

Alabama's Most Endangered Sites for 2011

Alabama Historical Commission
Alabama Trust for Historic Preservation

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May 25, 2011

Downtown Anniston Historic District named as a *Place in Peril*

In observance of National Historic Preservation Month, the Alabama Historical Commission (AHC) and the Alabama Trust for Historic Preservation (ATHP) announce Alabama's most endangered places for 2011.

Since 1994, the AHC and the ATHP have joined forces to sponsor *Places in Peril*, a program designed to highlight some of Alabama's most significant endangered historic sites.

"Places in Peril is a valuable tool in directing public attention to the many historic places in Alabama that are under threat from neglect or demolition," said Frank White, executive director of the AHC.

David Schneider, executive director of the ATHP states, "This list reminds us that much remains to be done to help Alabamians recognize that our historic places are essential community assets. These places represent one of the greenest approaches to providing places in which to live and work."

Downtown Anniston Historic District

A proposed federal courthouse project and the construction of a new city criminal justice center threaten Downtown Anniston's historic district. Historic resources dating from Anniston's heyday as the "Model City of the New South" through its turbulent Civil Rights history are endangered. As currently planned, the projects will demolish 14 percent of the district's contributing resources.

These projects represent a significant investment in downtown and could benefit the city's commercial core. Preservationists have long supported the original courthouse proposal that would have demolished the city hall building (1942), but saved the Anniston City Land Company Building (1890).

When the General Services Administration recently announced plans to move to the adjacent block, the number of historic resources that would be demolished for the project rose from two to sixteen. Among the latter is the intact Gurnee Avenue streetscape that served as the backdrop for the May 14, 1961 attack on a Greyhound bus carrying Freedom Riders.

The effectiveness of local and federal historic preservation protection will be tested by both projects. The courthouse project is subject to a review through Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. Preservationists hope to preserve the significant Gurnee Avenue streetscape and find appropriate ways to mitigate any demolition that will occur as the process unfolds. The justice center complex is located within a locally designated historic district, and any demolition requires approval by the city's Historic Preservation Commission. While the city's building authority has pledged not to demolish the Anniston City Land Company Building, its ultimate fate is uncertain.



credit: David Schneider

Downtown Anniston Historic District

2011 Places in Peril

- **Avondale Mill Village**, Sylacauga, Talladega County
- **Bermuda Hill**, Gallion Creek, Hale County
- **Boiling Springs Native American Sites**, Choccolocco Creek, Calhoun County
- **Downtown Anniston Historic District**, Anniston, Calhoun County
- **Elizabeth Presbyterian Church**, Sumter County
- **Gurley Town Hall**, Gurley, Madison County
- **Historic Movie Theatres**, statewide
- **Jemison-Turner House**, Turner, Talladega County
- **Powell School**, Birmingham, Jefferson County
- **Windham Construction Company Office Building**, Birmingham, Jefferson County

The Places in Peril list carries no formal protection, but it does build awareness in local communities about endangered sites, and can help generate support to preserve these places.

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