

Department of Community Planning and Economic Development (CPED)
Nomination for Consideration for Designation as a Local Historic Landmark
BZH-27695

Proposal: Nomination of the Sumner T. McKnight Mansion for Consideration for Designation as a Local Historic Landmark

Applicant: Commissioner Sue Hunter Weir, Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission

Address of Property: 2200 Park Avenue

CPED Staff and Phone: Paul Mogush, AICP, 612-673-2074

Date Application Deemed Complete: March 15, 2013

Public Hearing: April 30, 2013

Appeal Period Expiration: May 10, 2013

Ward: 6

Neighborhood Organization: Phillips West Neighborhood Organization

Concurrent Review: n/a

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PROPERTY INFORMATION	
Current name	American Indian Services
Historic Name	Sumner T. McKnight Mansion
Current Address	2200 Park Avenue
Historic Address	2200 Park Avenue
Original Construction Date	1892
Original Contractor	Sumner T. McKnight
Original Architect	Bertrand & Keith
Historic Use	Residence
Current Use	Vacant
Proposed Use	Undetermined; Property is for sale

BACKGROUND:

During the New Business portion of the February 26, 2013 meeting of the Heritage Preservation Commission, Commissioner Sue Hunter Weir announced that she would be submitting a nomination for the Sumner T. McKnight Mansion for local designation as an individual landmark. CPED has received the nomination and is bringing it forward for the commission’s consideration.

The residence was built in 1892 for Sumner T. McKnight, a prominent figure in lumbering and Minneapolis real estate. The home was designed by Bertrand & Keith in the Richardsonian Romanesque style. The McKnight family lived in the home until 1935, when the Northwestern College of Speech Arts purchased the property for use as a school. The mansion became a nursing home in the 1950s. In 1963, the nursing home tore down a carriage house at the rear of the property and added a two-story addition, replacing the original carriage house. Yorkshire Manor nursing home moved its operation from 2200 Park Avenue in 1997 when it merged with another facility. The most recent occupant of the mansion was American Indian Services. The property is currently for sale and the building vacant.

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 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 may be eligible for local designation as an individual landmark under criteria 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6.

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

Criterion 3 The property contains or is associated with distinctive elements of city or neighborhood identity.

The nomination states that the property meets criteria 1 and/or 3 as a result of its context within the Park Avenue “Golden Mile,” a stretch of 35 stately mansions along Park Avenue between Franklin Avenue and 28th Street. The nomination further states that of the few remaining Golden Mile mansions, only two have received historic designation (the Charles M. Harrington House and the Swan Turnblad House), leaving the others vulnerable to demolition.

Criterion 2 The property is associated with the lives of significant persons or groups.

The nomination details the life and significance of the Sumner T. McKnight family, who lived in the mansion from its construction in 1892 until Sumner T. McKnight, Jr. and his family moved to Lake Minnetonka in 1935. Sumner T. McKnight, Sr. was a prominent figure in the upper Midwest lumber industry and in Minneapolis real estate. His son, Sumner T. Jr. represented Minneapolis in both houses of the Minnesota Legislature. During the 43 years the McKnight family lived in the mansion, the home was host to lavish parties and social events, as well as the wedding of Harriett E. McKnight to Franklin Muzzy Crosby.

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

The nomination states that the property embodies the distinctive characteristics of the Richardsonian Romanesque Style of architecture, which include exterior walls composed of large rough-hewn stone blocks, naturalistic stone carving of plant forms, prominent use of Roman barrel arches, and a studied asymmetry. Examples of other Minneapolis buildings in the Richardsonian Romanesque style include Minneapolis City Hall, the Lumber Exchange building, and the Van Dusen Mansion.

Criterion 6 The property exemplifies the works of master builders, engineers, designers, artists, craftsmen or architects.

The nomination states that the property exemplifies the work of architects Bertrand and Keith, citing George Bertrand in particular as a prominent architect who could be considered a master architect. The nomination states that the McKnight Mansion conveys the original design intent of Bertrand and Keith, and that the rear addition to the building does not impair its integrity.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Staff has not received any comments at the time of the publication of this staff report.

FINDINGS

1. The nominated property appears to meet at least one of the criteria for designation contained in section 599.210 (criteria 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6).
2. The property may meet additional criteria of significance. A full review will be undertaken during the designation study.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

The Department of Community Planning and Economic Development recommends that the Heritage Preservation Commission adopt staff findings and **approve** the nomination of 2200 Park Avenue as a landmark; establish interim protection; and direct the Planning Director to prepare or cause to be prepared a designation study.

Attachments

1. Staff Report
2. Materials Submitted by CPED
 - a. Letter from Sue Hunter Weir and 350' map
3. Materials Submitted by Applicant
 - a. Nomination application, including narrative and photos

Hilary,

As we discussed last week, I am submitting an application for the staff to review to determine whether the Sumner T. McKnight mansion at 2200 Park Avenue is eligible for designation as a local landmark. The property is vulnerable: it is foreclosed, vacant, and currently on the market with Keller Williams as the agent.

