

AKRON URBAN DESIGN AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

MEETING OF APRIL 2, 2024 - 9:00 A.M.

COUNCIL CHAMBERS, THIRD FLOOR, MUNICIPAL BUILDING

166 S. HIGH STREET

(1) CORRECTION and APPROVAL of Minutes of March 5, 2024.

(2) NEW BUSINESS:

A. **UD-2024-01-HP** – Application for Akron Historic Landmark status for the Brown Family Home at 242 Lake Street.

KJ/emd

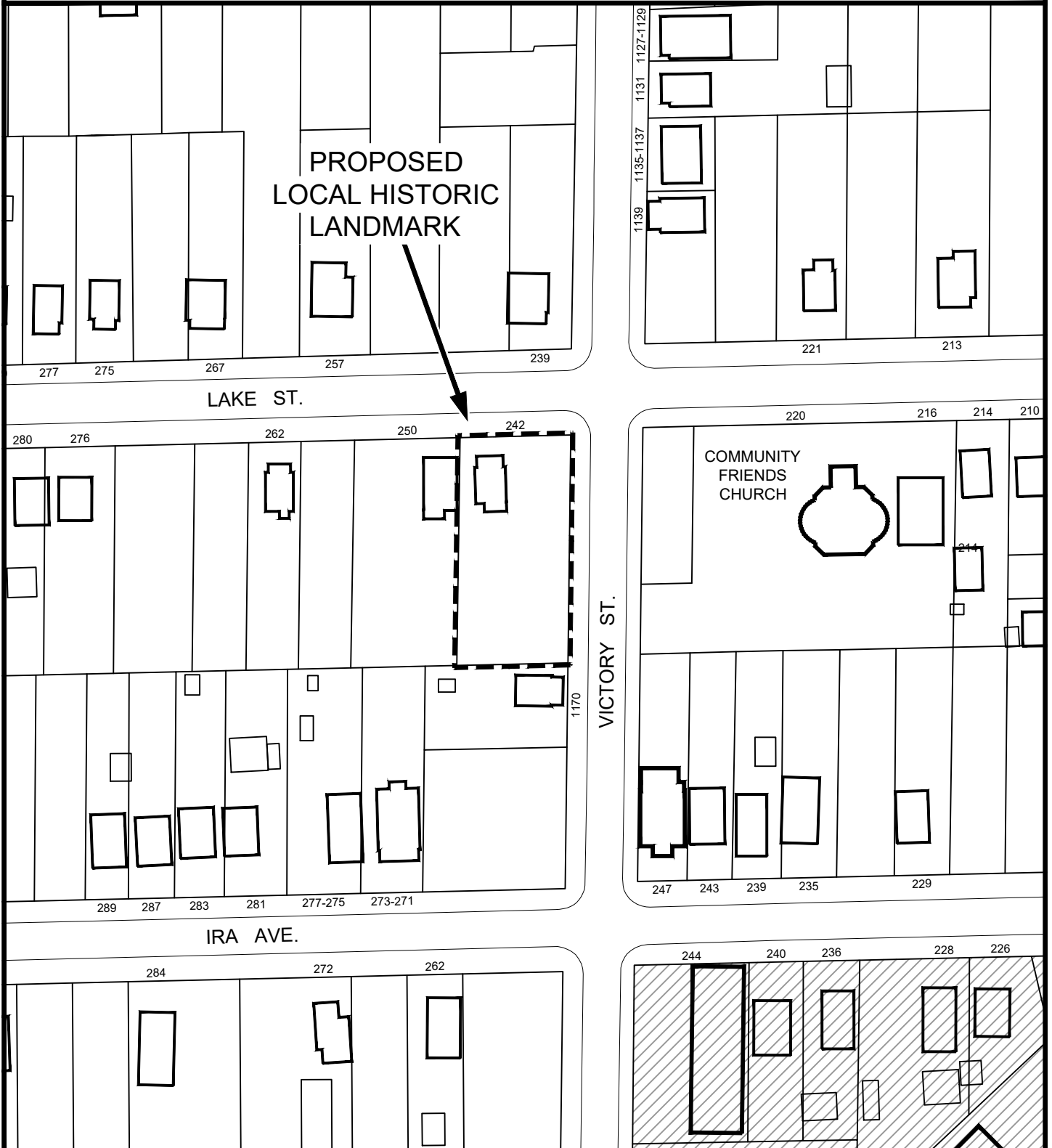
UD-2024-01-HP

Application for Akron Historic
Landmark status for the Brown
family house at 242 Lake Street

-  U1 Single Family Residential
-  U4 Commercial



0 100'
Created 03/08/2024 jwh
Revised 03/11/2024 jwh



MEMORANDUM

**TO: AKRON URBAN DESIGN AND
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION**

**ITEM # 2A
UD-2024-01-HP**

**FROM: DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND
URBAN DEVELOPMENT**

DATE: APRIL 2, 2024

SUBJECT: UD-2024-01-HP – Akron historic landmark status for the Brown Family Home at 242 Lake Street.

GENERAL LOCATION: South side of Lake Street, immediately west of Victory Street.

