



## Lowertown Redevelopment Corporation: Corporate records

### **Copyright Notice:**

This material may be protected by copyright law (U.S. Code, Title 17). Researchers are liable for any infringement. For more information, visit [www.mnhs.org/copyright](http://www.mnhs.org/copyright).



GREAT HALL  
Banquet Capacity: 350  
Reception Capacity: 600

THE MEZZANINE  
Banquet Capacity: 100  
Reception Capacity: 150

STATION MASTER'S HALL  
Dimensions: 45' x 45'

#### ACCESSIBILITY

- Fully accessible to the handicapped
- Connected to the St. Paul skyway system

#### CONVENIENT PARKING

- Two level underground parking within The Union Depot, elevator access to banquet level
- Inexpensive event parking fee
  - Circular drive for easy arrival and departure

*Christos*  
*Union Depot Place*  
*for the*  
*Perfect Space*

CHRISTOS  
UNION DEPOT PLACE



EVENT & BANQUET  
FACILITIES



CHRISTOS  
Union Depot Place  
214 Fourth Street East  
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55101  
Voice 612-224-6000  
Fax 612-223-4933

CHRISTOS  
UNION DEPOT PLACE  
EVENT & BANQUET  
FACILITIES

CHRISTOS  
AWARD WINNING  
GREEK  
RESTAURANT



# The Perfect Junction for Your Motorcoach Function—Christos Union Depot Place

Take a step back in time to a bygone era of timeless grace and elegance. Introduce your motorcoach passengers to the grandeur of St. Paul's historic Union Depot.

Placed on the National Historic Register in 1974, The Union Depot embodies the ornate style of St. Paul's architectural heritage.

## History Comes Alive

The Union Depot is located in St. Paul's Lowertown area, the birthplace of Minnesota's first railroad—the Saint Paul & Pacific. Designed by Charles S. Frost of Chicago, The Union Depot was built by the Confederation of Railroads between 1917 and 1920. The Lowertown area played an important role in the city's history; it was the site of the lower landing, a bustling Mississippi steamboat docking area where fur traders brought their wares to market, and an important part of the city's development. Later, due to the growth of the railroad industry, it became a thriving commercial district.

At one time the Union Depot was one of the busiest junctions around. When completed in 1920, it was a hub of downtown activity accommodating as many as 149 trains daily and serving 450,000 passengers per year.

Today, regular train travel is a memory of a bygone era and the foot-traffic has subsided—somewhat! But the elegance of this Neo-Classical structure remains the same and is even more breathtaking, following a major restoration to preserve the grandeur of one of St. Paul's most historic buildings.



## Timeless Elegance

The Union Depot offers a nostalgic glimpse reminiscent of another time. This Neo-Classical masterpiece sits in a park-like setting highlighted by a circular drive. At the building's stately entrance, ten Doric columns rise majestically to showcase a spectacular space now being offered as **Christos Union Depot Place**.

Just inside is the two-story **Great Hall** that soars 50 feet to a ceiling of original skylights. This room's elegant spaciousness is dramatically lighted by clerestory windows and wrought iron chandeliers. The drama is further heightened by twelve massive Ionic columns of marble, six on either end. Here the openness and subtle play of colors—muted pink, soft gray and pale green, create the perfect setting for road weary travelers to relax and soak in the atmosphere of truly refined grace.

Shimmering pink Tennessee marble floors lead the way to a central dining area surrounded by two tiers of live foliage. Ornate, multi-globed street lamps anchor the entrance and corners, suggesting an outside atmosphere. This dramatically raised platform will easily accommodate your group for a relaxed sit-down luncheon.

## The Mezzanine— For a Dazzling View

**The Mezzanine** is situated above the original Depot ticket windows that now provide an enchanting backdrop for Christos' sit-down bar. Up one short flight of stairs is a wrap-around balcony that features a beautiful glass balustrade and offers a panoramic view of the Great Hall. Here is another perfect place for you and your passengers to enjoy Mediterranean-style cuisine, fine conversation and a breathtaking view.

