

HERITAGE PRESERVATION APPLICATION SUMMARY

Property Location: See Attached
Project Name: Tilsenbilt Homes Potential Historic District
Prepared By: Andrew Frenz, City Planner, (612) 673-3790, with Dr. John Smoley, Senior City Planner
Applicant: Council Vice-President Elizabeth Glidden
Project Contact: Andrew Frenz
Ward: 8
Neighborhood: Bryant, Regina, Field
Request: Nomination for designation as a local historic district.

HISTORIC PROPERTY INFORMATION

Current Name	Tilsenbilt Homes Potential Historic District
Historic Name	Tilsenbilt Homes
Historic Address	See Attached
Original Construction Date	1954-1956
Original Owner	Various
Original Architect	Norman R. Johnson
Original Builder	Edward N. Tilsen
Historic Use	Single-family residential
Current Use	Single-family residential
Proposed Use	Single-family residential
Other Historical Designations	None

Date Application Deemed Complete	February 22, 2015	Date Extension Letter Sent	
End of 60-Day Decision Period		End of 120-Day Decision Period	

4248 3 rd Avenue South	4453 4 th Avenue South
501 45 th Street East	4456 4 th Avenue South
3904 4 th Avenue South	4457 4 th Avenue South
3912 4 th Avenue South	4505 4 th Avenue South
4117 4 th Avenue South	3928 5 th Avenue South
4203 4 th Avenue South	4024 5 th Avenue South
4231 4 th Avenue South	4045 5 th Avenue South
4417 4 th Avenue South	4544 5 th Avenue South
4429 4 th Avenue South	4556 5 th Avenue South
4440 4 th Avenue South	4629 5 th Avenue South
4452 4 th Avenue South	

Prior to the passage of the Fair Housing Act in 1968, housing discrimination based on factors such as race or religion was commonplace, and often encouraged by the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) and the U.S. Department of Veteran’s Affairs (VA). Restrictive deed covenants and red-lining policies of realtor’s associations and major lenders fed the growth of housing segregation, particularly during the housing crisis that followed World War II. During this period, African Americans in Minneapolis were particularly affected. African Americans found that very few realtors or banks would allow them to purchase homes outside of established black neighborhoods, mostly concentrated along the 6th Avenue North and 4th Avenue South corridors. Between 1946 and 1952, over 9,500 single-family homes and duplexes were constructed in Minneapolis, of which only twelve were sold to African American buyers. At the same time, Minneapolis’ black population increased 60% between 1940 and 1950.¹This created a severe shortage of quality housing for black Minneapolitans, and allowed them to be exploited by realtors, who often charged significantly more for homes available to African Americans.

In an effort to combat this problem, the Minneapolis Urban League encouraged black realtors to work with the FHA to develop a new model for integrated commercial building projects. Up-and-coming realtor Archie Givens assembled 63 lots bounded by East 39th Street, East 47th Street, 5th Avenue South, and 3rd Avenue South. Although these lots were located just south of the large African American community in the 4th Avenue corridor, only two black families were living south of 42nd Street at the time. Mr. Givens recruited Edward Tilsen, owner of Tilsenbilt Homes, as the builder for the project.²

Contemporary sources agree that 63 lots were involved in the project. Staff has located 66 lots that were owned by Tilsen in the project area, 53 of which contain homes built by Tilsenbilt Homes between 1954 and 1956.

PUBLIC COMMENTS. To date, no comments specific to the nomination application have been received by staff. Any correspondence received prior to the public meeting will be forwarded on to the Heritage Preservation Commission for consideration.

Prior to the nomination, three community meetings with Tilsenbilt homeowners and their near neighbors were conducted by the Ward 8 office, with help from the Field Regina Northrup Neighborhood Group (FRNNG) and CPED. Additional meetings have been conducted between the Ward 8 office, CPED, FRNNG, and the Bryant Neighborhood Organization. The Ward 8 office has also conducted an extensive door-knocking and mailing campaign.

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 Tilsenbilt Homes Potential Historic District appears to be significant under criterion one for its association with the Civil Rights Movement and its position as the first FHA-backed racially-integrated housing development in the United States. Although a small handful of racially-integrated commercial developments had been constructed elsewhere in the country prior to the Tilsenbilt Homes, the Tilsenbilt Homes still appear to be significant as the first integrated commercial housing development to be supported by the FHA.³ When the FHA was formed, its first Underwriting Manual explicitly advocated in favor of racial covenants, a policy which continued explicitly through 1949 and implicitly through 1962.⁴ As the first federally-supported integrated commercial housing project in the country, the Tilsenbilt Homes were an important step towards eliminating housing segregation.

