

# LANDMARKS **LETTER**

## Most Endangered Buildings

### FIRMIN DESLOGE HOSPITAL AND DESLOGE CHAPEL

Completed between 1931 and 1933, the Firmin Desloge Hospital Tower and Desloge Chapel ("Christ the Crucified King Chapel") are among St. Louis' most recognizable buildings. Designed by Study & Farrar with Arthur Widmer, and Ralph Adams Cram, the buildings are fabulous examples of two twentieth century approaches to the interpretation of Gothic Revival style. They are also beautiful, sound, enviably located, loved by the community, and ripe for redevelopment. Their new owner, SSM Health Care, may be planning to tear them down when a new hospital is developed on adjacent land. Landmarks Association has authored two statements regarding the importance of the buildings and provided them to SSM leadership. The second letter outlined the fantastic opportunity that the buildings present for adaptive reuse and was signed by a very wide range of prominent individuals, organizations and area stakeholders.



*Desloge Tower and Chapel c. 1930s*

### ST. BRIDGET OF ERIN, 1100 N. JEFFERSON

The cornerstone for St. Bridget of Erin was laid in 1859 and the church was regarded as the mother church of Irish Catholics in St. Louis. Located in the 5th Ward, which is not subject to preservation review, St. Louis' preservation ordinance was powerless to prevent the demolition of the building. Despite a scrambling effort by Landmarks' staff, Board and concerned citizens to find some way to prevent the demolition, the building's owner De La Salle Middle School moved forward very rapidly with their destructive plans. In the end, Landmarks was even denied the opportunity to complete a formal documentation of the building before the wreckers showed up. When we started working on the newsletter, St. Bridget's was endangered; the building is now gone.



*St. Bridget of Erin, February 2016*

### MO BELTING COMPANY/ PEVELY DAIRY OFFICE

No strangers to the Most Endangered List, the Missouri Belting Company and Pevely Dairy have been targets for demolition since Saint Louis University originally proposed a plan for a new medical facility in 2012. That plan did not prove to be viable, and the site was never fully consolidated.

Now, following the sale of SLU Hospital to SSM Healthcare, a plan is emerging for a major



*Pevely Dairy*

Can you guess which building this architectural detail is from? Test your knowledge with our column, *Elements* on page 2.

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**BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR A MAILING WITH OUR COMPLETE PRESERVATION MONTH SCHEDULE SOON!**

## Volume 50 Issue 4

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Elements



The Former Wednesday Club

WEDNESDAY CLUB  
Corner of Taylor and Westminster

THIS IMAGE IS A DETAIL OF ONE of many wonderful leaded-glass windows that add interest to the dignified building Theodore Link designed for the Wednesday Club at the southwest corner of Taylor and Westminster Place in the Central West End.

According to the club’s website, the organization “... was founded in 1890 by women who wished to continue their intellectual growth, stay abreast of the times, and contribute to the community.” It continues: “[F]rom the Club’s beginning, members have worked together to advance culture, education, and civic improvement. Early activities involved Club participation in portrayal of women’s professions at the 1904 World’s Fair, abolishment of child labor in local factories, establishment of traveling libraries, and smoke abatement in the downtown area. Today, members are actively involved in the community and focus on studying the areas of science, history, education, literature, the arts, and world affairs.”

Located across Westminster Place to the south of Second Presbyterian Church (also designed by Link 12 years earlier) the cornerstone of the Wednesday Club was laid in April of 1908 and by October of that year the building was complete. Link’s austere design was intended to reflect the values of the club, which according to the Post Dispatch, meant that the exterior displayed “no effort at ornament” and was “severely plain.” Arguably the building is better described as “stately” or “decorous” with wide overhanging eaves, contrasting brick and stucco panels, leaded glass lights, geometric patterns executed in glazed brick, and tall round-arch window openings on either end of the symmetrical façade. The centerpiece of the building’s

JOIN US!

Come and learn more about  
these efforts and explore this  
magnificent building!

**Saturday, April 30 from 1:30pm–3:00pm**  
Reservations required. The cost is \$20 for members of Landmarks Association and the Wednesday Club, and \$30 for guests. All proceeds go to support Landmarks Association and the maintenance of the former Wednesday Club building.

