



PRESERVING PENNSYLVANIA

The Newsletter Dedicated to Preserving Pennsylvania's Historic Places

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Thank you to each of our sponsors for their support of our biggest fundraiser event of the year! You've helped make certain that anyone in Pennsylvania, from Abbottstown to Zelienople, can call Preservation Pennsylvania for help in saving the places they love.

**THURSDAY
OCTOBER 24
ZEMBO SHRINE
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania**

2024 AWARD REVIEW COMMITTEE

Each year, the Pennsylvania Historic Preservation Awards nominations that are submitted by the public are evaluated and discussed by an independent panel of preservation professionals, who then select the award recipients.

We'd like to thank this year's reviewers for graciously offering to share their time and expertise:

Karen Arnold, Pennsylvania State Historic Preservation Office

Michael J. Cuddy, TranSystems, Preservation Pennsylvania Board of Directors

Katherine Dowdell, Farragut Street Architects

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MISSION STATEMENT

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

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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 hosts the Pennsylvania Historic Preservation Awards and publishes an annual list of endangered properties, *Pennsylvania At Risk*. Preservation Pennsylvania also participates in educational programs and advocacy initiatives, conducts special projects, and offers assistance to people throughout the commonwealth.

Thank you to our sponsors, members, donors and all the passionate preservationists who support our work!

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Cover image: James A. Hill (left) helps unveil the newly restored Peabody Memorial to Soldiers at a ceremony that took place at 11 a.m. on May 30, 2024, exactly 100 years to the hour that it was originally dedicated in 1924. (Photo credit: Jason Cohn, Pittsburgh Public Schools)



FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Our work at Preservation Pennsylvania is to empower the people who reach out to us with questions or preservation challenges.

Anyone who has worked to rescue a treasured historic place has likely experienced the myriad ups and downs of trying to “do preservation.” It can take years. It is often a contest of Goliath vs. David (or a Big Deal Developer vs. a group of concerned neighbors). It can throw expensive curveballs. It can feel like you’re getting nowhere. Most pointedly, it does not always end in success.

All the more reason, then, to take the opportunity to gather and celebrate the people who have succeeded in their efforts to save buildings, bridges, structures and sites with immense history, meaning and significance.

The annual Pennsylvania Historic Preservation Awards are when we say “thank you” and “well done” to the people who have sacrificed, persevered, and rallied support around saving a beloved local landmark. Let us, Pennsylvania’s statewide preservation community, be inspired by their passion and honor their remarkable achievements.

This year, it’s especially heartening to see yet another example of one of our *Pennsylvania At Risk*-listed properties receiving a preservation award. A special congratulations to the Mt. Tabor Preservation Project for all they have achieved! The group’s important work ensures that the community’s almost-forgotten AME church will be able to tell its story for future generations.

Our work at Preservation Pennsylvania is to empower the people who reach out to us with questions or preservation challenges. To play matchmaker and find the information or resources that will make a difference. To advocate for preservation-friendly policies at the local, state and federal levels. To work with partners and build a groundswell of statewide support for the practice and positive impacts of historic preservation. Together, with your support, we will continue to make a difference and serve as an important bulwark of preservation.

Mindy Gulden Crawford, Executive Director

We congratulate the 2024 recipients of the Pennsylvania Historic Preservation Awards!

HONOR AWARDS

— F. OTTO HAAS AWARD —

For outstanding individual achievements in historic preservation

BARBARA BARKSDALE
(DAUPHIN COUNTY)

— HENRY A. JORDAN AWARD —

For outstanding historic preservation efforts at the local level

CHARLENE DONCHEZ MOWERS
(NORTHAMPTON COUNTY)

— CHAIRPERSON'S AWARD —

For demonstrated leadership in historic preservation

ZEMBO SHRINE
(DAUPHIN COUNTY)

SPECIAL FOCUS AWARD

— MODJESKI AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN TRANSPORTATION DESIGN, PRESERVATION, AND ARCHAEOLOGY —

For an exceptional effort within the transportation field that results in an improvement in transportation systems while respecting and preserving the best practices of compatible design and historic preservation principles

THE CANTINI MOSAICS SECTION 106 CONSULTING PARTIES

(ALLEGHENY COUNTY)

LEADERSHIP AWARDS

— EMERGENCY RESPONSE —

In recognition of quick action to repair and/or preserve a historic resource after a threat or catastrophic event, such as fire, flooding, or extreme weather.

**LAUREL HILL EMERGENCY
BRIDGE REPAIR**
(PHILADELPHIA COUNTY)

— GRASSROOTS ADVOCACY —

In recognition of innovative examples of assistance that helped communities protect and preserve the historic places that matter to them.

JAMES A. HILL
(ALLEGHENY COUNTY)
**UNION COUNTY HISTORICAL
SOCIETY GALLERY & MUSEUM
(FORMER PACKWOOD HOUSE)**
(UNION COUNTY)

— PUBLIC IMPACT —

For excellence in using a historic building as a catalyst to enrich a community. Includes examples of small business or adaptive reuse.

**WCR CENTER FOR THE ARTS
(FORMER WOMEN'S CLUB
OF READING)**
(BERKS COUNTY)
WEST SHORE THEATRE
(CUMBERLAND COUNTY)

CONSTRUCTION PROJECT AWARDS – REHABILITATION

**A & INDIANA
(FORMER HOYLE,
HARRISON & KAYE
TEXTILE MILL)**
(PHILADELPHIA COUNTY)

**BERKS COUNTY TRUST
COMPANY BUILDING**
(BERKS COUNTY)

LAROS SILK MILL
(NORTHAMPTON COUNTY)

**MOUNT CARBON
BOWSTRING TRUSS BRIDGE**
(SCHUYLKILL COUNTY)

**MT. TABOR PRESERVATION
PROJECT**
(CUMBERLAND COUNTY)

**ROBERT N. C. NIX, SR.
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(PHILADELPHIA COUNTY)

**GENERAL WILLIAM
THOMPSON HOUSE**
(CUMBERLAND COUNTY)

WOODFORD MANSION
(PHILADELPHIA COUNTY)



F. OTTO HAAS AWARD

For outstanding individual achievements in historic preservation

HONOR AWARD • Sponsored by A. Roy Smith



BARBARA BARKSDALE

(DAUPHIN COUNTY)

The seeds of Barbara Barksdale's future achievements were planted in her childhood, during family cemetery visits to pay their respects. Decades later, she returned to what she thought was a "little corner cemetery" in Swatara Township to find the landscape more "rustic" and overgrown than she remembered. As she began her efforts to clear brush, preserve grave markers, and rally community support, she was unaware that she was embarking on a passion project that would take decades and result in the preservation of the 3.5-acre Midland Cemetery.

