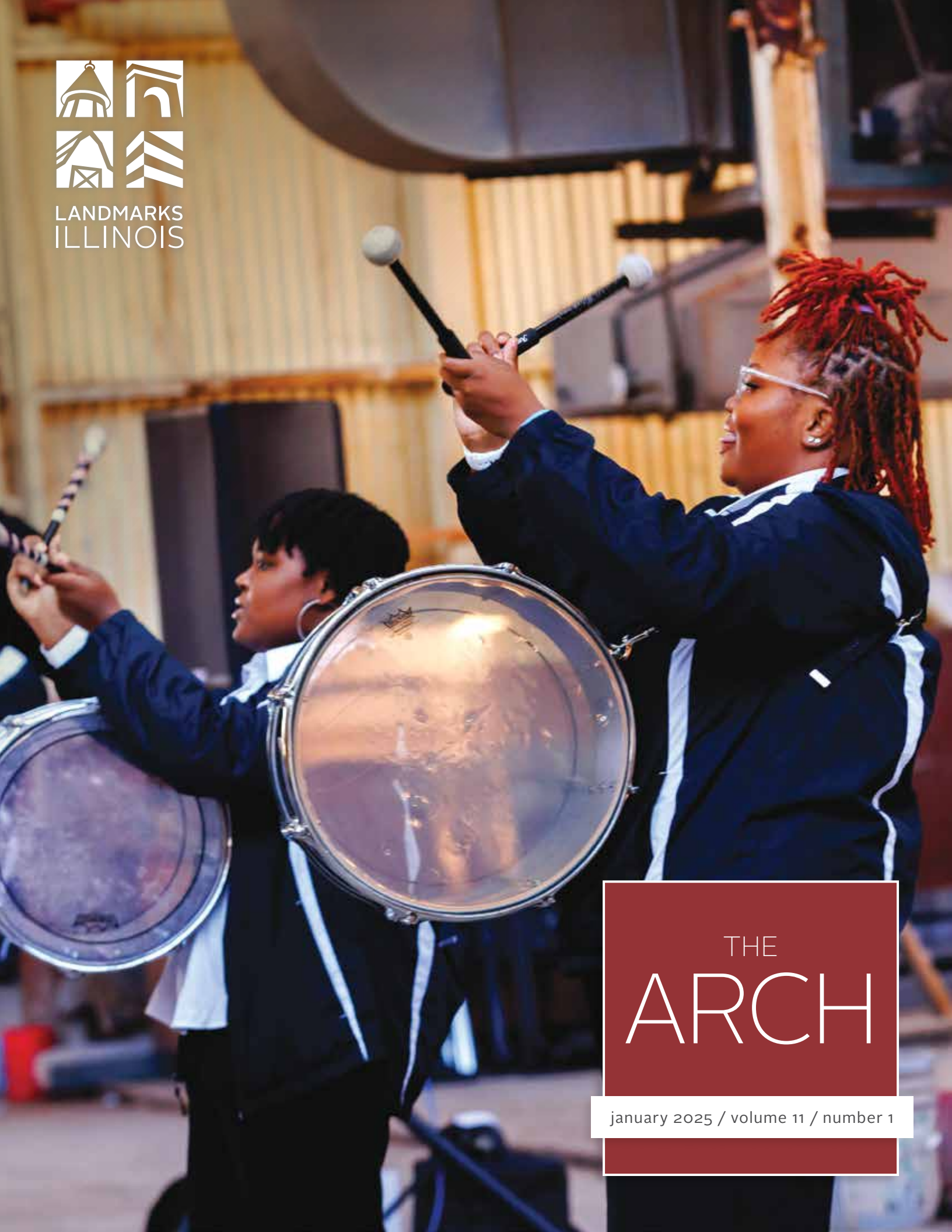




LANDMARKS
ILLINOIS



THE
ARCH

january 2025 / volume 11 / number 1



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january 2025 / volume 11 / number 1

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Cover: BandWith's Drumline performs at a groundbreaking ceremony on October 10, 2024, marking the start of an adaptive reuse project at the former Loyal Casket Building in East Garfield Park. Landmarks Illinois provided support through its Reinvestment Program Loan Fund to help BandWith with the project. Read more about it on pages 2-3. (Credit Sarah Larson)

Above: Plant Chicago will reuse a former firehouse in the Back of the Yards neighborhood. Courtesy Plant Chicago.

