

## 8. Heritage Preservation

*Minneapolis will promote the sustainable practice of protecting and reusing our culturally significant built and natural environment, including buildings, districts, landscapes, and historic resources, while advancing growth through preservation policies.*



*The Milling District, as viewed from St. Anthony Falls is an area of the city where historical and cultural resources have been preserved and adapted to serve current and future uses.*

Heritage preservation in Minneapolis extends past the brick and mortar of buildings to the landscape, both natural and altered by humans, and into the stories and experiences of the people who came here before. Around the United States, heritage and historic preservation are used interchangeably to denote the practice of preserving and reusing historic resources. While the term historic preservation relates to buildings, sites, structures, objects, or districts that have historical, architectural, archaeological, or cultural value, the term heritage preservation encompasses the historical and cultural significance of the built environment and landscape for the community today and future generations.

This chapter is organized into three sections: Historic Resources, Future Preservation Goals, and Programs & Preservation Essentials. The first section explores the known historic resources in Minneapolis, such as designated properties, historic surveys and archeology. Future Preservation Goals acknowledges the new frameworks in which to view heritage, like cultural landscapes, preservation of the public realm and neighborhood preservation.



*St. Anthony Falls and the Pillsbury "A" Mill, 1905, photo courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society*

Preservation Essentials addresses many of the processes involved in the day to day functions of preservation within Minneapolis municipal government.

## Historic Resources

### Historic Districts & Individual Landmarks

Historic resources are considered to be properties with significant historical, cultural, architectural, archaeological or engineering importance. The federal government, as well as local and state governments, can designate historic resources. The federal designations are called the **National Register of Historic Places** or **National Register Landmarks** and these properties are designated through a nomination process. The State of Minnesota can designate properties through state statute and the City can also designate properties through the local nomination process. Locally designated properties are protected for exterior, and sometimes interior, alterations.

Presently, Minneapolis has **eleven locally designated historic districts** and **one hundred and forty-six landmarks**. Buildings in historic districts typically have shared characteristics while individual landmarks span a variety of architectural styles and architects. While all buildings have a history, historic designation means that a property has a greater significance to local or national history. The significant may be the way the building or landscape is designed, or the significance may be the persons associated with the building, including owners, tenants, and designers.



*Homes in the Milwaukee Avenue Historic District are protected by historic designation to ensure perpetuation of their visually cohesive design.*

Buildings and other features within districts share a past which is significant either historically, culturally, architecturally, archaeologically or by virtue of engineering. Some districts are both locally and nationally designated. Historic districts in Minneapolis range from districts that cover multiple neighborhoods, such as in the St. Anthony Falls and Warehouse Historic Districts, to smaller districts that comprise a few blocks, as in the Healy Block or Fifth Street Southeast Historic District. Of the eleven locally designated districts, two are also listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The individually designated landmarks vary in their historic use, location, architectural style, and date of construction. Many of the individual landmarks in Downtown Minneapolis are commercial, institutional or cultural, such as the Foshay Tower, Basilica of St. Mary, and the State Theater. In residential neighborhoods, many landmarks are residential, commercial, civic or religious, such as homes designed by Frank Lloyd Wright and William Purcell, the Midtown Exchange, Fire Station Number 42, and Pioneers and Soldiers Memorial Cemetery. As the city ages, newer historic resources are eligible for preservation protection. Currently, the City is completing a re-survey of potential historic resources. One of the driving forces behind the current survey is to balance the designated properties. The re-survey of the city attempts to balance the historic properties by investigating properties from the recent past, variety of geographic locations in the City, and land uses. Certain areas, such neighborhoods in and around downtown, have a wealth of designated properties. Other parts of the city have historic resources; however, many have not been identified through historic surveys. Although buildings and resources constructed after World War II are now eligible for listing on the **National Register of Historic Places**, there are few city landmarks representing mid-20<sup>th</sup> century history

in the built environment. In addition to preserving the recent past, resources once considered unimportant, are being hailed as contributing to our City's significant history. The Midtown Greenway, an abandoned railroad trench, has experienced a rebirth as a bike and pedestrian corridor and is now on the National Register of Historic Places.

