50TH LANDMARKS ILLINOIS

2021 MOST ENDANGERED HISTORIC PLACES IN ILLINOIS



1. Altgeld Gardens Shop Building and School Buildings C & E
Chicago, Cook County



2. James R. Thompson Center
Chicago, Cook County



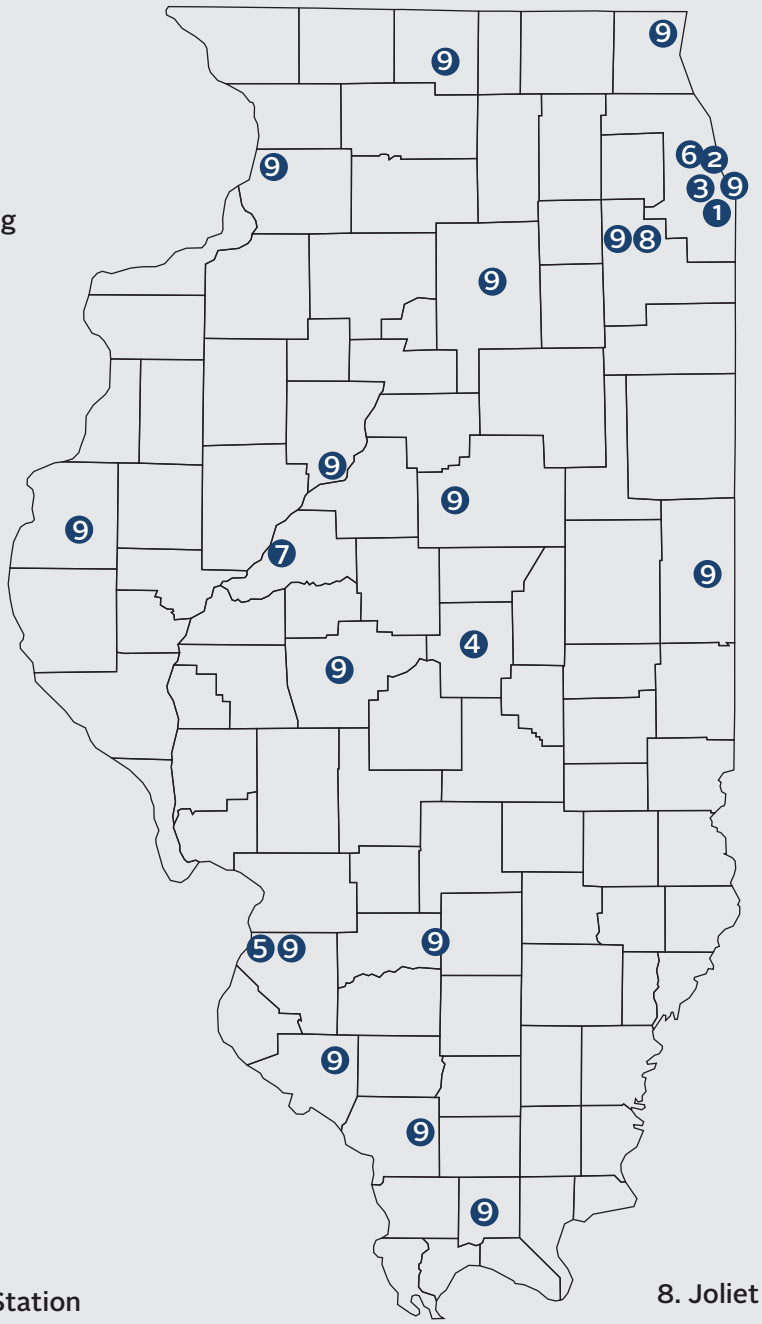
3. Klas Restaurant
Cicero, Cook County



4. Illinois Terminal Interurban Station
Decatur, Macon County



5. Broadview Hotel
East St. Louis, St. Clair County





6. Scott Foresman Headquarters
Glenview, Cook County



7. Havana Water Tower
Havana, Mason County



8. Joliet Steel Mill Main Office Building
Joliet, Will County



9. The Green Book Sites in Illinois
Statewide

www.landmarks.org

2021 MOST ENDANGERED HISTORIC PLACES IN ILLINOIS

ALTGELD GARDENS SHOP BUILDING & SCHOOL BUILDINGS C & E

Chicago, Cook County

The privately-owned Shop Building (called the "Up-Top" by Altgeld residents), built in 1945 and designed by Keck & Keck, and its Memorial Wall, as well as the Chicago Public Schools-owned School Building A and School Building E, both designed by John C. Christiansen and constructed in 1944 and 1950, respectively, are in need of major rehabilitation and reuse at the Chicago Housing Authority public housing complex on Chicago's Far South Side.

JAMES R. THOMPSON CENTER

Chicago, Cook County

The state-owned and neglected 1985, Helmut Jahn-designed building in the heart of Chicago's Loop is the best-known icon of Post-Modern architecture in Illinois, but it is being prepared for sale as a redevelopment site and should be marketed as a reuse opportunity. This is the fourth year since 2017 that Landmarks Illinois has included this site on its Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois.

KLAS RESTAURANT

Cicero, Cook County

The 99-year-old now-vacant commercial building that served for decades as an anchor to Cicero's Cermak Road commercial district and is important for its cultural history to the Chicagoland Czech community. It is currently for sale and unprotected.

ILLINOIS TERMINAL INTERURBAN STATION

Decatur, Macon County

The 1931 former rail station, most recently in use as a church, is being vacated and offered for sale. Many residents are concerned with the deterioration of and loss of community services provided at this neighborhood landmark.

BROADVIEW HOTEL

East St. Louis, St. Clair County

A redevelopment plan to convert the 1926 hotel building into 110 affordable senior housing units will fail without the Illinois legislature passing an extension of the River Edge Redevelopment Zone Historic Tax Credit, scheduled to expire at the end of this year. There is active legislation, SB0157, under consideration to extend this historic tax credit for an additional five years.

SCOTT FORESMAN HEADQUARTERS

Glenview, Cook County

The textbook company's former headquarters, built in 1966 and an award-winning Midcentury Modern design of architecture firm Perkins & Will, is now for sale, unprotected and being marketed as a residential redevelopment site.

HAVANA WATER TOWER

Havana, Mason County

Built in 1889, this community-identified symbol of Havana is threatened by the deterioration of the brick base, metal water tank and surrounding retaining wall while the city struggles to find revenue sources for critical repairs.

JOLIET STEEL MILL MAIN OFFICE BUILDING

Joliet, Will County

The office building constructed in 1891 and located on the closed Joliet Steel site, has sat vacant since the 1980s. Current owner U.S. Steel is has been unwilling to stabilize the structure or sell it separately from the rest of the site to enable a potential rehabilitation and reuse.

THE GREEN BOOK SITES IN ILLINOIS

Statewide

Landmarks Illinois and partners at Route History in Springfield are working to document and preserve the stories and remaining sites associated with the Green Book. The Green Book was a travel guide published between the late 1930s and 1960s when segregation and Jim Crow laws made it necessary to keep a list of places that provided safe services and accommodations for African American travelers.

Visit our website to learn more about each site included on the **2021 Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois**, view photos and learn how you can support local preservation efforts.

LANDMARKS ILLINOIS
People Saving Places For People

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 5, 2021

Media Contact:
Kaitlyn McAvoy
Communications Manager, Landmarks Illinois
kmcavoy@landmarks.org

Landmarks Illinois announces 2021 Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois

CHICAGO, IL – Landmarks Illinois has announced the 2021 Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois, its annual list of the top threatened architecturally and culturally significant sites throughout the state.

Properties included on Landmarks Illinois' annual Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois are those threatened by a lack of proper maintenance due to neglect or insufficient funding for repair and face the threat of demolition and/or inappropriate redevelopment. The annual Most Endangered list, now in its 27th year, aims to boost advocacy efforts and build support for each property's eventual preservation. Landmarks Illinois works with local advocates associated with each property included on the Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois, as well as with elected officials and building and preservation professionals to find a viable preservation solution for the threatened sites.

"Communities are passionate about their historic and culturally significant places, yet too often lack the resources necessary to maintain and preserve them," said Bonnie McDonald, President & CEO of Landmarks Illinois. "Our 2021 Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois demonstrates the demand for creative solutions, partnerships and incentives to give places of our past a chance for reuse and renewed life. Landmarks Illinois proudly serves as a resource to those trying to overcome these barriers."

2021 Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois

ALTGELD GARDENS SHOP BUILDING AND SCHOOL BUILDINGS C AND E, CHICAGO, COOK COUNTY
The privately-owned Shop Building (called "Up-Top" by local residents), built in 1945 and designed by Keck & Keck, and its Memorial Wall, as well as the Chicago Public Schools-owned School Building C and School Building E, both designed by John C. Christiansen and constructed in 1944 and 1950, respectively, are in need of major rehabilitation and reuse at the Chicago Housing Authority public housing complex on Chicago's Far South Side.

JAMES R. THOMPSON CENTER, CHICAGO, COOK COUNTY
The state-owned and neglected 1985, Helmut Jahn-designed building in the heart of Chicago's Loop is the best-known icon of Post-Modern architecture in Illinois, but it is being prepared for sale as a redevelopment site and should be marketed as a reuse opportunity. This is the fourth year since 2017 that Landmarks Illinois has included this site on its Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois.

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The 99-year-old, now-vacant commercial building, which served for decades as an anchor to Cicero's Cermak Road commercial district and is important for its cultural history to the Chicagoland Czech community, is currently for sale and unprotected.

ILLINOIS TERMINAL INTERURBAN STATION, DECATUR, MACON COUNTY
The 1931 former rail station, most recently in use as a church, is being vacated and offered for sale. Many residents are concerned with the deterioration and loss of community services provided at this neighborhood landmark.

