



## SPRINGFIELD PRESERVATION TRUST, INC

74 Walnut Street, Springfield, MA 01105  
Telephone Number – 413-747-0656

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

Dedicated to Preserving Springfield's Architectural History

**April 2010**

### 2010 Winter Fundraiser

On January 30<sup>th</sup> SPT held its most important and successful annual winter fundraiser EVER! And we owe every bit of our success to Donna and Gary West who graciously agreed to open their home for the event. This event officially kicked off the fundraising campaign for 77 Maple Street. SPT hired Al Dente catering for the evening who supplied ample food for all those in attendance. Guests were able to see the progress made on 77 Maple St. since its purchase via a slide show that ran continuously throughout the evening.



The West's displayed their own storyboard showing folks the work they have done to their beautiful home. SPT would like to thank the West's for making this year's winter fundraiser possible.

### Annual Meeting

The Trust held its Annual Meeting at 273 Street on February 28, 2010. Elected were Benjamin Murphy, president; Wendy Somes, vice president; Michael Marcinkewich, treasurer; Robert McCarroll, clerk; and board members Francis Gallagher, Robert Holbrook, Linda Langevin, James Llewellyn, Michael Rheault, and Steven Shultis.

President Ben Murphy gave an overview of the past year and Project Architect Bill Devlin gave an update on 77 Maple Street. Following the meeting, Kathleen Pellegrino gave a presentation about the renovation work her family had done at 265 and 273 State Street followed by a tour of 56 and 62 Temple Street.

### Spring 2010 House Tour

The Trust will sponsor a "Homes of Forest Park" Tour on Sunday, May 16, between 1:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m. The tour will feature six homes in the area south of Sumner Avenue between Dickinson Street and Forest Park.

Much of the area was developed as Entry Dingle Heights, located in a section of Longmeadow annexed to Springfield in the early twentieth century. Construction of most homes in the neighborhood took place between 1920 and 1940 and reflect the popular Colonial Revival and Tudor Revival styles. French-Canadian builders such as Joseph Chapdelaine, Joseph St. Laurent, Maurice Angers, and Zephryne Lassonde were prominent in developing the area.

Tickets are \$15 in advance at Flowers Flowers, 758 Sumner Avenue and at The Flower Box, 596 Carew Street. Tickets can be purchased on the day of the tour from 12:45 p.m. until 3:00 p.m. on Dickinson Street at Olmsted Drive; cost of ticket is \$20.

Trust members receive a \$3 discount. For more information, call 413-747-0656 or go to [www.SpringfieldPreservationTrust.org](http://www.SpringfieldPreservationTrust.org).



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## Springfield Preservation Awards

The Springfield Preservation Trust is in the process of choosing the recipients for this year's Annual Preservation Awards. Nominations have been collected and a committee will be choosing the winners. This year the Awards Ceremony will be held in June. Look for more information about the date and time at [www.springfieldpreservationtrust.org](http://www.springfieldpreservationtrust.org). A display of this year's awardees and previous year's award recipients, will be at Center Court, Tower Square, in June.

## Ed Sims

The Trust lost a dear friend in January with the passing of Doctor Edward Sims. Ed had served on the Board of Directors, opened his lovely Shingle Style McKnight home for several SPT house tours, and hosted two of our Winter Fund Raisers.

Ed, a professor at Springfield College, moved into his house more than forty years ago. He first rented an accessory apartment from the owner, another SC professor, and ultimately bought the house and lived there with his partner Paul Kenney. Together, they meticulously maintained the house, built by architect G. Wood Taylor and husband of Lillian McKnight.

The Board has voted to name the annual preservation award given for stewardship after Ed Sims.

## 77 Maple Street Update

77 Maple Street is one of the oldest buildings in Springfield and the oldest school building in the city. Due to unfortunate decisions made by the previous owner, the building had become a structurally unstable eyesore. Without the Springfield Preservation Trust purchasing the building and starting emergency repairs, the building would have certainly collapsed by now.

Soon after purchasing the property in the winter of 2009, SPT hired architect William Devlin to start the restoration process. SPT also applied for and received City of Springfield CDBG funding to help with the first phase of the restoration project which focused on structural repairs. Phase One is almost finished and SPT is continuing to raise funds to continue this important restoration.

The previous owner caused extensive structural damage to the South wall of the back ell of the building. The structural footings had been undermined when the cellar floor was dug out beneath the footings. The first and second floors of the ell were no longer supported and an entire section of wall was ready to collapse. General Contractor Kirk Stephens had to carefully disassemble the wall all the way into the basement. The wall has now been completely rebuilt and the first and second stories and the roof are now structurally sound.

