

Alabama's Most Endangered Sites for 2011

Alabama Historical Commission
Alabama Trust for Historic Preservation

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Windham Construction Co. Building in Birmingham 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."

Windham Construction Company Office Building (1912)

The Windham Construction Company Office Building is a remarkable reminder of a successful African-American business that flourished in a segregated society. The building was home to Windham Brothers Construction Company, a major black contractor that built some of the most significant buildings in Birmingham.

The company established a national reputation, and the Birmingham office was the headquarters for offices in Nashville, Chicago, Indianapolis, and Detroit. In addition, Thomas Windham leased space to black-owned businesses, and the building became a retail and commercial hub in the black community. The building illustrates the influence black professionals exerted in Birmingham's black and white communities in an era of forced segregation.

Wallace Rayfield, Alabama's first formally trained black architect, designed the building. The Windham Brothers and Rayfield collaborated on multiple projects, including the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church and the Alabama Penny Savings Bank, Alabama's first black-owned bank. In 1927, the company built the seven-story Birmingham Railway, Light and Power Company Building, a prominent building located in the city's white business district.

Listed on the National Register, the building qualifies for a federal historic preservation tax credit. The structure is unoccupied and threatened by vandalism. Restoration of the building could help to revitalize the adjacent Smithfield neighborhood.



credit: David Schneider

Windham Construction Company Office Building

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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