

preservation  
PENNSYLVANIA

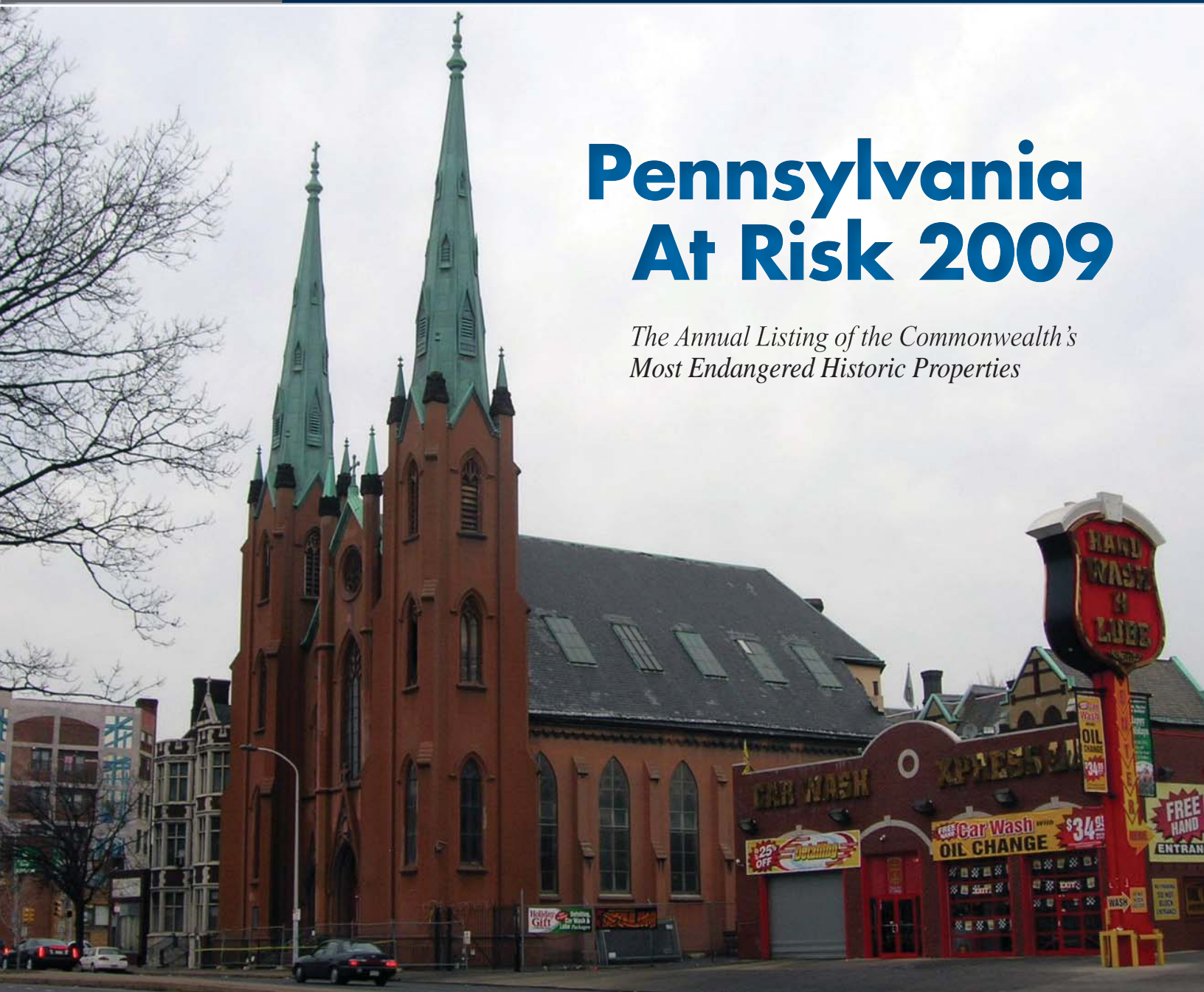
# Preserving

The Newsletter Dedicated to Preserving Pennsylvania's Historic Places

P E N N S Y L V A N I A

## Pennsylvania At Risk 2009

*The Annual Listing of the Commonwealth's  
Most Endangered Historic Properties*



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*Cresson Area Historical Association at Braemar Cottage, Cresson Township, Cambria County. Photo courtesy of Erin Hammerstedt, 2009.*

## "THIS PLACE MATTERS!"

Preservation Pennsylvania is dedicated to helping people protect and preserve the historic places that matter to them. Through the Partners in the Field program, Preservation Pennsylvania has assisted communities across the Commonwealth to identify at risk properties and coordinate grassroots advocacy efforts. In May 2009, Preservation Pennsylvania launched a statewide campaign in partnership with the National Trust for Historic Preservation to highlight the Commonwealth's historic places.

We need your help to make this campaign a success! Please download a "This Place Matters" sign at [www.preservationpa.org](http://www.preservationpa.org) and follow the instructions to submit your own photos. Each month, we will feature a newly submitted "This Place Matters" photo in the Preservation Pennsylvania e-newsletter and Facebook page.

