



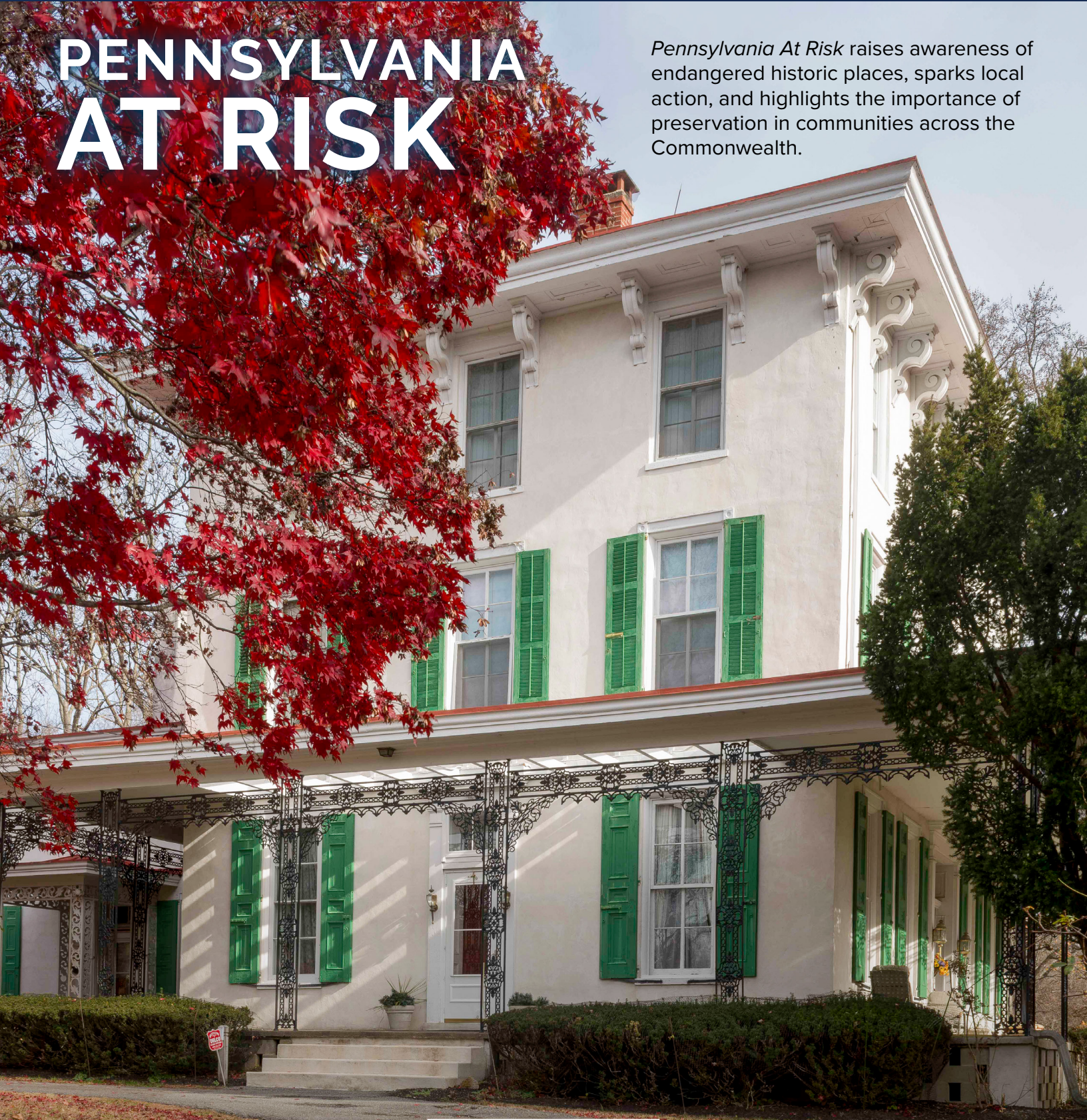
**Preservation
PENNSYLVANIA**

Protecting the past. Enriching the future.

2026

PENNSYLVANIA AT RISK

Pennsylvania At Risk raises awareness of endangered historic places, sparks local action, and highlights the importance of preservation in communities across the Commonwealth.



2026 PENNSYLVANIA AT RISK

MISSION STATEMENT

Preservation Pennsylvania assists communities, organizations, government entities, and individuals statewide in protecting and utilizing our irreplaceable historic and cultural resources. Through legislative advocacy, education, technical expertise, and strategic partnerships, we ensure these treasures continue to shape Pennsylvania's identity and fuel its sustainable growth for future generations.

ABOUT US

Founded in 1982, Preservation Pennsylvania is the Commonwealth's only independent, statewide, nonprofit membership organization dedicated to safeguarding historically and architecturally significant places.

Distinct from any government agency, we rely on member support, private donations, and grants to advance preservation through grassroots and legislative advocacy, technical assistance, and educational programs.

By partnering with communities, government entities, and local heritage organizations, we strengthen efforts to preserve our shared cultural assets, spur economic development, strengthen community identity, and enrich quality of life.

