PRESERVATION NEW JERSEY

Preservation Perspective



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Event Recap: Nearly 40 Volunteers with Preservation New Jersey, Clean Up Taylor's Mill in Readington Township

Taylor's Mill, located in Readington Township was nominated to Preservation New Jersey's 10 Most Endangered Historic Sites list for 2023. The mill is a stone grist mill built circa 1760 by Colonel John Taylor. John Taylor, who served in the Revolution as a member of the 4th Hunterdon Militia, and eventually achieved the rank of General, was an Englishman by birth, owned and ran the mill.

In 2023, Preservation New Jersey promised its continued support to work with the newly nominated 10 Most sites throughout the upcoming year.....

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Event Recap: Historic Preservation Awards 2023

On November 30, 2023, with a sold-out event of 125 guests, Preservation New Jersey ('PNJ') hosted its 2023 New Jersey Historic Preservation Awards event at Masker's Barn in Berkeley Heights, Union County, New Jersey. The event honored 14 awardees for excellence in preservation.

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RECAP HISTORIC PRESERVATION AWARDS 2023







Each year, PNJ recognizes those institutions and individuals that have sustained historic preservation through stewardship of public and private historic sites. Awardees across several categories were chosen by an independent awards jury comprised of preservation professionals from out of state. Selections were based on the following criteria: public impact on the community, region, or state; quality and/or creativity of effort; broadened public awareness of history and historic preservation; increased partnerships to support history and historic preservation; and the quality of the submission.

Attendees enjoyed networking during the reception as well as food catered by The Brownstone of Paterson, New Jersey. PNJ Board President Paul Muir along with members of the Board of Trustees presented the program and distributed the awards.

Award winner Steven Smolyn, AIA shared, "receiving the 2023 Preservation Documents Award is an honor that acknowledges our collaborative efforts with Cape May to make historic preservation guidance more accessible. This recognition is a testament to Architectural Heritage Consultants' expertise in developing responsive historic design guidelines to help municipalities across New Jersey maintain their unique historical characters." Smolyn represented Architectural Heritage Consultants alongside members of the City of Cape May Historic Preservation Commission who were honored with the prestigious 2023 Preservation Documents Award for its comprehensive update of the Historic Design Standards.

Another category honored was the Doris Carpenter Award for achievements in education and advocacy on historic preservation of buildings and other structures of significance in the African American community. PNJ presents this award in Ms. Carpenter's legacy to an individual, organization, or project which contributes to a greater understanding of New Jersey's diverse populations through history.

The Stoutsburg Sourland African American Museum was honored in this category, for its mission to interpret the history of the African American community and for its rich contributions to the Sourland Mountain Region of western-central New Jersey. The Museum is housed within the historic Mt. Zion AME Church in Montgomery, a one-room church building constructed in 1899. Despite a dwindling congregation, the building remained in use as a worship space throughout the twentieth century, only closing in 2005. The concept of restoring and reusing the building as a museum followed shortly thereafter. The Mount Zion AME Church offers an important physical link to the social and cultural history of the region and assists the museum in telling the story of this place and its people. Its restoration and reuse also remind us that preservation efforts should not be limited to large, highly decorated, and celebrated structures, but must include the more simple, quiet, often practical buildings in which we all live our own important singular and collective histories.

"The Doris Carpenter Award means a great deal to the Stoutsburg Sourland African American Museum. It is a recognition and validation of their work to educate the public about the experiences and the contributions of the African American community in the Sourland region. We were pleased to be the architect for the restoration of the one room church to become a museum, and are honored and grateful for this prestigious award from Preservation New Jersey," shared by Michael J. Mills, FAIA Partner of Mills + Schnoering Architects, LLC.

In addition, several project awardees were given for unique sites with fascinating and significant histories.

The Baker Theater which opened in 1906 in Dover, New Jersey, was considered the finest playhouse in the entire State and was a major stop for the vaudeville entertainment circuit hosting notables such as Helen Hayes, George Burns and Gracie Allen, Lou Costello, and Harry Houdini. The iconic marquee was severely damaged from high winds during a storm in 2020. Using historic photographs and existing field measurements, CTS Group was able to create drawings and renderings replicating the original marquee. The "CTS Group is proud and grateful to be recognized by our fellow preservationists at Preservation New Jersey with the 2023 Preservation Craftsmanship Award for our architectural work on the Baker Theatre Marquee in Dover's Blackwell Street Historic District. This restoration was a team effort whose success was also achieved through the client's and









contractor's commitment to the highest level of craftsmanship in the re-creation of this critical historic feature on one of Dover's key historic buildings," said William C. Slack, AIA, RIBA, PP, LEED AP, Principal.

