



RIPS NEWS

Advocates for Historic Architecture

Membership Meetings

www.RockIslandPreservation.org

November 18, 2008
Tuesday
7:00 PM

Home of Diane Carnithan, 3117 7th Avenue, Rock Island
Regular business meeting

December 16, 2008
Tuesday
7:00 PM

Home of Mooch Gay, 3815 8th Avenue, Rock Island
Plan on joining us for our holiday “snack potluck” social meeting. If you can, please bring a snack or dessert to share but don’t let baking keep you from the meeting. There is always plenty.

On-street parking may be limited but there is an Augustana College parking lot at the corner of 38th Street and 7th Avenue which has unrestricted parking in the evening.

January 20, 2009
Tuesday
7:00 PM

Home of Terri & Pete Cone, 1604 22nd Street, Rock Island
Regular business meeting

Comments and suggestions for Society activities are always welcome, now and in the future!
Remember to keep the third Tuesday of each month marked on your calendar for monthly RIPS meetings and activities.

Schrivier House Tour

The stately brick home on the corner of 11th Street and Third Avenue has always piqued my curiosity. Surprisingly unchanged and unremuddled over the decades, it still has uncommon round topped window sashes, many with the original round topped shutters. Although the porticoed front entry is elegant and formal, a sweeping, ornately latticed back porch wraps the back of the house, inviting porch sitters and friendly conversation.

Thanks to Alan Carmen, Rock Island Planning Administrator, members of RIPS and the Preservation Commission were permitted to tour the house recently. The mostly original exterior was a fitting introduction to a stately interior. Although modest and reversible changes have been made, the house mostly suffers from a lack of

maintenance and updating. Those who saw the interior were awed by the floor to ceiling windows, most with original or vintage storm windows. Woodwork varies from highly ornate in the front parlor area to comparatively simple in the upstairs rooms. Extensive original plaster features curved walls and corners throughout – and even holds penciled notations of wallpapering dates.

The home gained Rock Island Landmark status in 1993, when it was owned by Annie Mae and Roosevelt Nettles, who supported that designation. It had been built about 1869 for Isaac Heinsfurter, a downtown clothier, who lived there for 20 years. Two more owners preceded the fourth and most famous family, that of Wm. H. Schrivier, who came in 1905. Schrivier’s son, Harry, lived

there, too, and remained after his father’s death. Harry gained fame as the controversial mayor during John Looney’s era in Rock Island. Details on Mr. Schrivier can be found in the brand new and free Looney Tour booklets, available at the Rock Island Library and City Hall.

When Harry died in 1959, he bequeathed the home to his housekeeper, Florence Bock, who sold to the Nettles family in 1974. It was occupied by them until a few years ago, since when it has been vacant. Recently acquired by the City of Rock Island, it was marketed for restoration. Preliminary approval of a buyer, who has provided the city with detailed plans and a timeline for restoration as his family home, is pending final legal documentation.

Article written by Diane Oestreich

John Looney Legend Tour Brochure

The Rock Island Preservation Commission is resurrecting Rock Island's most notorious gangster in their greatly expanded and upgraded publication of the *John Looney Legend Tour* brochure.

The original *John Looney Legend Tour* brochure was hurriedly printed in 2002 as a companion to the trolley tours offered by the Preservation Commission during a special, 1920s-themed Summerfest. That was the year the movie *The Road to Perdition* premiered, starring Tom Hanks, Jude Law and Paul Newman, who played a character based on John Looney. That original brochure has grown from a black and white, legal-sized sheet to 36 full-color pages featuring 50 Rock Island buildings and sites associated with John Looney.

New material for the upgraded brochure was largely inspired by the 2007 book, *Citadel of Sin: The John Looney Story*, co-authored by Richard Hamer and Roger Ruthhart. "Mr. Hamer and Mr. Ruthhart brought a more complete telling of the John Looney story to light through the *Citadel of Sin* book, plus Mr. Hamer greatly assisted the Preservation Commission with the original tour in 2002," said Jill Doak, the City of Rock Island planner who staffs the Preservation Commission and researched and wrote the text for the brochure. "As we undertook the brochure upgrade, we decided to highlight locations of events featured in the *Citadel of Sin* book and research where some of the major players in the saga either lived or worked at the time they interacted with Looney. Mr. Hamer and Mr. Ruthhart were a tremendous help in bringing this brochure to the public."

