



MEETING AGENDA

**Heritage Preservation Commission
Monday, March 11, 2024 – 12:00pm
City Council Chambers, Third Floor City Hall, 411 W. First Street**

1. Call to Order/Determination of Quorum

2. Public Hearings

PL 23-224 Historic Resource Designation – Local Landmark Designation 2403 West 6th Street.

3. Consideration of Minutes – February 12-2023

4. Presentation

Skyline Parkway/Bardon's Peak – Duncan Schwensohn, PE, City of Duluth

5. Communications

6. Report of Final Disposition on Matters Previously Before the Commission

7. Reports of Officers, Staff and Committees

PC Liaison Update

8. Consideration of Matters Regarding Commission Action

9. Other Business

Consultation Regarding Hartley Park Green Infrastructure Improvements

Consultation Regarding Buckingham Creek Brook Trout Habitat Restoration

10. Adjournment

Heritage Preservation Commission
February 12, 2024 Meeting Minutes
Council Chambers – City Hall

Call to Order and Roll Call

President Jessica Glander called to order the meeting of the Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) at 12:00 p.m. on Monday, February 12, 2024.

Attendance:

Attending: Gary Eckenberg, Jessica Glander, Jess McCullough, and Kal Randa

Absent: Brandon Hartung, Ken Buehler

Staff Present: John Kelley, James Gittemeir, Miles Hansen

Public: Mike Conlan

Public Hearings

None at this time

Consideration of Minutes

November 13, 2023 HPC Meeting

MOTION/Second: Glander/ McCullough approved the minutes

VOTE: (4-0)

Presentation

Minnesota Department of Transportation Section 106 process for the London Road/TH61 from 26th Avenue to 60th Avenue, consisting of pavement resurfacing, lane configuration, roundabouts, and sidewalks, James Gittemeir, Senior Transportation Planner, City of Duluth addressed the commission. James stated that London Road is a mill an overlay project, begins in 2026 for 2 years, and stays within existing curb and gutter. The project includes better pedestrian lighting, sidewalks, added bike lanes and left turn lanes. Creates a roundabout at 26th Avenue East and 40th Avenue East, which will remove four houses.

President Glander stated that the maps provided to commissioners are from an architecture survey each has an inventory number of houses that will be demolished. President Glander asked if MnDot had looked at the neighborhood of London Rd for historic context and did MnDot contract this decision and research out? Their aerial that was provided in the packet is lacking in showing the homes to be demolished. James indicated on a project map which homes were to be removed. James also stated that the roundabout proposed at 60th Avenue East will not be constructed. President Glander stated that there is a lot of historic infrastructure that uses London Rd and would hate for that to be endangered. President Glander asked if MnDot had consulted the railroad on any of the proposed work. James noted that he would ask MnDot. Commissioner Randa asked if there was information on the homes to be removed such as history, age, use and construction. James noted that he would look into the history of the homes and provide John Kelley with the information for the HPC.

Consideration of Matters Regarding Commission Action

Heritage Preservation Commission acknowledged the application for a Historic Resource Designation – Local Landmark Designation at 2403 West 6th Street.

Commissioners: Commissioner Randa primary argument is that it's a classic example of a corner store. President Glander noted that there are findings of the criteria and an analysis will need to be done. McCullough stated that there are many examples of storefronts in e reused neighborhoods throughout Duluth and that he did a tour of one. Eckenberg read comments from the application and spoke about the corner store history of the building. Eckenberg noted that the building could be reused for residential and commercial. Mike Conlan who submitted the application spoke about the building and its history, and about potential reuse of the building.

Communications

The HPC commissioners inquired about their annual meeting. Commissioners asked about vacancies on the HPC and asked about renewal of appointments to HPC. Planner Kelley will check on these items and report back to HPC.

Report of Final Disposition of Matters Previously Before the Commission –

Reports of Officers, Staff and Committees

Planning Commission overview – Gary Eckenberg gave an overview. The pc meeting is tomorrow night. The Historic Resource Designation -Local Landmark Designation application for 2403 West 6th Street will be reviewed by the Planning Commission. Commissioner Eckenberg asked staff if the PC needed to make a recommendation. Planner Kelley stated no recommendation is required and that it was for discussion and comment.

Other Business

N/A

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 12:55 p.m.

Respectfully,

Ryan Pervenanz – Manager
Planning and Development Division



Planning & Development Division
Planning & Economic Development Department

Room 160
411 West First Street
Duluth, Minnesota 55802



218-730-5580



planning@duluthmn.gov

MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 5, 2024

TO: Historic Preservation Commission

FROM: John Kelley, Planner II

SUBJECT: Application for Historic Resource Designation – Local landmark nomination (PL 23-224) – Multifamily Residential/Commercial Store Front building (Belanger Block – 1916) at 2403 West 6th Street.

Proposal:

The applicant is seeking an Historic Resource Designation – Local landmark nomination (PL 23-224) for a Multifamily Residential/Commercial Store Front building (Belanger Block – 1916) at 2403 West 6th Street in the Lincoln Park Neighborhood.

Designation process:

Per UDC Section 50-37.8, the HPC can nominate properties for historic designation and, in so doing, shall report on the historical, cultural, and architectural significance of the proposal, as well as economic status of the property. The Planning Commission shall forward comments on the potential effects on the surrounding neighborhood, economics, environment, and other planning considerations.

On February 12, 2024, the HPC discussed the Multifamily Residential/Commercial Store Front building (Belanger Block – 1916) at 2403 West 6th Street for historic designation. The nomination form with all appendices is available under the HPC section of the City's web site, at <http://www.duluthmn.gov/community-planning/commissions-committees/> and is attached to this memo. On February 13, 2024, the Planning Commission discussed the nomination.

