



**LANDMARKS
ILLINOIS**

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2022 MOST ENDANGERED HISTORIC PLACES IN ILLINOIS



CENTURY & CONSUMERS BUILDINGS

CHICAGO, COOK COUNTY

Two early 20th-century commercial buildings at 202-220 S. State St., which sit within the National Register-listed Loop Retail Historic District, face demolition by the federal government.



EUGENE S. PIKE HOUSE

CHICAGO, COOK COUNTY

The picturesque, late 19th-century home at the southern edge of Dan Ryan Woods is part of the National Register-listed Ridge Historic District but sits vacant and deteriorating and is in need of an outside user and investor.



WILL COUNTY COURTHOUSE

JOLIET, WILL COUNTY

The 1969 Brutalist building is at risk of demolition due to Will County's current lack of interest to explore reuse opportunities for the architecturally significant but vacant structure.



ELKS LODGE #64

ROCKFORD, WINNEBAGO COUNTY

The architecturally significant former community meeting space serves as a gateway to the West Downtown Rockford Historic District but sits vacant and faces demolition by neglect.



GILLSON PARK

WILMETTE, COOK COUNTY

The Wilmette Park District is considering making changes like adding roads and parking to the beloved, Prairie-style historic park that would alter its passive design and remove greenery.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 20, 2022

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Landmarks Illinois releases 2022 Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois

CHICAGO, IL – Landmarks Illinois announced the [2022 Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois](#) at a virtual press conference this afternoon. This year's Most Endangered list is a targeted call to action for historic and culturally significant sites in Cook, Will and Winnebago Counties that face a serious risk of demolition and/or are suffering significant neglect due to lack of maintenance or insufficient funding for repair.

"The 2022 Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois are prominent examples of how a lack of funding, planning, creative vision and political will to invest in our historic sites has a detrimental effect on our communities," said Bonnie McDonald, President & CEO of Landmarks Illinois. "These endangered sites all have historic, cultural and economic value, and we want their preservation to serve as catalysts for hope and positive change. Demolishing or improperly redeveloping them would rob current and future generations of the chance to experience them and learn about their unique stories."

2022 Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois

Below are the sites included on the 2022 Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois. Please [visit our website](#) to see full descriptions and photos of each site. A downloadable digital press packet, which includes contact information for local advocates of each site, is also available on the website.

Century & Consumers Buildings - Chicago, Cook County

Two highly visible, early 20th-century commercial buildings at 202-220 S. State St., which sit within the National Register-listed Loop Retail Historic District, face demolition by the federal government. Previous redevelopment plans were halted due to security concerns by the adjacent federal courts, but demolition will leave a noticeable hole in the downtown State Street corridor.

Eugene S. Pike House - Chicago, Chicago County

The picturesque, late 19th-century home once used as a "Watchman's Residence" for the Forest Preserve District of Cook County sits at the southern edge of the Dan Ryan Woods



and is part of the National Register-listed Ridge Historic District. The house is vacant and deteriorating and needs an outside user and investor.

Will County Courthouse - Joliet, Will County

Built in 1969 and designed by Otto Stark of C.F. Murphy Associates in partnership with Krugel, Healy & Moore Architects, the Brutalist building is at risk of demolition due to Will County's current lack of interest to explore reuse opportunities for the architecturally significant but vacant structure.

Elks Lodge No. 64 - Rockford, Winnebago County

A former community meeting space built in 1912, the architecturally significant but long-vacant structure faces demolition by neglect. The building, which serves as an important gateway to the West Downtown Rockford Historic District where revitalization and reinvestment is booming, requires emergency repairs as well as a rehabilitation and reuse plan.

Gillson Park - Wilmette, Cook County

A 60-acre, Prairie-style public park sitting along Lake Michigan that features naturalist landscapes and open space beloved by locals. However, the Wilmette Park District is considering changes to the 107-year-old park that would alter its passive design and remove greenery to add more roads and parking.

More information about the Most Endangered program

The annual Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois is Landmarks Illinois' largest and longest-running advocacy program, beginning in 1995. The annual list aims to boost advocacy efforts and build support for each property's eventual preservation.

For the first time in the program's 27-year history, Landmarks Illinois has less than 10 sites on the Most Endangered list.

"We had a number of places come close to being included on the 2022 list, but thanks to partnerships with local and state government officials and the tireless dedication of local advocates and our staff, these places no longer face an imminent threat," said McDonald. "We think this year's more compact Most Endangered list is proof our efforts are working to save Illinois' historic places."

Sites included on the Most Endangered list are places that have been nominated by people in Illinois and evaluated by the Landmarks Illinois staff, board and regional advisors. Landmarks Illinois works with local advocates associated with each property to understand the historic/cultural significance of the sites and the preservation challenges it faces.



Once a property is included on the Most Endangered list, Landmarks Illinois remains committed to its preservation efforts, continuing communication and relationships with local advocates and elected officials to provide resources (including small grants) and connections where possible. In many cases, this has led to years- or decades-long relationships between local advocates and Landmarks Illinois. Staff at Landmarks Illinois can also serve as a link to pro bono services from other preservation professionals such as architects, engineers, historians and more.

Learn more about our Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois and see previous Most Endangered lists [at our website](#).

About Landmarks Illinois

We are People Saving Places for People. Landmarks Illinois is a membership-based historic preservation 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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HISTORIC PLACES IN ILLINOIS**

Property Advocates & Contacts

CENTURY & CONSUMERS BUILDINGS - Chicago

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- Lisa DiChiera, Director of Advocacy, Landmarks Illinois
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Cell: 773-456-7220, Office: 312-922-1742

EUGENE S. PIKE HOUSE - Chicago

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- Lisa DiChiera, Director of Advocacy, Landmarks Illinois
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WILL COUNTY COURTHOUSE - Joliet

