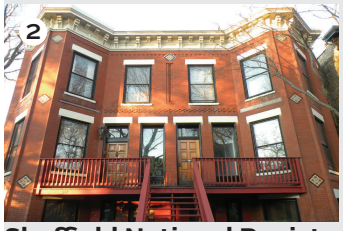
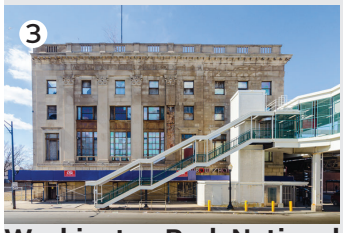
2019 MOST ENDANGERED HISTORIC PLACES IN ILLINOIS

LANDMARKS ILLINOIS

James R. Thompson Center
Chicago, *Cook County*



Sheffield National Register Historic District
Chicago, *Cook County*

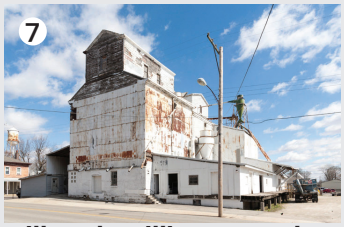


Washington Park National Bank
Chicago, *Cook County*

St. Mary's School
Galena, *Jo Daviess County*

Booth Cottage
Glencoe, *Cook County*

Hoover Estate
Glencoe, *Cook County*



Millstadt Milling & Feed Company
Millstadt, *St. Clair County*

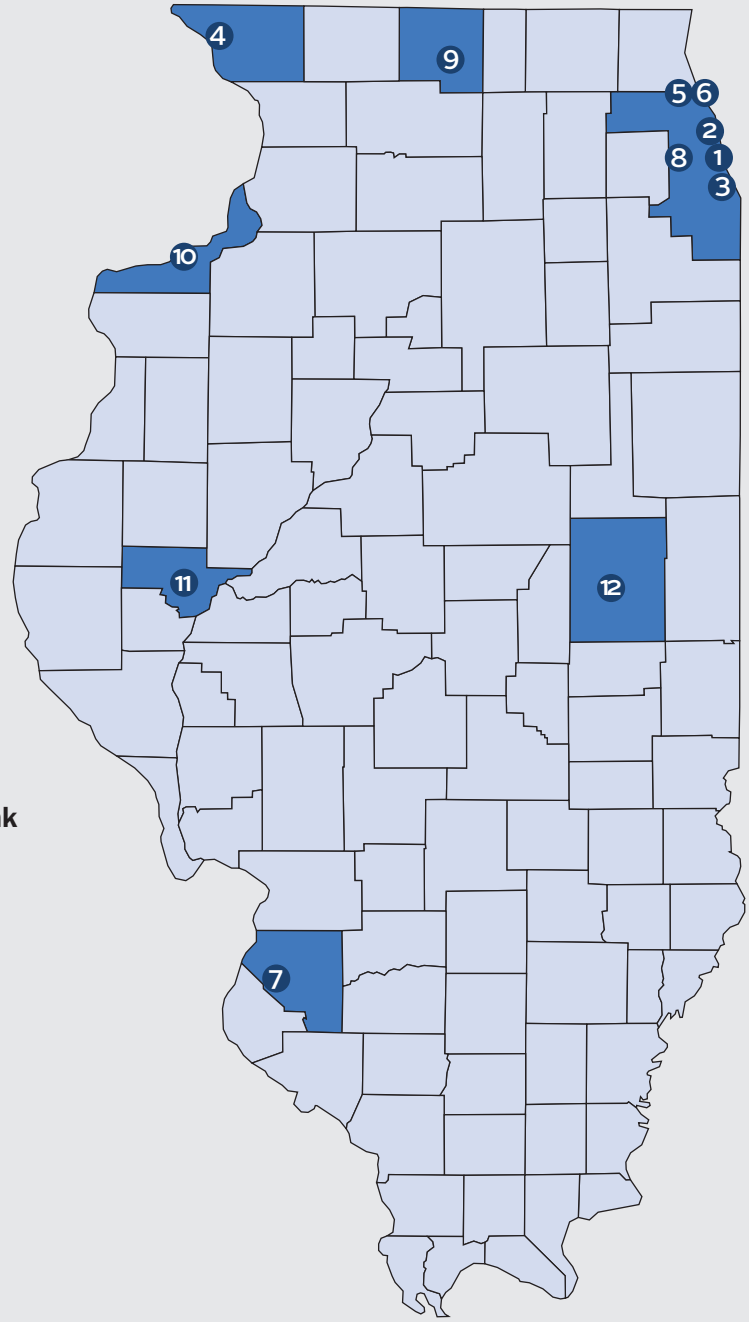
Hill Motor Sales Building
Oak Park, *Cook County*

Chancery & Piety Hill Properties
Rockford, *Winnebago County*

Rock Island County Courthouse
Rock Island, *Rock Island County*

Ray House
Rushville, *Schuyler County*

Greek Housing at University of Illinois
Urbana, *Champaign County*



LANDMARKS ILLINOIS

2019 Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois

JAMES R. THOMPSON CENTER

100 W Randolph Street, Chicago, *Cook County*

For the third year in a row, LI is including the one-of-a-kind, state-owned building in Chicago's Loop on its Most Endangered list. Designed by Helmut Jahn in 1985, the Thompson Center remains threatened as the State of Illinois continues to pursue a sale of the building that could allow new development on the site. In March 2019, Gov. JB Pritzker signed legislation that outlines a two-year plan for the building's sale. Landmarks Illinois only supports a sale if it includes reuse of the irreplaceable building, which remains Chicago's best example of grandly-scaled, Postmodern architecture.

SHEFFIELD NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICT

Lincoln Park Neighborhood, Chicago, *Cook County*

Located in Chicago's Lincoln Park neighborhood, this historic district is home to some of the city's best examples of late-19th century architecture. While the district is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, this does not protect against demolition of its architecturally significant buildings, and an increasing number of them are being torn down by owners and developers in favor of new construction. To date, a third of the district's buildings have been demolished and LI would like to see new polices explored to prevent further demolition.

WASHINGTON PARK NATIONAL BANK

600 S Cottage Grove Avenue, Chicago, *Cook County*

The five-story, limestone neoclassical building at the corner of Cottage Grove and 63rd Street, was built in 1924 and is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The site was once the heart of a thriving retail area in Chicago's Woodlawn community, but has been vacant for years. Current building owner, the Cook County Land Bank Authority, has fast-tracked redevelopment of the long-vacant site and recently selected a proposal from a developer that includes demolition of the historic bank, despite community input that demonstrated a preference for its preservation and reuse.

ST. MARY'S SCHOOL

401 Elk Street, Galena, *Jo Daviess County*

The 1865 school is part of Galena's National Register Historic District and a cherished part of the community. Unfortunately, the building has suffered from neglect under private ownership since the 1970s. The current owner is willing to sell, but the cost and scope of repairs makes the project challenging. The Galena Foundation, a local nonprofit, is advocating to save St. Mary's school as well as for Galena to pass a "demolition by neglect" ordinance to prevent historic buildings in private ownership from reaching such a state of disrepair. An ordinance of this type was proposed last year, but failed to pass the Galena City Council.

BOOTH COTTAGE

239 Franklin Street, Glencoe, *Cook County*

This Frank Lloyd Wright-designed home is currently for sale and unprotected. The one-story frame house was originally built in 1913 for Sherman and Elizabeth Booth, prominent members of the Glencoe community in the early 20th century. While charming in size, the house is located on a substantial lot that could accommodate a much larger residence, putting it at risk for tear-down and redevelopment.

HOOVER ESTATE

1801 Green Bay Road, Glencoe, *Cook County*

The historic Hoover Estate was built in 1925 and designed by architect William Furst, architect of Glencoe's village hall. The estate includes three buildings, all of which are remarkable examples of the Tudor Revival style, important not only for their architectural significance, but also for their association with famous vacuum magnate H. Earl Hoover. The Estate was recently purchased by a developer who plans to demolish the buildings to make way for multiple new single-family homes. The Glencoe Village Board rejected the historic preservation commission's recommendation for honorary landmark status, which would have delayed demolition and given the commission opportunity to urge reuse of any of the buildings.

MILLSTADT MILLING & FEED COMPANY

419 S Jefferson Street, Millstadt, *St. Clair County*

Built in 1857 with a grain elevator added in 1880, the property is one of the oldest continually operating grain elevators in the state and represents a critical piece of Illinois' industrial and agricultural past. Despite its historic significance and sound condition, Millstadt village officials have declared the site a "public nuisance" and given the current owners a tight timeframe to provide a detailed plan for restoration or face condemnation and demolition.

HILL MOTOR SALES BUILDING

644 Madison Street, Oak Park, *Cook County*

The former Packard showroom, also known as the former Foley-Rice dealership, was built in 1924-27 and remains one of the best preserved and most architecturally striking examples left from the time when Oak Park's Madison Street was an automobile sales district. Despite vocal protest from the community and recommendations from their own Historic Preservation Commission, Oak Park officials recently agreed to allow a developer to demolish the vacant building to make way for a new grocery store. Locals continue to push for the historic building to be incorporated in the development.