However, the *John Looney Legend Tour* is only part of what the Rock

Island Preservation Commission is making available free to the public. Other previously published historic architecture brochures have either been upgraded or reprinted, including *Rock Island's Modernistic Architecture* (1997), *Rock Island History* (1999), *Stroll These Sidewalks* (2002), *KeyStone Neighborhood Driving Tour* (2006) and *1918 Government Housing* (2006). The *KeyStone* and *1918 Government Housing* brochures were upgraded by the Rock Island Preservation Society from even earlier publications by the Rock Island Preservation Commission.

The brochures contain historical and architectural descriptions, modern and historical photographs and location maps. *Stroll These Sidewalks* is a fold-out map brochure highlighting 14 areas, while the others are booklets. *Rock Island History* chronicles Rock Island's past from Native American settlements to World War II and is a favorite tool for schools. *Rock Island's Modernistic Architecture* highlights 20 Art Moderne and Art Deco styled buildings, plus includes an explanation of the architectural movement and a glossary. *KeyStone* and *1918 Government Housing* are neighborhood-based tours.

The impetus for the grant application was the creation of the Centennial Bridge Visitor Center, which opened in May 2008 with a focus on heritage tourism. All the historic architecture brochures are available at the Rock Island Public Library, 401 19th Street; Rock Island City Hall, 1528 3rd Avenue; and Centennial Bridge Visitor Center, 201 15th Street, which opens again in May.

Downloadable versions of the brochures are available at www.rigov.org/visitors/walkingtour.html.

Check out all these Rock Island historic tour brochures



- Historical Highlights of Augustana College – A Walking Tour
- History & Architecture: Broadway Historic District
- Spencer Place / 19th Street Walking Tour
- 20th Street Walking Tour
- 22nd and 23rd Streets Walking Tour
- Chicago Addition Walking Tour
- History & Architecture Downtown Rock Island
- A Walking Tour of Western Downtown – Highlighting Commercial and Government Buildings
- History & Architecture Highland Park Historic District
- 1918 Government Housing Tour
- KeyStone Neighborhood Driving Tour
- Park View Addition Walking Tour
- Rock Island's Modernistic Architecture
- Stroll These Sidewalks – Rock Island's Historic Neighborhoods

And don't forget to pick up Long View Park 1908-2008 A Pictorial History

Prepared by RIPS for the July 2008 100th anniversary of the dedication of Long View Park

Are your windows in need of some care and repair?

RIPS member Pete Cone has written a detailed, step-by-step guide for repairing double hung windows, based on his own experience of the process. This handy guide is posted on the RIPS website.

Go to www.RockIslandPreservation.org and check it out.

OLD HOUSE MAINTENANCE: DULL, BUT ESSENTIAL

This article was written by Clem Labine and originally appeared in Historic Preservation in 1987. Reprints authorized by National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Trying to keep up an old house is a lot like eating your spinach. Not particularly appetizing, but essential.

Restoration is a dynamic, creative process that has a beginning, middle, and – thank God – an end. But maintenance is an endless and quite *undramatic* task. In fact, you work very hard to stay in the same place.

The British, who have been caring for their old buildings far longer than we, sum up their maintenance philosophy in a single phrase: daily care and conservative repair. Daily care means taking care of all those little problems quickly before they become big problems. Conservative repair means fixing the old material that gives the building its flavor and character in the least obtrusive manner.

When replacement is necessary, try to replace as little of the original material as possible or replicate it with a similar material. For example, if there are a few sections of loose plaster in a room, don't rip it all out and replace it with wallboard. Instead, repair the old plaster with plaster washers and joint compound. "Daily care and conservative repair." If this prescription were followed faithfully, every old building would remain in a perfect state of preservation, and restoration would be unnecessary.

