



West Barnstable Railroad Depot Restoration



Department of Public Works

June 5, 2025



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With a total estimated project cost of \$978,000, The Department of Public Works is seeking \$792,000 in Community Preservation funding and \$186,000 in capital funds for the restoration of the West Barnstable Railroad Depot.

The historic building sits within the Old Kings Highway Historic District as well as the West Barnstable Historic District. The building is listed as contributing to the national historic district and is listed as a Massachusetts Cultural Resource.

The project is estimated to be completed in the fall of 2026.





West Barnstable Railroad Depot History



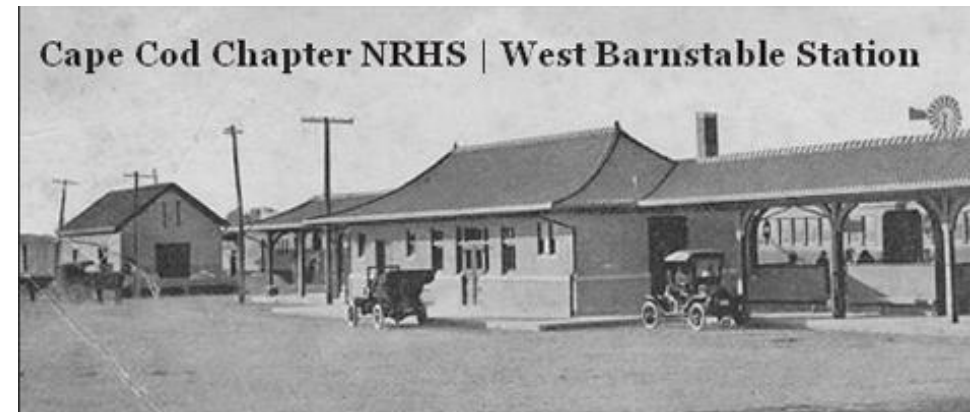
In the mid 1800's and early 1900's the railroad had a major role in the development of Cape Cod. In fact, the initial reason the railroad was coaxed into extending onto the Cape was to provide service to the Boston & Sandwich Glass Company (Sandwich Glass Works), which needed to get their products to Boston, so freight traffic began in 1848.

By 1887, the railroad extended to 14 of the 15 towns on Cape Cod. In 1927 the need for passenger service was so great that the Cape Codder Hotel ran a sleeping car only service from New York's Grand Central Station to Provincetown, with branches to both Woods Hole and Hyannis. Ten years later, day travel was initiated from New York to Hyannis and Woods Hole.

In 1938, service to Provincetown was discontinued. World War II had disrupted service, and by 1964 the increased travel by interstate, of both goods and people, led to the closure of passenger travel to and from the Cape, excepting special trains.

The location of the railroad depot on Meetinghouse Way in West Barnstable was certainly the reason commercial businesses were developed and maintained in the vicinity. Passenger service continued at the depot for 105 years until 1959.

Constructed in 1911 by the New Haven Railroad, the current West Barnstable Railroad Depot provides an excellent example of the Arts & Crafts/Mission style architecture of train depots in the Early 1900's.





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The presence of the railroad stimulated commerce as small-scale farming began a gradual decline in the village of West Barnstable. Commerce resourcefully rebounded with the development of local industrial manufacturing. Hats, chairs, leather, pottery and bricks were leading products.

The West Barnstable Train Station allowed agriculture to rebound. The cultivation of cranberries, apples and vegetables from West Barnstable and Marstons Mills, as well as oyster harvests from Osterville and Cotuit were allowed a larger, more profitable market in Boston and New York.

Wagons would travel Route 149 (Meetinghouse Way) to the station, bringing potatoes from Maine, dress goods, and wine from Boston, building materials from NH, VT and CT, and mail to the residents. At one point there was even a Railway Post Office car as part of the train line - sorting and postmarking mail en route. The postmarks read "Boston & Cape Cod/R.P.O.".

Between 1986 and 1996 the depot served as an unmanned stop for Amtrak's Cape Cod service.

The depot was used as a movie shooting location for the films *The Golden Boys* in 2008 and *The Lightkeepers* in 2009.

During the summer, West Barnstable serves as a stop for select excursion trains running from Hyannis to the Cape Cod Canal.