CHANCERY & PIETY HILL PROPERTIES

1229 & 1231 N Court Street and 1245 N Church Street, Rockford, *Winnebago County*

This group of three historic buildings includes the Chancery & Bishop's Residence, the St. Peter School and a convent, and are part of the former "Piety Hill" campus located prominently in Rockford's Signal Hill community. Designed by architect Wybe J. van der Meer and built between 1922 and 1929, the buildings are excellent examples of Beaux Arts and Renaissance Revival architecture. Current property owners, the Catholic Diocese of Rockford, is hoping to demolish the historic structures despite local opposition and eligibility for local landmark status.

ROCK ISLAND COUNTY COURTHOUSE

210 15th Street, Rock Island, *Rock Island County*

The Spanish Renaissance-style building was designed by Fredrick C. Gunn and Louis S. Curtis and built between 1895 and 1897. Vacant since the neighboring Justice Center Annex opened in late 2018, the Rock Island County Board and Public Building Commission have moved to demolish the historic courthouse without complying with state preservation law. Landmarks Illinois joined a lawsuit with five other plaintiffs seeking to prevent this unlawful demolition. The case is currently being heard by the State of Illinois Third District Appellate Court.

RAY HOUSE

419 W Washington Street, Rushville, *Schuyler County*

The Ray House was built in the 1850s and remains one of the oldest homes in Rushville. It is a beautiful example of Gothic Revival and Victorian architecture and is perhaps best known for hosting Abraham Lincoln during his 1858 senatorial campaign. Unfortunately, the Ray House sits vacant and has suffered significant deterioration following years of deferred maintenance. Immediate repairs are needed, including to the brick foundation and basement walls. A local nonprofit, the Schuyler County Architecture Foundation, has started a campaign to raise funds for the much-needed restoration.

GREEK HOUSING AT UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

Urbana-Champaign, *Champaign County*

The University of Illinois campus has one of the largest concentrations of Greek Life in the country, but an increasing number of the 100-year-old fraternity and sorority houses face demolition. These beautiful homes, which have become an integral part of the architectural fabric of Champaign and Urbana, have suffered from deferred maintenance, declining occupancy rates and a rapid escalation of property tax assessments, often making them tear-down targets to make way for new, high-rise apartment buildings.

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LANDMARKS ILLINOIS

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2019 Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois

James R. Thompson Center

QUICK STATS

- **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 – its voluminous atrium and curved facades make it a one-of-a-kind downtown building.
- **Why it is endangered:** State of Illinois is looking to sell the building, putting it at risk of possible demolition.
- **Take action:** Urge Gov. Pritzker to sell Thompson Center with a requirement for retention and reuse of this irreplaceable

Credit: Landmarks Illinois

BACKGROUND

The Thompson Center, constructed in 1985 and designed by Helmut Jahn, 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 Thompson 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."

CURRENT THREAT

Landmarks Illinois first placed the Thompson Center on its Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois in 2017 and again in 2018. Today, the building remains threatened as the State of Illinois continues to pursue a sale of the building that could allow new development on the site. Governor J.B. Pritzker recently signed legislation that outlines a two-year plan for the building's sale. Landmarks Illinois understands such a sale would bring needed revenue to the State of Illinois, but terms of the sale should include retaining and reusing this irreplaceable building, an approach supported by state statute for National Register-listed and eligible buildings. Thompson Center's eligibility for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (determined in 2009) triggers this option and gives a developer the opportunity to use Federal Historic Tax Credits for its rehabilitation. Through reuse, it is possible the space could be a future corporate headquarters or the next trending hotel.

LI/Jahn 2018 reuse rendering image. Credit: visualizedconcepts

The Rauner Administration previously 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 rendering of the Thompson Center, which included a new, approximately 13,000-square-foot tower to house a hotel and residences.

In 2018, Landmarks Illinois worked with Jahn and commissioned a series of renderings that visually demonstrate the architect's vision for how Thompson Center could be privately redeveloped as an exciting mixed-use destination, including the addition of a super tower at the southwest corner of the block to maximize zoning and revenue on the site. According to the design, the new tower would be added to the building's southwest corner and connect to its first four levels. The remainder of the existing building could 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.

LANDMARKS ILLINOIS

2019 Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois

James R. Thompson Center

With or without a new tower, reuse of the Thompson Center is the right thing to do economically, environmentally and architecturally. Demolition would be complicated with an existing CTA station on the site, and demolition costs are anticipated to be no less than $15 million to $20 million. A developer looking to undertake a qualified rehabilitation of the building could use 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.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Contact Governor J.B. Pritzker to voice support for the sale of the property, but not to endorse demolition as a preferred outcome. Urge him to sell Thompson Center with a requirement for retention and reuse of this irreplaceable building. Landmarks Illinois believes we need to 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. Landmarking at the national and local levels should be urged, which will provide economic incentives for rehabilitation and reuse.

FURTHER READING

- 'Love it or hate it'? List it, Pritzker says – puts Thompson Center up for sale
  Chicago Sun-Times, April 5, 2019

- Pritzker to sell Helmut Jahn's postmodern Thompson Center in Chicago
  Dezeen, April 9, 2019

- Multi-organization sign on letter to Gov. Pritzker (PDF)

- Watch Nathan Eddy's 2017 film, "Starship Chicago" on the Thompson Center

- Rauner rejects huge Thompson Center offer
  Crain's Chicago Business, June 22, 2017

- Rahm: I Offered To OK Sale of Thompson Center But Rauner Wouldn't Deal
  DNAinfo, June 22, 2017

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2019 Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois

James R. Thompson Center

- Why Chicago's Thompson Center is worth saving
  Chicago Curbed, January 23, 2017

- Helmut Jahn's State of Illinois Center a 'spectacular building'
  Chicago Tribune, May 16, 1988

LANDMARKS ILLINOIS

2019 Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois

Sheffield National Register Historic District

QUICK STATS

- **Location:** Chicago's Lincoln Park neighborhood. (Approx. Willow Street to the south, Larabee Street & Lincoln Avenue to the east, Fullerton Parkway to the north, and Southport, Lakewood & and Maud Avenues to the west).
- **Built:** Mixed, many mid- to late-19th century
- **Architect:** Various
- **Historic significance:** This Historic District, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, is one of the best examples of a late-19th century neighborhood in Chicago.
- **Why it is endangered:** For over 25 years, historic buildings have been torn down at an alarming rate to make space for new construction. National Register listing is honorific and does not provide protection.
- **Take Action:** Voice your support with local alderman and community organizations for potential additional protective historic districts at the local level and help us advocate for potential new citywide policies that protect places like these historic homes. (Read more below)

Credit: Matt Wicklund

BACKGROUND

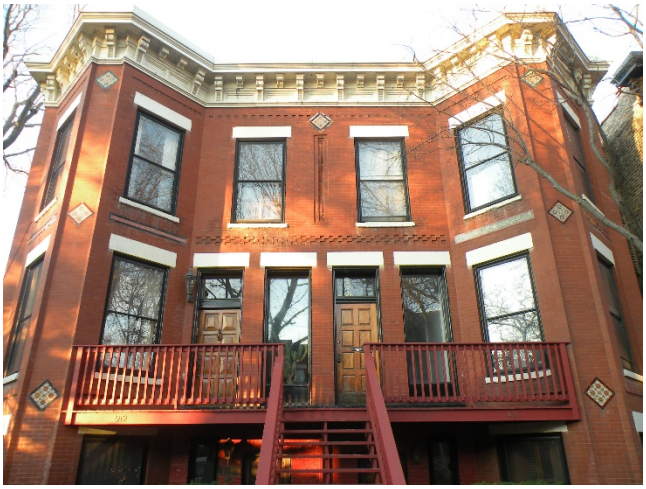
The footprint of the Sheffield National Register Historic District includes much of the western part of Chicago's Lincoln Park neighborhood. The area is primarily residential, interlaced with well-defined and popular commercial streets such as Halsted and Armitage. The district is also home to a number of historic schools, churches and parks, as well as DePaul University.

LANDMARKS ILLINOIS

2019 Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois

Sheffield National Register Historic District

Although it contains a variety of building types, the easily recognizable urban, middle-class character of Sheffield is valued by residents and visitors alike. The neighborhood was largely built from the 1860s through the early 20th century, and it remains one of the best-preserved late-19th century neighborhoods in the city. Homes in the neighborhood display a wonderful range of historic building styles, including early wooden Italianate cottages and brick Italianate row houses, which are becoming increasingly rare in Chicago due to demolition and redevelopment. The neighborhood also features a number of larger masonry homes in variations on the Queen Anne and Romanesque styles. Commercial buildings in the district are particularly notable, with many brightly colored examples of Queen Anne architecture.



