



MINNESOTA

Preservation Planner

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



Opening night at the Guthrie Theater, May 1963.

Will the curtain rise again?

The debate over the future of the 1963 Guthrie Theater building in Minneapolis is among the most visible, and challenging, preservation issues of the year. Although the State Historic Preservation Office announced its opinion in March that the building is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, there remains a likelihood that it will be demolished.

Last summer the adjacent Walker Art Center, owner of the site, announced its plans to raze the building for its own expansion after the Guthrie moves to a new home on the Mississippi riverfront in 2005. To assess

the building's historical importance and its eligibility for nomination to the National Register, the State Historic Preservation Office undertook an evaluation of significance. What we hoped to bring to the table through that evaluation was a meaningful discussion of the Guthrie's historical significance in the history of American regional theater. Meanwhile, in December 2001 the Walker received from the Minneapolis City Council the demolition permit it had sought – a decision made before completion of the SHPO's anticipated

Guthrie Theater *continued on page 3*

CALENDAR

PUBLIC MEETINGS ON HISTORIC PRESERVATION

The State Historic Preservation Office will host a series of public meetings to discuss historic preservation planning as it relates to the needs of the general public, government agencies and communities throughout Minnesota.

We seek your input as we review goals of the statewide preservation plan issued in 2000 and set priorities for our 2002-03 work plan.

Meetings begin at 7 p.m.; receptions at 6:30 p.m. No advance registration is required. For more information call Michael Koop, 651-296-5451, or e-mail michael.koop@mnhs.org.

April 11: Waseca, Waseca County Historical Society, 315 Second Ave. N.E.

May 2: Fergus Falls, River Inn, 133 Mill St. S.

MEETINGS AND WORKSHOPS

April 4: Grants Review Committee meeting, 9 a.m., Minnesota History Center, 345 Kellogg Blvd. W., St. Paul. For agenda information, call David Grabitske, 651-297-4416.

April 20: Minnesota Barn Preservation Workshop, Farmamerica, near Waseca. This day-long workshop requires advance registration. Cost: \$35 for MHS members, \$40 for nonmembers. See the April issue of the *Minnesota History Interpreter* for details. To register call Michele Decker, 651-296-5434.

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CALENDAR

May 12-18: National Preservation Week. "Preserving the Spirit of Place" is the theme of this year's week-long celebration. For tips on planning and promoting Preservation Week events, visit www.nationaltrust.org/preservationweek.

May 14: "Whose House Was This?" 6-7:30 p.m. Learn how to use resources such as city directories and photographs to uncover your house history. MHS Library, 345 Kellogg Blvd. W., St. Paul. \$3 for MHS members, \$7 for nonmembers. Registration required; call 651-296-2143.

May 21: 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.

SAVED

Hennepin County: Chicago Milwaukee St. Paul & Pacific Depot and Train Shed (1897-99), Minneapolis.

After more than 25 years of standing shuttered and empty, the Milwaukee Road depot in downtown Minneapolis is back on track. A complete rehabilitation converted the depot into a hotel with water park and enclosed the 625-foot-long train shed in glass for conversion to a year-round skating rink. The marble-floored great hall and other waiting areas in the depot will be used for events such as receptions and weddings. The \$50 million project benefited from federal preservation tax incentives.



Milwaukee Road depot and train shed in 1978 (top) before rehabilitation and in 2000 (bottom) after completion of a \$50 million conversion.

REGISTRATION

Recent additions to the National Register of Historic Places

Renville County: Heins Block (1896), 102-104 N. Ninth St., Olivia. Prepared by Margaret Sabongi.

Rice County: Trondhjem Norwegian Lutheran Church (1899), 8501 Garfield Ave., Lonsdale. Prepared by David C. Anderson.



Built in 1896, the Heins Block was Olivia's most prominent 19th-century commercial building. Tenants included the Heins and Byers hardware store, two banks, the local telephone company, a law firm, barber shop, and physician and dentist offices. The building's location in the heart of downtown played a crucial role in spurring the development of Olivia's central business district.



Located on the highest point of land for miles around, Trondhjem Lutheran Church and cemetery served as a focal point for Rice County's Norwegian immigrants, scattered on farmsteads across the county. Through Norwegian-language worship, education and church-sponsored social activities, members of the congregation maintained their ethnic heritage. Today the church is a meeting place for the Trondhjem Community Preservation Society.

