



**Request for City Council Committee Action
From the Department of Community Planning & Economic Development**

Date: February 3, 2005

To: Council Member Gary Schiff, Zoning and Planning Committee

Prepared by: Amy Lucas, Senior Planner, Phone 612-673-2422

Presenter in Committee: Amy Lucas

Approved by: Barbara Sporlein, Director, Planning _____

Subject: Referral from January 11, 2005 Heritage Preservation Commission hearing

RECOMMENDATION: To adopt staff findings with the additional finding that the proposed development will have a negative impact on the property and therefore the boundaries of the designated site will not include the vacant property to the east. To approve the landmark designation of the Cream of Wheat Building at 730 Stinson Boulevard.

Previous Directives: N/A

Financial Impact (Check those that apply)

No financial impact - or - Action is within current department budget.

Community Impact

Ward: 1

Neighborhood Notification: Within Mid-City Industrial Area
no recognized neighborhood association

City Goals: Consistent

Comprehensive Plan: Consistent

Background/Supporting Information:

The attached report summarizes the actions taken at the Heritage Preservation Commission hearing held on January 11, 2005. The findings and recommendations are respectfully submitted for the consideration of your Committee.

MINNEAPOLIS CITY PLANNING DEPARTMENT REPORT

HERITAGE PRESERVATION DESIGNATION

DATE OF HPC REVIEW: January 11, 2005 (forwarded from December 21, 2004 hearing)

ADDRESS OF PROPERTY: 730 Stinson Boulevard

STAFF CONTACT AND PHONE: Amy Lucas, 673-2422

PROPERTY OWNER: Hillcrest Development

CONTACT PERSON AND PHONE: Hillcrest Development, Scott Tankenoff, (612) 371-0123

WARD: 1 **NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATION:** no neighborhood association, within the boundaries of the Mid-City Industrial Area

BACKGROUND:

The Cream of Wheat Building is a four-story, brick building constructed in 1927 for the Cream of Wheat Company at the corner of Stinson and Broadway in Northeast Minneapolis. The building is significant as an architectural example of the success of the Cream of Wheat company and is a seamless incorporation of office and factory uses. The building is also significant as a noteworthy design of the Minneapolis engineer Walter H. Wheeler.

On October 19, 2004, the Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) directed the Planning Division to commence landmark designation of the Cream of Wheat Building. The property owner, Hillcrest Development, initiated the designation and hired Hess Roise Historical Consultants to complete the designation study. The landmark designation study was completed in November 2004. The designation study found that the Cream of Wheat Building meets designation criteria (1) and (4) contained in section 599.210 of the city's Heritage Preservation Regulations. Copies of the nomination form and designation study are attached.

The State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) was sent a copy of the proposed designation pursuant to the requirements of state law and section 599.250 of the city's Heritage Preservation Regulations. The SHPO has determined that the Cream of Wheat Building is eligible for local designation under designation criteria (1) and (4). The SHPO found that the Cream of Wheat Building is historically significant for its association with the milling industry in Minneapolis and as an example of a building type designed by Walter Wheeler. The SHPO comments are contained in a letter dated November 18, 2004 which is attached.

In addition, the proposed designation was submitted to the City Planning Commission (CPC) for its review and comment, pursuant to section 599.260 of the Heritage Preservation Regulations. The CPC was asked to consider the relationship of the proposed designation to the city's comprehensive plan, the effect of the proposed designation on the surrounding area, and the consistency of the proposed designation with applicable development plans or objectives. On November 18, 2004 the CPC adopted the findings and recommendations included in the

Planning Department staff report. A copy of the staff report dated November 18, 2004 is attached.

AUTHORITY FOR REVIEW:

Chapter 599 of the Minneapolis Code of Ordinances, Heritage Preservation Regulations, authorizes the HPC to hold a public hearing to consider proposed designations and to make findings and recommendations to the Zoning and Planning Committee of the City Council with respect to proposed designations as follows:

599.270. Designation hearing. Following completion of the designation study the commission shall hold a public hearing to consider the proposed designation, as provided in section 599.170. Any person having a legal or equitable interest in a nominated property shall be allowed reasonable opportunity to give testimony or present evidence concerning the proposed designation.

599.280. Commission recommendation. Following the public hearing, the commission shall make findings with respect to the proposed designation and shall submit the same together with its recommendation to the zoning and planning committee of the city council. In making its findings and recommendation, the commission shall consider the designation criteria contained in section 599.210, the information contained in the designation study, the state historic preservation officer's comments, the city planning commission's comments, the planning director's report and all testimony and evidence received at the public hearing relating to the designation.

