

The PRESERVATIONIST

Newsletter of
the SPRINGFIELD PRESERVATION TRUST

Fall 1992/Winter 1993

"PORCHES, PERGOLAS AND PARLORS" LECTURE SERIES IS UNVEILED

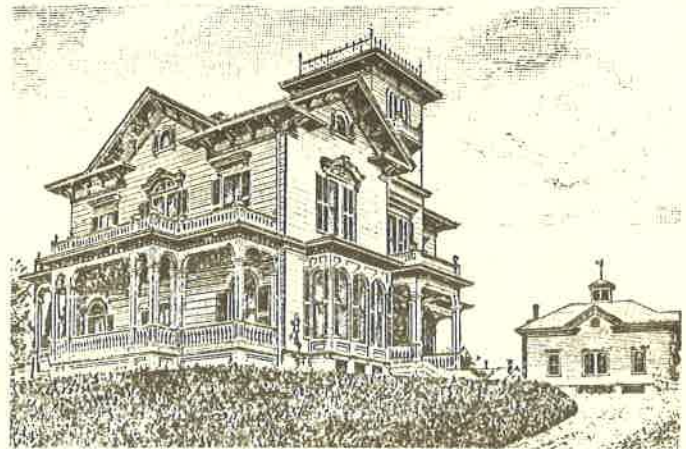
The Springfield Preservation Trust, in conjunction with the Connecticut Valley Historical Museum, will present a lecture series entitled "Porches, Parlors and Pergolas". The lectures will take place on Tuesday evenings from 7:30-9:00 p.m. on January 26, February 9 and February 23 in the downstairs auditorium of the Museum of Fine Arts at the Museum Quadrangle on the corner of State and Chestnut Street in Springfield. The series will feature prominent design historians focusing on the rich complexities of interior and exterior architecture, design and garden decoration as found in the residential architecture of homes in greater Springfield and the Connecticut Valley built between 1840 and 1930.

Tickets will be sold at the door on the evening of each lecture. For the general public, the cost is \$5 per lecture or \$12 for the series. If you are a member of either the Trust or the Quadrangle, the cost for each lecture is only \$4, and if you are a current member of both, then it is only \$3. Please remember to bring some substantiation of your memberships!

The series schedule is as follows:

January 26, 1993 - Introduction to Exterior Architecture - Sandy Gibson-Quigly of Preservation Worcester.

Become familiar with the subtle characteristics that identify styles of residences found in the Connecticut Valley area. Learn how your home would have been accented in paint colors appropriate to the period. Be able to identify appropriate and inappropriate changes to hundred-year-old properties.

