

LANDMARKS LETTER

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LANDMARKS ASSOCIATION TO HONOR FORMER DIRECTOR CAROLYN HEWES TOFT

On the evening of January 24th, 2009, the doors of Architecture St. Louis will be thrown open for a celebration to honor Carolyn Hewes Toft, the former Executive Director of Landmarks Association who retired this summer after 32 years at the helm. Board President Bill Wischmeyer praised the former director saying "it is fair to say that Carolyn Toft has effectively been Landmarks Association for as long as anyone can remember. Due to her guidance and direction, the association has grown to a membership of over 1,300 and is recognized through-

out the country as one of the nation's premier preservation organizations."

Toft's accomplishments while director of Landmarks are numerous and reflect her determination, thoroughness and passion. One of her greatest accomplishments was securing the passage of Missouri's historic rehabilitation tax credits law, one of the state's most important economic development tools. Her most recent accomplishment was the creation of Architecture St. Louis, a center to promote St. Louis' architectural heritage and encourage



sound planning. The event will also serve as a kick-off for a year-long celebration marking the organization's fiftieth anniversary. Special invitations for the event will be mailed in early January.

CITY BOARD OKAYS LOCUST ST. DEMOLITION

At its meeting on October 27, the St. Louis Preservation Board unanimously voted to grant preliminary approval to a plan by the Roberts Companies to demolish two historic downtown buildings as part of a new Hotel Indigo project. The proposed hotel would occupy 913 and 917 Locust Street (the latter building being the National Registered Scruggs Vandervoort and Barney warehouse) and

an addition on the site of the two demolished buildings. The original proposal for the new two-story addition was considered by many to be inappropriate for the site, as it opened the corner and devoted most of the footprint to an open-air driveway.

The two historic buildings slated for demolition are a

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Two buildings are slated for demolition to make way for a new "boutique" hotel.

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Proposition M Defeated, Public Transit Struggle Continues

On Election Day, St. Louis County voters defeated Proposition M, a half-cent sales tax increase that would have provided \$80 million for the maintenance and expansion of the region's public transit system. The final count showed 48.45% of voters in favor and 51.55% opposed. The defeat impacts MetroLink expansion in the county and raises budget issues for the entire system. Proposition M's passage would have triggered a sales tax fund that city voters approved in 1999 that was contingent upon county passage of a similar measure.



The Board of Landmarks enthusiastically supported Proposition M which would have provided funds for Metrolink maintenance and expansion. (Courtesy Citizens for Modern Transit.)

Metro officials are already suggesting that a projected 2009 budget shortfall -- which proposition M's funds would have covered -- will lead to massive service cuts. On the table are suggestions for reducing the number of bus routes, eliminating bus service west of I-270 and shutting MetroLink service down at 8:00 p.m. These cuts would negatively impact the lives of thousands of people who use the system.

In October, Landmarks enthusiastically endorsed Proposition M and joined the Greater St. Louis Transit Alliance, a new transit advocacy coalition. Public transit enables the urban population density that makes historic preservation possible. Transit allows people to reduce or eliminate vehicle use, lessening the need for highways and parking structures that threaten the urban fabric of St. Louis. Landmarks Association is committed to working with its allies to find other sources of funding for Metro. We may have lost Proposition M, but we will lose much more if we don't act to maintain and expand the Metro system. Please contact the state and federal elected officials who represent you and urge them to support increased funding for public transportation in St. Louis, Missouri and the nation.

Michael Allen, Asst. Director

Demolition

(Continued from page 1)

four-story timber-framed brick building at 921 Locust built in 1916 and designed by architect Nat Abrahams, and a three-story building at 923 Locust that probably dates to 1895 although it is covered in later stucco and timber cladding. 923 Locust would not be eligible for the National Register in its current state, but the other building, 921 Locust, might be. Even if singular eligibility was not possible there is another option -- a Multiple Property Documentation Form for remaining small-scale commercial buildings downtown. There is a class of buildings, mostly narrow

and two- to four-stories in height, that fill in the space around the architectural gems of downtown. Collectively, they are highly significant and impart a sense of pedestrian scale that has been eradicated through demolition.

