



## PRESERVING OUR ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE

*Respect for yesterday  
A promise for tomorrow*



*We shape our buildings; thereafter, they shape us.*

— Sir Winston Churchill, Statesman

*The mother art is architecture.*

*Without an architecture of our own we have no soul of our  
own civilization. — Frank Lloyd Wright, Architect*

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ABRAHAM WHEELWRIGHT HOUSE  
NEWBURYPORT, MA

## PRESERVING AMERICA

America owes its beauty to a diverse natural and architectural landscape. Over the past 230 years, Americans have created cities and towns that reflect pioneer spirit and ingenuity. America's growth from a rural nation to a diverse industrial society is exemplified in our architecture. The buildings that comprise our historic neighborhoods describe a unique American story of progress, change and preservation. They are a living monument to our predecessors and a history lesson to our youth. Unfortunately, like so many other things unique to our past, America's historic buildings are endangered.

As our population grows, the interest in convenience and commercialism increases and the buildings that tell so much about our history are put at risk. They are demolished to accommodate strip malls, parking lots, hotels, sports arenas and larger, newer houses. What is gained may be viewed temporarily as an improvement, but what is lost is lost forever.

*While the demolitions have razed well-known individual structures...their most devastating impact has been on the character of the city's neighborhoods.... It's as if once distinct parts of Chicago had been thrown into a blender and whipped into a bland mix.*

— *Chicago Tribune*, January 13, 2003





## TIMELESS TREASURES LOST

The *Chicago Tribune* in 2003 compared a recent survey of historically significant properties within 22 of Chicago's historic communities to a city-wide survey taken 20 years prior. The newspaper found that nearly 800 historically significant buildings in the 22 communities had been destroyed over that 20-year period. According to the *Tribune*, the purpose of the 1980s survey was to help the city protect its architectural heritage. The point of the report was to demonstrate that the city failed to apply the knowledge obtained from the first survey by adding the necessary protections for these historic resources. The lack of legal protection enabled the rampant demolition of these buildings.

What happened in Chicago is not unique. The Historic West End in Boston was targeted for urban renewal because of its crowded, narrow streets and unsightly structures including 10,000 housing units that accommodated mostly low-income residents and immigrants. But what fell beneath the bulldozers were not just rundown buildings. In the midst of the destruction were

also hundreds of colonial structures that gave the neighborhood a unique historic character that can never be reproduced. In today's landscape of high rise office buildings, condominiums and shops, the West End has precious little left of its historic neighborhood. And more recently, demolition of Boston's historic Gaiety Theater was permitted despite the objections of historians and preservationists.

In New York City, the demolition of Penn Station in 1963 attracted national attention to the need to preserve our architectural heritage and helped make the case for federal protections. Since then, America's one time tallest building, the Singer Building, built in 1908 and located in New York City's financial district, was demolished due to a perceived lack of functionality in today's business environment. In addition, five historic Broadway theaters built in the 1930s died an untimely death when they were demolished to accommodate a new hotel.



PATAPSCO FEMALE INSTITUTE  
ELLICOTT CITY, MD



INDIA WHARF STORES  
BOSTON, MA

In Newburyport, Massachusetts, the local government tried unsuccessfully to fund a preservation commission to monitor and protect the second largest single community of Federal architecture in the United States. This community of 2,600 homes has been on the National Register of Historic Places since 1984. Despite placement on the National Register, local efforts to protect historic buildings have failed, and demolition, development and period inappropriate alterations and additions have effectively replaced one third of these historic properties.

In December 2005, the *New York Times* reported that landmark status was revoked by the New York City Council for the Austin, Nichols & Co. warehouse in Brooklyn, designed in 1915 by Cass Gilbert. This building, identified as a landmark by the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, was no longer protected by city ordinances. It was scheduled for major alterations considered inappropriate by historic preservationists, although it is now expected to obtain individual listing on the National Register of Historic Places in late 2007 or early 2008.

