Endangered Buildings

Last month, the newsletter highlighted two buildings on the UI campus that are scheduled for demolition to make way for the Grainger Engineering Library. PACA is continuing to lobby the UI Board of Trustees to save these buildings. However, another historically significant building is also endangered, the Stephen A. Forbes house located at the corner of Springfield and Mathews avenues. The University has requested that the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency allow it to demolish this building in order to provide a staging area for construction equipment for the new library. No plans for the site after construction have been announced although the Sasaki North Campus Plan does show a future new building on the site.

Last fall, the University quietly "advertised" the availability of this building for moving. However, the request was buried in a 17-page sealed bid proposal that included six other buildings available for relocation—houses grouped together on California and Goodwin streets. In the bid request package the University did not mention the historic significance of the Forbes House nor did it offer a financial inducement to interested parties, as suggested by the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency.

PACA is continuing to monitor the demolition request to the IHPA and is continuing to lobby the Board of Trustees to save this significant building. Your help is needed NOW! If you have not called or written the Trustees about your concern for the Wood Shop, Aeronautical Lab B, and the Forbes House, please do so now (make it your New Year’s resolution to help save these important buildings) and come join PACA at the next Board of Trustees Meeting, to be held January 16 at the Illini Union.

Stephen A Forbes House

Stephen Alfred Forbes was born in Stephenson County, Illinois on May 29, 1844. He was educated at Beloit Academy, Rush Medical College, and the Illinois State Normal University. His college education was interrupted by the outbreak of the Civil War, in which he served from his seventeenth to twenty-first year as private, orderly sergeant, second lieutenant, and captain, in the 7th Illinois Cavalry. Four months of this time was in a Confederate prison. He was given the degree of Ph.D., on examination and thesis, by Indiana University, in 1884, and the honorary degree of LL.D. by the University of Illinois in 1905. Forbes was appointed curator of the Museum of the State Natural History Society at Normal, Illinois, in 1872, succeeding in that position Major J.W. Powell, who was engaged at the time in his western explorations. In 1875, he was appointed the first teacher of zoology at Illinois State Normal University, and he introduced in that year the laboratory method of instruction. By means of outlines prepared and duplicated by himself, he guided the dissection of type forms of animals. In the same year he organized a summer school of natural history, supplying it with teachers from various parts of the state and country, and with an abundance of marine material collected for the purpose along the Atlantic coast. He had much to do with the introduction of the natural sciences into the public schools of Illinois, publishing many.
articles on the subject in educational journals and organizing in that interest a "school and college association of natural history," the principal object of which was to supply natural history specimens to the high schools of the state.

In 1877 Forbes established the Illinois State Laboratory of Natural History, which became the Illinois Natural History Survey in 1917; he directed it until his death in 1930 and was the State Entomologist of Illinois from 1882 until 1921. Upon the transfer of the State Laboratory to the University of Illinois in 1885, he became Professor of Zoology at the University and so continued until 1909 when he became Professor of Entomology. He was Dean of the College of Science from 1885 to 1905 and received the rank of Emeritus Professor in 1921.

Forbes founded the Illinois Biological Station on the Illinois River in 1894, and was its first director. He began the publication of the Bulletin of the Illinois State Laboratory of Natural History in 1877 and was its editor, being the principal contributor to over ten volumes. He was awarded, in 1886, the first-class medal of the Société d'Acclimatation de France for his scientific publications. He organized a congress of zoologists at the World's Columbian Exposition in 1893, was director of the highly successful aquarium of the U.S. Fish Commission at this Exposition, and conducted biological expeditions to the Rocky Mountain region for the U.S. Fish Commission in 1891 and 1892.

Forbes was president of the Cambridge (Mass.) Entomological Club (1886), the Society of Naturalists (1890), the American Association of Economic Entomologists (1893, 1908), the Illinois Academy of Science (1909), and the Entomological Society of America (1912). He was a member or a fellow of each of the above societies, and also of the Société Entomologique de France, the American Zoological Society, the Washington Academy of Science, the Loyal Legion, the City Club, and the Chaos Club of Chicago.

Before ecology had been conceived as an offspring of the biological sciences, Forbes had adopted the ecological point of view in his published writings. As early as 1887, he set forth the themes of interdependence of organisms and community of interests in aggregations of living beings. The ecological point of view dominated his entire program of research. His most important scientific publications were his studies upon the food of birds, fishes, and insects (the first in the world of a critical, statistical character); his 17 biennial reports on the injurious and beneficial insects of Illinois; his papers on the Entomostraca of North America, and on the ecological distribution of Illinois birds and fishes; and his final report (with R. E. Richardson) on the Fishes of Illinois, published in 1908. At the time of its publication, it represented the most thorough and comprehensive survey of the fish fauna of Illinois of any similar region in our country. He also wrote on economic entomology, public school science work, limnology, ecology, and water pollution.

