



PRESS CONTACTS

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NEWS RELEASE

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Florida Trust's 11 Most Endangered Historic Sites

The Florida Trust for Historic Preservation announced their 2011 *11 Most Endangered Historic Sites* list at the Annual Statewide Preservation Conference, in Central Florida, on May 19, 2011. The sites are not ranked in any particular order.

Fire Station # 5, Jacksonville

Fire Station #5 is the oldest and most recognized historic building on Riverside Avenue in downtown Jacksonville's Brooklyn neighborhood. It was designed by Robert Lee Sevil in 1910. The land on which the building stands was sold by the city to Fidelity National Financial, Inc. in 2009. The building is currently vacant, unmaintained, and has been the target of repeated vandalism. Some city officials are in support of the preservation of the building but are concerned over costs for relocation and rehabilitation. The site is added to the 2011 list due to the potential for demolition caused by redevelopment pressure.

Royal Poinciana Playhouse and Plaza, Palm Beach

The John Volk-designed Royal Poinciana Playhouse and Plaza in the Town of Palm Beach represents the northern gateway to the town from the northern Flagler Bridge. It is one of the most significant projects for Palm Beach from the 1950s, as Volk's design incorporates modern concepts of space and traditional architectural styling. A proposed development project threatens the site's historic landmark status and includes a potential for demolition and alterations to the site. This site remains on the list from last year.

Central Christian Church, Orlando

Central Christian Church was founded during Orlando's Land Boom Period of the 1920s. The two-story, Mission Revival building is a contributing structure in the Lake Eola Heights National Register Historic District. In 1999, the Diocese of Orlando was gifted the site; however, it has since been deemed unsafe for use. Local historic groups and members of the community are actively seeking ways to revitalize and preserve the building. The Lake Eola Heights Historic Neighborhood Association held a planning session this year where the next steps in preservation of the church were featured and outlined. The site is remaining on the list from last year due to the threat of demolition by neglect.

Hialeah Park Race Course, Hialeah

On the Most Endangered List each year since 2007, the Hialeah Park Race Course is a nationally significant site due to being the oldest and widest continuously operating turf horse racing track in the United States. The park marks the beginning of the City of Hialeah, and represents a symbolic resting place for the champion thoroughbreds that raced there. Proposed development threatens several of the structures within the park, and could jeopardize the site's National Register of Historic Places and National Historic Landmark eligibility.

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Downtown Palatka

In the 1850s, the city of Palatka was a major center for transportation, freight trade, cypress lumber, and citrus sales. The city continued to grow in reputation as the “Bass Capital” of the world, drawing avid fishermen and outdoor enthusiasts. The city provides many components which lead to a vibrant downtown – an active Main Street program, mixed-use zoning, building improvement and façade grant programs, and county and professional buildings downtown, however, several buildings downtown are on the point of collapse, and many have severe roofing or structural problems associated with years of neglect. The economic downturn coupled with a growing vacancy rate downtown is having a dire impact on this historic city.

Thompson & Company Cigar Factory, Bartow

In the 1920s, Mark A. Thompson initiated plans for the Thompson & Company Cigar Factory through the Cuban American Corporation he helped organize in Tampa. The building is an early example of a fully mechanized cigar factory in Florida and is located in the East Bartow Historic District. The city of Bartow is in the process of taking ownership from Polk County if certain conditions are met – one of which is finding the funds to shore up the building. In November, the county granted the city 6 months to perform an environmental evaluation and clean-up of the building. Locals preservation activist are working with the county and city to raise the funds, help transfer the property to the city, and create interest in the project.

Coca Cola Bottling Plant, Ft. Lauderdale

Architect Courtney Stewart designed multiple identical Coca-Cola bottling plants throughout South Florida and this is one of two remaining in the state. Located at the intersection of Andrew Ave. and Seventh St, the 1938 Coca-Cola bottling plant building is opposite several historic buildings of similar mass and scale. The County Commission is considering plans to build the new courthouse parking garage on property immediately surrounding the building. The developer’s proposal calls for an immense parking garage built in an L around the Coca Cola Bottling Plant. Although some of the garage’s architectural features are designed to complement the plant, preservationists note that there are drastic issues with inappropriate massing, placement, and potential for damage due to increased traffic.

Orange City Historic District

The Wisconsin Company, a lumber company from Eau Claire Wisconsin, purchased land in 1874 in Southwest Volusia County which later became Orange City. Two members of that company - Dr. Seth French and Hugh H. DeYarman played an important role in the development of the city. Mr. DeYarman would eventually become the first mayor of Orange City and the hotel he established in 1875 – the DeYarman House Inn – is still standing. In 2004, the Orange City Historic District was added to the National Register of Historic Places. The district includes over 200 historic buildings and runs along the Florida Black Bear Trail – a national scenic byway. The Volusia County Historic Preservation Board has been working with local advocates to preserve many of the historic sites within the district. Some of the sites in the district have suffered neglect or hurricane damage and a potential rezoning along the 17/92 corridor in favor of redevelopment could adversely impact the historic district.

Bob White Citrus Packing House & Strawn Sawmill Historic Districts, DeLeon Springs

On the list since 2007 is the Bob White Citrus Packing House & Strawn Sawmill National Register Historic Districts in DeLeon Springs. Historic sites illustrating Florida's citrus industry are disappearing and only a handful of existing historic citrus packing houses remain in Florida and California. The Bob White Historic Citrus Packing House remains the only historic district in the State of Florida associated with the citrus industry. The 15 historic structures located in these historic districts are threatened by vacancy, lack of financial resources for their preservation, and proposed demolition. Two major fires on the property have severely impacted the site, resulting in the loss of some of the buildings.

Milton Historic District

Milton is a small town in Florida's panhandle located on the banks of the Blackwater River and known for its role in Florida's lumber industry. The major threat to the district is the proposed widening of the main street through town from two lanes to a four lane capacity. The widening would call for the demolition of some of the district's oldest and most significant buildings, and would have a detrimental effect on the revitalization process currently underway. The Milton Historic District is continuing on the 2011 list from last year to encourage preservation advocates and transportation officials to collaborate on a solution that will protect the town's historic resources.

The Munroe House, Tallahassee

Built in 1904, the Munroe House was home to one of the founding families of Tallahassee. It is locally designated and a contributing building to the National Register Park Avenue Historic District. In the face of extreme financial hardship, the owner – LeMoyné Center for the Visual Arts - is now being forced to liquidate many of its assets. In the eyes of the property owner, the Munroe House, which sits on prime downtown real estate, would be more appealing to potential buyers if the year-long delay for a demolition permit is initiated now to pave the way for new construction. The loss of the Munroe House would not only mean the loss of a significant local and state historic site, but it would further erode the historic district. At this time, no demolition plans have been submitted to the Architectural Review Board. By raising awareness of the plight of Munroe House, the owner hopes find a potential buyer who might spare it from the wrecking ball.

The Florida Trust for Historic Preservation is a non-profit organization of over 1600 members, and is the statewide partner to the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The Florida Trust was established in 1978 and since then has been the leader in the advocacy and education of preservationists around the state. Throughout the years, the Florida Trust has worked closely with the Florida Division of Historical Resources to keep abreast of the needs of the citizens of Florida for preservation programs and services.

The Annual Statewide Preservation Conference is held during the third full week in May and the location varies from year to year. The conference is 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.

The mission of the Florida Trust for Historic Preservation is to promote the preservation of Florida's unique cultural, historical and architectural resources.