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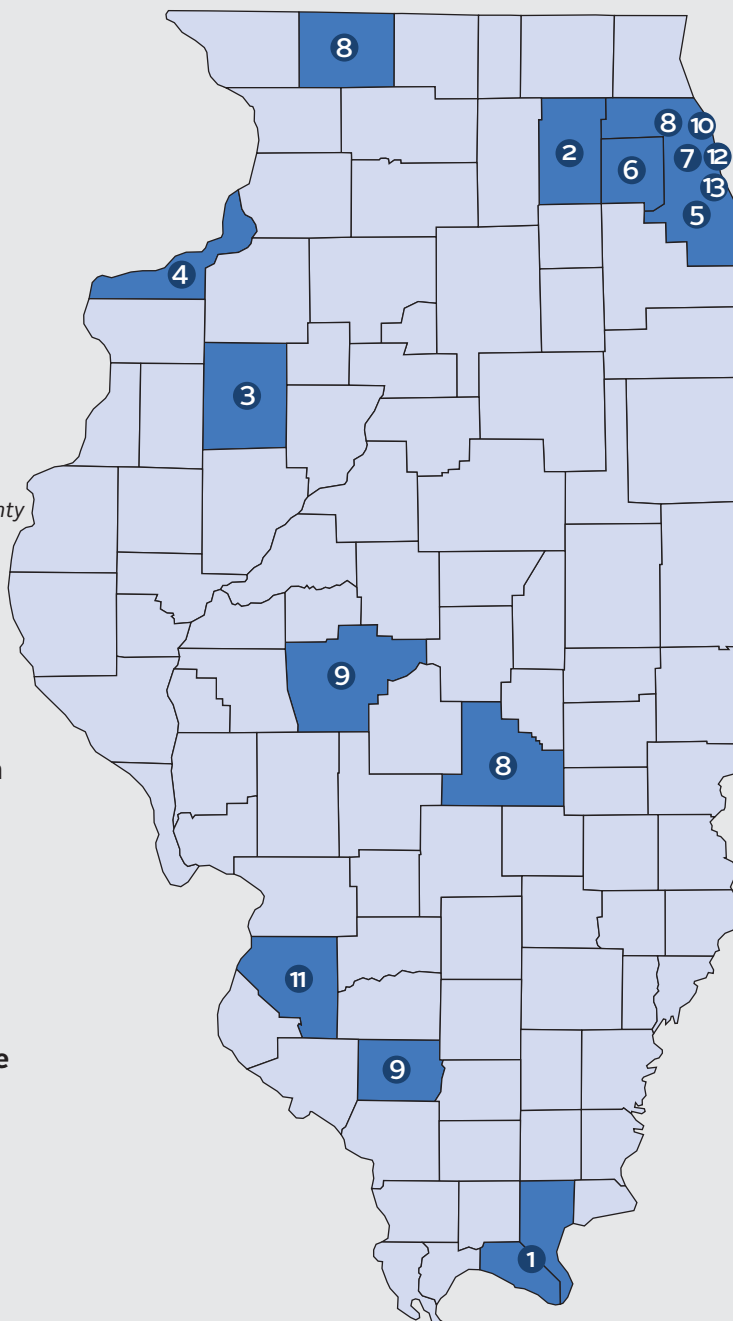
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2018 Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois

KINCAID MOUNDS

Brookport, Massac and Pope Counties

A rare, archeological site built by settlers in the Middle Mississippian period more than a thousand years ago. The site, which spans Massac and Pope Counties, is a National Historic Landmark. However, with no full-time staff dedicated to Kincaid Mounds, a local nonprofit organization is concerned that limited funding, deteriorating interpretation, farming practices and soil erosion threaten the proper care and long-term survival of the mounds. Just nine of the original estimated 19 earthen works exist today.

EARLY SETTLEMENT-ERA BUILDINGS

Mill Race Inn & Amasa White House, Geneva, Kane County

Two specific sites built within the first two decades of Geneva's founding are included in this listing: the Amasa White House and the Mill Race Inn. These sites represent both commercial and residential development during Geneva's early settlement years, are humble in nature and exhibit the vernacular architecture being constructed by Geneva's first settlers. Mill Race Inn faces demolition and Amasa White House remains vacant with no use.

CENTRAL CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

60 Public Square, Galesburg, Knox County

Built in 1898 and designed by C.E. Gottschalk and Beadle Architects, this historic church is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It has been host to prominent figures like Galesburg native Carl Sandburg, who celebrated his 75th birthday and the release of his autobiography at the church. Lack of funding, however, has led to deferred maintenance of the structure and an inability to complete significant repairs. The church congregation needs new partners, funding sources or possibly to sell the historic church in order to secure a long-term preservation solution.

ROCK ISLAND COUNTY COURTHOUSE

1504 Third Avenue, Rock Island, Rock Island County

The Spanish Renaissance or Roman-style building was designed by Fredrick C. Gunn and Louis S. Curtis and built in 1897. The courthouse served as the county seat since 1897, but today faces demolition following the completion of a new Justice Center in late 2018. The Public Building Commission has called for the demolition of the historic structure after courthouse operations move to the new center next door. Public support to seek reuse options has been strong, but the final decision resides with the Rock Island County Board.

THE FORUM

324 E 43rd Street, Chicago, Cook County

A former assembly hall built in 1897 in the Bronzeville neighborhood on Chicago's South Side attracted musical greats like Nat King Cole and Muddy Waters and served as the site of important civil and labor rights meetings. The Forum today requires significant rehabilitation. Funding has been difficult to secure for this unique historic building on a retail corridor challenged by decades of disinvestment.

OLD NICHOLS LIBRARY

110 S Washington Street, Naperville, DuPage County

This building, constructed in 1898 and designed by architect M.E. Bell, was Naperville's first public library. It features rusticated limestone quarried in Naperville and is locally landmarked and in a National Register district. However, the landmark status only protects the structure's main façade, and a developer has plans to demolish the remainder of the building for a new development.

SECOND CHURCH OF CHRIST, SCIENTIST

2700 N Pine Grove Avenue, Chicago, Cook County

This classically inspired church, built in 1899 and part of a National Register Historic District in Chicago's Lincoln Park neighborhood, is the oldest continually operating Christian Science church in the city. It was designed by S.S. Beman, perhaps best known as the architect behind the Pullman Company Town in Chicago. The National Register district does not provide landmark protection, unfortunately, and the congregation's marketing of the building in a desirable real estate area leaves it vulnerable.

CHAUTAUQUAS & TABERNACLES

Waldorf Tabernacle, Des Plaines, Cook County

Oakdale Tabernacle, Freeport, Stephenson County

Chautauqua Auditorium, Shelbyville, Shelby County

Three structures related to the Chautauqua and Camp Meeting movements in Illinois are included: the Waldorf Tabernacle in Des Plaines, the Oakdale Tabernacle in Freeport, and the Chautauqua Auditorium in Shelbyville. These structures all require maintenance and repairs in order to serve the community once again. They represent a unique part of Illinois' history in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, with large gathering spaces in natural settings for the public to hear sermons or educational lectures.

ILLINOIS STATE FAIRGROUNDS

801 E Sangamon Avenue, Springfield, Sangamon County

655 Executive Drive, Du Quoin, Perry County

Illinois' two state fairgrounds, Springfield and Du Quoin, are both home to numerous structures that have suffered from deferred maintenance as the State of Illinois lacks the capital required for such projects. In Springfield, Barn 13 required emergency repairs this year and the Coliseum remains closed due to deterioration, while the Grandstand building in Du Quoin is in need of a new roof. Over a dozen buildings at both fairgrounds need significant repairs and new roofs, but funding sources have not been secured.

STRAN-STEEL HOUSE

2105 Chestnut Avenue, Wilmette, Cook County

This unique home built of steel and baked iron enamel was featured at the "Homes of Tomorrow" exhibit at the 1933 Century of Progress Fair in Chicago. It was designed for the Stran-Steel Corp. to feature modern home design and was relocated to Wilmette after the Fair. It has no landmark protection and faces a demolition threat by its current owner who plans to build two new homes on the site. The owner has offered the home to anyone who can move it from its current location by this summer.

THE NITE SPOT CAFE

Collinsville Road & 45th Street, Fairmont City, St. Clair County

This former restaurant along Route 66 features an iconic mid-century, neon sign outside that continues to remind passersby of a bygone era when families and tourists hit the "Mother Road" – the historic highway from Chicago to Los Angeles. The Nite Spot Café closed in 1984 and remains vacant. The building is threatened with condemnation and demolition by Fairmont City, despite the owner's plans to complete the necessary structural repairs this year.

VARSITY THEATER BLOCK

1706-1726 Sherman Avenue, Evanston, Cook County

The 1700 block of Sherman Avenue is one of the last remaining historically intact blocks in downtown Evanston and is unprotected. Historic structures on this block, like the 1926, J.E.O. Pridmore-designed Varsity Theater, contribute to the city's downtown character and are vulnerable teardown targets to make way for future new developments.

THOMPSON CENTER

100 W Randolph Street, Chicago, Cook County

Chicago's best example of grandly-scaled, Postmodern architecture. Designed by Helmut Jahn and built in 1985, the building faces a demolition threat as its current owner, the State of Illinois, pursues a possible sale that may not require reuse of the existing structure. LI listed the Thompson Center in 2017 on our Most Endangered list, and this year, has released renderings to show a reuse concept for the irreplaceable building.

