

Carol Lansing's remarks presented to the HPC on 5/23/13.

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PRESENTATION TO SAINT PAUL HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION  
May 23, 2013

Intro self, representing Breckner Riverfront Development.

Paul Breckner, whose family owns the Island Station property is going to speak to you about the history of efforts that have been made to find a reuse for the power plant, the reasons why that vision is no longer feasible and demolition of the building is not only inevitable, but imperative to protect the public safety.

First I just wanted to make a few comments about the issues raised in the letter I sent to Amy Spong on March 28<sup>th</sup> that is in your packets. We hoped that you would have this letter to consider when you first determined whether to pursue a designation study, but we weren't allowed to present it to you then.

With respect to its significance under Criterion 1, if this property meets that criteria, the bar for significance is extremely low.

- The designation study concludes that Island Station meets Criterion 1 for its association with the City's early 1920's neighborhood growth.
- It is "associated" with the city's growth (any building constructed in the 1920's is), but that association is not significant.
- The full Landscape Research study that you reviewed in March explicitly stated that Island Station "did not make a significant contribution to the growth of the city" because it was only used in a standby capacity.

The study also recommends that you find the building meets Criterion 7 because it is a well-known local landmark and this criterion allows you to "address the importance of the building in the public's imagination."

- Unfortunately, the building not only inspires artists, it inspires vandals and vagrants. It no longer inspires developers or the neighbors who are impacted by the criminal activity that occurs there.

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Even if you conclude that the building meets one of the criteria for historic significance, there are other important factors that you should consider, including

- Whether the property retains integrity. Essentially all of the power plant machinery has been removed from the building. As Paul will show you, the building is in very poor and dangerous condition and does not retain the structural integrity it should have for you to designate it for preservation.
- While it is not a specified factor in your ordinance, you should also consider the practical considerations of the purpose to be served by designation.
- You are not required to designate every building that conceivably meets a criterion for significance.
- Not because of spite or greed, but simply because of the reality of the situation, if this building is designated you will soon be reviewing an application for demolition.

After you hear from Mr. Breckner, we request that the Commission conclude that the property does not merit designation, that designation would not serve the goals of preservation, and that the public interest is better served by allowing demolition to proceed.