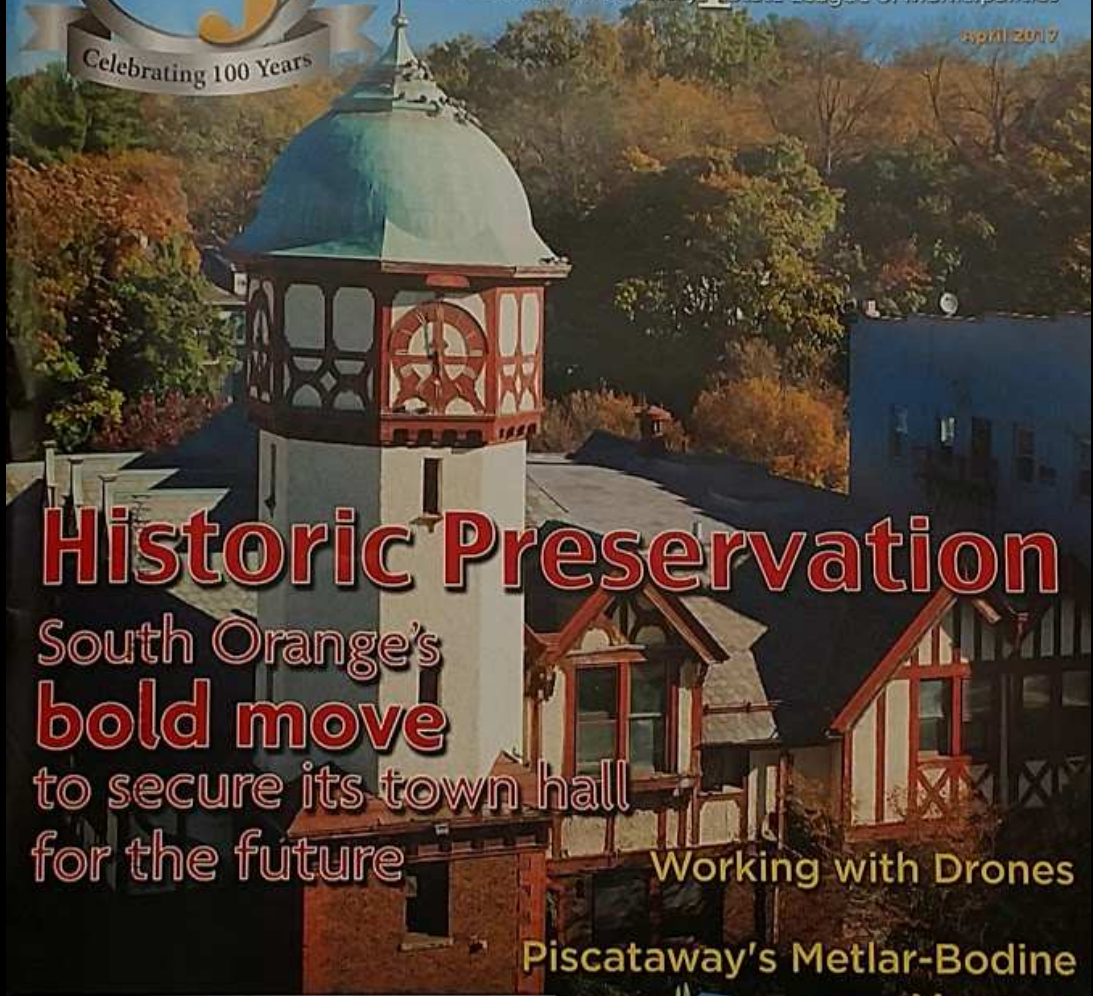




# nj municipalities

Official Publication of the New Jersey State League of Municipalities

April 2017



## Historic Preservation

South Orange's  
**bold move**  
to secure its town hall  
for the future

Working with Drones

Piscataway's Metlar-Bodine  
Museum

SCH 5-DIGIT 08835 FSSD  
HON DANIEL J HAYES JR  
MAYOR  
BRIDGEWATER TOWNSHIP  
100 COMMONS WAY  
BRIDGEWATER, NJ 08807-2449



Focus:

**Historic  
Preservation**



**Focus:  
Historic Preservation**

**Up Front**

**6 Focus: Creating New Form Out of Old Fabric**  
South Orange sells historic village hall to restaurant group  
Sheena Colium, Village President, South Orange

**ABOUT THE COVER**

South Orange made the bold decision to sell its town hall in order to ensure the historic facility was preserved for the future, updated, and maintained without the burden on taxpayers. Read about the efforts to keep communities' character and history in tact and flourishing in this month's Historic Preservation focus stories.



