



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

Summer 2016

Preservation Week theme for 2016 was a ~~towering~~ steeple-ing success

Once again Newburyport celebrated historic preservation during the 10th annual Newburyport Preservation Week, May 10-15, 2016. This year's theme, "Preserving the Architecture of Faith," featured the architecture and preservation of the city's many churches, old and new, and their presence that contributes to our sense of place. Six days of activities included tours, lectures, and the annual Historic Preservation Awards.

The church architecture theme was timely in that it coincided with the wrap-up of the lengthy, challenging, and costly restoration of the bell tower and steeple of the First Religious Society (Unitarian Church, 26 Pleasant Street), the towering

wood-framed structure that has defined the city's skyline since 1801.

Following a week of tours and events, it was no surprise that the 2016 Preservation Awards recognized the First Religious Society and its team of experts: Painters Pride, Matthew Construction, Rich Duca Design, Young's Woodworking, Anthony & Associates, American Steeple & Tower Co., and Construction Engineering Services.

In case you missed Preservation Week, or need to refresh your memory, the schedule remains on the NPT website, along with the historical/architectural overview of the city's churches (downloadable PDF). You can also download this year's photo-packed poster – indispensable for your collection! ■



Clockwise from top left: The happy crowd jams the Custom House Maritime Museum for the awards presentation; a small group braves a light mist to explore the burying ground across from the First Parish Church in Newbury; attendees enjoy an informative tour of Immaculate Conception Church; at Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church, the tour included choral music and chant; and the tour at Congregation Ahavas Achim included history of the building and congregation.



'If This House Could Talk' adds extra dash of spice to Yankee Homecoming

The Newburyport Preservation Trust is pleased to be a co-sponsor of "If This House Could Talk," a novel South End house history awareness program that will sprinkle additional spice onto Yankee Homecoming festivities July 30 - Aug. 6.

The premise is disarmingly simple. Participants sign up, get listed on a guide map, and post a placard on their house with tidbits of house history, folklore, or even oddball anecdotes. Then visitors can stroll the neighborhoods, digesting the tidbits of information at their own pace.

Newburyport resident and NPT member Jack Santos has supplied the energy and initiative for the activity. For details, visit the event website at www.walknewburyport.com. ■

These award winners can 'beam' with pride



Above, leading the list of this year's Preservation Award recipients was the First Religious Society and its team of experts that restored the exterior and steeple at 26 Pleasant St. (See adjacent listing.)

At right, Betsy & Kem Widmer receive an award for the interior & exterior restoration of 272 High Street. (Presenter: Stephanie Niketic)



Above left, Gerald Lipsky & Carol Rouleau (Stewardship, 26 Olive Street).



Above right, Brendan & Katy (i.a.) Banovic (Window Restoration, 1 Walnut Street).



Directly above, William & Deanna Swilling (Historic Landscape Restoration, 6 Dexter Street).

Directly above, Window Woman of New England (Historic Window Preservation). At right, John Leydon & Debra Pare (Historic Masonry Repair, 2 Beck Street).



(Photos by Novak Niketic)

NPT preservation advocacy – including developments on the ‘Frankenstein House’

This may be the season of leisure for some, but for NPT preservation advocacy, there is no vacation from vigilance:

- **The saga of the “Frankenstein addition”** to the Federal-era home at 77 Lime Street continues. To recap, the addition was built higher than permitted, among other irregularities. At a Zoning Board (ZBA) of Appeals meeting in April 2016 the developer proposed three remedies, each costing more than \$125,000, but claimed all were too complex and even more aesthetically deficient. Public comment was unanimous in favor of strict enforcement. A continuance was granted so that the developer and Mayor Donna Holaday could work out a “mitigation fee” beneficial to the city in exchange for allowing the building to remain as-is. At that time NPT encouraged that the

fee be equal to or greater than the cost of the remedies. The mayor then negotiated a mitigation fee of \$40,000 to \$50,000, with funds to benefit the neighborhood. At the ZBA meeting of May 24, the board granted zoning relief in acceptance of the agreement – but board members and the public were less than thrilled with the amount. (The three units of the development are on the market for a total of nearly \$2.5 million.) On June 26, the Newburyport City Council voted *not* to set up a fund to receive the mitigation fee for the neighborhood. This may have been due to dissatisfaction with the amount, but the landing-place for the fee remains unclear.