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ELKS LODGE # 64 - Rockford

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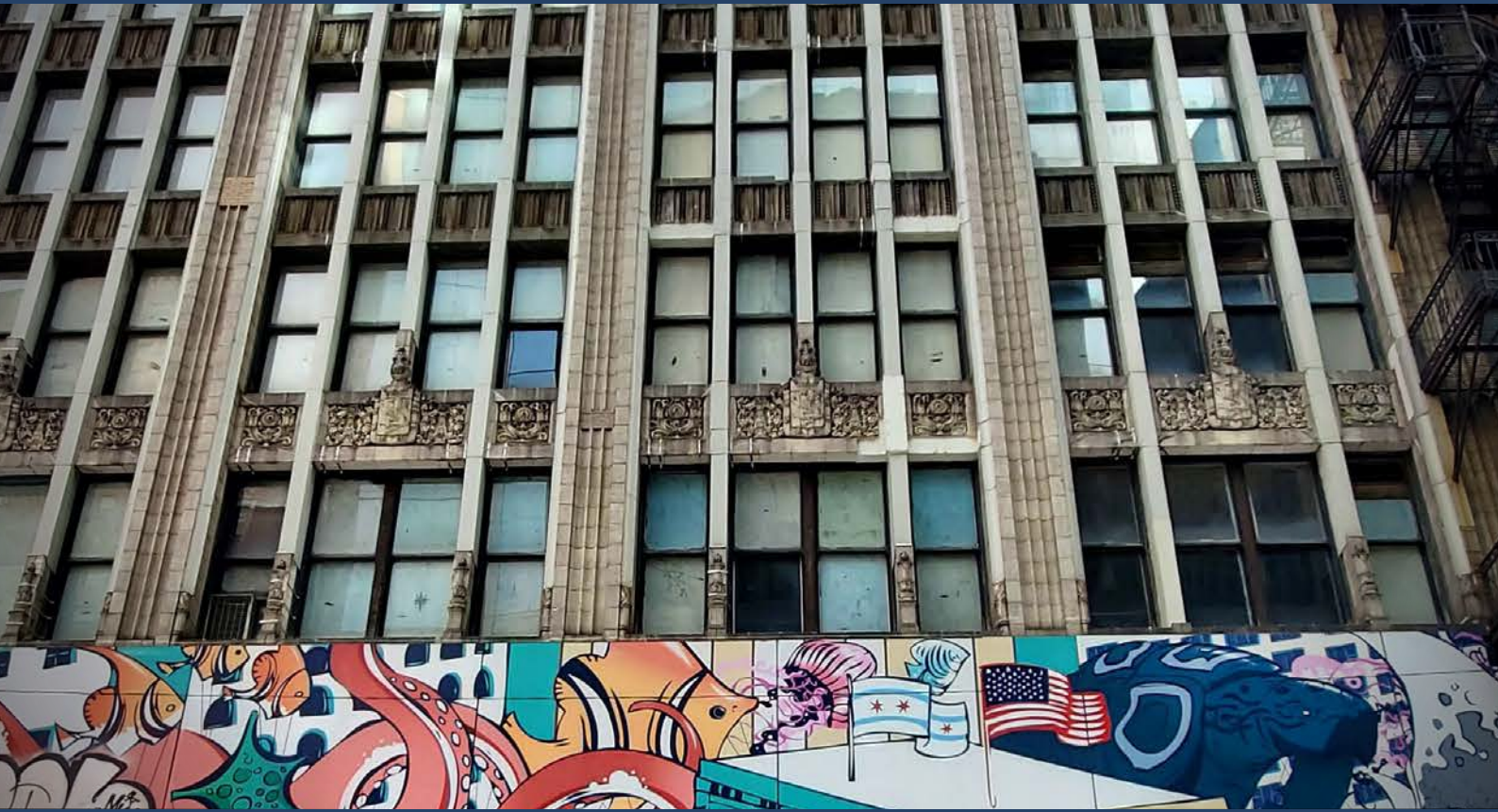
GILLSON PARK - Wilmette

- Mary Shea, Neighborhood representative, Co-Founder of Keep Gillson Green
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Century & Consumers Buildings

Chicago

"The Consumers and Century Buildings have stood prominently at the corner of Adams and State Streets for over one hundred years...Their demolition would not only create a visual hole in the streetwall, their loss would deny this commercial district important revenues and vibrancy that would come with their rehabilitation and reuse."

- MICHAEL EDWARDS

President & CEO of Chicago Loop Alliance



QUICK STATS

LOCATION

202-220 S. State St.
Chicago, Cook County

YEAR BUILT

202 S. State St.: 1915
220 S. State St.: 1913

ARCHITECT

202 S. State St.: Holabird & Roche
220 S. State St.: Jennie, Mundie, Jensen

CURRENT OWNER

U.S. General Services Administration

HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

Two, highly visible, early 20th-century commercial buildings sit in a prominent location on Chicago's State Street. Both are included in Chicago's Loop Retail Historic District listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

WHY IT IS ENDANGERED

The buildings sit deteriorating, without a reuse plan and at risk of demolition. The buildings' current owner has marketed the structures for redevelopment in coordination with the City of Chicago. A bidder was previously selected to redevelop the property, but the project was halted due to security concerns by the adjacent federal courts. There is a current appropriation request of \$52 million for the buildings' demolition.

TAKE ACTION

Reach out to U.S. Sen. Dick Durbin, Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot and GSA Administrator Robin Carnahan to voice opposition to the demolition of these prominent historic State Street buildings.





BACKGROUND

The Century and Consumers Buildings are two individual historic buildings on South State Street. The Century Building (202 S. State St.) was designed in 1915 by the legacy architecture firm of Holabird & Roche (today's Holabird & Root). Originally, the building was constructed to house the Buck & Rayner Drug Firm. In 1917, Century Trust & Savings Bank bought the property and changed its name to the Century Building. After 1950, the building went through multiple owners until General Services Administration (GSA) acquired the building in 2005.

The Consumers Building (220 S. State St.) was designed in 1913 by architects Jenney, Mundie & Jensen. The building got its name from its first tenant, the newly formed Consumers Company. After the Consumers Company left the building in 1917, it was home to many businesses and storefronts until it was also acquired by the GSA in 2005.

The two Chicago School-style, high-rise office buildings bookend two small-scale retail buildings at 212 and 214 S. State St. — all four of which are vacant and were never occupied by GSA since their acquisition, despite years of planning.



*Credit: Archie Collection
(Left to right: 220, 214, 212, 202 S. State St.)*



BACKGROUND cont.

The structures, except 212 S. State St., are all a key part of [Chicago's Loop Retail Historic District](#), which was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1999. Few areas in downtown Chicago are as architecturally important as the two square blocks bounded by Adams, Clark, Jackson and State Streets, which includes the [Mies van der Rohe-designed Federal Center Campus](#).

In 2017, the City of Chicago [agreed to oversee a Request for Proposal](#) process for the sale, reuse and redevelopment of the four-building site on State Street, which include the Century and Consumers Buildings. Despite the selection of a qualified developer, [redevelopment plans were halted](#) in 2019 by the city due to ongoing security concerns expressed by judicial occupants of the Dirksen Courthouse to the west.

These security concerns have been addressed by the GSA, but the court is still pushing for the demolition of the deteriorating Century and Consumer Buildings. Additionally, U.S. Sen. Dick Durbin of Illinois submitted an appropriation request of \$52 million for the demolition of the four buildings, which was approved for the 2022 GSA budget.





CURRENT THREAT

A \$52 million appropriations request was [approved in March](#) for GSA to demolish the Century and Consumers Buildings, as well as the smaller commercial buildings located at 212 and 214 S. State St.

Demolition is currently being pursued due to ongoing federal security concerns relating to the Dirksen Courthouse and office building, which sits directly west of the Century and Consumers Buildings.

In 2017, a proposal by Chicago real-estate firm CA Ventures was selected to revitalize the Century and Consumers Buildings. The [\\$141 million redevelopment plan](#) involved the purchase of the buildings, along with the other two commercial structures, for \$10.4 million. The plan included saving the Century and Consumers Buildings and the façade of 214 S. State St. from demolition. However, the City of Chicago halted the project altogether due to security concerns expressed by the judiciary at the Federal Dirksen Courthouse.



The safety issues stem from the buildings' proximity to the back of the courthouse, with some windows that look directly toward federal courtrooms. While CA Ventures addressed these concerns in consultation with the GSA, the city halted the sale, as well as the redevelopment plan, until negotiations with the federal courthouse are resolved.



CURRENT THREAT cont.

The court's safety concerns must be solved if the Century and Consumers Buildings are to be redeveloped instead of demolished. Without such a solution, all four State Street properties risk being torn down, leaving an empty parcel of land for an indefinite amount of time in the heart of Chicago's most important and historic downtown retail corridor.

