



## MEMORANDUM

**SUBJECT:** Proposed designation of the Dwight H. and Clara Watson House and Barn as a Saint Paul Heritage Preservation Site

**TO:** Comprehensive and Neighborhood Planning Committee

**FROM:** Michael Wade, City Planner

**DATE:** February 16, 2022

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### SUMMARY

The Dwight H. and Clara Watson House, located at 402 Hall Avenue on the West Side, has been nominated for local designation as a Saint Paul Heritage Preservation Site. The Saint Paul Planning Commission is directed to weigh in regarding the proposed designation's conformance to the Comprehensive Plan and effect on the surrounding neighborhood.

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- 1. Background**
- 2. Planning Commission Role**
- 3. Site Description**
- 4. Comprehensive Plan Conformance**
- 5. Effect on the Surrounding Neighborhood**
- 6. Staff Recommendation**
- 7. Attachments**
  - a) Dwight H. and Clara Watson House and Barn nomination**
  - b) HPC staff report**
  - c) Map of Site Boundary**
  - d) Draft Planning Commission Resolution**



## 1. Background

When a nomination for local designation is made, the Saint Paul Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) is responsible for evaluating whether the property meets criteria for local designation, and for consulting with the Saint Paul Planning Commission and the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) regarding the proposed designation. The nomination is then forwarded to the Saint Paul City Council for consideration.

On July 16, 2019, the Saint Paul HPC reviewed and supported nomination of the Dwight H. and Clara Watson House and Barn, located at 402 Hall Avenue on the West Side, to the National Register of Historic Places; the site was listed on the National Register on February 5, 2020. In November, 2019, the Saint Paul Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) received a nomination requesting review and consideration of 402 Hall Ave for local designation as a Saint Paul Heritage Preservation Site.

The HPC, having provided notice to affected property owners within 100 feet of the subject address and posted the agenda to the city website and the City's Early Notification System, conducted a public hearing on November 1, 2021 to review the designation request where all interested parties, including the applicant and owner, were given an opportunity to be heard. The HPC agreed that the property meets criteria 3 and 5 for local designation and voted 6-0 to continue the designation process and forward the nomination to the Saint Paul Planning Commission and the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office for review and recommendations.

## 2. Planning Commission Role

Per Saint Paul Legislative Code 73.05(b), the Planning Commission shall make recommendations regarding proposed Heritage Preservation Site designations (emphasis added):

*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 to the comprehensive plan of the City of Saint Paul, its opinion as to the effect of the proposed 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 modification of the proposed designation. Said recommendation shall become part of the 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. Site Description

The Dwight H. and Clara Watson House and Barn is located at 402 Hall Avenue at the corner of Hall Avenue and West Delos Street. From an overhead view, the site is at the top of the bluffs just southwest of Wabasha Street South in what was known as the “West Side Hills” in the late 19th Century. The site and most of the surrounding neighborhood are zoned RT1 two-family residential, and are occupied by mostly single-family and two-family dwellings. 402 Hall Avenue consists of one single-family home and one accessory carriage house structure, both commissioned by the Watsons, designed by Cass Gilbert, and built by Hans Milsted in 1886.

From the HPC Designation Study:

*Designed by architect Cass Gilbert in 1886, the home and barn represent a relatively early, inventive example of Gilbert’s residential designs, and a “wood” prototype of the houses he designed for wealthy clients on Saint Paul’s Summit Avenue.*

*The Dwight H. and Clara Watson House is a rectangular two-and-one-half-story building with a footprint of roughly 30 feet x 40 feet. This compact, but complex and inventive structure features a distinctive dormer-oriel uniting second story and roof, a main Dutch door offset on the front elevation, an ell and large gable projecting from the south elevation clad in Shingle style elements over a half-bay with Queen Anne characteristics. Resting on a raised basement of locally quarried Platteville limestone, the surface treatment of pine clapboard on the south elevation unites on the west and north elevations with drop-lap siding and a continuous wooden sill running underneath first story windows and trim running uninterrupted across the top of the second story windows. ... The building, at a distance, gives the impression of a rectangular box. As one approaches the Watson House, it becomes clear that each side has an individual treatment, with an eye to the sides that would have been viewed first from carriages of the 1880s, when the house was built. ...*

*As constructed in 1886, the two-story, 19’ by 27’ barn is pure Shingle Style construction, clapboard below, cedar shingles above. ... In 1914, the barn was rotated 90 degrees and moved 50 feet onto Lot 2. Access to the barn was moved from Hall Avenue to Delos Street and the north-facing elevation was reconfigured to accommodate two automobiles. The barn would now function as a coach house.*

...

*The Dwight and Clara Watson House and barn was the second architect-designed home on the West Side. It is the work of Cass Gilbert, and one of the first plans to emerge from his first professional partnership, with James Knox Taylor, in 1886.*

The lot is generally flat, with native grasses and wildflowers growing alongside mature trees. Hall Avenue and Delos Street are standard paved City Streets, though there is no adjacent alley. Concrete curbs and sidewalks surround the property and neighboring properties.



Dwight Watson's father, George Watson, was elected in 1857 to the Minnesota State Constitutional Convention as an early representative from Freeborn County of the new Republic Party. He was subsequently "elected to the first four terms of the Minnesota State Senate before retiring and moving to Saint Paul with his family." Clara's father, Daniel Shirter Merritt, was a printer who founded newspapers across the Midwest, including the Red Wing Republican in 1855. "The Watsons named their first male child 'Gilbert Dwight Watson', a clear tribute to [Cass Gilbert's] 'gift' of the home's design, and a suggestion that there was a close connection between Watson and Gilbert."

402 Hall Avenue meets two of the City's criteria for designation as a Saint Paul Heritage Preservation Site:

- Criterion 3 – It's identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the culture and development of the City of Saint Paul.
- Criterion 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.

