

Dear Mr. Gause and members of the Heritage Preservation Commission,

I am writing you to voice my support of the proposed demolition of Loras Hall and University of St. Thomas' (UST) proposed new Science Technology Engineering Arts and Math facility.

At the October 28th meeting of the Macalester-Groveland Community Council's Housing/Land-Use committee meeting, there was thorough review of the benefits/costs of the proposals, a supportive description of the historical context building and its famed architect. After the meeting, I came away with the following opinions:

- The Science Technology Engineering Arts and Math (STEAM) facility represents a wise investment in our city's future. With its unique design it will improve UST's ability to recruit a more diverse student body.
- With a more diverse and inclusive learning environment, this facility will increase the number of diverse and underrepresented professionals working in our area. This diverse workforce will provide long-term growth in our economy and improve equity in our community.
- The new structure represents a significant improvement in energy efficiency and it will align with the city's 2040 environmental goals.
- Despite its renowned architect, Loras Hall is not a landmark building and it provides very little lasting benefit to UST's students or our community.

In closing, I believe the best direction for our community, UST's students and our environment is to approve the demolition of Loras Hall and proceed with the STEAM project.

Sincerely,
Art Punyko
1463 Grand Ave, St Paul, MN 55105

November 23, 2020

Dear Members of the Heritage Preservation Commission,

I am beyond grateful to live in St. Paul, a city with leaders who had the foresight to provide the 2040 Comprehensive Plan before the pandemic and George Floyd's death. I attest that the Demolition of Loras Hall correlates with the Plan's Core Values. We are all called to implement the Plan. The process requires us to get comfortable with discomfort. The University of St. Thomas' (UST) Loras Hall provides the Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) the opportunity to demonstrate its ability to support the Core Values of the 2040 Plan. The Plan's first Core Value, **Equity and Opportunity**, demands that we face our history and ourselves.

Loras Hall is named for Bishop Mathias Loras who, as recently discovered, enslaved a woman named Marie Louise. Dr. Julie Sullivan, president of St. Thomas, wrote to the campus community, "A core conviction of the University of St. Thomas is to see and respect the dignity of every human being; the sin of slavery directly contradicts that conviction, and Bishop Loras' participation in slavery is reprehensible." I believe that our community resonates with Dr. Sullivan's words.

At recent meetings about the fate of Loras Hall preservationists quoted Winston Churchill's, "Those who fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it." That warning obligates us to face ALL of our history. Loras Hall is located in Macalester Groveland. Our history of redline deed covenants has made us the whitest - and wealthiest - neighborhood in St. Paul. Historic racism cannot be denied as a reason to demolish Loras Hall.

Nor can we deny the "post war" mentality that permeates the area surrounding St. Thomas. Some activist members of our community continue to refer to "the war years," a period in the early part of this century when neighbors successfully beat back St. Thomas' expansion plans and negotiated a number of restrictions against the campus. The 2004 Conditional Use Permit (CUP) that governs UST's campus is touted as a document etched in stone that can never be modified to conform to current times and circumstance. The CUP established the West Summit Neighborhood Advisory Committee (WSNAC), with eight votes designated to eight neighbor representatives and only three votes to the five UST representatives. When I joined WSNAC as an MGCC Representative in 2012 the neighbors instructed me that the four neighbor groups banded together as the "Neighborhood Caucus" to be "opponents" or "adversaries" to UST. It was explained, "WSNAC is a most unusual type of board as it is basically composed of two opposing parties, merged to operate by the City." For six years I sat at that table wondering what could possibly create a shift toward peace.

Assuming good intent requires me to believe that the authors of the CUP did not anticipate the unintended consequences for our community of an adversarial stance

toward St. Thomas, the largest of the 17 private colleges in Minnesota and a major employer in our community. Because students, I've been told, "aren't a protected class," it is accepted as natural for WSNAC to collect spoils of war in the form of restricted deed covenants against student renters. No one batted an eye when a member of WSNAC profited from the most recent transaction. This is on top of the restrictive Student Housing Overlay District that surrounds UST.

