

NEWBURYPORT
PRESERVATION TRUST

P. O. Box 184, Newburyport, MA 01950
www.nbptpreservationtrust.org

Linking the past with the present and future



Quarterly Newsletter of the Newburyport Preservation Trust

Winter 2016



Above is the Federal-era house at 77 Lime Street and its too-tall "addition" that ran afoul of the city's zoning regulations.

At left is Custom House Way, which will not be dug up for utility work.

Below is the Capt. James Clarkson House (c. 1790) at the corner of Boardman & Olive Sts., which will be the subject of future zoning board hearings.



NPT's preservation advocacy sparks a cautious enthusiasm

NPT's preservation advocacy efforts have churned relentlessly since the previous newsletter in September 2015. With multiple preservation-relevant projects to monitor – in various stages of permitting, appeal, stealth hibernation, or back-to-the-drawing-board delay – the vigilance, presence, and participation of members makes a difference.

Facebook is a "friend" of preservation. Our Facebook page is now the place to go for the very latest on NPT's preservation advocacy, including short-notice calls-to-action. The NPT website remains the source of in-depth content on Newburyport history, architecture, and preservation, but Facebook is a better news and networking tool. Show us some Facebook love at: www.facebook.com/newburyportpreservationtrust/.

Some recent NPT advocacy highlights:

• **Custom House Way at Water Street.**

Excavation too close to the museum's foundation was averted thanks to NPT adding its voice to those of the Newburyport Maritime Society and the Public Settlers (*sic*) of the Newburyport Waterfront Trust, to persuade the city to place utilities for the harbor master facility on the other side of the building, with more clearance and less risk.

• **77 Lime Street.** NPT members crowded into at City Hall on Jan. 26 to speak in favor of enforcement of our zoning laws regarding the excessive height of the "addition" built at 77 Lime Street. The developers lost their appeal before the Zoning Board, and must return to seek approval of a new plan.

• **114-118 Merrimac Street.** The non-owner applicant's plan to build a two-family home – with a first-floor garage opening into the city's busiest intersection – is technically still alive. A revised plan will come before the Zoning Board of Appeals, and NPT will be there to advocate for the preservation of life-and-limb at this busy intersection.

• **8 Strong Street.** NPT pressed for an explanation, through an official public records request, on the demolition of the 1824 home at 8 Strong Street. (See page 2.)

• **48 Boardman Street.** Next up is the future of the Capt. James Clarkson House (c. 1790) at 48 Boardman St. The developer proposes to preserve the house as a single-family, and add a "carriage house" home on the lot – or proceed to Plan B. The developer has consulted with NPT and neighbors. The lot is too small for two free-standing homes without zoning/planning exceptions. ■

Preservation education takes center stage at NPT's hands-on "Do It Ye Self" sessions

NPT's new "Do It Ye Self" series has been a big hit this season, confirming the interest and need for preservation education.

The series of bi-monthly, two-hour, low cost (\$15) demonstrations of preservation crafts – each with a hands-on participation component – has attracted homeowners and preservation craftspeople.

The first of the series, on October 24, was Glass Cutting & Window Glazing, with Alison Hardy. On December 12 was Repairing Rotten Wood with preservation

carpenter Jasper March. Both were at the Perkins "Mint" (Museum of Old Newbury).

The third in the series, Cooking in Beehive Ovens, with restoration mason Richard Irons, is scheduled for February 20 at a private home. This program sold out within one day of its announcement.

continued on next page

At right are scenes from NPT's "Do It Ye Self" series. At top left is "Window Woman of New England" Alison Hardy. At top right is a close-up of epoxy repair in the hands of wood craftsman Jasper March. At bottom, attendees watch Jasper's demonstration.





This Italianate Victorian located at 6 Washington St. was featured on www.Houzz.com.

Big-time exposure for a Newburyport home that sports an NPT Historic House Plaque

On January 23, 2016, the popular online magazine *Houzz.com* featured the restored Victorian home at 6 Washington Street in Newburyport – a home that also displays a newly-mounted plaque after professional research by the Newburyport Preservation Trust’s Historic House Plaque Program.

The article, by interior decorator Mary Prince, is devoted to the remarkable, expressive, and sometimes kaleidoscopic interior make-overs. But any observant passerby will note the attentive exterior restoration and the preservation of the original windows.

Chris and Beth Calitri purchased the home in 2013, and have transformed its rooms into fresh contemporary spaces.

NPT research determined that the original owner of the 1857 home was jewelry maker and merchant James B. Fairbanks. Since then it has been the residence of two mayors, two ship captains, and a dentist.

To read the article about 6 Washington Street, visit <http://www.houzz.com/ideabooks/59413380/list/my-houzz-revitalized-1857-seaside-victorian-in-new-england>.

For more about the NPT Historic House Plaque Program: www.nbptpreservationtrust.org.

Do It Ye Self ... continued from page 1

Scheduled for April 16 at the Perkins Printing & Engraving Plant (“the Mint”) is Fabio Bardini, who will demonstrate the best practices in using masonry mortar.

The series was conceived by NPT board member and masonry craftsman Matt Blanchette, and is the product of his interests, family background, and timely encounters with craftsmen and preservation advocates.

While working as a high school teacher in a parallel career, Matt seized the opportunity to work and learn from a master of historic masonry, Richard Irons, on projects around New England. Today Matt has his own business, Heritage Masonry, and recently completed a dual master’s degree in English and education at Salem State University.

With interest in the trades and in education, Matt shared his rationale for the “Do It Ye Self” series in an interview coming soon on the NPT website. The following is an excerpt:

“The DIYs series came about for two reasons. First, among members of NPT, there was a growing interest in practical

advice: “How can I affordably restore my old house?” This was, and in my opinion, is the main focus of NPT. However, NPT has been fighting hard to uphold the standards that revived Newburyport and made it a desirable place to live, but its goals are sometimes misconstrued. Ergo, I see an opportunity to refocus our efforts on our core values, and with these workshops, turn the conversation back to preserving.” ■

At right is restoration masonry expert **Richard Irons**, presenter of the “Cooking in Beehive Ovens” program on Feb. 20. The program sold out in less than 24 hours.



Another one down, as health dept. order has legal precedence over new zoning laws

In summer 2015, the “man-bites-dog” incongruity of a family in *Newburyport* living in extreme squalid conditions made the national news. The Newburyport Health Department removed the family and condemned the home at 8 Strong Street.

With a prospective developer waiting in the wings to buy the property, the modest 1824 house was cleaned out and fumigated, and the Board of Health issued a demolition order. The Planning Dept. was apprised, and awaited the paperwork to begin the permitting procedure according to zoning laws that apply to contributing structures in the National Register Historic District.

But in a surprise to all city officials (except in the Building Dept.), the house was demolished on November 9. NPT’s public records request was filed the next day.

The communications breakdown was the subject of a City Council Planning & Development Committee “of-the-whole” meeting on December 10 to investigate and press for more open communication in the future. Some questions remain unanswered.

At that meeting, a letter from the City Solicitor in reply to Mayor Donna Holaday’s

request confirmed that by state law, a Board of Health demolition order does take precedence over local zoning regulations.

The good news since the demolition is that the developer has accommodated neighbors with a design for a new single-family home in scale with its surroundings. The plans received unanimous support from neighbors, and unanimous approval from the city’s Zoning Board of Appeals. ■

– R.W. Bacon

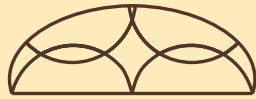
Preservation Week is May 10-15, 2016

This year’s Newburyport Preservation Week, the annual signature event for the Newburyport Preservation Trust, is set for Tuesday through Sunday, May 10-15, 2016.

The focus this year is on the architecture and preservation of the city’s many churches, old and new, and their presence that contributes to our sense of place. The theme: “Preserving the Architecture of Faith.”

