

MEMORANDUM

TO: City Planning Commission, Committee of the Whole

FROM: [Brian Schaffer](#), Principal City Planner, (612) 673-2670

DATE: April 28, 2016

SUBJECT: CPC Review and Comment on the Snyder Mansion Designation Study (2118 Blaisdell Ave)

Designation Study Review and Comment

Chapter 599, Heritage Preservation, of the Minneapolis Code of Ordinances outlines the review process for designation studies. The City is required to submit the designation study to the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and the City Planning Commission (CPC) for review and comment. A copy of the designation study has been submitted to the Minnesota SHPO. Enclosed is a copy of the designation study for your review and comment.

Section 599.260 of the Heritage Preservation Ordinance requires the planning director to 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.

The following addresses the proposed designation using the three factors outlined in section 599.260 of the ordinance.

I. The relationship of the proposed designation to the city's comprehensive plan.

The designation of the Snyder Mansion at 2118 Blaisdell Avenue is supported by the Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth through the following policies:

Policy 8.1 states, "Preserve, maintain, and designate districts, landmarks, and historic resources which serve as reminders of the city's architecture history, and culture." Implementation step 8.1.1 continues, "Protect historic resources from modifications that are not sensitive to their historic significance." Designating the John P Syder Mansion as a historic landmark would directly meet the intent and goal of Policy 8.1. The protections placed on the property as a result of designation would serve to meet policy objective 8.1.1.

2. The effect of the proposed designation on the surrounding area.

The designation of the Snyder Mansion will recognize the only remaining mansion on this block of Blaisdell Avenue and provide for a process to ensure that the property's historic integrity is retained.

3. The consistency of the proposed designation with applicable development plans or development objectives adopted by the city council.

There are no adopted small area plans for the area where the property is located.

I look forward to discussing this with you on April 28th .

Designation Study
for the

Snyder Mansion

2118 Blaisdell Avenue
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Draft for SHPO and CPC Review

February 11, 2016



**PRESERVATION
DESIGN WORKS, LLC**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Mayor and City Council of the City of Minneapolis

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Designation Study Purpose and Background

In February 2015 the Whittier Alliance submitted materials to the City of Minneapolis Department of Community planning and Economic Development (CPED) supporting the nomination of the John P. and Nelle Snyder Mansion (formerly understood as the “Pillsbury-Snyder Mansion”) at 2118 Blaisdell Avenue South as a local heritage landmark. As the property exhibited at least one of the local designation criteria found in Section 599.210 of the Heritage Preservation Ordinance, on 17 February 2015 the Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) unanimously voted to place the Snyder property under interim protection while a designation study was completed.

This report is intended to fulfill the requirements for local historic designation as outlined in Section 599.210 of the Heritage Preservation Ordinance. The study is based on a review of primary sources, including newspaper clippings from the Hennepin County Library James K. Hosmer Special Collections Minneapolis Collection, photographs from the Minnesota Historical Society’s holdings, and Ernest Kennedy’s original architectural plans from the Northwest Architectural Archives. The study also relies on a number of secondary sources and a site visit of the interior and exterior of the property.

Summary of Findings

The John P. and Nelle Snyder Mansion is a valuable historic resource for the City of Minneapolis. The property represents the civic and philanthropic contributions of John P. and Nelle Snyder, the work of master architect Ernest Kennedy, and is one of the few remaining fashionable residences of members of the Minneapolis elite which comprised the first phase of residential development on Blaisdell Avenue. The John P. and Nelle Snyder Mansion fulfills three landmark designation criteria under Section 599.210 and, as such, is historically significant under Criterion 1 for its association with the development of Blaisdell Avenue, Criterion 3 for its association with the distinctive elements of the identity of Blaisdell Avenue, and Criterion 6 for its association with Minneapolis master architect Ernest Kennedy.

BASIC PROPERTY INFORMATION	
Current name	NuWay House
Historic Name	John P. and Nelle Snyder Residence
Current Address	2118 Blaisdell Avenue
Historic Address	2118 Blaisdell Avenue
Original Construction Date	1913
Original Contractor	H.N. Leighton Company
Original Architect, Master builder, engineer, designer, artist, or craftsmen	Ernest Kennedy
Historic Use	Residence
Current Use	Office
Ward:	10
Neighborhood:	Whittier

PART 1: PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY

Parcel location, shape, and size

The John P. and Nelle Snyder Mansion at 2118 Blaisdell Avenue in Minneapolis (PID 34-029-24-0048) is located in the of the Whittier neighborhood at northwest corner of the intersection of Blaisdell Avenue and West 22nd Street. The building sits on a 29,477 square foot lot with 178 feet of frontage along Blaisdell Avenue and 165 feet of frontage along West 22nd Street. Nicollet Avenue is one block to the east of the property and West Franklin Avenue is one block to the north. (See Figure 1)

The surrounding neighborhood is a mix of residential and commercial structures. The neighborhood is home to large homes and multi-unit apartment buildings that date to the early twentieth century and a number of multi-unit apartment buildings constructed in the mid-twentieth century. Newer commercial buildings, including a Sunrise Bank and a Park Nicollet Clinic, and their associated parking lots dominate the north end of Blaisdell Avenue where it intersects with West Franklin Avenue. Over time, many of the large single-family homes in the larger neighborhood have been converted to multi-unit housing or office space.

In order to facilitate the construction of apartment buildings and commercial structures in the 1960s, most of the large elegant homes that once lined Blaisdell Avenue between West Franklin Avenue and West 24th Street were demolished (see Maps 1-4). As one of the few stately mansions that remains on Blaisdell Avenue, the Snyder Mansion represents the first phase of residential development on the street.

Description of building(s) on the property

Description of the primary structure

The Renaissance Revival mansion, which is the primary structure on the site, has an imposing rectangular massing with two stories above grade and a lower level ballroom below grade. The mansion was designed by prominent Minneapolis architect Ernest Kennedy and built in 1913 by the H.N. Leighton Company. In October of 1913, a two-story brick and reinforced concrete detached garage was built on the property (demolished 1962). The garage had the capacity to house three automobiles; the second story space was devoted to an apartment.¹

The house exemplifies many characteristics of the Renaissance Revival style, including its large rectangular massing, masonry and limestone construction, elaborate entrance portico and loggia, arched windows, limestone trim carved with reliefs of vases, flowers, torches, and rosettes, and ornamental engaged balusters beneath the tall arched windows (Figure.1). The house has a low-pitched hipped roof that overhangs large limestone brackets set atop decorative dentils (Figure 3-7)

The exterior is clad in buff brick and features ornate limestone details—including a water table, window arches, window sills, dentils, and cornice. The entrance portico and loggia are also clad in richly carved limestone. As the property is situated on a corner lot, the east and south elevations along Blaisdell Avenue and West 22nd Street are both considered primary facades (Figures.3, 4 and 6).

