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# MINNESOTA PUBLIC RADIO TOWER PROJECT

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CULTURAL RESOURCE EVALUATIONS OF

## DAN PATCH RACE TRACK SITE MINNESOTA MASONIC HOME

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April, 1995

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APRIL 1995

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## PROJECT BACKGROUND

Minnesota Public Radio has applied to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) for permission to build three radio broadcast towers for station KNOW AM 1330. The proposed towers would be erected on one of two sites located in the northwest quarter of Section 31, Township 27 North, Range 24 West in Scott County, Minnesota, near the city of Savage. Because the project requires an FCC license, it is subject to review under the provisions of Section 106 of the Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended.

As a first step toward meeting the Section 106 requirements, Hess, Roise and Company of Minneapolis was retained to conduct a windshield cultural resource survey of above ground properties located within a one-mile radius of the proposed tower site. Boundaries of the study area were delineated on a map provided by Minnesota Public Radio's environmental consultant, Andrew Golfis, of System G in St. Paul. A copy of the map and a memorandum explaining how the survey boundaries were determined are included as appendices to this report.

The purpose of the windshield survey was to identify properties that might be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The field work for the survey was completed on 27 December 1994, and the report was submitted to the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) in early January. Hess Roise identified eight properties within the survey area that appeared to exhibit National Register potential. Another property, the Dan Patch Race Track site, was noted, but not recommended for further study because it included no standing structures. A copy of the windshield survey report is included as an appendix to this report.

After reviewing the results of the windshield survey, the Minnesota SHPO requested further evaluation of two sites: The Dan Patch Race Track Site, located on the river flats north of Savage; and the Minnesota Masonic Home, located on the bluffs overlooking the Minnesota River Valley near the southern edge of Bloomington. SHPO compliance officer Dennis Gimmestad summarized the agency's reasons for selecting these two properties in a letter dated 28 February 1995:

The Dan Patch Race Track is located at the construction site. . . . Because the effects of the project are most clear at this site, and because the track has not been fully evaluated as a site, we would recommend further study.

It appears that the viewshed from the Minnesota Masonic Home may have been a consideration in the selection of the location for the facility, and since this viewshed may be altered as a result of the project, the property should be evaluated for potential historic significance. The water tower should be included in the evaluation.

In that same letter Gimmestad noted that "it does not appear that the proposed project would affect any of the other identified sites" within the original survey area. If these sites were not likely to be affected by the project, he added, "no further evaluation should be necessary." (Letter from Dennis Gimmestad, Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office, St. Paul, to Andrew Golfis, System G, dated 28 February 1995.)

In order to comply with SHPO's request, System G retained Hess, Roise and Company to investigate the history, architecture, and current condition of the Minnesota Masonic Home and the Dan Patch Race Track Site to determine if either property is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The evaluations were completed by senior research historian John Lauber with considerable assistance from research historian Cynthia de Miranda. Charlene K. Roise was principal investigator for the project.

### **REVIEW OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA**

The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 authorized the U.S. Secretary of the Interior to maintain a National Register of Historic Places, including properties that are significant in American history, architecture, engineering and culture. To be eligible for listing in the National Register, a property must possess both historic significance and physical integrity.

#### **Significance**

To be considered significant, a property must meet one or more of the established National Register Criteria:

**Criterion A:** The property must be associated with historic events, activities, broad patterns of history.

**Criterion B:** The property must be associated with the life of an important person.

**Criterion C:** The property must reflect distinctive design or physical characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction; or be the work of a master; or express high artistic values.

**Criterion D:** The property must exhibit potential to provide important information about prehistory or history.

Above-ground properties typically achieve National Register significance by meeting one or more of the first three criteria. Criterion D is usually applied to archaeological sites. Properties can achieve significance on a local, state or national level. A property may be eligible for listing in the National Register as an individual resource or as a contributing element within a historic district.

#### **Integrity**

In order to be eligible for listing in the National Register, a significant property must also exhibit a high degree of physical integrity — retaining features of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association that reflect its historic character.

#### **Scope of This Study**

Hess, Roise and Company was retained to evaluate the potential National Register eligibility of the Minnesota Masonic Home and the Dan Patch Race track under Criteria A, B, and C.

