

Roslyn Landmark Society  
Annual House Tour Guide.



30th Annual Tour

June 2, 1990  
10:00-4:00

Cover Illustration by John Collins— 1976.

*The Van Nostrand-Starkins House*

The Van Nostrand-Starkins House was built circa 1680 and probably is the earliest surviving house in Nassau County. Originally it was nine feet shorter, from front to back, than it is today and had symmetrical roof slopes. It also had an over-hang in its west gable-field. Early in the 18th century the house was extended to the north to its present dimension and the north roof slope was raised. At that time the west over-hang was removed and the present concave south roof projection was added. These changes were accomplished by a Dutch-oriented joiner, probably the same one who built the Robeson-Williams Grist Mill (TG 1976-77). The present 1½-storey east wing was added late in the 18th century. The Van Nostrand-Starkins House was restored by the Roslyn Landmark Society and is operated as a house museum. It is open to the public, for which admission is charged, from May through October.

**30TH ANNUAL HOUSE TOUR**

**\*HOUSES ON TOUR**

ESTELLA M. SEAMAN HOUSE (1888)  
15 Hicks Street, Roslyn  
*Pages 272 to 279*

MOTT-GALLAGHER HOUSE (ca. 1860)  
1125 Old Northern Boulevard, Roslyn  
*Pages 280 to 285*

EDWARD RAMSAUER HOUSE (ca. 1875)  
44 East Broadway, Roslyn  
*Pages 286 to 292*

ROSLYN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (1854)  
33 East Broadway, Roslyn  
*Pages 294 to 304*

JACOB SUTTON MOTT HOUSE (1831-1837)  
125 East Broadway, Roslyn  
*Pages 306 to 323*

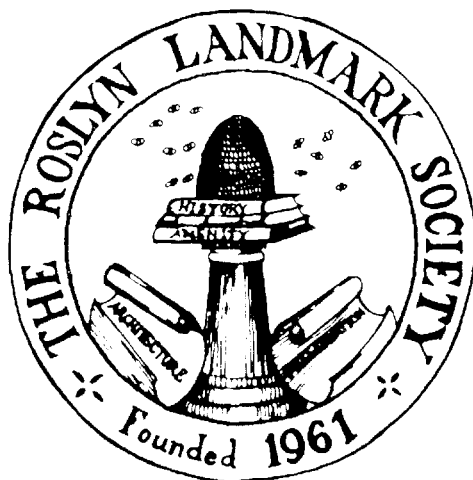
JAMES K. DAVIS HOUSE (1876)  
139 East Broadway, Roslyn  
*Pages 324 to 333*

VAN NOSTRAND-STARKINS HOUSE (ca. 1680)  
221 Main Street, Roslyn  
*Pages 334 to 350*

"MONTROSE" (ca. 1830 and 1869)  
410 Bryant Avenue, Roslyn Harbor  
*Pages 352 to 365*

"GREENRIDGE" (1916)  
875 Bryant Avenue, Roslyn Harbor  
*Pages 366 to 371*

**\*PLEASE  
NO CHILDREN UNDER TWELVE YEARS OF AGE  
NO SPIKE HEELS (PINE FLOORS)  
NO SMOKING WHEN IN HOUSES  
NO INTERIOR PHOTOGRAPHY ALLOWED**



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## REFERENCES

The following is by no means a list of all the reference material available. However, most of the publications included are more or less easily obtainable and, between them, include much of the known information concerning Roslyn's architectural past. Most of these references are available in the Department of Local History, Bryant Library, Roslyn.

### ARCHITECTURAL SOURCES:

- Benjamin Asher: *The Practical House Carpenter* (Boston 1830; Pub. by DeCapo Press, New York, 1972).
- Ranlett, William H.: *The Architect, vols. I & II, (De Witt & Davenport, New York 1849).*
- Downing, Andrew J.: *The Architecture of Country Houses, (D. Appleton & Co., New York, 1854).*
- Vaux, Calvert: *Villas & Cottages* (Harper & Brothers, New York, 1857).
- Woodward, Geo. E. & F.W.: "Woodward's Country Homes" (The Horticulturist, New York, 1865)

### MAPS:

- Walling, H.F.: *Topographical Map of the Counties of Kings and Queens, New York* (published by W.E. & A.A. Baker, New York, 1859). Includes insert map of Village of Roslyn.
- Beers, Frederick W.: *Atlas of Long Island, New York* (Beers, Comstock & Cline, N.Y. 1873)
- Belcher-Hyde, E.: *Atlas of Nassau County, Long Island, New York* (E. Belcher-Hyde, Brooklyn, 1906 and 1914).
- Sanborn Map Publishing Co., 117 and 119 Broadway, New York City: *Sanborn's Atlas of Roslyn* for 1886, 1893, 1902, 1908, 1920, 1931 and 1941.
- Skillman, Francis: Holographic map of Roslyn showing buildings. Probably 1895.
- Wolverton, Chester: *Atlas of Queens County, Long Island, N.Y., New York, 1891 Plate 26.*

### BIOGRAPHICAL ACCOUNTS:

- Onderdonk, Benjamin Tredwell (Bishop): Holographic letter to Mrs. Eliza Seaman Leggett written on Feb. 3, 1851. The original manuscript is on file in the Morton Pennypacker Collection of the East Hampton Free Library and describes life in Roslyn between 1796 and 1811. Bishop Onderdonk's letter was printed in *The Roslyn News* for July 3, 1903.
- Valentine, T.W.: *The Valentines in America: 1644-1874, (Clark & Maynard, New York, 1874).*
- Munsell, W.W.: *History of Queens County, New York, (W.W. Munsell & Co., New York, 1882).*
- Wilson, James G. & Fiske, John: *Appleton's Cyclopaedia of American Biography, (D. Appleton & Co., New York, 1887).*
- Darlington, Oscar C.: "Diary of Eliza Seaman Leggett," written in the 1880's for her granddaughter, Ellarose A. Randall. Bryant Library Local History Department.

Skillman, Francis: Letter to *The Roslyn News* in 1895. We have had access to typescript copies only and have never seen either the original manuscript or the original printed text. For this reason copy errors should be suspected, i.e., "east" for "west" and vice versa. The letter describes life in Roslyn between 1829 and 1879. Additional Skillman material, mostly referring to the present Village of Roslyn Harbor, is available in the Bryant Library.

Chapman Publishing Co.: *Portrait & Biographical Records of Queens County, New York*, (New York & Chicago, 1896).

Hicks, Benjamin D.: *Records of the Town of Hempstead and South Hempstead*, Vol. 1 thru 8 (Published by the Town Board of North Hempstead, New York, 1896).

*The Federal Census*, published every decade, beginning in 1790.

#### NEWSPAPER ACCOUNTS:

*The Plaindealer*: Published in Roslyn by Leggett & Eastman, weekly, from July 12, 1850 thru July 9, 1852. All issues have been reviewed and relevant items abstracted.

*Once-A-Week* or *The Roslyn Tablet*: Published by the Keeler Brothers. Vol. I was published elsewhere and is unrelated to Roslyn. Vol. II commenced with the issue for Oct. 12, 1876, the first Roslyn issue, and continued (Vol. III) thru the issue for Oct. 19, 1877, at which time publication was suspended. All issues published in Roslyn have been reviewed and the relevant items abstracted.

*The Roslyn News*: Vol. I (1878) thru Vol. 18 (1896). Selected issues have been reviewed.

"The Roslyn Sun," a weekly published by A.C. Marvin & Co. of Roslyn. Only four issues of Vol. 1 have been seen. The Roslyn Sun started publication with the issue for April 22, 1898. Possibly it remained in publication for only one or two years

#### UNPUBLISHED HISTORIES:

Brewer, Clifton H. (Rev.): *The History of Trinity Church, Roslyn, 1785-1909* written circa 1910.

Radigan, John J.: *History of St. Mary's Church, Roslyn*, 1943 and 1948.

#### RECENT PUBLICATIONS:

Gerry, Peggy & Roger: *Old Roslyn I* (1953) and *II* (1954), published by Bryant Library, Roslyn.

Moger, Roy W.: *Roslyn—Then & Now* published by the Roslyn Public Schools, 1964.

Fahnestock, Catherine B.: *The Story of Sycamore Lodge*, published by C.B. Fahnestock, Port Washington, 1964.

Gerry, Roger: *The Roslyn Historic District*, The Nassau County Historical Society Quarterly, Vol. XXVIII, No. 1, Winter-Spring 1967.

Withey, H.F. & R.: *Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (deceased)*, (Published by Hennessey & Ingalls, Los Angeles, 1970).

Goddard, Conrad G.: *The Early History of Roslyn Harbor*, C.G. Goddard, 1972.

Genovese, C.; Rosebrock, E.F.; York, C.D.: *Historic Roslyn—A Book To Walk With*, published by the Roslyn Savings Bank, Roslyn, 1975.

- Wanzor, Leonard, Jr.: *Patriots of the North Shore*, published by the author, 1976.
- Gerry, Roger: "The Roslyn Preservation Corporation—A Village Revolving Fund," *Preservation Notes*, Society for The Preservation of Long Island Antiquities, October 1976 and June 1978.
- Gerry, Roger: *Roslyn Saved*, published by the Roslyn Landmark Society, 1980 and 1989.





## ROSLYN'S ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY

Roslyn is of architectural interest because of the high survival of buildings dating from mid-19th century and earlier. The earliest, the Van Nostrand Starkins House, dates from about 1680. A significant group of architecturally consequential buildings date from the second half of the 19th century. Apparently the earliest known published record identifying locations and owners is the Walling Map of 1859 which probably was surveyed a year or two earlier. A large percentage of the houses and commercial buildings found on this map still stand.

Historic knowledge concerning individual houses, originally quite sketchy, has been expanding as the result of research connected with the publication of these annual Tour Guides. Sufficient has been learned to accomplish the inclusion of the Main Street Historic District in the National Register of Historic Places in 1974, and the East Toll Gate House in 1977. The East Broadway Historic District together with Trinity Church and Parish House, the Roslyn National Bank & Trust Company, the Willet Titus House, the Roslyn Savings Bank, the Robeson-Williams Grist Mill, the Henry Western Eastman Tenant Cottage, the Hicks Lumber Company Store, the Samuel Adams Warner Chalet and the unregistered parts of Roslyn Park, including both mill ponds, were admitted to the National Register in 1986. Altogether, more than 100 structures in Roslyn Village have been included in the National Register of Historic Places. In addition, the Society, together with the Incorporated Village of Roslyn Harbor, has sponsored the nomination of a number of buildings in Roslyn Harbor for inclusion in the National Register. These include the "Summit Avenue Historic District" which includes ten buildings including St. Mary's Church and its Rectory, the Captain James Muttee House. The Roslyn Harbor National Register group also includes a number of individual nominations including "Clifton," "Montrose," the "Thomas Pearsall House," the "Henry A. Tailer Estate," and "Thomas Clapham Estate," William Cullen Bryant's "Stone House," the "Arthur Williams House," and the "Michael & Daniel Mudge Farmhouse." Data for the nomination of John Warmuth's "The Roslyn House," in Roslyn Heights, was assembled in 1985, in which year the "George Washington Denton House," in Flower Hill, actually was admitted to the National Register of Historic Places. In addition, data concerning several structures in East Hills, all connected with Clarence Mackay's "Harbor Hill," have been submitted for nomination. In addition, quite a lot has been learned about individual construction detail, largely as a result of exploratory and recording procedures used in the preparation of the Tour Guides (TG) as well as from stripping techniques used in the examination of the Van Nostrand-Starkins House (TG 1976, 1977, 1989), the Valentine-Losee House (TG 1976), the Robeson-Williams Grist Mill (TG 1976-1977, 1988-1989), the George Allen Tenant House (TG 1978, 1982), the Warren Wilkey House (TG 1978-79-80), the Pine-Onderdonk-Bogart House, the Teamster's House (TG 1980-1981), the George Allen Residence (TG 1980-81-82), the Leonard Thorne House (TG 1965-66), the East Toll-Gate House (TG 1976-77, 1982-83), the Captain Jacob Mott Kirby Storehouse (TG 1986-87), the John Rogers House (TG 1987-88), and in the demolition of the Arthur Duffett Building (TG 1987).

The 1990 Tour is the 30th Tour of local buildings presented by the Society. More than 90 structures exhibited since 1961 have been examined carefully and much useful architectural information has been gained. Some of this study has been conducted under the direction of professional architectural historians as Daniel M.C. Hopping and John R. Stevens. In addition, much can be conjectured by evaluating architectural concepts, construction techniques, and decorative details of

the houses already studied and applying these criteria to the examination of other houses. Careful historic investigation of one house, as the study into the origins of the Van Nostrand-Starkins house by genealogist Rosalie Fellowes Bailey, has revealed data concerning the histories of other houses. Careful review of the early newspapers, i.e., *The Roslyn Plain Dealer*, published 1851–52, and the *Roslyn Tablet*, 1876–1877, has disclosed much detailed information concerning individual local buildings. In addition, a letter written to Mrs. Eliza Seaman Leggett in 1851 by Bishop Benjamin Treadwell Onderdonk, describing his boyhood in Roslyn during the late 18th and early 19th centuries, has been most useful in identifying structures standing at that time. Eliza Seaman Leggett, in her turn, wrote a notebook of her own, in the 1880's, for her granddaughter, Ellarose A. Randall. In a similar manner a letter written by Francis Skillman to the *Roslyn News* (ca. 1895) describes the history of many houses standing in Roslyn during the period 1829–1879. Skillman also prepared a holographic map to illustrate the location of buildings described in his letter. In general, each building or house is exhibited for two consecutive years with the result that approximately half the buildings on each tour are being shown for the second time. One of the benefits of this system is that data brought to light after the first showing may be included in the description of the second showing.

The preparation of the 1976 Tour Guide produced at least two interesting conjectures of major consequence. It now seems obvious that Roslyn, long considered unique for its large content of early and mid-19th century houses, included at least four major Federal Houses, i.e., the Anderis Onderdonk House (TG 1970–1971) known to have been built between 1794 and 1797; the Federal part of the William M. Valentine House (TG 1963), which almost certainly was standing in 1801 and possibly even three or four years earlier; the fire-damaged Francis Skillman House, later the Blue Spruce Inn, and the Federal part of the Valentine Robbins House (TG 1976–77) which can at present be dated only architecturally but which certainly was built within a few years of the other three. It seems reasonable at the time of writing to assume the Onderdonk House was built first, then the Robbins House followed by the Valentine House although future investigation may alter this tentative sequence. In addition, the Richard Kirk farmhouse, later "Cedarmere," which was built in 1787, may be the earliest member of the group. However, three major alterations and a serious fire have obscured its original identity. The gambrel-roofed Francis Skillman House seems to be the most recent of the group. Measured drawings of the Francis Skillman House have been prepared by Alex Herrera working under the aegis of the Landmark Society. During this procedure some fire-damaged moulded door facings were salvaged as trim samples. It had long been the hope of the Roslyn Preservation Corporation to dismantle the remains of the surviving original main block of the Skillman House and reconstruct it on a similar site, a wooded hillside off Glen Avenue on the west side of the Village. Actually, the oak framing of the house had survived with little rot and little fire damage except to the intermediary rafters. Enough of the original architectural detail and sheathing had survived to plan an extremely accurate restoration. Negotiations with the estate of the late Carl Werner, which owned the house, had gone on for several years but the executors were never willing to actually donate the house. These negotiations continued until February 12, 1981. Less than one week later, on February 18, 1981, the building burned once again, this time completely destroying the original Federal house. It is most unfortunate that this locally outstanding building for which all the facilities for restoration were available, should have met this end. Actually, a six-panel, Federal interior door with its original Suffolk latch, a 2-panel shutter, a panelled cupboard front and a strip of door facing

have survived in a tiny cottage on the site. These were donated to the Roslyn Preservation Corporation by the Carl Werner estate and it is assumed that all came from the Skillman House. Both shutter and door have applied mouldings in the Federal style which are identical in cross-section with those on the 6-panel Federal interior doors of the William M. Valentine House and it is assumed they were made with the same moulding plane. The attorney for the Werner estate also has donated the original front door and a number of early porch columns which were removed when an early porch was demolished to convert the Skillman House to the Blue Spruce Inn. Plans called for the preservation of this "Skillman Cottage," originally a small utility building, perhaps a carriage shed or stable, near the proposed reconstruction site for the Francis Skillman House. Unfortunately, the Skillman Cottage also was destroyed by fire early in 1984. In addition to the discovery of an unknown Federal carpenter-builder of talent we were amazed to identify the number of early buildings which included kitchen dependencies. It is now certain that a number of local houses at one time had kitchen dependencies and that a significant number of these have survived. Most of these appear to date from the first half of the 19th century although further study may establish that some are even earlier. The practice certainly continued as late as Vaux & Withers' enlargement of "Montrose" (TG 1974-75, 1986) in 1869. The Van Nostrand-Starkins House (TG 1976-77, 1989) and William Hicks' original "Montrose" both had kitchen dependencies which no longer survive. The kitchen dependencies of the Valentine- Losee House (TG 1976), the John Rogers House (TG 1976-1977) and of the 1869 alteration of "Montrose" all are standing. While the existence of kitchen dependencies in other Long Island villages has not been studied, so far as we know it seems obvious that the local group was extremely large in comparison to the numbers in other places.

During the fall of 1984, the exterior of Stephen Speedling's original "Presbyterian Parsonage" (1887) (TG 1978-79) was stripped of paint on all but the north side, and repainted. It seemed obvious that an earlier "stripping" had taken place and no trace of the original paint colors was visible. Because of the onset of cold weather, the north front remained undisturbed. Stripping was continued during the fall of 1985. During this procedure the undisturbed, original, paint pattern was disclosed. This had been executed in three colors, green, reddish-brown and olive. The clapboards were painted green and the vertical boarding, in the north gablefield, was painted reddish-brown. The north gablefield battens had been picked out in the same green as the clapboard paint. This "picking out" of the battens in a board-and-batten structure was identified for the first time in the East Toll-Gate House (TG 1976-77, 1982-83), in the Roslyn Cemetery, by Frank Welsh, a well-known paint analyst. The discovery of another similarly painted building, in 1985, suggested the possibility that the picking out of battens might be the technique of a local painter. Discussion with Frank Welsh disclosed that he had never seen "picked-out" battens except for those in the "East Toll-Gate House." Morgan Phillips, paint analyst for the Society for The Preservation of New England Antiquities, stated that he had seen battens treated as trim on only one occasion, in a late 19th century house in Connecticut. Similarly "picked-out" battens embellish the belt-course of the late 19th century "Charles B. Davenport House" at the Cold Spring Harbor Laboratories and probably were used in other buildings as well. Apart from these four examples of "picked-out" battens, no others are known. It is obvious that more general use of paint analysis is needed to disclose the dramatic design practices of Victorian house-painters.

Apart from the large "summer seats" in Roslyn Harbor, only a few of the early Roslyn houses actually were designed by individual architects. Nevertheless, each

house had an architectural concept which determined its appearance and function. The concept was frequently strongly influenced by the various published architectural works of the period, as Benjamin, Ranlett, Downing and Vaux, and, in other cases, was simply the result of a discussion between the owner and the carpenter-builder. Jacob C. Eastman may be the earliest identifiable local carpenter-builder. He is described in the article on Henry M.W. Eastman in "Portrait and Biographical Records of Queens County, N.Y." as born in New Hampshire and practicing in Roslyn before the birth of his son, Henry W., in 1826. It is possible he was later the builder of the group of early Federal houses described elsewhere in this article. Thomas Wood is another important early carpenter-builder. He probably was Roslyn's principal carpenter-builder between 1825-1865. An article in the Roslyn News for September 20, 1878, describing life in Roslyn fifty years earlier, states, "Probably no builder erected as many of the existing dwelling houses, barns, etc. in this town as Mr. Wood." Thomas Wood is indicated on the Walling Map as the then owner of the Williams-Wood House (TG 1965-66-67, 1988-89), at 150 Main Street which he purchased in 1827, according to an interview with his grandson Monroe Wood which appeared in the Brooklyn Daily Eagle for Sunday, August 17, 1913. In all probability he built the later (1827) half of it, as well as several other local houses which seemed related to it. Later carpenter-builders were John S. Wood, Thomas' son, and Stephen Speedling. Both worked during the second half of the 19th century. Thomas Wood's diary for the year 1871 was donated to the Society in January 1977. It indicates that by that time Thomas Wood was limiting his activities to making storm doors, sash and picture frames for Warren Wilkey, his son John, etc. John S. Wood was Warren S. Wilkey's brother-in-law and almost certainly was the designer and builder of his house. It was learned recently (1983), from a pencilled sheathing inscription, that the George W. Denton House was built by John Dugan who was a brother of Samuel Dugan I, a mason. John Dugan was described in his obituary (Roslyn News, January 14, 1888) as "born in Ireland" and "a leading architect and builder." He may have designed the George Washington Denton House in addition to having built it. Two houses built by Stephen Speedling were exhibited in 1978-1979. These are the Presbyterian Parsonage (1887) and the Oscar Seaman House (1901). Speedling's carpentry shop still stands at No. 1374, Old Northern Boulevard. Speedling also identified himself as the builder of the south addition to the Jacob Sutton Mott House, in a pencilled note on a shingle dated August 8th, 1876.

Architectural concepts of Roslyn houses were usually quite reactionary as might be expected in a small country village. In general the more ambitious the house at the time of building, the more likely it was to have been built in a contemporary style. Less important houses, in which owners were more likely to be interested in shelter than flourishes, frequently reflected the designs of an earlier period. Even in the stylish houses, secondary rooms appear retarded stylistically. In some houses the upper story trim was added as much as 10 years after the main floor trim and obviously appears to be later work.

Construction techniques are another important device in the dating of homes. Workmen trained in a country village were likely to use techniques of their apprenticeships. In sufficiently isolated communities, a workman might continue in techniques of the early working years of the elderly man who taught him. Reactionary techniques in one trade may appear side by side with relatively modern techniques in others, depending on the training of the man who did the work. In situations of this sort, the date of the house cannot be earlier than the introduction of the latest construction used, provided it may be accepted that the work is part of the

original structure. In general, framing of Roslyn houses conforms to contemporary standards. However, the plastering techniques of clamshells and horsehair continued into the late 1800's even though these techniques had been discontinued in cities like Boston by 1750. Early masonry, also, was likely to be reactionary, but improved markedly after the arrival of Samuel Dugan I, an Irish-trained mason, circa 1855. The brickwork in at least one house built in the second quarter of the 19th century was laid in Flemish bond, a style which had disappeared elsewhere at least a century earlier. It is worthy of comment that prior to about 1860, foundations of Roslyn houses were built of large stones, arranged in such a manner that the exposed inside surfaces of the cellar were smooth while the outer surfaces, covered by earth below grade, were irregular and thereby bonded together by the earth back-fill. After about 1835 the exposed parts of foundations, i.e., from grade to sill, were brick. From about 1860, the entire foundation walls were brick. The latter practice continued until about 1900.

