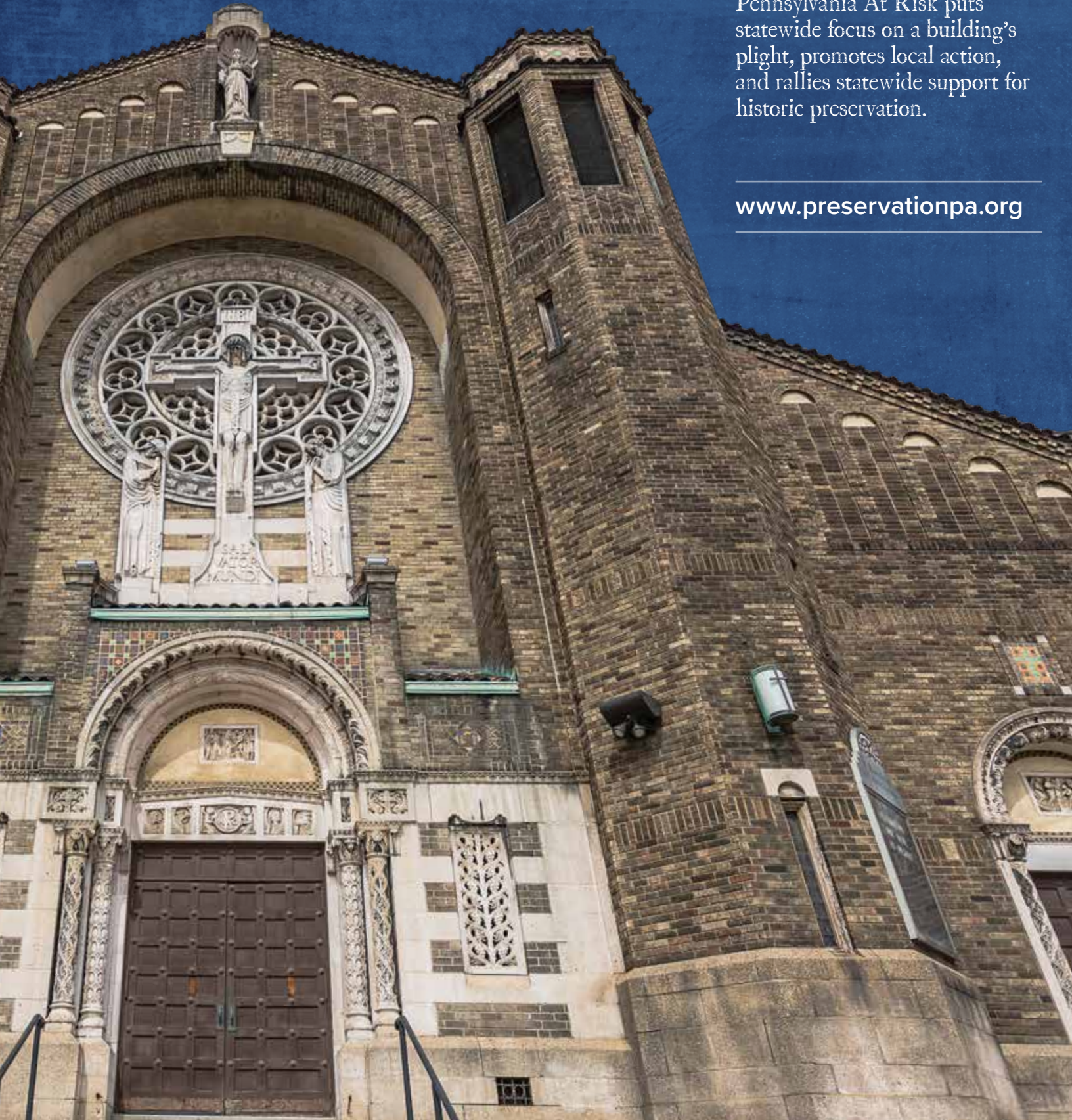


# 2021 PENNSYLVANIA AT RISK

preservation  
PENNSYLVANIA

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

[www.preservationpa.org](http://www.preservationpa.org)



# PENNSYLVANIA AT RISK preservation PENNSYLVANIA

## 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.

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Photographs were provided as part of *Pennsylvania At Risk* nominations, unless otherwise indicated. *At Risk* profiles are based on information from nominations. While we have attempted to verify the information provided, Preservation Pennsylvania does not assume liability for errors.

# From the Chairperson and Executive Director

Dear Preservation Friends,

We would like to thank you for your support during the last year. What a strange time we have had with virtual events, working from home, and no travel! We quickly learned that we really missed going places and visiting the amazing historic places in Pennsylvania. We are proud of the way we pivoted, offering our Statewide Conference on Heritage and the 2020 Pennsylvania Historic Preservation Awards virtually. We are so glad some of you could join us!

