Department of Community Planning & Economic Development
250 South 4th Street, Room 300
Minneapolis, MN 55415-1385

MEMORANDUM

TO: City Planning Commission, Committee of the Whole

FROM: Lisa Steiner, Senior City Planner, (612) 673-3950

DATE: June 30, 2016

SUBJECT: Review and Comment on the Arthur and Edith Lee House Designation Study – 4600 Columbus Avenue South

DESIGNATION STUDY REVIEW AND COMMENT

Chapter 599 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 draft designation study has been submitted to the Minnesota SHPO and comments are expected to be received prior to the Committee of the Whole meeting. Enclosed is a copy of the draft designation study for your review and comment.

Section 599.260 of the Heritage Preservation Regulations 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 those three factors:

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

The future land use of the property is identified as Urban Neighborhood in the *Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth*. The property is one block west of a designated Community Corridor, Chicago Avenue. A Neighborhood Commercial Node exists around the intersection of the East 48th Street and Chicago Avenue. The designation of the Arthur and Edith Lee House will implement the following policies of the comprehensive plan:

Heritage Preservation Policy 8.1: Preserve, maintain, and designate districts, landmarks, and historic resources which serve as reminders of the city's architecture, history, and culture.

8.1.1 Protect historic resources from modifications that are not sensitive to their historic significance.

8.1.4 Designate resources recommended for designation from historic surveys and listed on the National Register of Historic Places which have no local protection.

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

The designation of the Arthur and Edith Lee House is not anticipated to impact the surrounding area. The property's designation may bring more attention to the events of 1931 that occurred at the home.

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

No specific small area plans or other applicable development objectives have been adopted by the City Council for this area.

DESIGNATION STUDY

ARTHUR AND EDITH LEE HOUSE

4600 COLUMBUS AVENUE SOUTH MINNEAPOLIS

DRAFT: APRIL 21, 2016

Minneapolis
City of Lakes

MINNEAPOLIS HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF MINNEAPOLIS

Betsy Hodges, Mayor

Barbara Johnson, Council President

Elizabeth Glidden, Council Vice President

Lisa Bender

Alondra Cano

Jacob Frey

Lisa Goodman

Cam Gordon

Andrew Johnson

John Quincy

Linea Palmisano

Kevin Reich

Abdi Warsame

Blong Yang

MINNEAPOLIS HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Laura Faucher, Chair

Paul Bengtson

Chris Hartnett

Susan Hunter Weir

Ginny Lackovic

Linda Mack

Dan Olson

Ian Stade

Constance Vork

MINNEAPOLIS CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

Matthew Brown, President

Council Member Lisa Bender

Rebecca Gagnon

Ryan Kronzer

Alissa Luepke-Pier

Nick Magrino

Sam Rockwell

John Slack

Amy Sweasy

Scott Vreeland

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (CPED)

Craig Taylor, CPED Executive Director

Lisa Steiner, Senior City Planner, CPED, Principal Investigator

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....
DESIGNATION STUDY PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND 1
BASIC PROPERTY INFORMATION 1
PART 1: PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPERTY 2
PART 2: DISCUSSION OF HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE 2
PART 3: RATIONALE FOR LOCAL HISTORICAL DESIGNATION 3
PART 4: REGISTRATION AND CLASSIFICATION INFORMATION 6
PART 5: PHOTOGRAPHS, DRAWINGS, AND OTHER DOCUMENTS 8

- Appendix A: National Register of Historic Places Registration Form
- Appendix B: Action initiating nomination
- Appendix C: Nomination staff report
- Appendix D: HPC Actions from Nomination hearing
- Appendix E: Letter to SHPO (forthcoming)
- Appendix F: Letter from SHPO (forthcoming)
- Appendix G: Memorandum to City Planning Commission (forthcoming)
- Appendix H: Staff report to Heritage Preservation Commission (forthcoming)
- Appendix I: HPC Actions from Designation hearing (forthcoming)
- Appendix J: Request for Council Action (forthcoming)
- Appendix K: Zoning and Planning Committee Actions (forthcoming)
- Appendix L: Actions of the Full City Council Published in Finance and Commerce (forthcoming)

The activity that is the subject of this document has been financed in part with Federal funds from the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. However, the contents and opinions do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Department of the Interior, nor does the mention of trade names or commercial products constitute endorsement or recommendation by the Department of the Interior. This program receives Federal financial assistance for identification and protection of historic properties. Under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the U.S. Department of the Interior prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, or disability in its federally assisted programs. If you believe that you have been discriminated against in any program, activity or facility as described above, or if you desire further information, please write to: Office for Equal Opportunity, U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1849 C St, NW, Washington, DC, 20240.

DESIGNATION STUDY PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

In December 2015, Council Member Elizabeth Glidden submitted a nomination application for the Arthur and Edith Lee House located at 4600 Columbus Avenue to the Department of Community Planning and Economic Development (CPED). Upon review, CPED recommended to the Heritage Preservation Commission on January 5, 2016, that the property exhibited at least one of the local designation criteria found in section 599.210 of the Heritage Preservation Regulations. The HPC adopted CPED's findings and placed the property under interim protection and called for a designation study to be conducted. Interim protection for the property is in effect for at least one year, until January 5, 2017, or until the City Council makes a decision regarding the designation of the property.

This study is intended to fulfill the requirements for local designation outlined in Title 23, Chapter 599.230 of the Minneapolis Code of Ordinances. In 2014, the property was listed in the National Register of Historic Places for its association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history. Significant research for this study had been completed for the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form completed by Greg Donofrio and Laurel Fritz, principal investigators for that designation. This local designation is indebted to that significant body of research which has been utilized and applied to the local designation process.

The Arthur and Edith Lee House was identified as a potential historic resource in a 2010 reconnaissance survey of Far South Minneapolis completed by Mead & Hunt. The surveyors noted that the building appeared to possess significance and recommended it for intensive-level research to determine its eligibility for local and/or National Register designation in the area of social history as the site of early twentieth century race riots in south Minneapolis.

BASIC PROPERTY INFORMATION

CURRENT NAME	Lindstrom Residence
HISTORIC NAME	Arthur and Edith Lee House
CURRENT ADDRESS	4600 Columbus Avenue
HISTORIC ADDRESS	4600 Columbus Avenue
ORIGINAL CONSTRUCTION DATE	1923
ORIGINAL CONTRACTOR	J.A. Heinsch
ORIGINAL ARCHITECT, MASTER BUILDER, ENGINEER, DESIGNER, ARTIST, OR CRAFTSMEN	None
HISTORIC USE	Residence
CURRENT USE	Residence
WARD	Ward 8
NEIGHBORHOOD	Field

PART 1: PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPERTY

The physical description of the property is detailed in the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (Appendix A) Narrative Description (page 4-7) and Geographical Data (page 29). While historic features and materials do exist on the interior of this single-family residence, interior spaces are not recommended for protection as part of this local designation.

PART 2: DISCUSSION OF HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

The highly publicized protests at the Arthur and Edith Lee House have been identified as some of the largest racially-motivated demonstrations in Minnesota history. The National Register nomination form succinctly summarizes the significance of the Arthur and Edith Lee House:

> *A series of menacing protests described as "riots" in the newspapers enveloped 4600 Columbus Avenue South following its purchase in June 1931 by Arthur and Edith Lee. The young couple was African-American, and they chose to buy a house in the "Field" neighborhood, part of South Minneapolis that area homeowners considered to be a "white neighborhood." Some members of the community were upset by the presence of a black family in their neighborhood, especially considering that in 1927, the Eugene Field Neighborhood Association had gone so far as to ask homeowners to sign a contract stating that they would only sell their properties to Caucasians. Community members banded together and tried to force the Lees to leave their newly purchased house. Racial taunts and small demonstrations rapidly escalated, culminating in an unruly mob of 4,000 people who packed the lawn and spilled out into the street in front of 4600 Columbus Avenue South on the evening of July 16, 1931. Arthur Lee, a World War One veteran, an NAACP member, and a United States Postal Service worker, was determined to stay; he said he had a "right to establish a home" in the neighborhood of his choosing. Many individuals and organizations came to the family's defense, including, most notably, the local and national chapters of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), and the influential lawyer Lena Olive Smith. Arthur Lee, Edith Lee, and their young daughter Mary remained in the house until fall 1933, when they moved elsewhere in Minneapolis. The Lee protests remain some of the largest and most widely publicized racially-motivated demonstrations in Minnesota's history.*

For a much more detailed analysis of the significance of the Arthur and Edith Lee House, please see additional descriptions in the National Register Registration Form Statement of Significance (Page 9-25). The City of Minneapolis local designation similarly finds the property locally significant as analyzed in that document. The Arthur and Edith Lee House at 4600 Columbus Avenue South is associated with the significant events of these 1931 riots, as well as with broad patterns of social history, particularly in regard to African-American history in Minneapolis, race relations, and historical trends of housing discrimination.

PART 3: RATIONALE FOR LOCAL HISTORICAL 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 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 inappropriate alterations.

DESIGNATION CRITERIA

Title 23, Chapter 599.210 of the Minneapolis Code of Ordinances lists seven criteria which are considered when trying to determine whether a property is worthy of local designation as a landmark because of its particular significance. The Arthur and Edith Lee House is considered below in relation to each of the seven designation criteria:

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

This property is eligible for designation due to its association with the significant events of the protests in 1931. These riots have been identified as some of the largest racially-motivated demonstrations in Minnesota history. The property exemplifies broad patterns of social history, particularly in regard to African-American history in Minneapolis, race relations, and historical trends of housing discrimination.

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

While the assistance and involvement of lawyer and Minneapolis NAACP President Lena Olive Smith significantly impacted the outcome of the riots, the subject property itself is not strongly associated enough with Lena Olive Smith for designation under this criteria. Lena Olive Smith's home at 3905 5th Avenue South was locally designated in 1996 and placed in the National Register in 1991 and represents the importance of Lena Olive Smith to the history of Minneapolis.

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

While the neighborhood's development is important to understanding the context within which the riots occurred, the property itself is not strongly associated with distinctive elements of city or neighborhood identity and therefore is not considered significant under this criterion.

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

The modest single-story home is of a typical vernacular style with some Craftsman details, such as projecting eaves and clipped gables, as well as a front porch with Classical Revival details. However, the property does not embody distinctive architectural characteristics of a particular style and thus is not considered significant under this criterion.

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

The property has the typical landscape design and development pattern of most residential lots in the city, so the property is not considered significant for exemplifying a landscape design or development pattern distinguished by innovation, rarity, uniqueness or quality of design or detail.

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

The home was constructed by J.A. Heinsch and no architect is listed on the original building permit. J.A. Heinsch is not known to be a master builder. Thus, the property is not considered significant for exemplifying the work of master builders, engineers, designers, artists, craftsmen or architects.

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

There is no evidence to suggest that the property may be likely to yield information important in prehistory or history. Therefore, the site is not considered significant under this criterion.

INTEGRITY OF HISTORIC RESOURCE

The property retains integrity, as detailed in the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (Appendix A) Integrity section (page 8). Some materials, such as the exterior siding and windows, are known to be unoriginal, as noted in the National Register form.

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 April 2016, 170 individual properties are designated as landmarks in the City of Minneapolis, including other places important to African-American history in Minneapolis, such as the Lena Olive Smith Home at 3905 5th Avenue South and the Minnesota Spokesman-Recorder building at 3744 4th Avenue South. African-American sites were identified in the Historic Resources Inventory Capstone as a property type that is currently under-represented in the City.

The Arthur and Edith Lee House is unique in the City of Minneapolis and among those properties currently listed as landmarks. As the site of some of the largest racially-motivated demonstrations in Minnesota history, the property exemplifies broad patterns of social history, particularly in regard to African-American history in Minneapolis, race relations, and historical trends of housing discrimination.

There are no currently designated landmarks or historic districts in the Field neighborhood. Designated landmarks in Ward 8 include the Stewart Memorial Presbyterian Church, the Charles Backus House, the Hosmer Library, the Lena Olive Smith House, the Montefiore Cemetery and Chapel, and the Minnesota Spokesman-Recorder Building.

Relationship to the Minneapolis Preservation Plan

The proposed designation helps fulfill the goals outlined in the 1990 *Preservation Plan for the City of Minneapolis* by systematically studying a property for its potential for preservation.

Comprehensive and Long-Range Planning

Title 23, Chapter 599.260 of the 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 future land use of the property is identified as Urban Neighborhood in the *Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth*. The property is one block west of a designated Community Corridor, Chicago Avenue. A Neighborhood Commercial Node exists around the intersection of the East 48th Street and Chicago Avenue. The designation of the Arthur and Edith Lee House will implement the following policies of the comprehensive plan:

Heritage Preservation Policy 8.1: Preserve, maintain, and designate districts, landmarks, and historic resources which serve as reminders of the city's architecture, history, and culture.

8.1.1 Protect historic resources from modifications that are not sensitive to their historic significance.

8.1.4 Designate resources recommended for designation from historic surveys and listed on the National Register of Historic Places which have no local protection.

The Arthur and Edith Lee House was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2014. However, without local designation, the property would not be formally protected from modification or demolition. This property has been recommended for further study and designation by past historic surveys. The designation of this property protects a historic resource which is highly significant to the history of Minneapolis.

THE EFFECT OF THE PROPOSED DESIGNATION ON THE SURROUNDING AREA. The designation of the Arthur and Edith Lee House is not anticipated to impact the surrounding area. The property's designation may bring more attention to the events of 1931 that occurred at the home.

THE CONSISTENCY OF THE PROPOSED DESIGNATION WITH APPLICABLE DEVELOPMENT PLANS OR DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES ADOPTED BY THE CITY COUNCIL. No specific small area plans or other applicable development objectives have been adopted by the city council for this area.

National Register Status

In 2014, the property was listed in the National Register of Historic Places for its association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history, or Criterion A. The property was identified to be significant at the state level in the areas of ethnic heritage/ black and social history.

State Designation

The subject property has not been named a Minnesota State Historic Place, Historic Site, or Historic District.

Period of Significance

The period of significance for the Arthur and Edith Lee House is 1923-1933, from when the house was constructed until the Lee Family moved out of the home. This incorporates the key date of 1931 when the Lee Family moved into the home and the series of riots that occurred.

PART 4: REGISTRATION AND CLASSIFICATION INFORMATION

NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name	Arthur and Edith Lee House
Current Name	Lindstrom Residence
Other Names Used	None

LOCATION OF PROPERTY

Street and Number	4600 Columbus Avenue South
Is building located on its original site?	Yes
Date if moved	N/A

OWNERSHIP OF PROPERTY

Owner's Name	Kathleen McClure
Owner's Address	P.O. Box 10 Mound, MN 55364

CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property	Private
Category of property	Building
Number of contributing resources within property	Buildings: 1 (House) Structures: 0 Sites: 0 Objects: 0
Number of non-contributing resources within property	Buildings: 1 (Garage) Structures: 0 Sites: 0 Objects: 0
Listed in the National Register of Historic Places?	Yes
Date of NRHP listing?	2014

USE AND FUNCTION

Historic Use	Residence
Current Use	Residence

DESCRIPTION

Architectural classification/style	Vernacular
Materials	Steel siding
Foundation	Concrete
Roof	Asphalt
Windows	Vinyl replacements

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Applicable local designation criteria	Criterion #1: The property is associated with significant events or with periods that exemplify broad patterns of cultural, political, economic, or social history.
Related local context	Residential Development: South Minneapolis, Growth and Renewal 1920-1960
Significant dates	1923 – Home constructed 1927 – Eugene Field Neighborhood Association restricts sale of homes to Caucasians only June 1931 – Lee Family moves into house July 1931 – Riots occur 1933 – Lee Family moves out of house
Period of significance	1923 - 1933
Cultural affiliation	Not applicable
Names of master builders, engineers, designers, artists, craftsmen, and/or architects	Not applicable

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Size of parcel	6,435 square feet
PIN number	1402824220180
Legal Description	Lots 1 & 2, Block 2, Vinton Heights Addition to Minneapolis.

