HISTORIC PRESERVATION IN MINNESOTA: THE PLACES AND PEOPLE WHO MAKE IT WORK

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Interior of auditorium of Hearing School, Aurora, Minnesota

photo by Mesabi Daily News

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SEPTEMBER/ OCTOBER 1998
**President’s Notes**

by Roger Brooks

**Little Victories**

Working with elected officials and others, preservationists have racked up a few victories recently. The Preservation Alliance urged Minneapolis Mayor Sharon Sayles Belton to veto the city council action that would have derailed the renovation of the Milwaukee Road depot. The mayor then urged the Alliance to work with council members to explain why it is worth fighting for this long-sought-after project. That gave the prospective developers and the labor unions enough time to arrive at a compromise that may allow the project to go forward.

In Stillwater, the historic lift bridge got a reprieve when Richard Braun, the former state transportation commissioner who was charged with responsibility to come up with a new plan to span the St. Croix, presented a range of options, all of which left the old bridge in place. The Alliance had lobbied for that outcome. Although the National Park Service may continue to insist that the number of “intrusions” into the river valley be kept to a minimum and that building a new bridge would mean the old one had to come down, there are still plenty of good arguments to keep and restore the old bridge, too. The Alliance will continue to work toward that outcome.

These are little victories, not big ones. But they should be celebrated nonetheless. The Alliance will continue to help local preservation groups throughout Minnesota to protect and restore important historic resources. We'll keep you, our supporters, apprised of our progress.
Alliance Fall Festival to Feature
Historic House Restoration Expert

Mark your calendar for November 14

Come join us at the Preservation Alliance's Fall Festival featuring an entertaining presentation by Bob Yapp; the Host, Creator, Writer and Co-Executive Producer of About Your House with Bob Yapp! Bob's television program is partially underwritten by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The date is Saturday, November 14, 5 - 9:00 pm at St. Anthony Main Centre, Minneapolis. Watch for your invitation in the mail.

Bob Yapp is the new "house guy" on the block and he has a message for America: Preservation doesn't cost, it pays! And, Bob should know - he has been a renovation contractor, house inspector, historic property developer and he's seen preservation projects all over the country.

From the very beginning, Bob has dedicated his professional life to housing and woodworking. In the mid-1970's he spent several years as an apprentice furniture and cabinetmaker. Soon afterward he bought his first house -- a craftsman bungalow -- to renovate.

Since that time, Bob has been involved in the restoration or renovation of over 130 historic homes, many of them award winning. He usually has two or three complete restoration projects underway at any time. His efforts in neighborhood revitalization of historic areas in the Midwest are renowned.

Bob has also authored and co-authored numerous wood working and home improvement articles in national magazines. Bob, his wife, Pat, their two children and two big dogs live just off the Mississippi River in Rock Island, Illinois. Their home is an 1878 Queen Anne that Pat restored on her own.

With an eye toward preservation, Bob will bring tips and insights for the do-it-yourselfer and also provide necessary advice and guidance to those who prefer to hire a contractor. Other topics may include cost estimates and pay back projections, demystification of contractors' jargon, hints on preventing future problems and sources for additional information.

Preservation Alliance Membership Incentive and Book Promotion

The Preservation Alliance of Minnesota and the Afton Historical Society Press have come together this fall to create a special opportunity for our new and renewing members and those friends of the Alliance. For a limited time this fall, individual members and family or household members can build their personal libraries and renew their memberships at a special $65 rate and receive a free copy of the MINNESOTA ARCHITECT The Life and Work of Clarence H. Johnson by Paul Clifford Larson. Larson won a 1997 Minnesota book award for his book about this remarkable man and his contributions to the state's built environment. The Afton Historical Society Press publishes a number of award winning books on Minnesota subjects, and the Alliance is pleased to partner with them to offer our members a valuable incentive and increase their awareness of Minnesota topics.

Members renewing their membership at the $100 level and above will automatically receive an autographed copy of the book. Contact the Preservation Alliance office at 612 / 341-8140 for more details.
If all goes well, two abandoned and demolition-threatened school buildings in Aurora may become a regional arts center. In late August, the Mesabi Heritage Society, Aurora city officials and members of the Aurora School Board selected a development proposal from five submissions to give a probationary go-ahead, with a follow-up review in late September. The arts center, proposed by two Minnesota residents Cary Watson and Lu Ann Mulder, was selected because of compatibility with nearby schools, the recognized need for regional arts development, and what Mesabi Heritage Society member Robin Vora calls "the high energy" of the Watson-Mulder team.

Vora credits the May-June 1998 issue of 'Preservation,' a publication of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. It advertised the buildings in their "Bargain Basement" section which drew over 30 inquiries that developed into five proposals. Some months earlier, the Aurora School Board granted a year's delay in demolition for the Mesabi Heritage Society to provide a workable re-use for the two buildings. Two years ago the Preservation Alliance placed the Johnson and Hearding Schools on the Alliance's list of Top Ten Endangered Historic Properties of 1996.

The arts center would contain artists' live-in studios, community education classrooms, workshops, and possibly a restaurant, foundry and bookstore. Key to this proposal will be extensive fundraising. Vora says the City of Aurora may provide coordination and assist with fundraising.

Early in the second decade of the 20th century, the Iron Range City of Aurora built two grand school buildings that formed the beginnings of an educational campus. The architecture of the Hearding High School, built in 1911, included an auditorium featuring leaded windows and lacy gothic arches supporting a graceful vaulted ceiling and a copper roof. Elsewhere in the building, mosaic tile floors and an ornate carved stone entrance make Hearding one of the finest school spaces in the state. The Johnson Grade School, built a year earlier, is somewhat restrained in design but functions as an integral component in the school campus. Both school buildings were designed by the Duluth architectural firm Puck and Holstead.

