



CPED STAFF REPORT

Prepared for the Heritage Preservation Commission

HPC Agenda Item #8

July 14, 2015

BZH-28734

HERITAGE PRESERVATION APPLICATION SUMMARY

Property Location: 4401 Lyndale Avenue North; 4400 Lyndale Avenue North; and 4410, 4420, and 4430 Lyndale Avenue North

Project Name: 4401 Lyndale Avenue North (Mereen Johnson Machine Company); 4400 Lyndale Avenue North (C.A. Smith Lumber Company Office); and 4410, 4420, and 4430 Lyndale Avenue North (C.A. Smith Lumber and Compo-Board Company)

Prepared By: [Jim Voll](#), Principal Planner, 612-673-3887

Applicant: Council President Barbara Johnson

Project Contact: Council President Barbara Johnson

Ward: 5

Neighborhood: Lind-Bohanon

Request: Nomination for Designation as Local Landmarks

HISTORIC PROPERTY INFORMATION

Current Name	4401 Lyndale Avenue North; 4400 Lyndale Avenue North; and 4410, 4420, and 4430 Lyndale Avenue North
Historic Name	Mereen Johnson Machine Company (4401 Lyndale Avenue North); C.A. Smith Lumber Company Office (4400 Lyndale Avenue North); and C.A. Smith Lumber and Compo-Board Company (4410, 4420, and 4430 Lyndale Avenue North)
Historic Address	4400 Mississippi Drive
Original Construction Date	1892 (4400 and 4430 Lyndale Avenue North); 1916 (4401 Lyndale Avenue North)
Original Owner	Mereen Johnson Machine Company (4401 Lyndale Avenue North); C. A. Smith Lumber Company (4400 and 4430 Lyndale Avenue North)
Original Architect	John Scaub (4401 Lyndale); Unknown (4400 and 4430 Lyndale)
Original Builder	Carlsted Bros. (4401 Lyndale); Unknown (4400 and 4430 Lyndale)
Historic Use	Commercial, office, industrial
Current Use	Commercial, office, industrial, and vacant
Proposed Use	Undetermined
Other Historical Designations	n/a

SUMMARY

BACKGROUND. Council President Barbara Johnson (Ward 4) introduced, and the City Council adopted, a nomination for 4400 Lyndale Avenue North, 4430 Lyndale Avenue North, and 4401 Lyndale Avenue North as individual landmarks at its meeting of May 1, 2015. The City Council action is as follows:

Local Historic Designation of Properties at 4401, 4400, and 4430 Lyndale Avenue North:

Motion by B. Johnson to nominate the Mereen Johnson, C.A. Smith Lumber Company, and C.A. Smith Lumber and Compo-Board Co. properties for local historic designation, and direct the Planning Director to prepare the necessary documentation to bring the nomination forward to the Heritage Preservation Commission.

Action Taken: Adopted.

CPED has received the nomination and is bringing it forward for the Heritage Preservation Commission's consideration. Staff recommends adding 4410 and 4420 Lyndale Avenue North to the nomination and designation study. These parcels are part of the yard behind the 4430 Lyndale Avenue North building and are also part of the historic rail corridor running through the site and therefore warrant further study.

PUBLIC COMMENTS. Please see attached letter from the property owner of 4400, 4410, 4420, and 4430 Lyndale Avenue North. Staff has not received any other comments at the time of the publication of this staff report.

ANALYSIS

CONSIDERATION FOR NOMINATION

Per section 599.230 of the Heritage Preservation Regulations, the Heritage Preservation Commission shall review all complete nomination applications. If the Heritage Preservation Commission determines that a nominated property appears to meet at least one of the criteria for designation contained in section 599.210 the commission may institute interim protection and direct the planning director to prepare or cause to be prepared a designation study of the property.