Pipestone creates online tour

Itinerary features city's National Register properties

Armchair travelers, take note. Here's your chance to tour Pipestone's National Register historic sites without leaving home. They're all just a mouse-click away at www.cr.nps.gov/travel/pipestone.

Pipestone is the ninth of more than 30 communities across the country working with the National Park Service to create online travel itineraries featuring properties listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The itineraries are part of the Department of the Interior's strategy to revitalize communities by promoting public awareness of history and encouraging tourists to visit historic places throughout the nation.

Partnering with the NPS is the Pipestone Heritage Preservation Commission, which developed the Pipestone itinerary of 30 historic places that illustrate the region's history. Featured are buildings of locally quarried Sioux quartzite that comprise the Pipestone Commercial Historic District and reflect the community's

architectural heritage.

Visitors to the web site also will learn about the area's distinctive natural landscape, pipestone quarrying by American Indians, and the importance of railroad and quarrying enterprises to Pipestone County's growth and prosperity.

For each property on the tour there are a description of the place's significance, historic photographs and information about public access. Supporting essays offer a historical overview of the county and look at recent downtown revitalization efforts in the city of Pipestone.



Locally quarried Sioux quartzite gives Pipestone's Commercial Historic District its distinctive flavor. To visit a selection of the area's historic sites, go to www.cr.nps.gov/travel/pipestone.

Through this virtual tour, project partners hope to persuade travelers to make Pipestone a destination for their next trip.

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evaluation. In addition, the Walker has since announced that it would object to listing on the National Register.

Evaluating the significance of the Guthrie building was particularly challenging on a number of fronts. First was the question of the building's physical appearance. Did the Ralph Rapson-designed building retain sufficient integrity to qualify under the National Register's criterion of architectural significance? Our conclusion was that it did not. Over the years, the exterior façade had been changed dramatically. The interior, too,

had undergone changes though its basic integrity remained. Second, the structure is only 39 years old. Properties usually must be at least 50 years old to be eligible for listing on the National Register. The Guthrie's "young" age further complicated the case.

We next turned our attention to the criterion of historical association as a gauge of eligibility. On those grounds we determined that the building did merit listing. In the eyes of many, Sir Tyrone Guthrie and his theater put Minneapolis on America's cultural map.

The Guthrie is at the heart of the

state's vital theater community, and people feel passionate about its future. Many citizens hope to continue the debate by examining alternatives to demolition – reuse, rehabilitation, public stewardship – in deciding whether it is feasible to save the building.

It's the tragic truth in our work that some resources will be lost. Yet others miraculously survive and become causes for celebration when new uses for them are found. Which will it be for Minneapolis's Guthrie Theatre?

– *Britta L. Bloomberg, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer*

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For address corrections call Michele Decker at 651-296-5434 or e-mail michele.decker@mnhs.org.

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Britta Bloomberg, Editor

Michael Koop, Assistant Editor

Mary Ann Nord, Assistant Editor

Kate Raver, Layout

www.mnhs.org

Preservation Conference set for Sept. 12-13

Mark your calendars now for Minnesota's 23rd Annual Statewide Historic Preservation Conference, to be held Sept. 12-13 in Owatonna on the campus of the former State School for Neglected and Dependent Children. Sponsored by the State Historic Preservation Office, the conference will be hosted by the City of Owatonna, the Owatonna Arts Center and the Owatonna Convention and Visitors Bureau.

Dual themes anchor two days of lectures, working sessions and field trips: finding new uses for Minnesota's historic state institutions, and training for heritage preservation commissions, which will culminate in a mock commission meeting.

Keynote speakers include Pratt Cassidy, former executive director of the National Alliance of Preservation



Preservation conference field trips will visit a pair of Prairie School houses designed by Purcell and Elmslie as well as Owatonna's National Farmers' Bank (above), a National Historic Landmark designed by Louis Sullivan in 1907-08.

Commissions, and Harvey Ronglien, who lived at the Owatonna school from ages 4 to 15.

For more information call 651-296-5434, see future issues of the *Planner* or, in coming months, check the Minnesota Historical Society's web site at www.mnhs.org.



MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

345 Kellogg Boulevard West
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55102-1906

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