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Landmarks Illinois announces
Ten Most Endangered Historic Places for 2014

Tuesday, April 1, 2014, Springfield, Ill. — A list of the state’s Ten Most Endangered Historic Places was announced today at a press conference in Springfield.

Now in its 19th year, this statewide list calls attention to threatened historic resources in need of assistance in the form of responsible stewardship, creative reuse plans, and/or advances in public policy. The slow economic recovery, municipal deficits and a lack of available financing continue to challenge historic sites throughout Illinois.

“The sites named to the list are all exceptionally important to not only local residents, but the local economy,” said Bonnie McDonald, President of Landmarks Illinois. “By calling attention to the potential for their reuse and revitalization, we are encouraging job creation and economic development across Illinois – something everyone can support.”

The properties on this year’s list are: a Jens Jensen-designed “fresh air” camp, an historic planned manufacturing district, a late-19th century grouping of urban commercial corner buildings, the first free and integrated school in the nation, a prominent 1931 Art Deco building on a downtown public square, a suburban Chicago one-room schoolhouse, one of the few remaining “Tin Man” style water towers in Illinois, a prominent 1897 downtown main street commercial building, one of the largest and grandest movie palaces in the country and a pre-Civil War marine hospital. In addition, the Federal Historic Tax Credit Program was given a special “11th Most” designation on the list, owing to its unique status as an “issue,” rather than a building or a site.

Since the inception of Landmarks Illinois’ Ten Most list in 1995, a third of the listed properties have been saved, less than a quarter have been demolished, and the rest are in varying stages between being continually threatened and rehabilitation.

Landmarks Illinois has been working to protect historic places throughout Illinois for over 40 years. The not-for-profit works with citizens and communities to preserve historic places and promote awareness about them through education and advocacy. Landmarks Illinois preserves historic places that enhance communities, empower citizens, and catalyze local economic
development throughout Illinois. In addition to the Ten Most Endangered list, the organization also sponsors an annual awards program, two grant programs and various educational events, including the co-sponsorship of a bi-annual statewide historic preservation conference. Landmarks Illinois also is working with state legislators to enact a statewide historic tax credit program – The Illinois Rehabilitation and Revitalization Tax Credit Act (HB 4533).

The complete Ten Most list, including individual property press releases and photos, is available at www.Landmarks.org through the “Press Room” link.

Landmarks Illinois 2014 Ten Most Endangered Historic Places
(In alphabetical order)

Camp Algonquin
1889 Cary-Algonquin Rd., Unincorporated (McHenry County)

Closed in 2011, the 116-acre Camp Algonquin is one of only four camps built in the United States during the “Fresh Air in the Country” movement started during the late-1800s. In 1907, Camp Algonquin was established as a fresh air camp on 20 acres along the Fox River and in 1910 its grounds and building sites were laid out by famed landscape architect Jens Jensen. The camp was supported for many years by the Chicago Bureau of Charities, Chicago Board of Trade, Chicago Tribune, Oak Park churches and numerous private donors. In later years camp operations were taken over by Metropolitan Family Services, a Chicago-based social services agency. By 2004, due to financial difficulties, Metropolitan Family Services sold the camp to the McHenry County Conservation District (Conservation District). The YMCA of McHenry County operated the facility on behalf of the Conservation District until 2011 when the YMCA also ran into financial difficulties and the camp ceased operations. Many of the camp’s 47 buildings are in disrepair and slated for demolition, but the Conservation District wants to retain and rehabilitate some key buildings for future use. In March, State Senator Pam Althoff introduced two bills (SB 3341 and SB 3342) to address the challenges the Conservation District has in funding the rehabilitation of historic properties acquired with bond proceeds from voter approved referenda.

