



## **Florida Trust for Historic Preservation Announces** **2013 11 Most Endangered Historic Sites**

The Florida Trust for Historic Preservation announced the 2013 *11 Most Endangered Historic Sites* at the 35<sup>th</sup> Annual Statewide Preservation Conference in St. Augustine. Each year, the Florida Trust for Historic Preservation announces Florida's Eleven Most Endangered Historic Sites as part of the Annual Statewide Preservation Conference. The Most Endangered Historic Sites program is designed to increase the public's awareness of the urgent need to save Florida's neglected or threatened historic resources, and to empower local preservationists and preservation groups in their efforts to preserve Florida's rich history. The sites are not listed in a rank order.

### **Chapman School, Apalachicola**

The existing structure was designed and built from 1929-1934 by E.R. James in the Art Deco style with Egyptian Revival influences. The Chapman School is one of the few twentieth-century structures contributing to the Apalachicola Landmark District, and serves as a prime representation to the industry, architecture, economy, and culture of the post-World War I period in Florida. Threats to the Chapman School include misuse and neglect, lack of funds to support rehabilitation, and new development by the county and the school board.

### **Coconut Grove Playhouse**

Built in 1926 and designed by architects Kiehnel and Elliott, and remodeled in 1955 by architect Alfred Browning Parker, the Coconut Grove Playhouse is a noteworthy expression of the Florida Land Boom that has survived to the present day. The theater is currently owned by the state who is now seeking buyers from the private sector after offering first refusal it to educational institutions, city, and county. The immediate threat is that the structure has been left open and unattended subject to vandalism and the elements.

### **Lewis Spring House, Tallahassee**

The Lewis Spring House was built in 1954 and was designed by renowned architect Frank Lloyd Wright for the Lewis family. Built in the hemicycle design style, it is one of the few examples of this style still remaining. It is also the only remaining house designed by Wright in the state of Florida. Current threats to the property are from nature, limited funds which have prevented necessary maintenance to prevent damage from aging, and the proximity to I-10.

### **Miami Woman's Club, Miami**

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Built in 1925-1926, the Miami Woman's Club was designed by famed architect August Geiger at the North Bayshore Drive location first donated by Henry Flagler. The Club's U-shaped Mediterranean Revival style building wraps around a central courtyard overlooking Biscayne Bay. The Miami Woman's Club building was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1974. While the exterior of the structure has been well-maintained, the interior is in a current condition that renders the building unusable.

### **Historic YMCA Building, St. Petersburg**

Built in 1925, the YMCA Building is historically significant and retains its architectural integrity as an excellent example of the Mediterranean Revival style. Many of the building's interior features and motifs remain, such as a tile pool, cypress beams with historic stenciling and a tiled lobby, Mayan carved stone fireplaces and staircases. The YMCA Building was listed in the St. Petersburg Register of Historic Places in October 1991 and is eligible for listing on the National Register based upon its historical associations and architectural significance. The structure is under threat of demolition and redevelopment of the site.

### **Downtown Palatka**

In the 1850s, Palatka was a major center for transportation, freight trade, cypress lumber, and citrus sales before becoming a tourist haven in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The city continued to grow in reputation as the "Bass Capital" of the world, drawing avid fishermen and outdoor enthusiasts. The city provides many components that contribute to a vibrant downtown: an active Main Street program, mixed-use zoning, building improvement and façade grant programs, and county and professional buildings downtown. Despite those incentives, several buildings downtown are on the point of collapse; many have severe roofing or structural problems associated with years of neglect. The economic downturn coupled with a growing vacancy rate downtown is having a dire impact on this waterfront city which continues on the list from last year.

