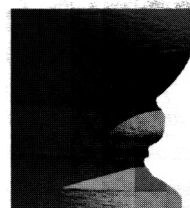
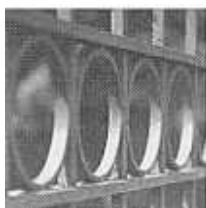


# PRESERVATION JOURNAL OF SAINT PAUL

A PUBLICATION OF HISTORIC SAINT PAUL

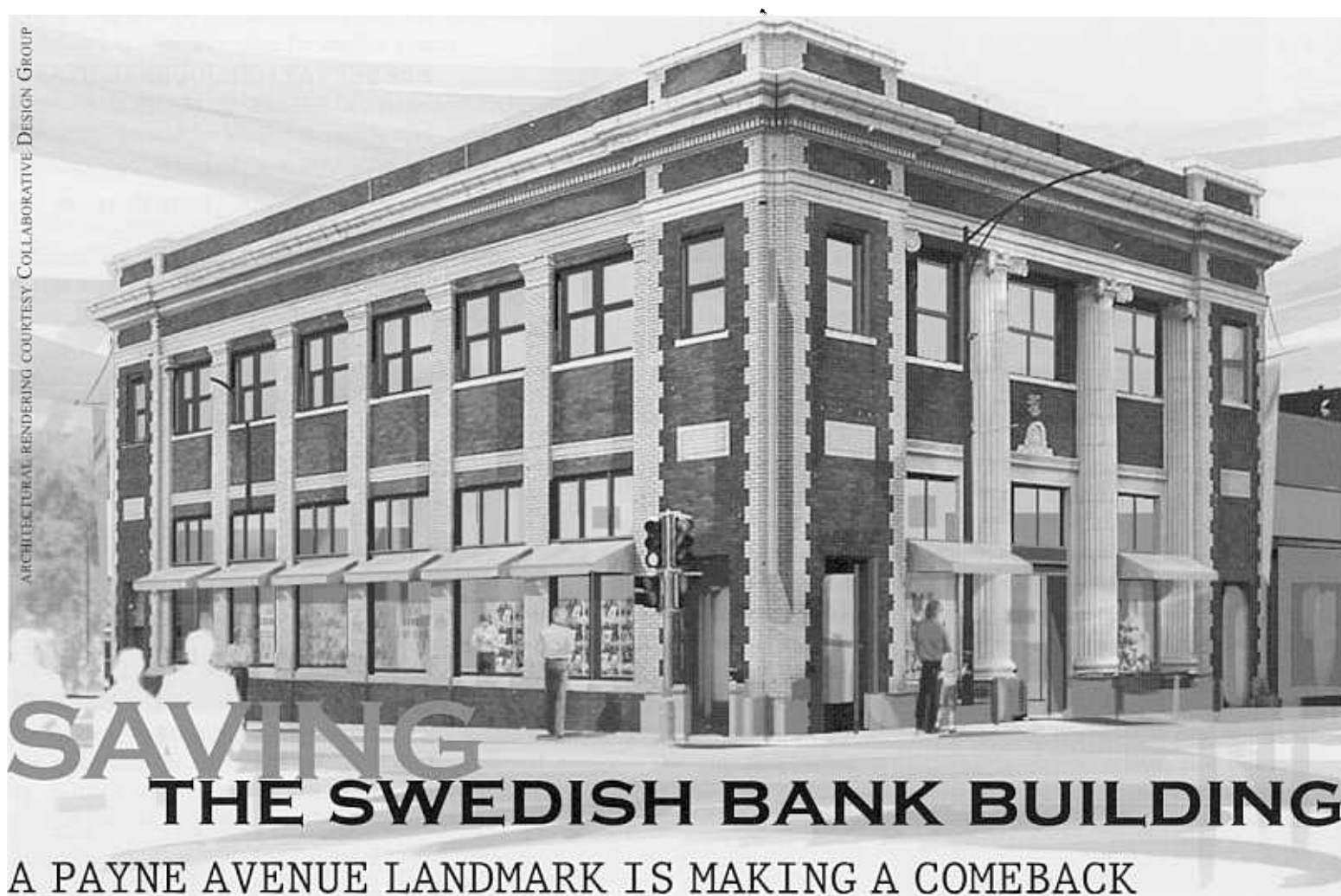


CELEBRATE HERITAGE | RENEW NEIGHBORHOODS | STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY

FALL 2006

VOLUME 4, ISSUE 2

ARCHITECTURAL RENDERING COURTESY: COLLABORATIVE DESIGN GROUP



BY BOB ROSCOE

PERHAPS NO OTHER COMMERCIAL STREET in Saint Paul contributed to the city's immigrant history as much as Payne Avenue. The Payne Avenue State Bank Building (historically known as the Swedish Bank Building), at the corner of Payne and Case Avenues, was critical in that role. The bank was the financial backbone of the early Scandinavians, Germans, Italians,

and other European settlers who established work, home, and cultural life in close-by neighborhoods. Today, Payne Avenue and the Swedish Bank are renewing those collaborative roles. The once derelict bank building is being renovated to serve the city's newest immigrants, most of them Asian and Hispanic, who are changing the face of Payne Avenue.

Building renovation is currently underway, with the first floor space, formerly occupied by the bank, being readied to reclaim its historical purpose, according to Mike LeFavre, development director of the Neighborhood Development Center (NDC) in Saint Paul. The bank building is becoming an "asset center," with a credit union offering a range of financial ser-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



THE PRESERVATION  
JOURNAL OF SAINT PAUL  
VOLUME 4, ISSUE 2

## HISTORIC SAINT PAUL

318 LANDMARK CENTER  
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SAINT PAUL, MN 55102

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## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

DEAR FRIENDS,

I hope this issue of the *Preservation Journal* finds you well. In this issue you will find articles highlighting Saint Paul's historic resources and the work of HISTORIC SAINT PAUL. This past October, HISTORIC SAINT PAUL held its fifth annual fundraiser. I would like to update you on the results of the event and thank the many people who made it the most successful fundraiser in the organization's history.

This year, the theme of the fundraiser was the critical role that artists have in historic preservation. The role of artists in preservation can be observed in every major city in the country, where artists have helped transform warehouse districts, train stations, and other cast-off elements of the urban environment into vital, vibrant communities.

