

Interview with Robert Roscoe

Interviewed by Linda Mack

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Minneapolis Riverfront Redevelopment Oral History Project

Robert Roscoe - RR

Linda Mack - LM

LM: This is Linda Mack and I am speaking with Bob Roscoe. The date is December 15, 2008, and we're in Bob's city office. We're on East River Road, and Bob's going to tell *all*. [Laughter]

RR: I'll tell what I can remember.

LM: Where do we start? Where did you first intersect with the Mississippi River? The central riverfront, I'm really thinking.

RR: It would have to be when I was on the Minneapolis HPC [Heritage Preservation Commission]. I think I got on the commission in 1980. At that point, as a river chasm, they had a lot of busted up concrete and a lot of buildings that used the river as their backyard, more so on the downtown side. The Fuji-Ya [restaurant] was really the only sign of anyone wanting to make use of the river. Of course, we all know why they picked that very location, because of the waterfall, the wind, and a third element I can't remember.

LM: Oh, I didn't know about this. Did you work with her [Reiko Weston] on that?

RR: No, no. I think it was built in the 1960s.

LM: It was 1968 or 1969 that it opened.

RR: Other than that, there were some plans that came and went to do things. Then it was the Minneapolis Housing Redevelopment Authority . . . It took a long time for anything to get done or really get started as to what makes sense. It was just a very, very complicated project, of course . . . a lot of interest and interweaving. When the development eventually happened, it happened when it was time for it to happen, when there were market forces of people in Minneapolis enhancing the cultural values that the

city was developing long after it had developed itself as an economic power. The cultural values came later.

About that time, my wife Sally and I went out to Massachusetts for a vacation, and we went to Salem because it was one of the oldest cities. A very impressive city. In the guidebook, it said, “Visit Salem Harbor.” Salem Harbor was the largest harbor on the East Coast. So we got steered towards a little interpretive center. As it turns out, as we walked up to it, it’s like a two-bedroom rambler, a new building with a low-pitched roof. There were various exhibits in there of what the harbor had been. Then, along with some other tourists, we got treated to a program where there were slides and someone very knowledgeable. I thought, this is really great, a great harbor. Minneapolis has a great riverfront, and I’m wondering if I can learn something here. Because I was just newly minted on the commission at that point. So we went to the presentation and then she said, “Now, we’ll go outside to see it.” So, we walked outside, and I looked, and there were two long fingers of what looked like sod sticking out into the harbor. She said, “Those are the remains of two piers that were remaining.” I thought, sod?

LM: [Laughter] Very evocative, huh?

RR: Right. I said, “Well, where’s the rest of it?” She pointed and said, “Those two buildings there.” There was like an esplanade between the harbor area and a row of buildings. She said, “That was the exchange building and that was the customs building.” They were neoclassical buildings, two buildings just standing there looking like they were trying to be as mute as possible.

LM: [Laughter]

RR: I, all of a sudden, thought, that’s all there is? I’d already bought a guidebook about the harbor. I think I took it home and never opened it. Now, fast forward . . . We look at what’s happened with the riverfront. There are a lot more than two fingers of sod and two small neoclassical buildings. It’s just really amazing. So I think that the riverfront has done and will continue to do—everything isn’t done—just a *magnificent* job of explaining Minneapolis history. Minneapolis, too, had a first, of course. It was the largest lumber milling area in the world, I think it was, and then followed by grain milling. With my time on the commission, I tended to have kind of a bipolar attitude towards government.

LM: [Chuckles]

RR: I saw with my previous work with Milwaukee Avenue how lamentable and short sighted policy could be, and how someone would have to pound their heads against the wall to make them wake up. This was ten years later when I got on the HPC. And when there was talk about the riverfront, I thought that there were just too many government agencies involved, and there wasn’t a corresponding sensitive approach by the private economic factors. Well, for the second time here I’m saying, “It all worked.” It worked so well. The Riverfront Development Coordination Board . . . I wasn’t on it, but someone

else from the HPC was. It took a long time. The Minnesota Historical Society, I think, probably was the nerve center that made things happen. Then the corresponding part of that in the Housing Redevelopment Authority—then it became Minneapolis Community Development Agency [MCDA]. The initials, Linda, stand for Money Can Do Anything.

