

preservation
PENNSYLVANIA

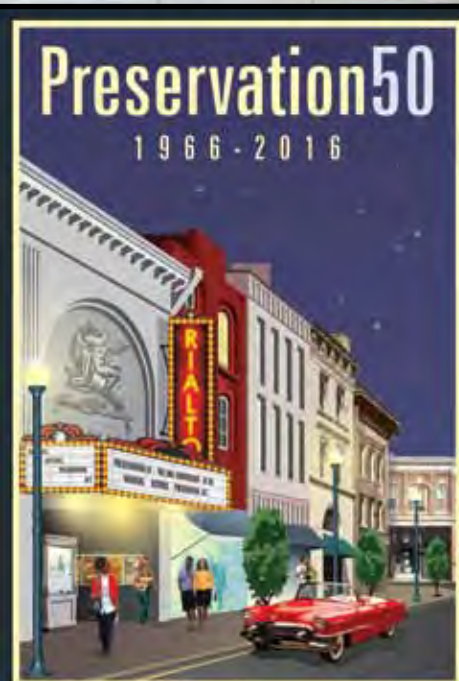
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2015 *Pennsylvania* **AT RISK**



OUR LEGACY, OUR FUTURE



FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Business is booming! Not sure if that is good or bad. We received 37 nominations for this year's *Pennsylvania At Risk*. We hope this is because of our great outreach via social media, word of mouth, and increased awareness of our work. It may reflect the fact that more and more of our historic properties are struggling to survive. Either way, it is an eye opener. There are LOTS of historic properties that need assistance. The review process in determining which properties make the list is difficult as the staff, board and our partners carefully evaluate each submission.

Each year's list sets our work priorities for the next 12 months, so we must feel confident that our intervention has the potential to make a difference in the outcome. Some issues resolve themselves quickly within the year, and others take many years to progress. We're not always successful but we do make a difference in many projects. You tell us this is true and we are happy to have helped in any way we can.

As part of the national celebration of **Preservation50** (at right), the staff and board of Preservation Pennsylvania have made site visits to ALL of our *Pennsylvania At Risk* properties listed since the beginning of the program in 1992. We not only wanted to check on the status of these properties and update the files but we also wanted to evaluate the factors that have led to their saves or losses. We're hoping that the trends we identify will help us in our future work with this important program.

There are a total of 218 historic resources listed in *Pennsylvania At Risk* (5 statewide listings, 142 buildings, 30 historic districts, 17 structures, 20 sites and 4 objects). They were evaluated and rated as saved, partially saved, lost or still at risk. Overall, this process has been interesting, sometimes surprising, and very informative. Less than 25% of At Risk resources have actually been lost! That is pretty impressive. Our work with At Risk properties can sometimes seem depressing as we do lose many battles. But our statistics show us that we aren't losing as many as we sometimes assume.

And the best news ... 50% of our At Risk properties have been saved (or partially saved)! I think that definitely calls for a celebration! And a continued call to action that this work IS important and DOES make a difference. Thank you for your support of this important work.

Best,

Mindy G. Crawford

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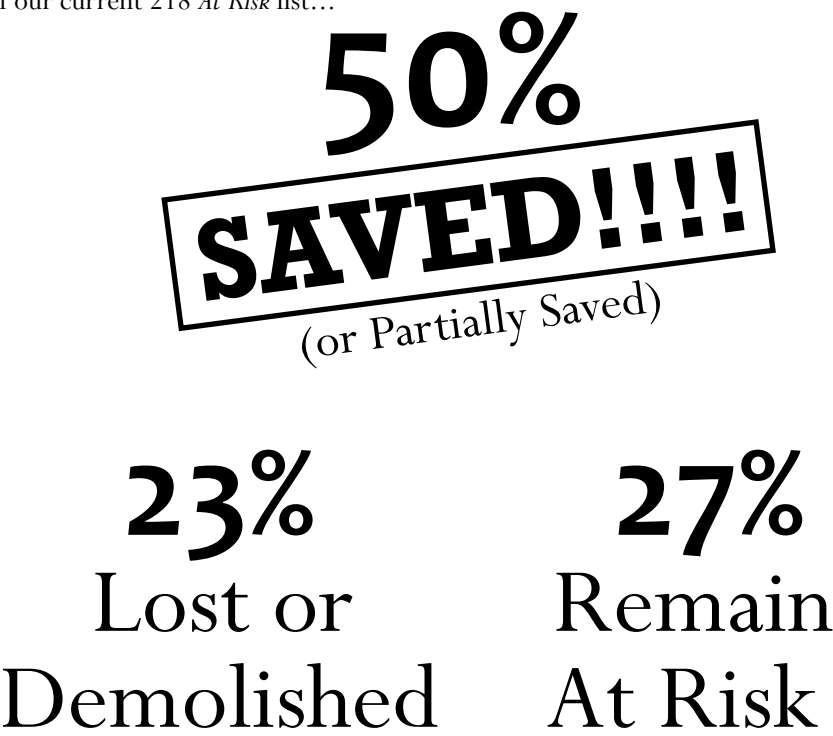
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Preservation Pennsylvania began its annual endangered properties program in 1992. Since then, we have listed a total of 218 resources in *Pennsylvania At Risk*, including 5 statewide listings, 30 districts, 142 buildings, 20 sites, 17 structures and 4 objects. Preservation Pennsylvania’s staff has recently visited each of these places to update our records on their progress or decline.

Of our current 218 *At Risk* list...



Preservation50! It’s time for a celebration!

The National Historic Preservation Act was signed into law in 1966 and has shaped the preservation of America’s historic resources. National Register of Historic Places? Yes, part of this law. Section 106 Review Process that takes into account the effect of undertakings on historic resources? Yes, part of this law, too. It also established the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and the Historic Preservation Fund that supports the work of Pennsylvania’s State Historic Preservation Office providing funding for Certified Local Government grants and other important programs.

The Preamble of the National Historic Preservation Act, signed into law by President Lyndon Johnson, includes these inspiring words; The Congress finds and declares that: (a) the spirit and direction of the Nation are founded upon and reflected in its historic heritage; (b) the historical and cultural foundations of the Nation should be preserved as a living part of our community life and development in order to give a sense of orientation to the American people ...

Preservation50 is celebrating the establishment of this important act by reflecting back on the first 50 years of historic preservation, and looking forward to the future. We’ll be celebrating along with our partners across the United States. To find out what events are planned for this celebration, go to our website (preservationpa.org) and click on the Preservation50 tab.



2015
**Pennsylvania
AT RISK**

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LEWISTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT MIFFLIN COUNTY

17-33 E. Market Street and 8 N. Brown Street, Lewistown

THREAT: DEMOLITION for Chain Retail Development

The National Register eligible Lewistown Historic District will be negatively impacted by the proposed demolition of approximately nine historic buildings (17-33 E. Market Street and 8 N. Brown Street) for the construction of a new CVS pharmacy.