The historical significance for the Johnson and Hearing was their role in educating and assimilating thousands of miners' children who were growing up as second-generation immigrants in ethnic diverse neighborhoods. Aurora adults of the early 20th century also benefited from naturalization orientation and night school classes. Architecturally, these buildings represent a high degree of design and construction, reflecting the commitment Iron Range communities placed in using tax funding derived from mining.

Each two-story building contains approximately 25,000 square feet. The re-use study performed for both buildings indicated housing as an appropriate use, but Vora noted the redevelop-
ment costs would result in rental rates higher than in local apartments. Commercial use is hampered by an ADA requirement for elevators required to make the structures handicapped accessible. The estimated $80,000 to $100,000 elevator cost pushes total development costs beyond economic feasibility for the typical reuse, according to Vora, who added, "I didn't think ADA is intended to destroy historic buildings."

Aurora, with a population of 1,966, is located 15 miles east of Virginia or 80 miles north of Duluth, and its several long-productive iron ore mines have provided a steady local economy. Superior National Forest is close by, and Giants' Ridge, six miles away, has introduced tourism to the area. A local electronic factory located in a former school building provides a small but potentially expandable high-tech base.

The Mesabi Heritage Society has been working to find a development solution for these buildings. The City of Aurora financed a re-use study conducted two years ago. Assistance from the Iron Range Rehabilitation Board has not materialized. The buildings' owner, the Aurora School Board, has only two members interested in supporting re-use. The school board insists any re-use of the buildings be compatible with nearby schools, which put the arts center high on their preference list. Other proposals among the five submissions were affordable housing, a critical need in the Aurora area. Vora says several industrial companies planning plant expansions have built their facilities elsewhere where more housing is available.

Vora, a life-long resident of Aurora, says the Mesabi Heritage Society is working to overcome indolence and form a coalition with other local organizations. He muses, "The design and materials in these buildings are irreplaceable. When I look up the street they dominate the scene."

He also notes the tight-knit aspect of these communities is being supplemented by retirees moving into the area, bed and breakfast inns, hotels and growing tourism. With these changes he observes, an arts center may be an appropriate contribution to Aurora's economic development.

-- Robert Roscoe

Preservationists You Should Know

David Heide - David Heide Design, St. Paul

Three years ago, David Heide was approached by the Grand Avenue Design Guidelines Committee to design a streetscape plan for Grand Avenue in St. Paul. As a designer for many years with MacDonald and Mack Architects, well-known for historic preservation expertise, David was uniquely prepared for the task of finding a style for this project that would be creative, and uniquely suited to the Grand Avenue area.

The changing face of Grand Avenue, as well as the closing of several well-known institutions, including Knowlans Supermarket, precipitated the discussion of the street's evolution. The committee wanted to preserve and improve the pedestrian nature of Grand Avenue. One problematic area was the intersection of Victoria and Grand. In particular, the parking lot at that corner. David calls it a "missing tooth" in the otherwise excellent dental work that is Grand Avenue.

The committee decided that a transit shelter was the answer to that gap, and David set about designing a transit shelter par excellence. Working with neighborhood residents, business owners, and Metro Transit, the group had the site cleared of the old transit shelter, installed attractive pavers, benches, landscaping, and an iron fence on the site. At the same time, they constructed the foundation for the new shelter.

Funding from the neighborhood, business owners, and the STAR (Sales Tax Revitalization) Program will make this transit shelter a reality. His elevation drawings of the shelter present a seamless copper roof, and two outdoor seating areas, as well as a heated indoor area. The group will be working on other sites and streetscape ideas such as bike racks, seating areas, pay phones, trash receptacles, and "pedestrian friendly" amenities.

-- Heather Worthington
By Frank Edgerton Martin

Starting with modest beginnings at the end of the Civil War, the state of Minnesota managed to build up one of the nation's largest and most urbane universities in less than a lifetime. In so doing, University leaders helped to build a rich mosaic of campus architecture and landscapes from many periods.

Today, it is this discordant, rich, and sometimes jarring diversity of inherited open spaces and building styles that makes the Twin Cities campuses so memorable. These "layers of time" include the romantic, curving site plans of H.W.S. Cleveland's design for the Knoll, the original campus front yard on University Avenue, the East River Road designed by Warren Manning to offer the campus's first connection to the River and, most dramatically, the Beaux Arts axiality of Cass Gilbert's 1908 vision for the Northrop Mall—perhaps Minnesota's greatest outdoor room.

Designing for the Campus as a Whole

The sheer audacity of Cass Gilbert's legacy seems even more striking today when campus planners have their hands full simply trying to meet ADA and asbestos requirements. Just as architects are now often beholden to the strictures of outside construction managers, campus planners at large universities generally report to facilities administrators whose bottom line is meeting code and minimizing liability within projected budgets. Such cost-benefit criteria do not recognize a tangible "return" for seemingly vague notions of "character" or "preservation value" of the campus.

The University's challenge today is to move from a "project oriented" design culture that builds monuments to an "urban campus" design culture that also seeks to build a city campus distinct in character, visually connected to the Mississippi, and respectful of ecology and streetlife. One critical layer of this comprehensive approach is the ability to evaluate buildings and landscapes from every period of the U of M's history.