DESIGNATION CRITERIA:

Section 599.210 of the Heritage Preservation Regulations establishes criteria to be considered in determining whether a property is worthy of designation as a landmark or historic district because of its historical, cultural, architectural, archaeological or engineering significance. To be eligible for designation, a property must meet at least one of the following designation criteria:

- (1) The property is associated with significant events or with periods that exemplify broad patterns of cultural, political, economic or social history.
- (2) The property is associated with the lives of significant persons or groups.
- (3) The property contains or is associated with distinctive elements of city identity.
- (4) The property embodies the distinctive characteristics of an architectural or engineering type or style, or method of construction.
- (5) The property exemplifies a landscape design or development pattern distinguished by innovation, rarity, uniqueness or quality of design or detail.
- (6) The property exemplifies works of master builders, engineers, designers, artists, craftsmen or architects.
- (7) The property has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

FINDINGS

1. Consistency with designation criteria:

The designation study for the Cream of Wheat Building (November 2004) shows that the property meets designation criteria (1) and (4) as follows:

(1) The property is associated with significant events or with periods that exemplify broad patterns of cultural, political, economic or social history.

The Cream of Wheat Company Building exemplifies the businesses spawned in the late nineteenth century by the region's flourishing agricultural economy. Drawn to Minneapolis by its dominance in the grain-milling industry, the fledging company grew to become a major player in the hot cereal market.

(4) The property embodies the distinctive characteristics of an architectural or engineering type or style, or method of construction.

The Cream of Wheat headquarters at 730 Stinson Boulevard is a symbol of the company's success. The building is a classic 1920s design that incorporates the office and factory uses and is marked by a prominent tower. It is a noteworthy design by the distinguished Minneapolis engineer, Walter H. Wheeler.

2. Consistency with the comprehensive plan:

The proposed designation promotes preservation of an historic resource and supports the following goal and policies of *The Minneapolis Plan*:

Goal 6. *Preserve, enhance and create a sustainable natural and historic environment citywide.*

Policy 1.7. *Minneapolis will recognize and celebrate its history.*

Policy 9.2. *Minneapolis will continue to preserve the natural ecology and the historical features that define its unique identity in the region.*

Policy 9.4. *Minneapolis will promote preservation as a tool for economic development and community revitalization.*

3. Effect on the surrounding area:

The proposed designation will preserve a unique local landmark. The designation will not negatively affect the surrounding area.

4. Consistency with applicable development objectives:

There are no applicable development plans or development objectives adopted by the city council for this property and the surrounding area.

5. Required comments:

The City Planning Commission and the State Historic Preservation Office have commented favorably on the designation.

RECOMMENDATION OF THE CITY PLANNING DEPARTMENT:

Planning Staff recommends that the Heritage Preservation Commission **adopt** the above findings and submit the same together with a recommendation to **approve** the landmark designation of the Cream of Wheat Building to the Zoning and Planning Committee of the City Council.

RECOMMENDATION OF THE HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION:

At the public hearing of January 11, 2005, the HPC moved to **adopt** staff findings with the additional finding that the proposed development will have a negative impact on the historic property and therefore the boundaries of the designated site will not include the vacant property to the east. The HPC forwarded the recommendation to **approve** the landmark designation of the Cream of Wheat Building to the Zoning and Planning Committee of the City Council.

Attachments:

1. Nomination Form, October 2004.
2. Cream of Wheat Designation Study, November 2004.
3. State Historic Preservation Officer comments, November 18, 2004.
4. Planning Department report to the City Planning Commission, November 18, 2004.
5. Map of Cream of Wheat boundaries for designation recommended by the HPC on January 11, 2005.

Date:

5. Function or Use

Historic: Industrial

Government:

Current: Vacant

Work in progress

6. Description

Architectural classification (style):

Materials: foundation: poured concrete
 roof: built-up materials
 walls: reinforced concrete, brick, Mankato stone, artificial stone
 other:

Describe present and historic physical appearance. Use continuation sheets.

7. Statement of Significance

Applicable local designation criteria: 1, 4

Related local context (s): Northeast Minneapolis Historic Context

Areas of significance: Industry, Architecture

Period (s) of significance: 1928-2002

Significant dates: 1928-2002

Significant person (s):

Cultural affiliation:

Architect/Builder: Walter H. Wheeler (engineer); C. F. Haglin & Sons (general contractor)

Use continuation sheets.

8. Major Bibliographic References

Use continuation sheets

9. Geographical Data

Legal Description: "The easterly 383.5 feet of Lot 1, AUDITOR'S SUBDIVISION NUMBER 268, Hennepin County, Minnesota, according to the map or plat thereof on

file and of record in the office of the Registrar of Titles in and for said Hennepin County."

see attached map

10. Form prepared by:

Name/Title: Elizabeth A. Gales, Historian

Organization: Hess, Roise and Company

Street and number: The Foster House, 100 North First Street Telephone:
(612) 338-1987

City: Minneapolis State: Minnesota Zip: 55401

11. Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission Comments

Date submitted to Minneapolis HPC: 10-19-04

Date of Minneapolis HPC comment: HPC public hearing 1-11-05

12. Description of City Council

Designation of property pursuant to:

Date of action:

