

A newsletter on historic preservation from the State Historic Preservation Office of the Minnesota Historical Society.

Meetings and workshops

April 24

SHPO Workshop for State/Federal Agencies, 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Minnesota Landscape Arboretum, Chaska. This workshop is intended for state and federal cultural resource staff and historical and archaeological consultants. Registration information has been mailed. For details or to request registration materials, call Kelly Gragg-Johnson, 651-259-3455, or e-mail kelly.graggjohnson@mnhs.org.

April 25-29

National Planning Conference, Minneapolis. The American Planning Association's conference will celebrate the centennial of the planning movement in this country with hundreds of sessions on all aspects of community planning as well as mobile workshops and networking events. For information go to www.planning.org/nationalconference.

June 23

State Review Board meeting, 7 p.m., Minnesota History Center, 345 Kellogg Blvd. W., St. Paul. For agenda information call Michele Decker, 651-259-3450.

May is Preservation Month

Preservation Month serves as a showcase for historic preservation successes nationwide. For tips on planning Preservation Month events, visit the web site of the National Trust for Historic Preservation at www.preservationnation.org. To publicize your own events throughout the state, e-mail localhistorynews@mnhs.org. Include the event name, date, time, location, a brief description, sponsors and contact information.

Encouraging signs for Fort Snelling's Upper Post

by Britta L. Bloomberg, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

In 2006 the Upper Post in the Fort Snelling Historic District was named one of America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The dubious honor was a call to action that has galvanized efforts to save this place for future generations. Although our work is far from complete, there is progress to report.

First, some background. The Fort Snelling Historic District was designated Minnesota's first National Historic Landmark in 1960. Located at the confluence of the Mississippi and Minnesota Rivers, it has been a place significant to native peoples for thousands

of years. From 1820, when Fort Snelling was established, through the first half of the 20th century, the site also served the U. S. government as an active military installation. The Upper Post, established in 1879, was gradually abandoned after World War II. In 1971 the title was transferred to the State of Minnesota with deed restrictions requiring that the property be used for "public park or recreational purposes." The area is currently administered by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) as part of Fort Snelling State Park.

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Miller Dunsmuir Architecture

Buildings of the Upper Post in the Fort Snelling Historic District are being stabilized to prepare them for rehabilitation and reuse.

Fort Snelling's Upper Post – continued

Work to date

Obstacles to preserving the Upper Post are large and complex, and the 28 buildings remaining on the 141-acre site are in various states of disrepair and deterioration. In 2006 an informal group of federal and state agencies began efforts to secure funding for rehabilitation and develop guidelines for the historic landscape. With a \$150,000 grant from the federal Save America's Treasures program and help from Hennepin County Sentence-to-Serve crews, significant headway has been made in stabilizing the site. Last year a National Trust grant provided the resources to develop landscape guidelines. And in its 2008 bonding bill, the Minnesota Legislature approved \$500,000 to begin the process of

preparing the buildings for reuse and redevelopment. That work gets underway this spring.

Next steps

In December the National Trust and Hennepin County convened a task force, chaired by Commissioner Peter McLaughlin, to move the effort to the next level. Among participating stakeholders: the DNR, Hennepin County, Mississippi National River and Recreation Area (National Park Service), Minnesota Historical Society, State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), Preservation Alliance of Minnesota, Fort Snelling State Park Association, Boy Scouts, Veterans' Affairs, Air Guard Museum and tribal representatives.

Progress is being made on several fronts. An interagency workgroup is exploring potential development approaches. Steps are being taken to transfer the DNR deed to the federal Historic Monuments program, which allows for long-term leases and greater flexibility in redevelopment options while continuing to protect the site's historic qualities. In addition, Hennepin County is formulating a Fort Snelling LRT Station Area Plan that will help inform future development.

Meanwhile, the ongoing stabilization work continues to buy time as we keep our eyes on the goal of securing a bright future for Fort Snelling's Upper Post. ■

