

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Coliseum Building and Hall

Other names/site number: Coliseum Ballroom; Podany's Warehouse

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: 2708 East Lake Street

City or town: Minneapolis State: MN County: Hennepin

Not For Publication: ☐ N/A Vicinity: ☐

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
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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 ☐

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE/department store
COMMERCE/professional
RECREATION AND CULTURE/hall

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

VACANT

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/Classical Revival

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property:

Foundation: CONCRETE

Walls: BRICK

Roof: SYNTHETICS: rubber with gravel ballast

Other: STONE

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 Coliseum Building and Hall (hereafter referred to as the Coliseum Building) at 2708 East Lake Street in Minneapolis, Minnesota is located in the Longfellow neighborhood of South Minneapolis. The building fronts Lake Street, a commercial corridor that stretches from Lake Bde Maka Ska on the west to the Mississippi River on the east (see Figures A, B and U).

The building is a rectangular-shaped, three-story brick building developed by the Hedwall Investment Company in 1917 to hold retail, office, and assembly space. A large addition that nearly doubled the size of the building was added to the north in 1923. A smaller addition was added to the north elevation again in 1955; a final addition was constructed above the 1923 addition in c. 1972. The 1917 building and 1923 addition feature brick walls, stone detailing, and a decorative parapet, with storefronts at the first level and punched window openings at the second and third levels. The single-story 1955 addition fronts the associated parking lot to the north of the building

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and features a flat roof with overhanging eaves; the utilitarian 1972 addition is composed of concrete block.

In the spring of 2020, the Coliseum Building was damaged during the civil unrest along Lake Street that followed the murder of George Floyd, and it has been vacant since that date. The interior includes former classroom and storage space at the lower level, retail and medical clinic space at the first level, and offices at the second and third levels.

The Coliseum Building maintains sufficient integrity to communicate its significance under Criterion A in the areas of Commerce and Entertainment/Recreation for its role as a prominent commercial building in the Longfellow neighborhood from 1917 until 1973.

Narrative Description

Site (Photos 0001 – 0004)

Located at the northeast corner of East Lake Street and 27th Avenue South, the Coliseum Building dominates the intersection (Photo 0001). The building is bordered by public sidewalks on its primary west and south elevations and by a parking lot (historically and currently associated with the building) on its secondary north elevation (see Photo 0002). At the secondary east elevation, an alley separates the building from a two-story building to the east (Photos 0003 and 0004). A chain link fence, installed after damage to the building in the summer of 2020, surrounds the building and parking lot.

Exterior (Photos 0001 – 0007)

Massing

Though appearing as a unified block, the north and south halves of the Coliseum Building were constructed separately (see Figure B). The original Coliseum Building – the three-story, south half of the existing building – was built in 1917. The north half of the building, which is three stories tall at its primary west elevation and two stories tall at the rear, was built in 1923 as the Coliseum Annex.¹ The one-story addition on the north elevation of the Annex was constructed in 1955.² Originally, the east half of the Annex was joined to the 1917 building by a one-story link set back from the alley (see Figure C). Sometime between 1972 and 1979, a concrete block addition

¹ City of Minneapolis building permit B216009, 2941 – 2947 27th Avenue South and 2700 – 2714 East Lake Street, December 29, 1916, on file at the City of Minneapolis. The building had tenants as early as March of 1917. See “First Pins Dropped in A. B. C. Meet,” *Minneapolis Sunday Tribune*, March 4, 1917; City of Minneapolis building permit B164448, 2937 – 2941 27th Avenue South, October 24, 1922, on file at the City of Minneapolis.

² Building permit A31902, July 1, 1955, 2700 – 14 East Lake Street, on file at the City of Minneapolis.

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extended the link east to the alley line and raised the roof height to match the three-story 1917 building (see Figure B and Photos 0002 and 0004).³

The Coliseum Building is clad in brown brick with stone⁴ detailing. It has a flat roof with decorative parapets at the primary, street-facing south and west elevations. Primary entrances are located on the west and south elevations, including the southwest corner (Photo 1). Secondary entrances are located at the 1955 addition on the north elevation and at the east elevation (Photos 0004 and 0005). This includes a vehicular entrance to the lower-level parking garage on the east elevation accessed via the alley.

South Elevation

The building's primary south elevation faces East Lake Street (Photo 1). It is divided into seven visual bays by dark brick pilasters that terminate in stone caps near the top of the third level. The building's most prominent entrance is located at the westernmost bay, at the southwest corner of the building. Here, the first level elevation is canted and recessed beneath the corner of the second level. A historic metal column with Corinthian capital supports the second level above (Photo 0007). Above the column, a non-historic projecting sign reading "Coliseum" is attached to the elevation. The previous non-historic aluminum entrance system at this entrance was destroyed in the spring of 2020 and the entrance has been boarded up.

At the rest of the first level, all bays feature non-historic aluminum storefront window systems above non-original concrete or stone sills and metal-clad bulkheads. Non-historic light fixtures are located on the brick pilasters between the storefronts. Entrances are located in the storefront systems in the central bay and the easternmost two bays. Many of the storefronts were damaged in 2020 and are missing some or all of their glazing and framing; all are boarded up at the exterior. Two bays have non-historic storefront awnings, and two have wall signs attached to the elevation above the storefronts. Above the storefronts and awnings, each bay features several recessed brick courses that form a rectangular shape in the façade.

During the 1920s, storefronts featured transom windows and large storefront windows above bulkheads, with entrances that appear to have been located in every bay on the south elevation (see Figures I and K). Building permits and historic photographs suggest that storefront design and entrance locations, as well as awnings and signage, were altered multiple times during the period of significance.⁵ By the 1960s, first-level storefronts had been remodeled with what appear to have

³ Building permit records do not include the c. 1972 addition. Aerial photographs indicate it was constructed between 1972 and 1979. Aerial photographs of 2708 East Lake Street, 1972 and 1979, Nationwide Environmental Title Research Historic Aerials Online, <https://www.historicaerials.com/viewer>.

⁴ Historic detailing at the buildings second and third levels appears to be stone; however, the material could not be determined with certainty. In this narrative, stone has been used to refer to historic detailing at the parapet, window sills, and string courses.

⁵ City of Minneapolis building permit index cards for 2700 – 2714 E Lake Street, on file at the City of Minneapolis.

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been new tile-faced bulkheads, storefront windows, awnings, and glass block transoms, and brick pilasters had been covered with paneling at the first level (see Figures P and Q). In the early 2000s, paneling and awnings were removed and new storefront windows and transoms were installed, restoring some of the building's original appearance.

At the second and third levels of the south elevation, each bay has four punched window openings with hung aluminum windows. Many second and third level windows were damaged during the spring of 2020 and have missing or broken panes of glass; some are boarded up from the interior. Each bay of windows has a continuous stone sill; at the second level, the sills are connected to form a stone string course that runs across the entire elevation. Above the second level windows, each bay features several projecting brick courses that form a rectangular shape in the façade. Above third level windows, a stone string course runs across the entire elevation, joining the stone caps of the brick pilasters near the top of the third level.

Above the string course, the parapet features inset stone pieces that form decorative designs, including cross-like patterns, rectangles, and vertical lines as well as torch-like symbols. The straight line of the parapet cap is interrupted at regular intervals by the curved top of the stone "torches" and by brick merlons, as well as four scuppers. The parapet has a non-historic metal cap. 1920s photographs indicates that parapets on the 1917 building were originally topped with what appear to have been stone caps and finials (see Figures I and K). Finials were removed before 1963. Portions of what appear to be stone caps were observed beneath the metal coping.

West Elevation

The primary west elevation faces 27th Avenue South and is divided into eight visual bays, which are nearly identical to those on the south elevation (Photos 0001, 0005 and 0006). The southern four bays are part of the original 1917 building; the northern four bays form the 1923 Annex. As at the south elevation, all first-level storefronts are boarded up. One entrance is located in the storefront system near the center of the elevation, beneath an awning. The northernmost bay has a modern wall sign above the boarded storefront. Historic photographs and building permits suggest a similar evolution of storefront design on the west elevation as at the south elevation. Photographs from the 1920s also show what appears to be a temporary winter entry vestibule along the northernmost four bays of the elevation and an exterior stair near the southwest corner that originally led down to the barber shop at the building's lower level (see Figures I and K). A 1963 photograph also shows an entrance canopy over the western entrance (see Figure P). These features have since been removed.

As at the south elevation, many upper-level windows are damaged. In addition to the curved tops of stone "torches" and brick merlons, the straight line of the parapet cap is also interrupted by two gently-sloped tented segments. There are no scuppers.

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North Elevation

The secondary north elevation is composed of the north elevation of the c. 1972 addition, the 1923 Annex, and the 1955 addition (Photos 0002 and 0005). At the first level, the 1955 addition spans nearly the entire length of the elevation. The addition is clad with wall paneling and has a flat roof with overhanging eaves that create a covered walkway along the parking lot side of the addition. The roof also extends over entrances on the addition's east and west ends to form entrance canopies supported by metal columns. At the west side, a storefront entrance system and two window openings beneath the canopy have been boarded up with plywood. At the east side, another storefront entrance system beneath the canopy has also been boarded up with plywood. At the far east side of the north elevation, the first level brick façade of the 1923 Annex is visible; a former window opening at this location has been infilled with concrete block.

The second and third levels of the Annex are composed of light-colored brick with peeling paint and feature a regular pattern of punched window openings with hung aluminum windows and sills composed of a course of rowlock brick. As on the south and west elevations, some windows have broken or missing panes, and some window openings are entirely boarded up with plywood. Historic photographs indicate that the roof parapet at the northeast corner of the Annex formerly extended above the roofline around an elevator penthouse (see Figure J and the parapet with painted "Lee Overalls" sign in Figure M); the elevator, penthouse, and parapet have since been removed.⁶ The building's chimney, formerly located at the north side of the 1917 building's roof, was likely removed when the c. 1972 addition was constructed; painted wall signs present by the 1960s have also been removed (see Figure N). Above the second level of the 1923 Annex, the north elevation of the c. 1972 addition is visible and features three fixed metal windows.

East Elevation

The secondary east elevation is primarily composed of light-colored brick (Photos 0003 and 0004). Ductwork and non-historic light fixtures are attached to masonry.

At the 1917 building, the south bay of the east elevation is composed of dark colored brick and mirrors the design of bays at the primary south and west elevations. At either side of the south bay, dark-colored brick piers mimic the dark-colored pilasters on the primary elevations. The first level has a boarded-up aluminum storefront system with an entrance, non-original stone or concrete storefront windowsills, and a metal-clad bulkhead.⁷ Above the storefront, several courses of brick are recessed into the elevation to form a rectangle shape. The second and third levels each have a single window opening with two hung windows on a stone sill. A stone string course carried around

⁶ The elevator was removed sometime after 1972. Aerial photographs of 2708 East Lake Street, 1972 and 1977, Nationwide Environmental Title Research Historic Aerials Online, <https://www.historicaerials.com/viewer>.

⁷ A storefront and an entrance were added here sometime after 1962 – see Figure R.

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from the primary south elevation runs the width of the bay below second level windows and above third level windows. One decorative stone design is inset into the parapet.

Moving north, the remainder of the 1917 building elevation has louver openings at the first level and punched window openings with hung windows and rowlock brick sills at the second and third levels. Brick beneath some window openings appears to have been replaced. A ghost sign reading "Freeman's Customer Parking" is visible at the top of the elevation. Continuing north, the east elevation of the c. 1972 concrete block addition is located at the center of the elevation, at the junction of the 1923 Annex to the 1917 building. The addition has a first level entrance that has been boarded up.

To the north of the c. 1972 addition, the elevation of the Annex is angled in towards the addition. The building's loading entrance, which provides access to a vehicular ramp down to the lower level, is located at the first level of this niche and has also been boarded up. The Annex has painted brick at the first level. It features two louver openings at the first level and punched window openings with rowlock brick sills and boarded up windows at the second level.

Interior (Photos 0008 - 0016)

Layout and Circulation

The Coliseum Building has three levels and a basement. The third level is a partial level that covers the footprint of the 1917 building and the west part of the 1923 addition. Vertical circulation includes three sets of stairs located at the east, south, and west sides and an elevator in concrete block shaft at the center of the building. The east stair and elevator are located in the c. 1972 addition; the west and south stairs are located in their historic locations in the 1917 building and 1923 Annex, respectively. All stairs have exterior access at the first level. The east stair, a metal stair with concrete treads, can be accessed from all levels at the interior. The south and west stairs have interior access at all levels except level one. Both stairs are composed of stone and/or concrete and have plaster at shaft walls. The west stair has a decorative wood handrail, a chair rail, and what appears to be painted stone wainscot and a concrete base. The south stair is highly finished and has terrazzo floor with stone insets at some landings, stone steps (some covered with rubber), and stone wainscot, as well as a wood handrail at the lower level (Photo 0014). At the east side of the Annex, there is also a fourth stair from the first to the second level in its historic location.

The building's interior circulation and subdivision reflects its continuous operation as a commercial building from its construction through 2020. The lower level has subdivided classroom space and open plan areas, the first level contains retail spaces and a medical clinic, the second level is subdivided into multiple offices, and the third level contains four office tenant suites.

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Lower Level (Photo 0008)

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Historically, the lower level was used as a billiards hall and bowling alley and a barber shop; primary sources also suggest that it may have been used as a parking garage and possibly as assembly space. It is assumed that the parking garage was located near the existing ramp; the locations of the other uses are unknown. Today, the lower level has subdivided former classroom space on the west side and two large, empty open-plan spaces on the east side. Restrooms are located on the west side near the elevator. At the lower level, much of the building's structure is exposed, including concrete floors, concrete or concrete block foundation walls, brick or concrete partition walls, and concrete columns and beams. Engaged concrete pilasters are also located at most exterior walls. Some concrete and brick walls have been painted. At the ceiling, the one-way clay tile and concrete joist floor system is visible; some portions are painted and other portions are covered with plaster. Building systems are generally exposed.

In the subdivided space at the west half of the lower level, structure is partially concealed beneath non-historic finishes, including resilient tile and laminate flooring, gypsum board walls, and a dropped ceiling grid that is missing most of its acoustical tiles (Photo 0008). Metal decking is located at the ceiling near the elevator and beneath the west sidewalk vault. Originally, the west sidewalk vault was accessed by an exterior stair in front of the west storefront; this stair has been removed and most of the sidewalk vault is now inaccessible from the lower level.

The south stair shaft, located between the subdivided west half and the open plan east half, has painted brick walls, some covered with plaster. Former openings to this stair shaft from adjacent rooms have been infilled with concrete block.

In the open plan spaces at the east side, most of the building's structure is exposed. Both spaces have some partitions at the perimeter; in the south space, partitions are wood frame with wire mesh. The east stair shaft and an L-shaped mechanical room are located between the north and south spaces. Physical evidence suggests a stair may have been formerly located in the mechanical room.⁸ Another possible former stair location was observed in the south open volume space, where a section of the ceiling has been infilled with wood framing. At the north open volume space, a concrete ramp with concrete block side wall leads to the alley loading entrance.

First Level (Photos 0009 - 0011)

Historically, the first level held retail space, including the building's primary tenant, Freeman's department store. In the absence of historic building plans or interior photographs, the exact interior layout of this level during the period of significance is unknown. However, 1928 and 1951 Sanborn maps show what appears to have been a central corridor running east-west in the

⁸ A diagonal line along a concrete wall suggests a staircase. The ceiling above has clay tile and does not show evidence of infill, however.

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building, and a combination of Sanborn maps, historic photos, and city directories indicate that the level was subdivided into several retail spaces with access at storefronts along 27th Avenue South and East Lake Street. Though the size and extent of the Freeman's department store footprint likely changed over the course of the 56-year period of significance, primary sources suggest it was initially located in the southwest area of the first level, along with a drugstore (see Figures C, I, J, and K).

Today, the first level has two former retail spaces on the south side of the level and a former medical clinic on the north side. Each tenant space has its own designated exterior entrance(s), consistent with the historic means of accessing first level retail spaces. A public corridor, accessed directly from the exterior by an entrance on the south elevation, provides internal access to all three tenant spaces, connecting them to the building's east stair as well as providing accessible access to the central elevator lobby.

At the north side of the first level, the existing medical clinic space is accessed from the exterior by the west and east entrances at the 1955 addition on the north side of the building. A lobby with reception desk, waiting area, and several small check-in counters is located at the west side of the clinic space (Photo 0010). At the north side of the lobby, a curved ramp accommodates the change in grade between the west exterior entrance and the floor level of the lobby. To the south and east of the lobby, the clinic space is partitioned off into examining rooms and offices (Photo 0011).

To the south of the clinic, most of the south half of the first level consists of a former restaurant space (Denny's). The former restaurant is accessed from the exterior by the entrance at the building's southwest corner and has an open plan seating area, a kitchen, and restrooms (Photo 0009). Though a large open-volume space that can definitively be identified as a department store is no longer present, the full-height ceilings and open plan at the Denny's seating area are reminiscent of an early twentieth-century department store such as the one located around this general area during the period of significance. To the east of Denny's, a second former restaurant (Mama Safia's) is located in the building's southeast corner. The location and layout of this space reflects the configuration of retail spaces at the east half of the first level shown on the 1928 and 1951 Sanborn maps (see Figures C and J). The open-plan space is accessed from the exterior by storefront entrances on the south and east elevations. Both restaurant spaces were damaged by fires during the spring of 2020 and are missing the majority of their finishes.

Throughout the first level, finishes in public and tenant spaces reflect the building's continuous use as a commercial building into the 21st century. Floors are primarily exposed concrete, some covered with non-historic tile, laminate, or adhesive from a previous flooring finish. What appears to be terrazzo⁹ was observed in Mama Safia's and a portion of the public corridor. Most walls are finished with gypsum board; some partition walls have exposed metal studs. Most ceilings have dropped metal grids with many missing acoustical ceiling tiles; one-way clay tile and concrete joist

⁹ Terrazzo matches the terrazzo at stair landings at the historic south stair, suggesting that it is historic.

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floor system covered with plaster was observed above. At the northeast corner of the building, metal decking is visible at the ceiling, where a former elevator was removed. Former restaurant spaces have exposed concrete columns. Pilasters along the south wall have brick veneer, and concrete block was observed beneath some of the south storefront systems. Areas of plaster were observed at exterior walls of the south stair shaft and covering the clay tile and concrete joist system at the ceiling; remnants of plaster were also observed at the brick wall on the north side of Mama Sofia's and at concrete columns and masonry pilasters in Denny's (Photo 0009).