Discrimination breeds discrimination. At a meeting about a racial slur at UST a neighbor asked a Black student leader whether he "*feels welcome in our neighborhood*," He paused and replied, "*Ma'am, no student feels welcome in your neighborhood.*" Macalester Groveland is the most educated and wealthiest district in St. Paul. Knowing how to play the game and having the resources to litigate have led our community to this point.

I attended the Listening Session that the Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) hosted on October 6, 2020. The invitation read:

"The heritage preservation profession has been very active lately on the topic of bias and exclusion as a byproduct of designated districts. Two distinct points have been articulated concerning bias and exclusion:

- 1. Heritage preservation could result in economic exclusion creating a form of 'redlining'.*
- 2. Designation can perpetuate a divisive form of nostalgia and may tell narrative of the culturally privileged."*

This meeting showed me that the HPC recognizes its duty to face history. You have the power to create the shift toward peace that leads our community to a more equitable future.

At the November 10, 2020 WSNAC discussion about the demolition of Loras Hall the representative from Undergraduate Student Government at St. Thomas, a junior majoring in Justice and Peace Studies, clarified the Heritage Preservation Commission's choice:

It's really powerful to consider the issue of the building's name. As a student at UST I take issue with a building named after a slaveowner. I take pride in my university and being a student here but with something like that coming up it makes me consider how I represent myself. The building holds that name and it has stood for that name.

I would agree with you that there is significance in the building itself and I think its important to realize that. But history is not always painting us in the light we want to be painted in. It is our responsibility to look at the light of progress and how to move forward. I understand the significance of Cass Gilbert's architecture, but this building will come down and he will not be forgotten. This speaks more to the community, to back this building or to

not back this building given the name. Are we going to put this building before progress and set that precedent as well?

This is the time to face our history rather than revere it without context. I believe the unintended consequence of demolishing Loras Hall will create a shift toward peace in our community. It will lead to a more equitable future for Macalester Groveland. Your vote on the demolition of UST's Loras Hall will demonstrate to the citizens of St. Paul how much the Heritage Preservation Commission values our first Core Value, **Equity and Opportunity**.

Please support the University of St. Thomas in its bid to demolish Loras Hall to make way for a new Science, Engineering, Technology & Arts building that will be more sustainable in its structure, more inclusive in its design and more welcoming to all members of our community.

Cathy Plessner
2038 Summit Avenue
Macalester Groveland Community Council board member
Past representative, West Summit Neighborhood Advisory Committee

Saura Jost
St. Paul, MN 55105

December 8, 2020

Mr. George Gause
Heritage Preservation Supervisor
City of Saint Paul
Heritage Preservation Commission
25 West 4th Street, Suite #1400
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Re: Support for University of St. Thomas STEAM Building and demolition of Loras Hall

Dear Mr. Gause,

My name is Saura Jost, and I am a long-time resident of the Macalester Groveland neighborhood. I also currently serve as a representative on the Macalester Groveland Community Council Board where I have heard the presentations by the University of St. Thomas (UST) regarding this project at our board and Housing and Land Use (HLU) Committee meetings. I am writing this letter to support the University of St. Thomas STEAM Building project understanding that fulfilling the design intent and needs of the campus would result in the demolition of the existing building, Loras Hall. I write this letter not only as a resident, but also as a licensed structural engineer in the commercial building industry, an educator in this field (adjunct instructor at the U of MN College of Design), a board member of a mentoring organization in the building industry for high school students and having had the experience as an engineering student at two universities.