In March 2022, the Chicago-based historic preservation nonprofit, Preservation Chicago, also called attention to the Century and Consumers Buildings on its Chicago 7 Most Endangered List. Also in March, Landmarks Illinois joined Preservation Chicago and the National Trust for Historic Preservation in sending a letter to the GSA voicing opposition to the possible demolition of the buildings.



Michael Edwards, President & CEO of Chicago Loop Alliance, said this about the buildings' significance:

“The Consumers and Century Buildings have stood prominently at the corner of Adams and State Streets for over one hundred years and are part of the architectural and commercial legacy of State Street — one of Chicago’s most important economic corridors. Their demolition would not only create a visual hole in the streetwall, their loss would deny this commercial district important revenues and vibrancy that would come with their rehabilitation and reuse. An empty lot on State Street does not make it a great street. The federal government should not be allowed to leave a black eye on downtown Chicago.”



WHAT YOU CAN DO

Reach out to Senator Durbin, Mayor Lightfoot and GSA Administrator Robin Carnahan to voice opposition to the demolition of these prominent historic State Street buildings.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Sen. Durbin

Washington, D.C. office: 202-224-2152

Chicago office: 312-353-4952

Springfield office: 217-492-4062

Carbondale office: 618-351-1122

Rock Island office: 309-786-5173

[Website](#)

[Email](#)

Mayor Lightfoot

Email: letterforthemayor@cityofchicago.org

[Website](#)

Office of the Administrator, GSA Robin Carnahan

202-501-2472

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Eugene S. Pike House

Chicago

"The Beverly Area Planning Association and Ridge Historical Society have partnered in the effort to save the Eugene S. Pike House because of its significance to the history of both our community and our city, its importance as a design by noted architect Harry Hale Waterman, and its stature as a contributing structure in the national Ridge Historic District."

- GRACE KUIKMAN

Assistant Director, Beverly Area Planning Association



QUICK STATS

LOCATION

1826 W. 91st St.
Chicago, Cook County

YEAR BUILT

1894

ARCHITECT

Harry Hale Waterman

CURRENT OWNER

Forest Preserve District of
Cook County



HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

The Eugene S. Pike House, also known informally as the “Watchman’s Residence,” is a picturesque, late 19th-century home nestled at the southern edge of the Dan Ryan Woods and is included in the National Register of Historic Places Ridge Historic District.

WHY IT IS ENDANGERED

Vacant and deteriorating, the Forest Preserve District of Cook County needs an outside user who can occupy and invest in the property.

TAKE ACTION

Reach out to the Beverly Area Planning Association if interested in participating in the community effort to reuse the Pike House.



BACKGROUND

The Eugene S. Pike House, commonly known as the “Watchman’s House,” was built in 1894 as part of a private estate in Chicago’s Washington Heights community (now the neighborhood of North Beverly), four years after Washington Heights’ annexation into the City of Chicago. Eugene S. Pike was a prominent real estate developer and financier who lived alongside many of Chicago’s wealthiest businessmen on Prairie Avenue in Chicago.

He built this weekend estate in today’s North Beverly neighborhood as part of his interest in residential development on the city’s expanding Far South Side. In addition to helping develop Beverly into the residential community it is today, Pike built the Mentor Building at the corner of State and Monroe Streets in Chicago and served on the Board of Directors of the 1893 Chicago World’s Fair. A lover of landscaping and gardens, he built for himself a “gardener’s cottage” and selected Harry Hale Waterman as his architect. Waterman designed many homes and buildings in Chicago’s Beverly, Morgan Park and Hyde Park neighborhoods. As a young man, Waterman worked with Frank Lloyd Wright in the office of architect Joseph Lyman Silsbee.





BACKGROUND cont.

For the Pike House, Waterman chose a Tudor Revival style with picturesque features that include a round tower, a steeply pitched roof with small dormers and carved wood ornamentation. The house fits within the natural environment of today's Dan Ryan Woods behind it. The American Institute of Architects Guide to Chicago noted about the location, "Expect Hansel and Gretel to come tripping past this house set on the edge of the woods."



*Historic photo of the Pike House.
Courtesy Ridge Historical Society*

In 1921, the [Forest Preserve District of Cook County](#) (FPDCC) purchased 32 acres of the Pike estate, including the house. According to newspaper accounts, FPDCC intended to use the house as a superintendent's headquarters and residence. The house eventually became known informally as the "Watchman's Residence" when it was adapted for that use in the 1960s. In 1921, the president of the Cook County Board of Commissioners was Dan Ryan. The preserve was initially known as the "Beverly Hills Woods." Ryan died in office in 1923, and the following year the preserve was renamed [Dan Ryan Woods](#) in his honor.

The house sits on the southern tip of the Dan Ryan Woods with its front façade facing a residential section of 91st Street. The east side faces a driveway and parking area used by FPDCC personnel. The back faces open green space, and the west side faces the woods. The house is included in the [Historic Architectural Resources Geographic Information System](#) compiled by the former Illinois Historic Preservation Agency in the 1970s and is a contributing building in the [Ridge Historic District](#) listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

The Pike House is also rated "orange" in the [City of Chicago's Historic Resources Survey](#), which means it possesses some architectural feature or historical association that makes it potentially significant in the context of the surrounding community. In 1962, the interior of the Pike House was largely gutted to update it for a "watchman's residence." None of the original historic features inside the house remain, except for a sunporch, making the space flexible for other uses.



BACKGROUND cont.

In 2017, the FPDCC commissioned a [Conversion Feasibility study](#) prepared by the firm of Kuklinski and Rappe Architects that included information on the home's condition and needed upgrades for public use. The feasibility study noted the house was, "in poor condition with masonry issues and a damaged roof." It further stated, "Before the building could be repurposed there are substantial renovations needed. Building systems (heating, electrical, plumbing) require replacement. Interior finishes are in marginal to poor condition. The scope of work includes extensive repairs and replacement of building components and systems to meet code requirements, given the building's existing condition." At that time, FPDCC officials estimated \$300,000 in repair costs were needed for the roof and exterior alone.

The building is considered a community landmark due to its location on the edge of the forest preserve, facing a residential street. The 257-acre Dan Ryan Woods is the only piece of FPDCC land entirely enclosed in the city. The forest preserve includes the tip of the Blue Island Ridge, an important geological feature that is the highest elevation in Chicago, about 60 feet higher than downtown. For over a century, the Pike House has been a familiar feature of Dan Ryan Woods and the Beverly neighborhood.





CURRENT THREAT

The Pike House has been vacant for approximately six years after its use as a watchman's residence was discontinued. It has since suffered deterioration due to a lack of funds for its maintenance.



The FPDCC issued a [Request for Information](#) to the public in 2018 for potential interest in the use and rehab of the house, but no serious offers were received. The structure has also been on the FPDCC's long-term demolition list. The FPCC plans to issue a new Request for Expression of Interest this spring seeking serious options for funding and rehabilitating the house for long-term reuse, which could include private residential, business and/or nonprofit use.

Recognizing that forest preserve districts have a mandate to conserve open space and prioritize funding toward that mission, Landmarks Illinois has urged FPDCC and all forest preserve boards to establish a more robust process for seeking community input and soliciting potential users to rehabilitate and occupy their older and historic buildings under long-term license and lease agreements.

