



Newsletter of The Springfield Preservation Trust

Summer 1990

Trust Welcomes Spring With Annual House Tour

Tour-goers will have the opportunity to enjoy visiting several of Springfield's historical districts on Sunday, May 6 between 11:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. The tour is well represented by home and business owners with a commitment to maintain and revive the values of Springfield's history and architecture.

The McKnight, Forest Park Heights, downtown, and Maple Hill sections will all be part of the day's journey. As visitors venture through

the city, they will learn some interesting historical facts about the homes and previous owners from the knowledgeable and entertaining tour guides.

As a prelude to the tour, Channel 22 will be broadcasting the 5:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. news from the home of Robert and Patricia Duquette, a featured stop, on Friday, May 4.

The Duquette's nine-room Shingle style house is situated on Crescent Hill and was built in 1888 for the Southworth family. A few highlights of this three-story structure are a blue, ceramic fireplace, a round room, pocket doors, chestnut woodwork and a view of the city from a third floor window seat. Also, etched in the library's original brick fireplace is the phrase "While I mused the fire burned." The author is unknown.

In another section of McKnight, a lovely Queen Anne style home was built for Dr. Nathan Adams and his family in 1888. The interior of this nineteen-room mansion has undergone many changes through the years, including conversions to a three-family dwelling, then to a room-

Continued on page 3.



This Victorian home on Ingersoll Grove is a fine example of Queen Anne styling with its angular lines and broad porch.

Lead in Old Homes Holds Dangers

by Scott Balfour

Lead has been with us for thousands of years. Early Egyptian sculptures have been dated as early as 3,000 B.C. The Romans recognized the industrial potential of lead and used it for pipes, roofing and waterproofing.

Today, lead is widely used in batteries, ammunition, pesticides, as an additive for gasoline, and a pigment in dyes. Except for gold, it is the densest of all metals and an effective barrier

Continued on page 4.

Trust Aids Holyoke Preservation Efforts

The Springfield Trust helped Holyoke residents take a ride — on their carousel, that is.

At an Executive Board meeting in January, the Trust agreed to donate \$100.00 in support of the fund raising efforts of The Friends of the Holyoke Merry-Go-Round.

The local group is working to save the carousel which was originally part of the Mountain Park Amusement Park. The park which lies adjacent to the Mount Tom Ski Area closed two years ago.

The Trust's donation will go towards a bank loan of \$100,000.00 borrowed to help meet the \$850,000.00 purchase price. Additional monies need to be raised to build a pavilion at Heritage State Park in downtown Holyoke for the now dismantled carousel.

Residents can send donations payable to The Friends of the Holyoke Merry-Go-Round at P.O. Box 6700, Holyoke 01040 or call John Hickey at 536-5520.

Why Save a Jail?

The first battle preservationists face is convincing the unsympathetic that there is a reason not to tear down an old building. As the public has been educated and as tastes have shifted away from the hollow sham of modernism, our job has become ever so slightly easier. People "just love those Victorian houses," the same people who decades ago would have gladly leveled blocks of historic neighborhoods so that we could start afresh. Around the nation, city centers have been revitalized as 19th-century institutional buildings and retail storefronts are restored and reused. The great brick mills and schools of yesteryear have been transformed into desperately needed housing. When an old building is saved and reused a light bulb goes on in the head of the elected officials and developers and they say "Hey, people really do like them old buildings!"

Which brings us to the York Street Jail. People who understand that old houses, schools, banks and city halls must be preserved often look bewildered when one says "Don't tear down that jail!" The Victorians were just as proud of their prisons as they were of their schools, hospitals, and courthouses as the architectural detailing lavished on prison exteriors clearly indicates. The 19th-century prison was also considered progressive and infinitely more humane than its predecessors. England's Strangeways Prison, recently destroyed by its inmates, was a stellar example of the panopticon, a central hub in



Can You Guess?

Do you recognize this home? Turn to page 7.