A public hearing is scheduled at the HPC meeting on March 11, 2024, after which the HPC can formally vote on the recommendation. City Council will make the final decision to approve, approve with modifications, or deny the designation based on the historic criteria in UDC 50-37.8.C.

If approved, the next step is writing and submitting a Preservation Plan to the HPC for adoption. This Preservation Plan would define how to proceed with maintenance, improvements, and changes to the railroad in the future. Any future change to the railroad would require a Historic Construction and Demolition Permit, which would need to be approved by the HPC. Historic Construction and Demolition Permits require conformance with the Preservation Plan for the site as well as with historic resource criteria developed by the National Park Service.


Background

The Multifamily Residential/Commercial Store Front building (Belanger Block – 1916) at 2403 West 6th Street was constructed in 1916. The building is 4,432 square feet and is located on the northwest corner of West 6th Street and North 24 Avenue West in the Lincoln Park Neighborhood.



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 planning@duluthmn.gov

The commercial building has two principle exterior elevations, one facing West 6th Street and the other facing North 24th Avenue West. The masonry of the exterior elevations consists of hardfired dark brown brick. The ground level storefront has a recessed entrance reflective of 1916 storefront treatments. The west side of the front façade has a recessed covered porch for the lower level apartment while the upper porch unit has an enclosed structure with metal siding and aluminum windows. The building housed an operating grocery store for approximately 35 years with 3 apartments, one on the lower level and two on the upper level. The building has been vacant for a number of years.

Staff Findings

Per the attached nomination form, the Multifamily Residential/Commercial Store Front building (Belanger Block – 1916) meets the following historic criteria:

- a. Criterion A: It has character, interest, or value as part of the development, heritage, or cultural characteristics of the City of Duluth, State of Minnesota, or the United States.
 - The City of Duluth historically had many grocery stores located in neighborhoods. The Belanger Block represents a fine example of an iconic corner store in a traditional neighborhood. The property meets criterion A.
- b. Criterion B: Its location was the site of a significant historical event.
 - The property was not the site a significant historical event. The property does not meet Criterion B.
- c. Criterion C: It is identified with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the cultural development of the City of Duluth, State of Minnesota, or the United States.
 - The property is not known to be associated with person or persons who significantly contributed to the cultural development of the City of Duluth. The property does not meet Criterion C.
- d. Criterion D: It embodies a distinguishing characteristic of an architectural type;
 - The building does have an identifiable architectural style as a commercial corner store with a brick façade but does it does reflect a distinctive architectural style. The property does not meet Criterion D.
- e. Criterion E: It is identified as the work of an architect or master builder whose individual work has influenced the development of the city or state;
 - According to the application materials the architect and builder are not know. The property does not meet Criterion E.
- f. Criterion F: It embodies elements of architectural design, detail, materials or craftsmanship that represents significant architectural innovation;
 - The property does not embody elements of architectural design, detail, materials or craftsmanship that represents significant architectural innovation. The property does not meet Criterion F.
- g. Criterion G: Its unique location or singular physical characteristics represent an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood, community, or the City as a whole.
 - As previously stated grocery stores were located throughout many neighborhoods in Duluth that served nearby residents. The buildings basic form as an iconic corner store with apartments has remained in tact for over 100 years. As stated in the applicant's documents "these corner store markets strengthened and solidified traditional neighborhoods, and by there presence were an essential part of the fabric of the city." The property meets criterion A.



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Economic impacts: Designating the property a Duluth Historic Landmark may provide assistance in funding opportunities to have the building restored and repurposed, which will further promote the site and provide potential financial benefits.

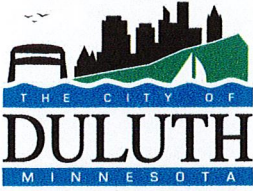
Environmental impacts: The building is surrounded by a residential neighborhood. Designation as a Duluth Historic Landmark is not expected to change the building or site and will have no environmental impact.

Recommendation

The Multifamily Residential/Commercial Store Front building (Belanger Block – 1916) meets satisfactory criteria for historic resources. Designating the building and property as a Duluth Historic Landmark will provide opportunities to have the building renovated and repurposed for residential and possible commercial uses.

Comments Received

One written comment was received and is attached to this memo. Two neighbors also called with questions. Generally, neighbors are concerned regarding the current blighted state of the building.



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RECEIVED

Room 160
411 West First Street
Duluth, Minnesota 55802

DEC 14 2023

PL23-284

Check One Box

- Accessory Home Share - \$268
- Accessory Vacation Dwelling Unit, Limited - \$268
- Appeal to Planning Com. - \$440
- Concurrent Use of Streets - \$855
- District Plan - \$1,227
- EAW or EIS- \$3,064, plus any applicable professional fees
- Historic Construction/Demolition - \$63
- Resource Designation - \$111
- Interim Use Permit \$1,717
- Planning Review - \$1,146
- Sidewalk Use Permit
 - New Permit - \$125
 - Renewal Permit - \$75
- Special Use Permit, General - \$1,723
- Special Use Permit, Wireless Telecommunications*
 - Modifying or Co-locating - \$3,064
 - New Facility or Tower - \$6,133
 - Escrow Deposit - \$10,426
- Subdivision Plat Approval or Amendment:
 - Concept Plan - \$200
 - Preliminary Plat - \$1,221
 - Final Plat - \$920
 - Minor Subdivision - \$458
 - Plat Amendment or Boundary Line Adjustment - \$307
 - Registered Land Survey - \$920
- Temporary Use Permit - \$313
- UDC Zoning Map Amendment/Rezoning
 - General - \$979
 - MU-P or R-P \$2,766
- Vacation of Street or Utility Easement - \$971
- Variance - \$917
- Wetland,
 - De Minimus, Delineation, or No Loss - \$244
 - Exemption - \$283
 - Replacement Plan - \$913
- Zoning Verification Letter - \$103

