

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

FILE NAME: 1711 Emerson Avenue South (BZH 25844)

APPLICANT: Ms. Montgomery (612) 377-5158 on behalf of the property owners Mr. and Mrs. Riaz

DATE APPLICATION COMPLETE: May 5, 2009

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STAFF INVESTIGATION AND REPORT: Aaron Hanauer, (612) 673-2494

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

A. SITE DESCRIPTION AND BACKGROUND

District/Area Information	
Historic District	N/A
Neighborhood	Lowry Hill
Historic Property Information	
National Designation	
Address	1711 Emerson Avenue South
Construction Date	1924
Original Contractor	N. Jenson
Original Architect	Fredrick Lee Ackerman
Master Craftsman	Samuel Yellin
Historical Use	Two-Family Residential
Current Use	Two-Family Residential
Historic Name	Elizabeth Quinlan Property

The Elizabeth C. Quinlan property at 1711 Emerson Avenue South is located in the Lowry Hill neighborhood. The house, garage, and likely the rear patio were designed by New York architect Fredrick H. Ackerman and built in 1924. The house was designed in an Italianate Renaissance Revival architectural style. The design is reminiscent of a late 16th century Tuscan house of Northern Italy (see Appendix A54).

The main structure is three stories, two units, and built in L-shaped plan (see Appendix A10-A20, B11). The Emerson Avenue façade is symmetrical and divided into three bays. The main entrance is located in the central bay and features a monumental surround. The two exterior balconies on the front elevation were completed by master iron craftsman, Samuel Yellin.

The subject parcel is 125 feet wide by 135 feet deep (16,875 square feet). The southern portion of the lot (50 feet by 135 feet) is green space (see Appendix A11). The house and other built elements are located on the northern portion of the lot. The main entrance to the house is connected to the sidewalk by a wide

red brick stair case. A driveway that accesses off of Emerson Avenue South leads to a three-car garage at the rear of the lot. The rear patio is located between the house and garage.

Ms. Quinlan lived at this property from 1923, the time of construction, to the time of her death in 1947. Elizabeth's sister, Annie E. Quinlan, also resided at this address during this time. Elizabeth's nephew, William Lahiff took over ownership after her death. Mr. Lahiff in 1979 donated the property to the Minneapolis Institute of Arts (MIA). In 1981, the MIA sold the house to its current owners Mahmoud and Nancy Riaz.

Mr. and Mrs. Riaz expressed interest and started the local designation process and listing on the National Register in 1983. This process, however, was not completed (see Appendix A51-A62 for a draft of National Register nomination). In April 2009, the Lowry Hill History Committee submitted an application for nomination for the property (exterior and portions of the interior) on behalf of Mr. and Mrs. Riaz (see Appendix A5-A7).

B. CONSIDERATION FOR NOMINATION

Per section 599.230 of the City's preservation ordinance, the Heritage Preservation Commission shall review all complete nomination applications. If the HPC 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.

Staff completed a review of the property at 1711 Emerson Avenue South based on the local designation criteria and believes the property may be worthy of nomination and designation as a local historic landmark because of its significance in the following four areas:

- *Local Criteria 2:* The property is associated with the lives of significant persons or groups;
- *Local criteria 4:* The property embodies the distinctive characteristics of an architectural or engineering type or style, or method of construction;
- *Local criteria 5:* The property exemplifies a landscape design or development pattern distinguished by innovation, rarity, uniqueness or quality of design or detail;
- *Local criteria 6:* The property exemplifies works of master builders, engineers, designers, artists, craftsmen or architects.

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

Ms. Elizabeth Quinlan (1863-1947) was a prominent early Minneapolis business woman. She was also an important player in national and local civic work and supporter of charities and cultural groups.

Ms. Quinlan was a co-founder of the Young-Quinlan Company in 1894 which was the first women's ready-to-wear shop west of the Mississippi (see Appendix A66). Before this time, women either made their dresses themselves or paid someone to make them. After her partner, Fred Young, died in 1911, she ran the Young-Quinlan Company until it was sold in 1945 (see Appendix A66).

Selected highlights of Ms. Quinlan's business, civic, and volunteer work:

- 1919: Created the Business Women's Club (see Appendix A67);

- 1926: Funded the construction of the Young-Quinlan Department Store at 901-915 Nicollet Avenue (see Appendix B12). The building was completed when she was 63 years old; the building cost was five million dollars;
- 1929: Served on the advisory board of the National Recovery Administration (see Appendix A65). The NRA was one of the first major pieces in place of the New Deal program of President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Among the activities of the NRA included advocating for raising of the minimum wage;
- 1935: Described by Fortune magazine as one of the country's top 16 businesswomen in the United States (see Appendix A65, A67, and A74).

