

## **Proposed St. Anthony Northeast Historic Central Business District**

### **Background and Description.**

In the City of Minneapolis' early days, there were two towns, *St. Anthony* on the Mississippi's east bank and *Minnehapolis* on the west. The City of St. Anthony emerged first when Franklin Steele began his sawmilling operation, leading to the construction of the Pillsbury A Mill complex. The Minneapolis side responded with competing mills, capped by Gold Medal Flour. Modest business districts grew on both sides of the river to support the milling operations. After the merger into one city in 1872, St. Anthony became "East Minneapolis" and eventually acquired its modern name of Northeast. The St. Anthony CBD waned through the 20<sup>th</sup> century while Downtown Minneapolis saw high-rises and skyscrapers blossom. Urban renewal allowed much of the district to be torn down but without resulting modernist construction of the time. Local business owners branded the area as "Old St. Anthony" which was seen on various placards and buildings until very recently. In the 1970s, the Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP) carved artificial neighborhoods and funding streams which unintentionally further diminished and split Old St. Anthony's business community. Today even the namesake of Northeast applies to the entirety of the Northeast community of Minneapolis. The Old St. Anthony name was rescinded in the 2000s by the NorthEast Minneapolis Business Association (NEMBA) in favor of the simple *NorthEast* name and adding a slogan "NorthEast: Making History Again."

The proposed "St. Anthony NorthEast Historic Central Business District" (here referred to as NorthEast) follows closely along NEMBA's boundaries, bounded on the south by the existing St. Anthony Falls District, to the west by the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) rail line, and to the north and east from Central Avenue. This triangular collection of blocks prospered once by the converging streetcar lines of East Hennepin Avenue (formerly Division Street) and Central Avenue. A wide range of commercial architectural styles dating the span of the 20<sup>th</sup> century occupy sites in this area. The condition of these existing buildings appear from good to stable. Though much was torn down through Urban Renewal and general fire, private owners appear to have generally invested and preserved their buildings for re-use. The taller more ornate buildings such as the Mason Temple (Aveda) and Banks Building have been fully adapted to new office and educational uses. Their facades appear restored and maintained, absent of any neglect or erosion. Smaller one to two story commercial buildings are not so fortunate in terms of restored architectural detail but a spatter of businesses occupying these modest structures indicates stability and use.



*Not shown, the district is split down Central Avenue by Marcy Holmes and Nicollet Island/East Bank neighborhood.*

**Significance.**

The birthplace of Minneapolis' first central business district still contains significant commercial architecture styles and trends that reflect the architectural progression of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. At the beginning of the century are several railroad warehouses. The Bank's Building, formerly the Northwestern Furniture Mart, both manufactured and sold furniture as a department store on site. Abutting the BNSF railway, lumber arrived on the rail line and furniture was shipped out. The Electric Machinery Manufacturing Company which originally began up at Seventeenth Street in the 1891, eventually relocated to the corner buildings north of the Hennepin and Central intersection. The company, now Converteam EM, still exists and occupies the buildings it acquired and expanded through the century. It is still influential for its power generators and motors, having employed significant labor in the area. At this intersection is also some unique buildings including the current U Otter Inn bar, a triangular Italianate structure built in 1898 that has persisted as a drinking establishment. The proposed district already contains a locally designated (HPC landmark) building, the Melrose Flats which feature work of distinguished architect Charles S. Segwick. The 1926 Mason Cataract Temple, now Aveda Institute, is a "Venetian" style building that gives influences of neoclassical style. Later trends are also reflected such as art deco, moderne in the current Denny Kemp Salon and West Photo buildings. A formal international-style building, the Union Labor Center, stands across the street from a very "loud" post-modern condo building, Cobalt.



1891 Italianate Independent Order of Odd Fellows



1903 Greek Revival



1898 Triangular Italianate U Otter Inn

1905 Chicago Commercial - Bank's Building



2007 Postmodern - Cobalt



1973 - International style - Union Labor Center



1979 Art Deco/Moderne - West Photo

### **Approach to Preservation and Funding.**

HPC designation would be the first step to securing the doorway for funding from State and federal sources such as the National Park Service Preserve America program. A local task force would need to identify, evaluate and prioritize the current inventory of buildings for preservation. With a proactive approach, property owners would be approached with resources and assistance to potentially jump start and revitalize their buildings or properties. Individual owners will be connected to Historic Preservation Tax Credit programs. Those interested in residential redevelopment will be geared toward HUD programs related to restoration. This could also open opportunities with CDBG funds to help infrastructure costs. On a greater planning level, there is a potential opportunity from the Transportation and Enhancements Funding program. Administered by the Federal Highway Administration, it offers funding to improvements that encourage transit use along corridors. The Northstar currently runs on the BNSF line and adjoining properties could potentially benefit from easement and rehab improvements. Additionally, other sources of funding for packaging are available to owners such as loans offered by Minneapolis CPED and the Met Council's Livable Communities Act (LCA). The City's business development staff can engage particular property owners with empty lots or unused buildings with these packages. Similarly, the neighborhood organizations and business association can begin visioning processes for a renewed CBD.

### **Related Sources**

Converteam EM. <http://www.converteam.com/majic/pageServer/0p04000125/en/USA---Minneapolis.html>

Heritage Preservation Commission. 2010. <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/hpc/index.asp>

Heritage Preservation Commission. 2007. Melrose Flats.  
[http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/hpc/landmarks/5th\\_St\\_NE\\_13-23\\_Melrose\\_Flats.asp](http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/hpc/landmarks/5th_St_NE_13-23_Melrose_Flats.asp)

Marcy Holmes Neighborhood Association. 2003. Master Plan for Marcy Holmes: Historic Preservation.  
<http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/master-plans/marcy-holmes/index.asp>

Millett, Lary. 2007. *AIA Guide to the Twin Cities*. Minnesota Historical Society.

NorthEast Minneapolis Business Association. 2010. NEMBA Website  
<http://www.northeastminneapolis.com/nemap.html>

Petersen, Penny A. 1999. *Hiding in Plain Sight: Minneapolis' First Neighborhood*. Marcy Holmes Neighborhood Association.

Shafer Richardson. 2010. For Lease: The Banks Building. <http://www.sr-re.com/listing?id=5>

Warner, George E; Foote, C. M. (Charles M.), 1849-1899; Williams, J. Fletcher (John Fletcher), 1834-1895; Neill, Edward D. (Edward Duffield), 1823-1893. 1893. History of Hennepin County and the city of Minneapolis (1881). Not in copyright. <http://www.archive.org/details/hennepincounty00warn>

YHR Construction, IOOF Building. <http://www.yhr.com/portfolio/historic/IOOF/>