Since the summer, Landmarks' staff has engaged in discussions about the project with representatives of the Roberts Companies, their architects and consultants. At the Preservation Board meeting, developers presented an improved addition that did fill the corner, but still left the large driveway.

The major point of contention, of course, was the proposed demolitions. In pur-

suit of our mission statement, ultimately Landmarks cannot support the demolition of any downtown building that could be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The developers argued that 917 Locust was the most significant building, and demolition of the other buildings would aid its preservation -- a viewpoint Landmarks has fought all too often.

Ultimately, the City Preservation Board unanimously approved the demolition permits while granting preliminary approval to the design. While the project does not fall under the coverage of any local historic district, the Roberts Compa-

nies admirably submitted to a voluntary design review. At the meeting, representatives of the company stated that they would bring the final design back to the Preservation Board for approval. While we lost the buildings on Locust Street, we will probably see a much better new building than first proposed. We remain concerned, however, about a precedent set at the start of what seems to be an economic recession. Hopefully the Hotel Indigo project doesn't send the message that our battered downtown needs more demolition, for new development or otherwise.

Michael Allen, Asst. Director

LAST REMAINING MOUND UP FOR SALE

Sugarloaf Mound, the last standing Native American mound in St. Louis, is for sale. Perched on the banks of the Mississippi, the mound had been standing watch for hundreds of years when Marquette and Joliet slipped by on their way south in 1673. Pierre Laclede passed the bluff-top landmark while searching for a site for his trading post, as did August Chouteau and his gang of workers on their way to begin construction of our city. The mound survived the New Madrid earthquake, bearing witness as the river ran backward. Ulysses Grant would have traveled past Sugarloaf while hauling firewood north on Broadway for sale in St. Louis. Sugarloaf stood when the riverfront burned, and cholera raged, when the railroad arrived, and when the Mississippi was finally spanned. Having witnessed the great events of our past, it is our responsibility to ensure that Sugarloaf bears witness to our future.

The impending sale of Sugarloaf presents an opportunity to re-examine the place that mounds hold in the history (and prehistory) of our city. It also affords a chance to consider our responsibilities toward these ancient structures, a matter that has been publicly discussed in the city since at least the 1830's. While once prevalent enough in St. Louis to earn us the nickname "Mound City," today Sugarloaf is the sole surviving example of St. Louis' prehistoric built environment.

The prehistoric mounds that once stood in St. Louis are presumed to have been associated with the Middle and Late Woodland (approx. 400 BC-900 AD) and Mississippian (approx. 900-1500) peoples, though their obliteration has somewhat inconvenienced the pursuit of definitive cultural associations. The largest complex of mounds in the city was a major Mississippian civic-ceremonial center located just north of Laclede's Landing. The cultural/temporal association of this group is known from analogous extant sites as well as detailed historical descriptions of the mounds themselves, their arrangement, and several associated diagnostic artifacts. The north St. Louis mound complex was presumably tied both politically and culturally to both the East St. Louis mound group and Cahokia. While the sites had been abandoned by their builders for hundreds of years when European and African people arrived in the vicin-



A 20th century bungalow rests atop Sugarloaf, the last remaining Native American mound in the area. The house and land recently went on the market.

ity, the mounds were still quite prominent features on the landscape. Eighteenth century French maps indicate that settlers of the area took notice of the unusual earthen structures and used them as landmarks. Additionally, mounds are common features on maps of St. Louis from the first half of the 19th century, and are clearly visible in several representations of the city such as John Caspar Wild's 1840 lithograph of the north riverfront.

