

PRESERVATION *perspective*

Preservation New Jersey's Quarterly Newsletter is back!

Welcome our new Executive Director, explore the history of a historic home with a Business Industry Network member, read the latest legislative update on the Historic Tax Credit, and much more.

Spring 2020

Welcome Our New Executive Director

The Board of Directors of Preservation New Jersey is pleased to announce the appointment of Emily Manz as the organization's Executive Director. Preservation New Jersey is a statewide member-supported non-profit that promotes the economic vitality, sustainability, and heritage of New Jersey's diverse communities through advocacy and education on historic preservation.

Manz, an economic development and tourism professional with a Masters in City and Regional Planning from the Edward J. Bloustein School at Rutgers will succeed Courtenay Mercer who has served in the part-time consulting role since 2017.



Mercer, who raised the profile of the organization immensely with a redesigned website, robust marketing around the group's annual 10 Most Endangered Historic Sites, and spearheaded Preservation New Jersey's mini-documentary *Saved or Lost Forever* states, "It's been a rewarding experience working with a group of dedicated volunteers working to preserve NJ's historic resources for generations to come. I know I am leaving the organization in good hands with Emily, whom I have admired for a number of years for her energy in marketing and promoting NJ's downtowns."

Barton Ross, President of the Preservation New Jersey Board of Trustees stated, "Courtenay has done an excellent job spearheading our increased education and preservation outreach efforts around the state. This includes numerous speaking engagements, implementing our strategic plan, and facilitating recognition of our 10 Most Endangered Historic Places in NJ program. We thank her and wish her all the best as she pursues new professional opportunities. And we are very excited to welcome Emily, who is already familiar with PNJ's work and brings a wealth of nonprofit leadership, place branding, and event planning experience, which we hope to capitalize on as we continue to move the organization forward."

Manz started her career at Newark's economic development agency before transitioning to work in economic development consulting – first with a firm in New York and then through her own company EMI Strategy based in Newark. Manz also co-founded and built Have You Met Newark Tours – a 7+ year old tour operation offering fun, informative tours of Newark's history and

current vibrancy to residents, visitors, students, and corporate clients.

Manz states, "I am excited to bring my deep-rooted appreciation for learning, understanding and sharing American history and a wealth of experience in events, tourism, and planning to this role. Preservation New Jersey has such a powerful brand. Through new and creative events, more frequent programming, and a continuation of our strong advocacy role – I want to engage with and grow the audience of people committed to historic preservation in our state."

Exploring the History of Your Historic Home

Lorraine Arnold
CEO, Legacy Roots LLC

A Case Study: Exploring the History of Your Historic Home

In 1970 a home was purchased on a one-acre lot in Matawan, Monmouth County. The undated English Colonial Revival style cross-hipped house was clad with flush horizontal pine plank sheathing typical of the second half of the eighteenth century, covered in stucco which had been adhered to ribbed metal lath. Two-over-two weighted windows and 5-panel pine doors with black iron locking mechanisms were found throughout the house. However, the structure was in gross disrepair having been neglected for a number of years. The new owners planned on fixing it up and reselling it and in that first year they added a single-story family room to the northwest rear of the home. Unaware of its history they then did what many did in the 1970s, they covered the exterior in wide-planked aluminum siding. Fourteen years later, in 1983, the house was listed for sale.

By the time of the sale a year later, the interior was replete with DIY construction projects, low-cost paneling covering the dining room plaster walls, the stairway walls were clad with under-coarse split wood shingles, thin hollow walls added in unusual places, and wood flooring covered over with orange shag rugs. Nevertheless, the energetic young new owners suspected that the house was built long before the build date listed as 1970 in the real estate listing. The structure had a spirit of having been around quite a long time with a history waiting to be discovered, and though the new owners' desire was to recover its original style, it would soon be revealed that decades separated by several phases of construction.

