

Fifth Street Southeast Historic District Resurvey Project
Community Meeting #2
June 13, 2024
First Congregational Church of Minnesota

Attendees:

Staff: Rob Skalecki, Erin Que, Andrea Burke
Consultant - Lauren Anderson, New History
Members of the public - 6

Staff and the Consultant gave a presentation and took questions from the audience.

Points from Slide Presentation

- The survey report is not yet finalized but it's close to being done. You can contact City staff and we will make sure you get a copy.
- Presentation by the Consultant:
 - Goals for tonight: review the project goals, share process and findings, and talk about what this means for you
 - Recap of historic district background
 - There are 71 properties in this [historic district](#).
 - It was locally designated by the City Council in 1976.
 - In 1980, the district was also certified eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. Our focus is the locally designated district only.
 - In 1976, the research and documentation for this district was pretty light. No period of significance was established to identify when this district was important. No in-depth research was done about each property. This project seeks to fill those gaps and update information to capture alterations from the last almost 50 years.
 - Review of [designation criteria](#)
 - Explanation of “period of significance” – this is the period when the district was historically important
 - Contributing resources – typically built during the district’s period of significance and have not been substantially changed
 - Non-contributing resources – typically built outside the district’s period of significance and/or have been substantially changed
 - New History was hired to summarize the district’s history, establish a period of significance, and determine contributing/non-contributing status
 - New History recommends that the historic district is significant under Criteria 1, 2, 4, and 6
 - Criterion 1 because it is associated with establishment of St. Anthony and development of Minneapolis
 - Criterion 2 because several residents were notable individuals
 - Criterion 4 because half of the district properties exemplify known architectural styles

- Criterion 6 because many district properties were designed or built by master architects or builders
- New History recommends a period of significance from 1856-1942
 - The oldest standing house was built in 1856.
 - The last historically significant building was built in 1942.
 - After 1942, there was an 18-year break in construction and the next building constructed was quite different from previously built properties.
- New History recommends that 64 are contributing and 7 are non-contributing
 - This is based on dates of construction and whether or not a property had any substantial alterations after 1942.
- Process
 - Reviewed past documentation and additional sources, such as maps
 - Translated past information about the significance into current designation criteria
- History of district is a microcosm of the history of the city as a whole.
 - It is one of the oldest if not the oldest Euro American settlements in the area.
 - Development was driven by waterpower of the river and establishment of U of M.
 - Flour milling took off in late 1800s, which spurred other industries.
 - Minneapolis became a hub for wholesale trade, the economy grew, development continued, and infrastructure was built, including the streetcar.
 - You can see examples of this big picture history here in the district
- Construction periods of the historic district
 - 9 properties were built from 1856-1972 (when this area was St. Anthony); they were built for prominent residents
 - 26 properties were built from 1873-1899
 - 25 properties were built from 1900-1928
 - By 1930, many single-family dwellings were subdivided into multi-family dwellings along with some apartment buildings
 - No properties were built from 1929-1938 (during Great Depression)
 - 4 properties were built from 1939-1942, which rounded out the district's development
- Research on residents/property owners
 - Residents held a wide variety of jobs, reflected a broad segment of the population
 - Common occupations: clerks, salespeople, teachers, students, U of M faculty
 - Later residents also included prominent individuals
- Research on architecture/architects/builders
 - Properties reflect a variety of architectural styles, some have characteristics of "high style" architecture, while others have simpler designs
 - Queen Anne is the most popular style used
 - There are also examples of Greek Revival, Italianate, Colonial Revival, Prairie School, Tudor Revival

- Couldn't locate original building permits for all properties in the districts, which often identify the architect
- However, some known architects including Colburn & Kees, Harry Wild Jones, and Ernest Kennedy
- Charles Haglin and Frank McMillan built houses in this district
- It was always a mostly residential area, but there were two churches (First Congregational Church and Andrew Presbyterian Church, which was demolished in 2003) and one hospital (St. Andrew's Hospital)
- The consultants did research, took field photos, and prepared inventory forms for each property.
- Of the non-contributing properties, six were built after 1942 and one was substantially altered after 1942 (it no longer looks like it was built in the late 1800s),
- Certainly other properties have experienced changes, which is expected, but the changes aren't considered substantial.
- What this means for you:
 - This level of research is now considered standard for historic preservation work.
 - This will help you and City staff better understand the history of your property, how it is classified, what changes have been made.
 - It helps inform how replacements and alterations can be made appropriately moving forward.
 - This will help City staff be clearer with guidance and recommendations and more responsive to your projects in the future.
 - City staff hopes this will lessen confusion in the future for project guidance and decisions and help property owners understand the history of this area.

