

4.0 RESULTS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In June 2003, additional context needs were identified and work began on the following tasks for the Central Transit Corridor architectural history investigation: 1) an analysis of the historical integrity of Union Park (a.k.a. Iris Park) as a possible historic district; 2) a discussion of a potential MPDF addressing freight transfer-related properties in the Highway 280/Raymond Avenue area; 3) a historical overview of the University Avenue corridor; 4) an evaluation of properties identified by Mn/DOT CRU, SHPO, and The 106 Group as potentially eligible for the NRHP; and 5) the completion of abbreviated inventory forms for properties found to be not eligible for listing on the NRHP. All properties are located in Sections 25 and 26, T29N, R24W; Sections 29, 30, 32, 33, 34, 35 and 36, T29N, R23W; Section 31, T29N, R22W; and Section 6, T28N, R22W, in Hennepin and Ramsey Counties, Minnesota.

Minnesota Architecture-History Inventory Forms are presented in Appendix A for properties that received Phase I evaluation during this study. These forms provide basic information on each property documented as part of this investigation, including location, estimated construction date, an architectural description, a description of associated outbuildings, NRHP eligibility potential and recommendations, and a photograph. A table summarizing the findings of the evaluation is presented in Chapter 5: Recommendations.

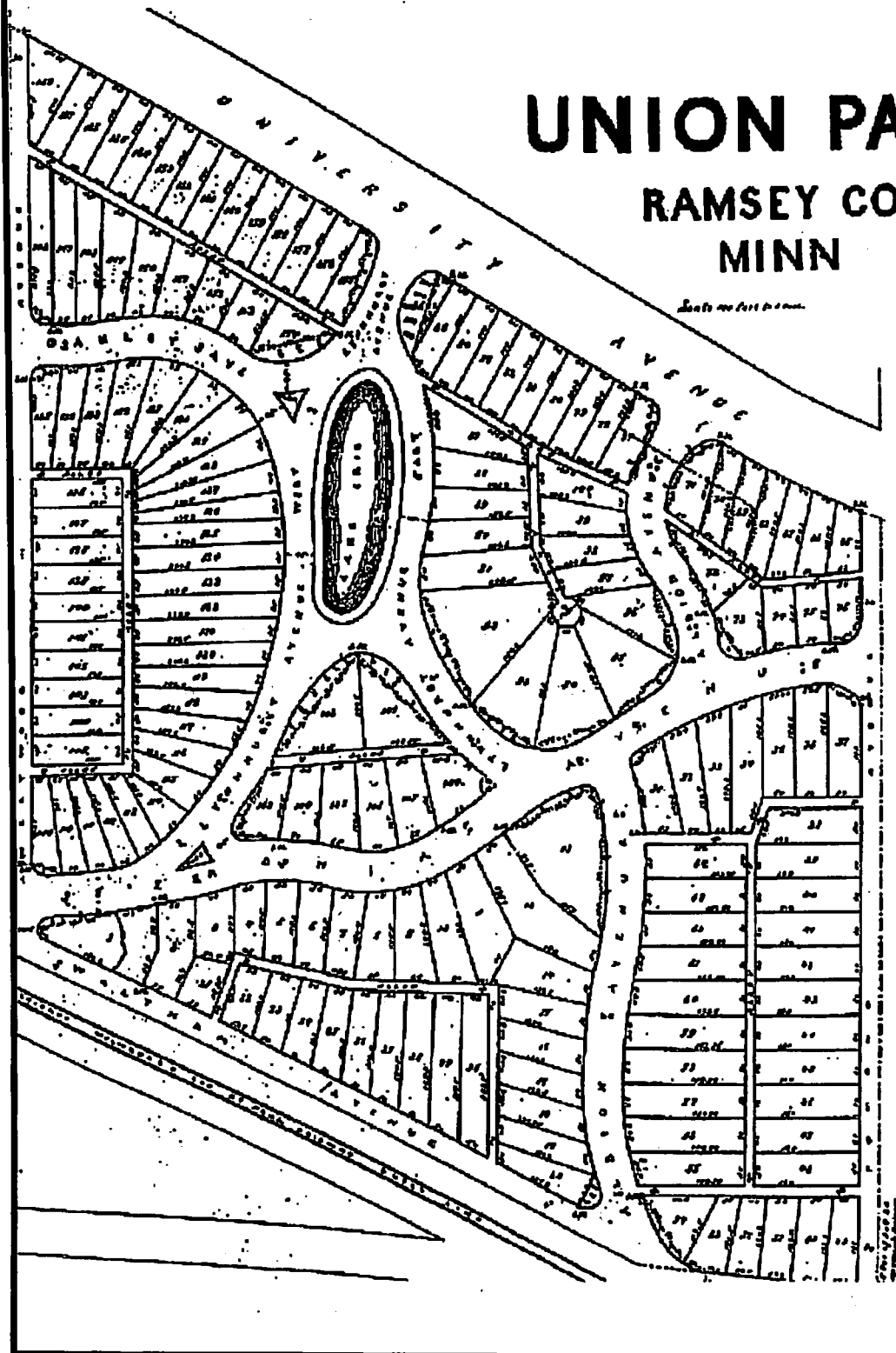
4.2 UNION (IRIS) PARK EVALUATION OF INTEGRITY

