

## District 5: Payne-Phalen

Planning District 5, known as Payne-Phalen, is bounded by Interstate 35E on the west, the St. Paul city limits at Larpen-  
Avenue on the north, the Burlington Northern railroad tracks on the east, and the Burlington Northern railroad tracks and District 4 on the south. District 5 is geographically part of St. Paul's "East Side". In 1970 the district was the most densely populated of the city's seventeen districts with nearly thirty thousand residents.

The southwest corner boundary of present day District 5 originally consisted of two small rivers which flowed south and almost converged as they emptied into the Mississippi River: Trout Brook, whose route is marked by Interstate 35E; and Phalen Creek, which flowed through the bottom of the deep ravine separating District 5 from Dayton's Bluff (District 4). Both rivers were filled in partially after the Civil War by railroad companies using the low-lying river valleys as track beds for railroad lines servicing the industrial Lowertown area in downtown St. Paul. The Phalen Creek valley, later known as Swede Hollow, also served as the site for several early industries in the area, one of the most famous being Hamm's Brewery, now Olympia Brewery, which is technically located in District 4.

The first residents of District 5 were temporary settlers who lived in log cabins along the banks of Phalen Creek and Trout Brook. Beginning in the 1840's and 1850's, the Swede Hollow ravine was settled by newly arrived Swedish immigrants who built shanties, modest dwellings and commercial buildings at the bottom of the ravine. Swede Hollow was eventually occupied by a succession of immigrants including Irish, Italians, Poles, and Mexican Americans, many of whom moved to other parts of the city as they found employment and built more substantial homes. In 1956 the city condemned the neighborhood which was then demolished by urban renewal.

The neighborhood immediately west of Swede Hollow, called Railroad Island because it is surrounded by railroad tracks, contains many of the oldest buildings found in District 5. Before the Civil War this area contained the homes of some wealthy residents of the city, and during the 1860's it was settled by Swedes, and later Irish and Italian immigrants. Lower Payne Avenue, as the area is also called, still retains strong ethnic communities. Within Railroad Island is one of the oldest documented houses standing in the city, the Benjamin Brunson House, built circa 1856 at 485 Kenny Road. It is now a National Register and St. Paul Heritage Preservation Commission site. A large concentration of modest nineteenth century houses including those on the western edge of Swede Hollow and along tiny alley-like streets such as Petit and Fred Streets, as well as larger woodframe and brick houses like the group of somewhat altered patternbook houses on Mt. Ida Street are located here. Two of the most substantial Victorian mansions are the Adolph Bloom house at 416 E. Mt. Ida Street and the Nels Okeson House at 686 N. Bradley Street. Railroad Island also contains a few altered Victorian commercial buildings along Lower Payne Avenue south of Minnehaha Avenue, a cluster of industrial buildings along the southwest edge of the district, and a brick Victorian fire station designed by St. Paul architect Havelock Hand and built in 1890 at 676 E. Bedford Street.

North of Railroad Island is the Upper Payne Avenue neighborhood which was settled during the 1880's by Scandinavian immigrants. The Historic Sites Survey staff identified a large number of interesting woodframe and brick Victorian houses which comprised a middle class residential neighborhood located in a wide band stretching north from Railroad Island to Maryland Avenue. Although many of these homes have been altered, examples of the Italianate, Queen Anne, and Colonial Revival styles can be found, as well as a large number of intact Victorian patternbook houses and a few early twentieth century concrete block houses. The area bounded by Wells, Payne, Greenbrier, and Jenks Avenues contains a dense concentration of intact buildings and has historic district potential.