In order to accommodate a new 12,000-square-foot, one-story CVS drugstore, its drive-through, 53 off-street parking spaces, utilities and stormwater management, 11 properties in Lewistown's downtown historic district will be acquired and consolidated into a single 1.1-acre lot. All of the buildings standing on these lots will be demolished, including approximately nine historic buildings and at least three outbuildings.

CVS currently leases space at 120 E. Market Street, in the center of a one-story commercial strip outside of the historic district, just one block from the proposed new development. An operational assessment determined that their existing space had several deficiencies. With the end of their lease on the horizon, CVS approached the owner of a strip center about leasing space in the strip out of downtown. He suggested that CVS consider this location as an alternative. They agreed, so he began acquiring properties to make way for the new store downtown. Online tax records available in January 2016 indicate that Capital Holdings of Lewistown, LLC has acquired 25, 27, 31 and 33 E. Market Street, and 8 N. Brown Street, at a total recorded price of \$218,416 for the parcels, which local sources say is at or above the local market value. They intend to acquire 17, 19, 21 and 23 E. Market Street soon.

In addition to leaving one large, aging commercial space vacant when CVS moves out of their existing location, this project will require at least four active businesses to move or close, and will displace at least five downtown residents by eliminating at least three occupied residential units. In both of the properties yet to be acquired, a couple lives above the business that they own and operate below.



The National Register eligible Lewistown Historic District will be negatively impacted by the proposed demolition of approximately nine historic buildings.

How Can This Happen?

Historic preservation professionals have been working with chain drug stores for many years in an effort to prevent this type of extremely destructive development. In 1999, the National Trust for Historic Preservation (NTHP) listed The Corner of Main and Main on their 11 Most Endangered Historic Places list in order to draw attention to the nationwide problem of national drugstore chains developing downtown in ways that are not sensitive to Main Street's unique character (www.preservationnation.org).

After consulting extensively with CVS, Rite Aid and other chain drugstores, the NTHP published *Better Models for Chain Drugstores*, prepared a two-page *Compatible New Drugstore Design* tip sheet, and offered tips on their website for communities dealing with drugstore chains. They published *Chain Drugstores on Main Street: Some Positive Trends* in 2002. So how does large-scale acquisition and demolition for inappropriately scaled chain retail development still occur in Pennsylvania downtowns today? In Lewistown, there were many factors that led to this very unfortunate situation:

1. Challenging Circumstances for Redevelopment

Four of the nine buildings have been underutilized for many years. A fatal fire gutted one building and left an emotional scar on the community. Two other buildings were abandoned mid-renovation. The bank on the corner has struggled to find a new use because of its large lobby space. Alone, each of these vacancies would not be a problem. But together, they have skewed public perception of this block. Many members of the public are eager to see them removed from the downtown streetscape.

2. No Effective Local Tools for Preservation

Lewistown does not have a historic preservation ordinance that requires the review of changes—including demolition—to historic properties. Their Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance could have prevented this project by not approving the lot consolidation. Likely because of the perception that this block is a problem, the Planning Commission recommended granting conditional approval of the CVS proposal, and Lewistown Borough Council voted unanimously to approve the plans.

3. No State or Federal Regulation

Because this is private development that does not require any state or federal permits and is not using any state or federal funding, there are no state or federal regulations that require consideration of historic resources in this case. Unlike situations where CVS selected a location based on market factors and aggressively pursued development, this development in Lewistown is occurring at the hand of local developers and agents, with CVS as the end tenant. But the end result is the same: historic buildings in a downtown historic district are being demolished for incompatible new construction that will house a national drugstore chain.

UPDATES: DEMOLITION for Chain Retail Development

National chain retailers like CVS and Walmart have long been a challenge for traditional communities. In the past two decades of *Pennsylvania At Risk*, Preservation Pennsylvania has designated eight significant historic places as endangered because of proposed chain retail developments. Of these eight At Risk listings, we have only had two preservation victories.

SAVED!!!!

Chalfont Historic District Bucks County (2003)

Eckerd proposed building a drugstore with a drive-through window in the heart of the historic district, that would demolish three historic buildings. After lively community meetings, they came back to the community with a revised proposal that didn't call for demolition of the historic buildings. Eckerd, which in 2003 had nearly 300 stores in Pennsylvania, signed a Corporate Good Neighbor Initiative agreement with the National Trust for Historic Preservation pledging not to destroy properties listed in the National Register of Historic Places.



Guthriesville General Store Chester County (2006)

Wawa proposed to demolish the historic store to build a new convenience store. Against all odds, local grassroots advocates were successful in saving the building from demolition, and it still stands today. The building (pictured above) is currently for sale or lease.

Lancaster County (1994) *Partial Save*

In 1994, the rural, bucolic landscape of Lancaster County was threatened by the proposed development of four Walmarts. The community worked hard to minimize the impact of this commercial development on the community's rural character. Today, there are four Walmarts in Lancaster County, two of the four originally proposed and two others. Lancaster County retains large swaths of rural historic areas, but faces continued development pressure.

LOST

Lackawanna Avenue Historic District Lackawanna County (1992)



In 1992, 21 buildings on the south side of Lackawanna Avenue were slated for demolition for the construction of a new mall. The project was approved, the buildings demolished and the mall built, all to the detriment of this highly significant historic district.

The Victoria Theatre Shamokin, Northumberland County (1999)

The Victoria Theatre was demolished and replaced by a Rite Aid pharmacy.

East Eighth Avenue, Homestead Historic District, Allegheny County (2001)

In 1997, CVS announced plans for a store on East Eighth Avenue that called for the demolition of 10 buildings that are part of the National Register listed Homestead Historic District. The plan was conditionally approved in 1999, but the project stalled for various reasons. In 2000, CVS filed a lawsuit against those that were opposing their destructive development. Preservation Pennsylvania added the district to *Pennsylvania At Risk* in 2001 because their condition was deteriorating significantly during the lengthy legal battle. Although the CVS has not been built, by 2015 the buildings from 114-144 East Eighth Avenue had all been demolished, likely because of their severely deteriorated condition.

Lincoln Highway Garage York County (2004)

The historic Lincoln Highway Garage was demolished and replaced by a Turkey Hill convenience store.

3100 Block Main Street Morgantown, Berks County (2006)

An entire block of five historic buildings were demolished to make way for a suburban-style Rite Aid pharmacy and parking lot. The attempts of local and statewide organizations to work with Rite Aid to develop an alternative location for the store were unsuccessful.

