

Rex Hardware Store Designation Report

2601 Lyndale Avenue South



Source: Google Maps Street View: April 2009

April 5, 2010



Acknowledgements

Mayor and City Council of the City of Minneapolis

R.T. Rybak, Mayor

Barbara Johnson, Council President

Robert Lilligren, Council Vice President

Sandy Colvin Roy

Elizabeth Glidden

Lisa Goodman

Cam Gordon

Betsy Hodges

Diane Hofstede

Barbara Johnson

John Quincy

Kevin Reich

Don Samuels

Gary Schiff

Meg Tuthill

Planning Commission

David Motzenbecker, Chair

Council Member Gary Schiff

Carla Bates

Brad Born

Erika Carter

Dan Cohen

Brian Gorecki

Lauren Huynh

Alissa Luepke-Pier

Theodore Tucker

Heritage Preservation Commission

Chad Larsen, Chair

Denita Lemmon, Vice Chair

Kevin Kelley, Secretary

Kathleen Anderson

John Crippen

Meghan Elliott

Christina Harrison

Ginny Lackovic

Linda Mack

Deborah Morse-Kahn

Department of Community Planning and Economic Development (CPED)

Mike Christenson, Executive Director

Barbara Sporlein, Planning Director

Jack Byers, Manager-Preservation and Design

Aaron Hanauer, Senior City Planner, Principal Investigator

Diana Armstrong, Committee Clerk

Hannah Berg, Consultant

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	
1. Introduction.....	1
1.1 Designation Study Background and Purpose	1
2. Property Description.....	2
3. Historic Significance	4
3.1 City Wide Streetcar Era Commercial Development.....	5
3.1.1 Lyndale Avenue South Commercial Corridor	5
3.2 2601 Lyndale Avenue South.....	9
3.2.1 Allen Hardware Store (1914-1944)	9
3.2.2 Rex Hardware Store (1944-2005)	9
3.3 The Architect: John V. Koester (1878 -1947)	9
4. Minneapolis Preservation.....	11
4.1 Heritage Preservation Ordinance.....	11
4.2 Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth	17
4.3 Lyn-Lake Small Area Plan.....	18
5. Historical Integrity	18
6. Recommendation.....	19
7. Bibliographic References	21
Appendix A: Bryant Avenue Streetcar Line Intersections.....	

1. Introduction

1.1 Designation Study Background and Purpose

On December 9, 2008, a wrecking permit was submitted for the demolition of the building at 2601 Lyndale Avenue South. After completing a historic review of the property, the Department of Community Planning and Economic Development (CPED) made the determination that the property was a historic resource and the demolition of the property would require a review by the Heritage Preservation Commission via a Demolition of Historic Resource application.

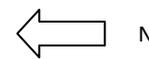
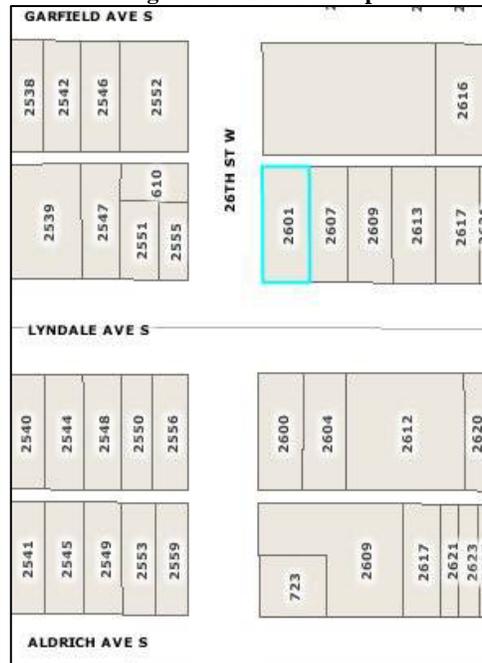
On March 25, 2009, Mabelle Norling on behalf of SMJ Partners submitted a Demolition of Historic Resource application for 2601 Lyndale Avenue South. The Heritage Preservation Commission meeting to hear the application was May 12, 2009 for mitigation and recordation. City staff recommended the Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) approve the demolition of the Rex Hardware Store with conditions. The commission, however, voted to deny the demolition permit and placed Rex Hardware Store under interim protection for a one year period to complete an historic designation study.

This report summarizes the findings of that study and acts as a supplement to the local nomination form. Included in this report is a description of the potential significance of the property, both individually and within the broader context of Minneapolis planning and heritage preservation goals. The report is based on a review of primary resources including the 2001 City of Minneapolis Historic Resources Inventory, historic building permits, newspaper clippings from the Minneapolis Collection of the Hennepin County Library, and from the Northwest Architectural Archives. A number of secondary resources, including scholarly articles and books, were referenced as well.

2. Property Description

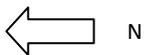
The Rex Hardware Store, 2601 Lyndale Avenue South, is located in the Whittier neighborhood of southwest Minneapolis. The property consists of a single lot, stretching 49.08 feet in width and 118.6 feet in depth at the southeast corner of Lyndale Avenue South and 26th Street West (Figure 2.1, Figure 2.2).

Figure 2.1: Context Map



Source: Hennepin County Property Information, 2009

Figure 2.2: Birdseye view looking east across Lyndale Avenue



Source: Bing Maps, 2009

The original structure, constructed in 1914, is built up to the lot lines on the Lyndale Avenue and West 26th Street façades. It is a one-story, pre-modern commercial building that was completed in a Utilitarian style (Figure 2.3). The original building measures approximately 49 feet wide by 80 feet deep. It is constructed of stretcher bonded red brick masonry (Figure 2.4) and is capped by a flat roof. A simple brick corbelled cornice encircles the roof. The Lyndale Avenue façade includes large glass store front windows and two doors. Above the windows in large font is a yellow and blue sign that reads “Hardware Paint Glass.” The northern façade (W 26th Street) has one large store window and seven square casement windows at eye level (Figure 2.5). A side door with a small projecting sign is towards the rear of the structure.

Figure 2.3: View of front façade from Lyndale Avenue. Windows have been boarded to mitigate graffiti, 2009.



Figure 2.4: Stretcher bonded brick veneer, 2009

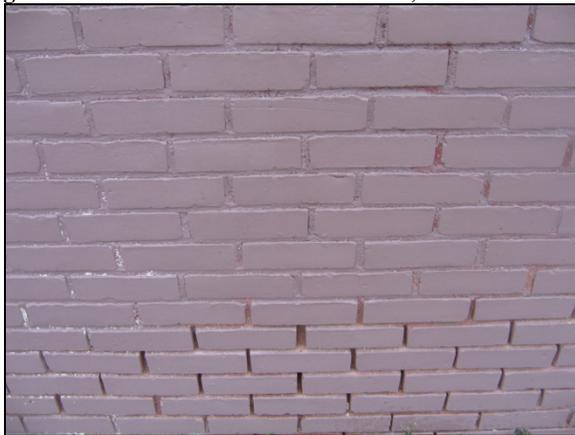


Figure 2.5: Window along W. 26th St., 2009



The building had rear additions in 1915, 1932, and 1955. The collection of rear additions expand the width of the building. These additions are constructed of concrete cinderblock (Figure 2.6). The additions also differs from the original structure in wall height and roofing material.

Presently, the building's front facing windows have been boarded and portions of the masonry have been whitewashed in an effort to mitigate graffiti and vandalism. These measures were taken by order of the Minneapolis Inspections Division.

Figure 2.6: Rear addition, 2009



3. Historic Significance

A 2001 Historic Resources Inventory of the Powderhorn Park, Central, Whittier, and Phillips neighborhoods identified the Rex Hardware Building as a potentially historic resource with “possible significance and integrity.”¹ This inventory did not provide additional details for its possible significance. However, when completing research for the Demolition of Historic Resource application and for the designation study, information was found that illustrates this building meets City of Minneapolis designation criteria.