MATERIAL INSPECTION

Inspection of the foundation provided clues regarding the various phases, and being a buildings' archaeologist, there is a natural draw to exploring below ground level which grants a view into how the building may have developed over time. The first phase was

Plainfield's Historic Preservation Commission

Maria Boyes

Chair of Westfield Historic Preservation Commission, Journalist

Spearheaded by a group of residents 40 years ago, Plainfield's City Council enacted its first ordinance established to guide the City's historic preservation policies. By 1985, 4 of the City's 10 Districts had been designated and were successfully nominated to the State and National Registers. Today, with a population of roughly 50,000 people, Plainfield has over 600 designated properties, 18 individual landmarked sites, and is known to have one of the strongest Commissions in the state.



As one of the first municipalities in New Jersey to be granted Certified Local Government (CLG) status, Plainfield was able to utilize this federal program administered by the Department of the Interior through the State Historic Preservation Office. A

"CLG status" entitles local governments to preferential funding for historic preservation projects which for Plainfield included the grant received from the NJ Trust to restore the exterior of the designated City Hall, expand historic districts, and complete the 2019 historic preservation element of the city's master plan.

Members of the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) are appointed by the Mayor of Plainfield with the advice and consent of the City Council. HPC Chair William Michelson has been on the Commission since 2006 and became Chairman six years ago. When asked what makes a strong Commission, he points to three things: professionalism, perseverance and passion.

As an Attorney with a Masters in Urban Planning, Mr. Michelson specializes in Land Use Law and counts a number of licensed professionals including registered architects amongst his Commission members. However, whether an architect, lawyer, or simply historically-minded resident, Michelson points out that each member is well-informed and dedicated to preserving the character of the town.

The licensed professionals who are employed by Plainfield also work closely with Commission members. Planning Director Bill Nierstedt has been there since 1998: "Our staff reviews each application and coordinates closely with the Commission and Boards." Nierstedt credits the fact that the Planning Board, Zoning Board, Historic Preservation Commission, and the Shade Tree Commission are all housed under the Planning Division and work collaboratively.

Nierstedt is quick to point out that having a Licensed Landscape Architect, who is also certified in historic preservation, is a valuable asset in planning and maintaining the historic character of Plainfield. "Our Master Plan describes Plainfield as a tree-lined city, and the city has been recognized by the National Arbor Day Association as a Tree City for over 10 years," he says. "No one gets through the Planning Board or the Zoning Board without planting trees. If the City takes one down, it must plant two."

Gail Hunton, Plainfield's Historic Consultant from 1983-2015, says

"Plainfield has gone through a lot over the years but was able to establish a strong historic preservation ordinance and program that has withstood the test of time, and they continue to build upon that strength with the hard work of everyone in the Planning Department." She refers to a zoning review conducted within the historic districts to ensure that zoning is compatible with historic sites.

Hunton created Plainfield's Design Guidelines for Historic Districts and Sites in 1988. These guidelines were created to assist the Historic Preservation Commission in its review of proposed work, and to guide property owners in planning and designing their construction projects. The resulting publication won a New Jersey Historic Sites Council Historic Preservation Award in 1989.

As for perseverance, Mr. Michelson asserts that the Commission is diligent about enforcing its ordinance and Design Standards. "We are a very outspoken Commission" says Michelson, "and will often check on work being done ourselves." Additionally, Plainfield has a rigorous Division of Inspections and Building Division that visits the properties once work is completed.

With so many designated properties in various demographic areas, the Commission is sensitive to the specifics involved with each application—whether they be time limitations, financial hindrances, or even language barriers. That is why when the HPC Bylaws were recently revised, an Architectural Review Committee (4 members within the HPC) was included. This subcommittee has the authority to approve a like-for-like repair (same materials) without submitting a formal application therefore expediting the process. Additionally, the Commission is open to exploring alternate materials when appropriate to a structure and was the first HPC in the state to publish their Design Guidelines in Spanish.

The final element, passion, seems to be woven into the fabric of all those involved with historic preservation in Plainfield, from the past to the present. Even the designated properties owned by the Municipality, such as City Hall or the Fire Stations, must adhere to the process put forth by the HPC. "The Municipality did not exempt itself from its own ordinance," says Nierstedt. "That in conjunction with the dedication of the Commission members is key."