The east elevation has a stepped façade, with the entrance portico set back furthest from the street. At the first story, the façade features arched windows with limestone trim capped by a rosette flanked torch finial and engaged limestone balusters beneath the sill; the second story windows are rectangular double hung sash with limestone trim (Figures 3 and 4).

The entrance portico wraps around the north and east facades at the northeast corner (Figures 3, 4 and 5). The portico has arched openings framed by engaged limestone arches that are decorated with relief patterns of vases, flowers, and torches; the openings are flanked by engaged decorative limestone arches that are designed to recall an arcade (Figure 4). Each arched opening features a glass fan window at the arch. The limestone arch trim has been ornately carved with relief patterns of vases, flowers, and rosettes (Figure 4)

¹ "New Private Garages," *The Accessory and Garage Journal* Vol. 3 (June, 1913), 23.

<https://books.google.com/books?id=PR5aAAAAYAAJ&pg=RA7-PA23&lpg=RA7-PA23&dq=john+p+snyder+minneapolis&source=bl&ots=jLIZkkTTc9&sig=ww5UoXzedhOmT5e0R9269Saif3M&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0CCAQ6AEwAigKahUKEwjemsvmqtTIAhUD2mMKHS2zDvQ#v=onepage&q&f=false>

The north elevation features double hung sash framed with limestone trim at the first and second story (Figure 5). Near the west end of this elevation, there is an arched limestone trimmed recessed entrance at the first story and a rectangular entrance porch at the second story. A very large window opening near the west end of the contributing building elevation is original to Ernest Kennedy's design (Figure 15).

The west elevation is comprised of the non-contributing nursing home addition (constructed 1962). The addition replaced the property's original two story detached garage. The addition is the same height as the original mansion, but, through the use of a similar buff brick and its location at the rear of the property, recedes in importance (Figures 5 and 6).

The south elevation, which is the primary façade along West 22nd Street, has arched windows featuring the decorative limestone trim at the first story and rectangular double hung sash with limestone trim at the second story. The façade features the ornately designed loggia, which has a pair of French doors capped by a fanlight in each arch to make the porch suitable for year-round use; limestone balustrades at each entrance have been removed. The loggia is clad in limestone carved with relief patterns of vases, flowers, torches, rosettes, and an egg and dart pattern (Figure 8).

Description of secondary structure(s)

The west elevation is comprised of the non-historic nursing home addition (constructed 1962). The addition replaced the property's original two story garage. The addition is the same height as the original mansion, but, through the use of a similar buff brick and its location at the rear of the property, recedes in importance (Figures 5 and 6).

Description of interior features

The interior of the mansion retains a remarkable amount of integrity, particularly in the public spaces on the first floor. The central hall, marble double staircase, living room, dining room, library, and loggia retain historic marble and wood floors, paneling, and molding, plaster walls and ornamented plaster ceilings, and historic wood and marble fireplaces.

The first floor is dominated by an elegant marble central hall that features a dramatic marble double staircase and marble floors (Figure 11-14). The staircase has ornately carved marble railings and is situated under a barreled coffered ceiling featuring stained glass panels. The railings and carved panels extend to the second floor, where they form a balcony that overlooks the central hall (Figures 11-14)

The hall connects to the loggia to the south and the library to the north (Figure 17). These rooms feature rich wood paneling and window trim. The library has wood floors and a plaster ceiling punctuated by wood beams (Figure 16). It also contains a wood and marble clad fireplace and built-in cabinetry. The loggia has herringbone wood floors and French doors with arched transom windows (Figure 17, 18, and 20).

The herringbone wood floors continue into the living room, which looks out the east windows to the street. The living room walls are clad in wood paneling (Figures 18 and 20). The ceiling is gorgeously detailed with historic decorative plaster (Figure 19). A wood and marble fireplace is situated on the east wall (Figure 20). The fireplace surround is richly carved with flowers and an egg and dart pattern along the mantel.

The formal dining room is on the west end of the first floor. The walls are clad in the original Honduran mahogany panels. The herringbone floors continue through the dining room; the ceiling features mahogany crown molding and a decorative plaster ceiling (Figure 21). The marble fireplace is framed by a carved mahogany surround.

Adjacent to the dining room is the butler's pantry. The pantry retains its original cabinetry, but the original flooring has been covered with non-historic pink carpeting.

Service stairs lead to the second floor. The private spaces of the house, including bedrooms and closets, have undergone cosmetic alterations. The historic floors have been covered with pink carpeting, and non-historic wallpaper has been used in the halls, bathrooms, and bedrooms. The bedrooms retain their original built-in cabinetry and the bathrooms retain their historic fixtures.

The attic space is largely unaltered and retains its large open volume and historic wood floors. The modernized HVAC system runs through the attic and required the removal of one of the original stained glass skylights. The original window is stored onsite in the attic.

The basement ballroom has also undergone some modifications including the removal of the tiled ceiling and the addition of a dropped ceiling. However, the original stage, located along the south building wall, is still intact and the original volume of the space can be easily identified. The removal of non-historic materials may allow the space to be restored to its historic appearance. The billiard room comprises the north end of the basement, behind the marble staircases. The billiard room retains its historic wood paneling and fireplace, but has been cosmetically altered by the installation of plush pink carpeting and non-historic wallpaper (Figures 25 and 26).

The first floor public spaces, including the large central hall, the dining room, the living room, the library, and the loggia, and the basement-level billiard room look much as they did when Kennedy designed them. Non-historic wood window panels and carved wood doors have been installed, but they are easily removed. A few rooms feature non-historic wall paper, carpeting and light fixtures, but these changes are also easily reversible.

Description of landscape and landscape features

Topography, terrain, and vegetation

The house is situated on a large corner lot with a setback that is consistent with other early twentieth century mansions in the surrounding neighborhood. The lot is flat and is bordered by a public sidewalk on the east and north sides. A concrete walkway, which rises five steps from the street, connects the public sidewalk to the mansion's primary entrance.

A large asphalt parking lot covers the north side of the property, extending from the house to the end of the property. The parking lot is located on what was historically a separate parcel (2114 Blaisdell) that housed a neighboring home that was demolished in 1969. The property at 2114 Blaisdell was demolished by the Northwestern Baptist Church who owned the nursing home at 2118 Blaisdell (see historic image on cover sheet). Following the demolition the parcel at 2114 Blaisdell was combined with the property at 2118 Blaisdell.

Vegetation

In addition to the flat green lawn, the site contains landscape elements that have been added by the current owner, including evergreen and flowering shrubs along the foundation of the house and historic retaining wall, evergreen trees at the primary entrance, flowering shrubs and trees at the walk leading to the front door, and rose bushes and daylilies along the fence.