During some periods of freezing temperatures, propane

heaters were brought in to keep the cement at the proper temperatures so work could continue. Structural concrete block was constructed to support the first and second floors that had been compromised due to the collapsed wall. Original brick was reused as an outside veneer to ensure that the new wall matched the old wall exactly.



Now that the building is structurally sound, SPT hopes to continue to move forward with the project as additional funds become available.



## Brief History of Forest Park, Springfield's Second Street Car Suburb

Where the McKnight neighborhood came into being with the horse drawn trolley from 1870-1890, the Forest Park neighborhood came into its own with the coming of the electric trolley in 1890. Prior to that there had been horse cars coming up Fort Pleasant to Sumner Avenue; the track ending where Trinity Church is located. The Fort Hill/Sumner Avenue trolley line was the first in the area. There was anti-electric trolley efforts mounted by the telephone company in 1887 thinking it would interfere with phone signals and others who felt they were too dangerous and would cause fires.

Coming to the park was the initial incentive to put in the trolley, the neighborhood followed. O.S. Greenleaf had planned a development in the early 1870's but it never got off the ground due to the depression of 1873. Greenleaf lived in the first house on Sumner Avenue (1874), located on the east corner of Firglade Street. In 1883 he donated land for part of the park.

William McKnight, long time park commissioner, also donated land. Some land was later purchased from the Dickinson family and in 1890, Everett Barney added 109 acres of his land (originally purchased in 1882). The Mutual Investment Company bought 75 acres of land in 1889 from O.S. Greenleaf located between Fort Pleasant, Belmont and Sumner. These were the McKnight's, as well as N.I. Hawley, C.H. Churchill, and George Vaughan. John D. McKnight died in 1891 but his brother William, developer of the McKnight area, and Charles McKnight, son of John, worked in the business of developing the area north of Sumner. They briefly owned land on the south side of Sumner but sold it to the Forest Park Heights Company to concentrate on their original development.

Note older era houses in the early Greenleaf, Churchill, Garfield area are much like McKnight houses. As the Mutual Investment Company continued development over the next 20-30 years, the styles stayed contemporary with what was popular at the time. By the time Oxford was developed, Arts and Crafts style was in vogue. Charles McKnight had one of the first automobiles and used it to promote the area by taking people for rides to see houses.

In 1894 Louis F. Newman bought 51 acres south of Sumner from the Mutual Investment Company and opened up the area. Magnolia Terrace was the premier street and houses built there cost between \$5000 and \$10,000. Other streets were allowed to have \$3500 houses.

The streets were named after trees, Pineywoods, Spruceland, Firglade, Beechwood, Magnolia, Hawthorne, (the latter changed to Washington and Cherryvale)

Houses south of Sumner were of the Shingle and Colonial Revival styles, the most modern of the day. Development moved south toward the park and streets were set out with terraces and a fountain on Florentine Gardens. Forest Park was, and continues to be, one of Springfield's premier neighborhoods.

## SPT Library

Architecture – There are more than a dozen books dedicated to architecture in our library, here are three different examples.

William Dudley Hunt, Jr. wrote [American Architecture: a field guide to the most important examples](#). He breaks the country up into regions then gives locations and dates of the examples for each. New England of course is well documented and Springfield is specifically mentioned for the Alexander House, a fine Federal style

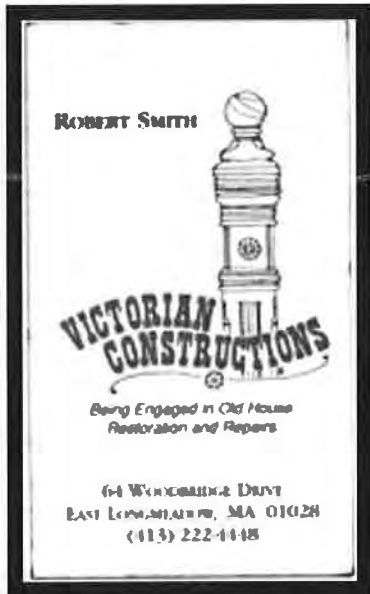


house. In 1983 when Mr. Hunt was doing his research the house was located at 284 State St.

Thanks to efforts of Jim Boone and others the Alexander House was successfully moved onto Elliot St to make way for the new Federal Court House saving this fine example of a Federal house for future generations to enjoy.

Rachel Carley created [The Visual Dictionary of American Domestic Architecture](#); its twelve chapters covering various periods of building styles. Chapter seven covers the Victorian Era and has diagrams displaying the attributes of each style home, Queen Anne, Gothic Revival, Italianate, and Stick Style. Each section shows both the exterior and interior designs that epitomizes their perspective style. Within the section there are six styles of staircases each with a beautiful ornate newel post as well as four gate patterns.

