



## 2017 Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois

### McKee House

Churchill Woods Forest Preserve, Lombard, DuPage County



*Credit: Linda Gilbert*

This charming two-story, stone Colonial Revival home was completed in 1936 by the Federal Works Progress Administration and functioned as a forest preserve headquarters and Superintendent Robert McKee's residence in the Churchill Woods Forest Preserve. The residence on St. Charles Road, with its workshop and well house, was shuttered by the DuPage County Forest Preserve Board in 2002. It last functioned as an employee residence with forest preserve offices and meeting rooms.

Landmarks Illinois first brought attention to the threatened historic complex in 2006 with its inclusion on our Chicagoland Watch List.

A decade later, the site is still in peril despite progress made by local advocates, led by Citizens for Glen Ellyn Preservation with support from the Lombard, Villa Park and Wheaton Historical Societies. From 2007-08, the groups worked with the DuPage County Housing Authority toward converting the complex into veterans' housing, but later the Housing Authority had to withdraw the plan due to internal management problems. In 2013, after years of advocates' pressure, the Forest Preserve Board contracted a qualified preservation architecture firm to assess the condition of the property. The house was considered structurally sound, but in need of a new roof to prevent further water infiltration. After the Forest Preserve Board agreed to request bids for a new roof, an election brought new board leadership that reversed the decision.

Now, over a decade of deferred maintenance has allowed further damage to the roof, copper gutters and downspouts, resulting in continued water infiltration. In 2016, the Forest Preserve District Board discussed demolition rather than financial investment, but agreed to delay any final decision until after spring elections.

A broadened coalition of advocates, now known as the [McKee Preservation Group](#), continues to argue that despite further deterioration, the complex is repairable and usable, as verified in an

additional study commissioned by the Board. McKee Preservation Group is seeking interested parties and organizations that may have interest in using the space and joining in the rehabilitation effort. The group also is asking DuPage County residents to urge their Forest Preserve commissioners to support the preservation of this irreplaceable historic complex.

### What you can do:

- If you are a DuPage County resident, please contact Forest Preserve District of DuPage County Board President Joseph Cantore:  
Phone: (630) 933-7225  
Email: [jcantore@dupageforest.org](mailto:jcantore@dupageforest.org)  
You can also contact your district representative. [See here](#).  
In a letter or email, please cc: McKee Preservation Group
- Voice support for the board to authorize roof repair funds for the McKee residence and to work with local advocates to identify a future use of the complex.
- Please “like” the [McKee Preservation Group Facebook page](#)
- Please sign the [“Restore the McKee House” petition](#)

### Additional Links:

- McKee Preservation Group fact sheet ([PDF](#))
- “McKee Preservation Group collects nearly 1,000 names on petition to save historic house,” *My Suburban Life*, Oct. 14, 2016:  
<http://www.mysuburbanlife.com/2016/10/12/mckee-preservation-group-collects-nearly-1-000-names-on-petition-to-save-historic-house/ahwq51u/>
- Forest Preserve District of DuPage County commissioned condition assessments by qualified firms:
  - WJE McKee House Cultural Resource Evaluation, 2016 ([PDF](#))
  - Altus Works McKee House Adaptive Reuse Feasibility Study, 2013 ([PDF](#))