Other landscape features

A limestone retaining wall fronts Blaisdell Avenue and West 22nd Street. This wall dates to the construction of the mansion and should be considered an architectural feature of the house rather than a separate landscape feature. A non-historic black wrought iron fence encloses the western and northern edges of the parcel. An asphalt parking lot covers the northern half of the property, which was the site of the former home at 2114 Blaisdell Avenue.

PART 2: HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

The John P. and Nelle Snyder Mansion, located at 2118 Blaisdell Avenue in Minneapolis, is historically significant under Criterion #1 for its association with the development of Blaisdell Avenue and under Criterion #3 for its association with the distinctive elements of the identity of Blaisdell Avenue. Finally, it is historically significant under Criterion #6 for its association with Minneapolis master architect Ernest Kennedy.

John P. and Nelle Snyder

John Pillsbury Snyder was born in 1888 in Minneapolis, Minnesota to Susan Mary Pillsbury and Fred Beal Snyder. Susan Pillsbury was the daughter of Governor John S. Pillsbury; her husband, Fred Snyder, was an attorney (in the firm of Snyder, Gale, and Richards) and the long-time chair of the Board of Regents of the University of Minnesota.²

Nelle Stevenson Snyder was born in Wisconsin in 1889 to Cora Vincent and Thomas W. Stevenson, a wholesale clothier, and was raised in Minneapolis at 2620 Portland Avenue.³ Nelle and John were married at the Stevenson's home on January 22, 1912. The Snyder's took an extensive European honeymoon and, on the last leg of their journey, boarded a first class stateroom (Cabin B-45) on the ill-fated Titanic. On April 15, 1912, when the ship began to sink, the Snyders were able to board a lifeboat and were later rescued, making them the only couple from Minnesota to survive the disaster. Their harrowing journey on the Titanic kept the Snyders in the public eye for the remainder of their lives. Two weeks after the disaster, on April 26, 1912, John Snyder spoke to a crowd of nearly 1,000 people at the Minneapolis Commercial Club.⁴ He spoke of their rescue again at the Men's Club of the First Congregational Church in May of 1912.⁵ The Snyder's were featured extensively in newspaper coverage of the Titanic for more than eighty years. They were repeatedly interviewed at the time of the tragedy and have been the subject of newspaper and journal articles written in the late 1990s and early 2000s—many years after both John and Nelle had passed away.

John Snyder was considered “mechanically gifted,” which served him well in his capacity as the owner of an automotive garage at 407 S. Tenth Street in Minneapolis; he owned the business, called Snyder Automotive Company, from 1911 until 1955,

² Lori Sturdevant and George Pillsbury, *The Pillsburys of Minnesota* (Minneapolis: Nidin Press, 2011); Alma O. Scott and Penelope Krosch, “Finding Aid: Fred Beal Snyder Papers, 1912-1950,” <http://special.lib.umn.edu/findaid/xml/uarc00978.xml>

³ “Titanic Passengers Reach Minneapolis,” *The Minneapolis Morning Tribune* (April 22, 1912), 1.

⁴ Christopher G. Welter, “Voices Cast Upon the Sea: Minnesota’s Titanic Passengers,” *Minnesota History* (Fall 2007), 252.

⁵ “Pastor and People,” *The Minneapolis Morning Tribune*, May 4, 1912, 12.

when he sold the garage to the Curtis Hotel.⁶ Committed to public service, Snyder served in the military (the Fourth Minnesota) and, in 1917, was promoted to Major and served as the Army's Chief Draft Aide for Minnesota. In 1926, John Snyder continued his family's long-standing political service and ran for the Minnesota House of Representatives (Historic Photo H.11). He served one term in the House and sat on the civil administration, motor vehicles and motor tax laws, reapportionment, reforestation, taxes and tax laws, and workmen's compensation committees.⁷ Upon completion of his term in the House, Snyder continued to operate his automotive business while also serving on the Board of Directors for several mining corporations, was a Vice President of Millers and Traders State Bank, and sat on the Board of the Great Northern Insurance Company.⁸

Nelle Snyder was active in many philanthropic causes, sitting the boards of charities, raising funds for local theater performances, and serving as a patron of military fundraising efforts as a result of her husband's service in World War I.⁹ She also served as a charter member of the Board of Northwestern Hospital.¹⁰

The mansion at 2118 Blaisdell Avenue was a wedding gift for John and Nelle from John's father, Fred B. Snyder. The home, which the elder Mr. Snyder told his daughter-in-law would be "the finest home in all of Minneapolis," was the site of many social engagements hosted by the Snyders. The society pages of Minneapolis newspapers frequently covered teas, luncheons, and dinner parties hosted at 2118 Blaisdell Avenue.¹¹

The Snyders raised three children—John P. Snyder, Jr., Thomas Stevenson Snyder, and Susan Pillsbury Snyder—in the Blaisdell Avenue house, which they lived in until the late 1940s, when they relocated to their summer home on Lake Minnetonka.

Blaisdell Avenue

⁶ Sandy Donovan, "Titanic Survivors: Local Man, Saved From Disaster, Serves Term in House," *Session Weekly*, April 3, 1998, 15, Vertical File: John Pillsbury Snyder, Hennepin County Library Special Collections; George Grimm, "I Like it Here," *Minneapolis Tribune*, January 6, 1955, Vertical File: John Pillsbury Snyder, Hennepin County Library Special Collections.

⁷ Sturdevant and Pillsbury, *The Pillsburys of Minnesota*, 203.

⁸⁸ "John Pillsbury Snyder Dies While Playing Golf," *Minneapolis Star*, July 23, 1959, 4A. Vertical File: John Pillsbury Snyder, Hennepin County Library Special Collections.

⁹ "Tableaux Depict Life in Orient at Society Benefit for Colleges," *Minneapolis Morning Tribune*, December 12, 1922, 12; "Prominent Minneapolis People to be Patrons at Aviation Ball," *The Minneapolis Sunday Tribune*, October 15, 1922, 2.

¹⁰ Nelle P. Snyder, *Lake Minnetonka Sun*, December 14, 1983, 13, Vertical File: John Pillsbury Snyder, Hennepin County Library Special Collections.

¹¹ "Society—Society's Summer Portals Open to Many Festivities," *The Minneapolis Sunday Tribune*, July 18, 1915; "Society," *The Minneapolis Morning Tribune*, November 14, 191.