**Get involved and share your stories about the historic places that matter to you!**

## On the Cover...

*Church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Philadelphia. The Church of the Assumption BVM is a cultural landmark for the surrounding community and provides a sense of place in the West Poplar and Callowhill neighborhoods. Photo courtesy of Andrew Palewski, 2009.*

*Fricks Lock Historic District, East Coventry Township, Chester County. Photo courtesy of Dave Kimmerly, 2009.*

*Braemar Cottage, Cresson Township, Cambria County. Photo courtesy of Erin Hammerstedt, 2009.*

*Camp Michaux, Cooke Township, Cumberland County. Fountain constructed by prisoners at the Pine Grove Furnace POW Interrogation Camp. Photo courtesy of Joseph Baker, 2009.*

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**Mission Statement** Preservation Pennsylvania, through creative partnerships, targeted educational and advocacy programs, advisory assistance, and special projects, assists Pennsylvania communities to protect and utilize the historic resources they want to preserve for the future.

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*This Place Matters!  
2009 Statewide  
Conference on  
Heritage attendees  
at the State Museum  
of Pennsylvania.  
Preservation  
Pennsylvania file photo.*

# Pennsylvania's historical organizations and museums are at risk.

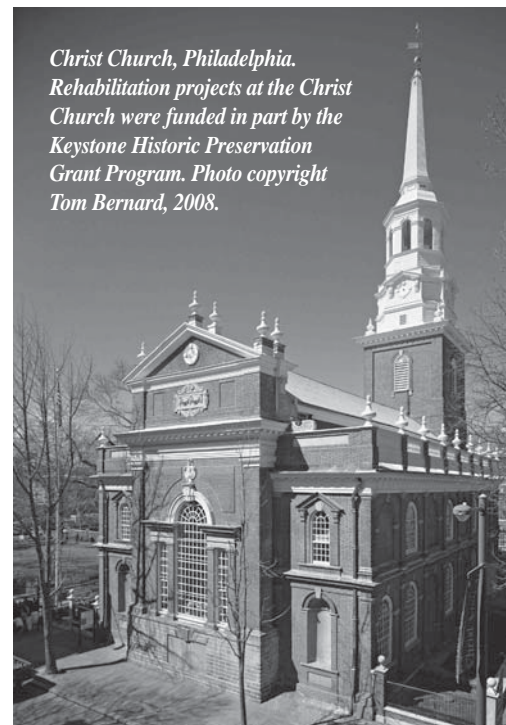
Annually, the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC) and the Pennsylvania Heritage Area Program provide millions of dollars of support to historical organizations and museums to fund preservation projects, educational programs, publications and operations. However, the drastic cuts in the Fiscal Year 2009-10 Pennsylvania Commonwealth Budget have eliminated the state funding for the Heritage Areas and forced the PHMC to review programs and reduce funding to historical organizations and museums. These reductions in funding have put all Pennsylvania public history programs at risk.

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## PHMC Budget Cuts – The Realities

In the recently approved State Budget, the PHMC general government operations funding was reduced by twenty-four percent. The Museum Assistance Grant Budget was cut by fifty-three percent from \$3,785,000 to \$1,779,000. The Museum Assistance Line Item funded a majority of PHMC grant programs, and allowed the PHMC to provide over \$2.4 million dollars in Fiscal Year 2008-09 for General Operating Support grants to Pennsylvania historical organizations and museums. Non-preferred museums and Regional History Center grants were reduced by fifty-four percent.

The Keystone Recreation, Park and Conservation Funding, supported by the Realty Transfer Tax, was redirected to the General Fund. This redirection results in a one hundred percent loss or a six million dollar reduction in funding that had supported the Keystone Historic Preservation Grant Program and security, conservation, and environmental systems at the PHMC sites. As a result, the PHMC was forced to eliminate the Keystone Historic Preservation Grant Program. Since its inception in 1994, the program has provided millions of dollars in matching grant funds to enable non-profits to complete over five hundred preservation projects across the Commonwealth. The elimination of this grant program will greatly increase the financial burden of preserving historic sites.



*Christ Church, Philadelphia.  
Rehabilitation projects at the Christ  
Church were funded in part by the  
Keystone Historic Preservation  
Grant Program. Photo copyright  
Tom Bernard, 2008.*

## Pennsylvania At Risk

serves as a representative sampling of the Commonwealth's most endangered historic resources. For the purpose of the list, endangerment is defined as threat of demolition, significant deterioration, vandalism, alteration, and/or loss of its historic setting. It is our belief that publishing this list draws statewide attention to the plight of Pennsylvania's historic resources, promotes local action to protect resources, and encourages additional state funding for historic sites.

This list is compiled from recommendations made by our members, local heritage organizations, the board and staff of Preservation Pennsylvania, and the Bureau for Historic Preservation, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission.

### Criteria for Listing

- the property is listed or determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, or
- the property is considered a contributing structure in a National Register Historic District, or
- the property is designated historic by local government, and
- the property is faced with imminent, recognized endangerment either from overt action, neglect, incompatible use, or loss of context.

