

## NPT Quarterly News



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[www.nbptpreservationtrust.org](http://www.nbptpreservationtrust.org)

*Linking the past with the present and future*



# Opposition grows to stop Pink House demolition



The iconic Pink House, an American foursquare structure built in 1925, is at the center of a debate over plans by the U.S. Fisheries & Wildlife Service to tear it down. *Photo by Jonathan Elcock*

## Forum slated November 20

A public forum is scheduled on Monday, November 20, at the PITA Hall on Plum Island to discuss a proposal by the U.S. Fisheries & Wildlife Service to tear down the iconic Pink House on Plum Island Turnpike.

State Sen. Bruce Tarr, R-Gloucester, will moderate and Parker River Wildlife Refuge Manager Matt Hillman will be on hand to answer questions. The meeting is scheduled from 10:30-11:30 a.m.

On November 1st, Parker River National Wildlife Refuge officials announced plans to tear down the long vacant two-story house

and return the land to its natural state as part of the vast salt marsh. Among the reasons cited by refuge officials were concerns about asbestos in the building and the fruitless search for a suitable parcel of land of equal value (approximately \$400,000) to swap for the Pink House. A local non-profit, Support the Pink House, had been engaged in that effort.

The announcement opened a 30-day comment period on an environmental assessment of the property. The assessment is posted at [www.fws.gov/refuge/parker-river](http://www.fws.gov/refuge/parker-river); comments can be submitted to [parkerriver@fws.gov](mailto:parkerriver@fws.gov) through November 30.

The Newburyport Preservation Trust previously paid for the research for a

preservation restriction on the property as well as a historic plaque in the event the Pink House is sold to a private owner.

Support the Pink House ([www.supportthepinkhouse.com](http://www.supportthepinkhouse.com)) is encouraging residents to write or call their elected representatives to help save the house.

**A rendering of what the Pink House might look like after restoration.**  
*Illustration by Rob Leanna*



## Newburyport City Council passes regulations limiting short-term rentals

After years of discussion and countless meetings, the City Council voted October 30 to adopt regulations allowing short-term rentals but requiring property owners to renew licenses annually and, in the case of investor-owned units, to obtain a special permit. The council also included a sunset provision that would ban investor-owned short-term rentals on the mainland (not Plum Island) after June 30, 2027.

Although not necessarily a historic preservation issue, short-term rentals can affect city neighborhoods. Many of the residents who spoke either against short-term rentals altogether, or against allowing investor-owned short-term rental units, voiced concerns about preserving the character of Newburyport's neighborhoods.



### Teamwork for historic preservation

Tara Bogorad and Bronson de Stadler display the historic plaque they've put up on their house at 17-19 Walnut St., Newburyport. The property was built as two half-houses in 1888 by Mary and John Pearson. Tara and her three children have lived at #17 for the past two years. Bronson, a Preservation Trust board member, and Kathleen de Stadler have lived at #19 since 1987.

The Trust's historic plaque program continues to gain support with more homes researched and plaques installed around the city. Find out more about the program and buildings where plaques have been placed at [www.NbptPreservationTrust.org](http://www.NbptPreservationTrust.org).



# Preservation conserves energy

*Editor's note: This column was published in The Daily News on October 20 as part of the continuing series fostering environmental stewardship and leadership coordinated by ACES, the Alliance of Climate and Environmental Stewards.*

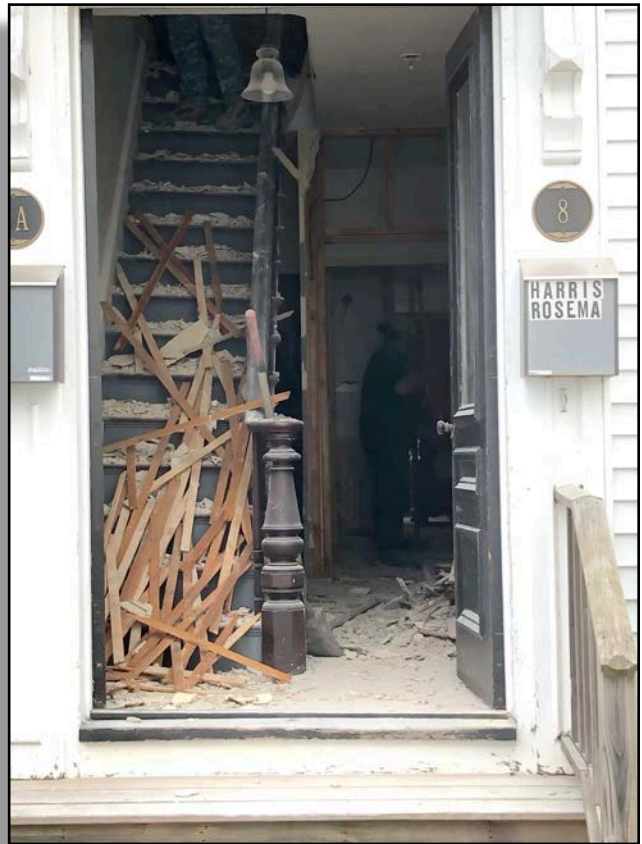
**By Linda Miller**  
**NPT Co-president**

If you live in an old house, congratulations! You have invested in embedded energy, a concept which encapsulates the energy used to produce something, like a building, with the length of time it has existed. The older the building, the more embedded energy it holds. The means of production for that building, such as hand tools, physical labor (both from animals and humans), and locally supplied materials made it a very low-energy-created object when it was built and that continues today.