Artists Paulette Meyers-Rich and David Rich graciously opened their home and studio for the event. Their home and studio is located in a 5,400 square-foot, commercial building circa 1900. The brick structure had previously

been a livery, an auto repair shop, and a furniture warehouse and was in a state of serious disrepair when Paulette and David acquired it in 2002. With the help of SALA Architects, the space was converted into a fine-press print studio and darkroom for Paulette, a large painting studio for David, and their residence. It was an ideal setting for a celebration of local artists' role in historic preservation.

The evening was festive and well attended. Speakers at the event included Mayor Chris Coleman, City Council President Kathy Lantry and City Council member (and artist) Dave Thune. All spoke to the importance of Saint Paul's older buildings in creating a unique city identity. Tim Fuller of SALA Architects also gave a presentation on the restoration of the studio. After the presentation, HISTORIC SAINT PAUL held its first annual silent auction. Sixteen local artists made generous donations of their works for the auction.



SCENES FROM THE  
HISTORIC SAINT PAUL  
FUNDRAISER

I am pleased to report that HISTORIC SAINT PAUL was able to surpass its goal of raising \$10,000 at the fundraiser. In addition, an anonymous benefactor matched contributions made to the fundraiser through a \$10,000 challenge grant. Thanks to everyone who attended and contributed to the event. Special thanks to the artists who donated their artwork; I encourage everyone to patronize their studios (see sidebar). I hope to see everyone again at next year's HISTORIC SAINT PAUL fundraiser.

*Thanks again,*

KATHRYN PAULSON  
*President*

THE LANGUAGE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION brings in new terms from time to time, some of them eventually seeping into general usage, such as “McMansion,” referring to those hyper-sized domestic citadels sprawling over the new suburban landscape. And “teardown”—the circumstance when bad things happen to good buildings. Two now-established terms deserve mention: “ghosts,” or the pattern an older structural appendage leaves on a building wall after it is removed, and “facadectomy,” when a significant older building, whose total square footage is deemed unprofitable by a developer, gets a new and bigger structure behind its façade, allowing the developer to save face.