2018 Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois

Kincaid Mounds

- **Location:** Massac and Pope Counties, near Brookport
- **Built:** circa 1050 A.D.
- **Architect:** N/A
- **Current owners:** State of Illinois and private ownership
- **Historic significance:** A rare, archeological site built by settlers in the Middle Mississippian period more than a thousand years ago. The site is a National Historic Landmark.
- **Why it is endangered:** Lack of funding, soil erosion and the ongoing threat of amateur archaeologists disturbing the mounds.



Credit: Mike Walker, Kincaid Mounds Support Organization

Almost one thousand years ago, during the Middle Mississippian period, Mississippian people began building a settlement at the site that is now known as Kincaid Mounds. Today, however, flooding and limited funding is threatening the survival of this prehistoric resource.

Located at the southernmost tip of Illinois, straddling present day Massac and Pope Counties, these early people selected a wide section of the Ohio River floodplain to construct a village. On a large ridge they began to build a civic and cultural center to that would serve as the ceremonial and administrative hub of their community.

Over the next 300 years, these people constructed 19 flat-top earth mounds, nine of which survive today. From atop some of these mounds, Chiefs and elite leaders would have lived and ruled, while others were used for religious purposes. Archeological remains indicate that large buildings, such as temples or council houses, were once situated on top of the mounds. These earthen works encircled a large central plaza that was most likely used for ceremonies and games. The plaza's most important function however was the annual "green corn festival," a renewal ritual that took place in late summer as the corn harvest ripened.

By about 1400 A.D., occupation at the site seems to have ceased, likely due to a climate shift, exhaustion of timber resources, or the decline of a central government. When European settlers arrived in the region in the late 18th century, Native Americans had repopulated the area, but were not aware of who constructed the mounds or for what reason. In 1838, the site was purchased and settled by John Kincaid.

During the 1930s and 1940s, Kincaid was the site of excavation and research carried out by anthropologist Fay-Cooper Cole of the University of Chicago. Much of what is known today about the site and its people was discovered during Cole's investigation. Also during this time, Richard MacNeish, the archeologist credited with discovering the origins of maize, trained under Cole at the site. In more recent years, Kincaid Mounds has continued to be the subject of archeological investigation and research carried out by Southern Illinois University.



Credit: Mike Walker, Kincaid Mounds Support Organization

Kincaid Mounds was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1964 and was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1966. The Massac County portion of the site was purchased in 1975 by the State of Illinois. It is now a state historic site under the jurisdiction of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, while the site is managed under contract by the non-profit Kincaid Mounds Support Organization (KMSO). The Pope County portion of the site is privately owned.

The Kincaid Mounds Support Organization (KMSO) is a volunteer organization that provides maintenance, interpretation and events for the historic site. With no full-time staff dedicated to the Kincaid Mounds, KMSO has been challenged in monitoring the site following significant soil erosion in 2017; fundraising to complete the paving of the access road to increase accessibility; and replacing sun-faded interpretive panels. KMSO also believes the mounds would benefit from new technology for interpretation, including cell phones and augmented reality programs. Facing the ongoing threat of amateur archeologists disturbing the mounds, KMSO also has the goal of uniting the entirety of the mounds under public ownership to better protect this National Historic Landmark.

What you can do:

- To learn more and support the Kincaid Mounds Support Organization, visit:
<http://www.kincaidmounds.com/contact.htm>

Additional Links:

- “Kincaid Mounds: A Prehistoric Cultural and Religious Center in Southern Illinois,” *Kincaid Mounds Support Organization*.
<http://www.kincaidmounds.com/history.htm>
- Experience History: Kincaid Mounds
<https://www2.illinois.gov/dnrhistoric/Experience/Sites/Southeast/Pages/Kincaid-Mounds.aspx>

2018 Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois

Early Settlement-era Buildings, Geneva

Structures built within the first 15-20 years of the settlement of a community are increasingly rare historic resources, especially in suburbanized communities that have experienced constant growth over long periods of time. Understandably, the fate of such structures is threatened due to condition issues, as well as continued development pressure.

The first Eastern United States and European settlers arrived in Geneva as early as 1833. In 1836, Geneva was named the county seat of Kane County and the original town was platted the following year. Harnessing water power from the Fox River provided economic opportunities, making Geneva a productive hub for manufacturing. Early products included lumber, furniture, agricultural equipment, cheese, butter, milled grains and packed meats. By 1840, the east and west banks of the Fox River were the center of industrial development, while homes and businesses were established on a rise “upwind” of the river. By 1853, railroad lines continued to advance Geneva as an industrial powerhouse, bringing numerous manufacturing businesses to the area.

The buildings in this listing represent both commercial and residential development during Geneva’s early years. Humble in nature, these buildings exhibit the vernacular architecture being constructed by Geneva’s first Eastern United States and European settlers. Also, this year’s Bicentennial celebration is an excellent opportunity to highlight structures from the first decades of the founding of Illinois.

Mill Race Inn

- **Location:** 4 E. State St., Geneva, Kane County
- **Built:** 1846
- **Architect:** Unknown
- **Current owner:** Privately owned
- **Historic significance:** One of the oldest surviving commercial structures in Geneva.
- **Why it is endangered:** The building faces a demolition threat.



Credit: Rich Hayhurst

This one-story, limestone utilitarian building is one of the oldest surviving commercial structures in Geneva. Located on the Fox River's east bank, this structure was built circa 1846. Early on, it was associated with the Alexander Brothers' Blacksmith Shop. It is worth noting that blacksmiths shops were one of the most important businesses in early settlement communities. The building's affiliation with the blacksmith shop suggests that it was possibly used either as a foundry, or as a mechanics or wheelwright shop. Around 1868, the building became part of the Rystrom Carriage and Wagon Manufacturing complex. A second story was added at this time for use as Rystrom's painting workshop. Later, the building housed the C.E. Mann Cooperage, which produced barrels, as well as butter and cheese boxes. The building went on to house many different businesses until 1933 when it was remodeled as the Mill Race Inn restaurant.

A popular destination dining spot in the western suburbs for nearly eight decades, the Mill Race Inn restaurant closed in 2011. Investigation of the remaining 1846 portion of the building began in 2013. In 2016, the owner removed numerous additions to the original building in order to expose the historic structure. As of now, the owner has applied to demolish the historic structure in order to redevelop the site.

Currently, the property is moving through a controversial landmark designation evaluation. In March, Geneva's Historic Preservation Commission voted in favor of recommending the circa 1846 building for landmark designation to the City Council. A full City Council meeting is scheduled to discuss landmark designation on May 7, 2018. If designated, the early industrial building would be protected under the Geneva Historic Preservation Ordinance, making any exterior alteration, construction or demolition subject to review by the Historic Preservation Commission.

Amasa White House

- **Location:** 757 E. Fabyan Parkway, Geneva, Kane County
- **Built:** 1840s
- **Architect:** Unknown
- **Current owner:** Kane County
- **Historic significance:** Former home of the White family, who settled in Geneva in 1838 and would become prominent members of the community.
- **Why it is endangered:** Vacant and without a proposed use and long-term plan, the home faces demolition.



Credit: Elizabeth Safanda

The White family settled in Geneva in 1838, eventually constructing their two-story limestone Greek Revival house north of present day Fabyan Parkway in the 1840s. Amasa White was a farmer and prominent Geneva resident. He also earned a significant profit from cutting and selling timber from his land. He had an interest in the progressive movements of the time and was also an appointed member of the building committee for the Geneva Unitarian Church, which was completed in 1843. The Whites raised their nine children in the impressive stone residence, many of whom went on to become involved in many of Geneva's manufacturing and production industries.

The house stayed in the family's hands into the 1920s, when it was purchased by the State of Illinois. By the 1950s, the land surrounding the house was part of the Kane County Home for the Aged and the Kane County Poor Farm. Today, the Amasa White House is owned by Kane County. Though the property sits vacant, the county has taken care to keep the house closed and secure. In 2007, the county published *The Fabyan Utilization Study* that identified the area of the Amasa White House as a possible historic settlement that would be a location for county historic buildings and educational programming. However, after the economy faltered, no pursuit of this recommendation was undertaken. To date, there is no proposed use for the property.

What you can do:

- If you are a Geneva resident, contact the Geneva City Council to support landmark designation of the Mill Race Inn prior to the Council's May 7, 2018, meeting.
 - Additionally, ask City Council to follow its approved 2008 Historic Preservation Plan where 63 historic resources, including the Mill Race Inn, were identified as potential landmarks and should be approved for landmark designation when landmark recommendations come to the Council.
- If you are a Kane County resident, contact your [County Board Members](#) regarding the significance of the Amasa White House and the need to develop a reuse plan for this early settlement property.