#### **4. Comprehensive Plan Conformance**

The proposed designation is in conformance with the City's Legislative Code and the 2040 Comprehensive Plan. Chapter 73 of the Legislative Code states the City's public purposes for the preservation of historic resources, which include safeguarding the City's heritage; protecting and enhancing the city's attractiveness to residents, tourists, and visitors; enhancing the city's visual and aesthetic character, diversity and interest; fostering civic pride among residents; pursuing the City's sustainability goals through strategic reuse of buildings rather than new construction; and to promote the use of historic resources for the education and general welfare of residents.

The Heritage and Cultural Preservation chapter of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan includes the following specific provisions regarding the nomination and protection of historic resources:

- **Policy HP-7.** Be proactive in the identification, evaluation, survey and designation of historic and cultural resources to ensure a consistent and equitable approach to preservation that is time-sensitive and responsive to community needs.
- **Policy HP-16.** Balance the preservation of a historic and/or cultural resource and new development by considering the:
  - significance of the resource;
  - impact of a proposed development action on the character-defining features of the resource and the area context;
  - potential for displacement of area residents and businesses;
  - evolution of the neighborhood and how neighborhood change is occurring;
  - long-term benefit-cost analysis and impact; and



- appropriateness of mitigation activities should the resource be compromised or lost.

The West Side Community Plan (2013) supports this designation with the following policies:

- **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.
- **HP 2.7.** Forward significant historic resources to the City (HPC) for designation as heritage preservation sites or historic districts.

According to HPC staff, 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.

## **5. Effect on the Surrounding Neighborhood**

Historic properties can help define the character of their neighborhoods, create a strong sense of place, enhance the quality of life of residents, and serve as a catalyst for investment in surrounding properties. 402 Hall Avenue predates much of the surrounding neighborhood and serves as an anchoring architectural feature in the West Side urban environment. Local designation would add to national designation to ensure that its benefits to the surrounding neighborhood would be sustained and enhanced.

## **6. Staff Recommendation**

Staff recommends that the Comprehensive and Neighborhood Planning Committee recommend that the Planning Commission support the designation of the Dwight H. and Clara Watson House and Barn at 402 Hall Avenue as a Saint Paul Heritage Preservation Site.

## **7. Attachments**

- a) HPC Resolution recommending designation
- b) HPC staff report
- c) Map of Site Boundary
- d) Dwight and Clara Watson House and Barn Designation Study
- e) Draft Planning Commission Resolution

**CITY OF SAINT PAUL**

**HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION RESOLUTION**

**FILE NUMBER: Dwight H. and Clara Watson House and Barn**

**DATE: November 1, 2021**

**Memorializing the decision of the Saint Paul Heritage Preservation Commission on November 1, 2021, recommending the City Council approve the Dwight H. and Clara Watson House and Barn, at 402 Hall Avenue, be designated a Saint Paul Heritage Preservation Site.**

**WHEREAS**, the Saint Paul Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) is authorized by Chapter 73 of the Saint Paul Legislative Code to review designation applications and provide a recommendation that is forwarded to the City Council; and

**WHEREAS**, the Dwight H. and Clara Watson House and Barn, at 402 Hall Avenue, is significant under criteria (3) and criteria (5) of Section 73.05 (a) of the Legislative Code; and

**WHEREAS**, on November 1, 2021, the HPC, having provided notice to affected property owners, duly conducted a public hearing on the said application where all interested parties were given an opportunity to be heard; and

**WHEREAS**, in accordance with Sec. 73.05(a), the HPC considered a staff report addressing the criteria, as follows:

73.05(a)(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 known 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.

73.05(a)(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; and

**WHEREAS**, the proposed designation of 402 Hall Avenue is generally consistent with the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan. Specifically, the Historic Preservation Chapter calls for designation and protection of historic resources and the use of the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, HP Policies 2.7 and 4.13; and

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Heritage Preservation Commission recommends to the City Council that the Dwight H. and Clara Watson House and Barn, at 402 Hall Avenue, be accepted for designation as a Saint Paul Heritage Preservation Sites along with the Preservation Program.

<b>MOVED BY</b>	<b>Commissioner Nelson</b>
<b>SECONDED BY</b>	<b>Commissioner Peroutka</b>
<b>IN FAVOR</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>AGAINST</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>ABSTAIN</b>	<b>0</b>

**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)



# Designation Study

## Dwight and Clara Watson House and Barn

402 Hall Avenue, Saint Paul

*November 1, 2021 – HPC Draft*



City of Saint Paul  
Department of Planning and Economic Development  
1400 City Hall Annex  
25 Fourth Street West  
Saint Paul, MN 55102

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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### MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SAINT PAUL

Melvin Carter, Mayor

Amy Brendmoen, Council President – Ward 5

Dai Thao, Councilmember – Ward 1

Rebecca Noecker, Councilmember Ward 2

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Mitra Jalali, Councilmember – Ward 4

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### DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (PED)

Nicolle Goodman, PED Director

Luis Peirera, Planning Director

George Gause, Historic Preservation Supervisor

Christine Boulware, Historic Preservation Specialist

Allison Suhan Eggers, Senior Historic Preservation Planner

SAINT PAUL HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION  
 SAINT PAUL DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
 DESIGNATION STUDY FOR THE DWIGHT AND CLARA WATSON HOUSE AND BARN

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SAINT PAUL HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION  
SAINT PAUL DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
DESIGNATION STUDY FOR THE DWIGHT AND CLARA WATSON HOUSE AND BARN

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## DESIGNATION STUDY PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

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The Dwight and Clara Watson House and Barn were first identified in the 1983 Historic Sites Survey of Ramsey County and Saint Paul. The 1983 inventory form identifies the property as the D.H. Weston [sic] House and Barn. At that time, the association between the property and Cass Gilbert were not known. In 2000, the house and barn were identified as an early Cass Gilbert commission.

In 2019, Mark S. Thomas, the property owner, nominated the property for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. On June 11, 2019, the Department of Planning and Economic Development (PED) received a letter from the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) requesting Certified Local Government comment on the nomination. At the July 15 meeting the commissioners agreed that the nomination met Criteria C in the area of architecture and declared their support for the nomination and strongly supported the inclusion of the barn as a contributing feature of the site.

