

The Soulard Restorationist

VOLUME I ISSUE 5

MAY, 1976

Agenda

A tentative agenda for the Soulard Restoration Group Membership Meeting to be held on Wednesday, June 2 at 7:30 P.M. at St. Joseph Croation Church Hall is as follows:

1. Boys' Club update
2. Financial report on House Tour
3. General report on House Tour
4. Report by the Logo Committee

Notes from last meeting

Television cameras from Channel 2 focused on the meeting held May 5, 1976, at St. Joseph's Croation Hall. Robin Smith of Channel 2 reported on the activities.

Skip Gatermann called the meeting to order.

There was a discussion regarding the recommendation made by the Board of Directors at a meeting on May 2 to discontinue the Communications Committee that has been meeting with the S.N.I.A. It was felt that since both the Restoration Group and S.N.I.A. have open meetings, individuals interested in activities of both groups could participate freely without a special committee. Ruth Day moved to discontinue the Communications Committee and to write the S.N.I.A. a diplomatic letter explaining the situation. The motion was carried by a vote of 18 to 7.

Clark Rowley reported on the latest developments of the Boys' Club. All of the houses the Club purchased were vacated by mid-March and deterioration of the buildings has been rapid. On April 13th a letter was sent to the Boys' Club asking that the houses be boarded up. The reply was that no action could be taken until after their Board meeting on May 11. The City also contacted the Boys' Club to secure the buildings, and stated if it were not done, the City would board the buildings. Clark impressed the group with the importance of supporting the Historic District Legislation of the Soulard Area at this time, as a deterrent to others in the area who might resist Historic District restrictions.

John Kelly described the peculiar incidents surrounding a fire in a building owned by the Boys' Club located only a few doors from his property.

There was a general discussion regarding the feasibility of the Restoration Group boarding up the buildings owned by the Boys' Club.

Jim Felling stated that it would cost about \$390.00 for plywood to board up the first floor and basement windows of the buildings in question.

Marjorie and Dianne Wozniak, who live near the Boys' Club, said that vandalism and destruction are spilling into the areas surrounding the Club, as a result of negligence to secure the buildings owned by the Club.

Hilary Clements moved to contact a lawyer and to board up the Boys' Club buildings as soon as possible after their Board meeting of May 11, if the Club took no action of its own. The motion passed unanimously.

Hilary moved to have minutes taken at all Restoration Group Board meetings, which are to be read to members at the subsequent monthly meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

Although it had been decided at a previous meeting that no political speakers would appear at Restoration Group monthly meetings, the Board of Directors decided it would be pertinent to have political speakers if they were directly involved in the area (from the Ward or City). Dick Gebhardt, City Alderman running for Congress, was present and spoke briefly to the Group. He offered congratulations for our acting as a united group in handling the problems he had heard discussed that night.

TOUR COMMENTS

On house tour day the Soulard Restorationist Staff was at work gathering reactions to our tour. Here are a few:

"Your tour is superb! It far surpasses other area house tours on many points." Mrs. Michael O'Brien, South St. Louis.

"The variety of house types was what impressed me most." Lauren Gross, St. Louis.

"In spite of the distance between them I saw ten of the houses, they were that exciting." Vassel Cucjuranu, Carondelet.

"Totally enjoyable." Carmen Buescher, Okawville, Illinois.

"I liked being able to compare and contrast those houses which had just begun restoration with those nearing completion." Nancy Jolley, University City.

"I was really amazed at the extent of restoration work completed. It was delightful." Charles Hartman, South St. Louis.

"You should have had better directions to the Crafts Fair and some of the houses." Tim Marion, St. Louis.

"Several of the homes did not collect tickets which is unfair to those of us who paid our money." Carol Rice, Florissant.

"I want to see more of these beautiful structures." Pat Coming, Florissant.

"Many of the homes had hosts that didn't explain anything about the house. I want to know the background of this area. This should be corrected." Darlene Wong, Bellefontaine Neighbors.

SUGGESTIONS FOR 1977 HOUSE TOUR

The Soulard Restorationist Staff would like to present suggestions for the next house tour based upon reactions of visitors to the May 16th tour:

1. Buildings on tour be numbered and display a uniform house tour sign in front of house.
2. Each house should have one reliable person to check all admission tickets.
3. A large (8-1/2" by 11") illustrated map with suggested routing of tour be available to visitors at all homes.
4. Provide more locations where food may be obtained and list locations on ticket.
5. Conduct house tour on both Saturday and Sunday from 11:30 A.M. - 4:30 P.M. to allow visitors access to Soulard Market.
6. Advertise tour in local newspapers and on radio (free public announcements provided by most stations).
7. Attempt to select homes for tour physically close to Soulard Market and/or the Crafts Fair location, to allow better accessibility to all structures and events.