Most Saint Paul architectural aficionados who came of age in the early 1980s may remember a term used only once—“Miami Vice Moderne.” It described what was at the time Saint Paul’s most notorious post-modern building, a Summit Avenue townhouse swathed in colors that gave rise to the building’s alternate tag—“spumoni moderne”—until subsequent owners succumbed to a gray-brown palette.

**MCBUNGLES:** What gets built after a teardown. These newly-constructed super-sized McBungles are designed to look like an Arts and Crafts bungalow on steroids, usually built as if they need a girdle to fit on urban lots originally sized for smaller houses.

**SUSTAINABLE ARCHITECTURE:** Or “green architecture”: the practice of design and building that uses less of the earth’s energy and resources, providing sustainability for future generations.

**EMBODIED ENERGY:** The term, usually measured on a percentage basis, describes the amount of earth resources in material and energy that it took to build a building. When a building is preserved instead of being demolished, its embodied energy is conserved.

**STORYBOOK HOUSES:** A term describing certain Cottage Revival houses of the 1920s and 1930s, that take on features of the “architecture of charm,” as found in children’s tales such as Hansel and Gretel.

**CULTURAL LANDSCAPE:** A geographic area, including both cultural and natural resources (including wildlife), associated with a historic event, activity, or person, or exhibiting other cultural or aesthetic values. A good example in Saint Paul is the Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary.

**NEW URBANISM:** A planning movement that arose in the 1980s to develop new communities based on urban patterns, with narrow streets, small lots and houses, with nearby commercial, institutional, and recreational facilities that conserve land area and reduce transportation and energy use.

**NURBS:** A cynical term for new urbanism communities, based on the notion that these are just smaller suburbs.

**JAPANESE BRUTALISM:** This term is being used right now by only one person—Saint Paul architect Richard Faricy—but the coinage might deserve wider circulation. It refers to the contemporary buildings whose only expression is that of recently-poured concrete.

**RIGHT ZONING:** This is a variation on two other concepts—“up-zoning,” which increases allowable density; and “down-zoning,” which is meant to increase “liveability” by reducing density (i.e., multi-family dwellings). The concept of “right zoning” has been forwarded by Jonathan Fine of Preservation Chicago, who advocates it as a more accurate form of down-zoning, permitting moderate expansion of homes. In the Twin Cities, however, house additions are usually allowed in less dense zoning classifications, but with sometimes stringent restrictions.

**TN-1, TN-2 ZONING:** Saint Paul has a more “correct” form of right zoning with newly minted Traditional Neighborhood Zoning classifications known as TN-1 and TN-2. These provide opportunities for buildings that mix light commercial uses with housing where appropriate for the character of the neighborhood. Many areas near the city core had been built originally with such a mix—for example, apartments built over ground-floor commercial space—but later some of these areas were down-zoned, eliminating the mixed-use option.

**POP UP:** What happens when a small house on a modest urban lot gets supersized with a huge addition

## MANY THANKS TO THE ARTISTS WHO DONATED THEIR WORK TO OUR FUNDRAISER

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# COOL & NOT COOL:

## HOW HISTORIC PRESERVATION HELPS US KNOW WHERE WE ARE

BY RUTH DANTUMA

WE ALL RECOGNIZE and can imagine those places in a city where we like to go, those places that are “cool.” We also know that a street filled with big box retailers and fast food joints is “not cool,” and that an avenue of independent stores, restaurants and one of a kind buildings IS.

That was the message Historic Saint Paul board members and others heard in August from preservation consultant Kennedy Smith, speaking in the new Minnesota Public Radio UBS Forum. Ms. Smith, one of the nation’s foremost experts on Main Street revitalization and a leading authority on mom-and-pop businesses, spoke on “Saving Cities; The Role of Historic Places in a Successful Economy.” Her presentation encouraged us to take the small steps that will preserve our distinct St. Paul places.

Smith suggested “selling” history in a different way. The word “preservation” may not mean much to the younger crowd but it is part of their description of cool places. When surveyed, people under 25 described cool

places as those having (in this order) historic buildings, independent businesses, and lots of people out and about. While European cities seem to do a better job keeping their streets vibrant, some U.S. cities have done small things that make a big impact.

