

A  
Strategy  
for the  
Future



# Letter from the Leadership Team

November 2022

As co-chairs of the Board of Preserve Rhode Island, we are pleased that our new strategic plan directs us to reaffirm and expand its abiding principle, that preserving Rhode Island’s historic buildings and special places is the treasure we give to present and future generations. We accept the bold challenge implicit in this principle to:

- Support and engage *all* communities
- Become *the “go-to”* resource for help with specific preservation challenges
- Expand our role as the leading advocate for statewide historic preservation
- Demonstrate that preservation creates *positive change*, making the environment, our diverse communities, and the economy better for people who live and work here, and for those who visit

Preserve Rhode Island has had many successes over the years—in public advocacy, sharing widely compatible preservation solutions among divergent interests, holding easements on rescued properties, and saving unique historic buildings through persuasion and our own direct actions. However, there is much important work still to be done.

This strategic plan outlines ambitious future goals where historic places are valued as integral community assets. Some of our priorities have long time horizons and seem challenging, requiring wide collaboration to leverage resources and extend our reach. We recognize the need to find new funding to realize these goals.

We firmly believe that Rhode Island’s distinct quality of place, as shown by its historic places and its community-mindedness, remains essential for our common prosperity. We invite you to join us in our preservation efforts for the benefit of all people now and in the future.

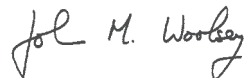
Preserve Rhode Island Co-Chairs,



William Kenyon



Elizabeth Goddard



John M. Woolsey



# vision

## Our aspiration for the future

Historic preservation creates positive change, making our diverse cultures, the environment, and the economy better for the people who live, visit, and work in Rhode Island.

# mission

## Our purpose as an organization

To protect and activate historic places for the benefit of all Rhode Islanders.

*Philip Walker House in East Providence, a working farm once again.*





*Middletown's Third Beach now free of unsightly utility poles and wires.*

# beliefs

That inspire and inform our work

- Historic preservation can benefit people from all communities.
- Historic preservation contributes to solutions on far-reaching societal issues from affordable housing to climate change to inclusion and equity.
- Historic places are important contributors to every community's character.
- Finding an appropriate use for an old building is the key to sustainable preservation.

# values

What we stand for

- We stand up for historic places—even when it is uncomfortable.
- We solve problems, offering practical solutions.
- We value collaboration because it increases our capacity and expertise, expands our impact, diversifies audiences, and leverages scarce resources.
- We strive to be inclusive in all areas of our work and serve diverse audiences in our public programming.
- We apply best practices as the standard of care of our own properties and collections.
- We honor donors' intentions and are trusted stewards of their contributions.
- We enjoy a safe, supportive, productive, and collegial work environment.



## **PRIORITIES AND GOALS**

### **ENGAGE**

Motivate people to connect with historic places so that all Rhode Island communities can reap cultural, environmental, and economic benefits.

### **INFLUENCE**

Strengthen support for the preservation of historic places.

### **EMPOWER**

Help people preserve the historic places that matter to them.

### **ACT**

Protect historic places through direct action, stewardship, collaboration, and innovation.

### **STRENGTHEN**

Build Preserve RI's capacity to better serve the growing preservation needs across our state's diverse communities.



*Lippitt House Museum's English Language Learner participants enjoy the garden.*

# engage:

**Motivate people to connect with historic places so that all Rhode Island communities can reap cultural, environmental, and economic benefits.**

- Make the case for safeguarding Rhode Island's historic places: illuminate the economic, environmental, and cultural benefits of historic preservation and relevancy to contemporary issues.
- Share the stories of Preserve RI's work so more people are aware of options and resources and are inspired to undertake preservation projects.
- Celebrate people and projects that exemplify the best of historic preservation in Rhode Island.
- Increase the number and diversity of people who care about historic places in Rhode Island.
- Provide museum programming that connects the story of Lippitt House with diverse, creative, and challenging insights and perspectives.

# influence:

## Strengthen support for the preservation of historic places.

- Be a leading voice for historic preservation in Rhode Island, a source of insight and information that inspires people to act.
- Conduct studies that explore the benefits, threats, needs, and opportunities to protect and activate historic places and recommend policy action.
- Team up with advocates to secure consistent sources of state funding for historic preservation projects and programs.
- Foster activists across the state to speak up to save threatened historic places and support the historic preservation legislative agenda.
- Strengthen partnerships with local, state, and regional allies.