Zoning Change Marks Neighborhood, Historic Victory

The McKnight neighborhood scored a significant victory when, after three attempts, it succeeded in having a large parcel of land in the historic district rezoned.

The property, located at Thompson and Westminster Streets, had been zoned for various business uses. Residents responded to a developer's proposal to build a 36-cluster housing project which they felt was inappropriate architecturally and density-wise by filing three separate times for a zone change. While the proposed change to Residence B use was approved each time by the Planning Board, it was not passed by the City Council. The Council finally did approve the change when the developer withdrew his proposal.

This rezoning will ensure that any development will be in the form of detached two-family houses in keeping with the neighborhood rather than an incompatible high density housing project. City Councillors complimented neighbors, many of whom are Trust members, for their dogged determination in protecting their neighborhood.

JAIL, continued.

which guards could watch the prisoners who were housed in wings that radiated from the center. This design allowed light and air into every cell; a true innovation in penal reform at that time.

Massachusetts also has several important and historic prisons: Boston's Charles Street Jail, MCI Concord, the Salem House of Correction and our own York Street Jail, among others. Now that there is going to be a new Hampden County Jail, we must be prepared to advocate for the preservation of York Street. We must remember that here we have a building that is literally "built like a fortress" and, as such, is worthy of preservation as good, solid, usable space. As a long-standing landmark on Springfield's river front, it would serve to anchor the development and revitalization of the waterfront area. As we consider new uses for this building, we must learn to divorce the building itself from any unpleasant associations of its past, and to see it for what it is: a valuable economic resource and an opportunity for progress without sacrificing a fine historical asset.

— Dan Sotak-Cooper



Trust member, Leslie Clement is building luxury condos in the style of the original Wyndhurst estate on Crescent Hill.

HOUSE TOUR, continued.

ing house, and finally a group home. It is presently owned by Robert Kinder who has restored it to a single family home. Mr. Kinder cites the magnificent staircase to the second floor as his favorite feature.

Downtown on Mattoon Street are the enchanting Victorian row houses. Here tour-goers will visit a glorious Second French Empire style double house. The interior of this home is exquisitely decorated in a variety of warm hues, fabrics, and furnishings. Thomas Brown is the decorator and owner of this 1873 renovated building.

The trek into the past will also include: the Wyndhurst (Maple Hill) and McIntosh (downtown) condominiums, a Union Street Queen Anne house, a Forest Park Avenue Shingle style home, and the Connecticut Valley Historical Museum. The museum exhibits "Valley Childhoods" and "Springfield Furniture: 1700-1850" will be open from noon to 5:00 p.m.

Please join us for a splendid look at early and present-day Springfield. The tour will take about

Trust Seeks Survey Monies

The Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) has invited the Trust to submit a final application in its second round of survey and planning grants.

The Trust has requested a \$4,000.00 grant to survey historic assets in the Bay and Pine Point neighborhoods as well as the portion of Metro Center lying between Chestnut and Federal Streets. If successful, the Trust must provide a matching contribution. The Board of Directors has voted to allocate funds from house tour proceeds. Past MHC grants have helped the Trust survey the North End, South End, and Indian Orchard neighborhoods.

The survey is expected to take one year. It will produce approximately 250 survey forms, historical narratives on each area, and — most importantly — a list of properties or districts eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

two and a half hours to complete. Buses leave hourly between 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. across the street from the Central Library, 222 State Street. Tickets are \$8.00 for self-drive and \$10.00 for the guided bus tour and they may be purchased in advance or the day of the tour. Tickets are available at Longmeadow Flowers in Longmeadow, Central Square in downtown Springfield, and on Allen Street. Advance purchase is recommended. For additional information please contact Bob McCarroll at 736-0629.

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Lead Use and Poisoning Have Long History

against radiation and sound. Until recently, lead was a prime ingredient in paint.

