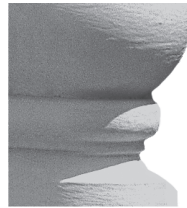
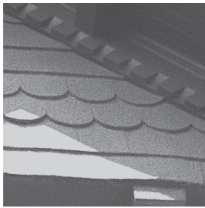


# PRESERVATION JOURNAL OF SAINT PAUL

A PUBLICATION OF HISTORIC SAINT PAUL



CELEBRATE HERITAGE | RENEW NEIGHBORHOODS | STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY

SPRING 2006

VOLUME 4, ISSUE 1

## OLD BUILDINGS *and the* NEW MAYOR

*Brian Horrigan talks to Mayor Chris Coleman*

*about the Schmidt Brewery,*

*neighborhood redevelopment, and*

*why historic preservation matters.*



### SOME OF US ON THE BOARD OF HISTORIC SAINT PAUL

thought it might be a good idea to ask the new Mayor about his views on historic preservation. Chris Coleman grew up in the West 7th Street neighborhood, so we decided to meet at a prominent landmark in the same vicinity—the now-shuttered Schmidt Brewery. It was too windy and noisy by that giant beer bottle on the corner, so we ducked into the McDonald's.

**BH:** How do you see historic preservation in the context of the city planning process?

**CC:** First of all, the first step in the planning process is to do an inventory of your resources, to assess your strengths and weaknesses. And clearly one of the strengths of St. Paul is our historic inventory. The character of downtown has been fundamentally shaped by the historic buildings and structures we have preserved down there. St. Paul has made great efforts to preserve those things, like the

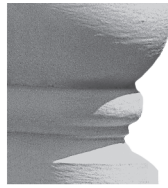
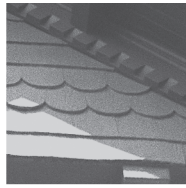
J.J. Hill warehouse, the Coney Island and 7th Place, Landmark Center, the Library, the whole inventory of things that are downtown—all the things that people will point to and say: "That's what I like about St. Paul."

So as we plan out how we redevelop our community—whether it's light rail in the Central Corridor, or re-establishing commercial districts like on Arcade or Payne Avenue—clearly, reutilizing and revitalizing the historic resources will be critical.

**BH:** What about the fact that currently in city government historic preservation is in Licensing instead of City Planning.

**CC:** On the one hand, it makes sense to have it in Licensing, because a lot of preservation questions have to do with permits and that sort of thing. But on the other hand, when it's siloed in Licensing, and Planning isn't brought in, we've kind of missed the boat with what you can with historic preservation.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6



## HISTORIC SAINT PAUL

### Board of Directors 2006

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Thanks to Bolger Printing for discounting the printing of this issue of *The Preservation Journal of Saint Paul*.

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VOLUME 4, ISSUE 1  
 SPRING 2006

## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



**Kathryn Paulson**  
 BOARD PRESIDENT

### DEAR SUPPORTERS,

Your generous contributions have enabled Historic Saint Paul in furthering our work of preserving the city's rich heritage and supporting Saint Paul's diverse neighborhoods. Historic Saint Paul believes that the historic character of our communities is an exciting asset and can be used as a tool to reinvigorate distressed neighborhoods. Reconnecting residents

with the history of their neighborhood helps create a sense of common identity and purpose.

Toward this end, Historic Saint Paul has focused on three general activities this past year. First, our brown bag lunches and contractor training have provided an educational format to advance the issues of preservation and promote Saint Paul's rich history. Additionally, the mark of our loan program has graced many homes throughout the East Side and Dayton's Bluff neighborhoods. Our preservation loan program is a unique combination of historic design assistance and low interest loans that allow residents to complete authentic renovations on their homes, whether they are embellished Victorians or more basic vernacular structures. Lastly, our advocacy work has helped to advance the preservation of significant structures in the city and increase preservation-dedicated financing.

This year we will conclude our three-year focus on the Preservation Development Initiative (PDI) with the National Trust for Historic Preservation (NTHP). With the conclusion of this initiative, the Board of Historic Saint Paul is conducting a careful evaluation of our work to determine where Historic Saint Paul brings the most value and is most

effective in the community. We have an energized and committed Board of Directors excited about honing our preservation efforts.

Historic Saint Paul was recently awarded \$200,000 in neighborhood STAR funds, \$300,000 in Capital Improvement Budget funds, and \$100,000 from NTHP through PDI to continue building our loan program. In addition to our residential lending, we are launching an initiative to restore storefronts along commercial corridors. Restoring original materials and fenestration in storefront facades has a dramatic, welcoming impact on urban streetscapes. We look forward to working with emerging businesses as they apply their mark on these historic facades.