- **114-118 Merrimac Street.** On May 10, the ZBA unanimously denied the driveway and parking variances for the two-family residence proposed at the Rte. 1 and Merrimac Street



Above left: The “Frankenstein addition,” 77 Lime St. Yes, it’s the same photo that appeared in the spring 2016 newsletter. It has not moved. It won’t go away.

intersection. So ultimately, in this case, the non-owner speculation and the owner’s demolition-by-neglect were *not* rewarded.

- **15 Howard Street.** Also on May 10, the c. 1875 “worker’s cottage” (612 sq. ft.) at 15 Howard Street was saved from demolition when the non-owner developer withdrew the application after the ZBA, the Historical Commission, and NPT opposition cited the Demolition Control Overlay District laws. ■

The latest in NPT’s ‘Do It Ye Self’ series: House research presentation draws a crowd

“Researching Your Historic Home,” a presentation by professional house researcher Linda Tulley, was the latest in the Newburyport Preservation Trust’s popular “Do It Ye Self” series.

Held at the Newburyport Public Library on Saturday morning, June 25, the program first featured the presenter’s informative illustrated lecture in the program room. After the presentation, the attentive crowd moved downstairs to the library’s Archival Center for a tour of relevant research materials with Bob Richard.

Interest in the topic and attendance at the presentation was boosted by NPT’s co-

sponsorship of the “If This House Could Talk” event at this year’s Yankee Homecoming July 30 - August 6, 2016 (See the article on the previous page).

For those who could not attend the program on June 25, Linda Tulley’s 29-slide presentation, “Researching Your Historic Home,” is now viewable and downloadable in PDF format via the NPT website’s “News” page.

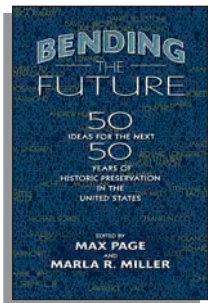
Future programs in the “Do It Ye Self” series are already in the planning stages, and coordinator Matt Blanchette welcomes program suggestions at 978-697-5135, or via email at bchette@gmail.com. ■



On June 25, NPT’s “Do It Ye Self” series presented “Researching Your Historic Home” with **Linda Tulley** (top photo). Later, attendees toured the library’s Archival Center. (Photos by Novak Niketic)

50th anniversary of Historic Preservation Act prompts a ‘big picture’ look at preservation

Just in time for the 50th anniversary of the National Historic Preservation Act is the publication of *Bending the Future: 50 Ideas for the Next 50 Years of Historic Preservation in the United States*.



Compiled and edited by Max Page and Marla Miller, the book presents varied commentary from leading preservation professionals, writers, historians, activists,

journalists, architects, and urbanists. Questions raised include: Who is a preservationist? What should be preserved? Why? How? What stories do we tell in preservation? Who cares? Can preservation be a tool to forge a more just society? (264 pgs., paper, \$28.95, www.umass.edu/umpress)

In reaction to global events, crises in the preservation of history, culture, and memory are receiving increased attention. While we attend to local issues, we also might consider the “big picture” of preservation beyond our lifetimes, beyond the city limits, and even beyond our national borders. – R.W. Bacon ■

Wipe off the frown! Instead, turn on an ‘Amazon Smile’

Do you ever shop on Amazon.com? Of course you do! Now, when you shop, make sure to sign in through the AmazonSmile program, and 0.5% of your purchase amount will go to support the Newburyport Preservation Trust. So the next time you browse Amazon.com, first go to the NPT website’s “News” page, and click on the link to AmazonSmile. Thanks! ■

