

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

# Preservation PLANNER

Spring 2000 (April)

Vol. XI, No. 2

## Learning Lessons the Hard Way, or: Counting the Cost

Dania Hall could be the poster child for Minnesota's threatened historic properties. It was lost to a devastating fire early Monday morning, Feb. 28. Its loss is a compelling reminder of how vulnerable are the resources that we've been charged to protect. The neighborhood and preservation community are grieving the loss of a landmark that can never be replaced. Let's hope that there's a lesson to be learned: We must work all the harder to ensure that other vulnerable resources are not lost. Those that hang in the balance, as Dania Hall has for the past decade, are at incredible risk every day.

Dania Hall was a remarkable place. It was both a social and a visual anchor in the Cedar Riverside neighborhood of Minneapolis. Constructed in 1886 in an imposing "Victorian Eclectic" style, the auditorium on its upper floors was a cultural center for the Danish community as well as a rich, intimate performing arts space that served the larger community.

The first floor and basement levels housed commercial retail. The building barely survived a 1991 fire that destroyed



SHPO file photo

*This photograph of Dania Hall was taken in 1974.*

major portions of the upper floors and roof, a setback that made its redevelopment all the more challenging in recent years. The future was beginning to look bright once again, as rehabilitation of the structure had just begun; this makes the tragedy of the recent loss that much greater. It was envisioned to become once again a local cultural center and a catalyst to revitalize the neighborhood.

Taking on National Register buildings that have fallen on hard times, especially those that are vacant and vulnerable, is a tall order and, sometimes, a thankless job. But it's a stewardship responsibility that must be taken seriously. Sometimes the tragedy of a fire is unavoidable, but not always. Fires in publicly held National Register buildings have taken too large a toll in recent years. Finding new uses for troubled historic properties is difficult enough, but it is even more so in buildings seriously compromised by fire damage. It's much too easy for a community to give up on the difficult ones. Preservationists must



SHPO file photo

*This photograph of the ruined Dania Hall was taken the day after the fire. Notice the elevator column on the right, part of the renovation work that had just begun.*

—————>  
Continued on page 2

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### Working Sessions on Local Historic Preservation

The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) will host two working sessions to discuss local preservation issues in southwestern and northeastern Minnesota. Attend one of the meetings to give SHPO staff your thoughts about historic preservation. No advance registration required. Meetings begin at 7 p.m. For more information, call Michael Koop, 651/296-5451.

**March 30:** Pipestone, Pipestone County Historical Society, 113 S. Hiawatha.

**May 18:** Duluth, Lake Superior Maritime Visitors Center, 600 Lake Ave. South.

### Meetings & Workshops

**April 15:** Minnesota Barn Preservation Workshop, Historic Valley Grove Churches (located on Rice County 29, two miles northwest of Nerstrand). All day, beginning at 9:30 a.m. Cost: \$30 (\$25 for MHS members), includes lunch and bus tour. Barn owners, agricultural historians and preservationists can acquire information about the history of barns, technical issues, construction techniques and rehabilitation resources. Co-sponsored by SHPO and the University of Minnesota Extension Service. For more information, call John Lauber, SHPO, 651/297-4418.

**April 22:** State Capitol Architecture Tour, 1:30 p.m., State Capitol. To register call 651/296-2881. Learn about the construction of this Italian Renaissance-style building using modern-day construction techniques. Reservations required. Fee: \$5 for adults, \$4 for senior citizens, \$3 for children ages 6-15; \$1 discount for MHS members.

**April 28:** Building Code-Rehabilitation Workshop, Faribault Fire Station, 122 2nd St. NW, Faribault, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Cost: \$10, includes lunch. Building officials,

—————>  
Continued on page 2

# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

property owners and preservation commissioners will learn about how the Secretary of the Interior's Design Standards for Historic Properties can be applied while maintaining compliance with the Uniform Building Code and the Uniform Code for Building Conservation. Co-sponsored by the Faribault Heritage Preservation Commission and SHPO. For more information, call Mark Hudson, City of Faribault, 507/334-2222, ext. 35.

