



preserve  
RHODE ISLAND

THE STATEWIDE ADVOCATE FOR HISTORIC PLACES

## Around the Block E-News

### Who Do You Trust to Repair Your Historic Property?



*Hannah Robinson House, Narragansett, during construction and after.*

Historic properties require special handling. Whether it's major reconstruction, interior decorating or tree service, Preserve RI's **Preservation Services Directory** is a great place to find specialists with the expertise to work on your old building. We occasionally shout out the good work of contractors in the directory.

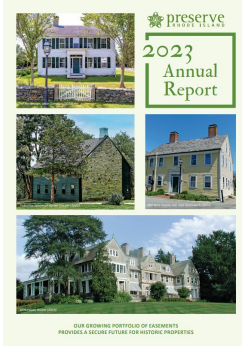
A project worth showcasing is Heritage Restoration, Inc.'s most recent work at the Hannah Robinson House in Narragansett. The project started off with just replacing the lapped clapboard siding; but when the siding was removed, they discovered the vertical sheathing was replaced in the 1920's with material that was too thin, and about 25% of the original timber frame was rotted underneath. The damage required Heritage Restoration to remove the sheathing, the interior walls (including the plaster and the library), support the inside frame, remove the gable end timber frame, and reproduce the frame out of dried fir timbers. Each timber was carefully cut to fit within the original frame, with new, thicker vertical white oak sheathing applied, and then new lapped clapboard siding installed. The interior systems were upgraded, and the pre-existing features reinstalled or reconstructed to match the original features as if nothing ever was done. A

wonderful display of craftsmanship and skill shown at the Hannah Robinson House!

[Start Your Search Here](#)

[Join the Directory](#)

## View Preserve RI's 2023 Annual Report



2023 was another year of growth at Preserve RI. A quick look at our Annual Report highlights what we accomplished across Rhode Island last year and what we're working on in 2024. As a non-profit, we rely on gifts, both large and small, to keep doing that work. And thanks to our donors, we're continuing to be preservation problem solvers for organizations and individuals throughout the state.

[Read the Report](#)

## Historic Preservation Easement Monitoring Underway Across the State



*The Old Kent County Jail in East Greenwich has a preservation easement held by Preserve RI.*

As our portfolio of preservation easements grows, so does our responsibility

to check regularly on each property. In March, the Preserve RI team visits each property for our annual check-ins. These annual visits allow us to meet with owners to discuss their concerns about their property, document the property's current condition, follow up on progress of approved projects, and ensure that protected features remain in good condition. Preserve RI staff then provide records and recommendations for the owners to help prioritize and plan future work. When work needs to be done, we can connect owners with experienced contractors who understand historic properties.

This year we have seven sites to visit across Rhode Island. For example, we'll meet again with the homeowners at the Valentine Whitman House in Lincoln (c.1696) and the Joseph Spalding House in Pawtucket (c.1828). We will also meet with non-profits, such as Revive the Roots, which owns the Mary Mowry House (c.1750) in Smithfield.

Our most expansive easement is held at Blithewold Mansion, Gardens & Arboretum in Bristol, RI. The sprawling 33-acre estate with protected landscape features, views, and multiple structures requires a full day on-site to inspect and document conditions.

