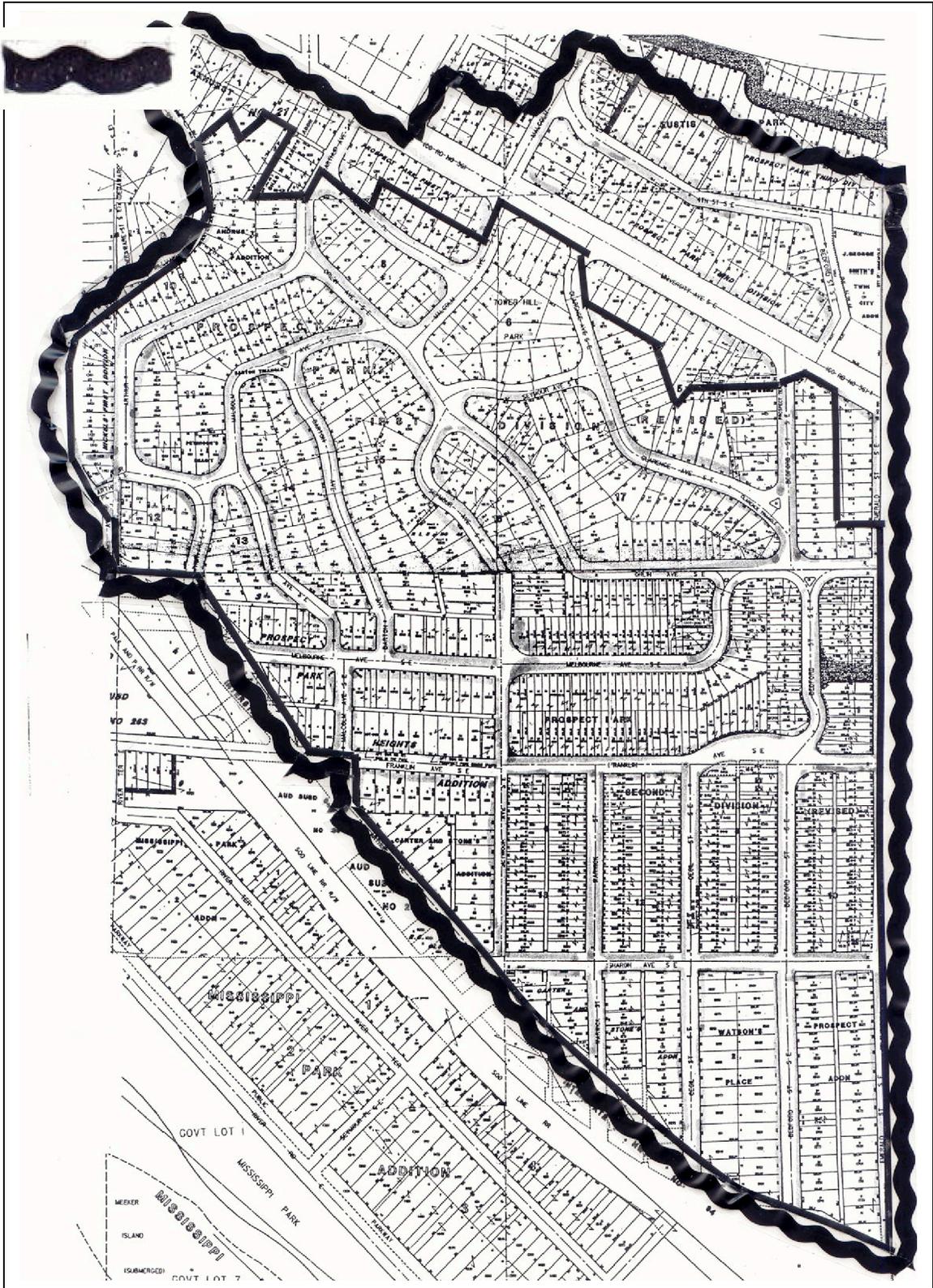




# Prospect Park, Minneapolis: An Historical Survey

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Proposed Historic District Boundary Study Area  
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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: PROSPECT PARK SURVEY**

In July 2000, Hess, Roise and Company entered into an agreement with the Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission/Minneapolis Planning Department to conduct an intensive survey and to compile an historical-architectural inventory of the buildings, structures, sites, and objects within a Prospect Park study area to determine the potential for creation of a National Register historic district, a local historic district, and/or individual National Register listings and local designations. Through a combination of fieldwork and historical research, Hess Roise photographed, inventoried, and evaluated all properties within the boundaries of the study area, some 650 sites. The final product comprised inventory forms for all surveyed properties and this summary report, which includes a description of methodology, a discussion of historic contexts and a brief history and architectural analysis of Prospect Park, and recommendations.

Prospect Park, located in Southeast Minneapolis adjoining the western border of Saint Paul, is set apart from the surrounding area by virtue of its topography and its geography. The Prospect Park water tower, often dubbed the “witch's hat,” set at the crest of Tower Hill Park, dominates the skyline as one approaches the community. Because of its topography, much of the community was laid out with a curvilinear street plan with named streets rather than the strict rectangular grid with numbered streets that characterizes most of the city.

Prospect Park was established when Louis Menage, who had acquired a large undeveloped tract of land, petitioned the Minneapolis City Council to accept two plats in 1884. Construction began slowly, partly because of the topography and partly because of the relative isolation of Prospect Park from the rest of the city. Construction occurred throughout the platted divisions of Prospect Park during the 1890s and the first decade of the twentieth century. Houses were designed in the popular architectural styles of the period, especially the Queen Anne and the Colonial Revival. Enough residents were living in the area by the end of the nineteenth century to successfully petition the Minneapolis Board of Education to construct the Sidney Pratt Elementary School. Three religious congregations were organized early in the twentieth century, with the Prospect Park Methodist Church playing a particularly active role.

About half of the houses in the neighborhood were built between 1915 and 1930, often on sites that must have challenged the ingenuity of their builders, because of their steep slopes. The houses, whether designed by architects or built from plan books, display a shift in architectural taste from classically inspired styles to the more picturesque Arts and Crafts (Craftsman), Prairie School, Tudor Revival, and English Cottage styles. Construction continued through the 1930s, but at a much slower pace given the economic constraints of the period. Two major examples of modern architecture were constructed on Bedford Street. The construction of Interstate 94 in the 1960s did even more to set the community apart from the surrounding area.

Prospect Park survives some 115 years after its establishment as a unique and distinct section of the city of Minneapolis. One of the most attractive residential areas of the city by virtue of its plan, architecture, and landscaping, and set apart by the constraints of geography and commerce, Prospect Park has always had a strong sense of itself as a community. The status of the area has been further reinforced through the Prospect Park Neighborhood Improvement Association, founded in 1901 and one of the oldest organizations of its kind in the Twin Cities.

We recommend that the area of Prospect Park illustrated on the map accompanying this report be nominated for listing in the National Register of Historic Places as the Prospect Park Historic

District for its significance in the areas of social history, community planning and development, and architecture. If a local historic district designation is pursued, we would recommend that the boundaries be the same as those identified for the proposed National Register historic district. Such as district would be significant for its social history, community planning and development, architecture, and association with distinctive elements of city identity.

## **INTRODUCTION: PROJECT ADMINISTRATION**

This project, commissioned by the Prospect Park and East River Road Improvement Association (PPERIA) was administered through an agreement between the Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC)/Minneapolis Planning Department and Hess, Roise and Company. Joe Ring and Susan Thrash represented PPERIA. Amy Lucas, City Planner, Heritage Preservation, represented the Minneapolis HPC. Susan Roth, National Register Historian, was the contact for the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office.

Hess, Roise and Company is a Minneapolis-based historical consulting firm specializing in cultural resource surveys, National Register nominations, HABS/HAER documentation, preservation planning, archival research, and historical publications and exhibits. Charlene Roise, president of the firm, acted as principal investigator for the project. Senior historian Marjorie Pearson worked on field survey, photography, site research, general background research, and site evaluation. Researcher Ursula Larson assisted with field survey. Researchers Kristine Harley and Nathan Weaver Olson assisted with research and inventory form preparation. Most of the photographs for the inventory forms were taken by Jerry Mathiason, assisted by Denis Gardner. Dr. Pearson authored the following report.



## **METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH**

The project entailed the following major tasks: (1) preliminary documentary research to prepare survey materials; (2) field survey of the entire Prospect Park study area including photography and preparation of inventory materials; (3) general and in-depth research and preparation of a historic context study; (4) preparation of survey report. The area that was surveyed consisted of the historic Prospect Park neighborhood bounded by: Fourth Street Southeast on the north; Emerald Street Southeast (the city limit with Saint Paul) on the east; the diagonal of the route of Interstate 94 on the south; and portions of Arthur Avenue Southeast, Williams Avenue Southeast, and Malcolm Avenue Southeast on the west. The area is illustrated on the map included with this report.

### **Preliminary Research**

Background research was conducted in January and February 2001. Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission (MHPC) and Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) site files on properties in Prospect Park were photocopied for inclusion into the project site files. Hess Roise files compiled in conjunction with the preparation of the National Register of Historic Places nomination of the Prospect Park Water Tower and Tower Hill Park were also consulted.

