

Context 2 – Chaska Brick

Time Span –1857-1950

“A Love Affair with Brick”

It is impossible to consider the city’s history without a discussion of Chaska brick. Though certainly other Minnesota cities held some brickyards (including Moorhead, St. Cloud, Minneapolis, and nearby Carver), none were as closely identified with the industry. Brickmaking defines Chaska in the same way that granite does St. Cloud, tourism does Brainerd, or beer does Milwaukee. It is indeed the central identifying historic context for the community.

For such a crucial industry, some aspects remain remarkably vague. For example, we don’t even know exactly when the term “Chaska brick” was coined. An 1894 edition of the *Chaska Herald* refers to a farmer “hauling Chaska brick for his new home,” but it is likely the term became popular far earlier than that.

The main considerations of a Chaska brick context are clear:

The factors that led to Chaska’ brickmaking dominance:

- essential natural resources, including a vein of high quality clay as well as timber to fire kilns
- viable transportation sources, including the river and later the railroad
- available labor, particularly German and Scandinavian immigrants familiar with brickmaking and construction

The effects of the industry:

- economic impact – in the development of the town
- social impact – in who settled the area and who worked with the brick, as well as Chaska’s identification with the material
- physical environment, both in the use of Chaska brick as the dominant construction material and in the clayholes (which have now filled in and serve as small lakes) that dot the town

Brickyard Beginnings

The location of the Chaska settlement led directly to its success in the brickmaking industry. The townsite was established on top of a very rich and deep alluvial clay deposit, formed as part of massive glacial melting around 10,000 B.C. The deposits in Chaska consisted of a layer of yellow clay over a layer of blue clay, both rich in sandy deposits and in finely ground silica, which gives the slight sparkle to the brick. The vein was

very accessible, and it was deeper than most — considered inexhaustible during the late 1800s — though in actuality it ran 20-45 feet deep.

The second major natural influence to affect the brickmaking industry was the “Big Woods,” described as:

“A dense hardwood forest, a real wilderness, containing many trees two and three feet in diameter — red and white oak, maple, basswood, elm and ash, together with the smaller varieties such as ironwood, poplar, white birch, butternut, hickory and hackberry.” (*The History of Victoria Parish*)

With that copious supply of deciduous hardwood, brickyards were guaranteed fuel for the kilns. In many cases farmers, who were felling the trees to clear their land, would trade the wood for brick, since brick farmhouses, barns, and even outbuildings were considered of higher status than frame structures. Wood was also purchased from middlemen, and some brickyards would even employ their workers during the off-season to cut wood.



Early photograph of laborers at a Chaska brickyard

By most accounts, it was Lucius Howe who pioneered Chaska’s brickmaking industry in 1857. A transplant from Vermont, he provided the bricks for mason Lyman W. Noble to build John Humple’s Chaska home. Howe represented the third major factor in Chaska’s brickmaking success — its human resources. Most of the area was settled by German or Scandinavian immigrants (over three-quarters of the county’s foreign-born population), often relocating from the east coast, many of whom had experience with brick.

Howe soon had competition, both from commercial brickyards and from the fabrication of cruder, homemade bricks made on-site, particularly at rural farmsteads. His main competitor was J.W. Gregg, though by the mid-1860s, there were four major Chaska brickyards, running continuously from April to November. The yards employed up to 100 men in a town of 1,255. River barges allowed the bricks to be easily transported throughout the state, especially to the population centers of Minneapolis and Saint Paul. Production averaged 3,500,000 bricks annually, with a rate of up to \$12 per 1,000.

By the 1870s, the industry had expanded rapidly. In 1872, two railroads — the Hastings & Dakota line and the Minneapolis & St. Louis railroads — added lines to the area. Soon, most brickyards had a spur of the line,

and most of the bricks were carried by train, which was cheaper and faster than boat. However, in 1889, rail rates had increased enough that a consortium of brickyard owners contracted with J.P. Donaldson to resume barge hauling. Rail tariffs were soon reduced in response to the boat competition, but the barges remained a viable, if sporadic, option for the rest of the century.

Whether carried by boat or train, a big advantage of Chaska brick was that it was lighter than traditional red brick, and thus cost less to transport. As production techniques were refined the industry grew still further, until it reached its peak near the turn of the century with eleven yards.