Additional Links:

- Mill Race Inn
 - "Geneva delays vote on Mill Race Inn's landmark status," *Daily Herald*, April 17, 2018: <http://www.dailyherald.com/news/20180417/geneva-delays-vote-on-mill-race-inns-landmark-status>
 - "Geneva preservationists gear to save original Mill Race structure," *Kane County Chronicle*, April 2, 2018: <http://www.kcchronicle.com/2018/04/01/geneva-preservationists-gear-to-save-original-mill-race-structure/aaynsva/>
 - "Geneva eyes landmark status for 1840s Mill Race Inn Building," *Chicago Tribune*, February 22, 2018: <http://www.chicagotribune.com/suburbs/aurora-beacon-news/news/ct-abn-mill-race-inn-st-0223-20180222-story.html>

- “Shodeen seeks to raze 1946 limestone building at former Mill Race Inn in Geneva,” *Kane County Chronicle*, January 8, 2018:
<http://www.kcchronicle.com/2018/01/05/shodeen-seeks-to-raze-1846-limestone-building-at-former-mill-race-inn-in-geneva/arvjwxk/>
- Amasa White House
 - Commemorative Biographical and Historical Record of Kane County, Illinois, 1888:
https://books.google.com/books?id=pc1MAQAAMAAJ&pg=PA810&lpg=PA810&dq=amasa+white+kane+county&source=bl&ots=UVaeebyB_u&sig=7H7jZnnctJzRcf-JX7_FOKXZV1M&hl=en&sa=X&ved=oahUKEwi5i6C874raAhXEm-AKHXisAVUQ6AEIQDAE#v=onepage&q=amasa%20white%20kane%20county&f=false
- Fabyan Utilization Study: ([PDF](#))

2018 Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois

Central Congregational Church

- **Location:** 60 Public Square, Galesburg, Knox County
- **Built:** 1898
- **Architect:** C.E. Gottschalk and Beadle Architects
- **Current owner:** Central Congregational Church congregation
- **Historic significance:** Local Landmark, listed on National Register of Historic Places (statewide significance), site where Galesburg native, writer and poet, Carl Sandburg, celebrated 75th Birthday and release of his autobiography.
- **Why it is endangered:** Lack of funding and maintenance has led to need for extensive repairs



Credit: Thomas Foley / Foley Photo Studio

Central Congregational Church has been an anchor, both physically and spiritually, in the Galesburg community for well over a century, and played host to many important figures. Due to declining membership, the congregation is struggling to take care of the building. However, the Central Congregational Church advocacy group has formed, with the support of the Galesburg Landmark Commission and the City of Galesburg, to help find a feasible path forward for this important church.

Galesburg, originally founded to serve as the home of Knox College (the brainchild of George Washington Gale for a Christian college on the prairie), was incorporated as a village in 1841. A site was given by Knox College for the sole purposes of a church, on which the “Old First Church” was built in 1842.

In 1854, the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad made its way to Galesburg, bringing people and industry to the quiet rural community. The effects were almost immediate; population grew from 882 in 1850 to 4,000 in 1856 and over 9,000 in 1867. The success of Galesburg prompted other lines to begin running through the community. This made Galesburg an influential force in the region, eventually leading to the relocation of the county seat in 1873.

The growth of Galesburg corresponded with the growth of religious institutions. In 1895, the congregation, after having amicably split over abolitionist activities, reunited to construct a new house of worship. The firm of C.E. Gottschalk and Beadle Architects was awarded the commission. It was decided that the new church would be modeled after the much-admired H.H. Richardson designed Trinity Church in Boston. The church was completed in 1898.

Echoing Richardson's style, Central Congregational Church incorporates rounded arches, high roof ridges and heavy rusticated stones. Its soaring tower, rising 137 feet above the ground, anchors the town square, filling nearly all of its quarter-block lot. According to Harvey Safford, the church's historian, "In many county seats the most imposing building on the town square is the courthouse. In Galesburg, it is Central Congregational Church."

The interior of Central Congregational is as striking as its exterior, having 75 stained glass windows, the largest of which, located on the north wall, measures 1,080 square feet. A massive rose window, 22 feet in diameter, floats above the balcony along the east wall. The sanctuary's design, known as an "Akron Plan," reflects the faith's emphasis on music and sermons. The sanctuary space itself resembles a theater, with a sloping floor and pews that encircle the pulpit.



Credit: Special Collections and Archives, Knox College Library, Galesburg, Illinois

While Central Congregational has played host to many notable figures, including Billy Sunday, perhaps its most honored guest was the most famous son of Galesburg: Carl Sandburg. Sandburg returned to his hometown to celebrate his 75th birthday, as well as the release of his autobiography, *Always the Young Strangers*, which chronicled his years growing up in Galesburg. Guests packed the 880-seat sanctuary and listened to Sandburg speak and play his guitar.

Central Congregational Church was listed on the National Register of Historic Places both individually and as part of the Galesburg

Historic District in 1976. It was also made a local landmark in 1977.

Central Congregational Church is the last remaining icon of Galesburg's architectural history on the once charming public square. The church's dwindling congregation recognizes that their ability to properly care for the building is [coming to an end](#). Deferred maintenance has led to the need for extensive roof repairs, restoration of sagging stained glass windows and a new boiler. The future of Central Congregational Church rests upon partnering with other organizations or institutions to expand its current use, or determining a new use and ownership structure.

What you can do:

- Visit the Galesburg Community Foundation's website to donate to the [Central Congregational Preservation Fund](#)
- Ideas for partnerships or contacts to share? Contact Springfield Office Director Frank Butterfield at fbutterfield@landmarks.org.

Additional Links:

- Read more about the history of Central Congregational Church: <https://galesburgchurch.org/home/history/our-historic-building/>
- Central Congregational Church National Register form: ([PDF](#))
- Galesburg Historic District National Register form: ([PDF](#))



2018 Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois

Rock Island County Courthouse



Credit: Landmarks Illinois

- **Location:** 210 15th Street, Rock Island, Rock Island County
- **Built:** 1897
- **Architect:** Fredrick C. Gunn and Louis S. Curtis
- **Current owner:** Rock Island County
- **Historic significance:** Historic example of Spanish Renaissance or Roman-style architecture. Determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places in 2017.
- **Why it is endangered:** Faces demolition following the completion of a new Justice Center in late 2018.

Serving as the seat of county government since 1897, the Rock Island County Courthouse is threatened by demolition following the completion of a new Justice Center in late 2018. The current plan would move courthouse operations from the historic courthouse to the new Justice Center and proponents of demolition are suggesting the 1897 building be replaced with greenspace.

In 1833, when the city of Stephenson (now known as Rock Island) was established, an area was set aside for what would become Courthouse Square. Three years later, the first courthouse was built on the square, but was soon expanded to meet the needs of a growing industrial city.

By the 1890s, the railway had brought industry to Rock Island along with prosperity. As the county's population grew due to work in the lumber, pottery and farm manufacturing industries, it became apparent that a larger building was needed for governmental operations. In 1895, the building committee approved the designs submitted by the Kansas City firm of Fredrick C. Gunn and Louis S. Curtis for a new four-story courthouse adjacent to the outdated structure.

Designed in the Spanish Renaissance, or Roman style, and completed in 1897, this courthouse closely resembles the Tarrant County Courthouse in Fort Worth, Texas, also constructed by Gunn and Curtis around the same time. Constructed at a cost of over \$100,000, the building is of both blue and buff-toned Bedford limestone. The building exhibits a variety of forms, including rounded arch windows and door recesses, balconies and a standing-seam metal roof. The original six domes on the courthouse were removed in 1958, a decision stemming from deterioration of the domes' copper roofing.



Credit: Landmarks Illinois

With the construction of a new Justice Center, the county board turned to the public for feedback on what to do with the historic courthouse, which was determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places in 2017. The public overwhelmingly supported retention and reuse of the courthouse. While the authority to retain or demolish the historic courthouse resides with the county board, members of the Public Building Commission (PBC) have been lobbying for the ability to clear the site for green space. In addition, unsubstantiated cost estimates are frequently cited to support calls for demolition. With strong public support for reuse and the potential of substantial demolition costs, a professional evaluation of reuse options with cost estimates would be the most fiscally responsible use of taxpayer funds.

What you can do:

- Contact the [Rock Island County Board](#) to let them know that you support exploring reuse options for the historic courthouse.
- Ideas or contacts to share? Reach out to the [Rock Island Preservation Society](#) or Landmarks Illinois Springfield Office Director Frank Butterfield at fbutterfield@landmarks.org.

Additional Links:

- “Rock Island County Courthouse eligible for National Register of Historic Places,” *Rock Island Argus*, November 17, 2017:
http://qconline.com/news/local/rock-island-county-courthouse-eligible-for-national-register-of-historic/article_aa183edf-a509-5e59-990e-2bb5bc8de86d.html
- “Fate of Rock Island County Courthouse in limbo as county board alleges IGA was altered,” *The Rock Island Argus*, January 17, 2018:

http://qconline.com/news/local/fate-of-rock-island-county-courthouse-in-limbo-as-county/article_7coe1fb4-9e39-58a2-925b-b7f1088ab00a.html

- “RIPS launches campaign for RICO Courthouse,” *Rock Island Argus*, April 16, 2018:
http://qconline.com/news/local/rips-launches-campaign-for-rico-courthouse/article_48198473-054f-55fo-b6dc-ba18fdbd58a6.html
- Watch a recent WQPT Quad Cities broadcast with the Rock Island Preservation Society:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dKPhl6-dcMU>

2018 Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois

The Forum



Credit: Terry Tatum

- **Location:** 324 E 43rd St., Chicago, Cook County
- **Built:** 1897
- **Architect:** Unknown
- **Current owner:** Urban Juncture, Inc.
- **Historic significance:** A prominent former assembly hall and ballroom where music greats like Nat King Cole performed, and where important civil and labor rights meetings were held.
- **Why it is endangered:** Structure requires significant rehabilitation. Funding has been difficult to secure, and the City of Chicago continues to threaten demolition of the site.

The Forum, having experienced nearly 40 years of neglect and disinvestment, was saved from the wrecking ball in 2011 by Urban Juncture, Inc., a local community development organization. Urban Juncture has done much to stabilize and develop a rehabilitation plan for the building, but the process continues to present challenges.

Built in 1897, The Forum has long played an important role in the cultural and social history of the South Side neighborhood of Bronzeville. It not only contains one of the most significant assembly and performance venues on the South Side, but it also houses perhaps the oldest surviving hardwood ballroom dance floor in Chicago.