BROADVIEW HOTEL, EAST ST. LOUIS, ST. CLAIR COUNTY
A redevelopment plan to convert the 1926 hotel building into 110 affordable senior housing units will fail without the Illinois legislature passing an extension of the River Edge Redevelopment Zone Historic Tax Credit, scheduled to expire at the end of this year. There is active legislation, SB0157, under consideration to extend this historic tax credit for an additional five years.

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The textbook company's former headquarters, built in 1966 and an award-winning Midcentury Modern design of architecture firm Perkins & Will, is now for sale, unprotected and being marketed as a residential redevelopment site.

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Built in 1889, this community-identified symbol of Havana is threatened by the deterioration of the brick base, metal water tank and surrounding retaining wall while the city struggles to find revenue sources for critical repairs.

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The office building constructed in 1891 and located on the closed Joliet Steel site, has sat vacant since the 1980s. Current owner U.S. Steel has been unwilling to stabilize the structure or sell it separately from the rest of the site to enable a potential rehabilitation and reuse.

THE GREEN BOOK SITES IN ILLINOIS, STATEWIDE
Landmarks Illinois and partners at Route History in Springfield are working to document and preserve the stories and remaining sites associated with the Green Book. The Green Book

was a travel guide published between the late 1930s and 1960s when segregation and Jim Crow laws made it necessary to keep a list of places that provided safe services and accommodations for African American travelers.

More information

Full descriptions of each site included on the 2021 Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois and a digital press packet, which includes local contacts, are available on our website. Additional photos are available at the Landmarks Illinois Flickr page and by request.

Details on today's announcement

Landmarks Illinois President & CEO Bonnie McDonald led the announcement of the 2021 Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois during a virtual, free public presentation this afternoon. The presentation featured detailed information on each of the sites included on this year's Most Endangered list as well as short videos submitted by local advocates working in partnership with Landmarks Illinois to save these threatened properties. You can watch a full recording to the presentation at the Landmarks Illinois Facebook page and see the advocate-submitted videos on Landmarks Illinois' YouTube channel.

About Landmarks Illinois

We are People Saving Places for People. Landmarks Illinois, now celebrating its 50th Anniversary, is a membership-based nonprofit organization serving the people of Illinois. We inspire and empower stakeholders to save places that matter to them by providing free guidance, practical and financial resources and access to strategic partnerships. For more information, visit www.Landmarks.org.

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LANDMARKS ILLINOIS

2021 Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois

PROPERTY ADVOCATES AND CONTACTS

ALTGELD GARDENS SHOP BUILDING AND SCHOOL BUILDINGS C & E

Bernadette Williams, tenants' Local Advisory Council President
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BROADVIEW HOTEL

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GREEN BOOK SITES

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HAVANA'S HISTORIC WATER TOWER

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JOLIET STEEL MILL MAIN OFFICE BUILDING

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LANDMARKS ILLINOIS

2021 Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois

PROPERTY ADVOCATES AND CONTACTS

KLAS RESTAURANT

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Michael Jordan, Member of Bohemian Lawyers Association of Chicago
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Irene Hogstrom, Granddaughter of Gennadi Goreyev (Regarding the history of the murals)
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SCOTT FORESMAN HEADQUARTERS

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Jerry Johnson, AIA, Glenview resident, design principal Perkins & Will
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LANDMARKS ILLINOIS

Landmarks Illinois 2021 Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois

ALTGELD GARDENS

SHOP BUILDING ("Up-Top") & SCHOOL BUILDINGS C & E

Chicago



Shop Building. Credit: Sean Reilly

"This area is a gem of the community. It is a staple of the community. It is part of the history of this community. It is important to the community to have this commercial strip because it gives residents the opportunity to open businesses."

CHERYL JOHNSON

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, PEOPLE FOR COMMUNITY RECOVERY

ALTGELD GARDENS: SHOP BUILDING ("Up-Top") & SCHOOL BUILDINGS C & E


Carver School. Credit: Sean Reilly

LOCATION

Shop Building: 13122 S. Ellis Ave.
School Building C: 839 E. 132nd St.
Carver School (School Building E): 801 E. 133rd Pl.
Chicago, IL, 60827, Cook County

YEAR BUILT

Shop Building: 1945
School Building C: 1944
Carver School (School Building E): 1950

ARCHITECT

Shop Building: Keck and Keck
School buildings: John C. Christensen

CURRENT OWNER

Shop Building: Privately owned commercial building
School Building C & Carver School (School Building E): Chicago Public Schools (CPS)

WHY IT'S ENDANGERED

While Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) continues to make long overdue improvements at Altgeld Gardens, the community's privately-owned Shop Building and two vacant historic CPS schools are highly visible and are a reminder of the critical investment still needed. Decades of neglect and deterioration at Altgeld Gardens previously resulted in CHA leading the demolition of several blocks in the nationally recognized housing development on Chicago's South Side. The Shop Building (known by Altgeld residents as the "Up-Top") currently faces a demolition threat and the private owner and City of Chicago are in demolition court. The two school buildings are vacant, need attention and in various stages of deterioration.

Shop Building: The City of Chicago is in demolition court with the private owner of the Shop Building/ the "Up-Top," and the fate of the structure is uncertain. All but one of its retail spaces are currently vacant. The building is in need of substantial rehabilitation and its important community-made Memorial Wall needs protection.

With the recent completion of the adjacent KOO-designed Altgeld Family Resource Center and Chicago Public Library branch, which draws inspiration from Keck & Keck's curvilinear roof design, and the potential for a new nearby CTA Red Line rail station, now is the ideal time for new investment in the highly significant Shop Building. Residents anxiously await the rehabilitation of the structure, which could

provide a home for a high-quality food store. A 2020 survey by grassroots environmental justice organization People for Community Recovery (PCR) reiterated the need for Altgeld residents to have access to quality food.

School Building C & Carver School (School Building E): CPS has not stated its intentions for the two vacant school buildings. School Building C is in severe deterioration after decades of neglect. Carver School Building E is in stable condition but it has remained unused for five years. The community would like to see School Buildings C and E rehabilitated and reused for jobs and vocational training opportunities for Altgeld residents. PCR's 2020 summer survey of residents emphasized that with a local grocery story, the essential community need is for child programs and jobs training. (Source "Build a Solar Farm in Altgeld: It's time for CHA to Follow Through," Cheryl Johnson, Sept. 2, 2020, South Side Weekly).



School Building C. Credit: Sean Reilly

HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE & BACKGROUND

CHA's Altgeld Gardens community was built during World War II to house the families of African American war workers and has been home to hundreds of families for the past nearly 80 years. Altgeld Gardens was first deemed eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places in 1994 by the Illinois State

Historic Preservation Office (IL SHPO) due to its role in the history of community planning and development in public housing and for its distinctive architecture.

In 2015, IL SHPO also determined the Shop Building as individually eligible for listing in the National Register for its Midcentury Modern Style architecture, its association with the Altgeld Gardens housing complex and the cultural significance of its breezeway Memorial Wall created by Altgeld residents. Per a memorandum of agreement between CHA and the IL SHPO, a National Register of Historic Places historic district nomination is underway to give national recognition to Altgeld Gardens. This will provide the opportunity for private investment in the Shop Building using federal and state historic tax credits, a substantial economic incentive for rehabilitation.



Bernadette Williams (left) and Cheryl Johnson in front of the Shop Building/ the "Up-Top." Credit: Sean Reilly

Shop Building: CHA originally envisioned a privately owned and operated commercial retail building for Altgeld Gardens' town center. That vision was fulfilled by prominent Chicago architects Keck & Keck. They designed the streamlined Midcentury Modern Shop Building, completed in 1945 and distinguished by a dramatically sweeping, curvilinear and overhanging roof. The crescent-shaped Shop Building originally housed essential shops and services and, most importantly, a grocery store, but is now mostly vacant.

According to Bernadette Williams, president of the tenants' Local Advisory Council, locals refer to this town center as "Up-Top" and despite being mostly vacant, the Shop Building remains a focal point for residents. Although located within the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA)-owned complex, Altgeld Gardens' Shop Building remains privately-owned and is currently in demolition court. The building's central location in Altgeld Gardens makes it highly accessible to the community and its deterioration highly visible. The Shop Building's rehabilitation and its potential to provide essential retail, especially a fresh food grocer, is critical for Altgeld residents' quality of life.

The commercial Shop Building also features a breezeway with a painted Memorial Wall created by residents in the early 1970s displaying names of Altgeld residents who have passed away due to pollution-related illnesses and violence. The environmental justice movement at Altgeld Gardens has its organized beginnings in 1979 with the founding of People for Community Recovery (PCR) by Hazel Johnson, who lived at Altgeld Gardens for 50 years. Johnson experienced firsthand the mental and physical toll of Altgeld residents living within the Lake Calumet and Little Calumet River industrial area of contaminated abandoned factories, landfills and a major sewage treatment plant. Johnson's PCR advocated for the closure and cleanup of facilities polluting Altgeld Gardens, as well as for the removal of asbestos and lead from residential buildings and for making corporate and government polluters accountable for the unjust polluting of minority communities.



Memorial Wall. Credit: Sean Reilly

Environmental justice activism at Altgeld remains strong, and PCR's work today is continued by her daughter Cheryl Johnson. One of PCR's first offices was located in Altgeld's Shop Building. In addition to rehabilitation of the Shop Building to bring in needed service-oriented retail, preservation of the Memorial Wall is extremely important as a remembrance of Altgeld family and friends whose lives have been lost.



School Building C. Credit: Sean Reilly

School Building C: The CPS-owned building was constructed in 1944 as one of four original school buildings designed by John C. Christensen, long-time head architect of the Chicago Board of Education. The building was part of a complete educational campus planned by the site's original architects centered on a park at the center of Altgeld Gardens. The building served as Altgeld's high school until 1950 when the Christensen-designed Carver High School was built to relieve overcrowding. School Buildings A through D were T-shaped masonry buildings with classical ornament and entrances at their narrow ends. Vacant for over 30 years and extremely deteriorated, the architecturally impressive School Building C is boarded up but is open to the elements and in deteriorating condition.