All photos by Landmarks Illinois unless otherwise noted.



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FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO TO OUR MEMBERS

Change is one of life's contradictory constants. Uncertainty can be met with resolve and anxiety. Resolutions are absent from beginnings, other than those we set as intentions. As Landmarks Illinois embarks on our 54th year as an organization, we find ourselves in a notable period of change.



Staff transitions are the most significant of these changes since our team implements the mission that you support as members. Membership Manager Marija Rich retired in October after working at the organization for over 35 years. Read more about Marija in this issue, and you will understand the impact of her work. At the same time, we welcome two new professionals to the team: Kenna Hogan and Amber Delgado. Kenna steps into the Development Department while Amber will help manage our Easements Program and add capacity to the Advocacy Team.

Our dynamic team, which supports people saving places across Illinois, is now 10 people strong. We miss Marija deeply, yet she always saw the value in new viewpoints, learning how to do things better and with greater impact. Our staff now has both newer and tenured voices, an exciting turn that will continue to make us more effective and relevant to the expanding preservation community.

Internally, this dynamic period includes finding ways to reflect our guiding principles in our workflow. We are embracing technological tools to help manage workloads. With the completion of our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) action plan, we will be updating our organizational priorities to shape accessible, fair and useful preservation practices. Our Transformational Plan is now underway, ensuring that we are strategic in serving our community's needs and moving preservation forward.

Throughout the pages of this newsletter, you can read about positive changes occurring at longtime endangered sites, including Altgeld Gardens School Building C in Chicago, the Broadview Hotel in East St. Louis and the Harley Clarke Mansion in Evanston. We will celebrate these and other Illinois preservation success stories at our 2025 Preservation Forward event on March 6. (Turn to page 10 for details.)

“As we enter a New Year, Landmarks Illinois remains dedicated to breaking down the barriers to preservation in our state.”

Despite all the changes we are undertaking, we see persistent challenges for preservation: vacancy, negligence and an overall lack of vision, leadership and funding continue to affect our built environment. We touch on some of these in this issue of The Arch. As we enter a New Year, Landmarks Illinois remains dedicated to breaking down the barriers to preservation in our state. Please support our mission: Make an end-of-year gift through our Annual Appeal (there's still time!) Find the Donate link on our website, Landmarks.org. Don't forget to follow our social media channels to stay informed about how changes at the government level affect preservation.

Wishing you resilience and success in 2025,

Bonnie McDonald

Bonnie McDonald

ANNUAL CORPORATE SPONSOR CORNER

Landmarks Illinois thanks its Annual Corporate Sponsors. To learn more about this program, please contact Bonnie McDonald at bmcdonald@landmarks.org.

GAME CHANGER

International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers/
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LANDMARKS ILLINOIS LOANS SUPPORT THE REINVESTMENT IN OUR CHICAGO NEIGHBORHOODS

BY **Kaitlyn McAvoy** DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS

In 2024, Landmarks Illinois provided two loans through its Reinvestment Program Loan Fund to support the reuse of historic places in Chicago. In July, Landmarks Illinois closed a \$500,000 loan to BandWith for the adaptive reuse of the former Loyal Casket Building in East Garfield Park. BandWith is a nonprofit providing access to the performing arts in Chicago's underserved communities. This fall we gave a \$300,000 loan to Plant Chicago for its restoration and reuse of a historic former firehouse in the Back of the Yards neighborhood.

Plant Chicago is a nonprofit dedicated to creating local circular economies where resources are reused, recycled and shared within a community to minimize waste. It operates out of a historic former firehouse, built in 1908, at 4459 S. Marshfield Ave. Plant Chicago's space provides a place for the community to drop off home items like kitchen scraps for composting, old batteries to be recycled and unwanted books and puzzles to be swapped and enjoyed by others. It also offers educational programming, a retail market selling food, beverages, home and garden goods, and other locally made products.

The organization is renovating the historic firehouse to improve accessibility and make it more energy efficient. The building currently has electric vehicle charging stations and solar panels on its roof. The loan from Landmarks Illinois will help support predevelopment costs associated with the renovation project.

