

PRESERVATION MATTERS

PRESERVATION AND CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION

VOLUME 29

MAY-JUNE, 2009

NUMBER 3

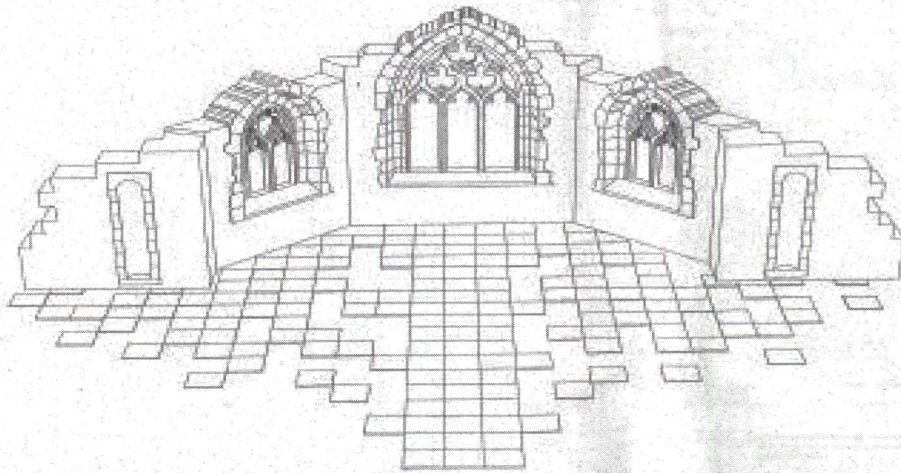
"Gothic Folly"

In the fall of 2004, PACA acquired about 200 pieces of limestone from the University of Illinois. These pieces comprise parts of three Gothic windows, two doorways, two niches, and a column from a fifteenth-century castle or chateau near Poitiers, along the Clain River in west central France. The limestone initially belonged to the Art Institute of Chicago, which acquired them in 1922 and incorporated the pieces into the Buckingham Room (old Buckingham Medieval Gallery), a one-story building that was demolished to build a new three-story modern addition.

In 1985, the pieces were transferred to the University of Illinois' World Heritage Museum and were stored in the basement of Lincoln Hall. Spurlock Museum, successor to the World Heritage Museum, deaccessioned the pieces and transferred ownership to PACA in 2004. Since that time, PACA has struggled with finding a use for the stone.

A University of Illinois architecture graduate student, Rodney Howlett, II, undertook a study of the stone and its reuse as an independent project under the direction of Jeffrey Gordon. His idea, supported by PACA, is to erect the stone as a "Gothic Folly."

Under this plan, the three Gothic windows would be placed in a slight semi-octagonal shape with the two niches flanking them at right angles. Permeable paving stones would create a small plaza in front of the structure. The site could be used as a quiet meditation spot and/or as the location for weddings and other ceremonies. The cost of such a project is estimated to be in the \$300,000 range. However, the location of such a folly is still to be determined. Suggested locations include Allerton Park, the University of Illinois Arboretum, or a local park district.



A possible reconstruction of the fifteenth-century limestone pieces recently acquired by PACA as a "Gothic Folly."

The stone is currently being stored in the basement of Lincoln Hall. PACA needs to move the stone this summer so that the long-awaited Lincoln Hall rehabilitation project can proceed. Due to the location and weight of the stone, the move will be difficult and a new storage site for the stone still needs to be found along with a permanent "home."

PACA is soliciting ideas for both the location of this "Gothic Folly" and for financing the project. In addition, volunteers to move the stone are needed. The move is planned for August 22-23. Please contact PACA to help (359-7222 or pacaexdir@com.cast.net).

2009 Ten Most Endangered Historic Places

This year's list of threatened sites was announced on April 28th at a press conference at the State Capitol in Springfield. The annual **Ten Most Endangered Historic Places list** is designed to focus attention on sites throughout Illinois threatened by deterioration, lack of maintenance, insufficient funds, or inappropriate develop-

ment. Since the program's inception in 1995, 40 sites have been saved, 34 have been demolished or substantially altered, and 81 remain threatened. For a detailed list of all 155 sites, see the "Ten Most" Archives on the Landmarks Illinois website landmarks.org.

Arcade Building Riverside Rd., Riverside (Cook Co.)

Designed by architect Frederick C. Withers, a former business partner of landscape architect Calvert Vaux, this is one of the village's oldest buildings and an early example of a multi-tenant commercial structure in the U.S. In 2007, the village approved restoration of the 136-year-old building. However, midway through the project, the property owner was faced with foreclosure proceedings. The building was vacated in January and ownership has been transferred to the mortgage holder. The fear is that the unstable real estate market could further delay the restoration, leaving the empty building vulnerable to neglect. The building is a local landmark and part of the larger Riverside National Historic Landmark District.

