

## MIDWEST OFFICE - HIGHLIGHTS

September 2006

### SAVING HISTORIC PLACES

In response to this year's 11 Most listing of **Kenilworth, Illinois**, the MWO has developed a plan of action to respond to the teardown epidemic in Chicago and the Midwest region. Priority focus is on continuing to facilitate the **Chicago Suburban Alliance**, a group of 90 representatives from 30 different communities in the Greater Chicagoland area who have joined together to share information on managing the loss of community character resulting from teardowns and infill development. A task group from the Chicago Suburban Alliance has drafted a scope of work for a **Teardown Impact Study** that will measure the economic, social and environmental impact of teardowns on communities. Alliance members are currently seeking research partner(s) and potential donors to underwrite the cost of the study, and plans are underway to convene a regional/national gathering of experts and communities to discuss best practices and model local policies.



*Citizens of Kenilworth, IL*



*Fire damaged several buildings in the National Trust Landmark District in Madison, IN*

The MWO immediately stepped forward with an offer of support for our local partner, **Historic Madison, Inc.**, when several historic downtown Madison, Indiana buildings were demolished by an arsonist's fire. The fire damaged six historic properties including the old City Hall built in 1876, the 1902 Elks Building, two historic homes and a 1830s building that housed a dentist's office, all located within four blocks of the Ohio River. The fire struck in the heart of the newly-designated National Historic Landmark District in Madison, one of the original National Trust Main Street Pilot Project communities. With \$5,000 from the **Kohler Midwest Intervention Fund**, Historic Madison, Inc. will be able to assist property owners with engineering assessments of building damage and stabilization of the sites before winter.

After **Decorah East Side and Middle School** were chosen as an **11 Most Endangered** site in 2003, advocacy efforts by Decorah citizens, the Residents for Responsible Renovation (3Rs), and the MWO helped convince the School Board to renovate the Middle School for third and fourth grade classrooms. The future of the East Side School remains uncertain. In July, a donation of \$500,000 from a concerned citizen stopped demolition of East Side at the last minute. The School Board has now agreed to give the



*Decorah East Side School  
Decorah, Iowa*

**East Side School Development Committee** nine months to raise \$3.24 million of the estimated \$5.4 million needed to rehab the school as a community arts and education center and provide an endowment for its operation. Community support for the rehabilitation of East Side is growing as evidenced by the recent School Board elections: one opponent of the project was defeated and two of the three newcomers to the board are strong supporters of saving the building. The MWO continues to provide technical support and advocacy for the fundraising efforts now underway as the Development Committee strives to meet this ambitious goal.

## REVITALIZE COMMUNITIES

To preserve Chicago's North Lawndale neighborhood's historic character and unique housing stock, MWO staff joined a multi-agency task force to publish a book on the Chicago Greystones, including authoring an essay on preservation as a vehicle for neighborhood revitalization. Released in September, the book will launch the City's **Greystone Initiative**, modeled on Chicago's very successful Bungalow Initiative, combining education and technical advice with funding incentives for preservation. Concurrently, MWO staff have participated in the development of *Learning from Lawndale*, a series of presentations and an exhibit on the multi-cultural history of Lawndale mounted by the Chicago Architectural Foundation.



*Over-the-Rhine neighborhood, Cincinnati, OH  
Photo: D. Klinger*

After designation of the **Over-the-Rhine** neighborhood in Cincinnati as an **11 Most Endangered** site, the MWO has been working closely with neighborhood stakeholders, community groups, developers, social service organizations, cultural institutions, municipal government, and corporate interests to develop a plan for our involvement. Community meetings and feedback guided development of a Menu of Services for Over-the-Rhine including commercial revitalization through Main Street, housing development, heritage tourism, programs for historic schools, churches, parks, and arts & culture, marketing, and preservation infrastructure improvements. The MWO is now meeting with potential funders to develop proposals for specific elements of this community revitalization plan.

## ENGAGE THE PUBLIC

The MWO Director continued outreach efforts on the **Historic Neighborhood Schools Initiative** to promote the new advocacy tools emerging from our successful partnership with the **Council of Educational Facility Planners** and the **US Environmental Protection Agency**. In April, presentations were made to interested audiences at an **APT-sponsored** conference on historic building codes, and at the **Traditional Building Conference**, both in Chicago, and in collaboration with the **Southwest Office** and EPA, at the **APA** convention in San Antonio. In June, the MWO teamed up with the **21<sup>st</sup> Century School** fund to offer advice on school retention and renovation to attendees at the **Main Street Conference in New Orleans**.

In response to a recent spate of endangered historic properties associated with university expansion and renovation, MWO representatives facilitated a panel discussion on "Preservation on Campus" at the **National Collegiate Facilities Management Technology Conference** in Columbia, Missouri, attended by campus planners, facilities managers, and others involved with the built environment of universities across the country. MWO advocacy efforts in this area have focused on plans by the University of Dayton, Ohio, to demolish **Building 26** on the former National Cash Register campus, where the Bombe codebreaking machine was developed and built during World War II. The MWO, **Preservation Dayton**, **SHPO**, and others are advocating for the incorporation of Building 26 into the University's plans for redevelopment of the site. Several **National Historic Landmarks** in Missouri have also come under threat by university expansion. Despite advocacy from the MWO and many local stakeholders, Washington University demolished the **Prince Building**, one of the original structures built for the 1904 World's Fair, to allow construction of underground parking and a new student center. The NHL **Duley-Miller Erosion Plots** in Columbia, listed for their important contributions to the fields of agriculture and soil science, are threatened by expansion of the University Hospital, and the MWO continues to work with **Missouri Preservation** and others to advocate for their preservation.



