

## THE PRESERVATIONIST

NEWSLETTER OF  
THE SPRINGFIELD PRESERVATION TRUST

*Spring 1991*

### Special Events Blossom with the Coming of Spring



#### *Plans for Lectures, Newport Trip Underway*

In addition to the annual Spring House Tour, two other exciting events are shaping up for the spring months.

For those interested in local architecture and period furnishings, the Trust will be sponsoring lectures on these topics. A talk on the Craftsman style will be coinciding with our historical survey of the Pine Point neighborhood. As the Pine Point community contains the largest number of Craftsman style houses in the region, the Trust is delighted to highlight this distinctive style.

A second talk will focus on decorative arts from the first three decades of this century. More details will be available at a later date.

For those members who have always pined for

#### *House Tour Offers Architectural Sampler*

This spring, tour-goers will have the chance to sample the richness of Springfield's different architectural styles during the Trust's Annual House Tour. Set aside Sunday, April 28 from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. for this wonderful sampler.

Wending its way through the downtown historical districts, the tour will take visitors through five architecturally different homes. The most notable of these houses is the Mills-Stebbins Villa owned by Howard and Anita Goldberg in Maple Hill. This 1849 Italianate Villa is considered the city's finest example of 19th century residential architecture. In the Quadrangle-Mattoon Street area, an 1872 bowfront town house owned by Don and Cathy Heft will be open. These attractively-designed row houses, also known as the Second French Empire style, were very popular in major cities such as Boston, later spreading to the Springfield and other areas.

*Continued on page 5.*

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*The bowfront town house, located here on Mattoon Street, became popular in Springfield among the middle class.*

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a summer home, our trip to Newport, Rhode Island then is an absolute must.

During the 19th and 20th century, millionaires such as the Vanderbilts and Astors built "summer cottages" along the bluffs in Newport. Homes such as Chateau-Sur-Mer, an ornate 1852 home with its intricate woodwork, and Kingscote (1839), known for its original Tiffany glass windows, are fine examples of Victorian architecture.

The day trip, arranged for trust members, will visit two or three of these famed mansions on Sunday, June 23. Guided tours last about 45 minutes for each mansion. Please plan on bringing or buying your own lunch.

The cost is \$18.50 and covers transportation and admission to two estates. If time permits, a

*Continued on page 5.*

### *Preservation is byword during spring maintenance*

Spring is just around the corner! We all look forward to leaving the "blahs" of the last weeks of winter and enjoying this season of birth and renewal. I'm sure you'll agree it is truly an invigorating time of year.

Every homeowner knows that along with the joy of the season comes the onslaught of yearly home maintenance chores. This year I urge you all to do some good old fashioned neighborly gossiping! SPREAD THE WORD! PRESERVATION!

We need to share our preservation knowledge with our neighbors. Many people living in older homes simply do not know that there are alternatives to the quick and easy so-called modern solutions to their home maintenance needs. Please keep in mind that each member of your Springfield Preservation Trust Board is ready, willing, and able to share or refer questions regarding hands-on preservation.

Enjoy the season, enjoy your neighbors, and SPREAD THE WORD...PRESERVATION!

-Diane Fisher



### City Responds to Trust Letters

Almost eleven months after first suggesting historically desirable sites for the placement of six houses being moved to make way for a new magnet school at Mason Square, the Trust has received a specific response from the Community Development Office.

In a letter dated October 23, 1990, Commissioner Dominic R. Sarno acknowledged the Trust's recommendation of using vacant lots on Thompson Street because of the compatibility of house styles, zoning, and proximity. While citing "our intention to preserve these structures and in some cases improve the property through rehabilitation", Mr. Sarno also stated that the city is "attempting to contain cost by utilizing publicly held building lots or lots within a street or two" to reduce the overall cost. All rehabilitation plans will be submitted to the Springfield Historical Commission for review and approval, he said.

