

New Visitor Center at Fort Snelling: Documentation for Consultation

**Submitted by the Minnesota Historical Society
In Support of the Section 106 Review Of The
Historic Fort Snelling Visitor Center And
Revitalization Project.**



Men on snowshoes pulling machine gun, Fort Snelling. 1923.

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INTRODUCTION: THE UNDERTAKING

Fort Snelling was established at the confluence of the Mississippi and Minnesota Rivers in the early nineteenth century, one of a series of military outposts across the frontier of the expanding United States. Over the decades, the fort's mission and physical characteristics have evolved in response to changing needs and conditions. For its historical significance, part of Fort Snelling, including the original fort, was declared a National Historic Landmark in 1960. The property was automatically listed in the National Register of Historic Places when the register was created in 1966. Subsequently, the National Register district was determined to be somewhat larger than the National Historic Landmark.

The Landmark and National Register districts include several areas distinguished by function and vintage. Coldwater Spring has significance to native peoples and was the location of Camp Coldwater, the army's encampment during the construction of the original stone fort. Completed in the 1820s, Fort Snelling was strategically positioned on the point of a bluff overlooking the junction of the two rivers. The "Upper Post," initially developed after the fort became headquarters for the Department of Dakota in 1878, extended along the Minnesota River bluff to the south and, to a lesser extent, along the Mississippi River bluff to the west. Areas in the Upper Post were grouped by function (infantry, artillery, cavalry, quartermaster, etc.).

This arrangement was disrupted, however, in the last half of the twentieth century with the expansion of road corridors, particularly Trunk Highway 55. Running atop a high, wide berm, the highway physically and visually separates most of the Upper Post from the original fort and, just to the west of the fort, a fragment of the Upper Post. The fragment contains one nineteenth-century stone structure (Building 22), erected in 1878 during the Department of Dakota era as an ordnance storehouse. The fragment also holds two brick barracks (Buildings 17 and 18) and one of four brick stables (Building 30) built for cavalry use in 1904, a period of major expansion at the fort following the Spanish-American War. The other three stables were demolished around 1980 for the construction of a visitor center for Fort Snelling; other nearby buildings (e.g., stable guardhouses, wagon storehouses, power magazines, machine gun sheds) associated with various periods of the fort's evolution had been removed before that time. The "underground" visitor center (which actually projects about one story above ground) and parking lot occupy a large, prominent location between Building 30 to the west, Building 22 to the south, and Buildings 17 and 18 to the east. The visitor center parking lots are the dominant visual element at the fragment's only vehicular access point. This is also the only access to the Fort Snelling Chapel, built in 1928, which is ringed by a freeway interchange ramp.

The Minnesota Historical Society began restoring and reconstructing the original fort in 1966, opening it a few years later as a seasonal living-history museum. Current interpretation at Historic Fort Snelling focuses principally on life at a frontier military post in the late 1820s. The history of what is now the Fort Snelling Historic District is far richer and more complex than that single snapshot in time reveals. As the steward of this important place, the Society has an obligation to help tell the full range of stories that will convey the significance of this place for all Minnesotans, indeed its national importance for every American. The experience of native peoples in the area prior to European contact, the first treaties and American settlement following the Louisiana Purchase, the role that Dred and Harriet Scott's presence in Minnesota

played in precipitating the Civil War and the state's subsequent participation in that struggle, the U.S.-Dakota Conflict of 1862 and its aftermath, and the role of the fort as a revived military base from the 1870s through World War II will be among the stories that the Society will present in this expanded program.

Unfortunately, the structural limitations of the current visitor center (built in the early 1980s), a lack of classroom space within the frontier fort, and a confusing pattern of roads and parking that makes visitor way-finding through the area difficult will require major physical changes to the site to enhance the visitor's understanding of Fort Snelling's history and importance. Initially, the Minnesota Historical Society planned to rehabilitate Buildings 17 and 18 for the visitor center. After months of design development with HGA Architects and initial consultations with the National Park Service and the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office, the Society realized that there were unavoidable conflicts between the programmatic needs of the visitor center and the configuration of the historic structures. Creating the type of space needed for exhibits would require substantial alterations to building interiors, adversely affecting character-defining features. Because the first floor was elevated above grade, an external lobby was needed to provide an accessible entry. In addition, the cost of rehabilitating the historic structures was far higher than the available budget.

The Society returned to the drawing board. The revised project (the "undertaking") has five major components that collectively will make possible the expanded program of interpretation:

1. Space within the reconstructed frontier fort will be modified to provide classroom space for on-site educational programming, and accessible restrooms will be added adjacent to the parade ground.
2. Four historic buildings outside the frontier fort will undergo external stabilization to arrest further deterioration: new roofs, re-pointing and window and door replacement as needed, and reconstruction of original porches.
3. The existing underground visitor center, whose structural integrity has been seriously compromised by groundwater, will be demolished.
4. It will be replaced by a new single-story visitor center of approximately 15,000 square feet.
5. Finally, the associated landscape will be redesigned to create a system of plantings, roadways, and parking that will better respect the historic vegetation and street grid, as well as improve visitor movement through the site. Drawing visitors closer to the rivers, which are the defining natural and geographical features for this place, will be an important goal for the landscape redesign, as well as the visitor center.

The first design that HGA Architects proposed for the free-standing visitor center and surrounding landscape was rejected by the National Park Service and the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office. Construction along the Mississippi River bluff line must conform to regional, state, and national regulations—most notably those associated with the Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area, created by Minnesota Executive Order 79-19, and the Comprehensive Management Plan for the National Park Service's Mississippi National River and Recreation Area. The first visitor center design did not meet height restrictions. In addition, the National Park Service and Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office felt that the design

did not sufficiently respect the historic surroundings, failing to meet the Secretary of the Interior's standards for new construction.

HGA's second design met the height guidelines and took into account the many layers of history imbedded in the site. It is this design, still undergoing refinement, that is being considered by this review.

Because this project will require an amendment to the Program of Utilization, which was created at the time the land was transferred from the U.S. Government to the State of Minnesota, the Minnesota Historical Society must comply with Sections 106 and 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act. Section 106 requires that before spending funds or approving a license for a project—or transferring title to a non-federal entity—a federal agency must consider the affect of the project on any property listed, or eligible for listing, in the National Register. Rules and regulations for implementing Section 106 are outlined by the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation in 36 CFR Part 800: Protection of Historic Properties. Section 110, which applies to National Historic Landmarks, is similar, but sets a higher standard: the federal agency “shall, to the maximum extent possible, undertake such planning and actions as may be necessary to minimize harm to such landmark.” For both Section 106 and Section 110, the federal agency must give the Advisory Council the opportunity to comment.

Appendix A of 36 CFR Part 800 outlines criteria for involvement by the Advisory Council in Section 106 review cases. The Council is “likely to enter the section 106 process” if the project is of national significance, a quality inherent in National Historic Landmark properties. Advisory Council participation in the Fort Snelling visitor center review is also appropriate because of the complex nature of the project and the number of interested parties.

PARTIES/PROCESS FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION

The National Park Service has compiled a mailing list of hundreds of individuals and organizations that have expressed an interest in other projects at Fort Snelling. That agency has used this list to distribute a preliminary notice for a public open house on the proposed visitor center project that will be held on September 11, 2007. The open house will be an opportunity to distribute information on the project and solicit written comments, which will be considered in the Section 106 review process. Additional public participation will be solicited by posting this “Documentation for Consultation” on the National Park Service’s Web site.

The Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office has indicated that the following agencies and organizations may have an interest in the review of the project: Preservation Alliance of Minnesota; Hennepin County, Division of Community Works; Minnesota Department of Natural Resources/State Parks; Fort Snelling State Park Association; Hennepin County Historical Society; Living History Society of Minnesota; and First Minnesota Regiment of Voluntary Infantry.

OVERVIEW OF FORT SNELLING HISTORY¹

Fort Snelling was established in 1819 to defend America's frontier. The stone citadel, diamond-shaped in plan, was completed in the 1820s. As Minnesota became settled and the frontier moved westward, the fort was no longer needed. The government sold Fort Snelling in 1858, and soldiers were replaced with sheep as the fort was converted to agricultural use. The fort was soon called back into service, however, to mobilize and train forces during the Civil War. A number of buildings, mostly wood-framed, were erected outside the walls of the original fort to house the expanded operations. After the war, the army retained the fort and some of the "temporary" buildings remained in service for several decades—including barracks and mess halls along the Mississippi River bluff.

The fort became a base of operations for the Department of Dakota, which oversaw more than a dozen forts in the Dakota and Montana Territories. In 1878, the department's headquarters moved from Saint Paul to the fort, prompting a wave of construction that created a permanent "Upper Post" to the south and west of the original fort. Administrative buildings and living quarters were mostly of brick, with stone foundations. Ordnance storage facilities had stone walls.

Another construction campaign followed the Spanish-American War as the army consolidated small, scattered outposts into larger, centrally located complexes. Among the new facilities at Fort Snelling was a brick compound for cavalry including two barracks buildings, four stables, connected paddocks, and two stable guardhouses, all dating from 1904. After a relatively quiet decade, with many of the fort's troops posted on the Mexican border, World War I brought a surge of activity. Many units were mobilized at the fort, which also held officers training camps and a veterans' rehabilitation hospital.

In the 1920s and 1930s, Fort Snelling was dubbed the "country club" of the army. A large post in a scenic setting on the edge of a growing metropolis, the fort had ample social and recreational opportunities for the men stationed there. Post athletics, especially polo matches, drew crowds of spectators from the Twin Cities. The Third Infantry Regiment, which had been based at the fort from 1888 to 1898, returned in 1921. In Buildings 17 and 18, a machine gun unit replaced the obsolete cavalry unit. In addition to remaining ready for conflict, the regiment's peacetime mission was to provide military training for the National Guard and other civilian organizations. Various federal relief projects improved the fort's buildings and infrastructure during the Depression.

As war raged in Europe in 1940, the U.S. government prepared for possible involvement by enacting the first peacetime draft. Fort Snelling once again became a reception center to mobilize regular soldiers and special units, such as military police. The Military Intelligence Service Language School opened at the fort in 1944, training men to serve as Japanese language translators and interpreters in the Pacific.

¹ The following is an edited excerpt from a report entitled "From Frontier to Country Club: A Historical Study of the 'New' Fort Snelling," prepared by Abbey Christman and Charlene Roise, Hess Roise and Company, for the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, May 2002.