LINDENWOLD MONTGOMERY COUNTY

701 S. Bethlehem Pike, (Ambler) Upper Dublin Township

THREAT: Inappropriate ALTERATION from Residential Development



DID YOU KNOW?

Lindenwold was the setting for the 1966 movie *The Trouble with Angels* featuring Hayley Mills.

Recently used as St. Mary's Villa for Children, Lindenwold estate is eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places both for its association with Dr. Richard V. Mattison and as an important example of its architectural type and style. According to the Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission, the landscape features are contributing elements of the property, in addition to the buildings and structures.

Lindenwold is currently owned by the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth, who have moved to a new location that better serves their mission. They have signed an agreement of sale with a development team who hopes to establish a mixed-use residential community on this 45-acre property. That development proposes to: remove approximately 1,580 trees over 8 inches in diameter; demolish the carriage house and other secondary buildings and structures; regrade the site to make it more suitable for construction; build 16 duplexes (32 units), 72 townhouses and approximately 255 apartments; and build a four-story parking structure and additional surface parking lots. However, the developers also currently plan to: retain 19 acres of open space (including the required setbacks and undevelopable wetland); retain the primary residence known as "the castle"; rehabilitate two gate houses as residences; and preserve the front gate and front entrance promenade, the sunken garden and the lake. The developer and the township feel like they are considering historic preservation, but the true nature of the property is not being preserved by this development plan.

Upper Dublin Township approved a zoning change for the property. The township recently received a conditional use application for the 45-acre estate, which is being reviewed by the Planning Commission. A public hearing will likely take place before the Board of Commissioners in the first quarter of 2016. The conditional use review is the first step in a lengthy land development plan review process.

The township has a preservation ordinance that recognizes Lindenwold as a historic resource. However, that ordinance does not have sufficient "teeth" to prevent a development that is allowed under local zoning. The historic commission will have an opportunity to review the design details of the new buildings, but not prohibit them to protect the historic landscape.

Despite the fact that elements of the historic property will be retained, development of this scale and intensity will severely compromise the historic character of the estate by altering its significant landscape and the relationship among its contributing features.

A citizens group known as Residents for Open Space at Lindenwold Estate (ROSLE) has organized to promote preservation of the property. ROSLE and other members of the community understand that it is not financially feasible for the Sisters to continue using the house as a home for abused and neglected children and maintain all of its buildings and its important landscape. However, since the historic landscape of the estate is a significant feature of the property and community, they think that the open space should be preserved as well as the buildings, structures and objects. They believe that a sufficient range of alternatives has not been explored, and that a more appropriate development plan might exist. Alternatives such as reusing the property as a hotel and conference or event center might allow the property to be financially viable while preserving the historic buildings and character-defining landscape.

"Despite the fact that elements of the historic property will be retained, development of this scale and intensity will severely compromise the historic character of the estate by altering its significant landscape and the relationship among its contributing features."

UPDATES: Properties Threatened with COMPROMISED SETTING

Over the years, Preservation Pennsylvania has seen many examples where historic places are threatened by development of their setting. In fact, 21 of the 218 historic resources listed in *Pennsylvania At Risk* were listed for this reason. This includes eight historic buildings and 10 historic districts whose setting was threatened by highway construction, flood control measures, residential and commercial development, strip mining and longwall mining, wind farm and Marcellus shale development. This group also includes three battlefields, whose historic character was threatened by encroaching development. In the case of these battlefields, casinos and general suburban sprawl were the key offenders.

In looking at these 21 examples, it becomes clear that the common factor among them is the presence of open space. Many types of historic resources, such as battlefields, farms and large estates and historic districts include open land. In some instances, such as battlefields, that open land IS the historic place. In other cases, like rural estates, farms or districts, the open space is a defining feature of the historic character of these places. However, to developers and some elected officials, open space looks like an opportunity for development. Those that do not work with historic preservation issues on a regular basis tend to focus on buildings, not sites and landscapes, as resources that merit consideration.

It is important to note that, often, when the setting is compromised, the condition of the building also begins to decline. Five of the eight buildings that were listed because of a threat to their setting are now also at risk because of their declining physical condition.

Dutch Corner Rural Historic District Bedford County (2010)

The Dutch Corner Rural Historic District is an example of a development

that threatened a historic resource by altering its setting. A developer proposed to build a series of wind turbines on the ridge that surrounded and defined the rural district. Because the turbines were at a distance from designated historic buildings, it seemed to many like a reasonable proposal. But to those who recognized the rural landscape, including both the cultivated farmland and the wooded mountainside that provided important resources to the farmers, as a historic resource were alarmed by the proposal. Fortunately for historic preservation, after years of opposition by local advocates working to prevent the construction of this ridgetop wind farm, the developer eventually withdrew his proposal.

SAVED!!!!



CHECK THIS OUT! ►

Modern parking garage looming over historic downtown buildings

Searights Tollhouse, Fayette County (1993)

Saved! from adverse impacts of nearby mining operations.



SAVED!!!!

Cold Point Village Historic District, Montgomery County (2000)

At Risk, negative activity in the form of extensive residential development.



Eagles Mere Historic District, Sullivan County (2010)

Saved! from negative impacts related to Marcellus shale natural gas extraction activities.



SAVED!!!!

133 W. Green Street, Hazleton

THREAT: Physical DETERIORATION Due to Vacancy and Abandonment

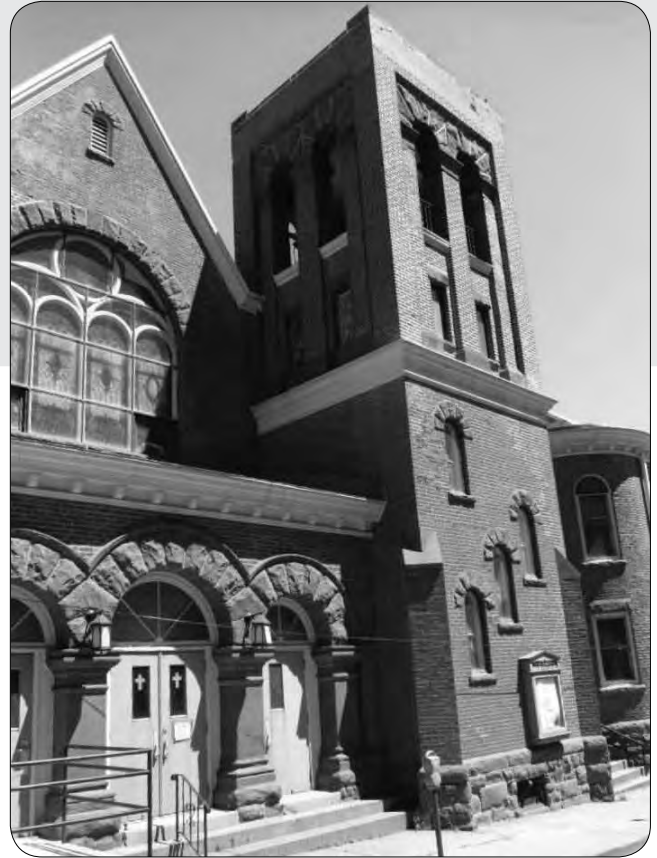
Once a lively community center, this church is now vacant and falling into disrepair. St. Paul's unique architecture, storied past and central location make the building an economic development opportunity for adaptive reuse. If properly addressed, a group of interested architects, realtors, planners and civic leaders could consider practical ideas to determine the landmark's future. The façade's broken components and interior's fairly open floor plan could be transformed into retail spaces, offices, or multi-family residential use.