Preservation Pennsylvania hosts the annual Statewide Conference on Heritage and the Pennsylvania Historic Preservation Awards, and publishes *Pennsylvania At Risk*, an annual list of endangered properties.

With a solid reputation of securing historic tax credits and championing preservation initiatives, we remain a vital force in protecting the Commonwealth's cultural and architectural legacy for future generations.

Table of Contents

From the Executive Director	3
About the <i>Pennsylvania At Risk</i> Program	4
<i>At Risk</i> Sites – 2026	5
<i>Pennsylvania At Risk</i> Updates	6
Painter's Folly	12
17 Elliott Avenue	14
Springfield Cabin	16
Slifer House	18
Union Lutheran Church	20
How to Stay Informed	22
Donation Form	23

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Mindy Gulden Crawford
Executive Director
mcrawford@preservationpa.org

Newsletter design by Sue Harper,
Sharper Creative
www.sharpernet.com

On the cover: Painter's Folly, Delaware
County. *Credit: Ed Worteck*

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

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From the Executive Director

Dear Preservation Friend,

Since 1992, *Pennsylvania At Risk* has identified the historic places across the Commonwealth where decisions are being made right now – places where the outcome is still uncertain, and where advocacy can still make a difference.

The 2026 list brings forward five properties that reflect both the breadth of Pennsylvania’s history and the complexity of the challenges we face today. This year’s sites include a rural cabin tied to early settlement, a nationally significant Arts & Crafts residence on the Main Line, a defining institutional church in York, an architecturally and culturally important property in Chadds Ford, and an elegant house that speaks to the incremental loss of neighborhood character in Lewisburg. Some are well known. Others are easily overlooked. All are at risk.

These places are not connected by style, scale or geography. They are connected by pressure – economic, physical and cultural. In each case, demolition is not hypothetical. It is being considered, planned, or actively pursued.

And yet, each site also represents a point of opportunity.

This year’s theme is decision.

These buildings do not lack significance. They lack time, resources, and in many cases, a clear path forward. Some require investment. Some require new uses. All require recognition that the choices made today will shape what remains tomorrow.

Preservation is rarely about saving something exactly as it was. It is about determining what continues – and how. The work is not always easy. These buildings are complex. Some are worn. Some are difficult. But they remain meaningful, and they remain usable.

Preservation Pennsylvania’s role is to stand at that point of decision – to support local advocates, provide technical guidance, and bring visibility to places that might otherwise be lost without broader awareness. We work to ensure that demolition is not the default outcome simply because alternatives have not yet been fully explored.

We are a small organization, but this work has statewide impact. Every place on this list represents a community effort already underway – and an opportunity to strengthen that effort before it is too late.

I encourage you to read this year’s list, share these stories, and consider supporting this work. Advocacy, technical assistance, and public awareness do not happen without sustained support.

The future of these places is still undecided. That is precisely why this work matters.

Thank you for being part of Pennsylvania’s preservation community.



Mindy Gulden Crawford

Mindy Gulden Crawford
Executive Director

Preservation Pennsylvania supports the protection and preservation of historic places through educational outreach, workshops and events, legislative advocacy, advisory and technical assistance in the field, and other special initiatives.

QUESTIONS?

Email info@preservationpa.org

www.preservationpa.org



About the *Pennsylvania At Risk* Program

Since 1992, Preservation Pennsylvania has published the *Pennsylvania At Risk* list to draw attention to the Commonwealth's most endangered historic resources. The program highlights places that are threatened by demolition, neglect, incompatible development, or other challenges.

The goals of *Pennsylvania At Risk* are to:

- Raise public awareness of the value and vulnerability of historic resources
- Build support for site-specific and policy-level solutions
- Offer technical assistance, advocacy tools, and visibility to local preservation efforts

Listing on *Pennsylvania At Risk* is not a designation and carries no regulatory authority. Rather, it is a call to action and a resource for individuals, organizations and communities working to protect places that matter.



HOW YOU CAN HELP

You can make a difference for these historic places:

- **Share Their Stories**
Help spread the word by sharing this publication, posting on social media, or talking to your community leaders.
- **Support Local Advocacy**
Reach out to the individuals and groups championing these places. Your voice and involvement matter.
- **Support This Work**
Preservation Pennsylvania is a small nonprofit with a statewide mission. We do not receive ongoing government funding to do this advocacy. Every site we assist, every community we support, and every place we help bring to public attention is made possible by individuals who believe that Pennsylvania's historic places are worth fighting for.

When you give, you are directly supporting:

- Advocacy at critical moments when demolition is being considered
- Technical guidance that helps communities identify realistic preservation solutions
- Public awareness efforts that bring visibility to places at risk before it is too late



Photos from top: Moore-Irwin House, Credit: King of Prussia Historical Society; Union Lutheran Church, Credit: Blake Gifford; Moon Lorn; Springfield Cabin, Credit: Viv Demko

The five places in this year's *Pennsylvania At Risk* list are not lost, but they are vulnerable. With your help, preservation can be the outcome. Together, we can write a better ending for these places in peril.