The University of Minnesota Preservation Plan

Completed in 1997, The University of Minnesota Preservation Plan is one of the most thorough historic preservation studies ever carried out for a state University system. The 250-page plan is the University's first comprehensive effort to assess the historic resources and recommend strategies for their conservation. With over 1,000 buildings and 32,000 acres of land across the state, the University system's historic sites range from the Cloquet Forest Research Center to the Mineral Resources Research Center on the Minneapolis Campus.

Developed by Landscape Research and Hokanson/Lunning Associates, the U of M Preservation Plan reflects state-of-the-art thinking in historic preservation whereby landscapes are placed on an equal par with architecture, and all designed places are considered not as solitary works of art but as part of larger social contexts. Reading a draft of the plan, one is struck by how closely the history of the state in bound up with the physical evolution of the University campuses.

Building on the historic contexts, such as lumbering and mining, that shaped the University and the state, the new Preservation Plan is structured to create understandable criteria of historic significance.
UofM continued from page 6
and clear priorities for action. The
report's four main sections are:

Chapter 1: The Historic Contexts
- Education In Minnesota: The
  Territorial Period through Early
  Statehood
- Pioneer Foundations of the
  University (1851-1884)
- Presidential Initiative and
  Professional School Development
  (1884-1945)
- The Influence of Agriculture
  on the University of Minnesota
  (1862-1945)
- The Impact of Lumbering on
  University Education in Minnesota
  (1899-1945)
- Landscape Architecture and
  Campus Design (1872-1945)
- Campus Architecture (1851-
  1945)

Chapter 2: The Evaluation Report
The Evaluation Process and
Summaries

Chapter 3: The Management Plan
Recognition
Identification
Conservation

Chapter 4: Preservation Case Studies
Case studies for 12 historic
buildings and 8 prominent land-
scapes on the Twin Cities campus
that present a cross section of
preservation issues.

Institutional Memory and "Historic
Significance"
Moving beyond traditional
National Register of Historic Places
criteria of significance whereby
buildings are often valued for
architectural reasons or their associa-
tion with a famous person or event,
the Preservation Plan offers new
consideration of institutional criteria
such as how a building or landscape
relates to the history of the Minne-
sota and the unique history and
culture of the University itself.

The evaluation process ranked
each building or site along a 1 (low)
to 5 (high) scale on the following
criteria:

National Register Criteria
- Architectural/landscape design
- Association with architects/
builders/landscape architects

University of Minnesota Criteria
- Exterior condition
- Building code status
- Reuse/master plan compatibility
- Early campus
- University life and culture
- Prominent location or siting

While the first three criteria
encompass traditional National
Register standards, the remaining
criteria relate directly to the needs
of the University. "Exterior condi-
tion" and "Building code status"
gauge the costs necessary to main-
tain the building in coming years
and the costs for code compliance.

"Reuse/master plan compatibil-
ity" ranks the building's flexibility
for new uses, its receptiveness to
system updates, and its compatibil-
ity with the Twin Cities Campus
Master Plan described in this issue.

The criteria "Early campus" and
"University life and culture" recog-
nize the "associational value" of
places that are important to the

UofM continued on page 8
institutional memory of the University, but are not necessarily architecturally significant. If such criteria had been in place fifteen years ago, the aging hulk of Memorial Stadium might well have been viewed in a different light.

Today, associational criteria help us to appreciate such 19th century University gems as the Music Education Building (1888) — a long-forgotten building that poses significant reuse challenges yet tells a fascinating story of student life. Built as the Students' Christian Association, the Music Education Building is a classic example of a small, altered structure that plays a very important role in the institutional memory of the University.

The Plan notes that this nearly-forgotten Richardsonian Romanesque building, sited at corner of the Knoll, is one of only eight nineteenth-century buildings remaining on campus and the first to be built with private funds. At the center of an impassioned debate about the role of religion in Minnesota public institutions, “The Student Christian Association Building (later the YMCA) was deemed necessary to promote moral behavior on campus.” Today, this small structure serves a reminder of the separation of church and state at public universities. Yet, its private funding was also a forerunner for partnership between private groups and the larger institution.

Although broken up into many small spaces by numerous alterations and additions, the Music Education Building is still “solid as a rock” according to Steve Wymkoop, a seasoned carpenter at the University assigned to maintaining the historic district buildings around the Knoll.

Until recently, Music Education, along with several other 19th century buildings, was candidates for demolition because of their age and perceived maintenance costs. When examined purely on a cost/benefit level, many of the University's historic buildings, after years of neglect, can seem to offer a poor return on the dollar. Last year, President Yudof, realizing the relative rarity of these buildings, ordered a re-study of the numbers with an eye to reuse.

The new preservation thinking at the U is reflected in the largely successful $249 million capital request to the state legislature, a package that places strong emphasis on restoring Northrop Mall buildings for new initiatives in digital technology, cellular biology, and multimedia. With the remarkable scope of new projects now funded, preservation standards for renovation and the integration of new construction are needed almost immediately.

The Challenge of Daily Application

Despite its strong historic research and evaluation criteria, the Preservation Plan’s greatest implementation challenge is the thousands of day-to-day decisions made about campus maintenance. The University’s Construction Standards for both buildings and landscapes should be expanded to include specifications for renovations, maintenance, repair and replacement materials and methods. As an increasingly large number of renovation projects are outsourced to outside contractors, the core group of University staff who care deeply about the campus will inevitably atrophy.

These fine-grained standards for treatment and maintenance of historic sites assume a staff complement of crafts people at the U who
know and value the standards and know how to apply them. Valuing traditional crafts as part of the maintenance process also means allocating sufficient space for glass, metal and wood shops. In addition, the U of M, like all campuses, should find space for storing historic materials so that appropriate matches can be made when historic buildings are repaired or updated.