Following the assessment stage of the Central Transit Corridor project, Mn/DOT CRU and SHPO requested an evaluation of integrity of Union Park (a.k.a. Iris Park). The goal of this evaluation was to assess the integrity of this district but not to evaluate its significance.

History: In 1884, following a brief period when the area of Iris Park was occupied by an amusement park that featured a bowling alley, dance pavilion, and observation tower, John Hinkel filed a plat for Union Park. The plat (Figure 3) established Union Park (commonly referred to as Iris Park) as a commercial and residential subdivision comprised of a set of curvilinear streets surrounding the Lake Iris park, an oval-shaped lagoon edged with landscaped grounds (Figure 4). The 1880 construction of the adjacent

UNION PARK

RAMSEY CO MINN



SOURCE: ST. PAUL HISTORIC CONTEXT STUDY, RESIDENTIAL REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT: 1880-1950 (ZELLIE AND PETERSON 2001)

CENTRAL TRANSIT CORRIDOR
PHASE I ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY STUDY
HENNEPIN AND RAMSEY COUNTIES, MINNESOTA

UNION PARK
ORIGINAL 1884 PLAT



FIGURE 3

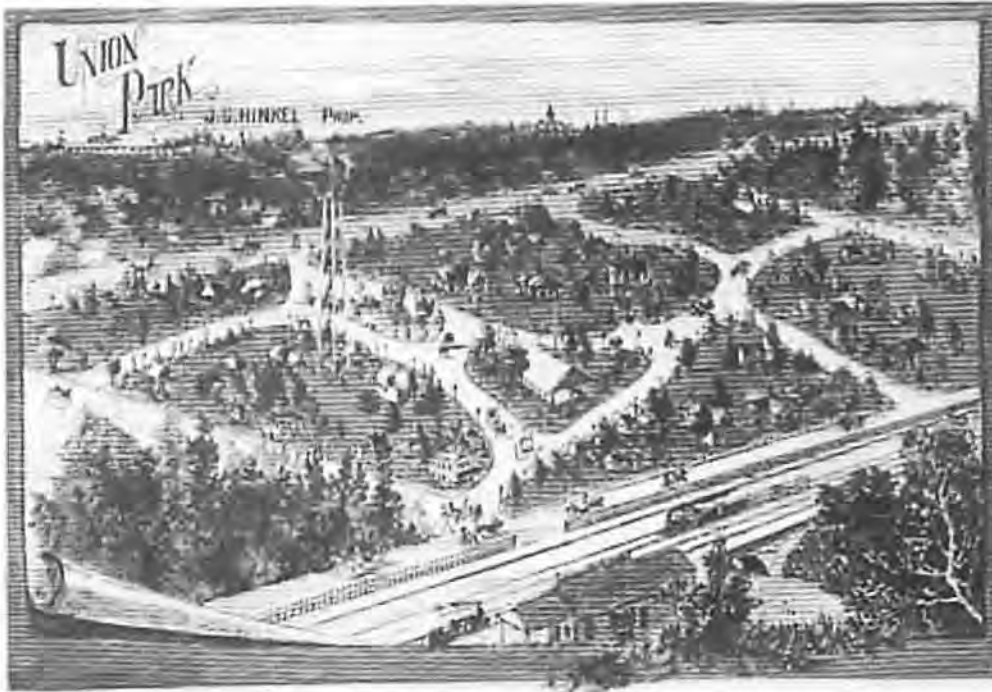


FIGURE 4. ENGRAVING OF UNION PARK C. 1886
(MHS LOCATION NO. MR2.9 SP4.1 P152)

Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Paul Short Line railroad had opened up commuting opportunities by offering a 25-minute ride between Minneapolis and St. Paul. The presence of the railroad led to the development of Union Park, as well as other nearby subdivisions, such as Merriam Park, Desnoyer Park, and St. Anthony Park, as residential enclaves. Union Park was advertised as a “beautiful combination of knolls, dells, grove and lake,” providing a variety of lot sizes and configurations (*The Northwest Magazine* April 1886:17, as quoted in Zellie and Peterson 2001c:10).