SIGNIFICANCE

The nominated properties appear to meet at least one of the criteria for designation contained in section 599.210. The subject properties may be eligible for local designation as individual landmarks under criteria 1, 3, and 4:

- (1) The property is associated with significant events or with periods that exemplify broad patterns of cultural, political, economic or social history.
- (3) The property contains or is associated with distinctive elements of city or neighborhood identity.
- (4) The property embodies the distinctive characteristics of an architectural or engineering type or style, or method of construction.

The Minneapolis Preservation Plan (1990) identifies historic contexts and sub-contexts to organize and focus on broad themes to give perspective to historic events and places. The business and industry context and the early lumber milling sub-context of the plan identify the C.A. Smith Lumber Company as one of ten large lumber companies located on the Mississippi in 1894. The plan states, “lumber milling is significant to the city as one of the earliest industries to take hold in the city. As lumber milling flourished, the city flourished. The industry created jobs, produced cheap building materials for the booming town and ultimately provided capital for the growth of other industries, especially flour milling. The entrepreneurs who established the mills would become leaders in business and politics and would contribute to the social and cultural development of the city. “

The North Minneapolis Historic Context Study (1998) identifies the C.A. Smith Lumber Company, the Compo-Board Company, and other industrial uses in this area as a “significant economic force in encouraging the development of North Minneapolis.” The study further states that, “the sawmills provided work for new immigrants as well as American-born, and encouraged the subdivision of land and building of homes for workingmen and well-to-do residents. The sawmills dominated the North Minneapolis economy in the growth period between 1880 and 1920.”

The Mereen-Johnson Company was started by two employees of the C.A. Smith Lumber Company, Arno Mereen and Charles Johnson, who invented the first horizontal slab resaw while employed at C.A. Smith Lumber Company.¹ In 1916, they completed construction of the building at 4401 Lyndale Avenue North and moved their operation from the C.A. Smith Lumber Company to this location.

The Historic Resources in the Camden Area Historic Resources Inventory (2011) identify the C.A. Smith Lumber Company and Compo-Board Company at 4400 and 4430 Lyndale Avenue North respectively, as well as the Mereen Johnson Machine Company at 4401 Lyndale Avenue North, for intensive-level survey and research as potential candidates for local landmark designation under Criteria 1 and 4.

The Historic Resources Inventory Capstone (2013) determined that there are types of landmarks that are under-represented in the inventory of landmarks in Minneapolis. One under-represented category is 20th Century manufacturing. The study lists C.A. Smith Lumber Company and Compo-Board Company at 4400 and 4430 Lyndale Avenue North respectively, as well as the Mereen Johnson Machine Company at 4401 Lyndale Avenue North, as examples of sites that could be included in this under-represented category that are worthy of further exploration and possible designation.

The subject buildings may also be eligible for designation as a landmark under the other designation criteria. Such an analysis would be conducted as part of a designation study.

¹ Koenig, Karen. “Mereen-Johnson Celebrates 110 Years of Wood Machinery Making”
Woodworkingnetwork.com. Woodworking Industry News, May 11, 2015. June 24, 2015.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation of the Department of Community Planning and Economic Development for the Nomination for Designation as Local Landmarks:

The Department of Community Planning and Economic Development recommends that the Heritage Preservation Commission adopt staff findings and **approve** the nomination of 4401 Lyndale Avenue North; 4400 Lyndale Avenue North; and 4410, 4420, and 4430 Lyndale Avenue North as landmarks; **establish** interim protection; and **direct** the Planning Director to prepare or cause to be prepared a designation study.

ATTACHMENTS

- A. Nomination form
- B. Nomination action
- C. Letter from property owner
- D. Vicinity map
- E. Photos and survey map from Historic Resources Inventory

Link to City Council action: <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/meetings/council/WCMSIP-I40870>

