

## 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

## SPT BOARD MEETINGS

SPT members are welcome to attend

### when

Third Wednesday of each month  
6:00PM

### where

Virtually through Zoom. Please email info@springfieldpreservation.org for a link.

## NEWSLETTER CREDITS

### Newsletter contributors:

Kira Holmes  
Bob McCarroll  
Erica Swallow

### Photography:

Giving Tuesday  
Kira Holmes  
Jeff Morgan  
Rockstar Cinema  
Springfield Museums  
Erica Swallow

## VISIT SPRINGFIELD PRESERVATION TRUST ONLINE

[www.springfieldpreservation.org](http://www.springfieldpreservation.org)

[www.facebook.com/preservespringfield](https://www.facebook.com/preservespringfield)

## ABOUT THE SPRINGFIELD PRESERVATION TRUST

The mission of the Springfield Preservation Trust is to preserve, protect, and promote properties in Springfield 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 50+ 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, Inc.  
74 Walnut Street  
Springfield, MA 01105



## SPRINGFIELD PRESERVATION TRUST NEWSLETTER

### FALL 2024

*images above are  
Stearns Square Bench by  
The Republican*

### SUPPORTERS

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### RETURN THE GRANITE BENCH TO STEARNS SQUARE



*Photo Courtesy of Erica Swallow, 2024*

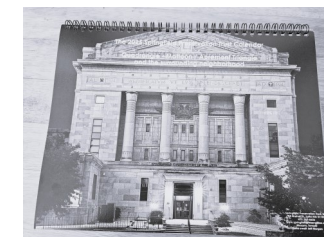
The large granite bench at Stearns Square has been removed. It was designed specifically for that park by noted architect Stanford White, who was working with the famous sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens. This "dynamic duo" redesigned the small Downtown open space in the 1880s. SPT had a press conference at Stearns Square on October 2, demanding a visual conditions report and plan for return of the bench. Several press members, speakers, and supporters were present. Speakers included Trust President Erica Swallow;

Kristin Neville, executive director and founder of

Blues to Green, the nonprofit which puts on the Jazz & Roots Festival in Stearns Square annually; downtown resident, business owner, and Trust board member Nels Frye; and Robert Loesch, downtown resident and member of the Metro Center Neighborhood Council, reading a statement on behalf of the council's board in support of the bench's return.

Following the event, investigative reporting by *The Republican's* Jeanette DeForge and photographer Don Treeger resulted in the first visual evidence the public has seen of the bench since its removal. The photo (header) shows tooling marks on the granite. Parks Department Director Ashe notes in the *Republican* article a lack of budget for repair and return. While Treeger's photo evidence quells concerns of total loss, the Trust remains concerned about damage done during removal and the timeline for the bench's repair and return. Contact Mayor Sarno and Director Ashe to urge the bench be returned as soon as possible.

### 2025 CITY OF HOMES CALENDAR



*Photo Courtesy of Kira Holmes, 2024*

Buy a City of Homes 2025 calendar today. It is the perfect gift for birthdays, the holidays, and a great keepsake. The calendar highlights the Mattoon Street Historic district and some of the surrounding neighborhood. Thank you to all of our sponsors for supporting the calendar! Calendars are \$20 each and are available at the following locations:

Winter Forest Park Farmers Markets  
Flowers, Flowers, 758 Sumner Avenue  
The Flower Box, 596 Carew Street

Support SPT by purchasing the calendar online at <https://springfieldpreservation.org/2025-calendar/>. Online orders include an additional \$7 for shipping and handling fees.

## SUPPORTERS

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## BECOME A SUPPORTER

Interested in being listed  
as a supporter in the  
SPT Quarterly Newsletter?

Become a member at the  
Greek Revival level  
or higher to be listed.

Visit  
[springfieldpreservation.org/  
membership](http://springfieldpreservation.org/membership)

## SPRINGFIELD PRESERVATION TRUST NAMES MASSASOIT HOUSE PARAMOUNT THEATER TO THE 2024 MOST ENDANGERED HISTORIC RESOURCE LIST

*Article by Erica Swallow and Kira Holmes*

The Springfield Preservation Trust has named Massasoit House-Paramount Theater to its 2024 Most Endangered Historic Resources List.

The Massasoit House-Paramount Theater, located at 1676 Main Street in Springfield, went to auction on September 23rd after redevelopment plans by current owner, The New England Farm Workers Council, have fizzled out. The building, first opened in 1843, has a legacy as a 130-room hotel, and later as the 3,200-seat Paramount Theater, opening in 1929 and designed by Paramount Pictures for “talking motion pictures,” which replaced silent films around 1928. The “talkie” theater was first in New England, even coming before the Boston Paramount Theater of 1932.

After its era as a theater, the Main Street property operated from 1999 to 2008 as the Hippodrome nightclub and was purchased in 2011 by the New England Farm Workers Council, who still owns it today. Though redevelopment was promised, the building has sat vacant.



*Photo Courtesy Works Progress Administration 1939*

“Massasoit House-Paramount Theater is a major economic development opportunity,” says Trust President Erica Swallow. “The building is prime real estate and has been touted as a potential ‘bookend’ for Main Street redevelopment. We believe in that vision—but the right developer needs to be selected for the opportunity. We

cannot let that building sit unused for another decade. The Trust would like to see the City of Springfield or the Springfield Redevelopment Authority step in to purchase the building.”