(Demolished)

From the 1920s through the 1950s, the neighborhood suffered a period of decline as many Chicago residents left urban neighborhoods in favor of the growing suburbs. Luckily, most of Sheffield's historic buildings survived until the 1960s, when the neighborhood again began to flourish. Since then, property values have skyrocketed and Lincoln Park has become one of the more popular and fashionable neighborhoods in Chicago.

In 1976, the historic nature of the Sheffield area received national recognition when it was added to the National Register of Historic Places as a Historic District. Over the next decade, the district received three extensions in the 1980s to its current footprint. While this designation provided no formal protections, it served as an indicator of the historic an architectural value of the neighborhood.

CURRENT THREAT

Since the National Register recognition, the Sheffield district has suffered from a tear-down epidemic, losing its irreplaceable 19th-century buildings at an alarming rate. As property values continue to rise, developers have torn down more historic homes and multi-unit flats to make way for new single-family mansions and condominium buildings that are largely unsympathetic to the neighborhood's historic character.

LANDMARKS ILLINOIS

2019 Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois

Sheffield National Register Historic District

Some areas of the Sheffield National Register Historic District have received protection through designation as Chicago Landmark Districts, including the McCormick Row House (1977), Burling Row House (2000), Armitage-Halsted (2003), Fremont Row House (2004) and Bissell Street (2007) Chicago Landmark Districts. A small section of the Mid North (1977) Landmark District is located in the Sheffield National Register District as well. Unfortunately, these protected areas still make up the minority of the district, protecting only 20 blocks.[1] To date, over 350 properties in the historic district have been demolished, approximately a third of its building stock.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

If you are a resident of the Sheffield National Register Historic District, continue to voice support with the alderman and community organizations for finding solutions to discourage demolition of historic properties. While additional local historic districts should be encouraged, new citywide policies such as a higher fees for the demolition of National Register-listed buildings and allowances for accessory dwelling units (ADU), which may give building owners who feel priced out of their neighborhoods to seek new income-options for their historic properties, should be studied.

FURTHER READING

- Map of tear-downs in the Historic District
- Data on demolished or significantly altered properties within the Historic District (PDF)
- 910-912 W. Webster demolition
  Preservation Chicago
- Teardown makes way for mansion
  Chicago Cityscape
- See Chicago Cityscape's detailed map of the district.

[1] Roughly 253 of the 1000+ structures within the Sheffield National Register Historic District are protected by Chicago Landmark District status.

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2019 Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois

Washington Park National Bank

QUICK STATS

- **Location:** 6300 S. Cottage Grove Ave, Chicago, Cook County
- **Built:** 1924
- **Architect:** Albert Schwartz
- **Current owner:** Cook County Land Bank Authority
- **Historic significance:** This nearly 100-year-old neoclassical building was once the heart of a thriving retail area in Chicago's Woodlawn neighborhood and remains an important anchor to the community.
- **Why it is endangered:** The owners, Cook County Land Bank Authority, recently accepted a developer's proposal to demolish the neglected property and replace it with a new building.
- **Take Action:** Contact newly elected 20th Ward Alderwoman Jeanette Taylor to voice your support for preservation of this building!

Credit: Eric Allix Rogers

BACKGROUND

Once at the center of a thriving commercial community on the South Side, Woodlawn's Washington Park National Bank now sits empty. The five-story, limestone neoclassical building at the corner of Cottage Grove and 63rd street was built in 1924 by architect Albert Schwartz. The structure included retail shops on the 63rd Street façade and the Washington Park National Bank on the Cottage Grove side. At the time of its construction, it was meant to serve a growing middle-class community at a thriving center of Chicago's South Side. In the 1940s, the racial makeup of the area shifted toward the African American community, and the neighborhood continued its prominence as an entertainment and retail hub.

Since the 1960s, however, the area has suffered decline, and the striking Washington Park National Bank has fallen into disrepair. In 2016, Preservation Chicago highlighted the historic

Washington Park National Bank

property on its Chicago 7 list. Until recently, it was owned by the Metropolitan Apostolic Church. However, the building was taken over by the Cook County Land Bank Authority (CCLBA) in 2018 due to years of unpaid taxes on the property. CCLBA was formed by county ordinance in 2013 to address the large inventory of vacant residential, industrial and commercial property in Cook County.

CURRENT THREAT

CCLBA has fast-tracked a redevelopment process to help revitalize the once-bustling intersection at Cottage Grove at 63rd Street. Unfortunately, out of the three final proposals submitted to the CCLBA as part of a Request for Proposal process for the site, the CCLBA accepted the only one that completely razes the historic bank.

Credit: Eric Allix Rogers

The bank itself is currently in dilapidated condition. Nonetheless, an April 2018 structural assessment for the CCLBA concluded the building remains structurally sound. The firm that performed the structural assessment stated, "We believe that the existing framing system of the building is structurally sound, intact, and still in good condition. We believe that the building is salvageable and can be repaired to restore its full structural integrity."

Since acquiring the building, the CCLBA led a community-directed redevelopment process for the project, hosting three meetings open to Woodlawn residents in January and February 2018 and conducting a neighborhood-wide survey later that year. Its reports indicated strong community support for adaptive reuse of the bank, stating, "Many participants expressed a desire to maintain the building's historic appearance, and to see the building reflect a mix of uses and activities." (See page 13 of document.) The same reports included multiple proposals for adaptive reuse, providing ideas to transform the community mainstay into a mixed-use property for commercial, retail and nonprofit use. The budget shown for rehabilitation was competitive with that for new construction: if the building successfully receives a National Register listing (it was determined eligible by the State Historic Preservation Office in March 2018), federal historic tax credits could be utilized. Other prominent buildings in the area, such as the former Cinderella

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2019 Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois

Washington Park National Bank

Ballroom (now Grand Ballroom) and former Strand Hotel (now Strand Apartments) have recently been successfully rehabilitated and reused, the Strand most notably with historic tax credits.

In October, the CCLBA put out a request for proposals from developers interested in the building. In the request, the CCLBA claimed to consider preservation of the building as a "very important" part of the evaluation process. However, despite receiving offers that would rehabilitate the current structure, the CCLBA voted for the only one out of the three finalists that proposed demolition. The developers have proposed a three- to five-story, mixed-use structure that Curbed Chicago describes as "a plain-looking building, devoid of the architectural embellishments of its predecessor."

The Woodlawn community is expressing its dissatisfaction with this decision. "I'm upset that our history is being erased," said Gloria Williams, a longtime Woodlawn resident and librarian at the Chicago Public Library branch nearby. The recently elected alderman in the district, Jeanette Taylor, has also stated her opposition to demolition. "It's unfair that communities on the South Side do not get to preserve historic buildings like they do on the North Side," Taylor told the Chicago Sun-Times. LI and many local organizations hope that with a new alderman and regulatory review by the State Historic Preservation Office, a better outcome may be possible.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Woodlawn residents and other interested parties are urged to reach out to newly elected alderman Jeanette Taylor regarding their desire to see a redevelopment that incorporates the historic bank.

FURTHER READING

- Historic Washington Park National Bank building facing demolition in Woodlawn
  Curbed Chicago, March 19, 2019

- Washington Park National Bank Building Likely To Be Demolished, Replaced With New Building
  Block Club Chicago, March 15, 2019

- Cook County Land Bank Seeks To Redevelop The Old Washington Park Bank Building
  Chicago Citizen, September 16, 2018

Washington Park National Bank

- Metropolitan Planning Council, "Woodlawn Corridor Development Initiative- Final Report," July 2018 (PDF)

LANDMARKS ILLINOIS

2019 Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois

St. Mary's School

QUICK STATS

- **Location:** 401 Elk Street, Galena, Jo Davies County
- **Built:** 1865
- **Architect:** unknown
- **Current owner:** Private
- **Historic significance:** A contributing structure to the Galena National Register Historic District, this beautiful 19th-century school educated the community's youth for over 100 years.
- **Why it is endangered:** Having been allowed to deteriorate under private ownership, the former school is at risk for demolition by neglect.
- **Take Action:** Contact the Galena City Council and the mayor to let them know you support the City of Galena's efforts to save its historic buildings, including new tools such as Demolition by Neglect ordinance. (see links below)

Credit: Landmarks Illinois

BACKGROUND

The City of Galena is well known for its historic charm and architectural beauty, boasting a wealth of mid-19th century buildings. Built in 1865 and in operation for over a century, St. Mary's School is an integral part of this historic landscape. Unfortunately, St. Mary's has suffered from years of neglect and deterioration, risking a significant loss within Galena's iconic historic district. Local advocates and the Historic Preservation Commission has worked for several years to pass a "demolition by neglect" ordinance to prevent a growing number of buildings like St. Mary's from reaching endangered status, but the legislation has failed to pass.

St. Mary's Catholic Church was built in 1856 according to the plans of missionary Father Samuel Mazzuchelli. Around 10 years later, the parish built a brick parochial school for their parishioners

St. Mary's School

on the hillside behind the church. St. Mary's Catholic Parish operated the school for over a century from its opening in 1865. Originally a two-story brick building with basement, the school was later increased in size with a brick addition, bringing the structure to 14,000 square feet over three floors. This addition included an ornate stone entrance on the left side of the façade featuring an elegant archway and ornate carved details.