At the east stair in the c. 1972 addition, infilled window openings are visible at the painted brick north wall of the shaft, which was formerly the south exterior wall of the 1923 Annex.

Second Level (Photos 0012 - 0015)

The second level is subdivided into offices organized around a U-shaped corridor. The historic configuration of this level is unknown, but the existing layout consisting of a central corridor and offices at the perimeter is consistent with the second level's historic function as office space. Restrooms are located near the elevator. The northeast corner is an open-plan space where most finishes are missing or damaged from fires during 2020 (Photo 0015). This space has a concrete floor and exposed concrete columns and beams; at the ceiling, sections of the plaster covering the one-way clay tile and concrete joist floor system are peeling or missing. At the south side of the space, one flight of stairs (the building's fourth stair) leads down to the first level.

The c. 1972 addition is located directly to the south of the open-plan space. At the second level, the addition is a double-height space, and the former exterior brick walls of the Annex and original building are exposed at the north and south sides (Photo 0012). Metal decking is visible at the ceiling.

As at the first level, finishes at the second level reflect the building's long use as commercial space. Most ceilings have dropped metal grids with many missing acoustical ceiling tiles (see Photo 0013); one-way clay tile and concrete joist floor system covered with plaster was observed above. In some areas, former locations of clay tile walls are also visible at the ceiling. Walls and columns are generally finished with gypsum board. At the east wall of the elevator shaft and the walls of the east stair shaft, the former exterior brick walls of the Annex and 1917 building are exposed. Floors have carpet or adhesive from previously-removed floor finishes; ceramic tile wainscot and flooring is located at restrooms. At the west stair well, a few wood window sills appear historic.

Third Level (Photo 0016)

Building permits indicate that the original 1917 building was planned to hold two halls. By the 1940s, newspaper articles and city directories confirm that the Coliseum had two dance halls as well as a school of music at the third level. As at the building's other levels, the exact historic layout

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of the third level is unknown. Today, the third level contains four office suites accessed from a central elevator lobby: one suite at the third level of the Annex and three suites at the third level of the 1917 building. Restrooms are located near the elevator.

The Annex suite has carpet floors and gypsum board walls. Again, a one-way clay tile and concrete joist floor system covered with plaster, as well as the former locations of some clay tile walls, were observed above the dropped acoustical ceiling.

At the 1917 building, most of the third level has historic wood flooring and gypsum board walls (Photo 0016). Restrooms have non-historic tile flooring and wainscot. The elevator lobby has adhesive at floors, gypsum board walls, and dropped ceilings. At the north side of the level, an opening in the north brick wall of the 1917 building provides access to a mechanical room behind the elevator in the c. 1972 addition.

While a large open-volume dance hall is no longer present at the third level, some partitions within tenant suites are partial height, maintaining the historic open-volume feeling of a dance hall. Ceilings at the west and east suites are plaster ceilings with plastered concrete beams at some areas, as well as some dropped acoustical tile ceilings at individual offices. Mechanical systems are exposed. Former locations of clay tile walls were observed above dropped acoustical tile ceilings at the west suite. The central suite (has a dropped acoustical tile ceiling. The west suite (Photo 0016) also has some molding at the ceiling and wood window sills that appear historic.

Integrity

The Coliseum Building retains sufficient integrity to convey its history from its period of significance, 1917 – 1973. The seven aspects of integrity are discussed separately, as follows:

Location

The Coliseum Building has not been moved and retains integrity of location along a commercial corridor.

Setting

The Coliseum Building's immediate setting has been compromised by the destruction of historic commercial buildings to the south in 2020 and the construction of non-historic buildings to the southeast and north. However, the building retains its historic relationship to East Lake Street as well as the residential blocks to the northeast and southeast. The buildings immediately to the east, while altered, were present during the Coliseum's period of significance, and the parking lot on the north half of the site is also consistent with the property's historic setting.

Design

The Coliseum Building retains integrity of design. At the exterior, it retains its historic two-part horizontal division between first-level storefront and upper levels, as well as the historic vertical

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division created by brick pilasters on the primary elevations. The building's historic window openings, recessed canted southwest corner, decorative parapet, and brick and stone detailing have also been preserved. Though storefronts have been altered as a result of the building's continued commercial use and recent damage, all current entrance locations at the west and south elevations are located in bays that historically held entrances. Entrance locations at the 1955 addition are also historic.

At the interior, the building retains its historic vertical circulation. In the absence of physical or photographic evidence, it is difficult to determine the exact historic layout of each level, which likely evolved during the period of significance. While a large open-volume space that can definitively be identified as a department store is no longer present at the first level, the historic circulation pattern of commercial spaces accessed from the exterior at storefronts along the primary west and south elevations and the historic 1955 addition at the north elevation, and from the interior via a central corridor, remains. The subdivision of the second level into offices is consistent with the historic function of this level. While the two dance halls historically located at the third level have been subdivided, current subdivision includes partial-height walls that communicate the historic open volume of the former halls.

Materials

The Coliseum Building retains integrity of materials at the exterior, including brick veneer and brick window sills; stone window sills, string courses, and detailing; and prominent metal column at the southwest entrance. At the interior, the building retains historic finishes at the historic south and west stairs, including stone or concrete steps, stone wainscot, terrazzo flooring, and wood handrails. Historic structural elements, including concrete columns and beams, concrete floors, and the one-way clay tile and concrete joist floor system, remains throughout the interior; concrete foundation walls and brick and concrete partition walls remain at the lower level. Plaster at the ceilings and south and west stairwells, historic wood flooring at the third level, and remaining wood window sills and molding (likely historic) also remain.

Workmanship

At the exterior, the Coliseum Building retains integrity of historic workmanship in the stone detailing, decorative brickwork, brick window sills, and painted ghost sign. At the interior, the building's wood floors, decorative finishes and details in the historic stairwells, remaining plaster walls and ceilings, and wood window sills and molding at the third level also allow it to communicate its historic workmanship.

Feeling and Association

The property continued to serve as a commercial building until 2020; as such, it retains integrity of association and feeling as a twentieth-century commercial center for the Longfellow neighborhood.

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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.)

- ☒ 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

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE

ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION

Period of Significance

1917 - 1973

Significant Dates

1923

1955

c. 1972

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

L. J. Johnson (architect, 1917 building)

C. W. Lundquist Company (contractor, 1917 building)

H. E. Halden (architect, 1923 addition)

Bettenburg Townsend & Stolte (1955 addition)

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Coliseum Building and Hall, located at 2708 East Lake Street in Minneapolis, Minnesota, is locally significant under Criterion A in the areas of Commerce and Entertainment for its role as a prominent commercial building in the Longfellow neighborhood in South Minneapolis. From its construction in 1917 through the early 1970s, the building was the anchor of the neighborhood's most prominent commercial node at 27th Avenue South and East Lake Street. With the combination of a department store, several retail businesses, office space, and a public dance and meeting hall under a single roof, the Coliseum was a central commercial enterprise distinguished from the surrounding commercial development and well-positioned to meet the commercial and entertainment needs of Longfellow residents for decades, from the height of the streetcar era through the transition to automobile-oriented development at midcentury. The period of significance is 1917 – 1973.¹⁰

The Coliseum Building operated as a commercial building continuously from its construction in 1917 until 2020. As one of the last early to mid-twentieth century buildings remaining at the 27th Avenue South and East Lake Street intersection, the building continues to tell the story of twentieth-century commerce in the Longfellow neighborhood as well as Minneapolis more broadly.

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

Commercial Development in the Longfellow Neighborhood: 1890s - 1929

In Minneapolis, as in other cities across the United States, late nineteenth and early twentieth-century commercial development outside of the downtown area was driven by the expansion of the streetcar system. Beginning in the 1870s with horse-drawn cars and continuing in the 1890s with electrified trolleys, the expanding street railways of the Twin City Rapid Transit Company (TCRTC)¹¹ supported the expansion of Minneapolis's physical boundaries and the creation of new

¹⁰ The building does not meet Criterion G for exceptional significance. However, within less than two years from the date of this application, it will not be necessary for the building to meet Criterion G. Therefore, at the recommendation of the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office, the authors of this application have extended the period of significance through 1973, the most appropriate and logical end date for the period of significance.

¹¹ The TCRTC was formed in 1891 as a holding company for the street railway lines of the Minneapolis Street Railway and the St. Paul Street Railway. See John Diers and Aaron Isaacs, *Twin Cities by Trolley: The Streetcar Era in*

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residential neighborhoods at the edges of the city. Between 1890 and 1920, the TCRTC expanded its network to include over 500 miles of lines in the Twin Cities area, with 17 streetcar lines in Minneapolis alone (see Figure D).¹²

As the TCRTC's lines expanded, they drove speculation for residential development, creating new residential neighborhoods in the vicinity of the lines. This in turn stimulated commercial development to serve the growing residential communities.¹³ This pattern played out in the Longfellow neighborhood of South Minneapolis. Bordered by the railroad line of the Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Paul Railroad to the north, the Mississippi River and Minnehaha Falls on the east and south, and the industrial and railroad corridor along modern-day Hiawatha Avenue/Highway 55 to the west, the Longfellow neighborhood developed during the first three decades of the twentieth century along TCRTC streetcar lines (see Figures D and E). According to Eric Hart, author of a community history of the Longfellow neighborhood,

In the first two-and-a-half decades of the 20th century, Longfellow went from a sleepy township dominated by dairy farms to a bustling community of industry and vibrant commercial and residential districts. Between 1905 and 1929, nearly 80 percent of the present housing stock appeared along with commercial districts at 27th and Lake, along Lake Street and Minnehaha Avenue, and in neighborhood commercial nodes along the streetcar lines.¹⁴

The first railway line to reach Longfellow was a segment of a horse-car line, which was extended south along 27th Avenue to Lake Street (the intersection of the future Coliseum Building) in 1886. In 1891, this line (which at that time was newly electrified) was extended further south along Minnehaha Avenue to the south end of the neighborhood at Minnehaha Park (this line was eventually known as the Minnehaha Falls-Fort Snelling line – see Figure D).¹⁵ In 1905, a streetcar line was laid along Lake Street east to 31st Avenue South; by 1906, the line extended all the way east across the Mississippi River over the Lake Street Bridge to St. Paul. Longfellow's third streetcar line, the 25th Street line, was extended in a zig-zag pattern through the neighborhood in 1921. The line entered the north side of the neighborhood along 36th Avenue South and cut east and south until it reached 46th Avenue South near the Mississippi River. In 1927, the line was extended across the Mississippi River via the Ford Bridge to St. Paul.¹⁶

Both residential and commercial development followed the streetcar lines through the neighborhood. Though limited residential development occurred along the Minnehaha Falls-Fort

Minneapolis and St. Paul (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), 4 and Tamara Halvorsen Ludt, Laurel Fritz, and Lauren Anderson, *Minneapolis Streetcar Commercial Building Context and Intensive Level Thematic Survey* (prepared for the City of Minneapolis, 2020), 31.

¹² Diers and Isaacs, *Twin Cities by Trolley*, 4; Ludt, Fritz, and Anderson, *Minneapolis Streetcar Commercial Building Context*, 39.

¹³ Ludt, Fritz, and Anderson, *Minneapolis Streetcar Commercial Building Historic Context*, 37 – 38.

¹⁴ Eric Hart, *The Neighborhood by the Falls: A Look Back at Life in Longfellow* (Longfellow Community Council, 2009), 78.

¹⁵ Hart, *The Neighborhood by the Falls*, 81.

¹⁶ Hart, *The Neighborhood by the Falls*, 82.

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Snelling line and at the northwest corner of Longfellow during the 1890s and early 1900s, few houses were constructed due to the financial Panic of 1893 and the subsequent economic depression. By the early twentieth century, however, the economy had begun to improve, and the construction of the Minneapolis Steel and Machinery Company's industrial plant at the intersection of East Lake Street and Minnehaha Avenue in 1905 (see Figure G) created a demand for housing to serve the plant's workers. Beginning around 1908, residential development spread from the northwest corner east and south, filling the neighborhood with bungalows for the working class. According to Hart, 40 percent of houses in Longfellow were constructed by the end of 1919. During the 1920s, as a building boom swept the nation, an additional 40 percent of the housing stock was constructed.¹⁷

Many of the residents of this rapidly developing neighborhood were Scandinavian - either immigrants or the children of immigrants from Sweden, Norway, and Denmark.¹⁸ Scandinavian communities continued to expand in South Minneapolis through the 1930s, making it the "20th-century heart of the city's Scandinavian community."¹⁹ As evidenced by the small houses constructed throughout the neighborhood, most Longfellow residents belonged to the working class. Many worked for the Minneapolis Steel and Machinery Company, whose large Lake Street plant was expanded in 1929, when this company merged with several other manufacturing firms to create the Minneapolis Moline Power Implement Company. According to architectural historians Carole Zellie and Amy Lucas, "Moline became one of the country's largest producers of farm implements as well as the largest employer on the city's South Side."²⁰ In addition to Minneapolis Moline, some Longfellow residents may have worked at the grain elevators, flour mills, and feed mills along the railroad lines at the western edge of the neighborhood.²¹

As in other Minneapolis communities, commercial development followed residents to Longfellow. The *Minneapolis Streetcar Commercial Context* provides the general characteristics of commercial development in "streetcar suburbs":

With each new residential development came commercial enterprise intended to cater to and support the neighborhood... Most services and small businesses were located within four to six blocks of streetcar stops, with walkability nearly as valuable as the streetcar to the business owner and patron alike. The types of services offered did not vary much between stops, with groceries, pharmacies, hardware stores, clothing shops, and restaurants and movie theaters serving each neighborhood. The businesses did vary by

¹⁷ Hart, *The Neighborhood by the Falls*, 31, 79 – 86.

¹⁸ Hart, *The Neighborhood by the Falls*, 44 - 45.

¹⁹ Qualey and Gjerde, "The Norwegians," in *They Chose Minnesota*, June Holmquist, ed. (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1981), 233; John Rice, "The Swedes," in *They Chose Minnesota*, 263.

²⁰ Carole Zellie and Amy Lucas, *Historic Context Development and Cultural Resources Evaluation for the Minnehaha-Hiawatha Community Works Strategic Development Framework* (prepared for Hennepin County Community Works, 2009), 17; Hart, *The Neighborhood by the Falls*, 83.

²¹ Hart, *The Neighborhood by the Falls*, 88 – 100.

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ownership and merchandise, often reflecting the economic and ethnic diversity of the neighborhoods in which they were located....

Small commercial centers near streetcar stops usually consisted of small-scale buildings – two to three stories – with retail on the first level and offices or apartments above. The buildings were often built by speculative real estate developers, sometimes with an interest in the streetcar company, and then leased to retailers and tenants.

In addition to these small commercial centers at and around streetcar stops, “more robust commercial development could be found along the Twin City Rapid Transit Company’s crosstown lines... [which were] particularly important streetcar corridors that had substantial ridership.”²² One such crosstown line ran along Lake Street, an east-west road that spanned South Minneapolis from Lake Calhoun (now Bde Maka Ska) on the west to the Mississippi River on the east. Completed in 1906, the Selby-Lake intercity streetcar line traversed the entire span of Lake Street in Minneapolis and Selby Avenue in St. Paul to connect the two cities. In the words of TCRTC historians John Diers and Aaron Isaacs, the line was “a huge people mover and the most important crosstown line in the system, intersecting every north-south line in the city of Minneapolis. Along Lake Street...the line carried more passengers per mile than any in the system.”²³ Commercial development along this streetcar line eventually “became one continuous shopping strip from Hennepin Avenue [on the west] all the way to 36th Avenue South [on the east].”²⁴

It is unsurprising, then, that the streetcar transfer point at the intersection of 27th Avenue South and East Lake Street became the commercial hub of the Longfellow neighborhood. Commercial development around this area was evident as early as 1885: a Sanborn fire insurance map from this date shows several small commercial buildings located at the intersection of Minnehaha Avenue and Lake Street, near the neighborhood’s earliest area of residential development.²⁵ By 1912, commercial buildings included several one and two-story store buildings and the four-story International Order of Odd Fellows Lodge along the south side of the East Lake Street-27th Avenue South intersection, as well as several one and two-story store buildings located west at the intersection of East Lake Street and Minnehaha Avenue (see Figure F).²⁶

As Longfellow’s residential construction boomed during the 1920s, the node truly came into its own. By the late 1920s, Sanborn maps show that the number of buildings in the Minnehaha Avenue/East Lake Street/27th Avenue South area had nearly doubled since 1912, and that the extent of the shopping node had increased along 27th Avenue South and both the north and south

²² Ludt, Fritz, and Anderson, *Minneapolis Streetcar Commercial Building Historic Context*, 37 – 38.

²³ Diers and Isaacs, *Twin Cities by Trolley*, 195 - 197.

²⁴ Diers and Isaacs, *Twin Cities by Trolley*, 178.

²⁵ Sanborn Map Publishing Company, *Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1885*, Vol. 1, Sheet 34, Proquest Digital Sanborn Maps.

²⁶ Sanborn Fire Insurance Company, *Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps of Minneapolis*, c. 1912, Vol. 4, Sheets 413, 414, 439, 440, Proquest Digital Sanborn Maps.

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sides of East Lake Street (see Figure G).²⁷ By the 1920s, the intersection was known as “downtown” Longfellow. The area was the hub of the neighborhood’s commerce, offering a combination of shopping, dining, entertainment, and professional and blue-collar services.

Table 1 shows the extensive scope of commercial businesses located here, as well as the distribution of these businesses between individual buildings (see Figure G for building locations).

Table 1. Commerce at the Intersection of 27th Ave. S. and E. Lake St., 1928*²⁸

* Buildings in **bold** are extant buildings constructed before 1973 (see Figures G and H).

