

preserve RHODE ISLAND

The Statewide Advocate for Historic Places

Around the Block E-News

Preserve RI Conducts Site Visits Statewide for Historic Preservation Matching Grants



As part of our ongoing partnership with the 1772 Foundation, Preserve RI staff have embarked on site visits across the state to assess applicants for the Historic Preservation Matching Grants Program. With nearly 30 applications submitted, February has been a particularly busy month dedicated to understanding the preservation needs of non-profits managing historic buildings.

We are observing an increasing demand for funding in preservation efforts, especially as material and labor costs continue to rise. Our brick-and-mortar grant program is designed to assist organizations in meeting their capital needs effectively. This year, the program will allocate \$125,000 in matching

grants, with individual grants available up to \$10,000, to aid in the restoration and maintenance of important historic sites.

Our mission is to ensure that the investment from the 1772 Foundation is maximized across Rhode Island, helping non-profits take proactive steps in addressing their preservation projects. Now in its fifth year, the Historic Preservation Matching Grants Program allows us to remain engaged with the community's needs while delivering critical funds to support our shared heritage.

Help Save RI's Historic Tax Credit Program. Sign the Petition Now!

Rhode Island's Historic Tax Credits have long been a proven tool to create more housing stock. Approximately 20% of all new housing comes through the program, including 20% of all new affordable housing. Neighboring states are expanding their programs to address their housing crises but not Rhode Island!

Our Historic Tax Credit program has been stymied through lack of funding, onerous fees, and impractical rules and restrictions. Just when our state faces a housing crisis, the Legislature is leaving this effective housing and community development program broken and out of funds. We need to tell our legislators that they must get RI's Historic Tax Credit program back in action NOW.

Help Preserve RI and Grow Smart RI save this vital program. Sign the petition and demand that our legislators fix RI's Historic Tax Credit. Please sign it today!

Sign the
Petition

Providence's Historic Districts Open to Installation of Solar Panels



The Providence Historic District Commission (PHDC) plays a crucial role in preserving the historical and architectural integrity of the city's historic properties. As interest in renewable energy grows, the Commission has taken significant steps to make the process of installing solar panels more accessible for property owners in historic districts.

One of the most notable changes in PHDC's approach to solar energy is its revised review process. Previously, all solar panel proposals required full Commission approval. Now, under new guidelines, most applications are handled by staff. If a proposal meets the guidelines, staff can approve it directly, expediting the process for homeowners. When a proposal doesn't align with the guidelines, PHDC staff will work closely with applicants to find solutions before referring the case to the Commission.

The PHDC encourages minimizing the visibility of solar panels from public rights-of-way. Arrays should be installed flush with the roof, arranged symmetrically, and, if a roof replacement is part of the project, a black or charcoal-colored roof is recommended to help blend the panels in.

Jason Martin, the city's Preservation Planner, underscores the Commission's balanced approach. "We recognize that sustainability and historic preservation are not mutually exclusive. The Commission has allowed solar panels since 2013, and our goal is to help homeowners implement renewable energy solutions in ways that respect the historic character of their buildings."

Since the approval of solar panels, the PHDC has reviewed 96 applications, with an approval rate of 94%. The Commission typically sees an increase in applications toward the end of the year or when tax incentives are available.

For homeowners interested in solar energy, PHDC staff recommend engaging with the Commission early in the process. "Give us a call before investing too much time and money into the design," Martin advises. "We can help guide the project to ensure it meets regulations while allowing for a successful solar installation." By adapting its guidelines and embracing renewable energy, the

PHDC is demonstrating that historic preservation and sustainability can coexist.

Lippitt House Museum is Hiring

Please help spread the word. Lippitt House Museum is hiring a Museum Interpreter to facilitate guided tours. This is a great opportunity for someone who is passionate about history, loves engaging with the public, and enjoys working on a team. This part-time, seasonal position begins in April and goes through October. For the complete job description and application information, please click the button below and look for “Job Opportunities”.



[Apply Now](#)

People in Preservation: Kaity Ryan

Chair, Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission

Kaity Ryan recently succeeded Ruth Taylor as Commission Chair. A certified architectural historian with a master’s degree in Historic Preservation from the Columbia University Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation, Kaity was appointed by the Governor of Rhode Island to the Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission in 2025. In the field, Ryan advances both preservation and conservation in Middletown where she has served as Executive Director at the Norman Bird Sanctuary since 2019.



1. Congratulations on your new role as Commission Chair of the RIHPHC, the state agency that oversees historic preservation efforts and policies. What do you see as the biggest priorities the Commission faces?

Thank you. The Commission is dedicated to preserving and celebrating the history of Rhode Island...and what a privilege and honor to do that here. Rhode Island is richly diverse, and it offers so much for those who live, work, and visit. Now more than ever, I see an increased need for collaboration between the public and private sectors, along with thoughtful community development that retains the unique identity of our state. We continue to face increased development pressure, housing demands, a changing environment,

and economic insecurity. The Commission's work is at the intersection of these issues and this work requires not only significant resources but also strategic investments to meet the scale and magnitude needed to move our state forward.

2. As you know, Preserve RI, along with GrowSmart RI, have been pushing state leaders to fix the State Historic Tax Credit program--an important generator of crucially needed housing. Where does the RIHPHC stand on this issue, and what role do you see the Commission playing in helping find a solution?

As Chair of the RIHPHC, I help lead a group of extremely skilled fellow commissioners and a highly talented staff team to advance preservation throughout Rhode Island using the tools we have at our disposal. The State Historic Tax Credit program is one such resource. The Commission supports the program and has for many years. Additional funding, support for projects that are currently on hold, and wider legislative support is critical to make this program more successful.

3. The State Preservation Grant program has provided funding for historic structures open to the public. The program has run out of funding. Will the Commission encourage the governor to add funding to next year's budget?

Yes. Historically, we have encouraged the governor to include support for this important program in the state budget. We will continue to do so.

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Barrington

February 19: [Barrington home added to National Register of Historic Places](#)

Newport

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February 23: [From neglect to tourist attraction – Rose Island Lighthouse's revival](#)

Pawtucket

February 5: [Board learns that funds won't come close to enough for Pawtucket City Hall](#)

Providence

January 29: [Rhode Island may get its first LGBTQ location on the national historic register. Here's how.](#)

February 3: [From Plan to Place: Providence's Downtown Renaissance](#)

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Statewide News

February 9: [What landlords need to know about Rhode Island's lead paint laws](#)

February 20: [Inside Two New Museums Dedicated to Memorializing Rhode Island's African American History](#)

National News

January 26: [Trump Architecture Memo Promises to Change How the US Government Builds](#)

January 27: [National Trust for Historic Preservation adds Houston's Beer Can House to Historic Artists' Homes and Studios Program](#)

January 30: [Boston City Hall Made a Historic Landmark](#)

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