In 1965, Galena was one of the first cities in Illinois to pass a historic preservation ordinance. Four years later, Galena Historic District was added to the National Register of Historic Places. For its architectural and historical value, St. Mary's School was recognized as a contributing structure to this district.

Credit: Landmarks Illinois

CURRENT THREAT

In the 1970s, St. Mary's Parish closed the school and sold the property to a private individual. Subsequently, the new owner removed most of the internal millwork and fixtures. In the past 10 years, the building has suffered from extreme neglect and continues to deteriorate to a dangerous degree, although the exterior remains much the same in appearance. While the current owners are willing to sell the property, no potential purchasers have surfaced to date. In the meantime, the building continues to deteriorate. The City of Galena has placed St. Mary's School on its list of substandard properties and has followed up with the current owner to no avail. If left as is, the historic school will continue to worsen and will soon place its structural integrity in jeopardy.

St. Mary's is just one example of a larger problem in Galena, which is home to a wealth of mid-nineteenth century buildings. Given their age, these historic buildings require regular upkeep and repair. Several buildings in private ownership, however, have been allowed to deteriorate, putting them at risk for demolition. This problem was most recently brought before the City Council in August 2018 by The Galena Foundation, a local preservation nonprofit. While the Galena Foundation has partnered with the city on the restoration of several publicly owned buildings and sites, the rapid deterioration of privately owned buildings has been a challenge to combat. The Galena Foundation proposed a new ordinance to ensure that all structures located in the Historic

LANDMARKS ILLINOIS

2019 Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois

St. Mary's School

District or other designated Landmark areas would be preserved by their owner against decay, rot and deterioration in order to prevent demolition or partial demolition caused by neglect. This proposed "demolition by neglect" legislation would have given the Galena City Council a toolkit of options for dealing with buildings in disrepair, helping to ensure that historic structures would not deteriorate past the point of no return. Unfortunately, the City Council felt this ordinance was not needed at this time and voted not to enact this legislation.

Local advocates in Galena continue to work on strategies to combat demolition by neglect. In the meantime, The Galena Foundation is hoping to find a buyer interested in purchasing and restoring St. Mary's School. The size and location of the building make it a good candidate for reuse as apartments, condominiums or vacation rentals in the tourist-oriented City of Galena. Other large properties in the city have successfully undergone similar transformations, including the Old High School (built in 1905) on Prospect Street, which was converted into condominiums and Freehan Hall Annunciation School, another parochial school structure built in 1886, which is currently being renovated into vacation rentals.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Know of a potential buyer for St. Mary's School? Please contact the Galena Foundation and Landmarks Illinois' Springfield Office.

- Contact the mayor and city council to let them know that you support the City of Galena's efforts to save its historic buildings, including new tools such as Demolition by Neglect ordinance.

- Have experience passing a Demolition by Neglect ordinance or enacting similar tools/programs? Contact Landmarks Illinois' Springfield Office.

FURTHER READING

- Visit the Galena Foundation's website

LANDMARKS ILLINOIS

2019 Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois

Booth Cottage

QUICK STATS

- **Location:** 239 Franklin Street, Glencoe, Cook County
- **Built:** 1913
- **Architect:** Frank Lloyd Wright
- **Current owner:** Private owner, out of state
- **Historic significance:** A Frank Lloyd Wright-designed home for Sherman and Elizabeth Booth, prominent members of the Glencoe community in the early 20th century.
- **Why it is endangered:** The home is unprotected. The current owner is looking to sell the house and, due to its small size, it is likely new owners would demolish the house to build a larger one on the property. The house has already received tear-down offers.
- **Take Action:** Promote this house to preservation-minded owners who will celebrate and honor its unique architecture!

Courtesy: Frank Lloyd Wright Building Conservancy

BACKGROUND

A significant but little-known work by Frank Lloyd Wright, the Booth Cottage is a one-story frame house in Glencoe. Currently on the market and unprotected, this charming small house is located on a big lot amid much larger residences, putting it at risk for tear-down and redevelopment. Local preservation groups have banded together to help locate a preservation-minded buyer for this architecturally important property.

The Booth Cottage was originally built as a temporary home for Sherman and Elizabeth Booth while their Wright-designed permanent house at 265 Sylvan Road was being constructed. At the time of the Cottage's construction, Sherman and Booth were one of the more important couples in the Glencoe community. Sherman was a prominent attorney who would also develop the area

Booth Cottage

now known as Ravine Bluffs, a neighborhood also conceived by Wright. Elizabeth was well-known as an influential Illinois suffragist.

Due to intended use as temporary housing, the Booth Cottage represents one of Wright's early attempts to minimize materials and streamline construction assemblies, concepts central to much of Wright's later work. The house displays many hallmarks of Wright's later Usonian designs, such as a flat roof with broadly overhanging eaves and a band of windows along the front of the house to reinforce its horizontality. The Booth Cottage is believed to have been originally located at 201 Franklin Road, to the northeast of Wright's Sylvan Road Bridge. After the Booth's permanent house was completed around late 1916 or early 1917, the cottage was moved to its current location.

Courtesy: Frank Lloyd Wright Building Conservancy

CURRENT THREAT

Originally about 1,100 square feet in size, the small Booth Cottage is now approximately 1,800 square feet. It sits on a large lot that, by current zoning standards, would allow construction of a house up to 4,322 square feet in size. Neighboring houses vary from 3,000 to 5,000 square feet. The most recent resident of the Booth Cottage passed away in 2014, and since 2017, the house has been on and off the market. Although the family is open to preservation and would prefer that the house remain standing, the Booth Cottage—like roughly half of Wright-designed houses around the country—is not legally protected through either a preservation easement or local certified landmarking. Thus, unless purchased by a preservation-minded new owner, the Booth Cottage is at serious risk for demolition to make way for a larger new house. Since putting the house back on the market at a reduced price at the end of March 2019, the owners have already received at least one tear-down offer for the property.

To help save this architectural gem, the Glencoe Historical Society, Glencoe Historic Preservation Commission, and Frank Lloyd Wright Building Conservancy (FLWBC) have been actively engaged in efforts to preserve this house and find a new owner interested in preservation rather than

Booth Cottage

demolition. Collaborating with the Village of Glencoe's Planning Department, AIA Chicago and Landmarks Illinois, the FLWBC has developed a number of adaptive reuse solutions. With sensitive modification, the house could remain a single family home. Alternatively, it could become a guest cottage for an additional new house on the property, which could accommodate an additional 3,200 square feet of construction under the current zoning regulations.

The FLWBC has also helped the current owner consider the option of moving the house. Given the strong ties of both the house itself and the Booth family to the Glencoe community, this option is not preferred; however, a move—especially one within the Village—would be preferable to full demolition. Currently an honorary Glencoe landmark, the building is subject to a Village-imposed six-month demolition delay.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Spread the word! Share this information with potential preservation-minded buyers. See the listing here.

- For more information, contact the Frank Lloyd Wright Building Conservancy at 312.663.5500 or preservation@savewright.org.

FURTHER READING

- Booth Summer Cottage information
  Frank Lloyd Wright Building Conservancy

- WRIGHT REPORT: BUILDING UPDATES AND CONSERVANCY ACTION
  Frank Lloyd Wright Building Conservancy, March 26, 2019

LANDMARKS ILLINOIS

2019 Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois

Hoover Estate

QUICK STATS

- **Location:** 1801 Green Bay Road, Glencoe, Cook County
- **Built:** 1925
- **Architect:** William Furst
- **Current owner:** Private developer
- **Historic significance:** The estate is a remarkable example of the Tudor Revival Style and represents an important tie to Glencoe's past. It was occupied by members of the prominent H. Earl Hoover family from construction until death of Mr. Hoover's third wife, Miriam Hoover, in 2018.
- **Why it is endangered:** The historic Hoover Estate has recently been purchased by a developer who plans to demolish the buildings to make way for multiple new single-family homes.
- **Take Action:** Contact the Glencoe Village Board to voice support for a preservation compromise at the Hoover Estate and the need for a stronger historic preservation ordinance.

Credit: Glencoe Historical Society

BACKGROUND

The Hoover Estate is located on 12.2 acres of land in Glencoe and is made up of three buildings: a large manor home, a coach house with living quarters and an attached greenhouse, and a stable building. All are remarkable examples of the Tudor Revival style and important not only for their architectural significance, but also for their association with famous vacuum magnate H. Earl Hoover. The estate, however, was recently purchased by a developer that plans to demolish the historic buildings to make way for a new residential development.

H. Earl Hoover was in his thirties when he purchased the property in 1922. Hoover was a nephew of the Ohio vacuum company's founder, W.H. Hoover, and eventually led the famous business from his home in Glencoe. In addition to administering the operations of the Hoover Company, Hoover ran the Hoover & Mason Phosphate Company and retired in 1974 as the company's

Hoover Estate

Chairman. His family continued to own and live in the home until the death of his third wife, Miriam Hoover, at the age of 104 in 2018.

