PETERSHAM HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
& HISTORICAL COMMISSION

3 South Main Street • P. O. Box 486 • Petersham, MA 01366-0486
978/724-3353 tel. • 978/724-3501 fax

LEGAL NOTICE
TOWN OF PETERSHAM – HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

PUBLIC HEARING
THURSDAY, JANUARY 20, 2022

THURSDAY, JANUARY 27, 2022 (if needed due to weather postponement)

UPPER TOWN HALL
1 SOUTH MAIN STREET
6:00 P.M.

Remote access by GoToMeeting.com is also available to the public for this meeting:

Public Hearing date of January 20, 2022 at 6 PM:
By digital device: https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/369133293 or
By phone: 1-224-501-3412; dial in access code: 369-133-293.

PLEASE NOTE: If needed due to weather postponement:

Public Hearing date of January 27, 2022 at 6 PM:
By digital device: https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/416016277 or
By phone: 1-408-650-3123; dial in access code: 416-016-277.

In accordance with the provisions of **ARTICLE XII, PETERSHAM HISTORIC DISTRICT, HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION, AND HISTORICAL COMMISSION BY-LAW**, the Petersham Historic District Commission will hold a public hearing on **Thursday, January 20th, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. at the Petersham Town Hall, 1 South Main Street and by GoToMeeting.com** on the **Application for Permit for Demolition or Removal by the Town of Petersham–Selectboard for the Nichewaug Inn and Academy building located at 25 Common Street Street, Map 201 Lot 116-0.** A copy of the Application and related material may be inspected prior to the public meeting on the Town of Petersham website http://www.townofpetersham.org/
All interested persons are invited to attend.
PETERSHAM HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
- Robert A. Clark, Chair

Posted on My Town Government http://www.mytowngovernment.org/

TOWN OF PETERSHAM
OFFICE OF THE SELECTBOARD

3 South Main Street • P.O. Box 486
Petersham, Massachusetts 01366
www.townofpetersham.org • 978-724-3353 • Fax 978-724-3501

APPLICATION SUBMISSION TO
PETERSHAM HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

Request for Demolition Application

25 Common Street Nichewaug Inn & Academy Building

Date of application submission: December 16, 2021

Application provided in hard copy format (herein)
and digital PDF format to HDC members.

PETERSHAM HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

3 South Main Street • P. O. Box 486 • Petersham, MA 01366-0486
978/724-3353 tel. • 978/724-3501 fax

APPLICATION FOR

☐ CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS
X PERMIT FOR DEMOLITION OR REMOVAL

Dated: **DECEMBER 16, 2021**

Applicant: **Town of Petersham – Selectboard**
Address: **3 South Main Street, P.O. Box 486**
Petersham, MA
Telephone: **978-724-3353** e-mail: **petershambosoffice@gmail.com**

Owner: **Town of Petersham**
Address: **3 South Main Street, P.O. Box 486**
Petersham, MA
Telephone: **978-724-3353** e-mail: **petershambosoffice@gmail.com**

For property located at: **25 Common Street**
Petersham parcel number: **116**
X Building or Structure ☐ Sign or Billboard ☐ Other:
Describe completely:

Please see attached pages for Project Description and supplemental materials.

(Attach Separate Sheets as Necessary)

Pursuant to Chapter 211 of the Acts of 1966,
Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 40C and Article XII of the By-laws of the Town of Petersham:
Any person who desires to erect, build, construct, reconstruct, restore, alter, move, demolish, remove or change an exterior architectural feature for which a Certificate of Appropriateness is required of any building or structure within the Historic District, or to erect within the Historic District a building, structure or sign for which a Certificate of Appropriateness is required, shall file with the Historic District Commission an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness or an Application for a Permit for Demolition or Removal, as the case may be, together with such plans, elevations, specifications, material and other information, as shall be deemed necessary by the Commission to enable it to make a determination on the application.

1. Attach all plans, specifications, descriptions, and any other material (including photographs).
2. Within fourteen (14) days after filing this application, the Historic District Commission will make a determination whether any external architectural features subject to approval are involved.
3. Should the Commission determine that no external architectural features subject to approval are involved; the Commission will issue a Certificate to that effect.
4. Should the Commission determine that external architectural features subject to approval are involved; the Commission shall hold a public hearing on the Application.
5. Following the public hearing and within forty-five (45) days after filing this application, the Commission shall make a determination of the Application.

APPLICATION FOR A CERTIFICATE OR PERMIT

(Continued)

In passing on appropriateness, the Commission shall consider, among other things, the historic value and significance of the site, building, or structure, the general design, arrangement, texture, material and color of the features involved, and the relation of such factors to similar factors of sites, buildings and structures in the immediate surroundings. The Commission shall consider the appropriateness of the size and shape of the building or structure in relation to the land area upon which the building or structure is situated and to the neighboring sites, buildings, or structures within the district. The Commission shall also consider the applicable zoning and other By-laws of the town.

Architect: --

Address: --

Telephone: -- e-mail: --

Contractor: Town to award to low qualified bidder Stamford Wrecking Company of Trumbull, CT

Address:

Telephone: e-mail:

- [x] Contact the Historic District Commission before you file this Application. The Commission can help you with your project by describing work that requires a Certificate or Permit, whether you need to apply, the type of work that is likely to be approved, and other helpful information.
- [x] Describe the work as completely as possible.
- [x] For minor alterations, please submit a sketch or drawing to scale showing the location.
- [x] For all new construction including additions, please submit views drawn to scale of all visible exterior elevations, applicable floor plans, explanatory notes, sections, and details of architectural features including trim, doors, and windows. Include a plot plan showing existing structures and the location of the proposed construction.
- [x] For signs, please submit a scale drawing of the proposed design, representation of lettering style, description of material to be used, sketch or drawing of the location on a building, and a plot plan for free standing signs showing the location in relation to other structures.
- [x] Photographs of existing conditions are very helpful.
- [x] Any additional drawings, diagrams, product samples, information, and photographs are very helpful.

The Historic District Commission shall charge the Applicant for all reasonable fees necessary to render an informed decision, including, but not limited to: consulting fees, stenographic fees, production and reproduction fees. The Applicant will be notified in writing of the same (including the approximate costs involved) not later than one week prior to any Public Hearing. All funds will be held in escrow and shall be duly accounted for.

Mail this Application to the Historic District Commission or deliver to the Town Secretary.

A Certificate is required before all other applicable Town permits can be issued.

X Photographs **X** Plans, elevations, and sections

☐ Sketch or Drawing **X** Material Specifications and information

X Site or Plot Plan ☐ Illustrations **X** Other: Town Records, etc.

Applicant's Signature Rebecca A Legare

Owner's Signature Rebecca A Legare

Date Dec. 14, 2021

Rebecca A Legare

Annette Ermini

Description:

At a Special Town Meeting on **December 6, 2021**, Town of Petersham voters approved demolition of the building known as the Nichewaug Inn & Maria Assumpta Academy at 25 Common Street.

The Town requests that the HDC review and rule in favor of this 'Application for Demolition.' The Town requests that the HDC review and approve complete demolition of the building at 25 Common Street, specifically the entire 1899 Inn building and wings which fronts on North Main Street and the entire 1951 Academy classroom & dormitory addition, a portion of which is located within the District's 200-foot setback zone.

It is the intention of the Town to either retain the small free-standing garage for a future use still to be determined or to remove it at a future date if so determined; meanwhile the Town will keep the garage for its current use as storage space for town equipment.

As HDC members are aware, this same demolition request was made to the Commission in 2010 and was unanimously approved by the HDC at that time for that specific Application. At that time a Special Town Meeting vote of 149–2 approved demolition of the entire structure but there was no financing to follow thru after that town vote.

Today, in December 2021, the Town makes the exact same request of the HDC only now the building has further deteriorated, the risk to the community has grown, and voters have approved the funding needed to act.

We seek permission for removal based on continued serious safety concerns registered by the Petersham Fire Chief and Police Chief. The Selectboard joins the Chiefs in those concerns and is very aware that the current high risk is combined with no redevelopment prospects coming forward in the 40 years since the building was first put up for sale by the Sisters of Assumpta in 1982 after concluding their parochial school in the 1970s; and since the Town took ownership in 2007 and numerous town committees were appointed, several outside consultants studies were conducted, and two official town Request for Proposals processes yielded no successful re-use solutions or interest from bonafide developers; among other actions that have been undertaken in attempts to preserve and re-use the building. The Town has also held four Special Town Meetings specifically addressing disposition of the building.

Since 2007, the Town has spent over $100,000 on the building for outside consultants' services, maintenance, insurance, alarm system, fire watch, etc. and not including over $500,000 spent on hazardous materials removal. The Town does not have the funding to properly repair and maintain the structures given they have no designated use and several years ago the Town had to terminate liability insurance due to not meeting the repairs and upkeep required by our insurer. If the building remains standing the Town will be erecting safety fencing under the visibly deteriorating tall brick chimney on the Academy south side and between the Chapel and Kitchen wings where there is a failing stone chimney and risk of roof collapse is high due to failed interior floors.

As far back as 2010, the Town's Building Inspector had ruled no access is allowed in some zones and instituted a specific entry point to the building so as to avoid certain sections. Two flat roof sections are in extremely poor condition, there are failing sills along the front of the Inn and there is failure of one of the front porches and a rear porch of the Inn. Fascia boards, gutters, roof sections, cupola , and other exterior features and details are all deteriorating. The main roofs of the Inn show obvious failure. Prior owners had ripped out some fixtures further impacting the integrity of the structure. There are myriad interior cracks, wall separations, falling ceiling sections, and caving floors. Ground water infiltration in the basement is an ongoing problem and likely is having a negative impact on sections of the building. The basement is now permanently flooded with approximately 3–4 feet of water which can only be removed via hook-up of pumps. Toxic mold permeates the building.

The large, empty building attracts intruders and have been illegally entered and vandalized over time including during the 11 years of Town ownership. The Town's limited safety departments — composed of an on-call Fire Department, two full-time Police Officers, and the balance of part-time Police Officers cannot provide 100% effective oversight. Safety of the public and of responders including local and regional Police and Fire Departments is an ongoing and grave concern. An intruder incident in 2017 brought out a massive response with five area towns supporting Petersham PD and FD along with a regional response team called in to the situation. In the event of a fire, a large disaster is possible with lives, homes, buildings, and possessions at risk. The Fire Department will not be entering the building and will focus on controlling the perimeter and the safety of adjacent buildings.

This is all completely unsustainable for the small town resources of Petersham and puts lives and property at great risk.

The Town calls to the attention of the Commission the following section of **Town Bylaw Article XII of the HDC** which may be pertinent to this request:

> **SECTION 6. EXCLUSIONS** Nothing in this act … nor shall anything in this act be construed to prevent the erection, construction, reconstruction, restoration, alteration **or <u>demolition of any such feature which a duly authorized public officer shall certify is required by the public safety because of an unsafe or dangerous condition.</u>**

<u>As part of this Application, please find enclosed the following documents:</u>

– Building schematic showing demolition plan as approved by Town voters at Special Town Meeting of Dec. 6, 2021.

– Property photographs showing current 2021 conditions – exterior and interior Oct. & Nov. 2021; copy of the Selectboard's Public Information Meeting presentation made on Nov. 21, 2021.

– Copy of the Public Information Meeting Minutes of Nov. 21, 2021.

– Copy of Dec. 6, 2021 Special Town Meeting Town Clerk's Certified Minutes presenting vote of Approval to Demolish by Town voters.

– Copy of Dec. 6, 2021 Special Town Meeting Warrant showing Advisory Finance Committee 'Recommendation' for demolition.

– Copy of Selectboard Report made to voters at December 6, 2021 Special Town Meeting asking for demolition approval by the voters.

– Copy of Athol Daily News article of September 28, 2021 featuring Petersham Fire Chief and Police Chief discussing status of the building and recommending demolition.

– Copy of the 2010 HDC Application made by the Town when the Town previously requested and received an approved HDC Permit for Demolition. The HDC 2010 Permit is included herein.

– Copy of Oct. 4, 2010 Special Town Meeting Town Clerk's Certified Minutes presenting vote of Approval to Demolish by Town voters.

– Copy of 2010 communications with Massachusetts Historical Commission for demolition.

Thank you for your time and review of this request.

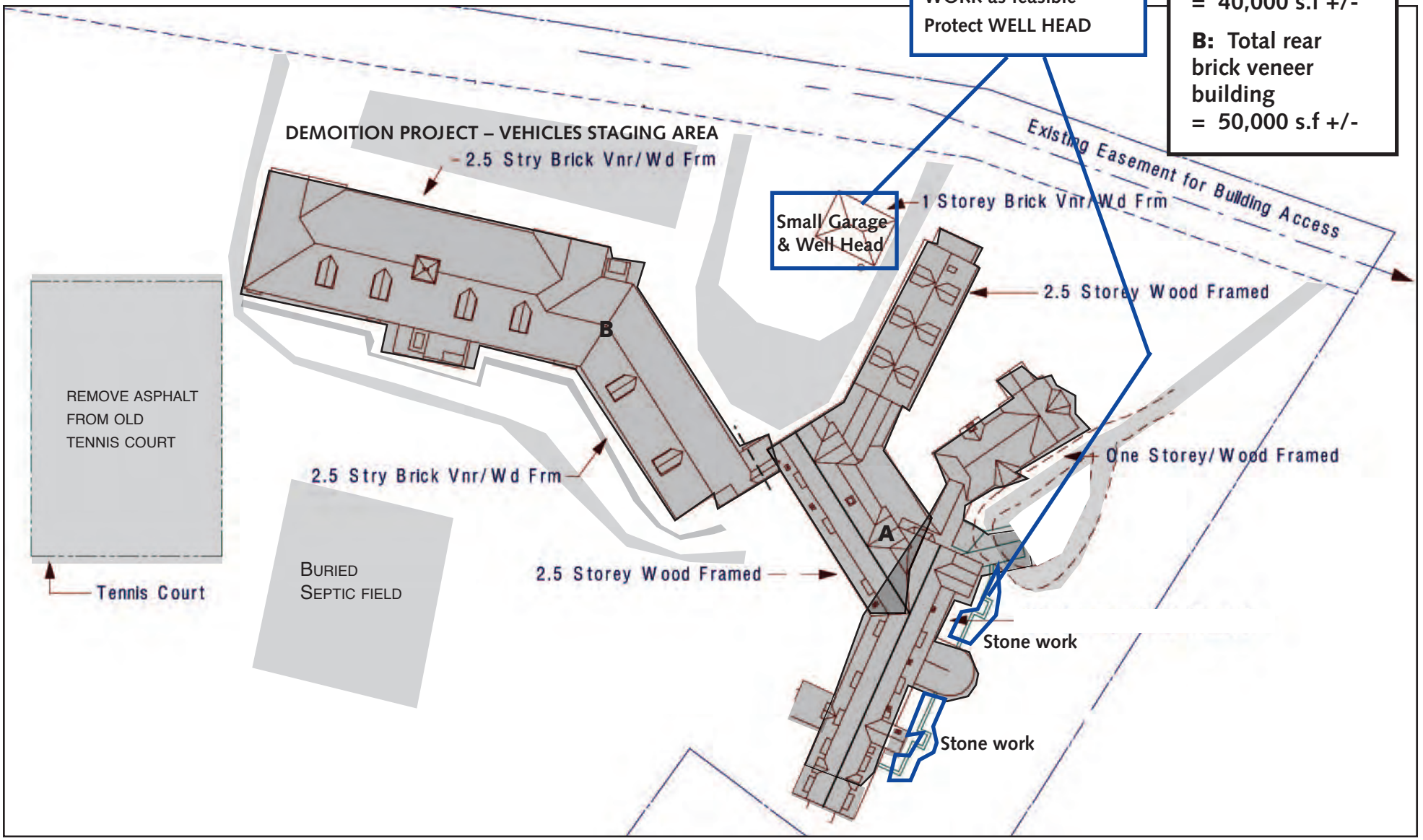
Respectfully,

– Town of Petersham Selectboard, December 16, 2021

ARTICLE 2 – Exhibit No. 1

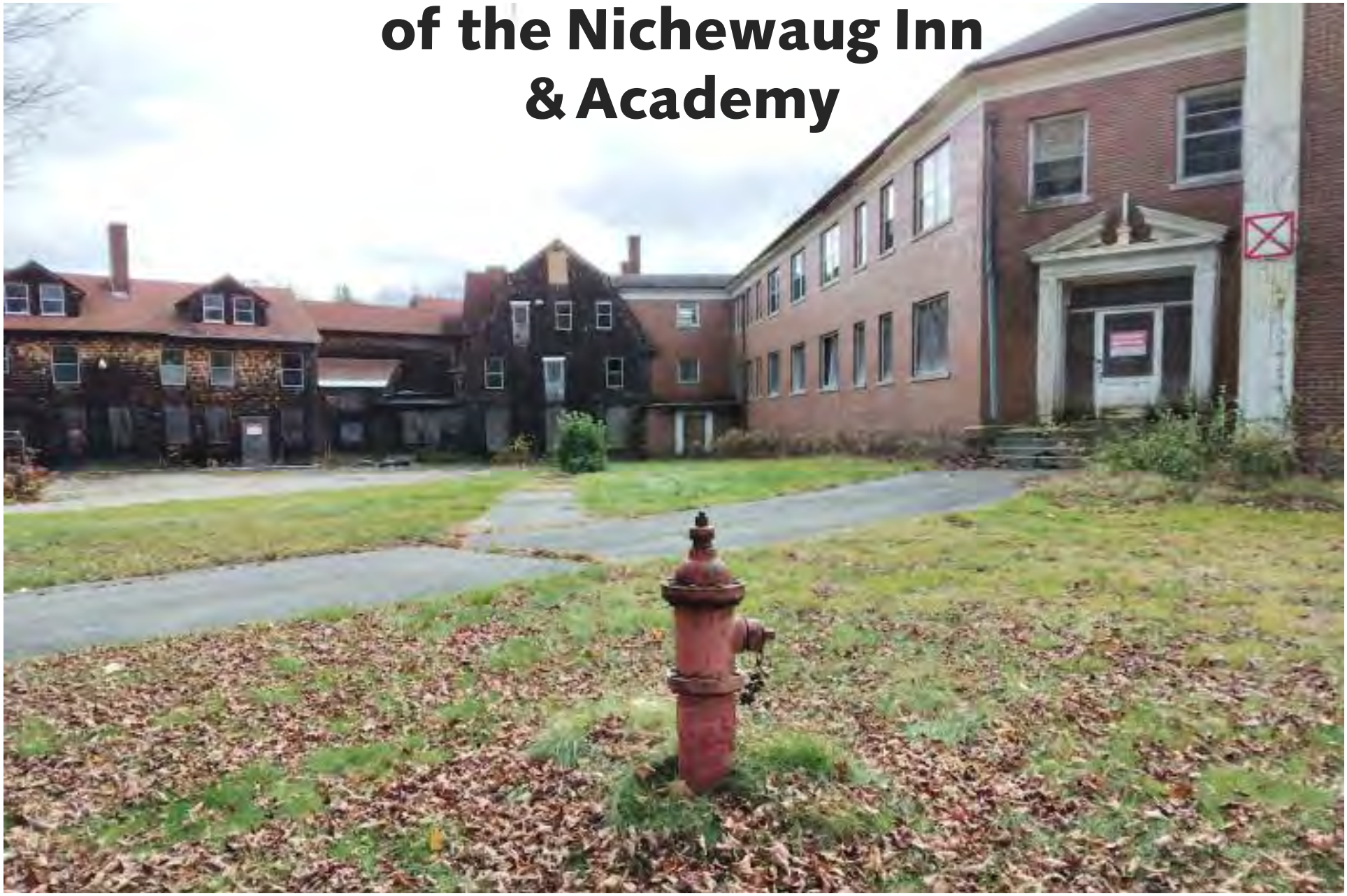
Remove structure and hardscape EXCEPTING leave standing:
Free-standing Garage and exterior Stonework as feasible –
in outlined areas below per Scope of Services Specifications provided.

STRUCTURE & HARDSCAPE AREAS TO BE REMOVED NOTED IN GREY:



PUBLIC INFORMATION PRESENTATION

To Review the Status of the Nichewaug Inn & Academy



PUBLIC INFORMATION PRESENTATION

To Review the Status of the Nichewaug Inn & Academy

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 2021
Petersham Town Hall

In preparation for
Special Town Meeting
on Monday, December 6, 2021

THANK YOU

to all who have tried to save and preserve this building for the past 40 years.

From private owners beginning 40 years ago,

to grassroots efforts that began 30 years ago,

to community-wide "Friends" efforts beginning 20 years,

to the Town taking acceptance 15 years ago,

to the 15 year review process by Town committee & residents.

<u>MANY</u> have tried –
thank you to all for your dedicated efforts.