## Award-Winning Cuisine— Offering Something for Everyone

Christos' flagship restaurant, located in South Minneapolis, is testament to the authenticity of its fine Greek cuisine. Opened in 1988, Christos has built a loyal clientele, almost entirely by word-of-mouth, and a wonderful reputation by being voted "best" in the Greek food category in every publication

featuring a contest of comparison. This track record speaks volumes for the friendly service, beautiful atmosphere and Christos' delicious food, where the magic of the Mediterranean shines most brightly. Here many cultures are represented—the French with their sauces, the Venetians with their pasta, the Turks with their country-style lamb stews and the Arabs with their marinated and broiled Ke Babs. All of these culinary influences have been artfully blended into the classic and contemporary cuisine of Greece so proudly presented by **Christos Union Depot Place**. This award-winning fare is balanced with traditional American selections.

At the heart of Greek cuisine is wine. After all, it is this civilization that created and celebrated Dionysus—the God of Wine. Along with a full bar, Christos offers the finest assortment of Greek wine and liquors and a complete assortment of domestic wines.



### COMPLIMENTARY UNION DEPOT PRESENTATION

*Included with tour groups of 30 or more.*

Time: 15-20 minutes

Content: Lowertown and  
Union Depot history; Great Hall  
architectural highlights.

### ATTRACTIONS WITHIN WALKING DISTANCE

First Trust Center, *Classical Revival structure*; McCall Building, *Romanesque Revival design*; Endicott Building, *Italian Renaissance facade*; Park Square Court, *original home of Prairie Home Companion*; Mears Park, *picturesque heart of lowertown with man-made brook and waterfall*; Farmer's Market and Mississippi River waterfront walkway.

### DESTINATION KEEPSAKE

Print of original pen and ink drawing of the Union Depot—for sale.



PHOTO BY:  
GREG HELGESON  
PLEASE CREDIT ©

RETURN TO  
LOWERTOWN REDEVELOPMENT CORPORATION  
400 SIBLEY, SUITE 590  
ST. PAUL, MN 55101

UNION DEPOT PLACE, restored to its former glory through physical improvement and aesthetic treatment of the building, now houses fine restaurants and an art gallery. Continental Cable Television, a major tenant, has its headquarters on the second floor. The building is nearly fully occupied.







