



PRESS RELEASE

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Link to press kit with additional info and pictures for individual sites (for press use only - do not share link with public):

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PRESERVATION NEW JERSEY ANNOUNCES THE 10 MOST ENDANGERED HISTORIC PLACES LIST FOR 2020

TRENTON, NJ – In recognition of national Preservation Month, Preservation New Jersey (PNJ) announced its annual list of the [10 Most Endangered Historic Places](#) in New Jersey at a virtual press conference at 11:00 AM on Thursday, May 14, 2019. PNJ was joined by the advocates for this year's endangered historic places via a ZOOM rally to support New Jersey's threatened cultural and architectural heritage.

The 10 Most Endangered Historic Places program spotlights irreplaceable historic, architectural, cultural, and archaeological resources in New Jersey that are in imminent danger of being lost. The act of listing these resources acknowledges their importance to the heritage of New Jersey and draws attention to the predicaments that endanger their survival and the survival of historic resources statewide. The list, generated from nominations by the public, aims to attract new perspectives and ideas to sites in desperate need of creative solutions.

This year marks a special milestone in PNJ's efforts to highlight and protect NJ's historic resources - we are commemorating the 25th Anniversary of the 10 Most Endangered Places initiative. Over this past year, PNJ has hosted workshops and tours celebrating the success stories - sites that have been saved, restored, and are in use once again. The anniversary festivities culminated in a Gala Celebration at Newark Symphony Hall in March where PNJ premiered the documentary – "[Saved or Lost Forever](#)" – which tells the story of New Jersey's places that have been part of significant events and periods in our state's history, discusses their importance to our collective past, and the fights to rescue these historic properties from extinction. The documentary focuses on three sites recognized on PNJ's 10 Most list – Camden High School, Romer Shoal Light, and the Van Wagenen/Apple Tree House.

Several challenges face properties on this year's endangered sites list, including neglect and deferred maintenance, threats incurred by redevelopment and new construction, difficulties raising adequate historic preservation funding, and the need for creative adaptive reuse proposals. Seven of the sites on this year's list are publicly owned, highlighting the government's frequent role in deferred maintenance along with the reality of limited historic preservation funds. The list also includes sites that portray rare building types of which only a few are left and a thematic listing of New Jersey's 1970's heritage. These two groups - those of which few are left, and those which there are many but not yet recognized as historic - showcase how failure to appreciate unique structures, even if once ubiquitous, can lead to their loss.

PNJ's 10 MOST ENDANGERED HISTORIC PLACES 2020, cont.

As we acknowledge each year, selections to the 10 Most Endangered Historic Places list are based on the likelihood that historic buildings and places can be brought back to useful and productive life. PNJ proudly points to many properties previously listed among the 10 Most Endangered that have now been saved and preserved or rehabilitated and have once again become character-defining and economy-boosting assets to New Jersey's communities. As we announce this year's list, we are encouraged by Newark Symphony Hall, which was included on our first ever 10 Most Endangered List in 1995 and recently hosted PNJ's 10 Most 25th Anniversary Gala. Newark Symphony Hall is in the midst of a \$500 million capital campaign, recently launched a brand new website, and provides community programming and hosts special events all year long. Although PNJ's 10 Most Endangered Properties list is published once per year, the fight for the preservation of our historic and cultural resources is daily, and being able to hold our celebration at Symphony Hall 25 years after its listing, is evidence that bringing awareness of such threats can bring about creative solutions.

Selections to the 10 Most Endangered list are based on three criteria:

- historic significance and architectural integrity,
- the critical nature of the threat identified, and
- the likelihood that inclusion on the list will have a positive impact on efforts to protect the resource

The **2020 Ten Most Endangered Historic Places in NJ** List:

Cranford Roundhouse, Cranford, Union County

- The Cranford Roundhouse is one of only three known surviving roundhouses in New Jersey. Constructed between 1913 and 1915, the roundhouse is important as a once-common but now rare building type associated with New Jersey's dynamic railroad history. Today, Cranford Township's Department of Public Works uses it as a maintenance yard and storage facility. However, there has been discussion of relocating the DPW; and in October 2019, the Township Planning Board recommended removing the roundhouse from the list of historic resources. Without local historic protections, the Township may sell the property for private development, which could lead to its demolition. The Roundhouse has enormous potential for adaptive reuse that would be attractive to the town's growing population, such as artists' studio space, a small performance/event venue, or a brewery. No matter its future use, the preservation of the Cranford Roundhouse is critical to ensuring this unique and rare railroad building type is not lost forever.

