



## CPED STAFF REPORT

Prepared for the Heritage Preservation Commission  
 HPC Agenda Item #6  
 May 17, 2016  
 BZH-29074

### HERITAGE PRESERVATION APPLICATION SUMMARY

*Property Location:* 4401 Lyndale Avenue North  
*Project Name:* Building Addition and Site Improvements  
*Prepared By:* Hilary Dvorak, Principal Planner, (612) 673-2639  
*Applicant:* 4401 Lyndale Avenue North, LLC  
*Project Contact:* Kathy Osborne with 4401 Lyndale Avenue North, LLC  
*Ward:* 4  
*Neighborhood:* Lind-Bohanon Neighborhood Association  
*Request:* To demolish the Mereen Johnson Office Building, the Mereen Johnson Garage Building and the 32-foot by 48-foot “brick pattern vault” addition constructed on the northeast end of the Mereen Johnson Factory Building and to allow for an addition to the Mereen Johnson Factory Building.

*Required Applications:*

<b>Certificate of Appropriateness</b>	To allow for demolition of the Mereen Johnson Office Building, the Mereen Johnson Garage Building and the 32-foot by 48-foot “brick pattern vault” addition constructed on the northeast end of the Mereen Johnson Factory Building.
<b>Certificate of Appropriateness</b>	To allow for an addition to the Mereen Johnson Factory Building.

### HISTORIC PROPERTY INFORMATION

<b>Current Name</b>	Not applicable
<b>Historic Name</b>	Mereen Johnson Office Building
<b>Historic Address</b>	4401 Lyndale Avenue North
<b>Original Construction Date</b>	1917, additions in 1953 and 1963-1971
<b>Original Architect</b>	John Schwab
<b>Original Builder</b>	Carlsted Brothers
<b>Original Engineer</b>	Not applicable
<b>Historic Use</b>	Office
<b>Current Use</b>	Vacant
<b>Proposed Use</b>	To be demolished

<b>Date Application Deemed Complete</b>	March 22, 2016	<b>Date Extension Letter Sent</b>	April 22, 2016
<b>End of 60-Day Decision Period</b>	May 21, 2016	<b>End of 120-Day Decision Period</b>	July 20, 2016

<b>Current Name</b>	Not applicable
<b>Historic Name</b>	Mereen Johnson Factory Building
<b>Historic Address</b>	4401 Lyndale Avenue North
<b>Original Construction Date</b>	1916, additions in 1919, 1920, 1923, 1943, 1946, 1950, 1953, 1960, 1966 and 1969
<b>Original Architect</b>	Not applicable
<b>Original Builder</b>	Not applicable
<b>Original Engineer</b>	Not applicable
<b>Historic Use</b>	Factory and production
<b>Current Use</b>	Production
<b>Proposed Use</b>	Production

<b>Current Name</b>	Not applicable
<b>Historic Name</b>	Mereen Johnson Garage
<b>Historic Address</b>	4401 Lyndale Avenue North
<b>Original Construction Date</b>	1959
<b>Original Architect</b>	Not applicable
<b>Original Builder</b>	Not applicable
<b>Original Engineer</b>	Not applicable
<b>Historic Use</b>	Garage
<b>Current Use</b>	Vacant
<b>Proposed Use</b>	To be demolished

**CLASSIFICATION**

<b>Proposed Local Historic District</b>	C.A. Smith Lumber Historic District
<b>Period of proposed Significance</b>	1892-1966
<b>Proposed Criteria of Significance</b>	<i>Criteria 1:</i> The district is associated with significant events or with periods that exemplify broad patterns of cultural, political, economic or social history. <i>Criteria 2:</i> The district is associated with the lives of significant persons or groups. <i>Criteria 3:</i> The district contains or is associated with distinctive elements of city or neighborhood identity.
<b>Date of Local Designation</b>	Nominated May 1, 2015
<b>Date of National Register Listing</b>	Not applicable
<b>Applicable Design Guidelines</b>	<i>Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation</i>

**SUMMARY**

**BACKGROUND.** The parcels at 4401, 4440, and 4430 Lyndale Avenue North were nominated as individual landmarks by Council President Barbara Johnson at the May 1, 2015, meeting of the Minneapolis City Council. The Council adopted the nomination. The nomination was reviewed by Community Planning and Economic Development (CPED) staff and then presented to the Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) at their public hearing on July 14, 2015. At this time, CPED staff recommended that the parcels at 4410 and 4420 Lyndale Avenue North be added to the nomination. The HPC adopted CPED’s findings, placing all five parcels under interim protection and directed the Planning Director to prepare or cause to be prepared a designation study. The study is now complete and will also be considered at the May 17, 2016 HPC meeting. CPED is recommending that the HPC adopt the report and attachments as findings of fact and submit the same together to the Zoning & Planning Committee of the City Council for the local designation of the properties located at 4401 Lyndale Avenue North and 4400-4430 Lyndale Avenue North.