The Snyder's home on Blaisdell Avenue was located in a neighborhood that rose to fashionable prominence in the early decades of the twentieth century. The transition of what is now known as the Whittier Neighborhood from an agricultural area to a residential enclave began in 1858, when Dorilus Morrison built his Italianate mansion, Villa Rosa.¹²

In the opening decades of the twentieth century, many of Minneapolis' wealthy families began to construct large elegant homes along Pillsbury, Blaisdell and Stevens Avenues (Maps 1 and 2). Blaisdell Avenue, between Franklin Avenue West and West 24th Street, was home to many prominent young families, including the Snyders, G. Nelson and Grace Dayton (2100 Blaisdell Avenue, demolished), N.M. Leighton (2114 Blaisdell Avenue, demolished 1969), the Franklin Bovey family (2322 Blaisdell Avenue, extant), Louis Blodgett Newel (2006 Blaisdell Avenue, demolished), and Dr. Arthur Benjamin (2222 Blaisdell Avenue, demolished 1965).

These families commissioned well-known architects and builders—including Ernest Kennedy, T.P. Healy, and William Channing Whitney—to design houses in popular revival styles. According to architectural historian Roger G. Kennedy, at the turn of the twentieth century, a wealthy second generation of Minnesota leaders built houses that were influenced by East Coast arbiters of tastes, people with names like Morgan and Vanderbilt, in classical styles that were popularized by the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris.¹³ Houses on Blaisdell Avenue were constructed in Renaissance Revival, Georgian Revival, and Beaux Arts styles.

The Snyder's Ernest Kennedy–designed Renaissance Revival style house was a showplace, with six fireplaces, flame-grained walnut ceilings, a Honduran mahogany-paneled dining room, a lower-level ballroom with a stage, a lower-level billiard room, a large living room and loggia featuring quarter-sawn herringbone patterned floors, a butler's pantry, bed chambers featuring built-in cabinetry, and elaborate decorative plaster ceilings, marble floors, and a central double staircase of carved marble situated under a barreled coffered ceiling featuring stained glass panels.

Building trends in the neighborhood began to shift in the mid-twentieth century. Many of the larger mansions and homes were converted to rooming houses and, between 1956 and 1969, the following large single family homes on this section of Blaisdell Avenue were demolished to make way for multi-unit apartment complexes and commercial buildings (Maps 1-3):

¹² Marjorie Pearson, Penny Petersen, and Charlene Roise, "The Evolution of the Whittier Neighborhood," 2009.

¹³ Roger G. Kennedy, *Historic Homes of Minnesota* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2006), 165.

- 2321 Blaisdell Avenue, demolished 1956
- 2310-2314 Blaisdell Avenue, demolished 1962
- 2215 Blaisdell Avenue, demolished 1963
- 2221 Blaisdell Avenue, demolished 1964
- 2222 Blaisdell Avenue, demolished 1965
- 2020-2022 Blaisdell Avenue, demolished 1968
- 2200-2202 Blaisdell Avenue, demolished, 1968
- 2114 Blaisdell Avenue, demolished 1969

As the appended development maps show, the Snyder Mansion is the only remaining single family house from this era on Blaisdell Avenue between W. Franklin Avenue and West 22nd Street and, as such, is historically significant for its representation of the first phase of residential development on Blaisdell Avenue (Map 4).

Ernest Kennedy

Minneapolis architect Ernest Kennedy was born in Mankato, Minnesota and trained at the University of Minnesota, the Sorbonne in Paris, Berlin Polytechnic, and Munich Polytechnic. Kennedy established his architectural practice in Minneapolis in 1897 and quickly established a reputation for specializing in the design of large mansions for the city's wealthy elite.¹⁴

Kennedy specialized in revival styles—particularly Renaissance Revival, Tudor Revival, and Georgian Revival—and designed homes for the Snyder's family and neighbors, including houses for:

- Alfred Pillsbury 116 E. 22nd Street, extant
- Edward C. Gale 2115 Stevens Avenue S., extant
- The Bovey Family, 2322 Blaisdell Avenue, extant with large addition to rear
- Charles Pillsbury, E. 22nd Street, demolished 1937

Kennedy also designed the University of Minnesota's Shevlin Hall, the Essex Building (10th Street and Nicollet Avenue), and the Lakewood Cemetery administration building (3600 Hennepin Avenue).

Kennedy-designed properties have been locally and nationally designated as part of the Washburn-Fair Oaks Historic District and nationally designated as part of the University of Minnesota's Old Campus Historic District.

Despite the nursing home addition that was constructed for the Northwestern Baptist Church in 1962, the Snyder mansion retains a significant amount of design integrity at

¹⁴ Alan Lathrop, *Minnesota Architects: A Biographical Dictionary* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010) 126.

the exterior and in the first floor public spaces. The nursing home addition is located at the rear of the property and reads as a secondary structure, while the three primary facades (as the house is situated on a corner lot) and the public spaces continue to reflect Kennedy's design intent, as represented in the original architectural drawings for the house, making the Snyder Mansion a significantly intact example of master architect Ernest Kennedy's work.

PART 3: RATIONALE FOR LOCAL HISTORIC DESIGNATION

Local historic designation is an official action that promotes the preservation of historic resources by recognizing specific people, places, and events that are deemed to be significant in relation to the history and heritage of Minneapolis. Through the requirements set out in the Heritage Preservation chapter of the City's Code of Ordinances, the act of designation establishes a series of protections that are administered through the ordinance to ensure protection of significant places throughout the city against demolition or in appropriate alterations.

Designation Criteria

Title 23, Chapter 599.210 of Minneapolis Code of Ordinances list seven criteria which shall be considered in determining whether a property is worthy of local designation as a landmark because of its historical, cultural, architectural, archaeological or engineering significance. The John P. and Nelle Snyder Mansion is considered below in relation to each of the seven designation criteria.

Criteria #1: The property is associated with significant events or with periods that exemplify broad patterns of cultural, political, economic, or social history.

In the early decades of the twentieth century, Blaisdell Avenue between Franklin Avenue West and West 24th Street was home to many young, prominent Minneapolis families. These families built large architect-designed mansions in revival styles. During the mid to late twentieth century, many of the mansions were demolished and replaced with multi-family apartment units, new commercial buildings, or parking lots. The houses that remained, including the Snyder house, were adapted to house commercial and non-profit entities.

Criteria #2: The property is associated with the lives of significant persons or groups.

The John P. and Nelle Snyder house is not significant for its association with John and Nelle Snyder. The Snyder's survived the Titanic disaster and were active in philanthropic causes, and John served as a member of the Minnesota House of Representatives, however these accomplishments and contributions do not rise to significant enough contributions to merit designation under this criteria.

Criteria #3: The property contains or is associated with distinctive elements of city or neighborhood identity.

In the early decades of the twentieth century, Blaisdell Avenue between Franklin Avenue West and West 24th Street was home to many young, prominent Minneapolis families. These families built large architect-designed mansions in revival styles.

During the mid to late twentieth century, many of the mansions were demolished and replaced with multi-family apartment units, new commercial buildings, or parking lots. The houses that remained, including the Snyder house, were adapted to house commercial and non-profit entities. The Snyder house is the only single-family property that remains on the stretch of Blaisdell between Franklin Avenue and West 22nd Street.

