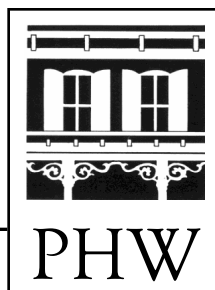


of Preservation Historic Winchester, Inc.

Winter 2010

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HOLIDAY HOUSE TOUR SNOW DOES NOT DETER VISITORS

The Holiday House Tour faced one of its greatest challenges this year — the great unknown of the weather. After some initially dicey moments on Saturday morning and into the afternoon as snow was falling, the weather cooperated at the last moment. The snow stopped falling just in time for the sidewalks to be cleared for the Preview Party and Candlelight Tour.



Visitors enter the Quinn's home at 415 West Clifford Street on Sunday along a snow-covered walk.

Sunday's Daylight tour proceeded as planned, and although conditions were wet, the tourgoers seemed undaunted. The snow added an extra festive touch that we don't normally see during the tour. According to Betty Orndoff, the resident expert on the tour, snow has only fallen about three times in thirty-three years. If you were unable to enjoy the snowfall in person, the Quinn's home (left) looked exceptionally lovely decked out in snow.

"THANK YOU EMILY!"

A big thanks goes to retiring Board Member Emily Skiles for her many years of active service on the Board. Emily has served as Vice President for Special Events, including providing organization and refreshments at several of our events of the past several years, including Special and Annual meetings of PHW. Emily has been especially active with the Holiday House Tour over the years. She initially served as a House Chairperson in 2005 and for the years 2007 through 2009, Emily was the Chair of the Holiday House Tour. As a result of her efforts and organization, we had three successful house tours, including the Amherst Street Tour in 2008 and the Clifford Street Tour in 2009.

Despite being the mother of three young children, Emily selflessly gave generously of her time and efforts, including having her own house on tour. All the members of PHW owe Emily and her family a vote of thanks for her many hours of effort on behalf of the organization. ♦

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WHY OLD HOUSES LAST LONGER THAN NEW HOUSES

BY DAVID LOGAN



Have you ever wondered why it seems that old houses last as long as they do, when new houses 10 or 15 years old seem to be falling apart? Or to think about it more specifically, why your new windows are rotting after 5 or 10 years? Why when the wind blows do you end up with asphalt shingles or vinyl siding on your lawn? To understand this question, there are three main factors in my view — design, craftsmanship, and material quality.

Two hundred years ago, there was both good and bad construction. Clearly, they were deal-

ing with the same issues that we are, deciding in which buildings to invest for the long run, and skimping where finances required. The old buildings in our midst are the buildings that have lasted. The buildings that are left tell us a lot about how buildings can be built to last, and which details do not function well over time.

Design. The buildings that last usually seem to have been thoughtfully designed, whether by an owner, architect (not typically), or the craftsman executing the work. Design to manage water is central, with heavy roof overhangs, high foundations, steep roofs, and thoughtful application of exterior trim details. The modern technique of building directly on a slab creates many moisture problems low in the walls, and once that damage gets started, it can travel up the walls. Buildings built in this way will not be here for the long term.

Craftsmanship. The thoughtful execution of good design is equally important — the site carpenters were a key part of this. Thoughtful execution included cutting drip slots on the bottom of window sills and water tables, sloping joined materials to the outside of the building, having tightly joined connections, etc. Carpentry was not reliant on caulking; the joinery could be successful on its own.

The quality of craftsmanship today is varied — due to the vocational training in the schools being whittled away, and the lack of proper training and experience of many carpenters. This is not to say that there are not plenty of great craftsmen out there today — there are — you just need to be sure that the company that you are hiring has them. Carpenters must be thinking people, all of these myriad details are paramount to the building's long term success.

Today's quality of construction and finish is generally lower than it was 50 or 100 years ago — why? Today we have automation, electricity, and specialized tooling, that, in the right hands, should make good craftsmen faster than our predecessors. Unfortunately, these details are not often understood or appreciated.

Material Quality. Water destroys materials that are prone to rot — increased moisture content allows bacteria, fungi, and insects to survive and to use that wood as a food source. In old houses, they used materials that were more naturally rot resistant, such as old growth pine that are full of resins and natural chemicals. Today's millwork, such as windows, are often made out of very rot prone materials like spruce which has given wood windows a very bad name. Other materials such as stone, brick, copper, slate, and high quality, rot resistant wood have been with us for generations. Frankly, long lasting, low maintenance materials were figured out long ago.

High quality materials, coupled with good design and execution, is a combination proven to survive the decades. All of these options are still available today.

In a coming feature, I will talk more about wood quality, and the reason that wood is getting such a bad rap these days.

Follow David's blog at <http://www.periodwoodworkingco.com/pw/Blog/Blog.html>. ♦

ARCHITECTURAL SCAVENGER HUNT

Do you recognize the details of these buildings? Hint: They are all buildings with a PHW connection. The answers are below.



ADVOCACY FOR PRESERVATION BY RICHARD BELL

Advocacy – Pleading or arguing in favor of something such as a cause, idea or policy.

