

News Release

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Rock Island Preservation Commission Identifies Rock Island's 100 Most Significant Unprotected Structures

The Rock Island Preservation Commission has spent the past nine months surveying post-World War II subdivisions, researching the homes of some of Rock Island's most prominent historical citizens and comparing the architectural merit of hundreds of buildings – all for the purpose of identifying Rock Island's 100 Most Significant Unprotected Structures.

These 100 structures represent the best of Rock Island's historic buildings that aren't already designated a Rock Island Landmark or located in the Highland Park Historic District. These buildings embrace the full history of Rock Island, from the 1850s to the 1960s. The grandest and most well known of Rock Island's unprotected buildings are included, along with the best examples of modest, everyday homes that are representative of their era. This list also encompasses a range of building types, from a barn and gas station to mansions, office buildings, churches and apartments.

“By naming the 100 Most Significant Unprotected Structures, we hope to build awareness among property owners and the general population about the importance of these special places,” said Bob Braun, Rock Island Preservation Commission chairman. “Buildings are considered historic once they reach 50 years old, yet it is sometimes difficult to recognize that structures of the recent past have unique qualities. Buildings also tend to be most in danger of unsympathetic remodeling when they are about 80 years old, so the Commission wanted there to be some sense of what was truly worthy of preservation and why. This was a very useful exercise in evaluating the architectural and historical value of our building stock,” he added.

The precursor of Rock Island's 100 Most Significant Unprotected Structures (MoSUS) was a 1988 study called the Significant Structures List. The word “unprotected” was added so as to not diminish the value of the already designated and exceptional Rock Island Landmark and Highland Park Historic District properties. Buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places were intentionally left on the “unprotected” list. It is the Rock Island Preservation Ordinance, adopted in 1984, that provides local design review which protects historic architectural features. A National Register listing is largely honorary, providing protection only when state or federal funds or licensing impacts a historic resource.

“It was time to update the list,” said Jill Doak, City of Rock Island urban planner and staff to the Preservation Commission. “More than 50% of the buildings had been designated landmarks,

listed on the National Register, demolished or drastically altered. Plus, no buildings after the 1930s were included on the 1988 list.”

To be on the MoSUS list, a structure had to be located in Rock Island’s municipal boundaries, constructed in 1960 or earlier, and not designated as a Rock Island Landmark or local historic district or protected by state historic site or national historic landmark designations. Additionally, groups of buildings identified as a single unit through geographic, stylistic or historic relationships were considered. The Preservation Commission selected the 100 buildings based on: 1) integrity of primary structure or district; 2) rarity of architectural style or type with consideration for building age; 3) special decorative or structural features associated with the building or site; and 4) historic associations with important individuals, but building integrity had to be sufficient enough that the historic individual would recognize the structure.

“Some of the buildings on the list are surprising,” said Mr. Braun. “The Quonset Hut on 4th Avenue is rare, and becoming more so as time passes. There is a Gordon-Van Tine catalog bungalow on the list, plus we added the Long View Park Conservatory and four Lustron homes. There are also buildings on the list that might surprise people to know they are not Landmarks, such as the Buford Mansion, Fort Armstrong Theatre, Negus Row House, the Safety Building, and the major buildings of Augustana College, like Old Main and the Weyerhaeuser House.”

The complete MoSUS list is organized by address and by name on the City of Rock Island website at www.rigov.org. Thumbnail images of the homes are shown, which then link to a description page for each of the 100 properties. The description pages include historical and architectural narrative, a larger image, construction date, architect or builder, if known, and the rationale for the MoSUS listing.

MoSUS posters were also produced as part of the project. To obtain a free copy of the 16.5 x 22 inch color poster, stop by the second floor of Rock Island City Hall while supplies last.

Drafts of the description pages were provided to owners of the MoSUS buildings in late August, asking for their assistance in correcting or enhancing the narratives. City staff received dozens of helpful calls, enriching the descriptions and adding facts. “Overwhelmingly, owners were pleased to see the Preservation Commission recognizing their properties,” said Ms. Doak. “Some had architect’s plans, abstracts, newspaper articles, letters or anecdotes that helped build a more colorful story.” She noted the owners of the Lundberg House at 1626 27th Street were able to tell the Commission who built the home’s distinctive chimney based on a letter in their possession. In another instance, an abstract led to clarifications about Joseph C. Cameron, an early pioneer.

A long term goal of the Preservation Commission is that a high percentage of the MoSUS buildings be landmarked. “We hope that over the next 20 years, many of these buildings move from the unprotected list to bona fide Rock Island Landmarks,” said Mr. Braun. Anyone can nominate a building to be a Rock Island landmark. To learn about the process, please call the City’s Planning & Redevelopment Division at 309.732.2900.

Rock Island’s 100 Most Significant Unprotected Structures project has been financed in part with federal funds from the Department of the Interior, administered by the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency. However, the contents and opinions do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Department of the Interior, nor the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, nor does the mention of trade names or commercial products constitute endorsement or recommendation by the Department of the Interior nor the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency.

