

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

Summer 2018

Preservation awards recognize citizen stewards, while events shine the spotlight on city's parks

Awards presented for stewardship, education, leadership, philanthropy, research, & craftsmanship

Preservation awards in multiple categories brought Preservation Week 2018 to a celebratory conclusion at the Custom House Maritime Museum on May 20, 2018. At the standing-room-only ceremony, the Newburyport Preservation Trust presented its 2018 awards in six categories:

- **Stewardship:** David A. Bak & Deborah A. Duncan (34 Boardman Street); Martha C. Muldoon & Carolyn J. Davis (6 Beck Street); James G. Shanley & Karen P. Battles (15 Olive Street); and Kenneth A. & Lauren J. Woods (18 Temple Street).
- **Education:** John M. Webber, teacher at Rupert A. Nock Middle School.
- **Research:** Sharon L. Spieldenner, senior librarian and archivist at the Newburyport Public Library Archival Center.
- **Leadership:** W. Michael Mroz, former director of the Custom House Maritime Museum in Newburyport.
- **Historically Sensitive Craftsman:** Paul R. Miller (1931-2012) of Newburyport.
- **Philanthropy:** James Agrippe Morrill, Robert Dodge Morrill, & James Astle Morrill, trustees of the Mayor Gayden W. Morrill Charitable Foundation. ■

Help wanted for NPT's Historic House Plaque Program!

Like old houses? If so, this opportunity is for you! As **volunteer coordinator for NPT's Historic House Plaque Program**, you will serve as liaison between homeowners and our researchers. Contact NPT co-president Linda Miller (lamiller20@comcast.net) for more information on how you can help NPT. ■



2018 Preservation Awards (l. to r., presented by NPT's Bronson de Stadler): **Stewardship:** Carolyn Davis & Martha Muldoon, Deborah Duncan & David Bak, Kenneth & Lauren Woods, and Rosemary Foy (for James Shanley & Karen Battles); **Education:** John Webber; **Leadership:** Michael Mroz; **Research:** Sharon Spieldenner; **Historically Sensitive Craftsman:** Paul Miller (accepted by Geraldine Miller); and **Philanthropy:** James Astle Morrill, James Agrippe Morrill, & Nancy Morrill (for R.D. Morrill), trustees of the Mayor G. W. Morrill Charitable Foundation.

Photos by
Novak Niketic



Preservation Week 2018: 'A walk in the park' with tours and presentations across the city

The theme for this year's Preservation Week was "Newburyport Parks: Past, Present, and Future," and the event packed seven park-related events into the weekend of May 19-20. Events included tours and presentations at Battis Grove on the Clipper City Rail Trail, Powder House Park & Learning Center, Atwood Park, Atkinson Common, and Cornelius J. Doyle Triangle; plus an anniversary open house at Window Woman of New England.

This year's keynote presentation was "Bartlet Mall: History, Significance, and Preservation," by architect Charles O. Griffin, Saturday afternoon at the historic 1805 courthouse on High Street. The presentation filled the upstairs courtroom of the Charles Bulfinch-designed building with attendees eager to learn about the restoration possibilities for the Bartlet Mall trees, slopes, fountain, and pond.

Thank you to all of our volunteer event coordinators, supporters, members, and enthusiastic attendees. ■





Don't miss NPT's 'If This House Could Talk' during Yankee Homecoming July 28 - August 5

The Newburyport Preservation Trust is again sponsoring the popular "If This House Could Talk" do-it-yourself poster program during the city's Yankee Homecoming celebration from July 28 to August 5.

This fun, historic house awareness program was started in Newburyport two years ago by local history enthusiast Jack Santos. The premise is simple. Participants sign up, get listed on a guide map, then post a placard on their house with tidbits of house history. Then visitors stroll the neighborhoods, digesting information at their own pace.

It's not too late to participate. Simply visit <https://walknewburyport.wordpress.com/> to learn more about the program and get listed on the map. ■

Powder House open for tours & demonstrations Saturday, July 28, 1-3 p.m.

Visit the Powder House Park & Learning Center on Saturday, July 28, from 1-3 p.m. The Acton Minutemen, historic reenactors, will be on hand to demonstrate marching maneuvers and musket firing. ■

Plans for High Street alterations proceed, but without a completed Section 106 review

NPT alerts Massachusetts Historical Commission

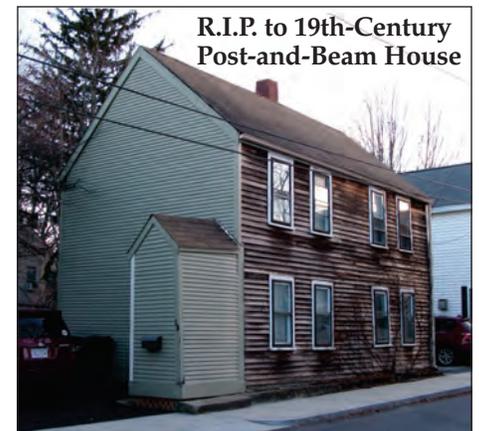
In June 2018, Newburyport Preservation Trust observers noted that the "Safe Routes to Schools" plan for wholesale alterations to a one-third-mile stretch of historic High Street was listed as 75% complete, yet without the required Section 106 review to assess impact on historic structures, byways, and vistas. One public hearing was held at the Newburyport Public Library on June 14.

The plan calls for curb extensions, crossing islands, road-straightening, wider concrete sidewalks, signs, lights, and flashing beacons, in addition to ADA-compliant ramps and five-foot bicycle lanes.

In December the city's Historical Commission requested additional details from the city and the Mass. Department of Transportation in order to initiate such a review, but information was not provided.

Because it appeared that this project, to be financed by \$1.6 million in federal and state funds (80/20%), was being hustled through while short-cutting proper procedure, NPT alerted the Massachusetts Historical Commission by letter on June 28.

At the July 11 meeting of the Newburyport Historical Commission, chairman Sarah White stated that when the commission does undertake its review, no public comment will be allowed, and that the commission serves as "the public" in a Section 106 review. ■



R.I.P. to 19th-Century Post-and-Beam House

It's business-as-usual at City Hall, as lapses in procedure continue

On July 13 the *Daily News* provided an update on the too-hasty demolition of a contributing structure in Newburyport's National Register Historic District. The early-19th-century house at 19 Merrill Street, in theory protected from demolition by city zoning laws, was demolished in mid-May upon emergency order of the city's building commissioner, Peter Binette.

At the July 12 meeting of the city's Historical Commission seeking explanation, Binette said that he ordered the demolition after receiving a written opinion from structural engineer John O'Connell that the house, after some foundation work, was unstable and therefore unsafe for workers.

At issue is the building department not following the process of public notice and hearing before the zoning board of appeals. This is the third "demolition-by-skirting-procedure" since pro-preservation zoning laws were passed unanimously in 2013. ■



A section of the "Safe Routes to School" design



Words not necessary

Preservationists cry "foul" at Fowle's!

At left: All original blond woodwork was scrapped.

At right: Someone's idea of preservation.

