



SPRINGFIELD PRESERVATION TRUST, INC

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

www.springfieldpreservationtrust.org

Dedicated to Preserving Springfield's Architectural History

December 2010

Holiday Tour

SPT will sponsor a "Holidays in the City" Tour on Sunday, December 5 between 1:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m. The tour will feature six historic homes decorated for Christmas or Hanukkah in Forest Park, McKnight, and Downtown.

"The Trust has usually held autumn and spring home tours but decided to organize one around the December holidays," said SPT president Ben Murphy. "We thought people might like to see these gracious homes decorated for the seasonal celebrations."

Included will be a 1903 Tudor Revival house at 1127 Worthington Street; a 1902 Colonial Revival house at 42 Magnolia Terrace; three Victorian era row houses on Mattoon and Elliot Streets, and a two-floor condo in the Hotel Kimball. The Kimball, marking its 100th anniversary, will have the grand lobby decorated for the holidays.

Admission is \$15 in advance and \$20 on the day of the tour. SPT members receive a \$3 discount from either price. Tickets for the tour can be purchased in advance from Flowers Flowers located at 758 Sumner Avenue; The Flower Box at 596 Carew Street; or online at www.SpringfieldPreservationTrust.org. Tickets can be purchased on the afternoon of the tour from 12:45 p.m. until 2:00 p.m. at 77 Maple Street, the Trust's current renovation project. For more information, call 413-747-0656.

Tag Sale

On December 11 from 9:00 to 3:00 PM, the Trust will hold a fund raising tag sale for 77 Maple Street. The tag sale will be held at 77 Maple Street and will feature Victorian, Craftsman, and Fifties furniture, as well as knick-knacks and other items—all priced for quick sale.

People going on the December 5 house tour will have the opportunity to preview and pre-purchase items between 12:45 and 2:00 PM on December 5, 2010 Winter Fundraiser.

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Endangered Properties

On Tuesday November 9, trust members Jim Boone, Sarah Murray and Bill Malloy went to Boston to join a gathering of PreservationMass, the state wide historic preservation organization. The occasion of the gathering was the presentation of this year's 10 Most Endangered Historic Resources in Massachusetts. This significant list highlights properties that are threatened in Massachusetts with demolition.

Springfield was recognized for the first time with two properties that are threatened.

The first property was nominated by the Springfield Preservation Trust and is the very significant Victorian Mansion, called the Allis Mansion (see article below). The Allis Mansion was the original building of Mercy Hospital, and is still owned by Mercy Hospital. It is the last significant mansion in a neighborhood that used to have many such homes and is a very prominent property on Carew Street. Made of brick by its first owner who ran a huge Brick Works, it lends added significance.

Jim Boone accepted a plaque on behalf of the SPT acknowledging this designation. The Historical Commission, City Officials, and Mercy Hospital officials have a meeting scheduled as a result of this listing.

The second property recognized was 25-27 Elliot Street, the severely fire damaged Mansard duplex right behind the new Federal Building. It was nominated by the Mattoon Street Association. Progress is already being made on this property due to its listing and officials have met with Congressman Neal who is very interested in seeing this house saved.

Jim Igoe, Executive Director of PreservationMass, publicly acknowledged the Springfield Preservation Trust for all the work it does as an all volunteer organization and thanked us for attending the meeting.



I'M NOT #1...
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Allis Mansion

The Allis Mansion at Mercy Medical Center is listed amongst Massachusetts Most Endangered Historic Resources.



The successful nomination of the Allis Mansion for Most Endangered status with Preservation Massachusetts is just a start. It is gratifying to have a spokesperson for

Mercy Medical Center on record as saying they have no formal plans to demolish the building at this time, but a more definitive statement regarding the institution's commitment to preserving this irreplaceable structure is needed.

The Board of the SPT is actively seeking to engage the city of Springfield in this process and hopes to use the endangered status of the building to both heighten awareness of the risk and increase the urgency with which the preservation of this building is being pursued.

The Allis Mansion at Mercy Medical Center has been named one of Massachusetts' "Most Endangered Historic Resources". Since 1993, this list is compiled annually by Preservation Massachusetts, the state's historic preservation advocacy organization.

The Allis Mansion is part of the Mercy Medical Center complex in Springfield, MA. It was the first building used for the Mercy Medical Center. The mansion was built in 1867 as a stellar example of Victorian Era brick work. The building is one of the last remaining mansions in an area of the city that once contained numerous Victorian Era estates. The structure, its central tower and architectural features, have retained their original appearance and integrity. The mansion has not been moved, but its context has changed significantly, including street patterns. The Allis Mansion, located on Carew Street has a strong presence on a highly travelled thoroughfare in the city and plays an integral role to the character content of the streetscape.

Allis Mansion's threat is demolition. The Mercy Medical Center has inquired about demolishing the building. It is unclear as to when the demolition could occur. The Springfield Historical Commission voted to send a letter to the Massachusetts Historical Commission communicating that they are against the demolition of the mansion.