## **METHODOLOGY**

During January and February 1995, Hess Roise research historian Cynthia de Miranda conducted extensive research into both properties at a number of local repositories, including the Minnesota Historical Society Library in St. Paul, the Hennepin History Museum in Minneapolis, the Northwest Architectural Archives in St. Paul, and the University of Minnesota Libraries in Minneapolis. She examined a large assortment of materials including aerial photographs, county atlases, news clippings, magazine articles, promotional literature from M.W. Savage's livestock food company, and annual reports from the Minnesota Masonic Home.

Senior research historian John Lauber conducted additional research on both properties in March, examining institutional records at the Minnesota Masonic Home as well as a variety of materials at the University of Minnesota Libraries. Lauber also visited the Masonic Home on 8 March 1995, documenting the buildings and grounds with photographs and field notes.

## **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

The Dan Patch Race Track and the Minnesota Masonic Home both have interesting histories. During the course of our investigations, however, it became apparent that the physical integrity of both sites has been seriously compromised. The original buildings at the Dan Patch Race Track Site were demolished many years ago, and significant portions of the tracks themselves have been plowed under, dug up, or turned into train yards. The original buildings at the Minnesota Masonic Home have been nearly hidden behind a series of recent additions, and the original site plan has been significantly altered. We therefore conclude that neither property is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A, B, or C. These findings are discussed in greater detail in the sections that follow.

## **Property Evaluations**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Both properties evaluated in this study were originally developed during the early years of the twentieth century by Marion W. Savage, an energetic businessman whose penchant for promotional activities led contemporaries to describe him as "the second P.T. Barnum." Born in Ohio in 1859, Savage spent his childhood years in southeastern Iowa. He moved to Minneapolis in 1886, and quickly amassed a fortune as a purveyor of livestock food. During the 1890s, Savage began to assemble a stable of race horses, partially to satisfy his own interests, and partially to serve as a highly visible advertising vehicle for his stock food business. The most famous horse in Savage's stable was the legendary Dan Patch, whose time of 1:55.25 for a measured mile, set in 1905, remained a world record for more than three decades. (Letter from Larry Evans, Public Relations Director for the United States Trotting Association to Karen Tuma, 13 December 1956. Included in "The Dan Patch Story: A Workbook Outline," compiled by Pam Albinson, Minnesota Masonic Home, 1994[?]. Collection of the Minnesota Masonic Home, Bloomington.)

In 1902, Savage purchased approximately 750 acres of land straddling the Minnesota River, near the present-day city of Savage. The tract included portions of northern Scott and southern Hennepin Counties. Savage began to develop this property about 1903 building a farm complex and race track on the south side of the river. In 1906 he erected a luxurious summer home on the north side of the river near Bloomington. From his mansion high on the river bluffs, Savage could oversee the activities taking place on his farm in the valley below.

## **Dan Patch Race Track Site**

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### **DESCRIPTION OF THE ORIGINAL COMPLEX**

The Savage Horse Farm occupied a large tract of land bounded by the Minnesota River on the north, present-day Highway 13 on the south, Vernon Avenue on the West and the Credit River bed on the east. When Savage purchased the property, the only structure on the site was "a straw covered shelter for animals." (Ken McCarr, "The Taj Mahal of Stock Farms," The Harness Horse. 14 December 1966: 8.) By 1907, he had transformed the site into a magnificent breeding farm and training facility for thoroughbred race horses.

### **Stable**

The most impressive feature of the farm complex was a sprawling, wood-frame stable that provided luxurious accommodations for 130 horses. Located near the southeast corner of the property, the structure was planned to resemble a rimless half-wheel, with its main axis paralleling present-day Highway 13. The stable consisted of a hublike, octagonal central block with five spokelike wings radiating outward on the north, east and west sides. The central block was approximately 90 feet across and 100 feet high. It was capped with a hipped roof and an enormous, silver-painted onion dome containing a water tank. Each of the five wings was approximately 160 feet long, and terminated in a two-story stall with a rectangular plan and a hipped roof. Projecting from the south

side of the central block was a two-story entrance pavilion with an onion-domed tower at each corner. The pavilion contained offices and dormitories for the trainers. (Descriptions of the facilities at the Savage horse farm are derived primarily from two articles by Ken McCarr, a horse-racing journalist who grew up on the farm. See "The Taj Mahal of Stock Farms," cited above, and "A Taste of Ashes: The Fall of a Fabulous Farm," The Horseman and Fair World (June 1960). Both articles are included in the Dan Patch file at the Hennepin History Museum in Minneapolis.)

