

PRESERVATION JOURNAL OF SAINT PAUL

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A PUBLICATION OF HISTORIC SAINT PAUL

CELEBRATE HERITAGE, RENEW NEIGHBORHOODS, STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY



DO SAINT PAUL'S HARVEST STATES HEAD HOUSE AND SACK HOUSE HAVE A FUTURE?

Rising above St. Paul's Mississippi River shoreline at the foot of Irvine Park near Shepard Road, a one-story brick-walled gable-roofed shed connected to a concrete tower sits empty. Passersby have long asked themselves: what is it?

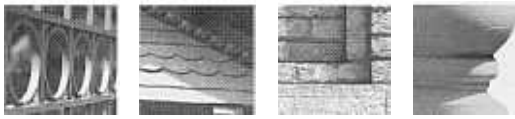
Last year, the Saint Paul Riverfront Corporation organized a design competition, "WHAZIT? Head House and Sack House Idea & Design Competition," inviting architects and designers to envision in graphic form a new use for the 70-year-old Harvest States Head House and Sack House complex. A jury of distinguished architects, planners and public officials reviewed more than 200 entries and selected four design concepts to headline the competition, with several honorable-mention awards. Since then, the Saint Paul Riverfront Corporation has been studying many of the design concepts to see if any ideas leading to an appropriate reuse could be formulated.

In 1917, Equity Cooperative Exchange built a large grain-elevator complex in this area. The cooperative, part of a Midwest populist agricultural movement, built the Head House and Sack House in the 1930s. The loading of grain into rail cars and barges took place in the Head House; the Sack House contained the operation of bagging milled flour. The Head House and Sack House, have been long abandoned, but they are eligible for the National Register of Historic Places for their role in St. Paul port history and as the first successful grain-terminal elevator owned and operated by an agricultural cooperative in the United States.

Many of the design ideas entailed significant additions or transformations of the buildings that would result in drastic alteration, while others sought minimal architectural intervention.

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Historic Saint Paul: A Nonprofit Working for Saint Paul Neighborhoods

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Historic Saint Paul Corporation (HSP) was founded in 1998 – on the recommendations of a citizens task force, with seed money from the city of Saint Paul – to support historic preservation, community economic development, and the documentation of Saint Paul’s cultural history.

The mission of HSP is to “work in partnership with private owners, community organizations, and public agencies to conserve neighborhoods, preserve the city’s history and heritage, foster high quality urban design, and create a sense of common purpose and pride.”

Since its establishment, HSP has supported important grass-roots preservation work through bricks and mortar initiatives such as the Restore Saint Paul Revolving Loan Fund and early grant program.

The pilot phase of the Restore Saint Paul Revolving Loan program has provided homeowners with no interest loans up to \$6,000, free technical and design assistance, and referrals to additional resources and rehabilitation planning tools.

Restore Saint Paul is currently funding 26 pilot properties in the East Side neighborhoods of Dayton’s Bluff, Payne-Phalen, and Railroad Island with plans to expand the program to core neighborhoods throughout the city.

These projects improve the appearance, perception of, and quality of life in neighborhoods, stimulate investments in surrounding properties, reestablish the historic fabric of Saint Paul streetscapes, and strengthen the city’s tax base.

Through our work HSP is demonstrating how relatively small investments well spent can generate BIG results!

~Brandi Wyatt

“Historic Saint Paul Revolving Loan Fund is wonderful, it gives people an opportunity to do things they did not realize they would be able to do without it.”

~Karin DuPaul, RSP Loan Participant



Restore Saint Paul Loan Program supports this project at 750 Margaret in the Dayton’s Bluff neighborhood.

Executive director notes...

Welcome to the first Preservation Journal of Saint Paul!

We hope that in coming months these pages will become a place where preservation in Saint Paul is highlighted, promoted, and debated. It is our goal to create a forum for spirited presentation and discussion of issues that strengthen, enlighten, and expand Saint Paul’s unique preservation ethic.

Preservation at its best is an activity that looks forward – not back. We will work to build a collective understanding of its potential as a key force in the future development of Saint Paul – a city both proud of its heritage and prepared to meet the challenges of the next century by capitalizing on what we have in the midst of anticipated growth and change.

We will share our view of preservation as dynamic and relevant to issues facing the city today by chronicling local preservation efforts from downtown and riverfront development to transportation, affordable housing, small business development, and the creation of equity and investment in struggling communities.