The Rex Hardware Store (originally known as the Clark J. Allen Hardware Store) at 2601 Lyndale Avenue South is quality example of streetcar era commercial development common in Minneapolis between 1890 and 1930. Specifically it serves as a high-quality example of commercial development for the Bryant Avenue Streetcar Line. The building at 2601 Lyndale Avenue South served as a community hardware store from 1914 to 2005 (91 years). In researching the longevity of other hardware stores in Minneapolis, the Allen/Rex Hardware Store was found to be the longest operating hardware store in Minneapolis that was originally built as a hardware store.

The architect of the Allen Hardware Building, John V. Koester, is known to have designed prominent buildings in Minneapolis, St. Paul, and Los Angeles. The Allen/Rex Hardware Store is believed to be his oldest commercial property in Minneapolis.

The Allen Hardware building was completed in a Utilitarian architectural style. The building represents a clean, pre-modern, one-story commercial storefront building from the early 20th century. Built of red brick masonry, the building contains a simple corbelled cornice, large store front windows, and a brick chimney. At this time, the City of Minneapolis does not have a similar commercial-use building designed in this architectural style that is designated.

3.1 City Wide Streetcar Era Commercial Development

During the last decade of the 19th century, the expansion of the electric streetcar “trolley” system spurred residential and commercial development far beyond downtown Minneapolis and the Mill District. At its height in the 1920s, Thomas Lowry’s Twin Cities Rapid Transit (TCRT) operated more than 900 streetcars, owned 523 miles of track, and was carrying in excess of 200 million passengers each year.² The streetcar was the dominant mode of transportation from 1890 to 1930 and as a result corridors of retail shops and commercial offices grew up alongside the lines. The line that connected Lyndale Avenue South from Lake Street to downtown was added in 1891 (see Figure 3.2).

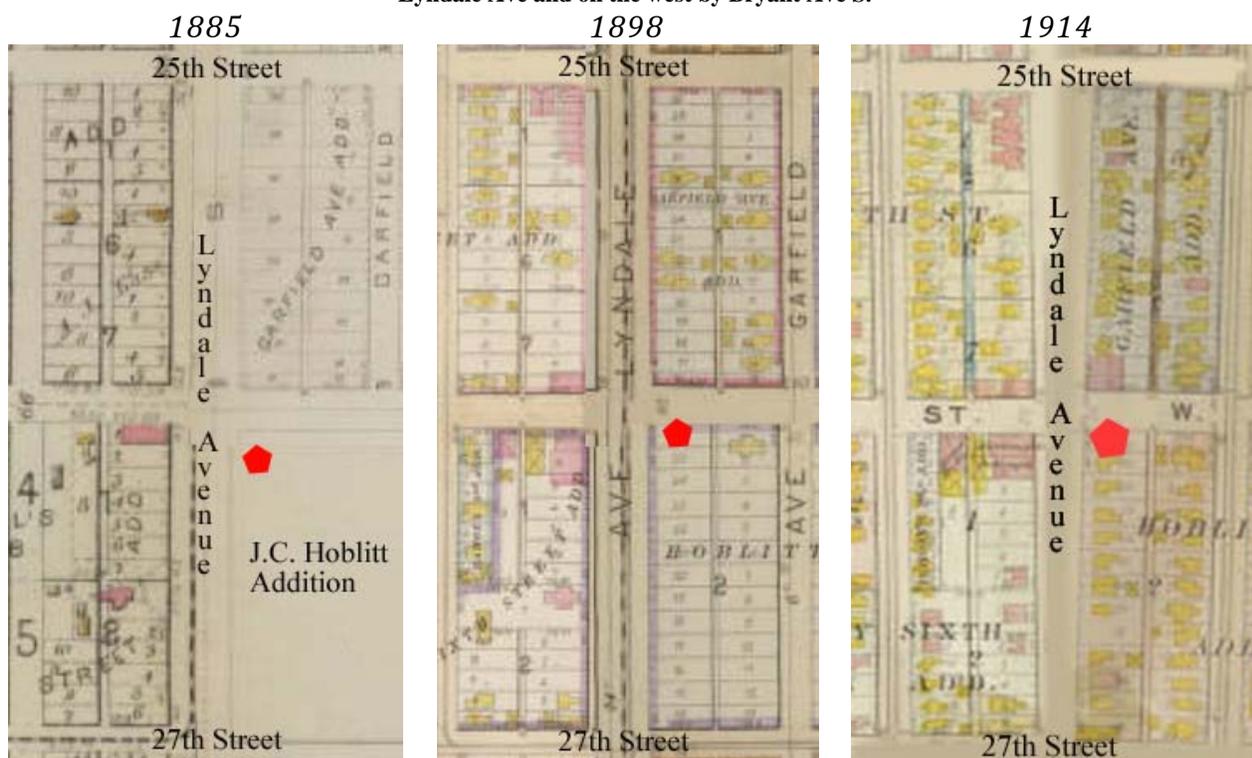
Although the streetcar system was gradually replaced by personal automobiles and completely dismantled by 1954, the patterns of commercial development along major lines still exist today. Commercial districts on Lake Street, Washington Avenue North, Central Avenue Northeast, and Hennepin Avenue, for example, are all remnants of development during the streetcar era. Smaller nodes of development, like those at the corner of Lyndale Avenue and West 26th Street, are also quality artifacts of the streetcar system where grocery, hardware, and drug stores served the everyday needs of the immediate neighborhood.

3.1.1 Lyndale Avenue South Commercial Corridor

Prior to its subdivision, the area that was bound by Lyndale Avenue South on the west, 26th Street on the north, Harriet Avenue on the east and 27th Street on the south was owned by Reverend J.C. Hoblitt (see Figure 3.1, 1885 map). Rev. Hoblitt was a Civil War veteran and an early pioneer to Minneapolis who became very active in the Baptist Church, holding high ranking positions until he moved to California in 1902.³ While living in Minneapolis, Rev. Hoblitt reportedly accrued significant wealth in real estate,⁴ even despite his theory that the real estate boom and bust cycles were based on Pharaoh’s “seven years of plenty and seven years of famine.”⁵

Hoblitt’s Addition was one of the last large parcels along Lyndale Avenue between Lake Street and Franklin Avenue to be developed. Images from Minneapolis platebooks from 1885, 1898, and 1914 demonstrate how lots gradually filled in with brick and frame buildings along Lyndale Avenue and the surrounding residential neighborhoods (Figure 3.1).⁶

Figure 3.1: Four city blocks through time. Bounded on the north by 25th St. W., on the south by 27th St. W, on the east by Lyndale Ave and on the west by Bryant Ave S.



Source: Minneapolis Platbooks, Courtesy of the Hennepin County Public Library's Minneapolis Collection

1

Development along this corridor was undoubtedly spurred along by the horsecar line that ran as early as 1884 from the heart of downtown Minneapolis south to West 28th Street along Lyndale then over to Dupont Avenue toward Lake Harriet.⁷ Later, in 1890, the line was electrified and the route changed slightly, pairing Lyndale Avenue with Bryant Avenue, south of 31st Street (Figure 3.2) According to Diers and Isaacs, the authors of *Twin Cities by Trolley*, the so-called ‘Bryant’ Line developed, “few businesses along the line except for small grocery, drug, and hardware stores at major cross streets. Small commercial districts grew up at 36th Street, 46th Street, 50th Street and Penn Avenue.”⁸

Although the intersection of West 26th Street and Lyndale Avenue was not recognized in Diers and Isaacs’ book, it had been established as a small commercial node since the horsecar line extended south. In fact, 2600 Lyndale, once the site of the Minneapolis Bakery Company (current location of the C.C. Club) (Figure 3.3), was built in the same year the horsecar line arrived (1884), and 2556 Lyndale followed shortly in 1888 (current location of Common Roots Café). Several other buildings were constructed in the first decade of the 20th century, including 2555 Lyndale (current location of Tree House Records). These buildings were designed as two-story masonry buildings with corbelled cornices, typical of vernacular Italianate commercial buildings.⁹

Figure 3.2: Commercial development at each corner of the intersection of Lyndale Ave and W. 26th St.