Michelson believes that passion is the most important thing for a successful Commission. "For no pay, members give up their time and talent," he says. And for Michelson, he wouldn't have it any other way. "I started off as a planner, ended up being a lawyer, but always wanted to go back into planning. So for me, this position is a dream come true."

Earlier this month, Plainfield received a favorable U.S. District Court opinion upholding their denial of use variance application to convert a pre-existing, non-conforming structure into apartments. Both the Zoning Board and the Historic Preservation Commission worked together with written reports and verbal testimony that served as key Findings in the Court opinion that ultimately proved favorable. Just another example of the collaborative effort between government employees and volunteers working together to save Plainfield's historic past.

Maria Boyes is a journalist who has written for newspapers across the country and penned a column in the NJ Courier News for several years. As a member of Preservation New Jersey's Public Relations Committee and Chair of the Westfield Historic Preservation Commission, Maria values historic architecture. She and her husband, Jim, live in a Victorian where they raised their three children and spend their free time, when not working on their home, volunteering in their community.

constructed on a four-foot high semblance of English rowlock brick set on sandy loam soil. (Figure 1) Built on sills of 8x12 inch thick hewn timber, the structural system was a pine braced frame with a combination of hand hewn and pit-sawn posts with ground level walls infilled with locally fired brick. (Figure 2)



Figure 1, SE Corner, First Phase

The 19x22 foot second phase addition of 1914 created a cross-hipped roofline. This added a front room and dining room on the ground floor, with a front stair leading to an additional bedroom, as well as extending the original two existing bedrooms on the upper floor. Built on sandy loam soil, the 27-inch high foundation of this phase consisted of uncut irregular course stone, topped with a solid 41-inch high solid brick wall with an English style variant of alternating rows of five stretcher rows per header row. The dirt floor foundation was later cemented causing damp to rise into the stone resulting in mold and mushrooms to bloom in the mortar joints. Evidence of irrelevant mortises in the



Figure 2, NE Wall, First Phase

sills indicated that they were reused, potentially from a demolished outbuilding. During this phase the roof was replaced but retained its steep roofline. The altered rafter trussing included a modified queen post system with common rafters and purlins. Originally clad with under-coarse split wood shingles, it was later replaced with plywood and covered with asphalt shingles during re-roofing in the late twentieth century. Structural evidence in the attic revealed the disjointed original front plate married to a new beam added in 1914 during the second phase addition. The front plate, left to protrude down into the bedrooms, settlement patterns throughout the house, and changes of flooring direction on the ground and upper floors confirmed the separate build phases.



Figure 3, NE Sill, Second Phase

DOCUMENT RESEARCH

Having determined that the structure was built in phases, and clearly long before the 1970 build date noted in the 1984 real estate listing, the deed line was searched reaching back to the earliest post-Revolutionary War record. This assisted in the development of the landscape of the building's location along with survey drawings constructed from the deed directions as the property evolved through conveyances. The earliest document used showed the transfer of a total of 141 acres to John Stoutenburgh/Stoutenborough, 131 acres from Anne Bingham, a widow, through representative William Cooper in 1793, and 11 acres from Jonathan Forman in 1794. When Stoutenburgh sold the property in 1818, the deed indicated that the parcel of land was known to be where "John Stoutenburgh formerly lived but is now

under the tenure and occupation of the said Gideon Crawford." The property which spanned two counties was subdivided in 1854, reducing the property to just over 16 acres. Though it had changed hands four times after Crawford owned the property, it continued to be known as the "Gideon S. Crawford" farm and it is suspected that subsequent owners used the acreage for farming but didn't occupy the dwelling. While the extent of the details of the search are beyond the scope of this article, investigation of materials and documents suggest that the original house was built between 1794 and 1817. Additional means of research, such as dendrochronology and further forensic property investigation including an indepth study of neighboring properties would more than likely provide clarity.

