FIRST ANNUAL PACA HERITAGE AWARDS

At the annual membership meeting last January, PACA announced the first annual Heritage Award winners. This article describes those winning entries in the hopes of encouraging everyone to nominate his/her favorite deserving building for this year's Awards. A nomination form is enclosed in this issue and nominations will be taken until November 24.

LANDSCAPE HERITAGE AWARD

(Recognition of significant landscape, related structures or landscape art): Carle Park Pavilion, Carle Park between Douglas and Garfield Avenues, Urbana.

Mrs. Margaret Carle Morris donated the land for the park, Urbana's first, in 1909. Mrs. Morris was the widow of Albert G. Carle, a farmer and stockman; and James H. Morris, a retired farmer. Mrs. Morris made the donation a condition of her sale of land to Dr. C. L. VanDoren, which later became the VanDoren addition to Urbana. In 1919 the first plan for the park was designed.

Mrs. Morris also gave $10,000 for the building of a two-story Italian Renaissance style pavilion. Interest on park investments paid for the $1,000 fountain to the immediate west of the pavilion. The pavilion and fountain were restored in the early 1960's; however, they are popular targets for vandalism. Currently, the pavilion is covered with graffiti and the fountain is broken. The park district does not have the funds for repair at this time.

Houses facing the park have larger front yards, giving the area an even more parklike setting. This effect is caused by the placement of sidewalks closer to the street pavement rather than next to the street right-of-way.

Carle Park is a neighborhood park of historic significance as Urbana's first and one of its loveliest. It is deserving of recognition and preservation.

LANDMARK HERITAGE AWARD

(Anniversary of significant date or recent accomplishment of National Register or landmark quality building): Harwood-Solon House, 503 South State Street, Champaign.

The Harwood-Solon House was built between 1865-69 by William C. Barrett, a local real estate developer and builder of Barrett's Block, a large commercial building at the corner of Neil and Main streets. Mr. Barrett apparently had 503 and its near twin at 507 S. State Street built as investment properties. 507 State, the James R. Scott house, was demolished in 1913 for the "new" Champaign High School (Edison Junior High).

The Harwood-Solon House recently underwent a restoration of the badly deteriorated exterior wood details — cupola, cornice, porch — that should help preserve this striking house for many years.

OUTSTANDING HERITAGE CONTRIBUTION AWARD

(Residential, Commercial or Institutional property which has accomplished recent renovation or restoration and is architecturally and/or historically sig-
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significat): Holy Cross Roman Catholic Church, 409 West Clark Street, Champaign.

The Exaltation of the Holy Cross parish was established in 1912 to serve all Catholics west of the Illinois Central tracks who were formerly part of St. Mary's parish. The first building, on the southwest corner of Clark and Elm, served as church, school and convent; the first mass was held in that building in December, 1912. The present church building, on the southwest corner of Clark and Prairie, was begun in November, 1920; the formal dedication was held on December 10, 1924. The building was designed by Zachary T. Davis of Chicago in the Romanesque style; English Brothers of Champaign served as the general contractor.

In 1983, the building underwent a $400,000 renovation. Many changes had been made over the years, some of which were the result of fires occurring in 1954, 1958, and 1961. Harry Breen, a local artist, served as artistic and interior design project director. Special care was taken to preserve and highlight the Romanesque design, the stained glass, particularly the rose windows, the Baptist Chapel mural and the Blessed Sacrament Chapel mural. The Cararra marble communion rail was carefully dismantled and reused. Rededication of the church was held on January 31, 1985.

The renovation efforts not only served to restore and maintain a significant piece of architecture, but also brought the facility into compliance with specifications of the Second Vatican Council.

RESIDENTIAL HERITAGE AWARD

(Residence of architectural and/or historical significance): Wee Haven, 1509 West Park Avenue, Champaign.

