

# AT RISK



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PENNSYLVANIA

*2013*  
*Pennsylvania*  
**AT RISK**

# 2013 Pennsylvania AT RISK

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## FROM THE DIRECTOR

Mindy G. Crawford

Recently, preservation organizations around the country have been debating the value of endangered lists like our own **Pennsylvania At Risk**. Some groups have discontinued them while others have renamed them to put a more positive spin on at-risk properties, calling them “preservation opportunities.” During the last year, we have also taken some time to think through our own program, and we have concluded that no matter what we call a list like this, calling attention to our most threatened resources IS important.

In 2013, we did a 20-year analysis of our **Pennsylvania At Risk** program and found that of the 200+ historic properties listed, only 18% have been lost. 32% have been saved and 50% remain at risk. It sometimes takes a long time to achieve a save, so it is not discouraging to us that we’re still working on half of the list. More importantly, of the 32% that have been saved, many of them have moved from “at risk” to being an award recipient! That is the ultimate save, and one that makes us very proud.

We think it is vital that we keep an eye on the many endangered resources in Pennsylvania and that we devote staff time to helping those who care about these properties. As we announce the 2013 list that will help to determine our work plan for the year, we look forward to making a difference in the outcome of more properties!

“We think it is vital that we keep an eye on the many endangered resources in Pennsylvania...”



preservation  
PENNSYLVANIA

## MISSION STATEMENT

Preservation Pennsylvania, through creative partnerships, targeted educational and advocacy programs, advisory assistance, and special projects, assists Pennsylvania communities to protect and utilize the historic resources they want to preserve for the future.

## ABOUT US

Preservation Pennsylvania is the Commonwealth’s only statewide, private nonprofit membership organization dedicated to the protection of historically and architecturally significant properties. The organization was created in 1982 as the Preservation Fund of Pennsylvania to operate a revolving fund that would assist in the acquisition and rehabilitation of historic properties. Since its incorporation, the organization has evolved and now hosts the Statewide Conference on Heritage and the Pennsylvania Historic Preservation Awards, and publishes an annual list of endangered historic properties in Pennsylvania At Risk in addition to managing the revolving loan fund. Preservation Pennsylvania also participates in educational programs and advocacy initiatives, as well as conducts special projects and offers on-site technical assistance to people across the Commonwealth.

# 2013 Pennsylvania AT RISK

## INTRODUCTION

*Pennsylvania At Risk* is a sampling of the Commonwealth's endangered historic resources. For the purpose of this list, endangerment is defined as threat of demolition, significant deterioration, vandalism, inappropriate alteration, and/or loss of historic setting. The properties included in *Pennsylvania At Risk* represent important resource types, or exemplify common or noteworthy problems or issues faced by historic properties in the Commonwealth.

To be eligible for inclusion in *Pennsylvania At Risk*, a property must be listed in or eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places, designated as historic locally, or have strong local support for preservation, and it must be faced with imminent endangerment from overt action, neglect, incompatible use, or loss of context. *Pennsylvania At Risk* is compiled from recommendations made by the membership, board and staff of Preservation Pennsylvania, as well as other heritage organizations and the public at large.

It is our belief that publishing this list draws statewide attention to the plight of Pennsylvania's historic resources and promotes local action to protect resources. Properties listed in *Pennsylvania At Risk* are priorities for Preservation Pennsylvania until the resource is lost or the threat is overcome and the property is saved.

Preservation Pennsylvania welcomes your comments on this year's list, your updates on the status of past entries, and your suggestions for future listings.



*This annual mission-driven publication has been paid for through membership dues and contributions.*

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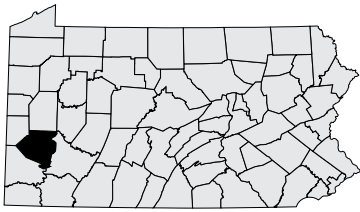
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# Coraopolis Station

Mill Street and Neville Avenue, Coraopolis  
ALLEGHENY COUNTY

## SIGNIFICANCE

Commissioned by the Pittsburgh & Lake Erie Railroad in 1895 and designed by the firm of Shepley, Rutan & Coolidge, the Coraopolis Station is a wonderful example of Richardsonian Romanesque architecture. The building is constructed of long, narrow buff-colored Roman bricks and red mortar with rusticated sandstone details. The station features round-arch windows with stone voussoirs and a slate roof with an outward curvature at the lower edge and decorative terra cotta ridge caps. To ensure that the station master had visibility up and down the tracks, the building has a protruding bay with observation windows, as well as a tower. The broad, overhanging roof and additional platform covers provided shelter to waiting passengers.

The station is an icon in this former steel town, reflecting the community's more prosperous days. Although the building has been vacant for many years, it is universally recognized by the community as a significant part of their history.

*To support this project by making a donation to the Coraopolis Community Development Foundation, please contact Sam Jampetro at 412.302.1899 or [sam.jampetro@comcast.net](mailto:sam.jampetro@comcast.net).*



## THREAT

The Coraopolis Station is not structurally stable, and many fear that it may collapse. After closing in the 1960s, the building was used as an auto parts store through the 1970s, and was abandoned in the mid-1980s. The Coraopolis Community Development Foundation purchased the vacant and deteriorating railroad station in 2007, with the goal of rehabilitating it as a community gathering space. In 2010, it was listed by the Young Preservationists Association of Pittsburgh as the number one preservation opportunity in the Pittsburgh area.

