



NEW HISTORY

WINDEGO PARK AUDITORIUM

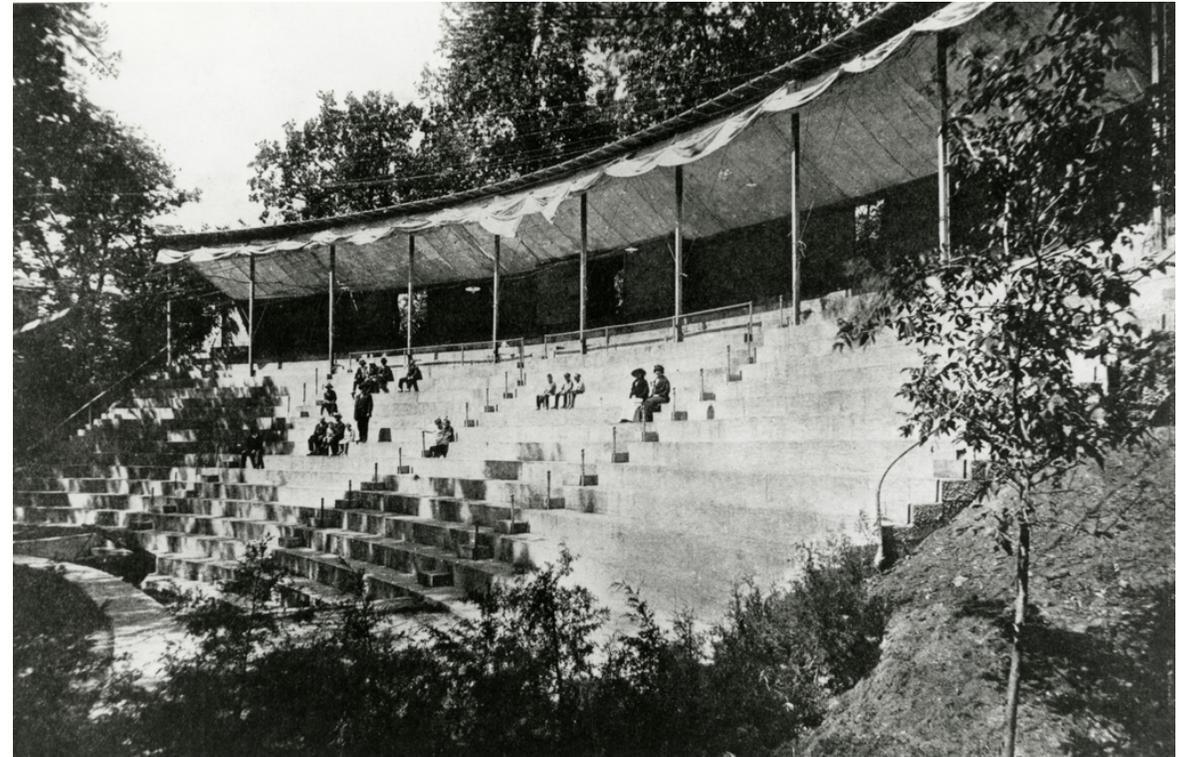
February 23, 2021

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# INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

In November of 2020, the City of Anoka hired New History to evaluate the continued National Register of Historic Places eligibility of the Windego Park Auditorium. The Windego Park Auditorium was listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) in February of 1980 and is considered historically significant for its design and its role as a community-gathering place.

In order to complete this evaluation, New History conducted a site visit to assess current conditions on November 25, 2020. Archival research was completed through online repositories, including the Minnesota Historical Society Gale Family Library, the Minnesota Historical Society State Archives, the Hennepin County Library James K. Hosmer Special Collections, the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office, and the University of Minnesota.



## WHAT IS THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES (NRHP)?



The National Register of Historic Places is the official list of the Nation's historic places worthy of preservation. Authorized by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the National Park Service's National Register of Historic Places is part of a national program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect America's historic and archeological resources.

# WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR A PROPERTY TO BE LISTED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES (NRHP)?

## What does NRHP listing do?

- Protects properties from federally and state funded, licensed, or sponsored projects that may impact the property.
- Positions owners of historic properties to apply for federal grants-in-aid for preservation activities that meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.
- Positions non-profit and municipal owners of historic properties to apply for state and private foundation grant programs for preservation activities that meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.

## What does NRHP listing NOT do?

- Restrict what a property owner can do with their property. An owner can alter, develop, sell, or demolish a property that is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. However, alteration or demolition can result in the removal of the property from the National Register, which would eliminate access to many historic preservation-focused financial tools.
- Stop federal, state, or local projects from taking place on an historic site.
- Guarantee grant awards.