**To Make Reservations:** Call or Email Susan Tschetter 314-421-6474 or stschetter@landmarks-stl.org

first floor is a lecture hall with seating for 500 people. The second floor has a large reception hall with a leaded glass skylight, library, reading room, beautiful half-timbered “session” room, and rich mahogany and oak paneling throughout.

For sixty five years the Club occupied Link’s building in the Central West End before moving to its present location on Ladue Road in St. Louis County in 1973. Following the Club’s departure in 1973, the building was used by a non-profit educational organization before entering a state of maintained vacancy in recent years. Currently an effort is underway to re-activate the building and put it back into productive use.

Perspectives: Tim Dunn, the Vitrolite Man

by Andrew Weil

A COMMON FEATURE OF many streamline storefronts, lobbies and restrooms that were built or retrofitted in the 1920s, 30s and 40s, pigmented structural glass enjoyed a brief, but wild popularity among architects and interior designers working in the Art Moderne mode. The story of pigmented structural glass begins with the Marietta Glass Manufacturing Company of Indianapolis in 1900. Marketed as a substitute for marble, Marietta branded its product “Sani-Onyx” which referenced both its polished stone appearance and the sanitary advantages it enjoyed over porous stone surfaces. Shortly thereafter both Penn-American Plate Glass and Libby-Owens-Ford Glass began production of similar materials branded “Carrara” and “Vitrolite” respectively. Initially, the material was used for industrial purposes in environments that needed to be kept clean such as the interiors of refrigeration units.

According to the National Park Service’s Preservation Brief Number 12, the first large scale use of the material as wall cladding was in the restrooms of Cass Gilbert’s Woolworth Building (231 Broadway, Manhattan), which opened in 1913. Interestingly, it is likely that the design work for the Woolworth Building overlapped with that done by Gilbert for the central library in downtown St. Louis (completed 1912), though no evidence has been found to indicate that the new material was employed in this much more traditional design.

The popularity of pigmented architectural glass as a cladding material really took off after the “International Exposition of Modern Industrial and Decorative Arts” in Paris in 1925. The term Art Deco is derived from the name of this exposition and it is this movement along with Streamline and Moderne architectural styles that found a use for, and encouraged advances in the application of the material in the middle third of the 20th century. During this period, materials like glass block and pigmented architectural glass were used both as components of contemporary building designs, but also commonly employed to modernize older, more traditional buildings. Indeed, New Deal programs such as low interest loans from the Federal Housing Administration and the “Modernize Main Street” contest (organized by The Architectural Record and Libby-Owens-Ford Glass) created conditions that encouraged many property owners to update the appearance of older buildings.

Structural glass is frequently known in different regions by different individual brand names depending on which company had dominance of distribution in a given area. The major players in the industry included Vitrolite, Sani-Onyx, and Carrara. According to Tim Dunn, a tradesman who has specialized in the material for over thirty years, St. Louis started off as Sani-Onyx territory. The material was distributed locally by companies such as Hadley-Dean Glass. Later, St. Louis distributors switched to Vitrolite after a 1931 Federal Trade Commission ruling (prompted by a petition from



Grand Island (Nebraska) Theater

the National Association of Marble Dealers) prohibited the use of the name “Sani-Onyx” because they claimed it dishonestly implied that the material was a natural stone product.

Most commonly, pigmented structural glass is found as a wall covering on storefronts and in kitchens and bathrooms, although it was used to fabricate a wide range of other products including table tops, lamp bases and desktop pen sets. Architectural applications are frequently fairly simple in terms of their color palate with most installations opting for a monochromatic or dichromatic scheme. A remarkable exception to this pattern once existed in the lobby of the Hadley-Dean Glass Company downtown at 11th and Lucas. There the versatility of the product was demonstrated by an elaborate, variegated Egyptian Revival design by St. Louis architect Oscar Enders. Installed in 1928, essentially all of this unique composition was either destroyed or salvaged during a 2004 conversion of the former Hadley-Dean lobby into a restaurant space.