Description: Although Union Park is primarily a residential community, provisions for commercial lots and services were made along the University Avenue and Prior Avenue corridors. The remaining area was devoted to residential units on tree-lined curvilinear streets comprised of single and double houses, as well as small apartment buildings. Most of the housing stock consisted of buildings constructed from the mid-1880s to the early 1900s. Generally built of frame construction with wood clapboard siding, typical architectural features include two or two-and-a-half stories, complex roof arrangements, asymmetrical massing, bay windows, turrets, front porches with turned or chamfered posts, and 1/1 double-hung-sash windows. The commercial properties were housed in traditional brick blocks, one to two stories in height. Several stores were located along University and Prior Avenues, as was a hotel; services such as a garage; and small manufacturing concerns, such as a cut glass factory, a book bindery, and a gas mantle factory (Sanborn 1927).

The original Union Park addition is bound by University Avenue on the north, Prior Avenue on the west, Fairview Avenue on the east, and the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad on the south, comprising approximately 35 acres (see Figure 3). Several smaller plats have resulted in subdivided or merged parcels since the original plat. Most significantly, most of the northeast corner of Union Park has been redeveloped into a modern senior housing complex, eliminating the original lot configuration and entirely removing Dewey Ave. north of Feronia Ave. The Lake Iris park has also been reshaped. What once consisted of a discontinuous park extending south from University Avenue, bound on each side by Lynnhurst Avenues East and West and separated by a roadway, has now been joined into one continuous park.