DESCRIPTION

The Cream of Wheat Building is located at 730 Stinson Boulevard in northeast Minneapolis. The property, which occupies Lots 1 and 2 of Auditor's Subdivision No. 268 and 325 feet of vacated frontage road, is bounded on the east by Stinson Boulevard, on the north by Broadway Street Northeast, and on the south by a large parking lot associated with other buildings. The west border is edged by other industrial properties; the northwestern end curves to follow one of the two rail spurs that serve the building. The building was constructed in 1927-1928 and has had few alterations. Grass lawns with mature trees surround the building on the east and north sides. Unlike other buildings in the neighborhood, Cream of Wheat is set back from Stinson Boulevard, allowing for a generous landscaped yard that is continued on the north side. This was mirrored historically by a similar space on the south side, but the south yard was partially occupied by a bulk handling plant in 1957. The structure for the twelve cylindrical, steel storage bins, which narrow into a funnel shape at the bottom, is reinforced concrete. A steel I-beam between the plant and the building, and steel platforms on the south train shed roof were added in 1976-1977 to support bins and equipment, which have since been removed. The bulk handling plant is linked to the building by an underground tunnel that holds

pipes. A parking lot extends from the building's west facade to the western property boundary.¹

The Cream of Wheat Building is rectangular in form. The main block of the building is four stories in height with a 125-foot tower on the southeast corner. In addition to making the building a landmark, the tower holds a water tank for a gravity-fed sprinkler system. A one-story garage wing extends south from the west corner of the south facade. On the north and south sides, the first story is stepped out approximately twenty feet from the main block of the building. These stepped portions accommodate train sheds on each side. Four penthouses, ranging in height from one to one-and-one-half stories, are located on the roof. Two sit on the south edge, are clad in brick, and are original to the building. The other two, built in the 1980s, are located on the west and north sides of the roof and are of concrete block painted a bright off-white. The western one is actually an addition to an original brick-walled roof access stair. Two metal-clad equipment sheds, constructed in the 1980s or 1990s, are situated on the east end of the roof. A smokestack, original to the building, rises from the southwest corner of the roof. The flat roofs of the main building, garage, and penthouses are covered with white PVC roofing. The flat roofs of the train sheds are built-up with top layers of gravel.²

The building's structure is reinforced concrete, and all facades are clad in buff-colored Kittanning brick with Mankato-stone ornament. The water table on the east, north, and south sides is a light-colored artificial stone. The west facade has a concrete water table. All facades are punctuated by rectangular window openings with sills of Mankato stone. The openings are set off in recessed bays by brick pilasters. Stone capitals and dentil molding decorate the pilasters and bays. All the original windows were replaced with the current Kalwall window units in the early 1980s. Brick panels with recessed cross patterns form spandrels under the third- and fourth-story windows. The cross pattern is repeated on the parapets, which are topped with saw-tooth brick courses, stone cornices, and stone caps. The parapet details are repeated on the one-story garage and train-shed wings, and the two original penthouses.

The east facade, the building's formal front, has an elaborate entrance porch at the base of the tower. The porch is one story in height and has a flat roof. Like the building, the porch's structure is reinforced concrete. Granite stairs lead from the ground to the granite porch floor, which is level with the first floor of the building. Rusticated Mankato stone covers the staircase walls and the exterior and interior walls of the porch. The porch entrance is a large segmental arch. Two window openings, one each in the north and south walls, allow light and air into the space. The coffered plaster ceiling is suspended from a concrete slab. The stone on the front face of the south staircase wall is incised with the numbers "1927." The cornice on the porch parapet has carved dentils and round-edged parapet caps. A stuccoed handicap ramp, constructed in 1994, wraps around from the south facade

¹ City of Minneapolis, building permit 467638, issued December 7, 1976.

² The description is based on site visits by the author on August 5 and September 28, 2004; and original drawings by Walter H. Wheeler, Tubes K, L, and M of the McEnary Krafft Birch & Kilgore Papers, Northwest Architectural Archives, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

to the east facade. The doorway for the ramp was created by enlarging a window opening immediately south of the entrance porch.³

The interior of the building remains largely untouched, although virtually all of the furnishings and manufacturing equipment have been removed. The majority of the interior is open with mushroom-capital columns spaced twenty feet apart. These open spaces have sealed concrete floors and painted concrete columns, walls, and ceilings. The original paint scheme was light green lower walls and white upper walls, ceilings, and columns. Now all painted surfaces are white, although some columns have red and yellow bands. Mechanical, electrical, plumbing, and HVAC equipment is visible throughout. Two freight elevators are located on the south side of the building. One is forty feet from the southeast corner and the other is sixty feet from the southwest corner. A manlift abuts the western freight elevator. The building has six staircases spread around the perimeter walls. Most of the staircases access all floors, but two of the staircases only connect two floors.⁴

