



PRESERVATION
LONG ISLAND

PRESERVATION NOTES

NEWSLETTER

Vol. LV Nos. 1 and 2 Fall 2020

CELEBRATING THE NASSAU COUNTY COURTHOUSE COMPLEX

We are pleased to welcome Daniel G. Looney, Nassau County deputy executive assistant district attorney, to introduce this important publicly owned historic resource. While Nassau County's nearby Neoclassical-style courthouse (designed by architect William B. Tubby in 1899) was successfully restored in 2009, the county's equally remarkable modernist-style courthouse still awaits much-needed repairs. Listing on the National and State Registers of Historic Places will help ongoing efforts led by Mr. Looney since 2017 to restore and preserve this remarkable place by raising awareness and opening more possibilities for funding.

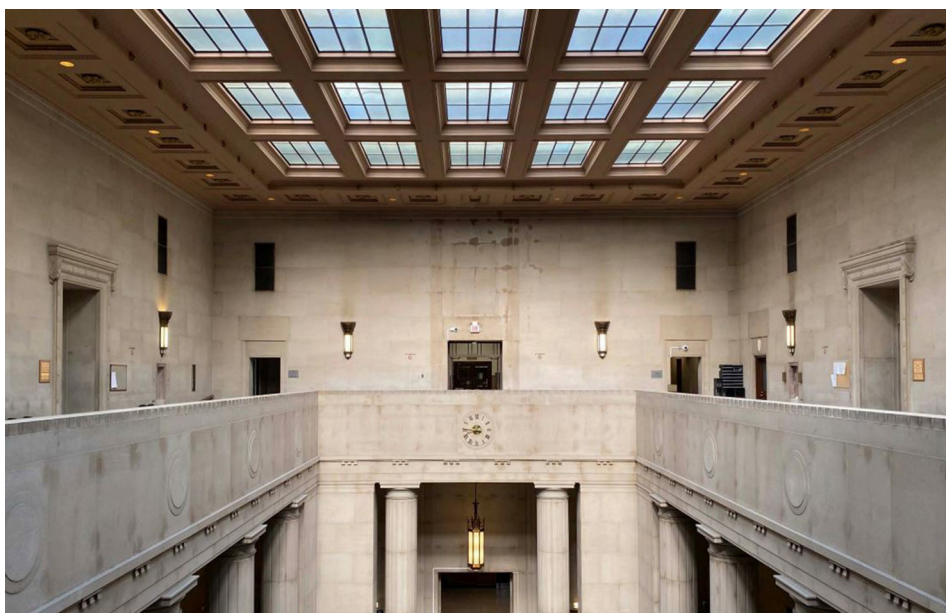
Located at 262 Old Country Road in Mineola, Nassau County's three-building courthouse complex was planned and constructed as a federal Public Works Administration project between 1938 and 1940. After more than 80 years as the centerpiece of Nassau County's judicial system, recent nomination for listing on the National and State Registers of Historic Places has brought recognition to the site as an important community center and outstanding example of large-scale, modernist-style civic architecture on Long Island. With the support of County Executive Laura Curran and District Attorney Madeline Singas, the nomination was prepared by Columbia University graduate student Micah Tichenor under the guidance of Jennifer Betsworth, a Historic Program specialist at the New York State Office of Historic Preservation.

Construction of courthouses often reflect key moments in our past. This is certainly the case for western Long Island, where a bitter 19th-century dispute over the location of the Queens County courthouse contributed to the creation of Nas-

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Distinctively clad in Berea sandstone blocks, the Nassau County Courthouse (completed 1940) has served as the county's judicial center for over 80 years. Image courtesy of Daniel G. Looney.



The bright and spacious central atrium is topped by 25 skylights and features polished concrete columns, granite terrazzo floors, and bronze light fixtures designed by Edward Caldwell & Co.



(Above right) Albert Stewart in his studio (detail), Peter A. Juley & Son Collection, Smithsonian American Art Museum J0015648. A renowned WPA-era sculptor, Stewart created the exterior bas-relief panels at Nassau County Courthouse (examples shown above left), images courtesy of NYS Historic Preservation Office.

