

Volume 19

July 2014

# PRESERVATION GAZETTE

a publication of the Preservation Alliance of Spring Lake, Inc.

## SPECIAL EDITION NEWSLETTER

### PASL CELEBRATES ITS 15-YEAR ANNIVERSARY

A LOOK BACK... AND INTO THE FUTURE

*by Dr. Kathy Sclafani*

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On March 18th 1999, a group of 25 Spring Lake citizens met at the Hamilton House to form what would become the Preservation Alliance of Spring Lake. The core members of the group, including founder and President Patricia Colrick and Bob Wallace, had previously been involved in the Town Council's Design Assistance Committee, responsible for improvements to Third Avenue paving and lighting and the restoration of the Mercer Avenue rustic footbridge. At the Hamilton House meeting, the group chose officers and made a list of "areas of concern". Since that day more than 15 years ago, the original 25 has grown to almost 300 members, and the Alliance can proudly claim to have played an important part in addressing these concerns. The list included: aiding the historical society in raising funds to replace the ceramic tiles on the North Pavilion, the restoration of the Spring Lake gates on Ocean Ave, the documentation and preservation of the Ballingarry Gardens (part of the old Maloney estate behind the iron fence), and the rehabilitation of the Frederick A. Duggan Memorial First Aid Squad Building. Over the past several years, our focus has been on the achievement of the last project on the list, and we are looking forward with great anticipation to the opening celebration for the newly revamped Frederick Duggan building some time in the Fall. In the spirit of honoring our 15 years of dedication to the cause of historic preservation in Spring Lake, we would like to reminisce about some of our other achievements. The following is an overview and update on these projects:

### **Ballingarry Gardens:**

In the Spring of 2000, the owners of a property inside the old Maloney estate were in the process of demolishing a wall on the northwest corner of the Ballingarry Gardens. This segmental-arched brick wall is believed to have been constructed in 1899, designed by renowned architect Horace Trumbauer, who also designed St. Catharines' Church. After being approached by members of the Alliance, the new owners were convinced to stop and restore the important architectural element instead.

This inspired the Alliance to form a committee, whose members included Patricia Colrick, Jackie Brahney and Jules Plangere, to commission a study of the history of the gardens. The resulting study, conducted by Rutgers Professor Larry Porter, was distributed to all of the owners of the properties inside the iron fence on the site of the original estate.

### **SPRING LAKE GATES**

The gates, red brick portals at the entrance of town on Ocean Ave between Belmar and Spring Lake, were originally constructed by the Spring Lake Improvement Association in 1918. In 1921 bronze lanterns were donated to adorn the new gates. Over the years, storms and auto accidents severely damaged the Gates, and in 2004 several PASL members, including Pat Barry and Arthur and Chris Aria, formed The Caring Neighbors for a Better Spring Lake. Their first project was the Gates.

With the help of Mayor Tom Byrne and Councilwoman Janice Venables, the group was able to obtain \$350,000 from Monmouth County to repair the gates, along with an additional \$1 million to rehabilitate the sidewalks, streets and curbs. With a \$100,000 donation from the Spring Lake Five committee, plantings were added to complete the project.



### **LEGISLATION IN SUPPORT OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION**

Alarmed by the rate of demolition of historic homes in Spring Lake, members of the Alliance have been working hard since the group's inception to advocate for legislation to protect endangered structures. As reported in the November 2000 newsletter, a town-wide petition drive was organized and hundreds of signatures gathered in support of such legislation. Soon after, the Preservation Alliance presented a draft Preservation Ordinance to the town's Land Use Committee and eventually to the Town Council. Though we were unable to garner enough support from the Council for the ordinance, some efforts were subsequently made to encourage preservation. These included a 2½ story limit on new construction so that homeowners would consider renovating older 3 story homes rather than demolishing them, and the establishment of a 45-day waiting period for a demolition permit. The waiting period would conceivably allow groups like the Preservation Alliance to approach homeowners of historic properties with alternatives to demolition. However, until recently this ordinance had little effect, as the legislation failed to include an application process that would directly involve preservation advocates.