Building Type	Address	Function	Extant
3-story Coliseum Building	2700 – 2714 E. Lake St. 2935 – 2947 27th Ave. S.	Barber (Christ Nimon) Drugstore (Walgreen Co.) Department Store (Elmer B. Freeman) Dentist (Charles Brady) Dentist (Frank Brady) Physician (Johannes Moen) Physician (Frank Anderson) Dentist (Oscar Johnson) Dentist (Arthur Wilen) Dentist (Victor Nelson) Dentist (Edward Pearson) Physician (Cephas Swanson) Photography studio (Herman Larson) Music Teacher (Amy Mielke) Billiards (Newhouse and Vanvliete) Restaurant (Frisco Café) Residence (Hing May) Retail meats (Valmer E Ness) Shoe Repair (Matthew Bauman) Meat market (Warren Stores) Office (Lampert Bros Lumber Co) Office (Lampert Investment Co) Beauty Parlor (Mildred’s Beauty Shoppe)	Yes

²⁷ Sanborn Fire Insurance Company, *Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps of Minneapolis*, c. 1928, Vol. 4, Sheets 413, 414, 439, 440, Hennepin County Library Digital Collections.

²⁸ This table was created by comparing 1928 Sanborn maps with the 1928 Minneapolis city directory. Removal dates are based on historic aerial photographs from the Nationwide Environmental Title Research Historic Aerials Online, (<https://www.historicaerials.com/viewer>), Sanborn Map Company, *Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps of Minneapolis*, c. 1951, Vol. 4, Sheets 413, 414, 439, and 440, Hennepin County Library Digital Collections; and 1963 aerial photographs from Hennepin County Library Digital Collections (<https://digitalcollections.hclib.org/digital/custom/home>). Where function is blank, there was no occupant listed in the city directory. Functions in italics are assumed based on the type of building shown on the Sanborn map.

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		Office (Minnesota State Board of Pharmacy)	
2-story commercial	2716 E. Lake St.	Barbershop (Oscar Kaschner) Office (Interstate Fuel & Transfer Co.) South Town YMCA Branch Insurance agency (Minnehaha Insurance) Lawyer (Lynn Helgersen)	Yes (extensive exterior alterations)
1-story commercial	2718, 2720 E. Lake St.	Pioneer Lumber and Millwork Co.	No (replaced with existing building by 1951)
1-story commercial	2726 E. Lake St.	Laundry (Charles Lung)	No (replaced with existing building by 1951)
1-story commercial	2728 E. Lake St.	Restaurant (Robert Hoover)	No (replaced with existing building by 1951)
1-story commercial and residence	2919 ½, 2919, and 2917 27th Ave. S.	Billiards (Charles Carlson) Beauty parlor (Louis Potvin) Radios (Kirk Thompson) Auto garage (George Walsh) Residence (Joseph Griswold)	No (replaced with existing building by 2000)
3-story hotel	2901 27th Ave. S.	Whistler Hotel	Yes
1-story filling station	2600 E. Lake St.	<i>Filling station</i>	No (removed between 1951 and 1963)
1-story commercial	2616 E. Lake St.	--	No (removed between 1951 and 1963)
2-story commercial	2620 – 2630 E. Lake St. 2938 – 2944 27th Ave. S.	Florist (Goodlund & Beach) Baker (Melbert Lenander) Artist (Edith B Elstad) Physician (Ward Flower)	No (removed between

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		Dentist (Burnett Fogel) Dentist (William Linder) Physician (Frederick Miller) Physician (John Olson) Chiropractor (Herman Oredson) Physician (Leon Petit) Chiropractor (Irving Sobelman) Real estate (M X Jackley Investments) Shoes (Harry Bearman) Drugstore (Kregel & Rapp)	1966 and 1972)
1-story auto garage	2908 – 2910 27th Ave. S.	Auto garage and repair	No (removed between 1980 and 1991)
1-story commercial	2914 27th Ave. S.	Auto top repair (Fred Johnson)	No (replaced by 1951, removed between 1980 and 1991)
2-story commercial/ residence	2916 27th Ave. S.	Transfer - express, drayage, and moving (Peter Nikolaisen)	No (removed between 1951 and 1963)
1-story commercial	2920 27th Ave. S.	Auto repairs (Minnehaha Lake Motor Co.)	No (Removed between 1980 and 1991)
1-story manufacturing and commercial	2924 27th Ave. S.	Berg Brothers Manufacturing Company	No (Removed between 1963 and 1966)
2 -story commercial	2616 29th St. E.	--	No (removed after 2017)

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1-story commercial	2629 29th St. E.	--	No (removed by 1951)
1-story commercial	2517, 2519, and 2521 E. Lake. St.	Auto garage and sales (Transit Motor Garage and Sales Co.)	No (removed between 1966 and 1972)
2-story commercial/residence	3000, 3002, and 3004 Minnehaha Ave.	Hardware (Bernard Geraghty) Laundry (Harry Lep) Printer (Paul Dehnel, also resides here)	No (removed between 1966 and 1972, replaced with existing building between 1980 and 1991)
1-story commercial	3012 Minnehaha Ave.	Blacksmith (Christian Lauritzen)	No (removed between 1972 and 2006)
2-story battery station	3016 Minnehaha Ave.	Residence	No (removed between 1972 and 1979)
1-story commercial	3024, 3024 ½, 3026	Barber (Emil Anderson) Bicycles (Edward Williams) Batteries (Robert Berryman)	No (removed between 1980 and 1991)
1-story commercial	2611, 2613, 2615, 2617 E. Lake St. 3001, 3003, 3005, 3007 Minnehaha Ave.	Radio and tires (Johnston Bros) Restaurant (Egekvist Bros) Restaurant (Julia Welch)	No (removed 2020)

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1-story commercial	2619 and 2621 E. Lake St.	Men's Furnishings (Paul Kunz) Shipping dept. (Sweet-Orr of MN)	No (removed 2020)
2-story commercial	2629 E. Lake St.	Restaurant (M-Ha-Ha Café)	Yes
1-story commercial	3006 27th Ave. S.	Jewelers (Anderson & Anderson)	Yes
2-story undertaker	3008 227th Ave. S.	Undertaker (John Bostrom)	No (removed between 1951 and 1963)
1-story commercial	3010 27th Ave. S.	Shoes (Albert Mettayer)	No (removed between 1951 and 1963)
2-story commercial	3012, 3014, 3016, 3016 ½, 3018 27 th Ave. S.	Clothing (Morley Walter) Clothing (Ristey Bros) Hemstitching (Anna-Stina) Oil burners and oil burning equipment (Samels & Co) Tire service station (Duncan Bros)	Yes
1-story filling station	3020 227th Ave. S.	<i>Filling station</i>	No (removed by 1951)
1-story filling station	3037 27th Ave. S.		No (replaced by 1951; replaced again 1966 – 1972, removed 2020)
1-story auto garage	3017 27th Ave. S.	Auto garage (Otto Carlson) Home Malt Company	No (removed 2020)
1-story commercial	3015 27th Ave. S.	Plumber (William Christiansen) Electrician (Leon Prall)	No (removed 2020)
1-story commercial/residence	3009, 3009 ½, 3011 27th Ave. S.	Shoe repair (Carl Nelson, also resides here) Tailor (Mandel Fefferman) Residence (Carl Fenn)	No (removed 2020)

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		Restaurant (Tivoli Café)	
1-story commercial	2729 E. Lake St.	--	No (removed 1963 – 1966; existing building constructed 1976)
1-story theater	2719 E. Lake St.	<i>Theater</i>	No (removed 1963 – 1966; existing building constructed 1976)
1-story commercial	2715, 2717, 2719 E. Lake St.	Five-and-dime store (F W Woolworths)	No (removed 1963 – 1966; existing building constructed 1976)
4-story International Order of Odd Fellows Building	2701, 2703, 2705, 2707, 2707 ½, E. Lake St.	IOOF Meeting Hall (Canton Minnesota No. 1, Flour City No. 118, Union Temple No. 14, Ivy No. 30) Royal Neighbors of America Camp Hiawatha No. 1162 Dentist (Earl Anderson) Insurance (Crosby Investment Co) Residence (Anthony Greisinger) Accountant (Guy Hastings) Physician (John Higgins) Music teacher (Martha Hoogenson) Residence (Pauline McCabe) Residence (Charles McCabe) Music teacher (Clara Rask) Hardware (Selby Lake Hardware Co) Residence (Harry Flittner)	No (removed 2020)

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		Undertaker (Melanchton McDivitt) Tailor (Morris Scheffman) Florist (Harold Soderberg)	
2-story commercial	2709, 2711, 2713, 2715 E. Lake St.	Women's dresses (Durawear Co) Notions and fancy goods (Lake Street Dollar Store)	No (removed 2020)

A review of 1928 Sanborn maps for the entire neighborhood confirms that this was the prominent commercial node within Longfellow. Scattered one- to two-story commercial buildings appear at street corners, with more concentrated commercial areas along streetcar lines: East Lake Street at its intersections with 30th, 36th, 39th, and 41st Avenue South and Minnehaha Avenue at intersections with 35th, 37th, and 40th Streets; however, none of these concentrations of commercial buildings was comparable to 27th Avenue South and East Lake Street.²⁹

A Hub of Commerce: The Coliseum Building, 1917 – 1929

The construction of the Coliseum Building in 1917 solidified the prominence of the 27th Avenue-Lake Street commercial node during the late 1910s and early 1920s. This building epitomizes the commercial development of the Longfellow Neighborhood, becoming the centerpiece and anchor of the commercial area centered at this prominent streetcar intersection. The Coliseum Building was not only the largest commercial building at this node but also housed the widest variety of functions, making it an important recreational and shopping hub for Longfellow residents.

In 1916, the City of Minneapolis granted the newly formed Hedwall Investment Company a building permit for a 157- by 70-foot, three-story building at the northeast corner of East Lake Street and 27th Avenue South (originally addressed at 2700 – 2714 East Lake Street and 2941 – 2947 27th Avenue South). At the time, this lot held the lumber sheds and office of the Lewis M. Glass Lumber Company, as well as a corner store (see Figure F); the store and office were moved and the lumber sheds were demolished to make way for the new construction. Constructed of brick, tile, and reinforced concrete and estimated at a cost of \$55,000, the Coliseum Building was planned to house eight stores, offices, and two halls. Designed by architect L. J. Johnson and constructed by the C. W. Lundquist Company, the building was completed in 1917.³⁰

The Hedwall Investment Company (later the Cullen-Farmer-Hedwall Investment Company) was incorporated in 1916. Among the company's founders was Charles Hedwall, a Swedish immigrant who arrived in Minneapolis during the late nineteenth century. Hedwall was a notable Minneapolis insurance agent and businessman described by the *Minneapolis Star* as a "pioneer in real estate"

²⁹ Sanborn Fire Insurance Company, *Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps of Minneapolis*, c. 1928, Vol. 4 and Vol. 5, various sheets, Hennepin County Library Digital Collections.

³⁰ City of Minneapolis building permit B216009, 2941 – 2947 27th Avenue South and 2700 – 2714 East Lake Street, December 29, 1916, on file at the City of Minneapolis; Sanborn Fire Insurance Company, *Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps of Minneapolis*, c. 1912, Vol. 4, Sheet 414, Proquest Digital Sanborn Maps; City of Minneapolis building permit index cards for 2700 – 2714 E Lake St, on file at the City of Minneapolis. The building had tenants as early as March of 1917. See "First Pins Dropped in A. B. C. Meet," *Minneapolis Sunday Tribune*, March 4, 1917.

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and “responsible for the financing and reorganization of several large industries, including the Northwestern Marble & Tile Co. and the Swedish-American bank which later became Midland National.”³¹ Hedwall’s decision to construct a large commercial building at this intersection was a savvy business move that leveraged a prime real estate location at a streetcar transfer point and expanding commercial node in a growing community. The building’s location was consistent with the siting of other streetcar-adjacent commercial buildings, which were usually constructed in a four to six-block radius of streetcar stops – but with its location directly on the corner, the Coliseum Building had an advantage over other buildings farther out from the intersection. The only other streetcar transfer point within the Longfellow neighborhood, Lake Street and 36th Avenue South, was located in a less developed area of Lake Street and posed little competition to the 27th and Lake commercial node. Hedwall’s decision to build in this area of South Minneapolis may also have been influenced by his ties to the Scandinavian community in that area.³²

The 1919 Minneapolis city directory indicates that the Coliseum Building originally housed a wide range of businesses. That year, Kregel’s Pharmacy, the E. B. Freeman Department Store, the Hultgren Sisters restaurant, the Home Economy Store, and Ingebretson and Ness’s wholesale meats were located at the first level. Historic photographs and Sanborn fire insurance maps (see Figures I and K) indicate that Freeman’s occupied the southwest area of the first level, and that the drugstore was located in the southwest corner. Entrances to Freemans were located on the building’s west and south elevations at both East Lake Street and 27th Avenue South. At the east half of the first level, three separate retail spaces had entrances on the south elevation at East Lake Street.³³ Billiards and a bowling alley were located at the lower level.³⁴

The building’s second level was leased as office space. The 1919 city directory indicates that these offices were primarily occupied by medical and dental professionals, including Johannes Moen, physician; CP & FP Brady, dentists; Charles Gray, chiropractor; Edward Pearson, dentist; and Arthur Wilen, dentist. Photographer Herman Larson and the Young Men’s Christian Association South Town Branch were also listed as tenants. A c. 1928 Sanborn map and addresses included in city

³¹ “Incorporation for Minneapolis Firms,” *Minneapolis Tribune*, August 8, 1916; “C. J. Hedwall Dies; Pioneer Businessman,” *Minneapolis Star*, February 15, 1943.

³² Stark and Vermeer, *Lake Street Repaving and Streetscape Design*, 14; Ludt, Fritz, and Anderson, *Minneapolis Streetcar Commercial Context*, 37; Diers and Isaacs, *Twin Cities by Trolley*, 182; Sanborn Fire Insurance Company, *Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps of Minneapolis*, c. 1928, Vol. 4, Sheets 443, 444, 417 and 418, Hennepin County Library Digital Collections.

³³ Minneapolis Directory Company, *Davison’s Minneapolis City Directory* (Minneapolis: Minneapolis Directory Company, 1919); Sanborn Fire Insurance Company, *Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps of Minneapolis*, c. 1928, Vol. 4, Sheet 414, Hennepin County Library Digital Collections; Photograph of the Coliseum Building, Charles P. Gibson, c. 1920, Minnesota Historical Society Collections Online.

³⁴ “First Pins Dropped in A. B. C. Meet,” *Minneapolis Sunday Tribune*, March 4, 1917; Sanborn Fire Insurance Company, *Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps of Minneapolis*, c. 1928, Vol. 4, Sheet 414, Hennepin County Library Digital Collections.

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directories suggest that entrance to upper-level offices was originally provided at the south elevation along East Lake Street.³⁵

The third level, identified in the 1919 city directory as the Coliseum Hall, served as a social space for dances and gatherings. An advertisement for the grand opening of the hall in September 1917 promoted the space as the “largest, finest, and most beautiful fireproof hall west of Chicago” (see Figure T).³⁶ During the first decade of operation, the hall was used by numerous organizations and groups for a variety of activities, including political meetings and rallies as well as events by fraternal organizations and social clubs.³⁷

Within four years of the building’s completion, the Cullen-Farmer-Hedwall Investment Company decided to finance the construction of a significant addition. The construction of an addition reflected the growing population of the neighborhood: forty percent of Longfellow’s housing stock was built during the 1920s, and this large increase in residents no doubt precipitated a greater demand for retail, services, and recreation at the Coliseum Building. The two and three-story addition, almost as large as the original building itself, was designed by architect H. E. Halden, begun in the fall of 1922, and completed in 1923. Like the original 1917 building, the 64- by 157-foot addition at 2937 – 2941 27th Avenue South was constructed of brick, tile, and reinforced concrete, blending seamlessly with the original building (see Figure K). Estimated at a cost of \$22,000, the addition was planned to hold three stores and offices.³⁸ The 1924 city directory indicates that early occupants of the addition complemented the retail and offices already in the building. These included a grocery store, a shoe repair shop, two dentist offices, a chiropractor, an investment company, and the office of a lumber company.³⁹ In 1924, a 14 by 40-foot concrete block addition was added to the north side of the 1923 addition (visible in the c. 1928 Sanborn map – see Figure C); the building permit indicates that this was used as a shoe shop.⁴⁰ With the exception of this addition, building permits record few significant alterations to the building in the 1920s. In

³⁵ Minneapolis Directory Company, *Davison’s Minneapolis City Directory* (Minneapolis: Minneapolis Directory Company, 1919); Photograph of the Coliseum Building, Charles P. Gibson, c. 1920, Minnesota Historical Society Collections Online; Sanborn Fire Insurance Company, *Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps of Minneapolis*, c. 1928, Vol. 4, Sheet 414, Hennepin County Library Digital Collections. A c. 1920 historic photograph of the building shows a sign with the building name “Coliseum” over the central entrance on the south facade. This lines up with the street address of 2706 shown on Sanborn maps, which is the address given for offices in the 1919 City Directory.

³⁶ “New Coliseum Hall,” *Minneapolis Tribune*, September 20, 1917.

³⁷ Minneapolis Directory Company, *Davison’s Minneapolis City Directory* (Minneapolis: Minneapolis Directory Company, 1919), 439; see for example “Housewives Complete Annual Dance Plans,” *Minneapolis Star*, December 14, 1921; “Meetings,” *Minneapolis Star*, January 8, 1923; “Announcement Extraordinary,” *St. Paul Appeal*, December 2, 1922.

³⁸ City of Minneapolis building permit B164448, 2937 – 2941 27th Avenue South, October 24, 1922, on file at the City of Minneapolis; “New Store Building,” *Minneapolis Tribune*, October 26, 1922; Hart, *Neighborhood by the Falls*, 84.

³⁹ Minneapolis Directory Company, *Davison’s Minneapolis City Directory* (Minneapolis: Minneapolis Directory Company, 1924), 2507, 1296, 1643, 1775, 2236.

⁴⁰ City of Minneapolis building permit index cards for 2937 27th Avenue South, on file at the City of Minneapolis.

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1928, an opening was cut in the first floor and a stairway added to the basement, and a new storefront was constructed in 1929.⁴¹

More than just simply adding one more building to a growing commercial hub, the Coliseum Building was a destination point that met the commercial and social needs of the community in a significant way not achieved by any other single building at this commercial node.

