

A Site for Sore Eyes and a Few Sore Sights

The Blue Grass Trust announces the 2009 Endangered Properties List.

This year, we have revisited our past lists to praise the efforts made to save properties and bring attention to those structures that remain in danger. In order to keep these threatened properties at the forefront all year long, we will maintain a running list of endangered properties on our website with regular updates. Each year, we will announce eleven properties that are in their eleventh hour and need our immediate help.

The criterion used for selecting the properties includes historic significance, proximity to proposed or current development, lack of protection from demolition, condition of structure, or architectural significance. Those properties on the running list may be stabilized but not yet saved while those on the Eleventh Hour list are in threat of demolition or deterioration.

The Blue Grass Trust is prepared to work with all interested parties to save these sites. Future generations of the Bluegrass are losing their heritage, one building at a time. It is our responsibility to preserve the past so that those who came before us will be remembered by those who will come after us.

Eleven in Their Eleventh Hour

1. Molly Graves Farmstead, Scott County

For over one hundred years, the Molly Graves Farm was the largest- 4,561 acres- and the most valuable in all of Scott County. Today, as a result of sprawling development, this farm is a ghost of what it once was. To the north and south of Champion Way in Georgetown are the remains of two aged brick farmhouses, slumped and deteriorated. According to the current owner, these houses were in irreparable condition when he purchased the farm from the Molly Graves Estate in the 1980s. Time and weather never improve an abandoned building and these two are showing their age. The Vault Allen Prewitt House was built by a member of this pioneer family in 1820. Though the brick is failing and the house is collapsed beyond repair, much of the original trim and features are salvageable. Across the street, the original 1850 Matthew Patterson House (right) is in a stable enough condition to be restored. Because of the years of neglect, the interior of the home has been destroyed by weather and must be removed. There is enough original material remaining, however, to be able to accurately reconstruct the home as it once stood, stately and magnificent. In the very near future these buildings will be



beyond repair and salvage and with their demolition, all trace of their existence and the hard work of their pioneer families will be lost.

2. Cadentown Lodge, Fayette County

Cadentown, tucked away in the middle of urban congestion in Lexington, continues the traditions today that were established when it was first formed after the Civil War. Founded in 1867 and populated by former slaves and their descendants, Cadentown is representative of the twenty-five rural hamlets established in Fayette County after the Civil War. The settlement pattern in most of the South was one of scattered, isolated sharecroppers, but the strong post-Civil War economy in the Bluegrass favored the close proximity of labor to the large farms of the



area. Communities such as Cadentown provided the labor force which sustained the horse farms that define this region.

A hamlet would include private residences with gardens and livestock as well as schools, churches, and stores. Many hamlets also included a town hall or lodge that served as a meeting place for the community. The lodge in Cadentown housed a store on the lower level and a hall on the upper level. Built in the late 19th century, the Cadentown Lodge sits on the west side of Liberty Road. The lodge was the meeting place for the Union Benevolent Society #7 as well as the site of many political meetings and rallies through the years.

Though work has been done to stabilize the lodge, the structure is in need of restoration and rehabilitation. This building represents many phases of American history and plays an essential role in the story of African Americans in the Bluegrass.

3. Willis Green House, Boyle County

The Willis Green House, known as Waveland, was built circa 1800 by Willis Green, a prominent early Kentucky settler. Waveland was the home of the Green family for over 130 years. The house is one of the few surviving Kentucky Georgian mansions with its broad proportions, exterior belt course, and extraordinary paneled interiors, some of whose vigorous details are based on William Pain's 1792 *Pattern Book*. Green first came to Kentucky from Virginia in 1782 as a land surveyor, selecting several hundred acres for himself just south of Danville. Because of the undulating terrain, he called his estate "Waveland." Playing an active role in the community, Green served in the Virginia legislature and was involved in two of the nine Constitutional Conventions that took place in Danville. He was one of the original trustees of

Transylvania Academy, founded in 1790 and later moved to Lexington. In 1783, Green married Sarah Reed in what Lewis Collins determined to be “one of the first Christian marriages ever solemnized on Kentucky soil.” Sarah was the daughter of John Reed, one of the first settlers of Danville. Their son, John Green, was born in 1787 and later purchased the home from his parents’ estate. John Green studied law under Henry Clay and during the War of 1812 served as aide-de-camp to Governor Isaac Shelby. He served several times in the State Senate and was the author of the 1833 bill prohibiting the importation of slaves from other states to Kentucky, which was repealed in 1850 making Kentucky a slave market for the South. Becoming a Circuit Court Judge, Green was an elder in the Presbyterian Church, was instrumental in the establishment of Centre College in 1819, and helped to found the Kentucky School for the Deaf in 1822.

