

Endangered Eight

Historic Preservation Alliance of Arkansas's 2015 list of
Arkansas's Most Endangered Places



*and
One Worth
Watching*



Thank you

Special thanks to 2015 Most Endangered Places Selection Committee Members: Tom Wing, Chairman, Fort Smith; Catherine Barrier, Little Rock; Dr. Tom DeBlack, Russellville; Tommy Jameson, Little Rock and Dr. David Ware, Little Rock.

Thank you to members of the Board of Directors Jamie Brandon, Jodi Barnes and John Greer for participating in the announcement.

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About the Most Endangered Places Program

The Historic Preservation Alliance of Arkansas began Arkansas's Most Endangered Places program in 1999 to raise awareness of the importance of Arkansas's historic properties and the dangers they face through neglect, encroaching development, and loss of integrity. The list is updated each year and serves to generate discussion and support for saving the state's endangered historic places. Previous places listed include the Johnny Cash Boyhood Home and the Dyess Colony Administration Building in Dyess, Arkansas Mound Sites Statewide, Rohwer and Jerome Japanese-American Relocation Camps in Desha County, the William Woodruff House in Little Rock, Magnolia Manor in Arkadelphia, The Thompson Building in Hot Springs, Centennial Baptist Church in Helena, the Donaghey Buildings in Little Rock, the Saenger Theatre in Pine Bluff, the twentieth century, Rosenwald Schools throughout the state, St. Joseph Home in North Little Rock, Forest Fire Lookouts statewide, the Hantz and Durst Houses in Fayetteville, the Historic Dunbar Neighborhood in Little Rock, Carleson Terrace in Fayetteville, the Woodmen on Union Building in Hot Springs.

Properties are nominated by individuals, communities, and organizations interested in preserving these places for future Arkansans. Criteria for inclusion in the list includes a property's listing or eligibility for listing in the Arkansas or National Register of Historic Places; the degree of a property's local, state or national significance; and the imminence and degree of the threat to the property.

The Historic Preservation Alliance of Arkansas was founded in 1981 and is the only statewide nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving Arkansas's architectural and cultural heritage. The mission of the Alliance is to build stronger communities by reconnecting Arkansans to our heritage and empowering people to save and rehabilitate historic places.

2015 Endangered Eight

Bondi Brothers Building, 1904
104 Madison Street, Clarendon, Monroe County

Brittnum Rooming House, 1913
1325 W. 12th Street Little Rock, Pulaski County

Downtown Pine Bluff Commercial Historic District, 1850-1958
Hotel Pines, c. 1910, 5th and Main Streets
Masonic Temple, c. 1902, 117 W 4th Street
Pine Bluff, Jefferson County

First Presbyterian Church, 1912
2nd and Hempstead Streets, Nashville, Howard County

Lee Theater, 1940
3819 W. 13th Street, Little Rock, Pulaski County

Old Springfield Road Bridge (Cadron Creek Bridge), 1874
Faulkner and Conway Counties

State National Bank of Foreman, c. 1940
111 Schuman Street, Forman, Little River County

James Horn Williams House (Howard-Williams House), c.1849
2908 East CR 570, Luxora, Mississippi County

One Worth Watching

Worthen Bank Building (KATV Building), 1928
401 Main Street, Little Rock, Pulaski County

Bondi Brothers Building, 1904

104 Madison Street, Clarendon, Monroe County



In 1904, merchants and clothiers Ed and Ike Bondi erected a two-story, 12,000-square-foot structure in the heart of Clarendon, the seat of Monroe County and a prosperous Delta timber and plantation service town. The Italianate structure, with flat stone lintels, is located on the town square, facing the county courthouse. It is a substantial reminder of these successful merchants and community builders and one of the few buildings of this size and significance remaining in Clarendon; most others have been razed, due to economic changes and public indifference.

The Bondi Brothers building was once already slated for demolition and “brick harvesting” but since its nomination, has been purchased by the Moore family of Clarendon. This represents a positive development, but ensuring the Bondi Building’s preservation will require resources, perseverance and imagination. The structure is for the most part sound but the parapet is deteriorating, as is brickwork on the long exterior wall. Debris from the parapet has impacted the building’s full-width awning. Inside, debris and evidence of partial update remodeling work coexist. The roof sorely needs repair or replacement. As important, the building will need to find a tenant; saving this impressive structure is only a first step.