2020 prompted some very significant changes at Preservation Pennsylvania – some made necessary by the stay-at-home order and others because of some re-evaluation of the work we do and how we can best promote the preservation of the state's historic resources. While some of our staff has always been remote, we learned during the last year that it works well for all of us. We have decided to close our office in Harrisburg and remain remote. During 2020, we met with concerned folks on many different topics, attended municipal meetings, met with legislators, and even testified at a Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission (PUC) hearing via Zoom and phone. The positive outcome of these virtual meetings is that we realized we could respond more quickly, assist with more projects, and save our travel budget for situations where a phone call or a Zoom is not enough. We've even done a few site visits via iPhone. We have reduced the size of our staff from four to two, but along with a great new board that took office on January 1, 2021, we are small but mighty.

Last year, we decided to shift our annual *Pennsylvania At Risk* announcement from February to May as part of our National Preservation Month events. We received 11 nominations for this year's list, and after careful evaluation by our Review Committee (composed of representatives from seven statewide organizations), we present you with the 2021 *Pennsylvania At Risk* list. We had a few surprises during the review that resulted in some good progress for several sites before we had a chance to list them. Be sure to read about them as well as the updates on several previous listings.

For those resources listed this year as well as those still "*At Risk*" from previous years, the work moves forward. Each of you can be a part of these success stories. YOU have the power to make a difference. *At Risk* places don't get saved just because we include them on the list – although many of our past listings credit us with helping to push forward the efforts. The momentum to find a new use or a positive outcome happens at the local level with your attendance at municipality meetings, and your volunteer work with local historical societies, historic review commissions, and local historic sites. We are here to encourage and aid your passion and enthusiasm, and together, we can achieve great things.

Finally, we want to thank you for your support of our work and ask you to consider making a donation to Preservation Pennsylvania to help further our efforts to protect and preserve Pennsylvania's historic resources.



*Mindy G. Crawford*

Mindy Gulden Crawford  
Executive Director



*Margaret B. Wallis*

Margaret B. Wallis  
Chairperson, Board of Directors

# Pennsylvania AT RISK

## ALLEGHENY COUNTY

### **Croatian Fraternal Union, 3441 Forbes Avenue, Pittsburgh**

Preservation Pittsburgh has continued to advocate diligently on behalf of this beautiful, historic building. Unfortunately, the building was not maintained, resulting in safety concerns that make demolition unavoidable. As part of ongoing discussions, a preservation compromise has been reached. Preservation Pittsburgh is currently in the process of signing a Memorandum of Understanding with the University of Pittsburgh in which they would agree to carefully dismantle the facade of the **Croatian Fraternal Union** (2020 *PA At Risk*), catalog and store it during construction of a new science building on the site. Upon completion of the new building, the facade's architectural details will be reinstalled on site to make a unique courtyard between the historic facade and the new building.

### **Firstside Historic District, 100-102 Market, 104 and 106-108 Market, and 209 First Ave.**

The Planning Commission denied the demolition request from developer Troiani, which would have leveled three historic buildings in Pittsburgh's **Firstside Historic District** (2020 *PA At Risk*). Troiani has filed an appeal. They were granted permission to demolish a separate six-story building due to an emergency Permit License Inspections Department approval.



*Firstside Historic District*



*Croatian Fraternal Union*

## BEDFORD COUNTY

### **Dutch Corner, Bedford Township**

The idyllic farming community of **Dutch Corner** (2010 *PA At Risk*) is once again under threat. The Competitive Power Ventures' (CPV) Kettle Wind Project proposes to build wind turbines on the ridge of Evitts Mountain. Construction and operation of these turbines would permanently impact the landscape, one of Bedford County's most significant economic assets. Local advocates have asked Bedford Township supervisors to update the municipality's antiquated wind energy ordinance that was enacted in 2010 based on a 2006 state ordinance model. Requested changes would affect setbacks for non-participating landowners and historic properties, preclude siting turbines within the National Register historic district or any designated natural or wildlife area, such as the Dunning Mountain Forest Natural Heritage Area, and would require a company to conduct studies for any proposed project, including potential impacts on environmental protection (including an endangered bat species located on Evitts Mountain), scenic views, noise, shadow flickers, and property values.

In addition to the potential harm to the character of the area, local residents are alarmed about environmental impacts, including the anticipated "flattening" of the steep slope of the ridge and related impact on the watershed. To learn more, visit the post in the News section of our website at [preservationpa.org](http://preservationpa.org).