### **Orange City Historic District**

The Wisconsin Company, a lumber company from Eau Claire, Wisconsin, purchased land in 1874 in Southwest Volusia County that later became Orange City. Two members of that company, Dr. Seth French and Hugh H. DeYarman, played an important role in the development of the city. Mr. DeYarman would eventually become the first mayor of Orange City. The hotel he established in 1875, the DeYarman House Inn, is still standing. In 2004, the Orange City Historic District was added to the National Register of Historic Places. The district includes more than 200 historic buildings and runs along the Florida Black Bear Trail, a national scenic byway. The Volusia County Historic Preservation Board has been working with local advocates to preserve many of the historic sites within the district. Some of the sites in the district have suffered neglect or hurricane damage and a potential rezoning along the 17/92 corridor in favor of redevelopment could adversely impact the historic district.

### **Milton Historic District**

Milton is a small town in Florida's panhandle located on the banks of the Blackwater River and known for its role in Florida's timber industry. The major threat to the district is the proposed widening of the main street through town from two lanes to a four-lane capacity. The widening would call for the demolition of some of the district's oldest and most significant buildings and would have a detrimental effect on the revitalization process currently underway. The Milton Historic District is continuing on the 2012 list from last year to encourage preservation advocates and transportation officials to collaborate on a solution that will protect the town's historic resources.

### **The Munroe House, Tallahassee**

Built in 1904, the Munroe House was home to one of the founding families of Tallahassee. It is locally designated and a contributing building to the Park Avenue National Register Historic District. In the face of extreme financial hardship, the owner LeMoyne Center for the Visual Arts

is liquidating many of its assets. In the eyes of the property owner, the Munroe House, which sits on prime downtown real estate, would be more appealing to potential buyers if the year-long delay for a demolition permit is initiated now to pave the way for new construction. The loss of the Munroe House would not only mean the loss of a significant local and state historic site, but it would further erode the historic district. At this time, no demolition plans have been submitted to the Architectural Review Board. By raising awareness of the plight of Munroe House, the owner hopes find a potential buyer who might spare it from the wrecking ball.

### **Bellevue Biltmore Resort and Spa, Belleair**

The Bellevue Hotel was built by Henry Plant in 1897 to boost tourism along Florida's west coast. The building is noted for its outstanding architectural features, with its unique multiple gables of different sizes, green sloped roof, exterior white siding, and extensive hand crafted woodwork. Visitors have included U.S. Presidents, British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, Duke of Windsor, Joe DiMaggio, Babe Ruth, Thomas Edison, Henry Ford and many Hollywood stars. During World War II, the hotel served as lodging for servicemen stationed at MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa. After that time, the hotel began to decline due to competition from newer, more modern motels. In 1991 Mido Development purchased the hotel and made many repairs. Between 1997 and 2004 a new owner attempted to restore common areas and guest rooms. The building was closed in 2009 following hurricane damage. Rehabilitation is certainly feasible as the economy is improving. The present owners purchased the property a year ago. They decline to either sell or rehabilitate the property, but have requested a demolition permit to enable construction of up to 180 condominiums.

### **William Camp House, Ocala**

Enterprising businessman William Camp built this house in 1903 in what became Ocala's first historic district. Currently, the Camp House is threatened due to the lack of maintenance and is in danger of being demolished. The current owner of the property brought the Camp House before the Ocala Historic Preservation Advisory Board (OHPAB) on December 1, 2011 for an application to demolish the building. The Board decided to delay any action for a period of 90 days to gather more information on the condition of the building. OHPAB can deny demolition for a period up to 365 days after which time if the building has not been purchased, the current owner will be able to demolish the building.

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*Founded in 1978, the Florida Trust for Historic Preservation is a non-profit organization of more than 1600 members and is a statewide partner with the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The mission of the Florida Trust is to promote the preservation of Florida's unique cultural, historical and architectural resources through advocacy, education, and property stewardship. For more information: [www.floridatrust.org](http://www.floridatrust.org)*

*The Annual Statewide Preservation Conference is generally held during the third full week in May and provides an opportunity to showcase the host community's historic preservation success stories with workshops, tours and events. The conference targets professional preservationists, preservation activists, design review commission members, architects, planners, historic homeowners and many others from the cultural and historical fields.*