7 FILM ▲ 5071

E



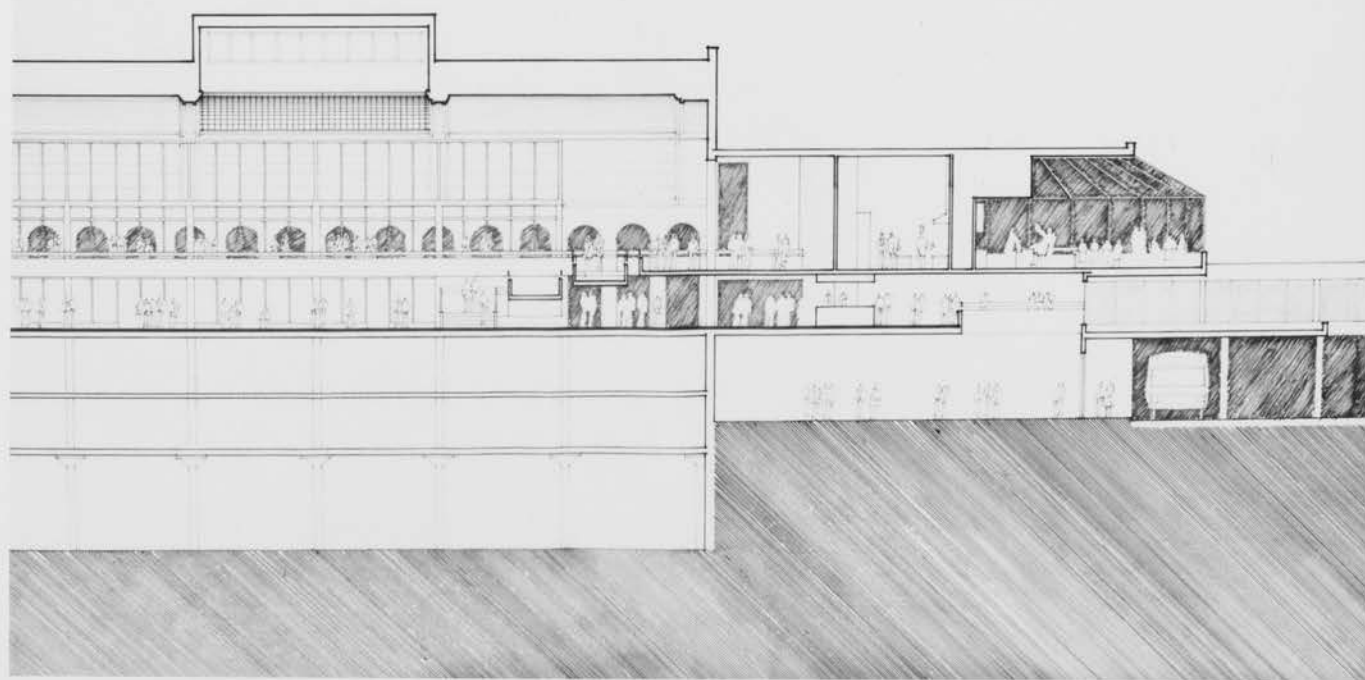
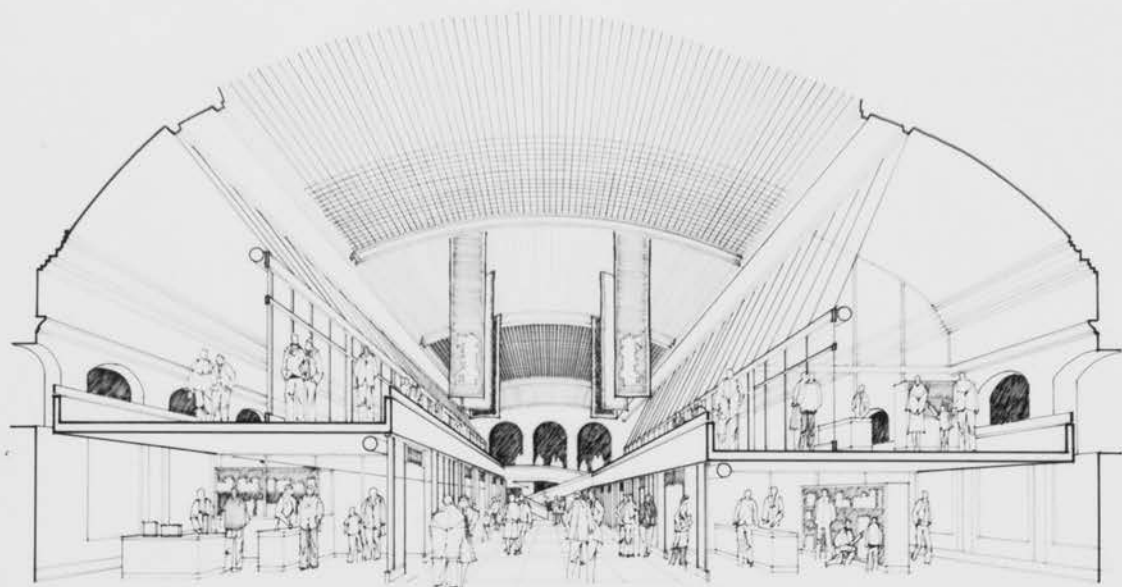
530

#906

506



only one  
(Depart  
Coxcourse)



KODAK SAFETY FILM ▲ 5071

C



80%

MARCH/APRIL 1984 \$2.50  
62364



# AM

*architecture minnesota*

**Special Issue:**  
**New Places for Old Saint Paul**

**Minnesota Architecture Directory**

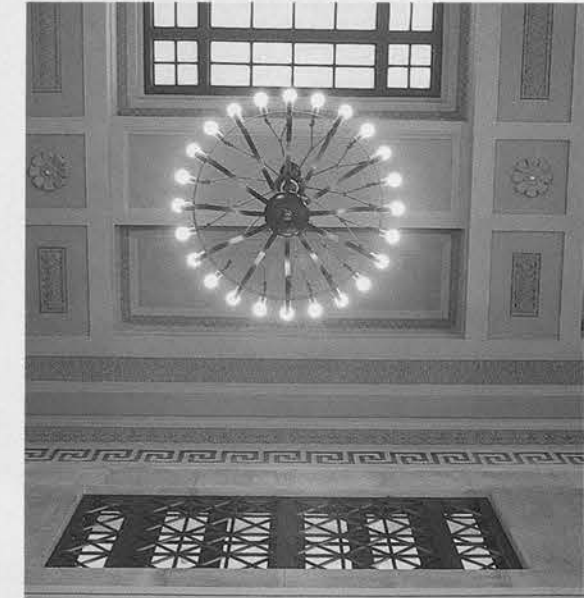




By Shannon King

The old Union Depot is open again—renewed, restored, spit and polished—after ten years of near total abandonment. Just two years ago, when Asset Development Services purchased the property, it was a kind of derelict building, unwanted and uncared for, the plaster ceiling half fallen to the floor, frozen and watersogged from broken pipes and the ravages of Minnesota winters. There was even a seven-foot tree growing in the debris caught in a skylight. The only signs of life were pigeons on the roof and a real derelict living on the lower level where immigrants once entered.

