



NEW BERN PRESERVATION FOUNDATION

NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2026

PRESERVING NEW BERN ONE BRICK AT A TIME

MEMBERSHIP MEETUP

Join us September 24th, 6 PM, at the Old Pinnix, 628 Hancock St. Food & beverages available for purchase.

Meetups are informal gatherings for NBPF members to socialize with our fellow preservationists. It's a great way to meet & get to know other members. We hope you will join us!

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Interested in volunteer opportunities and how you can help with our mission to preserve and protect the architectural and cultural heritage of New Bern?

Email us
Info@NewBernPF.org

Lisa Ayn Setliff, Editor

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Under the spotlight of bright summer sunshine, the product of your preservation efforts are everywhere I look. From the more than 70 structures preserved through your support and sweat equity to the many ways you collaborate in the name of preservation, the evidence is all around us. In this edition of the newsletter, you'll learn more about one of those preserved structures, the Thomas Sparrow House.

In collaboration with our friends at the Historic Downtown Residents Association (HDRA) and the Historic Riverside Neighborhood Association (HRNA), we are proud to jointly present An Evening with Restoration Specialist Wade Rogers on September 10 at St. John's Masonic Lodge, itself a lovingly preserved historic structure. This free program is a great chance to meet and learn from one of our hometown preservation experts. I hope you can make it.

On the very next day, September 11, please join us at the 6 Sisters for Art as Preservation, an enthusiastic collaboration with our friends at Art House Art Studio and The Old Pinnix. Come practice a very personal form of preservation, capturing structures, people, and landscapes through your art, as artists have done for centuries. New Bern Puppets will also join us for the debut of their Painting Marionette, painting live alongside you and the other artists.

Thank you to everyone who joined us last month at Brewery 99 for a wonderful Membership Meetup. I'm sure you noticed that Brewery 99 is adjacent to yet another preservation collaboration, the beautifully preserved Fordham Cemetery, protected through your work with the Epiphany School. As I said, the evidence of your preservation efforts is everywhere.

Join us at our next Membership Meetup on Thursday, September 17, at The Old Pinnix, in the lovingly preserved Pinnix Pharmacy building just down the street from the 6 Sisters.

Finally, mark your calendars for February 18-21 and our special 40th Annual Antique Show & Sale. You'll discover antique treasures, hear from fascinating speakers, and enjoy expert appraisals of your antiques and those of your neighbors. You'll also be supporting preservation by simply purchasing a ticket, as all event proceeds go directly toward protecting the historic landscape you are so passionate about.

I am truly thankful for your collective passionate devotion to preservation that is so evident everywhere you look in this remarkable community you've created and preserved.

~ John Barnes, President

UPCOMING EVENTS

AN EVENING WITH RESTORATION SPECIALIST WADE ROGERS

Ever dreamed of owning a historic home or already own one of our cherished treasures in New Bern but are overwhelmed by the responsibility that comes with the owning a historic home?

The New Bern Preservation Foundation is excited to collaborate with the Historic Downtown Residents Association (HDRA) and the Historic Riverside Neighborhood Association (HRNA) to present *An Evening with Restoration Specialist Wade Rogers* with opening remarks by Mickey Miller on Thursday, **September 10th** at 5:30 pm at **St. John's Masonic Lodge at 516 Hancock St.**

The presentation will include topics such as the importance of preservation in New Bern, property owner's roles in historic preservation, preservation tips, conversations historic property owners should have with their contractors and the NC Historic Tax Credit Program. Wade Rogers grew up in New Bern, works for the NC State Historic Preservation Office, and is a member of the Edenton Historic Preservation Commission.

We welcome you to a night of interesting discussion on preservation.

ART AS PRESERVATION

We are thrilled to partner with Art House Art Studio & The Old Pinnix for Art as Preservation, an afternoon of art, architecture, and preservation at New Bern's 6 Sisters. Come paint a picture of the 6 Sisters from the setting where they stand! Artists will work en plein air, capturing their own artistic interpretation of the houses and surrounding streetscape. Art supplies will be provided by **Art House Art Studio**, or bring your own.



Artists of all experience levels are welcome, from ages 9 to 99. Whether you're an experienced plein air painter, a young artist trying it for the first time, or simply want to spend an afternoon drawing or painting, join the fun on **September 11th** at **855 Pasteur Street** from 4 - 6 pm.