Figure 3.3: Commercial development at each corner of the intersection of Lyndale Ave and W. 26th St.



Google Maps; Photos October 2009

3.2 2601 Lyndale Avenue South

The last parcel at the intersection of West 26th Street and Lyndale Avenue to be developed was the southeast corner, 2601 Lyndale. In 1914, Clark J. Allen hired architect John V. Koester to prepare the designs for a simple, single-use, one-story commercial structure. Built of red brick masonry, the building was built with a corbelled cornice, large store front windows, and a brick chimney. The cornice was simpler than the neighboring corner buildings.

3.2.1 Allen Hardware Store (1914-1944)

The Clark J. Allen Hardware Store building operated as a neighborhood hardware store for 30 of the 91 years that this site was a hardware store. Little is known about the Allens, who owned the business from 1914 to 1944, City Directories show they lived just several houses down from their store, at 2617 Lyndale Avenue.¹⁰ Mr. Allen died in 1931, leaving it unclear who ran the business from 1931 to 1943.¹¹

3.2.2 Rex Hardware Store (1944-2005)

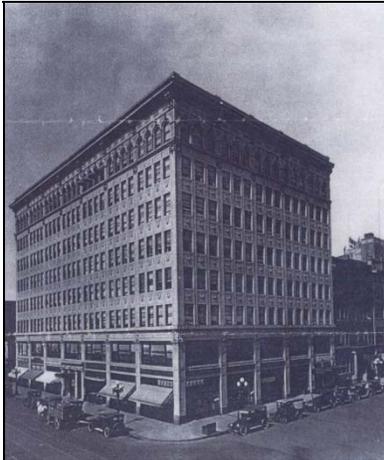
In 1944, Bernie and Anne Shom purchased the hardware store and renamed it Rex Hardware and Glass. The Shoms operated the store until 2005 when Mrs. Shom sold the store to the owners of the nearby French Meadow Bakery. During the 61 years Rex Hardware and Glass was in business, it became a fixture in the community, supplying the neighborhood with hard-to-find parts for old Victorian era homes or with services like custom glass cutting, blade sharpening, and picture framing. An article in the *Southwest Journal*, upon the closing of the store, commented, "While the outside world evolved, Rex Hardware – with its hardwood floors, wooden screen door, cluttered aisles and mom-and-pop atmosphere – remained largely unchanged." But by 2005, the impact of large hardware chains and shifting homeownership trends in the surrounding neighborhood challenged the continued viability of the store."¹² Since the store closed and was sold in 2005 it has remained vacant.

3.3 The Architect: John V. Koester (1878 -1947)

The architect the Allens hired to design their hardware store at 2601 Lyndale Avenue was John V. Koester. A native to Philadelphia, PA, born in 1878, he arrived in Minneapolis in 1913. City Directories show he set up offices for his architectural practice in the Kasota Building (1428 West Lake Street).¹³ While in the Twin Cities, he is known to have designed several buildings including the J.H. Coloton Apartment Building (1623 West Lake Street, built 1914), the Scandinavian Christian United Bible College "Dinkydome" (1501-1511 University Ave SE, built 1915) (Figure 3.5), The LaSalle Holding Company Building, an 8-story commercial and office building (700-12 Marquette Avenue, built 1916, razed in 1970 for the IDS Center) (Figure 3.4), and the Chittenden and Eastman Building in St. Paul (2402-2412 University Ave W, built 1917).

The Chittenden and Eastman Building is the only building of Koester's known to be designated. It is part of St. Paul's University-Raymond Commercial Historic District. The one-story commercial building at 2601 Lyndale is the oldest and simplest of his known commercial designs. Koester spent only five years as a Twin Cities' architect. In 1917 he moved to Los Angeles where he continued to work as an architect. He designed the Hotel St. Paul which was built in 1928 (Figure 36).¹⁴ John Koester died December 25, 1947 in Los Angeles.¹⁵

Figure 3.4: The LaSalle Holding Company Building at 700 Marquette Avenue (razed 1970)



Courtesy of the Northwest Architectural Archives

Figure 3.5: Drawing of Dinky Dome at 1501 University Avenue SE, circa 1915



Courtesy of the College of Design Special Collection,

Figure 3.6: The Hotel St. Paul, Los Angeles, 1928



Courtesy of the Los Angeles Public Library

Figure 3.7 Chittenden and Eastman Building, St. Paul, circa 2007



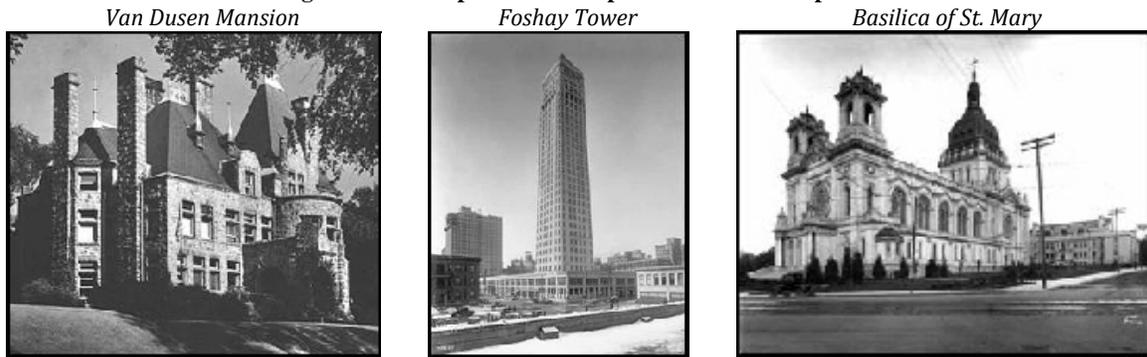
Courtesy of Flickr

4. Minneapolis Preservation

4.1 Heritage Preservation Ordinance

The City of Minneapolis designates properties that represent and reflect elements of the city's history as local heritage landmarks and historic districts. The city's heritage preservation ordinance states that the designation criteria that shall be considered in determining a property worthy of landmark or district designation is based on the followings areas of significance: cultural, social, economic, political, archeological, architectural, landscape architecture, neighborhood, and/or engineering. As of 2009, 148 properties are designated as individual landmarks, including places like the Van Dusen Mansion, the Foshay Tower, and the Basilica of St. Mary (Figure 4.1).

Figure 4.1: Examples of Minneapolis Landmark Properties



Courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society

The Rex Hardware Store Building meets four of seven designation criteria -Criteria 1, 3, 4, and 5. The following is an assessment of how the Rex Hardware Building meets these four designation criteria and does not meet Criteria 2, 6, and 7.

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

The property at 2601 Lyndale Avenue South was constructed in 1914 as a neighborhood hardware store, and continued to operate as a neighborhood hardware store until 2005. Even though Minneapolis still has neighborhood hardware stores throughout the city, Rex Hardware more than any other hardware store building in Minneapolis illustrates the economic rise and fall pattern of neighborhood hardware stores as a collection in the 20th and 21st centuries. Rex Hardware operated as a hardware store for most of the 20th century, and ended operation in the early part of the 21st century because of the impact of large hardware chains and shifting homeownership trends in the surrounding neighborhood ¹⁶. This trend of 19th and 20th

century hardware stores closing in the late 20th and early 21st century was typical throughout the country. According to the North American Retail Hardware Association, the number of independently owned hardware stores in the country decreased by 17 percent from 1989 to 1998, ¹⁷.

