

Historic Albany Foundation Announces its 2005 Endangered Historic Resource List

ALBANY, NY – December 12, 2005 – Historic Albany Foundation announces its 2005 Endangered Historic Resource List. The 8 resources on this list span the spectrum of Albany’s rich architectural heritage, from the 1832 John Taylor Cooper House at 134 State Street, part of Wellington Row, to the early 20th-century neighborhoods that comprise the Traditional Neighborhood Overlay District in Midtown/Uptown Albany. The purpose of the Endangered Historic Resource List is to encourage interest in and educate the public about these resources. The Foundation will hold a symposium in Spring 2006 to discuss the challenges in preserving these important historic resources, as well as examples of successful reuses for these types of buildings, in Albany and nationwide.

This list updates Historic Albany Foundation’s 2000 Endangered Buildings List, which included twelve threatened sites. Historic Albany Foundation is pleased to announce that five of those sites have been restored, rehabilitated, or stabilized, while two have transferred ownership and are awaiting or undergoing restoration or rehabilitation. The 2005 Endangered List has 8 resources on it. All but the Traditional Overlay District are officially listed on the City of Albany’s Designated Historic Resource List and the National Register of Historic Places, and all but the Overlay District are vacant.

“Historic Albany Foundation has worked with the Endangered Resources Committee for many months to compile this list of important threatened historic resources in Albany. Historic Albany has spent the last five years working intensively with the city and other community stakeholders, in Arbor Hill and beyond, to preserve several buildings that might have otherwise made this list.” said Historic Albany Foundation Executive Director, Susan Holland. “We look forward to working with our partners in the community to find preservation solutions for these resources.”

Director of Preservation Services, Erin Tobin Bearden, announced plans to hold a symposium in Spring, 2006, to focus on finding preservation solutions for these properties, Bearden said, “By holding an open and frank panel discussion with the Albany community most impacted by these threatened resources; as well as through presentation of successful adaptive uses of other similarly challenged buildings, Historic Albany Foundation hopes to spark creative interest in and draw attention to these properties. These architectural treasures belong to every resident of the City of Albany, and their preservation can only be ensured by the participation of the surrounding community.”

The list includes the following resources:

- Built in 1848, **Trinity Church, 31 Trinity Place**, has been vacant for many years. This small and simple church was an early commission of the nationally significant architect James Renwick, who also designed the Smithsonian “Castle” in Washington D.C., as well as Grace Church and St. Patrick’s Cathedral in New York City. Historic Albany Foundation has included this building on its Endangered List since 2000, but believes that its size and simplicity could lead to its preservation, allowing the building to be more readily adapted for a positive alternative use. Two vacant churches nearby currently have redevelopment plans – local residents will restore and rehabilitate St. Anthony’s Church for Grand Street Community Arts, and St. John’s Church in the Pastures will become condominiums.
- Albany’s **Traditional Neighborhood Overlay District** was adopted in 1993, to protect property owners in the majority of Albany’s 19th and early 20th-century residential neighborhoods from inappropriate renovation that would negatively impact the character and value of properties within the district. The neighborhoods selected had a high degree of original architectural integrity and a strong sense of neighborhood cohesiveness. Historic Albany Foundation included this resource on our Endangered List in order to draw attention to Albany’s wealth of late 19th and early 20th century architecture outside of its downtown historic districts. Many beautiful Arts and Crafts bungalows and Colonial Revival houses have been altered, often due to the lack of information provided to property owners within the district. Historic Albany has reached out to neighborhood associations and community groups over the last several months to educate homeowners about this zoning overlay and offer technical services and assistance.

- **Wellington Row, 132-140 State Street**, has been threatened for the last two decades, as this row of five buildings on one of Albany's most prominent and historically significant streets sits vacant. While in the last couple of years, the Wellington Hotel at 136 State Street has claimed the spotlight, there are several other very architecturally and historically significant buildings in this row. Those buildings include the 1832 John Taylor Cooper House, 134 State Street, which was designed by nationally-renowned architect James Dakin and is one of the earliest buildings to remain on State Street. New York City architects M. L. and H. G. Emery, designed the Elks Lodge at 138 State Street in 1911.
- **Church of the Holy Innocents, 271 North Pearl Street**, built around 1850. At the time of its construction, this church was just 4 blocks from the basin of the Erie Canal. Prominent church architect Frank Wills designed the main church, while the firm of Woollett and Ogden designed the chapel in 1866. Lumber baron William DeWitt had the chapel built as a memorial to his children.
- The design of the beautifully detailed 1889 Queen Anne mansion at **755 Madison Avenue** has been attributed to architect Albert Fuller. If restored, this house could be a showpiece among the freestanding late 19th-century mansions along Madison Avenue.
- Albany architect Walter Van Guysling designed the **Third Precinct Police Station, 222 North Pearl Street**, built in 1910. Brick with white glazed terra cotta ornament, this vacant building is fewer than three blocks from the restored Palace Theatre, and Albany's entertainment district.
- Architect Charles B. Nichols designed **School 17, 43 Second Avenue**, which was constructed in 1878, and altered in 1890. This building sits on a crest of Second Avenue, with remarkable views of the South End and Downtown Albany, and maintains a great deal of its architectural character.
- **Albany Knitting Company, 373 South Pearl Street** was built in 1886, housing the Albany Leiderkranz Singing Society upon its completion. In 1915, Hinckel Brewing Company owned a saloon in the building, which was occupied in the 1920s by the Albany Knitting Company, whose sign still stands on the building's facade. The structure complements the South Pearl streetscape with interesting and unique architectural details, while Albany's German community can trace their roots in the building's history.

Historic Albany Foundation is a private, not-for-profit membership organization working to promote the preservation and appreciation of the built environment in and around the city of Albany. Since 1974, the Foundation has fulfilled its mandate through public education, promotion and membership, provision of design and technical assistance, community projects, advocacy for endangered buildings, publications, tours, lectures and operation of an architectural parts warehouse. For additional information on this list, contact Erin Tobin Bearden, Director of Preservation Services.