Decorative details, as hardware, stair railings, mouldings, etc., are also of great value in establishing the age of a house. In Roslyn the concept and construction details, and even the hardware, may antedate moulding styles by many years. In such a case, the date of the house cannot be earlier than the date of the earliest appearance of the specific moulding style. Mouldings usually were stylish, probably because the presence of two lumber yards in the Village made it more convenient for carpenters to buy many mouldings ready-made. William Hicks started his sawmill in Roslyn Harbor in 1832 and may have operated another mill yard earlier. For the same reason mantels and door frames were usually in style and executed with contemporary detail. On the other hand, metal hardware frequently was retarded in style, a result of availability of out-of-date stock or re-use of earlier materials. "H" and "H-L" hinges and oval keyholes were used long after their use had been discontinued in metropolitan centers. Prior to about 1825 door locks were imported from England. After that date they were of local manufacture, some by A. Searing of Jamaica. Willowmere, a mid-18th century house, has locks installed circa 1830 made by Mackrell & Richardson of New York, and at least two more survive in the Williams-Wood house and the John Mott house. A Searing lock in the O.W. Valentine House (TG 1985-86) also bears the stamp "A. Hill/Patent; N. OR-LEANS.

The foregoing is only the briefest of resumes. Additional information will be given, when feasible, in descriptions of individual houses. In all cases, estimates of construction dates have been evaluated on the basis of architectural characteristics as described above. In some instances an individual house may have been built earlier than the attributed date, but alterations have given it the characteristics of a later period.

As noted above, most of the early Roslyn buildings were designed by local carpenter-builders who, in some instances, worked from architectural pattern books. By the mid-19th century, the larger, more fashionable houses being built along the harbor were designed by architects, even though in some instances the quality of the building provides the only evidence for an architectural attribution. The earliest building designed by a known firm of professional architects was Christ Church Chapel (later the first Trinity Church, Roslyn) which was designed by McDonald & Clinton in 1862. An earlier suggestion had been made that the Roslyn Presbyterian Church be designed by an architect but this proposal was not accepted by the congregation. The earliest known published work is Frederick Copley's design for the Jerusha Dewey house built in 1862 by William Cullen Bryant and published in

Woodward's Country Houses (published by the authors, George E. and F.W. Woodward, New York, 1865, Pg. 40). The Jerusha Dewey House belongs to the County of Nassau. It is being restored by the Town of North Hempstead Historical Society. Measured drawings were completed by John Stevens in December 1981. Copley also published the design for "Clifton," still standing in Roslyn Harbor (TG 1987-88), in *The Horticulturist* Vol. XX, 1865 Pg. 7 to Pg. 11 and reprinted in Woodward's *Country Houses* as Design #30, p. 139. In addition, he may have designed the Gothic Mill at Cedarmere." Copley did not consider himself an architect but signed himself "artist." He is known to have painted at least one Roslyn landscape, dated 1857, which returned to Roslyn in 1980. The earliest major work by a prominent architect is Jacob Wrey Mould's design for Thomas Clapham's "Stonehouse," now "Wenlo," in 1868. A contemporary newspaper clipping in the possession of the present owner identifies Mould as the architect. Plate #61 of Bicknell's *Brick and Wood Architecture* (1875) illustrates a house very similar to "Stonehouse" in facade design and floor plan. Bicknell credits the design to J. Wrey Mould and identifies the owner as Thomas Clapham of Roslyn. Mould designed many churches in New York, including the All Souls' Unitarian Church and Parsonage (1853-1855). In 1859 he became Associate Architect of the New York City Department of Public Parks and, in 1870-1871, the Architect-in-chief. In these capacities he designed most of the buildings and other structures in Central Park including the bandstand (1862), the terrace (1858-1864) and the casino (1871). (See Van Zanten, David T.; "Jacob Wrey Mould, Echoes of Owen Jones and The High Victorian Styles in New York, 1853-1865," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, Vol XXVII, #1, March 1969, pgs. 41-57).

In 1869 Calvert Vaux, one of the most prominent architects of his day and the author of a number of books on architectural subjects, did the design for the enlargement of "Clovercroft" (now "Montrose") to the order of Mrs. Parke Godwin. The drawings and elevations for the Vaux design survive and bear the imprint of Vaux, Withers & Co., 110 Broadway, New York. In 1874 Thomas Wisedell, of New York, prepared drawings for the enlargement of "Cedar Mere" for William Cullen Bryant. Other buildings in Roslyn Harbor which must represent the work of competent professional architects are "Locust Knoll," now "Mayknoll" (1854-1855), the Gothic Mill at "Cedar Mere" which, apparently, was not included in the Wisedell design and St. Mary's Church (1871-1876). Samuel Adams Warner (1822-1897) (TG 1961-1962) was a New York architect who lived in Roslyn during the third quarter of the 19th century. A Swiss Cottage built on his estate circa 1875 survives on Railroad Avenue and almost certainly must have been built to Warner's design. A letter from Warner's great-grandson Captain Harry W. Baltazzi, USN, dated September 7, 1965 (Bryant Library) states "My father told me that his grandfather, S.A. Warner, had given land to the Long Island Railroad with the provision that the station was to be built upon it." Warner may have designed some of the Roslyn Harbor houses for which architectural attributions have not yet been made. Warner designed major buildings in New York. These include the Marble Collegiate College as well as a number of commercial buildings. 13 of these built between 1879 and 1895 survive in the "Soho Cast Iron District" of which all but one have cast iron fronts. The present Roslyn Railroad Station was built in 1887 in the High Victorian style. Its train sheds were retrimmed and the interior modernized in 1922 at which time the exterior brick work was stuccoed, stimulating the conflict between Christopher Morley and the Long Island Rail Road in 1940. Copies of the original water-damaged drawings were donated to the Society by Robin H. H. Wilson, President of the Long Island Rail Road, in November 1981, and no

signature could be found on the early set of drawings which have been redrawn by Bruce Gemmill of the School of Architecture of the New York Institute of Technology under the Landmark Society's sponsorship. The original Railroad Station design probably was done by an unknown Long Island Rail Road architect who designed a number of similar stations for the Line (TG 1982-1983).

Actually the impact of William Cullen Bryant and his circle must be considered in developing the architectural attributions of the great mid-19th century houses in Roslyn Harbor. Frederick Law Olmstead, a close friend, is credited with the landscape design of "Cedarmere" and later was the landscape architect of Central Park, a project strongly supported by Bryant. However, today most writers feel that Bryant was his own landscape architect at "Cedarmere." Calvert Vaux was closely associated with Olmstead and was officially charged, with him, with control of the designs for Central Park. Vaux is known to have worked for Mrs. Parke Godwin, a Bryant daughter, and possibly designed other local buildings. These local connections of Olmstead and Vaux may also have been responsible for bringing Mould, a Central Park associate, commissions in this area. Near the turn of the century architectural attributions may be made with stronger authority. In 1898, or shortly thereafter, Ogden Codman, Jr., designed a house for Lloyd Bryce which later was acquired by the late Childs Frick, named "Clayton" and substantially altered (TG 1971-72). Frick's architect was Sir Charles Allom who designed the re-decoration of the John Nash Rooms in Buckingham Palace for Queen Mary. He also was the interior designer for the major rooms of the Henry Clay Frick mansion on Fifth Avenue. The grounds at "Clayton," during the Frick ownership, were even more important than the house. During the 1920's and 1930's, landscape architects such as Marian Coffin, Dorothy Nichols and Bevin and Milliken superimposed formal landscape designs upon the existing Bryce parkland. In an effort to stimulate the restoration of Clayton's planned landscape, the Roslyn Landmark Society provided for the restoration of the Frick Rose Arbor by Robert Pape and the Jamaica Iron Works in 1981. In 1983, the Society was awarded a matching grant by the New York State Council on The Arts to prepare a restoration project plan for the superb trellis at the south end of the parterre which was designed by Henry O. Milliken and Newton P. Bevin in 1930. This study was undertaken and completed by Robert Jensen. The Society has raised the funds necessary to complete the restoration of the principal component of the trellis, the central, apsidal arch with its flanking, paired Ionic columns. Work on the restoration of the Milliken-Bevin Trellis was started by Wooden Bridge Inc. in 1987 and was completed during the Spring of 1988. Staining was completed by James Shea in 1989. The specially prepared stain and technique for applying it were donated by Samuel Cabot, Inc. This restoration will preserve one of the most important examples of landscape architecture in the United States. This is the second Landmark Society landscape structure restoration at the Nassau County Fine Art Museum. The design of the Ellen Ward Memorial Clock Tower (1895) (TG 1971-72) can definitely be credited to Lamb & Rich, 265 Broadway, New York. Clarence Mackay's "Harbor Hill" was designed by McKim, Meade & White during 1902-1904, most of the design having been executed by Stanford White. Most of "Harbor Hill's" important buildings have been demolished, but the Stanford White gatehouse survives at the intersection of Harbor Hill and Roslyn Roads. The dairyman's house also survives, as does the Water Tower, now owned by the Roslyn Water District. The same architects did the designs for Trinity Church Parish House (1905) and Trinity Church, Roslyn (1906) (TG 1969-70).

Architects of national reputation have continued to work in Roslyn. William Bunker Tubby, who was related to a prominent local family, did most of his

important work in Brooklyn where he designed the Charles Pratt House, now known as the Bishop's House, in 1893, Wallabout Market and Tower, in 1896, and the library for the Pratt Institute, also in 1896. He also designed a group of five Brooklyn Carnegie Libraries in 1904. His activity was not limited to Brooklyn, as he was the architect of the Newark City Hall in 1901, the Nassau County Court House in 1899 and its addition in 1916. He designed three major buildings in Roslyn, all in the Colonial Revival Style. These are the Roslyn Presbyterian Church, 1928, the Roslyn National Bank and Trust Co., 1931, and the Roslyn High School, 1926. Unfortunately the latter was recently demolished to make way for the new high school. The Roslyn Presbyterian Church survives with some additions. The Roslyn National Bank and Trust Co. has recently been restored, using Tubby's original plans and elevations. The completed restoration served as the office of Paul L. Geiringer Associates and was one of ten New York State restorations of commercial buildings described in "Preservation for Profit" which was published by The Preservation League of New York State, in 1979. The architect for the restoration was Guy Ladd Frost, AIA.

During recent years there has been an increased interest in the Queen Anne Revival, an architectural style which developed in the last quarter of the 19th century. There are a number of examples in Roslyn, two of which were exhibited on the 1978-1979 tours. Carpenter-builder Stephen Speedling was the principal exponent of the style locally. The Queen Anne Revival was a mixed style, established by the 1870's in England, by a group of architects under the influence of William Morris Arts and Crafts Movement, and first represented by the architect innovators Phillip Webb (Red House, 1859) and Eden Nesfield (Longton Hall, 1860). The style was internationally popularized by the work of Norman Shaw (Glen Andred, 1867).

Most of the Queen Anne style houses were designed for a small, aesthetically advanced segment of the upper middle class. Stylistic elements were culled from the mid-17th century Dutch style, as embodied in the William and Mary Period, as well as from the Queen Anne rose-brick vernacular buildings. Design elements were found as well in Gothic, Jacobean and Tudor buildings. It began as an expression of revolt against the pretentiousness of the Italianate and Renaissance Revival and the enormous Gothic mansions of the mid-19th century postulating a return to a more domestic human scale and purely domestic comforts. The use of native and regional materials were, in the beginning, an important element of the philosophy of design.

In America, under the influence of Norman Shaw and his contemporaries, the first house of this type was the Sherman House, at Newport, Rhode Island, built in 1874 by Henry Hobson Richardson, its interior distinguished by a novel open plan. It is usually referred to; in the context of the Newport expanded "cottages," as a Shingle Style building, and was widely imitated, with patterned shingles substituted for the "Hung-tiles" of its British predecessors. The architectural firm of McKim, Meade and White designed Long Island examples at a somewhat later date, often incorporating English-Georgian details.

It should be mentioned that the buildings on exhibit have been selected to demonstrate the continuing story of Roslyn architecture, and to indicate various interesting inconsistencies of architectural concept, construction methods and decorative detail. Many more equally interesting buildings remain—it is hoped they will be exhibited on future tours. It should also be mentioned that, since 1971, the Landmark Society has received several grants from the New York State Council on the Arts to defray the publication costs for the annual Tour Guide. In the same year,



the Society was the recipient of the National Award of Merit of the American Association for State and Local History for, among other achievements, the accuracy of its research and the quality of its annual Tour Guides.

Not all the new discoveries are based upon literary research. In the Tour Guide for 1977, 1978 the entry for the Augustus W. Leggett Tenant House describes the earliest part of the structure as a 1½ storey “copy-hold” house, 14 feet square. In 1979 the house was sold to Mr. & Mrs. James Shevlin who, late in that year and early in 1980, added extensively along the west front of the building which involved the destruction of most of its early west wall. During the alteration it was possible to locate the original south exterior doorway, the existence of which was only conjectured in the Tour Guide description. In addition, the original 10” wide yellow pine ground floor flooring was uncovered. More important, it was established that the original small building was sheathed in board-and-batten and retained its original ground floor horizontally boarded dado. The early framing included no studs but the plate, and roof framing above, were supported by heavy corner posts and intermediary center posts. Dove-tailed mortises, for tie-beams, had been cut into the plate above each of the corner posts and the center posts. Since the loft flooring dated from the late 19th century when the original structure was much enlarged, it may be accepted that originally these tie-beams established the ceiling height of the room below, which made for a structure which included only a single plastered room, 14 feet square and 10 feet high. The location for the original hearth along the north wall was indicated by a cut in the flooring and the framing for the chimney remained at the north end of the ridge in contact with the gable rafter. As usual in local houses of the period, there was no ridge member. The chimney was approximately 24 inches square and set on the diagonal as it passed through the roof creating the impression of a diamond-shaped chimney. So far as we know no other example of this type chimney construction survives in Roslyn. This elegant little building with its single large room may have included a plaster cornice and probably was Augustus W. Leggett’s library. Most likely it was built 1845–1855. After “Hillside”, the Leggett estate, changed hands the building probably was allowed to deteriorate as Map #2 of the Sanborn Map and Publishing Co., Ltd’s Roslyn Atlas published March, 1886, indicates it only as a 1½ storey “shed.”

The description of the George Allen Tenant House (TG 1978–79–80–81–82) states that “the recently acquired Sanborn Atlas of Roslyn, published in 1886, establishes in Map #2 the dimensions of that house in 1886.” Reference to the same map indicates the site of the 2½-storey Caleb Valentine house, complete with its east veranda at the end of a flight of stairs off Main Street—which survives to this day. The Caleb Valentine House, which stood between #36 and #60 Main Street, burned in February, 1887. It was described in the Tour Guides for 1977 and 1978 as “Hillside” because of its connection with Augustus W. Leggett. At that time its precise location could not be established. The Sanborn Map establishes its location at the precise spot described in the Tour Guide, at the top of the surviving stone stairway.

Apart from the recent (1984) restoration of John Warmuth’s derelict saloon, perhaps the most exciting architectural event of all has been the construction, or reconstruction, of three Victorian commercial buildings in the Business District. First to be completed was the conversion of a small, mid-20th century, nondescript, concrete-block structure, on Bryant Avenue, into a much larger, architecturally convincing, Victorian bakeshop named “Diane’s Desserts.” Next to be completed was the reconstruction of a mid-19th century harness shop, which had been enlarged

and modernized at the turn of the century and, for many years, been operated as "Raymon's Department Store." Because of a serious foundation problem and to gain space, the new "Raymon's" was rebuilt about ten feet to the west of its original location by the Roslyn Savings Bank. The reconstructed "Raymon's" is almost a precise replica of the original and retains its original bracket system and much of the original shopfront. The third building, like "Diane's," is on Bryant Avenue. In this case, the entire Queen Anne Revival front of Dr. William Dohm's veterinary hospital was applied to a newly constructed medical office building designed by Guy Ladd Frost, A.I.A., who, obviously, was strongly influenced by the design of Dr. Dohm's front. This elaborate Queen Anne Revival shop front was added to the front of an unpretentious, 1½ storey, clapboarded building by Dr. Dohm, after World War I. The architect of the original front was Henry W. Johanson, of Roslyn, who also was the architect of the Roslyn Rescue Hook & Ladder Company and of the Lincoln Building Group, all of which survive. On the basis of the foregoing, the most important architectural component of Dr. Dohm's building has survived intact. Space prevents a more detailed description of all three buildings, here. However, a comprehensive account has been published on pages 7 and 20 of *The Roslyn News* for January 26th, 1984 (Vol. 106, #41). All three buildings enrich the Village substantially. It is hoped they will stimulate equally qualitative efforts by the owners of other commercial buildings. It is strongly recommended that participants in the House Tour visit all three buildings for the visual gratification of so doing and to see for themselves how each of the three has improved its surroundings. In 1984 Albert Margaritis, builder of "Diane's Desserts," built his own board-and-batten architectural millwork shop to the rear of Diane's Desserts," modifying the remains of an old hen house. In 1989, Diane and Albert Margaritis modified another 20th century building, south of the bakery, in accordance with John Collins plans for a bracketed Italianate building. In 1989, the Bell Hotel, across Bryant Avenue from the Margaritis group, was restored by Guy Ladd Frost's design for Paul Brown. The Bell Hotel, in the Queen Anne Revival Style (ca. 1878) originally was clapboarded but was covered with shingles, ca. 1900. Later, synthetic siding was applied. The latter was removed in 1989 and the porches re-built more closely to their original design and enclosed.

1986 was an unfortunate year for historic preservation in Roslyn. In April, the shingle style George T. Conklin House (1912) at 198 East Broadway, burned to the ground without ever having been studied. Later in the year the Building Inspector required the reconstruction of the moribund front porch of the house at 1100 Old Northern Blvd. The house, because of its concrete block foundation and other architectural characteristics, had always been regarded as a "Colonial Revival" house which looked earlier. Reconstruction of the porch required exposure of the framing of portions of the principal (south) front. The exposed framing was constructed of heavy, riven timbers connected by means of massive pinned mortise-and-tenon joinery, which established that the house had been built about 1800, or even earlier. While future study of the house is indicated it now seems that this was one of the houses moved across Northern Boulevard when it was widened for the extension of the New York and North Shore Traction Company's street car line from Roslyn to Flushing in 1910, and that the concrete block foundation dates from that relocation. It is possible that the present 1100 Old Northern Boulevard is the M. Noon House which is shown on Francis Skillman's Map as being almost directly opposite on the south side of today's Old Northern Boulevard.

During 1986, it became definite that the course of Lincoln Avenue, in Roslyn Heights, was to be relocated to provide a direct connection between Warner Avenue

and Round Hill Road. Six buildings stood in the path of this relocation, i.e., the Roslyn Railroad Station (1887) (TG 1982–83), the North-bound Passenger Shelter (1906–1922) (TG 1982–83), the Railway Express Office (ca. 1920) (TG 1982–83), the Arthur Duffett Building (ca. 1870), the Henry Duffett Residence and Country Store (ca. 1870) and the Henry Duffett Carriage Barn (ca. 1870). Plans had been made for the actual relocation of the Railroad Station about 1,000 feet south, several years earlier, and it actually was moved late in 1988 and was placed on its new foundation by Davis Brothers Engineering Company, early in 1989. For awhile, the Trustees of the Incorporated Village of Roslyn were interested in relocating the Passenger Shelter for use as a bus stop at Glen Avenue and Old Northern Boulevard, but decided it might be subjected to vandalism and withdrew. At this point the Roslyn Preservation Corporation contracted to relocate the Passenger Shelter to the south end of the Captain Jacob M. Kirby Storehouse site, (TG 1987) where it has been restored to serve as a picturesque garden house and will conceal north-bound traffic and head lights on Main Street. Considerable effort was made to accomplish the relocation of the Henry Duffett Country Store and Residence (#6 Lincoln Avenue) to Roslyn Village either as single or two individual buildings. However, the scarcity of land and the very high cost of relocation prevented a successful outcome (TG 1987). The Arthur Duffett Building (#4 Lincoln Avenue) suffered the same fate (TG 1987). The Henry and Arthur Duffett buildings and the Railway Express Office all were demolished on Boxing Day, December 26th, 1986. Limited investigation of all these buildings was accomplished in connection with the demolition procedures. In addition, the most interesting architectural features were salvaged by the Roslyn Preservation Corporation.

The Henry Duffett Carriage Barn, ca. 1870, was so hidden behind modern additions and plastic sheathing that it was not even recognized as an early building. When it was, the Roslyn Preservation Corporation contracted to relocate it. It was dismantled and reconstructed at the rear of the John Rogers House (TG 1987–88) by John and Marian Stevens. While it may be considered that the “saving” of half of the six early buildings remaining around the 1870 Station Plaza may be reasonably successful preservation effort, especially in the light that the most important structure, the Railroad Station, will survive, it should be recognized that all the survivals will be relocated and that the Station Plaza, perhaps the most vital commercial area in Roslyn, during the late 19th–early 20th centuries, will have been eliminated completely.

Near the end of 1986, Mr. Vincent A. Gentile advised the Roslyn Preservation Corporation that he planned to build new houses at the rear of the Jacob Sutton Mott House (constructed 1831–1837/family history) at 800 Mott’s Cove Road, North, in Glenwood Landing and that, in order to do this, it would be necessary to remove two small, asphalt shingle covered, accessory buildings. He offered to donate both buildings to the Roslyn Preservation Corporation for relocation. One of these proved to be the Jacob Sutton Mott granary, 14’ × 14’, dating from about 1840. While some of the granary wood framing had rotted, most of its interior architectural features have survived. Since it was imperative that the interior of the tiny granary should survive, arrangements were made with the Nassau County government to relocate the building to Old Bethpage Village. The other building was a garage, which originally was 16’ × 24’, but which had been extended to the south to permit the storage of automobiles. However, much of the early south wall had survived, inside the extension, together with large areas of original shingling. The rafters, which were notched for purlins, had been turned over. The garage was set upon a concrete foundation. On this basis, the structure could have been relocated

from some other site. Investigation of the structure indicated that it originally had been a house, built in the late 17th or early 18th century, which was converted to a barn about 1830. It had been enlarged and sheathed with asphalt strip shingles for use as a garage about 1920. Frank Harrington, the Roslyn Harbor Historian, reports that Jarvis Mudge bought and later leased this site from the Matinecock Indians in 1693. The site of a future house was designated in the document of sale. This land was purchased by Joseph Mott in 1734. He died in 1735 and the land was inherited by Jacob Mott I, the first member of the family to live on the east side of Hempstead Harbor. If the house described actually is the one mentioned in this transaction, it could have been built by Jarvis Mudge as early as 1694, or by Joseph Mott I, shortly after 1735. The Roslyn Preservation Corporation contracted with Janice and Robert Hansen to relocate the structure, in sections, to the west of their house, "Locust Hill" (TG 1983-84) where it has been reconstructed to its configuration as an early 19th century barn, in accordance with the plans of John Stevens. The Mott Granary, also, was reconstructed on the grounds of Old Bethpage Village, in 1987. Subsequently, Mr. Gentile decided that he required the land upon which the Jacob Sutton Mott House (1831-1837) stood. This was purchased by Thomas and Patricia Loeb late in 1987 and has been relocated to a site at the corner of East Broadway and Davis Lane, where it was reconstructed. It was exhibited in a partially restored state, on the 1988 House Tour and in its restored state, on the 1989 tour.

On April 30, 1988, Thomas Phelan, President, The Preservation League of New York State, presented their "1988 Adaptive Use Award to THE ROSLYN PRESERVATION CORPORATION for the exemplary preservation and reuse of THE ROSLYN HOUSE, ROSLYN, which demonstrates that the best way to protect New York's architectural heritage is to make valuable older buildings an integral part of everyday life.