Although neighborhood hardware stores are still an important part of the city's commerce today, they were more prevalent and vital for Minneapolis residents and residents throughout the country in the late 19th and early 20th century when transportation was limited. Hardware stores have been described as a "central place in history."¹⁸ They have also been a central meeting place for neighborhood residents. In recent years, numerous newspaper articles have been written, most often when a hardware store closes, that details the history and importance of a particular hardware store for a neighborhood or community.

Local Criteria 2: The property is associated with the lives of significant persons or groups.

The property is not associated with the lives of significant persons or groups that are worthy of designation. No additional information could be found on the original store owner, Clark J. Allen, or the Shoms, the owners of Rex Hardware from 1944 to 2005. While the Allens and the Shoms were important neighborhood figures they did not achieve the city-wide reputation that is implied in this criteria.

Local Criteria 3: The property contains or is associated with distinctive elements of city identity.

In 1991, the City of Minneapolis Preservation Plan was completed. The purpose of the plan was to identify historically significant sites and districts and to complete context studies in eight areas: architecture, business and industry, civic, culture, residential development, religion and social organization, and transportation. The business and industry context study of the Minneapolis Preservation Plan provides a list of important types of commerce in the City of Minneapolis history. These include: warehouses, wholesale-related offices, retail outlets, retail-related offices, groceries, hardware stores, dry goods, feed stores, lumber yards, and implement dealerships ¹⁹.

The Clark J. Allen/Rex Hardware Building is an important part of the City of Minneapolis' commerce history as a neighborhood hardware store. The building holds the distinction of being the longest operating hardware store in Minneapolis that was originally built as a hardware store (91 years). City building permit records show the property was built as the Clark J. Allen hardware store, which was in business from 1914 to 1943. In 1944, Bernie and Anne Shom purchased the property and changed the name to Rex Hardware. The store closed in 2005 and has since been vacant.

City staff identified three other hardware store companies and buildings that may have potential significance for their longevity in the city; however 2601 Lyndale Avenue has the distinction of being the location of the longest operating hardware store in Minneapolis that was originally built as a hardware store.

- The Gardner Hardware company has been in business for 125 years. It operated at its original location (3rd Street and Hennepin Avenue) from 1884 until after 1922. It moved to its current location, 515 Washington Avenue North (Historic Name: Maytag Company Building) in the 1960's.
- The Nile Hardware Building located at 2301-2307 38th Street East, which was noted in 2002 as being potentially eligible for historic designation, was built in 1925. It ceased operation as a hardware store in 1934.
- The Simms Hardware Store 411-413 14th Avenue SE (location of Al's Breakfast) built in 1904 ceased operation as a hardware store prior to 1951.

In addition to its significance as a hardware store, the Rex Hardware Building is significant as a quality example of an early 20th century commercial building from an important time period of Minneapolis' history. Commercial-retail sites are underrepresented as historic landmarks in Minneapolis. Currently, 7 of the 148 landmarks relate to commercial retail (Figure 4.2). Of those designated, none are associated with hardware, and only one is significant for its operation as a "Mom" and "Pop" operation (the John Nordstrom Store). Furthermore, none of the commercial-retail landmarks were built in the decade between 1910-1919, which is period of great population and economic growth in Minneapolis (Figure 4.2 and 4.3).

Figure 4.2: Minneapolis landmarks originally used for retail/commercial purposes

John Nordstrom Store - 1883
(2110 24th Avenue South)

Significant as one of the last remaining wood frame store fronts of its type in an early Minneapolis neighborhood. Although originally mixed use, it now functions as a residential unit.



(Figure 4.2 continued)

Crowell Block – 1888
(2957 Lyndale Avenue South)

Significant for being the first large-scale development to accompany the expansion of the streetcar system in southwest Minneapolis and for its Richardsonian Romanesque architectural style.



Melrose Flats – 1890-1892
(12-23 5th Street N.E.)

Significant as a work of master architect Charles Segwick.



The Handicraft Building – 1907
(89-91 10th Street South)

Significant for its association with the Arts and Crafts Movement of the early 20th century.



Despatch Laundry – 1929
(2611 1st Avenue South)

Significant as an example of the resurgence of exotic styles of architecture in the early 20th century.



The Young-Quinlan Department Store – 1926
(901 Nicollet Mall)

Significant for its association with the life of Elizabeth Quinlan; for being the design of master architect Frederick Lee Ackerman.



Sears, Roebuck & Co. Mail Order
Warehouse and Retail
Store/Midtown Exchange -1927
(2843 Elliot Ave S)

Significant for its association with retail and consumption at the turn of the 20th century.



Photos courtesy of the Minneapolis Planning Division, 2006

Figure 4.3 City of Minneapolis Landmarks Built Between 1910-1919: Original Use

Residential-12	Industrial -1
Public/Institutional – 8	Trasportation-1
Commercial/Office-2	Commercial Retail-0
Culture/Recreational Uses -2	

Local Criteria 4: The property embodies the distinctive characteristics of an architectural or engineering type or style, or method of construction.

The Rex Hardware building represents a high quality and early example of the Utilitarian architectural style for Minneapolis and Minnesota. Typical of the Utilitarian architectural style, Rex Hardware was constructed to be rectangular in shape, one story in size, and used for one tenant. The building is true to this architectural form also in that it was built with a flat roof, brick (red brick masonry), plain windows and door, and a roofline crested with a simple shape (subtle corbelled cornice). *Roots*, a magazine put out by the Minnesota Historical Society, states that the Utilitarian architectural style began to be used in Minnesota beginning around 1915. Given that the Rex Hardware Building was built in 1914, it can be seen as a precursor to modern and contemporary Utilitarian retail architecture design that is ubiquitous today.

Currently, the City of Minneapolis does not have a similarly designed building that is designated. The other commercial retail landmarks were designed in the Georgian Revival, Italianate, Chicago Commercial, Richardsonian Romanesque, Moorish Revival, and Moderne architectural styles (Figure 4.2). Although, the Kinnard-Haines Press Company building at 826 44th Avenue North was built in a Commercial Utilitarian style, it does not possess the large storefront windows of a retail use or have the commercial setting of 2601 Lyndale Avenue South.

Local Criteria 5: The property exemplifies a landscape design or development pattern distinguished by innovation, rarity, uniqueness or quality of design or detail.

The property at 2601 Lyndale Avenue South is associated with streetcar era commercial development common in Minneapolis between 1890 and 1930. As Twin Cities Rapid Transit

extended trolley lines through the metro area, residential and commercial development grew alongside the corridors. The Bryant Line traveled from downtown Minneapolis to the Lakes District along Lyndale Avenue. The intersection of Lyndale and West 26th Street, where Allen Hardware and later Rex Hardware was located, is an intact node of commercial buildings. All four buildings at this intersection date back to the streetcar era commercial development time period.

The Clark J. Allen/Rex Hardware Building and the other buildings at the corner of 26th and Lyndale serve as a high quality and intact example of the commercial development landscape along the Bryant Avenue Streetcar Line. According to Diers and Isaacs, the authors of Twin Cities by Trolley, The Bryant Line, which serviced Lyndale Avenue South, had few businesses except small grocery, drug, and hardware stores at major cross streets (26th Street is a major cross street). Today, most of these major cross street intersections of the Bryant Avenue Streetcar Line have had a portion of their real estate turned into surface parking (see Appendix A). These intersection include the following:

- Franklin/Lyndale
- 22nd/Lyndale,
- 24th/Lyndale,
- 27th/Lyndale,
- 28th/Lyndale,
- 46th/Bryant,
- 50th/Bryant, and
- 50th/Penn Avenue South

There are other examples of streetcar development in Minneapolis that have retained their integrity, however, to date, only the Como-Harriet Streetcar Line (42nd Street West at Queen Avenue South) and the Crowell Block (2957 Lyndale Avenue South) are designated for their association with the Twin Cities Rapid Transit streetcar system. The Rex Hardware Building, which retains its integrity, is an important part of the streetcar landscape of Southwest Minneapolis and the Bryant/Lyndale Avenue line.