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

The Tilsenbilt Homes Potential Historic District appears to be significant under criterion two for its association with Archie Givens Sr. and Edward N. Tilsen.

Archie Givens Sr., developer of the Tilsenbilt Homes Potential Historic District, was a significant figure in the African American Community and in the Twin Cities as a whole. Born in Minneapolis, Mr. Givens and his wife, Phebe, are known as Minneapolis' first black millionaires and major philanthropists.⁵ They were involved in many business ventures, most prominently developing and operating nursing homes. In 1972, the couple founded the Archie and Phebe Mae Givens Foundation, which provided scholarships for black students in the Twin Cities. Later, the organization shifted its mission to preserving African American literature, creating the Archie Givens Sr. Collection of African American Literature, which is housed at the University of Minnesota.⁶

Edward Tilsen was born in 1891 near Kiev, Ukraine as Edward Nahman Teplitszky. He came to the United States via Quebec. After living in Wisconsin, North Dakota, and Michigan, Mr. Tilsen ended up in Saint Paul, where he began his homebuilding company in the late 1930s.⁷ As an immigrant Jew, Mr. Tilsen had also experienced discrimination, and did not support segregation.⁸ In the 1940s, he

had tried to build several integrated apartment buildings in Saint Paul, but could not find a bank willing to finance integrated buildings. Rather than build segregated buildings as the banks required, Tilsen abandoned the project.⁹ Tilsen later built 24 non-segregated rental townhomes in Saint Paul, and eventually the houses of the Tilsenbilt Homes Potential Historic District.¹⁰ Tilsen developed homes across Minneapolis, Saint Paul, and many inner suburbs.¹¹ Tilsenbilt Homes is now in its fourth generation of family ownership and continues to develop housing in Minnesota.

The subject properties may also be eligible for designation as a local historic district under the other five 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 Elizabeth Glidden for the Tilsenbilt Homes Potential Historic District for designation as a local historic district:

A. Nomination for Designation as a Historic District.

Recommended motion: **Approve** the request to add properties to the nomination of the Tilsenbilt Homes Potential Historic District; **establish** interim protection for the added properties; and **direct** the Planning Director to include the added properties in the ongoing designation study.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Map
2. Nomination
3. Correspondence

¹ Blackwell, Ed. "Families May Purchase New Homes on "Open" Market for First Time, May Set National Pattern." *Saint Paul Recorder*, May 5, 1954; "Home Project Without Color Line Opens." *Minneapolis Morning Tribune*, May 24, 1954.

² "Home Project Without Color Line Opens." *Minneapolis Morning Tribune*, May 24, 1954.

³ United States Department of the Interior. (2010). *National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form: Greenbelt Knoll Historic District*, 12; Grier, Eunice S. and Grier, George. *Privately Developed Interracial Housing: An Analysis of Experience*. (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1960), 9.

⁴ Hatchet, LaDavia S. "A Case for Reparations: The Plight of the African-American World War II Veteran Concerning Federal Discriminatory Housing Practices." *The Modern American*, Summer 2006, 18-24.

⁵ "Twin Cities' First Black Millionaire Dies At Age 54." *Jet Magazine*, April 18, 1974, 53.

⁶ Lerner, Maura. "Phebe Givens, philanthropist, dies at 93." *Star Tribune*, April 27, 2015.

⁷ Tilsen, Jon-Jay. Edward N. Tilsen. Retrieved from: <http://www.tilsen.org/tilsedwa.html>

⁸ Tilsen, Jon-Jay. "Jerusalem: There Goes the Neighborhood." *BEKI Bulletin*, November 2014.

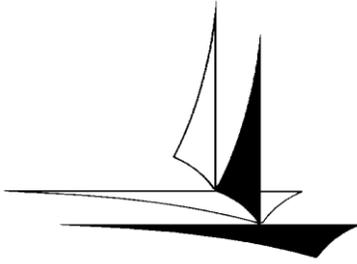
⁹ Blackwell, Ed. "Families May Purchase New Homes on "Open" Market for First Time, May Set National Pattern." *Saint Paul Recorder*, May 5, 1954.