The Trust first contacted Mayor Mary E. Hurley in January of 1990 and again in October. The Mayor initially thanked us for our ideas in March without spelling out the city's plans.

### Can You Guess?

Do you know this building? See page 6.



### Property Upkeep Current Advocacy Concern

Maintenance issues, poor building rehabilitation, and neglected property tops the Trust's current advocacy agenda.

Fires at the Hotel Charles and stolen roofing materials from the vacant Technical High School are big concerns for the Trust. These buildings are valuable assets belonging to all the people of Springfield and they are not being properly secured and protected. As they depreciate in value due to neglect, their restoration becomes more expensive and less attractive. Maintenance and security are of utmost importance. The Trust has repeatedly written city officials on these matters. Please contact your councilor and the Mayor and encourage better stewardship of our resources.

Rehabilitation work at the Watershops Armory has not warranted comment before now. However, if you feel that the new brickwork and blocking in of windows and doors is not appropriate to the building, call the Historical Commission at 787-6020 to air your views.

Lastly, the Trust has given its support to the Forest Park Civic Association in its attempts to force a landlord to properly maintain his property at 107 Garfield Street in the historic district. The house and property are a blight on the area and the landlord seemingly unable or unwilling to correct the situation. Letters from the Trust have been sent to the Mayor.



## TRUST, MHC HIRE CONSULTANT FOR SURVEY

The Trust is pleased to announce the selection of Kathleen Kelly Broomer as consultant to handle the historical survey of Bay, Pine Points, and parts of Metro Center. Ms. Broomer was jointly chosen by the Trust and Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) in November to survey these communities and nominate them to the National Register of Historic Places.

Ms. Broomer presented the already completed Phase One of the survey at the Trust's January board meeting. The products of this phase include a methodology statement, a draft bibliography of documentary resources, and a working map of the neighbors to be surveyed plus a large scale map to identify inventoried properties. Ms. Broomer will present Phase II to the Trust's project coordinator, Audrey Higbee and the MHC staff at the Commission offices in Boston in March.

For the last five years, Ms. Broomer has worked as an Architectural Historian and Preservation Consultant in the Greater Boston area. During this period she has completed numerous historic and survey preservation projects including a survey for the MHC of an area similar in scope to the area identified for the Trust survey. Ms. Broomer was very highly recommended by the Commission.

Ms. Broomer was graduated from Smith College with an A.B. in Art History, and received her Master's Degree in Architectural History and a Certificate in Historic Preservation from the University of Virginia School of Architecture.

## Victorian Gardens

*A Rich Eclectic Mix*

By Merry Boone

As art often reflects everyday life, so too did Victorian gardens — an art form unto itself — speak to its period of social change. An eclectic and rich mix of numerous elements, these gardens have some delightful basic characteristics which make it easy for today's owners to recreate with a lot of room for personal artistic expression.

It was the Industrial Revolution that heralded new concepts in gardening. The concentration of people in urban settings meant homes situated on smaller lots. The emergence of a middle class meant that the garden was no longer the exclusive domain of a privileged few. The relative and often

new-found prosperity meant a desire to show off, and the technology itself meant an abundance of garden ornaments and

*Continued on page 4.*



*Kathleen Kelly Broomer of Boston was the Trust and MHC's joint choice for our local survey.*

## Your Membership Important

Your membership in the Trust is very important. With your financial support, the Trust can continue its watchdog efforts and enriches the community in many ways.

Among our many activities past year, the Trust donated money to the Connecticut Valley Museum to buy Springfield memorabilia, and gave books and copies of the Trust videotape to the Library. We also matched a state grant to research and nominate unsurveyed sections of the city to the National Register of Historic Places.

Please respond promptly when your membership renewal notice arrives, so we may continue these efforts on your behalf. Thank you!



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## GARDENS SHOW OFF SPLENDOR

furniture to complement the plant material.

Victorian gardens often took features from several different periods and put them together in one landscape. This was an era of eclecticism, which is good news for those of us who want to design a garden or a yard which is appropriate to the Victorian period.