It is likely that no other residential property better captures the productive life of Ms. Elizabeth Quinlan. Ms. Quinlan lived at 1711 Emerson Avenue South for 23 of the 51 years that she was in the clothing industry. The Italianate architectural design and details reflect her personal interests. There are at least three other properties in Minneapolis that Ms. Quinlan lived at: 1005 Park Avenue South, 616 Ridgewood Avenue, and 1813 Girard Avenue South (see Appendix A68). The residential properties at 1005 Park Avenue South and 616 Ridgewood Avenue no longer exist and the property at 1813 Girard Avenue South was not built for Ms. Quinlan.

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

The property embodies the distinctive characteristics of the Italianate Renaissance architectural style and retains its architectural integrity. Fredrick Ackerman's point of origin for the Quinlan House design was the small rural houses of northern Italy (see Appendix A54, B15 and B16). He reduced the construction of this house scale and tied it to its site.

The details of this house that are reminiscent of the Italianate Renaissance architectural style in particular the 16th century rural Tuscan houses include the following:

Exterior

- The low-pitched hip roof with red clay tiles and wide eaves (see Appendix A10),
- Main entrance with monumental surrounding details ,
- Windows with shutters,
- Small balconies,
- Stone and stucco exterior (Mankato buff stone).

Interior

- Vaulted ceiling: within the living room and dining room (see Appendix A26, A29)
- Italian red tile floors,
- Iron gates: replicas of the Cluny Museum in Paris. These serve as the border between the stairwell and the living room,
- Corinthian-style stone column which separates the living room and the dining room (see Appendix A18 and A25),
- Italian Monastery cabinet constructed by a skilled Italian cabinet maker based on a famous historic piece in the Davan City palace in Florence (see Appendix A27, B17),
- Iron work completed by Samuel Yellin.

The interior portion of the house also retains its original integrity. The property owner is interested in pursuing interior designation for portions of the first and second floors (see Appendix A9 for a list

of items and Appendix A17-A20 for floor plans). This includes the living room, the vestibule, and staircase on the first floor and the staircase, living room, dining room, and coat room on the second floor (see Appendix A17 and A18 for site plan).

The property at 1711 Emerson Avenue South gains further significance in that it served as the architectural prototype for Ackerman's design of the five-story Young-Quinlan Company store at 901-915 Nicollet Avenue, which was built in 1926. The exterior and portions of the interior were locally designated in 1988. Similar to the Young-Quinlan Department Store building, all facades were finished in the same detailed manner. Ackerman made extensive use of dressed stone for trim, staircases and design elements, achieving two related compositions of refinement and elegance. The residential and commercial structures share the following characteristics or elements: Kasota stone, quoins, short balconies, and the inclusion of ample off-street parking.

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 likely exemplifies a landscape design of a high quality design and uniqueness to Minneapolis. The rear Italian patio with fountain compliments the Italianate design of the house. The patio is the center of attention from the dining room eastern window. The dining room also provides access to the patio (see Appendix A32 and A33). The Italian patio is approximately 37 feet by 37 feet (see Appendix A11). It contains the geometrically placed small stones based around a blue-tiled stone fountain placed in the center of the patio (see Appendix A32 and A33 for images of original construction and today). The patio is lined with manicured green plants along the eastern edge. Along the southern and eastern edges contains the original wall with lattice. The combined wall and lattice are approximately 10 feet in height and contains clay tiles that compliment the house's clay roof tiles (see Appendix A92).

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

Architect: Fred Lee Ackerman: The architect of the Quinlan Residence (and the Young-Quinlan Department Store) was Fred Ackerman (1878-1950). Ms. Quinlan's house and the Young-Quinlan Department store are the only two properties in Minneapolis known to be associated with Mr. Ackerman.

Fred Ackerman was a prominent architect based in New York City. Mr. Ackerman formed the architectural firm Trowbridge & Ackerman which was based in New York City and provided services from 1906-1920 (see Appendix B5). The firm designed numerous houses as well as commercial and institutional buildings. The office's largest project was the Brooklyn Central YMCA (see Appendix B13 and B14).