After the war, Fort Snelling was considered redundant. It was decommissioned by the army in 1946, although military reserve units continued to use some of the buildings for decades thereafter.

AREA OF POTENTIAL EFFECTS

The proposed Area of Potential Effects (APE) for the project has been developed through discussions among John Anfinson (National Park Service historian), Dennis Gimmestad (Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office compliance officer), Pat Emerson (Minnesota Historical Society head of archaeology), and Charlene Roise (Hess, Roise and Company, historical consultant). All meet the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards.

In accordance with the definition provided by 36 CFR 800.16(d), the APE includes "the geographic area or areas within which an undertaking may directly or indirectly cause alterations in the character or use of historic properties." Because the project has the potential for different types of effects on archaeological and above-ground properties, separate APEs have been established to address these resource types.

The APE for Archaeological Properties

With regard to archaeological properties, the APE for the current project can be defined as all areas within which ground disturbance will take place. Since most archaeological sites are deemed significant as sources of scientific and cultural data, factors such as visual and auditory effects are not considered detrimental to the characteristics that make them significant.² Disruption of soil stratigraphy, which can damage artifacts and features or obscure the spatial relationships among them, is almost always considered an adverse effect to archaeological properties.

The APE for Above-ground Properties

The proposed APE is based on discussions with the National Park Service and Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office. The following boundaries are preliminary and will be further refined as the review process continues:

- Begins with all property within the National Historic Landmark and National Register of Historic Places district;
- Continues on a line extending east from East Fifty-fourth Street in Minneapolis (the northern boundary of the Fort Snelling Landmark and National Register district) to Mississippi River Boulevard South in Saint Paul (approximately midway between Itasca Avenue and Elsie Lane);
- Follows the eastern edge of the Mississippi River Boulevard right-of-way to the south, continuing on the eastern edge of the Shepard Road right-of-way to Davern Street;
- Extends directly south along the alignment of the centerline of Davern Street to the northern edge of Pike Island;

² An exception to this is archaeological deposits that are also considered to be traditional cultural properties, where visual or auditory intrusions might be considered adverse effects. It is unknown at present if any archaeological sites that meet this standard are present at Historic Fort Snelling.

- Continues southeasterly from that point to the northeast corner of the Old Mendota Historic District;
- Goes along the eastern and southeastern border of the Old Mendota Historic District to the southern point of that district, then crosses Highways 110 and 13 to include all of the Oheyawahi/Pilot Knob National Register property and the Acacia Park Cemetery;
- And, finally, extends westerly from the northernmost point of the Oheyawahi/Pilot Knob National Register property to the southeast corner of the Fort Snelling National Register district.

IDENTIFYING HISTORIC RESOURCES IN THE APE

Only some of the properties in the APE have been evaluated to determine whether they meet National Register designation criteria. The following section first describes properties that are officially listed or determined eligible, then discusses properties that appear to have some potential for eligibility.

National Register Properties

- Fort Snelling National Historic Landmark
- Fort Snelling National Register Historic District

Fort Snelling was declared a National Historic Landmark in 1960. Because of this designation, the fort was automatically listed as a National Register historic district when the register was established in 1966. A National Register nomination form was not prepared until 1969. The early date of these designations and the limited information that accompanied them have made administration of the landmark and historic district challenging. Contributing and noncontributing resources were not identified by the nomination form, which did not even include a list of buildings, structures, objects, and sites. A period of significance was not clearly delineated, although the National Register description notes that “nearly 250 structures were built on this ground between 1819 and 1969.” It also states that “we have drawn the boundary of the historic district to include evidence of every phase of the fort’s 150-year influence in this region.”³ Based on this, a period of significance extending from 1819 to 1969 appears justified. Other periods of significance have been adopted at various times, starting as early as 1805. A reasonable compromise would be to assume a period of significance from 1819, when Lieutenant Colonel Henry Leavenworth arrived in the area to establish an outpost, to 1946, when Fort Snelling was decommissioned by the army. All of the buildings in the old fort (if the reconstructed buildings are accepted as “original”) and the fragment of the Upper Post that is north of Highway 55 would be contributing elements of the landmark and historic district within this time frame, except for the existing visitor center.

Conflicting accounts of the boundaries of the National Historic Landmark and the National Register historic district caused problems for a number of years, but this issue seems to have been resolved by National Register and Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office staff in the past decade. (See Figure 4 showing the combined boundaries of the National Historic Landmark and National Register historic district.) Archaeological resources, however, raise additional issues. Fort Snelling is recorded by the Minnesota Office of the State Archaeologist as archaeological site 21-HE-99. The designation was assigned in 1979 on the basis of excavations conducted mainly within the area of the original fort compound (discussed below). However, the boundaries of the archaeological site are very broadly drawn—they overlap but are not exactly contiguous with the boundaries of the National Historic Landmark and National Register historic district. The archaeological site boundaries extend from the location of the old fort upstream along the Mississippi River to the Camp Coldwater Locality, which is situated partly on Minnesota Historical Society property and partly on federal land once administered by the U.S.

³ John Grossman and Paul Dybvig, “Fort Snelling,” National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, prepared for the Minnesota Historical Society, November 28, 1969.

Bureau of Mines. The official site definition thus encompasses a large amount of terrain that has never been formally tested for the presence of archaeological deposits.

Neither the Fort Snelling National Register nomination nor the National Historic Landmark nomination contain any substantial discussion of archaeological manifestations at the fort, and no formal evaluation of National Register eligibility has ever been conducted for the archaeological site as an entity separate from other aspects of the property. However, it can be argued that archaeological deposits dating to the stated period of significance for Fort Snelling should be considered contributing elements to both the National Register and National Historic Landmark designations.

Other Properties Listed in the National Register

- Henry H. Sibley House, Willow Street, Mendota (also in Old Mendota Historic District): listed in 1972
- Old Mendota Historic District, vicinity of Willow Street and Minnesota Highway 13, Mendota: listed in 1970
- Oheyawahi/Pilot Knob, Mendota Heights
- Fort Snelling-Mendota Bridge (Bridge No. 4190), Minnesota Highway 55 over Mississippi River: listed in 1978

Properties Determined Eligible for Listing in the National Register

- Acacia Park Cemetery, 2151 Pilot Knob Road, Mendota Heights

Archaeological Sites Requiring Assessment

Note: The following discussion is preliminary in nature. More in-depth research in the Minnesota Historical Society's files and historic documents and other sources of information about archaeology at Fort Snelling will take place as part of future archaeological studies conducted in connection with the current project.

A History of Archaeology at Fort Snelling

In order to properly evaluate the potential for the current project to affect significant archaeological deposits, it is necessary to understand something about the history of archaeological work at Fort Snelling. The following discussion is based on review of field notes, maps, Minnesota Historical Society Archaeology Department internal documents and published reports on the archaeology of Fort Snelling.

Excavations at the Old Fort

Archaeological research was integral to the development of Historic Fort Snelling as the interpreted historic site it is today. The fort has been the focus of archaeological investigations for fifty years, the first formal excavations having begun at the site in 1957.

Initial archaeological research at the site of the original 1820s military occupation was conducted by John Callender in 1957 and 1958. Callender was hired by the Minnesota Historical Society to

conduct limited excavations with funding provided by the Minnesota Statehood Centennial Commission. His research was driven by plans then proposed by the State Highway Department to build a multi-lane freeway through the site of the old fort, between the Round Tower and the Chapel. There was considerable public concern about the devastating effect the project would have on the historic character of the area. Civic organizations and private citizens appealed to Russell Fridley, then Director of the Society, to save the old fort.

Fridley recognized the potential in the site and began to investigate the possibility of renovating the original fort for operation as an interpreted historic site. His first task was to demonstrate that something remained of the early fort besides the four original buildings which still stood (the Round Tower, Commanding Officer's House, Hexagonal Tower, and Officer's Quarters). This is the work which John Callender undertook.

At the time, the place looked far different than Historic Fort Snelling does today. West Seventh Street extended across the Mississippi River from Saint Paul and crossed within the original area of the fort. Paved roads encircled the Round Tower, abutted by manicured lawns under which lay multiple utility lines.

Callender focused his excavations on areas in proximity to the Round Tower where a number of early structures had stood. Between the fall of 1957 and the fall of 1958, Callender excavated part of the southwest line of the original fort wall, foundations of four structures that had stood just inside the wall, the cistern, and foundations of the Powder Magazine, Schoolhouse and Sutler's Store—to the extent possible, given the presence of paved roads and sidewalks within the original compound. After basic descriptions and measurements of the features were completed, heavy equipment was used to remove up to two feet of soil between the exposed foundations. The area was then covered with sod except for the foundations, leaving a visible representation of where the early structures had stood.

This initial foray into archaeology at Historic Fort Snelling was successful, demonstrating that physical remains of early fort buildings persisted intact under the contemporary ground surface. Negotiations with the State Highway Department, facilitated by the intervention of Governor Orville L. Freeman, resulted in a re-design of the proposed highway project which moved Highway 5 traffic lanes into a tunnel running underneath, instead of through, the area of the old fort.

Further excavations at Historic Fort Snelling would not occur until 1965, when the Minnesota Historical Society began the Fort Snelling Restoration Archaeology project, assisted with grant funds from the National Park Service. The project was overseen by Alan R. Woolworth, Chief Archaeologist for the Society at the time, and staffed by a crew of trained archaeologists and technicians with varying levels of education and experience.

Between 1965 and 1980, all 1820s structure locations within the fort's walls (including the walls) were excavated. Excavation records document an almost amazing state of preservation for below-grade remnants of buildings that in some cases had been demolished more than one hundred years prior. Basements were filled with demolition debris but were otherwise

consistently intact, often down to wooden members such as floor joists, trapdoors, and stairs. Artifact deposits reflected how the functions of various spaces had changed over time.

After excavation, buildings were recreated on their original foundations, using period techniques and materials as evidenced by archaeological findings. Frequently, reconstruction of several buildings was on-going while archaeologists were completing excavation of adjacent foundations. The only excavations within the fort walls that did not focus on structure remnants were a few exploratory trenches dug in the parade ground area, which yielded little in the way of artifactual data.

Some excavation was conducted outside the perimeter walls of the old fort, but this too focused on structures that dated from the earliest period of the military occupation. Among the corollary structures investigated were the original stables (located just to the southwest and downslope of the Hexagonal Tower) and several root cellars built underneath the landing road.