PART 5: PHOTOGRAPHS, DRAWINGS, AND OTHER DOCUMENTS

For additional photos and documents, please see the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form Photographs section (page 31-57).

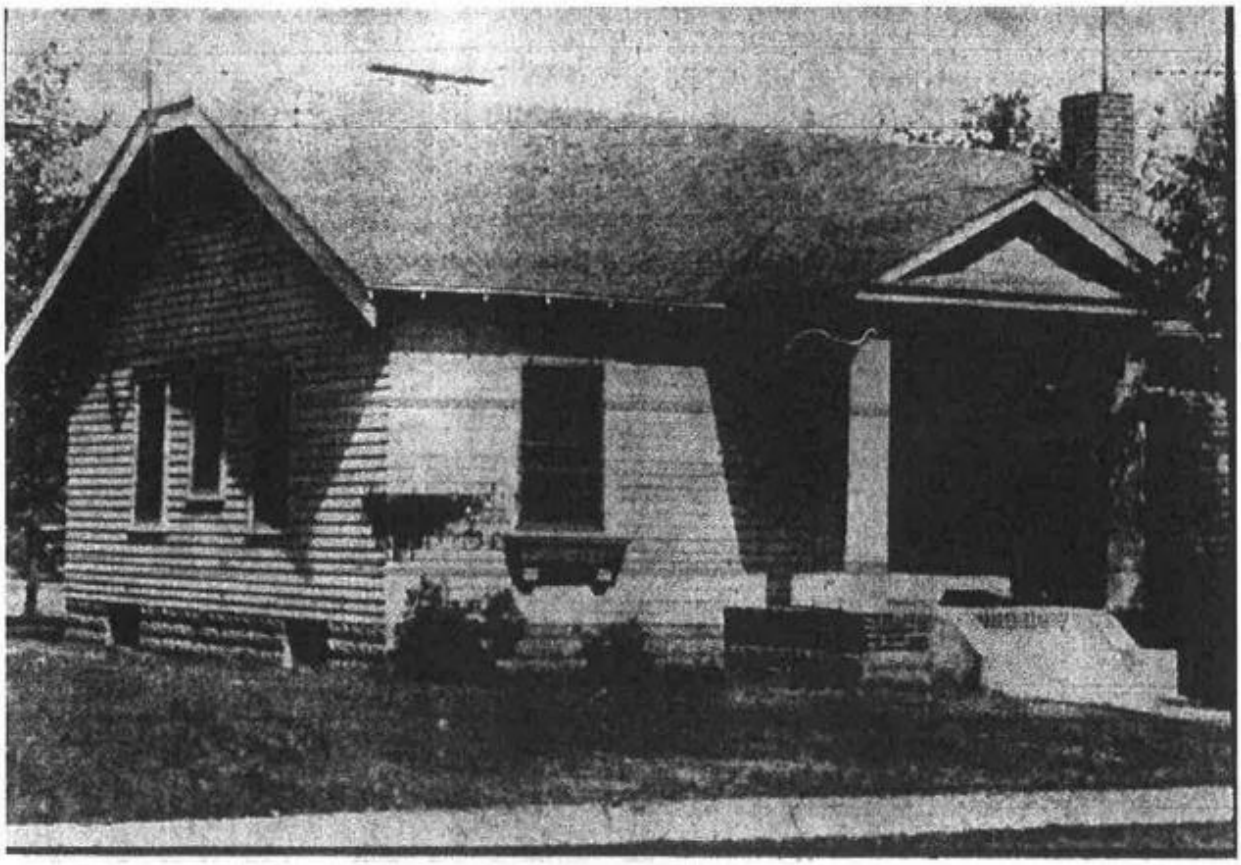
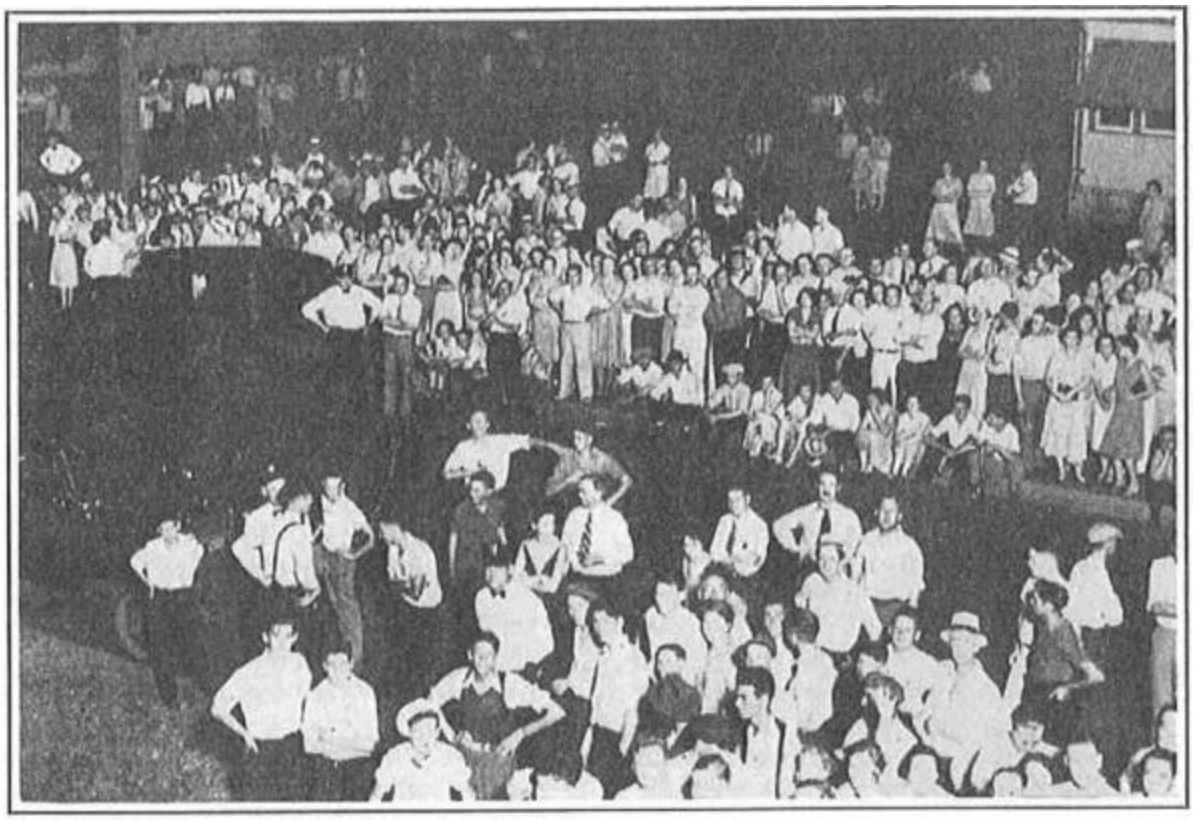


FIGURE 1. LEE HOME SPLATTERED WITH BLACK PAINT, SOURCE: NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM, PAGE 37. CITED FROM "CROWD OF 3,000 RENEWS ATTACK ON NEGRO'S HOME," MINNEAPOLIS TRIBUNE, JULY 16,1931.



The Minneapolis Mob
A few of the thousands of white citizens who for a week tried to drive a colored man from his own home

FIGURE 2. MINNEAPOLIS MOB ASSEMBLED OUTSIDE THE LEE HOUSE, SOURCE: NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM, PAGE 38. CITED FROM HALL, CHATWOOD. "A ROMAN HOLIDAY IN MINNEAPOLIS." CRISIS (OCTOBER 1931): 338.

APPENDIX A: NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES NOMINATION FORM

NPS Form 10-900 OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

391

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form.* If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

RECEIVED 2280
MAY 28 2014
NAT. REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Lee, Arthur and Edith, House

Other names/site number:

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing

2. Location

Street & number: 4600 Columbus Avenue South

City or town: Minneapolis State: MN County: Hennepin

Not For Publication: NA Vicinity: NA

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___national X statewide ___local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A ___B ___C ___D

Barbara Howard May 21, 2014

Signature of certifying official/Title: Barbara Mitchell Howard, Deputy SHPO, MHS **Date**

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official: **Date**

Title : **State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government**

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

✓ entered in the National Register

___ determined eligible for the National Register

___ determined not eligible for the National Register

___ removed from the National Register

___ other (explain:) _____

for Carson H. Beall 7-11-14

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Private: [x]

Public – Local [ ]

Public – State [ ]

Public – Federal [ ]

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

Building(s) [x]

District [ ]

Site [ ]

Structure [ ]

Object [ ]

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	1	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	1	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register NA

6. Function or Use
Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)
DOMESTIC/single dwelling

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)
DOMESTIC/single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)
LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY MOVEMENTS

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)
Principal exterior materials of the property:
Foundation: CONCRETE
Walls: METAL/Steel
Roof: ASPHALT
Other: BRICK

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with **a summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph
The Arthur and Edith Lee House is located in the Field neighborhood of south Minneapolis, Minnesota. The residence's address is 4600 Columbus Avenue South, (the southwest corner of the intersection of Columbus Avenue South and 46th Street East), where it occupies a corner lot. The house is a single-family detached, one-story residence. Its appearance hints at classicism, but it is challenging to apply a specific style. Completed in 1923, the house looks much like a Sears Roebuck and Company kit home from the period (Figure 11), although it is not clear if it is in fact a kit home. The size and age of the house are typical for this portion of the city, which is mainly composed of single-family detached residential dwellings with concentrated areas of small-scale commercial development along former streetcar lines.

The Lee House retains high integrity of location, design, setting, feeling, and association. Some exterior alterations have obscured or undermined the house's integrity of materials, and workmanship, though not to the point of compromising its integrity of design. Historic images of

the property show that it retains its original massing and fenestration pattern. The house's original wood clapboard remains intact under an outer layer of metal siding. A comparison of historic and contemporary photographs of the house shows that the metal siding retains the color and dimensioning of the original clapboard siding.

Narrative Description

Arthur and Edith Lee House
Exterior

The Arthur and Edith Lee House is set back from Columbus Avenue and 46th Street by grass boulevards, city sidewalks, and grass lawn. Additionally, a hedge bounds the northern and western edges of the lawn. The western side of the property abuts an alley.

The house, built in 1923[1], is a single story structure with a modest Classical Revival style front entry. The house has a low-pitched, side-gabled roof with jerkinheads and projecting boxed eaves. The roof is covered in asphalt shingles. The house is clad in horizontal metal siding. The foundation is made of "quarry faced" concrete block. Replacement double-hung, one-over-one, vinyl windows are found throughout the structure. The vinyl windows maintain the original dimensions and sash configuration of the original wood windows seen in historic photographs of the house.

The main façade of the house faces east toward Columbus Avenue South (Photo 1). The main façade's prominent feature is the entry. The entry is raised above grade and accessed by a set of concrete steps (three risers) and a final brick step, which gives way to a small brick porch. A projecting gable with triangular pediment covers the porch. This gable is supported on a square column at either end. Historic images of the property show that this porch is original (Figure 5). To the right (north) of the porch is a set of paired double-hung windows. To the left (south) of the porch is a lone double-hung window. A wheelchair-accessible ramp with wood railings has been added to the right of the porch, but does not adversely alter any significant materials.

The southern façade includes three double-hung windows, which are horizontally centered (Photo 4). The middle window is about three quarters of the length of the side windows. It starts at the same height as the side windows but does not extend as far down the façade.

The western façade has one set of paired double-hung windows and one single double-hung window (Photos 3 and 4). The three windows are roughly centered on the façade, with the paired windows to the north of the single window.

The northern façade has a large double-hung window at the western end (Photo 2). Proceeding easterly along the façade, there is a horizontal (likely an awning) window at the attic level. This

[1] Minneapolis Building Permit Index Card for 4600-02 Columbus Avenue, Lot 1 & 2, Block 2, Vinton Heights Addition.

window is centered on the façade. Below this window, splitting the center of the house, are a side door to the west and a small double-hung window to the east. To the east of the small double-hung window is an exposed brick chimney. The chimney is currently covered in ivy. To the east of the chimney is another small double-hung window.

The house is located on an essentially flat lot. Landscaping features include a grass lawn surrounding the house and low planting beds located next to the foundation on the east, south, and north sides. In 2011, the City of Minneapolis placed a prominent plaque at the northeast corner of the lot; the plaque memorializes the menacing protests that took place in 1931, when the Lees, an African American family first moved into the house (Photo 6).

Interior

The interior of 4600 Columbus Avenue South (Figure 2) also retains a high degree of integrity. The original plan is intact, and many of the original architectural details and finishes remain in place.

Public areas comprise the northern two-thirds of the house. Directly through the front door (which faces Columbus Avenue to the east), is an entry and circulation space that is an extension of the living room. The living room has two windows which frame a fireplace on the north wall (Photo 7). The dining room is located on the west side of the house (Photo 8). A hallway extending east to west across the house creates a sight line from the front door into the dining room. The living room is open to the dining room. The dining room is separated by a single door from the kitchen to the north (Photo 9).

The southern third of the house includes private spaces. A short hall off the main entry and circulation space accesses this wing (Photo 11). A full bath is centrally located on the southern wall, with bedrooms to the east and west.

Throughout the house, original details including oak doors with their hardware, oak moldings (Photo 12), wood floors, ceiling light fixtures, a porcelain-enamel kitchen sink (Photo 10), and kitchen cabinets remain intact.

Garage

A single car garage with a low-pitched gabled roof occupies the westernmost edge of the property (Photo 5). The exterior of the garage is clad in horizontal metal siding with an asphalt shingled roof; these materials match those present on the house. A single overhead garage door is located on the north-facing facade. An asphalt driveway off of the alley that intersects 46th Street accesses the garage. The garage was constructed in 1950,[2] well after the property's period of significance. For purposes of this nomination, the garage is a non-contributing building.

[2] Ibid.

Narrative Description

Context: South Minneapolis[3]

The neighborhood context of the house is integral to understanding its historic significance. The Arthur and Edith Lee House is located in South Minneapolis. In "South Minneapolis: An Historic Context," architectural historians Hess Roise and Company, working for the Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission, define South Minneapolis as an area bounded by the Mississippi River on the east, the city limits on the south and west, and the route of Interstate 394 and Interstate 94 on the north.[4] While this is a relatively large geography (comprising nearly half the land in the city), similarities in physical development and social history make it logical to discuss the area as a whole.

South Minneapolis was laid out along the city's north-south, east-west grid, and standard size city blocks make up the majority of the area. Platting of this area was completed by the 1920's (by the period of significance for the Arthur and Edith Lee House); however, parts of the southernmost section were not developed until after World War II.[5] The area was settled primarily by working- and middle-class residents, who owned their own homes. Most of these modest residences were built by contractors and frequently followed pattern book plans. The housing stock is primarily made up of modest one- and one-and-a-half story residences, in Bungalow, Tudor, Foursquare, Classical Revival and Colonial Revival styles.[6]

Small scale commercial development is focused near busier streets and intersections, usually where the city's streetcar lines were historically located. It was the Twin Cities' extensive network of streetcar lines that connected South Minneapolis to the downtown business district thereby making the area a realistic and desirable place to live. Lines that once existed on Chicago Avenue, 42nd Street, and 50th Street would have been closest to the Lee House.

Other notable features of the area immediate to the Lee House, including the Eugene Field School, Saint Mary's Cemetery, and Minnehaha Creek, existed during the period of significance and are extant today.

---

[3] In the 1960's, Minneapolis' planning department divided the city into 11 "communities," for planning and zoning purposes. These communities were then subdivided into a total of 84 neighborhoods. The Lee house is located in the Field neighborhood, which is also what the area was known as during the property's period of significance. The Field neighborhood is bordered by 46th Street East to the north, Chicago Avenue to the east, Minnehaha Parkway to the south, and Interstate 35W to the west. Since the Lee house riots affected an area much larger than the small Field neighborhood, this description will consider the entire area known as South Minneapolis as physical context. For map of physical context, please see Figures 3 and 4.