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**From 222 West State**

Michael J. Daicy, CAE, NJLM Executive Director



**Preserving History, Building the Future**

“Local governments’ work in preserving local history is a service to the residents who find a sense of place, pride, home, honor, community, and belonging to something bigger, and more enduring, than now.”

History is important to New Jersey local government and its constituents. It becomes an important reference point because our sense of place and origin is linked to our knowledge and understanding of our history. Understanding of community is often framed in what we are experiencing now, but “now” stands on the shoulders of history just as tomorrow will stand on what is now and all these will eventually make up our history. So our local history is to be treasured as a resource and a foundation, whether it is a historic town hall or museum, or the redevelopment of historic commercial space. Local governments’ work in preserving local history is a service to the residents who find a sense of place, pride, home, honor, community, and belonging to something bigger, and more enduring, than now.

Two great examples of the value of honoring history are close to home for all New Jersey municipalities. The League is headquartered in a designated historic building on West State Street in Trenton. Like all great historic buildings, it holds many stories that, when told, add color and texture to events that occurred within. It has been home and host to governors, both historic and modern. It was nearly lost to time and neglect only to be saved

through the partnership of those who understood its value to New Jersey history, including the New Jersey Historic Trust, the City of Trenton, and the League of Municipalities. As the only remaining Roebling Mansion, saving it was an important reminder of Trenton’s history and the history of manufacturing in New Jersey. (For the full story, visit [njsiom.org/city\\_mansion.html](http://njsiom.org/city_mansion.html))

The other local government example of the value of honoring history comes from the Department of Community Affairs (DCA). DCA began work on March 1, 1967, and recently celebrated its 50th anniversary. At that anniversary, eight former DCA commissioners were invited back by current Commissioner Richman to discuss how far DCA had come and how it honors its origin, while still contributing to the making of a modern state. (For details, visit [nj.gov/dca/home/50th/dca50th.html](http://nj.gov/dca/home/50th/dca50th.html))

First envisioned as a central point of coordination for federal programs and dollars, the DCA quickly evolved to address discrete issues of housing, neighborhoods, employment, health, and social programs. The mission continued to evolve over time, even as federal inputs waned. Housing remained a primary focus as issues of planning, safety, finance, and local government services gained priority. By the time Sandy struck in 2012, DCA was the State department with the right mix of history and technical ability to administer the recovery dollars that would be distributed locally.

Celebrate and preserve the history in your communities for the benefit of your current and future residents. 📌



Focus Historic Preservation

# Preservation New Jersey

Helping municipalities enhance the quality of their communities

By Barton Ross, on behalf of Preservation New Jersey



## What is Historic Preservation?

Defined as the identification, evaluation, and protection of historic resources, these irreplaceable properties play a vibrant role in their communities by improving its quality of life. Municipalities can curb suburban sprawl, preserve open space, gain Sustainable Jersey points, and reduce their landfill waste by utilizing existing building stock.

In New Jersey, the 1975 Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL; N.J.S.A. 40:55 D-1, et seq.) represented the state's enabling legislation, first allowing an historic preservation element to be implemented as part of a Planning Board's Master Plan. It also permitted a municipal governing body to "promote the conservation of historic sites and districts, open space, energy resources and valuable natural resources...and to prevent urban sprawl and degradation of the environment through improper use of land."

### Protecting the Past

Historic Preservation Commissions as we recognize them today evolved out of the 1985 amendments to the MLUL, which provided rules for governing bodies to establish a commission by ordinance.



Richard Southwick, PAA, Board of Directors, Preservation New Jersey



The principal duties of an Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) are to:

- Prepare surveys of historic sites;
- Make recommendations to the Planning Board on inclusion of Master Plan elements;
- Advise the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Adjustment on development applications involving historic sites or districts listed in the historic preservation element of the Master Plan; provide written reports to the Construction Official or Planning Board regarding permit applications;

Preservation New Jersey

• Perform other such advisory, educational, and informational functions that promote historic preservation.

Preserving our historic sites and the unique stories they tell of our cultural heritage is really a no-brainer. Who doesn't want property values to increase and local residents to be proud to call their town or city home? Municipalities that follow this sage advice consistently have greater community awareness, increased pride of place, lower crime rates, enhanced neighborhood identity, and broader investment dollars in heritage tourism.