"Plant Chicago is renovating a former Chicago firehouse to be a center for circular economy programming," said Jonathan Pereira, Executive Director of Plant Chicago. "When complete, the project will be over 90 percent decarbonized, be ADA



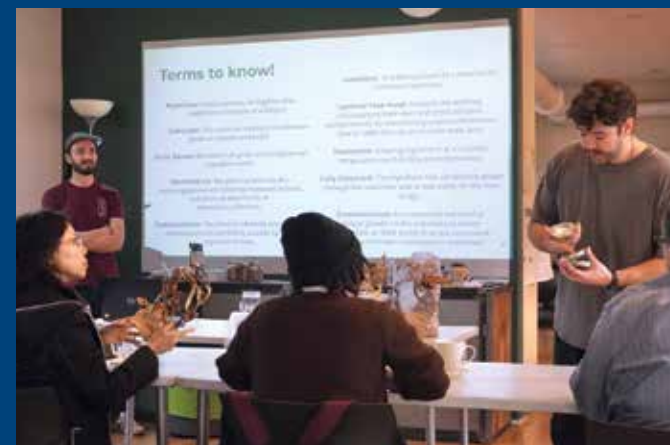
accessible and include a shared-use indoor farm. The project is relying on a lot of pledges of public funding and this loan from Landmarks Illinois will ensure that we have cash on hand to pay for work in case of delays. We are lucky to have partners like Landmarks Illinois that are willing to be flexible with a nonprofit like us and think out of the box!"

Both BandWith and Plant Chicago serve their community and aim to provide equal access to programs and services. **BandWith** currently provides its free programming to 7-18-year-olds in donated space it has

outgrown. Once transformed, the large former casket company building will serve as the organization's headquarters and provide ample space for free youth dance, drumline, sound engineering, instrumental and choral ensemble programs. It will also feature retail and communal spaces for partner organizations to use.

BandWith broke ground on its reuse project in October and expects to complete it later this year. The loan from Landmarks Illinois helped BandWith cover critical project planning costs, including design fees and energy efficiency and operational planning.

"The generous loan from Landmarks Illinois allows BandWith to move forward with creating a permanent home, giving us room to grow and continue providing high-quality arts programming to strengthen and amplify East Garfield Park's presence as part of Chicago's rich cultural landscape," said Annie Palomino, BandWith's Founder and Executive Director. "The project will contribute to the well-being, growth and vibrancy of Chicago's West Side, cementing our commitment to being a lasting presence in the lives of the families we serve." ■



Clockwise from far left: In October, BandWith broke ground on reusing the former Loyal Casket Building in East Garfield Park. Credit Sarah Larson

Annie Palomino, BandWith's Founder and Executive Director, at the groundbreaking ceremony in October. Credit Sarah Larson

Dulce Morales, Land Steward and co-founder of Cedillo's Fresh Produce, during Plant Chicago's Mercado de Intercambio in October. Dulce accepts LINK, LINK match dollars, and Plant Chicago coupons, making fresh and organic produce accessible for residents. Courtesy Plant Chicago.

Plant Chicago will reuse a former firehouse in the Back of the Yards neighborhood. Courtesy Plant Chicago.

Education Manager Tom Knapp with Plant Chicago's first Urban Sustainability Program with 20 young people from across the city. Plant Chicago worked with After School Matters and the Greater Chicago Food Depository to make this program successful. Courtesy Plant Chicago.

Plant Chicago Education Manager Tom Knapp and Avi Kazen (co-facilitator) lead a Mushroom Growing class. Courtesy Plant Chicago.

The former Loyal Casket Building. Credit Patrick Lentz.

Interested in learning more about the Landmarks Illinois Reinvestment Program or applying for a loan?

The program is currently focused on offering loans to preservation initiatives in historically disinvested neighborhoods on Chicago's South and West Sides. The more affordable and accessible lending terms of our program help bring preservation projects closer to completion. Nonprofit and for-profit organizations, building owners and renters working to preserve a historic or significant Illinois building, structure or site are welcome to apply for Landmarks Illinois Reinvestment Program loans.

Visit www.Landmarks.org/reinvestment-program to learn more.

● **EUGENE S. PIKE HOUSE** Beverly, Chicago

In September 2024, Illinois Sen. Willie Preston announced that he had secured \$1.5 million in state funding for the Eugene S. Pike House, included in our 2022 Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois. Funding will support the vision of the Eugene S. Pike House Foundation to turn the Cook County Forest Preserve property into the Pike House Community Cultural Center in partnership with the Beverly Area Arts Alliance and the Forest Preserves. The Eugene S. Pike House Foundation continues to fundraise to support the remainder of the project. Once complete, the Pike House Community Cultural Center will offer arts programming and artist residency space.



