

THE PRESERVATIONIST

Newsletter of
THE SPRINGFIELD PRESERVATION TRUST

Fall 1997

30 HIGH STREET REHAB COMPLETED SPT FUNDING INCLUDED

The Rice-Bangs House at 30 High Street in Springfield, after about 10 months of rehab work, was formally opened by the house's owner, the Mental Health Association of Greater Springfield, Inc. in June of 1996.

Weather cooperated for the event which attracted about 100 people including City Officials and lots of neighbors. As many of the long time residents of High Street recalled the Rice-Bangs House had sat vacant for nearly 2 decades and expressed much delight in seeing the finished rehab project. Mary Walachy, MHAGS' Executive Director, addressed the gathering and acknowledged several project participants. Mayor Michael Albano spoke briefly and adjourned the group to the yard for refreshments.

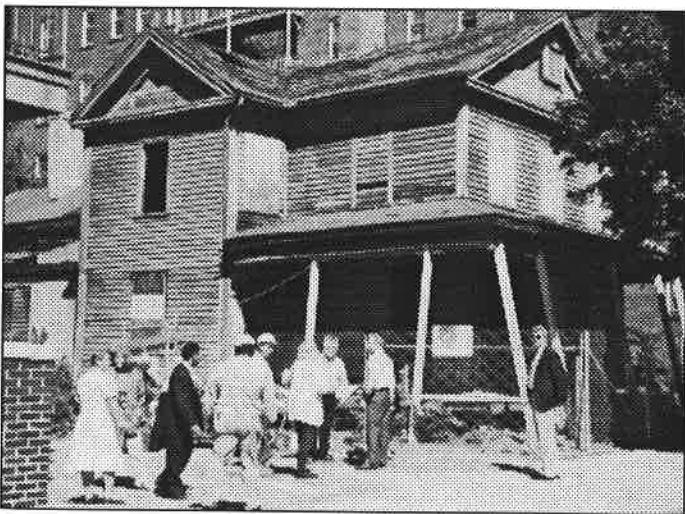
The house opened to residents soon thereafter, and is now in operation as intended. It is a group residence with a unique aspect, that of being a "safe haven" homeless shelter for up to 6 mentally-ill people. Residents are expected to be people who have generally been unreached by conventional



Mary Walachy addresses gathering outside 30 High Street

"homeless" efforts or mentally-ill-placement efforts. They will mostly be found by "outreach" searches throughout the city.

The house built around 1845 is one of Springfield's last remaining Greek Revival houses. It had several additions within 15-20 years of its original construction, and figured actively early in the Kindergarten movement 100 years ago. It was converted to medical offices in 1949. In 1957 another addition was made and finally by the 1970's the house was abandoned. Early in 1994 several SPT Board Members brought the house to the attention of Mary Walachy who took an interest in the site. Funds for the rehab were assembled funding from 8-10 different sources including the SPT. Although the interior has been completely updated the exterior retains much of the original look of the 1840's house thanks to William J. Devlin AIA, Inc. of Springfield, the architect for the project.



30 High Street prior to renovation

CAN YOU GUESS

from back cover


This sad looking derelict lot and the recently demolished Charles Hotel makes us forget the glory days of all the Railroad Hotels that surrounded busy rail stations across the country. Changing transportation habits and more modern accommodations and ultimately desertion and arson cost us the architecturally interesting and once thriving hotels that made center cities the places they were.

The Cooley Hotel prospered and grew over the years and added additions as it grew. At one time there were 300-400 trains a day passing through Springfield. As Springfield is the North-South and East-West terminus of transportation in all of New England (as it still is with Interstates 91 and 90) it made it a natural hub for the traveling salespeople who were the sellers of all goods before the age of the information highway,

catalogues and QVC. These "Traveling Men" stayed in hotels near the rail stations. The Charles Hotel was one of the last standing of these hotels. The buildings on right and center were destroyed by fire, the building at the left had been torn down to build the Charles. The Hotel Charles met the wrecking ball earlier this year with the idea that the vacant lot was an improvement over the derelict tower.