Local Criteria 6: The property exemplifies works of master builders, engineers, designers, artists, craftsman, or architects.

John V. Koester, a native to Philadelphia, PA, was the architect for 2601 Lyndale Avenue South. During Koester's professional career in the Twin Cities (1913-1917) he is known to have designed several prominent buildings in Minneapolis and St. Paul including the 8-story , LaSalle Holding Company Building (700-12 Marquette Avenue; 1916, razed for IDS Center construction), the Scandinavian Christian United Bible College "Dinkydome" (1501-1511 University Ave SE, 1915), the J.H. Coloton Apartment Building at 1623 West Lake Street (1914), and the Chittenden and Eastman Building in St. Paul (2402-2412 University Ave W, 1917). The Chittenden and Eastman Building is the only building of Koester's work that is currently designated. The Chittenden and Eastman Building is part of St. Paul's University-Raymond Commercial Historic District.

The one-story commercial building at 2601 Lyndale is John V. Koester's oldest known commercial design in Minneapolis. Koester spent four years as a Twin Cities' architect. In 1917 he moved to Los Angeles, CA where he continued working as an architect. There he designed the Hotel St. Paul, which was built in 1928. Mr. Koester died in Los Angeles on December 25, 1947.

The National Register Bulletin, "How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation" explains the qualifications a landmark must meet in order to be considered the "work of a master":

A master is a figure of generally recognized greatness in a field, a known craftsman of consummate skill, or an anonymous craftsman whose work is distinguishable from others by its characteristic style and quality. The property must express a particular phase in the development of the master's career, an aspect of his or her work, or a particular idea or theme in his or her craft.²⁰

While John V. Koester designed several impressive buildings, little could be found in the way of professional credentials or acclamation that could legitimize his status as an important master architect city-wide or nationally. Even though the Rex Hardware building is an early example of a simple, one-story commercial building, the Rex Hardware store is not Koester's grandest or finest example of work that remains. In addition, the Rex Hardware Building does not express a particular phase of Mr. Koester's work outside of being an early example of his work in the Twin Cities.

Local Criteria 7: The property has yielded, or may be likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Research of the property did not yield information important to prehistory or history, and, therefore, should not be evaluated for archeological significance.

4.2 Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth

The Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth guides policy in Minneapolis regarding land use, transportation, housing, environmental sustainability, urban design and heritage preservation. The following policies and implementation steps are relevant to the designation and preservation of heritage resources:

Policy 8.1: Preserve, maintain, and designate districts, landmarks, and historic resources which serve as reminders of the city's architecture, history, and culture.

8.1.4 Designate resources recommended for designation from historic surveys and listed on the National Register of Historic Places which has no local protection.

Policy 8.5: Recognize and preserve the important influence of landscape on the cultural identity of Minneapolis.

8.5.1 Identify and protect important historic and cultural landscapes.

Policy 8.7: Create a regulatory framework and consider implementing incentives to support the ethic of “reduce, reuse, and recycle” and revitalization for buildings and neighborhoods.

8.7.1 Protect historic resources from demolition and explore alternatives to demolition.

Policy 10.10: Support urban design standards that emphasize a traditional urban form in commercial areas.

10.10.7 Encourage the renovation of existing commercial buildings.

4.3 Lyn-Lake Small Area Plan

The Lyn-Lake Small Area Plan, adopted June 26, 2009, provides the following recommendations for the area on Lyndale Avenue between West 24th Street and West 28th Street:

“Between West 26th Street and West 28th Street, Lyndale Avenue South is likely to have more intense development than some portions of the street to the north because 26th and 28th Streets provide quick access across the city. These blocks can provide a transition between the Activity Center and areas to the north.”²¹

“Between West 24th Street and West 26th Street, there are more residential uses than in other sections of Lyndale Avenue South. Since there is a somewhat solid stretch of homes in these blocks, efforts should also be made to preserve the existing fabric and feel of the street, and when possible retain the existing building stock. Commercial uses may be appropriate in order to allow the existing structures to remain. If new development is proposed, the scale and design should complement the existing residential structures.”²²

The designation of the Rex Hardware Store would assist in preserving the existing fabric and feel of the street. At this time, there is no substitute development pending for this site. The demolition of the building at 2601 Lyndale Avenue South would eliminate an important part of this historic, intact, commercial node.

5. Historical Integrity

The historic integrity of a property is a measure of its authenticity and its present-day ability to convey its past significance. The City of Minneapolis and the National Register recognize a property’s integrity through seven aspects of qualities: location, design, setting, materials,

workmanship, feeling or association. Although the exterior of the Rex Hardware Building is in fair to poor condition and in need of rehabilitation work, it likely retains six of the seven aspects of integrity.

1. **Location:** The subject property retains its integrity of location. The building was built as a hardware store at this site in 1914.
2. **Design:** The subject property retains its integrity of design. It was built in a simple commercial utilitarian design with a corbelled cornice, flat roof, brick chimney, and large commercial windows; these building design elements remain.
3. **Setting:** The subject property's integrity of setting remains intact. It is located at the corner of 26th Street West and Lyndale Avenue South. The three other commercial properties at this corner were built in the late 19th or early 20th centuries.
4. **Materials:** The subject property was constructed with red brick, a flat roof, large store front windows, and a chimney. These items still remain today; however, they are in need of repair.
5. **Workmanship:** The property was constructed with few flourishes, however, it does retain the workmanship of the original construction.
6. **Feeling:** Feeling is a property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time. The property was constructed in 1914 as a corner store along a streetcar line. It retains the feeling of contributing to a viable commercial node/intersection.
7. **Association:** The subject property does not currently retain its integrity of association. Association is the direct link between a property and the event or person for which the property is significant. The subject property is the longest operating hardware store that was originally built as a hardware store. It has been vacant since 2005.

6. Recommendation

CPED recommends that the Rex Hardware Building at 2601 Lyndale Avenue be designated as a historic landmark. Rex Hardware meets four local designation criteria and retains its architectural integrity. The designation of the Rex Hardware Building would serve as a quality and early example of commercial Utilitarian architecture in Minneapolis and Minnesota. Rex Hardware also plays a vital role in retaining the commercial landscape of the Bryant Avenue Streetcar Line. It was built as a modest, pre-modern, streetcar era, commercial building in an important time period of Minneapolis' history. The Rex Hardware Building retains distinctive elements of city and neighborhood identity by being the longest operational hardware store in the City of Minneapolis that was originally built as a hardware store. In addition, the building/opening of the Clark J. Allen Hardware in the early part of the 20th century and the

later closing of Rex Hardware in the 21st century exemplifies a broad economic pattern for many small retail businesses in the City of Minneapolis. No other neighborhood hardware store in Minneapolis better captures this economic rise and fall development pattern.

