

**TEMPLE HERITAGE CENTER**

**How Did We Get Here?**

Beth El Temple on 34th and Ruckle Streets is an abandoned historical synagogue structure that was built in 1924. It is the oldest existing synagogue building in the city of Indianapolis.

The project to save and stabilize the structure started in the fall of 2011, at a Mapleton Fall Creek neighborhood retreat of some 40 people. There was enthusiastic support to save the historic building. From the very start, this project has been community driven by the very people who live, work and play in Mapleton Fall Creek.

The Mapleton-Fall Creek Development Corporation together with Indiana Landmarks assumed leadership of the project to preserve the structure and develop its reuse for the neighborhoods and city at large. The Jewish community was approached to join this effort. Beth El Zedeck Congregation, which originally built the synagogue, immediately came on board. Other Jewish organizations have lent their support as well. Several cultural organizations and Churches, have equally expressed strong support for the efforts. The project, while centered in Mapleton Fall Creek, has taken on a city-wide dimension. Several cultural organizations and institutions throughout the city have expressed a willingness to work together to preserve the structure and develop a sustainable use for it.

**Milestone Achievements**

Indiana Department of Natural Resources determined that the building is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Application is in process.

Temple Heritage Center, Inc. was formed as an independent non-profit organization to oversee the project’s overall development. The Center is applying for 501C3 status.

A Feasibility Study conducted by Browning Day Mullins Dierdorff Architects identified Phase 1 and Phase 2 for the building’s repair. The first phase to stabilize the building is projected to cost approximately $450,000. Phase 2 for complete repair is projected to cost an additional 2 million dollars.

CDBG Funds allocated to the Mapleton-Fall Creek Development Corporation were redirected toward the stabilization of the building in the amount of $190,000 with the agreement of the City’s Department of Metropolitan Development. The Efroymson Family Fund granted an additional $100,000. Additional funds for Phase 1 are being solicited.

The County Commissioners voted to transfer the property’s title to Indiana Landmarks, following a tax-sale process. A project agreement between the Marion County Treasurer’s Office and Landmarks describes the eventual transfer of the property to the Temple Heritage Center. The current holder of the deed is Indiana Landmarks.

Collection of photos and stories has begun as more and more former and current residents of the neighborhoods surrounding the Temple learn about the project.

Several Community-wide meetings will be held in 2014 to allow all stakeholders to define the ultimate sustainable use for the Temple.