CONSTRUCTION SERVICES AND INSPECTIONS

APPLICATION COVER SHEET

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Applicant/Owner BELANGER 1916 LLC
 Phone 218-393-2389 Email conlan518@charter.net
 Address 518 E. OXFORD ST.
 City DULUTH State MN Zip 55803
 Owner's Agent (if applicable) MICHAEL CONLAN
 Phone SAME Email _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____

APPLICATION INFORMATION:

Street Address and Zoning of Property 2401 W. 6th ST. R-1
 Parcel ID Number 010-220-02190
 Reason for this Request (Attach Additional Pages or Cover Letter if Necessary)
THIS 107 YEAR-OLD PROPERTY IS ONE OF THE LAST
EXAMPLES OF AN ICONIC BUILDING BLOCK OF HISTORIC
TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOODS: THE CORNER STORE.
ITS CHARACTER-DEFINING FEATURES ARE LARGELY
INTACT. LANDMARK DESIGNATION IS NECESSARY TO ALLOW
THE REHABILITATION OF THIS PROPERTY.

The undersigned hereby represents upon all of the penalties of law for the purpose of inducing the City of Duluth to take the action herein requested, that all statements herein and attached are true and that all work herein mentioned will be done in accordance with the Ordinances of the City of Duluth and the laws of the State of Minnesota. Undersigned also understands that all documents provided to the City may be considered public data, per Minnesota Government Data Practices Act.

[Signature] 12/14/23
 Signature of Applicant Date

Reminder: include application checklist and all supporting information, including pre-application verification (if applicable). Submit completed information to Room 100, Construction Services and Inspections.

*Special Use Permit Checklist required to be submitted with this application coversheet.

3.8 Checklist

Historic Resource Designation

Historic resource designation aims to preserve districts and landmarks that reflect elements of the City's cultural, social, economic, political, engineering, visual, or architectural history. See UDC Section 50-37.8 for more information.

Starting the Application Process

- Submit your application materials by the application deadline, four weeks prior to an HPC meeting. HPC meetings are held the second Tuesday of the month. There are numerous in-person and electronic application methods available; visit <https://duluthmn.gov/planning-development/land-use-zoning-and-applications/applications-checklists/> for current information. Your application must include the following:
 - Application Cover Sheet, available at <https://duluthmn.gov/planning-development/land-use-zoning-and-applications/applications-checklists/>, and applicable fee
 - Nomination form and any documentation

After Submitting Your Application

1. Determination of Completeness. Within 15 business days of your application, you should expect to:

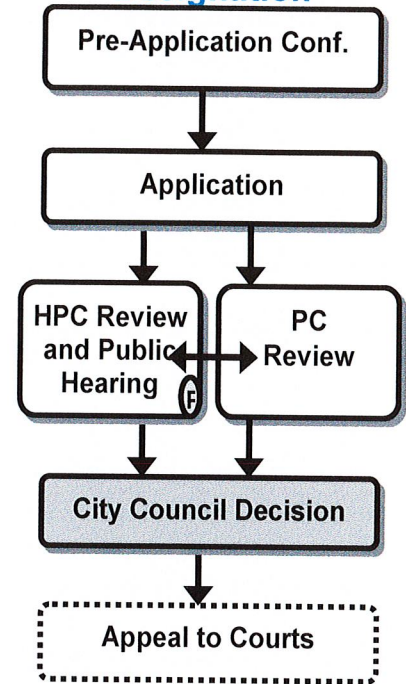
- Receive an "Applicant Letter," which acknowledges a complete application, shares the date of the HPC meeting and the assigned staff person, and notifies you of State-mandated deadlines for the City to make a decision, **OR**
- Receive notification that your application is incomplete, with details on further information to submit.

2. Public Notice. A mail notice will be sent by the City to property owners within 350 feet of the subject property.

3. Heritage Preservation Commission Hearing. The HPC will review the application, send it to Planning Commission for their review and recommendation, conduct a public hearing, and forward a recommendation to City Council. You will be notified when an HPC hearing is scheduled for your application. **We ask that applicants attend this meeting.**

4. City Council Decision. The Historic Preservation Commission recommendation will be forwarded to City Council in the form of an ordinance, which will require two readings. City Council will make a decision whether to approve the historic resource designation, approve it with modifications, or deny it. Planning staff will send notice of the Council action to the applicant.

Historic Resource Designation



(P) Indicates Public Hearing Required

Important Dates

Application Deadline:

Sign Notice Placed:

HPC Mtg:

Planning Commission:

City Council (1st read)*:

City Council (2nd read)*:

Effective*:

**Please note that these dates are approximate guidelines and may change*

CITY OF DULUTH
HISTORIC. PRESERVATION. COMMISSION
LOCAL LANDMARK. NOMINATION

HPC FN _____

- I. Name of Property
 - A. Historic: Belanger Block - 1916
 - B. Common: 'Sternal's Store' 'Annie's Store'

- II. Location
 - A. Address: 2401 W. 6th Street, Duluth, MN. 55806
 - B. Legal Description: Lot 0385. Block 153 Duluth Proper Second Division

- III. Classification
 - A. Type of Property: Commercial Block
 - B. Current Use: Multi-family residence / commercial storefront
 - C. Current. Zoning: R-1

- IV. Current. Owner
 - A. Name: Belanger 1916 LLC (Michael Conlan)
 - B. Address: 518 E. Oxford St., Duluth, MN. 55803
 - C. Telephone: (218) 393-2389

- V. Property. Status
 - A. Occupied / Vacant: Vacant
 - B. Assessed Value: \$ 198,400
 - C. Condition: Exterior: Good /. Interior: Poor

- VI. Historical. Background
 - A. Year Built: 1916
 - B. Architect and/or Builder: Unknown
 - C. Original. Site: Yes
 - D. Altered / Unaltered: Unaltered save for minor alterations
 - E. Architectural. Style: Transitional Brick Commercial

- VII. Description of Property

See attached continuation sheets.

