

## District 10: Como

Planning District 10, know as the Como area, is located in the northwestern part of St. Paul along the northern city limits. It is bounded by the cities of Roseville and Falcon Heights on the north and west, the Burlington Northern Railroad tracks and Lexington Parkway on the southwest, the southern shore of Lake Como and Maryland Avenue on the southeast, and Dale Street on the east.

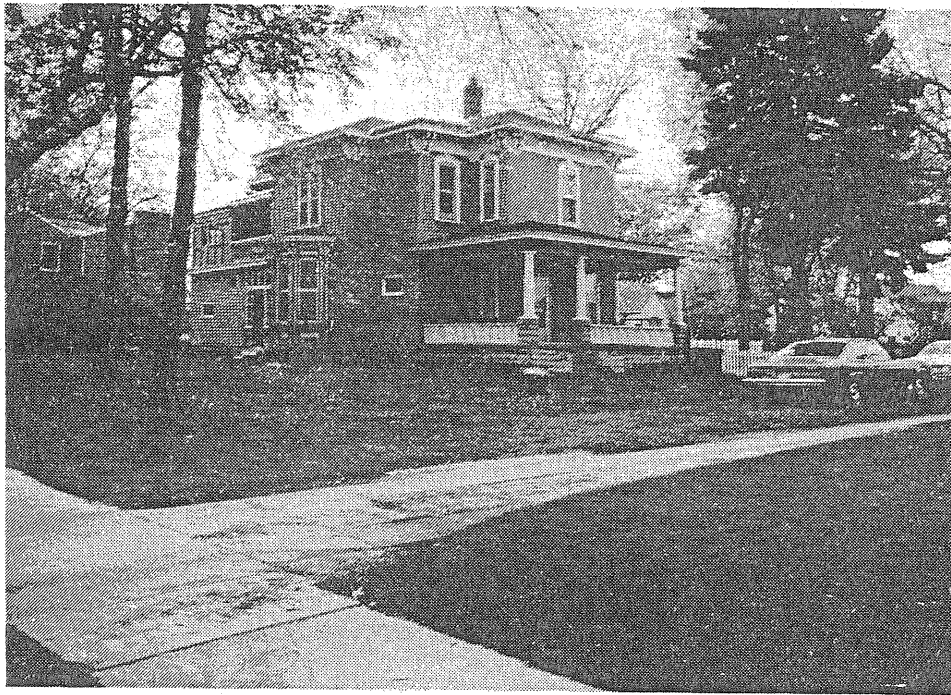
Like most of Ramsey County, the Como area was primarily used as farmland by early settlers in the 1850's to the 1880's. During the early 1850's an ambitious St. Paul real estate speculator, Henry "Broad Acres" McKenty, purchased land around the northern and eastern shores of Lake Como expecting to create a prime resort area. In 1856 McKenty financed the construction of the "Como Road" leading from downtown St. Paul to the lake, a route which roughly followed the path of today's Como Avenue. McKenty's scheme apparently suffered financial losses and he committed suicide in 1869. Several resort hotels were constructed around the lake in the 1860's by other investors and the area was linked to St. Paul by an early horsedrawn omnibus which travelled on the Como Road beginning in 1863.

The city of St. Paul became interested in the beauty of the area and circa 1873 purchased two hundred and fifty-six acres on the west side of the lake for the creation of a park on the recommendation of Horace W. S. Cleveland, a nationally known landscape architect who helped establish much of the St. Paul and Minneapolis park systems. The land remained undeveloped for several years. Beginning in 1883 the City used the southeast forty acres of the site for a city workhouse complex. In 1887 the city hired Cleveland to design the park's roadways and landscape. More improvements followed as the zoo was established in 1897, the lakeside pavilion was constructed in 1905-06, and the conservatory was built in 1915.

