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## Seven Endangered Sites listed for 2004

Four 19<sup>th</sup> century structures, the Interstate 81 corridor, green space around Victory Stadium and boarded-up houses in Old Southwest make up the 2004 Endangered Sites listing of Roanoke Valley Preservation Foundation.

The seven sites announced by the Foundation at its annual meeting Wednesday (Nov. 17) are:

- Former Lonesome Dove Bar & Grille, 110 Salem Ave., SW
- Frantz-Deyerle house at 5901 Williamson Road
- Stone arch from the unfinished Valley Railroad in Salem
- Piedmont-Clements Mill, near the path of proposed Int. 73, Franklin County
- Green space surrounding Victory Stadium
- Int. 81 corridor, threatening historic buildings, natural features
- Boarded-up houses, if razed, will leave a significant gap in streetscapes

Starting in 1996, the preservation organization annually has called public attention to threatened significant historical sites and cultural and environmental features in order to encourage their preservation and stewardship.

This year's list "reminds us all that we need to remain diligent in not only raising awareness of these resources but in continuing to emphasize their importance and the need to protect them," said Alison Blanton, Foundation president. "Individually, each resource may not seem to be important, but if we lose them, we begin to erode our ties to our heritage and our identity."

The former Salem Avenue restaurant, a century-old, three-story, brick commercial building has been purchased by the Art Museum of Western Virginia but its board has not decided what to do with the structure, according to Georgeann Bingham, executive director. "If it's not detrimental to the historic significance of the community, we'd like to take it down," she said. Renovation would be "extraordinarily expensive." Any change in the building must be approved by the Architectural Review Board because it is located in an historic district. Once a saloon and a billiard parlor, the building was listed on an 1898 Sanborn insurance map. Preservationists see the building as an integral part of the historical fabric of the City Market. The unpainted façade is accented with a heavy modillion cornice and projecting centered eave. The heavily accented cornices and decorative brick molding make it a unique structure.

On Williamson Road, a brick home built by David Deyerle, well-known 19<sup>th</sup> century Roanoke Valley builder in 1856-58 on Boxley Hill, north of Roanoke, has a vinyl-sided addition on the front but much of the historic fabric remains intact. One of several similar fine manor houses built by Deyerle, the home has the same brick bonds he used on the Main Building at Hollins University. The property, zoned commercial, is for sale.

A 15-foot stone arch in northeast Salem, a remnant of the old Valley Railroad chartered in 1866 to run from Staunton to Salem, needs repair and attention after recent flooding slightly undermined the wingwall. An 8-foot masonry arch for the planned railroad is nearby and a second arch is in a field off Peters Creek Road, near Cove Road.

Between Boones Mill and Burnt Chimney in Franklin County is the three-story, wood frame gristmill, known as the Piedmont or Clements Mill, built around 1870. The revised routing for Int. 73 passes nearby, but not in the viewshed of the mill, according to Kitty Houston of Virginia Department of Transportation. The mill and a 1929 steel truss bridge are in the Oak Hill German Baptist Brethren community, a once solidly agricultural area of farms, a school and a church. Modern subdivisions and new farm operations have replaced some of the earlier buildings but several old structures remain near the mill.

Preserving the green space around Victory Stadium as parkland—regardless of the stadium’s future—would benefit all citizens and continue to provide attractive vistas of the Roanoke River and Mill Mountain. As green parkland, it would be a natural use for the flood plain and a natural extension of the nearby popular Rivers Edge Park and Roanoke River Greenway. The encroachment of development and inevitable need for more parking space seriously endangers this green area. (The Foundation placed Victory Stadium on its endangered list in 1999.)

The proposed widening of Int. 81 to as much as 14 lanes of traffic in some high-congestion areas would change the landscape for the worse, bringing more air and water pollution and requiring much earth moving and blasting, causing wholesale destruction of some cultural resources, such as historic architecture and archeological sites, as well as the loss of natural rock outcropping, land forms and flora. Lush terrain, scenic streams and historic buildings are on both sides of the highway now. Federal laws have no guarantee of protection and there appears to be less hope for sites standing in the way of progress.

A significant number of boarded-up houses represent an important part of Roanoke’s history—some dating back to 1900 and earlier, according to the city’s website. Their styles range from Victorian to Italianate and many are clustered on the outer fringes of Old Southwest and Gainsboro, both historic districts. If these closed houses were razed, they would leave considerable gaps in some central streetscapes, changing the character of the neighborhoods.

Recent reports that the unique Central Manufacturing Co. building with its distinctive turret might be razed were discounted by a spokesman for the owners. He said they have no plans to remove the structure, listed as endangered in 1998. The old building at Centre and Shenandoah avenues, near the Coca-Cola plant and Norfolk Southern tracks, has been a landmark for more than a century.

Of the nine entries on the Foundation’s 2003 Endangered Sites list, Guildhall was removed but the other eight remain in some danger. The next-door church which owns the Guildhall site on Cove Road, Northwest, razed the late 19<sup>th</sup> century building last year for a proposed expansion. But no construction has been started.

The other sites or features on the 2003 listing were Mill Mountain, Carlton Terrace/College of Health Sciences and Flickwir House/Fralin Center for Health Education on South Jefferson Street, Brown-Akers House near Burlington School, Mount Moriah Baptist Church, dogwood trees, the remains of the Bell house near Poages Mill and an old hotel site on Orange Avenue, Northeast.

From the 2002 list, Fairacres, the former Garden Council mansion on Avenham Avenue, has been purchased by a private owner who is improving the structure, the H&C Coffee sign is to be moved and restored to life but the former Jefferson Street Baptist Church was removed for a health center parking lot.