ORIGNAL 1899 INN BUILDING
from the west, back side
[PHOTO: NOV. 2021]


NO
TRESPASSING



1899 INN BUILDING
south wing in-fill addition from south side

[PHOTO: NOV. 2021]





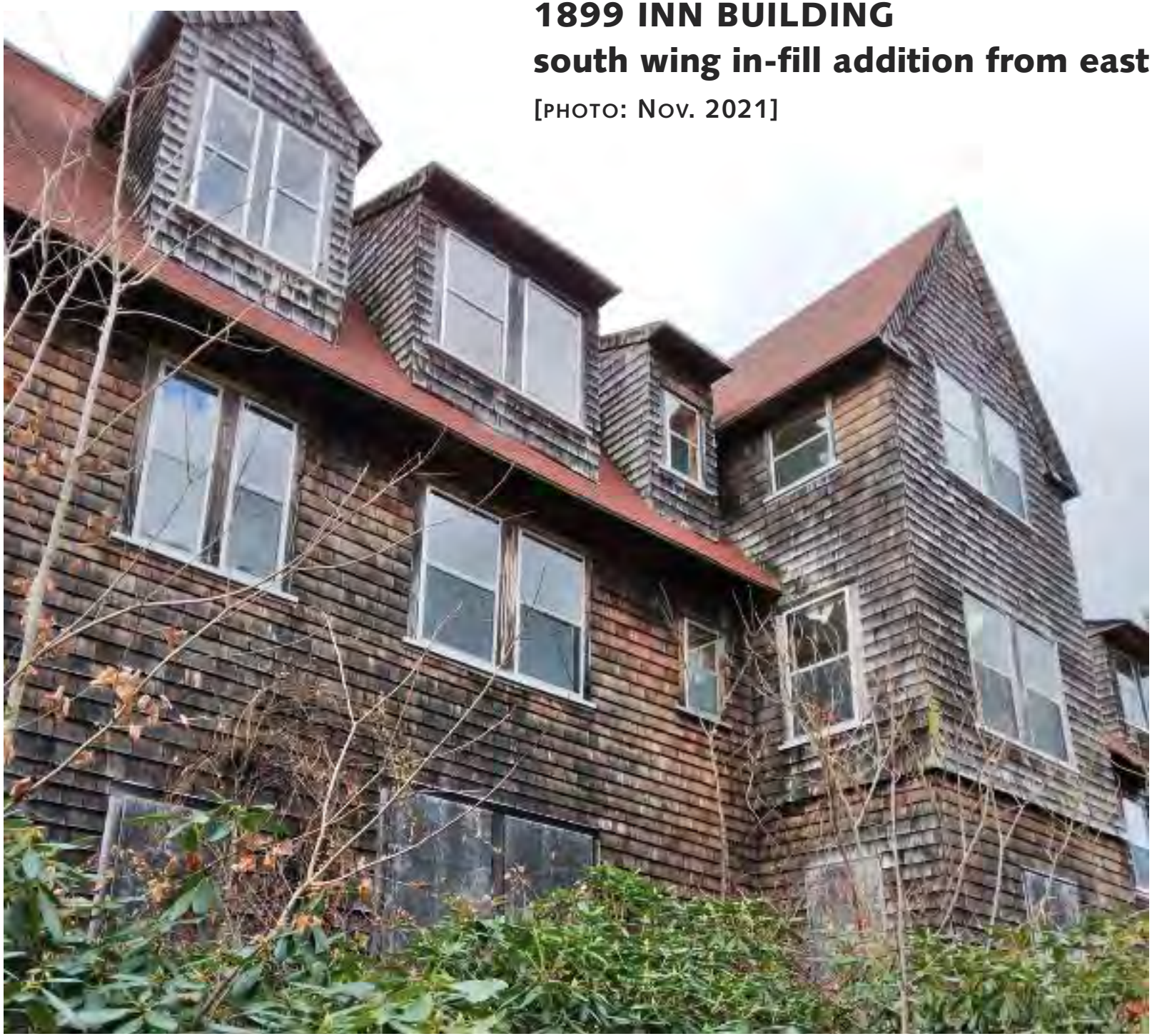




DISTANCE FROM LIBRARY TO NICHEWAUG INN

[PHOTO: NOV. 2021]





1899 INN BUILDING
south wing in-fill addition from east side
[PHOTO: NOV. 2021]

1899 INN BUILDING
from front, east side

[PHOTO: NOV. 2021]







1899 INN BUILDING
from front, east side
stone wall detail
[PHOTO: NOV. 2021]

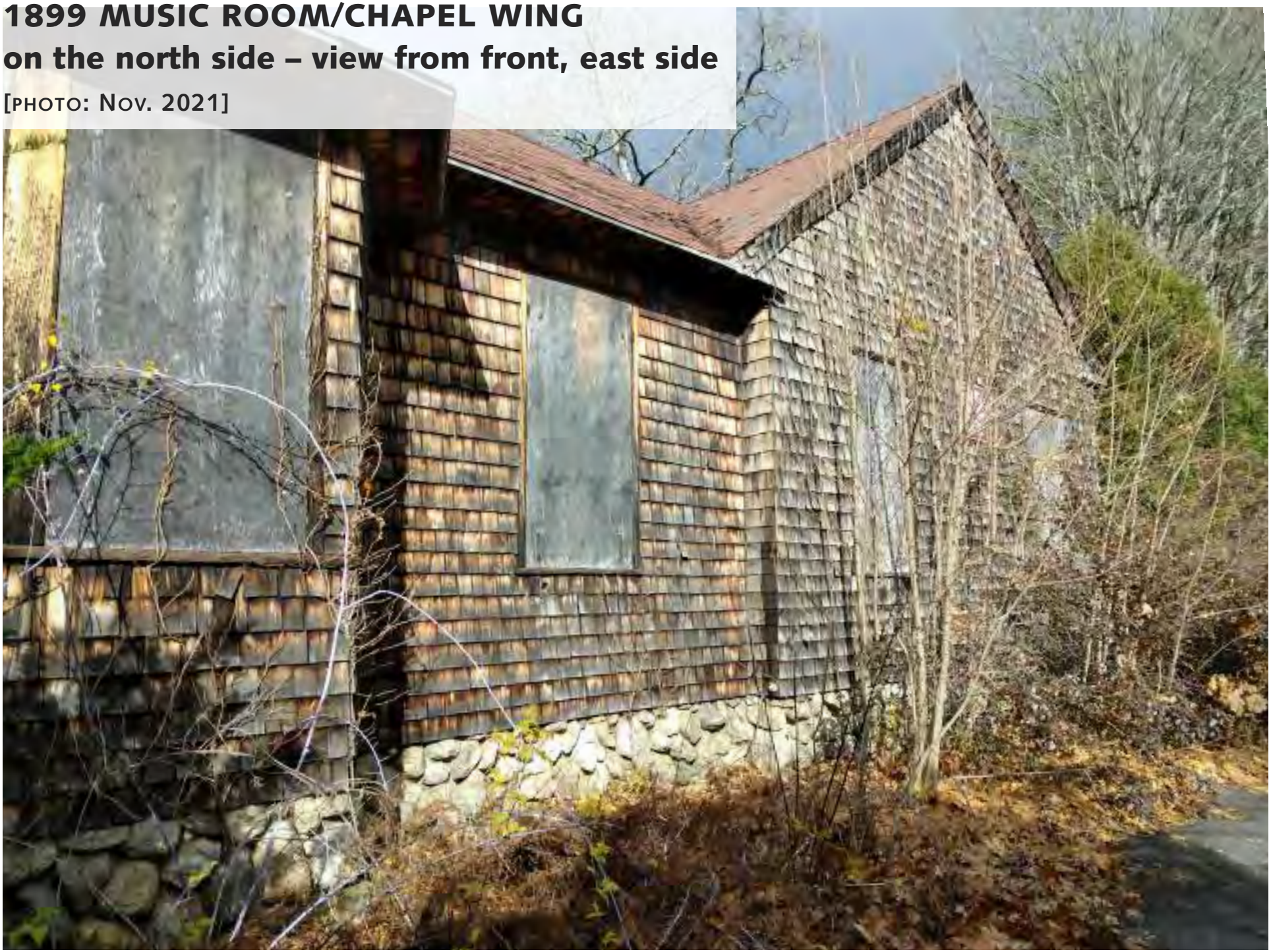




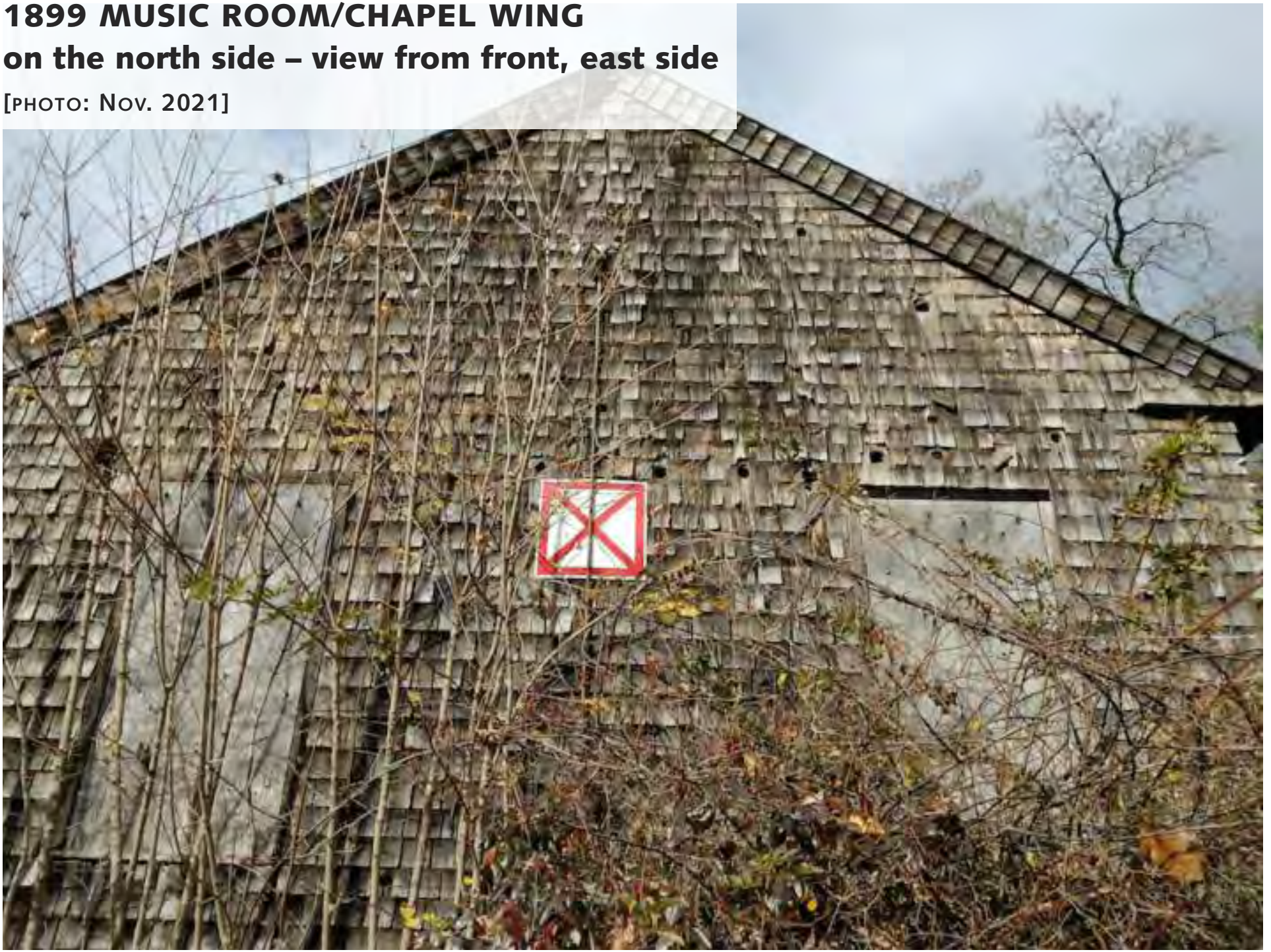
1899 INN BUILDING
front entrance, east side
[PHOTO: NOV. 2021]



1899 *MUSIC ROOM/CHAPEL WING*
on the north side – view from front, east side
[PHOTO: NOV. 2021]



1899 MUSIC ROOM/CHAPEL WING
on the north side – view from front, east side
[PHOTO: NOV. 2021]



1899 *MUSIC ROOM/CHAPEL WING*
on the north side –
view from front, northeast side

[PHOTO: NOV. 2021]





1899 *MUSIC ROOM/CHAPEL WING*
on the north side – view from rear, west side
[PHOTO: NOV. 2021]

1899 *MUSIC ROOM/CHAPEL WING*
on the south side

[PHOTO: NOV. 2021]









CHAPEL ROOF 20210

[PHOTO: SEPTEMBER 2010]



CHAPEL ROOF 2021

[PHOTO: NOV. 2021]



KITCHEN HALL & WING

[PHOTO: Nov. 2021]



KITCHEN WING
Porch removed due to failure

[PHOTO: NOV. 2021]







KITCHEN WING
north side view

[PHOTO: NOV. 2021]



KITCHEN WING
North end view, looking east

[PHOTO: NOV. 2021]



KITCHEN WING
West side
[PHOTO: NOV. 2021]

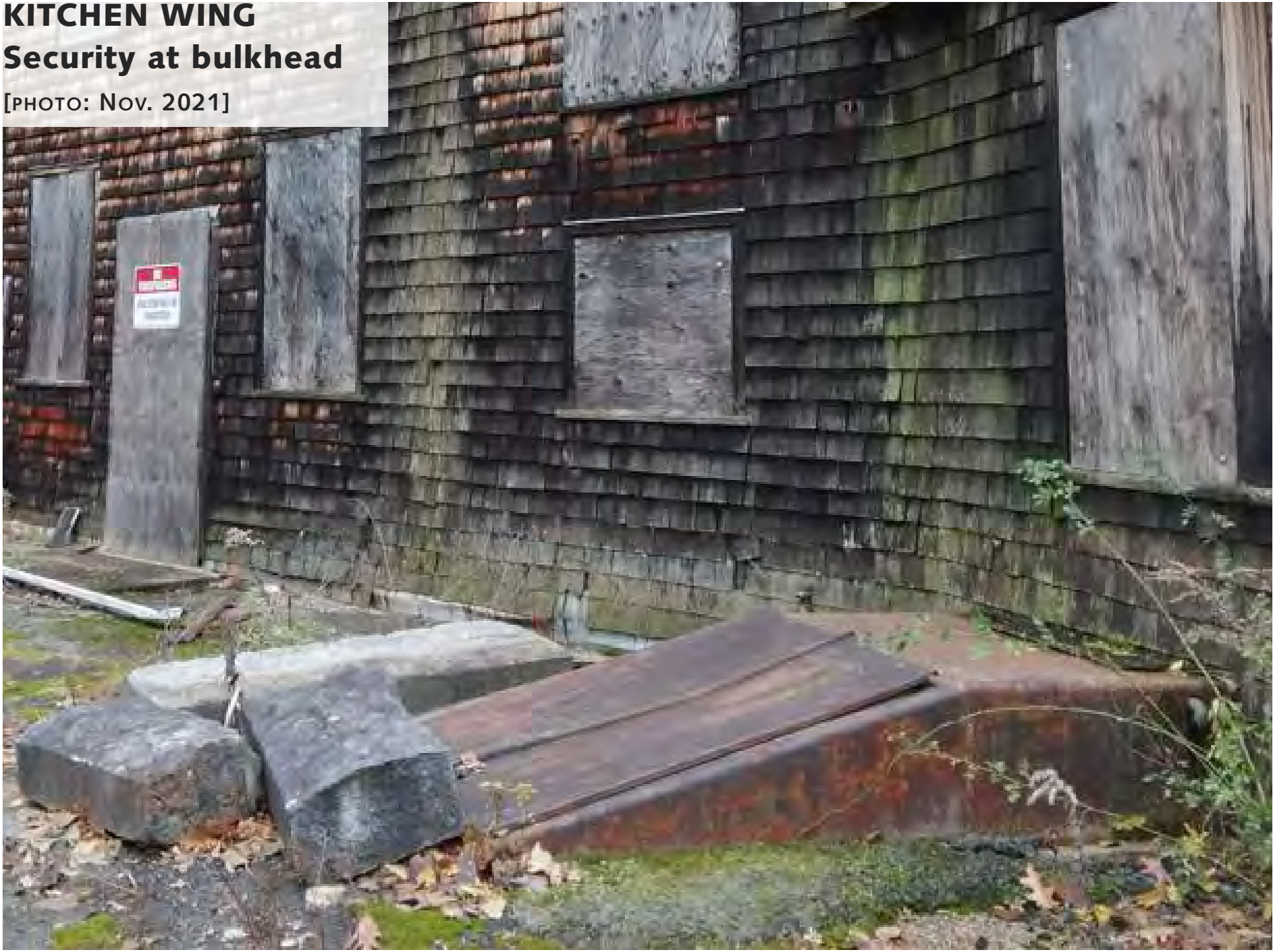


KITCHEN WING
West side

[PHOTO: NOV. 2021]



KITCHEN WING
Security at bulkhead
[PHOTO: NOV. 2021]







KITCHEN WING to ACADEMY CONNECTOR
Rear, north side of building
[PHOTO: NOV. 2021]

1952 ACADEMY

[PHOTO: NOV. 2021]





1952 ACADEMY
Debris fallen from the roof

[PHOTO: NOV. 2021]



1952 ACADEMY

Roof detail – failing soffits & fascia boards

[PHOTO: NOV. 2021]



1952 ACADEMY
Roof detail – failing soffits & fascia boards
[PHOTO: NOV. 2021]







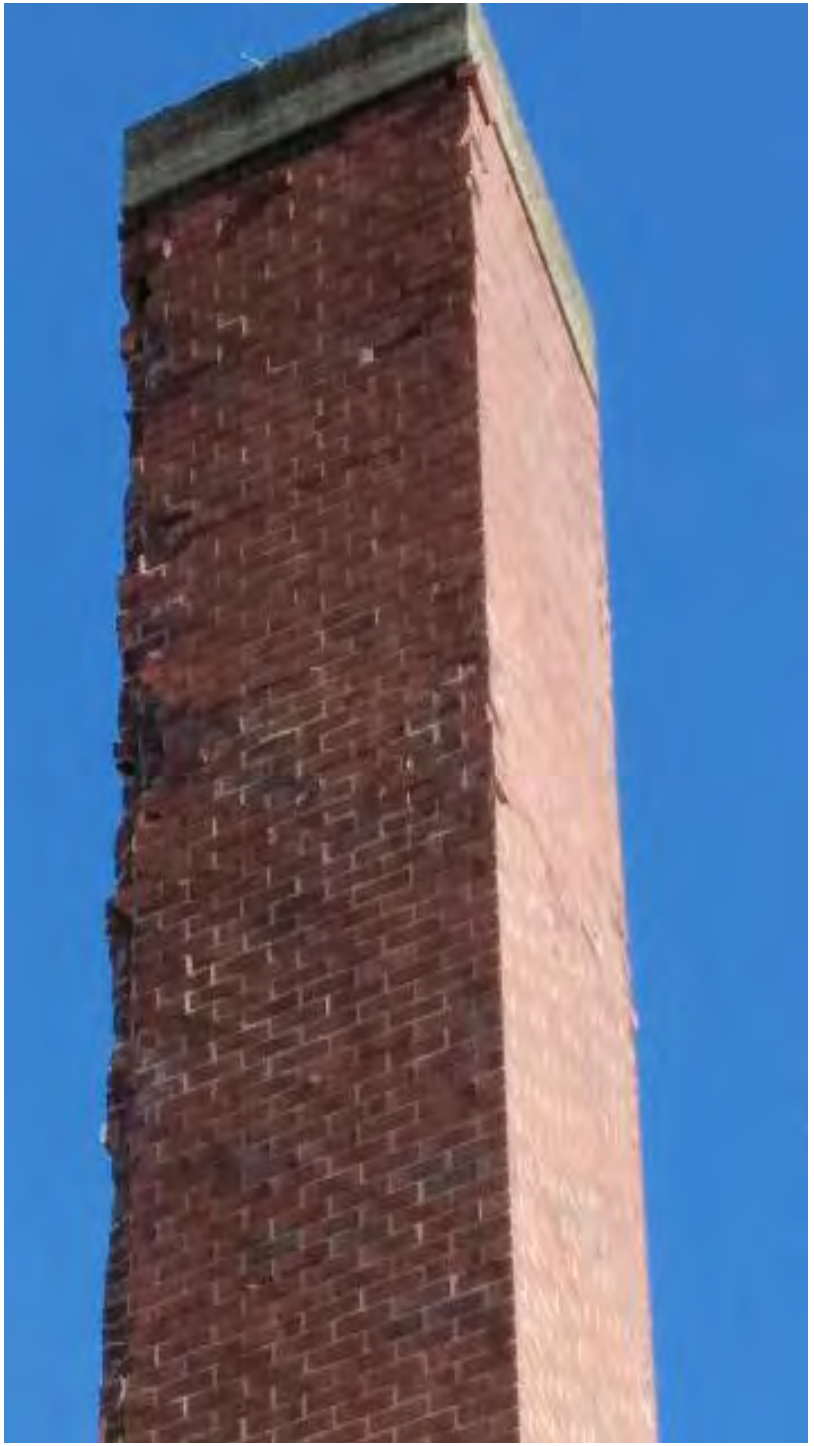


1952 ACADEMY
South Side – failing chimney

[PHOTO: NOV. 2021]















1952 ACADEMY

Stairwell & exterior basement door entrance with about 4 feet of ground water

[PHOTO: Nov. 2021]






NO
TRESPASSING









ACADEMY CONNECTOR to NICHEWAUG INN
Rear, south side of building
[PHOTO: NOV. 2021]

Tennis Court in 2010

[PHOTO: FALL. 2010]



1899 NICHEWAUG INN
Kitchen Wing – main kitchen room
[PHOTO: NOV. 2021]



1952 ACADEMY
Kitchen Wing hallway to rear of wing
[PHOTO: NOV. 2021]



1899 NICHEWAUG INN
Kitchen Wing – prep room
[PHOTO: NOV. 2021]



1899 NICHEWAUG INN
Main hallway to Kitchen Wing
No entrance allowed due to failed conditons

[PHOTO: NOV. 2021]





