

2022 Governor's Award for Historic Preservation



Fishtown

Fishtown Preservation Society Inc.; Biggs Construction; Kasson Contracting; Team Elmer's; Hopkins Burns Design Studio; and Laurie Sommers Cultural Consulting

Collaborative effort to lift Fishtown, Leland

Fishtown is Michigan's last traditional commercial fishing village. In addition to its working waterfront, the village has become a popular tourist destination, both for the fresh fish and the authentic ambience. Comprised of wooden docks and shanties built out over the water, the historic fabric of Fishtown was exposed over several years of record high water levels. Water poured into shanties and threatened to sweep away the docks and fishing economy of the region.

Non-profit Fishtown Preservation Society has been dedicated to promoting and preserving the historical and fishing heritage of Fishtown. Their close relationship with local partners helped them spring into action to combat the high water

danger. Starting in 2020, three shanties were carefully lifted off their crumbling wooden piles, set on land while new piles were driven, and then lifted back into place. Work on other buildings includes the rehabilitation of foundations, sills, siding, windows and docks.

Through it all, an important emphasis has been placed on retaining as much original fabric as possible. The tenacity and collaborative spirit so synonymous with fishing is evident in the community's desire to preserve its unique landscape. With the help of passionate partners with a deep love for Fishtown, it will continue as a working waterfront and fishery long into the future.