At Risk Sites – 2026

- **DELAWARE COUNTY**
Painter's Folly, Chadds Ford
c. 1856–1857
- **MONTGOMERY COUNTY**
17 Elliott Avenue, Bryn Mawr
1900
- **NORTHAMPTON COUNTY**
Springfield Cabin, Hellertown
c. 1789–early 1800s
- **UNION COUNTY**
Slifer House, Lewisburg
1861 with later additions
- **YORK COUNTY**
Union Lutheran Church, York
Sunday School Building: 1899
Sanctuary: 1927

Thank you to everyone who stepped forward this year – sharing the stories of places that matter and bringing attention to those at risk.

Each nomination reinforces a fundamental truth: preservation begins with stewardship. Regular maintenance – repairing roofs, addressing water infiltration, securing and stabilizing buildings – is not optional. It is the single most effective way to prevent loss. Too often, buildings come into the hands of well-intentioned owners without a clear plan for long-term care. When maintenance is deferred, deterioration accelerates, costs rise, and demolition begins to appear inevitable rather than avoidable.

The sites on this year's *Pennsylvania At Risk* list reflect a common challenge. They are not without value – they are at a point where their future is being questioned. In many cases, they are seen as difficult, underused, or no longer aligned with current needs. But each one retains the capacity to

serve a purpose. These buildings were constructed to last, and with thoughtful planning, they can continue to contribute – to their communities, to local economies, and to the character of the places they define.

Preservation does not begin with large-scale projects. It begins locally, often with a single voice asking whether loss is the only option. The most effective preservation efforts start when individuals recognize what is at stake and act early – before conditions worsen and options narrow.

By identifying places at risk, sharing their stories, and engaging in the conversation about their future, you play a direct role in shaping outcomes. The decisions being made today will determine what remains.

Together, we can ensure that Pennsylvania's historic places are not simply remembered, but retained – used, valued, and carried forward.

Pennsylvania At Risk Updates



Lincoln Motor Court (Manns Choice, Bedford County)

At Risk Listing: 2014

Current Status: Saved; actively rehabilitated and operating

The property has transitioned to new owners who are actively investing in the site, maintaining its historic character while upgrading facilities for continued use.

Work is underway across the cabins and grounds, including recent renovations (such as upgrades to individual cottages completed in 2025) that balance modern amenities with preservation of historic fabric.

The motor court continues to operate as overnight lodging, offering a rare intact example of a historic tourist cabin court along the Lincoln Highway – one of the last of its kind still serving travelers.

Social media activity and on-site programming indicate an owner-led effort to build audience, enhance the visitor experience, and position the site as both a destination and a community gathering place.

Summary:

The Lincoln Motor Court represents a clear preservation success. Once at risk due to uncertain ownership, the property now benefits from dedicated stewards who are fully invested in its future. Active rehabilitation, continued operation, and strong public engagement demonstrate that preservation and economic viability can align. The site stands as a model for how legacy roadside resources can be revitalized through committed ownership and thoughtful reinvestment.



Carlisle Indian Industrial School (Carlisle, Cumberland County)

At Risk Listing: 2019

Current Status: Active stewardship, repatriation, and interpretation efforts underway

The “farmhouse,” the last remaining building directly associated with the school outside the barracks core, has been rehabilitated – representing a tangible preservation success and a focal point for ongoing interpretation.

The U.S. Army’s disinterment and return of Native children to their home communities remains ongoing, reflecting a long-term commitment to addressing the site’s history and its impact on Indigenous families.

The organization Shaking the Clouds is leading a major effort to digitize and reconnect archival records from Carlisle and related institutions with descendant indigenous communities, creating a secure, culturally informed digital resource.

Together, these efforts reflect a shift away from traditional preservation approaches toward a broader model centered on memory, access, and community-led interpretation.

Continued collaboration with Indigenous communities will shape the future of the site, including interpretation, access to records, and commemoration.

Summary:

The Carlisle Indian Industrial School site is evolving through three coordinated actions: preservation of the remaining historic structure, ongoing repatriation of children, and development of an Indigenous-led archival and access initiative. While much work remains, these efforts collectively represent a significant shift toward stewardship grounded in acknowledgment, access and healing.



William Penn High School (Harrisburg, Dauphin County)

At Risk Listing: 2025

Current Status: Approved for demolition

The Harrisburg School District has determined that the building will be demolished, concluding consideration of rehabilitation or reuse options. As with many large, long-vacant school buildings, deferred maintenance and rehabilitation costs were central factors in the decision.

Designed by Charles Howard Lloyd, the 1926

Neoclassical structure has been a longstanding landmark within the community and an important piece of Harrisburg’s educational and architectural history.

With demolition plans advancing, remaining opportunities are likely confined to documentation, salvage of architectural materials, or interpretation of the site’s history.

Summary:

The William Penn High School has reached a critical and largely irreversible stage. Despite its architectural significance and potential for reuse, the decision to demolish reflects the ongoing challenge of addressing large, deteriorated institutional buildings without sufficient resources or planning frameworks for preservation. The *At Risk* listing brought attention to the site, but in this case, was not enough to alter the outcome.