After moving into an existing farmhouse on the property with his first wife, Hoover hired William Furst of Armstrong, Furst, and Tilton to design a home, carriage house and stable in 1925. The same firm was responsible for the design of three of Glencoe's original public schools, as well as the Seabury Western Seminary at Northwestern University in Evanston. Later, Furst worked with the architectural firm of Maher & McGrew to design Glencoe Village Hall.

The Hoover Estate's main home, carriage house and stables feature slate roofs, red brick exteriors, timber framing and decorated verge boards. The 10,000-square-foot manor home contains seven bedrooms, eight-and-a-half bathrooms, a large unfinished basement and a finished attic. A defining characteristic of the estate is its second-floor ballroom, which features two-story cathedral ceilings. The carriage house is approximately 3,000 square feet and contains parking for four cars, with a living space above. The stable building once served as the barn for horses and carriages. At its height, the estate employed over 30 staff members to maintain the estate and grounds. In fact, Miriam, Hoover's third wife, was initially hired to work at the estate as a maid.

Historic photo. Credit: Glencoe Historical Society

CURRENT THREAT

After Miriam's death in 2018, the property went onto the market for the first time, listing for $15.9 million. At the time, the 12.2-acre property was the largest piece of privately held residential property in Cook County. In December 2018, the Hoover Estate was purchased for $10 million by a private developer that intends to construct a residential development of single-family homes on the land, demolishing the historic buildings currently on the property.

The Glencoe Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) nominated the estate as an Honorary Historic Landmark in January 2019, in hopes of providing a temporary stay of proceedings so that no demolition permits could be issued for six months. This would have provided the opportunity for the HPC and village officials to explore potential reuse options for any of the historic buildings

with the developer. Unfortunately, in March, the Glencoe Village Board voted to deny the temporary landmark designation for the Hoover Estate, citing property rights concerns—despite the fact that an honorary landmark status would not have prevented the new owners from ultimately demolishing the buildings. The developer can now file for a demolition permit at any time.

Several Commissioners resigned from the HPC over the Village Board's unwillingness to approve the honorary landmark recommendation for the estate, especially considering it would have only provided temporary protection, yet needed time to explore options with the developer. Operating under a weak village historic preservation ordinance, the HPC's ability to facilitate preservation outcomes for any historic properties in the future remains a challenge.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Glencoe citizens who see value in protecting the village's irreplaceable historic architecture are encouraged to reach out to the Glencoe Village Board to express their disappointment in the recent rejection of Honorary Landmark status for the Hoover Estate and a desire to see any of its historic buildings incorporated into the residential redevelopment plan. Citizens are also encouraged to voice the need for a stronger historic preservation ordinance.

FURTHER READING

- "Hoover estate in Glencoe sells for $10 million"
  Crain's Chicago Business, Jan. 2, 2019

- "Hoover Estate Sold For $10 Million In Glencoe, Subdivision Likely"
  Glencoe Patch, Jan. 3, 2019

LANDMARKS ILLINOIS

2019 Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois

Millstadt Milling & Feed Company

QUICK STATS

- **Location:** 302 South Jefferson Street, Millstadt, St. Clair County
- **Built:** 1857, Grain Elevator Built in 1880
- **Architect:** Unknown
- **Current owner:** Private
- **Historic significance:** This property is one of the oldest continually operating grain elevators in the state. It represents a critical piece of Illinois' industrial and agricultural past.
- **Why it is endangered:** Millstadt Village officials declared the site a "public nuisance" in November 2018, giving the owners six months to present a plan for restoration or risk forced demolition.
- **Take Action:** Contact the Village of Millstadt Trustees to voice support for the preservation and continued use of the mill.

Credit: Liz Chilsen

BACKGROUND

Millstadt Milling & Feed Company has been in continuous operation for over 160 years and houses one of the oldest still-operable grain elevators in the state. James and Melissa Helfrich purchased the business and historic mill in late 2017 and are committed to saving this important example of Illinois' agricultural and industrial heritage. To their surprise, however, Millstadt Village officials have recently declared the site a "public nuisance," threatening to demolish the historic site if they did not provide a structural assessment and plan for repairs within six months.

Millstadt Milling & Feed Company was originally founded in 1857 at its current location at the southeast corner of Jefferson and Laurel Streets. In 1880, Fred Backer and Christian Stern added a wheat elevator to the site as business was flourishing. The crib-form grain elevator is typical of the late 1800s and was constructed of wood two-by-fours horizontally stacked 70 feet high. The Millstadt elevator was built to double the capacity of most mills constructed at that time,

Millstadt Milling & Feed Company

holding 50,000 bushels vs 25,000. The Mobile & Ohio railroad came to town in 1883 to serve the mill, and in 1900, the mill was converted to a feed mill. While rail service has ceased at the site and the mill and elevator have passed through several owners, the site has remained in continuous use, making the grain elevator one of the oldest in Illinois still in operation.

Grain elevators and flour mills played a large role in the growth of Illinois throughout the 19th century. The state prospered as corn, wheat and other grains grown around the Midwest were processed and shipped to large East Coast cities. Populations expanded in response to this economic growth, and towns like Millstadt attracted immigrants seeking rich farmland and agro-industrial opportunities. Structures like the Millstadt Milling & Feed Company represent a major piece of this history, but, as agricultural production and processing became more centralized throughout the 20th-century, many of these smaller, local facilities were left vacant. One of the other major examples in Millstadt—an 1857-built flour mill on the 100 block of West Oak Street—was razed in 1968. Today, there are few still-operable grain elevators left standing in the region.

The Millstadt Milling & Feed Company, however, remains in sound condition. One of the largest and tallest structures in the area, it continues to be a very visible part of the central village landscape. In 1985, the St. Clair County Historical Society recognized the importance of this long-operating building through its Landmark Award program.

Credit: Liz Chilsen

CURRENT THREAT

Although the exterior has suffered from deterioration, new owners James and Melissa Helfrich have been working to rehabilitate and save the historic mill. They are committed to the preservation of this critical piece of our industrial heritage and have worked with a number of community members, as well as the Millstadt Historical Society to raise awareness of the historic structure. As part of their efforts, the Helfrichs have discussed options for adaptive reuses of portions of the property, including uses that allow public access to the interior of the historic structure.

LANDMARKS ILLINOIS

2019 Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois

Millstadt Milling & Feed Company

Unfortunately, to the surprise of the mill owners, Millstadt Village officials declared the site a "public nuisance" in November 2018, with the possibility of condemnation and demolition of the property. The Village had previously purchased a large parcel of the mill's property from the former owner adjacent to the historic mill, demolishing the structures on that lot with intentions to plan and construct a new village hall.

Although the owners were given until June 2019 to present an assessment and plan for repairs, the overall rehabilitation project is a complex one, especially given the long history and functional nature of the site. To secure the future of this piece of industrial and agricultural history, the owners are working with Landmarks Illinois to develop plans for an immediate assessment and repairs. Instead of focusing on condemnation and potential demolition, we are calling on Millstadt Village officials to support this reinvestment and preservation opportunity in their community.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Contact the Village of Millstadt Trustees to state your support for saving the Millstadt Milling & Feed Co.

- If you have information on industrial heritage preservation, mill reuse or economic development possibilities for the Metro East region, contact Landmarks Illinois' Springfield Office.

FURTHER READING

- Millstadt History: https://www.millstadthistoricalsociety.org/history.html

- Visit the St. Clair County Historical Society website

LANDMARKS ILLINOIS

2019 Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois

Hill Motor Sales

QUICK STATS

- **Location:** 644 Madison Street, Oak Park, Cook County
- **Built:** 1924-1927
- **Architect:** E. E. Roberts and E.C. Roberts
- **Current owner:** Oak Park Madison Street, LLC c/o Pete's Fresh Market
- **Historic significance:** Eligible for both the National Register of Historic Places and Oak Park local landmark designation, this former Packard showroom is one of the best preserved and most architecturally striking examples left from the time when Oak Park's Madison Street was an automobile sales district
- **Why it is endangered:** Despite vocal protest from the community and unanimous recommendation from the Oak Park Historic Preservation Commission, Oak Park officials recently agreed to allow a developer to demolish the vacant building to construct a new grocery store.
- **Take Action:** Support local advocate group "Save the Hill," who are working to save the building from demolition.

Credit: Norma Rios

BACKGROUND

From the late 1910s through the 1960s, Oak Park reigned as a prime destination for car shows and sales. Although many traces of this era have been lost, Hill Motor Sales (also known as the Foley-Rice dealership) remains as the most significant surviving example of a large auto sales and showroom in the area. Designed by notable father and son architects, E. E. Roberts and E.C. Roberts, Hill Motor Sales remains in excellent physical condition and is a prime candidate for adaptive reuse.

LANDMARKS ILLINOIS

2019 Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois

Hill Motor Sales

With over a dozen major auto dealerships by the 1920s, Oak Park's Madison Street was once known as "Auto Row," rivaled only by Rockford and Chicago's famous Motor Row as destinations for car buyers. Although the Great Depression somewhat slowed the industry, Oak Park remained an automobile mecca, with 72 service stations, 7 supply stores and 16 auto dealerships centered on Madison Street as late as the 1960s. Since then, zoning restrictions, interest rates and limited land for development have gradually driven dealers away from this former center of the auto trade to the far suburbs.