Protecting our nation's historic resources is a continual challenge, requiring local, state and federal protections. A common misconception is that local ordinances provide sufficient protections. However, this has not proven to be the case. This is why federal legislation was passed to allow for the voluntary protection of America's architectural heritage through historic preservation easements. Some of the reasons that the protections offered by local ordinances and preservation commissions alone can prove insufficient include the following:

**Ordinances Change, but Easements are Forever –** Easements are perpetual agreements; local ordinances, however, can be revoked or altered at any time in response to changing government priorities. Local protections may seem strong today, but the same may not always be true in the future. The protection offered by a historic preservation easement also goes beyond limiting changes to the exterior of the property, which is where local ordinances normally focus. Easements prohibit demolition by neglect and require that the structural integrity of the entire building be maintained. Easements remain independent of local politics or local budget pressures.



CROWN CORK & BOTTLING COMPANY  
BALTIMORE, MD

*“...it is again no question of expediency or feeling whether we shall preserve the buildings of past times or not. We have no right whatever to touch them. They are not ours. They belong partly to those who built them, and partly to all the generations of mankind who are to follow us.”*

—John Ruskin, Art Critic

**Budget Constraints** – Historic commissions often do not have the necessary funding to fully achieve their missions and rarely exist without experiencing political pressure. National studies reveal that 40 percent of preservation commissions chartered to protect their local historic communities lack sufficient funding or staff to monitor the properties they are charged with overseeing, much less fight their destruction in court when necessary. Even the strongest historic preservation commissions often have their autonomy put at risk due to budgetary concerns of the municipality. Cost-cutting proposals that threaten to disband preservation commissions as independent bodies are commonplace. These proposals effectively reduce these commissions’ budgets to zero and shift their responsibilities to the city’s commissioners or planning commissions.

**Federal and Local Protections Not Always Aligned** – The boundaries of historic districts listed on the National Register of Historic Places can vary greatly from the boundaries of the local, ordinance-protected historic district, even when those historic districts are known by the same name. Two examples include

Baltimore, Maryland and Salem, Massachusetts where maps of the historic districts regulated by local ordinances contain 30 to 50 percent fewer properties than maps defining the historic districts listed on the National Register. In other areas, such as Brooklyn, New York, entire districts as defined by the National Register are excluded from the list of historic districts protected by the local preservation commission. In addition, the Internal Revenue Service has defined the required protections in a historic preservation agreement and the Department of Interior has defined the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties. Local preservation ordinances have no uniform protections and vary significantly from one municipality to the next. Some local preservation commissions have definitive powers, while others can be overruled and still others are strictly advisory. Even where the local preservation commissions do have the authority to approve changes, they do not always align with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards.





BROAD STREET STATION  
PHILADELPHIA, PA



PENN STATION  
NEW YORK, NY

## Of A Bygone Era...

Each year countless historic buildings and neighborhoods in metropolitan and rural areas throughout our country are lost either to neglect or demolition. With each building's collapse some of the character and craftsmanship that defined our nation's main streets and town centers is lost. The intricate columns, detailed sculptures, arches and ornaments that defined the office buildings, homes, theaters, banks and churches of our country are fewer and fewer. Demolished by developers with the approval of local governments, these historic buildings are often replaced by high rise condominiums, apartments, and office buildings, cookie-cutter chain stores, nondescript retail buildings and parking lots. The result is not just the irreplaceable loss of architectural treasures but also of the historic ambience the buildings brought to the communities where they were located. What replaces them usually lacks any unique architectural quality and provides little cultural value for the future. Attacks

on historic buildings are nothing new. For decades they have fallen as tastes change and at the hands of developers who find it more cost effective to rebuild than rehabilitate. The following are a few examples of some of the better known buildings and historic neighborhoods that have been lost forever:

### **Alexandria, Virginia**

First National Bank

### **Baltimore, Maryland**

Baltimore & Susquehanna Railroad:

