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Brimfield, Mass.
Via Email

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Earlier in August of this year, I once again visited the Salisbury house. Various repairs had been made to shore up the structure. While there are some deficiencies with the repairs as noted in the Structural Engineer's report, improvements can be made without too much difficulty. The improvements should be undertaken under the guidance of an architect or engineer sympathetic to the special challenges of working with historic structures. There are a number of other structural issues noted in the Engineer's report that should be addressed. These issues are not so severe that they make the building un-repairable - on the contrary, historic structures are routinely repaired and reinforced. For example, the bow noticed by the engineer on the front of the house is due to a structural sill that is rotting. Sill replacement is a routine component of historic house restoration, but again should be undertaken under the guidance of an architect or engineer.

Previously, I had suggested a one-time, full restoration of the house: removal of all non-original components, repair and reinforcement of the structure, updating mechanical systems, and upgrading finishes. Upon further reflection and recognizing budget constraints and other issues, it occurred to me that the Salisbury house could easily be restored in a methodical and ongoing way by simply continuing repairs and upgrades on a yearly basis. Basically, this is a conservative approach: by identifying issues and making repairs in an ongoing fashion this important town historical resource can be upgraded and preserved. This is a continuation of existing policy: problems have been periodically identified and repairs/upgrades have been undertaken. In some cases, the repairs or changes haven't been executed properly, but in others, repairs have been professionally specified and executed. Going forward, it is desirable to enlist professional help to ensure that town funds spent on the building are spent wisely.

My recommendation is to hire an Architect with experience in Historic Preservation to survey the Town Hall Annex, in conjunction with the Town Hall, to identify deficiencies and outline ways to restore and use the existing structures. By carefully planning a staged restoration of both buildings, the town might be able to achieve more usable working space while simultaneously restoring both historical assets. An architect or other preservation professional could also assist the town by applying for grants towards dedicated preservation tasks. For example, restoration

of the historic wood windows at the Town Hall might be an excellent prospect for funding by the State's Preservation Projects Fund which provides generous matching grants for exterior preservation work. The Pioneer Valley Planning Commission might also be of assistance in this regard.

This conservative approach to the restoration/preservation of both the Town Hall and the Town Hall Annex can likely be achieved without large, one-time expenditures. Instead, it is an incremental, flexible approach that can be tailored to meet the Town's budgetary needs. By being a responsible steward of these important historical assets, the town can meet the twin goals of preservation and developing additional usable working space.

Peter Hamm
August, 2023