[4] Interstate 35 currently traverses through the center of South Minneapolis, but was not constructed until 1956. During the period of significance for this property, the residential grid of South Minneapolis would have continued uninterrupted through the area that now houses the Interstate.

[5] Mead & Hunt, Inc., "Historic Resources Inventory: Historic Resources in the Hale, Keewaydin, Ericsson, Field, Page, Minnehaha, Diamond Lake, Wenonah, Morris Park, Regina, Northrop, Corcoran, Bryant, Bancroft and Standish Neighborhoods", (2010): 19.

[6] Ibid. 19.

Integrity

Overall, the Arthur and Edith Lee House retains its historic integrity and is in good to excellent physical condition. While cosmetic changes to the exterior of the building (replacement windows, and the addition of a second layer of siding) have negatively affected the house's integrity of materials and workmanship, these changes are reversible as historic images of the house can facilitate the installation of sympathetic window replacements, and the original clapboard siding can be recovered by removing the exterior layer of metal siding. Moreover, the house maintains integrity of design conveyed by its original massing, fenestration, roofline, plan, and interior architectural details. The building remains in its original location, and while South Minneapolis has a more diverse population than it did in 1923, its physical plan, residential quality, and the majority of its building stock have remained a consistent setting. Major features of the Lee house's immediate environment, such as Minnehaha Creek, the Field School, and Saint Mary's Cemetery remain largely unchanged and help to maintain the property's integrity. The house's integrity of design, location, and setting combine to give it integrity of feeling, as a modest early 20th century dwelling constructed within a working-class residential neighborhood of similar vintage. Most importantly, the Arthur and Edith Lee House retains its integrity of association. This property's significance resides in its association with the menacing protests of 1931. Recent publications[7] prove that this association remains firm in the minds of academics; the City of Minneapolis' 2011 installation of a memorial plaque on the site shows that the City and the public also value the site's heritage.

[7] See Ann Jurgens, "Lena Olive Smith: A Minnesota Civil Rights Pioneer," *William Mitchell Law Review* 28, no. 1 (2001): 409, footnote 56; and Jackie Sluss, "Lena Olive Smith: Civil Rights in the 1930s," *Hennepin History* (Winter 1995): 29.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- [x] A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- [ ] B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- [ ] C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- [ ] D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- [ ] A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- [ ] B. Removed from its original location
- [ ] C. A birthplace or grave
- [ ] D. A cemetery
- [ ] E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- [ ] F. A commemorative property
- [ ] G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)
ETHNIC HERITAGE / Black
SOCIAL HISTORY

Period of Significance
1923-1933

Significant Dates
1923, the house was constructed
1927, Eugene Field Neighborhood Association restricts sale of homes to Caucasians only
June 1931, Lee Family moves in
July 11-16, 1931, Riots
1933, Lee Family moves out

Significant Person
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)
N/A

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Architect/Builder
unknown

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

Summary Paragraph

A series of menacing protests described as "riots" in the newspapers enveloped 4600 Columbus Avenue South following its purchase in June 1931 by Arthur and Edith Lee. The young couple was African-American, and they chose to buy a house in the "Field" neighborhood, part of South Minneapolis that area homeowners considered to be a "white neighborhood." Some members of the community were upset by the presence of a black family in their neighborhood, especially considering that in 1927, the Eugene Field Neighborhood Association had gone so far as to ask homeowners to sign a contract stating that they would only sell their properties to Caucasians. Community members banded together and tried to force the Lees to leave their newly purchased house. Racial taunts and small demonstrations rapidly escalated, culminating in an unruly mob of 4,000 people who packed the lawn and spilled out into the street in front of 4600 Columbus Avenue South on the evening of July 16, 1931. Arthur Lee, a World War One veteran, an NAACP member, and a United States Postal Service worker, was determined to stay; he said he had a "right to establish a home" in the neighborhood of his choosing.[8] Many individuals and organizations came to the family's defense, including, most notably, the local and national chapters of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), and the influential lawyer Lena Olive Smith. Arthur Lee, Edith Lee, and their young daughter Mary remained in the house until fall 1933, when they moved elsewhere in Minneapolis. The Lee protests remain some of the largest and most widely publicized racially-motivated demonstrations in Minnesota's history.

The Arthur and Edith Lee House is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places as an important cultural heritage site associated with Minneapolis' African American community. This property is associated with the contexts "Urban Centers, 1870-1940" and "South Minneapolis: An Historic Context." The property has state-wide significance under Criterion A in the areas of Ethnic Heritage/black, and Social History for its association with the 1931 protests which took place at 4600 Columbus Avenue South, as well as with broader trends of housing discrimination in Minneapolis. The period of significance for this property begins in 1923, when the house was constructed. The period of significance for this property ends in 1933, when the Lees left 4600 Columbus Avenue and moved elsewhere in Minneapolis.

[8] "Home Stoned in Race Row: Sale of House to Negro Stirs Neighborhood," *Minneapolis Tribune*, July 15, 1931.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

The Minneapolis Riots (The Arthur and Edith Lee House)

In late June 1931, Arthur and Edith Lee along with their six-year-old daughter Mary purchased and moved into a house at 4600 Columbus Avenue South in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Arthur Lee worked for the United States Postal Service and had served in World War I. The family was African American.

A modest residence, 4600 Columbus Avenue South is characteristic of the housing stock and architectural types seen throughout the Field Neighborhood. The house was constructed in 1923, and is attributed to J.A. Heinsch.[9] While the building permits for the property refer to Heinsch as "architect," it is likely that he was more of a builder than an architect. Pattern book-type homes constitute a significant portion of the residential building stock in south Minneapolis.[10] With two bedrooms, a spacious dining room and living room, and a corner lot with front and back yards, the house at 4600 Columbus Avenue South had everything that the Lee family was looking for in a home.

While the house on Columbus Avenue South was located squarely in what area homeowners believed to be a "white neighborhood," the family decided to purchase it. A number of the Lees' new neighbors were agitated by the family's arrival in the neighborhood. Approximately 400 members of the local Eugene Field Neighborhood Association had signed "contracts" in 1927 that were intended to prevent the rental or sale of homes in a 24-block area between Chicago and Nicollet Avenues and 46th Street and the city limits to non-Caucasians.[11] Upon the Lee's arrival, the Eugene Field Neighborhood Association immediately began efforts to remove the family

---

[9] Minneapolis Building Permit Index Card for 4600-02 Columbus Avenue, Lot 1 & 2, Block 2, Vinton Heights Addition. See also, Charlene Roise, Stephanie K. Atwood, and Marjorie Pearson, "Prospect Park Residential Historic District," National Register of Historic Places Nomination (draft), 2012. Available online: http://www.pperr.org/. According to the National Register of Historic Places nomination for Minneapolis's Prospect Park neighborhood, Heinsch was building homes in that upper class neighborhood at the same time as he was working on 4600 Columbus Avenue South.

[10] Marjorie Pearson, "South Minneapolis: An Historic Context," (2000): 49. Historic Context studies are available to the public by contacting the Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission at 612.673.3000

[11] "Minnesota Whites Pay Top Prices to Bar Race," *Pittsburgh Courier,* February 26, 1927. The document signed by the members of the Eugene Field Neighborhood Association was a voluntary, non-legally binding "agreement" or "contract." Alternatively, historian H. Lynn Adelsman refers to the type of contract used by the Eugene Field Neighborhood Association as a "gentleman's agreement." Essentially peer pressure was the only thing forcing residents to maintain the terms of this document. Other neighborhoods in Minnesota took a different route to ensure that their neighborhoods ensured racial segregation through restrictive covenants. Restrictive covenants were attached to property deeds and provided a legally binding method of keeping blacks, Jews and other races deemed "undesirable" out of a community. Restrictive covenants remained in place in many Minnesota communities until 1948, when they were outlawed by the United States Supreme Court. For further information see: H. Lynn Adelsman, "Desegregating South Minneapolis Housing TilsenBilt Homes of 1954," *Hennepin History* (Spring 2005): 24-33; and Ann Juergens, "Lena Olive Smith: A Minnesota Civil Rights Pioneer," *William Mitchell Law Review* 28, no. 1 (2001): 409, footnote 56.

from their home. Initially, the Lees were approached by members of the community, who offered to purchase the house for $5,000. This was $300 more than the family had paid for the property.[12] The Lees refused to sell. This refusal yielded an onslaught of threats and insults to the Lees; agitators threw garbage and human excrement onto the property,[13] splattered black paint across the side of the house and garage, and posted signs proclaiming, "We don't want niggers here" and "No niggers allowed in the neighborhood. This means you." in the Lee's front yard. In response, the Lees secured an attorney through Arthur Lee's connections at the American Legion. The attorney, H.E. Maag, wrote letters to the neighbors advising them that actions would be taken if the harassment did not stop.[14]

On the evening of July 8, Arthur Lee received an anonymous phone call informing him that if the family did not leave, a mob of 500 people would storm their home that evening. The Lees informed the police of the call. The police were unresponsive, so the Lees and their family friends organized a constant surveillance vigil at the property. The mob of 500 did not materialize that evening, but around the same date, small groups of neighbors begin walking by the Lee house in the evenings yelling taunts and slurs at the family. By July 11, these small groups had increased to a constant crowd of about 150 people. That evening police were called again. They arrived and quieted the crowd; however officers offered no further protection to the Lee family. The crowd gathered again on the evenings of July 12 and 13, growing larger each night. On the evening of the 13th the crowd began to stone the house and the police were called again. This time 25 officers arrived on the scene and threatened to arrest the protestors. According to an article that ran in the *Minneapolis Tribune* on July 15, the commanding officer at the scene, Captain A.C. Jensen, "suggested property owners of the neighborhood appoint a committee to meet with a committee of colored leaders in the city and go before the mayor and see if an agreement could be reached."[15]

Prior to the July 15 article in the *Minneapolis Tribune*, the media had abided by a request from community leaders to avoid reporting the situation at the Lee House. Community leaders sought to suppress dissemination of the story, fearing that newspaper reporting would draw unwanted attention, causing the situation at the Lee house to explode into full-scale race riots similar to those that had recently occurred in Chicago and Detroit. By the 15th the papers felt a public responsibility to report on the conflict; it had grown too large to ignore. The story was the front page headline in the *Minneapolis Tribune*, which proclaimed "HOME STONED IN RACE ROW," and described the situation: "Several hundred residents of the neighborhood, including home owners, gathered to hurl taunts, jibes and threats at the Negro family, irate at their lack of legal recourse and resentful against the stand-pat attitude of the Negroes. ...[The mob's]

---

[12] "Home Stoned in Race Row: Sale of House to Negro Stirs Neighborhood," *Minneapolis Tribune*, July 15, 1931.

[13] Maurine Boie, "A Study of Conflict and Accommodation in Negro-White Relations in the Twin Cities" (master's thesis, University of Minnesota, 1932), 8.

[14] Ibid., 8-9.

[15] "Home Stoned in Race Row: Sale of House to Negro Stirs Neighborhood."

demeanor was threatening."[16] The same article featured a short interview with the Lees in which they stated that they planned to stay in the house because the United States' principles of democracy guaranteed them that right. "Nobody asked me to move out when I was in France fighting in mud and water for this country. I came out here to make this house my home. I have a right to establish a home," stated Arthur Lee.[17]

As Maurine Boie asserted in her 1932 master's thesis about race relations in Minneapolis, "there can be no doubt of the inflammatory effect of these newspaper articles. The night following their publication, [the evening of the 15th], a crowd estimated at 3,000 people gathered around the house.... [The crowd] was augmented by curious spectators from all parts of the city who were attracted by the newspaper reports and eager to see the show. The crowd grew so large and restless that a cordon of police was formed around the place. There was talk of burning the house, of killing and hanging the Negro."[18]

By 10:30 p.m., the crowd was so unruly that additional police reserves were called to the scene. Soon, a squad of motorcycle police arrived. In an attempt to push the crowd back from the Lee house, the motorcycle squad drove its vehicles straight toward the mob. This had little effect other than to make the group even angrier. At 11 p.m. a call for further reinforcements was sent to police headquarters with the result that every available gunsquad car in the city was sent to the scene. According to the *Pioneer Press*, this only aggravated the crowd, which succeeded in pulling an officer from his motorcycle. "A squad of patrolmen went charging to his rescue." Later that evening, two fire engines arrived on the scene, where they were booed by the crowd. They had been called as a practical joke.

At the same time that these events were taking place at the Lee House, the neighborhood meeting that had been suggested by Captain Jensen was taking place a couple blocks away at the Eugene Field School. There, civic leaders urged patience and conciliation, reminding those in attendance that the U.S. government was founded on principles of human and property rights.[19] The suggestion of conciliation only served to exacerbate the crowd, many of whom stormed out of the meeting and joined the mob on the Lee's front lawn.

---

[16] Ibid.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Boie, "A Study of Conflict and Accommodation in Negro-White Relations in the Twin Cities", 11-12. Minnesotans of the 1930s held differing perspectives about racial integration. Seeking to understand these perspectives, Maurine Boie, a University of Minnesota student wrote her 1932 thesis about relationships and racial conflict in the Twin Cities. Boie's thesis research included extensive interviews with both black and white members of the community.

[19] Ibid., 12.

On July 16, under the headlines "Mob Mauls Cop. . ."[20] and "Crowd of 3,000 Renews Attack on Negroes' Home,"[21] the newspapers again reported on the situation. That evening over 4,000 people gathered out front of the Lee House. Police created a barrier between the crowd and the house and also circulated among the crowd attempting to keep organized groups from forming. "By that time the crowd extended along Forty-Sixth Street from Park to Chicago avenues and for a block along Columbus Avenue. Refusing to obey the policemen's orders to stay out of the street they advanced almost to the sidewalks in front of the Lee home standing almost face to face with the line of policemen."[22] The officers had instructions to arrest anyone who became violent. Earlier in the day, the Mayor of Minneapolis had issued a plea to the city's residents to stay away from the Lee house; a group of Minneapolis ministers signed a resolution protesting the demonstrations, and civic leaders once again urged the papers to restrict coverage of the case (on the 17th, coverage was moved from the cover to the inside pages).[23]

Meanwhile, the Lees, who were longtime NAACP members, turned to that organization and lawyer Lena Olive Smith for support and guidance.

Lena Olive Smith's Involvement

The contributions by the Lee family's second lawyer, Lena Olive Smith, made a profound impact on the situation's final outcome.[24] As an African American herself, Smith understood the

---

[20] "Throng Still Perils Negro in Mill City," *Pioneer Press,* July 17, 1931.

[21] "Crowd of 3,000 Renews Attack on Negro's Home," *Minneapolis Tribune*, July 16, 1931.

[22] "4,000 Assemble Near Negro's Home," *Minneapolis Tribune*, July 17, 1931. Print.

[23] Boie, "A Study of Conflict and Accommodation in Negro-White Relations in the Twin Cities," 14.