ADVANTAGES TO BUILDING RESEARCH

While the 1984 new owners understood that previous alterations throughout the building's past voided its eligibility for designation, researching its history and understanding the evolution of its fabric, form, and function gave the owners multiple advantages including what era to focus their attention on for restoration. From the study, there was a clear understanding that most of the building's fabric and function were far removed from the original structure. The main room on the ground floor, once used for both kitchen and social purposes, was repurposed in 1914 to serve as a standalone kitchen, removing social gatherings to the dining and front rooms. During this phase the original architectural features were replaced including doors, windows, and moldings, along with the addition of a fiberboard wall covering in the kitchen and ground floor service rooms.

During the 1970's addition of a family room off the kitchen's northwest, the original stairway to the upper floor was demolished leaving the upper hallway to be repurposed. Though most of the 1970s DIY alterations were easily repaired, some of the changes were not, as in the case of the removal of the stairway. Ground floor five-panel doors and some of the molding surrounding the windows and doors had been destroyed, while the upper hall 1914 handrail was used as an edging feature in the garden. Despite these changes, it was clear that the remaining dominant structural and architectural fabric throughout the house was from 1914 providing a focus date for restoration and any future additions and alterations.

While the owners may be focused personally on their home, their efforts may also add to the history of the town's early development. The discovery of earlier structures often contributes to a greater understanding of the diversity of early building construction and local history. In this case, the study is expected to contribute to the knowledge of the early settlers and evolution of the farming and lumber industries in which several known owners were involved. While the project began with the study of understanding the home's evolution of fabric, form, and function by a buildings' archaeologist, the interdisciplinary knowledge of architectural historian, structural engineer, and architect, as well as a historical landscape architect and local historians are useful to owners of any historic property during projects of additions, restoration, and preservation.

Lorraine Arnold, M.A., is a member of Preservation NJ's Building Industry Network. As a buildings' archaeologist and principal of Legacy Roots, LLC, her work spans the northeast US and Europe, researching the fabric, form and function of buildings through material investigation and historical research. She can be reached at <https://www.legacyroots.com> or 732.620.1096.

The Historic Tax Credit - NJ Update

Michael Hanrahan

Principal, Clarke Caton Hintz

"The National Trust for Historic Preservation envisions a future where leaders who make decisions impacting our built environment consider the reuse of historic buildings as an essential strategy to create more inclusive, prosperous, and resilient communities. No policy better supports adaptive reuse of historic buildings than state and federal historic tax credits."

-State Historic Tax Credits: Maximizing Preservation, Community Revitalization, and Economic Impact, prepared by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, November 2018

The federal historic tax credit is an excellent example of how all levels of government can work together to improve our communities. Tax incentives for historic preservation protect not only culturally important spaces for future generations, but also generates significant economic returns on investment for the community.

The federal historic tax credit is a valuable tool to use to redevelop and to renew architectural treasures across the country. According to Robert Ivy, FAIA, CEO of the American Institute of Architects, tax credits are "an investment in our future, a commitment to honoring our collective history, and above all, a measure of our compassion as a nation." The federal historic tax credit provides a 20% federal tax credit to income-producing properties that complete historically appropriate renovation work. To best leverage the impact of the federal historic tax credit, developers often use federal and state historic tax incentives in tandem.

Unfortunately, New Jersey has yet to enact the Historic Property Reinvestment Act, our state historic tax credit, initially proposed more than a decade ago and New Jersey is missing out on attracting redevelopment to our great state. Often developers avoid New Jersey in favor of our neighbors because we lack a state

tax credit to offset costs associated with historic preservation projects. To that end, the New Jersey Chapter of the American Institute of Architects has taken the lead in lobbying for this valuable tool. Together with Preservation New Jersey, The National Trust for Historic Preservation and our partners in the development community, we are encouraging New Jersey to adopt a state historic tax credit.

Our coalition is heartened by governor Murphy's stated support of a state historic tax credit. The goal is to implement a state historic tax credit that mirrors the federal historic tax credit as closely as possible. This will streamline the review process, encouraging more and quicker redevelopment. We have offered comment and support for over a decade on this important issue. Most recently, we have collaborated to examine the revised proposals from the New Jersey Economic Development Authority (NJEDA) and subsequent proposed bill from the Governor's office. We have provided comments and met with NJEDA and the Governor's office to advance an incentive that attracts private investment while tailoring the legislation to address state priorities.