In October of 2019, the owner submitted a draft designation study to heritage preservation staff in the Department of Planning and Economic Development (PED) to initiate the local designation review process. After completing an initial review, PED recommended to the Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) on November 1, 2021, that the property meets two local designation criteria as recorded in Legislative Code Section 73.05x. The HPC adopted PED's findings and the nomination proceeded through the outlined reviews required for Heritage Preservation Site designation.

This Study is intended to fulfill the requirements for heritage preservation designation as outline in Title IX, Chapter 73 of the Saint Paul Legislative Code.

SAINT PAUL HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION  
SAINT PAUL DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
DESIGNATION STUDY FOR THE DWIGHT AND CLARA WATSON HOUSE AND BARN

## BASIC PROPERTY INFORMATION

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COMMON NAME	Mark Thomas residence
HISTORIC NAME	Dwight H. and Clara Watson House and Barn
CURRENT ADDRESS	402 Hall Avenue, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55107
HISTORIC ADDRESS	same as current address
ORIGINAL CONSTRUCTION DATE	1886
ORIGINAL BUILDER	Hans Milsted
ORIGINAL ARCHITECT	Cass Gilbert
CURRENT FUNCTION AND USE	Residence
ORIGINAL FUNCTION AND USE	Residence
WARD	2
DISTRICT	3 – West Side
ZONING	RC4 – River Corridor Urban Diversified Overlay District
PROPERTY IDENTIFICATION NUMBER	072822110182
INVENTORY ID	RA-SPC-1680
PROPERTY TYPE	Domestic: single dwelling: residence
LEGAL DESCRIPTION	West St Paul Blks 1 Thru 99 Ex S 7 Ft; Lot 2 & All of Lot 1 Blk 32
USGS 7.5 Quad. Name(s):	<b>create a layer of the USGS coordinates in the HP map</b>
 <u>HISTORICAL ABSTRACT</u>	
BUILDING PERMIT #	6879
CONSTRUCTION DATE	1886
SUBSEQUENT PERMITS	1887 – Building Permit # 10832 1907 – Building Permit # 48678 1925 – Building Permit # 17892 1938 – Electrical Permit # 32384 1945 – Building Permit # 120235 1947 – Plumbing Permit # 158072
MOVED:	Barn rotated 90 degrees clockwise and moved 50 feet south to Lot 2, Block 35, 1914
ORIGINAL OWNERS	Dwight H. and Clara Watson, 1886-1914

SAINT PAUL HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION  
SAINT PAUL DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
DESIGNATION STUDY FOR THE DWIGHT AND CLARA WATSON HOUSE AND BARN

SUBSEQUENT OWNERS Gustav Carlson, 1914; Clarence T. Ridge, 1914-1959; Edward Busch, 1959-1993; Mark S. Thomas and John C. Neess, 1993-2007; Mark S. Thomas, 2007-present

SITE DESCRIPTION

STYLE Victorian Era – eclectic: Shingle Style, Queen Anne, Four Square

BUILDING TYPE Single-family residence

NO. STORIES 2

PLAN Rectangular plan with south-facing gable, rear wing and summer kitchen

ROOF TYPE Hipped with dormer and side cross-gable

ROOF MATERIAL Asphalt shingles

STRUCTURAL SYSTEM Balloon frame, wood

FOUNDATION Platteville limestone

FAÇADE MATERIAL Drop-lap siding beneath first-floor windows, continuous wood sill and clapboard above the sill

ADDITIONAL Decorative cedar-shakes on the dormer

OUTBUILDINGS Carriage house – 19 x 2 feet with cedar clapboard (replaced in 2009) and cedar-shingles original to the second story

LANDSCAPE

OTHER CONTRIBUTING FEATURES

VISUAL ASSESSEMENT

EXTERIOR CONDITION Excellent

EXTERIOR HISTORIC INTEGRITY Good

SURROUNDING LAND USES Residential

## PART 1: DESCRIPTION STATEMENT

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### DESCRIPTION OF BUILDINGS ON THE SITE

The residence and barn at 402 Hall Avenue, commonly known as the Mark Thomas residence, is located in a residential area on the West Side of Saint Paul, at the corner of Hall Avenue and West Delos Street. Designed by architect Cass Gilbert in 1886, the home and barn represent a relatively early, inventive example of Gilbert's residential designs, and a "wood" prototype of the houses he designed for wealthy clients on Saint Paul's Summit Avenue.

The Dwight H. and Clara Watson House is a rectangular two-and-one-half-story building with a footprint of roughly 30 feet x 40 feet. This compact, but complex and inventive structure features a distinctive dormer-oriental uniting second story and roof, a main Dutch door offset on the front elevation, an ell and large gable projecting from the south elevation clad in Shingle style elements over a half-bay with Queen Anne characteristics. Resting on a raised basement of locally quarried Platteville limestone, the surface treatment of pine clapboard on the south elevation unites on the west and north elevations with drop-lap siding and a continuous wooden sill running underneath first story windows and trim running uninterrupted across the top of the second story windows.

The distinctive continuous sill running below the front window, and drop-lap siding below, also unites the west elevation with the north side. The front porch gable, which visually reads as part of the west elevation, rests atop the front porch and eccentrically placed large Dutch door (Dutch heritage). This shifting of the front door to the right, under the porch roof, allowed Gilbert to shift the front stairwell behind the west elevation.

In its original construction, in conformance to the plans (extant, New York Historical Society), the continuous sill on the west elevation was also continuous with the front porch railing, uniting the elevation with both the porch and the north elevation, a theme of horizontal unification seen wrapping around all four elevations. The cellar window fenestration was centered under the front window. (The plans had brick quoins drawn in as a suggestion for the cellar window but were never executed).

The building, at a distance, gives the impression of a rectangular box. As one approaches the Watson House, it becomes clear that each side has an individual treatment, with an eye to the sides that would have been viewed first from carriages of the 1880s, when the house was built.

