



**Preservation
League of NYS**

Downtown Oneonta Historic District One of New York's "Seven to Save"

This biennial list from the Preservation League of NYS highlights the most at-risk historic places across the state

Contacts:

Katy Peace, Preservation League Director of Communications
kpeace@preservenys.org | 518.462.5658 ext. 17

Stephen Yerly, City of Oneonta Deputy Community Development Director
syerly@oneonta.ny.us | 607.433.3435

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

[\(images\)](#)

Oneonta, NY, 05/16/2022 — Since 1999, the Preservation League has highlighted New York's most endangered historic sites through its Seven to Save program. The League works closely with local advocates over the course of the two-year listing and beyond, raising visibility, assisting with advocacy, and providing extensive technical services. **The League is thrilled to include the Downtown Oneonta Historic District on the 2022-2023 Seven to Save list.**

"Oneonta's Downtown Historic District is not just a business district, it is representative of generations of hopes and dreams, it is an investment made by those who came before us and one that we will leave for those who come after," said **Stephen Yerly, Deputy Community Development Director for the City of Oneonta**. "Historic preservation is collective memory and valuing the experiences and places that have shaped us and will continue to shape future generations."

The Downtown Oneonta Historic District is representative of more than two centuries of economic activity and urban development. The district remains largely intact, and contains an architecturally significant collection of commercial, converted residential, and civic buildings. The downtown district characterizes broader trends in small urban areas where disinvestment and rural poverty are a direct threat to historic resources. Small cities like Oneonta represent important parts of the overall historic tapestry of New York State that without creative solutions could be lost forever. Investing in their historic fabric could bring renewed interest to Downtown Oneonta, alleviating vacancy and deterioration, and bringing more life to an important Mohawk Valley city.

Historic preservation can serve as an economic life raft for upstate cities like Oneonta, but the public perception of preservation is a challenge for community buy-in. The League is eager to work with the City of Oneonta to provide outreach that engages a broad audience to help clarify the benefits of preservation and their historic downtown.

"Alleviating threats and in some cases outright saving these seven sites from demolition will make for challenging approaches," said **Preservation League Seven to Save Committee**



Preservation League of NYS

Chair Caroline Rob Zaleski. “The Preservation League staff are up to the task, as has been shown with the Seven to Save program’s remarkable 20-year track record in forming partnerships to help save and protect historic resources in New York State. Our selection committee chose to feature a diverse range of sites: a small African American church reflecting optimism and ingenuity; a Frederick Law Olmsted park during Olmsted’s bicentennial year; three urban districts – rife with history and varied important architecture; a recently closed 400-acre State hospital complex on Seneca Lake; and lastly a wooded site in Eastern Long Island, where the extant studios of two important Abstract Expressionist artists wait to be restored for public view.”

“The individual sites included on this year’s Seven to Save list embody key preservation issues affecting places across New York State,” said **Preservation League President Jay DiLorenzo.** “From the negative environmental impact of senseless demolition to bringing little-known, but important, histories to light, the League is excited to work alongside on-the-ground advocates to save each of these seven at-risk places.”

2022-2023 Seven to Save List

- **Thomas Memorial AME Zion Church, Watertown, Jefferson County**
Threat: Deterioration; Demolition
- **Genesee Valley Park, Rochester, Monroe County**
Threat: Demolition; Development Pressure; Lack of Public Awareness; Loss of Visual/Architectural Integrity
- **Proposed South of Union Square Historic District, Manhattan, New York County**
Threat: Demolition; Development Pressure; Loss of Visual/Architectural Integrity
- **Penn Station Neighborhood, Manhattan, New York County**
Threat: Development pressure; Demolition
- **Downtown Oneonta Historic District, Oneonta, Otsego County**
Threat: Demolition; Deterioration; Lack of Public Awareness; Loss of Visual/Architectural Integrity; Vacancy
- **Willard State Hospital, Romulus, Seneca County**
Threat: Demolition; Deterioration; Development Pressure; Lack of Public Awareness; Loss of Visual/Architectural Integrity; Vacancy
- **James Brooks / Charlotte Park Home & Studios, East Hampton, Suffolk County**
Threat: Demolition; Deterioration; Lack of Public Awareness; Vacancy

The League collaborates with property owners, elected officials, and other stakeholders to craft preservation strategies and put these plans into action. Through partnerships with groups and individuals, threats to dozens of at-risk buildings, landscapes, downtowns, and neighborhoods have been reduced, and in many cases, eliminated by the Preservation League’s Seven to Save listing and subsequent actions

For more information about the Seven to Save program and this year’s list, please visit preservenys.org/seven-to-save

Interviews with representatives from the Preservation League and all the Seven to Save sites are available by request.



Preservation League of NYS

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.

Connect with us at preservenys.org, facebook.com/preservenys, instagram.com/preservenys, and youtube.com/c/PreservationLeague

###