

ENDANGERED HISTORIC PLACES PROGRAM UPDATE



The Avery Homestead was purchased by Suffolk County and the Town of Brookhaven in August 2023 and will be dedicated to the Suffolk County Trust.

Since Preservation Long Island's list of Endangered Historic Places (EHP) was formally established in 2010, 44 buildings (including this year's) have been identified. This program—modeled on lists like the National Trust's Eleven Most Endangered Historic Places list that highlights heritage at risk—has proven to be an important tool to advocate for Long Island's history. It stretches over 200 years from pre-Revolutionary homesteads like Mill Pond House (EHP 2023) to the c.1959 Brooks-Park Home and Artist Studios (EHP 2021). Buildings are nominated to the biennial list by community members and groups.

As we reflect on these stories, we recognize the preservation challenges that remain constant throughout the program's history. A lack of funding to maintain and preserve historic spaces in public ownership continues to be a primary barrier to preservation. This proves true for both small municipalities as well as the State of New York. Despite these challenges, there

have been many successes.

Out of the 44 buildings listed, four have been saved and fully rehabilitated:

- John Mackay III's Happy House, East Hills
- La Grange Inn, Islip
- Fordham Saw Mill, Southhampton
- Canoe Place Inn, Southhampton

Many others are on the path to preservation, showcasing the positive momentum generated by community engagement and strategic initiatives. Some recent accomplishments include:

- Substantial fundraising efforts for the John and Alice Coltrane Home (EHP 2011)
- The completion of Phase I of the Roslyn Grist Mill Restoration project in July 2015
- The purchase of the Avery Homestead (EHP 2019) for the Suffolk County Historic Trust
- A buildings condition report completed for Brooks-Park Home and Artist Studio as of Spring 2023

Only three of the listed buildings have been demolished:

- The Meadowbrook Bank, Village of Freeport (listed 2013; demolished in 2019 for a car dealership)
- St. Ignatius Retreat House at Inisfada, Village of North Hills (listed 2013; demolished 2013)
- Hotel Huntington (Aboff Building), Huntington Village (listed 2011; demolished 2012)

By spotlighting structures at risk, the list raises awareness about the urgent need for preservation. It serves as a rallying call for community engagement, encouraging citizens and groups to participate actively in safeguarding their local heritage. This issue of Preservation Notes is dedicated to our Endangered Historic Places program.



Roslyn Grist Mill lowered onto its new foundation. July 25, 2023.



Brooks-Park Home and Artist Studio. Photo by Gordon M. Grant. Courtesy of Newsday.

ENDANGERED HISTORIC PLACES: 2023

Preservation Long Island's most recent list highlights the historical tapestry of Long Island, showcasing seven diverse sites ranging from the iconic Stepping Stones Lighthouse off the Great Neck peninsula to a modest industrial building in Riverhead. Among these are two pre-Revolutionary War residences, Mill Pond House and Eliphalet Whitman Homestead, that have endured neglect under government

ownership. This reflects not necessarily a lack of will by the agencies, but the challenge in securing public funds for preservation. Another two, King's Park Psychiatric Center (KPPC) and the Coindre Hall Boathouse exemplify the difficulties that can arise from a disconnect between natural conservation goals and historic preservation. KPPC additionally showcases the challenges involved in

protecting a 500 acre cultural-landscape. Finally, the Shutt House in Brentwood, is a rare remnant of Modern Times, a 19th-century Utopian community. Its endangerment underscores a recurring challenge on this list since 2010: the push for modern development overshadowing the effort and cost required to safeguard our historic resources.