1899 NICHEWAUG INN
Main hallway to Kitchen Wing
No entrance allowed due to failed conditons

[PHOTO: FALL 2010]



1899 NICHEWAUG INN
Dining Hall prep room
No entrance allowed
[PHOTO: FALL 2010]







1899 NICHEWAUG INN
Sunporch
No entrance allowed
[PHOTO: NOV. 2021]

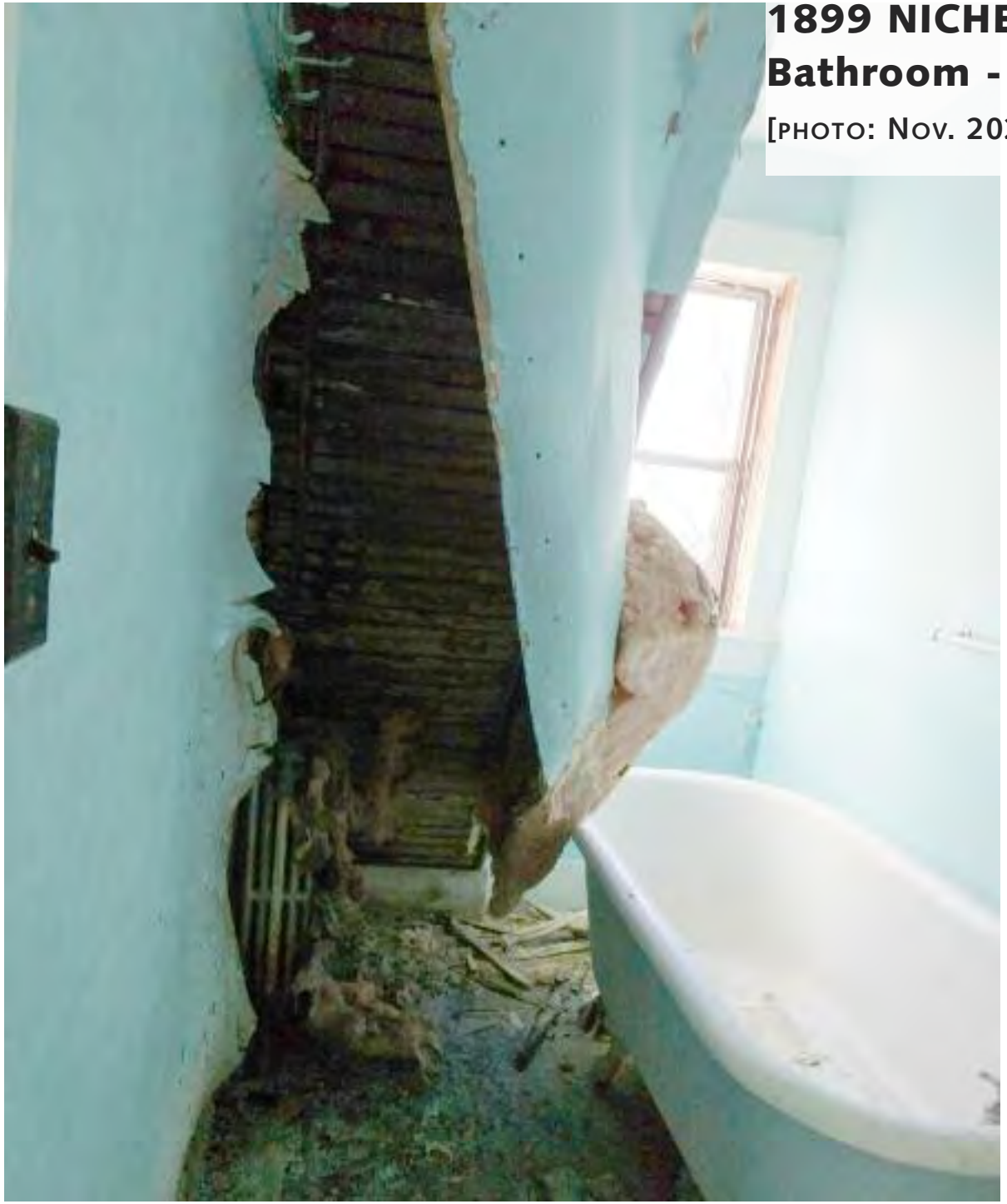


1899 NICHEWAUG INN
Sunporch
No entrance allowed
[PHOTO: Nov. 2021]



1899 NICHEWAUG INN
Bedroom - 2nd floor
[PHOTO: NOV. 2021]





1899 NICHEWAUG INN
Bathroom - 2nd floor
[PHOTO: NOV. 2021]







1899 NICHEWAUG INN
Narrow hallways
to bedrooms – 2nd floor

[PHOTO: NOV. 2021]



1899 NICHEWAUG INN
2nd Floor Hallways – details

[PHOTO: FALL 2010]





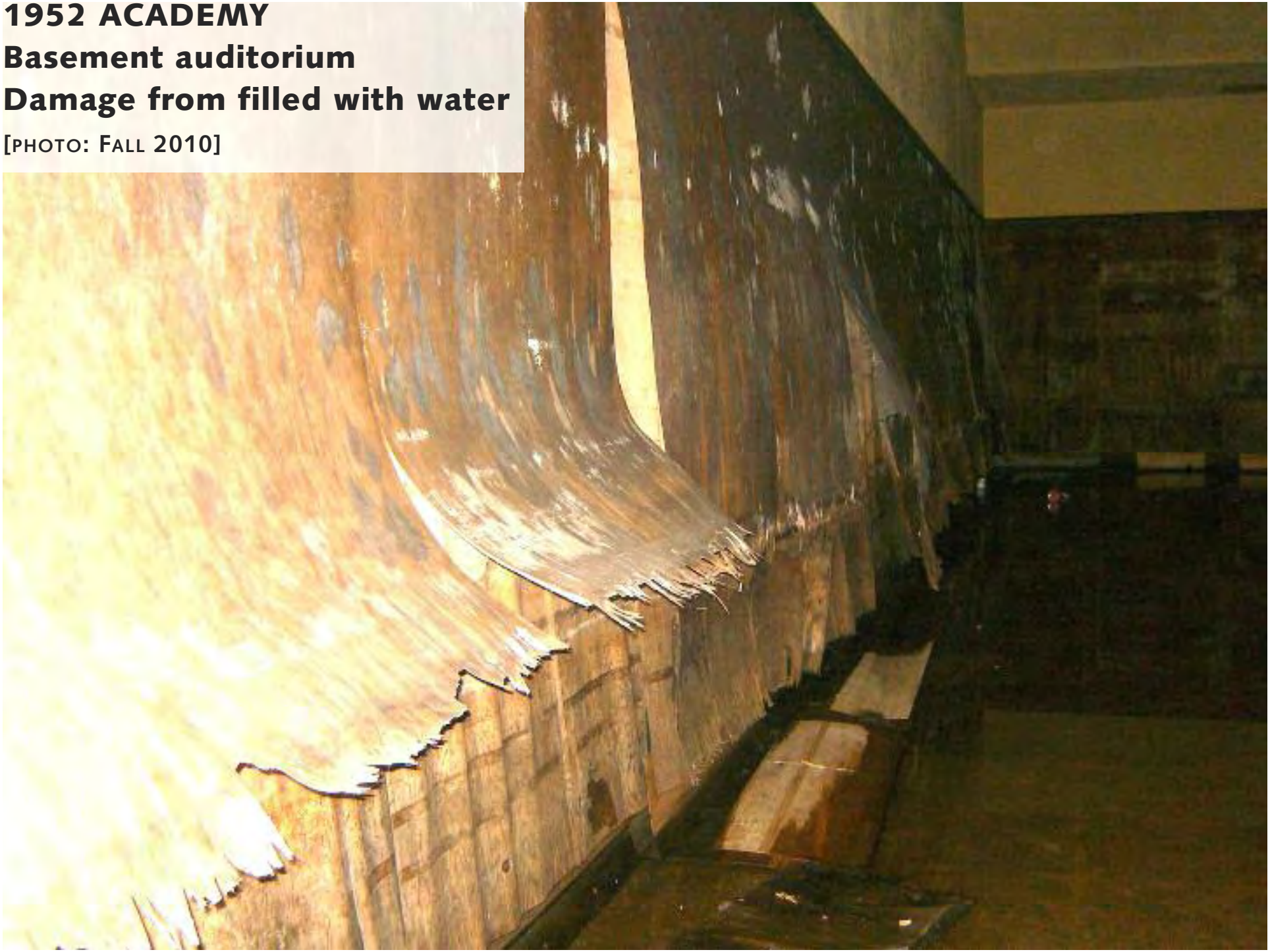


1952 ACADEMY
Basement stairwell filled with ground water
[PHOTO: Nov. 2021]

1952 ACADEMY
Basement auditorium
Damage from filled with water
[PHOTO: FALL 2010]

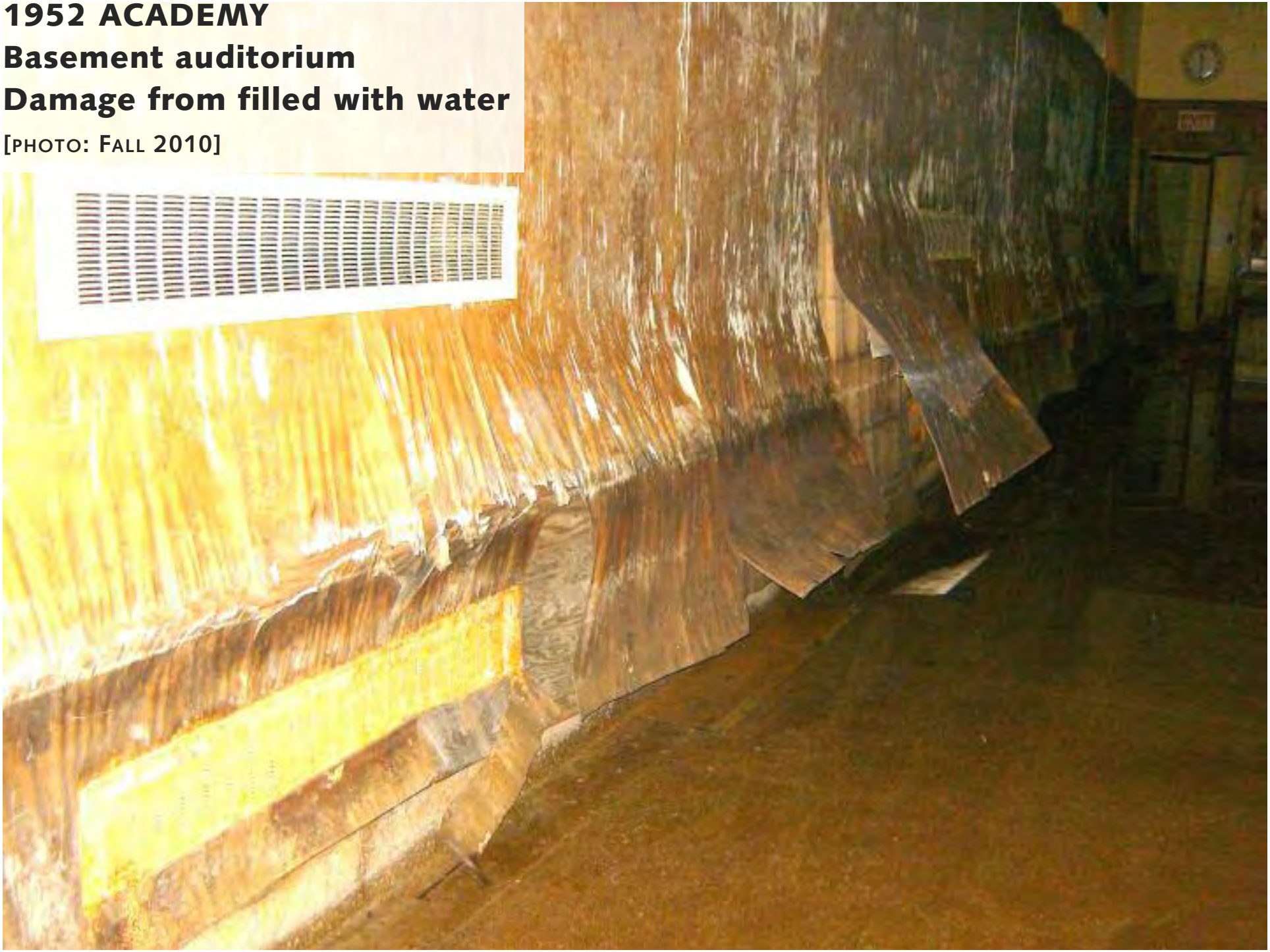


1952 ACADEMY
Basement auditorium
Damage from filled with water
[PHOTO: FALL 2010]



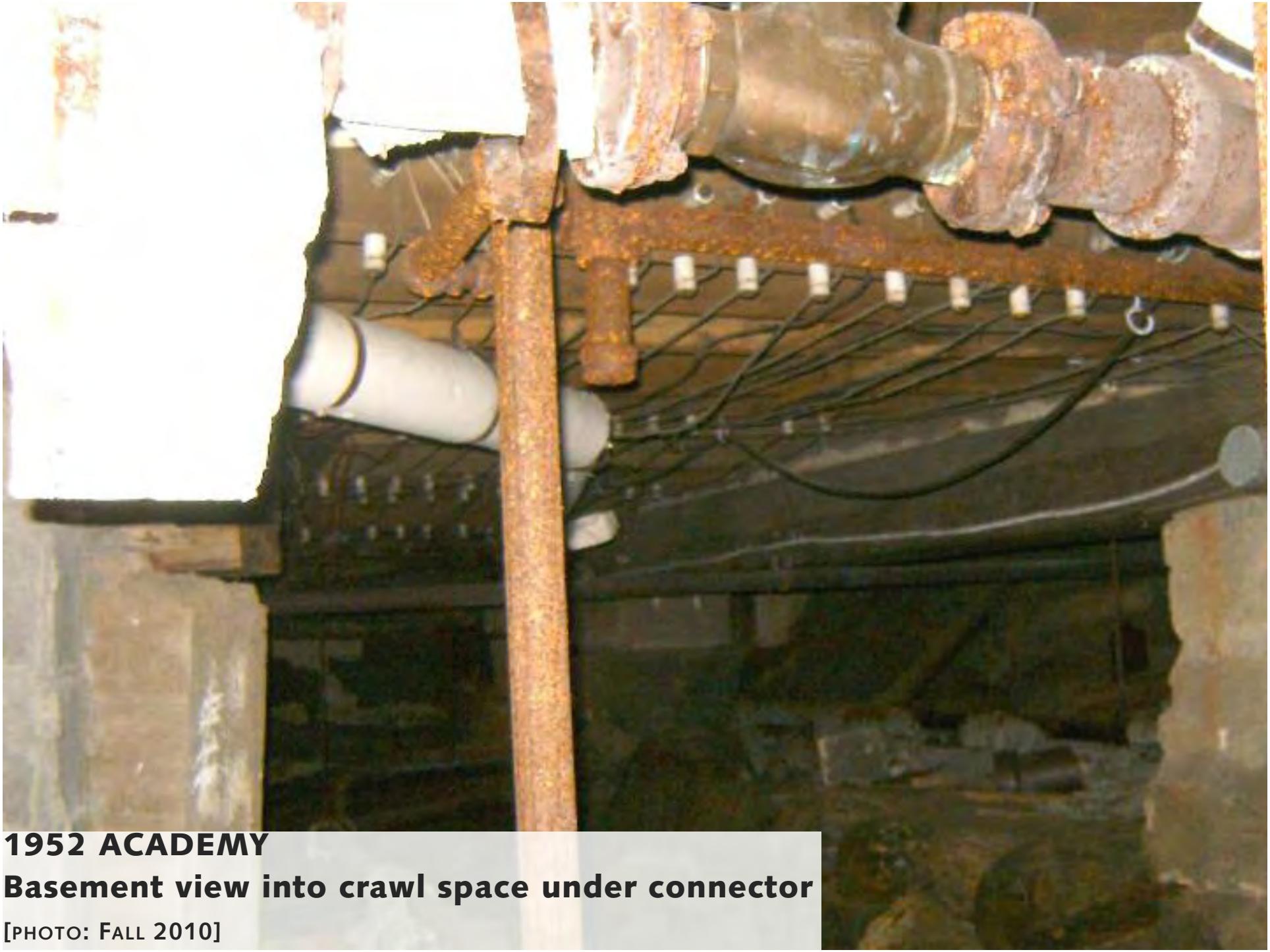
1952 ACADEMY
Basement auditorium
Damage from filled with water

[PHOTO: FALL 2010]





1952 ACADEMY
Basement ceiling
[PHOTO: FALL 2010]



1952 ACADEMY
Basement view into crawl space under connector
[PHOTO: FALL 2010]



1952 ACADEMY
Basement at connector
[PHOTO: FALL 2010]



1952 ACADEMY
Basement boiler room
Now with about 3–4 ft of water

[PHOTO: FALL 2010]

1952 ACADEMY
Basement
custodian's work room

[PHOTO: OCT. 2021]



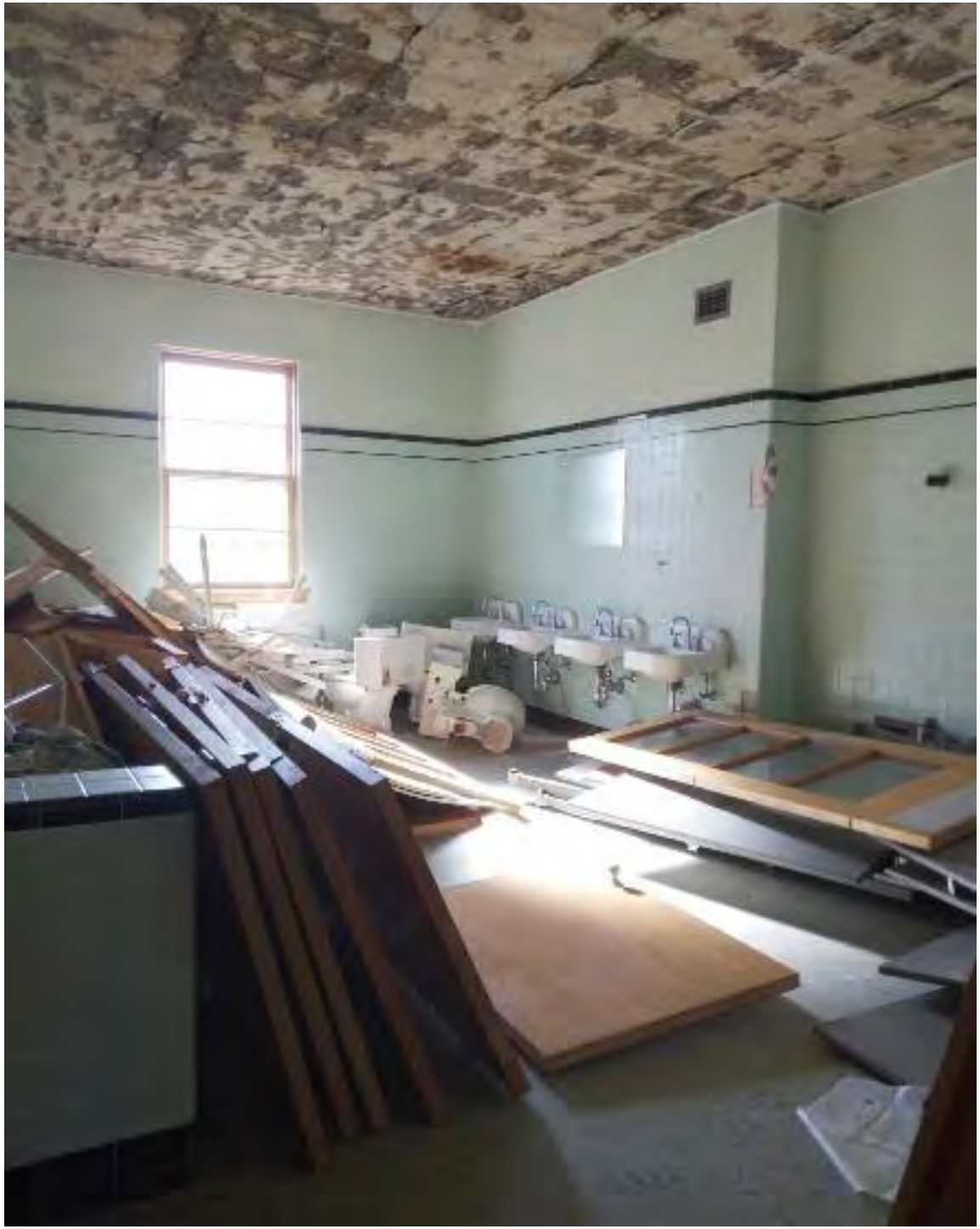
1952 ACADEMY
Basement
Storage

[PHOTO: NOV. 2021]



1952 ACADEMY
Dormitory restroom

[PHOTO: NOV. 2021]



