

ROCHESTER CONSERVANCY

THE FORMER CARLTON HOTEL IS AUTHENTIC ROCHESTER AND SHOULD BE REVITALIZED IN A FASHION SIMILAR TO THE ICONIC HOTEL DE LUXE IN PORTLAND OREGON. WHILE THE HOTEL'S PRIMARY ROLE IN SERVING MAYO CLINIC PATIENTS IS ITS CONSTRUCTION HISTORY, PAUL GRASSLE'S CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND THE FAMILY'S LEADERSHIP IN THE LOCAL BUSINESS COMMUNITY IS INDISPUTABLE. THE EXTENSIVE GRASSLE FAMILY COLLECTION HAS REVEALED SEVERAL THINGS THAT ARE LESS WIDELY KNOWN AND HERE ARE SOME HIGHLIGHTS OF THE NEWSPAPER CLIPPINGS, CORRESPONDENCE AND OTHER INFORMATION THE FAMILY HAS SHARED WITH THE ROCHESTER CONSERVANCY AND THE 106 GROUP:

- APPARENTLY, THE CARLETON ROUTINELY ACCOMMODATED NATIVE AMERICANS—IN AN ERA OF RATHER WIDESPREAD RACIAL PREJUDICE IN OUR COMMUNITY, WHEN PEOPLE OF THE JEWISH FAITH AND PEOPLE OF COLOR WHO SOUGHT TREATMENT AT MAYO CLINIC WERE NOT READILY ACCEPTED IN LOCAL HOTELS (EXCEPT FOR THE AVALON HOTEL, WHICH IS LISTED ON THE NATIONAL REGISTER FOR THIS REASON).
- THE HOTEL SERVED VETERANS WHOSE BILLS WERE UNDERWRITTEN BY THE U.S. VETERANS BUREAU.
- THE CARLETON WAS A MEETING SITE FOR LOCAL CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS, LIKE THE “GAMLE NORGE CULTURAL AND MARCHING SOCIETY.” ONE OF THE NEWSPAPER ARTICLES INDICATES THAT PAUL GRASSLE (ONE OF CARLETON FOUNDER CHARLES GRASSLE'S TWO SONS, WHO SUCCEEDED HIM IN OPERATING THE HOTEL UNTIL ITS SALE IN 1974) OPENED ITS MEETINGS BY RINGING AN OLD ROCHESTER FIRE BELL.
- CHARLES GRASSLE WAS A LONG-TIME OWNER OF A DOWNTOWN ROCHESTER BAR AND RESTAURANT BEFORE PROHIBITION CAUSED HIM TO CONSIDER ROCHESTER'S NEED FOR A GOOD FAMILY HOTEL.
- THE HOTEL ADVERTISED THAT ITS RESTAURANTS WERE “RECOMMENDED” BY THE TRAVEL GUIDE REVIEWER DUNCAN HINES.
- PAUL GRASSLE AND DR. CHARLES MAYO WERE HONORED IN 1954 FOR THEIR JOINT WORK ON THE ROCHESTER CENTENNIAL, WHICH WAS ROCHESTER'S LARGEST PUBLIC CELEBRATION TO THAT DATE (AND PERHAPS THE LARGEST EVER IN ROCHESTER HISTORY). SOME OF THE CELEBRATION ACTIVITIES TOOK PLACE AT THE CARLTON.
- IN ADDITION TO HIS FOUR TERMS AS ROCHESTER MAYOR, 20 YEARS OF SERVICE ON ROCHESTER'S CHARTER COMMISSION, AND MANY DECADES OF MEMBERSHIP IN LOCAL SERVICE CLUBS, PAUL GRASSLE WAS A LEADER OF VARIOUS LOCAL AND STATE PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS WITHIN THE HOTEL INDUSTRY, AND SERVED ON THE AMERICAN HOTEL ASSOCIATION'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS.
- THE CARLTON'S ARCHITECT, FREDERICK H. MOSSE, GREW UP IN ROCHESTER AS THE SON OF A MAYO CLINIC PHYSICIAN, AND WAS EDUCATED AT CARLETON COLLEGE AND

THE UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA. AMONG HIS OTHER PROJECTS ARE ROCHESTER'S ARMORY AND FORMER SALVATION ARMY CITADEL (BOTH STILL EXTANT, AND THE ARMORY IS ON THE NATIONAL REGISTER).

- THE CARLTON WAS A SUBSTANTIAL BUILDING, DESIGNED TO BE FIREPROOF (ASIDE: CHARLES GRASSLE WAS A FIREFIGHTER BEFORE TURNING TO THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY). IT HAD LEATHER AND MAHOGANY FURNITURE, HIGH-END FINISHES (KASOTA MARBLE LOBBY FLOORING, CARPETS AND MAHOGANY PANELING THROUGHOUT THE BUILDING), AND BATHROOMS IN MOST OF ITS GUEST ROOMS. HVAC AND PLUMBING SYSTEMS WERE DESIGNED BY MAASS AND MCANDREW, A ROCHESTER FIRM THAT WAS ALSO WORKING WITH DR. HENRY PLUMMER ON MAYO CLINIC'S EARLY FACILITIES AT THAT TIME. THE OVERALL DESIGN, AS TWO SMALL BLOCKS OF ROOMS RATHER THAN ONE LARGER ONE, WAS THOUGHT TO MAXIMIZE FRESH AIR TO GUEST ROOMS. I UNDERSTAND THAT THIS WAS A TREND IN HOTEL DESIGN, BUT, TO MY KNOWLEDGE, THERE WAS ONLY ONE OTHER HOTEL IN ROCHESTER THAT WAS DESIGNED THIS WAY—THE COLONIAL HOTEL/HOSPITAL, NOW A MAYO CLINIC FACILITY WITH ONLY ONE OF ITS BLOCKS REMAINING.
- OTHER HOTEL AMENITIES INCLUDED A RETAIL STORE, AN OPTICIAN, A DRUG STORE, AND A BUS STATION. GINGER HAS LEASES FOR THESE TENANTS.

THE CARLTON IS THE LAST OF THE GREAT FAMILY-RUN HOTELS (THE MARTIN, THE CAMPBELL, THE ARTHUR, THE DAMON, THE COOK, AND OTHERS) THAT WERE CREATED TO SERVE MAYO CLINIC PATIENTS, AND IS A GOOD COMPLEMENT TO THE CORPORATE KAHLER HOSPITAL-HOTEL FAMILY (OF WHICH ONLY THE FLAGSHIP KAHLER GRAND REMAINS). OWNED AND MANAGED BY THE GRASSLE FAMILY FOR MORE THAN FIVE DECADES, IT WAS AN EXEMPLARY EMPLOYER—EVEN THROUGH THE DEPRESSION ERA, WHEN NOT A SINGLE JOB WAS LOST—AND MADE A SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO THE WARMTH OF ROCHESTER'S WELCOME TO MAYO CLINIC PATIENTS.

SPEAKING FOR THOSE IN OUR COMMUNITY WHO CHERISH ITS HERITAGE AND BEING SUPPORTIVE OF THE GOALS AND VISION OF THE DMC PLANNING AND DESIGN GUIDELINES WE BELIEVE THIS HISTORIC LANDMARK SHOULD BE SPARED THE WRECKING BALL AND CONTINUE TO SERVE AS A UNIQUE DOWNTOWN ROCHESTER ANCHOR.

HERITAGE + EDUCATION + GROWTH