LM: [Laughter] Those were the days.

RR: Now it's [unclear]. Sometimes I like to call them the centipede.

LM: [Laughter]

RR: Ann Calvert with MCDA . . . I think that her astute mind, her very *quiet* working manner, and just the *prodigious* hours that she put it and puts in . . . She really had a way of making everything coordinate and work. Words at this point fail me. Of course, she says, "I'm just an employee," when you talk to her.

LM: Oh, boy.

RR: Really, I'll say it right here on tape. I hate to hear her say that, because she was so valuable. It just wouldn't have happened the way it happened without her.

LM: That is true. Can you give me an example of her steady hand?

RR: I remember when the city wanted to enter the World Trade Center contest that Saint Paul eventually won. There were various proposals; I think there were five proposals. One of them was I. M. Pei & Son. Then, of course, there was the redoubtable Harry Wirth, and some others. And I think Kathy Koutsky, who eventually developed Munsingwear and some others. Ann had studied all their proposals, and it really must have taken a lot of economic acumen for her to sort out the proposals. She gave a presentation on how each proposal would stack up just in terms of content. And she had a very subtle way of explaining the quality of that content, not favoring one or not denigrating another. It was really remarkable. Then we saw the presentations. Just her insight in how to organize that was prefaced by a lot of work, of course, which Ann knows how to do.

LM: What other things came before the HPC that drew your involvement?

RR: Well, building by building . . . I can't remember the year of the Crown Mill fire. I think I was fairly new on the commission then. It might have been 1984 or earlier.

LM: It was in the 1980s, yes.

RR: The commission had given courtesy reviews to various proposers who came before us. That was a time when the commission was still considered an obstacle to many people who wanted to do historic buildings the way they wanted to or wanted to turn an historic building into landfill.

Chuck Liddy was chair of HPC just before I got on and John Mulligan was chair, an attorney. Then we had Steve Murray, the staff person who is just one of the cleverest persons by far that I've ever met. Steve was highly intelligent. He knew how to find his way at getting information out of the various powers that be in city government, so he always knew the inside track on everything. He fed all the information to the commission. Steve, of course, is quite a manipulator; he only gave us the information that would favor *his* interests, too. [Chuckles] But Steve was a city planner first, and he really had the trueness of urban design and planning at heart, and he was very good at it, and in the preservation context.

We'd see these various proposals. I know there was a fight between two particular developers, each who claimed that they a legal right and that the other one didn't have. Then somehow, just after that, the mill caught fire.

LM: Oh, boy.

RR: It was very shocking. I think it was on a weekend when it happened. I remember going on a Saturday and they were still spraying water. Steve Murray was on vacation then. He always took a solid two weeks off. So the next Monday . . . I had pretty close connections with then council member Tony Scallon, because we both worked on the Milwaukee Avenue and Seward West Project together and learned how to relate to each other and learn how to trust each other. Tony was a rising star on the city council with community development. Tony had his ways about why use diplomacy when he could swing a meat ax to get something done.

LM: [Laughter] That's a good way to describe it.

RR: So Tony called me the first thing on Monday, and said that he had heard over the weekend that the Inspections Department was going to do a quick take and bulldoze the remaining walls. At the same time, I talked with Dennis Gimmestad at SHPO [State Historic Preservation Office] and mentioned to Dennis that I thought since the roof was gone, the top parts of the four walls were gone, nothing of the interior, just basically walls of limestone with a few window sashes still dangling in place . . . And Dennis said that he had been there the day before and he felt there was enough historic fabric there. He said, "Seventy percent of it is there. So if it can be rehabilitated . . ." Which he thought was the forbidding situation.

