1. Name of Property
Historic name: Aaron Carlson Corporation
Other names/site number: ______________________________________
Name of related multiple property listing: N/A
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location
Street & number: 1505 Central Avenue Northeast
City or town: Minneapolis State: Minnesota MN County: Hennepin
Not For Publication: N/A Vicinity: N/A

3. State/Federal Agency Certification
As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,
I hereby certify that this ___ nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets
the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic
Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.
In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I
recommend that this property be considered significant at the following
level(s) of significance:
___national ___statewide ___local
Applicable National Register Criteria:
___A ___B ___C ___D

Signature of certifying official/Title: __________________________ Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official: __________________________ Date

Title: State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government
4. **National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that this property is:

- ___ entered in the National Register
- ___ determined eligible for the National Register
- ___ determined not eligible for the National Register
- ___ removed from the National Register
- ___ other (explain: ______________________)

Signature of the Keeper: ____________________________  Date of Action: ____________________________

5. **Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Private:  
- [ ]

Public – Local  
- [ ]

Public – State  
- [ ]

Public – Federal  
- [ ]

**Category of Property**

(Check only **one** box.)

Building(s):  
- [ ]

District  
- [ ]

Site  
- [ ]

Structure  
- [ ]

Object  
- [ ]
### Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

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Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register **N/A**

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**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**
(Enter categories from instructions.)

- **INDUSTRY/manufacturing facility**
  - 
  - 
  - 
  - 
  - 
  - 

**Current Functions**
(Enter categories from instructions.)

- **VACANT**
  - 
  - 
  - 
  - 
  - 

Sections 1-6 page 3
7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)
OTHER/Vernacular

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)
Principal exterior materials of the property:
Foundation: Not visible from exterior
Roof: SYNTHETICS/Rubber; METAL
Walls: BRICK; METAL
Other: BRICK (smokestack); METAL (water tower, parapet caps, canopy at primary entrance vestibule); CLAY TILE (parapet caps)

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a summary paragraph that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Aaron Carlson Corporation is located at 1505 Central Avenue Northeast in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The 3.6-acre site is located adjacent to railroad tracks (historically the St. Paul and Pacific Railway, HE-MPC-17264, determined NRHP-eligible in 2012; now known as the BNSF Railway) and within an area of concentrated industry in the city’s Northeast neighborhood (Figure A). The utilitarian-style, main factory building was constructed by the Aaron Carlson Company in phases between 1905 and 1928. A three-story warehouse constructed in 1910 and a two-story lumber shed constructed in 1905 were connected to the southeast end of the main factory building by 1912 and 1928, respectively. By 1928, a two-story warehouse addition had
expanded to the complex further southeast, and a spur track had been constructed along the east
and north edges of the site, approximately half of the track is extant. Following a fire in 1943, the
factory constructed a new office (two stories) and lumber storage (one story) addition to the
northwest of the original factory.

Two additional storage buildings are located on the factory complex site: 1) a wood framed
“lumber shed” with sections dating to 1910, 1928, and 1950 and a metal-clad, shed-style
building that was added to the interior of the site in 1987. With the exception of the 1987 metal-
clad shed and the 1950 addition to the west lumber shed, all segments of the existing complex
are contributing resources (Figure B). In summary, there are two contributing buildings on the
site (the factory building and the wood-framed lumber shed) and one non-contributing building
(the 1987 shed).

1505 Central Avenue Northeast has served as the headquarters, lumber mill, and production
facility of the Aaron Carlson Corporation since 1905. The property maintains excellent integrity
from its period of significance, 1940 to 1945.

Narrative Description

Exterior - Site and Massing

The Aaron Carlson Corporation site at 1505 Central Avenue Northeast in Minneapolis,
Minnesota is a 3.6-acre industrial site in Northeast Minneapolis. The site is bound by Central
Avenue NE to the west, railroad tracks to the southwest, Northeast Park to the east, and an
unnamed service road to the north (Figure A). The spur track constructed along the edge of the
site by 1928 does not retain integrity, as only half of the track remains; the extant portion of the
track is located almost entirely on the adjacent parcel to the east.

The central factory and headquarters building is a two-story building with irregular massing that
was constructed in phases between 1905 and 1928. The wood-framed factory building has some
brick veneer as well as a brick power house. A single-story masonry storage addition and a two-
story masonry office addition were added to the main building in 1943. The main building was
connected to two neighboring buildings to the southeast – a three-story, 1910 brick warehouse
and a two-story, 1905 lumber shed – by 1912 and 1928, respectively. The building was expanded
farther to the southeast with the construction of a two-story “finished products” wood-framed
warehouse by 1928. A wood-framed lumber storage shed with components dating to 1910 and
1928 is located on the northwest corner of the site; it has a non-historic, 1950 addition. At the
interior of the site, a metal clad storage building was added in 1987. (See site development diagrams, Additional Documentation).

The site is paved for parking and loading. There is limited vegetation, with volunteer plants and trees growing along the sloped embankment between the factory and the railroad tracks (Photo 0001). Thick vegetation is also located along the east edge of the site, at the border with the park (Photos 0013 and 0014).