Midland Cemetery, established in 1795 as the cemetery of a nearby farm and officially named in 1877, is the resting place of enslaved people, freed people, citizens, civic leaders, and steelworkers. As a historian with a personal connection to the site, she worked to ensure the people and the place were not forgotten. Her efforts prevented development on the condemned property and resulted in a listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

She has expanded that work statewide as a founding member of Pennsylvania Hallowed Grounds, a nonprofit organization that works to educate, connect and inspire stewards of African American cemeteries. The organization documents African American cemeteries and burial grounds across the state, offers free meetings where stewards are able to network and share challenges and success stories, and recently launched a pilot grant program that offered cemetery stewards a customized preservation plan and funded a capstone volunteer event to advance local preservation efforts.

"Barbara's passion and perseverance rescued the Midland Cemetery from oblivion and helped aid the preservation of countless African American cemeteries across the Commonwealth," notes Mindy Crawford, Executive Director of Preservation Pennsylvania, a partner on the African American Cemetery Stewards Network project. "I have learned so much from working with her; she's inspiring!"



Barbara Barksdale rediscovered and reclaimed Midland Cemetery beginning in 1993. As a founding member of Pennsylvania Hallowed Grounds, her legacy as an advocate for African American cemetery preservation and history extends beyond Midland's boundaries.



HENRY A. JORDAN AWARD

For outstanding historic preservation efforts at the local level

HONOR AWARD • Sponsored by Mrs. Henry A. Jordan



CHARLENE DONCHEZ MOWERS

(NORTHAMPTON COUNTY)

For almost 30 years, Bethlehem native Charlene Donchez Mowers has been involved in preserving and interpreting the local history of Bethlehem. She is widely known for her efforts in gaining National Historic Landmark District status for Historic Moravian Bethlehem and, following that designation, for her decades of tireless work toward a successful nomination of Historic Moravian Bethlehem to the World Heritage List. In July 2024, UNESCO announced Moravian Church Settlements: Bethlehem as the 26th World Heritage site in the United States, joining a distinguished roster that includes the Statue of Liberty, the Grand Canyon, and Independence Hall.

She served for more than two decades as the energetic president of Historic Bethlehem Museums & Sites (HBMS), a not-for-profit that “brings to life three centuries of Bethlehem history.” HBMS manages 20 historic sites, seven gardens, five ruins, and an orchard located on approximately 20 acres in the heart of the city. The organization holds in excess of 70,000 artifacts, 10,000 photographs, archival documents, archaeological material, and a research library, now housed in a \$2.7 million Collections Resource Center addition that was completed during Charlene’s tenure. More than 50,000 visitors come to Bethlehem annually to see the historic sites and participate in HBMS community events.

Under Charlene’s guidance, several significant restoration projects were completed, new student learning centers were created, HBMS became an affiliate of the Smithsonian Institution, and the organization introduced an 80-stop Historic Bethlehem Heritage Trail, allowing visitors to experience a narrated tour of the history of Bethlehem via cell phone.

Charlene is a consummate professional, always eager to be a part of telling the story of Bethlehem’s history. She is equally comfortable deep in an archive doing research or welcoming visitors to Bethlehem museums or local festival days. Her enthusiasm is contagious. Her work has protected and preserved places that tell important stories and contributed to the growth of tourism and the local economy in Bethlehem.

Bethlehem’s Moravian Church Settlement was named a World Heritage site in 2024, thanks to the intrepid work of Charlene Donchez Mowers (bottom). Among Bethlehem’s many charms, visitors may see the historic Bell House and Sanctuary buildings (top, photo credit: Craig Larimer) and Single Sisters House (middle, photo credit: Durston Saylor).



CHAIRPERSON'S AWARD

For demonstrated leadership in historic preservation
HONOR AWARD



ZEMBO SHRINE

(DAUPHIN COUNTY)

HONORING

Zembo Shriners / Gina M. Douty, Historic Preservation Consulting, LLC / Historic Harrisburg Association

For nearly a century, the majestic Zembo Shrine has been home to the local organization of the Ancient Arabic Order of Nobles of the Mystic Shrine, known today as Shriners International. For years, their Harrisburg headquarters has hosted celebrities and welcomed community events such as graduations and fundraising galas. This year, the 76th annual Zembo Shrine Circus ran for eight performances in the arena-sized auditorium.

The building was designed by Harrisburg native Charles Howard Lloyd. The prolific architect is credited with numerous schools, notable residences, and several units of the Harrisburg State Hospital, but he is most revered for the Zembo Mosque. The building was constructed between 1928 and 1930, styled with Moroccan and Islamic motifs, and adorned with elaborate tile work throughout the interior.

As membership declined over time, the organization explored selling the building (for less than \$1 million) to an Oklahoma entrepreneur specializing in transforming former Masonic temples into public entertainment venues. When the deal fell through, members voted in 2022 to retain and restore the building.

Achieving National Register status was seen as a priority since the federal designation would make Zembo eligible for grants needed to fund restoration and system upgrades. Historic Harrisburg Association offered guidance and brought in consultant Gina M. Douty to prepare the nomination.

