BUILDING WATCH

PACA has become involved in a number of issues concerning the proposed demolition of buildings in the Champaign-Urbana area. This article is intended to keep our membership informed of these events and of actions that have been taken.

Urbana Senior High School

The Board of Education’s Reorganization Committee, made up of twenty citizens appointed by the Board of Education, has recommended that a restructuring of the junior high and high school system be undertaken. This change would involve making the junior high school a two-year middle school (7th & 8th grades) and the senior high school a four-year high school (9th, 10th, 11th & 12th grades). It was also recommended that the physical arrangement of the grades be changed: the middle school would be located at Brookens School and the high school would be housed in the current junior high school building (enlarged). The senior high school would be demolished.

The architectural firms of Isakesen & Matzdorff/Severns, Rishling & Associates studied all three buildings and made a number of cost estimates based upon the specifications given them by the Board of Education. According to the reports the high school is structurally sound and renovation is feasible, but the building needs major repairs. The roof, mechanical and electrical systems need replacement; energy efficiency and handicap accessibility requirements need to be met. The architects’ estimate for a complete renovation is $8.5 million, $10 million with a new pool and $11 million with a new gymnasium. To renovate the junior high school, built in 1952 with an addition in 1958, would cost $6.1 million. This includes a new pool, additional classrooms and a new auditorium. The renovation of Brookens for a middle school would cost $2.2 million.

PACA received a number of inquiries from people concerned about the fate of the high school and the apparent lack of recognition by the Reorganization Committee of its historic and architectural significance. The original portion of the building was built in 1914 by Joseph Royer, a prominent local architect who was also responsible for the Champaign County Courthouse, the Urbana Free Library, the Urbana-Lincoln Hotel and the original Champaign Country Club. Additions were made in 1925, 1955 and 1964; the 1925 addition was designed in the same style as the original building. The State Historic Preservation Office has requested that a nomination to the National Register of Historic Places be submitted so that the building’s eligibility for the Register can be determined.

In order to gauge citizen reaction to the proposed demolition, PACA held a public meeting on May 30 which approximately 50 people attended. At that meeting, 17 people volunteered to serve on a committee to draft a statement to be presented to the Board of Education at the June 5 study session. Eric Jakobsson was subsequently appointed chairman of the Committee to Save Urbana High School.

The Committee statement to the Board of Education presented seven points that were raised at the May 30 public meeting:
1. the advantages of having the high school and junior high school on one campus; 2. the advantages of a centrally located junior high school; 3. the lack of conclusive research in support of a 2-year-4-year junior high-high school sequence over a 3-year-3-year sequence; 4. the apparent disregard of enrollment projections beyond a five-year period; 5. the advantages of using the high school as an example of energy conservation/solar retrofitting; 6. the financial aspects of the architectural and historic significance of the Urbana high school; and 7. the intangible benefits of preserving the high school.

In addition to preparing the statement, the Committee began a petition drive to better demonstrate to the Board the degree of community support for saving the high school. It is generally felt that a referendum will be hard to pass in any event, but it may prove impossible to pass if the demolition of the high school is involved.

The Board of Education is not expected to make any decision before September. PACA will continue to monitor the situation and give support continued on page 2
to the Committee to Save Urbana High School. Persons wishing to volunteer to help should contact Eric Jakobsson, 344-1094 or 333-3918. To help with the financial costs of the campaign, tax-deductible contributions can be sent to PACA-Urbana High School Fund, P.O. Box 2555, Station A, Champaign, IL 61820. Petition forms and the complete Committee Statement are available from PACA. The architects’ reports on the school buildings and the Reorganization Committee’s Final Report are on reserve at the Urbana Free Library.

Kaufman Building
The First National Bank in Champaign recently acquired the Kaufman Building at 16-18 Main Street from the News-Gazette in exchange for the Bank’s parking lot at the northwest corner of Main and Walnut streets. PACA is concerned that the building may be demolished for additional Bank parking.

The present Kaufman Building dates from 1910, although the Kaufman brothers were at that location in 1879. The building’s lower facade has been altered twice, but the important features of the decorative terra cotta facade are intact. This building, plus the Sholem and Illinois Power Company buildings, represent the best examples of terra cotta architecture in Champaign. Historically the Kaufmans were early Champaign clothiers, establishing their business in 1879. The business was run by the family until 1966. It was a very innovative business, being the first store to add a women’s department, to have a modern beauty salon, to close on Sundays, to initiate a dividend payment plan, and to have a military department. Jacob Kaufman, one of the founders along with his brother Aaron, was an early president of the Champaign Chamber of Commerce, treasurer and president of the United Charities, and president of Sinai Congregation among other honors. His son Stanley was also very active in community affairs.

PACA has expressed its concern over the Kaufman Building to both the News-Gazette and the First National Bank. In an informal meeting with a Bank representative, PACA presented a number of ideas that could possibly save the important features of the building while providing for the Bank’s needs. These will continue to be explored with the Bank over the next two years, the time at which the current Karroll’s lease expires.