The FPDCC [continues to work with its Conservation and Policy Council](#) on land use policy, including acquisition and disposition practices. Landmarks Illinois is also working with the FPDCC to study additional policy and reuse opportunities for its surplus historic and cultural properties. The use of license agreements is the norm and could be amended to allow for more outside user flexibility. However, other government entities increasingly are seeking long-term lease/rehabilitation agreements with private users, including the successful Old Cook County Hospital rehabilitation and reuse made possible by Cook County's long-term lease agreement with a developer. Forest preserves may be able to also benefit from this model.



CURRENT THREAT cont.

The greater Beverly community, led by the [Beverly Area Planning Association](#) (BAPA) and the [Ridge Historical Society](#) (RHS), is also eager to work with the FPDCC and the public to develop a viable reuse solution and rehabilitation plan for the historic home.



With its location close to the 91st St. Metra station and at the south entry to Dan Ryan Woods, where an extension of the [Major Taylor Bike Trail](#) is planned, a rehabilitated Pike House could provide leasable space for a refreshments-to-go window, bike rental or neighborhood meeting and co-working space. However, any proposed reuse will need some initial investment by the FPDCC to stabilize the house before a nonprofit steps in.

“The Beverly Area Planning Association and Ridge Historical Society share a mission to protect the history and architecture of the Beverly/Morgan Park community,” said Grace Kuikman, Assistant Director of BAPA. “We have partnered in the effort to save the Eugene S. Pike House because of its significance to the history of both our community and our city, its importance as a design by noted architect Harry Hale Waterman and its stature as a contributing structure in the national Ridge Historic District. The confluence of these factors is that this is a community that treasures history and architecture, and is served by civic and government officials who support our endeavors to protect them for future generations and community organizations dedicated to preservation.”

It is important for forest preserve districts to engage in long-term planning processes that include cultural resources. They should also seek community input and reevaluate license and lease agreement policies to find viable solutions for their surplus historic and older properties. Otherwise, finding alternatives to demolition will continue to be a challenge.

Sustainable practices are a priority for all forest preserve districts, and rehabilitation and reuse of older buildings should be part of the sustainability mission. Demolition of these structures disposes of buildings with embodied energy and durable materials, such as old-growth wood, that can never be replaced.



CURRENT THREAT cont.

Historic properties in other regional forest preserves are also threatened with demolition due to discontinued use, vacancy and deterioration.

GENEVA, ILLINOIS:

An early 1900s former servants' home built as part of the Fabyan Villa estate, now in Geneva's Fabyan Forest Preserve, has been vacant for over a decade and needs of an estimated \$320,000 of repairs that the Forest Preserve District of Kane County (FPDKC) is unable to budget for. The forest preserve district is still interested in maintaining and preserving the servants' home if it can find a viable use for it.



With local organizations such as Preservation Partners of Fox Valley, which provides tours and heritage interpretation at nearby historic properties, local preservation commissions, planning officials and community members, there should be strategizing about the next steps to stabilize the property and how to market it to potential users appropriate for its location within a forest preserve.

RIVERWOODS & METTAWA, ILLINOIS:

The Lake County Forest Preserves (LCFPD), which demolished historic buildings at the Landmarks Illinois 2016 Most Endangered site, Lakewood Farms, has had a successful long-term lease agreement with the Brushwood Center for the Nora and Edward Ryerson House at the Ryerson Conservation Area in Riverwoods. However, the forest preserve continues to plan to demolish many historic structures, most recently a grouping of historic cabins at the Ryerson Conservation Area. The LCFPD advertised to the public in March the opportunity to move the cabins, yet with a very tight deadline of May 20, 2022.

In the meantime, the LCFPD continues to weigh demolition as an option for the Adlai Stevenson House, which was given National Historic Landmark status in 2013 and is an important heritage tourism site in Lake County and Illinois. On April 6, 2022, Crain's Chicago Business reported, "Lake County Forest Preserve officials are looking at 'all options, including demolition' of the former home to the man who was governor of Illinois, U.N. ambassador and presidential candidate." Demolition of this extremely important historic site should not be considered an option.



WHAT YOU CAN DO

If interested in engaging in the effort to save the Pike House, contact Beverly Area Planning Association.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Beverly Area Planning Association

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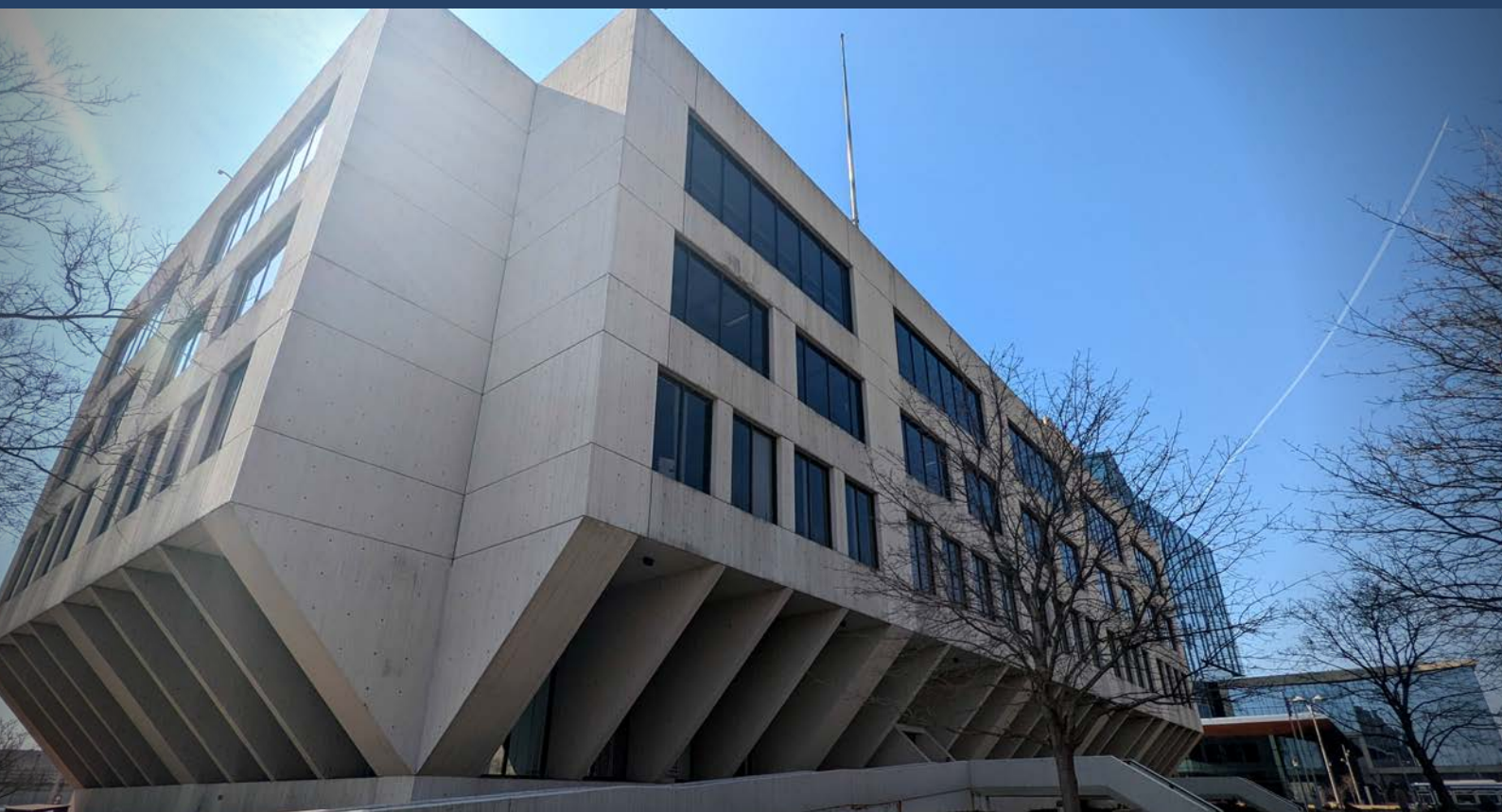
Grace Kuikman