Residential development occurred slowly, despite the platting and promotion of the Warrendale commuter suburb on the southwest

shore of the lake (see survey findings for District 6). Electric streetcar tracks first linked Como Park to the city in 1892. In 1898 the tracks were extended through the park westward along Como Avenue where they were linked to the Minneapolis streetcar system, forming the "Como-Harriet" interurban line. Streetcar service was improved in 1924 and 1927, spurring some development in the southern portions of the district, however most of the northern portions remained undeveloped until after World War II.

The Historic Sites Survey staff found several early farmhouses, although most have been altered and expanded. The oldest, at 1388 N. Victoria Street, dates from the 1850's or 1860's. Several nineteenth century houses, which probably were not farmhouses, were also discovered. The most significant of these is the basically intact Italianate George H. and Hannah Hazzard House (no. 25) at 1371-1373 W. Nebraska Avenue. The greatest concentration of Victorian houses was found along Como Avenue west of Lexington Parkway,



25. 1371-1373 W. Nebraska Avenue, George Hazzard House, ca. 1870, architect and builder unknown. (Photo by Gary Phelps)

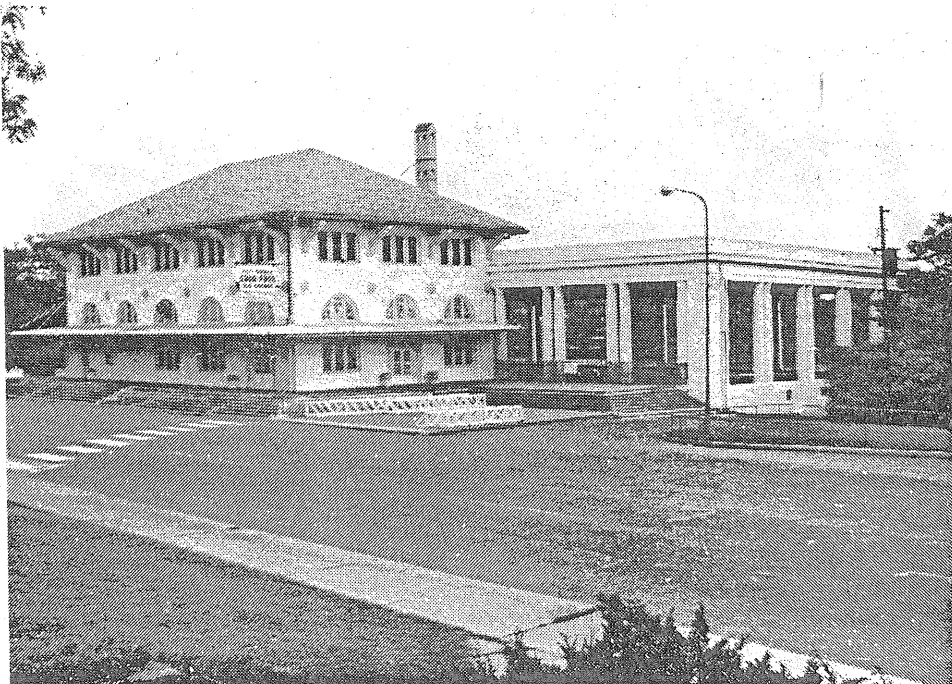
and in the area between Como Avenue and the Burlington Northern tracks, a residential neighborhood which developed shortly after the Northern Pacific Railroad's Como Shops were established nearby in 1885.

District 10 contains several woodframe, pressed brick, and rockfaced concrete block houses dating from the turn of the century, although bungalows constructed before World War II are more prevalent. Some bungalows feature Craftsman-inspired random rubble chimneys and foundations, but most are straightforward small frame dwellings which were inexpensive to construct. A number of fine Period Revival houses, circa 1900 to the 1940's, are located along Wheelock and Midway Parkways. The most significant of these is the Thomas Frankson House at 1349 Midway Parkway (no. 26), an unusual mildly Tudor Revival house faced in white and green glazed bricks. Frankson was a real estate investor who served as Lieutenant Governor of Minnesota from 1917 to 1921.