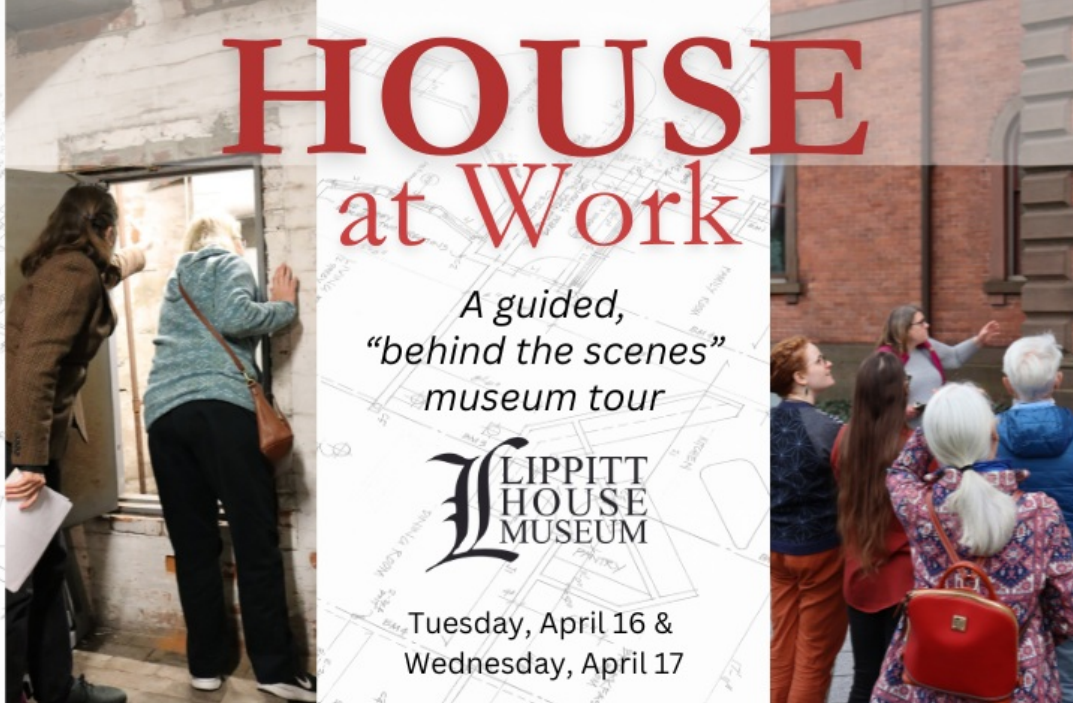
The team at Preserve RI enjoys meeting with the property owners and taking the opportunity to talk through issues that inevitably come up when caring for an old building. Likewise, owners of properties protected by easements look forward to meeting with the Preserve RI team. For instance, Carley and Dakota, owners of the Valentine Whitman House, view the preservation easement as a positive aspect to owning a historic home. To Carley, "The easement has made sure that each of our hopes and projects for the house are thoroughly thought through."

Each year, we are impressed and inspired by the efforts all the fantastic stewards who maintain these historic places.

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## **Lippitt House Museum Offers its Annual "House at Work" Behind the Scenes Tour**





Have you visited Lippitt House Museum before and want to see more? On this special tour experience, take an alternative path and explore a different perspective as you see spaces that are not usually on a tour. Hear stories about servants who lived at Lippitt House and learn about the 19th century back-of-the-house mechanical systems that made life comfortable for the Lippitt family. *Please Note: This tour will take guests into unfinished areas only accessible by stairs.*

**Wednesday, April 16 & Thursday, April 17**  
**5:00PM & 6:30PM**

Tickets are \$15. Space is limited. Pre-registration is required.

[Register](#)

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## Meet New Board Member: Annalisa Heppner

The Preserve RI Board of Directors plays a vital role in shaping policy and providing expertise and advice to the staff. New to the board this year, we're profiling:

### **Annalisa Heppner**

Annalisa is Providence's Director of Cemeteries, where she is responsible for managing grounds and office staff. In particular, she oversees the North Burial Ground, a 113-acre historic cemetery, that

continues to see 200+ burials per year. As part of her responsibilities, she is leading initiatives to build a historical and cultural tourism niche for the cemetery, focused on the cemetery's 323-year history of serving Rhode Islanders from every background.

Prior to this, Annalisa worked for the Haffenreffer Museum of Anthropology at Brown University as a project coordinator and museum specialist. She previously worked as an archeologist consulting with a variety of historic and cultural institutions. Annalisa has a Masters in Anthropology from the University of Alaska and received her B.A. from the University of Tennessee.



*“As a transplant to Rhode Island, one of my favorite things is the amazing amount of cultural diversity packed into such a small footprint. I’m so excited to join an organization that is committed to making historic preservation tools and resources available to historically underrepresented communities, and I’m looking forward to having an excuse to dive into all these new (well, new to me!) histories.”*

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## People in Preservation: Theresa Guzman Stokes

*Executive Director, Rhode Island Black Heritage Society (RIBHS)*

Writer, mother, historian, community activist, editor, feminist, US military veteran, and storyteller, Theresa Guzman Stokes has dedicated her career to illuminating the complex and woven narratives of African Heritage, Latin American, and Jewish Diasporic histories. Utilizing the tools of history, genealogy, and cultural preservation of the Guatemalan heritage, Stokes is fiercely committed to bringing to light the untold stories of the State of Rhode Island. In addition to her role at RIBHS, Theresa is the President of the 1696 Heritage Group, a historical consulting firm, and founder of the non-profit Historical Writers of America. She also serves on Newport's Planning Board, the Newport Historical Cemeteries Commission, and the board of Preserve RI.



**As someone who has been at the forefront of addressing equity and inclusion in Rhode Island's history, what do you see as the biggest**

## **achievement in recent years?**

Hands down the greatest achievement has been the passing of the legislation mandating African heritage history in our schools. Without the knowledge of our history in our state, how can we see ourselves, not only as a people who contributed to the building and sustaining of our democracy but also as true, productive citizens?