This property is one that is greatly valued by the neighborhood and represents an important piece of the city's—and region's—history. At one time there were 35 mansions along Park Avenue's "Golden Mile." Now there are only about a half dozen.

Sumner T. McKnight Sr. and his son Sumner Jr. were two of the most important commercial and civic leaders of their day, and the house that Sumner Sr. built is an elegant example of this success. The property appears to meet several criteria for designation, and those are outlined in the supporting materials.

I am asking that if staff agrees that the property merits historic designation, that the property be placed under interim protection.

Please let me know if you have questions or need further information.

Best wishes.

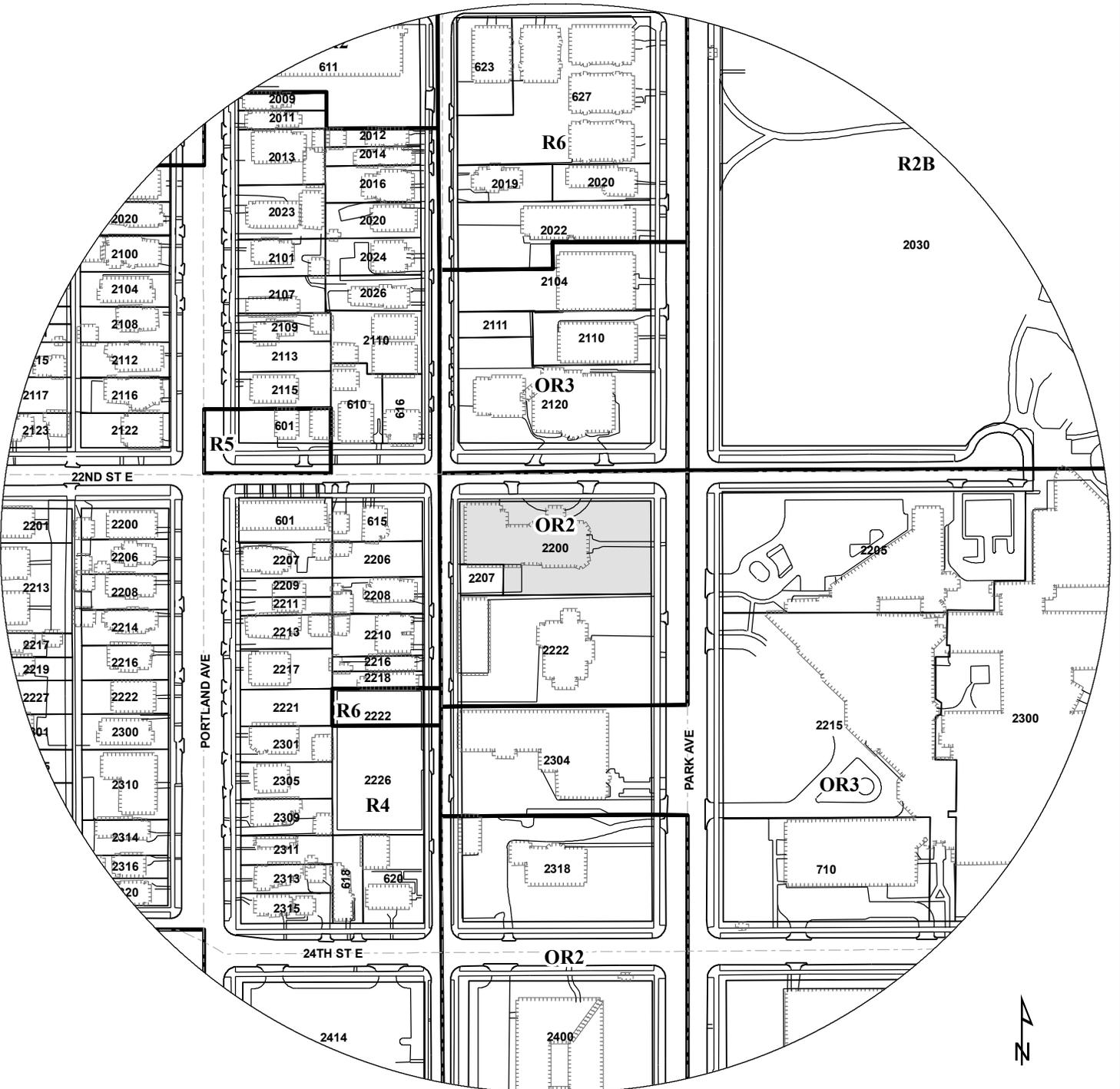
Sue Hunter Weir, HPC Commissioner

Sumner T. McKnight Mansion Nomination

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NAME OF APPLICANT

WARD



Address
2200 Park Avenue

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