

# Sites Worth Saving

## MINNESOTA'S 10 MOST ENDANGERED HISTORIC PLACES 2011



Preservation Alliance of Minnesota ❖ [www.mnpreservation.org](http://www.mnpreservation.org)

Porky's Drive-In Restaurant was gone before the Preservation Alliance of Minnesota could formally announce its place on the 10 Most Endangered Historic Places list for 2011. The iconic pig-in-a-top-hat neon sign, for more than fifty years a beacon of burgers along University Avenue, went dark on Sunday, April 3rd. Equipment and furnishings were auctioned off the following day, and the drive-in canopy and restaurant shell were purchased and transported to a rural setting near Hastings, where they are slated to become part of a private collection of relocated historic buildings. The big smiling pig sign is said to be in storage, perhaps someday to be resurrected next to a food booth at the state fairgrounds.



Porky's opened in 1953 and quickly became a popular spot for curbside dining and hot-rod car culture. It will be particularly missed by the Minnesota Street Rod Association, which encouraged the Twin Cities to "embrace, rather than erase Porky's." In the short week leading up to Porky's final day, PAM tried to encourage the owners, local elected officials, and other interested parties to explore alternatives to demolition, including relocation to another site where its important relationship to the urban car culture would be retained. Obviously, PAM's efforts were not successful.

The demise of Porky's raises troubling questions about the future of other historic sites along the Central Corridor Light Rail Transit (LRT) line. Architectural surveys carried out during LRT planning stages determined that Porky's and nearly two dozen other properties were individually eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. This federal process is supposed to ensure that impacts on historic properties are carefully considered. Unfortunately, Porky's fate was determined in a rash decision by private owners that did not include a thorough exploration of alternatives or any opportunity for public consultation. Porky's is gone, but other sites along the St. Paul LRT corridor are still at risk.

### Action Steps

1. Urge the Met Council to expedite nomination of other eligible properties along the Central Corridor to the National Register of Historic Places.
2. Ask the city of St. Paul to create a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program to ease development pressures on lower-scaled historic properties. TDRs should be studied and implemented before the LRT corridor is rezoned to allow for greater development density.
3. Demand compliance with the review, planning, and public comment provisions required by Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act to prevent additional "anticipatory demolitions" along the LRT route.

ST. PAUL



## PORKY'S DRIVE-IN



PRESERVE PROTECT PROMOTE