



FRIENDS OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION

SUMMER 2026 NEWSLETTER

Northside welcomes new historic landmarks

On August 4, the Iowa City City Council voted unanimously to designate the Fox Head Tavern, along with three adjoining properties on Gilbert Street, local historic landmarks.

The Fox Head and the houses at 204, 210 and 214 N. Gilbert had been in the Chudacek family for over 100 years. These buildings were constructed by the families of early Czech and German immigrants and help tell the story of the brewing industry in Iowa City.

Mary Ellen Chudacek wished for her family's heritage to be preserved. A long-time member of the Iowa City Community Theatre, she bequeathed the properties to the organization with preservation in mind. The Community Theatre plans to sell the properties, but is seeking buyers to help preserve them as historic landmarks.

Standing in front of these four buildings in the 200 block of North Gilbert Street is like going back in time to 1900. Along with others located along North Gilbert Street, such as the Wentz-Stach House (Haunted Book Shop) at 219 N. Gilbert, 225 and 229 N. Gilbert (PS-1) help tell the story of early Iowa City and the immigrants who helped build our town. The Fox Head is also known for its association with the Iowa Writers Workshop.



Each of these properties meet the criteria necessary for designation as a local historic landmark:

- Significant to American and/or Iowa City history, architecture, and culture;
- Possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials and workmanship; and
- Associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

Friends of Historic Preservation assisted the Community Theatre in preparing the zoning application and advocating for approval at the Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council. Historic landmark zoning will help preserve this small but important part of Iowa City history.





Old growth flooring finds new life

Friends of Historic Preservation's mission is to honor and value architectural heritage by protecting and preserving historic buildings. When it is not possible to save a historic building, we salvage materials that would otherwise end up in the landfill.

This past winter FHP saved over \$16,000 worth of materials from the Wilbur D. and Hattie Cannon House, a historic 1884 Italianate brick building located at 320 Melrose Avenue, previously serving as the University of Iowa College of Law admissions office.

The University of Iowa Board of Regents approved its demolition to accommodate a future reconstruction of Melrose Avenue. Its historic designation was lifted for the teardown in an agreement with the City Council that commits the University to preserving Sanxay-Gilmore House at 109 East Market Street.



With the hard work of Mike Haverkamp, FHP's Salvage Manager, along with dedicated volunteers, we were able to salvage over 6,000 linear feet of oak and pine flooring, 28 doors, 21 windows, a rare Oculus window, Purington pavers, and many, many other treasures, some of which are still available for purchase at the Salvage Barn. Jan McDonald, Salvage Barn Manager, worked directly with local architect Parker Dobberstein to repurpose a significant portion of the oak floor-



ing in a new build in Iowa City. Local contractor Top Shelf Construction meticulously fit the old growth oak into the new space, sanding and staining to create beautiful, warm flooring for a home that will be treasured for years to come.

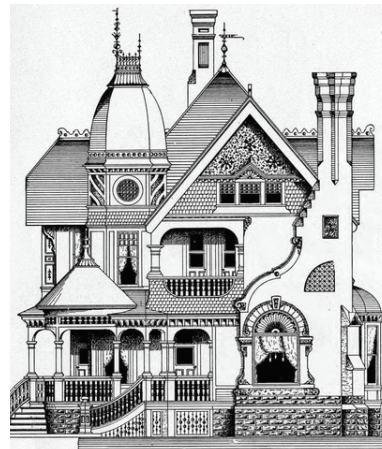


Salvage Barn Corner



Jan McDonald
SALVAGE BARN MANAGER

2026 is looking to be an epic year for the Salvage Barn! We've welcomed a record number of visitors, and enjoyed record sales. We have culled, cleaned, and curated. We have expanded our hours and our selection. Come see what's in store! Open Wednesday - Saturdays, 9am - 5pm. 2401 Scott Blvd. SE, Iowa City. Phone: 319-351-1875.



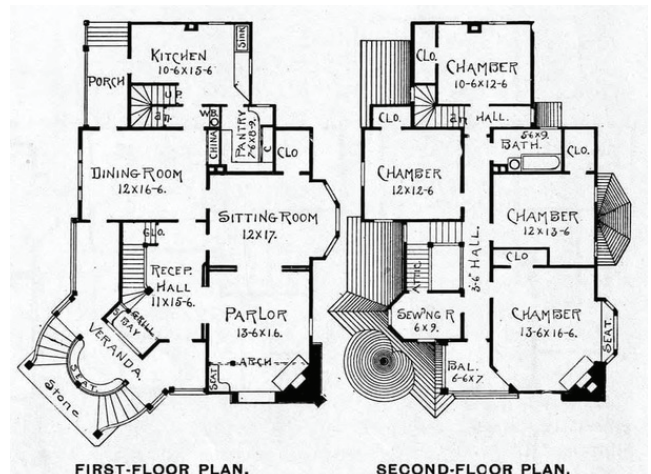
Bloom County House for sale

The fanciful "Bloom County" house at 935 College Street was built in 1893 by John E. Jayne, an Iowa City businessman who sold farm fences and seeds from his store on Gilbert Street. The house plan was from George F. Barber's Design No. 27 in "The Cottage Souvenir Revised and Enlarged, 1892". The plan was sold for \$5 through Barber's catalogue, advertised in the May 1893 edition of "The Ladies Home Journal".

Jayne gave the house as a wedding gift to his daughter, Ella, and her husband, John Granger Lindsay. The couple lived in the house until 1913 when they sold it and moved to Chicago. The house was briefly a fraternity and was later divided into apartments and rooming units.

The 1980s nationally syndicated cartoon strip "Bloom County" by Berkeley Breathed featured the house, which is why it's known today as the Bloom County House.

The River City Housing Cooperative, which has owned the house since 2005, is selling the property. Friends of Historic Preservation is offering technical assistance with the goal of finding a buyer who will invest in the restoration of this iconic property. Potential buyers are encouraged to email us at info@ic-fhp.org.



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