# WHAT MAKES A PROPERTY ELIGIBLE FOR THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES?

## HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

The property must be at least 50 years of age and meet one of the National Register criteria:

- A. Associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history
- B. Associated with the lives of significant persons
- C. Embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction; or that represent the work of a master; or that possess high artistic value
- D. Have yielded or may be likely to yield information important in history or prehistory

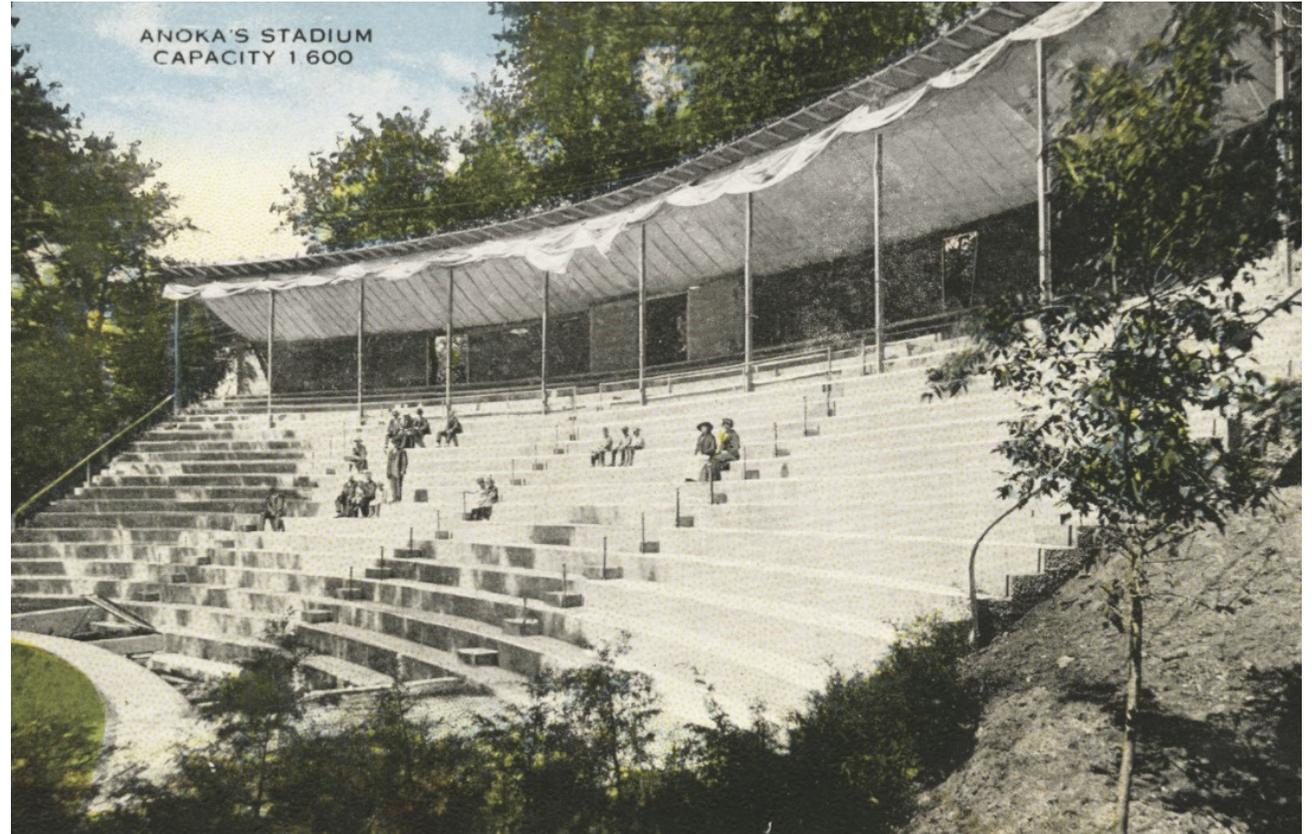
## HISTORIC INTEGRITY

The property must exhibit historic “integrity,” which is the ability of a property to reflect the time period for which it is significant. There are seven aspects of integrity:

- 1. Location
- 2. Setting
- 3. Design
- 4. Materials
- 5. Workmanship
- 6. Feeling
- 7. Association

## PRIMARY RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Should the property have been listed in 1980?
2. Does the property remain eligible for listing today?



# RESEARCH FINDINGS

- The auditorium is historically significant as a community gathering space and as a unique example of Purcell & Elmslie's work
- The auditorium also reflects the teaching philosophies of Thaddeus Giddings
- The Windego Park Auditorium was listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) in February of 1980 and is considered historically significant for its design and its role as a community-gathering place. At the time of the property's designation, a number of key features of the original auditorium had been removed, including:
  - The canvas awning system
  - The ticket booth
  - Light fixtures and railings
  - Dressing rooms
  - A sense of the location of the stage

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## OUTDOOR THEATER

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The following suggestions as to the design of outdoor theaters are condensed from the author's work on this subject.\*

*Size:* Generally speaking the outdoor theater ought to be large or small, one or the other. The football stadium has to be large enough to accommodate thousands of visitors; a theater for pageants must also be made on a large scale. But for small plays, for music and for public speaking the outdoor theater may easily be too large. For these latter requirements it should be as small,

