

# James A. Sewell, principal

## James A. Sewell Preservation Services, LLC

### Licensed Professional Architect

#### INTRODUCTION

Sewell has worked with historic buildings and properties in a wide variety of ways, both as the senior architect in the Wisconsin State Historic Preservation, a state agency, and in the private sector. Below is a summary of his experience.

#### PRINCIPAL, JAMES A. SEWELL PRESERVATION SERVICES: 2010 to present

Sewell is principal of the preservation consulting firm, James A. Sewell Preservation Services, LLC, which provides a wide range of consulting services to owners and developers of historic properties, as well as to government and non-profit groups. The firm specializes in advising owners of proper preservation techniques with an emphasis on meeting the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, and its subsections, such as Rehabilitation and Preservation. Below are some of his more noteworthy clients and achievements.

**TALIESIN, NHL. Spring Green, Wisconsin.** Sewell was employed as a preservation consultant by Taliesin Preservation, Inc. (TPI) from 2010 until 2015 when funding for the position was exhausted. Since then, Sewell has provided those services on a volunteer basis. Among his achievements he:

- Reviewed and documented ongoing work to ensure compliance with the Standards, in accordance with pre-existing restrictive covenants;
- Developed an omnibus Historic Preservation Plan for the entire Taliesin estate in Spring Green, including buildings, structures, and nearby land owned by the Frank Lloyd Wright foundation. This plan was submitted to OKEMOS in anticipation of the Taliesin Residence being nominated as a World Heritage Site.
- Developed a charter for a Taliesin Oversight Committee, which monitors and approves all projects at the Taliesin Estate in accordance with the Standards. Sewell has chaired this committee since its inception in 2011.
- Is developing procedures and standards for work to be carried out on the estate, such as repointing, masonry repair, roof replacement, and structural augmentation.
- Developed internal policies for TPI to help prevent damage to Taliesin's historic features while allowing for its continued usage and display to the public. These include a Special Events Policy and Fire and Fireplace Usage Policy.
- Compiled photo and video documentation for current events, as well as previous work as documented from his earliest work with Taliesin dating back as far as 1978. This documentation continues to be donated to the TPI photo and video archives.

**NATIONAL HOME FOR DISABLED VOLUNTEER SOLDIERS, NHL. Milwaukee VA Hospital.** Working with a team of engineers, architects and landscape architects, Sewell provided inspection services, guidance in meeting the Standards, and detailed, illustrated work programs for several National Historic Landmark Buildings. This work was subject to Section 106 review by the National Park Service, which oversaw the design and approval process. The work programs produced by Sewell formed the basis on which the work was reviewed. Among the work programs were:

- Repair of a collapsed section of roof on Main Hall, constructed in 1867, and the oldest "Old Soldier Home" in the nation;
- Complex repair of a collapsed truss in the Ward Theater Building, including additional roof, masonry, porch, fire escape, and exterior woodwork.
- Roof repair and replacement on three large, interconnected former hospital facili-



#### EXPERTISE

- Knowledge of historic architecture and appropriate preservation techniques.
- Application of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards.
- Familiarity with State Historic Preservation Office and National Park Service processes.

#### REGISTRATION

- Registered Architect State of Wisconsin

#### EDUCATION

- Bachelor of Science, University of Michigan, 1972
- Master of Architecture, University of Michigan, 1973
- Post-degree courses in Construction Management and Real Estate law and finance, University of Wisconsin-Madison.

#### PUBLICATIONS

- *Treatment of Flood-Damaged Older and Historic Buildings* published by the National Trust for Historic Preservation

ties with numerous significant roof-level features.

- Repair of masonry, window, concrete, and other significant features on numerous other buildings in the National Register complex.
- Removal of an elevated, highly visible steam pipe running through the historic district.

Sewell also produced an adaptive reuse plan for the Ward Theater Building in compliance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.

**TOMAH VETERANS HOSPITAL, NRHP. Tomah, Wisconsin.** Working with a Milwaukee-based engineering firm, Sewell developed work programs meeting the Standards for a number of contributing buildings to the Tomah VA National Register Historic District. Among the projects

- Analysis and repair of the 4-story decorative masonry and stone former ceremonial entrance to the Main Building.
- Development of code-compliant ramps, paving, and entrances for two of the buildings.
- Masonry repair for five of the buildings in the complex.

### **SENIOR PRESERVATION ARCHITECT, WISCONSIN STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE: 1976 to 2010**

Prior to his consulting career, Sewell served as the Senior Preservation Architect for the Division of Historic Preservation of the Wisconsin Historical Society from 1976 to 2010. In that position, he was responsible for ensuring that work on historic buildings in Wisconsin met the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Property, particularly the standards for Rehabilitation.

His responsibilities included: providing technical assistance to owners of historic buildings; administering a program of tax credits for rehabilitation of historic buildings; review of projects under state and federal compliance laws; and administering a program of federal grants-in-aid, when available, to owners of National Register properties. He was also responsible for overseeing the certification of properties under the Wisconsin historic building code and served on the Historic Building Code Council that produced and modified the code. In addition he has served on the Madison Landmark Commission, the Fitchburg Landmark Commission, the Board of Directors of the Madison Trust for Historic Preservation, the Board of Directors of the Wisconsin Trust for Historic Preservation, and the Wisconsin State Capitol and Executive Residence Board.

### **ACHIEVEMENTS**

- Member of advisory committees for Frank Lloyd Wright's First Unitarian Society Meeting House.
- Advised owners of numerous buildings rehabilitated to new uses, such as the Milwaukee Gas Light Company, numerous buildings in the Pabst Brewery complex, the Pittsburgh Plate Glass Enamel factory, Baraboo Island Woolen Mill, The La Crosse Gund Brewery, and numerous University of Wisconsin historic buildings, such as the Education Building, Home Economics Building, Agricultural Journalism Building, Washburn Observatory, Science Hall, and the Memorial Union.
- Served on the Wisconsin Historic Building Code Council that developed and published Wisconsin's first Historic Building Code in 1986. Continued on the council as it monitored and refined the code and eventually folded it into the Uniform Building Code and Existing Building Code.
- Consulted and advised numerous owners of public buildings, such as the Wisconsin State Capitol, numerous historic libraries, historic federal post offices, and nearly every historic county courthouse in Wisconsin.
- Worked with owners of hundreds of income-producing historic properties to bring rehabilitation plans into conformance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. These properties include large manufacturing buildings, downtown storefronts, schools, libraries, churches, and historic houses.