- VIII. Present. Condition

See attached continuation sheets.

- IX. Statement of Significance

See attached continuation sheets.

- X. Findings on Designation Criteria

See attached continuation sheets.

The following criteria are established by ordinance as the basis for designation of a site/district, with the requirement that the property proposed for designation meet at least one of the criteria.

Findings responding to each of the criteria are as follows:

- A. It has character, interest, or value as part of the development, heritage, or cultural characteristics of the City of Duluth, State of Minnesota, or the United States.**

FINDING:

- B. Its location was a site of a significant historical event.**

FINDING:

- C. It is identified with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the cultural development of the City of Duluth, State of Minnesota, or the United States.**

FINDING:

- D. It embodies a distinguishing characteristic of an architectural type.**

FINDING:

- E. It is identified as the work of an architect or master builder whose individual work has influenced the development of the City of Duluth or the State of Minnesota.**

FINDING:

- F. It embodies elements of architectural design, detail, materials, and craftsmanship which represent significant architectural innovation.**

FINDING:

- G. Its unique location or singular physical characteristics represent an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood, community, or the City as a whole.**

FINDING:

XI. Conclusions See attached continuation sheets.

A. Points in Favor:

B. Points in Opposition:

City of Duluth

Historic Preservation Commission Local Landmark Designation

Continuation Sheets

VII. Description of Property

The project engaged consulting historical architect Prof. Steve C. Martens to assess the architectural features of the building. Prof. Martens stated “Like everything in Duluth, what would be a simple, basic two-part commercial block anyplace else is hybridized by the sloping site, set-back ‘ell’ on the west, and asymmetrical layout with open porch across the rear.”

“State Historic Preservation Offices like to characterize function and form using a (1987) typology Richard Longstreth developed for the National Trust *Buildings of Main Street*, in this case a **one-over one, two-part commercial block on a sloping site, with asymmetrical two-story setback wing or ‘ell’ on the west, accessed from a center entrance and hallway dividing the interior into two units.** SHPO would then follow up that functional type by naming the **modest stylistic influences on a basic ‘transitional brick commercial’ with projecting, bracketed pressed metal cornice and raised center name block parapet.”**

The commercial building has two principal exterior elevations, one facing West 6th Street and another stepping up the hillside and facing 24th Avenue West (See photos 1-3). Brick on these principal elevations is hardfired dark brown brick, with finely-buttered mortar joints tinted to match. Exterior brickwork on the north (rear) and west (side) elevations is common, modular, soft yellow brick with standard mortar joints. All masonry materials are well crafted and remain in fundamentally sound material condition (See photos 4-5).

The front principal elevation presents a modest vernacular appearance, a square block façade with asymmetrical windows and doors, anchored by the street level storefront; the stepped-back ‘ell’ on the west featured a recessed covered porch for the apartment on the lower level while the upper porch unit has an enclosed structure with metal siding and aluminum windows. This enclosure does not appear to be original to the building (Photos 1,3). The ground level storefront has a recessed entrance reflective of 1916 storefront treatments. The storefront has been partially reconstructed with new, substitute materials (metal and wood panels) that maintained the appearance, configuration, scale and feeling of the existing recessed-entry storefront with bulkheads and display windows (See photo 7).

The two principal elevations fronting the street and avenue are surrounded by a wide pressed metal cornice with brackets. The masonry openings for the windows and doors are unornamented except for the painted concrete sills. The door and window heads on these two elevations are flat steel lintels. The common bond brickwork on the front façade is set off by an

architectural pattern vertical belt course above the window line. The raised center brick parapet contains a name block reading **F. Belanger Block - 1916** (See photo 6). The side (26th Avenue West) elevation features unmatched, asymmetrical windows and a grade-level door that served as the service entrance to the corner store on the first floor. The rear of the building shows the transition from the hard-fired 'formal' brick on the principal façades to the cheaper soft common brick on the rear. This elevation features an open porch across the entire width of the structure providing access to the second floor apartments via an offset staircase (See photo 8). Windows and a residential type wooden door serve each unit. The porch is wood framed, with six 6x6 wooden posts supporting a shed roof. The porch decking and remaining railing and balusters are wood. Below the porch is a concrete step leading below grade to an access door to the basement; this below grade area is buttressed by a poured concrete retaining wall extending up to the backyard grade.

As is shown in the accompanying Sanford Fire Insurance Map (See Map 2), the footprint of the structure extends from lot line to lot line across the front 40% of the lot, with the remaining land area comprising a backyard lawn with plantings rising in grade to the alley level which features a four car gravel parking pad.

VIII. Present Condition

The exterior of the building is in fundamentally good condition, having retained a basically unaltered appearance for over 100 years. The form of the structure and its function reflect its design as a commercial block with corner storefront and adjacent apartment units.

The hard-fired brick on the two principal elevations is in remarkably good condition with no spalling or deterioration of mortar joints requiring re-pointing. There is one area on the side façade that shows minor step cracking but no apparent displacement. On the rear of the building where common brick was used the mortar joints appear somewhat weathered and the relatively soft surface condition reflects some cosmetic soiling but there is almost no indication of water damage (either penetration or absorption) in the common masonry walls. The ornamental metal cornice is intact and shows only minor deterioration or corrosion damage. The brick parapet on all sides of the building is intact with no sign of crumbling mortar or loose bricks. A recent new EPDM rubber membrane roof has been installed which extends to form the parapet cap. The building has a rubblestone foundation; as is common, a roughly 8-foot section has been compromised but no displacement is apparent.