26. 1349 W. Midway Parkway, Lieutenant Governor Thomas Frankson House, 1914, designed by C.L. French. (Photo by Gary Phelps)

District 10 is primarily a residential and recreational area containing few commercial or industrial buildings, with the exception of the Como railroad shops at 1269 Energy Park Drive, a potential historic district. These shops are being renovated as part of the city's large new light industrial and residential Energy Park complex. The district contains a number of churches, none of outstanding architectural significance, and several institutions and schools which have served important roles in the neighborhood. Two nursing homes, the Lyngblomsten Home for the Aged at 128 N. Pascal Avenue and the Jewish Home for the Aged (Sholom Home) at 1554 W. Midway Parkway, are historically significant and architecturally interesting. The most architecturally significant institution is the Salvation Army Women's Home and Hospital at 1471 W. Como Avenue, a sophisticated brick Tudor Revival style building designed by Clarence H. Johnston, Sr., and constructed in 1912. Two public schools standing in District 10 are architecturally significant: the Art Deco Chelsea Heights School at 1557 N. Huron Street and the Beaux Arts Como Park Elementary School at 780 W. Wheelock Parkway designed by Charles A. Hausler in 1916.



27. N. Lexington Parkway, Como Lake Pavilion, 1905-06, designed by Clarence H. Johnston, Sr. (Photo by Brad Daniels)

Como Park comprises over 40% of District 10, and contains several important buildings including the Como Park Conservatory, now on the National Register; the Como Lake Pavilion (no. 27); the Park Comfort Station -- a Prairie style park shelter constructed by the W.P.A.; and the Art Deco, W.P.A.-constructed Zoological Building designed by Charles Bassford in 1936. The park contains a number of other important monuments and structures, several built by the W.P.A. In addition, one of the city's most important remnants of the streetcar era, the random rubble Como-Harriet Interurban Line Streetcar Waiting Station at 1224 N. Lexington Parkway, remains intact. With its dense collection of architecturally and historically significant buildings, and because the park provides physical evidence of the work of noted landscape architect, Horace W. S. Cleveland, the Historic Sites Survey staff recommends that the entire park be preserved sensitively, possibly as a National Register and/or St. Paul Heritage Preservation Commission historic district.

The following list includes a designated historic site, a list of sites which the Historic Sites Survey staff believes are eligible for listing with the National Register of Historic Places and/or the St. Paul Heritage Preservation Commission, a list of additional sites of major significance, and two potential historic districts. Approximate locations of the sites are shown on the accompanying map.

## DISTRICT 10

### Sites Already Designated

1. Aida Place, Como Park Conservatory

### Sites Eligible for Designation

2. Beulah Lane, Como Park, Como Park Comfort Station
3. 1471 W. Como Avenue, Salvation Army Women's Home and Hospital
4. W. Como Lake Drive, Como Lake Pavilion
5. 1371-1373 W. Nebraska Avenue, George H. and Hannah Hazzard House

### Additional Sites of Major Significance

6. 1542 W. Albany Avenue, T.F. Shea House
7. 1005 E. Como Boulevard, House
8. Como Park Zoo, Zoological Building
9. 891 W. Hoyt Avenue, House
10. 1557 N. Huron Street, Chelsea Heights School
11. 802 W. Larpenteur Avenue, House
12. 1251 N. Maywood Street, House
13. 1349 W. Midway Parkway, Thomas Frankson House
14. 1554 W. Midway Parkway, Jewish Home for Aged of the Northwest
15. 128 N. Pascal Avenue, Lyngblomsten Home for the Aged
16. 1308 N. St. Albans Street, House
17. 1388 N. Victoria Street, Como Park Farm
18. 780 W. Wheelock Parkway, Como Park Elementary School
19. 1483 W. Wynne Avenue, Herbert Morrison House

Potential Historic Districts

1269 Energy Park Drive, Northern Pacific Railway Como Shops  
Historic District

Como Park Historic District

# MAP 10

## DISTRICT 10

