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Dear Members and Friends:

MAP OF PORTLAND’s historic districts gives a clue to the battles fought when Landmarks was just starting out in the 1960s. I recently served on an advisory committee working with Portland’s Planning Department to develop a concept plan to rethink the Spring Street Arterial for the future. The study area, which includes the Arterial from High Street to just beyond Temple Street, almost exactly fits the “hole in the donut” between the Wexford, Congress Street, Pleasant Street Houses, and Old Port historic districts. It is the area that was “urban renewed” circa 1970. A whole row of historic buildings was demolished to make room for two additional traffic lanes, cutting side streets in half, and extending Spring all the way to Lower Middle Street (the upper part was transformed into an urban mall.)

Fortunately, Landmarks’ activism prevented the Arterial’s extension beyond High Street, but not before many important buildings had been razed. Among them was Frye Hall, which long-standing Portlanders remember fondly as a beautiful downtown library and an iconic presence in the civic and cultural fabric of the community.

The Spring Street study recommendations reflect changing attitudes about urban living and a desire to undo the damage of Urban Renewal. Among them are: removing the concrete New Jersey barriers and medians; narrowing the street (which is 90 feet in width); improving sidewalks, pedestrian amenities and plantings; adding bicycle lanes; reconfiguring the side streets; and placing crosswalks where they are most needed. There are even sites identified for new buildings to augment the retail and business activity in and near the Old Port.

Further, the study identifies three major nodes of activity at High and Spring Streets, the Civic Center, and Temple and Spring Streets. The architectural fabric is especially strong at Spring and High Streets, a zone where there are 200 years of outstanding architecture within several blocks as well as the awe-inspiring Portland Museum of Art. The goal is to develop signage and public art that interprets that architecture and Portland’s evolution.

The study focuses on three major opportunities to enhance the Spring Street Arterial. The entrance to the Old Port, with its lively business and retail functions, presents a third opportunity for place-making along the revived streetscape.

The concept plan will be considered by the Planning Board and City Council in the coming months. But even if approved, does it have a chance to be implemented? Several factors may make action possible sooner rather than later. First, the Civic Center renovation is already underway, and new brick sidewalks, street trees, and lighting will be part of those improvements. Second, Maine Department of Transportation funds have been allocated for repaving Spring Street, though they must be used by 2015. With the concept plan in place to guide decisions, this funding can begin to implement the plan’s recommendations. Third, there is strong community interest: abutting property owners are engaged, historic districts are thriving, and organizations like Landmarks, Portland’s Downtown District, and the Portland Society of Architects are actively advocating for the plan. Given these fortuitous circumstances, there is an unprecedented opportunity for the City to rectify past mistakes and to redefine Spring Street as a vital urban boulevard that links the historic, cultural, and commercial fabric of the community.

HILARY BASSETT
Executive Director

PRESERVATION UPDATES

Philanthropist Joan Kelly
Generously Supported Landmarks

A NHIO NATIVE with a doctorate in zoology, Joan Kelly knew Maine from spending summers at Hopkin’s Beach. She was instrumental in creating the Children’s Zoo at the San Diego Zoo. Later, she moved to Maine, where she felt a strong affinity to the state and its people. Through the Morton-Kelly Charitable Trust, she was a generous supporter of Landmarks and many other social, cultural, and environmental organizations. “Joan loved reviewing the grant proposals and reading the reports about how the grants had been used. She had a strongly independent spirit and formed lasting friendships with the leaders of her organizations. We will miss her,” said Hilary Bassett, Landmarks’ executive director.

Portland Observatory Receives Funding for Window Project

T HE CITY OF PORTLAND AWARDED FUNDING through the community development block grant program for a comprehensive replacement and repair of the windows at the Portland Observatory (1808). The current windows are replacements, installed in the 1998-2000 restoration of the tower. Unfortunately, various factors have led to unexpected and extensive leaking and deterioration. This spring the City will award a contract to a team who will develop a prototype window to be tested on site. Based on its performance, the remaining windows will be replaced to the new design. Look for more information later in the spring on this important preservation initiative.

U.S. Custom House Preserved

N THE PAST YEAR, Landmarks has served as a consulting party under section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 regarding the restoration of the US Custom House by the US General Services Administration. This status allowed Landmarks representatives to participate in building meetings for the restoration, which has included a new roof, and restoring 112 windows, doors and frames and the interior plaster and gold leaf. The restoration has recently been completed to the highest preservation standards, employing local preservation contractors and experts. While the customs function has moved, other federal tenants will soon occupy the office spaces.