In reviewing the documents provided by the design professionals, it is apparent, based on their feasibility study of the five options, that demolishing Loras Hall is the best solution from an economic, environmental, sustainability, and long-term planning standpoint. The documents note the repair needed to the architectural envelope and HVAC systems that would need to be upgraded to be more energy efficient. In addition, the structural engineering recommendation noted challenges for re-locating the building and an existing structure that would require significant modifications to increase the open space for a new program. While Loras Hall could be renovated and restored in these aspects, this would result in a high cost (preliminary estimate of \$10 million) for UST and would take away from the monetary resources and square footage for new construction thus taking away from a better experience for the students. In past renovations of existing buildings, I have worked on, I am reminded that, in addition to our architecture and owner clients, the building itself is our client. As a result, the freedom of our design is at the will of the building in every aspect. For this building, the report notes the existing floor to floor heights of Loras Hall, for example, are not favorable for the new desired floor heights of the STEAM building. This is one example of how the building restricts the design and is not in favor of the goals for the new construction. Overall, I think that the design team and UST have done their due diligence in exhausting all options to keep Loras Hall, and we should trust their professional expertise and recommendations to demolish it.

While Loras Hall is a Cass Gilbert design and part of the Historic St. Paul Seminary, the documents provided (UST Demo Application 11-06-2020) indicate that the building lacked historical significance for National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) eligibility, and it was also unclear how much influence James J. Hill may have had on Cass Gilbert's design. There are many historic buildings where the financial cost to restore such buildings is warranted based on its historic significance. When substantial resources are put towards keeping a historic building, it is usually because its historic significance and the desire for it to remain in the community far outweigh the loss of the building. Some recent projects come to mind: Northrup Memorial Auditorium, Pioneer Endicott, and Pioneer Hall (U of MN). However, Loras Hall, which currently serves as an office building, does not appear to be one of those buildings. In addition, it was recently discovered that Bishop Loras was a slave owner and used his slave profits toward his future projects, which brings to light an unfavorable historical significance of this building. This negative historic significance that Bishop Loras and the building represent may even outweigh the small amount of historic significance the building was evaluated to have.

Lastly, the potential opportunities for UST students, their educational experience, and the science and engineering industry should be the primary focus as the STEAM building will be built to serve them. UST has been working towards expanding its engineering program, and, to stay competitive in recruiting students to choose UST, it needs to provide a world class experience. The STEAM project is also important for the professional industry because some areas of engineering have seen a decline in enrollment over the past decade. Providing upgraded classroom space and a unique experience is imperative in keeping the next generation engaged in engineering professions. It is also important to provide the students with the tools and curriculum they need to be successful beyond their education in their future careers. UST is planning to house a variety of majors within this building with most of the square footage dedicated to engineering and science. In contrast, a larger University may have the space and resources to provide a building for each major. Therefore, reducing the square footage of the new building by even 5-10%, as recommended by some of the alternative options or moving the square footage into the less favorable, Loras Hall, may cut out significant opportunities for an entire major. Many majors need lab classrooms, large scale testing facilities, and the latest technology to learn and remain competitive. There is also potential for elementary and high school students in the community to take advantage of the spaces and learn more about potential careers. This provides a community aspect to the new construction that Loras Hall does not currently have. Therefore, I think that keeping Loras Hall does not best serve the students as it would take away from the potential for their education and hinder growth for the STEM industry.

In summary, the evaluation and report provided by UST shows that there are more reasons to support demolishing Loras Hall than to keep it. Demolishing this building and upgrading the space in its place will keep the University, industry, and neighborhood moving towards the future.

Sincerely,



Saura Jost

Please note that this is a personal opinion and is not a professional engineering recommendation or an opinion of the Macalester Groveland Community Council.

13 December 2020

To: Mr. George Gause
Heritage Preservation Supervisor, City of Saint Paul
Heritage Preservation Commission
25 West Fourth Street, Suite 1400
Saint Paul, MN 55105-1089
george.gause@stpaul.gov

From: Craig Skone, Macalester-Groveland Resident

Re: Demolition Permit Application filed by the University of St. Thomas
concerning Loras Hall (North Dormitory), 2260 Summit Avenue, Saint Paul, MN.

Dear Mr. Gause and Members of the Saint Paul Heritage Preservation Commission:

I must start this testimony by stating that I fully support the University of St. Thomas in its endeavor to construct the STEAM building. I also must state that I believe that it is important to preserve our historical, cultural and architectural heritage, but only if the results are functional, sustainable structures.

