



## HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION MEETING

August 2, 2023  
5:00 PM

### PUBLIC MEETING NOTICE

#### **PLANNING COMMISSION**

Michael Hittner, Chairperson  
Jackie Bredl Dietrich, Vice Chair  
Ryan Austin, Alderperson  
William Parker  
Justin Pluess  
Jeff Penzkover, 1<sup>st</sup> Alternate

#### **AGENDA ITEM RECIPIENTS**

Sue Schill, City Attorney  
Erika Esser, Secretary  
Jennifer Gossick, City Clerk

Notice is hereby given of a meeting of the Wisconsin Rapids Historic Preservation Commission to be held at various locations throughout the City as described below to begin in the parking lot at City Hall, 444 West Grand Avenue, Wisconsin Rapids, on **Wednesday, August 2, 2023, at 5:00 PM.**

### **AGENDA**

1. A physical walking tour of previously identified historic properties and districts with the following itinerary:
  - **5:00 p.m.** – meet at the City Hall parking lot to observe various downtown properties.
  - **5:45 p.m.** – meet at the northeast corner of First Street North and Apricot Street to observe Saints Peter and Paul historic district.
  - **6:30 p.m.** – meet at the northwest corner of Mead Street and Third Street South to observe various residential historic districts.

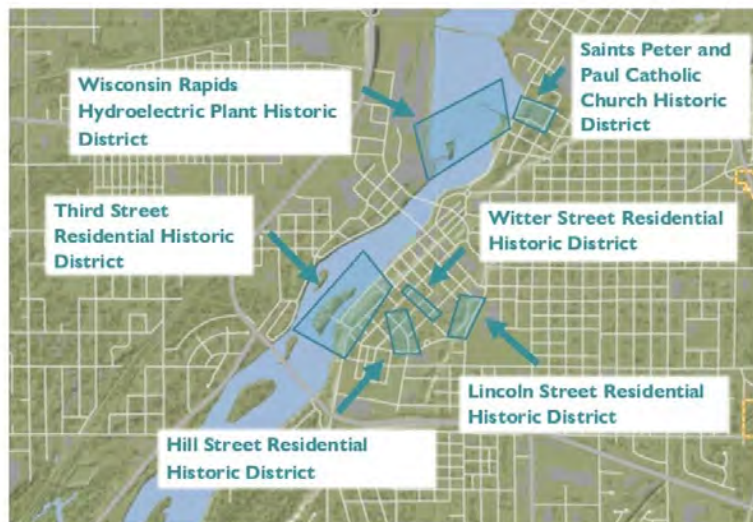
#### **2. Adjourn**

It is possible that less than a quorum of Commissioners may be present and, if so, Commissioners may still proceed with the walking tour. In any event, no deliberation or action will be undertaken by the Commission or Commissioners during this tour.

The City of Wisconsin Rapids encourages participation from all its citizens. If participation at this meeting is not possible due to a disability or other reasons, notification to the city clerk's office at least 24 hours prior to the scheduled meeting is encouraged to make the necessary accommodations. Call the clerk at (715) 421-8200 to request accommodations.

## Wisconsin Rapids Historic District Tour Wisconsin Rapids Historic Preservation Commission

Wednesday, August 2, 5:00 p.m.



## **General Information**

### **Previous Survey Efforts**

- 1996 Historic Property Reconnaissance Survey
  - 79 properties were determined to be potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP)
  - 6 potential historic districts were identified (details attached)
- 1973 and 1978 windshield surveys by the State Historical Society of Wisconsin
  - 140 properties identified

## **Section I | Downtown Properties**

The 1996 Historic Property Reconnaissance Survey did not identify any potential districts within the downtown. However, individual properties throughout the downtown were identified. The following list includes downtown properties that were identified:

- 310 First Avenue South, Moravian Church
- 160-172 First Street North
- 210 First Street North
- 133 Second Street North
- 150 Second Street North
- 240 Second Street South
- 241 Third Street South
- 110 East Grand Avenue
- 130 East Grand Avenue
- 320 East Grand Avenue
- 551 East Grand Avenue, Dairy Queen
- 253 West Grand Avenue
- 210-264 West Grand Avenue, Mead-Witter Block
- 320 West Grand Avenue, Johnson & Hill Co.
- 311 West Grand Avenue
- 340 West Grand Avenue
- 311 Lincoln Street, East Junior High School
- 400 Market Street, Wood County Courthouse

## Section II | Potential Historic Districts

### **Hill Street Residential Historic District**

A collection of single-family homes constructed by the Consoweld Company of Wisconsin Rapids to demonstrate its newly developed plastic laminate products. The district includes 15 single-family homes, 11 of which are contributing resources.