Rock Island's 100 Most Significant Unprotected Structures (MoSUS):

1203	2 Avenue	Gest House	230	18 Street	Central Trust & Savings Bank
1305	2 Avenue	Negus Row House	628	18 Street	Peetz House
1639	2 Avenue	First National Bank of Rock Island	1505	19 Avenue	Hiram S. Cable House
1705	2 Avenue	Best Building	2105	19 Avenue	Herman & Rose Goldstein House
1715	2 Avenue	London Building	320	19 Street	Sala Apartments
1504	3 Avenue	Modern Woodmen of America Home Office	709	19 Street	Patterson House
			730	19 Street	Samuel S. & Annette Guyer House
1528	3 Avenue	City Hall	917	19 Street	Anderson House
1800	3 Avenue	Safety Building	720	20 Street	Case-Mitchell House
1828	3 Avenue	Fort Armstrong Theatre	1223	20 Street	Gustafson House
1900	3 Avenue	Fort Armstrong Hotel	1600	20 Street	Stuart & Grace Harper House
1401	4 Avenue	Galbraith Motor Company	1226	21 Avenue	Christian Gaetjer House
1724	4 Avenue	Argus Building	1337	21 Avenue	Steepmeadow Apartments
2100	4 Avenue	Murrin Brothers Saloon	1038	21 Street	Greenough-Scott House
1820	5 Avenue	First Methodist Episcopal Church	1209	21 Street	Michael H. Sexton House
1925	5 Avenue	Immanuel Lutheran Church	1210	21 Street	C.W. Hawes House
2013	5 Avenue	Quonset Hut	2929	22 Avenue	Thoms House
2103	5 Avenue	Bear School of Automotive Safety Service	729	22 Street	Quincey House
			2903	22.5 Ave	Doris & Victor Day House
2800	5 Avenue	Sacred Heart Church	516	23 Street	Cameron House
2810	5 Avenue	Ben Harper House	524	23 Street	Speidel House
1900	6 Avenue	Morris Rosenfield House	625	23 Street	Marshall House
427	7 Avenue	West End Settlement	903	23 Street	McCandless House
1804	7 Avenue	Buford Mansion	1300	24 Street	Denkmann-Hauberg House
2912	7 Avenue	Henry Peter Bosse House	1401	25 Avenue	Rock Island High School
4501	7 Avenue	Swedish Zion Lutheran Church	1605	26 Street	Richard's Bungalow Court
2020	9 Street	Donovan House	1700	26 Street	Emmert C. & Lulu Clevenstine House
2951	9 Street	Dingeldein Wine Hall			
328	11 Street	George F. Roth House	1626	27 Street	Edward & Marie Lundberg House
4563	12 Avenue	Reuben & Alice Anderson House	3860	28 Avenue	John & Sherry Scherer House
1114	12 Street	Church of Peace	1609	28 Street	Emily Skallberg House
1302	12 Street	Henry and Jessie Paulsen House	3225	29 Ave Ct	John W. Burgess House
1811	12 Street	C.H. Langman House & Office	1600	29.5 Street	Jhirard & Nettie Dizotell House
2901	12 Street	Sexton's House	533	30 Street	Woltmann House
4141	12 Street	Otto & Elizabeth Seidlitz House	2200	30 Street	Frank & Bernice Downer House
3801	14 Avenue	Skelly Service Station	2401	31 Avenue	St. Pius X Catholic Church
3735	14 Street	Kenneth & Ruth Sturtevant House	552	31 Street	Charles Jewell House
3913	14 Street	Raymond & Beulah Criswell House	741	34 Street	Bartholomew House
			1422	40 Avenue	Heinz & Anita Maxeiner House
3918	14 Street	Strieter House	711	43 Street	Spencer Memorial Methodist Episcopal Parsonage
2527	15 Street	Ben Vinar House	830	43 Street	George Borg House
3635	15 Street	Jack & Rosalie Zukerman House	2801	River Heights Road	Bel Aire Barn
3730	15 Street	Elly & Henry Carlson, Jr House	2824	River Heights Road	Bel Air, John Looney's Second House
121	16 Street	Holsapple's Place			
230	16 Street	Royal Neighbors of America	35	Woodley Rd	Aaron & Alice Novak House
2605	17 Avenue	Benjamin L. & Lillian Driffill House	1918	Government	Housing
1049	17 Street	Henry W. Horst House			Augustana College
1625	17 Street	Long View Chalet			Free Classic Queen Anne Double Houses
1719	17 Street	Long View Conservatory			Lincoln Park
1929	17 Street	George C. & Nada Rausch House			Lustron Houses
901	18 Avenue	Fire Station No. 5			Park View Tudors
1600	18 Avenue	Samuel & Alma Kenworthy House			Sam Weisman's Addition
2601	18 Avenue	Audubon School			

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