PRESERVATION
LONG ISLAND

Preservation Notes

NEWSLETTER
Vol. LIX Fall 2025

INNS AND TAVERNS OF REVOLUTIONARY LONG ISLAND

View of Ketcham Inn. Photo courtesy of the Ketcham Inn Foundation.

During the Revolutionary era, Long Island's inns and taverns were far more than places to eat or sleep. Often housed in converted family dwellings as well as purpose-built establishments, they became the heart of community life—spaces where neighbors, travelers, and soldiers gathered. In the absence of newspapers or formal meeting halls, these rooms served as critical forums for exchanging news, debating politics, and navigating the uncertainties of wartime.

Their importance was magnified by the island's occupation. Many Long Island inns were pressed into service as quarters for British soldiers and Hessian auxiliaries, transforming everyday spaces into contested ground between occupiers and the local population. At the same time, they provided the necessities of travel and communication, serving as sites where loyalties were tested and the atmosphere of the Revolution was felt most directly.

After the war, the fates of these institutions varied. Some adapted to the new republic, prospering as stagecoach stops or evolving into the first generation of American hotels. Others slipped into decline, their buildings dismantled or reused for domestic or agricultural purposes as new modes of transportation altered the landscape. Their stories remind us that Long Island's inns and taverns were never simply waystations; they were living institutions that reflected both the upheavals of war and the transformations of community life that followed. Two of the buildings on this list, La Grange Inn and Canoe Place Inn, have been previously listed on Preservation Long Island's Endangered Historic Places List, both now successfully saved.

Because many of these structures predate systematic documentation, their early uses are often drawn from oral tradition and local histories. While the physical evidence confirms their existence during the Revolution, their exact functions—as inns, taverns, or domestic quarters—sometimes remain uncertain. Yet together, these buildings reveal a rich landscape of hospitality, survival, and adaptation that stretches across the length of Long Island.

Ketcham Inn:

Among Long Island's surviving taverns, the Ketcham Inn in Moriches stands as one of the best-documented examples of continuous preservation through grassroots effort. Originally recorded in Brookhaven Town documents as the Moriches Inn, the earliest portion of the building appears to date from the late seventeenth century, predating formal settlement in the area. Expanded across the eighteenth century, the inn evolved into a central gathering place along the South Shore, serving travelers and reflecting successive architectural styles from colonial to Federal.

The beauty of the building lies in its continuity—after 1790, few major alterations were made. Its many layers of construction tell the story of architectural evolution on Long Island's South Shore. The oldest portion, appearing to be a settlement cottage, dates to the late 1600s, a time before the area was officially settled. Subsequent additions followed over the next century, including a kitchen wing added in the 1740s when the property operated as a tavern for travelers and townspeople. The building's timber framing, Georgian proportions, and later Federal detailing reveal layers of construction that chart the development of the community.

During the Revolution, it is believed to have provided food and lodging to both locals and occupying soldiers. After 1790, few major alterations were made, preserving much of the original craftsmanship. In the 1940s, a commercial kitchen was added when the property operated as a popular restaurant for motorists traveling

View of Townsend Valentine Ketcham in historic tavern. The bar visible in this photo has been lovingly restored. Photo courtesy Ketcham Inn Foundation.

to the Hamptons during the rise of automobile tourism.

The Ketcham Inn's preservation story demonstrates the power of sustained community action. Threatened with demolition, the building was rescued by local advocates who recognized its architectural and historical importance. Under the stewardship of the Ketcham Inn Foundation, the site has been meticulously restored and reopened as an educational center and living history museum. Its restoration demonstrates how documentation, advocacy, and hands-on work can transform a vulnerable structure into a living resource that continues to serve its community.

Spaces of Gathering and Occupation

During the Revolutionary War, ordinary buildings became hubs of activity that reflected the shifting realities of life under occupation. In Smithtown, the Halliock Inn, built around 1725, provided lodging and meals for travelers along Middle Country Road. According to records later compiled by the Smithtown Historical Society, the inn served as a stagecoach stop and meeting place and was also frequented by British soldiers during the war. In Huntington, the Peace and Plenty Inn, also known as the Chichester Inn, was built around 1680 and expanded over time. It is now a private home.