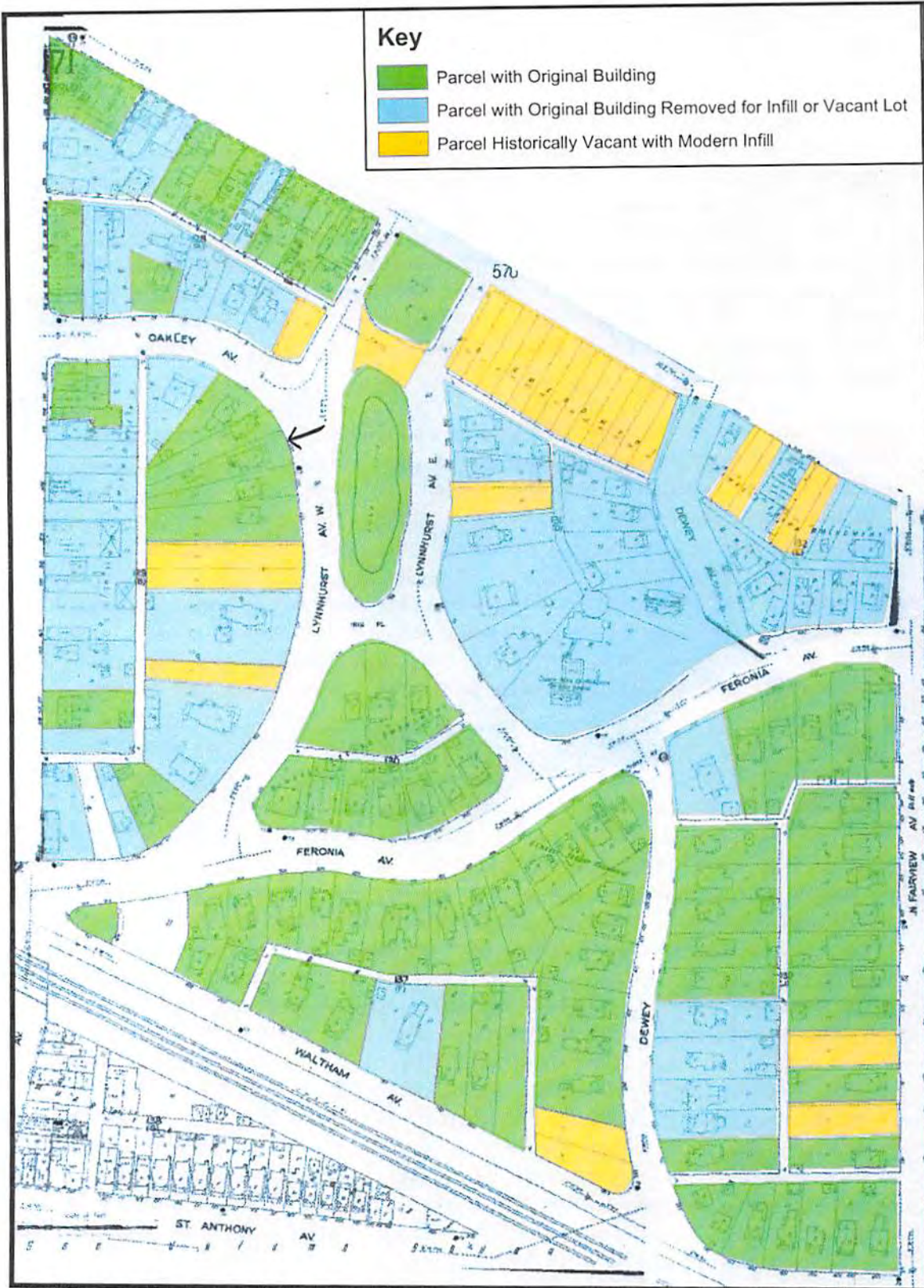
4.2.1 Analysis of Integrity

Sanborn fire insurance maps dating to 1927 (Vol. 6, pages 571 and 582) illustrate the extent to which Union Park had been built up by that time and also provide a good baseline for measuring changes to the area since 1927 (Figure 5). Only 12 of the platted residential lots remained un-built at that time. It should be noted that several of those lots remain vacant and may have been adjoined to an adjacent property to form a double or triple lot configuration. Many more of the commercial lots, particularly those on University Avenue between Lynnhurst Avenue E. and Dewey Avenue were undeveloped.

Within Union Park, buildings had been constructed on 104 residential lots by 1927. These included single houses, double houses, and flats. Of those, 33 have been removed, leaving 68 percent of the original residential stock standing. Many of the 33 houses were destroyed for the construction of a senior housing complex in the northeast portion of the plat. In other cases, the original houses were demolished in scattered locations for small-scale apartment buildings. In addition, infill construction of new buildings has occurred on parcels that were vacant in 1927. The infill has consisted of houses and small-scale apartment buildings constructed between approximately 1930 and 1970.

The overall integrity of the extant residential building stock is poor to fair. While most of the houses have retained their original massing and window configuration, other alterations have changed the historic character of the properties. While most of the houses originally had broad, open front porches, many of the porches have been totally or partially enclosed to form an additional interior room. Only about 40 percent of the houses retain their original siding or have replacement siding that is sympathetic to the original materials. These materials include wood clapboards, stucco, brick, and stone. Replacement siding considered to be inappropriate includes vinyl, metal clapboards, asbestos shingles, asphalt shingles, and wooden shingles (where it appears that this is not the original siding type).

The commercial storefronts and industrial buildings along University and Prior Avenues numbered 46 in 1927 (individual storefronts were counted individually, although many



SOURCE: SANBORN MAP COMPANY, 1927. ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA VOL. 6

CENTRAL TRANSIT CORRIDOR
 PHASE I ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY STUDY
 HENNEPIN AND RAMSEY COUNTIES, MINNESOTA

UNION PARK HISTORICAL
 INTEGRITY ANALYSIS

FIGURE 5

were contained within larger buildings). Fourteen of those storefronts have been removed, leaving 69 percent of the commercial storefronts and industrial buildings in place. Most of the remaining storefronts are located in several large buildings near the corner of University and Prior Avenues. All of the storefronts of the extant buildings have had significant alterations. While some of the upper stories may retain their original façade and window arrangement, some have been covered with alternative materials, such as stucco, and/or have had their windows filled. Consequently, the overall integrity of the commercial storefronts and industrial buildings of Union Park has been significantly compromised.

The circulation system layout of the Union Park addition and the Lake Iris park have also been altered through the years. A segment of Dewey Avenue between University and Feronia Avenues has been vacated and incorporated into the senior residential complex campus and no longer serves as a public thoroughfare. The Lake Iris park has also been altered. Although the landscaping surrounding the lagoon has been altered, the lake continues to form the irregular oval shape illustrated in the 1927 map and seen in earlier photographs (Figures 6-8). Details of the landscaping have been updated and altered over time, including the materials and furnishings, but the overall scheme and circulation system appears to be similar to early plans. The most significant park alteration is the amendment that joins the north park, along University Avenue, to the Lake Iris park.