#### WEST ELEVATION

The west-facing principal elevation is an inventive, yet simple composition (Figure \_), dominated by the shingled, "visored" dormer with "scramble" united underneath by a three-paneled oriel with windows (reference to drawings in his European notebook). A horizontal band of trim running across the dormer façade unites this elevation with the north elevation. The first-floor area of the "west side" is dominated by a large plate-glass window and Queen Anne transom.

#### SOUTH ELEVATION

The south elevation, a masterful combination of shingle and Queen Anne elements, was the first to be seen by passers-by in carriages, on their way to the new Prospect Boulevard Park when the house was built. Taken with the west, or front elevation, this "show side" of the building would have been an advertisement to passers-by of what Cass Gilbert could produce for a middle-class family in this "up-and-coming" neighborhood of Saint Paul. The elevation is dominated by a large gable, which juts 2 feet out from the body

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of the house. The detailing of shingle and saw-tooth under the roofline, and the flared, saw-toothed lower margin, defines the gable as shingle-style. The series of three small, square window-openings, (elaborated by the present owner), is a signature of the work of McKim, Mead, and White –Gilbert’s first professional employer- in works such as the Newport Casino (1882). The overhanging gable enables the positioning of a half-bay, to maximize winter sunlight in the family parlor, within. The continuity of this half-bay, by way of paneling, with two Queen Anne windows, connects the south elevation with the front porch. Originally an open porch, without an extension to the south (1909 addition), the south and west sides were united by the line of the gable-bottom and the porch roofline, and the window half-bay unit. Here the plans for the brick quoins around basement windows were executed.

#### NORTH ELEVATION

The north, or Delos Street elevation of the house, not seen by carriage occupants on their way to the bluff park, was more business-like in its execution, but, even here, the strong, horizontal connection to the front elevation is evident. The roof line is continuous with the front. The frieze-line, with lower-margin trim, also running contiguous with the tops of the windows, runs from the east elevation, across the north, and then on to the west, and even a portion, of the south elevation. The continuous sill under the windows, collinear with the top of the back-porch railing, and the distinctive drop-siding below the windows, wraps around the west elevation and provides emphasis of the visual unity of the two sides. Originally without a window at the western end, and a piano window on the first floor below it, two additional double-hung windows completed the symmetry of the original windows on the north elevation in 1943 and 1958.

#### EAST ELEVATION

The eastern elevation includes a one-story summer kitchen, constructed in 1887. Even here, its roof line is collinear with the frieze-trim on the main body of the house. Exposed ends of the eaves provide an elegant touch on the “business end” of the house: maid’s quarters upstairs, kitchen and summer kitchen downstairs. The summer kitchen was not shown on the plans.

The house is an excellent example of Cass Gilbert’s early years as a residential architect. The Watson home integrates the Shingle-Style and Queen Anne style into a modified “four-square” shape, one of the earliest examples extant in Saint Paul. The front roof plane features a balconette-dormer with a pyramidal projecting-roof, matched below by an oriel window at the second-story, novel to Saint Paul of 1886. These details mirror drawings from Gilbert’s travels in Europe in 1880. The front and side porches, as originally built, were roughly mirror images connected horizontally by drop siding and continuous sill designed to unite West and North primary elevations. The south elevation, whose jutting gable is treated with both Shingle Style and Queen Anne elements, connects visually with front elevation; these two sides would have been visible to carriages on their way to the newly constructed Prospect Boulevard (1885) promenade overlooking downtown.

#### ALTERATIONS AND ADDITIONS

The homes exterior has been preserved and brought back to its original configuration with the following exceptions:

1. Front porch, expanded in 1909, was enclosed in 1936.
2. Two double-hung windows added to the north elevation in 1943 and 1958.
3. Window in family parlor closet added 2005.
4. Window in stairwell added in 2010.

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## DESCRIPTION OF ASSESSORY STRUCTURES

As constructed in 1886, the two-story, 19' by 27' barn is pure Shingle Style construction, clapboard below, cedar shingles above.

In 1914, the barn was rotated 90 degrees and moved 50 feet onto Lot 2. Access to the barn was moved from Hall Avenue to Delos Street and the north-facing elevation was reconfigured to accommodate two automobiles. The barn would now function as a coach house.

The barn, also seen from a distance, would have been viewed as a companion structure, clad in clapboard, with a matching dormer fenestration on the front elevation.

The barn is the more purely “shingle-style” building of the two structures Watson had built. The building, longer than it is wide, presents unusual and pleasing proportions, with shingle-siding above and clapboard below. The dormer design relates to the house. Originally painted white, it has gone through a number of changes in color. Originally, it was located at the property line at the northeast corner of the lot, against Delos Street. The western elevation, or front, had a “human” door to the left, and a wider, “Dutch horse door,” to the right. The southern elevation had two carriage doors very sturdily constructed 4' by 12' pieces, that rolled on an internal, metal track, centered on the right side of this elevation. The southern elevation was covered, (Sanborn Insurance Map, 1903), by a one story, 8' by 15' addition. In March 1914, the barn was moved prior to the sale of the property by Dwight Watson. Presumably, this was to get the building off Delos Street, and to reconfigure it to accommodate automobiles. At that time, the barn was rotated 90 degrees, and shifted west 25 feet, and south 50 feet, to its present location. Two sets of double “swinging” doors were placed on the now “north” elevation. The carriage door on the now “west” elevation, was cut down to 8 feet, and turned into a set of swinging doors. The hay-door, on the second floor of the now “east” elevation, was removed and the opening framed in and shingled over.

The carriage house now sits directly behind the house. It was moved from its original position – in the northeast corner, facing west, or Hall Avenue – in 1914, shortly before the property was sold, by the Watsons to Gustav Carlson. Its surface features have been altered, most significantly on the present north and east elevations. The two, double entry doors, on the north side, replaced the earlier doors that were placed in 1914. The double doors on the side, cut downs from the original 12-foot high carriage doors, were replaced by two window-openings, and storm windows from the property, in 2005. The northern elevation dormer, with triangular openings in the gable, matches, in form the dormer of the house, and would have been seen as a “matched set” from Hall Avenue. The east elevation, which would have been along Delos Avenue at the lot line, features a second-story hay-door, which would have allowed the lifting of hay bales from a wagon below on Delos Street. The position of the windows on this side reflected the need for light in the two different interior spaces: 1. the larger, two-muntined sashes (found in outbuildings in the 1860s), located in the carriage stall; 2. the smaller, one-muntined sash in the horse stall (perhaps to protect the window from the horse(s)). A door was placed at the southern end of the elevation in 2005.