First, the combination of a department store with offices and other retail, entertainment, and a third-level space for social functions represented a more comprehensive offering of shopping and services than any other single building at this intersection. By 1928, retail tenants included a barbershop (located in the basement), a beauty shop, a drugstore, a café, two meat markets, a billiard hall, a shoe repair shop, and a significant department store. The building also housed the offices of three physicians, six dentists, one music teacher, a photographer, a lumber company, an insurance company, and the Minnesota State Board of Pharmacy.⁴² With 24 tenants, the Coliseum Building represented a significant concentration of retail and services at a single location, unparalleled by other buildings at this intersection or along East Lake Street. A 1928 Sanborn fire insurance map and the 1928 Minneapolis city directory reveals that other buildings at 27th and Lake were one- or two-story buildings, and all but two had between one and five tenants (see Table 1).⁴³

One exception to this was the International Order of Odd Fellows Building, a four-story brick building at 2701 - 2707 East Lake Street, directly south of the Coliseum. Constructed in 1909, the 76 by 80-foot building had a footprint half the size of the original 1917 Coliseum Building and was built to serve as meeting space for the International Order of Odd Fellows (IOOF) organization (see Figures G and L). According to a 1908 newspaper article, the second level was intended for offices and flats and the third and fourth levels “exclusively for lodge purposes.” By 1928, the building held the regular meetings of several IOOF groups as well as one chapter of the Royal Neighbors of America, as well as offices, retail, and four residential apartments (see Table 1).⁴⁴ The two-story commercial building at 2620 – 2630 East Lake Street to the west also had more than five occupants – a mix of retail and offices (see Figure G and Table 1). Though larger than the average commercial

⁴¹ Building permit A18794, March 14, 1928, 2700 – 2708 East Lake Street, on file at the City of Minneapolis; Building permit A19531, July 17, 1929, 2706 East Lake Street, on file at the City of Minneapolis; Minneapolis building permit index cards for 2700 – 2714 East Lake Street, on file at the City of Minneapolis.

⁴² Building permit B140016, January 5, 1920, 2700 East Lake Street, on file at the City of Minneapolis; Minneapolis Directory Company, *Minneapolis City Directory* (Minneapolis: Minneapolis Directory Company, 1928). One residential apartment was also located in the building in 1928.

⁴³ Sanborn Fire Insurance Company, *Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps of Minneapolis*, c. 1928, Vol. 4, Sheet 413, 414, 439, and 440, Hennepin County Library Digital Collections; Minneapolis Directory Company, *Minneapolis City Directory* (Minneapolis: Minneapolis Directory Company, 1928).

⁴⁴ This building is no longer extant. “I.O.O.F.,” *Minneapolis Tribune*, October 11, 1908; Minneapolis Directory Company, *Daivson’s Minneapolis City Directory* (Minneapolis: Minneapolis Directory Company, 1909); Minneapolis Directory Company, *Minneapolis City Directory* (Minneapolis: Minneapolis Directory Company, 1928).

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building, both the IOOF Building and 2620 East Lake Street did not house as many businesses and offices as the Coliseum Building.⁴⁵

The Coliseum Building was distinguished by not just its size and number of occupants, but also the type of occupants – specifically, E. B. Freeman’s Department Store. Elmer B. Freeman started his business as a small haberdashery located near East 25th Street and 26th Avenue around 1914. In 1917, he moved his store into the newly-completed Coliseum Building.⁴⁶ In 1919, Freeman’s was one of 13 department stores listed in the Minneapolis city directory. Of these, most were located downtown or in the Cedar Riverside neighborhood, to the north of Longfellow. Freeman’s was located much farther south than any of the other department stores, suggesting that it may have drawn the business of streetcar commuters from across South Minneapolis and not just the Longfellow neighborhood. The department store appears to have offered a comprehensive array of goods, including shoes, dry goods, and clothing, making it a one-stop shop for shoppers traveling by streetcar or on foot.⁴⁷ A 1935 Minneapolis publication noted that by the mid-1930s, the store had grown from “two salesrooms and three clerks” into a “huge establishment with twenty-five regular employees and four times the floor space of the first store,” calling the store “one of the largest and most complete department stores in the Twin Cities, outside of the loop area, and...the fastest growing independent store on Lake Street.”⁴⁸

The building’s other retail occupants provided complementary services to the department store. Several of these services and functions remained the same well into the mid-twentieth century. The drugstore on the corner – first Kregel’s Pharmacy and then Walgreen Company – was a fixture in the building for years, through at least 1950. The barbershop likewise remained until at least 1955. The eastern retail spaces held a restaurant and a meat market for most of the 1920s; by 1939, a combined grocery/meat market and bakery were located here. The lower-level billiard hall, later combined with bowling, remained until 1957.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ Minneapolis Directory Company, *Davison’s Minneapolis City Directory* (Minneapolis: Minneapolis Directory Company, 1928).

⁴⁶ Iric Nathanson, “Exploring the Rich History of 27th and Lake,” *Minnpost*, June 5, 2020, <https://www.minnpost.com/community-sketchbook/2020/06/exploring-the-rich-history-of-27th-and-lake/>; Iric Nathanson, *Minneapolis’s Lake Street* (Charleston: Arcadia Publishing, 2020), 54.

⁴⁷ Minneapolis Directory Company, *Davison’s Minneapolis City Directory* (Minneapolis: Minneapolis Directory Company, 1919), 2018; “How to Cut Shoe Expense,” *Minneapolis Tribune*, April 21, 1918; “Free – This Week Only!” *Minneapolis Sunday Tribune*, November 23, 1924; “Announcement,” *Minneapolis Daily Star*, December 25, 1925; Photograph of the Coliseum Building, Charles P. Gibson, c. 1920, Minnesota Historical Society Collections Online.

⁴⁸ “The Past Remembered – The Freemans,” *Longfellow Messenger*, October 1985, on file at the Hennepin County Library.

⁴⁹ Minneapolis Directory Company, *Davison’s Minneapolis City Directory* (Minneapolis: Minneapolis Directory Company, 1922), 1473 and 991; Minneapolis Directory Company, *Minneapolis City Directory* (Minneapolis: Minneapolis Directory Company, 1925), 1552, 1604; Minneapolis Directory Company, *Minneapolis City Directory* (Minneapolis: Minneapolis Directory Company, 1928), 850 and 1748; Minneapolis Directory Company, *Davison’s Minneapolis City Directory* (Minneapolis: Minneapolis Directory Company, 1919), 1034; Minneapolis Directory Company, *Minneapolis City Directory* (Minneapolis: Minneapolis Directory Company, 1950), 1331; Minneapolis Directory Company, *Minneapolis City Directory* (Minneapolis: Minneapolis Directory Company, 1929), 2559;

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The building not only provided a variety of shopping options but also professional services for the surrounding community. During the building's first few years, upper-level offices offered medical and dental services. In 1919 and 1922, six dentists, physicians, and/or chiropractors are listed as having offices in the building; by 1929, there were nine such professionals. By the late 1920s, several music teachers who appear to have been associated with a branch of the Minnesota College also had offices in the 1917 building.⁵⁰

In addition to the comprehensive scope of individual businesses housed in one building, the third-level hall was a public space that met the social and entertainment needs of Longfellow residents. Unlike the IOOF Hall across the street, which was constructed specifically for private use by the fraternal organization, the Coliseum Hall was used by a wide variety of groups organized along social, political, and economic lines. During the late 1910s and 1920s, these included the Women's Nonpartisan Club, Lodge No. 5 of the Knights of Pythias, the Housewives Union, the Working People's League, the Farmer Labor Federation, the Irish-American Club, the Minnehaha Commercial Club, the Minneapolis Branch of the National Association for Colored People, the 12th Ward Democratic and Republican Clubs, and the Phantom Athletic Club.⁵¹ Reflecting the rise in popularity of dance halls during the twentieth century, the space was also frequently used as a dance hall. Dances held in the 1920s ranged from "Swedish and old-time dance" to an "annual Halloween Ball."⁵² By 1926, the dance hall had its own management and maintained a dance hall license with the City.⁵³ The hall was the only such public gathering space at 27th Avenue South and East Lake Street, further distinguishing the Coliseum Building from the rest of the buildings at this node. Furthermore, review of 1928 Sanborn Maps indicates that the only other public hall in the neighborhood was a small, 1 and 1/2 story dance hall at the intersection of 45th Street East and Snelling Avenue, at the far south end of the Longfellow neighborhood and over two miles away from the Coliseum Building, providing further evidence that the Coliseum Hall served a critical function for the entire neighborhood.⁵⁴

Minneapolis Directory Company, *Minneapolis City Directory* (Minneapolis: Minneapolis Directory Company, 1955), 1760; Jerry Kirshenbaum, "Friends Help Widow Pay for Funeral," *Minneapolis Tribune*, October 21, 1963.

⁵⁰ Minneapolis Directory Company, *Davison's Minneapolis City Directory* (Minneapolis: Minneapolis Directory Company, 1919), 1265, 269, 315, 439, 500, 721, 1430, 1905; Minneapolis Directory Company, *Davison's Minneapolis City Directory* (Minneapolis: Minneapolis Directory Company, 1922), 180, 341, 799, 1062, 2409; Minneapolis Directory Company, *Minneapolis City Directory* (Minneapolis: Minneapolis Directory Company, 1929); "Music Notes from Minnesota College," *Minneapolis Tribune*, November 11, 1923.

⁵¹ This list was developed through a search of local newspapers, including the *Minneapolis Tribune* and the *Minneapolis Star*. For example, see "Housewives' Union to Stage Dance," *Minneapolis Star*, January 3, 1923; "Farmer-Labor Meeting," *Minneapolis Star*, April 3, 1924; "Mendota Bridge Opening Plans Are Announced," *Minneapolis Sunday Tribune*, October 31, 1926; and "Twelfth Ward G. O. P. to Give Dance on Thursday," *Minneapolis Tribune*, October 20, 1929; "Attention!," *St. Paul Appeal*, April 10, 2021.

⁵² For example, see "Minneapolis," *St. Paul Appeal*, October 22, 1921; "Announcement Extraordinary," *St. Paul Appeal*, December 2, 1922; "Meetings," *Minneapolis Star*, January 12, 1923.

⁵³ "Minneapolis in Brief," *Minneapolis Star*, April 14, 1926; "Council Reverses Action: Grants Dance License," *Minneapolis Star*, March 26, 1926; "Action Deferred on Dance License," *Minneapolis Star*, March 25, 1926.

⁵⁴ Sanborn Fire Insurance Company, *Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps of Minneapolis*, c. 1928, Vols. 4 and 5, Hennepin County Library Digital Collections.

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The functions of the hall, as well as the specific tenants in the Coliseum Building, provide evidence that the building was a destination point for the surrounding working-class Scandinavian neighborhood. The political organizations and political candidates that most frequently used the space were associated with the Farmer-Labor Party and the Working People's Nonpartisan Political League, both of which received support from working class unions.⁵⁵ In 1919, the Minneapolis Steel Club rented clubrooms in the building, reflecting the concentration of workers at the nearby Minneapolis Steel and Machinery plant. Speakers at the hall, such as a guest from the Transportation Brotherhood's Co-operative Bank and labor politician William Mahoney, also point to the interests of the working-class residents of Longfellow.⁵⁶ The names of businesses and occupants utilizing the Coliseum Building during the 1920s suggest alignment with not only the economic class but also the ethnic makeup of the Longfellow neighborhood. In 1929, the last names of professionals utilizing upper-level offices reflected the area's Scandinavian heritage, with names such as Anderson, Johnson, Larson, Olsen, Rask, and Swanson. Ingebretson & Ness's (later Ness's) wholesale meats, located at the first level, was also operated by Scandinavians.⁵⁷

Retail in a New Era: 1930 – 1973

Though suburbanization and the development of new forms of auto-centered retail began to challenge the prominence of the 27th Avenue-Lake Street node after World War II, the area around this intersection remained the major commercial center in the Longfellow community through the 1960s. The history of the Coliseum Building from the 1930s through the 1960s reflects this broader history. With the help of successful long-term retail tenants, including Freeman's Department Store, a vibrant third-level dance hall, and strategic alterations that included the development of an on-site parking lot, the building weathered the transition from streetcar to automobile-oriented commercial development to remain a prominent commercial enterprise in the neighborhood through 1973.

Commerce in the Longfellow Neighborhood: 1930 – 1973

The Great Depression was a difficult time for retail businesses in the United States; by 1933, per capita retail sales were at two-thirds of their 1929 levels. By the late 1930s, however, average per capita retail sales had recovered to pre-Depression levels, and the entrance of the United States into World War II helped pull the country into full economic recovery.⁵⁸ For established retail in urban

⁵⁵ See for example "Metropolitan Milk Supplied in 4 Schools," *Minneapolis Star*, March 12, 1921; "Meetings," *Minneapolis Star*, February 1, 1924; Paul S. Holbo, "The Farmer Labor-Association: Minnesota's Party within a Party," *Minnesota History* (September 1963): 1 – 2.

⁵⁶ "City News in Concise Form," *Minneapolis Morning Tribune*, April 5, 1919; "'Co-operative Banking' Topic," *Minneapolis Star*, March 17, 1924; "Meetings," *Minneapolis Star*, February 1, 1924.

⁵⁷ See for example Minneapolis Directory Company, *Davison's Minneapolis City Directory* (Minneapolis: Minneapolis Directory Company, 1919), 2119; Minneapolis Directory Company, *Minneapolis City Directory* (Minneapolis: Minneapolis Directory Company, 1929); 2698 and 2683.

⁵⁸ Price Fishback, William Horrace, and Shawn Kantor, "The Impact of New Deal Expenditures on Local Economic Activity: An Examination of Retail Sales, 1929 – 1939," National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper 8108, February 2001, p. 6, https://www.nber.org/system/files/working_papers/w8108/w8108.pdf; Tamara Halvorsen

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areas, the postwar era would bring new challenges. Following World War II, many middle-class white Americans flocked to the suburbs, as favorable economic conditions and government policies, interstate highway construction, rising automobile ownership, and a lack of existing housing encouraged the construction of new single-family homes at the fringes of urban areas.⁵⁹ As it had during streetcar era, new commercial development followed residential development out to the fringes – but this time, it took new, auto-oriented forms. Shopping centers, ranging in size from the smaller neighborhood and community shopping strips developed beginning in the 1940s to the enclosed shopping malls of the 1950s and 60s, featured large parking lots and a convenient selection of retail and services within a visually-unified development. Another postwar retail innovation often located in suburban areas, the discount store, provided low-cost goods in exchange for self-service.⁶⁰

In Minneapolis during the 1950s and 60s, urban retailers in established commercial districts within the city proper faced competition from these newer forms of retail and the population shifts and automobile usage that characterized the postwar era. In contrast to new shopping centers, commercial development along former streetcar lines had limited parking opportunities, having been designed primarily for streetcar and not automobile access. With the demise of the streetcar system in 1954, location along these streetcar lines, formerly an asset, became irrelevant and even detrimental, as high volumes of car traffic along primary thoroughfares made it difficult for pedestrians to traverse busy commercial intersections. Compared to the new, modern shopping centers, the older buildings on urban commercial strips were considered visually unattractive and functionally ill-suited to new methods of buying and selling.⁶¹

In the 1960s, publications by the Minneapolis City Planning department sounded the alarm about the necessity of making changes to allow older commercial strips to compete with newer retail. A 1963 publication summarized the challenges facing citywide commercial facilities this way:

Numerous factors influence commercial areas within a city – the automobile and bus replace the streetcar, population changes in number and composition, new and more efficient means of merchandising arise, buildings grow older and no longer meet the needs for which they were originally designed, traffic volumes grow and change, land becomes unavailable for expansion or parking. The automobile is a particularly important force which has provided the shopper with great flexibility. He can travel longer distances to find the items he wants at the price he wants to pay and can seek out pleasant surroundings in

Ludt, Laurel Fritz, and Lauren Anderson, *Minneapolis in the Modern Era Historic Context and History Architecture Survey* (prepared for the City of Minneapolis, 2020), 2.14.

⁵⁹ Ludt, Fritz, and Anderson, *Minneapolis in the Modern Era*, 3.9 – 3.10, 5.4, 5.5.

⁶⁰ National Register of Historic Places nomination #100004147, Dayton's Department Store, Hennepin County, Minnesota, Section 8, p. 29 - 31, https://mn.gov/admin/assets/Daytons%20Department%20Store_tcm36-380634.pdf.

⁶¹ Judith Martin and David Lanegran, *Where We Live: The Residential Districts of Minneapolis and St. Paul* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1983), 16 – 17; Ludt, Fritz, and Anderson, *Minneapolis Streetcar Commercial Context*, 40; City of Minneapolis Planning Commission, *Longfellow Community: Analysis and Action Recommendations*, Community Improvement Program Series No. 14, Publication No. 158 (Summer 1955), 48.

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which to shop. Discount houses and other shopping centers now ring the City only a few minutes away from most of the City's population.⁶²

According to the study, all these changes had been hard on the city's older commercial centers, as evidenced by "vacant stores, rapid changes in occupancy, and shifts from retail to service or office uses" in these areas.⁶³ The declining prominence of these older streetcar commercial districts is illustrated in a series of studies of Hennepin County shoppers by the *Minneapolis Star* and *Minneapolis Tribune* from the mid-1950s to the mid-1960s. According to the studies, the percentage of Minneapolis women shopping in a Minneapolis neighborhood commercial district at least once a year declined from 93% in 1955 to 80% in 1965; the percentage shopping at least once a week declined from 72% to 35%. In contrast, the number of Minneapolis women shopping in shopping centers at least once a year increased from 52% in 1955 to 83% in 1965, and at least once a month from 32% to 60%.⁶⁴

In the Longfellow community, these new developments undoubtedly brought changes to neighborhood retailing. Corner stores, once a fixture of the neighborhood, declined in the 1950s in the face of competition from new supermarkets.⁶⁵ The construction of the Hi-Lake Shopping Center in the adjacent Powderhorn neighborhood in 1957 brought a shopping center within close proximity to Longfellow residents.⁶⁶ The population of the neighborhood peaked at approximately 40,000 in 1940, declined slightly between 1940 and 1950, and declined by 10% between 1950 and 1960.⁶⁷

These changes, however, did not result in the immediate abandonment of the 27th Avenue and Lake Street node; indeed, evidence suggests that the shopping area remained a primary center of neighborhood commerce through the 1960s. The node entered the 1950s relatively unchanged from the late 1920s in terms of its extent and number of buildings, as evidenced by c. 1951 Sanborn fire insurance maps (see Figures G and H).⁶⁸ In the mid-1950s, a study of Minneapolis shopping areas listed 27th and Lake as one of eight "super" shopping districts in the City of Minneapolis: five in south and southwest Minneapolis at former streetcar transfer points at Nicollet Avenue, Chicago Avenue, 27th Avenue, Hennepin Avenue, and Bloomington Avenue along East Lake Street; two in northeast Minneapolis along the former streetcar line along Central Avenue; and one in North Minneapolis along the former streetcar line along West Broadway Avenue. The 27th and Lake

⁶² Minneapolis City Planning Commission, *Commercial Facilities: A City-Wide Facts & Inventory Report Phase I Community Improvement Program*, Community Improvement Program Series No. 4, Publication no. 143 (Spring 1963), 1.