Waveland is not only the home of instrumental leaders of both Danville and the Commonwealth, but the house boasts features that seldom remain from this time period in Kentucky. Though the exterior of the structure needs repair, especially repointing of the mortar, the interior features are well preserved. The landscape surrounding the house provides clues to the original estate, such as a terraced lawn that was once the front of the house, now reoriented to face Hustonville Road.



4. Penn’s Store, Marion County

Penn’s Store, owned by the Penn family since 1850, bears the unique distinction of being America’s oldest country store in continuous ownership and operation by the same family. The earliest record of a store at this location appeared in 1845, although it is believed that the structure is older. The store swiftly became a center of the small rural community, providing meats, dry goods, shoes, fabrics, farming tools, lanterns, and a postal service. The store also briefly served as a drugstore in the early 20th century, selling a cure to skin cancer among other items.



Nestled in the Knob Region of Central Kentucky, this country store still serves as a meeting place for the area’s residents. Visitors to the store gather around its original countertops or warm themselves next to the Warm Morning Model 521 wood/coal stove. Unfortunately, due to deterioration of the structure, it is possible that this unique rural

landmark will soon not exist. According to the current owner, Jean Penn Lane, the store is in the worst condition it has even been in. Without the funding to fully restore the building, Jean maintains it the best that she can. At this time the store is only open on the weekends and for special events, limiting the income and resources available for restoration.

5. **Lawrenceburg Hotel, Anderson County**

The Lawrenceburg Hotel was built in 1908 on East Court Street in Lawrenceburg. Situated near the Norfolk Southern Railroad crossing, the Opera House, and the Louisville Southern Depot, the Hotel was in a prime location for welcoming travelers throughout the first half of the 20th century. Unfortunately, over the years the hub of downtown moved from this area and Main Street out to the highway, leaving the properties surrounding the Hotel to be relocated, abandoned, or completely demolished. This building, however, is still standing with much of its original fabric and integrity including ornamental trim and stone work, decorative hardware, and stone thresholds worn by the coming and going of hundreds of busy railroad passengers. The sign reading “Lawrenceburg Hotel” still tops the center building where the hotel offices, front desk, and dining room were once housed. Today, the interior of the Lawrenceburg Hotel has been altered to serve the purposes of an embroidery shop, an appliance store, and as storage. The exterior of the structure needs basic repairs and restoration work.



6. **Shryock House, Fayette County**

The Frederick Shryock House, built in 1804, is an outstanding example of the skill and craftsmanship exhibited in stone construction. Built in the hall-and-parlor plan, the Shryock



House is laid in coursed limestone with accented corners and arches. Corner construction simulates quoins with perfectly tooled stones of equal size, rising in alternating courses from foundation to eave. The quality of the workmanship displayed in the window openings is equally impressive. Tooled voussoirs and keystones make up the flat arches above each opening and support the masonry walls above. The

interior spaces also demonstrate this dedication to quality. Though the Federal mantels are now absent, considerable interior trim and detail remain. Paneled reveals finish the openings of the first level of the building's twenty-inch thick walls. Despite its modest size, the Frederick Shryock House holds all the ornament, detail, and style of the larger Bluegrass homes and in many ways retains higher levels of historic integrity. Because this extraordinary structure is hidden by brush and overgrowth on rural land outside of Lexington, the deterioration has remained out-of-site, out-of-mind for many years.