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Save the Pike House group

[Join the "Save the Pike House" Facebook page](#)

2022 MOST ENDANGERED HISTORIC PLACES IN ILLINOIS



Will County Courthouse

Joliet

“The Will County Courthouse presents limitless reuse options. Its large footprint and historic function as a multifunctional space provides for immediate adaptability. It would be a travesty for the county to repeat past mistakes and not exhaustively explore redevelopment options.”

- NICHOLAS MACRIS

Co-Chair, Courthouse Preservation Partners



QUICK STATS

LOCATION

14 W. Jefferson St.
Joliet, Will County

YEAR BUILT

1969

ARCHITECT

Otto Stark of C.F. Murphy
Associates & Krugel, Healy &
Moore

CURRENT OWNER

Will County



Credit: Courthouse Preservation Partners

HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

The most unapologetically Brutalist-style building in the region and is the lone Brutalist example of this magnitude in the downtown and greater Joliet area.

WHY IT IS ENDANGERED

The vacant former county courthouse is at risk of demolition as county officials have not expressed a desire to explore reuse opportunities for the architecturally significant structure.

TAKE ACTION

Join local advocates in their efforts to encourage public officials to issue an RFP for the redevelopment of the 1969 Will County Courthouse.



BACKGROUND

The [1969 Will County Courthouse](#) was built as the county's fourth courthouse. It replaced an ornate [1887 structure of native limestone](#) designed by John Colby Cochrane. Because the 1969 courthouse was designed to [house other county departments](#) including the county jail, the Old Will County Jail also became surplus property. Predictably and unfortunately, county officials made the short-sighted decision to demolish both historic structures, which is still resented by local residents.

The 1969 Will County Courthouse is the most unapologetically Brutalist style building in the region and is the lone Brutalist example of this magnitude in the downtown and greater Joliet area. The award-winning design was created by Otto Stark of C.F. Murphy Associates (now JAHN) in partnership with Krugel, Healy & Moore Architects (now Healy Bender Patton & Been Architects). It is thoroughly utilitarian, with an emphasis on form following function rather than architectural embellishments. Key architectural attributes include an unadorned concrete exterior, a lack of interior load-bearing walls or architectural ornament, trayed concrete ceilings and an impressive lobby flanked by triangular concrete forms that frame floor-to-ceiling windows around the entire building.

The [1965 Groundbreaking program](#) boasted of the building's modern amenities, stating, "The building will be reinforced concrete cast in place and is designed to a specific module compatible to flexible office arrangement. The interiors will be fully air-conditioned, acoustically treated and designed for efficient use and economical maintenance."





BACKGROUND cont.

Located on a public square on the Historic Route 66 corridor in downtown Joliet, the imposing courthouse stands in stark contrast to other nearby historical buildings, many of which are designed in an array of late 19th-century and early 20th-century styles including Beaux Arts, Renaissance Revival, Art Deco and Gothic Revival. With its legacy as the replacement of the 1887 courthouse—one of Joliet’s most cherished historical buildings and mourned architectural losses—the contrasting Brutalist style of the 1969 courthouse serves as the definitive memento of Joliet’s failed urban renewal experiment. For some in the Joliet community, the courthouse symbolizes the loss of opportunity and the decay of downtown during that period; for others, the courthouse is a reminder of past mistakes and could serve as a fulcrum and catalyst for the ongoing downtown renaissance.



Credit: Courthouse Preservation Partners

The 1969 Will County Courthouse was built and opened during a tumultuous period, both nationally and locally. Like the courthouse, many government buildings during this period were designed in the Brutalist style. Fittingly and symbolically, the 1969 courthouse, as the center of justice in Will County, has been used frequently as a site for public demonstrations and protests from groups seeking justice on a variety of issues. This structure has served as a center for people challenging the establishment through [protests, demonstrations and riots](#); it stands as a part of regional history that cannot be replaced.



CURRENT THREAT

On [December 18, 2017](#), the Will County government broke ground to build a modern 365,000-square-foot courthouse, replacing the 140,000-square-foot 1969 courthouse. In early January 2018, members of the Will County Board [indicated a desire](#) to demolish the 1969 structure rather than explore possible reuse. Though consideration was given to reuse, the county board chose not to research possible redevelopment options; instead, it unanimously [passed a resolution](#) on April 18, 2019, calling for demolition.

The [new courthouse opened](#) in November 2020. Concurrently, the 1969 courthouse was closed and the unused structure has suffered from [vandalism](#). In October 2021, some members of the Will County Board's Capital Improvement Committee expressed interest in moving forward with demolition.

Courthouse Preservation Partners, a [local advocacy group](#), formed in the summer of 2021 and launched a pro-redevelopment campaign, with public online meetings commencing in December. The group called for the Will County Board to issue an RFP for redevelopment, and some group members created a [concept plan](#) to serve as an adaptive reuse example. The argument for an [RFP and the concept plan were presented](#) to the Will County Board's Capital Improvement Committee on January 4, 2022. In response, the county board continues to [seek cost estimates for demolition](#) while ignoring the request for redevelopment RFP to be issued.





CURRENT THREAT cont.

In addition to the expressed desire of demolition by county officials, the 1969 courthouse rests on land that is deemed held in public trust by the county and, according to a [1961 court ruling](#), cannot be used for private development.

The county [received an opinion](#) from the State's Attorney of Will County that affirms the 1961 court ruling. Advocates believe the State Legislature can amend the City of Joliet's incorporation to render the ruling moot. Additionally, advocates argue, since historic preservation is an established public purpose, the county could potentially lease the courthouse for redevelopment and preservation, within the limits of the court order; the court could be petitioned to modify the 1961 order in view of changed understandings of public purpose.



Credit: Courthouse Preservation Partners

Reimagining the 1969 courthouse should be pursued by Will County officials. Before the issuance of an order for demolition, the county should issue a Request For Proposals (RFP) for redevelopment to determine what creative adaptive reuse options may be available. Creative lease arrangements could potentially address the concern raised by the 1961 court ruling.

Will County should [look to the Old Cook County Hospital as a model project](#), as it is owned by Cook County but operated by a private firm. Additionally, as of press, the total cost to demolish the courthouse is unknown but will be substantial. Beyond money, the environmental cost associated with demolition is enormous. Will County should debate and consider whether spending tax dollars on demolition without investigating possible reuse options is a proper investment over incentivizing a developer and protecting the environment.



CURRENT THREAT cont.

