



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact: Alan Hayes, HNI Vice President 615-830-2048 or ahayes@tmpartners.com

HISTORIC NASHVILLE INC ANNOUNCES 2010 “NASHVILLE NINE”

LIST OF MOST ENDANGERED HISTORIC PROPERTIES

September 9, 2010 (Nashville) Historic Nashville, Inc. (HNI) announces the 2010 “Nashville Nine,” an annual list of the most endangered historic properties in Nashville and Davidson County. The Nashville Nine is intended to promote public awareness of endangered historic sites and encourage preservation advocacy at the grassroots level. The list features nine historic properties nominated by the public that are threatened by demolition, neglect, or development.

“This is the second year of our Nashville Nine program, which was a success last year in terms of focusing attention and the spotlight on specific properties and historic resources,” states David Price, board president and Nashville Nine committee chairman. “Two of the 2009 Nashville Nine properties - a church and a school - were demolished earlier this year and one other appears to be doomed, but overall we feel very good about the overwhelmingly positive response from the Nashville community regarding this new program and we will continue working to save the others.”

The 2010 Nashville Nine includes a diverse range of properties dating from the antebellum era to the 1960s. These historic places help define Nashville’s unique sense of place. The 2010 Nashville Nine are listed below in alphabetical order. More in-depth descriptions can be found on the following pages.

- **Fort Nashborough (downtown)**
- **Friendship Community Outreach Center (North Nashville)**
- **Gallatin Pike Historic District (Inglewood)**
- **John Geist & Sons Blacksmith Shop and House (Germantown)**
- **Imperial House Apartment Building (Belle Meade)**
- **Iser-Bloomstein House/Workmen’s Circle Hall (SoBro)**
- **Centerstone / Dede Wallace Center (Woodland-in-Waverly)**
- **U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Buildings at Lock Two Park (Donelson)**
- **Tennessee Department of Highways & Public Works Building (Midtown)**



Fort Nashborough – Located in the downtown Riverfront Park, Fort Nashborough is an 80-year old reconstruction of a long-vanished fort built by settlers in the 1770s. Located on the west bank of the Cumberland River, the original fort consisted of a two-acre fortified enclosure surrounding several freestanding cabins. In the 1920s, during a revival of national patriotism and interest in early American history, a local Nashville chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) decided to spearhead and fund construction of a replica of Fort Nashborough as a way to honor the sesquicentennial of Nashville’s founding in 1779. The DAR hired Nashville architect Joseph Hart to design a replica of the fort. Over the years, the fort served as a living history museum where costumed interpreters portrayed life on the frontier and some of rooms were furnished. Educational programs and tours were made available to local schoolchildren, history enthusiasts, and tourists.

Fort Nashborough is part of the Metro Parks System but unfortunately, in the late 1980s, the city eliminated funding for on-site staff and educational programs. Decades of deferred routine maintenance and repairs have allowed the once pioneering open-air museum and civic landmark to become an unkempt tourist attraction. Water infiltration has caused the wall logs to rot, daubing between the logs to crumble, and roof shingles to become detached allowing water to damage any remaining interior furnishings. Despite these issues, Fort Nashborough is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places due to its historical significance over the past 80 years.

Earlier this year, the city revealed that the Nashville Riverfront Redevelopment Master Plan would recommend that the Fort Nashborough site be dismantled and relocated elsewhere within in Riverfront Park boundaries. However, it is the opinion of HNI that this proposal would have a devastating impact to the 80-year old civic landmark. HNI calls on city leaders to reject this proposal and instead develop a plan to repair the historic site and support measures that would result in the return of educational and public programs at the fort. HNI is willing to assist Metro staff in this effort.

Friendship Community Outreach Center – Located in North Nashville at 1703 Jo Johnston Avenue across the street from Pearl-Cohn High School, this c.1900 church building has served the surrounding neighborhood in numerous capacities for the past century. Reflective of the changing racial makeup of the surrounding neighborhood, the church has served both white and African-American congregations. In recent years, the church was converted into the Friendship Community Outreach Center. A few years ago, HNI documented this church as part of its county-wide Sacred Sites Survey Project. HNI encourages the property owner to sell this neighborhood landmark to an organization that will be able to properly renovate and maintain the church.

