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*Preserve, Conserve and Protect
Sense of Place, Community, Spirit*

A Newsletter of Preserving the Wildwoods: A Community Alliance, a 501c3 Nonprofit

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The Kress Building in Sarasota, Florida, designed in 1932 by architect Edward Sibbett, has been preserved as a historical landmark. Courtesy Susan Fox Hirschmann

Preservation, Southern Style: How US Tourist Destinations Maintain Their Character

Susan Fox Hirschmann

Wherever we live, whether the small town of Wildwood, or larger towns or villages, our stories and our environments are our history. The buildings, the green open areas, make a place unique, distinct and affect how we feel about being "home".

Home to me is now Wildwood Crest, though the Crest I grew up in was laden with more mid-century motels, neon art, beach bungalows and grand Victorians several decades ago. The continual demise of the home I love, changes a town. And what replaces those destroyed buildings have mostly been vinyl and concrete eyesores with soulless exteriors – cookie cutter eye pollution! And so my travels made me even more keenly aware of how some towns restore, preserve, and retain the lovely charm that just makes people want to visit. These towns feel warm and inviting and beckon the visitor to linger.

Journey to the South

Atlanta, thanks to a cadre of several preservation groups, has taken old factories and turned them into apartment lofts, old Antebellum buildings and turned them into museums and wondrous parks, old buildings and turned them into shops and restaurants. The facades remain the same, but retain the charm and history that makes one

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Letter from the President

Parry Tell, President

Let me introduce myself. I am the new president of an old organization with a new name. As you may already know, Partners in Preservation and one of its standing committees, Preserving the Wildwoods, merged into one organization with a new name. Why the name change? After new officers were elected in December, the Executive Committee met and, after much discussion, decided we needed a new name to better reflect what we were all about. We will still be partnering with other history organizations on the island in the important work to preserve our past. We will still work to identify and save historic buildings. But we realized that our history is incomplete if we don't include all our community and buildings become more important if we know the stories that go with them. We also need to remember that history isn't something that happened a long time ago. What happened yesterday is

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Moving a Historic House

Editorial Board

Sometimes the best way to save a historic structure from demolition is to move it. When a historic structure is worth far less than the value of the land, moving a house allows the owner to sell their land, the developer to build

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Moving Wildwood's historic Shamrock in the winter of 2021. Courtesy Dennis Pierce.

Preservation: Choosing the Hard Things

Charles Rollins

One of the most compelling stories in Wildwood this year was moving the Shamrock house from its lot on Pacific Avenue to a new location a few blocks away. People witnessed the engineering marvel of a historic building being saved from demolition by traveling on the back of a flatbed truck. As this issue's article "Moving a Historic House" explains, it is no small feat to move a house. When many buildings are just torn down instead of moved or rehabbed, why in the world would anyone want to take on the difficulty of moving a house?

The answer is that preservation is part of a long tradition of American grit and ingenuity. America was built by people who took on challenges and walked the path less traveled. These were the people when told something was not possible or couldn't be done, they rolled up their sleeves and put in the work to prove the naysayers wrong. In today's society, things have become more disposable and we're moving towards a tendency to take the path of least resistance. If there's an old home that has seen better days - tear it down, no way it can be saved, not possible to rehab it, too many regulations. Preservationists reject this defeatist thinking and like the American pioneers, inventors, and entrepreneurs of the past they realize that hard work can lead to great results.

To paraphrase President Kennedy when he inspired the country to go to the moon, we choose to do things not because they are easy, but because they are hard. Yes, preserving an old house may not be the easiest way, but America was not built by people who took the easy way out. The owners of the Shamrock house could have given up and tossed their distinctive home in a landfill never to be seen again. But they chose to do the hard things by moving and preserving their iconic house for future generations. Maybe it's time we stop taking the easy way out and recapture that American grit and ingenuity by stepping up to preserve and protect the Wildwoods' older homes.

The views expressed in this piece are the author's own and do not necessarily represent those of the editorial board.



The Shamrock lifted and awaiting its trip down Pacific Avenue. Courtesy Taylor Henry

Moving a Historic House

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new on the land, and the preservation community to save a historic house. Moving a house from one place has a long history and was used in the past to save money due to the high cost of new construction. Now moving a house is usually done to preserve a historic structure.