By the time Charles and Christian Klein achieved dominance of the brickmaking industry just after 1900, daily production had risen to 3.5 million bricks (averaging 40-60 million per year), both solid and hollow core. Chaska was producing 30% of all the brick made in Minnesota. The brickyards employed up to 600 men annually (roughly 20% of the town's population), at an average wage of \$1.25-1.75 a day. With no child labor laws in place, a number of children were also employed, performing jobs such as hand turning the bricks at the rate of 4-7¢ an hour. The brickyards had been firmly established as Chaska's dominant economic force.

As the 20th century progressed, the brickyards began to decline. Many consolidated, until by 1930 Charles Klein was the remaining owner. Financial crises such as the 1930s recession affected construction, as did the development of new materials, such as clay tile and concrete block. For a short time, the buff color of the brick even fell out of fashion. Though Klein did not close the brickyard until 1971, the period of dominance had really ended by World War II. According to the Minnesota Manufacturer's Directory, today there are only four brickyards total remaining in Minnesota.

Brickmaking Techniques

The first, and crudest method, of brickmaking in Chaska was clamp brick, a homemade process. In this process, the raw clay was shoveled directly out of the ground, then weathered for 6 months and kneaded by foot or by hoof. It was then mixed with water and sand, tamped into rough forms, and left to dry in the sun. Once formed, they were stacked to produce the "clamp kiln" and fired from the middle with a basic wood fire. This method was both inefficient and inexact, but did produce a distinctive brick that was generally smaller than commercial efforts. Due to its lack of durability, few examples of this hand-crafted brick remain today.

An improvement on the process was slop brick. For this type, water and clay were mixed into a thin, almost slurry-like consistency that was poured into a mold, whose rounded edges and corners were to become a characteristic feature of all Chaska brick. These bricks were dried on open-air racks before firing and had to be laboriously hand-turned. It was also risky — in a period of particularly bad weather all of the semi-dry bricks could easily be disintegrated by heavy rains. In two particularly bad years, over 100,000 bricks annually were ruined.

By the mid-1860s, with the advent of professional yards, brickmaking became more efficient. The clay was excavated from the vein by a pick-and-shovel team and then hauled to the factory, first with wheelbarrows but soon by horse and wagon. By 1870, brickmolding machines were prevalent, making both wire-cut and pressed brick. In particular, the pressed brick became synonymous with Chaska, as the machinery allowed the bricks to have the characteristic indentations (called “frogs”) that reduced the weight of the brick and provided a better key for the mortar, and also later allowed the word “Chaska” to be pressed directly into the frog.

Brickyard owners were constantly looking for new ways to make the process better. One solution was Mike Bierlien’s clay crusher and temperer — otherwise known as the “nameless” machine — which pulverized the clay, added sand and water for the optimum mixture, and mechanically filled the molds, in one continuous step without human intervention. The result was a “handsome, even, solid brick, of a delicate cream color... undoubtedly the most desirable bricks in the market.” (*Herald*, May 26, 1887).

These bricks, with their thicker consistency, dried to form more quickly before kiln-firing. Hot-air dryers were also introduced, cutting initial drying time from several weeks to under 72 hours.

Bricks were then fired in beehive kilns, which with the number of active brickyards, soon became a prevalent physical feature of Chaska. Kilns were either intermittent, meaning that bricks had to be cooled and unloaded between firings, then re-loaded and baked again, or continuous, which had a number of connecting chambers that the heated air coursed through. Despite the slightly longer firing time, continuous kilns soon became the standard due to their labor efficiency, lower heating costs, and ability to create a more consistent product. With internal temperatures running from 400-2000 degrees Fahrenheit, fires at the kilns were a weekly occurrence.

Bricks were then hand sorted, according to grade and color. Charles Klein’s papers report that one way to test the quality was to knock the bricks together; if they made a high-pitched sound they were good, but a low thud meant they were of a poorer quality.

As the 20th century progressed, particularly as the Kleins consolidated the yards, technology introduced a number of changes. Steam shovels and bulldozers took over from the pick crews and horse carts. Industrial, tunnel kilns replaced the distinctive beehives. Firing times dropped dramatically — while wood fires took ten days to bake the bricks, coal took eight, fuel oil just three, and finally gas power just over two days.

The Aesthetic Character of Chaska Brick

Though so many factors were in place for the creation of Chaska brick, it would not have become a major industry without a substantial demand for the product. Chaska brick became incredibly popular not just

because of its quality and ease of use, but in particular because of its distinctive appearance and coloration. This brick has been likened to Milwaukee brick, but often described as “creamier,” more natural in tone, and with more variation in color. Though buff-colored brick was indeed made in other locations and even nationally, none has achieved the strong place-association or relative fame as Chaska brick.