This house is a rare example of Prairie style architecture in Champaign-Urbana. It was designed in 1924 by Charles Saxby Elwood, who worked for several architects of Frank Lloyd Wright's circle. Elwood published a number of designs for small homes and cottages that were meant to be inexpensive, efficient and convenient. One such design, "Wee Haven," was published in the February, 1924, issue of Fruit, Garden and Home (now Better Homes & Gardens).

Wee-Haven

"Most of the things you've longed for are in it. All the closets are mothproof - lined with fragrant cedar. There's a linen closet. Even the living room has its closet. Add a pretty convertible daybed and you have a third sleeping room when you need it. Tiled floor, recess tub, a mirrored wall cabinet and hot water when you want it - these are bath room joys. Heat in winter that's always adequate yet wonderfully economical - balmy air, healthfully moistened - is provided. The kitchen's nearly perfect. The refrigerator and supply cupboard above are served from outside - there is a folding ironing board, cabinets at the sink, a gas range with "fireless" oven, a scientific kitchen cabinet.

"You'll love the pretty dining nook with its casements. It seats four-five if you add a chair. In the living room the fireplace is simple yet charming - a shrine where flames dance and summer sunshine's reborn. And in summer, scented air will flood the room thru the outswung casements."

Champaign's "Wee Haven" was built in 1925 by Walter and Helen Swearingen. Although the interior has been altered over the years, the exterior contains all the elements of a Prairie style house and the detailing of Charles Elwood.

INSTITUTIONAL/COMMERCIAL AWARD

(Institutional or commercial building of architectural and/or historical significance): Illinois Power Building, 41 East University, Champaign.

Like many cities, Champaign and its sister city, Urbana, were served by an electric street railway which provided an efficient means of transportation of both passengers and goods before the automobile became common. The cities' system began in 1859 but was not electrified until 1890 when the line was bought by William McKinley, who then owned the electric power plant in Urbana. His merger of the railway and the utility was known as the Danville, Urbana and Champaign Railway, Gas and Electric Company. McKinley, who later served as an Illinois State Senator, envisioned a scheme to connect several local railroads to form a continuous route from Danville on the east, Peoria and Bloomington on the north and St. Louis via Springfield and Decatur - on the south. McKinley formed a syndicate to organize or acquire streetcar systems in many other cities in Illinois and Indiana and then built power plants to service them with electricity and gas. His scheme became the Illinois Traction System, and the first portion of inter-city track was laid in 1902 between Champaign and St. Joseph.

Between 1902 and 1911, most of McKinley's scheme had become reality. In 1904, negotiations were made for an entrance to St. Louis. After six years of work, the McKinley Bridge link was opened to service on November 10, 1910. As service increased and more destinations added it became obvious that a new station was needed for the hometown terminal.

In 1913, the old station in Champaign was abandoned for the new Illinois Traction Building located at the heart of the City. The new building, which combined a depot with offices for the system, was designed by local architect Joseph Royer. Royer graduated from the University of Illinois in 1895 and
located his office in Urbana. He practiced throughout the Midwest, specializing in courthouses, schools and churches. He designed many buildings in Urbana, Champaign and the University of Illinois, including the Champaign County Courthouse and the Urbana High School.

The Illinois Traction Building represents the "new" ideas about commercial building design popular around the turn-of-the-century: restrained ornament, expressed structural piers and large window openings. The distinctive red brick in combination with the white-glazed terra cotta (which is rare in the Champaign-Urbana area) creates a striking addition to the Champaign streetscape.

After a series of mergers, the Illinois Traction System became the Illinois Terminal Railroad in 1928; a consolidation of most of the central Illinois railroad systems. At the heart of each of these systems was the need to generate power for operation. In 1923, the utility operation was renamed the Illinois Power and Light Company. By 1930, the Illinois Terminal Railroad had become a subsidiary of that company, which sold the railroad in 1936 to National City Lines, a Chicago-based holding company. In one month, streetcar service was phased out in favor of busses. The last streetcar ran on November 11, 1936. Interurbans continued to run, but the station was moved from the downtown location to one at the Wabash Railroad Station until service was ended in 1955.