## **Can you tell us a story you uncovered that surprised you, and your understanding of our local history?**

Many stories surprise me, simply because no one told them before. But one thing that has stood out to me recently is the story of political collaboration between African heritage and Irish heritage people in Newport. These two groups fiercely competed for jobs and recognition in other major cities in the late 19th century, but they worked together in Newport.

## **What are the most challenging preservation issues regarding places important to RIBHS?**

Recognition of their importance. Of the over 90,000 sites on the National Register of Historic Places, only 3 percent focus on the Black American experience. With so many issues of equity needing to be addressed, preservation of historic sites of color isn't even considered. The community needs to be recognized and asked "what sites hold the community's memories? Which are important to your community and should be preserved" If no one is asking, the community doesn't know it can be done.

## **In conjunction with the Preservation Society of Newport County, the RIBHS has a new exhibit that opened March 15th, "The Gilded Age in Color" that explores African heritage families' influence on Newport, black culture and the Civil Rights Movement. What do you hope visitors will learn from the exhibit?**

Stories like the one I mentioned above. How people worked together to advance the community. The Gilded Age wasn't just about the acquisition of wealth to the African heritage community; it was about opportunity, achievement, and the advancement of the race.

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## **Newport Historical Society Launches New Resource for Research on Black and Indigenous History**

In February, the Newport Historical Society (NHS) announced the creation of the "Voices for the NHS Archives." This new addition to the NHS online collections aims to piece together the history of Newport's Black and/or Indigenous residents. The archive's database includes information about thousands of individuals. While most are fragmentary, many detailed

narratives can now be explored. Preserve RI supports the NHS in its efforts to tell the full story of Newport's history.

[Learn More](#)

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## Jobs in Preservation

### **Preserve RI is hiring.**

Preserve Rhode Island is seeking a Photography Intern to organize our photo library, and to photograph various historic buildings and landscapes across the state.

[See additional requirements and apply here.](#)

### **Providence Preservation Society is hiring.**

PPS seeks a Planning and Preservation Writer to cover developments in Providence that impact the urban fabric and the city's diverse cultural heritage practices, and to lead the organization's communications efforts.

[See additional requirements and apply here.](#)

### **The Preservation Society of Newport County is hiring.**

PSNC will be hosting a job fair on Wednesday, April 3rd at 424 Bellevue Ave. from 3:00pm to 7:00pm. Approximately 30 part-time and full-time positions are available.

[Learn more here.](#)

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## Featured News

### [Catch a Glimpse Into Newport's Past at the "Gilded Age Newport in Color" Exhibit](#)

"Ever wonder what it was like to live among Newport's costly mansions and cobblestone streets during the city's most extravagant era? The "Gilded Age Newport in Color" exhibit does exactly that..."



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## LOCAL NEWS

*Bristol*

March 5: [STEP INTO SPRINGTIME DURING THE 2024 DAFFODIL DAYS!](#)

### **Warren**

February 26: [Rhode Island's historic stained glass window depicting a dark-skinned Jesus moves to Memphis](#)

### **Newport**

February 15: [Mapping the Cliff Walk's Future](#)

February 27: [The Bells is gone from Brenton Point State Park. What's next for the site.](#)

March 13: [The woman who built Newport](#)

### **Pawtucket**

February 24: [Neighbors unhappy with plan to demolish historic Pawtucket mansion](#)

March 5: [Pawtucket City Hall's future in limbo as staff temporarily relocates](#)

### **Providence**

February 13: [Historic jewelry manufacturing buildings to be demolished for mixed-use property with nearly 200 apartments](#)

March 5: [Party Under the Sea at the Providence Preservation Society's Twentieth Annual Winter Bash](#)

## **STATEWIDE NEWS**

February 22: [Rhode Island Must Do Better to Preserve Vital Farmlands](#)

February 28: ['Staggering': Why it's now unaffordable to buy a home in any RI city or town](#)

March 12: [Here's a behind-the-scenes look at the Independent Man's restoration](#)

March 19: [Rhode Island need not choose between open space and housing, poll suggest](#)

## **NATIONAL NEWS**

February 27: [Eyes trained on proposed changes to Charleston's historic preservation laws](#)

March 11: [Team Pursues Virtual, Physical Historic Preservation of Disappearing Black Schools](#)

## **INTERNATIONAL NEWS**

February 14: [Israeli bombs are wiping out Gaza's heritage and history](#)

February 26: [Fans flock to 'Saltburn' mansion after TikTokers show the way](#)

March 2: [UNESCO's Quest to Save the World's Intangible Heritage](#)

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