**Preservation Pennsylvania welcomes your comments on this year's list, your updates on the status of past entries, and your suggestions for future listings.**



*Farrandville Iron Furnace. Photo courtesy of Clinton County Historical Society.*



“*How sad to see museums have to shift resources to spend more money and time fundraising rather than for safeguarding and exhibiting their collections for the public.*”

*Janet MacGregor, Deputy Director,  
Pennsylvania Federation of Museums and Historical Organizations*

## **Elimination of State Funding for Heritage Areas**

The line item that provided two million dollars of vital funding to the Pennsylvania Heritage Area Program was eliminated in the Fiscal Year 2009-10 Budget. This drastic cut has forced all Heritage Areas to reduce their operating budgets and eliminate the successful Heritage Area Grant Program, which provided funds to regional historical organizations.

## **Historical Societies Struggle Without State Funds**

Each year, the PHMC provides General Operating Support Grants to over 160 historical organizations across the Commonwealth. For many organizations, such as the Clinton County Historical Society, the grant represented two-thirds of the Society's operating and payroll budget. Now facing a sizable twenty thousand dollar deficit, the Clinton County Historical Society has adopted cost-cutting measures including a forty percent reduction in operating hours, elimination of community educational programs and layoffs. The Society maintains four historic properties—the Heisey Museum, Castanea Railroad Station, Barton Street School and the Farrandsville Iron Furnace, all of which require routine maintenance, repair and security. The elimination of the Keystone Historic Preservation Grant Program and the Heritage Area Grant Program have compounded and forced the Society to scramble to identify new funding sources for planned preservation projects such as the rehabilitation of the Farrandsville Iron Furnace.

The Farrandsville Iron Furnace, constructed by the Lycoming Coal Company circa 1836, was among the earliest hot blast furnaces erected on American soil. The Clinton County Historical Society maintains the 54-foot towering structure, and sponsored volunteer projects to repair the Furnace. However, the non-profit organization is in need of financing to conduct a complete structural assessment and fund a rehabilitation project, which would include removal of the roof covering, re-pointing of the masonry, relining of interior bricks, and archaeological investigations.

In spite of reductions in staff and operating budgets, many organizations like the Clinton County Historical Society are establishing innovative solutions to maintain programs and preserve sites. The Society has engaged the community and collaborated with the Keystone Central School District to complete preservation projects through sweat equity. For example, the Keystone Central Vo-Tech students recently completed the construction of a replica water tank kiosk located at the restored Castanea Railroad Station. However, this project was made possible by a grant from the Lumber Heritage Region of Pennsylvania, a funding resource that was eliminated in the Fiscal Year 2009-10 Budget. The Society also plans to contract an archaeologist to lead a community archaeological dig at the Furnace site. These strategies have successfully engaged the community in the Society's work and encouraged a shared appreciation for the preservation of the past, yet the shortfalls in funding will not be resolved through volunteerism and community support alone.

Next February, Governor Edward Rendell will publish the Fiscal Year 2010-11 Governor's Executive Budget. It is vitally important that all Pennsylvanians contact their legislators and the Governor's office to advocate for a restoration of funding to the Heritage Area Program, the Museum Assistance Line Item and a partial redirection of the Keystone Recreation, Park and Conservation Funding to the PHMC programs.



**Without a restoration in state funding for public history programs, historical organizations and museums across the Commonwealth are at risk.**

*Keystone Central Vo-Tech students construct a replica water tank kiosk. Photo courtesy of Clinton County Historical Society.*





*Braemar Cottage.  
Photo courtesy of Erin  
Hammerstedt, 2009.*

## **Braemar Cottage** **Cresson Township, Cambria County**

### *Significance*

The Braemar Cottage is significant both for its association with Benjamin Franklin Jones and the Mountain House Resort at Cresson Springs. In 1888, Benjamin Franklin Jones constructed the Braemar Cottage in the Queen Anne style. Jones, a Pittsburgh industrialist, owned the Jones and Laughlin Steel Company and profoundly influenced the American iron and steel industry. Jones was the first American iron master to utilize the Bessemer Converter and he led one of the first vertically integrated plants in the area. Additionally, Jones introduced the sliding wage concept that influenced the industry's organizational structures.

Jones built the Braemar Cottage to serve as his summer home after vacationing at the Mountain House Resort, a location popular with Pittsburgh's elite. Jones' other primary properties in Pittsburgh and Sewickley were demolished, and the Braemar Cottage is one of the only tangible remnants demonstrative of Jones' personal and professional achievements.

### *Threat*

The Braemar Cottage sat vacant for decades and deterioration and neglect have taken a toll on the once grand Queen Anne. In 1990, the Cresson Area Historical Association (CAHA) purchased the property with plans to rehabilitate and reopen the Braemar Cottage to the public. CAHA commissioned a Historic Structures Report and Braemar Cottage was listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Despite CAHA's efforts, the property was deemed a nuisance by neighbors and Cresson Township filed suit to demolish the property. In January 2009, a court order was issued requiring the property be demolished within six to eight months. Demolition of the Braemar Cottage seemed imminent. However, local and statewide non-profit organizations and interested professionals formed a team to work to save the Braemar Cottage. Cresson Township agreed to delay the demolition order until November 2009, at which time the CAHA and the preservation team needed to demonstrate the ability and financing required to stabilize the historic property.