4.2.2 Evaluation

As noted above, the analysis of historical integrity for Union Park was based on the historical layout and circulation pattern, the presence of original buildings, and the material integrity of the extant original buildings. The circulation pattern of the original Union Park plan has been somewhat compromised by two factors: the amendment of the Lake Iris park with the northern park and subsequent elimination of a traffic path and the removal of a segment of Dewey Avenue between University and Feronia Avenues. In addition, the residential structures standing within Union Park represent only 68 percent of the subdivision built as of 1927. Similarly, only 69 percent of the commercial storefronts and industrial buildings constructed as of 1927 are extant within Union Park. Of the original buildings that remain within Union Park, few have good historical integrity. Most residences have altered front porches, and many have more significant alterations. Sixty percent of the dwellings have been re-sided with inappropriate and/or modern materials. None of the original storefronts remain in place on the commercial buildings. In many cases, alterations have been made to the upper floors and the fenestration on the commercial buildings. Because of the significant compromises to the historical integrity of the overall plan of Union Park, the number of buildings that are no longer extant, and the lack of integrity of many of the extant buildings, The 106 Group recommends that Union Park does not retain sufficient integrity to be considered as a historic district.



FIGURE 6. UNION PARK, C. 1900 (MHS LOCATION NO. MR2.9 SP4.1 R109)



FIGURE 7. IRIS PARK, C. 1902, SHOWING JUDGE ORR'S RESIDENCE, (MHS LOCATION NO. MR2.9 SP4.1 P153)



FIGURE 8. IRIS PARK, 2003, FACING SW

4.3 FREIGHT TRANSFER-RELATED MULTIPLE PROPERTY DOCUMENTATION FORM

Previous studies have identified the area around Highway 280, Raymond Avenue, and University Avenue as a historic and significant transportation, warehousing, and manufacturing hub (Zellie and Peterson 2001a). Following a tour of the area, representatives of Mn/DOT CRU and SHPO found that the area did not maintain a geographically coherent collection of properties that could be considered a contiguous district. It was, however, recommended that a MPDF of the freight transfer-related properties in this area be completed in future phases of this study.

Concurrent with this project, a review of the proposed West University Avenue Historic District was undertaken by staff members of SHPO (Internal Memorandum, Review of “Transportation Corridors: 1857-1950” Historic Context Study and West University Avenue Historic Documentation, S. Roth, 10 March 2003, on file at the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office). This review included a lot-by-lot survey of the proposed district and provided SHPO concurrence or non-concurrence of properties that may be contributing to a potential district. The review found that no historic district exists on West University Ave. between Highway 280 and Hampden Ave. However, Roth recommended designation of eligible buildings by means of a MPDF.

The freight transfer facilities found in this area stem from the construction, in 1884, of the Minnesota Transfer Railway Company, which served as an interchange facility for all

5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 PREVIOUS DESIGNATIONS

Within the APE of the Central Transit Corridor are eight properties that were previously listed on or have been determined eligible for listing on the NRHP. Four are individually listed and four are eligible for listing on the NRHP within the eligible Capitol Grounds Historic District (see Table 2).

One of these eight properties, the Prospect Park Water Tower, is locally designated by the Minneapolis HPC, and another, the Krank Building at 1885 University Avenue, is locally designated by the St. Paul HPC. No other properties within the APE are locally designated.

The Central Transit Corridor APE also includes portions of one area that has been recommended as an eligible historic district: the Prospect Park Historic District. The buildings within this proposed district have not been individually identified in the SHPO database and, therefore, are not noted as listed or contributing properties in this study.

5.2 IRIS PARK

The analysis of historical integrity for Union Park (a.k.a. Iris Park) was based on the historical layout and circulation pattern, the presence of original buildings, and the material integrity of the extant original buildings. The historical integrity of the original Union Park plan has been somewhat compromised by two factors: the amendment of the Lake Iris park with the northern park and subsequent elimination of a traffic path and removal of a segment of Dewey Avenue between University and Feronia Avenues. The residential structures standing within Union Park represent only 68 percent of the subdivision built as of 1927. Similarly, only 69 percent of the commercial storefronts and industrial buildings constructed as of 1927 are extant within Union Park. Of the original buildings that remain within Union Park, few have good historical integrity. Most residences have altered front porches, and many have more significant alterations. Sixty percent of the dwellings have been re-sided with inappropriate and/or modern materials. None of the original storefronts remain in place on the commercial buildings. In many cases, alterations have been made to the upper floors and the fenestration on the commercial buildings. Because of the significant compromises to the historical integrity of the overall plan of Union Park, the number of buildings that are no longer extant, and the lack of integrity of many of the extant buildings, The 106 Group recommends that Union Park does not retain sufficient integrity to convey any potential significance of Union Park as a historic district.