St. Paul's, dedicated on May 22, 1899, was a magnificent execution of the Richardsonian Romanesque style. St. Paul's neatly packed edifice, an asymmetrical medley of this style, featured a façade of varied stone and brick. As the city's oldest congregation, St. Paul's was built in the final months of an industrious century, a church fitting for Hazleton. The structure overlooked the square that housed Pardee's mansion, which continued to command the downtown.

At the height of the Depression, the church underwent major renovations, and the congregation dropped "Episcopal" with the unification of American Methodists in 1939. By the early 1970s, the Methodists had merged with the Evangelical United Brethren denomination, making St. Paul's a United Methodist church. St. Paul's remained an active church through the 20th century. In the late 1990s, major renovations to the church's exterior and interior reaffirmed the congregation's commitment to its historic presence in the city. But St. Paul's could not control the unforeseen circumstances that resulted in a precipitous drop in its membership rolls. Hazleton's population decline and suburban flight directly impacted the congregation's size. As the children of lifelong congregants moved elsewhere, the church lost its viability. A corresponding drop in financial resources followed, and St. Paul's had to reevaluate its future. The church closed in 2004, nearly 170 years after its formation. The landmark has since stood vacant, changing ownership, plagued by instability caused by abandonment.

St. Paul's unfortunate outcome is not unique to post-industrial communities. In cities like Hazleton, the domes, spires and columns of religious structures define the skyline and attest to the diversity attracted by industry. Although a small city, Hazleton is endowed with diverse church architecture, signifying the many European cultures that built sacred tributes to their ancient denominations.

Churches frequently close because they cannot afford the upkeep of historic structures. Their leaders postpone necessary maintenance and repairs, struggling to finance the congregation's future in a space with a leaking roof, crumbling masonry, or an



St. Paul's closed in 2004, nearly 170 years after its formation.

outdated mechanical system. St. Paul's deteriorating condition is particularly painful, for the congregation maintained the building until the very end. Just one decade ago, masons and roofers busily kept pace with the church's required upkeep. But years of deterioration, exacerbated by break-ins and no utilities, has turned St. Paul's into a blighted property.

In 2012, the *Standard-Speaker's* Kent Jackson reported on Hazleton police Chief Frank DeAndrea's walk through the church. DeAndrea called St. Paul's a "house of ill repute," noting the ceiling's peeling plaster, beer cans scattered on the floor, and satanic pentagrams scrawled on the walls. At the time, the building was a den for vagrants, a nuisance property littered with alcohol containers and drug paraphernalia. The owner purchased the building for \$1 in 2005, intending to turn the former church into a youth center. In an expose on blighted properties in 2014, the *Standard-Speaker* noted that the owner owed \$8,039 in taxes on the property. When dialing his cell phone, a recorded message said his number was "temporarily not in service."

UPDATES: Challenges REHABILITATING Large Spaces

Spaces that are built to serve a specific purpose and house a particular group of people, like a church congregation or group of moviegoers, often have architecture that is inherently tied to the building's use. When that original use is separated from the building, it can be especially difficult to repurpose these large spaces. After reviewing the *At Risk* properties containing large volume spaces, it is clear that these are particularly challenging components of rehabilitation projects.



Villa Chapel

Erie County (2011) — AT RISK

In many instances, in order to get their plans approved, developers agree to keep historic buildings that exist on properties being developed, but do not actually use them as part of their plan. One example of this is Villa Chapel in Erie, where a historic school and convent were rehabilitated as the Villa Maria apartment complex, leaving the chapel to be rehabilitated in a later phase. Today, more than a decade after the Villa Maria project was finished, Villa Chapel still stands empty, deteriorating as a result of deferred maintenance and disuse.

Hazleton High School



Hazleton High School Luzerne County (1998) **SAVED!**

After years of deferred maintenance, which caused a section of the building's concrete parapet to collapse near the main entrance, the school board considered demolishing the school. Fortunately they decided instead to rehabilitate the building, including its impressive award-winning auditorium. The building now serves as the Hazleton Elementary Middle School and is commonly known as "The Castle."

Hershey Consolidated School



Hershey Consolidated School Dauphin County (1998) **SAVED!**

After being vacated in 1998, the Derry School District joined forces with developers to renovate the building into offices and a public gym.

Turtle Creek High School Allegheny County (2005) **SAVED!**

After serving as a public school since 1917, the school board voted in 2005 to close this school and build a new one. The community rallied to save the historic school, and had a ribbon cutting for the district's new accelerated learning academy in November 2015.

SAVED!!!!

The *Pennsylvania At Risk List* has 73 buildings containing large volume spaces on record. The building types that characteristically have large volume spaces are: commercial buildings, industrial buildings, public and government buildings, schools, religious structures, social and fraternal buildings, and theaters.

Properties
73
Most Common Threat **DEMOLITION**

45%
Saved or Partially Saved

ANDERSON BRICK BLOCK ELK COUNTY

523-569 Market Street, Johnsonburg

THREAT: Physical DETERIORATION (The Challenges of Rehabilitating Large Buildings in Small Towns and Rural Places)



“Because the building has not been upgraded and it is not able to attract and retain rent-paying tenants, there is less revenue coming in to cover the cost of the upgrades and generate profits for its owner.”

When you Google Johnsonburg, Pa., the defining image on Wikipedia is the Anderson Brick Block.

Johnsonburg is a borough in the heart of Pennsylvania’s Lumber Heritage Region, where farming and lumbering still form the basis of the economy. Since the last two decades of the 19th century, the major industry in Johnsonburg has been paper. The largest mill, which still operates today, was built more than 100 years ago by the Curtis Publishing Company, the Philadelphia-based publishing company that produced the *Saturday Evening Post* and *Ladies’ Home Journal*, among others. But a number of other paper factories existed in the community, as well.

In 1888, Philadelphia paper manufacturers L. D. and M. M. Armstrong established the Clarion Pulp and Paper Company to manufacture paper in Johnsonburg. Their factory opened in 1889 at the junction of the east and west branches of the Clarion River. The same year, the Anderson brothers platted an addition to the unincorporated village south of their mill, where they began to develop what is downtown Johnsonburg today.