## CUMBERLAND COUNTY

### **Mount Tabor AME Zion Church, Cedar St., Mount Holly Springs**

Preservation Pennsylvania recently participated in a virtual spring celebration with **Mount Tabor AME Zion Church** (2018

# UPDATES

# 2021

*PA At Risk*) in honor of its listing on the National Register of Historic Places under the Multiple Properties Documentation Form (MPDF) for “African American Churches and Cemeteries in Pennsylvania, c. 1644-c. 1970.” The church will receive \$275,000 in state funding from the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development. Additionally, a project now underway will use results from an earlier study with ground-penetrating radar in order to place solar-powered lights to mark each of the burials in the cemetery. Mount Tabor Church was founded by Elias Parker, once an enslaved person in Hagerstown, Maryland, who moved to Mount Holly Springs after serving with the U.S. Colored Troops during the Civil War.

## HUNTINGDON COUNTY

### **East Broad Top Railroad, 421 Meadow St., Rockhill**

What a relief! **The East Broad Top Railroad** has been saved! The new foundation that acquired the railroad last year is beginning an extensive master-planning process that will consider how to use the National Historic Landmark’s assets effectively, what its immediate and long-term needs are, and how it can help boost local and regional tourism and prosperity.

The months-long process will involve Huntingdon County and state leaders, residents of communities along the line, board members and employees of the EBT Foundation, Inc., as well as volunteers for the railroad and the neighboring Rockhill Trolley Museum. The study will be paid for with a just-announced \$125,000 grant from Appalachian Regional Commission (a partnership between the federal government and 13 states) and by Pennsylvania’s Marketing to Attract Tourists program.

East Broad Top (EBT) employees are currently overhauling track to the picnic grove, rebuilding two steam engines (from 1912 and 1916), stabilizing and adding fire protection to structures, and making safety and accessibility improvements throughout the property. As of June 2021, the railroad is running a regular schedule of trains for the first time since 2011, as well as offering tours of its historic machine shop. For information about this summer’s EBT schedule, visit the railroad’s website at [eastbroadtop.com](http://eastbroadtop.com).

The East Broad Top is representative of the industrial boom that swept across the United States in the aftermath of the Civil War. Built from 1872 to 1874, the 33-mile railroad originally brought iron ore and coal to the iron furnace that gave its name to the current borough of Rockhill Furnace. The iron furnace closed in the early 1900s, but the market for clean-burning Broad Top coal remained robust until after World War II. The EBT was shuttered when the mines closed in 1956, and was sold to the Kovalchick family, operators of a salvage company.

Instead of scrapping the line, in 1960, the Kovalchicks reopened four miles of it as a tourist railroad powered by the same steam locomotives that had hauled coal for decades. The rest of the railroad remained undisturbed, including the circa-1910 machine shops — a rare example of an early-20th-century American industrial facility and the core of EBT’s 1964 designation as a National Historic Landmark.

## MONTGOMERY COUNTY

### **Maulsby/Corson/Hovenden Homestead, Abolition Hall and the Plymouth Meeting Historic District, Plymouth Meeting**

**The Friends of Abolition Hall** (2017 *PA At Risk*), led by Sydelle Zove, have spent five years advocating for the preservation of a 10.45-acre farmstead and Underground Railroad site in Plymouth Meeting. Developer K. Hovnanian withdrew its proposal to build 67 townhouses on the site. The outlook is brighter following a unanimous April vote by the Whitemarsh Township supervisors to enter into an agreement with the heirs to purchase the property. A gift from a private donor will be coupled with Township Open Space funds to acquire the property, in partnership with the nonprofit Whitemarsh Art Center (WAC). A site with important anti-slavery and Underground Railroad history will be saved, and the Hovenden arts legacy at the site will carry on!

## NORTHAMPTON COUNTY

### Meadows Road Bridge, Lower Saucon Township

The **Meadows Road Bridge** (2020 *PA At Risk*) was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2020. The four-span stone arch bridge was built in 1858. It is the oldest multi-span stone arch highway bridge that is still extant in the county. These are rare in Northampton County and in the state as a whole, and this is the last remaining example in the county and one of only five remaining in the state. Unfortunately, deterioration has continued, and it appears likely that Northampton County will replace rather than restore the bridge. Advocates have suggested that past repairs contributed to the bridge's deterioration, such as the use of modern cement instead of a compatible mortar mix.



Meadows Road Bridge

were resolved. In early May 2021, the Strawberry Mansion Community Development Corporation (SMCDC) announced that, working with the property owner, they have completed a feasibility study, funded with a grant from the Community Design Collaborative of Philadelphia. It includes structural assessments and conceptual designs created by Kelly Maiello Architects.

According to the SMCDC statement, they “aim to expand the footprint of Coltrane’s jazz legacy beyond his former home, by also preserving the adjacent houses along the residential row.” However, the status of the properties on either side of the Coltrane House still pose potential risk. Its twin on the south side will be demolished as part of a new development, and houses on the north side have suffered fire damage. Still, the announcement is cause for optimism. “SMCDC views the site feasibility study as the basis to implement its plan to restore the house as a museum, preserve the row’s architectural character, create a gateway to Strawberry Mansion and develop a world-class venue where jazz can be heard, studied and appreciated.” Music to preservationists’ ears! The SMCDC will be fundraising and engaging with community stakeholders, including jazz fans and preservationists across the globe. Volunteer offers of planning and professional services may be directed to [coltranemcac@strawberrymansioncdc.org](mailto:coltranemcac@strawberrymansioncdc.org).