"Receiving the 2023 Preservation Project Award for the restoration of the Ellis Island Recreation Pavilion is truly an honor. It is an affirmation of both the historic significance of the site, and the care taken in its restoration. Thank you, Preservation New Jersey!" shared by Mark Thaler, AIA, NCARB, Thaler Reilly Wilson Architecture & Preservation. The Recreation Shelter on the south side of Ellis Island is a modest but elegant building that once provided a place of outdoor respite to the immigrant patients confined to Ellis Island due to illness. Completed in 1937, the building was abandoned in 1954 when the Ellis Island United States Immigration Station ceased operation. By the end of the 20th century, the buildings on the south side of Ellis Island were in serious disrepair. In 1999, Save Ellis Island, Inc. became a partner of the National Park Service with the mission of saving these important buildings that help tell the story of American Immigration. Following the restoration of other buildings and connecting corridors, in 2014 work on the Recreation Shelter began. Today, this important part of our history has been restored and visitors to Ellis Island can see this example of how restoration can highlight our history.

This event was supported and sponsored by all of the amazing and enthusiastic attendees, and our partners at HMR Architects, Clarke Caton Hintz, John O'Hara Company, Lear & Pannepacker



PRESERVATION AFTER DECONSECRATION

By: Greg Fitzgerald



Of the over 200 ecclesiastical structures on the National and State Register of Historic Places in New Jersey, about two dozen have transitioned out of primary active religious use and have found a purpose beyond worship. Ecclesiastical structures have been a mainstay of New Jersey's register since the first, the Connecticut Farms Presbyterian Church in Union (Union County), was listed in 1970. Most of the listed structures are still active houses of worship. Their preservation is supported by the contributions of their parishioners and their overarching faith organizations, alongside grant funding. But what happens when the congregation moves on, and a historic and listed ecclesiastical structure is left to be preserved without the funds from the tithe plate?

A few have been preserved as an historic artifact of the communities they were built to serve. The famous Church of the Presidents in Long Branch, where seven United States presidents worshipped during their summer vacations to the Jersey Shore, has been under a preservation program

since 1999 led by the Long Branch Historical Museum Association. The plan is to make it a museum dedicated to Long Branch's presidential history and rent it for weddings and events. The Mount Bethel Baptist Meeting House in Warren Township was replaced with a new building in the 1960s and was deeded to the township in the 1970s for preservation. Today it serves as a museum, telling the story of what was once one of the largest Baptist congregations in the area, and has benefitted from several rounds of grants on both the county and state level. Woodbine **Brotherhood** Synagogue in Cape May County has become the Sam Azeez Museum of Woodbine History, which focuses heavily on the history of Russian Jewish emigrants who built a community there.

Several churches have become community and cultural centers, utilizing their large gathering spaces to maximum advantage as secular structures. The Old Manahawkin Baptist Church in Stafford, Locktown Stone Church in Delaware Township, and Fisk Chapel (Bicentennial Hall) in Fair Haven all

act as cultural and events centers. They host community gatherings and concerts and continue to serve as local touchstones. The Old School Baptist Church in South River and Methodist Episcopal Church in Hibernia both serve as library branches for their communities, with stacks of books replacing rows of pews. These buildings have municipal funding to help with their upkeep, and many of them have been supported by county and New Jersey Historic Trust grants.

As large and subdividable spaces, a few churches have become office buildings. The Holmdel Dutch Reform Church now serves as a branch of Weichert Realtors; the only hint of its new use being doors that are painted Weichert's trademark yellow. The Pan-American C.M.A. Church and St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church, both in Newark, have been transformed into office buildings, hosting several tenants each. This has allowed them to thrive in the long-term and has saved the exteriors of the buildings even if the interiors are modified.

One of the newest trends in New Jersey ecclesiastical preservation is housing. The First Baptist Church in Hoboken and Polie Zedek Synagogue in New Brunswick have both been converted to condominiums in the past few years. Their exterior shells are retained, while the interiors have been completely reconfigured. Polie Zedek is now known as the Lofts at Neilson Crossings and was redeveloped into six two-bedroom units after a devastating 2015 fire gutted the historic interior. This adaptive reuse has saved the street-level view of the building. First Baptist Church is now The Raphael, a six-unit ultra-luxury building, with a private suite in the clock tower and wine cellars built into basement rooms. The \$1 million façade restoration was privately funded by the developer, even though the building's registry status made it eligible for grant funds.