## DESCRIPTION OF INTERIOR FEATURES

Interior features of the house and barn are not proposed for local designation.

## DESCRIPTION OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD

At the time of its construction, the Watson House and Barn were surrounded by mostly smaller frame houses, none designed by architects, with the possible exception of the Yoerg home, at 218 Isabel Street West, built in 1876. The Rau-Strong house, at 2 George Street East, was its closest “large” neighbor in 1886.

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This area of the West Side, known as the “West Side Hills,” was thinly populated before 1885, due to its character of wetlands, seeps, springs, and stream system. The city sewer project of 1885 effectively drained a large part of this area and rendered it more “buildable.” With the arrival of tap water on the West Side (1891), large, brick houses became fashionable, briefly. About 12 of them were constructed, the most notable of those extant being one at 386 Winslow (Minea), 397 Hall (Terrace Home), the Heimbach House (56 West Delos), Winona Street, among other.

#### Other Structures

The West Side of Saint Paul was originally part of West Saint Paul Township, Dakota County. 402 Hall Avenue was part of the 2nd plat in Dakota County, “West Saint Paul Proper,” in 1855 (following the “opening” of the West Bank of the Mississippi to “settlers.”) Part of it, including Block 32, was incorporated as the “city” of West Saint Paul, in 1858. Due to repeated flooding and fiscal troubles, it was dissolved as a political entity by the state legislature in 1862. The West Side of Saint Paul was annexed by the City of Saint Paul and Ramsey County in the election of 1874.

Lots 1-3, Block 32, West Saint Paul Proper, were purchased by Dwight Henderson Watson in February 1885, from Caroline Somers.

In 1885, the city of Saint Paul undertook a massive public building project on the West Side. It laid storm sewers throughout the district. It built its first public promenade, Prospect Boulevard, along the bluff facing downtown Saint Paul, directly across the Mississippi. The right of ways of Isabel and Susan (now Congress) streets were cut down through the bluff, and retaining walls of Platteville Limestone were constructed through these cuts. One such cut angled at the intersection with Hall Avenue, presumably to enable horse and carriage to maneuver the intersection on their way to the promenade. The D.H. Watson house was the first residence passengers would have seen on their way to Prospect Boulevard.

## DESCRIPTION OF LANDSCAPE AND LANDSCAPE FEATURES

**TOPOGRAPHY:** The lot is near the edge of the bluff and is generally flat.

**VEGETATION:** The vegetation is native grasses and wildflowers along with mature trees.

**OTHER LANDSCAPE FEATURES:** None

**PARK(S), BOULEVARDS, ETC.:** The boulevard is also home to native plantings.

**SHEDS, GAZEBOS, PERGOLAS, ETC.:** None

**FENCES, GATES, SCREENS, RETAINING WALLS, AND PRIVACY WALLS:** There is a non-historic, two-rail, wood fence wrapping the property.

**DRIVEWAYS, WALKWAYS, PATIOS, GARDEN PATHS:** There are new (2021) kasota stone steps and a brick walkway leading to the main entrance from the Hall Avenue sidewalk. The driveway off of Delos Street is unpaved, but archaeological exploration at the site has uncovered an early, brick paver, carriage path and walkway.

**STREET FURNITURE AND FEATURES:** None

**RIGHT-OF-WAY – STREETS, SIDEWALKS, CURBS, ALLEYS:** There are standard paved City Streets, concrete sidewalks and concrete curbs surrounding the property. There is no adjacent alley.

## PART 2: SIGNIFICANCE STATEMENTS

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PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE:	1886-1914
HISTORIC & CULTURAL CONTEXTS	Local: Residential Real Estate Development State: Urban Centers (1870 - 1940)
SIGNIFICANT PEOPLE	Cass Gilbert; Dwight Henderson and Clara Watson
RESIDENTS	Dwight Henderson and Clara Watson
ARCHITECTS	Cass Gilbert
BUILDERS	Hans Milsted
ARCHITECTURAL STYLES	Shingle Style, Queen Anne, Four Square (early)

### Contexts of significance:

1. Pioneers to the Territory
  - a. 1855: Daniel Shirter and Mary Merritt
  - b. 1856: George and Harriet Watson
2. Early Newspaper, 1855, Red Wing, Daniel Merritt
  - a. Red Wing Republican, first issue, July 17, 1855
3. Earliest State Government Significance: George Watson
  - a. State Constitutional Convention, Republican, 1857
  - b. State Senator 1858-1861
4. Early State Federal Office: US Surveyor General's Office: George Watson, 1861-1874
5. Early Commerce: Noyes Brothers and Cutler, 1869-1919, Dwight Henderson Watson

### St. Paul Historic Contexts:

The Dwight and Clara Watson House and barn was the second architect-designed home on the West Side. It is the work of Cass Gilbert, and one of the first plans to emerge from his first professional partnership, with James Knox Taylor, in 1886. The West Side, annexed from Dakota County by Ramsey County in 1874, underwent a massive public works project in 1885, when storm sewers and Prospect Park were developed.

### History of the Watson Family

The Watson family arrived in Minnesota in May 1856, in a family group of at least 9 people. George (Grove) and Harriet Chapman Watson moved from Platea, Erie County, Pennsylvania, where George was a physician. He had grown up in Ashtabula County, Ohio, the youngest of 7 children. He trained as a "township physician," and practiced there for five years. Harriet, the youngest of 7 children, grew up in the town of Franklin, New London County, Connecticut. She traveled to Ashtabula County in 1842 to assist in the care of her older sister's two children. The families were representative of a generation of Connecticutians who moved to the state's "Western Reserve." George and Harriet were representative of the generation of Connecticut Yankees who settled in Minnesota before it became a state.

