

August 31, 2015

Richard Dana
Chair, Saint Paul HPC
748 Goodrich Avenue
Saint Paul MN 55105

Re: Local designation of five non-contiguous properties as identified in the Pioneer Era Limestone Houses Thematic Nomination, located at 445 Smith Ave.; 383 Goodhue St.; 252 7th St W.; 202 McBoal St.; and 178 Goodrich Ave., SHPO File Number 2015-2455

Dear Mr. Dana,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the above reference designation. It has been reviewed pursuant to Minnesota Statutes §471.193, subd. 5., and 73.05 (4) of Saint Paul's Legislative Code.

Dating from the mid-nineteenth century, the five houses referenced above are the earliest extant limestone dwellings in Saint Paul's West Seventh Street neighborhood. They vary in height from one to two stories, display exposed stone walls, and exhibit elements of the Federal and Greek Revival styles as well as simple vernacular design such as the sidehall form. Overall, the houses are in very good physical condition and exhibit a relatively high degree of integrity.

These limestone houses are associated with and derive historical significance from Saint Paul's pioneer era of development from 1849-1900. During this era numerous permanent masonry buildings were constructed within the West Seventh Street neighborhood by a variety of skilled stonemasons, many of whom were immigrants from Europe.

We note that the Ramsey House at 252 West Seventh Street was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1975, while three of the properties have already been locally designated as landmarks: the Ramsey House in 1978, the Schillinger-Brings House in 1981/1994, and the Weber House in 1996. We concur that all five houses are good candidates for local designation due to their architectural and historical significance.

If the local designation of the Pioneer Era Limestone House Thematic Nomination is approved, the use of historic tax credits for rehabilitation projects may be appealing to the owners of the income-producing buildings. However, in order for tax credits to be utilized, the income-producing buildings need to meet National Register criteria, and until questions about National Register eligibility are answered, certification of the buildings in question by the National Park Service for tax credit purposes cannot occur.

If you have any questions regarding our assessment of these properties, please contact me at 651.259.3452 or michael.koop@mnhs.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Michael Koop", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Michael Koop
Certified Local Government Coordinator
Heritage Preservation Department

cc: Amy Spong, City of Saint Paul