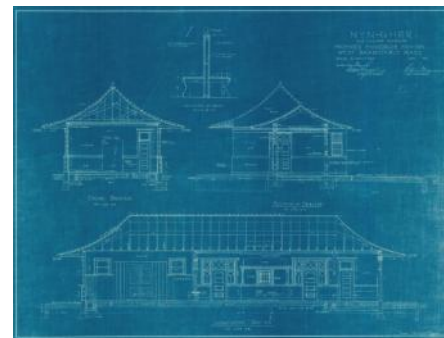
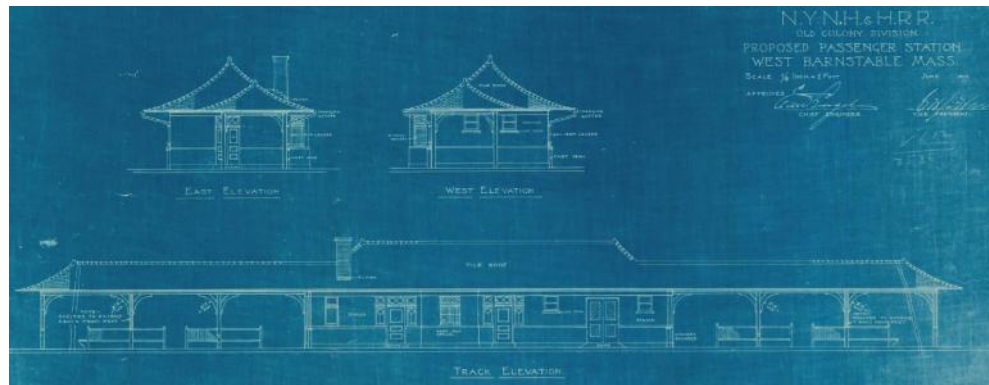


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In 2001, the Cape Cod Chapter of the NRHS leased the property and has been able to complete some minor repair work and maintained the original interior. They have been restoring it as a historical railway station and museum.

Although the passenger shelters that once extended on both ends of the building no longer exist, the original fenestration, roof, and interior of the building are intact and deserving of preservation.





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A preservation plan from 2004 stated that the roof was “mostly original and sound”, however roof leaks have developed over the past several years. These leaks have resulted in some damage to the interior ceiling finish, and deterioration of the wood fascia and soffits.

Although the Cape Cod Chapter of the NRHS has done well to perform spot roof and interior repairs, the long-term solution is beyond their technical and financial reach. We are proposing the following preservation work be completed on the project to insure the buildings weather tightness and continued use.

- The existing clay tile roof will be removed and salvaged. It has been determined that matching tiles exist and are available. Any broken tiles or components will be replaced with new tiles that match the existing style and color.
- Damaged sub-structure will be replaced in kind, new underlayment installed, and the salvaged roof tiles re-installed with copper nails and fittings.
- Water damaged exterior soffits and fascia will be repaired or replaced depending on the level of damage with matching materials.
- Water damaged interior ceilings will be repaired.
- An accessible walk will be installed to overcome the step to the front entry door. This accessible walk will not be permanently attached to the existing structure.
- Windows and doors will be restored as deemed necessary.
- A HVAC system will be installed utilizing other funding.





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Community Preservation Committee Historic Preservation Criteria:

Protecting, preserving, enhancing, restoring and / or rehabilitating publicly owned historic, cultural, architectural or archaeological resources of significance, especial those that are threatened and/ or Town-owned.

Preserving Historical Connections to Barnstable Railroad Depot: This building continues to serve as a living connection to Barnstable's railway past. The restoration of this building, which houses the Cape Cod Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society, will ensure that the town's railway heritage and its influence in West Barnstable is remembered and celebrated. The NRHS has preserved the original interior of the building which is open to the public during the summer. The historical artifacts, documents, and memorabilia highlight the Railroads role in the development of regional and national transportation as well as the development of the businesses of the area.

Protecting, preserving, enhancing, restoring and / or rehabilitating the historical function of a publicly-owned property or site: This project will maintain the historic use of the building as a railroad depot. The building is currently used as a depot during limited days and months and is the meeting place of the NRHS.

Maintaining Architectural Integrity: The preservation and restoration of the building's historic features—such as its clay tile roof, windows, wood trim, and structural elements—are key to maintaining the town's visual character. This is particularly important within both the West Barnstable and Old Kings Highway Historic Districts, where the architectural consistency and historic atmosphere contribute to the unique identity of Barnstable. The building's restoration will contribute to the preservation of the historic districts and maintain the aesthetic harmony of the surrounding area.

Demonstrating a public benefit; and demonstrating the ability to provide permanent protection for maintaining the historic resource through a preservation restriction:

This project will continue to be maintained by the lease on a limited bases, and the Department of Public Works.

An architectural/structural report for building conditions and project phasing is required:

An architectural evaluation was completed in 2004 and is the basis for this restoration project. Additional structural review and reporting will be completed as part of the project.





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