



## SPRINGFIELD PRESERVATION TRUST, INC

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

Dedicated to Preserving Springfield's Architectural History

May 2007

### May is National Preservation Month

The Springfield Preservation Trust will join thousands of individuals around the country as part of the national celebration of National Preservation Month. *"Making Preservation Work!"* is the theme of this year's month-long celebration.

Since the National Trust created Preservation Week in 1971 to spotlight grassroots preservation efforts in America, it has grown into an annual celebration observed by small towns and big cities. Events range from architectural and historic tours, awards ceremonies, fundraising events, educational programs and heritage travel opportunities. Due to its overwhelming popularity, the National Trust has extended the celebration for the entire month of May and declared it Preservation Month thereby providing an even longer opportunity to celebrate the diverse and unique heritage of our country's cities and states, and enable more Americans to become involved in the growing preservation movement.

Here in Springfield, Preservation Month 2007 will be observed in several ways:

**May 9<sup>th</sup> - Springfield Preservation Trust Annual Awards Program, Tower Square, downtown Springfield**

**May 5<sup>th</sup> – May 12<sup>th</sup> - Photographic display of award winners at Tower Square**

**May 15<sup>th</sup> – May 29<sup>th</sup> - Photographic display of award winners at Eastfield Mall**

**May 20<sup>th</sup> - Spring House Tour featuring historic homes on Bellevue Avenue and Marengo Park**

In an effort to increase awareness of Springfield's architecture and the importance of preservation, the Springfield Preservation Trust is expanding the annual photographic display. Eastfield Mall has generously donated a vacant storefront that will become exhibit space from May 15<sup>th</sup> thru May 29<sup>th</sup> and will highlight current and past award winners.

We hope you will show your support for historic preservation by attending these important events.

### Upcoming Award Ceremony

Please join us on Wednesday, May 9<sup>th</sup>, from 5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. for our Annual Awards Ceremony. Each year the Preservation Trust honors individuals and organizations whose restoration or rehabilitation efforts contribute to the preservation of Springfield's historical heritage.

### Forest Park House Tour

This year's Spring House Tour will take place in the Historic Forest Park neighborhood. Six houses on Bellevue Avenue and Marengo Park will be open on May 20<sup>th</sup> from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Tickets are \$15 for the general public; Trust members receive a \$2 discount. Beginning May 12<sup>th</sup>, advance tickets will be available at:

- The Flower Box, 596 Carew Street
- Flowers, Flowers, 758 Sumner Avenue

Tickets will be available during tour hours on Bellevue Avenue.

Anyone interested in helping staff a house should contact Bob McCarroll at 736-0629 or [bobmccarroll@juno.com](mailto:bobmccarroll@juno.com). All volunteers receive a complimentary tour ticket and an invitation to the after-tour reception.

### Annual Meeting

On March 4<sup>th</sup> the Trust held its annual meeting at the Mason Wright Community Center, the new home of the Springfield Preservation Trust. It was standing room only as we listened to our guest speaker, Don D'Amato, speak about Primus Mason, the philanthropist who gave the land and left an endowment that created the Mason Wright Center.

Those of us in attendance had the opportunity to tour the new SPT office space designed by Trust member Bill Devlin. Filled with antiques on loan, beautifully refinished furniture and mantle by John Langevin, shelving by Jack Hess, and wallpapered by Trust

members Ellen Berry, Linda Langevin and Paul Mann, the Trust finally has a place to call home.

### **Chestnut Middle School Gets A New Life**

The best way of saving a threatened, obsolete or functionally irrelevant structure is to give it a new life. One solution is renovation, which means updating the structure functionally and/or aesthetically in ways that allow it to serve its original purpose as well as a new replacement would while retaining its original identity. The gift of life may also mean finding a new use for a structure, and adapting it functionally and aesthetically to serve the new use's demands. This is called adaptive re-use and it is exactly what is planned for Chestnut Middle School.

On March 15<sup>th</sup> plans were unveiled for the redevelopment of 495 Chestnut Street. Miramar Real Estate of San Juan will convert the vacant property, to be re-named Chestnut Estate, into 110 market rate condominiums all built on existing, restored structures, "preserving its old charm, architecture and character." Several Springfield Preservation Trust members attended the presentation and had the opportunity to tour the building afterward. There are many excellent photographs available on Heather Brandon's blog, "Urban Compass" located on the Valley Advocate website.