The designation study concludes that the C.A. Smith Lumber Historic District is eligible for local designation. The properties located within the district represent the late stage of the Minneapolis lumber industry (c. 1890-1921), the city’s short-lived but robust “post-lumber” industry (c. 1921-1935), and 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century manufacturing. The C.A. Smith Lumber Historic District is historically significant under Criterion 1 for its association with the late-lumber and post-lumber industries in Minneapolis, under Criterion 2 for its association with C.A. Smith, Arno Meeen, and Charles Johnson, and under Criterion 3 for its association with distinctive elements of the identity of the Camden neighborhood. The period of significance for the district identified in the study is 1892-1966.

The C.A. Smith Lumber Historic District is located around the intersection of Lyndale Avenue North and 44<sup>th</sup> Avenue North. The district is composed of five lots – one on the west side of Lyndale Avenue North, and four on the east side of Lyndale Avenue North. The C.A. Smith Lumber Historic District includes the following properties:

- 4400 Lyndale Avenue North, C.A. Smith Lumber Company Office
- 4401 Lyndale Avenue North, Meeen Johnson Machine Company

- 4410 Lyndale Avenue North, C.A. Smith Lumber Company Yards
- 4420 Lyndale Avenue North, C.A. Smith Lumber Company Yards
- 4430 Lyndale Avenue North, Northwestern Compo Board Company and C.A. Smith Lumber Company Factory

The sites have an historical relationship and, collectively, form the historic district. Northwestern Compo-Board was a subsidiary of the C.A. Smith Lumber Company and the Mereen Johnson Machine Company was formed by two former C.A. Smith employees and counted C.A. Smith as an early investor.

According to the designation study, the C.A. Smith Lumber Historic District includes four contributing and two non-contributing buildings, as well as contributing landscape elements such as the extant “Soo” Line railroad siding. Contributing buildings include two office buildings and two larger factory buildings. The office buildings are one to two stories tall with modest masonry detailing and some distinctive architectural features. The factory buildings range from one to three stories in height, are of utilitarian masonry construction, and were designed with minimal architectural detailing. As working buildings on an industrial site, each of the contributing buildings has undergone additions and alterations over time; these additions and alterations are easily identifiable at building exteriors through changes in building materials, roof heights, setbacks, and window opening articulation. The exception to this is the office building at 4400 Lyndale Avenue North – it is designed in the Queen Anne style and has undergone minimal exterior alterations. Non-contributing buildings include a concrete block garage and a corrugated metal shed.

## **COMPANY HISTORY**

### *The C.A. Smith Lumber Company.*

C.A. Smith established the largest sawmill in the City of Minneapolis and his mill had garnered a national reputation in the lumber industry for its commitment to eliminating waste and maximizing the raw material derived from each and every log. C.A. Smith established his lumber company on 20 acres along the west bank of the Mississippi River in the Camden neighborhood. Smith constructed a factory building in 1892 and began construction of his mill in 1893. During the peak white pine production years of 1900 to 1910, Smith significantly expanded his operations. He added drying kilns to his factory in 1894 and 1895. The mill received a 66-foot by 90-foot addition in 1899 and a 48-foot by 80-foot addition in 1902. Additional drying kilns were constructed in 1903 and 1906. The factory was also expanded in 1906. A frame saw mill was constructed on the site in 1907. Another mill expansion took place in 1908.

### *Northwestern Compo Board Co.*

C.A. Smith secured the patent for a “composite material designed to take the place of ordinary plastering,” from George S. Mayhew in 1892. Smith called the material, which consisted of thin strips of pine edgings, heavy paper, cement, and glue, “Compo Board” and produced it in his Camden factory. Smith incorporated a separate company – the Northwestern Compo Board Co. – to produce the composite. As with the other mills in Minneapolis, as Minnesota’s reserves of white pine were exhausted after 1910, the mill’s production dwindled and Smith closed his mill in 1912 and moved his operations to Oregon. While the mill had closed in 1912, Compo Board production continued at the Lyndale Avenue North site through 1939.