¹⁰ "Home Project Without Color Line Opens." *Minneapolis Morning Tribune*, May 24, 1954.

¹¹ Blackwell, Ed. "Families May Purchase New Homes on "Open" Market for First Time, May Set National Pattern." *Saint Paul Recorder*, May 5, 1954.



Properties included in original nomination indicated in red, properties being added to the nomination indicated in green, Tilsenbilt Homes not included in the nomination indicated in black.



City of Minneapolis
Community Planning & Economic Development
250 South 4th Street, Room 300
Minneapolis MN 55415-1316
612-673-3000

NOMINATION APPLICATION

This application packet is used to file an application(s) for the nomination of a property as an individual landmark or for a group of properties as an historic district that requires approval by the Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission. The packet is a tool for gathering information relevant to an application. It contains a checklist of the commission with authority to recommend the designation of landmarks and historic districts and to adopt design guidelines for designated properties. (2001-Or-029, § 1, 3-2-01)

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

- (1) The property is associated with significant events or with periods that exemplify broad patterns of cultural, political, economic or social history.
- (2) The property is associated with the lives of significant persons or groups.
- (3) The property contains or is associated with distinctive elements of city or neighborhood identity.
- (4) The property embodies the distinctive characteristics of an architectural or engineering type or style, or method of construction.
- (5) The property exemplifies a landscape design or development pattern distinguished by innovation, rarity, uniqueness or quality of design or detail.
- (6) The property exemplifies works of master builders, engineers, designers, artists, craftsmen or architects.
- (7) The property has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history. (2001-Or-029, § 1, 3-2-01; 2009-Or-023, § 9, 3-27-2009)

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

- (1) A member of the heritage preservation commission.
- (2) A member of the city council.
- (3) The mayor.
- (4) The planning director.
- (5) Any person with a legal or equitable interest in the subject property. (2001-Or-029, § 1, 3-2-01)

599.230. Commission decision on nomination. The commission shall review all complete nomination applications. If the commission determines that a nominated property appears to meet at least one (1) of the criteria for designation contained in section 599.210, the commission may direct the planning director to

Attention: If you need other disability related accommodations, such as a sign language interpreter, accessible meeting site, or materials in alternative format, please contact 612-673-2162 (673-2157 TTY/VOICE) at least five days prior to the meeting. If you want help translating this information, call – **Hmong** – Ceeb toom. Yog koj xav tau kev pab txhais cov xov no rau koj dawb, hu 612-673-2800; **Spanish** – Atención. Si desea recibir asistencia gratuita para traducir esta información, llama 612-673-2700; **Somali** - Ogow. Haddii aad dooneysy in lagaa kaalmeeyo tarjamadda macluumaadkani oo lacag la' aan wac 612-673-3500.

prepare or cause to be prepared a designation study of the property. In cases where an application for demolition is initiated by the property owner, the planning director may determine that the property owner bears the full financial responsibility of conducting the designation study. In all cases, the planning director shall define the scope of services for a designation study, review qualifications of agent conducting study and make a determination of what constitutes a final submission upon completion. (2001-Or-029, § 1, 3-2-01; 2009-Or-023, § 10, 3-27-2009)

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

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

(c) Scope of restrictions. During the interim protection period, no alteration or minor alteration of a nominated property shall be allowed except where authorized by a certificate of appropriateness or a certificate of no change, as provided in this chapter. (2001-Or-029, § 1, 3-2-01)

599.250. State historic preservation office review. The planning director shall submit all proposed designations to the state historic preservation officer for review and comment within sixty (60) days. (2001-Or-029, § 1, 3-2-01)

599.260. City planning commission review. The planning director shall submit all proposed designations to the city planning commission for review and comment on the proposal within thirty (30) days. In its review, the city planning commission shall consider but not be limited to the following factors:

- (1) The relationship of the proposed designation to the city's comprehensive plan.
- (2) The effect of the proposed designation on the surrounding area.
- (3) The consistency of the proposed designation with applicable development plans or development objectives adopted by the city council. (2001-Or-029, § 1, 3-2-01)

599.270. Designation hearing. Following completion of the designation study the commission shall hold a public hearing to consider the proposed designation, as provided in section 599.170. Any person having a legal or equitable interest in a nominated property shall be allowed reasonable opportunity to give testimony or present evidence concerning the proposed designation. (2001-Or-029, § 1, 3-2-01)