**Policy 8.1: Preserve, maintain, and designate districts, landmarks, and historic resources which serve as reminders of the City's architecture, history, and culture.**

- 8.1.1 Protect historic resources from modifications that are not sensitive to their historic significance.
- 8.1.2 Require new construction in historic districts to be compatible with the historic fabric.
- 8.1.3 Encourage new developments to retain historic resources, including landscapes, incorporating them into new development rather than removal.
- 8.1.4 Designate resources recommended for designation from historic surveys and listed on the National Register of Historic Places which have no local protection.

**Policy 8.2: Continue to evaluate potential historic resources for future studies and designation as the City ages.**

- 8.2.1 Future surveys should focus on completion of a basic or reconnaissance survey of the entire City which incorporates nominations of potential landmarks or historic districts.
- 8.2.2 Identify and document the City's 20<sup>th</sup> century and post-war resources as part of the City's heritage. These resources may be increasingly threatened due to lack of awareness or the information necessary to evaluate their significance.
- 8.2.3 Contemporary architectural styles, such as resources from the last half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, as well as architects should be identified and evaluated as part of future survey efforts.

### **Archeological Resources**

Minneapolis is a relatively new city. Much of the urban fabric was constructed from the mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> century up to the present. A cycle of construction, demolition and rebuilding, often rapidly paced, was characteristic of Minneapolis' development, a trend that has continued to the present. Continued construction has no doubt resulted in the obliteration of potential archeological sites and artifacts, both prehistoric and historic. Areas around the City's lakes, river, streams, were used as settlements by indigenous people and have the potential to yield information about these communities. Evidence of this use has been identified, for example, on the

islands in Lake of the Isles. Archeology, however, is not limited to prehistoric or Native American sites. Recent development and redevelopment along the riverfront, for example, revealed a wealth of archeological sites associated with the city's early milling, lumber, and water powered industries.



*Archeological dig in Elliott Park, 2005*

### **Policy 8.3: Explore and protect potential archeological resources in the City.**

- 8.3.1 Examine potential archeological sites and artifacts as part of historic resource surveys undertaken by the City.
- 8.3.2 Protect potential and known prehistoric, as well as 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century archaeological sites and artifacts
- 8.3.3 Utilize existing identified sites, such as those associated with the City's milling and industry along the riverfront, as examples for documentation and interpretation of archeological resources.

### **Future Preservation Goals**

Over time, new ways to view our shared history become noticeable. Previously undervalued resources are pushed into the spotlight because of an emergence of new ways of thinking about the built and natural environment. One example of this is neighborhoods that reflect a certain era of housing. Preservationists have started to examine whether historic districts are possible for these intact neighborhoods. This reflects a change from only designating the grandiose homes of prominent city and business leaders to recognizing the importance of the character of neighborhoods with vernacular housing.



*Homes built after WWII, like this South Minneapolis Luston home, are an example of the growing popularity of mid-century architecture.*

Historic resources can also be evaluated for criteria other than architectural style. Landscapes, such as natural or planned parks and plazas, are resources that are gaining more prominence as historical resources. In addition to preserving buildings for their architectural significance, the history of people, organizations, and activities can be a reason for historic designation. Currently, much of the properties protected by historic designation reflect early white settlement in Minneapolis. Recognizing the influence that Native American settlement patterns had on modern city development is important, as well as how early minority groups interacted in the City, such as African Americans and other immigrant groups. Properties should also be evaluated for the influences by particular people, organizations, and events on the growth and development of Minneapolis.

### **Historic Contexts**

Historic resources or properties are viewed within a context, or an interrelated condition in which the resources exist or occur. Contexts are important themes in the prehistory or history of a community, state, or the nation during a particular period of time. Historic contexts can be organized by subject, place, and time and link properties to important historic trends.

### Historic Contexts & period of significance

Architecture—1855 to present  
 Business and Industry—1821 to present  
 Civic—1872 to present  
 Culture, Fine and Applied Arts—1883 to present  
 Education—1836 to present  
 Residential Development— 1847 to present  
 Religious and Social Organization—1830 to present  
 Transportation—1823 to present

The contexts that many historic resources in Minneapolis are viewed include industrial (such as the milling and railroad industries), commercial development, prominent architecture and architects, as well as civic related, like schools and religious places of assembly, as identified in the *Preservation Plan for Minneapolis, 1990*. Over time new contexts may become prominent, such as modern architecture, development and transportation patterns, and cultural contributions by ethnic or community groups. Context studies are often used to highlight and identify previously unrecognized historic resources.

