

MEMORANDUM

TO: Cary Teague, Planning Director
FROM: Robert Vogel, Preservation Planning Consultant
DATE: August 2, 2011
SUBJECT: Heritage Resources Assessment of the Grandview District

This memorandum presents the results of a heritage resources assessment of the Grandview District carried out by me in May-July, 2011. The purpose of this investigation was to identify and gather information on potential heritage resources in the study area for use in the small area guide plan process. The city's preservation ordinance (City Code Section 1504) defines a heritage resource as any prehistoric or historic building, site, structure, object or district that has significant historical, architectural, archaeological, or cultural value to the citizens of Edina. As stated in the Edina Comprehensive Plan (2008), the city is committed to preserving and protecting those properties which possess historical significance and retain historic integrity of those features necessary to convey their significance.

The authoritative guide used by city officials to identify heritage resources worthy of consideration in community development planning is the list of properties designated or determined eligible for designation as Edina Heritage Landmarks. Heritage Landmark overlay zoning, authorized in 2002, was intended to be the local equivalent of the National Register of Historic Places and the eligibility criteria for the landmark program are modeled after the National Register criteria for evaluation. City officials are required to consider the effects of development projects and land use plans on Edina Heritage Landmarks; they must also give the Heritage Preservation Board a reasonable opportunity to comment on such projects and plans.

Information on known (i.e., previously recorded) heritage resources in the study area was obtained from the inventory maintained by the city planning department, which is a duplicate of the inventory database kept at the State Historic Preservation Office at the Minnesota Historical Society in Saint Paul. Two Edina Heritage Landmark properties are located within the boundaries of the Grandview District:

- Cahill School (School Dist. No. 17), Eden Avenue and Highway 100. Frame, Greek Revival style one-room schoolhouse built in 1864; public school closed in 1958; the building was moved to this location in 1963 and rehabilitated for use as a public history facility (now operated by the Edina Historical Society). Designated an Edina Heritage Landmark by city council resolution in 2002. Also listed in the National Register.
- Order of the Patrons of Husbandry Hall (Minnehaha Grange No. 398), Eden Avenue and Highway 100. Frame meeting hall showing the influence of the Late Victorian Stick style; constructed in 1879, originally located on the corner of

Wooddale Avenue and W. 50th Street; served as Edina Village Hall from 1888 to 1942; moved from its original location in 1935, relocated again in 1970 and rehabilitated for use as a public history facility (now operated by the Edina Historical Society). Designated an Edina Heritage Landmark by city council resolution in 2002.

The two city-owned buildings are individually designated and co-located in Frank Tupa Park. Future development that may affect Tupa Park will require Certificates of Appropriateness from the Heritage Preservation Board (HPB) prior to issuance of permits for demolition or new construction work. Any realignment or reconstruction of the Highway 100/Eden Avenue interchange adjacent to Tupa Park will require mitigation measures to prevent or limit adverse effects (including visual effects) on the Cahill School and Grange Hall; and these plans will be subject to HPB review and approval.

Because most of the Grandview District has not been systematically surveyed for heritage preservation resources, I conducted a “desk-top” evaluation using historical and modern documentary sources, coupled with a “windshield” inspection of the entire district, to ascertain which buildings, sites, and structures appeared to meet the heritage landmark eligibility criteria. A literature search in local narrative histories (Scott and Hess, *History and Architecture of Edina* [1981]; Hesterman, *History of Edina* [1988]; Morse-Kahn, *Edina-Chapters in the City's History* [1998]) provided background information on community history, but little useful data relating to development in the Grandview District. This part of the city was initially settled and converted to family farms between the late 1850s and the 1890s, when agricultural output was dominated by small grains and livestock; there were also a number of small truck farms in the area. Eden Prairie Road (modern-day Vernon Avenue) and several other local roads were in place before 1900; development of modern transportation infrastructure (the Twin City Rapid Transit streetcar line in 1905, Dan Patch railway in 1908, and Highway 100 in 1933-41) transformed land use in the study area, which saw a rapid influx of nonfarm residents and suburban-type commercial development during the period between the two world wars. The area was not served by municipal sewer and water until the early 1960s. The changes in the built environment in the study area were clearly visible on historic maps and platbooks (published in 1874, 1887, 1898, 1913, and 1914) and aerial photographs (flown in 1937, 1940, 1947, 1953, 1964, 1975, and 1997). Data on the physical characteristics of specific parcels was provided by the city assessor's office, whose field record cards date back to the 1960s. The windshield reconnaissance was accomplished by driving around the district (I also conducted random pedestrian inspections) to get a general idea of the preservation value of the older buildings and structures.

The following properties were singled out for attention as potential heritage resources solely on the basis of their age (more than 50 years old):

- Trunk Highway 100 (historic Belt Line Highway, Lilac Way). Originally designed and constructed in 1933-1941 as a Federal relief project under the auspices of the Public Works Administration (PWA) and the Works Progress Administration

(WPA). The highway and bridges have been substantially reconstructed since 1964.

- Minneapolis, Northfield & Southern Railroad (Dan Patch Line). Standard gauge passenger and freight railway built in 1908; last passenger service in 1942. Only the historic route is preserved; grade, tracks, bridges, signals, and right-of-way fencing have all been modified.
- Perkins Restaurant, 4917 Eden Avenue. Site formerly occupied by Halla Nursery and Garden Center (demolished circa 1958); restaurant built in 1973.
- Edina Public Works Garage, 5220 Eden Avenue. Utilitarian concrete building in use as municipal public works facility since circa 1954 (now vacant). Architecturally undistinguished.
- Edina School Bus Garage, 5220 Eden Avenue. 1 story masonry garage with five vehicle bays, shop area, and office, built circa 1950; the detached bus garage was built in 1967.
- Commercial building, 5000 Vernon Avenue. Constructed in 1948; substantially altered from its original appearance.
- Washburn-McGreavy Funeral Chapel, 5001 Vernon Avenue. Built in 1954. Historic photographs and tax assessment records indicate multiple exterior alterations and additions.
- Jerry's Hardware, 5017 Vernon Avenue. 1 story commercial building with a distinctive pyramidal hip roof, constructed in 1950 and altered from its original appearance.
- Commercial building, 5101 Gus Young Lane. Retail strip built in 1956 and subsequently remodeled several times.

Evaluated in their historic context, none of these properties meet established criteria for historical significance and integrity; therefore, they should not be considered potential Edina Heritage Landmarks. Although Certificates of Appropriateness would not be required, demolition of buildings over 50 years old should be documented with digital color photography prior to removal

During redevelopment of the Grandview District, project sponsors and their design teams should be encouraged to consider the heritage tourism and public history interpretation potential of both the Highway 100 and Dan Patch Line corridors. Planning for new intermodal transportation facilities, parks and open spaces, and site aesthetics should implement best management practices as needed to maximize opportunities for public education and appreciation of the Grandview area's natural and cultural heritage.

No evidence of significant prehistoric or historic archaeological resources was indicated—the Grandview District has been so heavily impacted by over 100 years of intensive development (agriculture, transportation, housing, commerce), the potential for preservation of intact buried cultural deposits is very low.

No further heritage resource survey of the Grandview District is recommended.