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LANDMARKS OBSERVER / SPRING 2013

2
The details of a restoration or renovation of an older home have more layers than the wallpaper and paint on the walls. Greater Portland Landmarks invited five preservation experts to comment on how to prioritize your plan for any major work on your older or historic home. We asked them how to incorporate plans for sustainability and energy efficiency, how to stay on budget, how to prepare, and more. Here’s how they answered.

Meet the Experts

The experts we consulted for advice have extensive experience and training in the preservation of historic homes. They have a respect for the craftsmanship and history of the buildings they work on that translates into exquisite and long-lasting work.

Marc Bagala is owner and president of Bagala Window Works. He began preservation work 24 years ago, learning to make windows and doors energy efficient with Accurate Metal Interlocking Weatherstrip. Expanding on this near-living trade, he learned everything he could about architectural preservation and historic windows and doors. He also teaches classes and workshops.

Les Fossel is owner of Restoration Resources, Alna, Maine. Fossel’s company provides restoration and historic preservation services for any structure, with a specialty in 18th- and early 19th-century buildings. In addition to restoration, renovation, remodeling, repairing and fix-ups, Fossel’s company provides old-house inspections, consulting, education, energy audits, and weatherization.

Peter Taggart, Taggart Construction, is a green building firm specializing in sustainable construction, renovation, remodeling and more, in residential and commercial projects. The firm creates new construction and specializes in historic preservation as well, always with attention to energy efficiency, sustainability, and the integrity of the building envelope.

What is the first thing to consider?

Larry: The first thing is to determine what are the important features of the house that should be maintained as part of the project, so that a home doesn’t lose its special character.

Taggart: Research, to understand the history of the structure, the materials used, and the condition they’re in.

Sturgis: A complete assessment of the home is the best way to increase appreciation and understanding of it. It provides the basis for knowing the condition, the materials within it, how it was built, and what changes were made over time.

Fossel: Ask yourself: do you have the resources (time, money, skills, energy and commitment) to take the project to completion? Don’t trust yourself on this, ask for experienced advice.

Bagala: I want to be sensitive to the owners, their love for their home, and what they’re looking for. I try to design my work around that and their budget. My interview process is to ask a lot of questions.

How do you balance historic preservation with sustainability and energy efficiency?

Sturgis: Historic preservation is what sustainability is supposed to be about. Taking care of what you have is by far the most economical and effective way to become and remain sustainable. Energy efficiency is inherent in most historic buildings as the placement of the home within the landscape corresponds very well with the ability of the sun to warm its interior. Simple additions to older homes like storm windows and some forms of insulation and weather stripping will add greatly to energy efficiency without permanently changing the home or breaking the bank.

Taggart: Some of it, like air sealing and insulation, should be done carefully. Preservation and sustainability, at least from the building’s point of view, are very similar. Do the right thing and it will last. There are many good options for energy efficiency with regard to heating, cooling, and ventilation equipment that can be tailored to an older home. The challenging part is how to insulate and air seal the building to use less energy without doing present or future damage.

Larry: It’s true – preserving your historic home and its features is one of the greenest forms of construction! Maintaining and repairing your existing windows, doors, cabinetry, etc keeps construction waste out of our landfills and reduces the energy and natural resources needed to build replacement materials. Recent studies have shown that historic masonry buildings are more energy efficient than many modern buildings because of their thermal mass. However, many people are in an older home that’s drafty, and there are steps that can preserve the character of the house and improve energy efficiency, like attic insulation (it’s like a hat for your house!) and storm windows.

Fossel: There is generally not a conflict – if you know what you’re doing. The apparent conflict is the result of inexperience in making energy efficiency and sustainability work for early buildings. Make sure that you are hiring people who know what they are doing.

Bagala: In my business, I do the window part, and what really sells the restoration process is making an old window more efficient. Sometimes you don’t even need to restore the window but deal with deferred maintenance.

What are the most common problems that emerge when working on old homes?

Sturgis: I’ve found the most common problem is sourcing the appropriate materials for the repair work and determining a conscientious preservation carpenter crew to consult with and/or expedite the work. Understand that all of the original materials used to build your historic home are very much available. Timbers and high quality materials are nearby and should be sought out. Qualified preservation carpenters abound in Maine, but they must be properly vetted from those who care little for and have little knowledge of older, and more appropriate, means and methods for work on historic homes.

