

## CAPITOL COMPLEX

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### State Capitol Building

The Illinois State Capitol Building anchors the Capitol Complex on Second and Capitol Streets in Springfield. It is the state's sixth Capitol building — the second one in Springfield — since Illinois entered the Union as the 21st state on Dec. 3, 1818.

The first Capitol building was located in Kaskaskia — Illinois' first capital city. The next three were located in the state's second capital city of Vandalia. Following a bitter battle over moving the state capital out of Vandalia to a more central part of the state, Springfield was named the third capital city in 1839, and work began on a new building. The state's fifth Capitol building — now the Old State Capitol State Historic Site in downtown Springfield — was completed in 1853 and is where Abraham Lincoln served as a state legislator.

The General Assembly authorized construction of the current State Capitol in 1867, which was completed over a 20-year period in 1888. It was designed by architects John C. Cochrane, Alfred H. Piquenard and W.W. Boyington and cost \$4.3 million.

In addition to housing Illinois' executive officers and legislators, the State Capitol originally provided quarters for the Supreme Court, government agencies, regulatory boards and military leaders. It also housed three museums, several libraries and the State Archives. Many of those entities are now housed in separate buildings on the Capitol Complex.

The State Capitol presently houses the offices of several Illinois constitutional officers and state legislators, and is the location of all legislative sessions of the General Assembly. The building underwent major external restoration in 1983 and 1984, and the Capitol dome was restored in 1986.





### **Michael J. Howlett Building**

The Michael J. Howlett Building is south of the State Capitol. Formerly called the Centennial Building, it was erected to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Illinois' admission to the Union as the 21st state. The cornerstone was laid in 1918, and the building was completed in 1923 at a cost of \$3 million. Additions in 1928 and 1966 converted the original rectangular structure into a square building while retaining the original classic architectural design. It was renamed in 1992 in honor of former Secretary of State Michael J. Howlett. Several departments of the Secretary of State's office are housed in the building.



### **Illinois State Library, Gwendolyn Brooks Building**

The Gwendolyn Brooks Building on the corner of Second and Capitol Streets facing the State Capitol was opened to the public in 1990. The \$36 million, 164,000-square-foot structure is the first building specifically designed and constructed to house the collections of the Illinois State Library, formerly housed in the Howlett Building. Engraved on the exterior frieze are the names of 35 Illinois authors. In June 2003, the building was renamed in honor of the late Illinois Poet Laureate Gwendolyn Brooks.

## **Illinois State Archives, Margaret Cross Norton Building**

The Margaret Cross Norton Building, south of the State Capitol, houses the State Archives, a department of the Secretary of State's office. The building was designed to protect the state's valuable historic records from the hazards of fire, theft and exposure. Construction began in 1936 with aid from the New Deal's Public Works Administration, and the building was completed in 1938 at a cost of \$820,000. It is architecturally unique, having no windows on the fourth through seventh floors. The building was renamed in 1995 in honor of former State Archives Superintendent Margaret Cross Norton.



## **William G. Stratton Building**

Just west of the State Capitol is the William G. Stratton Building. Named after a former Governor of Illinois, ground was broken for the H-shaped, 448,000-square-foot structure on Feb. 15, 1954. It was completed less than two years later at a cost of \$11.5 million. The building houses the offices of members of the House of Representatives as well as some state agencies and departments.



## Illinois State Museum

The Illinois State Museum is on the corner of Spring and Edwards streets on the south side of the Capitol Complex. The building was specifically designed for the State Museum to display the many natural and cultural treasures of Illinois. Founded in 1877, the State Museum was originally housed in the State Capitol and for 40 years was located in what is now the Howlett Building. The official ground-breaking ceremony for the new building took place Jan. 5, 1961, and the \$2.2 million building was dedicated on Feb. 4, 1963.



## State Capitol Visitors' Center

The State Capitol Visitors' Center, west of the Stratton Building across College Street, was opened June 8, 1988. Covering two city blocks, the \$3.7 million structure provides visitor parking, tourism information, picnic facilities, vending machines, restrooms and a spacious, air-conditioned place to relax.





### **Armory Building**

North of the State Capitol on Monroe Street is the Armory Building, which replaced the State Arsenal that burned in 1934. The structure is a good example of Art-Deco architecture, typical of the late 1920s and 1930s. The offices surround a large auditorium with a seating capacity of 6,000, which has been the site of inauguration ceremonies for state officials in the past.



### **Attorney General's Building**

The Attorney General's Building, east of the Howlett Building across Second Street, houses the offices of more than 140 attorneys and support staff. Construction of the three-story, \$2.8 million building began in 1968, and the formal dedication was held Jan. 27, 1972. The interior features a center courtyard.