**Exterior – Factory Building**

**Southwest Façade (Photos 0001 - 0005)**

The primary (southwest) façade is comprised of the original 1905 mill and factory; this central organizing element is flanked by additions to the southeast and northwest. To the southeast is three story brick warehouse that was constructed in 1910 and a two-story metal-clad “finished products” warehouse that was constructed by 1928. To the northwest is the 1943 two-story brick office addition and single-story brick storage building.

**c. 1905 Mill and Factory (Photo 0002)**

The original mill and factory building is a two-story building with a stepped parapet and flat roof. The primary southwest façade has brick veneer. The building has a strong horizontal emphasis, but is vertically organized through eight bays of windows. At the first level, the window openings retain their original wood divided light sash. Second level windows have been replaced with double-hung windows; fabric awnings cover the second level windows. A sign band at the parapet reads “Aaron Carlson Corporation, Est. 1891,” though the “N” and part of the date are missing. The original masonry smokestack, which is part of the original mill and masonry power house, is visible behind the 1943 entrance addition; “Aaron Carlson” is painted vertically on the smokestack.

**1910 Warehouse (Photo 0003)**

The 1910 warehouse is a three-story, brown brick building located to the southeast of the 1905 mill and factory. The warehouse has a regular rhythm of stacked window openings; the building retains its historic six-over-six double-hung wood sash and some original storm windows. Exhaust equipment is attached to the primary façade.

The 1910 warehouse was connected to the mill and factory building in c. 1912 through the addition of a covered drive and elevated walkway. The covered drive now functions as a garage.
Aaron Carlson Corporation
Hennepin, Minnesota

(interior Photo 0022) and has a contemporary overhead door and a metal gutter that connects to the original mill and factory building.

c. 1928 Finished Products Warehouse (Photos 0004 and 0005)

A two-story wood-framed warehouse was added on to the 1910 warehouse by 1928. The warehouse is oriented to the northwest. Identified on historic maps as the “Finished Products Warehouse,” the warehouse is clad in corrugated metal panels that have been painted red. A sign band reads “Aaron Carlson Co.”

At the first level and second levels original divided light wood sash are organized in a strong horizontal band along the northwest and southwest facades. Several windows on the southwest façade (facing the railroad tracks) have been infilled. Loading entrances are located at the first level of the northwest façade.

1943 Office and Storage Addition (Photos 0006 and 0007)

Following a fire in 1943, the company expanded its facility to the northwest. A two-story red brick office and single-story red brick storage wing were built around the original power house and attached to the c. 1905 mill and factory. The power house location can be identified by the original smokestack.

The two-story office addition houses the primary entrance to the factory complex. The entry is marked by a single-story vestibule and a curved cantilevered roof (Photo 0006). The office addition has double hung windows, fabric awnings, and a flat roof.

The single-story storage addition is seven bays, marked by large window openings that have been infilled with board-and-batten plywood paneling and vinyl double-hung windows. The original brick headers and sills identify the proportions of the original window opening.

Northwest Façade (Photos 0007 and 0008)

1943 Storage Addition (Photo 0007)

The northwest façade is the loading entrance of the 1943 storage addition, which is infilled with a contemporary overhead door that is flanked by large window openings. The southernmost opening is infilled with non-historic materials; the northernmost opening retains glass block and original divided light sash. A pair of three-over-three windows are situated above the loading entrance.
1987 Addition (Photo 0008)

The 1987 building is a single-story metal clad shed addition that dominates the interior northwest façade of the mill and factory. Visible behind the shed is the second story of the main factory building.

Northeast Façade (Photos 0009 – 0011, 0015)

c. 1928 Factory Addition (Photos 0009 – 0011)

The northeast façade of the factory building is comprised of the L-shaped wood-framed addition to the original mill and factory, which was constructed by 1928 and re-clad with metal paneling in the late twentieth century. The windows on the 1928 addition have been replaced with contemporary double-hung sash. The original water tank is located on the flat roof of this addition (Photo 0011). A small “painting building” constructed by 1945 is also located on the northeast façade (Photo 0010).

1943 Storage Addition (Photo 0015)

The northeast facade of the 1943 storage addition contains two infilled loading entrances and a few single door entrances. Some multi-divided steel windows are also located on this facade.

East Façade (Photos 0012 - 0014)

The east façade consists of the east elevations of the c. 1928 L-shaped wood-framed addition, the two-story 1905 lumber shed, and the c. 1928, two-story finished products warehouse addition at the southeast corner of the complex. A small triangle-shaped addition constructed in the mid- to late 1940s is also located at the east side of the complex. Access to this facade is hindered by thick vegetation along the east edge of the site.

The east facade of the complex features metal siding. Windows on levels one and two are multi-divided wood windows, though some have been altered or removed. A large, folding wood door spans almost the entire height of the building near the south corner of the c. 1928 finished products warehouse addition. At the 1905 lumber shed, the roof has collapsed and the east wall is listing.
The third level of the three-story 1910 warehouse is visible above the lower stories on the east facade and features a painted wall sign.