The best known account of the north riverfront mound group was created by Dr. Thomas Say and Titian Peale, naturalists attached to Major Stephen Long's 1819 expedition up the Missouri River. The two men made detailed records of 25 Indian mounds in the complex and described their systematic orientation around a central plaza. To the south of the plaza was an unusual earthen stair-step feature commonly known as the "Falling Garden" and to the north, a single large mound known imaginatively as "Big Mound." Destruction of these mounds began in the 1830's as the street-grid was extended to the north of downtown. While a majority of St. Louisans regarded the mounds as little more than novel impediments, tourists marveled at their majesty. A visitor named Edmund Flagg wrote in 1838;

It is a circumstance which has often elicited remark from those who, as tourists, have visited St. Louis, that so

(Continued on page 4)

Sugarloaf Mound *(Continued from page 3)*

little interest should be manifested by its citizens for those mysterious and venerable monuments of another race by which on every side it is envisioned.

He continued reflecting upon the opportunity the city was currently squandering by destroying the mounds rather than preserving them and putting them to public use saying;

When we consider the complete absence of everything in the character of a public square or promenade in the city, one would suppose that individual taste and municipal authority would not have failed to avail themselves of and the beauty of their site, to have formed in their vicinity one of the most attractive spots in the West. These ancient tumuli could, at no considerable expense, have been enclosed and ornamented....and thus preserved for coming generations (quoted in Marshall, 1992).

Unfortunately, by the early 1840's much of the prehistoric landscape along the north riverfront bluffs had been significantly degraded. The destruction continued into the 1850's when all the mounds in the near north riverfront group, except for a portion of "Big Mound," were gone. In 1854, Adam B. Chambers, editor of the *Missouri Republican*, along with a group of concerned citizens expressed their hope that this last vestige of the formerly grand site would be preserved.

By the end of the Civil War, the mound was barely recognizable from its original form; piecemeal destruction had mutilated its shape, reduced its height, and contributed to unchecked erosion. Brooklyn Street cut through a section of the monument, and sand and clay had been mined from its interior for building material. An 1865 article in the *Post-Dispatch* noted that the "Mounds...are fast disappearing under the grasping, money making spirit of the age. In a few years these...memorials...will be entirely destroyed."

By 1869, Big Mound was gone, its fill ignominiously sold to the North Missouri Railroad to build track alignments. During removal, thirty-two burials were found in two chambers, one of which was estimated to be 25 feet below the surface of the mound. In following years, the rest of the mounds in the city were gradually and purposefully destroyed. Mounds that once dotted the landscape all along the north riverfront fell to the grader and the shovel. A mound once situated on the grounds of the Christian Brothers College in north city (now Sherman Park) was destroyed, as was another located at Jefferson and Olive streets. In preparation for the World's Fair, two groups of mounds (totaling 16 in all) were destroyed along the River des Peres in Forest Park. Today, Sugarloaf is the only mound left in the Mound City.

Listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1984, Sugarloaf Mound is subject to preservation review by the city of St. Louis Cultural Resources Office but its protection from demolition is not guaranteed. Landmarks Association is currently working with other concerned organizations and individuals to explore ways to ensure the safety of the monument, and hopefully provide public access and site interpretation. While nothing can be done to bring the other mounds of Mound City back, we can have an impact on what happens to Sugarloaf. In this case, as in so many others, looking back on what we have lost should focus our attention on what we might still preserve.