Calvert Station

Odorite Building

Tower Building

### **Boston, Massachusetts**

Gaiety Theater

Historic West End

S.S. Pierce Building

Traveler's Insurance Building

### **Chicago, Illinois**

Lexington Hotel

Mercantile Exchange

State Theater

Stock Exchange Building



SINGER BUILDING  
NEW YORK, NY

### **New Jersey**

Historic Villages of Rural New Jersey

Marlboro Inn, Montclair

### **New York City, New York**

Astor Theater

Bijou Theater

Gaiety Theater

Helen Hayes Theater

Morosco Theater

Penn Station

Savoy Plaza Hotel

The Singer Building

### **Newburyport, Massachusetts**

Wolfe Tavern

### **Philadelphia, Pennsylvania**

Broad Street Station

Lincoln Building

Rittenhouse Square homes



LEADBEATER HOUSE  
ALEXANDRIA, VA

## PROVIDING SALVATION

*The American dream has always depended  
on the dialogue between the  
present and the past. In our architecture,  
as in all our arts—indeed,  
as in our political and social culture as  
a whole—ours has been a struggle to  
formulate and sustain a usable past.*

— Robert A. M. Stern, Architect

Despite the American desire for things modern and new, there has always been a respect and appreciation for the past and a reverence for things historical. But, while as a society we appreciate our heritage and ancestry, we have not always had the foresight to preserve and protect the places of our past. This realization first came to light in the mid-20th century during the era of urban renewal and is what prompted Congress to pass the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966.

This act established the National Register of Historic Places, a list of sites, buildings, objects, districts and structures significant in American history, architecture, archeology and culture. It did not, however, give the federal government any real authority to protect these historic resources. The authority to create protections remained with state and municipal governments. Due to political and economic pressures, these governments often became advocates for the commercial interests behind the destruction of many historic buildings and communities listed on the National Register. In response,



## Economic Benefit

As well as providing the preservation benefit of protecting historic properties forever, the Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentive Program provides additional benefits. The majority of historic property owners who donate their easement reinvest the funds provided by the tax incentive towards the restoration of their property.

This ensures the property remains in good maintenance, thus furthering the preservation effort. Preservation organizations also have determined that investment in property restoration provides an eight-fold increase in the economy, creating jobs for highly skilled contractors and those that provide their materials.



Congress strengthened the 1966 legislation by passing the Tax Reform Act of 1976 and Tax Treatment Extension Act of 1980, which created the Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentive Program and set the stage for the current wave of voluntary preservation in America.

The Program uses tax incentives to encourage owners of buildings of historical significance, and those contributing to registered historic districts, to make historic preservation easement donations to qualified organizations such as the Trust for Architectural Easements. As of 2006, more than 4,200 easements have been donated nationwide.

Owners of historic properties who participate in the Program are eligible to receive federal and often state and local income tax deductions equal to the loss in property value attributed to their historic preservation easement donations. They retain title to their structures and can change the interior, rent their building, sell it, will it or live in it as they wish. What these owners donate is the contractual assurance that they will maintain the property and not make changes to the building's exterior without authorization from the qualified organization.

The architectural integrity of the building is protected in perpetuity by an objective easement holding organization whose interests are motivated by preservation and

which is free from commercial and political pressures. Owners often reinvest their tax savings in their buildings, using these funds to rehabilitate and restore their historic properties. For this reason the Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentive Program is credited with helping to repopulate and redevelop historic neighborhoods in many major cities. Much of the renaissance in downtown Cleveland, Savannah, Brooklyn and other urban areas can be attributed, at least partially, to this federal preservation program.