● **CAIRO HISTORICAL PRESERVATION PROJECT**

The Cairo Historical Preservation Project (CHHP), a nonprofit formed to protect and preserve the Southern Illinois town's historic resources, made great strides in 2024. These include partnering with the National Park Service to develop a commemorative site for Cairo's Civil War Contraband Camp, receiving a Saving Black Churches grant from the National Trust for Historic Preservation and successfully listing Ward Chapel A.M.E Church in the National Register of Historic Places. In addition, drawing from oral histories and community archives, CHHP is collaborating with Landmarks Illinois Board Member and University of Illinois Professor Magdalena Novoa, Regional Advocacy Manager Quinn Adamowski, the Cairo Public Library and Southern Illinois University-Carbondale to develop Cairo's African American Heritage Trail. This project, supported by the Illinois Innovation Network, will lay the groundwork for a long-term partnership that furthers local efforts and develops innovative strategies to preserve the history and legacy of Cairo and its African American community.

Credit Cairo Historical Preservation Project



● **SCHOOL BUILDING C** Altgeld Gardens, Chicago

In August 2024, the Chicago Board of Education voted to transfer ownership of School Building C at Altgeld Gardens to People for Community Recovery (PCR), which plans to reuse the building as the Hazel M. Johnson Institute for Sustainability and Environmental Justice. Landmarks Illinois included School Building C on our 2021 Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois and has since supported PCR's efforts to acquire and reimagine the 1944 school building, which has been vacant for more than 30 years.

Credit Sean Reilly



● **STEPHENS BROTHERS OPERA HOUSE** Watseka

The advocacy campaign to preserve the 1884 Stephens Brothers Opera House in Watseka secured a major victory in September when the city council voted to prioritize the reuse of the building and issue an RFP for repairs. Berglund Construction conducted a pro bono assessment of the building in 2021 that indicated the building was structurally sound. Watseka Mayor John Allhands led an effort for city acquisition of the property in 2022 and has been building community support for its reuse since. Local nonprofit organization Watseka Community Renewal is leading a community engagement process and working to identify necessary resources for rehabilitation. In addition to its historic use as an Opera House, the downtown anchor served as a J.C. Penney's and other department stores for Watseka residents. Community members have voiced interest in seeing the building become a community space and restaurant.

Credit Carla Waters



● **VARSITY THEATER BLOCK** Evanston

The Varsity Theater Block in Evanston, included in our 2018 Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois, has been rehabilitated as a mixed-use development including 33 apartments. The building once faced demolition to make way for a new 37-story tower. The rehabilitation project retained the exterior form and appearance of the historic theater and incorporated architectural details into interior units. It also included the reimagining of adjacent Bookman's Alley as a pedestrian plaza. The building opened to residential tenants in August.