⁶³ Minneapolis City Planning Commission, *Commercial Facilities*, 1.

⁶⁴ Research Department of the *Minneapolis Tribune* and *Minneapolis Star*, *Retail Revolution, 1955 – 1965* ([*Minneapolis, MN?*]: [*Minneapolis Star and Minneapolis Tribune?*], 1965), 9 – 10, 17 – 18.

⁶⁵ Hart, *Neighborhood by the Falls*, 57 – 58.

⁶⁶ "Hi-Lake Shop Center Ribbon Cutting Planned," *Minneapolis Star*, October 30, 1957.

⁶⁷ Minneapolis City Planning Commission, *Commercial Facilities*, 65 and 66; Hart, *The Neighborhood by the Falls*, 45.

⁶⁸ Sanborn Map Company, *Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps of Minneapolis*, c. 1951, Vol. 4, Sheets 413, 414, 439, and 440, Hennepin County Library Digital Collections.

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district, which the study defined as a four-block area along Lake Street between 26th Avenue and 30th Avenue, was the only such district in the Longfellow neighborhood. It contained a "J.C. Penney, 2 variety stores (including F. W. Woolworth), Lake Theater, Freeman's Dept. Store, First Minnehaha National Bank, 4 grocery stores (including Red Owl, National and Stillman's), Snyder Drugs, bowling alley, furniture store, several specialty shops, restaurants, and service firms."⁶⁹ The 1955 and 1965 *Minneapolis Star* and *Minneapolis Tribune* shopper surveys indicate that the district was the fifth most-popular in the city, suggesting it was far from obsolete.⁷⁰

A study of the Longfellow Community completed by the Minneapolis City Planning Commission in 1961 acknowledged several challenges facing Longfellow retail, including a lack of parking, division of shopping districts by major streets, and streetcar-oriented design that did not fit contemporary buying or selling habits. Yet, the publication asserted that "the most important commercial center in the Community is the 27th and Lake Shopping Center. The scope of services contained within the center are, in the main, those required of a community-wide shopping center but also include activities that are necessary to and successfully draw from a larger trade area than the Longfellow Community itself."⁷¹ Likewise, a 1963 publication noted that the number of passenger car trips to the 27th and Lake area "increased greatly" between 1949 and 1958, despite a 10% population decline in the surrounding area. The 1963 publication noted that the district was the neighborhood's only "community commercial center," defined as a retail shopping area containing more than 50 services and retail establishments serving a minimum of 5,000 families.⁷²

A 1963 study of the shopping district specifically noted a loss in the total number of businesses at 27th and Lake since the late 1940s and the presence of Hi-Lake Shopping Center as the district's greatest competitor. Yet, the study asserted that Hi-Lake did not yet offer a sufficient range of services and retail to fully compete with the district. Notably, the former streetcar transfer point at 36th Avenue South and East Lake Street was described as a neighborhood center (defined as a retail shopping area containing six or more establishments and serving a minimum of 1,000 families) that drew some trade from the neighborhood, "but the selection of merchandise and services there is limited and the competition is not severe." The study also found a "comparatively low patronage of suburban shopping centers and discount houses by families living in the 27th and Lake trade area," providing additional evidence that businesses at 27th and Lake, including the Coliseum Building, supplied the core shopping needs of the community.⁷³

⁶⁹ Advertising Department of the *Minneapolis Star and Tribune*, *Metropolitan Minneapolis Shopping Areas*, (Minneapolis, MN?]: Minneapolis Star and Tribune Company, 1956), 12.

⁷⁰ Research Department of the *Minneapolis Tribune* and *Minneapolis Star*, *Retail Revolution 1955 – 1965*, 11.

⁷¹ City of Minneapolis Planning Commission, *First Report on Longfellow Community Analysis*, Publication No. 127, Community Analysis No. 4, 1961, p. 34, on file at Hennepin County Library James K. Hosmer Special Collections.

⁷² Minneapolis City Planning Commission, *Commercial Facilities*, 18, 65.

⁷³ Minneapolis City Planning Commission, *27th and Lake: A Commercial District at the Crossroads*, (1963 - 1964), 12 – 39, on file at Hennepin County Library James K. Hosmer Special Collections; Minneapolis City Planning Commission, *Commercial Facilities*, 18.

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Through the early 1970s, the Coliseum Building remained the anchor of the 27th and Lake commercial node. The building's continued relevance to the Longfellow neighborhood is evidenced by several factors. First, the building displayed stability in tenants and uses through the mid-twentieth century. As noted previously, many of the building's retail uses – a barbershop, bowling alley/billiards hall, and drugstore – remained constant well into the 1950s. Most importantly, the continued use of the first level by Freeman's Department Store through the early 1970s provided a solid anchor tenant that continued to draw shoppers. In the mid-1930s, the department store was called "one of the largest and most complete department stores, outside of the loop area" and "the fastest growing independent store on Lake Street." The decision to add a parking lot to the north of the store sometime between the late 1920s and the early 1930s proved to be a foresighted decision; according to a mid-1930s publication, the parking lot "doubled the business" of the store within a year. Even before the demise of the streetcar system in 1954, Freeman's was already well positioned to accommodate automobile traffic, supporting its continued success during the postwar era.⁷⁴

Building permits for alterations to the Freeman's store reveal this continued success, and the store's efforts to cater to the auto-oriented shoppers of the postwar era. These included the remodeling of the storefront in 1935 and the addition of a one-story, 15 by 72-foot concrete block addition to the north side of the building in 1943 (see Figure J).⁷⁵ In 1955, the 1924 shoe shop and 1943 addition were removed and replaced with a 15.6 by 110-foot, one-story, masonry and steel addition along the north elevation of the store (see Figures M – O). Consistent with the rise in automobile use, the decision to add an entrance addition along the north elevation suggests increasing use of the building's north parking lot by shoppers. By the late 1950s, Freeman's shared this parking lot with the adjacent First Minnehaha National bank, J. C. Penney Co., F. W. Woolworth Co., and National Tea Company. According to a 1957 newspaper article, the intent of this shared arrangement was to "create a shopping center with the existing stores in the block," a strategic move to emulate the design of suburban shopping centers.⁷⁶

The 1955 parking lot addition provided two entrances on the building's north elevation, with overhanging eaves that could shelter pedestrians from the elements. By the 1960s, signs attached

⁷⁴ Don Rivers, Audrey Lewis and Gordon Daline, *Southtown Personalities*, as quoted in "The Past Remembered – The Freemans," *The Longfellow Messenger*, October 1985, p. 14; "Department Store to Open Saturday," *Minneapolis Tribune*, June 17, 1932. In 1944, the Scott-Burr Stores Corporation, a subsidiary of the Butler Brothers, purchased the Freeman Department Store at East Lake Street. E. B. Freeman retained an ownership interest, and the store continued under the Freeman name. "Scott Burr Buys Freeman Stores," *Minneapolis Star*, July 22, 1944.

⁷⁵ City of Minneapolis building permit A22179, September 4, 1935, 2710 – 14 East Lake Street, on file at the City of Minneapolis; City of Minneapolis building permit A25539, October 12, 1943, 2706 East Lake Street, on file at the City of Minneapolis.

⁷⁶ "Real Estate Roundup," *Minneapolis Star*, November 21, 1957; Building permit A31902, July 1, 1955, 2700 – 14 East Lake Street, on file at the City of Minneapolis.

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to the addition advertised free parking for Freeman's customers. The addition, which cost approximately \$29,000, was designed by the architectural firm of Bettenburg Townsend & Stolte. The decision to use a well-known Minneapolis architectural firm also suggests a desire to compete with the contemporary designs and prestige of new shopping centers.⁷⁷ By 1955, it also appears that the building's lower level may have been used as a parking garage, perhaps for employees driving their cars to work.⁷⁸

Building permits record numerous small alterations that were made to facilitate the continued commercial use of the building by Freeman's and other tenants. These included new partitions at the first level (1941), new partitions at the upper level (1948), new partitions for Freeman's (1953, 1956), installation of new interior bulkhead and trim (1954), new toilet room in the basement (1955), retaining wall under sidewalk vault (1955), replacement of skylight with fireproof ceiling (1956), alterations to storefronts that included new doors, a new opening in a masonry wall for a window, the combination of two entrances along Lake Street, and unspecified alterations (1959, 1960, and 1967), and the replacement of a second level door (1968).⁷⁹ By the 1960s, photographs indicate that the first-level storefronts had been remodeled with what appear to have been new tile-faced bulkheads, storefront windows, and glass black transoms. Painted wall signs on the north and east elevations served as advertisements to auto traffic on 27th Avenue and Lake Street (see Figures P and Q). Locations and placement of building signage on the primary west and south elevations suggests that Freeman's occupied most of the first level by this date.⁸⁰

In addition to the use of the first level for retail purposes, uses of second and third level offices remained relatively consistent through the 1960s.⁸¹ In 1950, the second level held the offices of several health professionals, including five dentists, one physician, one chiropractor, and one optometrist; one music teacher; an insurance agent; and a building company. The Federated Teachers Service Corporation of music teachers was located on the third level.⁸² Beginning in 1955, city directories show a declining number of tenants in upper-level offices, with a total of 17 tenants in 1955, 14 in 1960, and 12 in 1968. During some years, one or two offices were occupied by Freeman's department store. However, medical and dental professionals still formed the largest category of office tenants, reflecting the original use of the second level.⁸³

⁷⁷ City of Minneapolis building permit A31902, July 1, 1955, 2700 – 14 East Lake Street, on file at the City of Minneapolis; Alan Lathrop, *Minnesota Architects: A Biographical Dictionary* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 22 – 23.

⁷⁸ A 1955 building permit references the installation of a bathroom in the "basement of garage." See City of Minneapolis building permit 31850, 2708 E Lake Street, May 26, 1955, on file at the City of Minneapolis.

⁷⁹ City of Minneapolis building permit index cards for 2700 – 2714 E Lake Street, on file at the City of Minneapolis.

⁸⁰ Photographs of the Coliseum Building, 1960s, Hennepin County Library Digital Collections.

⁸¹ By 1942, it appears that offices were also located on the third level. See Minneapolis Directory Company, *Minneapolis City Directory* (Minneapolis: Minneapolis Directory Company, 1942), 1699.

⁸² Minneapolis Directory Company, *Minneapolis City Directory* (Minneapolis: Minneapolis Directory Company, 1950).

⁸³ Minneapolis Directory Company, *Minneapolis City Directory* (Minneapolis: Minneapolis Directory Company, 1955), 1625 and 1761; Minneapolis Directory Company, *Minneapolis City Directory* (Minneapolis: Minneapolis

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Declining use of the building for office space was offset by the growing popularity of the third level as a dance hall. During the 1930s and 40s, the third level hall continued to host social and political gatherings. Organizations that held occasional or regular meetings in the hall as well as other spaces in the building included the Order of Vasa, the Farmer-Labor party, the Minnehaha-Lake business association, the Daughters of Norway, the VFW, the Wold Chamberlain American Legion, the Twelfth Ward Republican Club, and the National Union for Social Justice.⁸⁴ In addition to the third-level hall, references in newspaper articles suggest that gathering spaces in the building may have also included a “rooftop garden” and a basement hall.⁸⁵

During the 1940s, regular newspaper advertisements began to appear promoting regular dances in the hall, by then listed in city directories as the Good Fellowship Club dance hall.⁸⁶ Some advertisements indicate that dancing was provided in two halls, and city directories beginning in 1939 list both the “Coliseum Building & Hall” and the “Coliseum Annex Hall,” suggested the upper level was subdivided at this time. Through the 1960s, ads for the ballroom appear frequently in local newspapers. Music and dancing catered to older generations, with ads promoting “Scandinavian dancing” and “old time dancing” and performances by groups such as Ted Johnson’s Scandinavian Orchestra, Ernie Bjorklund’s orchestra, and Harold Erickson’s orchestra for those “over 28 [years old].” The ballroom offered holiday dances around New Year’s Eve, Christmas, Thanksgiving, St. Patrick’s Day, and other special events. Judging from the frequency of ads, and in contrast to the declining use of the building’s office space, dancing appears to have actually picked up in the 1960s, possibly a result of the closure of other Minneapolis ballrooms during the second half of the twentieth century.⁸⁷

Directory Company, 1960), 251; Minneapolis Directory Company, *Minneapolis City Directory* (Minneapolis: Minneapolis Directory Company, 1963), 382; Minneapolis Directory Company, *Minneapolis City Directory* (Minneapolis: Minneapolis Directory Company, 1966), 379, Minneapolis Directory Company, *Minneapolis City Directory* (Minneapolis: Minneapolis Directory Company, 1968); 350.

⁸⁴ See for example “Auxiliary to Meet,” *Minneapolis Tribune*, November 6, 1938; “Social Justice Meetings,” *Minneapolis Tribune*, May 13, 1936; “VFW Meeting,” *Minneapolis Tribune*, May 5, 1949; “Meetings,” *Minneapolis Star*, September 27, 1945.

⁸⁵ “Gibbons Trio Will Show, with Gopher Pictures, at Smoker,” *Minneapolis Star*, December 8, 1936; “Wold-Chamberlain Unit Will Install,” *Minneapolis Tribune*, September 10, 1939; “Million ‘Bucks’ Will BE Spent at Festival” *Minneapolis Star*, October 17, 1938.

⁸⁶ See for example Minneapolis Directory Company, *Minneapolis City Directory* (Minneapolis: Minneapolis Directory Company, 1945), 1524.

⁸⁷ See for example Minneapolis Directory Company, *Minneapolis City Directory* (Minneapolis: Minneapolis Directory Company, 1939), 1753 and 1966. See for example “Dance Tonite,” *Minneapolis Tribune*, June 1945; “Every Friday Night,” *Minneapolis Star*, June 2, 1943; “Dance,” *Minneapolis Tribune*, June 23, 1945; “Coliseum Ballroom,” *Minneapolis Star*, December 10, 1958; “Dance!,” *Minneapolis Star*, September 12, 1969; “Dance,” *Minneapolis Tribune*, September 26, 1969; “Dance!,” *Minneapolis Star*, November 15, 1968; “Dance To...” *Minneapolis Star*, February 4, 1966; “New Years Eve at its Best!” *Minneapolis Tribune*, December 27, 1961. “Dance Halls,” Encyclopedia of Cleveland History, accessed May 5, 2021, <https://case.edu/ech/articles/d/dance-halls>; Ruth Hammond, “Not Snow nor Sleet...” *Minneapolis Tribune*, February 10, 1979.

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Epilogue: 1973 - Present

The commercial prominence of the Coliseum Building and the 27th-Lake shopping node, however, could not last. With the departure of the Coliseum's primary tenant, Freeman's Department Store, in 1973, the Coliseum Building ceased to be a central commercial hub for the neighborhood. The closure of Freeman's came on the heels of significant changes for the Longfellow community and the 27th-Lake area. By the early 1970s, several buildings in the shopping district had been removed.⁸⁸ The Minneapolis Moline plant closed in 1972, bringing an end to the industry that had provided jobs and purchasing power for Longfellow residents for decades. The construction of the Minnehaha Mall with Target and Super Valu market on the site of the plant in the mid-1970s was the final sign that commerce had moved beyond the Coliseum and the 27th Avenue and Lake Street shopping area.⁸⁹

Removal and replacement of buildings in the 27th and Lake commercial node continued through the early twenty-first century. Today, only five early-twentieth century commercial buildings in the area (four general commercial buildings and one former hotel) and three mid-twentieth century buildings (three general commercial buildings) remain extant (Figures G and H). As Table 1 above indicates, the historic scale and scope of commercial activity in these buildings did not compare to the Coliseum Building's ability to meet the neighborhood's commercial needs. Thus, the Coliseum Building remains as the best representation of commerce in the Longfellow neighborhood from the late 1910s until the early 1970s.

Though no longer the commercial hub it once was, the Coliseum Building has continued to serve as a backdrop for the history of the Longfellow neighborhood through the present day. The third-level ballroom remained in operation into the mid-1980s. As one of Minneapolis's last operating ballrooms, it drew people from outside the neighborhood and even outside the Twin Cities. By 1978, the hall was leased by a folk-dance school but continued to host regular ballroom dances during the week and weekends.⁹⁰ When the National Tea Company proposed to demolish the building and construct a new supermarket on the site in 1979, neighbors and ballroom patrons protested – and the redevelopment did not occur.⁹¹

⁸⁸ Aerial photograph of 2708 East Lake Street, 1972, Nationwide Environmental Title Research Historic Aerials Online, <https://www.historicaerials.com/viewer>.

⁸⁹ Martin and Lanegran, *Where We Live*, 17; Hennepin County Library Special Collections, "Minneapolis Moline and 'The Moline'" accessed May 5, 2021, [https://hclib.tumblr.com/post/147709896063/minneapolis-moline-and-the-moline-across-the#:~:text=In%201972%2C%20the%20Minneapolis%20plant,to%20be%20completed%20in%202017](https://hclib.tumblr.com/post/147709896063/minneapolis-moline-and-the-moline-across-the#:~:text=In%201972%2C%20the%20Minneapolis%20plant,to%20be%20completed%20in%202017;); "Sales," *Minneapolis Tribune*, August 10, 1973.

⁹⁰ Ruth Hammond, "Not snow nor sleet..." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, February 10, 1979.

⁹¹ Dan Cohen, "Supermarket Project Justified by Changing Scene along Lake St.," *Minneapolis Star*, March 23, 1979; Christy Hudgins, "Coliseum Ballroom," *Minneapolis Star*, June 19, 1979; Bryan R. Peterson, "Neighborhood Units Improve National Tea Proposal," *Minneapolis Star*, August 9, 1979; "Dick Youngblood, "Bel Rae Owner Is Having a Ball Running Dance Hall," *Minneapolis Tribune*, March 31, 1985.