There are, however, several basic characteristics. Large expanses of unbroken lawn were considered essential. Specimen trees were important; interest in the exotic and exaggerated form prompted use of weeping, dwarf, or variegated forms as accents in the landscape. Despite a continued interest in open plans and vistas, fences were typically used to define the property line, to prevent intrusion, and to add ornamentation. Cast iron was the ideal, but whatever the material, the more ornate, the better.

Shrubs were used in masses to define a boundary, or as a backdrop for flower beds and garden sculpture, or to separate sections of the yard. Grouping a mixture of species together was very popular. For pre-1890 houses, foundation planning was anachronistic. Garden beds were filled with bright, exotic, ever-blooming plants. Carpet bedding, in which annual plants of the same height were used to create elaborate designs, was very common. Most flower beds in

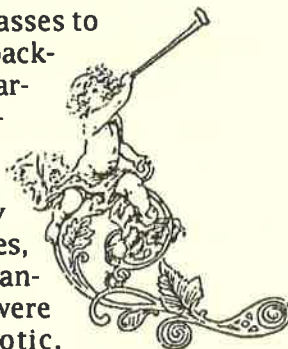
the lawn were round, oval, or arabesque in shape, and were placed so they could be seen from the street or from the busiest rooms of the house. Perennial borders did not become popular until the 1890's.

Ornaments such as urns, garden sculpture, and sundials - in stone, marble, and especially cast iron - increased in popularity throughout the period. A few good pieces, carefully placed, were basic to the garden plan. And benches, seats, and pavilions as places to sit served more of a decorative than functional purpose. In time, the highly ornamental iron furniture gave way to the simpler, rustic design towards the end of the period.

Victorian gardens were designed to be a showcase for the ever-increasing species of available plant materials and for the abundant mass-produced ornamental elements. They were elaborate, exotic, exuberant, and eclectic in nature. It's easy to develop your own plan, choosing your favorite features from the many which were popular during the period.

Further reading:

Rudy & Joy Favretti, *For Every House A Garden: A Guide for Reproducing Period Gardens*, 1977; Rudy & Joy Favretti, *Landscape & Gardens for Historic Buildings*, 1978.



## Library Pleased With Trust Videos

The following is a reprint of a letter received by the Trust from the Library for our donation of nine videos entitled "Homes of the City: A Guide to Residential Architecture in Springfield".

Dear Ms. Sutin:

*I would like to formally thank you and the Springfield Preservation Trust, Inc., for the nine copies of your video on residential architecture in Springfield.*

*This has long been an area of interest to Springfield citizens. Several years ago we were awarded a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities on "Springfield's Historic Architecture," which spawned a series of programs and walking tours throughout the City. It was gratifying that they proved to be very popular and well-attended. I am sure that these videos will be as well received.*

*Copies of the video were sent out to all the branches and two remain here in the Central Library, so they should be accessible to all who are interested.*

*Again, our thanks and appreciation.*

*Sincerely,*

*Jeffrey Katz, Interim Library Director*

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**SPT CALENDAR**

*Sunday, April 28 11:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.*

Spring Historic House Tour

*Friday, May 3 - Saturday, May 4*

Massachusetts Preservation Conference,  
Boston University

*TBA*

Lectures on Craftsmen Architecture &  
Decorative Arts

*Sunday, June 23*

Bus Trip to Newport, Rhode Island

Monthly meetings  
are held in the Community Room  
at Forest Park Library at 7:30 p.m.  
the first Wednesday of each  
month. All members are welcome.  
The next meetings are scheduled  
for April 3, May 1, and June 5.

### Trust, HMI Co-Sponsor Conference

Later this spring, the Trust will be co-sponsoring the Sixth Annual Massachusetts Preservation Conference with Historic Massachusetts, Inc., a Boston-based preservation organization.