Over time, weather and vandalism have compromised the roof. For many years, water has been allowed to infiltrate the building, and has caused deterioration of the wooden roof and floor structures and the masonry walls. The building has been declared unsafe and as time passes, its condition continues to worsen.

The Coraopolis Community Development Foundation has prepared a phased plan and hopes to rehabilitate the building and spur community-wide revitalization. They have been working to build support for their vision and raise funds, and hope to begin the three-part construction plan in the near future. The total cost of the project is estimated to be between \$900,000 and \$1,200,000. The Coraopolis Community Development Foundation sees this as an opportunity to engage the community in the project, as well as kick start revitalization of the community.

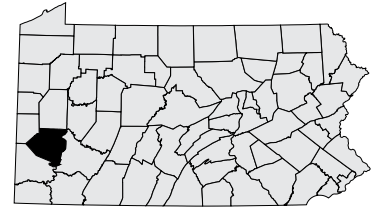
Plans to construct an 80-acre sports complex and the nearby terminus of the Montour Trail present an excellent opportunity to redevelop the Coraopolis Station into a visitor center with a cafe, exhibit and meeting space. However, immediate stabilization and significant fundraising must be accomplished before the future of this resource can be secured.

**“The station is an icon  
in this former steel town...”**

# VA Highland Drive Campus

Highland Drive, Pittsburgh

ALLEGHENY COUNTY



## SIGNIFICANCE

Built in 1950-1953, the 168-acre Department of Veteran's Affairs (VA) Highland Drive Campus is a good example of a post-WWII veteran's hospital. Also known as the Leech Farm Road Hospital, the property is eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.

President Harry S. Truman authorized construction of this neuropsychiatric hospital in 1947, and construction began in 1950. The Leech Farm Road Hospital was dedicated in 1953 and the first patient was admitted that year. The hospital housed an average of 900 patients. In 1971, President Richard Nixon appointed Valerija Raulinaitis, M.D. as director of the hospital, the first woman ever appointed as a hospital director. In 1975, the facility's name was changed to Highland Drive. Throughout its history, this facility has served as a stand-alone VA medical center, providing medical and surgical services as well as research facilities. Consolidation of the hospital as part of the VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System began in 2004, and today the property is no longer in use.

*Preservation Pennsylvania will work with the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, as well as local partners, to see that the VA comply with the required process, and acts as responsible stewards of their historic properties in the future.*

## THREAT

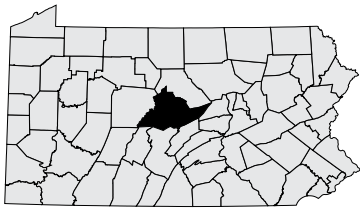
The VA plans to demolish the entire Highland Drive Campus, including all of its buildings, streets, curbs and other improvements, and retain the land for unspecified future use.

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) requires that federal agencies, including the VA, consider potential impacts of their undertakings on historic properties. In order to do so, they must consider a range of alternatives in an effort to avoid, minimize or mitigate adverse effects to historic properties. They must also solicit input from consulting parties and the public, and provide sufficient documentation of those alternatives to ensure that any reviewing parties understand the basis for decision making. The VA has not yet completed the Section 106 process.

A Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services (CARES) report issued in 2004 supported closure of the VA Highland Drive Campus. That report recommended that the property be leased through enhanced use leasing (EUL) or divested. In recent meetings, the VA stated that they had tried unsuccessfully to find partners for enhanced use leasing. They said that the General Services Administration (GSA) would not accept the property in its federal real property disposal program. However, no documentation of these alternatives was provided.

Instead of engaging in Section 106 consultation in 2004, when they began making decisions to vacate the premises and terminate maintenance, the VA delayed consultation nearly 10 years. Now, after nearly a decade of deferred maintenance, the VA is using the deteriorated state of the hospital complex as a reason to demolish it. Had they engaged in consultation in a timely manner, the interim maintenance of the property could have been addressed, and deterioration of the property avoided.

