

PRESS CONTACTS

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NEWS RELEASE

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Florida Trust for Historic Preservation Announces **11 Most Endangered Historic Sites**

The Florida Trust for Historic Preservation announced the 2014 *11 Most Endangered Historic Sites* at the 36th Annual Statewide Preservation Conference in Tampa. Each year, the Florida Trust for Historic Preservation announces Florida's Eleven Most Endangered Historic Sites as part of the Annual Statewide Preservation Conference. The Most Endangered Historic Sites program is designed to increase the public's awareness of the urgent need to save Florida's neglected or threatened historic resources, and to empower local preservationists and preservation groups in their efforts to preserve Florida's rich history. The sites are not listed in a rank order.

Elliot Plantation

Elliot Plantation is located on a 2585 acre site within Canaveral National Seashore and Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge in East Central Florida. It is the southernmost 18th Century sugar plantation in the United States and dates to 1763 when Florida was acquired by Britain from Spain. The Plantation ruins contain a sugar works factory, rum distillery, slave village, overseer's house, canals, and other agricultural remnants. The sugar mill itself is significant because it is the only 18th Century sugar mill in Florida made of native stone. Also within the area of the sugar mill is a Pre-Columbian mound.

The site has been reviewed by the Southeast Archaeological Center for the National Park Service, which considers it to be among the most significant and well preserved African-American landscapes because it was totally built with slave labor and the remains of their residences are evident. Because of its age and context they state: "It is our opinion that this property represents one of the most significant properties in North America."

In December 2013 the FAA issued a notice that SpacePort Florida had filed a permit application to operate a commercial launch facility called Shiloh Launch Complex in the general area of Elliot Plantation. At scoping hearings held by the FAA in February 2014, Space Florida released maps showing its proposed location, which includes a portion of Elliot Plantation.

Tinker Field, Orlando

In use in various forms for 100 years, Tinker Field first saw use for baseball in 1914. The first known stadium built on the site was in 1923, many major league teams called Tinker field their spring training home over the years, including the Cincinnati Reds, Brooklyn Dodgers, Washington Senators, and Minnesota Twins. The stadium was rebuilt again in 1963.

When Griffith Stadium in Washington, D.C. was demolished, nearly 1,000 of the stadium's seats were moved to Tinker Field, where they remain today. The Old press box next to the home side dugout is the original press box and can be seen in photo's as early as the 1920's. On May 14, 2004, Tinker Field was added to the U.S. National Register of Historic Places.

One of the most historical events to take place at Tinker Field was the visit from Dr. Martin Luther King Jr in 1964. He spoke before thousands of people from the pitcher's mound in his only visit ever to Orlando.

Major greats to have played on Tinker Field: Babe Ruth, Jackie Robinson, Harmon Kill brew, Rod Carew, Lou Gehrig, Warren Spahn, Stan Musial, Hank Aaron, Michael Jordan just to name a few of the thousands of players that ran the bases of Tinker Field.

Historic YMCA Building, St. Petersburg

Built in 1925, the YMCA Building is historically significant and retains its architectural integrity as an excellent example of the Mediterranean Revival style. Many of the building's interior features and motifs remain, such as a tile pool, cypress beams with historic stenciling and a tiled lobby, Mayan carved stone fireplaces and staircases. The YMCA Building was listed in the St. Petersburg Register of Historic Places in October 1991 and is eligible for listing on the National Register based upon its historical associations and architectural significance. The structure is under threat of demolition and redevelopment of the site.

Miami Woman's Club, Miami

Built in 1925-1926, the Miami Woman's Club was designed by famed architect August Geiger at the North Bayshore Drive location first donated by Henry Flagler. The Club's U-shaped Mediterranean Revival style building wraps around a central courtyard overlooking Biscayne Bay. The Miami Woman's Club building was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1974. While the exterior of the structure has been well-maintained, the interior is in a current condition that renders the building unusable.

Boynton Beach High School/Mangrove Park School, Boynton Beach

The Boynton Beach High School has been under threat for some time, first to an architecturally insensitive addition that would obscure the architectural design, more recently to a demolition proposal by the Mayor of Boynton Beach. The structure is sound, is important both culturally and historically within the community and can be restored and adaptively reused for a variety of community activities. A charrette was recently conducted to elicit public comment and ideas about future use of the property.