The current proposed legislation is packaged with other tax incentive programs, and, therefore, has yet to be introduced to the state legislature. Despite its wide appeal, the Governor's office does not want to promote the Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program Act (as it is now known) before the other incentives. The legislation will be introduced once broad support for all incentives is established. We remain hopeful that New Jersey will enact a

state historic tax credit in the near future and encourage the administration and legislature to consider this important incentive on its own merits.

Michael J. Hanrahan, AIA is a Preservation NJ Board Member. He specializes in numerous project types, including historic preservation and the adaptive re-use of historic structures. In over twenty years with Clarke Caton Hintz, he has led the design teams for a number of historically and architecturally significant buildings. In addition, Michael volunteers his time to the profession, having served AIA NJ in a variety of capacities, culminating with his Presidency in 2011. Beyond serving on the Board of Directors for Preservation New Jersey, he also serves on the Board of Directors of Architect's Housing in Trenton, NJ. Michael also is an active alumni of NJIT where he serves on the Board of Visitors for the Albert Dorman Honors College. Michael has been recognized for his historic preservation efforts with the 2012 AIA Young Architect Award.

It's Time to Invest in NJ's Past

Courtenay Mercer

New Jersey's past is its future – and preserving historic sites from our past is the best way to build a future for generations to come.

The State of New Jersey could embrace an excellent public policy tool for building its future by adopting a state historic tax credit (HTC) to incentivize renovation and rehabilitation of historic sites. Thus far, the state government has

lacked the will to do so. For decades, governors and legislators have been weighing the concept of an historic tax credit. In 2012, there was hope when a bi-partisan bill passed the legislature, only to be vetoed by the governor. In the 2018-19 Legislative Session, legislators again flirted with adoption and Governor Murphy publicly supported an HTC, but the proposed bill never made it to a floor vote. The initiative seems to have become ensnared in the larger debate about development incentives.

On January 14, 2020, State Senators Shirley Turner (District 15), Joseph Cryan (District 20), and Theresa Ruiz (District 29) re-introduced "The Historic Property Reinvestment Act" (S412), which provides credits against state taxes for the costs of rehabilitating historic properties. If we are lucky, history won't repeat itself for this bill.

Preservation New Jersey (PNJ) urges our government officials during the new Legislative Session to evaluate historic sites development through a different lens. New Jersey needs a state-wide law that would give developers and homeowners an economic reason to take the risk and invest in the revitalization of older communities and historic structures.

An HTC drives economic development:

- It creates jobs during both the rehabilitation phase and the building's operation.
- It increases revenue in the form of income taxes, sales taxes, and property taxes.



Volunteer Spotlight: Janet Foster

William Neumann

Director, Preservation New Jersey Board

Catching up with Preservation NJ member Janet W. Foster is akin to trying to bottle up a hurricane. As one of New Jersey's most prominent Architectural Historians, Janet claims to be "retired" but it was only last September that she stepped down from chairing the NJ Historic Trust, and she remains active on their Board. Moreover, for the past year, as Co-Chair to the Madison Preservation Commission, she has been working to determine the future of her hometown's Madison Movie Theatre.



Growing up in Pennsylvania, Janet unabashedly fell in love with New Jersey. "In a place where you can drive from one end to another in a relatively short time, it is incredible to experience its diversity in architecture and culture. It is not like any other place!"

Janet has made many contributions to architectural history in New Jersey and beyond. At Drew University's popular Historic Preservation Certificate Program (operated 2000 – 2011), Professor Foster guided students through NJ vernacular architecture, hands-on paint analysis and other essential coursework. At the same time, she served 12 years across the river as a professor and Assistant Director at Columbia University's Historic Preservation Program in the Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation.

Janet was also a co-founder and partner at Acroterion LLC, a cultural resource firm that provided consultation to municipalities and NJ State Historic Preservation Office by developing documentary records and physical investigations on historic assets throughout the region. During that time, she prepared National Register nominations, Historic Structure Reports and inventories, and even worked through the complexities of ordinance development and Preservation Master Plans for several NJ communities.