## PHILADELPHIA COUNTY

### John Coltrane House, National Historic Landmark, 1511 N. 33rd St., Philadelphia

Progress at last for the **John Coltrane House!** After the house was added to *Pennsylvania At Risk* in 2020, we spoke to the owner and staff in City Councilman Darrell Clarke’s office to discuss some legal ownership complexities and ways that we might be of assistance once those issues



John Coltrane House

## YORK COUNTY

### Mifflin House and Farmstead, Wrightsville

Preservation Pennsylvania placed the Mifflin House on the 2017 *Pennsylvania At Risk* list. We helped organize fundraisers and public meetings, attended township hearings, and paid for legal counsel to challenge the efforts to demolish the c. 1800 **Mifflin House** farmstead in eastern York County to make way for a warehouse facility. We knew that the community valued this beautiful property, open space, and Underground Railroad history. We worked hard to protect it and find a way forward for its preservation.

After working together with The Conservation Fund, Susquehanna National Heritage Area, the property owner, and developer, we are cautiously optimistic that Susquehanna National Heritage Area will very soon be announcing exciting plans to acquire and preserve the site.

### Strickler Farmstead, 1205 Williams Road, Springettsbury Township

Threatened with demolition and added to the *Pennsylvania At Risk* list in 2020, the **Strickler Farmstead** dates back to one of the earliest settler families in the area. Preservation Pennsylvania met with county officials who own the property to encourage them to preserve the buildings and find a new tenant. Do you know of a business looking for unique office space?



Strickler Farmstead

# About the Pennsylvania At Risk Program

2021

For nearly 30 years, Preservation Pennsylvania's annual listing 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, 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.

Another common threat 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 put historic properties at risk. 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 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 2021 *Pennsylvania At Risk* list.

## At Risk Sites

### ALLEGHENY COUNTY

#### St. Agnes Church (aka St. Agnes Center)

3217 Fifth Ave., Pittsburgh

Carlow University

**Threat: Demolition**

### BUCKS COUNTY

#### Satterthwaite House and Patterson Farm

909 Mirror Lake Road, Yardley

Lower Makefield Township

**Threat: Deterioration**

### DAUPHIN COUNTY

#### Fort Halifax Park

570 N. River Road, Halifax

Halifax Township

**Threat: Deterioration, Demolition**

# St. Agnes Church (aka St. Agnes Center)

THREAT: DEMOLITION



*St. Agnes photographs by Amy Fisher, Pawsburgh Photography*



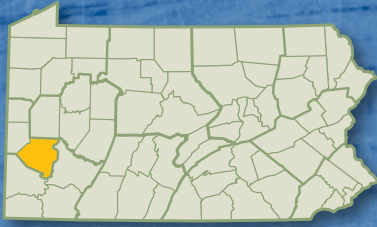
The former St. Agnes Church is considered one of the most beautiful churches in Pittsburgh, designed by architect John Theodore Comès (1873-1922). Its owner, Carlow University, proposes a public-private development partnership that would result in the church's demolition.

## HISTORY

The former St. Agnes Church is a work of art on the outside and inside, located in the dense urban cultural, institutional, and educational heart of Pittsburgh. It is believed to be one of the finest existing examples of the Lombard Romanesque ecclesiastical designs of Pittsburgh architect John Theodore Comès (1873-1922). Comès designed over two dozen churches in the Pittsburgh area, and is also credited as a leader in the advancement of church design in the early 20th century.

Comès believed that catholic churches should be designed with a full integration of the architecture, sculpture, decoration, and mural painting. Comès selected nationally and internationally recognized artists and craftspeople to create the jewel box interior at St. Agnes. George W. Sotter designed more than 100

3217 FIFTH AVE., PITTSBURGH  
ALLEGHENY COUNTY  
CARLOW UNIVERSITY



panels of medieval art glass. Frank Aretz sculpted the stonework. After construction was completed, Felix B. Lieftuchter painted the amazing interior murals. Dr. Sylvia Rhor Samaniego, the director and curator of the University of Pittsburgh's University Art Gallery, and former professor of art history at Carlow University, wrote of the murals for a local publication: "Called a 'symphony of paint' when they were finished, Lieftuchter's murals form an integral part of the ensemble work at St. Agnes."

Only the best materials were used for all of the church elements including the marble and granite columns. Comès also gave consideration to the green space and hillside of the site as a part of the church design. The builder, Patrick F. Gallagher of Duquesne Construction Company, said in a speech: "The truest evidence of the greatness of people of the past is found in the remains of their buildings."

