

**CITY OF SAINT PAUL**  
**HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION STAFF REPORT**

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**FILE NAME:** Dwight Henderson and Clara Watson House and Barn  
**HISTORIC NAME:** same as above  
**CURRENT NAME:** Mark Thomas House  
**INVENTORY #:** RA-SPC-1680  
**OWNER:** Mark Shepherd Thomas, MD  
**LOCATION/ADDRESS:** 402 Hall Avenue  
**HISTORIC ADDRESS:** same as above  
**ARCHITECT:** Cass Gilbert  
**BUILDER:** Hans Milsted  
**DATE OF CONSTRUCTION:** 1886  
**BUILDING PERMIT #:** 6879  
**DATE OF HPC PUBLIC HEARING:** November 1, 2021  
**LEGAL DESCRIPTION:** West St Paul Blks 1 Thru 99 Ex S 7 Ft; Lot 2 & All of Lot 1 Blk 32  
**PIN:** 072822110182  
**WARD:** 3  
**PLANNING DISTRICT:** West Side Community Organization  
**STAFF INVESTIGATION AND REPORT:** Christine Boulware  
**DATE OF REPORT:** October 22, 2021

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- A. PURPOSE:** To consider and make a recommendation to the Saint Paul City Council regarding the nomination for the designation of the Dwight Henderson and Clara Watson House and Barn, at 402 Hall Avenue, as a Saint Paul Heritage Preservation Site.
- B. CODE CITATIONS:**
1. Section 73.05 (a) of the City's Legislative Code states, in considering the designation of any area, place, building, structure or similar object in the City of Saint Paul as a heritage preservation site, the commission shall apply the following criteria with respect to such designation:
    - (1) Its character, interest, or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the City of Saint Paul, State of Minnesota, or the United States.'
    - (2) Its location as a site of a significant historic event.
    - (3) Its identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the culture and development of the City of Saint Paul.
    - (4) Its embodiment of distinguishing characteristics of an architectural or engineering type or specimen.
    - (5) Its identification as a work of an architect, engineer, or master builder whose individual work has influences the development of the City of Saint Paul.
    - (6) Its embodiment of elements of architectural or engineering design, detail, materials, or craftsmanship which represent a significant architectural or engineering innovation.
    - (7) Its unique location or singular physical characteristic representing an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood, community, or the City of Saint Paul.

2. Section 73.05 (b) states for *Planning commission review*: The heritage preservation commission shall advise the city planning commission of the proposed designation of a heritage preservation site, including boundaries, and a program for the preservation of a heritage preservation site, and secure from the city planning commission its recommendation with respect to the relationship of the proposed heritage preservation designation upon the surrounding neighborhood, and its opinion and recommendation as to any other planning consideration which may be relevant to the proposed designation, together with its recommendation of approval, rejection or official record concerning the proposed designation and shall be submitted by the heritage preservation commission along with its recommendation concerning the proposed designation to the city council. The heritage preservation commission may make such modifications, changes, and alterations concerning the proposed designations as it deems necessary in consideration of the recommendations of the city planning commission.
3. Section 73.05 (c) states for *Communication with the state historical society*. A copy of the heritage preservation commission's proposed designation of a heritage preservation, including boundaries, and a program for the preservation of a heritage preservation site, shall be sent to the state historical society in accordance with Minnesota Statutes, Section 471.193, Subdivision 6.
4. Section 73.05 (d) states for *Hearings*. Prior to the heritage preservation commission recommending to the city council any building, district, or object for designation as a heritage preservation site the commission shall hold a public hearing and seek the recommendation of all concerned citizens. Prior to such hearing the heritage preservation commission shall cause to be published in the newspaper of general circulation notice of said hearing at least twenty (20) days prior to the date of the hearing, and notice of the hearing shall be sent to all owners of the property within one hundred (100) feet of the boundary of the area to be designated a heritage preservation site.
5. Section 73.05 (e) states for *Findings and recommendations*. The heritage preservation commission shall determine if the proposed heritage preservation site(s) is eligible for designation as a determined by the criteria specified in paragraph (a) of this section, and if the heritage preservation commission recommends to the city council that the site(s) be designated as a heritage preservation site, the commission shall transmit to the city council with its recommendation its proposed program for the preservation of the site.
6. Section 73.05 (f) Council designation, hearings. The city council, upon the request of the heritage preservation commission, may by ordinance designate a heritage preservation site. Prior to such designation, the city council or one of its committees shall hold a public hearing, notice of which shall have been published in a newspaper of general circulation at least twenty (20) days prior to the date of the hearing, and notice of the hearing shall be sent to all owners of property which is propped to be designated a heritage preservation site and to all owners of property within one hundred (100) feet of the boundary of the area to be designated a heritage preservation site.
7. Section 73.04 (g) Heritage preservation program, amendment. The heritage preservation commission may recommend to the city council that the adopted heritage