Credit: Norma Rios

Nonetheless, the former Hill Motor Sales building remains as an architype and the most significant reminder of this era in Oak Park's history—a rare surviving example of a showroom from the early development of the automotive industry.

The building was constructed as the home of Hill Motor Sales Company by realtor and auto dealer F. A. Hill, Jr. and his father F.A. Hill, Sr. They were important figures in the development of Oak Park and were responsible for building hundreds of houses in the area around the turn of the century. After opening Hill Motor Sales in 1924, Hill, Jr. focused most of his energies on the auto franchise, which sold luxury Packard vehicles. By the 1930s, it had become the largest independent Packard dealer in the state.

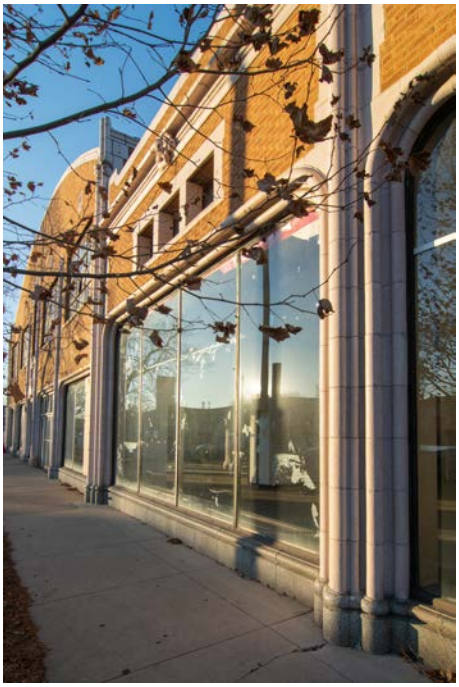
Reflecting the luxury status of its brand, the impressive building is an excellent example of a Commercial Style automobile showroom with details like terra cotta and stone trim, arched openings, diamond panel leaded glass windows, and medieval motifs integrated into the building's terra cotta ornamentation reflecting the Spanish Colonial Revival style.

Until 2007, the building continued to be used as a car dealership, with Foley Rice Cadillac used-car sales moving in once Hill Motor Sales closed. The historic structure underwent a full rehabilitation in the 1990s, when the former owners removed the aluminum siding "slipcover" that had been placed over the original yellow brick exterior. Today, although vacant, the building

Hill Motor Sales

remains in excellent condition on both the inside and out. In 2018, it was determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

CURRENT THREAT



Credit: Norma Rios

Unfortunately, in January 2019, the Village of Oak Park made the Hill Motor Sales building part of a redevelopment agreement with Jupiter Realty. Despite the strong architectural integrity and reusability of the building, the former Hill Motor Sales building was slated for demolition to make way for a new Pete's Fresh Market grocery store. In response, the Oak Park Historic Preservation Commission unanimously approved listing the building as a local landmark. However, the Oak Park Village Board rejected the nomination and denied landmark status in March.

Although the Village Board fears that the historic building will stand in the way of future development, local advocates are confident that the structure would be a prime candidate for adaptive reuse, including use as part of the planned Pete's Fresh Market grocery store. Six local architects have met with the developer and their architect to show how other successful car showrooms have been converted to markets and to demonstrate how the building can be incorporated into the development plan. In addition, a group of over 80 local citizens have formed a "Save the Hill" coalition to advocate for the preservation of this important building and to demonstrate concern for Oak Park's commercial buildings as much is shown for the village's residential structures.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Support the efforts of the "Save the Hill!" coalition, which has been meeting on a weekly basis to plan strategies to convince the developer, grocery operator and village government to adaptively reuse and incorporate the historic building into their plans for the site development. Make others aware of the value of maintaining this significant resource and advocate for protection of viable commercial structures into the future.

LANDMARKS ILLINOIS

2019 Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois

Hill Motor Sales

- Contact Pete's Fresh Market and members of the Oak Park Village Board and tell them you want a new, *unique* Pete's Fresh Market on Madison Street in Oak Park *inside* the architecturally striking Hill Motors Sales building, adaptively reusing the structure and ensuring it anchors the new pedestrian friendly streetscape.

- Mark your calendars for May 23, for a planned lecture and panel discussion in Oak Park on "Adaptive Reuse and Sustainability" by former Illinois Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer Mike Jackson. This Preservation Month program will examine the importance of finding creative ways to re-purpose and modify historic buildings to ensure that preservation, economic development and environmental sustainability are blended together.

FURTHER READING

- Moving Ahead, Honoring the Past
  Wednesday Journal, Opinion column, March 19, 2019

- Oak Park Denies Designation for Foley Rice
  Wednesday Journal, March 12, 2019

- Adaptive Reuse is the Ticket
  Wednesday Journal, Opinion column, March 19, 2019

- Oak Park Historic Preservation Commission meeting minutes, public hearing, February 14, 2019 – Item I.

- Local Residents Seek Landmark Designation for Former Foley Rice Building
  Oak Leaves, January 12, 2019

- Landmarks Illinois Letter of Support for landmark designation of Hill Motor Sales Building
  January 7, 2019

LANDMARKS ILLINOIS

2019 Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois

Chancery and Piety Hill Properties

QUICK STATS

- **Location:** 1229 N. Court Street (Convent), 1231 N. Court Street (St. Peter School), and 1245 N. Church Street (Chancery Office & Bishop's Residence), Rockford, Winnebago County
- **Built:** 1922-1929
- **Architect:** Wybe J. van der Meer
- **Current owner:** Rockford Diocese
- **Historic significance:** The historic buildings are architecturally significant and sit in a prominent location in the Signal Hill community.
- **Why it is endangered:** The Rockford Diocese vacated the chancery in 2009 and is now seeking to demolish the property despite vocal public opposition. The convent is vacant, and the school is planned for closure by fall of 2019.
- **Take Action:** Reach out to Rockford Aldermen to voice your support for landmark designation of the buildings, and reach out to Bishop Malloy of the Rockford Diocese to urge him to sell the buildings for reuse, rather than demolishing them.

Credit: Don Bissell

BACKGROUND

The Chancery Office and Bishop Residence is an excellent example of Beaux Arts architecture and stands grandly at the crest of a natural rise within Rockford's Signal Hill neighborhood. This gray Indiana limestone building at 1245 N. Church Street serves as the focal point of a campus that also includes the red brick, Renaissance Revival-style buildings the Cathedral of St. Peter School (1231 N. Court Street) and Convent (1229 N. Court Street). The chancery, with its columns, articulated corner quoins, balustrade and mansard roof with circular dormers, among

other ornamentation, was described by the Rockford Register Star as "a beautiful building that looks as if it were airlifted from Europe."

The school was first dedicated in 1922, and construction of the chancery and convent was completed in 1929. All three buildings were designed by Wybe J. van der Meer, the architect behind numerous diocesan buildings. Known as Piety Hill, the campus was reported to be the highest land elevation within the city's boundaries at the time of construction. Today, they stand as aesthetically and culturally significant structures for their Signal Hill neighbors. The chancery is one of the few Beaux Arts structures remaining in Rockford and is considered to be the most notable by far.

Credit: Landmarks Illinois

CURRENT THREAT

In 2002, the Catholic Diocese of Rockford moved its headquarters to a new office space along Interstate 90, vacating the chancery entirely after the retirement of the then-sitting bishop in 2009. Despite being shuttered for a decade, the chancery's limestone exterior remained in near-pristine condition until late 2018, when the Diocese began demolition. Despite the lack of permit approval, a private firm hired by the Diocese began removing fixtures—everything from chandeliers to wrought-iron gates—and placing them for sale on Facebook. For several days following the removal of the more decorative doors and windows, the chancery's interior was left exposed to the harsh winter weather. Fortunately, the City of Rockford issued a stop-work order to protect the property while the Diocese's request for a demolition permit was under review, alongside an application for local landmark status for all three buildings submitted by a group of concerned citizens.

Soon after, the Diocese disclosed its plans to close the school at the end of the academic year and raze the chancery, replacing it with additional surface parking. Rockford Mayor Tom McNamara requested that Bishop David Malloy hold off 60-90 days so that city staff could help them find a developer to repurpose the properties. "I don't think a parking lot is the highest and best use of that space," McNamara told the Rockford Register Star. "I like seeing older structures

Chancery and Piety Hill Properties

brought back to life and being productive. I think that's better for our neighborhoods, I think it's better for our tax base and, quite honestly, I think it's better for the church, too." His request for a delay was denied.

In response, the community has mobilized to fight the demolition. Former Rockford Mayor Larry Morrissey started a petition on Change.org that has gathered over 3,400 signatures in support of landmark status and preservation of the chancery. Local preservation advocates have also organized a grassroots political effort called "Fighting for the Chancery" to save it and the school and convent.

