

**CITY OF MINNEAPOLIS  
CPED PLANNING DIVISION  
HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION STAFF REPORT**

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FILE NAME: 500 3<sup>rd</sup> Street North

CATEGORY/DISTRICT: Historic Resource

CLASSIFICATION: Nomination for Consideration for Designation as a Local Historic Landmark

APPLICANT: City of Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission

DATE OF APPLICATION: November 18, 2008

PUBLICATION DATE: November 25, 2008

DATE OF HEARING: December 2, 2008

APPEAL PERIOD EXPIRATION: December 12, 2008

STAFF INVESTIGATION AND REPORT: Aaron Hanauer (612) 673-2494

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**A. BUILDING DESCRIPTION:**

The Green & DeLaittre Company Wholesale Grocery Warehouse Building at 500 North 3<sup>rd</sup> Street is a four-story rectangular brick building (see Appendix A for images). It was built in 1908 and designed by architect and engineer Claude Allen Porter (C.A.P.) Turner. The building has a corbelled cornice. The first story contains a loading dock and has Chicago windows. The upper stories' openings are paired in the corner bays and organized as single units in the middle bays. This building is a contributing structure to the National Register of Historic Places Warehouse District (see Appendix B).

**B. NOMINATION BACKGROUND:**

On September 22, 2008, the Applicant, 500 LLC, applied for two land use applications: a floor area ratio and site plan review application to allow for the construction of a three-story addition; the applicant later withdrew the application for the floor area ratio variance. At the November 17, 2008 City Planning Commission meeting, the Planning Commission denied the site plan review application.

At the November 18, 2008 Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) meeting, the commission adopted a motion to nominate 500 3<sup>rd</sup> Street North for consideration for designation as a local historic landmark and directed staff to notice and present this item before the Commission at the next regular meeting, December 2, 2008. The motion was approved unanimously.

In accordance with Article V of the Heritage Preservation ordinance, the commission shall review all complete nomination applications (see Section F for Article V in its entirety). As stated in Article V, "If the 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 direct the planning director to commence a designation study of the property.”

In accordance with standard procedures, all property owners within a 350-foot band around the perimeter of the proposed landmark were notified of this public hearing. Interested parties were invited to attend and be heard. All neighborhood representatives were invited and encouraged to attend.

Those that cannot attend the meeting were invited to submit comments in writing. Those written comments that were submitted to CPED-Planning prior to publication of this report are attached herein. Written comments that are submitted after publication of this report will be brought directly to the hearing for review by the Heritage Preservation Commission and for inclusion in the public record.

### **C. HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE:**

#### **Engineering Significance:**

The Green & DeLaittre Company Wholesale Grocery Warehouse Building’s brick façade does not reveal its revolutionary structural system (see Appendix C). The subject property, built in 1908 by C.A.P. Turner, is likely the earliest extant example in Minneapolis and one of the earliest extant examples in the country that was built with a reinforced concrete flat-slab design. Concrete flat-slab construction is a reinforced concrete slab supported directly by concrete columns without the use of girders or intermediate beams spanning between the columns. The benefits of the concrete flat-slab design compared to concrete systems that contain girders and intermediate beams include the following:

- Improved fire protection by reducing the number of sprinkler heads required and allowing more latitude in their placement;
- Lowered floor-to-floor heights, and the cost savings associated with less cladding and column construction;
- Provided better illumination from windows and overhead lights; More advantageous placing of shafts and other floor openings than with traditional beam framing;
- Reduced unusable space; allowed for greater amount of usable space;
- Reduced floor framing depths
- Eliminated the expanse of formed beams on the underside of the floor.

Concrete flat-slab construction was invented circa 1900. The honor of being the first U.S. engineer to design and build reinforced concrete flat-slab floors belongs to George M. Hill of New York (see Appendix D8). Hill’s design, however, was not widely used throughout the country.

The engineer that most helped make flat-slab construction a common building practice (which is still taught and used today) was C.A.P. Turner (see Appendix D). In 1906, Turner built his first concrete flat-slab construction, the Johnson-Bovey Building, in Minneapolis (located at 5<sup>th</sup> Street and 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue North); this building was later demolished. What separated Turner’s flat-slab construction from Hill’s was his use of a mushroom-shaped shear head at the top of the column (see Appendix D4 and D5). The use of mushroom-shaped shear heads became known as the

mushroom system or Turner System and proved to be a reliable and cost effective flat-slab system for both buildings and bridges; by 1913 over 1,000 buildings throughout the country used this style of reinforced concrete construction (see Appendix D and E).