599.280. Commission recommendation. Following the public hearing, the commission shall make findings with respect to the proposed designation and shall submit the same together with its recommendation to the zoning and planning committee of the city council. In making its findings and recommendation, the commission shall consider the designation criteria contained in section 599.210, the information contained in the designation study, the state historic preservation officer's comments, the city planning commission's comments, the planning director's report and all testimony and evidence received at the public hearing relating to the designation. (2001-Or-029, § 1, 3-2-01)

599.290. City council decision. The city council shall make the final decision on all designations. (2001-Or-029, § 1, 3-2-01)

599.300. Design guidelines. The commission shall adopt design guidelines for landmarks and historic districts. Prior to adoption, the planning director shall submit all proposed design guidelines to the state historic preservation officer for review and comment within sixty (60) days. (2001-Or-029, § 1, 3-2-01)

NOMINATION APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS CHECKLIST

Staff will accept only complete applications that include all of the items listed below. If any of the items are missing at the time of submittal, the application will be deemed incomplete and staff will not accept the application. ¹

	Pre-application meeting.
	Electronic copy of the application submittal. Please see our instructions for electronic submittal: http://www.minneapolismn.gov/hpc/WCMS1P-106443
	Completed Application Worksheet.
	Letter of support from the property owner, if applicable.
	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.
	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.
	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).
	Map showing the location of the property.
	Photos of the property and existing structures. Must include the following items: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Photos of all elevations of the structure(s)▪ Photos of significant interior features

¹ City staff will review the initial application submission to determine completeness and will notify the applicant of what, if any, additional information must be submitted. Please be aware that supplemental information may also be requested during the evaluation and hearing process.

NOMINATION APPLICATION WORKSHEET

Applicant (This person will be the primary contact for staff)	Name	Elizabeth Glidden, Minneapolis City Council Vice-President
	Mailing Address Including City, State and Zip Code	350 S. 5th St. Room 300 Minneapolis, MN 55415
	Phone Number	
	Fax	
	Email	
Property Owner	Name	See Attached
	Mailing Address Including City, State and Zip Code	
	Phone Number	
	Fax	
	Email	
Property Information	Address(es)	See Attached
	Identification Number(s)	See Attached
	Legal Description	
Name of Proposed Project (If applicable)		

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.


2/22/10
Date

Applicant's name and signature

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

Additions to the nomination:

Address	PID	Owner
4004 5 th Ave S	1002824140032	Dana Jackson
4501 4 th Ave S	1002824440171	Arle Bullert

Previously nominated homes:

Address	PID	Owner
343 41 st St E	1002824140117	Daniel Z Pelzman
3928 4 th Ave S	1002824110024	MPLS Public Housing Authority
4016 4 th Ave S	1002824140061	Julia H Bobadilla
4020 4 th Ave S	1002824140062	Michael D Juarez
4021 4 th Ave S	1002824140053	Ollie M Thomas
4116 4 th Ave S	1002824140119	Temple Israel of Minneapolis
4121 4 th Ave S	1002824140144	James D Dipietro
4219 4 th Ave S	1002824410054	Juan Reyes & Maria Zetino
4223 4 th Ave S	1002824410053	Jose Arturo Vega Lopez
4227 4 th Ave S	1002824410052	Alvedia Smith
4408 4 th Ave S	1002824440058	Mary Ann Hodge
4412 4 th Ave S	1002824440059	MPLS Public Housing Authority
4421 4 th Ave S	1002824440051	Lionel B Davis
4441 4 th Ave S	1002824440046	Holly S Mciver
4445 4 th Ave S	1002824440045	Manuel Ramon
4448 4 th Ave S	1002824440066	Susan Kapsner
4500 4 th Ave S	1002824440118	Cricket Holdings LLC
4504 4 th Ave S	1002824440119	MPLS Public Housing Authority
3943 5 th Ave S	1002824110173	Cornelious Martin
4012 5 th Ave S	1002824140034	Elizabeth Wollangk
4016 5 th Ave S	1002824140035	Ih3 Property Minnesota LP
4020 5 th Ave S	1002824140036	Anita Nunn
4021 5 th Ave S	1002824140025	Julian T D'andrea
4025 5 th Ave S	1002824140174	Paulette Cheatham
4028 5 th Ave S	1002824140038	Anthony R Scott II
4032 5 th Ave S	1002824140039	Melvin Mckissic
4036 5 th Ave S	1002824140040	Erika K Wachholz
4040 5 th Ave S	1002824140041	Kevin & Stacie Branson
4044 5 th Ave S	1002824140042	Ih3 Property Minnesota LP
4645 5 th Ave S	1502824110044	Bret E Indrelee

Statement describing the applicant's relationship to the property to be designated

I am the Minneapolis City Council member representing Ward 8, which includes the properties proposed for nomination.

