



National Trust for Historic Preservation Names Ames Shovel Shops in Easton, Massachusetts, to its 2009 List of America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places

Washington, D.C. (April 28, 2009) - Today, the [National Trust for Historic Preservation](#) named the [Ames Shovel Shops](#) in Easton, Massachusetts, to its 2009 list of [America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places®](#). This annual list highlights important examples of the nation's architectural, cultural and natural heritage that are at risk of destruction or irreparable damage.

In southeastern Massachusetts, an important piece of our nation's industrial heritage is threatened by development. The Ames Shovel Shops complex, an eight-acre site comprising 15 granite and wood buildings dating from 1852 through 1928, is the central core of what many consider a museum of 19th-century American development. To some, the area is so scenic it looks more like a New England college campus than an industrial village, complete with worker housing and civic buildings of international architectural reputation. The iron-bladed shovels fabricated here by generations of the Ames family literally built America. They were critical elements of the California Gold Rush, the Civil War and the building of the Transcontinental Railroad - but today, the new owners of the Ames Shovel Shop want to tear down some of the site's historic buildings and radically alter others in order to pave the way for a new mixed-use development.

"The shovels manufactured by the Ames family powered, enriched and defended America," said Richard Moe, president of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. "This is a remarkable example of a manufacturing complex that has survived intact for 150 years. We're not against redevelopment of the site, but the plan being proposed would have a devastating impact not only on the Shovel Shops but on the character of a picturesque, historic New England town."

Captain John Ames, a blacksmith, began manufacturing a simple but vital tool, the iron-bladed shovel, around 1774. His son, Oliver, established the Ames Shovel Works in Easton in 1803, and by 1870, the company, which pioneered early mass-production techniques, sold 60 percent of the shovels used worldwide. Thanks to the patronage of the Ames family, the town of North Easton flourished and is now a treasure trove of Henry Hobson Richardson's Romanesque Revival architecture and Frederick Law Olmsted landscapes.

Although the Shovel Shops left Easton in 1953 after a series of mergers, the Ames company remains in business today as Ames True Temper, based in Pennsylvania. The complex was sold in the 1970s to a local businessman who leased portions of the buildings for office space. In 2007, the Shovel Shops were sold again to developers who now propose building a 177-unit affordable-housing complex with 15,000 square feet of office space. The plan, filed under Chapter 40B, the state's affordable-housing law, is making its way through the permitting process. If approved, it would allow the demolition of several of the buildings and the dramatic expansion of others and would have an adverse impact on both National Landmark and National Register historic districts surrounding the Shovel Shops site.

The Easton Historical Commission, one of the groups leading the charge to save the Ames Shovel Shops, believes the best way to preserve the site is to keep it in active use, but not in a way that so devastatingly impacts the entire historic area. The developer has rejected alternative design concepts that would retain the historic character of the former factory complex and has threatened to apply for demolition permits if the current proposal is rejected. Despite being urged to pursue a project with state and federal historic tax credit programs which are designed to provide compensation for preservation projects just like this, the developer has refused to revise plans to protect these important and unique historic resources.



The 2009 list of America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places was made possible, in part, by a grant from HistoryTM. Local preservation groups across the nation submitted nominations for this year's list; the nomination for Ames Shovel Shops was submitted by the Easton Historical Commission.

The public is invited to learn more about what they can do to support these and hundreds of other endangered sites, experience first-hand accounts of these places, and share stories and photos of their own at www.PreservationNation.org/11Most.

To download high resolution images and video of this year's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places, click [here](#).

The 2009 list of America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places (in alphabetical order):

Ames Shovel Shops, *Easton, Mass.*- In southeastern Massachusetts, the Ames Shovel Shops complex, an intact 19th-century industrial village that resembles a picture-perfect New England college campus, is threatened by a plan to demolish several of the site's historic buildings and radically alter others to pave the way for new mixed-use development.

Cast-Iron Architecture of *Galveston, Texas*- The assemblage of late-19th-century Greek Revival and Italianate buildings with elaborate cast-iron storefronts in Galveston's 12-block Strand/Mechanic National Historic Landmark District is one of the largest collections of historic commercial buildings in the country. Unfortunately, the widespread flooding caused by Hurricane Ike in September 2008 caused extensive damage, leaving the district fighting to survive.

Century Plaza Hotel, *Los Angeles, Calif.*- Opened in 1966, the 19-story curved hotel, designed by renowned architect Minoru Yamasaki, who would later design New York's World Trade Center twin towers, has been a prominent Los Angeles landmark for more than four decades. Despite a \$36 million facelift just over a year ago, the hotel's new owners now intend to raze the building and replace it with two 600-foot, "environmentally sensitive" towers.

