



MISSOURI PRESERVATION

Preserving Place And Community For Future Generations

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Missouri Preservation Announces 2023 Places in Peril

Non-profit organization Missouri Alliance for Historic Preservation (Missouri Preservation) releases their 2023 list of Missouri's endangered historic places.

FOR RELEASE ON OCTOBER 31, 2023 AT 6:00 P.M.

St. Louis, MO — Missouri Preservation announced their 2023 Places in Peril list via a virtual announcement on Tuesday, October 31st.

Places in Peril is an annual list of endangered historic places in the state of Missouri. These places are nominated by concerned individuals and decided upon by a committee of preservation advocates. The announcement video is available for viewing on Missouri Preservation's website www.preservemo.org and on social media. In addition to the 2023 list, Missouri Preservation invites individuals to explore the interactive map available at www.preservemo.org/we-advocate/places-in-peril which pinpoints past-listed Places in Peril and lists their known status from successfully saved, in-progress, needing help, and in some unfortunate cases, lost. The 2023 Places in Peril announcement is made possible thanks to our corporate partners: Mangrove and Rosin Preservation.

About Missouri Preservation

Founded in 1976 as the Missouri Heritage Trust, Missouri Preservation has evolved into a respected grassroots network of individuals, organizations, and preservation commissions throughout Missouri. Missouri Preservation advocates for, educates about, and assists in the preservation of architectural and historic landmarks that embody Missouri's unique heritage and sense of place.

Information on how you can support each of these endangered places can be found at www.preservemo.org/we-advocate/places-in-peril

Potosi Presbyterian Church
Potosi, Washington County

Mt. Zion Church
Akers, Shannon County

1872 Neosho Colored School
Neosho, Newton County

Equitable Building
Sedalia, Pettis County

Sk8 Liborius
St. Louis City

Washington Chapel C.M.E. Church
Parkville, Platte County

Seymour Grade School
Seymour, Webster County

Photo Links:

Potosi Presbyterian Church

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/44p8awqalmaenx4z4etrl/Potosi-Presbyterian-Church.jpg?rlkey=9eq300784ex94riizugy0ckza&dl=0>

Mt. Zion Church

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/nv1m9rn48zuvwto592od5/Mt-Zion-Church.jpeg?rlkey=heaklc79ssyqtlpedzu3btqux&dl=0>

1872 Neosho Colored School

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/0hociy6r3nthv2ib9l1u9/1872-Neosho-Colored-School.jpg?rlkey=4r2jdnhle3nbng35j7926jx5&dl=0>

Equitable Building

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/0b07k8fr7ga8c5rclysk8/Equitable-Building.jpg?rlkey=mxe4cleoh2wlv6do1olq63w1k&dl=0>

Sk8 Liborius

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/2yga7buydfk13aqbh2r3f/Sk8-Liborius.jpg?rlkey=ui6ee2g3g5zry1md4gy65uinn&dl=0>

Washington Chapel C.M.E. Church

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/p1r8v9rcaqiaiozfpppy0g/Washington-Chapel-CME-Church.jpg?rlkey=ngi5mwv88xc6hzy89ofz3y1of&dl=0>

Seymour Grade School

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/3nangvzscxtr1ngr3qugn/Seymour-School.JPG?rlkey=tighz23yljq8i9v1qljbiv6w5&dl=0>

Property Descriptions

Potosi Presbyterian Church

The new Potosi Presbyterian Church at 104 West Breton Street was commissioned in the church's 75th year to house a growing congregation. The Second Gothic Revival style limestone building was completed in 1909 based on designs submitted by Potosi-native and famed architect, John Anderson Lankford. Lankford is known as the first professionally licensed African American

architect in Virginia and is often regarded as the “Dean of Black Architecture.” The Potosi Presbyterian Church is one of three churches he designed in Missouri, and is the only known church designed and built by Lankford for a predominantly white congregation. While it is unknown whether Lankford was a member of the Presbyterian Church, records indicate he worked throughout his youth for a prominent member of the church who also served as a Sunday school teacher for the African American children of Potosi. Like many small churches these days, the congregation of Potosi Presbyterian Church lacks the funds to carry out regular maintenance of the historic building, which in turn has created larger issues. Water infiltration has caused bubbling and cracking of the plaster and in the case of the side entrance, complete failure of the wall. The bell tower, built of Indiana limestone, is crumbling and the entranceway beneath has visible signs of water damage. The beautiful stained glass windows need repairing. A quote received years ago to repair the tower was upwards of a million dollars. It is hoped that listing the Potosi Presbyterian Church as a Place in Peril will raise awareness of the building’s significance, grab the attention of reputable preservation professionals who can provide assistance and realistic bids for repairs, and help the congregation raise much needed funds to preserve this landmark for future generations.