The color of Chaska brick ranges from a sandy buff to a gray-blue, with extensive variation in between. The color is mostly due to the high concentration of lime in the clay, as well as the firing process, including amount of oxygen introduced, length of firing, and temperature. For these reasons, earlier brick fired before techniques were standardized tends to have more variability in it than later brick. There is also a slight glister to the clay, due to the silica content.

The brick’s texture is also appealing. The size, particularly in the early iterations, was often slightly smaller than red brick. With the rounded corners, distinctive “frogs,” and grainy faces, even new brick seemed slightly weathered.

In general, the brick was of a consistent high quality, especially as manufacturing practices improved. Because it was lightweight and thus easy to transport and use, as well as resistant to compressions, it was of high demand for construction projects. Masons particularly liked it, because the porous clay, high in lime, wicked moisture from the mortar and set more quickly.

Even with this softness, it was said to weather elements as well as harder brick, and indeed, many Chaska brick buildings of over one hundred years old still stand today. While used in Chaska primarily as an exterior brick, elsewhere in the state the brick was in particular demand for structural walls of buildings, where it would be covered by a veneer of another product, or for infrastructure such as sewers.

The Brick as an Economic Engine

“Pay day at the brickyards is equal to one of our holidays for our merchants and saloon keepers. It makes things lively in town.” (*Chaska: Volume I*)

The importance of the brickyards to the economic development of Chaska cannot be underestimated. With the yards employing up to 20% of the population, associated businesses such as foundries and machine shops thriving, and local farmers selling wood for the kilns, it seemed like almost everyone in town had some kind of association with Chaska brick. In addition, the City of Chaska had become the County Seat in 1856, providing governmental services and related businesses.

The brick business was eagerly reported upon by the local newspapers, which in the spring would preview each yard and forecast its production. As the *Weekly Valley Herald* commented in 1910:

“Chaska owes a good deal to the brick industry in fact more so than to anything else. For years the industry has been a source of revenue to hundreds of our people and has contributed manifestly toward the upbuilding of many of our leading business enterprises. It has put hundreds of dollars into the pockets of our people in the years gone by and will continue to do so.”

The newspapers also often reported on Chaska brick houses constructed, especially in the rural areas. An example:

“Tobias Ottinger, of Laketown, has the brick on the ground for a dwelling and from what we understand, it will be a comfort to the occupants when finished.” (*Weekly Valley Herald*, April 25, 1878)

Perhaps no outside business was more related to the brickyards than the Ess Foundry. Joseph Ess, a wagon maker, started the foundry in 1886 along with his sons Frank and Fred, at the urging of local brick manufacturers. He began by repairing machines, but eventually also created new ones, including the slop molds and Bierlien’s “nameless” machine.

Other businesses whose fortunes depended directly on the prosperity of the brickyards included machinery shops, liveries and other stables working with the horses and mules that carried the clay, and hardware stores.

As noted above, even the businesses that would not seem to have a direct relationship to the brickyards were profoundly affected by the industry. Saloons, hotels, restaurants, stores, and services all depended on its prosperity. This effect was especially acute since pay was delayed for several months — workers who began when the yard opened each year in April might not be paid until August or later.

The area’s practical farmers considered Chaska brick a prime material for farm buildings — including houses, barns, and even outbuildings — due to its strength, durability, and ease of use. They also saw brick homes as a status symbol, and would replace previously-built frame houses with brick structures as soon as their finances would allow. To this end, farmers would often trade wood to fuel the kilns for brick to build their houses. Many of these farmers were German and Scandinavian immigrants, seeking to recreate the materials and styles of dwellings in their homelands.

Another group of people affected by the brick were service workers, such as the laborers, masons, and builders who used it, many of whom developed specialized skills with the medium. Builders recorded included Olaf Hanson, John S. Letford, Henry Kenning and sons, Henry Saurbrei, John Seims, Christian Bloecher, Lyman Noble, F. Klatte, and Charles Klatte.

Finally, the brickyard owners themselves were their own economic force, both bearing the risk of the yards and often profiting greatly from them. In 1878 yard owners formed the Brick Manufacturer's Union of Chaska. The Union met at least monthly to discuss pricing, bidding, wages, contracts, transportation, and other matters. One member was elected to serve as the sole agent for all of the firms. These "Brick Barons" formed a strong lobby that served to standardize wages, bidding and practices, until the Kleins' consolidation of the yards.

