

Historic Bungalows of the Morningside Neighborhood

Executive Summary

The Edina Heritage Preservation Board (Edina HPB) is pleased to announce the completion of a significant study entitled “Historic Bungalows of the Morningside Neighborhood: A Multiple Property Study”, prepared by Preservation Planning Consultant, Robert C. Vogel, financed in part by a Federal Certified Local Government (CLG) grant in 2010. The study:

- Defines bungalows, including specific categories of bungalows,
- Provides the historical context of the development of the Morningside suburb, including the impact of the streetcar on that development, and
- Sets forth the methodology by which the Edina HPB will designate properties as Edina Heritage Landmarks.

As a result of the Study, approximately 135 Morningside homes, built between about 1905 and 1930, have been identified as possible candidates for designation as Edina Heritage Landmarks.

Bungalow Defined. A product of the American Arts and Crafts movement, the bungalow represented a major innovation in domestic architecture: a small comfortable house that provided homebuyers of modest means with the comforts and conveniences of a much larger, architect-designed house. For planning purposes, the Edina HPB uses the term “bungalow” to refer to a small, detached, single-family home constructed between 1905 and 1930 that is less than two full stories high, has a core footprint of less than 800 square feet, and exhibits any combination of the following American Arts and Crafts Movement design characteristics:

- Gable or hip roofs
- Wood or stucco wall cladding
- Entry and/or sun porches
- Dormers
- Exposed structural elements, such as rafters or beam ends
- Multi-pane double-hung wood sash windows with divided lights in the upper sash
- Ribbon, bay or piano windows
- Fireplaces and end-wall chimneys
- Brick faced or rusticated concrete block foundation walls
- Informal, open floor plans, with a living room in the front of the house
- Built-in furniture, such as bookcases or buffets
- Hardwood flooring (oak or maple)
- Rustic landscaping featuring flower boxes, trellises or pergolas

The Morningside Suburban Landscape. Morningside’s residential landscape reflects several of the important broad themes in the pattern of suburban development in the Twin Cities area: the relatively high-density of people per square mile within the platted subdivisions, the architectural similarity of the houses and the dependence upon mass-transit. Between about 1905 and 1930, Morningside developers built several hundred

new single –family homes, mostly bungalows, on standard-sized suburban lots along straight-line streets, replacing land previously occupied by farm fields and orchards. The population of Edina village (including Morningside) more than doubled between 1900 and 1920 from 749 to 1833; between 1920 and 1930, the number of residents living in the newly incorporated village of Morningside rose from just over 500 to 903.

Morningside: Edina’s Streetcar Suburb. Morningside was situated on the outer edge of the Minneapolis urbanized area, far enough from the center city to require residents to commute to work. In 1905, the principal mode of transportation was the street railway or streetcar. The Minneapolis, Lyndale & Minnetonka Railway, organized in 1879, planned a stop in Morningside to be named “Grimes” after Jonathan and Eliza Grimes, whose home at 4200 West 44th Street is considered the birthplace of Morningside, but the segment west of Lake Calhoun was abandoned due to financial problems in 1886. The Como-Harriet Streetcar Line, using the right-of-way of the defunct Minneapolis, Lyndale & Minnetonka, providing service between Lake Harriet and Excelsior was opened on September 30, 1905, with important stops added in Morningside at 44th and France, 44th and Grimes and 44th and Wooddale. The Como-Harriet Line was the catalyst for the initial phase of residential development in Morningside. Workers living in Morningside could commute to factory jobs in Hopkins and office jobs in downtown Minneapolis. The streetcar also encouraged small retail and service businesses to set up near the stops, particularly along France Avenue between Morningside Road and 44th Street, increasing the economic vitality of the neighborhood and lowering the cost of living for everyone. Personal automobiles did not supplant the streetcar until the 1920s.

Designating a Morningside Bungalow as an Edina Heritage Landmark. To be eligible to be designated an Edina Heritage Landmark, a property must be associated with an important historic context and retain specific aspects of its historic integrity. Survey data shows that changes have taken place over the course of time in the appearance of most of the Morningside bungalows. Generally, a bungalow should be considered a potential heritage preservation resource when it has been altered from its original as-built appearance, but retains enough of its historic character-defining elements to achieve significance within its historic context. By ordinance, when a property is designated as an Edina Heritage Landmark, it must have a Plan of Treatment designed in partnership with the homeowner that provides general and specific guidelines for heritage resource management, including design review for Certificates of Appropriateness for demolition, new construction and moving buildings.

For more information about how you can apply to have your Morningside bungalow designated an Edina Heritage Landmark, contact Joyce Repya, Associate Planner, 952-826-0462, or jrepya@ci.edina.mn.us. To read the complete Historic Bungalows of the Morningside Neighborhood: Multiple Property Study, click on the link.