Designed by Philadelphia architect P. A. Welsh and built in 1890, the Anderson Brick Block was one of the first brick commercial buildings constructed in downtown Johnsonburg. This extraordinary building dominates the east side of Market Street for nearly ½ the length of the National Register listed Johnsonburg Commercial Historic District. The 12-bay brick building is two stories high, with a three-story bay accentuating each end. The second story is cantilevered over the sidewalk, creating an outdoor arcade. The façade of the brick building is trimmed in rock-faced sandstone, and each of the 12 bays has a wood-frame oriel window.

The mixed-use building has 12 commercial storefronts at street level, and a series of apartments above. In 1891, the newly

constructed building was vacant with the exception of an express office and stationery shop in the northern-most storefront, and an office on the second floor in the southern-most unit. In 1898, a post office had opened in the southern-most storefront. The building also contained a grocer, a meat shop, a jewelry store and a drugstore. One space was used for storage, and six spaces remained vacant. By 1904, the building was fully occupied. It contained a hardware, a confectionary and a tobacco store, as well as two grocery, two dry goods, and two jewelry stores. The building’s commercial first floor also housed a restaurant, a tailor and the post office.

Unfortunately, in its 125-year life, the building has been altered and its condition is deteriorating. The building is partially vacant and at risk of disaster, such as fire, or continued deterioration. It is in need of upgrades to attract quality tenants. This is a vicious cycle. Because the building has not been upgraded and it is not able to attract and retain rent-paying tenants, there is less revenue coming in to cover the cost of the upgrades and generate profits for its owner. If the building is upgraded, this cycle can be stopped. But doing so will require a significant investment.

The current owner is not interested in investing in the needed upgrades, but is willing to sell (or perhaps donate) the building to someone with the capacity to rehabilitate it. In the hands of a preservation-minded developer, the project will likely be able to utilize rehabilitation tax credits.

A new owner interested in rehabilitating the building is needed. A potential new owner has recently come forward. Preservation Pennsylvania will try to assist him in evaluating project feasibility and identifying additional resources that may be needed.

UPDATES: Physical DETERIORATION in Challenging Local Economies

The challenges associated with rehabilitating large buildings in small towns are real. In Pennsylvania's larger cities, strong real estate markets and the presence of experienced preservation developers, contractors and investors help make projects doable. But these advantages do not exist in many of our smaller communities. And in these smaller communities, large historic properties have a significant impact on the character of the place. In looking back on the last 23 years of *Pennsylvania At Risk*, we see that the challenge is big, but not always insurmountable.



Bellefonte Academy
Centre County (2002)

DEMOLISHED

Built in 1806 to provide secondary education for the young men of Pennsylvania, by 1909, the Bellefonte Academy had educated more governors, senators, judges and public men than any other school in Pennsylvania. But the academy was forced to close after the Depression, and was converted for residential use. Decades of residential use and lack of maintenance and upgrades took a toll on the physical condition and architectural character of this local landmark. For reasons very similar to those faced by the Anderson Brick Block in Johnsonburg, the Bellefonte Academy was listed in *Pennsylvania At Risk* in 2002. Members of municipal government in Bellefonte, Centre County were working with the owner to upgrade the condition of the building and its residential units when the building was destroyed by fire in 2004.



Highland Hall
Blair County (2011)

AT RISK
(Positive Activity)

Built just after the Civil War as the Hollidaysburg Female Seminary, Highland Hall was listed in *Pennsylvania At Risk* in 2011. A developer came forward and began working to obtain tax incentives to help make rehabilitating the building financially feasible. In the meantime, the building's condition continued to deteriorate. In October 2013, a large portion of the rear wing collapsed, requiring its demolition. Still, the developer persevered. On their third attempt, S&A Homes was awarded funding through the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency in 2015 to rehabilitate the property as senior housing. They plan to rehabilitate the historic main block of Highland Hall, and add additional units in new rear and side wings. S&A Homes has received the required conditional-use permits and is moving forward with the project. Because the building was allowed to deteriorate for so long, character-defining features including the mansard roof and cupola will have to be removed and replicated. There are still many unknowns that could pose problems for Highland Hall, but it appears as if this large building in a small town will be successfully rehabilitated, with some compromises made to allow for the new use and make the project financially viable.

Pennsylvania **AT RISK**

Large buildings can be challenging to rehabilitate in rural areas as well as small towns.



Buck Hill Inn
Monroe County (2001)

AT RISK
(Negative Activity)

Although the building still stands today, the future is not looking bright for the Buck Hill Inn. The 134-acre property containing this former Gilded Age resort hotel in the Poconos was recently offered at tax sale. After being vacant and not maintained since 1991, local sources say that even developers that have experience and the capacity to do rehabilitation at this scale, such as Disney, have studied the project and found it to be financially infeasible. The Monroe County Redevelopment Authority is now exploring the option of demolishing the gargantuan structure. Probably the only thing keeping it standing is its tremendous size, and the associated price tag for demolition.



Bedford Springs Hotel
Bedford County (1992)

SAVED!!!!

The Bedford Springs Hotel is proof that it can be done, but it's not easy! Listed in *Pennsylvania At Risk* in 1992, it took more than 25 years for a viable solution to be identified and implemented. The Bedford Springs Resort opened in 2007, and is thriving today. This high-quality, large-scale rehabilitation project took several private developers willing to work hard and invest large sums of money, as well as assistance from state agencies such as PennDOT to re-route roads to make the resort appealing and thus viable. Today, this national, award-winning historic hotel is highly successful, making a tremendous positive impact on the economy of Bedford and the surrounding area. This project wasn't easy but was worth it!

OLD ECONOMY BACHELORS' QUARTERS

BEAVER COUNTY

284 13th Street, Ambridge

THREAT: Physical DETERIORATION That May Result in Demolition

This ordinary-looking building is highly significant because of what it represents in our history and its unique construction method. Sometimes referred to as the bachelors' quarters, this five-bay gable-end building once housed the single men of the Harmony Society. The Harmonists emerging philosophy of celibacy, which is represented by this building, played a critical role in leading to the religious sect's eventual extinction. The building was constructed circa 1825 using the Harmonists early form of mass production. They crafted standard building components including timber framing members, beaded and flat-planed siding, and window and door units in volume and delivered them to the building site for easy assembly. This double house is twice the size of a typical wood frame Harmonist house. In 1987, it was one of only four two-story frame double houses in the community; today, only three examples of this type survive. The bachelor's quarters building is a contributing element of the Old Economy National Historic Landmark (NHL) district, and as such has national significance.