*Mereen Johnson Machine Company.*

The Mereen Johnson Machine Company was started by two employees of the C.A. Smith Lumber Company, Arno Mereen and Charles Johnson, in 1905. Arno Mereen and Charles Johnson invented the first horizontal band re-saw while employed at C.A. Smith Lumber Company. The Mereen Johnson Company's operations were originally housed near the river within the larger C.A. Smith site. However, within approximately two years of being in business, Mereen Johnson was ready to expand their production facilities. While the two businesses enjoyed a symbiotic relationship during Mereen Johnson's early years, by the 1910s Minnesota's white pine stands were rapidly depleting, and C.A. Smith Lumber Company began closing down its Lyndale Avenue North plant. During this time, the Mereen Johnson Machine Company filed a series of patents for machine types that diversified production.

In 1916, Mereen Johnson Machine Company completed its break from C.A. Smith, branding itself as a fully independent company by constructing a new machine shop on the west side of Lyndale Avenue North. The spacious brick machine shop measured 40-feet by 245-feet and featured large windows along its length. In addition to raising Mereen Johnson's profile, the shop was located directly alongside a Soo Line rail siding, allowing for easy loading and distribution of the machines the company manufactured.

In 1917, Mereen Johnson constructed an office building alongside their machine shop. The single-story brick office building was designed by architect John Schwab. At the ground level, the building included an open plan "general office" space, two private offices (presumably for Mereen and Johnson), a vault, an engineer's drawings room, and toilets. The basement of the building was reserved for service space, housing a coal bin and boiler.

Business during the 1910s and 1920s was clearly successful – Mereen Johnson followed the initial construction of its machine shop and office building with a series of expansions to the machine shop, construction of a foundry, and construction of a pattern vault.

Throughout the twentieth century, Mereen Johnson marketed its products at a national level. The late 1930s and 1940s appear to have been a particularly dynamic time for the Mereen Johnson Company. The company filed six new patents during these years. Significant additions to the factory were added in 1943 and 1946, suggesting an increase in production accompanied this diversification in product offerings.

The mid-twentieth century saw the introduction of the Dip Chain Gang Rip Saw in 1963 and the Computerized Panel Saw in 1969. The introduction of these tools marked a transition for Mereen Johnson; they no longer solely produced machines to serve the lumber industry, but also produced tools for more generalized woodworking. Likewise, the factory building received additions in 1960, 1963, two in 1966, and a final addition in 1969.

In 1973, Mereen Johnson opened a second factory and foundry in Webster, SD. The Webster factory was expanded in 1995. The continued growth of the Webster factory marks the shift in production from Minneapolis to South Dakota. Mereen Johnson continued to maintain offices at 4401 Lyndale Avenue North until 2012, when the company was acquired by NC Equity. Mereen Johnson still maintains offices in Minneapolis.

**DESCRIPTION OF BUILDINGS.** Per the designation study, the site includes two contributing and one non-contributing building, and a contributing site element – the Soo Line rail corridor. The property occupies roughly three-quarters of the city block bounded by Lyndale Avenue North to the east, 44<sup>th</sup> Avenue North to the south, Aldrich Avenue North to the west and 45<sup>th</sup> Avenue North to the north.

The contributing Mereen Johnson Machine Company office building is located at the southeast corner of the parcel fronting Lyndale Avenue North. A large contributing factory building covers the bulk of the parcel, fronting Aldrich Avenue North and 44<sup>th</sup> Avenue North. Just north of the office building is a non-contributing concrete block garage. The remainder of the site is utilized for surface parking.

### *Office Building*

The office building is a single-story brick building originally constructed in 1917 (contributing), with a brick addition added to the north side in 1953. The original building was 32 feet, 4-inches by 50 feet and the 1953 addition expanded the structure by 26 feet. The original building was designed by architect John Schwab and constructed by Carlsted Brothers. A newer concrete block addition (non-contributing) extends across the west side of both the 1917 building and the 1953 addition. The exact date of this western addition is unknown as a building permit cannot be located, though aerial photographs of the site show that the addition dates to sometime between 1967 and 1971.