Historic homeowners tend to want to share their home's past with the community and express their pride by hosting holiday walking tours, installing commemorative plaques on their facades, and displaying increased civic responsibility. These neighborhoods generally have higher home ownership rates, better rapport with neighbors, active

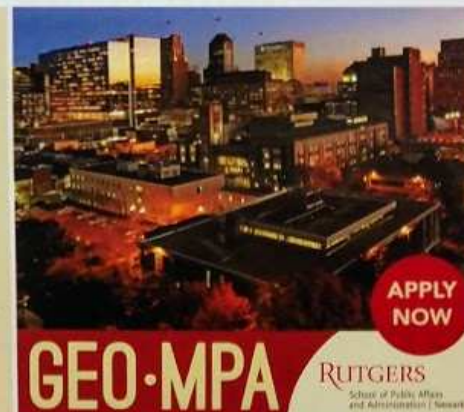
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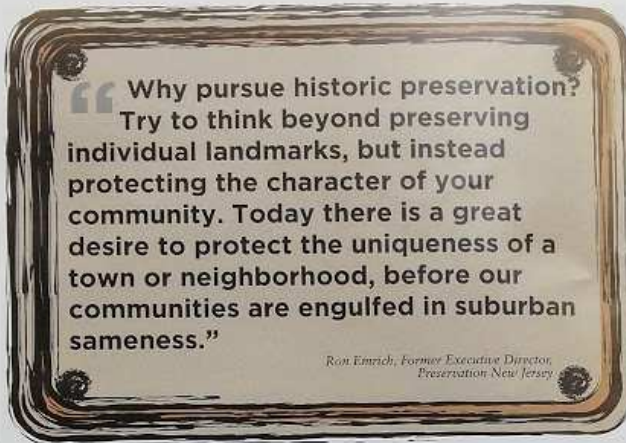
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security "eyes on the street" programs, and higher rates of participation in neighborhood associations and land use boards. Historic district residents typically believe in being good stewards of their town's cultural heritage.

According to the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the passage of the Tax Reform Act of 1986, has enabled the successful rehabilitation of over 41,250 buildings, created over 2.3 million jobs and managed over \$117 billion in private investment nationwide. Every dollar invested in rehabilitation projects triggers a chain reaction on local economies benefitting everyone from architects to construction workers, truck drivers, restaurant owners, and the taxpayer. According to Donovan Rypkema, author and expert on the economics of preservation, historic district designation increases property values at least 5-35% over similar, non-historic neighborhoods. By being proactive about saving places, municipalities can increase investor confidence in historic communities, and in turn become protected against broader housing market uncertainty.

While National Register districts attract investment, local preservation ordinances remain the only way to regulate privately owned historic properties,



**“ Why pursue historic preservation? Try to think beyond preserving individual landmarks, but instead protecting the character of your community. Today there is a great desire to protect the uniqueness of a town or neighborhood, before our communities are engulfed in suburban sameness.”**

*Ron Etnich, Former Executive Director, Preservation New Jersey*

An adopted ordinance allows for the creation and authority of the Historic Preservation Commission as municipal law. These ordinances provide a Statement of "Purpose" with detailed criteria and legal steps for local designation.

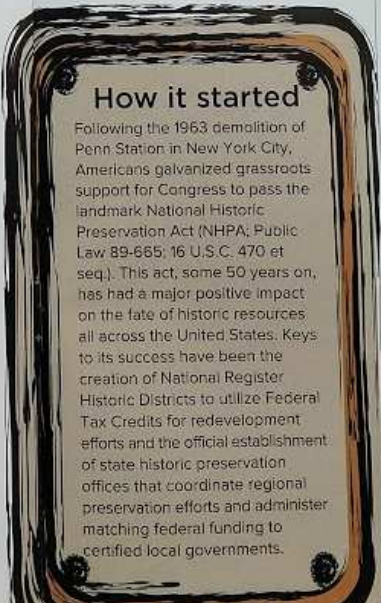
The document lists actions reviewable by the HPC (e.g., permit applications for a Certificate of Appropriateness) and specifies review procedures (e.g., does the HPC report to the Construction Official directly or to the Planning Board?).

An effective ordinance addresses demolition controls, property maintenance, legal challenges and code enforcement provisions. Properly implementing these concepts can qualify your town's historic preservation commission as a Certified Local Government, thereby becoming eligible for up to \$25,000 in annual grants.

The crucial first step to drafting an ordinance is to identify which properties are resources worthy of municipal protection. Identification is usually performed through an architectural survey based upon specific criteria and according to an informed statement of significance. It is recommended that professionals, including an historic preservation architect, land use attorney, and a professional planner with experience writing historic preservation elements of local master plans, be hired to collaborate with elected officials to draft an appropriate historic preservation ordinance for your community.

**How can we help?**

Founded in 1978, Preservation New Jersey (PNJ) advocates for and promotes historic preservation as a sustainable strategy to protect and enhance the vitality and heritage of New Jersey's richly diverse communities. Preservation New Jersey is the only statewide private member-supported historic preservation organization and is New Jersey's local collaborative partner with the National Trust.



**How it started**

Following the 1963 demolition of Penn Station in New York City, Americans galvanized grassroots support for Congress to pass the landmark National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA; Public Law 89-665; 16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.). This act, some 50 years on, has had a major positive impact on the fate of historic resources all across the United States. Keys to its success have been the creation of National Register Historic Districts to utilize Federal Tax Credits for redevelopment efforts and the official establishment of state historic preservation offices that coordinate regional preservation efforts and administer matching federal funding to certified local governments.