**Interior – Factory Building (Photos 0018 – 0025)**

The interior of the original mill and factory and storage additions is consistent across eras and functions. As a millwork factory, the factory and storage areas are characterized by a raw, utilitarian aesthetic. Each level is a large, open volume of space with an exposed column grid, exposed wood joists and decking, exposed masonry walls, and hardwood floors. At the 1943 storage addition, steel roof trusses are exposed.

There are skylight openings throughout the building (Photo 0022). Some skylights are extant; where skylights have been removed, the openings have been infilled with plywood.

Horizontal circulation through the factory and its many additions is complex, based on the additive nature of the building expansion campaigns. Vertical circulation is achieved through utilitarian staircases (Photo 0019) and two freight elevators.

The area of the original mill and factory immediately adjacent to the primary entrance has been finished as an office area, with work spaces and a conference room (Photo 0024). The historic 1943 office addition houses an executive office suite and has the highest level of finish of any of the interior spaces, reflecting a Moderne–inspired aesthetic with stained wood paneling and a decorative plaster ceiling (Photo 0025). A large brass light fixture marks the entry vestibule to the executive office.

**Exterior – Wood-Framed Lumber Shed (Photos 0016 and 0017)**

A raised-center-aisle, wood-framed storage shed with sections dating to 1910, 1928, and 1950 is located at the northwest corner of the site. It has metal siding and a pitched roof. The non-historic component of the shed, a triangle-shaped, raised-center aisle addition, was connected to the northwest elevation of the historic wood-framed shed in 1950.

**Interior – Wood Shed (Photo 0026)**

The interior of the wood shed has exposed wood framing and exposed wood walls. The center aisle is open, while the side aisles house storage bays.
The Aaron Carlson Corporation site retains historic integrity. The site retains sufficient levels of all seven aspects of integrity to convey its history form its period of significance, 1940 to 1945. The seven aspects of integrity are discussed separately, as follows:

**Location**

The Aaron Carlson Corporation has not been moved and retains integrity of location.

**Design**

The Aaron Carlson Corporation site retains much of the same appearance that it had from 1940-1945 and retains integrity of design. One storage building was added to the rear of the site in 1987, but it is not visible from Central Avenue Northeast or the rail line and does not diminish the integrity of design.

**Setting**

While the neighborhood around the Aaron Carlson Corporation site has evolved, many of the nearby industrial buildings retain an industrial use, as breweries and distilleries, or their industrial appearance. The rail line next to the site is extant and remains active. As such, the Aaron Carlson Corporation site retains integrity of setting.

**Materials**

Through the retention of its historic masonry exterior, many historic wood windows, its historic smoke stack, its historic wood floors, exposed column grid, plaster walls, and skylights the factory building retains integrity of materials. The wood-framed lumber shed also retains integrity of materials.

**Workmanship**

The site retains integrity of workmanship. As an active manufacturing facility, the workmanship at the Aaron Carlson Corporation site is restrained. Elegant details can be seen at the office’s primary entrance and in the plaster and casework in the executive office.

**Feeling**

...
As an active manufacturing facility, the Aaron Carlson Corporation site retains integrity of feeling.

**Association**

The Aaron Carlson Corporation site continues to be associated with the Aaron Carlson Corporation and retains integrity of association.

**Conclusion**

The Aaron Carlson Corporation site retains historic integrity. The site retains sufficient levels of all seven aspects of integrity to convey its history from its period of significance, 1940 to 1945.

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8. **Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- [x] A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- [ ] B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- [ ] C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- [ ] D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**
(Mark “x” in all the boxes that apply.)

- [ ] A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- [ ]
B. Removed from its original location

☐ C. A birthplace or grave

☐ D. A cemetery

☐ E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure

☐ F. A commemorative property

☐ G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

**Areas of Significance**
(Enter categories from instructions.)

**Industry**

__________________________________________

__________________________________________

__________________________________________

__________________________________________

Period of Significance

1940 - 1945

__________________________________________

__________________________________________

Significant Dates

1945

__________________________________________

__________________________________________

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

__________________________________________

__________________________________________

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

__________________________________________

__________________________________________

Architect/Builder
The Aaron Carlson Corporation factory, located at 1505 Central Avenue Northeast in Minneapolis, Minnesota (Figure A), is locally significant under Criterion A for its association with the Aaron Carlson Corporation, a local millwork company, specifically, the company’s production of pontoon bridge components during World War II. The company was one of 65 Minnesota companies awarded the prestigious Army-Navy “E” Award, and the only Minneapolis lumber company to receive this designation.

