



**Landmarks Illinois Statement  
To the Geneva Historic Preservation Commission  
Regarding 4 E. State Street  
January 18, 2023  
Kendra Parzen, Advocacy Manager, Landmarks Illinois**

Good evening, my name is Kendra Parzen and I am Advocacy Manager for Landmarks Illinois, the state's leading voice for historic preservation. We work with people across Illinois to protect the special places that define their communities. I am here tonight to express our adamant opposition to the de-designation and demolition of the building at 4 E. State Street.

In 2018, Landmarks Illinois included 4 E. State Street on our Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois list as the Mill Race Inn, under the heading of Geneva's early settlement buildings. This circa 1846 resource is one of the oldest surviving commercial structures in Geneva and an important structure associated with Geneva's pioneer era. Despite its current condition, the four primary limestone walls are reasonably intact and are able to convey its long history. It was deemed significant enough to be listed as a local landmark in Geneva only five years ago, in 2018. Landmarks Illinois strongly supported that designation. In 2022, the Geneva Historic Preservation revisited the boundaries of the landmark to allow the

applicant flexibility to develop the remainder of the site, which Landmarks Illinois also supported.

Resources like 4. E. State Street that date to the first fifteen to twenty years of the settlement of a community are increasingly rare. Many have been lost over time to suburban growth and development pressure. Those that remain should be treasured for their ability to tell a story of the community's origins that few other remaining resources can. Their preservation is in the best interest of the community and their demolition should come as an absolute last resort. Having reviewed the materials and responses submitted by the applicant, we are not yet satisfied that all alternatives to demolition have been exhausted.

In the interest of time, I will limit my remaining comments to the applicant's assertion that historic preservation tax credits are not available to help close the gap between rehabilitation and return on investment. We understand that the applicant is nonprofit organization. We would like to note, however, that nonprofit organizations are able to take advantage of historic preservation tax credits through partnership with a for-profit entity, where the for-profit entity serves as an investor. Additionally, while the applicant correctly notes that the Illinois Historic Preservation Tax Credit is competitive and caps the amount of credit available annually, the federal program, which offers a 20% credit, has no similar limitations. This tool for preservation exists to address situations like this and deserves additional consideration.

In closing, we encourage the commission not to approve demolition and de-designation without further investigation of alternatives. Thank you for your consideration.