It takes a team of experts including a general contractor, structural moving company, electricians, concrete company, and a detailed plan to make sure the job is done legally and safely. If you have a new lot close by and there are not many obstructions (utility lines and trees) on the move route, it could be a very good deal. Usually, the movers take care of getting everything necessary to move the house from one site to another such as choosing the best route, acquiring the road permits, working with the electric company to move power lines if necessary, and providing insurance.

Moving a house is a five-step process:

1. All items are removed from the basement or crawl space, including appliances, utilities, plumbing and ducts. Usually decks and steps from porches are removed.
2. The building itself is prepared for moving. Preparation is done by the contractor with guidance from the structural moving company.
3. The building's new site is prepared and a foundation built.
4. Professional movers use unified hydraulic jacking systems to raise the building to limit the chance of structure damage. If it is a short move, the building can just be placed on rollers and pushed or pulled to a new location.
5. The home is set into its new location and all utility hookups are restored.

Moving costs greatly vary depending on how the house is moved, the distance it's moved, the new location site, and the size of the home. Costs can range from \$15,000 to \$200,000, usually between \$12 and \$16 a square foot.

The process of relocating a historic house may seem overwhelming but it is doable and worth the work because preserving a piece of tangible history gives people a sense of place and a connection to the past.



Utility lines were temporarily removed so the Shamrock could make the move to its new destination. Courtesy Taylor Henry

New Program Provides Tax Credits for Historic Properties

Editorial Board

The State of New Jersey approved a new tax credit program that is yet another compelling reason to create historic districts in the Wildwoods. The Historic Property Reinvestment Program (HPRP) incentivizes rehabilitation of historic structures and works alongside the existing Federal Historic Tax Credit Program. The HPRP's goal is to attract investment to bring older properties back into productive use, thereby also protecting the properties from demolition.

Like many other preservation grants and tax credits, eligible buildings must be on a historic registry or part of a designated historic district. With the real estate market experiencing another bubble, the fabric of the Wildwoods is being changed by a large amount of demolitions and new development. Access to state and federal tax credits/grants can help protect the heritage of the island by offering incentives to owners and developers to rehab older buildings rather than destroy historic properties. New Jersey recognizes the importance of historic preservation as a part of a community's development. Now the Wildwoods need to do their part and enact historic districts so property owners can get access to the same state and federal funds that other communities have for maintaining older buildings.

If you are an owner of an older building in the Wildwoods, let the local leaders know you support historic districts and want to have access to HPRP and federal tax credits. More information about this new program can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/mrzsc6md>.

Letter from the President

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already history, so we need to be sure that we're including the history and stories of newer members of our community as well as longtime residents when we work to preserve our legacy. Taking all of this into consideration, we decided our new name should be Preserving the Wildwoods: A Community Alliance, and we hope that you recognize that YOU are included in that community and that your story is important to us.

As for me...I've lived "off shore" for the last 40 years, but only 4 miles away in Erma. I grew up in Wildwood, although my childhood home is now condos, and my family has longtime ties to the island. I attended St. Ann's School and Wildwood Catholic High. I still remember riding my bike with my brother and our friends all over the island in the winter and hitting the beach and boardwalk every summer (Mack's Pizza is the best!) When I was old enough, I went to Phil & Eddie's or the Stardust to hear Mary Wells, Little Stevie Wonder and the Shirelles, among many other famous performers. There were 5 movie theaters, 2 that stayed open all winter – everyone's Saturday night date. We felt sorry for the kids who had to live in Cape May. Those buildings are gone now, but the culture of that time, and other eras before that and since, are still important and still influence the Wildwoods of today. I hope as President, I can help foster a respect for our past and help us use it as a guide for our future. As Michael Crichton (author of Jurassic Park) once said, "If you don't know your past, it's like you're a leaf that doesn't know it's part of a tree." Here's to saving our tree.



Atlanta has taken old factories and converted them into shops and restaurants. Courtesy Susan Fox Hirschmann

Preservation, Southern Style: How US Tourist Destinations Maintain Their Character

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want to walk, enjoy, and savor the local neighborhoods.