preservation program for any heritage preservation site be amended and shall send a copy of the proposed amendment to the state historical society. Upon receipt of any such proposed amendments, the council may consider the matter at a public hearing held for that purpose, with published notice of the public hearing in a newspaper at least twenty (20) days prior to the hearing. If adopted by the council, a copy of the amended program shall be maintained on file in the office of the city clerk for public inspection.

**C. BACKGROUND:**

1. On July 16, 2019, the Saint Paul heritage preservation commission reviewed and reported their support of the nomination of 402 Hall Avenue to the National Register of Historic Places to the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office. The HPC also stated their belief that the property met criteria for designation at a Saint Paul heritage preservation site.
2. On February 5, 2020, the Dwight H. and Clara Watson House and Barn, at 402 Hall Avenue, was listed in the National Register of Historic Places with additional information.
3. On October 7, 2021, notice of the HPC November 1, 2021 public hearing to consider the designation of 402 Hall Avenue as a Saint Paul heritage preservation site was posted in the Saint Paul Legal Ledger.
4. On October 8, 2021, all property owners within one hundred (100) feet of the property were mailed notice of the HPC November 1, 2021 public hearing to consider the designation of 402 Hall Avenue as a Saint Paul heritage preservation site.
5. On October 25, 2021, the nomination, and associated documents for the designation of 402 Hall Avenue, were posted on the City of Saint Paul website.

**D. FINDINGS:**

1. The Dwight H. and Clara Watson house and barn are located at 402 Hall Avenue in Saint Paul, Minnesota.
2. The property was nominated for listing as a Saint Paul heritage preservation site by its owner, Mark Shepherd Thomas, MD, in November 2019.
3. The property was identified as a historic resource in the 1983 Historic Sites Survey of Saint Paul and Ramsey County and is identified by inventory # RA-SPC-1680.
4. The West Side Community Plan (2013) identifies the following Historic Preservation Objectives and Strategies:
  - a. HP 2.5 Evaluate properties based on historic contexts, reconnaissance surveys, and applicable designation criteria to determine their potential significance as well as their potential eligibility for designation as a heritage preservation site by the City and for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. The nomination of 402 Hall Avenue is consistent with this strategy.
  - b. HP 2.7 Forward significant historic resources to the City (HPC) for designation as heritage preservation sites or historic districts. The nomination of 402 Hall Avenue, a significant historic resource, is consistent with this strategy.

- c. HP 3.1 Use design review controls in conjunction with WSCO committees to protect designated historic resources, including archaeological sites, from destruction or alterations that would compromise their historic significance. The designation of 402 Hall Avenue would comply with this strategy.
- 5. 402 Hall Avenue meets the following criteria for designation as a Saint Paul Heritage Preservation Site:
  - a. CRITERION 3 Its identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the culture and development of the City of Saint Paul. Cass Gilbert, architect of the residence and barn, is a locally and nationally recognized master architect and is know for such notable commissions as the Minnesota State Capitol, the Endicott Building in downtown Saint Paul, many private residences along Summit Avenue and in the Crocus Hill neighborhood, as well as several churches.
  - b. CRITERION 5 Its identification as the work of an architect, engineer, or master builder whose individual work has influenced the development of the City of Saint Paul. The property is the work of Cass Gilbert whose body of work had a great influence on the development of the City of Saint Paul; this is most evident when experiencing the State Capitol and experiencing the Capitol Mall which is a significant architectural and landscape feature of the City.
- 6. The draft preservation program follows the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation and is written to be consistent with other local preservation programs while addressing specific materials and features of 402 Hall Avenue as described in the nomination. The preservation program does not address interior work, as the interior is not proposed as part of the designation
- 7. The proposed site boundaries of 402 Hall Avenue, -legal description- consist of the area described in the property’s legal description.

