

The Thomas Lowry Memorial appears to meet criteria 1, 2, and 6 for designation as a landmark under Section 599.210 of the Heritage Preservation Regulations.

Due to its association with Minneapolis' streetcar heritage the Thomas Lowry Memorial appears to meet criterion 1, "the property is associated with significant event or with periods that exemplify broad patterns of cultural, political, economic or social history." Streetcars were instrumental in shaping Minneapolis into the great city that it is today, allowing the city to expand beyond the bounds of walking distance and giving average citizens access to homes, jobs, and recreational opportunities far greater than what had previously been available to them.¹ As identified under the street railways context statement in the *Minneapolis Preservation Plan*, street railways enhanced property values, and shaped building, neighborhood, and commercial development. Much of Minneapolis' built environment owes its form to streetcar development patterns; however, this form does not currently serve as a reminder of Minneapolis' streetcar heritage in the public consciousness to the extent that the Thomas Lowry Memorial does.

Due to its association with Thomas Lowry, the Thomas Lowry memorial appears to meet criterion 2, "the property is associated with significant persons or groups." Thomas Lowry first served as president of the Minneapolis Street Railway Co, before merging it with the Saint Paul City Railway Co and becoming the first president of the Twin Cities Rapid Transit Company (TCRT).² Under Lowry's visionary leadership, TCRT extended service to new areas, driving growth and shaping much of the urban fabric of modern Minneapolis.³ Regarded as one of the City's great visionaries, Lowry was mourned across the city and indeed across the country upon his death in 1910. He was eulogized by Charles M. Loring, first president of the Minneapolis Park Board, who described Lowry as "as good a citizen as this city will ever have [...] [who] realized that Minneapolis was to be a great city and [...] showed that he had faith in it. He knew that Minneapolis would make good. [...] There is no question that this city will miss Mr. Lowry."⁴ The Thomas Lowry Memorial has been the property most associated with Mr. Lowry since the demolition of the Lowry mansion at the present site of the Walker Art Center in 1932.⁵

As a product of renowned sculptor Karl Bitter, the Thomas Lowry Memorial appears to meet criterion 6, "the property exemplifies works of master builders, engineers, designers, artists, craftsmen or architects." Karl Bitter was internationally recognized as among the greatest sculptors of his era, winning the silver medal in sculpture at the Paris Exposition in 1900, the gold medal at the 1901 Pan-American Exposition, the silver medal at the Philadelphia Exposition in 1902, and the gold medal at the Saint Louis Exposition in 1904. He also served as the director of sculpture at the 1901 Pan-American Exposition, the

¹ John W. Diers and Aaron Isaacs, *Twin Cities by Trolley: The Streetcar Era in Minneapolis and St. Paul* (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota, 2007), 4.

² Goodrich Lowry, *Streetcar Man: Tom Lowry and the Twin City Rapid Transit Company*. (Minneapolis: Lerner Publications, 1979), 40, 48-50, 127.

³ John W. Diers and Aaron Isaacs, *Twin Cities by Trolley: The Streetcar Era in Minneapolis and St. Paul* (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota, 2007), 47, 217, 230, 246-247, 249.

⁴ Peter S. Sussman, "The Thomas Lowry Memorial," *Twin City Lines* 5.2 (2011): 11-12.

⁵ Larry, Millet, *AIA Guide to the Minneapolis Lake District*, (Saint Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 2009), 12.