### **Field Survey**

Some fieldwork was undertaken by Marjorie Pearson and Ursula Larson in December 2000. Most of the fieldwork was done by Marjorie Pearson in March and April 2001. Black and white photographs were taken by Denis Gardner and Jerry Mathiason in December 2000 and January 2001, supplemented by photographs taken by Marjorie Pearson in April 2001. Marjorie Pearson made a site visit with Susan Roth, SHPO National Register historian, on August 30, 2001, to assess the historic resources of the neighborhood and discuss the recommendations in this report.

### **General and In-depth Research**

General and site-specific research was carried out between January and April 2001. This included an examination of Minneapolis Buildings Department records, historic maps and atlases, historic photographs, and city directories, as well as review of relevant materials in the collections of the Minnesota Historical Society, the Minneapolis Public Library, and the Hennepin County Historical Society. Once gathered, building dates were color-coded onto a map to assist with the analysis of development patterns in Prospect Park. The research also provided the basis for the preparation of the historic context study.

### **Preparation of Inventory Materials and Survey Report**

Inventory forms were prepared for each property surveyed, based on field notes, survey photographs, and historical research files on each property. Pertinent information was entered into a computerized database using Microsoft Access software. After the draft forms were compiled, the inventoried properties were analyzed to determine their National Register and/or local HPC status: listed/designated; contributing in a historic district; or non-contributing in a historic district.

Upon concluding the architectural and historical analysis of the Prospect Park area, Hess Roise prepared a summary report for the entire project outlining goals, survey methodology, research, findings in relation to historic contexts, and recommendations.

## PROSPECT PARK: AN OVERVIEW OF ITS HISTORY AND ARCHITECTURE

Prospect Park, located in Southeast Minneapolis adjoining the western border of Saint Paul, is set apart from the surrounding area by virtue of its topography and its geography. The Prospect Park water tower, often dubbed the “witch’s hat,” set at the crest of Tower Hill Park, dominates the skyline as one approaches the community. Because of its topography, much of the community was laid out with a curvilinear street plan with named streets rather than the strict rectangular grid with numbered streets that characterizes most of the city. The area encompassed by this study is bounded by Fourth Street Southeast on the north, Emerald Street Southeast (the city limit with Saint Paul) on the east, the diagonal of the route of Interstate 94 on the south, and portions of Arthur Avenue Southeast, Williams Avenue Southeast, and Malcolm Avenue Southeast on the west.

The Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission has sponsored the preparation of several historic context studies that encompass various aspects of the Prospect Park area. The most inclusive is the context “Architecture: 1848 to Present” and its subsections “Minneapolis As a City of Neighborhoods, 1893-1929,” “Minneapolis in the Depression/War Years, 1929-1945,” and “Post War Minneapolis, 1945-1991.” Various properties in the area can be evaluated within the contexts “Religion, 1850-1950” and “Neighborhood Commercial Centers, 1885-1963,” and the subcontext “Public School Education, 1849-1942.” Prospect Park as part of the city of Minneapolis can also be evaluated within the broad statewide context “Urban Centers, 1870-1940.”

### Early Development

The section of Minneapolis that contains Prospect Park was originally part of Ramsey County, but ceded to Hennepin County and made part of the town of Saint Anthony. The Prospect Park area was not added to the city of Minneapolis until 1883. Louis F. Menage, who has been characterized as “one of the most successful and flamboyant real estate speculators who made fortunes in Minneapolis in the 1880s,” purchased a large undeveloped tract of land in the town of Saint Anthony in 1878 and hired the civil engineering team of Samuel Harlan Baker and Joseph H. Gilmore to survey and plat the area that became known as Prospect Park for development. This was not his first experience with the type of development known as a residence park, for in 1874 Menage had hired the engineers Cooley and Rinker to lay out Lakeside Park on Lake Calhoun. Baker and Gilmore platted another residential addition known as Remington Park in 1883. In 1883 and in 1884, Menage petitioned the Minneapolis City Council to accept two plats which he called Prospect Park, First Division, and Prospect Park, Second Division. (In the 1890s, these two divisions were split into three: First Division Revised, Second Division Revised, and Third Division.) Menage’s plats were bounded by Emerald Street (the city limit) on the east, a portion of Territorial Road (later Fourth Street Southeast) and University Avenue on the north, portions of Williams Avenue and Arthur Avenue to the line of Orlin Avenue on the west, Seymour Avenue between Orlin and Sharon on the west, and Sharon Avenue on the south. Both plats incorporated curvilinear street patterns and irregular lot sizes that accommodated the topography, although four blocks in the Second Division between Franklin (originally Hazel, later Hamline) and Sharon are rectilinear in form. The lots in the First Division (north of Orlin) have wider frontages, usually fifty feet, while the lots in the Second Division are only twenty-five feet wide in front, except those at the ends of blocks which are thirty-five feet wide.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The addition of this section of the town of Saint Anthony to the city of Minneapolis is depicted on Plate 12B, *1940 Atlas of the City of Minneapolis* (Minneapolis: City Planning Commission, 1941). Larry Millett, *Lost Twin Cities*

Menage then turned to the real estate company of Farnsworth and Wolcott to promote Prospect Park. The company took out an advertisement extolling the area:

Prospect Park is a high, finely wooded tract near the University of Minnesota, fronting on University Avenue—the main thoroughfare between Minneapolis and St. Paul. This is the finest residence property in Minneapolis, and commands a view of the entire city, of Hamline, Merriam Park, Minnesota Transfer, and a good share of St. Paul, with Fort Snelling in the distance. Arrangement have recently been made for the erection of \$40,000 of first-class residences the coming season. This property is offered on reasonable terms. . . . Plats, map of the territory between Minneapolis and St. Paul, and all necessary information furnished on application.<sup>2</sup>

Construction began slowly, partly because of the topography and partly because of the relative isolation of Prospect Park from the rest of the city. The area was further constrained by the presence of one pre-existing railroad line, the Chicago, Milwaukee, and Saint Paul to the southwest, and the extension of the Saint Paul and Northern Pacific Railway from Minneapolis to Saint Paul in 1886, to the north. A depot was established at Eustis Street west of Malcolm. Much of the early construction occurred on and close to University Avenue. One early investor was Benjamin Sprague who purchased property in 1884 on Blocks 5 and 17 of the First Division and built several houses during the next two years. The Reverend Thomas McClary, minister of the Thirteenth Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church, built a house at 73 Seymour in 1885. Another early investor was the architect Lowell A. Lamoreaux who purchased a large piece of property at the intersection of Seymour and Clarence, and built his own house and barn in 1887-1888. Peter W. De Lancey, a carpenter and contractor, built his house in 1888 at 21 Malcolm at the corner of Fourth Street Southeast in the Eustis Park plat, filed in 1887. Eustis Park intersected with the Prospect Park First Division where Territorial Road intersected Fourth Street Southeast. He also carried out construction along Malcolm Avenue in the Prospect Park First Division. Other houses from the 1880s still survive on Seymour, Clarence, and Arthur Avenues. Not until the first inter-urban street railway line opened on University Avenue in 1890 did development begin in earnest.<sup>3</sup>

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(Saint Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1992), 223, discusses Menage's real estate investments. Menage's role in Prospect Park and the survey work of Baker and Gilmore is described in Penny Jacobson, "Platting Prospect Park Was a Tortuous Affair," *Southeast*, October 1986, 6. Jacobson also discounts the fanciful myth put forward by Elvira Betlach, an elderly longtime Prospect Park resident, that English surveyors had followed existing cowpaths and named the streets after themselves. "Southeast History Told by Native Woman," *Minneapolis Argus*, October 24, 1963. Jacobson notes that Prospect Park was laid out in the manner of a romantic landscaped suburb of the sort espoused and popularized by Andrew J. Downing and then refined by Frederick Law Olmsted in Riverside, Illinois. Carole Zellie, "The Romantic Landscape and Twin Cities Residence Parks," *Architecture Minnesota* 6 (February 1980): 39, had briefly described Prospect Park in the in context of residence parks and listed Lakeside Park and Remington Park. Menage's requests for his Prospect Park plats before the Minneapolis City Council are recorded in *Proceedings* 9 (May 2, 1883):45; (June 9, 1883): 97; 10 (October 1, 1884): 408; (October 15, 1884): 428; (October 22, 1884): 435. Jacobson reproduces a copy of the original plats signed by Menage, Baker, and Gilmore. The lot widths are depicted on G.M. Hopkins, *A Complete Set of Surveys and Plats of Properties in the City of Minneapolis* (Minneapolis: G. M. Hopkins, 1885), pl. 17.

<sup>2</sup> *The Northwest*, December 1884, 17. The company promoted the adjacent Meeker Island Land and Power Co. Addition to the west in the same ad, although that addition was oriented to manufacturing, as the Union Depot line of the Chicago, Milwaukee and Saint Paul Railroad ran through the property.

