

"Last Stop" on the Demarest Railroad Depot Restoration Project

Bergen County's historic preservation grants, combined with other funding, have resulted in an exemplary preservation project.

With assistance of the Bergen County Trust Fund, the handsome Romanesque Revival exterior of the Demarest Railroad Depot is being restored to the original design of J. Cleveland Cady. The historic railroad station presently houses the senior center and serves other groups, such as the Demarest Historical Society.

Bergen County's historic preservation Trust Fund provided \$193,812 in matching grants for Phase II of the depot's restoration. This work includes architectural design and the completion of the exterior restoration. This included masonry repointing and cleaning, removal of the later infill in the tower so that the tower now has its inviting original appearance with open archways, as well as restoration of windows and doors, replacement of heating and air conditioning systems, and installation of a bird control system.

The initial exterior work has partial New Jersey Historic Trust grants totaling \$203,068 and focuses on preparation of the preservation plan for the restoration of the building, architectural design for Phase I, and restoration of the slate roof, east dormer, and the roof drainage system. The interior restoration is now under way.

History and Significance

The Demarest Railroad Station was constructed in 1872 and was named after Demarest, who was a director of the railroad and owned the land that the station was built upon. It was built of stone quarried from the slopes of the Palisades, and helped the town's evolution from its agrarian origins to a commuter suburb.

The depot is truly unique not for its history, however, but its architecture. The 1872 Demarest building is one of the county's most architectural significant railroad stations. It has a wonderful scenic location, and is the visual symbol of the Borough. It is an important Romanesque Revival design with heavy rough-cut stone walls, round arches, and medieval style detailing.

It is the work on an important architect, Cady, whose most familiar surviving building is the south range for the American Museum of Natural History in New York City.

Passenger service for the station ended in 1966. The rail line is still used for freight transport as part of the CSX Northern Branch. The borough of Demarest purchased the depot in 1978. It was added to the State and National Registers of Historic Places in 2004.

Plans to restore the Park Street station were first discussed in the 1990s. The first phase in 2002, saw the addition of a slate roof and a weather vane, finials, cresting and an east dormer. Four years later, the portico to the station platform was opened, the stone exterior was cleaned, the heating and air conditioning systems were upgraded, and the windows, doors and cement sidewalk surrounding the building were restored.

In addition to the grants from Bergen and others, the Federal Highway administration has also provided funds. The work is expected to be completed by the end of the year.



A message from
**Bergen County Executive
Dennis McNerney**



Preserving Our Past for a Brighter Future

Dear Friends,

Bergen County has a rich history, and preserving historic buildings is essential to understanding our county's heritage. And to offer a modern twist, one might consider it recycling on a grand scale.

Often, you can make relatively small changes to adapt existing buildings to compatible new uses, and others can be upgraded to meet modern building requirements and codes. With historic preservation, we are not only safeguarding our legacy, but conducting a sustainable practice that makes good economic sense, as well.

The more than three-century history of Bergen County has produced a rich heritage of historically and architecturally significant sites. That's why the Bergen County Historic Preservation Trust Fund exists as part of the Bergen County Open Space, Recreation, Farmland and Historic Preservation Trust Fund. In order to help preserve some of these important historic properties, the County offers competitive matching grants for the acquisition, stabilization, rehabilitation, restoration, preservation, and the preparation of plans and reports associated with the implementation of capital historic preservation projects by the County, municipalities, and qualified non-profit organizations. Only properties listed on, or eligible for listing on, the New Jersey Register of Historic Places can apply for historic preservation grants. The work must meet exemplary historic preservation standards.

So, what benefits does historic preservation offer us? For one, significant historic structures give us a sense of permanence and community, and improve the quality of life in our many municipalities.

With historic preservation, we are not only safeguarding our legacy, but conducting a sustainable practice that makes good economic sense, as well.

A more tangible benefit, however, is that the rehabilitation of a historic structure often increases the value of the property, as well as the value of neighboring properties. In fact, research and studies have shown that historic preservation is an economic asset, producing jobs, fostering tourism, spurring reinvestment, increasing tax revenue, and providing business income. In tough economic times, this is welcome news indeed.

In this edition of *Open Space Momentum*, I'm proud to spotlight

several historic preservation successes. I invite you to learn about the impressive work at the Demarest Railroad Depot, as well as a church in Mahwah, a signal tower in Waldwick, an historic home in Ramsey, and even a 'castle' in Rutherford.

Sincerely,

Dennis McNerney
Bergen County Executive

COUNTY OF BERGEN

Dennis McNerney
County Executive



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Successful Case Studies

Bergen Historic Preservation Projects

Bergen's historic treasures rooted in the County's past are being safeguarded so future generations can benefit from their history and beauty. Among the Bergen Historic Preservation Projects are preservation activities at the Demarest Railroad Depot (see cover article), the Federalist-Period Reformed Church in Mahwah, Waldwick's Queen Anne style railroad signal tower (1890), the mid-eighteenth century Westervelt-Ackerman House in Ramsey, and "the Castle" at Felician College in Rutherford.

WALDWICK ERIE RAILROAD SIGNAL TOWER



Waldwick's Queen Anne style railroad signal tower was erected in 1890. Its picturesque architectural massing used a

mix of materials. The building is a rare surviving example of this once common type of transportation architecture. Its restoration is based on original 1890 construction drawings, as well as historic photographs and existing conditions.

