

HISTORIC PRESERVATION CERTIFICATION APPLICATION PART 1 - EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE

Frank P. and Anna Shepard House

Property Name

325 Dayton Avenue St. Paul, Ramsey Co. MN

Property Address

Description of Physical Appearance:

The Frank P. and Anna Shepard House is located at 325 Dayton Avenue in St Paul, Minnesota. Originally constructed in 1882 this building is currently considered a contributing structure that falls within the district's period of significance.¹ The building remains in its original location situated on a corner occupying the greater part of four large city lots. The main structure is approximately 70 feet by 55 feet with primary elevations aligned with Dayton Avenue to the South² and Farrington Street to the East.³ These streets have public sidewalks lined with lamp posts and a mixture of mature and newly planted maple trees. An iron fence lines the Southwest corner of the lot and two large spruce trees shade the walkway to the main entrance.⁴ This building is an excellent example of the Queen Anne style of architecture: the three-story masonry structure combines an irregular roofline of intersecting gables and staggered story heights with ornate porch posts, dentils, leaded glass windows and terra-cotta fish-scale patterned shingled gable walls. Four tall banded chimneys with flutes and flared tops are capped in stone and have intricate detailing. The roof is asphalt shingles. The frieze has a foliating terra-cotta cornice with wooden dentils and crowns. The exterior walls are faced with stretcher bond red-orange dry press bricks creating a smooth and regular surface with even edges and sharp corners. The facade and locally quarried Platteville limestone foundation are in excellent condition. There are decorated arched lintels over some of the windows with cast concrete coins and brick voussoirs with raised dot molding while others have straight stone lintels and sills.⁵ Many of the windows have newer replacement sashes in the same double hung style that was original to the house. The triangle, half circle and trapezoid windows in the third floor dormers are original as are several other leaded glass window on the second floor. On the Southeast corner a round turret with conical cap rising from the porch roof anchors the intersection of the two main facades.⁶ The turret features original stained glass windows, incised carving and flower motif in the frieze. The open wraparound wood-floored porch features stone capped half walls with carved flowers in the stone trim on the balustrade and is supported by paired fluted and turned Doric wood columns.⁷

¹ Minnesota, Ramsey County Historical Society, Historic Sites Survey; RA-Spc-0911

² Photograph No. 4

³ Photograph No. 2

⁴ Photograph No. 3

⁵ Photograph No. 5

⁶ Photograph No. 3 inset showing turret

⁷ Photograph No. 3

This building has a 1955 noncontributing addition attached at the Southwest corner of the original structure.⁸ This addition enclosed approximately fifteen feet of the original front porch. The original front door opening remains in its place and is the connection between the two structures. Modifications made to the house when converted from single family to institutional use were mostly superficial in nature, except for covering the original main entrance architectural detailing was not degraded or removed.

There is a detached structure facing Marshall Avenue that was originally a small residence with car storage added on in 1907.⁹¹⁰ It was expanded again in 1927 to its current size.¹¹ The structure, through its many incarnations, has always been part of the residence at 325 Dayton Avenue. It has exposed rafter tails, stucco exterior with wood trim and a small brick chimney.

Interior:

The interior of the house has an irregular floor plan divided into public, private, and service quarters arranged around a central hall. The quality of interior finishes and woodwork are exceptional and retain much of the original components. The original lath and plaster walls are in remarkable condition including a detailed dining room ceiling.¹² Partition walls added through the years have not damaged the elaborate architectural detailing. Throughout the house carpeting has protected the hardwood floors beneath.

The first floor has twelve foot ceilings and contains the primary public spaces. The foyer has oak paneled wainscoting, red glazed brick and brass fireplace, mahogany mantel with beveled glass mirrors, a paneled ceiling and decorative beams.¹³ The grand stairway has hand carved newel posts, detailed spindle work and a sitting bench on the first of two landings.¹⁴ The living room to the right of the foyer has a beamed ceiling with dental work and corbels.¹⁵ The two inch thick, eleven paneled door is eight feet high. Down the hall¹⁶ to the left is the parlor with a paneled ceiling, wainscoting, built in floor to ceiling china cabinet, fireplace with circular beveled mirrors and alcove.¹⁷ Across from the parlor is the dining room with an ornamental plaster ceiling, large crown moldings and detailed fireplace and surround. In the back of the house are what was the service quarters.¹⁸

