

**Heritage Resource Management Plan
for the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul
& Pacific Railroad Switching Tower
(Commonly Known as the Newport Tower)
600 Seventh Avenue
Newport, Minnesota**



Newport Heritage Preservation Commission

***Heritage Resource Management Plan
for the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul & Pacific Railroad Switching Tower***

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For the Heritage Preservation Commission
City of Newport, Minnesota
Date of Publication: July, 2011

This project has been financed in part with Federal funds from the National Park Service, United States Department of the Interior. However, the contents and opinions do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Department of the Interior, nor does the mention of trade names or commercial products constitute endorsement or recommendation by the Department of the Interior. This program receives Federal financial assistance for identification and protection of historic properties. Under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the United States Department of the Interior prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, or disability in its federally assisted programs. If you believe you have been discriminated against in any program, activity, or facility as described above, or if you desire further information, please write to: Office for Equal Opportunity, United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1849 C Street NW, Washington, DC 20240.

PART I INTRODUCTION

Built in 1904, the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railroad Switching Tower is a two-story, frame interlocking plant that controlled the joint Milwaukee Road and Chicago, Burlington & Quincy railroad tracks between the St. Croix Tower and St. Paul. Originally located trackside at Eleventh Street, the Newport Tower was taken out of service by the Milwaukee Road in 1983 and donated to the Greater East Area Model Railroad Club, which moved the structure to its present location on December 11, 1984. Some interpretive infrastructure has already been put in place by the model railroad club. For example, the mechanical interlocking machinery has been restored and is operable. Located adjacent to active railroad lines, the upper floor of the tower provides an excellent vantage point for viewing modern-day railway traffic.

This heritage resource management plan provides property-specific guidance for decisions relating to the preservation, protection, and use of the subject property by the City of Newport and its preservation partners. It is intended solely for use by city officials and others responsible for management of the property.

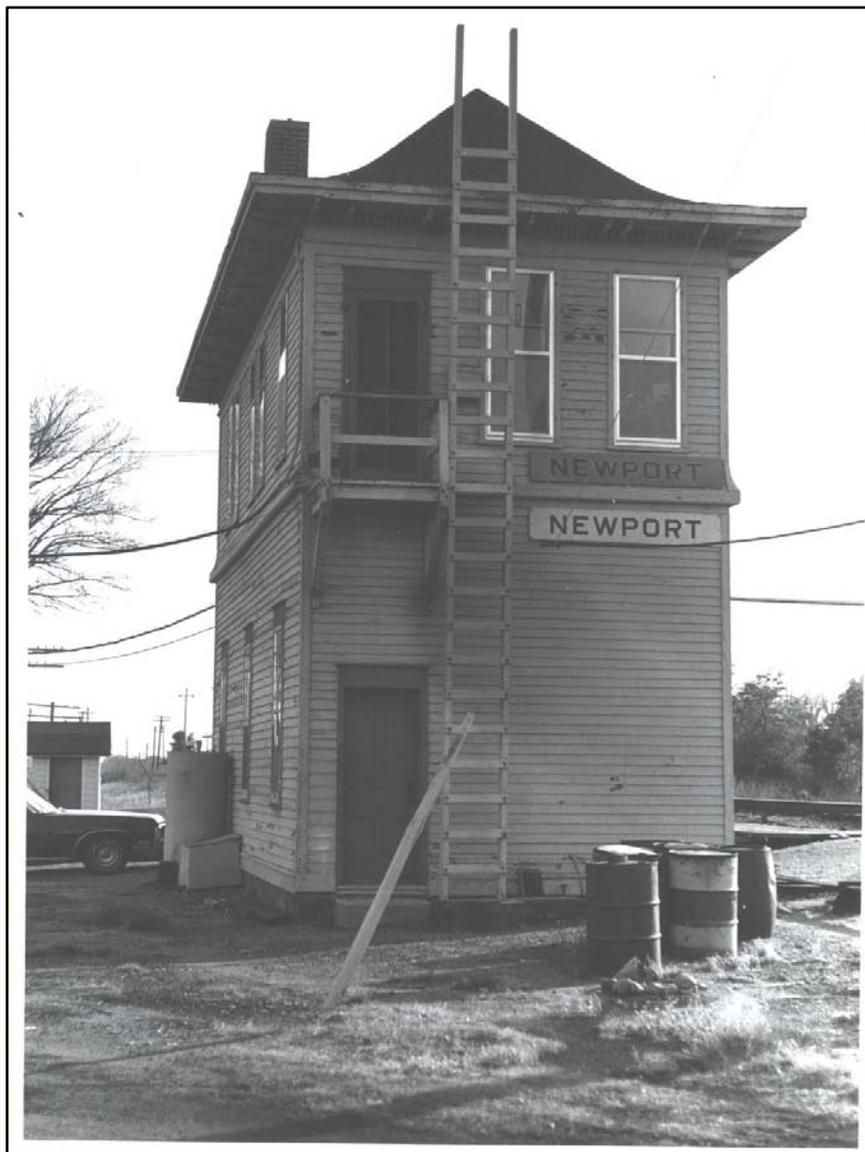
The conceptual basis for heritage resource management at the train tower is predicated upon the following assumptions:

1. The Newport Tower is a historically significant, nonrenewable heritage resource, the preservation of which is the responsibility of city government.
2. The historic property will be protected, maintained, preserved, and rehabilitated by the city in a manner that is consistent with its historical, architectural, and cultural values.

3. Property management decisions will be guided by the goals and policies set forth in the historic preservation element of the city's comprehensive plan.
4. Strategies for adaptive use of the property will emphasize conservancy and public accessibility.
5. The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties will provide the basis for evaluating the appropriateness of projects that will have an impact on the appearance, condition, historic significance, and integrity of the property.

The management plan consists of four parts. Part I consists of a brief description of the property extracted from heritage resource survey and other planning documents. Part II summarizes critical administrative and planning data pertaining to the Village Hall, including a statement of general preservation objectives and priorities. Part III presents an outcome-based plan of treatment based on best management practices. Part IV is a "punch list" or action plan for implementation.

The plan looks at all aspects of heritage resource management, including building maintenance, rehabilitation, and interpretation. It is not a static document. City officials should periodically review the management plan to ensure that the planning assumptions and performance goals remain valid.



PART II ADMINISTRATIVE DATA

Name

The historic name, i.e., the name that best reflects its historical significance, is the Newport Tower; it has been officially designated the Chicago, Milwaukee St. Paul & Pacific Railroad Switching Tower and is also known as the Newport Train Tower.

The train tower has been assigned number WA-NPC-001 in the statewide inventory of historic resources maintained by the State Historic Preservation Office, Minnesota Historical Society.

Location

The subject property is located at 600 Seventh Avenue in the City of Newport, which comprises Lots 12 and 13, Block 2, St. Paul Park Division No. 6 and part of the vacated Milford Avenue. It was moved to this location in 1984 from its original site next to the railroad tracks at Twelfth Street.

Owner and Tenant

The Newport Tower is owned by the City of Newport, 596 Seventh Avenue, Newport, MN 55055. It is leased to the Greater East Area Model Railroad Club (the Newport Club), P.O. Box 61, St. Paul Park, MN 55071, a non-profit educational corporation.

Historic Use

From the time it was constructed until 1983, the tower housed the interlocking plant and provided dispatching for the tracks operated by the Milwaukee and Burlington railroads.

Current Use

The property current functions as a cultural and recreational facility. The Greater East Area Model Railroad Club (founded in 1981) has renovated the structure for use as a railroad history museum and interpretive center. The tower is open to the public for tours on a limited basis.

Heritage Landmark status

The subject property was designated a Newport Heritage Landmark by City Council resolution on May 15, 2003.

As a matter of policy, all City of Newport projects are subject to design review by the HPC for their effects on significant heritage preservation resources. Compliance with the city's heritage preservation codes and comprehensive plan is mandatory.

Historical Significance

The Train Tower meets established criteria for historical significance on the basis of its association with events that have made an important contribution to the broad patterns of local history. Specifically, it is locally significant in the area of transportation history as a rare preserved example of a mechanical interlocking tower. The subject property attained the significance qualifying it for Heritage Landmark designation when it was constructed in 1904; the period of significance lasted until circa 1983, when it was taken out of service by the Milwaukee Road. Restored and adapted to use as a railway history interpretation center, the tower has great potential for developing into a major heritage tourism destination for Twin Cities area residents, visitors, and school groups.