Postcard c. 1950



Left: Credit: Historic Harrisburg Association
Above Top: Credit: Google Earth
Above Bottom: Credit: Historic Harrisburg Association



Credit: King of Prussia Historical Society

Moore–Irwin House (Upper Merion Township, Montgomery County)

At Risk Listing: 2025

Current Status: Active community engagement; preservation planning needed

- **Municipal ownership with no defined reuse plan.** The property remains under the ownership of Upper Merion Township, but no formal plan for long-term use, rehabilitation or interpretation has been publicly advanced.
- **Condition concerns tied to vacancy.** As with many municipally owned historic resources without active use, the house faces risks associated with deferred maintenance, environmental exposure, and gradual deterioration.
- **Significance recognized, but path forward unclear.** The building’s layered history – from its mid-18th-century log core through later expansions, including work by Richardson Brognard Okie – positions it as an important local asset. However, recognition has not yet translated into a defined preservation strategy.
- **Public forum signals shift toward action.** In March 2026, local stakeholders convened a public forum, “Saving Moore–Irwin: What’s Next?,” focused on identifying viable paths forward. Preservation Pennsylvania Executive Director Mindy Gulden Crawford participated as a panelist, contributing statewide preservation perspective to discussions of reuse, funding and partnership opportunities.
- **Community advocacy remains active.** The forum and related outreach demonstrate sustained local engagement and interest in securing a future for the property, with increasing focus on implementation rather than awareness.
- **Next steps.** Progress will depend on the township initiating a feasibility assessment, identifying partners, and committing resources toward stabilization and reuse planning.



Credit: King of Prussia Historical Society

Summary:

The Moore–Irwin House has moved beyond initial recognition of risk into an active – but still informal – planning phase shaped by community advocacy and professional input. Public engagement, including the March 2026 forum, reflects growing momentum. However, without a defined township-led strategy or committed investment, the property remains vulnerable to continued deterioration. The immediate need is to convert interest and discussion into a funded, actionable preservation plan.



Credit: Pete Woodall

Police Administration Building (The Roundhouse) (Philadelphia, Philadelphia County)

At Risk Listing: 2025

Current Status: Vacant and threatened with demolition

- **No formal action from the City.** The City of Philadelphia has not yet issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the property, and no redevelopment pathway has been publicly defined.
- **National Register nomination in progress.** Efforts to secure recognition through a National Register nomination are ongoing, which could strengthen the case for preservation but have not yet resulted in formal designation.
- **Building remains vacant.** Continued vacancy leaves the structure vulnerable to deterioration and reinforces the risk that demolition may be advanced as a default option in the absence of a reuse strategy.
- **Design competition demonstrates reuse potential.** A conceptual design competition held in fall 2025 generated more than 30 adaptive reuse proposals, illustrating a wide range of viable approaches to reimagining the building.
- **Strong professional and public engagement.** A related symposium drew over 150 attendees, signaling substantial interest from the design, preservation, and planning communities in finding a preservation-based solution.
- **Next steps.** Progress depends on the City initiating a formal disposition process, including issuance of an RFP and evaluation of reuse scenarios that incorporate the building's architectural and cultural significance.

Summary:

The Roundhouse remains in a holding pattern – vacant, publicly owned, and without a defined path forward. However, the volume of design proposals and strong attendance at the symposium demonstrate clear market and professional interest in adaptive reuse. The critical issue is not a lack of ideas, but the absence of municipal action to translate that interest into a formal redevelopment process. Until that occurs, the building remains at risk.

Moon Lorn (Prosperity, Washington County)

At Risk Listing: 2017

Current Status: Saved; rehabilitated and in active use



The property was acquired by CONSOL Energy in 2014 for anticipated longwall mining operations, placing the site at significant risk. That threat did not materialize, and the company ultimately divested the property, allowing it to return to private ownership.

Under new ownership, the house has undergone rehabilitation that stabilizes the structure while retaining its historic character and architectural features.

The property is now available for short-term rental, providing an income-generating use that supports ongoing maintenance and long-term preservation.

Active ownership and use have addressed the vacancy concerns that once threatened the property and now provide a viable path forward.

Designed by Malcolm Parcell, Moon Lorn remains a distinctive and rare example of early 20th-century residential design in Pennsylvania.

Summary:

Moon Lorn represents a strong preservation success. Once at risk due to potential mining activity, the property's transfer to committed private ownership enabled both its rehabilitation and a sustainable new use. Its continued care and adaptation demonstrate how even highly threatened properties can be preserved when ownership, investment, and a viable use align.

Hanover Theater (Hanover, York County)

At Risk Listing: 2011

Current Status: Saved; planning for rehabilitation and adaptive reuse underway



The building was purchased by the Hanover Economic Development Corporation (HEDC), a nonprofit organization, using donated funds – removing the immediate threat to the property.

HEDC is currently working with an architect to develop plans for the building's rehabilitation, addressing both structural needs and future functionality.

The project envisions conversion of the historic theater into office, meeting and event space, providing a viable long-term use. The acquisition and ongoing planning reflect strong local commitment to retaining the building as a community asset.

