

Sustainable, Eco-friendly & Green...all add up to Smarter Real Estate

metroGREEN+BUSINESS

[Home](#) [Business News](#) [Expert Q & As](#) [Publisher's Watch](#) [Press Releases](#) [eNews Service](#) [Green Jobs](#)

FEATURES

[Preservation](#)
[Personal Space](#)

INSIDE

[From the Editor](#)
[Entryway](#)
[Area Spotlight](#)
[In the Garden](#)
[Farm Notes](#)
[In the Studio](#)
[House Horoscopes](#)
[Back Porch](#)

RESOURCES

[Real Estate](#)
[Listings](#)
[Business Directory](#)


"When you own an old house, you own a piece of our national heritage. You have an obligation not just to preserve the house, but to protect and preserve the character of the area."

-- Kevin McEvoy with wife Barbara Epstein at their 18th-century home, Yeomans House

HISTORY PROJECT

The New Preservationists expand their mission.

BY SUSAN HODARA, PHOTOS BY LINDA BELL HALL



For the past six years, Kevin McEvoy, a real estate professional in Manhattan, and his wife, Barbara Epstein, a dietician, have been refurbishing their 18th-century stone house in the Ponckhockie section of Kingston. Known as Yeomans House for one of its early owners, the structure is steeped in Hudson River Valley history. In 1777, it was the first building to be torched when the British army attacked Kingston during the Revolutionary War. In the mid-19th century, it was the home of the manager of Newark Lime and Cement Manufacturing.

When McEvoy and Epstein purchased it, it was in disrepair. "It was a mess," says McEvoy. "The ceilings were sagging, the paint was peeling, and the mudroom had fallen off." With the help of family and friends, the couple restored the house, along with a shed that had slid down a hill and a Victorian-era barn that had collapsed. While most of the major work is complete, McEvoy says, "It's an ongoing project."

But these days, McEvoy and Epstein are occupied with another project—fighting proposals from two developers for 2,500 residential units along the Kingston waterfront. "When you own an old house like ours," he says, "you own a piece of our national heritage. You have an obligation not just to preserve the house, but to protect and preserve the character of the area so it doesn't turn into a giant sprawl."

The "New Preservationists" Join the Fight

Such a commitment places McEvoy and Epstein among a group of Hudson Valley residents who have updated and expanded the concept of preservation. Dubbed "New Preservationists" by Deborah Barrow, president of Hudson River Heritage, a preservation advocacy nonprofit in Rhinebeck, these are, she explains, "people who are as concerned with protecting the rural and historic character of the community as with protecting specific homes and buildings."

Which is not to downplay the importance of those homes. "These houses are fabulous jewels," Barrow continues. "Thirty years ago, you couldn't give them away, but that is not the case now. Individual properties are being purchased and preserved."

Nor is theirs an antidevelopment stance. "The New Preservationist concept does not preclude development," says McEvoy, "but rather encourages sustainable and well-planned development that allows for the preservation of open space and historic, cultural, and environmental resources, as well as positive economic growth."

New Preservationists comprise both property owners and organizations throughout the Hudson Valley, the 125-mile region that includes the counties along both sides of the river between New York City and Albany. The Valley includes a 20-mile-long National Historic Landmark District, at 22,205 acres the country's largest; numerous properties listed in the National Register of Historic Places; still-untouched natural habitats; and the scenic grandeur of the Hudson—all of which, warns Barrow, "could be paved over in 10 years if we aren't alert."

Death by a Thousand Cuts

For centuries, the Hudson Valley has attracted those who recognized its scenic beauty. "This area has been popular since pre-Revolutionary times," says Palma Driscoll, an artists' representative who splits her time between a Manhattan apartment and an 1870 Victorian farmhouse in Rhinebeck. Driscoll is a board member of both Hudson River Heritage and Wilderstein Preservation, and is collaborating on a book documenting historic houses in the Hudson Valley, proceeds from the sales of which will be distributed among organizations that champion preservation. "It's not new to tourism and land development," she says. "It's just that now there are more people with more money coming in search of communities that are very wonderful, livable, and sophisticated."

And with them comes the threat of inappropriate development that jeopardizes what makes the

\$140 billion of capital market transactions on six continents and we still keep the smallest detail in sharp focus.



#1 in commercial real estate worldwide

Valley unique—the bane of the New Preservationists.

In 2000, the National Trust for Historic Preservation (NTHP) listed the Hudson River Valley as one of "America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places," writing that "development and sprawl threatens to overwhelm the beautiful river valley where, over a span of centuries, some of the most important chapters of America's story have been written."

"There's a population shift out of the city," says Wendy Nicholas, director of NTHP's Northeast office, in Boston. In addition to the exodus prompted by the 9/11 attacks, she notes, technology is enabling more people to telecommute. "Developers are trying to accommodate people seeking housing."

Warren P. Reiss, general counsel for Scenic Hudson, Inc., a 40-year-old environmental advocacy group based in Poughkeepsie, believes the region's growth spurt is also due to successful endeavors to clean up the Hudson. "Areas that were once industrial and contaminated are now being reclaimed and developed, some in good ways, some in not-so-good ways," he says. He cites several proposals in addition to those in Kingston, such as a 1,000-unit residence in Sleepy Hollow, high-rises along the Yonkers waterfront, and construction in Haverstraw.

Continued

1 | 2 | 3 | [Next »](#)

[Subscribe](#) | [Where to Find](#) | [Advertise](#) | [About Us](#) | [Contact Us](#)
[Home](#) | [In This Issue](#) | [Article Archive](#) | [Press Releases](#) | [Business Directory](#) | [Jobs](#) | [Houses For Sale](#)

SCHEIN MEDIA

Copyright © 2003 - 2009 Schein Media
[privacy policy](#) | [terms of service](#)