Carver School (School Building E): The building, which is designed by architect John C. Christensen and owned by CPS, was built in 1950 to replace the site's first high school, School Building C. It was designed in a restrained Moderne Style and was the community high school until a third high school opened in 1971. The original 1950 school was then used as a public middle school until becoming Chicago International Charter School - Larry Hawkins High School. CPS closed CICS-Larry Hawkins in 2016, and the building has sat vacant since.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Help us spread the word on this vacant property! Outside investment is needed for the future of these important community buildings. A National Register district nomination underway could provide Federal historic tax credits to potential developers.

Reach out to Alderman Anthony Beale, regarding interest in investment opportunities at Altgeld.

See how you can support local efforts at Altgeld by contacting:

- **Bernadette Williams**, President, Local Advisory Council: bwilliams@lac.thecha.org 312-371-6065.
- **Cheryl Johnson**, Executive Director, People for Community Recovery: cheryl@pcrchi.org 773-971-5028

FURTHER READING

- Hazel Johnson, the mother of environmental justice, was Catholic
  EarthBeat, February 26, 2021

- Op-Ed: Build a Solar Farm in Altgeld
  South Side Weekly, September 2, 2020

- Life in the Doughnut
  South Side Weekly, April 16, 2019

- Forgotten Chicago tour: Early Obama tour – Altgeld Gardens townhomes
  August 26, 2017

- Lost in the Shuffle
  South Side Weekly, January 8, 2014

LANDMARKS ILLINOIS

Landmarks Illinois 2021 Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois

JAMES R. THOMPSON CENTER

Chicago



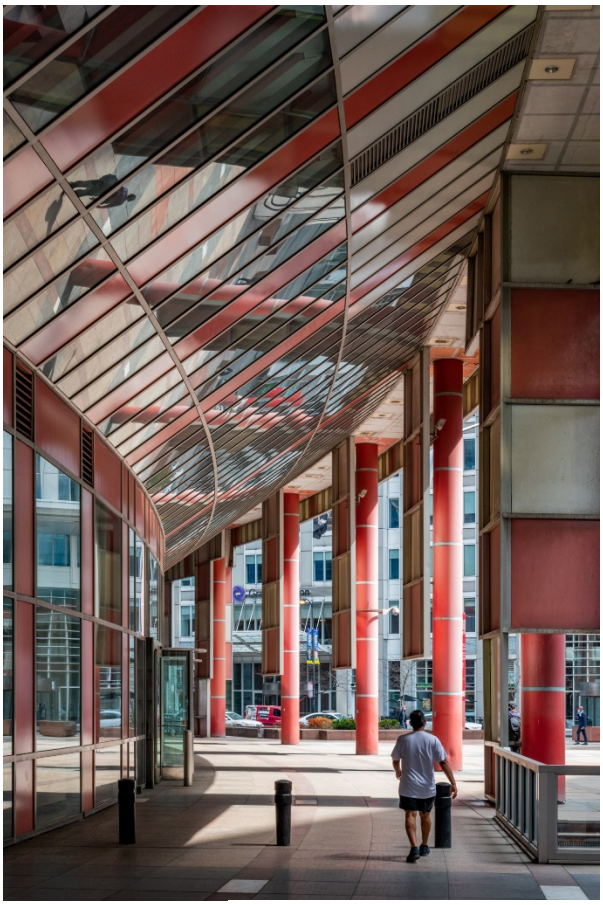
Credit: Sean Reilly

"The James R. Thompson Center represents the evolving relationship between citizenship and commerce, between democracy and capitalism, characteristic of 1980s America. It also happens to be a spectacular public space, well used by people across the city and region, as a site of protest, of direct engagement with government and as an integrated part of the life of the city."

ELIZABETH BLASIUS

CO-FOUNDER, JAMES R. THOMPSON CENTER HISTORICAL SOCIETY

JAMES R. THOMPSON CENTER



Credit: Sean Reilly

LOCATION

100 W. Randolph Street
Chicago, Cook County

YEAR BUILT

1985

ARCHITECT

Helmut Jahn

CURRENT OWNER

State of Illinois

WHY IT'S ENDANGERED

The State of Illinois continues to pursue a sale of the building that seems to encourage demolition and new development on the site. The COVID-19 outbreak encouraged the 2020 Illinois General Assembly to push the target deadline for a sale of the structure to April 5, 2022. On January 27, 2021, Gov. JB Pritzker announced the state acquired 555 W. Monroe in Chicago for $73.25 million and will house many state employees who had offices in the Thompson Center. Logistics to clear out state offices and staff continue in preparation for the sale of the property. At the end of March 2021, 42nd Ward Ald. Brendan Reilly proposed a rezoning ordinance for the Thompson Center site, which enables the state to market the property for replacement by a high-rise redevelopment. And, lastly, at the beginning of May 2021, the state officially issued its Request for Proposals for the sale of the building.

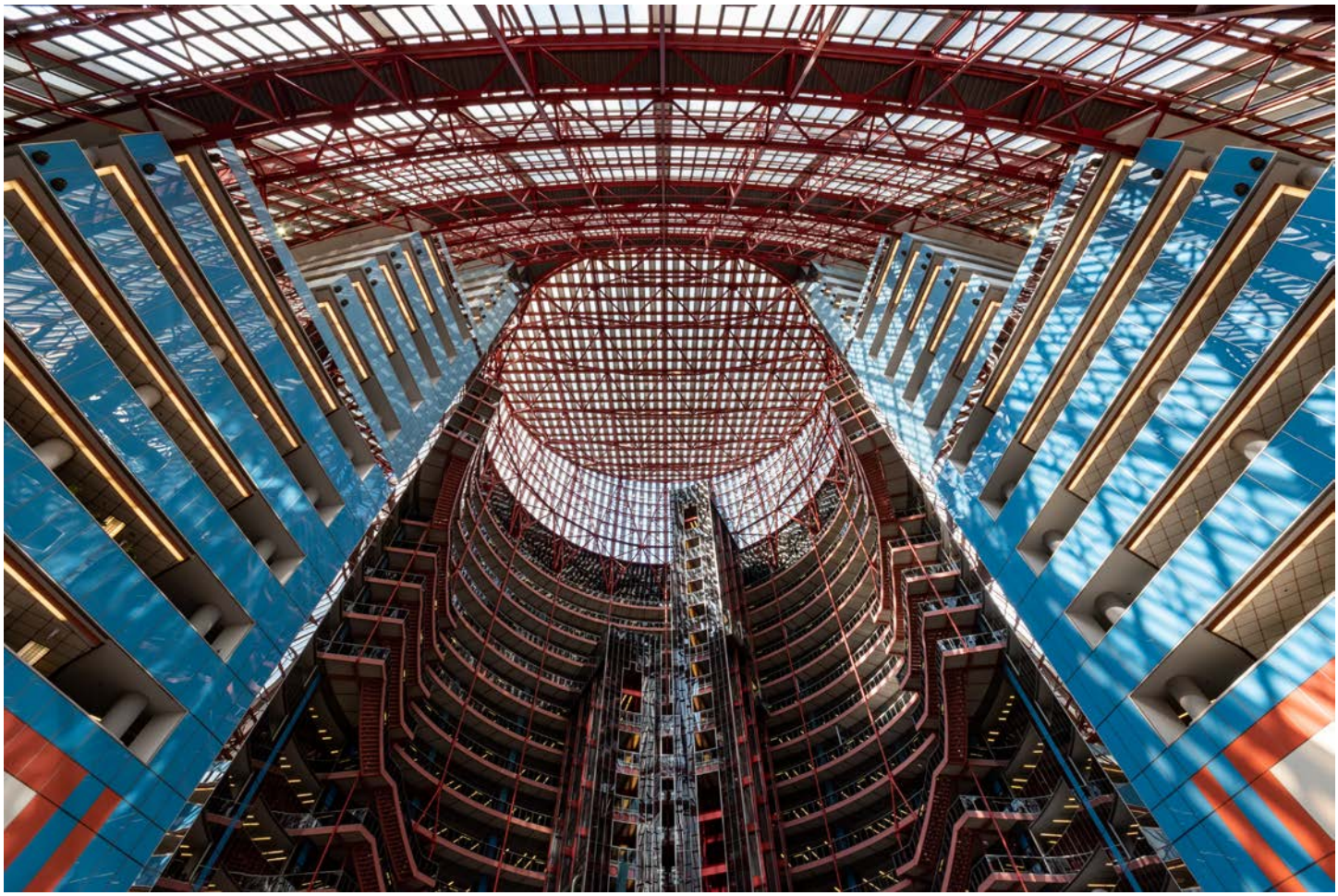
This is the fourth year Landmarks Illinois has included the Thompson Center on its Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois due to the threat of a sale and possible demolition (previously listed in 2017, 2018 and 2019). The National Trust for Historic Preservation included the iconic Post-Modern structure on its 2019 national "Most Endangered" list as well.

Landmarks Illinois understands a sale of the Thompson Center would bring needed revenue to the State of Illinois. Still, terms of the deal should include retaining and reusing this irreplaceable building, an approach supported by state statute for National Register-listed and eligible buildings. Thompson Center has been determined eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places and a nomination, prepared by the James R. Thompson Center Historical Society, is under review. Listing on the National Register would allow a developer to use Federal Historic Tax Credits for the building's rehabilitation. This is the same incentive that continues to enable viable reuse of some of Chicago's most significant landmarks, such as the Old Cook County Hospital and the Old Chicago Post Office. Through reuse, the Thompson Center could be a future corporate headquarters or the next trending hotel.

Former Illinois Gov. Bruce Rauner's administration previously released an image encouraging total demolition and replacement of the Thompson Center with a new super tower. In response, Thompson Center architect Helmut Jahn released a rendering that visualized a new, approximately 13,000-square-foot tower to house a hotel and residences on the site while retaining his original building.

HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE & 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 important 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 grand 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's design and the setting for Thompson Center create a modern landmark.



Credit: Sean Reilly

The Thompson Center's grand atrium is reminiscent of earlier monumental 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."





Reuse renderings produced by visualizedconcepts for Landmarks Illinois in partnership with Helmut Jahn

In 2018, Landmarks Illinois worked with Jahn to develop a series of renderings that further demonstrate the architect's vision for how Thompson Center could be privately redeveloped as an exciting mixed-use destination. These renderings include a super tower at the southwest corner of the block to maximize the site's zoning and revenue opportunity and to connect to Thompson Center's first four levels. Thompson Center's interior open office floors would be fully enclosed to separate the public, open-air atrium space from private corporate space. The large office floors could accommodate ancillary hotel meeting space, innovative tech companies or other corporate offices.

The renderings also reveal a design change to the Thompson Center's plaza and street entrances to enhance the idea of urban public space. Jahn envisions removing four, two-story entrance bays at the plaza and similar removals at LaSalle and Lake Streets. The public would be able to enter Thompson Center's atrium, considered one of Chicago's greatest indoor public spaces, as an open-air, urban space with shops, restaurants and activities that would make the complex a revitalized and exciting destination. Through vents in the skylight, natural convection would temper the open-air atrium and promote its use as a 24-hour venue, similar to Jahn's design for the Sony Center in Berlin. While Chicago Ald. Reilly's proposed zoning ordinance could encourage demolition of Thompson Center, it also could provide an opportunity for investors to consider Jahn's vision for a reused and revitalized Thompson Center with a new high-rise linked to the building.

With or without a new tower, reuse of the Thompson Center is the right thing to do economically, logistically, environmentally and architecturally. Demolition costs are anticipated to be no less than $15-20 million. Demolition will be complicated, and it will be difficult not to interrupt the existing 24-hour Clark and Lake Street CTA L station

on the site, which is one of the busiest CTA stations in the transit system. Reuse would divert unnecessary construction debris from entering a landfill.



(left to right) AJ LaTrace, Jonathan Solomon and Elizabeth Blasius of the James R. Thompson Center Historical Society. Credit: Sean Reilly

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Contact Gov. Pritzker and urge him to sell Thompson Center with a requirement for retention and reuse of this irreplaceable one-of-a kind, Post-Modern building that can become a revitalized and exciting destination. Landmarks Illinois believes we need to give the real estate market the chance to explore reuse opportunities, including the addition of a tower to maximize the site's zoning. Reuse is the better choice economically, logistically, environmentally and for Chicago's architectural legacy. Landmarking at the national and local levels will provide economic incentives for rehabilitation and reuse.

FURTHER READING

- State of Illinois' RFP of the James R. Thompson Center
- State v. Jahn: The Thompson Center is dead, long live the Thompson Center
  New City, May 4, 2021
- Fiscal Year 2022 Operating Budget - Illinois
  February 2021, Pages 48 and 246
- Time for a fresh look at plans to sell the Thompson Center
  Chicago Sun-Times, April 12, 2021
- How the pandemic made a bad situation worse at the Thompson Center
  Crain's Chicago Business, April 2, 2021
- The Thompson Center: A Building Facing Demolition Threat in Chicago
  ArchDaily, December 29, 2020
- Preservationists Rally Around Thompson Center as Pritzker Prepares for Sale
  WTTW, December 3, 2019
- Thompson Center Information
  Chicago Architecture Center
- What you should know about the Thompson center sale
  Chicago Curbed, August 28, 2019
- Watch Nathan Eddy's 2017 film, "Starship Chicago" on the Thompson Center
- Why Chicago's Thompson Center is worth saving
  Chicago Curbed, January 23, 2017

LANDMARKS ILLINOIS

Landmarks Illinois 2021 Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois

KLAS RESTAURANT

Cicero



Credit: Sean Reilly

"Adolph and Ella Klas hired artisans from here and abroad to complete their restaurant that served as an anchor for the Czech community, attracting everyone from dignitaries to working families."

IRENE HOGSTROM

GRANDDAUGHTER OF KLAS RESTAURANT ARTIST GENNADI GORDEYEV

KLAS RESTAURANT



Joe Vosicky, member of the Bohemian Lawyers Association (left) & Irene Hogstrom, granddaughter of artist Gennadi Gordeyev. Credit: Sean Reilly

LOCATION

5734 W. Cermak Road
Cicero, Cook County

YEAR BUILT

1922

ARCHITECT

Adolf Klas/Unknown

CURRENT OWNER

Privately owned

WHY IT'S ENDANGERED

The Klas Restaurant, a 12,825 square-foot, two-story building along Cermak Road in Cicero, is vacant and currently up for sale. With its fate undetermined and the building unprotected, it faces possible demolition.

The current owner listed the property for sale as a restaurant. However, the building itself is deteriorating due to lack of investment, and inside there is water damage and subsequent mildew and structural issues due to water leakage in the roof over the past few years. Its adjacent parking lot and interior courtyard are also both overgrown as the property sits vacant. These conditions require major rehabilitation to bring the restaurant up to current building codes, which could be cost prohibitive to a potential buyer. Despite its cultural significance to the Cicero community, Klas Restaurant has no historical designation or protection, and a future buyer could pursue demolition instead of refurbishing and reusing the building.

In August of 2019, an architectural salvage crew removed much of the interior ornamentation, canvas murals, paintings, wood carvings and some limestone details. The frescos painted directly on the plaster walls remain, but their present condition is unknown. The building was purchased in September of 2019, but the extent of work done by the new owner is unknown. The exterior continues to show deterioration. There is an extraordinary amount of support from residents, the Czech and Slovak communities, local businesses and Cicero's leadership for the reuse of the Klas Restaurant. Once revitalized, Klas would be a vibrant destination. A demolition permit was issued in 2020, but the six-month period expired and a new permit would need to be issued before demolition can occur. The building needs an owner who wants to preserve its historic character for a reuse that can hopefully be enjoyed by the public. The organizations dedicated to the region's Czech and Slovak history stand ready to partner and assist.

KLAS RESTAURANT





Credits: Sean Reilly

HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE & BACKGROUND

In 1922, Adolf Klas built Klas Restaurant in Cicero to replicate elements of traditional Czech culture. The restaurant served as a representation of Czech traditional culture and a meeting place for the sizeable Czech population in Cicero at the time. Having operated for over 90 years, Klas Restaurant is recognized by the Town of Cicero as the country's longest-running Czech restaurant. Klas served an anchor in the community, hosting many public and private events and drawing in visitors from all backgrounds who wanted to try the Czech fare and experience the fantasy the restaurant created through its architectural and artistic details. Al Capone and President H.W Bush frequented the restaurant, and in 2012, Madeline Albright visited to help honor the Prime Minister of the Czech Republic. Over time, Klas Restaurant's representation of Czech tradition created a welcoming atmosphere that became a part of Cicero's history and identity.

During its construction, Adolf Klas wanted to replicate the architecture and design elements of traditional Czech buildings. A portion of the exterior is meant to mirror gothic architecture seen in Prague. This portion features limestone construction with a polished granite base. A different part of the exterior is meant to replicate a medieval European village-style using timbers and stucco. Exterior decoration depicting harvests of produce and various instruments alludes to the highly ornamental and decorative interior elements that create a near-fantastical atmosphere for those who dined there.

The Klas family invited Czech artists to develop custom, hand-made furniture, stained glass, architectural accents and paintings on the restaurant's interiors. Notably, a series of murals painted in 1938 by Gennadi Gordeyev decorate several of the restaurant's themed dining rooms. Other paintings by Gordeyev exist in Chicago's Holy Trinity Russian Orthodox Cathedral, which is on the National Register of Historic Places. The architectural and artisanal details both inside and outside of Klas Restaurant are unique. Klas Restaurant's use of Czech artisans represents

its community in ways that are not commonly seen today. Many would like to see Klas Restaurant's dedication to Cicero's community and the Czech population remembered and honored through its protection.

Although there is no single effort to save Klas Restaurant, many individuals and organizations are concerned about its survival. Several reuse suggestions have been made, such as reopening Klas as a restaurant and a public event/music space like Thalia Hall in Pilsen. In 2018, members of the Bohemian Lawyers Association and American Sokol prepared a “Vision for Klas” hoping to raise funds to purchase the building. The comprehensive plan suggested two opportunities: Create a Czech Campus in Cicero and convert Klas into a multiethnic museum that also would pay tribute to Cicero’s Mexican community. The Czech Campus suggestion includes integrating the Klas Restaurant with the adjacent Czechoslovak Heritage Museum and Library and the 90-year-old T. G. Masaryk Czech School, just two blocks away. Connecting the museum to a larger coalition would provide resources to build a renowned museum. The T.G. Masaryk Czech School provides language, culture and history classes for people of Czech ancestry. Klas could provide catering and event space as well as additional exhibit and office space for the museum.



Credit: Sean Reilly

The idea of turning the Klas into a multiethnic museum would focus on the similar paths of Czech and Mexican migration. The location of Klas Restaurant on Cermak Road provides an opportunity to connect the many ethnic groups that have used this road as a center of community life. While the team that is working on the multiethnic museum idea has developed a plan, it has not been able to raise the projected $2 million needed to do the work.

Cicero's 2017 comprehensive plan includes preservation incentives that would apply to Klas. Chapter 6 suggests that the city "support the rehabilitation, preservation and reuse of Cicero's traditional buildings, especially along Cermak Road."

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Parties interested in possibly purchasing the Klas for rehabilitation and reuse are encouraged to tour the property. Check the real estate listing here.