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By the mid-1970s, Podany's Office Furniture Warehouse, run by local businessman Roger Podany, had moved into the space formerly occupied by Freeman's. The 1980 and 1990 city directories show only a handful of tenants in addition to Podany's in the building each year.⁹² One of the more unusual functions of the building during this time was the use of the basement level by various artists and musical groups as a rehearsal venue and living space. Among these groups was the well-known Minneapolis group the *Suburbs*, who rose to popularity in the 1980s.⁹³ Building permits indicate few alterations to the building during this time, with the exception of a new storefront (including new doors and windows) in 1987, and other exterior repairs and alterations at the northeast corner of the building in 1997.⁹⁴

In 1999, developer Fred Lehman purchased the building with assistance from the City of Minneapolis and made plans to renovate the structure, which by his account was in serious need of remodeling. Between 2000 and 2003 Lehman remodeled the building envelope and storefronts, removing some of the non-historic paneling at the first level storefronts, and also completed remodeling at all levels of the interior (see Figure S).⁹⁵ Building permits indicate that additional interior remodeling, exterior brick repair at the east elevation, the closing of areaways underneath the west and south sidewalks, and unspecified alterations occurred in 2007, 2008, 2010, and 2011.⁹⁶ During the early 2000s, the building housed several Latino businesses and organizations, reflecting the increasing importance of Lake Street as a center of Latino community in Minneapolis. These included Comunidades Latinas Unidas en Servicio (now CLUES) and Manny's Tortas. Sometime in the 2000s, an adult learning center also leased space in the building.⁹⁷

By 2012, financial difficulties and legal disputes forced the building into foreclosure, and a team of local investors purchased it. By this time, the Coliseum housed nonprofit groups that included the Minnesota Literacy Council and the La Oportunidad Latino social services program, as well as a Hennepin County Medical Center clinic and a Denny's restaurant.⁹⁸ During the 2010s, additional remodeling was completed to convert 6,000 sq. ft. of remaining space at the third-level ballroom

⁹² Minneapolis Directory Company, *Minneapolis City Directory* (Minneapolis: Minneapolis Directory Company, 1980), 285; Minneapolis Directory Company, *Minneapolis City Directory* (Minneapolis: Minneapolis Directory Company, 1990), 287; Iric Nathanson, "Exploring the Rich History of 27th and Lake," MinnPost, June 5, 2020, <https://www.minnpost.com/community-sketchbook/2020/06/exploring-the-rich-history-of-27th-and-lake/>.

⁹³ "Hard to Start Car Finally Does..." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, August 1975; Charlene Roise et. al, *Minneapolis Music History, 1850 – 2000: A Context* (prepared for the City of Minneapolis, 2018), 81, 94.

⁹⁴ City of Minneapolis building permit B545272, 2700 – 2708 East Lake Street, August 5, 1986, on file at the City of Minneapolis; City of Minneapolis building permit (permit number unreadable), 2700 – 2708 East Lake Street, 1997, on file at the City of Minneapolis.

⁹⁵ City of Minneapolis Property Info, 2708 East Lake Street, <http://apps.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/piapp/generalinfoft.aspx?AppID=PIApp&PID=3602924430077>.

⁹⁶ Mike Kaszuba, "Neighbors Are Wary of City's Plans for Light Rail," *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, April 30, 2000; Steve Brandt, "Renewal Is in the Air at Lake and 27th," *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, November 27, 1999.

⁹⁷ "Social Service," *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, July 24, 2005; "Lake Street," *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, November 6, 2008; "East Lake Street," South Minneapolis: An Ethnic Community Profile, accessed May 5, 2021, <https://eastlakestreet.wordpress.com/history/>.

⁹⁸ Don Jacobson, "Lake Street Icon Gets New Owners," *Minneapolis Tribune*, April 13, 2012.

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into additional tenant space, as well as alterations for restaurant tenants and water damage repair on interior walls.⁹⁹

Following the murder of George Floyd in May 2020, Lake Street became the heart of protest and civil unrest. Buildings along East and West Lake Street experienced extensive damage, especially at the intersection of 27th Avenue South and East Lake Street, where several buildings were burned or otherwise destroyed. Following damage in the spring of 2020, the Coliseum Building was vacated; it has remained empty through the present day. Today, the nonprofit community development corporation Seward Redesign plans to restore the building to allow it to once again function as a community resource meeting the neighborhood's social and commercial needs.

The Coliseum Building and Hall is locally significant under Criterion A in the area of Commerce and Entertainment/Recreation for its role as a prominent commercial building for the Longfellow neighborhood. As the anchor of the most prominent commercial node in Longfellow, the building was a destination point that met the commercial and recreational needs of the community in a significant way. With a successful department store, complement of professional offices, and a vibrant social hall, the Coliseum Building provided a more comprehensive offering of shopping and services than any other at this node, and retained its important role from the height of the streetcar era through the transition to automobile-oriented development in midcentury. As one of the last early to mid-twentieth century buildings remaining at the 27th Avenue South and East Lake Street intersection, the building continues to tell the story of twentieth-century commerce in the Longfellow neighborhood as well as Minneapolis more broadly.

⁹⁹ City of Minneapolis Property Info, 2708 East Lake Street,
<http://apps.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/piapp/generalinforpt.aspx?AppID=PIApp&PID=3602924430077>.

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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: James K. Hosmer Special Collections, Minneapolis Central Library

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): HE-MPC-4125

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Approx. 1 acre

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|--------------|------------|
| 1. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 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: 481642 | Northing: 4977279 |
| 2. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

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

The property consists of the boundaries of city parcels addressed at 2708 East Lake Street and 2935 27th Avenue South, as shown in Figure U.

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Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundaries were selected to encompass the Coliseum Building and the parking lot to the north, which was historically and is currently associated with the building.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Lauren Anderson
organization: New History
street & number: 575 SE 9th Street, Suite 215
city or town: Minneapolis state: MN zip code: 55414
e-mail anderson@newhistory.com
telephone: (612) 843-4146
date: November 2021

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.

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Photo Log

Name of Property: Coliseum Building and Hall

City or Vicinity: Minneapolis

County: Hennepin

State: Minnesota

Photographer: Lauren Anderson and Quentin Collette

Date Photographed: April, June, and November 2021

Description of Photographs:

Photo 0001: West and south elevations, camera facing northeast

Photo 0002: North elevation, camera facing southwest

Photo 0003: East elevation, camera facing northwest

Photo 0004: East elevation, camera facing southwest

Photo 0005: North and west elevations, camera facing southeast

Photo 0006: West elevation, camera facing southeast

Photo 0007: Column at primary southwest entrance, camera facing southeast.

Photo 0008: Lower level, 1917 building, camera facing northeast

Photo 0009: First level, 1917 building, camera facing northeast

Photo 0010: First level, 1923 addition, camera facing south

Photo 0011: First level, 1917 building, camera facing southwest

Photo 0012: Second level, 1972 addition, camera facing east

Photo 0013: Second level, 1917 building, camera facing northeast

Photo 0014: Second level, south stair at 1917 building, camera facing north

Photo 0015: Second level, 1923 addition, camera facing northeast

Photo 0016: Third level, 1917 building, camera facing southeast

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for nominations to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows: Tier 1 – 60-100 hours, Tier 2 – 120 hours, Tier 3 – 230 hours, Tier 4 – 280 hours.

The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525.

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National Park Service

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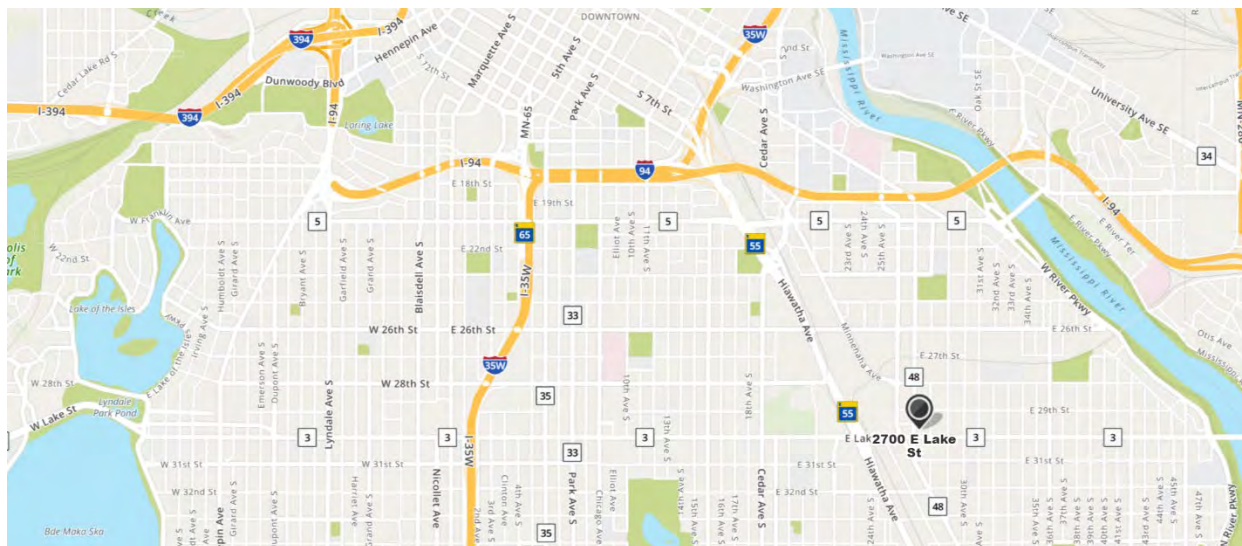


Figure A Map showing building location along Lake Street. North is up. Map courtesy of Mapquest.

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National Park Service

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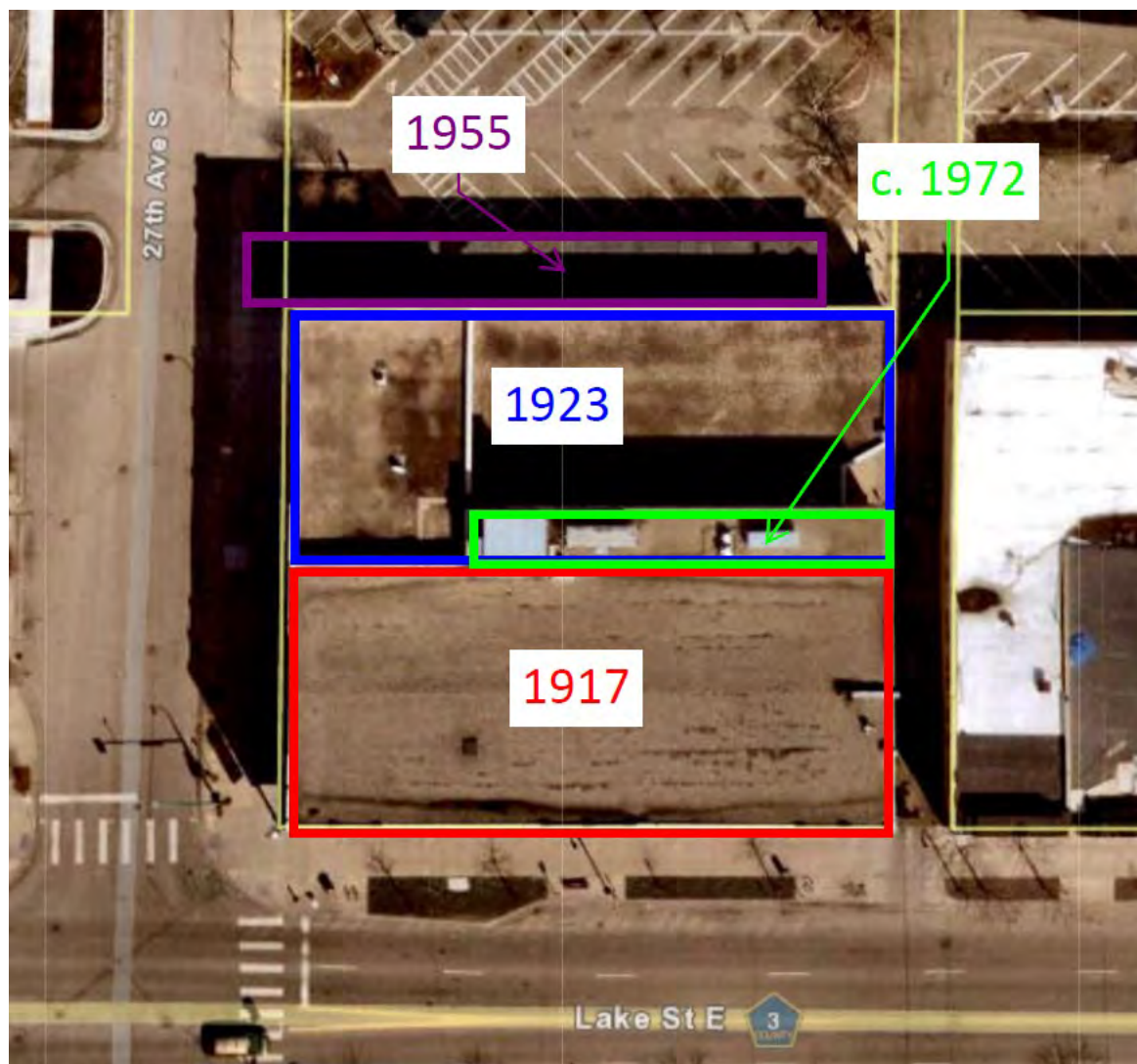


Figure B

Aerial photograph showing construction dates of Coliseum Building and additions.
North is up. Aerial image courtesy of Hennepin County.

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National Park Service

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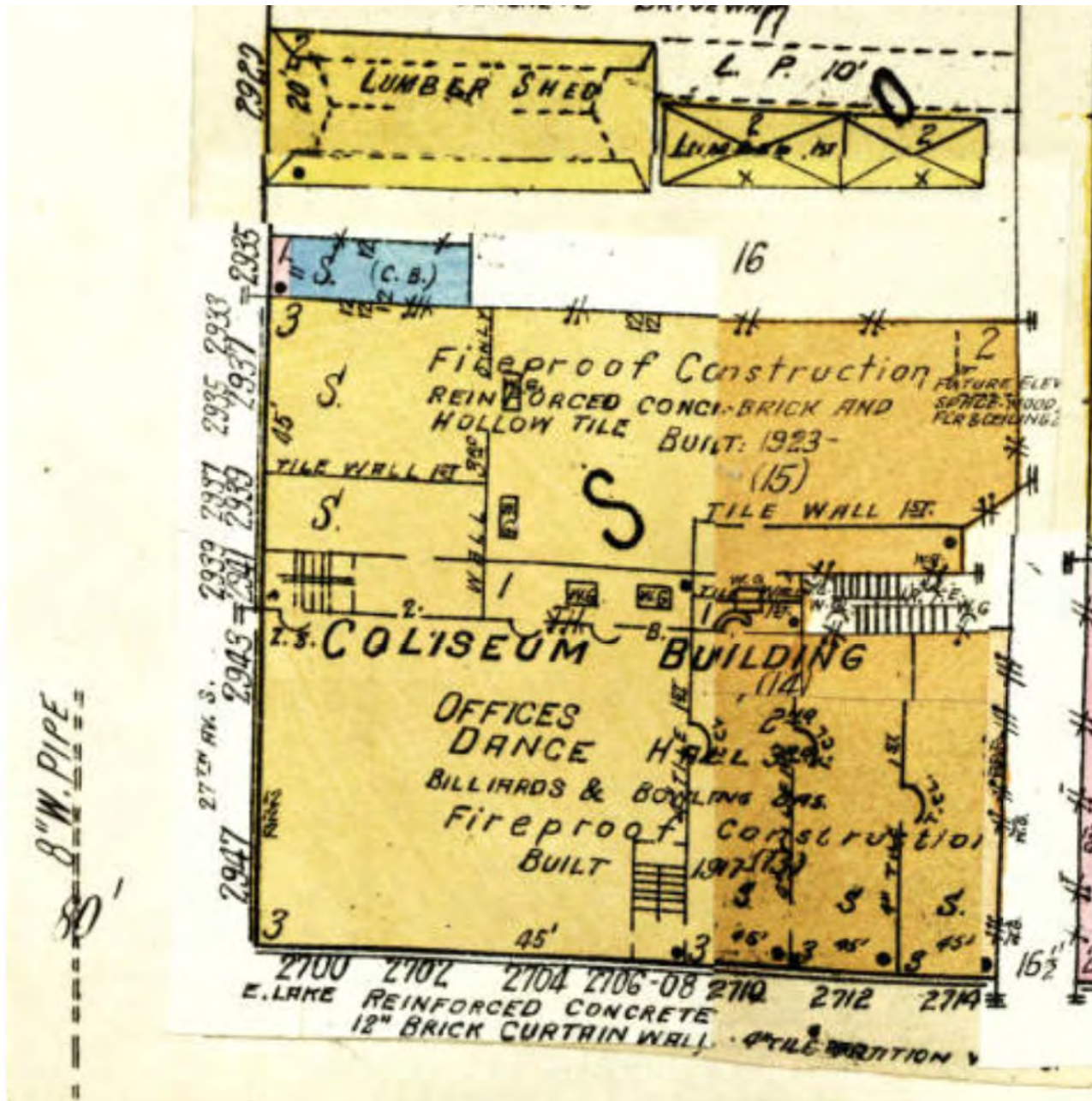
Section number FiguresPage 3

Figure C

Sanborn Fire Insurance Company map of the Coliseum Building, c. 1928. North is up.
Image courtesy of Hennepin County Library Digital Collections.

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Figure D

Map of the Minneapolis streetcar system in 1936. The intersection of 27th Avenue South and East Lake Street is indicated with a red star. Courtesy of Minnesota Reflections.

