



CASS GILBERT SOCIETY

Organized to preserve the work of Minnesota's most important architect.

JOIN THE CASS GILBERT SOCIETY FOR A FALL TOUR

On Saturday, **October 13, 2012**, members and friends of the Cass Gilbert Society and friends will enjoy a walking tour of the work of Gilbert and his contemporaries in St. Paul's Ramsey Hill neighborhood. Gilbert began his career in St. Paul by designing for his mother Elizabeth the house that still stands at 471 Ashland Avenue. Buildings by Gilbert in Ramsey Hill range in date from 1883 to 1898. The tour will also look at works of colleagues and contemporaries that extend into the 1920s.

When Gilbert returned to St. Paul, after studying at MIT, traveling in Europe, and working for McKim, Mead & White in New York, he was able to apply his knowledge and experience to his independent career. While he employed popular architectural styles of the late nineteenth century, such as the Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, and Romanesque Revival, he often employed elements of more than one style in a single building, and he developed characteristics details that provide clues to his design authorship. Among them are window designs, column and capital details, and unexpected combinations of materials. One aspect of the tour will be to focus on such details as well as to tell the stories behind the buildings.

Participants will also tour the interior of the first floor of an early (1890) Gilbert house at 839 Osceola Avenue. In addition to rehabilitating the kitchen and downstairs bathroom, the current owners completely restored the exterior including architectural details, which had been covered with steel siding,

The tour will begin at Overlook Park on Summit Avenue and Ramsey Street, east of the University Club, by the Eagle, starting between 1:30 P.M. and 2:00 P.M. Groups will be led by Tom Blanck, Marjorie Pearson, Ted Lenz, and John Yust. At the conclusion of the tour, participants are invited to a reception at the Summit Avenue home of Carolyn Nayematsu and Vincent Platt.

Tour admission is \$15 (cash or check). For reservations and further information, call Carolyn at 651-699-7407.



Detail of the entrance of the W.H. Lightner House, 318 Summit Avenue. Built 1893. Photo: Sonja Mason

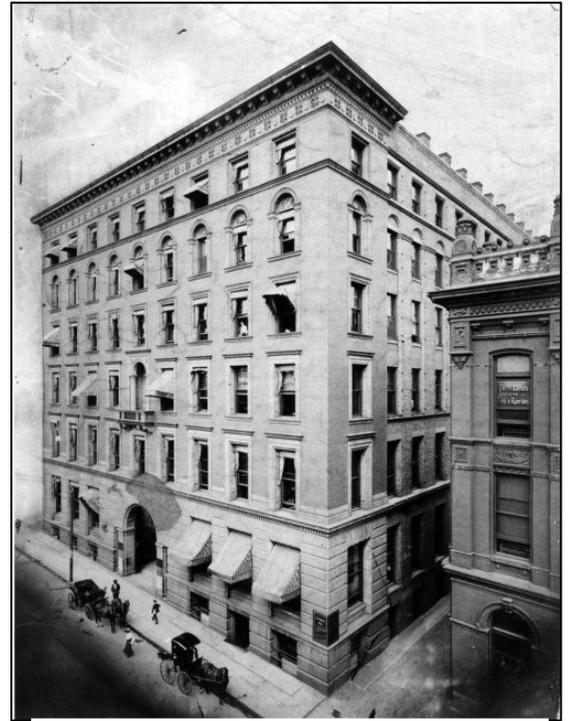


Crawford Livingston House, 339 Summit Avenue. Built 1898. Photo: Tom Blanck

NEW LIFE FOR THE ENDICOTT BUILDING

The Endicott Building, located on Robert Street and East Fourth Street in downtown St. Paul, is Cass Gilbert's first major office building, constructed in 1889-1890. Designed in an Italian Renaissance style, it was inspired by the Villard Houses (1882-1885) in New York City, a major work of McKim, Mead & White, begun when Gilbert was still in their office.

The Minnesota Museum of Art, which has been without a permanent home since January 2009, will open gallery space on the first floor of the building. The upper stories are to be redeveloped as residential units. In July 2012, the museum received a National Endowment for the Arts Our Town grant which will enable it to plan the expansion of the museum in the building. The museum's collection encompasses some 4,000 pieces of art from 1900 to the present and includes Minnesota artists from the late nineteenth century to the present. Among the artists is sculptor Paul Manship (1885-1966) whose sculpture, *Indian Hunter and His Dog*, can be seen in Cochran Park on the October 13 tour.



Endicott Building on East 4th Street.
Photo: Minnesota Historical Society

MINNESOTA STATE CAPITOL PRESERVATION UPDATE

The Minnesota State Capitol Preservation Commission has been continuing its work through the year. Cass Gilbert Society President Ted Lentz was appointed by Governor Mark Dayton to serve on the Commission. With the bonding bill provision of \$44 million approved by the legislature and signed by the governor, a down payment has been made toward preserving the historic Minnesota State Capitol. This is a unique project—the single largest preservation project the state has undertaken, the need for which has been documented for years.