**“Now threatened with demolition, Highland Drive Campus is a good example of a post-WWII veteran’s hospital.”**



# Garman Theatre

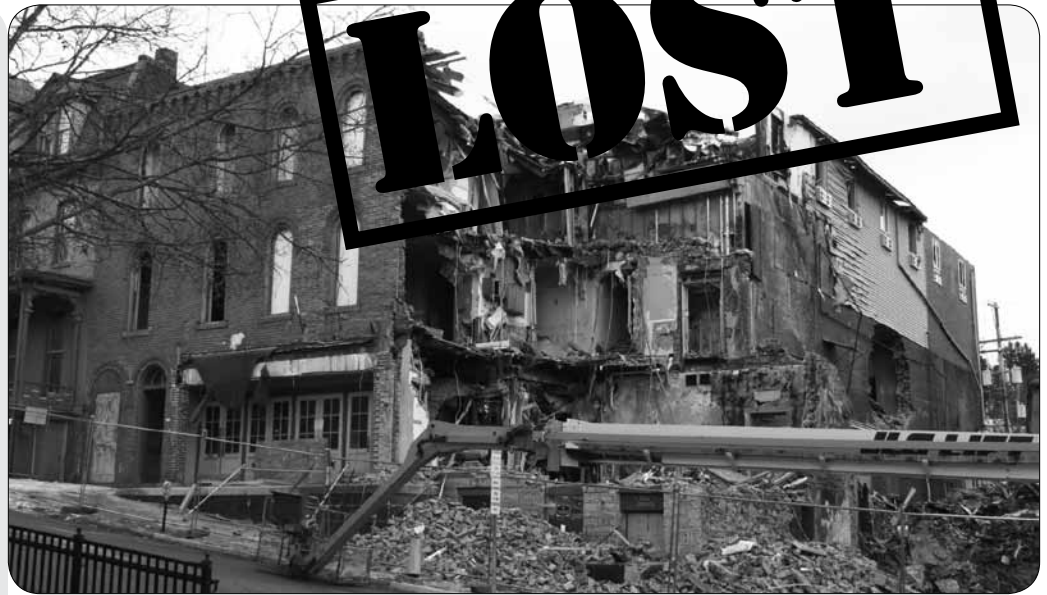
116 East High Street, Bellefonte

CENTRE COUNTY

## SIGNIFICANCE

In 1887, much of East High Street in Bellefonte was destroyed by fire. After the fire, Daniel Garman remodeled his hotel in 1888 and built the Garman Opera House in 1890. The Garman's stage hosted vaudeville acts, Wild West shows and performances by stars such as Harry Houdini, George Burns and Gracie Allen. Silent films were introduced at the Garman in the early 1900s. The Garman Opera House was renamed the State Theatre in 1931 and continued to show movies until 1961. After closing, the building was used for many years only for storage.

The theatre is a contributing element of the Bellefonte Historic District, which was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1977. The theatre's exterior was rehabilitated, and a covenant was placed on the building to require that renovations be completed in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards in 1989. The Garman Theatre's auditorium was renovated in the 1990s to make it more suitable for plays. It was then sold at sheriff's sale and opened under new ownership and with new equipment as the Garman Opera House Movie Theatre in 2000. In 2005-2006, an addition was made, adding hotel rooms and a conference or screening room above the theatre and an elevator and stair tower to the rear.



## THREAT

By 2009, the Garman Theatre had closed and the building was vacant. A mold problem – likely the result of a leaking roof or mechanical system in the new addition – had been identified by concerned members of the community. The building was caught up in bankruptcy proceedings, and so despite the fact that it was listed for sale and offers were made to purchase the theatre, it remained abandoned. In September 2012, there was a fire in the adjacent building and the Garman Theatre sustained significant fire and water damage. The property was not cleaned up or repaired after the fire. Large amounts of water used to extinguish the blaze and ongoing water infiltration exacerbated the existing mold problem.

After Bellefonte Borough notified the owner that the building was a public safety hazard and no action was taken to improve the building's condition, Bellefonte Borough filed a petition with the local court requesting that the Bellefonte Area Industrial Development Authority (BAIDA) be appointed conservator for the Garman Theatre under the Abandoned and Blighted Property Conservatorship Act in January 2013. Conservatorship is a legislative tool that can be used in Pennsylvania to reclaim blighted or abandoned property, allowing a third party to take possession in order to make repairs and return the property to productive use. Conservatorship can be used for preservation, and in fact the law favors rehabilitation. However, if rehabilitation is not feasible, demolition may be acceptable. The law does not specifically define how feasibility is assessed. The conservator is charged with developing a plan to abate the conditions that caused the property to become subject to the Act, and the local court approves the plan or requires that it be amended.

As part of the conservatorship process, BAIDA presented a plan to the judge that called for the transfer of the property to a private developer, who would demolish the Garman Theatre. BAIDA requested that the judge remove the covenant on the Garman Theatre as part of its plan. Historic Bellefonte, Inc., which held the preservation covenant, did not oppose its removal.

# “Conservatorship is a tool that can be used in Pennsylvania to reclaim blighted or abandoned property, allowing a third party to take possession in order to make repairs and return the property to productive use.”

## THREAT continued...

The conservatorship law does not require public participation or the solicitation of alternative proposals. However, hearing concern from the Bellefonte Historical and Cultural Association (BHCA), the judge required that BAIDA consider BHCA’s proposal for the rehabilitation of the theatre as a community arts center. BHCA worked diligently to develop a strong business, rehabilitation and fundraising plan in a few short weeks. Receiving strong support from many residents of the community and beyond, BHCA quickly raised nearly \$250,000 for their project. Despite BHCA’s tremendous effort to offer a viable rehabilitation alternative for the Garman Theatre, BAIDA decided to move forward with its original plan and the judge approved it, issuing a court order that the building be demolished by February 2014.

Despite the court order, preservation-minded citizens held onto hope that the Garman Theatre would be rehabilitated rather than demolished, since additional preservation tools were in place. Because the Garman Theatre is in a locally regulated historic district, demolition still needed to be reviewed by the Historical and Architectural Review Board (HARB). And since the developer planned to use federal funding for the housing development, Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act would apply.