The building has a flat roof. A clay tile parapet is present at the original portion of the building. At the original building, the cornice features corbeling with a stringcourse below and the water table stands proud of the upper portion of the walls. There are no notable architectural details in the brickwork at the 1953 addition or the later addition. Original architectural drawings of the building show that the pattern of window openings has been altered over time – no historic windows are extant; however limestone sills and soldier course headers are present marking the location of the original window openings.

The office building's primary façade fronts Lyndale Avenue North, and a door is located at the southern edge of the façade. A secondary entrance is located at the western edge of the southern façade facing 44<sup>th</sup> Avenue North. The building housed the Mereen Johnson Machine Company's offices and drafting department.

### *Factory Building*

The factory building has undergone significant changes with many alterations, additions, and demolitions taking place over time. The original portion of the building, historically the "machine shop" was constructed in 1916 (contributing). The 40-foot by 245-foot machine shop is the section that extends east from Aldrich Avenue North, fronting 44<sup>th</sup> Avenue North until reaching the railroad spur, where the building turns northeast.

This earliest portion of the building is organized into a series of bays. Each bay features a pair of radial arched windows with stone sills. A brick string course extends the full length of the façade fronting 44<sup>th</sup> Avenue North and the railroad spur. The window openings on this façade have been covered with plywood.

In 1917, an 18-foot by 32-foot concrete block addition was added to the north side of the machine shop. In 1919, a 55-foot by 72-foot brick foundry was added to the east end of the machine shop, extending the building along the railroad spur (contributing). A second 19-foot by 62 foot brick "addition to machine shop and foundry" followed in 1920 (contributing). Building permit cards for both of these additions credit Mereen Johnson as executive and Arthur B. Johnson as architect. In 1922, Arthur B. Johnson served as architect for another addition to the building – a 32-foot by 48-foot "brick pattern vault" constructed to the northeast of the foundry (contributing). Unspecified repairs were made to the building following a fire in 1938. In 1940, a 12-foot by 92-foot brick addition was added to the north side of the machine shop (contributing).

A series of large, concrete block additions were added to the north of the machine shop beginning in 1943. These additions have a different architectural character from the earlier sections of the building, notably their larger size and difference in material and detailing. These additions include:

- An 8-foot by 37-foot addition in 1943 (contributing)
- A 60-foot by 100-foot addition in 1946 (contributing)
- A 40-foot by 60-foot addition in 1950 (contributing)
- A 60-foot by 80-foot addition in 1953 (contributing)
- A 100-foot, 10-inch by 172-foot, 7-inch addition in 1960 (contributing)
- A 13-foot by 19-foot addition in 1963 (contributing)
- A 62-foot by 50-foot addition and an 81-foot by 266-foot addition in 1966 (both contributing)
- A 62-foot by 119-foot addition in 1969 (non-contributing)

The building housed the Mereen Johnson Company's factory and production facilities.

### *Garage*

To the north of the office building is a two story 24-foot x 60-foot garage constructed in 1959. It is constructed of concrete masonry units (CMU) laid in stacked bond; the exterior is painted. The building has a flat roof with a utilitarian parapet cap. Three overhead garage doors are centered on the south façade. At the east façade, a double man door is located at the northern end of the second story. The stair that served this door has been removed. A single man door is located at ground level on the eastern edge of the north façade. The west façade is an uninterrupted plane of CMU. Historically, the garage building was separated from the office building by a Soo Line railroad spur. This building is non-contributing to the district. It is a garage and never housed factory or office space that was integral to the Mereen Johnson Machine Company operations.

**APPLICANT'S PROPOSAL.** The applicant uses the site as a contractor's yard and maintenance facility for several of their businesses including Atomic Recycling, Kellington Construction, Inc., Maverick Cutting & Breaking, LLC, and Broadway Resource Recovery, LLC. The site is also home to ProPellet, a manufacture of kitty litter, where recycled wood is converted into pellets. The applicant is proposing to demolish the Mereen Johnson Office Building, the Mereen Johnson Garage Building and the 32-foot by 48-foot "brick pattern vault" addition constructed on the northeast end of the Mereen Johnson Factory Building in order to construct an addition to the Mereen Johnson Factory Building to enclose the truck load out area for ProPellet which is currently uncovered. The applicant has indicated that the Mereen Johnson Office Building and the Mereen Johnson Garage Building need to be demolished in order to make room for truck maneuvering.

