



## SPRINGFIELD PRESERVATION TRUST, INC

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[www.springfieldpreservationtrust.org](http://www.springfieldpreservationtrust.org)

Dedicated to Preserving Springfield's Architectural History

### October 2009

#### 77 Maple Street Rehabilitation Project Update

In July the Springfield Preservation Trust (SPT) took another step in the rehabilitation of 77 Maple Street by issuing a RFQ (Request For Qualifications). The RFQ asked contractors interested in the project to answer a series of questions ranging from the number of years they have been in business, to their actual experience working with historic properties over 100 years old as 77 Maple Street is 177 years old.

Prior to the submission deadline of the RFQ, SPT board member Bob McCarroll and project architect Bill Devlin held several open houses so perspective bidders could get a close up look of the project. SPT has divided the work to be done into two phases with hopes to have the first part done by mid November.



SPT received many qualified replies for its' RFQ. A committee reviewed the numerous submissions and rated the companies as qualified based on their responses. The next step in this process is to ask the qualified candidates to submit bids for the first phase of the project. SPT will keep you

updated on the progress of its efforts through our newsletters. However, you can visit [www.springfieldpreservationtrust.org](http://www.springfieldpreservationtrust.org) to see photos and learn more about the project and history of 77 Maple Street.

#### Autumn Tour

SPT will sponsor a "Homes of Forest Park" Tour on Sunday, October 18 between 1:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m. The tour will feature six homes in the area north of Sumner Avenue. Included will be an 1895 Colonial Revival house at 26 Greenleaf Street, a 1903 Tudor Revival house at 257 Fort Pleasant Avenue, a 1906 Shingle style house at 151 Forest Park Avenue, a 1913 Arts & Crafts house at 8 Riverview Terrace, a recently renovated 1910 Arts & Crafts house at 134 Forest Park Avenue, and a 1988 Neo-Colonial Revival condo at 185 Sumner Avenue.

Besides being Springfield's largest local historic district, Forest Park Heights is one of the most elegant turn-of-the-century neighborhoods in Western Massachusetts. Residential development was spurred in the 1890s by expansion and electrification of the trolley system, which connected the suburban neighborhood to Downtown. Creation of nearby Forest Park was a further incentive for people to live in the area.

More than 600 houses were constructed over a 35-year period. The area north of Sumner Avenue was primarily developed by the McKnight family which also developed the McKnight and Ridgewood areas.



Admission is \$15, \$12 for SPT members. Tickets can be purchased at the following locations:

Flowers Flowers, 758 Sumner Avenue  
The Flower Box, 596 Carew Street

Tickets can also be purchased on the afternoon of the tour between 12:45 p.m. and 3:30 p.m. at the intersection of Forest Park Avenue at Maplewood Terrace. For more information, call 413-747-0656 or go to [www.SpringfieldPreservationTrust.org](http://www.SpringfieldPreservationTrust.org)

#### Development of the Forest Park Neighborhood

The Forest Park Historic District was born with the installation of the trolley tracks on Sumner Avenue which connected downtown to the "suburbs". With the simultaneous creation of the park itself, it became the "in" place to live, with families moving here from the Old Hill and North End neighborhoods. It was a development created by Newman and McKnight. The streets were laid out to be "park-like", hence the numerous terraces, fountains, and triangles of green. The building took place primarily from about 1895

through 1915, with a wide variety of styles employed, including Queen Ann, Stick Style, Colonial Revival, and Mission.

Some of the homes, for example the Savery House (present home of Joe and Mary Napolitan on the corner of Buena Vista and Longhill Streets ) were very elaborate, and built to impress. For the most part, however, the homes were not as grand as those in the original McKnight District which predated the Forest Park development. Other homes were more modest, but still with fine woodwork and stained glass.

The apartment buildings on Sumner Avenue, mostly built around 1910-1915, were large, spacious units, some with maid's quarters. Because of the accessibility of the "street cars" people were flocking to fill them, mainly those who might work in downtown Springfield, a booming city in that era. The Sumner Avenue School, state of the art when built in 1911, was proudly described as a draw for the neighborhood, as was the Forest Park Library, a Carnegie library built around 1911.

The Forest Park Memorial Baptist Church on the corner of Forest Park Avenue and Garfield Street, which used East Longmeadow red stone for its base, is an excellent example of Shingle Style. Built for a place of worship, it was within walking distance for many of the new neighborhood residents. Holy Name Church on Dickinson Street was founded in 1909 to meet the expanding population of Catholics. There were three synagogues built in the new neighborhood, the earliest on Oakland Street across from the Forest Park Middle School. The Jewish residents of the North end of Springfield followed the predominantly white AngloSaxon Protestant settlers into the neighborhood.

The oldest portion of the Forest Park neighborhood is on Allen Street, which was home to several farmsteads that still remain. The Lower Forest Park neighborhood around Oakland and Orange Streets was developed to provide housing for workers at the Springfield Armory. The area going from Dickinson Street out to the Longmeadow line was developed later in the late 1920s and early 1930s. This includes several terraced streets which featured "English Style" houses, with brick, stucco, and timber construction. As expansion continued out Sumner Avenue, the great bungalow homes of the White Street area emerged in the 1920s.

### Church Closings

The Roman Catholic Diocese of Springfield has announced the closing of numerous churches in the region, including three in Springfield. Scheduled to be shuttered at the end of the year are:

The 1904 Gothic Revival Immaculate Conception Church on Parker Street

The 1925 Italian Renaissance Our Lady of Hope Church on Armory Street

The 1920s Gothic Revival Holy Family Church on Eastern Avenue

The news is alarming in the light of the fate of the 1870s Saint Joseph's Church, which was listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Diocese first sold off the parking lot, dooming any reuse of the church. A year later, the church was sold to a developer who demolished it for a commercial complex.