1904 Saint Louis Exposition, and the 1915 Panama-Pacific Exposition. In addition, Bitter served three terms as the vice-president of the National Institute of Arts and Sciences, and one term as president of the National Sculpture Society.⁶ Bitter worked on the Thomas Lowry Memorial from 1911 until his death in 1915, four months before the completion of the memorial.⁷ Bitter is responsible for dozens of memorials and much sculptural ornamentation across the country, however, the Thomas Lowry Memorial is his only extant work in Minnesota. The closest other works of Bitter are ornamentation on the Wisconsin state capitol building, followed by three pieces in Saint Louis, MO—one public sculpture and two in the collection of the Missouri History Museum.⁸

The Thomas Lowry Memorial does not retain integrity of location. The memorial was originally erected at the Virginia Triangle—a small park at the intersection of Hennepin, Lyndale, and Douglas Avenues. In 1967, to make way for the construction of Interstate 94 and the Lowry Hill Tunnel, the Minneapolis Park Board relocated the memorial to Smith Triangle Park, at 2330 Hennepin Ave S, and sold land including the Virginia Triangle to the Minnesota Department of Transportation. The memorial still stands at Smith Triangle Park.⁹

The Thomas Lowry Memorial fully retains integrity of design. The memorial has had no alterations since its construction in 1915 and remains as designed by Karl Bitter and constructed by Charles S. Wells.

The Thomas Lowry Memorial in large part retains integrity of setting. While the memorial was relocated in 1967, its new home at Smith Triangle Park is similar to its former home at the Virginia Triangle. Both parks consist of the leftover space where the angled Hennepin Avenue bisects streets that conform to Minneapolis' street grid. When relocated to Smith Triangle, the memorial was sited at the back of the park, facing the acute angle of the intersection. While there certainly was an association between the memorial's original siting at the intersection of three streetcar lines and Minneapolis' streetcar heritage, its present location is also along a significant historic streetcar routing. Indeed, even if the memorial had not been relocated, the symbolism of placing Mr. Lowry's memorial at the intersection of several streetcar lines would be lost to much of the public today. Its present location is less than five-eighths of a mile from its original siting, and it remains surrounded largely by commercial buildings built in the streetcar era, in a neighborhood whose development was driven by the streetcars.

The Thomas Lowry Memorial fully retains integrity of materials. There has no apparent replacement of original material.

The Thomas Lowry Memorial fully retains integrity of workmanship. The work of local quarrymen and stone-carvers is just as visible in the memorial today as it was in 1915.

The Thomas Lowry Memorial does not retain integrity of feeling in large part. The memorial was originally sited at what was perhaps the busiest intersection in the city, surrounded by streetcars and

⁶ Ferdinand Schevill, *Karl Bitter: A Biography* (Chicago, IL: U of Chicago, 1917), xiii.

⁷ Peter S. Sussman, "The Thomas Lowry Memorial," *Twin City Lines* 5.2 (2011): 18-19.

⁸ Ferdinand Schevill, *Karl Bitter: A Biography* (Chicago, IL: U of Chicago, 1917), x-xi.