Lead is also quite toxic and, unlike iron, serves no useful biological function. In fact, the toxic effects of lead have been known for over 2000 years. Lead acetate was once used to sweeten wine until the practice became an offense punishable by death. Ben Franklin documented cases of poisoning among people who drank "New England Rum" that had been distilled in equipment containing lead. He also noted the hazards lead posed to plumbers, glaziers and painters.

All of us have some lead in our systems. We are exposed to it in the air we breathe, our water, and even the food we eat. Our greatest exposure to lead, however, comes from lead based paint. Lead was used in paint as a coloring agent and to increase the durability of the paint film. Some paints contained as much as 50% of lead. Although it was used throughout this century in paint, it was especially prevalent during the 1930s and 40s. It was outlawed for use in residential paint in 1977.

Nearly 30 million dwelling units still contain lead paint. The greatest hazard is when the paint starts to deteriorate. Although paint chips pose a visible threat it is lead contaminated dust that causes most poisonings.

All of us are at risk of exposure to lead, but

children are, by far, the most susceptible. Their young, developing bodies absorb and store as much as 50% of the lead they ingest. Low level poisonings exhibit little if any symptoms. More serious poisonings may result in mental retardation and even death. Some cases require the painful, chemical removal of lead from a child's system called chelation.

Fortunately, lead poisoning is a detectable and preventable disease. Periodic blood tests will reveal lead levels and good nutrition will

|| *"Lead remains a major threat to our children."* ||

help buffer the effects of lead. Lead, however, still remains a major health threat to our children. As a result, various state and federal agencies have established laws governing the use and removal of lead paint.

In Massachusetts, housing units where children six or under reside must be free of lead paint hazards. Chewable surfaces to a height of five feet and four inches back from their corners must be delead in their entirety. Windows must have lead paint and putty removed from the inside as well as the outside of the sash. Loose paint must be removed from leaded surfaces at all heights.

Landlords and owners are liable for the cost of removal of these hazards and potentially for any damages that result from them. Because of the toxicity of lead, only licensed contractors are permitted to remove and dispose of lead paint and contaminated trim. They must follow stringent procedures to ensure that all dust and lead particles are contained and safely removed. All occupants must vacate during the process and are only allowed to return after the site has been reinspected by a registered lead paint inspector.

The safest method of "lead abatement" involves the complete removal and replacement of all contaminated components. Unfortunately, this is a costly proposition and not always a satisfactory method in older, historic homes. Dry scraping is accepted by the state but because of the dust created, particularly hazardous. Scraping also tends to mar the woodwork we are trying so hard to preserve. The best method for removing lead paint from interior, ornate trim is with a caustic stripping agent or an off-site dip tank.

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781-1201

SPT Calendar

Sunday, May 6 11:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Spring Historic House Tour
Friday, May 18
Video Premiere and Reception
Monday, May 21 - Sunday, May 28 7:30 p.m.
Homes of the City airs on Channel 18A,
Springfield Cable Network

Community Events

Friday, May 1 Salem, Mass., 9:00 a.m.
HMI Conference: "After the Miracle"
Sunday, June 3, 10, 17; 12:00 - 5:00 p.m.
"Pride of Place" House Tour Series
Porter-Phelps-Huntington Museum
Contact: Susan Lisk 584-4699
Sunday, June 3 11:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
First Annual McKnight Walking Tour
Contact: Merry Boone 734-9110
Saturday, June 16
Forest Park's "Illumination Night"
Contact: Steve Hays 737-8111

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 May 2, June 6, and July 8.

LEADING, continued.

Although costly, they pose the least risk of contamination and damage to the wood.

Exterior surfaces must also be abated. Cautics and scraping are options but consideration should be given to reconstruction. It is possible to duplicate older trim using new materials. Some companies specialize in this type of restoration. Lattice and decorative porch trim can all be made to look like the original.

It's important to remember a few key points. The removal of lead paint is extremely dangerous and can only be performed by licensed contractors. All children six and under should have their blood tested for lead regularly, especially if they live in older homes. And prior to starting a renovation or restoration on your own, have the surfaces tested for the presence of lead.