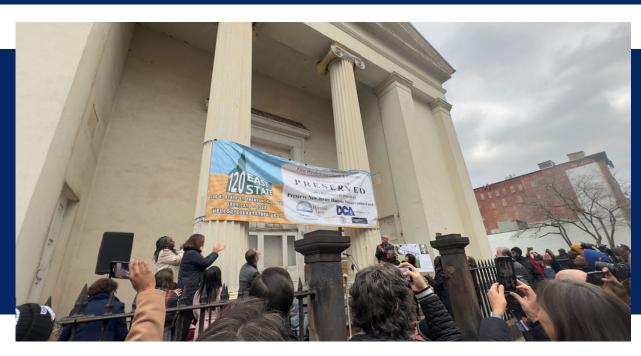
Of course, as anyone well-versed in preservation policy is aware, a listing on the National or State Register of Historic Places doesn't prevent demolition or abandonment. In 2017, the magnificent Church of the Ascension in Atlantic City met the wrecking ball.

shrinking congregation and а risina maintenance bill, particularly for the building's bell tower, sent the 1893 structure to its doom. In Newark, the Wickliffe Presbyterian Church met the same fate decades ago, with just a corner of its curved rough stone façade remaining as a memorial colonnade next to the housing that replaced the building. The Church of the Redeemer in Longport burned down from a lightning strike in 2012; it's been rebuilt in the spitting image of itself out of sturdy concrete, but is no longer a historic structure. The Spring Valley Christian Church Site in Hardwick is home to only the ruined walls of the 1840 Greek Revival structure, while the Mount Hope Miner's Church in Rockingham has a preservation project in the plans after many years of waiting, boarded up and silent. After being shuttered by the diocese in 2012, the St. Barnabas Episcopal Church in Newark has sat vacant, ivy growing more and more dramatically over its bell tower while the future of the building hangs in limbo.

Most of New Jersey's ecclesiastical sites continue to serve faith functions, but as religious participation changes in America, it's very possible that more structures will join these in looking for a post-worship role. For those in high-value urban locations, adaptive reuse into housing like in New Brunswick and Hoboken will be an appealing option, with high-value real estate markets driving high-quality restoration projects. More rural communities may find that the sanctuaries are useful as community centers, with the buildings' large footprints creating an easily converted gathering space. Inevitably, as too often happens in preservation, it is possible that some will be lost or left unmaintained until the project to save them becomes a larger and larger challenge. However, any community looking to revitalize a historic house of worship can find a large selection of examples of successful adaptive reuse close to home in New Jersey.

REVITALIZING HERITAGE: FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF TRENTON'S JOURNEY TO THE STEEPLE CENTER FOR ARTS AND CULTURE

By: Holly Boyer



In a significant leap towards preserving history and promoting cultural vibrancy, the First Presbyterian Church of Trenton is poised for a transformative renovation, buoyed by a \$3 million grant from the New Jersey State Historic Trust. This initiative heralds the creation of the Steeple Center for Arts and Culture at 120 East State. Explore the multifaceted narrative of this historic landmark, its journey towards transformation, and the resounding support from the community.

Historical Significance and Designations

The First Presbyterian Church of Trenton stands as a testament to the rich history of the city, boasting formal listings in both the New Jersey Register of Historic Places (2005) and the National Register of Historic Places (2005). Designated as an individual landmark and historic site by the City of Trenton Landmarks Commission in 1974, the church, along with its Fellowship Hall and

cemetery lot, abuts the locally designated Hanover/Academy Historic District.

The National Register of Historic Places nomination, spanning the period from 1727 through 1955, emphasizes the property's architectural, political, governmental, religious, and social significance. Notable dates include the founding of Trenton's Presbyterian congregation in 1712, the construction of the current church building in 1834-39, and a major interior renovation in 1870. The property is intimately tied to the First Battle of Trenton in 1776, forging a deep connection with the city's revolutionary past.

The Cemetery's Role in History

The National Register documentation highlights the architectural significance of the church building, focusing on its historic qualities. Additionally, it sheds light on the cemetery, a poignant testament to Trenton's past. Cemetery plots surrounding the church, dating from the 1730s to the late 19th century, unveil a rich mosaic of religious beliefs and burial traditions.