Despite the written agreement to postpone the demolition deadline, Cresson Township announced their intent to demolish the property in late October. The attorney for CAHA promptly filed a motion for injunction to prevent the demolition. The injunction and subsequent appeal were denied in the Cambria County Court, but CAHA filed an appeal in the Commonwealth Court. In an interview with the *Tribune-Democrat*, Gerald Neugebauer stated, "With the matter in Commonwealth Court, we do not feel comfortable proceeding with the demolition." Although the immediate demolition threat has temporarily subsided, CAHA and the preservation team must still demonstrate the ability to finance the rehabilitation of the Cottage.



*Braemar Cottage  
Preservation Team.  
Photo courtesy of Erin  
Hammerstedt, 2009.*





*Fricks Lock Historic District. Photo courtesy of Dave Kimmerly, 2009.*

## Fricks Lock Historic District East Coventry Township, Chester County

### *Significance*

The Girard Reach of Schuylkill Canal was constructed circa 1825 in the village of Fricks Lock. The Canal's primary purpose was to carry coal from the Anthracitic region to markets in Reading and Philadelphia. The two Locks 54 and 55 were constructed in the village to provide a lift of 18 feet. To guide traffic, a canal right-of-way, towpath, canal basin and aqueduct were constructed. A lock tender's residence was also built on site. The small village—comprised of vernacular Federal style residential properties, agricultural properties, and retail structures—expanded to support the booming transportation route. The extant Canal features and many of the associated properties contribute to the Fricks Lock National Register Historic District.

### *Threat*

The Fricks Lock Historic District is located within a nuclear power plant exclusion zone. The Limerick Generating Station regulates a one-mile radius around the plant in which no one may occupy buildings overnight due to the inability to evacuate in the case of an emergency. The historic properties in Fricks Lock have been vacant for decades and many are threatened with frequent vandalism and demolition. Exelon Nuclear, the operator of the nuclear power plant, considers the historic properties liabilities. As a result, the company has demolished both partial and entire historic structures without the approval of the East Coventry Township Historical Commission.

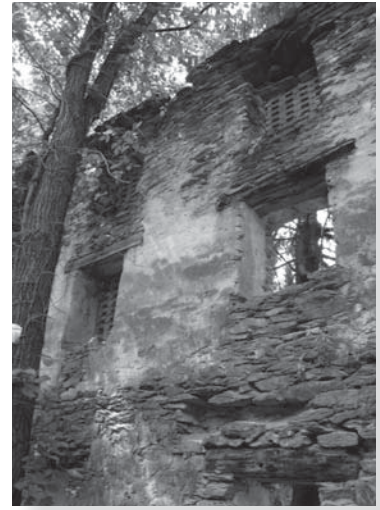
In September 2009, Exelon Nuclear announced plans to re-license Limerick with the federal Nuclear Regulatory Commission. This action will initiate an environmental review through the National Environmental Policy Act, which will include a Section 106 review in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act. The regulations require the lead agency to consider potential adverse effects to historic properties. Local preservationists hope this review will motivate Exelon Nuclear to explore potential mitigation commitments to stabilize and explore new uses for the long vacant, historically significant Fricks Lock National Register Historic District.







*Fountain constructed by prisoners at the Pine Grove Furnace POW Interrogation Camp. Photo courtesy of Joseph Baker.*



*Bunker Hill Farm stone wall. Photo courtesy of Joseph Baker.*

## Camp Michaux Cooke Township, Cumberland County

### *Significance*

Camp Michaux lies hidden along the Appalachian Trail in the South Mountain Range. The Camp's only standing feature is a late 18th century stone barn wall, but beneath the heavy forest cover lie ruins of a centuries-old farmstead, Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) Camp and Prisoner of War Interrogation Camp.

The Bunker Hill Farm, owned and operated by the South Mountain Mining and Iron Company, was constructed in the late 18th century to provide resources to ironworkers at the Pine Grove Furnace. In 1933, the first Pennsylvania CCC Camp was established at Pine Grove. The Camp spread across 120 acres and included barracks, a mess hall, officer's quarters and maintenance facilities. The Corps constructed many of the roads and facilities that now function as part of the Pine Grove Furnace State Park. In 1941, the CCC Camp closed, underwent renovations funded by the United States War Department, and reopened two years later as the Pine Grove Furnace POW Interrogation Camp. Primary sources describing the POW facility are well documented in the book *Secret War at Home: The Pine Grove Prisoner of War Interrogation Camp*, written by John Paul Bland in 2006.



In 1947, the Dickenson United Presbyterian Church leased the Camp and renovated the facilities to serve as a Christian youth camp. In 1972, Camp Michaux was closed and its buildings were demolished by the Commonwealth to begin the process of forest restoration. However, in a recently completed historic resource survey, archaeologists posit that features from the CCC and POW Camps remain under the heavy brush cover that surrounds the Bunker Hill Farm.

### *Threat*

Camp Michaux is located at the halfway point of the Appalachian Trail in the Pine Grove Furnace State Park. The stone wall is a popular stopping point for hikers, but the highly visible feature is continually threatened by deferred maintenance and vandalism.