What can we do as preservationists? First, we can demand better buildings from national

### WHAT CAN WE DO AS PRESERVATIONISTS? FIRST, WE CAN DEMAND BETTER BUILDINGS FROM NATIONAL RETAILERS.

retailers. We can ask them to respect local design traditions instead of delivering another suburban big box. National retailers can and do fit successfully into existing neighborhoods—a Home Depot in Manhattan, a Whole Foods in Washington, D.C.

We also need to make it much easier for businesses to move into older and historic places. City governments can help ease development with guidelines for all neighborhoods that streamline the process and encourage in-

novative design. In Smith’s words, we need to be “keepers of the flame, not just the code.” Our downtowns and main streets should be places where people meet and their daily experience is enhanced by the unexpected or creative activity. Pittsburgh rocks—literally, in public rocking chairs—and in Sonoma, jazz musicians play to rush hour motorists. Street

level activity keeps our historic places alive. Smith pointed out that Saint Paul’s skyways have added neither to our sense of fun nor to community. Preservationists must also focus on contemporary architecture, those buildings that will express the best architecture today and add to the continuing story of our community. Finally, Kennedy Smith encouraged us to publicly celebrate our preservation victories, which will ensure momentum and help save our memorable places. Cool!

## SAVING THE SWEDISH BANK BUILDING

*CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1*

vices for households and emerging businesses. A “financial wellness” planning program will help families navigate through mainstream economics. Proprietors of new shops and services can get advice from the center’s training programs. Employment services will be an important component as well, and small businesses and community organizations will occupy offices on the building’s second and third floors.

When it was built in 1923, the Swedish Bank’s bold Classical Revival architecture, designed by Saint Paul architect W. L. Alden, represented the culmination of Payne Avenue’s robust development. Few commercial structures outside of downtown Saint Paul could boast a three-story-high façade, Ionic columns, red brick walls, and tall pilasters clad with white glazed brick separating rows of large windows.

Architectural work by Collaborative Design

Group returned the main banking floor to its original wall-to-wall expanse by removing its chopped-up layout of walls from a 1970s remodeling. Phillip Waugh, the CDG architect (and Historic Saint Paul board member) who coordinated the restoration, notes that the original terrazzo floor retained its integrity, despite years of abuse and unwise remodeling.

The \$2 million redevelopment is coming to fruition, thanks to the persistence of the East-side Neighborhood Development Corporation (ESNDC). From their Payne Avenue offices, ESNDC began the redevelopment process by assembling a bundle of funds, including loans

from the city, federal grants, and foundation contributions. “ESNDC looked for development of this long-time banking facility into reclaiming its historic role, says Mike LeFavre. “This inspiring structure contributes both an economic and cultural presence again.”





# RECENT RESTORATION WORK BY HISTORIC SAINT PAUL

TEXT AND PHOTOS BY BOB ROSCOE

## 1259 EDGERTON: WORKING ON THE HOME FRONT

A FEW MONTHS AGO, Renee Indeher and Amy Blythe began a restoration of their Queen Anne style house on Edgerton Street in the Payne-Phalen neighborhood. Their preservation project includes repairing the failing front porch and removing 1950s style aluminum siding. The sisters hired City Ventures, a general contractor with renovation experience, to rebuild the delicately detailed front porch, which includes removing deteriorated ornamental parts and rebuilding these porch elements section by section in the contractor's shop.

Historic Saint Paul is providing loan assistance and architectural drawings for the project and the owners have been stripping paint and priming. But Renee and Amy are eagerly awaiting spring, when their carefully crafted paint palette will bring this Queen Anne back to its former glory.



## 613 NORTH: WILL THE REAL QUEEN ANNE PLEASE STAND OUT!

WHEN KIM AND RENE LERMA PURCHASED THEIR HANDSOME, well-proportioned Queen Anne house several years ago, they sensed their house's porch had once had a more detailed architectural presence that had vanished over time. The Lermas searched the Eastside area and through architectural books for similar houses, but found no matches. So they decided to use their imagination.