On May 27, 1988, Commissioner Orin Lehman of the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, announced the recipients of New York's Ninth Annual Historic Preservation Awards. The awards are given in recognition of outstanding public and private achievements in the preservation of New York's priceless historic assets. One of the recipients was The Roslyn Landmark society for the quality of its Annual House Tours and Tour Guide. The precise citation follows:

**THE ROSLYN LANDMARK SOCIETY (Nassau County).**

Initiated in 1961, the Annual House Tour of the Roslyn Landmark Society has been accompanied by a Tour Guide of exceptional quality and interest. To date, 90 structures have been documented in a manner which is thorough, professional in its approach, and at the same time very readable. Visitors get complete information on the structures in a serious format which has become the basis for an on-going writing project which comprises a history of the entire community.

1988 also saw the completion of the Rallye Motors buildings designed by Ulrich Franzen of New York. The showroom is constructed of polished pink granite. The site plan and landscape were designed by Zion & Breen, of Imlaystown, New Jersey. During the summer of 1989, the Daniel L. Mott House, built by Lars Larsen ca. 1900, was relocated from Maple Street and Scudders Lane, in Glenwood Landing, to the grounds of "Comfort Cottage" on Glenwood Road, in Roslyn Harbor. While the Landmark Society had nothing to do with the Mott House move, the successful relocation of other local buildings almost certainly influenced this effort.





Estella Seaman House, 1888  
As it appeared when built. Drawn by Cecilia Wheeler

**ESTELLA SEAMAN HOUSE (1888)**  
**15 Hicks Street, Roslyn**  
**Residence of Ms. Gail K. Zwang**

The part of Roslyn Village bounded by West Shore Road, Old Northern Boulevard, Mott Avenue and the Flower Hill Village line, started to develop as an artisan's residential district during the 19th century. This area has survived as Roslyn Village's "Residence C" Zoning District. Several mid-19th century houses survive, some of significant architectural merit. One, the Henry Western Eastman Cottage, at the east end of Mott Avenue, is listed in The National Register of Historic Places. During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, there was extensive residential construction with the result that many of the houses were built on lots only 50 feet in width. In 1910, when the trolley line to Flushing was developed by the New York and North Shore Traction Company, the West Turnpike Hill (now Old Northern Boulevard) was widened on its south side from Mineola Avenue to the Clock Tower and a few of the houses on the south side of the Turnpike were re-located to the north. One of them, #1100 Old Northern Boulevard, an 18th century house on a concrete block foundation, has been tentatively identified, and the possibility exists that #1147 Old Northern Boulevard, which may have been built as early as the 1840's, also was re-located. This practice of relocation of houses into the district continued with each of the two subsequent substantial road alterations although it should be remembered that, with both of these, while some houses were salvaged many more were demolished. With the construction of North Hempstead Turnpike, in 1948, the size of the district was substantially reduced, although #126 Mott Avenue and #14 Hicks Street were re-located and survived. With the West Shore Road improvement project of 1961, several houses along Old Northern Boulevard and West Shore Road were demolished, including Stephen Speedling's West Toll-Gate House, although the best of these, #130 Mott Avenue, was moved a few feet and survived. Subsequently, several new houses were built, most of them architecturally less qualitative than the original group. Even more seriously, several early houses were robbed of their architectural quality under the heading of modernization. However, notwithstanding deterioration, traffic stresses and unfortunate renovation and construction practices, the district retains a large part of its picturesque vitality. In recent years, the standards of restoration quality have improved and the quality of the neighborhood has started to move upward. There are several reasons for this. First of all, the massive increase in the price of property in Roslyn has placed most local houses out of the reach of many, who have recognized that picturesque 19th century houses with harbor views were still available right down the street. These are especially attractive to owners who have careers, but no children and who simply are not at home when traffic is a problem. Some of the new owners have completed substantial restoration projects which have been effectively guided by the Roslyn Village Historic District Board, after it acquired the power of enforcement, in 1979. The restorations improved in quality as owners became more cooperative and depended more upon the guidance of the Board. Early "restorations," as #9 Layton Street (1890-1900) and #17 Tatterson Street (ca. 1900) often were done without applying for building permits and then being forced to recant, in part. As the reputation of the Historic District Board matured, and after the Village Government removed two-family houses from the Zoning Code, reducing density and making speculation less profitable, owners became more cooperative, especially those who felt that the Board would provide sound, economical advice. Recent restorations, as #11a and #11b Layton Street

(1875–1900), #13 Layton Street (ca. 1890) and #1155 Old Northern Boulevard (1900–1910), as well as the new garage on Layton Street at the rear of #1101 Old Northern Boulevard, and the recently completed infill house designed by John Collins for Halm Industries, at 1123 Old Northern Boulevard, all have achieved a much higher level of restoration standards. Even the correction of Building Code violations, as of the porch of the re-located 18th century house at #1100 Old Northern Boulevard, have been completed in compliance with the Historic District Board's requirements. These restored houses have added significantly to the quality of the district. However, several derelicts remain, as well as some unaltered, architecturally significant houses, as #12 Hicks Street.

More recently, the Roslyn Preservation Corporation, a not-for-profit revolving restoration fund, purchased and planned the restoration of the Eastman and Hicks-Marino Stable (ca. 1870) (TG 1986–87) which had been converted to a residence in the early 20th century. This, the most deteriorated and most unsightly house in the neighborhood, was sold under an architectural covenant and created a highly favorable impression when its restoration was completed. The presence of Roslyn Preservation personnel working in the district also have made them available for informal advice and guidance, often with qualitative results.

The restoration of the Estella Seaman House represents the chronicle of one of these. It was purchased in 1984 by a developer who had been involved in the building and renovation of a number of houses in the district. The original design called for the modernization of the house in the same manner as the earlier renovations. However, much of the original plan could not be executed because of the activity of the Historic District Board. In 1985, restoration of the Eastman and Hicks-Marino Stable (ca. 1870), next door, commenced with the owners working under the restoration plans which John Stevens had carefully prepared for the Roslyn Preservation Corporation. The highly impressive progress made in the Stable strongly influenced Anthony DiStefano, the architect-builder of the Estella Seaman house next door, with the result that he strove to achieve restoration of the house rather than the renovation he originally had intended. Of course, some procedures had gone too far and could not be undone.

## **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

Benjamin Hicks and Frederick M. Eastman purchased the property from the family of Silas Mott in 1869–70. In 1872 they, in turn, divided it into lots and sold a 50 foot square parcel to Estella Seaman on 6/21/1888 (Liber 797, Pg. 26–31). Estella Seaman probably built her cottage in the same year. She retained ownership until June 9, 1920, when she sold the house to Bernard Reilly (Liber 59, Pg. 146). Mr. and Mrs. Reilly conveyed ownership of the property to John McQueen and Sarah, his wife, on September 3, 1946 (Liber 3178, Pg. 338). On May 6, 1967, John McQueen and Gertrude, his wife, sold the property to Marion Chester (Liber 7157, Pg. 509), who, in turn, sold it to Antonio DiStefano and Gilda, his wife, on August 2, 1984. The latter owners refurbished the house and sold it to Gail K. Zwang, the present owner, on August 4, 1986 (Liber 9160, Pg. 784).

The house lot apparently has been fifty feet square since it first was subdivided. However, the highly dependable 1908 Sanborn Atlas shows the much larger Eastman and Hicks-Marino Stable as being the stable for the Estella Seaman house. This arrangement probably was achieved on a rental basis and both buildings most likely were covered by the same insurance policy.



## ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY

Estella Seaman probably built her cottage in 1888, or shortly thereafter, and, until recently, it had been subjected to few alterations. When built, the cottage was clapboarded with novelty siding, had a gable-ended roof, the ridge of which ran from east to west, and stood upon a brick foundation which enclosed a full cellar. Its single-flue brick chimney pierced the mid point of the ridge. The house was three bays wide by 2 bays deep and probably had some sort of lean-to on its west front which provided space for a kitchen. Its 2/2 windows were protected by simple drip caps and had plain, 4" wide facings. There was a single-storey porch having a shallow hipped roof, supported by four turned posts, probably bracketted, which extended across its principal (east) front. There was a paired, 2/2 window in the east gable field at the second storey level. The house, basically, was quite plain. Its principal exterior decorative elements were the novelty siding, the paired east window, the front porch with its turned, bracketted posts, and a glazed, panelled front door. Louvered shutters flanked all the windows. The original cedar roof shingles had an exposure of 5 inches to the weather.

On the interior, the ground floor was divided into a parlor (east) and a dining room (west) which were separated by a north-south oriented wall which included the chimney, which was plastered to match the walls. A low, "parlor" stove served the parlor and a taller, "pot-bellied" stove the dining room. Probably most family gatherings took place in the warm dining room, while the use of the parlor was reserved for special social functions. The dining room was further enclosed by a plaster wall across its south end, which created a narrow hallway between the dining room, and the stairway. The stairway was narrow and steeply pitched. It had a stair-rail of unknown design. The area below the stairway was enclosed by a standard, wainscotted wall behind which descended the cellar stairs. There were three small bed-chambers upstairs. All the interior doorways and window facings were trimmed with symmetrically bi-lateral facings capped by rondel-turned blocks in their upper corners. All the interior doors were of the four-panel, ogee-moulded type.

As mentioned above, there was a lean-to kitchen at the west end of the house. This may have had a brick foundation but, more likely, was based upon locust posts. Prior to 1984, relatively few changes to the house took place. The most noticeable of these was the covering of the novelty siding with asbestos shingles, probably in the 1930's or 1940's. At the same time, possibly earlier, the cedar roof shingles which had a 5-inch exposure to the weather, were covered with asphalt strip shingles. In addition, at some point, the sash of the double, 2/2 window, in the east gable field, were removed and a single square of plate glass installed to fit the opening. The louvered shutters all were removed as were the porch post brackets. However, the porch railings were allowed to remain. The west lean-to was modified, or replaced, using a poorly laid concrete block foundation. This had a pent roof at its north end which probably represented the foot print of the original kitchen lean-to as it did not extend as far as the northwest corner of the house. At its south end, the kitchen lean-to was extended to the building corner by converting the kitchen roof to a hip. This was further extended to the south to provide a small vestibule for an east-facing kitchen doorway. Later on, after the asbestos shingles had been applied, a second storey was added above the kitchen roof. This had a gable-ended roof, the ridge of which ran east and west, and probably provided space for a second storey bathroom. On the interior, the wall at the south end of the dining room may have been removed.

The parlor and dining room stoves were removed and replaced with a hot-air central heating unit which had a large grill in the floor at the bottom of the stairway.

During his renovation of 1984-86, Anthony DiStefano, the son of the owners and a registered architect, removed all the visible asbestos siding and restored the original novelty siding, as required. He installed new double-glazed sash and window cases, including the replacement of the later east gable field plate glass window to achieve its original appearance. The new, double-glazed windows had slightly smaller facings than the originals, 3<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>" instead of 4" in width and were slightly shorter than the originals. These required filling in the spaces created with novelty siding. Also, the muntins in the new windows were of the plastic, "snap-in," type and there were no drip caps. Mr. DiStefano also stabilized and repaired the west kitchen wing and added a new east kitchen doorway. He also fitted appropriate brackets to the east porch posts. On the interior, he installed circulating hot water central heating and removed all the original interior doors and cases. These were replaced with conventional, modern, flush doors. The original moulded window and door facings were removed and replaced with standard modern facings. Mr. DiStefano also re-worked the second storey bath and installed a completely new bath at the south end of the kitchen wing.

After Gail Zwang purchased the house in 1986 she removed the wall between the parlor and dining room and laid new flooring on the first floor, using 9" wide pine boards. She also removed the original main staircase, its balustrade and the wainscotted wall beneath it, to eliminate the steep pitch of the original staircase. Subsequently, she was given 7 four-panel ogee moulded doors which matched the originals, from the Arthur Duffett House (TG 1987) by the Roslyn Preservation Corporation. These were hung by Edward Soukup in 1988. She also plans to install an exterior door from the Arthur Duffett House (TG 1987) in the east kitchen doorway and to install appropriate interior door and window facings to replace the removed originals.

## EXTERIOR

The house, today, looks much the same as when it was built. It is three bays wide by two bays deep and is sheathed with novelty siding having a weather exposure of seven inches. The windows have 2/2 sash with plain facings, 3<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>" in width, as compared with the missing 4" wide originals. The drip caps also are missing. There is a double, 2/2 window in the principal (east) gable field at the second storey level. Hopefully the windows will be flanked by louvered shutters by the day of the house tour. There are plain corner boards, 4" wide on each exposure and a plain water-table which is 5" in height. The ridge of the gable-ended roof runs from east to west. Its overhang soffits are open and the exposed rafters are a full 2 by 4 inches in cross-section and are set on 24-inch centers. There is no ridge member. The ridge rafter ends are simply "butted" in conformity to the joining technique of the period. The roof is sheathed with asphalt strip shingles today. The original cedar shingles having a five inch exposure to the weather remain beneath, nailed to the original shingle lath.

The foundation is brick laid in American bond from the sills to the floor of the full cellar. The north cellar wall has been replaced with a concrete block wall and the exposed foundation wall surfaces, interior as well as exterior, have been pargetted with concrete so that the characteristics of the surface beneath are not visible.

The original single-flue, brick chimney has survived and runs through the mid-point of the roof-ridge. It has lost its original cap.

The original single-storey front (east) porch survives. This has a shallow hipped roof and retains its original turned posts and balustrade which has a moulded railing and balusters which are square in cross-section. The scrolled porch post brackets are recent insertions. The front (east) doorway is one of the few parts of the house in which an effort at decoration was made. The original plain, 4-inch wide doorway facings survive. The door is glazed above with clear glass. There are moulded projecting supports both above and below the window, the upper shelf being further embellished with turned drops. There is a horizontal raised panel beneath the window with four square raised panels, grouped in a square, beneath this. All have moulded trim which has been planed into the stiles. The horizontal panel is further embellished with symmetrically paired, stylized, chiselled foliage sprays. Similar doors are seen elsewhere in Roslyn. At least three were salvaged from the Arthur Duffett House, all of which also had clear glazing. The Seaman door is now being stripped (Feb. 1990) preparatory to staining.

There is a single storey lean-to ranged along the west front of the house. This has a pent roof at its north end, which does not extend to the corner boards, and a hipped roof at its south end which extends beyond the south wall of the house, far enough to permit the inclusion of a new doorway in the east front of the extension. The wing rests upon a new pargetted concrete block foundation which encloses a crawl space.

Above the west wing there is a later, smaller, more recent second storey level. This has a pitched roof, the ridge of which extends from east to west. The second storey level was built after the house was sheathed with asbestos shingles, as these survive on the west wall of the house, within the attic storey of the wing.

There is a small clapboarded garage, of the World War I era, south of the house. Originally this had a cedar shingled roof. Subsequently the garage was extended to the rear (west) by means of a pent-roof addition.

## INTERIOR

The cellar originally was brick lined from the sills to the floor. The brick wall was recently replaced with concrete block on the north, and all four walls were pargetted with concrete to match. There are three 3-lite cellar windows on the north, two on the south. The first floor joists are 3 by 6 inches in cross section. These run from north to south and are set on 24-inch centers. They rest at the mid-point on summer beams which run east and west of the chimney. These rest on brick east and west chimney corbels. The east summer beam is 4 × 8 inches in cross-section and the west is 3 × 6 inches. The floor joists east of the stair-well, except the most easterly all have early repairs to their south ends which vary between two and three feet in length. All these repairs have early batten supports (“sisterings”) and probably represent early rot and its correction.

The first floor originally had two rooms, an “open plan” parlor immediately inside the front doorway and an enclosed dining room behind. These were divided at the chimney, which was plastered to match the walls. The dividing wall and the hall wall are missing today, but some plaster remains on the chimney. The closed stove-pipe hole for the low parlor stove can be seen on the east side of the chimney as

can the stove pipe hole for the taller, "pot-bellied," dining room stove on the west. The stair-case and floor both are recent. Four-panel, ogee-moulded doors also were inserted recently to replace modern flush doors. The four-panel doors all came from the demolished Arthur Duffett House (TG 1987).

There are two bedrooms and a small hallway on the second floor. The west chamber is unchanged. The larger east chamber probably was divided into two rooms, originally. The second floor bath is not in the original structure at all, but it is located in the upper storey of the west wing which probably was not built until the 1930's or 1940's.

The current owner is attempting to correct the damage caused by the recent interior "stripping" and already has installed 4-panel doors, contemporary with the house, to replace modern flush doors. The next step will be to install appropriate interior door and window trim. Period doorway trim, having symmetrically bilateral facings capped by rondel-turned blocks, is now (Feb. 1990) being collected. It is hoped that at least some of the interior doorways will be re-trimmed appropriately by the day of the House Tour. The owner truly is to be commended for recognizing the quality of the Estella Seaman House and for trying to recapture it. Of course, these architectural features should not have been removed in the first place. It is hoped that future mishaps of this sort will not occur. In the present instance, the house would have been more saleable, could have been sold for less, and would not have required expensive restoration, had as much of its original fabric as possible been allowed to remain.





*South elevation*

Mott-Gallagher House (Ca. 1860), as it appeared when built. Porch columns and front door are conjectural. Drawing by John Stevens.

**MOTT-GALLAGHER HOUSE (Circa 1860)**  
**1125 Old Northern Boulevard, Roslyn**  
**Property of Wooden Bridge, Inc.**  
**Under Architectural Covenant with the Roslyn Preservation Corporation**

**HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

As described in the background information to the nearby Estella Seaman House (TG 1989–90), the part of Roslyn Village bounded by West Shore Road, Old Northern Boulevard, Mott Avenue and the Flower Hill Village line started to develop as an artisan’s residential district during the 19th century. Now located in Roslyn Village’s “Residence C” Zoning District, the Mott-Gallagher House shares a common background story with many of its neighbors.

The 1859 Walling Map shows an “S. Mott,” likely Silas Mott as the land owner along Old Northern Boulevard (formerly the Flushing and North Hempstead Turnpike). Much of this land, including the property where the Mott-Gallagher House stands, was conveyed to Henry W. Eastman and Benjamin D. Hicks in 1874. Eastman and Hicks were responsible for subdividing the land into fairly small lots; the property on which the Mott-Gallagher House stands was divided into four lots, numbered lots 29, 30, 31 and 32.

On a map of property belonging to Fredrick M. Eastman, dated 1901, the lots are shown as “unsold”, and interestingly, are the only lots on the block which front both Old Northern Boulevard and Mott Avenue.

In 1906, lots 31 and 32 were sold to George Cann (Liber 140 and 145); in 1909, lot 30 was sold to Cann (Liber 195); and in 1923, lot 29 was sold to John Craft (Liber 925). The sales to Cann were made by Henry M.W. Eastman as executor of Frederick M. Eastman, and Benjamin D. Hicks, each with 50% interest; the sale to Craft was made by Henry M.W. Eastman as executor of Frederick M. Eastman, and Frederick C. and Marie Hicks, each with 50% interest.

Lots 30, 31 and 32 were sold fairly consistently as a group: from Cann to Lucker (1925, Liber 960); through tax sales to the Village of Roslyn (1940, Liber 2205); a brief separation following the Village ownership (lots 30 and 32 to Gellman, Liber 2321, and lot 31 to Ginsberg, Liber 2120, later Spiegel and Swartz, Liber 2203); and consolidated by Charles Nichols (lot 31 in 1940, Liber 2303, and lots 30 and 32 in 1941, Liber 2329). Lot 29 was also bought by Nichols in 1941 (Liber 2422). Nichols sold all four lots to James M. Gallagher in 1947 (Liber 3275). The Gallagher family lived in the house, and operated their commercial waste disposal business from the premises, until the property’s recent sale to Halm Industries.

Following this sale, the property was divided into three legal lots. The Mott-Gallagher House stands on lot 256 (formerly lot 31). This was done via a contract with Roslyn Preservation Corporation, who applied preservation restrictions and design review to all three lots. Subsequently, design review duties will be shared with the Roslyn Village Historic District Board when a building permit is applied for. The western lot, the site of a former trash pile, has been developed into a residence consistent with the scale and style of other buildings in the neighborhood. The eastern lot, the former site of the Gallagher’s garage, is awaiting development. The Mott-Gallagher House is being restored and developed in a manner consistent with the best of its details. The owner/contractor is Wooden Bridge Inc. The restoration plans were developed by John R. Stevens Associates.

The neighborhood of the Mott-Gallagher House has been assaulted by road projects throughout the 20th century; the trolley line to Flushing which required the widening of Old Northern Boulevard in 1910; the construction of the North Hempstead Turnpike and overpass in 1948; and the widening of Old Northern Boulevard in 1961. Through all of this development, the neighborhood has retained many fine, small scale vernacular buildings. By restoring and building side-by-side properties, the Roslyn Preservation Corporation has increased the desirability of the neighborhood significantly, and inspired other owners to improve their properties in a sympathetic manner.

## ARCHITECTURAL DEVELOPMENT

It is difficult to date the Mott-Gallagher House on the basis of its title chain; structurally, stylistically and on the basis of its moulding profiles it appears to have been built ca. 1860, as a one room deep, two and a half storey high house. The front (south) facade was three bays wide, and a front porch extended almost the complete length of the house. The porch had a shallow, probably pent, roof, with unidentified posts, which probably were bracketted as "paint ghosts" survive. The porch is shown on the Sanborn Map of 1908 and had a tin roof. Both east and west elevations were simply the gable ends of the house, with one 6/6 window at the second floor level, and a small 2/2 window in each gable. There was, and is, a simple 6/6 window at the first floor level of the west elevation. The east elevation may, originally, have had two 6/6 windows at the ground floor level. One of them is now a doorway. The other has been enclosed. The house was clapboarded and had 2 inch, plain corner boards. The deep soffits were open, exposing the underside of the rafters and roof sheathing. The house has a balloon frame. However, the main floor joists look backward in that they are mortised into the sills. Retrospectively, the side walls, also, are braced diagonally. The house was very well built and the main block, unusually, shows no evidence of rot. There is a remarkably high survival of the original fabric and almost all of the original flooring, which varies from 7 to 10 inches in width, has survived in good condition, probably because it has been protected by strip flooring for many years.

Today, there is a north lean-to which extends almost the entire length of the house. This has two storeys today. However, the Sanborn Map of 1908, the earliest to cover this part of Roslyn, shows the main block as having two storeys and the lean-to to have had one. Both are shown to have had full cellars. Subsequent excavation accompanying the Gallagher rubbish disposal operation, exposed the cellar level of the north lean-to so that it appears to be a two-storey structure today. For a variety of reasons it is likely that the north lean-to was built after the original house, although the present north lean-to may have been preceded by a kitchen wing which has disappeared. Some of the reasons which suggest a later construction date for the lean-to are:

1. The house is sheathed with clapboards; the lean-to with novelty siding.
2. The siding of the main house has been cut away so that the lean-to rafters may engage the second floor plate of the main house.
3. Careful exposure procedures of the clapboards of the west gable field and on the north wall of the main block disclose weathered wood beneath the first paint layer, suggesting that the main block was left unpainted for several years after it was built. The lean-to novelty siding has always been painted.