ROWHOUSE  
BALTIMORE, MD

*"...conservation easements...are one of the most underutilized tax deductions available to historic property owners. Taxpayers should be aware of this opportunity to save money while also serving the public interest by preserving historic properties in urban settings for future generations."*

*— The CPA Journal, March 2003*

## CHAMPIONING HISTORIC PRESERVATION



*Architecture has recorded the great ideas of the human race. Not only every religious symbol, but every human thought has its page in that vast book.*

—Victor Hugo, *Author*



CARROLL GARDENS  
BROOKLYN, NY

Thanks to its donors, the Trust for Architectural Easements has become the largest not-for-profit historic preservation trust in the nation to adopt the Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentive Program as its primary approach to protecting our nation's historic resources. By educating property owners about the Program and developing efficient and affordable ways for owners to participate, the Trust has successfully accepted historic preservation easement donations on more than 750 properties and has built a stewardship fund to protect these properties in excess of \$17 million. The Trust's number of easement holdings and its financial resources guarantee its ability to guard the architectural integrity of these historic buildings forever, thereby helping to assure protection of the historic character of the neighborhoods where they are located.

The Trust currently serves Illinois; eastern Maryland; eastern Massachusetts including Boston; the New York City metropolitan area, including historic districts in the Hudson River Valley, New Jersey and Connecticut; and northern Virginia. The Trust accepts easements on buildings where local ordinances also provide protection and where local ordinances are weak or non-existent. Where local ordinances exist the Trust provides a level of insurance for the protection of these historic resources. Where there are no other protections, the Trust becomes the first line of defense. The Trust also is committed to preserving historic buildings of all values and uses. It offers protection to this broad range of properties because it views its role as supporting the National Park Service and its assessment as to which properties are historically significant and require protection.



## Protecting History...

The Trust for Architectural Easements furthers its mission by consistently adding new registered historic districts to the list of districts it already serves. The following historic districts are those where the Trust for Architectural Easements holds historic preservation easements.

### Illinois

Historic Michigan Boulevard  
Michigan-Wacker

### Maryland

Bolton Hill  
Canton  
Cathedral Hill  
Colonial Annapolis  
Ellicott City  
Federal Hill  
Federal Hill South  
Fells Point  
Greater Homeland  
Guilford  
Mount Vernon Place  
Ridgely's Delight  
Roland Park



DALTON-HERBERT HOUSES  
ALEXANDRIA, VA

### Massachusetts

Back Bay  
Beacon Hill  
Billerica Town Common  
Cohasset Common  
Cottage Farm  
County Street  
Eagle Hill  
East End  
Frederick Douglass Square  
Leather District  
Marblehead  
Mission Hill Triangle  
Newburyport

Newton Highlands  
Newton Upper Falls  
North Falmouth Village  
Pill Hill  
South End  
Sumner Hill  
Thomas Hollis  
Topsfield Town Common  
Town Hill  
Wenham

### New Jersey

Hamilton Park  
Harismus Cove  
Paulis Hook  
Van Horst Park



TIFFANY AND COMPANY  
NEW YORK, NY

*We may live without her, and worship without her, but  
we cannot remember without her. How cold is all history,  
how lifeless all imagery, compared to that which the  
living nation writes, and the uncorrupted marble bears!*

— John Ruskin, *Art Critic*

## New York

Allentown  
Boerum Hill  
Brooklyn Heights  
Carnegie Hill  
Carroll Gardens  
Charlton-King-Vandam  
Chelsea  
Clinton Hill  
Cobble Hill  
Ditmas Park  
East 78th Street Houses  
Fort Greene  
Gramercy Park  
Greenwich Village  
Hamilton Heights  
Henderson Place  
Houses at 146-156 East 89th Street  
Houses at 208-218 East 78th Street

Jackson Heights  
Ladies' Mile  
Lefferts Manor  
Madison Square North  
Manhattan Avenue - West 120-123rd  
Streets  
Metropolitan Museum  
Murray Hill  
NoHo  
NoHo East  
Park Slope  
Riverside - West End  
Riverside Drive - West 80th-81st Streets  
Rowhouses at 322-344 East 69th Street  
Sag Harbor Village  
Saint Mark's  
Senator Street  
Sniffen Court

