

# Prospect Park Neighborhood Collection

## COLLECTION SUMMARY

**Collection number:** B562, Accession # 2019.002.0001-2019.002.0007

**Collection repository:** Hennepin History Museum  
2303 Third Ave  
Minneapolis, MN 55404

**Collection title:** Prospect Park Collection

**Dates:** 1902-2017 (bulk 1970s, 1993-2003)

**Extent:** 5 boxes, plus 2 oversized folders

**Creator:** Susan Larson-Fleming, Lois Willand, and Deborah Clark

**Language of material:** English

**Processed by:** Sophie Hunt

## ADMINISTRATIVE HISTORY

Prospect Park is a neighborhood in Southeast Minneapolis established by Farnsworth and Wolcott Real Estate firm in 1884. Most early residents were white professionals with such careers as lawyers or University professors, who chose the neighborhood because of its natural beauty and its proximity via the Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Paul Railroad to the University of Minnesota, downtown Minneapolis, and downtown St. Paul. From the beginning, the people of Prospect Park were among the city's most politically active residents. In 1901, they formed the city's first neighborhood improvement association, called the Prospect Park Improvement Association (PPIA). The name of the PPIA was later changed to the Prospect Park East River Road Improvement Association (PPERRIA) and, in 2015, to Prospect Park Association.

Over the course of the twentieth century, Prospect Park residents confronted issues common to cities during that era, including changing demographics, the interstate system, school closures, and revitalization. In the early 1950s, Minneapolis made plans to build a low-income housing project, Glen-Dale, in the neighborhood. Heated disagreements ensued at the meetings of the PPERRIA, which ultimately approved the project in 1951. At first, Glendale residents were primarily University students and white single mothers. Later residents have included African American, Hmong, and East African families. In 1956, the Minnesota Department of Transportation made plans to route Interstate 94 through Prospect Park. The original plan for the freeway would have destroyed hundreds of homes in the neighborhood and would have

eliminated Prospect Field. Residents sent letters of protest to Governor Orville Freeman, effectively redirecting the freeway to reduce its impact on Prospect Park.

In 1982, dozens of public schools closed in Minneapolis, including Sidney Pratt, a neighborhood elementary school that had been established thanks to PPERRIA efforts in 1898. Neighbors converted the building into a center for community education, which offered programs for adults and youth, as well as a home nursing program for seniors. Pratt Community Education Center was also home to The Loft literary center from 1990 to 2000. Before its closure as a school, Pratt had been one of five Southeast schools participating in the Southeast Alternatives project, a federally funded project through the Minneapolis Public Schools, which from 1971 to 1976 aimed at testing alternative forms of education.

In the 1990s, the PPERRIA administered the Minneapolis Neighborhood Revitalization Program, which sought to empower city residents to set and implement plans for their community. The PPERRIA-NRP steering committee was elected in 1993. Over the next two years, committee members gathered community input, drafted an action plan, and began implementing the program. The neighborhood institutions to benefit from NRP funds included Pratt Community Education Center, which received building renovations, exterior cleaning, and the construction of a Village Green and playground. The building reopened as a school in 2000. Prospect Park residents also used NRP funds to write a history of their neighborhood: *Under the Witch's Hat: A Prospect Park East River Road Neighborhood History*, published in 2003. In general, the people of Prospect Park have actively collected, preserved, and published accounts of their history, including nominating parts of the neighborhood for local and national historic status.

## SCOPE AND CONTENT

The Prospect Park Collection houses personal and organizational materials from residents of the Prospect Park and East River Road neighborhoods, particularly those involved in the Prospect Park and East River Road Improvement Association (PPERRIA) and the Sidney Pratt School. The collection dates from 1902 to 2017, with the bulk of the materials dating from the 1970s and 1990s. Overall, the collection documents a diverse, active neighborhood responding to the challenges that confronted urban communities in the late-twentieth century.