Reach out to advocates to see how you can support the preservation of Klas Restaurant:

- Jean Hruby, President, American Sokol: JeanHrubdry@american-sokol.org, jean.hruby@gmail.com or 708-420-7589

- Irene Hogstrom, Granddaughter of Gennadi Goreyev (Regarding the history of the murals), i_hogstrom@yahoo.com or 312 -607-2566



Credit: Sean Reilly

FURTHER READING

Facebook discussion thread
Forgotten Chicago Discussion Group, April 6, 2021

Chicago Area Murals
Chicago Sun-Times, September 6, 2019

Czechs in Chicago Documentary
WTTW

Cicero's roots entwined in restaurant
Chicago Tribune, February 27, 2008

LANDMARKS ILLINOIS

Landmarks Illinois 2021 Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois

ILLINOIS TERMINAL INTERURBAN STATION

Decatur



Credit: Ayn Owens

"Trains have a strong history in the shaping of the city of Decatur, and the Interurban Rail Service story is not widely known. History of the Heartland looks forward to assisting in this project and encouraging some joint partnerships among our consortium to assist in the awareness campaign."

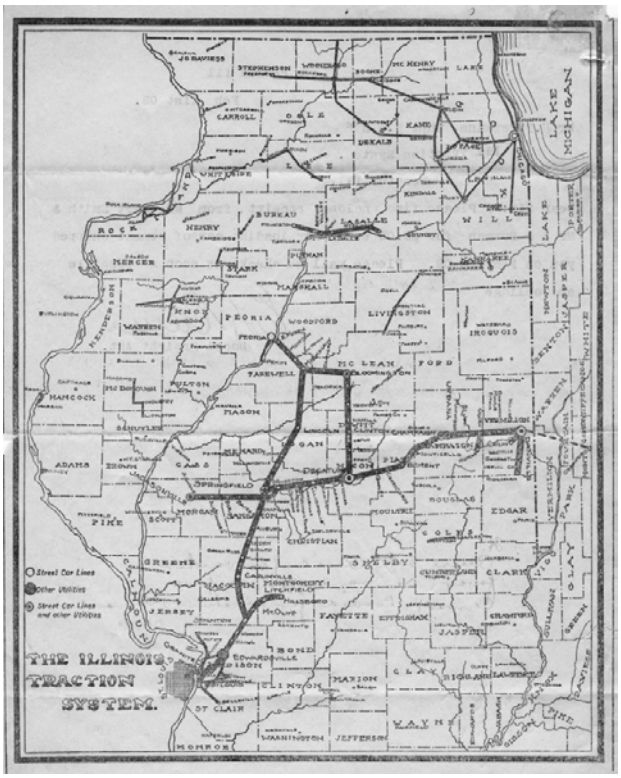
BRET ROBERTSON

CHAIR, HISTORY OF THE HEARTLAND

ILLINOIS TERMINAL INTERURBAN STATION







Photos courtesy: History of the Heartland

LOCATION

1065 N. Van Dyke Street
Decatur, Macon County

YEAR BUILT

1931

ARCHITECT

Unknown

CURRENT OWNER

Faith Community Assembly

WHY IT'S ENDANGERED

The Illinois Terminal Interurban Station has been a community asset for nearly a century, first serving as a rail station and later to house church social services. The current owner, a church, intends to vacate and sell the building. Neighbors and the Decatur organization, History of the Heartland, are concerned that the church's departure will lead to deterioration and the permanent loss of social services from this historic building. In the near term, the station will need a roof replacement to prevent water infiltration. Local advocates believe the station can still serve the neighborhood and be a source of much-needed investment. They hope to work with the City of Decatur and nonprofit partners toward a reuse solution that saves the Illinois Terminal Interurban Station while benefiting the community in which it's located.

HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE & BACKGROUND

The Illinois Terminal Railroad Company (ITC) – also known as the Interurban – operated electric passenger rail service from 1896 until 1956. This passenger service connected several Illinois urban areas together, boosting economy throughout the state. Built in 1931 at 1065 N. Van Dyke Street, the rail station in Decatur connected the community

to Illinois cities such as Champaign, Springfield and Bloomington. Passenger travel decreased during the Great Depression, but the station retained importance for bringing in workers, freight and college students at Millikin University.

Known as the Illinois Traction System (ITS) until 1937, the Illinois Terminal Railroad was an affiliate of the Illinois Power and Light Company. As an electric powered company, conductors and engineers could manage smoother, more frequent stops without sacrificing a great amount of time. This made interurban connection easier and profitable. With a wide connecting system, the interurban rail lines garnered significant interest throughout Illinois.

"The Road of Good Service" served freight as well as passengers. While some of the tracks were not precisely equipped to sustain heavy loads, the company either used shorter, specialized trains or created bypass trackage.

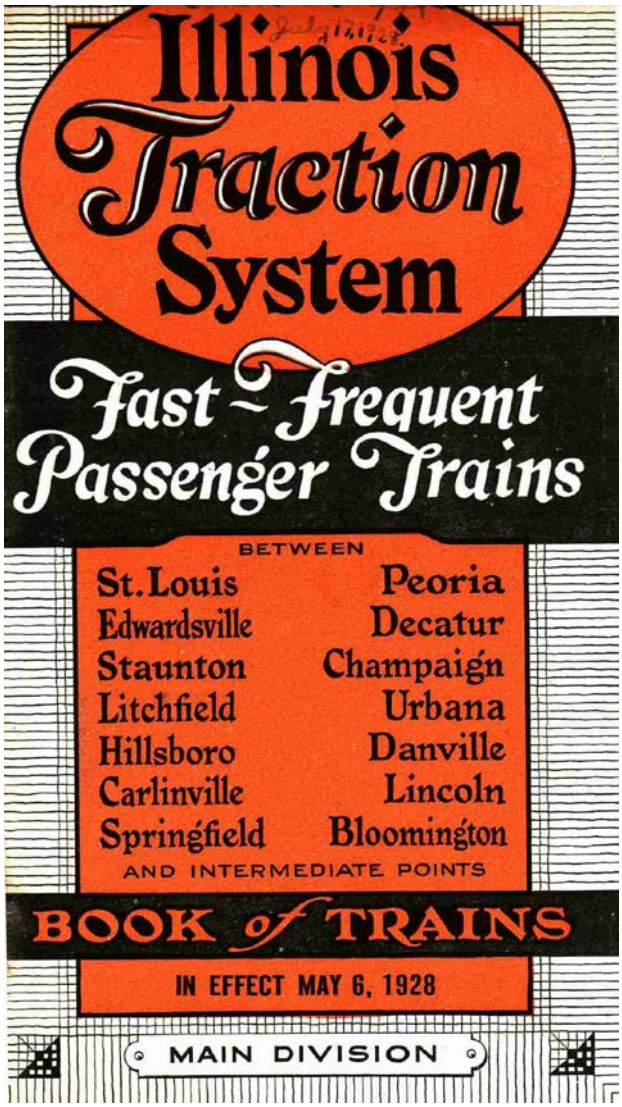


Credit: Ayn Owens

The Great Depression greatly affected the ITS. Lines were relinquished and affiliations fizzled. To combat this, it reorganized as the Illinois Terminal Railroad (ITR) in 1937. A contract with the United States Postal Service gave the ITR its boost to continue for almost another two decades. Unfortunately for the rail

service, automobiles became the predominant mode of travel, causing interurban rail passenger service to be unprofitable. By 1956, passenger service ended and the majority of the tracks were used for diesel-powered trains. In 1981, Norfolk and Western Railway bought ITR's remaining interest. Many of the ITR stations have been demolished and adjacent tracks removed. The headquarters of the former Illinois Traction System in Champaign was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2006.

For the past 15 years, the Illinois Terminal Interurban Station in Decatur has operated as a house of religious worship. In addition to religious services, the church has used the historic station for educational classes serving students working toward a high school diploma.



HOW YOU CAN HELP

Contact History of the Heartland with ideas for new users or potential buyers.

Participate in Decatur Historic Preservation Week (online and local) May 16, 2021-May 22, 2021, which will include information on efforts to find a reuse for the historic station. The Illinois Terminal Interurban Station will host an open house on Monday, May 17, 5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. as part of the Decatur Historic Preservation Week series of events.

FURTHER READING

Photos: Illinois Terminal Railroad
Herald&Review, March 19, 2020

A Railroad Runs Through It
Millikin University, April 16, 2008

Illinois Terminal Railroad
McLean Count Museum of History

Illinois Traction Society

Illinois Traction System: an album
Trolley Sparks, Central Electric Railmans' Association, Bulletin 98, November 1954

LANDMARKS ILLINOIS

Landmarks Illinois 2021 Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois

BROADVIEW HOTEL

East St. Louis



"With the extension of the RERZ historic tax credit and success of the New Broadview, we believe that more investors and developers will see the great opportunities in East St. Louis. The New Broadview is just a first step toward the city's downtown revitalization."

YAPHETT EL-AMIN

PRESIDENT, EFFICACY CONSULTING & DEVELOPMENT

BROADVIEW HOTEL



Yaphett El-Amin in front of the Broadview Hotel.

LOCATION

411 E. Broadway
East St. Louis, St. Clair County

YEAR BUILT

1927

ARCHITECT

Arthur J. Widmer, Widmer Engineering Company

CURRENT OWNER

City of East St. Louis

WHY IT'S ENDANGERED

The National Register-listed former Broadview Hotel was once East St. Louis' largest and most prominent hotel but has been vacant and deteriorating since 2004. A plan has surfaced to convert the unused building into 110 senior housing units. However, unless the Illinois legislature passes an extension of the River Edge Redevelopment Zone (RERZ) Historic Tax Credit, the project – known locally as "New Broadview" — will not have the necessary financing to take place. The RERZ Historic Tax Credit is set to expire December 31, 2021. Without an extension, this much-needed $34 million investment in downtown East St. Louis will not move forward.

Currently, there is legislation in both the Illinois House of Representatives and Senate to extend the program for an additional five years. Senate Bill 0157, sponsored by Senator Linda Holmes, passed out of the Senate and is currently in the Illinois House with Representative Jehan Gordon-Booth as the chief House sponsor. Supporters of this legislation include East St. Louis Mayor Robert Eastern III, former Illinois Senate Majority Leader James Clayborne, Jr., and a coalition of mayors, architects, developers and community activists across the state.