Preservation Vision

The Train Tower will be preserved in place and rehabilitated for the benefit of the public. The City of Newport will partner with the Greater East Area Model Railroad Club (commonly known as the Newport Club) to preserve, protect, rehabilitate, and maintain the historic structure. The City will continue to own the property and will be primarily responsible for heritage resource management. The Newport Club will occupy and actively use the property for historical interpretation purposes. Subject to the terms and conditions of its operating agreement with the City of Newport, the Newport Club will utilize the historic property to provide space for exhibits and programs focusing on railway transportation heritage. Key elements of the long-term preservation vision include, but are not limited to:

- Provide a compatible use for the property that requires minimal alteration of the tower's exterior;
- Implement appropriate measures to sustain the existing form, integrity, and materials of the building while integrating sustainable technologies and features;
- Rehabilitate the building exterior and interior to allow an efficient contemporary use while preserving those features which are significant to its historical, architectural, and cultural values;
- Create sustainable, state-of-the-art historical interpretation facilities; and
- Develop a master plan for the City Hall site to guide redevelopment of the City Hall, the historic Village Hall and Train Tower properties, and any adjacent properties that the city may acquire.

General Standards for Preservation Treatments

All work will be carried out in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.¹

Functional Constraints

The overall dimensions of the historic building are quite small: its footprint measures approximately 15 by 30 feet and much of the lower level is taken up by the interlocking plant.

The most important physical constraint on development of the property for public use is the limited size of the lot on which it is located. It will need to share off-street parking with the City Hall and the historic Village Hall. Its proximity to the Newport City Hall limits the number of off-street parking spaces available for visitors when the municipal building is used for public meetings and other assembly functions.

Accessibility Issues

In its current condition, the historic structure does not meet the standards of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) for barrier-free access to the upper level of the tower. Modern, fully usable and accessible toilet facilities, drinking fountains, and telephones are provided at the City Hall.

¹The current standards for preservation, rehabilitation, restoration, and reconstruction were developed by the Department of the Interior in 1992 and codified in 1995 (Title 36 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 68); see Kay D. Weeks and Anne E. Grimmer, *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring & Recycling Historic Buildings* (Washington: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1995). The City of Newport has adopted the Secretary of the Interior's Standards as its authoritative guide for design review.

Historical Documentation

The primary sources of documentary data for this property are the records of the Milwaukee Road and historical photographs held in various archival collections.

Published information about the Newport Tower is not particularly abundant and widely scattered in local newspapers and railroad periodicals, railroad histories, and industry reports.

No original architectural plans, drawings, or original construction documents have been located.

Archaeological Resources

Due to the high degree of site disturbance, it is unlikely that significant prehistoric or historic cultural deposits are preserved intact anywhere within the property boundaries.

PART III BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

The Environment

Provide proper site drainage to assure that water does not drain toward the historic structure.

Walls

The original wood wall cladding should be preserved intact without the application of any surface treatment.

Deteriorated wood siding should be repaired or replaced, where necessary. If replacement is unavoidable, the new wooden siding should duplicate the original in size, shape, and texture.

The wood cladding should be cleaned only when it is necessary to halt deterioration or to remove stains, graffiti, etc.

Roof

The original concave hip roof shape should be preserved intact.

The wide eaves and scrolled brackets are important architectural character defining details and should be preserved. If a roof detail element is missing or too badly deteriorated to be conserved, it should be replaced with new material that matches the old in composition, size, shape, color, and texture.

Windows and Doors

All existing window and door openings should be preserved intact. Window and door openings should not be enlarged or reduced to fit new window sash or stock doors.

The original wooden windows and frames should be retained, whenever possible. If replacement window sash and frames are installed, they should duplicate the original windows in material, design, and hardware.

Entrances

The primary entrance at the base of the tower should be retained and the stairway leading to the upper floor should be brought into compliance with handicap accessibility requirements.

If two egress doors cannot be provided without changing the essential character of the historic structure, alternative means of egress should be explored.

Ramps should be provided to make the ground-level entrances accessible for the physically handicapped.

Exterior Finishes

Discover the historic paint colors of the building and repaint with those colors.