### **Outdoor Track**

Located on the bottomlands to the north of the stable was an oval horse-racing track one mile long. Oriented along a north/northwest-south/southeast axis, the track extended from the stable almost all the way to the Minnesota River. Designed by nationally known track builder Seth Griffith, the oval was formed of packed dirt, covered with a layer of sod "bricks," which were intended to give the course a lively and fast running surface.

### **Enclosed Track**

In 1907, Savage hired Griffith to design a half-mile indoor track where the horses could be trained in comfort during the winter months. Linked to the west wing of the horse barn by a covered passageway, the 30-foot-wide track was protected by a wood-frame enclosure. The enclosure was heated with steam and lighted by 1400 windows. Built of packed dirt, the track had banked curves, and was covered with a mixture of tanbark and salt to keep the running surface from freezing during cold weather. According to one authority, this track was "the only covered regulation two-lap oval" ever built. (McCarr, "A Taste of Ashes," Horseman and Fair World (June 1960): 22.)

### **Associated Structures**

#### Brood Mare Barn

A barn for brood mares stood to the north and west of the stables, with its main axis running from north to south. An early photo of the structure depicts a long, narrow, one-story, wood-frame building with a rectangular plan and a moderately pitched gabled roof. The brood mare barn was about the length of one of the wings on the big barn. It contained a double row of stalls with an aisle down the center. (McCarr, "The Taj Mahal of Stock Farms," The Harness Horse (14 December 1966): 8, 10.)

#### Residences

Two two-story houses were built for trainers "at the point where the brook turned and headed for the river." (McCarr, "Ashes," 21) Although it is difficult to determine the precise location of the houses from this description, there is a bend in the brook [Credit River] near the southeast corner of the one-mile track.

Journalist Ken McCarr, who spent a part of his childhood on the farm, has recalled that there was also a separate residence for the farm's blacksmith. McCarr gives no exact location for this structure, noting only that it was located "further away" from the stable than the other residences, and that it stood near a pond. (McCarr, "Ashes," 20.)

#### Ice House

A small ice house stood behind the trainers' houses.

### Blacksmith Shop

A freestanding blacksmith shop stood on the north side of the stable, nestled between two of the wings.

### Heating Plant

A freestanding heating plant stood on the north side of the stable, where it was tucked out of sight between two of the wings. Boilers in this structure provided hot water to heat the stable and indoor track, and steam to heat the trainers\* quarters.

## **CHANGES**

Dan Patch and M.W. Savage died a day apart in mid-July 1916. The main bam was partially destroyed by fire the following year. At about the same time, FJ. Arnoldy of Savage was hired to demolish most of the half-mile track enclosure, which had already begun to deteriorate. The small sections of the enclosure left standing were subsequently converted into barns. ("Last Traces of Dan Patch Race Track to Be Erased," Minneapolis Tribune, 20 March 1938.)

In 1918, the Savage family sold the land to Mr. and Mrs. James R. Stewart. In 1928, the Stewarts leased the farm to a group of Minneapolis investors, who built a quarter-mile race track and a wood-frame grandstand inside the perimeter of the former covered track, and began to hold dog races on the site. A month later, state officials put an end to the races, charging that the investors were running an illegal gambling operation. Two later attempts to conduct dog races on the site (1930 and 1935) were also squelched by state authorities.