Central Manufacturing District
Primarily Ashland Avenue and Pershing Road, Chicago (Cook County)

The Central Manufacturing District (CMD) was founded in 1892 and is considered the city’s largest planned manufacturing area. With the decline of manufacturing jobs in Chicago and the preference for new modern facilities, the massive, multi-story historic buildings that define the once-bustling CMD are now considered antiquated and inefficient. They risk demolition, abandonment and/or replacement. The City of Chicago has designated the majority of the CMD as a Planned Manufacturing District (PMD) zone, but plans to reevaluate its PMD policy citywide. We encourage city officials to consider a broader base of manufacturing-related tenants such as green-collar industries, research and development, and technology training—all uses that could be accommodated in the existing historic buildings. Several buildings on Pershing (2139, 2159, 2225, and 2245 W. Pershing) are included in a city-wide historic boulevards nomination to the National Register of Historic Places, which will enable future use of the Federal Historic Tax Credit for
rehabilitation. A National Register district should be considered for buildings within the entire CMD boundaries as well to make special financial incentives available.

**Halsted and Willow Gateway**  
1732 and 1800 North Halsted, Chicago (Cook County)  
The intersection of Halsted and Willow Streets represents a largely intact, late-19th century group of commercial buildings that serve as a gateway to the historic Sheffield neighborhood. This gateway is now threatened by a large-scale redevelopment. A developer’s proposal for the northwest corner of the intersection would demolish the distinctive “Black Duck” Building at 1800 N. Halsted and five contiguous parcels to its north in order to erect a seven-story mixed-use complex. The developer is seeking to amend the Planned Development zoning for this proposal as well as for a future proposal at the southwest corner (1732 N. Halsted). If the Planned Development is amended, the proposed new projects would destroy the historic character of this important intersection and gateway to the Sheffield neighborhood.

**Hamilton Primary School**  
107 East Main St., Otterville (Jersey County)  
The Hamilton Primary School opened in 1835 as the first free and integrated school in the nation. The current building, built in 1873 using most of the original building’s limestone, provided education for all Otterville-area students until it closed in 1971. In 1982, Otter Creek Township transferred operations and maintenance to the Otter Creek Historical Society. While the Historical Society continues to open the school for tours, festivals, and local events, the fundraising efforts have lagged behind the maintenance and repair needs of the building. In 2014, the Historical Society identified critical needs for repair and maintenance of the roof, but the organization lacks the funds necessary to complete these repairs. The Otter Creek Historical Society is working on new fundraising strategies and additional revenue sources needed for repairs to the historic Hamilton Primary School.

**Hotel Belleville**  
16 South Illinois St., Belleville (St. Clair County)  
The City of Belleville plans to demolish the Hotel Belleville, a prominent 1931 Art Deco building on Belleville’s Public Square, if a viable rehabilitation solution is not secured by a City-imposed deadline in 2014. The hotel, designed by the St. Louis firm of Manske & Bartling, sold in 1962 to the Roman Catholic Diocese of Belleville for use as a retirement home, renamed the Meredith Memorial Home. In 2010, the City of Belleville purchased the building and subsequently accepted a donation to create a memorial garden on the site, requiring demolition of the Hotel Belleville. A local citizens group formed, Save the Belleville Meredith Memorial Home, and along with the Belleville Historical Society was able to temporarily delay demolition and explore rehabilitation options. As a result, the City of Belleville is currently seeking respondents to a newly-issued Request for Proposals for the redevelopment of the building.

**McAuley Schoolhouse**  
1820 West Roosevelt Rd., West Chicago (DuPage County)  
The McAuley Schoolhouse was the last functioning one-room school in Illinois when it closed in 1992. The schoolhouse is a simple frame, one-story building built in 1913. West Chicago School District 33 is still responsible for the structure’s security, but the building is presently in a
state of disrepair with no plans for its future use or disposition. Its location on the edge of Roosevelt Road (Hwy 38) – a busy four lane highway – near Fabyan Road puts the school at risk as the area continues to see commercial development. Over the years there have been discussions about moving the schoolhouse into town, but it is not clear whether the existing ownership agreements would permit this and whether such a move would put the structure into public or private ownership. Its simplicity and sturdiness makes the one-room schoolhouse an excellent reuse candidate and the level of community interest in saving the schoolhouse is high.