Advancement of design, financing and construction phases will determine the timeline for full rehabilitation and occupancy.

Summary:

The Hanover Theater represents a successful preservation intervention at a critical moment. Acquisition by a nonprofit entity stabilized the building and created a path forward. While rehabilitation is still in the planning stage, the combination of community support, organizational leadership, and a defined reuse strategy positions the project for long-term success.



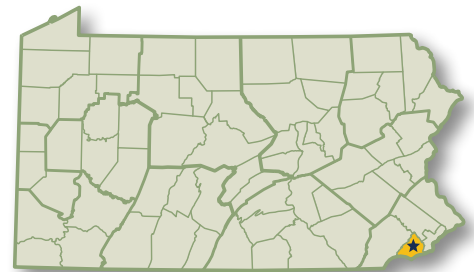
East elevation of building.
Credit: Ed Wortek

Painter's Folly

Rising prominently above Baltimore Pike, Painter's Folly is one of the most recognizable and culturally significant historic properties in the Brandywine Valley.

Built in the mid 19th century for local farmer Samuel Painter, the house immediately stood apart for its scale and architectural ambition. Its Italianate design – with a hipped roof, wide overhanging eaves supported by decorative brackets, tall windows, and a distinctive rooftop belvedere – was a striking departure from the restrained Quaker landscape that surrounded it. Painter was heavily influenced by the “Southern Mansion” designs in Philadelphia architect Samuel Sloan’s book, *The Model Architect* (1852). The building’s boldness earned it the name “Painter’s Folly,” a label that has endured but now reflects not excess, but distinction.

Beyond its architectural presence, Painter’s Folly holds an extraordinary place in American cultural history. Situated on land associated with the Battle of Brandywine, the property bridges Revolutionary history and artistic legacy. From 1898 to 1903, it served as the summer home and teaching site of renowned illustrator Howard Pyle, whose work and instruction shaped what



**1421 BALTIMORE PIKE, CHADDS FORD
DELAWARE COUNTY**

Year Built: c. 1856–1857

Style: Italianate

became known as the Brandywine School of Art. Here, Pyle trained a generation of influential artists, including N. C. Wyeth, Jessie Willcox Smith, and Maxfield Parrish, establishing Chadds Ford as a center of American illustration. The house later continued this artistic lineage through its association with Andrew Wyeth, who used the property as a studio for decades, producing

numerous works inspired by its interiors, its setting, and its atmosphere. Painter's Folly is not simply a historic structure – it is a place where American art was created, taught, and continuously reinterpreted across generations.

Despite this significance, the future of Painter's Folly is uncertain. Owned by Chadds Ford Township since 2018, the property faces a convergence of threats, including ongoing physical deterioration, unclear long-term stewardship, and the potential for sale or alteration under insufficient preservation protections. While the Township has explored uses such as artist studios and public programming, these efforts have been discontinued, and maintenance needs remain insufficiently addressed. At the same time, proposals for limited façade easements – potentially protecting only portions of the exterior – raise serious concerns about the long-term preservation of both the building and its historically significant interior spaces.

The uncertainty surrounding Painter's Folly has galvanized a broad coalition of advocates, including local historians, preservation organizations, and the Painter's Folly Preservation Alliance. These stakeholders are working to identify a viable preservation path, one that balances public interest, financial sustainability, and the building's national significance. Proposed solutions include establishing a long-term preservation partner, pursuing a ground lease with clear rehabilitation standards, and implementing comprehensive easements that protect both exterior and interior features.

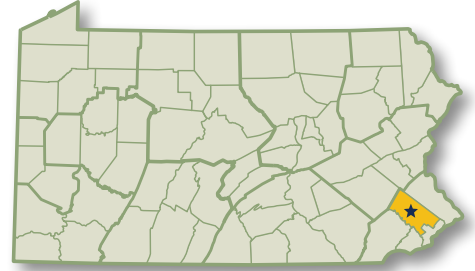
The inclusion of Painter's Folly on *Pennsylvania At Risk* highlights a critical moment of decision. This is a property of national cultural importance, deeply tied to the identity of the Brandywine Valley and to the broader story of American art. Its loss – or even incremental erosion through insensitive alteration – would represent an irreplaceable gap in that story. With thoughtful planning, strong partnerships, and a clear commitment to stewardship, Painter's Folly can continue to serve not only as a landmark on the landscape, but as a living connection to the artistic and historical legacy that defines this region.



Top: Second floor staircase. Credit: Ed Wordeck
Middle: Rear north wing looking southeast. Credit: Ed Wordeck
Bottom: First floor front parlor. Credit: Emma Leuschner



Credit: Arielle Harris



**17 ELLIOTT AVENUE, BRYN MAWR
MONTGOMERY COUNTY**

Year Built: 1900
Architect: William Lightfoot Price
Style: Arts & Crafts

17 Elliott Avenue

Tucked along a modest residential street just off Lancaster Avenue, 17 Elliott Avenue is a rare and remarkably intact example of early Arts & Crafts architecture by one of the Philadelphia region’s most influential designers, William Lightfoot Price.