In 1993, the Catholic Diocese closed St. Agnes Church, rectory and school. In 1996, Carlow University (formerly Carlow College) purchased the church and rectory. Later in 2011, Carlow purchased the school. Pews were removed from the church, and some other renovations were made for it to become a multi-purpose campus building/events center, called the St. Agnes Center. The original 1917 pipe organ remains.

## THREAT

Carlow University's lower campus includes St. Agnes School, Church and Rectory as well as a surface parking lot. As part of their lower campus development, Carlow University plans to partner with a developer on a "P3" (public private partnership) project that would include a long-term land lease to the developer that would construct a public office building, while Carlow would also construct a building for university use.

As the project is currently envisioned, Carlow University would demolish the St. Agnes Church building. This action is supported by the Catholic Diocese of Pittsburgh as preferable to reuse. If the building remains standing, the Diocese would require the removal or destruction of all religious iconography (i.e., windows, murals) in the event the church were converted to "profane use."

## CHANGE

Preservation Pennsylvania will partner with Preservation Pittsburgh to make the case for preserving the building and incorporating it into the new development as a marketable asset. The building has been determined eligible for the National Register, and an adaptive reuse project could qualify for historic preservation tax credits. The massive shift to remote working during the COVID-19 pandemic will have a long-term impact on Pittsburgh's office space. Renters may need less space, but the quality and distinctive features of that space will become more important.

Carlow has said that it will try to salvage materials from the church for reuse. While salvage is preferable to the destruction of these artistic works, it's unclear why the works could not remain in place for appreciation by generations to come. The Comès-designed St. John the Baptist Church in Lawrenceville is now The Church Brew Works, with stained glass windows and other decorative details still intact.

As Pittsburgh's Oakland neighborhood undergoes immense developmental change, retention and preservation of historic sites is imperative to maintaining human scale, history, and neighborhood identity. Currently, there is a city-sponsored planning process going on for Oakland. We encourage local residents to speak up for retaining and reusing older buildings and lament historic and cultural losses. As of this writing, almost 800 people have signed a [Change.org](https://www.change.org) petition for the preservation and reuse of the former St. Agnes Church.

# Satterthwaite House and Patterson Farm

THREAT: DETERIORATION, DEMOLITION BY NEGLECT



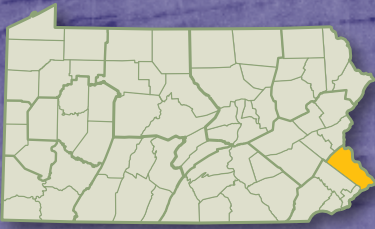
As open land in Bucks County is gobbled up by new housing developments, the fertile soils of Patterson Farm remain in cultivation, continuing a centuries-long agricultural tradition. Much of this land is already protected, however, a 40-acre parcel owned by Lower Makefield Township and containing a number of historic buildings, including the Quaker Satterthwaite House, is at risk. The buildings have fallen into disrepair since the Township obtained the farm in 1998. A local advocacy group seeks approval to begin restoration work before it's too late.

## HISTORY

Patterson Farm is a 234-acre property owned by Lower Makefield Township, located at I-95 and Mirror Lake Road. An exit off the interstate highway means the open farmland is a visitor's first impression.

The Township obtained the farm in 1998 from Thomas and Alice Patterson. A year later, 71 acres were placed under a farmland preservation easement. The farm's neighbors formed the group Patterson Farm Preservation, Inc. and lobbied Lower Makefield Township officials for a farmland preservation easement for additional acreage. The Township voted in October 2018 to grant an agricultural conservation easement to the county on approximately 106 acres, protecting a majority of the farm. The Patterson Farm Preservation group is now working toward protection of the last 40 acres, which include all of the historic structures.

909 MIRROR LAKE ROAD, YARDLEY  
LOWER MAKEFIELD TOWNSHIP  
BUCKS COUNTY



The Patterson Farm includes two large historic farmhouses, each with a main barn and other outbuildings.

The Quaker Satterthwaite House was built in the 1730s, with later additions in the mid-19th century. The Greek Revival frame building sits behind stone walls on Mirror Lake Road. The Satterthwaite farmstead includes an early 19th-century Pennsylvania bank barn, a corncrib, potato barn, a frame workshop/well house, and garage. The house's interior features fine decorative elements such as mantelpieces and stained glass. Satterthwaite's additions were constructed in the 1800s to accommodate two families, each with separate stairways, two floors and high-ceiling attics, kitchens and front parlors off a center entry hall. Many of the original window panes remain, mounted in a six-over-six configuration.

The Janney-Brown House dates to the 1750s, with a later 1830s Federal-style fieldstone addition. Its interior features a walk-in fireplace with a beehive oven and fine woodwork, including two staircases and wide plank pine flooring.

