



# SPRINGFIELD PRESERVATION TRUST NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2019

picture above is  
28 Ingersoll Grove  
location of the  
2020 Winter Fundraiser

Visit our website



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## NATIONAL NEEDLE POINTED IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

On January 2nd the Springfield Historical Commission voted to support the creation of a Local Historic District for the National Needle building located at 55 Emery Street with the hope of avoiding a needless demolition as requested by its owner. If successful this designation will offer the strongest protection available under current law against insensitive alterations or demolition of this historic resource, as all proposed changes to exterior architectural features visible from a public way will undergo a regulatory review process by the Springfield Historical Commission.

The Romanesque style, four story factory building (c.1886) at the corner of Boylston and Emery Streets may be remembered as part of the Kittridge Kitchen Supply complex. Since its 2008 conveyance to the current owner, the building has been considered as part of the site for the Penn Casino and a high-rise hotel; neither of which came to fruition. Now the owner has requested a demolition permit without a redevelopment plan.



The Trust named the National Needle to the Most Endangered List several years ago. It's one of only two period buildings remaining in a three by four block 1960s urban renewal area known as New North, now characterized by oversized streets, large office buildings, and a lack of residential space. The property has intrinsic value in terms of defining and framing the character of this area, and presents opportunities to support economic and business development. Built to house large scale processing systems and industrial machinery National Needle offers light filled, highly adaptable space that when creatively renovated or restored will result in an energy efficient, character rich place.

National Needle is a tangible reminder of Springfield's past, its industrial aesthetic and complex economy. Passing a National Needle Local Historic District is an important step in the preservation of a piece of the City's history.

**CALLING FOR**



413-788-9529  
800-347-9529

~  
**Beate Bolen &  
Mathew Forte**

~  
**Stephen Bosworth &  
Karen A. Merchant**

~  
**Donna & Doug  
Dreyer**

~  
**Matthew V. Jaquith  
& Michael Rheault**

~  
**Karin Johnson &  
Jason Alves**

~  
**Carol & Ken Kinsley**

~  
**Robert Markel**

~  
**Mark & Sally Mullan**

~  
**Ben Murphy &  
Brian Connors**

~  
**Keith Paul**

~  
**Paul Phaneuf**

~  
**David & Jacqueline  
Pleet**

~  
**Roger Roberge**

~  
**Michael & Elizabeth  
Stevens**

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## PRESERVATION AWARD NOMINATIONS

The Springfield Preservation Trust is currently accepting nominations for the 2020 Springfield Preservation Awards. Every year SPT honors the people and organizations that are helping to restore and preserve Springfield's historic places.

Nominations can be made for any historic property in Springfield which has been sensitively restored in the last year. Historic structures are those structures that are 50 years old or older but do not need to be in an historic district, have a plaque or otherwise been recognized as historic.

Nominations are due by **Friday, March 6, 2020**. [Click here](#) for a list of last year's awardees and to learn more about submitting a nomination.

## SPT 'CITY OF HOMES' CALENDAR

We had another successful year selling the 2020 Calendars. There are still a few calendars available that can be ordered online at by [clicking here](#) or at the Winter Fundraiser on January 26th.



The calendar committee is already working on the 2021 calendar and we are looking for photographers. If you are interested in taking photos for next year's calendar, let us know by sending an email to [info@springfieldpreservation.org](mailto:info@springfieldpreservation.org).

## HISTORIC PLACES OF SPRINGFIELD HOTEL KIMBALL - 121 CHESTNUT STREET

*Article courtesy of [Lost New England](#)*

The Hotel Kimball is one of the most historically-significant early 20th century buildings in Springfield. It was opened in 1911, at a time when the city was at its peak of prosperity as a major commercial and manufacturing center, and it was regarded as the finest hotel in the city. It was constructed at a cost of \$1 million, and it featured a Renaissance Revival exterior that was the work of architect Albert Winslow Cobb. On the interior, it originally included 309 guest rooms, a dining room that could seat 450 people, and the largest ballroom in the area.

Upon completion, it was regarded as the city's finest early 20th century hotel, but the Hotel Kimball was also significant as the home of one of the country's first commercial radio stations, WBZ, which opened its studio here in 1922. It remained here until 1931, when it relocated to Boston, but this building continued to be used by its affiliate station, WBZA, which served the Springfield market during the mid-20th century.

In the meantime, the Hotel Kimball was significantly expanded in 1923, with a large addition that is visible in the distance on the left side of both photos. It would remain an important hotel for many years, and attracted a number of prominent guests during this time, including presidents Calvin Coolidge, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Dwight D. Eisenhower, John F. Kennedy. Other celebrity visitors included Babe Ruth, who stayed here in the 1920s and 1930s along with the rest of his Yankees teammates, prior to their exhibition games against the minor league Springfield Ponies. The hotel also housed a number of long-term residents, including U.S. Speaker of the House Frederick H. Gillett, who lived here for more than 20 years.