Despite its tremendous historic significance, the bachelors' quarters has deteriorated to the point where its future is uncertain. For decades, the building has been used as a multi-unit rental property. It has been remodeled several times using inexpensive non-traditional materials. Now owned by a corporation based in Maine, the building has been vacant for many years. The cellar is beginning to cave in from rain run-off, and the Victorian-era

porch is collapsing. Neighbors are beginning to demand that the unsightly and potentially unsafe building be demolished.

The owner is willing to sell the property, and has listed it for sale for \$19,000. In December 2015, a listing on Zillow for MLS #1070919 advertises the four-bedroom property as a rare opportunity to own a 12-room Harmonist House in the Historic District of Old Economy Village within a half a block from the State Museum Village site. The large double house has a side yard on a tree-lined street, and is located in a historic district across the street from a historic log cabin and just two houses away from the Merchant Street commercial corridor. The listing notes that although the property is currently residential, the historic district allows limited commercial uses compatible with the historic neighborhood. It also warns that the home will be sold "as is and ready for renovation," and that exterior renovations will require review by the historic review board.

Although the condition of the building is deteriorated and it would need extensive rehabilitation, tools like state and federal rehabilitation investment tax credits that may be available if the property is rehabilitated for income-producing use, and local design review, mean that there is hope that this building will be acquired and appropriately rehabilitated. But if a new owner is not found soon, the property may be lost.



This example illustrates the important fact that historic designation itself does not protect historic properties from private action (or inaction).

This building is listed as a National Historic Landmark, and is located in a regulated historic district. Yet, the property is languishing.

Physical deterioration is threatening the bachelors' quarters in the Old Economy National Historic Landmark District. It makes the building less attractive to most buyers, makes it more disaster prone, increases the cost of rehabilitation, and may lead to demolition if the condition is not improved in the near future.

UPDATES: Physical DETERIORATION That May Result in Demolition

*Demolition is the ultimate threat to historic resources. Once a building has been demolished, it is lost forever. One hundred of the 218 resources listed in *Pennsylvania At Risk* are threatened with demolition. Of these, approximately 54 were at risk of being demolished because of factors related to physical condition. In 20 cases, the primary reason for the concern was deferred maintenance. Twenty-seven properties were at risk of demolition because they were not being utilized; they were functionally obsolete, vacant or abandoned. Seven more were at risk after being damaged by disasters such as fire and flood. Disuse and deferred maintenance tend to be directly linked to physical deterioration, which when not remedied, can result in demolition.*



**Jackson Rooming House
Dauphin County (2011)
AT RISK**

After two years of work to legally disentangle the property, a new owner successfully acquired the Jackson Rooming House in 2014. But during those two years, the building deteriorated significantly, and the new owner wondered if it was still worth saving. At his request, a structural engineer toured the building to find that the second and third floors had completely collapsed, leaving only the building's brick shell intact. The engineer concluded that saving the building was technically feasible, but would cost much more – probably double – than the building would be worth upon completion. With this information, the owner realized that rehabilitating the property was beyond his financial ability. The Jackson Rooming House is still standing, and has recently been sold again. Its future is extremely uncertain. If it is able to be saved, it will only be because an owner is willing to invest a significant amount of money just to save it, with no expectation of recouping his investment. Had the owner been able to begin rehabilitation in 2012 before it deteriorated so severely, the outcome may have been more positive for him.



**Garman Theatre
Centre County (2013)
LOST**

Another (sad) example is the Garman Theatre in Bellefonte, Centre County. In 2008, the owners of this 1890 opera house were looking for help identifying the source of a mold problem that occurred after they built a rooftop addition on the theatre. In 2009, the theatre closed, the mold problem still unresolved. Its owners facing bankruptcy, the building went into foreclosure. In 2012, a fire in the adjacent building spread to the theatre, and large amounts of water were used to extinguish the blaze. Still closed and uncared for, the building came to life (in a bad way) as the mold blossomed and thrived. Because of its extreme mold problem, when a developer proposed to demolish the building and its fire-ravaged neighbor and build a new mixed-use building, municipal officials were hard pressed to say no, despite opposition from preservation-minded groups in the community. Had the maintenance issues been addressed as they occurred, rather than allowed to accumulate, this highly significant downtown theatre would most likely still be standing today.



“Demolition is the ultimate threat to historic resources.”

WEST MIDDLETOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT

WASHINGTON COUNTY

THREAT: Physical DETERIORATION – Gradual Decline of Buildings in a Historic District; Losses have Potential to Impact District Significance and Economy

West Middletown is a quaint, historic community that developed circa 1800 with a road running east and west along a ridge and a single row of buildings lining the road, their backyards sloping steeply downward to the north and south. The buildings that comprise the district are typically two-story, side-gable residential forms built of brick or wood frame, but other types, such as smaller log homes and two churches exist, as well. Many of the town's typical buildings had two doors because its owners would live in the residence on one side and operate their business on the other. The town once contained a variety of businesses, including grocers, coopers, cobblers, harness makers and blacksmiths, most of which were located right on Main Street in buildings that today are indistinguishable from residences.

While many of the town's businesses were rather ordinary, serving needs of the residents of the town and surrounding rural area, others were quite significant. For instance, West Middletown is the home of the Ralston (or McClure) thresher, a tool that mechanized the removal of grains and kernels from their stalks (threshed) and separated (or winnowed) them from the chaff and dirt. In 1842, Andrew Ralston, who resided in the adjacent Hopewell Township, patented a machine that promised to thresh and winnow grain at the same time, and introduced it to wheat farmers in Washington County, Pa. West Middletown's Robert McClure manufactured Ralston's horse-powered thresher-cleaner, which could process about 100 bushels of grain a day. Later steam-powered models worked even faster. With a Ralston Thresher, tasks that once took farmers weeks or even months of intensive labor could be completed in a fraction of the time.

The Borough of West Middletown recognizes the value of its historic buildings, and is taking action in an attempt to preserve as many as possible.

When the West Middletown Historic District was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1985, it contained 49 buildings. The earliest building dated to 1798; 31 were built between 1800 and 1850; 16 were added between 1851 and 1900, and just one – the fire house – was built after 1900. Unfortunately, nine or 10 buildings have been lost since then, including the 1798 brick house and three log homes, a hotel and others. More buildings are at risk of being lost today. At least four homes need immediate intervention. As buildings are lost, the historic character that makes West Middletown special is compromised. But perhaps more importantly, its already limited tax base is eroded, presenting additional challenges for the remaining residents.