Despite disruptions during the construction of the second and third churches in 1839-40 and 1968, the cemetery persists as a repository of history. Noteworthy genealogical records and a 1911 burial list indicate approximately 336 tombstones, unveiling a remarkable collection of markers reflecting regional diversity. The cemetery emerges as an excellent representative collection, reflecting the wider region's religious diversity and burial traditions.

Project Milestones and Community Support

120 East State, the nonprofit converting the historic First Presbyterian Church of Trenton complex in downtown Trenton, recently announced that the New Jersey State Historic Trust awarded it \$3 million for the project. The announcement marks a major milestone in the endeavor. The design team, headed by Historic Building Architects, LLC, brings a wealth of expertise and local knowledge to ensure the preservation and transformation align with the city's historical essence.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Synod of the Northeast, in a recent newsletter, underscores the project's visibility within the broader Presbyterian community. The initiative aligns seamlessly with the broader mission of preserving historical and religious landmarks, securing a broader network of support beyond the local community.

New Jersey State Historic Trust and the Historic Property Reinvestment Program

The New Jersey Historic Property Reinvestment Program, administered by the New Jersey Economic Development Authority (NJEDA), and outlined on the NJEDA's official website, is designed to encourage investment in historic properties by providing tax credits to property owners undertaking qualified rehabilitation



projects. The intention of the legislation creating the new program was to support a program such as the Steeple Center project. 120 East State will be applying to this program in fall of 2024, with fingers crossed for a positive outcome.

Community Impact and Cultural Revitalization

As the renovation progresses, the project's impact on the local community is poised to be profound. Beyond the restoration of a historic landmark, the Steeple Center for Arts and Culture at 120 East State is set to become a cultural hub, breathing new life into downtown Trenton.

The adaptive reuse of the church and its surrounding properties aligns with broader urban revitalization efforts, contributing to the cultural and economic renaissance of the downtown area. Such initiatives have been proven to attract residents and businesses, fostering a sense of community pride and engagement.

Preserving the architectural and historical integrity of the First Presbyterian Church while repurposing it for contemporary use exemplifies a harmonious blend of past and present. This approach not only preserves the tangible history encapsulated within the church but also allows it to evolve into a dynamic space that serves the community's present and future needs.

Conclusion

The journey of the First Presbyterian Church of Trenton towards becoming the Steeple Center for Arts and Culture is a story woven with historical threads, community support, and forward-thinking initiatives. As the renovation progresses, guided by the spirit of preservation and revitalization, the church and its



cemetery are poised to transcend time, standing as a monument to historic dignity amid a modern world.

The collaborative efforts of local organizations, community members, and the backing of programs like the New Jersey Historic Property Reinvestment Program, along with the expertise of the design team led by Historic Building Architects, LLC, pave the way for a harmonious blend of historical preservation and contemporary cultural expression in the heart of downtown Trenton. This transformative journey not only preserves a significant piece of Trenton's past but also propels it into a vibrant and culturally rich future, fostering a legacy that will be cherished by generations to come.



PNJ Announces Return of Weekly Office Hours

Meet with PNJ's Executive Director and Board Members through weekly office hours. PNJ is hosting open office hours on Thursday nights from 6:00 - 8:00pm via Zoom beginning February 1st. Discuss 10 Most Endangered Historic Places, programs, preservation issues, or bring questions for technical assistance.

CLINTON PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH: CONTINUES TO RISE

By: Christina Honthly-Little



When you meander along the south branch of the Raritan River, you stumble upon the charming town of Clinton, NJ. Incorporated in 1865, Clinton boasts a quaint Main Street with boutiques, shops, restaurants and the Red Mill, one of the most painted and photographed grist mills in the world. In 1995, the town was added to the National Register of Historic Places for its notable architecture, commerce, and engineering. Take a walking tour uphill of the downtown along Center Street and you'll notice inviting arched red doors beckoning to a majestic white Victorian-style structure undergoing significant renovations: Clinton Presbyterian Church.

Founded in 1831, Clinton Presbyterian Church (CPC) has a storied history housing an active and faithful congregational community of 250+ since 1890. The original

one story rectangular stone building was by fire shortly destroyed after its construction. Rebuilt in 1845, the young thoroughly church was deemed "a unattractive box-like structure with no spire or tower...within a narrow pulpit with long windows of plain glass and entire absence of anything upon which the eye could rest with pleasure" by Reverend I. Alystine Blauvelt (term 1864-1868). The Sanctuary and subsequent classroom expansion were reconstructed in 1865, including a balcony and center steeple housing a brass bell manufactured that same year by Meneelys Bell Co, of West Troy, NY. In March 1888, a historic blizzard knocked the steeple off where it rolled onto the Mulligan property across the street, which is now owned by members of CPC. Miraculously, the bell remained intact and is joyfully ringing to this day.



