



# PRESERVATION AND CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION OF CHAMPAIGN COUNTY

Box 2555, Station A, Champaign, Illinois 61820

“The Past Has A Future”

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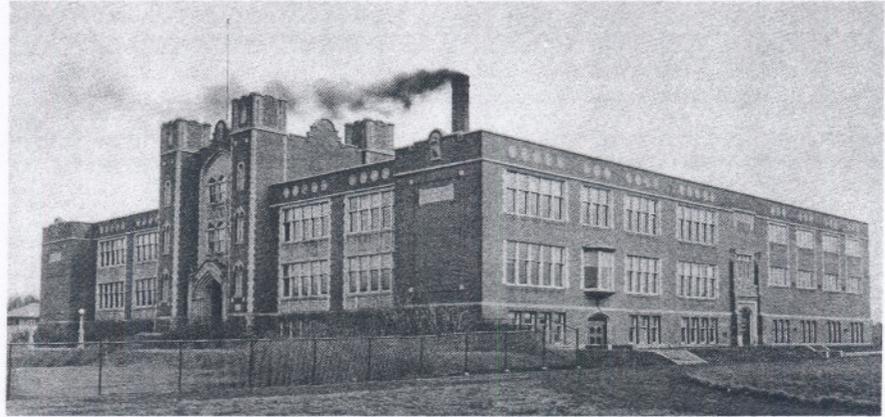
## BUILDING WATCH

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 action that has 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

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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, adjunct 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 valid 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 co-sponsors. 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

only qualification is an active interest in preserving the heritage of Champaign and surrounding counties. If you are interested or know of someone who might be, contact Lachlan Blair, 333-3890.

As reported at the annual meeting, *The Old House Journal*, a national rehabilitation publication, has recognized the work conducted by the Preservation and Conservation Association of Champaign County with the awarding of a \$1,000 grant. PACA is proud of the national recognition which this award bestows and will use the award for newly budgeted programs and to coordinate better communication, awareness and technical information on preservation throughout Champaign County. *The Old House Journal* is the only national magazine exclusively devoted to the sensitive rehabilitation, maintenance, and decoration of old houses. Information on subscribing to the *Journal* is available through PACA.

## SECOND ANNUAL SPRING PROMENADE

The Second Annual Spring Promenade was held Sunday, May 27; inclement weather forced PACA and CCHM to postpone the event, originally 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 garden in the Davidson Park/West Park Street area of Champaign. This translated 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.

We urge you to mark your calendars now for the Third Annual Spring Promenade to be held the third Sunday in May, 1985!

## 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 survey and inventory of downtown Champaign.

Michael A. Lambert, a graduate student in architecture specializing in historic 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 inventoried with a photograph, an architectural description and analysis and a historical sketch.

The results of this survey will be made available to the City of Champaign and the Vintage Champaign Council and should prove to be very useful in planning activities for downtown Champaign. The survey may also form the basis for a future National Register Historic District in a section of downtown.

The IDOC grant, a 70% reimbursement project, is being matched by in-kind contributions from PACA and the Vintage Champaign Council. This survey is financed with federal funds from the Department of the Interior. However, the contents and opinions do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Department of the Interior nor the Illinois Department of Conservation, 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, officially 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 organizations of the Congress of Illinois Historical Societies and Museums and local chambers of commerce.

"The citizens of Illinois are proud of the leaders in the business community. It takes strength to survive one hundred years and these institutions reflect the very spirit of our prairie state," said Patricia Wallace of Wheaton, president of the Society. "The Centennial Business program will provide the recognition these pioneers so richly deserve."

Businesses meeting the necessary requirements outlined on the application form and providing copies of primary resource documentation substantiating the founding date, will be officially designated Illinois Centennial 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 chairman, along with honorary chairmen Governor James R. Thompson, Lieutenant Governor George H. Ryan, Secretary 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 preserving Illinois' most important commercial and industrial heritage for future generations. The people of Illinois can benefit from the Centennial Business program through the donations of corporate histories to the Illinois State Historical Library."

To date, the Society has received over 150 requests for applications. Wallace noted that the excellent reception the Centennial Business program has received indicates that the Society will make this an ongoing project. Entries received after the first two hundred applications 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 concerns of preservationist all across America, be they the owners of private homes, local and state government officials or the owners of commercial buildings. Quality rehabilitation and maintenance make our homes more livable, our neighborhoods more attractive and our history more secure.

But we must be careful. A poorly planned, quick-fix solution can do almost as much damage to an old building as tearing it down. The following information has been assembled to help you avoid common mistakes of rehabilitation and maintenance.

Preservation is painting and plastering, 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**

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**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 sensi-

tive 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.

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#### ARTS COUNCIL OF CHAMPAIGN COUNTY

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

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