In the five RERZ communities (Aurora, East St. Louis, Elgin, Peoria and Rockford), $325 million in preservation projects are currently underway or in the planning phases. This is precisely the type of investment needed in Illinois following construction delays caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Unless the Illinois legislature acts to keep the effective RERZ Historic Tax Credit program in place, the New Broadview and many other rehabilitation projects, and the jobs they create, won't happen.

HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE & BACKGROUND

BROADVIEW HOTEL

The Broadview Hotel opened in 1927 as part of a movement supporting political, cultural and architectural modernization in the growing Illinois city of East St. Louis. The seven-story, Classical Revival building was the largest and most luxurious hotel in the city. The downtown building included a restaurant, rooftop garden, ball room, multiple meeting rooms and each suite had its own bathroom and air conditioning. The building even hosted the first radio station for the city, WIL (later WTMV).

The downtown location provided the hotel the benefit of being a central civic center. Various fraternal and labor organizations used rooms for meetings and events. It was designed to be gathering space for residents and a welcoming center for travelers. Outside organizations, such as the Jewish Federation of Southern Illinois, used the Broadview as its meeting place for 1,150 attendees in 1942.



Despite the intentions of the Broadview Hotel as a hub of economic activity, two years after it opened, the Great Depression shocked the country and plagued the building with financial troubles. The building was sold at auction in 1931 and again in 1935. The hotel was able to supplement revenue in the late 1940s and 1950s by renting rooms as apartments. With the nation shifting away from downtown lodging, the Broadview Hotel began leasing the second floor to Southern Illinois University in 1957. By 1978, the



Members of the development team and local and state partners stand in front of the vacant hotel in early April.

university owned the entire building, adapting it for university use. Legendary dancer, choreographer and scholar Katherine Dunham operated the Performing Arts Training Center in the former hotel building from 1971 through the late 1980s.

Southern Illinois University left the building in 2004, and it has sat vacant since. In 2012, the Illinois legislature passed the River Edge Redevelopment Zone (RERZ) Historic Tax Credit, which provides a tax credit on state income taxes equal to 25% of the qualified cost of a historic rehabilitation project in the five river communities of Aurora, East St. Louis, Elgin, Peoria, and Rockford. Because of this program, areas that previously saw little to no investment became attractive to developers. To date, 32 projects representing over $295 million in investment have been completed because of this program, with an additional $325 million of projects in planning phases or underway. While the RERZ Historic Tax Credit has attracted developers, especially in Rockford and Peoria, the Broadview Hotel would be the first East St. Louis project completed through the program.

Current plans to reuse the historic Broadview Hotel are led by Yaphett El-Amin of Efficacy Consulting & Development. The redevelopment proposal leverages both affordable and historic tax credits to create 110 senior housing units. The project also features 10% of the units set aside for veterans and more than 20,000 square feet of commercial community space. While the $34 million Broadview Hotel project would offer significant job creation and economic activity for the downtown, the development team sees the project as just the first step toward a larger downtown East St. Louis revitalization.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

- Contact your State Representative and urge them to co-sponsor SB0157 to extend the RERZ Historic Tax Credit, allowing the Broadview Hotel project and other reinvestment projects to move forward.

FURTHER READING

- Broadview Hotel
  Preservation Research Office

- Future uncertain for the Broadview, tax buyer could take ownership shuttered hotel
  The Register-Mail, March 14, 2021

- Broadview Hotel project in East St. Louis in line for $1.5 million grant
  Illinois Business Journal, February 26, 2021

- Broadview Hotel, National Register of Historic Places listing

LANDMARKS ILLINOIS

Landmarks Illinois 2021 Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois

SCOTT FORESMAN HEADQUARTERS

Glenview



"This place is an extraordinary example of the work of my firm, Perkins & Will, from the mid-20th century. It represents a modernist approach to an emerging building typology — a corporate campus. I believe this place is important to the community because it provides variety both in its design and purpose that makes for a more vibrant and interesting place to live and work."

JERRY JOHNSON
DESIGN PRINCIPAL, PRINCIPAL, PERKINS&WILL

SCOTT FORESMAN HEADQUARTERS



Credit: Hedrick Blessing

LOCATION

1900 E. Lake Avenue
Glenview, Cook County

YEAR BUILT

1966

ARCHITECT

Perkins & Will

CURRENT OWNER

Inland Real Estate Investment Corporation (affiliate of Oak Brook-based Inland Group)

WHY IT'S ENDANGERED

The former Scott Foresman Headquarters complex is architecturally distinctive for its Midcentury Modern corporate design and use of modern materials and construction methods within a peaceful campus setting. The site, however, has been vacant since June 2020 and the property is currently listed for sale and faces potential foreclosure. The site is being marketed for single-family residential redevelopment, which would be permitted by the village. Instead, it should be prioritized for reuse, which will preserve its important suburban design legacy.

The company's final iteration, Savvas Learning, was leasing the complex from Inland Real Estate before vacating in June of 2020. Since then, the Inland Group has struggled to make the mortgage payments, including missing one in August of 2020. The fate of the Scott Foresman site is symbolic of the ongoing uncertainty over the future of high-end, modern designed suburban corporate campuses. The pandemic has given further incentive for companies to downsize their real estate footprints as many companies will continue to allow employees to work remotely in the months and years to come. While corporate campuses remain desirable by some companies and would serve well as sites for learning institutions, many will be redeveloped for residential or commercial use, posing big suburban land-use questions regarding zoning changes and storm water challenges.

HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE & BACKGROUND

In 1889, E.H. Scott and C.J. Albert started their textbook publishing business in a modest, 100-square-foot office in Chicago. Its first publication was a high school Latin textbook. Hugh Foresman bought Albert's share of the company in 1894. With a third partner, W. Coates Foresman, Scott Foresman and Company

was founded in 1896. Publishers of the 20th century's popular Dick and Jane readers, the company was one of several successful educational publishers based in Chicago.

In 1966, Scott Foresman moved out of Chicago to a new 44-acre campus at 1900 E. Lake Ave. in Glenview designed by Perkins & Will. Until 1985, Scott Foresman continued to grow through the purchase of additional publishers. The company changed ownership multiple times from the mid-1980s through the early 2000s. The property was acquired by Inland Real Estate Investment Corporation in 2006, while the textbook publishing company continued to occupy the Glenview campus as its headquarters until 2020.

Perkins & Will's Modernist Scott Foresman corporate headquarters links four buildings with over 255,000 square feet by glass enclosed walkways. The complex is now just under 20 acres, and its landscaped grounds and pathways have historically been used by residents of the surrounding community. Three outdoor plazas and a fountain pool were placed between the structures to provide employees with tranquil outdoor areas. The campus was featured in the October 1968 edition of *Architectural Record*, which noted "[G]reat stress was made in the program for the use of materials, scale and landscaping that would be compatible with both rather special working needs and the surrounding neighborhood." (page 133)



SCOTT FORESMAN HEADQUARTERS

The columns and overhangs at Scott Foresman are cast-in-place sandblasted concrete as are the retaining walls that define the courtyard spaces. Building elevations are clad in brick and articulated with bands and cornices of sandblasted precast concrete. A large skylight over the main reception hall is intact. It is made up of 36 pyramids in 12 rows of three. The expansive use of large-scale windows allowed employees from all locations to view the landscaped plazas and gardens. Perkins & Will's design of Scott Foresman and nearby New Trier High School West, which is similar in massing and materials, came out of the C. William Brubaker-led design studio. Brubaker, in an oral history interview, noted their similar aesthetic. (page 106)

The Scott Foresman site is one of many suburban corporate campuses that are important Midcentury Modern designs by significant architectural firms, unprotected by any type of landmark designation. Other significant corporate campuses include Allstate in Northbrook (designed by Schmidt Garden and Erickson and built in 1963-67), Baxter International Corporate Headquarters in Deerfield (designed by Bruce Graham of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill) and A.C. Nielsen Company Headquarters in Northfield (designed by L.A.-based architect Welton Becket).



Suburban municipalities and organizations such as American Planning Association and the Municipal Design Review Network are discussing the land-use challenges of redeveloping suburban corporate campuses. Landmarks Illinois urges planning, community and economic development departments of suburban municipalities to study reuse options for these large building complexes. Many of these corporate campuses are eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, which gives access to federal historic tax credits for their rehabilitation and reuse. National Register-eligibility also gives area residents the ability to participate in state regulatory review processes regarding the future of these sites.

Most suburban municipalities are focused on sustainable development practices, particularly around the problems of flooding, wastewater treatment and storm water runoff. Retaining the current building complex at Scott Foresman complex not only will prevent large quantities of building material waste from entering a landfill, but will also allow the municipality and neighboring community to address storm water issues related to the site without the complication of new construction. Addressing reuse opportunities of former corporate campuses, a recent seminar featured the developer Somerset discussing its work adapting the former Bell Works campuses in New Jersey and suburban Chicago into "metroburbs." These are successful multi-tenant reuse models to consider.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Contact Glenview officials to urge a reuse of the historic Scott Foresman campus, rather than replacement.

If you are a Glenview residents, please sign this petition asking the Village of Glenview to consider community input on the future of the Scott Foresman Headquarters.

FURTHER READING

- Inland Group affiliate trying to work out short sale of Scott Foresman campus in Glenview
  Crain's Chicago Business, March 23, 2021

- Broker Seeks Buyer for Scott Foresman Site
  Journal & Topics, June 15, 2020

- Dick and Jane say goodbye to Glenview; A broker courts developers for Scott Foresman campus as publisher moves out
  Crain's Chicago Business, June 15, 2020

- 30 buildings honored for their design
  Chicago Tribune, April 18, 1968

- 50-acre Scott, Foresman Complex Designed to Blend with Surroundings
  Chicago tribune, January 14, 1968

LANDMARKS ILLINOIS

Landmarks Illinois 2021 Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois

HAVANA WATER TOWER

Havana



Photo: Kevin Miller

"The Historic Havana Water Tower is very significant to our community as we view it as our landmark for the City of Havana.

