



LANDMARKS

ASSOCIATION *of* SAINT LOUIS

Preserving and Promoting St. Louis' Historic Architecture for Over 50 Years

WINTER NEWSLETTER & ANNUAL REPORT

2012

VOLUME 27, ISSUE 4



PRESERVING AND PROMOTING ST. LOUIS'
HISTORIC ARCHITECTURE FOR OVER 50 YEARS



The Year in Review

Looking back on another busy year for Landmarks Association, I have to say that 2012 was a good one for preservation in St. Louis. The gradual improvement in the housing market meant that the economic foundation of rehabilitation continued to recover and the State Historic Tax Credit program remained intact.

As always, we had no shortage of nominations for the annual Most Enhanced Awards demonstrating that interest and investment in historic buildings continues to be strong. In addition, the 2012 Most Endangered List primarily consisted of buildings that were carried over from previous years, which meant that while many buildings still languish, there were few new specific threats identified.

Indeed, some formerly Most Endangered properties such as the stately Drosten House at 3330 Missouri Avenue and Council Plaza's quirky mid-century service station (the Del Taco Building) at 212 S. Grand underwent major rehabilitations this year. Additionally, the successful fight to retain the unique AAA Headquarters Building at 3917 Lindell Boulevard struck

a positive blow for both urban land-use policy and modern design. While Cupples #7 still hangs by a thread, it is a thread that demonstrates that St. Louis' preservation ordinance does have the power to prevent unwarranted demolition when there is sufficient public pressure and political will supporting it. Despite the fact that most of the Pevely Dairy complex at Grand and Chouteau is now a pile of broken concrete, the iconic corner building still stands due to a restriction imposed by the City making demolition contingent upon demonstrable steps toward actual new construction (steps which, to date have not been taken).

The rehabilitation of the Metropolitan Building in Grand Center is complete, as is that of Cupples #9. Plans appear in the works

for the currently vacant Chemical and Arcade buildings downtown as well as the St. Louis News Company Building (Bride's House) at 1010 Locust, and the Sun Theater at 3627 Grandel Square. Equally important is the fact that rehab at the neighborhood level remains strong in many historic residential areas of the City. This overall picture can be attributed to a number of factors: the economic recovery; continued market demand from people who want to live and work in unique historic neighborhoods; the vigilance and passion of citizen activists; the hard work and investment of visionary developers; politicians who increasingly seem to support preservation and adaptive reuse, and Landmarks Association, who argues emphatically for the protection of unique places and enjoys the support of over 1,400 active members and thousands more who follow us through social media.

Advocacy

Major preservation advocacy issues of 2012 which Landmarks' staff monitored and participated in include the unfortunate demolition of the Rock Hill Presbyterian Church, the demolition of Hodgen School, the partial demolition of the Pevely Dairy complex, the proposed demolition of

Cupples #7 and the proposed demolition of the AAA Building on Lindell Boulevard. The organization also served (and will continue to serve) as fiscal agent and consultant for the ongoing effort to preserve the National Register listed Route 66 Meramec River Bridge near Eureka, Missouri. In addition, staff continues to monitor Sugarloaf Mound for its owners, the Osage Nation.

Landmarks Association facilitates citizen advocacy by disseminating information about proposed development and demolitions through our website, newsletters, list serve and social media outlets. We work to inform the public about preservation issues and provide actionable information so that concerned residents have clear options for getting involved. Landmarks' staff testifies at monthly meetings of the St. Louis City Preservation Board and passes along its agenda to a wide audience. We consult with Aldermen and the staff of the City Cultural Resources Office on issues pertaining to the built environment and facilitate media coverage for preservation issues. In addition, we attend many community meetings to help explain topics such as the legal framework of preservation, how to carry out historical research, and the benefits of historic rehabilitation and available tax credit incentives. We also discuss strategies that neighborhoods can implement for using history and architecture to build community pride and foster stewardship. This year these meetings ranged across both north and south St. Louis City, St. Louis, Jefferson and Lincoln Counties (Missouri), and Marion and Jersey Counties in Illinois. Finally, we organize and participate in events such as last winter's Pevely Dairy design charrette, that are designed to generate constructive criticism and preferable alternatives to the wrecking ball or other short-sighted schemes.

