

Chapter 8: Historic Preservation

Goal: Preservation of Dundas' historic downtown and buildings on the National Register of Historic Places

Background

Dundas primary historic resources are its downtown and the several properties that are on the National Register of Historic Places. The "Register" properties include the following:

Archibald Mill Railway Street

The Archibald Mill is significant as being the first mill in the United States to manufacture and market patent flour.

Archibald, Edward T. – House Hamilton and Second Street

The EAT. Archibald House is significant as being the house in which E. T. Archibald, the prominent Minnesota miller, lived during the years of the milling revolution. Lorenzo Hamblin constructed the home that the Archibald family resided in from 1867-1885. The Archibalds had the reputation of being the best in the milling business.

Ault Store 2nd Street

The store is significant as the last remaining commercial building associated with Dundas' original business district. It is also significant as a good example of the first generation of commercial buildings constructed in Rice County communities during the 1850s and 60s. Edgar Ault, who had been in the mercantile business in the community since 1859, constructed the building in 1866. Ault's store occupied the first floor of the building and carried a full line of furniture, drugs, and a few staples. The front room on the second floor housed the community's first library and the back room was used for office space. The office of the Dundas News occupied the rear office at the time of its founding in 1876 until it was sold and incorporated into the Northfield News in 1879.

Church of the Holy Cross (Episcopal) 2nd Street

It is significant both for its close association with the early history of Dundas and as a reflection of one man's position of prominence in the town. The church is architecturally significant as a fine example of the Whipple churches inspired by "A Model for a Parish Church" published in Richard Upjohn's Rural Architecture in 1852. John Sidney Archibald was the driving force behind the formation of the Episcopal congregation and the construction of the Church of the Holy Cross. Services were held in Archibald's mill as early as 1864, Bishop Henry Whipple conducting the first service. In 1868, J. Archibald donated land for the church and bore most of the cost of the building erected in the same year. The church was largely the result of Archibald's desire to provide "his" town with a "proper" place to worship. The wealth and position of its prime benefactor reflected in the building's masonry construction, imported furniture, and care attention to design.

Martin, William, House Bridge and 1st Streets

It is significant for its close associations with the City of Dundas' period of greatest regional importance. The building is also significant as a well-preserved example of the residences constructed in the area during the late 1860s as the Italianate style was beginning to replace the Greek Revival style in popular residential architecture. Martin, treasure of the Archibald Milling /company, constructed the house in 1869. At the time Dundas enjoyed a reputation as one of Minnesota's foremost milling centers. The design features link the house to the precise time period in Minnesota at which Dundas and the milling industry reach their peak. The building reflects both the success achievable by prominent local millers and the City's earlier position of importance. No other structures in town so clearly reflect the social and cultural climate of Dundas' early period.

Objectives

National Register Properties

Objective: Preservation of National Register Properties

Policies:

P-1 The City will amend its development procedures to require City council approval of any demolition or exterior modifications to National Register properties.

Downtown

Objective: Preservation of the historic downtown area south of Hester.

Policies:

P-2 The City will preserve the existing buildings between Hester Street and Mill Street so that it is the focal point of new development and an improved riverfront.

P-3 The City will seek a long-range location for City hall that contributes to the preservation of the historic downtown by bringing more activity to Railway Street.

Mill Ruins

Objective: Preservation of the mill ruins.

Policies:

P-4 The City will study the feasibility to preserve the mill ruins and, if feasible, will eventually purchase and/or adopt interim controls to assure that it is not further damaged or demolished.

Implementation Directions/Actions

National Register properties are currently unprotected. There is no way for the City to stop demolitions or rehabilitation measures that destroy the historic character of the buildings. Therefore, the City must amend either the **zoning code** or other building codes to require that the City Council specifically approve demolition or building changes. The City may have to hire preservation specialists to review those rehabilitation measures so that they are done in a way that preserves the building's historic character.

The historic storefronts between Hester Street and Mill Street also need design review so that the commercial uses do not unknowingly destroy the facades by construction or insensitive signage. The appropriate City code(s) should be amended to protect these storefronts.

The preservation of these buildings is best encouraged by making sure that there are businesses that want to occupy them. The City can encourage this by **locating its City hall in the vicinity** so that business is brought to the downtown area. Greater recreational activity on the riverfront can also help the economic viability of uses in these buildings.

The City must be careful that **traffic solutions**, such as raising the grade of Hester, or diverting traffic away from downtown, do not have a detrimental impact on the economic viability of these buildings.

Finally, the City must take a more proactive position relative to the mill ruins and the adjacent building. The City should immediately **seek financial assistance** to do a feasibility study. This could lead to purchasing the mill ruins buildings in order to control and arrest the deterioration that is occurring there. This will allow for the eventual rerouting of Railway St. slightly toward the river and remove the dumping of trees and stumps in front of the mill ruins. This dumping activity makes it very difficult to observe the ruins.

The City will have to work with the **DNR** to seek funding for stabilization of the mill and developing some kind of interpretive plaques or information so that people can learn about the mills and appreciate their historic significance.