The stone wall is not in imminent danger of collapse, but stabilization measures are required to preserve the structure. Additionally, archaeologists have suggested the State Park should complete a survey of the Camp Michaux to document the area's strong, yet relatively unexplored connections to the CCC and POW Camps.



*La Ronda before the wrecking crew. Photo courtesy of Laura S. Kicey, 2009.*

## La Ronda Bryn Mawr, Montgomery County

On Friday, October 2, 2009, the owners of La Ronda began the weekend-long demolition of the treasured Mediterranean Revival estate. By Monday morning, only demolition debris and dust lingered at the site of the once magnificent mansion. The demolition of La Ronda marked the end of a summer-long preservation battle and has proven to be a catalyst to a new discussion about property rights, historic preservation ordinances and demolition permits.

*In March 2009, Joseph D. Kestenbaum purchased La Ronda, a 14,000 square foot Addison Mizner designed estate, with the intent of demolishing the structure to build a slightly smaller mansion.*

Lower Merion Township had designated La Ronda as a Class II property in the historic resource survey. However, after the Township completed the historic resource inventory, the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC) determined La Ronda was eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. The Township attempted to elevate La Ronda to a Class I property, but the property owner refused to grant his voluntary consent to the

change of designation. According to the local historic preservation ordinance, Class II properties are not protected from demolition. However, the Township Commissioners may vote to delay the demolition permit for 90 days to encourage the property owner to explore alternatives.

Local, statewide and national organizations and concerned citizens advocated for the preservation of the architecturally significant property and spearheaded an effort to raise funds to purchase and relocate the estate to an adjacent plot. Benjamin Wohl, a Palm Beach real estate executive, came forward and offered to finance the purchase and relocation. In addition to preserving La Ronda, this offer would have lessened the publicity nightmare that played-out in the Main Line community and would have saved the Kestenbaums an estimated three-hundred thousand dollars in demolition costs.

Unfortunately, a consensus over salvage rights could not be reached between Kestenbaum, Wohl and the former owner, Arthur Kania. Kania claimed that the property was sold under the stipulation that he would retain salvage rights and the ability to remove the valuable architectural elements—stained glass windows, chandeliers and doors—for thirty days in advance of the demolition. However, it was speculated that Kestenbaum began tearing out pieces of the estate before Kania had an opportunity to gut the building. In spite of extreme community opposition and extraordinary efforts at the local and national level to explore alternatives, Kestenbaum demolished La Ronda in October 2009.

### *Lessons Learned from La Ronda*

The demolition of La Ronda is not considered typical of residential teardowns. In most cases, developers purchase low-cost homes in established neighborhoods, tear down the modest residence and construct a new home that is typically not harmonious with the surrounding properties in size, scale, setback and style. La Ronda, a massive and magnificent structure, was purchased for a high-ticket price with the ultimate goal of constructing a smaller mansion in its place. Atypical as it may be, the demolition of La Ronda highlights the continuing threat of teardowns in historic neighborhoods in spite of the overall decline in the housing sector.

In 2002, the National Trust for Historic Preservation listed “Teardowns in Historic Neighborhoods” on the annual America’s 11 Most Endangered Historic Places. Within Pennsylvania, the National Trust for Historic Preservation listed the communities of Ardmore, Bryn Mawr, Lower Merion Township, Merion Station, North Wayne and Wynnewood as neighborhoods at risk.

Communities across the country are struggling to regulate the practice of teardowns and incompatible residential infill. In Pennsylvania, the Historic District Act 167 and Article VI (Section 603 (g) 2, 604 (1) and 605(2)) of the Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) provide municipalities the authority to regulate historic resources through their zoning ordinances and utilize planning tools to discourage demolition of historic properties. Lower Merion



Township conducted a historic resource inventory and enacted a historic preservation ordinance. In addition, the Township established a 90-day demolition delay ordinance.

Despite these tools to discourage residential teardowns, La Ronda still came crashing down. This tragedy highlights the necessity for communities and preservationists to review the concept of owner consent for designation in historic preservation ordinances and to integrate preemptive strategies to combat teardowns. Christopher Eck, a Historic Preservation Officer for the US General Services Administration, recently presented a lecture at the 2009 National Preservation Conference on the community and environmental costs of teardowns. Eck proposed implementing Construction and Demolition Tipping Fee Surcharges. A municipality may implement the surcharge on all construction and demolition waste and the funds may be funneled into a trust administered at the local level for preservation programs. Highland Park, Illinois, implemented a similar, although more costly, deterrent to demolition. The community established a \$10,000 teardown fee that is collected during the permitting phase. The funds are transferred to an Affordable Housing Trust Fund, administered by the Highland Park Illinois Community Land Trust.

These preemptive strategies are not a cure-all to the teardown trend and a disincentive program may not have discouraged a historic property owner like Joseph Kestenbaum. However, community leaders, preservationists and environmentalists need to join together to communicate the real financial, environmental and social impacts of teardowns to establish new tools to discourage the destruction of another estate like La Ronda.

