

Downtown



37 281 5th St. E.

The Crane Ordway

Aeon (in photo: Aeon staff)

Tours hourly on the half hour. Completed in 1904, this building was constructed as a warehouse for the Crane and Ordway Company, who at the time was the largest manufacturer of pipes, valves and steam supplies in the world. Today, the Crane Ordway is a housing complex serving people at 60% of the area median income. Elements of the original warehouse are preserved to keep its historical properties alive. From the beautiful exposed brick to the impressive long-standing pillars, Crane Ordway's historical features lend a charming look to the apartment building. The mosaic artwork shown in the building lobby was created from the original bathroom tiling of the Crane warehouse.

Since 1986, Aeon has been a nonprofit developer, owner and manager of affordable housing in the Twin Cities.



Downtown



38 200 10th St. E.

Renaissance Box

Aeon (in photo: Gregor McDonald)

Tours hourly on the hour. Built in 1914 and formerly the O'Donnell Shoe Factory, Renaissance Box Apartments is now a historic and sustainable home for Aeon residents. Original features like exposed brick and grand columns give this space an old-time feel, while sustainable upgrades and eye-catching artwork throughout the property add a modern touch. Step inside creatively arranged studios that maximize space and show off beautiful natural lighting. Home to several artists, this unique building also offers a private studio where residents can go to create — you'll find original resident artwork displayed in the cozy community room.

Aeon is a nonprofit developer, owner and manager of affordable housing in the Twin Cities. For more than 30 years, Aeon has helped provide high-quality homes to those facing the greatest barriers.



Walking Tour

Visiting either of Aeon's buildings, the Crane Ordway or Renaissance Box during the Home Tour or attending the Saint Paul Art Crawl in Downtown there is metered street parking. Or park at Union Depot or Lowertown Ramp, or take light rail. While Crane Ordway and Renaissance Box are only available to tour during the Home Tour, take the exterior walking tour between them any time.

You'll see two eras of construction, divided by East Seventh Street.

Many late 1800s–early 1900s buildings have been preserved and repurposed in Lowertown. The Northeast Quadrant developed in the early to mid 2000s...as an extension of Lowertown, with a new park, dense apartment housing and street-level businesses between East 7th and East 10th streets.

A) Restored Union Depot, 214 4th St. E. opened to the public December 2012. Note the **Custom House**, the hotel and condo re-use of the Post Office and Custom House (immigration office). It towers above the Depot at 2180 Kellogg Blvd. E. Walk through the **Carriage Way** with its photographic tiles by Sightline Tile depicting historic and other images.

B) 352 Wacouta and 242-280 Wacouta, The Paul Gotzian Building and former **Gotzian Shoe Company**, designed by Cass Gilbert, architect of the State Capitol. The latter is now Parkside Apartments.

C) Lowertown Lofts at 240 E. 5th St. Powers Dry Goods (later Department Store) started here. Continue east on 5th noting **Lofts at Farmers Market**, 260 E. 5th St., built by the City of St. Paul 2012 with art installations and a green roof, and **Rayette Lofts**, 261 E. 5th St., a 2014 Sherman Associates conversion with local art in its common areas.

D) 281 5th St. E. — Crane Ordway: Richard Teller Crane and Lucius Pond Ordway united their companies in 1893; Crane manufactured valves, fittings and supplies for steam engines, Ordway was in pipes, pumps, well drilling, windmills and water works. Eventually Crane became part of American Standard and Ordway went on to help build 3M. Building was designed by Reed and Stem, and had been vacant for 30 years before Aeon converted it to 70 apartments. A mural in the lobby is a mosaic of tiles found in the old warehouse.

E) Market House, a condo building with offices on the lower floors. Three Deep Marketing combines five different historic office spaces for contemporary space with all the comforts of a creative home. Note **CHS Field** to the east.