The Fort Snelling Restoration Archaeology Project was essentially complete by 1978, by which time a total of approximately 5,000 square meters, or almost 53,000 square feet, had been excavated at the site of the original Fort Snelling. The scope of archaeological work on the property diminished drastically after this time, although Robert Clouse, Minnesota Historical Society Head of Archaeology at the time, conducted summer field schools for University of Minnesota students at the site of the fort's stables most years from 1980 to 1997. Occasional excavations still took place within the reconstructed fort area, such as work on the Enlisted Men's Latrine in 1983 and 1987, around the foundations of the Hexagonal Tower in 1993 and 1997, and at the suspected site of the 1830s flag pole installation in 1987 and 2005-2006.

In retrospect, it is unfortunate that the overweening emphasis of the Fort Snelling Restoration Archaeology project was on recovery of structural data that would feed directly into the reconstruction of buildings that are now the fabric of the interpreted historic site. The bulk of the available resources were directed towards that goal, which left little to devote to other important aspects of archaeological research such as artifact analysis and reporting. Artifact collections did serve some purposes in the process of creating the site as it exists today—assemblages from certain buildings were surveyed by Historic Sites' staff as a guide to the creation of period-accurate furnishings, clothing and household goods, and some artifacts were selected for use in the "Archaeology Under the Floorboards" display in the Fort's Officers' Quarters.

This rich body of materials-- the estimated half-million artifacts excavated at Fort Snelling, which today reside in over six hundred boxes curated at the Minnesota History Center in Saint Paul-- awaits further analysis and reporting. The files of the Archaeology Department and the Society's archaeological collections constitute a huge body of raw data with tremendous potential to be mined for further analytical, theoretical and interpretive uses and for formal publication.

A bibliography of reports about the project lists thirty documents of various types that report on aspects of the work conducted between 1957 and 1980. One is a paper presented at a professional conference, three are articles or monographs published by the Minnesota Historical Society Press, and one is an unpublished PhD dissertation. The remainder were internal

documents. Further publication would help to capture further information that now exists only in oral tradition passed on by the archaeologists who worked on these investigations.

Archaeology Outside the Walls

In contrast to the extensive excavation at the site of the original Fort Snelling military installation, archaeological work on other portions of the Minnesota Historical Society's property at Historic Fort Snelling has been quite limited. There are only three documented research projects that have investigated portions of the property beyond the reconstructed walls of the old fort.

The first of these is a survey conducted in 1978 in connection with plans for construction of the extant Fort Snelling Visitor Center. Review of Department files has yielded no information about this survey except a few pages of notes about the locations of test holes, most of which use various corners of Building 22 as benchmarks. One partial box of artifacts recovered during the survey is in curation at the Minnesota History Center. Collections records indicate that the recovered materials include ceramics, glass and faunal material. Since no additional archaeological work was conducted as part of the project to construct the current visitor center, it is assumed that these materials were found in disturbed contexts and no significant structural features or midden deposits were identified during the survey.

The most recent substantial archaeological investigations conducted at Fort Snelling took place as part of a major infrastructure improvement project funded in part by Federal Highway Administration ISTEA (Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act) dollars. Project segments included expansion of the existing visitor center parking lot, addition of a storm sewer and stormwater retention ponds, construction of bicycle and pedestrian trails and landscaping. An evaluation phase of work was conducted in 1998, consisting of formal excavation of ten 1-meter-square units in areas where ground disturbance would take place. The results of this assessment were mixed. In some areas, there was evidence of extensive prior earthmoving activities that had thoroughly mixed artifact deposits and removed any trace of structural features. In other locations, intact structural remnants of mid-nineteenth-century buildings were encountered below multiple layers of more recent fill material.

Excavation units just east of Building 17 penetrated between 45 and 60 cm (ca. 17 to 24 inches) of fill material before encountering a deliberately-laid limestone flagging floor. A similar floor had been seen in excavations at the site of the original post stables, and the investigators concluded that this was a remnant of the 1853 Light Artillery Stables, which historic maps show as having been located in this general area. An additional excavation unit was dug near the southeastern corner of Building 17 after asphalt pavement was removed; here, evidence of some type of deliberate limestone construction was also found under multiple layers of fill, but it could not be associated with any specific known historic structure.

Excavation in an area of proposed parking expansion—which would today be at the far eastern end of the visitor center parking lot—showed a history of extensive earthmoving, probably related to highway construction. No intact structural features or midden deposits were found in this area.

Finally, excavation in the location of a proposed stormwater retention pond, not far outside the main gate of the old fort, once again encountered layers of relatively recent fill, below which lay multiple strata reflecting construction, repair and ultimate demolition of nearby structures. The investigators recommended that additional excavation be conducted in this area to mitigate adverse effect to these deposits. The recommended additional archaeological research took place in 2000. Although a formal report of results was never prepared, review of notes and the artifact catalog indicate that similar stratigraphy was encountered as had been seen in the previous year's work. Portions of the excavated area had been severely disrupted by utility trenches, but in other areas, artifact deposits and features such as lime mortar spills related to construction and later repair of early fort structures were found.

It is important to note that this research project yielded not just artifacts reflecting the military occupation of the area, but also recovered artifacts indicative of PreContact Period native habitation. This was not the first time that such evidence had turned up—during excavation of the old fort's Hospital, lithic debitage and projectile points were found within intact natural soils below the early nineteenth-century construction level. Recent excavations at the location where the Fort Snelling flagpole now stands also recovered PreContact Period lithics and ceramics from intact prairie soil strata just above bedrock.

Summary

Fort Snelling has a long and complex history, much of which is strikingly represented by an equally complex pattern of archaeological deposits both large and small, artifactual and structural. Past archaeological investigations at Fort Snelling have demonstrated two things. First, it is clear that substantial archaeological components reflecting the history of the military occupation, as well as earlier native occupations, remain intact in many areas of the property, frequently capped by multiple layers of fill material. In effect, Fort Snelling grew vertically over time as much as it expanded horizontally.

Second, the distribution of intact archaeological deposits on the property is discontinuous and highly variable, and cannot easily be predicted from surface manifestations. It is important to bear both of these points in mind when considering potential effects to archaeological properties that could result from the proposed construction project.

Recommendations for Further Work

Project architect HGA has prepared preliminary plans for this project which include an overlay of previous building locations derived from historic maps. Review of these plans allows for definition of a set of six "Areas of Interest" in which there is some potential for identifying intact archaeological deposits. They are described below, coupled with general recommendations for the types of research that could be conducted to identify and evaluate archaeological deposits. Certainly these recommendations will need refinement as the construction plan is finalized and as the specifics of such things as cut sections, fill sections and finish grades are worked out.

Much of the construction proposed for this project will take place in areas that are currently hard-surfaced—the main visitor center parking lot, Tower Avenue, and the old asphalt parking lot behind Buildings 17 and 18. This presents a substantial obstacle to traditional archaeological testing. Given that much of what it anticipated to be present is nineteenth-century structure

remains, it may be worth giving consideration to using geophysical survey as a preliminary technique to narrow the focus of excavation. Both magnetometer and ground-penetrating radar (GPR) survey can be used in areas covered by pavement, and they have been demonstrated effective in delineating certain kinds of subsurface cultural features. However, there are known problems in using such techniques in areas where soils are shallow to bedrock, which characterizes most of the Society's property at Fort Snelling. Consultation with the National Park Service and other sources of expertise on geophysical survey should be conducted to determine if current techniques might be useful in this instance.

Archaeological "Areas of Interest":

- 1) East of Building 17: excavations conducted in this area in connection with the 1999-2000 ISTEPA project have shown that intact remnants of the 1853 Light Artillery Stables are present below 45 to 60 cm (ca. 17 to 24 inches) of more recent fill material. Other mid-nineteenth-century structural features, not identified as being part of a specific known building, were also encountered in excavations conducted after removal of portions of Tower Road near the southeastern corner of Building 17, again buried under multiple layers of fill material. Geophysical survey and test excavations should be conducted in this area to better delineate the extent of structure remnants and determine if midden deposits related to the structures are present. Construction of new pedestrian pathways in this area should then be evaluated to determine how it might affect these archaeological deposits.
- 2) Outside northwest wall of Historic Fort Snelling: historic documentation indicates that several structures once stood immediately outside the fort walls, just west of the Pentagonal Tower. One of these, not demolished until 1971, was originally built in the 1860s at Henry Sibley's direction for use as a military prison and later a commissary. There is a high likelihood that archaeological features related to these structures remain *in situ* in this area. Geophysical survey and test excavations should be conducted to determine whether architectural remnants and midden deposits related to the structures are present. Construction of new pedestrian pathways and a river overlook in this area should then be evaluated to determine how it might affect these archaeological deposits.
- 3) North (riverside) of Buildings 17 and 18: historic documentation indicates that several Civil War-era mess halls and part of an associated barracks building were located under what is now the asphalt-surfaced parking area between Buildings 17 and 18 and the edge of the bluff overlooking the Mississippi River. Geophysical survey and test excavations should be conducted in this area to determine whether structural remnants and midden deposits related to the structures remain *in situ* in this area. If such archaeological manifestations are present, construction of new pedestrian pathways should be evaluated to determine how it might affect the deposits.
- 4) Buildings 17 and 18 foundations: the proposed rehabilitation of these buildings may include excavation around their perimeters to expose subgrade portions of the foundations. This activity could disrupt period deposits, if present, and obscure original construction details. Initially, limited archaeological testing should be conducted around

the foundation perimeters to determine if substantial builder's trench deposits and significant construction detail data are present.

- 5) Overflow parking west of Building 30: historic documentation indicates that a blacksmith's shop (1904-1914) and a smaller structure were once located just to the west of Building 30, in an area proposed for soft-surface overflow parking. Archaeological testing should be conducted here to determine if structural remnants or midden deposits related to those buildings are present. Construction plans for this area should then be evaluated to determine how it might affect these archaeological deposits.
- 6) Current parking lot: A number of buildings constructed during the early twentieth-century Fort Snelling expansion were located in the area now occupied by the large hard-surfaced parking lot that lies east of Building 30 and south of the present visitor center. The most substantial of these were three stables or mule barns (Buildings 25, 27 and 28) that were identical in age, form and orientation to Building 30. They were abutted by small guardhouse and shops buildings. It is not known what might remain of these buildings and associated artifact deposits beneath the parking lot. Review of the late-1970s plans for construction of the extant parking lot should be undertaken to determine the likelihood that remnants of these buildings or associated midden deposits might remain intact in this area.

