

Whitney Plaza Archaeology, Preservation, and Design Services

Minneapolis Riverfront



In the 1800s and early 1900s, the Mississippi River in Minneapolis was an industrial center of sawmills, grain elevators, and flourmills all powered by St. Anthony Falls. This rich history has long been preserved and interpreted along the riverfront as an important part of the city's heritage. In recent years, redevelopment has generated renewed interest in the area's history and its interpretation for the general public. The 106 Group has had a central role in preservation, archaeology, and interpretive planning along the Minneapolis riverfront.

The 106 Group assisted developers with planning for the redevelopment of the Standard Mill, also known as the Whitney Hotel. In the 1980s, the mill was converted to a hotel; more recently developers wanted to once again redevelop the site for residential condominiums. The historic building is a contributing property to a National Register of Historic Places district.



Our work in compiling a history of the physical condition of the building and identifying its character-defining features contributed to an understanding of how the building changed over time, thereby informing the redesign process. The 106 Group helped the architect and developer create a design plan that would have the best chance of being considered appropriate by the Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) and meet the needs for conversion to condominiums. We worked with the architect and developer to present the project to the HPC. In addition, prior to construction of the plaza, our archaeologists excavated the historic Dakota, Standard, and King Midas mills to document these important mill sites prior to destruction.

Our third responsibility was to research, write, and design interpretive signage for the Whitney Plaza. The signs tell the story of the industrial riverfront and the Standard Mill and help residents and visitors alike to understand the legacy of the land on which they live, work, and play.