Charles Hotel days before demolition



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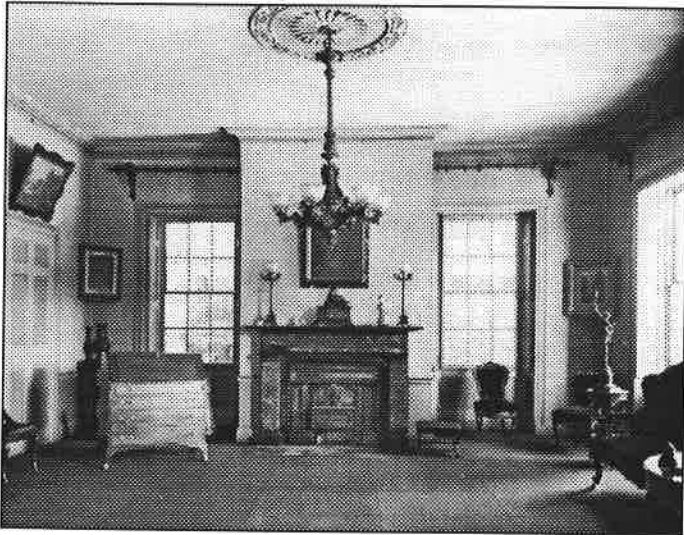
ALEXANDER HOUSE SUNDAY SOCIAL



Deborah Goss and Anabel Graetz, "The Proper Ladies"



284 State Street, "The Alexander House"



Right parlor of Alexander House during Alexander Family's residence



The Proper Ladies on the porch of the Alexander House

In June of last year the SPT hosted an afternoon of music and refreshment in the twin front parlors of the Alexander House as part of a continuing effort to bring attention to one of Springfield's oldest surviving residences. The program included a concert by the Proper Ladies of Cambridge, Deborah Goss and Anabel Graetz who performed 19th century songs as they told tales and recounted the history of the many people who occupied the house during the last 186 years. The Alexander House is owned and maintained by the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities of Boston.

Candlelight Tour of Historic McKnight Neighborhood

The SPT Candlelight Tour of McKnight attracted over 400 people despite the inclement weather. Proceeds will be used to reprint the McKnight Walking Tour. Read more about the tour in our Winter '98 Newsletter.

Preservation Web Site

Historic Preservation Forum, a membership program of the National Trust for Historic Preservation announced earlier this year Preservation Link, a world wide web site. The network includes special news and announcements, the complete Preservation Link Library of articles from past Forum journals and other Trust publications. Also included are current job listings and a database of hundreds of successful solutions to preservation problems from all around the U.S.

To Get into Preservation Link, contact Preservation Forum in Washington DC at 202-673-4296 or forum@nthp.org. or write to Preservation Forum, 1785 Massachusetts Avenue, North West, Washington DC 20036

Annual Meeting & Awards

On Sunday November 23, 1996 the SPT hosted its annual Preservation Awards Ceremony and Annual Election of Officers at the Alexander House in Springfield. Award recipients and guests received an extra special treat when they entered the Alexander House to find the main floor and oval winding staircase lit with over 100 glass hurricane lamps. After a social hour, SPT President Wilfred Stebbins called the meeting to order with remarks about several preservation issues in Springfield during the past year. Nominating Committee Chair announced the slate of Officers and Directors for the coming year. After the votes had been cast the podium was turned over to Board Member Jim Boone who began to deliver the 1996 Preservation Awards. Among this years recipients were; the Massachusetts Highway Department for the reconstruction of the Memorial Bridge, Congregation Kesser Israel for the stewardship of their temple in Forest Park, and several homeowners in Springfield were also awarded for the rehab of homes in the city's six historic districts. The Donald E. Champion Campaign Award for Exceptional Work in Preservation was awarded to Robert McCarroll, a long time SPT Board Member who has been a staunch supporter of Springfield's built environment for more than two decades.



Bob McCarroll, right, receives Champion Award from Jim Boone at 1996 Annual Meeting

1996 AWARD RECIPIENTS

Congregation Kesser Israel

Russell Selig

Springfield School Department
Building Commission

Mental Health Associates

Carmelo Borges

Victor & Karen Woolridge

Massachusetts Highway Department

Robert McCarroll

Careful Stewardship of 19 Oakland Street

Careful Stewardship of Residential Apartment Buildings

Reuse of 1250 State Street

Residential Rehab of 30 High Street

Exterior Restoration of 149 Clarendon Street

Exterior Restoration w/ New Materials 146 Longhill Street

Reconstruction of Memorial Bridge


Donald E. Champion Award for Exceptional Work in Preservation

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Silver Anniversary Tour of Historic Homes