⁸ Photograph No. 4

⁹ Photographs No. 8 & 9

¹⁰ Minnesota, City of St. Paul Construction Permit Card; Permit # 47707

¹¹ Minnesota, City of St. Paul Construction Permit Card; Permit # 27384

¹² Photograph No. 15

¹³ Photograph No. 10

¹⁴ Photograph No. 11

¹⁵ Photograph No. 12

¹⁶ Photograph No. 10

¹⁷ Photographs No. 13 and 14

¹⁸ Photograph No. 15

The second floor has ten foot ceilings and contains grand sleeping quarters. The Southeast bedroom has a limestone fireplace and turret with original windows and leaded glass.¹⁹ Two other bedrooms have sleeping porches and unique fireplaces. The library has dark oak woodwork and a tiled fireplace surround.²⁰

The third floor contains mostly service sleeping quarters under the irregular roofline. The large common area has a fireplace with a detailed mahogany mantel and surround flanked by trapezoidal windows with views toward downtown St. Paul and the awe-inspiring Cathedral.²¹

Except for the noncontributing one-story addition, the house retains excellent architectural integrity; a prime example of its style.

Statement of Significance:

The Frank P. and Anna Shepard House is located in the Historic Hill Heritage Preservation District of St. Paul, MN. The district is characterized by the largest concentration of excellent nineteenth century architectural examples in St. Paul. The period of significance, 1858 to 1930, began with wealthy St. Paul merchant families moving up to the district from the downtown area and building homes. This district flourished in the 1920s with streetcar lines and commercial development, however, the Great Depression largely ended construction in the Cathedral Hill District.

The Shepard House is a contributing building to the historic district. Built during the boom of single-family home construction in the 1880s, it is nestled within the district's oldest area. The home was built for Frank P. Shepard and Anna McMillan Shepard. Frank, a businessman whose devotion to the public good was unquestioned and arises from a sincere interest in the welfare of his fellowmen, was the son of David Shepard. Together they built much of the Great Northern Railway for James J. Hill.²² Anna, a member of the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution, was the daughter of Samuel J.R. McMillan, a United States Senator from Minnesota.²³ ²⁴ Frank P. and Anna Shepard had four children, two of whom attended Yale University. Mrs. Shepard survived her husband and lived for years at the old homestead, 325 Dayton Avenue, quoted in 1915 as "one of the most beautiful places in the City of St. Paul."²⁵

¹⁹ Photograph No. 16

²⁰ Photograph No. 17

²¹ Photograph No. 18

²² W. B. Hennessy, Past and present of St. Paul Minnesota (Chicago: The S. J. Clarke Publishing Co, 1906) 370

²³ United States, Directory of the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution (Washington: 1904) 80.

²⁴ Matthew Waniewski et al, Biographical Directory of the United States Congress U.S. Senate Historical Office

²⁵ Henry Anson Castle Minnesota, its story and biography (Lewis Publishing Co., 1915) 1603

The Shepards, a prominent St. Paul family, have ties to at least three more significant homes constructed on adjacent lots, one of which no longer stands.²⁶

In 1955, the Hill District underwent a decline of affluence. Many of the large significant homes began to deteriorate, many were divided into apartments or demolished. It was at this time that an institutional addition may have saved this structure from a worse fate. Repurposed as a care-taking facility, this structure has been well-maintained and the character preserved. Fortunately, this structure has not been altered to the extent that the overall integrity of the building is irretrievably lost. Moreover, when restored to life, this building will be preserved as a tangible link to the past and enable it to continue to contribute to the significance of this historic district.

The exterior design of the building is a prime example of the Queen Anne style of architecture, popular in the mid 1880s through the early 1890s. From the hand-carved mahogany mantel and balustrade, to the florets throughout the massive trim-work, the workmanship epitomizes the opulence of the era's upperclass. The seven unique and intact fireplaces were canvasses for the stone and wood artisans of the day.

Views of the massive St. Paul Cathedral,²⁷ designed by the French-born architect Emmanuel Masqueray who was also the chief architect for the 1904 World's Fair, are breathtaking as this local landmark is less than two blocks away.²⁸ Likewise, the setting of the Shepard House situated on a prominent corner lot offer views that can be enjoyed from the public park across the street and from Selby Avenue, a main thoroughfare of the district.²⁹

A 1906 description of the Shepard homestead states, "The family residence is a beautiful home at No. 325 Dayton avenue, filled with magnificent works of art, its furnishings being all that wealth can secure and refined taste suggest."³⁰ It was an empire building era and this home is a lasting legacy of this family and the significant role they played in defining the Historic Hill District. Since the residency of the Shepards, changes to the property have been minor, save for the addition and interior partition walls, and the house retains a very high degree of integrity in setting, location, feeling, association, design, materials and workmanship. This building conveys a strong physical connection to the district's sense of time, place, and historical development.

²⁶ Map 3

²⁷ Photograph No. 7

²⁸ Map 2

²⁹ Map 3

³⁰ Hennessy, 371