CPED STAFF REPORT

Prepared for the Heritage Planning Commission
Agenda Item #1
June 21, 2016
BZH-29013

HERITAGE PRESERVATION APPLICATION SUMMARY

Property Location:	See Attached
Project Name:	Tilsenbilt Homes Potential Historic District
Prepared By:	Andrew Frenz, City Planner, (612) 673-3790, with Dr. John Smoley, Senior City Planner
Applicant:	Council Vice-President Elizabeth Glidden
Project Contact:	Andrew Frenz
Ward:	8
Neighborhood:	Bryant, Regina, Field
Request:	Nomination for designation as a local historic district.

HISTORIC PROPERTY INFORMATION

Current Name	Tilsenbilt Homes Potential Historic District
Historic Name	Tilsenbilt Homes
Historic Address	See Attached
Original Construction Date	1954-1956
Original Owner	Various
Original Architect	Norman R. Johnson
Original Builder	Edward N. Tilsen
Historic Use	Single-family residential
Current Use	Single-family residential
Proposed Use	Single-family residential
Other Historical Designations	None

Date Application Deemed Complete		**Date Extension Letter Sent**	
End of 60-Day Decision Period		**End of 120-Day Decision Period**	

Additional Property Proposed for Nomination

3928 5th Avenue South

Properties Included in Prior Nominations

343 41st Street East	4500 4th Avenue South
3928 4th Avenue South	4501 4th Avenue South
4016 4th Avenue South	4504 4th Avenue South
4020 4th Avenue South	3943 5th Avenue South
4021 4th Avenue South	4004 5th Avenue South
4116 4th Avenue South	4012 5th Avenue South
4121 4th Avenue South	4016 5th Avenue South
4219 4th Avenue South	4020 5th Avenue South
4223 4th Avenue South	4021 5th Avenue South
4227 4th Avenue South	4025 5th Avenue South
4408 4th Avenue South	4028 5th Avenue South
4412 4th Avenue South	4032 5th Avenue South
4421 4th Avenue South	4036 5th Avenue South
4441 4th Avenue South	4040 5th Avenue South
4445 4th Avenue South	4044 5th Avenue South
4448 4th Avenue South	4645 5th Avenue South

SUMMARY

BACKGROUND. On January 19, 2016, the Heritage Preservation Commission approved the nomination of 30 properties as part of the Tilsenbilt Homes Potential Historic District, placed the properties under interim protection, and directed the planning director to prepare or cause to be prepared a designation study. On March 8, 2016, the Heritage Preservation Commission approved the addition of two additional properties to the potential historic district. Since that time, the original nominator, Council Vice-President Elisabeth Glidden, has submitted a modified nomination for the district which includes one additional property.

The properties of the Tilsenbilt Homes Potential Historic District were all constructed between 1954 and 1956 by Edward Tilsen with the help of Archie Givens Sr. Preliminary research indicates that these homes were built as part of the first federally-supported commercial housing development in Minnesota, and one of the first in the nation, that was open to homebuyers of all races. Tilsen acquired 63 lots, on

which he developed 52 homes. 33 homes, located along 4th and 5th Avenues South between East 39th Street and East 47th Street, are included in the nomination. Staff has determined that one of the previously nominated homes was not in fact built by Edward Tilsen. The following are the 20 additional Tilsenbilt Homes that are not included in the nomination:

4248 3rd Avenue South	4452 4th Avenue South
501 45th Street East	4453 4th Avenue South
3904 4th Avenue South	4456 4th Avenue South
3912 4th Avenue South	4457 4th Avenue South
4117 4th Avenue South	4505 4th Avenue South
4203 4th Avenue South	4024 5th Avenue South
4231 4th Avenue South	4045 5th Avenue South
4417 4th Avenue South	4544 5th Avenue South
4429 4th Avenue South	4556 5th Avenue South
4440 4th Avenue South	4629 5th Avenue South

Prior to the passage of the Fair Housing Act in 1968, housing discrimination based on factors such as race or religion was commonplace, and often encouraged by the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) and the U.S. Department of Veteran's Affairs (VA). Restrictive deed covenants and red-lining policies of realtor's associations and major lenders fed the growth of housing segregation, particularly during the housing crisis that followed World War II. During this period, African Americans in Minneapolis were particularly affected. African Americans found that very few realtors or banks would allow them to purchase homes outside of established black neighborhoods, mostly concentrated along the 6th Avenue North and 4th Avenue South corridors. Between 1946 and 1952, over 9,500 single-family homes and duplexes were constructed in Minneapolis, of which only twelve were sold to African American buyers. At the same time, Minneapolis' black population increased 60% between 1940 and 1950.[1] This created a severe shortage of quality housing for black Minneapolitans, and allowed them to be exploited by realtors, who often charged significantly more for homes available to African Americans.