Founded in 1891, the Aaron Carlson Corporation built a reputation for high-quality luxury millwork. The company produced high-end custom millwork for many public buildings and upper-class homes, until World War II, when it shifted its operation to the production of wood components of pontoon bridges. The company’s skill in finely-crafted wood building components and its proximity to a rail line made it a natural fit for the production and shipping of pontoon bridge components to U.S. troops in France, Belgium and Germany in the European theater and to Burma, China, and India in the Pacific theater. As the wartime factory of the Aaron Carlson Corporation, and the only “E” Award winning lumber mill in Minneapolis, the factory is locally significant and eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its association with the wartime lumber industry in Minneapolis. The proposed period of significance for the property is 1940 to 1945, to correspond with the company’s wartime production. There is not a relevant state context.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance.)

Aaron Carlson Sash and Door Company

The Aaron Carlson Sash and Door Company was founded in Minneapolis in 1891.¹ Originally known as Carlson & Allen, the company manufactured various types of millwork for public buildings and upper-class homes. Its founder, Aaron Carlson, was a Swedish immigrant who began his Minnesota career working in Stillwater lumber camps in the 1880s.

¹ “Minneapolis Makes Interior Woodwork,” Minneapolis Morning Tribune, Feb. 4, 1949, p. 11.
After a stint as a foreman in the Flour City Sash and Door Factory, he founded his own woodworking business with the financial aid of Minneapolis capitalist Captain John Martin. Though Carlson would live in Minneapolis until his death in 1942, he maintained strong ties to his native country. In addition to recruiting men from Sweden to work as carpenters at his firm, Carlson served as director of the Scandinavian-American National Bank; as a trustee of the Swedish-American Savings Bank, the Swedish Evangelical Mission Church, the Swedish Mission Covenant, and the Swedish Hospital; and as a trustee and president of the Minneapolis *Veckoblad* publication. In 1930, the King of Sweden awarded Carlson knighthood in the Royal Order of Vasa in recognition of the assistance he had provided to the Swedish people, presumably through his business and civic accomplishments.

By 1895, the Carlson & Allen Sash & Door Company was one of nineteen sash, door, and blind manufacturers in Minneapolis and operated out of a factory between Central and Polk Avenues, just north of 14th Avenue NE. The success of the Minneapolis millwork industry during the early twentieth century, stimulated by the region’s thriving lumber industry, an increased demand for finished wood products, and extensive investment in rail infrastructure, is reflected in the firm’s early growth.

From an initial roster of six employees in 1891, the company expanded to more than one hundred employees by 1905. Though a fire in August of 1905 destroyed the factory warehouse and stables, Carlson soon rebuilt and expanded his factory, filing permits for a new dry kiln, lumber sheds, a factory addition, and a power house that same year. More buildings followed as the firm continued to prosper; by 1928, the factory encompassed two acres of land and employed over 200 men (see site development diagrams, Additional Documentation).

Building permit index cards indicate that most of this construction was completed by the Aaron Carlson Company itself. However, brick stacks were constructed by contractor J. L. Robinson, a well-known Minneapolis builder. Robinson was a Canadian immigrant to the United States, who entered the building business in Minneapolis in the mid-1880s. He began his own business in 1901 and established the J. L. Robinson Company in 1913. Prominent buildings constructed by Robinson’s firm included the Shubert Theater (listed on the NRHP; now at 516 Hennepin Avenue), the Lincoln Bank Building (listed on the NRHP; 730 Hennepin Avenue), the

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2 “Aaron Carlson Funeral Friday,” *Minneapolis Morning Tribune*, Nov. 26, 1942, p. 15.
Aaron Carlson Corporation

Minneapolis YMCA (listed on the NRHP; 36 9th Street South), and the Northwestern National Life Insurance Company Home Office (listed on the NRHP; 430 Oak Grove Street).6

The contracting firm of S. M. Klarquist, listed as the builder on a 1910 permit for a warehouse constructed at the Aaron Carlson factory, was founded by Swedish immigrant Swan M. Klarquist in Minneapolis in 1882. By 1891, city directories list Swan as employed at J. P. Klarquist and Bro.; by 1902, S. M. Klarquist was listed as an independent contractor. The firm became S. M. Klarquist and Son by 1912 and K. M. Klarquist & Sons in 1920, reflecting the participation of Klarquist’s two sons, Rubenn E. and S. M. Klarquist in the business. Both the elder Klarquist and R. E. Klarquist passed away in 1920, and the remaining Klarquist son became president of the company. Newspaper references to the firm prior to 1920 are somewhat limited, but suggest that the company was engaged in the construction of a variety of building types, including residential, industrial, and institutional buildings.7

Aaron Carlson, Inc.

In the early 1920s, Carlson’s company (by then known as Aaron Carlson, Inc., Figure C) began to specialize in sandblasting, a technique in which wood products are finished with sand forced out of a machine at high pressure. Though not the first or only manufacturer to utilize this finishing method, the firm found a market niche in providing custom-made, sandblasted interior woodwork.