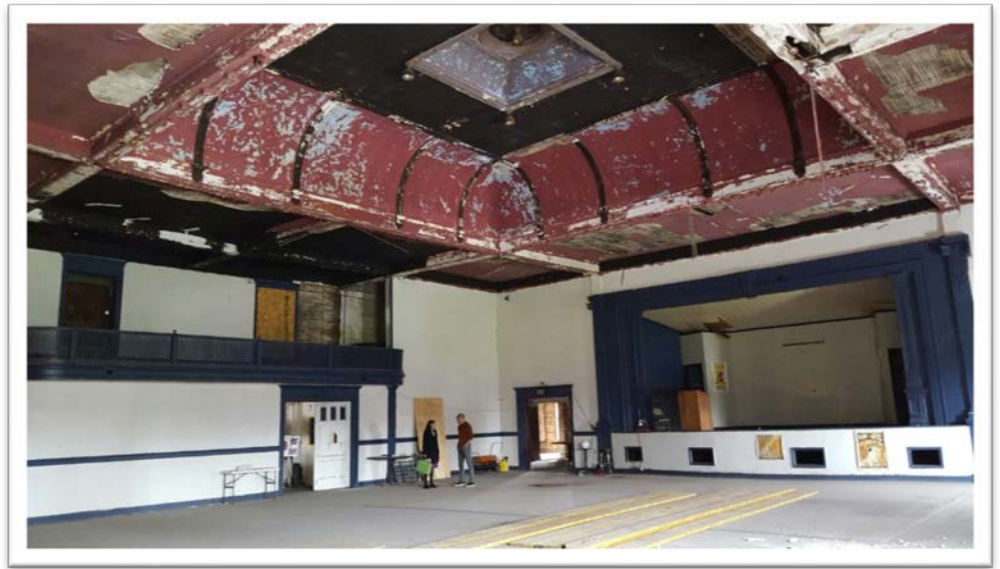
In the late 1800s, the area, originally referred to as Grand Boulevard, was primarily populated by immigrants of Irish, Scottish and English origin, as well as German Jews. The impressive red-brick building, adorned with brick detailing and Classical elements, embodies the old-world craftsmanship brought to this country by these groups.

The Forum functioned continuously as a dance hall, containing a large hardwood ballroom in the second floor *Forum Hall*. Predating the ballroom boom of the 1920s brought on primarily by the jazz movement, The Forum hosted concerts, dances and lessons, while also serving as a community meeting space. Six retail stores on the ground floor contributed to the diverse and

dynamic commercial core along 43rd Street well into the 20th century. Situated adjacent to the elevated transit line and along the street car route allowed commuters convenient access to this bustling urban center, helping make The Forum a popular area destination.

By the 1920s, the Great Migration had brought an influx of African Americans to Chicago's South Side. Grand Boulevard (now Martin Luther King Drive) saw much of this shift, and the 43rd Street corridor soon became a major music hub on the South Side. The Forum attracted some of the biggest names in the music industry, including Nat King Cole, Captain Walter Dyett, Muddy Waters, Floyd Campbell and Milt Hinton, just to name a few. It was also a site of important civil and labor rights meetings, making it a stop on the [Illinois Labor Trail](#).

While retail and other establishments continued to occupy the building into the 1990s, use of the ballroom had dwindled in the 1970s. By the late 1990s, the once vibrant Forum Hall sat vacant. Deferred maintenance over a 40-year period caused the building to fall into disrepair, eventually being threatened with demolition in 2011. Just days before it was



Credit: Landmarks Illinois

scheduled to be torn down, Urban Juncture, Inc., a Bronzeville-based community development firm, purchased the building, saving it from an unfortunate fate. Urban Juncture has invested \$250,000 in the cleanup and stabilization of the building and worked with a broad group of neighbors to develop a phased plan for rehabilitation. However, investment dollars for this unique historic building on a retail corridor challenged by decades of disinvestment are difficult to secure. In addition, the city's Building Department continues to threaten demolition.

What you can do:

- To learn more about Urban Juncture and help support their crowdfunding efforts, visit: <http://www.urbanjuncture.com/the-forum/>

Additional Links:

- Visit The Forum Bronzeville's website and stay up to date with events on The Forum Bronzeville's Facebook page: <http://www.theforumbronzeville.com/> and <https://www.facebook.com/TheForumBronzeville/>
- "Revival of Bronzeville's Forum Would Restore Building to Its Former Glory," *DNAinfo*, December 23, 2013: <https://www.dnainfo.com/chicago/20131223/bronzeville/forum-bronzeville-revival-would-restore-building-its-former-glory>
- "In Chicago's Bronzeville, The Forum Is Ready For Its Comeback," National Trust for Historic Preservation, February 6, 2017: [https://savingplaces.org/stories/in-chicago-bronzeville-the-forum-is-ready-for-its-comeback -.WpmOMWNMnwx](https://savingplaces.org/stories/in-chicago-bronzeville-the-forum-is-ready-for-its-comeback-.WpmOMWNMnwx)

2018 Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois

Old Nichols Library

- **Location:** 110 S. Washington St., Naperville, DuPage County
- **Built:** 1898
- **Architect:** M.E. Bell
- **Current owner:** Developer owned
- **Historic significance:** First public library in Naperville, locally landmarked, and the rusticated limestone used to construct the building was quarried locally in Naperville.
- **Why it is endangered:** The building faces demolition to make way for new development.



Credit: Charlie Wilkins

This building, constructed in 1898, was the first public library in west suburban Naperville and represents a period during which the democratization of knowledge was at the forefront of philanthropic efforts nationwide. While a dedicated advocacy group in Naperville succeeded in getting the property locally landmarked, its current owner is working to redevelop the site.

Notable resident, James Lawrence Nichols I, a successful author and professor, bequeathed \$10,000 to the City Of Naperville for the express purpose of purchasing land and constructing a building that, once erected, “must be [perpetually used as a free public library](#).”

A native of Coburg, Germany, Nichols came to America in 1857 at the age of 6. Two years later, when he was just 8, Nichols’ mother died and his stepfather abandoned him. Despite his misfortunes, Nichols was committed to improving his circumstances through self-education. After years of independent study, Nichols was finally admitted to North-Western College (now North Central College), where he would graduate with honors in 1880. During his time in school, he had compiled a resource guide of business and legal information, which he later published. *The Business Guide* emphasized personal independence, self-determination and above all, the value of education. The book was a major success, selling over four million copies worldwide.



Credit: Barb Hower

Nichols final wish was not only a testament to his belief in education, but also was an example of Gilded Age Philanthropy. M.E. Bell, an architect known nationally for his civic buildings, was selected for the commission. Like many of his other buildings, Bell employed the Richardsonian Romanesque style for the Nichols Library. Such a style was often used for civic institutions, as its use of heavy masonry suggested permanence and stability. Of note is that the building's rusticated limestone was quarried locally in Naperville.

For the last 20 years, the Library functioned as a church, but was purchased in 2017 by a developer looking to build a large-scale, mixed-use development on the site. When the City of Naperville sold the library to the church in 1996, a covenant was created that mandated the façade and vestibule be preserved.

In early 2016 the Old Nichols Library was purchased by a development company, and in September 2017, the building was designated a local landmark through the efforts of a local advocacy organization. The developer unveiled a design proposal in May 2016 would incorporate the library's primary façade, but would demolish the remainder of the historic building. A certificate of appropriateness was granted in January 2018 for the demolition of a 1962 addition and the east wall of the original library. The developer has suggested that other options might be entertained, but has been less than willing to sit down with interested parties.

What you can do:

- If you are a Naperville resident, please thank the [City Council](#) and the [Historic Preservation Commission](#) for their work in helping preserve Old Nichols Library and encourage them to push for a redevelopment that will reuse the entire building and not allow dismantling, façadisms, or relocation.
- If you would like to support this effort, join <https://www.facebook.com/NicholsHistory/>

Additional Links:

- "Naperville group seeks solutions before partial teardown of old library," *Daily Herald*, March 9, 2018:
<http://www.dailyherald.com/news/20180309/naperville-group-seeking-solutions-before-partial-teardown-of-old-library>

- “Preservationists show heart for Naperville’s old Nichols Library,” *Daily Herald*, April 21, 2018:
<http://www.dailyherald.com/news/20180421/preservationists-show-heart-for-napervilles-old-nichols-library>
- To learn more about the library and the advocacy efforts taking place, visit the Save Old Nichols group’s website:
<https://justsino.com/nicholslibrary/>
- To stay up to date on the most recent news regarding Old Nichols Library, visit the Save Old Nichols Facebook page:
<https://www.facebook.com/NicholsHistory/>

2018 Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois

Second Church of Christ, Scientist

- **Location:** 2700 N Pine Grove Ave., Chicago, Cook County
- **Built:** 1899
- **Architect:** S. S. Beman
- **Current owner:** Congregation
- **Historic significance:** Designed by a prominent architect and is the oldest continually operating Christian Science church in the city.
- **Why it is endangered:** A shrinking congregation makes funding necessary repairs to the building difficult. Also, the church is for sale, making it vulnerable to demolition if a developer purchases the property to make way for a new development.



Credit: Landmarks Illinois

The Second Church of Christ, Scientist is currently for sale, and while it is part of a National Register-listed Lakeview Historic District, this designation is honorific with no protection. Additionally, the Classical-Revival style church does not have any local protections under the Chicago Landmark Ordinance due to an owner consent clause for places of worship. [Decline in membership](#), especially in the Christian Science denomination, has forced many congregations to make difficult decisions regarding their properties.

This building, which was designed by S.S. Beman in 1899, was the second Christian Science church built in the city of Chicago. For that reason, the Second Church of Christ, Scientist is the oldest continually operating Christian Science church in Chicago. The church was the second of six Chicago structures Beman designed for the denomination between 1897 and 1911, during which time the denomination was experiencing rapid national growth. By the time of his death in 1914, Beman had designed 20 Christian Science churches throughout the country, effectively setting the building style for the denomination in America.