The portion of the Mereen Johnson Factory Building that the applicant is proposing to demolish is the contributing 32-foot by 48-foot "brick pattern vault" constructed on the northeast end of the building. In its place, the applicant is proposing to construct an approximate 5,100 square foot addition that measures between 80 and 93 feet long and 59 feet wide. The addition would be 25 feet tall and would have a flat roof. The addition would be clad in cedar lap siding and would have clearstory windows on the east side of the addition. The applicant is proposing to hang a salvaged mill saw on the exterior of the building facing Lyndale Avenue North.

**RELATED APPROVALS.** On July 14, 2015, the HPC approved the nomination of 4400, 4401, 4410, 4420 and 4430 Lyndale Avenue North as landmarks, established interim protection, and directed the Planning Director to prepare or cause to be prepared a designation study. The study is now complete and will also be considered at the May 17, 2016, HPC meeting.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS.** No comment letters have been received in regards to this application. Any correspondence received prior to the public meeting will be forwarded on to the Heritage Preservation Commission for consideration.

## ANALYSIS

### CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS

The Department of Community Planning and Economic Development has analyzed the application to allow for demolition of the Mereen Johnson Office Building, the Mereen Johnson Garage Building and the 32-foot by 48-foot “brick pattern vault” addition constructed on the northeast end of the Mereen Johnson Factory Building based on the following findings:

1. *The alteration is compatible with the designation of the landmark or historic district, including the period and criteria of significance.*

The C.A. Smith Lumber Historic District is historically significant for its association with the late-lumber and post-lumber industries in Minneapolis, for its association with C.A. Smith, Arno Mereen, and Charles Johnson, and for its association with distinctive elements of the identity of the Camden neighborhood. The period of significance for the district is identified in the designation study as 1892-1966.

#### **Office Building and Factory Building Addition**

The demolition of the Mereen Johnson Office Building and the 32-foot by 48-foot “brick pattern vault” addition constructed on the northeast end of the Mereen Johnson Factory Building would not be compatible with the designation of the C.A. Smith Lumber Historic District, including the period and criteria of significance. The Mereen Johnson Office Building was constructed in 1917 and the “brick pattern vault” addition to the Mereen Johnson Factory Building was built in 1922. Both the Mereen Johnson Office Building and the 32-foot by 48-foot “brick pattern vault” addition constructed on the northeast end of the Mereen Johnson Factory Building are essential elements in the district which reveal the successful expansion of the Mereen Johnson Machine Company.

#### **Garage**

The Mereen Johnson Garage Building is a non-contributing building to the district. While it was constructed during the period of significance, it was constructed as a garage and never housed factory or office space that was integral to the Mereen Johnson Machine Company operations. CPED therefore is recommending approval of the proposed demolition of the non-contributing garage.

2. *The alteration will ensure the continued integrity of the landmark or historic district.*

#### **Office Building and Factory Building Addition**

The demolition of the Mereen Johnson Office Building and the 32-foot by 48-foot “brick pattern vault” constructed on the northeast end of the Mereen Johnson Factory Building would not ensure the continued integrity of the C.A. Smith Lumber Historic District. The preservation ordinance defines integrity as authenticity evidenced by the following seven factors:

**Location:** Location is the place where the historic property was constructed. The Mereen Johnson Office Building and the 32-foot by 48-foot “brick pattern vault” addition constructed on the northeast end of the Mereen Johnson Factory Building remain in their original location and therefore retain integrity of location.

**Design:** Design is the combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a property. A property's design reflects historic functions and technologies as well as aesthetics. The original portion of the Mereen Johnson Office Building features a clay tile parapet, the cornice features corbeling with a stringcourse below and the water table stands proud of the upper portion of the walls. The Mereen Johnson Factory Building was a utilitarian structure that was added on to and adapted over time. While the buildings were not highly designed, the buildings have not been altered since the period of significance and therefore retain integrity of design.

**Setting:** Setting is the physical environment of a historic property. While the Camden neighborhood and Lyndale Avenue North continue to be a working industrial area and the spatial relationships among the buildings and their relationship to the Soo Line rail siding remain intact, the setting beyond the boundaries of the district has changed dramatically.

The sites within the district no longer have a direct physical connection to the Mississippi River; the connection was severed within the period of significance as a result of the construction of Interstate 94. Additionally, the neighborhood to the east and north of the district has changed from lumber yards to residential neighborhoods. Much of the historic industrial and commercial fabric along Lyndale Avenue North has been replaced with mid-to-late 20<sup>th</sup> century commercial buildings.

