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New Jersey Historic Trust Celebrates Renovation of a Historic Trenton Landmark

TRENTON, NJ – Lt. Governor Sheila Y. Oliver joined Trenton Mayor Reed Gusciora and members of The New Jersey Historic Trust today to celebrate the completion of interior renovations to the Alexander Douglass House (Douglass House), a Revolutionary era landmark that is a centerpiece in the heart of Trenton’s Mill Hill Park. The Douglass House was home to General Washington’s war council after the second battle of Trenton in 1777 and is known for its role in the Colonial Revival movement as an architectural relic of the Revolutionary War.

The centuries-old structure, listed on the New Jersey and National Register of Historic Places, has undergone decades of moves and renovations and was last moved in 1972 to its current location in Mill Hill Park.

The New Jersey Historic Trust most recently partnered with the City of Trenton to make improvements to the house, including interior renovations and interpretive signs to make the historic home an accessible visitor center. The preservation project was funded by a grant from the New Jersey Historic Trust’s Garden State Historic Preservation Trust Fund.

“I commend The New Jersey Historic Trust and City of Trenton for renovations they have completed on the Douglass House,” said Lt. Governor and Department of Community Affairs Commissioner Sheila Y. Oliver. “Preserving New Jersey’s centuries old history is not only important for saving historic relics and documenting our past, but it also serves as a catalyst for future neighborhood revitalization.”

The construction work included two new ADA-compliant bathrooms and hallway in the modern cellar as well as the repair and painting of floors, woodwork and damaged plaster throughout the first floor. Repairs were also made to the first-floor fireplaces and hearths along with an upgrade of electrical, fire detection and alarm systems.

“We can’t take for granted the value which history brings to our Capital City.” Continued Trenton’s Mayor Reed Gusciora, “To forget our past is to forego our identity. Trenton was a turning point during our fledgling nation’s revolution. We’re fortunate that historic landmarks, like the Douglass House, are getting the care and attention which they so deserve.”

In 2008, exterior preservation work was completed and windows on the first floor of the front facade were replaced. A barrier-free entrance was installed in 2011 at the rear elevation of the property to allow ADA access.

“On behalf of the Trust, we are proud to have supported the restoration of the Douglass House, which helps ensure that visitors will have an opportunity to experience this important part of Trenton’s past, which is critically linked with the history of New Jersey,” said Dorothy Guzzo, Executive Director of NJ Historic Trust.

The grant award for the entire Douglass House and Jackson Street Bridge project was \$534,000, and of that, \$250,000 has been used for the interior house renovations and the design and installation of a series of interpretive signs throughout Mill Hill Park that recount the three-century history of Trenton. The remaining funds will be used to repair and recoat Jackson Street Bridge.