Above-Ground Properties/Districts Requiring Assessment

Two properties appear to require additional assessment:

- Hidden Falls Regional Park: In 1887, according to the Web site of the Saint Paul Parks and Recreation Department, renowned landscape architect H. W. S. Cleveland proposed this as the location of one of four major parks for the city. It was little developed, however, until the 1930s, and its current appearance dates to the mid-1960s.
- Mississippi River Boulevard South: Further research is needed to evaluate the history of this road, which the city had developed by the 1920s. Much of the residential construction in this area occurred after World War II.

ASSESSMENT OF EFFECTS

Given the project's location in a National Historic Landmark and National Register historic district, it is clear that historic properties will be affected, regardless of whether or not other properties in the APE are found to be affected. Assuming that the proposed work on the buildings in the historic fort and on Buildings 17, 18, 22, and 30 will meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for rehabilitation and restoration, this work should have no adverse effect on historic properties.

Work associated with the demolition of the existing visitor center and construction of the new visitor center, however, requires closer evaluation.

Effects on Significant Archaeological Properties

Based on past research, it can be stated that the Minnesota Historical Society's property at Fort Snelling holds the potential to contain archaeological deposits reflecting human occupations that both predate and postdate the arrival of Europeans in the area. Certainly, manifestations of the military occupation of the locale are likely to be the most substantial of these deposits. The history of Fort Snelling is characterized to a great extent by periodic episodes of building construction, repair and subsequent demolition. Coupled with the common nineteenth- and early twentieth-century practice of adding fill to raise the ground surface as part of new construction, it is not unreasonable to expect to find overlapping layers of structure remnants and artifact midden almost anywhere on the property.

Materials reflecting PreContact Period native occupations may be most likely to occur in areas of the property close to the confluence of rivers, but could reasonably be expected to be present almost anywhere along the bluff edge overlooking the Mississippi River.

Assuming a period of significance from 1819 to 1946—essentially, the full period of time during which Fort Snelling was an active military installation—any structural remnants discovered during archaeological testing, except those related to very recent construction, would likely qualify to be considered contributing elements to the National Historic Landmark and National Register historic district. Similarly, *in situ* artifact deposits that can be tied to specific time periods or activities are likely to be considered contributing elements. Archaeological deposits that predate 1819, if present, may or may not qualify for consideration as eligible properties, dependent on their nature and extent.

Effects on Significant Above-ground Properties

In considering the design of the new visitor center and related landscape from the perspective of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, the Rehabilitation Standards appear to be the most appropriate. While there are separate standards for buildings and landscapes, both are essentially the same. For the proposed new construction, three standards are applicable:

Standard 8: Significant archaeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.

The preceding archaeological discussion describes a proposed methodology to address this standard.

Standard 9: New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.

Standard 9 cautions against designing a new structure that cannot be distinguished as new—this creates a “false sense of history.” At the same time, a defiantly modern building in a historic district can be visually jolting. Finding a balance is a tremendous challenge.

New construction in historic districts is a cutting-edge issue in preservation circles. As much as preservationists might like to hide new construction in a historic district, that is rarely possible—especially when it comes to a visitor center, which is, by definition, a destination. What often happens, instead, is that the design of new buildings becomes a scattershot blend of elements plucked from historic buildings, watered down, and reassembled as a bland caricature of the historic district. By going underground, the existing visitor center took another, equally unsuccessful, approach.

Preservationists are now seeking to create infill construction that reflects the high design quality embodied in historic districts. The historic district must remain dominant, clearly maintaining its significant character. But building on that character with high-quality design from the twenty-first century will leave an even better built environment for future generations to treasure, just as people today treasure the built legacy of earlier generations.

This approach is far more challenging than simply copying materials and other elements from the historic district—it demands a unique solution to each unique situation. But Fort Snelling is well worth the effort. To this end, architects at HGA and landscape architects at Coen+Partners have studied historic maps, photographs, and other images to become familiar with the evolution of Fort Snelling as a whole, and of the proposed visitor center site in particular.

Although their work is in the preliminary stages, it appears to tackle the challenge of creating a compatible, yet differentiated, new design. The building conforms to the military model of form following function. Both the building and the landscape defer to the historic setting in terms of massing, size, scale, and architectural features. The new design adopts elements—such as stone walls and tree-lined boulevards—without applying them literally. All in all, the design has the potential to establish a new layer of history that has an animated, yet respectful, conversation with the many historic layers existing at Fort Snelling.

Standard 10: New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

Standard 10 is relatively easy to apply to the new visitor center and related landscape when it comes to above-ground historic resources. The location of the proposed visitor center was significantly modified for the construction of the existing visitor center. No historic buildings or landscapes will be directly physically affected by the new construction because none survive in the construction zone.

Appendix A: Engineering Assessment of the Existing Visitor Center

Source: *Historic Fort Snelling Visitor Center Building Evaluation*. Collaborative Design Group, 2005.

DATA

The structure appears to be in average condition, exhibiting some problems. These include cracks in the concrete walls and slabs, which are evident throughout the interior and exterior of the building. Some cracks appear large and significant, but pose no immediate threat of structural instability or failure. There is evidence of movement in some of the retaining wall panels. Staining and efflorescence present throughout the structure give evidence of chronic moisture infiltration.

Other issues range from minor seasonal flooding to a constant stream of water flowing into the elevator shaft. In addition, occasional drainage system back-ups result in lower level flooding. These issues, in part, fostered moisture infiltration into the HVAC system. This HVAC system is over 24 years old and has reached the end of its expected useful life. Design considerations from 25 years ago do not reflect today's concerns regarding indoor air quality. To provide a HVAC system that meets today's indoor air quality design standards would require the replacement of the entire HVAC system, an option not financially cost effective.

The end result is that the building as a whole has relative high humidity and shows significant water damage in many areas. There is no clear evidence whether the ongoing water infiltration is due to static pressure in the bluff, the location of the building on an underground spring, the fact that the building roof is the lowest point on the site, or more likely a combination of issues.

CONCLUSION

The type and scope of damage present in the structure did not occur within the last five years, rather the Visitor Center at Fort Snelling has been in an accelerated state of decline since it was put into operation in 1980. While a subterranean building has its place, it has proved impractical and costly in this application. Submerging the building into porous bluffs littered with springs with an ineffective drainage plan has relegated this structure to the role of catch basin for water.

The results of this building assessment had a direct and significant impact on the planned expansion of the current Visitor Center to meet the programmatic needs of the Fort while developing Buildings 17 and 18 for a hotel and conference center. The original building space review indicated that the only way the Visitors Center could meet future programming needs was through construction of a substantial addition. However, due to the mechanical and structural issues outlined in this current report, the previous conclusions reached as to the cost effectiveness for continued use of the building are changed.

Investing substantial amounts of money to replace the HVAC system, remove the soil from on top of and around the structure, and redesign the drainage system would leave the Historical Society with a building that is wholly inadequate to meet their need in terms of size and function. In these circumstances it is apparent that adding to the structure (as originally proposed) would be throwing "good money after bad." If rehabilitated, the underground structure will begin its accelerated decline again, and MHS would be faced with this same discussion in 5-10 years.

In light of the recent building issues it is the recommendation of Collaborative Design Group that the Owner not allocate any future investment towards long-term occupation of the current Visitor Center. Careful analysis has determined that it will not be cost effective to remedy the numerous problems of the building, much less to expand the subterranean structure to provide the needed facilities.

Appendix B: Planning a New Visitor Center for Historic Fort Snelling

The Minnesota Historical Society's 1969 "Master Plan Program" described the scope of historic interpretation to be undertaken at the new Historic Fort Snelling site. "The time period to be dramatized in this park will run from 1805 through 1946, but with special emphasis on the period from 1819 to 1865." However, the Society's historical interpretation needs to be far broader if visitors are to understand the full and complex history of this place. A recounting of the process by which the Historical Society came to create the project now under development will help to explain its scope, goals, and content.

As the reconstruction of the frontier fort proceeded in the early 1970s, the interpretive program came to center on life at a frontier military post circa 1827. The use of "first person" presentations in which interpretative staff assumed the persona of characters of that time reinforced that emphasis. While this approach created a certain historical verisimilitude, it also inhibited interaction between the interpretive staff and visitors on subjects occurring after that date since an individual in 1827 logically would have no knowledge of future events. Interpreters also could not relate the full significance of the land that lies at the confluence of the Mississippi and Minnesota rivers prior to American settlement as that too would not have been well known to the residents of the Fort in 1820s.

The stories of what is now the Fort Snelling Historic District are far richer and more complex than that single snapshot in time reveals. For more than a decade, the Minnesota Historical Society has worked to extend and broaden the visitor experience. As the steward of this important place, the Minnesota Historical Society has an obligation to help tell the full range of stories necessary to convey the significance of this place for all Minnesotans, indeed its national importance for all Americans. The experience of native peoples prior to European contact, the first treaties and American settlement following the Louisiana Purchase, the role that Dred and Harriet Scott's presence in Minnesota played in precipitating the Civil War and the state's participation in that struggle, the U.S.-Dakota Conflict of 1862 and subsequent military encounters with native people and their aftermaths, and the role of the Fort as a revived military base from the 1870s through World War II will be among the themes the Historical Society will present in this expanded program. A fuller description of the Historical Society's new interpretive directions for the site appears as Appendix G of this document.

Physical limitations within the existing buildings have been a significant barrier in expanding the Society's programs. These large and complex stories require more space to tell than is currently available. Two buildings within the frontier fort will be modified in this project to provide more space for educational programming but they will be on the scale of classrooms, not a museum.

In addition to the structural problems that are described below, the current visitor center lacks sufficient, appropriate space for an interpretive gallery. There is only a relatively small area that might be adapted and its ceilings are too low to accommodate the necessary lighting and electrical infrastructure for a museum gallery.

In assessing the options that might support a fuller program of interpretation, the Historical Society evaluated four options before selecting the plan described in this document as the most prudent and feasible choice.