Increasing Our Visibility

This year we worked hard to increase our public profile and enjoyed direct coverage and/or references and quotations in a wide range of local and national media including: KMOX 1120 AM, KWMU 90.7 FM, "Majic" 104.9 FM, KDHX 88.1 FM, as well as Fox 2 News, KMOV Television, KETC and the Nine Network; as well as the St. Louis Post Dispatch, St. Louis Jewish Light, Ladue News, West End Word, 11 Magazine, Next American City, St. Louis Beacon, Feast Magazine and Sauce Magazine.

In addition our Facebook profile gains nearly 2,000 followers who actively monitor the activities of the organization.

Promotion, Education and Opportunities

Educational and promotional activities were many and varied this year. We organized a wide range of lectures, tours, exhibits and media screenings to provide opportunities for students of all ages to learn about and experience first-hand the incredible history and architecture of our region. Throughout





2012, we worked with hundreds of school children through Landmarks' "What Are Buildings Made Of?" program supported by the Regional Arts Commission (RAC). We taught classes, gave tours, visited schools, reviewed assignments, assisted teachers with curriculum development, gave interviews for student projects and hosted an exhibit of students' work in the

Carolyn Hewes Toft Gallery downtown.

In addition to the exhibit of student projects noted above, the Toft gallery also hosted an exhibit of beautiful water color paintings

by the venerable St. Louis architect Harry Richman. Currently we have an installation entitled "The Importance of Being Ernest" (on display through February 2013), which features the paintings of architect Ernest Friton and a unique documentation of buildings that once stood on the Arch grounds created by businessman Ernest Link. Landmarks also donated images for an exhibit put on by the Missouri Immigrant and Refugee Advocates (MIRA) entitled "The Missouri Immigrant Experience, Faces and Places." This spring look for a new exhibit we are hosting in conjunction with the Campbell House Museum. The exhibit will explore the past and present of Lucas Place and will be paired with an outstanding lecture series on lost neighborhoods of St. Louis.

In 2012, Landmarks organized and hosted lectures on various topics including the founding of St. Louis, the homes and history of the Lustron Corporation, the turnverins of St. Louis, the St. Louis streetcar system and renovation of the St. Louis Central Library. We also sponsored a film screening of "Detropia" at the downtown War Memorial as part of the "Open/Closed" conference and hosted a screening of the documentary "Brick by Chance and Fortune" at the Roberts' Orpheum Theater, which included a discussion with filmmaker Bill Streeter. All of these activities were planned and executed by Landmarks' staff in pursuit of our mission to help people to explore the region's history and to foster stewardship of historic architecture by helping citizens to understand it and appreciate it.

Through tours and events, we provided opportunities for people to explore the history and architecture of the region. Since the last annual report we organized visits to the Emil Frei Glass Studio, Grand Center Arts Academy, Magic Chef Mansion, Castle Ballroom, Chase Park Plaza, Gravois Planing Mill,

Artega Photography, Chain of Rocks Water Treatment Plant, Louisiana, Missouri; the Lierman Lofts (former American Furniture Company building), the Frank Lloyd Wright House in Ebsworth Park, the Dickman Building on South Grand and various sites related to the Lemp Family (co-sponsored with guides Davidson Mullgardt and Stephen Walker). We also toured the Lemp caves (thanks to everyone who participated in the raffle!), the Cherokee Street area, the former St. Louis State Hospital (Missouri Division of Mental Health Services at 5400 Arsenal); Convent of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, and a behind-the-scenes tour of the Old Courthouse. Finally, we had a lovely annual membership meeting at the Missouri Athletic Club where more than 140 members, young and old, came together to handle organizational business, enjoy the club's fabulous catering service, and explore the magnificent building. Thanks again to the MAC!

Strength on the Board

At the meeting, two new Board officers were elected:

Vice President Bob Wilhelm, a marketing and finance executive, and Secretary Shelley Donaho, real-estate agent and owner/rehabber/proprietor of the Magic Chef Mansion. In addition, two new Elected Directors were voted into office by the membership: Randy Vines, co-founder of Stl-Style.com and Shashi Palamand, owner of the Lemp Brewery Business Park.