On the front façade of the building several repairs or cosmetic changes have been made. The storefront form is unchanged, with the original display glass framing, inset entrance and oak front door remaining, although three of the five plate glass windows were blown out by a storm three years ago and replaced with temporary plywood sheathing. The transom and bulkhead have been clad with newer materials and are in fair shape. The recessed porch in the 'ell' section is in very good shape, with the original brickwork in excellent condition and original fir floor,

railing and balusters (See photo 10). The upper porch area has a framed in enclosure of non historic materials - metal siding and aluminum windows. This enclosure is in a severely deteriorated condition and warrants removal and restoration of historic treatments.

The open wooden porch assembly at the rear of the building appears to be original and is serviceable, although some railings are missing and its structural integrity is questionable, with several area of decking rotted; the stairway is no longer safe to use.. Rehabilitation of the building would require the removal of the porch structure and its replacement with new materials following the design and placement of the original.

The side elevation to the west (map orientation) is essentially not visible from the street. It features common brick walls framing a recessed 'ell' with windows on both levels. While this elevation was presumably completely brick faced originally, the recessed 'ell' area has been covered with metal siding at some point (See photos 10-11).

Windows on the upper level of the front façade have been replaced by non-historic aluminum replacement sash; windows in the covered porch section are intact but in a severely deteriorated state. They are sufficient, however, to demonstrate the historic 4:1 divided light configuration. The asymmetrical fenestration on the avenue elevation contains both double-hung sash and clerestory types; those not replaced with non-historic aluminum inserts show significant rot, particularly along the bottom rail (See photos 12-13). Significantly, however, all of the building penetrations are unaltered from the original construction, meaning that door and window units requiring replacement can be replaced by new custom units matching the surface, scale, detail and appearance of the original units without materially affecting the historic look of the structure.

IX Statement of Significance

While the **form** of the structure - its design, materials or craftsmanship - do not represent a significant architectural contribution to the community, its **function** does. The applicant believes that the Belanger Block represents one of the last, and finest, examples of the iconic corner store, one of the most important components of traditional historic neighborhoods in the United States. For over 100 years, this building has remained fundamentally unchanged, preserving appearance and texture of a building block of American urban development.

The Belanger Block is located in the midst of a traditional neighborhood zoned R-1 - single family residential. Traditionally, city planners have been scrupulous about keeping commercial style buildings out of such low density districts. Historically, however, there have been three exceptions to this rule: schools, churches and corner stores, all because they were seen, not as intrusions, but as supportive neighborhood institutions (See Map 2)..

The significance of historic corner stores in traditional neighborhood development has been well documented. In an article entitled *The Corner Store: At the Intersection of Memory and Time*

by Benjamin Forget in the Washington Post, the author discussed “an everyday American institution that was so common that nobody gave it half a thought. Corner stores - especially corner groceries - became ubiquitous in American cities because they were needed and convenient, and they fit the typical urban geometry.”

Most cities have been laid out, like Duluth when geography and geology permitted, with a grid pattern of streets; creating intersections that became prime real estate locations, drawing potential customers from four different directions. People walked to these locations, and as cities expanded in the 19th century, the increased distances between residential neighborhoods and central food markets made daily shopping trips less feasible; the neighborhood corner store thus became more integral to urban daily life.

A principal reason for the proliferation of corner stores, Forgey writes, “was technology or, rather, the lack of it: the absence of a widespread, reliable means of refrigeration, especially in the home, made daily food shopping a necessity. Small-store keepers would get up early and head for the larger markets, bringing fresh foodstuffs back to the neighborhood.” In many cases, corner store groceries across the country attracted immigrant proprietors, who saw such ‘mom and pop’ operations as a means of securing an economic future. “Owning a corner store often gave newcomers not only a livelihood,” according to *The Evolution of the Corner Store*, but also a roof over their heads and, for many, they served as a gateway business to move up the socio-economic ladder.”

Regardless of the background or ethnicity of store owners, the structures themselves followed a fixed pattern. “Despite regional differences,” Forgey notes, “there is a similarity to these buildings across the continent. In form and plan they are adaptations of the familiar Main Street pattern of ground-floor retail spaces with living quarters above.” According to the City of North Vancouver Heritage Register, corner stores similar to the Belanger building were “built as a retail block with apartments above at a time when intense speculation and development in the area could barely keep pace with the demands of the burgeoning population. The apartments on the second floor provided necessary housing for the large number of workers needed to support the economic boom.”

The demise of the neighborhood corner store has been well documented as well. Improvements in refrigeration in homes and in the marketplace changed the daily shopping dynamic; the automobile brought changes to personal mobility that affected shopping even more. The advent of supermarkets made it almost impossible for small groceries to compete. The result of these economic forces leads directly to the need to preserve one of the few remaining examples of this lost resource.

According to the website Streets MN, in an article entitled *Destruction for Appetite: The Loss of Corner Stores*, there were nearly 100 corner stores just in the Longfellow neighborhood of Minneapolis in the 1930s, including 67 grocery stores. Today there are none.

The pattern was repeated in Duluth. The Duluth Public Library's site **VINTAGE DULUTH** reported in 2013: "At one time, you could find a corner store in just about any Duluth neighborhood. The 1973 Duluth City Directory lists 69 stores under the *Groceries and Meats - Retail* heading. The list includes a few large chain markets like Super Value, National Food Stores and Piggly Wiggly, but the vast majority at that time was one-of-a-kind family owned neighborhood shops."