It took another long overdue achievement to lay the groundwork for more substantial legislation: the addition of an historic element to Spring Lake's Master Plan.

### **ADDING AN HISTORIC ELEMENT TO THE MASTER PLAN**

In 2010, the borough revisited its Master Plan for the first time in many years, making substantial changes. Since the previous Master Plan failed to outline a course of action to preserve and maintain Spring Lake's heritage, members of the Alliance aided the Planning Board in adding an historic element to the plan. Included in the plan is the following statement: "Through the protection of aesthetically appealing architectural elements and utilizing existing infrastructure, historic preservation is paramount to achieving smart growth and sustainable community development". To achieve this goal, the borough's governing bodies are instructed to "formulate a clear plan of action to protect the historic integrity of the town". The addition of this element is essential because it provides the basis for legislation in support of preservation, as Pete outlines in his article below. Recently, for example, a committee was set up to review demolition permit applications, finally making achievable the intentions of an ordinance passed almost 14 years ago.

### **COMMUNITY ACTION: ESSENTIAL TO OUR SUCCESS**

As you can see from this overview of the PASL's first 15 years, preservation is best achieved when it becomes the goal of the whole community and not just a few isolated members. All of our successful projects, from the restoration of the rustic footbridges to the replacement of the North End Pavilion tiles and the reconstruction of the Frederick A. Duggan Building, have been accomplished with the support of our legislative bodies, other engaged civic organizations and just ordinary citizens. In the following articles, Pete Saklas outlines a future course of action to further our goal of limiting the demolition of historic homes, and Joe Rizzo discusses the efforts made by the Spring Lake community toward the preservation of parks and open spaces. Finally, Mayor Jennifer Naughton composes a tribute to perhaps the quintessential community activist, a woman known and respected by all engaged Spring Lakers for her commitment to responsible government, her sharp wit and her keen understanding of community issues. As we highlight the importance of community to the achievement of historic preservation, it is perhaps fitting that we dedicate this issue of the newsletter to the late Eleanor Twomey, longtime and treasured member of the Preservation Alliance.

### **UPDATE ON THE FREDERICK A. DUGGAN BUILDING – TIME TO CELEBRATE!**

As of this writing, the renovation of the Duggan Building is finally nearing completion! The site has been cleaned up, the mechanical systems are all working well, the floors are being sanded and the lighting installed. We are anticipating the work will be finished in mid to late August, and we hope to have the dedication ceremony some time in the Fall after we furnish and equip the facility.

Our heartfelt thanks go to all of our members who have contributed to this long-running project.

# A MESSAGE FROM OUR MAYOR



Dear Members and Friends,

The most interesting part of a local politician's job is getting to know your fellow residents. Some exchanges you enjoy only in passing and other relationships develop into something special. Eleanor Twoomey was one of my special relationships.

A regular at our Council and Planning Board meetings, Eleanor took me by surprise with her extensive (and emphatically expressed) knowledge of Spring Lake's history. Her sometimes sharp questioning and constant probing encouraged Council members to be on their toes at all times. Not only did she vigorously challenge or approve of our decisions, she was constantly nudging us to stand firm for what we believed in. What better advice could an elected official get?

El, as her good friends called her, had an impressive career. She was a 1943 graduate of Georgian Court University and kept a lifelong association with her alum and her Catholic education. Georgian Court University President, Sister Rosemary Jeffries, RSM, Ph.D said of Eleanor, "She was a loyal alum who was equally committed to her beloved community of Spring Lake and to her church. Loyalty was probably her paramount virtue, given her love for her friends and colleagues, and her untiring willingness to serve and volunteer over many years. She never forgot her roots at Georgian Court and she remained committed to Catholic education. She will surely be missed by GCU and by her many friends and family members."