The team celebrated in February 2024 when the building was successfully listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Planning is now underway for building improvements. "Just talking to people who aren't even Shriners, I've seen what Zembo has meant to them," said Mike Smith, past Potentate. "People love Zembo and want it to stay in our hands."

The Zembo Shrine's elaborate interiors play host to numerous events throughout the year. The decorative tile was sourced from Spain.



MODJESKI AWARD

For excellence in transportation design, preservation and archaeology

SPECIAL FOCUS AWARD • Sponsored by Modjeski and Masters



THE CANTINI MOSAICS SECTION 106 CONSULTING PARTIES

(ALLEGHENY COUNTY)

In 2015, the Pittsburgh Sports & Exhibition Authority received a federal Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grant to design and build a park (the Cap) over I-579 to reconnect the Hill District and Downtown. Plans called for the closure and burial of a pedestrian tunnel containing 28 mosaic panels created by artist Virgil Cantini (1919-2009). Faced with the potential loss of a significant public artwork, a group of 13 individuals combined into the Section 106 Consulting Parties for the Cap Project.

The Consulting Parties initially contributed the knowledge and scholarship to determine the Cantini Mosaics eligibility for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. After assisting in the development of a Programmatic Agreement, the Consulting Parties continued to contribute and advise in the identification of a new site and the development of designs for the reinstallation. A core group of four members were especially helpful in the process: Lisa Cantini Seguin, daughter of the artist; Melissa Marinaro, Director of the Italian American Program at the Heinz History Center; Brittany Reilly, on behalf of Preservation Pittsburgh; and Laura Ricketts, local historian and historic preservation advocate.

Construction preparation of the reinstallation site began in December 2023, and by February 2024, the mosaics, newly cleaned and gleaming, were put on display in the Steel Plaza T Station, enhanced with interpretive panels. An event organized by the Consulting Parties featured a panel discussion that highlighted Virgil Cantini, the context of the Cantini Mosaics, and the consultation process that led to the successful preservation of the artwork.

The Cantini Mosaics celebration at the Heinz History Center featured a panel discussion of Cantini's life and artwork, the historic context of the pedestrian tunnel containing the mosaics, and the process by which the Cantini Mosaics were saved. Panel participants (l to r): Mark Young, Brittany Reilly, Laura Ricketts, Anthony Cavalline, Lisa Cantini Seguin, Melissa Marinaro (left, photo credit: Dana Cress). Detail of mosaic panel with signature plaque (right, photo credit: Laura Ricketts)

HONORING

City of Pittsburgh / PennDOT District 11 / Federal Highway Administration / Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission / Lisa Cantini Seguin, daughter of artist Virgil Cantini / Melissa Marinaro, Director of the Italian American Program at the Heinz History Center / Brittany Reilly, Preservation Pittsburgh Modern Committee / Laura Ricketts, local historian and historic preservation advocate / Jesse Belfast, local historian and historic preservation advocate / Matthew Craig, Young Preservationists Association / Matthew Falcone, Preservation Pittsburgh / Lisa Haabestad, Pfaffmann + Associates / Sallyann Kluz and Derek Reese, Office for Public Art (now Shiftworks Community + Public Arts Pittsburgh) / Rob Pfaffmann, Pfaffmann + Associates / Sarah Minnaert, Tony Cavalline, and Sarah Quinn, City of Pittsburgh Department of City Planning / Jeff Slack, Time & Place, LLC / Will Zavala, University of Pittsburgh

MOSAICS PROJECT

E. Holdings, Inc. / SB Thomas & Associates, Inc. / Landmarks SGA, LLC / McKay Lodge Art Conservation Laboratory / Wyatt Incorporated / Sargent Electric Company

WHAT IS SECTION 106?

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 requires federal agencies to consider the effects on historic properties of projects they carry out, assist, fund, permit, license, or approve throughout the country. If a federal or federally assisted project has the potential to affect historic properties, a Section 106 review will take place.

Section 106 gives the ACHP, interested parties, and the public the chance to weigh in on these matters before a final decision is made. This process is an important tool for citizens to lend their voice in protecting and maintaining historic properties in their communities.

— Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP)



EMERGENCY RESPONSE

LEADERSHIP AWARD • In recognition of quick action to repair and/or preserve a historic resource after a threat or catastrophic event, such as fire, flooding, or extreme weather.



LAUREL HILL EMERGENCY BRIDGE REPAIR

3822 Ridge Avenue, Philadelphia

(PHILADELPHIA COUNTY)

HONORING

Laurel Hill Cemetery / TranSystems / Loftus Construction

The National Historic Landmark Laurel Hill Cemetery, founded in 1836, is known for its beautiful landscape and significant cultural heritage. The cemetery's Laurel Hill Bridge, a three-span stone masonry arch built in 1864, is a vital connection between its central and south sections with a busy commuter route below.

In May 2023, the bridge was severely damaged by an oversized truck, resulting in the partial collapse of a wall and closure of the roadway beneath. The repair project was a complex undertaking due to the bridge's historic significance and the urgent need to reopen the vital transportation route.

The project team developed a plan to partially dismantle the damaged sections, salvage reusable materials, and reconstruct

the masonry using original stones and new, custom-cut replacements. After calculating the dimensions of the damaged stone, the cemetery's expert monument contractor cut and carved the new ringstone to fit. After the ringstones were reset and the arch spandrel walls were reconstructed, the masonry was repointed to match the original mortar. The project also included repairs to other parts of the cemetery's stone walls along West Hunting Park Avenue.

Despite the challenges posed by the historic nature of the bridge and the tight timeline, the project was successfully completed in September 2023. The bridge's repair not only restored access for commuters but also preserved an important piece of Philadelphia's history.

The historic span crosses West Hunting Park Avenue and connects sections of the National Historic Landmark Laurel Hill Cemetery in Philadelphia. (Photo credit: Laurel Hill Cemetery)



GRASSROOTS ADVOCACY

LEADERSHIP AWARD • In recognition of innovative examples of assistance that helped communities protect and preserve the historic places that matter to them.