Due to its structural peculiarities, Loras Hall cannot reasonably be converted to a use other than small offices or dormitory rooms. As I understand, the interior of the building cannot be altered to create larger, more usable spaces without compromising or eliminating its structural integrity. It was designed and built for a specific purpose, just as the Minnesota State Capitol was designed and built for a specific purpose – a purpose for which it is still used today and, hopefully, for generations to come. The Capitol was designed as the grand seat of state government; Loras Hall was designed as a dormitory. Its usefulness is rapidly waning.

To be honest, until the University filed for a demolition permit for Loras Hall, I had never heard of it, or seen it. Upon doing a Google Street View (dated June 2019), I saw a utilitarian-looking building with window A/C units in every-other window. That is grossly inefficient. I can only imagine that winter heating of the building is equally inefficient. Loras Hall is unsustainable. Its environmental footprint has to be enormous with few viable options to shrink it.

Preservation should be based on the following criteria at a minimum: 1) historical significance, 2) architectural significance, 3) cultural significance, 4) future usefulness, and 5) future sustainability. The more of these criteria that are met, the greater the case for preservation. As far as I am concerned, Loras Hall meets one of these criteria, that of historical significance. Though the architect is well-known, architecturally it is not a gem. Bland is a word that comes to mind. As such, this seems to me to be a case of a push for preservation solely for the sake of preservation. If a lesser-known, or unknown architect had designed Loras Hall, would we even be having this conversation? Cass Gilbert designed many magnificent structures, but Loras Hall is not one of them.

As I have previously stated, I am in favor of preserving the best of the best - especially if the structures can be properly maintained and remain functional and sustainable without astronomical financial outlays. At some point, however, as technology advances, some structures are going to fall by the wayside. If we insist on preserving everything based solely on perceived historic value, we will at some point in the future be flooded with buildings that are historically significant, but structurally, functionally and sustainably obsolete. And, possibly, vacant. When considering preservation, you cannot consider only the past and present – you must also take into consideration the future.

Sincerely,
Craig Skone
1960 James Av.
St. Paul, MN 55105
skone@q.com

November 27, 2020

Mr. George Gause
Saint Paul Heritage Preservation Commission
City of Saint Paul
VIA EMAIL

Mr. Gause:

On November 12th, the Board of Directors of the Macalester Groveland Community Council (“MGCC”) held a public eMeeting via Zoom, at which it considered a resolution from its standing Housing and Land Use Committee regarding the application for a demolition permit for Loras Hall, located on the University of St. Thomas Campus. Representatives of the applicant, The University of St. Thomas, appeared to speak to the application and to answer questions.

Prior to the meeting, MGCC did not receive any letters in opposition or in support of the application. Furthermore, 1 community member attended the eMeeting to speak in opposition of the application.

After speaking with the applicant, considering neighborhood feedback, consulting the Macalester Groveland Long Range plan, and assessing the merits of the application, the Board of Directors passed the following resolution by a final vote of 14-1:

**** “The Board of Directors of the Macalester-Groveland Community Council supports the University of St Thomas's plan to remove Loras Hall so that the new STEAM Building can be built on the site.” ****

Important to the discussion, were the following considerations:

Loras Hall does not contribute to the sustainability and resiliency goals in the City of Saint Paul 2040 Comprehensive Plan.

The consideration that other buildings designed by Cass Gilbert have greater historic significance and a more impactful design.

If you have questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.



Alexa Golemo
Executive Director
Macalester-Groveland Community Council

cc (via email): Amy McDonough, University of St. Thomas
Mark Vangsgard, University of St. Thomas
Amy Gage, University of St. Thomas
Ward 4 Office, City of Saint Paul



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November 19, 2020

Heritage Preservation Commission
City of St. Paul
25 West 4th Street
City Hall Annex, Suite 1400
St. Paul, MN 55102

To the members of the Heritage Preservation Commission,

District 13, Union Park District Council, supports the University of St. Thomas plans to demolish Loras Hall in order to build their proposed STEAM building on the University's South Campus. This plan passed with Committee support at the Union Park District Council's Land Use and Economic Development meeting on November 16th based on two presentations at the Committee's August and November meeting.