The Lermas contacted Historic Saint Paul for assistance. The organization offered a loan to finance a portion of the renovation, as well as consulting services. With Historic Saint Paul's help, the Lermas looked for clues in the porch structure that revealed missing ornamental parts. Using suggestions from Historic Saint Paul's loan committee, the Lermas developed a plan for the most appropriate reconstruction. A few months ago, a general contractor began structural work on the porch. Rene's woodworking skills produced porch ornamental details, and Kim found the type of lathe-turned columns and other parts that will give their century-old house the lively grace it once had.

## 955 JESSIE: STABILIZING A LEGACY

TECHNICAL AND LOAN ASSISTANCE from Historic Saint Paul recently helped stabilize the limestone foundation of this National Register of Historic Places designated house near Payne and Maryland Avenues on the Eastside. The Jessie Street house was designed in 1905 by Clarence Johnston in a "Bavarian Arts and Crafts" style.

Soil testing determined that the house had been partly built on soft soils over the edge of a former lakebed. City Ventures, the general contractor, began work by shoring up the house's corner, removing the foundation blocks, and excavating. Helical-shaped steel pilings were drilled several feet apart to a depth well below the bottom layer of the unstable soil. The pilings were topped with poured concrete steel-reinforced beam on which the limestone blocks were re-assembled and "toothed-in" with the main foundation stone. The job was finished by backfilling with compacted soil and removal of shoring timbers.



# THE HAMLINE "WHITE HOUSE": WHAT IS ITS FATE?

BY BRIAN HARRIGAN

In 2005, when Hamline University inaugurated its 19th president, a 93-year old campus tradition ended. President Linda Hanson did not move into the "White House," the large Colonial Revival house on the eastern edge of campus that had been the home of the college's presidents since 1912. Built in 1903 by Joseph and Jennie Hill Hackney, the house originally stood on Hewitt Avenue, directly across from the grand Victorian "Old Main" building. Joseph Hackney, an investor and later a state senator, had become a trustee of his college a year after graduating in 1901. (His wife was a 1902 grad.) In 1912, the Hackneys deeded it to the college for use as a residence for the president, and it has been home to nine Hamline presidents and their families. In 1946, the house was moved to its present site—its official address is 830 Simpson Avenue, although that street no longer runs through campus—to make room for a new dormitory building. Although numerous repairs and renovations have been made over the decades, with the last major interior



PHOTO COURTESY HAMLINE UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES

refurbishing in 1988, the 11-room house—essentially a Midwestern four-square with some prominent protrusions—lacks central air conditioning and is reported to be in need of considerable repairs. The Hamline trustees acquired a more spacious, upgraded Summit

Avenue residence for the new president. The fate of the currently unoccupied and little used "White House" is precarious, and will not be known until the university completes a major, campus-wide strategic planning effort sometime next year.

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CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



# STREET SMART: A REVIEW OF *THE STREET WHERE YOU LIVE*

REVIEW BY BOB ROSCOE

ARE THERE LILAC TREES IN THE HEART OF TOWN?  
CAN YOU HEAR A LARK IN ANY OTHER PART OF TOWN?  
DOES ENCHANTMENT POUR OUT OF EVERY DOOR?  
No, IT'S JUST ON THE STREET WHERE YOU LIVE.

A FEW SATURDAY AFTERNOONS AGO, I bought Donald Empson's newly re-issued *The Street Where You Live* at the grand opening of Common Good Books at Selby and Western. The shop's owner, Garrison Keillor, was on hand to autograph purchased books, and when I handed him my book to sign, I mentioned I occasionally give fellow Minneapolitans my foolproof method for finding destinations in Saint Paul. All we have to do, I told the bard, is to just get close enough to the destination before asking for street directions.