### **Lincoln Street Residential Historic District**

Collection of seven contributing residences. This is a distinctive collection of residences that demonstrate various early twentieth-century architectural styles including Elizabethan Revival, Arts and Crafts, French Provincial, and Colonial Revival styles. The properties are located along the west side of Lincoln Street between Birch Street and Witter Street and one adjacent property on Witter Street.

### **Saints Peter and Paul Catholic Church Historic District**

This previous survey stated that this district may be eligible in 2001 when the church (the central component of the district) would become 50 years old. The Neo-Gothic Revival style church, school, original rectory, and former convent are all considered contributing resources.

### **Third Street Residential Historic District**

This district includes the finest concentration of large-scale early twentieth century houses in Wisconsin Rapids. The district's 31 properties include 29 contributing resources in a variety of architectural styles including Colonial Revival, Neoclassical, Arts and Crafts, and Queen Anne. Many prominent business people and residents established homes along Third Street and on Belle Island.

### **Wisconsin Rapids Hydroelectric Plant Historic District**

This district includes 17 resources that were constructed for the Consolidated Water Power & Paper Company and its successors to provide power for the manufacture of paper products. Ten resources span the Wisconsin River.

### **Witter Street Residential Historic District**

This district along the northeast side of Witter Street between Third Street South and Elm Street includes nine houses that are all contributing. The proposed district contains an eclectic collection of architectural styles including the Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, Dutch Colonial Revival, Arts and Crafts, and Prairie styles.

## **Next Steps**

The City is currently in the process of applying for a Certified Local Government (CLG) subgrant for a Historic Property Survey Update. The grant application is due December 18, 2023. The update will enable the City to identify properties of architectural or historical interest and potential significance. Once properties and potential districts are identified, future grant funds can then be secured to request nomination of individual properties and historic districts. Once properties and historic districts are added to the National Register of Historic Places, historic tax credit funds can be accessed.

Decorative casement windows, an arched doorway, and a stone chimney enhance the main facade. This house is potentially eligible for the NRHP under *Criterion C: Architecture* as a local example of the Tudor Revival style.

**c. 1610 Smith Street, Consoweld House, 1947-1948, 41-15.** This is one of approximately 16 houses constructed between 1947-1948 by Consolidated Paper/Consoweld Corporation to demonstrate the residential use of their line of plastic laminates. The building retains integrity and is potentially eligible for the NRHP under *Criterion A: Industry* as a demonstration house of the Consoweld Corporation.

**841 Washington Street, House, c. 1910, 38-21.** As a noteworthy example of the Arts and Crafts style in Wisconsin Rapids, this residence is potentially eligible for the NRHP under *Criterion C: Architecture*. This two-story brick building has a rear addition, but retains integrity and remains in good condition.

**921 Washington Street, Wood House, c. 1910, 38-19 (5-4).** This large, two-story residence displays limited features of the Arts and Crafts style with a brick and stucco exterior, a wrap-around porch, exposed rafters and rustic porch supports. This building is in excellent condition and is potentially eligible for the NRHP under *Criterion C: Architecture*.

**721 Wisconsin Street, House, c. 1910, 43-18.** This Craftsman style house may be eligible for the NRHP under *Criterion C: Architecture*. The two-story house displays a clapboard first story and a second story of wood shingles under a jerkinhead roof. A full porch extends across the main facade.

## **B. Historic Districts<sup>12</sup>**

**Hill Street Residential Historic District.** The proposed Hill Street Residential District is a collection of single-family homes constructed by the Consoweld Company of Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin, to demonstrate its newly developed plastic laminate products. Approximately 16 Consoweld houses were constructed within the city between 1947 and 1948, and the proposed district includes 11 intact examples. The Consoweld Corporation formed as a subsidiary of Consolidated Paper Company through a merger of two smaller plastic laminate companies. The houses constructed by the company feature concrete and steel construction with interiors sheathed in Consoweld plastic laminate. Many of the original Consoweld designs emulated the patterns and colors of wood, rock, water, and sky. Production of the Consoweld house ended when it became apparent that the cost of construction exceeded the amount that could be recovered from the sale. The two-bedroom floor plan offered 792 square feet of living space. Many of the original houses now include modern additions.

The proposed district includes 15 single-family homes, 11 of which are considered contributing resources. The four noncontributing resources of the district include three

<sup>12</sup> See Appendix B, *District Summary Survey Forms*, for full descriptions of each district's resources and significance and maps depicting district boundaries.



homes, built c. 1950, which do not meet the 50-year age requirement to be eligible for the NRHP. The fourth noncontributing resource may have originally been constructed as a Consoweld house, but is not eligible because alterations have diminished its integrity. The proposed Hill Street Residential Historic District is potentially eligible for the NRHP under *Criterion C: Architecture* for its collection of resources that display a distinctive type of construction.