Near the Janney-Brown House is a small tenant house that may date back to the 1680s and a cucumber magnolia tree that's considered the largest in Pennsylvania.

To date, the Patterson Farm Preservation group has served as a conscience for the Township and a guardian for the Patterson Farm. At Township meetings, they have addressed a variety of mismanagement issues, from the misguided effort to sell off the Satterthwaite House (and only driveway access to the farmland) to the accidental demolition of a recently restored garage/apple cellar. The group also exposed illegal discharge of industrial wastewater by former farm tenant Brightfarms, leading the PA DEP to issue a fine for violation of the Clean Streams Law.

## THREAT

The Satterthwaite House and other historic buildings are suffering from 23 years of deferred maintenance by Lower Makefield Township, amounting to demolition by neglect. The Township has already attempted to sell off a 5-acre parcel containing Satterthwaite House. The buyer sought variances to build a commercial venture on the site, which were denied, resulting in years of litigation and, ultimately, an end to the sale.

For almost a decade, the Patterson Farm Preservation group has called for proper management and attention to the farm and its historic buildings. Lower Makefield Township is a Certified Local Government, a designation that includes an expectation to adequately maintain municipally owned historic resources. Jointly administered by the National Park Service and the State Historic Preservation Offices, each local community works through a certification process to become recognized as a Certified Local Government (CLG). Once certified, CLGs become an active partner in the Federal Historic Preservation Program. Each community gains access to benefits of the program and agrees to follow required federal and state requirements.

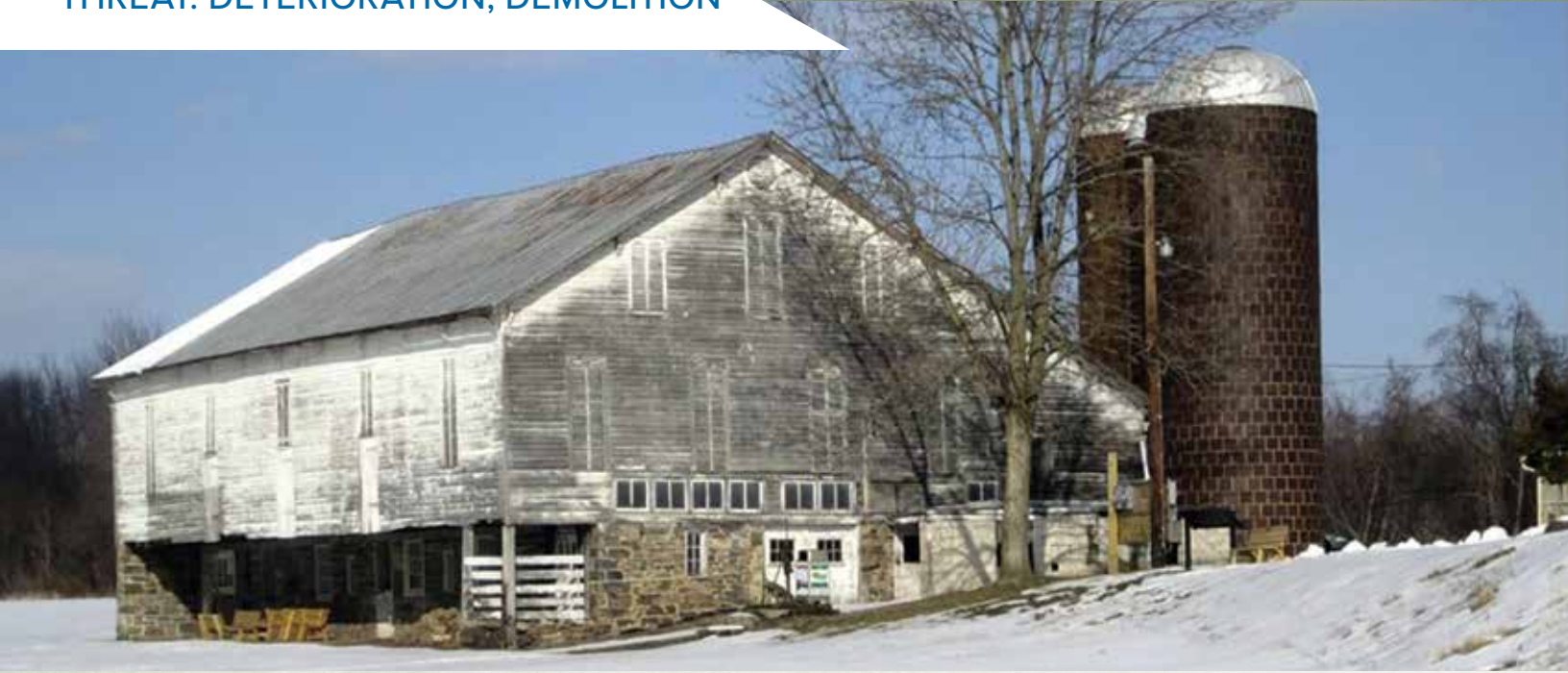
Although the Township accepted grant funding from the Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission years ago, they have not met their responsibility to make the historic house available for public access.