On 20 March 1938, the Minneapolis Tribune reported that "the last traces of the race track on which the famous pacer, Dan Patch, made turf history will be plowed under and the remaining buildings of what was once one of the show places of Minnesota will be removed." The demolition contract was awarded to Arnoldy, who was given sixty days "to clear all buildings, fences and piers still remaining from the old Savage buildings, . . . [and] to clear the grandstand built. . . when the place was used . . . for dog races." ("Last Traces," Minneapolis Tribune, 20 March 1938.1

Ken McCarr, a well-known horse-racing journalist who spent his childhood years on the original Savage Farm, revisited the site in 1960:

The old gravel road which once led to the big barn, now just allows a car to get off of the highway before being stopped by a gate. Here was a sad sight. A disconsolate cow wandered near one end of a red dairy barn about at the spot where the mammoth rotunda was once located. A beat up tractor stood near the other end of the stable . . . . A freight yard cut across the area where the covered half mile track had been located. The palatial white house on the bluff was gone. Only the old spring was left. (McCarr, "Ashes," 20.)

## **EXISTING CONDITIONS**

### **Standing Structures**

Aerial photos and topographical maps prepared in the early 1990s show that none of the original structures remain standing on the Dan Patch farm/track site. Hess Roise historian John Lauber examined the site from both Highway 13 and Vemon Avenue as part of a windshield survey conducted in December 1994. No standing structures were visible from either location at that time.

### Main Track

The area containing the race course and infield of the one-mile track has been under continuous cultivation since the late 1930s, making it unlikely that any trace of the track's original sod surface remains intact. Faint ground scars remain visible on recent aerial photos, making it possible to trace portions of the track's original perimeter. Between 1957 and 1964, a drainage canal was excavated along the eastern edge of the property running north-south between the Minnesota River and Highway 13. A long section of this canal cuts through what was once a long straightaway on the east side of the race track. A thickly vegetated berm/windbreak/fenceline crosses the former infield area at the mid-point, running from east to west.

### Covered Track/Dog Track

Virtually no traces of the covered horse-racing track are discernible in recent aerial photographs. The outlines of the dog track are clearly marked by vegetation patterns. Aerial photos show that the curve in the railroad right-of-way near the southwest corner of the covered track site was altered between 1940 and 1951. The new alignment cut directly across the path of the original covered track. Additional railroad track was laid in this area between 1951 and 1957. Between 1957 and 1964, a small building was erected in the southwest corner of the track site. A new parking area and access road were built in this area during the same period.

### **CONCLUSION**

The Dan Patch Race Track site has a fascinating history. If the property had remained intact, it would have been eligible under Criterion B for its association with Marion W. Savage, and under Criterion C as a rare and possibly unique example of an indoor race track, and as an unusual example of high-style barn architecture. However, none of the original structures from the original farm complex remain standing, and the site itself has been highly disrupted. The property utterly lacks integrity and is therefore not eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A, B, or C.



# Minnesota Masonic Home

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## **BACKGROUND**

The Minnesota Masonic Home is a residential care facility located east of Normandale Boulevard near the southern edge of Bloomington. Buildings at the home are distributed across an expanse of wooded lawn on the bluffs overlooking the Minnesota River Valley.

In 1906, the Masonic Lodges of Minnesota formed a non-profit corporation to build and maintain a state Masonic Home. In 1918, following a statewide search for a location, the organization acquired 271 acres of land from the estate of Marion W. Savage, and began to make plans to build a care facility on the site. The only structure standing on the land at that time was "Valley View," the mansion that had been Savage's summer hideaway.

The first residents entered the Minnesota Masonic Home in 1920, moving into temporary quarters in the former Savage mansion. The same year, the Home's board of directors authorized the Building Committee to proceed with plans for a permanent facility.

## **DESCRIPTION OF THE ORIGINAL FACILITIES**

The Minnesota Masonic Home was originally comprised of two distinct components: a residential complex located near the river bluffs on the east side of Normandale Boulevard, and a farm complex which was located on the west side.

### **The Farm Complex**

The farm complex was built between 1920 and 1924, and included a superintendent's residence, a dormitory, a stock barn, a hog house, a creamery, an ice house, a pump house, and a paint shop. A 100,000-gallon steel water tower was added to the complex in 1929.