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Credo: It has become apparent that those of us who are interested in conservation and preservation need to be alerted to the destruction of the irreplaceable values and environments that comprise our heritage and to the actions proposed to avert such threats. These notes are designed to raise awareness.

Preservation Notes is listed in the Avery Index to Architectural Periodicals.



Designs for Nassau's courthouse complex were inspired by the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C. Paired bronze torchères flanking Nassau courthouse's north and south steps (above left), are smaller-scale versions of stone torchères at the Lincoln Memorial (above right). Images courtesy of NYS Historic Preservation Office and tclf.org.

sau County. After the townships of western Queens (Jamaica, Flushing, Long Island City, and Newtown) merged with the City of New York in 1898, the townships of eastern Queens (Hempstead, North Hempstead, and Oyster Bay) became Nassau County in 1899. The new county promptly commissioned architect William B. Tubby to design a courthouse. This structure, completed in 1901, is currently known as Nassau County's Theodore Roosevelt Executive and Legislative Building, in honor of the 26th President of the United States, who attended the cornerstone laying ceremony in 1900 during his tenure as the 33rd Governor of New York.

By the 1930s, the rapidly growing population of Nassau County required a larger courthouse. Funding was secured via the Public Works Administration in 1938 to construct a new judicial complex designed by architect Lawrence J. Lincoln (1874–1945), a Nassau resident whose

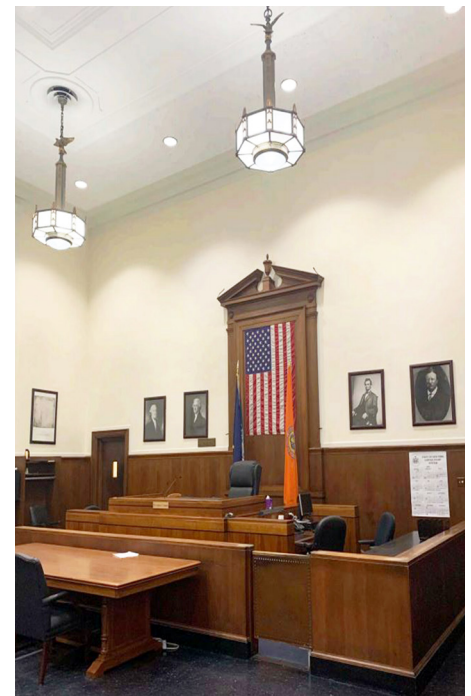
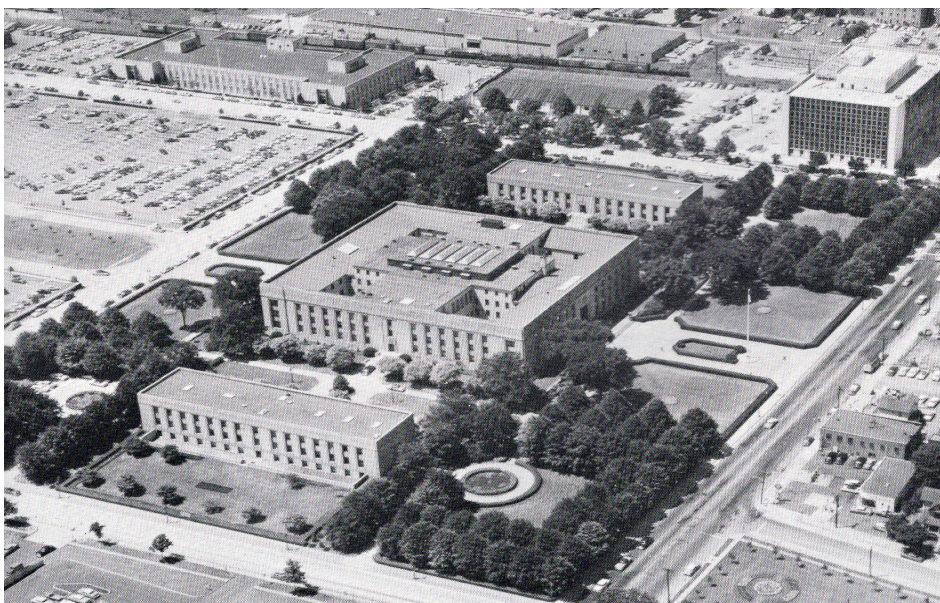
career spanned 25 years with the New York-based firm of architect Henry Bacon (1866–1924). Lincoln's site plan for the new complex was influenced by Bacon's neoclassical-style Lincoln Memorial, completed in 1922 at the west end of the National Mall, as well as the work of other pioneering architects like Paul Philippe Cret (1876–1945). In particular, Lincoln's fusion of Beaux-Art classicism and Art-Moderne style at the Nassau County Courthouse complex is reminiscent of Cret's Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington D.C. (completed 1932).