<sup>3</sup> The railroad lines and the depot are illustrated in *Davison's Atlas of the City of Minneapolis, Hennepin County, Minnesota* (Minneapolis: C. Wright Davison, 1887), pl. 38. For expansion of the Northern Pacific line see Richard

Construction occurred throughout the platted divisions of Prospect Park during the 1890s and the first decade of the twentieth century. The portion of the Prospect Park First Division north of University Avenue was split off as the Prospect Park Third Division by 1897. The southwestern parts of the Prospect Park area were platted for development in about 1903, extending south of Sharon Avenue and Melbourne Avenue to the railroad right of way. Here the streets were laid out with the more familiar rectangular grid pattern that characterizes most of the city, with relatively narrow, regularly sized lots, although the terrain slopes sharply upward from south to north. The blocks between Melbourne and Franklin continued the curvilinear pattern of the earlier plats.<sup>4</sup>

Examination of building permit records and property atlases suggest that houses were often built in pairs or groups by contractor-developers active throughout the area. Often a contractor would purchase several lots, commission the construction of houses on his lots from local carpenters, and then lease or sell the completed houses. (Houses often straddled the platted lot lines.) A number of houses were designed by local architects, either for themselves or on commission for the local property owners. (See *The Architects of Prospect Park* below.) The houses designed by architects tend to be more distinctive, reflecting the somewhat greater social and/or professional prestige of their owners. Stylistically, they reflect the architectural trends of the day, displaying characteristics of Queen Anne, Romanesque Revival, and Colonial Revival style architecture. Houses constructed by carpenters from plan books or similar sources follow the same stylistic trends, as well as taking more vernacular forms such as the four-square house. (See *Architectural Styles and Construction Techniques in Prospect Park* below.)

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S. Prosser, *Rails to the North Star* (Minneapolis: Dillon Press, 1966), 159. The depot is also discussed in J. P. S. La Sha, "The Secret History of Prospect Park's Depot," *Tower Talks* 6 (July 1979): 10. For Sprague, see Allen H. Gibas, "The History of Prospect Park," typescript, research paper, University of Minnesota, February 1965, available at Minnesota Historical Society, 6. Houses built by Sprague survive at 15-17 Seymour (1885, altered to a duplex, 1914), 88 Orlin (1886), and 52-54 Melbourne (1886, moved from 3314-3316 University in 1914). Lamoreaux and his role in Prospect Park are discussed further in other sections of this report. For De Lancey and Eustis Park see J. P. S. La Sha, "The De Lanceys," *Tower Talks* 6 (March 1979): 3, and Peter La Sha, "Emily Samantha Eustis, Builder of Eustis Park (4th St.)," *Tower Talks* 6 (March 1979): 2.

<sup>4</sup> The revised Prospect Park, First and Second Division, plats are shown on C. M. Foote, *City of Minneapolis* (Minneapolis: C. M. Foote, 1898), pl. 32. The newly platted divisions--Prospect Park Heights, Watson's Prospect Place Addition, and Carter and Stone's Addition--are hand-drawn on plate 35 of James E. Egan, *Atlas of Minneapolis, Hennepin County, Minnesota* (Minneapolis: Minneapolis Real Estate Board, 1903).

## Institutions, Organizations, and Infrastructure



Enough residents were living in the area by the end of the nineteenth century so they petitioned the Minneapolis Board of Education to construct a new elementary school in the neighborhood. Up to that time, the children of Prospect Park had attended the Motley School located at University and Oak Street. The Sidney Pratt School at Malcolm and Orlin Avenues was built in 1898. As the population grew, the school building was enlarged in 1906 and 1926. The school's namesake, Sidney Pratt, was the son of the president of the Board of Education and the first Minnesota casualty in the Spanish-American War.<sup>5</sup>

Pratt School

also established early in the Methodist Episcopal Church, now Prospect Park United Methodist Church, in 1902; Saint Timothy's Episcopal Mission (an off-shoot of Holy Trinity Episcopal at Fourth Street and Fourth Avenue Southeast) in 1910; and Prospect Park Lutheran Church in 1909. The first Methodist church building at 22 Orlin Avenue was replaced by the present building in 1914. From its beginnings, the Methodist church members have played an active role in community affairs, and the building has been regularly used for local activities. The Episcopal church building at 21 Clarence was subsequently taken over by two other Protestant denominations successively. (It is currently owned by a Korean Seventh Day Adventist congregation.) The Lutheran church building was moved to 2210 Franklin Avenue from another site closer to the University of Minnesota near the Washington Avenue Bridge. It, too, has had two successive congregations—Prospect Park Community Baptist and Saint Panteleimon Russian Greek Orthodox Church.<sup>6</sup>

Three religious congregations were twentieth century, the Prospect Park



Methodist Church at 22 Orlin Avenue

The Prospect Park Neighborhood Improvement Association, one of the earliest organizations of its kind in the Twin Cities, was founded in 1901 to work for the physical betterment of the community and to “defend the areas with its hills and trees, its nearness to the restless Mississippi and its view of the Minneapolis skyline from the encroachment of industry.” In its first year the association instituted prizes for the best front yards and gardens. It worked for the installation of electric lights, and in 1904 involved the local alderman and representatives of the Minneapolis Gas Light Company in effort to get more gas lighting in houses and on the streets.<sup>7</sup>

One of the association's first major efforts was to persuade the Minneapolis Board of Park Commissioners to acquire the irregularly shaped block bounded by University, Clarence, Seymour, Orlin, and Malcolm (Block 6 of Prospect Park First Division Revised) as parkland.

<sup>5</sup> Gibas, 13-14; “Pioneers of Pratt School Will Open \$95,000 Addition,” *Minneapolis Journal*, February 7, 1927.

<sup>6</sup> Gibas, 14-16; Ann Wick, “Prospect Park One-of-a-Kind Neighborhood,” *Hennepin County History* 32 (Spring 1973): 5-7, 9; Betlach, October 3, 1963, October 10, 1963; *Hudson's Dictionary of Minneapolis: A Guide and Handbook* (Minneapolis: Hudson Company, 1925), 58, 98, 102. For several years in the 1920s, the Men's Club of the Methodist Episcopal Church published a monthly Prospect Park Community Bulletin called the *Watchtower*, available at the Minnesota Historical Society.

<sup>7</sup> The quote is taken from Gibas, 17. See Claire Aronson, “A Few Good Fights,” *Hennepin History* 54 (Winter 1995): 5, for early association efforts.

While this block had been lotted, the extreme elevation, 917 feet, made residential construction highly unlikely, although its geological formation made it potentially desirable as gravel pit. The park commissioners approved the purchase of the block in May 1906 for \$19,500, with the cost to be assessed against the property in the vicinity. The park was not actually named Tower Hill until 1909. The water tower, which is now the community's signature piece, was constructed in 1913 after extensive lobbying by the association to improve the local water pressure for what had quickly become an urban neighborhood. It was designed by Frederick William Cappelen, a nationally prominent engineer who served as city engineer when the water tower was constructed.<sup>8</sup>



Water Tower in 1915 (Minnesota Historical Society)

In his role as city engineer, Cappelen was also involved in the design of the new Franklin Avenue

Kristoffer Olsen Oustad. Built between 1919 and 1923 under the direction of N. W. Elsberg,



Streetcar on bridge (Minnesota Historical Society)

Bridge, along with Cappelen's successor, it connected the east and west banks of Minneapolis at Franklin Avenue, replacing a bridge that had been built in 1888. Before the bridge was rebuilt, the section of Franklin Avenue on the east side was known as Hamline Avenue. Named the Cappelen Memorial Bridge upon its completion, the new structure was a reinforced-concrete open-spandrel ribbed-arch bridge with a 400-foot center span, the longest in the world when built.<sup>9</sup>

The city continued to expand its infrastructure during the 1920s. Gas street lighting was finally replaced by electric street lights in 1924, after the city's contract with the Patterson Lighting Company for lighting street lamps with gas expired in 1923. Another factor aiding residential development was the park board's practice of planting trees along streets and boulevards, thus enhancing the attractiveness of the neighborhoods. Charles M. Loring, the first president of the park board, is credited with implementing a tree-planting program which made Minneapolis "one of the most uniformly tree-adorned cities of the country." The park board was authorized to plant trees along the streets or issue permits for tree planting and to assess the costs against the adjacent property owners. In the case of Prospect Park, the improvement association enthusiastically supported this

<sup>8</sup> For an extensive discussion of the water tower and the park see Christine A. Curran and Charlene K. Roise, "Prospect Park Water Tower and Tower Hill Park," 1997, National Register of Historic Places Registration Form prepared by Hess, Roise and Company, available at State Historic Preservation Office, Minnesota Historical Society. Andrew Rinker, Cappelen's predecessor as city engineer, lived at 98 Malcolm Avenue, built in 1897.