"Fast-forward to to 2013, when only *nine* unique Duluth listings appear under the City Directory heading. With the closing of the last downtown holdout in June this year, Jacqui's Market & Deli (formerly Romano's Grocery), the only neighborhood markets remaining 30 years later are Fourth Street Market (note: now closed), Gannucci's Italian Market (note: now closed) and the Whole Foods Co-Op (hardly a neighborhood market anymore)." The VINTAGE DULUTH article concludes on a somewhat sentimental note. "Some of the store closings in recent years have been documented in 'obituaries' in the Duluth News Tribune. The stores never die quietly; there are always sad goodbyes and reminiscences."

Reminiscences are important to oral history; the most important in this context are those of Jim Heffernan, longtime columnist for the Duluth News Tribune. Writing in 2019 about the ***Corner Grocery Store Revisited***, "... home was in Duluth's West End well over a half century ago - long before anyone ever dreamed the neighborhood would change its name to Lincoln Park and before that neighborhood - or any other in Duluth - lost its grocery outlets to the advent of the supermarket era. We were located on 23rd Avenue West, between Fifth and Sixth streets, and our nearest grocery was on the Northwest corner of 23rd and Sixth. It was just one of several 'mom-and-pop' grocery outlets within short walking distance from our house."

"Counting on my fingers ... I realize that there were *eight small grocery stores within three blocks of my house*, all of which we patronized from time to time, depending on the urgency and nature of our needs. Our neighborhood was not unique. Throughout the city, every residential neighborhood had its grocery stores that served nearby residents who, as a rule, simply walked down the street to pick up whatever they needed. The eight stores in the heart of the West End near our home are largely forgotten today, and even the thought that they existed at all, and that supermarkets were unheard of, is alien to most people today."

"A block west - 24th and Sixth - was a somewhat larger store I knew as 'Sternal's Store' as a child but was operated by the Natalie family toward the end of its existence. The store part of the building is now vacated, with apartments above." The reference is to the Belanger Block. "Just a half block south on 24th was Charlie Caskey's ... the building is now a one-car garage. Another half block down 24th, at 5th Street, stood Olson Bros. ... Directly across 24th from /Olson Bros. was a small grocery store operated by the Kramnic family ..." The Olson Bros. Store is now the Boys & Girls Club; the site of the Kramnic store is a vacant lot.

The list goes on but the point is made, not only of the sheer number of these neighborhood-based businesses and their physical presence, but of the vital role they played in the daily life of most Duluthians. But it is not just the store operations that have ceased to exist, but the very buildings

that housed them have either been demolished or have lost their character-defining features. As urban designer Julie Campoli has documented in *The Corner Store*, “as the market for retail space receded, store owners sold to landlords and homeowners, transferring many of those early storefronts to residential use.”

In the West End, of the eight corner stores in the neighborhood cited by Heffernan, only the Belanger Block remains in its original form. Across the city, in the traditional neighborhoods from the East Hillside to the West End, some of what were the commonplace corner stores can still be seen, but in altered form, converted to housing or garage structures (See photos 14-16 for examples).

The Belanger Block remains one of the very last representatives of a basic building block of late 19th and early 20th century traditional neighborhood development, its basic form having remained the same for 107 years and its character-defining features largely intact. In recognition of that status, its designation as an historic local landmark is appropriate.

X. Findings on Designation Criteria

The following criteria are established by ordinance as the basis for designation of a site / district, with the requirement that the property proposed for designation meet at least one on the criteria.

Findings responding to each of the criteria are as follows:

A. It has character, interest, or value as part of the development, heritage, or cultural characteristics of the City of Duluth, State of Minnesota, or the United States.

FINDING: The applicant believes that the Belanger Block represents one of the last, and finest, examples of the iconic corner store, one of the most important components of traditional historic neighborhoods in the United States. For over 100 years, this building has remained fundamentally unchanged, its character-defining features largely intact, thus preserving appearance and texture of a building block of American urban development. The property meets Criterion A.

B. Its location was a site of a significant historical event.

FINDING: The property is not known to be the site of a significant historical event. It does not meet Criterion B.

C. It is identified with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the cultural development of the City of Duluth, State of Minnesota, or the United States.

FINDING: The property is not known to be associated with persons who significantly contributed to the cultural development of the city or its surrounding region, and that is precisely the point: the neighborhood corner store was such a common feature of the traditional neighborhood that it was taken for granted; rather than attracting famous personages it served everyday people on a daily basis. It does not meet Criterion C.

D. It embodies a distinguishing characteristic of an architectural type.

FINDING: While the property has an identifiable architectural style - transitional brick commercial - it does not reflect a distinctive character type. This criterion is not met.

E. It is identified as the work of an architect or master builder whose individual work has influenced the development of the City of Duluth or the State of Minnesota.

FINDING: The property's architect and builder are not known. The property does not meet Criterion E.

F. It embodies elements of architectural design, detail, materials, and craftsmanship which represents significant architectural innovation.

FINDING: The property does not embody elements of design, detail, materials and craftsmanship that represent significant architectural innovation. The property does not meet Criterion F.

G. Its unique location or singular physical characteristics represent an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood, community, or the City as a whole.

FINDING: The Belanger Block remains one of the very last representatives of a basic building block of late 19th and early 20th century traditional neighborhood development, its basic form having remained the same for 107 years and its character-defining features largely intact. As was noted in the narrative, there were eight small grocery stores within three blocks of one writer's home in the West End; and this neighborhood was not unique. Throughout the city, every residential neighborhood had its grocery stores that served nearby residents who, as a rule, simply walked down the street to pick up whatever they needed. These corner store markets

strengthened and solidified traditional neighborhoods, and by their presence were an essential part of the fabric of the city. The property meets Criterion G.