In addition to its rich architectural heritage and features, the Nassau County Courthouse has witnessed some of Long Island's most sensational courtroom trials. Several prosecutions garnered national attention including the Weinberger kidnapping case in 1950s, as well as the Joel Rikfin, Amy Fisher, and Colin Ferguson cases of the 1990s. These trials helped

shape popular views of American crime and justice as prominent subjects of true crime literature and media.

Today, the courthouse remains as relevant as ever, proving ideally suited to accommodate safe social distancing during the COVID-19 public health crisis. Thanks to the building's expansive central atrium, high ceiling courtrooms, and spacious interiors, all physical operations of the Nassau County courts took place here during the height of the pandemic. With new possibilities for preservation opened by the National and State Registers nomination, the Nassau County Courthouse complex will remain a place deeply tied to the values and work of justice for generations to come.

- by Daniel G. Looney,
Nassau County Deputy Executive
Assistant District Attorney



(Above) Classical-style courtrooms feature two-story ceilings, wood wainscot, and fixtures by Edward Caldwell & Co. Behind each judge's bench is a wood panel crowned with a broken pediment and urn. Image courtesy of NYS Historic Preservation Office.

(Above left) Nassau County Courthouse Complex, pictured in "Your County NASSAU, c.1949. (Bottom left) Aerial photo ca. 1950s, pictured in "Your County NASSAU, 60th Anniversary, 1899-1959," images courtesy of Alene Scoblete, Archivist/Local History Librarian, Rockville Centre Public Library.

INTRODUCING OUR NEW LOCAL LANDMARK LAW LOCATOR

Preservation Long Island's Local Landmark Law Locator is the first digital tool of its kind made specifically for our region. Developed using ArcGIS Online software, this map-based interface allows public users to explore local landmark laws in Nassau and Suffolk Counties like never before.

Why are local landmark laws important? Unfortunately, listing on the National and State Registers of Historic Places does not protect historic sites from destruction by their owners. Only local preservation laws can protect such places by establishing a municipal process of review for proposed changes to designated historic properties.

About one-third of the municipalities on Long Island have adopted some form of landmarking or historic preservation law, including one city, all 13 towns, and 31 incorporated villages. Is your community one of them? Find out now by visiting our website and using our new Local Landmark Law Locator tool:

preservationlongisland.org/locator-intro



For tips on using our Local Landmark Law Locator tool, please visit our website to watch a brief tutorial presented by Preservation Long Island's Sarah Kautz and Darren St. George.

"The Locator tool simplifies preservation planning research by visualizing local governments and ordinances throughout Nassau and Suffolk Counties, an especially dense geopolitical area with over 100 independent municipalities. The unique map-based interface empowers professional and public users to explore local landmark laws in a completely new way."

—Allison McGovern, Ph.D., Register of Professional Archaeologists

SOUTHAMPTON TOWN PASSES SHINNECOCK GRAVES PROTECTION ACT & BUILDING MORATORIUM

The Southampton Town Board voted unanimously to approve the Shinnecock Graves Protection Act and Shinnecock Hills Building Moratorium on September 8, 2020. In accordance with the new policy, a town archaeologist position will be created to help establish new procedures in consultation with the Shinnecock Indian Nation concerning the discovery of human remains and funerary materials. The temporary six-month moratorium on certain development actions within the hamlet of Shinnecock Hills provides time for review of current laws and procedures while exploring possibilities for town land acquisitions in sensitive areas.