NOMINATION APPLICATION WORKSHEET

Applicant (This person will be the primary contact for staff)	Name	Council President Barbara Johnson (Ward 4)
	Mailing Address Including City, State and Zip Code	Room 307 City Hall 350 South 5 th Street Minneapolis, MN 55415
	Phone Number	612-673-2205
	Fax	612-673-3940
	Email	Barbara.Johnson@minneapolismn.gov
Property Owner	Name	4401 Lyndale Avenue North: 4401 Lyndale Avenue North LLC 4400, 4410, 4420 and 4430 Lyndale Avenue North: Zimmerschied Inc. c/o Nancy Stevenson
	Mailing Address Including City, State and Zip Code	4401 Lyndale Avenue North: 4401 Lyndale Ave North LLC 4401 Lyndale Ave North; Mpls, MN 55412 4400, 4410, 4420, and 4430 Lyndale Avenue North: Zimmerschied Inc. 4400 Lyndale Avenue North; Mpls, MN 55412
	Phone Number	4401 Lyndale Avenue North: unknown 4400, 4410, 4420, and 4430 Lyndale Avenue North: Nancy Stevenson, Zimmerschied Inc., 608-788-6762
	Fax	unknown
	Email	4401 Lyndale Avenue North: unknown 4400, 4410, 4420, and 4430 Lyndale Avenue North: jeffnancy@astevenson.net
Property Information	Address(es)	4401 Lyndale Avenue North 4400, 4410, 4420, and 4430 Lyndale Avenue North

	Identification Number(s)	4401 Lyndale Avenue North: 13-118-21-21-0026 4400 Lyndale Avenue North: 13-118-21-12-0019 4410 Lyndale Avenue North: 13-118-21-12-0018 4420 Lyndale Avenue North: 13-118-21-12-0017 4430 Lyndale Avenue North: 13-118-21-12-0023
	Legal Description	4401 Lyndale Avenue North: LOTS 5 6 AND 7 BLK 1 AND LOTS 1 THRU 14 INCL BLK 2 JAMES M GILLESPIE'S 1ST ADDN ALSO LOTS 18 19 AND 20 AUD SUBD NO 158 INCL ADJ VAC STREET AND ALLEY 4400 Lyndale Avenue North: TRACT E, SUBJECT TO SPUR TRACK R/W AND HWY EASEMENT, REGISTERED LAND SURVEY NO. 1552 HENNEPIN COUNTY, MINNESOTA 4410 Lyndale Avenue North: TRACT D, SUBJECT TO SPUR TRACK R/W AND HWY EASEMENT, REGISTERED LAND SURVEY NO. 1552 HENNEPIN COUNTY, MINNESOTA 4420 Lyndale Avenue North: TRACT C, SUBJECT TO SPUR TRACK R/W AND HWY EASEMENTS, REGISTERED LAND SURVEY NO. 1552 HENNEPIN COUNTY, MINNESOTA 4430 Lyndale Avenue North: THAT PART OF TRACT B LYING S OF A LINE AND ITS WLY EXTS DESC AS BEG AT NW COR OF TRACT B TH ELY TO A PT ON E LINE OF TRACT B DIST 60 FT S OF NE COR THOF SUBJECT TO SPUR TRACK R/W EASEMENT
Name of Proposed Project (If applicable)	n/a	

NOMINATION APPLICATION

I understand that I must file the nomination application with the Department of Community Planning and Economic Development and obtain approval of this application by the Heritage Preservation Commission in order to conform with the heritage preservation regulations of the City of Minneapolis. I certify that the information which I have supplied in submitting this application is correct and accurate to the best of my knowledge. When I submit this application, I authorize the Department of Community Planning and Economic Development to process the nomination application.

Barbara A. Johnson
 Applicant's name and signature

6/30/15
 Date

- ❖ Must be signed and dated by the applicant before the application(s) will be processed.
- ❖ Applications received after 3:30 p.m. will be processed as received on the following business day.
- ❖ Community Planning and Economic Development staff may identify additional applications upon further analysis of the proposed project.

CITY COUNCIL MAY 1, 2015

MOTIONS

On motion by Glidden, on behalf of B. Johnson, the following properties were nominated for local historic designation and interim protection was established, pursuant to Section 599.240 (b) of the Minneapolis Code of Ordinances, covering all internal and external alterations to buildings, accessory structures and landscape features on the property, including demolitions, additions, renovations and other improvements:

- a) 4401 Lyndale Ave North, known as Mereen Johnson;
- b) 4400 Lyndale Ave North, known as C.A. Smith Lumber Company; and
- c) 4430 Lyndale Ave North, known as C.A. Smith Lumber and Compo-Board Co.