The few original terra-cotta tile and concrete-block partition walls were concentrated in corners and along perimeter walls. Over time, new concrete-block and temporary partition walls were added to the basement, second, and fourth floors. The basement holds the original boilers; the rest of the space is open, except for a concrete-block vault that was added to the southeast corner at some point. The first floor was open and held machinery. Loading docks on the north and south sides edged grade-level rail spurs that entered the building from the west. The northern rail spur has been mostly filled in with concrete; the southern trench remains. A twenty-foot by forty-foot formal lobby is located in the southeast corner. It retains its original finishes, including a terrazzo floor, marble-covered walls, mahogany trim, scalloped plaster cornices, and a coffered plaster ceiling. An original terrazzo staircase, with marble newels and bronze balustrade, leads to the second-floor offices. The reception room at the top of the stairs has a terrazzo floor, wood-and-glass partition walls, and a coffered plaster ceiling. A doorway in the room's east wall leads to a hallway for the executive suite, four private executive offices and a bathroom extending along the east side of the second floor. The suite has its historic plaster ceilings and walls, and mahogany wainscoting and trim. The doors are pine cores with several layers of mahogany veneer on each side. The executive offices have the original white oak floors covered by carpeting. The original "Battleship" linoleum in the hallway and bathroom was replaced in the 1970s with newer linoleum. A door in the north wall of the reception room provides access to the general offices, once a large open room on the northeast corner of the second floor. The original oak trim was removed, and the room was subdivided with temporary wall panels and suspended tile ceilings in the early 1980s. The Battleship linoleum floors were replaced with newer linoleum and carpeting. A vault, office supply closet, and men's and women's locker rooms are on the west end of the general offices. Most of the original wood trim and wood and metal shelving is intact. Several pine, oak, or Kalamein doors also remain. The cafeteria is located on the north wall, west of the vault and women's locker room.

³ City of Minneapolis, building permit 605980, issued March 24, 1994.

⁴ Wheeler to Haglin, February 17, 1928, Cream of Wheat Plant, Minneapolis—Folder 13, Box 11, Wheeler Papers; Bull to Wheeler, September 1, 1927, Cream of Wheat Plant, Minneapolis—Folder 18, Box 12, Wheeler Papers.

Metal, hollow-core French doors in the cafeteria's north wall once led to the roof of the train shed, which Wheeler vaguely described as a "roof garden for summer use." Now a solid-plane hollow-core metal door fills the opening.⁵

The third floor is open and once held machinery. The fourth floor was divided into five bays: the machine shop, the cooking room, the sterilizing room, the print paper storage room, and the printing department. The print presses were partially enclosed in a separate bay in the printing department; noise from the machinery was muffled by special material that reduced the vibrations of the printing presses. The paper storage room, the machine shop, and the sterilizing rooms were subdivided in the 1970s or 1980s.⁶

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Cream of Wheat Building is eligible for designation as a local historic landmark under Criterion 1 for its relationship to the milling industry in Minneapolis and Criterion 4 for its distinctive design by Walter H. Wheeler.

CREATING A CORPORATE LANDMARK

The history of Cream of Wheat cereal began in 1893 when the head miller at a small flour mill in Grand Forks, North Dakota, presented to his employers the idea of marketing wheat middlings as a cooked breakfast cereal. Diamond Milling's owners initially disliked the idea, but the miller, Thomas Amidon, convinced them of the cereal's potential value. Caught in an economic depression, the owners took a chance that the milling byproduct could provide additional income for the company. Before sending the product to brokers in New York City, they developed a name and package for the cereal. The brother of one of the owners came up with "Cream of Wheat"; the cereal was made from the best part of the wheat berry and had a creamy consistency when cooked. Another of the mill's owners, Emery Mapes, printed simple labels for the strawboard boxes using woodcuts left over from an earlier newspaper venture.

The cereal was an immediate success. The day that the initial ten cases arrived in New York, the brokers wired Grand Forks requesting fifty more cases. Diamond Milling soon shifted operations from flour milling to cereal production and changed its name. In 1895, the Cream of Wheat Company moved to Minneapolis to take advantage of lower shipping rates and have access to a steady supply of raw materials. The company occupied various buildings in the downtown area before settling in 1903 in a new building designed by Harry Wild Jones on the southwest corner of Fifth Street and First Avenue North.⁷

⁵ Kalamein doors are wood core doors with layers of fire insulation enclosed in steel. The ones in the Cream of Wheat building were finished with a baked faux grain finish. Drawings Nos. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 18, Working Drawings, Warehouse and Factory Building, Stinson Boulevard and Broadway, Cream of Wheat Co. Owner, Tube L, McEnary Krafft Birch & Kilgore Papers, Northwest Architectural Archives, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis; City of Minneapolis, building permit 511814, issued December 3, 1981.

⁶ Drawings Nos. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 18, McEnary Krafft Birch & Kilgore Papers; correspondence from the Korfund Company, manufacturers of noise buffering material and devices, to Wheeler can be found in Cream of Wheat Plant, Minneapolis—Folder 18, Box 12, Wheeler Papers.