Stepping Stones Lighthouse

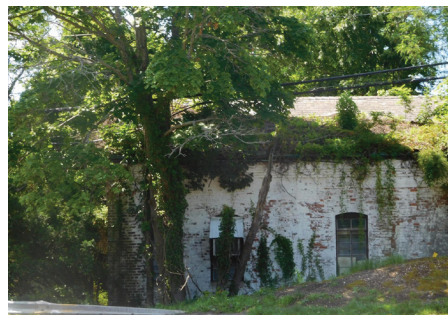
Stepping Stones Lighthouse, visible from Great Neck, City Island, and the Throgs Neck Bridge, was constructed in 1877 to guide maritime traffic in Long Island Sound. The Second Empire style structure was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2005. Declared surplus in 2006 by the US Coast Guard, it is now owned by the Town of Hempstead which has partnered with the Great Neck Historical Society since 2014. Facing neglect and deterioration, a 2022 assessment estimates the cost of stabilization at \$969,000. The Great Neck Historical Society believes that North Hempstead has neither the will nor the resources needed to complete the mission of restoration. In response, Historical Society members, along with others from the area, are in the process of establishing a separate non-profit that will hopefully steward the site moving forward. *Photo, Left, Courtesy Robert Lincoln.*

Shutt House



The Shutt House is one of the original structures in Modern Times (1851–1864), Long Island's Utopian community. It stands at 2nd Avenue and Brentwood Avenue in the commercial heart of Brentwood. The house was built in the mid-19th century with a large addition in the 1880s. Original owners, the Shutt, were key figures in mid-19th-century social movements and Brentwood's development. The structure is in imminent danger of demolition for commercial development.

Perkins Electric Generating Plant



This plant, built in 1897, is the sole remaining structure from the Perkins Company Woolen Mill in Riverhead. One of Long Island's earliest power plants, it was acquired by LILCO in 1922, and is now owned by LIPA/PSEG. The structure sits vacant, urgently needing stabilization. Its strategic downtown position makes it an ideal candidate for repurposing into a community building, preserving its historical significance and contributing to the area's revitalization.

Eliphalet Whitman Homestead



Constructed in the mid-18th century for tanner Eliphalet Whitman, this simple vernacular style house, barn, and work shed are contributing buildings within the Wyandanch Club Historic District. The Historic District boundaries now form Caleb Smith State Park. The homestead shows signs of neglect despite being used as a private residence.

Mill Pond House

Built before 1720, Mill Pond House is one of Oyster Bay's oldest homes. It stands on land granted to Henry Townsend in 1661. Passed to "Mill John" Townsend, it housed a grist mill until 1705. Likely constructed by Mill John's widow, Esther, a pioneering businesswoman, the house stayed in the Townsend family until 1929. Designated a local landmark in 1976, the town acquired it in 2008. Despite alterations and additions over its nearly 300-year history, the house maintains a remarkable level of architectural integrity. Two fires in 2014 caused damage to 20th-century additions but did not harm the historic core. A 2021 condition assessment estimates restoration at \$1.3 million. Despite strong community support the building remains vacant. A potential path towards restoration includes 1) subdividing the lot to preserve a portion as open space and 2) considering a sale to a responsible owner under a covenant to ensure preservation.



Coindre Hall Boathouse



Coindre Hall was constructed by the noted architect Clarence Sumner Luce in 1912 for pharmaceutical magnate George McKesson Brown. The approximately 135-acre estate consisted of numerous buildings, including the boat house. The structure is a miniature of the Main House, which, in turn, is modeled after a chateau in the south of France. The boat house has remained vacant for many years. In 1972, Suffolk County acquired the property, and in 1991, the Alliance for the Preservation of Coindre Hall Park was founded. The estate was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1985. With the support of the Advisory Board, the building appears to have a promising future, however funding and broad community support to guarantee its success are lacking.

King's Park Psychiatric Center



King's Park Psychiatric Center (KPPC), established in 1885, is one of the oldest mental health care facilities in New York. Ceasing mental health operations in 1996, the 500-acre site became the Nissequogue River State Park in 2000. The remaining hospital structures face challenges like vandalism and decay that are compounded by changes to KPPC's National Register eligibility. The New York State Master Plan for the park falls short by not recognizing the comprehensive importance of KPPC as a campus. This oversight puts historic resources at risk, exposing them to potential demolition and an inability to interpret the overall significance of the site. Of primary concern is the proposed demolition of Kings Park Boulevard, the historic primary road through the campus.