**May 6-14:** Minnesota Archaeology Week. The Office of the State Archaeologist is coordinating this annual event that celebrates Minnesota's archaeological heritage. For more information, call 612/725-2729, or see the web site at: [www.admin.state.mn.us/osa](http://www.admin.state.mn.us/osa).

**May 14-20:** National Preservation Week. "Taking America's Past Into the Future" is the national theme of this week-long celebration. See article in this issue about programs in the Twin Cities.

**May 23:** State Review Board meeting, 7 p.m., Minnesota History Center, 345 Kellogg Blvd. W., St. Paul. For agenda information, call Michele Decker at 651/296-5434.

**June 7-10:** Vernacular Architecture Forum (VAF) Annual Meeting, Duluth. The conference, co-sponsored by SHPO, includes one day of paper presentations and two days of field tours to explore the cultural landscape of the Mesabi Iron Range and Lake Superior's North Shore. For more information, call Michael Koop at 651/296-5451.

## Planner Goes On-line

All issues of the *Planner*, the *Interpreter*, and "Tech Talk" articles, from fall 1996 to the present, have been posted to the MHS web site at [www.mnhs.org/about/publications/index.html](http://www.mnhs.org/about/publications/index.html). They will appear as PDF (Portable Document Format) files, which can be viewed or printed using your Web browser and Adobe's Acrobat Reader software. Adobe provides downloading instructions for the free Acrobat Reader for Macintosh and Windows.

## Learning Lessons the Hard Way, or: Counting the Cost

*Continued from page 1*

keep pressing for improved stewardship of these special places while they're in the care of our communities, or it will be too late. Dania Hall is a case in point.

I hope we will learn from the recent tragedy. It's inadequate simply to say we're sorry. A community is grieving. Another loss should have been avoided. These should be bright times for historic preservation, for the economy is booming in many of Minnesota's cities.

Let's strive to improve the security of our at-risk resources and work together to find historic preservation solutions. Far too many of Minnesota's National Register treasures continue to hang in the balance.

For further information, visit the building's website at [www.dania-hall.org](http://www.dania-hall.org).

*Britta L. Bloomberg, Deputy SHPO*

## SAVED



SHPO file photo

*Before*



SHPO file photo

*After*



SHPO file photo

*Before*



SHPO file photo

*After*

It has been two years since the city of St. Peter was devastated by the tornado of March 29, 1998. As part of the recovery effort, \$1.35 million was designated for historic preservation assistance in the form of a combination grant and deferred loan from the Minnesota State Legislature. The State Historic Preservation Office is administering these funds in partnership with the City of St. Peter and Region Nine Development Commission.

For 15 projects that have received final approval, the work is largely complete (see the list below). Time and again, owners report that without the technical and financial assistance available through this program, this work would not have been possible.

### Completed Tornado Disaster Assistance Projects

#### *Commercial Properties*

**Nicollet Hotel**, Minnesota Avenue at Park Row  
**Engesser Building**, 123-125 S. Minnesota Ave.  
**Commercial Building**, 300 S. Minnesota Ave.

#### *Residential Properties*

**Judge Benson House**, 110 N. Fourth St.  
**Davidson House**, 204 S. Seventh St.  
**First Norwegian Lutheran Church**, 213 N. Third St.  
**Gault House**, 420 N. Minnesota Ave.  
**Jensen House**, 614 S. Washington Ave.  
**John A. Johnson House**, 418 N. Third St.  
**Miles B. Johnson House**, 520 N. Third St.  
**Schumacher House**, 202 N. Third St.  
**House**, 1114 S. Fourth St.  
**House**, 408 N. Minnesota Ave.  
**House**, 412 N. Minnesota Ave.  
**House**, 526 Park Row

*These photographs taken immediately after the 1998 tornado in St. Peter and following completion of repairs to the Schumacher House (above) and the Miles B. Johnson House (below) illustrate just two projects completed with SHPO assistance.*