Beman, best known for his design for the Pullman Company Town in Chicago, studied at the renowned New York office of Richard Upjohn, where he was part of many noteworthy commissions. In 1879, he arrived in Chicago at the request of George Pullman to begin work on

the nation's first company town. Beman took his first Christian Science church commission in 1897. Beman's [propensity toward classically inspired design](#) helped to develop an association between the style and Christian Science churches.

The introduction of tiered theater seating was an innovation in these early Christian Science churches, the likes of which had not been seen in previous religious architecture. Also of note was the attention given to acoustic design, as well as the ability to conform curvilinear interiors to the rectilinear exterior forms that were in fashion at the time.

Several other religious properties in the City of Chicago, such as the 1899 J.E.O. Pridmore-designed Ravenswood Club and the 1917 Max Dunning-designed Philadelphia Romanian Church of God (formerly the Fourteenth Church of Christ, Scientist), both of which reside in the East Ravenswood National Register District, fall victim to the owner consent provision and are unprotected. All of these buildings are located in sought-after development areas, making them vulnerable to demolition.

However, because all of the aforementioned resources contribute to National Register Historic Districts, the valuable 20% federal historic tax credit incentive would be available to potential developers who rehabilitate and reuse the buildings.

What you can do:

- Voice your support for Chicago Landmark designation and reuse of Second Church of Christ, Scientist by contacting 43rd Ward Alderman Michele Smith:
<http://ward43.org/contact/>

Additional Links:

- "Fate of historic Lincoln Park church building remains precarious," *Inside-Booster*, April 4-10, 2018 ([PDF](#))
- "Will this Lincoln Park church go residential?" *Crain's Chicago Business*, November 15, 2017:
<http://www.chicagobusiness.com/realestate/20171115/CREDo701/171119929/will-this-lincoln-park-church-go-residential>
- "Chicago's Historic Churches are Worth Saving, Part 1: Preservationists Prepare for a Crisis," *Curbed Chicago*, March 10, 2016:
<https://chicago.curbed.com/2016/3/10/11191158/chicago-historic-churches-preservation-battle>

2018 Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois

Chautauquas and Tabernacles

Statewide



Credit: Des Plaines History Center

Meeting halls associated with a nationally-significant educational and spiritual movement from the late 19th and early 20th centuries face an uncertain future resulting from damage, disinvestment and deterioration. These structures, often called chautauquas or tabernacles, are typically round or multi-sided structures located in parks or forest preserves, well-suited for gatherings or large crowds. They also feature interesting roofing systems that provide an unobstructed view of the preacher or lecturer. Despite significant cost

estimates for repair, advocates are committed to ensuring the survival of this unique building type.

Initially used during retreat-style camp meetings in the Protestant faith, most frequently Methodist, these gathering halls housed huge crowds for sermons and revivals in the late 19th century. The setting of these buildings was among nature, where people would often camp to get away from their day-to-day activities and hear several high-energy sermons. From these camp meetings emerged the nationally significant Chautauqua movement.

Popular in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the Chautauqua movement originated as a training program for Sunday-school teachers and church workers. While initially religious in nature, the concept later expanded to include recreation, entertainment and adult education of all kinds. With the rise of radio, movies and the automobile, the Chautauqua movement diminished across the country.

These camp meeting halls and Chautauquas spread extensively throughout Illinois, but is becoming increasingly rare. The three properties included in this listing are among the few remaining buildings in the state associated with this movement, each of which is currently under threat.

Waldorf Tabernacle

- **Location:** Des Plaines Methodist Campground, Cook County
- **Built:** 1903
- **Architect:** Joshua Watts
- **Current owner:** Chicago District Campground Association
- **Historic Significance:** Meetings held here greatly influenced growth in Des Plaines during the late 19th, early 20th century. It was also home to an annual meeting of the Chautauqua movement that attracted as many as 15,000 people – the largest of its kind in this part of the country.
- **Why it is endangered:** Des Plaines River flooding has damaged the building, which is also in need of other repairs and mold remediation.



Credit: Cynthia Nielsen-Morgan

Originally named the American Tabernacle, this 16-sided, wood and steel truss building was designed in 1903 by Joshua Watts. It measures roughly 110 feet in diameter and has a seating capacity of 3,000 people. The roofing system, comprised of 16 steel trusses angled toward a clerestory and cupola, allows for an auditorium space that is completely unobstructed.

In 1934, Bishop Ernest Lynn Waldorf, head of the Chicago District of the Methodist Episcopal Church, opened the annual meeting, at which time the American Tabernacle was renamed in his honor. The Des Plaines gathering attracted between 10,000-15,000 people annually and was considered the largest meeting of its kind in this part of the country, according to the Chicago Tribune. Meetings at the Des Plaines Methodist Campground, dating back to 1865, greatly influenced the transformation of Des Plaines from a small farming village into a large community in the Des Plaines River Valley.

The campground has suffered from flooding over the years from the nearby Des Plaines River, and the tabernacle, as well as many of the 129 structures on site, is in need of repair. Current needs include repairs to the roof and beams, windows, floors and benches. The structure also requires mold remediation and structural analysis. The Historic Methodist Campground organization, Chicago District Campground Association, is moving forward with a new vision to turn its historic 158-year-old campground into a modern-day Chautauqua open for all with a focus on environmental stewardship, educational programming and outreach and historic preservation.

Oakdale Tabernacle

- **Location:** Oakdale Nature Preserve, Freeport, Stephenson County
- **Built:** 1915
- **Architect:** Unknown
- **Current owner:** Freeport Park District
- **Historic Significance:** The building has served as a community gathering space since 1895. For more than 100 years, it provided a venue for the community to hold events and activities.
- **Why it is endangered:** The building faces the threat of demolition due to years of vacancy and deferred maintenance, making it inhabitable.



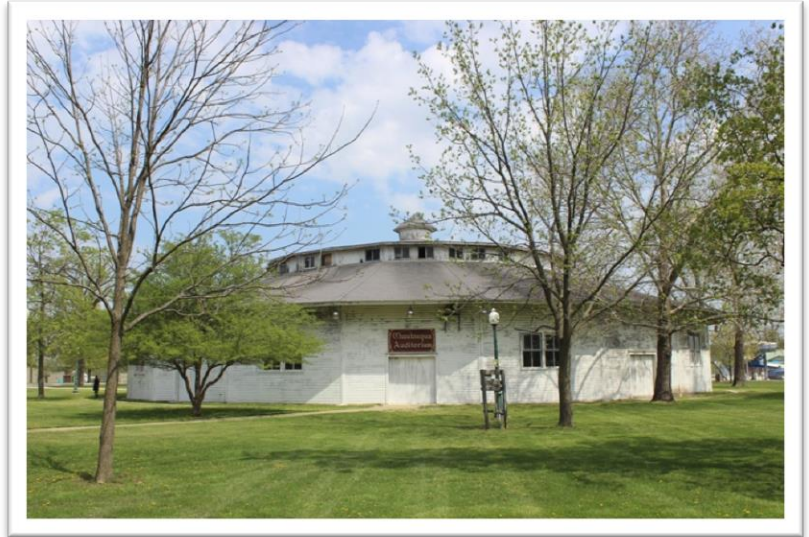
Credit: Karen Wilken

The origins of this tabernacle date back to 1895, when the Oakdale Park Camp Meeting Association held its first 10-day gathering on the site. Festivities included Bible study, religious services and outdoor activities for all ages. At one time, [2,000 people took part in these annual camp meetings](#). In 1915, the original 1895 tabernacle burned, but was replaced with this eight-sided tabernacle before the 1916 August camp meeting. Eventually, the United Methodist Church took over operation of the meetings, with the last annual gathering taking place in 1967. In 1971, the Freeport Park District bought the campground, renting out the Tabernacle for community events.

The building was closed in 2012 due to lack of bookings. Since that time, wildlife has overrun the building and made the structure uninhabitable. Despite threats of demolition, a group of community advocates is pressuring the Freeport Park District to restore it as a low-cost alternative that could be used as a community gathering space.

Chautauqua Auditorium

- **Location:** Forest Park, Shelbyville, Shelby County
- **Built:** 1903
- **Architect:** H.B. Trout
- **Current owner:** City of Shelbyville
- **Historic Significance:** The building features a unique radial roof truss system patented in 1903 by Morrison H. Vail and has hosted notable speakers such as Billy Sunday and former President William Taft.
- **Why it is endangered:** The building is in need of extensive repairs, such as roof replacement and structure stabilization but lacks proper funding.



Credit: Landmarks Illinois

This wood- frame, 20-sided auditorium building, built in 1903 by H.B. Trout, measures 150 feet in diameter and has a seating capacity of 5,000 people. The roofing system, comprised of 20 trusses that meet at a timber king post, support the spoke-and-wheel-like hub suspended high above the concave dirt floor. This radial truss system, patented in 1903 by Morrison H. Vail, allowed for the interior space to provide unobstructed views for those inside. This auditorium building was constructed under the cultural influence of the Chautauqua Movement and served to educate members of the community. Throughout the years, the Chautauqua Auditorium has played host to such notable speakers as William Jennings Bryan, Billy Sunday, Carrie Nation and Former President William Taft. In recent years, the building has suffered greatly due to flooding, lack of maintenance and limited funds.

