

MIDWEST OFFICE - HIGHLIGHTS

April 2006

SAVING HISTORIC PLACES



Promontory Point
Chicago, IL

Conceived as part of Daniel Burnham's Plan of Chicago in 1909, the lakefront park of Promontory Point has been a popular gathering place for Hyde Park residents for generations. Changing lake levels have led to the deterioration of exposed wooden piles and development of voids under parts of the stepped limestone revetment edge, which is now also threatened by Chicago Park District plans to encase it in a concrete and steel seawall. The MWO, **Landmarks Preservation Council of Illinois (LPCI)**, and the local advocacy group, the **Promontory Point Task Force**, were encouraged that **Illinois Historic Preservation Agency (IHPA)** was finally asked to be integrally involved in the development of new designs for the Point, but troubled when IHPA agreed to approve the Chicago Park District's concrete and steel reconstruction plan, which was in violation of the 1993 Memorandum of Agreement and of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards

for Historic Preservation. **U. S. Representative Jesse Jackson, Jr** proposed language in the U.S. House requiring the Army Corps to only use federal money for preservation at Promontory Point. In early 2006, **U. S. Senator** and Hyde Park resident **Barack Obama** also joined forces with the Task Force, **Preservation Chicago**, LPCI, and the **Trust's Legal Department and MWO**, on the Army Corps work at Promontory Point. Obama's office is now overseeing the process and the engineering team is developing design documents for a preservation approach in compliance with the 1993 MOA and the SOI Standards. Planning is expected to be completed later this year.

Founded in 1848 in Lancaster Village, Indiana (pop. 200), the **Eleutherian College** is a monument to an abolitionist group who believed in education, equality and the arts without regard to race or gender. The founders operated a school from 1848 to 1861 and helped slaves fleeing north on the Underground Railroad network. This extremely important cultural resource was included on the National Trust's 2005 list of **11 Most Endangered Historic Places**. A dedicated group, Historic Eleutherian College, Inc., has been proactive with fund raising efforts and implementing stabilization measures for the threatened and deteriorating structure. They received a **Save America's Treasures (SAT)** grant, but must still raise approximately \$2 million to complete recommended work and a total of \$3.5 million to make the entire site operational. The **Midwest Office** sponsored a meeting with representatives from the National Trust's SAT activity committee, **Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana**, the **Indiana State Historic Preservation Office**, **NPS Network to Freedom Program**, and **Historic Madison (Indiana), Inc.** to discuss restoration plans. The **Midwest Office** has committed \$5,000 from the Kohler Intervention Fund to hire a consultant to develop a fundraising plan for the site.



Eleutherian College
Lancaster Village, IN



Guthrie Theater
Minneapolis, Minnesota
credit: SaveTheGuthrie.org

**11 MOST
ENDANGERED
2002**

The Guthrie Theater opened its doors in 1963 to become the seminal leader of the revitalization of regional theaters across America. Despite substantial alterations in the 1980s and '90s, including the loss of its signature screen wall, its interior environment remains essentially intact. The Guthrie Theater Company will relocate to a new theater on Minneapolis' revitalized riverfront to be occupied in June 2006. The Walker Art Center, who owns the building attached to the art center, plans to demolish the historic Guthrie in order to expand their outdoor sculpture garden and convinced the city to authorize demolition in November of 2001. When the SHPO declared the building eligible for the National Register of Historic Places in 2002, the National Trust listed the property on its **11 Most Endangered List**. Along with our statewide partner, the **Preservation Alliance of Minnesota**, and **SaveTheGuthrie.org**, the Midwest Office has forged a coalition called the **Historic Guthrie Preservation Coalition**, which initiated a feasibility study for the building's continued use. The results were inconclusive and recent efforts have focused on using the theater as an open community

venue and/or as a high tech performance venue, as well as identifying an entrepreneur to spearhead the effort. Demolition is imminent, since the theater's performance season comes to a close on May 8 and the company will move into its newly completed theater on the riverfront.



The historic Douglas Inn in Urbana, OH.

Preservationists in **Urbana**, with the help of the MWO, Heritage Ohio, and Preservation Ohio, have been working for several years to save the local landmark **Douglas Inn** from meaningless demolition by the city. Working with local Main Street representatives, the MWO supported an engineering analysis and worked with a potential developer to access NT Loan Funds. A last minute appeal of a court-ordered demolition put the Douglas Inn's fate in limbo, but the political situation in Urbana has since changed dramatically. In April the citizens voted to recall the Mayor, the driving force behind the demolition, thanks to an effort led by Douglas supporters. The locals believe the building may now get a well-deserved reprieve, as the Mayor-elect is in favor of saving the Douglas Inn.

REVITALIZE COMMUNITIES



Threatened housing stock in Greenhills, OH.

Preservationists in the Cincinnati suburb of **Greenhills, Ohio**, one of 3 New Deal-era planned communities in the country, have enlisted the Midwest Office to help fight a Village-controlled redevelopment plan involving demolition of historic housing stock and replacement with new housing which would be out of character with the community in both style and density. The original multi-family structures influenced by the International Style are being bulldozed and replaced with fake bungalows and Four-squares. The planned development and its vocal opponents have received a great deal of media coverage, and the MWO continues to work with the local coalition and Village leaders to ensure future development is sensitive to Greenhills' unique architectural and cultural legacy.

The Midwest Office is fortunate to have three associates who volunteered to be part of the Hurricane Katrina recovery team in 2005 and 2006. **Nancy Finegood**, Executive Director of the Michigan Historic Preservation Network, our statewide partner, spent her annual vacation last fall in New Orleans as part of a team seeking out survivors, and distributing tarps and cleaning materials for their homes. Michigan Advisor, **Jim Turner**, visited New Orleans twice, doing house-by-house assessments and advising property owners on mold remediation and the potential for rehabilitation. **Chris Morris**, IL and MN program officer, spent a week working for the Trust's New Orleans office and the Preservation Resource Center conducting site visits and advising residents on the next steps for remediation and rehabilitation of their homes. She will speak to groups around the region about the Trust's work in the Gulf Coast.