XI. Conclusions:

A. **Points in Favor:** 2401 W. 6th Street meets the City of Duluth's Designation Criteria A and G and is therefore nominated for designation as a local landmark.

B. **Points in Opposition:** N.A.

HPC Nomination Form (2)

XII. Attachments

A. Sources

See attached.

B. Location Maps

See attached.

C. Photos of Subject Property

See attached.

SOURCES

Martens, Prof. Steve C. Personal Correspondence. November 27, 2023

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VINTAGE DULUTH. *Ye Olde Corner Grocery*. Duluth Public Library. 2013

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Richard, M. *The corner stores of yesteryear*. *The Gardner News*. February 15, 2020.

North Shore Heritage Blog. *The Evolution of the Corner Store*. July 20, 2023. <https://www.northshoreheritage.org/blog/the-evolution-of-the-corner-store>



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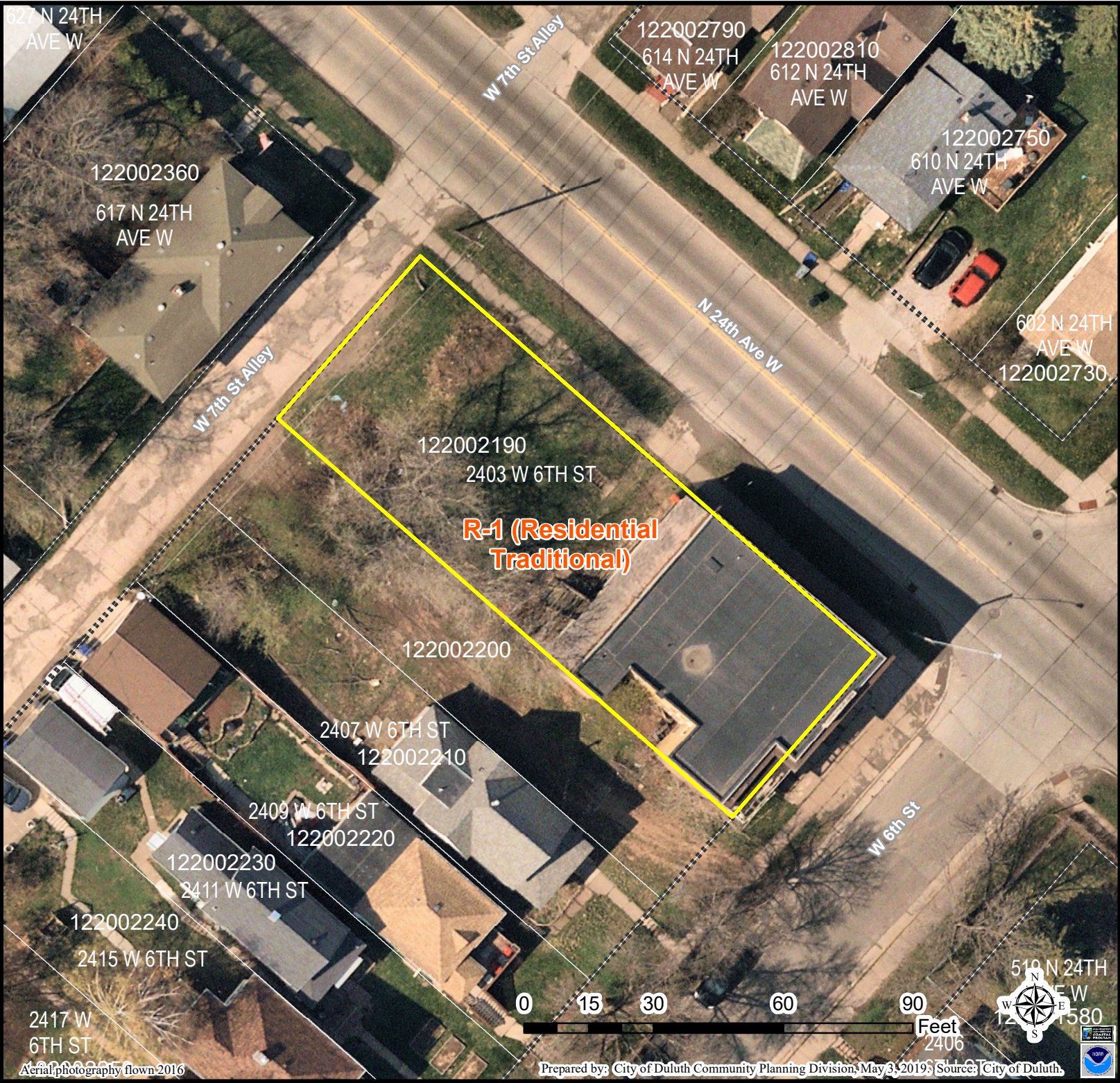
Heffernan, J. *Corner Grocery Store Revisited*. Duluth News Tribune. September 24, 2019.

Maps and Aerial Photos

1. Google Earth Imagery: 2023
2. Sanborn Map Publishing Company. *Duluth, Minnesota*, Vol. 2. New York: Sanborn Map Publishing Company, 1947.
3. Sanborn Map Publishing Company. *Duluth, Minnesota*, Vol. 2. New York: Sanborn Map Publishing Company, 1955.

Legend

-  Road or Alley ROW
-  Zoning Boundaries



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Aerial photography flown 2016



February 19, 2024

Mr. John Kelley
City of Duluth Planning Division
411 W First Street
Duluth MN 55802-1102

RE: Local designation of the F. Belanger Block, 2401 6th St W., SHPO Referral Number 2024-0826

Dear Mr. Kelley,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the above referenced local designation. It has been reviewed pursuant to Minnesota Statute §471.193, subd. 6., and Section 50-36.3.C.3 of the UDC for the City of Duluth.

