



Preservation
Massachusetts

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East Princeton's Mechanics Hall listed amongst Massachusetts Most Endangered Historic Resources

Nearly 30 years of vacancy and neglect taking toll on historic building

Mechanics Hall in East Princeton has been named one of Massachusetts' "Most Endangered Historic Resources". Since 1993, this list is compiled annually by Preservation Massachusetts, the state's historic preservation advocacy organization.

Constructed in 1852 as a schoolhouse, Mechanics Hall is the oldest municipal building in Princeton and the Greek Revival gable front façade looks much as it did at the turn of the century. In its 160 year history, Mechanics Hall has served as a meeting place and function hall for many local organizations, social events for the village of East Princeton. It closed permanently in the 1980's though its proximity to a busy roadway makes it highly visible to the community, many of whom want to see the building saved. In 2004, a committee surveying Princeton found 97% of residents wanted to see the building restored for community use.

Structural issues, neglect, faulty wiring, water infiltration and vandalism all threaten the future of Mechanics Hall. A Friends group was established and set out a list of short and long term goals for the preservation of Mechanics Hall. They hope that endangered listing will help to educate the public about the importance of Mechanics Hall, what it means to their town and their connections as a community.

Jim Igoe, President of Preservation Massachusetts feels strongly about the future of Mechanics Hall. "This beautiful 1852 front-gabled Greek revival building is far too important an historic property to be threatened and that is why Preservation Massachusetts has listed it on this year's Most Endangered List. The recently formed Friends of Mechanics Hall group has done a good job advocating and educating the Princeton community about the significance of this beautiful property. Preservation Massachusetts is proud to stand with those working to preserve this historic gem."

Alex Fiandaca of the Friends of Mechanics Hall adds, "The selection of Princeton's Mechanics Hall as one of Massachusetts' Most Endangered Historic Resources in 2012 will provide a critical opportunity for the newly formed Friends of Mechanics Hall to educate the public about the building's cultural and historical significance and draw attention to the

threats and challenges it faces. The Most Endangered designation will also enable our organization to reach a broad range of supporters, which will strengthen our efforts to stop further deterioration of Mechanics Hall and develop a comprehensive plan for its restoration and future use. The Friends of Mechanics Hall are eager to work with Preservation Massachusetts for guidance in saving and preserving this Princeton treasure.”

Fitchburg City Hall was also listed.

The other endangered resources for 2012 are: Durgin Garage (Brookline), Orchard House/197 Belmont Street (Watertown), Ware Methodist Episcopal Church, North Brookfield Town House, Elm Hill Farm (Brookfield), Quinsigamond Firehouse (Worcester), Plymouth Theatre – The Palladium (Worcester), the Charles Bowker House (Worcester), and Herbert M. Farr Residence (Holyoke).

The 2012 Massachusetts Most Endangered Historic Resources list will be publicly recognized at the annual “Believe in Preservation” event, hosted this year at Tuckerman Hall in Worcester on November 8. For more event details, and more information on the Massachusetts Most Endangered program, visit www.preservationmass.org or call 617-723-3383.

About the ‘Massachusetts Most Endangered Historic Resources’ List

Now in its 19th year, the list of most endangered historic resources has become an effective tool for preservationists to focus statewide attention on the condition of individual historic properties and their importance to communities. Of the more than 140 historic sites designated as endangered since the list’s inception in 1993, less than a twenty have been lost.

This year’s list was chosen from nominations submitted by groups and individuals concerned with local preservation issues throughout the state. Submissions are judged by several criteria, including their historic significance, the extent of the threat and the community’s commitment to preserving the resource.

Founded in 1985, Preservation Massachusetts is the statewide non-profit organization that actively promotes the preservation of historic buildings and landscapes as a positive force for economic development and the retention of community character.

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