Christie Clinic
PACA began corresponding with the Board of Directors of Christie Clinic, Inc. about the proposed demolition of the buildings on University and Neil streets in March, 1983. However, no response was received at that time. In March, 1984, correspondence was again initiated with PACA requesting permission to tour the buildings under question and, based upon that examination, prepare a proposal that would meet the Clinic’s expansion needs and at the same time save key downtown buildings. The Clinic’s May 23 reply stated that, although the Clinic was sympathetic to the goals and aims of PACA and realized that some of the buildings might have historical significance, visibility from University and Neil Streets was the prime objective and therefore the buildings would have to be demolished.

PACA then sent a letter to each Clinic physician briefly outlining a proposal to retain the two buildings on the corner of University and Neil streets (101-107 S. Neil). In this proposal, the Clinic would expand as planned; however, instead of demolishing the two corner buildings, they would be renovated. A circular drive would be sited behind the two renovated buildings and run from University to Neil street.

The advantages of this proposal are many. It is an innovative project that would attract the support of the community because it retains the historic character of downtown while at the same time promoting a modern medical image for the Clinic. This community support is important for the future of the Clinic.

An equally important but more tangible advantage to this proposal is that there are very attractive economic benefits to renovating older buildings. Investors and developers are now allowed an investment tax credit of 20% or 25% of the cost of renovating an older building combined with a 15 year cost recovery period for the adjusted basis in the building. This type of development project has proven so popular that 141 projects have been completed and $323.5 million has been invested in renovation projects since 1976 in Illinois alone.

Another economic benefit of renovating the buildings is that they continue to be income producing property. However, the Clinic might find it advantageous to use some of the space for Clinic departments that might benefit from high public visibility such as the pharmacy or the optical department. In addition, if further expansion is necessary, adjacent administrative and business departments could utilize the space. A basement tunnel or a second floor walkway between the buildings and the Clinic would provide efficient communication.

The visibility of the Clinic from Neil and University streets is a very important concern. However, if all the buildings, except the two under discussion, were demolished the Clinic’s new building would be quite visible from both streets. The building’s size, height, and modern design would make it very noticeable from all directions, especially if Neil Street is reopened to traffic, as may well occur in the near future. Moreover, the contrast between the Clinic and small scale older buildings would highlight the modern image of the Clinic in a more dramatic and friendly way than a parking lot would.

As of June 14, PACA had received no response from the Clinic concerning the request to present the proposal in more detail to the physicians. However, PACA will continue to try to work with the Clinic on the fate of these buildings.

PACA is looking for volunteers to help with any of these projects. This could involve research, photography, letter writing, drafting, salvage, etc. to volunteer or to express your concern about the fate of these buildings, call PACA (359-7404).

NOTES
The Victorian House lecture series, held last March and April, was a success. An average of 40 people attended each of the 5 lectures on various aspects of the Victorian House. Comments from the audience were very favorable toward both the speakers and the cosponsors. PACA wishes to thank all those involved in making this first lecture series a success. Later issues of the newsletter will contain information from those lectures that is of general reader interest.

The Board of Directors regretfully accepted the resignation of James Mathien from the Board effective May, 1984. Jim accepted a position as Executive Director of the Neighborhood Housing Services of Aurora, Inc. PACA wishes him the best in his new position.

The Nomination Committee is seeking names of people who would be interested in fulfilling the unexpired term of James Mathien (through 1985). The
dent in architecture specializing in his-
toric preservation, has begun the sur-
vey and inventory of downtown
Division of the Illinois Department of
$10,000 grant from the Historic Sites
May, 1985!
INITIATED
now for the Third Annual Spring Pro-
weekend to help make the event a
success.
We urge you to mark your calendars
for the Third Annual Spring Pro-
enade to be held the third Sunday in
May, 1985!
SECOND ANNUAL
SPRING PROMENADE
The Second Annual Spring Promen-
ade was held Sunday, May 27; inde-
ment weather forced PACA and
CCHM to postpone the event, original-
ly scheduled for May 20. Fortunately,
all of the homeowners graciously
agreed to this change in date. Over one
hundred people turned out to view five
early 20th-century homes and one gar-
den in the Davidson Park/West Park
Street area of Champaign. This trans-
lated into about $100 in profit for both
the sponsoring organizations. PACA
and CCHM would like to thank all of
the homeowners and volunteers who
gave up part of their Memorial Day
weekend to help make the event a
success.

DOWNTOWN
CHAMPAIGN SURVEY
INITIATED
PACA was recently awarded a
$10,000 grant from the Historic Sites
Division of the Illinois Department of
Conservation. This grant will be used
for an architectural and historical sur-
vey and inventory of downtown
Champaign.
Michael A. Lambert, a graduate stu-
dent in architecture specializing in his-
toric preservation, has begun the sur-
vey. The area to be covered is bounded
by Washington, State, Clark, Marshall
and First streets. Each building and lot
located within this area will be inven-
toried with a photograph, an architec-
tural description and analysis and a his-
torical sketch.
The results of this survey will be
made available to the City of Cham-
paign and the Vintage Champaign
Council and should prove to be very
useful in planning activities for down-
town Champaign. The survey may also
form the basis for a future National Re-
Register Historic District in a section of
downtown.
The IDOC grant, a 70% reimburse-
ment project, is being matched by in-
kind contributions from PACA and the
Vintage Champaign Council. This sur-
vey is financed with federal funds from
the Department of the Interior. How-
ever, the contents and opinions do not
necessarily reflect the views or policies
of the Department of the Interior nor
the Illinois Department of Conserva-
tion, or the Vintage Champaign
Council.

