

**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**

<b>Current Name</b>	Lindstrom Residence
<b>Historic Name</b>	Arthur and Edith Lee House
<b>Historic Address</b>	4600 Columbus Avenue South
<b>Original Construction Date</b>	1923
<b>Original Owner</b>	J.L. Rose
<b>Original Architect</b>	N/A
<b>Original Builder</b>	J.A. Heinsch
<b>Historic Use</b>	Residence
<b>Current Use</b>	Residence
<b>Proposed Use</b>	No change
<b>Other Historical Designations</b>	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 46<sup>th</sup> 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<sup>1</sup>. 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.<sup>2</sup> The Lees refused to move, with Arthur Lee stating in a *Minneapolis*

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<sup>1</sup> City of Minneapolis Building Permit #B171467, 4600 Columbus Ave, 1923.

<sup>2</sup> 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.”<sup>3</sup>

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.<sup>4</sup>

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

### I. Nomination

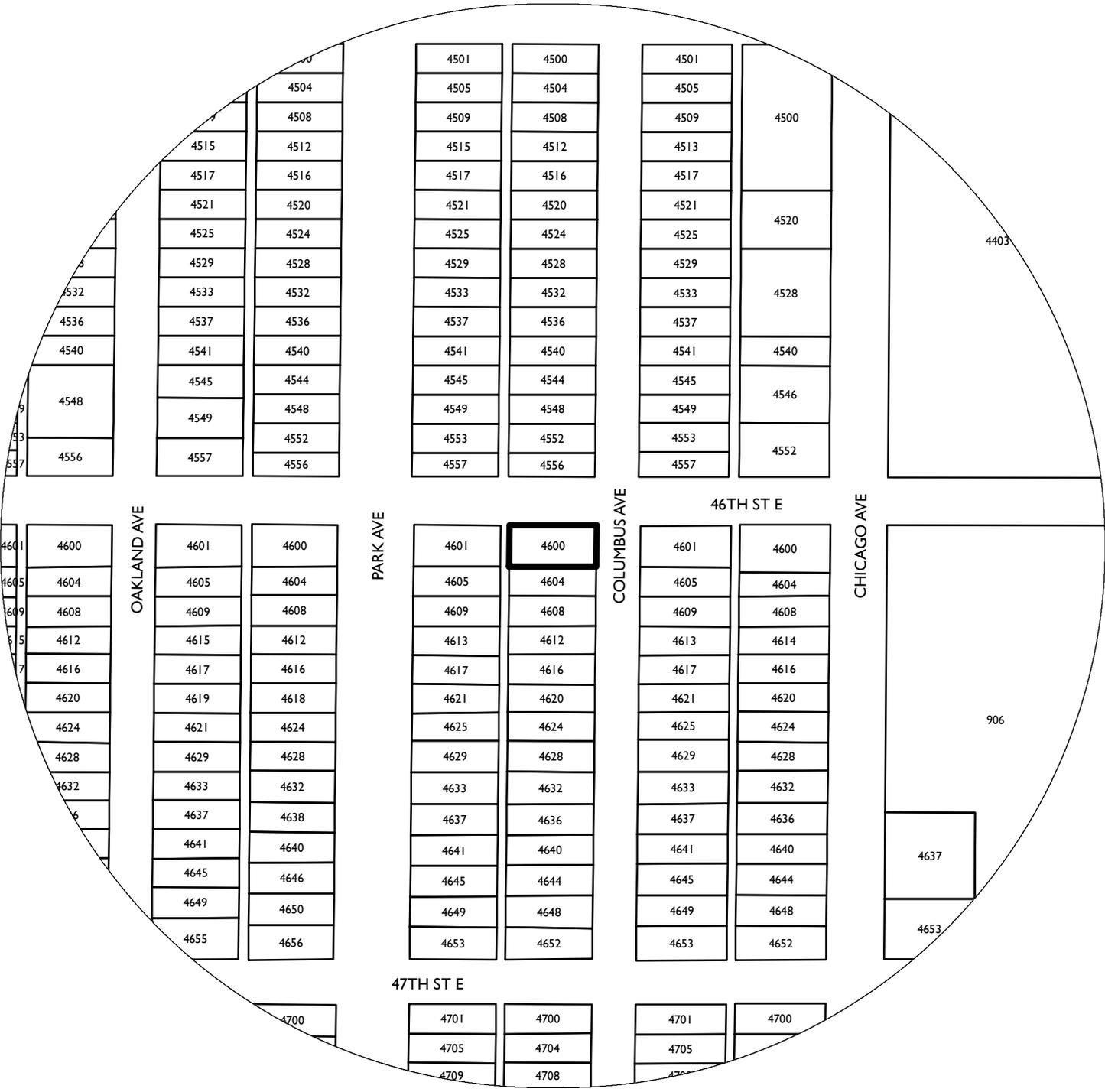
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<sup>3</sup> “Home Stoned in Race Row: Sale of House to Negro Stirs Neighborhood,” *Minneapolis Tribune*, July 15, 1931, quoted in Laurel Fritz and Greg Donofrio, “Arthur and Edith Lee House,” *National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*,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

<sup>4</sup> National Park Service, “Lee, Arthur and Edith, House,” *National Register of Historic Places Program*, <http://www.nps.gov/nr/feature/places/14000391.htm>.

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 46<sup>th</sup> 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