In addition to the foregoing, the novelty siding sheathing the north side of the lean-to does not extend for its entire length, but is interrupted about  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the way



from the east end. Today there is an interior, north-south, novelty-sided wall, which divides the lean-to into two rooms, the larger, present kitchen and the smaller, west "mud-room". A member of the Gallagher family states that the present "mud-room" was a screened porch when the family bought the house in 1947. The porch possibility is supported by the fact that while all the lean-to principal main floor joists match, those of the mud-room have rotted, the only rot in the house, at their north ends and have been "sistered." In addition, the "mud-room" floor has been replaced, probably because of rot. Obviously, the fabric of an open porch would be more exposed to weather and more rot-susceptible than would be the enclosed parts of the house. At this time, it seems most likely that the north lean-to was built some time after the main house, but prior to 1908 and that it had an open porch at its west end. The major part probably has always been the kitchen. It is not known where the cooking was done prior to the construction of the north lean-to.

It seems likely, as mentioned above, that during the period of original construction, the grade on the north and east sides of the building were at the level of the first floor, and that the current grade relates to the development of the basement spaces for use by the Gallagher family business, and the construction of the concrete block garage on the east side of the house.

Another early alteration to the exterior of the building includes the removal of the front porch. The front porch was reduced in length and used as a hood over the front door and probably included the reuse of the posts and brackets of the original porch. "Paint-ghosts" on the siding support this thesis. The Sanford Map of 1908 indicates that the original porch roof was tin.

Mid-twentieth century and later additions include an addition to the east of the main house, which contained the offices of the Gallagher's business, and a flat-roofed, concrete block garage (now demolished) for the storage of their vehicles. Assuming that the grade changes are contemporary with this construction, the concrete block foundation of the north lean-to replaced an earlier foundation wall. Changes to the exterior finishes included asbestos and aluminum siding, both of which have been removed, though the damage done to the window caps during the installation of the asbestos can still be seen. Contemporary with the aluminum siding was the removal of the door hood at the front entrance, and replacement with an aluminum awning. A picture window was installed in the south elevation, east of the front entrance.

## INTERIOR

The basement of the main house shows a foundation of brick from the building sills to a depth of 38", where the material changes to concrete. Finding several foundation stones visible within the concrete of the south and west walls, it seems likely that the concrete is later than the construction of the foundation. Foundation stones have been exposed in the north and east walls, establishing that the foundation was constructed of rubble to grade and brick between the grade and the sills in the conventional manner of foundation construction of the mid-19th century. The principal cellar apparently has always existed. The brick chimney, east of the cellar stairs, does not show signs of two periods of construction, establishing that the basement is at its original depth. The concrete cellar wall linings and floor are later (probably Gallagher) modifications. The floor joists run north to south, are 3" x 7½", 2'-0" o.c., and are mortised into the sills. There are the remains of three original cellar windows visible, one in the north wall, one under the front door and one in the west wall.

The basement under the north addition, unfortunately, does not prove conclusively any theories about the date and chronology of construction. Floor joists run north to south, with floor boards parallel to the exterior wall of the house, which would be very unusual for porch floor construction. The north foundation wall of the main house follows the same pattern of 38" of brick on top of stones covered with later poured concrete. The concrete is exposed on both sides, a tricky construction feat which depended upon the support of original rubble wall fragments while the concrete was poured. The north foundation wall of the addition is all concrete block construction, relating to the removal of the hillside, but with no indication of what the original foundation would have been. Further investigation in this area, as later 20th century finishes are stripped away, may answer some of these questions.

The cellar stairway is interesting for two features: one is the stovepipe hole which indicates that the stovepipe of the dining room stove extended across the stairway space to the chimney. The other is evidence of a small shelf unit just inside the first floor cellar door, accessible only from the cellar stairway. The stairwell head-joists are mortised into the main floor joists establishing that the stairwell has always been the same size and the staircase the same length.

The first floor of the main house contains two rooms, and the front hall leading to the stair. The east room, a parlor, has a chimney closet in the west wall, south of the location of a former mantel. The architraves of the closet and the doorway to the front hall are integrated, with a backbanded ogee molding. The parlor mantel has been removed, but there is a stovepipe hole located high in the wall, indicating the use of a stove. The four panel door to the cellar stair survives, the only original door on the first floor. A doorway in the north wall of the parlor leads to the kitchen, and appears to be original construction, lending support to the possibility that there has always been an addition of some sort on the north of the building. The first floor window and doorway which would have been on the east wall have been removed because of the later addition to the east. The original window on the south wall has been replaced with a picture window, which is in the course of being replaced with a 6/6 window (March 1990). The original, yellow pine flooring survives.

The west room may have been used as both a dining room and a kitchen until the north addition was used as a kitchen. (There are no signs that the basement ever contained a kitchen.) This room retains its original windows in the south and west walls, and retains its original mantel, which is typical of the second half of the 19th century in its Gothic detailing. A stovepipe hole is located within the firebox area, indicating a low stove, which could have been used for cooking as well as for heat. The baseboard has an ogee molded cap, and the window and door surrounds have backbanded ogee moldings. The floorboards were 6" wide pine, in good condition, and there is an area floorcloth of linoleum which is still intact.

The north addition is currently finished as two rooms; a kitchen in the eastern section, and a back entry, or "mud-room", in the western section. The ceiling and walls of the kitchen are clad in beaded board, and the ceiling slopes deeply at the exterior wall. The pitch of the addition towards the north wall is due to settlement of the foundation wall, perhaps related to the removal of the grade. The doorway and a window in the east wall of the present kitchen, lend credibility to the theory that one could walk out to grade. The western entry was enclosed later, as indicated by the novelty siding on the east wall, relating to the exterior of the kitchen. Also, the clapboards found under the beaded boards of the kitchen have two coats of paint, while the clapboards of the "mud-room" have four coats. The flooring of the

“mud-room” section is also later than the flooring of the kitchen, as it replaced rotted earlier flooring dating from the period when the present “mud-room” was a screened porch. So far as can be determined, this small area was the only porch on the north side of the house.

The stairway to the second floor is currently without railing and balustrade, and appears to have been built without either. The flooring almost all appears to be original, on both the stair and second floor landing. The attic stair is enclosed in a beaded board wall. Original four panels doors exist for the east and west chambers, and an original beaded board door survives for the attic stair. All windows, except the bathroom, are 6/6 and original.

The northwest corner room is a bathroom, which appears to have been a chamber converted to a bath. When the conversion was made, the wall dividing the southwest and northwest chambers was moved, making the northwest room considerable smaller. The southwest chamber now contains the west window that had originally been in the northwest chamber. The southwest chamber has a new closet, created by borrowing space from the bathroom.

The chamber on the east was and is the full depth of the house. Recently, the west wall has been moved out from its original location to increase the size of the closets on either side of the original mantel. This closet revision and the earlier re-location of the south bathroom wall represent the only alterations in floor plan in the original house. Original plaster remains on the north, east and south walls.

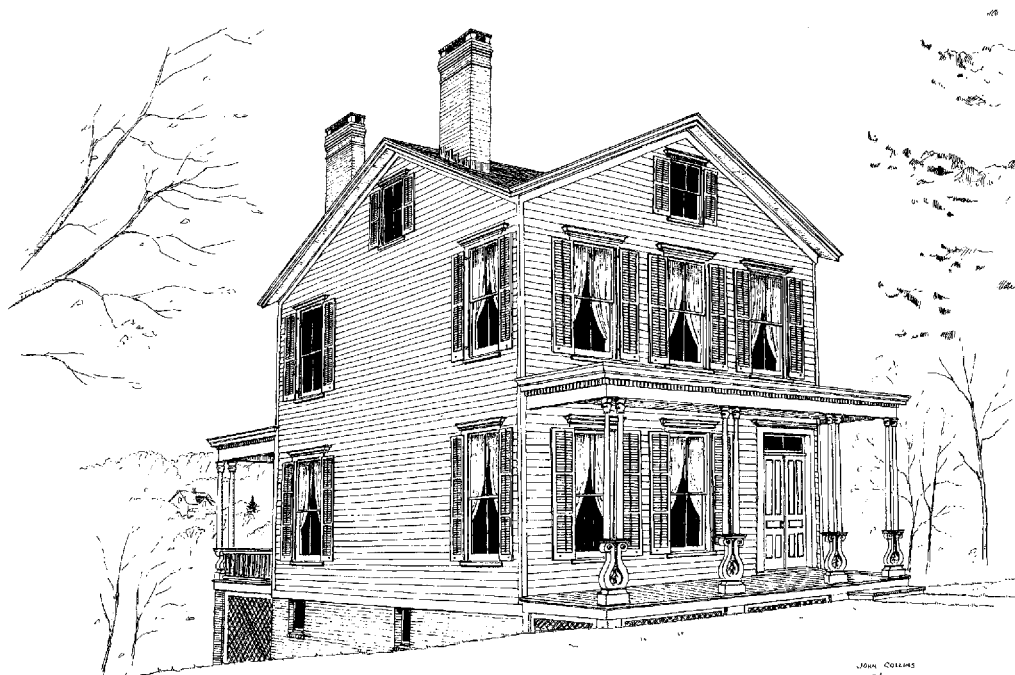
The attic reveals typical balloon frame construction, with studs nailed to rafters at the gables, and a butt joint ridge. There are 2/2 windows intact in each gable. Other construction details revealed in the course of the current restoration project include diagonal framing bracing the exterior corners of the main house, and diagonal bracing at the dining room fireplace.

## **CURRENT WORK**

The current restoration project is being conducted by Wooden Bridge, a local contracting firm, who also owns the building. The main house is being restored with careful attention given to original details which are still intact or can be surmised from the remaining evidence. The work on the second floor is largely completed at the time of this writing (March, 1990) except for the installation of bathroom fixtures.

More liberties will be taken with alterations to the eastern addition, as this is modern and largely undistinguished so far as architectural detailing is concerned. The north roof slope of the east addition will be lowered to come into line with the roof slope of the north addition. The space is to contain a guest room or study, and a bath.

Plans for the north addition are not finalized at this point. Because of the uncertainty of porch/kitchen chronology, all opportunities to answer these questions must be taken before designing this space. It does seem likely that the siting of the house would benefit from the restoration of the original grade, and this is certainly a possibility. The owners of the building should be commended for the careful attention paid to a building which is not so much unusual or exceptional, as an example of fine vernacular worthy of preservation and continued residential use.



Lamb-Ramsauer House (Ca. 1870), as it appeared when built. Rear porch columns and front door conjectural. Drawing by John Collins.

**LAMB-RAMSAUER HOUSE, (Circa 1870)**  
**44 East Broadway, Roslyn**  
**Residence of Mrs. Helen Black**  
**Property of the Roslyn Savings Bank**

**HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

The Edward Ramsauer house, located at 44 East Broadway, Roslyn, is now part of lot 542, in section 7, block B, and is owned by the Roslyn Savings Bank. Lot 542 is comprised of lots 9, 10, 33, 111, 112, 213, 510, 512, 513, 514, 523, and 524. The Ramsauer property is comprised of lots 213 (southerly parcel) and 514 (northerly parcel), having separate ownership history until Edward and Katherine Ramsauer purchased them both in 1909. The northerly parcel seems not to have ever had buildings on it.

The earliest record known for either parcel is a deed conveying the southerly parcel from Alfred J. and Margaret A. Lamb to John S. Hicks, April 1, 1873, in consideration of the sum of \$3,000, a high price for an empty lot, at that time. The deed refers to “. . . that certain lot with buildings thereon. . .” (April 1, 1873, Liber 410 (Queens), pg. 108), and though the reference to buildings is standard generally in the language of deeds, it was not used much locally and it is likely that the house was already in place by this time. John D. Hicks, assignee of property and estate of John S. Hicks, conveyed the property to Henry M.W. Eastman, a well known real estate investor, for the sum of \$100, subject to a “certain mortgage now a lien on said premises for \$1,500 and interest made by said Alfred J. Lamb, and wife to Benjamin D. Hicks and Henry W. Eastman” (November 20, 1877, Liber 516 (Queens), pg. 204). Henry M.W. Eastman conveyed the property to Frederick M. Eastman (at an unknown date), who, with his wife Leila, conveyed the property to Simon Replogle and wife Mattie (April 16, 1890, Liber 9, pg 379) for a sum of \$1,050. On October 30, 1905, Simon and Mattie Replogle conveyed the property to Edward Ramsauer (not yet married), for \$1,000 “and other good and valuable considerations” (Liber 74, pg. 219). Edward and Katherine Ramsauer acquired the northerly parcel in September, 1909 (Liber 195, pg. 452), earlier that year having conveyed the southerly parcel to Dorethea Hirsch for the consideration of \$1.00 (Liber 216, pg. 152). Soon after acquiring the northerly parcel, Dorethea Hirsch conveyed the property back to Katherine Ramsauer for the same consideration, \$1.00 (Liber 236, pg. 202). The Ramsauers thus occupied the property from 1905 to 1957, although the property was involved with a tax sale to the Village of Roslyn at one point during their tenure (Liber 2529, 2529 and 6256, pgs. 256, 252 and 414 respectively). In August of 1957, Katherine Ramsauer conveyed the property to Irving and Ruth M. Kriesberg, for the sum of \$10.00 and “other valuable consideration” (Liber 6256, pg. 535). The property was conveyed to Kenneth D. Molloy in June, 1970 (Liber 8125, pg. 303), and then to Roslyn Savings Bank within the same month (Liber 8171, pg. 138). All recent work on the house has been completed by the Bank, and the house has been used as a rental property. The garage on the property, discussed below as the workshop, is currently used jointly as equipment storage for the Bank, and a garage by the tenant.

**ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY**

The reconstruction of the evolution of the Ramsauer house is aided by three surviving photographs: a postcard view prior to 1909, showing the house from the pond, or western, side; a front, or east view, taken by a commercial photographer and

sold to Katherine Ramsauer in 1905 or 1906; and another front view taken in 1919. All photographs confirmed that the house has had fairly dramatic alterations, but its basic and unusual form are original. The two east views of the house, together with considerable history of the house and her family, were supplied by Dorothea M. Ramsauer who spent her first 50 years in the house. A date of 1860–70 would be likely for the construction of the house, based on building technology, stylistic elements, and deed research. However, since it does not appear in the Beers-Comstock Map of Roslyn (pub. 1873), it is unlikely it was built before 1872–73.

## ORIGINAL HOUSE

The Ramsauer house was originally two and half stories high, three bays wide and two bays deep, with a wide, flat roofed front porch. The unusual aspect of the house's form is that all four facades are identically gabled, creating a square building with eight equal and symmetrical roof planes, and roof ridges which run both north to south and east to west. There are no other known examples of this form in Roslyn. Only two published references were found which could have served as the source for the design. One of these is *Holly's Country Seats*, Henry Hudson Holly, (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1866), design no. 18. This illustrated view shows an Italianate style cottage with a cupola, a feature that the Roslyn house never appears to have had. The other is a far more sophisticated Gothic house which is the frontispiece for John Bullock's *The American Cottage Builder*, Henry Carey Ward, Philadelphia, 1873.

The unusual roof design may have something to do with the framing for the house, which is done in the balloon frame style of building construction, a technique originated in Chicago in the 1830's, and which quickly surpassed the traditional method of braced frame construction across the country. With balloon framing, lighter grades of lumber are used, and the major framing elements, studs and joists, are nailed to one another, rather than joined with mortise and tenon joinery. The fairly complex framing of the roof of the Ramsauer house could only have been accomplished with the understanding of lightweight frame construction. Balloon framing is thought to have come to the Roslyn area c. 1860.

The original front porch, illustrated in the photo of 1905/6, is a delicate construction without precedent in surviving Roslyn architecture. The flat porch roof, detailed at the cornice with a small dentil molding, was supported by four paired columns, diminutive in girth. These columns had very small capitals of an unidentifiable order. Each pair of columns sat on a base consisting of a classical lyre, upturned, on a large block base, and decorated with carved acanthus leaves. For a vernacular house such as this to have a porch with such elaborate classical decoration is most unusual, and the loss of the porch to the passage of time is most sad, indeed.

The postcard view of the rear of the Ramsauer house shows two original details now lost: a back porch, which extended the full length of the rear of the house at the first floor level, cantilevered over the basement; and a round window in the west gable. The porch had a hipped roof, and at least seven porch columns.

Scrutiny of the 1905/6 and 1909 photographs reveals a fairly complete picture of what the house looked like from the time of its construction until the newly married Ramsauers moved in to the house in 1905 (Katherine and Edward were married November 19, 1905). The front (east) elevation had a small 2/2 window at the attic level, three 2/2 windows on the second floor, and 2 2/2 windows on the first

floor. The front door, already once altered, was a solid panelled door with a transom above. There are a pair of exterior panelled double doors in use in the basement, which retain their original hardware, which may have been the original front doors. The front door facings are not moulded as the windows are, but are untrimmed like the east kitchen doorway which was added in 1913. The house was clad in novelty siding, each 10", tongue-and-rabbeted board milled to look like two clapboards. Window caps were heavily molded, and are likely the same intact today. All windows, including the gable, had exterior blinds with movable louvers. (These shutters are currently stored in the garage/workshop.) The front gable was boxed in a deep soffit, creating a sizable overhang. Although the roof covering is not documented, it was likely to have been tin, as the pitch of the roof slopes are quite shallow. Downspouts were let into the soffit at each valley to lead rainwater to the ground. A front fence, shown in the 1905/6 picture in deep snow, was in deteriorated shape, with boxed posts and square section pickets held by molded rails. There was an entry to the root cellar, located under the front porch, at the south end of the porch. There does not appear to have been a side porch before 1909.

### **RAMSAUER ALTERATIONS, 1905-1919**

Alterations to the building were accomplished primarily by the Ramsauers, beginning in 1905/6, soon after their purchase of the building. The family reports that the newlywed Ramsauers lived on the second floor, "while the lower ones were being completely done over new walls etc." The fireplaces were removed, and the openings blocked, except for the mantle of Italian marble (still intact in the parlor). The bay on the south side was added where the fireplaces were formerly. The kitchen must have remained in the basement, for in c. 1913 "the family kitchen was added by Jack Lambert of Roslyn Heights." The kitchen chimney, in the northwest corner, was added as well. The handsome kitchen cabinets were built by Wallace Cornelius, who lived next door at the time. The next addition was the western sun porch, added c. 1915, and replacing the back porch. Later, the cellar under the sun porch was converted into a laundry.

During the period of extensive renovation, the house was reclad in its present finish of shingles for the gables and second story, and clapboards for the first story. Incorporated with these cladding alterations are some Queen Anne stylistic features—board beltcourses at the floor levels, and "skirted" courses of shingles at the base of the second floor—that places this building visually in the second decade of the 20th century. All this cladding was applied over the existing siding, meaning that the house has grown 2-3 inches in girth.

The front porch was also altered during this period, as shown in the 1919 photograph. The diminutive columns and lyre bases were replaced by Tuscan columns and square stock balusters and railings. The porch was extended to wrap around to the north side of the house, as it is presently configured. The front wooden fence, deteriorated in 1905/6, had been replaced with a fence having turned locust posts and 2" pipe rails. The 1919 photograph also shows one of two horse chestnut trees transplanted by Edward Ramsauer from his boyhood home. Both have survived.

### **INTERIOR DESCRIPTION**

The house is entered, as it always has been, through a door at the north end of the front porch. This leads directly to the stairhall, the stairs rising against the north

wall of the house, a hall leading straight back, and entry to the parlor to the immediate left. The stairhall appears relatively unchanged from original detailing: the octagonal newel, balusters turned with an urn shape, and handrail are all of walnut. The wall and stair soffit are now plastered, though they may have been panelled originally. The door between the front and back hall appears to be original, including the panel in the wall above, and the door with glazing above two panels. There is a modern closet built into the back of the stair, with six panel sliders on the south wall, and a single six panel door on the west. The original basement stair, now floored over, was accessible through a two-panelled door under the staircase. The parquet floors in the hall and parlor have been laid over at least the original, if not subsequent, layers of flooring. The plaster cornice in the front hall, parlor and dining room may be part of the Ramsauers' first round of improvements, involving the "new walls and etc." The cove detail at the joining of wall to ceiling is likely early 20th century. The picture rails in both the parlor and dining room are likely part of this work as well. The door and window trim, and baseboards, however, are likely to be original, as an ogee molding with a backband is common third quarter 19th century practice. This molding is given more prominence in some locations, such as the entrance to the parlor, by the addition of a stepped surround. Cast iron rim locks and porcelain knobs on most doors are probably also original. The 1/1 sash found throughout the first floor are later, probably dating to the insertion of the bays in 1905/6. The interior doors, four panelled with ogee molding, are also common to the period of original construction, as are the 6" board and torus mold baseboards.

The front room, or parlor, is simply decorated, the prominent features being the ogee molded panels under the windows; a chandelier medallion decorated with molded fruit in relief (probably later than 1870), and a Rococco revival style Italian white marble mantle, original to the location (though the cast iron surround for the firebox is missing). The window casings are stepped, and the sliding door casings are heavier than those of the windows. Sliding pocket doors allow access to the dining room—these doors and track are original, and at the track, the floor may be examined to determine the original flooring, 6" wide pine boards. The three sided, four light, bay on the south side of the dining room (1905/6) is separated from the room at the ceiling by the plastered-over 2nd floor plate.

West of the dining room is the sun room, added as a play room in c. 1915, and occupying the approximate depth of the original back porch. The west window sash and surround, a 2/2 with a stepped molding, is obviously relocated from elsewhere, perhaps the old west wall, where the door to the sun room is now. The windows on the south side are late 20th century, as evidenced by their flat board trim.

North of the sun room is the kitchen. The original kitchen was located in the basement, where the Ramsauers must have begun their married cooking, for the kitchen addition dates to c. 1913, eight years after their marriage. The cast iron stove, with an overhead dish warmer and "Provident" emblazoned across the door, was a wedding gift to Katherine and Edward Ramsauer from Edward's parents. The original stained and varnished cupboards along the north wall, as well as the wainscoting, are the work of Wallace Cornelius (see above). The small room west of the kitchen likely held an icebox, or served as cold storage in some way. The exterior door to the north porch dates to the construction of that porch, sometime between 1913–19.

Following the stairs to the second floor, the stair continues to the attic, behind a beaded board stair wall and door. At the east end of the upstairs hall, there is a small



chamber. Lit by one window, this room retains all of its original features: 2/2 sash, flat window casing with backbanded ogee moldings, four panelled ogee molded door, and the original pine board floor. It is rare to see a chamber in such unaltered condition. The southeast and southwest chambers are over the parlor and dining room respectively. Both have later strip flooring, but otherwise retain original features of 2/2 sash, four panelled ogee molded doors, and window and door surrounds. The southeast chamber has panels beneath the sash, as in the downstairs parlor. The southwest chamber has a bay, reflecting that of the dining room, but with panelled window seats and storage areas below. This seating area terminates each end with a post, complete with molded cap and base, creating an intimate seating area. As in the dining room, the structural second floor plate is boxed and plastered at the ceiling. There is a new hall closet on the south side of the hall, with a new raised panel door.

The bath at the end of the hall may date to the early 20th century alterations, although it is contained within the space of the original house. (It may have served originally as a chamber or storage room). The marble wash basin is clearly an early plumbing detail. As Edward Ramsauer was a plumber, it is likely that if the house had no indoor plumbing originally, he would have installed fixtures soon after occupying the house.

