

Red Cross abandoning fungus-plagued headquarters

The American Red Cross, chased out of its old Minneapolis chapter house by intractable fungus contamination, will build a larger headquarters near the Interstate Hwy. 35W bridge over the Mississippi River.

The old building, the former Heffelfinger family mansion at 11 Dell Place south of Loring Park, will be razed because the contamination could not be abated, said Marian Adcock, the chapter's chief executive officer.

Groundbreaking is expected in May for the 50,000-square-foot brick, glass and aluminum building on 1.8 vacant acres at 1201 West River Pkwy. About 70 employees, now scattered at a dozen locations, are to be in the new structure before spring of 2000.

The project will cost about \$7 million, and Adcock said funds will include a few million dollars to be raised in a local capital campaign and even more from the national Red Cross.

``For 90 years, Red Cross volunteers selflessly have helped people in this community during times of disaster,'' she said. ``Now we are asking the community to help us as we recover from our own.''

The new building will include a regional blood collection center, an emergency operations center and space for volunteer training and mass care.

The old building was infested with four types of fungus, including *Stachybotrys atra*, which has been linked to fatal illnesses in animals.

Adcock said the Red Cross assisted nine employees in getting workers' compensation, has sued contractors who installed air-handling systems in additions to the old building in the 1970s and 1980s, and is in negotiations with its insurance carrier.

The old building site is too small for a replacement structure, and the Red Cross is negotiating to sell it, she said.

The Red Cross also said building anew would be more cost-effective than leasing because the local real-estate market is so tight.

The agency is buying the new site, in the Industry Square area east of downtown, from the Minneapolis Community Development Agency (MCDA) for \$449,000. Design and construction are by KKE Architects and the Ryan Companies US.

The Red Cross had occupied its Dell Place building since the 1940s. It was donated by the family of Tom Heffelfinger, now the chapter's board chairman. After moving out in 1996, the chapter occupied space at the Dayton Hudson Operations Center in Golden Valley and then at the United Way of Minneapolis Area building in downtown Minneapolis.

The chapter has an annual budget of about \$4 million and serves Hennepin, Anoka and Scott counties. Adcock also functions as administrative head of Red Cross disaster services statewide, and the agency said it benefits more than 350,000 people a year.

Copyright 1999 Star Tribune. Republished under license to Infonautics Corp. All other rights reserved.

Robert Franklin; Staff Writer, *Red Cross abandoning fungus-plagued headquarters.* , Minneapolis Star Tribune, 03-13-1999, pp 04B.

Copyright © 1998 [Infonautics Corporation](#). All rights reserved. - [Terms and Conditions](#)