The Chautauqua Auditorium Preservation Committee has made considerable progress in restoring the auditorium. However, in recent months engineers have found moisture rot where the walls meet the roofing system. Further stabilization and roof replacement is necessary if the building is to be saved. Since the Chautauqua Auditorium was first listed on the 2009 Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois, the Preservation Committee has continued to work in partnership with Landmarks Illinois on fundraising and advocacy efforts. In March 2018, the Chautauqua Auditorium was awarded a \$5,000 grant from the Landmarks Illinois Preservation Heritage Grant Fund to assist in assessing and addressing the current threat.

What you can do:

- To learn more and donate to the Shelbyville Chautauqua Auditorium Preservation Committee, visit <http://www.shelbyvillechautauqua.org/> and the [Shelbyville Chautauqua Facebook Page](#).

- To learn more about the Friends of the Freeport Park District's efforts to save the Oakdale Tabernacle, visit:
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/294745311043019/about/>
- To learn more and support the Chicago District Campground Association, visit:
<https://www.hmc1860.org/donate>

Additional Links:

- **General:**
 - The Chautauqua Trail: A North American Cultural Renaissance:
<http://www.chautauquatrail.com/>
- **Waldorf Tabernacle (Des Plaines):**
 - Des Plaines Methodist Camp Ground National Register form ([PDF](#))
 - Exhibition on the history of Des Plaines Methodist Camp Ground at the Des Plaines History Center:
<https://www.hmc1860.org/so/fM1SEeMU#/main>
- **Oakdale Tabernacle (Freeport):**
 - "Future of Freeport Park District's Oakdale Tabernacle still unknown," *Journal Standard*, November 8, 2017:
<http://www.journalstandard.com/news/20171108/future-of-freeport-park-districts-oakdale-tabernacle-still-unknown>
 - "Public feedback sought on potential Oakdale tabernacle renovation," *Journal Standard*, April 6, 2018:
<http://www.journalstandard.com/news/20180406/public-feedback-sought-on-potential-oakdale-tabernacle-renovation>
- **Chautauqua Auditorium (Shelbyville):**
 - Chautauqua Auditorium National Register form ([PDF](#))
 - "Shelbyville receives grant for Chautauqua Auditorium restoration," *Journal Gazette & Times Courier*, March 27, 2018:
http://jg-tc.com/lifestyles/announcements/shelbyville-receives-grant-for-chautauqua-auditorium-restoration/article_4f85605e-5cce-506d-be2f-bb431e146f7f.html

2018 Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois

State Fairgrounds

Springfield and Du Quoin, Sangamon and Perry Counties

State fairs have played a pivotal role, not only in our nation's history, but also in the history of Illinois. Illinois is unique in that it has two state fairs, [one in Springfield and the other in Du Quoin](#). Lack of funding for capital projects has created a substantial maintenance backlog for both fairgrounds, resulting in building closures and emergency repairs. As Illinois commemorates its bicentennial year, both a capital bill and private fundraising are needed to save the fairgrounds as places where we gather to celebrate the history and industry of Illinois.

Illinois State Fairgrounds

- **Location:** Springfield, Sangamon County
- **Built:** Late 19th and early 20th centuries
- **Architect:** Several, including Reeves & Baillie, Loebel & Schlossman
- **Current owner:** State of Illinois
- **Historic significance:** The fairgrounds and buildings located on site host thousands of visitors each year to celebrate Illinois' agriculture and history.
- **Why it is endangered:** Deferred maintenance due to lack of state funding has impacted many of the buildings on site. More than a dozen alone need new roofs.



Coliseum Building. Credit: Landmarks Illinois

The Illinois State Fair was founded in the mid-19th century to help promote and improve agricultural education in the state. The Industrial Revolution changed the scale and speed of agricultural production, initiating the shift from small substantive farming practices to highly productive endeavors that contributed to the commercial market.

The agricultural fair was one medium through which the changes in farming methods and technologies could be spread. The formation of agricultural societies began in the late 1840s, with Illinois establishing its own in 1853. The society's aim was to educate those farmers who did not have the opportunity to attend one of the newly founded land-grant agricultural schools, such as the Illinois Industrial University (now University of Illinois at Urbana, Champaign).



Barn 13. Credit: Landmarks Illinois

The first fair was held on the Sangamon County Fairgrounds in the fall of 1853. According to Patricia Henry, an Illinois State Fair historian, festivities included exhibitions of the state's finest "yokes of oxen, dairy products, fruit, grain, field crops, garden produce, flowers, needlework, butter, baked goods, wines, artwork and hair wreaths." Farm machinery, household products, and manufactured items were also on display. In its first year, between 15,000 and 20,000 people visited the fair.

Over the next 40 years, the fair traveled around the state until permanently settling in Springfield in 1894. After Chicago's 1893 World's Columbian Exposition, it was decided that, going forward, the State Fair would no longer be primarily identified with agricultural pursuits. Like the World's Fair, it would promote the interests of a modern, increasingly urban society. This was helped by the site's proximity to railway lines, making it accessible to visitors from all over the state.

The largest building on the Springfield fairgrounds is the Coliseum, which was designed by W. H. Reeves of the Peoria architectural firm Reeves and Baille in 1901. After inspectors deemed the building unsafe for use, it was closed in the fall of 2016. While it is identified as a top priority for repairs, it is estimated that the work will take at least two years and cost several million dollars.

Adjacent to the Coliseum is Barn 13, which in January was identified as needing emergency repairs to stabilize the deteriorating roof structure. Repair costs to the 1909 barn have been added to the growing list of maintenance needs, which includes new roofs for over a dozen structures. The current estimate for maintenance and repairs of the Springfield and Du Quoin state fair sites is \$180 million.

Du Quoin Fairgrounds

- **Location:** Du Quoin, Perry County
- **Built:** 1947
- **Architect:** Unknown
- **Current owner:** State of Illinois
- **Historic significance:** Architecture, yearly celebration of southern Illinois' history, industry and culture
- **Why it is endangered:** The largest and most significant building on site needs roof repairs. However, state funding is limited.

Entertainment, primarily harness horse racing, quickly became an integral part of the State Fair. However, gambling and the corrupt practices associated with it led to stricter regulations by the 1890s. In the pre-WWI era in which larger moral reform movements, such as prohibition, were taking place, laws were enacted to prohibit gambling, including horse racing. By 1911, racing was legal in only six states. While illegal, enforcement of such regulations was not common.

The quasi-public nature of state and county fairs made them targets for crackdowns on gambling activities. As a result, private establishments carried out much of the racing business, filling the gap in the racing market. A 1923 resolution by the Illinois County Fair Association banned gambling at fairs, leading to the establishment of separate fair associations.

While some racing activities were still being conducted in Springfield, a 1942 war-time suspension of racing at the Illinois State Fair allowed the Du Quoin Fair to finally capture the Grand Circuit for harness racing. Over the coming years, Du Quoin was able to attract some of the biggest races in the country. In 1947, W.R. Hayes constructed the current grandstand, a 7,500-seat Art Deco treasure.

In 1957, the Du Quoin State Fairgrounds Racetrack became the new official location of the Hambletonian, sometimes referred to as the “Kentucky Derby of harness racing.” The Hambletonian continued to be held at Du Quoin until the 1980s, when the privately held grounds were acquired by the State of Illinois. Today, the historic grandstand is primarily used for auto racing and concerts during the annual fair in September, but the largest and most significant building at the Du Quoin fair is in need of significant roof repairs.



Du Quoin Grandstand. Credit: Michael Allen

What you can do:

- Donate to the [Illinois Fairgrounds Foundation](#)
- [Contact your legislator](#) to support a capital bill which funds repairs to the State Fairgrounds.

Additional Links:

- Historic Fairgrounds in Illinois, National Register Multiple Property Listing: ([PDF](#))
- “Another Illinois State Fair building needs emergency repairs,” *The State Journal Register*, January 9, 2018:
<http://www.sj-r.com/news/20180109/another-illinois-state-fair-building-needs-emergency-repairs>
- “Rauner maintains ag program funding, adds money for state fair repairs,” *Farm Week Now*, February 15, 2018:
<http://farmweeknow.com/story-rauner-maintains-ag-program-funding-adds-money-state-fair-repairs-3-171794>
- “No easy fix: State Fairgrounds needs \$180 million in repairs,” *Agrinews*, March 19, 2018:
http://www.agrinews-pubs.com/news/no-easy-fix-state-fairgrounds-needs-million-in-repairs/article_ab9b1805-5311-5468-a07d-58f9591e7795.html

2018 Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois

Stran-Steel House

- **Location:** 2105 Chestnut Ave., Wilmette, Cook County
- **Built:** 1933
- **Architect:** H. Augustus O'Dell and Wirt C. Rowland
- **Current owner:** Developer owned
- **Historic significance:** A rare example of a residence built out of steel and baked iron enamel – unique materials for the time it was constructed. Also one of only two of such homes remaining that were shown at the 1933 World's Fair "Homes of Tomorrow" exhibit.
- **Why it is endangered:** House faces demolition as developer wishes to use the site to build two new homes.



Credit: Landmarks Illinois

At the time of its construction, this recently rediscovered 1933 World's Fair house was at the forefront of innovative residential architecture and material advancements. However, it is now facing an uncertain future, as it is in need of someone willing to move the structure in order to preserve this unique example of Machine Age design.

Designed by H. Augustus O'Dell and Wirt C. Rowland for the Stan-Steel Corporation of Detroit, this unusual French Art Deco house helped demonstrate Chicago's role in promoting modern residential architecture in the United States. Designed for the *Homes of Tomorrow* exhibit at the 1933 Century of Progress Fair, Stran-Steel partnered with Good Housekeeping to present an entry that showcased new home design utilizing materials and technology that had not previously been used in residential architecture.