Social Implications of Chaska Brick

As discussed elsewhere in this context, although other Minnesota cities had brick industries, none became so closely identified with a specific place as Chaska brick. The city became known as the home of this highly desirable, attractive product, and a thriving business grew from and around the manufacturing. The Chaska brick industry gave a specific and positive presence for the city, one that nearby and similar communities, such as Carver, did not attain.

For those who settled the area, mainly German and Scandinavian immigrants and transplants from the east coast as part of the Homestead Act, brick was extremely popular. Charles van Ravenswaay comments:

"Buildings made entirely of of brick were of higher status, and, hence, prosperous settlers frequently opted for all-brick construction. Such was the prestige of brick that it became the predominant material of later German houses..."

Chaska brick was not only prestigious, but also stood for permanence, stability, and durability. The local Chaska brick had the advantage of being relatively cheap and available, and was easy to work with, especially as many of the builders had masonry experience. It is no wonder that Chaska brick became the material of choice in the area.

For some, however, this is not the case. The Klein brothers' homes (at 314 N. Walnut Street and 205 E. 4th Street in downtown Chaska), are notoriously rumored to be not of Chaska brick, but instead brick from Iowa & Illinois. Whether this is because of inside knowledge about its durability, a shortage of the brick, or, as rumored, a reticence to use their own brick because brickyard workers could then easily calculate the value of the home, we do not know.

The use of Chaska brick in structures all over Minnesota, particularly in the Twin Cities, also increased its prestige. Some of these buildings are discussed below.

The result is that Chaska brick structures have achieved a kind of prestige and quality standard. Whether they are urban or rural, whether they maintain integrity or have been painted, stuccoed, or otherwise altered, they provide an icon and an identification point for the city.

“The Brick City of the West” — Physical Implications of Chaska Brick

As discussed above, Chaska brick was an extremely popular building material in Minnesota during the last half of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. Nowhere was it a more popular material than in the City of Chaska and in the larger environs of Carver County. Though readily available, the brick was seen both as a practical, durable choice and as a status symbol. Thus, a high percentage of buildings in Chaska are constructed of Chaska brick, many of which remain intact today.

Some of the first buildings constructed were commercial buildings and houses in the City of Chaska, including the Humple house that Lucius Howe provided brick for in 1857. As spring river flooding was a major issue in much of the city, brick gained even more popularity for its durability and water resistance. The city has many Chaska brick buildings, though they are of varying integrity; a formal inventory has yet to be completed, but there are over fifty separate buildings of note between the local and nationally designated sites.

Rural buildings followed soon after — the earliest of which appears to be the Vogel farmstead, constructed in 1864, likely from bricks produced on-site. At least 66 Chaska brick farmhouses still exist in Carver County, and are currently under nomination to the National Register in a Multiple Property Submission.

The prevalence of Chaska brick commercial buildings downtown also predicated a certain design sensibility. In general, Chaska’s historic commercial frontages are similar to those in most other small Minnesota cities — two story, with storefront below and offices or living quarters above. The storefronts display large glass windows distinguished by a bottom bulkhead and/or top transom. The decoration on these buildings is generally limited to a brick corbel or parapet and arched window caps. Some also includes ironwork, most often from the Ess Foundry.

Residences constructed of Chaska brick, though they vary in period and predominant style, are also relatively congruent. Ornamentation is generally restrained, with arched window heads, ranging from one simple row to rather complex multi-row designs, being the primary decorative enhancement. Some, particularly Queen Anne or other Victorian styles, also incorporate wood trim, such as brackets and turned porch columns and spindles.

Few remnants of brickyard kilns, drying racks, or other buildings remain, so these important institutions bear relatively little influence on Chaska’s physical landscape today. However, a major and sometimes overlooked remnant of the brick industry is the city’s three large clayholes, which are now filled with water and serve as small lakes. One in particular, the Brickyark Clayhole behind Cooper’s Supermarket, is said to still contain brickmaking machinery at the bottom of the pit, along with more recent artifacts. The other two are Fireman’s Clayhole and the clayhole behind the courthouse.

Chaska Brick Throughout the State

A great number of historic buildings in Minnesota contain Chaska brick.