⁷ The 1903 building was demolished in 1939 to make way for a parking lot; see "Cream of Wheat Building in Loop Will be Razed," *Minneapolis Tribune*, November 7, 1939. Other references: Mike Diamante,

The product's popularity was fostered by innovative advertising campaigns, which were spearheaded by Emery Mapes. Mapes kept the Cream of Wheat name continuously in the American consumer's mind by placing advertisements in nationally distributed women's magazines. In the late 1890s, he photographed an African American waiter in Chicago and used the man's face in subsequent advertising art. The image of a smiling chef presenting a bowl of steaming cereal became the company's icon. The company continued to grow over the next decade and added a manufacturing plant in 1915 in Winnipeg, Manitoba, to process cereal for the Canadian market. By 1926, the building in downtown Minneapolis was too small for production demands. The company purchased a lot in the Northwestern Terminal district, an industrial area northeast of downtown, and began developing a new building.⁸

In September 1926, Cream of Wheat hired engineer Walter H. Wheeler to prepare plans for the company's new building. Wheeler was forty-three years old and had an engineering consulting business in Minneapolis. Earlier that year, he finished one of the major projects in his career: designing and supervising construction of the Mendota Bridge over the Minnesota River. He also designed the Minneapolis Armory, the Baltimore Armory, Pioneer Hall at the University of Minnesota, and the Sunshine Biscuit Company factory in New Jersey.⁹

Wheeler threw himself into the design for the new Cream of Wheat building. He and the company agreed that the structure would be reinforced concrete, with similar "control of concrete and specifications . . . used for the Mendota Bridge." Reaching consensus on the building's exterior appearance, however, was more difficult. Cream of Wheat executives had expressed their preference for a traditional red brick design not long after hiring Wheeler: "We are rather inclined to favor the type of exterior used in the Northwestern Terminal buildings and to use that same type of brick." When Wheeler presented preliminary designs in February 1927 he accommodated this preference with an "English" option featuring red brick with light-colored stone trim.¹⁰ However, Wheeler had other ideas for the project. He lobbied for an alternative "Classical" design of Bedford limestone. "If stone is not used," he conceded, "a somewhat similar effect might be secured by using a light buff colored brick with Bedford stone or other stone trim." He proposed dark

"Great Milling Families of Minneapolis, Part 4," *Lake Area News*, September, 1988, 24; "The Story of Cream of Wheat," brochure by the Cream of Wheat Corporation, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1977, 1-2.

⁸ Diamante, 24-25; "The Story of Cream of Wheat," 2-3.

⁹ Biographical information is taken from the Northwest Architectural Archives files and is available online at <http://special.lib.umn.edu/findaid/html/mss/nwaa0116.html>.

¹⁰ The University of Minnesota's Northwest Architectural Archives has several boxes of Wheeler's papers pertaining to three Cream of Wheat projects: the 1927-1928 building in Minneapolis, the 1957 bulk handling plant in Minneapolis, and an addition and new plant in Manitoba, Canada. Information on the Minneapolis buildings is sometimes in files for the Manitoba project. For clarification, the following citations will list the project name before the folder number. Wheeler to Daniel F. Bull, General Manager, Cream of Wheat, November 29, 1943, Cream of Wheat Plant, Minneapolis—Folder 20, Box 12, Walter H. Wheeler Papers, Northwest Architectural Archives, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis (hereafter Wheeler Papers); Bull to Wheeler, September 16, 1926, Cream of Wheat Plant, Minneapolis—Folder 19, Box 12, Wheeler Papers; Wheeler to Cream of Wheat Company, February 17, 1927, Cream of Wheat Plant, Minneapolis—Folder 19, Box 12, Wheeler Papers; Bull to Wheeler, September 24, 1926, Cream of Wheat Plant, Minneapolis—Folder 19, Box 12, Wheeler Papers.

green or bronze cast-iron spandrels between the third and fourth floors “to make continuous iron, steel and glass panels the width of the window openings, extending from the 2nd story window sills to the 4th story window caps.” This would “emphasize the pilasters in the walls of the building and would undoubtedly result in a very pleasing architectural effect. . . . Such a building would be almost in a class by itself among factory buildings.” In the end, a rather streamlined classical design with buff-colored brick walls and spandrel panels, trimmed with Mankato and artificial stone, was chosen for the Cream of Wheat building.¹¹

Cream of Wheat’s plans for a new \$1 million building were reported on April 21 and 22, 1927 by the three major Minneapolis papers. The Northwestern Terminal Company, which sold the site to the company, had stipulated that the building and any future additions would be set back seventy-five feet from Stinson Boulevard. A landscaped lawn would fill the area between the building and Stinson Boulevard to the east, while one-hundred-foot “parks” would flank the building’s north and south sides. Construction was to begin in early summer. In late June, the Minneapolis *Improvement Bulletin* announced that plans would be available by June 21, and subsequent issues of the bulletin carried the deadline for submitting bids. C. F. Haglin and Sons was hired as the general and concrete contractor. H. Kelly and Company was the plumbing, heating, and ventilation contractor, and Langford Electric Company was the wiring contractor. A building permit for \$400,000 was filed at the end of July. The estimated date for the building’s completion was March 1, 1928.¹² Work on the building progressed at a continuous rate, employing local contractors, national companies with local branches, and Midwestern manufacturers. William Bros Boiler and Manufacturing Company on Nicollet Island provided the enormous boilers for the building. The Union Steam Pump Company of Battle Creek, Michigan, and the Monash-Younger Company of Chicago supplied other parts of the heating system. The boilers were encased in masonry laid by the Northwest Fire Brick Service Company of Minneapolis. By the beginning of January 1928, finish concrete work on the first floor was begun.¹³