Landscaping

Lawn grass and ornamental plantings should be used to define public activity areas and to screen utility installations and service areas. Flowering vines should be used to cover chain-link fencing.² Trees and

²In its original track-side setting, the Newport Tower had no landscaping whatsoever. Ordinarily, railroad switching towers were not landscaped with plantings or other decorative material, other than signs.

shrubbery should be kept trimmed, both as a security precaution and to minimize potential storm damage.

Landscaping, such as walkways, benches, and plantings, should be used to assist in outdoor interpretation.

The existing chain-link fence is visually intrusive and out of proportion with the scale of the historic structure. If a fenced enclosure is required for security purposes, it should have a regular pattern and be no higher than 3-1/2 feet above grade. If cyclone fencing is used, it should be black vinyl coated.

Pedestrian walkways and paths should be installed to encourage the flow of visitors into and within the tower site. Acceptable materials include concrete, brick, slate, field stone, and loose gravel. Plain asphalt or blacktop should not be used. Pervious materials are preferred over concrete, brick, or stone paving.

Off-street parking should not be permitted within 50 feet of the historic structure. Plantings should be used to screen parking areas.

Interior Features and Finishes

The functionality and interior aesthetic of the ground-floor spaces should be improved, while retaining the basic plan of the building and the size of the rooms. Floor space on the upper level should be kept as open as possible to accommodate the flow of visitors.

Original features such as doors, doorways, windows, moldings, flooring, plasterwork, and lighting fixtures should be identified and preserved in place, whenever possible. Deteriorated interior features should be repaired or replaced with new material that duplicates the old as closely as possible. It is appropriate to remove original material where it is essential for life safety.

Heating, air conditioning, electrical, plumbing, and fire protection systems should be installed in areas that will require the least possible alteration to the interior spaces. It may not be feasible to hide all of the new mechanical equipment from public view.

New Construction

New construction should be kept to a minimum. A structural addition to the tower may be needed for ADA compliance, provided the new work is compatible with the historic structure in size, scale, color, building materials, and texture. To meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, the addition would have to be differentiated from and compatible with the historic tower. It should also need to be designed and constructed in such a manner that if it were to be removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the train tower would not be impaired.³

Mechanical Equipment

Heating, ventilation, and air conditioning should be provided in all public spaces.

Mechanical equipment, such as air conditioners and overhead wires, should be placed where they cannot be seen from public spaces.

Installation of heating, air conditioning, electrical, plumbing, and fire protection systems should be designed to require the least possible alteration to the structural integrity and physical appearance of the building.

Mechanical equipment that is placed on the ground should be screened with fencing or plantings.

³Theoretically, construction of an addition to achieve ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) compliance would be considered an appropriate undertaking as part of an historic building rehabilitation project; however, there is no formula or prescription for designing an addition that meets the Secretary of the Interior's standards and guidelines for new construction. See Anne E. Grimmer and Kay D. Weeks, *New Exterior Additions to Historic Buildings: Preservation Concerns*, Preservation Brief 14 (Washington: National Park Service, 1998).

Gas and electrical meters should be located on the back (east) side of the tower.

Whenever possible, mechanical equipment placed outdoors should be designed to resemble the kinds of equipment ordinarily seen along railroads.

Energy Efficiency

Energy conservation measures do not need to alter the exterior of the train tower or interfere with historic interpretation to be effective. The preferred energy retrofits include weather-stripping around windows and doors, attic and wall insulation, and storm windows.

The most cost-effective energy conservation measures will probably be weather-stripping doors and windows, storm windows, and attic insulation.

Handicap Accessibility

All visitors should experience the historic train tower the same way, whenever possible.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) should be complied with in such a manner that the essential character of the historic property is preserved intact.

Because visitor access to the upper level is limited, alternative programmatic access should be provided.

A feasibility study should be carried out to explore the possibility of providing ADA compliant access to the upper level of the historic structure by means of a structural addition or a removable external stair tower.

Safety and Security

Work with the city building official, fire marshal, and others to investigate alternative life and fire safety measures that respect the building's historic integrity.

Adequate fire and smoke detection equipment should be installed in the tower.

Install adequate fire protection and prevention equipment in a manner that does minimal damage to historic fabric.

Architectural lighting should employ full cut-off lighting fixtures to promote safety, security, and energy conservation.

Security lighting fixtures should not be mounted directly on the historic structure.