The Borough of West Middletown recognizes the value of its historic buildings, and is taking action in an attempt to preserve as many as possible. Many of the borough's aging homes need to be maintained and upgraded. But their owners are either local residents who lack the means to do so, or are absentee landlords who are choosing not to invest in their rental properties. As the demographics of the community and regional economy are changing, West Middletown is reaching out to potential partners to seek assistance. They have asked for help to: identify the buildings most at risk; develop strategies and seek funding to help save them; and prepare a long-range plan to utilize historic preservation to help ensure the sustainability and vitality of their unique rural Pennsylvania community.

Preservation Pennsylvania may be able to assist West Middletown in these steps by providing technical assistance and small Intervention Fund grants or loans to stabilize the endangered buildings, helping to find new owners for the town's available properties through our Historic Properties for Sale website and other marketing efforts, helping them identify other sources of potential financing and funding, and assisting them in their long-range planning efforts.



UPDATES: Physical DETERIORATION—Erosion of Historic Districts

West Middletown is not alone in its struggles to retain the historic buildings that contribute to the character of its community and its tax base. Thirty historic districts have been listed in *Pennsylvania At Risk* over the past 23 years. The size and character of these districts varies widely, as do the situations that threaten them. For the most part, these districts have been listed because some form of development threatens to demolish contributing elements or alter their character-defining features.

Residential development and sprawl appear to be the primary concerns in the southern and eastern parts of the state, especially in the suburban areas outside of Philadelphia. Commercial development threatens historic districts in mid-sized towns and in cities such as Pittsburgh. In more rural areas of the commonwealth, historic districts tend to be threatened more by impacts of energy-related development, such as mining, Marcellus shale gas extraction, and wind turbines, and by impacts associated with flood control and mitigation measures. In districts like West Middletown, the struggle is not to prevent development, but to attract investment.



Brownsville Commercial Historic District Fayette County (2004) PARTIAL SAVE

One case that seems to be similar to that of West Middletown in several ways, although the character of the community is quite different, is the Brownsville Commercial Historic District in Fayette County. Like West Middletown, Brownsville is located in southwestern Pennsylvania, where the economy has suffered greatly in recent decades. Both communities are just a short drive from Pittsburgh, and are in a state of physical deterioration in part because absentee owners have acquired inexpensive real estate and are not maintaining their properties.

In Brownsville, however, more than 90% of the downtown commercial district was owned by one property owner, who hoped to make downtown Brownsville a riverboat or casino gambling hub and refused to rehabilitate or sell the buildings for any other purpose. In an act of desperation to revitalize the community, the county redevelopment authority recently seized all of his real estate holdings. Unfortunately, their preliminary plans called for the demolition of nearly all of the buildings downtown.

Because they intended to use federal funds to demolish the buildings, a Section 106 review was required. This process resulted in a physical assessment of the buildings and a market study, which together demonstrated that several of the buildings could be saved, if rehabilitation-minded developers could be identified. The community set to work to identify such developers, conveying two properties to the Brownsville Area Revitalization Corporation, and attracting a private developer to take on several other properties.

A couple of buildings in Brownsville's Commercial District have been lost, and others are still at risk. But due to the hard work of local advocates and municipal officials, local and statewide partners, and determined developers, several of Brownsville's important buildings will be saved. The historic district will retain much of its essential historic character, and the economic base for the community will be revived. This proves that there is hope for West Middletown's historic district, where the scale of buildings is smaller, so even individuals could serve as the new rehabilitation-minded owner, and the amount of financial resources needed is much less.

Historic Districts



The primary threat to the 30 historic districts listed in *Pennsylvania At Risk* is development that will demolish or alter character-defining features.

“A couple of buildings in Brownsville’s Commercial District have been lost, and others are still at risk. But due to the hard work of local advocates and municipal officials, local and statewide partners, and determined developers, several of Brownsville’s important buildings will be saved.”

FARRANDSVILLE FURNACE CLINTON COUNTY

400 Block Farrandsville Road, Colebrook Township (Lock Haven)

THREAT: Physical DETERIORATION Financial Sustainability of Historic Sites

While the furnace sits at an easily accessible location, the physical deterioration of the property has become so severe that it has become a danger. Age, weather and water have made the property unsafe to visit. The furnace is owned by the Clinton County Historical Society, which is committed to stabilizing this property. They received a grant for a masonry group to evaluate the cost of rehabilitating the property, but are unable to act upon this report without further funding and support.

The Farrandsville Furnace was completed in 1837, and is a pioneer in the spread of hot blast iron furnaces in America. The original builder, Edward Thomas, hailed from Wales, and brought European techniques with him when he created the furnace. This National Register listed site remains one of the largest and most intact of the early furnaces. Its impressive 54-foot height is built from locally quarried stone and boasts exceptional workmanship. Additionally, this furnace fits into a dialogue on an early attempt to use coke as fuel. This coke was a product of bituminous coal, and delivered from a local mine. By fueling with coke, the Farrandsville Furnace was able to produce at an impressive capacity of 50 tons per week.

Unfortunately, the iron ore needed to run the furnace was located over 100 miles away. Even a locally built canal could not fix this problem, and the distance became so economically troubling that the Furnace closed in 1838. After standing empty, the furnace was deeded to the Clinton County Historical Society in 1951. The Historical Society seeks funding to return this landmark to a safe condition. After the furnace is stabilized, they hope to create walking paths and install interpretive signs so that people can enjoy the site.



Farrandsville Furnace was built with locally quarried stone in 1837.

“This National Register site is one of the largest and most intact of the early furnaces.”

UPDATES: ENDANGERED Historic Sites & Structures

Coplay Cement Kilns
Lehigh County (2005)
AT RISK



Pond Eddy Bridge
Pike County (2002)
AT RISK, Negative Activity
(will be demolished in 2016)



Delaware Canal District
Bucks and Northampton Counties (1993)
SAVED! (Original threat overcome; portions now facing development pressure).



SAVED!!!!

UPDATES: Financial SUSTAINABILITY of Historic Sites

While historic sites are the backbone of the preservation movement, they can be a challenge to maintain. Unfortunately, these sites often have significant obstacles in providing a lasting means of funding. While operating costs can often be low, as is the case of the Farrandville Furnace, these sites need to be stable and safe for the public. Many of these properties no longer function under their original use. It is essential to continue to think of creative and cost-effective preservation solutions.

45 Sites
Structures
Objects

64%
Saved or Partially Saved

Most Common Threat
DEMOLITION

Enola Low Grade Railroad Line Lancaster County (1996) - SAVED!

Spanning 23 miles across the southern end of Lancaster County, the Enola Low Grade Railroad Line was built between 1903 and 1906 by the Pennsylvania Railroad.

Lancaster County Commissioners ended a long struggle to preserve this engineering marvel by developing the 23-mile span into a “rails to trails” recreational line for hikers, joggers, bicyclists and horseback riders.

The trail features interpretive signage and kiosks. Well maintained, the Enola Low Grade Railroad Line remains a popular spot for locals.