Thank you for your kind support in the activities that preserve St. Paul for future generations. We look forward to your continued participation in our efforts.



**THE BOARD AT WORK**

# BOARD NOTES

## New Faces, New Perspectives

### Historic Saint Paul welcomes four new Board members

*Historic Saint Paul is pleased to introduce the new members of its Board of Directors! As a group, they bring a range of talents, great energy and passion and add to the board's already rich and diverse intellectual capital.*



**Ruth Dantuma's** background includes education, ESL licensure and a stint in the Peace Corps where she taught English in Western Samoa. She is now "following her bliss" to become a self-taught garden designer/ landscaper. Her hope is to play a part in helping to "green up" some of the city's particularly barren areas. She also supports the arts community and delights in the imprint of the many ethnic groups here in Saint Paul. Ruth is also currently an antique collector/dealer in "St Paul's funkier emporium." Ruth says. "I've lived in and remodeled three homes in St Paul, the current one in a historic district. I love patina...and I love St Paul. I hope to help preserve those places that are meaningful and comfortable to all."



**Brian Horrigan** moved to Minnesota in 1990 to work at the Minnesota Historical Society, where he remains as exhibit curator. In his 15 years at the Society he has curated exhibits on various subjects, including historic preservation, family history; Minnesota Territory, Charles Lindbergh, Split Rock Lighthouse, and forest history. Prior to moving here he was an exhibit developer and writer in Washington DC with the US Information Agency and the Smithsonian Institution. His first experience with historic preservation issues came while an undergraduate at the University of Chicago, and later in graduate school in architectural history at the University of California at Berkeley. He and his family live in the Summit Hill neighborhood of St. Paul, and have been active from time to time with the neighborhood association and with local politics.



**Virginia (Ginny) Housum** started working on historic preservation issues in Denver in about 1986 as a volunteer lawyer on new zoning of an area now known as LoDo including the drafting the LoDo ordinance, along with the city attorney and the planning staff. This work led to collaboration with many local and national preservation groups including Historic Denver, Inc, where she served as a board member. There she worked with the organization's revolving loan fund for property owners of historic buildings. Their program was initiated with funds borrowed from the National Trust and matched, with resources advanced by a consortium of local banks. She served on the board of Historic Denver, Inc. In addition, Ginny worked on a range of preservation projects including acquisitions, creation of a historic overlay district in the main part of downtown and promotion of preservation in the public schools. Ginny moved to Minnesota in 1998, where she served as a member and chair of the Minneapolis HPC, and on the board of the Preservation Alliance. She currently lives in Saint Paul, loves the city, and feels a strong sense of commitment to its future.



**Shaun McElhatton** is a shareholder with Leonard, Street and Deinard, P.A., where he focuses his practice in the areas of real estate finance and development, with an emphasis on housing finance and development. Shaun represents developers of a wide range of housing--from luxury urban condominiums to small, neighborhood-based, in-fill housing developments. He has given a number of seminars regarding the formation of condominium and townhome developments. Shaun received his J.D. degree cum laude from Harvard Law School in 1987. Shaun has spoken at continuing legal education seminars and written many articles published in local, state, and national publications including: "Understanding condo, townhome warranties--Know the Rules or Pay the Price," *Minnesota Real Estate Journal*, April 6, 2004, and "Understanding the challenges of commercial condos," *Minnesota Real Estate Journal*, October 1, 2004.



# EVENTS CALENDAR

## Thursday, May 4

### "Lewis & Clark in Court"

*Trial Reenactment.*

7p.m., Courtroom 317, Landmark Center.

Cast includes an illustrious group of Minnesota Supreme Court justices, District Court judges, and local lawyers. Reenactment followed by a reception with light appetizers. Sponsored by Minnesota Landmarks and William Mitchell College of Law.

## Saturday and Sunday, May 6-7

### Minneapolis and Saint Paul Home Tour

Homes open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, noon to 5 p.m. Sunday.

Now in its 19th year, the Home Tour is an inspiring celebration of city living. Preservation Alliance of Minnesota will highlight some of the tour's older homes. The tour is a free, self-guided event using the Home Tour Guide to decide which homes to visit. Guides can be found in the April 29 *StarTribune* Homes section and the May 3 *City Pages*. Homes are also featured at <http://www.msphometour.com>. Presented by The Minneapolis Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP), the City of Minneapolis and the City of St. Paul.