Further, the Planning Director was directed to prepare the necessary documentation to bring this nomination forward to the Heritage Preservation Commission.

Jim Voll, AICP, LEED-AP
Principal City Planner
City of Minneapolis

June 26, 2015

Re: Nomination of properties to Heritage Preservation Commission

Dear Mr. Voll,

We received your notice regarding potential designation of our properties (4400, 4430, etc) as locally designated (Minneapolis) historic property (and possible expansion to adjacent properties).

I appreciate your time for the initial phone explanation.

I have some comments from that conversation:

I wanted to clarify that 4420 is a small 'triangle' with a rail road spur designation. The 4410 section is next to the freeway border and is the property with a billboard installed. The billboard is not historic.

The properties

As you know there are two buildings--the office and the warehouse/ machine shop.

The office is two stories (plus basement) and appears to be built as a single phase building.

The warehouse/ machine shop is three stories, much larger and has many phases (and different years) of construction, widely varied building materials, and fairly limited uses for the existing space configuration.

This building seems a more difficult project to preserve or to transform into a modern configuration and financially feasible operation going forward.

As you know, these properties have been for sale since my brother (who operated the business) died two years ago. There have been many preliminary parties with curiosity and high 'first look' interest. Following tours and purchase/rehab cost assessment, no one, to date, has moved forward with functional offers. The layout of the building, the cost of renovation, and ability to generate revenue to support 'modern' operations make this building a challenge for the future.

Several companies or individuals have suggested removal of the warehouse/ machine shop and retention of the office building. This would provide the historical anchor for the area yet recognize the difficult financial pressure of investing in a large building with very limited revenue potential. We are not adverse to some continued use for this building; we are concerned that the cost for acquisition and rehabilitation must be financially rational.

Our concern is being placed in the “no way out” condition of significant limitations on use (or removal) of the large building with no way of finding a buyer or use of the facility. Our offer price is substantially below the assessed valuation upon which we pay taxes. The price for two acres in central Minneapolis is very low. The cost to rehab and cash flow the current configuration appears to be an impediment to moving the sale forward.

Should the buildings, their history, and the configuration of the spaces, lead to a historical designation of both structures, then it would seem logical that the City of Minneapolis has also committed to purchase of the facilities to be preserved in their current configuration. Several people have expressed interests in artisan work and development spaces if they could afford the space. In addition, community members envision City roles in neighborhood enhancement for a portion of the space.

Historic use and designation have a role to play in the neighborhood and the framing of the stories of lumber in the City. Since the use of the facilities/ properties may be narrowed and the cost of renovation difficult to sustain (with few interested parties), the best option for long term retention and rehabilitation would be via purchase by the City. This would affirm its value and protect the long term availability for the historic intentions.

While historic considerations are valuable for the community overall, the need to solve the practical concerns of this location (and not continuing to lose money) are a specific reality that pleads for solution.

As a seventy year family business owner and tax payer, it is time to move this property to a new use and to expedite the transition to new owners and purposes. As Minneapolis reconfigures to attract small business and entrepreneurial development, practical solutions for these thorny problems are vital. Your assessment of the options, the practical needs to accomplish a timely sale, possible preservation alternatives, and future ownership options are all part of a timely and considered review.

