



**Preservation
League of NYS**

The Howland Stone Store Museum's Restoration of Opendore 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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Sherwood, NY, 11/7/22 — The restoration of Opendore by the Howland Stone Store Museum 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>

"What once seemed like a lost treasure has become a wonderful community asset," said **Guy Garnsey, President of Howland Stone Store Museum and project manager**. "The vision of those who conceived the building's restoration and the enormous volunteer effort in management and construction labor has been extraordinary."

Opendore is the historic home of William, Hannah, and Isabel Howland, national leaders in the women's suffrage movement. The house is an important contributing property to the Sherwood Equal Rights Historic District. Originally constructed in 1837, Opendore was remodeled in the 1860s and 1888, and a major Colonial Revival style expansion was made in 1910, designed by noted Syracuse architect Albert Brockway.

The Howland home was once the center of Sherwood's community life. Despite its historical importance, Opendore had been abandoned since the 1970s, standing vacant and suffering major structural decay for three decades. Opendore was rescued from certain demolition by the Howland Stone Store Museum, which bought the building for back taxes in 2008.

In 2011, the Museum secured a John E. Streb Preservation grant from the National Trust for Historic Preservation to fund a building condition report by Crawford & Stearns, Preservation Architects, which provided recommendations for future work. Construction took place in four phases between 2012 and 2021 and involved the careful repair and replication of exterior and interior details. The exterior clapboard siding was repaired and painted to recreate the original paint scheme of yellow with white trim and green accents. Original wood windows and historic French doors were restored and reglazed with period appropriate glass. Throughout the building interior, extensive moldings, trim, wainscot, pocket doors, an archway, and five fireplace mantels were lovingly rebuilt, repaired, or replicated by skilled volunteer

woodworkers, working from historic photos, and using salvaged components when possible. Notably, Opendore is now heated and cooled by a geothermal system, with four ground source wells and two heat pumps serving the entire building. As a result, no fossil fuels are consumed for the building's environmental control.

Opendore now welcomes visitors with public programs and exhibitions on its main floor. The second floor has been made accessible with a lift and includes a women's history research library, gallery as well as staff offices. Opendore's new climate controlled archival storage room is now home to the Museum's nationally significant collection of suffrage posters and other collection materials.

Opendore is a showpiece of community pride for the southern Cayuga County and greater Finger Lakes region. The many volunteers and professionals who have contributed time, imagination, skill, and funding consider Opendore a vital asset in the heart of this small rural community. Both historical and cultural resources embedded in the property have been preserved, against all odds, for the benefit of all.

"Without the vision and dedication of the Howland Stone Store Museum, Opendore would surely have been lost," said **Preservation League President Jay DiLorenzo**. "Opendore is a tangible reminder of the area's importance in the history of abolitionism and women's rights. We are thrilled to recognize this incredible restoration with an Excellence Award this year."

Major funding for the Opendore restoration project came from two matching grants through the New York State Environmental Protection Fund and a third grant from the Rural Area Revitalization Project through NYS Homes & Community Renewal. Additional funding was received from many individuals, foundations, businesses, and nonprofits. Over the course of six years, a staggering 12,800 hours of volunteer labor has been contributed by over 40 devoted community members, of which 7,500 hours served as a match for the EPF grants. These diverse entities have funded a \$1.1 million restored building that is debt-free.

The Opendore project team included: **Howland Stone Store Museum**, owner; **Crawford and Stearns, Architects & Preservation Planners, PLLC**, project architect; and **New York State Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation**.

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
- **Cochecton Pump House** | Cochecton, 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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