MAYOR BRENDA STADSHOLT
HAVANA MAYOR

HAVANA WATER TOWER





Photos courtesy: City of Havana

LOCATION

Corner of Pearl and Main Streets
Havana, Mason County

YEAR BUILT

1889

ARCHITECT

F.W. Raider Company of St. Louis

CURRENT OWNER

City of Havana

WHY IT'S ENDANGERED

The 132 year-old, National Register-listed water tower is a beloved and prominent landmark in the Havana community but needs rehabilitation work from top to bottom: The metal section requires a new coat of paint or sealant to prevent growing rust, the octagonal brick base needs tuck-pointing before the existing water infiltration creates a structural crisis, and the retaining walls surrounding the water tower must be stabilized. The water tower's owner, the City of Havana, does not have the funding required to make these critical repairs.

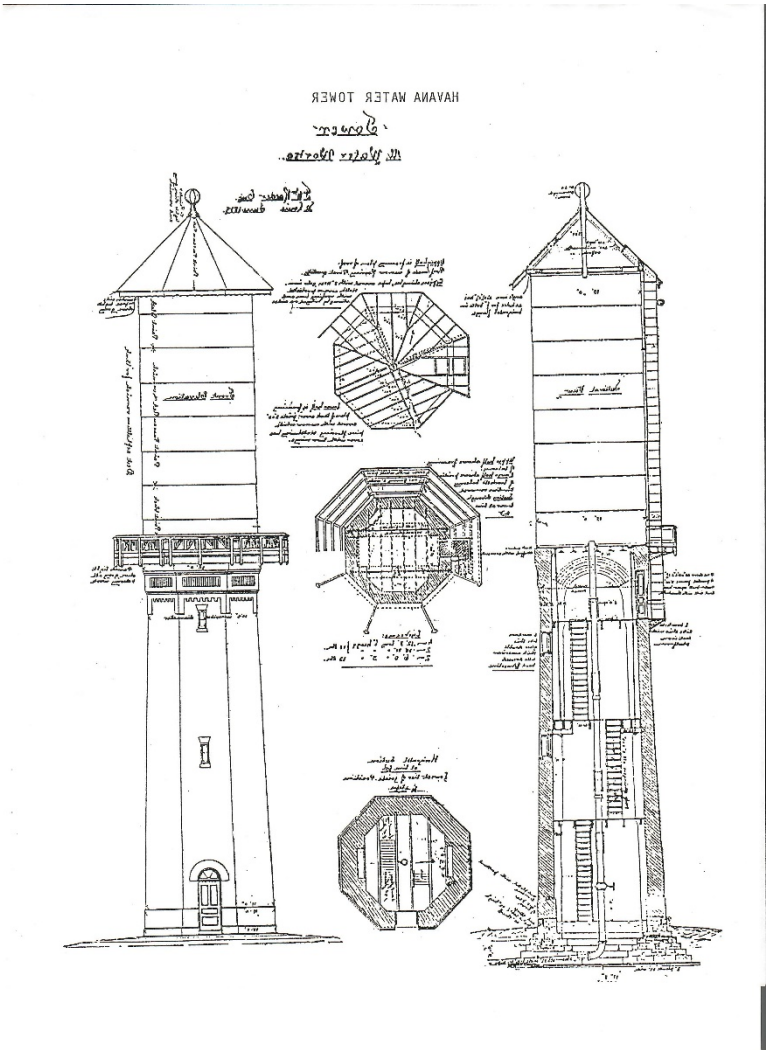
In 2020, the City of Havana received a $2,500 matching grant from Landmarks Illinois to complete a rehabilitation assessment and estimate of repair costs. During that process, engineers estimated the cost to stabilize the water tower would be $350,000, but this does not include the work needed to return the structure to a working water tower. The repairs needed to make the tower part of the municipal water system is between $900,000 and $1.2 million. Repairs to the retaining walls are estimated at $50,000 alone. Havana, a community of 3,200 people, is uncertain how it will be able to secure these needed funds. Without determining a funding source soon, the water tower will continue to deteriorate, increasing the risk that the people of Havana will lose their most visible city landmark.

HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE & BACKGROUND

The Havana Water Tower is a community symbol that sits atop Main Street hill in Havana, overlooking the business district and Illinois River. Built in 1889 and standing 86 feet tall, the Havana Water Tower originated as a critical source of infrastructure but has become a cherished symbol of the community.

Incorporated in 1853, the City of Havana is 45 miles southwest of Peoria and serves as the county seat of Mason County. With businesses growing in the 1880s and seeking much-needed fire insurance and fire protection, the citizens of Havana voted in 1889 to install a municipal water system. The resulting water tower provided the essential water supply for fighting a fire and creating the necessary water pressure to deliver water through a network of water mains anywhere in the community. F.W. Raider, an engineering firm from St. Louis, Missouri, designed the water tower. Once installed, the water tower and corresponding water system facilitated business and residential growth of the city. From 1890 to 1900, the city saw a 29.4% growth in population, from 2,525 to 3,268 residents.





Photos courtesy: National Park Service (right)

HAVANA WATER TOWER

The base of the water tower is 50 feet tall, octagonal in shape and constructed of soft brick. The walls are 27 inches thick on the bottom end, narrowing to 18 inches wide on top. At the top of the base (immediately beneath the tank) is a section of ornamental brickwork in which several courses of brick are interlaid in different positions. The entrance to the tower features an arched doorway with a transom. Sitting on the brick base, the large steel storage tank rises 36 feet with a diameter of 15 feet and a capacity of 50,000 gallons.

In 1982, the American Water Works Association designated the Havana Water Tower an American Water Landmark, only the fourth site in Illinois to receive the recognition at that time. In 1993, the water tower was listed on the National Register of Historic Places. While no longer active as part of the municipal water system, the water tower has become a community symbol, featured on the city's website and in other city publications.

The City of Havana has prioritized preservation as an economic development driver of its historic downtown. In recent years, 14 new businesses have opened downtown and several buildings previously suffering from disinvestment have been rehabilitated and reused. Residents of Havana hope that the water tower overlooking downtown will also be rehabilitated so it can continue to welcome visitors into the community.



Photo: Kevin Miller

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Contact Landmarks Illinois' Springfield Office Director Frank Butterfield or the City of Havana with any ideas on creative funding or donated services.

FURTHER READING

Historic Water Tower Gets Preservation Funds
Chicago Architecture, September 19, 2020

LANDMARKS ILLINOIS

Landmarks Illinois 2021 Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois

JOLIET STEEL MILL MAIN OFFICE BUILDING

Joliet



"This distinctively 'Joliet' structure represents the best of the city's past, present and future, offering boundless development potential as a testament in stone to the importance of the region's industrial heritage."

GREG PEERBOLTE

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, JOLIET AREA HISTORICAL MUSEUM, OLD JOLIET PRISON HISTORIC SITE

JOLIET STEEL MILL MAIN OFFICE BUILDING



LOCATION

927 Collins Street
Joliet, Will County

YEAR BUILT

C. 1891

ARCHITECT

Unknown

CURRENT OWNER

United States Steel Corporation

WHY IT'S ENDANGERED

The Neoclassical/Romanesque Joliet Steel Mill Main Office Building sits in the 16-acre Joliet Steel Works National Register Historic District. Despite the designation, U.S. Steel has neglected the historic building, with proper maintenance largely ignored since the early 1980s when it was vacated. The City of Joliet produced an Exterior Condition Report of the building in 2021 that noted extensive roof damage, evidence of water infiltration in the basement and collapsed rafters between the second and attic levels. Joliet officials have not seen the building interior for over six years and conditions inside are expected to have deteriorated as well.

Joliet officials have encouraged U.S. Steel to sell the building in a lot split from the overall 94-acre former steel mill site, recognizing its location on the Collins Street commercial corridor and the opportunity for a purchaser to utilize federal and state historic tax credits for rehabilitation could help facilitate its reuse. U.S. Steel, however, has also been unwilling to sell.

While the building continues to deteriorate, local residents have reached out to elected officials requesting that something be done. The Collins Street Neighborhood Council has been advocating for the reuse of the steel mill site and the former headquarters building for several years. Yet the fear of demolition due to neglect looms large. The Main Office Building is symbolic of Joliet's industrial heritage and is an architectural and cultural landmark on Collins Street. Many buildings that once represented the city's industrial heritage have already been demolished, heightening the importance of preserving this structure. If it continues to deteriorate, the Main Office Building will become a blight to the neighborhood. Without rehabilitation and reuse, this important historic resource is in jeopardy of being lost forever and a missed economic opportunity.

HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE & BACKGROUND

The Joliet Steel Mill site serves as a reminder of local, economic development that shaped Joliet. The mill began production in 1869, following multiple technological advancements like the open-hearth furnace, and employed thousands of people, mainly immigrants, from the late 1800s to early 1900s. The success of the company and the jobs it provided helped Joliet become a thriving city, fostering culture, commerce and helping create recreational areas for residents to enjoy. It was an iconic representation of Joliet with its physically imposing structures where hard-working immigrants made an honest living. The mill also links to the history of United States steel production, bringing the site into a larger context.



By the 1920s, Joliet's steel mill had become a division of the mighty U.S. Steel and was the corporation's second-largest mill. With the onset of the Depression, the mill experienced a slow decline. The site's physical constraints and its older buildings were poorly suited to automated assembly, leading to it being passed over in favor of newer locations. U.S. Steel closed production at the facility in 1983, when it was the oldest operating industry operating in its original location on the Illinois and Michigan Canal.