### **About Massasoit House-Paramount Theater**

Massasoit House-Paramount Theater, located in a four-story Classical Revival style brick structure. Its Main Street face dates back to 1912 and conceals the 1840s Massasoit House, a prominent 19th-century hotel. Among many accolades, the hotel is known as having been a stop on the Underground Railroad, as a place of employment for free Blacks, including those who had escaped slavery. Given that history, it is a prominent highlight on the “Underground Railroad Tour” presented annually by the Pan African Historical Museum USA (PAHMUSA) in celebration of Juneteenth. It is also the place where President Theodore Roosevelt and his bride Alice spent their wedding night of October 27, 1880 (“The Rise of Theodore Roosevelt,” by Edmund Morris, 1979, page 115). More history is on the SPT website.

This property, a significant part of our city's history, went to auction on September 23 and was purchased by an unidentified buyer. Several advocates from Massachusetts, Connecticut, and the surrounding area are rallying to preserve this building for future generations. We need your support and involvement in this crucial preservation effort. see photos of the building here: <https://afterthefinalcurtain.net/2017/10/27/paramount-theatre-springfield-ma/>.

### **7-9 STOCKBRIDGE UPDATE**

Excavations in basement test pits have revealed unstable organic material. (Remember that the "Hassocky Marsh" was just east of Main Street in the early settlement period before being filled in.) We are awaiting more information from our environmental consultant and structural engineer.

Meanwhile, architect Steve Jablonski has recommended that we proceed with roof replacement to stop any water penetration. Our CPA grant will cover that expense, but we need to consider that it was previously recommended by multiple roof and masonry contractors that facade masonry work come before a roof replacement..

## LINEN & LACE GARDEN PARTY



*Photo Courtesy of Rockstar Cinema, 2024*

The 2024 "Linen & Lace" Garden Party Fundraiser took place at Chateau Douillet, historically known as Clarence Schoo House. This successful fundraiser had 100 people in attendance.

Thank you to host Cheryl Duyette and to our sponsors for their generous contributions to the event: Fontaine Bros, the Turnberg & Swallow Team / Coldwell Banker, Rockstar Cinema Productions, and Mark S. Fuller. Additionally, thank you so much to our silent auction donors.

Gratitude to the Community Music School of Springfield for entertaining us with the string ensemble, Al Dente's Catering for the delicious array of hors d'oeuvres, and board member Robert Louder for providing the bar. Finally SPT thanks its board and staff for all the fabulous behind the scenes and day of the event work to make this fundraiser occur.

## **2024 CEMETERY TOURS: VOICES OF THE GRAVE**

The Springfield Preservation Trust will host its annual "Voices from the Grave" seven-stop tour at the Springfield Cemetery on **October 20**. Five tour times will start at 1:00 pm.

Attendees will have a unique opportunity to delve into the lives of seven influential figures in Springfield's history. The tour winds through the Cemetery's pathways and features, with some former residents to visit this year, including Anna Sophia (Clapp) Merrick, a Civil War nurse; Eli Baptiste, a free Black man who was the Porter in a dry goods store; Milton Bradley, Printer & Game Pioneer, among four other residents that will be revealed **on October 20**. Docents will lead this hour-long experience through Springfield Cemetery, taking visitors on a tour to the graves of former Springfield residents, where costumed interpreters speak about each person of intrigue. SPT Secretary Michael Stevens developed the tour and continues to conduct annual research on cemetery residents for the event.

Hour-long walking tours will depart every fifteen minutes at Springfield Cemetery, 171 Maple Street, starting at 1:00 pm. The last tour will be at 2:00 pm. Tickets are available for \$20 for SPT members and \$25 for non-members. (Members should contact SPT for a member discount code.) The Cemetery does not have even terrain; sometimes, attendees will have to use stairs to reach the grave, and walking shoes are encouraged. Remember, this tour will happen rain or shine!

Tickets are available for purchase online at [VoicesFromTheGrave2024.eventbrite.com](https://VoicesFromTheGrave2024.eventbrite.com). Subject to availability, tickets can also be purchased in person with cash **on October 20** at Springfield Cemetery.



*Photo Courtesy of SPT*

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### **SPRINGFIELD'S GLIDED AGE ART SECOND SATURDAY TOUR**

On October 12 Guy McLain, Executive Director of the Westfield Athenaeum, will provide a history of gilded age art and architecture of Springfield. Please purchase your tickets through Eventbrite and this tour will leave from Springfield Museums. The Tour series is co-presented by the SPT and Springfield Museums, and generously sponsored by the Daboul Family Charitable Trust.

### **2024 PRESERVATION AWARDS EXHIBIT**

SPT 2024 Preservation Awards exhibit in the Wood Museum of Springfield History will be up from October 1, 2024 - March 30, 2025. The Trust appreciates this partnership with Springfield Museums.

### **GIVING TUESDAY DECEMBER 3**

SPT's mission is to preserve and educate about Springfield's historic buildings. Please write a check, buy a membership, or donate through PayPal to continue its mission activities. SPT can only do this historic preservation work with your support!



*Photo Courtesy of Jeff Morgan, 2024*



*Photo Courtesy of Springfield Museums*



*Photo Courtesy of Giving Tuesday*