<sup>9</sup> Nicholas Westbrook, ed., *A Guide to the Industrial Archeology of the Twin Cities* (Saint Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1983), 24-25; *Hudson's Dictionary*, 31. A picture of the previous Franklin Avenue bridge can be found in Wick.

endeavor. The streets of the community were paved in 1927, partly in response to the greater number of automobiles which required smoother road surfaces to operate effectively.<sup>10</sup>

### Twentieth-Century Development to World War II

Development continued throughout the Prospect Park area through the 1920s. About half of the houses in the neighborhood were built between 1915 and 1930, often on sites that must have challenged the ingenuity of their builders, because of their steep slopes. A sizable number were constructed as duplexes, and in the years following World War I, many single-family houses were converted to duplexes. A number of multiple dwellings were built during this period, usually two stories high with rectangular plans, incorporating, four, six, or eight units. Also, quite a few earlier houses were moved to their present sites from other locations and often modified from single-family houses to duplexes in the process. Quite a few houses were moved from University Avenue, as that street succumbed to the pressures of commercial development. As automobiles became more important, earlier barns and carriage houses were converted to garages, garages were added to lots with early houses, and new houses were constructed with garages, whether freestanding, attached, or incorporated at basement level. By 1930, few sites remained on which to build.



80 Malcolm Avenue  
(English Cottage Style)

The houses, whether designed by architects or built from plan books, display a shift in architectural taste from classically inspired styles to the more picturesque Arts and Crafts (Craftsman), Prairie School, Tudor Revival, and English Cottage styles.

As in the period before World War I, houses for middle-class residents were more likely to be the product of builders than architects. The use of plan books continued to be popular, and buyers of more modest houses, especially bungalows, could even order pre-fabricated houses or pre-cut components for houses from the Sears Roebuck catalog or the local lumber yard. To increase the demand for architects' services and to promote better design, a group of architects based at the University of Minnesota founded the Architects Small House Service Bureau in 1919. The group offered stock housing plans for dwellings that were no larger than 3,000 square feet. Organized in 1921 as a national corporation with regional divisions, the bureau began to publish a monthly bulletin, *The Small House*, in 1922. Sales of plans were never great. Colonial Revival and bungalow designs were the most popular. The houses at 100 Orlin Avenue (1922) and 237 Bedford Avenue (1925) are examples of their work.<sup>11</sup>



Minneapolis had adopted its first comprehensive zoning ordinance in 1924, which largely codified existing uses.

and Building Lighting,” typescript compiled by Mrs. Lester J. Eck, Public Library, Minneapolis History Collection; Wirth, 39, 207; Gibas, Robert Gertson and Kristi Lee Johnson, *The Longfellow Planbook* (Minneapolis: Longfellow Community Council, 1997), 4; Thomas R. Zahn, “Context: Architecture, 1848 to Present,” 4.2.21 - 4.2.22, in Thomas R. Zahn, “237 Bedford Avenue,” 1990 and 1991, prepared by Thomas R. Zahn and Associates for the City of Minneapolis.

It created residence districts for one- and two-family homes; multiple-dwelling districts; commercial districts that largely followed the streetcar lines; light-industrial districts; and heavy-industrial districts, primarily around railroad yards. Prospect Park was largely classified as either a residence district in the blocks around the park or a multiple-dwelling district, although Fourth Street Southeast was classified as industrial, because of its proximity to the railroad tracks. Charles H. Ramsdell, a landscape architect and one of the founding members of the improvement association, saw the new law as an important vehicle for enhancing and expanding the residential character of Prospect Park and the surrounding area.<sup>12</sup>

Because of its location, Prospect Park had always been subject to commercial development pressures, especially on University Avenue which served as the primary artery through the community. Garages, light manufacturing, and retail establishments all took hold there. The Bedford Avenue intersection, which was also a streetcar stop, was, and still is, the location of local services, including the building at 3400-3408 University which housed the Prospect Park Pharmacy with flats above (1900, 1908), and the grocery store at 50-52 Bedford (1912). Both buildings still house their original uses. The building at 130 Warwick, constructed in 1922 to house a grocery store on the first floor and flats above, stands out because of its location in the middle of an otherwise residential block.<sup>13</sup>

Construction continued through the 1930s, but at a much slower pace given the economic constraints of the period. Two major examples of modern architecture were constructed on Bedford Street. The house for Malcolm Willey, academic vice president of the University of Minnesota, at 255 Bedford, was designed by Frank Lloyd Wright in his Usonian manner and built in 1934. The first International Style-inspired house in Minnesota, designed by Elizabeth Scheu and Winston Close, was built at 252 Bedford in 1938, then enlarged in 1940 for B. E. Lippincott, a professor of political science at the University. However, more typical for the decade is the pair of English Cottage style houses at 247 and 251 Bedford, built in 1932-1933, and the Colonial Revival style house at 248 Bedford, built in 1939.<sup>14</sup> (See *The Architects of Prospect Park* and *Architectural Styles and Construction Techniques in Prospect Park*.)

### Prospect Park After World War II

After the Second World War, the great demand for housing for returning servicemen and their families led to an enormous building boom and the rapid expansion of the “first-tier” suburbs around the Twin Cities. Although most sections of Minneapolis



<sup>12</sup> Minnesota Works Progress Administration, *1940 Atlas of the City of Minneapolis, Minnesota* (Minneapolis: City of Minneapolis, 1941) contains the language of the zoning ordinance and the zoning map. Charles H. Ramsdell, “The New Districting Law,” *Watchtower* 3 (April 1925): 1.

<sup>13</sup> Gibas, 18-19; Wick, 9.

<sup>14</sup> The Willey House is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. David Gebhard and Tom Martinson, *A Guide to the Architecture of Minnesota* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977), 47.

including Prospect Park had been heavily developed earlier, there were still a few larger tracts in Prospect Park available for new construction, as well as other scattered lots that had been too difficult or too expensive to build on earlier. While the lot sizes are smaller than those in the suburban communities, most of the houses are of the same type—Cape Cods that are variations of earlier Colonial Revival styles, ramblers, and ranch houses. These wood-frame houses typically used standardized parts and plans that were widely available to builders and contractors.<sup>15</sup>



222 Melbourne Avenue

In contrast to the construction of standardized suburban-type houses are a small number of architect-designed houses that are part of a regional modern style that has sought to accommodate houses to their sites. Most were designed by architects that were affiliated with the University of Minnesota.<sup>16</sup>

The city of Minneapolis took advantage of two major federal programs enacted after World War II, the Federal Housing Act of 1949 and the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1956, that were intended to reshape and revitalize the city. The first of these to be

manifested in the Prospect Park area was the construction of the city's first postwar public housing project on the west side of Williams Avenue (just outside the boundary of the study area) on what had been a gravel and sand pit. Called the Glen-Dale (later Glendale) Homes, the two-story units were designed by the architectural firm of Larson and McLaren to house families and the elderly. Despite some community opposition, although with the support of the improvement association, the buildings were completed in 1952.<sup>17</sup>

Interstate 94, which forms the southern boundary of this study area, was begun in 1960. Designed to link the downtowns of Saint Paul and Minneapolis, it set off the residential neighborhood of Prospect Park from the River Road areas of Minneapolis and Saint Paul to the south. An eleven-mile stretch of the roadway was officially opened on December 9, 1968. As originally proposed, the freeway route would have destroyed the Willey House, obliterated parts of Arthur and Franklin Avenues, gone through the Prospect Field playground and removed about half of the Glendale Homes project. Appeals to Governor Orville Freeman, a former Prospect Park resident, intense lobbying by the community, and pressure from the Housing and Redevelopment Authority and the Minneapolis Park Board, ultimately led to a modification that followed the line of the railroad right-of-way and saved many of the threatened houses. The removal of others for the freeway resulted in several dead-end streets and the creation of several

<sup>15</sup> Judith A. Martin and David A. Lanegran, *Where We Live: The Residential Districts of Minneapolis and Saint Paul* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press and Center for Urban and Regional Affairs, 1983), 125-129; Robert Gerloff, Kristi Johnson, and Peter J. Musty, *Cape Cods and Ramblers: A Remodeling Planbook for Post-WWII Houses* (Minneapolis: Minnesota Housing and Redevelopment Authority, 1999), 4-6; Gebhard and Martinson, 72; Charlene K. Roise, Christine A. Curran, and Denis P. Gardner, "Minneapolis-Saint Paul International Airport, Historic/Architectural Survey of 1996 DNL 65 for the Part 150 Sound Insulation Program," April 1997, prepared by Hess, Roise and Company for the Center for Energy and Environment, 14.

<sup>16</sup> See Gebhard and Martinson, 20, 72, and 90-91, for a brief discussion of the movement and other examples.

<sup>17</sup> Aronson, 11-14; Gibas, 28-29; Judith A. Martin and Antony Goddard, *Past Choices/Present Landscapes: The Impact of Urban Renewal on the Twin Cities* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, Center for Urban and Regional Affairs, 1989), 152, 154.

small park areas. While the Willey House and others were not removed, they did lose their previously unimpeded views down the slope towards the river.<sup>18</sup>

The improvement association expanded in name and area to take in the East River Road, as the Prospect Park and East River Road Neighborhood Improvement Association. It continues to work for community improvements and to stop inappropriate development.