JOLIET STEEL MILL MAIN OFFICE BUILDING

The Main Office Building, constructed between 1886 and 1891, is an excellent example of Neoclassical/Romanesque architecture executed in rusticated Joliet limestone. The building's distinguishing features include layered Neoclassical pediments and a large Romanesque arch over the entrance. The front-gabled building is 40 feet in length by 60 feet wide, is two-and-half stories tall and sits on a raised basement. The entry is deeply recessed beneath a wide Romanesque arch, leading into a remodeled atrium. Vacant since the 1980s, it is representative of the evolution of the steel industry from a large number of independent operations into a highly consolidated business dominated by only a few large corporations. Despite its decades of vacancy, the building stands prominently on a busy thoroughfare as a reminder of Joliet's once thriving steel industry.

The City of Joliet and its community partners wish to re-engage U.S. Steel in meaningful dialogue to determine the best reuse of the property and to determine how to complete immediate repairs to stabilize and prevent further deterioration of the building. The city also requests open communication channels with U.S. Steel to allow community partners to facilitate interest in the property from developers as well as to work toward a larger plan to repurpose the nearly 200-acre former steel mill complex.



HOW YOU CAN HELP

Urge U.S. Steel to take action on the Main Office Building. Sign the petition asking U.S. Steel to work with the City of Joliet and its community partners to develop a plan for the site's reuse.

Reach out to local advocates to see how you can support preservation of the site:

- Greg Peerbolte, Executive Director, Joliet Area Historical Museum & Old Joliet Prison Historic Site: g.peerbolte@jolietmuseum.org, 815-723-5201 ext. 7210

FURTHER READING

Steeling Joliet's Past
The Forest Preserve District of Will County, article by Bruce Hodgdon

Then & Now: Illinois Steel Company Offices – Joliet
Shaw Media, March 26, 2017

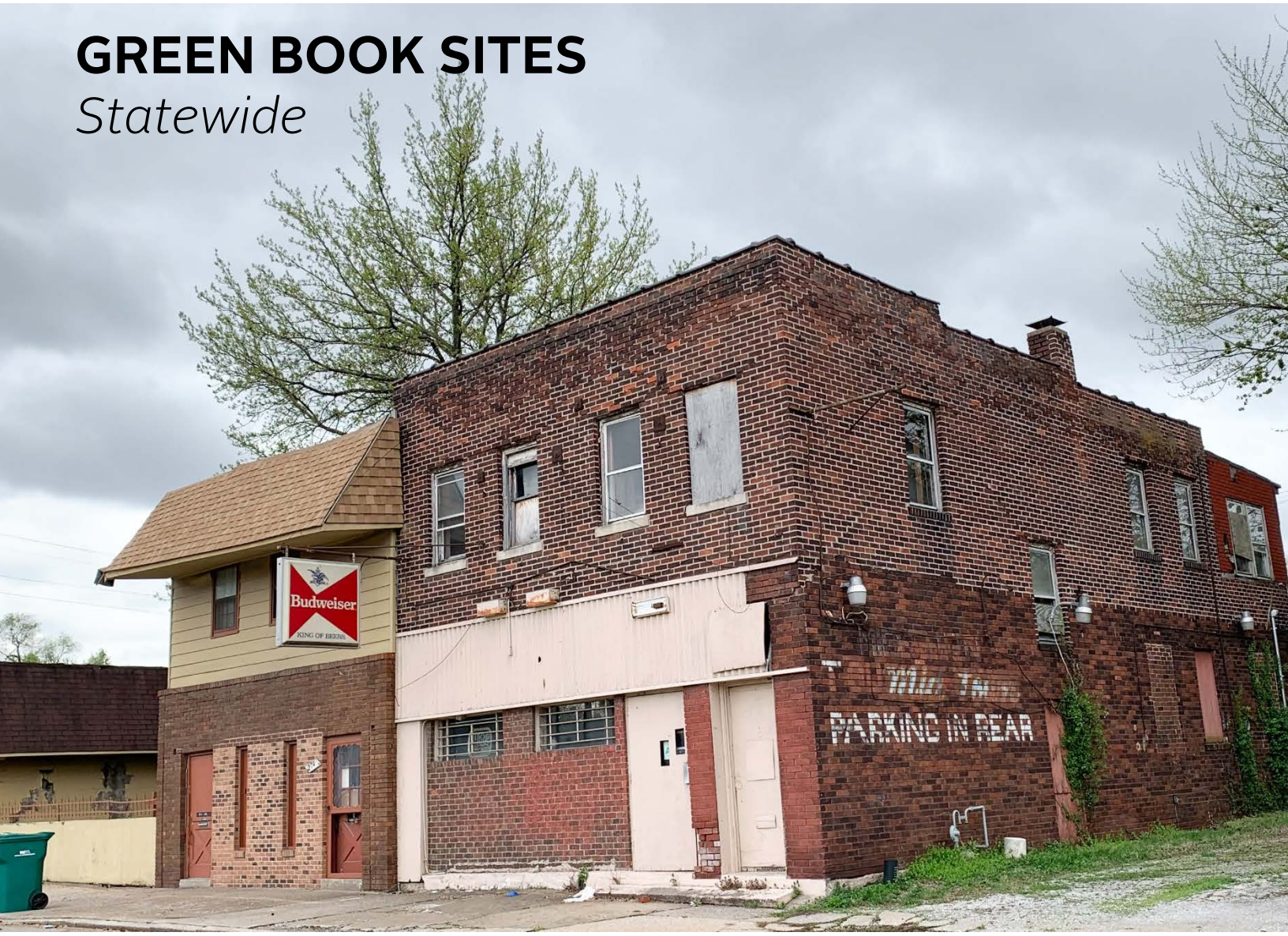
Steely face of old Joliet needs a face lift
Chicago Tribune, September 22, 2006

LANDMARKS ILLINOIS

Landmarks Illinois 2021 Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois

GREEN BOOK SITES

Statewide



"The Green Book saved many lives and was a road map for Black people to travel safely and ultimately have a better quality of life in the face of racism and discrimination. It is all of our responsibility to preserve and tell the untold stories of those Green Book sites so that future generations, especially Black children, understand the rich legacy that they come from."

DR. STACY GRUNDY
VICE PRESIDENT, ROUTE HISTORY

GREEN BOOK SITES



Green Book house in East St. Louis

LOCATION

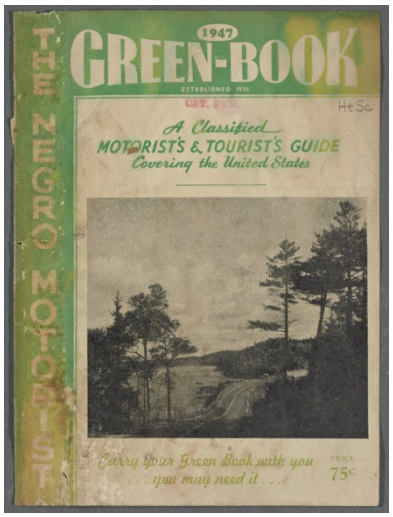
Statewide

WHY IT'S ENDANGERED

Dozens of sites in Illinois were included in the Negro Motorist Green Book, published by Victor H. Green from 1936 to 1967 to provide Black people with options for safe travel in the face of discrimination and the threat of sundown towns across the United States.

Since the final printing of the Green Book in 1967, many of the Illinois sites featured in the publication have been demolished. For those that remain, often their cultural significance is not widely known, and thus they lack the protections and prioritization that they deserve. If this trend continues, we will lose more of the places and stories of African American communities that hosted Green Book sites and the role they played in the struggle for Civil Rights.

Illinois is in need of a survey of Green Book sites along with collaborative approaches to share the stories of the people who owned and operated the businesses highlighted as well as the travelers who used the guide. Preservation of the remaining Illinois Green Book sites is an opportunity to honor the legacy of the people and communities the Green Book served and to better understand the critical role they played in the struggle for civil rights and equality, as well as travel culture in America.



Credit: New York Public Library

HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE & BACKGROUND

The Negro Motorist Green Book, commonly referred to as the "Green Book," directed Black motorists and vacationers, who commonly faced threats and refusals of service, to lodging, dining, barbershops, salons, taverns and more where they would be welcomed.

The first print of the Green Book featured only locations in New York City, but it became such a useful resource that the following year it expanded to serve national travelers. Victor Green published the guide yearly to ensure up-to-date listings of safe locations. Largely filled with the Black-owned businesses, the Green Book also offered the option of stopping at "tourist homes," where private homeowners provided travelers a safe place to spend the night.

GREEN BOOK SITES

Many Green Book resources are now available online, including the digitization of several of the Green Book publications by the New York Public Library. The National Park Service Route 66 Corridor Preservation Program created a list and map of Green Book sites along Route 66 in Joliet, Bloomington, Springfield and East St. Louis. Other Illinois Green Book cities yet to be surveyed include Brooklyn, Carbondale, Carthage, Centralia, Chicago, Danville, Fulton, Ottawa, Peoria, Rockford, Sparta, Vienna and Waukegan.



Green Book Tourist Home, 1616 E. Jackson St., Springfield

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Landmarks Illinois is compiling information on Illinois Green Book sites with the goal of completing a statewide survey. Currently, we are in need of survey information and additional research for sites in the Chicagoland area. If you are able to help in this work, please contact Landmarks Illinois Springfield Office Director Frank Butterfield.

Route History, a space to experience and learn about the tragedy, resilience and excellence of Black people along Route 66 and in the City of Springfield, is working to elevate the stories of Green Book sites in Illinois in preparation for the centennial of Route 66 in 2026. Follow Route History and support its work.



The Dudley Hotel in Springfield, now demolished. Courtesy: Sangamon Valley Collection

FURTHER READING

- National Trust for Historic Preservation: Green Book Sites
- National Park Service Route 66 Corridor Preservation Program: Route 66 and the Negro Motorist Green Book
- New York Public Library: The Green Book