Built in 1900, the house reflects a pivotal moment in American domestic architecture, when designers began to move away from rigid historic styles toward more expressive, regionally grounded forms. Constructed of Wissahickon schist with pebble dash, timbering, and a complex arrangement of towers, gables and porches, the house embodies Price’s emerging architectural philosophy – one that would later define his nationally significant work at Rose Valley.

The home is equally notable for its association with innovation and independence at the turn of the 20th century. Commissioned by Helen Sleeper Pearson, a mathematician and educator, the house was designed to meet the needs of a modern professional woman. Most strikingly, it incorporates a purpose-built attached “automobile stable,” an exceedingly rare feature at a time when car ownership was still in its infancy. This element may represent one of the earliest attached residential garages in the Philadelphia region, reflecting both technological foresight and the evolving patterns of suburban life.

The property also carries significant social and cultural meaning through its long-term association with Pearson and her partner, Dr. Helen Dean King, a pioneering biologist at the Wistar Institute. For more than four decades, the two women shared the home, forming an independent household at a time when such arrangements were rarely documented or preserved. Their lives intersected with major developments

in education and science – Pearson as an educator of young women and King as a researcher whose work on standardized laboratory rats shaped biomedical science nationwide. Together, their presence situates 17 Elliott Avenue within broader narratives of women’s professional advancement and underrecognized LGBTQ-adjacent history in the early 20th century.

Despite its architectural and cultural significance, the future of 17 Elliott Avenue is increasingly uncertain. The property has suffered from long-term deferred maintenance, and its setting has been steadily compromised by the expansion of adjacent utility facilities. Nearby historic homes have already been demolished, replaced with incompatible institutional development, and similar pressure now threatens this site. The current owner has expressed interest in selling the property to a neighboring utility company, raising the very real possibility of demolition and the loss of an irreplaceable historic resource.

Efforts to secure local historic designation have thus far been unsuccessful, despite strong



Credit: Arielle Harris

advocacy and public support. While the property has been determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, the absence of local protection leaves it vulnerable at a critical moment. Preservation advocates, including historians and members of the community, continue to work toward a solution that would transfer the property to a preservation-minded owner and stabilize its condition before further deterioration occurs.

The inclusion of 17 Elliott Avenue on *Pennsylvania At Risk* underscores both its significance and its urgency. This is not simply a well-designed house – it is a place where architecture, technology and social history converge in a way that is increasingly rare. Its loss would erase an important chapter in the story of the Main Line, the evolution of suburban life, and the contributions of women whose lives and work have too often gone unrecognized. With thoughtful intervention and renewed attention, this property has the potential to be preserved not only as a building, but as a powerful and tangible record of innovation, independence and place.



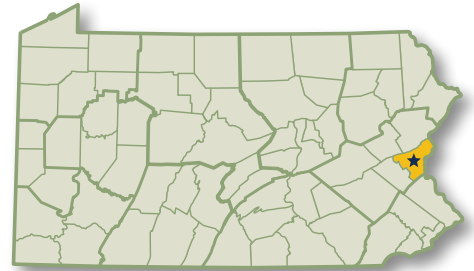
Credit: Arielle Harris

Springfield Cabin

Set within a quiet rural landscape in Lower Saucon Township, the Springfield Cabin stands as a rare and remarkably intact example of early settler life in Pennsylvania.

Modest in scale yet rich in meaning, this log-and-stone structure reflects the resourcefulness and building traditions of the region’s earliest European inhabitants. Its simple form – two one-story sections joined under a shared roofline, with an off-center chimney characteristic of Germanic construction – offers a tangible connection to the earliest period of settlement in the Lehigh Valley. Unlike many surviving early buildings that were absorbed into later expansions, the Springfield Cabin remains a stand-alone structure, preserving its primitive form and original relationship to the surrounding landscape.

The origins of the property trace back to the mid 18th century, when land warrants were issued to early settlers under the Penn family. By 1789, William Graver had secured a patent for the land and named the property “Springfield,” likely in reference to the nearby natural spring that continues to define the site. The cabin itself is widely believed



**LOWER SAUCON ROAD, HELLERTOWN
NORTHAMPTON COUNTY**

Date of Origin: c. 1789–early 1800s
Style: Vernacular log and stone construction



Various views of the cabin. Credit: Viv Demko

to date to this early period, although some architectural analysis suggests a slightly later construction in the early 19th century. Over time, the property evolved into a working farm, passing through several families before being acquired by the Borough of Hellertown in 1944 as part of a larger effort to secure water resources for the community. Notably, even as other farm structures were removed, the cabin was recognized for its historical importance and deliberately retained. Local officials as early as the 1960s identified it as a significant artifact of early settlement, preserving it “as a monument to that hearty breed of pioneers” who shaped the region.

Today, the Springfield Cabin faces a more precarious future. Vacant and increasingly vulnerable, the structure is experiencing ongoing deterioration, with a failing roof posing the most immediate threat. Temporary measures, including tarping, have been employed, but these are not sustainable solutions and leave the building exposed to weather and vandalism. The Hellertown Water Authority, which owns the property, has expressed openness to preservation but has also made clear that, without a viable and organized plan for rehabilitation, demolition may become the most practical course of action.

