

Preservation League of New York State Helps Fund Purchase of Rutger Park Buildings in Utica

\$150,000 loan to Landmarks Society will protect 19th-century landmarks

The Preservation League of New York State recently disbursed a loan from its Endangered Properties Intervention Program (EPIP) to a Utica group seeking to protect and restore two architecturally significant residences in Rutger Park.

The League's EPIP program was established with state funds to foster the revitalization and protection of historic resources and neighborhoods throughout New York. "EPIP allows the Preservation League to take action when historic buildings are threatened with disinvestment, neglect and demolition," said Jay DiLorenzo, the League's president. The loan was made to help support the purchase of 1 and 3 Rutger Park in Utica by the not-for-profit Landmarks Society of Greater Utica.

Located in a planned park-like setting in what was once the rural outskirts of Utica, these venerable buildings are linked to state and national leaders who made Utica their home in the 19th century. Their historic associations and design have enabled 1 and 3 Rutger Park to achieve every level of landmark status available to heritage properties.

They are included in Utica's Scenic and Historic District and are located in the Rutger-Steuben Park State and National Register Historic District, established in 1973. In addition, 3 Rutger Park was judged by the Secretary of the



Designed by Philip Hooker, the Roscoe Conkling house at 3 Rutger Park is one of the most significant structures in Oneida County.

Interior to be worthy of recognition as a National Historic Landmark in 1975. Unfortunately, these buildings have been largely vacant and unused since 2004. The imposing 1854 Italianate villa style house at 1 Rutger Park is considered one of architect Alexander Jackson Davis' most important works, while 3 Rutger Park was designed by Philip Hooker of Albany in 1830. "These properties were included on the Preservation League's Seven to Save list of endangered places in 2006, which led to enhanced technical, advocacy and legal services from the League. The Landmarks Society of Greater Utica has labored for many years to acquire and protect these properties," said DiLorenzo, "and the Preservation League is delighted to continue to support their efforts."



1 Rutger Park was designed by Alexander Jackson Davis in the Italianate Villa style, and was known for many years as Munn's Castle. Built in 1854 for leading banker, John Munn, it was and later was the home of Samuel Remington, founder of the world famous Remington Arms Company.

The Landmarks Society will conduct a detailed conditions assessment of the buildings, which will guide emergency stabilization and repairs. In addition to the Preservation League's loan, grants from the Community Foundation of Herkimer and Oneida Counties and from the City of Utica will support these efforts.

"By acquiring these irreplaceable properties, we are assuring the opportunity for future generations to experience first-hand this unique piece of our history," said Michael Bosak, President of the Board of Trustees of the Landmarks Society of Greater Utica.

According to Utica Mayor David Roefaro, "This is a very important and historically significant landmark in our community. Now that the Landmarks Society owns the property, we are looking forward to the restoration of the structures and conservation of the grounds."

Once emergency stabilization is completed, the Landmarks Society of Greater Utica will launch a fundraising campaign to secure additional support for the restoration and redevelopment of the properties. Additional information is available on the group's website at www.uticalandmarks.org.

The Preservation League previously made an EPIP loan to help support the purchase of the Kimlin Cider Mill and 1.8 acres of surrounding buffer land in the town of Poughkeepsie. This Dutchess County property was acquired by the not-for-profit Cider Mill Friends of Open Space and Historic Preservation, Inc., in February 2008. 🏠