JAMES A. HILL Pittsburgh

(ALLEGHENY COUNTY)

In July 2023, with a kick off on the 4th of July, Preservation Pittsburgh began raising funds to restore and landmark the Peabody Memorial to Soldiers located at Pittsburgh Public Schools' Barack Obama Academy of International Studies, which served as the Benjamin H. Peabody High School from 1911-2011. Renowned sculptor Frank Vittor was commissioned to create what is the most significant war memorial at a Pittsburgh Public Schools building today. The sculpture, with seven figures circling a central flagpole, commemorates 543 students who served in WWI and the 17 who were killed in action. It was dedicated on May 30, 1924.

James A. Hill served as the chairperson of the campaign, and his leadership and dedication were instrumental not only in raising the needed funding, but also engaging today's students in the history and conservation process to create new appreciation for the long-neglected artwork.

Over time, the sculpture had deteriorated, elements were lost, and the setting had been compromised. Much-needed conservation work included full restoration of the memorial's

bronze, recreation of Victory's missing hand and wreath, installation of a new flagpole and architectural lighting, and connection on East Liberty Boulevard to better capture the original intent before the school's 1975-1978 renovation and create a public gathering space for students.

With passion and savvy, James rallied support from alumni, foundations, and the public in order to raise the necessary restoration funds and, using his knowledge of the workings of city government, he facilitated necessary permits and approvals.

James engaged with current students and made the sculpture meaningful again. He facilitated opportunities for students to learn about the First World War, the memorial's history, and the conservation process. His involvement with the students helped to connect them with their school's history and the sacrifices made by their predecessors.

The unveiling of the newly restored statue took place at 11 a.m. on May 30, 2024, exactly 100 years to the hour that it was originally dedicated in 1924, at a ceremony attended by more than 100 students, alumni, veterans and others.

James Hill (left) led the initiative to raise funds for the restoration of the Peabody Memorial to Soldiers. By engaging students in understanding the restoration process and the history of the sculpture, he created meaning and connection for a new generation. (Photo credit: Jason Cohn, Pittsburgh Public Schools) James Hill (right) stands with Matthew Falcone, President of Preservation Pittsburgh, following the unveiling of the newly restored Peabody Memorial to Soldiers. (Photo credit: Preservation Pittsburgh)



GRASSROOTS ADVOCACY

LEADERSHIP AWARD • In recognition of innovative examples of assistance that helped communities protect and preserve the historic places that matter to them.



UNION COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY GALLERY & MUSEUM (FORMER PACKWOOD HOUSE)

15 North Water Street & 12 Market Street, Lewisburg

(UNION COUNTY)

HONORING

Union County Historical Society

The sad reality is that not all history museums survive. In 2022, Lewisburg’s Packwood House Museum closed, and its contents were sold at auction. Its two buildings languished on the real estate market, as buyers were put off by the size, age, condition, lack of off-street parking, and residential zoning.

Seeing part of Lewisburg history at risk, the Union County Historical Society (UCHS) stepped up to become the new owner and reimagine the role of these properties for the community. Board members with financial expertise drew up a plan, structural engineers inspected the two buildings, and, after closing, renovation planning got underway.

The strategy was to focus on improvements to the brick building and its adjoining garden space at 15 North Water Street, constructed around 1850 as townhouses. It now serves as gallery and event space, in partnership with the Lewisburg Arts Council. The National Register-listed building at 12 Market Street will begin renovations in 2025 and will eventually house the Union County Museum.

After clearing out the basement and attic of 15 North Water Street, the organization removed old carpets, located electrical and water connections, painted walls, cleaned windows, serviced heating and cooling systems, refinished hardwood floors, and cleared an overgrown garden. They developed a schedule for ongoing improvements, repairs and replacements to the physical plant.

Improvements include construction of a spacious ADA-compliant restroom and lighting upgrades to enhance the space for exhibits and programs. Future plans include HVAC upgrades and further electrical system improvements.

One UCHS board member stated, “It is better that we try and fail to purchase the Packwood property than not try at all.” This was an investment in the future to preserve and protect these two buildings. The building acquisition now ensures there is enough exhibit and storage space for the UCHS’ ever-growing collection of county historic photographs, documents, artifacts, and locally made items.

The Gallery, 15 North Water Street (left): For over a hundred years, the Union County Historical Society has promoted the history of Union County through educational programs, displays, publications, events and celebrations. In one year, the UCHS has renovated and improved the gallery building, hosting over 1,000 visitors for events and exhibits. The National Register-listed building at 12 Market Street (right) will become a museum. (Photo credits: Mike Molesevich)



PUBLIC IMPACT

LEADERSHIP AWARD • For excellence in using a historic building as a catalyst to enrich a community. Includes examples of small business or adaptive reuse.



WCR CENTER FOR THE ARTS (FORMER WOMEN'S CLUB OF READING)

140 North 5th Street, Reading

(BERKS COUNTY)

HONORING
WCR Center for the Arts

The WCR Center for the Arts celebrates diversity and accessibility. Their mission is to showcase and celebrate the cultural heritage of the Berks County community by hosting events, exhibitions and performances that highlight the community's diverse cultural backgrounds.

A top priority for the WCR Center is to foster community engagement by providing a welcoming space where community members can gather, create and collaborate. This includes ensuring physical accessibility, as well as providing resources such as equipment and facilities for meetings, events, rehearsals, performances and exhibitions.

The 19th-century building that the WCR Center for the Arts calls home is located in Reading's Callowhill Historic District. From 1919, the building was home to the Women's Club of

Reading. In the summer of 2004, several community leaders came together to form a new entity, the WCR Center for the Arts, to preserve the 150-year-old building as a unique performance and exhibition venue to benefit the community.



The building includes a historic auditorium space, used for a wide range of events and performances, but it presented accessibility challenges. The WCR Center for the Arts constructed a new addition on the rear of the building that solves the problem with a new wheelchair-accessible door, a two-stop chair lift, and improved access to backstage areas.