Rather than supplying stock items as it had in the past, the company received specialized commissions for large public buildings across the United States, including the Washington state capitol in Olympia, the Merchandise Mart in Chicago, the Nicollet hotel in Minneapolis, and the Shrine temple in Indianapolis, Indiana. Though the production of these interior finishes and decorations was partially mechanized, all wood carving was completed by hand.8

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Aaron Carlson Corporation
Name of Property

Hennepin, Minnesota
County and State

This business model allowed the company to survive, and even thrive, during the Great Depression of the 1930s (Figure D); aerial photographs dating from 1938 reveal that Aaron Carlson, Inc. occupied a large factory complex on Central Avenue (Figures E and F). 9

“The Bridge To Victory”: Aaron Carlson, Inc. During World War II

The onset of World War II in 1939 brought significant changes to Aaron Carlson, Inc. and factories across the United States. The economic activity generated by the conflict is credited with helping the United States out of the Great Depression and bringing an end to the federal work aid programs that had marked the previous decade. Much of this increased economic activity was the manufacture of military supplies, first for sale to the Allied forces and eventually to the United States, which entered the conflict in December of 1941. 10

Government contracts for wartime goods and supplies did not immediately reach Minnesota. According to Minnesota historian Dave Kenney, in 1939 Minnesota’s “political and business leaders had lobbied heavily for what they considered Minnesota’s fair share of the billions of dollars being spent on the nation’s military buildup.” 11 In November of 1940, “the National Defense Advisory Commission (later known as the Office of Production Management, or OPM) opened a field office in Minneapolis to coordinate the distribution of defense contracts in Minnesota.” 12 As a result, hundreds of businesses throughout the state converted to war production in the early 1940s, and by the second half of 1941, federal defense contracts with Minnesota companies totaled over a half of a billion dollars. However, Minnesota continued to rank 33rd in the nation for defense contract spending. 13

According to scholar Don Larson, “practically every major corporation [in Minnesota] was involved in some facet of war production.” 14 A large portion of government contract money was awarded to large companies in Minneapolis and the metropolitan area. Some of these companies

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13 Ibid, 5, 10.
continued manufacturing the types of goods they had before the war, while others transitioned to entirely new lines of production.\textsuperscript{15}

For Aaron Carlson, wartime production meant working within its existing field of specialty, millwork, to manufacture a product specific to wartime needs. Beginning in July of 1940, Aaron Carlson engaged in the production of pontoon bridge components that were shipped to the European and Pacific theaters.\textsuperscript{16} Over the course of five years, the company “shipped approximately 30 million board feet of components,” or enough wooden bridge spans to stretch from Minneapolis to Fargo, North Dakota, to the battlefront.\textsuperscript{17}

Pontoon bridges, also known as “floating bridges” are temporary bridges that are often used in wartime or in response to natural disasters (Figure G). The portable bridges are comprised of wood structural materials and decking attached to floats or shallow boats; the individual bridge sections, called “pontoons,” are linked together by wood stringers, called “balks.” The balks were covered with wood decking planks, called “chess pieces,” and the bridge was weighed down and anchored to adjacent river banks with “sills.”\textsuperscript{18} Through World War II, most pontoon bridges were constructed of aluminum and wood, making the production of bridge components a natural fit for the Aaron Carlson, Inc.\textsuperscript{19}

The “raw material logs arrived in trainloads on the railroad siding that still exists on the property.”\textsuperscript{20} In order to produce the bridges that needed to support 10 and 25-ton tanks in varied climates and conditions,

\begin{quote}
Structural grade Douglas fir from Washington and Oregon [was] kiln-dried to season it for flexibility....To fit accurate army specifications, the logs [were] shaped to the 32\textsuperscript{nd} of an inch. Corners [were] rounded, wedges to fit metalwork (produced by Minneapolis-based Crown Iron Works Co.) sliced out, and irons bolted on. Then the heavy timbers – ‘balk’ pieces for the 25-ton tank bridges weigh 244 pounds apiece—[were] dipped in a toxic solution which seals out moisture and termites. The wood bridge parts [received] an olive drab paint job for camouflage and protection against weather.\textsuperscript{21}
\end{quote}

“After the logs were cut, cured, machined and waterproofed they were loaded on trains and shipped to Europe” and parts of Asia.\textsuperscript{22} The wood bridges created essential transportation networks for the Allied Forces, as pontoon bridges facilitated pedestrian and automobile travel

\textsuperscript{16} “Bridges Cover Water Fronts,” \textit{Minneapolis Sunday Tribune}, March 18, 1945, p. 17.
\textsuperscript{17} Aaron Carlson Corporation files.
\textsuperscript{18} “Bridges Cover Water Fronts,” \textit{Minneapolis Sunday Tribune}, March 18, 1945, p. 17.
\textsuperscript{20} “Bridges Cover Water Fronts,” \textit{Minneapolis Sunday Tribune}, March 18, 1945, p. 17.
\textsuperscript{21} “Bridges Cover Water Fronts,” \textit{Minneapolis Sunday Tribune}, March 18, 1945, p. 17.
\textsuperscript{22} “E Award for Bridge Aid,” \textit{Minneapolis Star}, March 24, 1945; Aaron Carlson Corporation files.
across the Rhine as well as rivers in China, Burma, India, and the Philippines. According to a 1945 newspaper article about the company’s wartime production, “The manufacturer… [produced] planking for most of the 10 and 25-ton pontoon bridges across rivers in Burma, China and India, along the Ledo road, in the Philippines, through France, Belgium and Holland.”