Gallatin Pike Historic District – Located in the Inglewood neighborhood in East Nashville, this proposed historic district is comprised of thirteen properties located on the west side of Gallatin Pike between Calvert Street and Virginia Avenue. Local real estate developers platted this particular residential subdivision in 1924 and over the next few years fashionable Tudor Revival and Craftsman-style homes lined Gallatin Pike, an important transportation corridor that shared the state-owned right-



of-way with the city's electric streetcars and an interurban route connecting to Gallatin. In recent years, the entire Gallatin Pike corridor in Davidson County has seen new commercial development, but perhaps none more Inglewood, which has lost several historic properties in recent years including the Albert L. Hadley House in July. The proposed Gallatin Pike Historic District retains a residential feeling and setting due to the number of mature trees and well-maintained lawns. Most of the private homes within the district have already been rezoned commercial and while some have been renovated and repurposed for use as businesses such as law and real estate firms. However, recently several of these properties have been listed for sale, undoubtedly due to increased values of commercial property in Inglewood. HNI commends the Inglewood Neighborhood Association for spearheading the recent effort to identify threatened historic properties, including this district. HNI also encourages individual property owners along the Inglewood section of Gallatin Pike to discuss alternatives to with government agency and elected officials.

John Geist & Sons Blacksmith Shop and House – Located on the 300 block of Jefferson Street in Germantown, the John Geist & Sons Blacksmith Shop operated at the same location from 1886-2006. This is likely the oldest continuously operated family business in Nashville's history. The Geist property retains the c.1900 blacksmith shop connected to the older residence and the newer Geist House built next door in 1908. These brick buildings were all listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The blacksmith shop designed with special features such as a large skylight that illuminated the area where horses were shod with new shoes. Descendants of the Geist family continue to own this property. HNI encourages the owners to develop a plan on how to save this historic place and prevent it from falling into further disrepair.

Imperial House Apartment Building – Located at 109 Bosley Springs Road next to the St. Thomas Hospital campus, this distinctive high-rise apartment building was designed by local architect Earl S. Swensson, FAIA. Completed from 1961-1964, the 110-unit apartment building was constructed with a structural framework made of pre-cast concrete. Likewise the cantilevered "pods" above the balconies and parking canopies are made of precast concrete. Other notable architectural details include the use of perforated concrete block screen walls; an exterior "skin" featuring marble chips and aluminum trim; and stylized private balconies with decorative railings. St. Thomas Hospital purchased the 7-acre property in 1984 and later renovated it for use as elderly housing. However, in 2005, St. Thomas Hospital was forced to temporarily shutter the building due to the lack of a sprinkler system. The Imperial House Apartment Building is a rare example of Mid-Century Modern-style architecture in Nashville. HNI encourages St. Thomas Hospital to install a codes-compliant sprinkler system so that this unique modern landmark can once again serve as income-producing property and a home for the city's residents.

Iser-Bloomstein House/Workmen's Circle Hall – Located at 521 5th Avenue South in the rapidly changing SoBro district, this three-story building played a significant role in Nashville's Jewish history from 1859-1952. The Italianate-style townhouse was built in 1859 for Isaac Garretson, an elder



statesman for the local Jewish community, and subsequent owners included Alexander Iser and Jacob Bloomstein, both were leading members of the Jewish business and religious community. In 1927, the Workmen's Circle purchased this building for use as its Hall Branch 641. Founded in 1900 in New York City, the Workmen's Circle was a Yiddish language-oriented American Jewish fraternal organization committed to social justice, Jewish community, and Ashkenazi culture. The Workmen's Circle used this antebellum townhouse as a residence, lodge, and community center. The Workmen's Circle also provided aid and support to Jewish workers, recent immigrants, and community services such as hospitals. This building retains the original cast concrete sign on the front of the building with the Workmen's Circle name in both English and Yiddish. Since 1952, the building has served as a commercial business and a private residence. However, it has been vacant for five or six years and has suffered significant damage from vandals and trespassers. HNI supports the current owner's efforts to find an owner that will rehabilitate this remarkable property that is so important to the history of the local Jewish community. HNI is willing to work with the owner and representatives of city agencies in an effort to save this building.