PHW was founded on advocacy for issues of preservation. Advocacy is the backbone of our organization. As a membership organization the strength of our message can best be magnified through our members. As a preservation organization we can take positions on specific topics or time-sensitive issues. Our successful prevention of the proposed demolition of a block or more of vernacular housing on South Kent Street stands as a good example of our recent issues-related advocacy. Issues driven advocacy is often time-sensitive in nature and is driven by equal parts of philosophical position and passion.

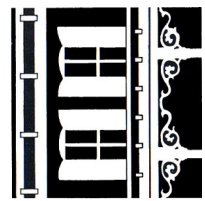
The second form of advocacy for preservation is at the policy level. As the tide of leadership in a community ebbs and flows, it is the policy shifts that can leave a long term impact either in support of or to the detriment of preservation. Policy driven advocacy is driven more by perseverance than by issues related passion. Policy can be established or influenced at many levels. There are currently a number of vacancies on many of the appointed boards and commissions within the city government (see the list below). These groups can give a good education of the inner workings of community and regional government as well as creating an opportunity for us each to make a difference. While usually limited to certain areas of focus (planning commission, board of architectural review, board of zoning appeals, etc) the policy and prevailing attitude of these boards and commissions can create influence within the greater government. City council specifically looks to these bodies to provide the ground level analysis and recommendation to influence their decision-making process.

Economic pressures as they are will certainly seek to neutralize anything that can be viewed as an impediment. As I am reaching out to the PHW membership, I have to assume that you personally view preservation as a positive and lasting philosophy and not an impediment. I encourage the membership of PHW to wade into the water and volunteer for an appointment for these current and future vacancies. If you want to make a positive influence on preservation and our community overall or know someone who can please give me a call to see how we can assist the appointment to an area of interest.

Vacancies as of 10 December 2009 (from the city web site)
2 vacancies on the Planning Commission
3 vacancies on the Community Development Committee
2 vacancies on the Board of Zoning Appeals
2 vacancies on the Industrial Development Authority – a funding source for major redevelopment projects!
1 vacancy on the Winchester Parking Authority – PHW formed over the demolition of an historic house to build a parking lot.
2 vacancies on the Board of Building Code Appeals
1 vacancy on the Tree Commission
4 vacancies on the Fire Prevention Code Board of Appeals

For more detailed information about these boards and commissions you can contact city hall or go to their web site at www.winchesterva.gov under government tab you will see Boards and Commissions. Here you can also see current appointees. Feel free to contact those who you may know to see how they feel they are making an impact in Winchester. Or contact Richard Bell at 667-2424 ext 213 or at richardbell@adamscompanies.com. ♦

Answers to Scavenger Hunt: (Left to right) 810 Amherst Street, The Kurtz Building (2 N. Cameron Street), Magill-Keller House (418 N. Loudoun Street).



Preservation
of Historic
Winchester

Hexagon House ♦ 530 Amherst St. ♦ Winchester, VA 22601

NEWS

Winter 2010

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Nominations for the Annual Meeting

It's never too early to start thinking of nominees for PHW's Annual Meeting in June. The board is soliciting membership input for several director positions. We also need more subcommittee members willing to lend a hand for events and activities. Nominate yourself or a friend!

As part of the nomination process, don't forget PHW also solicits rehabilitation projects and outstanding local leaders in preservation and outstanding volunteers on behalf of PHW. Nomination forms for the Annual Awards will be available in early spring online and through the newsletter.

May Is National Preservation Month

The theme for 2010's National Preservation Month is Old is the New Green! We know that preservation is good for

communities and good for the pocketbook, but in the face of our growing climate crisis, we can also say with confidence that preservation has a significant role to play in fostering development that is more environmentally and economically sustainable. By giving Preservation Month the theme of sustainability, we are hopeful communities and organizations across the country will help us spread the word that preservation is inherently green. When you reinvest in older and historic buildings, live in a historic home, or even become a member of the National Trust for Historic Preservation or your local preservation organization, you support a more sustainable world. Spread the word – Old is the New Green!

Visit the National Trust's Preservation Month page at <http://www.preservationnation.org/take-action/preservation-month/> ♦

Check each item that you are willing to volunteer your time and return to **PHW, 530 Amherst St. Winchester, VA 22601**

PHW Activities

- ☐ Newsletter
- ☐ Education
- ☐ Community Relations
- ☐ Special Events
- ☐ Membership Campaign
- ☐ Revolving Fund

Holiday House Tour

- ☐ Docents
- ☐ House Chairmen
- ☐ Decorators
- ☐ Publicity
- ☐ Bough and Dough Shop

Name: _____

Phone: _____

E-Mail: _____

ARE YOU A PHW MEMBER?

Preservation of Historic Winchester, Inc., is a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting Winchester's architectural heritage. PHW depends on income from membership and contributions to achieve its goals. *All contributions above membership are tax deductible.*

Join today by completing this form and returning it to PHW, 530 Amherst St., Winchester, VA 22601.



____ Individual
____ Corporate

\$25
\$100

____ Family/Business
____ Other

\$45

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____