New buildings require shipping manufactured materials from all over the world, using gas and oil and electricity. Construction methods today use power tools and heavy equipment that use fossil-fuel energy. Manufacturing processes use all of these with the additional use of machines making the products being manufactured and shipped, etc. Old houses used sustainable materials, such as wood and locally sourced lime, fieldstone, and bricks.

As an example, a house built around 1800 would have been framed with local trees, cut down by hand and shipped on rivers, shaped by hand tools and erected by human workers. The woodwork was handmade and unique to each house; plaster and mortar were made from lime extracted from local pits mixed by hand on site and applied by humans with hand tools. Foundations were laid out with local stone moved by oxen on carts and set by masons.

Roof shingles were carved out by hand from timbers and nailed on. Nails were made by blacksmiths. The old-growth wood used lasts hundreds of years longer than farmed wood does today, as the natural, slow-growing wood contains less water and air and the growth rings are tight together. Windows made from this wood can last hundreds of years while new, manufactured windows must be replaced at about twenty years, causing more manufacturing, shipping, and energy use. The same is true for siding, trim, and woodwork.



Recent renovation on Milk Street (circa 1870) involved ripping out and discarding lath, plaster ceilings and walls, a common sight in Newburyport.

Photo by Richard K. Lodge

Re-use of old materials can aid in repairing and replacing problem areas of older buildings. A new industry of salvaged materials, which are also high in embedded energy, has sprung up to help sustain older buildings and can be tapped for repairs.

There are establishments locally that can provide many styles of doors, hardware, woodwork, bricks and other stone products, trim, flooring, etc. These are better choices for old buildings than modern manufactured materials and will last longer.

They are of higher quality and are usually handmade, sometimes unique.

Protecting older buildings and re-using them in adaptive ways adds to the sustainability of our communities and keeps new energy use lower.

## Newburyport Preservation Trust — Fall 2023

Protecting older buildings and re-using them in adaptive ways adds to the sustainability of our communities and keeps new energy use lower. The amount of energy that was used to produce an older building was based on not using much fossil fuel, while new buildings rely on materials manufactured and shipped from all over the world, containing chemicals and non-local ingredients.

Sustainability and reuse of old objects, including buildings, helps slow the use of fossil fuels and helps to keep the environment healthier. Since Greater Newburyport has many existing older structures which can help create

a more sustainable community, it becomes important to recognize the embedded energy levels we already have and to keep those structures functioning to foster a sustainable future.



Interior framing is piled in a construction dumpster on Prospect Street in the South End during a renovation.

The “greenest” building you can have is one that is already built. We can keep and reuse our beautiful old buildings and help the environment as well. Next time you envision a home improvement project, try to get creative by finding and reusing existing items, like maybe an old mantel piece. It can be unique, beautiful, and reduce a little bit of our carbon footprint.

For more: [www.aces-alliance.org](http://www.aces-alliance.org).

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## In the news, here and there ...

The Preservation Trust is again supporting the annual **William Lloyd Garrison Lecture** at 7 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 9, at the Old South Presbyterian Church. Tufts University Professor **Kerri Greenidge**, author of “The Grimkes: The Legacy of Slavery in An American Family,” will present the free lecture, which is the fourth annual sponsored by the Friends of William Lloyd Garrison.

Mayor Sean Reardon is slated to proclaim Dec. 4-10 as Human Rights and Anti-Oppression Education Week in honor of Garrison’s birthday, Dec. 10. The Newburyport Public Library is preparing a suggested reading list relating to the abolition movement and social justice America. For more: [www.wlgarrison.com](http://www.wlgarrison.com).



**Professor Kerri Greenidge**

A date hasn’t been finalized, but the NPT is planning a **special screening of “A Measure of Change”** and a discussion with executive producer Ron Fleming sometime in late January or early February. The documentary, which will be shown at The Screening Room on State Street, tells how the urban renewal movement of the 1960s and ’70s targeted many rundown and vacant buildings in the city and how much of downtown Newburyport was saved from the wrecking ball through the actions of a group of visionary preservationists. The

trust is also hoping some of the people who participated in the 1976 documentary will join us for a discussion after the screening.