Centerstone / Dede Wallace Center– Located at 2400 White Avenue in the historic Woodland-in-Waverly neighborhood, the Junior League funded the construction of this building originally known as the Home for Crippled Children. Completed in 1928, the two-story, Colonial Revival-style building was used as a convalescent home for children stricken with polio. The Junior League of Nashville was established in 1922 and quickly turned its attention to raising the \$100,000 needed to build this medical facility. The Junior League expanded the facility with additions in 1940 and 1949. The Junior League also built the nearby Mental Health Guidance Center, a Mid-Century Modern-style facility completed in 1956 that was a precursor to the current Centerstone organization. The Junior League eventually transferred the services offered at the home to Vanderbilt Children's Hospital and leased the property to the State of Tennessee from 1971-2000 at which point it was sold to Centerstone, a behavioral healthcare services provider. However, Centerstone vacated the building in recent years, leaving the historic building neglected and unsecured. HNI strongly encourages Centerstone to properly secure and stabilize the historic building until an owner can be recruited to rehab this significant site in Nashville's long history of healthcare and women's history.

Lock Two Park buildings – The present-day Lock Two Park on the south bank of the Cumberland River in Pennington Bend was originally created in the 1890s by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers as part of a proposed multi-site project aimed at improving the river's navigability. The Corps had developed ambitious plans to build a series of canals, locks, and dams along the river, but by the 1920s, the federal government decided to abandon this massive infrastructure project. The Lock Two site retains several original Corps buildings and structures, including the Lock-Keepers House, several support outbuildings, and infrastructure components such as a land wall and concrete steps. This facility is currently used as a public park managed by Metro Parks and the Corp. However, the historic Lock-Keeper's House is vacant and deteriorated. HNI encourages the city and federal



agencies to consider options for adaptively re-using these historic buildings for use by visitors to the public park. HNI will be glad to work with both government agencies during the process.

Tennessee Department of Highways & Public Works Building – Located on Charlotte Avenue in Midtown, this state-owned facility served as the main offices for the state highway department when it opened in 1952. The two-story, masonry facility was designed by the Shelton & Brown architectural firm located in Crossville. This firm provided an excellent example of Mid-Century Modern-style civic architecture. The building exhibits horizontal massing, cantilevered ledges, flat roofs, narrow ribbons of block-like windows, and trim and other details constructed with linear slabs of Crab Orchard stone quarried near Crossville. In the 1970s, the building was enlarged with a rear addition but otherwise it retains much of its original integrity. However, the state offices are housed on in the rear addition, leaving the original 1950s building vacant and suffering from neglect and deferred maintenance. HNI encourages the State of Tennessee to undertake necessary repairs and secure this architecturally-significant public building. HNI recommends that the appropriate local and state agency officials discuss various possibilities for preserving the building.

Members of the 2010 Nashville Nine committee include: David Price, President of HNI; Alan Hayes, Vice President of HNI; Patrick McIntyre, Executive Director of the Tennessee Historical Commission; Claudette Stager, National Register Coordinator at the Tennessee Historical Commission; and Dr. Tara Mielnik, Historic Preservation Specialist at the Metropolitan Historical Commission.

ABOUT HISTORIC NASHVILLE, INC. (HNI)

Historic Nashville, Inc. was originally chartered in 1968 as “The Historic Sites Federation of Tennessee.” In 1975, the name and mission changed in response to the urgency of threats to historic landmarks in Nashville. The nonprofit 501(c)3 organization became “Historic Nashville, Inc.” with the mission to preserve and promote the historic places that make Nashville unique.”

Over the years, HNI has successfully advocated for the preservation of many downtown landmarks, including the Ryman Auditorium, Union Station, Hermitage Hotel, Shelby Street Bridge, and the Second Avenue, Printer’s Alley, Lower Broadway, and East Nashville historic districts. In 1982, HNI established the state’s first Preservation Easement program and currently owns easements on 16 historic landmarks with a market value of over \$30 million. HNI hosts an annual membership meeting, publishes a newsletter, maintains a website, gives special tours of local historic landmarks, and in 2009 launched the annual “Nashville Nine” endangered properties list.