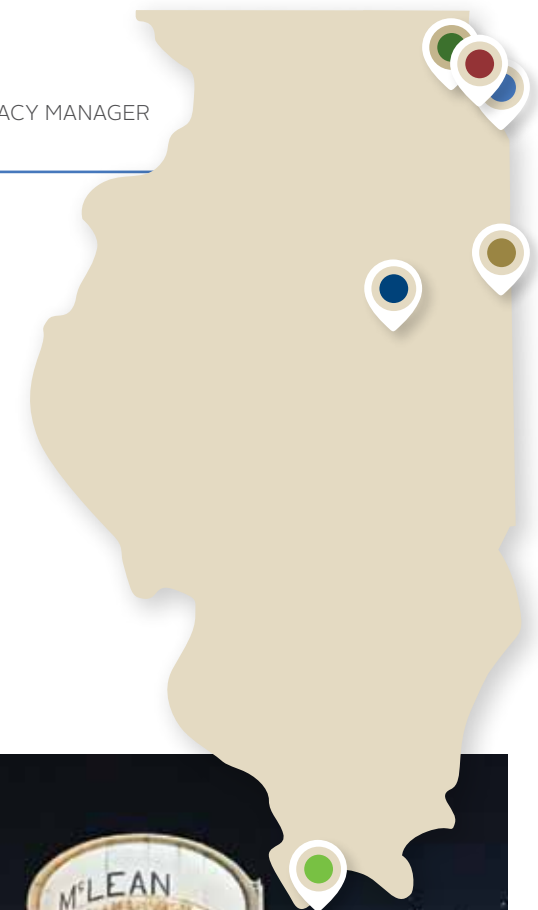
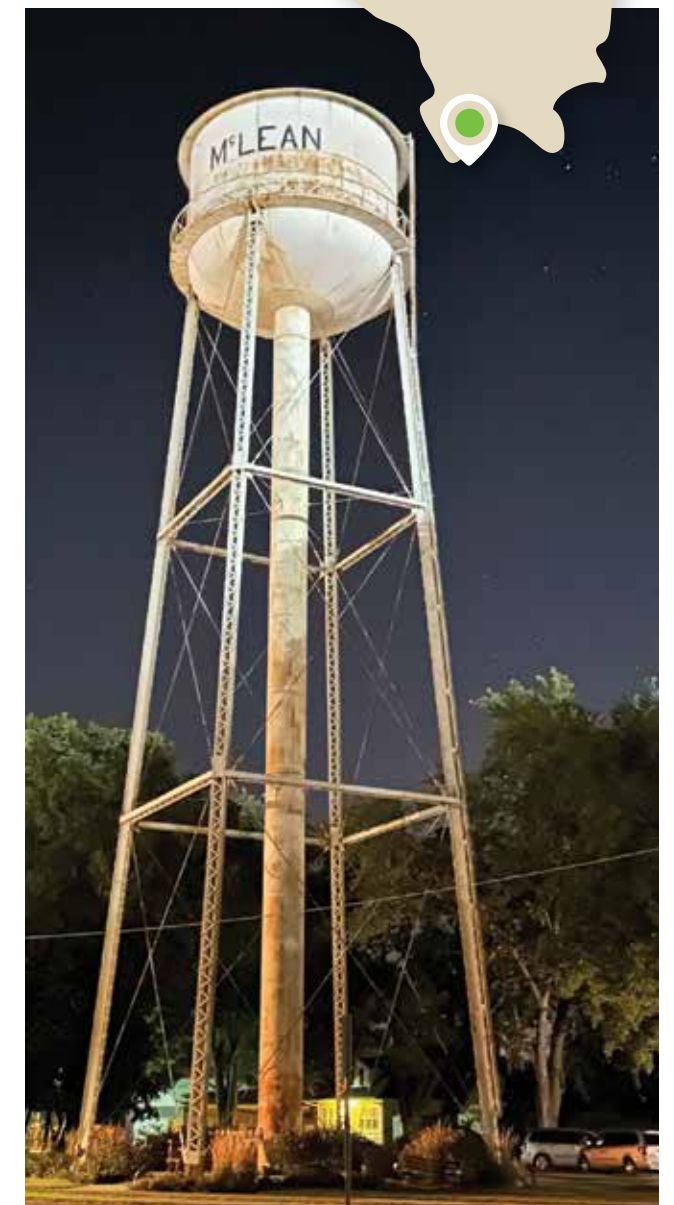
Courtesy Cambell Coyle



● **MCLEAN WATER TOWER**

The former 1935 McLean water tower will be preserved thanks to a successful yearlong advocacy effort led by local nonprofit, CORE of McLean. The Village of McLean intended to remove the historic landmark, but CORE built local support for the tower's preservation and collaborated with Landmarks Illinois, Illinois Route 66 Scenic Byway and the Illinois Route 66 Association to change village leader's minds. In September, the group acquired the tower from the village for \$1. CORE and other partners are fundraising and applying for grants to restore the tower and install a mural at the top in advance of the Route 66 Centennial in 2026.

Credit CORE of McLean



REVOLUTION WORKSHOP Pullman
Landmarks Illinois Timuel D. Black, Jr. Grant Fund
for Chicago's South Side Grant Recipient



Revolution Workshop (RW) connects individuals from Chicago's under-resourced neighborhoods with the construction industry through sector-specific pre-apprenticeship training, job placement, support services and targeted community outreach. Over the past five years, RW has served close to 400 individuals from Chicago's South and West Sides — neighborhoods that have faced decades of disinvestment, segregation and economic decline. With an 85% job placement rate for graduates of the pre-apprenticeship program, the nonprofit has been instrumental in lifting families out of poverty and preparing participants with the skills needed to thrive in various sectors of the construction industry.