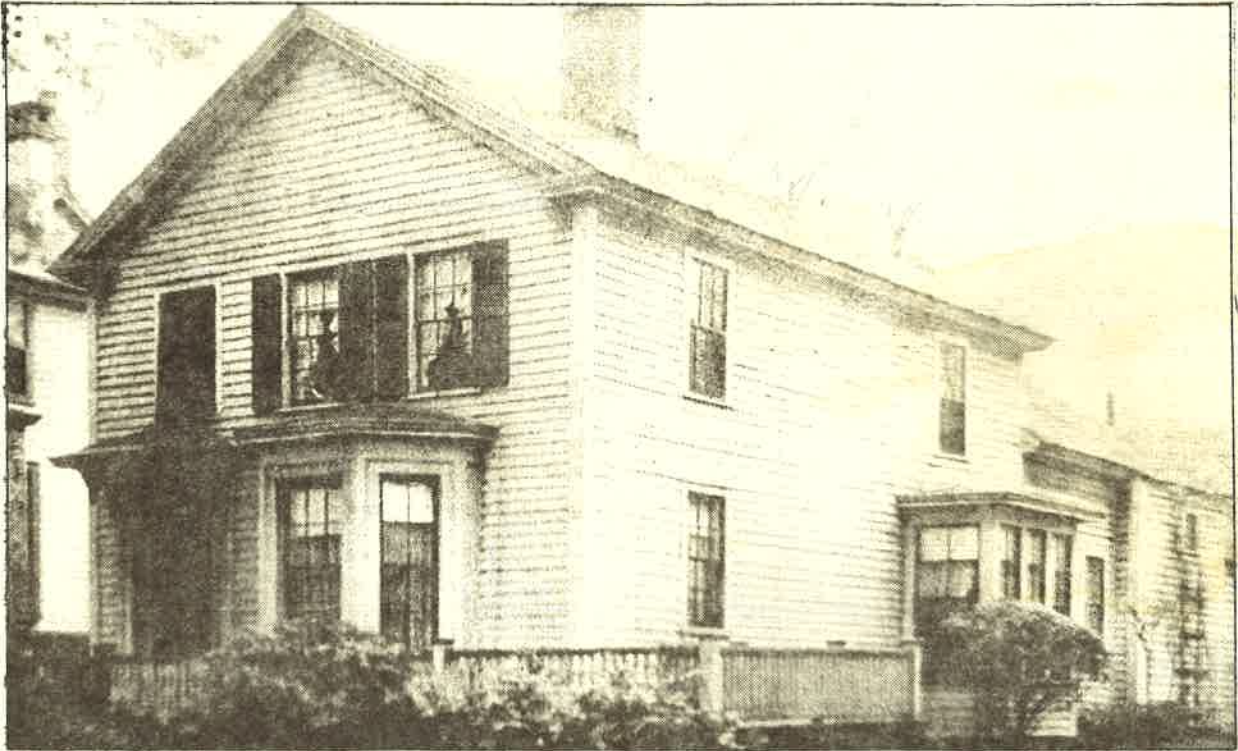


February 9, 1993 - Gardens and Gazebos - Nancy Grimes and Humphrey Sutton, design historians and owners of New England Garden Ornaments of North Brookfield, MA.

Period landscape design over the last hundred years, including the types of plantings, flowers and trees appropriate to our period homes. How lawn architecture and ornamentation have been used to enhance the residential setting. Learn to recreate period gardens through the use of fountains, arbors, statuary and buildings.

February 23, 1993 - Seeing Inside the Period Home - Bill Hosley, curator of American Decorative Arts at the Wadsworth Atheneum and contributing editor to Art & Antiques Magazine.

Designers and architects are designing and restoring older homes to reflect the ease and elegance of earlier life. This lecture will present several studies in interior design of homes built from 1840 to 1930. Learn how design and ornamentation of our living areas has changed over time. The evolution of room layouts, colors and architectural enhancements, as well as lighting, and wall and window coverings will be addressed. There's more to decorating than choosing the right colors. This is for anyone who wants more information on interiors.



Photograph of 51 Mulberry Street as it appeared in 1939.

HISTORIC TRAGEDY OCCURS ON MULBERRY STREET

On the morning of December 28th, tragedy struck an 1830's Greek Revival house on historic Mulberry Street, part of the Ridgewood Historic District also listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Acting without a permit from the Building Department and without approval of the Historic Commission, 51 Mulberry Street was demolished quickly in the early morning hours by its owner, Dr. Phillip Stone and Associated Building Wreckers. Dr. Stone has made no public statement as to his motivation for this action and the wrecking company claims that there was a paperwork mix-up.

The Springfield Union News reports that Mayor Bob Markel wants the full extent of the law to be applied to the parties involved and that it is of utmost importance that this obvious flouting of the law cannot be tolerated.

The Springfield Historical Commission voted to pursue all legal remedies available and the law department may now proceed. The Mayor said publicly that he wants the house to be rebuilt.

This issue has gained national attention through an AP story due to the connection with Dr. Seuss' first book "And To Think That I Saw It On Mulberry Street".

Prior to the 1890's development of Mulberry Street, there were a number of Greek Revival houses on the street. Now, only two remain...a real loss to the city.

At the January 6th meeting of the Preservation Trust, it was voted to express dismay and disapproval of the 51 Mulberry Street demolition and to support the efforts of the Historical Commission to pursue all legal remedies.

The Trust suggests that members write a strong letter of shock and disapproval to both the owner and the wrecking company. Also, it is suggested that members write to the Mayor, thanking him for his support in this matter. It would be a good idea to send copies of each letter to the other parties involved. This wanton disregard for the law and our historic districts cannot go unanswered and cannot be tolerated.