The WCR's efforts and initiatives over the past few years have opened doors to members of the greater Reading community, supported community engagement and cohesion, and contributed to the overall economic revitalization of the city.

The WCR Center for the Arts board of directors and city officials at a ribbon cutting celebrating the newly completed auditorium accessibility project (top, photo credit: The Greater Reading Chamber Alliance). Auditorium in use (inset, photo credit: WCR Center for the Arts).



PUBLIC IMPACT

LEADERSHIP AWARD • For excellence in using a historic building as a catalyst to enrich a community. Includes examples of small business or adaptive reuse.



WEST SHORE THEATRE 317 Bridge Street, New Cumberland (CUMBERLAND COUNTY)

HONORING

Friends of the West Shore Theatre, Inc. / Chris Dawson Architect / Lobar Associates

The West Shore Theatre (WST) opened on January 22, 1940, with a showing of “The Secret of Dr. Kildare.” It was designed by Philadelphia architect William Harold Lee (1884-1971), a protege of Frank Furness and noted theater designer whose work included the extant Anthony Wayne (Wayne), the Hiway Theater (Jenkintown), the Sedgwick Theater (Philadelphia), and the Lansdowne Theater (Lansdowne).

The theatre has been popular since its opening, attracting patrons downtown and serving as an economic anchor for local restaurants and the shopping district.

While community support rallied to upgrade the film equipment to digital in the late 1980s, the proprietor’s ill health led to the theatre’s closure in 2018. In stepped the Friends of the West Shore Theatre, Inc. (FOWST), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit group that restored the theatre by converting it from a single-screen movie house to a multi-purpose venue. Financing came from FOWST fundraisers, including gala events and buy-a-seat and buy-a-paver (front sidewalk) campaigns. Additional funding came from corporate and individual sponsorships and advertising, generous local citizens, and a grant from the Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program of the

Pennsylvania Office of the Budget (RACP).

The original iconic front facade, marquee, doors, and ticket booth were restored. Outdoor poster displays flanking the entrance were converted to electronic boards for advertising. Inside the theatre, the stage was expanded to accommodate live performances, and seating was reconfigured into a central auditorium section with theatre seating, left and right sections with booths, and a rear section with high-top tables.

Original walnut paneling on the upper sides and rear of the theatre was retained. The floor was stripped to cement and polished, with new carpeting installed in the aisles. The fabric that once draped over the right and left interior cinder block walls was replaced with a reproduction, and the deteriorated ceiling mural was reproduced. The foyer, vestibule, auditorium and bathrooms were updated for ADA compliance.

The theatre’s grand opening in 2022 re-energized downtown New Cumberland, serving as a catalyst for new stores and restaurants. Today, the theatre’s events include both first-run and classic films, ballet recitals, live improv comedy, folk music, and jazz attended by over 25,000 visitors.

The restored facade of the West Shore Theatre gleams as the centerpiece of downtown New Cumberland. (Photo credit: Todd Mason)



REHABILITATION CONSTRUCTION PROJECT AWARD

These awards honor outstanding preservation, restoration or rehabilitation projects and/or pre-construction documentation (e.g., historic structure reports), technical innovation and achievement. (Please note: Awards are given to the project rather than individual architects/engineers/consultants.)



A & INDIANA (FORMER HOYLE, HARRISON & KAYE TEXTILE MILL)

(PHILADELPHIA COUNTY)

HONORING

**Impact Services / BartonPartners Architects / Clemens Construction Company, Inc. /
McHugh Engineering / O'Donnell & Naccarato / Delta Development Group, Inc. / Becker &
Frondorf / Marcus Reinvestment Strategies, LLC**

During the Industrial Revolution, Philadelphia grew to become a textile powerhouse, with thousands of mills employing thousands of immigrants. One such mill was the Hoyle, Harrison & Kaye Textile Mill, located in the heart of the Kensington neighborhood. However, at the beginning of the early 1900s, the industry began to wane, resulting in the loss of jobs and the decline of the neighborhoods reliant upon them.

The textile mill passed from owner to owner, and by 2008, it sat vacant and dormant. Kensington was also suffering, with limited job opportunities or fair housing available, exacerbated by gentrification.

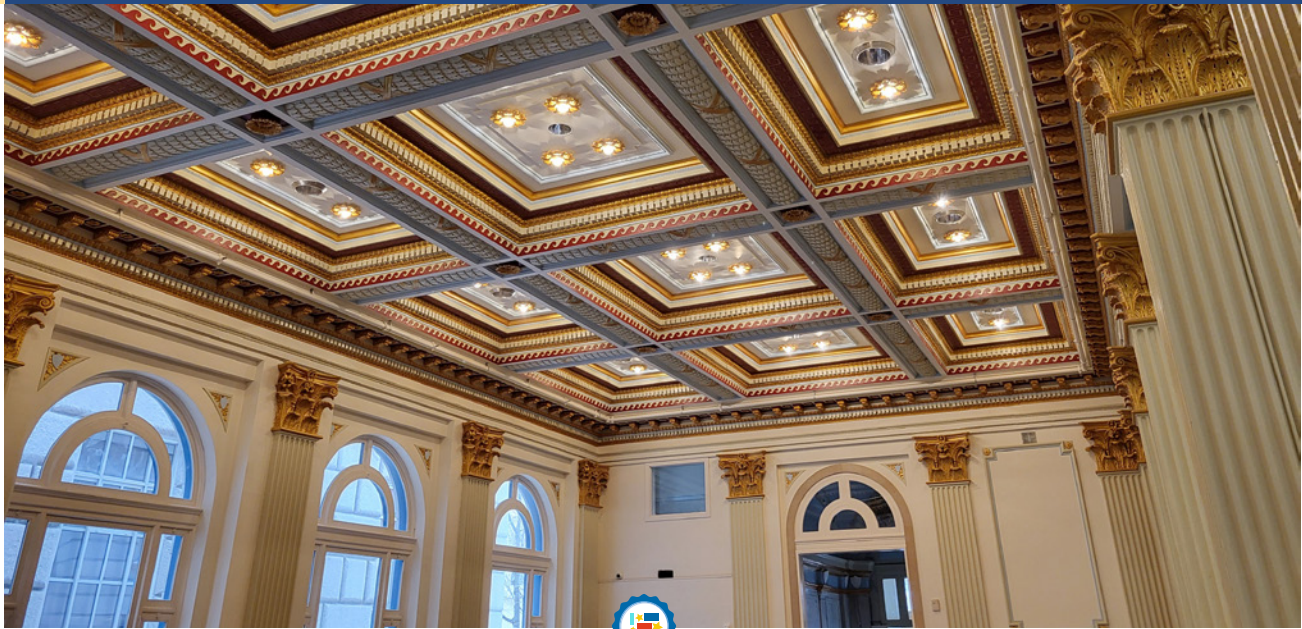
New owner Impact Services works in the Kensington neighborhood to help people re-enter the workforce, train for jobs, find housing, and build community. Over the last two decades, the organization has also built a continuum of housing services in an effort to end veteran homelessness. The organization pursued rehabilitating the mill, restoring its historic integrity, and ultimately converting it into affordable housing in a multi-phased project.