In an effort to combat this problem, the Minneapolis Urban League encouraged black realtors to work with the FHA to develop a new model for integrated commercial building projects. Up-and-coming realtor Archie Givens assembled 63 lots bounded by East 39th Street, East 47th Street, 5th Avenue South, and 3rd Avenue South. Although these lots were located just south of the large African American community in the 4th Avenue corridor, only two black families were living south of 42nd Street at the time. Mr. Givens recruited Edward Tilsen, owner of Tilsenbilt Homes, as the builder for the project.[2]

Contemporary sources agree that 63 lots were involved in the project. Staff has located 66 lots that were owned by Tilsen in the project area, 52 of which contain homes built by Tilsenbilt Homes between 1954 and 1956.

PUBLIC COMMENTS. To date, no comments specific to the nomination application have been received by staff. Any correspondence received prior to the public meeting will be forwarded on to the Heritage Preservation Commission for consideration.

Prior to the nomination, three community meetings with Tilsenbilt homeowners and their near neighbors were conducted by the Ward 8 office, with help from the Field Regina Northrup Neighborhood Group (FRNNG) and CPED. Additional meetings have been conducted between the Ward 8 office, CPED, FRNNG, and the Bryant Neighborhood Organization. The Ward 8 office has also conducted an extensive door-knocking and mailing campaign.

ANALYSIS

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 criteria for designation contained in section 599.210 the commission may institute interim protection and direct the planning director to prepare or cause to be prepared a designation study of the property.

Significance

The nominated property appears to meet at least one of the seven criteria for designation contained in section 599.210:

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

   The Tilsenbilt Homes Potential Historic District appears to be significant under criterion one for its association with the Civil Rights Movement and its position as the first FHA-backed racially-integrated housing development in Minnesota and one of the first in the entire nation.[3] When the FHA was formed, its first Underwriting Manual explicitly advocated in favor of racial covenants, a policy which continued explicitly through 1949 and implicitly through 1962.[4] As the first federally-supported integrated commercial housing project in Minnesota, the Tilsenbilt Homes were an important step towards eliminating housing segregation.

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

   The Tilsenbilt Homes Potential Historic District appears to be significant under criterion two for its association with Archie Givens Sr. and Edward N. Tilsen.

   Archie Givens Sr., developer of the Tilsenbilt Homes Potential Historic District, was a significant figure in the African American Community and in the Twin Cities as a whole. Born in Minneapolis, Mr. Givens and his wife, Phebe, are known as Minneapolis' first black millionaires and major philanthropists.[5] They were involved in many business ventures, most prominently developing and operating nursing homes. In 1972, the couple founded the Archie and Phebe Mae Givens Foundation, which provided scholarships for black students in the Twin Cities. Later, the

organization shifted its mission to preserving African American literature, creating the Archie Givens Sr. Collection of African American Literature, which is housed at the University of Minnesota.[6]

Edward Tilsen was born in 1891 near Kiev, Ukraine as Edward Nahman Teplitszky. He came to the United States via Quebec. After living in Wisconsin, North Dakota, and Michigan, Mr. Tilsen ended up in Saint Paul, where he began his homebuilding company in the late 1930s.[7] As an immigrant Jew, Mr. Tilsen had also experienced discrimination, and did not support segregation.[8] In the 1940s, he had tried to build several integrated apartment buildings in Saint Paul, but could not find a bank willing to finance integrated buildings. Rather than build segregated buildings as the banks required, Tilsen abandoned the project.[9] Tilsen later built 24 non-segregated rental townhomes in Saint Paul, and eventually the houses of the Tilsenbilt Homes Potential Historic District.[10] Tilsen developed homes across Minneapolis, Saint Paul, and many inner suburbs.[11] Tilsenbilt Homes is now in its fourth generation of family ownership and continues to develop housing in Minnesota.

