



NEWS RELEASE

For Release *May 12, 2016*

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**Florida Trust for Historic Preservation Announces
11 Most Endangered Historic Sites for 2016**

The Florida Trust for Historic Preservation announced the 2016 *11 Most Endangered Historic Sites* at the 38th Annual Statewide Preservation Conference in Tallahassee. The conference, themed *Historic Preservation: A Capital Idea!* celebrates the 50th anniversary of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966.

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.



400 Block of Central Avenue including Central National Bank and Pheil Hotel & Theater, St. Petersburg

The historic setting and appearance of the 400 Block of Central Avenue is one of an early 20th century "main street" commercial district in the urban center of St. Petersburg. The plat of the city was made in 1888 by engineers of the Orange Belt Railroad. The structures along the 400 block of Central Avenue have changed constantly over time. Before 1918 the majority of the buildings on Central were one to three story vernacular style masonry or wood frame commercial buildings containing retail shops on the ground floor and a mixture of hotel rooms or offices on the upper floors. The Central National Bank Building when it was built in 1911-1912 was the largest and most architecturally sophisticated structure along Central Avenue. During the 1920s Florida Land Boom many of the pre-1918 structures were demolished and replaced with new buildings of a dramatically larger size that were of masonry construction and

designed in more sophisticated architectural styles. The adjacent Pheil Hotel, at a height of 11 stories was the tallest building in the city and the nearby Snell Arcade Building, the West Coast Title Company Building (City Multi-services bldg.), and the Florida Theater Building, also built in this era, were about 80' to 100' high, thus creating the highest density land use in the city. The present-day appearance of the area around the Central National Bank Building has not changed significantly, many of its pre-1945 commercial buildings survive. The north side of the 400 block of Central with the Kress and Snell Arcade buildings is largely intact in its historic appearance. The south side of the 400 block of Central Avenue lies on the southern edge of the Downtown St. Petersburg Historic District (8PI10648) which was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2004.



Coconut Grove Playhouse, Miami

The Coconut Grove Playhouse is located on the northwest corner of Main Highway and Charles Avenue in one of Miami's oldest areas. 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 and leased by

Miami-Dade County and Florida International University. The building is vacant and not listed for sale at this time. The immediate threat is that the structure has been left open and unattended subject to vandalism and the elements. Left unattended the building will continue to deteriorate rapidly.

Little Havana/Riverside, Miami

One of the most significant urban enclaves in the US, Little Havana / Riverside has always been a safe haven for immigrants and symbolic of the American melting pot. This large neighborhood features a veritable treasure trove of architectural typologies and styles. These types are unique in their local adaptations and further enhanced by the physical vernacular interventions by various ethnicities that have occupied this neighborhood. Currently, there are two main threats to the Little Havana / Riverside neighborhood: up zoning, which will detrimentally affect neighborhood character; and endangered scattered resources with no legal mechanism in place for the establishment of thematic multiple resource nominations. The creation of historic districts and thematic multiple resource nominations will save Little Havana. Recently, the city established a small historic district in East Little Havana which will help future chances of broadening the district.



Elliot Plantation, Merritt Island

Elliot Plantation is located on a 2,585 acre site within Canaveral National Seashore and Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge in East Central Florida. It is the southernmost 18th Century sugar plantation in the United States and dates to 1763 when Florida was acquired by Britain from Spain. The Plantation ruins contain a sugar works factory, rum distillery, slave village, overseer's house, canals, and other agricultural remnants. The sugar mill itself is significant because it is the only 18th Century sugar mill in Florida made of native stone. Also within the area of the sugar mill is a Pre-Columbian mound.

The site has been reviewed by the Southeast Archaeological Center for the National Park Service, which considers it to be among the most significant and well preserved African-American landscapes because it was totally built with slave labor and the remains of their residences are evident. Because of its age and context they state: "It is our opinion that this property represents one of the most significant properties in North America."

In December 2013, the FAA issued a notice that SpacePort Florida had filed a permit application to operate a commercial launch facility called Shiloh Launch Complex in the general area of Elliot Plantation. At scoping hearings held by the FAA in February 2014, Space Florida released maps showing its proposed location, which includes a portion of Elliot Plantation.



Florida Keys Reef Lighthouses

The Florida Keys Reef Lighthouses are an important piece of Florida's history. The six reef lighthouses are Carysfort Reef (6 miles south of Key Largo), Sand Key (7 miles southwest of Key West), Sombrero Key (5 miles south of Marathon), Alligator Reef (4 miles south of Islamorada), Fowey Rocks (6 miles east of Key Biscayne) and American Shoal (5 miles south of Sugar Loaf). Built between 1852 and 1880, these lighthouses are made of cast iron with a skeletal design to let as much wind and waves pass through in order to withstand hurricanes. These lighthouses were constructed to warn ships of the hazardous reefs below the surface.

The Florida Keys Reef Lighthouses are currently owned by the US Coast Guard. The Florida Keys Reef Lights Foundation is applying for ownership of all but Fowey Rocks, which has been transferred to Biscayne National Park. With the Coast Guard facing budget cuts and many boaters relying on GPS for navigation, the proper upkeep of the lighthouses has been lacking. All lighthouses now have corrosion showing, and vandals leave the doors and windows open causing damage on the inside (Fowey Rocks has been secured now). The need to save these lighthouses as pieces of history now doubles to protect the reef. Should the lighthouses be left to decay the structures would fall on the reef causing damage that cannot be repaired.