The design team embraced the challenge of transforming the historic mill into affordable housing units of varying sizes, while at the same time retaining and preserving the character-defining features that carried its history. Community spaces for tenants and commercial spaces were also created, with the hope of adding neighborhood health care and childcare resources.

This undertaking was made possible utilizing funding from the Philadelphia Housing Development Corporation (PHDC), Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency (PHFA), Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program (RACP), federal and Pennsylvania Historic Tax Credits, and Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC).

The goal of the project was always a twofold approach: to preserve and rehabilitate the historic integrity of the building while at the same time provide affordable housing and community services for those in need. Initial reception from neighbors indicates that this realization has been achieved with a new sense of hope that more will follow.

A & Indiana exterior before and after. ("After" image photo credit: Taylor Photo)



BERKS COUNTY TRUST COMPANY BUILDING

35 North 6th Street, Reading

(BERKS COUNTY)

HONORING

**Shuman Development Group / Louis Masciotti Architect / Drafting Solutions /
Delta Development Group, Inc.**

The Berks County Trust Company building (1909) is one of Reading's best examples of the Beaux Arts style. It is situated in the commercial core of the city and consists of three sections: the original 1909 building and 1923 expansion, a 1946 utilitarian three-story red brick masonry block to its rear, and a 1966 six-story International style addition to its north. The original design by Lebanon County native Abner A. Ritcher features a limestone water table supporting a steel frame covered with brick and sheathed in terra-cotta panels to simulate stone. Originally three bays wide, two additional bays were added in 1923 to provide additional space required by the Trust's growing business.

The building was left vacant in 2012, and suffered extensive damage in 2013 when water pipes froze and burst in multiple locations, leading to a significant water and mold problem and security issues that left the interior stripped.

Two of the balconies on the front of the building — each weighing about 2,500 pounds — had collapsed onto the sidewalk. During the restoration, all five balconies were removed, repaired and reconstructed.

The limestone water table and terra-cotta panels covering the exterior of the original building required cleaning and

restoration that exceeded the knowledge of local trades. Experts were brought in for the project, and they also trained local tradesmen so these skills will be available in the area.

Additional work included rust remediation, opening infilled windows, and installation of a new HVAC system that respects the historic nature of the building. To complete and protect the restored property, modern electrical, fire suppression, telecommunications, and security systems were installed throughout. In one of the most visible and satisfying parts of the work, conservators cleaned, repaired and repainted the

ornate Corinthian columns and pilasters and the polychrome coffered ceiling, restoring the banking floor to its original glory.

The building currently houses businesses such as a Federal Credit Union, lawyers' offices (including nonprofits providing legal assistance for low-income people), and a vibrant food court. The restoration of the Berks

County Trust Company building preserved an architecturally notable building and restored its ability to contribute to the economic and community life of downtown Reading.

Interior, the restored banking hall and ornate ceiling above the entrance (top). Exterior, west elevation during restoration, showing missing balconies and deteriorated windows and spandrels on upper floors (inset, photo credit: Alan Shuman, Shuman Development Group).





REHABILITATION CONSTRUCTION PROJECT AWARD



LAROS SILK MILL

601-699 East Broad Street and 650 East North Street, Bethlehem

(NORTHAMPTON COUNTY)

HONORING

**VM Development Group, LLC / Artefact, Inc. / Strunk-Albert Engineering /
Mulhern Consulting Engineers / Hofmeister Engineering / Lock Ridge Engineering**

For nearly 75 years (1922-1995), the Laros Mill building served as a beacon of textile manufacturing in Bethlehem, despite coinciding with many decades of industrial decline in the area. As the Laros Silk Mill and later as the Sure Fit Company, the three-story, brick masonry facility, with its many additions and alterations, details the transitions the textile industry experienced, from silk throwing to the manufacturing of cloth and synthetic fabrics.

Although never entirely vacant after Sure Fit's departure in 1995, the mill complex had long been underutilized prior to this rehabilitation. Commercial tenancies were generally short-lived, resulting in a jumble of reconfigurations over the past two-plus decades. Windows had been infilled with concrete or wood boards, limiting the entry of natural light to the interior and creating an unfriendly exterior appearance.

By reopening these spaces and adding new multi-lite windows and sashes, the rehabilitation brightened tenant

spaces and refreshed the facade in keeping with the mill's historic appearance. The work also updated mechanical systems, created new "vanilla box" lease opportunities for small businesses, and upgraded existing public spaces, in particular, an attractive lobby that highlights original mill machinery.

There are now 114 apartments on the building's second and third floors, adding a new residential component. Transforming the building into a mixed-use facility has increased foot traffic in the area and provided an established clientele for on-site businesses — a boon to a historically depressed section of east Bethlehem.