While the popularity of structural glass as a building material faded as the 20th century progressed, today interest is reviving in Art Deco and Moderne aesthetics. Also, many buildings that date to the 1920s and 1930s are being restored after years of neglect, resulting in increased demand for salvaged materials and tradespeople who know how to work with them. Among the most experienced of these craftsmen is St. Louis’ own Tim Dunn.

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new hospital, which once again will presumably call for the removal of the Pevely and MO Belting buildings. Hopefully the new buildings will justify the sacrifice with an attractive contemporary design that restores some density to this otherwise windswept intersection. In a city that has a nasty tendency to replace historic buildings with parking lots, the new hospital represents an exciting opportunity to demonstrate that in some cases, “out with the old and in with the new” doesn’t have to be a step in the wrong direction.

**ST. AUGUSTINE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH, 3114 LISMORE**

According to the National Register nomination for St. Augustine’s church, when its cornerstone was laid in 1896, 10,000 people gathered to watch. Built to serve a booming German Catholic population in the St. Louis Place neighborhood, the church remained part of the St. Louis Archdiocese until closure in 1982. Designed by German born architect Louis Wessbecher (who also designed St. Stanislaus and Bethlehem Lutheran [demolished 2014]), the building has a distinctive German Gothic character and still contains stunning stained glass windows by Emil Frei. Historian Mi Mi Stirtz successfully nominated the building to the National Register of Historic Places in 1986, and it is also recognized as a City Landmark. Unfortunately, neither of these designations has the ability to protect the building from the decay of deferred maintenance and the vandals and scavengers that have descended since the current owner, Last Awakening Christian Outreach, stopped using the building. A recent inspection by a concerned activist resulted in the following description: “open windows, rotting roof, missing gutters, melting floor; the rectory, which had been in good shape, has been pillaged for its windows.” St. Augustine’s is yet another unfortunate example of the plight of St. Louis’ ecclesiastical architecture, particularly in struggling areas of the north side.

**4225–29 DUNCAN, REMAINS OF THE MUTUAL BREWING COMPANY**

In 2015, Cortex tore down the 1919 Case Threshing (Brauer Supply) Building at Forest Park and Boyle. A few months later, they destroyed the attractive office building of the Empire Brewery at 311 S. Sarah. While no plans have been announced for the latter site, we wonder if they know the empty parcel is the footprint of the old Rock Spring Catholic Cemetery? The next buildings to be destroyed are the remains of the Mutual Brewing Company at 4235-39 Duncan. According to “St. Louis Brews, 200 Years of Brewing in St. Louis” construction of Mutual began in 1912. Historic images demonstrate that the brewery complex was a very substantial operation, but within a year of completion, angry creditors initiated bankruptcy proceedings and by 1917 the company’s assets were auctioned. The following year Prohibition began and beer was never again brewed at this facility. While Cortex likes to use words like “sustainable” and “innovative” to describe its activities, it seems ironic that so many of the interesting and unique buildings that already exist in its redevelopment zone are being regarded as impediments rather than assets. Cortex, we love you, but your “urban” campus could be much cooler with a more convincing mix of old and new.

**CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL (ORIGINALLY YEATMAN), 3616 GARRISON AVENUE**

Designed by William Ittner in 1902, Yeatman was the match for McKinley, which was constructed simultaneously on the south side. Ittner’s only high schools, both were constructed to alleviate crowding at the city’s single high school on North Grand. Yeatman is an illustration of Ittner’s preference for “Jacobethan” design with five story stair towers flanking a monumental entry, limestone friezes, quoins, belt courses, mullions and window surrounds. The building was closed in 2004 and sat empty though largely intact for eight years before a developer hired Landmarks Association to nominate the building to the National Register of Historic Places. While the listing was successful, it’s rehabilitation never took place and the building was overrun by thieves and vandals. In 2015 the SLPS approved an application to demolish the building for brick salvage. That plan also fell through. Now the building stands open to the elements with all the copper roofing, flashing, gutters and even some stone window surrounds stolen.