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

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

The Tilsenbilt Homes Potential Historic District appears to be significant under criterion one for its association with the Civil Rights Movement and its position as the first FHA-backed racially-integrated housing development in the United States.

Prior to the passage of the Fair Housing Act in 1968, housing discrimination based on race or religion was commonplace. Restrictive deed covenants, major lenders' red-lining policies, and realtors' association rules, both written and unwritten, fed the growth of housing segregation during the housing crisis that followed World War II. During this period, African Americans in Minneapolis were particularly affected. African Americans found that very few realtors or banks would allow them to purchase homes outside of defined neighborhoods, which were generally located along the 6th Avenue North and 4th Avenue South corridors. Between 1946 and 1952, over 9,500 single-family homes and duplexes were constructed in Minneapolis, of which fewer than 20 were sold to African American buyers, while at the same time, Minneapolis' black population increased 60% between 1940 and 1950. This created a severe shortage of quality housing for black Minneapolitans and allowed them to be exploited by realtors, who often charged more for homes available to African Americans.

In an effort to reduce the shortage of quality housing available to African Americans in Minneapolis, the Minneapolis Urban League encouraged black realtors to work with the FHA to develop a new model for integrated commercial housing projects. Up-and-coming realtor Archie Givens located buildable lots in an area bounded by 39th Street E, 47th Street E, 5th Avenue S, and 3rd Avenue S. Although these lots were located just south of the large African American community in the 4th Avenue corridor, only two African American families were living south of 42nd Street at the time. Mr. Givens also found the builder for the homes, Edward Tilsen, owner of Tilsenbilt Homes.

Although a small handful of racially-integrated commercial developments had been constructed elsewhere in the country prior to the Tilsenbilt Homes, the Tilsenbilt Homes still appear to be the first integrated commercial housing development to be supported by the FHA. When the FHA was first formed, its first Underwriting Manual explicitly advocated in favor of racial covenants, a policy which continued explicitly through 1949

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

The Tilsenbilt Homes Potential Historic District appears to be significant under criterion two for its association with Archie Givens Sr. and Edward N. Tilsen.

Archie Givens Sr., developer of the Tilsenbilt Homes Potential Historic District, was a significant figure in the African American community and in the Twin Cities as a whole. Born in Minneapolis, Mr. Givens and his wife, Phebe, are known as Minneapolis' first black millionaires and major philanthropists. They were involved in many business ventures, most prominently developing and operating nursing homes. In 1972, the couple founded the Archie and Phebe Mae Givens Foundation, which provided scholarships for black students in the Twin Cities. Later, the organization shifted its mission to preserving African American literature, creating the Archie Givens Sr. Collection of African American Literature, which is housed at the University of Minnesota.

Edward Tilsen was born in 1891 near Kiev, Ukraine as Edward Nahman Teplitzky. He came to the United States via Quebec. After living in Wisconsin, North Dakota, and Michigan, Mr. Tilsen ended up in Saint Paul, where he began his homebuilding company in the late 1930s. As an immigrant Jew, Mr. Tilsen had also experienced discrimination, and did not support segregation. In the 1940s, he had tried to build several integrated apartment buildings in Saint Paul, but could not find a bank willing to finance integrated buildings. Rather than build segregated buildings as the banks required, Tilsen abandoned the project. Tilsen got his chance to build integrated housing when he worked with Archie Givens in 1953 to build the properties of the proposed district. Tilsen developed homes across Minneapolis, Saint Paul, and many inner suburbs. Tilsenbilt Homes is now in its fourth generation of family ownership and continues to develop housing in Minnesota.

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):

In general, the properties retain their integrity. The nominated properties have had very few major exterior alterations. Most of the properties retain the vast majority of their original materials, workmanship, and design, and none of the properties have been relocated.



4000 Block 5th Ave S, facing southwest. Source: CPED Files



4000 Block of 5th Ave S, facing southeast. Source: CPED Files