#### Historic Significance

La Ronda was designed in 1929 by architect Addison Mizner for Percival Foerderer, a Philadelphia leather manufacturer and noted philanthropist. The Mediterranean Revival estate was one of the few extant examples of Mizner's work in the northeast. Mizner is best known for his architectural contributions in Boca Raton, Palm Beach and other southern Florida communities. The original estate stretched across 232 acres and included several structures. Over the past fifty years, the estate was subdivided and the ancillary buildings and plots were sold to various owners. La Ronda, the main villa, was situated on a two-acre plot and was visible from the road.



“Despite the economy and depressed real estate market, teardowns are not going away in many places. And for people that have the means, but lack the interest in a community's heritage, La Ronda and others like it will continue to fall.”

*Demolishing La Ronda... Unthinkable, but Potentially True.*

*Adrian Scott Fine, Director, Center for State and Local Policy, National Trust for Historic Preservation 28 August 2009.*



*Demolition of La Ronda. Photo courtesy of Carla J. Zambelli, 2009.*

*The community protest. Photo courtesy of Carla J. Zambelli, 2009.*

*Randy Cotton and Roy Smith, Preservation Pennsylvania Chairman at community protest. Photo courtesy of Laura S. Kicey, 2009.*



“

*Assumption is an extraordinary survivor in a landscape that has been all but stripped of its architectural heritage. It is one of the most prominent structures in the area. Its copper spires, which stand over 15 stories high, are easily recognizable from the far reaches of West Poplar and Callowhill.*

”

Andrew Palewski.

Alan Jaffe. “Preservation Row: Church of the Assumption.” *PlanPhilly*. 9 April 2009.

## Church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary 1123-1133 Spring Garden St., Philadelphia

### Significance

The Church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary is a Gothic-Revival style masonry church designed by Patrick Charles Keely. Keely, a prolific Irish-American architect, designed over 600 Catholic Churches in North America. Constructed between 1848 and 1849—with renovations in 1899—the Church of the Assumption BVM is the earliest surviving example of Keely’s ecclesiastical designs. In addition to architectural significance, the Church of the Assumption is associated with the lives of two Catholic Saints—Saint Katherine Drexel and Saint John Neumann. In 2006, Siloam, a spirituality and wellness center for people living with or affected by HIV/AIDS, purchased the Church of the Assumption, the rectory, convent, storefront, and a paved play area from the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. The non-profit organization operates services and programs in the former rectory building.

### Threat

In 2007, Siloam applied to the Community Design Collaborative of AIA Philadelphia to explore expanding services into the other acquired buildings. The Collaborative estimated a cost of approximately five million dollars to rehabilitate the Church for adaptive reuse. Siloam was unable to finance the rehabilitation

project and instead applied for a permit to demolish the Church building in 2009. The demolition permit request was denied as the Philadelphia Historical Commission placed the Church under its jurisdiction just one day prior to Siloam’s permit application. On May 8, 2009, the Commission accepted the Church of the Assumption BVM nomination and included the property on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places.

In June 2009, Siloam appealed the historic designation and argued alterations including the removal of the stained glass windows and various interior elements have comprised the historic significance and architectural integrity of the Church. Additionally, Siloam has stated it will file an appeal for financial hardship with the Philadelphia Historical Commission.

Local residents, activists and preservation groups have continued to protest Siloam’s efforts to demolish the historic Church. Local activists argue the Church of the Assumption is more than an architectural gem; it is a cultural landmark for the surrounding community and provides a sense of place in the West Poplar and Callowhill neighborhoods. Andrew Palewski, a preservation architect and neighbor to the Church, has led the preservation battle and recently contacted Siloam leaders to explore alternatives to demolition that could include leasing or selling the property to a preservation-minded buyer.



*Church of the Assumption Blessed Virgin Mary. Photo courtesy of Andrew Palewski, 2009.*



## Sidney Hillman Medical Center 2116 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia

### Significance

In 1951, the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America constructed the Sidney Hillman Medical Center to provide free medical services to unionized apparel industry workers in Philadelphia. Named after prominent 20th century labor leader Sidney Hillman, the facility represented the first attempt by an American union to provide wellness services to its members. In addition to the social significance of the facility, the Sidney Hillman Medical Center was designed by the esteemed architectural firm Magaziner & Polss and is considered one of Philadelphia's most distinctive examples of Modernist architecture. The building is listed as a contributing resource to the Rittenhouse Square National Register Historic District and the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC) determined the property



to be individually eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places for its significance in 20th century social history and Modernist architecture.

*Sidney Hillman Medical Center. Photo courtesy of J. Randall Cotton.*

### Threat

In 2009, the John Buck Company, a Chicago-based real estate developer, announced plans to demolish the Sidney Hillman Medical Center in order to construct a thirty-three story apartment tower, street level café, retail shops and parking garage. The plans included the relocation of the Medical Center to an adjacent site on Sansom Street. Neighboring churches, property owners, local preservationists and the Preservation Alliance of Greater Philadelphia protested the proposed demolition and new construction. In June 2009, the Philadelphia Historical Commission reviewed the demolition permit and approved an application for financial hardship submitted by the developer. The Preservation Alliance of Greater Philadelphia has appealed this decision, and the PHMC stated the demolition and new construction would adversely affect the surrounding National Register Historic Districts.