Mark your calendar now so you don’t miss out on any of the presentations, tours, and activities now in the planning stages. ■





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Summer/Fall 2015

Zoning amendment addressing bizarre infill projects passes 2nd reading by unanimous City Council vote

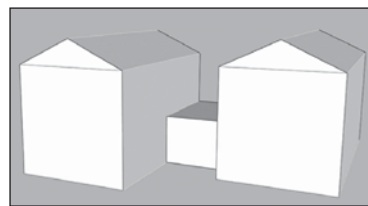
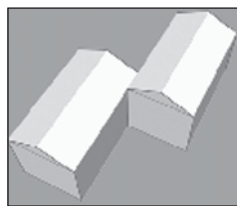
Many voices speaking at public meetings made the difference

In an effort to put an end to strangely-configured multi-family infill projects, the Newburyport City Council approved a revision of the Zoning Ordinance that amends the definition of multi-family and two-family structures, and clarifies the requirements of a common wall connector.

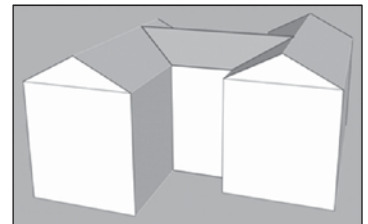
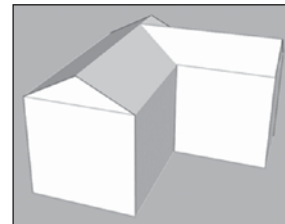
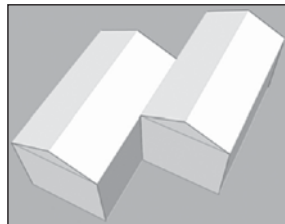
The number of citizens that spoke their mind on this issue at several public meetings made an impact: City Council votes on the first reading (June 29) and second reading (July 13) were unanimous.

In spring 2015, an incongruous new development at 77 Lime Street brought into question what constitutes “a building.” On May 11, Ward 2 Councilor Jared Eigerman introduced a zoning amendment to clarify the requirement of a common wall connector. The new language is as follows:

“Common Wall Connector. An interior wall that is shared by and separates the two



The new zoning amendment clarifies the definitions of two-family and multi-family structures by specifying the requirements of the “common wall connector.” The designs in the top row are “unacceptable,” and do not meet requirements. The designs below are examples of an “acceptable” common wall connector. In the above right photo is the “two-family house” at 77 Lime Street, joined only by a “storage connector,” that prompted the issue.



dwelling units of a two-family dwelling, or the dwelling units of a multifamily dwelling, and meets all four of the following requirements: (1) the shared length of the common wall is no less than 50% of the longest dimension of the rectangle in which the footprint of the larger unit exists; (2) it exists at the ground-level story and is at least

as high as the eaves line of the lowest dwelling unit; (3) it separates enclosed interior space(s) in each of the dwelling units it separates; and (4) it connects the dwelling units in such a way that the building or structure containing them appears to be an integral whole rather than conjoined masses, as depicted in the diagrams.” ■



Newburyport Preservation Trust takes message to the streets at Yankee Homecoming sidewalk sales

The Yankee Homecoming Sidewalk Sales on Saturday, August 1 provided an opportunity for the Newburyport Preservation Trust to take its message and mission to the streets and get shoulder-to-shoulder with the teeming summer crowd.

For the first time, NPT mounted a booth at the Sidewalk Sale, complete with canopy, display table, banner, props, reams of hard-

copy support materials, and brochures to thrust in the hands of passersby.

The consensus of table-staffers reporting was that while our presence, display, materials, message, and chat-em-up index were excellent, perhaps the event and the Inn Street location did not draw passersby who were interested in history, preservation, or cultural issues. One table-staffer noted that a few local residents stopped at the booth, but that most out-of-towners passed without notice on their hunt for bargains, food, or particular shops. Next year’s fine-tuning will be based on these observations. ■

At left is the NPT booth at the 2015 Yankee Homecoming Sidewalk Sale. At the far right in the photo is the award-winning Powder House poster by Nock Middle School student Zack Naughton.

Powder House Park & Learning Center continues to extend its reach – to Germany

Yankee Homecoming, Trails & Sails, and visitors enliven the season

You can still have a guided tour of the Powder House! Stop by the restored 1822 structure on Low Street at the Essex Heritage Trails & Sails event on Sunday, September 20 (10-4) or Sunday, September 27 (12-4).

Of course you can explore the site on your own at anytime during the daylight

open hours until the park closes for the season October 31.

Some notes on the summer season:

- Katrin & Timon Kolterjahn visited from Lübeck, Germany. They translated the interpretive panels into German for future visitors.
- Mowing is done weekly. Weeds in paths are controlled by environmentally-safe spraying of white vinegar.
- Park environs are home to five rabbits, six groundhogs, two deer, and countless species of birds. ■



At right are siblings Katrin and Timon Kolterjahn, visiting from Lübeck, Germany. As cousins of NPT's co-president Tom Kolterjahn, they were designated as "Powder House Keepers for a Day." Timon is a city councilor in his preservation-focused home city.



Above is proud homeowner Chris Rutchick (left) holding her new historic house sign for 82 Bromfield Street in Newburyport. At right is Martha Muldoon, coordinator of the Newburyport Preservation Trust's Historic House Plaque Program that has gathered momentum in the past year.

NPT's Historic House Plaque Program continues to keep research team busy

The Mary Loring/Parsons Brown House at 82 Bromfield Street is the newest property to be researched and documented by the Newburyport Preservation Trust Historic House Plaque Program.

While many Newburyport homes sport signs of various origins, at the core of NPT's program is rigorous professional research. To learn how you can "get with the program," visit www.NbptPreservationTrust.org. ■

Condemned 1824 house is on the fast track for demolition – Another loophole to close?



The home at 8 Strong Street, variously identified in the news recently as "the hoarder house" and the "house of squalor," was condemned by the Newburyport Health Department, which has apparently put it on the fast track for demolition.

While the building is undeniably an example of neglect and deterioration, the 1824 house is still a contributing structure in the National Register Historic District.

Does the condemned status supersede the city's zoning laws and procedures? Is this another loophole to be addressed? ■

Words not necessary

Is this the new normal? Below is a newly-constructed fake chimney, a half-baked 21st-century effort to "blend in" here in highly-marketable "quaint olde Newburyport." ■



In some cases, many words are necessary ...

Many words and many voices, including NPT's, are being heard by the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service over the city's plan to excavate Custom House Way to place utilities for the new harbor master's building – without regard for historical/archaeological resources. ■





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High Street (from the west)



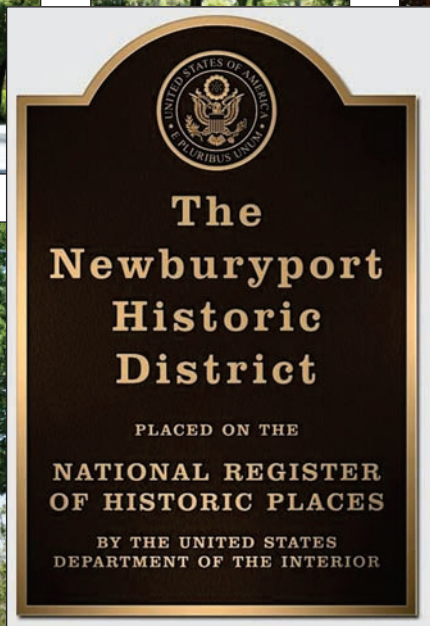
State Street



High Street (from the east)



Water Street



Merrimac Street



Recognition of National Register Historic District is highlight of Preservation Week

Established in 1984, city's historic district finally has signs indicating the national significance of its architecture

The work of this year's Preservation Week is done, and this year's theme that served us well, "Signs of the Times," is retired. But the presence of physical signs will fuel awareness of the city's architectural preservation for years to come.

A highlight of Preservation Week 2015 was the ceremonial unveiling and installation on May 12 of five signs that mark the city's National Register Historic District. The district – the largest in Massachusetts, encompassing over 2500 contributing structures from Joppa in the

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Preservation Awards go to homeowners, planners, historians, craftsmen, & developers

Preservation awards in a several categories were presented to 10 recipients Sunday afternoon, May 17, 2015 at the concluding event of the Newburyport Preservation Trust's annual Preservation Week. The standing-room-only award ceremony and reception was held at the Custom House Maritime Museum in Newburyport.