Joining the children (and adults!) will be **New Bern Puppets'** Painting Marionette, making its debut as it paints live alongside the artists! You can also have your photo taken with New Bern's newest little painter.

Enjoy signature 6 Sister toasts and drinks at **The Old Pinnix** throughout the day and hear the fascinating history of the 6 Sisters from the NBPF at The Old Pinnix from 6:30 - 8 pm.

40TH ANNUAL ANTIQUE SHOW & SALE

A full array of fantastic vendors have been confirmed for the **40th Annual Antique Show & Sale** including a few new dealers. Did you know the antique show is our signature fundraiser? We couldn't be successful without our antique show patrons and sponsors. Since our next show will be our 40th Anniversary, we are planning to make the show extra special. **We are currently seeking sponsors for this event.**

If you are looking for a way to help our mission, email Antiques@NewBernPF.org and learn more about our sponsorship opportunities and tell a friend.

We appreciate your help in making our 40th antique show one for the books!

SAVING WHAT MATTERS

WHY SAVE THE HISTORIC BUILDINGS & HOMES OF NEW BERN?

Preserving New Bern's architectural and cultural heritage certainly includes protecting the many lovely buildings of the Downtown Historic District, but it extends well beyond the boundaries of that district to encompass the greater New Bern area and the buildings and structures that have contributed to its rich history.

When we refer to "historic" buildings, we cannot limit our interest to only the earliest, grandest, or most famous structures. We must also include structures constructed at any time throughout New Bern's long history that have contributed to its architectural or cultural heritage.

Accordingly, preservation easements and covenants may protect modest properties that are architecturally distinctive, culturally significant, or connected to important people, events, neighborhoods, or aspects of New Bern's history.

The New Bern Preservation Foundation works with property owners to protect these irreplaceable places through protective covenants, preservation easements, façade easements, and other preservation tools. We also help save threatened properties, support restoration efforts, and connect property owners with information and resources to guide their preservation decisions.

Explore our work and learn how you can help preserve New Bern's architectural heritage.

~ Cyndi Papia



THE THOMAS SPARROW HOUSE THAT NEARLY DISAPPEARED

by Richard Parsons

The Thomas Sparrow house stands in solitary splendor at 222 E. Front Street; it is soon to be joined by a modern building in the style of its former neighbor, the Simpson-Oaksmith house (demolished over fifty years ago).

The Sparrow house was standing vacant and open and destined for demolition in 1980, when a member of the New Bern Preservation Foundation suggested that the owner might be better off donating it to the 501(c)(3) Foundation than demolishing the building and selling the vacant lot. This proved to be true and the Foundation acquired the house and lot in 1981 and in 1982 sold it with the protective covenant which still protects it.

By the 1980s the house had been stripped of all its later additions and looked pretty much as it does now, although greatly run down.

It's a handsome townhouse in Flemish bond brickwork, with additions that place it in the New-Bern-fireproof style, parapets along the end walls and a fireproof roof from the beginning. This style appeared after the fires in 1838 and 1841 that swept through this intense mixed-use area of sawmills, rosin distilleries, and turpentine distilleries, along with a number of private houses like the two Justice houses, also in the fireproof style.

There is a side passage containing the stair on the north side; on the south side are two rooms with a chimney between on each floor, including the attic.

Although the rooms have ponderous Grecian mantels and doors with two slender vertical panels, the stair was built in the Federal style of 1810, with rectangular pickets and slender tapered newels. The stair switchbacks through four floors, all the way to the garret with its remarkable views of the river.

About 1900, the house received some "modernizing," including a heavy Eastlake/Victorian newel. It was about this time that a two-story piazza, now removed, was built on the north side of the house. The basement was not finished; they knew by 1840 that this area was subject to floods. The original cistern is built into the northeast corner of the basement, under the stair. It likely remained in use even after New Bern got running water in 1893. The running water was handy for flushing, but was not particularly tasty; many houses were built with rainwater catchment systems into the 1920s because rainwater was much nicer for drinking, cooking, and washing.

It is now divided into several units, but the interior and exterior historic architecture is protected by covenants held by the New Bern Preservation Foundation. The Foundation continues to be a 501(c)(3) tax exempt organization and welcomes donations of cash, historic buildings, and façade easements on historic buildings.



NEW BERN PRESERVATION FOUNDATION 2026 EXECUTIVE BOARD

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For questions or to share your preservation story,
contact Info@NewBernPF.org