

The William Russell Allen House is a Gilded Age era mansion located in downtown Pittsfield. The significance of the property is multi-faceted – architectural quality, connection to significant persons in the local and regional context, and historic events. From an architectural perspective, the mansion maintains most of its original Queen Anne style features, despite its current condition. No expenses were spared in the design and construction of the home.

WILLIAM RUSSELL ALLEN HOUSE PITTSFIELD



Its design stood out in the region, and was the first local project for H. Neil Wilson, who became a preeminent architect in the region and is tied to several notable buildings.

The Allen House is the remaining mansion on what was a street lined with imposing homes 100 years ago. While much of Pittsfield's history is overshadowed by General Electric and its impacts on the City to this day, this home was built in a time where there were numerous Gilded Age cottages located in the City and rivaled the estates found in Stockbridge and Lenox, which spoke to Pittsfield's place in the region and the Commonwealth with its strong industrial roots.

Resource at Risk

The structure has been vacant for almost 50 years. While the deferred maintenance is a continued threat, in recent years DCAMM (the Commonwealth's Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance) appears motivated to dispose of the property and is considering myriad options. Given the challenges in reuse of a property that has received little upkeep for several decades and its landlocked location in between a state building and senior housing complex, the property faces significant uncertainty. DCAMM completed a conditions assessment in 2022 that found all mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems to be at the end of their useful life. The possibility of cutting heat and electricity could result in even further deterioration.

What's Happening Now

Over the last decade, the City of Pittsfield has taken steps towards the preservation of the property. In 2016, this property was featured in its own planning evaluation of endangered properties in the City. The City has committed CPA funds for a feasibility study this year by Finegold Alexander Architects and remains an active partner in determining the future reuse of the property.