

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

Preservation PLANNER

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Lessons Learned in Disaster Recovery

The focus of the tornado disaster response efforts of the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) in the wake of the March 29 tornadoes that hit south central Minnesota has shifted from emergency response to the work of recovery. While the office had considerable experience in dealing with the disasters of the 1993 and 1997 floods, never before had

French Second Empire school is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Despite efforts by preservationists to buy time while options to restore the building could be explored, the Arts and Heritage Center board, owners of the building, voted to proceed with demolition.

But not all the news on the historic preservation front is so dark. Early engineering reports on the Nicollet Hotel, prominently situated on the north end of Minnesota Avenue and also listed on the Register, indicated that it had been structurally damaged beyond repair. It has since been purchased by new owners who are restoring the property.

SHPO files

SHPO files photo by Scott Anfinson



St. Peter Central School, above, in 1980; below, a few days after the March 29 tornado.

the direct impact on historic buildings been so significant. Historic properties in the Minnesota River town of St. Peter were especially hard hit.

The St. Peter Central School, pictured above, is one of the tragic losses. Designed by A. M. Radcliffe in 1869, the

SHPO staff and volunteer architects have been in contact with over 135 property owners. Many are expected to apply for assistance from the \$1 million gap financing earmarked for historic preservation that was appropriated by the Minnesota Legislature in April. The office has begun accepting pre-applications to determine whether properties and proposed preservation treatments are eligible for assistance.

The final applications and loan documents will be administered locally through the Region Nine Development Commission. The assistance is in the form of a combination grant and deferred loan; the loan is forgiven after five years

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

July 4 and Aug. 1: Archaeology Information Station: An Interpretive Program of Voices of the Valley, sponsored by the Institute for Minnesota Archaeology. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Hikers and bikers along the Cannon Valley Trail near Red Wing are invited to stop at a resource table to see artifacts, visit a site and pick up interpretive materials that highlight the archaeology of the Red Wing area. For additional information, call Rose Marie Bosshard, (612) 388-6188; or Beth Nodland, (612) 627-0315.

Aug. 18: State Review Board meeting, 7 p.m., Minnesota History Center, 345 Kellogg Blvd. W., St. Paul. For agenda information, call Michele Decker, (612) 296-5434.

Oct. 20-25: 52nd National Preservation Conference, Savannah, GA: "Art and Economics of Preservation." For details call the National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1-800-944-6847.

NOMINATION DEADLINE

July 31: Preservation Honor Awards. To be presented by the Preservation Alliance of Minnesota in October. Categories include brick-and-mortar projects, individual contributions and community efforts. For details call the Preservation Alliance of Minnesota, (612) 341-8140.

GRANTS

In the 1998 Session, the Minnesota Legislature approved funding for the County and Local Preservation Projects grants program administered by the Minnesota

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Historical Society. A total of \$ 975,000 was appropriated for a matching grants program to county and local jurisdictions for historic preservation projects of a capital nature. Grant recipients must be public entities and must match state funds on at least an equal basis, and the facilities must publicly owned. For the fall 1998 grants cycle, up to \$450,000 will be awarded; the balance will be available for award in 1999.

To receive a copy of the application materials, call or write the Grants Office of the Minnesota Historical Society, 345 Kellogg Blvd. W., St. Paul, MN 55102-1906; telephone: (612) 296-5478; fax (612) 282-2374.

GRANT INFORMATION MEETINGS

July 21: 3 p.m. Alexandria (Douglas County Historical Society, 1219 So. Nokomis)

July 22: 3 p.m. Owatonna (Administration Building, City Offices, 540 West Hills Circle)

GRANT APPLICATION DEADLINES

Aug. 7: Pre-applications due
Sept. 4: Applications due
Oct. 15: Grants Review Committee meets

Lessons After the Tornado

Continued from page 1

if the owner continues to occupy the property.

Lessons

In dealing with historic properties, two of the lessons we learned are seemingly contradictory: respond quickly—but don't take unnecessary action too quickly.

In the immediate hours after a disaster, issues of public safety must come first. A property may be condemned as unsafe, but condemnation does not necessarily mean that the building cannot be restored or rehabilitated. For historic preservation to be a viable option, a few measures must be taken quickly: thoroughly check for damage; make the building watertight; save architectural details or features—even if they don't belong to your building—and ask for help. The historical architects at SHPO are experienced in dealing with these situations.

The mechanisms in place to help owners deal with a disaster can be a disincentive for preservation. An insurance adjuster may declare a damaged building a total loss, or a community may feel pressed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to apply

for federal assistance to cover the cost of demolition. However, even putting a building on the FEMA demolition list does not *require* that it be demolished; a preservation solution may surface if demolition can be delayed.

Where historic resources are concerned, other values need to be considered. The Legislature knew this when it decided that additional resources would be needed in the recovery package to help bring back the special historic qualities that distinguish a community like St. Peter. It takes time to find a preservation solution for a damaged property, which may require locating a new owner and a new use. For this reason, it's important not to take unnecessary action too quickly.

We also learned from the experience in St. Peter that people from all across the state are willing to help preserve the historic character of the community. The exemplary outpouring of volunteer architects and the incredible level of coordination among the partners involved in recovery are never-to-be-forgotten lessons.