*Building 26  
Dayton, OH  
Photo: www.daytoncodebreakers.org*

## LEAD THE PRESERVATION MOVEMENT

**ADDING without subtracting:**  
Sensitive design and historic properties  
October 20, 2006



On October 20<sup>th</sup>, preservation leaders from across the nation will join with local activists and design professionals for the **ADDING without Subtracting: Sensitive Design and Historic Properties** seminar. The MWO is sponsoring the day-long symposium that will explore National Park Service standards guiding design work and additions to historic buildings and neighborhoods. Speakers will include: **Paul Spencer Byard, FAIA**, Director of the Historic Preservation Program at Columbia University in New York City; **Steven Semes, AIA**, Associate Professor of Architecture at Notre Dame University, **Sharon Park, FAIA**, Chief, Technical Preservation Services, National Park Service; and **Jim Draeger**, Wisconsin Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer. Case studies from Wisconsin communities will be presented by independent reviewers to serve as the basis of dialogue and debate. The symposium is being underwritten by a grant from the **Jeffris Family Foundation of Wisconsin**. Funding also was provided for twenty-six scholarships that were awarded to help participants from five states (including Wisconsin) attend the conference. Co-sponsors include the **American Institute of Architects, Wisconsin Southeast Chapter; University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee School of Architecture and Urban Planning; University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Design Council; American Planning Association, Wisconsin Chapter; Wisconsin Department of Commerce, Main Street Program; Wisconsin Historical Society, Division of Historic Preservation and Public History; Wisconsin Association of Historic Preservation Commissions; Wisconsin Trust for Historic Preservation; and Milwaukee's Historic Third Ward Association.**

Our statewide partner, the **Michigan Historic Preservation Network (MHPN)**, was selected to participate in the **State Advocacy Capacity Building Pilot Program** being offered by the **Public Policy Department**. Before the ink was dry on the participation agreement, Michigan faced two threats to major preservation programs which were successfully fought off. Michigan's House Tax Policy Committee was looking to eliminate **the state's historic tax credit** as part of a plan to eliminate \$100 million in tax breaks. The MHPN, assisted by the Public Policy Department and **MWO**, got the word out across Michigan and numerous groups came forward to support the tax credits, including developers, preservationists, and community development organizations. Before the end of the year, a threat to the Michigan Main Street program arose when the Community Assistance Team (CATEam), which operated the **Michigan Main Street program**, was transferred from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) to the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA), leaving the CATEam programs, including Main Street, with operational funding only until the end of June 2006. Advocacy efforts to save the Michigan Main Street program came from every quarter – the MHPN, the **National Main Street Center**, the Public Policy Department, and the MWO. Public pressure and the Trust's advocacy assistance encouraged the development of a new agreement between the MEDC and the MSHDA to continue Michigan Main Street into 2006. A subsequent agreement was then forged resulting in the CATEam's existing services and programs continuing at MSHDA and a new contract with the National Main Street Center was signed for continuing services in Michigan.

The recently formed **Midwest Preservation Institute** in Minnesota is providing high-quality technical training on a wide variety of preservation topics to both professionals and homeowners. In response to demands by homeowners in the Twin Cities, MPI created an education series designed to teach preservation of ranch houses or "ramblers," as they're known in Minnesota. MWO staff created specialized training materials for the May course, "**Preserving Your Rambler From the Inside Out.**" The two-hour class covered the history and cultural significance of the ranch house, processes for designating properties at the local and national level, and strategies to advocate for the preservation of ranch houses. The course included a detailed **Rambler Inspection Checklist** to guide homeowners through conditions assessment and prioritizing maintenance and repairs, and was such a success that MWO staff plan to revise the materials into a comprehensive guide for Ranch House preservation and present the session at conferences around the region.



*An example of a "rambler" in Edina, MN.*

## **FUNDING FOR PRESERVATION BY THE NATIONAL TRUST**

In August, the MWO received a \$10,000 grant from the **Jeffris Family Foundation of Wisconsin** to support the **Cultural Diversity Scholarship**, enabling twenty or more Wisconsin grassroots preservation leaders and students to attend the **2007 National Preservation Conference in Saint Paul**. The MWO was also awarded two generous grants from the Jeffris Family Foundation to fund a **Historic Theater Workshop** and a **Wisconsin House Museum Summit**. The Historic Theater Workshop will bring nationally recognized experts to Wisconsin to provide training and technical assistance to those engaged in efforts to preserve historic theaters in the region. The **Wisconsin Historic House Museum Summit** will bring nationally recognized experts to address the challenges faced by historic house museums in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The **Midwest Office and Wisconsin Field Office** will work closely with the Trust's **Historic Sites Department**, the **Wisconsin Historical Society**, the **League of Historic American Theaters** and other partners to plan and execute both workshops.



*Balcony view  
Mabel Tainter Theater  
Menomonie, WI*