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Preservation Award recipients for 2015 are (l. to r.) Keith Dodge, Linda Tulley, Linda Smiley, Mark Wojcicki, Patricia Henault, Paul Henault, Brad Kutcher, Dorothy Fairweather, Howard Fairweather, and William Hickey.

Preservation Week 2015

Continued from page 1

South End to Atkinson Common in the North End – was established in 1984 by the U.S. Department of the Interior to recognize the national significance of the city’s architecture, grand and modest, from the late 17th century to the early 20th century.

That the *local* celebratory fanfare and installation came over 30 years after the *national* recognition was downplayed, as preservation advocates and allies among local and state officials looked toward the future with the hope that the signs will encourage preservation awareness.

The initiative for the signs began with Newburyport Preservation Trust member Jerry Mullins, and proceeded with the support of NPT, financing by members Howard and Dorothy Fairweather, and Community Preservation Act funds.

Since 2007, Preservation Week has celebrated Newburyport’s range of period architecture through tours, programs, and education sessions. This year included a presentation by Window Woman of New Hampshire, an exhibit on the Historic American Building Survey (HABS) of Newburyport’s restored Powder House, and historical and architectural tours at multiple sites. Mark your calendar now for mid-May 2016. ■

House tours spotlight NPT’s new Historic House Plaque Program

At right are the first three homes researched by the NPT Historic House Plaque Program. During Preservation Week, guides presented exterior tours based on the research. For more details about the program, visit www.NbptPreservationTrust.org.



Clockwise from top left: 37 Temple Street, 93 High Street, and 77 Prospect Street.



NPT presents 10 Preservation awards

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This year awards were presented to recipients in the following categories:

- Historically Sensitive Planner/Consultant - Nicholas Cracknell, Amesbury, Mass.
- Stewardship - William Hickey (1 Parsons St.)
- Stewardship - Howard & Dorothy Fairweather (4 Parsons Street)

- Historic Landscape Restoration - Belleville Improvement Society (Atkinson Common)
- Preservation Research - Linda Tulley
- Preservation Leadership - Linda Smiley
- Historically Sensitive Contractor/Builder - Brad Kutcher (386 High Street)
- Historically Sensitive Contractor/Builder - Mark Wojcicki (386 High Street)
- Exterior Restoration - Paul & Patricia Henault (owners) (7 Marlboro Street)
- Exterior Restoration - Dodge & Dodge General Contractors (contractors) (7 Marlboro Street) ■



Above is a city-approved “one-structure”(!) multi-unit development on Lime Street that has prompted proposed zoning amendments.

‘Addition’ points out zoning loopholes

An incongruous addition has prompted efforts by the Newburyport City Council to close loopholes in the city zoning ordinance.

The renovation and new development at 77 Lime Street has brought into question what constitutes “a building.” The photo at left shows what appears to be two separate buildings in two styles on one lot. They are joined only by what is indicated in plans as

a narrow “storage connector.” Yet our city zoning board interpreted the entire mass to be “one structure” and permitted the plan.

On May 11, Ward 2 Councillor Jared Eigerman introduced a zoning amendment to clarify that, as regards multi-family structures, “a building” should mean no fewer than two rooms of habitable space share a common wall, floor, or ceiling, with no fewer than two rooms in the other dwelling unit in the same building.

The amendment is now in the council’s Planning & Development subcommittee. ■

It’s game time!

(...with apologies to *Where’s Waldo*.)

Can you find the missing original c. 1800 chimneys in the “new-and-improved” alteration at far right?

Can you find the same chimneys that the developers, when presenting their plans before the Newburyport Historical Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals – promised to save?

ORIGINAL c. 1800 BRICK CHIMNEYS



Hint: At the far right of the photo, you’ll see – drum-roll here – a dumpster.

Bonus points: Can you find the Stop Work Order? Can you find *any* Stop Work Order?





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Another historic building lost: 1846 firehouse succumbs to the weight of snow... and other forces

City's new pro-preservation zoning laws will never save any historic buildings if the laws are never enforced

Another "test case" of Newburyport's new pro-preservation zoning laws, adopted to some fanfare in April 2014, never made it to a vote on February 24. A demolition order was issued for the 1846 brick structure at 114 Merrimac Street on the day prior to the hearing on its future before the city's Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA).

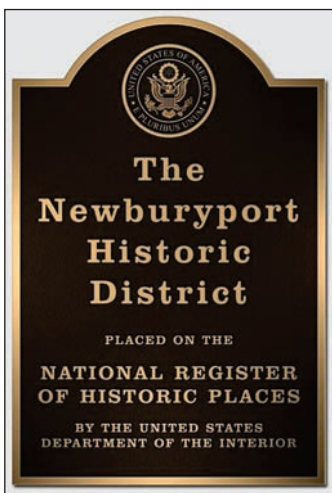
The building, the former Deluge No. 1 firehouse and a contributing structure in Newburyport's National Register Historic District, was the subject of an oft-continued public hearing before the ZBA – until a roof collapse on Feb. 23 rendered it a public safety hazard. The vacant and long-neglected building was demolished upon order from the city building inspector Thursday, Feb. 26.

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A "demolition-by-neglect"? At right is 114 Merrimac Street in summer 2014. Below was the scene on Thursday, Feb. 26, 2015. After years of "deferred maintenance," a section of the roof collapsed under the heavy snow. The compromised structure was then deemed a public safety hazard, and its demolition was ordered by the city. (Photo by Tom Kolterjahn)



Signs of the Times?: This year's theme is infused with multiple meanings



The theme for 2015 Preservation Week: 'Signs of the Times'

Mark your calendar now for May 12-17, 2015 events

Planning has intensified for Preservation Week 2015, scheduled for Tuesday through Sunday, May 12-17, at sites throughout Newburyport. This year's theme is "Signs of the Times," referencing the new National Register District Signs, the new NPT Historic House Plaque program, and the apparent pro-preservation sentiment of Newburyport voters at the ballot box.

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At the far right is one of five signs to be installed this year indicating Newburyport's National Register Historic District. Below left is a sign from NPT's new Historic House Plaque program. Above left are members of the Newburyport City Council that unanimously passed two new pro-preservation zoning ordinances in April 2014. Three of the pro-preservation city councillors were newly-elected the previous November.

Another historic building falls to 'natural causes'

Continued from page 1

The long drawn-out story in brief: In June 2014 prospective owners began seeking approval to demolish 114-118 Merrimac St. and construct a two-family home on the lot, located at the bottom of the Rte. 1 exit ramp at one of the city's busiest intersections. Sale of the property, still owned by Anita Kumari – Mr. India Restaurant was the most recent occupant of the building – was to be contingent upon approval of multiple permits from the city.

In June 2014, after two public hearings, the Newburyport Historical Commission voted unanimously that the building should be preserved, and noted in its report the non-maintenance of the vacant structure.

The applicants, represented by local attorney Lisa Mead, appeared before the ZBA eight times between June 2014 and February 2015, most times to request continuance. Plans were presented on September 16. The position of the applicants was that the property, in its long-neglected condition, no longer had any reasonable value or use, and demolition was the only

At right is the snow on the roof at 114 Merrimac Street that led to the partial roof collapse and eventual demise of the 1846 structure. (Linda Smiley photo)



option. Considerable opposition was heard, including from numerous NPT members. Some opposition included the assertion of the property's historical significance. This assertion merely served as a reminder, since all contributing structures within the city's National Register Historic District are, *on paper at least*, protected from demolition by the city's new Demolition Control Overlay District (DCOD) and Downtown Overlay District (DOD) ordinances.

Finally on Oct. 21 the Newburyport Zoning Board of Appeals exercised the right bestowed by law to engage an *independent* structural engineer, construction estimator, and real estate appraiser, paid for by the applicant, to render objective opinions on the value of the property and feasibility of preservation. Engaging these independent consultants took many weeks.

The most recent continuance was Feb. 3, which extended proceedings to the Feb. 24

meeting, at which time the applicants were to contest the structural engineer's favorable report on the building, and emphasize negative aspects of the appraiser's report.