## CHANGE

Preservation Pennsylvania will work with the nonprofit group Patterson Farm Preservation to find solutions. Their Petition for Preservation has garnered over 4,000 signatures to date. Their social media campaign encourages people to support restoration of Patterson Farm's historic homes, barns and buildings: #saveoursatterthwaite. They seek approval from the Township to allow their volunteers to begin restoration work as soon as possible.

# Fort Halifax Park

THREAT: DETERIORATION, DEMOLITION



The 172-acre Fort Halifax Park fronts the Susquehanna River and includes rolling meadows, pristine woodlands, the meandering Armstrong Creek, and a historic 19th-century farmstead. It was likely the location of Fort Halifax during the French and Indian War. Today, the site offers recreational, archaeological and educational opportunities, such as nature, science, history and other programs. In the past year, Halifax Township's Board of Supervisors initiated plans to demolish the iconic barn and farmhouse.

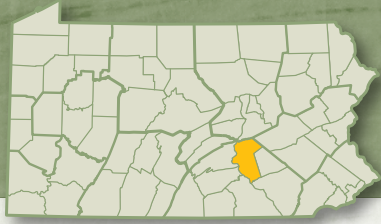
## HISTORY

The French and Indian War (1754-1763) pitted the colonies of British America against those of New France, each side supported by military units from the parent country and by Native American allies. Fort Halifax was one of three fortifications erected along the Susquehanna River: Fort Halifax in Halifax, Fort Hunter in Harrisburg, and Fort Augusta in Sunbury. These were part of a chain of fortifications built to protect borderland settlers from raiding parties. Colonel William Clapham supervised construction of Fort Halifax in 1756, using lumber sourced and sawn locally. Built in two weeks "under guard of an officer and thirty men," the fort was a 160' square log stockade with four bastions and an earthwork about "10 feet high surrounded by a ditch of equal depth." By 1757, the troops were transferred to Fort Hunter, and by 1763, Fort Halifax was abandoned and dismantled.

In 1926, a stone monument was erected along Route 147 to commemorate Fort Halifax. Archaeological research has not yet yielded the exact location of the fort, but efforts will continue in 2021 with a field school on the property. The site of the fort is suspected to be within the boundaries of the Fort Halifax Park property.

Joseph and Sarah Geiger owned the property between 1820-1888, and it is believed that the farmhouse and barn may have been built between 1820-1830. In 1951, Andrew and Sarah Yeager bought the property and adapted the barn for their successful dairy production. The Yeagers had 50 dairy cows, and farmed wheat, corn and oats until 1972-1973. In 2004, they wished the property to be preserved and sold it to the Central Pennsylvania Conservancy. In 2006, Halifax Township took ownership with certain covenants and expectations in place connected to the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) grant and public funding used for its purchase.

570 N. RIVER ROAD, HALIFAX  
HALIFAX TOWNSHIP  
DAUPHIN COUNTY



Between 2011 and 2016, PennDOT, DCNR, and Township officials and volunteers worked cooperatively to conduct some small archaeological investigations at the park. They identified a number of buried features and recovered military and domestic artifacts (including lead balls and handmade nails and spikes) that date from the mid-18th century and may be associated with the fort.

Recently, a partnership that includes the nonprofit Friends of Fort Halifax Park, Inc. (FoFHP), Halifax Township, Juniata College's Cultural Resource Institute, and the veterans organization Team Rubicon has formed to continue the effort to positively identify the location of the fort.

The work plan includes some additional ground-penetrating radar and metal-detecting survey, followed by the excavation of exploratory trenches in the area where concentrations of 18th-century artifacts were previously discovered. That work will be supervised by Dr. Jonathan Burns of Juniata College with members of the FoFHP, local volunteers, a team of undergraduate and graduate field school students, and volunteers from Team Rubicon. This approach of involving veterans in the archaeology of military sites has been successfully implemented at Fort Ligonier in Pennsylvania and at Saratoga Battlefield in New York, as well as by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in the Veterans Curation Program. It's an approach that pays dividends for the veterans who acquire some useful and marketable skills through their work on the project, and also benefits the research with the perspectives and insights of volunteers with direct military and combat experience.

## THREAT

Halifax Township is a reluctant owner, feeling encumbered by the responsibility and financial burdens of the historic buildings in this park. A long-term management plan, expected under the original ownership transfer from the Central Pennsylvania Conservancy, was never implemented by the Township. The buildings' maintenance has been neglected, resulting in the insurance carrier notifying the Township of their intent to drop coverage. The Township has turned down funds awarded by Dauphin County and others to stabilize the historic structures. Instead, it has solicited bids for demolition of the house and barn. Demolition alters the character of the park and threatens the ability to find a new owner and to use the rehabilitated buildings as income-producing venues to assist with operation and maintenance of the park.

