



## CPED STAFF REPORT

Prepared for the Heritage Preservation Commission  
 HPC Agenda Item #1  
 March 22, 2016  
 BZH-27695

### HERITAGE PRESERVATION APPLICATION SUMMARY

*Property Location:* 2200 Park Avenue  
*Project Name:* The Sumner T. McKnight Mansion  
*Prepared By:* [Joe Bernard](#), AICP, Senior City Planner, (612) 673-2422  
*Applicant:* Commissioner Sue Hunter Weir, Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission  
*Project Contact:* Joe Bernard  
*Ward:* 6  
*Neighborhood:* Phillips West  
*Request:* Local Historic Designation of the Sumner T. McKnight Mansion at 2200 Park Avenue

### HISTORIC PROPERTY INFORMATION

<b>Current Name</b>	Vacant Building
<b>Historic Name</b>	Sumner T. McKnight Mansion
<b>Historic Address</b>	2200 Park Avenue
<b>Original Construction Date</b>	1892
<b>Original Architect</b>	Bertrand and Keith
<b>Original Builder</b>	Sumner T. McKnight
<b>Original Engineer</b>	<u>Unknown</u>
<b>Historic Use</b>	Residence
<b>Current Use</b>	Vacant Building
<b>Proposed Use</b>	Assisted Living

<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>	TBD
<b>Criteria of Significance</b>	TBD
<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 April 30, 2013 the Heritage Preservation Commission, in response to a nomination by Commissioner Sue Hunter Weir, established interim protection for the Sumner T. McKnight Mansion at 2200 Park Ave and directed the planning director to prepare or cause to be prepared a designation study of the property. In this case, the designation study is being completed by Commissioner Hunter Weir and her research associate. The designation study is not yet complete, and interim protection is set to expire on April 30, 2014.

Section 599.240 of the Minneapolis Code of Ordinance provides interim protection to properties during the time of a designation study. The interim protection period lasts 12 months from the decision to commence a designation study. Interim protection may be extended up to an additional 18 months. The ordinance requires the Heritage Preservation Commission to hold a public hearing on a proposed extension of interim protection.

The property is under new ownership since the time interim protection commenced. On March 24, 2014, the City Planning Commission granted a Conditional Use Permit (BZZ-6355) to allow an assisted living facility with 78 beds at the property, as well as a variance to reduce the vehicle parking requirement from 26 to 8.

On March 11, 2014, staff approved a Certificate of No Change (BZH-28014) for window repair, painting, and mold/asbestos abatement. Work on these repairs has revealed intact features that may contribute to the property’s significance and may deepen the scope of the designation.

Interim protection of the property was extended on April 29, 2014 to allow additional time for completion of the designation study, including documentation of interior features, and allowed time for the necessary reviews outlined in the preservation ordinance. In recent months the designation study was completed, and reviewed by both the State Historic Preservation Office as well as 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: Maintain the quality, safety and unique character of the city's housing stock.
- Policy 8.1: Preserve, maintain, and designate districts, landmarks, and historic resources which serve as reminders of the city's architecture, history, and culture.

*The effect of the proposed designation on the surrounding area:* The proposed designation of the subject property 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 is within the boundary of the Phillips West Master Land Use Plan, which guides the site for future Institution, Public, or Office use – with the intended result of preservation of mansions in the area. The designation will help preserve the character of the neighborhood.

## 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 Sumner T. McKnight 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 Sumner T. McKnight 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 McKnight residence is significant for Sumner T. McKnight and members of his family. Sumner T. McKnight was a leader in the lumber industry and prominent in local financial and real estate ventures. McKnight's family continued to live in the mansion after his death. Sumner T. McKnight, Jr. served in the state legislature and carried on his father's legacy as a prominent business leader.

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

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**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 Richardsonian Romanesque style, a variant of the Romanesque style created by Henry Hobson Richardson. Characteristics of the Richardsonian Romanesque style include exterior walls composed of

large rough-hewn stone blocks, naturalistic stone carving of plant forms, prominent use of Roman barrel arches and a studied asymmetry. The 1963 rear addition is in stark contrast to the Richardsonian Romanesque style of the original mansion, and is non-contributing.

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

The subject property is significant because of its association with architects Bertrand and Keith. The work of Bertrand and Keith represents a variety of architectural and building types. They worked as partners from 1890 until 1894, a period that includes the construction of the McKnight Mansion. Bertrand designed several notable commercial buildings, including two locally and nationally designated properties. Keith's primary interest was in designing residential properties. His work reflects a number of different styles but he is perhaps best known for his efforts to popularize bungalow-style housing.

## 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 September 16, 2015. In a letter dated November 19, 2015 (attached) SHPO provided favorable comments on the designation and stated:

“The McKnight Mansion is historically significant for its association with Sumner T. McKnight, a successful lumberman, philanthropist, and arts supporter. The property gains additional architectural significance as a well-conserved example of the Richardsonian Romanesque style. As such, we concur that the Sumner T. McKnight Mansion 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 on February 25, 2016. 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 area. A copy of the Planning Commission's comments on the designation 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 2200 Park Avenue with the following conditions:

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

## ATTACHMENTS

1. The Sumner T. McKnight Mansion Designation Study
2. Heritage Preservation Commission Nomination Staff Report and Actions, dated April 30, 2013
3. State Historic Preservation Office Correspondence
4. Minneapolis City Planning Commission Staff Report and Comment Letter, dated February 25, 2016
5. Heritage Preservation Commission Extension of Interim Protection Staff Report, dated April 29, 2014
6. Minneapolis City Planning Commission Staff Report, dated March 24, 2014
7. Map of the subject property