**Materials:** Materials are the physical elements that were combined during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern or configuration to form a historic property. The Mereen Johnson Office Building and the 32-foot by 48-foot “brick pattern vault” constructed on the northeast end of the Mereen Johnson Factory Building retain their original masonry exteriors (both 19<sup>th</sup> century brick and early-to-mid 20<sup>th</sup> century CMU construction) along with details including stone windowsills, some original windows, and ghost signs. The buildings retain integrity of materials.

**Workmanship:** Workmanship is the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history. The Mereen Johnson Office Building retains integrity of workmanship which is expressed through its masonry details and construction quality. The 32-foot by 48-foot “brick pattern vault” addition constructed on the northeast end of the Mereen Johnson Factory Building is utilitarian without a high degree of architectural detail. The articulated addition and straightforward construction methods reflect the quality of workmanship common in 20<sup>th</sup> century factory buildings constructed by day labor.

**Feeling:** Feeling is a property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time. It results from the presence of physical features that, taken together, convey the property's historic character. The Mereen Johnson Office Building and the 32-foot by 48-foot “brick pattern vault” constructed on the northeast end of the Mereen Johnson Factory Building are historically significant for its association with the late-lumber and post-lumber industries in Minneapolis, for its association with C.A. Smith, Arno Mereen, and Charles Johnson, and for its association with distinctive elements of the identity of the Camden neighborhood. The buildings retain integrity of feeling.

**Association:** The property's integrity of association is the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property. The buildings retain integrity of association with Arno Mereen and Charles Johnson.

### **Garage**

The Mereen Johnson Garage Building is a non-contributing building to the district. While it was constructed during the period of significance, it was constructed as a garage and never housed factory or office space that was integral to the Mereen Johnson Machine Company operations.

Given this, the demolition of this building would not impact the integrity of the C.A. Smith Lumber Historic District.

3. *The alteration is consistent with the applicable design guidelines adopted by the commission.*

There are no applicable design guidelines that have been adopted for the C.A. Smith Lumber Historic District, as the historic district's designation will be considered at the May 17, 2016, HPC meeting and design guidelines have not yet been created. See finding number 5, regarding the consistency of the alterations with *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*.

4. *The alteration is consistent with the applicable recommendations contained in The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.*

The following standards for rehabilitation are most applicable to this proposal:

- A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.
- The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.
- Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic property shall be preserved.

#### **Office Building and Factory Building Addition**

The demolition of the Mereen Johnson Office Building and the 32-foot by 48-foot "brick pattern vault" constructed on the northeast end of the Mereen Johnson Factory Building would not be consistent with the applicable recommendations contained in *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*. These buildings were constructed during the period of significance and contribute to the integrity of the district.

#### **Garage**

The demolition of the non-contributing Mereen Johnson Garage Building would be consistent with the applicable recommendations contained in *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*. While this building was constructed during the period of significance, it was constructed as a garage and never housed factory or office space that was integral to the Mereen Johnson Machine Company operations. Demolition of the garage would have minimal impact on the defining characteristics and contributing structures of the historic district.

5. *The alteration is consistent with the spirit and intent of the preservation ordinance, the applicable policies of the comprehensive plan, and the applicable preservation policies in small area plans adopted by the city council.*

The following policies of *The Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth* are most applicable to the proposal:

#### **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.

**Heritage Preservation Policy 8.2: Continue to evaluate potential historic resources for future studies and designation as the city ages.**

- 8.2.2 Identify and document the city’s 20<sup>th</sup> century and post-war resources as part of the city’s heritage. These resources may be increasingly threatened due to lack of awareness or the information necessary to evaluate their significance.

Demolishing the Mereen Johnson Office Building and the 32-foot by 48-foot “brick pattern vault” constructed on the northeast end of the Mereen Johnson Factory Building would not be consistent with the spirit and intent of the preservation ordinance, the applicable policies of the comprehensive plan, and the applicable preservation policies in small area plans adopted by the city council. Retaining these buildings on site help explain the successful expansion of the Mereen Johnson Machine Company.