Option One:

The first option considered was to expand the current underground visitor center. Capitalizing on existing infrastructure seemed an effective and cost-efficient approach. However, since this building had presented problems ever since it was constructed in 1980, a consulting engineering firm was engaged to study the practical issues surrounding an adaptation of the existing complex. While not entirely surprising to staff who had worked there over the past 25 years, their report was discouraging. Their summary conclusions appear as Appendix A to this document. In brief, their analysis was this.

- The building has high humidity levels and "shows significant water damage."
- The visitor center's location is the cause of these problems. "While a subterranean building has its place, it has proved impractical and costly in this application. Submerging the building into porous bluffs littered with springs with an ineffective drainage plan has relegated this structure to the role of catch basin for water."
- Repairing the building, let alone expanding it would be "throwing good money after bad. If rehabilitated, the underground structure will begin its accelerated decline again and MHS would be faced with the same discussion in 5-10 years."

The shortcomings of the existing facility extend beyond these structural problems. A subterranean visitor center was initially hailed as less invasive of the historical landscape than an above-ground structure. But the fact remains that the building is earth-sheltered rather than completely underground. Standing at the top of the entrance ramp that leads one down into the building, the visitor faces an earthen berm rising more than ten feet above ground level, punctuated by cement walls that extend even higher. Instead of contributing to an understanding of the various historical buildings and their spatial relationships to each other, the center's location and height actually confound one's understanding of the history of the site. It is impossible to visually identify, differentiate, and then associate the various elements. The visitor's primary destination, the frontier fort, cannot be seen at all. The view of barracks building 18 is obstructed by the berm. The ordnance building (number 22) is largely hidden behind a modern loading dock. At this vantage point, Building 30, passed as one entered the site, is obscured by rows of trees across a large parking lot.

The visitor center's placement and elevation, combined with the manner in which the existing roads and parking have obliterated historic traffic patterns, make it virtually impossible for the visitor to understand the spatial relationships of these buildings to each other, to the frontier fort, and to the rivers that were the fort's *raison d'etre*.

As currently configured, the site layout creates visitor service problems. This confusion of new and old buildings, some above and some below grade, some freestanding and others connected, makes it virtually impossible for those arriving at the site to know where to begin their visit. Almost immediately after the center opened in 1980, the Historical Society had to erect a large concrete obelisk near the entrance ramp to provide at least some directional guidance for the visitor. Larger scale and more readily apparent visual indicators created by a new, above-grade Visitor Center and landscape plan would significantly improve way finding upon arrival.

There are four remaining historical buildings in this area outside the frontier fort whose preservation has long been a matter of concern to the Historical Society: the two cavalry barracks, the ordnance building, and the remaining stable. Understanding the importance of the barracks for the interpretation of the larger history of Fort Snelling, the Historical Society decided not to demolish them following the 1989 transfer. They have remained unused since that date. Utility services to Building 17 and 18 have now been abandoned in place. Localized external repairs have been made to the aging roofs in an attempt to protect these buildings from progressive water infiltration. Lower level windows have been covered to limit vandalism and unauthorized entry. Other buildings in the area include a former stable (Building 30) dating to 1904, currently used to house the Society's site maintenance equipment and the 1898 ordnance facility (Building 22) which contains a repair shop. Other short-term repairs and security measures, similar to those implemented for the barracks, have been improvised for both structures.

Option Two:

The Historical Society's second option was to adapt these four adjacent historic military buildings to serve as an appropriate interpretive complex and thereby ensure their preservation. Buildings 17 and 18 would serve as a year-round interpretive center; Building 30 would provide meeting space and food service for visitors; and Building 22 would be adapted as office space. In 2006, the Society submitted a request to the Minnesota Legislature for a capital appropriation of \$22M to support the construction of that project. While the full funding was not received, the legislature did appropriate \$1.2M for project design and Governor Pawlenty included the balance in his 2008 planning estimate.

Following a highly competitive bidding process, the Historical Society awarded the design contract to the firm of Hammel, Green and Abrahamson in October 2006. As predesign work was completed, the scope of the building program could be defined in greater detail enabling a more detailed and precise estimate of project costs. With the timetable now known more precisely, construction cost escalation, compounded over the years since the original projection at approximately 8% each year, could now be factored in for a more accurate project cost estimate. The recalculated project cost, slightly over \$60M, proved to be substantially higher than originally estimated. Cost Planning Management International (CPMI), the Historical

Society's construction management firm, confirmed this estimate through a separate and independent analysis. Their involvement with the project continues and to date their estimates have concurred with all subsequent cost projections for the project.

The implications of this escalation in projected costs are obvious and significant. An analysis of funding opportunities from all potential public and private sources for this project was revealing. Based on the best available external information and the Historical Society's own experience in the construction of two major museums, the Society's management and its governing board of directors concluded that it was highly unlikely that sufficient funds would be available to build or operate an undertaking of the scope and magnitude described in the 2006 plan in the present economic and political environment. Simply put, the project needed to be scaled back to its original cost level. With an adjustment for the escalation in construction costs, that would be an additional \$24.8M beyond the funds already provided for planning.

Option Three:

Mindful of its commitment to the preservation of these historic structures, the Society considered as its third option various alternative scenarios for the partial utilization of one barracks building and the stabilization of other three structures for current or future use. Detailed consideration of the implications of this course revealed its own set of obstacles. Choosing to retrofit an historic building to meet the performance standards required of a modern museum (a challenge the Society had previously embraced and surmounted at Mill City Museum) presents an array of technical difficulties with associated cost increases.

The need for new museum space at Fort Snelling has always been predicated on the Society's obligation to fulfill its original mandate to present the complete history of the site, something that cannot happen within the physical limitations of the frontier fort because of the complexity, extent, or scale of the stories, their relationship to issues outside the old fort, or because their culturally sensitive nature makes it an inappropriate venue.

The design requirements for galleries, public spaces, and support functions in successful museums are well established. Exhibit spaces require a minimum of 14 feet ceiling clearance to support lighting and electrical infrastructure and to create an appropriate sense of space. Their length and width must be sufficiently large and proportional to accommodate viewers. Lobby areas must be spacious enough to be welcoming, to handle crowds during popular attractions, and perhaps even to serve as a suitable venue for rental events or other public uses.

The interior of Buildings 17 and 18 is such that it would be impossible to accommodate these requirements without substantial internal modification and the construction of an external lobby. Built as enlisted men's quarters, each of these matching buildings consists of two relatively narrow bays- 33 feet wide- that were used as sleeping areas. They are oriented perpendicularly to the river and connected across the front by smaller rooms that served as common areas. Both floors in each building have ten-foot ceilings and are punctuated by supporting columns on a 12-foot grid. The first floor of each building is five feet above ground level and was reached originally by an external stairway to exterior porches that have not survived.

Five concerns emerged in developing a suitable design.

- The ten-foot ceilings would be suitable for office space but would produce a claustrophobic feeling in a lobby and could not accommodate the requirements for ceiling height in a gallery.
- The long and narrow shape of the rooms would not be desirable for meeting or class rooms and would substantially limit options for exhibit development, both as to the placement of objects and interpretive materials and also the flow of visitors through a gallery.
- The columns, standing in a very narrow and rigid grid, create substantial problems with sightlines in lobbies, galleries, meeting spaces and classrooms.
- Another significant challenge was the practical problem of providing a way for arriving visitors, especially those with limited mobility, to make the five-foot transition from ground level to first floor. While stairs up to exterior porches were a practical solution in their original use, they cannot be easily adapted for ADA-compliant public use without major exterior modification.
- Finally, the designer was faced with the issue of providing a loading dock in a place and configuration that would not further compromise the exterior integrity of the building.

Several design solutions were considered. All required the retention of a portion of the existing visitor center to house an underground loading dock that would utilize an underground tunnel to connect to the basement of Building 18. It would also be necessary to create an external lobby along the west end of Building 18 to serve as a suitable entry and gathering space and to house the stairways, ramps and elevators needed to transition the visitor to the first floor. While one could build a museum in this building that retained the low ceilings and supporting columns that are among the most significant defining architectural characteristics of its interior, the resulting space would be so completely problematic from the perspective of museum design as to render the project an inappropriate use of resources. The most practical option would be to use the entire first floor of the building, removing the columns in both wings and raising the ceiling of the east wing to create suitable gallery space. Even these drastic internal alterations would result in an exhibit space that would be less than fully functional being disproportionately long and narrow.

Such drastic alterations to the internal fabric of Building 18 and the addition of a large and highly visible addition along its left flank would undoubtedly constitute a significant adverse effect on its historic character as defined by the Secretary of Interior's standards and guidelines for the preservation of historic structures. When the Society analyzed the impacts on these buildings that would result if it were to adopt this option, it was extremely reluctant to proceed. To do so would be incompatible with the institution's commitment to and responsibility for historic preservation. When similar concerns were voiced by the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office staff and by the senior architectural historian of the National Park Service office then charged with oversight of the Section 106 review process, it became clear that this option was not viable. Another approach would be required, one that would ensure the preservation of these buildings in another way. Successful adaptive reuse requires an appropriate alignment between the character of the historic structure and the requirements of the new use. Such a match would not exist with this use.

The Minnesota Historical Society has long been a leader in and highly supportive of the effort to ensure the preservation of important historical structures and cultural landscapes in Minnesota so that future generations might know and understand their significance for their lives. With its extensive network of historic sites and museums, the Historical Society is one of the largest owners of historic properties in the state. Many of these are historically significant. Five are National Historical Landmarks: Fort Snelling, the James J. Hill House, the Oliver Kelly Homestead, the Charles A. Lindbergh House, and the Washburn A Mill Complex. Three more, the Jeffers Petroglyphs, Grand Mounds, and the Split Rock Lighthouse, are widely considered to be eligible for NHL designation. Twenty-one of the Society's properties are on the National Register and others have local historical designations. As a leader in preservation, the Society has always held itself to the highest standards in the maintenance, rehabilitation, and use of the properties it owns or administers. Appropriately, the State Historic Preservation Office is one of the Society's most important programs. The missions of both are fully compatible. In dealing with projects relating to its own properties, the Society has always scrupulously maintained an inviolate "firewall" between its own programmatic actions and the reviews and determinations made by the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office staff. This has been as true in the dozens of smaller projects undertaken each year to preserve the Historical Society's buildings as it was in major, multi-million dollar undertakings like the Mill City Museum. Indeed, the Society received a Certificate of Appreciation from the National Park Service in 2005 for its "rehabilitation of a portion of the fire-damaged Washburn A Mill Complex National Historic Landmark into a creative and engaging museum of the flour milling industry."

