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**HISTORIC NASHVILLE INC ANNOUNCES 2009 “NASHVILLE NINE”**

**LIST OF MOST ENDANGERED HISTORIC PROPERTIES**

September 9, 2009 (Nashville) Historic Nashville, Inc. (HNI) announces the 2009 “Nashville Nine,” an annual list of the most endangered historic properties in Nashville and Davidson County. The Nashville Nine is intended to promote public awareness of endangered historic sites and encourage preservation advocacy at the grassroots level. The list features nine historic properties nominated by the public that are threatened by demolition, neglect, or development.

“Similar endangered properties lists have been very successful at both the state and national levels in encouraging the preservation of buildings and other sites that are important to everyday people,” states David Price, board president and Nashville Nine committee chairman. “This new program will focus the efforts of property owners, public officials, and preservation advocates on the problems of the listed properties. As defined by our mission, HNI will be proactive and work collaboratively to help find solutions to preserve them for future generations.”

The 2009 Nashville Nine puts a spotlight on a diverse range of properties dating from the 1790s to the 1960s that help enhance Nashville’s unique “sense of place.” They include three private dwellings, a church, a cemetery chapel, a federal post office, and a former Masonic school as well as historic neighborhood schools and neon signs throughout the county. These properties are examples of historic preservation challenges facing communities throughout the country, putting a local face on critical issues being discussed at the national level. The 2009 Nashville Nine are:

**McC Campbell House** – 305 Kent Road in Donelson. This two-story brick Federal-style home was built around 1790 by the Hall brothers. The McC Campbell family acquired the estate in the 1840s. Since the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, most of the grounds have subdivided and developed. The McC Campbell House remained a private residence although in recent years deferred maintenance has resulted in the house and grounds becoming overgrown and deteriorated. The owner recently passed away and willed the vacant house to the State of Tennessee for potential use by the State Museum. As one of the few remaining pre-1800 residences in Davidson County, HNI encourages the State Building Commission to initiate plans to stabilize and rehabilitate this important landmark.

**Jackson House** – 3500 Brick Church Pike in Bordeaux. This home is a wonderful example of a vernacular farmhouse dating to the Victorian Era in Davidson County. While the Jackson House was built around 1885, the rear ell contains an earlier building, probably constructed in the antebellum period. One of Davidson County’s finest examples of vernacular Queen Anne-style architecture, the



Jackson House incorporates a bay window, a turret, and Eastlake detailing – details commonly found on urban houses from the period, but less common in the countryside. The home's proximity to I-24 has increased its value to developers who plan to subdivide the large estate. HNI encourages the owners to preserve this historic home and to create buffer zones from any future development so that future generations can enjoy the beauty of this landmark.

**“Silverdene,” Lawrence Finn House** – 931 Main Street in East Nashville. Lawrence Finn, a native of Ireland, retired to this mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, Edgefield “country estate” in the 1860s and lived here with his family until his death in 1881. The Finn family is buried at Calvary Catholic Cemetery. By 1908, his son-in-law had subdivided the 600-acre Silverdene farm for dozens of new homes. With its Grecian architecture and stately colonnaded facade, the home is a replica of Andrew Jackson’s Hermitage mansion. From 1926 to 1967, the East Nashville landmark was used as a roadside “tourist inn” for automobile travelers along Gallatin Pike; later it was used as “Main Street Salvage.” The home was vacated a few years ago and recently seriously damaged by a fire. The property is currently on the market and threatened with demolition. Though deteriorated, the home could be salvaged and renovated for use as housing, offices, or commerce. HNI is willing to work with the owner to buy time for the preservation of this significant Nashville landmark.

**Mt. Olivet Cemetery Chapel & Office** – 1101 Lebanon Pike in Southeast Nashville. Built in phases between the 1870s and 1940s, this Gothic Revival-style building served as the chapel and offices for the historic Mt. Olivet Cemetery until it was replaced with a new facility in 1996. The unique brick building features extraordinary architectural detailing such as a cathedral ceiling with original woodwork in the octagonal vestry, two bell towers, a built-in vault, and pointed arched windows. The nineteenth century building was likely designed by Nashville architect Hugh Cathcart Thompson, best known as designer of the Ryman Auditorium. The Tennessee Preservation Trust placed this building on its endangered properties list in 2005, the same year the entire 206-acre cemetery with its 192,000 burials was listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The historic chapel and office is currently vacant and deteriorated. HNI is currently working with the owners and the Metropolitan Historical Commission on options to buy time to save the landmark.

**U.S. Post Office at 16 Arcade** – downtown. Located in the historic Arcade shopping mall in downtown Nashville, this U.S. post office has operated continuously here since 1903. Downtown users love the funky Art Deco architecture and convenient location. For over a century, urban residents and office workers have used this building to post their mail to locales around the world while enjoying the smells and tastes of the neighboring peanut shop and restaurants. In July, the U.S. Postal Service announced plans to close 667 retail stations and branches across the U.S., including this station, resulting in an overwhelming public outcry in support of keeping the location open. Last week, the list was narrowed to 413 stations, but the Arcade station remains. For years, communities across the country – including Franklin here in Tennessee - have fought to keep historic downtown post offices from being replaced with modern suburban branches. HNI fears that if this historic post office were to close, the entire Arcade, which is listed in the National Register of Historic Places, would be threatened and implores the U.S. Postal Service to reconsider and keep Nashville’s beloved Arcade Post Office open.