The developer agreed to consider preserving the building facade if BHCA would contribute \$500,000 to cover the additional costs. BHCA, which wanted to preserve the theatre in its entirety, not just the facade, was not satisfied with this compromise. Thus, the developer moved forward to obtain permission to demolish the building.

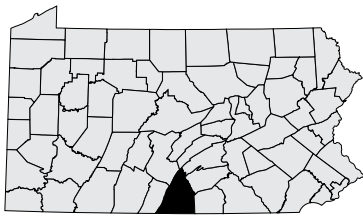
Bellefonte’s HARB discussed the proposed demolition of the Garman Theatre at several of its meetings, weighing concerns presented by the developer, BHCA and borough staff, and ultimately voted to permit demolition of the Garman. Not in line with standard preservation decisions, HARB’s decision likely reflects the desire of many in the community to see quick visible results, regardless of long-term community impact.

At the same time that HARB was reviewing the project, BHCA took legal action, filing a request for an injunction to prevent demolition of the Garman and requesting an appeal of the conservatorship decision. In a hearing on December 4, 2013, the Commonwealth Court upheld prior decisions and denied BHCA’s injunction and appeal.

Section 106 consultation was completed in December 2013. While the process did require minimization and mitigation of adverse effects, it did not prevent demolition of the Garman Theatre.



*Demolition of the Garman Theatre began in late December and must be completed by February 2014. Preservation Pennsylvania does not typically include buildings that have been lost prior to the release of **Pennsylvania At Risk**. However, in an effort to help preserve other historic properties, it is important to talk about the issues that created the threat, the tools and strategies available to aid in preservation, and why the theatre was ultimately lost. Preservation Pennsylvania will soon prepare a presentation that discusses the fight to preserve the Garman Theatre in greater detail. Please contact us if you would like additional information.*



# Monterey Pass Battlefield and Maria Furnace Road

14325 Buchanan Trail East, Washington Township  
FRANKLIN COUNTY

## SIGNIFICANCE

Located along the Mason-Dixon line on the ridge of South Mountain, Monterey Pass provided a direct route to the Potomac River that was used by the bulk of the Confederate Army during its withdrawal from Gettysburg. The Battle of Monterey Pass occurred on the night of July 4, 1863, during the retreat from Gettysburg, when the Union Cavalry came into contact with the Confederate Cavalry. After six hours of heavy fighting, which spilled over into the surrounding area, Union General Judson Kilpatrick gained the summit of Monterey Pass, successfully reaching the connecting road by 3:30 a.m. on July 5. Kilpatrick's men captured and destroyed nine miles worth of wagons, taking 1,360 prisoners and a large number of horses and mules as they moved toward Ringgold, Md.

The Battle of Monterey Pass is the second largest battle that occurred in Pennsylvania. Approximately 10,000 soldiers fought around Monterey Pass. The battle lasted more than ten hours and covered over 20 miles, all fought in the dark and in the midst of blinding thunderstorm. In 2011, Civil War Trust listed this site on the top 15 endangered battlefield list.

*To support its efforts, please go to: [http://www.montereypassbattlefield.org/friends\\_content/help\\_preserve.htm](http://www.montereypassbattlefield.org/friends_content/help_preserve.htm).*



## THREAT

The Monterey Pass Battlefield is a large area, some of which is in public ownership and has been preserved. One acre owned by Washington Township is used as Monterey Pass Battlefield Park, while another 100 acres of wetlands is known as Happel's Meadow. The Lions Club also owns several acres, which are open to the public as a park. But the remainder of the battlefield is privately owned and is not protected.

Washington Township Municipal Authority is offering 110 acres of land, including portions of the Monterey Pass Battlefield and Maria Furnace Road, for sale with no preservation restrictions. The weak economy has kept private developers from acquiring the tract and building residential neighborhoods; and a local mining company that is interested in expanding has not yet purchased the property. But as the economy improves, the threat to the Monterey Pass Battlefield and Maria Furnace Road may increase. Both residential development and mining, as well as other types of development, would significantly alter the landscape, removing the physical remnants of Maria Furnace Road and destroying an important aspect of the Battlefield forever.

The threat of development could be overcome by acquisition by an entity committed to long-term preservation of the site. The site could be open to the public, with interpretation such as signage and walking trails to allow visitors the opportunity to walk the road as so many soldiers did during their retreat from Gettysburg. The site could also serve as a nature preserve, helping to protect the environment and providing educational opportunities for area schools and families. A management plan, conceptual development plan and Battlefield preservation plan have been prepared. Friends of the Monterey Pass Battlefield, Inc. is currently raising funds to purchase the property so that it can be preserved.

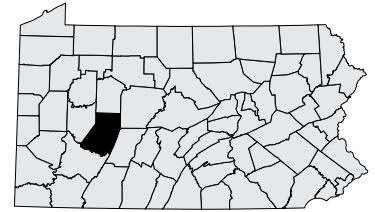
**“Approximately 10,000 soldiers fought around Monterey Pass.”**



# Altman's Mill

360 Point Street, Saltsburg

INDIANA COUNTY



## THREAT

George Altman purchased the mill at sheriff's sale in 1940 and expanded the facility to accommodate the packaging and sale of animal feed. Milling ceased in the 1960s, but the property continued to operate as a feed store until about 1990. The mill was documented as part of the America's Industrial Heritage Project, and restoration was planned as part of the Saltsburg Canal Park. However, funding for the project was terminated in the mid-1990s, so the mill was not restored.