Brittnum Rooming House, 1913

1325 W. 12th Street Little Rock, Pulaski County



Originally constructed in 1913 as a single family residence, by 1939 this large two-story framed house was converted to a boarding house catering to African American blue collar workers. In the mid 40's, 50's, and 60's, the tenants worked in hotels, businesses and schools in the downtown areas and at Little Rock Central High School and the nearby United Friends of America hospital. The Brittnum Boarding House has a long history of diverse tenants, including Howard L. Love, the former executive director of the Urban League of Arkansas, who has shared his vivid recollections living at 1325 West 12th and the vibrancy of the overall community upon first arriving from Marianna to start a successful career as a community organizer. During the 1960s, the boarding house is reputed to have been "home" to several African American professional baseball players from the Arkansas Travelers rosters. The last tenants moved out in 2002.

Time has not been kind to the old boarding house; it is currently vacant and boarded up. The full-width front porches and the east wall, particularly, have deteriorated. Despite this decline and having been re-sided and otherwise modified over its decades of service, the Brittnum boarding house has retained much of its original character. At this point, its future is unclear. The current owner has commissioned a study to evaluate possibilities for rehabilitation and use but the building has been declared "Unsafe and Vacant" by the City of Little Rock and at the May 5th City Board meeting, an ordinance to condemn it was passed, but the emergency clause was not, giving the owner 30 days before the building can be demolished. Nevertheless, it is included on this year's listing because it represents a class of structures about which questions of significance, integrity and rehabilitation potential are unanswered; bulldozer blades and wrecking bars guarantee that they will remain so.

Downtown Pine Bluff Commercial Historic District, 1850-1958

Pine Bluff, Jefferson County



In recent years, the decline of the historic commercial district of Pine Bluff has attracted attention in historic preservation circles and in the public eye. The recent literal collapse of several buildings in the onetime business blocks has highlighted the dire condition of much of the heart of what was once a vital center of industry, trade and society. While many fine buildings survive in the district, two in particular highlight both the dire conditions and the preservation potential found there: the Hotel Pines and the Masonic Temple. Both were standout structures when new and deserve a better fate than serving as destinations for recreational adventure trespassers.



The **Hotel Pines**, built in 1912, was the largest and finest hotel in Pine Bluff and the center of the city's social life for over 50 years. It was designed by George Richard Mann, the first architect of the Arkansas Capitol; it is a six-story U-shaped brick building with classical ornamentation outside and a rich interior featuring marble and stained glass.

The Hotel Pines operated continuously for fifty-seven years. When passenger rail service to Pine Bluff ended in 1968, the hotel lost its primary clientele, closing in the spring of 1970. Since then, several attempts to revive and reclaim the majestic hospitality have foundered; today, the Hotel Pines is neglected, unoccupied and once more for sale. Broken skylights allow rain into the lobby; its decorative ceramic tile floor is still in good condition but the ornamental plaster deteriorated and fallen. The concrete roof and its covering are in good shape, except where water collects at the corners; this has resulted in seepage damaging the corner rooms. The building is structurally sound but declining in details

Downtown Pine Bluff Commercial Historic District, *cont.*



Pine Bluff's African American **Masonic Temple** was begun in 1902 and, when it was completed two years later, stood as the largest building in downtown Pine Bluff. It served as a crossroad of African American society and commerce for the city; the building's cornerstone is a virtual "Who's Who" of Arkansas's most notable African American citizens. The Masonic Temple housed a number of businesses and professional offices, including the Unity Bank And Trust Company, established in 1902 as Arkansas's first African American-owned bank.

The former Temple is a four story masonry building, praised in 1909 by no less than Booker T. Washington as a visible symbol of African American enterprise. Its exterior, which features an ornate entrance framed with columns and pediment, is largely intact

apart from a dormer destroyed in a 1954 fire. The former Temple is currently unoccupied but not derelict; its owner has maintained utilities and performed upkeep when possible. Moisture infiltration, mainly from broken windows, poses the most immediate threat to the structure. The owner seeks to rehabilitate it with the help of partners, creating a mixed-use development to help stabilize and reinvigorate the heart of Pine Bluff.



First Presbyterian Church, 1912

2nd and Hempstead Streets, Nashville, Howard County



The First Presbyterian Church is a textbook example of Victorian “Carpenter Gothic” architecture. This building features exposed interior Gothic beams, clear-finished bead board ceilings, wainscoting, a four-square Victorian bell tower, High Gothic bronze door hardware, heart pine flooring and intricately cut Florentine glass windows. It served the community as a church from 1912 - 1975 and then as a museum, but has been vacant for years.