INTEREST SHOWN IN RE-USE OF YORK STREET JAIL

The former jail in downtown Springfield is being studied for possible re-use as an American branch of the Tower of London museum. Officials from the museum in London visited Springfield in November to determine whether the jail site would become a finalist in the competition to locate a branch of the Tower armories museum in this country. Boston is the other most likely site.

As the center for United States arms industry since the 18th century, Springfield has much in common with the interests of the Tower museum. The potential success of this particular concept will hinge on related plans for the development of Springfield as a destination for tourists and plans for the enhancement of the waterfront area.

A decision has yet to be made and we will be following the story until the fate of the former jail building is determined.

SPT CALENDAR

Monthly meetings
held at 7:30 P.M. in
the **Memorial House at Mercy Hospital**
Next meetings are
February 3, March 3, and April 7

Tuesday, January 26,
Tuesday, February 9
Tuesday, February 23
"Porches, Pergolas and Parlors"
Lecture series on residential architecture,
interiors and exteriors from 1840-1920
to be held from 7:30-9 p.m. in the
Museum of Fine Arts auditorium

Sunday, May 2
Annual SPT Historic House Tour

CONSTRUCTION OF HABITAT HOUSE BEGINS

The new house for Greater Springfield HABITAT for Humanity is under construction at last! As of late October, the foundation has been put in and damp-proofed, the first floor deck is on, and first floor walls are being raised. The walls are double-thickness for energy savings.

HABITAT hopes to have the house, located on Marion Street in the McKnight area, closed in for the winter. As always, volunteers are essential to the work of HABITAT and are greatly appreciated; please help! Contact Bruce or Ruth Pierce at 589-1984.



Letters regarding the 51 Mulberry Street demolition should be sent to the following people:

Dr. Phillip Stone
57 Mulberry Street
Springfield, MA 01103

Zane Mirkin
Associated Building Wreckers
352 Albany Street
Springfield, MA 01109

Mayor Robert Markel
City Hall
Springfield, MA 01103



CAN YOU GUESS?



Had there been a stronger preservation movement in the 1960's, this site across from the main library might not be a parking lot today. The promise of apartment development and the rush to the suburbs by parishioners cost Springfield one of its finest landmarks. The 1960's was not that long ago. We have come a long way, but must constantly remain vigilant. So...what used to be on this empty lot, why is it so important to the history of Springfield and who designed the building that used to be there? Turn to page 7 to find out.



SACRED PLACES TOUR MARCHES ON

Sunny autumn skies smiled down upon the Trust's second annual Sacred Places walking tour, which took place on Sunday afternoon, September 20th. The tour, led by guides Jim Boone and Bob McCarroll, visited five places of worship, each serving the Forest Park Heights area, the city's largest historic district. At each stop, a member of the church or synagogue spoke about the history of the congregation and pointed out important features in the sanctuary.

All five places of worship dated from the first two decades of the 20th century, a time of rapid growth for this early "streetcar suburb". Participating in the tour were: Faith United Church of Christ, Trinity United Methodist Church, Saint Barnabas and All Saints Episcopal Church, Kesser Israel Synagogue, and First Park Memorial Baptist Church.

**william j. devlin
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architect**

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NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN TAPLEY SCHOOL SAGA

The long, sad story of the neglect and abandonment of the Tapley School, built in 1887 in McKnight, may finally be coming to an end.

A developer, using all private money, has proposed to convert this wonderful building into 30 apartments. The City Council has voted unanimously to change the zoning on the long-empty school in order to allow development as housing. Over the years, there have been many proposals for housing at Tapley, but none have gone forward. The City government felt this was the last chance to save Tapley because of its serious deterioration due to water damage. Last year, the Trust hired a roofing contractor to assess the costs of stopping the water; this would amount to at least \$25,000. However, buildings in much worse shape than Tapley have been brought back for re-use.

