



Art's Cafe Receives a 2022 Excellence in Historic Preservation Award

This award from the Preservation League of NYS recognizes the best in the field of historic preservation

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Springville, NY, 11/7/22 — Art's Cafe has been named one of this year's Excellence in Historic Preservation award winners. Since 1984, the League's annual Excellence Awards program has allowed us to shine a light on the people who are using historic preservation to make all our lives better — through exemplary restoration projects, indispensable publications, individual action, and organizational distinction.

Additional information about the 2022 Excellence Award winners, including interviews, videos, and more, can be found on our website: <https://www.preservenys.org/excellence-awards>

"This project has meant so much to Springville," said **Martin Timm, Springville Center for the Arts Board President**. "This award celebrates the many years our team, along with so many dedicated volunteers, have contributed to preserving this piece of our history."

A collapsed building, rescued by a group of passionate citizens—this is the home of Art's Café in Springville. Three floors, steeped in history, feature an artisan bakery and café with a connected arts workshop, performance venue, fully accessible green roof, and artist residences.

The Italianate brick building at 5 East Main Street in Springville served as the home to many thriving businesses for over a century. Built in 1880, it is especially notable for the exuberant design of its second-story facade, which features brick piers between bays, round-arched window openings, recessed square brick panels, and a prominent bracketed metal cornice. Sadly, after 20 years of neglect, the roof collapsed into the basement, threatening neighboring buildings and passersby.

In 2012, the nonprofit Springville Center for the Arts (SCA) acquired the building for a dollar and worked with the Erie County Legislature to free the property from back taxes. From the beginning, the project was propelled by community support. Springville residents rallied early on through an online campaign. Architect Jay Braymiller donated design work. The new steel structure was installed by the Iron Workers Local 6 apprenticeship program. Labor and love were given by carpenters, masons and more. The area's first green roof was installed by a crew of 30 trained volunteers. Through sweat and sacrifice, the structure was rebuilt, floor by floor.

Fittingly, Art's Cafe is owned by the community. To complete the financing and launch the business, SCA created a partnership between the nonprofit, community investors, and worker-owners who operate the cafe. This business structure reflects the mission of building community and reinvesting in Main Street.

This unique business arrangement also allowed for a novel approach to the use of tax credit financing, which a tax-exempt nonprofit like SCA would not ordinarily be able to utilize. With targeted outreach, \$380,000 in funding was raised from small, individual investors who were then able to use small pieces of the national and state credits to offset their personal income.

Major work was completed at the end of 2019. When the pandemic derailed original plans, Art's Café opened in stages. First, the Café's Backdoor Bakery started selling baked goods out of the back alley in the spring of 2020. The full Café opened about a year later and now hosts music, theater, school tours, garden groups, workshops, Spanish lessons, and everyday quiet moments. Art's Cafe has become a model multi-use redevelopment creating pedestrian activity in downtown Springville, driven by the preservation of a historic building.

"The transformation of Art's Café is truly inspiring," said **Preservation League President Jay DiLorenzo**. "From a building shell to a multi-use business, Art's Café is a model for how historic preservation can help revitalize a community."

Art's Café was funded in part by: State and Federal Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits; NYS Parks Environmental Protection Fund grant; NYS Empire State Development grant; Village of Springville Main Street Grant; Environmental Facilities Corp Green Innovation Grant Program; Homes & Community Renewal Rural Area Revitalization Program

The Art's Cafe project team included: **The Board of Springville Center for the Arts**, owner; **Seth Wochensky**, Executive Director and project manager; **Jay Braymiller**, Architect; **Richard Rogers**, tax credit attorney; **Jonathan Johnsen**, securities attorney; **Jim DeBelis**, tax credit accountant; **Richard Berger**, acquisition attorney; **Tracy Maybray**, volunteer coordinator; and the **Art's Cafe Board and worker-owners**.

Recipients of the Excellence Award represent the very best of what the League stands for and supports in historic preservation. They exemplify best practices in the field and demonstrate how preservation is integral to building stronger neighborhoods, boosting local economies, tackling the affordable housing crisis, mitigating climate change, opening our eyes to overlooked history, and saving the places that are special to all of us. Our shared cultural heritage grounds us and unites us. The Excellence Awards celebrate those who work so hard to protect that shared heritage.

2022 Awardees:

- **Gowanda Hollywood Theater** | Gowanda, Cattaraugus County
- **Opendore Restoration** | Sherwood, Cayuga County
- **Art's Cafe** | Springville, Erie County
- **The Pavilion at Fort Ticonderoga** | Ticonderoga, Essex County
- **The Church of St. Luke & St. Matthew Exterior Restoration** | Brooklyn, Kings County
- **Edgemere Development** | Rochester, Monroe County
- **Rehabilitation of the Little Theatre** | Rochester, Monroe County
- **Steve Jordan** | Rochester, Monroe County
- **East Harlem South / El Barrio Reconnaissance-Level Historic Resource Survey** | Manhattan, New York County
- **Cochection Pump House** | Cochection, Sullivan County

The 2022 Excellence in Historic Preservation Awards are sponsored in part by Mr. Robert A.M. Stern, FAIA | Robert A.M. Stern Architects, LLP.

About the Preservation League of New York State

Since its founding in 1974, the Preservation League has built a reputation for action and effectiveness. Our goal has been to preserve our historic buildings, districts, and landscapes and to build a better New

York, one community at a time. The Preservation League of New York State invests in people and projects that champion the essential role of preservation in community revitalization, sustainable economic growth and the protection of our historic buildings and landscapes. We lead advocacy, economic development, and education programs across the state.

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