The courthouse received a [positive opinion](#) from the Illinois State Historic Preservation Office for listing on the National Register of Historic Places; as such, a redevelopment project could incorporate historic preservation tax credits, potentially making the project more attractive to developers.

Two recent redevelopments of Brutalist buildings underscore the possibilities for the Will County Courthouse. First, a non-tax credit project, the [\\$30 million](#) redevelopment of a 1969 office building in Indianapolis resulted in the [Hotel Indy](#), which opened in 2021.

Second, a tax credit project, the [\\$50 million redevelopment](#) of a 1970 factory in New Haven, Connecticut, resulted in the net-zero [Hotel Marcel](#) ([the most energy-efficient hotel in the United States](#)), which opened in April 2022. As these recent examples show, the cutting-edge redevelopment of the Will County Courthouse is an opportunity for Will County and the City of Joliet. To ignore the possibility of a redeveloped 1969 courthouse and to hastily pursue demolition would be a [repeat of a past mistake](#).



Credit: Courthouse Preservation Partners



WHAT YOU CAN DO

Landmarks Illinois believes the real estate market should have the opportunity to propose reuse opportunities before demolition is pursued. Reuse is the better choice economically, logistically, environmentally and for Joliet's architectural legacy.

Contact the Will County Executive and the County Board Speaker and encourage them to work together to issue an RFP for redevelopment. Reach out to local advocates to offer support and assistance and leads to potential developers.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Jennifer Bertino-Tarrant, Will County Executive

Phone: 815-740-4601

Email: countyexec@willcounty.gov

Mimi Cowan, Will County Board Speaker

Phone: 331-472-0491

Email: mcowan@willcountyillinois.com

Courthouse Preservation Partners

[Facebook group](#)

2022 MOST ENDANGERED HISTORIC PLACES IN ILLINOIS



Credit: Friends of Ziock

Elks Lodge #64

Rockford

"The restoration of our historic places, as well as new development opportunities has made this community thrive. The historic significance of the Elks Lodge building is paramount to the continuation of this mission."

- SANDI KOHN

President of the River District Association in Rockford



QUICK STATS

LOCATION

210 W Jefferson St.
Rockford, Winnebago County

YEAR BUILT

1912

ARCHITECT

Lawrence P. Buck

CURRENT OWNER

Privately owned

HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

The Elks Lodge #64 long served as a community meeting place as well as an event and retail space near downtown Rockford. It is architecturally significant to the history of Rockford and has both local and national historical designations.

WHY IT IS ENDANGERED

The building is in disrepair due to the current owner's neglect, requires emergency repairs and poses a public safety risk. It faces an immediate threat of demolition.

TAKE ACTION

A preservation-minded developer and/or buyer is needed to save the former Elks Lodge and maintain its presence as part of the gateway to the West Downtown Rockford Historic District.



Credit: Friends of Ziock



BACKGROUND

The [Elks Lodge #64](#) has a long history in Rockford, and the structure has been used for many community activities. However, it has been vacant and deteriorating since 1990. It was built in 1912 and served many years as a lodge for the local Elks Club. Chicago-based architect Lawrence P. Buck designed the multi-story clubhouse made from red and brown brick with green tile. It has an exterior finish similar to that of the American Insurance Company across the street – making it an important part of the architectural aesthetic of this downtown area in Rockford. Buck was influenced by the English Arts and Crafts movement and Chicago Prairie School philosophy, which are reflected in the building's overall design. There is a second floor, a Classical-Revival ballroom and a bowling alley on the lower level.



Credit: Rockford Public Library

The Elks Lodge was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2005. It is also part of the [West Downtown Rockford Historic District](#) and is a local landmark in Rockford as of 2004. Its location on the corner of Jefferson Street and Main Street makes it an important gateway to Rockford's West Downtown commercial district. Many nearby buildings have been successfully renovated, including the Coronado Theatre. Rehabilitating the Elks Lodge building is needed to continue the revitalization and reinvestment efforts seen in the area.

It is the intention of local organizations like [Friends of Ziock](#) and the [River District Association](#) as well as the City of Rockford to promote and reinforce the historic district's redevelopment opportunities. The Elks Lodge holds a linchpin corner to mark the gateway into this important downtown district.



CURRENT THREAT

A current court order calls for the immediate demolition of the historic former Elks Lodge #64. Once a prominent community gathering space, the building has had a long history of sitting vacant and deteriorating. The Elks Club vacated the property in the 1990s, and it has since had several owners who never utilized the building. At one point, the building was donated to Goodwill Industries, which made some needed improvements and sold it to the current owner a decade ago. Since then it has suffered deterioration due to a lack of maintenance and funding to make necessary repairs.



Credit: Friends of Ziock

A previous developer with an option on the building passed away in 2007 before being able to embark on a restaurant and banquet center redevelopment. The current owner of 10 years has said he too would rehab the building as a restaurant, wedding and event space, but has been unable to proceed and has accumulated more than \$60,000 in city fines due to code violations.

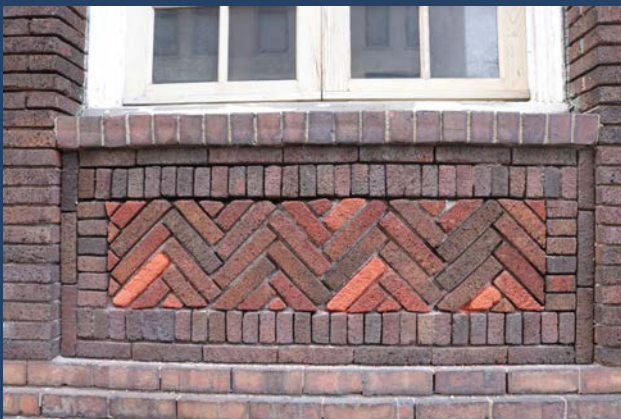
A spring 2021 listing of the building for sale was unrealistic in price and prompted the River District Association to [hold a press conference](#) at the Elks Lodge to encourage movement from the owner and the city. Amid the organization's warnings about public safety hazards including falling brick and a collapsing roof, the city brought the building into court.



CURRENT THREAT cont.

In August 2021, a [judge ordered the owner to demolish the building](#) with a January 2022 deadline. Rather than making emergency repairs, the owner continues to claim he is [pursuing reusing the building](#) as an event venue but does not have the funding to do so. Also without available funds, the city is unable to pursue demolition or stabilization of the structure, and the building continues to sit in limbo.

Despite its current negative presence due to neglect, the Elks Lodge's location within the West Downtown Rockford Historic District does provide some benefits. For one, it opens up the possibility of a developer being able to use [key financial incentives](#) for the building's rehabilitation. The location makes the 20% federal historic preservation tax credit available with a qualified rehabilitation. Additionally, the Elks Lodge is in the State of Illinois' River Edge Zone, which also provides use of the state's 25% River Edge Historic Preservation Tax Credit. Rockford is one of five cities in Illinois with access to this additional financial incentive for the rehabilitation of historic buildings.



Credit: Friends of Ziock

The building's downtown location also provides a variety of commercial reuse opportunities. Possible reuse scenarios include a restaurant, boutique hotel, banquet or event facility, or innovative office space. More than 700 parking spaces are within 200-300 feet of the main entrance. To the south is [Veterans Memorial Hall and Museum](#), one of the oldest museums in the county. To the east of the building, a new public library is being constructed and is expected to be complete in 2024. A mixed-use residential and commercial project is also planned adjacent to the new library. To the northwest, is [304 Main](#), a preservation project with newly renovated upscale classic or loft-style office space for professional service companies and creative firms. Immediately adjacent to that building is the historic and completely renovated Coronado Performing Arts Theatre.