From Martin Luther King's home and Ebenezer Baptist Church to early American history, this city prides itself on neighborhood resurrection! Atlanteans talk lovingly of their city and love to walk, expressing pride in their green spaces, parks, museums, and places to learn and enjoy this great city that cares about its citizens. From the Museum of Human Rights to the Coca Cola Museum, some buildings are new, some are restored but most tend to value the history of this city, many being restored but blending well with the architectural design of the past.

Onto the town of Sarasota, Florida, once again my tours of the different neighborhoods, brought home the value this town places on restored buildings. The 1920's home of John and Mabel Ringling (yes of circus fame!) has been restored but has the original facade, now a museum, encompassing the Ringling's art collection surrounded by magnificent grounds. Downtown Sarasota, labeled the historic area, is now full of older restored buildings, turned into retail businesses, restaurants, bars, and galleries. The Kress Building, once a large department store built in 1932 in classic Art Deco style with tile and terra-cotta entrance, stands out on Main Street as a warm and welcoming area of small shops. Another notable restored building is the Resurrection House, a Mediterranean Revival style typical of others built in the 1920's, was a drug store, then a glass company, and in 1995 was restored, keeping the exterior charm. It now houses several retail businesses.

Valuing Our Own History

So why should we care? And why do I especially feel so deeply about this subject of preservation? And why are these two towns important to our own pursuit of preserving and renovating buildings. We can learn from our travels and apply the values of our history to our own town of Wildwood. A vision of some of those charming old buildings, most empty and perhaps unsightly, requires the energy and architectural talent to restore while preserving, keeping the charm of the Wildwood downtown of years ago. Traveling to these two cities has given me a renewed vision of what can be done with great ideas, a plan, architecturally congruent design, and the grant funding to restore our town. May we find people, particularly our public officials, that also value our history here and preserve the Wildwood charm we love!



This homeowner is preserving the integrity of their historic house, and thanks to new NJ tax incentives, it's easy for you to do the same! Courtesy Taylor Henry.

Keep in Touch

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PTW website: www.preservingthewildwoods.com

Preserving the Wildwoods on Facebook

We Need Your Support!

Donations of time and money are both very appreciated.

If you are interested volunteering, please email preservingthewildwoods@gmail.com and let us know how you'd like to be involved.

If you are interested in making a donation, visit our PayPal donation form at <https://www.preservingthewildwoods.com/make-a-donation>

I Remember: A Wildwood Memory

Gail Hayman Cohen, Editorial Board

I don't remember the exact date, but I remember the story. We were sitting around the dining table eating dinner when my father, who at the time was a Municipal Judge in the Crest, got a phone call. We only had one phone and it happened to be between the kitchen and dining room so we could hear the conversation. My father was a mild-mannered kind of guy so the fact that his tone was angry and heated put us all on edge.

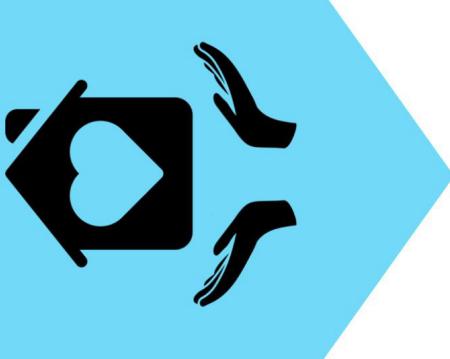
Sammy Davis Jr. was to perform in Wildwood and his tour manager booked him and his entourage to stay in a motel in the Crest. When they got there, the motel owner refused to give them rooms. Segregation was in full swing at the time so someone called my father and asked him to help. My father and the caller worked out a solution together and then Sammy Davis Jr.'s manager called

to thank my father and invited us to the early first performance.

We all went and after greeting and warming up his audience, Sammy Davis Jr., full of passion, humor, and energy shared the story of his "motel" experience. His end line was "I know they did not give me a room because I am Jewish!" That remark brought the house down! After performing two shows for paid audiences, he did a special show for the waiters, waitresses, and staff where he led a serious discussion on equality, freedom, and respect.

Recollecting this story made me wonder why I have read histories of the Black Community of Cape May and Atlantic City, but not of Wildwood Island. It is time to focus more on preserving the history, culture, and stories of the underrepresented groups of the Wildwoods.

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