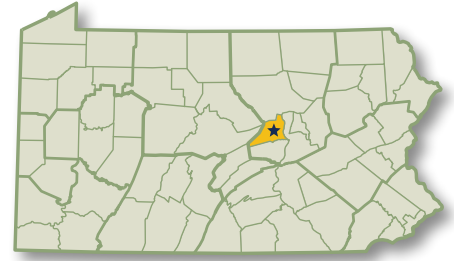
Encouragingly, a group of local advocates and historians has begun to mobilize around the cabin’s preservation. A restoration strategy is already in development, outlining a phased approach that begins with stabilizing the structure – particularly replacing the roof – and progresses toward full restoration and interpretation as a public historic site. The long-term vision is to return the cabin to its early appearance and use it as an educational resource, offering scheduled public access, school programs, and community events that interpret the lives of the region’s first settlers. This effort represents a critical opportunity: not only to save a rare surviving structure, but to create a place where history can be experienced in its most immediate and human scale.

The listing of the Springfield Cabin on *Pennsylvania At Risk* underscores both its significance and its urgency. This is not simply a question of saving a building – it is about preserving a direct link to the earliest chapter of settlement in the Lehigh Valley. Structures like this are increasingly rare, and once lost, they cannot be replaced. With coordinated action, strategic investment, and community support, the Springfield Cabin can move from vulnerability to visibility – serving once again as a meaningful and accessible reminder of Pennsylvania’s earliest stories.



Slifer House

UPDATE: Following notification of the property’s inclusion on the 2026 *Pennsylvania At Risk* list, the current owner immediately applied for and received a demolition permit for the Slifer House. The timing of this action underscores the urgency of the threat facing the property and highlights the increasingly narrow window for meaningful community discussion, advocacy and exploration of preservation alternatives. While the future of the house remains uncertain, its listing reflects both its architectural and historical significance and the importance of documenting places at risk before they are lost.



**80 MAGNOLIA DRIVE, LEWISBURG
UNION COUNTY**

Year Built: 1861 (with later alterations)
Architect: Samuel Sloan
Style: Italianate/Gothic Revival

Set on a rise overlooking the Susquehanna River, the Slifer House is a striking and highly intact example of a mid-19th-century Victorian country estate.

Designed in 1861 by prominent Philadelphia architect Samuel Sloan, the house reflects a sophisticated blending of architectural styles and was recognized even in its own time for its design, appearing in Godey’s *Lady’s Book* as a model “picturesque villa.” Its commanding presence, complex roofline, prominent tower, and

expansive porches convey both the ambition of its original owner and the architectural ideals of the period.

The house was built for Eli Slifer, a prominent businessman, industrialist, and political figure who served as Pennsylvania’s Secretary of the Commonwealth during the Civil War.



Credit: Slifer_House_Co_PA



Credit: Slifer_House_Co_PA

The residence functioned as the centerpiece of a 280-acre farm and orchard, representing both personal success and the broader economic development of the region. Over time, the property evolved in use – serving as an institutional facility in the early 20th century – but it retains a remarkable degree of architectural integrity. Despite minor alterations, the building continues to convey its original design intent and craftsmanship, standing today as one of the most architecturally significant historic residences in the Lewisburg area.

Today, however, that continuity is under threat. The Slifer House faces the very real possibility of demolition as part of redevelopment pressure in an area where land value increasingly outweighs the perceived value of existing structures. As is often the case with properties of this scale, the absence of formal designation or strong regulatory protection leaves it particularly vulnerable.

The potential removal of the Slifer House also raises broader concerns about the cumulative impact of such decisions. When buildings of this type are lost, the result is not just the disappearance of an individual structure, but the gradual erosion of neighborhood character, scale,

and historical coherence. Replacement development – often larger in scale and inconsistent in form – can fundamentally alter the sense of place that defines communities like Lewisburg.

Local awareness and advocacy will be critical in determining the future of this property. The Slifer House presents an opportunity to consider how smaller, vernacular historic resources fit into preservation efforts – particularly in communities experiencing growth and change. Its preservation does not require monumental intervention, but rather recognition of its role within a broader historic landscape.

Listing the Slifer House on *Pennsylvania At Risk* highlights this important moment. It underscores the need to look beyond landmark buildings and consider the everyday structures that collectively tell the story of a place. With thoughtful planning and community engagement, there is an opportunity to retain this connection to Lewisburg's past while accommodating its future. Without that intervention, the loss of the Slifer House would mark another incremental but meaningful step in the quiet disappearance of the town's historic fabric.