Janet's research on vernacular architecture and America's flood of pattern and builder's publications resulted in two influential books; *The Queen Anne House: America's Victorian Vernacular*, [Harry N. Abrams, Publisher, 2006] and *Building By The Book: Pattern-book Architecture in New Jersey*, co-authored with Robert P. Guter [Rutgers University Press, 1992]. She passionately describes an ahHA! moment that occurred while driving through Shrewsbury, NJ when she came upon a perfectly extant example of a Samuel Sloan design from a pattern book she was just researching. The photo of it ultimately became the cover for *Building by The Book*.

Another New Jersey building – and the one that most inspires Janet is the Abel and Mary Nicholson House in Salem County which serves as "an excellent example of a Delaware Valley patterned end brick house." Because of the decorative art of the brick work, the Nicholson house was listed by Preservation New Jersey on the 2018 10 Most Endangered Historic Properties. But this National Historic Landmark is also a beautiful 1722 residence that was never remodeled or updated. "It is not a restoration; it is just pure preservation. Currently, it sits empty and unoccupied" explains Janet, who adds that as "it sits on marshy land along the Delaware

Bay the future of this building is very much in doubt." At times of day it is now inaccessible and endangered by encroaching surface waters brought about by dramatic and rapid climate change. "It is inspiring as it suggests what the preservation community needs to be addressing now to save many of our favorite buildings."

During her years as a Preservation New Jersey member and Board of Trustee member, Janet volunteered for many projects. She thrived in the collegial atmosphere of PNJ's advocacy and educational goals. Janet thanks PNJ for the working experience of its board and learning about organizational structure there that would prepare her for all the future boards she would serve on. She fondly remembers the many social engagements with her peers and associates at the annual meetings and galas. Janet says that she was "always interested in what preservation crafts people, the builders, the doers and makers, were up to. It was great to share that back and forth with them at PNJ events."

Reflecting on her two decades as a career educator, Janet Foster voices a clear relationship between teaching and experience. She believes that inspiration through experience leads to everything and states that "for me the mnemonic is the building. Architecture is something you must fully experience. We should recognize architecture as we do with bird and tree species to understand the history of a place."

William "Billy" Neumann is a Preservation New Jersey Board of Director and chairs the Public Relations Committee. He is the current Chairperson of Bergen County's Historic Preservation Advisory Board and led Rutherford's HPC for five years. He has authored two local history books, several National Register nominations and presents talks, walks and demonstrations on history, historic preservation, commercial photography and beekeeping.

Nominations for NJ Historic Preservation Awards Extended

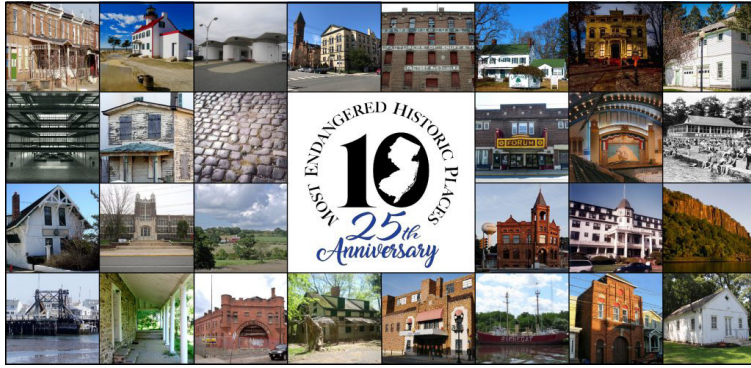
Preservation New Jersey is pleased to solicit public nominations for the 2020 NJ Historic Preservation Awards for leadership, to be presented in conjunction with the Historic Preservation Office & NJ Historic Sites Council project achievement awards.

Nominate an individual, site, initiative or more at www.preservationnj.org/awards2020

by May 20th.