[24] Lena Olive Smith was born in Lawrence, Kansas in 1885. In 1905, Smith moved to Buxton, Iowa with her father in search of work. Smith's father died in 1906, at which point she moved to Minneapolis where she was joined by her mother, three younger brothers and younger sister. Smith took much of the responsibility of providing for her family. Over the next 10 years she moved between a number of professions including dermatologist, undertaker, hairdresser, and realtor. In 1916, Smith began taking part-time evening classes at Northwestern College of Law. While in school, Smith became involved with the nascent Minneapolis NAACP chapter (founded in 1913), and actively worked on cases that challenged segregation. Smith became a member of the Executive Committee of the Minneapolis NAACP in 1920, and in that capacity worked to seek justice for the lynching of three black circus workers that had taken place in Duluth earlier that year. Smith graduated law school in the spring of 1921 and was sworn into the bar on June 16 along with 22 of her classmates. Only one other inductee was female, and it is estimated that at this time there were only 16 other African Americans practicing law in Minnesota, three of them in Minneapolis. From the beginning, Smith's career was defined by her civil rights work. By 1930, she was so well regarded that she was elected President of the Minneapolis NAACP, a position she held through 1939. This period of her career was marked by several high profile cases including a campaign to have showings of the film "Birth of a Nation" barred from Minneapolis for its racist content, a suit against the University of Minnesota over the denied admission of an African American nursing student, and the Lee case. Smith continued to serve in leadership positions in the Minneapolis NAACP through the mid 1940's, and continued to serve on bar association committees through the 1960's. Lena Smith continued to practice law and was an influential member of the Minneapolis African American community until her death in 1966, at the age of 81. (The Lena Olive Smith House, located at 3905 5th Avenue South, was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1991.)

obstacles the Lee family was facing, and she had a vested interest in pursuing a resolution that upheld the family's civil and property rights.

Smith's involvement with the Lee case commenced after the Lees had already begun mediation with the neighborhood association. The Lees had originally consulted with H.E. Maag, a white lawyer who Arthur Lee retained through his connections at the American Legion. Maag, along with representatives from the Mayor's office and the Minneapolis Urban League, urged Lee that the best and most expedient solution to the situation was to vacate the premises until the neighborhood association could raise further funds and purchase the home from the family. This idea was supported by many in the community, as well as by political leaders, as it was seen as the easiest way to deescalate the situation. After the initial mediation sessions, the July 18 newspaper headlines read "Negro's Lawyer Reports Progress Toward Amity," and "End of Race Row Believed Near."[25] The *Minneapolis Tribune* went on to quote H.E. Maag, who stated "There has been no specific or definite agreement made, but Lee has intimated to me that he is willing to consider moving if he is permitted to deal with the residents of the community as one citizen dealing with others. Just when he will move, if he decides to move, has not been decided." [26] "No plan was adopted, but. . . progress had been made toward an agreement. A second meeting is to be held Monday," concluded the *Pioneer Press*.[27]

In reality, Lee was not planning to move. Feeling that his actual views were not being heard during the mediation, Lee dismissed Maag and turned to fellow NAACP member Smith for additional council. Smith was absolutely opposed to the Lees doing anything other than remaining in their home. As law professor Ann Juergens explains in an article about Smith, "To Smith, the level of threatened violence only highlighted the importance of the principle at stake: that African American people may live wherever European American people live. Smith believed that 'it would be unwise and unfair to this man to be forced to leave his home under the circumstances' and that agreeing to move out 'would have no effect other than to convince the mob that their action has been successful.'"[28]

On July 20, Lena Smith and the NAACP surprised the public, which had been led to believe that the Lees were preparing to move, by releasing the following statement that ran in all three major Minneapolis papers:

> Mr. Lee intends to remain in his present residence, [Ms. Smith] said. He has no intention of moving now or later, even after we are assured the feeling in the district has subsided.

For a more in-depth biography of Smith, please see: Juergens, "Lena Olive Smith: A Minnesota Civil Rights Pioneer," 397-453, on which this document draws heavily.

[25] "End of Race Row is Believed Near," *Minneapolis Tribune*, July 18, 1931; "Negro's Lawyer Reports Progress Toward Amity," *Pioneer Press*, July 18, 1931.

[26] Ibid.

[27] "Negro's Lawyer Reports Progress Toward Amity."

[28] Juergens, "Lena Olive Smith: A Minnesota Civil Rights Pioneer," 440.

> He has nothing to trade, barter, or sell. I believe we have made that clear to all parties involved.
>
> I am president of the Minneapolis branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and Mr. Lee's stand in this matter has been backed by that organization. We feel that the issue goes deeper than this individual case. I have been assured my client will receive ample police protection.[29]

Many people worried that such a forceful statement would incite violence from the mob;[30] however, no further protests occurred on Columbus Avenue after the statement's release.

Civil Rights Context—Racial Conflict

In the opening decades of the twentieth century, the country viewed Minneapolis as a progressive northern city. Progressive, however, did not mean without prejudice and racism. The conflict and intimidation surrounding the Lee family's purchase of 4600 Columbus Avenue South took place in a community that was familiar with high profile acts of violence against blacks, such as the Duluth Lynchings of 1920 and Detroit's Ossian Sweet case of 1925. Closer to home, the community was also aware of more commonplace acts of racism such as restaurants denying service to African-Americans. While the Lee case was certainly one of the most dramatic and well-documented instances of racial conflict to take place in Minneapolis, it was also part of a trend of racism and housing discrimination that were prevalent at the time. The events described in this section form the broader context in which the Lee house protests took place. Both the major incidents and daily experiences were well known to the black community and some white leaders. These events shaped the public perception of, and official reaction to, the Lee "riots."

The Duluth Lynching

On June 14, 1920, a young white couple, Irene Tusken and James Sullivan, reported that six black men who worked as roustabouts for a traveling circus had held the couple at gunpoint and then assaulted and raped Miss Tusken. Though these accusations were unsubstantiated, rumors spread and the next day newspapers printed articles about the alleged rape. On June 15, a mob estimated at between 5,000 and 10,000 people collected at the city jail. Eventually, several men broke into the jail and seized three of the suspects. Police did little to nothing to stop the break in; they had been ordered not to use their guns.[31] The three men—Elias Clayton, Elmer Jackson, and Isaac McGhie—were found "guilty" in a "trial" conducted by the mob and were hanged from a lamppost in downtown Duluth. The surviving prisoners were taken into custody of the National Guard and eventually stood trial.

---

[29] Boie, "A Study of Conflict and Accommodation in Negro-White Relations in the Twin Cities," 16.

[30] Ibid.

[31] "Duluth Lynchings Online Resource," *Minnesota Historical Society*, accessed August 8, 2013, http://collections.mnhs.org/duluthlynchings/html/lynchings.htm.

After news of the lynching spread, the NAACP became involved in the case, sending officers to Duluth to investigate accusations of police inaction, bring indictments against the lynchers, and provide counsel for the remaining prisoners.[32]

The national press looked unfavorably on the event, and many people were aghast that such a thing could happen in Minnesota. A *Chicago Evening Post* article stated "This is a crime of a Northern state, as black and ugly as any that has brought the South in disrepute. The Duluth authorities stand condemned in the eyes of the nation."[33] Memories of mob violence and national disgrace would have been in the minds of city officials and many others as the Lee case unfolded.[34]

The Ossian Sweet Case[35]

During the Minneapolis Riots, the fear of a violent conclusion to the conflict distressed both city officials and the NAACP. Knowledge of what happened just a few years earlier at the Ossian Sweet home in Detroit was part of the reason that both sides of the Lee case agreed to meet in a council to discuss what would become of the family and their home on Columbus Avenue South. A *Pittsburgh Courier* article published after the Minneapolis riots had ceased ran under the headline "Another 'Sweet Case' Averted in Minneapolis,"[36] further emphasizing the lasting impression that the Sweet case had left on the country.

In 1925, Ossian Sweet was a young African American doctor living in Detroit, Michigan. Recently returned from a multi-year tour of Europe with his wife, Sweet decided to buy a home, and found one he liked at 2509 Garland, in a "white neighborhood" on Detroit's east side. Despite the Ku Klux Klan's strong influence in Detroit at that time, Sweet did not initially expect trouble in occupying his new home. However, when the previous (white) owner received a death threat demanding that she back out of the sale, the doctor realized that the move was unlikely to go smoothly. Sweet decided that he would need to be prepared to defend his right to live in the house.

On September 8, 1925, the Sweets moved into the house, determined to defend it against any violence. A number of the Sweets' friends joined the couple at the house to help secure it. On the evening of September 9, a mob arrived at the Sweet home and began stoning it. Retaliatory shots

---

[32] Juergens, "Lena Olive Smith: A Minnesota Civil Rights Pioneer," 413-414.

[33] Chicago Evening Post, quoted in "Minnesota's Disgrace," *Appeal* (Saint Paul, Minnesota), June 19, 1920, p 2.

[34] Juergens, "Lena Olive Smith: A Minnesota Civil Rights Pioneer," 417.

[35] Information in this section is taken primarily from: David B. Burnette, "Home of Dr. Ossian Sweet," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (1985), Record Number 399199 Item, Number 85000696. For a more in-depth discussion of the Ossian Sweet Case, please see: Kevin Boyle, *Arc of Justice: A Saga of Race, Civil Rights, and Murder in the Jazz Age* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2005); and Phyllis Vine, *One Man's Castle: Clarence Darrow in Defense of the American Dream* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc., 2004).

[36] "Another 'Sweet Case' Averted in Minneapolis," *Pittsburgh Courier*, August 8, 1931.

were fired from inside the house, killing one of the antagonists. The police were called and the Sweets, along with nine friends were all arrested and charged with murder. The initial Sweet trial lasted 25 days and resulted in a hung jury. Eventually, all occupants of the house were cleared of charges. Sweet retained the house until selling it in 1944. The Sweet home was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1985.[37]

Everyday Injustices

A 1932 thesis by University of Minnesota graduate student Maurine Boie titled "A Study of Conflict and Accommodation in Negro-White Relations in the Twin Cities," provides a thorough look at the status of race relations in Minneapolis in the early twentieth century. Despite the existence of the Minnesota State Equal Accommodations Act of 1885, Boie found numerous examples of illegal segregation and second-class status regularly visited on the Twin Cities' African American population. The following are excerpts from the first-person interviews and a review of legal cases that Boie conducted.[38]

Often, African Americans were seated in separate sections or rooms of restaurants and lunch counters, or simply ignored by wait staff until they went away.

> When I first came here, I went down on ___ Avenue to a little restaurant. We sat upon the stools. There was a lady waitress. She didn't wait on us. The manager came by and said, "We don't particularly cater to colored people here; there is a colored restaurant down the street; if you don't mind we would like to have you go there." He was apologetic; I felt if I had forced my way I could have got service.[39]
>
> . . . A small cafe on ___ South, refused to serve colored men and displayed a sign stating that they did not want colored trade.[40]
>
> The Twin Cities don't compare with a place like Buffalo, N.Y. for courtesies and service. There we felt so free. We could go in any store. We ate in fine restaurants in residential districts. We don't feel that freedom here. I went into ___ and they just didn't serve me until I got tired and left. That's their policy. Another little place I went into said they didn't serve Negroes. I couldn't do anything because I was alone and had no witnesses. I cussed him out and he just walked away. Two girls went into ___ Department store. They put sawdust in their food. They reported it to the President himself and he rectified it. ___ won't

---

[37] Burnette, "Home of Dr. Ossian Sweet."

[38] All spelling and grammar remain true to the original document.

[39] Boie, "A Study of Conflict and Accommodation in Negro-White Relations in the Twin Cities," 59.

[40] Ibid., 50.

> serve you. I went to see the manager of the ___ restaurant. They said it was the policy of their stores all over the country not to serve or employ Negroes.[41]

Similarly, theatres and movie houses forced African Americans to sit in special sections. Certain department stores refused to allow African Americans to buy items on credit.

> The managers of the ___ Theatre, who were reported to discriminate against colored patrons by refusing them first floor admission tickets.[42]

> I wish you to publish for the benefit of the colored people in the Twin Cities my experience with ___ department store. I won't say that they refuse to open credit accounts with all Colored people, but I do say that I was refused an account by one, Mr.___ presumably head of the credit department, under pretense that they were not opening any new accounts to any one [SIC]. I later called the Credit department and asked if they were opening new credit accounts. The clerk very politely said yes; then I inquired if they were opening new accounts to Colored people, she hesitated and said no...[43]

Many businesses and individuals simply did not realize (or at least claimed not to) when they were making racist remarks or taking racist actions.

> The epithet "nigger" has been used by two radio performers over station ___ for several months. Many complaints have been made by colored citizens but none were made to the radio station. About two weeks ago Mr. ___ in a letter to the station protested against the term, calling attention to the fact that it is considered an insult by colored people. He received a courteous reply from the station manager and a letter of apology from (the broadcasters), who said that they would never be guilty of such an offense again.[44]

> Last week the ___ Furniture Company, Minneapolis, in a window display showing the advance of modern laundry methods, used as contrast a rusty wash tub with a model of a Negro woman as rusty as the tub bending over it. Needless to say the President of the local branch of the NAACP was bombarded with complaints and urged to do something about it. This he did in an interview with the management of the company. When it was shown that the display was being unfavorably regarded by the colored people, Mr. ___, the manager, disclaiming

[41] Ibid., 61.

[42] Ibid., 50.

[43] Ibid., 51.

[44] Ibid., 74.

> any intention to offend out people, readily agreed to remove the cause; this was done the following morning.[45]

Other businesses flatly refused to hire African American workers.

> We wouldn't use Negros in our bakery, because the white people might object.[46]

> I asked a man to hire a Negro. He said, you know I am interested, but I couldn't take another one on, because the one I had was reported to have stolen a tire.[47]

Civil Rights Context—Housing Discrimination in Minneapolis

Like in many other parts of the country, African Americans were essentially limited to living in certain parts of the Twin Cities. While this was not official policy in Minneapolis or Saint Paul, neighborhood covenants and unscrupulous realtors, as well as African Americans' desire to live among a supportive community, contributed to the demographic living primarily in several relatively concentrated geographies.[48] While the Lee case represents the largest and most notorious instance of housing related racial conflict in the Twin Cities, it was neither the first nor the only case. As early as 1909, newspaper articles detail multiple instances of white citizens taking action against their black neighbors.

Example Cases

One case, which appeared in the papers under the headline "Harriet Negro Trouble,"[49] involved an African-American man, Mr. Malone, who purchased a house in the area of Lake Harriet. When the purchase became public knowledge, Mr. Malone was slandered in the papers, which questioned his legitimacy as an Episcopal minister. The story also reported that the windows of the home were broken one evening.

Another case from 1909 involved two African-American families purchasing property in the Prospect Park neighborhood. First, the Jackson family built a house on Hamline Avenue (now Franklin Avenue). Soon after, Mr. W.E. Simpson purchased two lots in the neighborhood with the intention of building on them. Articles describe neighborhood meetings where the community met to decide what to do about the new residents. "Race war has broken out in Prospect Park. A party of 125 residents of that section, among them many leading business and professional men of Minneapolis, called at the home of a negro family last night and read its members a prepared paper which told in plain language that none of the colored race was wanted

[45] Ibid., 74.

[46] Ibid., 107.

[47] Ibid., 105.

[48] See Figures 8-10. Figure 8 shows changes in the size and location of Minneapolis' African-American population between 1900 and 1930. Figure 9 and 10 show the location of African-American households in Minneapolis and Saint Paul in 1930.

[49] "Harriet Negro Trouble is Taken to the Police," *Minneapolis Tribune*, December 29, 1909.

in that neighborhood," stated the *Minneapolis Morning Tribune*.[50] An article that ran in February 1910 described the neighborhood still trying to raise the funds to buy out the homes of Mr. Simpson and the Jacksons.[51]

A 1912 case described a south Minneapolis neighborhood that was in a "race feud." After the neighborhood complained to the health department of "unsanitary conditions" at a rental property at 2826 Park Avenue, the owner "retaliated" securing black tenets. "The neighborhood is now up in arms over the invasion of the black race and is preparing to take steps to prevent any further colonization of the same nature."[52]

The 1912 story of Thomas H. Green described neighbors interfering with the construction of a house near 40th Street and Bloomington Avenue. "A load of lumber was sent by [Green's] order and Green alleges that several of he neighbors a week ago Saturday night carted it away, leaving if fully two blocks distant. . . . Since then, Green says, he has been on guard to see that his property was not molested."[53]

Conflict Cycle

Attempting to understand the actions taken by the Lee house mob and white citizens in similar situations, Maurine Boie identified a typical behavior pattern underlying racial conflict. She describes these patterns as a "process of circular response by which friction was accentuated and tension increased to the point of conflict."[54] Specific elements of Boie's circular process include: economics; rumor and myth; latent racial prejudices; crowd behavior and social pressures; precedent and typical patterns of behavior.