### **The People and Organizations of Prospect Park**

In part because of its geographically constrained location, and in part because of its many organizations, Prospect Park has always had a strong sense of itself as a community. The first of these organizations was the Prospect Park Study Club, a women's group founded in 1896 to promote intellectual activities for its members. The founding members were formed from the first twenty families to settle there, and were among the socially prominent, upper middle-class women of the area, as befitted its early character as a suburban residence park. Three years later a "Mothers' Circle of Prospect Park" was founded at Pratt School for talks, readings, and discussions on child training and education. This was superceded by a Parent-Teachers Association (P.T.A.) in 1916.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> "Central Corridor Hennepin and Ramsey Counties, Phase I and II Cultural Resources Investigations of the Central Corridor, Minneapolis, Hennepin County, and Saint Paul, Ramsey County, Minnesota," 1995/1996, study prepared by BRW with Hess, Roise and Company as subcontractors and submitted pursuant to the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and the Procedures of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (36 CFR 800) by the Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority, Ramsey County Regional Regional Railroad Authority, Minnesota Department of Transportation, 8-12 – 8-13; "Freeways to Make Cities Truly Twins," *Minneapolis Tribune*, December 8, 1968. Aronson, 14-17. Alan A. Altshuler, *The City Planning Process: A Political Analysis* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1965), 40-48, 71-72, discusses the freeway project and its impact on residential communities.

<sup>19</sup> Aronson, 5. A collection of programs of the study club from 1902-03 to 1960-61 is available in the Minneapolis Public Library, Minneapolis Collection. For the Mothers' Circle see Gibas, 14.



Hafstad House, 159 Arthur Avenue



Photo of Luxton House in 1918  
(Minnesota Historical Society)

The Prospect Park Improvement Association is the longest-running and perhaps the most important community organization of its kind in the Twin Cities. Among its founding members were Jacob Hafstad, Harry Benton, Charles Ramsdell, and George Luxton. Hafstad, a Norwegian immigrant, was a master carpenter by trade who joined the Minneapolis Fire Department in 1890, subsequently losing a leg in a railroad accident. He built the picturesque Queen Anne style house at 159 Arthur Avenue. Benton, the assistant city clerk of Minneapolis, built a house at 112 Arthur Avenue in 1907. Ramsdell, a landscape architect who was active in the Prospect Park Methodist Church, built a house at 46 Barton Avenue in 1909. Luxton, who was chief photographer for the *Minneapolis Journal*, built his house at 138 Arthur Avenue in 1910, recording the process in a series of photographs.<sup>20</sup>

F.F. Lindsay, who helped found the Prospect Park Methodist Church and donated the land on which the church building stands, built his house at 25 Seymour Avenue in 1899. The lot on which the house stands was originally owned by the architect Lowell A. Lamoreaux. Justus Gable, another founder of the church, lived at 15 Seymour in a house built in 1885 for Benjamin Sprague and designed by the Orff Brothers. His daughter Mary married Edwin Roy Ludwig, the architect of the second church building. They lived at 147 Cecil Street.<sup>21</sup>

Another important Prospect Park organization was the co-operative buying club, formed in 1937 to purchase groceries for member families. Initial membership shares were five dollars a year. The coop operated out of various homes until the late 1940s, when it purchased a building for sales, storage, and meeting space located at 1 Twenty-seventh Avenue Southeast. Despite a membership of about one hundred families, costs and expenses began to exceed income in the mid-1960s, and the coop was disbanded in 1967.<sup>22</sup>

Prospect Park has long had associations with faculty members at the University of Minnesota because of its proximity to both Twin Cities campuses. Marian Foster Fraser, the daughter of two University of Minnesota faculty members, describes her childhood growing up at 60 Arthur Avenue and her friendships with neighborhood faculty children. The area has always been popular with students, many of whom live in duplexes or multi-family dwellings. Arthur

<sup>20</sup> Gibas, 16-17; June Barnhill and J. P. S. LaSha, "Hafstad's House Now Historic," *Tower Talks* 9 (July-August 1982): 3, 11; *Watchtower* 1 (March 1924): 4. Luxton's photograph collection is now available at the Minnesota Historical Society.

<sup>21</sup> Gibas, 15-16; Abe Altowitz, "Prospect Park High and Haughty," *Minneapolis Star*; February 16, 1956; Wick, 9.

<sup>22</sup> Gibas, 22-23; Wick, 8-10.

Naftalin, a political science professor, lived at 66 Seymour between 1961 and 1979 during and after his tenure as mayor of Minneapolis (1961-1969). Most of those affiliated with the university have lived in the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century residences that characterize the community. Others have commissioned distinctive modern houses both before and after World War II. Frank Lloyd Wright's house for University vice president Malcolm Willey and the Scheu and Close house for B. E. Lippincott, both on Bedford, have been cited. Dr. Lippincott's wife was a modern dancer who introduced the teaching of modern dance to college and university curricula. The first three residents of the Close-designed house at 252 Bedford, Ray Faulkner, Jerry Hill, and Ed Ziegfeld were all university faculty members. University historian Harold Deutsch had lived at 86 Seymour, then commissioned the Closes to design a new house next door at 90 Seymour, built in 1950-1951. Dr. Edith Stedman, dean of women, lived in the duplex at 21 Seymour, designed by Carl Graffunder and built in 1964. Dorothy Whitmore built 91 Seymour, designed by Graffunder, in 1955. This house is now owned by Roger Page who commissioned 163-165 Malcolm from Graffunder in 1963. Graffunder also designed interior alterations for Naftalin's house at 66 Seymour.<sup>23</sup>

### **Architectural Styles and Construction Techniques in Prospect Park**

The styles of architecture seen in Prospect Park can be found in many sections of Minneapolis that were developed during the same periods of time. Rather than stretching over the relatively flat landscape that characterizes so much of the city, the residential architecture of Prospect Park has been adapted itself to the varied topography and irregularly sized lots of the area.

#### *Queen Anne (1880-1895)*

The Queen Anne style is characterized by its richly ornamented, asymmetrical composition based on an irregular plan and massing and contrasting textures and materials. Characteristic features include steeply pitched multi-planed roofs, towers with conical roofs, pedimented dormers, projecting gables with recessed surfaces, carved panels, and wood shingles hung in patterns. A variant, known as the Shingle Style, is characterized by smooth, curvilinear surfaces covered with wood shingles. Residential Queen Anne style buildings are scattered throughout the area. Notable examples can be found on Arthur Avenue, Clarence Avenue, and Malcolm Avenue.



86 Arthur Avenue  
(Queen Anne style)

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<sup>23</sup> Marion Foster Fraser, "The Arthur Avenue Gang: Prospect Park, Minneapolis in the 1920s and 30s," 1992, typescript, available at Minnesota Historical Society; Gebhard and Martinson, 72; Linda Mack, "Women Architects Make Their Way in an Old Boys' Profession, Lisl Close Has Always Been Ahead of Her Time," *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, April 5, 1992 (Sunday Magazine); Altowitz.

### *Colonial Revival (1890-1940)*

In Prospect Park, the Colonial Revival style falls into two eras, approximately 1890-1905 and 1920-1940, and is one of the most prevalent styles in the area. Houses from both periods are characterized by their regular, rectangular plans, surmounted by gabled roofs. In the earlier period the gable end usually fronts the street, while in the second period, the gables are at the ends with the front roof slope pierced by dormers. Wood clapboard siding is the typical façade material



64 Barton Street  
(Colonial Revival, first period)



86 Seymour Avenue  
(Colonial Revival, first period)

during both periods. In the first period, houses are often fronted by one- or two-story porches with fluted columns and Corinthian capitals. Fanlights and/or pediments and sidelights often mark the doorways. In the earlier period, the classically inspired details that are the hallmark of the style are interpreted in a rather fanciful way, while in the second period the style is a more accurate reproduction of the colonial prototypes. The Dutch Colonial Revival is a variation on the style that incorporates a gambrel roof.

### *Vernacular and Four-Square (1885-1920)*

Vernacular residences are simple in form and plan with little or no ornamentation. The prevalent type in the area is a rectangular, wood-frame, two-story, front-gabled dwelling, often with a simple front porch. A



160 Malcolm Avenue  
(four-square)



209 Bedford Avenue  
(Colonial Revival, second period)

variation on this type is the four-square residence, a cube-shaped dwelling, incorporating four rooms on the main floor, with a hipped or cross-gable roof, wide unsupported eaves, a simple front porch, often enclosed, and little ornamentation. Many of these houses have been extensively altered with additions and replacement materials, and ornamental detail may have been removed. Houses of these two types are found throughout the

Prospect Park area.



Luxton House (Arts and Crafts interior, 1915)

### *Arts and Crafts and Prairie (1905-1925)<sup>24</sup>*

The Arts and Crafts style in residential architecture emphasizes low, horizontal massing, open interior floor plans, and contrasting combinations of materials such as stucco, brick and/or stone veneers,



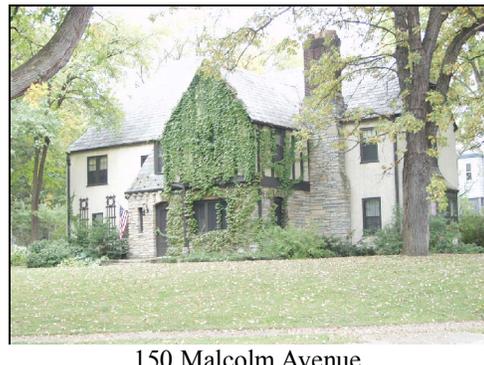
205 Cecil Avenue  
(Arts and Crafts style)

wood clapboards, and wood shingles. Characteristic features include low-pitched roofs, wide eaves, exposed roof rafters, horizontally grouped windows, front porches and/or sun porches, and artistic ornamentation such as inset tilework. The style is also called the Craftsman style, after the early twentieth-century magazine that popularized it. One-story houses in the style are often called bungalows. The English Cottage style (1920-1935) is a variation on the Arts and Crafts style. Usually asymmetric in plan, houses in the style are faced in stucco with fieldstone trim and often have steep, sloping roofs.