The companies set out to produce a house that was fireproof, pre-fabricated and affordable to the average family. The result was a 1,300-square-foot house, constructed of steel and baked iron enamel that started at \$7,500. The house has four bedrooms, two baths and a large u-shaped outdoor terrace on the second story. It was touted as being "a simple, inexpensive system of steel members...[that could be] erected by [ordinary carpenters with ordinary tools](#)." Top

companies, eager to advertise their products, provided appliances, fixtures and furnishings for the house.



Credit: Chicago History Museum

While numerous copies of the model were [built around the country](#), recent research confirmed the house located in Wilmette is one of two that stood at the Century of Progress exhibit. The other had been moved to Palos Heights, but was demolished in the 1990s. A developer purchased the Wilmette home with the intention of replacing it with two new houses and was informed by Landmarks Illinois, other groups and village officials afterward of the home's significance. The developer has since offered the home to anyone who can move it from the site.

However, time is of the essence, as the developer intends to start construction on the site this summer.

Landmarks Illinois would prefer a compromise scheme proposed by preservation architect John Eifler that demonstrates the house could be moved to the other side of its lot, allowing the developer to build one new house with a needed zoning variance. However, the Village has completed its approval process for the subdivision of the lot. While the developer is yet to gain final approvals for construction, the village is unwilling to landmark properties without the owner's consent, leaving relocation as the only means for the Stran-Steel House to be saved.

What you can do:

- Urge the Wilmette Village Board to implement a demolition delay process in its code and to support the Historic Preservation Commission's efforts to survey historic properties in Wilmette and identify significant properties in need of protection.
<https://www.wilmette.com/village-board/>

Additional Links:

- "Do You Want To Buy A World's Fair House In Wilmette?" *Wilmette Patch*, February 9, 2018:
<https://patch.com/illinois/wilmette/do-you-want-buy-worlds-fair-house-wilmette>
- "Architecture sleuths solve mystery of that World's Fair House," *Crain's Chicago Business*, December 19, 2017:
<http://www.chicagobusiness.com/realestate/20171219/CREDo701/171219874/architecture-sleuths-solve-mystery-of-that-worlds-fair-house>

- Chicago History Museum Record of the Stran-Steel House:
<https://images.chicagohistory.org/detail/en/9045/1/EN9045-exterior-view-of-good-housekeeping.htm>

2018 Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois

The Nite Spot Café

- **Location:** Collinsville Road and 45th Street, Fairmont City, St. Clair County
- **Built:** Unknown
- **Architect:** Unknown
- **Current owner:** Galas Family
- **Historic significance:** An iconic location along Illinois' portion of Route 66 that once served the many travelers on America's "Mother Road."
- **Why it is endangered:** The site sits vacant and in need of maintenance. It also faces demolition as a nearby library wishes to acquire the site to build an expansion.



Credit: Illinois Route 66 Scenic Byway

Each year, tens of thousands of visitors explore Illinois on Route 66 in search of the neon signs, motels and brick roads that characterize the "Mother Road." However, many businesses along Route 66 have shuttered, their neon signs going dark for the foreseeable future. The Nite Spot Café (and its iconic neon sign) is but one example, as it is now threatened by the expansion of a nearby library complex.

In the 1920s, the creation of Route 66 gained immediate popularity as the shortest year-round route between the Midwest and the Southwest. As Americans bought cars and journeyed on the highways after World War II, a unique roadside culture of diners, motels and tourist kitsch became synonymous with Route 66.

With the creation of the Interstate Highway System in 1956, Route 66 could easily be bypassed and the local economies of communities along the historic route suffered. Despite motels closing and neon signs going dark, Route 66's popularity continued to grow among domestic and international travelers seeking to have a uniquely American experience along the open road.

Now, over 90 years old, the 2,400-mile highway from Chicago to Los Angeles remains an economic force in Illinois tourism despite preservation challenges. Rural economic development resources remain limited and many historic motels and restaurants remain shuttered.

One of these is The Nite Spot Café. Purchased in 1947 when it was just a one-room building in a junkyard, Adam and Anne Galas renovated the building in order to turn it into a 24/7 restaurant for tourists and truckers traveling on Route 66. The restaurant did more than serve food though; it sold various personal care items and household goods. Additionally, around Christmas, truckers could place orders through The Nite Spot for holiday gifts, which they would then pick up on their way home.

The prominent neon sign in front of the restaurant was added in the 1960s after the interstate was built adjacent to Route 66. It was meant to grab the attention of those traveling on the new bypass and has been a Route 66 icon ever since. Anne Galas was able to keep the restaurant open following the death of her husband in 1978, but was forced to close in 1984 when her own health began to deteriorate. The restaurant has been closed since, but recently the next two generations of Galas family members have worked toward the goal of reopening the building as a Route 66 destination. In addition, they are pursuing listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

Despite the building's potential as a Route 66 landmark, Fairmont City officials have moved to condemn and demolish the building. The Galas family has documented their plans to move forward with structural repairs to the foundation and exterior wall this year, but will face a court appearance with the City this summer. While city officials have not stated their intentions for the site, The Nite Spot Café is adjacent to the Fairmont City Library Center and Bank of Edwardsville.

What you can do:

- If you'd like to assist in the National Register nomination process, please contact Frank Butterfield, Springfield Office Director, at 217-836-2524 or fbutterfield@landmarks.org.
- Contact Fairmont City Trustees to tell them that you support the rehabilitation of The Nite Spot Café: <http://fairmontcityil.com/pages/administration.html>

Additional Links:

- Illinois Route 66 Scenic Byway: <http://www.illinoisroute66.org/>



2018 Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois

Varsity Theater Block



Credit: Landmarks Illinois

- **Location:** 1706-26 Sherman Ave., Evanston, Cook County
- **Built:** Various dates
- **Architect:** Unknown
- **Current owner:** Privately owned
- **Historic significance:** One of last remaining historically intact blocks in downtown Evanston.
- **Why it is endangered:** Historic buildings on the block do not have landmark protection and are vulnerable teardown targets to make way for future new developments.

Renewed development pressure in north suburban Evanston's downtown has threatened some of the city's architectural and historically significant buildings. With only 29 locally designated landmarks in downtown Evanston, and no downtown historic districts, there are few protections for commercial buildings that contribute to the city's character.

The 1700 block of Sherman Avenue is one of the last remaining historically intact blocks in Evanston's downtown. A survey of historic buildings in the downtown district was conducted in 2007 by the Evanston Preservation Commission. This survey identified the former Varsity Theater, a 1926 J.E.O. Pridmore-designed building located at 1706-10 Sherman Avenue, and the 1922 J.A. Scanlan-designed building at 1712-22 Sherman Avenue, as possessing historical and/or architectural merit, making their landmark potential a topic for further discussion. These buildings are important contributors to the desired physical context and character of downtown Evanston.

The City of Evanston adopted its most recent Downtown Plan in February 2009, and a downtown building condition survey was conducted in 2007 as part of the Downtown Plan process. Incorporating data from the 2007 historic building survey, the Plan identified three "Traditional Zones," one of which includes the buildings in the 1700 block of Sherman Avenue. According to the Plan, these zones exhibit, "A more traditional shopping street character with smaller buildings and shops... with specialty merchants, restaurants and 'neighborhood'

convenience centers.” The Plan went on to state that, “The traditional scale and character of the buildings in these zones should be conserved where feasible through adaptive reuse and façade improvements.” It also recommended improvements to the alleyway between the 1706 and 1712 Sherman Avenue buildings that would enhance the block by facilitating pedestrian movement, as well as creating a special public space within downtown.

Finally, one of this Plan’s main objectives was to, “Protect and rehabilitate character-giving buildings, structures and sites [by promoting] the rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of buildings and sites that provide historical and architectural context to the downtown.” Recommended strategies to help Evanston meet this objective included establishing a Downtown Federal/Conservation Historic District that would coincide with the Plan’s Traditional Zones (making property owners eligible for federal incentives), encouraging landmark designation for those properties identified in the 2007 survey and creating a Rehabilitation/Adaptive Reuse Fund.

While a recent proposal to replace the buildings with a high-rise development was withdrawn, the fate of these “Traditional Zones” is in danger, as none of the 2009 plan’s recommendations were undertaken. Without any individual or district landmark protections in place downtown, such buildings are left vulnerable.



Credit: Landmarks Illinois

Landmarks Illinois is advocating for a comprehensive downtown survey to be conducted, identifying architectural and/or historically significant buildings that may be eligible for local or National Register designation, either individually or as part of a district. If considered, such designations could make these buildings eligible for rehabilitation tax incentives, such as the 20% Historic Tax Credit or Class L, a property tax incentive.

While many suburban communities face hard decisions whether to permit new, high-density development in their traditional downtowns, often putting older building stock at risk, there should be a balance that permits new development, as well as preserving a downtown’s historic character.

What you can do:

- Urge the City of Evanston to carry out the recommendations put forth for “Traditional Zones” in the 2009 Downtown Plan, especially in light of new development pressure.

- As well as conduct a comprehensive survey of architectural and/or historically significant buildings in Downtown.

Additional Links:

- “Developers pull the plug on Evanston’s Northlight Theatre Tower,” *Chicago Curbed*, March 2, 2018:
<https://chicago.curbed.com/2018/3/2/17069010/evanston-high-rise-northlight-theatre>
- Downtown Evanston Plan, adopted February, 2009:
<https://www.cityofevanston.org/home/showdocument?id=4020>

2018 Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois

James R. Thompson Center



Credit: Landmarks Illinois

- **Location:** 100 W Randolph St., Chicago, Cook County
- **Built:** 1985
- **Architect:** Helmut Jahn
- **Current owner:** State of Illinois
- **Historic significance:** Chicago's best example of grandly-scaled, Postmodern architecture, the most significant architectural style of the last two decades of the 20th century.
- **Why it is endangered:** State of Illinois is looking to sell the building, putting it at risk of possible demolition.