Despite approval from the Philadelphia Historical Commission, the Philadelphia City Planning Commission and the Zoning Board of Adjustments, the project financing may initiate an additional level of review. The John Buck Company applied for US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) funds to finance the project. Under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, the application for federal funds will initiate a review of the project to consider the potential adverse effect on the historic resources.

## Mountain View Inn Unity Township, Westmoreland County

### Significance

The Mountain View Inn, a former Historic Hotel of America, opened in 1924 and welcomed guests traveling along the Lincoln Highway for the past eighty-five years. The Lincoln Highway was the first coast-to-coast road in the United States. A local landmark, the Mountain View Inn offered peaceful rest for travelers and was long famous for its huge pool. The Inn was family-owned and hosted many dignitaries including the Dalai Lama, and cultural icons like the Rolling Stones.

### Threat

In January 2009, the bank that held the mortgage on Mountain View Inn filed for foreclosure. The Inn was purchased in August and the new owners announced plans to demolish the historic sections of the property to construct a new commercial development, the Mountain View Village. The proposed plans will subdivide the eleven acres into six plots and may include a smaller fifty-three room lodge, a grocery store, shops, restaurants and drive-thru chains. In September and October 2009, the new owners hosted three auctions and sold-off the

Inn's valuable architectural elements. The Inn's original hardwood floors and bar where famous guests like Presidents Dwight D. Eisenhower, John F. Kennedy and Ronald Reagan once dined were removed.

The Mountain View Inn was razed on November 4, 2009.



*Mountain View Inn. Photo courtesy of Olga Herbert, Executive Director, Lincoln Highway Heritage Corridor.*

# Pennsylvania At Risk 2009 *Updates on Previously Listed Properties*

## Civic Arena

Pittsburgh, Allegheny County  
(PA At Risk 2002)

By Robert S. Pfaffmann, AIA

In early October 2009, with the famed Stanley Cup shimmering dramatically at center ice of the Civic Arena (aka “the Igloo”), the Pittsburgh Penguins began their final season in the historic building. The media has printed a series of nostalgia articles, and adaptive-reuse advocates are beginning a final push to persuade Pittsburgh that the 48-year-old, like-new stainless steel dome can have new life as Pittsburgh’s answer to Chicago’s Millennium Park. In a town where hometown pride has brought us Steeler Nation, reuse of the historic sports complex will simply be another Pittsburgh first.

The Civic Arena is a design and engineering landmark. With its still-working retractable roof, it is a one-of-a-kind building in the world, and worthy of preservation and adaptive reuse. The Pittsburgh Sports & Exhibition Authority (SEA), which owns the Igloo, has begun planning for demolition by issuing environmental assessment contracts. In the coming months, a federal Section 106 review and the consulting party process required by the National Historic Preservation Act and Section 105 of the Pennsylvania History Code will commence.

At the same time, the residents of the adjacent Hill District are beginning an Urban Redevelopment Authority-sponsored master planning process that will determine the planning context of the Arena’s future. Residents hope that the historic review and

planning processes are combined to provide an opportunity for constructive dialogue. Leaders from Preservation Pittsburgh have formed a new advocacy group, entitled Recycle the Igloo!, to make the case for reuse.

*Recycle the Igloo! advocates for the following reuse strategies:*

**Promote a sustainable (green) reuse strategy.** In order to save the Arena, advocates will need to demonstrate the economic viability of a new use and show that it can be an anchor for new development. An ecologically driven “Greenprint” for the Hill Neighborhood is also underway that will have an influence over the master plan.

Since it will cost millions just to demolish the Civic Arena and prepare the surrounding 28-acre site, without having built anything in its place, advocates point out that the preservation and sustainable planning could create an exciting destination for residents and visitors alike. And of course, as preservationists and green building advocates know, the greenest building is the one that already exists!

The reuse of the structure proposes significant internal change, while maintaining the exterior character-defining features. The sketches show how the arena was built as two structures in one: 1) the internal seating bowl and supporting spaces below it and, 2) the exterior cantilevered dome set on a concrete tension ring. The tension ring is supported by 58 sets of canted cast concrete struts that sit on a terrace overlooking the skyline. The external cantilevered truss was designed and constructed by American bridge builders—American Bridge Company and Amman &

Whitney, designers of the Verrazano Narrows Bridge in New York City.

**Create a unique visitor and community destination.** As a unique destination, the Arena could attract worldwide interest and generate new business and the revenue to maintain the character-defining structural moveable dome. Growing from the ashes of failed urban renewal and highways separating the Hill and downtown, the Civic Arena could be an anchor for a sustainable urban plan that integrates well with the new Consol Arena next door and the rebirth of the Hill.

The illustrations show that unlike conventional buildings, the Arena’s roof can be fully opened allowing for a six-acre park that can be covered in bad weather with the press of a button! The fixed portion of the 415-foot dome offers a great view towards the downtown skyline.

To many local officials, the Pittsburgh Sports & Exhibition Authority (SEA) and the prime tenants of the Civic Arena—the Pittsburgh Penguins—the demolition plan is a done deal. However, a small group of preservation advocates has not given up on the building or the community.