The Restorationist Staff strongly believes that a successful house tour is founded upon adherence to definite, decisive standards and procedures for all participating members. An impression of efficiency and professionalism must be present to impart to the visitor the solidarity and unification-of-action of a viable organization.

LANDMARKS AND URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION MEETING

At a special meeting of the Landmarks and Urban Design Commission held at 3:00 P.M. on Thursday, May 20 at 1015 Locust Street, Suite 1201, called most specifically to deal with the Breckenridge Building, testimony was also heard regarding the Boys' Club request to demolish 2500, 2502, 2504, 2506, 2514, 2516, and 2520 South 10th Street and 1008, 1010, 1012 Victor, front and rear.

No one was present to represent the Boys' Club, but there were in attendance many Soulard residents, as well as Mrs. Gail Yerges, President of Landmarks Association of St. Louis, Inc.; Mr. Voorhees, President of the Carondelet Historical Society; Don Daniels, President of the Lafayette Square Restoration Committee and other interested preservationists.

The Commission Chairman, Verner I. Burks, made clear that the special meeting had not been called to inconvenience anyone, nor to sneak in a controversial issue on short notice. Rather, the meeting, held at the request of Mayor Poelker, was called to expedite the Breckenridge project.

A letter from Gerhardt Kramer, distinguished preservationist and Executive Director of Landmarks Association of St. Louis, Inc., was entered into testimony concerning the Boys' Club buildings. Mr. Kramer had personally inspected all buildings in question and found them to be in sound structural condition. Even 1010 Victor, which was damaged by fire some weeks ago, requires only replacement of the stairs and the two second story floor joists.

Architecturally, according to Mr. Kramer, all but one building, which was built in the early 20th Century, are typical of Soulard and all of the buildings are interesting and add a supportive element to the neighborhood. Mr. Kramer decried their unboarded state as an open invitation to vandalism.

Oral testimony was taken from Clark Rowley, Don Daniels, Mr. Voorhees, Skip Gatermann, Mike Felling, Louise Tonkovich, John Kelly and Robert Brandhorst, among others.

The original compromise, offered at the Mayor's office in November, 1975, was again explained by a member of the Community Development Agency staff and discussed by Clark Rowley. Up to this date the Boys' Club has refused to consider the compromise which would demolish only the alley houses on Victor and two houses on 10th nearest Sidney, thus sparing the buildings fronting Victor and two on South 10th, nearest Victor.

It was emphasized that allowing the demolition of the Boys' Club property would dangerously undermine the spirit of Historic District legislation, which was designed as a protection against demolition in order to buy time for neglected buildings to be brought back to a livable state.

A very unfortunate precedent would be set in that persons wishing to demolish would purposely contribute to a building becoming derelict in hopes of its being considered beyond reclamation and thereby acquiring a demolition permit to remove an imminent danger.

John Kelly, who with his wife Jan owns 1000 Victor, expressed his belief that the Boys' Club officials have not acted in good faith with the residents most immediately affected by their planned expansion. Rather, he personally has been treated with contempt and is beginning to lose patience and adopt a more beligerent stance in self-defense.

Many other cogent points were brought up by members of the Commission, as well as by witnesses from the audience. Two of the most notable were that the Boys' Club officials have assumed in their planning that they will be able to close 10th Street, although this is a very involved procedure requiring the consent of all property owners on the street. Another point emphasized was that no compromise is advisable unless there are written guarantees that the houses to be spared by such compromise will be boarded and then sold to individuals for private restoration.

Mr. Burks noted that the Commission is interested in seeing preservation advanced in Historic Districts and is most heartened to see such interest from the Soulard neighborhood. He asked all present from Soulard to give their names to the secretary to be included in the minutes.

The Boys' Club will be given another opportunity to present its case on Thursday, May 27th, at 3:00 P. M. at 1015 Locust Street. The meeting is open to the public.

C.D.A. PROPOSAL SUBMITTED

Sue White, heading up a committee comprised of Paul Kjorlie and Dick and Delores Phelps, submitted the Soulard Restoration Group's request for the 3rd year Community Development Block Grant Funds on May 3, 1976.

Last year, our first year of participation, was very satisfying in that during 1976, we will have 25 blocks of our streets resurfaced and Soulard Park will have new equipment in the east playground, as well as a refurbishing of the bandstand. We also should see a number of trees planted around the park with lovely iron guards around the trees.

Our request for the 3rd year, January 1, 1977 through December 31, 1977, includes the tennis courts with lights in Soulard Park and an updating of the playground equipment and trees and shrubs at Pontiac Park.

We have also requested surfacing of about 40 more blocks of streets along with a request for the beginning of an updating and repairing of our curbs. We feel confident that we will receive favorable consideration of our street and parks request for the basics of resurfacing and updating of equipment, along with the planting of more trees.