Boie explained that housing conflicts typically started with economic concerns. African-Americans, or other minorities, moving into a white neighborhood caused property values in the area to drop drastically. Contemporary real estate training manuals featured tables designed to help realtors value homes. One such manual published in 1937 lists "racial and foreign neighbors" as an "up to 60% deduction" off the home's price.[55] Whatever prejudices or biases an individual might have held, the fact was that many whites simply could not afford to have their neighborhoods integrated. In an article titled *Desegregating South Minneapolis Housing,*

---

[50] "Race War Started in Prospect Park: 'We Do Not Want You,' White Residents Tell the Negroes," *Minneapolis Tribune,* October 22, 1909.

[51] "Whites Plan Corporation to Buy Homes of Negroes," *Minneapolis Tribune*, February 6, 1910.

[52] "'Race Feud' Makes Trouble for South Side Residents: Health Department Told that One Negro Home is in Insanitary Condition," *Minneapolis Tribune*, December 8, 1912.

[53] "Unwelcome Negro Neighbor Says He'll Make Trouble," *Minneapolis Tribune*, June 3, 1912.

[54] Boie, "A Study of Conflict and Accommodation in Negro-White Relations in the Twin Cities," 16-17.

[55] Stanley L. McMichael, *McMichael's Appraising Manual,* Second Edition (New York: Prentice-Hall, INC., 1937), 330.

historian H. Lynn Adelsman adds the following point: "...banks often balked at financing home purchases by blacks. Many private banks followed the same guidelines established by the real-estate industry, identifying buyers in mixed-race neighborhoods at the greatest risk for loans."[56] Not only did white homeowners suffer decreased property values when their neighborhoods integrated, but they also faced an increased difficulty in selling their homes, as potential buyers would likely be unable to secure financing.

Boie explained that this threat of economic hardship tended to cause the creation of rumors and myths about the situation in general and the new neighbors in particular. Examples of this can be seen in the 1909 case where the validity of Mr. Malone's training as a minister was questioned, and in the Lee case where many believed that Lee only purchased the property in order to re-sell it at a profit. These types of rumors combined with fears of property depreciation to awaken the latent prejudices held by community members. A particularly potent prejudice in the early twentieth century was held against miscegeny—inter-racial romantic or sexual relations, including marriage—as many believed it was un-Christian. In many places, miscegeny was illegal.[57] Integrating neighborhoods tended to incite this prejudice as people believed that living in close proximity would create more chances for romantic attractions and ultimately marriages to form between the races.

As neighbors came together to discuss their fears and prejudices, these feelings were reinforced and encouraged through social pressure exhibited by the fact that other members of the community held the same fears and prejudices. Boie saw this similarity of thought as giving way to crowd behaviors—when part of a crowd, people take actions that they would have unlikely taken on their own. This can be seen in the housing conflicts in Prospect Park and on Bloomington Avenue, and most remarkably in the Lee case.

Frequently crowd behaviors follow patterns set forth in previous situations. Offering to purchase a property back from a black family, throwing things at homes owned by blacks, and appearing en masse to demand that a family move out of the neighborhood—these were the types of actions that appeared again and again in cases of housing conflicts. Civic leaders, Lena Smith, and the Lees and their supporters had good reason to fear that the demonstrations outside the house at 4600 Columbus Avenue South in the summer of 1931 would erupt into the type of violence seen in the Duluth lynchings or the Sweet case. This also explains why influential actors such as the Minneapolis Police Department and the NAACP were quick to try changing the typical pattern of events by encouraging mediation.

---

[56] Adelsman, "Desegregating South Minneapolis Housing TilsenBilt Homes of 1954," 28.

[57] In *Loving v. Virginia*, 388 U.S. 1 (1967), the United States Supreme Court invalidated laws prohibiting interracial marriage.

Outcomes

The combination of mediation, Lena Olive Smith's assertive and decisive statements in the newspapers, and the substantial police presence at the Lee house combined to discourage any further riots on Columbus Avenue after July 20, 1931. On August 4th, a delegation of 75 residents from the neighborhood protested the continued presence of the Lee family and the police in the neighborhood.[58] Police protection remained at the Lee home until September of 1932, and officers escorted six-year-old Mary to kindergarten for the entire year.[59] Anxious about their continued safety, the family slept in the basement of the house for the entire time they lived on Columbus Avenue South.[60]

Shortly after the police guard was removed from the Lee home, local teenagers once again began harassing the house. One day, after ordering the teens to leave his property, Arthur Lee lost his temper and struck one of the boys. This action drew an angry crowd of around 50 people to the house, reminiscent of the mobs from the previous year. Lee was charged with assault and battery and was again asked by other residents to leave the neighborhood. Lee took the case to court, where Lena Olive Smith represented him once again, arguing for his acquittal, on grounds that he had been forced to endure more than "any reasonable person should be expected to."[61] Lee was found guilty and fined $5.00, however the judge also reprimanded the boy Lee struck, stating that the court did not condone his behavior.

In the end, the Lees remained living in their home at 4600 Columbus Avenue South until late 1933, at which time they felt that they had made their point and relocated to a nearby neighborhood with a higher black population.

Conclusion

The events that took place at the Arthur and Edith Lee House were a turning point in the history of Minneapolis' African American community. The situation reminded people that even in liberal northern cities such as Minneapolis, discrimination and prejudice were chronic issues. The Lee case highlighted the existence of housing discrimination in the city. Furthermore, the case coincided with the beginning of a trend toward action rather than appeasement in NAACP policy[62] that would eventually bring about the Civil Rights Movement of the mid-twentieth century. As Ann Juergens rightly concludes, "Principal was served at significant personal cost, but a battle had been won in the long struggle for fair housing. Since the Lee's courageous stand, Minnesota has not seen white mob demonstrations against housing integration."[63] For these reasons, the Arthur and Edith Lee House is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic

[58] Boie, "A Study of Conflict and Accommodation in Negro-White Relations in the Twin Cities," 16.

[59] Juergens, "Lena Olive Smith: A Minnesota Civil Rights Pioneer," 441.

[60] Sluss, "Lena Olive Smith: Civil Rights in the 1930s," 32.

[61] Ibid., 442.

[62] Sluss, "Lena Olive Smith: Civil Rights in the 1930s," 33.

[63] Juergens, "Lena Olive Smith: A Minnesota Civil Rights Pioneer," 442.

Places as an important cultural heritage site associated with Minneapolis' African American community. The property has significance under Criterion A in the areas of Ethnic Heritage/black, and Social History. The property retains enough historic integrity to convey its significance, particularly as is evidenced by continued academic and public interest in the site.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

"4,000 Assemble Near Negro's Home." *Minneapolis Tribune*, July 17, 1931. Print.

Adelsman, H. Lynn. "Desegregating South Minneapolis Housing TilsenBilt Homes of 1954." *Hennepin History* (Spring 2005): 24-33.

"Another 'Sweet Case' Averted in Minneapolis." *Pittsburgh Courier*, August 8, 1931.

"Arthur Lee Gets Small Fine for Assult on Boy." *Twin City Herald*, October 1, 1932.

Boie, Maurine. "A Study of Conflict and Accommodation in Negro-White Relations in the Twin Cities." Master's thesis, University of Minnesota, 1932.

Boyle, Kevin. *Arc of Justice: A Saga of Race, Civil Rights, and Murder in the Jazz Age.* New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2005.

"Crowd of 3,000 Renews Attack on Negro's Home." *Minneapolis Tribune*, July 16, 1931.

Donofrio, Gregory, ed. *Strike You in Your Soul: Experiences of Race and Place in South Minneapolis.* unpublished. 2013.

"Duluth Lynchings Online Resource." *Minnesota Historical Society*. Accessed August 8, 2013. http://collections.mnhs.org/duluthlynchings/html/lynchings.htm.

"End of Race Row is Believed Near." *Minneapolis Tribune*, July 18, 1931.

Hall, Chatwood. "A Roman Holiday in Minneapolis." *Crisis* (October 1931): 337-339.

"Harriet Negro Trouble is Taken to the Police." *Minneapolis Tribune*, December 29, 1909.

"Historic Resources Inventory: Historic Resources in the Hale, Keewaydin, Ericsson, Field, Page, Minnehaha, Diamond Lake, Wenonah, Morris Park, Regina, Northrop, Corcoran, Bryant, Bancroft and Standish Neighborhoods." Mead & Hunt, INC, for City of Minneapolis. 2010.

"Home Stoned in Race Row: Sale of House to Negro Stirs Neighborhood." *Minneapolis Tribune*, July 15, 1931.

Jurgens, Ann. "Lena Olive Smith: A Minnesota Civil Rights Pioneer." *William Mitchell Law Review* 28, no. 1 (2001): 397-453.

"Lee Home Again Threatened After Trouble with Boys." *Twin City Herald*, September 17, 1932.

"Lee Case Again, Topic as Assault Case is Heard." *Twin City Herald*, September 24,1932.

McMichael, Stanley L. *McMichael's Appraising Manual, Second Edition.* New York: Prentice-Hall, INC., 1937.

Minneapolis Building Permit Index Card for 4600-02 Columbus Avenue, Lot 1 & 2, Block 2, Vinton Heights Addition.

"Minnesota Whites Pay Top Prices to Bar Race." *Pittsburgh Courier*, February 26, 1927.

"Minnesota's Disgrace." *Appeal*, June 19, 1920.

"Mob Stones Home, Parley Scheduled." *Minneapolis Journal*, July 16, 1931.

"Mob Mauls Cop as 3,000 Besiege Minneapolis Negro Home." *Pioneer Press*, July 16, 1931.

"Negro's Lawyer Reports Progress Toward Amity." *Pioneer Press*, July 18, 1931.

"'Race Feud' Makes Trouble for South Side Residents: Health Department Told that One Negro Home is in Insanitary Condition." *Minneapolis Tribune*, December 8, 1912.

"Race War Started in Prospect Park: 'We Do Not Want You,' White Residents Tell the Negroes." *Minneapolis Tribune,* October 22, 1909.

Roise, Charlene, Stephanie K. Atwood, and Marjorie Pearson. "Prospect Park Residential Historic District." National Register of Historic Places Nomination (draft). 2012. Available online: http://www.pperr.org/.

Pearson, Marjorie. "South Minneapolis: An Historic Context." Hesse, Roise and Company for Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission. 2000.

Schmid, Calvin F. *Social Saga of Two Cities: An Ecological and Statistical Study of Social Trends in Minneapolis and St. Paul.* Minneapolis: The Minneapolis Council of Social Agencies, 1937.

Sluss, Jackie. "Lena Olive Smith: Civil Rights in the 1930s". *Hennepin History*, (Winter 1995): 28-34.

"Smith, Lena O., House." National Register of Historic Places Nomination. 1991. Record Number 417016. Item Number 91001472.

"Throng Still Perils Negro in Mill City." *Pioneer Press,* July 17, 1931.

"Unwelcome Negro Neighbor Says He'll Make Trouble." *Minneapolis Tribune*, June 3, 1912.

Vine, Phyllis. *One Man's Castle: Clarence Darrow in Defense of the American Dream.* New York: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc., 2004.

"Whites Plan Corporation to Buy Homes of Negroes." *Minneapolis Tribune*, February 6, 1910.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

____ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
____ previously listed in the National Register
____previously determined eligible by the National Register
____designated a National Historic Landmark
____ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #_____
____recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
____ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

____ State Historic Preservation Office
____ Other State agency
____ Federal agency
____ Local government
__x_ University
__x_ Other
Name of repository: __Hennepin County Library: Minneapolis History Collection

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): __HE-MPC-9739__

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 0.16 Acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates
Datum if other than WGS84:_____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)
1. Latitude: Longitude:

Or
UTM References
Datum (indicated on USGS map):

☐ NAD 1927 or ☒ NAD 1983

1. Zone: 15 Easting: 479153 mE Northing: 4974047 mN

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The property is a single city lot located at the southwest corner of the intersection of 46th Street East and Columbus Avenue South in the City of Minneapolis.

The boundary begins at the southwest corner of the intersection of 46th Street East and Columbus Avenue South, extending southerly along Columbus Avenue. The boundary continues southerly until reaching the legal property line, which can be visually identified by a change in ground cover plantings. Here, the boundary turns 90 degrees to the west and continues westerly until reaching the alley, where the boundary turns 90 degrees to the north. The boundary extends northerly until it reaches 46th Street East, where it turns 90 degrees to the east and continues easterly until returning to the corner of Columbus Avenue South and 46th Street East.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)
The boundary contains the legal parcel associated with Property ID 1402824220180, as defined by the City of Minneapolis.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Laurel Fritz and Greg Donofrio
organization: School of Architecture, University of Minnesota
street & number: 89 Church Street SE
city or town: Minneapolis state: MN zip code: 55455
e-mail donofrio@umn.edu
telephone: 612.626.1107
date: 1.19.14

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Arthur and Edith Lee House

City or Vicinity: Minneapolis

County: Hennepin State: Minnesota

Photographer: Laurel Fritz (Images 1,5), Greg Donofrio (Images 2-4,6,7-12)

Date Photographed: June 15, 2013 (Images 1,5), November 28, 2012 (Images 2-4,6,7-12)

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

Photo #1 (MN_Hennepin County_Arthur and Edith Lee House_0001)
East façade, general view from west across Columbus Avenue South

Photo #2 (MN_Hennepin County_Arthur and Edith Lee House_0002)
North façade, general view from north edge of property

Photo #3 (MN_Hennepin County_Arthur and Edith Lee House_0003)
West and South façades, general view from southwest

Photo #4 (MN_Hennepin County_Arthur and Edith Lee House_0004)
South façade, general view from southeast

Photo #5 (MN_Hennepin County_Arthur and Edith Lee House_0005)
Garage, west end of property, abutting the alley that intersects 46th Street South, general view from north.

Photo #6 (MN_Hennepin County_Arthur and Edith Lee House_0006)
Memorial, northeast edge of property, view from east

Photo #7 (MN_Hennepin County_Arthur and Edith Lee House_0007)
Living room, view from south/circulation space

Photo #8 (MN_Hennepin County_Arthur and Edith Lee House_0008)
Dining room, view from east/circulation space

Photo #9 (MN_Hennepin County_Arthur and Edith Lee House_0009)
Kitchen and dining room, view from north/center of kitchen. Note original cabinetry.

Photo #10 (MN_Hennepin County_Arthur and Edith Lee House_0010)
Kitchen detail. Note original farmhouse sink.

Photo #11 (MN_Hennepin County_Arthur and Edith Lee House_0011)
Hall accessing private spaces. View from north.

Photo #12 (MN_Hennepin County_Arthur and Edith Lee House_0012)
Architectural details, woodwork.