Much can be learned about the framing of the house from an examination of the attic and basement. As noted above, the house is framed in the balloon style of construction: studs visible in the attic are 2" x 4", 17" o.c.; rafters are 2" x 4", 36" o.c. There are three 2/2 gable windows (north, west and south; the east has a later three light casement). Also visible in the attic are the four valley rafters and four ridgepoles which frame the extraordinary roofline, making the attic space one filled with angles and interest.

Floor joists in the basement are 3" x 7", 24" o.c., running north to south. A later beam, running east to west, supports the floor joists at mid-span. The foundation is brick from house sills to the cellar floor on the north, south, and original west foundation walls, but the base of the east foundation wall was laid in stone, switching to brick well below grade. The foundation under the western additions of sun room and kitchen are poured concrete. The exterior of the brick portions of the foundation have been stuccoed. There are six light original cellar sash intact in the south, north and west walls.

The west end of the basement was the location of the original kitchen. This area shows signs of having plastered walls and ceiling. The original basement stair descended in the northwest corner of this space. Some balusters survive, turned, but of a different pattern than the main staircase. There is a brick projection in the south foundation where the kitchen stove would have been located, as evidenced by a stove hole. There are brick piers below the parlor fireplace, also against the south foundation wall.

## **LATE 20TH CENTURY ALTERATIONS**

The east side of the house shows the newest additions: a deck has been added outside the sun room and kitchen, and the basement extended under this deck, to provide more finished rooms in the basement area. All of this work is of late 20th century in character. Foundation walls are poured concrete, and first floor exterior walls are clapboarded, window trim is flat board, and windows are modern 1/1 sash. The only notable interior feature of these west basement rooms is the use of a pair of

exterior doors to separate two rooms, which may in fact be the original front doors to the house. Also visible in this basement space is an area of the original novelty siding, uncovered.

The front porch has also been altered, just after the Bank's acquisition of the house. Columns have been replaced by square posts, trimmed at the top with an unmolded cap, and on the front face with a flat trim to give the impression of a recessed panel.

The present front door, an oak, 3 panelled door with beveled glass glazing above, probably dates to the renovations completed by 1919. The glazed overdoor is late 20th century. New lattice encloses the areas below the south bay and the north porch.

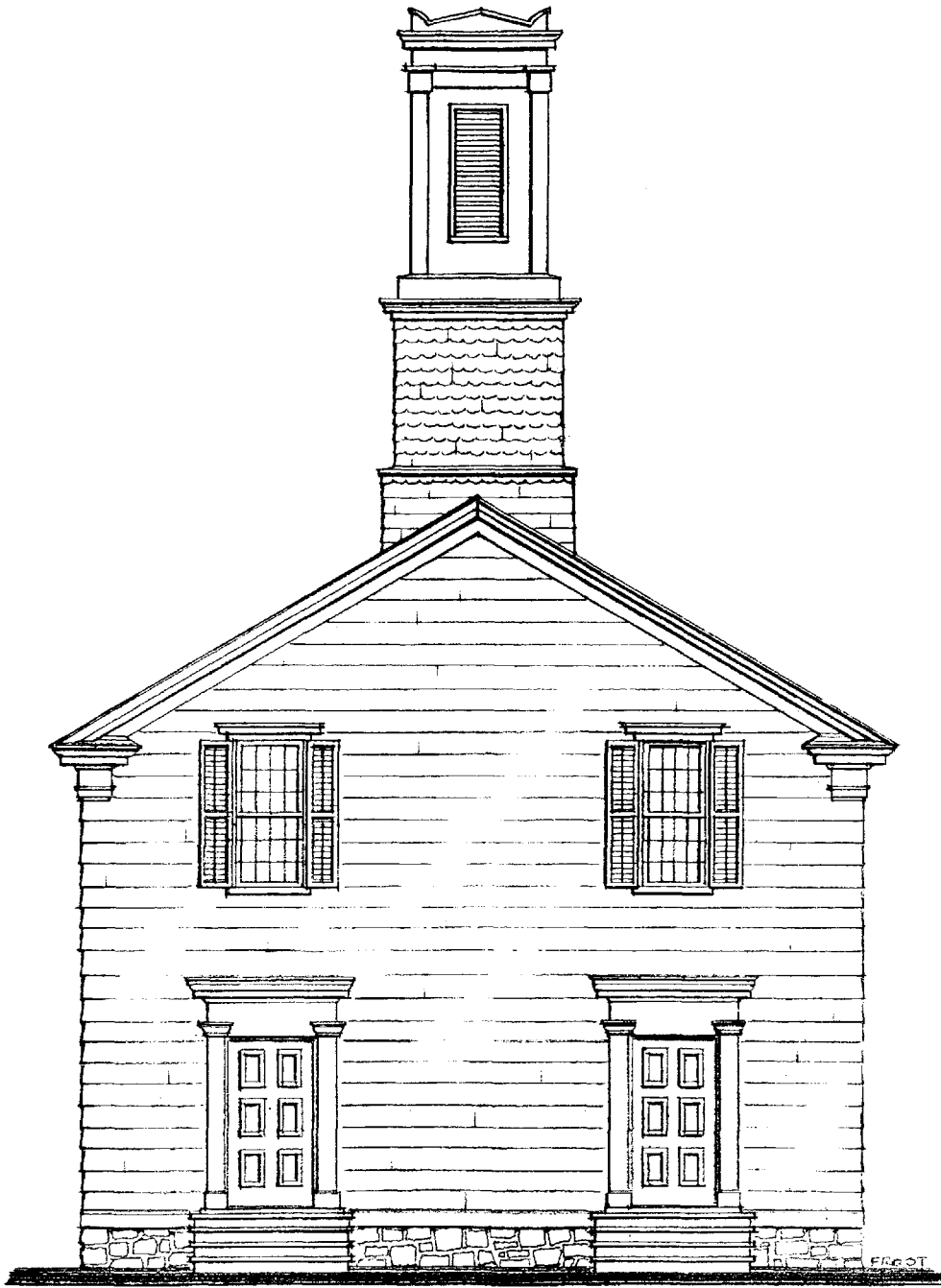
## **WORKSHOP**

Located west of the house, close to the edge of the pond, is a gable-ended building currently used as a two car garage/storage area. This building appears in the postcard view (prior to 1909), with window openings on the west elevation that indicate its use as stalls on the lowest level. Later, the building was used by Edward Ramsauer as his workshop. The framing is similar to that of the house, and was probably built close to the same time.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The Ramsauer House is a fine example of a vernacular building which was substantially altered to conform to a new stylistic idiom. The removal of the porch with classical detailing, and the recladding of the building with shingles and clapboards, was an attempt to update the building by the aspiring and young Ramsauers. Interestingly, the Herbert Conklin House at nearby 62 East Broadway, followed an almost identical path of change, as a wing was added to the north in 1907, and the house shingled in the Queen Anne style, with skirtings, in 1916 (TG 1988-89).





Roslyn Presbyterian Church (1851) as it appeared ca 1900.  
Drawing by Guy Ladd Frost, AIA

**THE ORIGINAL ROSLYN PREBSYTERIAN CHURCH (1851)**  
**33 East Broadway, Roslyn, New York**  
**Residence of Mr. and Mrs. Richard D. Ponemon**

**HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

There was no Presbyterian congregation in Roslyn until 1849, when, at the instigation of Mrs. James W. Losee, steps were taken to form one. On October 26, 1849, the Reverend Franklin Merrill, who was in charge of a Presbyterian church in a town about ten miles distant, gave the first sermon at the Roslyn Academy (TG 1988–89), lent for the purpose by Henry W. Eastman, who was then conducting a school there. Reverend Graves, the Congregational minister from Hempstead, shared the ministerial responsibilities until 1850, when Merrill became the sole pastor.

There was no formal organization until January 24, 1850, when, at a Thursday evening service, the gathering formed itself into the Roslyn Presbyterian Association and elected its first trustees: James Losee (TG 1976), Stephen A. Ketcham, James W. Smith (James & William Smith House, TG 1973–74, 1984–85), Joseph J. Hegeman and Franklin Merrill. On August 2, 1850, Daniel Bogart, who later owned the Epenetus Oakley House (Oakley-Field-Bogart, TG 1973–74), was appointed Clerk of the Association (*Roslyn Plain Dealer*, 9 August 1850).

The small Association continued to meet at the Academy and elsewhere, but plans for building their own church were already being formulated. Subscriptions were taken up for the purpose of building, but they were resolved not to begin actual procedures until \$1000 had been collected. The mark was reached in July of 1850. (*Manuscript Record*, Roslyn Presbyterian Church. Made available by the Rev. Stark Jones, Pastor)

On August 2, a committee consisting of Daniel Hegeman (TG 1986–87), James Losee (TG 1976) and Franklin Merrill was appointed to consider the building of the church (*Roslyn Plain Dealer*, 9 August 1850). They recommended a structure 34 feet in width and 40 feet long, 18 feet from the sills to the top of the outer walls. The cost of framing and enclosing the building, installing the doors and window sash, laying the floors and painting, was estimated between \$950 and \$1000. (Report of the Building Committee, 10 August 1850).

About this time, during the summer of 1850, a serious disagreement arose within the Association over the specifics of building operations. One side was reflected in a letter to the Editor of the *Roslyn Plain Dealer*, printed on August 30th, in which the writer, who signed himself “One of the Contributors”, expressed a decided wish to have the specifications advertised in village, county and New York City newspapers, and to invite prospective architects or contractors to make proposals for carrying out the construction. “I take it for granted,” he wrote, “that the *usual* and, I might say, *almost invariable* mode of erecting public buildings—whether they are for religious or civil purposes—will certainly not be departed from in this case . . . ”

The church records themselves offer some explanation of the problem, which is recorded as the “disaffection” of several of the first families involved with the church organization during the summer of 1850. Apparently the trustees had refused to accede to the ultimatum of “one domineering rich man” (unidentified) who wanted to award the building contract to a professional architect who would design and

supervise the project, providing the materials and the craftsmen himself. The others thought it would be wiser (especially economically) to employ "a trustworthy carpenter" (probably Thomas Wood, Williams—Wood House, TG 1967–68, 1988–89, who is known to have built the Methodist parsonage, 180 Main Street, in 1843, and to whom a number of Roslyn buildings of this period have been attributed on stylistic grounds). The carpenter would work by the day, with the aid of volunteer labor by the members of the Association, neighbors and friends. According to this method, materials would be provided by the Association.

Because of the firmness of the trustees on the issue, the protestor, along with several of his family, withdrew from the Association, thereby creating still another difficulty. One of the members of his family had promised to donate the land for the church building "which later had to be bought and graded for two hundred dollars." (*Manuscript Records*, Roslyn Presbyterian Church). The church was located on a sixty by one hundred foot lot of land on the east side of East Broadway, purchased from John R. Schenck. The transfer of land, although settled long before, was recorded 17th October 1853. (Recorded in Queens County Liber of Deeds, Page 77, 22 December 1853.)

The matter of the building contract settled, work was begun during the fall with the digging of the foundation, but once again trouble intervened. The timber which had been ordered for the framing was delayed in shipment and was not received until winter had begun. Disappointment for the Presbyterians soon became annoyance for the community, expressed by the Roslyn *Plain Dealer's* editorial on September 13. "We are frequently asked what is doing about that Presbyterian Church. Will somebody please inform us what is the matter, and why the work is not proceeded with? Delay is worse than useless."

Late in January of 1851, the Association, presumably to be closer to their building site, removed their meeting place from the Academy to a room offered them by Mr. Pinkney in "Pinkney Hall" on the West side of East Broadway, south of the church site. (Munsell, W.W. & Co., *History of Queens County, N.Y.* 1882, pg. 427; Van Zanten, the Rev. J.W., "The One Hundredth Anniversary of the Roslyn Presbyterian Church" 1951).

On March 12, 1851, with appropriate ceremony, the cornerstone was laid. A box of papers was sealed within the cornerstone, among which was a copy of the *Roslyn Plain Dealer*. By this time it was certainly known to the building committee that the enterprise was not going to be completed with the funds estimated and collected before work had begun. During the cornerstone ceremony, a considerable amount was collected for the continuing of construction, which then began in earnest. The building was framed and closed quickly, then there was a delay of a few weeks for lack of funds (*Manuscript Records*, Roslyn Presbyterian Church) but afterwards the work proceeded regularly. One dour note in the *Roslyn Plain Dealer* on September 9th illuminates a further fiscal problem: "Presbyterian Church two thirds finished. No Funds." The winter affording some necessary abatement of building activity, it is probable that final monies were gathered, the remaining work finished, and on the 16th of March, 1852, the dedicatory exercises were held, with a visiting minister, the Rev. Dr. Goldsmith, giving the sermon.

At the final calculation, the entire cost of the building and the lot was \$1,900, about twice the original estimate. In addition to the thousand dollars subscribed in Roslyn and vicinity and the collection made at the cornerstone ceremony, donations were received from the Presbyteries of New York and Long Island, the churches at

Newtown, Jamaica, Hempstead, Babylon, Huntington, Sag Harbor, East Hampton and Southampton. (Munsell, pg. 427). After the building was finished a service organization formed of Roslyn women, raised an additional \$170 for the purchase of a bell.

On May 18, 1851, a committee of the Presbytery of Long Island met at Roslyn for the purpose of creating a Presbyterian Church with formal ecclesiastical organization. Because of stormy weather the business was put forward to the 25th, at which time the Reverend Merrill proceeded to complete the organization. There were four members received that day: James W. Smith, Maria Losee, Elizabeth Ketcham and Elizabeth Losee. The new trustees were: James Losee, Daniel Brinckerhoff, Stephen A. Ketcham, Joseph J. Hegeman, Henry W. Eastman (TG 1977–78) and Caleb Kirby (TG 1984 Memorial). James Smith was elected and ordained ruling Elder, a responsibility he retained until his death in January 1879.

Reverend Franklin Merrill continued as pastor until June of 1853, after which time the pulpit was filled by visiting ministers until May of 1854, when the Reverend Samuel Rose Ely became stated supply, holding the office without salary until 1870. Ely was one of the most distinguished residents of Roslyn during the 19th century. He was born in Springfield, Mass., in 1803, and died in Roslyn in 1873. He was educated at Williams and Princeton, receiving the Doctor of Divinity degree from Columbia in 1865, while serving in Roslyn. (Appleton's *Cyclopedia of American Biography*, New York 1889). In 1859 he owned "Locust Hill" (TG 1983–84) and during his residence there it became one of the most attractive and socially active houses in the village. Before coming to Roslyn, Ely had served large congregations in New York, East Hampton and Brooklyn. (Van Zanten, "One Hundredth Anniversary . . .") and his broad experience is reflected in the course of this distinguished period in the history of the Presbyterian Church.

It was during his pastorate that William Cullen Bryant became associated with the church, where he was a "trustee, constant attendant and one of the larger contributors to its maintenance" (John Bigelow: "Bryant, William Cullen": *American Men of Letters*, 1890). Although brought up as a Presbyterian, Bryant may not have become a church member in Roslyn, for although his wife was baptized in August of 1858, it is not known that Bryant received the sacrament. (In fact, a Boston minister claimed to have baptized him later). Membership in the congregation is not required for trusteeship (The Rev. Stark Jones). Bryant's daughter wrote ". . . he communed there because Dr. Ely was a liberal man and always invited all members of other churches and denominations who might be present to join in the communion service." Bryant himself was responsible for the occasional visits to the congregation of his friend, the Reverend Dr. Orville Dewey, to whom he wrote of Roslyn and the church on July 9, 1860, ". . . The church has been got ready for you—renovated, as the Italians say: the ceiling, as the country newspaper described it the other day, "painted in water colors"—that is to say, embued with a fresh coat of whitewash—the walls neatly painted and floors neatly carpeted . . . Have no apprehensions concerning the second sermon (the congregation) tolerates but one on a Sunday . . . Here in Roslyn we cannot all of us read and yet we wear beards as long as anybody . . ."

In 1870, after Ely's retirement, the pulpit was supplied for a little over a year by the Reverend William Wallace Kirby, a Roslyn resident who probably had another occupation in addition to his ministerial duties, and who continued as trustee after he was replaced by other ministers. From 1871, a series of installed pastors have

served the Roslyn Presbyterian Church. In 1881 the *Roslyn News* (April 23) announced the forthcoming publication of a history of the Roslyn Presbyterian Church written by J. Browne, Jr., of which, unfortunately, no copies are known. In 1887 a parsonage was built (TG 1978–79) by carpenter Stephen Speedling, and in December, 1892, a new pipe organ was installed in the church building.

By the end of World War I the increasing congregation began to outgrow the small building which had to serve as church and Sunday School. Franklin P. Noble, a civil engineer from Roslyn Heights, in a report dated October 29th, 1919, recommended substantial changes. These included removal of the steeple, which leaned slightly to the east and which he considered unsafe; removal of the front porch, which he noted retained its original tin roof; removal of the north bay of the carriage shed; removal of most of the east wall of the church building; excavation of the site under the building to a depth of six feet, so that the building could be dropped down four feet; construction of a new tower; construction of a new east wing; probable construction of a new south wing; stuccoing of entire exterior, old and new; plasterboard interior; new porch and new windows. Fortunately Mr. Noble's plan was not implemented. While he advocated the preservation of old materials, these were to be used to avoid buying new. No effort was made to preserve any of the visual qualities of the building. The proposed building would not have resembled the original in any way. A report dated March 5, 1922, prepared as required by the Presbytery of Brooklyn-Nassau, discussed the deplorable condition of the building and stated that a new edifice had been considered for "many years." There existed a "strong sentiment and desire" for such a new church building, and those feelings had "caused an indifference to upkeep and a consequent neglect of the present structure and its interior furnishings . . . The condition of the building is a constant source of discomfort and shame to ourselves and our would-be friends . . ." The most substantial complaints, however, were not structural at all, but dealt with "faded, stained and peeling wall paper", incessant dust arising from worn-out carpets too fragile for cleaning, and general disrepair resulting from overuse. This appeal must have had its effect, for in November, 1922, the church bought the site of their present building, on the west side of East Broadway, from the Roslyn Neighborhood Association (*Records*, Roslyn Presbyterian Church). Plans were drawn in 1924 by William Bunker Tubby and after a hiatus of four years, the cornerstone was laid in May, 1928, and the building completed in July.

On November 27, 1928, the Presbyterian Church deeded the old building to the Roslyn Council No. 38, Junior Order of United American Mechanics, who were the first nonecclesiastic occupants. (Recorded November 27th, 1928, Liber 1405, p. 93). On 11/25/1939, after a period of vacancy, the Junior Order of American Mechanics conveyed the church building to the Roslyn National Bank & Trust Co. (Recorded 12/8/1939, Liber 2166, pg. 443). The bank at first rented the building to two Sea Cliff artists, Robert Archer and Charles Lundgren, who repaired the walls, replaced numerous broken windows and repainted, prior to opening the Roslyn Studios, which operated as an art gallery and held evening classes. Another art group, "The Church Mice", used the building simultaneously. This use was not without precedent in the building's history, as a news item of 1882 informed the village there was an "Art Gallery at the Presbyterian Church and a Festival at the Hall", probably in reference to a summer social or fund raising event (*Roslyn News*, 6/17/1882). On 4/25/46 the Roslyn National Bank & Trust Company sold the church building to Charles J. Lundgren and Robert P. Archer (Recorded 4/29/46, Liber 3074, pg. 48). On 7/29/55, Charles J. Lundgren sold his share of the building to Robert P. Archer (Recorded 8/12/55, Liber 5852, pg. 92), who converted the



church interior to a combined residence and studio. On 10/9/64 Dorothy and Robert Archer sold the property to Morris and Evelyn Cutler (Liber 7325, pg. 491, 10/13/64). The Cutlers resided in the former church and manufactured evening dresses there until they sold the building to Gerald and Ruth Mermen on 6/30/71 (Liber 8010, pg. 25, 6/25/69). Gerald and Ruth Mermen sold the building to the present owner, Rheta W. Ponemon, on 6/30/71 (Recorded Liber 8263, pg. 113, 7/7/71).

## EXTERIOR

The original Roslyn Presbyterian Church was designed in the Greek Revival Style and is the earliest surviving church edifice in Roslyn. The building has a rubble foundation to the sills and originally had no cellar of any sort. The rubble foundation has been patched extensively with concrete all around and is exposed only along its north face. The main block is sheathed on all four sides with shingles having twelve inch exposures. Originally there was a plain water-table, having a chamfered upper edge, on all four faces of the building, but this has been lost on the south and west aspects as a result of the raising of the grade.

The originally shingled gable-ended roof has its ridge at right angles to the road and preserves its original overhanging eaves, except on the least consequential east facade over which the eaves have always been "clipped." On the other three sides there is a moulded cornice beneath the eaves and, below this, a broad stepped frieze along the north and south facades. The north and south eave cornices and friezes both turn their respective west corners and return against the west front. There is a stepped gable fascia which matches the north and south friezes and which extends beneath the eaves of the west gable field. The north and south friezes and the west gable fascia all are trimmed with a large Tuscan moulding beneath the eaves. The friezes, but not the gable fascia, have a smaller Tuscan moulding which runs above the step and parallel to it. In addition a thumb-nail moulding surmounted by a fillet extends immediately beneath the roof shingles and returns with the eave cornices. The entire entablature composition resembles the work of Thomas Wood who probably was the carpenter-builder of the edifice.

There are three very large 6/6 windows in the north and south walls which are the most striking architectural feature of the building today, although the steeple originally dominated the composition. These are trimmed with narrow, bead-edged surrounds capped by projecting dripboards. The windows had louvered shutters divided into equal upper and lower sections. The shutters are now missing.

The east (rear) facade of the church was very plain and is trimmed only with a narrow stepped fascia beneath the clipped gable eaves. There is a small 6/6 window in the east gablefield which is located above the interior ceiling line. All other windows in the east front are new (1972), or later. The north and south friezes terminate just short of the east corners and the eave cornices return at each of the east corners. The church originally had two interior chimneys midway between the ridge and corners of the east facade which provided flues for a pair of large interior stoves. Both chimneys were removed in 1972. A small single-storey, pent-roofed east wing, which extends completely across the building, was designed by Guy Ladd Frost and constructed by Wooden Bridge in 1985-86, to provide space for a small sitting room and additional storage.

The ground floor of the principal (west) facade is now concealed behind a later (ca. 1870) single-storey, enclosed porch. Two small windows appear at the second

storey (choir) level above the original exterior doorway. These originally had 12/12 glazing although the lower sash has been converted to a single pane. Their surrounds are the same as those of the larger north and south windows except for the wider cross-topped top facings which are trimmed with Tuscan mouldings. These mouldings are, in turn, surmounted by projecting hood-moulds, trimmed with Tuscan ogee transitional mouldings, which may have been added at the time the enclosed porch was built.

The early exterior paired doorways are now concealed inside the enclosed porch. These are flanked by plain pilasters having stepped and transitionally moulded capitals in the Greek Revival manner. The simple pilaster bases are chamfered along their upper edges in the manner of the water-table. The plain doorway entablatures are capped by prominent Tuscan mouldings and projecting hood-moulds. The original large, six-panel, double-faced doors both survive. These are trimmed with standard Tuscan mouldings on both faces and retain their original butt hinges and porcelain and silver-plated fittings.