So then Tony called me and wanted me to come up to his office, because he said that Sol Jacobs, who was head of Inspections, was going to see him. So first, I met with Tony, the two of us. He asked me if I thought the building could be saved. I said, "I don't know the answer to that question. There's a lot of reason to think that it can't be. There's maybe always ways that it can, but it just looks very difficult." I said, "It's going to take some people with some judgment." Tony was looking for a kind of black or white response on it. Then he heard Sol's voice out in the hallway and other council members at that point came in to talk to Tony . . . Kathy O'Brien and some others. Tony saw Sol, and Sol in his quiet and measured voice said, "Well, Tony, I think we're going to have to take that

building down.” Tony just jabbed his thick, solid forefinger into Sol’s necktie and into his stomach and said, “I’ll have your job if you do!”

LM: Wow!

RR: Sol kind of took a step back at that point and explained that it was a hazard and so on. So Sol retreated. Then Tony said, “Let’s go take a look at it! Do you have time, Bob?” I said, “Sure.” So we and Kathy O’Brien and another council member named Joan Niemiec got in the car and went over to look at it. I just looked at those walls and I wanted to be an optimist. I think they were waiting for me to say, “Yes, it can be.” I just didn’t want to put myself . . . like that, because I really didn’t know. [Sighs] Then we decided to leave, and I said, “The action would be to at least prop up the walls, stabilize them, and then do a study.” They thought that was a good idea. I think we came in two cars. I think Kathy and Joan and some others went in one car, and Tony and I stood talking before we got into my car.

Just then I noticed Dave Macdonald, an engineer with Mattson Macdonald Young, as it is now, whom I’ve worked with a lot. He had gotten out of his car and was looking at the building. So I said, “Tony, here’s the guy who will know.” With trepidation, I walked over and asked Dave, “Can these walls stay up? Is there enough there to rehab?” He just matter-of-factly said, “Oh, yes. Yes, they’re very solid.” I said, “Even after a fire like this? Dave, I don’t know structural engineering, but wouldn’t the fire harm the mortar?” He said, “Actually, it strengthens it a little bit.” So the rest is history on that.

LM: Neat. Wow. I’d never heard the whole story. That’s great.

RR: From time to time, Ann Calvert and various people at MCDA and Bob Mattson from the Park Board . . . I really respected Bob a lot. There’s another little story there. Steve Murray asked me, “Let’s go out for lunch.” I said, “Sure,” and then realized, what does he want out of me here? [Chuckles] So we went to a place in what is now the automobile district called Nigel’s. It was busy and kind of loud with people bustling around. Then, all of a sudden, Steve leaned over to me and said, “Bob, do any of the people at the table in back of me know you?” I looked, and I didn’t know who they were. I’m going to have to edit my remarks a little bit, but he said, “Well, there are a couple people from the post office in Washington, D.C. that are here. They’re at the table and they’re talking with a couple of architects from a firm, and they’re talking about ways how to get around the HPC and how they are going to do it.” He said, “You keep talking more softly and I’ll just spend more time listening.” So then we walked out.

The post office knew there was land between the back of the older building and the West River Parkway, but it was owned by the Park Board. One of the four or five gentlemen had said, “Well, that’s easy. All we have to do is play up to Bob Mattson and he’ll play ball with us.” So later on that afternoon, Steve gave me a call and said he’d talked to Bob Mattson. And Bob’s usually calm demeanor was very agitated and he said, “That will never happen that way.” Because the post office just wanted a very utilitarian building.

They said, “Our purpose is to deliver mail. Our purpose is not to honor historic preservation.”

LM: And since they’re a federal agency, they don’t have to worry about it.

RR: Right.

LM: But you actually did have purview over them even though they are a federal agency?

RR: I think Bob Mattson then gave informational reviews of that project, so that was great. Then, of course, Ann Calvert would come time after time. There’s no one person I saw [more often] on a continual basis over my twenty-one years than Ann Calvert. It was usually for informational . . . She was always at the business meetings. Sometimes, it would take a long time for her explain what was happening with the riverfront. I remember my very last meeting. I was chair of the commission. I wondered who was going to be on the agenda. Well, of course, Ann Calvert was. [Chuckles]

LM: Do you have a sense of what difference it made when the Saint Anthony Falls Heritage Board was created, which did bring in the Historical Society?