The rest of the Board is composed of professionals with a wide variety of expertise including architecture, history, education, media, marketing, finance,

real-estate, business, and non-profit management. In 2013, the Board of Directors that will guide the organization is comprised of: Stephen Acree, Bob Wilhelm, Shelley Donaho, Kevin Kelleher, Karl Grice, Dorothy Martin, Margaret McDonald, William Seibert, William Wischmeyer, John Chen, Monica McFee, Karen Goering, H. Meade Summers Jr., Jeff Vines, Randy Vines, Jeff Brambila, Peter George, Jim Heslop, Patrick Murphy, Shashi Palamand, Matt Ghio, and new members Jeff Suzik and David Lott.



A Resource for the Public

Another important aspect of what we accomplished in 2012 was simply a continuation of what we have been doing for decades – we remain an available and reliable resource for the public. Every day we assist people who call with questions about buildings and architects in St. Louis or who come by our office to conduct research and explore the gallery and collections. We assist people who are researching their homes; those who are working on a book or paper; and those who simply are interested in learning more about St. Louis' architecture and history. We assist developers and property owners to discover and market the history of their buildings. We assist reporters and journalists who are covering preservation-related stories; and we assist visitors and tourists who want to discover the amazing neighborhoods and architectural treasures that St. Louis holds.





LANDMARKS

ASSOCIATION of SAINT LOUIS

911 Washington Ave., Ste. 170
St. Louis, Missouri 63101

PRESORTED
FIRST CLASS MAIL
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
St. Louis, MO
Permit 2055

Consulting Work

This year, staff also worked on many National Register nominations of buildings and neighborhoods. These listings help to protect historic properties while qualifying them for rehabilitation incentives. Most of this work was initiated by private citizens or by aldermen or other government entities. While the vast majority of the work we carried out this year was within the City of St. Louis, the staff's expertise was solicited for additional projects throughout the region. We

successfully listed Central (Yeatman) High School in St. Louis and assisted with expanding the boundaries of the Forest Park Southeast Historic District. We listed the North Taylor Avenue District in Kirkwood and the Route 66 Steak & Shake in Springfield, Missouri. We are currently finishing up nominations or awaiting the formal listing of the Tower Grove East Historic District, Penrose Park Historic District, Lindell Park Historic District, the Bevo Mill District and Troy (Missouri's) Downtown Historic District. These listings and individual nominations include more than 5,000 properties that now enjoy an additional layer

of protection, as well as incentives for reuse. Also in 2012, we began work on a "multiple property document" that will facilitate the National Register listing of St. Louis' mid-century industrial buildings.

A Difficult Job Done with Passion and Integrity

As you can see, our small but dedicated board and staff have been very busy. We work hard to preserve and promote the unique architectural character of St. Louis and its surrounding communities and we are so grateful that our members see value in the work that we do. It is not always easy and it is not always pretty. Sometimes the organization has to take controversial stances. We are often placed in positions where we have to speak truth to power and stand up for our founding principles. Toes get stepped on and feelings get hurt. Through it all though, we strive to be civil, clear, and most importantly constructive in

our positions. For this reason, I reject the labels like "obstructionist" which are occasionally thrown our way. I want to make it clear that we do not pursue preservation as an end unto itself. Preservation is a component of a larger vision for community improvement, economic development, and urban revitalization. The theoretical underpinnings of preservation are predicated upon the firm belief that the protection and continuing use of the unique places we have inherited from the past is not only the right thing to do from a cultural and environmental standpoint, it also makes sound economic sense.

One of St. Louis' most important competitive advantages is its historic building stock. This place is truly unique and in an era of cookie-cutter housing and national chains, "unique" is increasingly valuable. The founders of Landmarks Association knew the value of this building stock when they came together in 1958. The task that they set for themselves was to protect a past that they knew would be a key to the future. Today, we can all appreciate the sagacity of their convictions.

Thanks!

I want to thank you all personally and on behalf of Landmarks Association of St. Louis for your ongoing support. We strive to make sure that your contributions to the organization are in fact contributions to the future vitality of the region. I hope that you take pride in knowing that your memberships and donations ensure that historic preservation, good contemporary design and sound urban land-use policy continue to have a strong voice in our community.

Executive Director - Andrew Weil