First Presbyterian’s current condition vividly illustrates how rapidly and in how many ways a well-built structure can deteriorate. A door has been damaged by rain and is no longer usable. Holes have appeared in the wooden siding, soffits and vents; runoff from the roof has worsened siding holes and damaged the plank underlayment and framing. Wooden fascia, window and bell tower trim has either rotted in place or broken off. The former church’s climate control, and electrical systems are in need of wholesale updating.

The building has not, however, been left utterly alone in decline. Plywood covers the damaged entry doors and empty window frames, while tarpaulins cover patches of rotted siding. A new roof was installed about a decade ago, with new flashing to partially direct rain runoff. Inside, the wooden floors are tired but mainly sound, and much of the church’s original woodworking and ecclesiastical furnishings remain.

In 2014, friends of the old church formed the Howard County Historical Society. Its goal is to preserve the building and reopen it as a local history museum and wedding chapel! Groundwork is under way, starting with cleanup, patching and painting. Fundraising has begun but historically-faithful restoration is neither quick nor inexpensive; even with volunteer labor committed, much tangible support from the Nashville community is needed to ensure that First Presbyterian’s future is assured.

James Horn Williams House (Howard-Williams House), c.1849

2908 East CR 570, Luxora, Mississippi County



During the early 1840s Tennessean James Horn Williams visited today's Mississippi County, scouting properties on behalf of his planter father. What he saw apparently pleased him; in 1849 he purchased 480 acres, on which he built a residence. Williams became one of the leaders of the area; he served in both the state House and Senate, was a justice of the peace and was very active in local school, church and Masonic activities.

The property was sold to W.C. and Ruth Howard in the 1920's, and family farmed the surrounding acreage until recently. There is much Howard history available also through letters and photos; the last inhabitant, Carolyn Howard Hudson, passed away in 2014, and the house is, for the first time in over 100 years, vacant.

The present house, located just east of present day Luxora, is believed to incorporate Williams's original modest plantation house, much enlarged and modified and described in 1880 as "a fine residence." It is currently unoccupied, thus vulnerable to wildlife, the elements, vandals and scavengers. Already, the wrought iron porch supports have disappeared; the nominator, a descendant of the original occupants, predicts that the house will either be demolished by vandalism or salvaged by its owners, who cannot support the financial burden of rehabilitating it or maintaining it as a vacant property.

At this stage, more is known of the house's original occupants than of the structure itself. The Williams-Howard House awaits detailed architectural inspection and evaluation, but the possibilities of what may be found behind the vintage wood siding are enormous and exciting. A vintage plantation house facing the Mississippi across the levee road, the Williams-Howard House has a long, almost unbroken chain of occupation and ownership and is a preservation prospect ripe for the picking.

Lee Theater, 1940

3819 W. 13th Street, Little Rock, Pulaski County



The Lee Theatre is a one-screen movie theatre built in 1940, replacing an earlier, smaller theater on the same site. It was designed by Corgan & Moore Architects of Dallas to increase seating capacity while minimizing access and service areas. The shell was built of hollow tile and brick. Its Deco-influenced facade featured white stucco, glazed tile and three colored porcelain enamel copings. Inside, the hall was finished with simple metal trim and five shades of blue paint.

The theatre was configured to reflect the social mores of its day. It originally held approximately 700 guests on the first floor and 200 in a segregated balcony; its single box office was designed so that white and black patrons would not have contact with each other. One former African American patron remembers that unlike the movie house in the small Delta town where she grew up, the Lee's balcony was not enclosed with chicken wire.

The Lee Theater, and others like it, were popular in their day but the rise of multiplex theaters doomed most such across the nation, as in Little Rock. In 1949, there were nineteen "standalone" movie theatres and two drive-ins in Little Rock and North Little Rock. Today, the Lee is one of three former theaters remaining and the only one built before WWII. Its condition is appalling: the roof is partially collapsed, the interior has been gutted of its furnishings and exterior trim is compromised as well. On the other hand, walls and floor are sound and the interior retains traces of its original sheet metal decorations and the five shades of blue paint. Its current owners have slated the property for demolition but are somewhat open to other proposals. For those who would save the Lee Theater, twin challenges loom: to develop a plan that could make use of the structure in the context of the historic 12th Street district, and then to find the funds and partnerships to carry the planning into practice.

