

**CITY OF SAINT PAUL  
HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION STAFF REPORT**

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**FILE NAME:** Limestone Properties Thematic Nomination, Heritage Preservation Site

**LOCATION:** Currently five non-contiguous properties are being recommended for consideration as Saint Paul Heritage Preservation Sites and include:

**202 McBoal Street  
178 Goodrich Avenue  
445 Smith Avenue  
383 Goodhue Street  
252 West Seventh Street**

**DATE OF HEARING:** August 13, 2015

**LEGAL DESCRIPTION:** see attachments

**WARD:** 2      **PLANNING DISTRICT:** 9—West Seventh Street/Fort Road

**STAFF INVESTIGATION AND REPORT:**      **DATE:** August 5, 2015  
   **BY:** Amy Spong

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**A. PURPOSE:** To consider local designation of the Limestone Properties Thematic Nomination and include five individual sites for designation as Saint Paul Heritage Preservation Sites.

**B. CODE CITATIONS:**

1. Section 73.05 (a) of the City's Legislative Code states, in considering the designation of any area, place, building, structure or similar object in the City of Saint Paul as a heritage preservation site; the commission shall apply the following criteria with respect to such designation:
  - (1) Its character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the City of Saint Paul, State of Minnesota, or the United States.
  - (2) Its location as a site of a significant historic event.
  - (3) Its identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the culture and development of the City of Saint Paul.
  - (4) Its embodiment of distinguishing characteristics of an architectural or engineering type or specimen.
  - (5) Its identification as the work of an architect, engineer, or master builder whose individual work has influenced the development of the City of Saint Paul.
  - (6) Its embodiment of elements of architectural or engineering design, detail, materials or craftsmanship which represent a significant architectural or engineering innovation.

- (7) Its unique location or singular physical characteristic representing an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood, community or the City of Saint Paul.
2. Section 73.05 states for *Planning commission review*. The heritage preservation commission shall advise the city planning commission of the proposed designation of a heritage preservation site, including boundaries, and a program for the preservation of a heritage preservation site, and secure from the city planning commission its recommendation with respect to the relationship of the proposed heritage preservation designation to the comprehensive plan of the City of Saint Paul, its opinion as to the effect of the proposed designation upon the surrounding neighborhood, and its opinion and recommendation as to any other planning consideration which may be relevant to the proposed designation, together with its recommendation of approval, rejection or modification of the proposed designation. Said recommendation shall become part of the official record concerning the proposed designation and shall be submitted by the heritage preservation commission along with its recommendation concerning the proposed designation to the city council. The heritage preservation commission may make such modifications, changes and alterations concerning the proposed designations as it deems necessary in consideration of the recommendations of the city planning commission.
3. Section 73.05 states for *Communication with state historical society*. A copy of the heritage preservation commission's proposed designation of a heritage preservation site, including boundaries, and a program for the preservation of a heritage preservation site, shall be sent to the state historical society in accordance with Minnesota Statutes, Section 471.193, Subdivision 6.
4. Section 73.05 states for *Hearings*. Prior to the heritage preservation commission recommending to the city council any building, district or object for designation as a heritage preservation site the commission shall hold a public hearing and seek the recommendation of all concerned citizens.
5. Section 73.05 states for *Finding and recommendations*. The heritage preservation commission shall determine if the proposed heritage preservation site(s) is eligible for designation as determined by the criteria specified in paragraph (a) of this section, and if the heritage preservation commission recommends to the city council that the site(s) be designated as a heritage preservation site, the commission shall transmit to the city council with its recommendation its proposed program for the preservation of the site.

#### **C. BACKGROUND:**

1. The first comprehensive Historic Sites Survey in St. Paul was completed in 1983. The stone house at 252 W. 7<sup>th</sup> Street (Ramsey) was already a designated historic site and 202 McBoal (Weber), 314 Smith (Brings) and 445 Smith (Waldman) were recommended as eligible for designation. The Reinhardt House at 383 Goodhue was not identified in the final report likely because there was synthetic siding covering the stone addition but an inventory number was assigned and an inventory form completed. In addition to individual inventory forms, survey staff identified a five block area west of the Irvine Park Historic District with potential as an historic district. This included a "large concentration of woodframe houses dating from the 1860's through the 1880's, two solid limestone houses, and several basically intact larger woodframe houses including two Italianate

houses on Goodrich.” The 1983 survey was the start in developing neighborhood contexts by district council boundaries.