The Union Park District Council supports the University's plans to demolish Loras Hall in order to build their proposed STEAM [Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math] Complex on the University's South Campus. Although the building was designed by Cass Gilbert, the decision to support demolishing it is due in part to the lack of viability of integrating Loras Hall into the proposed building. There are several reasons for this. First, an estimated \$10 million would be needed in basic upgrades to make Loras Hall usable space. Also, after its last renovation, much of the plumbing was removed in order to retrofit the building into office space which would require rebuilding this aspect of the building. Also, the main supports of the structure run down the center corridor of the building, which make it difficult to reconfigure the interior configuration into anything other than the current structure.

In supporting the University of St. Thomas' demolition of Loras Hall, we recognize the difficulty in integrating the building into the University's proposed STEAM building and also support the University's plans to build the STEAM building project that is intended not only as an academic resource for its students, but is also intended as an amenity for the university's broader community. This aligns with the Board's interest in the supporting projects within its borders that serve the greater community.

Sincerely,

Henry Parker, President
Board of Directors
Union Park District Council

Dear Members of the Heritage Preservation Committee,

I am writing you regarding the UST request for the demolition of Loras Hall on their south campus.

After careful consideration of all facts both pro and con, I am urging you to vote for demolition of Loras Hall for these reasons.

1. Loris Hall was built as a dorm for seminary students. Although on the Historic Register as contributing, possibly because it is one of Cass Gilbert's buildings, it still looks like a dorm. Other than Cass Gilbert was the builder, it still looks like a large, red dorm.
2. When I heard, either myth or fact, that Mr. Hill wanted Loris Hall and the two other Cass Gilbert buildings nearby to look like boxcars, I agreed. Other than Cass Gilbert was the builder, it does look like a boxcar, a large red boxcar with little preservation value.
3. After 50 years of living on this historic Summit Avenue, the useful purpose of this building as either a dorm or office building, has ended.
4. I think that UST has offered to designate a space to honor the legacy of Cass Gilbert and I strongly support that idea.

Please vote for demolition of Loras Hall so we can move on to a more useful repurposing of this particular property.

Sincerely
Rachel M. Westermeyer
1935 Summit Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55105
651/644-3770

I'm asking the St Paul HPC support the Mac Groveland Community Council recommendation: "supporting the University of St Thomas's plan to remove Loras Hall so that the new STEAM Building can be built on the site".

1. The MGCC represents the community where the proposed change would take place. Further, UST makes a compelling case the "optimum use" the property is constructing a STEAM building for a diverse student population. The wishes of the community and the property owner should carry strong weight..

2. J.J. Hill "was intimately involved with Gilbert and Archbishop Ireland in working out nearly every aspect of the design and construction of the seminary. [It may not be] possible to determine how much .. Loras Hall is attributable to Gilbert's design sensibilities and how much was dictated by Hill. Gilbert despised the experience of working with Hill. Never again, he vowed, would he be coerced into subservience by a powerful client".

ref: UST, Seminary, and Historic Summit Ave: Assessment of Cultural Resources p.34.

The preservation of Loras Hall does NOT honor Cass Gilbert. Rather, it perpetuates a building design imposed by a powerful, wealthy and elite white man. In short, not a structure worthy of preservation....

3. "Preservation can be essentially an elitist, class, and racially divisive activity whose result is a form of economic bias and segregation. History sites can perpetuate a divisive form of nostalgia that supports and validates racism and exclusion."

ref: <https://twistedpreservation.com/2020/06/02/systemic-racism-of-preservation/>

I'm asking the St Paul HPC respect broader community wishes and demonstrate it's commitment to equity and social justice..