A Campus is More than Buildings

In the April, 1998 issue of Preservation Magazine, the U of M and President Yudof's commitment to preservation were profiled for a national audience. Having recently served as Provost at the University of Texas in Austin, Yudof is quoted saying that "I have been a critic of some of the modern architecture that we've put up on college campuses with no sense of it fits in with what was there. A campus is not just atomized buildings; it's how they all work together."

The University's new Preservation Plan is a roadmap for daily and long-term decision-making to create this greater whole. It is not a report to be shelved, but a living set of principles and methods for evaluating significance of properties as changes are proposed, for integrating new with old, for tending what the University has and building wisely. With its institutional focus and pragmatic concern for cost effective reuse, the Plan is also a model for universities across the country.

Great streets and campuses are usually not master planned and built at once, but evolve over time. They need to be overseen with policies for staffing, exterior design standards, and caring maintenance. The University of Minnesota is much more than a collection of capital projects. Stewarding the campus means understanding that urban universities are built by individuals, but their overall character is ultimately preserved by communities who have a clear understanding of history and campus quality—and the planning tools to protect them.

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Houses of Minnesota Writers

The Maud Hart Lovelace House

By Laura Weber

Ardent fans of the Betsy-Tacy children's books—and there are many—know the enchanting tales of a late Victorian girlhood written in the 1940s and 1950s by Maud Hart Lovelace (1892-1980) are based on Lovelace's own early life in turn-of-the-century Mankato. That is why a nondescript, vinyl-sided house in Mankato's Lincoln Park neighborhood is being restored by the Betsy-Tacy Society, one of the two Minnesota-based societies dedicated to keeping the Lovelace flame glowing. (The other is Maud Hart Lovelace Society, based in Minneapolis.)

332 Center Street was the childhood home of Lovelace's lifelong friend, Frances "Bick" Kenny, upon whom the character "Tacy" is based. Many of the characters of the 10 Betsy Tacy books are similarly based on Lovelace's real family and friends. They move through the streets, parks, and buildings of the author's Mankato childhood, many of which still exist. Lovelace (the "Betsy" of the series) grew up across the street at 333 Center Street, known in the books as Hill Street. The houses are located near the Lincoln Park Historic District.

They are not listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

When the 1881 "Tacy" house went into foreclosure in 1995, the Betsy Tacy Society was determined to purchase the house. The Lovelace fans initially lost out to another bidder, but when the first bidder's financing didn't go through, a second bid by the society was successful. The group purchased the house for $39,000 in July 1995. Though the house is not yet open to the public, it can be seen by appointment. The hope is to make the house an interpretive center with a live-in caretaker.

Lona Falczonski is the president of the 1,000-member Betsy-Tacy Society, many of whom make pilgrimages to Mankato. She described the house as "a HUD house in bad shape" when the Betsy Tacy Society took possession. Prior to foreclosure the tenants had been college students, who had "dropped whatever all over." Volunteers have painted all surfaces and taken up the carpet, revealing the maple floor underneath. The next goal is to restore the two porches and get the vinyl siding off, Falczonski said.
Preservation 101

What is the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office (MN SHPO)?

Minnesota's State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) operates within the Minnesota Historical Society (MHS), and its focus is the preservation of historic resources.

The State Historic Preservation Offices were created in 1966 with the passage of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA); there is a SHPO in each of the 50 states and the U.S. Territories. Recent amendments to the NHPA allow for American Indian tribes to participate in the SHPO network as Tribal Historic Preservation Offices. Each SHPO is mandated by this law to carry out certain functions related to the identification, evaluation, registration, and protection of historic properties. Historic properties include buildings, structures (such as bridges), archaeological resources, and objects (such as monuments).

One of the most widely known and recognized programs carried out by SHPOs is the nomination of properties in their respective jurisdictions to the National Register of Historic Places (please see "The National Register: Dispelling the Myths," July/August 1998, The Minnesota Preservationist). The SHPOs have engaged in extensive survey efforts to identify those properties that have the potential to be eligible for listing in the National Register; and, by the same token, they have identified many properties that do not meet the criteria for listing. The SHPOs are involved in the protection of historic resources through their participation in the Section 106 Review process, which requires federal agencies to work with the SHPOs in assessing the potential effects of their projects (and those of their applicants) on historic properties, and to mitigate those effects deemed to be adverse. Another way the SHPOs encourage protection of historic properties is through participation in the Rehabilitation Tax Credit program, which offers financial incentives to private owners in return for investing in their income-producing historic buildings.

The SHPOs receive federal funding from the National Park Service (NPS), which has been designated as the federal agency that administers the National Register of Historic Places program. A portion of this funding is passed on to the communities in each state and territory that participate in the Certified Local Government (CLG) program. With this funding, CLGs can conduct surveys of local historic resources, complete nominations of local historic properties to the National Register, and produce materials to educate the public about local historic resources, to name a few activities.

Enough of the generalities! Now we will move on to the specifics (some of them, at any rate) of the Minnesota SHPO. Each state and territory has determined where its SHPO will 'set up shop', and in Minnesota, the SHPO is housed within the Minnesota Historical Society; the MN SHPO is located in the Society's Historic Preservation, Field Services and Grants Department. Minnesota law designates the director of the Society as the State Historic Preservation Officer.