7. Stephenson Homestead, Lincoln County

The Stephenson House dates to the earliest days of Kentucky's founding and is believed to have been built by William Whitley around 1790. Many of the features of this house are shared by the William Whitley House, which stands nearby as a state park. The Stephenson House was occupied for more than 150 years by generations of the Stephenson family, a family very influential in establishing the court system and roads in the area, and descendants of the original settler David Stephenson. A list of early occupants also includes Ann Vardeman, daughter of John Vardeman who blazed the Wilderness Trail with Daniel Boone. In 1952, Rebecca Stephenson Newland died and passed the home on to her farm manager and, unfortunately, it has been deteriorating ever since. In 2000, the Commonwealth of Kentucky purchased the home as part of a mitigation agreement involving damage incurred during the construction of Cedar Creek Lake. An architectural study was completed but no further stabilization or restoration has taken place with the exception of some emergency stabilization performed by the Lincoln County Historical Society in 2004 on the crumbling south wall, which threatens to bring down the entire structure if allowed to deteriorate further. Regrettably, the current owner of the site, the Transportation Department, has made little effort to maintain the property. Though it is stabilized and a candidate for restoration, without assistance, the Stephenson House will continue to deteriorate until it eventually collapses and this architectural treasure is lost to the woods.



8. Mooreland House, Mercer County

This turn of the 20th century Romanesque mansion is absolutely breathtaking. With over 10,000 square feet, this house boasts 10 fireplaces, 8 foot doors, marble and hardwood floors, elaborately carved stone, a turreted tower, large rooms including four bedrooms, a stained glass window, a carved staircase, and quaint period features throughout. There are several outbuildings and additions that appear to be the



original kitchen and servants' quarters. Though the original fabric of the house seems to be untouched, the building needs many standard repairs and regular maintenance. Up for sale for over a year, realtors have been unable to secure a buyer due to the high cost of purchasing the house, \$1,175,000, and maintaining it.

9. Joseph Fields Burgess House

Sitting on a hill above U.S. 25 in Scott County, the Joseph Fields Burgess House is large and inviting. Joseph Fields, the son of an early settler, owned a large quantity of land in this area and in 1839, married Miranda Penn and built this home where his nine children were born. In 1892, the land was transferred from Joseph Burgess' son to the Smith family. B.O. Gaines, who in his 1906 History of Scott County, declared that, "Mr. Smith has the best hill farm... Weeds cannot



grow on his place. The likeness of his home is enough to make one almost turn green with envy of his comfortableness." In 1925, the Smiths conveyed title to their daughter, Sarah Smith Gano and in 1939, Mrs. Gano deeded the property to her son, Sterling Gano, whose daughter Sally Gano Hays owns it today. Mr. and Mrs. Hays plan to keep the property in the family and hope that their children will pursue restoration or rehabilitation of the site.

Though the house is in fair condition, much restoration work is required. The wooden front porch and clapboard are experiencing water damage and the top of the chimney in the rear of the house has been lost. A rare stone kitchen, attached to the back of the house by a breezeway, is collapsing and currently stabilized by boards. Though a tenant currently lives in the left side, the right side of the house has been closed up since the early 1930s. Many of the original outbuildings such as a chicken house, smoke house, and outhouse have been removed due to deterioration. Other outbuildings, such as a cabin and buggy house, still stand but are in

need of repair. A family burying ground dating back to the late 1700s is also on the site. In fact, this tract of land can supposedly be traced back to a land grant from the Revolutionary War era. With both historic and architectural significance, this property is important to the history of the Bluegrass Region and should be preserved for future generations.

10. Robert Sanders House

Built in 1797, this exquisite Georgian house is considered the first brick house built in Scott County and may be the best one of its period in all of Central Kentucky. It was the home of Robert Sanders, an important early thoroughbred breeder, who was also the owner of Scott County's first racetrack and the operator of a tavern.

The exterior of this building is large and impressive, but the interior is the real treasure. The first story room to the east of the central stair hall contains the original walnut mantelpiece and paneling. Detailing includes scallops, large reeding, fretwork, cornice, and chair rail, all in the original, unpainted walnut. To the right of the fireplace is a bookshelf with doors containing small panes of glass and to the right is a closet which once housed an early stairway. The rest of the house preserves original mantels, trim, and floorboards. An early addition is still attached, though highly deteriorated, to the back of the house and a well pump and old faucet are still on the site.



Looking down to Cane Run Creek and across acres of rolling hills, this site is simply beautiful. Standing in front of this house and looking out, it is easy to see why so many early settlers were attracted to the Bluegrass. Though the farm is still in operation, this house has been used for storage over the years and has been neglected. Without attention, it will continue to deteriorate.