Originally the church had a typical country Greek Revival steeple. According to photographs the steeple was built in three diminishing sections, all of which were square in cross-section and which were separated from each other by mouldings. The lowest section projected only slightly above the ridge and provided a platform for the upper sections. Both lower sections were shingled; the lowest with square-butt shingles and the middle (according to the earliest available photograph, ca. 1910) with round-butt shingles. The latter may represent re-shingling in the Queen Ann Revival style of the early 20th century. The upper steeple segment was the tallest and most elaborate and served as the belfry. Each face of the upper segment was filled almost completely with a large rectangular louvered panel, and its four faces divided from each other by corner-boards, possibly in the shape of pilasters. The upper segment was capped by a projecting cornice, a low hipped roof, and a simple shaped parapet, the corners of which were in the form of stylized anthemions. The steeple was taken down, circa 1930, by the Junior Order of United American Mechanics, the first secular occupants of the building, under the impression that it was unsound, as suggested in Franklin P. Noble's report. During the dismantling procedure it was established that the steeple was structurally intact—although by that time it was too late to stop the demolition (Pio Teolis/oral communication). The enclosed, single storey, board-and-batten, shallow, shed-roofed porch along the principal (west) front of the church is a later addition. However, it was built only shortly after the church was completed as it is present in a photograph of Roslyn taken prior to the publication of the Beers-Comstock Map (1873). So far as is known there is no record of how the original church steps looked. There could have been an open platform which extended across the west front or, more likely, a simple platform outside each doorway, approached by open tread steps. The existing enclosed porch originally had a rubble foundation to the sills, but this had deteriorated badly and was extensively repaired with concrete in 1972. The present water-table matches that of the main block of the church. However, this form is only conjectural as the entire porch siding had been sheathed over with asbestos shingles requiring the removal of the original projecting battens and water-table to achieve a smooth surface. When this later sheathing was removed in 1972, the water-table was matched to that surviving on the edifice and the battens reconstructed from the paint outlines along the lower edge of the surviving two board high, steeped roof fascia. Early photographs indicate there originally was a third horizontal member, above the roof line, which formed a low parapet, and all three horizontal members were moulded to form an architecturally appropriate cornice. Originally the porch roof

was sheathed with tin. Much of the porch restoration was guided by the study of early 20th c. photographs. The principal porch doorway obviously was strongly influenced by the original exterior doorways. Like them, the porch doorway is strongly classic in concept and has a prominent entablature, projecting cornice and plain pilasters. The latter have simple stepped and vigorous ogee-moulded capitals and bases compatible with the water-table. The original paired porch doors were discarded by Gerald Mermen in 1970, shortly before the present owners purchased the church and were replaced with multi-panel doors of Spanish influence. These were discarded in 1972 when the present pair of three-panel ogee-moulded doors were installed, in the same style as the original doors and with appropriate porcelain knobs. The interior stairway leading up to the edifice floor level has been removed and the present doors cannot be opened.

The principal porch doorway is flanked by a pair of tall, narrow, 8/6 windows which were considered appropriate to a church. Their surrounds are simplifications of the earlier, 12/8 second-storey windows in the same facade and, like them, have simple, crossetted surrounds. These windows are capped by projecting hood moulds which are identical to those of the earlier 12/8 windows. The west front windows are now flanked by new, louvered shutters. Originally there were similar windows at the north and south ends of the porch, both of which utilized plain drip-boards instead of crossetted caps. During the 1972 program, the south window, later made a doorway with glazed door, was moved into the position of the north window. The present 4-panel south door with projecting ogee-mouldings comes from the Willet Titus House (TG 1972-73) where it led to a second storey porch which was demolished in 1969.

## **GARAGE**

The entire garage was designed in 1972 by Guy Ladd Frost, AIA, and stands upon the site of the northern half of the early carriage shed which was removed in the 1930's. The southern half survives in modified form and serves as the garage for the Mott-Magee-Skewes House next door (TG 1970-71, 1983-84). The present board-and-batten structure has a facade gable parallel to the road and was constructed in 1972. It is sympathetic in concept to the church porch and provides space for a workshop and roof-top terrace as well as a garage. The workshop is entered through a small, four-panel, round-headed, ogee-moulded door, circa 1870, from the Roslyn Preservation Corporation's architectural stockpile.

## **INTERIOR**

The original church had a two aisle hall plan and included neither transept nor apse. The side pews butted directly into the north and south walls. Two original church benches survive. One remains in the church. The other is in the William M. Valentine House (TG 1963). Both, when found, had only a single end, i.e., flat, sawn leg and arm. The other end originally had been inserted into the dado for support. New ends have been added to both benches so they may be free standing.

The original door and window surrounds in the hall are typically Greek Revival in design and have stepped, crossetted surrounds trimmed with standard Tuscan mouldings. The original 12/8 gallery window surrounds are finished in the same manner as the large hall windows except they are not crossetted. These now are 12/1, as the result of removal of the original muntins prior to the present ownership. The hall windows have small, wooden, spear-pointed devices on each side of the

frames which serve as window latches. Similar comma-shaped devices, having fish-tail ends, serve to lock the gallery windows in the open position.

There is a horizontally-boarded dado of window-sill height which surrounds the hall on three (originally on four) sides. This is capped by a square-edged projecting lip which forms the window sills. The dado presumably has been much altered as no scars remain of the side-aisle bench insertions. Much of the dado boarding was replaced in 1972. However, in a closet of about the same period as the enclosed porch, located beneath the choir stairway, a section of the original, intact, artificially-grained dado remains. Except for the artificial graining this is identical to the exposed portion of the dado in the hall. This closet also contains a few fragments of mid-19th century, painted grisaille, architectural wallpaper which presumably dates from the original church. This is executed in a pattern of 18th century-type raised panels and originally covered the entire plaster wall of the hall. A similar, but larger, closet under the opposite end of the gallery, was installed in 1972 and houses the new cellar stairway.

The interior of the church is enhanced by a Greek Revival gesso cornice on three sides. The north and south sections are original. The west end of the ceiling, partially concealed by the choir loft, never had a cornice. The cornice at the east end of the room was installed in 1972. Originally, there was a similar cornice, further east, over the sanctuary. This broke in and out around the paired chimneys mentioned earlier and formed an impressive setting for the reredos. Originally, also, there was a large gesso central chandelier medallion which matched the cornice mouldings. This fell down and shattered during the 1972 restoration. A segment has been salvaged and preserved. Much of the early yellow pine flooring has survived, although damaged sections were replaced in 1972. The choir also survives although it may have had a different configuration originally. The present choir is supported by two iron tie-rods which extend down from the roof framing. According to Wilson Skewes, who grew up next door (Mott-Magee-Skewes House, (TG 1970–71, 1983–84), these were inserted by the Junior Order of United American Mechanics about 1930. Prior to that time the gallery was supported by a pair of cast-iron fluted columns, the bases of which were decorated with acanthus leaves. The original column capitals have long disappeared, but the shafts and bases survive as cellar lolly columns in the Mott-Magee-Skewes House. Square wooden patches in the floor, directly beneath the tie-rod ends, indicated the original locations of the columns. A pair of identical square wooden patches, about four feet to the east of the set just described, apparently indicated the locations of another pair of columns. If this conjecture is correct, there was another, earlier gallery which projected further to the east and which extended across the west pair of hall windows. Both pairs of patches, incidentally, were removed when the floor was repaired in 1972.

The present choir projects forward and is enclosed behind a three section, panelled railing, which consists of two short angled side panels and a longer central panel, all framed with rudimentary Tuscan mouldings. The projecting, square-edged railing cap rests upon a standard Tuscan moulding. The projecting choir floor-nosing is based upon a fascia reminiscent of an inverted, stepped baseboard capped by a massive Tuscan ogee transitional moulding which probably is contemporary with the enclosed porch and suggests the present gallery dates from the same period. The south one-third of the choir railing was removed by Robert Archer in order to construct an east-west dividing wall. This was replaced by the present owners in 1972.

The choir stairway is sheathed with plain vertical boarding and reverses upon itself before attaining the choir floor. The newel is San Domingo mahogany and is the standard late Sheraton turned type found in Roslyn during the second quarter of the 19th century, but is somewhat larger in diameter than those usually encountered. The San Domino mahogany stair-rail is circular in cross section. The original balusters all were missing and have been replaced with conventional, period, urn-turned mahogany balusters from the Roslyn Preservation Corporation's stockpile. The closet beneath the stairway is faced with beaded vertical sheathing and is contemporary with the enclosed porch. This is the closet which retains the original section of early dado and the fragment of early wallpaper. All this suggests that the choir stairway once was free-standing. However, its under surface has never been finished and it is unlikely it would have been exposed to public view in this condition. The outside wall of the stairway is sheathed with 9" wide horizontal boarding which, at the choir level, continues on to form a dado which matches that in the hall. Much of this dado was replaced in 1972. As in the case of the hall dado, the square-edged projecting cap of the choir dado forms the window-sills. The choir floor originally was stepped and included an organ pit. The original top step remains but the lower steps have been raised (1972) to form a level floor. The iron railing was installed at that time. The new (1972) east wall and balcony is two storeys in height and divides off approximately one-third of the original hall. It obviously reflects the choir design and provides space for bedrooms and other residential requirements.

The original enclosed porch probably was intended to provide space for convenience and protection from the weather. Apparently the positions of the interior walls have been changed at least twice. The window surrounds, trimmed with double-beaded ogee mouldings used locally 1855-1875, are original as is part of the beaded-edge board ceiling and interior sheathing in the foyer (the porch is now divided into a kitchen and small foyer). All the interior door surrounds have been matched to those of the surviving windows. The doors are the four-panel, ogee-moulded type of the period and came from the Roslyn Preservation Corporation's architectural stockpile.

## EPILOGUE

Little is known of the structural architectural history of the early Roslyn Presbyterian Church. No drawings or photographs have been found which show the appearance of the church prior to the construction of the enclosed porch, circa 1870. It is likely that the present choir was inserted at that time, replacing an earlier one. While there is considerable newspaper data concerning the building of the church and the minutes of the congregation establish that no architect was retained, no statement has been found which indicates who the carpenter-builder was although in all likelihood he was Thomas Wood. A significant effort has been made to find interior photographs of the church, but none have come to light prior to those taken in connection with the 1972 restoration project.

The conversion of the mid-19th century Roslyn Presbyterian Church to a comfortable, yet elegant, residence was completed almost twenty years ago. It is nationally known as an outstanding example of the adaptive use of a village church into a modern house. So far as possible no undecayed early fabric was removed. All of the original architectural features of the hall were retained, or replaced where missing. Everything was carefully worked out, apparently successfully, as none of the original project plan has been altered over the years. The recent addition at the east end simply represents an alteration in the life style of the owners and in no way

indicates a failure of the restoration plan. This unusually fortunate result was, of course, based upon the understanding and harmonious relationship among the owners, Rheta and Richard Ponemon, the interior designer, Phyllis Hoffzimer, AID and the architect, Guy Ladd Frost, AIA, and the respect and understanding that each of these had for the building itself. Mr. Frost was awarded the 1974 Award for Excellence in the restoration of the church and the design of its garage by the Long Island Chapter of the American Institute of Architects.





*West elevation*

Jacob Sutton Mott House (1831–1837). West front as it appeared after Stephen Speedling's addition of 1876. north lean-to not shown.  
Drawing by John R. Stevens.



**JACOB SUTTON MOTT HOUSE (1831-1837)**  
**125 East Broadway, Roslyn**  
**Residence of Drs. Thomas and Patricia Loeb**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Jacob Sutton Mott House was exhibited on the 1988–1989 Tours. In 1988 it had recently been relocated from Mott's Cove Road, North, and in 1989 the new owners had only barely moved in. Now the house is completely furnished and the landscape plan completed. Further changes will accrue, but on a gradual basis over the years. It is being shown now, for the third consecutive year, because of the many requests received.

## **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

The Jacob Sutton Mott House was relocated from 800 Mott's Cove Road, North, to its present site in December, 1987. We are indebted to Frank X. Harrington, the Village Historian of Roslyn Harbor, for the history of the house and the land upon which it stood, which was known originally as the "Mott Upper Farm" in the 18th and 19th centuries. (Wanzor, Leonard, "Patriots of the North Shore," 1976, pg. 61)

The land was conveyed to Moses Mudge and his son, Jarvis, of Mosquito (Glen) Cove, in 1693 by the Matinecock Indians (Mudge, Alfred: "Memorials of the Mudge Family," Boston, 1868, and Oyster Bay Town Records, Vol. I, page 527). The parcel was located west of Glen Cove Avenue and south of Scudder's Lane. The deed included an additional "small parcel of land for the said Moses and Jarvis to build a house." Since Jarvis lived there for more than forty years, it may be assumed that a house was built.

This transaction was repeated in 1695 in the form of a lease between the Matinecocks and Jarvis Mudge for a period of 500 years (Oyster Bay Town Records, Vol. I, page 527). The consideration was 20 English pounds plus an annual rent of "one peck of good apples . . . upon the 29th day of September each year." Frank Harrington explains this second and highly unusual transaction was because the Mudge purchase, as originally drafted, infringed upon a restrictive covenant which ran with the deed. The Matinecocks had received this 200 acre parcel from Governor Thomas Dongan in 1687 and the deed specified "it shall not be in the Indians power to grant or convey said land" (Oyster Bay Town Records, Vol. I, page 519). The Mudge lease appears to be an attempt to circumvent this restriction. Incidentally, Jarvis Mudge was the uncle of Michael Mudge who purchased the Michael and Daniel Mudge Farmhouse (TG 1982–83) from Amos Mott in 1745. Amos was the son of Charles Mott who sold the Robeson-Williams Grist Mill to Jeremiah Williams (TG 1976–77 and 1988).

In 1734, Joseph Mott (1661–1734) of Cow Neck, purchased the Mudge farm and gave it to his son, Jacob (Oyster Bay Town Records, Vol. VI, pages 128 & 138). This land, although diminished in size, remained in the Mott family ownership for 216 years, until Catherine Mott Valentine died in 1950.

Jacob Mott (1714–1805) married Abigail Jackson, had eleven children and lived on the Upper Farm until his death. His son, Richard, who had married Martha Sutton, inherited the property. Upon Richard's death, nine years later, the farm passed to their son, Jacob Sutton Mott (1786–1868) who, in 1807, had married

Elizabeth Ireland, daughter of Daniel Ireland and Elizabeth Sands. Jacob Sutton Mott began construction of the house, which is the subject of this article, in 1831 and completed it in 1837. His granddaughter Catherine stated that the house had been built from stone and wood from the farm, possibly using the Jackson Mott sawmill, which stood on Mott's Cove, off Hempstead Harbor (Interview of Catherine Mott Valentine by Dorothy Golden, Glen Cove Record for 3/23/1950). Jackson Mott's sawmill was standing at least as early as 1811 and is mentioned in a deed conveying land from James Post to John Schenck and George Duryea (Queens County Deeds, Liber CC, page 433); transferred 4/8/1811 and recorded 10/ 1/1832). Jacob Sutton Mott is buried in the Roslyn Cemetery with his descendants.

The farm passed to Elisha Mott (1821–1900), son of Jacob Sutton Mott, a few years after the Civil War. Elisha was married to Elizabeth Warner (1830–1915). He was locally famous for his cider made in his own cider mill from his own apples (Interview by Mrs. Thomas Clapham, Brooklyn Daily Eagle, 1/20/1907).

At the beginning of the 20th century, Elisha Mott's children, Sutton Lawrence Mott (1854–1937) and Catherine Mott Valentine (1858–1950) inherited the farm. Sutton Mott, a bachelor, worked the farm and, late in the 19th century, became a photographer as an avocation. The Bryant Library has a collection of more than 200 of his glassplate negatives. Catherine Mott Valentine lost her husband, Everett, and their three children to tuberculosis, all before the age of 30. She lived to be 92 and bequeathed the property to her caretaker and his wife, Irvin and Hilda Smith. An auction of the contents of the house was held. Subsequently, the Smiths sold the house, and the remnant of the farm, to William Koblenzer, who lived there for 35 years. In 1983, he sold the place to James Hood who, three years later, conveyed the remnant of a little over an acre to Vincent Gentile, a developer.

During 1986, Vincent Gentile donated the frame of a late 17th century house, which had been converted to a barn during the second quarter of the 19th century, to the Roslyn Preservation Corporation, a not-for-profit revolving restoration fund. In the same year he donated a small granary dating from the second quarter of the 19th century to the Nassau County Museum for relocation to Old Bethpage Village. In 1987 he sold the Jacob Sutton Mott House to Thomas and Patricia Loeb. As the result of the relocation of these three buildings, all visible traces of the connection of the Mott family to the remaining land of the Mott Upper Farm had been removed.

## **ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY**

In its new location the Jacob Sutton Mott House maintains the same compass orientation it had on its original site. On this basis, compass directions given below apply to the present house site as well as to its original site. The Jacob Sutton Mott House was built between 1831 and 1837. The original house apparently was five bays wide by two bays deep. It was constructed upon a rubble stone foundation which included a full cellar. The original structure included two storeys plus an attic and was built on a center hall plan. Its exterior walls were sheathed with white cedar shingles which were 28½" long and which had an exposure to the weather of 12½". It had a pitched roof, the ridge of which ran from north to south, and which did not include a ridge member. The roof also was shingled originally, presumably with the same shingles as the wall shingles, although the shingle exposure no longer is known. All the substantial mortise-and-tenon joined framing was sawn. There were no hewn framing members. There were brick chimneys at the north and south ends of the house. The north chimney was covered by exterior shingles and the upper part of the

south chimney was also covered by the sheathing. There may have been a bake-oven attached to the south chimney but its existence has not been definitely established. Stylistically, the house was very simply trimmed, basically in the local late-Federal style executed with Greek Revival mouldings. It is worthy of mention that the west and east (front and back) exterior doors all included four Tuscan-moulded horizontal panels. The only other surviving local houses having horizontal door panels are the Oakley-Eastman House (TG 1977-78), the James and William Smith House (TG 1961-62, 1973-74, 1984-85) and the Hendrickson-Ely-Brower House (TG "Locust Hill" 1963-64 and 1983-84). The Smith and Hendrickson houses are known to have been built in 1836 and the Oakley house was built at apparently the same time. All three have "richer" trim than does the Jacob Sutton Mott House, and all three utilize some mouldings which are closer to Federal moulding contours. In comparison with other Roslyn houses it probably most resembles the George Allen Residence (1836) (TG 1980-81-82), especially when the differences in site are considered. Both are approximately the same size; the principal floor plans are very similar and both comprise two of the three local houses, the other being the Pine-Onderdonk-Brower House, which feature the use of complex concave mouldings on their principal exterior doors. The George Allen Residence is weather-boarded and more richly trimmed. Both have similar porches.

At the same time the house was being built, a single storey wing (lean-to) was added to its south end. This was shingled in the same manner as the principal house. It had a pent roof, the end rafter of which survives buried in the present endwalls. The south lean-to roof plate was seven inches lower than the main second storey floor plates. This south lean-to plate survives with its ceiling joist mortises set on 42-inch centers. The joist height was 7' 4". On this basis, the "high" part of the pent roof was about level with the second storey flooring. This single storey south wing stood upon a rubble foundation, which, like that of the main house, enclosed a full cellar. The east and west foundation walls of the wing blended so perfectly with those of the principal house that the line of union was not visible. The basic area of the principal structure, plus the single storey wing, was 25½ feet by 46½ feet. However, while the wing was heavily framed, in the same manner as the principal house, with sawn, mortise-and-tenon joined timbers, the surviving west sill does not cross the line of junction. However, the southwest cornerpost exhibits no evidence of shingle lath upon its south face, establishing that this wall was never shingled and that the lean-to was built with the main part of the house. Also, the floor joists of the single storey wing run from north to south, in contrast to the main house floor joists which run from east to west. The lean-to south windows were smaller than those of the main house. The west window is the same size as the main house windows but may have been changed later. It is not possible to state with certainty the purpose of this south wing but it probably always was used as the kitchen. In addition, on the south wall of the present dining room, west of the fireplace, there is a partially exposed brick wall which would normally not be present. Above this the ceiling plaster lath extends onto the bottom of the south end-girt, proving that this brick wall was not always there and that, originally, there was a plaster walled embrasure east of the dining room fireplace. It is evident there was substantial alteration of the wall separating the dining room from the kitchen, west of the dining room fireplace, a decade or so after the house was built. Finally, in the original cellar there was a massive brick platform which rested upon heavy, east-west directed timbers. This timber base formed a palette which extended seven feet from north to south and ten and a half feet from east to west. This wooden structure rested, in turn, upon two rectangular brick piers which ran from north to south. These were seven feet long by

one and a half feet wide. There was a space of three feet between the two brick piers. The west ends of the wooden timbers were bonded into the west foundation wall. The entire structure survived relocation except for the two brick piers and provided a base for a structure much larger than the chimney base and hearth. The existing chimney base, fireplace and hearth have a basal area of 4 by 7 feet. This left a support area of 6½ by 7 feet for a bake-oven, a kitchen fireplace and a hearth. In the conventional situation, the chimney, fireplace, hearth and bake-oven, would have been supported by the foundation wall. However, in this instance, the south foundation wall was several feet too far to the south and the structure described was required. It should be mentioned that the south chimney was built in its present location to avoid the presence of an exposed chimney which extended upward an additional two storeys above the lean-to roof line. This massive brick structure survives but has been studied insufficiently to establish the locations of the original kitchen fireplace and bake-oven. Only the original location of the dining room fireplace, which survives, is known.

During the mid-1870's, Stephen Speedling, a local carpenter-builder (Presbyterian Parsonage, TG 1978-79) raised the height of the south lean-to by 1½ storeys and provided a pitched roof. By so doing the principal block of the house was converted to one that was six bays long and which had a ridge which extended for the entire north-south roof dimension. The "imprint" of the altered structure remained the same as it was prior to the Speedling alteration. We can state with certainty that Speedling was the builder as a pencilled inscription was found on the under surface of a roof shingle during the 1987 relocation. The inscription reads as follows:

"Roslyn is my Residence  
Stephen Speedling Carpenter  
and Builder  
August 8th 1876  
Samuel Blair Jerney (sic) Man  
Wages 2.50  
per day"

In the course of the alteration, Speedling and Blair continued the shingled siding and fenestration of the addition so they matched those of the original house on its south and west fronts. Speedling and Blair may have replaced a matching west first floor window in the lean-to. For some reason Speedling and Blair included only a single small 6/6 window at the east second floor level of their addition. They also extended the original roof the requisite distance to the south. Until the 1987 relocation, the original rafters survived. Those of the original five bay house were joined by means of mortise-and-tenon joints at the ridge. The Speedling-Blair rafters had simple butt joints at the ridge of the type used during the mid-19th century and later. They also modified the kitchen by reducing the size of the fireplace and installing a new mantel. They also raised the height of the kitchen ceiling. In addition to the modifications already mentioned, Speedling and Blair re-built the north and south chimneys from the ridge upward, to provide the waists and projecting chimney caps which were stylish during the second half of the 19th century. Only the north and south pairs of gable rafters survive today to demonstrate two original rafter types.