But at the 11th hour on Feb. 23, Mother Nature, aided by years of apparent abandonment of the building, took over. The partial collapse of the roof created a hazard to human activity along the Rte. 1 exit ramp, and the building had to come down. Therefore there was no need for discussion or vote on demolition at the Feb. 24 meeting. The Zoning Board of Appeals missed out on an opportunity to show its backbone in enforcing the city's zoning laws.

(The city's new pro-preservation zoning ordinances address "demolition-by-neglect," but there has yet to be any enforcement.)

Attention turned to the special permits needed to build the two-family structure according to a plan that involves a drive-through garage in which cars would enter on Merrimac Street and exit out the back onto Mass. Dept. of Transportation property and turn onto the Rte. 1 off-ramp. In keeping with the project's history so far, the hearing on the special permits for this project is continued to the Zoning Board of Appeals meeting of April 14, 2015. ■

Yes, this is indeed the winter issue ...

... although it is later than usual as we held out for any late-breaking news on NPT preservation advocacy efforts. Preserved Newburyport is still visible this winter: Beyond the snowbank below is the Charles Bulfinch designed courthouse (1805) on High Street.



Preservation Week 2015: 'Signs of the Times'

Continued from page 1

Featured this year will be an exhibition at the Custom House Maritime Museum detailing the Historic American Building Survey (HABS) of Newburyport's restored 1822 Powder House. Other highlights

include tours, lecture programs, and the annual Preservation Awards ceremony recognizing projects undertaken by preservation-sensitive property owners and exemplary preservation craftsmen.

Mark your calendar now for Tuesday through Sunday, May 12-17, 2015, keep an eye out for the latest developing details, and plan to join us for the tours and activities of Preservation Week 2015. ■

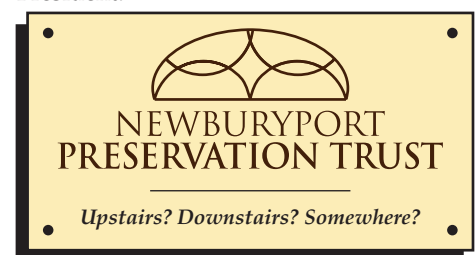
NPT seeks to share downtown office space for efficiency & increased public visibility

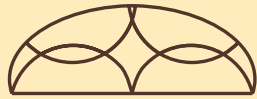
In an effort to gain greater public visibility, streamline work, and consolidate archives, the Newburyport Preservation Trust is looking for office space in or near downtown Newburyport.

We need one room with access to a half-bath. It needs to be accessible to the public from the street, but can be on a lower or upper floor. This prospective office room rental needs to be very inexpensive and have no lease. We are also looking for members, non-members, or businesses who would like to support our moving into office space by donating a month's rent (or more) for a tax write-off. Since NPT will not use the office for full-time hours, another

small non-profit or business with similar small office needs could be a co-tenant.

If you can help NPT in this quest, contact Linda Miller, NPT Co-President, with your ideas, information, and suggestions at 978-462-9079. Thanks! – Linda Miller, NPT Co-President. ■





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Fall 2014

Public visibility on the rise at the Powder House with public events, school visits, and HABS survey

Landscaping work also in progress this fall

Newburyport's restored 1822 Powder House continues to gather increased public notice this season, thanks to school visits, well-publicized public events, and finally, the end-of-the-season finishing touches of landscaping work at the Low Street site.

Six groups of middle-school students enjoyed educational programs at the Powder House in the spring, and since the grounds of the Powder House Park & Learning Center is open to the public from spring through the fall, history enthusiasts of all ages availed themselves of self-guided tours enhanced by interpretive panels that describe the useful functional life of the Powder House through the years. In May, guided tours of the Powder House were featured during the NPT's annual Preservation Week.

Also in the spring, the team of graduate students from Boston Architectural College wrapped up its comprehensive project for the National Parks Service's Historic American Building Survey (HABS) report. The report, under the direction of the school's Director of Historic Preservation Robert W. Ogle and faculty member Johanna Rowley, includes measured

At right, Tom Kolterjahn, in period garb, introduces a group of students to the Powder House Park & Learning Center at the Godfrey's Hill site off Low Street, Newburyport. Below right, landscaping begins in earnest at the Powder House, after clearance from the Massachusetts Historical Commission and the state's Executive Office of Public Safety & Security.



drawings, photo studies, and historic research reports. The report has been presented to the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., taking its place alongside HABS reports on over 38,000 historic structures throughout the U.S. The archives are housed at the Prints and Photographs Division.

More recently, the Powder House has been featured among the destinations of the

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NPT annual meeting date & location imminent

The annual meeting of the Newburyport Preservation Trust will be in October ... on some Sunday date ... at some Newburyport location yet to be determined. That determination is imminent, so watch for NPT e-mail news notification, then join us for the usual business, elections, and the latest news on NPT activities. ■

NPT loses appeal contesting city's ruling at 59-61 Bromfield St., but sends message that preservation advocates are watching

Preservation advocacy advanced to first priority during the summer of 2014, as the Newburyport Preservation Trust pursued a formal appeal of the city building commissioner's decision to not enforce permitting regulations on a project at 59-61 Bromfield Street in Newburyport.

NPT's request for enforcement by Building Inspector Gary Calderwood and the Zoning Board of Appeals was based on the belief that a partial demolition of the 1810 structure was undertaken that went beyond what was authorized in the original building permit (i.e. demolition of two rear additions).

For relief, NPT asked the ZBA to provide guidance to the building commissioner so that future demolitions would comply with the relevant city board public hearings, approvals, and permitting required by law.

Continued on page 2

At right is 59-61 Bromfield St. Demolition beyond what was authorized in the original building permit was the subject of NPT's ZBA appeal. (Photo by Tom Kolterjahn)



No ruling on demolition of 1846 firehouse until Zoning Board engages its own experts

The Newburyport Zoning Board of Appeals, after a two-hour hearing on a request for full demolition of the 1846 brick structure at 114 Merrimac Street, decided to call upon the expertise of independent consultants before voting on the matter.

The option to engage independent professionals to assess the feasibility of preservation in the face of a demolition request is a provision of the new demolition control ordinances passed by the City Council in April 2014. This was the ZBA's first exercise of that option.

At the September 16 hearing in City Hall Auditorium, six individuals spoke in opposition to the demolition request, including three members of the NPT board. No one except the applicant's lawyer and architect spoke in favor of the demolition – or the proposed residential project.

The building, a contributing structure within Newburyport's National Register Historic District, and one of the city's first fire stations, was most recently the site of Mr. India Restaurant, and has been unoccupied for over 900 days. The owner's sale to a



couple who plan to build a two-family home on the busy corner is contingent on the city's permission to demolish the structure.

After weighing information from its consultants, the ZBA will render a decision at a future meeting in October or November. ■

Historic house program seeks coordinator(s)

The Newburyport Preservation Trust (NPT) is seeking two coordinators for a new initiative to provide plaques for historic homes. The purpose of the program is to research, promote and ensure that more historic homes in Newburyport display an accurate informational plaque regarding the structure. Specific goals are:

- to engage more homeowners in public appreciation of their historic homes,
- to educate locals and visitors about the treasure trove of historic homes in Newburyport, and
- to promote the NPT as an educational resource about historic homes.

The role of the coordinator is to receive requests from homeowners, ascertain what information is required, coordinate contact with a house information researcher, and ensure that payment is made and the plaque is delivered. This is an opportunity to visit historic homes in Newburyport and get to know their proud owners.

As this is a new initiative, the workload is unpredictable. If requests mount up, NPT would solicit additional coordinators. If you are interested in the historic house sign project and would like to volunteer as a coordinator, please contact NPT co-president Linda Miller at (978) 462-9079. ■

NPT loses appeal, but makes firm statement

Continued from page 1

The lengthy hearing on August 12 at Newburyport City Hall featured a well-prepared presentation by NPT, supporting testimony from the Historical Commission, extensive public comment in support of the

appeal, a blustery performance by the building owner's lawyer, and deliberations by a zoning board still working to master the new pro-preservation ordinances.