OPEN SPACE AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Regionally beneficial partnerships have emerged between organizations whose missions are to conserve Long Island's remaining open spaces and historic resources. This alignment has naturally evolved due to the long history of the region combined with development pressures. The spaces that are left to preserve are often associated with historically significant buildings—be it a Gilded Age country house or a historic farm. Partnerships range from non-profit organizations like the North Shore Land Alliance and the Peconic Land Trust, to Government Agencies like Suffolk County and the New York State Parks Department.

Open space preservation can create other paths to saving historic buildings by preserving the land around them. There are grants and public funds available for the conservation of natural lands that are not available for historic buildings. Such partnerships have mostly proven to bear fruit, however, when the mission of natural conservation is prioritized over historic preservation, it can put our built heritage at risk.

Two Long Island based environmental organizations have incorporated preservation a step further by making historic buildings their headquarters. The North Shore Land Alliance opened its new offices in the historic Tavern House in Mill Neck last summer. The restoration was made possible through grants, including a preservation grant from the Robert David Lion Gardiner Foundation. According to President and CEO, Lisa Ott, "Through this project, we can preserve an important piece of Long Island's story. The Tavern House has borne witness to hundreds of years of growth. It is an important part of Long Island's history. With this grant, we are proud that we have ensured it will remain an integral part of Long Island's future as well."

In 2017, the Safina Center, an environmental non-profit that creates projects around the world but is based on Long Island, purchased the Hawkins-Elzon House in Setauket to use as their headquarters. The c.1730 house is one of nine upon which PLI maintains a historic covenant.



Workers laying a new foundation at the Hawkins-Elzon House. Courtesy Zach Studenroth.

The house is currently undergoing a large restoration including repairs to the foundation, shingles, and historic windows.

The Peconic Land Trust holds multiple historic preservation easements in addition to the numerous conservation easements they manage. The Trust recently completed the renovation of the c.1747 Moses Case House in Southold, which will be leased as part of their "Farms for the Future" program, that rents farmland at an affordable rate back to farmers.

On November 30th, the North Shore

Land Alliance announced that the Seminary of the Immaculate Conception, the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, and the Village of Lloyd Harbor, had reached a deal to protect over 200 acres of the site. The seminary was constructed in 1930 on the grounds of the former Conklin estate, and features a Spanish Renaissance/Romanesque building designed by Robert J. Reiley, whose primary client was the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of New York. The Seminary of the Immaculate Conception



New North Shore Land Alliance headquarters at the Tavern House in the Humes Preserve in Mill Neck.

will retain control of the historic buildings for use as a retreat center. The funds from the sale of the surrounding property will be utilized to maintain the historic property. The grounds include an amphitheater that dates back to the earlier estate.

Although the alliance with open space conservation has proven to be a powerful tool for preservation, this year's Endangered Historic Places list shows that there are times when the missions are at odds. An example is the current Master Plan for Nissequogue River State Park on the grounds of the former King's Park Psychiatric Center. While it recognizes the historic significance of several buildings, it fails to interpret the park as a historic district within a Cultural Historic Landscape, to the detriment of several historic resources, and the site as whole. At Caleb Smith State Park, several buildings, including the Eliphalet Whitman Homestead, are exhibiting signs of neglect and deterioration. This shows, more than anything, the



Case House in Southold. Courtesy Peconic Land Trust.



Seminary of the Immaculate Conception (Above and Right).

difficulty—even within state-run parks—of maintaining and repairing historic buildings due to the lack of public funds. At Coindre Hall (Huntington), there is a disconnect between the plan to restore the historic boathouse and the goal of some to create a natural waterfront habitat.

Nevertheless, Long Island's collaborative efforts between conservation organizations and historic preservation have proven instrumental to protecting the region's natural and cultural legacy. From repurposing historic buildings as headquarters for environmental groups to strategic land conservation, these partnerships showcase a shared dedication to Long Island's past and future. Despite successes, challenges persist, as evidenced by this year's Endangered Historic Places list.