Elks Hall, New Brunswick, Middlesex County

- Elks Hall, home to Elks Lodge #324, sits proudly on Livingston Avenue adjacent to the newly revitalized Cultural Arts District in downtown New Brunswick. Dedicated in 1926, Elks Hall is an example of classical revival architecture designed by local Highland Park architect Alexander Merchant. The site also boasts a historic "Elk Sculpture" created by Laura Gardin Fraser, a prominent early 20th-Century female sculptor. Elks Hall has played an important role in the civic and community life of New Brunswick for nearly a century. The Elks Lodge #324 has recently signaled plans to demolish this historic landmark before the end of the year to make way for a new building. The close proximity of the newly revitalized Cultural Arts District offers a timely opportunity to find a new compatible reuse for Elks Hall as part of the arts and cultural community of the city. A positive resolution would be a fitting tribute to the history of the Elks Lodge #324 commitment to the New Brunswick community for the last 125 years.

Fort Lee Post Office, Fort Lee, Bergen County

- The Fort Lee Post Office was constructed as a part of the New Deal program in 1938. Like many federal projects of that era, it was designed in the colonial revival style, honoring the architecture of the nation's founding. The building also boasts four large-scale murals by Henry Schnakenberg depicting the city's history. Today the building stands as a reminder of Fort Lee's roots, but it also faces the threat of demolition. As part of the City's redevelopment efforts, the US Postal Service agreed to relocate to a new facility. The City then plans to demolish the building and replace it with a passive park. Many post office buildings have been successfully adaptively reused as offices, restaurants, and cultural or community spaces. The City should rethink the redevelopment plan to incorporate the post office intact.

Futuro Houses, Greenwich, Cumberland County and Willingboro, Burlington County

- The Futuro House was conceived in 1968 as a “portable” ski chalet by Matti Suuronen, a pioneer in using reinforced plastic for construction. Futuro structures are made of fiberglass reinforced plastic as to be light and easy to transport to remote locations, easy to construct once on site, and efficient to heat and cool. Less than 100 of these alien-like Futuro Homes were built, and today they are located all over the world. Because of their durable construction and unique design, they have survived in form. Two of the chalets have survived in New Jersey - in Greenwich and Willingboro. While both are in need of repair, they are still largely intact. It is imperative that these architecturally historic pieces be preserved for generations to come. Efforts should be undertaken to list them on the State and National Registers of Historic Places and develop reuse plans for the structures.

Lauriston Estate, Rumson, Monmouth County

- The Lauriston Estate in Rumson Borough is an 1870 Colonial Revival mansion designed by New York and Red Bank architect Leon Cubberly. It is the only residential building in Rumson listed on the National Historic Register of Historic Places. Designed in the predominant Colonial Revival style of that era, the Lauriston Estate is grand and includes a marble foyer and spacious entrance hall leading to a unique dual bowed staircase – just one of many outstanding architectural features. Lauriston is currently at the center of an affordable housing settlement agreement that would allow replacement of the mansion with 16 luxury townhouses. Firstly, we believe that the mansion could be adaptively reused as a part of the proposed development. Secondly, the plight of the Lauriston Estate is reflective of a larger issue related to the State’s refusal to actively manage its obligation to ensure the creation of adequate and safe affordable housing. Preservation New Jersey fully supports the creation of affordable housing and believes that Rumson should provide its fair share. Lack of a functioning office of affordable housing and rules; however, has led to haphazard implementation that is not based in sound planning. So long as the State of New Jersey continues to allow the courts to implement affordable housing policy, Preservation New Jersey fears that other historic resources will be at risk of demolition.

Old Stone House, South Orange, Essex County

- Nearly hidden behind the South Orange police station, the Old Stone House is the oldest structure in the Township and, possibly New Jersey. Historians estimate that Dutch settlers built the farmhouse between 1666 and 1680 when they arrived in Newark. The original house was 1 1/2 stories with a native, rubble stone foundation. Renovations in 1877 and 1896 transformed the farmhouse into a Queen Anne, shingle-style mansion. The Township of South Orange Village has owned the Old Stone House since 1953. It was vacated in 1983 and has suffered significant water damage and deterioration. Unable to bear the cost to restore the building, the Township has tried to sell the property to no avail. Without an intervention soon, one of the oldest structures in the state will be lost forever.