Florida's Submerged Native American Sites, Statewide

Florida's rivers hold evidence of Native Americans in the form of stone points and tools made and used by the people who first called our state home. These artifacts come from upland sites that erode into rivers, and also from intact sites that once were on dry land but now are submerged.

The Florida Historical Resources Act (Chapter 267 of the Florida Statutes) states that these artifacts located on state sovereignty submerged lands belong to the people of Florida and protects them from unauthorized disturbance or collection. Recently, these artifacts and the sites they are associated with have come under threat by an effort to change the state law to allow the private collection of artifacts from state submerged lands. These artifacts would then disappear into private collections and may end up for sale on the antiquities market.



Old Leon County Jail-George Firestone Building, Tallahassee

Tampa-based architect M. Leo Elliott designed the building and T.A. Monk of Tallahassee was the building contractor. Although additions and alterations to the original structure occurred over time, the building's Art Deco design is still visible. The flat roof with small coping, and the horizontal grooves over the vestibule give the building its horizontal emphasis. Also accentuating the horizontal lines are the rectangular windows that appear to be continuous around some corners. The concrete walls, originally painted white, were common to the Art Deco style and originally contrasted with black Carrara glass window panes etched with silver aluminum.

Significance of the site: The Leon County Jail is significant architecturally and there are few examples of Art Deco in Tallahassee/Leon County. More important is the association of the building, functioning as the Old Leon County Jail, with the Civil Rights Movement. The Old Leon County Jail is threatened by development pressure. The building was determined to be ineligible for the National Register due to the various alterations and additions and the City of Tallahassee has no current interest in local designation. Therefore, there is no protection or review afforded to the property in the redevelopment process. The City of Tallahassee has issued a request for proposal for the redevelopment of the site, increasing the immediacy of the threat. There is significant community support for the preservation of the Old Leon County Jail, hopefully listing it as one of Florida's 11 Most Endangered Places will continue to raise awareness about the threat to this significant historic property.

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 owner will be able to demolish the building. The owner is planning on appearing before the OHPAB this May.



William J. Howey House, Howey-In-The-Hills

This Mediterranean Revival masterpiece was built in 1925 by William John Howey, using a female architect Katherine Cotheal Budd. The house has twenty rooms and 6,000 square feet on almost 4 acres of land in the town that bore the owner's name. The masonry home is comprised of two stories over a basement and is surrounded by walled gardens that also enclose several outbuildings including the family mausoleum where Mr. Howey and his family are buried. The property has been placed on the National Register of Historic Places #83001426.

The property is significant for many reasons. It is a high style example of Mediterranean Revival architecture, was built during the land boom, was designed by a female architect, is associated with notable individuals and remains largely in original condition in its original setting. The home features extensive cast stone work on the exterior, while the interior features, stained glass, a magnificent entry hall with marble walls and a marble staircase topped by a domed ceiling, several carved stone fireplaces, extensive use of pecky cypress, custom ironwork, original sconces, period bathrooms, a hidden staircase and large basement safe, just to name a few highlights. The site is threatened by foreclosure proceedings and remains vacant with no maintenance and exposure to vandalism. The threat from deferred maintenance is significant as there are broken windows and leaky roofs. There is strong community support for the preservation of this site but it is still in private hands through the long foreclosure procedures.

Willoughby Gregory Plantation House, Quincy

This plantation house constructed between 1843 and 1847, remains as one of Gadsden County's few antebellum houses and is a companion house to the Jason Gregory, (Willoughby's brother) house at Torreya State Park. The house is almost a perfect square, 3 bays wide on its front & rear elevations and 4 bays wide on the sides. It has a typical Georgian plan with a center hall running the depth of the house, upstairs and down, flanked by 4 rooms, 2 to a side, for a total of 8 rooms. Above it all is a hipped roof with a two-story Victorian portico. One remaining Doric column on the enclosed rear porch clearly indicates the Greek Revival styling of the original building. At the building's rear a modified framed kitchen remains connected. Interior detailing is simplified Greek Revival particularly noted in the house's eight matching fireplace mantles.



The house was maintained through its ownership by Imperial Nurseries, serving as its headquarters but subsequent leasing to another company, Berry Nurseries, led to its abandonment. The wood Victorian two story portico is rotting and there are signs of roof leaks. Further compounding the problem of deterioration is the recent news of Berry's closing which will certainly result in further deterioration while Imperial seeks a buyer for the property. Its significance to Florida and its territorial history could be lost through ignorance even though the building is separately listed (#83003520) on the National Register of Historic Places.



Victor Lundy's South Gate Community House, Sarasota

Built in 1956 and designed by renowned architect Victor Lundy from the Sarasota School of Architecture era, the building is divided into two main sections, a large rectangular auditorium and an arced, connected service wing. The structure of the auditorium is exposed laminated wood beams supported by wood columns at two sides with floor to ceiling glazing. The other two structural walls are brick. The arced wing is constructed of brick walls with a distinguished stepped in and out pattern. The roof is lower than the auditorium wing and Victor Lundy provided interesting details connecting the two wings.

There are a number of issues of concern at this time: ponding on the flat roof, rusting reinforcements in the arced brick wall causing the brick to crack and crumble. The air conditioning systems have been modified and added onto over the years and these alterations have affected the aesthetics of the building considerably.

In 2014 a group came together to create the non-profit, IRS 501(c)4 Foundation to Preserve Victor Lundy's South Gate Community House, Inc. The Foundation's next goal is to raise funds for a comprehensive study of the building by a team of architects and engineers with historic preservation expertise. With their help, the Foundation can then take the next steps to prioritize funding for future projects to preserve this special building.

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

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.