

TRENTON

Add Ewing's Green House to the list of endangered

By Nicole Mulvaney

For Times of Trenton

Preservation New Jersey's top 10 most endangered historic sites in the state this year include a dilapidated farmhouse on the grounds of the College of New Jersey, sites in the paths of proposed pipelines, and Atlantic City.

The annual list, announced Thursday morning on the steps of the War Memorial in Trenton, is meant to raise awareness and rally support for the state's endangered historic treasures.

"Several challenges face properties of this year's endangered sites list, including neglect and deferred maintenance, threats incurred by proposed gas pipelines, stalled adaptive reuse proposals and lack of adequate historic preservation funding," Preservation New Jersey Vice President Margaret Hickey said.

"Although the economy continues to improve, impacts to historic properties and places do not always reflect this, and some are threatened by it."

Preservation New Jersey provides a new list of 10 sites each year. Here is the full 2015 list of endangered sites, with descriptions provided by Preservation New Jersey:

William Green House (Ewing)

The 18th-century farmhouse was once home to William Green, one of Ewing's earliest settlers. The oldest portion was built in the 1730s and the structure was later enlarged and brought to its current dimensions around 1830.

Preservation groups have been working with the College of New Jersey for 40 years to restore the building, which housed college employees until the mid 1970s.

It was then when a plan to restore it as conference space for TCNJ was scrapped. The idea was revisited again in the 1990s, but the project was not funded.

In 2006, TCNJ stabilized the building with plans to eventually reuse it as an alumni reception center. Construction costs were estimated at \$2 million in 2012 and Friends of the Green House made plans to raise funds and apply for grants to save it.

In March, TCNJ announced it would not endorse a fundraising effort or commit to any future use of the house.

"It's been a roller coaster. Several times we think everything has been decided," said Anne McArthur, vice president of the Friends of the William Green Farmhouse.

"We really would like the college to reverse its decision and give us some support so we can reach out to the community to help us save this National Register building."

Historic properties threatened by proposed gas pipelines

Environmentalists and preservationists say several pipelines planned throughout the state are a threat to New Jersey's historic, cultural and natural resources.

Those include the 114-mile, \$1.2 billion PennEast pipeline proposed through Mercer and Hunterdon counties; Williams Transco's \$650 million, 30-mile pipeline loop through Mercer, Somerset and Hunterdon counties in New Jersey and Monroe and Luzerne counties in Pennsylvania; the 28-mile, \$130 million Southern Reliability Link through Burlington, Monmouth and Ocean counties; and Tennessee Gas' 40-mile pipeline from West Milford to Mahwah.

"We are finding ourselves having to fight to protect the things that we thought we preserved," said Alix Bacon, a regional manager with the New Jersey Conservation Foundation. "When it comes to pipelines, that preservation doesn't seem to matter so much."

Historic sites hurt by lack of public funding

In November, voters approved an amendment to the state constitution dedicating funds from the corporate business tax to preserve open space, farmland and historic resources.

Gov. Chris Christie's budget announced in February recommends \$1.4 million for the New Jersey Historic Trust, which preservationists say is not enough to sustain and staff the grant program.

Sites most threatened by a lack of public funding include the Ewing Presbyterian Church, also known as the 1867 Sanctuary at Ewing, Hinchliffe Stadium in Paterson, one of three existing stadiums associated with Negro League baseball games, and the 1759 Vought House in Clinton.

Atlantic City

In its heyday, Atlantic City's boardwalk, beaches and hotels attracted millions of tourists annually.

Hotels of the past were replaced by casinos, but some landmarks survived, including Gardner's Basin, Boardwalk Hall, Absecon Lighthouse and the Madison Hotel.

The city now faces a crisis brought on by the recent recession and competition from casinos in neighboring states.

National Guard Armory (Paterson, Passaic County)

The 53,800 square-foot structure was completed in 1896 and was home to the New Jersey National Guard's Second Regiment until the three-story structure was decommissioned in 1982. It was the site of rallies during the 1913 silk strike and has been a sports and concert venue over the years.

There have been several unsuccessful attempts to find a new use for the red brick and steel building, which has been empty for 25 years.

Pitney Farm (Mendham, Morris County)

The 12-acre farm contains a Federal-style farmhouse with three barns, two cottages, an ice house and several gardens. First developed around 1760, the farm remained in the Pitney family for 10 generations until the township bought it in 2009.