SoHo  
State Street Houses  
Stuyvesant Square  
Treadwell Farm  
Tribeca East  
Tribeca North  
Tribeca South  
Tribeca West  
Upper East Side  
Upper West Side/Central Park West  
West End-Collegiate

## Virginia

Alexandria  
Potomac Village  
Rosemont



## COMMUNITY ADVOCACY

The Trust for Architectural Easements takes preservation further than the protection of buildings through the acceptance of historic preservation easements. The Trust also supports local efforts to restore historic landmarks, monuments, parks and streets, and funds and develops educational programs on historic architecture and the benefits of preservation. These are important activities in the preservation of our historic communities.

**Lessons in Architectural History:** Educating our youth about the importance of preservation is important to the long-term public appreciation for our nation's architectural heritage. Trust leaders worked closely with the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York City and selected elementary and secondary schools in the states it serves to develop programs and curricula to educate students about America's architectural history and to build further awareness about the need for preservation. For instance, the Trust made a \$50,000 grant to MoMA to create a collection of study guides for high school teachers and students around the museum's Tall Buildings exhibit. The Trust also is working with Open House New York and with Friends of the Highline, both based in New York City, to develop youth programs in architecture, architectural history, and historic preservation.

*Architecture is to make us know and  
remember who we are.*

— Sir Geoffrey Jellicoe, Architect

In Washington, DC, the Trust developed and administered an after-school program at the Ross School, a public elementary school. The intent of the program was to help the children develop an appreciation for architectural design. They learned basic architectural vocabulary, gained an appreciation for some important historic buildings, and had a chance to design their own “dream houses” using basic drafting techniques. The Trust plans to offer more programs of this type in the future at schools in Washington, D.C. and the other communities it serves.





WASHINGTON MONUMENT, MT. VERNON PLACE  
BALTIMORE, MD

*If the past cannot teach the present and the  
father cannot teach the son, then history need not  
have bothered to go on, and the world has  
wasted a great deal of time.*

*- Russell Hoban, Author*

**Neighborhood Restoration:** Another way that the Trust is helping to encourage the cause of preservation in the community is by supporting local initiatives to restore the character of historic neighborhoods. The Trust for Architectural Easements has provided grants to community groups in Greenwich Village and NoHo, and worked with the New York City Department of Transportation, to restore the neighborhoods' cobblestone streets and install stylistically appropriate street lamps. Similarly, the Trust also has provided financial support to community groups working to preserve and restore historic parks, including Canal and James Bogardus Triangle Parks in New York City and Hiscock Park in Boston.

**Memorials to the Past:** The importance of preserving America's history touches on so many things, not the least of which are the memorials and monuments our predecessors erected in recognition of this country's heroes. Just as it is important that our historic buildings and districts do not fall into decay, it is important that these symbols remain intact and true to their benefactors' vision. The Trust for Architectural Easements has helped to assure that this happens with a grant to the Art and Antiquities unit of the New York City Parks & Recreation Department's Citywide Monuments Conservation Program. This grant gives graduate students studying historic preservation an opportunity to learn the rare

skills of sculpture conservation and restoration, while providing important maintenance for these memorials.

**Buildings in History:** For the Trust for Architectural Easements, protecting America's most storied buildings for the enjoyment of future generations is a philosophy that is all-inclusive. When the Lee-Fendall House Museum in Alexandria, Virginia, needed a strong advocate, the Trust was there. Famous both for its ties to Virginia's historic Lee family, and its design as Alexandria's only telescoping building, the 219-year-old structure was in danger of collapse. The building needed its summer beam and sill repaired. These deteriorating components bear the weight of the house and partly form the base of the house's rear wall. The Trust assisted the effort to fund this repair and made a matching grant to the Museum.