In Setauket, Roe Tavern reflects the layered history of Revolutionary Long Island. Traditionally associated with Austin Roe, the tavern's story is intertwined with the Culper Spy Ring, though its precise role during the war remains the subject of ongoing study. The structure itself dates to the eighteenth century and was moved from its original location around 1936. In recent years, the Town of Brookhaven and local advocates have worked to relocate it closer to its original site to ensure its continued preservation and interpretation. As Mari Irizarry, Director of the Three Village Historical Society, observed, "The story of the Roe Tavern is really the story of us — of resilience, reinvention, and the power of place in shaping a community."

In Jericho, the Milleridge Inn originated as the late seventeenth-century home of Quaker widow Mary Willets, who reportedly offered travelers shelter and food. Later generations expanded the building, and it was said to have quartered Hessian and British soldiers during the war. Over time, the inn became a popular colonial-themed restaurant complex, continuing its role in hospitality for more than 300 years. Just around the corner, the Maine Maid Inn, built around 1800 by Valentine Hicks, later became a station on the Underground Railroad and a local landmark. In recent years, however, renovations by new owners removed much of its historic material, illustrating how fragile historic character can be without legal protection or community oversight.

View of Chichester Inn. Photo by Tara Cubie.

In West Islip, the La Grange Inn, operating by the early 1800s, offered lodging for travelers along the South Shore and was renamed in honor of Lafayette's estate, La Grange. Threatened with demolition in the 2010s, it was rescued through the combined efforts of preservationists and local residents and now houses the West Islip History Center.

View of Roe Tavern, ca. 1916. Photo courtesy East Hampton Library, Long Island Collection

Survival, Adaptation, and Preservation Challenges

The preservation history of Long Island's inns reveals how changing economic conditions, ownership patterns, and local advocacy shaped what survived. In Hampton Bays, the Canoe Place Inn stands on a site that has welcomed travelers since at least 1750. The original building, which quartered British troops, was destroyed by fire in 1921 and replaced the following year with a Dutch Colonial Revival structure designed by William Lawrence Bottomley. After decades of vacancy and proposed demolition, it was rehabilitated through a public–private partnership and reopened in 2023 as a hotel and event

View of La Grange Inn.

space, retaining its twentieth-century form while acknowledging its deeper colonial roots.

Private homes also played significant roles during the Revolution, even if they were not yet formal inns. In Setauket, the Brewster House, built around 1665, was operated by Joseph Brewster as a tavern and store that served British troops during the occupation. His cousin, Caleb Brewster, a member of Washington's Culper Spy Ring, used the site as a base for transporting intelligence across Long Island Sound. Although it did not serve as a formal inn during the Revolution, it later became a public museum interpreting these events and remains one of the area's best-preserved colonial structures.

1936 Photograph of Halliock Inn. Courtesy HABS/HAER.

Similarly, in Stony Brook, the Hallock Homestead, built in 1751, was connected to local Revolutionary activity through its owner, Richard Hallock, a member of the Brookhaven militia. The property's transformation into the Three Village Inn came much later, in the 1930s, when it was repurposed as a tea room and inn under philanthropist Ward Melville. While not an inn during the war, its history illustrates how sites with Revolutionary associations were later adapted for hospitality, blending historical commemoration with modern use.

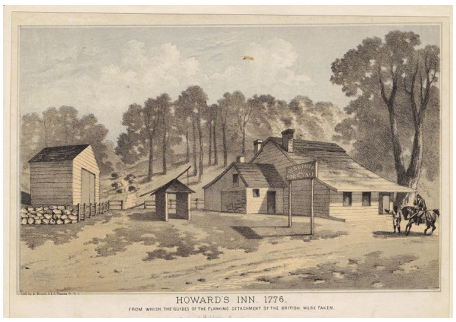
The survival of these structures depended largely on continued use and community awareness. Those that found new public purposes—as museums, restaurants, or civic spaces—were most likely to endure. Where function was lost, demolition or neglect often followed.

Remembering the Lost Inns

Many inns that once served Revolutionary Long Island are no longer extent. In Brooklyn, the Red Lion Inn, site of the opening skirmish of the Battle of Brooklyn, and Howard's Rising Sun Tavern, where British forces executed a key flanking maneuver, were both lost to nineteenth-century development.

