

The PRESERVATIONIST

Newsletter of
the SPRINGFIELD PRESERVATION TRUST

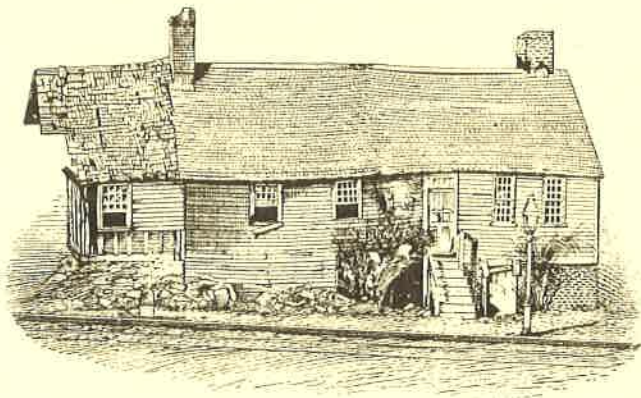
Spring 1992

"BLIGHT-BUSTERS" SQUAD IS FORMED IN SPRINGFIELD

The city has recently set up a task-force whose purpose is to monitor vacant and vandalized buildings in Springfield and then to come up with recommendations for their re-use, demolition or the further securing of those properties. In tough economic times, we are faced with too many buildings that owners have simply walked away from and abandoned. Many of these buildings are currently owned by banks who are overwhelmed with surplus properties.

This active stand on the part of the city is a good one, but caution must be exercised. The rush to demolish buildings, rather than to secure them, is a temptation in many cases. Hard economic times come and go, but a demolished structure stays gone.

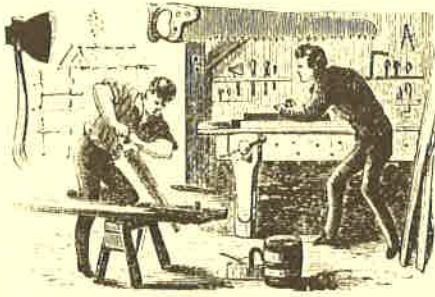
The Trust has suggested that someone with an insight into historic preservation issues and relevant experience be placed on this task force so that the situations of historic properties can be assessed and properly protected. The current administration is very supportive of preservation issues, so this is a good time for us all to work together in the safeguarding of all structures of historical interest or significance.



This stately McKnight-district home will welcome the public on the Historic House Tour.

ANNUAL SPRING HOUSE TOUR SET TO GO

The Trust's sixteenth Historic House Tour will take place on Sunday, April 26 between 11 A.M. and 4 P.M. A variety of fine homes will be open, including Colonial Revival houses in McKnight and Forest Park Heights, Queen Anne houses in Maple Hill and Ridgewood, a townhouse on Mattoon Street, and an apartment in the Colony Court, the grand dame of Maple Street apartment houses. Tour-goers have the choice of driving themselves or taking one of the Trust buses which depart at 11, 12, 1 and 2 o'clock from just opposite the City Library on State Street. Tickets are \$8 for self-drive and \$10 for the bus; Trust members are \$7 and \$9. Once again, we are grateful to Shawmut Bank for their help in underwriting the costs of this annual educational event.



Carpenter.

NEW MEMBER SERVICE BEING DEVELOPED

Membership Chairperson Deni Sindel is working to gather information with the goal of providing a new service to Trust members. The proposed service will be a compilation of vendors, suppliers, services, craftspeople, and other sources for historic restoration-related items and/or workpersons. So...if you have the name of a company or person who has performed satisfactory work for you or has supplied materials to you in the past, please give Deni a call at 739-6037 (evenings) or drop her a list at the following address: 166 Mulberry Street, Springfield, MA 01105. This compilation will be kept to aid all interested Trust members in finding sources for anything to do with our older (and newer) homes and will be available as part of the benefits that go along with a Trust membership.

Also, we will be looking to start a series of lectures along these same lines. We are looking for "experts", professional or amateur, who are willing to share their knowledge, ideas and experiences with a group. You don't need a degree, only a willingness to speak to a small gathering about your knowledge and/or to informally share ideas. Any candidates willing to participate should also call Deni at the number mentioned previously.

Many thanks for your anticipated involvement!