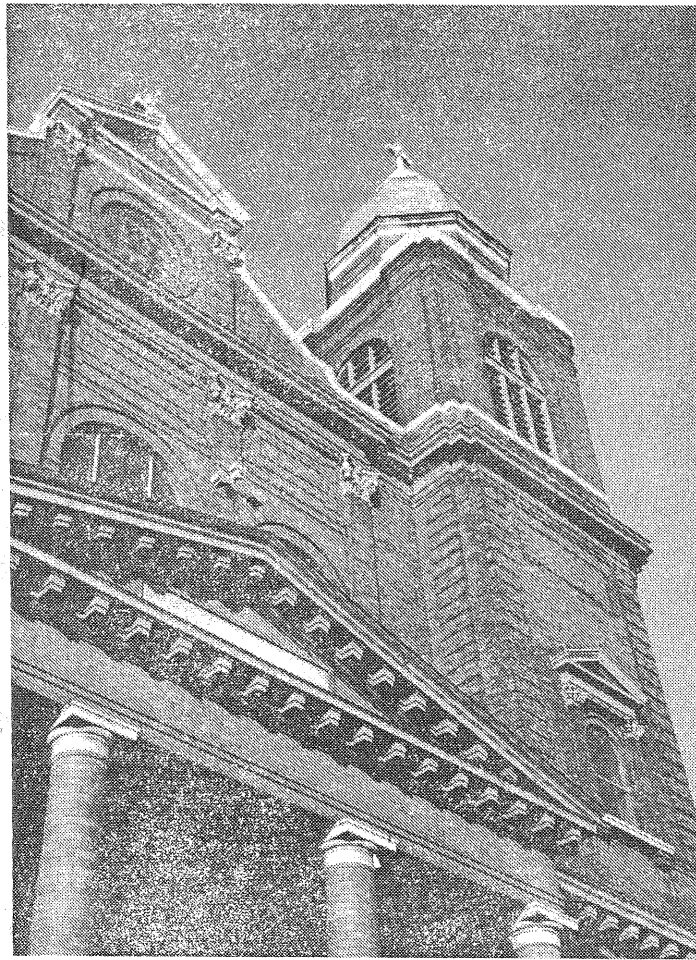
11. 955 N. Jessie Street, Olaf Lee House, 1905, designed by Clarence H. Johnston, Sr. This is one of the most intact and sophisticated early twentieth century houses in the area. (Photo by Patricia Murphy)

Stores, banks, and businesses which served the Upper Payne Avenue neighborhood are located along Payne Avenue and Arcade Street. Both of these streets contain a number of basically intact commercial buildings dating from circa 1885 to circa 1920. The earliest of these are woodframe and mildly Italianate in style, with pedimented false fronts and bracketed cornices. Later commercial buildings are of brick construction with galvanized metal cornices and cast iron storefronts. The commercial buildings at 960, 961, 987-989, and 991-993 N. Payne Avenue are among the most architecturally significant in the district. A few commercial buildings in the Upper Payne neighborhood are scattered along former streetcar routes. Those at 1019 N. Edgerton Street and 841 N. Burr Street are examples of early businesses in residential areas with links to earlier streetcar lines.

The northern and eastern sections of District 5 were settled largely after World War I. The area north of Maryland Avenue and east of Earl Street contains a large number of bungalows dating from the 1920's, and Period Revival, Prairie style, and undistinguished ranch style and suburban houses dating from the 1930's and 1940's. Exceptions to this trend are the Victorian houses along early well-travelled routes and streetcar lines like Payne and Arlington Avenues and Arcade and Edgerton Streets, and a few possible farmhouses. The modest but beautifully intact house at 1391 N. Edgerton Street, and the 1872 vintage Hinkel-Sullivan House at 531 E. Brainerd Avenue, a National Register site, are two important representatives of the few Victorian homes predating their neighbors in the northern portions of District 5. The most architecturally sophisticated twentieth century houses in District 5 are located generally on Wheelock Parkway and along the edges of Lake Phalen and Phalen Park.

District 5 contains a number of churches and other institutions with early links to immigrants who settled the area. Several are architecturally and historically significant. These include St. Casimir's Church at 937 E. Jessamine Avenue (no. 12), Holy Trinity Russian Serbian Orthodox Church at 958 N. Forest Street, and the Second Swedish Methodist Episcopal Church at 701 E. Cook Avenue. On the southern shore of Lake Phalen the Survey team discovered two brick buildings interspersed within newer housing which are remnants of the Evangelical Luther Seminary, an institution which moved to this site in 1893. The seminary presidents' house still stands at 1050 E. Ivy Avenue. Across Ivy Avenue and adjacent to Phalen Park is Michael J. Dowling Memorial Hall, the remaining building of the Gillette Children's Hospital, which was demolished in 1980.