Thank you for listening,
Jack Fei
1359 Sargent Avenue
St Paul, Mn 55105

Good morning,

I write today to support the University of St. Thomas' plan for demolition of Loras Hall. I'm familiar with the demolition plan as a result of my participation on the Macalester Groveland Community Council and its Housing and Land Use Committee, and I also serve as the chair of the MGCC Inclusivity Task Force, though I speak only in an individual capacity and not on behalf of the council or any committee in writing this letter.

In short, from the arguments I've seen presented, the demolition of Loras Hall is consistent with the values of our community in terms of inclusivity, diversity, and design, and the heritage or historical value of the site is minimal at best.

To start with the positive attributes of allowing the Loras Hall demolition, St. Thomas has put together an excellent plan for a STEAM complex designed to attract a fantastic and diverse set of candidates to St. Thomas. Their design is environmentally friendly, well done, and in line with the type of 21st century education that we should be supporting. In addition, St. Thomas makes excellent points about the limit in using old buildings and designs to facilitate engineering and science classrooms, and the limits of ADA compliance in retrofitting a building to attach to the old Loras Hall that meets today's requirements (i.e. the floors would not match up, for example). I do not think it is particularly valuable for members of the community to second guess the excellent engineering and design work when it is clear from presentations that the complex UST has designed is ideal to meet their purposes and to provide an optimal educational environment for future generations of engineers, scientists, and thought leaders.

More than that, however, the deep dive we've taken into Loras Hall has convinced me that it is simply not worth of historic preservation at the expense of such an educational purpose. I love Cass Gilbert - the Minnesota Supreme Courtroom in the Capitol is gorgeous and a fine example of his work. Loras Hall is not. It is the last of three buildings - the other two of which have already been torn down, meaning that we wouldn't even be preserving it in a historically accurate manner - that has been a working building for a century, with changes over time rightfully made to meet the needs of students. It does not have adequate bathroom facilities; it would need intensive work to restore it; it was built by Gilbert at the behest of James J. Hill and it's not even clear that Gilbert himself considered it emblematic of his style or anything other than a job done at the direction of a wealthy client. We have excellent examples of Cass Gilbert's work in St. Paul; we do not need this nondescript building that is only minorly viewable and that prevents the land around it from being used in an efficient fashion to aid students.

I served as the PTA president of Randolph Heights Elementary during the time period where RHS celebrated its centennial, and chaired the centennial celebration committee. I love St. Paul's historic buildings and I am fully aware and agree that stakeholders need to be consulted about the natural environment and buildings that become neighborhood institutions (like Randolph Heights!). But during that period the facilities team at SPPS gave a presentation on updates they were planning for various buildings and they mentioned something that has really stuck with me. When designing a school building for use by actual students and then updating that building, best practice is to update the building in line with modern design standards, because the function of the space is always more important than the aesthetics. Of course you should preserve the aesthetic and historic resources when you can, but the ability of students to use the space NOW is more important than the ability of nonstudents to observe and live in the presence of the space. That seems to be the exact lesson we should be taking from Loras Hall. St. Thomas has done a study and examined the options and Loras Hall

does not meet the needs of their students, and it is not a reasonable use of college dollars to fix it to make a subpar learning environment rather than build the complex that would best serve UST students. We should support that decision.

In addition, as St. Thomas now recognizes, Loras Hall is now named after a person who enslaved others. Requiring the building to be preserved even when St. Thomas would like to tear it down in order to facilitate its ever more diverse incoming classes sends a signal of the exact type of divisive nostalgia that the HPC discussed in August. Loras Hall is not an architectural gem whose magnificence will be lost to the annals of history. It is a nondescript dorm, built by an otherwise impressive architect, that has been underutilized for decades, named to honor a person who enslaved others. Allowing it to be torn down is an action towards anti-racism and towards building a future we can all be proud of.