11. 412 West Third Street



This eclectic house on West Second Street is a grab bag of architectural features and details. The brick arch that covers the front porch and the many additions create an asymmetrical and uncoordinated appearance, yet as a whole are surprisingly aesthetic. The historic homes that line this street contribute to the beautiful and engaging streetscape. Unfortunately, this home

may not be one of them in the future. The Division of Code Enforcement has established this house as “unfit for human habitation.” The structure’s Chicago owner seems uninterested in restoring the property and has thus far been complacent in efforts to sell, though it has been listed for years. At this time, there is no functional kitchen no running water, no bathrooms, and the electric and plumbing will need to be completely replaced.

These properties are all significant to the history and character of the Bluegrass. It is important that they be recognized and preserved. While some properties would ideally be returned to single family residences, others have the potential to be a restaurant or a bed and breakfast. The Blue Grass Trust would like to partner with the owners to find funding for restoration, conduct research and documentation, or help secure preservation minded buyers. There are many ways that you can help save these properties. For more information about how to get involved, contact Alison Carter.

A Second Chance

1. Cadentown School

Listed in 2001, the Cadentown School was deteriorated and threatened by the residential development encroaching on this historic hamlet. The school was constructed in 1922 as a result of the Rosenwald education initiative. Julius Rosenwald collaborated with Booker T. Washington in developing a plan to improve African American education and facilitate the construction of schools in rural southern African American communities. After Washington’s death, Rosenwald established a plan to construct schools throughout the south, in which he paid one third of the



cost of construction, but only in communities where strong financial and social commitment to education of African American rural residents existed. Of the 557 Rosenwald buildings constructed, no more than five remain today in Kentucky. Thankfully, the Cadentown School is one of them. Restored and maintained, the building is now residential and contributes to the character and integrity of Cadentown.

2. Williamson Price House

At 2497 Liberty Road, the Williamson Price House was listed in 2000 as endangered due to development. Constructed in 1805 by Williamson Price, the house has an unusual seven-panel front door with sidelights, reed pilasters, and an elliptical fanlight which contains original glass. The current owners have done an excellent restoration of this beautiful home.



3. The Howard



Located at 316 Hampton Court, “The Howard” is a Spanish Colonial Revival apartment building constructed in 1920. Listed on our Endangered Properties List in 2004, this building was in disrepair as a result of absentee owners and lack of visibility from the street. Thankfully, Chris and Teri Kelly saw the potential and restored the building. Now in beautiful condition and converted into condos, The Howard adds to the historic atmosphere of Hampton Court.

4. 441 West Second Street

Built around 1905 on the side yard of the January mansion, this building was originally part of the Campbell-Hagerman College for Young Women, an institution that was later absorbed into Transylvania University. The 1908-09 school catalog lauded the “modern conveniences” and the locations as “one of the very best residence sections of the city, making its environment in every way favorable while its three handsome buildings and all their furnishing are 1st-class and up-to-date in every respect.” Shortly after the school closed in 1912, the building became the home of the Lexington School of Music and later converted into large, fashionable apartments. By 1979, though the building was substantially compromised, it still



retained its interior finishes such as a marble staircase and mantels. Now being restored, the building will be condominiums.

5. 355 South Upper Street



This Italianate residence was built in 1873 on South Upper Street in Lexington. With beautiful features such as large brackets, hood molds over arched windows, and a Colonial Revival porch added after 1900, this building was worthy of restoration. Unfortunately, all of this historic fabric had been left to deteriorate and was in deplorable condition. After restoration, however, this home is once again beautiful and remains a private residence and a contributing property in this historic neighborhood.

6. Oldham House

Standing prominently on South Limestone Street in Lexington, the Oldham House has a long and storied past. The house was built by Samuel Oldham, a free black barber, and his wife Daphney in 1835. The house was one of the first owned by a freed slave in Lexington. Over the years, it served as a single family home, an antique store, apartments, and eventually a rooming house. These transitions took their toll and the house was placed on the Endangered List in 2000.