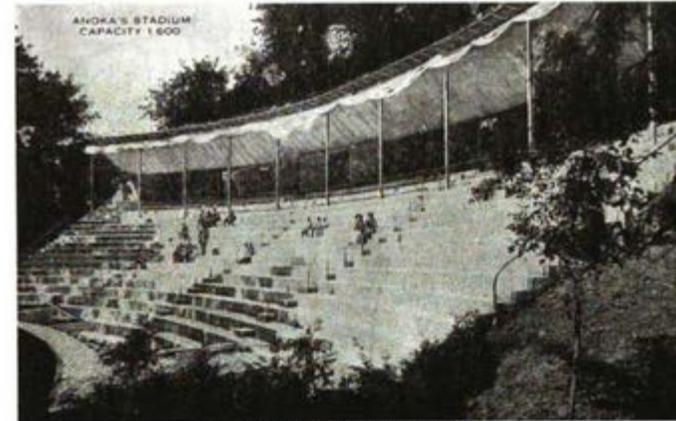


FIG. 86. OUTDOOR THEATER AT ANOKA, MINN.

compact and intimate as possible. Rarely should it be designed to seat more than 500. If 200 auditors are well cared for it will be even better.

*Enclosure:* Every outdoor theater ought to be fully enclosed, preferably by trees and shrubs or by hedges of greenery. Boundaries of dressed and painted lumber or of stucco or brick can be made attractive if well designed and especially if well covered with vines.

\* Waugh, "Outdoor Theaters," Boston, 1917.

"Outdoor Theater" featured in a 1922 textbook on Landscape Design

# SEVEN ASPECTS OF INTEGRITY



1. Location
2. Setting
3. Design

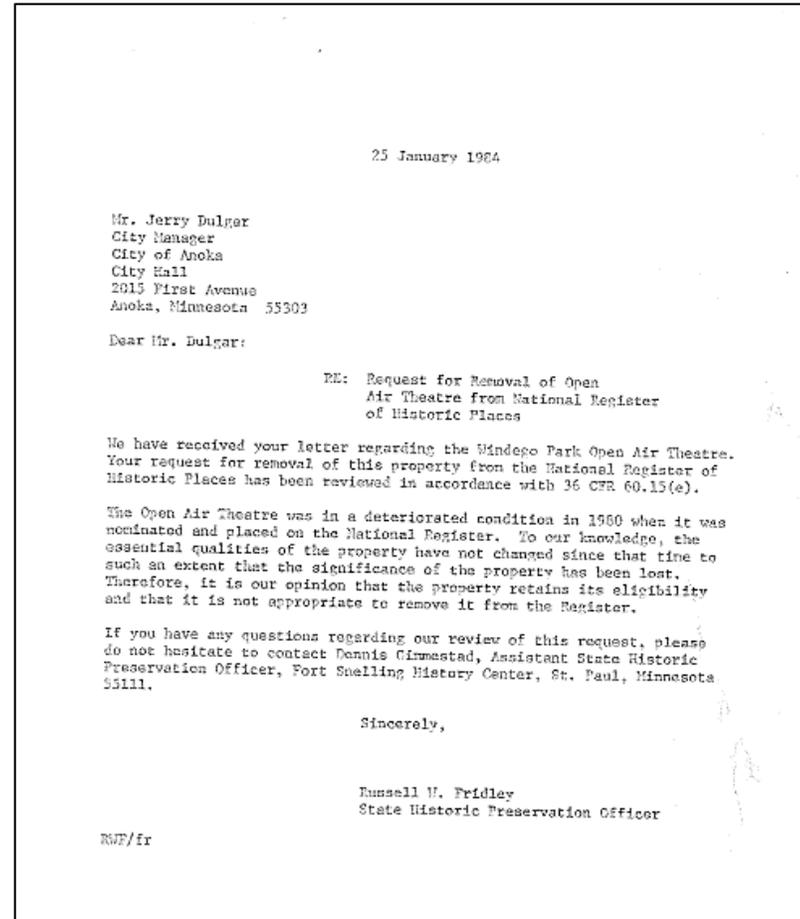
4. Materials
5. Workmanship

6. Feeling
7. Association

## SHOULD THE PROPERTY HAVE BEEN LISTED IN 1980?

The 1980 nomination does not hide integrity problems but deals with them straight-on, noting that many features had been removed from the site.

The SHPO reaffirmed listing in 1984, stating that “The Open Air Theater was in a deteriorated condition on 1980 when it was nominated and placed on the National Register...”



## DOES THE PROPERTY REMAIN ELIGIBLE TODAY?

1a: "The property has ceased to meet the criteria for listing in the National Register because the qualities which caused it to be originally listed have been lost or destroyed, or such qualities were lost subsequent to nomination and prior to listing." Between 1980 and the present, the property has not experienced loss of qualities that caused it to be originally listed (more deterioration, but same integrity of setting, materials, design, etc.).

The Windego Park Auditorium remains eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

# QUESTIONS?

