2015 Year in Review

Over the past year, Preservation Greensboro progressed in many ways that allow it to continue a preservation narrative in our community, and to make the organization strong and stable as we approach our 50th anniversary in 2016.

Architectural Salvage of Greensboro continued service to the community as a volunteer oriented “rescuer of old house parts.” In May we provided a hands-on Window Repair Workshop that attracted 18 attendees to learn best practices in the restoration of historic double hung windows. We continue to be a part of the city’s recycling program and mitigation for loss of contributing National Register properties. From our new showroom at 1028-B Huffman Street in East Greensboro, the initiative preserves vintage mantels, old light fixtures, wood flooring, and trim that would otherwise be relegated to our city landfill. The effort was boosted by an anonymous donation in the form of a much-needed van to transport materials. Thank you for your gift!

Blandwood Mansion saw an active year as we examined our past that changed our tour narrative in the present. In February, through funding by the Community Foundation of Greater Greensboro and the National Trust for Historic Preservation, we staffed an Education Specialist position to help us identify African American history at Blandwood, and to incorporate this newfound information into our Docent Manual. Renee Donnell ably filled the position, and immediately began to extend our storyline far beyond what was previously known. In addition to her own research, Renee worked with Jeff Thigpen of the Guilford County Register of Deeds office, and UNCG’s Dr. Linda Stine and Chris Graham to incorporate revelations they uncovered through archaeology and student-driven research.

The year saw the demise of John Motley Morehead Memorial Commission. The venerable Commission was established in 1959 to provide a lasting memorial to Governor Morehead. In that capacity, the Commission held the deed to Blandwood for 45 years (1966-2011), but it was decommissioned as a superfluous entity in 2015. In anticipation of this action, the deed to Blandwood was transferred to Preservation Greensboro in 2011. Unfortunately, the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office hastily assigned themselves the companion easement to oversee the site, causing its effectiveness to be nullified.
The mansion saw physical changes with the replacement of the circa 1965 storm doors that stood at the main entrance. The old doors, both hazardous and difficult to use, were replaced with all-glass doors that allow for an unencumbered view and use of the front doors of the house. At the same time, the Carriage House roof was repainted, clapboards on the south elevation of the kitchen repaired, and a shingle roof on the well house was reroofed.

Sadly, Blandwood lost one of its most eye-catching features in 2015. For over 80 years, the Willow Oak on the South Lawn grew into a community icon. In 2014, a severe ice storm caused a major crack on the western trunk of the tree. Over the next several months the crack expanded, and experts including the City arborist Judson Clinton, and Keith Francies and Scott Wyatt both of Davey Tree provided opinions that the safest path forward was removal of the tree and to plant anew. Due to concerns of immediate collapse onto McGee Street, work began immediately and the tree was cut down by January 2016. Special thanks to Duke Power for contributing man hours and equipment for removal, and to the City of Greensboro for grinding the massive stump that remained. Logs will be re-used for local wood-crafts.

As preservation is our name, preservation is our game! In 2015, the organization was involved in several high-profile preservation initiatives. As an example, we partnered with Sandra Cowart, owner of the Julian Price Home “Hillside” to request that North Carolina’s State Historic Preservation Office revise the significance of the estate from “local” to “statewide” to enable protection from demolition of the structure. In July the designation was updated, ensuring an opportunity thwart destruction of one of Greensboro’s most important historic sites.

Additionally, Preservation Greensboro was on the front lines of support for the reinstatement of our statewide Historic Tax Credits through the North Carolina Governor and General Assembly. With broad public support, the credits were approved into law through 2021.

Preservation Greensboro’s supporters were no strangers to celebrations in 2015! In April the organization recognized our Preservation Heroes in Virginia and Henry Zenke. With 80 attendees in the West Parlor of Blandwood, the reception honored a lifetime of contributions made by the couple to Blandwood and community preservation.

Keep Connected to Preservation Greensboro on the web. Follow our feed on Facebook and receive monthly updates through our LandmarksOnline newsletters by email. Questions? Contact Judi at (336) 272-5003 or jkastner@preservationgreensboro.org.
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Please consider being a part of the Governor’s Circle by remembering Preservation Greensboro and Blandwood Mansion when planning your estate. Funds are needed to support our staff and operations budget. For more information on this way you can help save Greensboro’s most treasured places, please call our office at 336-272-5003.
Our most intrepid members continued to explore the world through our partner Adeline Talbot and Studio Traveler. Within the special perspective of preservation with a comprehensive excursion to Los Angeles, attendees enjoyed viewing homes built by Frank Lloyd Wright, an influential early Craftsman home, early modernist homes, the Los Angeles County Botanical Garden, the Broad Museum, and the Getty. Great food, art, and history are the perfect mix!

Closer to home, members enjoyed a Coach Tour to explore the Prestwould Plantation near Clarksville Virginia. Attendees enjoyed a tour by Prestwould’s greatest champion Dr. Julian Hudson who spoke of the eighteenth-century site’s early decorative arts, landscape, and American history.

Not only did Preservation Greensboro take tours, but we gave them too! The organization staffed walking tours of various neighborhoods throughout the city and held our 5th Annual Tour of Historic Homes on May 16-17 in Hamilton Lakes. The homes open for this tour included the 1925 Tar Haven, the home of Rear Admiral Archibald Henderson Scales, located at 3907 Henderson Road; the c. 1926 residence of Alfred M. Scales III House at 1207 Lakewood Drive; the 1927 Mediterranean home of Harry Barton at 104 Kemp Road West; the Mid-Century Modern 1955 home of Diane and Will Howard at 3905 Henderson Road; and the 1951 Ranch home of Dori and Paul Jalazo at 505 Kemp Road West.

The Tour set a new benchmark for the annual tour, attracted approximately 900 participants including volunteers, and a profit of $22,552.62! Thank you to all that helped and toured!

Several initiatives were completed in 2015 that will help the organization into the future. With the support of the Weaver Foundation, strategist Jean Pudlo assisted the board in creating a Long Term Planning Statement of Strategy. This effort included a review of our Mission Statement and staff priorities.
However, the **BIG NEWS** of 2015 was the best news! Preservation Greensboro was selected as the recipient of an Extreme Nonprofit Makeover. The Extreme Nonprofit Makeover is a community technological support initiative that provided PGI with:

- A new **website** that can be edited and updated, and is mobile friendly
- New custom **logo** templates that will be use to communicate with constituents
- **Social media** training on platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and our blog
- Much needed **technology upgrades** such as computers, tablets, and wireless capacity
- A **mobile app** for Greensboro visitors to better tap into the heritage of our city
- A new VoIP **phone system** with reduced monthly phone bills

Preservation Greensboro’s staff and board members are most grateful to **Tech Triad** and the entire Extreme Makeover Team for their enthusiasm and support for community preservation!

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