The Masonic Home ceased operating the farm in 1952. The land and buildings were leased to various tenants until 1970. In 1973, the Masonic Home sold the farm buildings and associated cropland to private interests, and the site was subsequently redeveloped as a residential subdivision. The only remnant of the original farmstead remaining on the site today is the steel water tower. This structure stands on a knoll near the head of River Bluff Circle, and is completely surrounded by new construction.

### **The Residential Complex**

Construction of the residential complex began in 1924. The first buildings erected in this area were a large dormitory (Guest Lodge), a kitchen/dining hall, and a heating plant. Designed by the Minneapolis architectural firm of Bertrand and Chamberlain, the one- and two-story structures were built in the popular Collegiate Gothic Style, with steeply pitched parapet gabled roofs, a proliferation of dormers, and extensive carved and molded stone detailing. The variegated brown brick, Kasota stone and red terra cotta tile used in construction were manufactured or quarried in Minnesota. The original buildings were arrayed along a gracefully curving road (Masonic Home Drive) flanked by carefully planned lawns and wooded areas. The landscape plan was developed with assistance from Theodore Wirth, a prominent member of the Minneapolis Park Board. The new facilities were dedicated and opened for use in 1927. (Much of the information included in this section is taken from a concise developmental history of the facilities at the Minnesota Masonic Home, prepared by the institution's official historian. See Charles Nelson, "Masonic Home Historic Dates and Events,"

TMs, 1994. Collection of the Minnesota Masonic Home, Bloomington.)

In 1940, a new 52-bed infirmary was added to the original complex. Located on Masonic Home Drive between the kitchen/dining hall and the heating plant, the new 2 1/2-story structure was similar in style, massing and materials to the original buildings. Lang and Raugland of Minneapolis were architects for that project.

### **CHANGES, 1949-1971**

The Masonic Home stopped using the Savage mansion in 1949, due to the difficulty of bringing the structure into compliance with fire and building codes. The building was demolished in 1950. During the next two decades a number of additions were made to the campus. The most important additions are briefly described below, and are indicated on the site plan attached to this report.

#### Administrator's Residence. 1953

The administrator's residence stands on the river bluffs south of Masonic Home Drive. It is a 1 1/2-story dwelling with an irregular plan and a cascade of steeply pitched gabled roofs. Built of variegated brown brick and clapboards with Kasota stone detailing, the structure fits in well with buildings in the original complex.

#### Heating Plant Remodelling. 1954

The heating plant/laundry building was remodelled into a staff dormitory in 1954. A shed dormer may have been added to the structure at that time.

#### Chapel. 1958

The chapel stands near the southeast corner of the Guest Lodge. This building is similar in style, massing and materials to buildings in the original complex.

#### Building B. 1958

In 1958, a two-story building was erected to connect the original kitchen/dining hall and the 1940 infirmary building. The new structure, dubbed "Building B," is similar in style, massing and materials to buildings in the original complex.

#### Care Center. 1967-71

Originally constructed as a freestanding building located northeast of the original Guest Lodge, the Care Center is a three-story, brick building with parapet walls and a flat roof. It stands out as a significant departure from the prevailing Collegiate Gothic Style structures elsewhere on campus.

### **PREVIOUS EVALUATIONS**

The Masonic Home was identified as a potentially significant site during surveys conducted by the State Historic Preservation Office in the late 1970s and early 1980s. In a memorandum included in SHPO files from this period, state historical architect Charles Nelson observed that although a number of additional structures had been added to the complex and the farmstead was no longer active,

[T]he Home complex is important as a representation of the board and care philosophy of prominent organizations and fraternities during the early twentieth century. The structures . . . survive in a good state of integrity and are good. . . examples of the work of Bertrand and Chamberlain. The present condition of the grounds are in keeping with the Wirth plan. The home continues to function in its original purpose and is exceptionally well maintained. (Charles W. Nelson, "Minnesota Masonic Home," undated memorandum included in the

Minnesota Masonic Home file at the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office, St. Paul.)