RR: I was a little removed from that. I think Tom Holman on HPC was the representative on the Saint Anthony Falls Heritage Board, and Tom reported to us from time to time. All I know is what I observed secondhand and that’s that everything happened . . . It took a long time. It’s like when I was working on the Milwaukee Avenue; that took a long time, too. There were times when someone else had a scheme for the place and it didn’t work out or wouldn’t have worked out. So if there’s any parallel at all, I think it did take a while for things to fall in place. I’m no economic expert. I just know how to draw lines. But I think that it was a good synergistic happening of the right kind of astuteness and planning expertise and the coordination. I noticed when Nina Archabal became director of MHS that there was just more from her . . . She had a vision and I think the other people who preceded her were very nice and capable people, but I think she saw that this was really an important part. I remember when they were dedicating a small little park in a little plaza that stuck out along side the river just up the stream from the Hennepin Avenue Bridge. Sharon Sayles Belton was either president of the council or was mayor then. I remember Nina saying that this is the birthplace of Minnesota right here. That’s how she opened her remarks. Nothing could be said more true in that instance.

LM: Let’s mention Sharon and how she deserves credit. Let’s talk about that a bit.

RR: Most of this will not be related to the riverfront, so I’ll kind of make it brief. The State Theatre . . . when the developers of the LaSalle Block wanted to knock that down . . . In that case, my friend Tony Scallon thought as chairman of the Community Development Committee . . . He was actually more powerful than Don Fraser, the mayor. Tony saw economic progress. Tony and preservation got to be like oil and water. I tried to nurture the relationship, but he felt too many preservationists didn’t honor how he did

things, I guess. [Chuckles] Basically, I think, Tony saw the economic development aspect of it, and he didn't see the State Theatre as being valuable at all. So Tony and I locked horns. That was just after I became chair of HPC. I can't remember who I succeeded; it might have been John Mulligan. At any rate, a couple people talked to me when there was one of the many announcements that the Milwaukee Road Depot was going to be saved. There were several attempts before that. So there was a big party. I don't whether it was Harry Wirth's venture or not. I've got to get back to Harry Wirth here.

LM: Yes.

RR: Some of the commissioners came up to me and said that we needed a new chair and I was the one that people were talking about. Then someone said, "But you're too close to Tony." "Well, I am close to him, but my interests are here. I'll do my job the best I can and it will work out." So the friendship was strained over the State Theatre.

Wait a minute! We were supposed to talk about Sharon now.

LM: Right.

RR: Sharon was chair of Zoning and Planning, I think. She knew she had a rising star. I think she saw the commission as someone who actually was doing things right. She trusted the commission. She somehow, I think, attached herself to preservation because of how she saw the commission was working hard and so on. She and I developed a very close relationship. It got so that she would ask me, "Do you really think so now? Because I'm going to have to act on this in this way." I'd say, "Yes."

So at some point, there's a vote on whether the State Theatre should be designated . . . It was tantamount to signing the demolition permit or allowing it to fly free of that. We voted, of course, to designate it. Then at the city council, there was a vote on it. I remember Steve Murray asked me—I couldn't be seen in the meeting—"How is it going to come out?" I said, "Well, the council is going to decide not to designate." Steve said, "Can I press you? What's it looking like?" I said, "Eight to five." He said, "Really?" I said, "Yes, and I'll name you the five that will be on our side. What's more, I'm going to write it down on a piece of paper. You put it in your desk."

LM: [Chuckles]

RR: Later on, he pulled it out and he told me, "Yes." Sharon really . . . I think this is the important thing. This is almost a simplistic thing to say, but we see so many politicians wanting to do the right thing, but then it's compromise with their friends who can help or hinder their rise to power. Sharon, I think, knew that this was not helping her out, to be in favor of saving this Jesus People Church. But she saw something right about it. It turned out to work in her favor and, obviously, the State Theatre was saved.

