

2018 PENNSYLVANIA AT RISK

preservation
PENNSYLVANIA

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The *Pennsylvania At Risk* list puts statewide focus on a building's plight, promotes local action, and rallies statewide support for historic preservation.



www.preservationpa.org

2018 PENNSYLVANIA AT RISK preservation PENNSYLVANIA

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FROM THE CHAIR

Since 1992, Preservation Pennsylvania has published an annual list of the most endangered properties in Pennsylvania. As the state's historic preservation advocacy organization, it is fully right and proper that we compile such a list. Happily, many of the properties we have listed over the years have been saved because of the publicity their listing engendered. Nonetheless, the annual process of reviewing the treasures of our legacy, imperiled by neglect or insensitivity, is a sobering one and serves as a reminder that we have a long way to go in creating a culture of *preservation first* in Pennsylvania.

It is each generation's responsibility to decide what to preserve and what to surrender. The *Pennsylvania At Risk* list is a critical tool in making sure there is a meaningful chance to make that decision. The resources on the *Pennsylvania At Risk* list are significant unto themselves and deserve their moment in the spotlight to consider their future. The resources chosen, more importantly, represent issues we will need to resolve if ever we hope to establish that culture of preservation first. The state's stewardship of publicly-owned historic resources, the use of public and private funds for economic development projects that miss the opportunity to capitalize on existing historic fabric, the lack of local-level preservation protections throughout much of Pennsylvania, and weak preservation laws or the lack of enforcement of them are all issues represented by this year's list ... and just about every list since we began making lists. This needs to change and change NOW.

Against these odds, I believe we are justifiably doubly proud of our track record in saving the individual resources on our lists. In every successful case, we won because we built a community of interest around the cause. This year, while we advocate to save these resources emblematic of Pennsylvania's brilliant past, I offer you a challenge: in the interest of Pennsylvania's future, we must strengthen the community of interest around the work of Preservation Pennsylvania to combat the root causes that have endangered these structures in the first place.

We are working with our partners across the state to build an advocacy machine worthy of the legacy we need to protect. As the state and federal budgets for preservation are being decimated, we are building our organization so that game-changing advances and successes become the norm, not an aberration.

If our advocacy work to create a *preservation first* ideal is as successful as I believe it can be, I know there is a future where the final thing on our *Pennsylvania At Risk* list will be the *At Risk* list itself because preservation choices will have become a part of how we all think. If you are with me, please consider advancing the cause with a gift to Preservation Pennsylvania today.

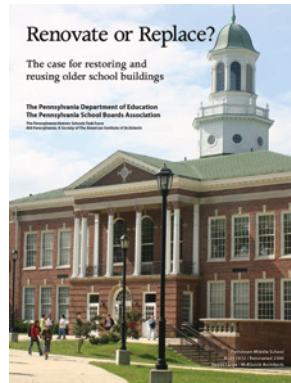


Nathaniel Guest, Esq.

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Sometimes it seems as though preservationists have special spectacles through which we view the world. The rose-colored glasses that allow us to envision a new use for an old building. That give us the long-term view of a revitalized neighborhood that those with short-term vision just can't see. The perspective that allows us to see an opportunity in place of an obstruction.

This year's list includes a high school that may be lost because its community importance has been overlooked. Historic schools have been a huge part of our work since 1998 when we devoted our entire *Pennsylvania At Risk* issue to the subject. It was a catalyst for change! Working with Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation, we successfully changed the state policy that provided reimbursements to new construction only. We were able to change not only the



reimbursement policy but to also prove that ordinary construction (most common in historic buildings) was as safe as modern construction methods. Since that time, Preservation Pennsylvania has continued to work on saving neighborhood schools. It has been especially rewarding to present several Historic Preservation Awards to school rehabilitations. Let's hope that this year's listing will result in a new future for the E. L. Meyers High School and another *Pennsylvania At Risk* to Awards recipient in the future.

As we go to press, the tax reform bill has been signed into law, including the Historic Tax Credit (HTC) to be claimed over five years. We thank all of you who answered our call to contact legislators and encourage preservation of this important tool. Clearly, your advocacy efforts worked!

Another important preservation tool is the state historic tax credit. Our efforts in 1996 led to the establishment of a state historic tax credit in 2012 with a very modest \$3 million allocation each year. The state credit sunsets in 2019, so we have already started working on making the case for this important program to not only continue but to be even better. The tax credits are an integral part of the arsenal of positive tools to encourage reuse of our older buildings. Better tools hopefully mean fewer *Pennsylvania At Risk* properties in the future.

Our prescription for the year ahead? Have vision. Believe in patience, passion and preservation, my friends.