The subject properties may also be eligible for designation as a local historic district under the other five designation criteria. Such an analysis would be conducted as part of a designation study.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Department of Community Planning and Economic Development recommends that the Heritage Preservation Commission adopt staff findings for the nomination by Elizabeth Glidden for the Tilsenbilt Homes Potential Historic District for designation as a local historic district:

A. Nomination for Designation as a Historic District.

Recommended motion: **Approve** the request to add 3928 5th Avenue South to the nomination of the Tilsenbilt Homes Potential Historic District; **establish** interim protection for the added property; and **direct** the Planning Director to include the added property in the ongoing designation study.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Map
2. Nomination
3. Correspondence

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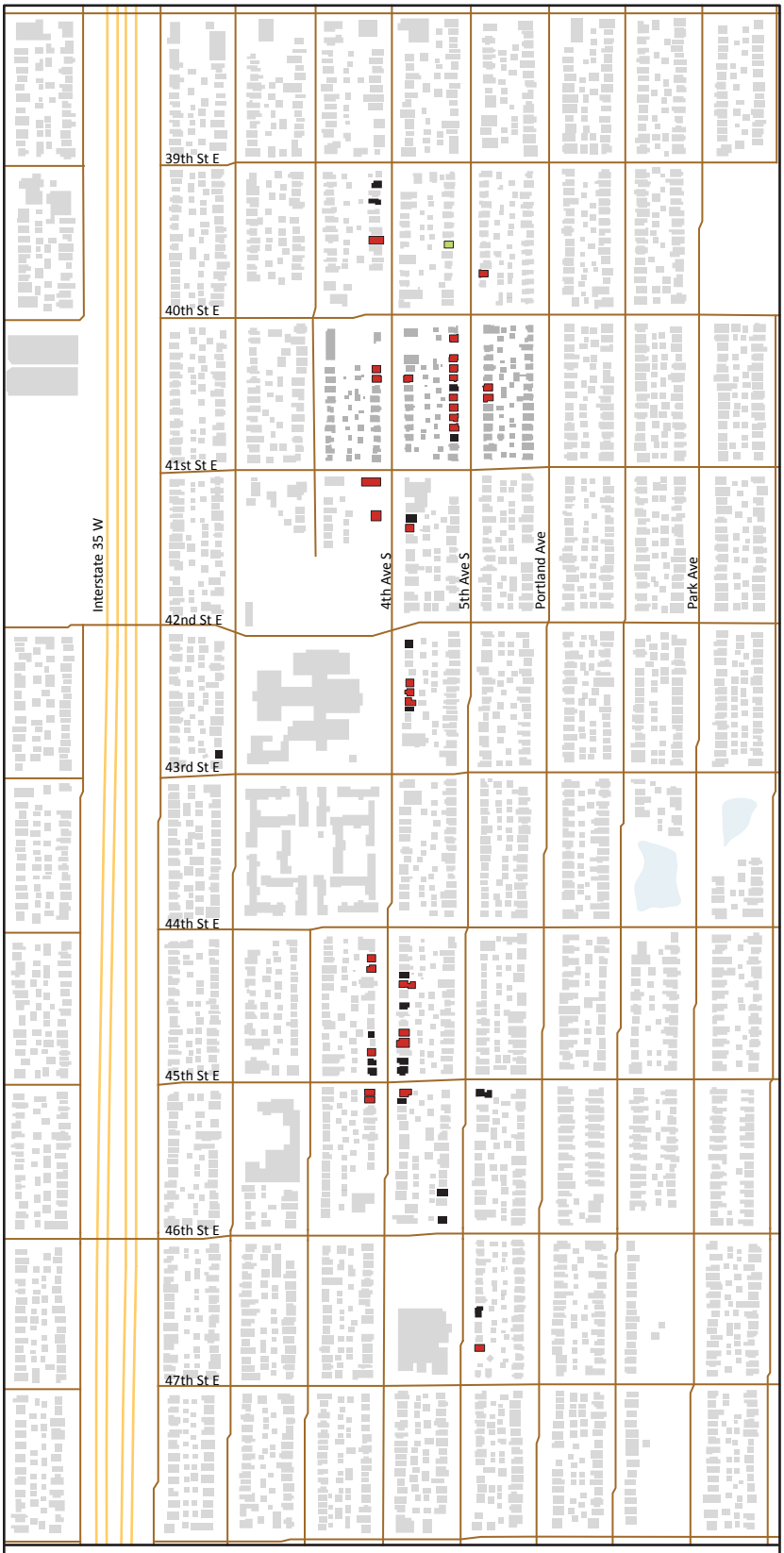
[1] Blackwell, Ed. "Families May Purchase New Homes on "Open" Market for First Time, May Set National Pattern." *Saint Paul Recorder*, May 5, 1954; "Home Project Without Color Line Opens." *Minneapolis Morning Tribune*, May 24, 1954.