## Saturday, May 6

### Cinco de Mayo Festival

*District del Sol, West Side of Saint Paul*

The event marks the anniversary of Mexico's Battle of Puebla and serves to celebrate, preserve and share Hispanic/Latino culture and tradition. All are invited to enjoy dancing, art, a parade, great food and more at one of the nation's largest Cinco de Mayo festivals.

## Now until May 8

### Minnesota Saved! A Quarter Century of Historic Preservation in Minnesota

Mill City Museum, Minneapolis. 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesdays – Saturdays (until 9 p.m. on Thursdays); noon to 5 p.m. Sundays. Free. Mill City Museum will host an exhibit celebrating Minnesota's 25 best historic preservation successes. The exhibit was developed by the Preservation Alliance of Minnesota to celebrate its 25th anniversary and the progress of the preservation movement in Minnesota.

## Wednesday, May 10

### Preserving Your Rambler from the Inside Out

Presented by the Midwest Preservation Institute. 6:30-8:00 p.m. Edina Community Education Services, Edina Public Schools, 5701 Normandale Road, Edina. \$31 per person - Register by calling: 952-848-3950. Back by popular demand! Come to this lively workshop and learn from experts in architecture of the recent past - Christina Morris and Jeanne Lambin from the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Discover how to diagnose problems, prioritize projects, and find the right replacement materials to keep your home looking true to its original architecture.

## Friday, May 12th

### The Future of the Modern Past: Preserving Minnesota's Modern Architecture Symposium

Presented by the Preservation Alliance of Minnesota. Frederick R. Weisman Art Museum, University of Minnesota-Twin Cities Campus, Minneapolis. 8:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. Join the Preservation Alliance of Minnesota for an engaging dialogue about preserving

design from our modern past. Many outstanding examples of modernist design have been and will continue to be lost forever if their contribution is not recognized or considered. Join national and local design experts to debate and discuss "best practices" for the preservation of modern structures and landscapes. Speakers include nationally recognized architects Hugh Hardy, Ralph Rapson, Bruce Abrahamson, and Leonard Parker. Newly appointed AIA Fellow Rich Varda of Target Corporation will make the closing remarks.

Tickets are \$60 per person and include lunch, snacks, and materials. Reservations are required and limited to 120 people. Please call 651-293-9047. All major credit cards accepted. The Future of the Modern Past symposium is generously sponsored by Target Corporation. Funds raised through this and other events will support the Alliance's mission to preserve, protect, and promote Minnesota's historic resources.

## Tuesday, May 16

### 16th Annual Saint Paul Heritage Preservation Awards

Sponsored by The Heritage Preservation Commission of the City of Saint Paul and the Saint Paul Chapter of the American Institute of Architects.

Landmark Center, Weyerhaeuser

Auditorium. Doors open at 6pm for a social hour. The ceremony is 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

The 2006 awards will be presented as part of a month-long celebration during National Preservation Month to recognize projects, individuals and organizations that enhance and celebrate Saint Paul's historic and cultural resources. Mayor Coleman will give welcoming remarks.

## PRESERVATION 101

### ANATOMY OF A PORCH

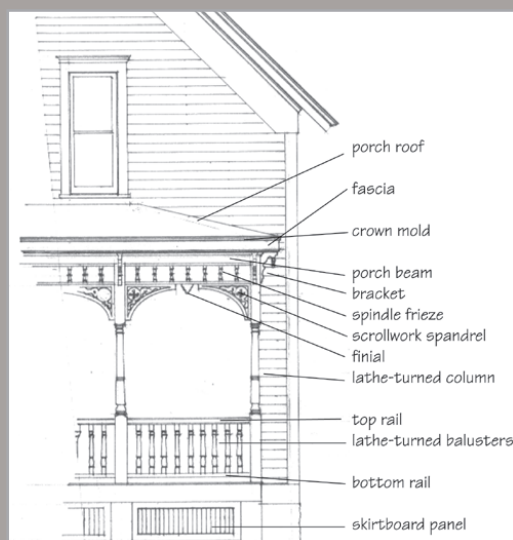
FRONTS OF HOUSES HAVE ADDRESS NUMBERS, but the real "how do you do?" introduction to visitors and passersby are front porches. Porches can somehow tell us the character of the house, which in turn reflects the personality, and occasionally, the lives of those living within.

We see porches in many of our city neighborhoods that we admire, but without knowing what the architectural elements are called. This illustration depicts a porch often used for Victorian houses, with definitions of these parts. Many of these features in various interpretations also can be seen with other house architectural styles.