Mr. Ackerman is even more known for his contributions in housing and city planning (see Appendix A91 and B12). He was a founding member of the Regional Planning Association of America (RPAA) in 1923 with Clarence Stein, Henry Wright, and Lewis Mumford (see Appendix B5). The RPAA shared a commitment to regionalism and to decentralize congested urban populations. They also believed that new technologies – electric power, the telephone, and the car were liberating agents, allowing homes and workplaces to escape completely from the constriction of the 19th century city (Hall, *The Cities of Tomorrow*, 158). Mr. Ackerman with the RPAA and outside of the

RPAA worked for socially responsible planning, design, and financing of community housing (see Appendix B5).

His additional contributions in city planning included serving as an architect for the 200-house Sunnyside Gardens, which is one of the first “garden city” developments in the United States (see Appendix A12). In addition, Mr. Ackerman served as a consultant for the “Town for the Motor Age” created for the planning of Radburn, N.J (see Appendix A91). The planning and design of Radburn, N.J. was influential in the design of cities and subdivisions all around the world.

With Mr. Ackerman’s work with the RPAA and garden cities, it is likely that Mr. Ackerman encouraged the three-car garage for the Quinlan Residence and the construction of the underground garage at the Young-Quinlan Department Store. Even as late as the late 1920’s vehicles were seen as benign by many, however, the RPAA and garden cities movement planned for the increased use of vehicles.

Master Iron Worker: Samuel Yellin: There were at least two firms that completed ironwork in the Quinlan Residence. Samuel Yellin (1885-1940) and W.E. Challman & Company (see Appendix A35). Mr. Yellin, who is recognized as a master iron craftsman. completed the staircase railing, chandeliers, fireplace railing, lantern, and balconies.

Mr Yellin was born and later trained in iron craftsmanship in Poland settled in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Mr. Yellin worked with notable architects all across the country and was recognized nationwide for his craftsmanship. His works include the hand-wrought fixtures and gratings in the Memorial Chapel at Valley Forge, Yale, Harvard Universities, Washington Cathedral (DC), Grace Cathedral (San Francisco) and the Cathedral of St. John the Divine (New York City, NY). He received recognition as “the master iron craftsman of all time” and received awards from the Chicago Art Institute (1919), American Institute of Architects (1920), Architectural League of New York (1922) (see Appendix A99).

There is likely only two other properties in Minnesota outside of the Ms. Quinlan’s residence and commercial building that contain Mr. Yellin’s work (see Appendix A35).

C. INTEGRITY

There have been few exterior alterations to the Quinlan house and the exterior of the building likely retains the seven aspects of integrity: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. In addition, the interior portions of the house that the applicant is interested in designating also retain their integrity. These rooms include the following: vestibule (1st floor) main stairwell, coat room, living room, and dining room.

D. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

CPED-Planning staff recommends that the Heritage Preservation Commission **adopt** staff findings, establish interim protection, and **direct** the planning director to commence a designation study for 1711 Emerson Avenue South.

E. FINDINGS

1. The Elizabeth C. Quinlan property at 1711 Emerson Avenue South is located in the Lowry Hill neighborhood. The house, garage, and likely the rear patio were designed by New York architect Fredrick H. Ackerman and built in 1924.

2. The Lowry Hill History Committee, on behalf of Mr. and Mrs. Riaz, submitted a nomination application of 1711 Emerson Avenue South to be considered for designation as a local landmark (exterior and portions of the interior).
3. The Elizabeth Quinlan property at 1711 Emerson Avenue South is likely eligible for local designation because it is associated with the lives of a significant person; embodies the distinctive characteristics of an architectural style, exemplifies a landscape design or development pattern distinguished by innovation, uniqueness or quality of design or detail; and exemplifies works of master architect and craftsmen.
4. There have been few exterior alterations to the Quinlan house and the exterior of the building likely retains the seven aspects of integrity: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. In addition, the interior portions of the house that the applicant is interested in designating also retain their integrity. The interior portions the property owner is interested in designating include the following: vestibule (1st floor) main stairwell, coat room, living room, and dining room.
5. Interim protection shall take immediate effect and remain in force during the duration of the designation study as allowed in Title 23, Minneapolis Code of Ordinances, Chapter 599, section 240.
6. During the interim protection period, no alteration or minor alteration of a nominated property (including all buildings, structures, and landscape features) shall be allowed except where authorized by a certificate of appropriateness or a certificate of no change, as provided in the city's preservation ordinance.

F. ATTACHMENTS

Appendix A: Lowry Hill History Committee Application

Appendix B: CPED Compiled Information