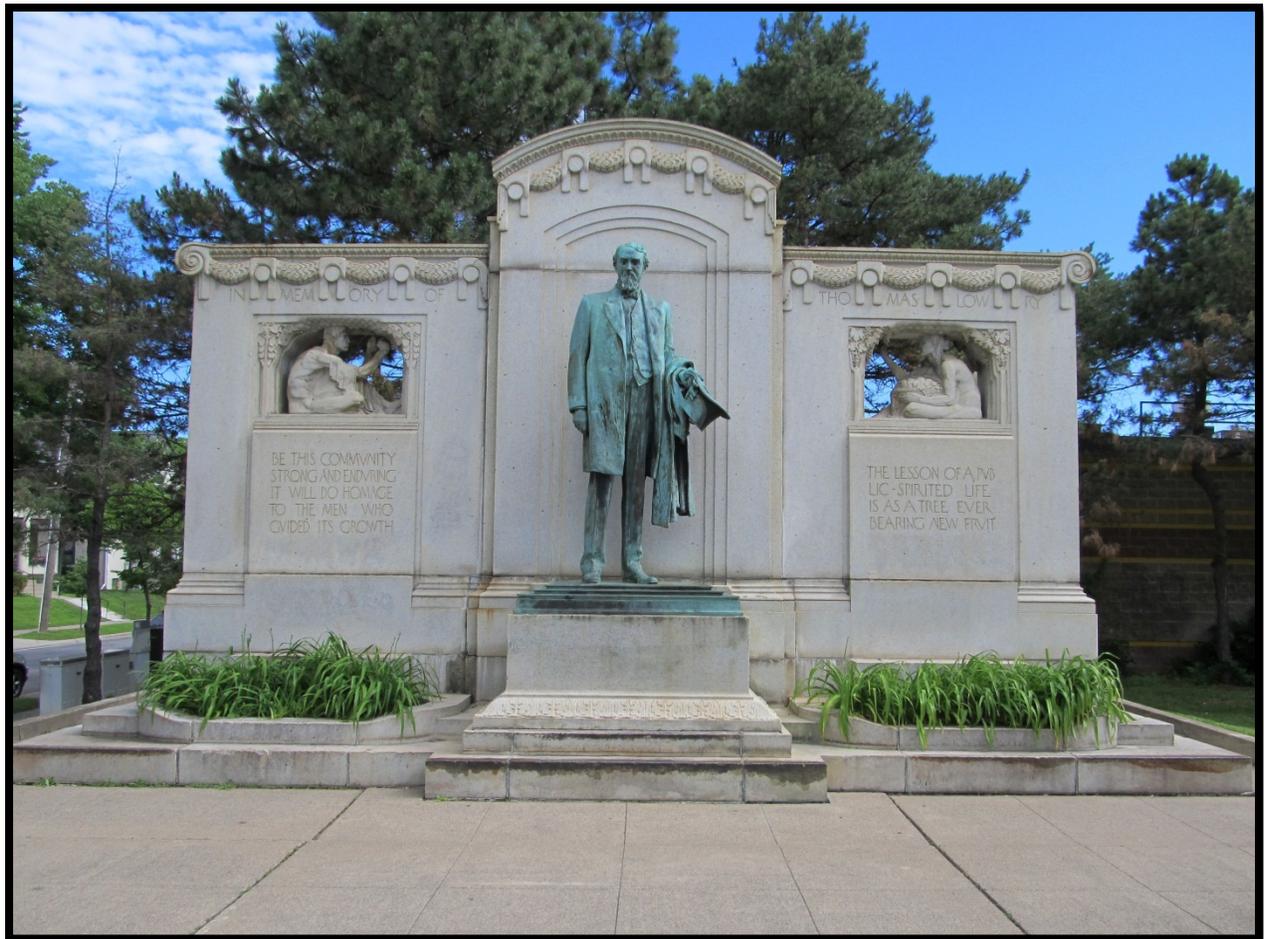
⁹ Goodrich Lowry, *Streetcar Man: Tom Lowry and the Twin City Rapid Transit Company*. (Minneapolis: Lerner Publications, 1979), 155.

autos, a proud monument to one of the men who most shaped the urban fabric that it stood at the center of. Lowry stood over the intersection, almost as a guardian greeting the multitudes of streetcar passengers that passed him by, headed to various corners of the city. Today, the memorial still stands along busy Hennepin Ave, but set back from the street, rather than in the middle of hustle and bustle.

The Thomas Lowry Memorial fully retains integrity of association. The memorial remains among the properties most associated with Minneapolis' streetcar heritage, and is certainly the extant property most associated with Thomas Lowry. In a city where most of historic street railway infrastructure has been obliterated, the Thomas Lowry memorial is one of the extant properties that the public most directly associates with the history of streetcars in Minneapolis.



Thomas Lowry Memorial, 2330 Hennepin Ave S, in relation to nearby properties



Thomas Lowry Memorial , south elevation top, north elevation bottom





Thomas Lowry Memorial, west elevation top, east elevation bottom



Materials Submitted by CPED Staff

Historic Photos:



Memorial prior to being removed from Virginia Triangle. Image courtesy Hennepin County Libraries.



Dedication of Memorial, 1915. Image courtesy Minnesota Historical Society.



Soot being cleaned from memorial, 1937. Image courtesy Minnesota Historical Society.