C.A.P. Turner has received national recognition with his mushroom-slab design and contributions to concrete flat-slab construction. In 2002, Turner's Marshall Building (1907) in Milwaukee, WI was dedicated as a national historic civil engineering landmark for being the world's oldest extant example of a flat-slab concrete building (see Appendix E and J). Turner's flat-slab construction technique can also be seen in Frank Lloyd Wright's 1939 Johnson Wax Administrative Building which is a national historic landmark (see Appendix F). The mushroom-slab element is a prominent part of the building's statement of significance:

*"Frank Lloyd Wright's Depression-era design for the Johnson Wax Company's Administration Building and Research Tower was so radical that local building commissioners refused to approve it without a test. At issue were Wright's novel "mushroom" columns, intended to carry loads varying from 2 to 12 tons. When a sample was built and withstood a load of 60 tons, the permit was granted (see Appendix F)."*

### **Master Engineer Significance**

C.A.P. Turner, who received 30 patents related to reinforced concrete, is the engineer and/or architect of record for prominent bridges and buildings in Minneapolis and throughout the country. In addition to designing the Green & DeLaitre Company Wholesale Grocery Warehouse Building, Turner is the engineer of two other important Minneapolis landmarks: the Pillsbury A Mill Rebuild of 1913 and the Northwestern Knitting Company/International Market Square (1904-1913). The Pillsbury A Mill is one of only two national historic landmarks in Minneapolis and the Northwestern Knitting Company is a local landmark. These buildings were not built with the Turner System; however, the oldest of the Northwestern Knitting Company's buildings is the city's first entirely reinforced concrete structure and a predecessor of concrete flat slab construction (see Appendix D3 and H3).

The significance of C.A.P. Turner's contributions to Minneapolis construction practices are noted in Larry Millet's Lost Twin Cities:

*"Perhaps because of this local connection [with C.A.P. Turner], builders used concrete framing extensively in the Twin Cities during the first two decades of the century. In fact it appears that by 1915 the Twin Cities had the nation's greatest concentration of tall concrete-frame buildings. Concrete framing was even more popular for warehouses, the first example appearing in the Twin Cities around 1905. Grain Elevators and other industrial structures, many of which survived into the 1990's also employed this type of construction (Millet, 1992, p 245).*

Outside of Minneapolis, Turner is responsible for designing and/or engineering the Aerial Lift Bridge (1906) in Duluth, the Lindeke-Warner Building (1909) in St. Paul, the Soo Line High Bridge (1911) north of Stillwater, and the Mendota Bridge (1926) in Mendota Heights <sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> (source: Wikipedia [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C.A.P. Turner](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C.A.P._Turner) , November 25, 2008).

## **Social Significance**

The subject property, The Green & DeLaittre Company Wholesale Grocery Warehouse Building, is also an important part of Minneapolis' social history. The Green and DeLaittre Company was one of the largest wholesale grocery firms in Minneapolis (see Appendix C).

The DeLaittre family was a prominent Minneapolis family in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century. They played important roles in the city's lumber industry, politics, banking, philanthropy, and the wholesale grocery business. The first DeLaittre in Minneapolis, John, arrived in 1865 and married Clara Towle Eastman that same year<sup>2</sup>. Mr. DeLaittre accomplishments included being elected the tenth mayor of Minneapolis (April 10, 1877- April 9, 1878), appointment by Governor John Pillsbury as the State Prison Inspector (1879-1887), and service as the commissioner of construction of the State Capital, and Minneapolis City Hall & City Court House in 1900.

John's son, Karl DeLaittre (1874-1957) was part owner of the Green & DeLaittre Company Warehouse Grocery Business. His other accomplishments include: prominent banker, state representative (1905-1906), and City of Minneapolis council member. Karl's son, John (1907-1992), was also in the banking business. He served as the president of the Farmers & Mechanics Savings Bank and National Association of Mutual Savings Bank. In the 1960's, John was appointed by John F. Kennedy to serve on the Federal Home Loan Bank Board; he served for four years. This position included the oversight of 4,200 federally chartered savings and loan associations (see Appendix I).

The subject property at 500 3<sup>rd</sup> Street North is the only known remaining business building that exists in Minneapolis that can be directly attributed to the Delaittre family and their wholesale grocery business. The John DeLaittre House, which was a Beaux-Arts mansion built in 1909, stood at 122 Franklin Avenue and was raised in the 1960's (see Appendix H).

## **D. CONSIDERATION FOR NOMINATION:**

Per section 599.230 of the City's preservation ordinance, the Heritage Preservation Commission shall review all complete nomination applications. If the HPC determines that a nominated property or property appears to meet at least one of the local designation criteria the commission may direct the planning director to commence a designation study of the property.

Staff believes the property is significant under criterion #4 and #6 and may have significance under criterion number 2.