Ultimately the board voted 4-1 to deny the appeal, stating in the written decision that the building commissioner was within his authority in ordering the additional demolition under the existing permit. ■

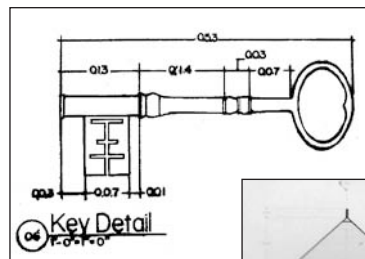
Powder House park makes its mark

Continued from page 1

annual Trails & Sails events coordinated by the Essex National Heritage Area. In addition to guided tours, Sunday, Sept. 21 featured demonstrations by master cooper Ron Raiselis. Sunday, Sept. 28 (10 a.m. - 4 p.m.) features a Civil War encampment, with musket-firings at 1:30 and 2:30 p.m.

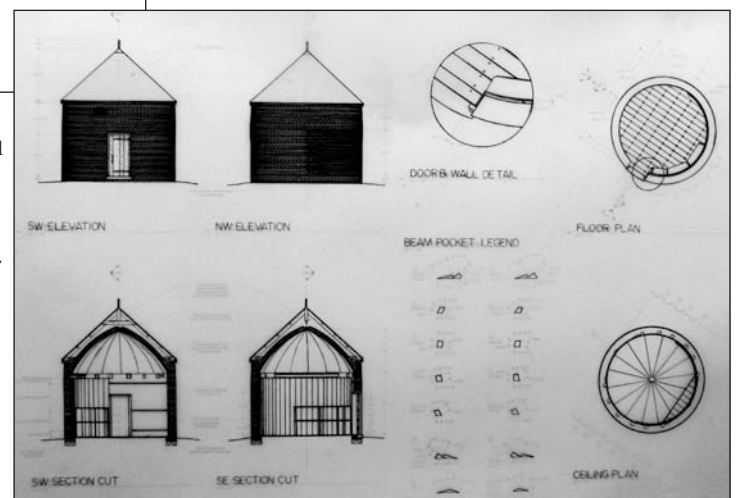
In the next few weeks, passersby will notice even more activity at the Powder House, as clearance for final landscaping work was received from the Massachusetts Historical Commission and the Massachusetts Executive Office of Public Safety & Security – Military Division.

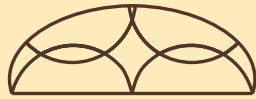
Powder House Park & Learning Center has been a long-term restoration supported by NPT, under the direction of co-chairmen Tom Kolterjahn and Karen Holt. ■



At top right is the team from Boston Architectural College that conducted the Historic American Building Survey (HABS) of the Powder House, with (at far right) Powder House co-chairman Tom Kolterjahn.

At immediate right and above are some of the detailed drawings from the survey, which are now at the Library of Congress Prints & Photographs Division.





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Quarterly Newsletter of the Newburyport Preservation Trust

Summer 2014

Talk is cheap: Newburyport Preservation Trust acts to appeal inaction on 59-61 Bromfield St. demolition

Hearing before city's Zoning Board of Appeals set for August 12, 2014

The Newburyport Preservation Trust has appealed the decision of city Building Commissioner Gary Calderwood *not to enforce* the city's demolition ordinance at the c. 1810 Federal-era house at 59-61 Bromfield Street.

The city's Zoning Board of Appeals will hold a public hearing on the appeal at 7:15 p.m., Tuesday, Aug. 12, 2014 at Newburyport City Hall.

NPT's request for enforcement was the result of the developer's demolition and reconstruction exceeding what was permitted by the Newburyport Historical Commission in August 2013.

On August 1, 2013, the owner and developer received permission from the Historical Commission (NHC) to demolish two rear additions to the building. NPT's request for enforcement on May 5, 2014 stated: "Since then, at least two-thirds of the main structure has been removed or replaced. ...We believe the owner violated the building demolition ordinance by exceeding the limit of the permit he gained under that statute. He did not have NHC approval to demolish the main structure."

Building Commissioner Calderwood did not respond to the request for enforcement within the prescribed 14 days. In a later written response dated June 3, he explained that on October 7, 2013 the developer "voiced his concerns over the collapsing foundation and the complete disintegration of the sill beams and wall studding. At that time, I ordered him to bring the structural integrity back to the structure as needed, to be in compliance with the Building Code. ... I am going to stop at this time as I have

Continued on page 2



Jumping through the usual loopholes. At left is 59-61 Bromfield St. after interior gutting in November 2013. (Photo by R.W. Bacon) At right is 59-61 Bromfield St. in May 2014, after the developer encountered structural issues and was allowed to proceed with demolition and new construction. (Photo by Tom Kolterjahn)

Hearing for demolition of 1846 firehouse will be Sept. 9 at Newburyport City Hall

On Tuesday, Sept. 9 at 7:15 p.m., the Newburyport Zoning Board of Appeals will consider an application for the full demolition of the 1846-1865 Deluge No. 1 firehouse building – more recently known as the Mr. India location at 114 Merrimac St.

The applicants are prospective buyers – as in the previous application under the city's new demolition control ordinance, the sale is contingent upon permission to demolish the building and construct a two-family house.

Continued on page 2



At right is a current view of the building at 114 Merrimac Street, originally built in 1846 as the Deluge No. 1 firehouse. Above is an early 20th-century photo showing its commercial use. (Photo at right by R.W. Bacon)



Stand up for saving Deluge No. 1 building

Continued from page 1

The applicants, represented by Atty. Lisa Mead, first went before the Newburyport Historical Commission on June 5, 2014. The written research report by the applicants' architects was riddled with errors, including the date of the building. The argument for demolition is based upon conditions like standing water in the basement, mold, and other factors commonly attributed to "demolition by neglect," as the building has been unoccupied for more than 600 days. The report also went to great lengths to argue that the building was not historically or architecturally significant, which revealed a misunderstanding of contributing structures within a National Register Historic District. As soon as the "experts" realized their blunders, a 14-page addendum was submitted on June 19 to rewrite their understanding of the building's history.

The Historical Commission's advisory report to the Zoning Board of Appeals on July 11 determined the building to be "in no worse condition than those successfully

rehabilitated in downtown Newburyport in the 1970s." The Historical Commission voted to recommend that the ZBA deny a Demolition Control Overlay District Demolition Special Permit.

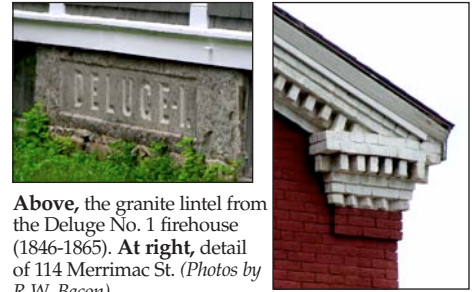
Join your fellow NPT members at Newburyport City Hall on Tuesday, Sept. 9 at 7:15 p.m. to support the preservation of this 1846 contributing structure in the city's National Register Historic District.

NPT appeals ruling; seeks enforcement of laws

Continued from page 1

other duties to attend to ..." The response included his interpretation of structural deficiencies and the developer's remedies.

NPT's formal 36-point appeal was filed July 3. The appeal states that the non-enforcement allowed "serial partial demolitions of the historical parts of the building without reapplying for additional demolition permits," and that "the wrongful demolition of a historically significant building needlessly harms the Newburyport National Register District and diminishes regard for the ordinances and public policies



Above, the granite lintel from the Deluge No. 1 firehouse (1846-1865). At right, detail of 114 Merrimac St. (Photos by R.W. Bacon)

of the city intended to protect it."

In the body of a "news" article in the Newburyport Daily News on July 9, the writer opined "It was an unusual move by the Trust, which is a local nonprofit that primarily focuses on highlighting the city's architectural heritage through lectures and its Preservation Week events held in May."

Standing up for principles usually requires action in addition to talk. In this instance the NPT board also decided the case was worthy of opening its checkbook.

Join NPT members at City Hall on Tuesday evening, Aug. 12, at 7:15 p.m., to support enforcement of our laws to protect historic neighborhoods and architectural assets.