*Mold damage
3033 Robert St.
New Orleans. LA*



*Fairbanks Flats
Beloit, WI.*

Built in 1917 to accommodate African-American workers that moved to **Beloit, WI** during the Great Migration, **Fairbanks Flats** are a rare example of segregated company housing built during World War I. The Trust has been advocating for the preservation of the Flats since 2000 when the city announced demolition plans. They would now like to see the now vacant Flats reused as market rate housing, but finding an interested developer for the modest riverfront buildings has proven to be a challenge. The Trust is working with the city of Beloit to preserve the Flats by helping to identify potential developers and funding sources for the property.

The **Women's Community Development Organization** in Duluth, MN, purchased the condemned, 98-year-old Sacred Heart Convent with intentions of converting the three-story brick structure into 11 units of affordable, supportive housing for women in need and their children. Called *Alicia's Place* in honor of one of the nuns, the project is a testament to the vision of co-director, Zoe LeBeau, and her colleague, Deyona Kirk. Michelle LeBeau and the crew of *Women in Construction*, a non-profit housing and service organization in Duluth that teaches women construction skills and utilizes female crews to work on renovation and new construction projects, brought their skills and workmanship to the project. The financing came from multiple locations, including local, state, and federal organizations. The **National Trust's Community Investment Corporation (NTCIC)** played a critical role through the syndication of the Federal Historic Tax Credits.

The **Over-the-Rhine** neighborhood in **Cincinnati, Ohio**, is one of America's largest and most cohesive historic urban districts and boasts the largest collection of Italianate buildings in the country. It is facing urgent threats and a microcosm of



Over-the-Rhine, Cincinnati, OH.

preservation and revitalization issues, including community reinvestment, gentrification, threatened architecture and historic school closure. As the city and private developers have begun to take new interest in Over-the-Rhine, residents now fear a loss of control and a lack of sensitivity to the neighborhood's historic fabric. The critical question is whether Over-the-Rhine can succeed in attracting new investment and community development without displacing residents and losing its historic character. In response to its nomination as one of **America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places**, the MWO is working closely with local partner **Cincinnati Preservation Association (CPA)** and local and statewide stakeholders to investigate meaningful preservation strategies. The designation will bring attention to the neighborhood and provide an opportunity for the Trust to act as a facilitator in the process, bridging the gap between the various parties and working towards the rebirth of a largely African-American neighborhood rich in architectural character.

ENGAGE THE PUBLIC

Members of the MWO staff attended the **Building Codes and Historic Rehabilitation Conference**, held April 6-9 at Navy Pier and presented by APT (Association for Preservation Technology International) and the **Traditional Building Exhibition and Conference**. Hundreds of preservation professionals, architects, homeowners, and craftspeople took part in the trade show and stopped by our booth.

After the the *Historic Buildings of Downtown Detroit* were listed as one of the National Trust's 2005 11 Most Endangered Places, *the Midwest Office, Preservation Wayne*, and the *Friends of the Book-Cadillac* sponsored a **Detroit Preservation Summit**. At the meeting, over 60 representatives from more than 20 different preservation groups formed the **Greater Detroit Historic Preservation Coalition** and committed to developing a **Vision for Detroit**. This proactive strategy intends to engage the local philanthropic, corporate and political interests in making the reuse of historic buildings part of Detroit's revitalization plan for the city. The final draft of the **Vision for Detroit** is being prepared for circulation.

LEAD THE PRESERVATION MOVEMENT



*Blooming Rose Dormitory
Mark Twain National Forest
Missouri*

The **Mark Twain National Forest** encompasses 1.5 million acres in south central **Missouri**. Due in part to deferred maintenance and a limited facilities budget, the Forest plans to demolish over 150 structures, 84 of which may be eligible for the National Register. As a consulting party to the Section 106 process, MWO staff helped assess the significance of the threat and worked with Forest and SHPO staff to determine potential partnerships and alternatives. Forest staff is showing a new willingness to pursue creative reuse options and partnerships for key buildings (ranger station, fire towers and farmhouses). Plans are being considered to move some of the most significant farm structures to the nearby NPS Ozark Scenic Riverways. While many buildings remain threatened, the potential exists for a positive outcome and it could be a model for other Trust collaborations with the Forest Service.

The developer for Walgreen's has dropped plans to build an incompatible new store in the **Cincinnati Northside Historic Business District**. When the developer was awarded a zoning variance hinging on the characterization of the store as 'mixed-use', a local coalition appealed the ruling. Using Trust publications to aid negotiations for a better store design including smaller setbacks

and fewer front parking lots, the community and the developer arrived at a compromise design. Within weeks, the developer unexpectedly notified the community that 'Walgreen's corporate' did not like the changes and they were withdrawing from the project. The site has been acquired by members of the local business community who are currently rehabbing an adjacent historic building.

A very successful *Spring Midwest Regional Partners and Advisors Meeting* was held in Kansas City March 24-26. With the help of Chair Eric Youngberg, the MWO hosted a silent auction at the Frank Lloyd Wright designed Sondern-Adler house to kick-off the weekend. Participants also enjoyed productive collaborative sessions and a bus tour of preservation projects in the Kansas City area.

FUNDING FOR PRESERVATION BY THE NATIONAL TRUST

The Americana Foundation of Novi, Michigan has generously agreed to continue a third year of funding for the Michigan Field Representative position at the level of \$25,000. This is a shared position of the Midwest Office and the Michigan Historic Preservation Network.