In 1857, George was elected a representative, from Freeborn County, to the Minnesota State Constitutional Convention as a Republican: a new party endorsing abolition and the availability of land for settlement. He subsequently was elected to the first four terms of the Minnesota State Senate before retiring and moving to Saint Paul with his family. He worked as chief clerk in the US Surveyor General's office on Pine Street in the

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West Seventh neighborhood until forced to resign because of ill health. His last public office was that of representative from the West Side to the Saint Paul School Board, from 1876-1880.

Dwight Henderson Watson, George and Harriet's son, was born in Platea, Pennsylvania, and came to Minnesota as a two-year-old on a steamer from Rock Island, in 1856. He began work in the young firm of Noyes Brothers and Cutler, formed in 1869. He worked there until his retirement in 1916. He became the chief buyer for the firm in 1895. He was the only non-family member of the board of the company when it became a public corporation, in 1916. Clara Merritt, Dwight's wife, was born in Red Wing, in 1863, one of seven children of Daniel Shirter Merritt and Mary Arminda Millard. Merritt, trained as a printer in Manhattan, traveled through Michigan and Illinois, where he founded three papers. In 1855, along with Alexis Bailey, he brought his printing press to Red Wing, where he published the first paper, the Red Wing Republican, in the same month as the founding of the Republican Party in Ripon, Wisconsin. He subsequently created the Delano paper in 1872.

Architect Cass Gilbert:

The history of Cass Gilbert is well-documented. In 1885, when Dwight Watson bought the West Side Property, Gilbert had opened his office with James Knox Taylor. Prior to this, he had designed homes for his mother, Elizabeth Gilbert (471 Ashland Avenue), and wealthy St. Paulites, including Charles Phelps Noyes, Watson's employer. The home most closely resembling the Watson home was the Lucius Ordway home. 1886 also witnessed the construction of the Swedeborgian Church on Virginia Street, and was underwritten financially by Charles Noyes. Details of the church, including the stained-glass windows, are repeated in the Watson home.

The Watson home departed from Gilbert's pattern: the Watson home was a modest project (estimated cost \$2,600); the location was on the West Side, where he had no other projects; the design of the house was unlike previous ones: a box-like construction with details that referenced both Shingle Style elements and Queen Anne; elements that harked back to Gilbert's time with McKim, Mead, and White – a series of three small windows in the south gable- and to the heritage of the Watsons – the large Dutch front door, the beaded trim throughout the interior, and the Colonial style front hallway and stairwell.

The Watsons named their first male child "Gilbert Dwight Watson," a clear tribute to the architect's "gift" of the home's design, and a suggestion that there was a close connection between Watson and Gilbert. When the Gilbert family arrived in St. Paul, Dwight Watson's father was Chief Clerk in the US Surveyor General's Office. Gilbert's father, Augustus, was a very early surveyor with the US Geological Survey. It's possible that the families met through this connection. Gilbert's grandparents lived in Hebron, Connecticut, just 15 miles from where Watson's mother, Harriet, grew up: the "Yankee" connection relatively common in early St. Paul. Alternatively, Watson's employer, Charles Phelps Noyes, was an early patron of Gilberts. It is possible that Noyes availed Gilbert's services to his esteemed employee. Noyes' own home, on Virginia Street, followed the Watson construction by one year.

## PART 3: RATIONALE FOR DESIGNATION

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“The council of the City of Saint Paul hereby declares as a matter of public policy that the preservation, protection, perpetuation and use of areas, places, buildings, structures and other objects having a special historical, community or aesthetic interest or value is a public necessity and is required in the interest of the health, prosperity, safety and welfare of the people.” Legislative Code § 73.01.

“The commission shall recommend to the mayor and city council areas, buildings, objects or districts to be designated as heritage preservation sites in the city, except for the Capitol Area, as defined in Minnesota Statutes, Section 15.50, Subdivision 2, along with programs for the preservation of such sites.” Legislative Code § 73.04. (3)

“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:” Legislative Code § 73.05.

### DESIGNATION CRITERIA

- CRITERION 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.
- CRITERION 2 Its location as a site of a significant historic event.
- CRITERION 3 Its identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the culture and development of the City of Saint Paul.**
- CRITERION 4 Its embodiment of distinguishing characteristics of an architectural or engineering type or specimen.
- 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.**
- CRITERION 6 Its embodiment of elements of architectural or engineering design, detail, materials or craftsmanship which represent a significant architectural or engineering innovation.
- CRITERION 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.

### ASSESSMENT OF HISTORIC INTEGRITY

Historic integrity is the ability of a property to convey its historical associations or attributes.

The property retains physical features that characterize the type, period and method of construction the property represents. It retains design, workmanship and materials

**LOCATION:** The house and barn were both constructed at 402 Hall Avenue in 1886. In 1914, during the period of significance, the barn was moved and reoriented on the site by the Watson family. Both buildings retain integrity of location.

**DESIGN:** The house and barn retain integrity of design, as the historic form, plan, style, ornamentation and materials retain generally unchanged, and alterations have been consistent with the original design intent.

**SETTING:** The house and barn retain integrity of setting.

**MATERIALS:** The house and barn retain integrity of materials.

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**WORKMANSHIP:** The house and barn retain integrity of workmanship.

**FEELING:** The house and barn retain original and early feelings of experience, as there has been minimal alterations to the design of the buildings and they can be read as products of their time (1886-1914)

**ASSOCIATION:** The property retains integrity of associations with Cass Gilbert and the Watson family.

The DH Watson House and Barn retain very good integrity. The exterior has been restored largely to its original condition, as determined from original plans and remnants of original surface treatment. The entire house had been clad in asbestos shingles. Most surface treatment, such as trim and decorative moldings, had been removed. The original plate glass window and transom on the western elevation, which were removed and replaced with a set of double hung windows, was replaced in 2010. A piano window on the north elevation, west end of first floor, was replaced by a single, double hung window in 1958, remains. A double hung window above this, on the second floor, was placed in 1942. A single, double hung window was placed on the second floor, above the side porch in the maid's room, also in 1942. Another double hung window, with middle muntins, was added in 1914, on the south side of the back wing of the house, second floor. Two stained glass windows have been added: one on the east elevation, first floor, the other on the south elevation, second floor, above the front porch roof. The front porch was expanded to the south, in 1909, by J. A. Posey, and enclosed with clapboard and screens, in 1936. A small window was placed in the eastern elevation, second floor, to admit light to the bathroom. It matches a small window, present originally, just to its left.

