

NEWBURYPORT PRESERVATION TRUST

P. O. Box 184, Newburyport, MA 01950
www.nbptpreservationtrust.org

Linking the past with the present and future



Quarterly Newsletter of the Newburyport Preservation Trust

Fall 2019

A look at preservation challenges beyond our city borders: A report from the Massachusetts Preservation Conference

Might we learn from how other cities & towns encourage preservation over demolition?

On September 20 at the crack of dawn, encouraged by NPT colleagues, one board member drove straight into the teeth of the beast – the morning traffic through Boston – just to get to Plymouth, Mass. for the 2019 Massachusetts Preservation Conference.

Because this board member is way too old to know everything (... age 16 was a long time back), he always thinks it is beneficial to at least *attempt* to stay up-to-date on best practices, emerging trends, evolving strategies, and new technologies. This conference also presented the opportunity to absorb the insights of others working “in the trenches” of preservation advocacy.

The Massachusetts Preservation Conference is presented every two years by Preservation Massachusetts, a statewide non-profit preservation education and advocacy organization established in 1985.

This year's one-day conference, held at Hotel 1620 in Plymouth, Mass., offered a selection of 22 educational sessions and panel discussions on preservation-related subjects including adaptive reuse, advocacy, archaeology, climate change, Community Preservation Act issues, gravestone conservation, historic interpretation, historic rehabilitation tax credits, landscape preservation, negotiation with developers, new technologies in building restoration, and resources for historic homeowners.

The 300 attendees – preservation professionals as well as city/town board volunteers and representatives from non-profit preservation organizations – were like kids in a candy store, but could only select three of the 22 90-minute sessions to attend in the tightly-scheduled day.

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Massachusetts
Historic Preservation
Conference 2019

September 20, 2019

Hotel 1620 • Plymouth, Massachusetts



Every two years Preservation Massachusetts, a statewide non-profit preservation advocacy and education organization, presents the Massachusetts Preservation Conference as an opportunity for preservation advocates to learn, share, mentor, and network.

More than 300 preservation professionals, planners, architects, engineers, city & town volunteer board members, and representatives from preservation advocacy groups attended the 2019 Massachusetts Preservation Conference held Sept. 20, 2019 at the Hotel 1620 in Plymouth, Mass.



Daily News features the first in a series of articles on NPT's historic house plaques

If you like to walk through the city's neighborhoods – “*nbpt@3mph*” – you have probably noticed the growing number of NPT-verified historic house plaques.

On Monday, October 28, *The Daily News* of Newburyport published the first article in a series prepared by NPT's Barb Bailey about homes researched for NPT's Historic House Plaque Program.

This first article detailed discoveries made during research for the brick home at 78 Middle Street, built in the Greek Revival style in 1834 by Samuel Currier. Homes in this style popular in New England in the 1825-1850 period were seldom constructed of brick. But NPT's research found that Samuel Currier (1787-1871) was a mason, and his new house showcased his skill as a craftsman. [Samuel Currier was a 1st cousin 1x removed to Albert Currier (1819-1912), the city's prolific masonry craftsman who also served as mayor in 1859-60.]

Future articles in the series will tell some of the interesting stories encountered in the

process of NPT's deed, construction, and ownership research.

Read all about the Historic House Plaque Program at www.nbptpreservationtrust.org, where you can learn about the research process, criteria, and fees; and easily download or print an application form. ■



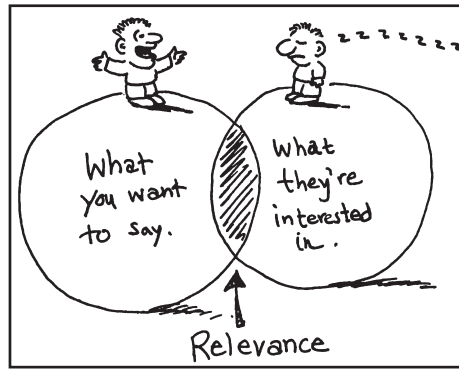
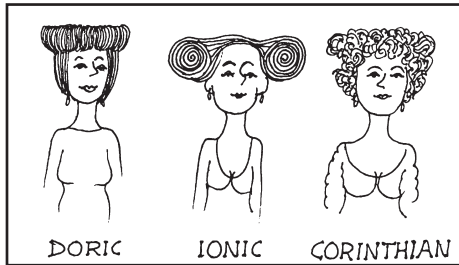
Above: One of the newest NPT historic house plaques.