Originally known as Chestnut Street Grammar School, construction began November 20<sup>th</sup>, 1901 and the building was occupied on September 8<sup>th</sup>, 1903. It was designed by E. C. Gardner (1836-1915), thought by many to be Springfield's most famous architect. An addition was put on within the first few years of construction, doubling the size of the original building. A few of the original building's statistics:

- 15,600 cubic feet of Portland cement concrete support the walls
- 2,250,000 bricks were used in the walls
- 13,500 yards of plastering were needed to cover the walls and ceilings of the rooms
- 4,500 square feet of slate blackboard was used
- 55,000 feet of maple floor were laid
- 14,000 of felt and asbestos paper was used for deafening and fire-retardant purposes
- 385 windows supply 8,000 square feet of lighting surface
- 23 tons of cast-iron radiation provide heat
- 8 miles of wire provide for the 500 lights, the electric bells, the telephone system and the clocks
- The cost to the city was approximately \$136,000.
- The initial enrollment was 700 children.

*Many thanks to Ralph Slate for the use of his original brochure.*

### **5 Biggest Restoration Mistakes**

#### **Compliments of Greater Portland Landmarks (Maine)**

1. Not restoring the structural integrity of the building before investing in cosmetic details.
2. Failing to properly prepare surfaces for restoration such as repairing and cleaning walls and woodwork.
3. Underestimating the impact of potential construction hazards such as lead, asbestos, dust, and electrical problems.
4. Performing projects in a way that undermines previous work. For example, finishing floors before the walls are repaired and restoring interior details prior to completing foundation or roof repairs.
5. Short term cures that lead to more serious problems in the future such as using inferior quality products, performing cosmetic cover-ups, or using unskilled labor.

Jim Boone would add #6. Do not start your restoration until you have a plan that is thought out. A shotgun approach leads to multiple projects going on at the same time and none of them get finished. Much time and money is wasted and the proper order of things gets lost. (Very hard on relationships too as individual priorities may differ).

#### **How To: It's spring, time for a House Tune Up**

Spring is here and the winter has taken a toll on your wonderful old house. You have not been out too much so you may not have noticed what has happened. It is time to do an inventory of winter damage/deterioration and make a plan of repairs before it is winter again.

Start by walking around the house and looking at the roof and chimney(s). Any slates or shingles lost, any flashing around the chimney bent up from the wind? Have you cleaned the gutters from the last of the fall leaves? Did any of your downspouts come loose or the gutters get bent or are sagging from the snow and ice? Do your downspouts drain away from the house enough to keep water out of the basement? Look at your porches and exterior stairs, did the snow shovel scrape the paint off, did sand and ice scuff the paint down to bare wood? Repainting porches and steps is often a yearly chore and now is a good time to do it. Do you have any beginnings of peeling paint that you might be able to touch up and avoid further deterioration and a bigger paint job?

If your house needs repainting, have you set that up yet? Painters are booking their years work, get in line. Have your bushes or trees grown closer to your house than 3 feet, time to trim them as a way to keep the moisture away from the foundation and porches as to avoid rot and carpenter ants. Does your fence need paint touch up or re-securing from frost heaves? And finally, don't

forget to wash the windows, change the storm windows, repair the screens and fix the broken window ropes.

When you are done, sit back and relax on your patio or porch and have a cool drink. Winter is just around the corner.

We continue to look for new contractors to add to our Contractor List. Please call Jim Boone at 734-9110, send him an email at [jimboone@hotmail.com](mailto:jimboone@hotmail.com), or complete the form below and mail it to our office at 74 Walnut Street, Spfld. MA 01105. If you need a contractor, please call the Trust for a copy of the list.

### New Trust Logo

Can you identify the building(s) in the upper left corner of the newsletter? Several of Springfield's most recognized buildings have been incorporated into the new Springfield Preservation Trust logo. The logo was adapted by the Design WorkShop, Inc from an original drawing by J. William Fanning.

### Membership information

Want to help preserve Springfield's built environment? Join our organization and become a vital part of the movement to preserve our built environment and promote our architectural heritage.

- **(\$30) Household** - Includes discounted admission to Trust events
- **(\$60) Patron** - Includes discounted admission to Trust events and one complimentary event ticket
- **(\$120) Sponsor** - Includes discounted admission to Trust events, two complimentary events tickets and an architectural guide
- **(\$200) Benefactor** - Includes discounted admission to Trust events, two complimentary tickets and a Trust produced video titled "Homes of the City"

As per your request, two levels of lifetime membership are now being offered

- **(\$300) Lifetime Household** - Includes discounted admission to Trust events
- **(\$600) Lifetime Patron** - Includes one complimentary event ticket per year in addition to discounted admission to Trust events

### Monthly Meetings

Monthly meetings of the Springfield Preservation Trust are held on the first Wednesday of each month at 6:30 p.m., at the Mason Wright Retirement Center, 74 Walnut Street. All Trust members are welcome.

Newsletter contributors:

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Name of Contractor \_\_\_\_\_

Trade Specialty \_\_\_\_\_

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