

**CITY OF MINNEAPOLIS
CPED PLANNING DIVISION
HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION STAFF REPORT
BZH-26402**

FILE NAME: 2006 Laurel Avenue West – Viehman Residence

APPLICANT: CPED-Planning

DATE APPLICATION COMPLETE: n/a

PUBLICATION OF STAFF REPORT: December 6, 2011

DATE OF HEARING: December 13, 2011

APPEAL PERIOD EXPIRATION: December 23, 2011

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

CLASSIFICATION: Landmark Designation Study

A. SITE DESCRIPTION AND BACKGROUND

District/Area information	
Historic District	N/A
Neighborhood	Bryn Mawr

Historic Property information	
Current name	Wiegand Residence
Historic Name	Viehman Residence
Current Address	2006 Laurel Avenue West
Historic Address	2000-2006 Laurel Avenue West
Original Construction Date	1888
Original Contractor	Erick Lund
Original Architect	None
Historic Use	Residence
Current Use	Residence
Proposed Use	Residence
Other Historical Designations	N/A



2006 Laurel Avenue West, date unknown, photo submitted by Rick Carter from Hennepin History museum Files



2006 Laurel Avenue West, 2010, photo submitted by Rick Carter

The subject property is a 2.5-story house designed in the Queen Anne style. The residence is laid out in a massed plan essentially two units deep by three units wide but modified by a variety of horizontal and vertical projections. These projections along with the variety and placement of exterior features such as an offset front porch, dormers, and oriel windows clearly indicate the building's Queen Anne origins.

On April 16, 2010, Councilmember Lisa Goodman moved to nominate the subject property at 2006 Laurel Avenue West in 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 June 22, 2010. The Council adopted this motion that same day.

On June 22, 2010 CPED recommended that the Heritage Preservation Commission approve the nomination of the subject property as a landmark; establish interim protection; and direct the Planning Director to prepare or cause to be prepared a designation study. The Heritage Preservation Commission adopted this recommendation.

On June 7, 2011, the Heritage Preservation Commission extended interim protection for 2006 Laurel Avenue West for six months until December 22, 2011.

On September 1, 2011, the State Historic Preservation Officer found the subject property to be eligible for local designation.

On October 20, 2011, CPED brought the completed designation study to the Committee of the Whole of the Planning Commission. The Committee recommended the property be designated.

B. EVALUATION

In a 1981 reconnaissance survey of Minneapolis, including properties recommended for further study in the *Minneapolis Buildings-Potential National/Local Historic or Architecture Sites List*, the subject property was recommended for further study. The Minnesota SHPO site inventory files and database included a survey of the property as well. Despite these surveys, a 2002 reconnaissance survey of North Minneapolis by 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, stating that it had lost historic integrity since the earlier surveys.¹

C. CONSIDERATION FOR DESIGNATION

Based on the 2010 nomination, CPED-Planning-Preservation and Design conducted a designation study attached within.

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

¹ Mead & Hunt, "North Minneapolis Historic Resources Inventory: Bryn Mawr and Near North Neighborhoods (South Area)," Reconnaissance Survey Files, Planning Division, Community Planning and Economic Development Department, Minneapolis, MN.

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.

D. 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 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.

E. FINDINGS

1. Consistency with designation criteria:

The Viehman Residence appears eligible for designation as a landmark under two of the designation criteria (2 and 4). It does not appear significant under criteria 1, 3, 5, 6, and 7.

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 in question does not appear to be the site of historically significant events. While it did merit mention in the *Minneapolis Tribune* several times before 1923, such mention referred to a short social page note on a 1908 Viehman family wedding and ads listing an apartment for rent.¹

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

The property is significant for its association with the Viehman family, as discussed in part two of this designation study.

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

The property in question does not appear to be associated with distinctive elements of city or neighborhood identity. The subject property is the site of a residence, which is extremely common in the City of Minneapolis. The neighborhood has seen regular, though not untoward, change over time, as demonstrated by numerous period architectural styles in the few blocks around the property. Queen Anne residences rub elbows with Minimal Traditional, Flat Pack, and vernacular residences and small commercial node buildings. If any style dominates the neighborhood it is Craftsman.

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

The residence at 2006 Laurel Avenue West is significant for its embodiment of the Queen Anne style of architecture, as discussed in part two of this designation study.

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

The subject property does not appear significant under criterion 5. The design of the yards appears mundane. Shrubs, trees, and grass, the major landscape features, are quite common to other residences in Minneapolis.

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

The property has no architect of record. Erick Lund is listed as the builder of record on the property's building permit index card, though the building permit lists no builder.² Lund merited mention in the *Minneapolis Tribune* a number of times between 1867 and 1922. Lund appears to have been a builder with enough capital to pursue his own speculative real estate projects and commission historically significant architects like Harry Wild Jones, Adam Lansing Dorr, and Edward Stebbins.³ But city directories indicate that Lund was one of several hundred contractors in Minneapolis at the time, and he ran his business out of his residence until the late 1890s. For two or three years he ran his business out of the Lumber Exchange, also headquarters to Jones and other prominent people associated with the building trade.⁴ In August 1897 Lund ended his successful business to prospect for gold in the Yukon.⁵ While the residence at 2006 Laurel Avenue West is indicative of the quality of Lund's craftsmanship, Lund's opportunistic abandonment of his profession to hunt for gold in Canada challenges the idea that he be considered a master craftsman. Yet he remained in the building trade longer than he remained a prospector. By 1902 Lund had abandoned his quest for gold and returned to Minneapolis. In any event, other extant buildings constructed by Lund, such as the large, four-story brick apartment building at 905-909 Franklin Avenue West (at the corner of Hennepin Avenue) and 337 Oak Grove Street (recently designated as a Landmark), are better remaining examples of Lund's work.⁶

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

The subject property has not yielded information important in prehistory or history. Records available at the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office indicate that no archaeological sites have been identified on the subject property nor have any archaeological surveys have been conducted on or near the property in question.

