

SAINT PAUL HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION
SITE NOMINATION FORM

I NAME

HISTORIC: Merchants National Bank Building
COMMON: McColl Building

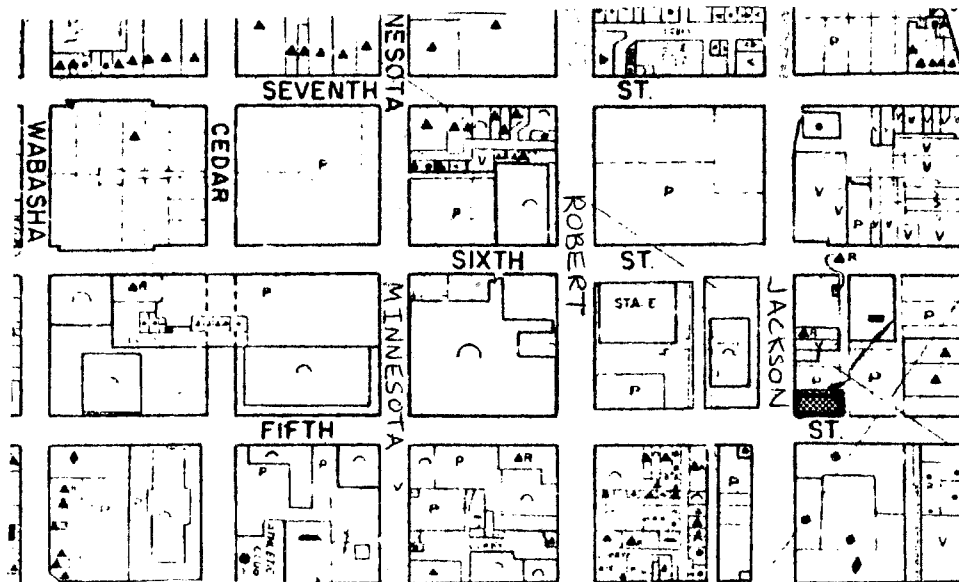
II LOCATION

ADDRESS: 366-368 Jackson Street
LEGAL DESCRIPTION: (on file)

III PRESENT OWNER

NAME: Connolly & Heffernan
ADDRESS: 310 McColl Building

IV LAND USE LOCATION MAP



V FORM PREPARED BY

NAME/TITLE: Carol Ekstrum, Intern; David Wieberg, Ed.
ADDRESS: 421 Wabasha, St. Paul
SUPERVISOR: Donna McNeally
DATE: 4-13-78

VI DOCUMENTATION ON FILE

- A HISTORIC SITE EVALUATION FORM
- B BUILDING PERMIT(S)
- C SLIDES/PHOTOGRAPHS OF STRUCTURE
- D ADDITIONAL DESCRIPTIVE MATERIAL (LIST) National Register Nomination form
- E OTHER (LIST) Newspaper clippings

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VII NARRATIVE: HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE OF SITE

The McColl Building, built in 1892, is a four story Romanesque style commercial structure located in St. Paul's Lower town district. Designed by noted St. Paul architect E. P. Bassford, the building features elaborate architectural detailing on its West and South facades, where the use of contrasting colors and textures in stone--rock-faced red sandstone blocks, smooth, polished granite columns, and delicately carved sandstone--gives the exterior a highly ornate, somewhat quaint appearance.

The bays of the building are defined by ornamental turrets which extend from just below the level of the second floor to the top of the roof parapet. Windows of the first and second stories are aligned vertically under arches, and carved panels mark the level of the second floor. Above the third story windows are carved lintels, while the fourth story windows are arched. All the windows are flanked by polished granite columns with carved capitals.

The McColl Building is important historically for a number of reasons. It was originally built to house the Merchants National Bank, a pioneer financial institution in St. Paul (which was absorbed in a merger with First National in 1929), and was the scene of transactions which had significant impact on local development and development of the entire region during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Among those associated with the bank were Amherst H. Wilder, financier, and William R. Merriam, governor of Minnesota from 1889 to 1893. In addition, a number of nationally prominent legal and political figures once had their law offices in the McColl Building, including Cushman K. Davis (governor, U. S. Senator), Cordenio Severance (American Bar Association president), Frank B. Kellogg (U.S. Senator, Ambassador, Secretary of State, World Court Justice), William Mitchell (U.S. Attorney General), and Pierce Butler (U.S. Supreme Court). The McColl Building was also the home of the St. Paul College of Law in the early 1900's.

The McColl Building today shows all the signs of prosperity, but in 1968 it was virtually derelict, and in 1967 was threatened with demolition by the City of St. Paul to make way for a proposed widening of Jackson Street. Fortunately concerned citizens and public officials succeeded in rallying support for saving the building, and plans for demolition were scrapped. The building was extensively restored in 1967-1969. Since 1969 it has been well-maintained, and continued use and preservation of the building seem to be assured.