COMMENTS:

The subject property is a two-story home located at 242 Lake Street. According to the Summit County Auditor's Office, the single-family residence was constructed in 1913. This was during the ten-year period when Akron's population exploded from 69,000 in 1910 to 208,000 in 1920, making Akron the United States' fastest growing City during that time period. The home is located in Akron's Summit Lake neighborhood. Through the 1950's, the Summit Lake neighborhood extended north uninterrupted to Bartges Street and the B.F. Goodrich plant. Summit Beach Amusement Park opened along the east edge of Summit Lake in 1917, and closed in 1958. In 1965, Summit Lake Homes were built along the eastern edge of the lake by the Akron Metropolitan Housing Authority. In the 1960's, the construction of Interstate 76 split the neighborhood in half north to south. The quality of the homes in the neighborhood gradually declined due to disinvestment and lack of maintenance. From the 1980's through the 2000's, the City of Akron bought and demolished many of the deteriorating homes in the neighborhood, thus land-banking the parcels for future new residential construction.

In 1966, James Allen Brown Sr., and Johnnie Elaine Brown-Foster purchased the home at 242 Lake Street, moving into the home with their five children. A sixth daughter was born later in the home. James and Johnnie Elaine had both graduated from Akron Garfield High School and married as teenage sweethearts. The Brown's family story traces back to Georgia for their mother and Oklahoma for their father. James and Johnnie Elaine were both born in Akron in February, 1939 after both of their families had moved to Akron as part of the great migration of over six million African Americans from the southern United States to the Northeast, Midwest and West between 1910 and 1970. Johnnie Elaine Brown recalled the fun she had at Summit Beach Amusement Park in the 1950's riding the Ferris Wheel and playing at the beach. She recalled that Blacks and Whites were segregated at the beach and some days were specific *Whites Only* days.

The close bond of this family and their ties to the community are evident in the application. The application for designation has been submitted by the Brown family after the passing of their parents. Their father worked for both Chrysler and the Babcock & Wilcox Company. Their mother was initially a stay-at-home mom and PTA President for Lincoln School. She eventually took on a part-time job at Swenson's where she became a manager and later worked as a paraprofessional at the Akron Public Schools which fulfilled her desire to work with children. Her children's admission into college led her to register and attend classes at the University of Akron. All six children attended college and they credit this to their parents.

The application goes into a great amount of detail to document growing up in Summit Lake. With six children, the Brown residence was a focal point of the block and Johnnie Elaine was the "Mom of the Neighborhood." The kids were king of the court at the community center for pickup basketball games. The home became known for its' annual Christmas show of Christmas lights and every year there were 4th of July celebrations and cookouts. The Brown's family history in this home and neighborhood exemplifies the story of many African-American families in Akron and across the United States in the 1960's.

The home was built in the Akron Vernacular II style. Popular between 1900 and 1920, this house style is numerous and seen in variations throughout the older sections of Akron. It is a predominant housetype in Summit Lake. The most distinctive features of this housetype are a shingle ornamented gable area with some type of ornamental window and a hip-roofed porch extending the full width of the house front. Except for the shingled gable, siding on this type of house is usually thin, horizontal wood siding. The Brown house is sided and the ornamental gabled area is covered with vertical siding. Original windows and doors have been replaced. The porch columns maintain their original ornamentation. The home is in very good condition with a well-maintained corner side yard enclosed with a chain-link fence.

Prepared in accordance with the City of Akron Ordinance No. 388-1997, the Department of Planning and Urban Development hereby forwards to the City of Akron Urban Design and Historic Preservation Commission its "Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations" on the Landmark Designation UD-2024-01-HP the Brown Family Home.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS:

- A. Consistent with the City of Akron Ord. 388-1997, the Department of Planning and Urban Development has determined that the application for Historic Landmark Designation for the Brown Family Home is complete. As required, the property owner and all property owners within 500 feet of the subject property have been

notified by mail of the April 2, 2024, Public Hearing concerning the designation of the property as a historic landmark. No other individuals or additional groups have requested notice.

- B. If designated, any demolition of the existing structure or additions or additional entranceways will require a Certificate of Appropriateness. Before issuing the Certificate of Appropriateness, the Commission will review the proposed activity for consistency with the Secretary of the Interior's "Standards for Rehabilitation" and "Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings". Routine repairs and maintenance utilizing appropriate materials will not require a Certificate of Appropriateness.
- C. At the close of the Public Hearing, the Urban Design and Historic Preservation Commission shall determine if the application for the BROWN FAMILY HOME meets the criteria for designation. The submitted application contends that the property meets the following criteria outlined in the City of Akron Urban Design and Historic Preservation Ordinance to define a Historic Landmark (Ord. 388-1997):
1. *has significant character, interest or value, as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the city, state or nation; and*
 2. *is associated with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the culture and development of the city, state or nation; and*
 3. *is the site of an historic event with a significant effect on society; and*
 4. *exemplifies the area, property or site of the cultural, political, economic, social or historic heritage of the city, state or nation; and*
 5. *is a portrayal of the environment of a group of people in an era of history characterized by a distinctive architectural style; and*
 6. *embodies the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type or specimen; and*
 7. *contains elements of design, detail, materials or craftsmanship which represent a significant architectural or structural innovation*

KM/emd