The collection is arranged in four series. The series include:

- Series 1: Historical Research
- Series 2: Prospect Park East River Road Improvement Association
- Series 3: Southeast Alternatives Project
- Series 4: Sidney Pratt School

The “Historical Research” series, which dates from 1902 to 2017, includes published and unpublished writing, notes, and primary sources relating to the history of Prospect Park. The bulk of these materials are associated with histories written by neighborhood residents, including *Under the Witch's Hat* (2003); Susan Laron-Fleming, *A School in the Country* (1998); and works by Anne Barnum. Thematic focuses include primary and secondary sources related to Glen-Dale

housing development and Interstate 94. The series begins with historical publications, arranged chronologically. It then continues by source type and topic.

The “Prospect Park East River Road Improvement Association” series dates from about 1983 to 2001, with the bulk of the material relating to the Minneapolis Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP) from 1993 to 1995. It includes correspondence, meeting minutes, community input, and other administrative records, as well as lists of residents and organizations, useful for research on people living in Prospect Park. The series is arranged according to committees and issues, roughly following the timeline of the NRP. At the end of the series are two folders and material objects related to later PPERRIA activities.

The “Southeast Alternatives Project” contains publications and reports produced by the Minneapolis Public Schools between 1973 and 1976 dealing with the Southeast Alternatives project. The series is arranged chronologically.

The “Sidney Pratt School” collection dates from about 1920 to 1999. It contains hundreds of photographs from 1996 to 1999 of events and projects at Pratt Community Education Center, some of which were funded by the Minneapolis NRP. These photographs include interior shots showing the entrance to The Loft literary center. The collection also contains photographs and negatives of the school from the 1920s, and a revised copy of a floor plan created as part Minnesota Works Progress Administration project number 1528.

## **ACCESS**

The collection is open for researchers and has no restrictions. The archive does not have cassette players, so the audio interviews cannot be played.

## **COPYRIGHT**

The researcher assumes the responsibility for ensuring copyright is followed. When and where possible the archive will provide information related to the copyright owners, but it will be the responsibility of the researcher to ensure copyright laws are followed. Requests for permission to publish material in this collection should be directed to the Archivist.

## **RELATED MATERIAL**

### **Hennepin History Museum:**

- Anne Barnum Collection, 591
- SEMPACC Collection, 592
- Prospect Park Co-op Collection, 593
- Luxton Park Painters - Norma Olson Collection, 613
- Southeast Publications Collection, 617
- Sidney J. Pratt Scrapbook, SC81
- Mary Alice Kopf Real Estate Photos, Reading Room

- *Southeast Angle*
- *Tower Talks*, N97

**Hennepin County Library Special Collections:**

- Prospect Park Association Collection, Call #: M/A 2015.03.01-21
- Prospect Park Study Club Collection, Call #: M/A 2000.02.01-08
- Minneapolis Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP) Collection, Call #: M/A 2012.05.01-29

**Minnesota Historical Society:**

- Minneapolis Public Schools. Southeast Alternatives experimental schools project records
- Minnesota. Department of Highways. Miscellaneous records
- Minnesota. Governor (1955-1961: Freeman, Orville L.). Departmental and General Files

**Online materials:**

- PPA Newsletter Archive: <https://www.prospectparkmpls.org/ppa/newsletter/index.html>
- Kacie Lucchini Butcher and Denise Pike, *Owning Up: Racism and Housing in Minneapolis*. Digital Exhibit, 2019. <https://dpike.dash.umn.edu/owningup/>

**ACQUISITION**

Material in this collection was collected over several years by Susan Larson-Fleming, Hennepin History Museum archivist and Prospect Park resident, with items from her personal collection as well as additional donations from Lois Willand and Deborah Clark.

**COLLECTION INVENTORY**

**Series 1: Historical Research**

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	
1	1	Allen Gibas, “The History of Prospect Park.” 1965
1	2	Judy Olson, “Prospect Park.” circa 1971
1	3	Ann Wick, “Prospect Park: One-of-a-Kind Neighborhood,” <i>Hennepin County History</i> . 1973
1	4	Claire Aronson, “A Few Good Fights,” <i>Hennepin History</i> . 1995
1	5	Susan Larson-Fleming, <i>A School in the Country: The Early History of Sidney Pratt</i> . 1998
1	6	Joan Hunter Padvan, <i>Memories of Prospect Park</i> . 2001
1	7	<i>Under the Witch’s Hat</i> , meetings and notes. circa 1990-1991
1	8	<i>Under the Witch’s Hat</i> , “Appendix B – Photograph & Map Sources.” 2003
1	9	Dean Abrahamson, <i>Under the Witch’s Hat</i> , Introduction, Chapters 1-2. 2003