We will also explore stories of the people and places in Saint Paul that reveal our social and cultural fabric – working towards a shared appreciation of the inter-connected roles we play in Saint Paul’s unfolding history.

We invite you to enjoy our perspective and urge you to contribute your own. ~Carol Carey

Preservation Journal Staff

Executive Editor
Managing Editor, Writer
City Editor, Writer
Layout Editor
Copy Editor

Carol Carey
Brandi Wyatt
Robert Roscoe
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"The Union Depot is working symbol of Saint Paul's heritage as a regional transportation center. By re-establishing the Depot as a multi-modal transportation hub, the Depot will once again connect travelers to and from the Twin Cities using high speed, commuter and light rail, as well as bus, bicycle and bus rapid transit. The Depot is both a historic asset as well as a gateway for 21st century transportation, and is a key component of our bright future as a destination city."

Saint Paul Mayor Randy Kelly



Photo by Robert Roscoe

THE SAINT PAUL UNION DEPOT MAY REGAIN ITS TRANSPORTATION ROLE

For the past thirty years, the Union Depot complex, with over 200,000 square feet of floor space, vast site coverage, and an architectural monumentality unrivaled by most of downtown Saint Paul's buildings, has sat largely under-utilized with an increasing doubtful future. Ironically, the depot that propelled the city into its economic strength in the early 1900s has seemed to be unable to contribute to downtown Saint Paul's current economy. Recent successive ownerships have been unable to make financial ends meet and signs of delayed maintenance have become more apparent.

The depot complex is composed of a front section facing East Fourth Street with a neo-classical colonnaded façade that served as a portal for hundreds of thousands of rail passengers, and a massive concourse structure, that once sheltered arrival and departure activity for over sixty years. Architect Charles Frost designed the complex, which was built in the early 1920s by railroad magnate James J. Hill.

Although new ownership for the complex's front section intends to expand its retail and office uses, the concourse and area around it are owned by the U.S. Postal Service, which operates its functions in a tall art deco structure adjacent to the concourse. The Postal Service has left the concourse structure empty, parking mail trucks beneath it, but has no plans to find an appropriate use for the building.

At this time, an overall re-use plan, orchestrated by private and public interests, is focusing on the concourse and related land to regain its transit use by forming a multi-modal transit facility. The objective is to form a coordinated network of transit modes that can more efficiently carry and distribute large volumes of goods and services throughout an increasingly transit-stressed regional transportation infrastructure. Existing lines such as Amtrack, and prospective light rail lines such as the Central Corridor running along University Avenue connecting Saint Paul and Minneapolis, the Red Rock Corridor extending through Mississippi River towns, the Rush Line Corridor running between Duluth and the Twin Cities, as well as local and suburban bus systems, and a Minneapolis-Saint Paul International Airport link would be integrated into the multi-modal network. Of prime importance would be a high speed rail connection to Chicago, the major distribution center of goods and services in the nation's mid-section, with an extensive transportation network. Linking Chicago's economic power with the Twin Cities would be an asset to this region.

The opportunities this facility presents are monumental – but the obstacles seem formidable. In this flagging economy and period of governmental belt tightening, the required private and public funding are crucial to make it happen. But Saint Paul city leaders – the Mayor's office, the Department of Planning and Economic Development, Ramsey County, Lowertown Redevelopment Corporation, and downtown business representatives have been working with State and Federal lawmakers to present this multi-modal system as an opportunity with immeasurable benefits. ~Robert Roscoe



PRESERVATION 101

Vernacular and High Style

Two terms are frequently used in historic preservation in general descriptions of buildings, especially houses - *Vernacular* and *High Style*. It may be helpful to give definition to these two terms.

High Style can be applied to buildings of a defined architectural style designed with numerous features of that style that contribute to an overall unified architectural composition. Those features may be structural elements such as bay windows, turrets, porches, railings, and arches, or they may be surfaces such as shingles, siding, cornices and pediments designed with articulated treatment.

More often than not, a single architectural style such as Victorian, Italianate, Arts and Crafts and Modern defines the building, but sometimes minor features of other styles can be seen here and there. Many commercial buildings in downtown Saint Paul, places of worship, and Summit Avenue houses represent high style architecture, but high style houses can be found in all neighborhoods of the city.