In 2001, the property was sold to its current owners, who recognized the significance of the mill and acquired it in order to save it. To keep the historic building standing, they stabilized and upgraded the rear of the building, and opened a business in it. Although they intended to restore the historic mill, they have been unable to fund restoration to date.

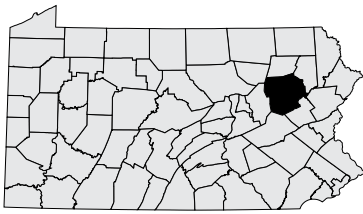
Over time, the mill's original slate roof deteriorated, allowing water infiltration that damaged the wooden grain bins and threatened the historic milling equipment. In 2010, a group of concerned individuals intervened to make temporary repairs to the mill's roof. They utilized more than 85 hours of donated skilled labor, and raised more than \$6,500 (including a \$1,500 Intervention Fund grant from the National Trust for Historic Preservation and a donation from the property owners) to provide a temporary roof covering in order to protect the mill and its contents while a long-term preservation solution could be negotiated. In 2012, the owners paid to have the windows on the lower floor reglazed. Additional and ongoing maintenance is needed.

There are currently people who would like to see the mill rehabilitated, and hope to showcase the historic equipment as part of an economically sustainable preservation plan. However, due to the substantial cost of the work required, they have not yet approached the property owners with a proposal to acquire the property. The owners would like to see the mill preserved, if possible, and are willing to consider potential partnership opportunities or sale or donation to a new owner.

**“...its equipment is an example of a line shaft system that is both elegant and sophisticated for its time.”**

## SIGNIFICANCE

Altman's Mill was built by Miller Patterson in 1912 to replace a mill that had been destroyed by fire in 1911. Tall wooden grain bins occupy more than half of the four-story timber-frame building. In the remainder of the structure, milling was done on the first floor, separating was done on the second floor, sifting was done on the third floor, and the fourth floor was for receiving and filtering. The mill's unique wooden machinery, which is still largely intact, is primarily from the Allis-Chalmers Company of Milwaukee. The mill and its evolution are typical of moderately sized, family-owned mills. However, its equipment is an example of a line shaft system that is both elegant and sophisticated for its time. This intact collection of significant equipment in its original location makes Altman's Mill a rare and exceptional example surviving today.



# Irem Temple

42-46 North Franklin Street, Wilkes-Barre

LUZERNE COUNTY

## SIGNIFICANCE

Irem Temple was built in 1907-1909 by the Ancient Arabic Order of the Nobles of the Mystic Shrine. The organization served social, charitable and protective purposes, which were funded by monthly dues paid by its members.

Designed by architects Frances Willard Puckey and Frederick Lawrence Olds, Irem Temple is a brick meeting hall and auditorium in the Moorish style comprised of two main parts. The front is a three-story cube with a central dome, four corner minarets, and polychrome-glazed terra cotta decoration. A large rectangular brick auditorium comprises the rear. It has seating for approximately 575 on the first floor, while the second-level balcony contains seating for approximately 800 more.

The facility was designed for use by the Shriners, but its auditorium, banquet facilities and meeting rooms were frequently rented out to generate income for the organization.

Irem Temple is distinct from the usual styles of architecture seen in this country, and provided a high-quality venue for music and entertainment. The temple was seen as a monument to the progressiveness of the Shriners.

Irem Temple is listed in the National Register of Historic Places as a contributing element of the River Street Historic District.



## THREAT

The Ancient Arabic Order of the Nobles of the Mystic Shrine's membership dwindled through the latter part of the 20th century. In 2009, they sold Irem Temple to the Wilkes-Barre Area Chamber of Commerce, which intended to rehabilitate it as an events venue. They hoped to use a combination of state grants and gaming revenues to make needed repairs and upgrades to the property. However, funds were not made available to the project. Given their current financial situation, it seems unlikely that the Chamber of Commerce will move forward with plans to rehabilitate Irem Temple in the near future. The building now stands empty, its doors chained closed, and is beginning to deteriorate.

Although it was not built or used for religious purposes, the challenges faced by Irem Temple and other large gathering places are similar to those faced by sacred places across the Commonwealth and beyond. They were designed and built in an age of prosperity, as monuments to the values of members at that time. They relied on the generosity of their members, through dues or tithes, for support. Over time, both the size and wealth of these memberships have declined. The large spaces are often too costly to maintain properly. In order to preserve Irem Temple, a strategy like that championed by Partners for Sacred Places, which works to integrate these large, significant buildings into the community in order to broaden the base of support, will almost certainly be necessary.