Landmarks Illinois first placed the Thompson Center on its Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois in 2017. A year later, the Postmodern building constructed in 1985 and designed by Helmut Jahn, remains threatened as the State of Illinois continues to pursue a possible sale of the building that could allow new development on the site. Landmarks Illinois understands such a sale would bring needed revenue to the State of Illinois, but it cannot support a sale of the Thompson Center if it leads to demolition of the irreplaceable building, located in the heart of Chicago's Loop. Landmarks Illinois would only support the state's sale of this great asset if such a sale includes reuse options. Through reuse, it is possible the space could be a potential energy generator for a future corporate headquarters or the next trending hotel or condo project.

Last year, the state released an image encouraging full demolition and replacement of the Thompson Center with a new super tower. In response, architect Helmut Jahn released his own re-envisioning of the Thompson Center, which includes a new, approximately 13,000-square-foot tower to house a hotel and residences. According to the design, the new tower would be carved into the existing complex at the southwest corner of the block and connect to the existing building up to level four. Jahn demonstrates how the remainder of the existing building can be utilized as office space and the atrium opened, similar to his design for the Sony Center in Berlin,

as an exciting open-air public space with shops, restaurants and activities that would make the complex a new and exciting destination.

As of now, the fate of the Thompson Center continues to be at a standstill legislatively giving preservationists more time to explore feasible options for the building. Since including the Thompson Center on its 2017 Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois, Landmarks Illinois has commissioned renderings that visually demonstrate Thompson Center's ability to be privately redeveloped as an exciting mixed-use destination, which could also include the addition of a super tower at the southwest corner of the block to maximize zoning and revenue on the site.

Reuse of the Thompson Center is also the right thing to do economically, environmentally and architecturally. Demolition would be complicated with an existing CTA station on the site, and demo costs are anticipated to be no less than \$15 million to \$20 million. A developer looking to reuse the existing Thompson Center also could take advantage of other incentives. The Thompson Center's eligibility for listing in the National Register of Historic Places was determined in 2009. A full rehabilitation and reuse of the Thompson Center, without a tower addition, could be undertaken using the Federal Historic Tax Credit, the very incentive that continues to allow some of Chicago's greatest landmarks, such as the Chicago Athletic Association, the Wrigley Building and the IBM Building, to be economically brought back to life.

The Thompson Center is locally significant as Chicago's best example of grandly-scaled, Postmodern architecture, the most significant architectural style of the last two decades of the 20th century. Its broad plaza, prominently marked by Jean Dubuffet's whimsical sculpture Monument with Standing Beast, continues a three-block path of great public artwork plazas, from 69 W. Washington St. with *Miro's Moon, Sun, and One Star*, to *The Picasso* at Daley Plaza to Thompson Center's plaza. While not officially designated, Jahn forged a landmark with Thompson's Center's building design and setting.

The Thompson Center's voluminous atrium is also reminiscent of monumental and bygone public spaces. At the time of its opening in 1985, the [Chicago Tribune's architectural critic Paul Gapp wrote](#), "What we did not have in Chicago until Jahn designed the center was a contemporary vertical space of such splendid and theatrical dimensions." Regarding the Center's curved glass facades, which provide a break in the streetscape of surrounding linear office towers, Gapp wrote, "In a city where architects so long worshiped the 90-degree angle and black curtain walls, the center's asymmetry and multicolored skin appear as almost impudent nose-thumbing at the past."



Credit: Landmarks Illinois

What you can do:

- [Contact Governor Bruce Rauner](#) to voice support for the sale of the property, but not to endorse demolition as a preferred outcome. Give the real estate market the chance to explore reuse opportunities, which could include the addition of a tower to maximize the site. Reuse is the better choice economically, environmentally and for Chicago's architectural legacy.

Additional Links:

- Watch Nathan Eddy's 2017 film, "Starship Chicago" on the Thompson Center: <https://vimeo.com/241413433>
- "Rauner rejects huge Thompson Center offer," *Crain's Chicago Business*, June 22, 2017: <http://www.chicagobusiness.com/article/20170622/BLOGS02/170629928/rauner-rejects-huge-thompson-center-offer>
- "Rahm: I Offered To OK Sale of Thompson Center But Rauner Wouldn't Deal," *DNAinfo*, June 22, 2017: <https://www.dnainfo.com/chicago/20170622/downtown/rahm-i-offered-ok-sale-of-thompson-center-but-rauner-wouldnt-deal>
- "Why Chicago's Thompson Center is worth saving," *Chicago Curbed*, Jan. 23, 2017 ([PDF](#))
- "Helmut Jahn's State of Illinois Center a 'spectacular building'," *Chicago Tribune*, May 16, 1988 ([PDF](#))



2018 Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois Press Conference Speakers and “Most Endangered” Property Advocates and Contacts

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Updates on Past Most Endangered Historic Places 2018



McKee House

Lombard/Glen Ellyn

2017 Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois

The McKee Preservation Group (MPG) recently renegotiated parts of an intergovernmental agreement with the DuPage County Forest Preserve and the Village of Glen Ellyn that gives the Village an

immediate lease agreement. This will allow access to the property for MPG, a volunteer group, to do clean-up and condition assessments. It will also help with fundraising efforts. MPG is now raising \$65,000 to replace the roof. Citizens for Glen Ellyn Preservation has contributed \$10,000, and Landmarks Illinois has provided a \$2,000 grant through its Preservation Heritage Fund. McKee House was included on LI's 2017 Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois. The 1936, Colonial Revival home built by the Federal Works Progress Administration functioned as a forest preserve headquarters and superintendent's home. It was closed by the DuPage County Forest Preserve in 2002. MPG welcomes donations, volunteers and potential board members. Contact:

McKeePreservationGroup@gmail.com.



Gemini Giant and Launching Pad Restaurant

Wilmington

2017 Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois (Route 66 listing)

The Gemini Giant, a 30-foot-tall statue of a spaceman, has welcomed visitors to the Launching Pad Restaurant on Route 66 since 1965. Since the restaurant closed in 2010, the fate of

the Gemini Giant had been called into question. The restaurant and statue failed to sell at auction in 2016, and there have been discussions of moving the statue to a new location, losing its original context. Seeing the potential of the Launching Pad and Gemini Giant after a visit to Wilmington's antique district, Tully Garrett and Holly Barker purchased the restaurant and statue in October 2017. Recently, the couple replaced the deteriorating plywood sign with an exact replica of the original. They plan to do a partial reopening to tourists this year, with the restaurant to follow next year after completing necessary repairs.



WWI Monuments

Statewide

2017 Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois

These important and historic markers paying tribute to those who fought in the Great War are nearing 100 years old and many are in need of repair to return them to their dedication-era quality and appearance. April 6, 2017, marked the 100th anniversary of the U.S. entry into WWI, and Landmarks Illinois launched a grant program to help communities restore these significant memorials. Since then, LI has given grants to four cities totaling \$28,000 to restore their WWI monuments. The WWI Monument Preservation Grant Program was made possible with generous support from the Pritzker Military Foundation. The next grant round deadline is May 15, 2018. For more information, go to the Resources and Financial Resources tabs at www.Landmarks.org and click on “Landmarks Illinois Grants.”



Harley Clarke Mansion

Evanston

2016 Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois

On April 9, 2018, the Evanston City Council voted against entering into a lease agreement with Evanston Lakehouse & Gardens (ELHG), the nonprofit citizens group formed to rehabilitate and reuse the

city-owned lakefront mansion, which the city had considered for demolition after a long-time cultural institution vacated. ELHG hoped to convert the building to a multi-purpose venue for environmental education, community events and cultural programming. Since the mansion was included on LI's 2016 Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois, the city formed a Harley Clarke Planning Committee, which after a nine-month study, recommended the city enter into a lease agreement with ELHG. In the city's subsequent Request for Proposals process, ELHG was the only qualifying organization to submit. It is now unclear what next steps the city will take to address the future of this vacant, historic landmark. For more information, go to:

<http://evanstonlakehouse.org/>.



Ursuline Academy

Springfield

2008 Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois

In March, Benedictine University officials announced they will close the Springfield branch of the university, which includes the historic Ursuline Academy buildings. Two of the buildings date to

the 1860s, when the Ursuline order of Catholic nuns opened the all-girls school in Springfield.

Landmarks Illinois listed Ursuline Academy on its 2008 Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois, prior to the school's closure in 2009. Benedictine University took over the campus in 2009 but has struggled with low enrollment and deferred maintenance, which it says totals approximately \$5 million. The 1869 Brinkerhoff Home is listed in the National Register of Historic Places, while several other campus buildings have been determined eligible for listing. Finding a developer with experience in preservation incentives, like the Federal Historic Tax Credit, will be key to achieving a preservation solution for Ursuline Academy.



Rosenwald Court Apartments

Chicago

2002 Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois

In the fall of 2016, a ribbon-cutting ceremony was held at the Rosenwald Court Apartments to celebrate the completion of a \$132 million rehabilitation of the 1929 Art Moderne-style residential complex commissioned by Sears, Roebuck & Co.

Executive Julius Rosenwald. The reopening of Rosenwald came after a 15-year advocacy campaign to revive the vacant Chicago Housing Authority complex, which once housed the growing working, middle-class African American population on Chicago's South Side. The development team secured multiple layers of gap financing, including federal historic tax credits, to bring back this important community anchor at 47th Street and Michigan Avenue.

For more information on
Landmarks Illinois' Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois,
visit: www.Landmarks.org