Sometime after that decision was made when Kathy O'Brien was leaving the council to work, I think, at the University [of Minnesota] right away, she and I had lunch. We

walked out and we were just getting ready to separate and she said, “Bob, did you ever hear how . . .?” I’d mentioned before how Don Fraser had made this decision. I read it in the paper not knowing that was going to happen, that he was going to change his mind, and say that he wouldn’t accept the Palmer Group’s decision. If they were going to demolish it, then he would deny their subsidy. He had the votes. That same eight to five votes then would work in his favor.

LM: So it was eight to five in favor of designation?

RR: No, against that designation.

LM: Oh.

RR: If he were to decide to deny subsidy, it would take nine members of the council to override his veto. I think that’s how it worked. So as soon as he announced that, the game was over, because people had been so entrenched in on that one.

Anyway, I said, “How did Don change his mind?” Sharon said there was a Sunday afternoon when she and Kathy and Don went to some political symposium in River Falls, Wisconsin. How Don Fraser put it . . . Someone asked him how he changed his mind, and he said, “Well, I went to this symposium down in River Falls with Kathy O’Brien and Sharon Sayles Belton. On the way back . . .” I’m telling the story wrong. He said, “One Sunday afternoon I was coming back from a symposium in River Falls, Wisconsin. As I was driving back, all of sudden, I thought, no, the State Theatre should be saved. In the car with me were . . .” [Chuckles]

LM: Oh, yes, right. [Laughter] I’m a little confused about the vote. So the HPC voted to designate?

RR: To designate, but . . .

LM: Then that was overruled by the council?

RR: It was overruled by the council on an eight to five vote.

LM: And then it was another set of votes about the subsidy and that’s when Fraser had gained more support on the council, so then he had enough votes to pull the subsidy if they didn’t keep the theater?

RR: That’s about what happened. The eight to five vote that I first mentioned, that was a vote whether to designate or not. Then, I think, later on, the council had to vote whether to approve the subsidy, the redevelopment deal that included a subsidy.

LM: I see. Okay. So something happened in that car.

RR: Right.

LM: [Chuckles]

RR: Just a comment . . . to go back to the World Trade Center. That big, long meeting in the MCDA office . . . Harry Wirth, if anything, was comic relief.

LM: [Chuckles]

RR: I. M. Pei & Son and the others had these [unclear] and plenaries who knew architecture very well to people on the MCDA Board that could really understand that. They had various plans, schematic plans, flow diagrams and so on and a few concept sketches. Harry Wirth decided that was too complicated. He just hired a guy who was really good at architectural rendering. So he just rolled this big drawing out with I don't know how many lines of ink showing all kinds of things going on. Someone said it looked like a state fair.

LM: Yes, yes. Right. [Laughter] That must have been one of those great moments. When you look back over really twenty-five years of riverfront history that's brought it to this point, what do you see as the most crucial pieces in this puzzle?

RR: First, I was going to say, "I don't know." But then, just going back to some earlier thoughts about that, I think preservation has always had a tough job trying to sell its value. I think preservationists are very inept at public relations, and not just so much that in itself, but I've always felt—and I felt that in myself—a shortcoming in being able to really get into the essence of why is historic preservation important. It's easy to say, "Well, for our sense of history," or, "Well, adaptive reuse can provide economic stimulus," those sorts of things. But, at some point, I think the Riverfront Saint Anthony Falls Coordinating Board . . . I don't know how they did it, but I remember from what I read and heard—I was always in the mix of people who belonged on the board and talked about it—that they managed to say that there's a relationship between recreation, preservation, economic development, and creating a Renaissance of housing in the mill buildings that gave them a [unclear] amenity. Those all folded into one entity: good preservation was good recreation and good recreation was good amenity for developing housing out of the grain mill buildings.

