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


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

Online materials:
- PPA Newsletter Archive: https://www.prospectparkmpls.org/ppa/newsletter/index.html

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

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

Dean Abrahamson, *Under the Witch's Hat*, Epilogue and Appendices. 2003


Anne Barnum research and writing. 1970-1977, 1995

History articles and memoir. 1970-1974, circa 1990s

Clippings and images. 1880s (photocopy), 1956-1994

Brochures and flyers. 1970s-1990s

Biography – clippings, letter, photograph. 1950s, 1992-2005

Churches – histories, program, flyers. 1952, 1970s, 1990s

Houses – clippings, images, real estate listings, notes. 1985-2013

Karen Melvin house photos. 1992

(number duplication during processing)


Interstate 94 – letters. 1956


**Oversized 2**

Cities Service Minneapolis-St. Paul street map showing proposed freeway. 1964

Minnesota Department of Highways map of estimated traffic volumes, Vicinity of Arthur Ave. from Mississippi River to Minneapolis City Limits. 1959

Interstate 94 – research. 1991-2006

Cassette recording – Dianne Kepner Interview of Norma Olson for *Southeast* newspaper. November 1985

Compact disc – Prospect Park Study Club, “Freeway Fight,” Becky Stannard. 15 February 2010

Businesses – Lewis, Bolt, & Nut clippings. 1992

Neighborhood songs. 1998, 2013

*Neighborhood Veteran*. circa 1997

Prospect Park East River Road Improvement Association. 1902, 1957-1995

Southeast Minneapolis Planning and Coordinating Committee. 1969-1975

Prospect Park Cooperative Nursery School. circa 1950s


National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheets: cover page, Sections 7 (incomplete), 8-10, list of photographs – Prospect Park. 2014

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheets: Section 7 (incomplete), house photographs, maps – Prospect Park. 2014


Glendale – Anne Barnum research. 1975, 1990s

Glendale – Susan Larson-Fleming research. 1990, 1995

Glendale – programs, invitation, flyer. 1952, 1990s

Glendale – Glen News. 1966-1968

Glendale – photos. circa 1955-1973


Copy of Egan, Field, & Nowak survey of Glen Dale Heights. 1957

Southeast History Festival packet. circa 1972

Southeast History Festival, history research. circa 1972 (number duplication during processing)

Periodicals. 1970s, 1990

Map segments, Works Progress Administration or similar. circa 1950s (copy)

Map “Prospect Park Witch’s Tower 100 Years,” designed by Ruth Fen. 2014

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

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<td>PPERRIA mailings. 1994-1995</td>
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<td>NRP steering committee. 1993-1994</td>
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<td>Steering committee election. September-October 1993</td>
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<td>NRP Early Access Subcommittee. 1993-1995</td>
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<td>Early Access proposals. 1993-1994</td>
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<td>MGraphics correspondence. February-March 1994</td>
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<td>Artwork. 1990s</td>
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<td>51</td>
<td>NRP Survey committee meetings</td>
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<td>Survey committee – correspondence and reports. February-November 1994</td>
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Survey committee – community input process. January-May 1994
Survey committee – contact lists. 1990s
Group survey form. 1994 April-May
Minneapolis Planning Department NRP, Prospect Park Neighborhood: Planning Information Base. Winter 1993
Action Plan drafts. 1995 April-July
Block clubs – formation and training. 1994-1995
Block clubs – name lists. circa 1994-1995
Block clubs – leader lists and maps. circa 1994-1995
Block clubs – areas A, B, C. circa 1994-1995
Block clubs – area D. circa 1994-1995
Block clubs – areas E, F. circa 1994-1995
Block clubs – attendance sheets. 1994
Block clubs – attendance sheets (copy). 1994
People and groups in neighborhood – contact lists. circa 1994
Minneapolis city directory. 1983-1987 (copies), 1994
People and groups in neighborhood – clippings, flyer. 1993-1995
Focus groups – goals and objectives. November-December 1994
Housing focus group. 1994
Livability focus group. 1993-1995
Livability strategy worksheets. 1994-1995
Issues: landscaping. 1994-1995
Issues: Tower Hill. circa 1993-1994
Southeast Industrial Area/Southeast Business Area focus group. 1993-1995
Other issues – crime, jobs. 1994-1995
Prospect Park Welcome Packet. 1990s
Tower Hill Park Committee. 1997-1999
Neighborhood directory. 1998
Buttons - “PPERRIA 1901-2001.” circa 2001
Button - “Ask me about PPERRIA.” date unknown
Button - “Save Dinkytown.” date unknown

Series 3: Southeast Alternatives Project

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Series 4: Sidney Pratt School

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Oversized 2: Minnesota Works Progress Administration Project No. 1528, floor plan of Pratt School, revised. 1956

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