We need your support; please go to this Facebook page to join and stay up to date on the latest events: <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=56073818959>

Visit <http://gallery.mac.com/robertpfaffmann2#100479>, to view the booklet, *A Civic Renewal: Proposal for Reuse of the Civic Arena*, written by Robert S. Pfaffmann, AIA.

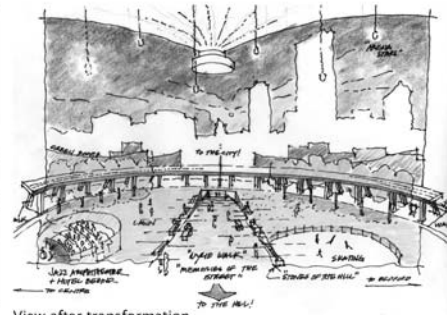


Civic Arena. Photo courtesy of Rob Pfaffmann.

## Celebrating Innovation, Renewing Community



View with dome full open



View after transformation

*A Civic Renewal: Proposal for Reuse of the Civic Arena*, concept sheet courtesy of Rob Pfaffmann.



## Phoenix Iron Company Foundry

Phoenixville, Chester County  
(PA At Risk 1996)



*Phoenix Iron Company Foundry. Photo courtesy of Barbara Cohen, Schuylkill River Heritage Center.*

The Foundry sat vacant on the abandoned Phoenix Iron Company site for decades and the building slowly deteriorated from neglect, water infiltration and vandalism. In 1998, the Phoenixville Area Economic Development Corporation (PAEDCO) purchased the Foundry building and contracted Carnevale Eustis Architects to complete the exterior rehabilitation. The project included the replacement of the roof; the repair of the window frames, trim and the replacement of the window sashes; and repointing of stone and brick. With the exterior rehabilitation completed, PAEDCO focused on the site and interior rehabilitation. A “Symbols of Steel” sculptural garden with original Phoenix Columns was installed, and an interpretative Schuylkill River Heritage Center was established. The property was sold to Hankin Group. The Hankin Group embraced the industrial character of the building and created a flexible event space open for rental. The development plans required the addition of a second floor mezzanine, which was integrated into the open space in conformance with the Secretary of Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation. The Foundry was reopened to the public in 2008 and was honored with the Construction Award for Industrial & Commercial Properties at the 2009 Pennsylvania Historic Preservation Awards.

## Dolington Village Historic District

Upper and Lower Makefield Townships, Bucks County (PA At Risk 2005)

In April of 1998, national real-estate developer Toll Brothers, Inc. purchased approximately 311 acres of farmland that adjoined and provided the rural agricultural context for the Dolington Village Historic District. Local residents and co-founders of the Upper Makefield Conservancy, Jane Johnson and Carol Stuckely contested the proposed development through participation in zoning hearings and legal action. In June of 2007, Toll Brothers sold 205 of the acres surrounding Dolington Village to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to construct the Washington Crossing National Veterans Cemetery. A Programmatic Agreement (PA) was established in Spring of 2009 that includes stipulations requiring the phased development of the cemetery to ensure that areas closest to the Dolington Village Historic District are developed last and commits the VA to preserving the National Register eligible Samuel Merrick Log Home and the Scott Farm. However, the Upper Makefield Conservancy is continuing its fight to prevent the Toll Brothers development plans through outstanding lawsuits. The Upper Makefield Conservancy was honored with the Grassroots Advocacy Award at the 2009 Pennsylvania Historic Preservation Awards. Information courtesy of Randy Cotton, Jane Johnson and Carol Stuckely.

## Boyd Theater

Chestnut Street between 19th and 20th, Philadelphia (PA At Risk 2002)

In 2008, the National Trust for Historic Preservation listed the Boyd Theater on the annual America’s 11 Most Endangered Historic Places. In September 2008, developer Hal Wheeler purchased the historic Art Deco Theater from Live Nation. The Philadelphia Historical Commission approved the plans to rehabilitate the structure as part of a larger hotel and entertainment development.

## Dickson Tavern

East Second & French Streets, Erie  
(PA At Risk 2001)

The Dickson Tavern was constructed circa 1815 and is one of the oldest structures in the City of Erie. In 1841, the building was converted to a residence and a Greek Revival addition was constructed. The City of Erie purchased the vacant Dickson Tavern in the early 20th century. The tavern functioned as a public museum from 1963 until 2004. For the past five years, the Tavern has sat vacant and was threatened with encroaching development.

In November 2009, Kidder Wachter Architecture & Design announced plans to purchase the Dickson Tavern from the City of Erie and renovate the building for reuse as the firm’s offices. Since 1991, Jeff Kidder has worked to protect and preserve the Dickson Tavern and he is grateful to the City of Erie for the opportunity to rehabilitate and reuse the historically significant building. “By preserving the Dickson Tavern, we can practice the values of historic preservation that we preach and encourage others to utilize our community’s historic resources as opportunities for economic development,” Kidder said.

Jeff Kidder currently serves as a Preservation Pennsylvania Board Member and is the Chairman of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission’s Historic Preservation Board. He has also been active in the preservation of the George Carroll House, listed in the 1995 edition of PA At Risk. Kidder and his family operate the George Carroll House as a bed and breakfast in downtown Erie.



*Dickson Tavern. Photo courtesy of Jeff Kidder, 2009.*



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