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West End Settlement House makes statewide endangered list

Wednesday, April 6, 2011, Springfield, Ill.—The West End Settlement House, 427 7th Ave., Rock Island (Rock Island County), was named to Landmarks Illinois’ annual “Ten Most Endangered Historic Places” list, which was announced today at a press conference in the State Capitol.

“This is one of Rock Island’s most unique buildings both historically and architecturally,” said Jim Peters, President of Landmarks Illinois. “We hope that “10 Most” listing will bring new awareness to its significance and help encourage the necessary repairs.”

Landmarks Illinois, the state’s leading voice for historic preservation, listed nine other endangered historic properties on its annual list which focuses attention on sites throughout Illinois threatened by deterioration, lack of maintenance, insufficient funds, or inappropriate development.

Built in 1909 in the city’s West End neighborhood, this building provided social services and educational training for the city’s poorest citizens at a time when “settlement houses” were the only resource for such needs in big cities. It is currently occupied by an Elks organization for its lodge. However, conflicting ownership interests, due to unpaid property taxes, have put the building in a state of endangerment, as many needed upgrades to keep the building a viable facility for public use are not being addressed.

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Background

Since the inception of Landmarks Illinois' "Ten Most" list in 1995, more than a third of the listed properties have been saved, less than a quarter have been demolished, and the rest remain threatened or are being rehabilitated.

This year's list also includes: an 1859 mansion, an historic bridge, a 1920s community center that promoted physical fitness, an 1871 county sheriff's residence and jail, three century-old Catholic churches, a Bertrand Goldberg-designed modern hospital, a 1930s Art Deco theater, one of the state's most extravagant movie palaces, and a pair of buildings that housed one of the state's most noted artists.

Landmarks Illinois is celebrating its 40th year as a statewide advocacy and education organization. The not-for-profit works with citizens and communities throughout Illinois to preserve, protect and promote historic places through advocacy and education. In addition to the Ten Most Endangered list, the organization also sponsors an annual awards program and a matching grants program for County Courthouses.

The complete "Ten Most" list, including photos of the following sites, is available at www.Landmarks.org through the "Press Room" link.