– R.W. Bacon

Zoning Board of Appeals hears first demolition application under Newburyport's new demolition control ordinance

ZBA wrestles with details, but approves demolition of 1875 Collins Street house

All eyes were on the Newburyport Zoning Board of Appeals on July 8 at City Hall for the first demolition application hearing under the provisions of the new Demolition Control Overlay District ordinance passed unanimously by the Newburyport City Council on April 15.

In a hearing that lasted over two hours, the board appeared not quite comfortable administering the new regulations, which are intended to prevent demolition of contributing structures within the city's National Register Historic District.

Ultimately the board voted unanimously to allow demolition of a contributing structure, an 1875 home at 24 Collins Street, to make way for construction of a new two-family home on the large lot.

Interesting to note is that the applicant requesting permission to demolish the single-family home was not the property owner, but a prospective buyer with a development plan for a two-family house.

The argument for demolition, presented by Atty. Mark Griffin, included (1) the usual expert-for-hire statements that the structure is beyond repair, (2) hypothetical financial figures that ignored the valuation standard of the ordinance, (3) the plea that the vacant and exposed building cannot be maintained, (4) a petition indicating neighborhood support, and (5) the opinion that the building has "not much historic significance."

The board elected *not* to follow the recommendations of the Historical Commission to deny the application. Earlier, the board also elected *not* to exercise its right to call in its own independent preservation consultant (to be paid for by the applicant), as permitted in the ordinance. Despite those decisions, and the outcome, some board members insisted that the case should not be viewed as precedent-setting.

Words not necessary ...

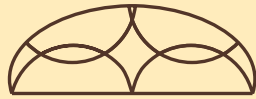
Built about 1875.

Designated as a contributing structure, Newburyport National Register Historic District, in 1984.

Approved for demolition in 2014.



Photos by R.W. Bacon



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Quarterly Newsletter of the Newburyport Preservation Trust

Spring 2014

Preservation zoning laws passed: Demolition control finally in place throughout National Register District

NPT documentation & advocacy efforts – plus member support – contributed to passage

April 15 is not usually a date to celebrate, but it was this spring, when the Newburyport City Council voted into law two pro-preservation zoning ordinances that offer unprecedented protections to contributing structures throughout the city's National Register Historic District.

The votes to approve the Downtown Overlay District and the Demolition Control Overlay District – both proposed by first-term Ward 2 councilor Jared Eigerman, were unanimous. Newburyport Mayor Donna Holaday signed the ordinances into law the next day.

An assist from NPT. During the three-month process leading up to the passage of the new ordinances, several councilors cited assistance of the Newburyport Preservation Trust in confirming the accuracy of the National Historic District survey records compiled for the U.S. Department of the Interior in 1984. In addition, NPT board and members alike supported passage of the ordinances with letters, e-mails, and comment at numerous public hearings.

What the laws do. The Downtown Overlay District (DOD) ordinance replaces and expands preservation protections for the downtown business district that expired in 2005. The protections include design review and demolition control. The Demolition Control Overlay District (DCOD) covers contributing structures listed in the National Register Historic District, which extends from the Joppa neighborhood in the South End to Atkinson Common in the North End, roughly between the Merrimack River and High Street. Approximately 2500

'On the same page' for historic preservation. The Newburyport City Council is all smiles after the "historic" unanimous vote on pro-preservation zoning ordinances on April 15. Left to right: Charlie Tontar, Bob Cronin, Larry Giunta, Ed Cameron, Tom O'Brien, Allison Heartquist, Bruce Vogel, Barry Connell, Ari Herzog, and Jared Eigerman. Not pictured is Megan Kinsey, who was part of the March 31 unanimous vote. (Photo by Novak Niketic)



contributing historic structures (1930 or earlier) were identified in the survey of 1984. Complete text of the new ordinances, with maps, is available on the Planning Department page at the city's web site, www.CityofNewburyport.com. (Click on "Recent Zoning Amendments.")

Coming right up: A full schedule for Preservation Week May 14-18, 2014

Preservation Week, the signature annual event of the Newburyport Preservation Trust (NPT) is Wednesday through Sunday, May 14-18, 2014. This year Preservation Week celebrates the 250th anniversary of the town of Newbury's "Waterside" separating into the new town of Newburyport in 1764. This year is also the 30th anniversary of Newburyport's designation as a National Register Historic District.

Preservation Week features a varied program of illustrated lectures, architectural tours, social events, and a closing reception to present the annual Preservation Awards. For a complete schedule of this year's Preservation Week activities, visit the NPT web site at www.NbptPreservationTrust.org.

The new ordinances also change the procedure for the demolition application and permitting process, as decision-making authority will rest with the city's Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals. The Historical Commission, which administered the now-superseded one-year demolition delay ordinance, will now serve both boards in an advisory role.

Significant in the ordinances is reliance on the best-practices in the architectural preservation field as set forth by the U.S. Department of the Interior.

It was a long time coming. The following overview is provided to supplement the depth of local news coverage:

1971. A few years after the 1960s urban renewal wrecking ball was halted, and the city turned to restoration of its downtown instead of demolition, the Market Square National Register Historic District was designated. At the same time, support mounted to protect the downtown and High Street as a Local Historic District. Even then, an LHD was already a proven approach to protecting historic architecture and streetscapes. Despite considerable public support, the measure did not attain the super-majority vote of the City Council.

In 1984, several years of research and documentation resulted in the central Newburyport area from Joppa to Atkinson Common being designated by the U.S.

Continued on page 2

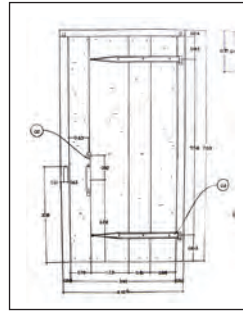
Powder House report destined for archives at Library of Congress

Formal presentation of the Newburyport Powder House Historic American Building Survey (HABS) report to the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. is imminent. Last fall, students from Boston Architectural College, under the direction of Robert W. Ogle, the school's Director of Historic Preservation, and Johanna Rowley of the BAC faculty, documented the restored 1822 Powder House through measured drawings, photo studies, and historic research reports.

The HABS program, which began in 1933, has archived over 38,000 historic structures from throughout the U.S. Today the HABS program is administered by the National Parks Service, with its archives housed at the Prints and Photographs Division of the U.S. Library of Congress.



The HABS report on the Powder House includes measured drawings by BAC students.



In other Powder House news:

- Six school groups are scheduled to visit before the end of the school year.
- Tours during Preservation Week will be Saturday, May 17, 1-3 p.m., with musket-firing demonstrations at 1:30 and 2:30 p.m.
- The Cobblestone & Brick Location Plan, completed by NPT volunteer (and surveyor) Everett Chandler, has been presented to the Massachusetts Historical Commission, an important step in clearing the way for the upper landscaping at the Powder House.

Have a sneak preview of NPT's newest project: Historic House Signs

Among the latest initiatives of the Newburyport Preservation Trust is a Historic House Sign program that will at once be (1) a service to interested homeowners, (2) a way to increase awareness of our city's remarkable domestic architecture of many periods, (3) a way to increase awareness of architectural preservation, and (4) a way to increase NPT's public visibility.

Details of the program are far from refined to a finished state. Basically an interested homeowner would engage NPT to research (or verify) the history of the house, and once confirmed, produce a durable historic house sign of uniform design – with the NPT logo – ready for mounting. Cost of the research-and-sign combination has not been determined. In addition to increasing awareness of the city's historic homes, the program will also serve as a continuing fund-raiser for NPT.

As the program takes shape, more details will be available on the NPT web site.

City Council unanimous on pro-preservation zoning

Continued from page 1

Department of the Interior as a National Register Historic District. As the largest such district in Massachusetts (7500 acres), the designation was a point of pride, but it offered little in the way of protection from wholesale changes or demolition.

In 1991, the city completed its Historic Preservation Plan. Recommended as a key component of this long-range plan was the establishment of a Local Historic District.

In 2001, the city finished a comprehensive Master Plan. Recommended for the preservation of historic architecture was the establishment of a Local Historic District.

