



MIKE WILTROUT

A proposed Meijer mega-store would flatten 35 of 180 Flanner House Homes, a National-Register listed district. In the same district, Indianapolis Public Schools wants to demolish the vacant Phillips Temple for a parking lot.

The plan to widen State Boulevard to four lanes would ruin Brookview's winding, tree-lined streets and the vistas they create, and destroy 12 historic houses and a bridge over Spy Run Creek. The proposal also violates famed landscape architect George Kessler's National Register-listed park and boulevard system by elevating the State Boulevard roadbed.

Indiana Landmarks hopes the 10 Most listing will launch a constructive dialogue with the city on alternatives that will minimize damage to the area's historic landscape and architecture, and lead to a plan that isn't all about moving more cars, faster, from point A to point B.

On Indianapolis's near westside, the National Register-listed Flanner House Homes Historic District faces threats on two fronts. Meijer wants to acquire and demolish 35

# Can losses be forestalled?

## Historic districts face development threats

**HISTORIC NEIGHBORHOODS** in central and northwest Indiana are in the crosshairs of development and road projects that threaten to destroy landmark houses and irreparably alter historic landscapes.

Road widening threatens Fort Wayne's Brookview-Irvington Park Historic District, a neighborhood recognized for its picturesque natural beauty, landscape design, and landmark houses by women architects Joel Roberts Ninde and Grace E. Crosby. One of the city's first planned neighborhoods, Brookview was laid out by Boston-based landscape architect Arthur Shurcliff, best known today for re-creating the historic landscape of Colonial Williamsburg.

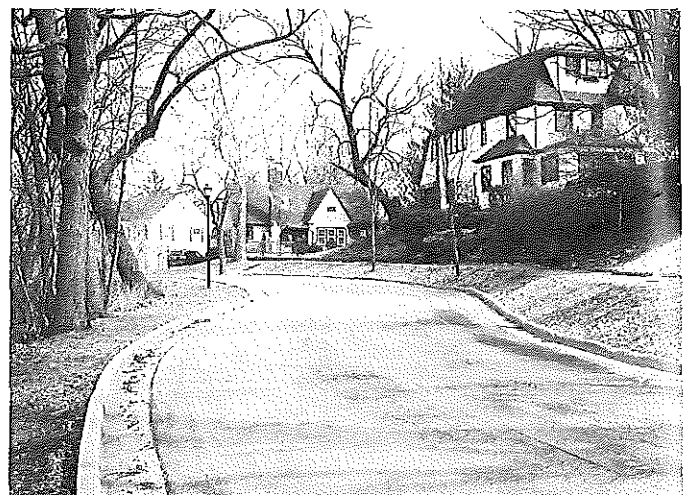
A plan to widen Fort Wayne's State Boulevard threatens historic homes and a bridge in the picturesque Brookview-Irvington Park neighborhood, and would alter the curvilinear, tree-lined street, a hallmark of the historic district.



LAURA RENWICK

### OLD CLARKSVILLE SITE

Erosion caused by a dam on the Ohio River will eventually erase the Old Clarksville Site—the place where George Rogers Clark's cabin stood, and where Lewis and Clark launched their famous expedition in 1803—without intervention by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.



SARA CRAWFORD

historic houses to make way for one of its mega-stores on city-owned land north of the district. On the district's south edge, Indianapolis Public Schools wants to tear down the Neoclassical-style Phillips Temple for parking.

The 181 Flanner House Homes were built between 1950 and 1959 through an innovative self-help cooperative. African American families, who found it hard to secure conventional mortgages in the segregated city, helped build their own homes.

"Builders or their descendants still own more than half the houses," according to Disa Watson, second generation owner and organizer of the anti-demolition forces.

Located next to Crispus Attucks High School, the original Phillips Temple sits vacant, slowly crumbling as water seeps in from holes in the roof and around a wooden dome above the sanctuary. Instead of pursuing immediate demolition of the 1924 African American church in the Flanner district, IPS granted a temporary reprieve to give Indiana Landmarks time to try to find a new owner, but the clock is ticking.

The National Register protects listed properties only when they're threatened by projects that employ federal funds. Flanner House Homes—so far—does not enjoy the more robust form of protection guaranteed by local landmark designation, a situation the residents hope to change.

The Flanner House Homes district represents a hard-won heritage that deserves respect, recognition, and protection. Ten Most Endangered status adds muscle to the preservation battle.

# Real Estate Woes

## Grand house needs restorer



MARY MEARS

**THE FORECLOSURE CRISIS HITS** new and old structures, but it can strike historic houses with deadlier force. If a roof leak develops in a suburban house, a section of drywall gets ruined. Not a big deal to replace.

When the tile roof of the Bowen House springs a leak, decorative plaster, wall murals, carved woodwork and wainscoting suffer—and may not recover if it remains vacant much longer. Built on Delphi's Main Street in 1896, it's one of the town's great Victorian houses.

Bank owner Nathaniel Bowen and his wife Caroline commissioned the house overlooking Deer Creek. Dick Afflis—known later in life by his professional wrestling handle "Dick the Bruiser"—called the place home as a child.

Delphi's Bowen House, a grand Victorian manse overlooking Deer Creek, languishes in real estate limbo. It needs a buyer who can repair the structure before the home's distinctive qualities—inside and out—are lost.

The interior retains decorative fireplaces, stained glass windows, parquet floors, and murals. Though once part of a much larger estate, the Bowen House still holds an impressive profile in the neighborhood, occupying a 1.5 acre lot with a large carriage house and small stone outbuilding.

The home's tile roof, brick walls, and stone foundation urgently need repairs. The 10 Most Endangered Bowen House, vacant and in real estate limbo, endures slow demolition by neglect.