Photo Key

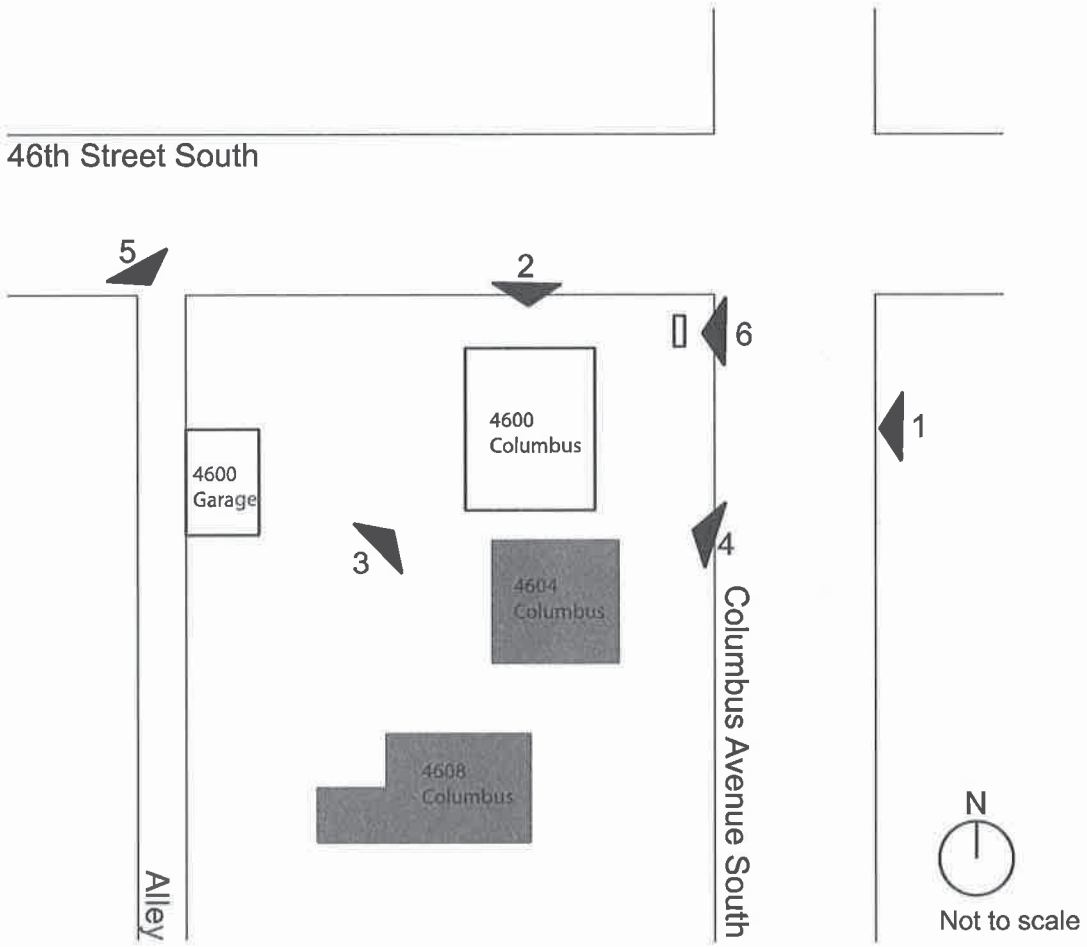


Figure 1: Site plan and exterior photo key.

Photo Key

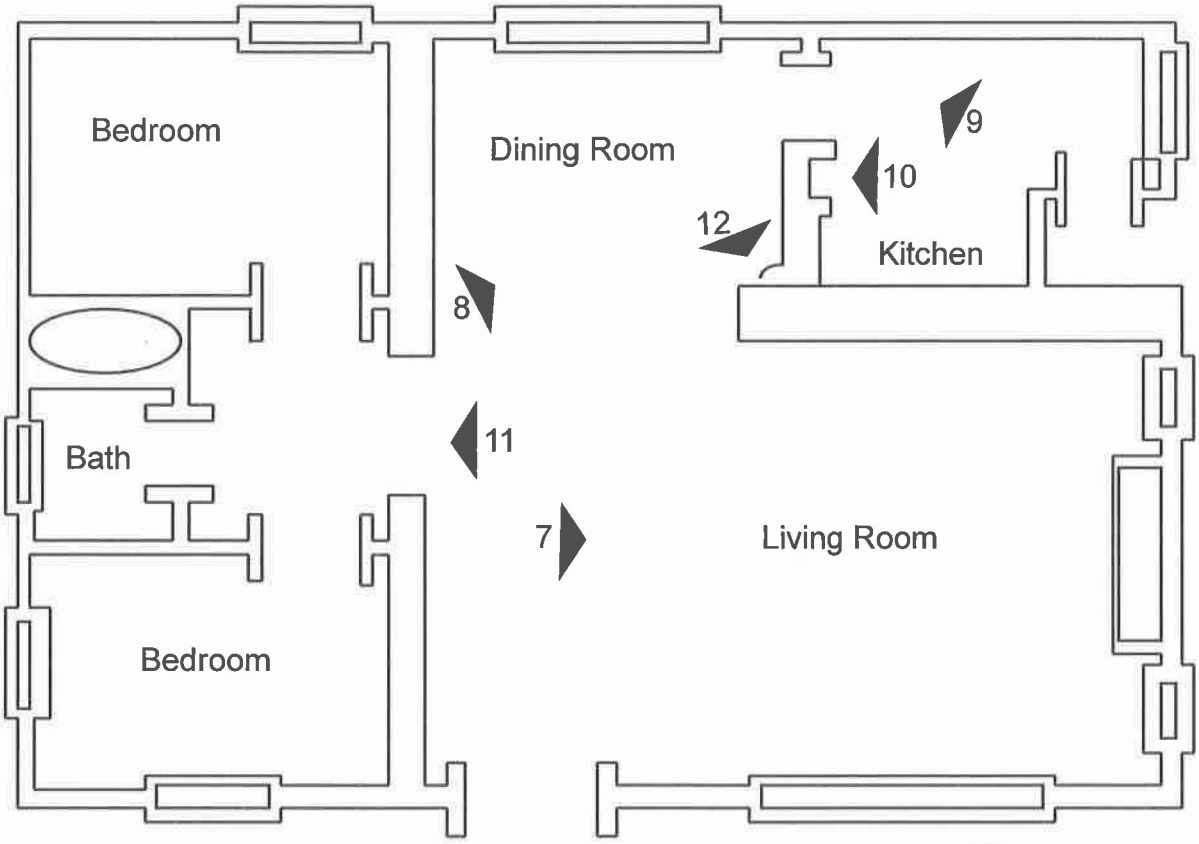


Photo Locations: 4600 Columbus Avenue South, Ground Level

Not to scale

Plan drawing by author, based on plan drawing by Iran Mejia, ARCH 4671 | Fall 2012

Figure 2: Floor plan and interior photo key.

Additional Documentation

Arthur and Edith Lee House, Minneapolis, Hennepin County, Minnesota

UTM Reference:
Zone 15
479153mE
4974047mN

Figure 3: Geographical map. Map sources: USGS Minneapolis South Quadrangle, Minnesota, 7.5 minute series, 2010.

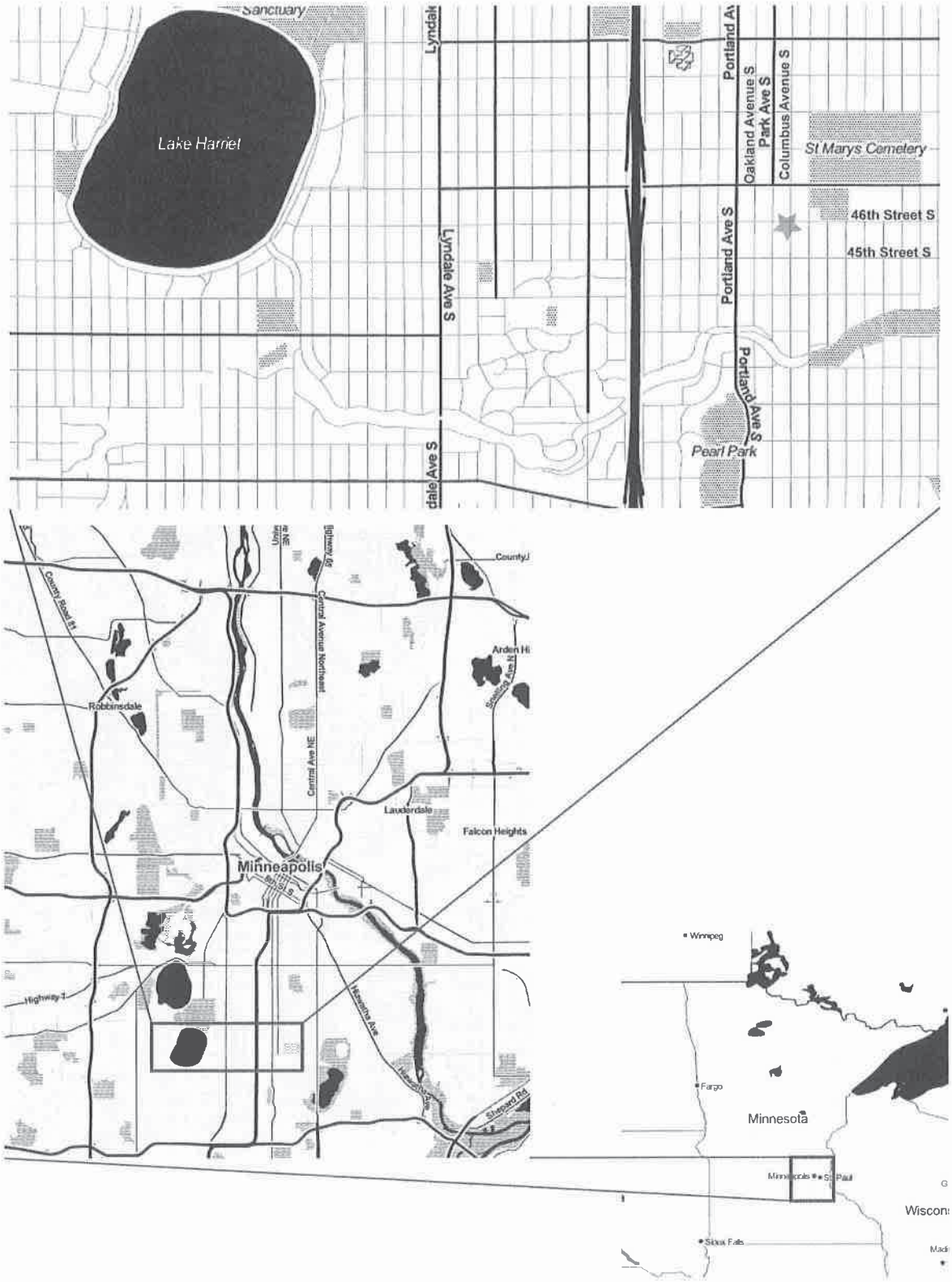


Figure 4: Context maps, location of Lee house. Base maps source: Stamen Design (maps.stamen.com)

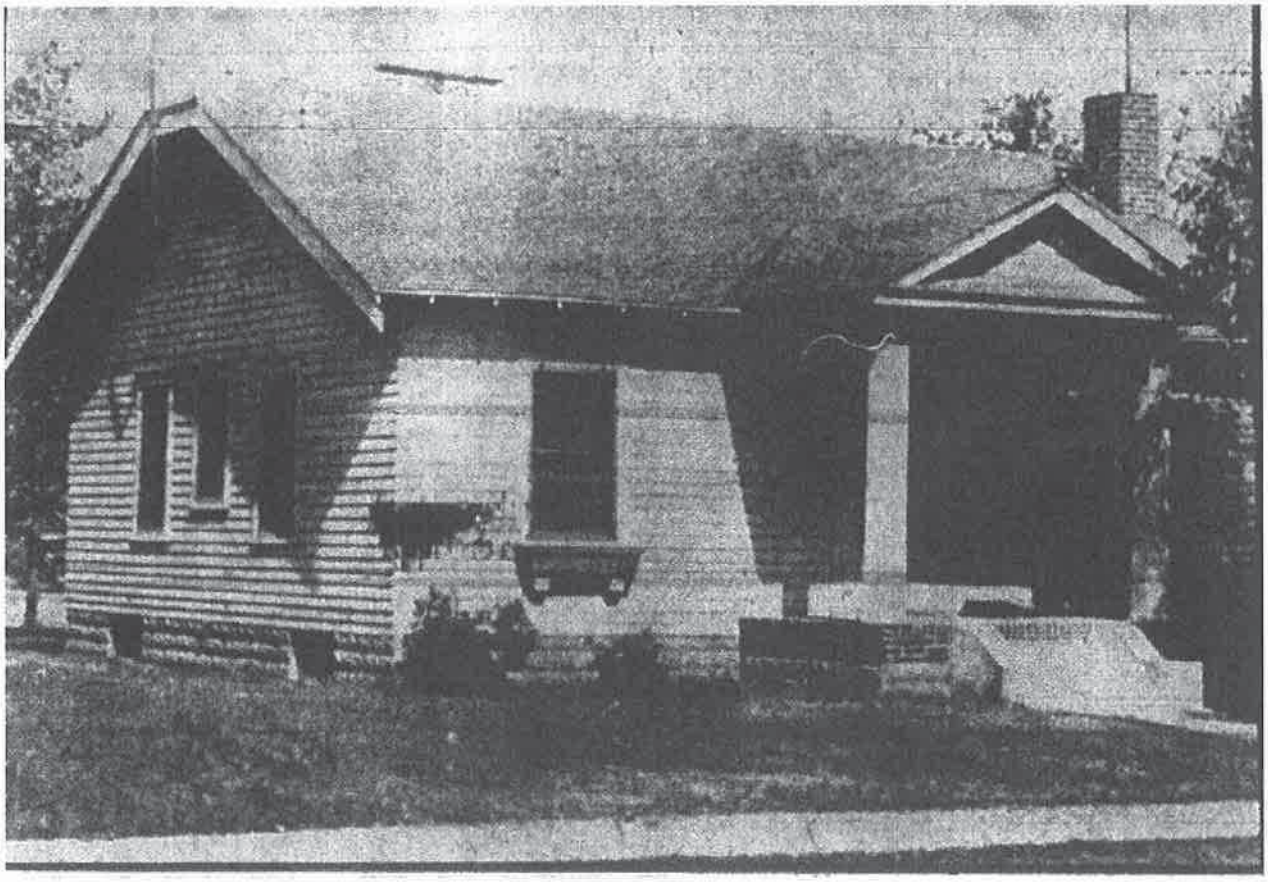


Figure 5: Lee home splattered with black paint.
Source: "Crowd of 3,000 Renews Attack on Negro's Home," *Minneapolis Tribune,* July 16, 1931.

The Minneapolis Mob
A few of the thousands of white citizens who for a week tried to drive a colored man from his own home

Figure 6: Minneapolis mob assembled outside the Lee house.
Source: Hall, Chatwood. "A Roman Holiday in Minneapolis." *Crisis* (October 1931): 338.

Figure 7: October 1931 cover of *The Crisis*.