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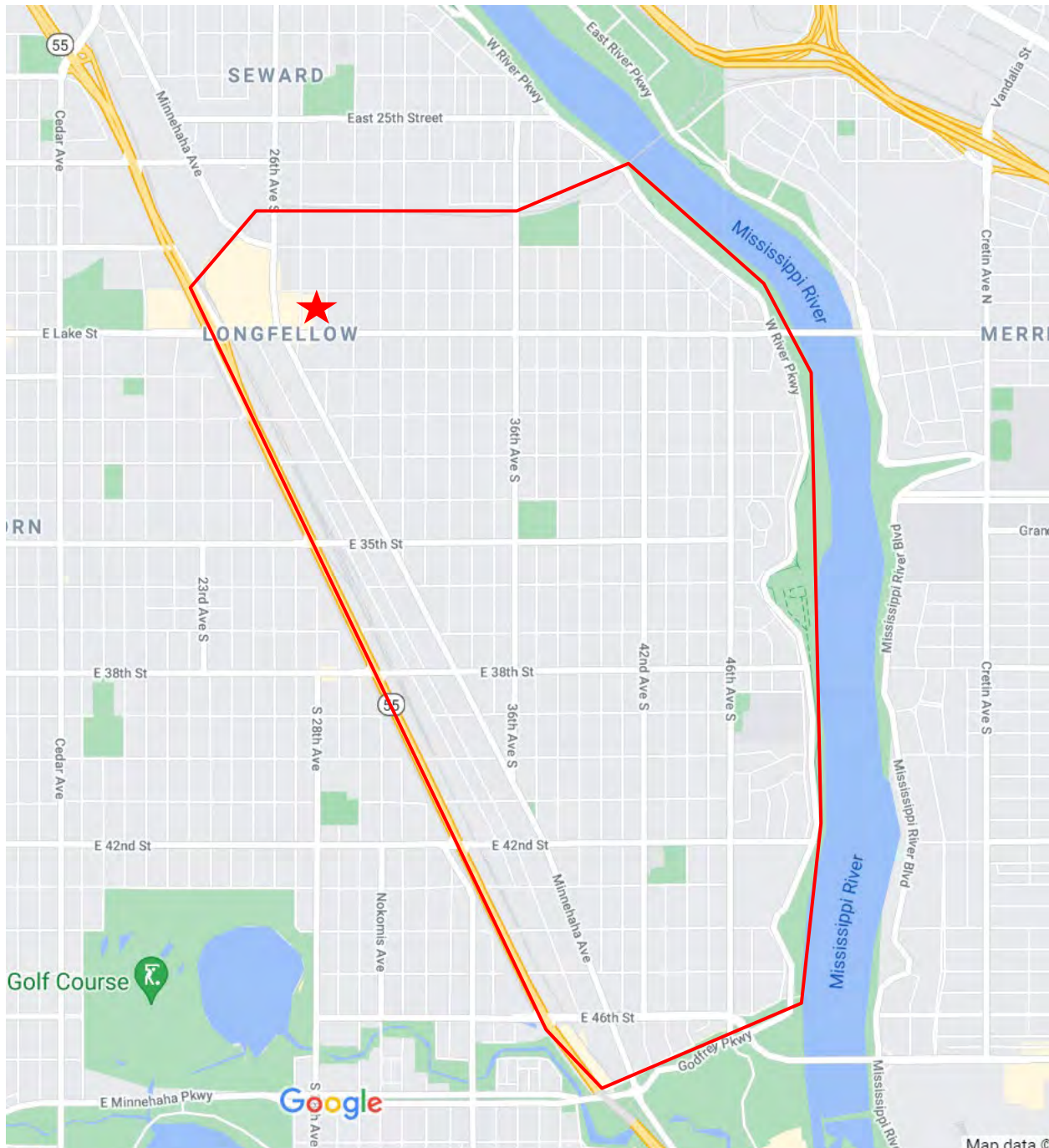


Figure E

Map showing approximate boundaries of the Greater Longfellow neighborhood in Minneapolis, 2021. Neighborhood boundaries are shown in red. The location of the Coliseum Building is marked with a red star. North is up. Courtesy of John Weeks, <https://www.johnweeks.com/highway/mps-neighborhoods/longfellow.html>.

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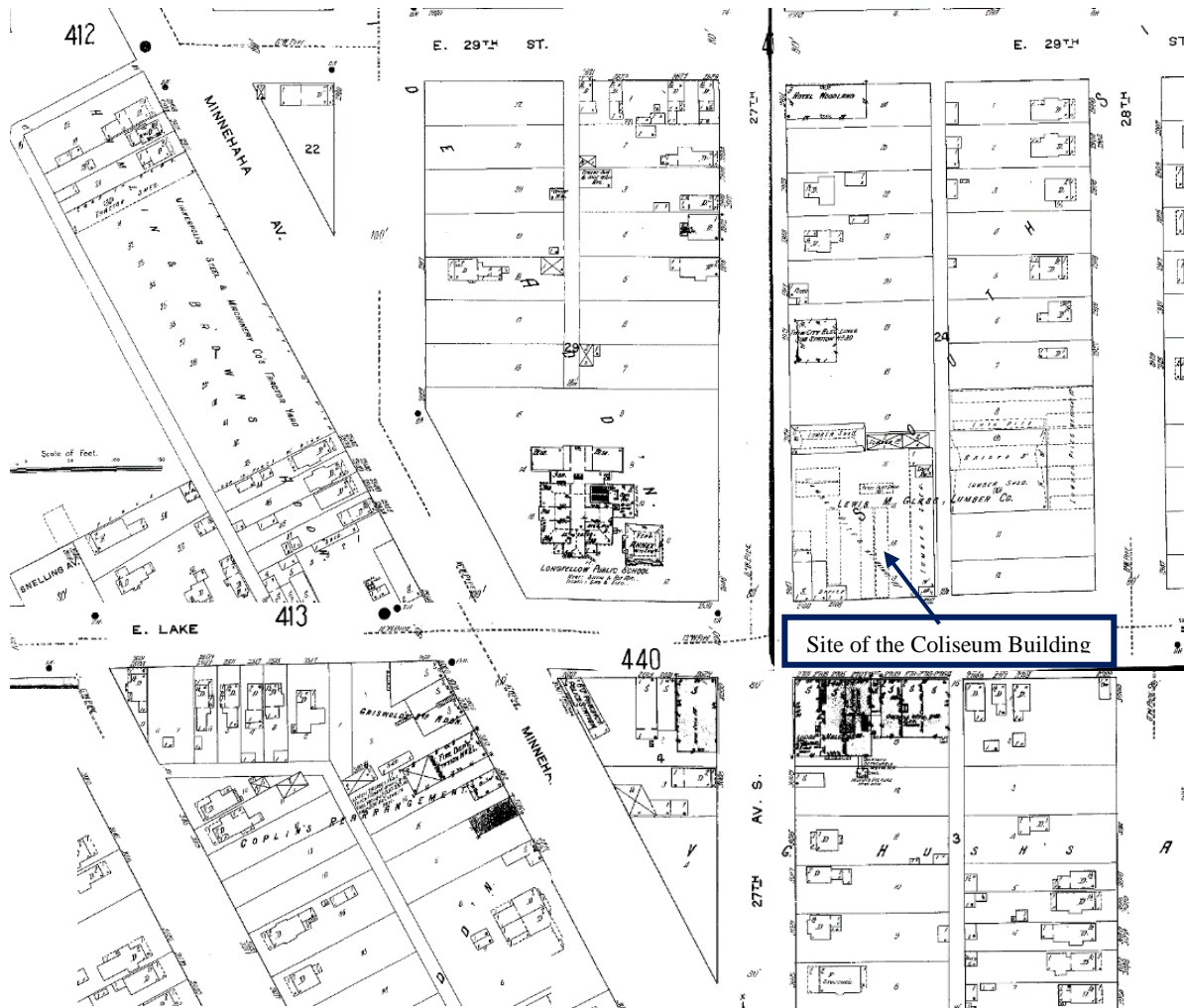
Page 6

Figure F Map of the commercial node at the intersection of Minnehaha Avenue, East Lake Street, and 27th Avenue South as shown on Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps of Minneapolis, Vol 4., Sheets 413, 414, 439, and 440, c. 1912. North is up. The site of the Coliseum Building (not yet constructed) is labeled. Image courtesy of Proquest Digital Sanborn Maps.

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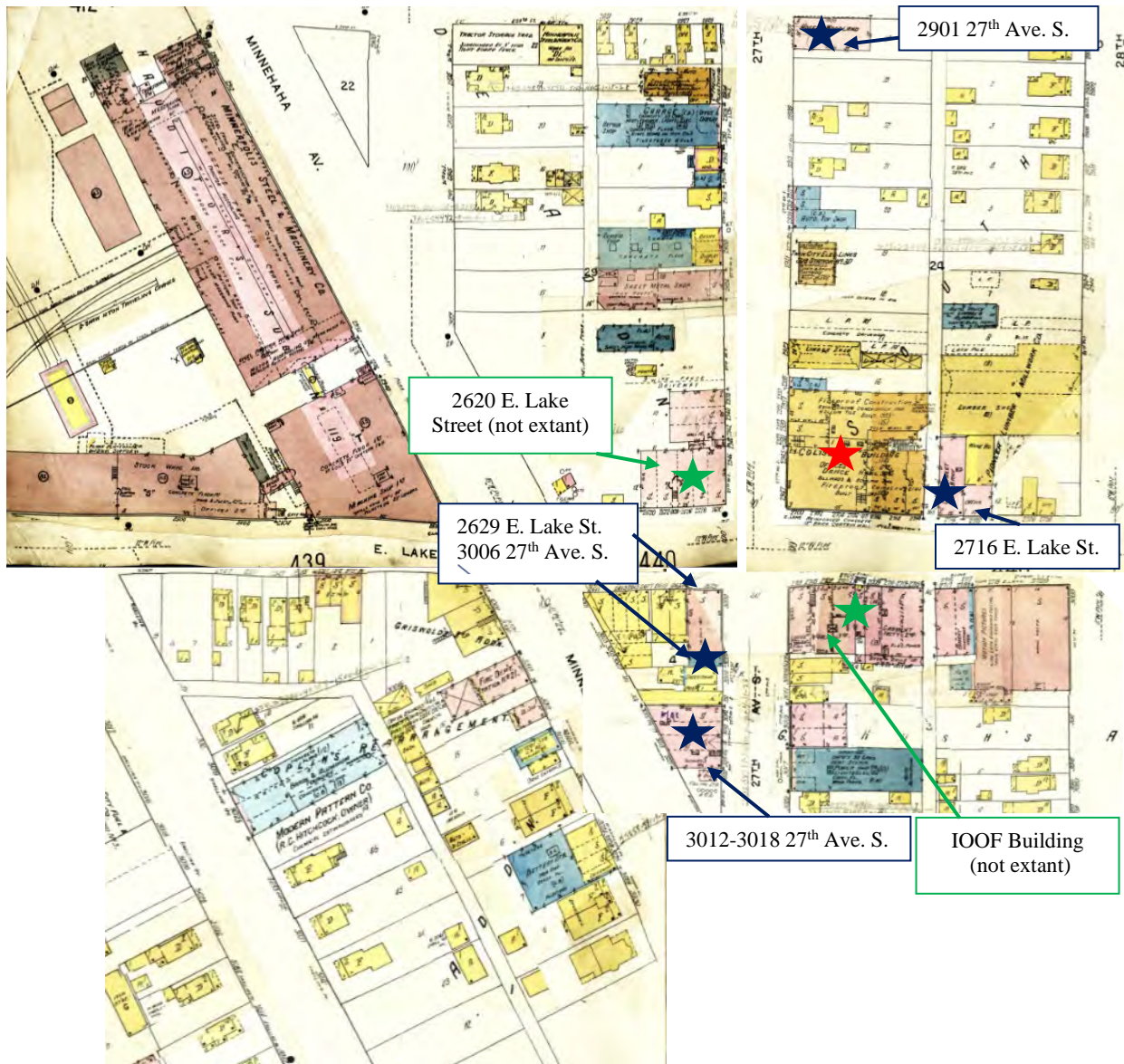
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Figure G

Commercial node at the intersection of Minnehaha Avenue, East Lake Street, and 27th Avenue South as shown on Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps of Minneapolis, Vol 4., Sheets 413, 414, 439, and 440, c. 1928. The red star indicates the location of the Coliseum Building. Blue stars indicate locations of other extant buildings. The IOOF Building and 2620 E. Lake Street (no longer extant) are labeled in green. North is up. Image courtesy of Hennepin County Library Digital Collections.

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Figure H

Commercial node at the intersection of Minnehaha Avenue, East Lake Street, and 27th Avenue South as shown on Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps of Minneapolis, Vol 4., Sheets 413, 414, 439, and 440, c. 1951. The red star indicates the location of the Coliseum Building. Blue stars indicate locations of extant buildings. North is up. Image courtesy of Hennepin County Library Digital Collections.

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Figure 1 South and west elevations of the 1917 Coliseum Building, looking northeast, c. 1920. Photograph by Charles Gibson. Photograph courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society Collections Online.

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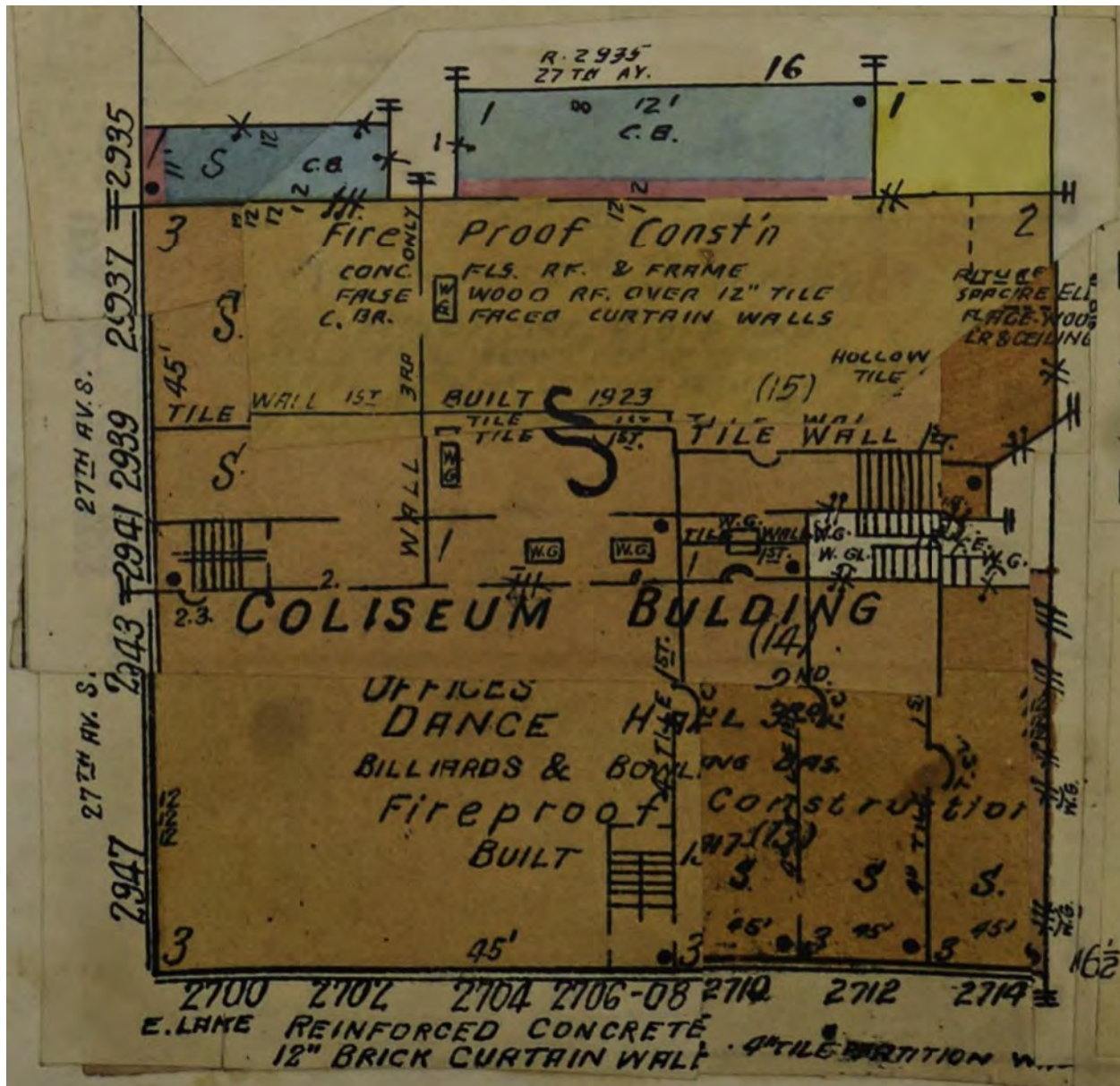
Section number FiguresPage 10

Figure J

Sanborn Fire Insurance Map showing the Coliseum Building, c. 1951. North is up.
Image courtesy of Hennepin County Library Digital Collections.

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Figure K

South and west elevations of the Coliseum Building, looking northeast, c. 1923.
Photograph by Arnold Roth. Photograph of the Hennepin County Library Digital
Collections.

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Figure L North elevation of the International Order of Odd Fellows Building (no longer extant), looking southeast, 1970s. Photograph courtesy of Hennepin County Library Digital Collections.

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Figure M

Parking lot and north elevation of the Coliseum Building, looking southeast, 1960s.
Photograph courtesy of Hennepin County Library Digital Collections.

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Figure N

Parking lot and north elevation of the Coliseum Building, looking south, 1960s.
Photograph courtesy of Hennepin County Library Digital Collections.

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Figure O

North and west elevations of the Coliseum Building, looking southeast, 1960s.
Photograph courtesy of Hennepin County Library Digital Collections.

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Figure P

West and south elevations of the Coliseum Building, looking northeast, 1963.
Photograph courtesy of Hennepin County Library Digital Collections.

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Figure Q

South elevation of the Coliseum Building, looking northwest, 1962. Photograph courtesy of the Hennepin County Library Digital Collections.

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Figure R

South elevation of the Coliseum Building, looking northwest, 1962. Photograph courtesy of Hennepin County Library Digital Collections.

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Figure S

South and west elevations, looking northeast, c. 2000. Photograph courtesy of the Hennepin County Library Digital Collections.

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Figure T

Advertisement for the opening of the Coliseum Hall, September 20, 1917,
Minneapolis Tribune.