Taggart: Drag basements that lead to moisture damage and poor indoor air quality, leaky windows, and poor quality of previous work that compromised other parts of the home.

Larry: Unforeseen conditions. Opening up walls, floors, etc often exposes wiring issues, cracked plumbing, or rotten structural members. Sometimes you even uncover previous repairs that are actually increasing the decay of a building. We always advise clients to keep a contingency of 10% of their budget for problems that arise during construction. If nothing arises, they have additional money to upgrade materials or expand the scope of work.

Bagala: Simply that older homes are usually out of square and out of plumb and when you’re working on them you have to draw a balance – are we going to make the...
sash fit the jamb or rebuild the jamb. That depends on the budget too. Most of the time you have to live with things that are out of square or out of plumb. Sometimes a window has been leaking for a few years and you haven’t seen that it is until I take the window apart. Fossel: Outdated systems, that must usually be addressed early in the restoration process, poor maintenance. And – the desire to turn an old house into the house of your dreams. If you’ve chosen wisely, the reality of your house is much more interesting than your dreams.

What kinds of problems are preventable?

Sturgis: All problems are preventable. A willingness to learn about your home in collaboration with a professional preservation carpenter will make the problems that arise less formidable. Making wise material choices will solve almost all of the 20th-century problems that are notorious in homes that have been renovated over time. Learning how the house was built and how changes to it have impacted it is the key. What is much more interesting than your dreams. If you’ve chosen wisely, the reality of your house is much more interesting than your dreams.

Bagala: Yes, the more experience the preservation professional has, the fewer problems you’ll have because he or she will be prepared for things. Before I work on a window I tell the homeowner what I see. Sometimes the people who have been in the business the longest cost the most but can guide you in the best way. Problems aren’t really problems, they’re things you notice and you can take care of them.

Larry: Things that are reversible and restorable are reversible with proper maintenance, and peeling paint, which is most often a result of moisture, can significantly be reduced. In general, fix small problems before they become big problems. Stop any on-going damage or deterioration. Fix the water leaks, plug the big air holes.

Larry: Most problems are preventable by regular maintenance. A small problem, especially a leak caused by a leaking pipe or missing roof shingle, can cause long trail of problems if left unrepaired for a period of time.

Fossel: Most serious problems are preventable if you think before you act, (when you’re unsure – stop, take time to think, ask for help), accept that you will make mistakes (welcome to the human race), be careful, learn from your mistakes.

What kind of planning is needed before starting the preservation of an older building? What is the ideal?

Sturgis: A working understanding of how your home was built and how changes to it have impacted it is the best way to begin planning for the preservation effort. Without that you will make mistakes that can be costly.

Taggart: It is always helpful and cost effective to have a set of plans or a prioritization of the work. It is the best that can be done in stages. If they have 20 windows but can only do five, that’s a conversation that we have. Unless there’s some visible damage from moisture or water they’ll be fine until we can get to them in future years. There are some short term things you can do to button them up till next year, save some energy, get some stoppages going until you can get to full restoration and energy savings. Or we can put stoppers on all the windows and just do full restoration on two.

Larry: Often historic homes need updates to their infrastructure; these items are not glamorous, but they’re important and costly. Even when a homeowner is tackling a small project in a small area, they need to think about the impact on the house’s bigger systems and be prepared for ‘scope creep’. A preservation professional can look at your house’s overall condition and help establish a prioritized list of projects. This is especially helpful if budgets do not permit completing work all at once. Most preservation projects can be completed over a period of time, but it’s important to have a secure exterior envelope and a safe interior.

Fossel: Dangerous conditions need to be addressed at once. Everything else can wait for a plan to be put in place.

What can homeowners do when they must live in the building that is being worked on?

Sturgis: Homeowners can always live and work in their buildings. Temporary protection of work areas is easy to attain and maintain during the work. Preservation work on your home is an investment on your life whether you hire out or do the work yourselves. Careful planning will decrease this interrupted time and your understanding of the project will relieve your stress. Owner participation can really save time and money and provide ownership of the project. Your involvement will make the interruption of your life worthwhile and even fun.