1952 ACADEMY
Dormitory
[PHOTO: OCT. 2021]

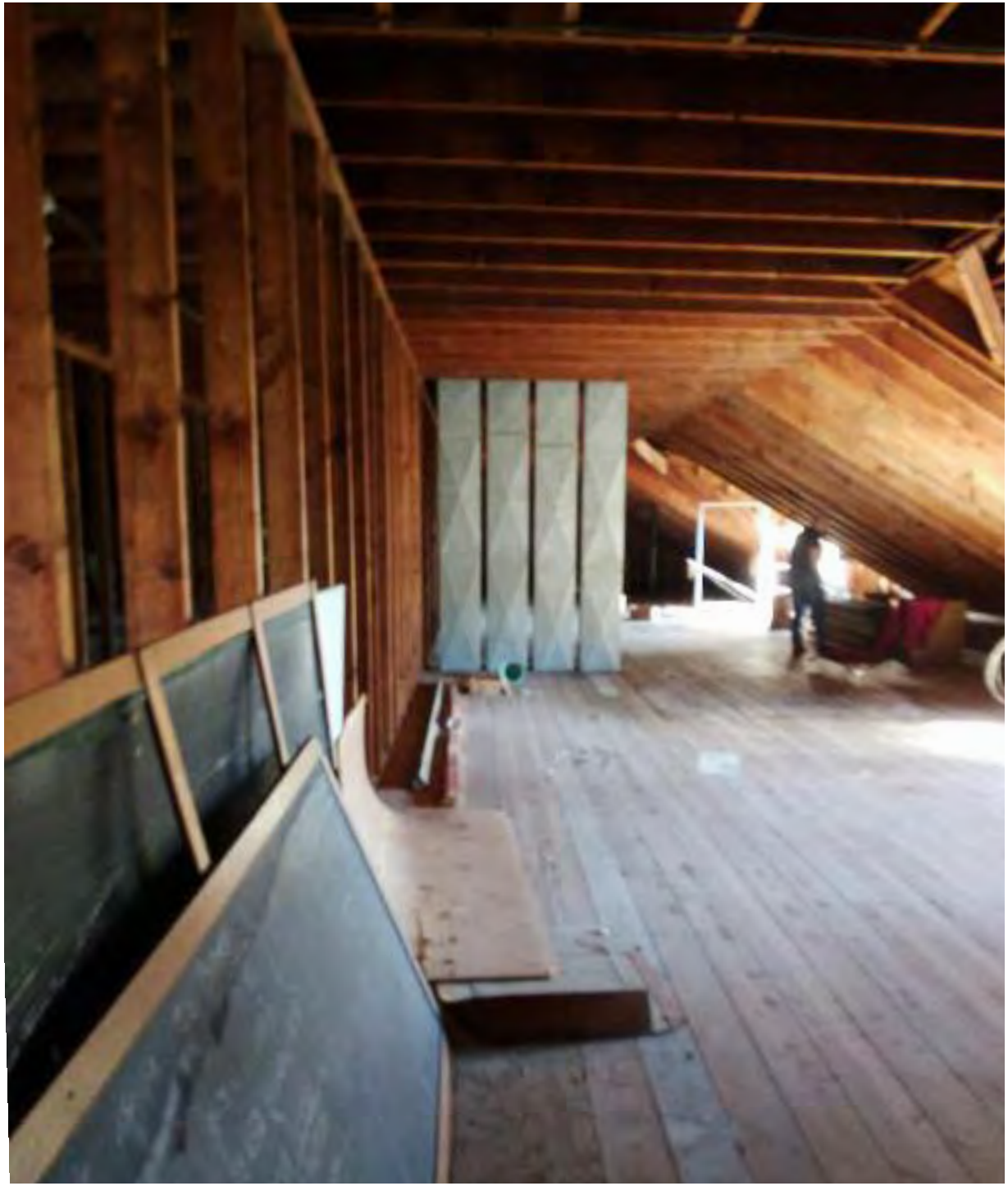


1952 ACADEMY
Classroom/social space
[PHOTO: OCT. 2021]



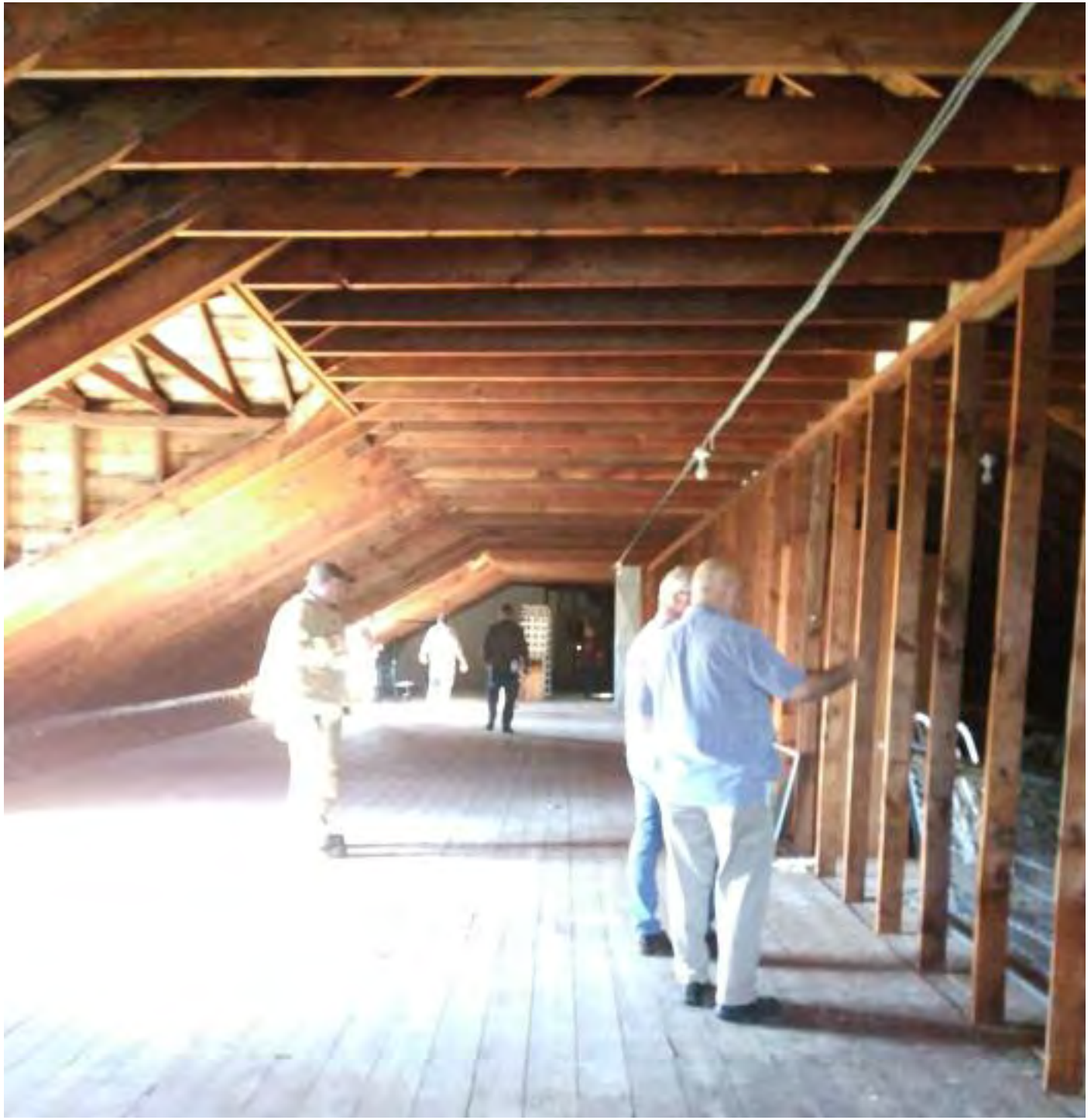
1952 ACADEMY
Attic

[PHOTO: OCT. 2021]



1952 ACADEMY
Attic

[PHOTO: OCT. 2021]



The fundamental issues:

TIME

SCALE / SIZE

SAFETY

MONEY

HISTORY

TIME

After trying to solicit interest, the Sisters officially put the building up for sale in 1982. Today, as we verge on 2022, the building has been unused for about 40 years.

There have been five property owners since 1982; though many ideas have been put forth and lots of money spent on those ideas, NO redevelopment solutions have been found or implemented in all of that time.

For 40 years, both private owners and the Town of Petersham have tried to implement re-use. There has been zero success.

Literally thousands of hours of owners', town officials', and volunteers' time have been put into trying to preserve the building

Since 2007, the town has spent multiple hundreds of hours on safety, analysis, review, committee, and maintenance time.

SCALE/SIZE

As the 40 year timeframe has proven, at about 100,00 s.f. the building is too large for reasonable, successful redevelopment for our town/region.

This is one of the reasons that NO professional developer could re-purpose it up to 2007, why no qualified professional developer responded to the town's Request for Proposals (RFP) processes, and why no one has come forward with an economically viable plan since 2007.

MONEY

Since 2007, the Town has spent over $100,000 on the building. This include the most recent $30,000 in state funds for outside consutlat work in 2020–21, but it does NOT include the $500,000+ spent on hazardous materials removal.

For 14 years of town ownership, funds have been spent on numerous outside consultants conducting analysis including planning, feasibility, specifications, and real estate reviews; insurance; alarm system; Fire Watchs; Police responses, Highway Dept. work; adminstrative staff time; and general maintenence.

Some residents have stated that the town cannot afford to have the parcel sit empty. Per above, the town is spending inordinate amounts of money to have the building standing. While the town detemrines the next steps, there is no cost to an empty parcel other than grounds maintenance.

SAFETY

After 15 years of town ownership & analysis –

The Fire Chief has stated the building needs to be demolished.

The Police Chief has stated the building needs to be demolished.

Members of the Planning Board has stated the building needs to be removed.

Members of the Board of Assessors has stated the building needs to be removed.

The Historic District Commission gave approval to demolish.

The Massachusetts Historical Commission gave approval to demolish.

In 2010, over 100 residents signed & submitted a letter asking for the building to be demolished.

In 2021, over 140 residents signed & submitted a letter asking for the building to be demolished.

THE SELECTBOARD AGREES WITH ALL OF THESE GROUPS.

MONEY (again)

At this time there is funding available in the form of historically low interest loans combined with available funds.

The Selectboard feels strongly that in order to address the large safety and risk factors the building presents, that this is the time to implement removal with the best funding sources for the residents.

The Advisory FInance Committee agrees and has 'Recommended' full demolition and a financing plan to present at Dec. 6, 2021 Special Town Meeting.

MISC.

Some have asked why the Town has not hired a structural engineer to analyze the property.

A private engineering firm reviewed the entire property for a week in 2006 when it was privately owned. They had projects on the east coast and in NY. After their review they decided not to purchase the property.

The issue for the town is not its structural status – though it can be seen as compromised and failing in areas – rather, it is that after 40 years no one have been able to implement the successful funding formula for its redevelopment and meanwhile its condition presents a major risk for the town.

In August 2021, the town's Regional Planning Commission (MRPC) estimated an average of approx. $500 per sq. ft. for renovation cost to the building. The 40 year record shows the cost is too much for successful redevelopment.

Since 2007, multiple Town appointed committees and formal processes have spent hundred and hundreds of hours reviewing the property.

(COMMITTEES: Nichewaug iNn Task Force, NI&AComm1, NI&AComm2, RFP Review Comm, Mediator's Effort, NIAC2020/2021)

The Town has held five Special Town Meetings focused on the status of the property — 2007, 2010, 2015, 2016, and the upcoming Dec. 6, 2021 Town Meeting).


It is time
to move on...

PUBLIC INFORMATION PRESENTATION

To Review the Status of the Nichewaug Inn & Academy

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 2021
Petersham Town Hall

In preparation for
Special Town Meeting
on Monday, December 6, 2021

Petersham Selectboard and Advisory Finance Committee
Joint Public Information Presentation
for the Dec. 6 2021 Special Town Meeting
and the Nichewaug Inn and Academy

Town Hall Upper Level and Remote Access
1 South Main Street

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 2021
4:00 PM

Selectboard Members Present in Person
Nancy Allen, Chair; Rebecca Legare, Vice Chair; Annette Ermini, Clerk

Advisory Finance Committee Members Present in Person
Rich Cavanaugh, Chair; Mark Bishop, Vice Chair; Sandy Page, Clerk; Jim Dowd

Others Present in Person Approximately 30 members from the community were present.

Meeting Called to Order
Chair Nancy Allen called the Selectboard meeting to order at approximately 4:10 PM.

Invoke the Rule of Necessity
Rebecca Legare invoked the rule of necessity to establish a quorum for the Selectboard. Annette Ermini invoked the rule of necessity as an abutter to the Nichewaug Inn & Academy property and to be able to discuss the subject. Nancy Allen invoked the rule of necessity as an abutter to the Nichewaug Inn & Academy property and to be able to discuss the subject. This legal procedure is followed as advised by the Petersham's Town Counsel.

Presentation from the Selectboard
The meeting began with a slide presentation. Nancy Allen explained a site visit had been held on Sat., Nov. 20 for town officials including the Advisory Finance Committee and members of the Historic District Commission and the Planning Board Chair. The Selectboard thanked the Petersham Fire and Police Department for providing the Fire Watch for the site visit.

The Selectboard began by thanking the many people who have worked hard a trying to preserve the Nichewaug Inn & Academy building.

The slide show consisted of 100 exterior and interior photos taken in October and November 2021 along with handful of photos from 2010 included for interior areas that are no longer safely accessible so current images cannot be taken. The presentation summarized the history and fundamental issues of Time, Scale/Size of the Building, Money, and Safety.

The Selectboard described that the Sisters of Assumpta closed the school program in the 1970s and then a decade later in 1982 they put the building up for sale on the open market, 2022 marks the 40th anniversary. There have been five property owners since 1982 including the town and the building has sat empty and unused for a couple of decades. The town took acceptance of the property in 2007,

nearly 15 years ago. Since then a nearly 15-year review process by Town committee and residents has been undertaken. Thousands of hours by private owners, town officials, volunteers, committee members, and residents have gone into trying to save the building without any success.

A large display of Property records, files, plans, photographs, proposals, meeting documents, news clippings, and much more was spread across five tables in the town hall, representing only a small portion of the dedicated work of residents and town committees since 2001 in the effort to preserve the building.

The following handouts were distributed to the public:

- Dec. 6 2021 Special Town Meeting Warrant of Articles
- 1982-2015 Summary of Proposed Development Projects and Preservation Efforts
- August 2021 Montachuset Regional Planning Commission (MRPC) Financial Report to the Nichewaug Inn & Academy Committee

The Warrant Articles were reviewed:

Article 2 Total demolition of the building excluding the separate garage and stonework as feasible.

Article 3 Total demolition of the building excluding the garage, Chapel wing, and stonework as feasible.

Article 4 Total demolition of the building excluding the garage, Chapel wing, a section of the original front building, and stonework as feasible,

The Board outlined the base demolition estimates, backfill material costs for the cellar holes, engineering & construction enclosures of the south side of the original front section should Article 4 pass, 5% contingency, and a Clerk of the Works stipend to oversee the demolition for the town. Nancy emphasized the backfill estimates are consistent across the Articles as most of the backfill pertains to the Academy basement while the front Inn building and wings are nearly all crawl space with only a small section of basement.

Comments from the Petersham Fire Department

Fire Dept/Captain Shawn Legare and FD Member Rebecca Legare spoke to property issues for the Fire Dept. They explained we do not have hydrants in town, rather they are "dry" hydrants. We only have tank trucks to bring water to center of town. The Fire Dept is on-call, we do not have any full-time members and the Station is unmanned. 72% of the Fire Department's calls are during the work hours on workdays. Response time to the center of town if needed for this property would require mutual aid from surrounding towns.

The Fire Dept. plans for and asks itself how do we protect the library first and foremost? Shawn Legare outlined the plan and amount of gallons of water that would be brought to the center of town in event of a Nichewaug Inn property fire.

The amount of water needed and able to be transported to the site is not feasible from just Buell's Pond about a ¼ mile away on Oliver Street off of South Main Street. The logistics of tanker trucks needed from fellow towns — approximately 60 tankers based upon the math — would congest and block the town center requiring additional control and organization. Shawn Legare explained the building is "balloon construction," meaning the fire would spread quickly because there are no fire stops between floors.

Nancy noted that on Saturday morning, Nov. 20, the Fire Department was simultaneously on Fire Watch for the Nichewaug Inn Site Visit, FD members were participating in training exercises in Phillipston, and FD members responded to an emergency call for a two-car accident on Route 122.

Comments from Jim Dowd, Master Stonemason

Petersham stonemason Jim Dowd stated he always appreciated the stonework at the Nichewaug Inn. He recently inspected the stonewalls and foundations and saw they are compromised and quite cracked but some could be restored. The stone chimney at the Chapel has some major vertical cracks. The stonework is restorable but at a cost. He noted that with the machinery functioning in the vicinity as needed during demolition there could be more damage.

Comments from Rich Cavanaugh, Chair, Advisory Finance Committee

Rich outlined the AFC analysis of the NI&A Warrant Articles. The first allocation of money is from the town's Stabilization Account. $100K would be used from this fund. The existing account amount reflects 8% of the town's budget; after the allocation, the fund would be at 6.2%. Funding would also come from the town's American Rescue Plan account, ranging from $121K-$127K, depending upon which Article passes.

The $500K remaining to fund the project would be borrowed. We will not know the exact costs to borrow until financing is obtained. Two loans are available—a 20-year loan available with special legislation, or a 10-year loan. Treasurer Dana Robinson provided figures for various loan scenarios for example a 10-year loan at 2% rate would be a $60,000 payment for first year and 20-year loan at 1.5% rate would $32,500 for first year. The AFC reviewed the current fiscal year's budget to generally determine estimated amounts and which come to approximately $75 to $125 per year for the average home tax impact, based upon demolition costs and the final financing rate.

Rich noted that the town has two large school construction loans that will be fully paid as of fiscal year 2025 after a 20-year loan term. Within three years our loan payments will go down 18%.

Questions from the Public and Press

Roy Nilson asked if interest costs should be added into the cost of borrowing? Rich stated the Article on the Warrant is to borrow $500K. We cannot predict the cost of interest until the loan is secured and we don't know the tax rate at this time.

Madelyn Moseley asked that if Article 4 passes, will additional funds be spent on the building, such as a sprinkler system. Nancy answered that if Article 4 passes no additional town funding is planned to go into the building for upgrades, renovation, or repairs. Madelyn stated that safety is the issue central to the building. She asked why Article 4 is an option if it means the building remains standing and remains a safety risk? The Selectboard noted they agreed with her.

Ann Lewis stated that most of the NI&A Committee's work and recommendations was based upon what residents indicated they wanted for the building from the Survey conducted. 136 people responded to the Survey; the majority said they wanted to see a portion of the building saved. 62% of respondents favored repurposing the stonework. 61% favored retaining the historic inn, 59% favored retaining the chapel. Ann clarified that Article 4 will reduce safety risks by eliminating the majority of the building, and the south side "Mother Superior Wing" would be removed from the front building, due to its proximity to the library.

Jim Moseley asked if Shawn or Becky Legare could provide an ad hoc estimate of the level of safety should Article 4 pass. Keeping some of the Nichewaug Inn is about systems, looking at facts and risk assessment. Becky responded that we don't have systems for that building, electrical, sprinklers, etc. The roof would need to be replaced. We would have to put in safety systems – need to address the water for a 40,000 sq. ft. building. Still have issue of tanker trucks and moving water.

Grace West asked about the impact of large quantities of water flooding the neighborhood should a fire occur noting this potentially could be just as damaging as a fire.

The Fire Dept members present explained that the whole Common is ledge and we know we already have high water levels in the center of town. The Fire Department pumps out the library. Becky Legare explained the recent Fall multi-town simulated tanker shuttle drill was held at the Petersham Center School because the Nichewaug Inn property could not handle the amount of water without flooding the library basement and possibly neighboring basements.

Maryanne Reynolds asked if the town can put out a fire at the Quabbin Retreat building on North Main Street It was noted that the building was renovated, is up to code and has a sprinkler system in addition to a water reservoir.

Maryanne Reynolds asked what happens at the Town Meeting, based upon the various Articles – if Article 2 pass, do we continue on to Articles 3 and 4? Nancy explained the Articles require a 2/3 vote to pass because of funds being used from the Stabilization Account and the use of borrowing. Should Article 2 pass, then there would be a Motion to Take No Action on Articles 3 and 4.

Robin Koenig asked who created the various Articles and asked how the Chapel factors in regarding fire response. Nancy explained that the Selectboard wrote Articles 2 and 3 and accepted the concept of Article 4 from the Nichewaug Inn & Academy Committee who want to retain a portion of the front building and the Chapel. Becky stated that if only the Chapel is retained as per Article 3 the Fire Department should be able to handle it due to its smaller size. She added that should Article 4 pass, it is unknown if the building would be renovated by a developer and could potentially need to be demolished down the road at further cost to the town.

Jane Lynch Gilbert stated the assessors assessment is $660,000 and she doesn't believe the property would be assessed this high once cleared. She asked how the backfill would affect property value for future reuse. Nancy replied that if there was any new construction, builders would be able to excavate and the backfill is all standard procedure.

Curtis Upshaw had a question about leaving the stonework structures and noted concerns that rock climbers could pose a liability to the town should someone fall. Nancy replied that the stonework will be hard to retain, loose stones will not remain, and most of the stonework is low walls.