Cyril M Harris edited an Illustrated Dictionary of Historic Architecture in 1977. Its 585 pages give definitions from the simple to the obscure of world architecture. The first entry is Aaron's Rod – An ornament or molding consisting of a straight rod from which pointed leaves or scroll work emerge on each side at regular intervals. The last entry is Zystos – Among the ancients, a portico or aisle of unusual length, commonly used for gymnastic exercises. Throughout the book global cultures such as Japanese, Islamic, Greek, and Roman are identified for their architectural attributes.



### It's Spring Chore Time

Yes, at last it is spring or soon enough to start planning what we need to do to/for our older homes, or newer ones for that matter. Starting at the top, check your roof for missing or damaged shingles. Check your gutters, especially if you did not clean them just before the first snow. Also plan to clean them after all the little maple and oak debris fall this spring. Get this done and you are home free till fall again. A clogged gutter is worse than no gutter at all.

Check to see if your shoveling in the winter scrapped the paint off your porches or steps. If so, repaint now to keep the water out. If your siding in need of paint, now is the time to plan that job if you are going to do it yourself or line up a contractor for this year. Remember good contractors are busy even in tough times so call them now to get on their schedules for the summer.

Time to put the snow blower away. A recent article said that it is best to fill the gas tank with high test gas and a gas stabilizer and run it through the system some. Leave it in the tank as gaskets and seals dry out. Small engines are having problems due to the alcohol in the gas and high test gas has a lower alcohol content. Find a gas stabilizer especially designed to deal with the alcohol.

Kick back and enjoy the summer, it will be time for fall chores before you know it.

### WPA Image Project

The Works Progress Administration was the largest New Deal agency, employing millions to carry out public works projects including the construction of public buildings and roads, and operating large arts, drama, media and literacy projects. One of these projects undertaken in Springfield was the photographing of every building in the city. This project took place in 1938 & 1939 and represents what the City of Springfield looked like in the years between the Great Depression and World War II.

The Springfield Preservation Trust has taken on an effort to digitally scan these images which are found in the City of Springfield Building Department. Generally, the goal has been to scan streets that are found within the city's local historic districts but when a street like State Street is only partially in a district, the entire street is scanned at once. The project is quite an undertaking. Volunteers have to bring in the scanning equipment into the city's building department during business hours to actually scan the images.

Once the images have been scanned they need to be cropped and resized for the internet. SPT has chosen to use a free online program, Google's Picasa, to store and share the images online. The albums are organized by street and they can be accessed by going to the resource tab at [www.springfieldpreservationtrust.org](http://www.springfieldpreservationtrust.org).

Currently online are Mulberry Street, High Street, Ridgwood Terrace & Place, School Street, Eliot Street, and parts of State Street and Maple Street.

Enjoy browsing through these historic images. If you are interested and available during business hours to scan WPA images please contact us by email at [info@springfieldpreservationtrust.org](mailto:info@springfieldpreservationtrust.org).

## SPT Newsletter time Capsule

Being an SPT board member I have the pleasure to peruse the archives of the trust actions over the last 38 years. Due to impeccable record keeping by Jim Boone, Sarah Murray and many other previous board members, all the efforts of past projects and ideas will always be visible proof that the Trust has lived up to its mission of advocating for and preserving Springfield's historic properties.

### FALL 1981



The Trust acquired 134 Buckingham St as its third rehab project. The Breck house (known by its last owners) is an 1881 Victorian home in the McKnight section of Springfield and if not purchased by the Trust, it would surely have crumpled by neglect. The Trust completed the rehab and sold it sixteen months later. While the house has changed hands several time since it is still a wonderful asset to the City and the neighborhood.

### WINTER 1987

Gov Dukakis was in Winchester Square for the ground breaking ceremony for the rehabilitation of the Indian Motorcycle into an apartment building. Governor Dukakis stated that if this building were not on the National Register of Historic Places, this ceremony might have never taken place. Special thanks were given to Hilton Abbott, Peter Zorzi, Dave Sanborn, and Fran Gagnon who advocated over 10 years to get the building on the National Register.

### **E-newsletter**

SPT is in the process of developing an e-newsletter that will run parallel to our quarterly print newsletter. We hope to cut down on printing and postage expenses by mailing and printing less newsletters and sending more e-newsletters. To sign up for the e-news visit [www.springfieldpreservationtrust.org](http://www.springfieldpreservationtrust.org). Fill in your name and email address in the right hand column and click the "Subscribe" button; it's that easy.



### **Advertising**

if you are interested in placing an ad in the SPT Newsletter, please contact Jim Boone at 734-9110 or Marilyn Sutin at 733-3697. Business card size ads are \$35 per newsletter.

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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