Britta L. Bloomberg
Deputy SHPO

REGISTRATION

Recent Additions to the National Register of Historic Places

Hennepin County:

Anne C. and Frank B. Semple House, 100-104 W. Franklin Ave., Minneapolis. Prepared by Margaret Sabongi.

Thompson Summer House, 3012 Shoreline Dr., Minnetonka Beach. Prepared by Stacey Morris and Jackie Sluss.

Stearns County:

St. Cloud Commercial Historic District, W. St. Germain St. between Fifth Ave. and Tenth Ave., St. Cloud. Prepared by Susan Granger and Kay Grossman.

Winona County:

Winona Masonic Temple, 255 Main St., Winona. Prepared by Christine Curran and Charlene Roise.

SHPO files



Above: Located on the shore of Lafayette Bay of Lake Minnetonka, the Thompson Summer House (1887) embodies the patterns of leisure and recreation of upper-class Minneapolitans before the turn of the century. Consistently used as a summer home since its construction, it is one of the oldest extant summer residences on one of Minnesota's largest and most popular lakes.



SHPO files

Left: The Winona Masonic Temple (1909) held the regional headquarters of the Scottish Rite Order of Freemasonry for southern Minnesota. The temple's 98 hand-painted theatrical scenic backdrops, the largest of only two such collections remaining in the state, represent the work of Sosman and Landis of Chicago, one of the country's earliest and most influential scene-painting studios in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

SURVEY COMPLETED FOR STILLWATER'S GREELEY RESIDENTIAL AREA

A survey of the Greeley residential neighborhood in Stillwater was recently completed by Donald Empson for the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and the Stillwater Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) through a Certified Local Government (CLG) grant. The survey covered more than 100 acres and encompassed nearly 250 buildings. The Greeley neighborhood was the third residential area in Stillwater to be systematically surveyed in as many years; previous surveys identified historic resources in the North Hill and South Hill neighborhoods. The Stillwater HPC divided the city's neighborhoods into Historic Preservation Planning Areas and intends to survey the entire city systematically over the next decade.

Most houses in the Greeley area were built in the 1880s and 1890s, about 10 to 20 years later than the other two neighborhoods in the original townsite. One of the most active builders of houses in Greeley was the Stillwater Manufacturing Company, which had 120 employees in the late 19th century. Compared to the North and South Hill areas, where residences are much larger and illustrate a wide range of architectural styles popular during the mid- to late-19th century, Greeley's houses tend to be smaller in

scale and represent vernacular forms typically built by contractors and carpenters.

Original residents of the Greeley neighborhood comprised Stillwater's working class and were often related to each other through marriage or by occupation. For example, five men who lived in the same block of North Martha Street

were employed by the Stillwater Manufacturing Company, four of them as carpenters.

Although many houses in the survey area have undergone some alterations, others have retained a good deal of physical integrity and are in the process of being sensitively rehabilitated.



This "Bird's Eye View" shows the north part of the Greeley Residential Area in Stillwater in 1879. From the report Greeley Residential Area; Stillwater, Washington County, Minnesota; submitted to the City of Stillwater Heritage Preservation Committee by Empson Archives, Stillwater, July 1997. p. 30.

SAVED

With funds provided in part through the state County and Local Preservation Project Grants-in-Aid program, the deteriorated brick and terra cotta of the New Ulm Post Office (1910, right) was tuckpointed, its front steps were repaired, and its windows replaced. The Post Office, shown here in the 1970s, is home to the Brown County Historical Society.



SHPO files



SHPO files

The Sioux quartzite Pipestone County Courthouse (1900, left) was remodeled and restored thanks to the foresight of citizens who approved issuing county revenue bonds for the project. County commissioners and a citizen advisory board worked with Baldrige and Associates Architects of Sioux Falls, S.D., to update the building while respecting the integrity of its original architectural features. The building is shown here as it looked in 1996.



OTTAWA, MINNESOTA, TO BE FOCUS OF RE-SURVEY

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This summer the unincorporated hamlet of Ottawa, situated on the Minnesota River in LeSueur County, will be the subject of an intensive level survey by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). Platted in 1855 and well-connected to both river and railroad transportation, the village exhibited great potential in its early years. It attracted a variety of businesses, including a grist mill, a limestone quarry, lime kilns, a brickyard and a fireworks factory. The community never lived up to its promise, however by the mid-1950s, most of the original enterprises had failed, and the school and post office had closed.

The most visible remnant of the community is a small collection of well-crafted stone buildings erected between 1859 and the mid-1870s. Seven of those

buildings were listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1982, but the documentation for that nomination is sparse, and the survey that identified the seven stone buildings needs to be updated. The site is currently threatened by proposed expansion of a sand and gravel quarry, and the entire hamlet was recently added to the list of "Minnesota's Ten Most Endangered Historic Properties" by the Preservation Alliance of Minnesota.

Working with SHPO on the project is intern Will Stark, a graduate student in historic preservation planning and participant in Cornell University's Cooperative Summer Internship Program. Funding for the project was provided, in part, through the generous support of John A. and Katha L. Chamberlain.



The stone buildings of Ottawa form a charming remnant of a Minnesota River village that was once a center of stone quarrying. Their future is uncertain because they stand on land that is a prime target for an advancing silica sand mining operation.

Courtesy Preservation Alliance of Minnesota; photo by Andrew Baugnet



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