In Bridgehampton, the Wick's (Bull's Head) Tavern, built around 1686, was demolished in the 1940s to become a gas station. In Patchogue, Hart's Tavern, visited by George Washington in 1790 and mentioned by Thomas Jefferson a year later, was also lost, though historians continue to debate its precise location.

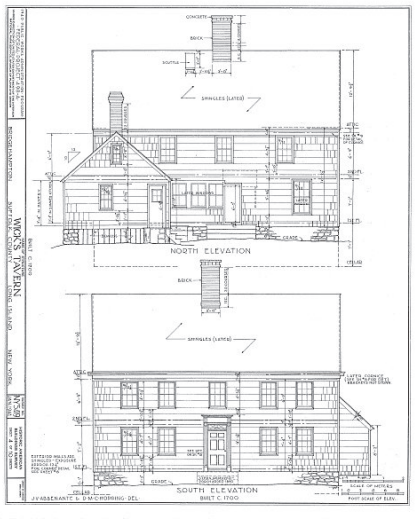
The Orient Point Inn, believed to have housed British troops and later known as the Orient Point House, declined after closure and was demolished around 1980. As Amy Folk of the Oysterponds Historical Society observed, "I'm sure [the owners] didn't volunteer the house—it was taken over for quartering." Its loss illustrates how deferred maintenance and lack of protective designation can erase centuries of history. Sammis Tavern in Hempstead, another eighteenth-century inn once visited by Washington, has also disappeared, remembered only through records and local symbols.



Sketch of Howard's Inn. Courtesy The New York Public Library Digital Collections.

Each of these vanished landmarks underscores the fragility of Long Island's Revolutionary landscape and the importance of continued documentation and advocacy.

The fate of Long Island's Revolutionary inns and taverns reflects the broader evolution of preservation itself. Some, like the Ketcham Inn and La Grange, have endured through extraordinary community commitment. Others, like the Maine Maid, demonstrate how easily historic character can be compromised without safeguards. Still others, like the Orient Point Inn or Wick's Tavern, exist only in archival traces. As gathering places of travelers, soldiers, and spies, these sites were more than inns; they were centers of community life where ordinary people encountered the extraordinary challenges of war. Preserving them—or at least preserving their stories—ensures that Long Island's Revolutionary past remains tangible in the present.



Elevation drawing of Wick's Tavern. Courtesy HABS/HAER.

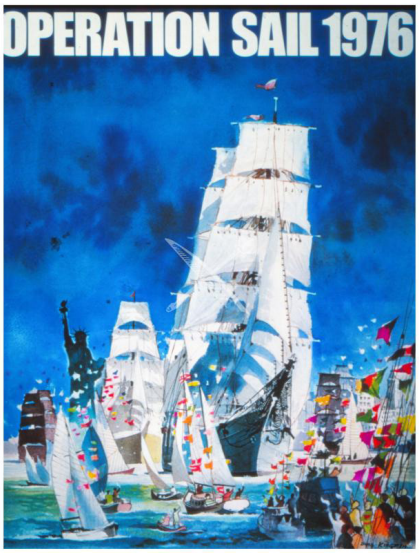
TALL SHIPS AND THE BICENTENNIAL

The Amerigo Vespucci in New York Harbor, 1976. Photo courtesy U.S. NOAA.

One of the most memorable spectacles of the 1976 Bicentennial was Operation Sail, a grand international gathering of tall ships in New York Harbor. Sixteen square-rigged school ships from around the world joined the "Grand Parade of Sailing Ships," each flying the tricolor star insignia of the Bicentennial. Alongside them were 113 additional vessels—sloops, schooners, brigs, and ketches—making it one of the largest assemblies of tall ships in modern history.

While the ultimate destination was New York Harbor, Long Island played a vital role in hosting the fleet on its journey from Newport, Rhode Island. For three days in July 1976, the waters of Long Island Sound became a sailor's paradise as ships sought local hospitality. Five North Shore communities—Port Jefferson, Huntington, Oyster Bay, Hempstead Harbor, and Manhasset Bay—were designated official ports of call, transforming the shoreline into a festival of maritime heritage.