LM: That's interesting. That certainly was something that the Saint Anthony Falls Heritage Board epitomized and came up with the little motto. But you really can perceive that that made a difference in terms of the developer's attitudes and the reality?

RR: And the public. I think, at that point, the public began to see more of the value.

LM: Yes. Are there things, as you look at the riverfront now, you wish were not there?

RR: Well, I'm going to be a smart ass and say . . . I remember many architectural firms came to the HPC and did presentations on visions for the river. The first digitally-produced presentation, I remember seeing that, these detailed virtual drawings. The riverfronts were just as verdant green and the trees were green, no busted up concrete

blocks along the shore. It kind of looked like its history had been totally wiped away. I mean, it takes those sorts of unfinished things that get left over from history, I think . . . which in the *grand* scale of things, that's what happened with the Mill City Museum. That was just a great idea between Tom Meyer and Nina Archabal to come up with that. It's not easy to do. It certainly wasn't the first time a ruin has been saved by the historic preservation process. They become an artifact looking for a meaning, I think, too easily. I think Meyer Scherer & Rockcastle and the SHPO office . . . Of course, it took a whole band of other people at the Saint Anthony Falls Coordination Board to really get behind that. I understand that was a tough proposition, in many respects, to make happen. There were more chances that it wouldn't happen than it would.

LM: Yes. That's very true.

RR: I think that maybe I've got blinders and can't see what didn't work. [Chuckles] Because from going to fireworks, to going running, to using the Parkway as a place to get from downtown to my house here, to walking across the Stone Arch Bridge . . . I remember the first time I went across. The first time I was on it was before it was legit. Then we heard a woo woo woo! [Laughter]

LM: Whoops!

RR: So we had to run as fast as we could, it was the middle of the night, and scramble off. We did it at night just kind of like daring to do it. After it became the walkway, I really surprised myself. I thought I knew how to read three-dimensional space that I'm always operating in, but I was just dumbfounded and totally surprised at how beautiful it was. I call it "History in 360 Degrees."

LM: Yes. Yes, you can really *feel* the history and not just observe it.

RR: Yes. The other part of what will be the history is what came out last Wednesday at breakfast with preservationists, with what happens with the east river bank with the A Mill and the new development that will be appendages to it. I guess this is a case where my fellow preservationists and I see it somewhat differently. I remember running into Kit Richardson some place before he was making his presentations. He was describing what he wanted to build there in general terms. I said, "Well, Kit, have you ever been to Vancouver?" Right away, he says, "You know, too, don't you?" [Laughter] I think that's the right approach. Rather than taking a high-rise structure that wasn't meant to have stone stuck on it just to resemble a historic building or a series of them, I think that modern structures can be what they're supposed to be: tall buildings built the way they're supposed to be that the Chicago School of Architecture taught us we can do. Steel and glass will provide a fitting contrast to the limestone and massiveness, a feeling of lightness versus a feeling of solidity. Those are very worthy contrasts.

LM: You were not on the commission when that came up?

RR: No.

LM: So even though it's a historic district, National Register District, you would see departure from the guidelines?

RR: Well . . . I would say that the guidelines should embrace this. I suppose you could say that the best thing would be to have no development there at all in terms of the pure history. There's an argument for that, I suppose. But, the fact is preservation is part of a metropolitan environment. The metropolitan environment these days means looking for ways to put places of living near places of work that don't require streets and freeways and parking lots and so on. I think that development on East Hennepin Avenue has shown us that—not that this came as a surprise to people like you and I, Linda—you could have small shops, that people don't come to these places to park in a parking lot. They come to these places to buy things that they like to buy or see things they want to see and eat the food they want to eat and so on. So I think that sense really becomes part of what can happen with that part of the Saint Anthony Falls District. The district can and should address the kind of metropolitan city that Minneapolis can become.

