

Learning Lessons the Hard Way

Ytterboe Hall on the St. Olaf College campus in Northfield is the latest loss for historic preservation in Minnesota. The 97-year-old Classical Revival dormitory building located in the heart of the campus was eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. In September a Rice County District Court judge removed an injunction preventing demolition, and within hours, the college started the demolition process. With the loss of Ytterboe, St. Olaf has lost a piece of its heart; the people of Minnesota, one the earliest college dormitories in the state.

The tragedy in the latest loss is that Ytterboe never had a chance. The college administration slated the building for demolition in the 1970s. A pressing need for space, combined with earlier efforts on the part of students and alumni, extended the life of the building for a time. However, the college proceeded with development plans for the campus that assumed the prominent site occupied by Ytterboe would be cleared.

Alternatives to demolition were never explored. Repeatedly, the college administration promoted the notion that preservation was physically impossible, but an assessment of the building's condition had not been completed, so the claim was unsubstantiated. What ensued was a sequence of events that culminated in a "celebration" of the building's memories at the 1997 reunion weekend, which would pave the way for demolition of Ytterboe and beginning construction of a new student union on the site.

What the college administration didn't anticipate, however, was the level of outrage on the part of some alumni. The "Friends of Ytterboe" organized and filed suit against the college under the Minnesota Environmental Rights Act (MERA). An injunction was granted, with a provision that the group post a \$50,000 bond by July 10; three additional deadlines would



SHPO; photographs by Scott Anfinson

Above, Ytterboe Hall (the building to the right) in June 1997; below, the rubble after demolition. The cupola, seen in front of the pile, was taken down before demolition began.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Oct. 17: "American Arts & Crafts: The Bungalow Style," 5:30 p.m., International Market Square, 275 Market St., Minneapolis. Leslie Green Bowman, curator of decorative arts for the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, will talk about the Arts and Crafts movement in America.

Oct. 24: "Bungalow Interiors," 7 p.m., Hillcrest Recreation Center, 1961 Bohland Ave., St. Paul. Author Paul Duchscherer will bring both his eagerly awaited new book and slide show presentation. Sponsored by the Twin Cities Bungalow Club. For more information call Kristi Johnson, (612) 729-4712.

Oct. 26: Preservation Alliance of Minnesota Preservation Festival, "Preservation Strengthens Communities," 11 a.m.-3 p.m., International Market Square, 275 Market St., Minneapolis. This statewide festival celebrates historic preservation in Minnesota and helps develop a more active network among preservationists. Hon. Brian Rude, Wisconsin legislator and preservation leader, will be the guest speaker. Other events include tables and booths sponsored by individuals, companies and organizations active in preservation; the annual meeting; and annual awards. For more information call (612) 341-8140.

Nov. 5: SHPO Workshop for Federal/State Agencies, 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m., Minnesota Historical Society, 345 Kellogg Blvd. W., St. Paul. A workshop for state and federal agency cultural resource staffs and for historical and archaeological consultants. Registration information will be mailed in October. If

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

you do not receive a notice, call Kelly Gragg-Johnson at (612) 296-5462.

Nov. 20: State Review Board Meeting, 7 p.m., Minnesota Historical Society, 345 Kellogg Blvd. W. For agenda information, call Michele Decker, (612) 296-5434.

NOMINATION DEADLINE

Nov. 1: Great American Main Street Awards. These awards recognize cities and towns that have revitalized their historic downtowns and traditional neighborhood commercial districts through public/private partnerships. Five winners, to be announced at the National Town Meeting on Main Street, May 18, 1998, in Pittsburgh, Penn., will each receive a \$5,000 cash prize, road signs and a bronze plaque. Cosponsored by the financial services firm Edward Jones and the National Trust for Historic Preservation. For award applications call John Lauber, (612) 296-5434.



GRANTS DEADLINES

Applications for CLG grants will be available in November. See also article on p. 3.

Jan. 9: Preapplication deadline for CLG grants.

Feb. 6: Final deadline for CLG grant applications.

Constructed in 1870, the Collinwood School (right) is a remnant of a typical early settlement village whose future was eclipsed when the St. Paul and Pacific Railroad came through Meeker County. The school represents 19th-century rural education in Minnesota, when an eight-grade curriculum was taught by one person in a single classroom.

Preservation Lessons

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escalate the bond to \$1 million by October 1. When the third deadline after the Labor Day weekend was not met, the legal barrier was lifted. The court injunction granted had been a hollow victory; the excessive bond requirement sealed Ytterboe's sad ending.

The Ytterboe case brings home the importance of exploring alternatives while there is still time to find appropriate new uses for historic properties.

Unfortunately, Ytterboe didn't get

that chance. The Ytterboe story is also a hard lesson of the importance of sound information and visionary leadership in advocating for the preservation of historic resources.

As this issue goes to press, a very different situation is unfolding on the Minneapolis campus of the University of Minnesota. There, four historic buildings have been placed on the decommission list: news met with serious concern from the preservation community. Reuse studies

are underway, however, and President Yudof has taken a bold stance in support of preserving these buildings. It will take time, resources, and the collective creativity of many to make it happen, but, for now, optimism is running high.