According to The Long-Islander (July 8, 1976), Huntington Harbor welcomed an impressive fleet, including the 135-foot schooner Roseway and the 110-foot Phoenix from Dublin. Nearby Northport hosted the 655-foot *Vega* from Venezuela and the U.S. topsail schooner *Rachel and Ebenezer*, which invited the public aboard after sailing through the bays. Cold Spring Harbor greeted three visiting vessels—the 50-foot topsail schooner *Fly*, the 42-foot Bermudian cutter *Cameo of Looe,* and the 40-foot German entry *Whisky Three*. Crews came ashore for a Jamboree Picnic with live music at Coindre Hall, followed by a sold-out Bicentennial dance that drew nearly 3,000 sailors and local hosts. Yacht clubs across the harbor hosted dinners for captains and crews, turning the waterfront into a lively hub of international camaraderie.



Commemorative Poster of Op-Sail, 1976. Photo courtesy U.S. Naval Institute.

Festivities extended all along the Sound. The Northport Journal (June 25, 1976) reported that on June 26, the harbor welcomed the Hamburg Fleet—sixty yachts from Germany that had crossed the Atlantic by freighter. Crowds gathered with flags and noisemakers to greet them as they sailed in from Eaton's Neck. To the west, The Leader (July 8, 1976) noted that the 153-foot British topsail schooner *Sir Winston Churchill*—crewed entirely by women—anchored in Hempstead Harbor, where receptions and a Bicentennial ball were held as onlookers watched from the bluffs and beaches.

As The East Hampton Star (June 10, 1976) described, Long Islanders from across the region could witness the spectacle as vessels rounded Montauk Point. The larger ships followed a South Shore route toward Sandy Hook, New Jersey, while smaller vessels traveled through Long Island Sound, ensuring communities from the East End to the North Shore shared in the moment. Among the international fleet were Italy's *Amerigo Vespucci,* Poland's *Dar Pomorza*, Portugal's *Sagres*, Japan's *Nippon Maru,* Spain's *Juan Sebastián de Elcano*, and Norway's *Christian Radich*—a powerful display of global friendship marking America's 200th anniversary.

A Tradition of Maritime Celebrations

Operation Sail 1976 stood in a long line of maritime pageantry marking major moments in New York and national history. As early as 1789, when George Washington traveled to New York City for his inauguration, vessels filled the harbor in a ceremonial flotilla to honor the new republic. Throughout the nineteenth century, tall ship parades and naval reviews greeted foreign dignitaries and showcased the city's maritime power. By 1893, the Columbian Naval Review brought together warships and sailing vessels from around the world, followed by another international fleet at the 1939 World's Fair. The founding of Operation Sail in 1964 formalized these traditions of goodwill and cultural diplomacy, ensuring the sight of tall ships remained a visible reminder of the nation's seafaring heritage.

Looking Ahead to 2026

As the United States approaches its 250th anniversary, the tall ships will once again return. In 2026, the largest gathering since 1976 is anticipated, with vessels stopping in cities along the eastern seaboard before assembling in New York Harbor. Some of the same ships that graced Long Island waters during the Bicentennial will sail again, linking past to present.

VICTORIAN CAST-IRON FIREPLACE HARDWARE ON LONG ISLAND

When historic interiors undergo drastic alterations, the mantel is often the only survivor. A mantel's decorative elements offer insight into the historical trends that shaped their design. Cast-iron fireplace hardware often accompanied mantels in nineteenth-century domestic interiors. On Long Island, much of this hardware dates from the early- to mid-Victorian period (ca. 1837–1870), which saw a rise in the manufacture and sale of fireplace fixtures such as cast-iron stoves, inserts, covers, and firebacks. These elements maximized the efficiency of the hearth, redistributing heat aesthetically.

Firebacks were the earliest form of fireplace hardware used on Long Island, with examples recovered from eighteenth-century houses in Canarsie and Flushing. The Flushing fireback, produced by New Jersey's Oxford Furnace in the 1740s, acted like a mirror, reflecting heat back into the room. Typically placed at the rear wall of the fireplace, these cast-iron plates were easily removed when they fell out of favor. Their portability made them ideal for shipment to the New York market, setting a precedent: over the next century, Long Islanders traveled to the city to purchase interior decorations, including fireplace hardware. After the 1830s, urban foundries began marketing these goods to the middle class.

Early nineteenth-century fireplace wares are exemplified by Franklin stoves—open-ended iron boxes designed to cradle logs or coal. Seen across Long Island, these stoves reflected the antebellum period's Greco-Roman design lexicon. Most stoves fit the rectangular hearth openings standard since the seventeenth century.