Model railroad club members should be trained to respond promptly and summon additional resources in the event of an emergency situation.

Signs

Signs that attract visitors, assist them in finding their way to the train tower, and inform them about the tower's history should be clear, easy to read, and visually attractive.

Signs placed off-site should focus on making Newport residents and visitors aware of the historic resource.

Signs should complement the materials and design of the historic structure.

The placement of wayfinding and interpretive signs should not obscure views of the train tower.

Parking

Automobiles should not be allowed within 50 feet of the historic structure to prevent parked cars from blocking views of the train tower.

Historical Interpretation

A visitor information center should be developed at the train tower to serve as one of the primary outlets for information about Newport heritage landmark properties and preservation.

Interpretive media should include a kiosk, one or more traditional historical markers and plaques, signs, indoor and outdoor exhibits, interactive modules, brochures, and a website.⁴

Barrier-free accessibility should be provided for all interpretive programming.

Interpretation facilities should be carefully designed to be educational, functional, durable, and safe.

Large objects placed around the tower for interpretive purposes, such as restored pieces of railway rolling stock, should not appear to dominate the property when viewed from public areas. Rail cars should be set back from the tower.

A hands-on education program should be developed to serve the needs of school-age children.

If access to the upper level of the tower is not possible for physically handicapped visitors, a similar experience should be provided by means of a “virtual switch room” on the ground level that provides an interactive audio-visual presentation of the inaccessible area. An appropriate alternative would utilize

⁴ See the *Heritage Site Interpretation Plan* prepared by Robert C. Vogel for the Newport Heritage Preservation Commission (July, 2006).

interpretive panels placed around the base of the tower that display views of the interior of the switch room and the viewshed from the upper level of the tower, as well as information about the history of the structure.

Visitors should be able to operate the levers of the interlocking machine exactly as was done when the tower was in active service. If practical, the machinery should be linked to a computer simulation that is programmed with actual historic train schedules: as the “virtual trains” arrive and depart the area, they would be displayed by the indicator lights on the model board, allowing visitors to throw the proper levers to route the trains onto the correct tracks.

Interpretation boards providing visitors with textual and graphic information should be fabricated from durable materials (such as stainless steel, aluminum, and timber) and fit well with their surroundings.

Historical documents and artifacts on display should be provided with a professional level of care and protection against theft, vandalism, sunlight, dust, airborne pollutants, and insect infestation.

An attractive and fun train tower logo should be developed for use in marketing and interpretation.



PART IV IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

To implement the Heritage Resource Management Plan for the Train Tower, the City of Newport should:

- 1) Adopt the Heritage Resource Management Plan by City Council resolution as the authoritative guide to be used by City officials, the model railroad club, and citizens to plan for the preservation, protection, and use of the Train Tower.
- 2) Direct the City Administrator to regularly monitor activities at the historic property and conduct annual inspections of the building to detect any signs of natural deterioration, neglect, wear and tear, or abuse.
- 3) Work with the model railroad club to develop a master plan for development of the property which takes into account the architectural character of the building, the programming needs of the Newport Club, and the City's heritage preservation policy goals.
- 4) Negotiate and approve a memorandum of understanding (MOU) or letter agreement with the Greater East Area Model Railroad Club that lays out the expectations and responsibilities of both parties, with clearly stated goals, metrics, and timelines.
- 5) Bring in a qualified preservation architect to carry out an intensive structural and materials analysis and prepare a set of as-built architectural plans.

- 6) Establish line-items for building maintenance, repairs, renovation, and capital improvements at city-owned historic properties as part of the general fund budget and appropriate such funds as the city council may deem necessary.

Because it is vital for the model railroad club to be involved in property management decisions, the Newport Club should:

- 1) Provide the City of Newport with information about the club's goals and objectives relating to use of the Train Tower.
- 2) Cooperate with the City in preparing and implementing a partnership agreement to ensure that the interests of both parties are taken into account in management decisions.
- 3) Develop a realistic budget for preserving and maintaining the historic property that takes into account the club's programming needs, its legal obligations, the interests of its members, available funding, and the nature of the heritage resource.
- 4) Arrange to have its members receive training in the care of old buildings to ensure that housekeeping and routine maintenance tasks will not endanger historic fabric.