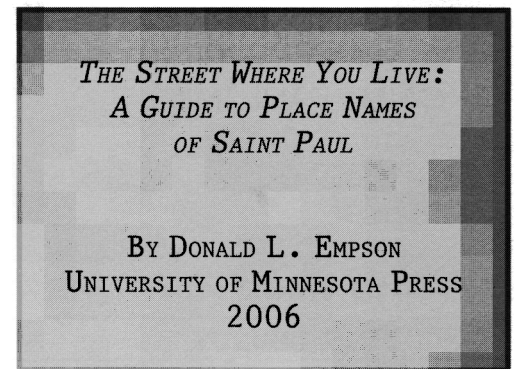
Empson borrows his title from the *My Fair Lady* tune (later turned into a pop hit for Vic Damone, among others), which is apt since street names carry with them a certain kind of romantic meaning. The 1975 edition served as a comprehensive glossary of Saint Paul streets. Empson has now added names of places, along with detailed and often witty narratives of neighborhoods, parks, semi-public crannies, and long-vanished lakes, as well as stories of streets that have changed names, some of them several times. He shows us how place names reflect changes in the city's history, not only by re-shaping of land but by significant events and those piquant circumstances that flavor city life.

Empson's main lesson, however, is that place names often originate as a caprice or an off-hand notion by someone who has found himself in the position of a momentary decision that the rest of us have to live with long afterward. For example, subdivisions platted out in the 19<sup>th</sup> century often acquired names of

developers' wives and children, or perhaps the names of towns in New England where they once lived. Some names—like "Ashland"—were chosen because they sounded pleasant, or were fanciful, such as "Petit Street"—just 20 feet wide—on the east side.

But there are also names that serve as markers for stories we may not have known until now, stories of once prominent people whose lives came to glory or tragic undoing, or both. Henry McKenty, a land speculator, named Lake Como (previously known as Sandy Lake), and also named Lake Josephine for his daughter and Lake Johanna for his wife. But he lost his wealth in the Panic of 1857, and he later took his life, a fate that also befell his wife and daughter.

Some names are not what they could seem to be. For instance, Clifford Street in Desnoyer Park was named for a village in Massachusetts, not for a certain notorious human services provider, well known in Saint Paul, whose last name was Clifford. Nor was her first name, Nina, the inspiration for the street of that name



in Ramsey Hill. Then there is Long Street and Short Street, both of similar lengths.

Another example of how name change reflects change in history – an 1839 map of the Fort Snelling Military Reservation indicated the name "Old Rum Town" for a land area across the river from Fort Snelling, now known as Highland Park.

*The Street Where You Live* also deals with contemporary place-naming, for example, the Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary, commemorating the late congressman, and Three Judges Park at Arcade and East Third Street, which will honor three Saint Paul natives who rose to national prominence on the bench—Edward Devitt (U.S. District Court), and Harry Blackmun and Warren Burger (U.S. Supreme Court).

History is not preservation of the status quo—history is the record of change. Empson's remarkable effort acknowledges how place names become enduring emblems for the society and culture we create, both noble and whimsical.

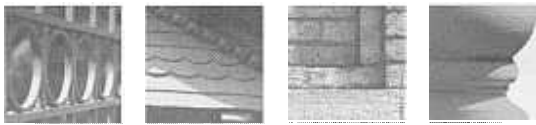
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**NEW LIFE FOR PAYNE AVENUE'S  
SWEDISH BANK BUILDING**

**WHAT MAKES PRESERVATION  
"COOL"?**

**THE FATE OF THE HAMLINE  
COLLEGE "WHITE HOUSE"**

**HISTORIC SAINT PAUL PROJ-  
ECT UPDATES**

**WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE  
STREET WHERE YOU LIVE?**

**PRESERVATION 101: PRESER-  
VATIONS TERMS YOU MAY NOT  
KNOW**

## **GIFT TO HISTORIC SAINT PAUL IN HONOR OF ROZIE PARISH**

RICHARD AND NANCY NICHOLSON OF SAINT PAUL recently made a generous gift to Historic Saint Paul in memory of their friend and neighbor, Rozie Parish, who died this past January. Ms. Parish, born in St. Paul in 1946, grew up on the East Side and was the original "Miss Grand Avenue" and later the Winter Carnival's Queen of the Snows. She spent many years raising a family in Anchorage and Seattle before returning to St. Paul in 1998. She and her husband, Michael Parish, lived in the Cathedral Hill neighborhood. The members of the Board of Historic Saint Paul are grateful to the Nicholsons for their gift, and extend their sympathies to the Parish family.