The Waldwick Historical Society operates the building as a museum, interpreting the area's rich transportation history. The 2002 grant was used for site work, selective demolition, and some exterior restoration. The 2004, 2005 and 2007 grants support exterior and interior restoration, including replacement of missing and deteriorated features, painting, and new slate roofing.

IVISWOLD, THE CASTLE AT FELICIAN COLLEGE

Located in the Borough of Rutherford, the lavish Iviswold, also known as the Castle, was transformed in 1887 by noted architect William Henry Miller into an eclectic mansion with features based on a French Chateaux located along the Loire River. Its owner from 1887 to 1901 was Henry Ivison, a textbook publisher.



The building's features include Belleville brownstone walls topped by a tile roof with many projections,

outstanding decorative stained glass, and architecturally significant interior spaces with decorative woodwork.

The 2001 grant was used for selective removal of inappropriate interior changes and the 2002 and 2004 grants for exterior masonry restoration. In 2007, the exterior restoration was awarded a prestigious Historic Preservation Award from the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (Historic Preservation Office). In 2009, the project

received a Bergen County Historic Preservation Commendation. The 2006 grant was for the restoration of the reception room, an important public space, and the 2007 grant was for the restoration of significant stained glass windows. The grant-funded projects are part of a comprehensive restoration effort to transform the building into the Campus Center for Felician College.

MAHWAH'S DUTCH REFORMED CHURCH AT RAMAPO

Located in the Township of Mahwah, the existing church was erected in 1798 as a joint effort of the area's Dutch

Reformed and Lutheran congregations. The rectangular building with front tower is one of ten federal period church buildings in

Bergen County, and is the older of the two that are of wood frame construction. Funding helped stabilize the tower and its octagonal cupola.



RAMSEY'S WESTERVELT-ACKERMAN HOUSE (OLD STONE HOUSE MUSEUM)

The Westervelt-Ackerman House is a fine example of a mid-eighteenth century stone house of the type associated with the Dutch-American cultural group. It is a 1½-story building with a gambrel roof and a four bay front with a pair of Dutch doors. The house is associated with a number of early Bergen County families, including Westervelt and Ackerman.

The house, located in Ramsey near Route 17, was owned by the New Jersey Department of Transportation for more than fifty years.

In 2007, the Borough of Ramsey acquired it. The Borough leases the historic house to the Ramsey

Historical Association, which has operated it as a historic house museum for more than fifty years. Trust Fund funding was used for restoration of the wood shingle roof.



Trust Fund Municipal Program Changes and Timeline

Starting this year, the Open Space Trust Fund's Municipal Park Improvement & Land Acquisition Program will be administered by the Division of Open Space within the Department of Planning & Economic Development. Until this change, the program has been managed by the Bergen County Division of Community Development. Despite this administrative change, the same application and review procedures remain as was under the Division of Community Development.

Application and Review Timeline

October 8, 2010

Application Deadline

October, November, December 2010 & January 2011

Application reviews and meetings of the Municipal Program Sub-regional Committees and the Trust Fund Public Advisory Committee

February/March 2011

Final recommendations determined and presented

April/May 2011

Public Hearings

July 2011

Final Approval by Board of Freeholders

Regional Review Meetings Are Key for Open Space Trust Fund Applicants

For the purposes of reviewing each application in a public and regional setting, all applicants to the municipal portion of the Open Space Trust Fund are asked to appear before a regional review meeting. There are six regions, each with about 11 towns, covering every municipality in Bergen County. The six regions are Northwest, Pascack Valley, Northern Valley, Southeast, Southwest, and Central.

To learn your town's region, please contact Robert Abbatomarco at Bergen County's Division of Open Space.

Each town in the region is given one representative on their regional review committee. Typically, the committees meet for one session, but will meet more frequently if the number of applications is particularly large.

The regional board members listen to 5 to 10 minute presentations from each town that is applying for Open Space Trust Fund grants. Members of the public are allowed to attend and can speak on any application before the board. Here are five suggestions to keep in mind after you submit your application and prepare for your regional review meeting:

1. Show Up. Attendance is mandatory! If a municipal applicant is not present, then it will NOT receive a funding recommendation.

2. Be Knowledgeable. Have a clear understanding of the project so that you can explain it in detail to the others. Some towns use their municipal engineer or architect for this.

3. Keep Funding Requests Realistic. Your application will need to be balanced with those of your neighboring municipalities. Application requests typically exceed the amount of money available, so the more realistic your request is, the better.

4. Complete Past Projects First. Regional review committees are reluctant to fund a new project if a previous one is not yet completed or close to completion by the time the new application is submitted.

5. No bankrolling. If a project cannot get off the ground with only partial funding, the committees do not look favorably on towns that take the grant money and hold on to it for a year and then return for the remainder of the funding. This practice is prohibited.

Informing the Public

In 1998, the citizens of Bergen County overwhelmingly supported the creation of a five-year Open Space Trust Fund. The Trust Fund is dedicated to supporting open space and recreation acquisition and development, as well as historic preservation and farmland preservation throughout Bergen County. In 2003, the Trust Fund was made permanent by another vote of Bergen County's electorate. Seventy-percent of the fund is allocated to projects impacting the entire county and the remaining 30-percent is dedicated to municipal projects. Bergen County towns apply annually for funding.

This quarterly newsletter highlights the uses of the Bergen County Open Space Trust Fund. Visit us on the Web at <http://www.co.bergen.nj.us/planning/os/hp.html>