7. Bibliographic References

- ¹ Mitchell, "Minneapolis Citywide Survey: Part I, Powderhorn Park, Central, Whittier, and Phillips Neighborhoods," August 2001.
- ² John Diers & Aaron Isaacs. *Twin Cities by Trolley: The Streetcar Era in Minneapolis and St. Paul*. University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis and London: 2007. pp 4-5.
- ³ "Rev. J.C. Hoblitt, Pioneer Baptist Minister, Dead." *Minneapolis Morning Tribune (1909-1922)*, (Feb 27, 1922), p. 9. Published by: Proquest Historical Newspapers.
- ⁴ "Man Bestows His All in Deeds to Church." *Minneapolis Morning Tribune (1909-1922)*, (Aug 17, 1912), p. 9. Published by: Proquest Historical Newspapers.
- ⁵ "Plenty." *Minneapolis Tribune (1867-1908)*; (Apr 9, 1893), p. 18. Published by: ProQuest Historical Newspapers.
- ⁶ Hennepin County Public Libraries. *Minneapolis Historic Platbooks 1885, 1898, 1914*, Minneapolis Collection, <http://www.hclib.org/pub/search/specialcollections/minneapoliscollection.cfm>.
- ⁷ John Diers & Aaron Isaacs. *Twin Cities by Trolley: The Streetcar Era in Minneapolis and St. Paul*. University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis and London, 2007, page18.
- ⁸ Ibid, page 254.
- ⁹ Ibid, page 254.
- ¹⁰ *Minneapolis City Directory*. Minneapolis: Minneapolis Directory Company, (1914).
- ¹¹ Minnesota Historical Society, *Death Certificates Index*, Search: Clark J. Allen, <http://people.mnhs.org/dci/>.
- ¹² Kari Canderveen. "Rex Hardware closes after more than 61 years of business." *Minneapolis Southwest Journal*, (January, 16, 2006), <http://www.swjournal.com/index.php?currentIssue=7809&publication=southwest&action=searchArchive&searchString=Rex+Hardware&searchPubs=southwest&dateFrom=2005-11-01&dateTo=2009-11-1&numResults=All&order=rel&page=152&story=6733&fromArchives=fromArchives&archivePage=131>.
- ¹³ *Minneapolis City Directory*. Minneapolis: Minneapolis Directory Company, (1913, 1914, 1915, 1916, 1917).
- ¹⁴ Ruth Wallach, Linda McCann, Dace Taube, Claude Zachary, Curtis C. Roseman, *Historic Hotels of Los Angeles and Hollywood*, Arcadia Publishing: Charleston, SC, Chicago IL, Portsmouth, NH, San Francisco, CA, 2008, p. 47.
- ¹⁵ Edan Milton Hughes, *Artists in California, 1786-1940*. Crocker Art Museum: Sacramento, CA, 2002.
- ¹⁶ Kari Canderveen. "Rex Hardware closes after more than 61 years of business." *Minneapolis Southwest Journal*, (January, 16, 2006), <http://www.swjournal.com/index.php?currentIssue=7809&publication=southwest&action=searchArchive&searchString=Rex+Hardware&searchPubs=southwest&dateFrom=2005-11-01&dateTo=2009-11-1&numResults=All&order=rel&page=152&story=6733&fromArchives=fromArchives&archivePage=131>.
- ¹⁷ Tara Bahrapour, "A Nuts-and-Bolts Success; Over 95 Years, Nichols Hardware Has Dispensed Paint, Nails and Advice. Now Its Homespun **History** Will Be Documented on Film." *Washington Post*, (February 11, 2009)

¹⁸ Home Channel News, *History Channel Highlights Hardware*, June 4, 2001

¹⁹ Thomas R. Zahn & Associates, Preservation Plan for the City of Minneapolis. July 1990 and August 1991.

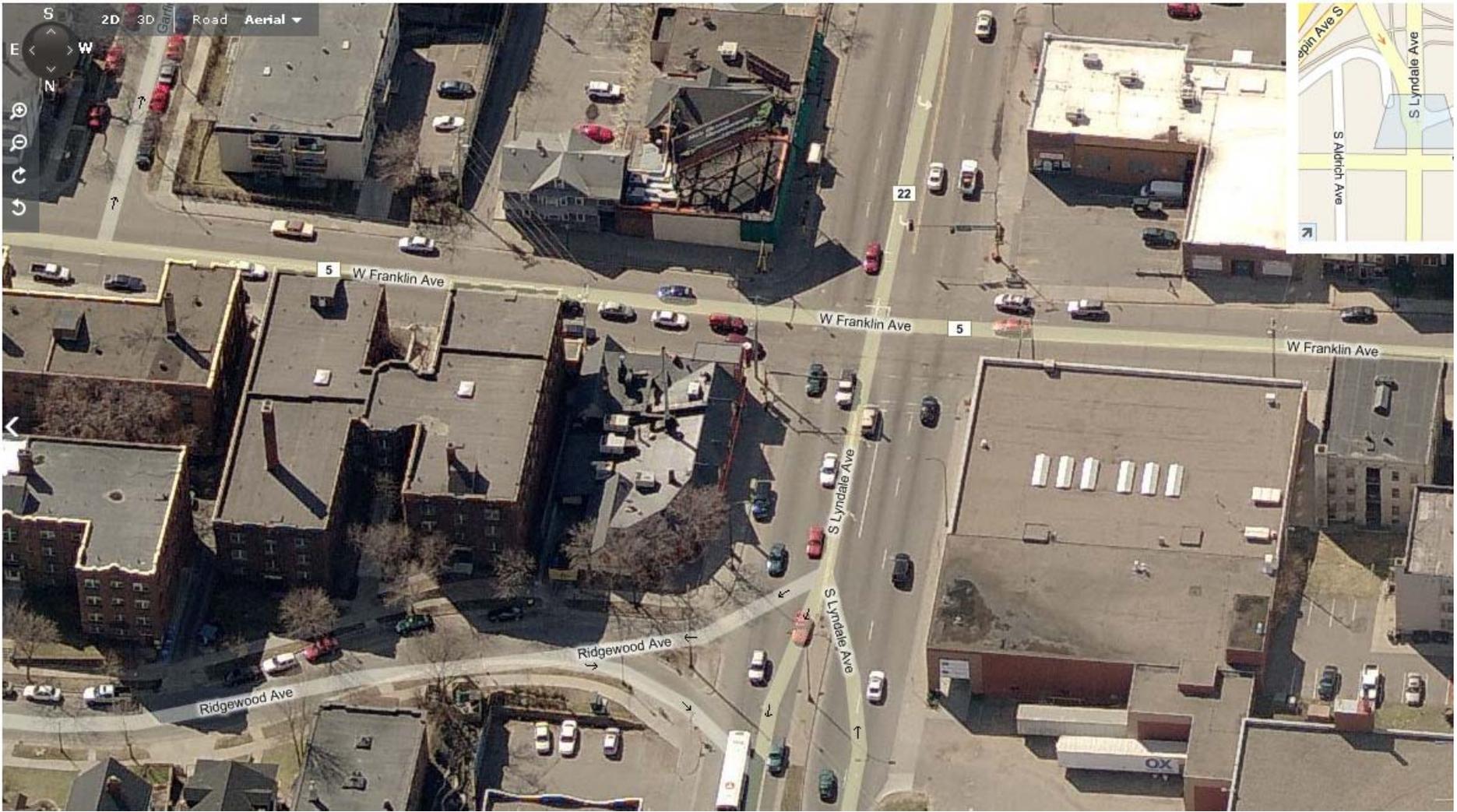
²⁰ U.S. Department of the Interior. "Part IV: How to Identify the Significance of a property." *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation Bulletin*, Vol. 15. (2002). Published by: National Register of Historic Places: <http://www.nps.gov/nr/publications/bulletins/nrb15/>. Accessed: 9/29/2009.

²¹ City of Minneapolis CPED – Community Planning, "*Lyn-Lake Small Area Plan*," Adopted June 26, 2009, p. 47.