*Remains of Missouri Belting Company*



*St. Augustine's Roman Catholic Church*



*Remains of Mutual Brewing Co.*



*Central High School*

**HEMPSTEAD SCHOOL, 5872 MINERVA**

A carryover from last year, Hempstead School continues to languish and deteriorate. In May of 2014, a fire swept through the upper floors of the building in the Hamilton Heights neighborhood of north St. Louis. Vacant since 2003, the Ittner-designed school was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2007, the year it turned 100 years old. Despite efforts by SLPS Real Estate Director Walker Gaffney and Landmarks Association to find a new owner for the building (structurally sound, but severely damaged by the fire) so far nobody has stepped forward with a viable plan for reuse. While Mr. Gaffney’s proactive approach toward marketing vacant schools (illustrated by the public tours and the solicitation of input that took place over the course of last summer) is generating positive outcomes for a number of important buildings, Hempstead’s condition and location pose significant impediments to redevelopment.



*Hempstead School*

**BUILDINGS IN THE FOOTPRINT OF THE PROPOSED RELOCATION SITE FOR THE NATIONAL GEOSPATIAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY**

While the retention of 3,100 NGA jobs in the city is a necessity, the relocation of the facility to north St. Louis will certainly have a negative impact on some historic architecture, residents, businesses and institutions in its path. While many residents have accepted buyout offers, others have resisted relocation and the threat of eminent domain. In at least one case, the city has agreed to physically move a house to satisfy a resident. While expensive, such a practice could be seen as an equitable solution for people who want to remain in their homes. As Paul Hohmann of the Vanishing StL Blog points out, if done strategically such a practice could actually strengthen surrounding blocks by filling in vacant lots.

The largest historic building that is threatened is the former Buster Brown factory at 1526 N. Jefferson. Listed in the National Register by Landmarks’ Association in 2004, the building was built for the LaPrelle-Williams Shoe Company and acquired by Brown in 1904. Today the building is in good shape and is occupied by a company that sells countertops and cabinets. This and other buildings on the fringes of the project area could be spared by some flexibility in the site plan. Again as Paul Hohmann points out, the NGA’s own specifications require a minimum footprint of just 50 acres, not the 99 that comprise the current proposal. Of course, given this consideration perhaps it is legitimate to ask how many buildings could have been saved and residents left in place by using the adjacent 33 acre Pruitt-Igoe site (already vacant and owned by the city) to make up the lion’s share of the needed land?



*Buster Brown Blue Ribbon Shoe Factory*



*2600 Block N. Market*

**MERAMEC RIVER ROUTE 66 BRIDGE**

Located in Missouri’s Route 66 Park (St. Louis County), the bridge was constructed in 1931-32 to serve the needs of America’s new federal highway. Established in 1926, U.S. (Route) 66 is an international attraction that draws thousands of tourists each year. This is good news for Missouri and a solid economic reason to embrace surviving historic resources that tell the story of this iconic highway. The Meramec River Bridge is a unique three-span, rigid-connected Warren deck truss. With such a bridge, the trusses are below the deck; If you flipped it upside down, it would look more like the Chain of Rocks Bridge in St. Louis, which carries Route 66 across the Mississippi River. Listed in the National Register of Historic Places as an engineering achievement and for its association with transportation history, the bridge is the only Warren truss span that serves Route 66 in Missouri. Missouri State Parks has agreed to take over ownership of the bridge and preserve it as a component of the surrounding Route 66 State Park if an endowment of \$650,000 can be raised by the end of 2016. Currently many entities including the Route 66 Association of Missouri, Great Rivers Greenway, Trailnet, Landmarks Association of St. Louis, St. Louis County Parks & Recreation, the Missouri Open Space Council and Missouri Alliance for Historic Preservation are working to raise the needed funds. If you would like to make a donation to the effort visit **www.gofundme.com** and search for “Route 66 Bridge.” If the money can’t be raised, the bridge will be demolished in 2017.