During the second half of the 19th century, or perhaps even later, two additional lean-tos were added to the house. These were both demolished in 1987 in preparation for moving the house and nothing is known of them apart from what may be learned from snapshots. The north lean-to probably resembled the earliest form of the south lean-to. However, its west wall was recessed slightly from the west

main block wall. Also, the north lean-to shingles had a much smaller weather exposure than the main block shingles, perhaps 6 or 7 inches. It was built after the house had been completed as the north end of the house had been shingled before the north wing was built. Also, it had brick nogging which establishes a second half of the 19th century construction date. In addition, it was built upon a stone rubble foundation which probably establishes a construction date during, or before, the third quarter of the 19th century.

During the ownership of William Koblenzer (1950–1983) the north lean-to served as the “gun room.” The second largely unidentified lean-to extended east approximately from the east end of the original single-storey south lean-to and, very possibly, had the same roof slope. The house wall was shingled before the east lean-to was built, so it is not an early extension of the original south lean-to. More likely it was built after 1876 when Stephen Speedling had completed his alteration. The east lean-to did not have a proper foundation and was based upon four large boulders. The east lean-to was sheathed with narrow, mid-to-late 19th century weatherboards and had a smaller lean-to of its own, extending out from its east wall. This is reported to have housed a late 19th century lift pump and, presumably, dated from the 20th century.

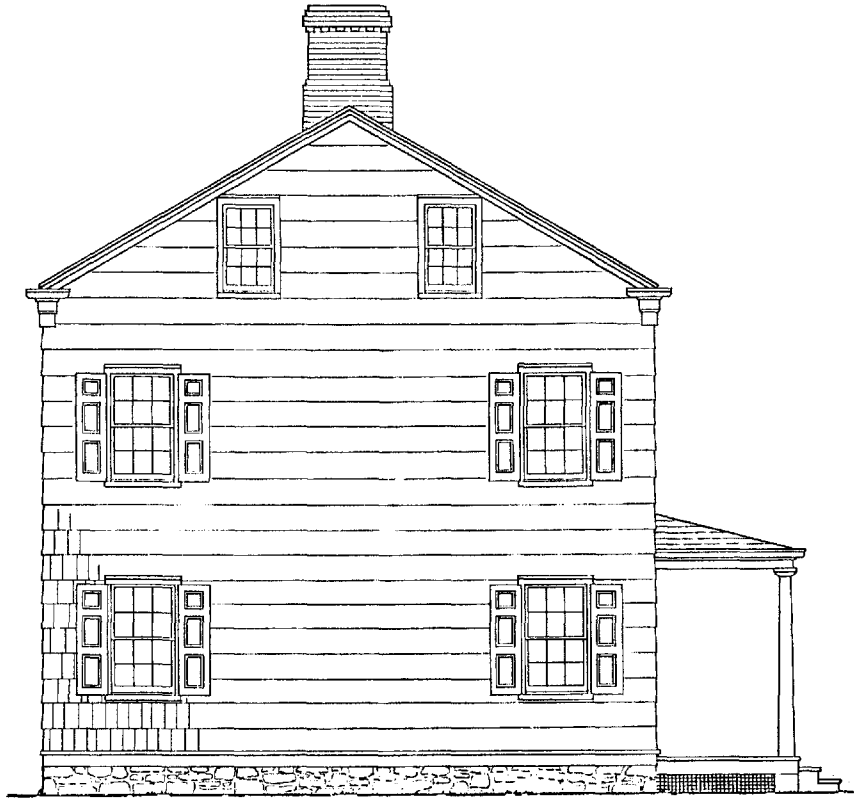
## ACCESSORY BUILDINGS

In addition to the Jacob Sutton Mott House, the two other early buildings on the remains of the Mott Upper Farm complex also were salvaged by means of relocation. These included a small barn, apparently dating from the second quarter of the 19th century, which had been extended to the south and sheathed with asphalt shingles for use as a garage, ca. 1920, and a two-storey granary, 14' by 14', which was badly rotted, but which had survived without alteration of its interior or exterior, apart from 20th century asphalt sheathing. The owner of the property, Mr. Vincent Gentile, was willing to donate both buildings for restoration.

*Jacob Sutton Mott Granary:* The 14 foot square building went to Old Bethpage Village for relocation on the Ritch Farm. It was moved as a single unit and has been rotated 90 degrees in its relocation, i.e. the original principal (north) front is now the west front. In its new location the granary has been placed on stone footings, as it was originally, and its pitched roof has been repaired and re-shingled. The north and south fronts (now the west and east) retain most of their original weatherboards. These have a weather exposure of 11 inches. The two sides are slatted, with the upper edges of the slats chamfered at a 45 degree angle. By this arrangement, air will circulate within the granary but rain will not penetrate the walls. There are plain cornerboards at the ends of the slatted walls. The granary retains its original board-and-batten front doors, one of which provides access to the loft. Both doors retain their original strap hinges. There also is an original board-and-batten door, which retains its original strap hinges, at the first floor level of the rear of the building. The only window, a 6/6 having a plain drip-cap and plain facings, is sited in the rear gable field.

The granary now is safe. It still requires some work, especially to the interior, but for the foreseeable future it will survive.

*Mudge-Mott Barn:* The asphalt shingle-sheathed garage had been extended to the south so that it could accommodate automobiles. The early part of the structure, as it survived, was 16 by 24 feet in floor area. It had a pitched roof, the ridge of which ran from east to west. The structure faced south. Notwithstanding the south



*North elevation*

Jacob Sutton Mott House (1831–1837). North elevation prior to construction of north lean-to. First floor windows are conjectural.

Drawing by John R. Stevens.

extension, much of the original south wall survived inside. The structure was three bays wide and 1½ storeys in height. The structure's walls were sheathed with shingles, having an exposure of 11 inches to the weather, beneath the asphalt siding. The structure stood on a concrete foundation which could not have been earlier than 1890–1900. On this basis it was recognized that, while the structure almost certainly originated on the Mott Upper Farm, it was possible that it had been moved from some other, possibly distant, place prior to the earliest of the surviving photographs. The concrete foundation walls extended about two feet above grade and it is assumed that the structure had been shortened by this dimension at the time it had been converted to a garage.

The Roslyn Preservation Corporation accepted the barn as a gift from Mr. Gentile and arranged for a framing study by John Stevens, in an effort to learn something of the architectural history of the structure. Mr. Stevens established that the west bay of the three-bay wide barn was more recent than the two surviving bays, and probably had been built during the second quarter of the 19th century. Its interior had never been plastered and had been built to be used as a part of a barn. Mr. Stevens also determined, from the presence of mortises, etc. that the original

structure had been built with at least one additional bay to the east of the two surviving original bays. From the presence of chamfers on the interior corners of posts and girts of the earliest framing, it seemed obvious that the framing of the two earliest bays had once been part of a house. In addition, the survival of traces of early plaster and lath confirmed this hypothesis. Examination of the exterior faces of the east wall disclosed the presence of similar chamfering and plaster traces, establishing that at one time the earliest structure had extended further to the east. Actually, the house had been plastered twice; first between the chamfered posts and beams; then, later on, with the rived plaster lath applied over the framing to provide a continuous plastered surface. Further evidence of a very early construction date survived in the loft. The original rafters had been notched for purlins on their upper surfaces. The notches were set on 19 inch centers. At the time the house had been converted to a barn, the rafters were turned over, so that the purlin notches were on their lower surfaces, and the ridge mortise-and-tenon joints were re-cut. Doing so shortened the rafters and decreased the pitch of the roof. The roof shingle-lath laid at that time were set on 13 inch centers. While no specific attribution can be made, it seems obvious that the original house was erected circa 1700, or even earlier. On this basis, a tentative attribution was made that the framing of the two easterly bays constitute the remains of the Jarvis Mudge House, which was built in 1693 or shortly thereafter. If this attribution is incorrect, the possibility exists that the house could have been built in 1734 or 1735, after the land passed into the ownership of the Mott family. However, it seems likely that the original house was built before the second quarter of the 18th century. It probably was converted to a barn by Jacob Sutton Mott at the time he built his house.

During the summer of 1987 the Roslyn Preservation Corporation retained Wooden Bridge to dismantle the roof of the barn. The barn was stripped and the rafters removed. The walls were separated at the corners and the walls and rafters moved to its future site on Locust Hill, at which point it was conveyed to Robert and Janice Hansen who owned the land and who would accomplish its restoration. The barn was re-erected as carefully as possible, by Wooden Bridge, to maintain its appearance at the time it was converted to a barn. The original framing was replaced using the original joists. The rafters were re-set in their inverted positions and the second set of mortise-and-tenon ridge joints re-pinned. Wall shingles were re-laid, on the original shingle lath, with a weather exposure of 11 inches. New roof shingle lath were laid between the originals so that new cedar roof shingles could be laid with an exposure of 6 inches to the weather. Conventional new board- and-batten barn doors, on appropriate hinges, were installed.

## **FRAMING**

All the framing of the original house and the south lean-to was sawn yellow pine and chestnut. In some places a single surface had been roughened with an axe so that plaster would bind to the surface. William Hicks started his sawmill and lumberyard in Roslyn Harbor in 1832, so sawn lumber would have been available by that year, or very shortly thereafter (TG 1974-75—"Montrose"). It has been mentioned above that Jackson Mott operated a sawmill on Mott's Cove as early as 1811, but it is not known if this mill was in operation at the time the Jacob Sutton Mott House was built.

All of the framing was joined by means of mortise-and-tenon joints; the major joints are pinned, in addition. The rafters of the original five-bay house were fastened, at the ridge, with pinned mortise-and-tenon joints. The rafters of the 1876

Speedling-Blair addition was fastened, at the ridge, with simple butt joints. There was no ridge member in either part of the roof. The corner posts were 4 by 7 inches. Similar posts were set between them at intervals of approximately 7 feet. The north end studs were 3 by 4 inches and set on 18 inch centers. The visible south end studs are full size 2 × 4's installed over a plastered brick wall, probably by Stephen Speedling. The 3" by 4" east and west wall studs, between the wall posts, had light vertical strips between them installed for the attachment of plaster lath.

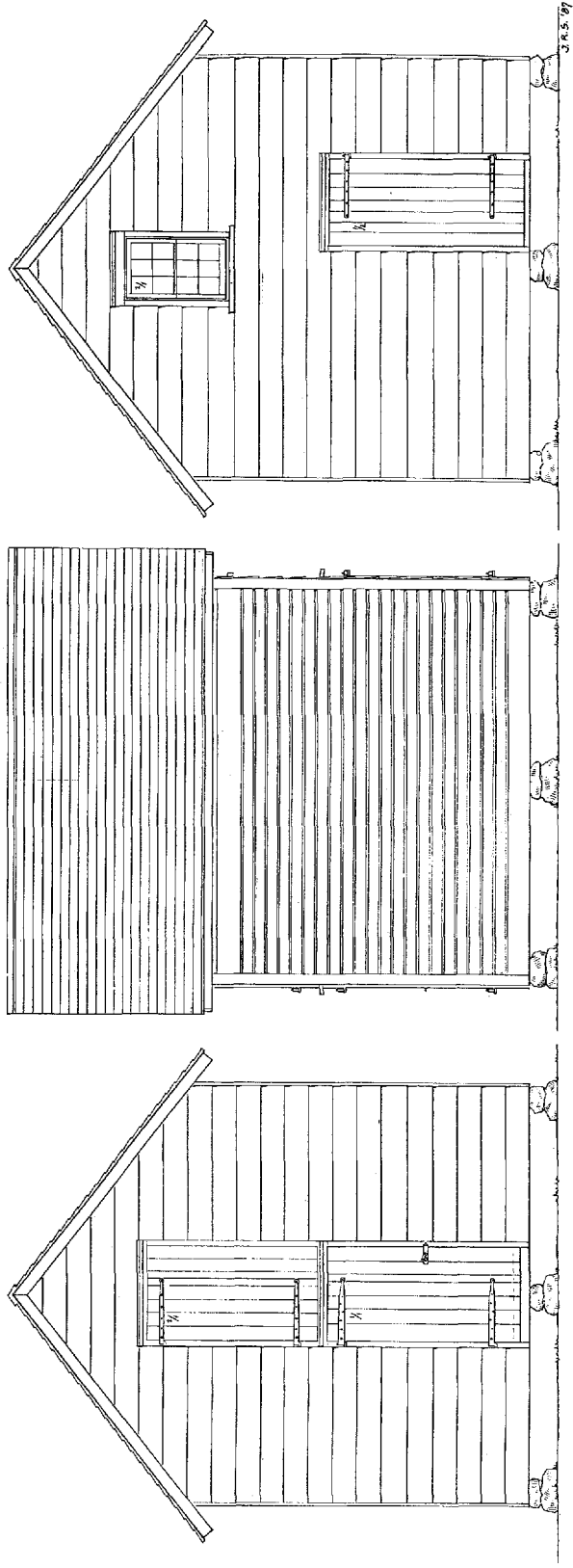
The sills were 4 by 9 inches. There were north and south oriented girts, 8 by 8 inches, which were placed 9 feet from the east wall and 16½ feet from the west, upon which the main north-south interior dividing walls were placed. The floor joists in the main house were 3¼ by 9 inches and were set east and west on 25 inch centers. The south lean-to floor joists were 2½ by 8½ inches and were set north to south on 22 inch centers. The main floor joists were notched into the sills; the second floor joists rested above them. The plates at the south lean-to were 4 by 8 inches, and were set approximately 7 inches lower than the second storey floor plates of the main house. The framing of the south lean-to was fastened with pinned mortise-and-tenon joinery in the same manner as that of the main house. There was substantial diagonal bracing of all east-west oriented walls, i.e., the north and south walls and the center hall walls of the main house. There were diagonal corner braces at each floor level in the east and west walls. All of the interior wall framing, above the second floor level; all the loft floor framing and all but the gable rafters were inserted during the 1988 reconstruction. The knee-wall height of 16½ inches on the east and west sides of the loft has been preserved.

## EXTERIOR

The house as it stands today is 6 bays in length by two bays deep. It is 2½ storeys in height and is sheathed with its original white cedar shingles which are 28 inches long and have a weather exposure of 12½ inches. It stands upon a new concrete foundation which retains its stonework of original rubble from grade to sills. The two brick chimneys both perforate the ridge at their original locations. The north chimney is placed immediately inside the north wall. The south chimney is placed between the two southernmost bays. Both chimneys were re-built from the ridge upwards in the 1870's and the visible parts are characteristic of that period, i.e. convergence of two courses of bricks, to form a waist, four courses above the ridge, then nine courses before the caps begin. The caps consists of a course of alternating projecting headers above which are two courses which project to the prominence of the ridge courses. Above this level the two upper courses converge, in steps, to complete the caps. The frieze, eaves trim and cornice are stepped and trimmed with Tuscan mouldings to complete the cornice. All the individual elements were found in various cornice locations before the building was moved.

All of the windows are of the 6/6 type and have fixed upper sash. All of the first and second storey windows are the same size. The gable field windows are slightly smaller. Originally the first floor windows at the south end, which were in the south lean-to, and single windows in the first and second storeys at the south end of the east front, were smaller than the others. These all have disappeared. The east front windows have disappeared into a 1988 two-storey, two bays wide by two bays deep, east wing and the two south windows have been replaced by 6/6 windows of the same size as the others, obtained from elsewhere in the house. Similarly, there were no windows at the north first floor level, prior to relocation, because of the presence of the north lean-to. The two missing windows were replaced during reconstruction





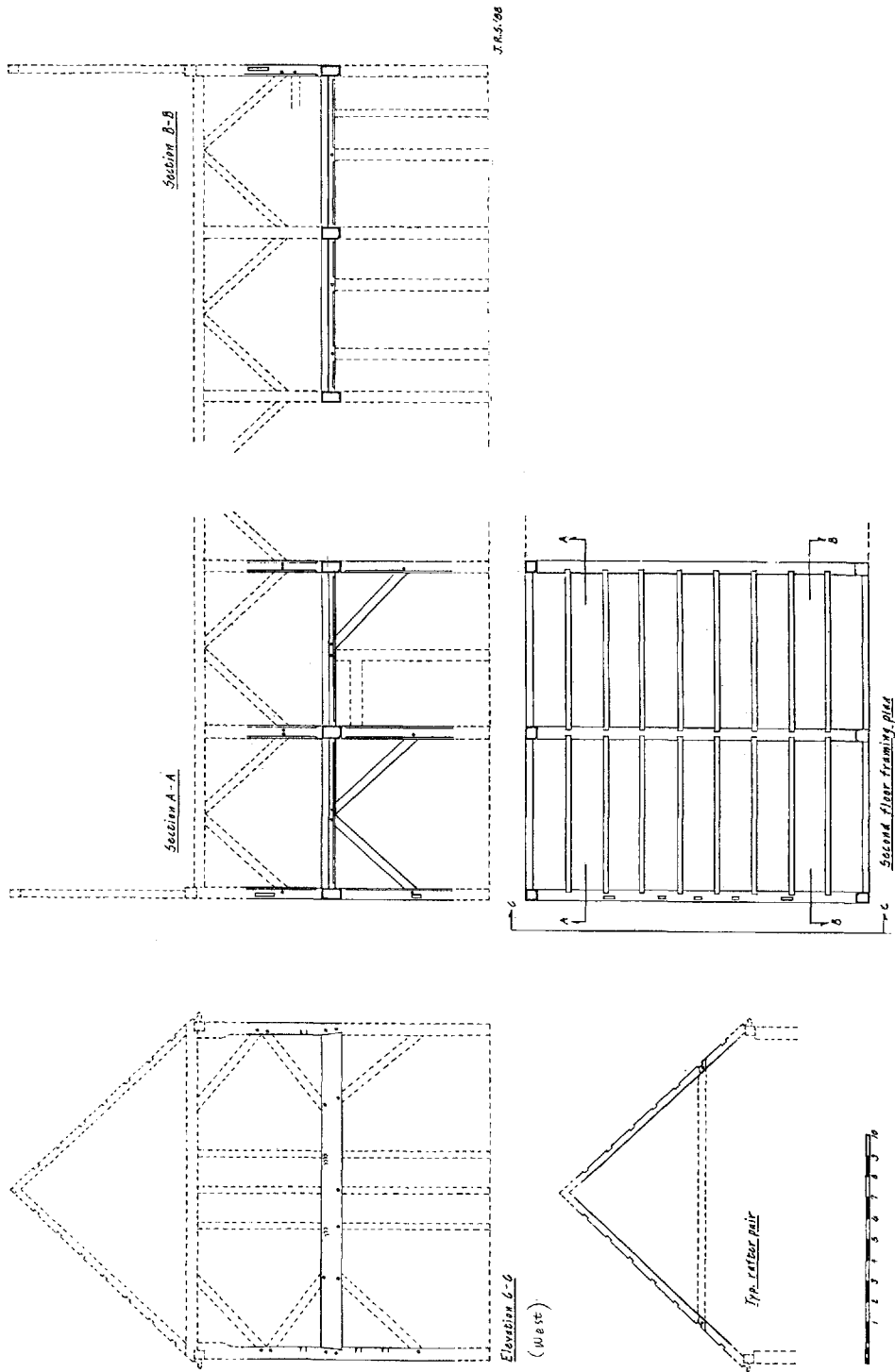
Jacob Sutton Mott Granary (1825-1850), as it appeared when built. Relocated to Ritch Farm at Old Bethpage Village in 1987.  
 Drawing by John R. Stevens.

with 6/6 windows from elsewhere in the house.” There are fewer windows in the east front than in the west. The two northernmost windows are missing at both first and second storey levels. Probably this was done to create wall space for beds and other large pieces of furniture. More unusually, at the second storey level there was only a single small 6/6 window in the wall space south of the center hall. Its small size probably represented economy on a seldom used side of the house. The reason which necessitated the retention of all the wall space gained probably will not be solved. All the windows have plain cases having beaded inner stile corners. All have plain drip caps and prominent sills. All are fitted with two or three panel shutters. Originally, these probably all were three panel except for the smaller windows, as in the gable fields. As the original shutters rotted, they were replaced with available non-matching shutters from other houses. At the time of writing (March 1989) early shutters are being repaired and missing shutters fabricated to match. At least some will be in place by the House Tour. The original house, in its new location, will have seven cellar windows. Probably no more than one of these existed, originally. These will be replicas of a ruinous barred cellar window, glazed on its interior, which remained in position at the north end of the east front. Similar grilled cellar windows survive in the Van Nostrand-Starkins House (TG 1975-76), the Valentine-Losee House (TG 1976) and the William M. Valentine House (TG 1963).

The house has no corner-boards, as is usual with shingled houses. The plain water-table is 6 inches high and is capped by a lip which is 1½ inches in height and projects 1¼ inches. There is a west porch having a shallow hipped roof, three bays long, which extends along the principal front and which is centered on the principal doorway. The porch roof is supported by four simple, baseless, turned columns which are fitted with Tuscan capitals. The openings beneath the porch deck are fitted with conventional wooden lattice having square openings. The front porch is very similar to that of the George Allen Residence (TG 1980-81-82), which also is three bays along on a five bay front, except that the latter includes a deck at the second storey level.

The principal (west) doorway, which includes a four-light transom window and four-light side-lights, is the principal architectural feature of the house. The outer casing includes flat corner-blocks having square edges and a similarly trimmed rectangular central panel, which are holdovers from the Federal Style. These are connected, above, and supported, at the sides, by back-banded facings which include stepped panels. The side facings terminate with square bases at their bottoms. The same design scheme is repeated on the insides of the windows except there are no corner-blocks and the transom bar breaks in and out over the inner pilasters. Below the sidelights, there are Tuscan-moulded panels between the inner and outer pilasters.

The west door is made up of four horizontal panels. This is an unusual form in the early 19th century and is present in Roslyn only in the James & William Smith House (TG 1961-62; 1973-74; 1985-86); the Hendrickson-Ely-Brower House (“Locust Hill,” TG 1962-63; 1983-84) and the Oakley-Eastman House (TG 1977-78). The Smith House and the Hendrickson-Ely-Brower House both were built in 1836 and the Oakley-Eastman House in the same year or a little earlier. The door-panel mouldings are quite complex and consist of a step-down from the stiles which connects with a back-banded Tuscan moulding. A concave moulding rises from this point to approach the flat door panel. Only two other examples of concave door mouldings exist in Roslyn; in the principal (east) two-panel “Temple of Atrous” door in the George Allen Residence (TG 1980-81-82) and in the six-panel



Jarvis Mudge House (1690). Framing drawing by John R. Stevens. Chamfering may be seen in section "A-A" and "B-B." Relocated to Locust Hill in 1987.

south door of the Pine-Onderdonk-Bogart House. Again, the George Allen Residence was built in 1836 and the south doorway, in an addition to the Pine-Onderdonk-Bogart House, is of about the same date. It is hard to connect all this, but it seems obvious that a highly distinctive pattern of door styling existed in Roslyn for a very short period of time in the mid-1830's. The east doorway, which flanks the 1988 two-storey east wing, is a simplified version of the west. It includes a three-light overdoor window, but no sidelights. The door surround includes flat cornerblocks having square edge mouldings. The flat side facings include a simple central step and rest upon plain bases. The transom bar, between the corner-blocks is the same as the side facings. The most elaborate feature of the east doorway is the rich Tuscan-moulded base below the transom window. The four-panel door is flush panelled on its exterior surface. The east doorway originally was protected by a small gable-ended porch, now replaced by the east-west 1988 porch.