There was another compelling and highly pragmatic reason for rejecting this option: cost. The full renovation of Building 18 would cost an additional \$36 M beyond the current planning appropriation. It would be possible to finish off only a smaller area, one functionally comparable to the space planned for the new Visitor Center, but this would not reduce the cost sufficiently to bring it into line with the established budget. There are several reasons for this. While only the first floor would be occupied for the present in this scenario, the mechanical systems (heating, air conditioning, ventilation, fire protection, security systems and electrical service) would have to be built to support a fuller use of the entire building in the future. The expense of removing columns and raising ceilings with the resulting need to reinforce the structure would be significant. At least part of the existing visitor center would have to be retained to serve as a loading and service area connected underground to Building 18. Finally, there would be the cost the external lobby. The cost of such a renovation is projected to require an additional \$30M, still significantly above budget.

Option Four:

The fourth option, the project described in this document, was determined to be the only feasible and prudent course of action. Many factors were weighed in comparing all four possibilities. There would be pluses and minuses with each. This option provides the best balance by addressing the Historical Society's obligation to preserve the existing structures in a way that makes suitable reuse possible, by creating a visitor center that will permit the richer interpretation that all desire, by being respectful of the historical integrity of this National Historic Landmark, and by meeting a realistic budget.

Appendix C: Stabilization of Existing Structures

Of the ten post Civil War buildings constructed along the edge of the river bluff, only four original structures remain. The two largest historic buildings (Cavalry Barracks 17 and 18) stand empty, two others (the Ordnance Building and Cavalry Stable) are underutilized, all show signs of significant and progressive deterioration. These buildings have a profound influence on the site due to both their physical prominence and proximity to the Historic Fort. Consequently, their current state of disrepair casts a shadow over the experience and memory of every visitor. The preservation and stabilization of these significant buildings will therefore be critical to the revitalization of this National Historic Landmark site.

Cavalry Barracks (Buildings 17 and 18)

Stabilization plans call for the double set of barracks to be restored to their original exterior appearance with minimal construction work performed on the interior. The present exterior condition of these buildings is considered fair to poor. The issues confronting the building stabilization are, for the most part, directly related to three events: the ravages of time and weather; construction of the 1936 infill additions and connecting link; and the unfortunate removal of all original wood porches. Deteriorated roof, foundation and wall systems are causing progressive and accelerated damage to building components. Conditions associated with the addition, and its proposed removal, are also serious because they too affect the integrity of the building structure and exterior enclosure. Although not critical to stabilization, the porch modifications have significantly altered the historic character of the building and their restoration will make a significant contribution to the cohesion of the site.

Perimeter limestone foundation walls demonstrate persistent areas of dampness in both buildings. Where unfinished and exposed, interior foundation walls are visibly damp and pools of standing water are often observed at or near the base of the walls. Although stone units themselves appear to be structurally sound, mortar is deteriorating due to long-term exposure to water penetration and pervasive damp conditions. The basement level appears to be very close to the impervious bedrock layer which may be a contributing factor to the below grade water issues. The nature of the stone, altered grade conditions, missing and deteriorated downspouts, and open joints provide additional avenues for water infiltration. Recommendations to relieve the basement moisture issues include digging up the perimeter earth and applying a waterproofing and drain tile system at the foundation wall and footing. Providing positive slope away from the building and lowering grade to avoid conflicts with window sills will further protect the wall system. The excavation will be backfilled with a free-draining, granular material.

All of the mortar joints at the stone base course of Buildings 17 and 18 are either broken, missing, or have been re-pointed with mortar that does not match the original color or joint profile. Although the foundation appears to be reasonably intact, there is evidence of damage caused by long-term water penetration through open joints. The limestone backup material absorbs and responds to water saturation differently than the sandstone veneer. Over time, limestone will expand in a direction perpendicular to the bedding plane while sandstone remains relatively stable dimensionally. Both seasonal and irreversible movement puts stress on individual stone units and mortar joints. As the joints crack, and ultimately fail, more water

enters the wall system and the process of deterioration begins to accelerate. Differential settlement puts additional stresses on the wall system. This combination of movement and severe water saturation degrades the softer, weaker material of the limestone backup wall, weakening the bond of the face veneer, and ultimately threatening the integrity of the wall system. For these reasons, 100% of the stone veneer will be re-pointed. Small sections of veneer will be removed and reset with appropriate limestone backup wall repairs as required.

Brick units and mortar joints on both buildings are severely weathered, a condition that appears to worsen towards the upper half of the façade. Consistent unit and joint cracking is observed at window jamb/sill intersections, corners of window openings, and brick arch lintels. Severe brick erosion and joint deterioration from running water and prolonged saturation is observed at degraded gutters and roof systems and adjacent to concrete porch structures. Previous brick and mortar repairs are readily visible. Due to the extensive amount of repointing required, it is more cost effective to assume 100 % repointing rather than selectively repairing isolated areas. This will also provide a more uniform appearance.

Aside from natural weathering processes, the most significant alterations to exterior building systems, walls and openings, occur where the 1936 addition and connecting link have been tied into the original perimeter walls. For estimating purposes, an estimated 15% of the brick will require replacement. New brick will be selected with intent to match the existing brick in size, color and physical properties. Approximately 10% of the sandstone units will require patching, consolidation repair or replacement.

The majority of window assemblies appear to be authentic if not original. Most, excluding the basement windows, are in reasonable condition and therefore salvable. However, significant alterations have been made to original exterior door openings (several doors have been replaced with window assemblies) where porches were removed. Openings have also been shifted or eliminated to accommodate relocation of the interior stairs. Arch lintels over original second floor porch door openings have, in some cases, been raised to match adjacent windows. Restoration of these openings will need to be carefully considered within the context of proposed porch restoration recommendations and current interior conditions. Other minor alterations include sash replacement with glass block, primarily in Building 17, and introduction of wire glass near fire escapes. Upper level window and door assemblies will be repaired where possible and replaced where missing or where existing conditions prohibit repair. Window refurbishment will include minor wood repair to sash and frame, wood sill consolidation, new glass to replace broken lites and wire glass, and 100% reglazing of existing lites. All basement window assemblies will be replaced with new assemblies due to the advanced deterioration of the components. New units will be selected to match type, pattern and color of existing assemblies. All openings will be provided with new storm windows to protect the primary windows.

The original red slate roof is intact but, after 100 years, is in poor condition. Although significant repairs have been made, in some areas grey slate salvaged from Building 30 has been patched in, tiles continue to fall from the building and are a potential safety hazard. Specialty consultants have previously recommended complete replacement. New, red slate is prohibitively expensive. Therefore, we are proposing to replace the roofing with simulated, red slate. The new roof system will include insulating the roof from the exterior side of the sheathing using rigid

insulation. Roof decking, as viewed from the attic, appears to be in good shape although areas associated with compromised roofing material may need selective replacement. Molded profile gutters and corrugated downspouts do not appear to be original. Components are severely degraded, missing, or otherwise compromised. All gutters and downspouts will be replaced to matching the type, profile and color of the existing original where possible. Soffits and trim show signs of moderate deterioration at or near degraded gutter systems. Severely deteriorated sections and members will be replaced to match existing. Other sections will be repaired and conditioned to receive new paint finishes.

As is the case with many historic buildings, certain significant architectural elements have been removed completely. The most character-defining features were the north and south wood porches. South entries were subsequently reconstructed with concrete stoops, stairs and a concrete gabled porch roof enclosure. These porches are a contributing factor to the accelerating degradation of brick and stone and should be removed. Although the original porches have been demolished, their outlines can still be traced on the brick wall surface. These will be replaced unless it becomes cost prohibitive to do so.

Whereas in a full restoration all important missing features would ideally be restored, stabilization focuses primarily on existing systems. Although a few significant features, namely the porches, will be addressed, stoves, select chimneys and eight large historic ventilators that have been removed over time are not included in the current project.

Three structures of later construction, two infill additions and the link between the two buildings, will be removed. All areas affected by this later construction will be patched to match the original construction. Final paint colors on wood trim and porches will be selected to match the original paint colors.

The interior condition of these buildings is poor. Several areas are water damaged from leaky roofs and windows. Moisture damage is also apparent where windows are left open to ventilate the building and from condensation as a result of non-working building heating systems. Plumbing and electrical services have been abandoned in place.

The current plan calls for minimal repair/reconstruction work to the interior spaces of Building 17 and 18. The Society proposes to install temporary heat (warehouse type) throughout to maintain 55 degrees F in winter months to stave off further deterioration. Basic power and lighting will be installed for building security purposes only.

The goal of this stabilization, of course, is to ensure structural viability so that these buildings can be used for an appropriate purpose in the future, one that has not yet been fully identified. Any future adaptive reuse of buildings 17 and 18 must be compatible with the mission of the Minnesota Historical Society, consistent with the status of the property as a National Historic Landmark and the particular character of this site, and compliant with State of Minnesota regulations regarding the appropriate use of state bonds funds.

These requirements will provide the framework for identifying the range of possible uses of the buildings and selecting an appropriate tenant. The Society is currently undertaking a similar study to identify potential reuses for the grain elevators adjacent to the Mill City Museum. A parallel process is being undertaken for these barracks. Previous discussions identified examples of potential uses such as a specialty hotel, perhaps one that features cultural tourism, a youth hostel, possibly in conjunction with plans for a youth athletic facility at the Upper Post, an educational facility, artists' studios, or office space for organizations with an educational or environmental mission, government agencies, or possibly even the Historical Society itself at some future date.

The unknown requirements of prospective tenants complicates planning for features such as future parking requirements. However, given the space requirements for potential compatible uses, it is projected that the parking shown in the Master Landscape Plan will be sufficient to accommodate both the needs of the Historic Fort any likely tenant. Even with increased attendance, the current lot is filled only on those summer weekends when special events such as the Civil War encampment occur. On such occasions, the Society will provide shuttle service to and from nearby parking at the LRT station. Insofar as one can project, this solution will also satisfy the needs of potential tenants in the two barracks. Given their size, smaller than an office complex or even the barracks on the Upper Post, they certainly will not house a large number of employees or guests. While the parking is somewhat removed, hotels typically provide valet service and office employees expect to walk some distance to their place of work. By comparison, visitors to the Historic Fort will have to walk much further. The landscape master plan provides handicapped and limited visitor parking near Building 17.