Completed in the spring of 1928, the majority of the building was used for manufacturing the cereal, following a vertical process. Raw material entered the building through the south train shed on the first floor, was loaded into a receiving hopper, and was lifted by bucket elevator to a fifth-floor penthouse. The grain then flowed down from floor to floor through processing and packing machinery. Individual packages were consolidated into cases and moved by gravity conveyors

¹¹ Wheeler to Bull, February 2, 1927, Cream of Wheat Plant, Minneapolis—Folder 19, Box 12, Wheeler Papers.

¹² “\$1,000,000 Plant in N. W. Terminal District Ordered by Cereal Company,” *Minneapolis Star*, April 21, 1927; “\$1,000,000 Factory, Biggest Wheat Cereal Plant in World, Will be Built in Minneapolis,” *Minneapolis Journal*, April 21, 1927; “\$1,000,000 Cereal Plant Assured City,” *Minneapolis Morning Tribune*, April 22, 1927; “Factory Bldg.,” *Improvement Bulletin* 68B (June 25, 1927): 15; *Improvement Bulletin* 68B (July 2, 1927): 15; *Improvement Bulletin* 68B (July 13, 1927): 13; *Improvement Bulletin* 68B (July 20, 1927): 15; *Improvement Bulletin* 68B (July 30, 1927): 9.

¹³ Correspondence between Wheeler and project contractors can be found in Cream of Wheat Plant, Minneapolis—Folders Boxes 10, 11, and 12, Wheeler Papers. See specifically C. F. Haglin and Sons to Wheeler, December 15, 1927, Cream of Wheat Plant, Minneapolis—Folder 1, Box 10, Wheeler Papers.

to outbound railroad cars in the north train shed. Local shipments were loaded onto trucks at a dock on the building's west side.¹⁴

Wheeler designed and specified the finishes in the lobby and general offices, but Cream of Wheat hired a prominent Minneapolis interior decorating firm, William A. French and Company, to furnish and decorate the executive offices. The company was started in the late nineteenth century and maintained a factory where reproduction European and early American furniture was built. The firm decorated and furnished several residences including "Glensheen," the Chester Congdon residence in Duluth, in association with John Bradstreet. In 1930, an advertisement in a local newspaper showcased French's popularity with businesses. The company had completed offices for the Rand Company, Northwestern National Bank, the Cargill Elevator Company, and the new Minneapolis Chamber of Commerce. Cream of Wheat was proudly listed among French's commercial clients.¹⁵

Production of Cream of Wheat continued apace as the company settled into its spacious new headquarters, which had 60 percent more capacity than the old downtown building. Throughout the early twentieth century, Cream of Wheat held a solid position in a hot cereal market dominated by Quaker Oats. In the world of breakfast cereal, hot cereal was a quiet mainstay compared to the competitive cold cereal market. In 1939, the company introduced its Quick version, which took only two and one-half minutes to cook. It was a big step for Cream of Wheat, but in the cereal world it was hardly radical since Quaker Oats had been selling a quick version since 1922. A sign of the ongoing strength of Cream of Wheat's business was its construction of a new complex in Saint Boniface, Manitoba, in the late 1940s. Wheeler acted as the unofficial Cream of Wheat corporate architect/engineer and followed the construction of the building from Minneapolis. A Canadian architectural firm, Green Blankstein Russell and Associates, did most of the work. Cream of Wheat expanded its Winnipeg plant in 1952. The company held its niche in the market and looked for ways to increase production efficiency at the Minneapolis plant in the 1950s. Wheeler developed plans for a bulk handling plant in 1956, and construction on the structure began in 1957. He was assisted by M. Dwight Bell, who Wheeler hired as a consulting engineer. Wheeler and Bell's plans for the bulk handling plant were not innovative in design, materials, or technology. The pair visited existing silo facilities in Minneapolis and met with representatives from the Atkinson, Pillsbury, Superior Separator Company, the King Midas Flour Mills, and the Day Company to learn about silo characteristics.

¹⁴ Draft of magazine article written by Wheeler, October 13, 1928, Cream of Wheat Plant, Winnipeg—Folder 3, Box 12, Wheeler Papers.

