

ISLE OF SAFETY BULLETIN

The Connecticut Trolley Museum • East Windsor, Connecticut • December 2018

Help Us Save and Restore Hartford's Isle of Safety!



The Isle of Safety today at the entrance of the Connecticut Trolley Museum.

One of Hartford's great and notable icons is in danger of being lost forever and we at the Connecticut Trolley Museum intend to save it with the help of many individuals, businesses and foundations that treasure our past.

We are referring specifically to the **Isle of Safety** which had been located at State House Square in the center of downtown Hartford from 1913 to 1976.

This historic structure which is now 105 years old was nearly lost in 1976 when State House Square was paved over. It was rescued by the Knox Foundation which moved it to a temporary location and then later it was re-erected at the Connecticut Trolley Museum in East Windsor.

It is situated at the entrance to the Museum where visitors board the trolley cars for their ride along the track and right of way originally used by the Rockville line of the Hartford & Springfield Street Railway Company. This is a fitting location for the Isle of Safety in that it formerly served tens of thousands of trolley car passengers from 1913 up until the time that they were replaced by buses. Time has un-

fortunately taken its toll. What is more concerning than its shabby appearance is its structural integrity. There is considerable rot in the wood that supports the tile roof and virtually all of the tiles are chipped and faded, and many have fallen off.

At their July 2018 Board meeting the directors of the Connecticut

Electric Railway Association d/b/a The Connecticut Trolley Museum voted unanimously to move ahead with the total restoration of the Isle of Safety to its original 1913 condition and authorized the Museum's Development Committee to organize and manage a campaign to carry out the necessary work. ■

Isle of Safety Restoration Q&A

Why are we sending this publication to you?

You are among a select group of targeted individuals, businesses and foundations that share an interest in Greater Hartford – its past, present and future. We think that you are as passionate as we are about preserving significant landmarks such as the **Isle of Safety**.

What is the Connecticut Trolley Museum?

The Connecticut Electric Railway Association d/b/a The Connecticut Trolley Museum is the oldest (1940) incorporated Trolley Museum in America. It is organized as a private nonprofit organization with an IRS 501(c)3 designation and is overseen by a volunteer Board of Directors. It is dedicated to preserving artifacts from the Trolley era and serves the public with a variety of programs for visitors of all ages. A large number of its trolleys are in operating condition.

Who is managing the campaign to restore the Isle of Safety?

The Development Committee of the Connecticut Trolley Museum is chaired by Michael P. Speciale. Mike is the retired Executive Director of the New

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Isle of Safety Q&A

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England Air Museum where he served for 29 years. Prior to that he helped to organize and served as the first director of the United Way of Connecticut's Statewide Info Line System now known as 211. He is joined by Dulcie Giadone and Bob Rosenberg. Dulcie has been a long-term active leader in Hartford, providing executive and development support for area community and cultural organizations. Her leadership has contributed to significant progress in community development, enhanced human services and cultural enrichment. Bob is the Project Coordinator. He retired from Pratt & Whitney after 37 years as Director of Facilities & Services. He served as a volunteer for many years at the New England Air Museum where he managed most of the Museum's numerous capital construction and improvement projects. In addition he has been active working with NINA on the restoration of Victorian houses in Hartford's Asylum Hill area. Staff support will be provided by Gina Maria Alimberti, the Trolley Museum's Business Manager. She has considerable experience in the nonprofit sector in marketing, program development and customer services. She is currently President of the Bradley Regional Chamber of Commerce.

Who will manage the campaign's publicity and public relations efforts?

Eugene A. (Gene) Sheehan III, President and Managing Partner of Sullivan & LeShane Public Relations has graciously offered the assistance that is needed to run a successful campaign. Both Gene and Sullivan & LeShane are well known for their excellence in the public relations arena.

Will the campaign have an Honorary Chair?

Yes, Dennis House, WFSB 3's evening news anchor and *Face the State* moderator will serve as Honorary Chairman.



STATE STREET AND OLD STATE HOUSE, FROM MAIN STREET, HARTFORD, CONN.



The above pictures show a vintage 1924 photo and a later postcard showing the Isle of Safety - both in the trolley era and the bus era - in its original location next to the Old State House in downtown Hartford.

In addition to his being highly respected and having been an important part of the Hartford community for a long time, Dennis is well-versed in its history. We are very pleased that Dennis has joined us as a key player in this effort.

How long is the campaign expected to last?

The campaign is now under way and we

hope to have the fundraising wrapped up by Spring 2019. We expect the restoration will be completed by Fall 2019.

When will the restoration of the Isle of Safety begin?

Preliminary agreements with all of the subcontractors are now being prepared. No work will be authorized until 100% of the needed funds have been raised.

How much will this project cost?

The total cost estimate is \$175,000. This includes:

- Wooden structure repairs
- Complete tile replacement with historically correct tiles
- Brick pavers
- Period-style lighting
- Architectural and engineering support
- Marketing and campaign materials
- Outdoor pictorial exhibit at the Old State House, detailing the Isle's history
- A new walkway to the Isle of Safety from the Museum's Visitor Center

Have any funds been raised to date?

Yes - \$30,000 is already on hand in a restricted account. These funds were donated several years ago by a local historical preservation association.

And thank you to Knox Foundation for first saving the Isle of Safety from destruction and then later for providing the \$5,000 to transport it to the Connecticut Trolley Museum in 1988.

How will donations to the project be recognized?