Ordnance Building (Building 22)

Old Fort Snelling was sold and stood vacant between 1858 and 1861. After the Civil War, the Federal Government repossessed the Fort for Headquarters of the Department of Dakota. Building 22, constructed between 1878–1880, is the oldest remaining building in the Lower Post from this period. The 1878 centrally located stone building will continue to house a maintenance shop and will provide additional storage for the new Visitor Center.

The exposed squared-stone walls are the most distinctive feature of Building 22. The stone on this building reflects the rugged beauty of natural limestone and now, unfortunately, many of its flaws. The stone and mortar joints on Building 22 are severely weathered. Limestone absorbs water and over time expands. Both seasonal and irreversible movement puts stress on mortar joints. As the joints crack, and ultimately fail, more water enters the wall system and the process of deterioration begins to accelerate. Left unchecked, the combination of movement and severe weathering caused by wind, water, snow and ice degrades the stone and ultimately compromises

the structural integrity entire wall system. A majority of the joints and many stone units in Building 22 have lost their material and structural integrity due to this process. Due to the advanced state of deterioration, consolidation of the limestone is no longer a viable option and stone replacement would be risky. Stabilization efforts will include 100% re-pointing and application of a deep penetrating, breathable, masonry water repellent treatment.

There are several areas along the foundation where long-term water penetration has caused severe erosion of stone and joint material. The building was evaluated during a period of heavy of rainfall and water was observed running through and trickling down interior basement walls. The most serious water damage appears to correlate with the terminal ends of partial length gutters on both the north and south sides of the building. Recommendations to relieve water at the foundation level include: hard surface removal and grade correction; selective re-pointing of interior foundation wall joints, and restoration of missing gutters and downspouts.

Aside from the physical changes in the stone, the most significant exterior building alterations are those associated window and door openings. Nearly every window and door opening in the building has been impacted to some degree. Early photographs show the south façade with a symmetrical arrangement of doors and windows, each door opening centered between two windows. In a full restoration, the original rhythm of the facade would be re-established. Cost constraints may confine stabilization efforts to repair of critical existing conditions in which case the current non-original configuration would be maintained.

A handful of windows, although not in their original locations, may be authentic. These windows are severely deteriorated and replacement is recommended. Although few exterior windows and doors are likely original, most of the more recent windows are in reasonable condition and salvable for stabilization purposes. Sashes in these assemblies will be repaired and refurbished. Where replacement is necessary, components and assemblies will be provided to match existing newer windows for type and profile (not the original). Original components, wood frames and sills, will be retained and restored where possible. All openings will be provided with new storm windows to protect the primary windows and provide a tight weather seal.

The original roof has been replaced with modern cedar shingles. A moderate percentage of shingles are starting to warp and a small section of the roof adjacent to the west eave overhang has been damaged. Trim boards are warping and twisting exposing steel fasteners. The roof is approaching the end of its useful life and could be replaced. Although replacement is not critical at this time it may be worth considering as an alternate to selective repair. The built-up roofing system of the small flat roof and associated flashing, on the other hand, are completely deteriorated. There are signs of long term damage to interior finishes and structural framing members. Water infiltration through this roof is also causing significant damage to adjacent stonework. This portion of the roof will be replaced in its entirety.

As is the case with most historic buildings, certain significant architectural elements have been removed completely. Perhaps the most character-defining features for Building 22 were the original stairs and stoops along the south elevation. These would ideally be restored in concert with the original façade opening composition. Chimneys and stoves have also been removed. Today, the only chimney penetrating the roof is the central chimney currently used to vent the

boiler. Three other chimneys have either been cut back or removed completely. Restoration and reconstruction of missing architectural features are not part of the current scope of work for the stabilization of Building 22.

Modern alterations and/or additions that violate the historic character of the building should be removed. Demolition would include the 1980 addition (loading dock and mechanical/electrical equipment room for the existing Visitor Center) connected at the west end of the building and a concrete retaining wall to the north. In a full restoration all non-original interventions and alterations would be removed in an effort to restore the historic character of the building. For stabilization purposes, non-original concrete ramps, stoops, and stairs at the south and east side will be removed. Due to cost concerns and the limited scope of interior work, removal of the non-original wood framed exterior stair enclosure is recommended as an alternate.

Building 22 is currently in use and has functional mechanical and electrical systems. However, demolition of the 1980 addition will eliminate electrical service to the building. Because continued use of this building is likely, an electrical system upgrade is recommended. Replacement of the current boiler is not critical and can be delayed for the time being.

Cavalry Stable (Building 30)

Four red brick stables, each with a capacity to house 82 horses, were built for the cavalry in 1904. Of these, Building 30 is the only one that remains standing. Significant alterations have been made to the building over the years as changing functional requirements have transformed the building from a stable to a repair garage to its current use as a storage and maintenance shed. Current plans for the 1904 brick structure will provide for it's continued to function as a storage and grounds-keeping maintenance facility.

Structural framing has been significantly altered. Timber posts at the first level have been replaced with 6" steel columns and column arrangement no longer corresponds to the original 10'-0" bay spacing. Girders have also been replaced with steel sections although one original member survives. Loft clerestory cross bracing supporting the low roof has been removed on the south end. No corrective or restoration work is included for the interior at this time.

Aside from the structural modifications, the most significant building alterations are those associated window and door openings. Nearly every window and door opening in the building has been impacted to some degree. Installation and subsequent removal of overhead garage doors accounts for a majority of the first floor changes on the north, south and west walls. Clerestory windows are boarded up but are still mostly intact. Early photographs indicate paired louvers alternating with paired clerestory windows. It appears that all original louvers have been removed and likely discarded. Historic louver openings are currently covered over with composite slate shingles.

In order to restore the historic character of the building, restoration of original window and door openings on the north and south facades is recommended. Original windows at both the first level and clerestory will be restored. Where replacement is required, assemblies will match the original in type, profile, and materials. Remaining non-original windows will be repaired and

refurbished. All openings will be provided with new storm windows to protect the primary windows and provide a tight weather seal.

The brickwork, both inside and out, has been painted. An accurate estimation of mortar joint and brick condition is somewhat difficult but outlines of original openings are still visible and areas subjected to previous alterations, patching repairs, and joint re-pointing performed after application of the paint finish are obvious. Areas with cracked or open joints, missing joint material, and broken masonry units are also visible at most jamb/sill intersections and selective brick arch lintels at openings that were previously altered. Paint removal and brick cleaning is included in the stabilization effort. For estimating purposes a minimum of 40% re-pointing is assumed.

Many of the stone sills were removed when windows were moved. Currently only nine of the original pinkish sandstone sills remain, all other sills are of cast in place concrete which has also been painted. Paint removal will make this difference in materials obvious. In a full restoration the concrete sills would be replaced with a material to match the existing in profile, color, texture and material. Although historically incompatible, these elements are reasonably sound and will be retained for this stabilization effort.

The roof was recently replaced with simulated slate shingles and is in good condition. In addition, temporary heating will be installed to stabilize the structure and basic electrical lighting and power will be added to meet the functional requirements of the space.

Appendix D: Modifications to Frontier Fort Snelling

Two existing buildings within the walls of the Historic Fort will be modified to accommodate new educational programming, provide visitor amenities, and improve staff facilities.

Long Barracks

The Long Barracks will be rehabilitated to serve the educational and administrative needs of the new Visitor Center and the Historic Fort. New spaces will include several multipurpose rooms, staff offices, updated and expanded staff locker room facilities, handicap accessible public restrooms as well as updated mechanical and electrical systems.

Officer's Quarters

The Officer's Quarters will be rehabilitated to serve the educational and food service needs of the Historic Fort. The scope of the work will include electrical upgrades to an existing multipurpose room, a new catering kitchen and new mechanical/electrical systems.

Appendix E: Demolition of the Existing Visitor Center

The existing, underground Visitor Center, constructed in 1980, will be demolished and the hole filled to grade level. The Minnesota Historical Society has analyzed the current Visitor Center and found the facility to be underutilized, inefficient and inadequate in its handling of visitor needs related to shopping, food, rest areas and basic site entrance visibility. More importantly, the subterranean building has significant water damage and moisture infiltration issues for which there are no permanent remedies, only temporary and expensive measures.

Appendix F: New Visitor Center

The new Fort Snelling Visitor Center will provide attractions and conveniences to meet the expectations of today's visitors on a year round basis. These include programs and exhibitions on important topics such as Minnesota's role in the Frontier Era, the Civil War and World War II, as well as visitor conveniences including ample parking, improved way finding, and multiple gathering spaces.

To make this vision succeed, significant investment is needed in the physical resources of the site including improved visitor amenities on a creatively redesigned campus. The new 15,000 square foot Visitor Center, located on the bluff along the Mississippi River, will guide visitors directly into the site and efficiently handle vehicular traffic. New admissions counters will avoid long lines on busy days and new restrooms will ensure a comfortable visit. Better signage will help visitors find their way to the Visitor Center and the Historic Fort. An expanded gift shop will give opportunities to purchase mementos of their experience. Multipurpose spaces will accommodate several bus loads of school groups and a large reception area will be available for rent which will provide additional revenue for the Minnesota Historical Society.

A summary of the architectural program is as follows:

| | |
|---|------------------|
| Gallery and Exhibits | 2,700 SF |
| Exhibit Support | 100 SF |
| Visitor Services | 4,530 SF |
| Education | 700 SF |
| Administration | 700 SF |
| Facilities/Operations | 250 SF |
| Mechanical/Electrical Support | 1,800 SF |
| Inaccessible Spaces (wall thickness, structure, etc.) | 1,800 SF |
| Circulation | 2,431 SF |
| Total Gross Square Feet | 15,011 SF |

Building Design Approach

As Minnesota's first National Historic Landmark, Fort Snelling is one of the state's most significant historic sites. Situated on a limestone bluff high above the Mississippi and Minnesota Rivers, Fort Snelling is about the development of the Northwest and its significance as a military post and main outpost for transportation, protection and commerce in the northern United States.