¹⁵ Draft of magazine article written by Wheeler, October 13, 1928; Wheeler to Haglin, February 21, 1928, Cream of Wheat Plant, Minneapolis—Folder 6, Box 10, Wheeler Papers; Haglin to William A. French Company, February 28, 1928, Cream of Wheat Plant, Minneapolis—Folder 6, Box 10, Wheeler Papers; Walter Wheeler, Drawings Nos. 4 and 16, Tube L, McEnary Krafft Birch & Kilgore Papers; Wheeler to Haglin, February 15, 1928, Cream of Wheat Plant, Minneapolis—Folder 6, Box 10, Wheeler Papers; Wheeler to Thorp Fire Proof Door Company, November 17, 1927, Cream of Wheat Plant, Minneapolis—Folder 18, Box 12, Wheeler Papers; Wheeler to Cream of Wheat, January 6, 1928, Cream of Wheat Plant, Minneapolis—Folder 18, Box 12, Wheeler Papers; Michael Conforti and Jennifer Komar, "Bradstreet's Craftshouse: Retailing in an Arts and Crafts Style," in *Art and Life on the Upper Mississippi, 1890-1915*, ed. Michael Conforti, 72-75 (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1994); "William A. French & Co. Will Expand Operations," *Minneapolis Tribune*, September 11, 1928; "W. A. French, Furniture Maker and Designer, Dies," *Minneapolis Tribune*, February 3, 1942.

Wheeler also clipped articles from various professional periodicals for project ideas. When finished in 1958, the plant was composed of twelve steel storage tanks supported on a poured-concrete basement. The structure freed up approximately 10,000 square feet of storage space in the 1928 building. In 1976-1977, steel supports were constructed on top of the south train shed to support additional bins and equipment. A door was cut in the middle window of a fourth-story opening to access the equipment. The bins and equipment were removed when the plant was closed. The doorway, some of the steel supports on the train shed roof, and a steel I-beam connected to both the plant and building were left behind.¹⁶

In 1961, Cream of Wheat was purchased by the National Biscuit Company. At that time, National Biscuit's cereal division had only three brands: Shredded Wheat, Wheat Honeys, and Rice Honeys. The company had acquired brands from smaller companies rather than creating new products and controlled only 5 percent of the breakfast cereal market. With the addition of Cream of Wheat, the company gained control of 15 to 20 percent of the hot cereal market and a slightly larger stake in the breakfast cereal industry. Cream of Wheat's president, Dave Bull, moved to National Biscuit's Special Products Division and continued to oversee cereal product development. The plant in Minneapolis remained in production, but when it became automated in the late 1980s the number of employees dropped from 300 to 140. Product sales also dropped in the late 1980s and 1990s as granola bars and other portable breakfast foods became more popular. In 2000 the company, which had been renamed Nabisco in 1971, was purchased by Philip Morris Companies, which owns Kraft Foods. After surveying all of Nabisco's plants, Kraft decided to close the Minneapolis building and move production to Missouri and Canada. Production ended in 2002 and the property was sold to Hillcrest Development, the current owner.¹⁷

CONCLUSION

Some of the additions and alterations made to the site during its period of significance, from 1928 to 2002, contribute to its historic character. The bulk handling plant, constructed in 1957 to free up space in the building and streamline the manufacturing process, is a contributing structure. The landscape surrounding the building is also contributing. The extensive grass lawns, shrubbery, and mature trees create a residential feeling that contrasts with the surrounding industrial areas.

¹⁶ "New Factory of Cereal Firm Starts to Hum," n.p., n.d., clipping in Cream of Wheat Plant, Winnipeg—Folder 2, Box 12, Wheeler Papers; "Instructions to New Bidders, New Factory Building for the Cream of Wheat Corporation at St. Boniface, Manitoba," 1947-1948, Cream of Wheat Plant, Winnipeg—Folder 2, Box 12, Wheeler Papers; Invoice from Wheeler to Cream of Wheat, December 15, 1952, Cream of Wheat Plant, Winnipeg—Folder 3, Box 12, Wheeler Papers; preliminary sketch for bulk handling plant, December 26, 1956, Cream of Wheat Plant, Minneapolis—Folder 20, Box 12, Wheeler Papers; statement from M. Dwight Bell to Wheeler, December 19, 1957, Cream of Wheat Plant, Winnipeg—Folder 3, Box 12, Wheeler Papers; telegrams from Wheeler to Evershield Products, July 29 and August 8, 1958, Cream of Wheat Plant, Winnipeg—Folder 1, Box 12, Wheeler Papers; "Cream of Wheat Installs Streamlining," *Minneapolis Tribune*, n.d., available in Cream of Wheat, Bulk Handling Plant—Folder 7, Box 14, Wheeler Papers; Diamante, 25. The Bulk Handling Plant folders in the Wheeler Papers are filled with clippings from periodicals like *Combustion* and *The Plant*.

¹⁷ Scott Bruce and Bill Crawford, *Cerealizing America: The Unsweetened Story of American Breakfast Cereal* (Boston: Faber and Faber, 1995), 46, 105, 214, 221-222; Sally Apgar, "Good for 100 Years," *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, October 7, 1993; Ann Merrill, "End of the Line," *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, May 30, 2001.