Records Storage Building, Hoboken, Hudson County

- The Records Storage Building, which sits at the edge of the Delaware, Lackawanna & Western Railroad rail yard in Hoboken, is a 1904 three-story, red brick building harkening back to English Victorian Gothic Revival architecture. Sadly, the Records Storage Building has deteriorated to the point that the NJ Department of Community Affairs has called for its demolition due to safety concerns. The building's future will be determined by the NJ Transit Board of Directors after the ongoing federal National Historic Preservation Act review process is complete. While the required [Alternatives Analysis](#) leans towards demolition or relocation, public sentiment predominantly favors adaptive reuse. With the impending Hoboken Yards redevelopment, there is no reason to believe that if the Records Storage Building is still standing, that the chosen redeveloper could not rehabilitate and reuse the structure. It is important for NJ Transit to stabilize the structure now, so that it is still standing when the redevelopment commences.

Roosevelt Public School, Roosevelt, Monmouth County

PNJ's 10 MOST ENDANGERED HISTORIC PLACES 2020, cont.

- Jersey Homesteads, now known as Roosevelt, NJ, was established in 1933 by a New Deal initiative intended to provide relief for industrial workers and struggling farmers. Renowned architects, Louis I. Kahn and Alfred Kastner, designed the community and the school there and painter Ben Shahn completed a large mural in the school lobby depicting themes of Jewish immigration, the garment industry and labor movement, and the establishment of Jersey Homesteads as a model planned community for workers. It seems likely that insufficient funding for the district, due to the changing State school aid formula, will cause the school to close in the coming years. This particular building's deed stipulates that if it closes, ownership refers back to the federal government, who has a dubious history of neglecting surplus real estate. With population shifts and the reallocation of State funding, we will continue to see school closures statewide. While it may not be feasible to maintain these structures as schools, protections must be in place to preserve them and plan for their adaptive reuse.

Sutfin House, Manalapan, Monmouth County

- The Derick Sutfin House in Monmouth Battlefield State Park is the park's oldest structure, and witnessed some of the Revolution's most dramatic scenes. Jacob Sutfin constructed the dwelling after purchasing the property in 1718. During the Battle of Monmouth in June 1778, the farmhouse was in the midst of the action, caught in the crossfire of the biggest field artillery duel of the American Revolution. When Derick Sutfin died in 1796, two of his neighbors carefully inventoried the contents of the dwelling, outbuildings and fields, providing an exceptional interpretive opportunity. The threat to the Sutfin House is immediate. It is in such a severely deteriorated condition that there have been discussions of abandoning the house to demolition by neglect so available funds can be used to maintain two nearby houses. With the 250th anniversary of the battle less than a decade away, Preservation New Jersey supports the view that the State of New Jersey should be moving to allocate sufficient funds to prepare the park, and this specific home, for its upcoming part on the national stage in 2028.

New Jersey's 1970's Heritage, Statewide

- While the 1970s may not seem like that long ago, the decade officially reaches the 50-year benchmark as of 2020, meaning that sites from the era will soon be eligible for listing in the State and National Registers of Historic Places. Sites of the more recent past are particularly vulnerable to demolition, as often people think that something must be much older to be historic. Highlights of this bygone era include works from internationally renowned architect [Michael Graves](#), "the father of gentle architecture" [Malcolm Wells](#), and pioneering female architect [Eleanore Petersen](#). Beyond architecture, the 1970s was a tumultuous time in New Jersey -- from Earth Day, to legalized gambling, to Bruce Springsteen, to the Mount Laurel decision. Out of this era also came cultural changes that we still feel in our society today. Now is the time to begin formally identifying, documenting, and planning for the future of significant places of the 1970s.

Founded in 1978, Preservation New Jersey is a statewide nonprofit organization that promotes the economic vitality, sustainability, and heritage of New Jersey's diverse communities through advocacy and education. Preservation New Jersey produces this annual list of New Jersey's 10 Most Endangered Historic Places in addition to other advocacy programs; provides educational workshops; publishes an interactive website; serves as a resource for technical assistance and general advice for the public; and addresses legislation and public policies that impact New Jersey's historic places and communities.

Visit Preservation New Jersey's website at www.preservationnj.org for more information regarding the organization and the 10 Most Endangered program. For details about national Preservation Month, visit the National Trust for Historic Preservation's website at www.preservationnation.org.