The MN SHPO continues to sponsor the survey of historic properties in the state. In 1997, a portion of its federal funding was utilized to employ independent contractors in both survey efforts and the completion of National Register nominations. The SHPO also used state funds through the Legislative Commission on Minnesota Resources to complete an intensive survey of underwater cultural resources.

As stated earlier, the National Register program is extremely popular throughout the country, and Minnesota is no exception. More than 1,450 properties in Minnesota are listed on the National Register. Included among the listings in 1997 were archaeological sites, bridges, individual buildings, and a commercial district.

In addition to the CLG grants that are available (see above), the MN SHPO administers two other grants programs: County and Local Preservation Projects Grants and State Grants-in-Aid. Initially authorized by the State Legislature in 1994, the County and Local Preservation Projects Grants Program relies on the use of state funds for capital projects that are sponsored primarily by county and local jurisdictions. There are ten separate eligible categories under the State Grants-in-Aid Program; the primary recipients of these funds are nonprofit organizations. Some states do not have state-supported grant programs for historic preservation, so we are very fortunate to have these programs in Minnesota.

Of course, the MN SHPO carries out the other programs mandated by the NHPA, including both the Section 106 Review process and the Rehabilitation Tax Credit program. In 1997, over 3500 federal activities were reviewed and commented upon. Nineteen tax credit projects were completed.
Interview With SOS Director Gary Schiff

The Save Our Shubert committee fulfills its name description

The mid-August Minneapolis City Council vote to move the embattled and bedraggled Shubert Theater off its Block E site to a location alongside the Hennepin Center for the Arts is a successful outcome to a year-long battle carried out by citizens of both of the Twin Cities who wrote letters and called public officials to plea for the Shubert's preservation.

Three factors have been critical to influencing the council decision: the daring decision by Artspace Projects, a developer of arts-related real estate who saw the opportunity to adjoin the Shubert with their Hennepin Center for the Arts building, the strong coverage and support by the Starb-Tribune, and the Save Our Shubert committee, (SOS) an ad hoc group of mostly young people previously uninitiated in the vagaries of historic preservation.

Minnesota Preservationist editor Robert Roscoe interviewed Gary Schiff, director of SOS, to ask how the group did their job. Schiff, age 26, was born in Niagara Falls, New York, works at the University of Minnesota Center of Continuing Education and is studying for a master's degree in urban planning at the Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs.

MP: "By the way, how do you feel personally about the Shubert victory?"

GS: "Very good. We averted the worst case scenario of demolition. If SOS hadn't joined with Artspace's campaign in the final weeks, there would have been seven council votes to demolish the Shubert."

MP: "What interested you in working to save the Shubert?"

GS: "The cross section of issues; historic preservation being only one; the others involve urban planning, and policy decisions that would replace a beautiful old theater with another mall and a parking ramp, and the overall aspect of the importance of arts to our culture."

MP: "How did SOS start?"

GS: "When the threat to the Shubert became apparent, I called Britta Bloomberg at the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). She and Dennis Gimmestad at the SHPO office discussed with me the need for a specific group to take action that might be critical for saving the Shubert."

MP: "How many members did SOS have in total, how many were the most active, and what sustained the committee?"

GS: "At various meetings we held, the maximum attendance was about 30 people, of which about six formed a core group who working many hours each week. We held fundraisers to buy postage stamps, envelopes and mailing supplies. In the final weeks some of us worked 20 hours a week in lobbying; we had a phone bank that kept four lines busy for several hours some evenings."

MP: "Most of the SOS members are outside of the established preservation community, aren't they?"

GS: "Right, mostly first timers here."

MP: "Why a new group?"

GS: "SHPO was in the position to remind people of the facts important to the issues and where various responsibilities lie; but they could not lobby or file a lawsuit. The Alliance was busy in reorganization procedures; the Minneapolis HPC had several individuals who contributed, but as an organization, they did not have the resources to sustain an intensive and concentrated effort."

MP: "The Alliance and HPC did continually talk up the Shubert issue with their supporters. HPC staff supplied much coordination needed in the public maneuvering. But I agree that the sustained and concentrated effort that preservation organizations made for the State Theater issue didn't happen here. What actions did SOS do that made
the difference?"
GS: “For nine months we kept the Shubert in the public eye: We were the source for information to the media. Our lobbying raised the stakes for the Minneapolis City Council. We did a lot of one-on-one with council members. We knew early that the votes of certain council members would be critical, so we communicated with them several times a week over a long period of time. There were a lot of grass roots activism some of us previously developed that came in use here.”

“SOS did a petition drive, then phonebanked the petition signers to attended precinct caucuses where resolutions were introduced to save the Shubert. SOS members became precinct delegates, and council members know well how important it is for them to listen to precinct delegates. What made us different? Most advocacy groups proselytize but find it difficult to phone bank. Our hardest task to find people to commit to phone banking, yet it was our most effective tool. With many people calling city leaders, the Shubert issue finalized into a public decision rather than a chambered one.”

MP: “Early in the game, didn’t SOS advocate keeping the Shubert on its Block E site?”
GS: “When Council President Jackie Cherryhomes announced she supported moving the theater after Artspace proposed it, SOS raised the question whether this was the best solution. Eventually keeping it on Block E became politically impossible, because very few council members would consider this. But we got the debate going.

MP: “When I attended many SOS meetings, I sensed the majority of SOS members are gay. What factor has this for the Shubert?”
GS: “For gay people, the theater is often the church in a cultural sense. The Shubert coalition has been an interesting mix: gays, conservatives not in the Ronald Reagan mold but cultural conservatives, and arts people.”