**Educating Owners of Historic Property:** The Trust's education of property owners goes beyond an explanation of the Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentive Program. It includes increasing awareness about historic preservation through the Trust's newsletter, *Columns*, website resources, and sponsorship of local events. The Trust's representatives, often residents of historic districts themselves, offer free informational seminars throughout the year. They explain the benefits of the Program as well as the consequences of neglecting to preserve our architectural past.



## PROTECTIONS FOR DISTRICTS AND LANDMARKS

In addition to actively promoting the cause of preservation throughout the historic districts it serves, the Trust for Architectural Easements is working in support of area residents and business leaders' efforts to preserve their neighborhoods and landmark buildings by assisting those not in registered historic districts to obtain federal certification or listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The following are some historic districts for which the Trust helped obtain recognition.

### **Maryland**

#### ***Reservoir Hill (Certified in 2004)***

A 32-block area, home to the most diverse, intact collection of late-19th- and early-20th-century urban architecture in Baltimore City.

### **Massachusetts**

#### ***Beacon Hill (Redefined in 2007)***

Directly north of the Boston Common and the Boston Public Garden, this downtown residential neighborhood houses

a diverse variety of architectural styles. Its architecture, mostly brick rowhouses, includes examples of the Federal, Greek Revival and Victorian periods, as well as early 20th-century colonial revival homes and tenements.

### **New York**

#### ***Carnegie Hill (Certified in 2003)***

Named for one-time resident Andrew Carnegie, this primarily residential area is directly associated with trends in the development of Manhattan from the 1850s to the 1960s.

#### ***Ladies Mile (Certified in 2003)***

The shopping center of New York City and the nation during the Gilded Age, this area is best known for its early skyscrapers and enormous department stores.

#### ***Madison Square North (Certified in 2004)***

Comprised of 78 buildings representing New York City's commercial history from 1849 to 1930, Madison

*To fully appreciate an older historic district we must consider its current status within the context of time and look at both its past and its future.*

*- Norman Tyler, Historic Preservation:  
An Introduction to Its History, Principles and Practice*



FIFTH AVENUE  
NEW YORK, NY



FLATIRON BUILDING  
NEW YORK, NY

Square North evolved over the years from a fashionable residential neighborhood into a major entertainment district and then a mercantile district.

***Metropolitan Museum District (Certified in 2002)***

Named for the nearby Metropolitan Museum of Art, this district is comprised primarily of residential buildings erected between the late 1860s and early 1930s.

***Riverside-West End (Certified in 2004)***

A small community on the Upper West Side of Manhattan, Riverside-West End evolved from a sparsely inhabited district into a densely developed, fashionable community representing New York City's residential history from 1884 to 1939.

***Treadwell Farm (Certified in 2004)***

A two-block, 19th century residential enclave comprised primarily of rowhouses modernized to reveal the design aesthetic of the early 1920's.

***Wall Street (Listed in 2007)***

Commonly hailed as the economic and financial center of New York City, this 36-block area contains some of the earliest skyscrapers in the United States, as well as significant buildings of the Modern period, dating as late as 1967.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

To obtain additional information about the Trust for Architectural Easements, the Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentive Program, or to learn more about why historic preservation is so important, please visit our website at [www.architecturaltrust.org](http://www.architecturaltrust.org) or call us at 1-888-831-2107.



*We at the Trust for Architectural Easements<sup>sm</sup> believe in the cause of historic preservation. We have a deep understanding and respect for what historic buildings say about our country and our ancestors. Historic neighborhoods and the buildings that comprise them should be preserved so that they can educate future generations about our shared cultural values. Too often, we have stood idle while culturally and architecturally significant buildings are demolished. These historic structures are often replaced by new buildings that are out of context with their historic neighborhoods. While these may have value in their own right, we believe they should not be built at the expense of America's architectural heritage.*

*America's historic neighborhoods tell stories about people, about time, and about priorities. We think these are important stories that should be passed from generation to generation. I hope you agree and will join us in our efforts to promote historic preservation.*

*Steven McClain  
President*



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