

**CITY OF MINNEAPOLIS
CPED PLANNING DIVISION
HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION STAFF REPORT
BZH-26009**

FILE NAME: 131 Oak Grove Street – Ladd House

APPLICANT: Citizens for a Loring Park Community, 612-874-9002

DATE APPLICATION COMPLETE: January 29, 2010

PUBLICATION OF STAFF REPORT: March 30, 2010

DATE OF HEARING: April 6, 2010

APPEAL PERIOD EXPIRATION: April 16, 2010

STAFF INVESTIGATION AND REPORT: John Smoley, Ph.D., 612-673-2830

CLASSIFICATION: Nomination for Consideration for Designation as a Local Historic Landmark

A. SITE DESCRIPTION AND BACKGROUND

District/Area information	
Historic District	N/A
Neighborhood	Loring Park

Historic Property information	
Current name	Nelson Residence
Historic Name	Ladd House
Current Address	131 Oak Grove Street
Historic Address	131 Oak Grove Street
Original Construction Date	1889
Original Contractor	W.D. Lewis
Original Architect	Harry Wild Jones (1859-1935)
Historic Use	Residence
Current Use	Residence
Proposed Use	Residence
Other Historical Designations	N/A

The Ladd House is a 2.5 story residence designed in the Richardsonian Romanesque style by Harry Wild Jones and built by W.D. Lewis for Henry E. Ladd in 1889 at a cost of \$18,000.¹ Nearly every exterior feature is carved from tan Kasota limestone. The building's complex, composition shingle-covered roof of hips, gables, parapets, and a turret is the most notable exception, though bracketed, narrow eaves are comprised of this Mankato stone. An open porch curves around the northern and eastern sides of the home. The porches flat roof is supported by Doric columns set atop a simple stone balustrade set in a grid pattern. The columnar pattern is repeated in mullions of select window groupings around the home.

On January 29, 2010, Councilmember Lisa Goodman, on behalf of the Citizens for a Loring Park Community, moved to nominate the property known as the Henry E. Ladd House, 131 Oak Grove, Minneapolis, for local historic designation and to establish interim historic protections pursuant to Minneapolis Code of Ordinances §599.240(b) covering all internal and external alterations to buildings, accessory structures and landscape features on the property, including demolitions, additions, renovations and other improvements. Councilmember Goodman also moved that the Planning Director be directed to prepare the necessary documentation to bring this nomination forward to the Historic Preservation Commission no later than April 20, 2010. The Council adopted this motion.

In 2008 the building was documented in a reconnaissance survey of the Loring Park neighborhood. The evaluators, Mead and Hunt, did not recommend further study of the property to determine whether it was eligible for local and/or national designation as a historic property.²

B. CONSIDERATION FOR NOMINATION

Per section 599.230 of the Heritage Preservation Regulations, the Heritage Preservation Commission shall review all complete nomination applications. If the Heritage Preservation Commission determines that a nominated property or property appears to meet at least one of the local designation criteria the commission may direct the planning director to commence a designation study of the property.

SIGNIFICANCE

The subject property appears eligible for designation as an individual landmark per the following criterion:

- (6) The property exemplifies works of master builders, engineers, designers, artists, craftsmen or architects.

Harry Wild Jones designed the residence at 131 Oak Grove Street for Henry and

¹ City of Minneapolis Building Permit #B18188, 131 Oak Grove Street; "Building permits," *Minneapolis Tribune*, 6 April 1889, 8.

² Mead & Hunt, "Historic Resources Inventory: Historic Resources in the Loring Park and Elliot Park Neighborhoods, Re-survey of Lowry Hill East Neighborhood," Reconnaissance Survey Files, Planning Division, Community Planning and Economic Development Department, Minneapolis, MN.