Ann Lewis commented that the NI&A Committee's recommendations include obtaining grant funding to offset demolition costs. She noted the resident's Survey indicated that the community wanted first choice of recreational facilities on the site, then second choice was a community/senior center in the Chapel,

and third choice was senior housing. If the Master Plan was updated and accepted, then perhaps we could obtain grant funding for demolition and repurposing of the property. The Master Plan is the responsibility of the Planning Board. NI&A Committee recommendations also included update of Open Space and Recreation Plan. CGBD money might be available with updated plans. This would benefit town financially. Ann further noted that residents ask about low-cost, low-impact recreation on the site, such as bocce courts. Ann stated the 6.6 acres needs to be really planned before anything is permanent on the site.

Nancy noted that in 2010 the town applied for a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) which was denied because the proposal didn't not have a use plan and CDBG has strict funding purposes. Nancy emphasized the major issue is at this time is safety and the risk presented by the building in its poor condition.

Jane Lynch Gilbert asked why not use some of ARPA money for safety systems. Nancy stated it takes electricity to hard-wire safety systems plus ARPA does not cover fire alarms. Nancy stated the town will do everything possible to keep the building as safe as possible.

Richard McCrae asked if the backfill will be compacted. Nancy confirmed the backfill costs have been calculated to be compacted. Richard McCrae stated he has been an architect for 55 years, has been through the building, it is of mediocre original construction, that there's no market for reuse, and it should be torn down.

Shawn Legare asked about septic. Nancy said there have been studies that if the property is not overbuilt that with new technology, septic systems could be available.

Stephanie Selden asked what is the harm for demolition funding on the town's budget? Rich said this is unknown at the current time but the AFC and Selectboard will deal with that, and it will be part of the budget process. He said it is possible something else may not be funded, depending upon what the voters choose to support. Nancy stated that each year we know the status of major expenses such as town vehicles, etc. The town staff works in tandem with the Selectboard and Finance Committee each year during budget season to balance needs and budget.

Marc Page recommended the Selectboard to investigate the firm with the lowest bid to ensure they will do a good job. Nancy stated the lowest, qualified bidder is identified during a required, formal bid process and all bidders must be pre-qualified through a State mandated process and many presented long lists of projects demonstrating experience. She noted the low bid demolition company has a long history in the business.

Adjourn

Public Information Presentation adjourned at 6:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Annette Ermini

Annette Ermini
Petersham Selectboard Clerk

TOWN OF PETERSHAM
THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

SPECIAL TOWN MEETING WARRANT

with accompanying
Report of the Advisory Finance Committee

For MONDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2021

7:00 PM

at PETERSHAM TOWN HALL

Town of Petersham
Office of the Selectboard
3 South Main Street
Petersham Massachusetts 01366

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TOWN OF PETERSHAM
THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

WARRANT
SPECIAL TOWN MEETING

PETERSHAM TOWN HALL • MONDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2021 • 7:00 P.M.

ARTICLE l. [Reports to the voters]

To see if the Town will vote to receive the reports of Town Officers and Committees and act thereon.

ARTICLE 2. [Total Demolition of the Nichewaug Inn & Academy Building, excluding the separate free-standing garage and and exterior stonework as feasible]

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate and transfer from available funds, transfer from the Stabilization Fund, transfer from other available accounts, or any combination thereof; and or borrow a sum of money; in the amount not to exceed **$ 721,000.00** **for the costs of the complete demolition, deconstruction, and removal of the building known as the former Nichewaug Inn and Maria Assumpta Academy; not including the free-standing garage and exterior stonework, as shown in MAP EXHIBIT NO. 1 herein**; and as detailed in the bidders' documents noticed in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' CommBuys and Central Register effective September 20, 2021; for the Town-owned property located at 25 Common Street, Assessors' Map Parcel Number 116; as may be possible with funding provided for the purposes, over a period of one or more years, as determined by the Town of Petersham, said removal to include site clearance, filling, soil restoration, grading, and seeding of the land upon completion of demolition; and to authorize the Selectboard to enter into all agreements and execute any and all instruments as may be necessary to effect said demolition and removal; subject to obtaining a "Permit for Demolition" from the Town of Petersham Historic District Commission; and to authorize the Treasurer, with the approval of the Selectboard, to issue bonds or notes therefore in accordance with the provisions of General Laws Chapter 44, Section 7(3), and Chapter 181 of the Acts and Resolves of 2013: An Act Authorizing the Town of Petersham to Borrow Outside the Debt Limit for a Certain Town Project enacted by the General Court of Massachusetts and signed into law December 19, 2013 by his Excellency the Governor, and or any other authority; or act in relation thereto.

— RECOMMENDED

ARTICLE 3. [Demolition of the Nichewaug Inn & Academy Building, excluding the "Chapel Wing", separate free-standing garage, exterior stonework as feasible]

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate and transfer from available funds, transfer from the Stabilization Fund, transfer from other available accounts, or any combination thereof; and or borrow a sum of money; in the amount not to exceed **$ 723,000.00** **for the costs of the demolition, deconstruction, and removal of the building known as the former Nichewaug Inn and Maria Assumpta Academy; not including the "Chapel Wing", the free-standing garage, and the exterior stonework, as shown**

in <u>Map Exhibit No. 2 herein</u>; and as detailed in the bidders' documents noticed in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' CommBuys and Central Register effective September 20, 2021; for the Town-owned property located at 25 Common Street, Assessors' Map Parcel Number 116; as may be possible with funding provided for the purposes, over a period of one or more years, as determined by the Town of Petersham, said removal to include site clearance, filling, soil restoration, grading, and seeding of the land upon completion of demolition; and to authorize the Selectboard to enter into all agreements and execute any and all instruments as may be necessary to effect said demolition, deconstruction, and removal; subject to obtaining a "Permit for Demolition" from the Town of Petersham Historic District Commission; and to authorize the Treasurer, with the approval of the Selectboard, to issue bonds or notes therefore in accordance with the provisions of General Laws Chapter 44, Section 7(3), and Chapter 181 of the Acts and Resolves of 2013: An Act Authorizing the Town of Petersham to Borrow Outside the Debt Limit for a Certain Town Project enacted by the General Court of Massachusetts and signed into law December 19, 2013 by his Excellency the Governor, and or any other authority; or act in relation thereto.

— <u>NOT RECOMMENDED</u>

ARTICLE 4. **<u>[Demolition of the Nichewaug Inn & Academy Building, excluding the "Chapel Wing", a portion of the front section of the original building, the separate free-standing garage, and exterior stonework as feasible]</u>**

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate and transfer from available funds, transfer from the Stabilization Fund, transfer from other available accounts, or any combination thereof; and or borrow a sum of money; **in the amount not to exceed <u>$ 777,000.00</u> for the costs of the demolition, deconstruction, and removal of the building known as the former Nichewaug Inn and Maria Assumpta Academy; not including the "Chapel Wing", a specified portion of the original front building, the free-standing garage, and exterior stonework, as shown in <u>Map Exhibit No. 3 herein</u> and for the post-demolition costs to structurally stabilize and enclose the exposed 2.5 story south end of the front building after removal of the south side section**; and as detailed in the bidders' documents noticed in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' CommBuys and Central Register effective September 20, 2021; for the Town-owned property located at 25 Common Street, Assessors' Map Parcel Number 116; as may be possible with funding provided for the purposes, over a period of one or more years, as determined by the Town of Petersham, said removal to include site clearance, filling, soil restoration, grading, and seeding of the land upon completion of demolition; and to authorize the Selectboard to enter into all agreements and execute any and all instruments as may be necessary to effect said demolition, deconstruction, and removal; subject to obtaining a "Permit for Demolition" from the Town of Petersham Historic District Commission; and to authorize the Treasurer, with the approval of the Selectboard, to issue bonds or notes therefore in accordance with the provisions of General Laws Chapter 44, Section 7(3), and Chapter 181 of the Acts and Resolves of 2013: An Act Authorizing the Town of Petersham to Borrow Outside the Debt Limit for a Certain Town Project enacted by the General Court of Massachusetts and signed into law December 19, 2013 by his Excellency the Governor, and or any other authority; or act in relation thereto.

— <u>NOT RECOMMENDED</u>

Report of the Advisory Finance Committee for Special Town Meeting on December 6, 2021

I. INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

On behalf of the Advisory Finance Committee, I welcome Town Meeting voters to this Special Town Meeting to discuss and vote on three scenarios developed by and for the Selectboard to demolish a building located at the Nichewaug Inn and Academy ("NI&A") site.

The Advisory Finance Committee serves the voters by carefully considering components of the town's budget and making recommendations to the Town Meeting. In our deliberations we seek the input of residents, the Selectboard, and our town's departments. Tonight, we consider three articles detailed in Articles Two through Four of the Warrant. Each calls for the demolition to varying degrees of the building on the NI&A property at estimated costs ranging from $721,000 to $777,000.

A. Recommendations

Article 2 (Demolish All Building Except the Garage):	**Recommended with reservations**
Article 3 (Partial Demolition):	**Not Recommended**
Article 4 (Partial Demolition Alternate):	**Not Recommended**

To fund any of the above, we recommend: using $100,000 from the Stabilization Fund, borrowing $500,000, and taking the remainder from funds provided to Petersham through the federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA).

B. Estimated impact of borrowing on property taxes

The Town Treasurer conservatively estimates that the annual cost to service a loan for $500,000 would range between $32,500 and $60,000. If this amount was added to the Fiscal Year 2022 budget, the total tax levy would increase by 1 to 2 percent, which would raise the tax paid by the average property owner by $75 to $125 per year.

II. ANALYSIS

A. Approach

Evaluating these three scenarios as part of a Special Town Meeting, as opposed to considering them as part of the regular budget process associated with an Annual Town Meeting in June, presents special challenges. Among them is that we must consider the nature, scope, and cost of the project along with its impact on town spending without the benefit of knowing what the schools and town departments will be requesting as part of the budget review process for FY 2023, which starts in early 2022.

To help guide its analysis, the Advisory Finance Committee has therefore looked at the increased spending in the context of the current FY 2022 budget that ends on June 30, 2022. In other words, the Advisory Finance Committee looked at these spending requests as if they had been made as part of the FY 2022 budget process to best gauge the impact of the increased spending on town finances and ultimately the taxpayers.

B. Impact on Stabilization Fund

The town plans for future contingencies by means of the Stabilization Fund, which, simply put, is the town's savings account. The Advisory Finance Committee has worked to maintain a healthy balance of approximately 8% of the total budget in that fund. The town currently has approximately $381,123 in the Stabilization Fund, which amounts to 8.4% of this Fiscal Year 2022 budget. Transferring $100,000 from the Stabilization Fund would leave $281,123 in the Stabilization Fund, representing 6.2% of the FY22 budget.

C. Use of ARPA Funds

The town has received $376,632 as a result of ARPA. The Selectboard has already specified $222,000 of that amount for 15 town items/projects across Departments and Committees, leaving an available balance of $154,632. The Selectboard seeks to use up to between $121,000 to $127,000 of that available balance, or between 78% to 82% of the remaining ARPA funds, depending on which scenario is approved. Should the voters approve Warrant Articles 2, 3, or 4, it will affect other projects considered by the Selectboard for ARPA funding.

D. Impact on Town Debt

Again, the Warrant Articles for your consideration all anticipate borrowing $500,000. The Town Treasurer has provided estimates for the carrying costs of a 10-year or a 20-year note (the term options available to the town) with interest rates of 1.5% or 2%. Please note that the actual cost of the debt service will not be known until the loans are secured. However, 1.5% and 2% interest rates seem to be a reasonable upper estimate based on more recent borrowing by the town. In short, the estimates for the first year's principal and interest payments range from $32,500 to $60,000.

In this Fiscal Year 2022, the total amount the town is spending to service its debt is $254,602, which represents approximately 6% of the overall FY22 Budget. While it is not clear what other projects may be considered for borrowing in the next few years, please note that two school construction loans, which amount to loan payments of roughly $127,000, per year will end in 2025.

E. Impact on the Tax Rate

It is not possible to provide with any specificity what the impact of the approval of any of the Warrant Articles would be on the tax rate. Nevertheless, the Advisory Finance Committee offers the following analysis to provide some sense of the tax impact presented by the Warrant Articles.

Our analysis assumes that this additional $500K loan was included in the town's approved budget for FY2022, that the debt service for this loan is consistent with the Treasurer's estimates stated above, and that the added debt is entirely serviced by taxes.

– Fiscal Year 2022 total tax levy (includes Prop. 2 1/2 excluded debt service): $3,132,864
– Town Treasurer's maximum 1st year estimate for servicing a $500K loan: $60,000
– Town Treasurer's minimum 1st year estimate for servicing a $500K loan: $32,500
– Maximum estimate of tax if we had serviced the proposed loan in FY2022: $3,192,864 (up 2%)
– Minimum estimate of tax if we had serviced the proposed loan in FY2022: $3,164,364 (up 1%)
– The total value of taxable property according to the FY2021 recap sheet: $174,212,611
– Tax impact caused by a $60,000 budget item on the FY2022 budget: $0.32/1000
– Tax impact caused by a $32,500 budget item: $0.19/1000
– Estimated number of single-family homes in FY2021: 444
– Total value from recap sheet divided by # homes = $392,371 = estimated average home value

Based on those assumptions and figures, the dollar amount that an average household would have paid in FY2022 would be $125 on a $60,000 budget item, or $75 on a $32,500 budget item.

F. Reservations

In addition to the challenge of evaluating the impact of the three scenarios outside the regular budget process, the Advisory Finance Committee feels obligated to point out that the actual costs of the three scenarios remain unclear.

Estimates for the amount of backfill materials needed for filling cellar holes are rough, as are the estimates to close up portions of the Inn should the town vote to keep a portion of the Inn standing. While there is a 5% contingency built into the estimates, how the contractor will perform this enclosure work is also unknown.

The potential future costs to the town of partial-demolition Scenarios 2 and 3 are even less clear. The Selectboard has not asked voters to approve a current structural evaluation of the portions of the building potentially to be saved. The town could incur future expense to maintain or demolish portions or all of this structure at some later point.

Addressing these issues at a Special Town Meeting rather than at an Annual Town Meeting potentially means that fewer voters will determine the town's course of action. The Advisory Finance Committee respectfully requests that the Special Town Meeting voters appreciate the importance of their votes on the town's future as well as the tax bills of their neighbors.

Finally, while we have discussed the financial impact of taking some action on the Warrant Articles now, there is also a cost associated with taking no action now.

From a financial standpoint, the best-case outcome is that doing something later will cost more than it would now. However, we worry that any such increase will not be balanced by a similar increase in family income for many of our residents over that same period. Also, given the town's inability to reach an agreement regarding the future uses of the property, it seems unlikely the town would be deemed eligible for grant monies for demolition any time soon.

The worst-case outcome of inaction is that the problem will be addressed under emerging circumstances and mitigation may be extraordinarily expensive. Beyond financial risk, the buildings continue to pose risk to the health and property in the center of town.

G. Conclusion

For these reasons and others and with these reservations and others, the Advisory Finance Committee Recommends the passage of Warrant Article 2, and it does Not Recommend the passage of Articles 3 and 4.

Petersham Advisory Finance Committee —

Richard Cavanaugh, *Chair* Mark Bishop, *Vice Chair* Sandy Page, *Clerk* Jim Dowd, *member*

TOWN OF PETERSHAM
OFFICE OF THE TOWN CLERK Diana L. Cooley
PO Box 486 * 3 South Main St. * Petersham, MA 01366 * (978) 724-6649

At the Special Town Meeting, held on December 6, 2021, at which a quorum was present, the following votes were taken:

A motion was made and seconded to allow the Moderator to call a 2/3 vote. Unanimous

Article1: Reports were read by Nancy Allen - Selectboard, Richard Cavanaugh – Advisory Finance Committee, and Ann Lewis – Nichewaug Inn & Academy Committee. The motion was made and seconded to accept the reports are read.

Article 2: The motion made by Irene Perkins was :

That the Town take $ 100,000.00 from the Stabilization Fund, take $121,000.00 from the American Rescue Plan Account, and borrow $ 500,000.00, for a sum not to exceed $721,000.00 for all costs incidental and related thereto for the complete demolition, deconstruction, and removal of the building known as the former Nichewaug Inn and Maria Assumpta Academy; not including the free-standing garage and exterior stonework as feasible for retention, and as shown in Map Exhibit
No. 1, and as detailed in the bidders' documents noticed in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' CommBuys and Central Register effective September 20, 2021; for the Town-owned property located at 25 Common Street, Assessors' Map Parcel Number 116; said removal to include site clearance, filling, soil restoration, grading, and seeding of the land upon completion of demolition; and to authorize the Selectboard to enter into all agreements and execute any and all instruments as may be necessary to effect said demolition and removal; including subject to obtaining a "Permit for Demolition" from the Town of Petersham Historic District Commission; and to authorize the Treasurer, with the approval of the Selectboard, to issue bonds or notes therefor in accordance with the provisions of Mass. General Laws Chapter 44, Section 7(1) or any other enabling authority; and authorize the Selectboard to enter into all agreements and execute all instruments necessary to effect said work; that the Treasurer, with the approval of the Selectboard, be authorized to issue bonds or notes of the Town for such borrowing; and provided that, any premium received by the Town upon the sale of any bonds or notes approved by this vote, less any such premium applied to the payment of the costs of issuance of such bonds or notes, may be applied to the payment of costs approved by this vote in accordance with Chapter 44, Section 20 of the General Laws, thereby reducing the amount authorized to be borrowed to pay such costs by a like amount.

An amendment was made by Marie Erie to amend the article funding sources as follows: appropriate $100,000 from the Stabilization Fund and borrow a sum of $621,000. The amendment passed 90 for and 80 against.

Bob Bellefeuille made the motion to move the vote.

The vote was taken as follows:

That the Town take $ 100,000.00 from the Stabilization Fund, and borrow $ 621,000.00, for a sum not to exceed $721,000.00 for all costs incidental and related thereto for the complete demolition, deconstruction, and removal of the building known as the former Nichewaug Inn and Maria Assumpta Academy; not including the free-standing garage and exterior stonework as feasible for retention, and as shown in Map Exhibit No. 1, and as detailed in the bidders' documents noticed in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' CommBuys and Central Register effective September 20, 2021; for the Town-owned property located at 25 Common Street, Assessors' Map Parcel Number 116; said removal to include site clearance, filling, soil restoration, grading, and seeding of the land upon completion of demolition; and to authorize the Selectboard to enter into all agreements and execute any and all instruments as may be necessary to effect said demolition and removal; including subject to obtaining a "Permit for Demolition" from the Town of Petersham Historic District Commission; and to authorize the Treasurer, with the approval of the Selectboard, to issue bonds or notes therefor in accordance with the provisions of Mass. General Laws Chapter 44, Section 7(1) or any other enabling authority; and authorize the Selectboard to enter into all agreements and execute all instruments necessary to effect said work; that the Treasurer, with the approval of the Selectboard, be authorized to issue bonds or notes of the Town for such borrowing; and provided that, any premium received by the Town upon the sale of any bonds or notes approved by this vote, less any such premium applied to the payment of the costs of issuance of such bonds or notes, may be applied to the payment of costs approved by this vote in accordance with Chapter 44, Section 20 of the General Laws, thereby reducing the amount authorized to be borrowed to pay such costs by a like amount.

A 2/3 vote was required. The article as amended passed 143 in favor 31 against.
A call for a second vote was called by Ann Lewis. A second vote was taken. The article, as amended, was passed 142 in favor 31 against.

Article 3: Motion was made to pass over. 161 yes 13 against.

Article 4: Motion was made to pass over. 164 yes 10 against.

The Town voted to adjourn the STM at 9:05 PM.

This is a true copy attest.

Diana L. Cooley

Diana L. Cooley, Town Clerk

TOWN of PETERSHAM
OFFICE of the SELECTBOARD
3 South Main Street • P.O. Box 486 • Petersham, Massachusetts 01366
www.townofpetersham.org • 978-724-3353 • Fax 978-724-3501

Report to Voters Special Town Meeting December 6, 2021

Thank you all for being here tonight. We are very grateful you are here.

We offer our sincere thanks to all community members who since the 1990s have spent time, energy, personal funding, and their skills and knowledge trying to save and re-use the Nichewaug Inn & Academy building. The list is so long it would literally be impossible to acknowledge everyone.

Petersham at its heart and soul is a preservation town; many, if not most of us, live in historic homes into which we put lots of time and attention. We have worked together to take care of historic community buildings including our Center School, our one-room Schoolhouses, our Church buildings, our cemetery structures, and our Country Store. We deeply appreciate the benefits and impact of preservation.
In the end, after 40 years of no private or public redevelopment solution and 15 years of town ownership with no solutions, we are asking everyone to finally let this building go.

In summary: Tonight, we of the Petersham Selectboard join the Fire Chief and Fire Department, the Police Chief and Police Department, town staff, other Town Committees and officials, and numerous residents since 2010, in asking that voters approve taking down the building.

We do not make this request lightly.

We do so because the current failing and dangerous building conditions are putting this town at extraordinary risk. That risk ultimately falls to all of us, but it is your on-call Fire Department who runs forward into fires and emergencies. And it is your Police Department who responds to the alarm going off at all hours of the night and day not knowing if is it a real intruder or a raccoon. It is your Highway Dept. who must respond to clean up failing conditions and after vandalism. And it is your Selectboard, no matter who is sitting on it at any given time, who bears the responsibility as your executive office.

That rising risk and those failing conditions are combined with an optimum time for the town financing for voters to act on removing the building.

As you know, loan rates are at historic lows. The last loan the Town Treasurer took out was for the new Highway Dept. truck and he obtained a remarkable .35% interest rate. These conditions will not last forever. Working with the Finance Committee, we have also identified the ability to use two available accounts to lower the loan amount needed.