MP: “In the manner of how standard issue preservationists work, what has to be changed?
GS: “That’s difficult to answer; political connections tend to neutralize organizations. What SOS realized is the potential for widespread support in the general population for historic preservation, as shown by participation in the precinct caucuses. The preservation movement has to break out and find these people. There has to be more of a focus forming a strong lobbying force.”

“Minneapolis City Council members Lisa Goodman and Lisa McDonald are willing to go to the wall for preservation on certain issues. They have different backgrounds and different constituencies, and they occasionally differ on various government issues; however, they see eye to eye on preservation. This can be enlarged on the council level. And this indicates neighborhoods can do likewise; with their diversity they can embrace historic preservation. This shows the breadth of support preservation can enjoy.”

MP: “What other factors do you see that can enhance historic preservation?”
GS: “Cities have to change how land is valued for historic buildings. Real estate value should be determined by what the buildings are worth in themselves, not based on their max-out build-out potential.”
The Shubert Theater Decision—How the Votes Were Made

Imperiled historic theaters have a history of dramatic political maneuvering, and the Shubert Theater in Minneapolis played to that script. A nine-vote majority the Minneapolis City Council was required to override Mayor Sharon Sayles Belton’s veto of the council’s previous seven votes calling for moving the Shubert. Artspace Projects marshaled their supporters and organized a convincing array of financial information and architectural plans that indicated project feasibility. Undoubtedly, Council members Lisa McDonald, Lisa Goodman and Doré Mead formed a core group within the Minneapolis City Council that pressed the issue with their colleagues. Important to the nine-vote decision were the many calls and letters council members received from Twin Cities citizens in what has been the biggest Minneapolis preservation battle this year.

Also highly important was the advocacy campaign waged in and around City Hall by the Save Our Shubert Committee (SOS). (See accompanying interview of SOS director Gary Schiff). What were SOS’s key actions that made the difference?

Artspace Projects President Kelley Lindquist lavished much praise on SOS for the incredible amount of time the group devoted. Lindquist called the SOS role “pivotal” in the final decision, and outlined several critical components of their success.

The extensive mailout of SOS material and the phone bank work. Lindquist said a week before the council vote, he asked Schiff how much funds SOS had to do the mailing and the phone work. “We have spent everything; we have nothing,” was Schiff’s reply. Soon after, volunteers brought in supplies and Artspace offered its offices and phones. “They were there night after night,” Lindquist commented, then added, “That reminds me - Gary still has my office key.”

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Twelfth Ward Council member Lisa McDonald, who cast the crucial vote, had previously announced her heart which wanted to see the theater saved could not balance with what her head told her about some of the important technical details of the decision to move the building. This was very difficult for McDonald, who has been consistently a strong and enlightened promoter of historic preservation. SOS worked very hard with her, keeping in nearly constant contact with her the day before the council vote. SOS director Gary Schiff had thought after his last phone call to McDonald at 10:30 p.m., her vote still was not there, but the next morning shortly before the council deliberations, she set out a signal she was prepared to vote for the move.

SOS had the help of George Sutton, Brad Morison and other theater consultants whose expertise contributed to changing the political process.

At one point in the process, Lindquist and others met with the Star Tribune editorial board, and shortly after the Star Tribune published a strong commentary by Linda Mack that was well received by the public and by decision makers. Her article was followed by a prominent editorial spelling out the contribution the Shubert could make to the Twin Cities.

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12. Dun Sullivan, former theater critic for the Los Angeles Times and the Minneapolis Star-Tribune, is an SOS member who Lindquist called “the spiritual leader” of SOS. Sullivan’s authoritative and august presence inspired everyone he talked to, and his knowledge of theater in general and past performances at the Shubert itself, and working with media help form sympathetic news articles by local press, especially the Star Tribune.

13. Tenth Ward Council member Lisa McDonald, who cast the crucial vote, had previously announced her heart which wanted to see the theater saved could not balance with what her head told her about some of the important technical details of the decision to move the building. This was very difficult for McDonald, who has been consistently a strong and enlightened promoter of historic preservation. SOS worked very hard with her, keeping in nearly constant contact with her the day before the council vote. SOS director Gary Schiff had thought after his last phone call to McDonald at 10:30 p.m., her vote still was not there, but the next morning shortly before the council deliberations, she set out a signal she was prepared to vote for the move.

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Who raves for the Hollywood?

A historic art moderne theater in northeast Minneapolis looks for a buyer.

On a September 1st sunny late afternoon, a Hollywoodish scene was happening curbside in front of a northeast Minneapolis theater; a vintage red Volkswagen stopped as two people climbed out just before the driver scooted away, then a Mitsubishi jeep stopped to land two stylish men in suits on the sidewalk. As other sporty vehicles dropped off their passengers, an assorted crowd of neighborhood and artsified folk in front of the Hollywood Theater fashioned the occasion into a social and political schmooze event. Council member Paul Ostrow, who governs the First Ward in which the Hollywood is located, seemed to exude a promotional demeanor.

The official purpose of the moment was an open house at the Hollywood Theater, sponsored by the Minneapolis Community Development Agency (MCDA), and hosted by the Audubon Neighborhood Association as an effort to allow the interested public to view the vacant building and hopefully attract a development proposal or two.

The Hollywood Theater, located on the 2800 block of Johnson Street NE, was designed by noted theater architects Liebenberg and Kaplan in 1935. Its owner Charles Rubenstein gave the architects an unrestricted budget during these restricted economic times, giving Liebenberg and Kaplan an opportunity to design a large new building during a period when most of their commissions were renovations of existing theaters. The venture also gave northeast moviegoers over four decades of service until its subsequent owners abruptly closed it in 1987.