Criteria #4: The property embodies the distinctive characteristics of an architectural or engineering type or style, or method of construction.

While the John P. and Nelle Snyder house is an attractive example of the Renaissance Revival style, the large nursing home addition that was added to the rear of the property in the 1960s undermines the houses integrity with regard to Criterion 4.

Criteria #5: The property exemplifies a landscape design or development pattern distinguished by innovation, rarity, uniqueness or quality of design or detail.

The property is not significant under Criterion 5. Most of the landscape design dates to 2014.

Criteria #6: The property exemplifies works of master builders, engineers, designers, artists, craftsmen or architects.

The John P. and Nelle Snyder house was designed by Minneapolis master architect Ernest Kennedy. Many Kennedy-designed properties are locally and nationally designated as historic. In the early decades of the twentieth century, while Kennedy was designing homes for the Minneapolis elite, he designed houses in revival styles with highly finished interiors. Mahogany and walnut paneling lined libraries, living rooms, dining rooms and central halls in the Pillsbury, Gale, Snyder, and Walker homes. Wood herringbone floors and wood and marble fireplace mantels and surrounds and were also common design features. Many of the homes included skylights and enclosed porches. Libraries and billiard rooms were also typical in these homes.

Kennedy designed elaborate plaster ceilings for many of his homes including the Gale and Pillsbury mansions. The molded plaster ceilings in the Snyder mansion are much more delicate and restrained than the ceilings in the Gale and Crosby mansions (see photo of the Gale mansion).

The Snyder mansion stands out for its unique central double staircase and its comparatively open main floor plan. Visitors to the Snyder's home enter into the main central hall and have nearly immediate access to the loggia, living room, and dining room. Unlike other works of Kennedy the visitor to Snyder Mansion is not funneled through a vestibule, a hall, a reception room, a parlor, a music room, etc. before gaining entry to the living and dining rooms. This sets the Snyder mansion apart from the Gale, Pillsbury, and Walker homes (and many other mansions from the same period). Even the balcony that wraps around the second floor and overlooks the hall suggests a level of access to intimate spaces that is not typical of the period.

The Snyder mansion's first floor public spaces—including the Honduran mahogany-paneled dining room, the loggia, the living room, the library, basement billiard rooms and the central double staircase of carved marble situated under a barreled coffered ceiling featuring stained glass panels—retain a high level of integrity and exemplify the work of Kennedy.

The exterior of the mansion also retains a high degree of integrity when compared to Kennedy's original elevation drawings and despite the addition exemplifies Kennedy's work.

Criteria #7: The property has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

The property is not a significant archaeological resource.

Integrity of historic resource

The following is an assessment of the John P. and Nelle Snyder Mansion as relates to the seven aspects of integrity as defined by the Department of the Interior:

Location

The building has not been moved from its original site of 2118 Blaisdell Avenue South and therefore retains integrity of location.

Design

The exterior of the mansion closely resembles Ernest Kennedy's original architectural drawings and retains its rich decorative carved limestone details—including arched window trim, decorative engaged limestone balusters, the ornately carved entrance portico, and the arched limestone loggia. While a large secondary addition was added in the 1960s, it is at the rear of the property and reads as a secondary structure. The integrity of design for the site is also diminished by the existing parking lot abutting the original building. The parking lot along with the non-contributing fence and landscaping that surrounds it suggests a stronger northern orientation of the building than the design of the building intended. Despite this, the exterior of the mansion retains excellent integrity of design and conveys its significance.

The interior of the mansion has undergone alteration in the basement ballroom, the first floor service spaces, and in some of the second floor bedrooms. The basement ballroom features a dropped ceiling (original tile ceiling has been removed), the second floor bedrooms feature non-historic carpeting and wall coverings. These changes are likely easily reversible.

The first floor public spaces, including the large central hall, the dining room, the living room, the library, and the loggia look much as they did when Kennedy designed them. Non-historic wood window panels and carved wood doors have been installed, but they are easily removed. A few rooms feature non-historic wall paper and non-historic light fixtures, but these changes are also easily reversible. Therefore, the interior of the mansion retains a high degree of integrity of design.

Setting

The neighborhood surrounding the Snyder Mansion has changed significantly since 1913. In the 1960s, the majority of the large, elegant single-family homes that comprised the neighborhood were demolished and replaced with multi-unit apartment buildings. The property's fenced in parking lot, formerly a different property containing house located at 2114 Blaisdell, impacts the integrity of setting associated with the original design of Kennedy through altering the perceived orientation of the property.

However, the property is also significant for being an extant example of the mansion development in this area of the City and the Whittier neighborhood. As such the changes in setting do help convey this significance.

Materials

The Snyder Mansion has a very high degree of integrity of materials as it retains its masonry and limestone exterior, marble floors, quarter-sawn herringbone patterned wood floors, decorative plaster ceilings, flame-grained walnut ceilings, a Honduran mahogany-paneled dining room, its elegant central double staircase of carved marble situated under a barreled coffered ceiling featuring stained glass panels.

Workmanship

The Snyder Mansion also has a very high degree of integrity of workmanship, which is evident through the richly carved limestone details, the quarter-sawn herringbone patterned wood floors, the built-in cabinetry, the decorative plaster ceilings, the flame-grained walnut ceilings, the Honduran mahogany paneling, the carved marble staircase, and the stained glass skylight.

Feeling

The Snyder Mansion is a highly intact example of an early twentieth mansion on Blaisdell Avenue and retains a high degree of integrity of feeling.

Association

The Snyder Mansion continues to be associated with John and Nelle Snyder, with architect Ernest Kennedy, and with early phases of residential development on Blaisdell Avenue and retains a very high degree of integrity of association.

Other Considerations:

Minneapolis Historic Contexts

“The Evolution of the Whittie Neighborhood” a historic context study of the neighborhood was completed in 2009 by Hess, Roise and Company for The Whittier Alliance. The context study identifies the John P. Snyder Mansion as part of a second wave of single family residential development that occurred between 1900 and 1920 that occurred along Pillsbury, Stevens and Blaisdell Avenues. The earlier phase of development was primarily east of Nicollet Avenue and occurred between 1880 and 2000.

Relationship to the 1990 Minneapolis Preservation Plan

Pertinent themes from the “Preservation Plan for the City of Minneapolis” include Architecture: 1848 to Present and Residential Development, 1847 to Present.

Relationship to the body of locally-designated properties in Minneapolis

The City of Minneapolis designates properties that represent and reflect elements of the city’s culture, social, economic, religious, political, architectural, or aesthetic history as local heritage landmarks. As of January 2015, over 150 individual properties have been designated as landmarks in the City of Minneapolis.