The buildings present wonderful opportunities for reuse and several developers have already expressed their willingness to purchase and rehabilitate the chancery. Only one block away, the historic and long-vacant Garrison School was transformed into market-rate lofts and townhouses and community residents want investment in their neighborhood.

Early this year, local advocates submitted nominations to grant the buildings protected landmark status, which were approved by the local Historic Preservation Commission (HPC). However, the Rockford City Council has expressed reluctance to accept the HPC's recommendations for landmarking the properties over the objection of the Rockford Diocese for fear of a threatened lawsuit. The council has until May 6, 2019, to make a final decision. After that time, the HPC's recommendations would fail if the council does not act. Landmarks Illinois and local preservation supporters have maintained that the council's role is to recognize that the buildings meet the needed criteria for landmark designation, are viable candidates for reuse and that there is a process outlined in the historic preservation ordinance by which the Rockford Diocese can appeal a designation through the filing of economic hardship.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Rockford residents are urged to reach out to their alderman to support landmark designation of these important historic buildings so they may remain important neighborhood anchors and have the option to be rehabilitated and reused in the future.

LANDMARKS ILLINOIS

2019 Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois

Chancery and Piety Hill Properties

- Rockford residents and anyone concerned about the future of these buildings are asked to reach out to Bishop Malloy of the Rockford Diocese and urge him to reconsider demolition.

- Follow the "Fighting for the Chancery" Facebook's page @savepietyhill to stay up to date on local advocacy efforts to save these irreplaceable historic properties.

FURTHER READING

- Vote delayed for Landmark status Rockford Diocese Buildings
  WIFR, April 22, 2019

- Rockford City Council vote on Landmark Status for Former Chancery Delayed
  Rockford Register Star, April 15, 2019

- Landmarks Illinois Letter to the Editor - Letter: Chancery, school, convent should have landmark designation
  Rockford Register Star, April 12, 2019

- Letter: Don't let the threat of lawsuit derail landmarking By Adam Kingsley
  Rockford Register Star, April 12, 2019

- Chancery Building vote laid over by Rockford City Council
  WIFR, April 1, 2019

- Rockford city council committee votes down landmark status for Diocese of Rockford buildings
  WREX, March 25, 2019

- CitySmiths Blog: https://www.citysmiths.org/blog/chancery-support

LANDMARKS ILLINOIS

2019 Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois

Rock Island County Courthouse

QUICK STATS

- **Location:** 210 15th Street, Rock Island, Rock Island County
- **Built:** 1895-97
- **Architect:** Fredrick C. Gunn and Louis S. Curtis
- **Current owner:** Rock Island County
- **Historic significance:** Excellent example of Spanish Renaissance or Roman-style architecture, and eligible for the National Register of Historic Places in 2017. The courthouse also served as the seat of Rock Island County Court for 122 years.
- **Why it is endangered:** The Rock Island County Board and Public Building Commission are seeking to demolish the courthouse, despite not being in compliance with state preservation laws.
- **Take Action:** Tell the Rock Island County Board know that you support a private reuse of the courthouse. You can also support LI and other preservation organizations involved in a lawsuit to prevent unlawful demolition.

Credit: Landmarks Illinois

BACKGROUND

The historic Rock Island County Courthouse is threatened by demolition by the Rock Island County Board and the Rock Island Public Building Commission (PBC) following the completion of a new Justice Center Annex in late 2018. The county and PBC have refused to explore reuse options or comply with state preservation laws, leading Landmarks Illinois to file a lawsuit with other preservation organizations and plaintiffs seeking to prevent the unlawful demolition of the historic courthouse.

LANDMARKS ILLINOIS

2019 Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois

Rock Island County Courthouse

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.

Inside the courthouse. Credit: Landmarks Illinois

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.

After plans for a new Justice Center Annex were unveiled, the Rock Island 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. Despite this, Chief Judge Walter Braud issued a letter proposing the use of bond funds from the Justice Center Annex project to fund the demolition of the historic courthouse and clear the site for green space.

In a December 2017 letter published in the Dispatch-Argus, then County Board Vice-Chairman (now current chairman) Richard Brunk wrote, "Could private redevelopment be an option? Could the building be repurposed for county use? Some have said the county board should vote this month to raze the building. The truth is, the board has yet to thoroughly explore options for the

old courthouse, and there is nearly a year before the annex will be completed." In April of 2018, Landmarks Illinois named the building to its list annual Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois.

Despite having not sought private redevelopment proposals, in July of 2018, the Rock Island County Board voted to enter into an agreement with the PBC to demolish the courthouse. To demonstrate the redevelopment potential, local advocates were able to secure several letters of interest in the courthouse from private developers. A reuse of the courthouse by a private developer could benefit from the use of the Federal Historic Tax Credit and a new State Historic Tax Credit.

CURRENT THREAT

In November 2018, the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) at the Illinois Department of Natural Resources notified Rock Island County and the PBC that demolition plans for the historic courthouse would need to be submitted for review as part of Illinois State Agency Historic Resources Preservation Act. In response, attorneys for the County and PBC stated that the state preservation law should not apply to the courthouse project.

In February, as demolition appeared imminent in violation of the state preservation law, Landmarks Illinois joined five other plaintiffs in filing a lawsuit against Rock Island County and the Public Building Commission. Joining as plaintiffs are the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the Rock Island Preservation Society, Moline Preservation Society, bondholder Fred Shaw and Rock Island resident Diane Oestreich. Jenner & Block is providing pro-bono legal representation to the plaintiffs.

The new annex under construction with the historic courthouse (left) next door. Credit: Landmarks Illinois

The suit contends the county is not in compliance with state preservation law as it proceeds with efforts to tear down the historic courthouse. The suit also points out the PBC's possible illegal reallocation of publicly funded bonds and calls on the county to make a good-faith effort to find a reuse for the historically and architecturally significant courthouse.

LANDMARKS ILLINOIS

2019 Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois

Rock Island County Courthouse

In the circuit court, Landmarks Illinois and co-plaintiffs were initially granted a temporary restraining order (TRO), which halted demolition activities while the case was heard. On March 19, the case was dismissed in the circuit court, but three days later the Illinois Third District Appellate Court granted a petition to keep the TRO in place. On April 1, the appellate court issued a notice that it would hear the case, preventing demolition until the court reaches its decision.

Landmarks Illinois continues to urge the Rock Island County Board and Public Building Commission to seek proposals from developers for reuse of the historic courthouse. With interest in the building and its eligibility for Federal and State Historic Tax Credits, the Rock Island County Courthouse project could create jobs, generate new tax revenue and provide an economic benefit to residents of Rock Island County.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Contact the Rock Island County Board and state your support for a process to seek private investment to reuse the historic courthouse.

- Support the non-profit organizations defending the historic Rock Island County Courthouse in court:
    - Landmarks Illinois
    - National Trust for Historic Preservation
    - Rock Island Preservation Society
    - Moline Preservation Society

FURTHER READING

- Bond paid to keep courthouse from being demolished
  Dispatch-Argus, April 12, 2019

- Suit filed against Rock Island County to stop courthouse demolition
  Dispatch-Argus, April 12, 2019

- History of Rock Island Courthouse
  Rock Island Preservation Society

LANDMARKS ILLINOIS

2019 Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois

Ray House

QUICK STATS

- **Location:** 417 West Washington Street, Rushville, Schuyler County
- **Built:** 1850s
- **Architect:** Unknown
- **Current owner:** Schuyler County Architecture Foundation
- **Historic significance:** A beautiful example of Gothic Revival and Victorian architecture, the Ray House played host to Abraham Lincoln during his 1858 senatorial campaign.
- **Why it is endangered:** Years of neglect have left the building in need of substantial repairs and upgrades for a new use.
- **Take Action:** Donate funds, share expertise and spread the word about Schuyler County Architecture Foundation's campaign to save the Ray House.

Courtesy: Schuyler County Architecture Foundation

BACKGROUND

The Ray House is one of the oldest homes in Rushville and unquestionably one of the most famous: aspiring politician Abraham Lincoln stayed with his friend, owner William G. Ray, and gave a speech from the home during his 1858 senatorial campaign. Unfortunately, the Ray House now sits vacant in a state of significant deterioration following years of deferred maintenance and few repairs. In response, the Schuyler County Architecture Foundation, a new non-profit focused on educational and inspirational power of historic buildings, has set a goal of saving this critical component of Rushville's history.

The Ray House was originally constructed as a double log home in 1833. Located near the community's downtown square, the house was expanded in the 1850s by merchant and banker William H. Ray. The home is built in the Gothic Revival style with a Victorian-style wraparound porch featuring dentils in the porch cornice and artistic vergeboards. The home's complicated Mansard and gable roofs also echo the Second Empire style. One of the home's most unique

Ray House

qualities are the eight original full-arch windows on the structure's second story, features which rarely survive to the present day in historic wood-clad structures.