Constructed in 1916, the F. Belanger Block is located on the corner of West 6th Street and N 24th Ave West in Duluth's Lincoln Park neighborhood. The commercial brick building stands two stories in height and features a storefront with a recessed entrance flanked by large plate glass windows and a transom above. Double hung sash windows with concrete sills pierce the second floor. A wide cornice with modillion blocks wraps around the building on the 6th Street and 24th Avenue elevations. There is a raised center brick parapet with "F. BELANGER BLOCK – 1916" spelled out. The 6th Street elevation features a two-story section that is stepped back from the primary block, which features a first floor porch and second floor deteriorated enclosed porch.

The Belanger Block is significant under Criterion A of the Duluth UDC as a good example of a neighborhood corner store, a once common property type throughout Duluth. Economic growth that spurred residential expansion in Duluth was fueled during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries by the lumber, grain, and iron ore industries. As residential neighborhoods expanded, small scale commercial properties were constructed on corners to serve the surrounding population. Such corner stores were at one time commonly found in Duluth's neighborhoods but are becoming increasingly rare. For this reason, we concur that the Belanger Block is a good candidate for local designation.

FYI, I was curious about who the owner of the building might be and found this reference from the *Duluth News Tribune*, dated Oct. 29, 1922: "Frank Belanger, 2401 W. Sixth St., yesterday celebrated his 40th year of continuous service in the employ of the Northern Pacific Railway Company. Belanger, who will be 63 years old next March, is the oldest employee of the railroad in Duluth."

If you have any questions regarding our assessment of this designation, please contact me at 651.201.3291 or michael.koop@state.mn.us.

Sincerely,



Michael Koop
State Historic Preservation Office

cc: Jessica Glander, President, Duluth HPC

From: John Hanson

Sent: Tuesday, February 27, 2024 7:25 PM

To: planning <planning@DuluthMN.gov>

Subject: 2403 W. 6th St. Historic Resource Designation

Hello,

My name is John Hanson, I live on the 600 block of 24th Ave West St, and I am writing to you today in relation to the public notice I received for the application for historic resource designation for 2403 W. 6th Street. As a nearby resident to the structure listed, I would like to voice my opposition to the structure receiving a historical resource designation. While the structure may have had some historical value at some point, it has since fallen into intense disrepair to the point where I feel it no longer has any viability to the community as a historical artifact.

Even without being able to assess the interior or structure of the building, I can say just looking from the outside that the building is far from being habitable. Any exterior wood on the building is either rotten or destroyed, most of the windows in the building are either shattered or boarded up, there is significant graffiti on the building, the grass is completely overgrown, the yard is covered in trash and rotting construction materials, I have observed racoons and other vermin coming and going from the building, the roof structures on the front and rear of the building looks to be failing, and satellite images from google maps appears to show a hole in the roof.

Although I am not an expert by any means, I would guess that the amount of funds and resources it would take to restore the building to where it would be useful as a historical resource would be far beyond what would be economically viable for this building. Even if the petitioner did have the resources to restore this building, the fact that in the two years I have lived next to this building the owner has not so much as mowed the lawn shows to me that they do not have the ability or serious desire to restore it.

At some point this committee could reassess the historical value of this building, maybe after a serious effort has been made to restore the building, or at least to make it habitable. Until then, it remains an unfortunate blight that I must see every day from my front porch.

John Hanson



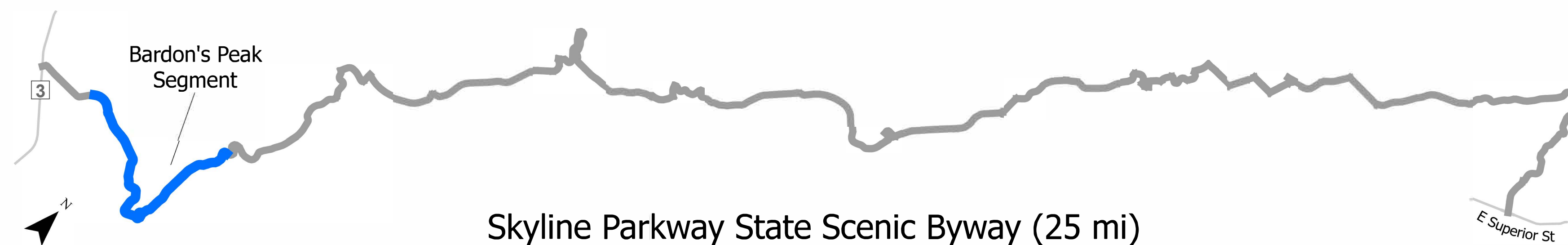
View of Bardon's Peak Scenic Overlook turnout parking area.



Skyline Parkway Bardon's Peak segment culvert damage - ditching required.



Bardon's Peak Scenic Overlook retaining wall damage.



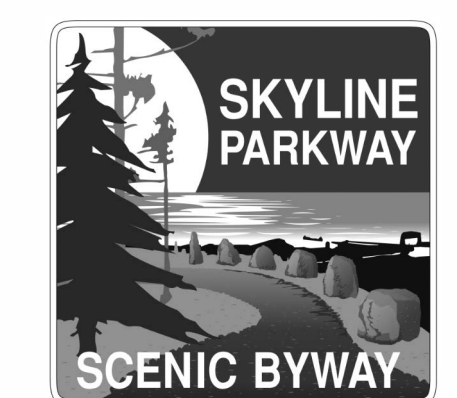
- Overlook Turnout & Interpretive Marker Location
- Skyline Parkway State Scenic Byway
- Bardon's Peak Segment
- Streams
- Lake or Reservoir
- River
- Park Lands
- St. Louis County, MN Census Tract 102 & 36



View approaching turnout parking area.



Alternative mode of transportation



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