The Selectboard works very hard with town staff and the Finance Committee to ensure what is brought before voters at Town Meeting makes the ideal sense for the community. The staff and committees

serve the public so well by working with us to balance and time their requests as needed for the best total operating budget.

That effort of coordinated, smart annual budget planning now plays a role in allowing the Board of Assessors and Town Accountant to calculate an expected **$2 decrease** in the tax rate for 2022 when combined with new growth. The Selectboard and Finance Committee also expect a healthy sum of available Free Cash for use at June 2022 Town Meeting. All of that was taken into account when we looked a the timing of this decision combined with the failing status of the building.

It is actually better for us to decide this question now so that we can allow for it in the upcoming budget planning for the next fiscal year.

Two new Selectboard members are here tonight — one, by chance, is a long serving Petersham firefighter; the other, by chance, is a 22-year long abutter to the property. Annette Ermini did not run for office because of the property status, but in fact, she was joined by two other residents who are also abutters – all three of them took the chance and stood up to be counted for a position where only one could be chosen. No one who is now asking to keep this building up ran for the Selectboard office in May or November 2021. Additionally, Annette and I had the opportunity to join in the work of dozens and dozens of dedicated fellow community members in the 2000 decade trying to preserve the building – and so many are here tonight from that era.

This Fall we realized that former longtime Selectman Rick Marsh of West Street qualified as an abutter. Not a single person who currently wishes to keep the building standing ever investigated Rick's status or has spoken a word about it. Doing so would have placed two abutters on the Selectboard during that era — myself and Rick, just as we have today with Annette and myself and perhaps would have changed the course of timing and decision making.

We'd like to note that a Town Bylaw calls for a postcard to be mailed seven days prior to Special Town Meeting. For this Meeting, the notice was sent town-wide on Dec. 1st in the form of the entire Warrant, Maps, & Finance Committee Report – the hand-out before you. Along with those 485 copies, the Warrant was posted two weeks ago per the town Bylaw and in four public locations, it was also posted at the top of the town home web page followed by web posting of the Finance Report when it was ready, plus hard copies of the 'Warrant & AFC Report ' were left at the Post Office. If someone would like to ask the Attorney General's Office if the town followed proper protocol they are naturally most welcome to do so.

Some have said we are “rushing” this process – when one looks at the timeframe, it has been 40 years since the Sisters put it on the market, 30 years of active community effort to save it, 15 years of town ownership, 5 different owners, a week-long structural engineering analysis conducted in 2006 by a prospective private owner, 6 town committees & official town processes appointed to analyze the property, 4 Special Town Meetings including this one, 2 town 'Requests for Proposals' to outside parties, numerous professional consultants hired at expnese to the town, and now nearly 4 months of current review to get tonight. The definition of “rushing' does not seem to fit in this timeframe.

In 2007 we asked each other to take a leap of faith – at that Special Town Meeting we accepted the gift of the property with high hopes and the faith something could be done to preserve it. And yes, at that time, some were not happy the property was accepted by the town. Fifteen years later the building is in seriously declining shape; presents a real hazard to this community and not a single realistic successful solution as emerged for its redevelopment from public or private owners.

Some residents have asked, What will occur if the voters do not pass the Articles tonight? Unfortunateley, one of the first actions by the town will be to erect security fencing under the tall, now crumbing brick chimney on the south side of the Academy. Visible with the naked eye are whole sections separated at the chimney corners. We will also place a chain link fence between the Chapel wing and the Kitchen wing – that area has a failing stone chimney and the wing connector section is likely a first possible place for roof collapse because of interior collapsing floors. These actions will take more town funds and town time and energy.

Additionally, if the voters take no action we will have no funding to address any potential major emergencies, for example, if a roof collapses due to heavy snow. We will be back to the voters with little time for preparation and seeking funding for emergency actions. Some may hear that as false flags or overstatements, but it is just simply the fact of the matter.

In the end, we trust and believe in the voters.

Thank you for your time and for being here tonight.

Petersham Selectboard

~ Nancy Allen, Chair

~ Becky Legare, Vice Chair

~ Annette Ermini, Clerk

Athol Daily News

(https://www.atholdailynews.com)

SELECTBOARD MEETING WITH FIRE CHIEF and POLICE CHIEF Sept 28 2021

News > Local (/News/Local/)

Public safety chiefs: Nichewaug should come down





The future of the Nichewaug Inn and Academy was discussed at the most recent meeting of the Petersham selectboard. Staff photo/Greg Vine




By GREG VINE (/byline?byline=By GREG VINE)
For The Athol Daily News

Published: 10/1/2021 5:48:38 PM
Modified: 10/1/2021 5:48:45 PM

PETERSHAM — Voters at a Special Town Meeting scheduled for Dec. 6 will be asked if the former Nichewaug Inn and Academy should be razed as soon as possible due to safety concerns. At a meeting of Petersham's Selectboard on Tuesday, Sept. 28, Police Chief Dana Cooley and Fire Chief Dana Robinson answered the question with an emphatic "yes."

Cooley and Robinson spoke to a gathering of about a dozen and a half residents, several of whom joined the meeting remotely, and left no doubt that it's their firm belief the inn complex presents an immediate risk to life and property.

Referencing a recent drill employing a tanker shuttle which was recently undertaken at the Petersham Center School, Robinson said the resources of his department would be severely strained in the event of a fire at Nichewaug.

During the course of the drill, Robinson said, "We hauled 400 and some odd thousand gallons of water over that period of time."



Motioning toward the inn, which sits kitty corner across the common from Town Hall, he said, "That's a drop in the bucket over here, as much as that sounds like a lot of water in a short amount of time. If there's an event over there, our priority is going to be to protect the exposure."

The fire chief said there is no way his department could stop a fire at Nichewaug once it got started. The first step in fighting a blaze would be to set up a tanker shuttle similar to that used during the drill at the school.

"Because of manpower considerations," he explained, "that takes the least amount of manpower. We'll call in task forces, which are groups of six to eight departments from different areas of the state to set up a secondary water source."

Robinson said he's had a plan to protect the nearby library in place for a number of years. The library sits just feet from the southern end of the complex.

"We're going to do whatever we can to put up a water curtain around the library,"

he said, "but that's not going to guarantee that we're going to save it. But we'll do our best to save that building."

The town's Fire Department, Robinson said, is totally dependent on on-call firefighters. The fire station is not manned, except in the event of an emergency.

Cooley then gave his assessment of the situation.

"I've been in that building, probably within the past year," he began. "I walked on the floor joists and I'm not very heavy, but those floor joists were squishy when I went across them. So, I came back and I told my guys none of us will ever enter that building again, at least in the front part."

Getting calls to the complex is not uncommon for his officers, according to Cooley.

"Over the past 10 years we've had over 100 alarms there, so we average maybe 10 a year. We've had eight breaks where we actually had people in there. As a matter of fact, the very first time we got somebody up there after the alarms were put in, we bought our tasers with the money they gave to the court.

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"But I have instructed my guys that if somebody goes in there at this point, that it is a dangerous building."

Cooley said outside resources must sometimes be called upon to assist in the response to a break.

"There's so many nooks and crannies to hide, good luck finding them. The last time we actually did bring someone out of there a few years ago, they found him in the basement standing in waist-deep water trying to hide."

The police chief said that in the event of a fire, "by the time everybody gets there, I don't know if you can get water on it quick enough," particularly if it occurs in the early morning hours.

Like Robinson, said Cooley, "We've got a plan if, God forbid, something ever happens."

"In my opinion," he continued, "what I would like to see happen, is I would like to see the building come to the ground. I would like to see a nice big lawn there, then we take a step back and take a deep breath, then say, 'What do we want to do with that property?'"

The town has been grappling with what to do with Nichewaug since taking ownership of the site in 2007. A Nichewaug Inn and Academy Committee has been looking at the possibility of refurbishing at least part of the buildings that make up the complex. Ideas have ranged from senior housing and/or a senior center to the creation of an arts and performance venue.

On the other hand, the Selectboard recently received a petition signed by more than 130 Petersham residents calling for the complete demolition of the inn and academy buildings.

Members of both groups were in attendance at the Selectboard meeting.

The current inn building was constructed in 1899, with the "academy section" added on after the property was taken over by the Sisters or Maria Assumpta, who established a parochial school that operated until 1972.

Nichewaug was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1982.

The Special Town Meeting has been scheduled for Dec. 6. Town Clerk Diana Cooley said the warrant has not yet been set. Therefore, the final wording of the Nichewaug article has not yet been finalized.

Greg Vine can be reached at gvineadn@gmail.com

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(https://www.facebook.com/sharer/sharer.php?s=100&u=https%3a%2f%2fwww.atholdailynews.com%2fPublic-safety-chief-want-Nichewaug-razed-42768401)

2010 Materials

The HDC's 2010 Approved Permit for Demolition

and

The Town's 2010 Application to the HDC seeking complete demolition of the building.

[Same request being made in both 2010 and 2021.]

PETERSHAM HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

3 South Main Street • P. O. Box 486 • Petersham, MA 01366-0486
978/724-3353 tel. • 978/724-3501 fax

PERMIT FOR DEMOLITION

Dated: September 13, 2010

Owner: Town of Petersham
Address: Office of the Selectboard, P.O. Box 486, 3 South Main Street
Petersham, MA 01366
Telephone: 978-724-3353 e-mail: hilltop2@gis.com

For property located at: 25 Common Street [known as the Nichewaug Inn & Academy]

Petersham parcel number: 48

☒ Building or Structure ☐ Sign or Billboard ☐ Other:

As described in the Application for a Permit for Demolition dated: August 12, 2010

Having considered your Application for a Permit for Demolition the Petersham Historic District Commission held a public hearing on **SEPTEMBER 1 and continued on SEPTEMBER 7, 2010** and, after careful consideration of all submitted information and plans and the impact on the historic value and significance of the site, building, or structure, and the general design, arrangement, texture, material, and color of the features involved and the relation of such factors to similar factors in the immediate surroundings, the Commission, Pursuant to Chapter 211 of the Acts of 1966, Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 40C, and Article XII of the By-laws of the Town of Petersham, the Petersham Historic Commission hereby:

☐ Issues this Certificate of Non-Applicability (no external architectural features subject to approval).

X Issues this Permit for Demolition subject to the conditions below and as described herein.

The Commission requires the following conditions:

1. **The work shall conform to the conditions referenced in this Permit**
2. **Any change to the proposed work shall require the applicant to inquire of the Petersham Historic District Commission in writing whether the change is significant enough to require the filing of a new Application for a Certificate of Appropriateness.**

(Continued)

☐ Denies a Certificate of Appropriateness for the following reasons:

Permit for Demolition is approved.

See page 2 for detail and conditions.

(Continued)

PETERSHAM HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

PERMIT FOR DEMOLITION

(Continued)

Decision and Comments:

Per the Public Hearing of September 1 & 7, 2010, the Historic District Commission voted unanimously in favor of issuing a Permit for Demolition for the town-owned property as described below and per the specific Approval and Conditions as described below:

The Commission approves demolition of the structure at 25 Common Street – specifically the entire 1899 "shingle-style" Inn building which fronts on North Main Street and Petersham Common and the entire 1951 Academy classroom & dormitory building, a portion of which is located within the District's 200-foot setback zone, as part of the demolition project described by the Town's 2010 Community Development Block Grant proposal, and per a signature from a member of the Board of Selectmen on the application, and with the following two conditions:

1) That a reasonable effort to document the building be a condition of approval.

2) If the demolition is phased in, both the Building Inspector and the HDC must approve the appearance of the remaining structures at the end of each phase.

The Town's Application for Demolition is attached as a permanent part of this Approval.

The Commission notes that should the Town change the course of action as described in the Application for this project and/or undertake a project beyond the Demolition described in this Permit and within the purview of the Commission, that the Town shall meet with the Historic District Commission for discussion and review as necessary.

Sept. 13 2010

Date

Chair Signature

Vice-Chair Signature

PETERSHAM HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

3 South Main Street • P. O. Box 486 • Petersham, MA 01366-0486
978/724-3353 tel. • 978/724-3501 fax

APPLICATION FOR A

☐ **CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS**
X PERMIT FOR DEMOLITION OR REMOVAL

Dated: August 12, 2010

Applicant: **Town of Petersham – Nichewaug Inn Task Force**
Address: **3 South Main Street, P.O. Box 486**
Petersham, MA
Telephone: **978-724-3353** e-mail: **hilltop2@gis.net or amlewis2@verizon.net**

Owner: **Town of Petersham – Selectboard**
Address: **3 South Main Street, P.O. Box 486**
Petersham, MA
Telephone: **978-724-3353** e-mail: **hilltop2@gis.net**

For property located at: **25 Common Street**
Petersham parcel number: **48**
X Building or Structure ☐ Sign or Billboard ☐ Other:
Describe completely:

Please see attached pages for Project Description.

(Attach Separate Sheets as Necessary)

Pursuant to Chapter 211 of the Acts of 1966,
Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 40C and Article XII of the By-laws of the Town of Petersham:
Any person who desires to erect, build, construct, reconstruct, restore, alter, move, demolish, remove or change an exterior architectural feature for which a Certificate of Appropriateness is required of any building or structure within the Historic District, or to erect within the Historic District a building, structure or sign for which a Certificate of Appropriateness is required, shall file with the Historic District Commission an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness or an Application for a Permit for Demolition or Removal, as the case may be, together with such plans, elevations, specifications, material and other information, as shall be deemed necessary by the Commission to enable it to make a determination on the application.

1. Attach all plans, specifications, descriptions, and any other material (including photographs).
2. Within fourteen (14) days after filing this application, the Historic District Commission will make a determination whether any external architectural features subject to approval are involved.
3. Should the Commission determine that no external architectural features subject to approval are involved; the Commission will issue a Certificate to that effect.
4. Should the Commission determine that external architectural features subject to approval are involved; the Commission shall hold a public hearing on the Application.
5. Following the public hearing and within forty-five (45) days after filing this application, the Commission shall make a determination of the Application.

APPLICATION FOR A CERTIFICATE OR PERMIT

(Continued)

In passing on appropriateness, the Commission shall consider, among other things, the historic value and significance of the site, building, or structure, the general design, arrangement, texture, material and color of the features involved, and the relation of such factors to similar factors of sites, buildings and structures in the immediate surroundings. The Commission shall consider the appropriateness of the size and shape of the building or structure in relation to the land area upon which the building or structure is situated and to the neighboring sites, buildings, or structures within the district. The Commission shall also consider the applicable zoning and other By-laws of the town.

Architect: **None**

Address: _____

_____

Telephone: _____ e-mail: _____

Contractor: **None at this time. The project would go out to Bid per approval received from the HDC to proceed.**

Address: _____

_____

Telephone: _____ e-mail: _____

- Contact the Historic District Commission before you file this Application. The Commission can help you with your project by describing work that requires a Certificate or Permit, whether you need to apply, the type of work that is likely to be approved, and other helpful information.
- Describe the work as completely as possible.
- For minor alterations, please submit a sketch or drawing to scale showing the location.
- For all new construction including additions, please submit views drawn to scale of all visible exterior elevations, applicable floor plans, explanatory notes, sections, and details of architectural features including trim, doors, and windows. Include a plot plan showing existing structures and the location of the proposed construction.
- For signs, please submit a scale drawing of the proposed design, representation of lettering style, description of material to be used, sketch or drawing of the location on a building, and a plot plan for free standing signs showing the location in relation to other structures.
- Photographs of existing conditions are very helpful.
- Any additional drawings, diagrams, product samples, information, and photographs are very helpful.

The Historic District Commission shall charge the Applicant for all reasonable fees necessary to render an informed decision, including, but not limited to: consulting fees, stenographic fees, production and reproduction fees. The Applicant will be notified in writing of the same (including the approximate costs involved) not later than one week prior to any Public Hearing. All funds will be held in escrow and shall be duly accounted for. (See attached ADDENDUM.)

Mail this Application to the Historic District Commission or deliver to the Town Secretary.

A Certificate is required before all other applicable Town permits can be issued.

X Photographs X Plans, elevations, and sections

☐ Sketch or Drawing X Material Specifications and information

X Site or Plot Plan ☐ Illustration ☐ Other: _____

Chair, Preservation Inn Task Force
Applicant's Signature

Owner's Signature

Date: 11 Aug 2010

Description: The Town of Petersham would like to ask voters at a Special Town Meeting on October 4, 2010, for permission to seek a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) to fund demolition/deconstruction of buildings known as the Nichewaug Inn & Maria Assumpta Academy at 25 Common Street on Petersham Common. Montachuset Regional Planning Commission has been engaged by the Town to write the grant which is due on December 10, 2010. Review by the HDC is required for the grant submission. Review by Massachusetts Historical Commission is also required for the grant submission. If the grant application is successful, work would begin in approximately late Summer–early Fall 2011.
To that end, the Town submits this 'Application for Demolition' with the following requests:

1.) That the HDC review and approve demolition of structures at 25 Common Street — specifically the entire 1899 "shingle-style" Inn building which fronts on North Main Street and Petersham Common and the entire 1951 Academy classroom & dormitory building, a portion of which is located within the District's 200-foot setback zone. Attached find a general plan of Demolition Scenario #1 for complete demolition of all structures. It is the intention of the town to seek CDBG grant funding for this Scenario.

2.) Alternatively, the Town asks the Commission to consider approval of selective demolition in the event that funds are not secured for complete removal. Attached find Demolition Scenarios #2A and #2B for phased-in complete demolition, and Scenario #4 for partial demolition defined by where hazardous conditions are most critical.

(Note that in all cases it is the intention of the Town to keep the small existing garage at least temporarily for storage of town equipment.)

The Town is extremely sensitive to the history of the property and regrets that this request must be made. We seek permission for removal based on growing safety concerns of the Petersham Building Inspector, Fire Chief, and Police Chief combined with very real economic hardship. The Town does not have the funding to properly repair and maintain the structures.

After thirty years of no use and a variety of private owners and of interested parties viewing the property, the buildings are deteriorating and presenting a serious hazard to the Town. As of this time, no party has come forward with a solid, feasible proposal for re-use. Now that deterioration has begun it appears to be coming on more rapidly. This is visible particularly in the vicinity of the Kitchen Wing and the Dining Hall of the Inn. The Building Inspector has ruled no access is allowed to those zones and in July 2010 instituted a new entry point to the building so as to avoid that section. Two flat roof sections are in extremely poor condition, there are failing sills along the front of the Inn and failure of one of the front porches and a rear porch of the Inn. There are myriad interior cracks, wall separations, and falling ceiling sections. Water infiltration in the basement is an ongoing problem and may be having a negative impact on sections of the building. Fascia boards, roof sections, and the cupola of the Academy building are deteriorating. Those with experience in architecture and construction have noted that the main roofs of the Inn will likely be next to show obvious failure.

The large, empty buildings attract intruders and have been illegally entered and vandalized over time. The Town's limited safety departments cannot provide 100% effective oversight. Safety of the public and of responders including local and regional Police and Fire Departments is a mounting concern. In the event of a fire, a regional disaster is possible with lives, homes, buildings, and possessions at risk. The structures contain asbestos which adds considerably to the fire risk.

Please note that at this time there is no known future use for the land once the buildings are removed.

The Town understands and is in complete agreement with Town Bylaws dictating oversight and approvals by the Historic District Commission in the event any structures are erected in the future. The Town calls to the attention of the Commission the following sections of **Town Bylaw Article XII of the HDC** which may be pertinent to this request:

SECTION 6. EXCLUSIONS Nothing in this act … nor shall anything in this act be construed to prevent the erection, construction, reconstruction, restoration, alteration **or demolition of any such feature which a duly authorized public officer shall certify is required by the public safety because of an unsafe or dangerous condition.**

SECTION 9. POWERS, FUNCTIONS AND DUTIES OF COMMISSION The commission ... **If a proposal shall be determined to be inappropriate, the commission shall determine whether, owing to conditions especially affecting the historic district generally, failure to approve an application will involve a substantial hardship, financial or otherwise, to the applicant and whether such application may be approved without substantial detriment to the public welfare and without substantial derogation from the intent and purposes of this act. If the commission determines that** the features, **demolition or removal involved will be appropriate or, although inappropriate, owing to conditions as aforesaid, failure to approve an application will involve substantial hardship to the applicant** and approval thereof may be made without substantial detriment or derogation as aforesaid, **the commission shall approve the application**; but if the commission does not so determine, the application shall be disapproved.

Town of
Petersham, Massachusetts 01366-0486

978-724-3353 978-724-3501 (fax)

August 3, 2010

Petersham Historic District Commission
3 South Main Street
P.O. Box 486
Petersham, MA 01366

Dear Commission Members:

The Petersham Selectboard is requesting that the Historic District Commission take under consideration demolition of the Nichewaug Inn and Academy buildings.

Per the recommendation of the Nichewaug Inn Task Force, the Town expects to submit an application for demolition to the Historic District Commission.

Funding for demolition will be sought through an application for a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and the grant application process must include review and approval by the Massachusetts Historical Commission and the local Petersham Historic District Commission.

The application will be administered by the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission and is due December 10. All approval must be in hand before that date.

If there is any further information that you require, please don't hesitate to contact the Selectboard office.

