

**STE. CLAIRE (Passenger Steamship)**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

**Withdrawal Report**

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form

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**NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK WITHDRAWAL OF DESIGNATION REPORT**

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***Ste. Claire* (Passenger Steamship)  
National Historic Landmark****Designated:**

June 6, 1992

**Location:**

Riverside Marina, Detroit River, Detroit, Michigan

**Owner:**

Dr. Ron Kattoo  
Henry Ford Health System  
2799 West Grand Blvd.  
Detroit, MI 48222

**SHPO Contact:**

Mr. Mark Rodman, SHPO  
Michigan Economic Development Corporation  
State Historic Preservation Office  
300 N. Washington Square  
Lansing, MI 48913

**Significance of the Landmark:**

Designed by Frank E. Kirby, one of the leading naval architects of the time, the classic excursion passenger steamer *Ste. Claire* was launched in Toledo, Ohio, in 1910 and entered service as part of the fleet operated by the Detroit & Windsor Ferry Company. *Ste. Claire* was a sister ship to *Columbia* (NHL, 1992) and for 81 years the two shared the run from Detroit to Bois Blanc (Bob-Lo) Island, a popular amusement park. This is a record of service unequalled in U.S. maritime history. *Columbia* and *Ste. Claire* were the country's best remaining examples of classic excursion steamers.

**Condition of the Landmark:**

*Ste. Claire*, along with her sister ship *Columbia*, were taken out of commission at the end of the 1991 season. In 2016, *Ste. Claire* was moored in the Detroit River with restoration work being carried out by her current owner. A steel structure was added to the ship above the main deck that was considered to be an inappropriate alteration by preservationists. Among other work being done on the ship was the partial destruction of the historic boilers. (The power plant was one of the nationally significant resources on the ship.) On July 6, 2018, the *Ste. Claire* caught fire during work by welders. Because the vessel was not directly at a dock, fire apparatus was not able to closely approach the *Ste. Claire* so effective firefighting had to wait for the arrival of the Detroit fire boat from over seven miles away. For all practical purposes the vessel's wooden superstructure was completely destroyed, except for a very small section at the stern. The only thing standing above the main deck is the added inappropriate steel structure. (See below for links to articles.)

[Saying goodbye to the Ste. Claire \(detroitnews.com\)](http://detroitnews.com)

[Historic Boblo Island boat, S.S. Ste Claire, destroyed by fire along Detroit River \(clickondetroit.com\)](http://clickondetroit.com)

**Recommendation:**

The property no longer retains its historical integrity and, therefore, National Historic Landmark (NHL) designation should be withdrawn. The Michigan State Historic Preservation Office concurs with the decision to withdraw the NHL designation and is in the process of requesting the property be removed from the National Register of Historic Places.

**Justification for Withdrawing Landmark Designation:**

The *Ste. Claire* Passenger Steamer has ceased to meet the criteria for designation because the qualities which originally led it to be designated, have been destroyed [36 CFR 65.9 (b)(1)].



*Ste. Claire* Passenger Steamer, Detroit, Michigan  
Post July 2018 fire  
Photo by William M. Worden, 2018