Because of the large volume of bridge components produced by the company during the war, Aaron Carlson, Inc. received the Army-Navy “E” Award in March of 1945 (Figures H and I). The “E” Award was given to companies which achieved “Excellence in Production” of equipment to serve the war effort. Of the more than 85,000 American companies that produced materials to support the war, only 5%, or 4,283 companies, were awarded the “E” Award, making the award the highest honor presented to industrial firms which supported the war effort. Approximately half of the “E” Awards went to small plants, defined as companies with fewer than 500 employees, like Aaron Carlson.

According to a press release issued by the War Employment Office Bureau of Public Relations in December of 1945:

The Army-Navy “E” Award was granted only to facilities which were particularly outstanding in production for the War and Navy Departments. Excellence in quality and quantity of production were two of the determining factors in granting Awards. Others included: (a) overcoming of production obstacles; (b) low rate of absenteeism; (c) Avoidance of work stoppages; (d) maintenance of fair labor standards; (e) training of additional labor forces; (f) effective management; (g) record on accidents, health, sanitation, and plant protection; (h) utilization of sub-contracting facilities; (i) cooperation between management and labor as it affected production; and (j) conservation of critical and strategic materials.

In addition to strict requirements for the award, a plant had to be nominated by the military branch with which it worked. Aaron Carlson was nominated by the Army, through the following process:

For the Army, the nomination originated with the field procurement officer in closest touch with the plant. Thus, the field procurement officer of the service having the largest contractual interest in the plant, such as the Ordnance Department, Chemical Warfare Service, or other technical service of the Army, or the Army Air Forces, recommended a

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23 Ibid.
28 Ibid.
Minnesota produced 62 “E” Award winners, over half of which were located in the Twin Cities area. Minneapolis firms to win the award included several machinery and tool manufacturers, several manufacturers of sheet metal products and architectural and ornamental iron, and manufacturers of a variety of other products. Some of these Minneapolis firms expanded from their pre-war product lines into new areas of production, such as the Flour City Ornamental Iron Company at 2637 27th Avenue South, which produced a variety of defense items, and the Honeywell Heat Regulator Company Plant and Headquarters at 2701 Wells Fargo Way, which expanded from its heating, ventilating, and air conditioning systems into the production of bombs and airplane autopilot systems.

Notably, Aaron Carlson was the only Minneapolis-based lumber mill to win the Army-Navy E Award. The award became an integral component of the company’s war-time and post-war identity, with articles appearing in newspapers and photographs of the award-winning team appearing in company promotional materials and featured prominently in the company headquarters (Figures G and I).

**Aaron Carlson after World War II**

After the war, Aaron Carlson, Inc. returned to a specialization in architectural woodwork. According to a 1949 newspaper article, the company produced “interior cabinetwork and millwork according to architects’ plans and specifications… includ[ing] paneling, window frames, doors, and woodwork.”

Though the company’s Central Avenue factory underwent some alterations and additions during the late 1930s and the 1940s, the site saw few external changes after 1951 (see site development diagrams, Additional Documentation).

The postwar phase of development occurred under the leadership of Aaron Carlson’s sons Albert and Earl, who had presumably assumed management of the company after their father’s death in 1942. Under the Carlson brothers (and under Albert Carlson after Earl’s death in 1953), the

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29 Ibid.
company continued to occupy a prominent position among millwork manufacturers. In 1953, Albert Carlson was one of six Minneapolis millwork manufacturers responsible for establishing the National Association of Special Woodworking Manufacturers; in 1955, he was elected president of the Architectural Woodwork Institute of the United States and Canada. Like his father, Albert was also awarded knighthood in the Royal Order of Vasa.\(^{32}\)

Notable local projects in which the firm was involved under Albert’s leadership included the Northstar Center in Minneapolis (608 2nd Avenue South, c. 1963; extant), the Minneapolis Sheraton-Ritz Hotel (315 Nicollet Avenue, c. 1963; razed 1990), Fairview-Southdale Hospital (6401 France Ave S, Edina, c. 1965; extant), and the Summit State Bank of Richfield-Bloomington (6500 Nicollet Avenue, c.1966, razed c. 2019).\(^{33}\)

In 2019, Aaron Carlson sold its Central Avenue factory. Though several small buildings were demolished and a new storage building constructed in the 1980s, the site looks much as it did 70 years ago and continues to communicate the history and significance of the Aaron Carlson Sash and Door Company.

**Conclusion**

The Aaron Carlson Corporation is locally significant under Criterion A for its contribution to the war effort through its manufacture of pontoon bridge components during World War II. As the only Minneapolis lumber mill to win the Army-Navy “E” Award for its industrial production, the factory is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its association with the wartime lumber industry in Minneapolis.