Preservation Long Island congratulates Southampton Town and the Shinnecock Indian Nation on this milestone legislation. We strongly encourage other municipalities to adopt protections for vulnerable unmarked graves and burying grounds. Such action is urgently needed to preserve ancient and historic burials throughout our region from desecration.



Southampton Town Supervisor Jay Schneiderman (left) speaks with Shinnecock advocates and their supporters outside Southampton Town Hall in August 2020. Community members have long sought better protections for graves and sacred sites. Photograph by Dana Shaw.

PRESERVING THE SHERWOOD FAMILY PAPERS

We recently embarked on a project to enhance the preservation and accessibility of our large collections of photographs, manuscripts, and personal papers. Preservation Long Island was fortunate to receive funding support from Documentary Heritage & Preservation Services for New York (DHPSNY) for an Archival Needs Assessment and a Preservation Survey. This helped us secure a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) via their Inspire! Grants for Small Museums program.

The IMLS grant enabled us to hire professional archivist, Katie Ehrlich, to survey all 185 cubic feet of our archival collections and create a Processing Manual for Archival Collections using up-to-date descriptive standards and best practices. This essential document provides step-by-step instructions for collections staff,

interns, and volunteers on how to catalog, organize, and safely store different types of archival materials.

As part of her work, Ms. Ehrlich processed and rehoused the personal papers of Preservation Long Island's founder, Howard C. Sherwood (1870–1957), which were largely unknown and never fully studied. Sherwood was an avid Colonial Revival collector of American decorative arts and an early Long Island preservationist. The Sherwood-Jayne Farm, Sherwood's circa 1730 country retreat in Setauket, is one of Preservation Long Island's three interpreted historic houses and is filled with many of Sherwood's original collections.

Now cataloged and accessible to researchers for the first time, the Sherwood Family papers, encompassing about 5 cubic feet of photographs, diaries, and correspondence, provide an intimate look

at Howard Sherwood's life as a collector, preservationist, world traveler, and chronicler of the rapidly changing world around him. As more is revealed about him, we will be able to tell new stories at the Sherwood-Jayne House and share its 20th-century history. Select items from the Sherwood Family papers can be viewed on our website in a new digital exhibition, "Preserving Howard Sherwood: The Sherwood Family Papers in Context," curated by Ms. Ehrlich.

Preservation Long Island is grateful to the IMLS and DHPSNY for supporting this important work. Researchers interested in viewing the Sherwood Family papers may make an appointment by contacting collections@preservationlongisland.org.

*- by Lauren Brincat, Curator
Preservation Long Island*



(Above left) Howard C. Sherwood (pictured center) was the youngest of four siblings; John "Dick" (pictured left) was the oldest followed by Franklin "Frank" (pictured right), then Jennie (not pictured) and Howard. Albumen print, detail. Sherwood Family papers. (Above right) Archivist Katie Ehrlich sorting and rehousing the Sherwood Family papers.



The Sherwood Family Papers fully processed and rehoused in archival boxes.

LONG ISLAND'S 2020 NATIONAL REGISTER NOMINATIONS

The New York State Board for Historic Preservation recommended one historic district, one update, and four new sites in Nassau and Suffolk Counties for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) in 2020. Congratulations to this year's NRHP nomination sponsors, supporters, and property owners!