Questions/comments and staff answers are below. Text may be paraphrased.

- On a non-contributing property, would they no longer be required to ask for preservation approval?
 - All properties, whether contributing or non-contributing, still go through the same preservation approval process since the whole district is designated.
 - Which application is used will vary based on the project.
 - For non-contributing properties, we can be more flexible with replacement/alterations.
 - This district already has design guidelines so projects will be evaluated against these.
- Will the inventory forms be part of the public record?
 - Yes, after the grant project is finished and approved, we will publish the information. We will put the survey report on the website for sure. We may or may not be able to put the inventory forms online (depending on IT restrictions), but you can contact our staff to get a copy if you want to know about a specific property.
- Attendee shared reflection on investment of public dollars, changes that have been made, expectation that property owners maintain and preserve their properties, this may mean owners have to use more expensive replacement materials. Can the guidelines be reconsidered to be able to use modern building techniques?
 - The purpose of a historic district is not to treat the properties as a museum – this may be a misconception.

- Staff are happy to help property owners navigate the guidelines and talk through options.
- Staff would welcome examples of situations where homeowners were told they couldn't do things. Staff are not in the business of telling people they can't do something. Staff are obligated to take people through the process.
- Attendee shared example of a neighbor wanting to do a porch and they were turned down. The attendee wanted to do an egress window on their house (the Van Cleve home) and the contractor was having issues. They kept being turned down so they gave up.
 - Staff would welcome more information to understand the situation and when it happened.
- Attendee shared a reflection on the restrictions of being in a historic district and no benefits. They are concerned about properties that are not being maintained. They have heard the answer that enforcement is not staff's job. They would like to see staff work with enforcement and walk through the district and enforce the portion of the ordinance that requires maintenance. They feel like no one is willing to do this or take the responsibility. They are concerned that the oldest properties are falling apart and that this should be staff's top priority. They are concerned that the landlords aren't able to maintain the properties and worried they will be demolished in 30 years. They feel that several homes are destroying the aesthetic character of the district. Cited [599.660](#).
 - If interested, staff suggested they should notify appropriate departments of any concerns about violations (i.e. housing, or building code).
 - Staff has brought these concerns to leadership and provided information back to the questioner.
 - Another avenue is to talk to your Council Member.
- Another attendee asked if this was the scope of the meeting.
 - This is not and we understand that this creates a forum for people to share concerns.
- Attendee suggested that the neighborhood association should be present at meeting. They should help secure funds to help with preservation in the historic district.
- Attendee suggested an annual meeting with residents, historic preservation staff, and inspections to review and check.
 - One historic district does have a homeowner's association. That may be an avenue to consider.
- When do you anticipate this will be wrapped up and ready for publication?
 - In a few months/likely this summer. The grant report is due at the end of June to the State Historic Preservation Office and then we need to make sure we've finished all of the grant requirements.
- Do you expect to revisit the design guidelines? The current ones are a page and a half.
 - That would need to be a future project. This is likely a next step, but won't be immediate.
- Will this presentation be online like the last one?
 - Yes and we'll also publish notes.
- Would it be possible to have HPC + historic preservation staff + head of inspections + interested residents walk the district and draft comment form about maintenance issues in the district?

- This would fall outside a Planner's duty. Enforcement is separate. They respond to complaints about possible violations. If we did this for one district, we would need to do it for all districts, which is not feasible to do in addition to our required tasks.
- There is a community aspect to this. Another avenue is for neighbors to talk with each other, collectively identify the issues, and organize as you wish. Consider contacting Milwaukee Avenue Homeowners Association (MAHA) to learn more about their efforts. Staff and MAHA are sometimes in communication when projects come up.
- How does MAHA handle maintenance issues in the district?
 - Staff would suggest contacting MAHA directly about this.
- What do you know about the topography and geology?
 - Consultant noted that the bird's eye view map shows a few ravines cutting through where streets would otherwise go. They did not do an geological analysis.
- Would be cool to have an overlay of the topography and see what is under their yard. Can that be part of the report?
 - The image is in the report with the citation information. It is from the Library of Congress.