**Additional Findings for Destruction**

Before approving a certificate of appropriateness that involves the destruction, in whole or in part, of any landmark, property in an historic district or nominated property under interim protection, the commission shall make the following findings:

1. *The destruction is necessary to correct an unsafe or dangerous condition on the property; or*
2. *That there are no reasonable alternatives to the destruction. In determining whether reasonable alternatives exist, the commission shall consider, but not be limited to:*
  - a. *The significance of the property;*
  - b. *The integrity of the property; and*
  - c. *The economic value or usefulness of the existing structure, including its current use, costs of renovation and feasible alternative uses.*

**UNSAFE OR DANGEROUS CONDITION**

The applicant is proposing to demolish the Mereen Johnson Office Building, the Mereen Johnson Garage Building and the 32-foot by 48-foot “brick pattern vault” addition constructed on the northeast end of the Mereen Johnson Factory Building. The applicant is not asserting that the demolition of these buildings is necessary to correct an unsafe or dangerous condition. However, the applicant contends that these buildings need to be demolished as there is no economic value in renovating them and that in order to allow for adequate truck access to the proposed addition that they need to be demolished.

**REASONABLE ALTERNATIVES TO DEMOLITION**

**Significance and Integrity:** As discussed above, the Mereen Johnson Office Building and the 32-foot by 48-foot “brick pattern vault” constructed on the northeast end of the Mereen Johnson Factory Building retain integrity and contribute to the significance of the C.A. Smith Lumber Historic District. However, the Mereen Johnson Garage Building is a non-contributing building to the district and demolition of this building would not impact the significance or the integrity of the district.

**Economic Value or Usefulness of the Existing Structure:** Hennepin County Assessor records indicate that the market value of the property is \$751,500 and the market value of the buildings is \$1,000, for a total market value of \$752,500.

The applicant asserts that demolition is the only viable alternative for the buildings. The applicant provided cost estimates for renovation and for asbestos abatement which are attached to the report. The applicant also provided a structural evaluation of the buildings that indicates that the exterior masonry of the buildings is crumbling, that there is evidence of foundation cracks due to settlement and roof damage.

The applicant has indicated that the cost to renovate the Mereen Johnson Office Building would be approximately \$1,069,978 dollars and approximately \$135,082 dollars to renovate the Mereen Johnson Garage Building. In addition, the applicant has indicated that there would be an additional \$308,921 dollars in fees for the remodeling projects.

Based on a real estate brokers opinion that was also submitted the applicant would have to lease out the buildings for \$30.00 per square foot to justify the investment to rehabilitate the buildings but the applicant contends that they would only be able to lease out the buildings for \$8.00 per square foot. The applicant's information is based upon only one option of renting out the building to someone else. However, since they have several of their own businesses in the building they could utilize the buildings themselves. This option was not explored.

No information was submitted that discussed the possibility of reorganizing the uses within the Mereen Johnson Factory Building to avoid the demolition of the 32-foot by 48-foot "brick pattern vault" addition, nor was there any information provided that discussed reuse of the buildings for their own businesses. Without an exploration for reuse of the existing structures for utilization by their own businesses rather than leasing to other businesses, it is impossible to conclude that there is no economic value or usefulness of the existing structures.

If the property were to be placed on the National Register of Historic Places, a substantial rehabilitation of the buildings could be eligible for state and federal tax credits, which could provide up to a 40 percent tax credit.

## CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS

The Department of Community Planning and Economic Development has analyzed the application to allow for an addition to the Mereen Johnson Factory Building based on the following findings:

- 1. The alteration is compatible with the designation of the landmark or historic district, including the period and criteria of significance.*

The C.A. Smith Lumber Historic District is historically significant for its association with the late-lumber and post-lumber industries in Minneapolis, for its association with C.A. Smith, Arno Mereen, and Charles Johnson, and for its association with distinctive elements of the identity of the Camden neighborhood. The period of significance for the district is identified in the designation study as 1892-1966.

The applicant is proposing to demolish the Mereen Johnson Office Building, the Mereen Johnson Garage Building and the 32-foot by 48-foot "brick pattern vault" addition constructed on the northeast end of the Mereen Johnson Factory Building. In place of the 32-foot by 48-foot "brick pattern vault" addition, the applicant is proposing to construct an approximate 5,100 square foot addition that measures between 80 and 93 feet long and 59 feet wide. The addition would be 25 feet tall and would have a flat roof. The addition would be clad in cedar lap siding and would have clearstory windows on the northeast end of the addition. The applicant is proposing to hang a salvaged mill saw on the exterior of the building facing Lyndale Avenue North.