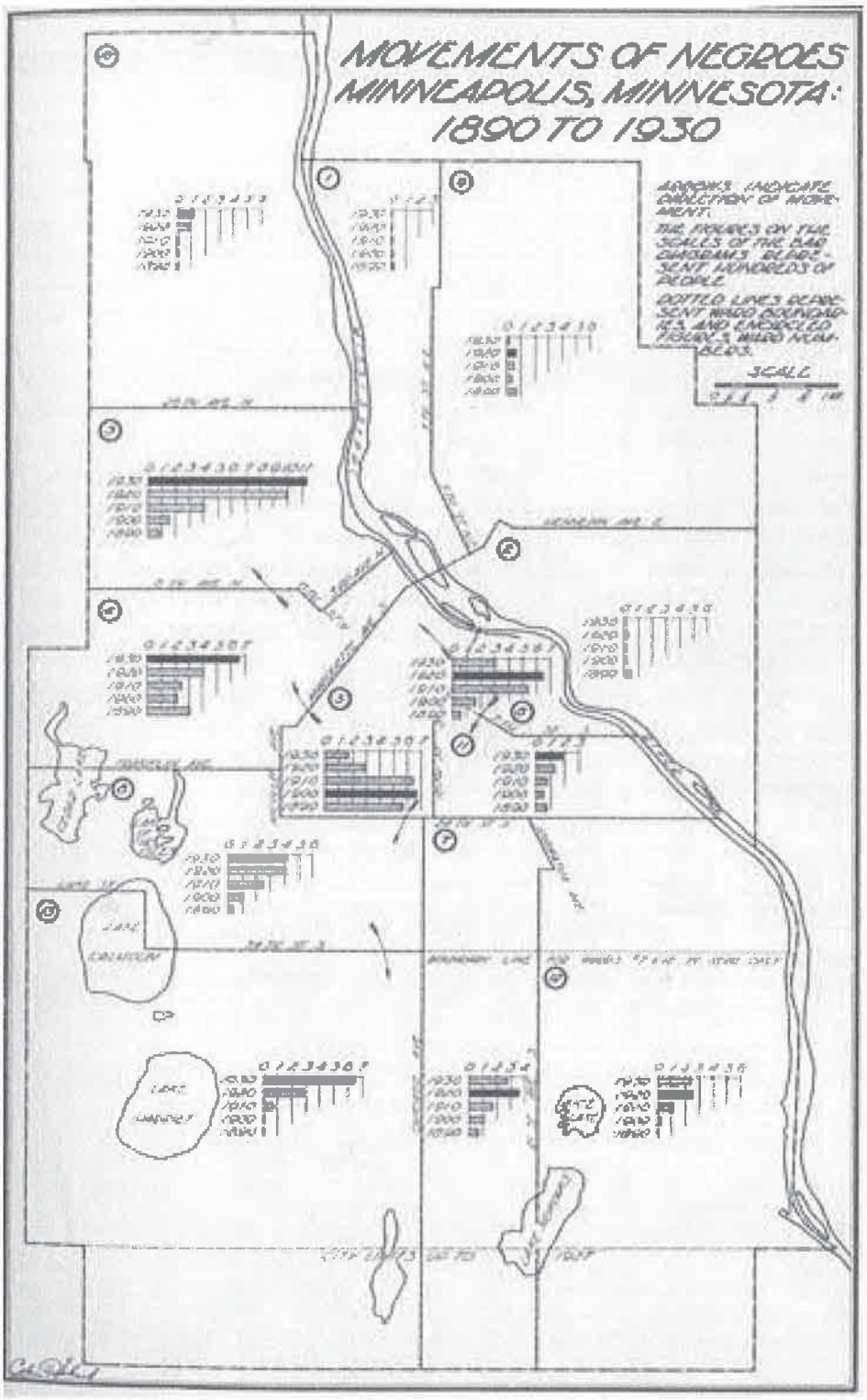


Figure 8: 1937 map, "Movements of Negroes Minneapolis, Minnesota: 1890 to 1930." Source: Schmid, Calvin F. *Social Saga of Two Cities: An Ecological and Statistical Study of Social Trends in Minneapolis and St. Paul.* Minneapolis: The Minneapolis Council of Social Agencies, 1937. p.

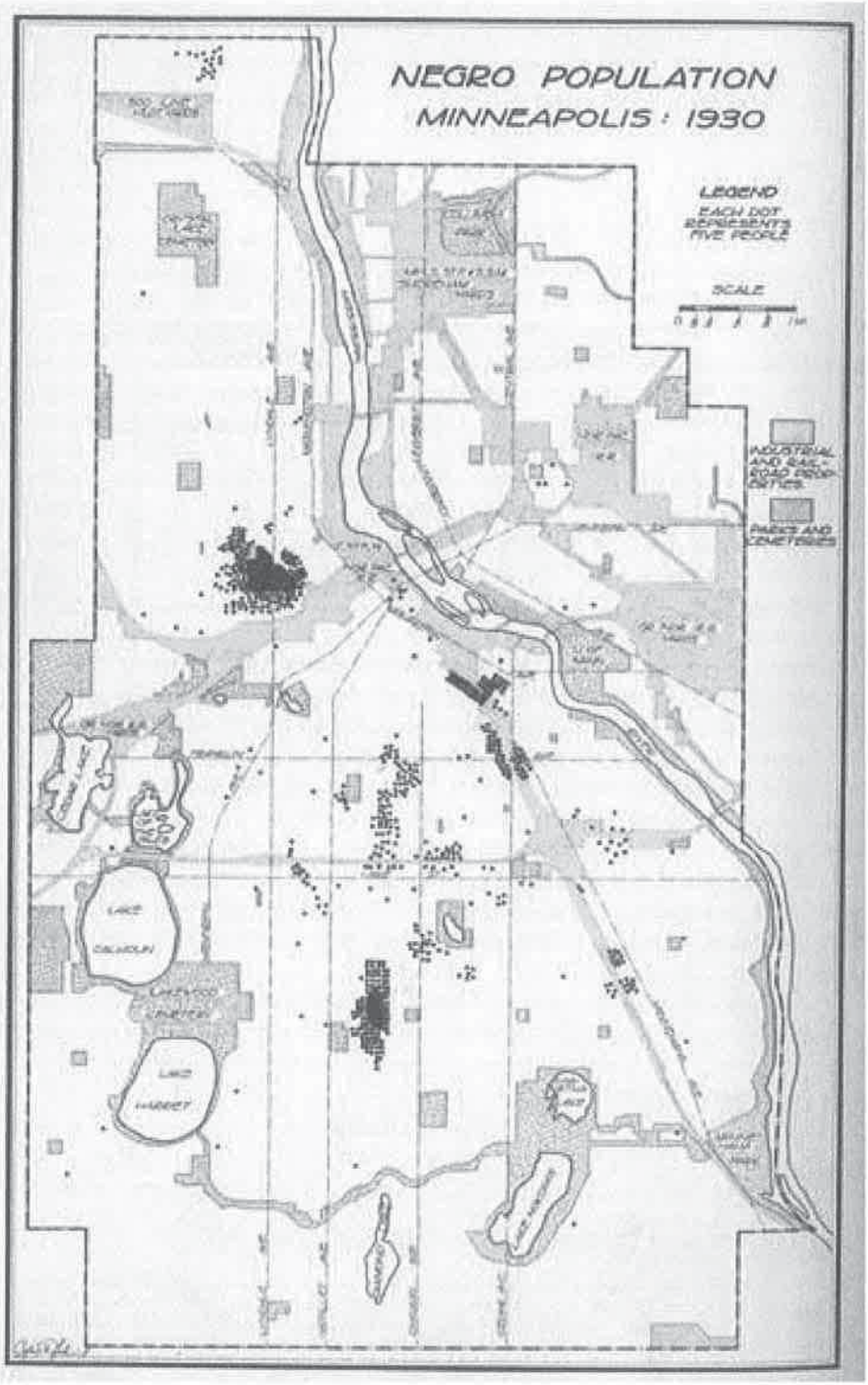


Figure 9: 1937 map, "Negro Population Minneapolis: 1930."
Source: Schmid, Calvin F. *Social Saga of Two Cities: An Ecological and Statistical Study of Social Trends in Minneapolis and St. Paul.* Minneapolis: The Minneapolis Council of Social Agencies, 1937.

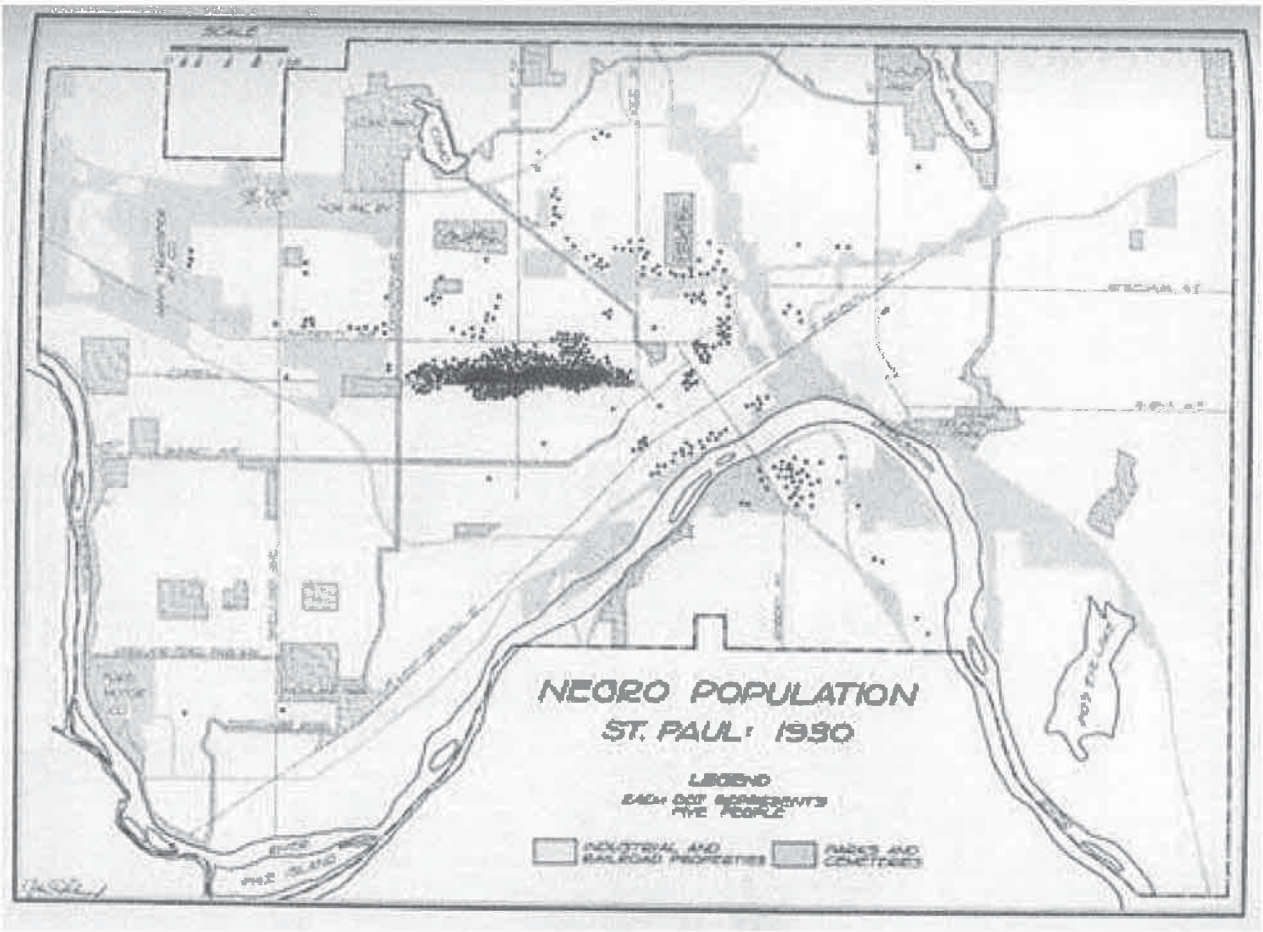


Figure 10: 937 map, "Negro Population St. Paul: 1930."
Source: Schmid, Calvin F. *Social Saga of Two Cities: An Ecological and Statistical Study of Social Trends in Minneapolis and St. Paul.* Minneapolis: The Minneapolis Council of Social Agencies, 1937.

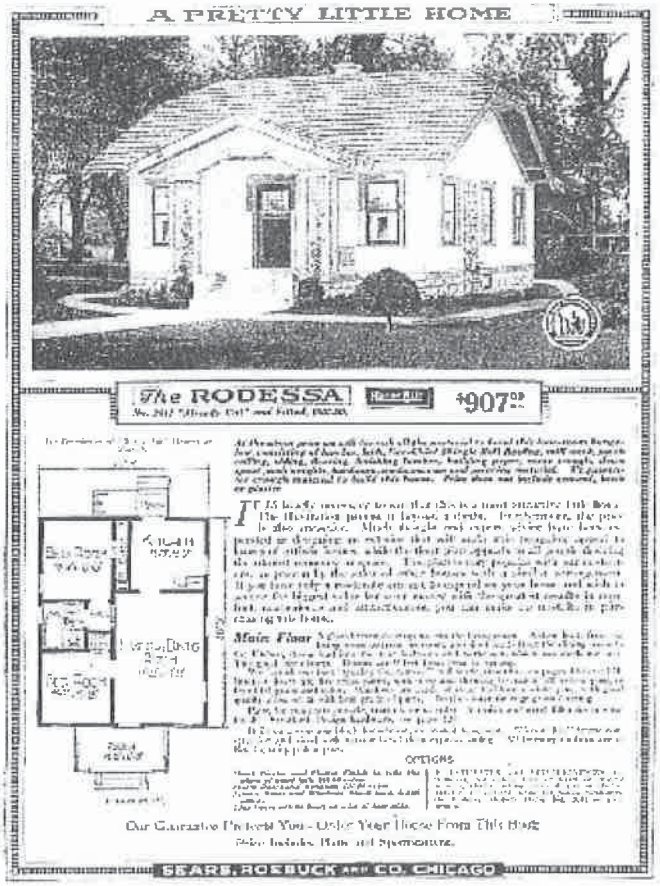


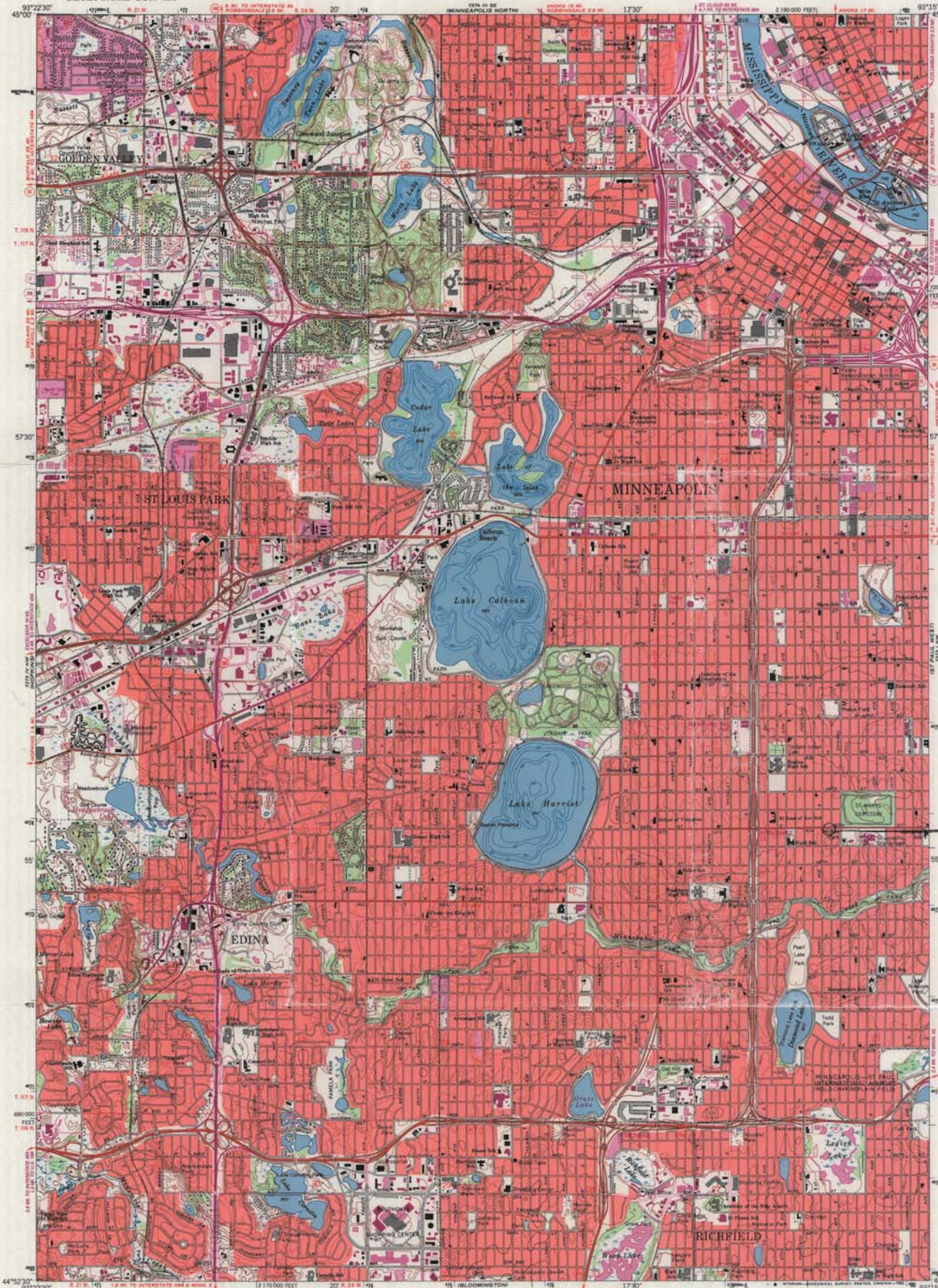
Figure 11: Ad from "Honor Bilt Modern Homes," Sears Roebuck and Company, 1923.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management. U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