Are you ready to return your porch to its original glory? HSP's "Restore Saint Paul" loan program currently has low or 0% interest loans for exterior improvements. Call us to see if we're working in your neighborhood! 651.222.3049

BY ROBERT ROSCOE

Design for Preservation | [www.designforpreservation.com](http://www.designforpreservation.com)



# Open House: If These Walls Could Talk

## MINNESOTA HISTORY CENTER EXHIBIT CAPTURES THE PULSE OF A NEIGHBORHOOD

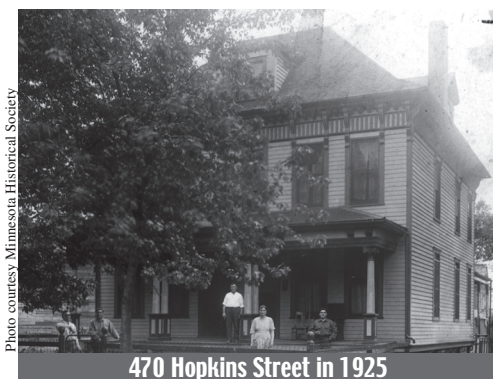
BY BENJAMIN FILENE

CAN A HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROJECT work without touching a hammer or a paintbrush? What if a steady stream of renters continues to pass in and out of the house, wielding their own hammers and brushes, during the course of the project? What if you don't actually own the house yourself? And what if what you are trying to preserve is as much about change as continuity?

Such were the dynamics behind *Open House: If These Walls Could Talk*, the Minnesota Historical Society's most recent major exhibit project, which opened at the History Center in January 2006. *Open House* uses a single, existing house—in the "Railroad Island" neighborhood on St. Paul's East Side—as a window into the daily lives of people of the past. The exhibit tells the stories of the working-class families who lived in 470 Hopkins Street, from the German immigrants that built the house through the Italians, African Americans, and now Hmong who succeeded them. But the house remains where it is, still very much occupied. And the exhibit deals only tangentially with architecture. It notes the dramatic changes the house underwent—from a single-family home in 1888 to a duplex by 1907 to a triplex by 1946. It notes that a 1971 fire burned off the attic, and that it was never replaced. It shows then-and-now photos that suggest an enterprising asbestos-siding salesman made his commission, with pink no less.

But the focus of the exhibit is on people, not architecture. The voices, the photographs, the stories—these are where the exhibit insists on authenticity. In *Open House*, visitors explore rooms representing 470 Hopkins Street in different eras. They become detectives, piecing together the lives of the families who lived in the house. But these are more than static period rooms. For starters, their layout in no way corresponds to the real house's floor plan—almost impossible to reconstruct anyway, given all the changes it underwent over the last century. The rooms are certainly bigger than they ever were in real life, in part to accommodate wheelchairs and school groups.

Most significantly, though, the settings depart from the usual period-room fare because they pulse with life. At once familiar and surprising at every turn, the settings make dramatic use of media. Sitting down at the 1940s dining room table triggers photos that illuminate in the plates and a recording of Grace Tinucci's memories of meeting her future in-laws at a big



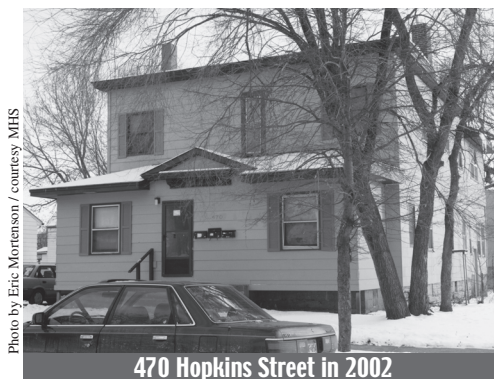
470 Hopkins Street in 1925

family dinner. Touching a money jar in the 1960s bedroom launches home movies and the Krismers' story of saving coins for their family vacations across Minnesota. Approaching the window in the 2005 living room causes it to dissolve into views of Laos and Thai refugee camps, visions from the journey Pang Toua's family took to America. Richly realized and story-driven, *Open House* engages visitors in what can—and, sometimes, can't—be recovered from the past.

