

HISTORY

Weston Historic Landmark Commissions news and announcements

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Historic Property Inventory "HPI"

By Kristen Bailey

The Weston HLC continues its work to renew the Historic Property Inventory ("HPI") forms for its Weston Downtown Residential Historic District and its Downtown Business Historic District. You may observe Commission members and volunteers taking photographs and notes as they review the lovely, historic homes in our community for inclusion in the Historic District. Properties are periodically reviewed to ensure that the District retains the qualities of historic significance which originally created the inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places.

So, why does a town want to include important buildings on the National Register? For preserving the history of a town, collecting architectural, biographical (as available), and community legacy information can provide important ways to secure funding and maintain historical accuracy. Change over time in the form of the destruction of older properties and the construction of new buildings can impact the nature of a historic district, so re-surveys are critical to the preservation goals of the HLC. Access to funding to support projects (such as the renovation of the Weston Cultural Center) often depends on a building's placement within the

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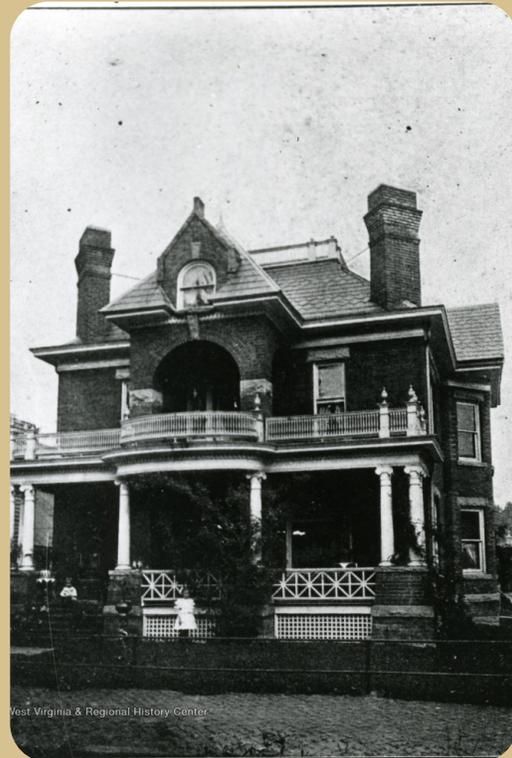
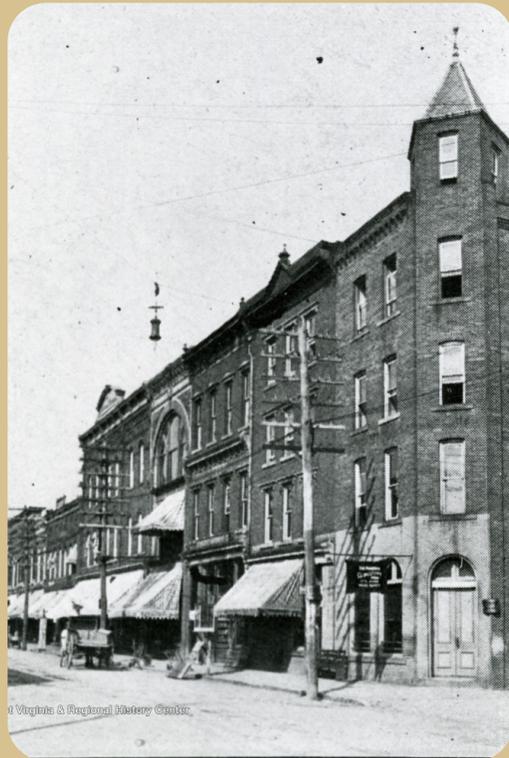
Historic Property Inventory "HPI"

historic footprint of the city. HPI forms, particularly those which identify a district, provide information such as boundaries and architectural significance, which can serve to support funding projects to preserve the buildings the HLC hopes to protect for Weston's citizens.