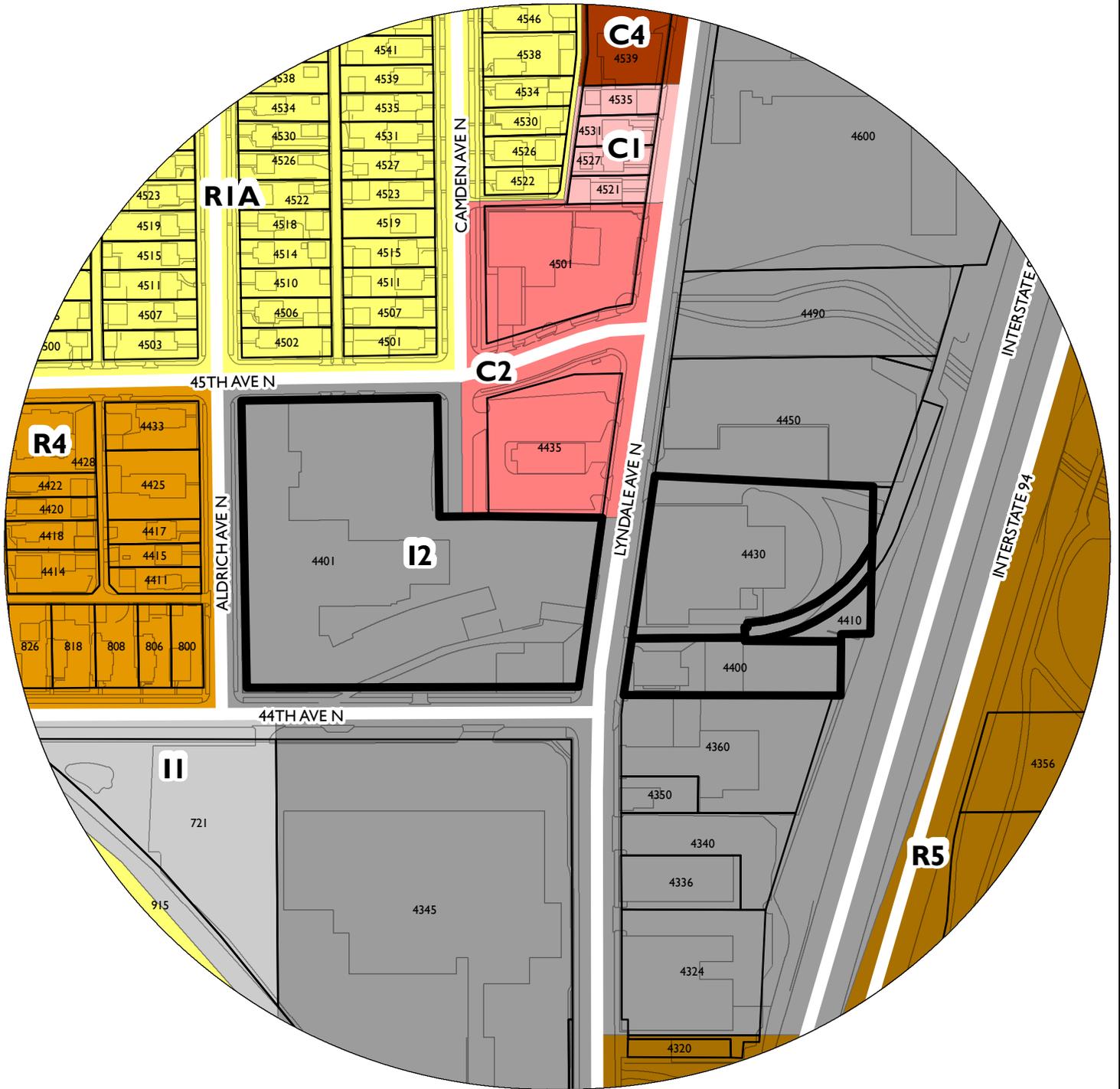
Thank you for sharing the initiation of the process with us. We hope that the sale can move forward in a timely manner and the options are reflective of the short and long term needs of the various parties involved/.

Sincerely,

Nancy Stevenson
President
Zimmerschied, Inc

NAME OF APPLICANT

WARD



PROPERTY ADDRESS

4401, 4400, 4410, 4420, and 4430 Lyndale Avenue North

FILE NUMBER

BZH-28734

Section 3
Reconnaissance Survey Results
and Recommendations

of individual properties and boundaries for potential historic districts. For information on all properties in the Camden survey area, see the tabular listing in Appendix B.