In the big picture, then, *Open House* is about change over time, about connections between past and present, about the lived experiences of ordinary people. All of these themes came together not only in our exhibit design but also in our process of collaboration with the community. From the start, we recognized that even though the exhibit would open at the History Center, this project offered opportunities for neighborhood-based work. In conjunction with the larger exhibit, then, the *Open House* team launched a series of community-focused projects:

**ViewPoints:** A dozen East Side teenagers, working with professional photographer Dan Dennehy, documented their neighborhood through photographs. They chose their favorite images and wrote label text for them, creating an exhibit that opened at the East YMCA and traveled to John A. Johnson Elementary School and the Payne Avenue branch of US Bank before arriving for long-term display at the Minnesota History Center.

**Memory Map:** An oversized street map was taken to festivals, community centers, retiree groups, and public markets. At every stop, current and former residents annotated the map with their personal recollections of neighborhood locations. The project culminated in the installation of the map for long-term display at the History Center, with an opening reception attended by more than 400 neighborhood residents.



470 Hopkins Street in 2002

**History Happened Here:** Students at HOPE Community Academy (a Hmong charter school on Payne Avenue) uncovered the history of their neighborhood and their families through a five-week curriculum.

**Voices from Railroad Island:** A series of oral interviews with current and former residents documented the people, places, and stories of the neighborhood. Transcripts of these interviews will be deposited at the Arlington branch of the St. Paul Public Library.

**Hop on the Bus:** This initiative provided free bus transportation to the Society's programs and exhibitions to community groups on the East Side. For the five-year run of *Open House*, the Society is continuing this approach, offering free bus transportation and admission to every 4th-grade class in the seven public elementary schools in the Railroad Island area.

Does taking photos of the contemporary neighborhood count as "history"? Does asking people to write on a street map constitute "research"? Does building an intentionally inaccurate rendition of a house's floor plan in a museum qualify as "preservation"?

*Open House* knowingly stretched the boundaries of these terms. We didn't frame it as an historic preservation project and, no doubt, in a strict sense it doesn't warrant the designation. But in the five years it took to develop the project, I began to feel that it was fired by an impulse familiar to preservationists—a desire to hang on to the past even as we know it slips through our fingers, a desire to make history tangible and meaningful to people in their daily lives. The more we can make our walls talk—the more we feel the human presence of people from the past—the more we will know why we should treasure our buildings and the texture of our neighborhoods and why continuity need not be at odds with change.

*Benjamin Filene, the lead developer of the Open House exhibit, lives in the Merriam Park neighborhood.*



## Interview with Mayor Coleman CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

**BH:** Any thoughts on two of the biggest historic sites in the city, the Schmidt and Hamm's breweries?

**CC:** They are both tremendous historical assets, and there are tremendous challenges to try to redevelop them. . . . It's really challenging—you look at some of the historic commercial buildings in downtown, beautiful buildings, you would never want to tear them down, but from a modern business perspective they just don't work. So a lot are being converted to condos, but that's very expensive as well, largely because they don't have parking, or they need new windows, or any number of other things. It's a tremendous challenge. But it's also what fundamentally distinguishes us from other cities. It certainly distinguishes us from Minneapolis. Again, look at destination tourism: you go to cities because they're unique. You can go anywhere and find a strip of Wal-Marts and chain restaurants. You're not going to travel anywhere to see those kinds of things. But you are going to travel to see intact historic districts such as we have in the city of St. Paul. And people will want to invest in a community where they can buy a well-preserved historic building.

**BH:** Any thoughts on the role of historic preservation in community development?

*You can go anywhere and find a strip of Wal-Marts and chain restaurants.*

*You're not going to travel anywhere to see those kinds of things.*

*But you are going to travel to see*

*intact historic districts such as we have in the city of Saint Paul.*

**CC:** Take Frogtown as an example. There are all those old working-class railroad houses—there's a very distinct historic architectural pattern that exists there. Think about what you could do if you could invest and reinvigorate that old housing stock that's been covered up with siding or altered in any number of ways, or just allowed to deteriorate. Clearly there's a great opportunity there.

Or go over to Payne and Arcade. You've got the Swedish Bank building, and an incredible historic corridor on Arcade. I think it's one of the great streets in St. Paul, even if a lot of it has been allowed to fall off over the years. One of the problems there is that commercial streets like that were built when there were streetcars, and pedestrian traffic, and there wasn't a parking requirement of, say, five spaces for x number of square feet of retail. I talked with a Hmong real estate agent who said there are a lot of people who would like to open businesses on Payne Avenue but they can't do it because of the parking requirements. So I think one of the ways that we will have to try to reclaim these

historic assets is to recreate a little bit of what existed at the time they were built.