Mt. Zion Church

Mount Zion Church was built by individuals from the rural community of Akers in Shannon County on land donated by Jane Summers Purcell and her husband, George. Construction began in 1939 and took until 1948 to complete, as the congregants built the structure as time and resources allowed throughout the depression and World War II. Services and civic events were hosted periodically throughout that time. The cobblestone building was officially dedicated on the 8th of August, 1948 and the church remained an active part of the Akers community well into the 1970s. Mount Zion Church has been owned by the National Park Service for about fifty years and is one of few church buildings remaining within the Ozark National Scenic Riverways along the Current River. A lack of funds and maintenance has allowed the building to deteriorate. The foundation needs to be assessed and stabilized, the roof repaired, and the walls replastered. Lighting and electrical systems need to be upgraded, including the addition of outside lighting and safety provisions, and the restroom facilities need to be updated. The parking lot and site need to be improved for safety and ADA accessibility. Current estimates for repairs are around \$100,000. Friends of Mount Zion, a non-profit organization, spearheads efforts to care for the church. They have worked to raise funds for the building’s restoration, with the assistance of the Ozark Riverways Foundation and Ozark Heritage Project. The remote location of the church has made it difficult to fundraise beyond the region, but as an important symbol of the Ozark Mountains Peoples culture and heritage, it is no less deserving of recognition and a chance at preservation. It is hoped that listing Mt. Zion as a Place in Peril will raise awareness for this unique church and bolster fundraising efforts to preserve this piece of Ozark heritage. More information on making a donation can be found by visiting friendsofmountzion.com.

1872 Neosho Colored School

In the fall of 1872, the Neosho School Board bought a small house to utilize as a school for black students. The school served an average of 21 to 30 students a year, with the highest enrollment documented at 62 students. It was converted back to a private residence in 1891 and has remarkably remained intact over the ensuing decades, despite numerous modern additions which have since been removed. The school represents part of a large and continuous struggle for black Americans to capture a fundamental right of citizenship — access to education. The Neosho Colored

School is also the first school attended by noted Missourian, Dr. George Washington Carver and provides a tangible historic resource directly connected to his life. In 2004 the building was donated to the Carver Birthplace Association (CBA) and over the last two decades they have made great strides in the preservation of the building, including structural stabilization and restoration of the exterior. A Historic Structure Report was prepared, approximating that 70 to 80% of the original fabric is intact, and recommends treatments for the remaining restoration work including historic paint analysis, repair of plaster and trim, encapsulation of lead paint, stabilization of the second floor and more. In order to achieve this massive undertaking, the Carver Birthplace Association applied for and was awarded a \$70,000 grant from the National Trust for Historic Preservation's African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund. While it may seem like the future of the school is bright, the project is a ticking clock. In order to succeed, the CBA must come up with matching funds and complete the work by March of 2025. It is hoped that listing the 1872 Neosho Colored School as a Place in Peril will help raise the much-needed matching funds that will ensure the restoration of the school and its future as a cultural heritage site interpreting not just the life of Dr. Carver, but the plight of African Americans in their struggle for equality. Donations to assist in the preservation of the 1872 Neosho Colored School can be mailed to the Carver Birthplace Association | 5646 Carver Road, Diamond, MO 64840.

Equitable Building

The Equitable Building at 401 South Lamine Avenue was designed by W.S. Epperson and completed in 1891 during a major building boom in Sedalia. The two-story Romanesque Revival building, one of few remaining examples of this style in town, originally housed the Equitable Loan and Investment Company. Its most notable occupants have been various local newspapers, including the *Sedalia Democrat*, the *Sedalia Sentinel* and the *Sedalia Capital*. The County of Pettis purchased the building in July 2022, but at that time, no plans were announced for its future. Commissioners claim a call for bids to tuckpoint the structure was put out in the fall of 2022, that a bid was accepted, but that workers never showed up. However, public records from this time do not reference the building at 401 S. Lamine. In March 2023, citizens spotted a call for bids in the local paper to demolish the building. The County Commission responded to concerns by hosting a public meeting and stated that the call for bids was to help determine the most cost-effective action for taxpayers and that no official decision had been made. They fear that rehabbing and making the building ADA accessible will be too expensive; at this time, it appears no official call for bids to rehab the structure have been announced and that the only estimates for costs have come from county maintenance employees and not an experienced preservation contractor. A third option was raised, to sell the property to someone willing to rehabilitate the structure, but the county owns the entire block and doesn't wish to lose access to this one parcel. Also concerning is that the County Commission was unaware and unwilling to recognize that 401 S. Lamine is listed as a contributing structure in the Sedalia Commercial Historic District on the National Register of Historic Places, making any decisions regarding its future subject to review by the Sedalia Historic Preservation Commission. It is hoped that listing the Equitable Building as a Place in Peril will help hold the County of Pettis accountable for this historic structure and their many constituents who wish to see it preserved and perhaps bring the building to the attention of reputable and experienced preservation contractors who can provide realistic bids for an ADA accessible rehabilitation. The Equitable Building is an iconic structure facing Sedalia's courthouse square and should not be lost.