Downtown Palatka

In the 1850s, Palatka was a major center for transportation, freight trade, cypress lumber, and citrus sales before becoming a tourist haven in the late 19th century. The city continued to grow in reputation as the "Bass Capital" of the world, drawing avid fishermen and outdoor enthusiasts. The city provides many components that contribute to a vibrant downtown: an active Main Street program, mixed-use zoning, building improvement and façade grant programs, and county and professional buildings downtown. Despite those incentives, several buildings downtown are on the point of collapse; many have severe roofing or structural problems associated with years

of neglect. The economic downturn coupled with a growing vacancy rate downtown is having a dire impact on this waterfront city which continues on the list from last year.

Orange City Historic District

The Wisconsin Company, a lumber company from Eau Claire, Wisconsin, purchased land in 1874 in Southwest Volusia County that later became Orange City. Two members of that company, Dr. Seth French and Hugh H. DeYarman, played an important role in the development of the city. Mr. DeYarman would eventually become the first mayor of Orange City. The hotel he established in 1875, the DeYarman House Inn, is still standing. In 2004, the Orange City Historic District was added to the National Register of Historic Places. The district includes more than 200 historic buildings and runs along the Florida Black Bear Trail, a national scenic byway. The Volusia County Historic Preservation Board has been working with local advocates to preserve many of the historic sites within the district. Some of the sites in the district have suffered neglect or hurricane damage and a potential rezoning along the 17/92 corridor in favor of redevelopment could adversely impact the historic district.

Milton Historic District

Milton is a small town in Florida's panhandle located on the banks of the Blackwater River and known for its role in Florida's timber industry. The major threat to the district is the proposed widening of the main street through town from two lanes to a four-lane capacity. The widening would call for the demolition of some of the district's oldest and most significant buildings and would have a detrimental effect on the revitalization process currently underway. The Milton Historic District is continuing on the 2012 list from last year to encourage preservation advocates and transportation officials to collaborate on a solution that will protect the town's historic resources.

The Munroe House, Tallahassee

Built in 1904, the Munroe House was home to one of the founding families of Tallahassee. It is locally designated and a contributing building to the Park Avenue National Register Historic District. In the face of extreme financial hardship, the owner LeMoyne Center for the Visual Arts is liquidating many of its assets. In the eyes of the property owner, the Munroe House, which sits on prime downtown real estate, would be more appealing to potential buyers if the year-long delay for a demolition permit is initiated now to pave the way for new construction. The loss of the Munroe House would not only mean the loss of a significant local and state historic site, but it would further erode the historic district. At this time, no demolition plans have been submitted to the Architectural Review Board. By raising awareness of the plight of Munroe House, the owner hopes find a potential buyer who might spare it from the wrecking ball.

Belleview Biltmore Resort and Spa, Belleair

The Belleview Hotel was built by Henry Plant in 1897 to boost tourism along Florida's west coast. The building is noted for its outstanding architectural features, with its unique multiple gables of different sizes, green sloped roof, exterior white siding, and extensive hand crafted woodwork. Visitors have included U.S. Presidents, British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, Duke of Windsor, Joe DiMaggio, Babe Ruth, Thomas Edison, Henry Ford and many Hollywood stars. During World War II, the hotel served as lodging for servicemen stationed at MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa. After that time, the hotel began to decline due to

competition from newer, more modern motels. In 1991 Mido Development purchased the hotel and made many repairs. Between 1997 and 2004 a new owner attempted to restore common areas and guest rooms. The building was closed in 2009 following hurricane damage. Rehabilitation is certainly feasible as the economy is improving. The present owners purchased the property a year ago. They decline to either sell or rehabilitate the property, but have requested a demolition permit to enable construction of up to 180 condominiums.

William Camp House, Ocala

Enterprising businessman William Camp built this house in 1903 in what became Ocala's first historic district. Currently, the Camp House is threatened due to the lack of maintenance and is in danger of being demolished. The current owner of the property brought the Camp House before the Ocala Historic Preservation Advisory Board (OHPAB) on December 1, 2011 for an application to demolish the building. The Board decided to delay any action for a period of 90 days to gather more information on the condition of the building. OHPAB can deny demolition for a period up to 365 days after which time if the building has not been purchased, the current owner will be able to demolish the building.

Founded in 1978, the Florida Trust for Historic Preservation is a non-profit organization of more than 1600 members and is a statewide partner with the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The mission of the Florida Trust is to promote the preservation of Florida's unique cultural, historical and architectural resources through advocacy, education, and property stewardship. For more information: www.floridatrust.org

The Annual Statewide Preservation Conference is generally held during the third full week in May and provides an opportunity to showcase the host community's historic preservation success stories with workshops, tours and events. The conference targets professional preservationists, preservation activists, design review commission members, architects, planners, historic homeowners and many others from the cultural and historical fields.