**Lincoln Street Residential Historic District.** The proposed Lincoln Street Residential Historic District encompasses seven properties along the west side of Lincoln Street between Birch Street and Witter Street and one adjacent property on Witter Street. The proposed district contains a distinctive collection of residences that demonstrate various early twentieth-century architectural styles. The district's buildings include examples of the Elizabethan Revival, Arts and Crafts, French Provincial, and Colonial Revival styles. The period of significance for this proposed district spans c. 1909 to 1925, which encompasses the construction date of the seven houses within the district that contribute to its significance. A single house, c. 1950, does not contribute to the district's significance, because it does not meet the 50-year age requirement to be eligible for the NRHP. The district is potentially eligible for the NRHP under *Criterion C: Architecture* for its concentration of distinctive residential architecture.

**Saints Peter and Paul Catholic Church Historic District.** The proposed Saints Peter and Paul Historic District may be eligible for the NRHP under *Criterion C: Architecture* in the year 2001, when the church—the central building of the district—meets the 50-year age requirement for eligibility. The district represents an eclectic collection of distinctive architecture. The Neo-Gothic Revival style church was designed by A.F. Billmeyer and Son. In addition to the church, the school, original rectory, and former convent are considered contributing resources. The present rectory is considered noncontributing due to substantial alterations. Criterion Consideration A for religious properties would apply because the district derives its significance from architectural distinction. The period of significance for the proposed district spans c. 1870 to 1951 to encompass the construction dates of all resources contributing to the district's significance.

**Third Street Residential Historic District.** The proposed Third Street Residential Historic District includes the finest concentration of large-scale, early twentieth-century houses in Wisconsin Rapids. The district includes 28 properties on Third Street South between Witter Street on the north and Chestnut Street on the south; two properties on Belle Island; and a bridge spanning the Wisconsin River to Belle Island. The district's 31 resources include 29 contributing resources and two noncontributing buildings, a house and an apartment building, which are not eligible for the NRHP because they do not meet the 50-year age requirement.

The proposed district features large-scale residences demonstrating a number of architectural styles, including Colonial Revival, Neoclassical, Arts and Crafts, and Queen Anne. Historically, many of Wisconsin Rapids' prominent business people and residents established homes along Third Street and on Belle Island. Notable historic residents included John Daly, a local businessperson; Isaac Witter, a local businessperson and state senator; and George Mead, co-founder of Consolidated

Paper Company. The proposed district is potentially eligible for the NRHP under *Criterion C: Architecture* as an exceptional concentration of residential architecture within the city of Wisconsin Rapids.

**Wisconsin Rapids Hydroelectric Plant Historic District, 38-23 (91-130).** This district comprises 17 resources, all of which were constructed for the Consolidated Water Power & Paper Company and its successors to provide power for the manufacture of paper products. Ten of these resources physically span the Wisconsin River: the masonry wall dam, which forms part of the substructure for the grinder building and beater room building; the powerhouse and its reinforced concrete substructure; and the eight sections of the 1,934-foot dam. The district's other resources include a 3,000-foot earth dike; the paper mill building that sits on part of the south end of this dike; a 651-foot masonry dam, which acts as the substructure for the paper mill; and a high-voltage substation. The significance of the district lies in the high integrity exhibited by the district's contributing resources—the beater room building, the grinding building and its substructure, and the powerhouse. The beater room and grinder room buildings, designed by local engineer John C. Jacobson, are the only intact portions of the original 1903 mill complex. The powerhouse building was constructed in 1921 to the design of local engineer, Leonard A. De Geure. A greatly altered and much larger adjacent paper mill complex is excluded from the boundaries of the historic district. A 1991 evaluation of the district identified a group of resources with potential local significance under NRHP *Criteria A and C*.<sup>13</sup>

**Witter Street Residential Historic District.** The proposed Witter Street Residential Historic District encompasses nine properties along the northeast side of Witter Street between Third Street South and Elm Street. All nine houses within the historic district retain historic integrity and are contributing to the significance of the historic district. The proposed district contains an eclectic collection of architectural styles including the Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, Dutch Colonial Revival, Arts and Crafts, and Prairie styles. The district displays continuity through the architectural interest and integrity of the buildings. The period of significance for the proposed district spans c. 1890 to 1920, which encompasses the construction dates of all the houses within the district. The proposed Witter Street Residential Historic District is potentially eligible for the NRHP under *Criterion C: Architecture* as a distinctive collection of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century architectural styles.

<sup>13</sup> A Determination of Eligibility for this property was prepared in conjunction with the relicensing of the Wisconsin Rapids Hydroelectric Plant to comply with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act; see Timothy Heggland, "Wisconsin Rapids Hydroelectric Plant Historic District," Determination of Eligibility, 1991, in the files of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Division of Historic Preservation.