Preserve RI Secures a Conservation Easement at 122 Hope St. in Providence

In the summer of 2023, Preserve RI was contacted by Harry and Arria Bilodeau, long-time owners and residents of the Underwood-Hale-Noyes House (c. 1826) at 122 Hope St. in Providence’s College Hill Historic District. The Bilodeaus had decided to sell the house and property, which contains a sizable side yard mostly fronting Hope Street.

Research showed that the lot had never been built on since its inception, and the Bilodeaus wanted assurances that it would remain in an undeveloped state after they sold the property. They recognized the
importance of the property’s historic character and open space in a dense, highly visible area of the historic district on the fringe of an institutional zone that includes Brown University buildings. They also realized that even though the property is in a local historic district, its zoning could not prohibit new construction on the empty lot.

Preserve RI negotiated terms of a permanent conservation easement with the Bilodeaus as part of the sale that includes a “protected area” where no new building could be constructed for residential use. Conservation of the lot yields many public benefits, including keeping the scenic and historic quality of the historic district intact and eliminating the possibility that new construction could disrupt its sense of place and historic quality.

We are grateful for the Bilodeaus’ commitment to preserving this historic open space!

See Our Other Easement Properties

Limited Success in Reforming the State Historic Tax Credit Program This Year

While the Rhode Island House has acted, they did not adopt comprehensive reforms to the state historic tax credit program. The General Assembly did extend the sunset – giving the program breathing room for two years (instead of the usual one-year termination).

Preserve RI had joined with Grow Smart RI to call for important changes to make this vital economic stimulus program fully functional again. From lack of funding to excessive fees to an unworkable labor restriction for large projects, recent revisions to the law have made state historic tax credits dysfunctional, especially when compared to programs in other New England states.

When fully functioning, Rhode Island’s state historic tax credits produced approximately 20% of the state’s housing units, including affordable housing. It’s beyond frustrating that the program has been sidelined at this critical point of housing needs. A group of developers made it known to legislators that they were prepared to bring 800 units of housing on-line if only the program were funded and restored. Those “shovel ready” projects are stalled and will not get underway until the issues are fixed.

Preserve RI and Grow Smart RI have already agreed to redouble advocacy efforts for next year – to secure funding; to modify prevailing wage requirements; to streamline the processing fee; to incentivize housing projects on parity with commercial projects; and to improve transparency. We’ll need to get started with advocacy efforts as soon as
possible; and we will be asking for your help raising the public and legislators’ awareness of the remedial action that must be taken to get this vital program fully functioning once more.

Stone Wall Repair Continues at Miantonomi Park in Newport

Preserve RI, along with The Preservation Society of Newport County and the Aquidneck Land Trust, acting as “the Scenic Aquidneck Coalition,” are working with the City of Newport to complete the second phase of wall restoration at Miantonomi Park. This phase, which follows the successful repair of a 250-foot wall stretch last year, will apply the final touches in redefining the park’s north entry point.

Miantonomi Park is a cherished green space and resource for the surrounding community of Newport’s densely populated North End. It provides walking trails, community gathering space, public programming, wildlife habitat, tree canopy and much more.

Preserve RI is particularly keen on this effort that demonstrates that preservation extends beyond preserving historic buildings. One of our primary goals is to protect important landscapes and vistas. That is why we have been so involved with restoring historic stone walls across Aquidneck Island.

Ramos Masonry will be back on-site next week to begin work on the final stretch of the wall. The project is expected to be completed by the end of summer 2024.

Funding for this project was generously provided by Scenic Aquidneck and the van Buren Charitable Foundation.

People in Preservation: Tripp Evans
Author and Professor of Art History, Wheaton College

Tripp specializes in American art and
You have a new book coming out and exhibit opening this month in conjunction with Historic New England titled The Importance of Being Furnished: Four Bachelors at Home. What interested you in this topic and the stories of these men?

Having spent my childhood in generic military housing, I’ve always found the generational histories of old homes special, even exotic. My academic career has focused on American material culture – the ways objects and architectural fabric reveal human stories – and with these four homes, I found a gold mine. The project began with Charles Gibson, who believed his Boston home could forever enshrine his literary reputation and even his own youth; not long after I started to explore his world, I found similarly compelling stories of three other New England bachelor-curators. All four of these men believed, in different ways, that to preserve the past was to preserve their very selfhood. And they were right.

What do you hope visitors learn from the experience?