- 1 10 Dean Abrahamson, *Under the Witch's Hat*, Chapters 3-5. 2003
- 1 11 Dean Abrahamson, *Under the Witch's Hat*, Epilogue and Appendices. 2003
- 1 12 John E. Gaustad and Susan Heller Hay, *Reunion 2008 Sidney Pratt 1938ers*. 2008
- 1 13 Anne Barnum research and writing. 1970-1977, 1995
- 1 14 History articles and memoir. 1970-1974, circa 1990s
- 1 15 Clippings and images. 1880s (photocopy), 1956-1994
- 1 16 Brochures and flyers. 1970s-1990s
- 1 17 Biography – clippings, letter, photograph. 1950s, 1992-2005
- 1 18 Churches – histories, program, flyers. 1952, 1970s, 1990s
- 1 19 Houses – clippings, images, real estate listings, notes. 1985-2013
- 1 19.1 Karen Melvin house photos. 1992  
(number duplication during processing)
- 1 20 Interstate 94 – community memories. 1985, 1994, 2017
- 1 21 Interstate 94 – letters. 1956
- 1 22 Interstate 94 – maps and clippings. 1956-1968, 2006, 2010
- Oversized 2 Cities Service Minneapolis-St. Paul street map showing proposed freeway. 1964
- M4 D.1 Minnesota Department of Highways map of estimated traffic volumes, Vicinity of Arthur Ave. from Mississippi River to Minneapolis City Limits. 1959
- 1 23 Interstate 94 – research. 1991-2006
- 5 Cassette recording – Dianne Kepner Interview of Norma Olson for *Southeast* newspaper. November 1985
- 5 Compact disc – Prospect Park Study Club, “Freeway Fight,” Becky Stannard. 15 February 2010
- 1 24 Businesses – Lewis, Bolt, & Nut clippings. 1992
- 1 25 Neighborhood songs. 1998, 2013
- 1 26 *Neighborhood Veteran*. circa 1997
- 1 27 Prospect Park East River Road Improvement Association. 1902, 1957-1995
- 1 28 Southeast Minneapolis Planning and Coordinating Committee. 1969-1975
- 1 29 Prospect Park Cooperative Nursery School. circa 1950s
- 1 30 Tower Hill Park – clipping, history. 1973, 2016
- 1 31 National Register of Historic Places registration – Tower Hill Park. 1997

- 1 32 National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheets: cover page, Sections 7 (incomplete), 8-10, list of photographs – Prospect Park. 2014
- Oversized 1 National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheets: Section 7 (incomplete), house photographs, maps – Prospect Park. 2014
- 1 33 Hess, Roise, & Company, “Glendale Townhomes: An Assessment of National Register Eligibility.” 2015
- 1 34 Glendale – Anne Barnum research. 1975, 1990s
- 1 35 Glendale – Susan Larson-Fleming research. 1990, 1995
- 1 36 Glendale – programs, invitation, flyer. 1952, 1990s
- 1 37 Glendale – *Glen News*. 1966-1968
- 1 38 Glendale – photos. circa 1955-1973
- 1 39 Glendale – clippings. 1952-1975, 2009, 2015
- Oversized 2 Copy of Egan, Field, & Nowak survey of Glen Dale Heights. 1957
- 1 40 Southeast History Festival packet. circa 1972
- 1 40.1 Southeast History Festival, history research. circa 1972  
(number duplication during processing)
- 1 41 Periodicals. 1970s, 1990
- Oversized 1 Map segments, Works Progress Administration or similar. circa 1950s (copy)
- Oversized 2 Map “Prospect Park Witch’s Tower 100 Years,” designed by Ruth Fen. 2014