**Charlotte Avenue Church of Christ** – 4508 Charlotte Avenue in Richland Park. Constructed in 1921, this local landmark is owned by the Charlotte Heights Church of Christ congregation, which was founded in 1889. Built around the same time suburban housing was expanding into this part of the city, the church is a fine example of 1920s Gothic Revival church architecture in Nashville. Due to changing demographics of the neighborhood, the congregation wants to vacate the building and build a new church on property it purchased two miles away. The congregation is looking for a new use for their old church property after developers for a Rite Aid Pharmacy dropped plans to build on it amid opposition from neighbors who do not wish to see the community landmark razed. The property is currently on the market and its future is uncertain. HNI encourages the congregation to sell the property to an owner that will adaptively reuse and preserve this historic landmark.

**Home for Aged Masons/Masonic School** – R.S. Gass Boulevard and Hart Lane in Inglewood. The Home for Aged Masons, a three-story Colonial Revival-style building constructed in 1913-1915, and the nearby ca. 1915 Boy's School are the only surviving buildings from a larger complex dating to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, when the Tennessee Masons provided a campus to house widows, orphans, and the aged in the Masonic "family." Designed by the Nashville architectural firm of Asmus & Norton, who designed the Cathedral of Incarnation on West End, the limestone building is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Purchased by the State of Tennessee in 1941 for use as a tuberculosis hospital, the property was vacated in the 1990s, but plans for renovations are in the works. HNI encourages the State of Tennessee to adaptively reuse these historic buildings, perhaps donating or leasing them to a community nonprofit organization, to ensure their future preservation.

**Historic Neon Signs** – Countywide. Popular since the 1930s and '40s, neon signs are important local examples of eye-catching outdoor advertising, affiliated with roadside and commercial architecture both downtown and in the suburbs. These flashy electric signs promoted everything from bowling alleys, restaurants, liquor stores, nightclubs, and motels to drive-in theaters, car dealerships, and tourist attractions. Currently there are no specific government protections for these popular landmarks, resulting in the signs being threatened by development or neglect. Good examples of neon signs are located at Weiss Liquor sign on Main Street in East Nashville, Krispy Kreme donuts off Mufreesboro Pike and bowling alleys in Madison and Donelson as well as at the Loveless Café, Drake Motel, Elliston Place Soda Shoppe, Donut Den, and the Walter Nipper's Nashville Sporting Goods on 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue North. Iconic neon signs also grace Nashville's skyline, promoting WKDF and the L&C tower, as well as the guitar-shaped scoreboard at the Nashville Sounds ball field. HNI encourages owners of these signs to maintain them and restore them where needed as well as city leaders and planners to consider adopting ordinances that will protect these local works of art.

**Historic Neighborhood Schools** – Countywide. Nashville's first public school opened in 1855 and the county's first public school opened in 1907; the two school districts merged in 1964. Today, the consolidated city-county Metro school system counts 136 schools serving nearly 75,000 students; the 49<sup>th</sup> largest urban school district in the U.S. HNI first recognized that Nashville's historic neighborhood schools were threatened in 2001. While there have been several success stories, such as preservation of the Eakin Elementary School near Hillsboro Village, many of the city's historic public schools are neglected. HNI encourages the Metro School Board and city leaders to be vigilant in the stewardship of these critical neighborhood landmarks. Historic neighborhood schools are a point of civic pride all over the county and every effort should be made to preserve them.



A perfect example of a school that is threatened is the John B. Ransom School at Elmington Place off West End. This school may be demolished for construction of eleven single-family homes. The historic city school dates from 1918 with wings added from 1926-1955 and was designed by the Nashville architectural firm of Warfield & Keeble, best known for designing the 1950s L&C Tower. The school was last used as the Randall's Learning Center before Metro vacated it in 2007 and sold it at auction in 2008. HNI encourages the city to work with local neighborhood groups to develop a solution that will preserve this local landmark.

This is the inaugural Nashville Nine, but HNI maintained an ongoing endangered properties list from 1998-2001. Many of those historic properties have been saved, such as the Savage House (now The Standard restaurant) and Berger Building on 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue North, which were renovated by HNI board member Joshua Smith, as well as the Hodge House at Warner Park (now an education center), Bennie Dillon Building (now condos), and Castner-Knott Department Store (now offices). Unfortunately, several properties were lost, including Evergreen Place in Inglewood (razed by Franklin developer Robert N. Moore, Jr. for a Home Depot in 2005) and the Centennial Club on 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue South (destroyed by fire in 2000). And, some endangered properties remain threatened, such as Bells Bend, the Buena Vista neighborhood in North Nashville, and historic apartment buildings in older suburban neighborhoods such as Midtown and West End.

Members of the 2009 Nashville Nine committee include: David Price, President of HNI; Alan Hayes, Vice President of HNI; Patrick McIntyre, Executive Director of the Tennessee Historical Commission; Claudette Stager, National Register Coordinator at the Tennessee Historical Commission; and Dr. Tara Mielnik, Historic Preservation Specialist at the Metropolitan Historical Commission.

### **ABOUT HISTORIC NASHVILLE, INC. (HNI)**

Historic Nashville, Inc. was originally chartered in 1968 as "The Historic Sites Federation of Tennessee." In 1975, the name and mission changed in response to the urgency of threats to historic landmarks in Nashville. The nonprofit 501(c)3 organization became "Historic Nashville, Inc." Our mission is to work to preserve, revitalize, and enhance the natural, built, and cultural heritage of Nashville and Davidson County through education, partnerships, and advocacy.

Over the years, HNI has successfully advocated for the preservation of many landmarks, including the Ryman Auditorium, Union Station, Hermitage Hotel, Shelby Street Bridge, and Union Stockyard as well as the Second Avenue, Printer's Alley, Lower Broadway, and East Nashville historic districts. In 1982, HNI established the state's first Preservation Easement program and currently owns easements on 16 historic landmarks with a market value of over \$30 million. HNI hosts an annual membership meeting, publishes a newsletter, maintains a website, gives special tours of local historic landmarks, and recently launched the annual "Nashville Nine" endangered properties list.