East Broad Top Railroad

Huntingdon County (1992) – AT RISK, Positive Activity

After years of disuse, the East Broad Top Preservation Association (EBTPA) was founded in 2009 to operate the historic railroad. They negotiated an agreement that allowed them to operate the railroad for three years, during which time they investigated what would be needed to save and preserve the railroad permanently. EBTPA purchased the entire Mount Union site of the East Broad Top Railroad, as well as right-of-way from Mount Union to and including the Aughwick bridge. They invested more than \$3million in infrastructure improvements, and operated successfully for their three years. But the operation, including 29 miles of right-of-way, all of the historic buildings and rolling stock, now sits idle while the EBTPA seeks funding to restart the operations and preserve this endangered railroad.



“The East Broad Top Railroad National Historic Landmark is threatened due to high operating and maintenance costs.”

PEOPLE'S HALL CHESTER COUNTY

810 Doe Run Road, East Fallowfield Township

THREAT: Physical DETERIORATION Due to Deferred Maintenance and Financial Capacity



People's Hall was built in 1845 by the East Fallowfield Anti-Slavery Society, a local Quaker Abolitionist group. This building was used not only to conduct their meetings, but it transformed into the local mecca for the abolitionist movement. The founding members were known operators of the Underground Railroad. After the Civil War, this building continued to serve as an important community building and cultural center. It has been used as a grange, church, library and town hall over the years. Most recently, it was used as a meeting place for the East Fallowfield Historical Society, and as a storage location for various historical items and artifacts.

***"The founding members
were known operators of
the Underground Railroad."***

The most recent lessee of the building has disbanded, leaving People's Hall with severe deferred maintenance. Both the exterior structure and interior have damage that needs to be stabilized. The hall is managed by a board of trustees, however, these trustee positions originally were inherited and passed down through families. This function left the board sparsely populated. New efforts have restructured the board, and it recently gained non-profit status. The new board is energized and committed to returning People's Hall to its rightful status as an important community building. However, they are struggling with issues of financial capacity.

UPDATES: PRESERVING Community Buildings

Neilltown Church Building, Forest County (2006) - SAVED!

The Neilltown Cemetery Association (NCA) planned to burn the church unless a preservation-minded group purchased it. The Oil Heritage Region (OHR) stepped in originally negotiating a three-year period in which they would stabilize the building and seek a permanent preservation solution. In 2010, using a Revolving Fund loan from Preservation Pennsylvania, OHR purchased the property from NCA. They have completed a significant amount of restoration inside the building, and have some funds lined up to address the exterior siding and windows.

They are currently completing the environmental review required because of the federal funding source (CDBG). The building has no heat, so is still only usable seasonally, and may be subject to some deterioration as a result of extreme cold. Although there is still work to be done, the threat of demolition has been overcome, and the building is owned by a preservation-minded organization.



Overall Statistics

Of the 218 historic resources listed in *Pennsylvania At Risk* because they were imminently threatened from 1992 through 2014, approximately 23% (50 resources) have been lost. Another 14% (31 resources) were partially saved, meaning that a compromise was struck, and part of the resource was saved, but parts were also lost. Amazingly, 36% of these threatened historic properties (78 resources) have been saved! The remaining 27% (59 resources) remain at risk, and will continue to be priorities for Preservation Pennsylvania in the coming years.

Not surprisingly, those resources threatened with demolition had, by far, the highest rate of loss. We lost 42% of those resources, which is much higher than our total loss percentage of 23%. This is also the area where we had the lowest percentage of saved resources, at just 21% compared to our total rate of 36% saved. This confirms that demolition is perhaps the greatest, most imminent and permanent threat to historic resources.

It may be interesting to note that those endangered resources that were most commonly saved (60%) were those properties that were threatened by inappropriate alterations. In many cases, those properties were buildings such as churches, schools and public buildings, that were being vacated by their original or intended users, and whose fate was thus unknown. Efforts to find preservation-minded new owners for these properties have been largely successful. Although 9% have been unfavorably altered to some extent (thus a partial save), none have been lost completely.

At Risk Threats

After completing updates to the *Pennsylvania At Risk* list, we realized that interesting trends were emerging in our data. We were able to define four clear threats to historic resources, and a number of factors that commonly contribute to each of those threats.

Inappropriate Alterations

Historic resources are threatened by inappropriate alterations when changes to that historic resource will damage its historic character and integrity.

Unlike those listed in the Compromised Setting category, where the impacts come from changes adjacent to or near the resource, these properties are threatened by alterations to the resource itself.

Physical Deterioration

Deterioration increases the cost of rehabilitation, making it more likely that a project will be financially infeasible and making the building less attractive to potential buyers and developers. It also makes buildings more disaster prone: vandalism, arson and accidental fires occur far more often in deteriorating properties than in well-maintained ones. The simple solution to this problem is to establish and enforce local regulations to ensure proper maintenance, and develop tools or resources to assist property owners as needed.

Demolition

Demolition is the ultimate threat to historic resources, and is by far the most common threat to historic properties in *Pennsylvania At Risk*. One hundred of the 218 properties in *Pennsylvania At Risk* are listed because of a threat of demolition.

Compromised Setting

Twenty-one historic resources were threatened by changes to their setting that would compromise their historic character. The common factor among them is the presence of open space.

Sincere THANKS to Our Partners for Assisting with Updates

Preservation Pennsylvania's staff worked hard to visit the 218 endangered places across the commonwealth. But we couldn't make it to them all. We are extremely grateful for help provided by some of our partners. Our sincerest thanks goes out to:

Jane Sheffield

- Allegheny Ridge Corporation (www.alleghenyridge.org)
 - Main Line Canal Greenway (<http://mainlinecanalgreenway.org>)
- for updates in Blair, Cambria and Huntingdon Counties*

Jeff Kidder

- Kidder Wachter Architecture & Design (www.kidderwachter.com)
 - Kidder Wachter Jeffrys Construction LLC (www.kwjconstruction.com)
- for updates in Erie County*



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National Trust
Partners Network

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.



Preservation Pennsylvania is the commonwealth's only statewide, private nonprofit membership organization dedicated to the protection of historically and architecturally significant properties. The organization was created in 1982 as the Preservation Fund of Pennsylvania to operate a revolving fund that would assist in the acquisition and rehabilitation of historic properties. Since its incorporation, the organization has evolved and now hosts the Statewide Conference on Heritage and the Pennsylvania Historic Preservation Awards, and publishes an annual list of endangered historic properties in Pennsylvania At Risk in addition to managing the revolving loan fund. Preservation Pennsylvania also participates in educational programs and advocacy initiatives, as well as conducts special projects and offers on-site technical assistance to people across the commonwealth.

2015
Pennsylvania
AT RISK

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