Documentary Highlights Grassroots Efforts to Save Historic Resources



Over 100 historic preservation supporters gathered at Newark Symphony Hall on March 4th to commemorate the 25th Anniversary of Preservation New Jersey's "10 Most Endangered Historic Places in New Jersey" list, and to watch the premiere of the mini-documentary celebrating grassroots efforts to save NJ's historic resources.

Since 1995, Preservation New Jersey (PNJ) has been compiling annually its "10 Most" list, spotlighting the state's irreplaceable historic, architectural, cultural, and archaeological resources that are in imminent danger of being lost. The 10 Most 25th Anniversary Gala celebrated this 25-year milestone and brings continued attention to the fragile existence of New Jersey's historic resources. Premiering at the gala, the documentary – "Saved or Lost Forever" – tells the story of New Jersey's places that have been part of significant events and periods in our state's history, discusses their importance to our collective past, and the fights to rescue these historic properties from extinction. The documentary focuses on three sites recognized on PNJ's 10 Most list – Camden High School, Romer Shoal Light, and the Van Wagenen/Apple Tree House. The 10 Most documentary was supported through a project grant from the New Jersey Historical Commission, a division of the Department of State.

"This is far more than a battle to save a building or a track of land for nostalgic reasons. It is a fight related to the economic and cultural well-being of our state and all of its residents. We are enhancing the vitality and heritage of New Jersey's diverse communities," said Courtenay Mercer, Executive Director of PNJ. "The documentary stars the endangered properties that have no voice but have moving stories to tell. Preservation New Jersey lends a voice to these properties that need to be rescued," she said.

Newark Symphony Hall – the location of the PNJ gala – has its own compelling story to broadcast. Taneshia Nash Laird, President and CEO of Newark Symphony Hall, stated in her remarks at the Gala, "Newark Symphony Hall was one of the 10 Most Endangered Places in New Jersey and we're distinguished as one of New Jersey's most comprehensive and respected centers for promoting arts, education, and entertainment and making a great impact on empowering the lives of citizens of Newark and New Jersey since 1925." She also stated that Newark Symphony Hall has begun

a \$50 million capital campaign and thanked the public officials in attendance, State Senator Teresa Ruiz and Newark Central Ward Councilmember LaMonica McIver, for their support of a State Historic Tax Credit that could help fund much-needed renovations.

PNJ President, Barton Ross, also thanked State Senator Teresa Ruiz for her sponsorship of a State Historic Tax Credit bill (S412). "Despite over a decade of advocacy by PNJ and its partners, NJ remains one of only 13 states that does not have statewide enabling legislation for this proven preservation tool," said Ross. "We will continue to work with the legislature and Governor's office to get this critical piece of legislation passed in this legislative cycle."

See several images from the Gala below.

10 Most 25th Anniversary Gala Photos



Elaine Medina and Taneshia Nash Laird, Executive Director of Newark Symphony Hall



Evelyn Murphy and Barton Ross, PNJ Board President



New Jersey State Senator Teresa Ruiz

- It incentivizes developers and banks to invest locally, especially in economically distressed areas they might not otherwise consider.
- It revitalizes run-down areas while making use of existing infrastructure.
- It results in “spillover” effects that extend beyond the rehabilitated building, improving the local economy and attracting businesses to the surrounding area.

For those who fear loss of state revenue if an HTC is implemented, they should note the following. Similar tax credit programs in other states have generated strong net tax revenue to the state. In Maryland, for example, the historic tax credits return over \$3 for every dollar invested. Between 1978 and 2015, the National Park Service’s federal Historic Tax Credit for income-producing buildings led to \$28.1 billion in federal tax receipts, a significant net gain over the \$23.1 billion in allocated credits.

Thirty-seven states have a historic tax credit and are reaping the benefits of restoration and rehabilitation of their historic resources. They also are doing a much better job than New Jersey at leveraging federal historic tax credit dollars. Without a state HTC, New Jersey is missing out on a proven strategy for economic growth and revitalization.

The dream of PNJ is to advocate so successfully for saving New Jersey’s historic sites that New Jersey’s endangered historic sites would become history.

