

INDIANAPOLIS RECORDER

NEWSPAPER

Indiana Landmarks Rescues Endangered Jewish landmark

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For the Recorder |

Indiana Landmarks recently purchased the endangered Beth-El temple in Indianapolis. The nearly century old building at 3359 North Ruckle Street had been vacant for nearly a decade. The Beth-El congregation that built the synagogue left in 1958 when it moved to the present Beth-El Zedeck temple on West 70th Street. Another Jewish congregation occupied the building until 1968, followed by three successive Christian churches that used the structure until about ten years ago.

Indiana Landmarks acquired the tax-delinquent landmark from Marion County for \$50,000 and struck a two-year project agreement by paying \$5,000 on the transfer of title. The county may forgive the remaining \$45,000 with sufficient revitalization progress.

“It has a big hole in the roof and we intervened so we can replace the roof before the building becomes too damaged to save,” said Mark Dollase, Vice President of Preservation Services at the nonprofit organization. Indiana Landmarks needed site control in order to fix the roof, work that will begin early this spring.

The Mapleton-Fall Creek Community Development Corporation (CDC) will supply up to \$100,000 in Community Development Block Grant funds it received from the city for the roof replacement project. Indiana Landmarks received \$110,000 from the Efrogmson Family Fund of the Central Indiana Community Foundation to match the public funds.

“We expect to own the building until a new nonprofit group, Temple Heritage Center, Inc., is ready to assume ownership,” Dollase said. “In the meantime, we’re accepting tax-deductible donations for the project.”

Indiana Landmarks, Temple Heritage Center, Inc. and the Mapleton-Fall Creek CDC commissioned a conditions assessment by architects Browning Day Mullins Dierdorf. Two additional sessions, open to the public, will be staged this spring, funded by a \$10,000 grant from Beth-El Zedeck Foundation.

The sessions will explore neighborhood-sensitive reuses for the landmark. Suggestions have included a Jewish Heritage Museum, a restaurant, a daycare facility, and a preservation-centered job training program.