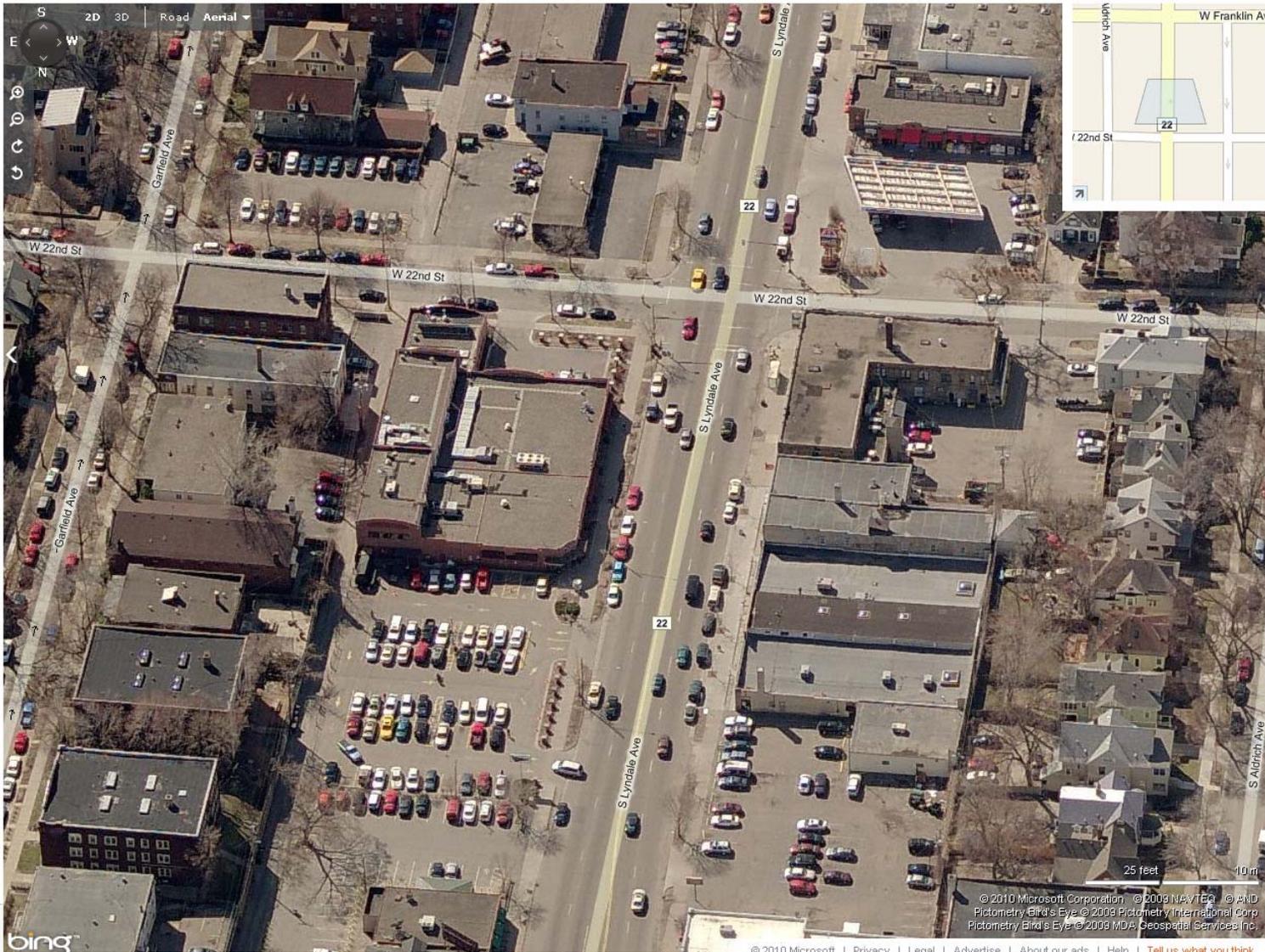
²² *Ibid*, p 47.

Appendix A: Bryant Avenue Streetcar Line Intersections

Appendix A: Bryant Avenue Streetcar Line Intersections: West Franklin Avenue and Lyndale Avenue South



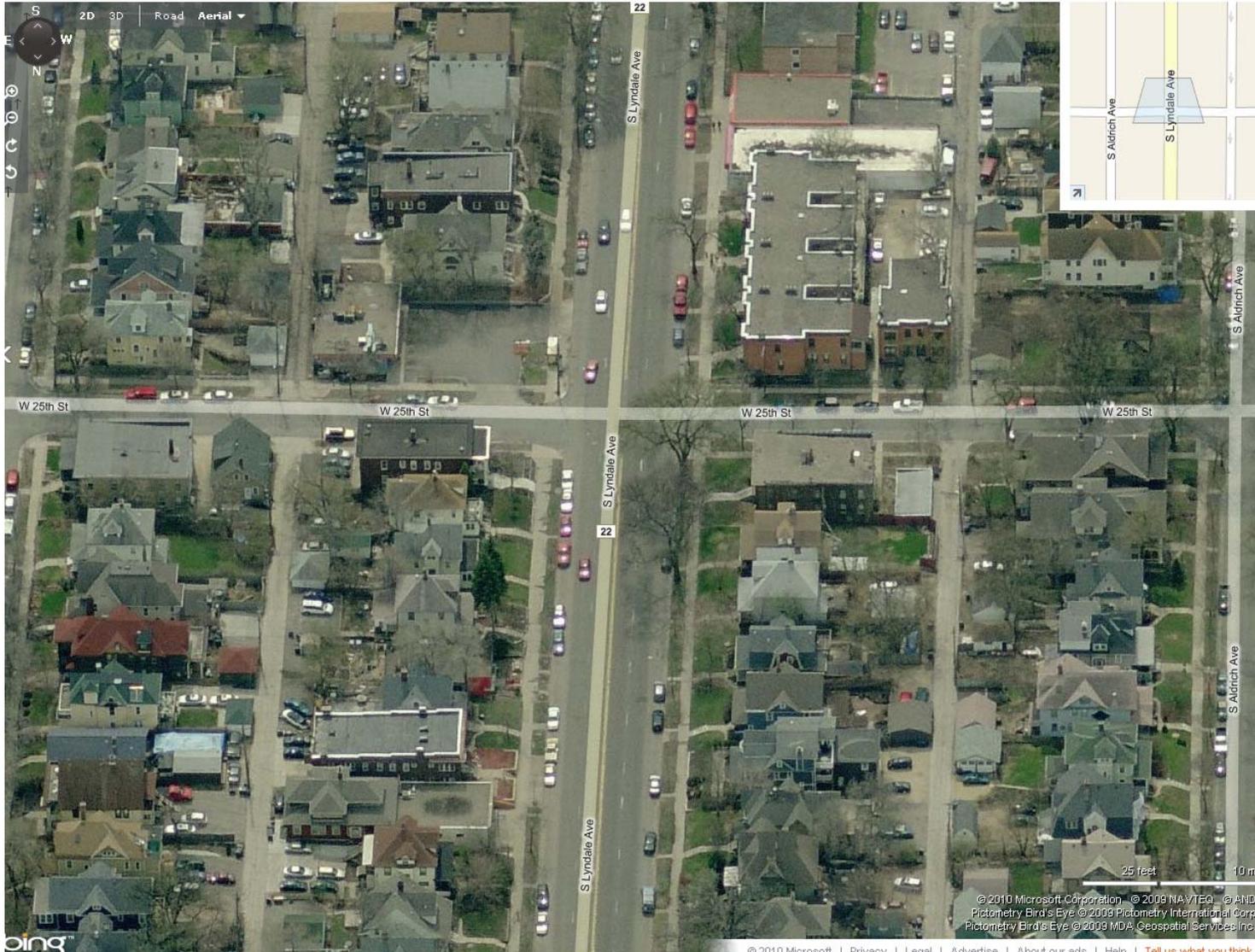
Bryant Avenue Streetcar Line Intersection: 22nd Street West and Lyndale Avenue South



Bryant Avenue Streetcar Line Intersection: 24th Street West and Lyndale Avenue South