Following this damage, in 1890 the church led a major Capital Campaign to radically improve the architecture to accommodate its growing congregation; the building was widened from one center aisle by adding additional side isles and upgrading from boxed to curved pews, two square towered entrances (one housing the lucky, undamaged bell) and horse and carriage sheds erected at the rear of the property. The Christian Education building abutting the sanctuary was also added during this remodeling. Although much of the current construction dates back to 1890, in 1963 CPC added basement classroom space, a Fellowship Hall and kitchen. Showcased at the head of the "Basilica-style" Sanctuary, beneath elegant frescoes and a Latin cross, is an elevated platform or "bema" and ornate chancel. The decorative pipe organ, still in use, was generously donated by Ralph Voorhees' family. In its modern glory, CPC houses a four aisle pew configuration made with ash and walnut trimmings and a central Pre-Raphaelite angel stained glass window flanked by 8 more depicting colorful biblical flora. Viewed from the air, CPC's floor plan was intentionally constructed to mirror a cross with wide "arms" housing its vestibules and organ chambers.



Before the pandemic, CPC recognized that if they were going to continue to attract and promote members, as well as accommodate their mission of outreach within the community and their congregation, they needed to raise money for deferred maintenance and capital renovations. It was unfortunate timing because within 2 months of identifying their needs the world shut down due to COVID 19. What could have resulted in an immediate loss of momentum for the Capital Campaign ended up working to the church's benefit. The congregation rallied, quickly pivoting to an online Zoom format continuing their sermons, chancel choir and community outreach.

Inspections progressed, and found that the bell tower had suffered significant wood rot, endangering the sanctuary's ornamental ceiling. The plaster and lathe ceiling and plaster moldings started exhibiting cracks due to age and settlement. Typical of the plaster used in the 1890's, it was found to contain horsehair. This repair was integral to maintain the safety of the congregation. After much research, a proprietary method to stabilize the existing ceiling and moldings was chosen over removal and mechanical fastening so as to save the original moldings and chandelier medallion.



Several of the sanctuary's stained glass windows required repair. The roof over the main structure was nearing the end of its useful life. The restrooms, original to the 1963 addition, were in sore need of an upgrade. One bathroom was to be enlarged to comply with ADA obligations, adding features to welcome all visitors to the church. In furtherance of CPC's commitment to be a welcoming place of worship, the handicap ramp and entrance needed to be upgraded. The deteriorating ornamental trim on the exterior roof edge and bell towers and rotting tin flashings were also beyond their useful life. And the distinct red arched doors leading into the sanctuary, along with the electrified gas lights flanking the front doors, also needed to be refurbished.

As its membership settled into their "new normal" of Covid," Session organized a Building Subcommittee to solidify immediate needs, and to solicit proposals and advice from experts in their specific craft to understand the scope and set realistic costs. Horizons Stewardship was engaged to assist in designing the Capital Campaign. With great hope and trust in the future of our church, Session initiated their financial plea to the congregation in February 2022 by way of a vision brochure titled "Generation to Generation" summarizing the restoration project estimated at \$700,000.

The response was overwhelmingly positive. Pastor Tracey Henry, who was installed to serve the congregation in 2013 was joyful about the outcome. "The people of CPC responded to our capital campaign with their characteristically deep and faith-filled generosity. Pledged giving exceeded campaign goals by over 25%, with members committing to fulfill these pledges over a three year time period. What a blessing!"

Out of necessity, stabilization of the sanctuary plaster ceiling began in June of 2021 while services, due to Covid, were being held outside and CPC trusted God would bless the planned Capital Campaign. The church was proud to ultimately select craftsmen, all from New Jersey, to accomplish the work. Repairs to the exterior began summer of 2022. With God's grace and good weather, all of the planned projects are anticipated to be accomplished by the end of 2025.

"CPC is a truly special place." Reverend Henry professed. "Our church continues to grow and we are so very hopeful about the future. If you walk into the Sanctuary on any given Sunday, you will find a vibrant congregation, where the chancel steps are overflowing with children, a family of faith where a warm welcome awaits everyone. We have the privilege of hosting many different community groups throughout the year and our preschool established in 2018 is growing from strength to strength. With all the investments we have made in and around the building it is our prayer that this church will continue to be a place of sacred encounter and faithful service for years to come."