The period of significance is that period of time in which the property achieved importance. The period may be as short as one year; however, a property can also have achieved significance during several distinct periods of time, as in the case of an archaeological site. In the case of a historic district, the date of significance is usually the date of the oldest building within the district. The ending date of the period of significance is the time by which significant development of the property, or the property's importance ended.



*The Grain Belt sign on Nicollet Island is an example of an underrepresented historic resource.*

**Policy 8.4: Examine and evaluate the contexts in which historic resources are analyzed.**

- 8.4.1 Complete context studies associated with the City’s history and development, such as the impact of Grand Rounds park system or transportation systems, to evaluate their impact on the built and natural environment.
- 8.4.2 Evaluate the impact of the ethnic and community groups on the natural and built environment.

**Cultural Landscapes**

The City is a mixture of buildings and open spaces. A focus on buildings belies the fact that history is imprinted on nature as well. While the City has moved quickly to designate many of the area’s most important buildings in the decades following urban renewal, large category of historic resources has yet to be comprehensively identified and potentially designated: landscapes. **Historic and cultural landscapes are more than parks, encompassing a wide variety of spaces and features including: Native American trails and encampments, old industrial sites, walls, woodlands, archeological sites, cemeteries, religious landscapes, formal and informal gardens, fairgrounds, college campus spaces, and much more.** The City currently has a few designations that could fall under the category of historic landscape, but there is a potential for much more work.

Currently, few infrastructure projects are designated. Bridges, canals, locks and dams, railroad corridors, and stone or wood-paved roads are a few examples. The impact that infrastructure has on the history of the City is another resource to document.



*The Pioneer and Soldiers Memorial Cemetery is a **locally and nationally designated** historic landscape.*

**Policy 8.5: Recognize and preserve the importance influence of landscape on the cultural identity of Minneapolis.**

- 8.5.1 Identify and protect important historic and cultural landscapes.
- 8.5.2 Encourage planting and maintenance of street trees and other natural elements in historic districts to promote livability.
- 8.5.3 Preserve historic materials typically found in public spaces, such as street materials like pavers, lighting and other resources.

**Property Maintenance**

Property maintenance is an important aspect of preserving and enhancing historic structures, whether they are historically designated or not. The City’s role in property maintenance includes educational, technical, and financial assistance. Educational assistance is provided through proactive inspections, the City website, informational brochures, and events such as **Minneapolis Housing Fairs** and the **Minneapolis/St. Paul Home Tour**. Staff also provides property owners of historically designated structures information on how to ensure repairs and maintenance are done in a way that maintains the property’s historic integrity.

Ongoing property maintenance is the informal and less regulated work surrounding the general maintenance and upkeep of the built environment. It can be viewed as a means and not an end, and can be utilized in all types of reuse projects, not just projects involving designated properties. Ongoing property maintenance can ensure the desirability of a single home or neighborhood. Preventing, or at the least



mitigating, the demolition of existing housing, commercial and industrial buildings can ensure neighborhood reinvestment based on existing cultural resources.

*On-going maintenance is key in preserving historic architecture as evidenced in this North Minneapolis Queen Anne Victorian home.*

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**Policy 8.6: Provide educational, financial, technical, and regulatory assistance to ensure the survival of the City's historic resources.**

- 8.6.1 Increase the information on the City's **heritage preservation website** about the resources available.
- 8.6.2 Identify financial assistance for historic properties such as loans and grants targeted to historic properties.
- 8.6.3 Enhance technical assistance by subsidizing architectural assistance for property maintenance and remodeling issues.
- 8.6.4 **Ensure maintenance of properties through regulatory enforcement of the City code, specifically as it relates to historic resources.**

### **Reuse, Reduce, and Recycle**

Demolishing buildings often rips the fabric of the City as the character of neighborhoods disappears. Moreover, demolition of structures and throwing out building materials adds waste to landfills and makes the reuse of building materials for housing and other needs impossible. Applying the ethic of “*reuse, reduce, and recycle*” to buildings with the goal of neighborhood revitalization can have positive results for Minneapolis communities, the natural environment, and society.

The need for demolitions can be reduced by adapting the building to a new use which meets the needs the existing owner or selling the property to an owner who will use the property as is. Moving the structure in whole or part to a vacant lot is another alternative. Analyzing the historic significance of properties to determine their historic value can prevent demolition. Properties worthy of historic designation should not be demolished or relocated. These options keep the City's building stock intact and conserve the energy and resources required to build a new structure.