The American Heritage Dictionary defines *vernacular* in spoken or written word context as: "The native language of a country or region, as distinct from literary language." That helps us to describe buildings in architectural preservation terms, *Vernacular* buildings have a straightforward design, with style features applied to specific areas that define its architectural presence. The city's neighborhoods are replete with houses of the vernacular type, having common siding and trim surfaces, but ornamental features in conspicuous places, such as porch gables, lathe-turned porch columns and railing balusters (spindles), and other areas.

Phillip Waugh, intern staff for the Saint Paul Heritage Preservation Commission, views vernacular as a structure not designed but built from a tradition. Waugh points out he often classifies buildings as "vernacular with elements or components of a particular style." ~Robert Roscoe

"There is no place like this anymore."
Slogan of the city of Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin

Head House from page 1

The challenge is to find a solution with minimal economic impact and that can bundle together committed funding now available publicly and privately. The Centex Corporation, which plans to develop housing sites adjacent to the Head House and Sack House, has committed \$200,000 to either building stabilization or demolition. This comes as part of a development agreement with St. Paul officials that sets a time limit of year end 2004 for a developable plan in process; without a plan, the agreement stipulates the complex be razed. ~Robert Roscoe



High-style Victorian house on Winslow Street, West Side Saint Paul



Vernacular house with Victorian elements on Stewart Avenue, near West 7th Street



LOCAL BUSINESSES CONTRIBUTE TO PRESERVATION



Jean Comstock, owner of 729 E. 6th St. was impressed with and thankful for the paint donated by Sherwin-Williams and the painting expertise from Nilles Builders.

Historic Saint Paul is building partnerships with local businesses to provide incentives for property owners to maintain and improve their buildings.

Sherwin-Williams Paints is offering participants in programs affiliated with Historic Saint Paul a discount of up to 30% off of paint and supplies (see below). To kick-off this arrangement and demonstrate the commitment to the community Sherwin-Williams has donated 60 gallons of paint for 729 E. 6th Street (pictured at left), a pilot property of the Restore Saint Paul Revolving Loan Fund.

The paint donated was a new product called Duration. This one coat paint is guaranteed for life, and also a proven lead encapsulate. This beautiful home now stands out as a prize property on East 6th Street.

Historic Saint Paul has also received a discount commitment for repair and/or replacement of wood windows from A-Craft Windows.

For more information about how to receive these discounts of if you have a discounted product or service to include in the HSP incentive program please call the HSP office at 651-222-3049.

~Brandi Wyatt

“TAKE CARE OF YOUR HOUSE AND YOUR HOUSE WILL TAKE CARE OF YOU.”

Your home is your shelter, the place where memories are made, and very likely your largest single investment and source of equity. You gotta love it!

In an effort to help you do just that – Historic Saint Paul is teaming up with Sherwin-Williams to offer you a discount of up to 30% on paint and supplies with a contribution at the “love your house” level of \$75 in 2003. This contribution will qualify you for the “gotta love your house” discount on exterior and interior paint products through December 2003.

Mail in your contribution to:

Historic Saint Paul
318 Landmark Center
75 West 5th Street
Saint Paul, MN 55102

**Please include your name,
address, phone,
and e-mail - or call our office
at 651-222-3049 for details.**

**Then ... roll up your sleeves,
get creative, and
have fun.**

Your house will love you for it!



PRESERVATION PEOPLE

Tim Griffin, AIA, AICP
Manager, Design Center

Tim Griffin is responsible for identifying and managing key urban design projects that are essential for the implementation of the Saint Paul on the Mississippi Development Framework, Saint Paul's vision for a dynamic and livable urban core.

The Saint Paul on the Mississippi Design Center was established in 1997 to implement, advocate and steward the Saint Paul on the Mississippi Development Framework, Saint Paul's downtown area vision. See www.riverfrontcorporation/designcenter.

In Griffin's words, "Three of the ten Framework principles speak to the role of a Saint Paul preservation ethic that is central to the Design Center's work. 'Evoke a sense of place', 'Build on existing strengths' and 'Preserve and enhance heritage resources.' These principles direct us to rebuild by starting with what we already treasure - our historic buildings, parks, tree-lined streets and the Mississippi River. Additionally we strive to preserve historic buildings and public places and bring a sense of what it is to build in Saint to adaptive reuse of existing structures or the sensitive insertion of new pieces."

