

## LANDMARKS ILLINOIS

53 W. Jackson Boulevard, Suite 1315, Chicago, IL 60604

[www.landmarks.org](http://www.landmarks.org)

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### **SHUTTERED SPRINGFIELD LANDMARK ON THE “TEN MOST ENDANGERED” LIST**

SPRINGFIELD, IL. Apr. 2 – Ursuline Academy, 1400 N. 5<sup>th</sup> St., Springfield (Sangamon County) was named to the list of “Ten Most Endangered Historic Places” for 2008 by Landmarks Illinois, a statewide advocacy group. The announcement was made today in the Press Room of the State Capitol.

“No matter how much money is thrown at a new facility, these historic buildings cannot be replaced,” said David Bahlman, president of Landmarks Illinois. “We strongly urge the University to keep these landmark buildings.”

This Civil War-era girls’ school was established by an order of nuns that abandoned monastic life in favor of public service through education. The original 1867 building, a three-story brick Italianate, was constructed by Raglan & Myers and housed both the convent and classrooms. Later additions of a chapel (1895) and music hall (1908) were designed by William Conway, Springfield’s first certified architect. The music hall hosted poet Vachel Lindsay and the Von Trapp children, along with 150 years of Ursuline Academy graduating classes.

The property was purchased by Lisle’s Benedictine University in 2003 to serve as a satellite campus. Four years later, Benedictine closed the high school campus with little notice and vacated the three historic buildings. Plans have been drafted for a new college facility, and Benedictine’s president has not ruled out demolition of existing structures.

The purpose of the “Ten Most” list is to focus attention on sites threatened by deterioration, lack of maintenance, insufficient funds, or inappropriate development. Since the program’s inception in 1995, 143 properties have been identified on the

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endangered list, calling attention to statewide resources in need of preservation. Less than 20% of these sites have been lost to demolition, but many remain in need of preservation.

This year's list also includes a site along the Underground Railroad, Chicago's first riverfront plaza, early examples of American skyscrapers, a windmill-themed sandwich shop in Central Illinois, a Mid-Century modern building designed for the Navy, and two renowned sporting facilities: U of I's Assembly Hall and Chicago's Wrigley Field.

Landmarks Illinois is celebrating its 37<sup>th</sup> 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 the Chicagoland Watch List and the Richard H. Driehaus Foundation Preservation Awards.

### *EDITORS:*

*The complete list of the Ten Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois, including photos, can be downloaded from our website: [www.landmarks.org](http://www.landmarks.org) through the "Press Room" link.*

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