Taggart: Afternoon tea and biscuits for the crew is always nice! There are good dust control barriers that can be set up to isolate work areas from living areas. Most old homes have lead paint, so everyone should be aware of best lead-safe practices. Be prepared for some surprises when opening up walls, floors or roofs. Bagala: With windows, the most important part is to hire qualified people who have experience dealing with lead paint. It’s well worth it to keep your family healthy. While we’re doing the windows I’ll have the homeowner vacate for that day. Having experienced and qualified people is well worth the extra money to get you through living there while the work is going on. Larry: Living in a construction zone is stressful! Be flexible and choose your contractor wisely! You are going to spend a lot of time with your contractor and their team, so be sure you establish good communications with your general contractor at the beginning of a project.

Fossel: Separate the restoration work from the part of the house you live in. If you have children, make sure they are living in safe conditions. Keep up with the regular maintenance officer is okay living in a construction project. Don’t trap yourselves.

When budgets are limited, how should homeowners prioritize? What is the first thing that must be done?

Sturgis: Owner participation is a must. That can save money, may increase the efficiency of the overall process involved in preservation. The owner must, however, realize their own limitations and collaborate with professional preservation carpenters as needed to ensure cost savings and efficiency. The assessment of conditions is the first step, and from there the prioritization of work, budget, and time frame can be determined.

Taggart: Get an energy and home performance audit of your building. Keep up with regular maintenance, but don’t just focus on one part until understanding the whole picture – look at the building as a whole system.

Bagala: If you see damage you need to tend to that because it’s going to get worse every year.

Fossel: It takes time, money, and expertise to restore a house. You can sometimes substitute one for the other, but you can never really substitute both. Homeowners have to figure out the best lead-safe practices. Be prepared for some surprises when opening up walls, floors or roofs. Larry: Owner participation is a must. That can save money, may increase the efficiency of the overall process involved in preservation. The owner must, however, realize their own limitations and collaborate with professional preservation carpenters as needed to ensure cost savings and efficiency. The assessment of conditions is the first step, and from there the prioritization of work, budget, and time frame can be determined.

What advice would you give regarding maintaining an older home?

Sturgis: Maintenance is the cheapest form of preservation. Knowing how the house was built, how changes were made, and knowing how you will proceed with upkeep is both fun and rewarding. Know that you can do something that will be important for your home. Lack of knowledge results in paralysis.

Larry: Home maintenance is a lifetime commitment. Every home needs maintenance. Every time you defer maintenance it costs more down the road. Storm windows are a good thing because they add insulation value, protect the fabric of the building from the elements, and they're reversible. Slowly but surely the word is getting out that newer is not necessarily better, that old wood is better and that the simplest thing you can do to make your old window more energy efficient is to add a storm. The new windows are not standing the test of time like old windows have. And paint is important because it protects everything.

Taggart: Clean your gutters, keep up with painting and caulking, use storm windows, and keep bushes and trees away from the building.

Larry: Develop a to-do list of maintenance projects that should be done every spring and fall. Inspect the exterior of your house for damage after wind, rain, or even snowstorms.
Renovation: How to Choose An Architect and Builder

Older and historic homes have many advantages, including, often, good design and construction, not to mention charm. But renovating them comes with special considerations. Two of your most important decisions are your choice of architect and general contractor. And the most important factor in how things will go is something integral to any important relationship: communication.

“I truly believe it’s about a fit because it’s a personal relationship,” says Cordelia Pitman, an architect who is director of preconstruction services at Wright-Ryan Construction and a Landmarks board member. “Most issues come from lack of communication or lack of understanding.”

Before you can articulate to an architect or builder what you have in mind, it must be clear to you first. Collect pictures from magazines, even show the architect knobs or paint colors you’ve chosen. If you have a fat binder of ideas, you may want to call it to a manageable thickness, Pitman says. The choices you’ve made help demonstrate your taste, says Board member and architect Carol J. DeTine of Carriage House Studios.

Architects and builders have distinct expertise, but you are the expert on your home and how you live in it, Pitman says. Think about how you will be using the renovated space, now and in the future. How many children do you have and how will they use the space? How much storage do you need? Will this renovation need to work for future owners or will it cater only to your needs, they say.

“It’s okay to say, ‘no, that’s not what I want,’” Pitman says. “It’s you paying for it and living in it.”

In order to build up the trust and good working relationships required of a renovation, you, the builder, and the architect should be communicating together as early as the design phase, say Pitman and Kolbert.

Most renovation, even on an historic building, will not be much limited by preservation rules. Still, it’s important to choose an architect and builder who have experience working with older and historic homes. They will know how to work with preservation boards and contractors have a track record of bringing a project in on budget? Renovation work requires trust on all sides.”