Tim Griffin can be contacted at: griffin@riverfrontcorporation.com

PRESERVATION DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE:

HSP Awarded 1.8 million to Promote Preservation-Based Development

Historic preservation is a strong and vital tool to economic growth and success for communities. Preservation-based community and economic development strategies create jobs, generate income, taxes and general wealth for the communities who utilize them.

Saint Paul is rich with historic resources from downtown commercial buildings, landmarks, neighborhood commercial corridors, and residential buildings. These structures range from high style to vernacular (see Preservation 101).

The value of preservation can be seen in the revitalization of properties in districts as diverse as Summit Avenue, Ramsey Hill, Irvine Park, Lowertown, and Dayton's Bluff.

In study after study, **LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICTS** were found to **ADD VALUE TO A COMMUNITY AND ADD VALUE TO PROPERTIES** within them.
(National Trust for Historic Preservation)

But the community development potential of preservation is not limited to the city's designated historic districts...

With this untapped potential in mind, Historic Saint Paul applied for the Preservation Development Initiative (PDI), sponsored by the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation.

Saint Paul was selected, via Historic Saint Paul, to receive a minimum of \$1.7 million in financial incentives and \$100,000 in technical assistance to promote local preservation – based community and economic development activity.

In late fall and winter of 2002 a comprehensive community preservation assessment was conducted. This included a weeklong visit from a team assembled by the National Trust to analyze the current and potential strategies for preservation-based economic development in Saint Paul.

C O M M U N I T Y
R E V I T A L I Z A T I O N



NATIONAL TRUST
for HISTORIC PRESERVATION™

Historic Saint Paul thanks our local Preservation Development Initiative sponsors...

City of Saint Paul ,
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of the St. Paul Foundation,
MetroPlains Development, LLC.
Saint Paul Convention and Visitors Bureau,
Morrissey Hospitalities Inc.,
Saint Paul Hotel,
Building Restoration Corporation,
Saint Paul Port Authority,
Cermak Rhoades Architects,
Design for Preservation,
Hess Roise Historical Consultants,
Lundquist, Killeen, Potvin & Bender, Inc. (LKPB)
Hay Dobbs P.A.

The Trust Team has just issued a draft report outlining their funding and recommendations. The report features chapters on Saint Paul's preservation infrastructure, commercial revitalization, neighborhood preservation, downtown development and heritage tourism.

Historic Saint Paul will work closely with the National Trust and local partners to identify priorities within the recommendations and adopt a "success schedule".

During implementation, The National Trust will provide ongoing technical assistance and financial investments into the adopted strategies, which will be accessed via Historic Saint Paul and our programming.

Successes from Saint Paul will be featured on a "Best Practices" online database of the National Trust, in a national symposium in Washington, D.C., and in a publication celebrating Saint Paul visions and actions.

The success of implementation depends greatly on the participation by local constituents and community leaders – and we look forward to working with the National Trust and our partners throughout this exciting initiative.

~Brandi Wyatt

Did you know that... each million spent on non-residential historic rehabilitation **CREATES 4 JOBS MORE** than the same money spent on new construction?

(National Trust for Historic Preservation)



NATIONAL PRESERVATION WEEK MAY 5-12, 2003

"Cities, Suburbs and Countryside"

"Cities, Suburbs, and Countryside" is the theme of the week-long celebration of Preservation Week sponsored annually by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Various activities will be conducted throughout the week that will awaken the spirit in Saint Paul that makes this city special and unique. The preservation community of Saint Paul would like to invite all residents to participate in this celebration. National Preservation Week is not only about preserving the past, but celebrating our heritage in the future. All too often the landmarks, housing and character in cities such as ours are allowed to deteriorate destroying necessary links to the past that are irreplaceable.

National Preservation Week was launched by the National Trust for Historic Preservation in 1971 as a way to showcase grassroots activity in communities nationwide. This year's theme underscores how the preservation ethic is changing, broadening its focus from saving individual landmark buildings to tackling economic and quality of life issues in America's downtown business districts and inner-city neighborhoods, first-ring suburban neighborhoods and historic, natural and scenic landscapes.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation, chartered by Congress in 1949, is a private, non-profit organization that provides leadership, education and advocacy to save America's diverse historic places and revitalize communities. They have made a commitment to cities, suburbs and countrysides to help preserve and protect the historic fabric that has made these places the great assets that they are today.
~Brandi Wyatt