The inclusion of historic homes in the Weston Downtown Residential Historic District or the Downtown Business Historic District in no way restricts or limits what a property owner chooses to do with their land or buildings. The inclusion of properties in these districts simply reflects the intent to report to the State of West Virginia and the National Park Service that these properties are considered integral to the history of our town. HLC efforts are solely done with the intent of ensuring that those districts deemed important from a historical perspective are considered as such in terms of planning, zoning, or other city government measures which might impact those places. The qualities which make Weston a unique place to visit rest in our ability to preserve the historically significant buildings which make up our downtown area.

HPI forms not only enhance the ability of certified governments to secure funding to protect their historic neighborhoods, but they also serve as valuable research tools for historians. On record digitally and free for review, the content of HPI forms can provide historians with context about the environment of a place. Examining the types and qualities of buildings within a district speaks to the economic and social character of a town. The types of homes or businesses which were being built in the 1950s, for example, can provide context clues to the types of people who were living in the downtown area.

Individual homeowners and business owners can request to have their home placed on the National Register of Historic Places as an individual entity (in addition to being part of a historic district) by completing their own HPI form and filing a request with the West Virginia State Historic Preservation Office (<https://wvculture.org/agencies/state-historic-preservation-office-shpo/>). Please feel free to reach out to any HLC member if you have additional questions or concerns.



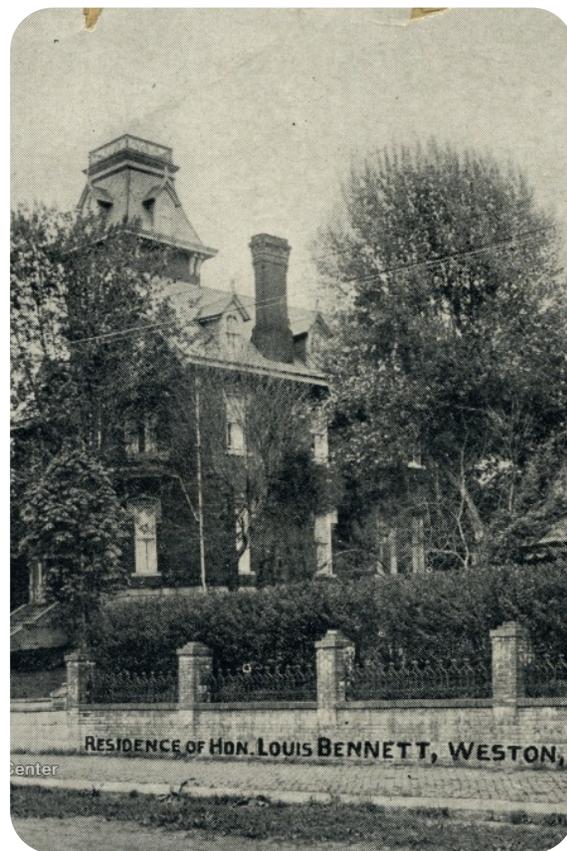
Library Receives Massive Facelift

By Kim Harrison

The Louis Bennett Public Library & War Memorial has seen quite a lot of renovations in the last few years. Katrina Johnson, Library Director, reports that the two balconies on the 2nd floor have been rebuilt as well as repairs to the front porch and doors. These renovations were funded by the county's hotel/motel tax. Inside the library, the fiction room was renovated to include plastering the walls, adding shelving, and refinishing the shutters. This work was funded in part by a grant and hotel/motel tax. On the 2nd floor, a community center room and a conference room has been added.

In 2022, the roof was replaced with the Lewis County Commission and the City of Weston contributing toward the cost. The City of Weston also provided funding to replace the retaining wall at the back of the library. Work is currently beginning on the American Legion Room, which has sustained water damage from the leaking roof.

If you haven't visited the Library in awhile, now is the time to go check out all the work that has been accomplished by the library staff, board, and the American Legion and while you're there, be sure to check out a few good books.