Another chance for communication with an architect is the proposal he or she will give you after discussing your project. It provides an early opportunity to speak up and clarify anything you don’t agree with or don’t understand, says Pitman.

“I do most of my work on existing houses, so I find that people need a proposal, and it’s impossible to provide one without seeing the house,” says DeTine. “Any interview would take place at the house, where I talk to the owner and find out what they’re trying to do.”

Be clear about your budget and your desires, and don’t let politeness or your own lack of expertise get in the way of expressing any hesitations. Ask questions and say so if something is not going the way you hoped or intended.

If you name a low budget figure out of fear of being overcharged, your architect may not draw what you want and your builder may not be able to deliver what you need, they say.

“Stone*Henge was fantastic in their care for the building, as well as the workmanship on our copper flashings and gutter system. They communicated well at every step as the projects progressed. We are very pleased with the final result, and we have recommended their work to others.” - Craig and Libby Owens, 104 West Street Portland, Maine ‘2007’

Greater Portland Landmarks recently awarded new Historic Markers

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Stone*Henge was fantastic in their care for the building, as well as the workmanship on our copper flashings and gutter system. They communicated well at every step as the projects progressed. We are very pleased with the final result, and we have recommended their work to others.” - Craig and Libby Owens, 104 West Street Portland, Maine ‘2007’

Estate planning involves important decisions that reflect your passions and beliefs. When preparing your will, please consider including Greater Portland Landmarks as a beneficiary.

For further information, please contact Hilary Bassett at Greater Portland Landmarks, 207-774-5561 x101

www.portlandlandmarks.org  LANDMARKS OBSERVER / SPRING 2013

Jesse Aronson, a senior at Waynflete School in Portland, has been volunteering weekly at Greater Portland Landmarks since his sophomore year. Every Wednesday for an hour or two, Jesse has helped scan some 500 historic postcards from the early 1900s to the 1960s into GPL’s computers. He is now beginning to upload those images onto the Maine Memory Network, and he is researching the historic background on each building, park, or residence in each photo to include with his entries. You can view his work so far at http://www.mainememory.net/in the Search box enter Greater Portland Landmarks.

How did you get involved with Landmarks?

My Spanish teacher, Breda White, introduced me to the Landmarks project, and I greatly respected their devotion to the preservation of Portland. My first job was to scan historic postcards onto the Landmarks computers. Breda introduced me to Landmarks because she used to volunteer there, and her goal was to find students who would partially take her place. I think Breda knew I was detail-oriented, and that I appreciated historical values. Before Breda introduced me to Landmarks, I only knew of their location on High Street, but not much about their job.

What have you learned from your work with historic images?

I’ve learned a lot about the history of Portland, but in an untraditional way. In school we read about wars and politicians in our textbooks, but I’ve never focused on the buildings, bridges, and parks that form a community’s history. When I work with the historic images at Landmarks I end up studying the historical context behind the image. For example, I scanned a postcard of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow’s birthplace, which was an old postcard with a three-story image of a house inked onto it. To upload the image onto The Maine Memory Network, I needed to provide a description and background, so I had to do a little research. I’ve learned more about my hometown, the people that lived in my area, and the historic buildings within it.

Also, I’ve learned a lot about the importance of preserving the history of the images. By uploading them digitally onto a computer, we can save them forever, essentially, while the actual structures may erode and eventually collapse.

Has your idea of the historic “cityscape” of the Portland area changed at all?

Although I have lived in Portland most of my life, I never valued the historical significance of my surroundings. Just like people you meet every day, the buildings in Portland have a life story (if you will)–some buildings have been demolished and then rebuilt, others have been expanded or refurbished, and some don’t exist anymore. The cool thing about images is that the timeline can be preserved in snapshots.

And in terms of the culture of the city, I’ve definitely learned about the people who have resided within it. There are writers, politicians, artists, and wealthy individuals. Also, there have been many groups and individuals devoted to serving the community—some volunteer to build shelters in the middle of winter, others volunteer as firefighters. It was nice to read about this type of interaction within the city around the 1920s and 30s, because I always associated that time period with the horrors of the Great Depression, while in fact it brought the community closer in a sense. I don’t doubt that there was tragedy in Portland during this time, but I saw more historical information about optimism than I expected.

What would you like young people to know about historic buildings? About Landmarks’ work?

I would like the younger generation to be aware of the antiqueness that our city’s buildings possess. I know it’s hard to understand the importance of preserving history when we live so much in these fast-paced, modern times, but we have to try to keep the historic artifacts intact. We also have to keep preserving the buildings so future generations have the luxury of being in them and near them and living among them.