The interior of the house has remarkably retained the integrity of all walls, baseboards, trim on all doors, bead in front hallway, all hardware. The kitchen chimney has been removed except for a portion enclosed by a faux brick enclosure. Two interior doorways were widened in 1893, to the dining room and to the formal parlor. A door between the master bedroom and the north bedroom has been removed. The closet in the north bedroom has been incorporated into the bathroom on the second floor. A half-bath has been installed in the main coat closet on the first floor. The summer kitchen is in its original condition, save for removal of the summer kitchen stove (extant in the basement) and removal of the chimney above the roof. The cistern in the basement was removed in 1916. The original layout is identical with the plans from Gilbert and Taylor except for the position of the scullery (placed adjacent to the summer kitchen) and a "pass through" pantry between the kitchen and the dining room (during construction, 1886).

The carriage house, or barn, has been moved, and there have been major changes to its integrity.

The Dwight and Clara Watson house and carriage house is architecturally significant as an early, inventive, prototypical example of the residences designed by Cass Gilbert (1859-1934), an architect of local, regional, and national significance. It is significant on the West Side as the earliest example of Shingle Style (in part), and the 4th-earliest extant residence designed by Gilbert in the St. Paul area.

At the time of Watsons' purchase of Lots 1,2,3, Block 32, West Saint Paul Proper, the recently annexed West Side was receiving a major infrastructural improvement of storm sewers and piped water (1885), and the construction of Prospect Boulevard with its peerless view of downtown St. Paul. The location of Watsons property placed it on the newly dug Isabel Street approach to the park. As placed, visitors by carriage to the

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Boulevard would pass by the south and west elevations of Gilbert's design, where he appointed it with most of his creative motifs. As this was quite early in Gilbert's career in residential design, the position of the house, on a knoll along a well-traveled route of people of means, would have served as an advertisement of what he was capable of producing for clients of moderate to wealthy means. His Summit Avenue houses, most of them of square to rectangular form, bear a similarity to the Watson house: roughly symmetric, but with individual to grouped treatment of one or more elevations.

The West Side, separated as it was by the Mississippi River from downtown Saint Paul, was also plagued by serious flooding of the "flats," below the bluff and hills where the Watson House was built. The infrastructural project of 1885, and the housing boom of the 1880's made the prospect of Prospect Boulevard neighborhood quite promising for real estate speculators. At least 8 buildings, architecturally designed, arose during this period. The deep recession of 1893 ended much of the building for wealthy individuals on the West Side.

At the time of construction of 402 Hall Avenue, Cass Gilbert was early into his first, and only, partnership, with James Knox Taylor. This may have been one of the earliest to have emerged from this office. At the time, Gilbert was designing structures such as the Swedeborgian Church on Virginia Avenue, St. Martins on the Lake at Lafayette Beach, Minnetonka, and the Bethlehem Church at the foot of Ramsey Hill. Earlier residential structures included the home he designed for his mother at 471 Ashland Street, and the ..... house on .....Portland Avenue.

At this time, Dwight Henderson Watson, (1854-1922), was the senior "buyer" at Noyes Brothers and Cutler, the primary pharmaceutical supply firm in Saint Paul. He had begun work there as a 20-year-old, in 1874. His employer, Charles Noyes, under-wrote the construction of the Swedenborgian Church, also designed by Gilbert, in 1886. Noyes also contracted with Gilbert to design his own residence, on Virginia Street, in 1887.

Dwight Watson's parents, Harriet Chapman and Grove "George" Watson, arrived in Minnesota in a family group of 12, by steamboat. Settling in Freeborn Township, George was elected delegate to the Minnesota Constitutional Convention of 1857, and he was elected to the first three terms of the State Senate. The family moved to the intersection of Smith (then Forbes) Street and Fort Road, in 1861. George worked as clerk in the US Surveyor General's Office nearby on Pine Street. On June 15, 1889, Dwight and Clara Watson's second child was born. He was named "Gilbert Dwight Watson," presumably after the architect. The connection between Gilbert and the Watsons may have been through Charles Noyes, with whom Gilbert had a professional and social relationship, or through Gilbert's father, August, a former surveyor in the US Geological Survey, and presumably familiar with the Surveyor General's Office.

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CONFORMANCE WITH SAINT PAUL PRESERVATION LEGISLATION AND POLICIES  
HERITAGE AND CULTURAL PRESERVATION CHAPTER OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2020

NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

West Side

NATIONAL REGISTER STATUS

Listed 2019

STATE REGISTER STATUS

N/A

RELATED HISTORIC & CULTURAL CONTEXTS

Local: Residential Real Estate Development

State: Urban Centers (1870 - 1940)