Neighborhood opinion has been deeply split over the nature of the housing which has been proposed for the building. The McKnight Neighborhood Council opposed the project because they felt it would increase the density of assisted or subsidized housing in an area already saturated with subsidized housing. Some said they would even prefer to see the Tapley School torn down rather than converted to housing. An interesting observation: If the site had been developed as originally zoned with two-family lots and a few apartments (as the surrounding area is) instead of a school, there would be approximately 25 to 35 units on it. The current proposal calls for 30 units. However, those in the neighborhood who supported the project saw it as the last hope of saving the historically and architecturally significant school and also as a way to eliminate an embarrassing eyesore.

The Trust has had a long involvement with the Tapley School. When it was proposed for re-use as a school, the Trust supported that as long as the original 1887 and 1910 sections were retained and any other additions were architecturally compatible. The new Rebecca Johnson School was built instead. In April of 1992, the Trust voted to adamantly oppose the demolition of the Tapley School and to support any proposal that would save the building.



Better days ahead for the Tapley School?

Because of the zone change, development plans can now progress. The school will become a mix of one and two bedroom units with 68 parking spaces and play space. The exterior will be restored to its original grandeur. All plans will have to be approved by the Historical Commission since the building is contained within the McKnight Historic District. Construction is slated to begin in early 1993.

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TRUST CELEBRATES 20TH YEAR AT ANNUAL MEETING AND RECEPTION

This year's Annual Meeting and Recognition Reception was a special one as the Preservation Trust celebrated its 20th anniversary. The event took place in the Lattimer Room of the Old First Church in Court Square on Sunday, November 22. The presentation of preservation awards took place, as well as the election of officers and members to the Board of Directors.

Selected to receive preservation awards this year were the following individuals and institutions:

Rita McInnis
for the residential renovation of
27 Elliot Street

John & Andrea MacGovern
for removal of artificial siding from
10 Dorchester Street

Paul & Josephine Sears
for removal of artificial siding from
161 Allen Street

Jesus & Carmen Rosa
for removal of artificial siding from
374 Hancock Street

Mental Health Association of Greater Springfield
for residential renovation of the
Pine Street Fire Station

MacDuffie School for Girls
for careful stewardship of the MacDuffie campus

Greek Orthodox Cathedral of Saint George
for careful stewardship of their cathedral at
8 Plainfield Street

Bacon & Wilson
for non-residential restoration of
33 State Street



Honored guests receive their awards at the Trust's Annual Recognition Reception.

The special Donald E. Champion Award for Outstanding Achievement in Historic Preservation was presented to the original members of the first Springfield Historic Commission. They are:

Stephen Hays
Athena Kalita
Kathleen Morehead
Lester Premo, Jr.
Donald Reichart
Seymour Tillman
Bernard Tourangeau

The Trust was also the recipient of a congratulatory letter from the Massachusetts Historical Commission, which reads as follows:

"On behalf of the Massachusetts Historical Commission, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Springfield Preservation Trust for 20 years of working to preserve the City of Springfield. I thank you very much for the kind invitations you extended to the staff at the Massachusetts Historical Commission to join you at your 20th Anniversary celebration. It is most unfortunate that we could not attend, but we share your pride, and would like to commend you for the preservation work that you perform everyday."

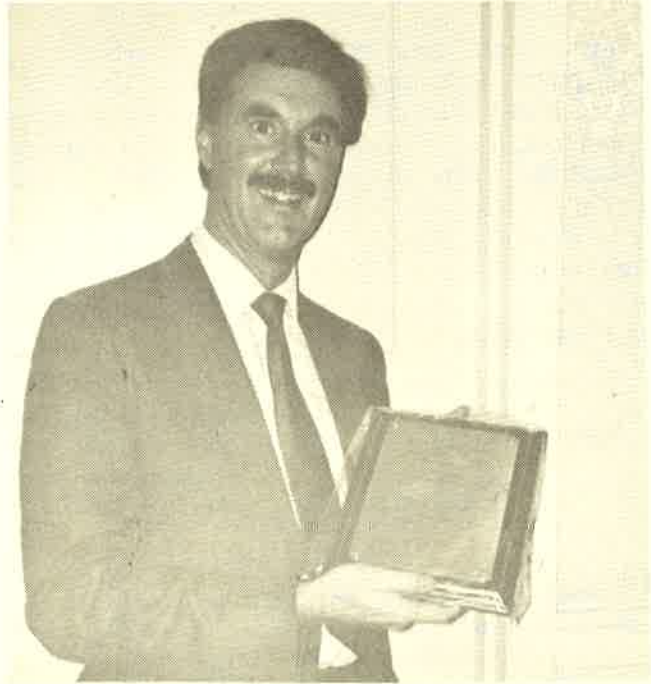
-- Judith McDonough, Executive Director and State Historic Preservation Officer.