Dorchester Academy, *Midway, Ga.*- Founded in 1868 as a school for freed slaves, Dorchester Academy started humbly in a one-room schoolhouse and later gained prominence as a center for voter registration drives during the civil rights movement. The academy's last remaining building, a handsome 1934 Greek Revival dormitory, is deteriorating and structurally compromised.

Human Services Center, *Yankton, S.D.*- Founded in 1879 as the South Dakota Hospital for the Insane and once regarded as a model institution of its kind, this campus comprises a collection of neoclassical, Art Deco and Italianate buildings that have stood vacant for years. Despite the site's potential for innovative reuse and appropriate redevelopment, the State is moving forward with plans to demolish 11 historic buildings on the Yankton campus.

L na'i City, *Hawai'i*- One of Hawaii's eight main islands, L na'i, known as the "Pineapple Isle," has lush tropical beaches, breathtaking natural beauty, lavish resorts and one attraction none of the other islands can claim: an intact plantation town. L na'i City, built by pineapple baron James Dole in the 1920s, features plantation-style homes, a laundromat, jail, courthouse and police station, and is now threatened by a large-scale commercial development calling for the destruction or significant alteration of 15-20 historic buildings.

The Manhattan Project's Enola Gay Hangar, *Wendover Airfield, Utah*- The hangar that housed the Enola Gay, the B-29 Superfortress that dropped the world's first atomic bomb on Hiroshima, Japan, on August 6, 1945, is, along with other Manhattan Project sites, in a critical state of disrepair.



Memorial Bridge, Portsmouth, N.H. to Kittery, Maine-For more than 85 years, Memorial Bridge, the first major lift bridge in the eastern US, has been a sturdy and dramatic landmark, spanning the Piscataqua River and connecting two coastal towns steeped in history. But like so many others in the nation, the bridge has suffered from tight budgets and postponed maintenance. The states of Maine and New Hampshire have not yet agreed on a plan to save Memorial Bridge and are now considering their options, including its removal - a move that would be costly and in direct opposition to the desires of local residents in two communities.

Miami Marine Stadium, Virginia Key, Fla.- Completed in 1963, Miami Marine Stadium is both a South Florida landmark and an icon of modern design. Built entirely of poured concrete and featuring a dramatically cantilevered folded-plate roof, the stadium is a sentimental favorite of many Miami residents. After sustaining damage during Hurricane Andrew in 1992, the stadium, a prime target for developers, closed and has since suffered from years of deterioration, vandalism and neglect.

Mount Taylor, near Grants, N.M.- Located in the southwestern corner of New Mexico's San Mateo Mountains, midway between Albuquerque and Gallup, Mount Taylor, with an elevation of nearly 12,000 feet, is startlingly beautiful and a sacred place for as many as 30 Native American tribes. Currently, the mountain is under threat from exploration and proposals for uranium mining, which, if allowed to proceed, would have a devastating impact on this cherished historic place.

Unity Temple, Oak Park, Ill.- Unity Temple, designed for Wright's own Unitarian congregation in Oak Park, is widely acknowledged as an icon of 20th century architecture. Dedicated in September 1909, the cubic, flat-roofed structure is also one of the earliest public buildings in modern times to feature exposed concrete, one of Wright's signature design elements. Years of water infiltration have compromised the structure prompting a multi-million-dollar rescue effort.

America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places has identified more than 200 threatened one-of-a-kind historic treasures since 1988. Whether these sites are urban districts or rural landscapes, Native American landmarks or 20th-century sports arenas, entire communities or single buildings, the list spotlights historic places across America that are threatened by neglect, insufficient funds, inappropriate development or insensitive public policy. The designation has been a powerful tool for raising awareness and rallying resources to save endangered sites from every region of the country. At times, that attention has garnered public support to quickly rescue a treasured landmark; while in other instances, it has been the impetus of a long battle to save an important piece of our history. Learn more at www.PreservationNation.org/11Most.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation (www.PreservationNation.org) is a non-profit membership organization bringing people together to protect, enhance and enjoy the places that matter to them. By saving the places where great moments from history - and the important moments of everyday life - took place, the National Trust for Historic Preservation helps revitalize neighborhoods and communities, spark economic development and promote environmental sustainability. With headquarters in Washington, DC, nine regional and field offices, 29 historic sites, and partner organizations in all 50 states, the National Trust for Historic Preservation provides leadership, education, advocacy and resources to a national network of people, organizations and local communities committed to saving places, connecting us to our history and collectively shaping the future of America's stories.

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