Fireplace insert at St. George's Manor House in Brookhaven, ca. 1844.

Fireplace in the Southampton History Museum, ca. 1869.

The Lloyd family of Lloyd Neck may have selected their stove to complement the Greek Revival portico added to their 1760s home around 1841. A similar example in a Southampton house, made by the Bronx-based foundry Janes and Kirtland, features classical ornament such as fluted columns, anthemion leaves, and paterae.

The French-inspired Rococo style blossomed in New York by the late 1840s. The Hewlett family of Lawrence bought at least two Rococo stoves for Rock Hall, their 1760s house. Both were made by Hudson Valley manufacturers: Low and Hicks of Troy and R. R. Finch of Peekskill. Whimsical in design, the Finch stove features the heads of cherubs, lions, and striped cabochons. The Troy-made example has florid scrolls and cabriole legs, imitating the Louis XV–style furniture then common for parlors. Notably, these objects mark a shift in the design of mantels themselves, which began appearing with arched openings surrounded by florid carvings in white Italian marble.

On shopping trips in the city, the purchase of mantels and matching fireplace hardware probably occurred simultaneously. Architect Alexander Jackson Davis made it clear in his building specifications that marble mantels were to be "furnished by the proprietor"—the homeowner. Even without the services of a professional architect, builders likely negotiated with clients over these aesthetic features.

In the mid-1840s, the Strong family rebuilt their manor house in Brookhaven,

Stove at Rock Hall in Lawrence, ca. 1850.

incorporating Italian-inspired architectural details. Influenced by the exterior, one prominent fireplace insert exhibited ancient Roman themes in its depiction of Mercury, messenger of the gods. The house's architect, English-born Frederick Diaper, had used an identical insert for a mansion he designed for William P. Van Rensselaer on the Hudson, possibly sourcing both from England. These cast-iron panels helped contain heat by minimizing the open void of the fireplace. Decorative, insertable grilles known as "summer covers" served a similar function and may still be found in place today. Framed in black marble, the Strongs' mantel—and others like it—demonstrated the unity of architecture and cast iron, reflecting the nineteenth century's characteristic blend of artistry and technological innovation.

By Steven Baltsas, Peggy N. Gerry Curatorial Fellow

Chalif House at Risk

Julian and Barbara Neski's groundbreaking Chalif House (1964), located at 28 Terbell Lane in East Hampton, has recently come on the market for more than $11 million. Designed for attor-ney Seymour Chalif and his wife, Ronnie, an artist, the house was the first project to bring the Neskis international acclaim. Featured in numerous design journals and exhibited at the 1970 World's Fair in Osaka, Japan, it was celebrated as a model of modern architecture in harmony with its historic setting. Yet, despite its pedigree, the property's high land value and location in the heart of East Hampton's estate section place it at serious risk of demolition.

The Chalif House, an elegant composition of two wedge-shaped pavilions connected by a glass breezeway, combines modernist geometry with the texture of local vernacular forms. Rough-cut cedar shakes, cypress siding, and barn-like shutters echo East Hampton's agrarian heritage, while the dramatic sloped roofs and open interior volumes reflect the influence of Le Corbusier and Japanese design.

In its spare beauty and quiet balance, the house set the stage for a generation of experimental modernist retreats on eastern Long Island, predating Charles Gwathmey's iconic Amagansett house by a year. It remains a key example of the Hamptons' mid-century design legacy, repre-senting the region's shift from summer colony to center of architectural innovation.

Despite the significance of modernist architecture in the Hamptons, the region faces immense pressure from development. The land's high value often leads to the demolition of modernist treasures to make way for new, larger homes. "It is to be hoped that some enlightened shopper, with $12 million to spare and a penchant for vintage modern, will come along in the next few weeks, step up, and restore the Chalif House to its original condition," wrote architectural historian Alastair Gordon in *Another Iconic House at Risk of Demolition* (The East Hampton Star, August 28, 2025). "There have been any number of early-modern houses demolished in the past 20 years—including important examples by Peter Blake, Norman Jaffe, George Nelson, Gordon Bunshaft, and Andrew Geller—and they are losses to the cultural fabric of the town that can never be replaced. Considering its pedigree, the Chalif House certainly seems worth fighting for."