Mindy Gulden Crawford

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.

ABOUT US

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 organizes the Statewide Conference on Heritage, hosts the Pennsylvania Historic Preservation Awards, and publishes an annual list of endangered properties in *Pennsylvania At Risk* in addition to managing a revolving fund and intervention fund. Preservation Pennsylvania also participates in educational programs and advocacy initiatives, conducts special projects, and offers technical assistance to people throughout the commonwealth.

ABOUT THE *PENNSYLVANIA* *AT RISK* PROGRAM

For more than 25 years, Preservation Pennsylvania's annual list of endangered historic properties has raised awareness about preservation issues and rallied statewide support. In this time, several key factors have emerged as consistent threats. For instance, in areas where real estate markets are strong, DEVELOPMENT PRESSURE often threatens to compromise the setting or result in the demolition of important historic properties. Conversely, in areas where there is a WEAK LOCAL ECONOMY, vacancy and/or abandonment often lead to deferred maintenance, which can result in physical deterioration or demolition. Even in cases where buildings aren't vacant, if their owner does not have the FINANCIAL CAPACITY to maintain the building, physical deterioration or demolition may occur.

The most common threat in the 2018 *Pennsylvania At Risk* list is CONTROL CONCERNS. Where there is a LACK OF LOCAL TOOLS to encourage or require maintenance and/or preservation, or where zoning or other ordinances do not support preservation goals, there is often little that can be done to address these control concerns.

FUNCTIONAL OBSOLESCENCE can also result in the endangerment of historic properties. When their original intended function is no longer needed in the community, a new way of doing business exists, or users prefer a different type or style of space, buildings can be threatened with inappropriate alterations, physical deterioration, or even demolition.

The action(s) needed to protect historic properties from the threats of inappropriate alterations, compromised setting, physical deterioration or demolition will vary, depending on the contributing factors. Preservation Pennsylvania is in the process of working with property owners and other interested parties to formulate an action plan that will help to protect each of the historic buildings included in this 2018 *Pennsylvania At Risk* list.



GET INVOLVED!

- **Follow us on Facebook** (Preservation Pennsylvania) for *Pennsylvania At Risk* updates, news about hands-on workdays, advocacy alerts, and other preservation events. (See below for workshop news!)
- **Sign up** for our monthly e-news at preservationpa.org.
- **Contribute** to our Share the Love fundraiser to benefit our 2018 work with these *Pennsylvania At Risk* sites. Donations will help provide Intervention Fund grants and technical assistance to these places.
- In February, **show some love for your favorite local places** by giving them a valentine! Share your pictures and stories with us by emailing ssmith@preservationpa.org or use #prespaLOVE on social media. (*Valentine love should respect private property laws and should be reversible, without causing harm to the historic structure.*)
- Check area preservation organizations, historic sites, and historical societies for local building valentine events, or plan your own! (See our website for ideas.)

Join Us!

April 20, 2018

Balancing Development and Protection: A Workshop for Local Government and Citizen Advocates

LANCASTER

Developers, planners, historic preservation advocates, all municipalities, and nonprofit organizations located in or working with Lancaster County are invited to discuss how to balance the need for development with the value of maintaining Lancaster's unique sense of place.

May 2018 (date TBD)

Tax Credit Workshop

PHILADELPHIA

The federal Historic Tax Credit (HTC) was modified by the 2017 tax legislation but remains our most powerful tool for preserving and rehabilitating historic buildings. This half-day workshop will feature tax credit experts and representatives from the State Historic Preservation Office discussing the strategies and mechanics of utilizing HTCs for development, including case studies and how to evaluate potential projects. Attorney CLE, Real Estate CEU, and AIA LU credits anticipated.

June 14, 2018

Cultural Resource Management Workshop

HARRISBURG

This workshop offers an opportunity for cultural resources management (CRM) consultants and PennDOT staff to learn about new policies and procedures, innovative technologies, and best industry practices. Opening plenary session will focus on the future of transportation in Pennsylvania. The remainder of the day will offer a two-track program for archaeologists and architectural historians.