Once vacant, the Hollywood nearly became bi-polar when a would-be developer proposed a two-screen operation. When former Council member Walt Dziedzic adamantly pushed to have the Hollywood demolished due to its “excessive rehab costs” and a perceived need for a parking lot, Audubon neighbors countered with public hearings and a petition drive. Minneapolis HPC urged the city's Zoning and Planning Committee to adopt a demolition moratorium. MCDA purchased the building and has looked for a qualified developer ever since.

Several years ago, Hollywood Theater Preservation Inc. was formed to renovate the theater and offer classic films and other local cultural events. The group was strong in dedication but was unable to formulate a development-financing plan MCDA would accept. Since then, hopes of local preservationists have played a waiting game, but the September First Open House has been intended to activate a successful development.

The question arises whether the time is ripe for the Hollywood. Until recent years, the city's cultural patterns seemed to follow the geographic peripheries of the once-
CHARLES NELSON and David Nystuen of the State Historic Preservation Office have advised the Betsy Tacy Society on restoration. “It’s a nice, unimposing house,” Nelson said. “It’s a typical house of the turn-of-the-century, reflecting the ‘Leave it to Beaver’/‘Donna Reed’ tone of the books. It needs restoration, but there is lots of potential for it to be brought back.”

Falczonski lives in Mankato; she has the key to the house. Thus, the burden falls on her to check on the house, solicit volunteers to do restoration work, and lead the tours by appointment, which she seems to do with cheer. Last month, she and other officers of the Society (one who came from Boston) supervised the unloading of three pieces of furniture into the Tacy House that belonged to Lovelace, including a drop-leaf table described in the final book in the series, Betsy’s Wedding. The pieces were willed to the group by Merian Lovelace Kirchner, Lovelace’s daughter, who died last year. The story goes that Lovelace would tell Merian bedtime stories of her Minnesota childhood, and from there the series grew. Sixty years later, the mystique of the stories lives on.

For more information: Lona Falczonski, Betsy Tacy Society, 303 Meadowood Drive, Mankato, MN 56001, lona@ic.mankato.mn.us, (507) 345-810

LONG PRAIRIE, TODD COUNTY

A plan to convert the Reichert Hotel into affordable housing has the backing of the City of Long Prairie, according to the project’s architect, Jeri Zuber, and additional financing is being sought.

BRainerD, Crow WING COUNTRY

Two large railroad shop buildings are being planned for conversion into incubator-type manufacturing buildings, with restoration of building exteriors. If all goes well, the building owners plan renovation of additional buildings in the large industrial complex in the near future.

CHISHOLM, SAINT LOUIS COUNTY

The Bruce Mine Headframe, a tall rusting steel structure that once hoisted miners down into an underground iron ore mine and hoisted carloads of ore up to the surface has seen years pass without maintenance, and several Iron Range preservationists wonder how long this industrial icon can remain. The headframe is owned by the State of Minnesota due to tax forfeiture.
The Hollywood continued from page 15

infamous liquor patrol limits, as arts venues clung close to downtown, a few outlying commercial streets and avoided predominately residential districts. Another factor, to put it directly, was that northeast Minneapolis was decidedly unhip. But when the downtown Warehouse District, once an artists' protectorate, saw parts of it become a Palookaville, many artists migrated across the river to Northeast where unornamented commercial buildings and many large worker-Victorian houses became converted into studios, and the area now has become the artistic center of Minneapolis.

The September 1st crowd contained many people who possess a passion for theater but may have hoped that the person next to them would be the one with the funds to engineer its renovation. The crowd saw the Hollywood's geometrically decorous interior now in a disheveled state - its auditorium with the MCDA trademark of badly deteriorated plaster walls resulting from a leaky roof. But overall, the structure is very solid and its original architectural features seem to be asking for repair and fresh paint.

Most definitely, the Hollywood Theater seems ready for the community around it looking for a place where theater can flourish in the truest sense of the word - where the architecture that houses performance is performance - and the people within and around it are their own performers in their own evening.
Preservation Alliance Makes Partner!

We're making friends and expanding our influence

Richard Moe, the President of the National Trust for Historic Preservation recently informed the Preservation Alliance of Minnesota that it had been named a Statewide Partner with the Trust. Minnesota joins just 26 other statewide preservation organizations in this highly important initiative to bolster the preservation movement in the country. To become a Statewide Partner, preservation non-profits must meet criteria established by the National Trust and have demonstrated the capability to implement the organization's mission statement. The Preservation Alliance satisfied all of the Trust's expectations: hiring and sustaining full-time professional staff, providing an annual meeting, participating in a state conference, building a strong constituency for preservation throughout the state, strengthening community preservation activity and local preservation groups in the state, being committed to cultural diversity, and producing communications (publications) and media strategies, and sponsoring a legislative agenda. The Alliance met or exceeded all of these requirements.

The Preservation Alliance also received a National Trust Challenge Grant, one of only 14 awarded, as a part of the Statewides Initiative. The grants are designed to facilitate the move from an all-volunteer based preservation organization to one that has the capacity to maintain full time professional staff. The grant also validated the Alliance's significant work and accomplishments and enabled the group to pursue and obtain additional private funding. The Alliance will be receiving additional payments from the grant this year and next, and matching dollars will still need to be solicited from members, corporations and foundations.