NEARLY 40 VOLUNTEERS WITH PRESERVATION NEW JERSEY, CLEAN UP TAYLOR'S MILL IN READINGTON TOWNSHIP



Taylor's Mill, located in Readington Township was nominated to Preservation New Jersey's 10 Most Endangered Historic Sites list for 2023. The mill is a stone grist mill built circa 1760 by Colonel John Taylor. John Taylor, who served in the Revolution as a member of the 4th Hunterdon Militia, and eventually achieved the rank of General, was an Englishman by birth, owned and ran the mill.

In 2023, Preservation New Jersey ('PNJ') promised its continued support to work with the newly nominated 10 Most sites throughout the year. In partnership with Patricia Fisher-Olsen, chair of the township's Historic Preservation Commission who nominated the mill for annual 10 Most Endangered Historic Sites list, PNJ hosted a community clean up event.

As we prepare for the celebration of the 250th anniversary of the founding of this nation, The Readington Township Historic Preservation Commission and the Friends of Taylor Mill want to thank Preservation NJ for the opportunity to bring to the public attention an important historic structure tied to the founding of this nation that needs help from the preservation community," shared Olsen.

Since being listed, Olsen and community members formed a new non-profit organization, the Friends of Col. John Taylor's Grist Mill Inc. to further the public interest in the preservation, conservation, and education of Readington Township's historic sites, which enrich the sense of place as told through the built environment.

On Sunday, November 19, 2023, nearly 40 people swarmed the site of John Taylor's Mill, removing debris, garbage, and overgrown vegetation. PNJ's Executive Director, President, and board members were joined by members of the Friends of John Taylor's Grist Mill, members of the community, the township's Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) and employees of the township Department of Public Works. Current and past township officials, including former mayors John Albanese and Betty Ann Fort also supported the event. It was an overwhelming turnout for the significant historic site.

Taylor's Mill played an important role as a grain supplier for Washington's Army and remains significant for its contributions to the war effort during the American Revolution. The site also contributes to local history of industry and commerce. Although the site was acquired nearly thirty years ago, structures have been lost over time through demolition by neglect. The current ruins have been in a state of threat; however with this outpouring of support, and the creation of the Friends of Taylor's Mill, PNJ and the community are hopeful to see the stabilization of the site completed by 2026.

PNJ will continue to support Taylor's mill and strongly encourages municipalities, counties, and statewide bodies to use this partnership as a model in engaging and exploring ways to preserve New Jersey's role in America's history as we move towards America's 250th celebrations.









UPCOMING PROGRAMS & EVENTS



FOR FULL PROGRAM LISTING AND TO RSVP VISIT WWW.PRESERVATIONNJ.ORG



Q&A with PNJ
"Meet the NJ State
Historic Preservation
Office & the NJ Historic
Trust"

Date, Time & Location: February 28, 2024 7:00PM Zoom



Talks with our Ten Most St. Monica's Episcopal Church



Q&A with PNJ "Revolution NJ"

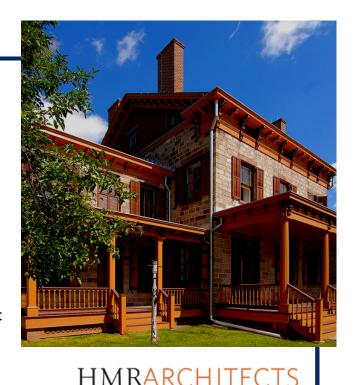
Date, Time & Location: March 15, 2024 7:00PM

Date, Time & Location: April 15, 2024 7:00PM

MEMBERSHIP

Our members share an appreciation for the value of historic resources, a commitment to the preservation of our heritage for future generations, and a desire to see the tangible evidence of New Jersey's past remain a living, contributing part of its future.

Sharing a special thank you to our current members and sponsors!



















PRESERVATION ersey

Founded in 1978, Preservation New Jersey is a statewide nonprofit organization that promotes the economic vitality, sustainability, and heritage of New Jersey's diverse communities through advocacy and education. Preservation New Jersey produces an annual list of New Jersey's 10 Most Endangered Historic Places; provides educational workshops; serves as a resource for technical assistance and general advice for the public; and addresses legislation and public policies that impact New Jersey's historic places and communities. For more information visit www.preservationnj.org.



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