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\(^{32}\text{Ibid.}\)

9. Major Bibliographical References

**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

**Published Materials:**


*Minneapolis City Directory for 1891 – 1892.* Minneapolis: Harrison & Smith, 1891.


**Newspapers:**

*Minneapolis Journal*

*Minneapolis Morning Tribune*

*Minneapolis Star*

*Minneapolis Star Tribune*

*Minneapolis Sunday Tribune*

*Minneapolis Tribune*

**Databases and Collections**

Aaron Carlson Corporation files.

City of Minneapolis building permits and building permit index cards for 1505 Central Avenue Northeast. On file at the City of Minneapolis Public Service Center, 250 4th Street South.
Minnesota Historical Aerial Photographs Online. John R. Borchert Map Library.
https://apps.lib.umn.edu/mhapo/.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

___ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
___ previously listed in the National Register
___ previously determined eligible by the National Register
___ designated a National Historic Landmark
___ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # ____________
___ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # ____________
___ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # ____________

Primary location of additional data:

___ State Historic Preservation Office
___ Other State agency
___ Federal agency
___ Local government
___ University
___ Other
   Name of repository:  Aaron Carlson Corporation files

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):  HE-MPC-3763

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property  __3.6 acres__________

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees)
Datum if other than WGS84: ____________
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)
1. Latitude: __________________________ Longitude: __________________________
Aaron Carlson Corporation                        Hennepin, Minnesota
Name of Property                   County and State

2. Latitude:                        Longitude:

3. Latitude:                        Longitude:

4. Latitude:                        Longitude:

Or

UTM References
Datum (indicated on USGS map):

☐ NAD 1927 or × NAD 1983

1. Zone: 15T Easting: 480646 Northing: 4983323

2. Zone: Easting: Northing:

3. Zone: Easting: Northing:

4. Zone: Easting: Northing:

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundaries are indicated on the accompanying base map, Figure A. The boundaries encompass the entirety of two city parcels identified with the property identification numbers (PIN) 1302924220105 and 1302924220097, as well as the portion of the parcel identified as PIN 1302924230047 on which the c. 1928 Finished Products Warehouse sits. All of the property is unplatted.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

With one exception, the proposed boundaries encompass the factory of the Aaron Carlson Corporation as it existed during the property’s period of significance (see historic aerial photographs, Figures F and J). The proposed boundaries do not encompass the site of a c. 1928 lumber storage shed that existed during the period of significance at the northern edge of the site (see 1928 site development diagram, Additional Documentation). This shed has been removed and that area of the site has been converted to a paved drive; thus, this area of the site no longer retains integrity and has not been included in the boundaries. The boundary also does not encompass the extant portion of the spur railroad track to the east, as the track does not retain integrity and is located almost entirely on the adjacent parcel to the east.
11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Tamara Halvorsen Ludt and Lauren Anderson

organization: New History

street & number: 575 9th Street SE, Suite 215

city or town: Minneapolis state: MN zip code: 55414-1399

e-mail: ludt@newhistory.com and anderson@pvnworks.com

telephone: (612) 843-4140

date: May 21, 2020

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A USGS map or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.

- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)
Photographs
Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn’t need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log
Name of Property: Aaron Carlson Corporation
City or Vicinity: Minneapolis
County: Hennepin
State: Minnesota

Location of Original Digital Files: 575 9th Street SE, Suite 215, Minneapolis, MN 55414
Number of Photographs: 26

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

Photo 0001
Southwest elevation of factory complex and site, camera facing northwest.

Photographer: Lauren Anderson
Date Photographed: January 2020

Photo 0002
South elevation of main factory building and 1943 storage and office additions, camera facing northwest.

Photographer: Tamara Halvorsen Ludt
Date Photographed: April 2019

Photo 0003
Northwest and southwest elevations of the 1910 warehouse, camera facing east.

Photographer: Tamara Halvorsen Ludt
Date Photographed: April 2019

Photo 0004
Northwest elevation of the 1928 warehouse addition, camera facing southeast.

Photographer: Lauren Anderson
Date Photographed: January 2020
Photo 0005
Southwest elevation of the 1928 warehouse addition, camera facing northwest.

Photographer: Lauren Anderson  
Date Photographed: January 2020

Photo 0006
1943 entrance vestibule at the primary southwest elevation, camera facing northeast.

Photographer: Tamara Halvorsen Ludt  
Date Photographed: April 2019

Photo 0007
Northwest and southwest elevations of the 1943 warehouse addition, camera facing east.

Photographer: Tamara Halvorsen Ludt  
Date Photographed: April 2019

Photo 0008
Northwest elevation of the 1987 shed, camera facing south.

Photographer: Lauren Anderson  
Date Photographed: January 2020

Photo 0009
Northeast elevation of the L-shaped, c. 1928 factory addition, camera facing west.

Photographer: Lauren Anderson  
Date Photographed: January 2020

Photo 0010
Southwest and northeast elevations of the c. 1945 painting shed, camera facing west.