## PART 4: REGISTRATION AND CLASSIFICATION INFORMATION

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MAP OF AREA

CONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS #: 1

CONTRIBUTING GARAGES/ACCESSORY BUILDINGS #: 1

NON-CONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS (AGE) #: 0

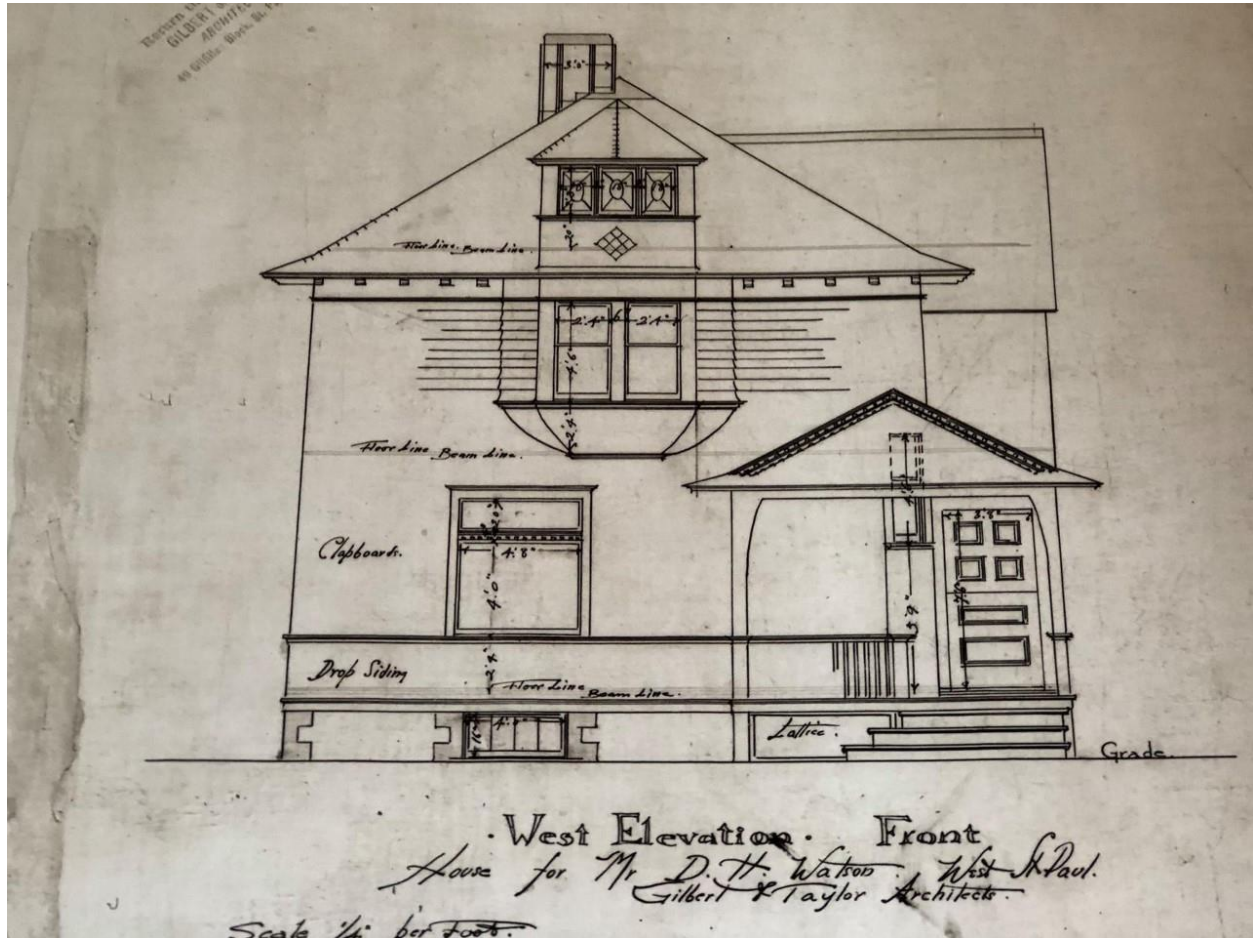
NON-CONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS (INTEGRITY)#: 0

NON-CONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS (STYLE)#: NA

PARK(S): 0

## PART 5: PHOTOGRAPHS, MAPS, DRAWINGS, AND OTHER DOCUMENTS

Staff is waiting for leaves to fall before taking final photos for the designation study so that design elements of the property are more visible.



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SAINT PAUL HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION  
SAINT PAUL DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
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## REFERENCES

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### BOOKS AND PUBLICATIONS

ARCHIVAL COLLECTIONS: Plans, New York Historical Society, Gilbert Papers

DATE OF FORM: October 2021

PREPARED BY: Mark Shepherd Thomas, MD, Paul C. Larson, Christine Boulware

## APPENDICES

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- APPENDIX A: Action/Request initiating nomination
- APPENDIX B: Designation Study staff report to HPC
- APPENDIX C: Inventory Form
- APPENDIX D: Map of Proposed Site
- APPENDIX E: HPC decision from Designation Study hearing (forthcoming)
- APPENDIX F: Letter to SHPO (forthcoming)
- APPENDIX G: Letter from SHPO (forthcoming)
- APPENDIX H: Memorandum to Planning Commission (forthcoming)
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city of saint paul  
planning commission resolution  
file number \_\_\_\_\_  
date \_\_\_\_\_

**Resolution on Recommendations to the Heritage Preservation Commission Regarding  
the Nomination of the Dwight H. and Clara Watson House and Barn at 402 Hall Avenue as  
a Local Heritage Preservation Site**

WHEREAS, the Dwight H. and Clara Watson House and Barn at 402 Hall Avenue has been nominated for designation as a local heritage preservation site; and

WHEREAS, the Saint Paul Heritage Preservation Commission has initiated review of said nomination pursuant to Saint Paul Legislative Code § 73.05; and

WHEREAS, § 73.05(b) states that the Saint Paul Planning Commission shall advise the Heritage Preservation Commission regarding the proposed designation based on consideration of the Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan, consideration of potential effects on the surrounding neighborhood of the designation, and evaluation of other planning considerations as related to the nomination; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission finds that policies HP-7 and HP-16 of the Heritage Preservation Chapter of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan and policies HP 2.5 and HP 2.7 of the West Side Community Plan are consistent with the proposed designation; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission finds that the effect of the proposed designation on the neighborhood would be positive, helping to define the character of the neighborhood, create a strong sense of place, enhance the quality of life of residents, and serve as a catalyst for investment in surrounding properties; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission hereby forwards its recommendation on to the Heritage Preservation Commission,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that based on consideration of the Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan, consideration of potential effects on the surrounding neighborhood of the designation, and evaluation of other planning considerations, that the Saint Paul Planning Commission recommends approval of the proposed designation of the former St. Andrews Church as a local heritage preservation site.

moved by \_\_\_\_\_

seconded by \_\_\_\_\_

in favor \_\_\_\_\_

against \_\_\_\_\_