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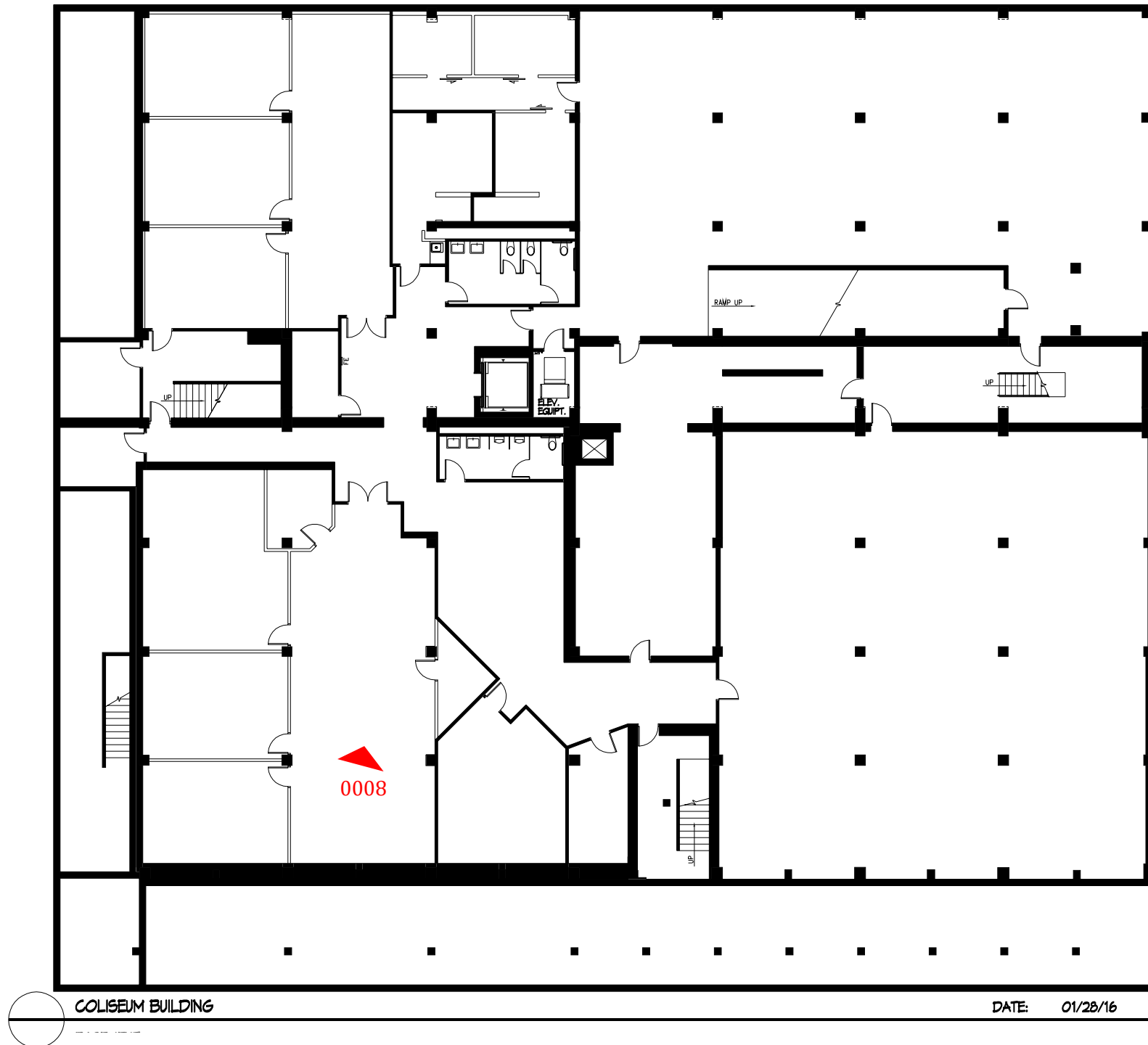
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Figure U

Proposed boundaries for the Coliseum Building and Hall. North is up. Aerial image courtesy of Hennepin County.





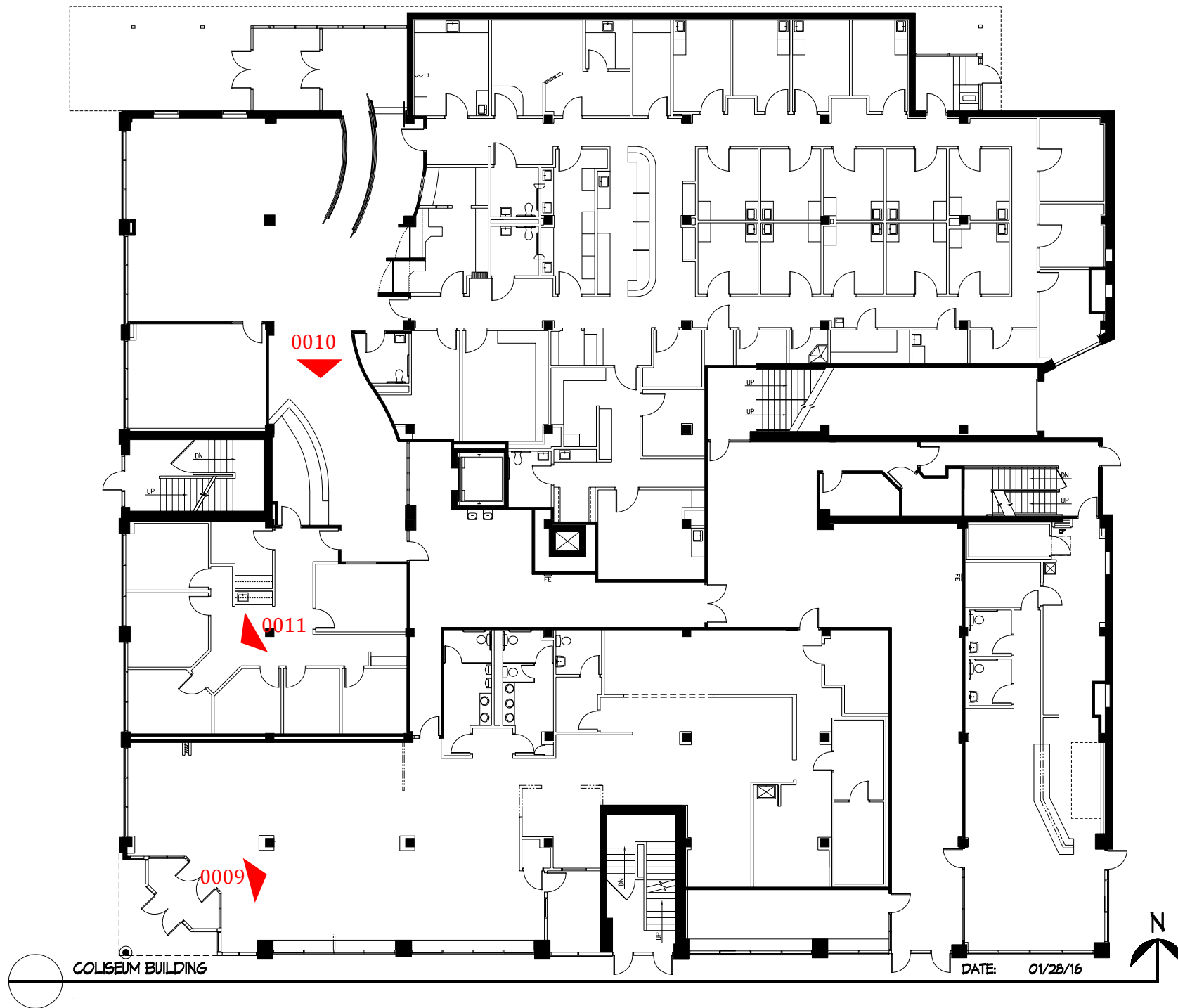
Note:
A few of the partitions shown
on these floor plans were
destroyed during recent fires in
the building and are no longer
present.

COLISEUM BUILDING

DATE: 01/28/16



Coliseum Building and Hall
NRHP Nomination | Lower Level Photo Key



Coliseum Building and Hall
NRHP Nomination | Level One Photo Key

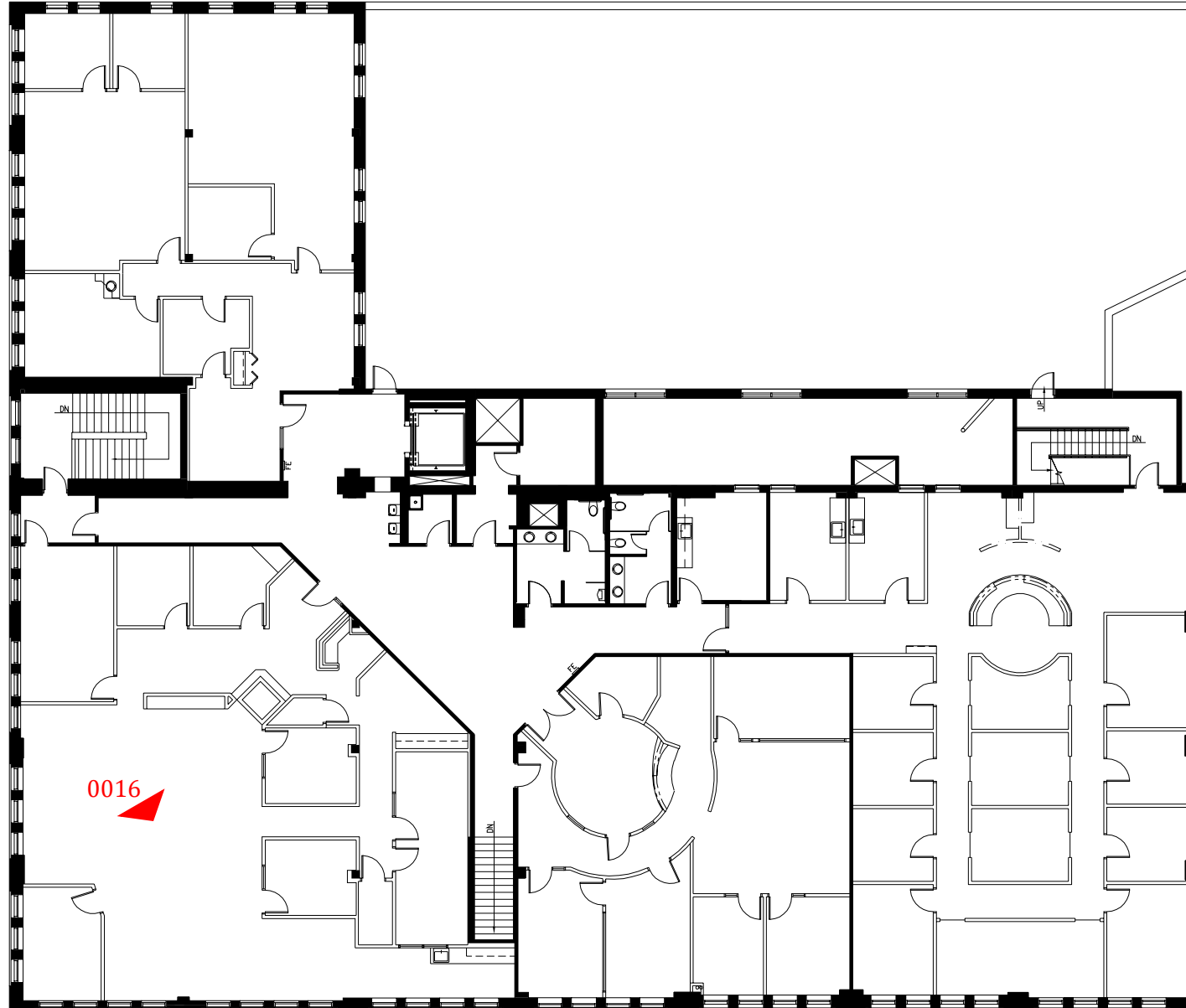


COLISEUM BUILDING

DATE: 08/09/16



Coliseum Building and Hall
NRHP Nomination | Level Two Photo Key

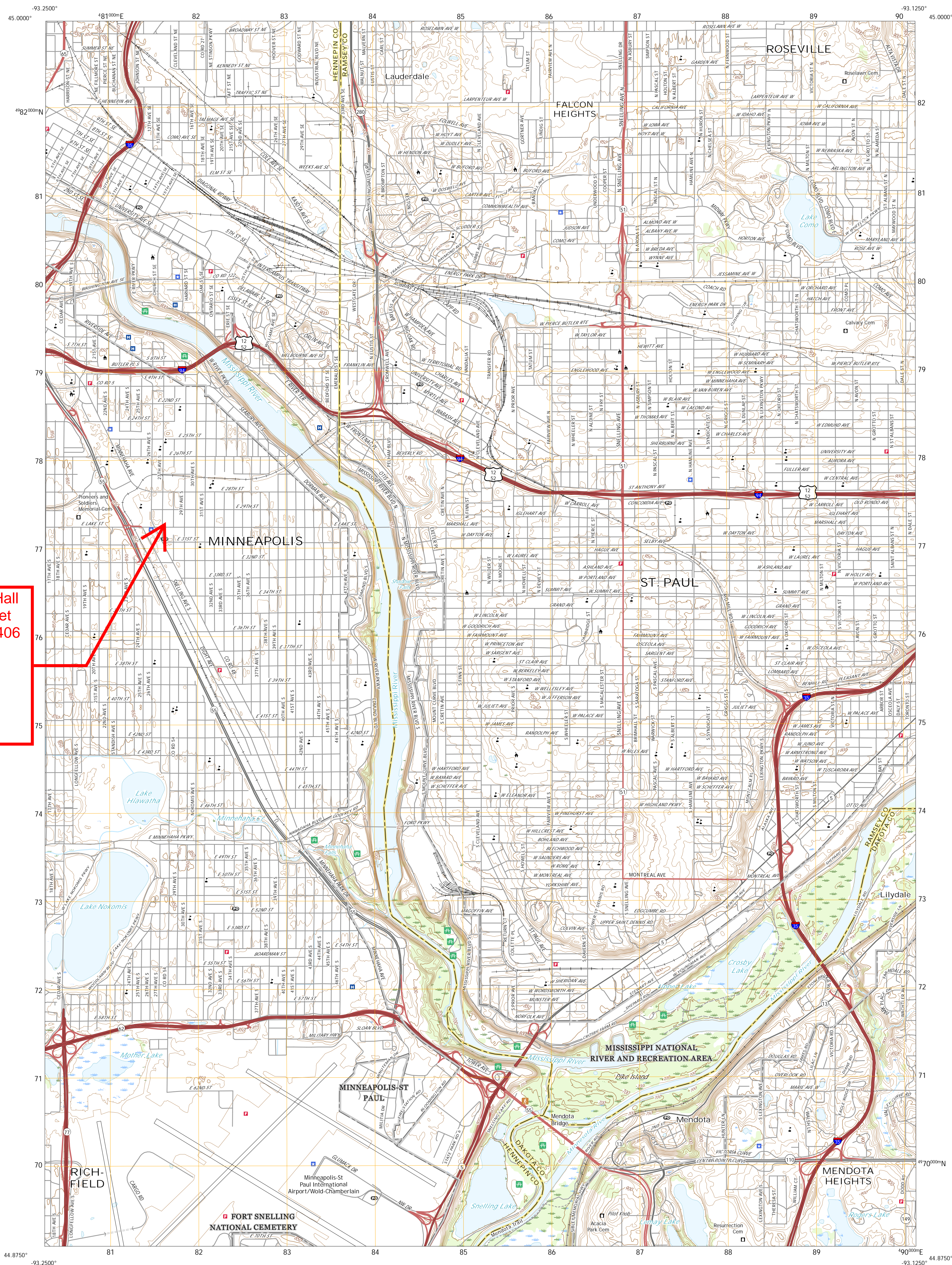


COLISEUM BUILDING

DATE: 01/28/16



Coliseum Building and Hall
NRHP Nomination | Level Three Photo Key

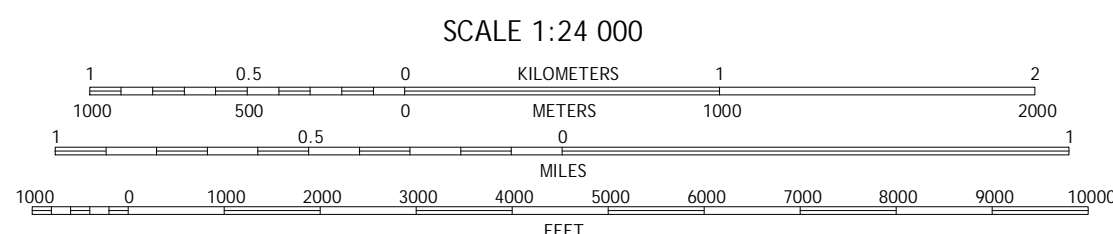
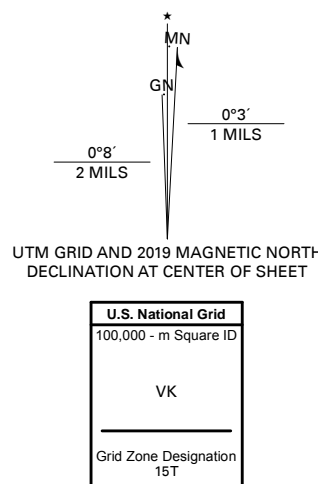


Coliseum Bldg and Hall
2708 East Lake Street
Minneapolis, MN 55406

UTM References:
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Easting: 481642
Northing: 4977279

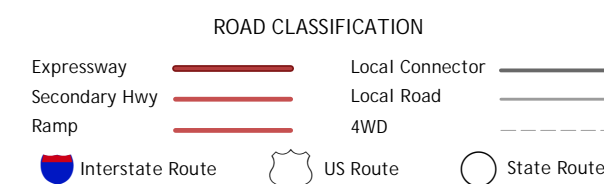
Produced by the United States Geological Survey
North American Datum of 1983 (NAD83)
World Geodetic System of 1984 (WGS84). Projection and
1 000-meter grid/Universal Transverse Mercator, Zone 15T
This map is not a legal document. Boundaries may be
generalized for this map scale. Private lands within government
reservations may not be shown. Obtain permission before
entering private lands.

Imagery.....NAIP, August 2017 - November 2017
Roads.....U.S. Census Bureau, 2016
Names.....GNIS, 1980 - 2019
Hydrography.....National Hydrography Dataset, 2001 - 2018
Contours.....National Elevation Dataset, 2016
Boundaries.....see metadata file 2017
Public Land Survey System.....BLM, 2017
Wetlands.....FWS National Wetlands Inventory 2010



1	2	3
4	5	6
7	8	9

1 Minneapolis North
2 New Brighton
3 White Bear Lake West
4 Minneapolis South
5 Saint Paul East
6 Bloomington
7 Saint Paul SW
8 Inver Grove Heights



SAINT PAUL WEST, MN

2019