[2] "Home Project Without Color Line Opens." *Minneapolis Morning Tribune*, May 24, 1954.

[3] United States Department of the Interior. (2010). *National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form: Greenbelt Knoll Historic District*, 12; Grier, Eunice S. and Grier, George. *Privately Developed Interracial Housing: An Analysis of Experience.* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1960), 9.

[4] Hatchet, LaDavia S. "A Case for Reparations: The Plight of the African-American World War II Veteran Concerning Federal Discriminatory Housing Practices." *The Modern American*, Summer 2006, 18-24.

[5] "Twin Cities' First Black Millionaire Dies At Age 54." *Jet Magazine*, April 18, 1974, 53.
[6] Lerner, Maura. "Phebe Givens, philanthropist, dies at 93." *Star Tribune*, April 27, 2015.
[7] Tilsen, Jon-Jay. Edward N. Tilsen. Retrieved from: http://www.tilsen.org/tilsedwa.html
[8] Tilsen, Jon-Jay. "Jerusalem: There Goes the Neighborhood." *BEKI Bulletin*, November 2014.
[9] Blackwell, Ed. "Families May Purchase New Homes on "Open" Market for First Time, May Set National Pattern." *Saint Paul Recorder*, May 5, 1954.
[10] "Home Project Without Color Line Opens." *Minneapolis Morning Tribune*, May 24, 1954.
[11] Blackwell, Ed. "Families May Purchase New Homes on "Open" Market for First Time, May Set National Pattern." *Saint Paul Recorder*, May 5, 1954.



North

Tilsenbuilt Historic District
July 2016

NOMINATION APPLICATION WORKSHEET

Applicant **(This person will be the primary contact for staff)**	Name	Elizabeth Glidden, Minneapolis City Council Vice-President
	Mailing Address Including City, State and Zip Code	350 S. 5th St. Room 300 Minneapolis, MN 55415
	Phone Number	
	Fax	
	Email	
Property Owner	Name	See Attached
	Mailing Address Including City, State and Zip Code	
	Phone Number	
	Fax	
	Email	
Property Information	Address(es)	See Attached
	Identification Number(s)	See Attached
	Legal Description	
Name of Proposed Project (If applicable)		

NOMINATION APPLICATION

I understand that I must file the nomination application with the Department of Community Planning and Economic Development and obtain approval of this application by the Heritage Preservation Commission in order to conform with the heritage preservation regulations of the City of Minneapolis. I certify that the information which I have supplied in submitting this application is correct and accurate to the best of my knowledge. When I submit this application, I authorize the Department of Community Planning and Economic Development to process the nomination application.

Applicant's name and signature — Date 6/7/14

- Must be signed and dated by the applicant before the application(s) will be processed.
- Applications received after 3:30 p.m. will be processed as received on the following business day.
- Community Planning and Economic Development staff may identify additional applications upon further analysis of the proposed project.

Addition to the nomination:

Address	PID	Owner
3928 5th Ave S	1002824110177	Holly Marshall

Previously nominated homes:

Address	PID	Owner
343 41st St E	1002824140117	Daniel Z Pelzman
3928 4th Ave S	1002824110024	MPLS Public Housing Authority
4016 4th Ave S	1002824140061	Julia H Bobadilla
4020 4th Ave S	1002824140062	Michael D Juarez
4021 4th Ave S	1002824140053	Ollie M Thomas
4116 4th Ave S	1002824140119	Temple Israel of Minneapolis
4121 4th Ave S	1002824140144	James D Dipietro
4219 4th Ave S	1002824410054	Juan Reyes & Maria Zetino
4223 4th Ave S	1002824410053	Jose Arturo Vega Lopez
4227 4th Ave S	1002824410052	Alvedia Smith
4408 4th Ave S	1002824440058	Mary Ann Hodge
4412 4th Ave S	1002824440059	MPLS Public Housing Authority
4421 4th Ave S	1002824440051	Lionel B Davis
4441 4th Ave S	1002824440046	Holly S Mciver
4445 4th Ave S	1002824440045	Manuel Ramon
4448 4th Ave S	1002824440066	Susan Kapsner
4500 4th Ave S	1002824440118	Cricket Holdings LLC
4501 4th Ave S	1002924440171	Arle Bullert
4504 4th Ave S	1002824440119	MPLS Public Housing Authority
3943 5th Ave S	1002824110173	Cornelious Martin
4004 5th Ave S	1002824140032	Dana Jackson
4012 5th Ave S	1002824140034	Elizabeth Wollangk
4016 5th Ave S	1002824140035	Ih3 Property Minnesota LP
4020 5th Ave S	1002824140036	Anita Nunn
4021 5th Ave S	1002824140025	Julian T D'andrea
4025 5th Ave S	1002824140174	Paulette Cheatham
4028 5th Ave S	1002824140038	Anthony R Scott II
4032 5th Ave S	1002824140039	Melvin Mckissic
4036 5th Ave S	1002824140040	Erika K Wachholz
4040 5th Ave S	1002824140041	Kevin & Stacie Branson
4044 5th Ave S	1002824140042	Ih3 Property Minnesota LP
4645 5th Ave S	1502824110044	Bret E Indrelee

Statement describing the applicant's relationship to the property to be designated

I am the Minneapolis City Council member representing Ward 8, which includes the properties proposed for nomination.

Statement describing how the property meets at least one of the criteria for designation as a landmark or historic district contained in Section 599.210 of the Heritage Preservation Regulations

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

The Tilsenbilt Homes Potential Historic District appears to be significant under criterion one for its association with the Civil Rights Movement and its position as the first FHA-backed racially-integrated housing development in the United States.

Prior to the passage of the Fair Housing Act in 1968, housing discrimination based on race or religion was commonplace. Restrictive deed covenants, major lenders' red-lining policies, and realtors' association rules, both written and unwritten, fed the growth of housing segregation during the housing crisis that followed World War II. During this period, African Americans in Minneapolis were particularly affected. African Americans found that very few realtors or banks would allow them to purchase homes outside of defined neighborhoods, which were generally located along the 6th Avenue North and 4th Avenue South corridors. Between 1946 and 1952, over 9,500 single-family homes and duplexes were constructed in Minneapolis, of which fewer than 20 were sold to African American buyers, while at the same time, Minneapolis' black population increased 60% between 1940 and 1950. This created a severe shortage of quality housing for black Minneapolitans and allowed them to be exploited by realtors, who often charged more for homes available to African Americans.

In an effort to reduce the shortage of quality housing available to African Americans in Minneapolis, the Minneapolis Urban League encouraged black realtors to work with the FHA to develop a new model for integrated commercial housing projects. Up-and-coming realtor Archie Givens located buildable lots in an area bounded by 39th Street E, 47th Street E, 5th Avenue S, and 3rd Avenue S. Although these lots were located just south of the large African American community in the 4th Avenue corridor, only two African American families were living south of 42nd Street at the time. Mr. Givens also found the builder for the homes, Edward Tilsen, owner of Tilsenbilt Homes.

Although a small handful of racially-integrated commercial developments had been constructed elsewhere in the country prior to the Tilsenbilt Homes, the Tilsenbilt Homes still appear to be the first integrated commercial housing development to be supported by the FHA. When the FHA was first formed, its first Underwriting Manual explicitly advocated in favor of racial covenants, a policy which continued explicitly through 1949

and implicitly through 1962. As the first federally-supported integrated commercial housing project in the country, the Tilsenbilt Homes were an important step towards eliminating housing segregation.

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

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<u>Statement describing the physical condition of the property and whether the property retains integrity (i.e. the ability to communicate its historical significance as evident in its location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association):</u>

In general, the properties retain their integrity. The nominated properties have had very few major exterior alterations. Most of the properties retain the vast majority of their original materials, workmanship, and design, and none of the properties have been relocated.

4000 Block 5th Ave S, facing southwest. Source: CPED Files

4000 Block of 5th Ave S, facing southeast. Source: CPED Files