212 Bedford Avenue  
(Prairie style)

The Prairie style was popularized by Frank Lloyd Wright and a group of architects working with him in Chicago in the early twentieth century. As the style is interpreted in Prospect Park, the houses are often cubical in form, faced in stucco, and have hipped roofs with wide eaves. Characteristic features of the style are also applied to many of the multiple dwellings.



150 Malcolm Avenue  
(Tudor Revival style)

### *Period Revivals (1900-1930)*

In addition to the Colonial Revival, other popular Revival styles are the Tudor Revival and the Mediterranean or Spanish Revival. Tudor Revival houses are often faced with stucco and have applied half-timbering, set below intersecting gabled roofs.

<sup>24</sup> For a discussion of the sources and impact of the Arts and Crafts movement in Minneapolis see Patty Dean, "It Is Here We Live": Minneapolis Homes and the Arts and Crafts Movement," *Minnesota History* 57 (Spring 2001): 245-262.

Mediterranean Revival houses are faced with stucco and brick veneer and incorporate bold ornamental detail. Roofs can be hipped or gabled and sometimes covered with tiles. Examples of houses in these styles can be found on Barton, Clarence, Malcolm, and Seymour Avenues.

### *Modern (1930-1965)*

Modern architecture includes the Usonian and International styles as well as such housing types popular with builders as the ranch and the Rambler. Modern residential designs disdain ornamentation and tend to favor low-pitched or flat roofs, cantilevered overhangs, and extended, smooth, wall surfaces, often of glass.

Frank Lloyd Wright's Willey House, 255 Bedford Street, is an early example of his Usonian style. The work of Winston and Elizabeth Close and Carl Graffunder exemplify certain aspects of the International Style. Robert Cerny's house at 23-25 Melbourne is a modern ranch house.



Willey House  
(Minnesota Historical Society)

### **Construction Techniques**

Wood-frame construction is used almost exclusively throughout the area, even for multiple dwellings. In houses, the wood structure is covered with wood clapboard and/or shingles (sometimes replaced by aluminum or vinyl substitutes) or brick veneer. The use of stucco facing over a wood-frame structure for both houses and multiple dwellings began to gain popularity in about 1915. As some houses were remodeled into duplexes or moved from one location to another, stucco often replaced the original clapboard. Calvin Schmid in his extensive study of Minneapolis and Saint Paul (published in 1937) discussed the popularity of stucco as a building material, as compared to its use as a building material in cities of comparable size elsewhere in the United States. He does not discuss why it became so popular, but its ready adaptability to the Arts and Crafts style is probably an important factor. In some areas of the country, stucco is applied over fireproof terra-cotta tile walls. In Prospect Park that construction material was occasionally used for garages where fear of fire was a factor.<sup>25</sup>

One often-overlooked aspect of a building's construction is the type of material used for the foundation, which can be an important indicator of a building's date. Until about 1900, buildings were constructed on foundations of locally quarried limestone which was readily available from nearby sites. Rusticated concrete blocks began to become popular in the early twentieth century and were widely used until about 1920. Most were manufactured by local firms and marketed as economical substitutes for stone.<sup>26</sup> Advances in the technology of concrete manufacture led to the

<sup>25</sup> Calvin F. Schmid, *Social Saga of the Twin Cities: An Ecological and Statistical Study of Social Trends in Minneapolis and St. Paul* (Minneapolis: Minneapolis Council of Social Agencies, Bureau of Social Research, 1937), 194-197.

<sup>26</sup> The manufacture of concrete blocks became practical after Harmon S. Palmer invented a machine that allowed for the easy molding of hollow concrete blocks. The Miracle Company of Minneapolis was a prominent local maker of concrete blocks and the machines that formed them. See Pamela H. Simpson, *Cheap, Quick, and Easy: Imitative Architectural Materials, 1870-1930* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1999), 11-16, 21-27. The Minneapolis Collection of the Minneapolis Public Library has trade catalogs from the Miracle Pressed Stone

use of poured concrete foundations in the 1920s, often coupled with stucco facades that extended almost to ground level. By the 1930s the standardized, smooth-faced, concrete blocks that were readily available had become the preferred alternative. Older houses that were moved to new locations from the 1920s on, are generally set on concrete-block foundations. Garages were often constructed entirely of concrete blocks.

### **Selected Architects of Prospect Park**

A number of prominent architects have practiced in Prospect Park. Many of them have lived in the community, and quite a few of them have been affiliated with the University of Minnesota Architecture School.

#### *The Lamoreaux Legacy*<sup>27</sup>



Lamoreaux House (39 Seymour Avenue)

Lowell A. Lamoreaux (1861-1922) designed for himself one of the very first houses constructed in Prospect Park shortly after his graduation from the University of Minnesota in 1887. Prominently sited on a peninsular lot at the intersection of Seymour and Orlin, the house is a notable example of the Shingle Style with a boldly scaled granite porch with carved columns. In addition to the wood shingles covering the wall surfaces, the house has unusual curved and rounded roof dormers. What is now the family room was originally the barn where the family kept its cow. In association with James MacLeod in the late 1890s, Lamoreaux designed many notable residences for wealthy clients in the Lowry Hill and

Whittier sections of Minneapolis. The partners designed the Swiss Chalet-inspired house at 25 Seymour Avenue, on a portion of the lot originally owned by Lamoreaux, in 1899 for F. F. Lindsay, one of the founders of the Prospect Park Methodist Church. They also designed the Mrs. A. T. Iverson House (1897) at 51 Clarence. Other houses in Prospect Park designed by Lamoreaux are the Mary E. Morgan House (1904), 2115 Franklin Avenue Southeast; the J. L. Gable House (1906), 44 Clarence Avenue; and the W. J. Bowen House (1907), 60 Seymour Avenue. He became a full partner of the firm in 1909, when it became Long, Lamoreaux & Long. Under that name the firm designed Saint Timothy's Mission Church (1911), 21 Clarence Avenue. Lamoreaux actively promoted the implementation of the Prospect Park Water Tower and is said to have sketched a design of it for the Minneapolis Park Board.<sup>28</sup>



44 Clarence Street

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Company, including "Miracle Concrete" and "Miracle Wonder Face Down Machine for Making Concrete Building Blocks." See "List of Trade Catalogs Available in the Minneapolis Collection," 1997, Minneapolis Public Library.

<sup>27</sup> See the description of the Cerny Associates Papers, Northwest Architectural Archives, Elmer L. Andersen Library, University of Minnesota, available from [www.special.lib.umn.edu/manuscripts/architect.html](http://www.special.lib.umn.edu/manuscripts/architect.html).

<sup>28</sup> Curran and Roise, "Prospect Park Water Tower," 8:7.

In 1920 Olaf Thorshov (d. 1928), a Norwegian immigrant architect (who initially spelled his name Thorshaug), became a partner, and the firm was renamed Long, Lamoreaux & Thorsov. Thorsov also lived in Prospect Park, designing his own Swiss Chalet-inspired house at 208 Cecil Street, built in 1912.<sup>29</sup> His son Roy Norman Thorshov (1905-1992) graduated from the University of Minnesota in 1928 and joined his father's firm. While still in school he designed the garage at the rear of Lamoreaux's property in 1925. In 1941 Roy Thorshov designed the house at 104 Seymour Avenue.



208 Cecil Avenue

In 1942 Robert G. Cerny (1908-1985), also a graduate of the University of Minnesota, joined the firm which became Thorshov and Cerny. Cerny had previously practiced with Roy Childs Jones, head of the architecture school at the University of Minnesota. Cerny also taught at the University of Minnesota between about 1936 and 1976. In the Prospect Park area, although outside the boundaries of this study area, Cerny designed the Saint Francis Cabrini Church (1947), 1500 Franklin Avenue Southeast. Within the study area, Cerny was especially active in the design and construction of many residences, including 75-77 Barton Avenue (1940); the group at 125, 129, 133, and 137 Warwick Avenue (1946) acting as part of the contracting firm of Noble, Jensen, Tracy and Cerny; the group at 221, 225, 229, 233, 237, and 241 Arthur Avenue (1948); and the house at 33-35 Melbourne Avenue (1952).

