

# **CITY OF SAINT PAUL HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION RESOLUTION**

**FILE NAME**     **Limestone Properties Thematic Designation**

**DATE**             **August 13, 2015**

**WHEREAS**, Chapter 73 of the Saint Paul Legislative Code directs that the Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) shall recommend to the Mayor and City Council areas and buildings which the Commission has reason to believe are eligible for designation as heritage preservation sites; and

**WHEREAS**, Chapter 73 requires that the Heritage Preservation Commission shall secure comments from the Planning Commission and the Minnesota Historical Society prior to forwarding the proposed designation to the City Council for its consideration; and

**WHEREAS**, the HPC accepted the nomination form regarding the proposed designation of the Limestone Properties Thematic Nomination as a Saint Paul Heritage Preservation Site; and

**WHEREAS**, the Planning Commission reviewed the proposed designation of the five limestone properties in the West Seventh Street neighborhood as part of the Limestone Properties Thematic Nomination on July 24, 2015 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; and

**WHEREAS**, the Minnesota Historical Society (MHS), pursuant to Minnesota Statutes Section 471.193, Subdivision 5 and Chapter 73 of the Saint Paul Legislative Code, has reviewed and commented on the proposed designation of the Limestone Properties on August 31, 2015 and concurs with the HPC that all five houses are good candidates for location designation due to their architectural and historical significance. In addition the MHS made the following comments:

1. Dating from the mid-nineteenth century, the five limestone properties are the earliest extant limestone dwellings in the 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.
2. The 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.

3. The Ramsey House at 252 West Seventh Street was listed on 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 Schilliger-Brings House in 1981/1994, and the Weber House in 1996; and

**WHEREAS**, the HPC held a public hearing regarding the proposed designation on August 13, 2015 and made the following findings:

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. 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.

4. 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).

5. 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);

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Heritage Preservation Commission of the City of Saint Paul determines that the Limestone Properties Thematic Nomination is eligible for designation as a Saint Paul Heritage Preservation Site and forwards consideration of the designation and preservation program to the Saint Paul City Council;

**FINALLY, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Saint Paul Heritage Preservation Commission recommends 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.

**MOVED BY**                **David Riehle**  
**SECONDED BY**        **Matt Hill**

**IN FAVOR**                **7**  
**AGAINST**                **0**  
**ABSTAIN**                **0**