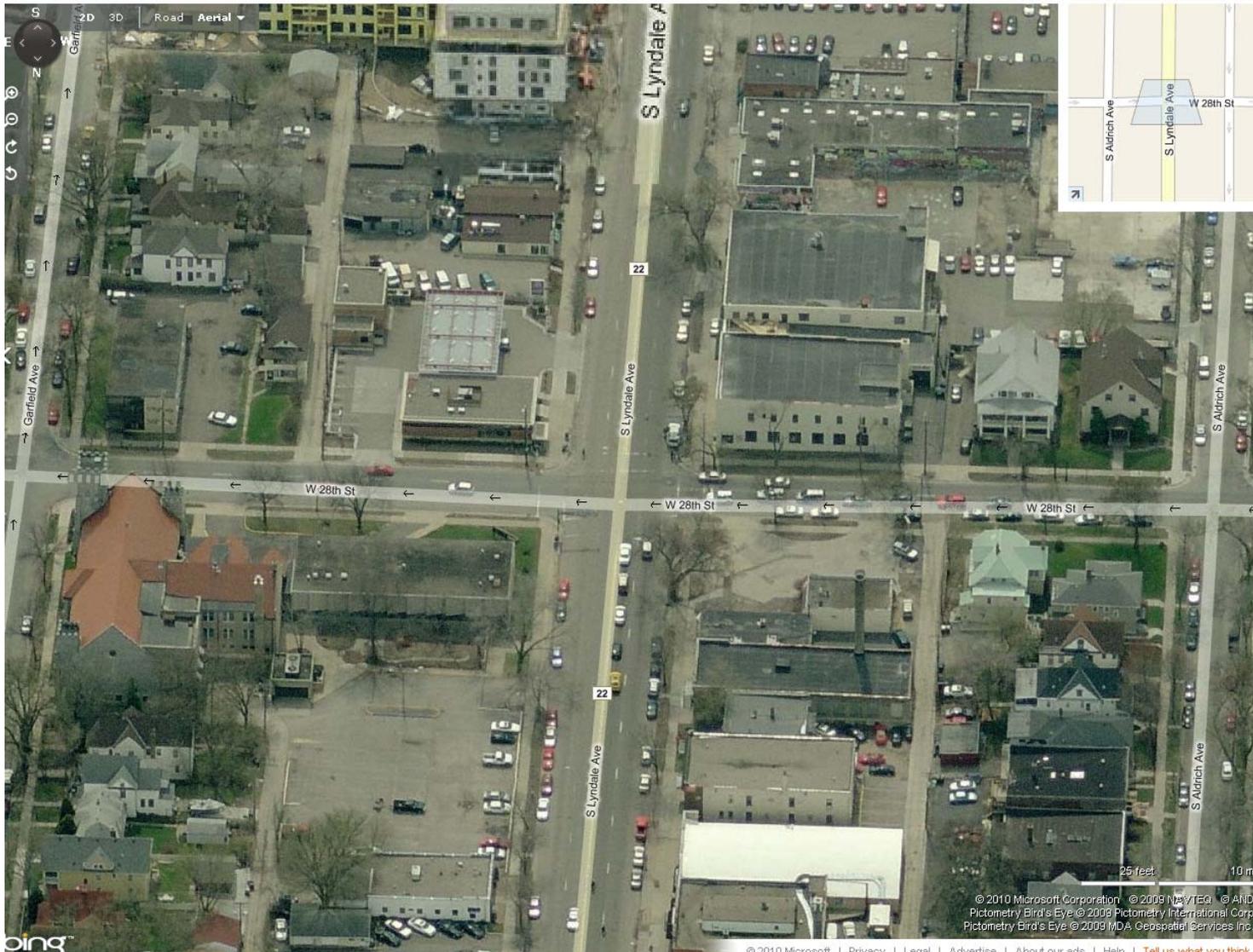
Bryant Avenue Streetcar Line Intersection: 25th Street West and Lyndale Avenue South



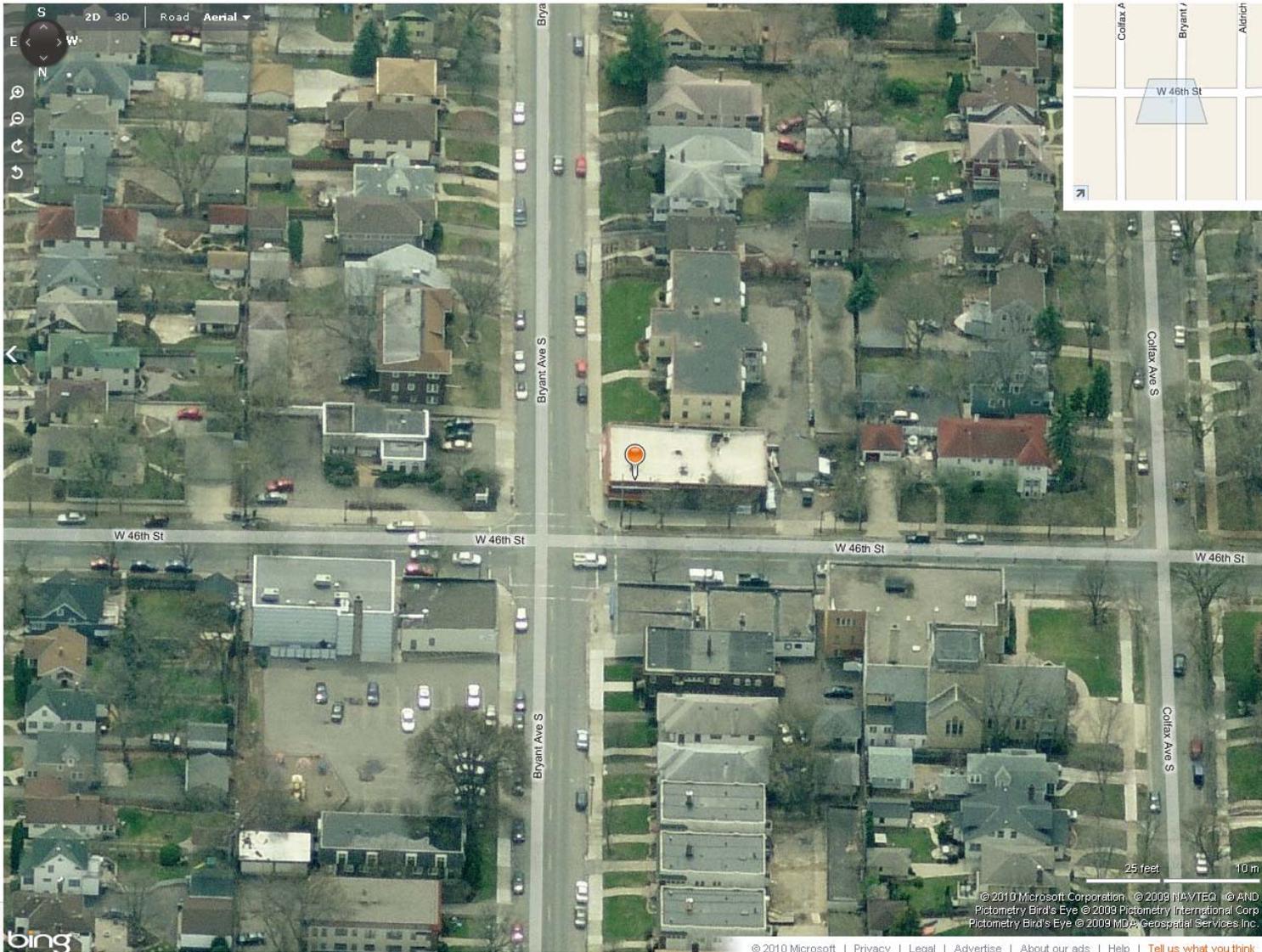
Bryant Avenue Streetcar Line Intersection: 27th Street West and Lyndale Avenue South



Bryant Avenue Streetcar Line Intersection: 28th Street West and Lyndale Avenue South



Bryant Avenue Streetcar Line Intersection: 46th Street West and Bryant Avenue South



Bryant Avenue Streetcar Line Intersection: 50th Street West and Bryant Avenue South