The nonprofit Friends of Fort Halifax Park, Inc. was formed to support the Township in the daily maintenance, programming, education and preservation of this park and its historic resources. FoFHP has been doing its best to manage and maintain the park and its buildings, within constraints imposed by Halifax Township. FoFHP has been paying for trail upkeep, gardens, signage, maintenance, programs, lavatory rental and maintenance by drawing on volunteer assistance, a small membership, donations, small grants, and fundraising. An effort to mitigate insurance liability concerns was contingent on FoFHP doing the work and the Township paying for materials (\$600.00). The Friends also completed and submitted a Historic Resource Survey Form that resulted in a determination of eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places from the Pennsylvania State Historic Preservation Office. Eligibility is a criterion for use of state or federal historic preservation tax credits.

FoFHP has not been permitted to use, enter, maintain or renovate the barn or farmhouse, and the Township only recently agreed to allow FoFHP to work on the mid-century Yeager House, a brick one-and-a-half-story home built by Glenn Yeager during his dairy farming operation. Other buildings FoFHP has funded and been permitted to use and renovate are the Granary (complete except for gutters and fascia), milkhouse, and wagon shed (renovations pending). In 2020, FoFHP replaced the roof on all of these outbuildings.

## CHANGE

The Township has stated that the only way to avoid a demolition outcome is to find a new owner who will undertake rehabilitation of the buildings. Preservation Pennsylvania will work in partnership with the Friends of Fort Halifax Park, Inc. and the Central Pennsylvania Conservancy, which holds an easement on the land.



# Thanks!

## Connect and Get Involved

♥ **Do your civic duty!** Serve on local commissions. Pay attention to upcoming local government meetings and attend when there's an issue you care about. Bring along a friend.

♥ **Connect with your local** preservation organization, historic sites, and historical societies. Become a volunteer and spread the word.

♥ **Follow us on Facebook** for updates, advocacy alerts, and preservation events. Search #PAatRisk on social media.

♥ **Sign up for our monthly e-news** at our website, [preservationpa.org](http://preservationpa.org), and receive information about grant funding, advocacy alerts, and the call for *Pennsylvania At Risk* nominations. (The Statewide Conference on Heritage and Pennsylvania Historic Preservation Awards are on hiatus.)

♥ **Donate to Preservation Pennsylvania** or become a member to benefit our 2021 work with these *At Risk* sites.

**WE'D LIKE TO THANK** the members of the public for answering the call for submissions and sharing with us the stories of the places they love and are working to preserve. Our review panel this year discussed each site at length, evaluating which were truly at risk and might benefit from the listing. Every place that was nominated received some advice. We'll be working with the places listed on 2021 *Pennsylvania At Risk* throughout the year. One of the selected places received a last-minute divine intervention when a buyer appeared with a plan to reuse the church building as part of a new affordable housing project.

This year's review panel included representatives from the following organizations, who shared their expertise to evaluate each of the nominations and offered their professional insights on potential solutions.

10,000 Friends of Pennsylvania  
Heritage PA  
PA Museums  
Pennsylvania Archaeological Council  
Pennsylvania Downtown Center  
Pennsylvania State Historic Preservation Office

This year's nominations reminded us of an important truth: Maintenance IS preservation. Painting, glazing, roofing and other such seemingly mundane matters are critical to the condition and survival of an old building. Deferred maintenance is a building killer.

Please check our website, sign up for our enews, or follow our social media for updates on the 2021 *Pennsylvania At Risk* and for news and advocacy alerts on preservation action and places all across the commonwealth.

## INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP



# ARE YOU PENNSYLVANIA PROUD? JOIN US!

Preservationists **support** their local legacy businesses, **save** local **landmarks** they **love**, perform regular **maintenance** on vintage buildings, use **creative** means to **repurpose** old buildings with new uses – and join **Preservation Pennsylvania!** Your membership enables us to create guides to help individuals care for their historic homes, offer free advice to individuals and communities, and promote the annual *Pennsylvania At Risk* list to help save places people love.

## MEMBERSHIP FORM

**YOUR MEMBERSHIP IS IMPORTANT** as it demonstrates support for preservation as a tool for economic revitalization and defining community character. Help us save special places with your support!

☐ **\$2,500 Keystone Society**

☐ **\$1,000 Chairman's Circle**

☐ **\$500 Benefactor**

☐ **\$150 Pennsylvania Patron**

☐ **\$50 Advocate**

☐ **\$35 Digital Membership**

• Students submit ID for free membership

☐ **Donate to support our work: Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_**

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Help change the future of *Pennsylvania At Risk* places!



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