Some members of Immaculate Conception and Our Lady of Hope have requested the Springfield Historical Commission to begin the process to designate the churches local historic districts. The Commission voted to start writing a Preliminary Report. Church members are also petitioning to rezone the properties from Business to Residential.

### Restoration of the William H. Bausch House

For many years the house at 843 Chestnut Street was abandoned and uncared for. It was in sad shape, but the grand house still retained much of its original details including inlaid floors, elaborate trim and moldings, beautiful windows, and handsome woodwork. In the fall of 2008 after years of unpaid taxes, the City of Springfield took the property.



In November, SPT helped advertise the historic property for restoration. SPT ran an ad in the Republican because the city was only able to run a small legal advertisement. SPT's ad was large and had a picture, helping to attract interest in the property.

The city decided to dispose of the property through a request for proposals process. This was done so they would have control over what happened to this historic asset, which isn't possible through the auction process. Through the advocacy of SPT, the city also agreed to place a preservation restriction on the property. This means the Springfield Historical Commission will have design review over any exterior changes to the main house and carriage house.

The Colonial Revival home was built for William H. Bausch, owner of Bausch Machine Tool Company, in 1899. The Bausch Machine Tool Company was located close by on Wason Avenue. One of the buildings of the company still survives and has been reused as medical offices. Mr. Bausch's house was built by Napoleon Russell, one of Springfield's foremost homebuilders between 1890-1920. Russell built approximately seventy homes and developed property in Forest Park, the North End, Hungry Hill and Atwater Park.

His homes represented the popular styles and tastes of the upper class of Springfield during the last turn of the century. In the immediate area of 843 Chestnut there are at least three other homes built by Russell. There are also many more in Atwater Park, where he developed a section of the neighborhood around Springfield, Shefford, Caseland, and Cunningham Streets. He built two beautiful homes for himself in this area, one on Springfield Street, and his last residence on Shefford Street.

After years of neglect the City of Springfield awarded 843 Chestnut Street to the property's neighbors who planned on restoring the home for their personal residence.

Since the city turned the property over to the new owners, the home has started the restoration process.



Windows have been restored, columns and posts have been repaired and the whole house has gotten a new paint job. The project has been moving right along over the past six months and is now showing significant improvements. One can

see the changes in the before and after pictures. It sure will be a candidate for a SPT preservation award when it is finished.

## Helpful Hints: Getting Ready for Winter

It is time for you to do your preparation for winter so that your old house is snug and all ready for the harsh New England weather. Walk around the outside of your house and look for the obvious. Are your bushes cut away from the house so they do not hold all that extra moisture from snow? Are there any dead or dangerous branches hanging over the house that might brake in a storm? Are your gutters firmly attached and the hangers in good shape so that they drain towards the drains? Of course at the last moment before the first snow or freeze, be sure they have been well cleaned. Stopped up gutters are worse than having no gutters at all.

Are your storm windows and doors in place and closed tight? Look at your roof for any missing shingles or slates or loose flashing. Easier to get it fixed now rather than in an ice storm in February. Are there vines or ivy that should be trimmed down so they don't hold moisture in the winter? Check for small places that need paint touch up so exposed wood is not there for the snow and ice to get to. Of course before winter a fresh coat of paint to your exterior wooden steps and porches should be applied for protection.

Be sure all leaves are up from driveways so as not to clog your snow blower. All the normal energy saving steps should be taken; clean and tune up your boiler or change the filters in your hot air furnace and make sure your chimney flues are close tightly.

When you shovel that snow that will be here before you know it, be sure to also shovel your porches, don't let that ice and snow build up and stay there all winter, it's very hard on the porches. Get a plastic shovel without a metal edge to shovel the porches so they do not damage and scrape the paint off and expose the wood, remember, you just painted them. All of these things will make your home suffer less in our harsh climate and make your chores in the spring easier. Have fun, get ready to snuggle up; you will need the rest if you did all these things.

## Second Saturday Walking Tours

There are 2 tours remaining in the series of walking tours sponsored by the Springfield Museums and Armory-Quadrangle Civic Association. The tours will take place rain or shine, beginning at 10:30 AM and ending around noon. The tour admission is \$5.00 per person, but it is free for AQCA or Springfield Museums members.

**October 10:** John O'Connor, historian and genealogist extraordinaire, will take us on a tour through the Springfield Cemetery. Tour starts at the Springfield Cemetery; parking is available at the Cemetery.

**November 14:** Gloria Russell, art historian, will talk about some of the more famous painters who have spent time in Springfield; Chester Harding, Whistler, and more! The tour will start and end at the Springfield Museums Welcome Center on Edwards Street.

### **Editorial: Ward Representation**

Whether you were a supporter of Ward Representation or not, we have it so you should become involved. There will now be someone whose special interest is now your neighborhood. Work for your favorite candidate; be sure they know of your interest in Historic Preservation and how it is so important to the future of our City. If you work for a candidate and contribute to their campaign, you will then be in a better position to ask them for their help when inevitably there are issues that City Council or School Committee people will have to deal with that impact our interests. Zoning, school reuse, or demolitions are issues that are coming our way soon. We all know politics is about education and influence, get ahead of it now, be ready, educate and support you favorite person.

Jim Boone

Monthly meetings of the Springfield Preservation Trust are held on the first Wednesday of each month at 6:30 p.m., at the Mason Wright Retirement Center, 74 Walnut Street. All Trust members are welcome.

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