### **(4) The property embodies the distinctive characteristics of an architectural or engineering type or style, or method of construction.**

The Green & DeLaittre Company Wholesale Grocery Warehouse Building was built in 1908 and it is likely the earliest extant example in Minneapolis and one of the earliest examples in the country that was built with a reinforced concrete flat-slab design C.A.P. Turner, the

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<sup>2</sup> (source: Thursday Night Hikes website <http://www.angelfire.com/mn/thursdaynighthikes/fairoakhike.html> , Lawrence Martin, November 25, 2008)

engineer that built this building, has received national and international recognition for his contributions to reinforced concrete. In 2002, Turner's Marshall Building (1907) in Milwaukee was dedicated as a national historic civil engineering landmark for being the . The Turner System is also an important part of the significance of Frank Lloyd Wright's 1939 Johnson Wax Administrative Building which is a national historic landmark.

**(6) The property exemplifies works of master builders, engineers, designers, artists, craftsmen or architects.**

C.A.P. Turner's advancements in reinforced concrete flat slab construction have national and international implications. Turner's mushroom flat-slab system helped show that flat-slab construction was a reliable and cost effective flat-slab system for both buildings and bridges. This construction technique transformed the design and construction of reinforced-concrete floors worldwide.

C.A.P. Turner's local accomplishments include the engineering of the Pillsbury A Mill Rebuild in 1913 and the reinforced concrete engineering construction of the Northwestern Knitting Company/International Market Square in 1904. The Pillsbury A Mill is one of only two national historic landmarks in Minneapolis and the Northwestern Knitting Company is a local landmark. These buildings were built without the Turner System, however, the oldest of the Northwestern Knitting Company's buildings is the city's first entirely reinforced concrete structures and a predecessor of the Turner System.

**(2) The property is associated with the lives of significant persons or groups.**

The DeLaittre family was a prominent Minneapolis family in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century that were important in the city's lumber industry, politics, banking industry, philanthropy, and the wholesale grocery business. John DeLaittre was the city's 10<sup>th</sup> mayor. His son, Karl, in addition to being a partner of one of the city's largest wholesale grocery firms, was a state representative and city council member. Karl's son, John, served as the president of the Farmers & Mechanics Savings Bank and National Association of Mutual Savings Bank. John also served four years on the Federal Home Loan Bank Board in the 1960's under the Kennedy Administration.

**E. INTERIM PROTECTION:**

Per section 599.240 of the City's preservation ordinance, Interim Protection shall be in effect from the date of the commission's decision to commence a designation study of a nominated property until the city council makes a decision regarding the designation of the property, or for twelve (12) months, whichever comes first. Interim protection may be extended for such additional periods as the commission may deem appropriate and necessary to protect the designation process, not exceeding a total additional period of eighteen (18) months. Accordingly, the commission shall hold a public hearing on a proposed extension of interim protection as provided in section 599.170.

*Effective date:* If the findings and staff recommendations proposed herein are adopted and approved by the Heritage Preservation Commission, interim protection shall be in effect immediately on December 2, 2008..

*Scope of restrictions:* During the interim protection period, no alteration or minor alteration of a nominated property (including all buildings, structures, and landscape features) shall be allowed except where authorized by a certificate of appropriateness or a certificate of no change, as provided in the city's preservation ordinance.

- *Minor alterations:* Certificates of No Change (CNC) will be used for minor alterations to all properties, buildings, structures, and landscape features within the proposed district under interim protection. CNCs provide the planning director with authority to review and approve or deny all proposed minor alterations. The Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation will be used for review and analysis of all CNC applications. CNCs can be acted on administratively by CPED-Planning staff. All application procedures will apply.
- *Major alterations:* Certificates of Appropriateness (COA) will be used for major alterations to all properties, buildings, structures, and landscape features within the proposed district under interim protection. COAs provide the Heritage Preservation Commission with authority to review and approve or deny all proposed major alterations. The Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation will be used for review and analysis of all COA applications. Certificates of Appropriateness require a public hearing before the HPC. All application fees and procedures will apply.
- *Demolition Permits:* Accordingly, during interim protection, because all resources under consideration for further study are treated as those that have already achieved local designation, proposed demolitions will be treated through the Certificate of Appropriateness application. The Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation will be used for review and analysis of all COA applications. Certificates of Appropriateness require a public hearing before the HPC. All application fees and procedures will apply.

## **F. APPLICABLE ORDINANCES:**

### **Title 23, Minneapolis Code of Ordinances, Chapter 599. Heritage Preservation Regulations, Article V: Designation**

**599.200. Purpose.** This article is established to promote the preservation of historic resources by providing the commission with authority to recommend the designation of landmarks and historic districts and to adopt design guidelines for designated properties.