Courtesy: Schuyler County Architecture Foundation

Perhaps even more impressive than the home's architectural credentials is its historic record. New York native William H. Ray was a prominent Rushville businessman who also served as a U.S. congressman from March 4, 1873, to March 3, 1875. On October 20, 1858, Ray played host to his friend, U.S. senatorial candidate Abraham Lincoln. On the evening of the visit, local supporters paraded through town in a procession reported to be over a mile long. The crowd ended their parade at the Ray House, where Lincoln was staying. Lincoln then spoke to the crowd from an upstairs window. Lincoln later lost the county (and the campaign) to Stephen A. Douglas, but, especially after Lincoln was elected president in 1860, the visit became legendary. In 1936, the Illinois State Historic Society placed a plaque on the foundation wall just to the north of where Lincoln gave his speech. It reads: "Abraham Lincoln Addressed the people of Rushville, Oct. 20, 1858, While a guest of Hon. William H. Ray at his home."

CURRENT THREAT

Since its brush with history, the Ray House has changed hands a number of times, at one point serving as a funeral home before returning to use as a private residence. Over the past 40 years, the home has suffered from the effects of neglect and deferred maintenance. Although occupied by its former owner until 2018, there are areas of the roof structure that are visibly open to the elements. This has resulted in significant water damage throughout the building. The brick foundation and basement walls are deteriorating and need immediate attention.

Supported by a network of existing local nonprofits as well as local leaders, a group of concerned citizens formed the Schuyler County Architecture Foundation specifically for the purpose of saving the historic Ray House. The Foundation plans to restore the home and repurpose it as a Visitor's Center for Schuyler County tourists. It would also provide office space for the Foundation and other community organizations. In addition, the group plans to utilize the

Ray House

renovated home as an exhibit space in coordination with the Schuyler County Historic Jail and Museum. The Foundation has recently established a Board of Directors and, with the support of the community and local government, is launching a public campaign to raise the funds necessary to rehabilitate this historic structure.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Learn more about the Schuyler County Architecture Foundation and join their fundraising efforts to fully restore the Ray House at https://www.thescaf.org.

- If you can assist with design expertise, a condition analysis or research, contact Landmarks Illinois' Springfield Office.

FURTHER READING

- Learn more about the Schuyler County Architecture Foundation on Facebook.

LANDMARKS ILLINOIS

2019 Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois

Greek Housing at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

QUICK STATS

- **Location:** Multiple addresses in Champaign and Urbana
- **Built:** Early 20th-century
- **Architect:** Various, including nationally and locally known architects such as Howard Van Doren Shaw and Joseph Royer.
- **Current owner:** Multiple, mostly fraternity and sorority organizations.
- **Historic significance:** Fraternity and sorority housing has been a critical piece of student life at the University of Illinois for over 100 years. These beautiful revival-style homes near campus have influenced the experiences of thousands of students and have become an integral part of the architectural fabric of Champaign and Urbana.
- **Why it is endangered:** Deferred maintenance, declining occupancy rates and a rapid escalation of property tax assessments are placing increased pressure on demolition and replacement with high-rise apartment buildings.
- **Take Action:** Contact the Champaign City Council and the Urbana City Council to share your support for the preservation and reuse of these historic buildings.

BACKGROUND

Fraternity and sorority organizations first arrived at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign nearly 150 years ago. In the early 1900s, dozens of beautiful revival-style houses were built around the campus, becoming an integral part of the architectural and historic fabric of the community. Today, the University of Illinois campus boasts one of the largest concentrations of

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Greek Housing at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

Greek Life in the country, with over 7,600 undergraduate members in 90 total fraternities and sororities. Despite the size and long history of Greek organizations at the university, however, fraternity and sorority houses are facing a wave of demolitions as they struggle with years of heavy use, deferred maintenance and a dramatic increase in property tax assessments.

The Zeta Tau Alpha House has been saved from demolition. Credit: Landmarks Illinois

In the first half of the 20th century, the state provided few dormitories for students at the University of Illinois campus. To help ease this housing shortage, fraternity and sorority organizations began to build chapter houses in Champaign and Urbana, providing both living and meeting space for their members. Fraternity Row was first established in the early 1900s and migrated southward to center on Chalmers Street. Sorority housing was originally constructed around John Street, but many chapters eventually relocated to Urbana in the 1910s. By the mid-1920s, the University of Illinois campus was in the midst of a veritable Greek housing boom, with at least 27 chapters building houses between 1926 and 1930.[1]

These houses were typically set on large landscaped lots and were interspersed between university buildings, single family residences and apartment buildings. Most of the chapter houses were designed in the popular revival styles of the time, leading to a number of large, stunning examples of Neo-Classical, Colonial and Tudor Revival architecture. Nationally and locally well-known architects such as Howard Van Doren Shaw and Joseph Royer helped to design these new housing options.

In constructing the houses, fraternal and sororal organizations put high value on elegant design and high-quality interiors with the belief that exposing students to tasteful living would help encourage their growth, good behavior and education. Through well-designed accommodations,

[1] Karen Lang Kummer, Dana L. Pratt, Lachlan F. Blair, and Linda Bastyr, "Fraternity and Sorority Houses at the Urbana-Champaign Campus of the University of Illinois," (Multiple Property Documentation form, [MPD], May 1989), pg. E.13

Greek Housing at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

fraternities and sororities aimed to supplement the university education. Since then, these buildings have shaped the lives of thousands of University of Illinois students for over 100 years.

CURRENT THREAT

The historic and architectural value of these beautiful homes has long been recognized by members of Greek organizations, the University of Illinois and communities of Urbana and Champaign. Seventeen of these chapter houses are currently listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Today, however, these historic chapter houses face a host of issues. Deferred maintenance and years of heavy use have left many of the houses in a deteriorated condition. Additionally, updated safety requirements in Champaign have left many fraternity and sorority organizations with the choice between significant renovations or demolition and reconstruction. Unfortunately, many chapters over the past several years have chosen the latter.

The former Alpha Delta Phi house was demolished.

As a living option, Greek houses also face much more competition today than they did in the early 1900s. Students now have many more residential options, including luxury apartments and private dormitories that are often more enticing than the Greek houses' multi-bed sleeping rooms and often un-renovated facilities. Consequently, many chapters are facing declining in-house residents and are forced to vacate large homes that they can no longer fill.

In March 2019, the Beta Theta Pi fraternity announced it will sell its National Register-listed house at 202 E. Daniel Street in Champaign. It appears likely that the house will be sold to a local real estate development and management company for redevelopment. Citing the need for major repairs, the fraternity had previous explored a sale to the same company in 2016 to construct a new apartment complex adjacent to the fraternity house. With the recent closure of the fraternity, a sale is now imminent and the fate of the historic house is in jeopardy.

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Compounding these issues is a recent spike in property tax assessments, particularly in Champaign. Beginning in 2016, fraternities and sororities started to see their land assessments triple or quadruple versus previous years. The City of Champaign Township Assessor cited years of higher land sales in the area as the reason for the increase. The added taxes places increase pressure on an area that has already seen historic fraternities and sororities demolished for high-rise apartment buildings.

Advocates for the preservation of these historic houses cite their nonprofit and university-approved housing status as reasons to provide tax relief to these historic structures. In 2018, State Rep. Robert Pritchard introduced legislation to exempt school-approved dormitories or residence halls occupied by nonprofit fraternities or sororities from property taxes. This legislation did not pass, and the increased taxes continue to threaten the closure of historic Greek housing in Champaign.

While chapter houses face increased closure and sale some, such as the former Zeta Tau Alpha Sorority House at 1404 S. Lincoln, have found successful second lives as apartment buildings or homes for fellow Greek organizations. Others, however, have been demolished and replaced with new construction—despite the fact that some, like the former Alpha Delta Phi Fraternity House at 310 E. John St., have been nationally recognized for their historic value.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Contact the Champaign City Council and the Urbana City Council to share your support for the preservation and reuse of these historic buildings. Zoning and property tax assessment policies should reflect the historic value of these buildings, their nonprofit status and role as affordable housing for students.

- Help spread the word with your fraternity, sorority or alumni organization! Share the Most Endangered listing via email and social media.

- Know of upcoming fraternity or sorority projects that could use assistance or successful projects for case studies? Contact the Landmarks Illinois Springfield Office to share information.

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2019 Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois

Greek Housing at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

FURTHER READING

- National Society for the Preservation of Greek Housing

- The Preservation and Conservation Association (PACA)
  Champaign County

- Soaring assessments irk Campustown property owners
  The News-Gazette, October 2, 2016

2019 Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois
Press Conference Speakers &
"Most Endangered" Property Advocates and Contacts

1. Thompson Center

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2. Sheffield National Register Historic District

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3. Washington Park National Bank

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   - Maggie DeCarlo, Cell: 773-551-7604
   - Gabriel Piemont, Cell: 773-540-8370
   - Gloria Williams, Cell: 773-620-7076

4. St. Mary's School

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6. Hoover Estate

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7. Millstadt Milling & Feed Company

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Melissa Helfrich, owner
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8. Hill Motor Sales Building

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9. Chancery and Piety Hill Properties

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10. Rock Island County Courthouse

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11. Ray House

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12. Greek Housing at University of Illinois

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