Table 4. Historic Context: Business and Industry

These properties are recommended as potential candidates for local landmark designation under *Criterion 1: History* and/or *Criterion 4: Architecture/Engineering/Construction* and/or National Register listing under *Criterion A: History* and/or *Criterion C: Architecture*

<p>705 42nd Avenue North Camden Park State Bank SHPO Inventory No. HE-MPC-3321 Construction date: 1910 Architectural Style: Brick Commercial Architect: Septimus J. Bowler Builder/Contractor: Unknown</p>	
<p>4049 Fremont Avenue North Service Station SHPO Inventory No. HE-MPC-3340 Construction date: 1933 Architectural style: Mission Architect: Unknown Builder/Contractor: Unknown</p>	
<p>4400 Lyndale Avenue North C.A. Smith Lumber Company Office SHPO Inventory No. HE-MPC-3339 Construction date: 1892 Architectural style: Queen Anne Architect: Unknown Builder/Contractor: Unknown</p>	

Section 3
Reconnaissance Survey Results
and Recommendations

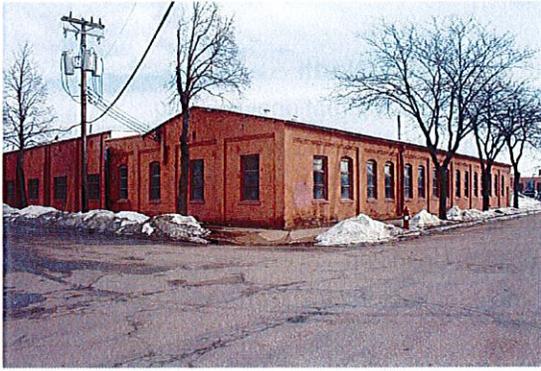
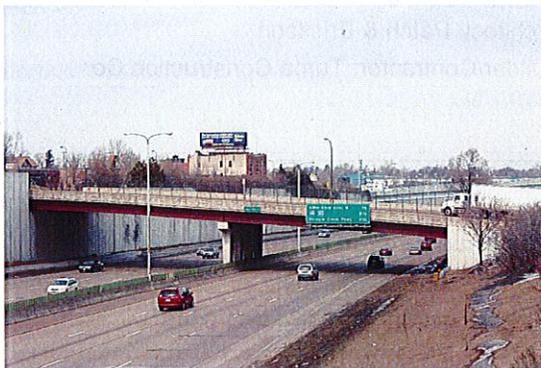
<p>4401 Lyndale Avenue North Mereen Johnson Machine Company SHPO Inventory No. HE-MPC-3344 Construction date: 1916 Architectural Style: No Style Architect: John Scaub Builder/Contractor: Carlsted Bro.</p>	
<p>4430 Lyndale Avenue North C.A. Smith Lumber and Compo-Board Company SHPO Inventory No. HE-MPC-3338 Construction date: 1892 Architectural style: Brick Commercial Architect: Unknown Builder/Contractor: Unknown</p>	

Table 5. Historic Context: Civic

These properties are recommended as potential candidates for local landmark designation under *Criterion 1: History* and/or *Criterion 4: Architecture/Engineering/Construction* and/or National Register listing under *Criterion A: History* and/or *Criterion C: Architecture*

<p>500 Block of 42nd Avenue over I-94 Bridge 27819 SHPO Inventory No. HE-MPC-3350 Construction date: 1980 Architectural style: No Style Architect: Unknown Builder/Contractor: Unknown</p>	
---	--



Map 4: Properties Recommended For Further Survey and Research (North)*



*Portions of survey area not included on map do not contain recommended properties

Legend

- Survey Boundary
- Previously Designated Historic District/Landmark
- Bridge Recommended for Further Survey and Research
- Property Recommended for Further Survey and Research
- Recommended Historic Districts

Recommended Historic Districts

- A: Victory Neighborhood Period Revival Potential Historic District (see pages 55-56)
- B: Chautauqua Addition Potential Historic District (see page 59)