"Who'd ever buy that wreck of a building with a 'For Sale' sign tacked to it?" Mayor George Latimer reputedly said while driving by the site on the very day that Asset Development Services purchased it.



Brian Nelson, Asset Development Services President, does not think of himself as a "rescuer" of derelict buildings, although he does like them, but as a pragmatist with good business sense. "Notice this is a grey flannel outfit," he says, "I come out of the investment side of things. Uniqueness is a saleable product. These buildings are absolutely unique because of the sense of history they convey, and because of their craftsmanship." Nelson looks a bit "historical" himself (or, perhaps, post-modern). Though a young man in his thirties, he sports a broad, baroque moustache reminiscent of styles in 19th century tintypes.

His company, though, is a relatively new one, just five years old. The last three have been very good years, according to Nelson. "We spotted the trend of restoration in the Midwest where so many sound older buildings

# New Traffic for a Grand Old Station

Photos: Phillip Mookkellon Jones



are unused or mis-used. We're not a particularly large company and don't like to compete for \$50 million projects, but we are experienced in adaptive reuse.

Before the Depot project, Assets Development Services had recently developed the Grand Garage and Gallery in Stillwater, and were researching other places for historic renovation. St. Paul seemed perfect because "nothing was wrong in the first place." Things went downhill in the center of the city, according to Nelson, but not for any particular reason, like crime, but simply due to lack of interest. We found the Depot, and it was a pivotal building of an area undergoing rebirth," he says. "At the time, we knew the Galtier plaza was a possibility, which was a \$100 million development. It made sense to be there."

The company's biggest concern, at this point, was to find an architectural firm with the sensitivity to deal with older buildings. "Few in Minnesota have done this kind of detailed, yet large scale project," Nelson says.

Fortunately, Nelson's firm did find Rafferty, Rafferty, Mikutowski and Roney and Associates in St. Paul. "With restoration, unlike a new building," Nelson says, "you have the personality of the builders and the personality of the building. It's hard to make all that work together. Rafferty's firm did an exceptional job marrying the new uses to the old building. People come in and ask if the restaurant was always there—and that's a compliment. The mezzanine bar, for instance, was essentially Craig Rafferty's conception, working with interior designer Ron Sorenson. We're basically 'hands on' developers, and much involved all along. With Rafferty, we gave more leeway than usual, because of the direction they took the project, and their experience. We both learned from it."

The basic soundness of the headhouse was a strong factor when Asset Development Services considered the project. Although the debris-strewn interior required a massive clean-up, and was water damaged, no structural repairs had to be made. The building's reinforced concrete construction made the Twin Cities a leader in innovative technology when it was built, and it is still state-of-the-art construction. The Depot was designed by Charles S. Frost of Chicago, and built between 1919 and 1922. Its facade is of Bedford stone and the base is granite.

In the main lobby, despite the water and debris, much could be saved and re-used, and the pink Tennessee marble floors were not damaged. But decorative plaster running down the center of the roof beams had fallen, and wainscoting was water damaged. This required elaborate restoration work.

Here, the plasterers actually set up a factory in the middle of the atrium space, producing new replica moldings of reinforced plaster on the spot and installing them on the 150-foot ceiling.

A brick screen—the product of '50s remodeling—was stripped away from the original ticket counters which now divide Signal's Bar from the kitchen. An extension built out from the counters forms the bar.

The raised platform of Signal's restaurant once displayed the William Crooks steam engine—the first steam engine in Minnesota, which is now at the Transportation Museum in Duluth. Softly lit streetlamps around and within the restaurant suggest the outdoors, and extend Lowertown's streetscape concept (also developed by Rafferty).

A pink tile "moat" and fountains designed by Ron Sorenson complement the Tennessee marble floor.

"The biggest obstacle to this project," Nelson says, "was the psychological obstacle of the financial and investment community to an investment in St. Paul. The change over the past 24 months has been phenomenal—in the attitude of loan officers, investment advisors and investors themselves. I think our efforts will make it easier to do more projects here."