Scott Balfour, a certified lead paint inspector, is a guest contributor.

Conference Addresses Dearth of Funds

Historic Massachusetts, Inc. (HMI) will address preservation issues in light of the state's economic crisis at a conference entitled "After the Miracle" scheduled for Friday, May 11 in Salem, Massachusetts.

The Fifth Annual Massachusetts Preservation Conference will focus attention on the challenges which face the preservation community after the "Massachusetts Miracle". The abundant wealth and enthusiasm which was representative of the Commonwealth's booming "miracle" economy has been replaced with the grim realities of dwindling resources and the fiscal demise of many programs sensitive to the needs of preservation. New strategies for funding and long-range planning are now necessary. This conference is designed to address these concerns, and to promote the discussion of creative solutions.

The day-long conference features a morning panel discussion, afternoon workshops and tours, and two evening receptions. The cost is \$55.00 and the registration deadline, May 4. Interested persons can contact Betsy Van Oot at (617) 723-3383.

Jim Boone Featured Conference Panelist

James Boone, Vice President for Advocacy with the Trust, will participate as a panelist in an upcoming conference sponsored by Historic Massachusetts, Inc.

Jim will address issues of neighborhood activism, discussing what Springfield has done to maintain and improve the fabric of our community.

Joining him will be Mary Boatswain, President, Elm Hill Park Association, Doris Dickinson, Chair, Belchertown Historical Commission and William Guenther, President of Historic Salem, Inc. Edith Harman, Director of The House of the Seven Gables, will moderate.

The workshop will be held from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. in Salem, Massachusetts.

Membership Renewals Now Due

As predictable as New England's spring rains is our request for your membership renewal.

Notices should be arriving soon asking for your prompt response. In an effort to contain costs, dues have remained the same for the upcoming year. Families are \$25.00, individuals \$15.00, and students only \$10.00.

Please mail your renewal by May 31 if you have not done so already. Make your check payable to Springfield Preservation Trust and send to 979 Main Street, Springfield 01103.

Joint Lecture Series a Success

The lecture series co-sponsored by the Connecticut Valley Museum and the Trust was a success, according to Trust president, Dan Sotak-Cooper.

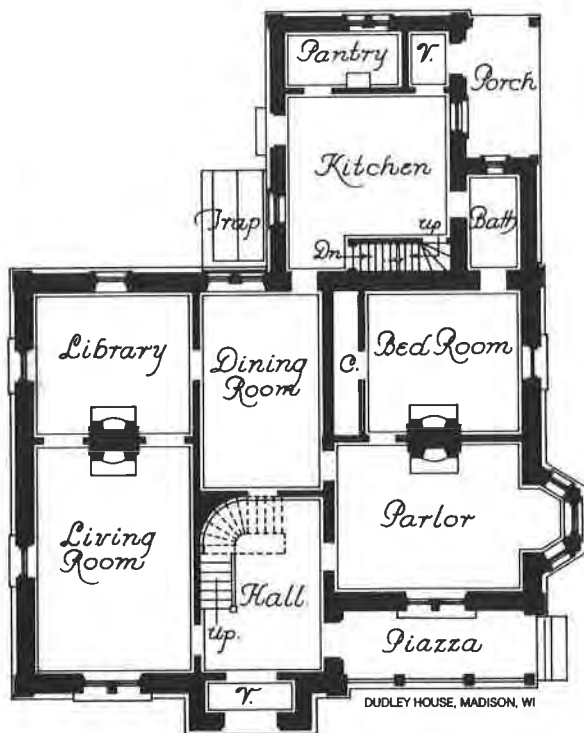
The idea for a series featuring Trust speakers came out of our participation in the "Valley Victorian" talks last year. The program which eventually evolved was a four-part series based on the theme of old home ownership.

