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MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Fort Snelling Historical Center St. Paul, MN. 55101 612/726-1171

3 January 1985

Mr. Fred Grimm
c/o Developmental Disability Council
State Planning Agency
Capitol Square Building
550 Cedar Street
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101

Dear Mr. Grimm:

Barb Goodwin of your office has requested information regarding the historical significance of buildings located on the state hospital campuses.

As you know, our office is currently completing a survey of state-owned buildings to evaluate their historic significance and to encourage preservation of the most important structures.

The only state hospital building currently listed on the National Register of Historic Places is the School for the Feeble Minded Hospital Building (aka Oaks Building) at Faribault. Our preliminary findings would indicate that other buildings which should receive the highest priority for preservation would be the Main Building (including attached and detached wings) and the Nurses Dormitory at Fergus Falls, Old Main at St. Peter, and all the original buildings remaining at Willmar. In addition, further research needs to be done on the original buildings at Ah-Gwah-Ching Nursing Home to clarify its historical significance. Once the survey report is completed, we will be establishing a process for consideration of these buildings for nomination to the National Register.

The National Register is a listing of significant buildings, districts, sites, structures, and objects of significance in the areas of architecture, history, archaeology, engineering and culture. The Register is maintained by the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, and is administered in each state by a State Historic Preservation Office such as ours. All federally funded or licensed actions are subject to the provisions of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and the procedures of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (36CFR800). This process requires that our office review all federal actions to ascertain if there are any properties on the National Register or eligible for the National Register in the area of the project. If so, the process is designed to assure that the federal agency makes efforts to avoid adverse impacts to those properties. Therefore, should a federal agency have some involvement in proposed changes on state hospital campuses, those changes would be reviewed by our office.

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If changes are proposed in which there is no federal involvement, listing on the National Register does not impose any requirement for review. However, inappropriate changes could result in the removal of the property from the Register. Of course, we welcome the opportunity to review such changes on a voluntary basis to help assure that the integrity of historically significant properties is maintained.

If properties receive a preservation grant in aid through the Minnesota Historical Society Grant Program, certain obligations may be assumed by the recipient in terms of the future of the property.

I should add that if properties are added to the State Registry (Minnesota Statutes Chapter 138), Section 138.60 requires that the state obtain approval before altering these properties. However, we are currently considering revisions to the State Registry and are not seeking to add properties to this listing. We do hope to work with each individual agency after completion of the report to explore potential means of assuring the preservation of listed and eligible structures.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at the Minnesota Historical Society, Fort Snelling History Center, St. Paul, Minnesota 55111, phone, 726-1171.

Sincerely,

Dennis Gimmestad
Assistant State Historic Preservation
Officer

DAG/fr

cc: Barb Goodwin
c/o Developmental Disability Council
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