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1992 PRESERVATION CONFERENCE IS ANNOUNCED

Historic Massachusetts, Inc. has announced that the Seventh Annual Statewide Preservation Conference, this year entitled "Preservation is Good Business", will be held on May 8, 1992 in Boston. The aim of the conference is to focus preservation efforts in areas that will promote the economic revitalization of the Commonwealth. There will be speakers and panel discussions which will promote the management and protection of our historical and cultural resources within the framework of the current fiscal crisis in Massachusetts. For the past six years, the Historic Massachusetts Conference has been the most important event for the Massachusetts preservation community, attracting approximately 500 participants annually. Attendees represent diverse perspectives concerned about the Commonwealth's resources, including business leaders, planners, developers, environmentalists, architects, historians, educators, public officials and community activists. For further information, contact: Jill Shiel at Historic Massachusetts, (617) 723-3383.

william j. devlin
aia, inc.,
architect

SPRINGFIELD 732-6197

MARENGO PARK CONDOS
 PINE ST. FIRE STA, REUSE

ENDANGERED PROPERTY LIST UPDATE

One of the Trust's new Board members, Bill Devlin, has agreed to take on the assignment of "watchdog" for the Trust's "Endangered Building" list for the city of Springfield. The Trust has been working to identify properties of historic value that are threatened by neglect, adverse development or demolition. The Trust believes that by keeping an eye on these properties and writing letters to the city authorities and newspapers, we can help keep the spotlight focused on notable buildings. Every issue of our newsletter will carry our updated "Top Ten" list of at-risk properties. This activity is especially important during these tough economic times when demolition sometimes seems the only solution when people are faced with a vacant, deteriorated building or one that appears to have no immediate prospects at hand.

Our volunteer, Bill Devlin, is an architect in Springfield who is building a solid reputation. Bill has worked on some important restoration work, as well as designs for new construction that is compatible with historic surroundings. He has also been a faithful observer of the Springfield Historical Commission for some years and is aware of preservation issues throughout the city.

TOP 10 ENDANGERED PROPERTIES

<u>Property</u>	<u>Owner</u>
(1) Hotel Charles	SRA
(2) Technical High School	City
(3) Tapley School	City
(4) Carew Street School	City
(5) Union Station	SRA
(6) Winchester Sq. Fire Station	City
(7) Temple St. Carriage House	Private
(8) York Street Jail	County
(9) Memorial Bridge	County
(10) 415 Belmont Ave.	Private

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SPT CALENDAR

Monthly meetings
 held at 7:30 P.M. in
the Memorial House at Mercy Hospital
 Next meetings are
May 6, June 3, and July 1

Sunday, April 26 from 11 A.M. to 4 P.M.
 in Springfield
 Annual Historic House Tour

Friday, May 8
 in Boston
 Massachusetts Historic Preservation
 Conference



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NEW HABITAT HOUSE PLANNED FOR MCKNIGHT

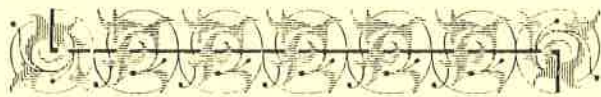
This summer, a new house is planned for a vacant lot at 107 Marion Street, in the McKnight National Register Historic District.

The house is being sponsored by Greater Springfield HABITAT for Humanity, Inc., an affiliate of the widely-known national/international group, HABITAT for Humanity. The group is based in Georgia (yes, these are the folks with whom Jimmy Carter works) and it sponsors self-help, sweat-equity housing for low-income people...with no government money and interest-free mortgages. This project will provide a home for a fourth local HABITAT family.

Designed to be compatible with the area, the house was recently approved by the McKnight Neighborhood Council's Design Review Committee and the support of the Council is anticipated. Support of community residents is also needed for a variance required for construction, due to the size of the lot.

Construction of HABITAT houses is accomplished by donations of materials and/or labor (no particular skills required) in addition to the sweat equity of the owners-to-be. Most activity tends to occur on weekends, with chores always available for interested volunteers, as well as plenty of guidance.

If you would like to participate in any way, please call Bruce or Ruth Pierce at 589-1984 (Ludlow).



CAN YOU GUESS?

Do you recognize this rather non-descript 1920's-looking building? We might never give it a second look except for that clock tower on the roof and the fancy arched doorway on the left side. Why would such an ordinary structure have these details? Turn to page 6 to find out.

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The Tapley School in better days, as shown in this antique postcard photograph.

Focus

LATEST ASSESSMENT OF THE TAPLEY SCHOOL SITUATION

This month, the Trust's focus of attention is on the Tapley School. It was built in 1887 during the height of the development of the McKnight neighborhood. Designed in the Queen Anne style, this brick and brownstone building is a very important architectural and historical landmark in the McKnight Historic District.

The school was closed in the early 1980's and has sat vacant ever since. Over the years there have been several attempts to restore it for a variety of potential uses as a school, housing, or as some type of community center. To this date, no proposal has been carried through.

A recent tour of the building was shocking. The main roof is leaking badly and the ceilings throughout are falling down from the excessive moisture. The connecting structure between the 1887 main building and the 1910 addition is totally shot and water is just pouring in. As a result, one staircase has totally collapsed and one of the classroom floors has actually collapsed into the basement. What other structural damage that might also exist remains unknown at this time. The Building Commissioner stated that he should condemn the building. However, the Mayor is adamantly opposed to tearing down the building.