All donations to the Connecticut Trolley Museum for the restoration of the Isle of Safety will be placed in a restricted fund. All donors will be acknowledged immediately. Their names will be placed on a permanent plaque adjacent to the Isle of Safety following its restoration.

How will I know how the campaign is progressing?

We will publish additional issues of the *Isle of Safety Bulletin* to keep you up to date on the fund-raising progress and later on to track the progress of the restoration work.

Has there been any preliminary feedback on the project?

Yes – we have spoken to numerous key people who are familiar with the Isle of Safety's place in Hartford's history and all have been overwhelmingly enthusiastic to say the least. The Isle of Safety engenders many fond memories of downtown Hartford back in the day!

Testimonial letters of support.

A brief letter of support from you would be helpful in mounting enthusiasm for the project. We are pleased to print the first one on page 4.

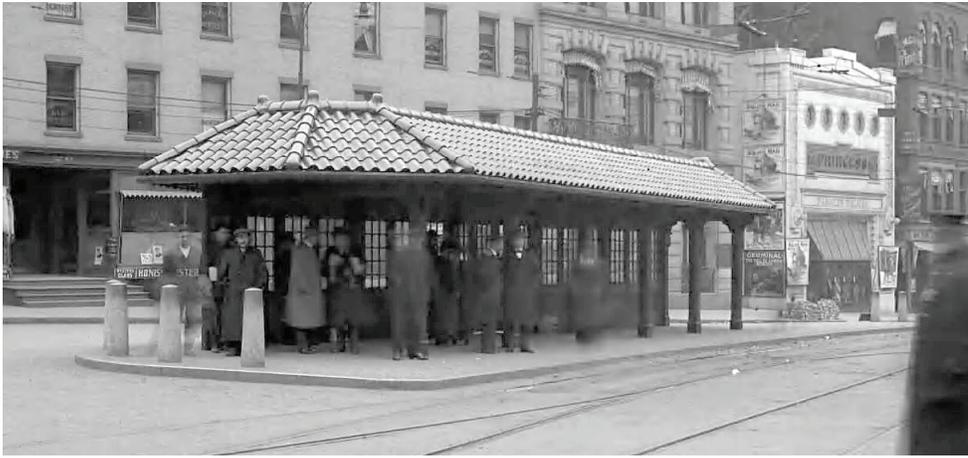
When can I make my gift?

The campaign has begun and gifts may be made online at: www.ct-trolley.org, or by check, mailed to: Connecticut Trolley Museum, 58 North Road, East Windsor, CT 06088.

Michael P. Speciale
Development Chairman
Connecticut Trolley Museum
Contact:
mpspeciale1946@gmail.com



The architectural rendering above previews the appearance of the restored Isle of Safety.



Riders wait for the next trolley in this vintage photo of the Isle of Safety.

Bits and Pieces

- The roof tile manufacturer, Ludowici, of New Lexington, Ohio, which made the original terra cotta tiles for the Isle of Safety in 1913 is still in business and manufacturing the same tiles in the original color.
- Ron Pitz, Executive Director of Knox, has committed to landscaping the area around the Isle of Safety, following its restoration.
- Thanks to Pirie Associates, Architects for their in-kind contribution to create the rendering of the restored Isle of Safety. ■

Isle of Safety Restoration Contractors/Vendors

Architect.....	Pirie Associates, New Haven, CT
General Contractor.....	A&R Building and Remodeling, Northford, CT
Tile Manufacturer.....	Ludowici, New Lexington, Ohio
Tile Installer.....	Lifetime Tilers, Westfield, Massachusetts
Landscaping.....	Knox, Inc., Hartford, CT
Marketing Materials.....	Tom Bittel

Connecticut Trolley Museum

Timothy Lesniak.....	Chairman
Robert Brogle.....	President
Gina Maria Alimberti.....	Business Manager
Sara Garthwait.....	Secretary
Stephen Taylor.....	Treasurer

CONNECTICUT TROLLEY MUSEUM

58 North Road, East Windsor, Connecticut 06088
860-627-6540 • www.ct-trolley.org

MISSION

To provide a historically accurate educational experience of the trolley era, through the interpretation, preservation, restoration, and operation of an electric railway.

Testimonial

“Sometimes I step away from my desk and walk through the Old State House. Despite its beauty, I am always drawn to the windows, and while every view vibrates with the rhythm of city life, there are two that draw me into the past.

When I look south, I see myself standing across Central Row. Sometimes I’m a 3rd grader, new to Connecticut and waiting for the bus to Newington with my mom. Other times, I see my high school self, waiting for that same bus after a hard day’s work at G. Fox. No matter what the age, that younger me is always looking back up at the Old State House with the respect and admiration my mother instilled in me.

When I look north and into the past, I see my mom with me and my siblings in tow, touching base on the Isle of Safety and marching onward to downtown’s shopping wonders: W. T. Grant, Sage-Allen, J. J. Newberry (and its wooden escalator), G. Fox, Mary Jane’s, and Bakers. The Isle of Safety was the gateway to those wonders. At the same time, it was a pause in the city rush. The name alone made me feel safe. It made me feel like the city cared about me. As a result, I care about the city.

The Isle of Safety and the Old State House stood side by side for decades, an architectural odd couple of grandeur and whimsy. Both have been challenged. Both have been saved. I am so grateful that the Connecticut Trolley Museum is offering us a chance to ensure the Isle’s own safety for years to come. I hope you will join the cause and invite others to do the same.”

Sally Whipple

Executive Director

Connecticut’s Old State House