



Preservation Matters in Independence

A Publication by the Independence Historic Preservation Division

Community Development Department

111 East Maple, Independence, MO 64050

Also available at: <http://www.independencemo.org/comdev/HistoricPreservation.aspx>

Winter 2008

Greetings from the Heritage Commission

Can we develop a City historic preservation program worthy of our rich heritage?

We are making progress, but frankly with few city resources to support this effort and a rather fragmented, though active, historic community we could do more.

City funding for historic preservation has been significantly reduced over the years despite having strong community support based on the City's Citizen Satisfaction Survey.

Endless staff time and substantial volunteer hours notwithstanding, efforts are thinly divided between many deserving projects and needs. As such, it is challenging to develop and sustain a broad-based historic preservation and heritage program.

Here is what needs should be focused on:

- **Expanding the National Historic Landmark District.** Expected to be approved in 2008, the expansion will

include both commercial and residential properties around the Independence Square. As a result, financial incentives, such as tax credits will be available. This has truly been years in the works.

- **Supporting the Independence Square Courthouse Renovation project.** As planned, the retaining walls around the historic courthouse will come down and the original 1933 property boundaries re-established. This will provide more on-street parking and also eliminate water retention which has been harmful to the courthouse foundation. With years in the making, this is the time to do something.

- **Focusing attention on historic resources in addition to Truman-related sites.** Two things come to mind: Completing

work on the Old Mill Office (near the National Frontier Trails Center and the Chicago & Alton Depot) and doing more with our rather substantial Civil War history. We will soon see a new Civil War brochure and secure funding for historic signage within the battlefield sites.

- **Creating additional local historic districts** (that our community has only one is a shame, given our rich history in comparison to other local communities) which would require new surveys. Potential historic districts include Benton, Fairmount, Procter, and Golden Acres neighborhoods or business districts.

In 2008, our goals should be to preserve, protect and interpret what few communities have or can offer - our wonderful past.

-Brent Schondelmeyer, Chair

National Park Service (NPS) Restores the George Wallace Garage

Adjacent to the Truman Home are three historic structures that are all a part of the Gates-Wallace-Truman family story. One of those structures is the George Wallace garage which lies behind the George Wallace home at 605 W. Truman Road.

As the years have passed, the garage has fallen into some disrepair. A structural assessment of the garage was performed in October 2004 by the Quinn Evans Architecture firm and Fitzpatrick Structural Engineering, P.C. both out of Ann Arbor, Michigan.

The George Wallace garage is a small, one-story frame structure constructed about the same time as the George Wallace House (c.1916).

The original foundation used neither stone nor brick, instead it featured railroad ties placed at ground level in a horse shoe configuration. Over time the railroad ties deteriorated and weakened which caused the building to

become uneven and out of plumb. This resulted in imbalanced pressure to the structure's frame, thus creating wood fractures.

In order to repair the foundation and the portion of the damaged framing, the entire structure was removed in one piece from the foundation by constructing a large wood support skeleton frame and placing it onto a heavy duty trailer. This option was exercised in lieu of marking each board and taking the garage apart and having then to reconstruct it.

Once the railroad ties were removed and the ground dirt base of the garage was leveled, a concrete block footer was installed three feet below ground. "J" bolts were placed in the foundation wall so that the sole plate could be anchored. Nails were used to attach the foundation and garage frame together. The ground level dirt floor was then covered with three inches of pea size gravel to maintain the integrity of the original floor material.

Damaged wood framing and exterior wall panel siding were replaced on

approximately 5% of the structure. Salvageable wood framing was treated with Wes System Epoxy while still affixed to the structure. To complete the project, the exterior was repainted, and the building was set back onto the new foundation.

The garage rehabilitation work was performed by NPS Maintenance Staff that included: Facility Management Specialist, Alan Dinehart, Woodcrafter, Lewis McKarnin, and Maintenance Worker (IPM), Mark Jamieson. The project started in June of 2007 and was accomplished in phases over a six month period.

For further information about this project, please contact Alan Dinehart at (816)833-4528.

-Larry Villalva
NPS Truman Home
Superintendent



Constructed c. 1916, George Wallace Garage Restoration in progress.