Thanks for your time,
Kate Baxter-Kauf
(1739 Palace, 55105)

Dear George and Members of the Heritage Preservation Commission,

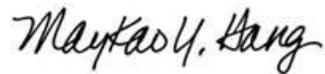
I want to thank members of the Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) for considering the application from the University St. Thomas to remove Loras Hall in order to build a Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math (STEAM) complex.

As founding dean of the Morrison Family College of Health at St. Thomas, I am very familiar with the tremendous opportunity this complex represents for the greater St. Paul community. By growing the new Morrison Family College of Health and establishing a new School of Nursing, St. Thomas is responding to a shortage of health providers and leaders required to promote healthy families and communities. We are building a college where students will learn to provide whole-person care to address the physical, mental, social and spiritual needs of individuals, while also discovering ways to advance systems change to eliminate health disparities. This complex will allow us to provide the best possible educational experience to our students.

As a board member of the Minnesota Historical Society, I understand the need to appreciate and understand our past.

I hope you will appreciate the balance between appreciating the past and serving its educational mission that the University of St. Thomas is striving to bring about the changes needed to serve and meet deep community needs.

Best regards,



Maykao Y. Hang, D.P.A.

Vice President, Strategic Initiatives and Founding Dean

Morrison Family College of Health [Give Now](#)

maykao.hang@stthomas.edu

Mail TMH 201 | p 651.962.4727

University of St. Thomas | MN stthomas.edu



December 7, 2020

Mr. George Gause
Heritage Preservation Supervisor
City of St. Paul
25 W 4th St., Suite #1400
St. Paul, MN 55102

Dear Mr. Gause and Members of the Heritage Preservation Commission:

On behalf of the University of St. Thomas Board of Trustees, we urge you to approve the St. Thomas application before you for a demolition permit for Loras Hall. Your approval will ensure that we are prudently investing our students' tuition dollars and limited donor funds to directly benefit our current and future students, an investment that will provide important benefits to the St. Paul community.

As you will read in the application, St. Thomas is preparing to build a state-of-the-art STEAM building (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math) on our south campus in proximity to our existing science and engineering buildings. This complex, built in this location, will ensure that St. Thomas can serve students in growing, high-demand fields, such as health care, engineering and other sciences; and diversify these fields as we intentionally welcome more students and faculty of diverse backgrounds. St. Thomas has hired Robert A.M. Stern Architects (RAMSA), a world-renown architect, as the design architect.

Our priority for this project is to prepare more young people for the jobs of tomorrow by providing collaborative educational experiences that employers value. The building will allow for interdisciplinary education that will attract top-talent students and faculty to St. Paul from around the country. Equally important to St. Thomas is building a complex that will help us increase the number of women and people of color in STEAM fields as our programs grow.

This building provides a tremendous opportunity not just for St. Thomas, but it meets many shared goals of the City of St. Paul. We are excited that the new space will allow our engineering and arts programs to collaborate with public and private K-12 programs and offer performance and gathering spaces that neighbors, community leaders and nonprofits can enjoy. Additional green space will benefit neighbors and those who travel through campus for recreation. Our goals for the complex align with goals stated in the St. Paul 2040 Comprehensive Plan:

-Resiliency. The complex will focus on sustainability strategies by replacing an incredible energy-inefficient building with a LEED-certified building that follows green building standards. The complex will help us reduce our carbon footprint.

-Urban design. Our goal has been to ensure efficient use of our space on campus. Given the limits placed on St. Thomas through the Conditional Use Permit, it is vitally important that we plan development within our campus in a way that as the 2040 plan states, "fosters activity, connection, beauty, safety, and economic value." Policies in the 2040 document speak to the need to use land and public infrastructure more efficiently by increasing densities on infill parcels.

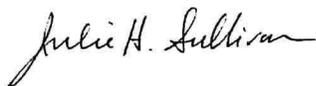
- **Fostering the next generation.** The 2040 plan states, "If a city is going to grow, innovate and prosper, it must provide opportunities for its youth to grow, innovate and prosper. The same physical systems that need to accommodate an aging population need to accommodate a young population. This is especially important in the areas of education and employment and innovation."