Buildings with structural walls created of Chaska brick include:

- the Lumber Exchange Building
- Butler Square
- Renaissance Square
- the Orpheum Theater
- the Grain Belt Brewery
- the Masonic Temple/Hennepin Center for the Arts
- the State Capitol in Saint Paul — the basement walls are made of over two million Chaska bricks

The sewers of both Minneapolis and St. Paul are lined with Chaska brick.

Some architects particularly favored the aesthetics of Chaska brick and would use them as the primary material for their building. Examples of these include:

- Market Square
- Crown Roller Mill Building
- Wesbrook Hall at the University of Minnesota

Many homeowners also preferred Chaska brick for its color and ease of use, and so it is seen in many residential properties, especially in Minneapolis and St. Paul. However, there is no reliable inventory of these properties (see Recommendations).

There are a number of lost resources statewide which also made significant use of Chaska brick. These include:

- the Minneapolis Chamber of Commerce Building
- the Minneapolis Auditorium
- the Northwestern National Bank Building in Minneapolis, which used over seven million Chaska bricks in its construction
- the prison at Fort Snelling
- the Chamber of Commerce Building, Minneapolis – over 2 million bricks
- the Humboldt mill in Minneapolis (following the 1878 fire)
- the Washburn mill in Minneapolis (also following the fire)

Chaska brick is also said to have been used for diverse buildings ranging from the courthouses in McLeod county and the town of Stillwater courthouse to Shakopee churches, but this is unsubstantiated.

Lost Resources

As discussed above, the high concentration of Chaska brick buildings in both the City of Chaska and Chaska Township give a high level of cohesion to its aesthetic standards. Members of the community and visitors can easily identify Chaska brick structures, are attracted to the distinctive colors and properties of the brick, and have a broad understanding of the importance of the material. It gives the community a distinctive quality and sense of place.

The town has lost many resources as vacant lots and infill construction prove. All of the original major civic buildings have been torn down, as well as some schools and larger commercial properties. Virtually all resources relating to the brickyards (save the clayholes), and most relating to the railroads, are gone.

At least one property previously listed on the National Register, the Iltis Brewery and Icehouse, was removed from the Register when razed in 1989.

Though not “lost” *per se*, many Chaska brick structures have lost some or a great deal of their original integrity, usually due to being painted, covered with siding or stucco, or added on to. In some cases, such as the painted structures or ones with small (often wooden) additions, these alterations are relatively reversible. In others, such as in buildings that have been stuccoed, it would be relatively difficult, if not impossible, to restore them to their original state.

Rural farmsteads in Chaska face similar issues, particularly in alterations. In addition, as urban development extends, many of them may cease to be farms and will thus lose at least part of their context. Though farms need not continue in their original function to maintain relevance, they should retain some visual associations with a nineteenth or early-twentieth century farmstead, such as open, field-like spaces, a retention of mature plantings, and/or the preservation of outbuildings. They should not be too narrowly encroached upon by new construction or subdivisions. In addition, all efforts should be made to avoid the unfortunate demolition of one-of-a-kind resources, such as the unfortunate 2004 demolition of the Miesler farmstead, which had been one of only two known remaining examples of early “fachwerk” construction in the state.

Sites Currently Designated

The following sites are currently designated to the National Register of Historic Places, or have been determined eligible for designation:

- Frederick Greiner House
319 E. 3rd Street
associated with Chaska merchant’s history

- Frederick E. DuToit House
121 Hickory Street
founder of the Chaska Herald
- Eder-Baer House
105 Elm Street
distinctive Queen Anne styling
- Conrad Fink House – National Register eligible but not listed
322 W. 1st Street
- Herald Block
Pine and 2nd Streets
Chaska Herald
- E.H. Lewis House
321 W. 2nd Street
associated with Lucius Faber and Dr. E.H. Lewis families
- Diedrick Building – tax credit received as part of a historic district
100 E. 2nd Street
- William Scott House – National Register eligible and in process, but not yet listed
516 Pine Street
Criterion B – association with mill owner, next to mill
- Simons Building and Livery
123 W. 3rd Street
commercial/residential
- Walnut Street Historic District
a number of structures, not all of which are Chaska brick or contributory

Property Types

Because Chaska brick is so prevalent, the potential property types are almost unlimited. The following represents the most common resources:

City of Chaska Residences

Downtown Houses

Row Houses

Houses in the city but not in the central core (e.g. Stoughton Avenue)

Outlying scattered houses that are no longer farmsteads (e.g. Karen house, Eitel house)