In January, the Capitol Preservation Commission unanimously approved a comprehensive restoration plan estimated at \$241,000,000. The project is designed to be completed in phases and includes repairs to the deteriorating facade and modernization of the mechanical, electrical, plumbing, life-safety, security and telecommunication systems. This work will be accomplished while preserving the architectural integrity of the historic Capitol building in keeping with Cass Gilbert's original design.

The State Department of Administration issued RFPs to choose a construction management team and a project design team. The Minneapolis firm of HGA was selected as the lead architectural firm to develop plans and specifications for comprehensive restoration. Preservation work continued on the Capitol building this summer, including replacement of the drum windows in the dome, and repairs to the west plaza and steps. In addition, construction of a tunnel underneath University Avenue also began this summer in coordination with the construction of the Central Corridor Light Rail Transit project in the area north of the Capitol Building.

Recent workshop sessions have reaffirmed the guiding principles of the Preservation Commission:

- It is essential to respect the architectural integrity of the Cass Gilbert design.
- It is essential to improve the functional relationships of the spaces for the legislature, executive and judicial branches of government.
- It is essential to provide for accessibility, life safety, and to mitigate security vulnerabilities.

To follow the work of the Preservation Commission see: <http://www.admin.state.mn.us/recs/capitol/capbldg.html>

CELEBRATING 100 YEARS OF THE WOOLWORTH BUILDING

April 24, 2013, will mark the one hundredth anniversary of the Woolworth Building since President Woodrow Wilson pressed a button in the White House to signal the lighting of the building during a celebratory dinner. The Woolworth Building is Cass Gilbert's best-known tall building and one of the most famous skyscrapers in the United States. When it was completed in 1913, it was the tallest building in the world and a potent symbol of the F. W. Woolworth Company. The 60-story tower with its terra-cotta cladding and neo-Gothic ornament helped to transform the skyline of New York. The Woolworth Building was the last major skyscraper constructed in New York before World War II. Its romantic tower form helped to establish the prototype for a group of skyscrapers built in the 1930s.

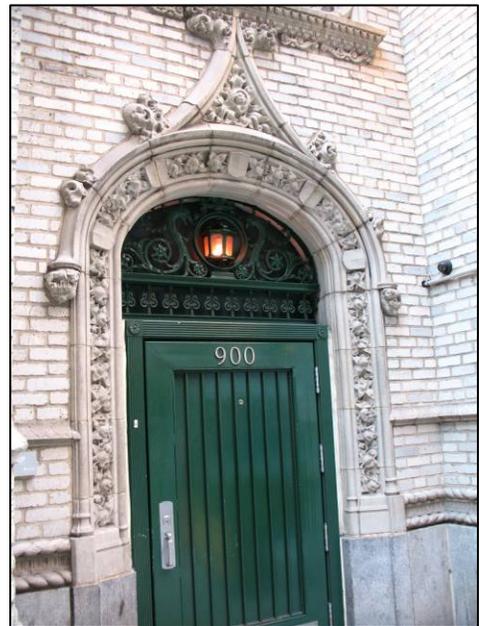
The building remained the headquarters of the Woolworth Company until the company went out of business. It was subsequently sold to a New York real estate development group that intended to convert part of it to a residential condominium. Due to economic conditions, this did not happen. The top 30 floors were sold in July 2012 to Alchemy Properties which intends to carry out the condominium plan. Most of the building has remained in use as offices.

In addition to its height, the Woolworth Building is known for its terra-cotta Gothic detail. This was not Gilbert's first essay in the Gothic. He had employed Gothic detail several years earlier in the nearby West Street Building (1905-1907). In 1916-1917, Gilbert employed Gothic detail in the Rodin Studios on West 57th Street, a residential artists' studio building, the only one of the type that Gilbert designed. The New York Life Company Building (1925-1928) near Madison Square also uses Gothic detail.

The Cass Gilbert Society looks forward to participating in scholarly and celebratory activities that are planned for New York next year in conjunction with the 100th anniversary.



On a ceiling corbel in the lobby, Cass Gilbert holds a model of the Woolworth Building. Photo: Tom Blanck



Gothic detail at side entrance to the Rodin Studios, 900 Seventh Avenue. Photo: Marjorie Pearson

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Our Mission

To preserve our cultural heritage through advancing scholarship in and appreciation of Cass Gilbert's influence on American architecture.

The Cass Gilbert Society, Inc., is a non-profit tax-exempt organization under Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code. All contributions are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

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October 2012

JOIN OR RENEW YOUR SUPPORT FOR 2012/2013

See the CGS website for a membership form. Our records are maintained on a calendar year basis, with the expiration date noted on your address label. We encourage you to provide your email address if you have one. It will only be used to send out announcements between the publication dates of the Newsletters.

You can show your support at various levels and any contributions above the basic level are much appreciated. Your support ensures that you will receive our quarterly Newsletter via U.S. mail, free admission to lectures, reduced fees for local tours, and eligibility to participate in regional tours. Your contributions are the major source of funding for operating expenses for our all-volunteer organization.

You may also donate online through GiveMN.org. Click on "Donate" and enter Cass Gilbert Society in the search box.