A well respected engineer, Eleanor spent 40 years working at Fort Monmouth in a world, as her good friend Bruce commented, run by men. She and her mother also ran a children's clothing business in Spring Lake known as the Stork Haven. Her memories of Third Ave as it was many years ago were often shared at Council meetings. I knew Eleanor to be a sharp bridge player (who liked to win) and a big fan of the Spring Lake Community House Theatre.



If you asked Eleanor how she would most want to be remembered, I think she would say it was her friends. Her deep friendship with fellow Spring Lakers Marge Casagrande and Jane Nagle lasted nearly 80 years and the loyalty among them fierce. This friendship extended to their families and many among them still call her Aunt El.

In her 1943 Georgian Court yearbook, Eleanor used the following words to describe herself: "Nordic countenance, scientist, doer, Spring Laker". I would add "Friend".

Jennifer Naughton  
Mayor



**ELEANOR WITH FORMER  
SPRING LAKE BUSINESS  
ADMINISTRATOR TOM  
FERGUSON**



## *Ocean, Wood and Lake ... And Much More Now and In the Future*

By Joseph Rizzo

In my last article I noted that most people know of the Preservation Alliance of Spring Lake because of its annual awards night and newsletters, as well as for the active role it has taken to save, restore and repurpose the Frederick Duggan Memorial First Aid & Emergency Squad Building. Although one of the Alliance's roles is to educate the public about the many benefits of preserving our town's wonderful architectural heritage, to repeat myself, preservation in Spring Lake is about much more than saving and restoring grand old houses and historic buildings.

So, rather than focusing on the success of our residential awards program, I decided to devote this article to the other important aspects of the Town, that provide so much of the context and character we identify with and remember as "Spring Lake".

These fall into two major categories;

- Non-Residential Development
- Diverse Natural Resources & Open Spaces

These two categories include many of the truly unique and most readily identifiable components of Spring Lake's past. Many have been restored and improved in recent years, not simply left to decay in a time capsule.

It is very important to note that many of Spring Lake's residents, business leaders, its civic and non-profit organizations, have been instrumental in saving these important buildings and places and in coming up with the new ideas to expand upon and improve them.

Though the Preservation Alliance is probably known for our reverence of the past, I think it is also important to communicate to our community that we are not against progress and change. But we believe that as we plan for the future it is also vitally important to recognize and protect what it is that has made our community special - including those historic elements that have helped to establish Spring Lake's unique identity. Doing so enriches Spring Lake and will help ease it into the future, so that it continues to be the Spring Lake we've all come to know and love.

If I were to try to encapsulate this concept it would be as follows - that the Preservation Alliance seeks to:

- Respect and preserve the **past**, identifying all the important places that should be saved;
- Taking action in the **present**, to educate and inform the public to achieve this goal;
- And, helping the Town to plan for the **future**, so that our past continues to play an integral part of it.

The area in and around Potter Park, which serves as a major gateway to Spring Lake, and the Train Station are other excellent examples of an informal **Public-Private Partnership**. The addition of a charming gazebo provides a major focal point. It provides a place to rest and read the paper. It is also a center of numerous gatherings, like festive wedding ceremonies and the Recreation Commission's popular "Music in the Park". The Borough has improved lighting and has provided new walkways through the park. The Garden Club has installed several special planting beds and new trees at the corners, while more recently the Shade Tree Commission planted a row of Sycamore Trees on 5th Avenue, all of which, adds even more to the park's beauty.



The Borough restored and repurposed the abandoned Railroad Station, improved lighting and parking in the adjacent parking lot, while the Garden Club beautified the entrance .

Much has been preserved and enhanced around the Park that contributes to its charm.

The impressive improvements to the "Chateau" anchors the northwest corner of 5th & Warren Avenues and provides visitors with a wonderfully active reminder of the storied history of Spring Lakes Hotels and B&B's. Popular local establishments like Joe's Deli and Egan's Liquor Store occupy a restored structure that helps frame the western end of Warren Avenue. Construction recently began on a new 4-unit residential structure, located on the adjacent track-side property, that will achieve the Borough's 3rd round COHA obligation. This has been sensitively designed to fit comfortably in its historic setting. It has similar massing and two roof gables that are very similar in appearance to the two buildings just to its east.