CURRENT THREAT cont.

Several other residential and commercial properties on the same block have been recently rehabilitated or have renovations underway, making the Elks Lodge rehabilitation a key part of downtown Rockford's overall revitalization.

Sandi Kohn, president of River District Association in Rockford said this about the significance of this building:

"The history of our beautiful downtown has been top of mind for the developers and business leaders in the River District, which includes the important West Downtown Rockford Historic District. The restoration of our past mixed with new development opportunities have made this community thrive. The historical significant of the Elk's Club building is paramount to the continuation of this mission. I, for one, cannot wait to see it back to the splendor of its past, ready for enjoyment of Rockfordians for generations to come."



Credit: Rockford Public Library



WHAT YOU CAN DO

For those with an interest in learning more about the opportunity to purchase and redevelop the building, please reach out to Friends of Ziock, which continues to encourage the owner to sell due to a lack of movement toward a rehabilitation of the building and failure to address code violations.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Friends of Ziock

Email: friendsofziock@gmail.com

Website: <https://ziock.org/>

Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/friendsofziock/>



LANDMARKS
ILLINOIS

2022 MOST ENDANGERED HISTORIC PLACES IN ILLINOIS



Credit: Julia Bachrach

Gillson Park

Wilmette

"The park is so beloved and well used by many people, not just Wilmette residents, and shows that the naturalistic character of its design has stood the test of time."

- MARY SHEA

Neighborhood representative and Co-Founder of Keep Gillson Green



QUICK STATS

LOCATION

Lake Michigan Lakefront
Wilmette, Cook County

Bordered by the North Shore Channel to the south, Michigan Avenue to the west and Lake Avenue (park section) and Forest Avenue (beach section) to the north.

YEAR BUILT

1915

Expanded and improved 1937

ARCHITECT

Benjamin E. Gage

Later phase: C.D. Wagstaff & Robert E. Everly



CURRENT OWNER

Wilmette Park District

HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

The Prairie-style park has naturalistic features and historic landscape integrity.

WHY IT IS ENDANGERED

The Wilmette Park District Board is considering changes to the park that would alter its passive design by adding more roads and parking.

TAKE ACTION

Reach out to Wilmette Park District Board to encourage a comprehensive plan that has the least impact on the park's historic landscape.

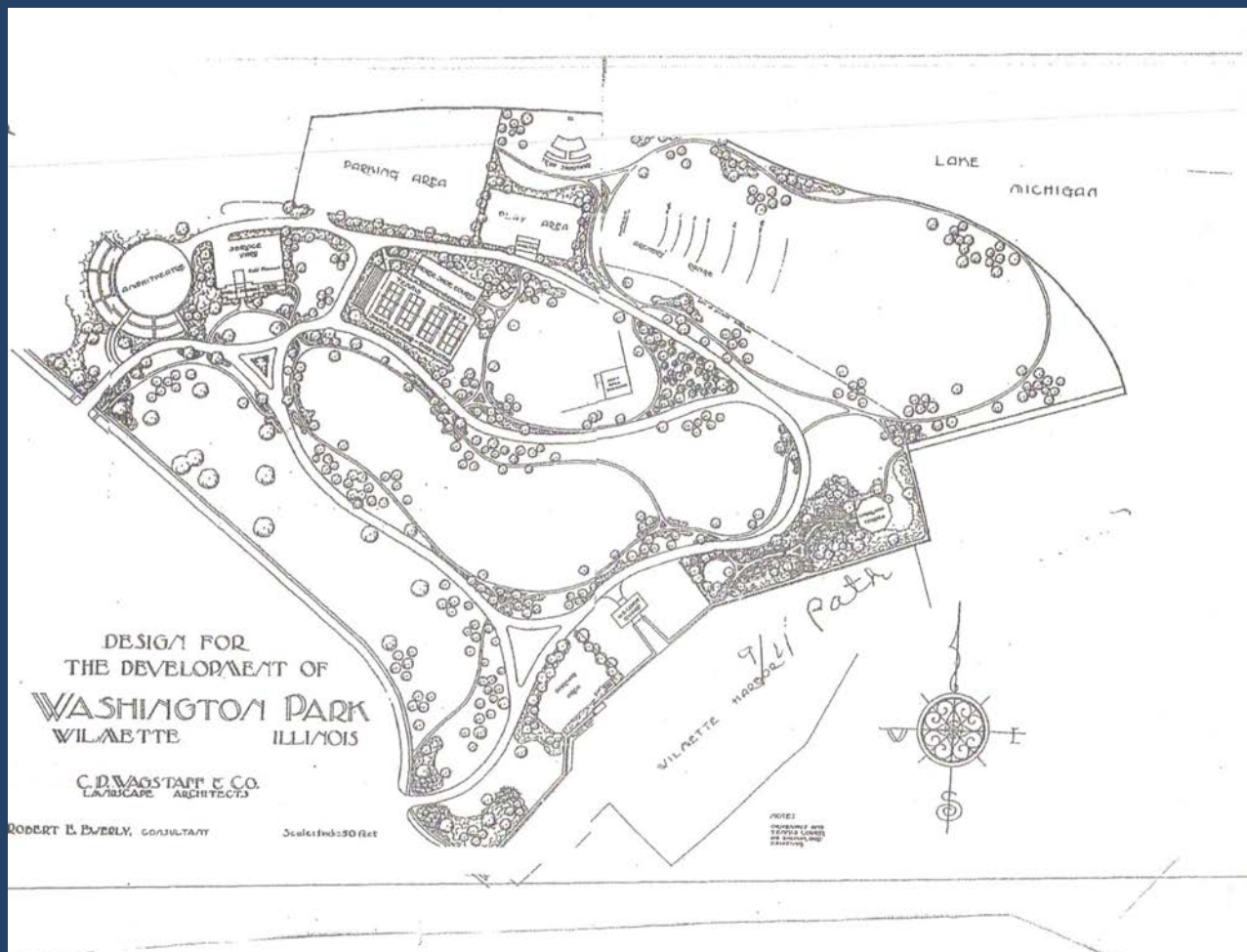


BACKGROUND

Gillson Park is a 60-acre, Prairie-style park on Lake Michigan. In 1905, Colonel Robert R. McCormick led the Chicago Sanitary District and began planning the North Shore Channel to reverse the course of the Chicago River and protect the region's Lake Michigan drinking water. In 1907, McCormick suggested that the fill from the channel be dumped into the lake north of the channel along the Wilmette shore.

This fill created 22 acres of "made land." In 1908, Wilmette residents successfully petitioned to organize a park district. The new district acquired the "made land" and, in 1915, it began to develop Washington Park, originally designed by Benjamin E. Gage, one of the earliest Wilmette Park superintendents.

In 1937, the park was renamed Gillson, in honor of Louis Gillson who served as president of the Wilmette Park District Board from 1908 until 1934. The park was expanded and improved at this time as well. C.D. Wagstaff and Robert E. Everly, two of the region's most talented landscape architects of the mid-20th century, designed the expanded park in a style inspired by noted Prairie School landscape architect Jens Jensen.