**“Although it was not built or used for religious purposes, the challenges faced by Irem Temple and other large gathering places are similar to those faced by sacred places across the Commonwealth and beyond.”**



### **PRESERVING SACRED PLACES**

*Many sacred places in Pennsylvania are at risk. There are currently nine churches on Preservation Pennsylvania's At Risk list, and three more were nominated this year. Threatened sacred places almost certainly exist in every county across the Commonwealth. Churches and synagogues are often beloved landmarks. They are key features of a community's architectural character, and reflect important aspects of social and religious history.*

*Frequently, congregations are smaller today than they were historically, leaving fewer people to share operating and maintenance costs. Religious buildings are often large and relatively ornate, making them costly to light, heat and repair. In other cases, real estate values in the area have increased over time, placing tremendous pressure on congregations to sell their property for new development. Conversely, some sacred places exist in neighborhoods that have become undesirable, and the congregation decides to relocate elsewhere. Large and small, urban and rural, sacred places throughout Pennsylvania are in danger for a variety of reasons. Despite the fact that people often relate strongly to and assign great cultural value to sacred places, very little public funding is available to help defray their substantial maintenance costs.*

*The National Trust for Historic Preservation has created a "toolkit" to help preserve historic religious properties. Partners for Sacred Places is dedicated to helping congregations utilize their architectural assets to expand their role in the community in order to generate funds to sustain their buildings. They provide information, training, case studies, and the expertise of a strong network to help sustain sacred places. But even with these resources, the number of threatened religious properties is increasing.*

*Preservation Pennsylvania will continue to work with its partners to help address the needs of threatened sacred places across the state.*

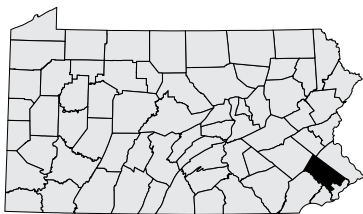


**Do you know of a property that should be considered for next year's AT RISK list?**

*We want to hear from you!*

**2014  
Pennsylvania  
AT RISK**

**[www.preservationpa.org](http://www.preservationpa.org)**



# Public Federal Savings Bank

39 Lancaster Avenue, Lower Merion Township  
MONTGOMERY COUNTY

## SIGNIFICANCE

Built in 1951 for the Public Federal Savings Bank, this unique mid-century modern building is a largely unaltered example of suburban commercial development that occurred in Wynnewood during the 1950s. The one-story brick building is an icon in the community. It is characterized by a rounded front that reflects its corner location, formed by a nearly full-height band of large windows in aluminum frames. The building's prominent brick and concrete tower is intersected by a bold horizontal cantilevered flat roof that wraps the corner of the building and announces the main entrance.

Although it is over 50 years in age and has a unique architecture that reflects the period in which it was constructed, the National Register eligibility of the Public Federal Savings Bank has not been documented and evaluated. The Township is now making plans to add mid-century buildings like this one to its inventory of protected historic properties, but the building is not currently protected.

**“The one-story brick building is an icon in the community.”**



## THREAT

Mid-century modern architecture is often under-appreciated. Because it is often not considered to be “historic” and thus worthy of preservation, buildings of this era are often altered in a manner that compromises their design and character, or lost all together.

The property containing the 1950s Public Federal Savings Bank, as well as several adjacent properties, were purchased by a local developer. The developer

submitted plans to develop this property that called for the demolition of the Public Federal Savings Bank and construction of a new bank with a larger floor plan and a drive-through. Plans for the bank property have not yet been finalized, so a demolition permit has not yet been issued.

In an attempt to protect this property, members of the Township’s Historical Commission and Planning Department have prepared sketch plans that explore alternatives that allow the developer to achieve its goals, while preserving the existing building. When community members presented the alternative concepts to the developer, they highlighted advantages of utilizing the existing building, including the fact that it is iconic in the community and has a prominent tower that can be seen from quite a distance. The developer listened to this proposal and took the ideas back to the development team for consideration.

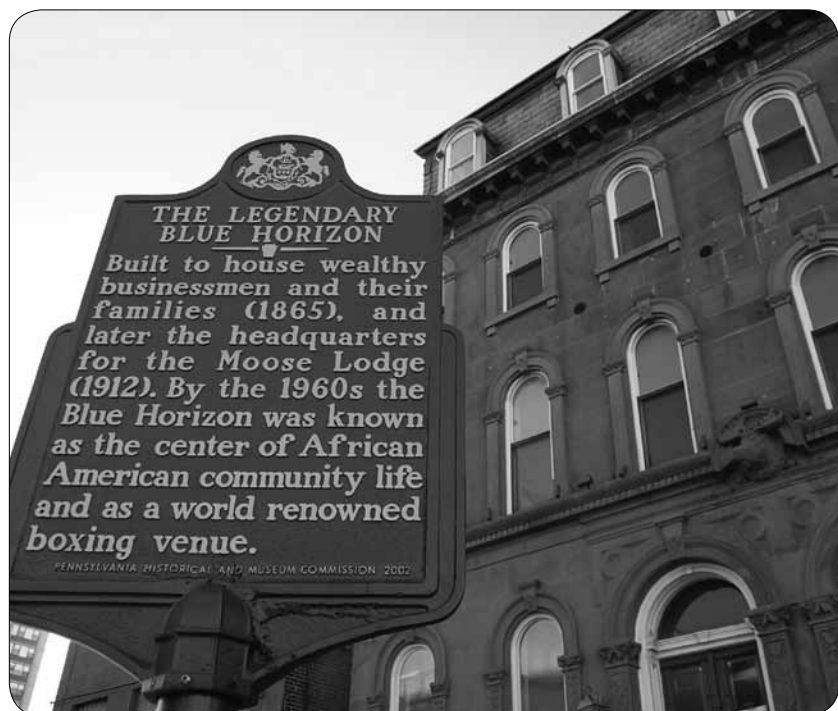
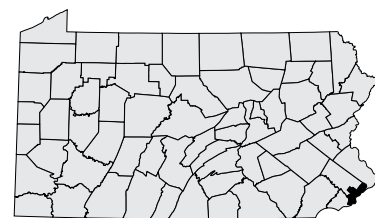
Because new bank branches are licensed by the FDIC, the project will likely be reviewed under Section 106 of the Historic Preservation Act. This will require that the significance of the property be documented and evaluated. If the building is found to be “historic,” the developer will be required to engage in a public process to consider project alternatives that avoid or minimize adverse impact to the property, or take measures to mitigate the impact. This process, as well as preservation incentives such as the Rehabilitation Investment Tax Credits, may help to convince the developer to preserve the building rather than demolish it. However, a demolition proposal has been submitted and is scheduled to be reviewed in February.