ELECTION RESULTS

The top three candidates in the election for two board slots representing Soulard at the Chouteau-Russell Gateway Community Corporation, which is a branch of the Human Development Corporation, were as follows:

Mike Felling	98 Votes
Greg Michaud	95 Votes
Ed Bushmeyer	94 Votes

The election, held May 7 and May 8 at 2021 Menard, thus resulted in the election of Mike Felling of the Soulard Restoration Group and Greg Michaud of the Soulard Neighborhood Improvement Association to the board positions. All neighborhood residents 16 years and older were eligible to vote.

Chouteau-Russell is a community resource which can substantially benefit the Soulard area. It will be providing free meals this summer through a special grant program to St. Agatha Day Care Center.

PREVIEW OF THE CONVENTION CENTER

On May 19th, a box lunch, sponsored by the Mayor's office, was served on Seventh Street, east of the St. Louis Gateway Convention and Exhibition Center on Delmar. The week of May 16th was set aside to let the St. Louis public see how construction of the Convention Center is progressing. Each day was reserved for different groups and on the 19th, neighborhood groups were invited. Soulard was represented by seven people. There was a large crowd for lunch and then tours of the first floor of the Center were taken in smaller groups.

The first floor plan has 244,000 square feet of exhibit area. The basement will be totally reserved for food preparations. The second level will include VIP suites, dressing rooms and meeting rooms. Versatility is achieved by the conversion of large areas into small or medium size meeting rooms.

The future income which the center will bring to the city was also pointed out. This new Convention Center is important - if not critical - to the continued growth and economic well-being of St. Louis. The first convention will be held on June 27, 1977. The Convention Center already has more than 270 definite days of business booked for the first year's operation. From all appearances, it will help to revive downtown St. Louis.

New Faces

COMING HOME

When Mr. and Mrs. Bartlett moved into the house at 2344 S. 12th last January, Mrs. Bartlett was coming home. Raised in "Mr. Busch's backyard," Mrs. Bartlett is glad to be able to contribute to the changing neighborhood. Now that their three children are grown and away from home, the Bartletts can work on the eight room row house as their retirement home. The wrought iron fence and gate, marble fireplace in the living room, and medallions in the first floor ceilings are just a few of the "nice touches" the Bartletts hope to preserve and restore.

T-SHIRTS ANYONE ?

Those Soulard T-shirts you've been seeing all over the neighborhood are the brainstorm of Marjorie Wozniak. Marjorie, her husband David, and their three children are restoring the house at 1211 Victor while operating the custom T-shirt shop in the adjoining storefront on 12th Street. Marjorie's shop is open Tuesday-Saturday, 10:00 A.M. - 8:00 P.M., and she'll be glad to see us any time.

David, an employee of Union Electric, commutes from Bonne Terre each week while awaiting a transfer to the St. Louis area. In the meantime, extensive restoration goes on at the house on Victor. In the last month, the Wozniaks have had to replace an exterior wall, and hope to do the rewiring this summer. The house was built between 1914 and 1917, and the Wozniaks hope to restore and re-decorate to be faithful to the period. They have already completed the front hall using wallpaper seen in only two other homes in St. Louis.

The Wozniaks bring a great deal of enthusiasm and experience to Soulard. They have redone several houses, and plan to use all their experience on the home on Victor.

TAKING IT ALL OFF

By Jim Felling

I'm referring to the roof. The previous generations, in placing roof upon roof, have parked the equivalent of six to twelve Cadillacs (pre-Granada) on the top of your house. This tremendous weight causes a lot of bowed walls, bent chimneys, and waving parapets.

The entire roof should be peeled off and sent to a landfill. Sheathing should be replaced, parapets and chimneys tuckpointed, and metal flashing installed between brick and roofing.

On Flounder, Federal or Greek Revival type homes with pitched or gabled roofs, a shingle roof with an underlayer of 30 lb. felt is the most desired. There are shingles which simulate the original wood shake roofing. The roof on Jay and Lynn Giardina's home on 11th Street is a prime example of new materials and workmanship compatible with the intent of facade restoration.

Flat roofs, such as on the more Victorian structures, require the same preliminary work, but are best finished with three courses of 30 lb. felt with tar over each course. A gravel finish is optional, but offers excellent protection against hail damage.

Roofing time is also the best time to install new guttering and downspouts. Bear in mind that raw or exposed metal does not conform to Historic District Standards. Therefore, they must be either baked on enamel or painted approximately one year later, as new metal will not hold a coat of paint.