Union Depot Place already has captured people's imaginations. About 1,500 people were expected for the grand opening in December, but instead, 4,500 attended. A fundraiser for the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra attracted 1,900 (The building has exceptionally good acoustics, with its oblong rectangular shape similar to many European concert halls). There is already a brisk luncheon business at Signal's which wasn't anticipated—as December isn't ordinarily the best time to open a new restaurant.

Restoration of the Union Depot confirms the fact that elegance does not go out of style. And some buildings do have a personality, a presence. The architects and designers have enhanced that personality by recognizing its *restraint* (a nearly forgotten virtue in these modern times) and resisting the temptation to impose their personal styles or make flamboyant statements. The result—a great atrium spaciousness, clarity of line, subtle play of colors—soft greys, muted pinks and pale greens—that carry the past quite irresistibly into the future. Those who remember the depot with nostalgia will be happily surprised by the fresh new look on old familiar features, and by the fresh new energy that's enlivening this old, old part of town.

*Shannon King is a Minneapolis freelance writer who specializes in arts and architecture.*

Where traveler's footsteps echoed, a new rumble of activity



The tide of time . . . and the trains were gone

First came canoes, then steamboats, then trains. Now pedestrians gather here on the banks of the Mississippi. The old Union Depot is open again.

The Depot's history is full of such Phoenix-like transformations. The first railroad in Minnesota, the St. Paul and Pacific, started at this spot, which was then the Lower-town levee, and hauled goods brought in by steamboat over swampy bogs, and around the bluffs to St. Anthony. As railroads began to pass by the steamboat, James J. Hill and his associates formed the St. Paul Union Depot Company, and made the decision to utilize a single station for all the passenger traffic coming to the city. The first Union Depot station was built in 1881 (located along Sibley Street, south of Third Street). Its huge trainshed and high peaked roof



made it an imposing structure which even impressed Mark Twain, who called it "an unusually fine rail-way station." In 1913, the St. Paul Union Depot was destroyed by fire, and agreement on plans for a new building was hindered by conflicting railroad and city interests and the difficulties of building while accommodating traffic at the site. One plan

even proposed moving the Mississippi River channel 400 feet to the south.

Finally, in 1917, plans were accepted, but the advent of World War I caused further delay, and construction began in 1919. The headhouse, concourse and waiting room were designed by architect Charles S. Frost of Chicago (Frost also designed what is now the Bur-



Relaxing with a glass of vintage wine, patrons of Gordon's Mezzanine Bar (left) can enjoy a panoramic view including the activity at Signal's restaurant.

Attention to detail in decor is evident in the diamond pattern in the glass balustrade, the motif in clerestory windows, and in the rosy color scheme that plays on tones of marble.

Elegant Ionic columns (bottom left) and original clock frame the inner space. Design of large windows in background is repeated in grillwork of old ticket windows at Signal's (above).

New fountain design (top left) surrounding restaurant provides pleasant sounds and sights of running water, and wrought iron streetlamps suggest an outdoor atmosphere.

lington Northern Building in St. Paul and the Great Northern and Milwaukee Road depots in Minneapolis).

The depot opened in March, 1920 and, in short order, began handling, among other things, 746 tons of mail per day, 576,000 milkcans per year, while an estimated 20,000 passengers came through on the 282 trains arriving and departing each day.

Time, tides, and technology wait for no man—or train. With the advent of the automobile, followed by the Depression and then the growth of air travel, passenger demand continually diminished, and in 1970 less than 50,000 tickets were sold. The last passenger train pulled out of the depot May 2, 1971 when Amtrak took over the service and moved its operation to a new building in an industrial area.

Today, Union Depot Place has put on a fresh face, and is open to a new kind of traffic. The trains may be gone, but the depot is back.

S.K.





French maitre 'd Alain Bacherie (above) greets guests at Gordon's front door. Attention to detail is evidenced in custom woodwork by Aaron Carlson, Larry Jesinosky and John Lunde including serving carts (above) and textile hangings (below) by Minneapolis artist Ned Souder.



Photos: Philip MacMillan, James



## In the former ladies lounge, *haute cuisine* and luscious decor

The lobby of the Union Depot is a place that bustles, today as it did in the past. But through a set of double doors is a new place that invites repose. Gordon's, the newest of owner Gordon Schutte's restaurants in St. Paul, is as he calls it "classic in every detail." Its formal decor—simple and refined—provides a quiet sanctuary for fine food and wine.