Christ Church Lutheran receives National Historic Landmark designation

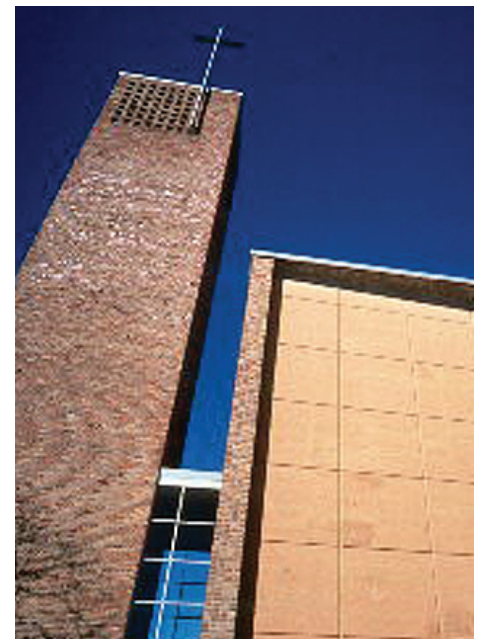
The National Park Service has designated Christ Church Lutheran in Minneapolis, a celebrated work by Eliel Saarinen, as a National Historic Landmark, the country's highest recognition given to historic properties.

Saarinen, among the nation's most acclaimed architects and architectural educators of the 20th century, was on the leading edge of the modernist movement and played a pivotal role in the emergence of modernist religious architecture in the United States. Through his use of materials, proportion, scale and light, Saarinen created in Christ Church Lutheran a building with great drama. Yet the church retains a human scale. The combination of these qualities

distinguishes Saarinen's work from that of many other modernists.

Saarinen died the year after completing the church in 1949. When the congregation decided to add an education wing in 1962, it turned to Eliel's son, Eero, who directed the design according to his father's original concept.

Fewer than 2,500 historic places in the country carry National Historic Landmark (NHL) designation. Christ Church becomes the 23rd Minnesota property to achieve landmark status. For more information on the NHL program and Minnesota's NHL properties, go to www.nps.gov/history/nhl and www.mnhs.org/places/nationalregister/landmarks/index.html. ■



Christ Church Lutheran, a striking example of mid-century modernism designed by architect Eliel Saarinen, recently became the 23rd Minnesota property to be named a National Historic Landmark.

Saved

Norman County: Norman County Courthouse (1904), Ada. The clock tower of the brick-and-stone, Romanesque Revival courthouse designed by Omeyer and Thori was restored with funds from the State Capital Projects Grants-in-Aid program. Work included replacing deteriorated wood decking, replacing glass block infill with wood windows, repointing mortar joints, and repairing and cleaning the clock faces.



Norman County Courthouse clock tower during (left) and after rehabilitation.

Wadena County: Northern Pacific Passenger Depot (1915), Wadena. The brick-and-stone depot was rehabilitated with funds from the State Capital Projects Grants-in-Aid program. Work included repointing stone and brick; installing gutters, downspouts and drain pipes; repairing exterior doors; installing HVAC and electrical systems; and building a handicapped-accessible walkway.



Northern Pacific Passenger Depot before (left) and after rehabilitation.

Kerry Pausser, Michael J. Burns Architects

Registration

Recent additions to the National Register of Historic Places:

Hennepin County: First National Bank-Soo Line Building (1915), 101 S. 5th St., Minneapolis. Prepared by Elizabeth Gales.

Martin County: United States Post Office, Fairmont (1926), 51-55 Downtown Plaza, Fairmont. Prepared by Daniel Hoisington.

Washington County: Log Cabin (Club Tara) (1938), 15021 60th St. N., Oak Park Heights. Prepared by Carole Zellie.



One of Minneapolis's early tall buildings, the First National Bank-Soo Line Building served as corporate offices for two business institutions - First National Bank of Minneapolis, founded in 1857, and the Minneapolis, Saint Paul and Sault Ste. Marie Railway Company, created to give Minneapolis millers shipping routes independent of Chicago lines.



Businesses like the Log Cabin, an early 20th-century roadhouse and nightclub in the St. Croix Valley, catered to the growing automobile culture, often in isolated settings. The iconic log cabin design of the building advertised its uniqueness as a place of entertainment and refreshment.

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www.mnhs.org/shpo

Preservation conference set for Sept. 17-18

Mark your calendars now for Minnesota's 29th Annual Statewide Historic Preservation Conference, to be held Sept. 17-18 at the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum in Chaska.

Sponsored by the State Historic Preservation Office, the conference will be hosted by the Heritage Preservation Commissions of Chaska and Carver in cooperation with the Chaska Historical Society and the Carver County Historical Society.

This year's conference theme is Green Design and Historic Buildings, featuring lectures and working sessions on sustainability and preservation topics as well as tours of local sites.

For more information go to www.mnhs.org/presconf, call 651-259-3450 or e-mail mnshpo@mnhs.org. ■



A walking tour of Chaska's Walnut Street Historic District includes the Diedrick Building (1876). Rehabilitated into retail and office space, it exemplifies sustainable preservation.



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