2. In 1992, the HPC and Minnesota Historical Society commissioned the Uppertown Survey, which developed more contexts from its early settlement to the post-war period. The entire survey area was recommended for designation as a Heritage Preservation Site, which was a 230-acre tract west of the Irvine Park Historic District (1973 NRHP, 1976 local). The Final Report mentions a “handful of remaining limestone houses, hundreds of stone foundations and retaining walls, and the former stone quarry sites, scattered throughout the district [to] remind residents of how early pioneers used materials at-hand to build Uppertown.”
3. In 2001, the HPC commissioned six context studies including *Pioneer Houses: 1854-1880*. The development of Uppertown and the five block potential historic district were again mentioned and further refined. By now, the City Council had designated 178 Goodrich (Brings) and 202 McBoal (Weber) in addition to the Justus Ramsey House. The Anthony Waldman House was again recommended for further study but the Christian Reinhardt House was not, despite the stone addition now being visible but was noted on the historic resources list.
4. In 2011, the HPC, along with Historic St. Paul and the Ramsey County Historical Society, commissioned new survey work in three neighborhoods, including the West Seventh Street area, and a new context study, *Neighborhoods at the Edge of the Walking City*. Again the Waldman House was recommended for intensive level survey and possibly eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places. The Christian “Rhinehardt” House was recommended for intensive level survey on an individual basis. The five block “certified eligible” historic district west of Irvine Park was reevaluated and is still being recommended as a potential Uppertown Historic District but now with smaller boundaries (about four blocks) given alterations and loss of historic fabric since the 1983 survey. The Waldman, Weber and McBoal Houses are all located within this potential historic district as part of a “distinctive area of residential development within the West 7<sup>th</sup> Street neighborhood.”

#### **D. FINDINGS:**

1. The Planning Commission supports the designation of the five limestone properties in the West Seventh Street neighborhood as part of the Limestone Properties Thematic Nomination and Resolution 15-52 found the proposal generally consistent with the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan. Specifically, the Historic Preservation Chapter calls for designation and protection of historic resources (Strategies HP 3.11, 3.12, and 4.3), while the District 9 Area Plan Summary, an addendum to the Comprehensive Plan, specifically calls for pursuing historic designation of the neighborhood’s original limestone residential and commercial buildings.
2. Pursuant to Minnesota Statutes §471.193, subd. 6, and Section 73.05 (c) of Saint Paul’s Legislative Code, staff submitted the proposed nomination form and draft preservation program to the State Historic Preservation Office on July 2, 2015.
3. The Limestone Properties Thematic Nomination is both geographical and chronological. The areas where a handful of the City’s earliest masonry structures are still extant are

within the West Seventh Street/Ft. Road Neighborhood. This area is also called Uppertown which was near the Upper Landing where many first settlers disembarked at the steamboat landing. The integrity of the five individual properties ranges from fair to good and general integrity is assessed by evaluating seven aspects or qualities as defined by the National Park Service and are: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. All of the properties are considered contributing to the Limestone Properties Thematic Nomination.

4. The period of significance for the Limestone Thematic Nomination is from **1849** when Saint Paul was incorporated as a town and permanent housing construction increased to **1900** when the Uppertown area was mostly developed. All five properties were constructed during the period of significance as well as early expansions that have gained significance in their own right and show how an area's uses and/or development patterns evolved.
5. In order to understand the significance of individual properties or a group of properties, "historic contexts" are developed and informally refer to both a document and an understanding of circumstances surrounding an event or property. The National Park Service defines historic contexts as "those patterns or trends in history by which a specific occurrence, property, or site is understood and its meaning (and ultimately its significance) within history or prehistory is made clear." Contexts are based on a theme, geographic limits, and a chronological period to provide a framework for identifying, evaluating and treating the full range of properties that represent each historic context.

Already established Saint Paul context studies that are applicable to the Limestone Properties Thematic Nomination are *Pioneer Houses: 1854-1880*, *Transportation Corridors: 1857-1950*, *Neighborhoods at the Edge of the Walking City: 1849-1900*. In addition, Greek Revival and Federal style buildings, stone quarries of the West Seventh Street area, and limestone construction contexts are included within the thematic nomination.

6. A thematic nomination is considered a cover document that can nominate groups of related significant properties. Themes, trends, and patterns of history shared by the properties are organized into historic contexts and the property types that represent those are defined. The Limestone Properties Thematic Nomination establishes the contexts and designation requirements for listing buildings, sites, districts, structures or objects within the thematic group. Five individual sites are being proposed for local designation that fall within the contexts and associated property types.

Some of the limestone houses significance were recognized early on in the establishment of historic preservation laws and were designated by the City Council and the Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places. Others were first identified and evaluated in the Historic Sites Survey of Saint Paul (1983) and in subsequent surveys but were not officially designated. This nomination includes three properties that are already designated (Joseph Brings, Justus Ramsey, and Martin Weber Houses) and two new properties (Christian Reinhardt and Anthony Waldman Houses).

7. The Limestone Properties Thematic Nomination is significant under criteria (1), (4) and (7) of Section 73.05 (a) of the Legislative Code, in addition, certain individual limestone properties considered under this nomination are individually eligible under criteria (3) and (5).

**F. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Based on the above findings, staff recommends that the Limestone Properties Thematic Nomination be accepted by the HPC and the HPC recommend the five properties for designation as Saint Paul Heritage Preservation Sites along with the Preservation Program (design guidelines) for City Council consideration.

Staff would also recommend a broader study to identify additional potential resources, such as retaining walls (particularly along the bluff), foundations and other possible structures, that could be added to this thematic nomination. There are also larger limestone buildings, many of them already designated, that could be included as part of the nomination.

**G. ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Thematic Nomination Form
  - Part 1: Introduction and Significance
  - Part 2: Limestone Context
  - Part 3: Description of Individual Properties
  - Part 4: Draft Preservation Program
2. Planning Commission Resolution 15-52
3. Letters of testimony
4. Previous inventory forms and Sanborn Insurance Maps