F) Seestedt's Carpet and Linoleum, a family owned business for over 90 years. At 282 E. 6th St., the building known as the Commission House was recently painted to recall the original brick color when built.



G) Lowertown warehouse buildings turned residential: **Cosmopolitan Apartments**, 250 E. 6th St., built 1911 was the Finch, VanSlyck and McConville Dry Goods Company. Repurposed in the 1980s, new common areas were added in 2015 and apartment renovation to industrial-chic style is underway. **River Park Lofts** 245 E. 6th St. is now condos. Built 1905, Architect J. Walter Stevens designed it and most of the buildings around Mears Park including the Bulldog, the building west of it, and what is now the massive Park Square Court.

H) 413 Wacouta: An event center, and business offices, one of three Cass Gilbert-designed buildings in Lowertown, it is named for him. Constructed in 1894 owned by the Boston & Northwest Realty Co., home of T.L. Blood's Northwestern Paint Works Co. **412 Wacouta** was Fire Station #2, built 1872, added onto in 1885, rebuilt 1921. Condos.

I) Stand at the corner of 7th and Wacouta outside the Gopher Bar or the Buttered Tin, and look back: To your left, the Dark Horse Restaurant is in a row of buildings being redeveloped. The former Annie's space is ready for a restaurant. Note Kat Keys locksmith in business since 1924 at 249 E. 7th St., and Needels (janitorial) Supply, 444 Wacouta, celebrating 75 years in business in 2017.

J) Wacouta Commons Park, built 2006. To the west: **The Essex**, 445 Wacouta Commons, built 2001, and the **Dakota**, by Lander Group. **Lyons Court** with 60 units of independent senior housing, by Sherman. The **9th Street Lofts** at 225 9th St., 49 condos in a historic building that used to house a state agency.

K) Renaissance Box at Sibley and 10th. Originally a shoe company, most recently a theater before Aeon's renovation into 70 units of LEED-Gold affordable housing designed by LHB. Awarded the 2013 Affordable Housing Design Award by the American Institute of Architects (AIA) Minnesota and McKnight Foundation.

L) A street of new apartments. Between Lander and Sherman, most of this area was developed in the early to mid-2000s. **Printer's Row**, condos built in 2005 by Lander, main entrance at 490 Temperance. Sherman developed **Sibley Court** and **Sibley Park** apartments with businesses on the first floor.

M) Late 1800s buildings remain including the **Walsh Block** at 189-191 E. 7th St., built 1888, Edward P. Bassford, architect.

N) 212 E. 7th St. Bonnie Jean Lofts and Offices in the building with ghost sign for Butwinick's.

O) 224-240 E. 7th St. the Constans Block, 1884, Architect Augustus Gauger (who also designed the 2017 Tour home at 672 Greenbrier). Indoor parking garage on main level, **Heritage House** senior housing above, some space in flux.

P) At 6th, take the diagonal through Mears Park and see the contrast of old and new: 400 Sibley was built in 1889 for a drug and medical supply business. A 1906 expansion added three bays including the entrance fronting the park. In 1971-73 the building was converted to retail shops, restaurants and offices and was renamed **Park Square Court**. To the west, a self-contained community on one block, 1986-built **Cray** (formerly Galtier) **Plaza** including the YMCA, and **Galtier Towers**; championed by Lowertown Redevelopment Corporation's executive director Weiming Lu.

Q) The World of Beer at 356 Sibley, and 333 Sibley, **333 on the Park**, housing conversion at the former Social Security office. While 209 E. 4th St. is now fallow, 213 E. 4th is home to the co-working space called **COCO**, one of the newest concepts in business.

Sources for this tour include building and business websites, internet searches for press articles, Preservation Alliance of Minnesota, American Institute of Architects Minnesota, and the history link at lowertownlanding.com. Lowertown Landing is dedicated to supporting the continued growth and rejuvenation of the Lowertown historic district...21 buildings are profiled, about half of which are noted above.

—Compiled by Margo Ashmore