RW is helping revitalize the disinvested neighborhood of Pullman by renovating a rowhouse that will be sold back to community members, creating affordable housing. The rowhouse, gifted to RW by the Chicago Neighborhood Initiative, has long been vacant but remains a fine example of the architectural style consistent throughout the Pullman Historic District.

Landmarks Illinois awarded a grant for \$10,000 to RW through the Timuel D. Black, Jr. Fund for Chicago's South Side to support the rehabilitation of the Pullman rowhouse's facade, including a historic replica porch, historic replica windows, a historic replica door and masonry work. The work will be completed by skilled tradespeople in the field in conjunction with RW's Social Enterprise, who will serve as the general contractor and perform some work with the assistance of transitional employees. ■■

BY **Suzanne Germann**
DIRECTOR OF REINVESTMENT

\$107,375
total grant funds
awarded in 2024

26 grants awarded
in support of
saving places
in Illinois

4 grant programs
through which
Landmarks Illinois
administered its
grants in 2024

LEWIS ROUND BARN
Mendon



Preservation Heritage Fund
Grant Recipient

In 1911, Charles E. Lewis was inspired by the three round barns built several years earlier for the College of Agriculture at the University of Illinois. Lewis was impressed by the efficiency of the round barn structure but needed a much larger version for his large herd of cattle and hogs. Lewis hired noted area carpenter Lambert Huber as architect, engineer and building foreman to construct the expansive barn using local lumber. Construction wasn't completed until 1914. The Lewis family used the barn into the 1990s when they determined the best way to preserve the structure was to donate it to the Adams County Olde Tyme Association.

The association, with the assistance of local Amish carpenters, dismantled and moved the barn from the Lewis family farm to land near the Adams County Fairgrounds, where it joined a one-room schoolhouse, print shop, a log cabin and a windmill. The barn is now a museum featuring agricultural equipment and is dedicated to educating the young and old about agricultural heritage.

Landmarks Illinois awarded the Adams County Olde Tyme Association a \$5,000 Preservation Heritage Fund Grant to replace the roof of the round barn. ■■

ALT SPACE CHICAGO
Austin

Barbara C. and Thomas E. Donnelley II
Preservation Fund for Illinois
Grant Recipient



Alt Space Chicago's "alt space market" is a functional art installation that transforms abandoned spaces into a communal free market where members of the community can give and take, thus creating a temporary communal shared economy. Credit Jordan Campbell.

Alt Space Chicago is an artist-led nonprofit dedicated to revitalizing communities through art, culture and sustainable practices. It challenges conventional narratives by offering innovative, eco-conscious artistic platforms that inspire connection, transformation and long-term impact. Alt Space recently acquired the 100-year-old former Austin Bank building in Chicago's Austin neighborhood where it plans to open its new HOMECOMING Space.

Landmarks Illinois awarded the organization a \$2,500 Donnelley Preservation Fund Grant to host a series of "HOMECOMING Design Sessions" where residents, artists and local leaders can contribute ideas for reimagining the interior and exterior spaces of the bank building. These sessions will include interactive workshops, visioning exercises and design feedback events, all facilitated by an experienced community planner and a preservation architect. The grant will help create a collective vision for the HOMECOMING Space that prioritizes both preservation and community relevance. ■■

SHASTID HOUSE Pittsfield
Preservation Heritage Fund
Grant Recipient



The timber-frame John Shastid House was constructed in 1838. The house is an early and well-preserved example of this construction method, which is characterized by squared beams connected by mortise and tenon joints.

Before moving to Pittsfield in 1836, John Greene Shastid and his wife Elizabeth lived in New Salem, where Shastid was a friend and neighbor of Abraham Lincoln. Lincoln was known to visit the Shastids whenever he came to Pittsfield on legal business as a circuit rider.

The home remained in the Shastid family until 1927. It was later modified with several additions and used as a rental property. After sitting vacant for many years, the building was donated to the Pike County Historical Society in the early 1990s and a renovation of the property in 2002 removed non-original additions and materials. The house is now on the Looking for Lincoln trail in Pittsfield and Pike County with a wayside sign with a "talking house" provision to tell the story of Lincoln and the Shastids. The house is open to the public on weekends from May through October and by appointment.