Maintenance means doing battle with the two most powerful forces in the universe – the laws of nature and the power of human inertia. Without human intervention the forces of nature will reduce a beautiful home to a crumbling ruin. The most destructive of all nature's forces is water. If I had to boil historic house maintenance down to a short, clear sentence, it would be: "Keep everything dry".

Good maintenance starts with an inspection program. If your house were a museum, you'd have a maintenance manual that set out a rigid inspection schedule. Most homeowners aren't so rigorous, but they should set aside at

least two days a year, preferably in spring and fall, to survey the house in detail.

Knowing what to look for is the key. The two areas of a house that require the most attention are the parts closest to the ground and farthest from it. Roof projections, roof valleys and roof edges deteriorate most rapidly. Roof projections include dormers, chimneys, finials and cresting.

Shingles may also deteriorate. Cupping or curling wood are signs of shingles in distress. However, they can be maintained rather easily by applying a solution of linseed oil and graphite every 5 to 10 years. Asphalt shingles that have curled are near the end of their usefulness.

Metal roofs, especially terne metal and galvanized must be kept painted. Above all, avoid what I call the "black-goop solution". Roofing cement dabbed around the flashings and on a roof will last 18 to 24 months at best. However, the stain that it leaves on the building materials, like slate, will last for decades.

Flat roofs with roll roofing demand special attention at the junction of the roof and the parapet wall and the flashing on the parapet wall. Those areas are subject to cracking and curling and, as a result, leakage.

Another potential trouble spot is gutters. No gutters are better than malfunctioning ones. Without gutters, runoff usually distributes itself fairly evenly. But with faulty gutters the water collects and cascades against one area of the building. Just like the roof, gutters made of galvanized or terne metal should be kept painted.

Built-in gutters are an architectural delight and a maintenance nightmare because of their metal linings. The lining invariably has soldered joints, and after a couple of seasons of expansion and contraction these joints often give way, admitting water into the cornice underneath and starting a whole new decay cycle. New metal linings can be installed with expansion joints to take account of the expansion and contraction. A simpler solution is the newer rubberized roof-

ing materials used as a long seamless lining.

Chimneys bear the biggest brunt of weathering. If the brickwork is not kept pointed, the chimney will become dangerously unstable. Similarly, copings on top of masonry walls should be kept caulked or filled with some sort of sealant, or water will penetrate from the top of the masonry and travel inside the structure.

But while maintenance is important, wrongheaded maintenance can be worse than none at all. Take a porch roof that had not been flashed properly, allowing water to run down the masonry wall and leak into the section below. Then what I call the department of silly repairs got on the job, took a piece of flashing material and pasted it to the stone wall with roofing cement. This repair lasted all of 18 months, when the roofing cement started to dry out and crack and curl. As a result, water coming down the masonry walls again seeped behind the flashing and the roofing cement – and the leak is just as bad as it ever was. Except now you've got an ugly piece of flashing on top of it.

Bottoms of buildings take the next heaviest load from moisture. Open seams in masonry and peeling, flaking paint are signs of moisture problems. But it's not always clear where the moisture is coming from. It could be working up from the ground. It could be from a defective leader and downspout system. It could even be a broken pipe somewhere inside the building. The point is: the source of the moisture should be isolated and stopped.

Don't ever try to solve a moisture problem by just covering it up. One of my basic no-nos of building maintenance is never to build up material "sandwiches". Don't put things over things. Usually what happens is you just manage to trap moisture somehow and cause a condition that is worse than your original problem. If you have a soft-brick wall that is absorbing moisture and, instead of painting it with permeable masonry paint, you slather stucco all over it,

Article continues on next page

the moisture will simply be trapped by the stucco. Eventually, the stucco will fall off, taking a lot of brick with it.

Masonry should also be checked as part of your inspection schedule. A chimney stack may look okay, until you closely examine the joint between the main wall and the chimney stack. You may find that the bricks there are starting to pull out and that the whole chimney stack is separating from the main wall. That's big trouble.