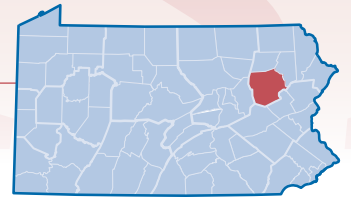
CONTROL CONCERNS

ELMER L. MEYERS HIGH SCHOOL

Luzerne County

341 Carey Avenue | Wilkes-Barre, PA

Threat: Demolition



Beginning in May 2008 and extending through April 2012, Preservation Pennsylvania worked with the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the United States Environmental Protection Agency on a program entitled, "Helping Johnny Walk to School: Sustaining Communities through Smart School Siting Policies." This program encourages school districts to retain historic schools, to locate new ones in locations where a portion of students can walk or bike to school, and to use schools as a center of community activities beyond regular school hours. The Elmer L. Meyers High School, built in 1930, stands as a testament to the importance of continuing such programs. As a Depression-era construction project, the school embodies the grand design of early 20th-century public architecture. It serves a diverse neighborhood, and is located in a central location that children can walk to. The Wilkes-Barre school board has planned to consolidate several of their schools, including Meyers and the historic James M. Coughlin High School, and build a new school approximately four miles from Meyers. The plan was created as a reaction to several feasibility studies done by the district indicating that renovation of their historic high schools would be cost prohibitive. The plan ultimately concludes with Elmer L. Meyers being demolished in order to build a park. This historic school serves as a community anchor and ties the residents to the area. Losing this school would mean that children would be bussed out of town for school. Wilkes-Barre Area Save Our Schools has been advocating for the school to remain in use, and locals are preparing a National Register nomination for the Elmer L. Meyers School. Preservation Pennsylvania hopes to work with the district's school board and the local community to encourage the building's preservation either as a school building or new community use.



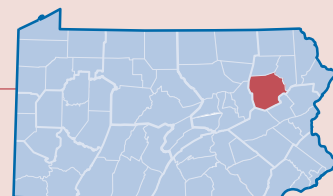
*Detail of stained glass in auditorium (above);
main staircase (left inset)*





COOPER HOUSE

Luzerne County
200-202 West Third Street | Nescopeck, PA
Threat: Demolition



In 1817, Christian Kunkle built a home using stone cut and dressed on Nescopeck Mountain and hauled by sledge to the site. On the corner of the property was mile marker No. 1 of the Susquehanna and Lehigh Turnpike, built in 1805. Today, it is the oldest building in the area. While not currently eligible for the National Register of Historic Places,

Cooper House is a vital landmark in the community. This local support was evidenced when in the late 1970s a PennDOT road project threatened the house, and local concern for the historic landmark convinced PennDOT to reroute the project. The property is now owned by Nescopeck Borough, purchased with U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) funding, and is slated for demolition. The Nescopeck Area Historical & Genealogical Society would like to buy the building and preserve it as a tangible link to the history of the area, however, complications with HUD funding make the borough council unwilling to sell the property. Threatened by imminent demolition, this property demonstrates an opportunity to advocate for better preservation practices for HUD and also the borough. Preservation Pennsylvania plans to work with the borough to identify other solutions for the property and advocate against demolition.



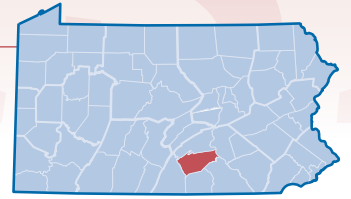
FUNCTIONAL OBSOLESCENCE

MOUNT TABOR AME CHURCH

Cumberland County

Cedar Street | Mount Holly Springs

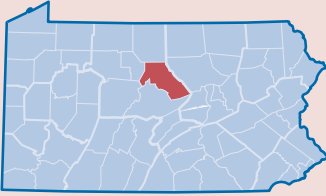
Threat: Physical Deterioration



To look at the weathered boards, the hole in the roof, the crack in the foundation, the invasive vegetation that seems to be holding up the structure – you’d think that no one cares for this abandoned church. No congregation has used this place since 1970. But, in this case, looks are deceiving. To a community of concerned stakeholders, this building represents the history of a once-thriving African American community founded by freed people escaping the south. To octogenarian Harriett Gumby, it is something more personal; family history that connects her to her grandfather, Elias Van Buren Parker. Parker, once an enslaved person, built the church around 1870 and is buried in the cemetery, along with fellow veterans who served in the United States Colored Troops during the Civil War.

The effort to preserve the site started simply, with a story. The Greater Carlisle Heart & Soul Project engages with local residents to talk about their personal histories in an effort to identify the places that are important to the community. The stories from Harriett Gumby and her family brought to light a mostly undocumented history of the African American community in the area. The Mount Tabor AME Church and its cemetery is a vital link to that history. Preservation Pennsylvania will work with the Greater Carlisle Heart & Soul Project and local stakeholders on stabilizing the structure, resolving deed-related issues, and preparing a nomination for the National Register of Historic Places. Anyone interested in getting involved can stay tuned for opportunities to donate, provide service, or attend a special event.