CENTENNIAL BUSINESS
PROGRAM UNVEILED
Illinois businesses which have been
in continuous operation for 100 years or
more will be honored through the new
“Centennial Business” program, offi-
cially unveiled by the Illinois State
Historical Society (ISHS) on February
1.
A statewide search for eligible firms,
ranging from family owned stores to
major corporations, is being conducted
in cooperation with member organiza-
tions of the Congress of Illinois Histori-
cal Societies and Museums and local
chambers of commerce.
“The citizens of Illinois are proud
of the leaders in the business com-
unity. It takes strength to survive one
hundred years and these institutions
reflect the very spirit of our prairie
state,” said Patricia Wallace of Whea-
ton, president of the Society. “The
Centennial Business program will pro-
vide the recognition these pioneers so
richly deserve.”
Businesses meeting the necessary
requirements outlined on the applica-
tion form and providing copies of pri-
mary resource documentation sub-
stantiating the founding date, will be
officially designated Illinois Centen-
nial Businesses and awarded recognition
certificates suitable for display.

A State Advisory Committee has
been formed to aid the Society in the
identification of centennial firms
throughout the state and to provide
final approval of all applications.
Kenneth R. Miller of Mount Vernon
heads the committee as general chair-
man, along with honorary chairman
Governor James R. Thompson, Lieu-
tenant Governor George H. Ryan, Sec-
retary of State Jim Edgar and State
Chamber of Commerce President,
Lester W. Brann.

“Through the Centennial Business
program we hope to make great strides
in our mission to link Illinois’ past to its
future,” said Olive S. Foster, executive
director of the ISHS. “It is essential
that we stimulate an interest in pre-
serving Illinois’ most important com-
mercial and industrial heritage for fu-
ture generations. The people of Illinois
can benefit from the Centennial Busi-
ness program through the donations of
corporate histories to the Illinois State
Historical Library.”

To date, the Society has received
over 150 requests for applications. Wal-
lace noted that the excellent reception
for the Centennial Business program has
received indicates that the Society will
make this an ongoing project. Entries
received after the first two hundred ap-
lications have been approved will be
considered for next year’s program.

THE PROBLEM SOLVER
Fix it up, clean it up. These were the
watchwords of Preservation Week
1984. They are also the principal con-
cerns of preservationist all across
America, be they the owners of private
homes, local and state government of-
ficials or the owners of commercial
buildings. Quality rehabilitation and
maintenance make our homes more
livable, our neighborhoods more at-
tractive and our history more secure.
But we must be careful. A poorly
planned, quick-fix solution can do al-
most as much damage to an old build-
ing as tearing it down. The following
information has been assembled to
help you avoid common mistakes of
rehabilitation and maintenance.
Preservation is painting and pla-
tering, refurbishing and refinishing.
Preservation is taking care of America.
I recently purchased an 1850 brick
Gothic Revival cottage. The plantings
are overgrown, and some apparently
continued on page 4
old bushes are located close to the building's foundations. Cracks are beginning to appear in the brickwork, and I am afraid that the shrubbery may be the culprit. Should all the vegetation be removed?

Yes. However, if it is feasible and the cost is not prohibitive, you may wish to save the bushes and move them a reasonable distance from the foundation walls to prevent further damage. If you decide to remove the vegetation completely, it would be a good idea to cut down the bushes and vines; to prevent further damage to the building material, wait until the roots have dried out and have begun to decompose before removing them from the ground or the brick wall. You should then arrange to have the cracks in the brickwork repaired by a skilled mason who is sensitive to the needs of a historic masonry building—that is, one who will use a soft mortar that will not damage the old bricks.

Ten years ago, we sandblasted our 1881 building, and now the brick seems to be deteriorating. What can be done to prevent further damage?

Old brick, essentially a soft, baked clay product, is highly susceptible to increased deterioration when its outer skin is removed through abrasive cleaning techniques. The problem can be minimized by painting the brick or by treating it with a clear sealer. Painting is preferable because sealers tend to leave a glossy look and, more important, reduce the migration of moisture, allowing subflorescence—that is, salt crystallization—which causes spalling, or deterioration, of the brick. If the brick has been so badly damaged that spalling has already begun, it may be necessary to cover the walls with stucco or even replace the bricks.

ARTS COUNCIL OF CHAMPAIGN COUNTY
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Champaign, Illinois 61820

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359-7404

Please submit material for publication in the next newsletter before 15th of month.

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