Entitled "Held in Trust: 1890's Legacies, 1990's Challenges - the Landscape Vision", the program will take place Friday and Saturday, May 3 and 4 at Boston University.

The conference will assemble historic preservationists, planners, archaeologists, environmentalists, educators, public officials and developers, among others to explore, understand, and integrate their common interests.

The two-day program will also celebrate and reassess collective stewardship efforts of the built and natural environment and seek to renew joint dedication to preservation issues.

For more information, call HMI at (617) 723-3383.

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### HOUSE TOUR, *continued.*

In Forest Park, former Mayor Charles Ryan and his wife Joan are opening their 1905 Colonial Revival home. An 1863 Italianate house owned by Bob Cornell in Ridgewood, and an 1888 Queen Anne in McKnight owned by Terry and Deborah Barker will round out the tour.

The Connecticut Valley Historical Museum will also be open. The Trust's architecture film will run in Blake House, and a genealogist will be available for consultation in the Museum. Refreshments will be available at the museum.

Tour-goers have the option of taking a bus tour of the homes or driving themselves. The bus tours include tour guides and depart hourly from Classical High Condominium between 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. Tickets are \$10.00 for the bus, and \$8.00 for self-drive. Trust members receive a dollar discount. Tickets will be sold a week before the tour at Longmeadow Flowers at their Central Square, Allen Street and Longmeadow locations, and on the day of the tour in front of Classical High Condominium.



*The handsome, square Italianate tower on the Mills-Stebbins house on Crescent Hill identifies it as an Italianate Villa.*



### NEWPORT TRIP, *continued.*

third mansion will be added for an additional \$3.50. Van seating is limited, so early reservation is strongly recommended. If interested, call Marilyn Sutin at 733-3697, and leave your name, telephone number and number of people in your party.

Set time aside now for these wonderful events.

**The Springfield Preservation Trust**

This newsletter is published quarterly for the members of the Springfield Preservation Trust, Inc., 979 Main Street, Springfield, MA 01103.

Editor: Pamela Brecknell  
Contributors: Jim Boone, Diane Fisher, Roger Harris, Audrey Higbee, Bob McCarroll, Dan Sotak-Cooper, Lisa Sotak-Cooper  
Photographs: Kathleen M. Morehead, Marilyn Sutin  
Advertising: David Premont

Springfield Preservation Trust is a non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation of historic structures in the City of Springfield, Massachusetts.

**HOUSE TIPS, continued.**

home. Make sure these are in good working condition. If the fireplace is never used, consider placing an unfaced fiberglass batt above the damper and caulk around the damper perimeter. Don't neglect the fireplace mantel and side pieces. These are often not tight to the plaster wall resulting in heat loss between wall and chimney. Place finished furring strips in any large gaps before caulking.

Not all energy loopholes are hidden; some are readily apparent. Examples include door thresholds, perimeter baseboard, slightly warped window moldings, built-in bathtubs, electrical outlet and switch plates, built-in ironing boards, cupboards,

remains of ice-box drains from kitchen to outside, and remains of original gas light piping. Use of a fine bead of **clear** silicone caulking to a clean surface is a barely noticeable correction which also can prevent wall discoloring caused by drafts.

Next issue: How your heating system may contribute to the occurrence of energy loopholes.

—Roger Harris

**WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS**

We would like to welcome to Trust membership the following new people: Howard Goldberg, Paul and Karen Swenson, and Brian and Nancy Furley.

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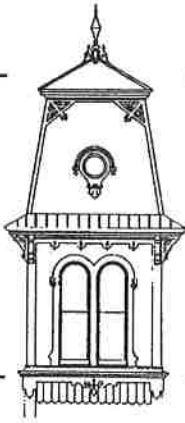
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For more information, **CONTACT DAVID PREMONT** at 782-9182 or write Springfield Preservation Trust, 979 Main Street, Springfield, MA 01103, ATTN: NEWSLETTER ADS.