The Executive
Director's View
George W. Edwards

Change is inevitable in life and also in the life of organizations. Thus we see a lot of things happening with the Alliance. This spring we extended our reach around the state attending public hearings throughout the state. We cosponsored the annual state preservation conference with the State Historic Preservation Office, and our annual endangered properties list had the greatest coverage and public response ever. Now we are busy upgrading our organizational capacity, and will soon have e-mail and a new world wide web site. We are busy making numerous internal management improvements too, which will make us a better and stronger operation.

In recognition of our growth and organizational improvement, and strong board and volunteer leadership, we were just selected as a Statewide Partner with the National Trust for Historic Preservation. This national initiative is comprised of only the statewides that exhibit the strength and capacity to provide leadership and assistance to their state's citizens. Selection as a Statewide Partner will enhance the Alliance's stature and enable us to grow stronger.

All this change is exciting, and the Board and I are challenged to make the Preservation Alliance a unifying force for preservation in Minnesota. We know the state will benefit, and we need your help in making these transitions. When we ask for your help, I hope you will step forward.
New Members

The Preservation Alliance of Minnesota's mission is to preserve, protect and promote Minnesota's historic resources. This can only be accomplished with our member's support. We want to acknowledge all of the people who have joined the Alliance from July 1, 1998 and August 31, 1998.

Andersen, Eleanor J., Arden Hills
Anson, Sally A., Minneapolis
Audrey Jackson Antiques, Welch
Barkelew, Ann, Sunfish Lake
Benidt, Bruce W., Eden Prairie
Beran, Marge, Woodbury
Black, Mr. & Mrs. Ron, Elk River
Braman, Barbara & Edwin, St. Paul
Brooks, Marney B., Long Lake
Cram, Catharine, Maple Plain
Crosby, Ella P., Wayzata
Dunn, Beverlee, Wayzata
Franklin, Evelyn, St. Paul
Futter, Catherine, Minneapolis
Glaefke, Patricia & Howard, Long Lake
Gardner, Nancy, Milltown, WI
Gardner, Denis, Crystal
Gassner, Kim, Plymouth
Godde, Tom & Linda, Independence
Gregerson, Jane & David, Minneapolis
Hallet, Janice, Minneapolis
Harris, Gale, Crystal Bay
Hyatt, Elizabeth, Minneapolis
Lahm, Larry J., Gaylord
Lang, Theodora H., Wayzata
Lindahl, B. John & Sarah, Crystal Bay
Lindberg, Lacey E., Wayzata
Lindley, Clarkson & Nancy, Long Lake
Maki, Bunny, Roseville
McGuigan, Judy, Roseville
Miller, Amy, Ellsworth, WI
Monkhouse, Christopher, Minneapolis
Nicholson, Ford & Catherine, Dellwood
Pagnucco, Mary & John, Wayzata
Pauly, Jackie, Minnesota
Penney, Polly, Minneapolis
Pepera, Marilyn, Forest Lake
Peterson, Brian, Red Wing
Pfau, Mrs. Leo, Wayzata
Reed, Lachlan & Martha, Wayzata
Riaz, Mahmoud & Nancy, Minneapolis
Roby, Carolyn, Minneapolis
Ruth, Jenny, Roseville
Scherer, Patti, Roseville
Scott, Andrew & Kathleen, Minneapolis
Stevens, David, Minneapolis
Swanson, Larey Ann, Medina
Sweatt, Margaret, Wayzata
Sweatt, Sally, Minneapolis
The Upper Midwest Conservation Association, Minneapolis
Tuttle, Emily Anne & Gedney, Wayzata
Wakefield, Mrs. Samuel C., Plymouth
Wilson-McLaren Restorations, Prior Lake
Wolford, Rita, Golden Valley

Partners In Preservation

The Preservation Alliance of Minnesota wishes to acknowledge all of new corporate supporters who have joined throughout the Partners in Preservation campaign during 1998:

Andersen Windows
Andy Baugnet, Photographer
Kodet Architectural Group
Mintahoe Hospitality Group
Netalliance
P & H Graphic Communications
Syrentha Savio, Web Page Designer

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Preservation Alliance Membership Application

The Preservation Alliance of Minnesota is a membership organization. Your contributions make our work possible. And they are tax deductible.

Join today! Fill out the coupon and mail it with your contribution to:

Preservation Alliance of Minnesota
275 Market Street, Suite 54
Minneapolis, MN 55405-1621

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Name ____________________________
Address ____________________________
City/State ____________________________ ZIP _______
Phone (home) ____________________________ (work) _______

In addition to my membership, I am enclosing an additional gift of $_______ to help the Preservation Alliance.
Where Is It?

Our fax machine received two correct responses to the July-August issue's Where Is It, from Judith Van Dyne, Advertising Sales Director for AIA Minnesota, and Floreen Meyer, of Building Restoration Corporation.

The Jemne Building in downtown St. Paul is one of the country's Art Deco treasures. St. Paul architect Magnus Jemne and his artist wife Elsa built it for the Women's City Club in 1931. It combines both the zigzag (vertical) and streamline moderne (horizontal) aspects of the Deco style. The building was left empty in 1993 when the Minnesota Museum of Art left it for Landmark Center. Earlier proposals to turn the Jemne into a LeRoy Neiman art museum or a women's center failed when groups that were pushing those ideas failed to raise enough money.

Wold Architects purchased the building earlier this year. The firm's plans include remodeling the auditorium into a "three-dimensional studio station environment" and an architectural gallery that would be open to the public on weekdays. The gallery will also include a display on the history of St. Paul.

For this month's Where Is It?: Why go to jail for coughing?

Where Is It? features Minnesota properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places, with photographs supplied by the Minnesota Historical Society.

So...where is it? Fax the editor your guess at 612-317-0990!