Andrew Weil, Research Associate



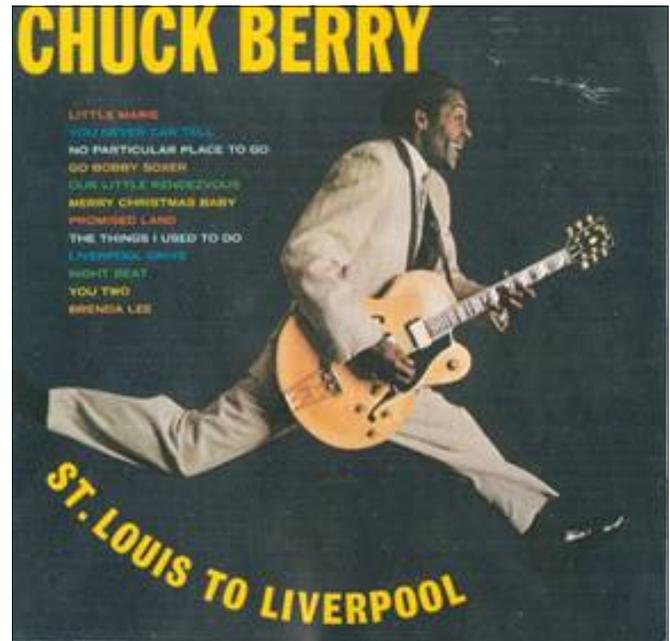
View of the Mississippi River from Sugarloaf. The author of this article relied heavily on Dr. John Marshall's excellent primary research in "The St. Louis Mound Group: Historical Accounts and Pictorial Depictions" published in The Missouri Archaeologist, v. 53, Dec. 1992.

CHUCK BERRY NOMINATION—DOWN BUT NOT OUT

For those members who missed the *Post-Dispatch's* August 4th cover article “House of Rock” (a story picked up by newspapers and websites globally, including *The New York Times*), this summer Landmarks prepared a National Register nomination for Chuck Berry’s former home at 3137 Whittier Street in the Greater Ville neighborhood of North St. Louis. Berry and his wife Themetta purchased the 1910 home in 1950 and resided there until 1958. These eight years proved to be the most definitive of his career, and witnessed the beginnings of Berry’s musical development in Saint Louis, his first recordings at Chess Records in Chicago, and the bulk of his most influential songwriting which forever impacted the course of popular music both in the United States and abroad.

Berry’s particular blend of blues and country western music was crucial to the birth of rock ‘n’ roll, and as the genre’s first singer-songwriter- guitar player, he set the standard for generations of musicians to come. He was a potent cultural force in the brief period during the middle 1950s when popular music presented hope for an integrated American society as those “outside” the mainstream (African Americans and poor white Southerners such as Jerry Lee Lewis, Bo Diddley, and Elvis Presley) successfully captured the imagination of mainstream white youth. For these reasons Landmarks sought to nominate the nationally significant home to honor Chuck Berry as well as increase the community’s awareness of the ties between St. Louis’ built environment and its rich musical heritage.

Practically every honor has been bestowed upon Chuck Berry for his incredible musical and cultural contributions; the most profound may be NASA’s selecting “Johnny B. Goode” as one of two representative examples of American music for the Golden Record on its Voyager space probe now hurtling through the galaxy bearing the canon of human culture into the unknown. Despite the overwhelming acknowledgement of his importance in both the popular and academic spheres, and though the nomination had the strong support of State Historic Preservation Office staff and approval by the Missouri Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, reviewers at the federal level have declined to



consider it. Concerns hinge around Berry’s continuing performance career, though great pains were taken to elaborate on the point that he is no longer producing new music and has not produced anything significant in that regard in over forty years. As Berry himself explained in 2001,

For many years I’ve been reluctant to make new songs. There has been a great laziness in my soul. Lots of days I could write songs, but I could also take my \$400 and play the slot machines at the riverfront casino. In a way, I feel it might be ill-mannered to try and top myself. You see, I am not an oldies act. The music I play, it is a ritual. Something that matters to people in a special way. I wouldn’t want to interfere with that.

Since federal reviewers remain intractable, Landmarks is now looking into the possibility of achieving City Landmark status for the house. This would not only provide it greater protection, but would finally acknowledge the importance of this modest home where one of our nation’s musical masters, St. Louis’ own Chuck Berry, crafted the fundamentals of rock ‘n’ roll.

Lindsey Derrington, Researcher

ARCHITECTURE ST. LOUIS HOSTS “AFTER HOURS” EXHIBIT

Landmarks Association hosted its first public exhibit opening at its new space on Friday, October 10. Held in conjunction with the American Institute of Architects (AIA) - St. Louis Chapter and the organization's Young Architects Forum, Landmarks presented After Hours, a juried student drawing competition shown alongside assorted work (furniture, photography, collage, painting) produced by young architects either unlicensed or within ten years of licensure. Subjects ranged from St. Louis architecture to nature to sports to modern furniture. The evening was a great success as well as a nice inaugural show for the brand new space. For more photographs of the event, be sure to visit our website at www.landmarks-stl.org.