In 2007, a Local Historic District Study Committee of citizens was appointed by the mayor to begin the procedure to establish an LHD in Newburyport according to state law. For five years the committee took surveys, held hearings, and crafted a minimally-restrictive LHD based on public input.

In 2012, misinformation about the proposed LHD created such a divisive atmosphere that even a shrunken, watered-down LHD did not attain the required super-majority (8 of 11) vote of the City Council in January 2013.

In fall 2013, the preservation issue was one of many on the minds of voters in the municipal elections. An LHD opposition group promoted a slate of candidates for mayor and council. Not one was elected.

In early 2014, shortly after the new City Council was seated, the preservation zoning ordinances were proposed by newly-elected Ward 2 Councilor Jared Eigerman.

The newly-constituted City Council worked together, studied the proposals, received civilized public comment, held joint public hearings with the Planning Board, and refined the ordinances in preparation for a vote. Votes on March 31 and April 15 were unanimous.

While the new zoning ordinances are worthy of celebration, the preservation of our historic architecture and streetscapes requires constant attention. The city's zoning laws are slated for overhaul, and its Master Plan is being revised. Vigilant representation of preservation interests is vital. Meanwhile, the usual players will continue to look for loopholes in regulations, and those with deep pockets will still try to prevail through the appeals process. That's old news. As everywhere, life goes on. And in civilized places around the world, so do worthy efforts to preserve architectural and cultural treasures.

– R.W. Bacon

Words not necessary ...

Going ... going ... and almost gone.

Built about 1750.
Neglected, stripped, and set for demolition in 2014.




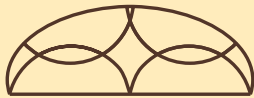




Photo by Tom Kolterjahn *Photos by Novak Niketic*



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Quarterly Newsletter of the Newburyport Preservation Trust

Winter 2013/14

Downtown Newburyport's deteriorating brickwork needs attention 40 years after the first restoration effort

No, the sky isn't falling, but downtown bricks might be falling soon without proper repairs

Over 40 years ago, the restoration of downtown Newburyport's early-19th-century brick buildings earned well-deserved praise. But as anyone who has survived over 40 years in this life knows, with the passage of time there are usually some "trouble spots" that need attention. So it is with our downtown brickwork.

Deteriorating downtown brickwork has been on the radar of the Newburyport Preservation Trust for several years. NPT routinely distributes information on the maintenance of historic masonry, and has frequently engaged the region's most expert restoration masons for both educational programs during Preservation Week, and for work on the restoration of the 1822 Powder House on Low Street.

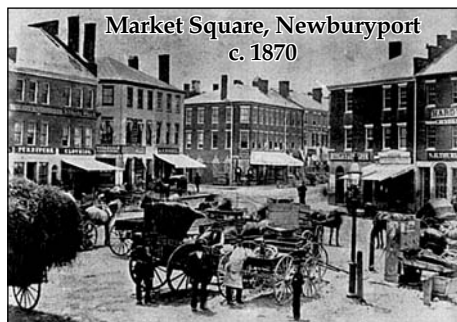
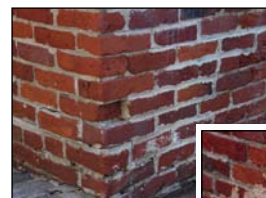


Photo documentation of downtown "trouble spots" in recent years shows clear evidence of deterioration – and evidence of less-than-ideal repairs (... to phrase it gently.) (See the accompanying photos and captions.)

One central issue with downtown Newburyport's brickwork is the unadvised use of Portland cement instead of lime mortar when repointing joints and seams between bricks. Use of proper mortar is critical to the continued survival of historic bricks. In masonry, the mortar not only holds the joints together, but also provides the porosity that releases moisture through



At left is a crude repair attempt with Portland cement, in a photo taken in 2008.

At right, a recent repair made a bad situation worse, as seen in this 2013 photo.



Above, this building only *looks* like it's smiling. Mortar has fallen out, allowing moisture to penetrate into the wall. Subsequent freeze-and-thaw cycles will cause further damage.

a wall or chimney. The guiding principle is that the mortar joints should be "softer" than the material the joints support. Since our city's early 19th-century bricks are softer and more porous than modern bricks, a softer mortar must be used to ensure that moisture can escape. When the much harder Portland cement (a hard-fired combination of limestone, clay, and gypsum introduced in the U.S. from England in the 1870s) is used around older bricks, the moisture is trapped, then forced into the soft brick. Over time this results in the old bricks spalling, or peeling away in chunks. Historic brickwork requires a softer "high-lime" mortar, a mix of ground limestone and sand, which allows both movement without damage and the transmission/release of moisture.

Other ill-advised "repairs" that actually accelerate the deterioration of historic brick include grinding out old mortar joints with

Continued on page 2

Two celebrations for Preservation Week 2014: Newburyport's 250th & Historic District's 30th

Preservation Week, the signature annual event of the Newburyport Preservation Trust (NPT) will be Wednesday through Sunday, May 14-18, 2014.

The theme in 2014 is one of multiple anniversary celebration, so NPT members are advised to mark calendars now and get those party hats-and-horns ready. The year 2014 is the 250th anniversary of the town of Newbury's "Waterside" separating into the new town of Newburyport in 1754. The year 2014 also happens to be the 30th anniversary of Newburyport's designation as a National Register Historic District by the U.S. Department of the Interior.

Newburyport's National Register Historic District, comprised of over 2500 contributing buildings when first designated in 1984, extends from the Joppa area of the city's South End to Atkinson Common at the city's North End. Within the 7500-acre district are 10 neighborhood districts.

Each year in the spring, NPT's Preservation Week features a varied program of illustrated lectures, architectural tours, social events, and a closing reception to present the annual Preservation Awards. For the latest information about Preservation Week 2014 as it draws closer, visit www.NbptPreservationTrust.org.

At right, at least this brick wall does not suffer the damage from Portland cement.



The good news is that this earnest repair, with silicon caulk, is reversible.

Deteriorating brickwork ...

Continued from page 1

a carbide-tipped grinding wheel instead of by hand, and sandblasting that obliterates the outer “fireskin” layer of old bricks.

Information on proper maintenance of historic masonry is readily available. The Newburyport Historical Commission offers a free downloadable guide on the subject that even includes recommended formulas for mixing lime mortar. (www.cityofnewburyport.com/historical.../nhcs-advisory-on-lime-mortar) Further afield, but just a few mouse-clicks away, are free U.S. government publications on the proper care of historic masonry. (<http://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs/2-repoint-mortar-joints.htm>) Awareness of this information – and perhaps carrot-or-stick incentives to use it – will help property owners and contractors stay on the path of responsible stewardship of our city’s assets.

In 2014 the Newburyport Preservation Trust aims to ensure, through advocacy and education, that the preservation of our downtown brickwork receives the attention it deserves. The restoration of our downtown 40-plus years ago became a point of pride in Newburyport and fueled its renaissance that continues today. Our city’s assets should not be allowed to crumble right before us.

– R.W. Bacon

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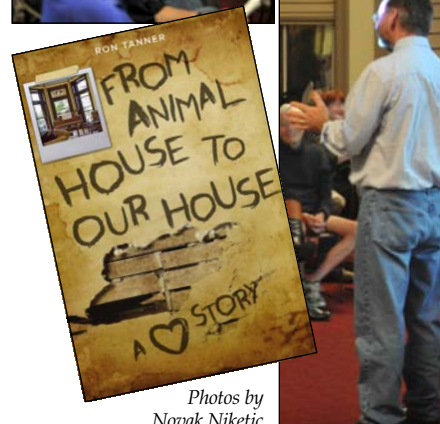
Preservation project author draws SRO crowd – and keeps ‘em laughing

The Newburyport Preservation Trust hosted author/preservationist Ron Tanner on October 17, 2013, co-sponsoring a free program at the Newburyport Public Library: “From Animal House to Our House.”

The crowd heard Tanner’s comical-but-true story of how he and his wife bought condemned property – a wrecked former fraternity house in Baltimore, Md. – and restored it to its original Victorian splendor.