LM: Would you say RiverWest was a horrible mistake? Not to put words in your mouth. [Laughter]

RR: I'll definitely put it in my own words. I was chair of the commission when that went up. [Sighs] When they came for a building permit, the developer couldn't wait for the meeting to start so then it could get finished and end so he could get out there, and then he could take the commission's denial to the city council—which he did. Brian Coyle was on the council at that time and Kathy and Tony and a bunch . . . The city council was getting beat up at the time that they were always handing money out to developers. They were subsidizing every project that would spring out of the ground. The developer said, "No, no. No city subsidy on this." I went to the Zoning and Planning meeting where they overrode the HPC's recommendations, and they couldn't wait to do it. They couldn't wait to vote in favor of it, because they so lusted after wanting to prove to the public that they were being responsible. This happened as a means of showing that.

After it was built, a couple years later, I remember I went as a commissioner to speak on some project at Zoning and Planning. When I got a chance to speak at Zoning and Planning, I kept talking and talking and talking about why that building was wrong in every way I could. Brian said, "This is the person we didn't listen to on RiverWest."

LM: Hmmm. Small consolation?

RR: Right. On my Sunday runs, I run down through Saint Paul's East River Parkway. I always run by 740 River Drive [Apartments]. The short side of the building faces the river and it's the long sides that allow people to get a view at an angle of the landscape. How many landscape paintings do you see where when you look at a river at a perpendicular angle?

LM: [Chuckles]

RR: That's what failed to happen here. I guess that developer took a long time to sell all those units. I call it the "Berlin Wall."

LM: Yes.

RR: Or I used to.

LM: What would you like to see happen on the riverfront now?

RR: Hmmm . . .

LM: As you look at it now, has it come together? Has it gelled? Has it become a neighborhood?

RR: It hasn't quite become a neighborhood yet. It's emerging that way. I look at the development like the [unclear] Hotel and those and they're good urban pieces for a city. On the other side of the river and down from the A Mill, I think going back from the river, there's a chance to develop little stackable townhouses, a fine grain mix of housing that's attached and stacked, that jig jogs back and forth along with commercial facilities and mini parks and so on. I think that would be a great mix rather than having *the* large building that tries to do all that and then figure out a way how to get parkland around it.

LM: That's on the east bank?

RR: On the east bank, yes. There would have been a chance to do that on the west bank, too, but then what happened happened there. It works.

LM: Yes.

RR: I'll just say I'm glad the Twins stadium didn't end up there.

LM: Oh, right. [Chuckles] Are you a Guthrie [Theater] fan?

RR: Uh . . .

LM: Architecturally? We don't have to talk about the place.

RR: I would be of the place. I like a building that functions well, and there are some problems there. I think there's something hanging up here that I wrote. It was in the *Star Tribune*; they published it. [Mr. Roscoe retrieves it to show to Linda.]

LM: Oh, yes.

RR: It's fine. It is a step forward in the architectural development. It is a step forward, but I think that saying that it was designed to fit in with the grain mills is a large stretch of the imagination. [Chuckles]

LM: It takes a French imagination.

RR: Right.

LM: Well any other great seminal moments in the rebirth of the Minneapolis Riverfront that stick out in your mind that we should document?

RR: Well, I think the name of the building was Ragstock. We got rid of that, didn't we, that concrete block building that was near the Liquor Depot, which, in itself was . . . ?

LM: Oh, right, right.

RR: We got rid of buildings that had just been these . . . put them up with straight walls and a roof that doesn't leak and put in doors and sell or produce whatever we have to. That's what the public seemed to say that that land was for. It wasn't meant to be part of the great Mississippi River corridor. It was just meant to do that. That was a holdover from the days when the Mississippi River was a lot of industries' backyard. So I think that was just great strides to get what's there now.

LM: Yes, it's so easy to forget that that was even there.

RR: Right. I can't envision where to go from here, but I just like to reflect on what has happened.

LM: Oh, you're like me. Historians find it very hard to think about the future. [Laughter]

RR: Sure.

LM: Well, thank you so much.

RR: Well, Linda, thanks for the opportunity here.

LM: It was fun.