MINNEAPOLIS SOUTH QUADRANGLE
MINNESOTA-HENNEPIN CO.
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)



Produced by the United States Geological Survey

Control by USGS, NOS/NOAA and USCE

Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1947. Field checked 1952. Revised from aerial photographs taken 1966. Field checked 1967. Map edited 1967

Hydrography compiled from information furnished by Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

Projection and 10,000-foot grid ticks: Minnesota coordinate system, south zone (Lambert conformal conic)
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 15, shown in blue
1927 North American Datum (NAD 27)

North American Datum of 1983 (NAD 83) is shown by dashed corner ticks
The values of the shift between NAD 27 and NAD 83 for 7.5-minute intersections are given in USGS Bulletin 1875

Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown

SCALE 1:24 000

CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY
DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

Revisions shown in purple and woodland compiled in cooperation with State of Minnesota agencies from aerial photographs taken 1991 and other sources. This information not field checked. Map edited 1993

ROAD CLASSIFICATION
Heavy-duty — Light-duty
Medium-duty — Unimproved dirt
Interstate Route — U.S. Route — State Route

QUADRANGLE LOCATION

MINNEAPOLIS SOUTH, MINN.
44093-H3-TF-024
1967
REVISED 1993
DMA 7373 IV NE-SERIES V872

USGS NPS ILLUSTRATED MAP ARCHIVES
AUG 17 1993
REC'D FILE COPY

vivint

4600

"Nobody asked me to
move out when I was
in France fighting in
mud and water for this
country. I came out here
to make this house my
home.
I have a right to
establish a home"
—Arthur Lee
July 16,

ENIOR
ELPLINE
29-5499

APPENDIX B: ACTION INITIATING NOMINATION

NOMINATION APPLICATION WORKSHEET

Applicant *This person will be the primary contact for staff*	Name	Elizabeth Glidden
	Mailing Address Including City, State and Zip Code	City Hall Room 307 350 South 5th Street Minneapolis, MN 55415
	Phone Number	612-673-2208
	Fax	
	Email	elizabeth.glidden@minneapolismn.gov
Property Owner	Name	Pearl Lindstrom, C/O Kathleen McClure
	Mailing Address Including City, State and Zip Code	PO Box 10 Mound, MN 55364
	Phone Number	
	Fax	
	Email	
Property Information	Address(es)	4600 Columbus Avenue South
	Identification Number(s)	14-028-24-22-0180
	Legal Description	Lots 1 and 2, Block 2, Vinton Heights Addition to Minneapolis
Historic or Current Name of Property *(If applicable)*	Arthur and Edith Lee House	

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.

Applicant's name and signature — Date: 12/7/15

- 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.
- Development Services staff may identify additional applications upon further analysis of the proposed project.

APPENDIX C: NOMINATION STAFF REPORT

CPED STAFF REPORT

Prepared for the Heritage Preservation Commission 1
HPC Agenda Item #2
January 5, 2016
BZH-28977

HERITAGE PRESERVATION APPLICATION SUMMARY

Property Location:	4600 Columbus Avenue South
Project Name:	Arthur and Edith Lee House Nomination
Prepared By:	Lisa Steiner, Senior City Planner, (612) 673-3950
Applicant:	Council Member Elizabeth Glidden
Project Contact:	Lisa Steiner
Ward:	8
Neighborhood:	Field; adjacent to Regina
Request:	Nomination for designation as a historic landmark

HISTORIC PROPERTY INFORMATION

Current Name	Lindstrom Residence
Historic Name	Arthur and Edith Lee House
Historic Address	4600 Columbus Avenue South
Original Construction Date	1923
Original Owner	J.L. Rose
Original Architect	N/A
Original Builder	J.A. Heinsch
Historic Use	Residence
Current Use	Residence
Proposed Use	No change
Other Historical Designations	National Register of Historic Places – Listed 2014

SUMMARY

BACKGROUND. Council Member Elizabeth Glidden (Ward 8) has submitted a nomination to designate 4600 Columbus Avenue South, the Arthur and Edith Lee House, as a historic landmark. CPED has received the nomination and is bringing it forward for the Heritage Preservation Commission's consideration. In 2014, the property was listed in the National Register of Historic Places for its association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history. The property was identified to be significant at the state level.

The subject property is located at the southwest corner of the intersection of Columbus Avenue South and East 46th Street. The property includes a one-story single-family home that was constructed in 1923 and a single-car garage that was built in 1950. The single-story Craftsman home is currently clad in horizontal metal siding and has an original modest Classical Revival front entry. While some alterations have occurred to the home since its construction, these are limited to window replacement, new siding covering the original clapboard siding, and the construction of a wheelchair-accessible ramp. A plaque memorializing the 1931 protests is located at the northeast corner of the lot.

PUBLIC COMMENTS. Staff has not received any comments at the time of the publication of this staff report. Any correspondence received prior to the public meeting will be forwarded on to the Heritage Preservation Commission for consideration.

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 property appears to meet at least one of the seven criteria for designation contained in section 599.210:

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

   The home at 4600 Columbus Avenue South was constructed in 1923[1]. In the summer of 1931, Arthur and Edith Lee, an African-American couple purchased the home. Subsequently, a series of racially-motivated and threatening riots occurred in an attempt to intimidate the couple to move out of their newly purchased home. The riots escalated to the point of 4,000 rioters gathering outside the house on July 16, 1931.[2] The Lees refused to move, with Arthur Lee stating in a *Minneapolis*

[1] City of Minneapolis Building Permit #B171467, 4600 Columbus Ave, 1923.
[2] Laurel Fritz and Greg Donofrio, "Arthur and Edith Lee House," *National Register of Historic Places Registration Form,* May 2014, http://www.nps.gov/nr/feature/places/pdfs/14000391.pdf, section 8 page 11.

Tribune interview, "I came out here to make this house my home. I have a right to establish a home."[3]

Despite the riots, the Lee family continued to live in the house until 1933. The highly publicized protests at the Arthur and Edith Lee House have been identified as some of the largest racially-motivated demonstrations in Minnesota history.[4]

The Arthur and Edith Lee House at 4600 Columbus Avenue South is associated with the significant events of these 1931 riots, as well as with broad patterns of social history, particularly in regard to African-American history in Minneapolis, race relations, and historical trends of housing discrimination.

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

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Department of Community Planning and Economic Development recommends that the Heritage Preservation Commission adopt staff findings for the nomination by Council Member Elizabeth Glidden for the property at 4600 Columbus Avenue South for designation as a landmark:

A. Nomination for Designation as a Landmark.

Recommended motion: **Approve** the nomination of 4600 Columbus Avenue South as a landmark; **establish** interim protection; and **direct** the Planning Director to prepare or cause to be prepared a designation study.

ATTACHMENTS

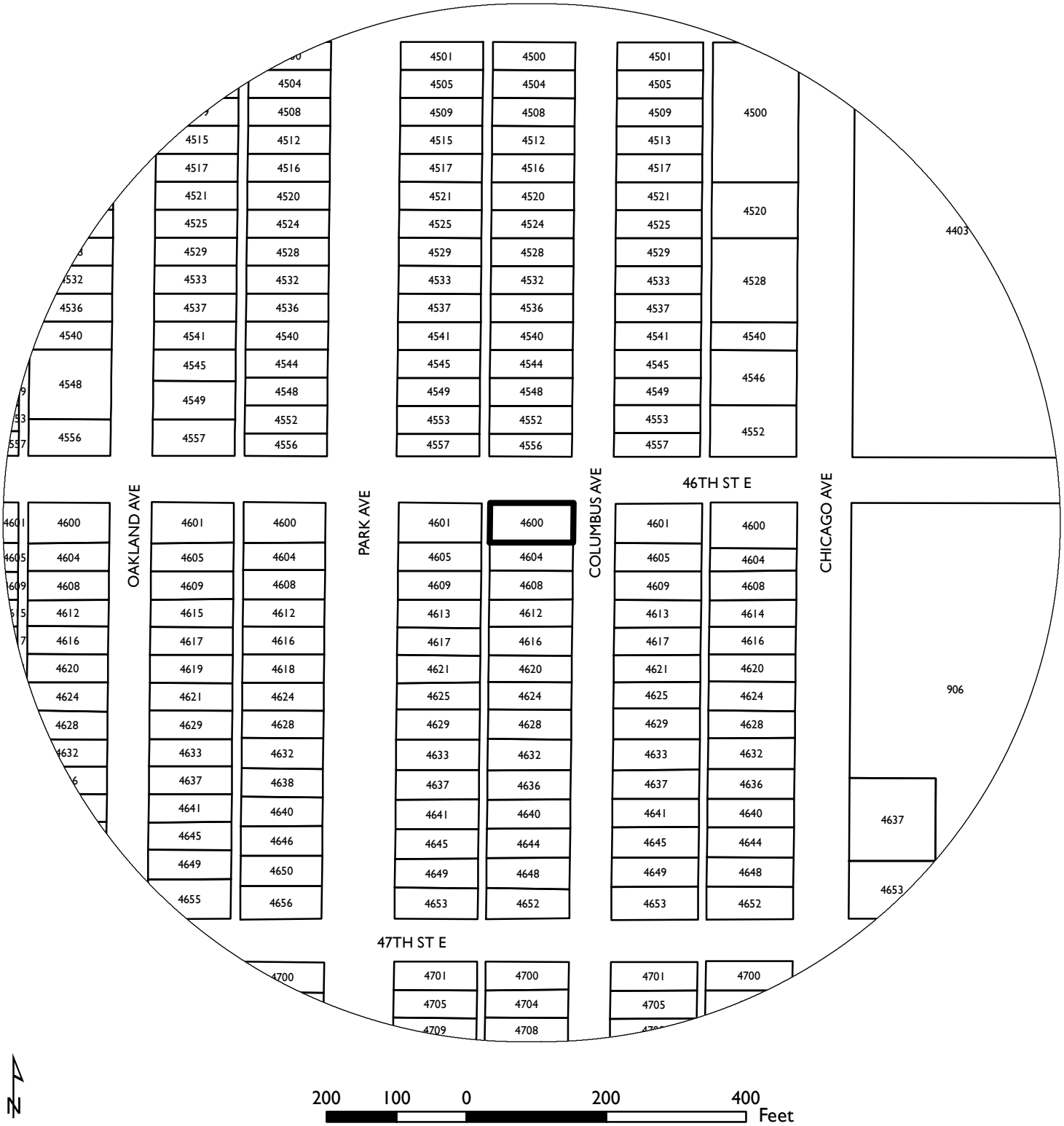
1. Nomination

[3] "Home Stoned in Race Row: Sale of House to Negro Stirs Neighborhood," *Minneapolis Tribune,* July 15, 1931, quoted in Laurel Fritz and Greg Donofrio, "Arthur and Edith Lee House," *National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*, May 2014, http://www.nps.gov/nr/feature/places/pdfs/14000391.pdf, section 8 page 13-14.

[4] National Park Service, "Lee, Arthur and Edith, House," *National Register of Historic Places Program,* http://www.nps.gov/nr/feature/places/14000391.htm.

Council Member Elizabeth Glidden **8th**

NAME OF APPLICANT WARD



PROPERTY ADDRESS

4600 Columbus Avenue South

STATEMENT DESCRIBING THE APPLICANT'S RELATIONSHIP TO THE PROPERTY TO BE DESIGNATED. THIS STATEMENT SHOULD INDICATE THE APPLICANT'S INTEREST IN OR ASSOCIATION WITH THIS PROPERTY.

This property is located within Ward 8. The applicant is the representative for that ward, Council Member Elizabeth Glidden.

STATEMENT DESCRIBING HOW THE PROPERTY MEETS AT LEAST ONE OF THE CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION AS A LANDMARK OR HISTORIC DISTRICT CONTAINED IN SECTION 599.210 OF THE HERITAGE PRESERVATION REGULATIONS.

The Arthur and Edith Lee House was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2014 for its association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history. The property was identified to be significant at the state level.

At a minimum, the property appears to meet at least one of the local criteria for designation, namely for its association with significant events or with periods that exemplify broad pattern of cultural, political, or economic history (Criterion #1). The property was the site of threatening riots that took place in the summer of 1931. Arthur and Edith Lee, an African-American couple, purchased the home at 4600 Columbus Avenue South in June 1931, which incited a series of menacing protests that attempted to intimidate the couple to move out of their newly purchased home. The riots escalated until ultimately a mob of 4,000 people gathered on July 16, 1931. The Lees refused to leave their home and continued to live there until 1933. The site is significant within the context of social history, African-American history in Minneapolis, race relations, and historical trends of housing discrimination. The site is also significant due to the involvement of Lena Olive Smith, a lawyer and President of NAACP.

STATEMENT DESCRIBING THE PHYSICAL CONDITION OF THE PROPERTY AND WHETHER THE PROPERTY RETAINS INTEGRITY (I.E. THE ABILITY TO COMMUNICATE ITS HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE AS EVIDENT IN ITS LOCATION, DESIGN, SETTING, MATERIALS, WORKMANSHIP, FEELING AND ASSOCIATION).

The subject property is located at the southwest corner of the intersection of Columbus Avenue South and 46th Street East. The property includes a one-story single-family home that was constructed in 1923 and a single-car garage that was built in 1950. The single-story Craftsman home is currently clad in horizontal metal siding and has an original modest Classical Revival front entry. While some alterations have occurred to the home since its construction, these are limited to window replacement, new siding covering the original clapboard siding, and the construction of a wheelchair-accessible ramp. These changes are reversible and the property is in good to excellent physical condition. A plaque memorializing the 1931 protests is located at the northwest corner of the lot. The property appears to retain integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association.

Exterior Photos - 4600 Columbus Avenue South

Photos from National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (2014)

West Elevation

North Elevation

East Elevation

South Elevation

Garage - built 1950

Plaque commemorating events of 1931

APPENDIX D: HPC ACTIONS FROM NOMINATION HEARING

MINNEAPOLIS HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION

REGULAR MEETING ACTIONS: TUESDAY, JANUARY 05, 2016

4:30 p.m. | City Hall, Room 317 | 350 South 5th Street | Minneapolis, MN 55415

Committee Clerk
Fatimat Porter – 612.673.3153

Commissioners
Laura Faucher, Chair | Paul Bengtson | Chris Hartnett | Susan Hunter Weir
Ginny Lackovic | Linda Mack | Dan Olson | Ian Stade | Constance Vork

CALL TO ORDER

APPROVAL OF ACTIONS FROM THE DECEMBER 15, 2015 MEETING

The Heritage Preservation Commission approved the actions from the December 15, 2015 meeting.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

ACTION ITEM

1. **Arthur and Edith Lee House, Ward 8**
   Staff report by Lisa Steiner, BZH 28977

   The Department of Community Planning and Economic Development recommends that the Heritage Preservation Commission adopt staff findings for the nomination by Council Member Elizabeth Glidden for the property at 4600 Columbus Avenue South for designation as a landmark:

   A. Nomination for Designation as a Landmark.

   Action: The Heritage Preservation Commission **approved** the nomination of 4600 Columbus Avenue as a landmark; **established** interim protection; and **directed** the Planning Director to prepare or cause to be prepared a designation study.

Absent: Lackovic
Aye: Bengtson, Faucher, Hartnett, Hunter Weir, Mack, Olson, Stade, Vork
Motion passed