

LANDMARKS ILLINOIS

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www.landmarks.org

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ILLINOIS UNDERGROUND RAILROAD SITE AMONG “TEN MOST ENDANGERED HISTORIC PLACES”

SPRINGFIELD, IL. Apr. 2 – Burlingame House, 11930 Crown St., Eden (Randolph County) was named to the list of “Ten Most Endangered Historic Places” for 2008 by Landmarks Illinois, a statewide advocacy group. The announcement was made today in the Press Room of the State Capitol.

“Illinois has approximately 500 sites that were part of the Underground Railroad system,” said David Bahlman, president of Landmarks Illinois. “Protecting them from ruin is a way to honor the memory of those who struggled for freedom during this difficult period of our nation’s history.”

Located 50 miles northwest of Carbondale and just east of Sparta, this two-story brick Greek Revival-style house dates to 1849. A. A. Burlingame, a local farm pump manufacturer, lived here through the 1850s and offered his residence as a refuge to escaped slaves along what became known as the Underground Railroad. Burlingame’s efforts to shelter and transport runaway slaves north as part of his business trips are an integral part of Illinois’ antebellum history.

The house is an historic resource within the National Park Service’s proposed Mississippi Delta Region African-American Heritage Corridor. Vacant and for sale, the residence is in dire need of rehabilitation.

The purpose of the “Ten Most” list is to focus attention on sites threatened by deterioration, lack of maintenance, insufficient funds, or inappropriate development. Since the program’s inception in 1995, 143 properties have been identified on the endangered list, calling attention to statewide resources in need of preservation. Less

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than 20% of these sites have been lost to demolition, but many remain in need of preservation.

This year's list also includes a parochial school constructed by Civil War veterans, Chicago's first riverfront plaza, early examples of American skyscrapers, a windmill-themed sandwich shop in Central Illinois, a Mid-Century modern building designed for the Navy, and two renowned sporting facilities: U of I's Assembly Hall and Chicago's Wrigley Field.

Landmarks Illinois is celebrating its 37th year as a statewide advocacy and education organization. The not-for-profit works with citizens and communities throughout Illinois to preserve, protect and promote historic places through advocacy and education. In addition to the Ten Most Endangered list, the organization also sponsors the Chicagoland Watch List and the Richard H. Driehaus Foundation Preservation Awards.

EDITORS:

The complete list of the Ten Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois, including photos, can be downloaded from our website: www.landmarks.org through the "Press Room" link.

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