Sincerely,

Fredrik A. Marsh
Selectboard chair

Timothy M. Clark
Vice chair

Robert D. Legare
Clerk

Dsb

PETERSHAM HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

3 South Main Street • P. O. Box 486 • Petersham, MA 01366-0486
978/724-3353 tel. • 978/724-3501 fax

As part of this Application, please find enclosed the following documents:

- Most recent Property Survey (2009)
- Scenarios for Demolition
- Draft of Demolition Bid Specifications from MRPC (at 8/11/10)

Attachment A
SCOPE OF SERVICES

Specifications for Building Demolition/Deconstruction and Site Clearance:

of the 'Nichewaug Inn & Academy' Structures
Assessor's Parcel 48
25 Common Street, Petersham, Massachusetts
PROPERTY OWNER: TOWN OF PETERSHAM

OVERVIEW OF WORK

Demolition/deconstruction of building structures per all Specifcations listed herein and as illustrated in the attached Scenarios. Site soil surface restoration, grading, and clean-up as specified in this Scope of Services.

DESCRIPTION OF WORK

The Contractor shall:

A. Prior to commencing work, the Contractor shall notify all public utility companies, if applicable including but not limited to: Electric, Telephone, and Digsafe. Also contact the Town of Petersham's Highway Department, Fire Department, Police Department, Building Inspector, Board of Health, and Selectboard Office in writing, at least seventy-two (72) hours before the start of any demolition work.

B. Provide all labor, equipment, materials, insurance, and supervision, engineering, and testing necessary to remove and properly dispose of all structures and contents, including trash, rubbish, basement walls, floors, foundations, sidewalks, steps and driveways, any fuel tanks, toilets, septic tanks, cisterns, and meter pits from the property as shown on Scenario Plans 1, 2A, 2B, 3, and 4.

C. Install perimeter fencing for security around the project site.

D. Protect well head (see map for location) during deconstruction.

E. Maintain controlled site access for vehicles and personnel.

F. Remove and dispose of all building contents and fixtures unless designated as exempt by the Owner. Salvage rights are per the Contractor or Contractor's designated Sub-contractor. An Addendum Notice will be distributed at the Site Visit on Wednesday, August 25, and available thereafter, itemizing specific items exempt from the project by the Owner.

G. Remove and dispose of appliances and other items that may contain refrigerants in accordance with all Town and State regulations. Appliances and other items that may contain refrigerants include, but are not limited to, refrigerators, freezers, dehumidifiers, and portable or central air conditioners.
H. Remove and legally dispose of asbestos; mercury-containing materials including fluorescent, high pressure sodium, mercury vapor, metal halide light bulbs, and thermostats; PCB-containing materials include capacitors, ballasts, and transformers where component is contained within a metal jacket and does not have a specific, legible label stating no PCBs are present. Attached is a report that was conducted on the property in regards to hazardous materials present on the site. Any remediation recommended in this report must be addressed as applicable to each of the Scenario bids.

I. Remove all materials from the site in accordance with Federal, State, and Local regulations at an approved waste facility. Copies of all manifest sheets are to be turned over to the Project Manager prior to the completion of the project and final payment.

J. Once the demolition is started, it shall be continued until completed.

K. Building openings and portals created as a result of selective demolition shall be closed with secure barriers, shoring, and support as required.

L. Perform site clearance, grading, and restoration with topsoil and seeding. Infill with clean fill. Grading shall be level and in keeping with the surrounding grounds.

M. Complete the demolition work in accordance with the plans and these technical specifications and any special provisions included in the Contract Documents.

N. Signify whether there will be a need for police detail at any phase of the project.

SPECIFICATIONS FOR DEMOLITION / DECONSTRUCTION

(1) A Demolition Permit shall be procured from the Inspector of Buildings before commencing demolition. There will be no charge for the Permit.

(2) When a structure is demolished or deconstructed, the roof and each upper story shall be taken down before the demolition/deconstruction of the next lower story is begun; no material shall be placed in such a manner as to overload any part of such building in the course of demolition; all brick, stone, timber and structural parts of each story shall be lowered to the ground immediately upon displacement; all dry mortar, lime, brick dust, plaster, or other flying material shall before and during removal be dampened sufficiently to prevent it from floating or being blown into the street or on adjoining property.

(3) The Owner shall inspect each excavation, or any part thereof, before filling of any excavations and it shall be unlawful to fill any such excavation without inspection and approval of the Owner.

(4) No part of the abutting streets, including the public walks and right-of-ways, shall be occupied by the Contractor and his equipment. The Contractor's operations on site shall be confined to the area within the security barrier. Public and private property that are not part of the job site shall not be harmed.

(5) The Contractor shall be responsible for all damage to private or public property as a result of his fault or negligence in connection with the execution of the work and shall be responsible for the proper care and protection of all work performed until completion and final acceptance.

(6) In order to prevent the blowing of dust and dirt, the Contractor will be required to wet down and keep wet the structures before and during wrecking operations and all rubbish or debris as being loaded for disposal. The on-site well may be utilized for this purpose. Contractor to provide generator to run well pump.

(7) Demolition will consist of the demolition and removal of all structures and accessory buildings, walks, concrete slabs, retaining walls, trees and bushes, and including foundation walls, columns, floors, piers, partitions, walls, stoops and any other subsurface structures unless designated as exempt by the Owner.

(8) Any building openings/portals created as a result of selective or phased demolition shall be closed with weathertight, exterior walls and foundations adequate to support imposed loads. Suitable salvaged material may be used for this construction. Said closure design and any salvaged materials to be used therein shall be approved by the Owner prior to installation. In addition, temporary barriers and supports may be necessary to prevent damage of structures not to be demolished, or for safety.

(9) Site clearance will consist of filling all excavations to the existing ground elevation with clean fill; and the grading and smoothing of the site. Soil restoraton with topsoil loam and seeding.

(10) The Contractor shall be responsible for removing any demolition debris or mud resulting from the execution of the demolition work from any street or right-of-way. Any cost incurred by the Owner in cleaning up any litter or mud shall be charged to the Contractor and be deducted from funds due for the work.

(11) Littering of the project site shall not be permitted.

(12) All construction debris, trash, and other materials shall be promptly removed from the site.

(13) The Contractor shall comply with applicable laws and ordinances governing the disposal of materials, debris, rubbish, and trash and shall commit no trespass on any private property in the disposal of the materials.

Attachment B
ADDITIONAL CONDITIONS

The Town of Petersham (TOWN), as Property Owner by way of its legally designated agents, assumes no responsibility for the condition of existing buildings and structures and other property on the project areas, either at the time of the Invitation to Bid or thereafter. The TOWN shall not adjust contract price or grant any allowance for any change in conditions, which may occur after the Invitation to Bid is issued. Conditions existing at time of inspection for bidding purposes will be maintained by the TOWN as far as practical.

All demolition work and disposal of debris shall be completed within 120 days after commencement of the work.

Substantial Completion is that point at which all the following work items have been completed in accordance with the Contract Documents and is accepted by the TOWN:

a. all demolition is complete
b. all debris is properly disposed
c. the site is graded to final contours
d. erosion control measures are in place
e. the security barrier is removed
f.

Final Completion is that point at which all work required by the Contract Documents is complete and the work is accepted by the TOWN.

In the event of prolonged or extreme weather conditions, the CONTRACTOR may submit a written request to the TOWN for an extension of the time for completion, which shall be the CONTRACTOR's sole remedy.

The CONTRACTOR shall secure, keep current, and pay for all permits, licenses, fees, and inspections necessary for proper execution and completion of the project. The CONTRACTOR shall fully comply with all Federal, State and Local laws and regulations, including but not limited to the orders of public authorities applicable to this project.

The CONTRACTOR shall perform all work between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. weekdays.

Prior to the start of any demolition work, the CONTRACTOR shall perform all work necessary to conform to the Town of Petersham Board of Health requirements regarding insect and rodent control, and the CONTRACTOR shall further make an inspection of the building to make certain that no unauthorized persons are inside the building.

The CONTRACTOR shall take reasonable precautions for the safety of, and shall provide reasonable protection to prevent damage injury or loss to:

a. employees on the work site and other persons who may be affected thereby

b. the work site, materials, and equipment to be incorporated therein

c. other property at the site or adjacent thereto, such as trees, shrubs, lawns, walks, pavements, roadways, structures, and utilities not designated for removal in the course of the project.

The CONTRACTOR shall reimburse the TOWN for any and all costs for police supervision of traffic as required by the Petersham Chief of Police during the course of the project. The CONTRACTOR shall provide no less than 7 days notice to the Petersham Chief of Police to insure that an officer(s) will be available for such supervision. Failure by the CONTRACTOR to provide proper supervision shall be grounds for a suspension of work until such time as it is made available.

The CONTRACTOR shall protect as necessary all structures to remain on the project site or which are adjacent to or in the vicinity of the site and which may be in any way affected the work. Proper barriers should be in place at all times to protect persons from hazards of site conditions or operations. The CONTRACTOR shall indemnify and hold harmless the TOWN from liability for any injury or damage to said structures, the premises, or to persons or property due to its operations or failure to provide adequate safeguards, barriers, or supervision.

The CONTRACTOR shall maintain public access to public roads, sidewalks, and to abutters' property at all times.

The CONTRACTOR shall have no right to recover for any damages or losses it may suffer as a result of adverse weather conditions.

The CONTRACTOR shall keep the project area and adjacent public right-of-ways reasonably clean at all times and upon completion of the work, remove all security barriers and equipment, leaving the entire project area in a neat condition.

The CONTRACTOR shall not be permitted to burn trash on the site under any circumstances.

All work is to be done by properly qualified persons possessing required licenses and the identity of such person and the required licenses and/or permits shall be submitted to the TOWN prior to the commencement of any work. All disposal slips obtained in the course of the work shall be presented to the TOWN for its records prior to final payment.

The CONTRACTOR shall make no claims against the Town of Petersham or its officials, employees, or agents for any injury to any of its officers, employees, or agents or for damage to its trucks, material or equipment arising out of work related to this project.

The CONTRACTOR shall comply with the requirements of the prevailing wage rate laws. The minimum wage rates applicable to the project as determined by the Commissioner, Department of Labor and Industries,

Commonwealth of Massachusetts under the provisions of the Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 149, sections 26 and 27D, inclusive, as amended, are affixed hereto, and are incorporated in the Contract by reference.

The CONTRACTOR shall keep posted on the site a legible copy of the wage rate schedule. The CONTRACTOR shall also keep on file the wage rates and classifications of labor employed on the project in order that the rate and classifications may be available for inspection by the TOWN or its designee. The CONTRACTOR shall provide the TOWN with a weekly record of payroll payments made for the prior week on the forms provided, and shall provide the TOWN any other evidence relating to compliance with the minimum wage rate requirements, as the TOWN may request.

Apprentices employed pursuant to the determination of wage rates shall be registered and approved by the State Apprenticeship Council.

Wherever rates for journeymen or apprentices are not listed, and if other labor is not included on the list, the CONTRACTOR shall insert the rates of the labor employed on the project.

Attachment K ADDENDUM of August 25, 2010:
Owners' List of Exceptions of Contents and Landscape Items
NOT Included in the Scope of Services of August 18, 2010

Attachment K
ADDENDUM

August 25, 2010

Addendum to Specifications for Building Demolition/Deconstruction and Site Clearance:
of the 'Nichewaug Inn & Academy' Structures
25 Common Street, Petersham, Massachusetts
Property Owner: Town of Petersham

This Addendum oserves to itemize the Owner's exemptions of contents and landscape features from the project's Scope of Services as described in Attachment A: SCOPE OF SERVICES and Attachment B: ADDITIONAL CONDITIONS of August 18, 2010.

A. The Owner will retain the followimg items and remove them from the premises prior to commencement of work:

1. A bank of 8–10 lockers as marked – located in the first floor hallway of the rear Academy Building
2. Two conference tables as marked – located in the first floor Library of rear Academy Building

B. Landscape items to remain on the premises are as follows:

1. All trees on the north side of the property excepting any tree(s) immediately abutting or otherwise blocking vehicular access to the building.
2. Row of trees on the east side of the property lining the front sidewalk
3. Spruce tree and smaller surorunding shrubs on southeast front side of the property (those plantings not abutting or touching the structure)
4. All trees and shrubs on the far south and far west rear perimeter property edges.

See next page for corresponding photo map indicating landscape items.

B. Landscape items to remain on the premises are as follows:

1. All trees on the north side of the property excepting any tree(s) immediately abutting or otherwise blocking vehicular access to the building.
2.. Row of trees on the east side of the property lining the front sidewalk
3. Spruce tree and smaller surorunding shrubs on southeast front side of the property (those plantings not abutting or touching the structure)
4. All trees and shrubs on the far south and far west rear perimeter property edges.



ADDENDUM #2 TO

Request for Proposals

Documents and Bidding Specifications

For Demolition/Deconstruction and Removal Services:
Nichewaug Inn and Academy Property
25 Common Street
Petersham, MA

Attachment M
Q&A / INFORMATION ADDENDUM TO CONTRACTOR'S SITE VISIT OF AUGUST 25, 2010

An Addendum was distributed at the Site Visit:
'Attachment K - Owners' List of Exceptions of Contents and Landscape Items'

The following verbal information was provided during the course of the Site Visit:

The Bid will be used for a CDBG Grant Application due on December 10, 2010. This bidding process will be the only one required for this Grant -- there will not be new bids sought if the CDBG Grant is awarded from the State to the Town.

Several scenarios are requested for bids so the Town can determine a budget for either full demolition all at once or phased-in demolition in stages.

Petersham is a small town with a volunteer on-call Fire Department and a Police Department composed of two full-time officers and several part-time officers. They work to secure the building which is under the control of the Building Inspector and Selectboard.

Queries were received about a 2nd Site Visit. A second Site Visit has been scheduled and all parties present on August 25 have been notified.

The following Questions & Answers ensued during the course of the August 25 Site Visit:

Q: Is project funding contingent upon the CDBG Grant award?
A: Yes.

Q: When will the CDBG Grant be awarded?
A: Announcements are expected from the State in April to June, 2011.

Q: When would work begin?
A: As soon as possible after the Grants are announced and a schedule is agreed to with the Contractor – so work could begin in approximately Summer 2011 or thereafter.

Q. How much security fencing is required?

A. Fencing shall be sufficient so as to enclose the entire project site while the project is in progress. This is for the benefit of both the Town and the Contractor.

Q. Are the fire hydrants active?

A. No. There is no public water or sewer system in the Town.

Q: Does the building have power?

A: No. Electric was terminated at the street by National Grid at the request of the owner. The Contractor must provide power via temporary pole or generators.

Q: How much crawl space is there?

A: More than half of the front building – the original 1899 Nichewaug Inn building – has crawl space -- the Chapel, Kitchen Wing, and some of the South Wing, have crawl space at varying depths of approximately 1-3 feet. The central portion of the Nichewaug Inn under the Reception Area and Dining Hall has a full basement. The rear 1951 Brick-veneer Building has a full basement throughout.

Q. Are there underground oil tanks?

A: No. Underground oil tanks were removed.

Q. Has the Owner contracted with an Asbestos Consultant?

A: The Asbestos Inspection Report conducted by Environmental Compliance Services, Inc. (ECS) and contained in the Bid Documents serves as the information to be provided.

Q. Is the listing for the 3rd Floor of the Nichewaug Inn building on page 5 of the Asbestos Inspection Report correct? (9x9 floor tiles and mastic at 1,000 s.f. at stairwell, bathrooms, and other rooms)

A: Yes.

Q. Are the conditions at the section of the 3rd Floor northwest wing of the Nichewaug Inn (3rd floor of the Kitchen Wing) which was deemed unsafe by the Building Inspector affecting the asbestos?

A: The "unsafe condition" was applied directly for the group of people touring the building at the time of the Site Visit. The Contractor will need to take appropriate precautions during demolition and the Building Inspector shall assume that correct personnel and equipment will be utilized. The asbestos in the floor section of that area is not being disturbed any more or less than elsewhere in dilapidated sections of the building. That section of building is consistent in configuration, construction, style, and materials of the other portions of the 3rd Floor and the 1st and 2nd Floor of Nichewaug Inn building.

Q. Will the Town or the Contractor be responsible to cover the costs for supplemental services?

A. The Contractor is responsible for any costs associated with the supplemental services, such as: survey, asbestos consultants, etc.

Q. Will a Change Order be allowed if additional asbestos is found?
A: Yes.

Q. When was the building last used?
A: The building was last occupied for use about 30 years ago as a private parochial girls school.

Q. If it is possible does the Owner want to keep shrubs immediately abutting and running along the front eastern side of the front Nichewaug Inn building?
A: Yes. If it does not impact the work process -- any shrubs and greens (rhododendrons, evergreen yews, azalea bushes, small cherry tree, etc.) in the very immediate vicinity of the building may be kept in place at the Contractor's discretion if it does not impede progress.

Q. What is the manhole cover at the front eastern side of the Nichewaug Inn building (just south of the front entrance circular driveway)?
A: The manhole is a clean-out for an old drainage pipe which was discontinued in circa 1960s-1970s. The manhole is shown on page 5 of Attachment G. Building & Site Plans.

Q. Will MRPC distribute the Site Visit Sign-in sheet?
A: Yes. A copy of the sign-in sheet for the pre-bid viewing along with a copy of the plan holder list was distributed to all attendees and plan holders as Addendum #1, Attachment L.

SCENARIO #1

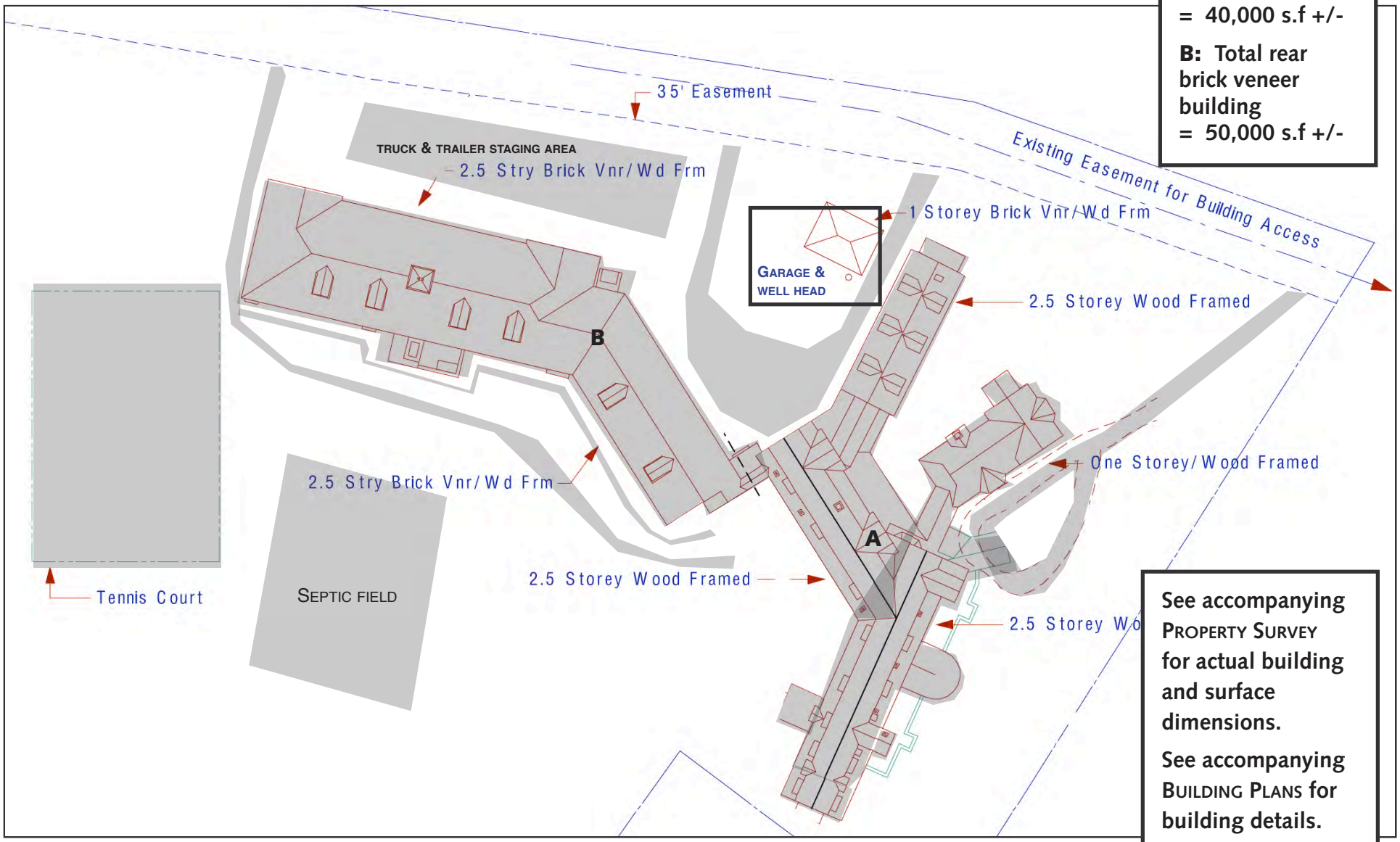
Remove all structures [EXCEPT GARAGE – IN OUTLINED AREA BELOW] per Scope of Services Specifications provided. Protect existing well head [IN OUTLINED AREA BELOW].

STRUCTURES & HARDSCAPE AREAS TO BE REMOVED NOTED IN GREY:

TOTAL BUILDING SIZE
= 90,000 s.f. +/-

A: Total front shingle building
= 40,000 s.f +/-

B: Total rear brick veneer building
= 50,000 s.f +/-



See accompanying PROPERTY SURVEY for actual building and surface dimensions.

See accompanying BUILDING PLANS for building details.

