

Cass Gilbert Society – 2016 Annual Meeting
Carondelet Village – December 11, 2016
Saint Paul, MN

State of the Cass Gilbert Society
Submitted by Ted Lentz, President – Cass Gilbert Society

From the Cass Gilbert Society By-Laws

ARTICLE I. GENERAL PURPOSE

Section 1. The purpose of the Cass Gilbert Society, Inc. shall be to promote, encourage, and study the works of Cass Gilbert, architect, and contemporaries, who designed edifices both within and without the State of Minnesota. The goal of the corporation will be to provide meetings, symposia, and other resource opportunities whereby interested persons or groups may become more knowledgeable about the design and work of Cass Gilbert.

Key events of the past year in support of the CGS General Purpose –

Capitol Furnishing Restoration Task Force - Carolyn Kompelien - Chair, John Yust, Linda Bjorklund, Marjorie Pearson and former CGS Board Member Carol Forbes. The proposal to research MN Capitol Furnishings designed or selected by Cass Gilbert removed since 1905 received funding through the State of MN Legacy Program. The full \$96,500 request was awarded in October. RFP's to retain consultants to develop and document this research will be released in December 2016. Substantial project completion scheduled for Jan 1, 2018.

This program will proceed with two major contracts – one for the research, recording and identification of furnishings and the second for the web based program to permit continued access to the records and information about the furnishings identified.

CGS Tour and Twin Cities Public Television

Twin Cities Public Television - TPT Tour – October 1, TPT – Tour for TPT members conducted by CGS on the afternoon of Oct 1. Twin Cities Public Television (TPT) created with CGS a new member award – a Cass Gilbert Homes tour on Oct 1 from 1 -3:30 PM. Two tour groups were formed: one led by Marjorie Pearson and a second led by Tom Blanck with assistance from John Yust and Ted Lentz. A total of 28 people, including three TPT representatives participated. Before the tour, Marjorie and Tom provided an introduction to Cass Gilbert in St. Paul at the University Club. A post-tour reception at the University Club allowed participants to ask follow up questions and continue the discussion. A 17 page tour guide and a special 11 x 17 inch key map was developed for this tour.

TPT's Almanac - Mary Lahammer of TPT Almanac continues to promote the work of Cass Gilbert in frequent presentations on the MN State Capitol Building. Mary Lahammer's commitment led Carolyn Kompelien to contact her and describe some of the projects underway with the Cass Gilbert Society.

TPT/ Almanac Projects included a program on Cass Gilbert's St. Paul Churches:

Virginia Street Church, Dayton Avenue Presbyterian, St. Clements, German Bethlehem Presbyterian; Cass Gilbert's Work on Restyling Summit Avenue; and Roselawn Cemetery buildings and details (bargeboard renovation and reinstallation).

As part of this work Ms. Lahammer's "Connections with Cass" was broadcast on TPT – Twin Cities Public Television on Sunday June 5, 2016 at 7:30 PM. Another version of "Connections with Cass" was joined with "Cass Gilbert: Standing the Test of Time" to create a new DVD, offered as a TPT membership premium and broadcast on August 23, 2016.

Presentations & Talks

The Minnesota Capitol – Preservation and Restoration – Ted Lentz talks and presentations

- **January 7, 2016 – University Club** – Cass Gilbert Society Lecture **Minnesota State Capitol Preservation, Renovation and Engagement** about the MN Capitol's architectural design, history, renovation, preservation and recent efforts for public programs for Art at the Capitol.
- **March 13, 2016 - House of Hope Presbyterian Church**, jointly with Paul Anderson, Assoc. Justice MN Supreme Court (retired) on the Preservation Program with an emphasis on the Art at the MN Capitol
- **November 15, 2016 - Roseville Rotary** breakfast on **Minnesota State Capitol Preservation, Renovation and Engagement** about the MN Capitol's architectural design, preservation and recent efforts for engaging the public in Art at the Capitol.

Oberlin College - Cass Gilbert at Oberlin – Ted Lentz led a walking tour

- **September 29** – review of four Cass Gilbert buildings, circa 1905-1927 that face Oberlin's Tappen Square. This tour served as prelude to Ted's presentation May 20, 2017 on the Cass Gilbert's buildings at Oberlin with an emphasis on the 100 year anniversary of Gilbert's Allen Memorial Art Museum.

"Connections with Cass" by Mary Lahammer, Twin Cities Public Television Almanac, presented excerpts from "Connections with Cass" and the Minnesota State Capitol to the Cass Gilbert Society at the University Club on Tuesday, April 5, 7 P.M.

Harvey Ellis and the Pillsbury Building, U of MN – John Guenther, FAIA –

- May 5, 2016 at the Mill City Museum the Cass Gilbert Society sponsored a presentation by John Guenther, FAIA, St. Louis on Harvey Ellis's Pillsbury Hall on the U of MN Campus. John Yust developed and coordinated the program to promote the retention and development of this work by one of Cass Gilbert's contemporaries. Pillsbury Hall, a historic and architecturally significant building from the 1880's will soon be transferred to the U of MN English department. John Guenther's talk helped promote the U of MN's request for renovation funding for this important building. The renovation proposal, included in the University of Minnesota's request for bonding funds, was well received at the legislature but was left unfunded when no bonding bill was passed by the conclusion of Session in May 2016.