The Springfield Preservation Trust presented its Silver Anniversary Tour of Historic Homes in Springfield on Sunday May 4th. The House Tour was part of the SPT's year long 25th anniversary celebration. The tour route began at the Alexander House and included 2 condominium units, 7 private homes and one church all located within the six historic districts of Springfield. Over 300 people came out to tour the homes which ranged in style from an 1811 Federal Transitional to a 1920's Tudor Revival in the Entry Dingle Neighborhood along Forest Park. Peter Pan's London Double Decker Bus made its public debut as it carried the tourists across the city on the three hour tour.

Lectures Celebrate 25 Years of Historic Preservation

As part of the celebration of a quarter century of preservation in Springfield the SPT sponsored two lectures at the Trinity United Methodist Church in Forest Park. Although the first lecture date was canceled because of the April first snow storm the remaining two lectures were a great success. Local Historian, former Commissioner of the Historic Commission and SPT Board Member Jim Boone presented a lecture which focused on preservation successes and losses during the last century in Springfield. At the end of the lecture Jim presented a list of the most endangered landmark buildings in Springfield (see list in this newsletter)

William Hosley, Curator of American Decorative Parts at the Wadsworth Atheneum in Hartford presented "Our Search for A Useable Past". Mr. Hosley's focus was more widely spread across New England as a region and traced the establishment of New England myth and icons back to before the War of Independence.

Springfield's "Ten Most Endangered Buildings" 1997

Each year the Board of the SPT chooses a number of buildings within Springfield that are threatened with "extinction" for a variety of reasons. Mostly neglect. Some

simply because they are vacant and prone to vandalism and fires. Most will be demolished because their owners have allowed them to deteriorate

1. Technical High School, Elliot Street
2. Carew Street School, Carew Street
3. Chestnut Middle School Carew Street
4. York Street Jail House, West Columbus Avenue
5. Mill Street Fire Station, Mill Street
6. Mason Square Fire Station, Mason Square
7. Carriage House, Temple Street
8. Dr. Bill House, Mulberry Street
9. former Carter Underwear Factory, Central Street
10. *Alexander House, 284 State Street

*While the Alexander House is maintained and well secured, it's owner, the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities has not been successful in marketing the vacant building for reuse. Although their efforts are commendable, the SPT has some concern about the future of the building.

Former Endangered List Buildings Successfully Rehabbed.

30 High Street, Memorial Square Parish House and the Pine Street Fire Station were all on the SPT endangered buildings list. Although the SPT is often seen fighting a losing battle attempting to save "sores on the Springfield City Scape" our efforts are not always without reward. All three of these buildings were rescued, rehabbed and given new life adding to the value of their neighborhoods. Two of these success stories, 30 High Street and the Pine Street Fire Station were supported through the efforts of the SPT.

Are you interested in ...

Becoming a Member?

Advertising your business in our newsletter?

Expressing your opinion about a preservation issue?

Volunteering to help in the next SPT event?

Call and leave your name and phone number with Trust Voice, the official voice mail of the SPT by dialing (413) 747-0656

25 Years of Preservation in Springfield.

Over a quarter century ago the historic preservation movement began to gain momentum across the United States. In response to a decade of urban flight, blight and renewal plans that were leaving many American cities, like Springfield, stripped of their historic and architecturally significant landmarks the preservation movement was born. Remember Jacqueline Onassis' march against the demolition of Grand Central Station? In 1974 three organizations came into being that were and still are the foundation of preservation in Springfield. The Historic Commission was chartered by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to oversee the stewardship of the the newly formed historic districts. The Mattoon Street Preservation Association was formed which launched the beginning of the the restoration of the one of Springfield's most treasured and unique landmarks, Mattoon Street. And the Springfield Preservation Trust, Inc. was formed, Springfield's only private, non-profit organization

dedicated to the the preserving the architecturally and historically significant built environment of Springfield. The SPT is celebrating its 25th anniversary with a series of year long events.

The Springfield Preservation Trust

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

Contributors Jim Boone, Bill Devlin, Wilfred Stebbins, Diane Fisher

The Springfield Preservation Trust is a non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation of Springfield's built environment.

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“CAN YOU GUESS”

Can you guess the address of this block of buildings from 19th century Springfield?