(From the Forbes Papers, UI Archives)

Description

The Forbes House was built about 1885 in the Italianate style. It has a two story, "L"-plan with a low, truncated hip roof over the main block. Although simple in plan, the building exhibits fine Italianate massing and detailing, specifically the first story pedimented window hoods and second story "eared" drip caps, the wide overhanging boxed eave, the wide wood watertable, and simple gable front porch with slender wood posts. The house's 2/2-light windows are original and windows of this type are becoming increasingly rare in the area. The Forbes House is the last known example of a frame Italianate house in Urbana. Champaign has two frame Italianate houses, and the two cities combined have only four brick houses in this style.
Recreational Buildings

The Green Decade has made us increasingly aware of an important new benefit of historic preservation—both the demolition of older buildings and their replacement with new ones have a serious negative impact on the environment.

While preservation is earth friendly, demolition and new construction result in major costs for the earth. Some of the environmental consequences are:

- the consumption of fossil fuel energy to demolish, haul away debris, manufacture, and transport new materials to the site (a 1978 National Trust for Historic Preservation study determined that production and assembly of seven bricks required an energy expenditure equal to a gallon of gasoline);
- the debris resulting from demolition adds to the "disposal crisis." Locally, construction/demolition debris makes up 23% of landfilled waste.
- new raw materials must be extracted from the earth, depleting the world's reserves.

PACA encourages you to support building recycling; the earth can no longer afford a "throwaway" mentality. The price is much too high.

Board of Directors Nominations Sought

The Nominating Committee of the Board of Directors is soliciting nominations for three open board positions. Qualifications are a strong desire to promote the preservation of Champaign County's built environment and a willingness to work hard to accomplish that goal. Directors serve for three years and must attend monthly board meetings which are currently held on the second Wednesday of the month beginning at 7:30 pm. All Directors are asked to chair at least one committee, organize a program/project, or serve as an officer. Self-nominations are accepted, call 328-7222.

Heritage Awards

The Heritage Award Committee is still seeking nominations for the 1992 Heritage Awards. Residential and landscape projects completed in the last year are welcome. Call 328-7222 with your award suggestions.

Salvage Warehouse Annex

The Salvage Committee is pleased to announce the opening of PACA's salvage annex in Mahomet. Antique dealer Bob Hurst has invited PACA to share retail space in his new furniture stripping shop on Main Street. PACA welcomes this opportunity to showcase some of our nicer salvage pieces and to more widely advertise the main warehouse facility. It will also allow PACA to reach more people interested in "old things" and spread the message of historic preservation.

Among the first pieces to be offered for sale at the Annex, will be items donated to PACA from the Harris Mansion in Pontiac, Illinois. The Harris House suffered severe damage in a February fire, but the owners carefully salvaged many decorative elements. Many of these elements were sold to local residents, but the remainder were given to PACA. Donated pieces include 9-foot beveled and etched glass double entrance doors, sidelights, three marble fireplaces, paneled interior doors, ornate Victorian hardware sets, and a wonderful selection of ornate corner blocks. PACA thanks the Harris family for their generous donation and the intrepid salvage volunteers who loaded, transported, and unloaded the 14-foot U-Haul truck!

Membership Application P.A.C.A.

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORY:

INDIVIDUAL

☐ Adult .......................................................... $10.00
☐ Student (1/2 time or more) .................................. $ 5.00
☐ Senior Citizen ............................................... $ 5.00
☐ Family (includes all members of a household
with no more than two members being
over age 21) .................................................. $15.00

☐ Additional Contribution

CIVIC

☐ Over 100 members ...................................... $100.00
☐ 50-100 members ....................................... $ 75.00
☐ Up to 50 members ...................................... $ 50.00

CORPORATE

☐ ......................................................... $ 50.00

☐ RENEWAL  ☐ NEW MEMBERSHIP

NAME ____________________________

ADDRESS Street City State Zip

Make checks payable to: PACA, Box 2555, Station A, Champaign, Illinois 61825

Contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.
The Lumber Room

Timber Framing

A framing system that uses timbers as structural elements; generally, the timbers range in size from 4x4s to 9x15s. Although timber framing is still used to a limited extent today—mostly for large outbuildings—it was in wide use until balloon framing was introduced in the early 1830s.