Old Springfield Road/ Cadron Creek Bridge, 1874

Springfield Vicinity, Faulkner and Conway County Line



The Springfield Bridge was built in 1874 by the King Bridge Manufactory and Iron Works of Iola, Kansas. It was shipped disassembled, then erected on footings built by a local mason. The bridge was an essential link in an historic route connecting Des Arc on the White River with Springfield, the onetime seat of Conway County. The Springfield bridge is a good example of the now-rare bowstring truss design, as well as the oldest surviving highway bridge in the state.

The bowstring truss bridge design was a trademark of the companies founded by Zenas King of Cincinnati, Ohio. He built his first bowstring prototype in 1859 and in the 1860s grew his business enough so that in 1871, he could incorporate in Iola, Kansas, then remove to Topeka in 1872.

The Springfield bridge is one of the few King bridges fabricated in Iola. The parts were delivered in 1872 and the stone piers constructed, but completion had to wait two years, due to lawsuits and questions of jurisdiction (the consequence of building on a county boundary). Finally, on July 21 1874 the Springfield bridge was declared done, at a cost of \$12,857.

In 1991, the road was relocated and the Springfield bridge bypassed. According to the Historic American Engineering Record, the bridge was originally intended to be left as a pedestrian bridge, as a recognition of its aesthetic appeal and significance. However a lack of a footpath incorporating the bridge, plus absence of maintenance, means that the bridge is today essentially abandoned. Since 1991, visitors' photographs reveal, the bridge has been allowed to deteriorate. The stonework abutments are failing and vandals set fire to the bridge timbers in 2013.

Preservation in place may not be an option, but there exist others. The bowstring design lends itself to being moved. A successful "save" of this bridge could therefore consist of either its restoration in place, or disassembly, refurbishment and relocation to a similar but more visible setting, preserving an historic engineering monument while placing it more firmly in the public eye.

State National Bank of Foreman, c. 1940

111 Schuman Street, Foreman, Little River County



Located a little ways south of the main road through Foreman, this modest stucco-fronted building remains as a tangible reminder of this community's vibrant history.

Today's Foreman was established when the Arkansas and Choctaw Railroad built its line from Ashdown to Arkinda in 1895. The railway cut through forests one mile north of the long-established town of Rocky Comfort, a onetime county seat; within a few years businessmen as well as residents of Rocky Comfort recognized the advantages of locating closer to the rail line. A new community began to grow, called "New Rocky Comfort."

When the U.S. Post Office opened there in 1900, it did not use the popular name for the community. Instead, designated the town as "Foreman", in honor of Ben Foreman, a prominent civic leader from Texarkana. Due to the "dual identity" of the town, mortgages and deeds carried a description of the town as being situated in New Rocky Comfort (Foreman). Finally in 1959, the Arkansas Legislature approved a measure officially changing the name of the town from New Rocky Comfort to Foreman.

The State National Bank building is believed to date from circa 1940, but its site was occupied by a bank as early as 1908 and the present structure may incorporate the fabric of the earlier one. If this is the case, the bank is one of the oldest surviving historic structures in downtown Foreman. It still contains many of its historic features including decorative tile, much woodwork (including the original teller stations and their crystal glass inserts) and two vaults: a conventional walk-in vault and a "pedestal" cash safe. The stucco-over-brick façade combines Art Deco and Mediterranean elements with a distinctive fenestration and appears to be in stable condition, but the rear wall has been breached, the hole partially blocked with plywood and the roof partially collapsed. The exterior brickwork is in very poor condition and threatened by the elements and vandalism.

One Worth Watching:
Worthen Bank (KATV) Building, 1928
401 Main Street, Little Rock, Pulaski County



In 1928, Little Rock's Worthen Bank occupied a prominent and respected place among Arkansas financial concerns. Founded in 1877, the Worthen Bank was a long-time mainstay of Main Street. Even as other banks and brokerages migrated to Louisiana Avenue in the 1920s, Worthen stood fast: its new home would be built at the corner of Main and Fourth Streets. To design the new building, Worthen Bank's directors turned to one of Arkansas's most respected and best-known architects: George Richard Mann, known for his work on the Arkansas Capitol, Pine Bluff's Hotel Pines and the Fordyce, Maurice and Ozark bath houses in Hot Springs.

The building is a mainly Neo-Classical design that incorporates some Art Deco ornamentation. Built of limestone over a steel frame, the Worthen Bank building's exterior is largely unaltered. The Worthen Bank occupied the property until 1969; KATV purchased the building that year and has occupied it since. This late design by one of Arkansas's most respected architects has remained in continuous use, hence has been maintained in good condition, since 1928. It has been modified internally but its exterior retains almost all of its historic elements.