Anna Ladd in 1889.³ Born in Michigan in 1859, Jones faced considerable pressure to follow in the footsteps of several generations of religious leaders. While he became neither a preacher nor a missionary, as many of his ancestors, he approached architecture with faith and fervor. Trained at what was then the nation's leading school of architecture, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Jones graduated in 1882 and quickly found employment in the office of Henry Hobson Richardson. Within a year he married and moved to Minneapolis where he worked as a draftsman for James Plant and William Channing Whitney. After study abroad in Europe and additional work for Whitney, Jones established his own practice in late 1885 or early 1886. From then until his death in 1935 Jones designed hundreds of residential, commercial, and institutional buildings, many of which not only remain standing but have been designated as landmarks in communities throughout the United States.⁴

The residence at 131 Oak Grove Street may be the best remaining example of architect Harry Wild Jones' Richardsonian Romanesque design in Minneapolis. The Richardsonian Romanesque designs of Jones are especially important to understanding this architect's legacy, given that his first job was working for the architect credited with the development of this style: Henry Hobson Richardson. In his later years, Jones reflected upon this period as a period of great significance. "The time spent under the tutelage of this man, one of the greatest of modern architects, was of the highest value to me and his influence had much to do with moulding my taste in my chosen art and profession."⁵

Swinford Apartments, designed in the same style, has already been designated a landmark, but was designed as a multi-family residence. Other single family Minneapolis residences that Jones designed in this style, such as 1920 Vine Place (the George C. Cook Residence) and 720 6th Avenue South (the Dr. Samuel F. Hanse House), have been demolished.⁶ Further research, through the designation study process, is warranted, to determine the place of this property within the scope of Jones' work.

The subject property may also be eligible for designation as a landmark under the other six designation criteria. Such an analysis would be conducted as part of a designation study.

B. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Staff has received letters supporting the nomination from the property owner, the Lowry Hill History Committee, Citizens for a Loring Park Community, and from Elizabeth Vandam: author of a recent book on Harry Wild Jones.

³ City of Minneapolis Building Permit #B18188, 131 Oak Grove Street; "Building permits," *Minneapolis Tribune*, 6 April 1889, 8.

⁴ Elizabeth A. Vandam, *Harry Wild Jones: American Architect* (Minneapolis: Nodin Press, 2008) 16, 19-22, 29-31, 125-131.

⁵ Elizabeth A. Vandam, *Harry Wild Jones: American Architect* (Minneapolis: Nodin Press, 2008) 20.

⁶ Elizabeth A. Vandam, *Harry Wild Jones: American Architect* (Minneapolis: Nodin Press, 2008) 126-127.

C. APPLICABLE ORDINANCES

Chapter 599. Heritage Preservation Regulation

ARTICLE V. DESIGNATION

599.210. Designation criteria. The following criteria shall 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:

- (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 or neighborhood 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.

599.230. Commission decision on nomination. The commission shall review all complete nomination applications. If the commission determines that a nominated property appears to meet at least one of the criteria for designation contained in section 599.210, the commission may direct the planning director to prepare or cause to be prepared a designation study of the property. In cases where an application for demolition is initiated by the property owner, the planning director may determine that the property owner bears the full financial responsibility of conducting the designation study. In all cases, the planning director shall define the scope of services for a designation study, review qualifications of agent conducting study and make a determination of what constitutes a final submission upon completion.

599.240. Interim protection. (a) Purpose. Interim protection is established to protect a nominated property from destruction or inappropriate alteration during the designation process.

(b) *Effective date.* Interim protection shall be in effect from the date of the commission's decision to commence a designation study of a nominated property until the city council makes a decision regarding the designation of the property, or for twelve (12) months, whichever comes first. Interim protection may be extended for such additional periods as the commission may deem appropriate and necessary to protect the designation process, not exceeding a total

additional period of eighteen (18) months. The commission shall hold a public hearing on a proposed extension of interim protection as provided in section 599.170.

(c) *Scope of restrictions.* During the interim protection period, no alteration or minor alteration of a nominated property shall be allowed except where authorized by a certificate of appropriateness or a certificate of no change, as provided in this chapter. (2001-Or-029, § 1, 3-2-01)

D. FINDINGS

1. The nominated property appears to meet at least one of the criteria for designation contained in section 599.210 (criterion 6).

E. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

CPED recommends that the Heritage Preservation Commission **adopt** staff findings and **approve** the nomination of 131 Oak Grove Street as a landmark; **establish** interim protection; and **direct** the Planning Director to prepare or cause to be prepared a designation study.

Attachments:

- A. Materials submitted by CPED staff – A1-A2
 - a. Location map – A1
 - b. 350' map – A2
- B. Materials submitted by the property owner, the Lowry Hill History Committee, Citizens for a Loring Park Community, and from Elizabeth Vandam: author of a recent book on Harry Wild Jones – B1-B33
- C. Councilmember Nomination – C1