# Celebrate National Preservation Week: May 14-20

The National Trust for Historic Preservation, which has sponsored Preservation Week since its inception in 1971, announced that the theme for this year is "Taking America's Past into the Future." Richard Moe, president of the National Trust, stated that "The millennium is a time to reflect on where we've been and where we're going. This year's theme celebrates that link between past and future, challenging us to plan for the issues that will confront us in the years to come. It is essential that we be vigilant, flexible and well informed in order to deal with the rapid changes that are sure to have an impact on our irreplaceable historic treasures."

In Minnesota, local preservation organizations all around the state have planned events to celebrate during National Preservation Week.

The State Historic Preservation Office and other Twin Cities organizations have organized a series of events that apply this year's theme to the history of neighborhoods. Events for Preservation Week 2000 are listed here.

*Free admission. All events begin at 7 p.m. unless otherwise noted.*

## ExtraOrdinary Places

*Explore the history of Twin Cities neighborhoods during Historic Preservation Week, May 14-20, 2000.*

This year's Preservation Week partners hope to create an awareness of and appreciation for the history of Twin Cities neighborhoods. To accomplish this task, the partners will co-sponsor a series of low-key lectures focused on neighborhood history at Minneapolis and St. Paul branch libraries. Intended primarily for adult audiences, the lectures will describe the factors that have contributed to the development and evolution of the built environment in each neighborhood.

For a Preservation Week kit containing a poster, sample publicity materials and tips on promoting Preservation Week, call the National Trust Office of Communications at 202/588-6141.

## MINNEAPOLIS

*Monday, May 15*

### **The Development of North Minneapolis**

Garneth Peterson  
Historian and Planner, BRW Inc.,  
Minneapolis  
*Sumner Branch Library*  
611 Emerson Ave. N., 612/630-6390

*Monday, May 15*

### **A History of Tangletown**

Tom Balcom  
Historian, Minneapolis  
*Washburn Branch Library*  
5244 Lyndale Ave. S., 612/630-6500

*Tuesday, May 16*

### **In the Shadow of the City: A history of the Loring Park neighborhood**

Steve Trimble  
State Representative, St. Paul  
*Minneapolis Woman's Club*  
410 Oak Grove Street; 612/673-2996

*Thursday, May 18*

### **Hiding in Plain Sight: Minneapolis's first neighborhood: A History of Marcy-Holmes**

Penny Petersen  
Historian and author, Minneapolis  
*Southeast Branch Library*  
1222 S.E. 4th Street; 612/630-6850

*Friday, May 19, 12 noon*

### **The Future of Minneapolis Neighborhoods**

Judith Martin  
Director of the University of Minnesota's  
Urban Studies Program

### **The Future of the Community Libraries**

Amy Ryan  
Chief of Minneapolis Community  
Libraries  
*Heritage Hall*  
*Minneapolis Central Library*  
300 Nicollet Mall; 612/630-6170.

*Sponsored by The Friends of the Minneapolis Public Library, the Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission, the Minneapolis Empowerment Zone, the Citizens for a Loring Park Community, and the State Historic Preservation Office of the Minnesota Historical Society.*

## **Mark Your Calendar! 21st Annual Historic Preservation Conference**

Thursday and Friday, Sept. 28-29, 2000  
*Alverna Center, Winona*

Watch for a postcard with more details next month. For more information and registration materials, call 651/296-5434.