Top, AIA President Sara Tetley and Carolyn Toft enjoying themselves at the opening; Bottom, the crowds gather in the new gallery at Architecture St. Louis!

Current Exhibit:

“Reconnecting and Revitalizing the Riverfront, Arch Grounds and Downtown District”

Student Submissions from the recent charette sponsored by the AIA and members of the local design community.

EXHIBIT RECEPTION

**5 p.m. to 8 p.m.
Wednesday, Dec. 3, 2008**

Join us and examine these fascinating and provocative concepts from over 35 students who explored numerous ways to improve St. Louis' landmark site.

Refreshments Served.

NEW SPACE IDEAL FOR WABMO PROGRAMS

The move to the new Architecture St. Louis provides the Landmarks staff an excellent location from which to launch its well-established and highly acclaimed WABMO (What Are Buildings Made Of?) educational program for schoolchildren. This fall, Landmarks has welcomed students from the Center for Creative Learning (Rockwood School District), Ladue Middle School and Reed Elementary. In addition to staff members, Landmarks was assisted by our wonderful cadre of dedicated volunteers, including **Tim Corcoran, Karen Halla, Lynn Josse, Venita Lake, Maureen McMillan, Richard Mueller, Tracy Perotti and Rick Rosen. Thanks for your hard work.**



Top, Andrew Weil explains the intricacies of building materials to inquiring minds; Bottom, students with Tim Corcoran, Landmarks volunteer!

INTERNSHIP PROVES TO BE VALUABLE EXPERIENCE

A graduate student in urban planning and real estate development at SLU, **Matt Fernandez** is dividing his time these days between Landmarks and the Carondelet Historical Society. Since Matt's program focuses on historic preservation and community development, his work at Landmarks has been particularly helpful, allowing him to conduct research on a variety of different projects and learn more about available research resources. Matt has also been working on a contract with the Carondelet Historical Society to build a searchable database of the society's 40-year old collection of over 15,000 photographs, as well as other artifacts. Matt views his internship as having been extremely worthwhile. “Working at Landmarks and the Historical Society, I have learned a great deal more about the history of St. Louis and the Carondelet area. I am even more interested in making St. Louis a vital and successful region that respects its past and builds a strong and sustainable future.”

STAY ON TOP OF THINGS!
**JOIN LANDMARKS'
 NEW EMAIL LIST**

Landmarks Association has just launched a new e-mail announcement list. While Landmarks Letter and our website offer great information on preservation news and events, sometimes we need to bring a Landmarks event, tour or news item to your direct attention. As we expand our offerings of tours, exhibits, lectures and special events, you'll want to stay in the loop so that you don't miss the excitement. Messages will be limited to announcements coming from our staff, so the volume won't be high. To sign up, go to the announcement list page here:

<http://groups.google.com/group/landmarks-association-of-st-louis>

Or simply send an e-mail to the office at landmark@stlouis.missouri.org and we'll add you directly.

Iron Horse Trestle Returning to Service

A completely unique historic preservation project is in the works in north city: renovation of the so-called Iron Horse Trestle for use as a bike and walking trail. The imposing 2-mile steel trestle was built in 1931 by the Illinois Traction System (later Illinois Terminal Railroad), and directed electric inter-urban passenger rail traffic from the McKinley Bridge to a tunnel that led to a station in the basement of the Central Terminal (now Globe-Democrat) Building downtown. Service and use of the trestle stopped in 1956.