*Photo courtesy of Joe Sonderman*

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HENRY L. WOLFNER MEMORIAL LIBRARY FOR THE BLIND,  
3842-44 OLIVE STREET

A carryover from last year’s list, The National Register listed Wolfner Library Complex consists of two buildings constructed in 1898 and 1904 by Shepley, Rutan & Coolidge and Mauran, Russell & Garden respectively. Originally built as the Lindell Exchange for the Bell Telephone Company, the buildings were repurposed in 1938 and put into service as the first “stand alone” library for blind in the United States. By 1940 only the Library of Congress exceeded Wolfner in its collections and circulation of Braille and “talking” books. The facility closed at this location in 1971 and merged with the Missouri State Library in Jefferson City in 1985. Located on a block of Olive adjacent to Grand Center and St. Louis University, decades of demolition have rendered the area desolate and the library virtually devoid of context. Currently neglected and condemned, the Wolfner Library, once a symbol of St. Louis’ progressive nature, appears to be on the verge of disappearing.



Wolfner Library

JAMES CLEMENS JR. HOUSE, 1849 CASS AVENUE.

This formerly grand mansion designed by Patrick Walsh for James Clemens Jr. in 1858 bears little resemblance to the home where a ceremonial signing of two aldermanic bills in support of developer Paul McKee’s North Side Regeneration plan took place in 2009. Every year there is less and less to save of the Clemen’s Mansion and its associated chapel. Open to vandals and the elements for years, the buildings offer a sad commentary on how even high profile and highly significant buildings are allowed to fade into oblivion in a city that lacks the will and authority (or at least selectively wields them) to hold derelict absentee property owners like O’Fallon MO based Northside Regeneration accountable for the condition of their buildings.



James Clemens Jr. House and Chapel

Perspectives: Tim Dunn continued...



Tim Dunn inspects green agate Vitrolite

Known as “the Vitrolite Man” Tim has been salvaging, restoring, installing, and custom fitting historic structural glass across the country since 1985. Based in Maplewood Tim has both a shop and warehouse with an enormous collection of historic structural glass. His shop alone holds an estimated 20 tons of salvaged Vitrolite making Tim perhaps the best source of the original material in the country.

For Tim no project is too large or too small. When I visited him this winter he was getting ready to ship some “Lemon” yellow glass to Scotland for a woman who was restoring her bathroom, and as we were talking he brought up the 1,650 square foot façade he installed on a historic theater in Grand Island, Nebraska. Unfortunately, many people don’t know that the material has value (aesthetic, historic, and economic) and it is frequently discarded. Tim salvages glass from all over, mostly from early 20th century buildings that are being updated or 19th century buildings that are reversing Art Deco era alterations. Such a project was undertaken in 2013 on the 1893 Board of Education Building in downtown St. Louis. Black Vitrolite had been applied to its first floor storefronts during an early 20th century renovation, but the 21st century owner wanted to bring the building back to its original appearance, so off came the Vitrolite. Tim carefully removed the material and then later was hired by the National Park Service to reuse it in a restoration of the WPA era restrooms at the Hoover Dam.

From Parkersburg West Virginia where the Vitrolite was made, to downtown St. Louis, to the great dam in the Black Canyon of the Colorado River, this unique material has the capacity to live many lives. Thankfully there are people like Tim who have the knowledge and passion needed to keep this interesting chapter of American architectural history alive.

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Shirley Fox Bethard  
Daniel Fry  
Howard E. Miller  
Kenneth A. Ortmann  
Tracy & James Perotti  
Laura Rudder  
Timothy Schoemehl  
Linda Stark  
Mary Louise Brown  
David H. Hutchinson  
Robert Mai & Lisa Richter

ADDITIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS

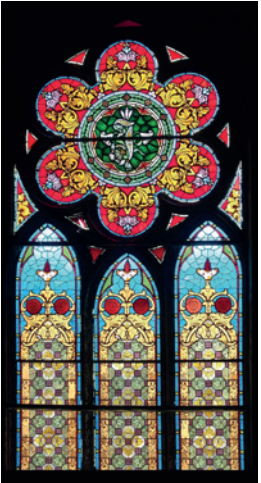
Estate of Arthur M. Branch  
Mary Strauss  
Private Bank  
Nancy M. Hamilton  
Bright Funds Foundation  
Thomas Grady  
Warren Rosenblum & Nicole Blummer  
Carl P. Zey  
Ryan B. Day  
Gladys Myles  
Fred Perabo  
Andrew Wanko  
Steven C. Diesing  
Edward M. Finkelstein  
Richard & Jean Robertson  
Amazon Smile Foundation  
Harold Kalde  
Wesley & Carol Boshart  
John E. Curby  
Andrew & Valerie Hahn  
Walter Schmitz