Gordon's dining room encompasses more space than its counterpoint Signal's, in the Depot lobby, but it seats fewer people. Thus, even when the house is full, seclusion and privacy are maintained. As Mr. Schutte puts it, "My charter to the architects was 'There shall not be a bad seat in the house.'" Indeed, St. Paul architects Rafferty, Rafferty, Mikutowski and Roney and interior designer Ron Sorenson have fulfilled their client's wish with the careful arrangement of seating and elegant furnishings.

Mindful of the Neo-Classical style of the original structure, the architects and interior designer adapted the space for its new use by highlighting its inherent detailing and adding new complementary elements. The high backed banquettes, pinwheeling around three columns in the main dining room, are reminiscent of the seats on Pullman cars of the trains which stopped at the depot in the '20s. Designed by Ron Sorenson, the banquettes also serve as acoustical buffers, accentuating the intimate atmosphere. Softly lit with restored chandeliers and new wall sconces, the interior's coloring takes cues from the tones of the pink Tennessee marble, painted walls and wrought iron of the original structure. Wrapping around the dining room, a band of granite wainscoting blends into the mahogany wainscoting of the wine room adjacent to the west.

In the wine room, a collection of fine old Bordeaux wines are kept in temperature-controlled cellars. These cellars, sheathed in glass, allow guests to peruse the vintage wines (as mature as the 1961 Chateau Lafite or the 1970

Chateau Montrose) before tasting their selection in the elegant, almost residential sitting room.

Beyond the wine room are two private conference rooms. Audio-visual equipment will be housed in a large mahogany armoire to complement the nearby linen credenza, maitre 'd stands, sculpture pedestals and serving carts. Crafted by John Lunde, the serving carts were designed to accommodate specifications requested by executive chef Sidney Larson.

The chef's primary concern, however, was the kitchen. Here, where depot clerks formerly sold train tickets, pastries and sauces are now prepared in one of the most complex kitchens in the Twin Cities. Chef Larson requested separate work stations for the *saucier*, *rotissier*, *garde manger* and *patissier*. "My general requirements were based on the flow of activity, the menu and the number of people preparing the food." The details, from the *baine-marie* (a soft heat bath) to the marble confectionery's slab reflect the attention Gordon's gives both food and surroundings.

J.G.





## UNION DEPOT PLACE

Historic Lowertown

St. Paul, Minnesota 55101

Fourth & Sibley

### Restaurants

#### GORDON'S

(Lunch & Dinner)

is a classic French restaurant in stately and elegant surroundings. Gordon's food preparation, presentation and service combine to represent the very highest level of culinary art. 227-3200.

#### THE MEZZANINE BAR

a private place for conversation and cocktails in St. Paul's most intimate setting.

#### LEEANN CHIN'S

(Lunch, Dinner, Catering, Chinese Market)

serves the finest quality Chinese food in a contemporary and relaxed atmosphere. The menu changes daily, taking advantage of the freshest foods available. Adjacent to the restaurant is the Chinese Market featuring oriental produce, dry goods, imported dishes and cooking utensils, as well as foods served in the restaurant. 224-8814.

#### SIGNALS

(Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner)

located in the Great Space of the Union Depot, Signals Restaurant and Bar serves authentic American foods. Dishes that might remind one of foods served train travelers as they crossed the country. Regional specials from the northeast to the southwest round out the ticket at Signals. 221-1983.

#### SIGNALS BAR

the original Depot ticket windows provide the backdrop at this bright and lively gathering spot for conversation, drinks and entertainment.

#### THE SIDEWALK CAFE

serves light meals noon to midnight in an outdoor setting. Full bar service available.

### Special Events

1. "Great Space" available for special events. The two story high "waiting room" area of the Depot is the perfect spot for everything from a cocktail party to formal dinners for 100-2000 people. 292-8411.
2. Private Dining/Meeting Rooms.
3. Catering for business meetings, receptions, and parties.

### ST. PAUL'S HISTORIC AREA

Union Depot Place is located in the Lowertown area of St. Paul. Lowertown played an important role in St. Paul's history. It was the site of the lower landing, a bustling Mississippi steamboat docking area of the city's development when fur traders brought their wares to market. Later due to the growth of the railroad industry, it became a thriving commercial district. Lowertown is in the process of being rebuilt into a thriving entertainment, retail and housing area of St. Paul.