In 2006, local builder Coleman Callaway purchased the property after reading an article about its intriguing history. By this point, the house was in dire need of repair. There was heavy smoke damage where squatters had started fires to keep warm, holes in the roof, and the original hardwood floors were not connected to the floor joists or foundation. Police would later tell Mr. Callaway that they dreaded being called to the property as they never knew what to expect.

Mr. Callaway embarked on a complete restoration. What little historic fabric remained on the interior was carefully restored, particularly the staircase. Additionally, the exterior brick was stripped of several coats of paint and repointed, the chimneys were rebuilt from the roof line up, and the rear wall completely rebuilt. The process of restoring this building was daunting and costly, especially after many unexpected delays and adjustments. In the end, Mr. Callaway claimed that he would do it all over again saying, "I have more love and appreciation for this place than any ordinary project, this was community oriented." The ground floor will eventually serve as professional office space while the upstairs has a tastefully appointed apartment. The property has become an important part of the revitalization of the South Limestone corridor and is a wonderful example of historically sensitive adaptive reuse.

In 2008 the house was the inspiration for the play “In This Place...”, a collaboration between LexArts and noted Director Ain Gordon. The play profiled the life of Daphney Oldham and told her story of being born a slave and dying free. More information can be found at www.oldhamhouse.org.

7. Tollie Young House

On the corner of Houston Avenue and Second Street in Paris, the Tollie Young House sat neglected and deteriorating for years. The two-story brick residence was built by Charles S. Brent after the Civil War as a wedding gift for his son John C. Brent. After a series of other owners and occupants, the home was abandoned and became overgrown with vines and vegetation. Thankfully, the building was not lost but instead was completely renovated and now is on the market waiting to serve as a comfortable, stately residence once again.



8. 162 Old Georgetown Street



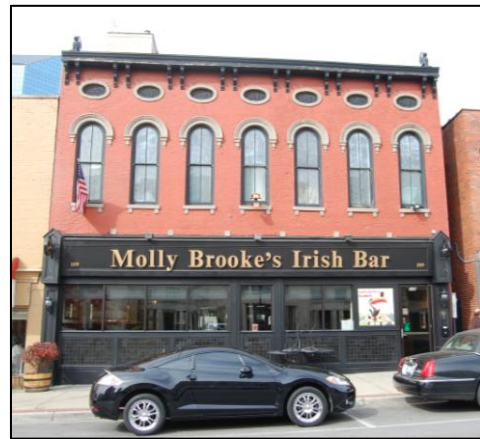
The shifting of African Americans in the Bluegrass in the years surrounding the Civil War evolved into new patterns of architecture that reflected these changes. Architectural forms that were established then are still evident in Lexington today. The shotgun house is an example of an architectural form that has survived since that time. This style is most frequently associated with urban ethnic enclaves and is an example of African folk architecture. Slaves in Haiti first built the prototype of the shotgun house.

The shotgun cottage at 162 Old Georgetown in Lexington is one of the few remaining brick shotguns in the area but neglect threatened to destroy this important piece of history. Now stabilized and saved from demolition, this house is a privately owned.

9. 109-113 North Limestone

This typical post-Civil War Italianate commercial property is located on what was known in the early 19th century as “Trotter’s Row” in downtown Lexington. Prominent merchants and entrepreneurs Samuel and George Trotter bought the entire block of Limestone between Main and Short Street from John Hawkins of Scotty County in 1805. From approximately 1887 to 1902, part of the building was occupied by the barbershop of a freed slave, Benjamin Franklin. Mr. Franklin ran an extremely stylish shop in this building for nearly 25 years. Born into slavery

in 1849, he went into business for himself in 1871-76 after serving in the US Colored Infantry, Regiment 119. The building that Mr. Franklin once thrived in was endangered in 2001 and at risk of becoming a parking lot, the fate of so many of the commercial buildings that used to grace the streets of Downtown. However, this building was carefully restored and is now the home of the Molly Brooke's Irish Bar.



10. 239 South Limestone

This property, built in approximately 1907, was originally a single-family dwelling, then was converted into high density apartment units, later left abandoned to deteriorate, and finally saved. A beautiful restoration job has returned this property to a condition that could compete with the grandeur of the structure when it was first built. Now utilized as office space, this property contributes to the streetscape of South Limestone.