If none of the above options are possible, reusing building materials in the structure is preferable. This can be accomplished through salvage. Property owners can offer the opportunity to salvage building materials. Salvage rights could be sold for all or part of the building. Materials could be reused by developers or homeowners, or acquired and resold by businesses specializing in salvaged materials.

If there is no demand for salvaged materials, recycling building materials is the next best option. Simply providing recycling containers on site during demolition and informing workers on how to use the containers can divert large amounts of waste from going to landfills. If a building cannot be moved and if materials cannot be salvaged or recycled, the resources must be thrown out. At any time during the reuse, reduce, recycling of buildings, documentation of the structure could also take place.

**Policy 8.7: Create a regulatory framework and consider implementing incentives to support the ethic of “reuse, reduce, and recycle” and revitalization for buildings and neighborhood.**

- 8.7.1 Protect historic resources from demolition and explore alternatives to demolition.



*Demolition of a single-family house.*

- 8.7.2 Research and modify the preservation and zoning ordinances as they relate to demolition of historic resources, in order to better serve neighborhoods.
- 8.7.3 Develop regulations and/or processes that ensure the timely and appropriate construction of buildings once demolition occurs.
- 8.7.4 Encourage relocation of historic resources as a last means of preservation for endangered properties.
- 8.7.5 Preserve artifacts from structures and sites that are historically, architecturally or culturally significant and seek to reintroduce these artifacts into the City's streetscape and building interiors.
- 8.7.6 Encourage the recycling and reuse of building materials from demolitions and remodels in order to conserve natural resources and remove material from the waste stream.
- 8.7.7 Work with private and public sector stakeholders to develop a salvage system that minimizes the loss of building materials, promote the reuse of materials, require recycling containers to be present on-site with guidance on their use,

8.7.8 Develop a salvage process for materials from any city-initiated demolitions.

## Conservation Districts

In addition to regular maintenance and adherence to the zoning code, other tools exist to preserve neighborhood character. A Conservation District is a zoning or preservation tool used to help communities protect certain characteristics in their neighborhood. They concentrate on protecting such things as architecture styles, densities of the area, heights of structures, and setback guidelines. The scope and size of conservation districts may vary; and the regulations of the district may affect design elements, structure size, building demolition, and land use. While Minneapolis currently does not have conservation districts, this tool can be effective for preserving neighborhood character.

### **Policy 8.8: Preserve neighborhood character by preserving the quality of the built environment**

- 8.8.1 Preserve and maintain the character and quality of residential neighborhoods with regulatory tools such as the zoning code and housing maintenance code.
- 8.8.2 In addition to local designation, develop other preservation tools, like conservation districts, to preserve the historic character of neighborhoods and landscapes.

## Preservation Essentials

Heritage preservation in Minneapolis is advanced by the work of City staff and the **Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC)**. Staff reviews administrative applications for minor alterations to districts and landmarks and also prepares reports to the HPC for approval of major alteration to districts and landmarks, as well as reviewing demolition permits for potential historic resources. City staff also works with other government partners, such as the **Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)** and the **Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board** to further preservation plans and programs. A myriad of organizations, such as **Preserve Minneapolis**, the **Preservation Alliance of Minnesota**, and the **American Institute of Architects** promote preservation through education efforts.

In addition to the work involved with historic resources, the City is involved with many programs that promote preservation. Education and outreach programs target Minneapolis residents and others interested in preservation. Preservation staff is involved in many programs and review processes within the City as well as with the State of Minnesota, such as environmental reviews and **"Section 106"** reviews. Preservation policies are also used in the creation of neighborhood or small area plans.

## Preservation & Land Use Planning

Land use planning in Minneapolis integrates a preservation ethic into long range and strategic planning. Many neighborhood and small area plans adopted by the City have historic preservation components. Neighborhoods such as Marcy-Holmes and Whittier have significant historic districts or landmarks, with plans that include policies and implementation steps related to the continue maintenance of historic resources and guidelines for infill development. In addition, City led plans have historic components, such as the Midtown Exchange (Sears, Roebuck & Co. Mail Order Warehouse and Retail Store) and the Grain Belt Brewery Redevelopment.

### Policy 8.9: Integrate preservation planning in the larger planning process.

8.9.1 Incorporate preservation at the earliest stage of comprehensive planning, small area plans, and neighborhood revitalization strategies.