Unfortunately, we are a long way from realizing that fantasy. Twenty-five years ago, PNJ created its first list of the 10 Most Endangered Historic Sites in New Jersey. And every year since, we have produced this list to highlight fading historic, architectural, cultural, and archaeological sites with the hope of raising awareness about the benefits of preservation. Out of the 250 properties on the “10 Most” list, about 15 percent have been restored and are again in use; while another 15 percent succumbed to development or nature and are lost forever. The rest remain in some state of limbo, awaiting the necessary interest and/or funds to restore them. After a certain period of time without restoration, these endangered sites will also be lost forever.

Preservation of historic properties is more than a feel-good activity of nostalgia. Preserving old buildings is beneficial not only for a community’s culture, but also for the local economy and for the long-term sustainability of our society. Earlier this year, PlaceEconomics published a report citing the Twenty-Four Reasons Historic Preservation is Good for Your Community. Here are just a few of the reasons its good for NJ:

- **Jobs:** Historic preservation requires labor-intensive work, employing carpenters, electricians, plumbers, and other tradespeople. In Delaware, for example, rehabilitation of historic structures created 14.6 jobs for every \$1 million spent, while new construction created 11.2 jobs per million.
- **Downtown Revitalization:** Think of all the “best downtown” articles you may have read over the years. What separates the best from the rest? Compared to strip malls and other modern retail developments, historic buildings are what make downtowns distinctive. This historic character, along with the walkability typically associated with historic development patterns, is what is driving the downtown resurgence. Not only that, the unique spaces in historic buildings are attractive to small business, as well as start-ups and young businesses.

- **Tourism:** In 2018, heritage tourism in NJ generated \$3.52 billion in revenue, \$385 million in state and local taxes, and 39,000 jobs. The average heritage tourist spends just over \$1,300 compared to an \$800 average spend for general tourism, largely because heritage tourists spend more money on dining and shopping and are more likely to stay at a hotel or inn.
- **Property Values:** Many believe that more restrictions make a property harder to sell, and thus reduces value. Study after study, however, has proven that values tend to be higher in historic districts and that they are less vulnerable to foreclosure during market downturns. That’s good both for the property owner and the property tax base.
- **Millennial Housing of Choice:** Trying to attract the largest age cohort? A recent survey by the National Trust for Historic Preservation found that 44 percent of millennials surveyed wanted to live in historic, “character rich” neighborhoods. Housing trends back this up. While Millennials only represent 34 percent of all homebuyers nationwide, they represent 59 percent of all buyers of houses built before 1912 and 43 percent of buyers of houses built between 1912 and 1960.
- **Structures Tell Stories:** Historic buildings are a community’s tangible connection to our past. From Native American heritage to the crossroads of the American Revolution to women’s suffrage, the civil rights movement, the struggle for LGBTQ parity and many more moments important to our culture and heritage, historic sites help to tell the stories of our diverse past.
- **No Going Back:** The preservation of historic buildings is a one-way street - once a piece of history is destroyed, it is lost forever.

This last point is the theme of a new documentary PNJ is unveiled on March 4 at a gala celebration. The documentary, “Saved or Lost Forever,” delves into the history of three endangered properties that have moving stories to tell — Camden High School, Lower New York Bay’s Romer Shoal Light (a lighthouse) and the Van Wagenen (Apple Tree) House of Jersey City. These properties are unable to talk, so PNJ is telling their stories in hopes that they will inspire state and local officials, developers and corporate leaders, as well as individual citizens, as to the pressing need for preservation.

The 10 Most documentary premiered at a celebration gala at Newark Symphony Hall, which was included on the first 10 Most list 25 years ago. If passed, historic tax credits could play a major role in the long overdue restoration of the historic venue, providing a strong anchor for Newark’s Lincoln Park Coast Cultural District. We will continue our work to advocate for the passage of an HTC bill in the new legislative session and continue our advocacy on behalf of New Jersey’s endangered sites. We need individual citizens to recognize the peril of not doing so and rally around the PNJ mission in order to deliver a future rooted in our past.

For more information about the 10 Most documentary visit: <https://www.preservationnj.org/10most-documentary/>

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The 2020 10 Most Endangered Historic Places

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