Two Kennedy designed homes are included in the Washburn Fair Oaks Historic District. These are the Gale Mansion at 2115 Stevens Ave S and the Alfred Pillsbury Mansion at 116 East 22nd Street.

Comprehensive and Long-Range Planning

Title 23, Chapter 599.260 of Minneapolis Code of Ordinances requires the planning director to submit all proposed designations to the Minneapolis City Planning Commission for review and comment on the proposed designation. 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.

The relationship of the proposed designation to the city’s comprehensive plan:

The designation of the subject property meets relevant policies of the Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth.

Policy 3.7 states, “Maintain the quality, safety and unique character of the city’s housing stock.” The subject property serves as an enduring example of Minneapolis’ safe and unique housing: and an example that has thrived for over a century.

Policy 8.1 states, “Preserve, maintain, and designate districts, landmarks, and historic resources which serve as reminders of the city’s architecture history, and culture.” Implementation step 8.1.1 continues, “Protect historic resources from modifications that are not sensitive to their historic significance.” Designating the John P Syder Mansion as a historic landmark would directly meet the intent and goal of Policy 8.1. The protections placed on the property as a result of designation would serve to meet policy objective 8.1.1.

The effect of the proposed designation on the surrounding area:

The designation of the Snyder Mansion will help keep intact the only remaining mansion on this block of Blasidell Avenue.

The consistency of the proposed designation with applicable development plans or development objectives adopted by the City Council:

There are no adopted small area plans for the area where the property is located.

National Register Status

The property is not currently listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

Proposed Period of Significance

The proposed Period of Significance for the John P. and Nelle Snyder Mansion is 1913-1962, which reflects the time period that the Snyder's owned the property.

PART 4: REGISTRATION AND CLASSIFICATION INFORMATION

NAME OF PROPERTY	
Historic Name	John P. and Nelle Snyder Mansion
Current Name	NuWay House
Other Names Used	
LOCATION OF PROPERTY	
Street and Number	2118 Blaisdell Avenue
Is building located on its original site?	Yes
Date if moved	
OWNERSHIP OF PROPERTY	
Owner's Name	NuWay House, Inc.
Owner's Address	2217 Nicollet Avenue South, Minneapolis
CLASSIFICATION	
Ownership of Property	Private
Category of property	Commercial
Number of contributing resources within property	<i>Buildings:</i> 1, with a non-contributing three-story addition <i>Structures:</i> <i>Sites:</i> <i>Objects:</i>
Number of non-contributing resources within property	<i>Buildings:</i> non-contributing three-story addition <i>Structures:</i> <i>Sites:</i> <i>Objects:</i>
Interior features/spaces contributing to property's significance	First floor public spaces as listed below: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central Hall • Dining Room • Living Room • Library • Loggia Basement public space as listed below: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Billiards Room

	Contributing features of the above listed interior spaces include decorative stone, wood and plaster work that adorns the ceilings, walls and staircase. It does not include non-original features such as carpet (billiards room), wallpaper and painted surfaces, mechanical or light fixtures.
Listed on the National Register of Historic Places?	No
Date of NRHP listing?	N/A
USE AND FUNCTION	
Historic Use	Private Residence
Current Use	Office
DESCRIPTION	
Architectural classification/style	Renaissance Revival
Materials	Brick, Limestone, asphalt shingles, Wood
STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE	
Applicable local designation criteria	1,2,3,6
Related local context (s)	Whittier
Significant dates	1913
Period (s) of significance	1913-1962
Cultural affiliation	n/a
Names of master builders, engineers, designers, artists, craftsmen, and/or architects	Ernest Kennedy
GEOGRAPHICAL DATA	
Size of parcel	29,744 square feet
PIN number	34-029-24-0048
Legal Description	T Blaisdells Revised Addition to Minneapolis, Block 002, Lots 10 11 and 12 and the S 35 42/100 ft. of Lot 9

PART 5: PHOTOGRAPHS, DRAWINGS AND OTHER DOCUMENTS

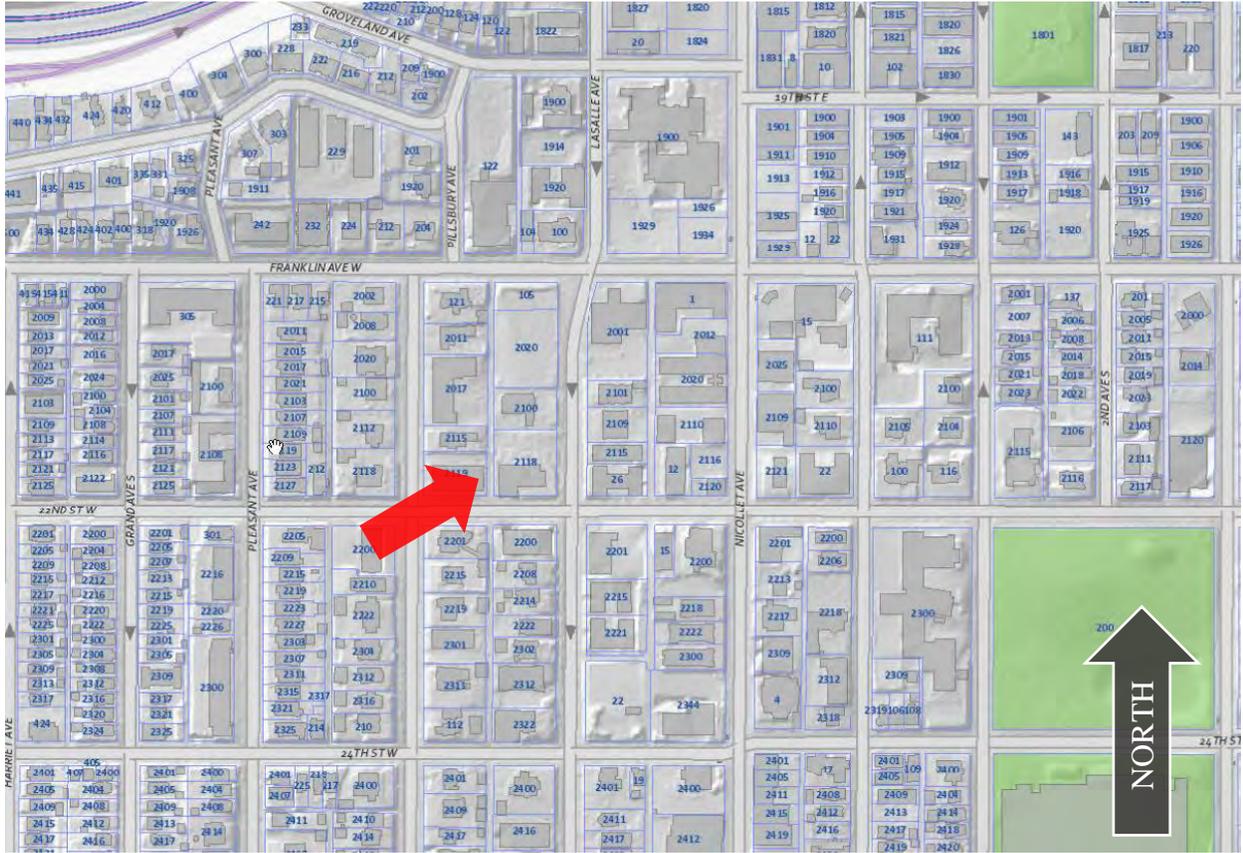


Figure 1: Map



Figure 2: Aerial Photo of 2118 Blaisdell. Photo source: Hennepin County Pictometry 2015



Figure 3: John and Nelle Snyder House. Photo source: Preservation Design Works, September 2015.