FORMER PENNSYLVANIA RAILROAD TIPPLE

Clinton County
Greater Renovo Area Heritage Park
78 Industrial Park Road | Renovo
Threat: Physical Deterioration

The tipple was built by the Pennsylvania & Erie Railroad in the early 1800s, and used to stock steam locomotives with coal, sand and water. The three-story concrete structure dominates the three-acre segment of the railyard donated by the Clinton County Economic Partnership to be developed as a park. An important part of the Renovo area's railroad history, the park is located on the northwest portion of the former rail yards, an area that was once completely covered by railroad tracks. With continuing demolition of the Renovo railroad yards and buildings, and the pending construction of the gas-fired power plant on this site, the tipple will be the only remaining evidence of the existence of the Pennsylvania Railroad shops.

While railroad buffs visit the site to pose for photographs in front of the boxcar and caboose that sit on tracks in front of the tipple, security fencing surrounds the site to ward off vandals and daredevils who might attempt to climb the rusted ladders that lead to the control room at the top. Physical deterioration is taking a toll on the structure, from cracked and crumbling concrete to rusted metal components that need to be repaired or replaced.

Restoration of this unique building demands professional preservation expertise in planning and engineering. Preservation Pennsylvania will assist with locating preservation experts and providing support for grant funding applications.



2017

PENNSYLVANIA AT RISK UPDATES

It's not over yet for most of these 2017 *Pennsylvania At Risk* sites. Here's an update, including ways for you to get involved.

ALLEGHENY COUNTY

EKIN HOUSE

203 South Water Street | Elizabeth Borough

Threat: Demolition

Preservation Pennsylvania, collaborating with local advocates, determined that the first, most important step to save this c. 1840s building in downtown Elizabeth was to find a new owner. Unfortunately, the current owner is not motivated to sell at this time and finds the lot useful as a parking area. Preservation Pennsylvania is not aware of any immediate demolition plans.

CARBON COUNTY

KIDDIE KLOES FACTORY

West Bertsch Street | Lansford Borough

Threat: Physical Deterioration

The Kiddie Kloes Factory was a beloved site as an abandoned place, a location filled with evocative artifacts and light filtering in through large factory windows. Today, new owners filled with passion and tireless energy are working toward realizing their vision of transforming the shuttered factory into a community center for the arts. Preservation Pennsylvania has assisted with advice on possible grant funding and provided an intervention fund grant. Although trained preservation contractors are not common in Carbon County, the team is doing the best they can with local crews, repairing compromised external brick walls and shoring up walls internally. They are also engaging with the community and hosted a memory day that invited former employees back to the factory to share memories and enjoy an art installation based on themselves! There is a film project underway to capture the history. To get updates and follow their progress, check out their website at www.factory4us.com.



CHESTER COUNTY

MEADOWBROOK FARMSTEAD

Campbell Lane | Schuylkill Township

Threat: Demolition

A group of advocates is working with the school board to find a new owner. Preservation Pennsylvania has agreed to promote the for sale property through our social media networks and on our Historic Properties for Sale website page.

DAUPHIN COUNTY

BUCK'S TAVERN

7590 Jonestown Road | West Hanover Township

Threat: Physical Deterioration, Demolition

Acquired by West Hanover Township, Buck's Tavern was targeted for demolition after the last resident moved out in 2017. After the historic building was added to the *Pennsylvania At Risk* list, Preservation Pennsylvania met with township officials to discuss preservation of the building. Preservation Pennsylvania is working with the township to develop a new plan for the use of the building.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY

ABOLITION HALL, HOVENDEN HOUSE, AND PLYMOUTH MEETING HISTORIC DISTRICT

Germantown Pike & Butler Pike | Whitemarsh Township

Threat: Compromised Setting, Demolition

Sydelle Zove and a loyal group of advocates captured our hearts last February by posing in front of Abolition Hall. They displayed valentine hearts and signs asking people to help them save their crossroads village, Pennsylvania's first National Register-listed district and an important Underground Railroad site where notable abolitionists such as Frederick Douglass spoke and anonymous enslaved people found shelter before continuing their journey north to freedom. To assist in the preservation of this nationally-significant site, Preservation Pennsylvania reached out to the National Park Service, the Network to Freedom, and the Historical Society of Montgomery County for letters of support, and helped with communications and raising funds to help pay for legal counsel and planning experts. The Corson heirs intend to sell their property to developer K. Hovnanian, whose original proposal to build 48 townhomes on the Corson land has increased to 67 with the planned purchase of an adjacent 2.7 acres. The Friends of Abolition Hall have an alternative site plan that gives "breathing room" to Abolition Hall and creates a small welcome park that could be the site for interpretative information. As we went to press, the most recent update from the Friends of Abolition Hall includes the following objectives: "We appreciate that this new plan keeps the proposed townhouses away from the historic structures, however, where we recommended the retention of open space for a Historic Plymouth Meeting Welcome Park fronting onto Butler Pike adjacent to Abolition Hall, this plan shows a large stormwater basin. We also appreciate that this plan eliminates the proposed right of way for a realigned Butler Pike. Sadly, this plan increases the number of townhouses at an already busy area of our community. We continue to call upon Whitemarsh Township to use Open Space dollars to buy down the density. The county could step in and do likewise, using its funds to ensure access