The Cass Gilbert Room at the Minnesota State Capitol

Jean Velleu Chair with a committee including Cindy Stephani, Tom Blanck, Carolyn Kompelien and John Yust will develop a design plan for the Cass Gilbert Room at the MN State Capitol on the Third Floor East wing. – Herb Grika, Tom Blanck and Sheila Smith will be involved in discussions about the potential use of some of their collected Capitol artifacts. The collections of these three members of the CGS include – postcards, photos, books, pamphlets, silverware, plates, models, & more.

Matt Massman, Commissioner for Administration and Asst. Commissioner Erin Campbell met with Jean Velleu and Ted Lentz to ask for CGS support to develop the Cass Gilbert Room for the August 11-13, 2017, Grand Public Reopening of the Capitol building. They also wished to explore possibilities of having some artifacts in place by the January “soft” opening at the beginning of the Legislative session.

CGS Outreach and Community Service

The CGS Board approved \$150 for an ad that supported the Keeler Tavern Museum (Cass Gilbert’s Connecticut home) for its 50th Anniversary. Marjorie Pearson and Sonja Mason developed the ad and had it placed.

MN State Capitol Preservation Commission - Ted Lentz, Cass Gilbert Society President, an appointed member to the MN State Capitol Preservation Commission continues to represent the interests of the Cass Gilbert Society to keep the Minnesota Capitol a functioning, working asset to the community and to preserve this significant work of architecture.

Art at the Capitol – Subcommittee of the Capitol Preservation Commission

In 2015 Governor Dayton selected Ted to serve on the Commission’s Subcommittee on Art at the Capitol. The Subcommittee on Art at the Capitol met monthly in formal public meetings beginning in March 2015; it held eleven major public meetings throughout Minnesota and maintains a website to gather information and record the discussions. The Subcommittee’s questionnaire for the public meetings gathered over 3,000 individual responses when posted online. The Subcommittee on Art at the Capitol focused on existing art: including the murals and paintings original to the Capitol and the Governor Portraits.

In August 2016 the **Final Report by the Subcommittee on Capitol Art - to the Minnesota State Capitol Preservation Commission** was submitted and approved by the Capitol Preservation Commission. The ten page appendix to this sixty-seven page report include multiple reports and programs for new art at the Capitol during the coming year.

Capitol Re-opening Committee – Legislative Opening Jan 3, 2017 with Grand Public Opening – Friday August 11 through Sunday August 13. In 2016 Governor Dayton asked that Ted be appointed to the Re-Opening Committee

CGS Newsletter - Marjorie Pearson is recognized and applauded for her work maintaining the CGS Newsletter.

CGS Website – Continues to received substantial traffic. Summaries of the number of visits and visitors are available for those interested.

Factor of Four, CGS website designer and manager, contracted with CGS for the current upgrade required to be consistent with the guidelines for management and delivery of the Legacy grant. John Yust report emphasized the importance of accessibility of the site to visitors

2017 Next steps. Projects and events in the planning stages for 2017 include:

- A. **Lecture series** Jan and Feb lectures plus ideas for 2017 include
- a. Jan 24 The design and evolution of the Minnesota State Capitol Mall – Marjorie Pearson’s soon to be published article in *Minnesota History*, will provide the basis for the presentation.
 - b. February 28 – Peter O’Toole, author of the recent book on architect Edwin Lundie, a draftsman in Cass Gilbert’s office, will talk about Lundie’s architecture.
 - c. The CGS Board and members have suggested some programs for the coming year including
 1. Guastavino Tile at the MN Capitol – Janet Parks
 2. Mural Painting- late 19th Century Mural Art and the Murals of the MN State Capitol - Sally Webster
 3. Gilbert’s Furniture designs for the MN Capitol – scholarly research and presentation in elaboration of the CGS Furnishing program
 4. Marble and Stone at the MN State Capitol – Maybe a demonstration or discussion rather than scholarly
 - d. A discussion of the St. Paul Preservation Programs led by Tom Lutz for the MN Historical Society in the early 1970’s. Tom Lutz and Charles Nelson, both of MNHS, were major initiators of the successful preservation and restoration efforts in Irvine Park and on the Historic Hill areas in the early 1970’s. Tom Lutz has written a book on his later efforts with the National Trust in Chicago.
- B. **MN Capitol Re-Opening Jan 3 and August 11, 12, 13 2017.** The Cass Gilbert Society will take major responsibility for the public face of the Cass Gilbert Room and will help identify subjects and speakers in support of the MN Capitol Re-Opening. The State of Minnesota Department of Administration has expressed interest in programs and presentations that the CGS might recommend. The suggested list of lectures on Guastavino Tile, the MN Capitol Mall, furniture and others might find a supportive venue.
- C. **October 2017 Cass Gilbert Society Oberlin College Tour** - In recognition of the five Cass Gilbert designed buildings at Oberlin and 100th year anniversary in June of Gilbert’s Allen Memorial Art Museum, CGS is planning a tour to Oberlin, Ohio and possibly incorporate a visit to Cleveland.

End of Annual report.