

HERITAGE PRESERVATION APPLICATION SUMMARY

Property Location: 4600 Columbus Avenue South
Project Name: Arthur and Edith Lee House Designation
Prepared By: Lisa Steiner, Senior City Planner, (612) 673-3950
Applicant: Council Member Elizabeth Glidden
Project Contact: Lisa Steiner
Ward: 8
Neighborhood: Field; adjacent to Regina
Request: Designation as a historic landmark

HISTORIC PROPERTY INFORMATION

Current Name	Lindstrom Residence
Historic Name	Arthur and Edith Lee House
Historic Address	4600 Columbus Avenue South
Original Construction Date	1923
Original Owner	J.L. Rose
Original Architect	N/A
Original Builder	J.A. Heinsch
Historic Use	Residence
Current Use	Residence
Proposed Use	No change
Other Historical Designations	National Register of Historic Places – Listed 2014

SUMMARY

In December of 2015, Council Member Elizabeth Glidden submitted a nomination application for the Arthur and Edith Lee House located at 4600 Columbus Avenue South. Upon review, the Department of Community Planning and Economic Development (CPED) recommended to the Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) on January 5, 2016, that the property exhibited at least one of the local designation criteria found in section 599.210 of the Heritage Preservation Regulations. The HPC adopted CPED's findings and placed the property under interim protection and called for a designation study to be conducted. Interim protection for the property is in effect for at least one year, until January 5, 2017, or until the City Council makes a decision regarding the designation of the property.

A designation study was completed in April 2016 and has been presented for review to both the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and the Minneapolis City Planning Commission.

CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED PLANS AND POLICIES

Title 23, Chapter 599.260 of the Minneapolis Code of Ordinances requires the planning director to submit all proposed designations to the Minneapolis City Planning Commission for review and comment on the proposed designation. In its review, the City Planning Commission considers but is not limited to the following factors:

- (1) The relationship of the proposed designation to the city's comprehensive plan
- (2) The effect of the proposed designation on the surrounding area
- (3) The consistency of the proposed designation with applicable development plans or development objectives adopted by the City Council

The designation of the Arthur and Edith Lee House at 4600 Columbus Avenue South meets the following relevant policies of *The Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth*:

Heritage Preservation Policy 8.1: Preserve, maintain, and designate districts, landmarks, and historic resources which serve as reminders of the city's architecture, history, and culture.

- 8.1.1 Protect historic resources from modifications that are not sensitive to their historic significance.
- 8.1.4 Designate resources recommended for designation from historic surveys and listed on the National Register of Historic Places which have no local protection.

The future land use of the property is identified as Urban Neighborhood in the *Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth*. The property is one block west of a designated Community Corridor, Chicago Avenue. A Neighborhood Commercial Node exists around the intersection of the East 48th Street and Chicago Avenue.

The effect of the proposed designation on the surrounding area:

The designation of the Arthur and Edith Lee House is not anticipated to impact the surrounding area. Designation will protect the property from inappropriate alterations or demolition as Heritage Preservation Commission approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness would be required for any major alterations to the property. The property's designation may bring more attention to the events of 1931 that occurred at the home.

The consistency of the proposed designation with applicable development plans or development objectives adopted by the City Council:

No specific small area plans or other applicable development objectives have been adopted by the City Council for this area.

LOCAL DESIGNATION CRITERIA

Title 23, Chapter 599.210 of the Minneapolis Code of Ordinances list seven criteria which shall be considered in determining whether a property is worthy of local designation as a landmark because of its historical, cultural, architectural, archaeological or engineering significance. The Arthur and Edith Lee House at 4600 Columbus Avenue South meets Criterion #1 as evaluated below:

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

This property is eligible for designation due to its association with the significant events of the protests in 1931. These riots have been identified as some of the largest racially-motivated demonstrations in Minnesota history. The property exemplifies broad patterns of social history, particularly in regard to African-American history in Minneapolis, race relations, and historical trends of housing discrimination.

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

While the assistance and involvement of lawyer and Minneapolis NAACP President Lena Olive Smith significantly impacted the outcome of the riots, the subject property itself is not strongly associated enough with Lena Olive Smith for designation under this criteria. Lena Olive Smith's home at 3905 5th Avenue South was locally designated in 1996 and placed in the National Register in 1991 and represents the importance of Lena Olive Smith to the history of Minneapolis.

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

While the neighborhood's development is important to understanding the context within which the riots occurred, the property itself is not strongly associated with distinctive elements of city or neighborhood identity and therefore is not considered significant under this criterion.

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

The modest single-story home is of a typical vernacular style with some Craftsman details, such as projecting eaves and clipped gables, as well as a front porch with Classical Revival details. However, the property does not embody distinctive architectural characteristics of a particular style and thus is not considered significant under this criterion.

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

The property has the typical landscape design and development pattern of most residential lots in the city, so the property is not considered significant for exemplifying a landscape design or development pattern distinguished by innovation, rarity, uniqueness or quality of design or detail.

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

The home was constructed by J.A. Heinsch and no architect is listed on the original building permit. J.A. Heinsch is not known to be a master builder. Thus, the property is not considered significant for exemplifying the work of master builders, engineers, designers, artists, craftsmen or architects.

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

There is no evidence to suggest that the property may be likely to yield information important in prehistory or history. Therefore, the site is not considered significant under this criterion.

REVIEWS AND COMMENTS

Chapter 599 of the Minneapolis Code of Ordinances requires that the designation be submitted to the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) for review and comment.

State Historic Preservation Office

The designation study was submitted to SHPO for comment on April 21, 2016. In the attached letter dated June 22, 2016, SHPO provided favorable comments on the designation, stating:

“The Arthur and Edith Lee House is historically significant for its association with Minneapolis’ African American community and specifically for its ties to a series of racial protests which culminated on July 16, 1931 with an unruly mob of 4,000 people in front of the Lee House. African American couple, Arthur and Edith Lee, moved into 4600 Columbus Avenue South in June 1931. The house was located in the South Minneapolis Field neighborhood, which was considered to be a “white neighborhood” by homeowners in the area who were angry that a black family had moved in to the neighborhood. The July events that occurred at the Lee House were a defining moment in African American history in Minneapolis and highlighted the existence of housing discrimination in the city. The significance of the Lee House was recognized by the National Register of Historic Places, which listed the property on July 11, 2014. We concur that the Lee House is an ideal candidate for local designation.”

City Planning Commission

Chapter 599 of the Minneapolis Code of Ordinances also requires that the designation be submitted to the Minneapolis City Planning Commission for review and comment. In its review, the City Planning Commission considers but is not limited to the following factors:

- (1) The relationship of the proposed designation to the city's comprehensive plan.
- (2) The effect of the proposed designation on the surrounding area.
- (3) The consistency of the proposed designation with applicable development plans or development objectives adopted by the city council.

The designation study was presented to the City Planning Commission at their Committee of the Whole meeting on June 30, 2016. The City Planning Commission found that the proposed designation was consistent with the *Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth* and commented favorably on the designation. A copy of the memorandum submitted to the City Planning Commission is attached to the designation study.

RECOMMENDATION

The Department of Community Planning and Economic Development recommends that the Heritage Preservation Commission and City Council adopt staff findings for the local designation of the Arthur and Edith Lee House located at 4600 Columbus Avenue South:

A. Landmark Designation.

Recommended motion: **Recommend that the City Council approve** the local designation of the Arthur and Edith Lee House located at 4600 Columbus Avenue South.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Map of the subject property
2. Arthur and Edith Lee House Designation Study and Attachments