### *Edwin Roy Ludwig*

Edward Roy Ludwig, was active in the Prospect Park area, designing the Prospect Park Methodist Episcopal (now United Methodist) Church at 22 Orlin Avenue Southeast. The cornerstone of the present building was laid on June 20, 1914. He also designed the D. R. Howell House at 66 Seymour Avenue (1916) and the Blessley House at 73 Arthur Avenue (1923). His wife Mary Gable Ludwig was the daughter of Justus Gable, one of the founders of the Methodist church. The Ludwigs lived at 147 Cecil Avenue.



66 Seymour Avenue

### *Menno S. Detweiler*

M. S. Detweiler was responsible for the design of two grand houses on Orlin Avenue. He built the first at No. 32, in 1903, for himself and his family when he was in partnership with A. J. Kinney. The second at No. 36, built two years later for C. H. Crouse, was done in partnership with Charles E. Bell and is a picturesque Spanish Revival design.

<sup>29</sup> Paul Clifford Larson, "Olaf Thorshov House," 1984, National Register of Historic Places Registration Form prepared for the Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission, available at Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission.

Detweiler also designed the picturesque group of Spanish Revival style flats buildings (1905, 1908) at 23, 25, and 29 Sidney Place.

*Perry E. Crosier*<sup>30</sup>

Perry E. Crosier (1890-1953), born in Minneapolis, began his career as a draftsman for Minneapolis architect Harry W. Jones. Between 1914 and 1916 Crosier headed a firm of architects and contractors, the Crosier Construction Company. During this period it built several residences in Prospect Park, 240-242 and 244-246 Bedford Avenue (1915) and 148 Malcolm Avenue (1916). The houses Crosier designed at 124 Warwick Avenue and 209 Bedford Street date from 1924 and 1925. He is best known as a designer of movie theaters and garden apartment complexes. His son Paul joined his architectural practice, which became Paul E. Crosier Co. after the elder Crosier's death.

*Architects and Plan Books*<sup>31</sup>

A number of Minneapolis architects were active in the design of houses for publication in plan books, beginning in the 1890s. Through such books, plans were readily available to middle-class homeowners. Several of the architects that produced these plans are listed as the architects of record for houses in Prospect Park. These include the Keith Company, founded by W. L. Keith, with houses at 68 Barton Avenue (1908) and 44 Arthur Avenue (1913); Sedgwick and Saxton, founded by Charles S. Sedgwick, who is better known for his church buildings and large houses for individual clients, and Glenn L. Saxton, with houses at 1717 and 1721 Franklin Avenue (1904, 1905; moved to their sites from Harvard Street); and Glenn L. Saxton, working independently, with houses at 219 Bedford (1906, moved from State Street), 2018 Franklin Avenue (1908), and 101 Arthur Avenue (1909). Lindstrom and Ahlerts is listed as the architect for the fourplex at 150 Orlin Avenue Southeast (1912).

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<sup>30</sup> See description of "Perry E. Crosier Papers," Northwest Architectural Archive.

<sup>31</sup> See description of "Stock Plan Books Collection," Northwest Architectural Archives; Zahn, "Context: Architecture," 4.2.21-4.2.22.

*Robert Taylor Jones and the Architects' Small House Service Bureau*<sup>32</sup>



44 Arthur Avenue

Robert Taylor Jones (1885-1963), a graduate of the University of Illinois, came to Minnesota in 1919 as an assistant professor in the School of Architecture. At about the same time he became involved in the work of the Architects' Small House Service Bureau, founded by a group of Minnesota architects, headed by Edwin H. Brown, to promote architect-designed house plans through mail-order. When the organization became a national one in 1920, the Minnesota group became the Northwestern Division. It also generated sales and publicity for the entire enterprise. Jones became the general manager and in that capacity wrote a newspaper column about small houses, edited the *Small Homes Magazine*, and published a book on small houses. The organization provided working drawings and construction specifications. Two houses built in Prospect Park list the Architects' Small House Service Bureau as architect: 237 Bedford (1925) and 100 Orlin (1922).

In addition to his teaching, Jones was a member of President Hoover's Conference on Housing in 1928, the Minneapolis Mayor's Housing Conference in the 1930s, and a member of the Minneapolis City Planning Commission between 1945 and 1956.

Jones himself lived in Prospect Park in a 1913 house at 44 Arthur Avenue that had been designed by the Keith Company. When interviewed in 1956, he described his house as "'about 40 years old and of uncertain architectural character.' He characterized most Prospect Park homes as 'carpenter-esque,' which came into being when a carpenter was told to 'build me a house.'"<sup>33</sup>

*Winston Close and Elizabeth (Scheu) Close/Close Associates*<sup>34</sup>

Winston Close (1906-1991) and Elizabeth Scheu Close (b. 1912) were the first two modern architects to practice in the state of Minnesota. Educated at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, they came to Minnesota in the 1930s to work for the firm of Magney and Tusler on the Sumner Field Homes, Minnesota's first public housing project. They formed their own firm in 1938 and married soon thereafter. Their first independent work was the house at 252 Bedford Avenue, built in 1938 and subsequently enlarged in 1940. The firm's other work in Prospect Park was the house for Harold Deutsch at 90 Seymour Avenue, built in 1950-1951. In 1950, Winston Close joined the architecture faculty at the



90 Seymour Avenue

<sup>32</sup> See Dean, 261, and note 21; Thomas Harvey, "Mail-Order Architecture in the Twenties," *Landscape* 25 (1991): 1-9; Robert T. Jones, ed., *Authentic Small Houses of the Twenties* (1929; reprint, New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1987); "R. T. Jones Dies at 78," *Northwest Architect* 27 (May-June 1963): 49.

<sup>33</sup> Altowitz.

<sup>34</sup> Mack, "Women Architects"; see description of Close Associates Papers, Northwest Architectural Archives; Linda Mack, "Winston Close Dies at 91," *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, June 17, 1997, B7; Gebhard and Martinson, 90-93.

University of Minnesota, an association which brought the firm a number of university clients, primarily in University Grove, near the University of Minnesota campus in Saint Paul, although their first commission there dates from 1939. As advisory architect for the university, Winston Close oversaw the planning for the Morris campus, the Duluth campus, and the expansion of the Minneapolis campus on the West Bank.

### *The Rapson Legacy*<sup>35</sup>

Ralph Rapson (b. 1914), one of Minnesota's foremost modern architects, came to Minneapolis in 1954, as the new head of the University of Minnesota School of Architecture, succeeding Roy Child Jones in that post. Rapson and his wife Mary purchased the large Colonial Revival house at 1 Seymour Avenue, built in 1898, and modernized the interior, installing furnishings from Rapson-Inc., the furniture design firm they had founded in Boston. Although Rapson designed no new houses in Prospect Park, he brought numerous local practitioners to teach at the University, including Carl Graffunder and James Stageberg. Carl Graffunder was the architect for three notable modern houses in Prospect Park: 91 Seymour Avenue (1955); 163-165 Malcolm Avenue (1963); and 21 Seymour Avenue (1964). Both Rapson and Graffunder designed houses in University Grove. Stageberg's partner, Thomas Hodne, purchased the 1905 house at 100 Seymour Avenue and in 1967-1969 added a modern extension to accommodate his large family. It is set at the rear of the original house and largely concealed by the sloping site. Hodne/Stageberg designed the park building in Luxton Park (formerly Prospect Field), constructed in 1970 and located just outside the study area.

### **The Landscape of Prospect Park**

The landscape patterns and topography are the most important features that set Prospect Park apart from other communities of Minneapolis and help to define its essential character. The underlying geology was formed by two icesheets. The Keewatin glacier extended down from Canada through what are now the Red River and Minnesota River valleys and into eastern Minnesota. The gray drift moraine from this icesheet partially covered the red drift moraine that was carried from the northeast by the Patrician glacier. The result was a series of roughly rolling hills formed of granite and quartzite boulders known as "hardheads." These hills extend from the Saint Anthony Park area of Saint Paul into the Prospect Park area of Minneapolis, dropping off into sand dune tracts close to the Mississippi River. The summit of this moraine comprises Tower Hill Park, approximately 971 feet above sea level at its peak. Prior to settlement, these hills were covered by deciduous hardwood trees, primarily ash and oak.<sup>36</sup>

When Prospect Park was originally platted by Louis Menage for development, the street plan as surveyed by Baker and Gilmore followed the contours of the hills and took advantage of the topography of the area. In so doing they were following the landscape design principles espoused by Andrew Jackson Downing and promoted in the Twin Cities by Horace W. S. Cleveland. Cleveland is credited with laying out the design of Saint Anthony Park in 1873 and Warrendale, near Como Park, in 1874, both in Saint Paul. In 1886 he laid out Washburn Park, in what is now the southwest section of Minneapolis, with a curvilinear street pattern in accordance with a series of hills. Washburn Park also has a water tower as its centerpiece, but one that is much less

<sup>35</sup> Jane King Hession, Rip Rapson, and Bruce N. Wright, *Ralph Rapson: Sixty Years of Modern Design* (Afton, Minn.: Afton Historical Society Press, 1999), 112-114; Gebhard and Martinson, 48, 90-93.