Old Millstadt Water Tower  
Madison and Breese Streets, Millstadt (St. Clair County)

The Old Millstadt Water Tower is located near the main intersection in Millstadt and can be seen for several miles in all directions. The Tower was built in 1931 and today is one of the few remaining “Tin Man” style towers in Illinois, as many have been lost in recent years to deterioration and demolition. With a new water tower in place, the Old Tower currently houses telecommunications antennas for the County 911 system and Harrisonville Telephone Company. The Village plans to demolish the Old Tower after the County completes construction of a new tower for their 911 antenna. The Friends of the Old Millstadt Water Tower is working on a business plan to take ownership of the Old Tower and fund repair and maintenance in part through revenue generated from housing additional antennas. If the City does not accept the proposal, local officials have stated their intent to proceed with demolition.

Robertson Building  
118 Beardstown St., Virginia (Cass County)

An anchor of downtown Virginia and the Cass County Courthouse Square, the Robertson Building is threatened by damage from a major roof collapse which left sections of the building structurally unsound. Constructed after an 1897 fire, the impressive building housed the Dime Store for most of the 20th century and is notable for its corner tower, red brick façade, and sandstone details. Spurred by the roof collapse and the prospect of additional damage, local advocates rallied to form a non-profit organization, Virginia’s Square One, Inc., with the goal of stabilizing the structure and rebuilding the Dime Store interior for use as a community center. While the community of 1,600 is fundraising to rehabilitate the Robertson Building, its structural condition remains at risk for additional collapse.

Uptown Theatre  
4816 N. Broadway, Chicago (Cook County)

The Uptown Theatre, one of the largest and grandest movie palaces in the country, stands empty and lacks a redevelopment plan. Closed since 1981, the Uptown is a lynchpin for the planning of an “Uptown Music District” that city officials want to see developed. With redevelopment of the Uptown anticipated to cost upwards of $50-70 million, a major partnership will be needed to accomplish the work. The City recently brought the theater into building court because of water damage due to lack of heating in the building. Court hearings continue to be scheduled to monitor work on replacing the boiler. In 2008, the city spent approximately $1.2 million for temporary repairs to the facade that were anticipated to last five years at best. Making those temporary repairs permanent should now be the owner’s priority in order for the building to remain viable for redevelopment.
U.S. Marine Hospital
1304 Park Avenue, Galena (Jo Davies County)

Currently for sale, the U.S. Marine Hospital was built in 1859 by the United States Treasury Department and operated by the Marine Hospital Service. Constructed as part of a nationally significant federal health care initiative for United States sailors, the U.S. Marine Hospital in Galena is one of only two pre-Civil War marine hospitals remaining on the inland waterway system. The other example is in Kentucky and has been designated a National Historic Landmark. The U.S. Marine Hospital is for sale as part of eleven acres of land, currently used for livestock grazing, and does not have the protection of local or national landmark designation. Local support for redevelopment includes potential use as a single-family residence or multi-family housing. While the outcome remains uncertain, advocates view the property’s possible sale as an opportunity to find a rehabilitation solution for this significant U.S. Marine Hospital.

Special 11th Most Designation
Federal Historic Tax Credit Program
Statewide

On February 26th, the chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee – U.S. Rep. Dave Camp (R-MI) – released a draft of his proposed Tax Reform Act of 2014 that calls for the elimination of the Federal Historic Tax Credit (FHTC) program. This program is the backbone of historic preservation efforts throughout the nation and our state. If eliminated, it would bring a virtual halt to historic rehabilitation projects in Illinois. In Illinois, since 2002 the FHTC has generated over $2.3 billion in private development investment and helped create over 22,000 jobs. U.S. Rep. Danny Davis, U.S. Rep. Aaron Schock and U.S. Rep. Peter Roskam are Illinois members of the House Ways & Means Committee. Please contact your U.S. Representative and ask him/her to reach out to these Illinois members and to Chairman Camp to let them know that the Federal Historic Tax Credit program is vital to the economic health of our cities, towns and neighborhoods.

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Landmarks Illinois is the state’s leading voice for historic preservation. Since its founding in 1971, the statewide membership organization has saved countless architectural and historic treasures throughout Illinois. Landmarks Illinois’ mission today focuses on preserving historic places and advancing policies that enhance communities, empower citizens, and catalyze local economic development throughout Illinois.

For more information, visit www.Landmarks.org