The following priorities have been identified for the new Fort Snelling Visitor Center project. First, create a state-of-the-art Visitor Center that celebrates the history of Fort Snelling by finding the aesthetic, technical, and programmatic solutions that tell the stories that have yet to be told. Secondly, produce a cultural destination that preserves, stabilizes and honors the existing historic buildings with an emphasis on exterior historic patterning. Third, craft new

architectural and landscape connectors that convey the vitality of the 21st century and compliment the sublime beauty of the existing historic context. Lastly, fashion a sustainable Visitor Center that expresses functional and environmentally sound design principles with an emphasis on authentic, natural materials, and efficient, economical building systems.

Engaging architecture, with its ability to excite, captivate and stimulate, has always been used to draw visitors to cultural institutions including history museums. For the new Visitor Center, the architectural language employed will not only highlight and honor the distinctive qualities of the nearby historic buildings but also create a strong new identity for the complex. The river, the bluff, the legacy of the site and the landscape will shape the new Visitor Center and this vision in turn will rejuvenate Fort Snelling and the visitor's experience. The Historical Society believes it has an obligation to employ architectural design that will endure as a legacy for future generations in a place that celebrates the buildings of the past and their meaning for us today.

Imperative to the success of the new Historic Fort Snelling Visitor Center's plan will be the preservation of the existing structures adjacent to the Historic Fort. Specifically, the Cavalry Barracks (Buildings 17 and 18), Cavalry Stable (Building 30) and the Ordnance Building (Building 22) will be restored to their original exterior form and condition. In addition, the entire site will be reenergized by strengthening the physical programmatic relationships between the Historic Fort and the new Visitor Center. Ultimately, the site will be transformed into a multi-faceted experience with a wide variety of things to do and see.

The plan provides for a welcoming new entry sequence and a visible entry. Vehicular and pedestrian circulation will be reconfigured to bring clarity to the visitor arrival and take advantage of the expansive views of the natural bluff and river. Vehicles will be directed to the new front door where an ample drop-off area for cars and buses will be provided. Clear signage directing cars to the chapel parking lot will also be provided here. Visitor Center parking will be reconfigured for approximately 290 vehicles, including space for 8 to 10 buses.

One of the distinctive characteristics of the new Visitor Center will be the siting of the new building. Oriented east-west along the Mississippi River, the low horizontal building will take advantage of dramatic views along the bluff and reinforce the new pedestrian pathway along the river to the Historic Fort. The stand-alone location of the new Visitor Center will not impact any of the historic buildings, and the character-defining features of these buildings will be preserved and enhanced. The location of the new building reinforces the open space between Buildings 18 and 22 while maintaining unobstructed views of the west side of Building 18.

The massing of the new Visitor Center will consist of a long, one-story structure with sloping roofs that is consistent with many of the simple, rectangular-shaped buildings within the Historic Fort. The new building is small (15,000 SF) relative to the adjacent Cavalry Barracks (32,414 SF each), and is designed in a manner that makes clear what is historic and what is new. The form is broken up into several smaller-scaled elements along the river with canopies and overhangs that create depth and relief in the building mass.

The Visitor Center entry will be very visible and aligned with the vehicular drop-off area. The public lobby has views to the bluff and will provide orientation to the visitor with information, ticketing and convenient access to public restrooms and gift shop. The primary circulation path within the lobby runs parallel to the new river walk and leads visitors in the direction of the Historic Fort with a clear, direct view of the Fort's North Battery. The new gallery is flexible to allow for changing exhibits and multi-media displays. The multipurpose room serves as an education space for visiting students, a meeting space for staff or a rental space for corporate and community functions. The new building also complies with the required 40-foot setback from the bluff line and the maximum height requirement of 30 feet.

Building materials for the new Visitor Center will be compatible with the palette of materials, colors and textures of the existing historic buildings. Inspired by the bluffs along the Mississippi River, limestone is being considered for the primary exterior material. Large windows with clear, non-reflective glass will be used throughout the facility to create a warm, welcoming presence on the site and allow passersby to see activity inside the Visitor Center. Consideration is also being given to windows with low maintenance wood frames such as teak that will blend well with the existing materials of brick, stone and slate.

Appendix G: New Interpretive Plan

The overarching goal of the revitalization project is to broaden the interpretation at Historic Fort Snelling and Sibley historic sites. All of the physical changes, whether through new construction, rehabilitation or stabilization provide the framework; the attraction of new audiences, multiple voices and relevancy, and state of the art technology are appropriate objectives to meet this goal. Each site element will build upon the others, so that visitors will have a more fluid understanding of the built and landscape environments. The new visitor center will be the gateway to the historic site, preparing visitors for the myriad of experiences. Walkways and paths will connect to the river view shed. Historic structures from the early 20th and early 19th centuries will illustrate the evolution of military architecture and purpose. Interpretive components will not be only site-based, but will be available electronically as well as visitors move through the site. The new visitor center and rehabilitated barracks within the walls of the fort will allow an extension of the seasonal calendar, with school-age groups and life-long learners participating in classes, workshops, and special events.

The vision for this important historic site is expansive: to be the national leader in innovative collaborative historic site interpretive programming. In order to facilitate this vision, the following components are deemed essential.

- **Partnerships and collaborations** will be the hallmark of this site and will be characterized by a dynamic, community responsive program. Each new initiative will be developed in conjunction with a community partner, deepening, broadening, and strengthening those relationships. A partnership with Penumbra Theatre would help visitors gain an understanding of slavery in the early U.S. military and the nation-changing efforts of one such slave; canoe and camp within the walls of the fort with the Friends of the Mississippi River; and celebrate the Fete de la St. Jean-Baptiste with the Cedar Cultural Center.
- **New media and technology** will play a prominent role in the visitor experience, with pod-casting, interactive media, and access to greater information on collections, historic issues, and biographies interspersed throughout the campus. This is an essential element in reaching younger audiences and will be a basic expectation of all visitors in the future.
- A significant change in **live interpretation** will allow staff and visitors to explore more topics and themes of the period. First- person interpretation will be just one element of the interpretive program and will be mounted as vignettes of well-documented individuals, such as Mrs. Snelling, Henry Sibley, Lawrence Taliaffero, Grey Cloud Woman, or Julia Johnson.
- There will be **differentiated yet complementary programs** throughout the site that will encourage multiple visits. Visitors might come one day to learn about the pivotal role of Dakota women in the fur trade at the Sibley site and continue their experience at the fort where they empathize with the internment camp experience of Dakota women a few decades later. Visitors might experience the daily grind of the soldier at the fort and later

visit the Faribault house to see how the same soldiers relaxed over games of chance and liquor.

- **Signature programs**, such as WWII weekend, a re-creation of the first State Fair, youth and elder summer camps, or the Dakota march provide opportunities for a more in-depth experience for visitors and will focus media attention on partnerships and program. Historic Fort Snelling & Sibley site will be a national leader in the transmission of traditional European craft, such as blacksmithing and hearth baking, as well as in traditional crafts of American Indians and immigrant communities.
- **School programs** will encompass K-16 and provide leadership in immersive experiential learning. Classroom space within barracks will juxtapose state-of-the-art technology with hands-on learning to create a bridge between the past and the present. Whether a student is from Somalia, Sandstone, or Shakopee, she will find be able to make a personal connection to the site.

The comprehensive interpretive planning process is underway. Key stakeholders have been identified and their position relating to their power and interest has been plotted. Meetings with select individuals and organizations, ranging from natural resource organizations to school districts to new immigrant communities, are helping to validate the stakeholder list. The first meeting of the large stakeholder group is targeted for mid-September, with a final report ready by December.

While members of the African American and American Indian communities will be a part of the Comprehensive Interpretive Planning process, separate meetings will be held with each respective community to sort out the interpretive challenges of these difficult histories. Meetings with African American community members will discuss the neglected history of slavery at the fort and the appropriate interpretive techniques to use at the site. A deep interpretive exploration of American Indian history will take place over a longer time period than the larger CIP. Several initiatives are being considered to fully address the concerns of the Dakota community in particular. In addition to the historical issues, the recruitment and employment of members of these communities will be explored as part of the interpretive planning process.

Appendix H: Landscape Master Plan

To tell the important and varied stories of Fort Snelling and its river location, the National Historic Landmark needs a comprehensive master plan to accompany the new Visitor Center and associated Fort improvements. The master plan will (1) integrate the new Visitor Center and associated uses into the site, (2) implement a clear circulation system, (3) connect people to the river, the new Visitor Center and the Historic Fort, (4) create exterior gathering spaces, and (5) reflect Fort Snelling's multiple histories and landscapes.

The proposed site framework will ground the new Visitor Center through a plaza reaching north to the river and south to historic Tower Avenue. The plaza functions as the hub of the site, demarcating the Visitor Center as the fort's interpretive starting point. The plaza and Visitor Center emphasize connections to the river, the surrounding historic structures, and they encourage pedestrian exploration of Fort Snelling's complex site story.

Vehicular circulation begins with a redesigned entry drive creating an experience reflective of the Fort. It emphasizes clear and deliberate circulation, easily understood connections to the Visitor Center, the river and the Historic Fort, and to the Fort Snelling Chapel via a re-aligned Tower Avenue.

West of the Visitor Center the entry drive links the existing 'T' intersection with the Visitor Center plaza. Relating to Fort Snelling's military history, this loop entry drive features a large tree-lined green boulevard as one approaches the Visitor Center and the Historic Fort. Vehicles can loop into the generous plaza to drop off passengers at the new Visitor Center and then return west or south to one of two main parking lots. This entry loop and boulevard is a dominant physical marker establishing a clear vocabulary for the circulation system. Total parking with overflow accommodates approximately 290 vehicles including 8 to 10 school buses. Each parking lot is compact and divided into bays oriented towards the river with geometries distinctly different from structural remnants of the Historic Fort. Between each parking bay, oriented North/South, green bands infiltrate storm water in this system without curbs and gutters.

Similar to the vehicular circulation strategy, the pedestrian circulation system is a simple loop, focusing on movement north to the river from the parking lot, and East/West lateral movement connecting all site and structural elements. The pedestrian circulation system from parking lot to river and Visitor Center is simple and legible via a series of walks complete with site lighting and appropriate signage. A key feature of the pedestrian system is a promenade with a plaza adjacent to the river bluff. This walk stretches the length of the site offering river connections from the Historic Fort area west to Building 30.

The vegetative and site elements overlay quietly reflects the multiple layers of change Fort Snelling has experienced since the early 1800s. An integrated approach representing the pre-military history, military histories, the pre-settlement vegetation, and late 20th century development enhances the visitor's understanding of Fort Snelling's historic importance to the Upper Midwest.