*State historic tax credits make projects like Warwick's Pontiac Mills possible.*





*1772 Grants enable non-profits like the Wedding Cake House in Providence to take on capital projects.*

# empower:

**Help people preserve the historic places that matter to them.**

- Through our Community Preservation Response (CPR) program, broaden our capacity to provide ideas, strategies, technical advice, connections, and funding to protect and activate historic places.
- Facilitate collaboration among groups to leverage resources, expand expertise, and have greater impact in tackling shared threats and issues.
- Expand collaboration with underserved communities.
- Enhance our Preservation Toolkit to provide more information, expertise, advice, connections, and funding opportunities.
- Continue our grant program in partnership with The 1772 Foundation and cultivate additional funding sources to make grants available to others for preservation work.



# act:

Protect historic places through direct action, stewardship, collaboration, and innovation.

- Showcase our own properties as examples of excellent stewardship and productive uses.
- Grow our portfolio of real estate projects and other initiatives that protect historic places and demonstrate the benefits of preservation.
- Protect more places forever through our easement program, safeguarding properties under our protection through consistent communication, education, and oversight.

*Putting a new cedar shingle roof on the Valentine Whitman House (c 1696) in Lincoln.*





*Providence's Jeremiah Dexter House (c 1754) is home to Preserve RI's headquarters.*

# strengthen:

**Build Preserve RI's capacity to better serve the growing preservation needs across our state's diverse communities.**

- Increase diversity, equity, and inclusion in all aspects of Preserve RI administration, policy, staff, governance, and programs.
- Fund and implement a robust communication strategy that builds awareness of our work and makes the case for preservation in Rhode Island.
- Increase staff capacity to become the go-to resource for community groups, with the ability to respond, convene, and help organize.
- Expand resources to manage preservation real estate projects and to acquire and enforce preservation easements.
- Raise \$1 million for capital projects for Preserve RI's properties and new program initiatives.
- Build the Project Revolving Fund to \$1 million, allowing us to take on urgent preservation real estate projects.
- Grow the Easement Stewardship fund to \$500,000 for monitoring and defense.
- Identify funding to support studies that will inform policy and decision makers.
- Champion new sources of funding to support restoration and rehabilitation projects for historic places in all communities.

# by the numbers

Historic preservation pays dividends for Rhode Island's economy, environment, and quality of life.

## State Historic Tax Credits are Smart Investments

Since 2001, State Historic Tax Credits have attracted over \$1.8 billion in private investment, rehabilitating over 300 historic buildings and producing over 6,000 sorely needed housing units. Every \$1 in tax credits is estimated to generate over \$10 in economic activity. Two-thirds of Rhode Island's cities and towns have projects that utilized the tax credits.

## Heritage Tourism Creates Jobs and Boosts Our Economy

Tourism is big business in Rhode Island, adding more than \$1 billion to the state's economy each year. 44% of those tourists self-identify as heritage visitors to historic sites, museums, and cultural attractions. That adds up to a lot of jobs—19,000 directly and 7,000 indirectly.

## Preservation Improves Quality of Life and Draws New Residents

People want to live in historic neighborhoods. In Rhode Island, where population growth is low, more than half of the growth occurred in historic neighborhoods since 2000. While these neighborhoods represent just 1% of our land, they represent 12% of our population—preventing suburban sprawl and protecting open spaces. Additionally, rehabbing vacant and underutilized buildings into vibrant communities reduces arson and street crime.

## Preservation Makes Our Environment Healthier

Did you know that repurposing the Kinsley Building in Providence kept 2,000 tons of debris out of our state's landfill? It's often said the greenest building is the one already built. Repurposing and restoring historic materials not only looks pretty, but often is as cost and energy efficient in the long run. Moreover, rehabilitation of industrial mills into apartments and commercial space often requires the cleanup of brownfield sites, improving our land and waterways.

# join us

Support historic preservation  
efforts across our state



**DONATE TODAY**  
[www.preserveri.org](http://www.preserveri.org)



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*Training volunteers in stone wall repair at Norman Bird Sanctuary, Middletown.*