Cracks in old houses are normally not a source of concern. Most cracks are just the result of normal settling or seasonal changes in the structure. But when you start to see cracks in masonry units, such as a stone lintel or cracks right through the bricks, that could very well be a sign of real problems. At the very least, bring in a consulting engineer to take a look.

There's not too much to say about maintenance of ferrous metals other than to keep them primed and painted. The primer is the most important element. That's what keeps the metal from rusting. The finish coat is merely the device to protect and lengthen the life of the primer.

So priming the metal is the critical factor. If you have cast-iron ornaments, an additional factor is caulking. They are usually hollow elements built up of separate pieces bolted and screwed together. Caulking seams and joints is necessary to keep the water out and prevent rusting from starting inside.

Caulk is also an essential component when you're talking about built-up wooden elements. An old painter friend of mine once gave me a wonderful rule of thumb about caulking on building exteriors. He said, "Imagine a drop of water rolling down the outside of the building. Any place this drop of water encounters a crack, a seam or a joint where it can get into the building, there's a place to caulk."

You can't really understand the maintenance of wood without understanding the concept of end grain. Imagine that a board is made up of a series of drinking straws running parallel to the length of the board. When you look at the end of it, imagine that you're looking into the ends of the drinking straws, and obviously this is where water will be admitted to the structure. That's why the end grain is

what absorbs water. Rot fungus needs three things to thrive. It needs food, which is the wood; it needs oxygen; and it needs moisture. Now obviously you can't do anything about the oxygen, because that's in the air around us. The only thing we can control is moisture. As long as you keep moisture levels below around 25 percent in wood, the rot fungus cannot propagate. So, keeping water out of the wood, especially out of the end grain, is the key to wood conservation.

When you understand about end grain, you understand why decorative gingerbread elements rarely survive. Every place you see cutouts you see exposed end grain, and these are the areas that absorb moisture. So unless you get into all those little nooks and crannies with a paintbrush and keep those areas painted, they're going to start absorbing water and start a decaying cycle.

Good maintenance is invisible to most observers. A friend will never say "Oh, what a wonderful maintenance program you have". But neglect a building, and neighbors inevitably remark, "They really let that place go". You're ignored when you do and damned when you don't.

Old House Journal Featuring Broadway District Audio Tour

Old House Journal surfed the Net for cutting edge ways to tour historic areas, and landed in Rock Island, Illinois! The November/December 2008 issue of this national magazine will feature the Broadway Historic District audio tours that were created in 2007 by the Rock Island Preservation Commission. The November-December issue is scheduled to go on sale November 4, 2008.

"In brief, the story looks at how several communities are using new technologies, such as iPod tours, sometimes able to be individualized, to create neighborhood tours of historic areas," said Demetra Aposporos, editor-in-chief of *Old House Journal*.

The Rock Island Preservation Commission and Broadway Historic District Association created 50 downloadable .mp3 files as a companion to the full-color brochure upgrade for the historic district in 2007. The audio option is available through the purchase of a \$10 CD and brochure at Rock Island City Hall or through free downloads of individual .mp3 files from the City's website at www.rigov.org. The audio option is packaged with an extensive web browsing feature that includes audio files, text on the history and architecture of the buildings, images and maps. Exclusive to the web browsing and audio

feature are themed tours of Broadway. You can hear about all 50 buildings or select subsets suited to your interests. These themes range from Landmarks in Broadway and Movers & Shakers to topics focusing on unique and outstanding architecture or specific architectural styles, such as Italianate, Queen Anne and Colonial and Classical Revival.

The audio tours, brochures and web pages were a joint project of the Rock Island Preservation Commission and Broadway Historic District Association (BHDA). Mark Johnson of Brass Sail Recording produced the audio components and served as voice talent. The project was made possible by the financial commitment of the City of Rock Island, BHDA and a grant by the U.S. Department of the Interior, administered by the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency.

The Broadway Historic District was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1998 and contains the largest concentration of Rock Island Landmarks. The architecture of the neighborhood spans the mid-1850s to the 1940s, including the opulence of the Victorian era. Several of Rock Island's most well-known historic people lived in Broadway and are featured in the audio files.