The Public Federal Savings Bank is not alone. Mid-century modern buildings are disappearing because they don’t fit in with our traditional concepts of what is historic. Hopefully, the Public Federal Savings Bank will help to bring attention to the significance of architecture of this era, and begin to help the public recognize its value.

# The Legendary Blue Horizon

1314-16 North Broad Street, Philadelphia

PHILADELPHIA



## SIGNIFICANCE

Just after the Civil War, three large brownstone row houses were built on North Broad Street. By 1910, only one of them was occupied, and in 1914, the Loyal Order of Moose purchased all three. They adapted the existing houses to serve as social halls and dining rooms. By 1928, the club had become so popular that the Moose needed to expand. They built a new large addition behind the row houses to accommodate a dining hall, a ballroom and a balconied auditorium.

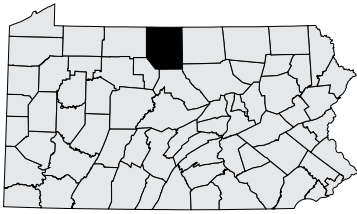
Following the Depression, the club and surrounding neighborhood began to decline. In 1961, boxing promoter Jimmy Toppi acquired the Moose lodge and began to operate a banquet hall and fight venue named the Legendary Blue Horizon. For nearly 50 years, "The Blue" hosted boxing matches, and was celebrated for its unpolished and intimate atmosphere under a series of three different owners. In 1996, *Sports Illustrated* magazine said, "There isn't another sports arena in the country remotely like the Blue Horizon. Only 1,500 fans can be crammed inside for an event ... From the rickety balcony, an overexcited spectator can practically reach down and slug the participants. The degree of intimacy is both upsetting and illuminating."

Charming as it was, the Legendary Blue Horizon was in need of significant repairs. The new owners had trouble financing improvements to the property, and struggled to address dozens of code violations, cracked plaster walls, peeling paint, and other problems. They stayed true to the Legendary Blue Horizon's boxing roots, and continued to put on shows and hold inexpensive Friday-night fights. Owner Vernoca Michael became the first African American female boxing promoter in 1998. The Legendary Blue Horizon was named the best boxing venue in the world by *The Ring Magazine* in 1999. By 2004, the owners had succeeded in restoring the Legendary Blue Horizon, and received an achievement award from the Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia.

## THREAT

The Legendary Blue Horizon closed abruptly in 2010 and is currently threatened with demolition to accommodate parking associated with a proposed hotel development. In 2011, hotel developers proposed a plan that would build a hotel adjacent to the Legendary Blue Horizon and preserve the auditorium as the hotel's ballroom and event space. A \$6 million Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program grant was awarded to the project, and Philadelphia City Council passed a zoning change to allow a taller addition on the site to accommodate the preservation of the auditorium. However, in June 2013, the developers revealed new plans that would demolish the entire rear of the structure, preserving only the Broad Street facades of the 1865 brownstones. A parking garage for the new hotel is now proposed in place of the historic auditorium. The plan still depends on over \$6 million in public financing.

The Legendary Blue Horizon is not listed on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, so the Philadelphia Historical Commission has no authority to prevent the demolition. The use of state grants and federal loans will require a review process, but may not prevent demolition. The Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia, which listed The Legendary Blue Horizon in its 2013 Endangered Properties List, opposes the use of state funds for demolition of historic structures, and is advocating for alternative proposals that would ensure preservation of the Legendary Blue Horizon's historic auditorium.



# Old Hickory

North Main Street, Coudersport

POTTER COUNTY

## SIGNIFICANCE

Also known as the F. W. Knox Residence, Old Hickory is a 3-story, frame building in the Italianate style. Construction of the house began in 1875 and was completed in 1880, using local lumber, and sparing no expense to make it the finest private home in Potter County. The elegant house is characterized by a prominent tower with round arched windows and a bracketed roof, as well as other decorative wood detailing in the gable ends, windows hoods, porches and more.