The proposed addition to the Mereen Johnson Factory Building would not be compatible with the designation of the C.A. Smith Lumber Historic District, including the period and criteria of significance. The proposed addition requires the demolition of a contributing portion of the building as well as two other buildings on the property; the contributing Mereen Johnson Office Building and the non-contributing Mereen Johnson Garage Building. In addition, the proposed addition would not be compatible with the portion of the building that would remain on the site. The proposed addition would be taller and have significantly more bulk than the remaining building, making the addition

clearly out of proportion with the remaining building. The addition would be clad in cedar lap siding and would have clearstory windows on the east side of the building. On the north side of the addition there would be two overhead garage doors installed. One of the garage doors would be taller than the roofline of the remaining building.

2. *The alteration will ensure the continued integrity of the landmark or historic district.*

The proposed addition to the Mereen Johnson Factory Building would not ensure the continued integrity of the C.A. Smith Lumber Historic District. The proposed addition requires the demolition of a contributing portion of the building as well as two other buildings on the property; the contributing Mereen Johnson Office Building and the non-contributing Mereen Johnson Garage Building. In addition, the proposed addition would not be compatible in terms of design and scale with the portion of the building that would remain on the site.

3. *The alteration is consistent with the applicable design guidelines adopted by the commission.*

There are no applicable design guidelines that have been adopted for the C.A. Smith Lumber Historic District, as the historic district's designation will be considered at the May 17, 2016, HPC meeting and design guidelines have not yet been created. See finding number 5, regarding the consistency of the alterations with *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*.

4. *The alteration is consistent with the applicable recommendations contained in The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.*

The following standards for rehabilitation are most applicable to this proposal:

- A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.
- The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.
- Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic property shall be preserved.
- New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.
- New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

The addition to the Mereen Johnson Factory Building would not be consistent with the applicable recommendations contained in *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*. The proposed addition requires the demolition of a contributing portion of the building as well as two other buildings on the property; the contributing Mereen Johnson Office Building and the non-contributing Mereen Johnson Garage Building. In addition, the proposed addition would not be compatible with the portion of the building that would remain on the site based on the defining characteristics of the contributing structure. The proposed addition would be taller and have significantly more bulk than the remaining building, making the addition clearly out of proportion with the remaining building. The addition would be clad in cedar lap siding and would have clearstory windows on the east side of the building. On the north side of the addition there would

be two overhead garage doors installed. One of the garage doors would be taller than the roofline of the remaining building.

5. *The alteration is consistent with the spirit and intent of the preservation ordinance, the applicable policies of the comprehensive plan, and the applicable preservation policies in small area plans adopted by the city council.*

The following policies of *The Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth* are most applicable to the proposal:

**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.
- 8.1.2 Require new construction in historic districts to be compatible with the historic fabric.

The addition to the Mereen Johnson Factory Building would not be consistent with the spirit and intent of the preservation ordinance, the applicable policies of the comprehensive plan, or the applicable preservation policies in small area plans adopted by the city council. The proposed addition requires the demolition of a contributing portion of the building as well as two other buildings on the property; the contributing Mereen Johnson Office Building and the non-contributing Mereen Johnson Garage Building. In addition, the proposed addition would not be compatible with the portion of the building that would remain on the site.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The Department of Community Planning and Economic Development recommends that the Heritage Preservation Commission adopt staff findings for the applications by Atomic Recycling for the property located at 4401 Lyndale Avenue North in the potential C.A. Smith Lumber Historic District:

### A. Certificate of Appropriateness.

Recommended motion: **Deny** the certificate of appropriateness to allow for the demolition of the Mereen Johnson Office Building and the 32-foot by 48-foot “brick pattern vault” addition constructed on the northeast end of the Mereen Johnson Factory Building but **Approve** the certificate of appropriateness to allow for the demolition of the Mereen Johnson Garage Building.

### B. Certificate of Appropriateness.

Recommended motion: **Deny** the certificate of appropriateness to allow for an addition to the Mereen Johnson Factory Building.

## ATTACHMENTS

1. BZH Map
2. C.A. Smith Lumber Historic District designation study
3. Written description and findings submitted by applicant
4. Information from Greiner Construction
5. Information from TWELL Environmental, Inc.
6. Information from Larson Engineering, Inc.

7. Information from Colliers International
8. Information from Anchor Bank
9. Photos
10. Survey
11. Plans
12. Correspondence