Figure 4: Primary Entrance, East Elevation. Photo source: Preservation Design Works, September 2015.



Figure 5: North Elevation. Photo source: Preservation Design Works, September 2015.



Figure 6: South Elevation. Photo source: Preservation Design Works, September 2015.



Figure 7: Loggia, North Elevation. Photo source: Preservation Design Works, September 2015.



Figure 8: Loggia, window details. Photo source: Preservation Design Works, September 2015



Figure 9: Window details, South Elevation. Photo source: Preservation Design Works, September 2015.



Figure 10: Nursing Home addition, West Elevation. Photo source: Preservation Design Works, September 2015.



Figure 11: John P. Snyder House, Hall ceiling and stained glass skylights. Photo source: Preservation Design Works, September 2015.



Figure 12: John P. Snyder House, Hall double staircase. Photo source: Preservation Design Works, September 2015.



Figure 13: John P. Snyder House, Hall staircase and landing. Photo source: Preservation Design Works, September 2015.



Figure 14: John P. Snyder House, Hall staircase. Photo source: Preservation Design Works, September 2015.



Figure 15: John P. Snyder House, Hall staircase detail. Photo source: Preservation Design Works, September 2015.



Figure 16: John P. Snyder House, Library fireplace. Photo source: Preservation Design Works, September 2015.



Figure 17: John P. Snyder House, Loggia windows. Photo source: Preservation Design Works, September 2015.



Figure 18: John P. Snyder House, Living Room. Photo source: Preservation Design Works, September 2015.



Figure 19: John P. Snyder House, Living Room ceiling detail. Photo source: Preservation Design Works, September 2015.



Figure 20: John P. Snyder House, Living Room fireplace. Photo source: Preservation Design Works, September 2015.



Figure 21: John P. Snyder House, Living Room ceiling detail. Photo source: Preservation Design Works, September 2015.



Figure 22: John P. Snyder House, Dining Room fireplace. Photo source: Preservation Design Works, September 2015.



Figure 23: John P. Snyder House, Ballroom looking into Billiard Room. Photo source: Preservation Design Works, September 2015.



Figure 24: John P. Snyder House, Ballroom fireplace. Photo source: Preservation Design Works, September 2015.



Figure 25: John P. Snyder House, Billiard Room. Photo source: Preservation Design Works, September 2015.



Figure 26: John P. Snyder House, Billiard Room paneling. Photo source: Preservation Design Works, September 2015.



Figure 27: John P. Snyder House, c. 1965. Photo source: Minnesota Historical Society.



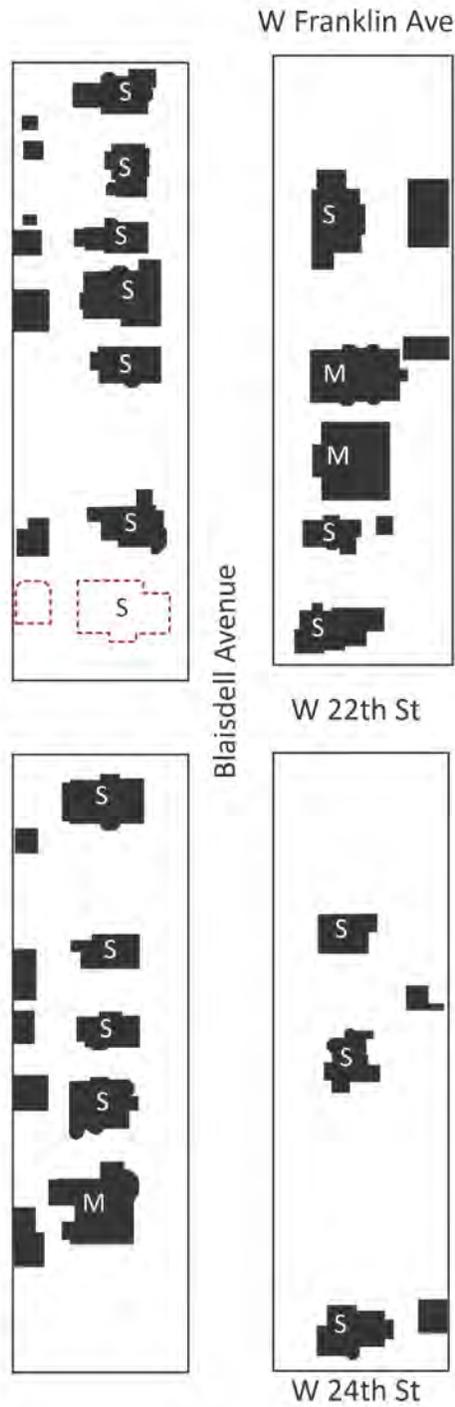
Figure 28: Mrs. Snyder. Photo source: Minneapolis Central Library, Special Collections, M2810H.



Figure 29: John P. Snyder. Photo source: Minneapolis Central Library, Special Collections, M2810I.

Map 1: Development of 2100-2400 Blocks of Blaisdell Avenue in Minneapolis, 1912
 Produced by Preservation Design Works based on historical Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps and aerial photography