There is one current proposal to save the building by converting it to 33 housing units for low income tenants. The Neighborhood Council is opposed to more subsidized housing in the area. The Mayor has told the McKnight Neighborhood Council that if they come up with any alternate proposal that is both viable and fundable, he will consider it. The Mayor agrees that there should not be subsidized housing at that location, but he would prefer that use to losing the building permanently.

There is not a lot of time left for the Tapley School if action is not taken soon; the amount of structural damage is increasing rapidly. Please write to the Mayor and let him know how you feel about saving this building.

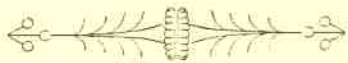
TRUST REITERATES ITS POSITION ON TAPLEY SCHOOL

In 1987, the Trust took the position that its interest in the Tapley School was that it be restored and that its important original architectural features be retained. The Trust does not take a position on any proposed uses of buildings, as long as the goal of preserving the building is met.

At the April 1, 1992 Board meeting, it was again voted to support the reuse of the Tapley School in whatever way would preserve it. The Trust is adamantly opposed to the demolition of the school.

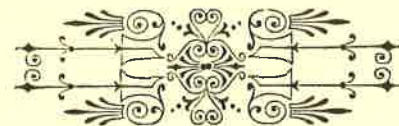
YORK STREET JAIL REUSE IS STUDIED

According to the newsletter of Springfield Central, a private, non-profit development organization established to initiate and manage economic development in downtown Springfield, a committee has been formed to study possible uses for the York Street Jail. They have hired a team of consultants to come up with a recommendation on how the jail should be developed. The consultants involved have backgrounds in market analysis, strategic planning, museum planning, public space design and development of entertainment centers. It is hoped to somehow redevelop the jail into some type of tourist attraction which will complement the Basketball Hall of Fame.



CAN YOU GUESS? Continued from page 4.

Wow...and we thought Michael Jackson's facelift was radical! This beautiful brownstone edifice was located on the southeast corner of the Main Street/State Street intersection. It was built as a Masonic Temple and was one of the most handsome buildings on Main Street. Built in 1892-93, it was radically changed in the 1920's, all in the name of progress and keeping up-to-date. The age-old question must be asked once again: is "new" necessarily better?




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LECTURE SERIES ENJOYS SUCCESS

The Trust, with the Connecticut Valley Historical Museum as co-sponsor, presented a series of three public slide lectures during February and March.

The first lecture featured consultant Kathy Broomer speaking about the results of the Trust's historic survey of the Pine Point area. Over forty people, most of them from the neighborhood itself, attended and heard the tale of the area's evolution from a sparsely populated farming community in the 19th century to a growing streetcar suburb of the 20th century.

The second lecture focused on the Craftsman style of architecture, not only in Springfield, but across America. Ms. Broomer traced the style from its turn-of-the-century beginnings in California through the work of the firm of Greene and Greene and onward to its appearance around 1909 in Springfield and its subsequent proliferation over the course of the next two decades. Large numbers of Craftsman-style homes are now contained within the neighborhoods of Pine Point, Forest Park, Liberty Heights, East Springfield and Indian Orchard. In fact our city has one of the greatest concentrations of this architectural style in the entire Commonwealth.

The third lecture was presented by museum consultant Susan Montgomery and dealt specifically with the design of interior space during Arts and Crafts period. Ms. Montgomery discussed the philosophical origins of the movement and some of its numerous practitioners, including the well-known firm of Gustav Stickley.

For any of our readers who are interested in learning more about the Arts & Crafts style, we are printing this list of suggested reading on the subject. We thank Susan Montgomery, one of the guest speakers in our lecture series on this important period in American design and architecture.

Arts & Crafts Movement in America, 1876-1916, Robert Judson Clark, editor, 1971.

'The Art that is Life:' The Arts & Crafts Movement in America, 1875-1920, Kaplan, 1987.

Treasures of the American Arts & Crafts Movement, Volpe & Cathers, 1988.

Greene & Greene: Architecture as Fine Art, Makinson, 1977.

Greene & Greene: Furniture and Related Drawings, Makinson, 1979.

The Comfortable House, Gowans, 1986.

Art Pottery of the United States, Evans, 2nd ed., 1988.

From Our Native Clay, Eidelberg & Ellison, 1987.

MAGAZINES:

Bungalow

Arts & Crafts Quarterly



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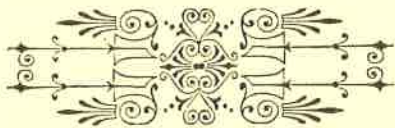
Springfield Preservation Trust is a non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation of historic structures in the City of Springfield, Massachusetts.



This charming Queen Anne-style Victorian is but one of several appealing homes that will open on the Trust Historic House Tour this Spring. See story on page 1.



MARILYN SUTIN
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(413)733-3697



WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

We would like to welcome to Trust membership the following new people: Maryanne Hawkins, Janis Rae McDonald and John E. Normand.



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