PARCEL 567
Susan H. & Mary L. RILEY
Book 30214 Page 332

PARCEL 43
Robert C. & Jean M. DAY
Book 7573 Page 205

iron pipe found

S 80°47'17" E
276.08'

right of way

stone bound found
S 75°53'17" E
110.50'

gun barrel found
S 82°08'17" E
163.30'

gun barrel found

iron pipe found 0.43' back

S 70°03'30" E
188.54'

35' wide

NICHEWAUG LANE

PARCEL 59
Ruth E. BASSINGTHWAITE
Book 3883 Page 403

N 00°45'56" E
558.45'

tennis courts

masonry building

garage

wood frame building

NO. 25

6.63'

S 21°11'51" W
832.45 to MHB ⇒

(ROUTE 32)

204+03.73

MHB 32.63'
S 72°28'09" E

85.74'

S 22°26'35" W

iron pipe found

1948 State Highway Alteration
MAIN STREET
see Plan Book 151 Plan 1

236.29'
S 31°39'40" W

N.

Meridian of the 1948
State Highway Alteration
of Athol Road

Parcel numbers shown are those indicated on the "Town of Petersham Tax Map".

Worcester District Registry of Deeds

PARCEL 48
Book 41699 Page 256
6.678 ACRES

PARCEL 58
Roy P. NILSON
Book 11848 Page 119

gun barrel found

174.30'
S 36°12'49" W

N 53°47'07" W
157.70'

iron pipe found

73.00'
S 36°36'05" W

PARCEL 51
PETERSHAM MEMORIAL LIBRARY
Book 1426 Page 439

gun barrel found

locus drill hole

12' right of way over existing roadway

293.95'
S 88°29'14" W

iron pipe found

PARCEL 55
Elizabeth W. CUMMINGS
Book 13189 Page 51

PARCEL 53.1
Odette Marianne HINTON
Book 43473 Page 351

PARCEL 52
Nancy S. ALLEN
Book 24489 Page 201

COMMON STREET

ATHOL ROAD (aka NORTH MAIN STREET)

PETERSHAM COMMON

I hereby certify that the property lines shown are the lines dividing existing ownerships and the lines of streets and ways shown are those of public or private streets and ways already established, and that no new lines for the division of existing ownerships or for new ways or streets are shown. (G.L. Ch. 41 Sec. 81-X)

William L. Berry Jr., P.L.S.

I hereby certify that this plan has been prepared in conformity with the rules and regulations of the Registers of Deeds.

William L. Berry Jr., P.L.S.

PLAN OF LAND IN PETERSHAM OWNED BY THE TOWN OF PETERSHAM

0' 50' 100'
1"=50' 1:600

11 June 2009

Berry Engineering, Inc. Petersham, Mass.

2-15001

NICHEWAUG.dwg

SPECIAL TOWN MEETING
October 4, 2010
7:30 p.m.

ARTICLE 1.

To receive reports of various committees.

RESULTS: Reports were presented by the Selectboard, the Advisory Finance Committee, the Nichewaug Inn Task Force, and the Board of Assessors.

ARTICLE 2.

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate from available funds, take from the Stabilization Fund, borrow, or any combination thereof, and/or authorize the Treasurer, with the approval of the Selectboard, to issue bonds or notes for the sum of $250,000 to purchase a new Fire Engine for the Petersham Fire Department, in accordance with the provisions of General Laws Chapter 44, Section 7(9), and any other enabling authority; provided that any such appropriation by borrowing shall be contingent upon the vote of the Town, at an election, to exempt from the provisions of Proposition 2 1/2, so-called, the amount required to pay for the bonds issued to meet said appropriation or act in relation thereto.

RESULTS: The Town voted to take up to $100,000 from the Stabilization Fund and to borrow $100,000 in accordance with the provisions of General Laws Chapter 44, Section 7(9), and any other enabling authority; provided that any such appropriation by borrowing shall be contingent upon the vote of the Town, at an election, to exempt from the provisions of Proposition 2 1/2, so-called, the amount required to pay for the bonds issued to meet said appropriation, for a total appropriation of $200,000, to purchase a new fire engine for the Petersham Fire Department. 2 opposed

ARTICLE 3.

To see if the Town will vote to approve the demolition, deconstruction, and removal of all buildings and structures except the garage on the Town-owned property known as the former Nichewaug Inn and Maria Assumpta Academy, Assessors' Map Parcel Number 48, located at 25 Common Street, as shown on Map Exhibit No. 1, a copy of which is on file in the office of the Town Clerk, as may be possible with funding provided for the purpose, over a period of one or more years, as determined by the Town of Petersham, said removal to include site clearance, filling, soil restoration, grading, and seeding of the land upon completion of demolition; and to authorize the Selectboard to enter into all agreements and execute any and all instruments as may be necessary on behalf of the Town of Petersham to effect said demolition, deconstruction and removal; or act in relation thereto.

RESULTS: The Town voted the article as read. 2 opposed

ARTICLE 4.

To see if the Town will vote to approve submission of an application by the Town for one or more Community Development Block Grants from the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development through a grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for the purpose of complete or phased-

...ion, deconstruction, and removal of all buildings and structures except the ...ge on the Town-owned property known as the former Nichewaug Inn and Maria Assumpta Academy, Assessors' Map Parcel Number 48, located at 25 Common Street as shown on Map Exhibit No. 1, copy of which is on file in the office of the Town Clerk, said removal to include site clearance, filling, soil restoration, grading, and seeding of the land upon completion of demolition, and to fund housing rehabilitation projects as necessary to satisfy the requirements of any such grant; or act in relation thereto.
RESULTS: The Town voted the article as read. Unanimous

ARTICLE 5.

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate from available funds, transfer from the Stabilization Account, or any combination thereof, the sum of $25,000 as the Town's "in earnest" contribution toward the cost of removal of all buildings and structures except the garage on the Town-owned property known as the former Nichewaug Inn and Maria Assumpta Academy, Assessors' Map Parcel Number 48, located at 25 Common Street as shown on Map Exhibit No. 1, a copy of which is on file in the office of the Town Clerk, said removal to include site clearance, filling, soil restoration, grading, and seeding of the land upon completion of demolition and for any other costs incidental and related thereto provided that expenditure of said appropriation shall be subject to and in combination with a grant award for a Community Development Block Grant from the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development, through a grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development; or act in relation thereto.
RESULTS: The Town voted to take $25,000 from the Nichewaug Inn Special Revenue Account as the Town's "in earnest" contribution toward the cost of removal of all buildings and structures except the garage on the Town-owned property known as the former Nichewaug Inn and Maria Assumpta Academy. Unanimous

ARTICLE 6.

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate from available funds, transfer from the Stabilization Account, or any combination thereof, the sum of $74,000 as contingency funding for the CDBG funded demolition for removal of all buildings and structures except the garage on the Town-owned property known as the former Nichewaug Inn and Maria Assumpta Academy, Assessors' Map Parcel Number 48, located at 25 Common Street as shown on Map Exhibit No. 1. a copy of which is on file in the office of the Town Clerk, said removal to include site clearance, filling, soil restoration, grading, and seeding of the land upon completion of demolition; and for any other costs incidental and related thereto provided that expenditure of said appropriation shall be subject to and in combination with a grant award for a Community Development Block Grant from the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development through a grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development or act in relation thereto.
RESULTS: The Town voted to take no action. Unanimous

ARTICLE 7.

To see if the Town will vote to approve submission of application for all future available grant funding for removal of all buildings and structures on the Town-owned property known as the former Nichewaug Inn and Maria Assumpta Academy, Assessors'

Map Parcel Number 48, located at 25 Common Street, said removal to include site clearance, filling, soil restoration, grading, and seeding of the land upon completion of demolition and any other costs incidental and related thereto; or act in relation thereto.
RESULTS: The Town voted the article as read. Unanimous

DEC 9 2010
1 of 1

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

William Francis Galvin, Secretary of the Commonwealth
Massachusetts Historical Commission

December 9, 2010

Shelly Hatch
Community Development Director
MRPC
1427R Water Street
Fitchburg, MA 01420

RE: Demolition of Nichewaug Inn & Maria Assumpta Academy, 25 Common Street, Petersham, MA; MHC# 49551

Dear Ms. Hatch:

The Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) is in receipt of several letters of concern and additional information regarding the project referenced above.

This project proposes the demolition of the Nichewaug Inn and Academy Buildings (PET.6) located at 25 Common Street in Petersham, Massachusetts. This property is listed in the State and National Register of Historic Places as contributing to the Petersham Common Historic District (PET.B).

Demolition of these buildings will have an "adverse effect" (36 CFR 800.5(a)(2)(i) on these National Register-listed buildings and the Petersham Common Historic District. Pursuant to (36 CFR 800.6(a)) & (950 CMR 71.07(3)).

The MHC understands that the Town of Petersham has explored alternatives including rehabilitation and reuse and agrees that the buildings is in poor condition and that any reuse would not be feasible or prudent, and the existing poor condition of the buildings may pose a danger to the town.

Should the Town of Petersham be awarded the Community Development Block Grant funds they are applying for, the MHC suggests the Town of Petersham, the MHC, and the Massachusetts Department of Community and Housing Development enter in a simple Memorandum of Agreement specifying the information received thus far will serve as mitigation for the loss of the historic structures. A Memorandum of Agreement will be prepared at that time.

These comments are offered to assist in compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (36 CFR 800), M.G.L. Chapter 9, Section 26-27C, (950 CMR 71.00) and MEPA (301 CMR 11). Please do not hesitate to contact Brandee Loughlin of my staff if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Brona Simon

Brona Simon
State Historic Preservation Officer
Executive Director
Massachusetts Historical Commission

xc: Mark Southerd, DHCD
Dale Bull, Petersham Administrative Coordinator

220 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, Massachusetts 02125
(617) 727-8470 • Fax: (617) 727-5128
www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc

Dale Bull

NOV. 24 2010

1 of 1

From: "Shelly Hatch" <shatch@mrpc.org>
To: "Dale Bull" <hilltop2@gis.net>
Sent: Wednesday, November 24, 2010 10:28 AM
Subject: Re: Demo of NI

Thank you, thank you, thank you!!!!! After all this work...I hated to see this fall apart!!!

---- Original Message ----
From: Dale Bull
To: Shelly Hatch
Cc: Tim Clark ; Rick Marsh ; Bob Legare ; Eric Mandel ; christine.mandel@verizon.net ; M Lynn Shaw ; Ellen Anderson
Sent: Wednesday, November 24, 2010 10:27 AM
Subject: Demo of NI

Just an update....Rick talked with Brandee Loughlin of the MHC this morning. She stated she is in the process of writing a Memo of Understanding to the Town stating that, subject to review by her executive director, the Town can proceed with the demolition. She stated the MOU should be coming next week. She further stated that with everything that has been provided to MHC, she sees no problem.

Have a great Thanksgiving. Dale

Nov. 17 2010 1011

Dale Bull

From: "Loosemore, Stuart (HOU)" <Stuart.Loosemore@mahouse.gov>
To: "Simon, Brona (SEC)" <Brona.Simon@state.ma.us>
Cc: <hilltop2@gis.net>
Sent: Wednesday, November 17, 2010 3:26 PM
Subject: Demolition of Nichewaug Inn & Maria Assumpta Academy

Dear Director Simon,

We are in receipt of a copy of a letter that was sent to Shelly Hatch, Community Development Director of the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission in regards to the demolition of the Nichewaug Inn and Maria Assumpta Academy.

While we appreciate your comments and concerns, we do not believe you have a firm understanding of the gravity of the situation. We have worked closely with Secretary of State William Galvin and we fully support the efforts of the Massachusetts Historical Commission. We have also worked in conjunction with communities to add properties to the State and National Register of Historic Places and understand how critical preservation efforts are, however, the Nichewaug Inn and Academy buildings are beyond repair and the community has taken extraordinary effort for years to find a buyer and alternate forms of funding to no avail. The astronomical costs associated with the removal of asbestos alone is beyond what any buyer is willing to assume. Any historical significance the buildings once had is now overshadowed by the fact that these two pieces of property are major liabilities to the town and to the historic common they sit upon. These buildings are prime arson targets and because of the poor structural quality, our greatest fear is that firefighters and other responders will be placed in a life threatening situation. The town has already incurred additional expense in securing the buildings including installing an alarm system, yet break-ins continue to occur. Mothballing the buildings is just an invitation for additional mayhem. The buildings should be removed from the Historic Register and demolition should be allowed to take place; to do otherwise will adversely affect the community for years to come.

We respectfully request that the decision of the Commission on this matter be reversed and the Town be allowed to demolish the buildings and proceed with their proposed plan.

We thank you for your time and consideration on this matter and look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Anne M. Gobi, State Representative
Stephen M. Brewer, State Senator

CC: Dale Bull, Administrative Coordinator, Town of Petersham

Legislative Aide
Office of Representative Anne M. Gobi, Vice Chair
Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight
State House, Room 26
Boston, MA 02133
Tel. (617) 722-2080
Fax (617) 722-2339
email: stuart.loosemore@mahouse.gov

TOWN OF PETERSHAM

NICHEWAUG INN TASK FORCE

PETERSHAM TOWN OFFICES
3 South Main Street
P.O. Box 486
Petersham, Massachusetts 01366
TEL: 978-724-3353
FAX: 978-724-3501
EMAIL: PetershamInn@verizon.net

NOV. 15 2010 / 1 of 3

15 November 2010

Ms. Tina Brooks, Undersecretary
Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development
Suite 300
100 Cambridge Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02114

Dear Ms. Brooks,

The Nichewaug Inn Task Force voted to recommend that the Town of Petersham apply for the Fiscal Year 2011 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding to demolish the Nichewaug Inn/Maria Assumpta Academy at 25 Common Street, Petersham MA. Each member of the Task Force stands behind that vote. We urge funding of the proposal to demolish this hazardous property on the Common in Petersham.

Less than a year after the Town of Petersham accepted a gift of the historic Nichewaug Inn and Maria Assumpta Academy property, the Nichewaug Inn Task Force was charged by the Petersham Selectboard with researching and recommending a use for the Inn and Academy. Because Petersham is a small town with limited financial resources, the Task Force was asked to recommend potential funding scenarios, also. The challenge was laid. The building had been empty for approximately three decades, and a series of owners had been unable to develop it. In the two years of the most recent owner's tenure, regular maintenance stopped. The property decayed significantly.

The Task Force began by trying to stabilize building integrity with limited resources and by determining whether there were any environmental hazards on the property. To do the later, the town contracted to have an Environmental Assessment Phase II determine conditions on the site. The property earned a report with no problems identified. To accomplish the former, the Task Force accepted primary responsibility for coordinating work with the Building Inspector, the Fire Department, and the Highway Department to ensure that building integrity was stabilized as much as possible within the limited Nichewaug Inn/Maria Assumpta Academy budget—most of which was from private donations. Members of the Task Force worked very hard and obtained a grant to install a special intrusion alarm system. Members of the Task Force and the Selectboard worked closely with the Petersham Police Department to help deter and capture new and repeat intruders.

The Task Force resolved or developed plans to resolve most of the issues that hindered previous owners from developing the property (see Nichewaug Inn Task Force Reports to the Town of Petersham, included in appendices to this grant proposal). An email blast solicited historic preservation developers courtesy of Preservation Mass. The Inn and Academy sought developers on a web site (mysite.verizon.net/InnAndAcademy), with a "For Sale" sign, in the media, and through phone calls to developers and historic preservation professionals. The Task Force did not find a viable project and a developer to do it. Unfortunately, an organization founded to save and develop historically significant buildings was unable to identify an economically feasible project for the Inn and Academy or some part of the building. That organization was the town's last best hope.

While the Task Force continued the search for a viable project and developer, and despite the town's best efforts to maintain this enormous and prominent building in the Town Center, the property continued to deteriorate. The cellar had been flooded for three years because line power had been removed for safety reasons and the roof was leaking. The Shingle Building's sills were rotted away. By the summer of 2010, supporting beams and posts were collapsing. The building was sagging in many places, including those that had no hint of structural damage the year before. The Inn and Academy was collapsing beyond the town's ability to salvage it and faster than we could identify a viable project.

Even with the intrusion alarm, keeping the building secure, stretched the limits of Petersham's small police force. While the town assembled in the Town Hall and voted to demolish the building, the police apprehended intruders. Now we can add "ghost hunters" along with adventure photographers and local teens to the list of people accused of Breaking and Entering. With the boarded up first floor, flooded cellar, limited egress, complex layout, and structural deterioration, the building is a hazard to authorized personnel and intruders alike. With intruders who smoke and light candles in a wood-frame, the building is a fire hazard that threatens all of the buildings on the Common. Only with a call for Local Aid, can our small, volunteer fire department hope to save surrounding properties if a significant fire starts in the Inn and Academy.

Despite the building's historic appeal and intricate ties to the community, the structure is a severe safety and financial burden on the community. The Task Force tried to find a re-use for the property that would take good advantage of this historic building. We were unable to identify a project and developer within a timeframe that allows the town to save the building. For ever increasing safety concerns, the Task Force concluded that the building must be demolished.

Thank you for considering the town's proposal! The members of the Nichewaug Inn Task Force urge the CDBG program to fund it. Please, help the town relieve itself of this very large and blighted property that physically and economically threatens our entire community because of its prominent and thickly settled location on the Common in Petersham.

Sincerely,

Ann M. Lewis, Chair

Ann M. Lewis
PO Box 702
19 North Street
Petersham MA 01366
978-724-6624
amlewis2@verizon.net

FAX: 978-724-6624

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FAX

Number of pages including this cover sheet: **3**

Date:	17 November 2010
To:	Brona Simon and Chris Skelly
Organization:	Massachusetts Historical Commission
FAX Number:	617-727-5128
Phone Number:	617-727-8470
Subject:	Demolition of the Nichewaug Inn & Maria Assumpta Academy, 25 Common Street, Petersham MA; **MHC# 49551**

Note:
Dear Ms. Simon and Mr. Skelly,

I received word today that the MHC has denied the Town of Petersham's application to demolish the historic Nichewaug Inn & Maria Assumpta Academy on the Common in Petersham. I read with interest your letter to that effect.

I want to assure you that the Town of Petersham through the Nichewaug Inn Task Force did everything in its power to find a developer for the Inn and Academy building. Our approach was to look for development opportunities and recommend demolition if there were no other options. You can see in the attached letter that we believe that we have done our due diligence in the attempt to identify a project and developer. We recommended that the town demolish the Inn and Academy because we came to the conclusion that we would find no development opportunities within a timeframe that kept the building structurally sound and safe to the community and to intruders. In fact, much of the Historic District is at risk if there is a fire in the old wood-frame-with-cedar-shingle structure. It seems that with every passing day, the building deteriorates and sags more. The Petersham Building Inspector will attest that she has had to close more and more of the building to any entry at all because of rapid structural deterioration.

Approximately one year ago, the Task Force took advantage of an offer by PreservatiON Mass. That organization sent out an email blast to their list of historic preservation developers. There were no responses with follow-up. Independently, the Task Force has toured the Inn with seven parties interested in development via historic tax credits or historic preservation grants. None of them has followed up; most don't return our phone calls. The Architectural Heritage Foundation was unable to identify a viable project for some part of the building. The small town, all-volunteer Task Force has done what it can. In these fiscally-tight times, the town has spent all the funds that it can afford to maintain the integrity and security of the Inn and Academy. Residents are exhausted by the concern of needing to spend more town funding and the fear of safety issues. Private donors are unwilling to put more money into a disintegrating building with no hope of saving it.

All members of the Task Force have a special place in their hearts for this building on this site, yet we felt that the only responsible course was to recommend demolition. Town residents have fond memories of going to school there, being married at the Inn or spending wedding nights there, working there, or going dancing there. Yet residents at the Special Town Meeting in October voted to demolish the structure with only two dissenting votes.

As a member of the Task Force said, "There will not be a dry eye in town when that building comes down." Please don't make our task any harder; let us do what must be done!

Nancy Allen, Petersham Historic District Commission Chair and former Selectboard Chair, and I will call you later today or tomorrow.

Thank you!

Sincerely,
Ann M. Lewis,
Chair, Nichewaug Inn Task Force

Town of
Petersham, Massachusetts 01366-0486

978-724-3353 978-724-3501 (fax)

November 18, 2010

Ms. Brona Simon
State Historic Preservation Officer
Massachusetts Historical commission
220 Morrissey Boulevard
Boston, MA 02125

RE: Demolition of Nichewaug Inn & Maria Assumpta Academy; MHC#49551

Dear Ms. Simon:

The Selectboard has received a copy your letter to Shelly Hatch at Montachusett Regional Planning Commission with suggestions to avoid demolition of this property.

For a number of years, the owners and now the Town of Petersham have worked diligently to find a buyer for the property who would appreciate its historic value. With numerous open houses and countless ads in national real estate sources, there has been no one who has stepped forth. In the meantime, the Building continues to deteriorate to the point of now being a safety hazard for the Town and surrounding communities that would be called in to assist in an emergency disaster situation.

The Town Building Inspector has expressed her deep concern with the Building's structural integrity and the physical and financial toll to the community, should a fire occur.

With this in mind, the Petersham Selectboard respectfully requests that you reverse your decision to not support this grant application for the demolition of the Nichewaug Inn. As time is of the essence and for the Town of Petersham, an extremely important matter, the Selectboard asks that you visit the Building next week to see the dilapidating condition of the building. Please call the office to let us know of your arrival date.

If you have any questions, don't hesitate to contact the office and the Selectboard looks forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Fredrik A. Marsh
Selectboard chair

Timothy M. Clark
Vice-chair

Robert D. Legare
Clerk