SPECIAL HONORS FOR TRUST MEMBER

Long-time Trust member and Vice-President Bob McCarroll was honored at the Trust's Annual Meeting as one of the recipients of the Donald Campion Award for Outstanding Achievement in Historic Preservation. Bob was honored for his service as the Staff person for the first Historical Commission. Those Commission members were also honored with the Campion Award.

Among the accomplishments of the first Historical Commission were the creation of the Mattoon, McKnight and Forest Park Districts. Bob was instrumental in ensuring that this work was completed in the required manner and that the entire process was done correctly.

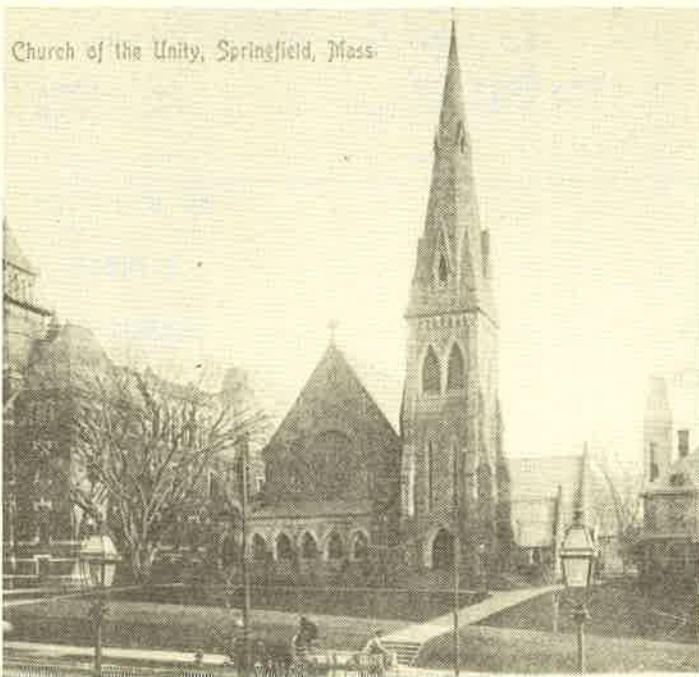
Bob has also been an invaluable member of the Preservation Trust throughout its 20-year history and is most deserving of its highest award. Congratulations Bob!



Bob McCarroll shows off his special Campion Award.



CAN YOU GUESS? Continued from page 4.



Nationally-renowned architect Henry Hobson Richardson got his start with the commission to design the Church of the Unity on State Street. This superb Victorian Gothic building was one of the most beautiful in the city and boasted fabulous stained-glass windows. It was located next to the old High School (on the left in this old postcard view) which was where Classical High School now stands. When the Unitarian Church moved to Porter Lake Drive and built a modern building, this beautiful structure was destroyed in order to build apartments...which never actually materialized. Considering what probably would have been built in the 1960's, perhaps the parking lot isn't so bad after all.

ANNUAL PICNIC HELD IN MCKNIGHT

The annual Preservation Trust Pot-Luck Picnic took place on Sunday, August 23rd. The Trust would like to extend thanks to Lynne Goldberg, Bob Wool, Ted Devanski and Bill Guzzy who co-hosted the event in their abutting yards in the McKnight Historic District. Despite the somewhat cool weather, Bob and Lynne's pool was very popular and Ted and Bill's gardens were a delight to lounge in while eating all the great food. A good time was had by all who attended.

The Springfield Preservation Trust

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

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

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WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

We would like to welcome to Trust membership the following new people: Jo Sarnelli, Michael Plumly, Barbara Silverstein, Adele Conway, Michael and Christina Fix, and Ralph Bilodeau.

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