LONG ISLAND'S 2023 NATIONAL REGISTER NOMINATIONS

The New York State Board for Historic Preservation recommended one historic district and three new sites in Nassau and Suffolk Counties for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) in 2023. Two out of the three listings were on Preservation Long Island's EHP list.

Listing on the NRHP plays a key role in preservation planning and cultural re-

source 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.

Congratulations to this year's National Register nomination sponsors, supporters, and property owners!

Please visit Preservation Long Island's website for more information about the NRHP. (www.preservationlongisland.org)



Smithtown

York Hall

The hall was constructed as part of the King's Park Psychiatric Center (see this year's EHP list) in 1932. Constructed at a time when over 90% of the Kings Park community lived or worked at the Psychiatric Center, York Hall represents the deep connections between the former hospital and its surrounding community. While patients used York Hall for recreational activities, performances, and plays (theater and drama were viewed as both therapeutic and a means by which to keep patients active and socially engaged), town residents used the building for community meetings, holiday celebrations, dances, receptions, and other social activities. York Hall continued to serve as a civic center into the late 1990s, when the New York State Office of Mental Health decommissioned the hospital and transferred the property to the State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation.

The building was abandoned in 1996, but is currently being stabilized to prevent further deterioration. The current Master Plan for Nissequogue River State Park calls for the goal of "identify[ing] opportunities for artistic and cultural partnerships for the operation of York Hall as a performance space and event venue"

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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.



Historic View of York Hall. Courtesy King's Park Heritage Museum.

St. James

St. James Firehouse

The firehouse (*shown below*) has been in active use since it was constructed in 1925, with later additions completed prior to 1967. The building was listed on our EHP list in 2021 and continues to be at risk due to a lack of necessary funding. The Italian Renaissance/Spanish Revival style building is also recognized as a contributing resource to the Saint James National Register Historic District. It was designed by local architect Lawrence Smith Butler (1875-1954), a descendant of the town's founder Richard "Bull" Smith. The site is a celebrated neighborhood landmark that serves not only as a firehouse, but as a community gathering space.



Image included in the Building Structure Inventory Form completed by the Town of Smithtown in May 1978. Photo c.1925 (From maggie-blanc.com).

East Hampton

Van Scoy Burial Ground (*shown below, images courtesy of Zach Studenroth*)

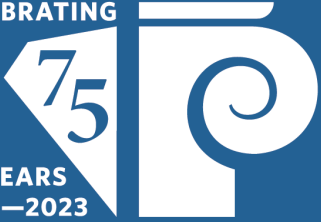
The Van Scoy Burying Ground, located in the Village of Northwest Harbor, is the late 18th-century family burial plot of the Van Scoy family and the related Terry and Edwards families, all early settlers in the region. The site consists of eight headstones, nine footstones, and one family monument, all of which were recently cleaned and restored. The graveyard is

maintained by the Town of East Hampton within the 163-acre Grassy Hollow Nature Preserve. The Van Scoy Burying Ground is one of several small, preserved family burial places in the Town of East Hampton, each of which illustrates an important aspect of the town's historic settlement patterns. The documentation of the cemetery "Historic East Hampton Town Burying Grounds, Cemeteries & Gravesites" was part of a cultural resource survey (MPDF)

of all the historic cemeteries and burying grounds in the Town of East Hampton. The report was funded by a Preserve New York grant from the Preservation League of New York State and completed by Zach Studenroth and Kurt E. Kahofer, of the Burying Ground Preservation Group, Inc.



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IN THIS ISSUE:

LOOKING BACK AT ENDANGERED HISTORIC PLACES

2023 ENDANGERED HISTORIC PLACES LIST

OPEN SPACE AND PRESERVATION

LONG ISLAND'S 2023 NATIONAL REGISTER NOMINATIONS