**599.210. Designation criteria.** The following criteria shall be considered in determining whether a property is worthy of designation as a landmark or historic district because of its historical, cultural, architectural, archaeological or engineering significance:

- (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.

**599.220. Nomination of property.** Nomination of a property to be considered for designation as a landmark or historic district shall be submitted to the planning director on a nomination application form approved by the planning director and shall be accompanied by all required supporting information. A nomination may be made by any of the following:

- (1) A member of the heritage preservation commission.
- (2) A member of the city council.
- (3) The mayor.
- (4) The planning director.
- (5) Any person with a legal or equitable interest in the subject property.

**599.230. Commission decision on nomination.** The commission shall review all complete nomination applications. If the 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 direct the planning director to commence a designation study of the property.

**599.240. Interim protection.** (a) Purpose. Interim protection is established to protect a nominated property from destruction or inappropriate alteration during the designation process.

(b) Effective date. Interim protection shall be in effect from the date of the commission's decision to commence a designation study of a nominated property until the city council makes a decision regarding the designation of the property, or for twelve (12) months, whichever comes first. Interim protection may be extended for such additional periods as the commission may deem appropriate and necessary to protect the designation process, not exceeding a total additional period of eighteen (18) months. The commission shall hold a public hearing on a proposed extension of interim protection as provided in section 599.170.

(c) Scope of restrictions. During the interim protection period, no alteration or minor alteration of a nominated property shall be allowed except where authorized by a certificate of appropriateness or a certificate of no change, as provided in this chapter.

**599.250. State historic preservation office review.** The planning director shall submit all proposed designations to the state historic preservation officer for review and comment within sixty (60) days.

**599.260. City planning commission review.** The planning director shall submit all proposed designations to the city planning commission for review and comment on the proposal

within thirty (30) days. In its review, the city planning commission shall consider but not be limited to the following factors:

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

**599.270. Designation hearing.** Following completion of the designation study the commission shall hold a public hearing to consider the proposed designation, as provided in section 599.170. Any person having a legal or equitable interest in a nominated property shall be allowed reasonable opportunity to give testimony or present evidence concerning the proposed designation.

**599.280. Commission recommendation.** Following the public hearing, the commission shall make findings with respect to the proposed designation and shall submit the same together with its recommendation to the zoning and planning committee of the city council. In making its findings and recommendation, the commission shall consider the designation criteria contained in section 599.210, the information contained in the designation study, the state historic preservation officer's comments, the city planning commission's comments, the planning director's report and all testimony and evidence received at the public hearing relating to the designation.

#### **G. FINDINGS:**

1. 500 3<sup>rd</sup> Street North was designed and engineered by C.A.P. Turner in 1908 for the Green & DeLaitre Company Wholesale Grocery Warehouse business.
2. 500 3<sup>rd</sup> Street North is a contributing structure to the National Register of Historic Places Warehouse District.
3. Staff believes the property has significance under the following local designation criteria:
  - Criterion 4: The property embodies the distinctive characteristics of an architectural or engineering type or style, or method of construction. and
  - Criterion 6: The property exemplifies works of master builders, engineers, designers, artists, craftsmen or architects.
4. Staff believes that the property may have significance under local designation Criterion 2: The property is associated with the lives of significant persons or groups.
5. C.A.P. Turner made major contributions in the engineering and architectural field with the Turner System.
6. 500 3<sup>rd</sup> Street is likely the earliest extant example in Minneapolis and one of the earliest examples in the country that contains the reinforced concrete flat-slab design with mushroom head columns (a.k.a The Turner System).
7. Interim protection shall take immediate effect and remain in force during the duration of the designation study as allowed in Title 23, Minneapolis Code of Ordinances, Chapter 599, section 240.
8. During the interim protection period, no alteration or minor alteration of a nominated property (including all buildings, structures, and landscape features) shall be allowed

except where authorized by a certificate of appropriateness or a certificate of no change, as provided in the city's preservation ordinance.

#### **H. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends that the Heritage Preservation Commission **adopt** staff findings, **approve** the nomination, **establish** interim protection, **nominate** the property, and **direct** the Planning Director to commence a designation study of 500 3<sup>rd</sup> Street North.

#### **I. ATTACHMENTS**

- A. Building Images
- B. District Boundary Maps
- C. National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form for Warehouse District
- D. D.A. Gasparini Article
- E. Hickock-Wall Article
- F. National Historic Landmark Program Website
- G. Frank Lloyd Wright and the Johnson Wax Buildings
- H. AIA Guide to the Twin Cities
- I. Lambert Article
- J. American Society of Civil Engineers Landmarks Project