In 1982, Susan Blachman of Barton-Aschman Associates, Minneapolis, completed a National Register nomination form for the Masonic Home in conjunction with a proposed road construction project. In her brief study, Blachman concluded that the Home was eligible for listing in the National Register. The State Historic Preservation Office agreed, stating that "the Minnesota Masonic Home essentially meets[s] the National Register Criteria." In 1983, however, the keeper of the National Register requested additional documentation before concurring with SHPO's determination. That documentation was apparently never provided, and the Masonic Home's National Register status remained uncertain as Hess, Roise and Company began the current evaluation. (Susan Blachman, "National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination Form," 13 January 1982. SHPO's opinion is included in a letter from Dennis Gimmestad (SHPO) to Vern Genzlinger of the Hennepin County Department of Transportation, 25 May 1982. MHS Referral File Number N676, L542. The request for additional documentation may be found in "E.O. 11593 Determination of Eligibility Notification," memorandum signed by Linda McClelland for the Keeper of the National Register, 23 September 1983. All included in the Minnesota Masonic Home file at SHPO.)

### **EXISTING CONDITIONS**

In 1993-94, the Minnesota Masonic Home completed an extensive building program that significantly altered the historic character of the institution's buildings and grounds. Major changes included:

—Construction of "Unity Center," a 120-bed extended care facility located in the southeast corner of the complex. Unity Center is an immense 2 1/2-story brick building, consisting of a central service core with four radial wings. It is tied to the 1927 Guest Lodge and the 1967 Care Center by a series of enclosed passageways appended to the outer walls of the older buildings.

—Construction of the "Town Square" addition. Town Square is an enclosed one- and two-story atrium/mall which is attached to the north side of the 1927 Guest Lodge.

—Addition of a one-story, three-bay, brown brick service garage to the southeast corner of the 1927 Heating Plant. Construction of the "Cluster Homes," a series of house-like independent living facilities located on the north end of the campus near the intersection of Normandale Boulevard and Masonic Home Drive. Built of frame construction with moderately pitched hipped roofs, these one-story residential units stand out in sharp contrast to the multi-story, brown brick, Collegiate Gothic Style structures that predominate elsewhere on campus.

—As part of the building program, parking facilities in both the west and southeast parts of the campus were significantly expanded, and the roadway system was extended, reconfigured, and repaved. Portions of the campus were extensively regraded and several new retaining walls were installed along the roadways. (Information regarding the 1993-94 building program was included on a site plan prepared by Arvid Elness Architects in 1993. See "Additions and Renovations, Minnesota Masonic Home Care Center, Sheet 2-3, Site Grading, Roads and Parking," 24 March 1993. Collection of the Minnesota Masonic Home, Bloomington. Additional information was obtained by John Lauber during a field inspection of the Masonic Home facilities on 8 March 1995.)

## **CONCLUSION**

In her 1982 National Register nomination, Susan Blachman determined that the Minnesota Masonic Home had historic significance under National Register Criterion A "as a representation of the board and care philosophy of prominent organizations and fraternities during the early twentieth century." She also determined that the facility had architectural significance under Criterion C as "a good work example of the prominent Minneapolis architectural firm of Bertrand and Chamberlain." She determined that the facility had additional significance under Criterion C as a good example of the work of landscape architect Theodore Wirth. (Blachman, "National Register of Historic Places Nomination," 1982, SHPO.) As a result of the recent facilities expansion program at the Masonic Home, however, the institution's original buildings are now enveloped and dwarfed by the new construction. The institution has been transformed from a collection of distinctive small buildings into a sprawling, modern health care complex. The original site plan has been greatly altered. These changes have seriously compromised the Masonic Home's integrity. Consequently, the institution is not eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A, B, or C.

The steel water tower was evaluated for potential historical significance under Criterion A, for its association with an important institution in the history of Minnesota. The tank, however, was merely one element of the Masonic Home farmstead that was built during the 1920s. The other structures from the the farmstead have all been demolished, the cropland has been sold, and the property has been redeveloped as a residential subdivision. Today the water tower is completely surrounded by suburban houses. The integrity of the setting has been seriously compromised, and the tank is therefore no longer eligible under Criterion A.

The tower was also evaluated under Criterion C for potential significance as an engineering structure. According to SHPO historian Susan Roth, however, the Masonic Home water tower is of a type commonly found in Minnesota. It has no significance under Criterion C.

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