



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.indepncemo.org/comdev/HistoricPreservation.aspx>

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Winter 2011

Greetings from the Independence Heritage Commission

While most of nature is enjoying a winter's nap, the rest of us are busy considering our accomplishments from the last year while looking optimistically at the year ahead. The following is a summary of on-site visits and high points from 2010's Independence Heritage Commission.

Site visits are a key component to the continued training of the Heritage Commission. In February 2010, the National Parks Service, one of the community's treasured heritage partners, gave members of the Heritage Commission a behind-the-scenes tour of the Truman home as it underwent interior repairs and structural and aesthetic updates (read more below). Wallpaper restoration, plaster repair, fire suppression upgrades, and a new HVAC system were all part of this extensive renovation.

In May, the Heritage Commission traveled to the Vaile Mansion where local residents were treated to an open house by the Vaile Victorian Board. The evening included a presentation by plaster and mural restoration experts who recently repaired water-damaged ceilings in the Vaile Mansion's dining room and Mrs. Vaile's bedroom (see photo, above right).

In December, the Bingham-Waggoner hosted the annual Heritage Commission holiday gathering. The event is hosted by a different city-owned historic site each year. The Bingham house and grounds



Cracked plaster in the dining room at the Vaile Mansion.

were in full holiday regalia and the Commissioners thoroughly enjoyed a chance to speak with members of all of the city's historic sites.

In looking back at this past year, what is most impressive is the consistent dedication of the City's volunteers and staff at all the City's historic sites. The Heritage Commission considers them all proud partners in educating the public about the history of Independence and Jackson County.

In 2011, the Commission encourages public participation and feedback at all meetings and events. For more information and Commission schedules, go to: <http://www.indepncemo.org/comdev/HistoricPreservation.aspx> or call Wendy Shay, Preservation Manager at 816.325.7419.

*-Jeffery Shawhan
Chair, Independence Heritage Commission*



Design Guidelines Public Meeting

Join the Independence Heritage Commission on **Wednesday, February 9, 2011** for their second public meeting to review the proposed revisions to the Truman Heritage Design Guidelines. The meeting will be held from **6-8p.m. on the first floor of City Hall, 111 E. Maple**. Enter on the north side of the building. *All members of the public are welcome!*

Truman Home Undergoes Upgrades and Improvements

In 1995, an in-depth investigation of the ceilings, walls, and interior finishes of the Harry S Truman Home was conducted by Quinn Evans Architects of Ann Arbor, MI. The report revealed that many of the home's walls and ceilings showed signs of damage due to age, overstressed structural systems, and moisture problems. Paint finishes and wallpaper also sustained wrinkles, tears, peels, and stains, especially in areas where the underlying plaster was damaged. Areas with split or torn wallpaper were identified as a potential source for dust and grit infiltration, as well as an access point for insects and gaseous pollutants. However, some of the plaster distress was also attributed to normal cracking and settling of a 100-year-old home.

Since 1995, the Park Service has been gradually mitigating these documented problems as funding becomes available through repair and rehabilitation of the plaster ceilings and walls, while also repairing the secondary damage to the

historic wallpaper. This repair work was accelerated in 2008 when the site received special funding from the federal government through a program called "Centennial Flexible Funds."

With this funding in place, first-priority repairs were to the damaged plaster which was falling off the wood lathe. Park managers opted for utilizing adhesives to mitigate damage. Work began in the dining room and kitchen. The process started with the removal of wall and ceiling papers. Repair and stabilization of ceiling plaster was completed primarily in-house by park maintenance staff.

Paper conservation and plaster repair also required close coordination with installation of a new HVAC and fire sprinkler systems, also funded as part of this project.

Other plaster stabilization activities included: removal of historic wood flooring over ceilings that required repair, removal/repair of bulging plaster, re-securing ceilings from the underside up, repair of wall bulges and cracks to stabilize surfaces for re-installation of wallpaper, and re-painting ceilings to match historic color and appearance.

Upon completion, all treatments were documented and recorded as part of the site's conservation history. The most recent work occurred between October 2009 and May 2010. This stage of the project completed two-thirds of the plaster repair needed. It also preserved an important historic building, and elevated its condition rating by the Park Service from fair to good. This work provided for the home's long-term preservation, and ensured the ability of the Park Service to protect the site in perpetuity.

*-Larry Villalva, Superintendent,
Truman National Historic Site*