Jim Igoe, President of Preservation Massachusetts feels strongly about the future of the Allis Mansion. "The Allis Mansion is a remarkable piece of Springfield and Mercy Medical Center's history. Its prominent visual location as you approach the medical center makes the potential loss of this building all the more disturbing. We are hopeful that the designation will demonstrate the value and significance of the Allis Mansion to the medical center and encourage them to incorporate its rehabilitation and reuse as part of expansion efforts and planning."

Looking forward, advocates like the Springfield Preservation Trust would like an adaptive reuse of the

building, ensuring the preservation of the building and its historical character.

The organization is willing to work with the owner of the building. The Allis Mansion's listing will hopefully create an opportunity for dialogue with Mercy Medical Center to incorporate this handsome building into their long term plans, subsequently preventing its razing of the Allis Mansion.

The other endangered resources for 2010 are: the Speedway Building (Boston/Brighton), Pawtucket Dam (Lowell), Odd Fellows Home (Worcester), Oakham West School (Oakham), and East Parish Meeting House (Haverhill).

Please visit www.preservationmass.org or call 617-723-3383 for more information on this year's endangered list.



Miss Sarah Porter and the Springfield Female Seminary

As SPT continues research about 77 Maple Street we continue to find more interesting facts about the property. An article that Jim Boone came across tells of Miss Sarah Porter's relationship to 77 Maple Street. The article is printed in its entirety below. The article mistakenly indicates that the home of Frederick Harris is a different building than the school. Other historic documents and structural evidence shows that the original school building was renovated into a house. It is interesting to note the original school building was considered an "ugly three-story building", this may explain why the building was extensively remodeled and the third floor removed in 1843.

Springfield Republican
October 19, 1913
An Old Springfield School
Where Sarah Porter Taught

Institution of Long Ago Recalled by the Celebration at Farmington, Ct.

The celebration at the Porter school at Farmington, Ct., last week of the 100th anniversary of Miss Sarah Porter's birth not only interested many Springfield women who had attended the famous school, but it recalled a bit of the history of old Springfield that most of the citizens never knew or have forgotten. On the easterly side of Maple Street, between High and Union Street, where the residence of the late Frederick H. Harris now stands, there once was a square, ugly three-story building, which, in the memory of only a few people now living, housed Miss Julia Hawkes's "private school for young ladies." This was opened in 1829 and was attended by the young women of the foremost families of the town.

It was at this school that Sarah Porter had her first experience in teaching, and she was then a girl of only 19 years. The Hartford Times last week had an interesting interview with Miss Charlotte E. Warner of this city, who recalls that early school. Says the Times: "Mrs. Warner, it is true, attended the school, but shortly after Miss Porter left it, so that she cannot claim to be one of Miss Porter's 'girls.' Yet her sister, Mrs. William L. Smith of Springfield, whose husband was once mayor of that city and a noted lawyer, studied under Miss Porter. Mrs. Warner said the other day that she presumed she was the only person living who had a relative who went to that first school taught by Miss Porter long before she inaugurated her famous school in Farmington in 1844. One of Mrs. Warner's pleasant mementoes of Miss Porter is a letter written by her in which she spoke of her very happy recollections of Mrs. Smith, or Caroline L. Edwards, as Miss Porter knew her. One reason why the veteran teacher was able to keep in such close sympathy with her many pupils, scattered worldwide, was through those same letters to her girls with whom it was a joy to correspond.

"It was in 1832 that Miss Porter began teaching in Springfield, entering upon a career that extended until she was nearly 80 years of age. Miss Porter came as assistant to Miss Julia S. Hawkes, who had opened a school for the training of young ladies in the higher branches in 1829, or three years before. Previously Miss Hawkes had taught in Miss Catherine E. Beecher's school, that is the recently established Hartford female seminary. And how Massachusetts came to Connecticut for assistance in starting a new seminary for young ladies makes pleasant reading for Connecticut people, as showing how justly famous was Miss Beecher and her school.

"Reading the announcement of the new Springfield seminary, as it appeared in the local press of the day, one sees the institution was to be modeled after that of the Hartford female seminary and copied it truly as regards the subjects taught, the prices charged, length of terms and of vacations, rules and regulations, etc."



George Pooler

The Springfield Preservation Trust was saddened at the loss of George Pooler this summer. George was a long time supporter of the the Trust and an enthusiastic Springfield Historian. George never missed a house tour or lecture, fund raiser or get together, and loved to play the piano at many events.



As a lifelong career postal carrier, George knew the city of Springfield better than most and loved to talk about all of his memories and experiences. In his later years, when some memories were fading, George could talk for

hours about Springfield buildings, architecture and history. In his late 80's, George would still come out when volunteers were needed to clean out a project house or give a hand on a project, keeping up with the youngest of us. Georges good cheer and positive attitude were an inspiration to everyone.

The Trust was honored after George's passing by his remembering the Trust with a generous bequest that will be used to further the Trust's mission, an organization that George cared so much for.



Advertising

if you are interested in placing an ad in the SPT Newsletter, please contact Jim Boone at 734-9110 or Jim Llewellyn at 636-1656. 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.

Newsletter contributors:

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Marilyn Sutin, Editor