



**SOCIETY FOR
INDUSTRIAL
ARCHEOLOGY**

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industrial Heritage Sites Threatened

Among 11 Most Endangered Historic Places

Houghton, Michigan—Today the National Trust for Historic Preservation released its annual list of 11 Most Endangered Historic Places. On the roster are the Memorial Bridge, connecting Portsmouth, New Hampshire and Kittery Maine, and the Ames Shovel Shops in North Easton, Massachusetts. Both nominations were supported by the Society for Industrial Archeology.

The 1923 Memorial Bridge was an important and trend-setting design by the pre-eminent bridge engineer J.A.L. Waddell. He was responsible for developing the vertical lift bridge in this country. The Memorial Bridge was the first vertical lift bridge built in the eastern U.S. and is one of the oldest still operational lift bridges in the country. It is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. It is threatened by the high cost of rehabilitation which has caused the states of New Hampshire and Maine to back pedal on an agreement to restore the bridge.

“Historic bridges link us to the past and demonstrate how civil engineering provides unique solutions to particular problems. Because every bridge is customized for its crossing and springs out over a void where views are unobstructed, it provides, more than any other structure, a powerful sense of place,” said SIA president Mary Habstritt.

The Ames Shovel Shops is the heart of the North Easton Village Historic District, already enrolled on the National Register of Historic Places. Yet the factory is threatened by a developer’s plan to build affordable housing. The Ames company developed methods for mass production of the prosaic shovel and became the world’s largest producer of this essential tool, shipping them around the world by the mid-19th century. The success of the enterprise allowed the Ames family to invest in magnificent civic architecture and provide other lasting benefits to their community.

“The loss of historic factories causes us to forget that the this country was once a manufacturing power house, nimbly able to adapt and innovate to turn out the tools and other goods needed to build the comfortable lives Americans now lead,” said SIA president Mary Habstritt.

“Affordable housing and preservation are both worthy causes and not mutually exclusive. Factories can be put to new uses and serve as reminders of our industrial past. “

The Society for Industrial Archeology studies, interprets, and seeks to preserve the remnants of our industrial and engineering history. It has over 1,600 members nationwide. For more information, see www.sia-web.org

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