The plantings and sensitive exterior repairs of Borough Hall and the Historical Society Museum on the third floor, preserves yet another key architectural and institutional element of Spring Lake's wonderful past.



Many years ago, Gil Robinson, one of our most active preservationists, was almost single-handedly responsible for saving Borough Hall - our foundress and first President, Patricia Colrick later actively lobbied the Mayor and Council to repair and restore the east office wing of the building in keeping with its original design, when it was the Borough's Elementary school

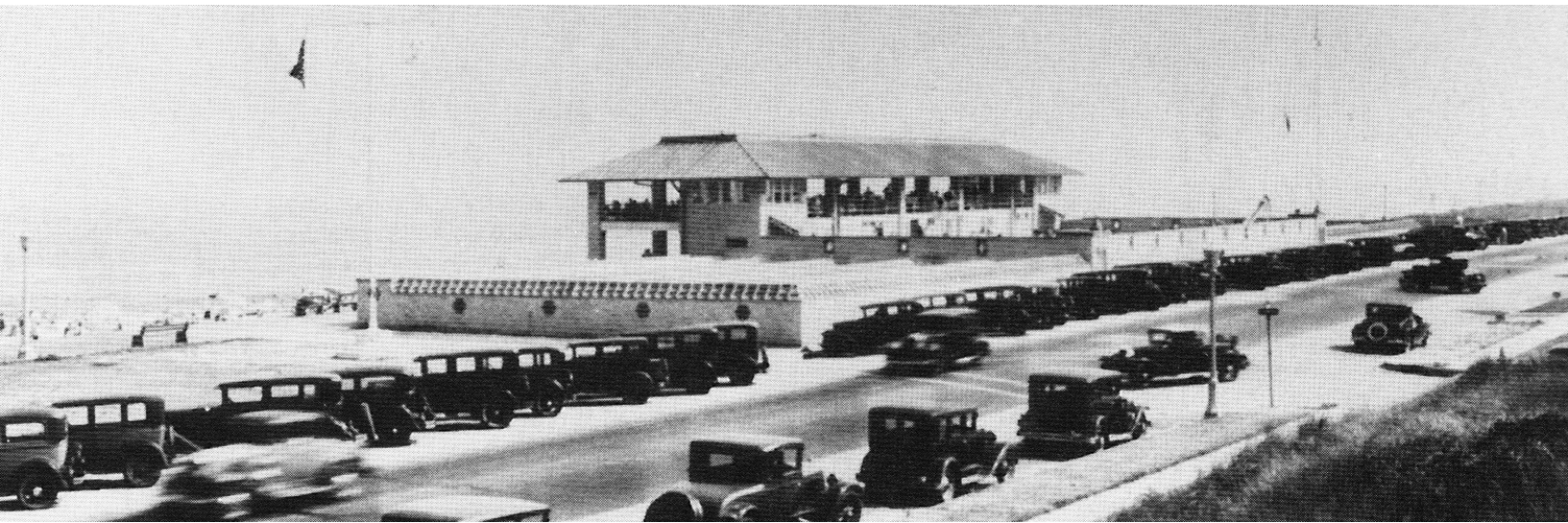
It is also important to recognize other relatively recent improvements made on 5th Avenue between Warren and Passaic Avenues. These include renovations to the Fire Company Building and very importantly, the enhancements to the Veteran's Memorial Monument speakers platform and plantings. Every year, this serves as the site for our solemn annual "Spring Lake Remembers" Memorial Day ceremonies hosted by Bill Wingard. Traditionally, citizen groups have been responsible for consistently, helping with the preservation and enhancement of Spring Lake's park and recreation areas. This continues today, for example, it was a citizen group that helped to create Devine Park's popular playground and tennis court improvements. There are many other volunteer groups, like the Pool & Pavilion Committees and the Environmental Commission, who have assisted the Borough with improvements along the beachfront and at our lakes. These dedicated citizens have provided invaluable services in the planning and advocacy of projects for flood control at Wreck Pond, for the designs of our new boardwalk railings and benches, and for the landscaping at Lake Como, the 9/11 Memorial, and restoration of the Ocean Avenue Gates.