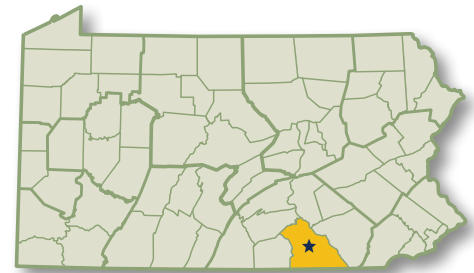
Sanctuary building, north (main) facade.
Credit: Blake Gifford

Union Lutheran Church

Commanding a prominent position along West Market Street, Union Lutheran Church is one of the most recognizable and architecturally significant religious landmarks in the City of York.

Rising above the surrounding neighborhood, its approximately 100-foot tower anchors the western vista of the city’s historic core and serves as a defining feature of York’s skyline. The church complex – comprised of a 1927 Gothic Revival sanctuary and an 1899 Romanesque Revival Sunday school building – embodies both architectural distinction and the evolving role of religious institutions as centers of worship, education, and community life.

The sanctuary building, executed in rusticated granite with a slate roof, represents the final commissioned work of J. A. Dempwolf, one of York’s most influential architects. Designed near the end of his career, the building stands as a culminating expression of his ecclesiastical work, with its twin towers, rose window, pointed arches, and richly detailed stonework reflecting a mature and confident architectural vision. Its interior – defined by a soaring, barrel-vaulted ceiling supported by heavy timber trusses – creates a dramatic and cohesive sacred space that underscores the building’s craftsmanship and scale.



**408 WEST MARKET STREET, YORK
YORK COUNTY**

Date of Origin: Sunday school building: 1899; sanctuary: 1927
Architects: J. A. Dempwolf (sanctuary); B. F. Willis (Sunday school building)

Style: Gothic Revival/ Romanesque Revival

Complementing the sanctuary is the earlier Sunday school building, designed by B. F. Willis and constructed in 1899. Its Romanesque Revival design, characterized by red brick construction, arched openings, and a slate roof, reflects a broader national trend in religious architecture that expanded church campuses to include educational and social functions. Notably, the building's design was published in *American Architect and Building News*, signaling recognition beyond the local level. Together, the two structures form a cohesive institutional complex that illustrates the multifaceted role churches played in shaping urban communities at the turn of the 20th century.

Beyond architecture, Union Lutheran Church holds deep cultural significance within York. For generations, it has served as a place of worship, gathering and service – hosting weddings, funerals, holiday celebrations, concerts, and outreach programs. Its continued role in serving vulnerable populations, including those experiencing housing instability, reinforces its relevance as both a historic and actively engaged community institution. The church is not simply a landmark – it is a place embedded in the lived experience and collective memory of the city.

Despite this significance, the site faces an immediate and credible threat of demolition. Confronted with mounting deferred maintenance costs – including roof repairs, masonry stabilization, stained glass conservation, and outdated systems, the current congregation has determined that long-term stewardship may not be financially sustainable. This has led to active exploration of demolition and redevelopment. A recent proposal for demolition and new



Sunday school building, main entrance. Credit: Blake Gifford

construction was withdrawn after initial review by HARB indicated that approval for demolition was unlikely. While this represents a temporary reprieve, it does not address the fundamental challenges facing the property, and the long-term threat to the church remains.

At the same time, the situation presents a meaningful opportunity. The buildings remain structurally sound, occupied, and in active use – conditions that position them well for adaptive reuse or continued community function. Local advocates, preservation professionals, and engaged residents have begun to organize in response, exploring alternatives that could stabilize the property, address financial challenges, and retain the building's architectural and cultural value. Potential solutions include identifying funding sources, establishing preservation partnerships, and developing reuse strategies that align with both community needs and long-term sustainability.

The inclusion of Union Lutheran Church on *Pennsylvania At Risk* highlights a pivotal moment – not only for this site, but for historic religious properties across the Commonwealth. The pressures facing this congregation are not unique, and the outcome here has the potential to inform broader approaches to preservation, reuse and stewardship. The loss of Union Lutheran Church would remove a defining element of York's historic district, diminishing both its architectural integrity and its cultural continuity. With coordinated action, strategic investment, and a commitment to exploring viable alternatives, there remains a clear path to preserving this landmark as an active and meaningful part of the city's future.



Sanctuary building, south (rear) facade. Credit: Blake Gifford

How to Stay Informed

As these situations develop, we'll share updates via our website, e-news and social media. We'll let you know how you can become involved and take action for the preservation of these places and all of the others listed on *Pennsylvania At Risk!*

♥ Follow us on Facebook and Instagram for updates, advocacy alerts, and preservation events.

♥ Sign up for our monthly e-news at www.preservationpa.org (in the footer) and receive information about grant funding, advocacy alerts, and upcoming events. Each year, we put out a call for nominations for *Pennsylvania At Risk* and the Pennsylvania Historic Preservation Awards.

♥ Donate to Preservation Pennsylvania or become a member to benefit our 2026-2027 work with these *At Risk* sites.

♥ Be a good citizen. Participate in your local government. Attend local municipal meetings. Research electoral candidates and vote.

If you're working to save a historic building in your community, visit www.preservationpa.org/resources/expertise and download our guide, "How to Protect and Preserve the Historic Places That Matter to You."



Moore-Irwin House, Upper Merion Township, Montgomery County. Credit: King of Prussia Historical Society

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