Around the early 1950s, the hotel was acquired by Sheraton, which had been founded in 1937 in Springfield. This property became the Sheraton-Kimball Hotel, and it was declared to be "The Leading Hotel in Western Mass." in a 1955 directory. However, the mid-20th century was a difficult time for grand downtown hotels across the country, as interstate highways and suburban motels began changing the way Americans traveled. The Sheraton-Kimball closed by the early 1960s, but the building avoided demolition. Instead, it was converted into apartments, and it was renamed the Kimball Towers. Then, in 1985 it was converted into condominiums. It remains in use today, and it serves as an important success story in adaptive reuse and historic preservation.



*Hotel Kimball, around 1938-1939.  
Image from the SPT WPA Collection*



*Hotel Kimball in 2018  
Image courtesy of Lost New England*

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## EVENTS

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### WINTER FUNDRAISER

The annual Winter Fundraiser will be **Sunday, January 26**, at 1:00 pm. The event will be hosted by Ed Zuckerman in his grand 1888 Victorian home at 28 Ingersoll Grove in the McKnight Local Historic District.

The house was built for Dr. Nathan Adams, who died before it was completed. His wife Emily and family, however, lived here for nearly 40 years. A subsequent owner was James Gill, president of the Peerless Handcuff Company, and police commissioner. The house eventually became a group home before being restored by Ed and his late partner, Bob Kinder.

Ample hors d'oeuvres, wine, and sparkling water will be served. Tickets are \$35 for SPT members and \$40 for nonmembers. Make your reservation by [clicking here](#) or by mailing a check by January 21 to Springfield Preservation Trust, 74 Walnut Street, Springfield, MA 01105.

For additional information, email [info@springfieldpreservation.org](mailto:info@springfieldpreservation.org) or call 413-736-0629.

### 2020 ANNUAL MEETING

SPT will hold its Annual Meeting at 1 pm on **Sunday, March 1** at the Drama Studio, 41 Oakland Street. Annual elections will be held for the Board of Directors, the 2020 Most Endangered List will be announced, and a review of the past year will be presented. Staff from the Drama Studio will talk about their renovation plans. The event is free and open to the public, so invite a friend to join you. On-street parking is available on Oakland and Garfield Streets.



The former church was designed in 1908 by local architect Guy Kirkham after William Pynchon's home church in Chelmsford, England. The Drama Studio had long been a tenant in the building until purchasing it when the congregation disbanded a few years ago.

### SAVE THE DATE - SPRING HOUSE TOUR

SPT is planning a house tour in Forest Park Heights on **Sunday, June 7** from 1 pm to 4 pm. Proceeds from the tour will go toward reprinting the self-guided walking tour brochure for the neighborhood since copies are running low. If you know of a home owner who might be interested in participating, email us the contact information at [info@springfieldpreservation.org](mailto:info@springfieldpreservation.org).

### SAVE THIS DATE - CEMETERY TOUR

After a successful Cemetery Tour this past October, we are now planning the 7th annual Cemetery Tour. Our tribute to some of Springfield's "dear departed" will be held on **Sunday, October 18** at the Springfield Cemetery. We continue to discover more fascinating folk of our city's past whose graves and monuments have been left for us to admire. The beautiful woodland setting of Springfield Cemetery is a nice place for a stroll any day — especially on a fall afternoon. Volunteers will be dressed for their parts and prepared to share their slice of local history.

Now is also the time to think about participating as a portrayer. There are many interesting folks in the area of the cemetery we will be covering, including automaker Frank Duryea, the Merriam brothers of dictionary fame, Rachel Capen Merriam the founder of the Children's Study Home, George Walter Vincent Smith and his wife Belle Townsley Smith, children's author and radio personality Thornton Burgess, Springfield's first librarian, William Rice, and George Hendee, co-founder of Indian Motorcycle and cycling champion. Contact us at [info@springfieldpreservation.org](mailto:info@springfieldpreservation.org) to volunteer.

### CONTRACTOR'S LIST

If you know a skilled craftsman that you would recommend, please let us know.

Please include:

~Name of Contractor

~Category of work

~Phone/Email/website

Send information to  
[jimboone@hotmail.com](mailto:jimboone@hotmail.com)

### SPT BOARD MEETINGS

SPT members are welcome to attend

#### when

Third Wednesday  
of each month

6:30PM

#### where

Mason Wright

Retirement Community

74 Walnut Street

### CREDITS

#### Newsletter contributors:

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## About the Springfield Preservation Trust

*The mission of the Springfield Preservation Trust (SPT) is to preserve and protect properties in Springfield, Massachusetts which have architectural, historic, educational, or general cultural significance for public edification and enjoyment.*

*SPT believes historic preservation is an important part of making Springfield a great place to live, work, and visit. Historic Preservation is crucial to tourism and economic development and creating a unique sense of place. It's a means of creating jobs, attracting investment, generating tax revenue, and supporting small business.*

*For 45 years, SPT has been an independent voice supporting historic preservation. Over the years we have held countless events to showcase how our old buildings can be part of our modern lives and show off the historic places that make Springfield unique. We've helped pass legislation on the state and local levels that averts the needless loss of historic places. Our online resources help homeowners with restoration and educate the public on the beauty, quality and value of older homes. These activities have helped save and restore Springfield's threatened historic treasures so that they are here for future generations to enjoy.*

Springfield Preservation Trust  
[info@springfieldpreservation.org](mailto:info@springfieldpreservation.org)

