Current News – Indiana Landmarks

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| |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | Long-vacant Indianapolis temple headed for recovery  2/12/2014   |  | | --- | | Beth-El-Temple, Indianapolis | | Architectural renderings show a renovated Beth-El Temple. A new non-profit organization is working to revitalize the Indianapolis landmark. (Rendering by Browning Day Mullins Dierdorf) |   Beth-El Temple, Indianapolis’s oldest extant synagogue stands vacant, deteriorating, and increasingly the target of vandalism in the Mapleton-Fall Creek neighborhood. The long-endangered building is now in Indiana Landmarks’ hands and headed toward recovery, with community, civic, and philanthropic support for its rehabilitation and reuse.    An austere, elegant example of the Neoclassical style, the 1924 temple was designed by Vonnegut, Bohn and Mueller, the architectural firm responsible for several city landmarks including the Athenaeum and the former Block’s Department Store. The temple served two Jewish congregations, including the Beth-El Zedeck congregation, before 1967, then other religious institutions occupied the structure.    To rescue the site, Indiana Landmarks partnered with Jewish, neighborhood and civic organizations to establish Temple Heritage Center, Inc., a non-profit organized to preserve, repurpose, and promote a sustainable use for the building. This year we plan to nominate the building to the National Register of Historic Places, recognizing the building’s architectural and religious significance.    Before Indiana Landmarks took title, the Mapleton Fall Creek Development Corporation used a grant from our Marion County Historic Preservation Fund for a feasibility study of stabilization requirements and a long-term restoration plan. With water pouring in during every rain or snow storm, getting a new roof on the deteriorating building is the immediate priority. We’ll tackle that repair this spring thanks to generous grants of $100,000 each from the City of Indianapolis and Efroymson Family Fund of the Central Indiana Community Foundation.    Once the structure is stabilized, we will transfer ownership to Temple Heritage Center and place covenants on the deed to ensure the landmark’s long-term protection. “We’re confident this building will find new life and resume a contributing role in the neighborhood,” says Mark Dollase, Vice President of Preservation Services at Indiana Landmarks. To support the project or learn more about the Beth-El Temple, contact Dollase at 317-639-4534, [mdollase@indianalandmarks.org](mailto:mdollase@indianalandmarks.org). | |