Chalif House. Photo courtesy U.S. Modernist.

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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.

New National Register Listings

Photos courtesy National Register for Historic Preservation

Lynbrook Public Library

The Lynbrook Public Library, at 56 Eldert Street, was listed on the National Register of Historic Places on August 27, 2025. Designed by École des Beaux-Arts–trained architect Hugh Tallant in 1929, it is a fine example of Neoclassical Revival design, with a symmetrical brick and stone façade, Ionic columns, and ornamental details. Founded through the efforts of local women's organizations, many active in the suffrage movement, the library has long served as a center for learning and civic engagement. Restored after a 1930s fire and later expanded, it remains a vital community space and a testament to civic vision and design excellence.

John Steinbeck Cottage, Sag Harbor

The John Steinbeck Cottage, at 2 Bluff Point Lane in Sag Harbor, was listed on the National Register of Historic Places on August 11, 2025. Overlooking Morris Cove, the property preserves the shingled cottage and surrounding landscape where the Nobel Prize–winning author lived and worked during his final years. Expanded under Steinbeck to include a studio, guest house, garage, and pool, the site reflects his life as both writer and family man. Between 1955 and 1968, he wrote major late works here, including The Winter of Our Discontent. The intact buildings and "Joyous Garde" studio offer insight into his daily life and creative process.

Saving Grace Cabin

Photo by Tara Cubie.

The designation of Grace Cabin at the Edwin and Gertrude Grace Preserve as a Huntington historical landmark highlights the critical role of community engagement in historic preservation. Constructed in 1918 by Herman Roosen, the log cabin features chestnut log construction, a central fieldstone fireplace, and views overlooking Centerport Harbor. Once part of the Laurel Lodge estate, the surrounding landscape was designed by Roland von Waldburg—also known for Heckscher Park—reflecting early 20th-century design ideals that harmonized architecture and nature. Though beautifully restored by town staff between 2008 and 2013, the cabin was later closed and subject to vandalism, underscoring the need for continued public use and care.

On September 16, 2025, the Huntington Town Board unanimously voted to designate Grace Cabin as a local historic landmark following compelling testimony from residents who urged its protection. Their advocacy prompted Councilman Dr. Dave Bennardo to draft a resolution during the hearing, which was swiftly approved. Councilman Sal Ferro praised the outcome, stating, "Whenever we have a chance to preserve a piece of history and to remember the legacy of a different time, we have to take it. Now we have a responsibility to take care of it."

First Presbyterian Church of Glen Cove Closes Its Doors

Photo from Glen Cove Presbyterian Church (https://www.fpcglencove.org/)

The First Presbyterian Church of Glen Cove held its final worship service on January 11, 2025, marking the end of more than 150 years of service to the Glen Cove community. Founded in 1869, the congregation first met on Hendrick Avenue before relocating in 1906 to its current hilltop site, where both the church and parsonage were built. Designed in a distinctive blend of Tudor and Gothic Revival styles—with a circular tower, half-timbering, and stained-glass win-dows—the church remains a familiar landmark visible from several directions. Architectural credit has been variously attributed to Oscar S. Teale or Harold S. Rolfe. The property is cur-rently listed for sale, though legal processes surrounding religious properties are often complex and time-consuming. For now, the building continues to host Alcoholics Anonymous meetings and two Spanish-speaking congregations.

In 2022, the church and its gambrel-roofed Colonial Revival parsonage were determined eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Together, they reflect Glen Cove's early twentieth-century development as part of Long Island's "Gold Coast" resort era.

Across denominations, churches are closing at an alarming rate. Many of these congregations occupy historic buildings that are costly to maintain and repair. These structures are often community landmarks—rich centers of worship, gathering, and architectural heritage. Without active congregations, they face significant risk of demolition or inappropriate redevelopment. The challenge lies in finding new uses that preserve their role as vital community centers while honoring the history of the congregations that built them.

There are many examples of creative adaptive reuse of sacred spaces. Preservation Long Is-land's own headquarters, a former Methodist church built in 1842, demonstrates how such buildings can continue to serve the public in meaningful new ways. As more historic churches come onto the market, innovative and forward-thinking approaches will be essential to safe-guarding their history and continued presence within our communities.

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