Whether someone reads the book or visits the show (preferably both!), I hope they will come away with a deeper understanding of “home-making” as a devotional activity. This is precisely how Oscar Wilde envisioned domestic design, and these four men – whose lives spanned the Gilded to the Jazz age – were very much Wilde’s acolytes. As single men who represented the last branch of their family trees, my subjects poured their hearts and souls into collecting, preservation, and the (then-new) field of professional interior decoration. They laid the groundwork, in many ways, for the popularity of DIY projects and HGTV home-makeover shows of our own time.
in Milton, Massachusetts, and will close on October 27. The book of the same title was released on June 4.

It’s Not Too Late to Become a 2024 Rhody Awards Sponsor

Be an important part of Historic Preservation’s event of the year. Sign up today and show that your business cares about historic preservation. To see how your business/organization can support the 2024 Rhody Awards — and what benefits are included for your business — click the button below.

Lippitt House Museum’s Rosé Garden Party — Get Your Tickets While They’re Still Available.
Step back in time and immerse yourself in the glamour of a bygone era at the Museum’s vintage-inspired Rosé Garden Party fundraiser Sunday, June 23, 4:00 – 6:00 PM.

Held on the grounds and inside the 1865 Lippitt House on Providence’s East Side, the annual Rosé Garden Party includes live performances from the band Minor Swing and the TropiGals, New England's premier vintage dance company!

Admission includes light bites, a variety of rosé wines, croquet, museum open house, parking, and a wine glass to take home after the party as a memento. Take your chance at tantalizing raffle prizes including an overnight NYC bundle, a glam photo package, and a selection of rosé wines to enjoy all summer.

Proceeds from the Rosé Garden Party support Lippitt House Museum programs throughout the year. Reserve your tickets below.

Thank you to event sponsors: **DIAMOND** - Compass; **GOLD** - Campus Fine Wines, Coastline Trust Company, Easy Entertaining, John & Madeleine Mullen, National Security Fire Alarm Systems, Parsons Capital Management
Introducing Our Summer Intern: Sarah Frank

Sarah Frank is a rising senior at Brown University studying English and philosophy. She’s the published author of three novels: One Chance, Two Secrets, and Three Quests, as well as a picture book for kids with anxiety titled Cloudy Days. Sarah was born and raised in Florida but loves New England—namely, Newport and all of the Newport mansions. When asked why she wanted to join Preserve RI, she stated, “one of the reasons I moved to New England is because of all the history and culture, but I know an incredible amount of work has to go into preserving it. I’m excited to learn about it and help!”

Sarah will be working with the communications team to help with photography and social media. Welcome aboard, Sarah!

Grant Opportunities

Historic New England has a grant opportunity available for 501(c)3 non-profits whose primary mission is historic preservation. The Herbert and Louise Whitney Fund for Community Preservation will award six grants of $1,250, one in each New England state.

Apply Here

Featured News

Rep. Carson’s cultural economy bond question included in budget bill approved by House

The House’s approval of Representative Lauren Carson’s proposal for a cultural economy bond signifies promising support for arts and cultural infrastructure in Rhode Island. At the November 5th election, Rhode Island voters will have the chance to fund this bond – and we urge voters to say “yes”.

Among other initiatives, it would allocate $2 million towards constructing a
new facility for the Tomaquag Museum at the University of Rhode Island’s
Kingston campus — a clear commitment to preserving and promoting
indigenous heritage. Moreover, it would allocate an additional $4 million to
the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts for infrastructure projects. This
broader support for the state's artistic landscape has rich potential for
fostering economic growth and community development through the arts.

Local News

Burrillville
June 13: Champlin funding to preserve Burrillville history

Newport
May 23: Boys & Girls Clubs of Newport County to Overhaul Historic Facility
June 3: The Breakers opens its historic third-floor family space to public tours

Portsmouth
June 1: Prudence Island Lighthouse gets new steward
June 14: Hog Island lighthouse in desperate need of repairs

Providence
June 3: NELSON TAYLOR AND THE BLACKSTONE TEAM OF COMPASS PROVIDENCE SHATTER
RECORD WITH SALE OF 66 WILLIAMS STREET FOR $6,850,000
June 6: Rhode Island artist’s massive work explores why time dominates our lives
June 6: Sale of Providence building paused as historians look for possible link to slavery
June 15: Providence, RI, Is the Charming East Coast Creative Capital to Visit Now

Statewide News
June 18: Governor McKee and Rhode Island Commerce announce $4 million in awards for
commercial district improvements
June 20: ConserFest returns to RI to support environmental preservation

National News
May 21: MAIN SPOTLIGHT: HOW TO REHABILITATE A HISTORIC BUILDING
June 5: This Brooklyn couple mastered the art of restoring historic brownstones. Now, they're
sharing all they know
June 7: Michigan Central Station reopens after historic renovation
June 8: How to Renovate a Historic Home—and Keep Its Character—According to Designers

International News
June 19: Historic building in Italy damaged by parkour tourist

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