Landmarks works to revitalize the historic buildings we are so familiar with in Portland. Without those buildings intact, we wouldn’t recognize our hometown. A lot of hard work goes into keeping Portland looking clean, attractive, and healthy.

What would you like Landmarks to know about young people your age?

I think Landmarks should know that people my age need a little push to contribute to the preservation project. Not many young people know about what Landmarks does, but I think that once they learn more about the organization they will appreciate and contribute to the project. It is important to educate younger generations and encourage them to continue with the preservation of our city.
Training in Manchester, N.H., partners shared several of its many benefits and the value of their work and of their buildings. At a recent board of social services they provide are also a lifeline to the communities which they serve.

Religious communities are discovering that their buildings and the ever-broadening range of social services they provide are also a lifeline to the communities which they serve.

Churches, synagogues, mosques, indeed religious buildings of all types, have for centuries also been community centers and repositories for cultural treasures. Today, religious communities are discovering that their buildings and the ever-broadening range of social services they provide are also a lifeline to the communities which they serve.

Many congregations, facing shrinking memberships, falling revenues, and costly repairs to their buildings, are struggling to maintain their staffs and their missions. Partners for Sacred Places (Partners), a national non-profit organization, has been helping religious organizations since 1989 to save their congregations and their buildings.

An important emerging strategy is articulating to communities—often city or state governments—the monetary value of their work and of their buildings. At a recent training in Manchester, N.H., partners shared several of its initiatives to preserve and revitalize declining congregations and the architecture they inhabit:

- Through the New Dollars / New Partners Program, Partners is providing sophisticated guidance for capital campaigns to help find ways to obtain state, federal, and philanthropic funding. This is the only program of its kind to focus on congregations that serve the community and that also possess older and historic properties.
- Launching faith-based funding initiatives, accessing US Department of Agriculture Programs, among others.
- Leveraging site and property location attributes by leasing space in steeples and belfries for cellular telephone antennae relay equipment, etc.
- Reducing operating costs through energy efficiency improvements.

A major aspect of Partners' mission is to awaken communities to the value of churches beyond their religious purposes. Governments and communities often don't appreciate the very important and in some cases lifesaving social services that churches provide. Their buildings' aesthetic value to cityscapes is often taken for granted, even when they are the focal point of a neighborhood.

Churches often do more than serve as a gathering place for weekend worship; many are venues for arts and theater events that draw many people from outside their congregations.

Sacred Heart/St. Dominic's Church on Mellen Street in Portland is an example of a church that is deeply engaged in providing social services, yet faces possible closure by its diocese despite its pivotal importance as both a spiritual and community center.

The church has expanded its social-service programs to accommodate the growing needs of its congregation and the nearby Parkside neighborhood, which includes many immigrants. During the course of its consultations, Greater Portland Landmarks identified 29 programs, including drug and alcohol abuse treatment, continuing education, job training, child and elder care, and more—services the city and other resource-strapped organizations would be called upon to bear should this church close.

In response to scenarios like this, Partners for Sacred Places has developed an evaluation matrix with more than 55 socio-economic factors to help assess the dollar replacement value of the work religious organizations perform. Using this analysis, it has been estimated that Sacred Heart/St. Dominic's contributes more than $2.5 million annually in social services and dozens of jobs to the local economy.

Partners also believes that the best adaptive reuse of a church is for continued use as a church. That is partly because houses of worship are often conducive to gatherings of large groups.

One local example of this concept is the former Universalist Church at 719 Main Street in Westbrook, which was consecrated several years ago and left vacant. The building was recently acquired by the Maine Hindu Temple, fulfilling its dream of establishing a central place of worship for its 200+ members. In January 2013, board members of this congregation took advantage of Landmarks' Preservation Services Program and sought professional advice on how best to proceed. Approaching this in a business-like way, the Hindu congregation is actively exploring ways to generate weekday and overnight income that supports the building, including social services and arts venue options.

As the size and demographic composition of congregations change and the costs of maintaining historic and older buildings rise, churches today must find creative ways of surviving into the 21st century. Fortunately for Greater Portland, Partners for Sacred Places has helped point the way with innovative, practical, and compelling strategies to meet these challenges.

For more information, go to www.sacredplaces.org; and see the Complete Guide to Capital Campaigns for Historic Churches and Synagogues.

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