The various topics addressed special maintenance problems for architectural styles, interior woodwork restoration, energy efficiency, and researching one's home. Each was delivered by an experienced Trust member.

An average of 20 people enjoyed each of the talks, comfortably fitting the lecture room in the Blake house at the Quadrangle.

The program was presented on four successive Wednesdays in April.

PRESERVATION PLAN ON IT



Write:

National Trust for Historic Preservation
Department PA
1785 Massachusetts Ave., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036

Completed Video Ready for Viewing

In celebration of the completion of the video, Homes of the City, A Guide to Residential Architecture in Springfield, the Trust invites members to a premiere showing and a special reception Friday, May 18. Current, dues-paying members will receive a formal invitation in the mail. The 30-minute program will also be aired on Springfield's Cable Network, Channel 18A, on May 21 through May 27 at 7:30 p.m.

Approximately one year ago, the Trust applied for a grant to produce a video on architectural styles in Springfield with the intent of bringing a greater appreciation of our built environment to a larger, more diverse audience. Copies of the video will be made available to the Springfield School Department, the public libraries, and the Local History Library of the Connecticut Valley Historical Museum.

Upon receiving funding approval from the Springfield Cable Television Programming Endowment, a committee began converting the Trust's booklet on residential architecture into video format.

Jim Boone narrates the program, introducing the different architectural styles followed with several examples of each. The music, an original score, was composed by Stephen Moser and performed by Moser and Trust president, Dan Sotak-Cooper. The video has just been submitted to the Cable Endowment for final approval.

Special recognition goes to committee members Marilyn Sutin, Dan and Lisa Sotak-Cooper, Jim Boone, and Bob McCarroll who contributed many evening and weekend hours researching, taping, and editing the film.

Correction

In the last issue, the "Can You Guess?" story erroneously identified the Roman Catholic Church as responsible for the razing of St. Joseph's Convent. The Diocese of Springfield ordered the demolition.

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Can You Guess?

This 1894 Queen Anne style house on Dartmouth Street was completely restored both inside and out about 10 years ago. Most noticeable is the newly rebuilt porch and front doors. Originally the structure was a Victorian duplex.

Trust Maintains Watchdog Efforts

The Trust is closely monitoring several buildings which are threatened by future potential development and reuse.

The abandoned Hotel Charles and Railroad Station have been the subject of some speculation including recent interest by Father & Sons, an automobile dealership. In the owner's multi-use package is a proposal to tear down the hotel. Because both buildings are part of the Railroad Urban Renewal area and are on the National Register, the Trust has written the dealership pointing out the hotel's historic status. To date, the owner has not responded.

In Ludlow, the building of a new jail puts the fate of the National Register-eligible York Street Jail into question. The Trust has written to the County Commissioners and the State Historical Commission urging that any development of the old jail be in keeping with its historic status. The Commission is aware of the situation and has promised to keep an eye on the York Street Jail.

A proposal for a new school at Mason Square

House Tips:

Exterior Caulking Spares Home from Water Seepage

Ed. Note: The following is the third article in a four-part series.

Many people are familiar with caulking as a means of plugging drafts in windows and around doors. Caulking can also be used on the exterior of your home to protect it from damaging water seepage.

Caulks should be used wherever different materials meet or even similar materials meet. Examples are where clapboard meets with wood trim or where wood butts against stone or brick. This is where homeowners must be always vigilant and familiar with their house's current condition.

All materials expand and contract with the change in temperature, moisture and humidity. And different types of materials expand and contract at different rates. This is why there is cracking and peeling of paint when oil based paint and latex paint are on top of each other. Where different types of materials meet, there is the very real potential of them separating, even slightly, with the change of season thus allowing water to enter the building.

Caulking materials that are too rigid do not work well. Latex caulks allow for the most flexibility. Read the labels carefully and remember to buy the best. As with paint, it is important to get the best quality. Saving a couple of dollars here is never going to pay off.