## SAINT PAUL

*Monday, May 15*

### **St. Anthony Park: Portrait of a Community**

David Lanegran  
Professor of Geography, Macalester  
College, St. Paul.  
*St. Anthony Park Branch Library*  
2245 Como Avenue; 651/642-0411

*Thursday, May 18*

### **The Development of St. Paul's East Side**

Garneth Peterson  
Historian and Planner, BRW Inc.,  
Minneapolis  
*Arlington Hills Branch Library*  
1105 Greenbrier Street; 651/793-3930

*Saturday, May 20, 2:00 p.m.*

### **A History of Highland Park**

Paul Clifford Larson  
Architectural Historian and Author,  
St. Paul  
*Highland Park Branch Library*  
1974 Ford Parkway; 651/695-3700

*Sponsored by The Friends of the Saint Paul Public Library and the State Historic Preservation Office of the Minnesota Historical Society.*

*With concrete detailing by sculptor John K. Daniels, the Washburn Park Watertower in Minneapolis's Tangletown area has been a neighborhood landmark since 1932.*

*SHPO file photo*





# Nike Missile Site near Farmington Being Reviewed Under Section 106 Process

The **Minnesota Preservation Planner** is published and distributed in January, April, July and October by the State Historic Preservation Office of the Minnesota Historical Society. Information for each issue should be received by the editor no later than one month before the publication date at the Minnesota Historical Society, 345 Kellogg Blvd. W., St. Paul, MN 55102-1906. For further information call 651/296-5434.

Material from this issue may be reprinted with the following credit line: Reprinted with permission from the **Minnesota Preservation Planner**, published by the Minnesota Historical Society, Vol. XI, No. 2, Spring 2000. To reprint material that has been reprinted with permission from another source, contact the originating publication.

Upon request, this publication can be made available in alternative formats: audiotape, large print or computer disk. Unless otherwise noted, photographic images in the **Planner** are from the State Historic Preservation Office, Minnesota Historical Society.

This newsletter has been financed in part with federal funds from the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, through the Minnesota Historical Society under the provisions of the national Historic Preservation Act as amended. However, the contents and opinions do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Department of the Interior, nor does the mention of trade names or commercial products constitute endorsement or recommendations by the Department of the Interior.

Regulations of the U.S. Department of the Interior strictly prohibit unlawful discrimination in departmental federally assisted programs on the basis of race, color, national origin, age or disability. Any person who believes he or she has been discriminated against in any program, activity or facility operated by a recipient of federal assistance should write to: Director, Equal Opportunity Program, U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

**Britta Bloomberg**, Editor  
**Michael Koop**, Assistant Editor  
**James Smith**, Assistant Editor  
**Kate Raver**, Layout

<http://www.mnhs.org>

When the United States Congress abolished the Bureau of Mines several years ago, various properties administered by the Bureau were not needed by the U.S. Department of the Interior, and the process of offering them for sale or transfer began.

One of these properties is a former missile base near Farmington in Dakota County, known historically as the NIKE Hercules Missile Launch Site. The base was built during the second construction phase, called Hercules, of the U.S. Army's surface-to-air missile Cold War defense program. The site, which contains 21 contributing buildings and structures, represents an important element of a national defense system that protected 20 major U.S. cities from direct military attack by Soviet Union inter-

continental bombers during the years 1959 to 1971.

Currently, the base is under the jurisdiction of the General Services Administration, which has initiated consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. The site must first be offered to other federal agencies, and then can be offered to other units of government. Should no new owner be found who is willing and able to preserve the site, the SHPO has recommended that GSA record the structures and buildings to the standards of the Historic American Engineering Record before transfer.

Any comments on this property should be directed to SHPO at 651/296-5462.

## We Want to Know What You Think

The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) wants your comments and suggestions about preserving Minnesota's historic resources. Your ideas will help SHPO identify issues and establish priorities for the 2000-2001 work plan and in the years ahead. The statewide historic preservation plan serves as the blueprint for allocating resources for SHPO's annual work plan; a new statewide plan will be issued in the fall of 2000. Drafts will be available for review and comment in early April.

If you have comments or suggestions for the annual work plan or if you would like to request a review copy of the draft statewide plan, please contact: Minnesota SHPO, 345 Kellogg Blvd. W., St. Paul, MN 55102 or call Michael Koop at 651/296-5451; e-mail: michael.koop@mnhs.org.



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

NonProfit  
Organization  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
St. Paul, MN  
Permit No. 854