Britta L. Bloomberg
Deputy SHPO



Minnesota Historical Society

Nicholson Hall, one of the four buildings at risk on the University of Minnesota Campus. (Others: Westbrook Hall, Music Education building and Jones Hall.) When this picture was taken, in 1925, Nicholson was the main Student Union.

REGISTRATION

Recent Additions to the National Register of Historic Places

Meeker County: District No. 48 School, off Co. Hwy. 6, Collinwood Twp. Prepared by David C. Anderson.

Ramsey County: Hamm Building, 408 St. Peter St., St. Paul. Prepared by Gabrielle Bourgerie.

Steele County: Owatonna City and Firemen's Hall, 107 Main St. W., Owatonna. Prepared by Susan Granger and Kay Grossman.



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The Owatonna City and Firemen's Hall (above) was built in 1906-07 to serve as the center for city government and as an important public facility. Still in use by the city's fire department, the building originally had living quarters for firefighters on the second floor and an auditorium/gymnasium on the third floor. It is shown here during renovation.



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Duluth Barge To Be Scrapped

The derrick barge *Coleman*, a National Register-eligible vessel in Duluth, will be scrapped by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The *Coleman* was built for the Corps by Marine Iron and Shipbuilding Company at Duluth in 1923, and served western Lake Superior ports through 1995.

The vessel has never been altered and is an excellent example of 1920s industrial technology, preserved in working condition. The *Coleman* is the only known steam-powered derrick barge in the United States.

For a period of time last year, it seemed the *Coleman* would gain a new life as part of the City of Duluth's waterfront park development. The

area south of the convention center, which includes the earliest historic slips in the harbor, is now host to a number of outdoor performing arts events. A promising idea emerged to moor the *Coleman* in one of the slips and use the vessel as a stage. However, some of the

potential arts groups felt that the vessel did not meet their space needs, and the proposal was abandoned.

The Great Lakes Shipwreck Preservation Society was also approached about the possibility of sinking the *Coleman* for a diving site, but the group's

work on another site precluded taking on the *Coleman*. Other attempts to market the vessel by the Corps were not successful.

As mitigation for the loss of the *Coleman*, the Corps will curate records at the Lake Superior Maritime Visitors Center, issue a report on the history of the vessel and create an exhibit at the center.



Photo by U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

The derrickboat *Coleman* is shown here in a vessel yard in Duluth harbor in Oct. 1960.

Draft Applications for CLG Grants Due in January

The final deadline for grant applications in the next cycle of the Certified Local Government (CLG) program is Feb. 6, 1998. Applications must be received in the Grants Office at the Minnesota History Center by 4:30 p.m. on that date. (345 Kellogg Blvd. W., St. Paul, MN 55102-1906)

You are encouraged to submit a draft of your grant application by Jan. 9, 1998, so that the Grants Office can offer comments and suggestions for your final application.

Only cities with local historic preservation ordinances, commissions, and programs certified by the State Historic Preservation Office are eligible to apply for these matching grants. Heritage preservation commissions interested in achieving CLG status for their city should call Michael Koop, MHS historic preservation program specialist, (612) 296-5451.

Special priority will be given to projects that:

- promote surveys in areas of known development activity in order to reduce project delays;
- generate data for planning use;
- result in local designations; or
- involve properties associated with the history of under-documented groups or communities.

The Grants Review Committee will meet March 19, 1998, to make recommendations. Work on the projects that are recommended for funding can begin between July 1 and Oct. 1. In special circumstances, earlier starting dates may be possible.

Funds for the CLG program are provided through the U.S. Department of the Interior's National Park Service. The Service expects to approve the 1998 Historic Preservation Fund Program for Minnesota in the near future. Federal regulations stipulate that at least 10 percent of that allocation be awarded as pass-through funds to cities with CLG status. It is anticipated that at least \$60,000 will be awarded in Minnesota (subject to change pending adoption of the 1998 federal budget).

Grant guidelines, procedures and application forms can be found in the 1998 Certified Local Government Grants Manual for Heritage Preservation Commissions, which will be mailed to eligible cities in late November, 1997. For information before that date, call Mandy Skypala, (612) 296-5478.



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Britta Bloomberg, Editor
Michael Koop, Assistant Editor
James Smith, Assistant Editor



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Grants Office files

A new cedar shingle roof was installed and two early 20th-century kitchen additions were removed on the George Stoppel Farm (ca. 1860) in Rochester Township, Olmsted County. Funds were provided in part through the MHS state Grants-in-Aid program. The farmstead is owned by the Olmsted County Historical Society.



SHPO collection



Grants Office files

The Banfill Tavern (1847) in Fridley was painted, a new roof was constructed, siding was replaced, and the foundation and front steps were repaired. Funds were provided in part through the MHS state Grants-in-Aid program. The building is owned by the Anoka County Parks and Recreation Department.



MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
345 KELLOGG BOULEVARD WEST
SAINT PAUL, MINNESOTA 55102-1906

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