As roofing is a major project, most of us will hire a contractor. Make sure that the recommended work is spelled out in the contract and that it is guaranteed: a minimum ten years for shingle and five for roll and tar. The contractor should be insured, bonded, and in business for a while if the guarantee is to be credible. The work performed should last fifteen to twenty years, although roll and tar needs new tar every five years or so.

While cutting corners on the roof may save money now, in the end it will be more expensive than doing it right the first time and deferring interior projects. I understand that work recommended in these last columns entails considerable expense, but once completed, will never interfere with the more cosmetic projects of interior decoration.

Next month's article on windows will complete the series on exterior maintenance and preservation of the basic structure appropriate for the season.

THE VICTORIAN DELTIOLOGIST (First Part of a Two Part Series)

by Skip Gattermann

During the year 1869 in the country of Austria, a new method of communication was developed. The postcard was invented and became an immediate success. The

following year a new dimension was added to the card. The new dimension, a picture, proved to be a tremendous idea.

Sending picture postcards soon became the rage. No proper Victorian would dare to forget to display his or her picture postcard album when visitors came calling. It was always displayed prominently in the parlor. One's guest was offended if the album was not on display.

The album came in various styles and colors. At times this depended on the type of material used for the cover. The pages were always made of paper with little slits used to secure the four corners of each card to the page. Relatively few of the original albums exist today, because the paper used in the albums deteriorated considerably over a period of time. However, one may still purchase albums today which resemble the original style.

The cards of the Victorian period are a different story. Unlike the modern chrome view card, the early cards were printed on heavy card stock which seems to have resisted wear rather well. The cards are easily obtained today. Their prices vary, as this is affected by scarcity, quality, and subject matter.

One of the best ways to find cards is to attend the great American market place, the flea market. The best prices on cards are usually found at flea markets. Another source of cards is the antique shop. However, prices are usually slightly higher there. Prices on these cards may vary from as little as 5¢ to \$500. (Next month's article will deal with post card art, popular subject matters and the demise of the post card craze.)

INSURANCE

Because some Soulard residents have had difficulty acquiring adequate insurance, one member of the Group would like to share the following information:

Rudi G. Schwenger of Schwenger Insurance & Realty Co., 9981 Highway 66, has expressed an interest in serving insurance needs in Soulard. He offers both the Fair Plan coverage and Federal Crime Insurance which is the fullest, cheapest theft coverage available. Feel free to call Mr. Schwenger at 822-2000 to discuss your insurance needs.

Editorial

As the tour progressed, it became increasingly evident that tickets were not being marked or punched at most of the houses. Some people toured as many as seven homes before being asked to produce a ticket. People who had paid for their tickets were understandably resentful when they suspected that others were being admitted without tickets.

A typical comment overheard by a member of the Restorationist staff was, "Next year we won't even need a ticket, they'll let us in free."

Unfortunately, some of the homeowners on tour were not told which number on the ticket corresponded with their house. This greatly contributed to confusion in deciding what to mark off or punch. However, at the very least, someone at each house should have made certain that each adult showed his or her ticket before entering.

Hopefully, next year careful coordination and clearly detailed instructions will prevent this situation from recurring. Proper procedures, formulated by the House Tour Committee, should insure a financially successful and professionally organized tour.

NEEDED

Needed for St. Agatha Day Care Center: used television sets, radios, record players, typewriters (manual or electric), and electric fans. All donations are tax deductible. Please call Judy Shehan, 664-3497 evenings.

ADLETS

Classified ad rates: \$1.00 up to the first ten words. Each additional word is 10¢. Ads are due the first Wednesday of each month. Call Skip at 771-4191 for ad placement.

Distributor of all wood cabinets - has stock ready made cabinets at contractor prices for individuals remodeling older homes - Free estimates and designing - Free delivery. Cabinet Craft, 10566 Page - 428-3265 or 8419 Gravois 351-9972.

Paint stripping in our vat, pickup, removal, delivery and installation. Dave or Jim Felling evenings 771-3866 - 771-0335.

Restoration/rehabilitation, major or minor. Jim or Dave Felling evenings 771-3866 - 771-0335.

Need plumbing fixtures? Call Rossi Plumbing at 631-5715. Bayless at I-55. A 10% discount is given to all Soulard Restoration Group Members.

ATTENTION

Anyone who has an article for the Restorationist or would like to volunteer to work on the newsletter, please check the letterhead for the names and telephone numbers of the committee members. We also welcome questions, suggestions, comments, criticisms or complaints.

THE SOULARD RESTORATIONIST
Box 13312
Soulard Station
St. Louis, Mo. 63157

Don Bennett
865-3583

Ruth Day
865-4360

Skip Gattermann
771-4191

Jamie Lewis
776-1993

Karen Rowley
664-9195

Garry Waters
772-6183

Clark & Karen Rowley
2322 South Twelfth St.
St. Louis, MO 63104