Photographer: Lauren Anderson  
Date Photographed: January 2020

Photo 0011
Water tower on the roof of the L-shaped, c. 1928 factory addition, camera facing northwest.

Photographer: Quentin Collette  
Date Photographed: February 2020

Photo 0012
East elevation of the L-shaped, c. 1928 factory addition, camera facing southwest.

Photographer: Lauren Anderson  
Date Photographed: January 2020
Photo 0013
East elevation of the 1928 warehouse addition, camera facing northwest.

Photographer: Lauren Anderson
Date Photographed: January 2020

Photo 0014
Southeast elevation of the 1928 warehouse addition, camera facing southwest.

Photographer: Lauren Anderson
Date Photographed: January 2020

Photo 0015
Northeast elevation of the 1943 warehouse addition, camera facing southeast.

Photographer: Lauren Anderson
Date Photographed: January 2020

Photo 0016
Southeast and northeast elevations of the west wood shed, camera facing west.

Photographer: Lauren Anderson
Date Photographed: January 2020

Photo 0017
Southeast and southwest elevations of the wood shed, camera facing north.

Photographer: Tamara Halvorsen Ludt
Date Photographed: April 2019

Photo 0018
Second level of the main factory building, camera facing northwest.

Photographer: Lauren Anderson
Date Photographed: January 2020

Photo 0019
First level of the main factory building, camera facing south.

Photographer: Lauren Anderson
Date Photographed: January 2020

Photo 0020
1943 warehouse addition, camera facing west.

Photographer: Lauren Anderson
Date Photographed: January 2020
Photo 0021
Second level of the 1910 warehouse, camera facing southeast.
Photographer: Lauren Anderson
Date Photographed: January 2020

Photo 0022
First level at the c. 1912 covered walkway/garage, camera facing northeast.
Photographer: Lauren Anderson
Date Photographed: January 2020

Photo 0023
First level of the 1928 warehouse addition, camera facing northwest.
Photographer: Quentin Collett
Date Photographed: February 2020

Photo 0024
Second level offices near primary factory entrance, camera facing south.
Photographer: Lauren Anderson
Date Photographed: January 2020

Photo 0025
Second level executive office, camera facing southwest.
Photographer: Lauren Anderson
Date Photographed: January 2020

Photo 0026
Interior of west wood shed, camera facing northwest.
Photographer: Lauren Anderson
Date Photographed: January 2020
Aaron Carlson Corporation
Name of Property: Hennepin MN
County and State
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 8  Page 1

Figure A  Aerial photograph of the Aaron Carlson Corporation depicting site boundaries, c. 2020. Courtesy of Hennepin County.
Aaron Carlson Corporation
Name of Property
Hennepin MN
County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Figure B  Diagram depicting contributing and non-contributing resources at the Aaron Carlson Corporation, 1505 Central Avenue Northeast. Created by New History.
National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

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Aaron Carlson Corporation
Name of Property
Hennepin MN
County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

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Figure C  Aaron Carlson Inc., c. 1917. Courtesy of the *Minneapolis Sunday Tribune*.

Figure D  Aaron Carlson staff, 1937. Courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society.
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8   Page 4

Aaron Carlson Corporation
Name of Property
Hennepin MN
County and State
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Figure E  Aaron Carlson, Inc. factory site, c. 1940. Courtesy of Aaron Carlson.

Figure F  Aaron Carlson Inc. factory site, 1938. Courtesy of the John R. Borchert Map Library’s Minnesota Historic Aerial Photographs Online.
Figure G  U.S. Army poster showing pontoon bridge construction, hanging in the Aaron Carlson lobby. Courtesy of Aaron Carlson.
Figure H  Employees of Aaron Carlson Company Receive “E” Award. Courtesy of Aaron Carlson.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aaron Carlson Corporation</th>
<th>Name of Property</th>
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<td>County and State</td>
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<td>Name of multiple listing (if applicable)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8  Page 7

Figure 1  Army-Navy E Award Poster.
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8  Page 8

Aaron Carlson Corporation
Name of Property
Hennepin MN
County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Figure J  Aaron Carlson Inc. factory site, 1945. Courtesy of the John R. Borchert Map Library’s Minnesota Historic Aerial Photographs Online.
Aaron Carlson Corporation Factory
NRHP | Additional Documentation: Site Development Diagrams

Aaron Carlson Sash and Door Company
Development Diagram
Produced by PVN based on Sanborn Fire Insurance maps, building permits, historic newspapers, and aerial photographs

Key
- New construction
- Existing building
- Unrelated building
- Year building completed
- Railroad line

True North
Aaron Carlson Corporation Factory
NRHP | Additional Documentation: Site Development Diagrams

Aaron Carlson Sash and Door Company Development Diagram
Produced by P/N based on Sanborn Fire Insurance maps, building permits, historic newspapers, and aerial photographs

Key
- New construction
- Existing building
- Unrelated building
- Year building completed
- Railroad line

True North

N

2018