The rehabilitation of the Laros Silk Mill has created an active community that celebrates Bethlehem's textile industry history and boosts the economy of a marginalized neighborhood, making Laros Lofts a desirable Lehigh Valley destination rather than an overlooked former industrial site.

The Laros Silk Mill building before and after rehabilitation. (Photo credit: Artefact, Inc.)



MOUNT CARBON BOWSTRING TRUSS BRIDGE

400 Terry Rich Boulevard, St. Clair

(SCHUYLKILL COUNTY)

HONORING

**Schuylkill River Greenway Association / PennDOT District 5-0 / Gannett Fleming /
Susquehanna Civil / Fabcor, Inc. / Schuylkill County Municipal Authority**

Initially erected in 1894 in Palo Alto, Schuylkill County, the Mount Carbon Bowstring Truss has a storied history spanning four owners and three different locations. Stretching 100 feet over the Schuylkill River, this iconic bridge has endured many phases of construction, relocation and repair, all while preserving and honoring its original character. Today, it is one of only three bowstring trusses in Pennsylvania.

Its ownership was a mystery after its accidental discovery by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) District 5-0 and PennDOT's Office of Multimodal Transportation. Through the collaborative efforts of the Schuylkill County Municipal Authority (SCMA), Schuylkill River Greenway Association (SRGA), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), PennDOT, and community advocates, it was revealed that the SCMA owned the truss, unbeknownst to them.

United with a common goal to preserve Schuylkill County's historic landmarks and community heritage, PennDOT, FHWA, and SCMA engaged the SRGA to develop a comprehensive rehabilitation plan to repurpose this vital structure. PennDOT assumed ownership of the bridge,

bringing in Gannett Fleming as the designer and Fabcor as the contractor to tackle the intensive truss repair.

The project involved carefully removing, rehabilitating and relocating the truss five miles north of the Mount Carbon site. Significant documentation and marking were made during disassembly before shipping the parts to an Ohio blacksmith, who used new hot-driven rivets to restore the truss. New abutments were constructed at Coal Creek, and the staging area was prepared for reassembly. The rehabilitation process incorporated long-term analysis and retrofitting to accommodate a pedestrian trail. The bridge reinstallation took place within an active business zone, requiring careful coordination to ensure uninterrupted business operations.

The rehabilitated truss now serves as a multi-use recreational crossing, a vital link in a planned extension of the 120-mile SRGA trail. It accommodates pedestrians and bicyclists as they cross over Mill Creek at the Coal Creek Commons development in St. Clair. Upon construction completion in 2024, ownership of the structure was transferred from PennDOT to the SRGA, securing its place in the community's future.

By preserving a piece of history and integrating it into a modern transportation network, the adaptive reuse of the Mount Carbon Bowstring Truss honors the past and lays the foundation for a sustainable and interconnected future. (Photo credit: Gannett Fleming)



MT. TABOR PRESERVATION PROJECT

13 Cedar Street, Mt. Holly Springs

(CUMBERLAND COUNTY)

HONORING

**Mt. Tabor Preservation Project Board / Mt. Holly Springs Borough /
SBA Architects / Halteman's Home Improvements, Inc.**

The former Mt. Tabor African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church (AMEZ) and nearby segregated cemetery have been listed in the National Register of Historic Places, Preservation Pennsylvania's *Pennsylvania At Risk*, and the Cumberland County Register of Historic Places. The site was an active church from circa 1875 to circa 1970. Empty and unused since, the building fell into such disrepair that it appeared only trees and poison ivy vines growing from the foundation were holding it up.

The site was identified by former congregants during a community story-telling project. Research uncovered what had once been a vital community center for the Black residents of Mt. Holly Springs. It was a site of worship, a school, and space for lectures and gatherings.

The rediscovery resulted in a community-led preservation initiative that included former congregants, descendants of congregants, and community members. A volunteer-led nonprofit, Mt. Tabor Preservation Project, formed to oversee the effort, while the Borough of Mt. Holly Springs took ownership of the site. This partnership is an exemplary

example of a municipal government and a nonprofit working together to ensure the preservation of a regional historic resource.

The delicate condition of the building and its original construction methods required creative solutions. Some visiting professionals recommended demolition. Determination to save a place identified to the descendant community as "not important," "a chicken coop," and "past the point of saving" took an incredible force of will.

The project team sought to preserve as much original fabric as possible, but needed to remain flexible when new information required a change in plans. For example, the original paint on the interior of the building required lead remediation, so new paint was matched to the original color.

Thanks to a high-quality construction team led by qualified board members, the rehabilitation work was completed with strict adherence to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards as well as community-directed design. The outcome has maintained the integrity of the historic space while making it usable for modern community programming.

The delicate condition of the building and its original construction methods required creative solutions. The rehabilitated building has maintained the integrity of the historic space while making it usable for modern community programming.



REHABILITATION

CONSTRUCTION PROJECT AWARD



ROBERT N. C. NIX, SR. FEDERAL BUILDING, PHILADELPHIA PASSPORT AGENCY

900 Market Street, Philadelphia

(PHILADELPHIA COUNTY)

HONORING

General Services Administration / Department of State / Mills + Schnoering Architects, LLC / The Bedwell Company / Keast & Hood / Henry Adams / Jensen Hughes / K2 Audio, LLC (now Salas O'Brien) / The Lighting Practice / AFG Group, Inc. / LVCK, LLC (now LVCK – A Beyer Blinder Belle Studio) / Becker & Frondorf / Materials Conservation Co. / Page Conservation, Inc. / Conservation Center for Art & Historic Artifacts (CCAHA)

The Robert N. C. Nix, Sr. Federal Building is a masonry, Art Moderne-style building constructed by the Public Works Administration in 1939 and located in Philadelphia's central business district. The United States Post Office originally filled the first floor with its monumental lobby and interior workroom, while stately courtrooms occupied upper floors. Two Philadelphia architects, Harry Sternfeld and the Ballinger Company, blended European training with factory-building expertise into an elegant and efficient structure. The building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places individually and as contributing to the East Center City Commercial Historic District.