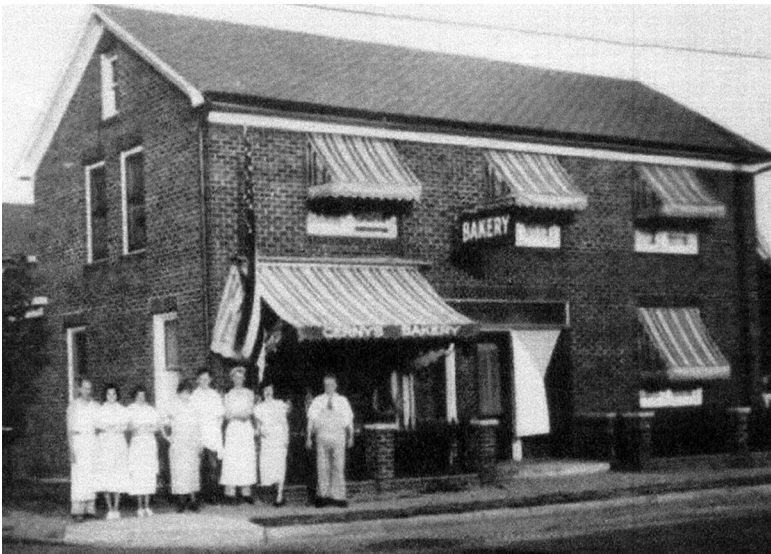
Listing on the NRHP plays a key role in preservation planning and cultural resource management. In addition to honorific recognition, listed sites are eligible for certain federal tax credit programs and grants for historic preservation. Owners of NRHP-listed properties may also be eligible for a 20% investment tax credit for the

rehabilitation of income-producing certified historic structures such as commercial, industrial, or rental residential buildings. Please visit Preservation Long Island's website for more information about the NRHP. *See pages 1–3 for details about this year's Nassau County Courthouse Complex nomination.*

CENTER MORICHES

Mary E. Bell House, Town of Brookhaven (shown right, ca. 1895, the five women are most likely Mrs. Bell and her family. Image courtesy of the Ketcham Inn Foundation)

Previously threatened with demolition in 2009, this vernacular 19th-century timber-frame house on Railroad Avenue is now owned by the Town of Brookhaven and preserved as a museum under the stewardship of the nonprofit Ketcham Inn Foundation. The house reflects the stories of the Bell family and other members of their historic African American community, which dates back to at least the 1840s, when the first African Methodist Episcopal Church was established. Today, Mary E. Bell née Smith (1865–1923) is remembered as a prominent figure of local history; the nearby Bell AME Zion Church is named in her honor.



BOHEMIA

Cerny's Bakery, Town of Islip (shown above left, ca. 1935, and above right in 2019. Images courtesy of NYS Historic Preservation Office)

Built in 1932 by Czech immigrant Josef Cerny, this site is significant for its role as an important business and community center in the predominantly Czech-American neighborhood of Bohemia during the 20th century. The bakery was operated by Josef's descendants until the late 1990s. Cerny's Bakery was well-known in the area for its Czech-style crispy rye bread, sweet breads (vanocky, mazance, and housky), and filled pastries (kolacky and buchty).

MILL NECK/ LOCUST VALLEY

Schmidlapp-Humes Estate Historic District, Village of Locust Valley and Town of Oyster Bay (shown below left and right, ca. 2019, images courtesy of the North Shore Land Alliance)

Encompassing three dozen buildings across 81 acres, the site is currently owned and operated by the North Shore Land Alliance as the Humes Preserve. In the early 1920s, banker Carl J. Schmidlapp acquired the property for use as his country estate, which remained a family retreat for two generations. Between the 1920s and 1960s, multiple cottages, outbuildings, and recreational amenities were built here in a cohesive Colonial Revival style designed by

leading firms, such as: Peabody, Wilson & Brown, an influential architecture firm; Ellen Biddle Shipman, a pioneering female landscape architect; Vitale and Geiffert, landscape architects; and Innocenti & Webel, landscape architects. Another highlight is the John P. Humes Japanese Stroll Garden, created in 1962–1966 by Japanese-American landscape designer Douglas DeFaya and his wife Joan.



CENTERPORT

Eagle's Nest Update, Town of Huntington (shown right, image courtesy of NYS Historic Preservation Office)

Additional documentation and a boundary increase was submitted for William K. Vanderbilt II's historic estate, which encompasses Suffolk County's Vanderbilt Museum. The property has been listed on the NRHP since 1985.



HAUPPAUGE

Hauppauge Methodist Episcopal Church, Town of Smithtown (shown left, image courtesy of NYS Historic Preservation Office)

Established in 1806, this church is the oldest surviving religious structure in the hamlet of Hauppauge. Founding members of the local community and military veterans are interred in the historic cemetery.



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