

Adirondack Daily Enterprise

Preserving history

Grants for Harrietstown Town Hall roof and Trudeau Building entrance

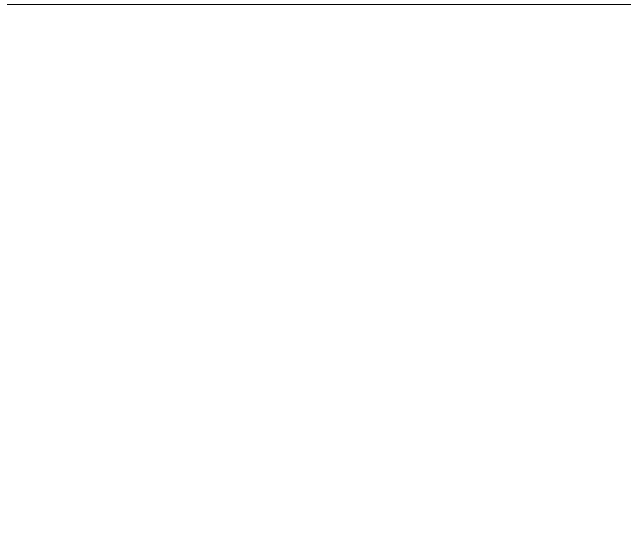


The Trudeau Building, now owned by Historic Saranac Lake, is seen in 1895 when it was owned by Edward Livingston Trudeau. A grant from Adirondack Architectural Heritage will go to restoring

the portico, seen to the left on the front of the building. (Provided photo — Courtesy of the Saranac Lake Free Library)

SARANAC LAKE — The town of Harrietstown and Historic Saranac Lake have both received grants from the Adirondack Architectural Heritage preservation nonprofit to restore historic buildings.

Harrietstown Town Supervisor Jordanna Mallach said the town got \$100,000 to replace the roof on its nearly century-old town hall and repair the water damage caused by the roof leaking over the years.



HSL Executive Director Amy Catania said the historic organization got \$22,500 toward reconstruction of the portico entrance at the Trudeau Building on the corner of Main and Church streets — the former home and laboratory of tuberculosis doctor Edward Livingston Trudeau and the future home of HSL’s collections, in addition to the existing Saranac Laboratory museum next door.

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Harrietstown



An architectural rendering of the portico Historic Saranac Lake plans to rebuild on the Trudeau Building. (Photo courtesy of Historic Saranac Lake)

Mallach said the town is providing a \$25,000 match toward the roof project to make up the rest of the costs. This has already been budgeted for in this year's budget, she said.

“By getting that (AARCH) money, it’s basically going to free up other money for us to do some other things that we need to around the town,” Mallach said.

The building, built in 1928, is approaching 100 years old. The town has patched the roof in the past because that’s what they could afford to do, but this will be a more comprehensive fix.

“We’re not going to fix the roof in the winter, so we’re not going to fix the inside stuff until the roof gets fixed,” Mallach said. *“There’s a high probability that by the time we go to fix the water damage in the spring there’s going to be some additional water damage.”*

The town has replaced other portions of the roof over the years. This portion is in the front left corner of the building, when looking at it from Main Street. Next, Mallach said the town might look to replace the auditorium roof.

“I think that everyone is excited to have a not leaking roof,” Mallach said. *“Probably the village most of all.”*

The village’s offices are right below this portion of the roof. A corner of the village board room shows water damage on the ceiling from water running down through the roof and damaging the wood.

Mallach said the town will have to go out to bid for this project and she hopes the work can be done this spring.

Her overall goal is to get the town hall to last for another 100 years. This fall, Mallach and other town council members cleaned out the attic of the town hall. She said she wants to put more effort into making the building, which holds so much history, sustainable.

“We are grateful for this grant money,” Mallach said in a statement. *“It will fund necessary repairs that are part of our ongoing strategic efforts of repairs and upgrades to the town hall that will preserve its historic nature, community use and presence on Main Street for many*

years to come.”

HSL

The entrance to the Trudeau Building on Main Street used to have a portico, an enclosed porch, back when it was owned by Trudeau. This was where he practiced medicine and worked on tuberculosis, the disease that brought people to Saranac Lake and played a large role in making Saranac Lake the population center it is today.

HSL bought this building in 2019 and plans to expand its museum exhibit space for its voluminous collections. They are restoring the building back to its historic appearance, as it was during Trudeau’s lifetime — from its construction in 1894 to around 1915.

Catania said the portico is the last thing they had to raise money for before construction. The AARCH grant won’t cover everything, but it will help, she said.

Catania said they need around \$125,000 more for the portico, a lot of money, but compared to the millions of budget for the whole project, a “doable” amount. The portico will require a complete rebuild.

At some point the portico was removed from the building.

“It was this beautiful, semi-circular glassed-in (porch),” Catania said. *“Really pretty. I’ve never seen anything like that in the North Country.”*

What’s there is not nearly as grand, she said. This replacement is not required by state historic preservation standards, but she said HSL staff feel it was one of the most beautiful features of the building and they want to do it for aesthetic reasons and to benefit Main Street as a whole.

The Trudeau Building rehabilitation is getting close to 25% completion, Catania said. She hopes to open the building to the public in the summer of 2025.

HSL has raised a total of \$5,426,000 so far for the work, including to buy the building and to get all the construction documents. She said they'll have to spend around \$3 million more on construction.

“Construction-wise, it’s an expensive project,” Catania said. “It’s a big building and it’s an old building. And we’re changing its use from office space to museum.

“When it’s done it will be ready to last another 125 years,” she added.

Contractors have wrapped up exterior work on the foundation for the winter and will be focusing on working inside now, doing carpentry, electric and HVAC work. She said the demolition is done, removing non-historic walls and bringing the building *“down to the the bones.”*

Catania expects construction to be done around this time next year. Then, they'll need to fill it with exhibits. HSL will raise more money for that, she said. Catania said they've already spent \$50,000 on planning for exhibits.

They plan to raise another \$3 million — \$1 million for exhibits, \$1 million for handicap accessibility at the laboratory and \$1 million for HSL's endowment.

Catania said HSL recently got a \$10,000 Humanities NY grant to pay Dave Kanietakeron Fadden of the Six Nations Iroquois Cultural Center in Onchiota to produce exhibits introducing people to Indigenous culture and history.

Fadden, a member of the Mohawk Nation and an artist, will start working on this this winter, she said. The building will have one area focused on taking people back in time to human history before colonization and will weave Indigenous stories through the other exhibits.

The grant

AARCH gave out \$680,734 to fund 11 projects throughout the region through its Adirondack Rural Revitalization Program, a fund which is supported in part by a Paul Bruhn Historic Revitalization Grant from the Department of the Interior's Historic Preservation Fund, administered by the National Park Service.

The ARRP grant also funds projects in Keeseville, Westport, Essex, Bleeker, Lake Pleasant, Canton, Brant Lake, Fort Ann and Salem.

“Through these grants, AARCH can support the libraries, museums, town halls, farmsteads and other civic buildings that form the backbone of our rural North Country communities,” AARCH Executive Director Erin Tobin said in a statment. *“Grant funds will leverage over \$2.1 million of public and private investment in our selected projects, all of which will lead to new or expanded public use.”*

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