It is easy to become discouraged, when we hear that yet another, architecturally important old home has been demolished. However, we should look at all the positive things that are happening in Spring Lake, recognizing the remarkable efforts of our friends and neighbors and joining them where and when we can. It is very clear that the members of the PASL are certainly not alone in their dedication to the preservation of this very unique jewel. Working together today, is the best way to assure that more of Spring Lake's past will continue to play an important part of its future.



**Above left, the Gazebo at Potter Park, above right, the 9/11 Memorial, and right, the Veterans' Memorial at Fifth Avenue near Warren Avenue.**





## *A New Direction for Preservation In Spring Lake*

*by Peter Saklas*

Yes, the PASL has tried to preserve historic structures, and we have had some success. The Duggan Building is a prime example. Another accomplishment has been our support for homeowners who have successfully appealed to the Planning Board for variances partly based on the owner's incorporation of historic preservation into their projects. Also, the Borough Council has adopted a number of land use changes that work toward the objective of historic preservation, the 2½ floor limit (discussed in the opening article) being an example.

Historic preservation is ongoing in Spring Lake. A walk around the Borough shows there are many who have preserved historic homes. Each year we recognize a handful of property owners who took extraordinary efforts to preserve historic homes and commercial buildings. Since 1999, we have recognized over 100 properties. This has not been an easy process because there are hundreds more we have left "on the table" for potential future recognition.

Modest success is not enough. Whenever a significant historic home, such as the Swain House (right), is demolished, we are berated for not stopping the demolition of historic homes. Residents ask us to do more. Our efforts to have a stronger preservation ordinance adopted have not been successful. When we ask "Do you want to preserve Spring Lake's historic heritage?" most residents say yes. Unfortunately, most residents also reject the concept of mandatory preservation requirements. Our efforts over the past 15 years have taught us that mandatory preservation requirements are not feasible and we have concluded that they are off the table. We want to focus on what we can do to enhance voluntary historic preservation. With this in mind we have developed a new strategy.



## RELIEF AND INCENTIVES - A NEW APPROACH

While there are several hundred historic properties where the owners have made the effort to preserve while bringing them up to date, we feel there are many more that owners may preserve with a little bit of help from the Borough. A voluntary program providing some relief from current zoning requirements and incorporating incentives will encourage more folks to preserve historic homes. Some ideas are listed below.

### **Relief: Some small changes to zoning requirements for historic homes to:**

1. Eliminate any requirement to bring the historic home into compliance with current zoning
2. Insure that historic conditions that do not meet current zoning will not influence the consideration of requests for variances
3. Allow for finished basements and exclude them from counting as against the 2½ floor limitation
4. Exclude small slabs for air conditioners, outdoor showers, generators, etc. from coverage requirements
5. Allow minor variances from setback requirements
6. Allow existing garage apartments to be rehabilitated or rebuilt
7. Delete the requirement that driveways extend to the garage

### **Incentives: Change zoning requirements for historic homes to:**

1. Allow the “garage” to be somewhat larger and higher, including a second floor, and allow it to be used for any purpose normal to the main house
2. Exclude open porches from coverage and “bulk” requirements
3. Increase the allowed structure coverage relative to the “new” house limit by a small percentage
4. Allow the owner to allocate the allowable lot coverage among the various requirements
5. Establish historic preservation as a goal to be considered in all variance requests
6. Reduce Planning Board fees for historic homes and give historic homes scheduling priority

The “relief” and “incentives” make restoring historic structures more practical by eliminating some of the procedural headaches when adapting a historic property to current zoning and by providing flexibility to allow a property owner to bring the home up to date without destroying its historical character. The relief and incentives also give the Preservation Alliance and others in the Borough something to offer to owners of historic properties. In addition to the inherent recognition that the Borough wants to preserve historic structures, the relief and incentives would be “selling points” the Preservation Alliance and others could use to persuade property owners to consider restoration in lieu of demolition.