In 1928, the Knox family sold the mansion, and it was converted for use as an inn known as Old Hickory Tavern. Through the mid-20th century, Old Hickory was the place to be for evenings out, corporate parties and more. The building has been vacant since 1987.

Old Hickory is listed in the National Register of Historic Places as part of the Coudersport Historic District.



## THREAT

In 1987, Old Hickory was purchased by John Rigas, founder of Adelphia Communications Corporation. Founded in 1952, Adelphia was one of the largest communications companies in the world, with headquarters across the street from Old Hickory on Main Street in Coudersport. Rigas transferred ownership of Old Hickory to Adelphia in 1995, intending to rehabilitate the building as a bed and breakfast for use by employees visiting the corporate headquarters. Although Rigas invested heavily in antiques to furnish Old Hickory, rehabilitation never commenced.

Along with Enron, WorldCom and others, Adelphia was destroyed by an accounting scandal. In 2002, the company entered Chapter 11 bankruptcy, and in 2006, their assets were auctioned off. While the corporation's assets were transferred to Time Warner Cable and Comcast, Old Hickory was sold to Mary Freysinger in 2004. John Rigas was sentenced to 15 years in prison, and his son, Timothy, is doing 20 years for conspiracy, bank fraud and securities fraud.

Because Old Hickory has been vacant for more than 25 years and is currently owned by an individual without the means to rehabilitate it, the building is at risk. Once an architectural gem and social hub, Old Hickory has been seen as an eyesore and a "monument to corporate indecision" for well over 10 years. Located on a large piece of land on Main Street, Old Hickory is not an asset to the community in its current condition.

**“Once an architectural gem and social hub, Old Hickory has been seen as an eyesore and a ‘monument to corporate indecision’ for well over 10 years.”**

# 2013 Pennsylvania AT RISK

## UPDATES

In the 20 years that Preservation Pennsylvania has been publishing *Pennsylvania At Risk*, 202 endangered historic properties (including several districts and multiple property listings) have been listed. Prior to 2013, approximately 18% of those had been lost, and another 32% had been saved, leaving approximately 100 endangered historic properties on the list. This year, Preservation Pennsylvania has the following updates on these 100 properties:

### SAVED!

- **Camp Security** (York County) has been saved! The land that comprises this important revolutionary war era archeological site was acquired and transferred to the Springettsbury Township for preservation as a park.
- The **Hillsgrove Covered Bridge** was rehabilitated after being severely damaged during Tropical Storm Lee and is once again open to automotive traffic.\*
- The **Franklin Street Station** (Berks County) was rehabilitated by the Berks Area Regional Transportation Authority for use as a bus station.\*
- Exelon Generation invested in the preservation of the **Fricks Lock Historic District**, which is now showcased during interpretive tours.\*

### LOST

- **Huber Breaker** (Luzerne County) was sold to a company that is currently demolishing it and salvaging the metal for its scrap value.
- **The Kerlin Farm** (also known as Heidelberg, Montgomery County) was demolished to make way for new residential development.
- **The Hotel Sterling** (Luzerne County) was demolished. The site remains vacant.
- **The Cyclorama** (Adams County) at Gettysburg National Military Park was demolished in 2013 after a lengthy battle to preserve this unique mid-century modern building.
- Demolition of the **Mellon (Civic) Arena** (Allegheny County) was completed in 2013. The site now provides parking for a new hockey arena that was built nearby.

Preservation Pennsylvania will be updating the *At Risk* database in February. If you have information on the current status of any of our *At Risk* properties, please let us know!

The database can be found at:

<http://www.preservationpa.org/paatrisk.asp>.

Updates can be emailed to [info@preservationpa.org](mailto:info@preservationpa.org).

- The **Bucks County Playhouse** (Bucks County) was rehabilitated and is once again open as a theater.\*



- \* *The project received a Pennsylvania Historic Preservation Award in 2013.*

### STILL AT RISK

- An application for a demolition permit for the **Boyd Theatre** (Philadelphia) was filed in September to make way for a new eight-screen luxury multi-plex theater. The demolition permit has not yet been issued, but it is likely that the Art Deco theater, with the exception of its façade, will be lost.
- **Selma Mansion** (Montgomery County) may be seized from the Norristown Preservation Society and put up for public sale if approximately \$5,000 in back taxes are not paid soon.
- Despite studies that show that rehabilitation is possible, several buildings in **Brownsville's downtown commercial district** (Fayette County) are slated for demolition. Preservation partners are working to ensure that the Section 106 process is followed, and are seeking alternatives to demolition for some of the historic buildings.
- **Highland Hall** (Blair County) suffered a partial collapse during a heavy rainstorm in October 2013. As a result, the rear addition to the historic school was demolished. Members of the community are still hopeful that the building's main block can be saved.
- The **Westinghouse Atom Smasher** (Allegheny County) has been acquired by a preservation-minded buyer, but its future is still uncertain. To be saved, the structure will most likely have to be moved to a new location.

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## UPCOMING EVENT

Join  
**PRESERVATION  
PENNSYLVANIA**  
in Philadelphia  
July 16-20, 2014  
for **FORUM 2014**

This year's conference will bring together the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions' biennial training program for local preservation boards and commissions and the Pennsylvania Statewide Conference on Heritage for a fun-filled and information-packed program.