**E. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Based on the above findings, staff recommends that the nomination for the designation of the Dwight H. and Clara Watson house and barn, at 402 Hall Avenue, meets criteria 3 and 5 for designation as a Saint Paul heritage preservation site and should be forwarded, along with the draft preservation program and site boundaries to the State Historic Preservation Office, City of Saint Paul planning commission, and finally the Saint Paul city council for review and consideration for designation as a Saint Paul heritage preservation site.

**F. ATTACHMENTS:**

- 1. Nomination Form
- 2. Site Map
- 3. HPC NRHP comments to SHPO, July 16, 2019
- 4. Testimony received (emailed to commissioners)



CITY OF SAINT PAUL  
*Melvin Carter, Mayor*

25 West Fourth Street, Ste. 1400  
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Telephone: 651-266-6700  
Facsimile: 651-266-6549

July 16, 2019

Amy Spong  
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer  
Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office  
50 Sherburne Avenue  
Administration Building 203  
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Re: Certified Local Government Comment on the nomination of: **Dwight and Clara Watson House, 402 Hall Avenue, Saint Paul, Ramsey County** to the National Register of Historic Places

Dear Ms. Spong,

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the proposed nomination of the Dwight and Clara Watson House, at 402 Hall Avenue, to the National Register of Historic Places. The nomination is classified as architectural and Saint Paul Heritage Preservation Commissioner Stuart MacDonald meets the Federal Standards for architecture and historic architecture. Commissioner MacDonald reviewed the National Register nomination for Dwight and Clara Watson House and provided comment at the HPC meeting.

The commissioners agree that the nomination meets Criteria C in the area of architecture. The commissioners also provided the following comments:

- The massing and eccentric details are wonderful.
- The final paragraph of the nomination eloquently summarizes my sentiments.
- The barn is a contributing element; it is on the property and retains integrity and significance.
- The 1909 alterations to the porch are compatible and follow the Gilbert's design for the house.
- The period of significance should be expanded to include the alterations to the front porch and the reorientation of the barn.

The Saint Paul Heritage Preservation Commission allowed for public comment during their July 15, 2019 meeting and did not receive any public comment. The HPC fully supports the nomination of the Dwight and Clara Watson House to the National Register of Historic Places and strongly supports the inclusion of the barn as a contributing feature of the site. Please feel free to contact me at 651-266-6715 with any questions.

Sincerely,

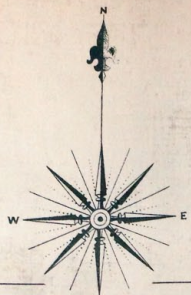


Christine Boulware  
Historic Preservation Specialist

Cc: Mayor Melvin Carter  
Ward 2 Councilmember Rebecca Noecker  
File

617

ST. PAUL VOL. 5



607

608

W-COLORADO

PRESCOTT ADD.

12

W-DELOS

618

W-ISABEL

W-CONGRESS

626

616

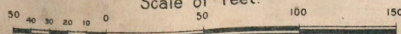
WINSLOW AV.

STRYKER AV.

HALL AV.

625

Scale of Feet



Dear Saint Paul Heritage Preservation Commission,

As a life long Saint Paulite, West Sider, artist in the public realm and garden designer, let this letter indicate my unequivocal and most exuberant support for Dr. Mark Thomas's application for the Historic Designation of 402 Hall Ave.

Over the past twenty years I have watched and experienced Dr. Thomas's dedicated love to the Cass Gilbert designed home. Mark has poured unabated love, energy and money into creating this authentic and historic place here on the West Side. We as neighbors and fellow residents are blessed to have someone as dedicated as Mark, one who understands the importance of designating, protecting and maintaining our history through this important work. Mark is the West Sides most active and important historian, and he has helped preserve, in 402 Hall Avenue, a most important landmark and story for this quiet little neighborhood. Many thanks to Mark.

Please support in full the *Historic Designation* of 402 Hall Avenue.

With all sincerity,

Craig David  
Art Davidii Public Arts Co.  
88 Morton Street West  
Saint Paul, MN 55107