<sup>36</sup> Curran and Roise, 7-6; George M. Schwartz, *The Geology of the Minneapolis-St. Paul Metropolitan Area* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1936), 86-87; Daniel E. Willard, *The Story of the North Star State* (Saint Paul: Webb Publishing Co., 1922), 56-59, 316.

dramatic than the one in Prospect Park. Three years earlier Cleveland had been hired by the Minneapolis Board of Park Commissioners to advise them on the park system.<sup>37</sup>

A variety of landscape features help to define and enhance the Prospect Park community. Some are derived from the street patterns, while others are more specific to the sites of individual residential buildings.

While not part of Prospect Park as originally platted, Tower Hill Park is now the most prominent landscape feature of the community, both by virtue of its size, 4.7 acres, and its location on University Avenue, the major artery that traverses the area on the north.



The intersections of the curvilinear streets have resulted in the creation of spaces that have allowed for the insertion of landscaped triangles. Some of these are officially mapped parkland, while others appear to be under the jurisdiction of the city department of public works. Adjacent to Tower Hill Park, at the intersections of Malcolm and Clarence with University, are two triangles. The

Barton Triangle

one at Malcolm has a freestanding boulder inscribed with the name "Prospect Park." On the other side of the park is a triangle at the intersection of Clarence and Seymour. Other triangles are located at the intersection of Arthur and Orlin, the intersection of Orlin and Melbourne, and the intersection of Barton and Malcolm. The latter two are mapped parkland. Three other mapped triangles, Clarence at Bedford, Bedford at Orlin, and Bedford at University, have been removed or reduced in size to enhance traffic flow. A curvilinear landscaped island is situated on Franklin west of Bedford. The south side of Franklin between Bedford and Cecil originally extended further northward, but the houses on the three lots at the north end of the block were removed in order to regularize the curb line.<sup>38</sup>



Franklin Island

The streets themselves are paved with asphalt, which has been replaced periodically since the streets were first paved in 1927, due to the stress on paving materials during Minnesota winters. The curbs are poured concrete, and the sidewalks are concrete slabs. The age of these features varies. In blocks without alleys, the curbs and sidewalks are interrupted by driveways leading to garages. Except on the steeper slopes, garages are usually placed at the rear of the lots. The cast-iron streetlight standards, a re-creation of a historic pattern, were installed in 1999.

<sup>37</sup> David Schuyler, *Apostle of Taste: Andrew Jackson Downing, 1815-1852* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 204-208; Jacobson; Zellie; Thomas W. Balcom, "A Tale of Two Towers: Washburn Park and Its Water Supply," *Minnesota History* 49 (Spring 1984): 19-21.

<sup>38</sup> *Hudson's Dictionary of Minneapolis*, 120-124, lists the city's parklands and acreage, including the mapped triangles. The original configuration of Franklin is shown on various atlases, when this portion of Franklin Avenue was called Hamline Avenue. The change occurred after the Cappelen Bridge was opened.

The construction of Interstate 94 in the 1960s resulted in the removal of houses and the creation of several dead-end streets. It also allowed for the creation of two small parks, one at the west end of Melbourne and the other at the intersection of Arthur, Sharon, and Seymour. The latter was named Chergosky Park in 1982. Prospect Field, which was renamed Luxton Park after George Luxton, is located outside the study area to the west of Williams Avenue.

The streets are further enhanced by the boulevard trees. Many of the elms first planted by the park board still survive. Those that succumbed to Dutch elm disease have been replaced by more resistant species of trees.

Individual lots throughout Prospect Park are also distinguished by their landscape features. Builders took advantage of the irregular terrain, incorporating terracing and retaining many of the pre-existing oak trees. Because of the long-time efforts of the improvement association to promote neighborhood beautification, the neighborhood is known for its gardens. Many lots incorporate picturesque masonry retaining walls into the overall landscaping.



Stone wall

### **Conclusion**

Prospect Park survives some 115 years after its establishment as a unique and distinct section of the city of Minneapolis. One of the most attractive residential areas of the city by virtue of its plan, architecture, and landscaping, and set apart by the constraints of geography and commerce, it has always attracted an active and committed group of residents. They have consistently sought neighborhood improvements and enhancement, beginning with the founding of Pratt

School in 1898. The status of the area has been further reinforced through the Prospect Park Neighborhood Improvement Association, founded in 1901 and one of the oldest organizations of its kind in the Twin Cities.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Designation of Individual Properties and National Register Listings to Date**

The Minneapolis HPC and the Minneapolis City Council have designated three properties as heritage preservation sites (landmarks) within the Prospect Park study area. Two of these sites are listed individually in the National Register of Historic Places.

*Jacob Hafstad House, 159 Arthur Avenue Southeast. HE-MPC-3004*

This impressive Queen Anne style house was built in 1894 on a steep, sloping site that extends through the block from Arthur Avenue to Malcolm Avenue. Hafstad, a Norwegian immigrant, was a master carpenter by trade who joined the Minneapolis Fire Department in 1890. He was one of the founders of the Prospect Park Improvement Association. It was designated in 1983 as a Minneapolis heritage preservation site.

*Malcolm Willey House, 255 Bedford Avenue Southeast. HE-MPC-3012*

This house was designed in 1934 by Frank Lloyd Wright for Malcolm Willey, a vice president at the University of Minnesota. Sited to take advantage of the view towards the Mississippi River and to emphasize the use of natural materials, it is one of Wright's early Usonian designs. It was designated 1984 as a heritage preservation site and listed in National Register on February 23, 1984, for its architectural significance as the work of a master.

*Prospect Park Water Tower and Tower Hill Park, University Avenue and Malcolm Avenue Southeast. HE-MPC-3052, HE-MPC-3177*

The Prospect Park Water Tower, sited at the crest of Tower Hill Park, was built in 1913-1914 to improve water pressure for the surrounding area. Designed by city engineer Frederick William Cappelen, it is a significant work of engineering and the most prominent and visible feature of the neighborhood. It was designated in 1997 as a heritage preservation site and listed in National Register on November 13, 1997, for its engineering and architectural significance.

### **Proposed National Register and Local Historic District**

Established by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the National Register of Historic Places consists of properties "significant in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture." To be considered significant, a property must meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Criterion A: be associated with events important to broad patterns of history;
- Criterion B: have a significant association with the life of an important person;
- Criterion C: represent a type, period, or method of construction; or be the work of a master; or express high artistic values; or
- Criterion D: yield, or be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Typically, above-ground properties merit National Register designation based on the first three criteria; Criterion D is usually applied to archaeological sites. Properties can achieve significance on a local, state, or national level. A property may be individually eligible for listing in the National Register, or eligible as a contributing component of an historic district. In addition to significance, a property must maintain physical integrity to be considered for the National Register, and must usually be over fifty years old unless it ranks as exceptionally significant.

Based on fieldwork and research, we recommend that the area of Prospect Park outlined on the map accompanying this report be nominated for listing in the National Register of Historic Places as the Prospect Park Historic District. Our preliminary assessment was affirmed following a site visit with Susan Roth, SHPO National Register Historian, on August 30, 2001. Ms. Roth expressed preliminary agreement with our suggested boundary recommendation and advised that such a nomination should first address Criterion A and secondarily address Criterion C. The period of significance would be from the establishment of Prospect Park in 1885 through the period of World War II and possibly to 1950. Buildings, structures, sites, and objects located within the boundary of the district and are at least fifty years old are judged to be contributing to the historic district if they retain sufficient integrity. A number of buildings, structures, and sites would be considered non-contributing because of their age. The property list accompanying this report and the inventory forms compiled as part of this project give the existing or recommended National Register and/or local designation status for each building, structure, site, or object. Some properties designed by distinguished architects, but less than fifty years old, will have to be evaluated for their potential contribution to the district when they meet the age qualification.

The Minneapolis ordinance that contains the heritage preservation regulations defines an historic district as “all property within a defined area designated as an historic district by the city council because of the historical, cultural, architectural, archaeological or engineering significance of the district, or designated as an historic district by state law.”

Property is evaluated for designation as a landmark or historic district according to the following criteria:

- (1) The property is associated with significant events or with periods that exemplify broad patterns of cultural, political, economic or social history.
- (2) The property is associated with the lives of significant persons or groups.
- (3) The property contains or is associated with distinctive elements of city identity.
- (4) The property embodies the distinctive characteristics of an architectural or engineering type or style, or method of construction.
- (5) The property exemplifies a landscape design or development pattern distinguished by innovation, rarity, uniqueness, or quality of design or detail.
- (6) The property exemplifies works of master builders, engineers, designers, artists, craftsmen or architects.
- (7) The property has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

If a local historic district designation is pursued, we would recommend that the boundaries be the same as those identified for the proposed National Register historic district. Such as district would qualify under local criteria 1, 3, 4, 5, and 6.

## **Proposed Individual National Register Listings and Local Designations**

There are no properties within the study area, but outside the boundaries of the proposed historic district, that appear to meet the criteria for National Register listing. The Peter De Lancey House, 21 Malcolm Avenue Southeast, was built in 1888 and is a notable example of the Queen Anne style. It could be considered for local designation under criterion 4.

A National Register nomination form was prepared for the Olaf Thorshov House, 208 Cecil Street Southeast, in 1984 based on its architectural significance, but the property was not listed. The house is included within the boundaries of the proposed historic district.

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