The Historical Society will use the \$5,000 Preservation Heritage Fund grant from Landmarks Illinois to replace the roof of the Shastid House. ■■



JOLIET STEEL MILL MAIN OFFICE BUILDING

A Preventable Loss

BY **Quinn Adamowski** REGIONAL ADVOCACY MANAGER

The Joliet Steel Mill Main Office building, an iconic structure nestled near the I&M Canal and Old Joliet Prison, once served as the gateway to a bustling industrial campus. After the mill's closure in 1983, the building stood as a testament to Joliet's rich industrial heritage. However, years of neglect and disrepair led Landmarks Illinois to include it on our 2021 Most Endangered Historic Places list. U.S. Steel replaced the roof in 2022 but then allowed the rest of the building to fall further into decay. On September 7, 2024, after 41 years of abandonment and vacancy, the irreplaceable structure was destroyed in a preventable blaze.

The demise of the Main Office building is not unique. Owned by governments, corporations and individuals, vacant and abandoned buildings are ubiquitous across Illinois' urban, suburban and rural landscapes. At a minimum, these ignored structures eventually become victims of demolition by neglect. At worst, they become magnets for vandalism and crime, leading to blight that erodes the quality of life for nearby residents, businesses and other building owners. When they are not appropriately maintained by their owners or when they are targeted by unsavory forces, they can become eyesores or hazards to communities, transforming them from assets to liabilities.

The reasons behind such neglect are complex, ranging from a lack of creative thinking to the lack of coordinated efforts between public and private entities. Often, these structures are overlooked due to immediate concerns like business attraction or housing development when, in fact, they can be leveraged to achieve both.

Communities should not accept and exacerbate the status quo by ignoring the problem of vacancy and abandonment and continuing to allow historic properties to meet the same fate as the Joliet Steel Mill Main Office building. Our historic places hold untapped potential for revitalization, economic development, and environmentally friendly, sustainable community renewal. Local

governments should prioritize their preservation and recognize the multifaceted benefits they offer. Indeed, in places like Jacksonville, Marion, Aledo and Petersburg, there is clear evidence that the prioritization of adaptive reuse of historic properties can have catalytic impacts on community development.

Historic preservation tax credits, tax abatement, façade programs and local incentives such as TIF help to incentivize redevelopment of historic properties with much success. However, these incentives do not resolve the larger dilemma of abandonment and vacancy. There are proactive actions that could assist in reversing the decades-long trend of buildings hopelessly deteriorating and being transformed into liabilities. They include:

- » The state should adopt legislation that requires all local governments to adopt building codes. Local governments need to enforce codes and ordinances to require owners to maintain their properties, including implementing fines and penalties for lack of action on properties.
- » The state should adopt legislation for commercial properties that is modeled after the Abandoned Housing Rehabilitation Act.
- » Government entities should prioritize identifying new uses for buildings they own before they vacate them, including engaging the community and hiring consultants to conduct adaptive reuse studies.
- » Illinois would benefit from an extensive network of landbanks and community development corporations that can acquire, manage and repurpose vacant and abandoned properties.
- » Federal and state historic preservation tax credits need to become more accessible.

By recognizing the untapped potential of historic properties and implementing proactive measures, towns can transform these buildings from burdens into assets, revitalizing their communities and fostering sustainable development. 🇺🇸

Above, left to right: Joliet Steel Mill Main Office destroyed by a fire in September 2024. Credit Candace Johnson-Wheeler.

Joliet Steel Mill Main Office building pictured in 2021.

“Our historic places hold untapped potential for revitalization, economic development, and environmentally friendly, sustainable community renewal.”

UPCOMING
EVENT

MARCH 6, 2025

2025 PRESERVATION FORWARD

Join us for an unforgettable evening as Landmarks Illinois proudly presents its signature fundraising event of the year: **Preservation Forward**, hosted at The Old Post Office in Chicago. This year's celebration will spotlight our 2025 Influencers—trailblazers who are redefining preservation to be more inclusive, accessible and impactful. The event, which attracts more than 800 professionals and community activists from across the state, gives guests ample opportunity to network with like-minded people who are passionate about preservation and our built environment.

For details and sponsorship opportunities, visit [Landmarks.org/events](https://landmarks.org/events). Reservations go on sale in January!