MINNESOTA ARCHAEOLOGY WEEK

May 3-11, 2003

(Sponsored by: Institute for Minnesota Archaeology)

There are many great events planned for this week as well and they are available at:

www.admin.state.mn.us/osa/archwek.html

CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR PRESERVATION WEEK

- Saturday May 3** **Minnesota Barn Workshop:** Celebrate our historic barns and explore ways to preserve them in this one-day program. Located at the Dalbo Town Hall in rural Isanti County at 9:30 a.m. \$40 registration, \$35 for Minnesota Historical Society Members. Call 651-296-5434 for details.
- May 3-4** **6th Annual Minneapolis/St. Paul Home Tour** for information contact Sharon Posnansky at 651-452-5443
- Dayton's Bluff Home Tour** begins at 661 East 5th St. or 634 Arcade in St. Paul. Sat. 10-5/Sun. 1-5. Call 651-772-2075 for details
- Sunday May 4** **Nooks and Crannies-** Tour the hidden treasures in Rice Park's beautiful historic buildings. 12:00-5:00 p.m. meet at Landmark Center, 75 West 5th St., Saint Paul. Admission charged for adults and children under 12 free. The money will go to benefit the Rice Park Association and the participating historic sites Sponsored by MN Landmarks. Call 651-292-3276 for details.
- Monday May 5** **St. Paul Heritage Preservation Commission Awards** Location TBA. 6:30 p.m. Call 651-266-9078 for details.
- Tuesday May 6** **Beyond Buildings:** Discussions on Historic Preservation in a New Century-featuring Peter Bell. 5:00-6:30 p.m. Free forum with reception to follow in F.K. Wyehauser Auditorium of Landmark Center, 75 West 5th St, St. Paul. Sponsored by MN Landmarks
- MHS "Who's House was this?"** class, 6:30-7:30 p.m., \$5 for MHS members, \$7 for non-MHS members, Contact Tracey Baker at 651-296-2143 for more information.
- Wednesday May 7** **Minneapolis City Hall Tour,** City Hall Atrium by the Fathers of the Waters statue, 315 Fourth St. 12:00 p.m.
- Saturday May 10** **Walking Tour of Minneapolis' Four Historic Theatres-**State, Orpheum, Pantages, and Shubert. 11:00 am to 2:00 pm at the Hennepin Center for the Performing Arts. Tickets--\$15 for non PAM Members, \$5 for members. Sponsored by PAM
- Thursday, May 15** **12th Annual Preservation Awards Ceremony & Luncheon,** International Market Square, 275 Market St., Rm. 185, Minneapolis. 11:30-1:30 p.m. Call 651-673-2996 for details. \$17 per person.

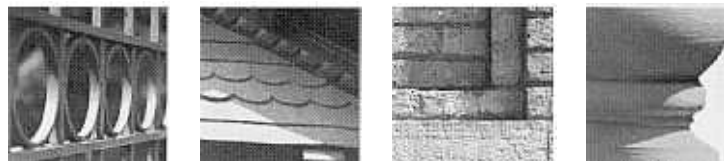


Announcing...

The Premier issue of the Preservation Journal of Saint Paul.

Historic Saint Paul's mission is to celebrate heritage, renew neighborhoods and strengthen community. This publication is our way of thanking you for sharing our interests. *The Preservation Journal of Saint Paul* can be a source to inform, enlighten and create for all of us a sense of pride in our city.

Steve Buetow
President, **Historic Saint Paul**



Historic Saint Paul is sending you this initial issue of the **PRESERVATION JOURNAL**, a quarterly compendium of news, issues and events relating to Saint Paul's current efforts to maintain and enhance the city's heritage.

You can help! Send us your ideas.

Tell us what you think is important. Please contact Brandi Wyatt, Historic Saint Paul, (651)222-3049.

Support for Historic Saint Paul comes from...

The Saint Paul Foundation, Saint Paul Companies, McKnight Foundation, Lowertown Redevelopment Corporation, MetroPlains Development LLC., Clare and Roland Faircy Foundation of the Saint Paul Foundation, Saint Paul Convention and Visitors Bureau, Saint Paul Port Authority, HRK Foundation, Nicholson Family Foundation, City of Saint Paul, and the generous contributions of our board members, private individuals, and businesses. Many thanks!

Historic Saint Paul
318 Landmark Center
75 West 5th Street
Saint Paul, MN 55102

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* See details inside for a 30% discount on paint

