



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

Spring 2020

'Preservation' takes on new meaning as priorities shift to preserving public health, sanity, optimism, & unity



During this period of responsible preventive social distancing, Newburyport preservation advocates and historic house enthusiasts can take the lead from Ado and Bea Stock and catch up on their reading. *Walk Newburyport* is a lot shorter than *Les Miserables*, plus it will motivate you to get out in the fresh air, with mask in place, and enjoy exploring the neighborhoods "@3mph."

Preservation Week 2020 is cancelled, but there's still plenty to do for old house enthusiasts

In the interest of public health during the COVID-19 crisis, on March 22 the Newburyport Preservation Trust board cancelled Preservation Week 2020 events previously scheduled for May 15-17. Members were informed by email the next day. Programs related to this year's theme, "The Mills of Newburyport" will continue to be refined for presentation in May 2021.

Our Annual Meeting drew a full-house at the Riverside Cafe on Sunday, February 23. Since then, NPT monitoring of preservation-related business before city boards has continued, first at City Hall, now remotely.

While life is compromised during this public health crisis, there is plenty to do for the history and preservation enthusiast:

- **Catch up on your reading.** If you've got the time, we've got the books. See page 2.

- **Take a hike** and check out the various period homes with NPT historic house plaques. See separate article on this page.

- **Get lost in the NPT website.** Its 6000-plus pages of preservation-related content include the 50 authoritative and practical U.S. Dept. of the Interior *Preservation Briefs*.

- **Research your house.** The NPT website includes links to the MACRIS database, historic texts, and maps. The Newburyport Archival Center offers online access to city newspapers through 1963. Records of the South Essex Registry of Deeds are online at <http://sailemdeeds.com/sailemdeeds/Default2.aspx>.

- **Tackle a project.** If you have a deferred project on your historic house, perhaps now there is time for the extra care it deserves.

Finally, note that "Boredom is a matter of choice, not circumstance." – Elbert Hubbard. ■

Need your Newburyport historic house fix? put on your mask and 'take a hike' @3mph

Now almost two months into the public health crisis, the social distancing, business shutdown, and stress have people missing everything – their paycheck ... their isolated loved ones ... their favorite hot dog.

But if you have missed meandering through Newburyport's veritable museum of domestic architecture within the city's National Register Historic District, you're in luck. Traffic is light, weather is warming, birds are singing, and buds are popping.

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In a world shut down, NPT board ramps up

At present, the Newburyport Preservation Trust is for once thankful it has no premises or employees. In fact, the enforced time-out from usual priorities of Preservation Week planning and City Hall advocacy has freed the NPT board to delve into topics of more long-range significance. Meetings by phone and video are held via the Zoom service.

NPT continues to remotely monitor preservation-related issues, advocate for preservation, and serve as an information resource to homeowners and developers. ■



This Italianate Victorian located at 6 Washington St. was the topic of an article in the *Daily News* of April 22, 2020, part of the continuing series prepared by NPT historic house researcher Barb Bailey.

Georgian staircase needs a home in Newburyport

In 2016, at the request of the City of Newburyport, the Newburyport Preservation Trust salvaged whatever architectural elements it could from the former Towle "1690 House" on Merrimac Street, including the ornate c. 1770 Georgian staircase.

Since then the hope has been to find an appropriate home for the rescued craftsmanship in Newburyport.

As shown in the photos at right, the staircase parts include the left side wall of paneling, all the decorative scroll work by each tread, all balusters, and the entire railing. There are no treads or supportive framework.

Those interested in exploring the possibility of adapting this staircase into a historic home or new addition are advised to contact NPT co-president Tom Kolterjahn at 978-462-8081, or tkolterjahn@gmail.com for more information. Proceeds will support NPT's preservation education and advocacy efforts. ■



Photos by Steve Rudolph

Catch up on your reading! Dive into the website ... or bury your nose in a book

Our collective "time-out" during the public health crisis is a great time to catch up on reading. For history, architecture, and preservation interests, the NPT website at www.NbptPreservationTrust.org is packed with links to thousands of pages of texts that are alternatively practical, theoretical, and historical.

In addition, NPT's two feature publications remain at the top of the avid preservationist's reading list. *Walk Newburyport* and *The HABS and the HABS NOTs: Documenting the Architecture of Newburyport in the Historic American Buildings Survey* are both available from the NPT website at www.NbptPreservationTrust.org – and from our friends at Newburyport's Jabberwocky Bookstore (www.jabberwockybookshop.com). *The HABS and the HABS NOTs*, by R.W. Bacon, was the 2017 IPNE non-fiction book of the year. *Walk Newburyport*, a collaboration by Karen Battles, Matt Blanchette, Greg Colling, Mary Harbaugh, and Linda Miller, has been a sought-after guide to Newburyport architecture since 2011.

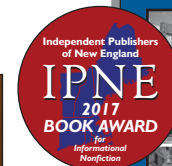
So when you're done re-reading Tolstoy, Melville, and Hugo, NPT has you covered with solid history, architecture, and preservation content. ■

For your preservation bookshelf ...



Walk Newburyport: Three Self-Guided Residential Walking Tours

6x9 softcover; 32 pages
\$12.00 includes shipping!



"The newest 'must-have' book on Newburyport architecture."
– Northshore Magazine



The HABS and the HABS NOTs: Documenting the Architecture of Newburyport, Mass.

8.5x11 hardcover; 160 pages;
ISBN: 9780997752816
\$35.00 includes shipping!

'Take a hike' for your historic house fix ...

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For a concise walkable introduction to the history and architecture of Newburyport, one good way to start is with NPT's *Walk Newburyport* book mentioned in the article above. The annotated self-guided walking tours help make sense of the different styles and periods found in the city's National Register Historic District.

After that, it's a fine time to explore neighborhoods that may be unfamiliar to you – at safe preventive social distance of course – and catch up on the new NPT historic house plaques that have been going up throughout the older part of the city.

Better yet, our side streets are wider yet more sparsely strolled than the Rail Trail or the downtown boardwalk.

In the last month, it is clear that walkers newly at-liberty are wandering through



neighborhoods in Newburyport's National Register Historic District that they have never set eyes on before.

If your aim is to stride with a purpose – even @3mph – first visit the NPT website (www.NbptPreservationTrust.org), go to the Historic House Plaque Program page, and look for the link to the program's 3-page summary-in-progress. The downloadable and printable PDF includes a list of homes with plaques to-date, along with a selection of photos. From the list of addresses, you can plan your route – your choice, from short jaunts to an all-day trek. (Of course you'll make sure to include a few hills.) Then go ahead, put on your walking shoes – and protective mask – and set out to see 'em all. Happy hiking. ■