The subject property is not likely to yield information important in prehistory. The subject property is located between Basset Creek and the Devil's Backbone: the ridge that runs on the north edge of the Lowry Hill and Kenwood neighborhoods.⁷ These terrain features have created a logical route for east-west traffic between the western portions of the city and St. Anthony Falls. Given these conditions, it is possible that the site might yield information important in prehistory, however, due to the intensive development of this residential lot, the potential for intact, significant, archaeological deposits to be present that are likely to yield information important in prehistory is regarded as low.

Furthermore, the site is more than five hundred feet from both Bassett Creek and the wetland precursor of Bryn Mawr Meadows. As sources of water, food, and transportation, areas in close proximity (generally five hundred feet or less) to such sites have a higher than average potential to include archaeological evidence of precontact human habitation. Being further than five hundred feet from either feature, the property at 2006 Laurel Avenue West is far less likely to possess such evidence.⁸

The subject property is not likely to yield information important in history. Building permit records do not indicate the presence of buildings onsite prior to the construction of the present building in 1888 but city records indicate the lot was not connected to the municipal sewer system until 1918.⁹ As this was thirty years after the home was built, there is a chance that the lot may contain privy vaults bearing archaeological evidence. Other archaeological sources of information such as sheet refuse (general surface trash scatters that accumulate over time), trash pits, and builder's trenches may still be present on the lot. Generally, this sort of evidence is found in the backyards of residences. The northernmost portion of the rear yard of this property has been impacted by a driveway whose general size and placement appears to be original.¹⁰ The property originally included two lots: 2006 and what is now 2008 Laurel Avenue West. This lot, just to the west of the property, has been heavily impacted by the construction of a new residence in 2007. While the remaining yard does have the potential to reveal data about past uses and inhabitants, a relatively small portion of the yard remains. Buried remains of a carriage house that historically stood at the end of the driveway may reveal additional data, but photos of the carriage house, demolished sometime after 2004, exist in Planning files.¹¹

F. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Staff has received no comment letters as of the date of this staff report's publication.

G. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

CPED recommends that the Heritage Preservation Commission **adopt** staff findings and **approve** the landmark designation of the Viehman Residence, and forward the study and recommendation to the Zoning and Planning Committee of the City Council with a recommendation to **approve** the designation of the property at 2006 Laurel Avenue West.

¹ “Nelson-Mansfield Wedding,” *Minneapolis Tribune*, 26 November 1908, 3; Classified Ad, *Minneapolis Tribune*, 12 April 1911, 16; Classified Ad, *Minneapolis Tribune*, 19 February 1930, 15.

² City of Minneapolis Building Permit #B16442, 2006 Laurel Avenue West.; City of Minneapolis Building Permit Index Card, 2006 Laurel Avenue West.

³ “Costly Homes,” *Minneapolis Tribune*, 22 January 1893, 9; “Realty Men to Dine,” *Minneapolis Tribune*, 28 January 1895, 8; “Fine Flat Building,” *Minneapolis Tribune*, 25 April 1902, 6; City of Minneapolis Building Permit #B30223, 337 Oak Grove Street.

⁴ *Minneapolis City Directory*, 1888-1897.

⁵ “Are After Riches,” *Minneapolis Tribune*, 11 August 1897, 3.

⁶ “Fine Flat Building,” *Minneapolis Tribune*, 25 April 1902, 6; City of Minneapolis Building Permit #B30223, 337 Oak Grove Street; City of Minneapolis Building Permit Index Card, 905-909 Franklin Avenue West.

⁷ U.S. Surveyor General’s Office, *Minnesota Public Land Survey Plat Map*, Township 29 N, Range 24 W, 4th Meridian, 1876 [<http://www.mngeo.state.mn.us/glo/Index.htm>] accessed 11 February 2011.

⁸ U.S. Surveyor General’s Office, *Minnesota Public Land Survey Plat Map*, Township 29 N, Range 24 W, 4th Meridian, 1876 [<http://www.mngeo.state.mn.us/glo/Index.htm>] accessed 11 February 2011.

⁹ City of Minneapolis Building Permit Index Card, 2006 Laurel Avenue West; City of Minneapolis Public Works and Engineering Sewer and Water Connections Inspection.

¹⁰ Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Minneapolis, MN, 1912-1951, Vol. 2, 158.

¹¹ BZZ-1567, Setback Variances, 2006 Laurel Avenue West, 11 February 2004, Planning Division, Community Planning and Economic Development Department, Minneapolis, MN.