HKCF Releases 2011 Most Endangered List

January 24, 2012  Every year HKCF publishes the most endangered list to raise awareness and advocate for our city’s historic buildings and resources. The 2011 list is as follows:

(List is not in a specific order)

1.  KCMO Closed Schools, KCMO

   In 2010 the Kansas City, MO School District closed over half of its schools, bringing the total number of closed schools in Kansas City to over 30. The majority of schools were built before 1930. Most are eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places and would qualify for Historic Tax Credits. Many of the buildings are in neighborhoods struggling with the effects on long term disinvestment, and the lack of available financing makes adaptive reuse projects challenging.

2.  Lane Blueprint Building, 1520 Main, KCMO

   This brick and limestone commercial building is one of the oldest in the Crossroads, built in 1889. The developer of the site, Sporting Innovations (an offshoot of Sporting KC), intends to build an office for a new sports-oriented software development company.

   The development plan—which spans a number of lots—calls for the rehabilitation of the Hanna Rubber building, built in 1905. The Lane building was initially slated for demolition due to structural concerns and to provide parking. However, after hearing opposition from the Crossroads Neighborhood Association, the developer has agreed to re-evaluate the structural assessment now that additional parking is not needed. The future of the Lane building is uncertain as no commitments have been made by Sporting Innovations.

3.  Knickerbocker Apartments, 501-531 Knickerbocker Place, KCMO
This apartment building designed by Leon Grant Middaugh was built in 1909 in the Century Revival style. The building is significant for its architecture and was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2003. The building has lost some of its original components over the years, including some porches, and is currently vacant due to a stalled rehabilitation effort. It is on the dangerous building list and its future is uncertain.

4. The Historic Country Club Plaza and Country Club District, KCMO

The Country Club Plaza is nationally and locally significant although it is not listed on the National Register or Kansas City Register. Built in the early 1920s, this early example of an automobile-based, suburban shopping district has grown to become an important economic center in Kansas City, MO. Over the course of the past few years it is clear that the Country Club Plaza District is losing its historic integrity as original structures are demolished and new, incompatible development is built.

5. Wheatley Provident Hospital – 1822-1826 Forest, KCMO

The Wheatley Provident Hospital is the only remaining hospital building in Kansas City, MO that was established and run by and for the African-American community during the era of racial segregation in the 20th Century. The facility was founded by Dr. J. Edward Perry and run as a hospital and training school for nurses until 1972.

The building has an infamous association with the city's jazz history surrounding the death of jazz musician and band leader Bennie Moten who died as the result of a tonsillectomy. The hospital structure consists of two wings. The original structure was built in 1902 as the St. Joseph’s Parochial School. A second, north wing was added in 1925 that was designed by the architecture firm of Hoit, Price and Barnes. The building is currently vacant and deteriorating.

6. Hawthorn Plaza Apartments—3835 Main, KCMO

The Hawthorn Plaza Apartments (also known as the Netherland Hotel and The Tacoma) was designed by Robert F. Gornall in the 1920s. The building is listed on the Kansas City Register and the National Register of Historic Places. The building is also part of the 39th and Main Historic District. The apartment building is currently on the dangerous building list and is vacant, as rehabilitation efforts have stalled due to lack of financing.

7. Leona Pouncey Thurman Law Office Building, 1505 E. 18th St., KCMO

This brick commercial building was not included in the original 18th and Vine Historic District and the Jazz District Redevelopment Corporation applied for demolition in 2009. This building is one of the few remaining original office buildings in the 18th and Vine
area and is associated with the social history of the district as the office of the city’s first African American female lawyer, Leona Pouncey Thurman. She moved her office to this building in 1955. The building is currently on the dangerous building list and the Jazz District Redevelopment Corporation still intends to move forward with demolition in the future.

8. Donaldson House, KC Art Institute, 4347 Oak, KCMO

The Donaldson House was built in 1901 at 4347 Oak in the Southmoreland Historic District. The house is 2 1/2 story Queen Ann with coursed stone cladding on the first floor and slate shingle cladding on the upper floors. It is a rare local example of Shingle Style architecture and is asymmetrical with a sweeping conical shaped roof, a large rounded front porch, intersecting gables, and steeply pitched rooflines.

The Kansas City Art Institute has owned the house since 1967 and has submitted application for its demolition. The building is in a holding period before it can be demolished. They are willing to give it to a new owner if the owner will move it from the lot.

9. Disney Building (Laugh-o-Gram), 1127 E 31st Street, KCMO

This brick building at 31st and Troost played an important role in the early years of animation as it was home to many of the pioneers in the field brought there by Walt Disney. It is also said to be the place where Disney had the inspiration to create Mickey Mouse. In 2009 the exterior of the building was stabilized, boarded up and the roof was replaced. However, the building continues to sit vacant and continues to deteriorate. It is on the National Register of Historic Places.

The LLC that owns the building is seeking funds to pay off the loan for the roof replacement and to undertake repairs to the exterior masonry. They intend to keep the building in not-for-profit hands and will continue to fundraise in the hopes that the building can become a functioning historic site. For more information: [http://www.thankyouwaltdisney.org/](http://www.thankyouwaltdisney.org/)

10. Kansas City, MO Historic Preservation and Long Range Planning Programs

The City’s Historic Preservation program is in need of additional resources if it is to fulfill its duties. Currently, the program needs additional staff in order to properly oversee the thousands of properties across the city that are subject to oversight. The program also suffers from being unable to complete the surveys identified in the FOCUS Kansas City Plan.

Similarly, the long range planning program is in urgent need of support. The Planning Department has increasingly failed to demonstrate knowledge of and commitment to the neighborhood plans adopted by the City with participation from city planners and neighborhoods.
Additionally, both programs and their effectiveness are endangered due to budget cuts over the next several years and the restructuring of departments and responsibilities.

2011 Watch List

1. Colonnade Apartments, KCMO
2. Gumbel Building, 801 Walnut, KCMO
3. Epperson House, UMKC, 5200 Cherry, KCMO
4. Savoy Hotel and Grill, 219 W 9th, KCMO
5. Acme Cleaning Company Building, 3200 Gillham Road, KCMO (former Luzier Cosmetics, Nelle Peters designed)
6. YMCA, 900 N. 8th Street, Kansas City, KS
7. Marcel Breuer’s Snower House, 6700 Belinder Ave, Mission Hills, KS
8. Ambassador Hotel, 3560 Broadway, KCMO
9. Satchel Paige Residence, 2626 E. 28th Street, KCMO (Santa Fe Historic District) and Buck O’Neil Residence, 3049 E. 32nd St., KCMO
10. Beth Shalom Synagogue, 9400 Wornall Rd, KCMO
11. Historic Churches, KCMO
12. Santa Fe Historic District
13. 18th and Vine Historic District

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