Among the many notable Pitneys associated with the property are a Revolutionary War veteran and prominent lawyers and jurists, including Mahlon Pitney III, nominated to the U.S. Supreme Court in 1912.

In May 2014, several courses of action were recommended for the property, but in April, the township committee voted to investigate the necessary steps to put the property up for public auction.

Ryer House (Matawan, Monmouth County)

Built in 1873, the Second Empire-style house remained a private residence until about a decade ago.

The current owner bought it in 2007, and after zoning prohibited him from converting the house into offices, he announced his intention to demolish it.

As it sits vacant, chandeliers and Tiffany doors have gone missing, pipes have burst and the windows are broken and boarded up.

Thomas Brown House (Greenwich, Cumberland County)

The dwelling built about 1787 was built for and partially by cabinetmaker Thomas Brown and his wife Rebecca. With its front-door details, it has been nicknamed the "Bull's Eye House."

In 2006, new owners planned to restore it, but they gave up after the property's value dropped below the mortgage price, and foreclosure proceedings began, but are incomplete.

Cooper River Park Historic District (Camden County)

Cooper River Park runs along both sides of the Cooper River for five miles between the city of Camden and the borough of Haddonfield. The park incorporates the 18th-century Ebenezer Hopkins House, a model yacht basin, tennis clubhouse and a two-mile rowing course. Some of it has fallen into disrepair due to budget cuts.

The county is currently implementing a vision plan, which considers building a sculpture garden and renovating the Hopkins House to accommodate festivals and weddings.

The county has committed \$23 million to fix up the Cooper Lake area, but preservationists fear alterations or renovations will negatively impact the historical integrity of the park without state reviews.

Haines-Cochley-Singer House (Medford, Burlington County)

The two-story building was built in three stages between the 18th and 19th centuries.

It is thought to be the oldest wood-frame building in Medford and has been decaying since its last occupant died in 1980.

Previous Preservation New Jersey top 10 endangered sites lists:

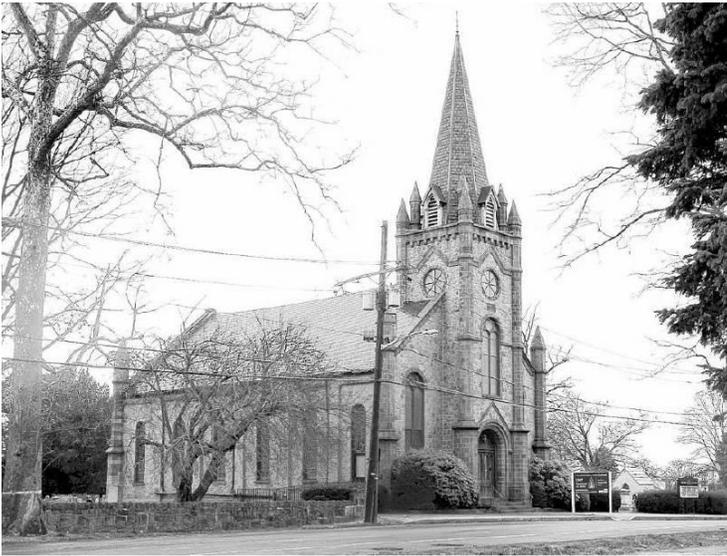
For more information, visit www.preservationnj.org.

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2015 Endangered historic sites

Preservation New Jersey has released its list of the top 10 endangered historic sites and the William Green House, located on the campus of the College of New Jersey, made the list. Ewing's Presbyterian Church also is cited among the sites lacking public funding. Here is the complete list:

- William Green House (Ewing)
- Historic properties threatened by proposed gas pipelines
- Historic sites hurt by lack of public funding
- Atlantic City
- National Guard Armory (Paterson)
- Pitney Farm (Mendham)
- Ryer House (Matawan)
- Thomas Brown House (Greenwich)
- Cooper River Park Historic District (Camden County)
- Haines-Cochley-Singer House (Medford)



The 1867 Sanctuary at Ewing faces an uncertain future because of a lack of public funding, according to Preservation New Jersey. (FILE PHOTO)



The William Green house on the College of New Jersey grounds. (FILE PHOTO)