In 1937, the utility became the Illinois-Iowa Power Company and continued to maintain offices in the Illinois Traction Building on University Avenue. In 1947, the utility became the Illinois Power Company, which continues to operate as the generator of power for this area of Illinois today. In March, 1985, Illinois Power vacated the Illinois Traction Building for new offices in Urbana.

As a remnant of an important element in the development of Central Illinois transportation and commerce and for its architectural quality for this community and the surrounding area, the Illinois Traction Building is deserving of recognition.

(Taken from the National Register nomination prepared by Michael A. Lambert.)

ENVIRONMENTAL HERITAGE AWARD

(Accomplishments for the environment or other sites such as commercial, residential, or farm outbuildings, bridges, streets, roads, alleys, signs, vehicles. Significant dates, persons, or events in northeast Illinois history can also be acknowledged): Gifford Mills, Penfield, Illinois.

This grain elevator has been in continuous use since the 1890's when it was built for the Penfield Grain and Coal Company by the Union Iron Works of Decatur, Illinois. It is an excellent example of wood crib construction; the exterior is sheathed in galvanized sheet iron. It has a 30-40,000 bushel capacity.

The Gifford Mills elevator is a symbol of the rural town in the midwest, a landmark of the rural area. This particular elevator has a quality of woodwork and crib construction style that is quickly fading from the landscape.

A University of Illinois architecture class under the direction of Dr. John Garner recently won an award from the Landmarks Preservation Council of Illinois for their measured drawings of this elevator.

SPECIAL HERITAGE AWARD

(Outstanding contribution to the preservation community): William H. Schmidt, Champaign.

A posthumous award was given to William H. Schmidt who was one of the founding members of PACA and served as vice-president. He was very active in the preservation community and spent many long hours researching important buildings and people for PACA's use. Bill was a main force in the organization of walking and house tours and was a vital component of the Cattle Bank Restoration Committee. His expertise is sorely missed.

HISTORIC HOUSE PROGRAM

The Historic House Association of America, established in 1978 to service the interests and concerns of individuals who own old and historic houses, has been incorporated into the National Trust's Office of Preservation Services. The Trust's new Historic House Program will identify individual National Trust members who own historically or architecturally significant houses.

The Historic House Program will gather and maintain information on members' houses for future projects. Program plans include seminars and gatherings for individuals who own historic houses, such as special sessions at this year's National Preservation Conference in Seattle, and informational guides for old house owners on such topics as estate planning, insurance and security. Future plans also include developing a national historic homeowners' insurance program, as well as cooperative agreements with other national and international historic house organizations.

For further information, contact Susan Shaw, Director, Historic House Program, National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1785 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036 (202) 673-4025.
NEW & RENEWING MEMBERS
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Rose Geier-Wilson  Ruthann Nichols-Nine

PROPOSALS SOUGHT
The College of Agriculture at the University of Illinois is seeking proposals to remove the Hunter Farm House from their property located outside of Sidney. This two story frame vernacular farm house has natural oak woodwork and is in excellent condition; however, it will require total modernization. The removal process can be either by demolition or by moving the house “in total” off the property. PACA is actively seeking parties interested in moving the house and will offer advice and assistance in that endeavor. For more information contact PACA or Douglas Bauling, College of Agriculture (333-0242).

ARTS COUNCIL OF CHAMPAIGN COUNTY
709 West University Avenue
Champaign, Illinois 61820

PACA Newsletter
Published by the Preservation and Conservation Association of Champaign County.
President: Gregory Hargus
Vice President: Hermenia Kruidenier
Treas.: Norman Bailey
Exec. Director: Karen Lang Kummer
359-0114

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

Membership Application P.A.C.A.

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORY:

INDIVIDUAL
☐ Adult ........................................... $10.00
☐ Student (½ 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 ........................ $50.00

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

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

☐ RENEWAL  ☐ NEW MEMBERSHIP

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