The Preservation Alliance recognizes that the relief and incentives concept cannot be a blank check and there will have to be reasonable limits. For example, the total bulk of the historic structure and all other structures on the property should not be allowed to exceed that allowed by new construction. Also, once a property owner elects to take advantage of the relief and/or the incentives, the historic exterior of the structure as viewed from the street must be maintained.

We know that making a relief and incentives program part of the Borough's ordinances will require a long process and a good bit of give and take. We are beginning to work on this now and hope to make steady progress.

## FUTURE PLANS

We intend to implement a comprehensive program to encourage the preservation of historic properties. Some of the elements listed below are not dependent on a formal relief and incentives program but certainly will be far more effective if included with the program. To this end, the first task is to convince the Borough Council, in conjunction with the Planning Board, to establish a committee to work on the relief and incentives concept. The second is for the Borough to adopt the program. If the Borough can adopt a relief and incentives program, we envision a multi-faceted program that encourages voluntary historic preservation. But even without the program in place, some of the efforts outlined below could have a positive impact on preservation.

1. An outreach program to potential property buyers that features the availability of historic properties. This could include, in periodicals focused on preservation, articles highlighting the availability of historic homes in Spring Lake and, of course, the many features of our town. The program might also include an effort to place informational advertisements in those periodicals as well as others that circulate to readers that may be interested in property at the Jersey Shore.
2. An outreach to all owners of historic properties to explain the advantages of the relief and incentives program as well as the advantages of owning and preserving a historic property.
3. An outreach program to all realtors to explain the advantages of the relief and incentives program, plus preparation of information packets for distribution to prospective purchasers.
4. A tabulation of historic homes that have been renovated, hopefully with their owners' commitment to share their renovation experience and knowledge with those who may be interested in buying and preserving a historic home in Spring Lake.
5. A resource list of architects and contractors that are interested in preserving historic properties, as well as a list of vendors that can provide "hard to find" historic material.
6. A catalog of books, web sites, periodicals, etc., that provide information on historic structures and historic structure restoration.
7. A historic reference section in our website that includes much of the information listed in the above items.
8. An information center in the new Duggan Building focusing on historic preservation.





The Preservation Alliance  
 Congratulates the Residents of the  
 Essex and Sussex on their  
*100th Anniversary*

ABOVE THE ORIGINAL ESSEX AND SUSSEX, AND AN ORIGINAL BOOK OF MATCHES FROM THE 1920'S. RIGHT, A PHOTO OF GEORGE M. COHAN AND HIS SON IN THE TEA GARDEN, CIRCA 1920. COURTESY OF BETTY ROBINSON.



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## **WE NEED YOU AND YOUR SUPPORT !!!**

PASL is a not for profit group of volunteers dedicated to preserving the traditional charm and character of Spring Lake. Membership is offered to all who are interested in these same goals. The diverse activities of the Alliance create a need and opportunity for members to use personal skills, become an active participant, or assume an inactive role of support, through tax deductible dues and/or donations.

We invite you to join our organization and help us continue to be a voice for the preservation of historic and beautiful Spring Lake.

**PLEASE TEAR OFF THIS PAGE AND MAIL IT TO THE ADDRESS BELOW**

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The Preservation Alliance of Spring Lake, Inc.

## *PRESERVATION Awards*

AWARD PRESENTATIONS FOLLOWED BY A GALA COCKTAIL PARTY  
FEATURING LIVE MUSIC

**SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 27, 2014 AT 7:30 PM**

AT THE SPRING LAKE MEMORIAL COMMUNITY HOUSE  
THIRD & MADISON AVENUES

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**JOIN US FOR THE AWARD PRESENTATIONS  
RECOGNIZING THE BEAUTIFUL HOMES OF SPRING LAKE**

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