Rural Farmsteads

Farmhouses

Barns

Other Outbuildings

City of Chaska Commercial Properties

Storefronts

- Offices
 - Newspaper Offices
 - Industrial Buildings and Offices
 - Mill and Associated Buildings
 - Inns and Hotels
 - Livery Stables
 - Bars, Saloons and Restaurants
 - Banks and Financial Institutions
 - Icehouses
 - Breweries
 - Warehouses
 - Automobile Dealerships and Garages
 - Factories – cigar and other
 - Surveyors, Law Offices, and Other Buildings related to Chaska as a County Seat
 - Outlying Offices and Commercial Properties
- Brickyards
 - Remaining Resources or Ruins
 - Clayholes
- Public Buildings
 - Remaining Schools
 - Any other remaining public buildings — police and fires stations, city and county offices, other units of government
- Infrastructure
 - Any use of Chaska brick in remaining infrastructures (sewers, levee, etc.)

Recommendations and Future Actions

1. The City of Chaska should identify and inventory all Chaska brick buildings within its boundaries.
2. The City of Chaska should consider local designation of all remaining Chaska brick structures within its boundaries. As part of this, the city may or may not want to consider placing some levels of consideration, such as:
 - Unaltered Chaska brick structure of high integrity
 - Chaska brick construction, but with alterations (additions made of some other material, extensive non-brick trim, etc.)
 - Chaska brick construction but with extensive alteration that is likely irreversible (such as covered with stucco, etc.)
 - Contains elements of Chaska brick (portions are of Chaska brick, etc.)
3. Chaska should pursue National Register nominations for the 11 buildings determined National Register eligible as part of a recent Section 106 survey by the Minnesota Department of Transportation. The majority of these buildings are constructed of Chaska brick, and they represent the most obvious candidates of major historical significance.
4. Chaska should consider making a Multiple Property Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places for significant properties within the city and township created of Chaska brick. Such a nomination

would incorporate properties that might not stand on their own as National Register-significant, but would demonstrate part of a trend or context. Of particular interest for this nomination would be:

- Properties that demonstrate early patterns of settlement (see Point #6, below)
- Properties that show a wide range of use (residential, commercial, etc.)
- Properties that were of strong local importance that may no rise to a national standard.
- Properties that demonstrate a range of style (Queen Anne, Craftsman, etc.)

5. The Minnesota Department of Transportation is currently in the process of submitting to the National Register a Multiple Property Nomination for Chaska brick farmhouses in Carver County. The City of Chaska should support these efforts.
6. In particular, the City of Chaska should focus on Chaska brick buildings that are scattered around the outskirts of town, since these represent early settlement patterns and are particularly striking by virtue of being the only example of Chaska brick construction in the immediate area. A partial list of these may include:
 - Karen House (Jonathan)
 - Eitel House (Jonathan)
 - small cottage on Willow off of Stoughton Avenue
 - Riedele House (122 US Highway 212)
 - Ottinger House (821 Howard Lane)
 - house at State Street
 - sugar factory offices on Stoughton Avenue
7. Chaska should recognize and interpret any remaining resources related to the brickyards (kiln ruins, etc.)
8. Chaska should recognize and interpret the three remaining clay holes as demonstrative of the brickmaking industry and its physical effects on the city.
9. The Chaska Historical Society should continue its excellent interpretation of the brickmaking industry as part of its core activities. It may want to consider other methods of outreach, such as history curriculum development on the topic for local schools or a traveling exhibit.
10. The Chaska HPC should consider establishing a “Chaska Brick Owners” society for those who own buildings constructed of Chaska brick. Such a society could provide technical support for issue associated with the properties’ unique repair and maintenance needs, standardize restoration and rehabilitation techniques, provide educational and networking opportunities, and perhaps even administer a small grants program.
11. The City of Chaska already does an excellent job of stockpiling Chaska brick and using it in public projects. The City should draw more attention to this process and to the importance of its careful resource management.

12. The Chaska Historical Society should begin a database of use of Chaska brick in buildings statewide. Such a database would demonstrate the wide range of use of the brick, and its importance in the physical development of the Twin Cities and the State of Minnesota.

13. The city and county government should work together to try to preserve the feeling of agricultural life on the rural farmsteads. While many of these may not continue to be viable farms, visual elements representative of an agricultural setting, such as open, field-like space, the preservation of mature plantings (the “Big Woods”), and the retention of outbuildings should be retained. A rural farmhouse will not feel like a farm site if narrowly encroached upon by new construction.