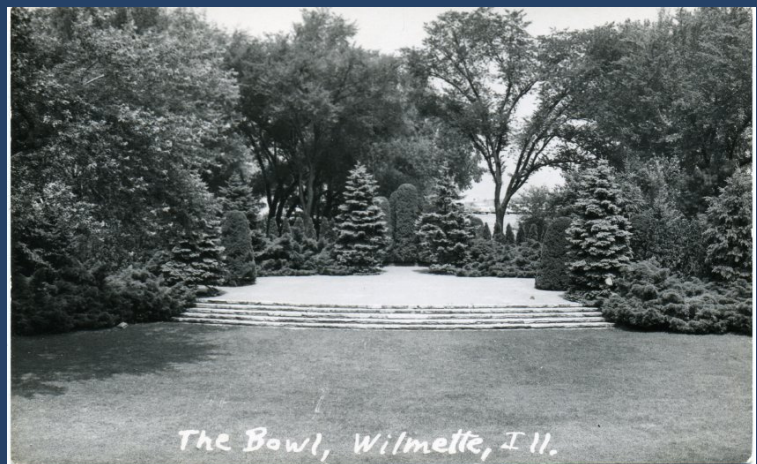


BACKGROUND cont.

The park includes many Prairie-style elements, including a stone council ring, stratified stone walls and steps, curvilinear roadways and walking paths, and informal tree plantings and open space. Noted architectural and landscape historian Julia Bachrach said, “Wagstaff and Everly created a thoughtful scheme that incorporated an array of recreational features as well as the existing circuit drive and lawn areas into a lovely naturalistic landscape.”

C.D. Wagstaff and Robert E. Everly’s intact naturalistic landscape is beloved by locals. Wagstaff was known for his landscape designs for the Century of Progress 1933 Chicago World’s Fair. Everly, who knew Jensen and was mentored by him, designed many parks in Glencoe and served as its park superintendent. Several architectural historians, including Bachrach, believe Gillson Park is likely eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

The north area of Gillson includes swimming and sailing beaches, a native bird habitat, a wildflower garden and two council rings. It also includes the 8,900-square-foot Lakeview Center, built in 1989, which houses offices, a shelter for summer camps and space for small community events. Adjacent to Lakeview Center is Wallace Bowl, an outdoor venue with lawn and bleacher seating built in 1939 by the [Works Progress Administration](#).



*Gillson Park Wallace Bowl, 1945.
Courtesy of Wilmette Historical Museum*

Gillson’s 1937 design included four tennis courts, walking paths, a public beach, large open lawns, picnic and play areas as well as two harbor walks in addition to its vast open space. In the winter, part of the lawn is flooded for an ice skating rink.

Parking is sufficient for today’s park needs, with 327 parking spaces in a lot adjacent to the existing beach house and 99 parking spaces along the roads that traverse the park’s south end. Visitors can still travel the curvilinear roads, stroll the wide lawns, view the expansive lake vistas and rest on the native stonework — hallmarks of this important Prairie-style landscape design.



CURRENT THREAT

In 2021, the Wilmette Park District [began a comprehensive planning process](#) with community input regarding future improvements to the park. After a series of design options were shared, public surveys and meetings confirmed a majority of residents preferred “Concept 1” of five plans presented, as it was the least intrusive and maintained the park’s historic landscape while making many long-needed improvements. Gillson Park is a remarkably intact historic park and is treasured by Wilmette residents and visitors alike.



The other four concept designs presented to the public, all of which greatly increased roads and parking lots to accommodate a planned expansion of the 1989-built Lakeview Center, would severely alter the naturalistic historic character of the park. The Wilmette Park District Board has discussed changes to Gillson Park that could add up to 108 new parking spaces and the loss of up to 96 mature trees. The plan would move roads and entrances, create two-way traffic and add more structures and concrete. At the park district’s November 2021 board meeting, consultants and residents made clear Concept 1 of the five concepts presented was the public’s preferred choice.

The board has delayed selecting an option, seeking further cost estimates for all five options, including those that would be most destructive to the park’s passive and naturalistic design.

Gillson is identified as one of residents’ favorite parks. In previous years the park district board has pushed for a new beach house, more structures and the addition of concrete parking areas.



CURRENT THREAT cont.

In 2015, residents overwhelmingly defeated a proposed referendum that would have funded a new beach house and a \$1.5 million expansion of the existing Lakeview Center.

An independent survey conducted in 2016 found that over 83 percent of residents were satisfied with Gillson as it is. Several surveys in recent years, including in July 2021, have consistently shown that residents want to preserve Gillson's open space.

When the park district board presented its first concepts for a Comprehensive Plan in May 2021, which included options for additional roads and parking lots, residents formed [Keep Gillson Green](#). The local group worked to educate the public about the proposed plans, urging the park district board to make only minimal changes necessary to repair existing infrastructure and to adopt a master landscaping plan.

In October 2021, despite resident objections, the park district board voted to expand Lakeview Center with a \$1 million budget, which residents believe will continue the park district's effort to expand roads and parking.





CURRENT THREAT cont.

As a result, Keep Gillson Green distributed hundreds of yard signs and more than 850 people signed an online petition advocating limited change to the historic park.

Local organization [Bike Walk Wilmette](#) is also urging improvement to walking and biking paths that will not damage trees.



Preserving Gillson Park will enable visitors to continue to enjoy the park as it was intended—a peaceful place with expansive natural areas to explore at one's own pace.

It appears that the park district board's desire to commercialize the park with revenue-generating spaces for private use is behind the plan to redirect and add roads, add parking and cut mature trees to accommodate an increase in cars.

With such changes, future visitors would experience more traffic congestion, air and noise pollution, less cooling shade and park areas closed for large-scale private events — all to the detriment of the park's historic landscape design and reputation as a place of peaceful escape.

Residents favor the park's preservation and long-delayed infrastructure improvements, such as repairing broken sewers, existing roads and drainage, as well as improving bike and pedestrian access within the park and creating a comprehensive landscaping plan to address tree loss.

Neighborhood representative and co-founder of Keep Gillson Green Mary Shea said, "The park is so beloved and well used by many people, not just Wilmette residents, and shows that the naturalistic character of its design has stood the test of time. The original architects had an understanding and appreciation of the land and its unique location. The original design reflects how people today continue to use and enjoy the park for walking, swimming, bird watching and simply being in nature. The features that give the park its great appeal have so far been retained with an optimum traffic flow. While it is important to maintain the park, significant design changes are not needed, especially those that would alter its natural character with its majestic trees and open green space."



WHAT YOU CAN DO

Speak at Wilmette Park District Board meetings & contact board members asking them to support Concept 1 of five potential design concepts for Gillson Park. Advocate for the preservation of the park's historic landscape design that includes natural space and heritage trees and push to limit the intrusion of more hard surfaces with unnecessary new roads and parking lots. Concept 1 of five concepts presented by consultants would be the least intrusive and maintain the park's historic landscape while making many long-needed improvements.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Park District Board President Michael Murdock

Email: mmurdock@wilpark.org

Submit a public comment for Wilmette Park District Board meetings

Email: swilson@wilpark.org in advance. Comments will be read during the meeting and put into the record.

Keep Gillson Green

[Take Action webpage](#)