It's frustrating, because when I was on the City Council, people would come in, and acknowledge the fact that historic preservation guidelines created the very neighborhood they wanted to live in, then they would seek variances to do renovations in a non-historic fashion, because it was expensive to do otherwise. So it always bothered me that we granted a variance so they didn't have to do it in a historic fashion. At the same time, from a homeowner's perspective, I understand if you've got a broken window, and one's going to cost you \$1000 to fix it and the other costs \$250 . . . . We need to figure out a way, whether it's through tax credits, or access to some capital, or whatever it may be, we have to continue to be creative on how we do some of these things.

You don't do historic preservation because it's easy. You do it because it's the right thing to do.

## DREAMING of PRESERVATION and Reuse of the Schmidt Brewery

BY RUTH DANTUMA

West End neighbors concerned with the fate of the Schmidt Brewery are heartened by the steps preservation organizations have taken to protect the buildings. Last year the State Historic Preservation Office declared the property eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places; the Preservation Alliance of Minnesota named the brewery one of the ten most endangered sites in Minnesota; and the St. Paul Heritage Preservation Commission voted to seek either local or national historic designation for the former brewery. The City Council has issued an interim moratorium on zoning changes and building permits for the site and hopes to extend that moratorium a year in order to study the site and adjacent properties for historic designation.

The 15-acre brewery site is still on the market and neighbors have had ample time to develop ideas for rehabilitation and reuse. Three local citizens visited the Brewers Hill

project in Baltimore, Md. This renovation of two breweries is an inspired conversion of 11 buildings into office/warehouse space, retail space, apartments and lofts. The Schmidt site and Brewers Hill are similar in background and proximity to a downtown.

Another site people are talking about is the Westergasfabriek project outside of Amsterdam. This development of an abandoned 19th-century industrial gasworks is home to a park, art galleries, restaurants, an art house cinema, and temporary festivals in raw space. It has been likened to a scrappier version of the Faneuil Hall Marketplace in Boston, MA. Similarly, the Schmidt buildings could be rented out now and the site could develop organically in much the same way as this Dutch culture park.

The initial inspiration for the preservation and adaptation of the Schmidt site resulted from a visit by another local resident to the

Brewery Arts Center in the Lake District of England. This converted brewery includes art and theatre spaces and restaurants that overlook lush gardens.

The Schmidt site is adjacent to two railroads, the Mississippi River, and St. Paul's trail and park system. Walkers, bikers, skiers, maybe even train commuters could stop or make the Schmidt Brewery site a destination. The Rathskellar is intact and the water well is considered to be a local treasure. Neighbors envision artist studios and galleries, a museum or two, wholesale and retail shops, light industrial businesses, markets and co-ops, and of course a microbrewery...or two...or three...

*Thanks to Andrew Hine for providing information for this article.*

Inspiration found at:  
[www.faneuilhallmarketplace.com](http://www.faneuilhallmarketplace.com),  
[www.brewershill.net](http://www.brewershill.net), [www.breweryarts.co.uk](http://www.breweryarts.co.uk),  
[www.westergasfabriek.nl](http://www.westergasfabriek.nl) and [www.torpedofactory.org](http://www.torpedofactory.org).

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**MAY IS PRESERVATION MONTH!**

# Minnesota Rocks!

## International Stone Carving Symposium

### May 21 through June 30

PUBLIC ART SAINT PAUL AND HEDBERG LANDSCAPE AND MASONRY SUPPLIES ARE BRINGING TOGETHER FOURTEEN MASTER STONE CARVERS FROM AROUND THE WORLD AND MINNESOTA FOR A UNIQUE EVENT THAT CELEBRATES CREATIVITY IN ITS MOST BASIC FORM--AN ARTIST AND A BLOCK OF STONE.

Minnesota Rocks! will shine a public spotlight on the ancient art of stone carving. Artists from Japan, Germany, China, Mexico, Zimbabwe, Finland, Egypt, Italy and Minnesota will work in an open-air studio on the lawn of Saint Paul College. The site, at the highly visible intersection of Kellogg Boulevard and Summit Avenue, will give the public a rare glimpse at the creativity and discipline required to work with this elemental material. Using stone from Minnesota quarries, the artists will create sculptures that will be permanently installed in public settings.

**H S P  
 EVENT**

**Historic Saint Paul presents a Tour Series during the event, "Architecture Rocks," highlighting stone in local architecture. They will depart from the site and include the State Capitol, the Cathedral, and the Summit-Hill neighborhood. See [www.minnesotarocks.org](http://www.minnesotarocks.org) for more information and a calendar of events.**