Visually inspect your house often. You probably already do this because you love it and just like to look at it. Be critical; look for problems and then fix them. Keep out the water; it is your worst enemy.

Next: Exterior Maintenance

—Jim Boone

has also raised some preservation issues. One proposal under consideration requires that up to six houses be moved. As they are part of the McKnight National Register Historic District, the houses are protected. In a letter to Mayor Mary E. Hurley, the Trust has suggested the vacant land on Thompson and Westminster Streets as an ideal location if these houses are moved. With permission from the state just received to relocate the buildings, the Mayor has issued an assurance that they will stay within the historic McKnight neighborhood. The local Historical Commission will monitor any relocations.



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: Denise Brouillette, Jim Boone,
Bob McCarroll, and Marilyn Sutin
Photographs: 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.

McKnight Spared Unsightly Intrusion

When New England Telephone decided to place a four-foot high switching box on the corner of Worthington, St. James and Dartmouth Streets, McKnight residents and Trust members rallied against the proposal. Community members circulated a petition and brought the issue before the Historical Commission.

According to Bill McGrath of the Commission, the telephone company re-evaluated the site upon realizing the box would be located in an historic district. As a result, the proposal was withdrawn and the equipment installed out of the historic area on private property down the street.

Conn. Valley Thanks Trust for Donation

Earlier this year, the Trust, working through the Historical Commission, notified the Connecticut Valley Historical Museum of local memorabilia coming available on the market. The Trust then donated \$250.00 towards purchasing old photographs and plat maps. Reprinted below is a letter of appreciation from the museum.

Dear Mr. Boone:

On behalf of the Connecticut Valley Historical Museum, and especially the Local History Library and Archives, I want to thank the Trust for its generous donation of \$250.00. This gift has proven extremely helpful in assisting us to purchase portions of Jack Hess' E. Barney collection that otherwise would have been lost to the Springfield community. We can now say that these items can be properly cared for, and will be available for exhibit and research for generations to come. Without your gift, they certainly would have been lost.

Again, thank you and the Springfield Preservation Trust for all your assistance.

Sincerely,

Guy A. McLain, Jr.

Head of Library and Archives Collections



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VIDEO UPDATE

I am excited to announce that the video, HOMES OF THE CITY, A GUIDE TO RESIDENTIAL ARCHITECTURE IN SPRINGFIELD, has been completed and submitted for final approval to the Springfield Cable Television Programming Endowment.

As you know, it was just about a year ago that the SPT applied for a grant to produce a video on architectural styles in Springfield. It was our hope to bring a greater appreciation of our built environment to a larger, more diverse audience. Copies of the video would be made available to the Springfield School Department, the Public Libraries, and the Local History Library of the Connecticut Valley Historical Museum.

Since funding was approved last July, a committee was formed to convert the booklet on Springfield's residential architecture into a video format. We spent weeks reviewing the text, selecting the houses to be taped, reworking the script, and pouring over materials made available through the Connecticut Valley Historical Museum.

Jim Boone, who served as narrator for the video, learned about the fine art of acting. For each minute of Jim on tape, there are several takes of the same subject. Jim introduces each of the different architectural styles, followed by several examples of each. It concludes with a summary of each style, emphasizing the distinctive architectural details.

After taping over 70 different homes and logging almost 5 hours of tape, we had to edit all the footage into a half hour format. The committee viewed all of the tapes and selected the best images. For the next several months I spent my weekends in the studio with the videographers, splicing it all together. The music, an original score written by Stephen Moser and played by Stephen and Dan Sotak-Cooper, was finally added last week, and with that, 9 months of work came to an end.

This has been a very exciting experience for all of us who worked on this project and to celebrate, we will have a premier showing of the completed video followed by a small reception on Friday May 18. All dues paying members will receive an invitation in the mail regarding time and place. The video is scheduled to air on Springfield's Cable Network, Channel 12, May 21 through May 27, at 7:30.

Marilyn Sutin