2025 Landmarks Illinois Influencers

- **Chris Enck**, Architect and Preservationist
- **Elizabeth and Ethan Finkelstein**, Founders of Cheap Old Houses
- **Chicago Women in Trades**, Represented by **Jayne Vellinga**, Executive Director



UPCOMING
EVENT

FEBRUARY 20, 2025

LANDMARKS ILLINOIS and the INTERNATIONAL MASONRY INSTITUTE ANNUAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION TRAINING

8:30 a.m. – Via Zoom
Free, Registration required
Registration link at landmarks.org



LANDMARKS
ILLINOIS

UPCOMING
EVENT

JANUARY 22, 2025

SKYLINE COUNCIL'S TRIVIA NIGHT!

6:00-9:00pm – Great Central Brewing Company
221 N Wood St, Chicago, IL 60612

Landmarks Illinois' Skyline Council will host its Trivia Night at Great Central Brewing Company. Gather your team of six and put your knowledge to the test! Topics will include architecture, history, geography, sports, pop culture and Landmarks Illinois' "Most Endangered" list. Compete for prizes awarded to the top three teams. The dynamic Gregory Dowell will return as Master of Ceremonies. Don't miss this fun opportunity to showcase your trivia skills and support Landmarks Illinois! Reserve your spot or secure sponsorships now!
www.landmarks.org/events/skyline-council-events/



“Who we are following on TikTok!”

Landmarks Illinois knows it is imperative to engage a wide variety of people from all generations in our preservation work, and we aim to do so, especially on social media. Certain audiences love storytelling and learning the histories of our built environment while others want to see how organizations like ours are tackling climate change and making preservation more accessible. Both these audiences encourage us to create a more sustainable and equitable future through our preservation work. Here are a couple of accounts on TikTok (yes, Landmarks Illinois is now on TikTok) that create inclusive and enjoyable preservation-focused content. If you see something cool on social media, make sure to share it with us!

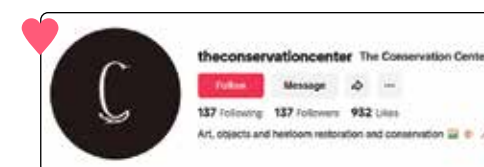
@pastpreservation

Justin is dedicated to the preservation of headstones, grave markers and historical sites



@theconservationcenter

Features art, objects and heirloom restoration and conservation



WELCOME NEW STAFF MEMBERS!



Kenna Hogan

DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANT
Kenna Hogan has joined the Landmarks Illinois team as its new Development Assistant. In her role, she looks forward to building relationships with the members and donors of Landmarks Illinois that make our mission possible.



Amber Delgado

**EASEMENTS AND ADVOCACY
ASSOCIATE**

Amber will serve as LI's Easements and Advocacy Associate, where she will provide support to the Director of Reinvestment with the historic preservation easements program and the advocacy managers with inquiries across the state of Illinois.

Read more about Kenna & Amber and how to connect with them on our staff webpage, www.Landmarks.org/staff.



LONGTIME STAFF MEMBER MARIJA RICH RETIRES

After 35 years serving Landmarks Illinois, staff member Marija Rich has retired. Landmarks Illinois hosted a small but joyous celebration to honor and celebrate Marija on October 25 at the Murphy Auditorium in Chicago. Current and former staff and board members and her closest colleagues, friends and LI supporters raised their glass to toast Marija, thanking her for her decades of service to the organization and wishing her a happy retirement.

Marija first joined the staff in 1989. Throughout her tenure, she managed the organization's membership program and annual appeals. For many years, she also led the Preservation Snapshots Lecture series. In addition to being Landmarks Illinois' information technology administrator, managing office computers and donor software, she was the staff and board's go-to source for institutional knowledge about the organization. Marija was an absolute pleasure to work with. She brought a calming presence and sophistication to the staff that will be greatly missed. We wish Marija all the best in retirement and thank her for her decades of service!

Marija Rich at her retirement party with Landmarks Illinois Director of Reinvestment Suzanne Germann. Credit David T. Kindler.

CONTRIBUTIONS

THANKS TO OUR SUPPORTERS

APRIL 19 – OCTOBER 27, 2024

Through membership dues, contributions, event sponsorship and grants, Landmarks Illinois is able to preserve, protect and promote Illinois' historic buildings and sites. The Board of Directors, volunteers and staff sincerely thank all our supporters for their contributions.

\$10,000 - \$25,000

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Juan Moreno, JGMA Architects

\$5,000-\$9,999

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