Danser Hardware & Supply Building has a new owner

By Kim Harrison

The long-standing vacant Danser Hardware & Supply Co. building at 237 E. 2nd St. was recently sold at a public auction. Gregory A. Smith of Glenville, formerly of Weston, submitted the winning bid. The building boasts of 15,000 square feet, three stories constructed of metal I-beams, concrete floors, and a freight elevator.

Adam Gissy, Project Manager for SLS Land & Energy Development, a company owned by Gregory Smith, reports that the new owner has several ideas for potential uses for the building. Those uses include loft apartments, meeting and event space, and possibly entrepreneurial space on the first floor to help rejuvenate the local economy.

Gissy also reported the new owner looks forward to working with the City of Weston and the Historic Landmarks Commission as suitable uses are explored for the building.



Weston Cultural Center Update

By Anna Cardelli

It has been a busy year for the former Columbia Club, now the Weston Cultural Center. We have been able to remove the crumbling front addition, remove debris, replace the roof, and complete exterior drainage. The team has been working with West Virginia architecture firm, The Mill's Group, which specializes in historic adaptive reuse projects, to come up with a new vision for the front facade. This new facade will pay homage to the original glory of this building while allowing for adaptive reuse and ADA accessibility. Now that we have been able to secure the building, we will be able to begin moving forward with facade design and usability in phase two of a three-part restoration process. The team has secured a grant for a portion of the Phase II construction of this project.

This is the second grant awarded to the Weston Historic Landmark Commission from the West Virginia Department of Arts, Culture, and History in support of this restoration project. The Weston Cultural Center may not have a permanent home yet, but that has not slowed down our progress in providing free and affordable community programming. We just concluded Weston's first summer concert series with local live music in the park. A series of History Alive! events and the Hatfield and McCoy traveling exhibit on loan from the West Virginia Humanities Council hosted at the Museum of American Glass in West Virginia.



Historic Focus Photo Contest

The winner of our "Historic Focus" Photo Contest is Dean Hardman with his photo of the historic log cabin at Jackson Mill. Mr. Hardman spent many years overseeing major restoration projects at Jackson's Mill and was an employee for nearly thirty-two years. He has been heavily involved in the Mill for over fifty years.

The Henry McWhorter Cabin served the Hacker's Creek community as a home, church, school, and post office. Today it serves as a reminder of the courageous pioneers who settled the Central West Virginia area.

If you would like to enter our next contest and have your photo featured in our next issue, please send submissions via email to westonhlc@cityofwestonwv.com with the email subject line "Historic Focus Photo Contest".



How you can help

By Anna Cardelli

How you can help? The projects you have read about in this newsletter represent a significant and long-term commitment to preserving Lewis County's heritage. The Weston Historic Landmark Commission is a 100% volunteer-based group that has dedicated participants that are very passionate about this community. If you share our passion for the City of Weston and Lewis County, you may be wondering how you can help! We need volunteers to support exhibits, restoration projects, and community activities. We also need volunteers to help us bring programming to the public and help us keep costs as affordable as possible. If you are unable to participate physically and want to contribute via work-at-home projects or monetary contributions, these are other ways you can support our goals. We have something for everyone, and we appreciate all contributions, large and small. If you wish to support our work, please contact westonhlc@cityofwestonwv.com to find out more.

As the Vice President of the Weston HLC, I would like to thank the Miley Legal Group for recognizing my volunteer work with this organization and allowing me to select the Weston HLC for a \$500 donation for my volunteer efforts.



HLC Fall Projects

The HLC has been working with the city on Old Hill Cemetery cleanup after it sustained substantial damages during a summer storm. Ground penetrating radar was completed this summer, and now we are working on compiling our data. This fall, paving will occur on the road up Reservoir to improve access.

The HLC has been awarded a grant from Try This West Virginia and partnered with the LC BluePrint Committee to provide mobile games for everyone. This mobile unit will be all over the community. Stay tuned for dates.

The HLC has partnered with the City to bring you the first summer concert series in Weston, History Alive!, and the Hatfield and McCoy exhibit.