Sk8 Liborius

St. Liborius Church, located at 1850 Hogan Street, was constructed in 1889 for the increasing number of German Catholic immigrants settling in the area of North St. Louis. The St. Liborius Parish District (a three building complex including sanctuary, rectory and convent) was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1978 and is noted as “the first major Catholic church in the area to build in the Gothic style.” Although parish membership dwindled with the declining population, St. Liborius was still able to make an impact on the non-catholic community through the services they offered, and the iconic church building was considered a valuable symbol of the neighborhood. The church closed in 1992 and the complex was briefly used as a homeless shelter for abused women. A little over a decade ago, the church was purchased by a pair with a unique vision for the building’s future. Sk8 Liborius was born. Under the non-profit Liborius Urban Art Studios (LUAS), Sk8 Liborius has a mission to preserve the historic parish complex and utilize it as a skate park, art, music and education center. LUAS launched a fundraising campaign in 2022 known as “Long Live Liborius” and was working towards bringing the building up to code and within ADA-compliance. A massive fire in June 2023 destroyed much of the former sanctuary and rectory, leaving a shell of brick walls. Despite this major setback, LUAS is not giving up and is pursuing all possible avenues to save the building. They have garnered international attention for what is arguably one of the most unique adaptive reuse projects for a historic building and it is hoped that listing the property as a Place in Peril will increase visibility for Sk8 Liborius and their goal to rebuild and continue the mission set out by LUAS. Donations can be made to Sk8 Liborius via their website sk8liborius.com.

Washington Chapel C.M.E. Church

Washington Chapel C.M.E. Church at 1137 West Street in Parkville, Missouri was dedicated on the 29th of June, 1907 and boasted a congregation of eighty members, many of whom were prominent leaders in the Black community. The construction of the church was supervised by Charles Patrick Breen, the Superintendent of Buildings at nearby Park College. It was built with native limestone, a material Breen used frequently, and designed in the Late Gothic Revival Style. Members of the Board of Trustees at the College took a great interest in Parkville’s Black community and many of those who worked at the college were deeded land; there were even plans to construct a “Negro Annex” at the school. While the plans for the annex never came to fruition, it was that goal that spurred the construction of Washington Chapel on the land that had been set aside. The congregation of this “Colored Methodist Episcopal Church” (now known as the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church) in Parkville is said to be the second of the denomination in Missouri and had been meeting as early as 1870. Efforts to construct their own church building began as early as 1886. Washington Chapel C.M.E. Church served as a spiritual, social and visual focal point of Parkville’s Black community well into the late 1990s. However, congregant numbers dwindled as many Black families migrated to urban centers to escape discrimination and segregation in Parkville. The small, aging congregation has difficulty completing building maintenance on their own and also struggles to raise funds for outside labor. The roof needs repairs to stop continual water damage, the restrooms are currently non-functional nor ADA compliant, and vandals have recently damaged the structure. It is hoped that listing Washington Chapel C.M.E. Church as a Place in Peril will raise awareness for the plight of this significant piece of Parkville’s Black history, help raise funds for their capital campaign, and garner attention of potential volunteers and preservation professionals who can assist with the preservation of this historic landmark.

Donations can be made to Washington Chapel CME Church at 1137 West Street, Parkville, MO 64152.

Seymour Grade School

The Seymour Grade School was constructed in 1940 on a block of land that housed the community's public schools for decades. It was constructed using WPA funds and built with sandstone quarried in the region. The material was unusual for Seymour and it is still referred to locally as "the rock building." Between 1940 and 1958, all the children in Seymour were introduced to education at the stone school house on Cordie Street until a new grade school was built. Later it served as a Junior High School and Early Childhood Center. It remains the oldest school building in Seymour today. Like many old school buildings in Missouri, the building is structurally sound but functionally obsolete and obsolescence threatens its continued existence. The Public School System does not have the resources to maintain, let alone restore, a building that can no longer be used as a public school and the longer it remains vacant, the harder it will be to find a new use, making demolition more likely. Water damage from a failed roof has created mold issues and flooded the basement. In 2019, vandals broke in and damaged more of the structure. While there is strong community interest in saving the building, it is difficult to find an appropriate new use and funding. Efforts are underway to list the building on the National Register of Historic Places, which would make any future rehabilitation by a private entity eligible for historic tax credits. In 2020 the Seymour Area Arts Council attempted to purchase the building but the sale fell through. The most recent plans were to create a partnership that would allow the building to be used by the community as a continuing education and training center, but those plans have fallen through as the School District is not willing to sell the property for a minimal amount that would be needed to make a rehabilitation feasible for the buyer. Concerned individuals hope that listing the Seymour Grade School as a Place in Peril will lend credence to preservation efforts and convince the school district that the most cost effective measure for all parties is to agree to a sale of the building at a reasonable price.