for the Cross County Trail, which is likely to emerge just across Butler Pike, adjacent to the limekilns on the Danella property." Early in 2018, the Whitmarsh Township planning commission and the board of supervisors will take up the matter of a conditional use request from the developer. Townhouses are permitted at this location only with conditional use approval, which must be granted by the board of supervisors subsequent to a public hearing. For updates, visit preservationpa.org and "Like" their Facebook page: Plymouth Meeting Abolition Hall.

PHILADELPHIA COUNTY

JEWELERS ROW

702-710 Sansom Street
Philadelphia
Threat: Demolition

The battle goes on! Toll Brothers City Living continues to pursue its plan to build a luxury tower in the heart of the nation's oldest jewelry district, a block of human-scaled buildings that is a favorite background for film crews (like that Bradley Cooper/Jennifer Lawrence kiss in "Silver Linings Playbook"!). Toll representatives cancelled their presentation to the Washington Square West Civic Association in mid-November. In mid-December, they received a zoning permit to combine parcels and construct a 24-story luxury apartment tower. Appeals of previously-issued demolition permits filed by the Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia remain pending, awaiting a hearing date before the Philadelphia Court

of Common Pleas. The Alliance welcomes contributions to help defray legal expenses. Visit preservationalliance.com to contribute and for updates.

WASHINGTON COUNTY

MOON LORN

357 Parcell Road | Prosperity
Morris Township
Threat: Deterioration

Moon Lorn was once home to artist Malcolm Parcell and is an eclectic campus of residential and studio buildings where the artist lived from 1925 to his death in 1987. Preservation Pennsylvania worked with locals who were interested in purchasing the site. Unfortunately, owner CONSOL has plans for the property for the next five years or so, but may be willing to sell afterward.

WESTMORELAND COUNTY

MONESSEN SAVINGS & TRUST

500 Donner Avenue | Monessen
Threat: Demolition

The situation looked dire for this graceful Beaux Arts building, once an important business landmark in downtown Monessen. While Preservation Pennsylvania shared some love with the place, the mayor was determined to see the building demolished. A hurried call for bids resulted in selection of a contractor to take the building down. Politics intervened. In a wonderful example of the motto "be the change you want to see in the world," local advocate Matthew

Shorraw beat the incumbent in the primary. Now elected mayor of Monessen, he has big plans for the building and the town.

YORK COUNTY

HOKE HOUSE

420 N. Main Street | Spring Grove
Threat: Demolition

Three years ago, Friends of the Hoke House was able to negotiate an agreement with Rutters that would allow them time to explore preservation alternatives for the c. 1750 building, the oldest in Spring Grove Borough. In the latter half of 2017, a local realtor agreed to market the property, without success. Rutters has declined to extend the agreement.

MIFFLIN HOUSE

202 Cool Springs Road
Hellam Township
Threat: Demolition

This Underground Railroad site remains under threat of demolition to make way for a warehouse operation. Preservation Pennsylvania sponsored a research report that culminated in a determination of eligibility for the National Register from the State Historic Preservation Office. We have testified at township zoning hearing board meetings about the historic significance of the site, and are now granted standing in litigation with the York County Court of Common Pleas to continue to support the township's denial of a demolition permit for the site. Preservation Pennsylvania is now the fiscal manager of donations for these legal fees. Follow updates on Facebook at Save Mifflin House.

THE YORKTOWNE HOTEL

48 East Market Street | York City
Threat: Partial Demolition

SAVED! Preservation Pennsylvania raised the alert about the potential demolition of the upper floors of this landmark in downtown York and worked with the hotel's new owners to ensure that renovations would not have a negative impact on the building's historic character. Rather than removing all of the upper floors and rebuilding, the exterior of the hotel will remain intact, and demolition will be limited to the interior of the upper floors. We are delighted to see this downtown anchor remain as a welcoming landmark to residents and guests alike.



JEWELERS ROW



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www.preservationpa.org

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love
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GIVES UP