Ron & Jill Tanner knew nothing about fixing up houses when they started, but their work reclaiming the 19th-century inner-city brownstone led to a feature in *This Old House* magazine, and later to Ron Tanner’s book, *From Animal House to Our House: A Love Story*, published in 2012.

Promotion of the book evolved to include Tanner’s comic monologue accompanying his slide show of “hilarious and harrowing” restoration adventures – a subject that resonates with many NPT members.



Photos by Novak Niketic

A few words from JFK about preservation

“I look forward to an America which will not be afraid of grace and beauty, which will protect the beauty of our natural environment, which will preserve the great old American houses and squares and parks of our national past, and which will build handsome and balanced cities for our future.”

– President John F. Kennedy
October 26, 1963

NPT member Michael Sales alerted us to this preservation reference in a speech by the late President John F. Kennedy at Amherst (Mass.) College on October 26, 1963. The

occasion was a ceremony honoring the poet Robert Frost (1874-1963), and the above excerpt is from the President’s remarks on the place of art and culture in American life.

Powder House update

Powder House Park is closed for the season, but work continues on the Historic American Building Survey by Boston Architectural College students. Fall Trails & Sails events were well attended, landscape planning continues, and the warmth generated by the national preservation award from AASLH will last all winter.

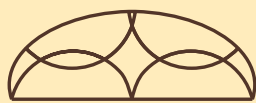
Words not necessary ... Built c. 1810. Guttled 2013.

Newburyport National Historic Register District Documentation Photo, 1980.



November 2013 photo.





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Quarterly Newsletter of the Newburyport Preservation Trust

Fall 2013

Powder House restoration project wins national award from American Association for State & Local History

Award ceremony at AASLH conference in Birmingham, Alabama

The Newburyport Preservation Trust's efforts to preserve the city's formerly crumbling 1822 Powder House have been recognized with an Award of Merit from the American Association for State & Local History (AASLH).

The award for the Powder House preservation is one of 88 Leadership in History Awards conferred this year by AASLH, honoring people, projects, exhibits, books, and organizations that represent the best work in their respective fields. Project co-chair Karen Holt of Newburyport, who has worked with co-chair Tom Kolterjahn on the project, will accept the award at a ceremony at the AASLH Annual Meeting on Sept. 20 in Birmingham, Alabama.



Powder House preservation. Planning for the Powder House Park and Learning Center, located on Godfrey's Hill off Low Street, Newburyport, began in 2003, with the small committee devoting the first several years to research – and to navigating necessary administrative and procedural processes. Physical restoration of the distinctive 60-foot diameter building began in earnest in 2009, and the Powder House opened with a formal dedication ceremony in fall 2012. Since then, the site has welcomed hundreds of visitors at Trails & Sails events, at a Yankee Homecoming

Open House, and in hosting numerous school group visits. While restoration of the building is complete, work remains to be done on the grounds, including a detailed survey of the original cobblestone wagon path, and park landscaping.

A brief history of the Powder House. The 1822 Powder House, built in the aftermath of the War of 1812, and located a safe distance from homes of the era, was used to store gunpowder, flints, musket balls, and camp kettles used by the local militia. In those years every town was required to maintain a militia and a safe place to store munitions. Research has determined that gunpowder from the newly-established DuPont de Nemours Co. in Delaware was shipped to Newburyport via coastal schooners. Gunpowder served many purposes beyond defense, as it was useful for road and canal building, land clearing, quarrying, and bridge-building. Newburyport's Powder House was well-used during the Civil War, but fell into disuse in the latter decades of the 19th century. After nearly a century of

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Visit the Powder House at Trails & Sails Sept. 22 & 29

Visit and see the award-winning Powder House restoration on September 22 & 29 as part of the county-wide Trails & Sails events coordinated by Essex National Heritage. Learn about the role of the 1822 Powder House, enjoy a tour, and on Sept. 22, see a Civil War encampment and watch a master cooper at work. Admission is free. (The Powder House was a Trails & Sails "Peoples Choice" award winner in 2012.) Powder House Park is at Godfrey's Hill off Low St., Newburyport, across from the Nock Middle School. Parking is at the school lot or the Newburyport Emergency Management lot.

Sunday, Sept. 22, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. (Musket firing demonstrations at 1:30 p.m. & 3:30 p.m.; Civil War encampment; keg-making demonstrations through the afternoon.)

Sunday, Sept. 29, 1 p.m. - 4 p.m. (Musket firing demonstrations at 1:30 p.m. & 3:30 p.m.)

Join us at our Annual Meeting Sunday, Oct. 6; NPT issues a call for additional board members

Join us at NPT's Annual Meeting on Sunday, Oct. 6, 4 p.m., at Powder House Park & Learning Center. You'll be able to get the latest reports on NPT activities, vote on new board members, and celebrate the national recognition of the Powder House.

NPT seeks additional board members. Each year The Newburyport Preservation Trust looks for new members to serve on its board of directors. The board oversees NPT activities and provides direction and strategy for the future. We seek board members with diverse backgrounds and skills. We now have eight board members,

and would like to increase it to nine. We ask that you, as members, look at your interests and those of others you know, and provide us with names of people you think are suitable for NPT board service.

Nominations will be taken until the end of September. The nomination committee will consider all, and present any selected at the NPT Annual Meeting on October 7 at Powder House Park & Learning Center, to be voted on by the members.

Nominations may be submitted by e-mail at npt@nbptpreservationtrust.org. Thank you for your thought and input.

HABS survey to begin this fall at Powder House

Measured drawings, photos, & research reports destined for Library of Congress

This fall Newburyport's 1822 Powder House will be the subject of a Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS), with the resulting documentation taking its place among surveys of America's architectural heritage at the U.S. Library of Congress.

The Powder House, which has been an ongoing restoration project of the Newburyport Preservation Trust, was selected for the study by Robert W. Ogle, Director of Historic Preservation at Boston Architectural College's School of Design Studies.

Throughout the fall semester, students from Boston Architectural College will document the Powder House through measured drawings, photo studies, and historic research reports. Johanna Rowley of the BAC faculty will direct the student team and manage the project.

Upon completion, the survey will be added to the permanent public domain HABS resources held at the U.S. Library of Congress. The survey will also be entered into competition for the Charles E. Peterson Prize, which recognizes student excellence in measured drawings created to HABS standards. Charles E. Peterson (1906-2004),

School groups visit Powder House Park & Learning Center

Since the opening of Powder House Park & Learning Center in September 2012, it has become a destination for school groups.



Above right is a visiting class from River Valley Charter School in Newburyport. At bottom center and far right, two students show their interpretations of the Powder House. At top center, RVCS student **Sonny Knight** returns to the Powder House after his school visit to donate a flint nodule and two musket balls. Receiving the donation is Powder House Committee Co-Chair **Tom Kolterjahn**.

conceived the HABS program in 1933, and is regarded as the founding father of the preservation architecture profession.

The Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) program began in the 1930s with the documentation of the country's earliest architectural heritage, and today comprises drawings, photos, and written reports on

over 38,000 historic structures across the U.S. Along with the Historic American Engineering Record (HAER) and the Historic American Landscapes Survey (HALS), the program is administered by the National Parks Service, with archives held by the Prints and Photographs Division of the Library of Congress.

Powder House award ...

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abandonment, overgrowth, and vandalism, the building received some attention as the 1976 Bicentennial approached. But a plaque alone did not repel the wind and water

from the deteriorating structure. It took the leadership of the Powder House Committee in more recent years to make the current state of preservation a reality.

About AASLH. The American Association for State and Local History awards program was initiated in 1945 to establish and encourage standards of excellence in the collection, preservation, and interpretation of state and local history throughout the United States. AASLH is a non-profit professional organization of individuals and institutions working to preserve and promote history. From its headquarters in Nashville, Tennessee, AASLH provides leadership, service, and support for its members who preserve and interpret state and local history in order to make the past more meaningful in American society. Especially valuable to professionals in the museum, history, and preservation fields, AASLH publishes books, technical publications, a quarterly magazine, and monthly newsletter. The association also sponsors regional and national training workshops and an annual meeting. For more information about AASLH, visit www.aaslh.org.

Words not necessary ...

R.I.P.:
The James Carey House (1823-2013)