MATCHING GIFTS

Monsanto Fund

IN HONOR OF DOROTHY MARTIN

Paul & Georgia Martin



Stained glass in  
St. Augustine

Dear friends,

As you know, Landmarks Association relies heavily on the support of our membership to meet our humble financial needs. We would like to thank you for your continuing support, and encourage you to pass this newsletter along to a friend with an invitation to join! Becoming a member is easy. Simply call the office at 314-421-6474 or visit [landmarks-stl.org](http://landmarks-stl.org) and click on the “join” tab.

Thanks!



# LANDMARKS

ASSOCIATION of SAINT LOUIS

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Stay tuned for a postcard with  
our entire Preservation Month  
schedule including information  
on the Most Enhanced Awards

## JOIN US FOR THESE 2 EVENTS!

### A Celebration of St. Louis' New City Landmarks – Apr. 23

Join Tillies Corner, Landmarks Association and many distinguished guests on **Saturday, April 23, 2016 from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.** for a celebration of the three new St. Louis City Landmarks designated in 2015.

- **NEW AGE FEDERAL SAVINGS & LOAN: City Landmark #127**, 1401 N. Kingshighway Blvd. Chartered in 1915, "New Age" was St. Louis' longest operating African American-owned financial institution (1915–1991).
- **TILLIE'S CORNER: City Landmark #128**, 1345–1355 N. Garrison Avenue. Lillie Velma Pearson operated "Tillie's Food Shop" from 1948 until 1988. The spirit of Mrs. Pearson's social activism and community support are perpetuated today at Tillie's Corner (constructed as Tillie's Butterfly Home in 2014), the City's first contemporary Landmark.
- **MAYA ANGELOU BIRTHPLACE: City Landmark #129**, 3130 Hickory Street. Maya Angelou inspired us through her civil rights activism, poetry, published works and public appearances. She is one of our nation's most celebrated literary figures.

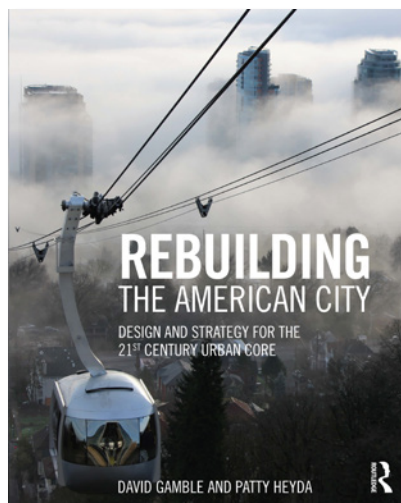
**This FREE event will be held at Landmarks Association**, 911 Washington, Suite 170 (\*If needed, event will be moved to auditorium on the building's 5th floor). For more information contact Ruth Keenoy at (314) 421-6474, email: [rkeenoy@landmarks-stl.org](mailto:rkeenoy@landmarks-stl.org).

### Rebuilding the American City Exhibit Opening and Author Lecture – May 5

An exhibition of drawings from the book *Rebuilding the American City* (Routledge, 2015) by David Gamble and Patty Heyda. This event is FREE and open to the public.

**OPENING RECEPTION:** Thursday, May 5, 6:00–8:00 pm at  
The Carolyn Hewes Toft Gallery, Landmarks Association of St. Louis,  
911 Washington Avenue suite 170

**EXHIBIT ON VIEW:** Thursday, May 5, 2016 to June 15, 2016



**David Gamble AIA** is a principal at Gamble Associates in Cambridge and a lecturer in the Department of Urban Planning and Design at Harvard GSD.

**Patty Heyda LEED AP** is an Assistant Professor of Urban Design and Architecture at the Sam Fox School of Design & Visual Arts at Washington University in St. Louis.



[www.landmarks-stl.org](http://www.landmarks-stl.org)