KATV has discussed moving its operations from the Main Street building for several years. Moreover, the former Worthen Bank building site has been identified for a future expansion phase of the Little Rock Technology park development. Two alternate development plans have been circulated; one includes demolition of the Worthen Bank building, while the other slates it for preservation and adaptive re-use. No action is anticipated before 2019 on either alternative, affording preservation advocates a golden opportunity to work for the building's survival. Success in this effort might take the form of the current owners to donate a façade easement to protect the Worthen Bank Building in perpetuity, and for the Little Rock Tech Park to be developed in a way that respects its surroundings and the significant redevelopment efforts of others in downtown Little Rock.

Updates on previously listed properties

Thompson Building (2014 MEP)



The Thompson Building (1913), located in the Central Avenue Historic District in downtown Hot Springs, is a landmark Classical Revival building designed by renowned architect George R. Mann, the principal architect of the Arkansas State Capitol. It's elaborate detail and ornamented white terracotta façade extend to the top reach of the five story building. The Thompson Building was one of Hot Spring's most

prominent office buildings in the early 1900's, housing doctors offices in the upper floors and retail spaces below. The upper floors were later used for residential purposes. When the building was listed in 2014, the first floor is was used as retail space, but the top four floors had been vacant for decades. The long-time owner had been unwilling to invest to bring the upper stories in compliance with codes. Shortly after the 2014 MEP announcement, the building was sold to a local development group with a track record of rehabilitating significant historic landmarks in Hot Springs. Pre-construction work to adapt the building into a boutique hotel is well underway. Tax Credit applications have been approved and the year-long construction project is expected to begin in within a few months from this publication.

New Hope School (2011 MEP)



The New Hope School is one of the few two-room schools existing in Eastern Arkansas. It is an excellent example of the small, rural schools which were once vital to Arkansas's education system. The building was first built in 1903 as a one-room school house and was expanded to two rooms prior to 1930. School was held in the building for nearly half a century before consolidation moved the last class to Wynne. In 2013, work on the project was recognized with an award for Outstanding Preservation Craftsperson given to Danny Ball, Sr. for repair and rebuilding the windows. Thanks to grants from the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, the Arkansas Historic Preservation Foundation, local fundraising efforts and lots of volunteer time, this project is on target to be complete in 2015.





PRESERVE ARKANSAS

restore, redevelop, revitalize

The Historic Preservation Alliance of Arkansas works to build stronger communities by reconnecting Arkansans to our heritage and empowering people to save and rehabilitate historic places. Founded in 1981, Preserve Arkansas has been the statewide voice for historic preservation for three decades.

In person: 201 W Fourth Street (entrance on Maple Street between Fourth and Fifth), North Little Rock, AR

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Website: PreserveArkansas.org

Facebook: [Facebook.com/PreserveAR](https://www.facebook.com/PreserveAR) 

Twitter: [@PreserveAR](https://twitter.com/PreserveAR) 

UPCOMING EVENTS

MAY 14

Preserve Arkansas Happy Hour | 5:00 PM
The Green Corner Store and Soda Fountain
1423 S Main Street, Little Rock

JUNE 25

Preservation Libations Mix-off | 5:30 PM
Albert Pike Memorial Temple
712 Scott Street, Little Rock

AUGUST 1

Stone's Throw Brewing Block on Rock Party
Benefitting Preserve Arkansas
Stone's Throw Brewing
402 E 9th St, Little Rock

AUGUST 12

This Place Matters: Preserving Arkansas's
Architectural and Cultural Heritage
Crystal Bridges Museum of Art
600 Museum Way, Bentonville

SEPTEMBER 14-16

Destination Downtown and Dollars & Sense
of Neighborhood Revitalization
Little Rock

OCTOBER 9

Preservation Libations
Owens Funeral Home
(Hardin and Grace Law Firm)
500 Main Street, North Little Rock

NOVEMBER 5

Annual Membership Meeting | 5:30 PM
TBA

NOVEMBER 6

Sandwiching in History Tour | 12:00 PM
Thomas M. Clifton House (McKuinn home)
1423 S Summit Street, Little Rock

NOVEMBER 7

Fall Ramble: tour of historic sites
associated with WWII | 8:30 AM - 10:00 PM
Various sites, Southeast Arkansas

Preservation Libations
Lakeport Plantation, Lake Village

DECEMBER 4

Preservation Libations | 5:00 pm
TBA, Little Rock