

# You can help promote sustainability in historic buildings: Case Study Earlville Opera House

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## **ABSTRACT**

In this case study of the history and ongoing operations of the Earlville Opera House, my presentation will highlight all the ways in which my skills as an architect have informed and supported my leadership role in the organization. My goal is to encourage and inspire others to offer their skills to preserve and improve the historic built environment, enhancing sustainability and reducing carbon along the way. The presentation will begin with a statement of the above goal and the learning objectives, and move into a brief history of the Earlville Opera House, (built in 1892) and its context as one of a very few surviving examples of formerly common opera houses in every small town. I will describe the early years of its operation, decline, closure, and re-birth as a non-profit corporation which now serves as a community hub for the arts. I will describe the many reconstruction projects that were undertaken over the last 50 years of non-profit operation, along with the professional architectural studies and designs that drove the work, the largely volunteer operations that accomplished the reconstruction, and the state and federal agencies and private foundations that supported the work. Finally, I will describe in detail the many ways in which an architect's skillset can facilitate this kind of preservation, and ways to foster and promote a shift toward sustainability and reduced carbon in this sector.

## **BIOGRAPHY**

**Bruce Ward**, 69, has 45 years of experience in architecture. He earned his New York license to practice architecture in 1990. He began his career working summers as a drafter for St. John Associates Consulting Engineers in Binghamton. After graduating Colgate University with a Bachelor of Arts degree, he began working for Fred Thomas Associates in Ithaca in 1977. He joined Colletti Associates in Sherburne in 1986, and moved to King & King in 1988, remaining 13 years. He lives in Hamilton, NY where he has served several hundred clients as a sole practitioner in private practice since 2001.