When the post office closed in 2017, the first floor retained a high degree of architectural integrity, and a priority for any new design was the preservation of the voluminous spaces and finishes. The renovation for the new tenant, the Philadelphia Passport Agency, included retaining the historic

lobby as a public space with accommodations for queuing and circulation, security screening, and waiting areas.

Existing openings in the 480-foot-long west lobby marble wall were utilized for new restrooms and adjudication counters. Modifications for accessible entrances, enhanced security systems, and passport functions were successfully blended with historic materials. The character-defining postal workroom was renovated to accommodate 120 staff in an attractive, professional environment.

The site has been publicly accessible since 1884 when a Second-Empire post office and courthouse was completed as the predecessor to the 1939 Nix Federal Building. With this rehabilitation, which includes interpretive displays on the post office and passports, the building continues to serve as an impressive public space for thousands of Philadelphians and world citizens each year.

Before, the light-filled post office lobby featured a wall of post office boxes. After, the lobby is transformed into the Philadelphia Passport Agency lobby waiting area near new adjudication service counters. ('After' photo credit: © Aislinn Weidele)



GENERAL WILLIAM THOMPSON HOUSE, “SOLDIER’S RETREAT”

North Middleton Township

(CUMBERLAND COUNTY)

HONORING

The late James P. Howell and Gwen Howell / Kevin Hollowell Restoration

Some preservation projects aren’t really about the building, but more about the love behind the project. In this case, the rehabilitation of “Soldiers Retreat,” an 18th-century homestead, is about the love a couple had for a property and for each other, and for the team that helped realize their dream.

Soldiers Retreat sits on the bank of the Conodoguinet Creek, within earshot of the Pennsylvania Turnpike. It was built circa 1765 for William Thompson (1736-1781) and his wife, Catherine Ross (1739 - 1809). Thompson served in the Continental Army during the Revolutionary War until his capture in June 1776 during a battle in Quebec, the first Continental general taken in the course of the Revolutionary War.

In 2012, Jim and Gwen Howell decided to restore the buildings on the property, beginning with the barn and the summer kitchen. Unfortunately, Jim received a cancer diagnosis, and the house remained untouched during his illness. After Jim died in 2019, Gwen decided to restore the house in his memory.

Gwen hired Kevin Hollowell of Hollowell Restoration, and the work began. Kevin stripped the interior down to the original horsehair plaster, revealing old log beams and three original fireplaces. One of the “found” fireplaces had ghost lines showing the molding profile. Kevin had a craftsperson duplicate the molding and a missing chair rail. A local blacksmith duplicated missing hardware from the period.

A Victorian addition was removed and replaced with new construction more in keeping with the 18th-century side of the house. New plumbing and heating are creatively hidden behind the original doors, and the modern kitchen has been designed to complement the rest of the house.

The project’s focus was always on ensuring the house would keep its simple and elegant historic character. After many discoveries and a lot of work, Gwen has settled into life in the new-old house, gratified that the dream she and Jim had shared has become reality.

The front of the General William Thompson House before and after restoration.



WOODFORD MANSION

2300 North 33rd Street, Philadelphia

(PHILADELPHIA COUNTY)

HONORING

Naomi Wood Trust / Mark B. Thompson Associates, PC

Woodford Mansion is a National Historic Landmark owned by the City of Philadelphia and operated by the Naomi Wood Trust as an historic house museum displaying the Naomi Wood collection of 18th-century furniture and decorative arts. The Mansion was built 1756-1758 for William Coleman, a Philadelphia merchant, judge, and close friend of Benjamin Franklin. Architecturally, it represents one of the best domestic examples of the middle-Georgian style in the Philadelphia area and is one of the few remaining examples of the early summer retreats built along the Schuylkill River.

The rehabilitation project sought to create a more historic presentation of two rooms to expand the house museum's narrative around slavery and servitude and to update two service areas, a bathroom and kitchen.

A third-floor attic garret and a second-floor room used as a passageway and pantry located in the 1771-72 ell addition are believed to have originally been used as sleeping or working quarters for servants on the property. The ell was built for third

owner David Franks, a Philadelphia merchant and Loyalist, who relied upon enslaved Africans and indentured European servants and was involved in both the slave trade and the importation of indentured servants. Transformation of these spaces expands the historical narrative at the Woodford Mansion.

To enable visitor access to the staircase and the third-floor garret, the project also moved the public restroom from the second floor to the first floor in the 20th-century addition. Along with the construction of the accessible bathroom, the kitchen was also modernized.

The profound impact of opening up spaces where enslaved African and indentured European servants likely slept and worked helps tell a more complete and inclusive story of life in Colonial Philadelphia. The Mansion's location in East Fairmount Park, near the majority African-American Strawberry Mansion neighborhood, makes the expanded narratives even more important.

Woodford Mansion's garret space with reenactors as Ann King and Peter (a formerly enslaved man). The profound impact of opening up spaces where enslaved African and indentured European servants likely slept and worked helps tell a more complete and inclusive story of life in Colonial Philadelphia. (Photo credit: Jeff Duncan)

From Abbottstown to Zelienople



*Donations over \$100 received by November 25 get our sticker!



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HANDMADE HISTORY

Each year, our Honor Awards are handcrafted at the historic Tileworks of Bucks County, a National Historic Landmark. We highly recommend a visit to the Tileworks and adjacent Fonthill, the home of Henry Chapman Mercer, who was an American archaeologist, artifact collector, tile maker, and designer of three distinctive poured-concrete structures in Doylestown.

Founded by Mercer in 1897, the Tileworks produced tiles for hundreds of private and public buildings, such as the State Capitol in Harrisburg, the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston, the National Press Club in Washington, and the John D. Rockefeller Estate in New York. Mercer's tile production processes are replicated as faithfully as possible to preserve the look and spirit of the originals.

