between Franklin Avenue and East 28<sup>th</sup> Street in the era of Anson Brooks was known as Minneapolis' "Golden Mile." It was one of 35 architect-designed homes built for several of the City's wealthiest and most prominent businessmen and civic leaders. By the 1920s the wealthy residents of Park Avenue had begun to move to other, less busy, areas of the city. Many of their former homes came to house commercial and non-profit organizations and over the years the majority of homes along Park Avenue were demolished. Only eight of them remain today.

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

The property is historically significant because it embodies the distinctive characteristics of the Venetian Gothic style, an architectural style that is rare not only in Minneapolis but throughout most of the United States.

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

The Brooks Mansion is significant because of its association with Franklin and Louis Long. A catalog of their commissions—both during their partnership and in association with other partnerships, namely Long and Kees—represent a variety of architectural and building types. Based on previous locally and

nationally designated works, Franklin Long most certainly is recognized as one of Minneapolis' premiere architects and would be considered a master architect. Louis's catalogue, while not as extensive as his father's, is also impressive and could qualify him for master architect status, as well. The Anson S. Brooks Mansion conveys the original design intent of Long & Long, with virtually no exterior or interior modifications to the building's original design. The Anson Brooks Mansion is an excellent, intact, and beautifully preserved example of the work of these prolific master architects. Other examples of Long and Long's work are given in part two of this 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 designation was submitted to SHPO for comment on May 21, 2015. In a letter dated July 20, 2015 (attached) SHPO provided favorable comments on the designation and stated:

"The Brooks Residence is historically significant for its association with Anson Brooks and architecturally significant as a very well-conserved example of the Venetian Gothic style designed by Long & Long Architects. Anson Brooks was a highly successful grain and lumber businessman who also used his influence for civic improvements in Minneapolis in the early twentieth century. Architecturally, the Brooks House is a unique representation of Venetian Gothic design, a style rarely seen in Minnesota. As such, we concur that the Anson Brooks Residence is an ideal candidate for local designation."

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 development objectives adopted by the city council.

The designation study was presented to the CPC Committee of the Whole on June 18, 2015. The CPC found that the proposed designation was consistent with the City of Minneapolis's 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 staff report submitted to the CPC is attached to this report.

## RECOMMENDATION

### **Recommendation of the Department of Community Planning and Economic Development:**

CPED Staff recommends that the Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission **adopt** the above report and attachments as findings of fact and submit the same together to the Zoning & Planning Committee of the City Council with a **recommendation to approve** the local designation of the property at 2445 Park Avenue with the following conditions:

- I. The designation includes the entire property including the exteriors of the principal structure and the garage.

2. The Secretary of Interior's Standards for Treatment of Historic Properties will be used to evaluate alterations to the property.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

1. The Anson Brooks Mansion Designation Study
2. State Historic Preservation Office Comment Letter
3. Minneapolis City Planning Commission Comment Letter
4. Heritage Preservation Commission Nomination Staff Report
5. Map of the subject property