At present there are two buildings in Planning District 5 which have been placed on the National Register, the Benjamin Brunson House and the Hinkel-Sullivan House, although only the Brunson



12. 937 E. Jessamine Avenue, St. Casimir's Church, 1904, architect unknown. (Photo by Brad Daniels)

House and Michael J. Dowling Memorial Hall have been designated St. Paul Heritage Preservation Commission sites. District 5 contains no historic districts at present. The Historic Sites Survey staff has identified one potential historic district in the Payne-Phalen area: a Payne Avenue District, bounded roughly by Wells, Payne, Greenbrier and Jenks Avenues. This several square block area contains a collection of basically intact turn of the century commercial buildings along Payne Avenue, a two-block stretch

of small Victorian worker's houses along Wells Avenue on the northern edge of Swede Hollow, and a large concentration of middle class Victorian woodframe and brick houses along Case, Sims, and York Avenues. In addition, the Survey staff recommends that the Victorian patternbook houses on both sides of Mt. Ida Street between Rivoli and DeSoto Streets, including the impressive Adolph Bloom House at 416 E. Mt. Ida Street, be grouped as a thematic nomination to the National Register. The following is a list of sites in District 5 which have already been designated as historic sites, 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, and a list of additional sites of major significance. Approximate locations of the sites are shown on the accompanying map.

## DISTRICT 5

### Sites Already Designated

1. 531 E. Brainerd Avenue, Hinkel-Sullivan House (only on National Register)
2. 485 Kenny Road, Benjamin Brunson House

### Sites Eligible for Designation

3. 676 E. Bedford Street, Engine Company #1
4. 904-906 N. Burr Street, Double house
5. 656 E. Bush Street, House
6. 1391 N. Edgerton Street, House
7. 1105 N. Greenbrier Street, Arlington Hills Library
8. 1003 E. Ivy Avenue, Michael J. Dowling Memorial Hall (Gillette Children's Hospital) -- has been designated as an H.P.C. site
9. 543 E. Jessamine Avenue, House
10. 937 E. Jessamine Avenue, St. Casimir's Church
11. 955 N. Jessie Street, Olaf Lee House
12. 416 E. Mt. Ida Street, Adolph Bloom House
13. 718 E. Sims Avenue, N. P. Jorgenson House
14. 647 E. York Avenue, East Side Commercial Club

### Additional Sites of Major Significance

15. 686 N. Bradley Street, Nels Okeson House
16. 1070 N. Bradley Street, Joseph A. A. Burnquist House
17. 601 E. Case Avenue, Ludwig E. Johnson House
18. Ca. 697 E. Case Avenue and 975 N. Greenbrier Street, Houses
19. 701 E. Cook Avenue, Second Swedish Methodist Episcopal Church
20. 647 N. DeSoto Street, Rev. Swan W. Sundberg House

21. 1019 N. Edgerton Street, Commercial Building
22. 1259 N. Edgerton Street, John Lindstrom House
23. 1370 N. Edgerton Street, Johnson House and Carriage House
24. 958-960 N. Forest Street, Holy Trinity Russian Orthodox Church
25. 671 E. Geranium Avenue, House
26. 1050 E. Ivy Avenue, Evangelical Luther Seminary President's House
27. 525 E. Jessamine Avenue, House
28. 808 E. Jessamine Avenue, House
29. 958 N. Jessie Street, Wilder Playground Building
30. 304 E. Lawson Avenue, House
31. 626 E. Lawson Avenue, House
32. 1032 E. Magnolia Avenue, House
33. 981 N. Mendota Street, House
34. 470 E. Minnehaha Avenue, House
35. 618-620 E. Minnehaha Avenue, Commercial Building
36. 720 N. Payne Avenue, Hamm's Brewery Administrative Office
37. 960 N. Payne Avenue, Commercial Building
38. 961 N. Payne Avenue, Payne Avenue State Bank
39. 987-989 N. Payne Avenue, G. A. Johnson Building
40. 991-993 N. Payne Avenue, Commercial Building
41. 1138 N. Payne Avenue, Skelly Station
42. 1033 E. Sims Avenue, House
43. Ca. 970 N. Weide Street, House
44. 650 E. York Avenue, Tri-State Telephone Company
45. 747 E. York Avenue, House



Potential Historic Districts

Mt. Ida Street Thematic Nomination

Payne Avenue Historic District

# MAP 5

## DISTRICT 5