Rail spur lines on the property's west side lead into the building and recall the vital link between industry and railroads in the first half of the twentieth century. The rail spurs cross an area that served, and still serves, as a parking lot. The handicap entrance and ramp on the southeast corner of the building, constructed in 1994, are sensitive to the building's design and are contributing to the site's historic integrity. Other alterations to the building were not completed with as much thoughtfulness, deviate from the building's design, and do not contribute to its integrity. The doorway, steel supports, and I-beam on the south side of the building are not contributing because the bins and equipment, the reason for the doorway and supports, have been removed. The Kalwall windows installed in the early 1980s are dramatically different from the original units and do not relate to the building's design. They do not contribute to the building's integrity. Concrete-block penthouses and metal-clad sheds constructed in the 1980s and 1990s on the main roof do not compliment the original brick penthouses or the building's overall design. They do not contribute to the building's historic integrity.

The Cream of Wheat Company exemplifies the businesses spawned in the late nineteenth century by the region's flourishing agricultural economy. Drawn to Minneapolis by its dominance in the grain-milling industry, the fledgling company grew to become a major player in the hot cereal market. A symbol of its success was its 1927-1928 corporate headquarters and factory building at 730 Stinson Boulevard. As such, the Cream of Wheat Building merits local landmark designation under Criterion 1. The building, with its prominent corner tower, is also of interest architecturally. Featuring a classic 1920s design that seamlessly incorporates office and factory uses, the building is further enhanced by its setback from Stinson Boulevard and the landscaped yards that surround it on three sides. As a noteworthy design of distinguished Minneapolis engineer Walter H. Wheeler, the building qualifies for local landmark designation under Criterion 4.

Articles, 1927-1928. *Minneapolis Journal*, *Minneapolis Star*, and *Minneapolis Tribune*.

C. F. Haglin Company Papers. Northwest Architectural Archives. University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

Diamante, Mike. "Great Milling Families of Minneapolis, Part 4." *Lake Area News*, September, 1988.

Listings. *Improvement Bulletin* 68B (June and July, 1927).

McEnary Krafft Birch & Kilgore Papers. Northwest Architectural Archives. University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

"The Story of Cream of Wheat." Brochure by the Cream of Wheat Corporation, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1977.

Walter H. Wheeler Papers. Northwest Architectural Archives. University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

MINNEAPOLIS CITY PLANNING DEPARTMENT REPORT

HERITAGE PRESERVATION DESIGNATION

DATE OF CPC REVIEW: November 18, 2004

ADDRESS OF PROPERTY: Cream of Wheat Building, 730 Stinson Blvd.

STAFF CONTACT AND PHONE: Amy Lucas, 673-2422

PROPERTY OWNER: Hillcrest Development

CONTACT PERSON AND PHONE: Scott Tankenoff, (612) 371-0123

WARD: 1 NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATION: no neighborhood association, within the boundaries of the Mid-City Industrial Area

REPORT SUMMARY:

The designation study for the Cream of Wheat Building (November 2004) finds the property meets designation criteria 1 and 4 contained in section 599.210 of the city's Heritage Preservation Regulations:

(1) The property is associated with significant events or with periods that exemplify broad patterns of cultural, political, economic or social history.

The Cream of Wheat Company exemplifies the businesses spawned in the late nineteenth century by the region's flourishing agricultural economy. Drawn to Minneapolis by its dominance in the grain-milling industry, the fledging company grew to become a major player in the hot cereal market.

(4) The property embodies the distinctive characteristics of an architectural or engineering type or style, or method of construction.

The Cream of Wheat headquarters at 730 Stinson Boulevard is a symbol of the company's success. The building is a classic 1920s design that incorporates the office and factory uses and is marked by a prominent tower. It is a noteworthy design by the distinguished Minneapolis engineer, Walter H. Wheeler.

AUTHORITY FOR REVIEW:

Chapter 599 of the Minneapolis Code of Ordinances, Heritage Preservation Regulations, authorizes the City Planning Commission to review and comment on all proposed designations as follows:

599.260. City planning commission review. The planning director shall submit all proposed designations to the city planning commission for review and comment on the proposal within thirty (30) days. 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.

FINDINGS:

- 1. The relationship of the designation to the city's comprehensive plan.** The proposed designation promotes preservation of an historic resource and supports the following goal and policies of *The Minneapolis Plan*:

Goal 6. *Preserve, enhance and create a sustainable natural and historic environment citywide.*

Policy 1.7. *Minneapolis will recognize and celebrate its history.*

Policy 9.2. *Minneapolis will continue to preserve the natural ecology and the historical features that define its unique identity in the region.*

Policy 9.4. *Minneapolis will promote preservation as a tool for economic development and community revitalization.*

- 2. The effect of the designation on the surrounding area.** The proposed designation will preserve a unique local landmark. The designation will not negatively affect the surrounding area.
- 3. The consistency of the designation with applicable development plans or development objectives adopted by the city council.** There are no applicable development plans or development objectives adopted by the city council for this property and the surrounding area.

RECOMMENDATION OF THE CITY PLANNING DEPARTMENT:

Planning Staff recommends that the City Planning Commission adopt the above findings and forward such findings and comments to the Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission.

CITY PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION:

At the Committee of the Whole meeting on November 18, 2004, the City Planning Commission moved to adopt staff findings and forward to Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission. The full City Planning Commission approved this motion on November 25, 2004.

Attachment: Cream of Wheat Building Designation Study, November 2004.