8.9.2 Incorporate preservation in early land use and planning evaluations, including federal reviews such as 106 Reviews and Environment Assessments, and City processes such as **Capital Long Range Improvement Committee (CLIC)** and preliminary development review.



*Humboldt Greenway homes reflect historic building design*

8.9.3 Encourage property owners and developers to consider historic resources early in the development review process by promoting the preliminary review and early consultation with preservation staff.

## Revitalization and Preservation

Historic preservation can be a strategy in redevelopment or revitalization of a neighborhood or area of the city. Reusing and rehabilitation of historic buildings can be a catalyst for other investment, especially in neighborhoods with barriers to economic success. While renovating an older building has many positive impacts to the community, the cost of renovating a historic building to property owners and developer can often be a major issue. Working with developers early in the process can help to streamline preservation requirements and increase the project success.

**Policy 8.10: Promote the benefits of preservation as an economic development tool and a method to achieve greater environmental sustainability and City vitality.**

- 8.10.1 Encourage rehabilitation of buildings and landscapes to stimulate economic activity in depressed areas.
- 8.10.2 Establish property tax relief for historic building owners whose building is in an economically depressed area.
- 8.10.3 Establish a local funding stream for preservation work which directly contributes to the City's economic growth.
- 8.10.4 Encourage the occupation and reuse of historic structures in areas targeted by the City for revitalization by contributing resources to make older buildings more energy efficient and therefore less expensive to operate.
- 8.10.5 Prioritize the reuse of the City's historic buildings as a strategy for sustainable development.
- 8.10.6 Market the City's high quality, architecturally interesting, readily available and affordable housing and commercial properties.
- 8.10.7 Use planning tools, such as transfer of development rights and historic variances, as well as economic incentives, such as tax increment financing and tax abatements, to retain historic structures while compensating for the loss of development potential.
- 8.10.8 Promote financial preservation incentives for property owners and developers.
- 8.10.9 Develop heritage tourism strategies.



*Restoration of historic buildings aids revitalization, such as the State Theater and other historic theaters along Hennepin Avenue.*

## Preservation Regulations

Minneapolis has a preservation toolbox that includes ordinances, design guidelines, and plans. These tools need to stay current in order to best evaluate modifications to historic resources as well as new construction in historic districts. Many district design guidelines were written in the 1980s and should be modified to integrate greater city goals, such as sustainable building practices and accommodating increased population growth.

### **Policy 8.11: Improve and adapt preservation regulations to recognize city goals, current preservation practices, and emerging historical contexts**

- 8.11.1 Update the preservation ordinance, to include the codification of local districts and landmarks, discourage demolition of historic resources, and incorporate conservation districts.
- 8.11.2 Revise existing historic district guidelines and require guidelines for all new local districts and landmarks
- 8.11.3. Create and use design guidelines for existing historic landscapes.

## Education and Outreach Programs

Citizens from all walks of life can be involved in learning about and preserving the City's historic resources. Preserving the City's built past can incorporate a range of approaches, from education about the importance of maintaining historic buildings to recognition and designation of previously unaccounted historic resources.

Other approaches important to success in historic preservation projects rely on technical support and citizen involvement in designation campaigns. The role of residents and property owners in identifying, preserving, protecting, and adaptively reusing buildings is critical to keeping Minneapolis' heritage strong.



*Walking tours, like this one of the Schubert Theater, are one way to promote the city's historic resources and build awareness for their value.*

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**Policy 8.12: Raise awareness of the history of Minneapolis and promote the quality of the built environment.**

- 8.12.1 Promote heritage preservation planning efforts to important stakeholders, including other City offices, the public, and preservation organizations.
- 8.12.2 Continue to work with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and preservation organizations to promote education and incentive programs.
- 8.12.3 Involve residents and neighborhood organizations in review of heritage preservation applications.
- 8.12.4 Continue to recognize outstanding projects, programs, individuals and organizations that have significantly contributed to the heritage of Minneapolis and enhancement of the urban environment.
- 8.12.5 Provide educational activities, such as walking tours, to foster appreciation of Minneapolis history and the built and natural environment.
- 8.12.6 Design and install appropriate and interpretive signs and historical markers for designated historic districts and landmarks.
- 8.12.7 Work with **Minneapolis Public Schools** and the **Heritage Preservation Commission** to prepare a preservation curriculum package for instructors.