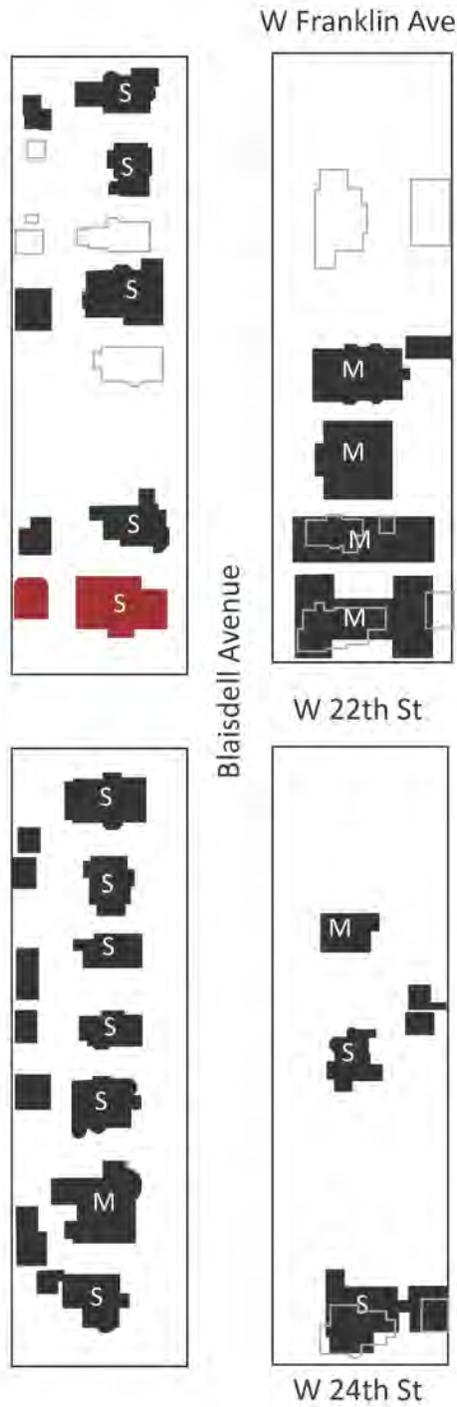
- KEY
- S - single-unit residence
 - M - multi-unit residence
 - B - business
 -  demolished
 -  existing building
 -  subject property



Map 2: Development of 2100-2400 Blocks of Blaisdell Avenue in Minneapolis, 1952
 Produced by Preservation Design Works based on historical Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps and aerial photography

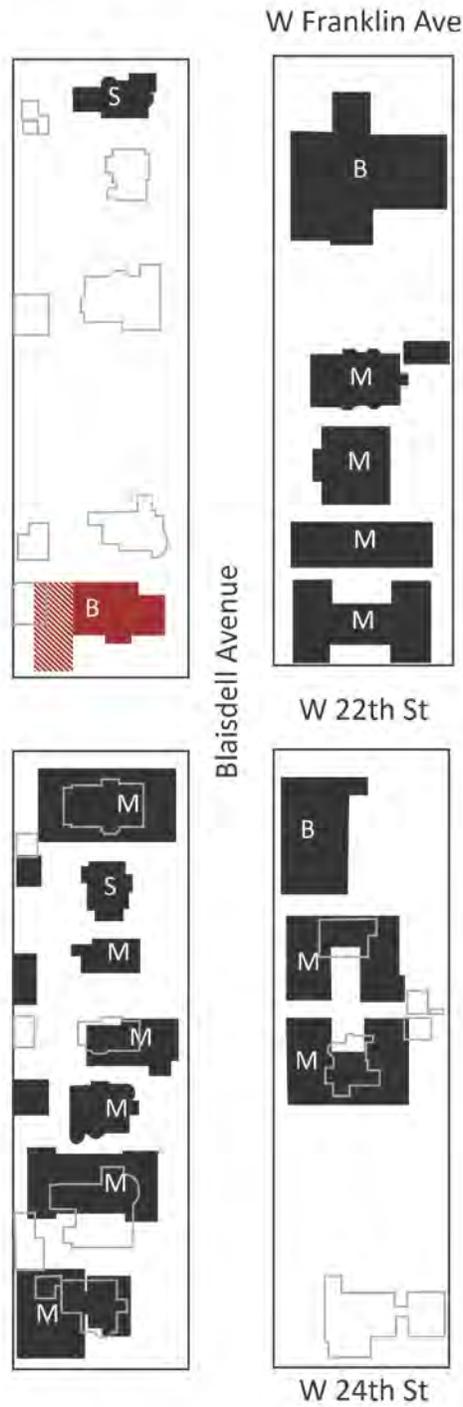
KEY

- S - single-unit residence
- M - multi-unit residence
- B - business
-  demolished
-  existing building
-  subject property



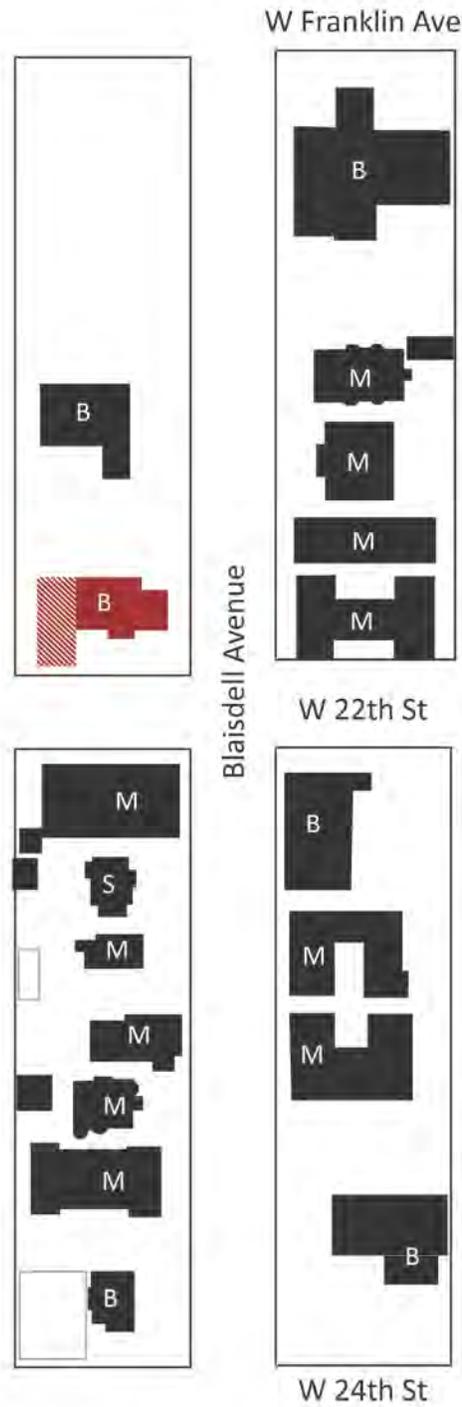
Map 3: Development of 2100-2400 Blocks of Blaisdell Avenue in Minneapolis, 1974
 Produced by Preservation Design Works based on historical Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps and aerial photography

- KEY**
 S - single-unit residence
 M - multi-unit residence
 B - business
 [white outline] demolished
 [black fill] existing building
 [red fill] subject property



Map 4: Development of 2100-2400 Blocks of Blaisdell Avenue in Minneapolis, 2015
 Produced by Preservation Design Works based on historical Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps and aerial photography

- KEY**
 S - single-unit residence
 M - multi-unit residence
 B - business
 [white box] demolished
 [black box] existing building
 [red box] subject property



PART 6: SOURCES AND REFERENCES

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