

New Life & New Stories for New Bedford's Historic Places

2023 Annual Appeal



If there is one thing that WHALE has done consistently since 1962, it has been giving life to historic places in the city of New Bedford. And while “new” and “historic” may appear to be opposites, they both are at the core of our mission to foster historic preservation and continued use of the city’s architectural heritage to enhance community and economic vitality in New Bedford.



WHALE’s projects, outreach and partnerships within the city breathe new life into historic places, giving them new uses, new vitality, and new stories to share. Like the story of First Baptist Church, its landmark status in the city and importance to the country with its connection to Robert’s Rules of Order and being the only steeple remaining on the New Bedford city seal. That story may well have ended in 2014 due to the huge maintenance needs of the building and a small congregation.

After nearly ten years, and a lot of “new” challenges (like a complete rebuild of the deteriorated steeple and bell tower and a global pandemic), new life and vitality will soon return to the site. The Steeple Playhouse, home to Your Theatre, Inc. will open its doors in late 2023. Now everyone who comes to the building to enjoy a production or event at the Steeple Playhouse will have their own story to add to the tapestry of history contained within its walls.



There are so many stories encapsulated with the work and projects of WHALE, 72 in just over sixty years. It’s hard to imagine what the city would look like if these places, like the Robeson House, the Co+Creative Center on Union Street, or the Zeiterion Theatre were not here, contributing to the vitality and life of New Bedford. What stories would not have been preserved or new stories told in those spaces? What would this place look like without WHALE?



Luckily that is a story we don’t have to tell, not without your support. Your contribution to our Annual Appeal goes a long way to ensuring that WHALE remains a leader, partner, resource and ally for historic places in New Bedford. Your donation is an investment in a stronger, more prosperous city that can take pride in its heritage and have hope for its future. We have a lot to look forward to as we write a new chapter for this storied organization, one that builds upon our past success and learning while we forge new partnerships and seek out new opportunities for historic preservation in our city.

Donate to our 2023 Annual Appeal today and help WHALE bring new life and new stories to important historic places in New Bedford for the benefit of all. Thank you for your support!

Erin D.A. Miranda, Executive Director

“If you bulldoze your heritage,
you become just anywhere.”

-Sarah Delano

WHALE President, 1966 - 1982

Looking Ahead to 2024



Hillman Street Firehouse

This 1892 firehouse was constructed during a period of tremendous economic and population growth in New Bedford when the city was transforming from a wealthy whaling capital to a wealthy textile capital. It eventually became a Civil Defense headquarters before being vacated. Located just outside of downtown, this highly visible

project will be undertaken by WHALE in collaboration with a development partner. The project has already received great support from the city administration and will be rehabilitated to provide much needed housing to the community.

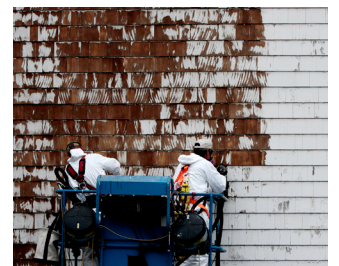
Supportive Partnerships

WHALE has worked with an array of partners over the years. From private homeowners or developers to the City of New Bedford and the National Park Service, partnership is an essential part of our work and our success. We continue work with non-profits, like the **Cape Verdean Association in New Bedford, Inc.**, and their rehabilitation of the historic Strand Theatre on Acushnet Avenue. The theater will be restored to its former grandeur and be a cultural center for the Association, providing incredible space for them to conduct and grow their programs for the community and the city.



Work on our **Places that Matter** mapping project will wrap up in the spring and we are excited to share this innovative tool that prioritized community engagement and voices in identifying places of cultural and historic importance around the city. WHALE is also excited to collaborate on efforts to expand awareness and understanding of preservation, historic properties and the benefits to the community. We will be partnering with the **Rotch-Jones-Duff House Museum and Gardens** on an historic homeowner “ask the expert” series from January through March of 2024. Be sure to follow WHALE on social media and sign up for our e-newsletters to stay up to date on announcements, updates and more. We are excited for what awaits us in 2024 and we look forward to sharing this new chapter for WHALE with you.

To make a donation to our 2023 Annual Appeal, return the slip below with your gift, or visit our website, www.waterfrontleague.org and give securely on-line. Thank you for your support!



Please cut and return this card in the enclosed envelope to WHALE.

\$2,500 \$1,000 \$500 \$250 \$100 \$50 Other \$

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Donations of \$1,000 and above are eligible for a 50% Community Investment Tax Credit (CTIC)!

WHALE is a 501(c)3 nonprofit, charitable organization. In accordance with IRS regulations, your contribution is fully tax deductible.