Does your municipality require historic preservation commission assistance, best practice recommendations, or advice for starting local preservation programs?

Are you having trouble building public support, formulating policies, or drafting an ordinance? Preservation New Jersey's Commission Assistance and Mentoring Program provides

interactive, one-day training sessions which focus on teaching fundamentals that every elected official, commission member, and history advocate should know. This training will prepare your municipality with proven regulatory expertise and guide your town toward the most effective protection of its significant landmarks. **3**

**THE SOLUTION TO YOUR COMPANY'S THIRD PARTY CLAIM CHALLENGES**

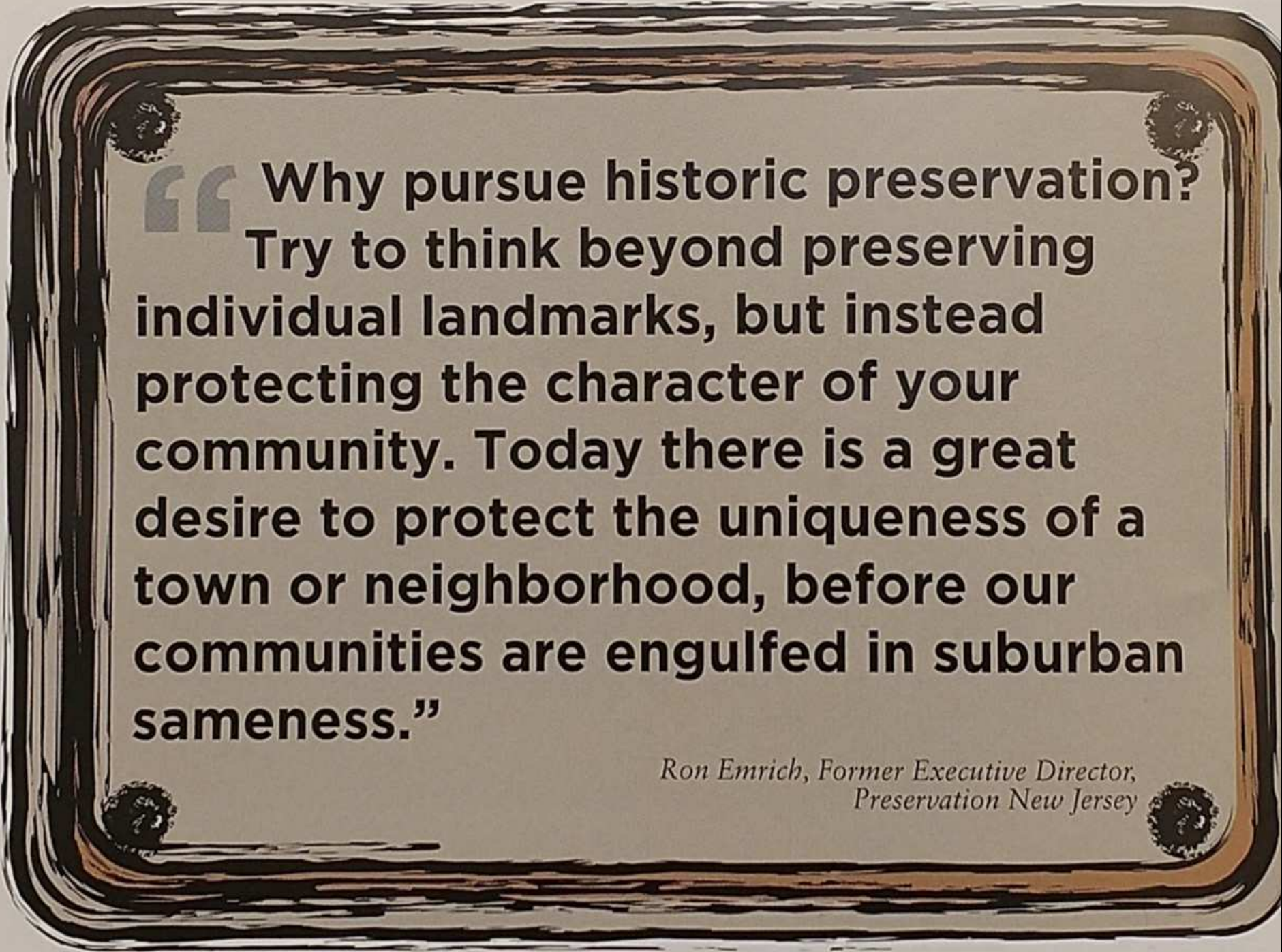
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*Ron Emrich, Former Executive Director,  
Preservation New Jersey*