The Great Rivers Greenway District has acquired the trestle and is planning to start rehabilitation work in 2009. The District has re-opened a small section of the trestle that connects with the pedestrian and bike lane on the McKinley Bridge as well as the North Riverfront Trail. The District board will approve a final design in November. HOK is the master designer on the project, which

will be completed in phases over the next few years. Amenities planned on the trestle deck include native plantings, public art and historical markers. A park will be built at the trestle entrance.

More information is online: <http://www.greatrivers.info/projects/CurrentProjectsMap.aspx>

Michael Allen, Asst. Dir.



Mullanphy Emigrant Home Stabilization Nearly Complete!

Thanks to the support of hundreds of individuals and organizations, including Landmarks Association and many Landmarks members, the Old North St. Louis Restoration Group (ONSLRG) has made tremendous progress in saving the Mullanphy Emigrant Home. After the 1867 landmark building was severely damaged by tornadic winds that brought down much of the south wall in April of 2006, ONSLRG intervened to keep the city from pursuing its initial demolition order. Nearly a year later, while ONSLRG was still raising funds to repair the damage, another storm blew through the building and knocked out much of the wall at the north end.

Over the past several months, crews from E.M. Harris Construction Com-



pany have framed up and closed off the massive opening along the north end of the building. This work follows the rebuilding of the entire south wall with concrete block, made possible by contributed services, supplies, equipment, and labor from several contractors affiliated with the Masonry Contractors Association and the Masonry Institute of

St. Louis. Although ONSLRG has taken on significant debt in the course of the campaign to preserve this irreplaceable piece of our city's architectural, cultural, and historic landscape, there is cause for great celebration as the building is no longer on the brink of total collapse. Quite a few things still need to be fixed, but the building is, for the most part, buttoned up for winter.

To help defray the remaining costs of stabilization, contributions can be made out to "Mullanphy Emigrant Home LLC" and sent to ONSLRG at 2800 N. 14th Street, St. Louis, MO 63107. For more information, visit www.SaveMullanphy.org.

Submitted by Sean Thomas,
 Ex. Director, ONSLRG

Donations to Landmarks' Architecture St. Louis Capital Campaign

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*The Board of Directors
and the Staff of the
Landmarks Association
wish you and yours the
Happiest of Holiday
Seasons!*



LANDMARKS ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP: September 1, 2008– October 31, 2008

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THE BACK PAGE... "THE NEXT FIFTY YEARS FOR LANDMARKS!"

After two months in St. Louis, I still find myself amazed (daily) by the wealth of historic architecture found in this city. Whether its on my walk to work or on my weekend jaunts exploring the city's diverse and vibrant neighborhoods, I am overwhelmed with the breadth of the historic resources in our community. And as many of you know, Landmarks Association of St. Louis has played a major role in the preservation of those resources. It is safe to say that without Landmarks, St. Louis would be a far different place than the city we know and enjoy today.

Next year, Landmarks turns fifty and one of our first celebrations marking that major milestone is an event to honor Carolyn Hewes Toft, the person who has, for the past 32 years, so ably and admirably directed this organization. I hope that you will join us on January 24 at Architecture St. Louis to pay tribute to Carolyn for her years of selfless devotion to Landmarks and to the important preservation work of this city. Believe me, I am the first to recognize that I have some big shoes to fill.

As the Board of Directors looks to the future of this organization, it has taken

some steps to ensure that the next fifty years will be as productive and rewarding as the past half-century. Toward that end, the board has established a strategic planning committee who will determine and chart the management, growth and sustainability of the organization. To assist in the realization of that plan, the board has also created a development committee to identify giving opportunities and to raise the necessary funds to secure the financial stability of the Association. Additionally, we now have a special events committee working to provide the quality lectures,

programs and exhibits that our membership and community have come to expect from this organization.

Of course, as we look to the future, we realize that nothing is possible without the continued support of our membership. The next fifty years for Landmarks Association will, no doubt, be equally, if not more challenging. There is no question, however, they can also be just as rewarding. Thank you to all who have welcomed me to St. Louis. I am excited to be here and be part of charting the course for the next fifty years.

Jefferson Mansell
Executive Director