## **Series 2: Prospect Park East River Road Improvement Association (PPERRIA)**

### Box Folder

- 2 42 PPERRIA administrative records. 1993-1995
- 2 43 PPERRIA mailings. 1994-1995
- 2 44 NRP steering committee. 1993-1994
- 2 45 Steering committee election. September-October 1993
- 2 46 NRP Early Access Subcommittee. 1993-1995
- 2 47 Early Access proposals. 1993-1994
- 2 48 Development of PPERRIA-NRP logo. January-February 1994
- 2 49 MGraphics correspondence. February-March 1994
- 2 50 Artwork. 1990s
- 2 51 NRP Survey committee meetings
- 2 52 Survey committee – correspondence and reports. February-November 1994

2	53	Survey committee – community input process. January-May 1994
2	54	Survey committee – contact lists. 1990s
2	55	Group survey form. 1994 April-May
2	56	“What You Told Us: A Compilation of Mini-Survey Responses.” July 1994
2	57	Development of Action Plan. circa 1993-1995
2	58	Minneapolis Planning Department NRP, <i>Prospect Park Neighborhood: Planning Information Base</i> . Winter 1993
2	59	Action Plan drafts. 1995 April-July
2	60	Block clubs – formation and training. 1994-1995
2	61	Block clubs – name lists. circa 1994-1995
2	62	Block clubs – leader lists and maps. circa 1994-1995
2	63	Block clubs – areas A, B, C. circa 1994-1995
2	64	Block clubs – area D. circa 1994-1995
2	65	Block clubs – areas E, F. circa 1994-1995
2	66	Block clubs – areas G, H, I J. circa 1994-1995
2	67	Block clubs – attendance sheets. 1994
2	68	Block clubs – attendance sheets (copy). 1994
2	69	People and groups in neighborhood – contact lists. circa 1994
2	70	Minneapolis city directory. 1983-1987 (copies), 1994
2	71	People and groups in neighborhood – clippings, flyer. 1993-1995
2	72	Focus groups – goals and objectives. November-December 1994
2	73	Housing focus group. 1994
2	74	Livability focus group. 1993-1995
2	75	Livability strategy worksheets. 1994-1995
2	76	Issues: landscaping. 1994-1995
2	77	Issues: gateways, New Urbanism, pollution, transportation. circa 1993-1994
2	78	Issues: Tower Hill. circa 1993-1994
2	79	Southeast Industrial Area/ Southeast Business Area focus group. 1993-1995
2	80	Other issues – crime, jobs. 1994-1995
2	81	Minneapolis NRP: Marcy-Holmes, Como. circa 1991-1994
2	82	Prospect Park Welcome Packet. 1990s
2	83	Tower Hill Park Committee. 1997-1999
2	84	Neighborhood directory. 1998

- 5 Buttons - "PPERRIA 1901-2001." circa 2001
- 5 Button - "Ask me about PPERRIA." date unknown
- 5 Button - "Save Dinkytown." date unknown

**Series 3: Southeast Alternatives Project**

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	
3	85	Azernove and French, <i>I could tell something good was coming...</i> , K-12 interdisciplinary publication. 1973
3	86	Minneapolis Public Schools, <i>Southeast Alternatives 1974</i> project update. 1974
3	87	Minneapolis Schools, <i>SEA Journal 1971-1976</i> . 1975
3	88	Southeast Alternatives final report, chapters 1-5. July 1976
3	89	Southeast Alternatives final report, chapters 6-9. July 1976
3	90	Minneapolis Public Schools long range facility plan (version 1). May 1976
3	91	Minneapolis Public Schools long range facility plan (version 2). May 1976
3	92	Minneapolis Public Schools middle range facilities programs. June 1976
3	93	Minneapolis Public Schools short range facilities projects. October 1976

**Series 4: Sidney Pratt School**

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	
4	94	Negatives – School and students. circa 1920s
4	95	Photographs – Ice cream social. 30 May 1996
4	96	Building photographs for Larson-Fleming, <i>A School in the Country</i> . circa 1998
4	97	Photographs – Centennial celebration. 14 September 1998
4	98	Negatives – Centennial celebration. 14 September 1998
4	99	Photographs – Planting of grounds. 25 April 1998
4	100	Photographs – Performance circle. 14 August 1999
5		Cassette recording – Bernice Cheesman, Pratt school. 18 September 1998
Oversized 2		Minnesota Works Progress Administration Project No. 1528, floor plan of Pratt School, revised. 1956



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