

NATIONAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION MONTH



May is National Historic Preservation Month and a good time to ask the question, **why preserve old buildings?** The National Trust for Historic Places gives us this long list of reasons.

It's good for the neighborhood

- ✓ Preservation promotes neighborhood stability and revitalization.
- ✓ Preservation attaches people to their neighborhood and encourages public participation in their community and their government.
- ✓ Preservation reduces vacancy. Vacant housing and vacant lots reduce property values.
- ✓ Preservation spurs further rehabilitation.
- ✓ "Preservation is making opportunities for contact with our shared heritage, and that is the glue that holds us together." – Richard Moe, President of the National Trust

It's good for the environment

- ✓ Preserving a building is the ultimate in recycling. It keeps construction materials out of the landfill.
- ✓ Preservation saves the embodied energy of a building. Much energy was required to excavate, manufacture and transport the bricks, glass, steel and wood used to build an existing building.
- ✓ Preservation uses existing infrastructure, promotes walkable and bikeable communities and decreases urban sprawl.

It's good for the economy

- ✓ Preservation brings jobs and dollars to the local economy. Restoration of a building employs skilled local tradesmen and their wages recirculate through the local economy.
- ✓ Preservation and designation of historic districts maintains or increases property values.
- ✓ Preservation supports cultural and heritage tourism bring outside dollars to the community
- ✓ Preservation adds to a community's quality of life, an important element in attracting new residents and new businesses.
- ✓ Preservation of Rock Island's historic buildings tells our unique story and differentiates us from all other communities.

In Rock Island, we have historic buildings and neighborhoods identified in four different ways: National Register, Local Landmark, Local Historic District, or Unprotected Significant Structure.

National Register listing requires a nomination and acceptance by the National Park Service. It means the structure(s) are historic and worthy of preservation. It offers business structures the possibility of federal tax benefits for renovations that meet preservation standards. But National Register listing provides no protections for properties when not using public funds. Changes and even demolition can take place with no review.

Becoming a **Local Landmark** or **Local Historic District** requires nomination to and acceptance by the Rock Island Preservation Commission. Designation is based on historic or architectural significance. Once landmarked or listed as a contributing structure in a local historic district, changes to the building exterior or demolition require a certificate of appropriateness from the Preservation Commission.

Rock Island also has an **Unprotected Significant Structure List**. Quite a few years ago the Preservation Commission developed the list that can be found on Rock Island's website. It has not had a recent update but identifies structures that are important to our history and worthy of review for local landmark status.

All three of these lists are accessible on the Rock Island's website as the Rock Island Historic Structure Inventory: <https://www.rigov.org/businessdirectoryii.aspx> Please check it out!



RIPS NEWS

Advocates for Historic Architecture

Membership Meetings

May 21, 2024 Hauberg Civic Center, 1300 24th Street, Rock Island
Tuesday 7:00 PM

June 18, 2024 Hauberg Civic Center, 1300 24th Street, Rock Island
Tuesday 7:00 PM

July 16, 2024 Hauberg Civic Center, 1300 24th Street, Rock Island
Tuesday 7:00 PM Our annual Indoor Picnic! Please bring a snack or dish to share while socializing with RIPS friends. Bring a friend, too, if you like.

If you have requested, an email reminder with the Meeting Agenda will be sent prior to each meeting with confirmation of time and location of each meeting. Remember to keep the third Tuesday of each month marked on your calendar

DAY OF CARING

MEMBERSHIP

It's time to renew

Many of you have renewed, but some have not. Please check your mailing label and renew if you haven't. If you send more than the \$15 individual/\$25 family dues, we will assume the rest is a donation unless you specify that it's for multi-year membership.

Membership dues and donations can be sent to Rock Island Preservation Society P.O. Box 3261 Rock Island, IL 61204-3621



On Thursday, April 25, Deere & Company employees participated in the Day of Caring, at the Little Stone House at Saukie Golf Course at 38th Street. Several RIPS members provided assistance and direction to the volunteer crew. The inside was cleaned out so that it can be used by the Course personnel as a new golf clubhouse is built this summer. Historic furnishings were removed and are being stored by the park department. Basic cleaning returned the house to usable condition. Even the many vines and shrubs damaging the stone exterior were removed in this daylong effort. Another large group of volunteers from Deere and other companies worked on the historic Jens Jensen landscape at Hauberg while a third group worked at Longview Park (and other parks).



Preservationists are grateful to all the local businesses for allowing these folks paid time-off for such heroic volunteer efforts throughout the Quad Cities.



PRESERVATION AWARDS

Each year during the month of May, which is National Preservation Month, we recognize local preservation efforts. We rely on friends and members for suggestions of exterior work completed on a historic building during the past year or earlier.