As we invest in this complex, or in any major project, we have the utmost responsibility to ensure that any dollar spent is maximized to directly benefit our current and future students. Preliminary estimates indicate that it would cost nearly \$10 million to rehabilitate and repurpose Loras Hall. Even with that investment, the building's configuration limits its usefulness and a rehabilitated Loras Hall would not benefit our students. As fiscal stewards of the university, we cannot justify spending donor or student tuition dollars on a building that does not further our educational mission.

The University of St. Thomas greatly respects the history that has shaped the development of its campuses and the City of St. Paul. We are proud to anchor beautiful, historic Summit Avenue and appreciate its tradition and beauty. We have invested and will continue to invest in valued historic buildings on our campus. However, as an educational institution, we must balance historic preservation with the primary educational needs of our community.

Thank you for your service to St. Paul and for your attention to this matter. Please know that your approval will ensure that investment in our STEAM complex enhances the education of our students and contributes to the long-term goals of the City of St. Paul.

Sincerely,



Julie H. Sullivan, Ph.D.
President
University of St. Thomas



Pat Ryan
Chair of the Board of Trustees

cc: Mayor Melvin Carter
Jaime Tincher, Chief of Staff, City of St. Paul
Councilmember Mitra Jalali
Josh Williams, City of St. Paul
Tia Anderson, Principal City Planner, City of St. Paul



December 10th, 2020

Mr. George Gause
Heritage Preservation Supervisor
City of St. Paul
25 W 4th St., Suite #1400
St. Paul, MN 55102

Dear Mr. Gause and Members of the Heritage Preservation Commission:

The **Undergraduate Student Government (USG)** at the University of St. Thomas urges you to support the permit application to demolish Loras Hall. As the governing body of the St. Thomas undergraduate student population, USG is comprised of 40 representatives dedicated to advocating student concerns by working with faculty, staff, the administration, community leaders, and fellow students to promote positive change.

Your support will be the first step toward building a world-class STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics) complex that will provide incredible benefits to future students of St. Thomas.

As you can imagine, students attending college are very concerned with how tuition dollars are spent. Without your approval of the demolition permit, student tuition dollars will most likely be used to renovate Loras Hall. Because the building's configuration is so limited, this investment would be of little or no use to students.

In contrast, the STEAM complex will help St. Thomas students directly and will help us achieve two important goals, issues that are of the utmost importance to students at St. Thomas:

- 1. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion**– A top priority with the building of this complex and growing these programs is to continue to diversify St. Thomas STEAM programs and provide an atmosphere where students of all backgrounds are encouraged and enabled to learn. Our current engineering program is among the top 10 engineering programs in the country for the number of women engineering faculty. The building will be designed to be an inclusive space, welcoming students and faculty from all backgrounds.



- 2. Sustainability-** Students at St. Thomas take protecting our Earth for future generations very seriously. The Undergraduate Student Government recently passed a Zero-Waste Resolution advocating for improved sustainability practices within the university. While Loras Hall is extremely inefficient in energy use, the STEAM building will be LEED-certified. As St. Thomas replaces an energy-inefficient Loras and a parking lot with a LEED-certified building and green space, we will become a more sustainable campus. This is in line with our first-ever sustainability strategic plan to embed sustainability practices and education throughout campus and to become carbon neutral by 2035.

Students at St. Thomas are also very concerned about the history of Loras Hall and its namesake. St. Thomas learned this summer that Bishop Mathias Loras was a slave owner. The university is confronting this disturbing issue by creating a renaming committee and involving the community in many conversations to understand and learn from our history. We believe that Loras Hall's namesake does not represent the University of St. Thomas. It is important to learn from our past but to not be wedded to buildings or names that no longer represent who we are. We strongly believe that it is important to move forward and focus on a brighter future for students.

We hope that the City of St. Paul will realize the benefits to future generations that come with this project. We appreciate your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

The Undergraduate Student Government, University of St. Thomas