

# Places in Peril

## Alabama's Most Endangered Sites for 2009

**Alabama Historical Commission  
Alabama Trust for Historic Preservation**

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## Historic Schools of Birmingham named as Most Endangered

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 2009.

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. This year's list includes 10 sites.

"*Places in Peril* is a valuable tool in directing public attention to the many cultural resources in Alabama 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 assets for community revitalization. They also represent one of the greenest approaches to providing places in which to live and work."

Named to this year's *Places in Peril* are **Historic Birmingham Schools**.

So many historic Alabama schools are abandoned, in disrepair, or will be demolished each year that in 2000, "Historic Schools – Statewide" were listed as a "Places in Peril" thematic.

While most school closings or demolitions occur one at a time, over a period of time, the Birmingham Board of Education has taken a different approach to dealing with their

aging buildings. In a single action the Board recently closed, or proposed to close, 28 older schools in the city. Many are eligible for the National Register and are landmarks within their individual neighborhoods. Some will just be vacated for now while others are slated for demolition.

One important school has already been demolished – West End High School. Designed by Warren, Knight and Davis, and David O. Whilldin and completed in 1930, West End played a role in the Civil Rights Movement in 1963 when white students boycotted the school after two black students tried to register for classes.

Not all schools can be saved, of course, especially due to the considerable decline in enrollment and an overall reduction in school funding. “If possible, efforts should be made to identify the most significant ones and devise a citywide plan to adapt those buildings to new uses,” said Melanie Betz, an architectural historian with the Alabama Historical Commission.

The 10 sites listed as *Places in Peril* for 2009 are:

- . **Grove Court Apartments**, Montgomery, Montgomery County
- . **The Lyric Theatre and Office Building**, Birmingham, Jefferson County
- . **Wadley Depot**, Wadley, Randolph County
- . **Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church and Community Day School**, Hamburg, Wilcox Co.
- . **Allen & Jemison Building**, Tuscaloosa, Tuscaloosa County
- . **Historic Schools of Birmingham**, Birmingham, Jefferson County
- . **Prewitt Plantation Slave Cemetery**, Northport vic., Tuscaloosa County
- . **Uniontown Historic District**, Uniontown, Perry County
- . **Town of Hobson City**, Hobson City, Calhoun County
- . **Ogletree-Wright-Ivy House**, Auburn, Lee County

### ***Still Endangered Landmarks***

Two nationally significant historic sites have previously been listed as “Places in Peril” but are “Still in Peril”.

- . **Barton Academy**, Mobile (PIP 2005)
- . **Old Tallassee Mill**, Tallassee (PIP 1994; 2001)

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