To be considered historic, the building must be at least 50 years old.

This year we are recognizing two projects – Rock Island Bible Church on 7th Avenue and 23rd Street and the landmarked Leonard Drack House at 836 22nd Street.



Rock Island Bible Church on 7th Avenue and 23rd Street
The Rock Island Bible Church, whose official beginning was in 2018, purchased the former Broadway Presbyterian Church in November, 2022 after the former congregation merged with other Presbyterians in a different location. Under the leadership of Pastor Doug Rowland, the congregation immediately began commendable repair and restoration projects for the historic structure. RIPS is recognizing the outstanding exterior restoration and repair with this award.

With the help of congregation members, volunteers, and local contractors, much of the work conducted in 2023 focused on the exterior of the building. Tuckpointing of the exterior stonework and chimneys was done by Bi-State Masonry, 3511 8th Street, Rock Island. This included tuck-pointing around the existing stones and replacement of a few broken or missing pieces, using the original stone that was collected from the grounds. To reproduce and replicate the historic tuckpointing, custom convex trowels had to be created. This in itself is notable.

The Church also repaired and replaced damaged or missing gutters and downspouts on the building. Some of the original copper downspouts had been stolen, and some gutters were deteriorated. The sections along the South and East Ends of the building were replaced with 7" aluminum gutters colored to match the patina of the originals. In other areas, the existing copper gutters were saved with new, custom made copper strapping and inlay of aluminum gutters in locations where the copper was too deteriorated to hold water. Gutter work was done by Mike Schwartz, of Schwartz Roofing and Gutters.



Mike also repaired, and repainted the building's exterior trim and wood windows and sills. The tall steeple on the north façade was painted off-white topped with an inlaid cross accented in blue.

Further exterior work involved repairing, replacing, and supplementing exterior lighting. Now that the major exterior work has been done, future plans include flower beds and additional landscaping.

Although RIPS awards are not based on interiors, the Bible Church has not neglected theirs. Here the work has focused on needed maintenance and repairs, including boiler and piping as well as plaster repair. The plaster work is being done by a skilled member of the congregation. Interior painting and upgrades to the interior lighting have also been accomplished.

RIPS applauds this commitment to maintaining this very historic structure.



PRESERVATION AWARDS

Although a Presbyterian congregation dates to the earliest days of Stephenson, as Rock Island was originally called, it wasn't until 1837 when the first church was constructed. Although the congregation separated into two factions because of slavery, they eventually reunited after the Civil War. Not long after, there was a second division, this time for geographic reasons: A church was needed in the eastern part of the city.

In 1875, ground was broken for the new church at Spencer and Broadway streets. Although the street names were changed to 7th Avenue and 23rd Streets the following year, the church kept its original name of Broadway Presbyterian. The cornerstone, said to be Joliet limestone, was laid on May 2, 1876. Its contents included local histories, newspapers, and one unexpected item – a picture of the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition buildings. The church structure itself appears to be of the Joliet stone, a sturdy, yellowish dolomitic limestone cut from quarries along the Des Plaines River. Joliet stone was also used for some of the Rock Island Arsenal buildings. Although marketed as "Athens Marble" or "Joliet Marble," it was not a true marble. The various sized rectangular cut stone walls of the church are laid in a pattern called "random ashlar". The "random" simply means that there are no long continuous vertical or horizontal mortar lines or "runs."

Over the years, many of these Joliet limestone buildings have disappeared, both here and across the state. That makes the costly preservation work of the Rock Island Bible Church even more important for our historic heritage in Rock Island.



Leonard Drack House at 836 22nd Street The second project that RIPS recognizes this year is the construction of a new garage for the landmarked Leonard Drack house at 836 22nd Street. Owners Mark and Robyn McVey constructed the garage with a steeply pitched roof. Except for the alley side auto doors, the garage looks like it could have been built decades earlier. The narrow clapboard siding is not vinyl, but is durable (and costly) Hardi wood, a cement-wood fiber material. The gables have wood shingle trim, replicating some of the house trim, and the windows are vintage salvaged double-hung.

Architect Leonard Drack designed this home for his family and it was constructed in 1904. Drack was a partner in the firm of Drack & Kerns, which designed many prominent buildings, including the Rock Island Public Library, London Building (now Quad City Arts and Studio 483), Sala Apartments, and Immanuel Lutheran Church (now Grace City Cathedral). The home has been in the current family for over three decades, taking over the home from Robyn's parents. Because the home is an official Local Landmark as of 1994, the owners were required to get approval for

the construction of their new garage from the Rock Island Preservation Commission, which they willingly did.

Well done, McVeys

Special thanks to Joshua Shomo for information about the church's restoration efforts and to Diana Alm for these photos.