Preservation Conference ...

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The first choice of your NPT editor and board member was "Advocating for Special Places in Your Community." From the start the thrust of the content dovetailed with the opinion piece in NPT's fall 2018 newsletter entitled "Do we 'preservationists' have an image problem? Might we get better at articulating preservation?"

Co-presenter Nicole Benjamin-Ma, senior preservation planner with the design and consulting firm of Vanasse, Hanglin, Brustlin, Inc., used pointed and often humorous examples of how the use of



insider architectural and preservation jargon is a turn-off to many, and sends an unintended message that preservation advocates are all smarty-pants elitists. She emphasized that in preservation advocacy, "It's not what you say. It's what they hear."

Ms. Benjamin-Ma advanced that "We tend to retain stories longer than we retain data," and encouraged preservationists to reveal a personal reason for caring about an issue, and to seek a common ground with others so that they may come to care as well.

Another component of the advocacy session was the use of social media. Presenter Grayce Rogers of the Town of Barnstable Planning Dept., stressed the urgency of preservation advocacy groups having a robust presence on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and Youtube. Byproducts are interaction, discussion, networking, and relationship building. All this demands timeliness, editing, fresh images, pithy captions, following, commenting, and relentless posting. This is a real PR-pro job.

Another session attended was "Modern Technology in Building Restoration," of particular interest to stewards of brick and stone buildings. The last session was a brisk guided tour of Plymouth's Burial Hill, which got the blood flowing enough for some lively networking before departure into the traffic.

Presentation visuals are available at www.preservationmass.org/2019-mhpc-sessions, though without the presenter's words, body language, and context. (Get all that in person at the 2021 conference. I'll let you drive.) ■

– R.W. Bacon



NPT makes many new friends at a festive Bartlet Mall Day

The "Food-Beer-History" sign promoting Bartlet Mall Day on Saturday, October 5 was hard to ignore. The foaming mug and the grassroots enthusiasm that bubbled forth from the sign on High Street for weeks in advance stoked curiosity and anticipation.

To NPT's good fortune – even with no food or beer to dispense – the strolling crowd funneled by the modest table display steadily. Engaging the crowd, handing out brochures, and informing people about the Newburyport Preservation Trust mission were Tom and Linda Kolterjahn, and Tom and Barb Bailey. NPT's two "best-sellers," *Walk Newburyport* and *The HABS and the HABS NOTs: Documenting the Architecture of Newburyport in the Historic American Buildings Survey* were popular purchases. In addition, several applications for NPT historic house plaques were distributed. ■

At left at Bartlet Mall Day on October 5, 2019 are (l. to r.) Tom Kolterjahn and Linda Kolterjahn (in 18th-century wardrobe), and Tom Bailey and Barb Bailey.

Words not necessary

On June 12, 2019 a building permit was issued for 4-6 Bromfield Street. The permit, in capitals: "DEMO WORK TO INSTALL FOUNDATION ONLY." The c. 1800 house is was a contributing structure within the city's National Register Historic District, therefore subject to regulations of the city's Demolition Control Overlay District. The special permit for *partial demolition* was approved by the zoning board in May. The enforcement "SNAFU"* that ensued? In this space at least, words fail. ■

At near right is 4-6 Bromfield Street before the "partial demolition." At far right is what remains. Inset is the new foundation at the rear. *SNAFU: "Situation Normal – All Fouled Up" (1940s military term).