The south doorway is in the remains of the original south lean-to and served as the "kitchen door." The door-case is simply finished in the same manner as the window cases. The door itself is a simple board-and-batten door to which beaded stiles have been added to simulate two large square panels. Both panels are trimmed with torus mouldings. The central bar has been scored, horizontally, to simulate a "Dutch" door. A similar original simulated "Dutch" door survives in the ca. 1790 east wing of the Van Nostrand-Starkins House (TG 1975-76-77). The door in the Jacob Sutton Mott house may be earlier than the house and re-used from another location. At some time in its history the upper panel has been modified by the insertion of a window sash to permit more light.

## INTERIOR

During the relocation of the Jacob Sutton Mott House, from Mott's Cove Road, North, to East Broadway, it became necessary to reduce the size of the house considerably so that it could pass under utility wires and so that it could negotiate the narrow width of East Broadway. To do this, north and east lean-tos were removed. The roof was stripped and the rafters removed and stored. The house was then divided into two sections, lengthwise, just east of the north-south main girts and east of the interior, north-south walls. The remaining, east-west interior walls were removed above the second storey floor level. The exterior walls, above the second storey floor level, were sectioned, hinged and folded inward so they could rest upon the second storey floor. The house was then moved to its new foundation, in two parts, in December 1987. During early 1988, the two parts of the house were fastened together in their original relationship. The original exterior walls, above the second storey floor level, were re-positioned and fastened. At this point the roof was re-framed and sheathed and new interior walls constructed to replace those which were removed. On the first floor level, only part of the single north-south wall had to be replaced. On the second storey, all the interior walls were missing and had to be replaced. It should be noted that all the exterior walls, with their interior architectural features, survived intact so, notwithstanding the magnitude of the relocation procedure, most of the original fabric of the house has survived, including all the flooring. Guy Ladd Frost, AIA and John Flynn and Philip Ciulla, Jr., of the John Flynn Building Company, were responsible for most of the planning and execution of the relocation of the house, and for its reconstruction.

The entire attic, except for the 16 $\frac{1}{2}$ " high knee walls, the north and south gables and gable rafters and the floor, and the entire cellar, apart from the framing

and south chimney base, which have been described, is new work which is associated with the reconstruction of the house.

The first floor center hall is the only room in the house in which the framing of all four walls has survived intact. The principal, west, doorway is less impressive on its interior than on its exterior, as is usually the case. The doorway facings are plain, except for the un-moulded edges which are beaded. The periphery of the door case is trimmed with back-banded Tuscan mouldings, the perimeters of which are delineated with torus mouldings. This use of an extra torus moulding is seen elsewhere in this house but does not appear elsewhere in Roslyn. The reverse panels of the front door are trimmed with Tuscan mouldings. The door retains its original, large, wrought-iron rim-lock which has been fitted with later, at one time more fashionable, porcelain knobs.

Unlike the front doorway, the rear (east) doorway is richer on its interior. It is trimmed in the same manner as the other, interior hall doorways, with stepped facings having beaded inner edges. Its facings are trimmed with back-banded Tuscan mouldings which, in turn, are outlined by projecting, peripheral, torus mouldings. The interior panels of the back (east) door are Tuscan moulded. It retains its original, wrought-iron rim lock with its original brass knobs. The interior hall doorways, to the front parlor, back parlor and dining room, are trimmed in the same manner as the interior aspect of the back (east) doorway. The interior doors, all of which have survived, have five Tuscan-moulded horizontal panels, unlike the exterior doors which have four horizontal, Tuscan-moulded panels, a quality the Mott House shares with the other three local houses which are fitted with horizontally panelled doors. All of them were built in 1836—"Locust Hill" (TG 1962, 1964, 1983-1984) also has four-panelled exterior doors. However, the James & William Smith House (TG 1974-75, 1984-85) has five horizontal panels on both interior and exterior doors, as does the early part of the Oakley-Eastman House (TG 1977, 1978)."

The original flooring, which runs from north to south and which varies between 6 inches and 9 inches in width, survives throughout the house, including the loft. The hall baseboards are stepped and capped with back-banded Tuscan mouldings.

The original principal staircase survives in the southeast center hall corner. Its stair-rail resembles that of the Epenetus Oakley House (1836) (TG 1973-74). The San Domingo mahogany, "urn-and-cone" newel is the same late-Sheraton type often employed in Roslyn during the second quarter of the 19th century, except that it has a more slender, more refined quality than most of the others. The mahogany rail is circular in cross-section and the balusters are simple tapering mahogany rods having entasis. Both interior and exterior stair stringers are stepped. The exterior stair stringer has a bead at its lower edge. The interior stair stringer has a Tuscan moulding to match the baseboards.

Fragments of sawn plaster-lath survive in the center hall and kitchen. All the surviving plaster lath is sawn and it is reasonable to assume there was no rived plaster lath in the structure. Until the preparation of the house for relocation, the early gray colored plaster finish survived in the center hall. Local legend attributes this color to mixing of gun powder in the plaster to achieve a marble texture. Fragments will be studied to determine if this is true.

The front parlor is trimmed in much the same manner as the center hall. The window cases have stepped facings trimmed with back-banded Tuscan mouldings on

their outer edges. These are further emphasized by a protruding torus, perimeter moulding. The window facings continue down to floor level, and the area beneath the sash is fitted with Tuscan-moulded panels. The door case to the hallway is trimmed in the same manner as the window cases. The original flooring survives and the stepped baseboards are capped with back-banded Tuscan mouldings. The mantel on the north wall of the front parlor, has plain pilasters with Tuscan- moulded capitals and a monumental square-cornered moulding which supports its square-cornered shelf. There is an untrimmed, flat panel in the fabric below the mantel breast and the facings of the firebox are lined with new lime mortar as originally. The original brownstone hearth-stone survives. The wall dividing the front parlor from the rear was removed many years ago and the two parlors remain a single room. As might be expected, the back parlor originally was more simply trimmed than the front. The baseboards were the same as those in the front parlor. The door-and-window facings were stepped and trimmed with back-banded Tuscan mouldings. However, the torus peripheral mouldings, present in the center hall and front parlor, originally were absent here. The window facings did not extend to the floor but, less expensively, were terminated by window stools which were beaded at their upper and lower edges. The window stools rested upon aprons which were decorated with an incised, square groove which follows their outer edges. During the relocation the back parlor door and window facings were modified to match those of the front parlor. The dining room is fitted with a horizontal three-board dado which is capped by a torus-moulded chair rail. The dining room door-and-window cases are plain, and are trimmed with back-banded Tuscan mouldings. The torus-moulded chair rail forms the stools for the windows. In the south wall, west of the fireplace, there is an elevated wall cupboard which is fitted with a pair of Tuscan-moulded doors. The cupboard surround is trimmed with back-banded Tuscan mouldings. The inner facing edges are beaded as is the base facing board. This cupboard could not have been in this location when the house was built as it has been established that there was an embrasure recess west of the dining room fireplace originally. The cupboard may have been in the south wall recess, in which case it would have extruded into the kitchen.

The dining room mantel is very plain. It is fitted with a pair of plain pilasters which have neither capitals nor bases. The mantel shelf has an untrimmed, square front edge and rounded corners, in the manner of the Greek Revival. A heavy Tuscan moulding supports the shelf and forms the pilaster capital. The mantel breast is delineated at its lower edge by a Tuscan moulding which breaks in and out over the pilasters. The fireplace is brick and has canted side-walls. It retains its original brownstone hearth-stone. There is a low brick wall to the west of the fireplace in the same plane as the chimney front and beneath the wall cupboard, which is plastered above the dado. The purpose of this brickwork is not known, but it is supported by the massive brick and wood platform below. In any case, it represents an early alteration, as there was a recess or embrasure in this location originally.

The small room east of the dining room was in the line of separation of the house, during the move. Its exterior wall has been removed to accommodate the construction of the new east wing. No early fabric worthy of description remains. However, the framing of the wall delineating the east side of the dining room remains. Prior to the relocation this wall included two doorways, one of which opened to a small, early back stairs. Both doorways have been closed.

*Kitchen:* The original kitchen probably was on the same site as the kitchen developed during the 1988 restoration. With intervening modifications it represents

the third kitchen in this location. The original kitchen was in a lean-to located at the south side of the house and was built at the same time, as the original foundation stones were continuous. Its original framing and brick and stone masonry have already been described.

The original kitchen lean-to was significantly modified by Stephen Speedling and Samuel Blair in 1876. They added a second storey to the lean-to, extended the pitched roof and replaced the small 6/6 window at the west end of the early kitchen with a larger one which matched the others of the west front. When they finished their alterations, all the windows of the principal elevation were uniform. On the interior, they removed all the lean-to rafters but the end rafters and installed a conventional, flat, plastered ceiling. The original south plate survives, with rafter muntins set on 42" centers. The wooden ceiling height was 7'8". They also installed a narrow, late 19th century fireplace and mantel and a large wooden cupboard, 56" × 24" × 76", which occupied the space between their mantel and the west wall. This was very deep and extended to fill the former dining room chimney embrasure, above the brick wall, which flanks the dining room fireplace, which has been described but the purpose of which is not known. It has been mentioned that this low brick wall was laid after the house was built, but prior to the Speedling-Blair additions. Other early features which survived until the recent relocation were two 6/6 south windows, smaller than the west front windows, and the south (kitchen) doorway, which has plain facings, beaded along their inner edges. The doorway retains its original board-and-batten door, untrimmed on its interior, but having false stiles which form upper and lower panels on its exterior. The central batten is scribed horizontally to suggest a "Dutch" door in the manner of the late 18th century east wing doors in the Van Nostrand-Starkins House (TG 1975-76, 1989). The upper part of the kitchen door has been fitted with a window sash to admit more light. On its interior, the kitchen retained its original 8-inch wide floor boards, which run from east to west, and a vertically boarded west wall, which resembles the vertical boarding of the exterior walls of the Cap't Jacob Mott Kirby Storehouse (TG 1986-87). In the Mott House, a horizontally placed torus moulding formed a dado. The vertical boarding above the dado was painted white to resemble plaster. Just west of the doorway to the dining room there is a dado, made up of 9-inch wide vertically placed boards beneath a torus moulding. The chimney-oven-fireplace brick work was exposed above the dado. Originally the vertical board sheathing extended to the ceiling, in the same manner as the west wall sheathing already described. Further to the west, above the cupboard already described, the batten to which the early lean-to kitchen ceiling boards were nailed also survived.

On the basis of the foregoing, it may be assumed that the original, lean-to kitchen was vertically boarded on all sides and was fitted with a torus moulding which formed a chair-rail. The vertical boarding above the chair-rail was painted white to resemble plaster. The early kitchen had a board ceiling which concealed the rafters. This ceiling probably was painted white like the upper part of the walls. Most of the north kitchen wall, west of the dining room doorway, was occupied by a large, much modified, unstudied brick structure which comprises the remains of the early kitchen fireplace, chimney and bake-oven. Almost all of this was concealed behind plaster by Speedling and Blair.

When the current owners bought the house they found the Speedling-Blair kitchen including all the modernization changes which had taken place during the previous century. The result was not attractive. They decided to try to salvage the original floor, which proved to be unfeasible, and to restore the original south

exterior doorway. They preferred to have larger 6/6 south windows to conform to the others in the house, following the example set by Speedling and Blair in the west kitchen wall more than a century earlier. They felt they did not require the Speedling-Blair mantel and cupboard and these were removed. Measurements were taken for appropriate counters and cabinets and these were ordered. It was not until much later on, after the original kitchen had been stripped, that it was realized that much of the original kitchen fabric had survived and there there was sufficient data available to restore the wooden parts of the original kitchen and that the configuration of the original fireplace and oven probably could be established with further study. However, by this time it was too late to make use of these findings as the new cabinets would not fit under the original ceiling. Today, the kitchen is current in design. It occupies the same floor area the kitchen always has occupied and is trimmed to match the other parts of the house. The only visible, early feature is the original south doorway. However, beneath all the new fabric, the original kitchen can be restored whenever someone chooses to do so.

The interior second storey walls were all replaced following the move (1988) although the second storey flooring and exterior walls with their trim have survived. The second storey follows the same floor plan as the first floor, having two rooms on either side of a central hall. In addition, there is a late 19th century room over the early kitchen lean-to. Except for this room, the second storey window facings all are stepped and trimmed with back-banded Tuscan mouldings. The two large, west rooms, flanking the center hall, have chair-rails which also form the window stools. These consist of a projecting upper part, beaded at the upper and lower edges, over a stepped, beaded apron. The walls were plastered above and below the chair rails. Both rooms have fireplaces. The southwest chamber fireplace now has brick facings although its firebox is lined with lime mortar. It retains its 1876 brownstone hearth-stone. Its mantel resembles that of the dining room immediately below but, surprisingly, is more elaborate. Its square-edged shelf, with rounded corners, has a flat groove planed into its front edge for decorative effect. The shelf rests upon a large Tuscan moulding. The plain, square pilasters rest upon plain bases. However, the pilasters have definite moulded capitals. The mantel breast is outlined below by a moulded belt course above the pilaster capitals. The northwest chamber fireplace has brick facings and its 1876 brownstone hearth. The fire-box is lime-mortared. The mantel shelf has rounded corners and a straight front edge with planed flat grooves. The shelf is supported by flat Tuscan moulding. The plain pilasters rest on plain, square bases. These have simple, stepped, Tuscan-moulded capitals. A flat belt course with projecting upper quarter-round moulding divides the mantel-breast horizontally. A plain, flat, unmoulded horizontal panel decorates the fascia beneath the mantel breast. The northeast chamber is now a bath and has no chair rail. Its single window stool has the same beaded top and bottom edges as elsewhere. This rests upon a plain apron which is beaded along its bottom edge and end. The southeast chamber includes a new attic staircase.

The second floor center hall windows have the same stepped, Tuscan-moulded, back-banded facings as elsewhere on this floor. The window stools are beaded along their upper and lower edges. The hall window aprons are stepped and have a lower beaded edge. Both steps and beads turn upward at the apron ends to butt into the window stools. The second storey baseboards all are stepped and have torus-moulded edges.

The second storey chamber over the early south lean-to is especially interesting because its presents trimming techniques of a generation later than the rest of the

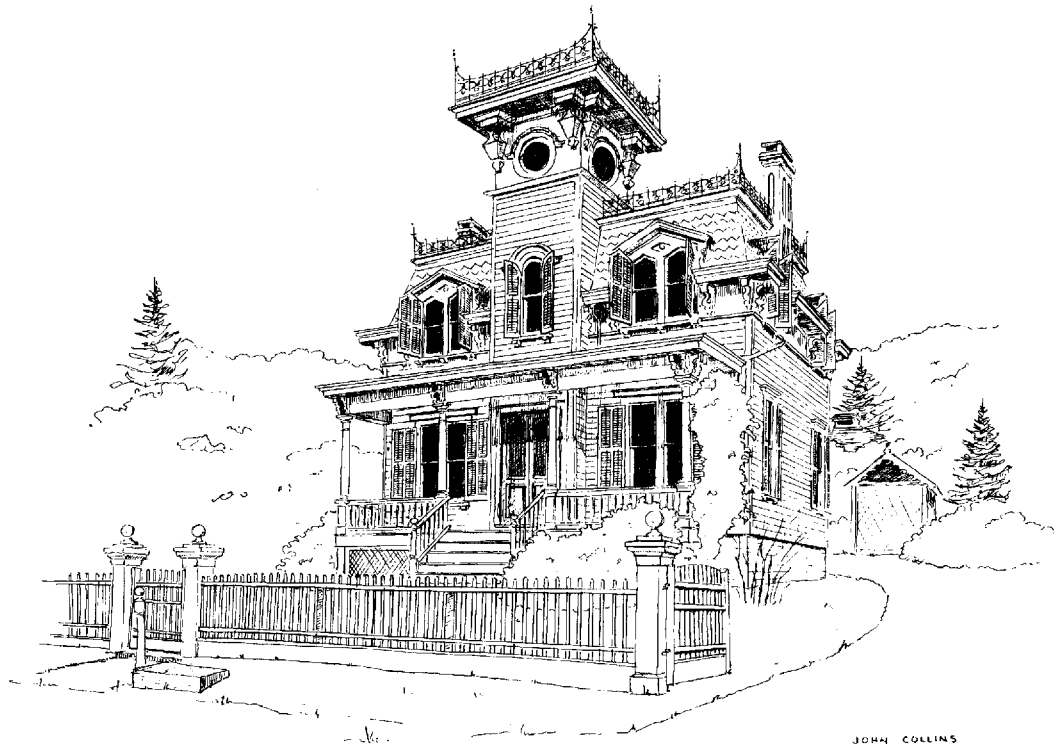


house. The window facings are wider than the others; the west window facing is trimmed with back-banded Tuscan mouldings. This has flat-edged Tuscan moulding, as other second floor windows, but no step. It is conjectured to have come from the south wall of the southeast chamber, which wall was removed when the second storey bath was constructed. The southwest window is trimmed with back-banded, primitive ogee mouldings. The facing mouldings of the east window in the south wall are missing. They probably were back-banded ogee mouldings. The inner edges of the window stools are torus-moulded and are based upon aprons which are beaded along their lower edges. The baseboards are the originals. These are stepped and have torus-moulded caps.

## FINALE

Apart from the relocation of the William M. Valentine House in 1968 which was moved only across the street and did not involve any dismantling, the moving of the Jacob Sutton Mott House is the largest relocation project to be undertaken in Roslyn. It must be accepted that, in a project of this magnitude, some permanent injury to original fabric is unavoidable. The alternative to this damage probably was demolition. The restoration of the Jacob Sutton Mott House is just about complete. The house is finished, furnished and lived in. The landscaping has been completed, at least so far as initial landscaping ever is completed. The original, monumental kitchen door-stone, bearing the completion date, 1837, has been set at the end of the new porch, opposite the original east doorway, which will be the route by which most people will enter the house.

During the Mott House restoration, the Buffett Barn, a mid-19th century structure in Cold Springs Harbor Hills, was scheduled for demolition and was to be moved to this site. The Huntington Town Landmarks Commission would not authorize demolition and the Mott House owners replicated it for use as a garage. Drs. Patricia and Thomas Loeb, the new owners of the Jacob Sutton Mott House, are indeed to be congratulated for their courage, patience and perseverance, and for their splendid contributions to the Roslyn Village Historic District.



JOHN COLLINS  
3/04

James K. Davis House as it appeared when built (1877)  
Drawing by John Collins

**JAMES K. DAVIS HOUSE**  
**139 East Broadway (1877)**  
**Residence of Dr. Naomi Sadowsky and Dr. Ralph Kaplan**

**HISTORY AND EXTERIOR**

The James K. Davis House appears on neither the Walling (1859) nor the Beers-Comstock (1873) Maps as it was not built until after their publication. The *Roslyn Tablet* for October 19, 1876, notes "Mr. James Davis is erecting a very fine cottage on the other side of the harbor." The November 10th issue is a bit more specific and notes that the house is situated on "the east side of the harbor next to the residence of Mr. W. Losee," and that the house "is nearly completed and presents a fine appearance." The house must have been completed by March 16th, 1877, as the issue of that date observes "James K. Davis' house is a model of artistic beauty, and contains all the modern improvements necessary for comfort and convenience." The May 11th, 1877, issue closes with the following philosophic observation: "Mr. Jas. K. Davis has erected a new picket fence enclosing his residence, and he now has without any exception, the prettiest place in Roslyn. It is better to be born lucky than rich." The James K. Davis House has been exhibited on Landmark Society tours in 1968, 1984 and 1985. Normally, it would not be exhibited again for a ten-year period. However, it has been the recipient of a major refurbishing program during 1987, 1988 and 1989, and because of the changes in its appearance, is being exhibited at this time.

According to biographical data furnished by Jean Davis Chapman, James K. Davis' granddaughter, and Grace Wiley Krukowski, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Edward Wiley, James K. Davis died on September 6, 1923. In accordance with the

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James K. Davis (1 Nov. 1844–6 Sept 1923) was born at Wheatly, town of Oyster Bay, one of eight children of Samuel James Davis (1809–1873) and Mary Seaman Davis (1817–1892). Samuel J. Davis was a stone mason/plasterer/farmer. There are indications that there were five unrelated Davis families on Long Island in the 17th century, having come from either England, Scotland, or Wales. Family tradition indicates that James K. Davis ancestors came from Wales and had settled in the town of Oyster Bay by the late 1600's. James K., at age 14, was working in the store of William Valentine of Roslyn and then, at age 16, entered upon an apprenticeship to the carpenter's trade. At 21 he began to work at his trade. He married, October 24, 1876, Eliza Charlick, daughter of John Charlick and his first wife, Ruth Smith, descendant of the Smith/Raynor families who founded Freeport and Merrick. John Charlick was the proprietor of the Mansion House Hotel in Roslyn. He was a member of the first Roslyn School District Board of Education, from 1864 to 1874, serving as President from 1864 to 1872. He was also elected secretary of the Roslyn Hook & Ladder Fire Department at its organizational meeting held on Nov. 1, 1852, at the Roslyn Hotel. Eliza Charlick Davis died Dec. 2, 1880, leaving one surviving son, Frederick Coles Davis (17 Sept 1877–5 June 1953). James K. married, second, Sarah Day Hegeman, daughter of Robert Hegeman of Roslyn, whose home stood in the vicinity of the present Roslyn Savings Bank. By his second marriage, there were six surviving children: Eugenia, Ellen, Bruce, Marjorie, Lois, Mary. Sarah Hegeman Davis died in 1898.

James K. Davis was the contractor for the Bryce House, now the quarters for the Nassau County Fine Arts Museum; for the North Hempstead Town Hall, in Manhasset, and was one of the contractors for the Mackay Estate in Roslyn. He was a director (1907–1914) of the Bank of Hempstead Harbor (founded in 1906), now the Bank of North America. He owned an ice house south of Main Street in Roslyn, a blacksmith shop in Manhasset; a meat market on Willow Avenue in Roslyn; was elected Collector of Taxes for the Town of North Hempstead, in 1892, on the Democratic ticket, and re-elected the following term; was appointed Postmaster of Roslyn in 1893, under President Cleveland; was a member of the Roslyn Benevolent Association; a member of the Roslyn Board of Education from 1879–1895, serving as President from 1892–1895; a Director of the Bryant Circulating Library; life member of the Roslyn Hook & Ladder Co.; member of Masonic Glencove Lodge No. 580. His son Frederick remembered him as a quiet disciplinarian, busy with his work and caring for his seven children—and, for relaxation, participating in the trotting races at the old Mineola Fair Grounds.

terms of his will, dated at Roslyn, 15th May, 1917, he left the house to his daughters Eugenia Vreeland Davis and Ellen Pierson Davis. Between 1923 and the sale of the house in 1939 there were periods during which the house stood empty. During a part of this period the house was loaned to the local chapter of the Masonic Order. In January, 1938, the house was sold by the Davis sisters to Mr. and Mrs. Edward Wiley who, in turn, sold it to Mr. and Mrs. Ronald R. Galione in 1965. During the period of Galione ownership, the James K. Davis House was exhibited on the Landmark Society Tour in 1968. Shortly thereafter the house was purchased by Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Milbauer who, in turn, sold it to Stephen and Dorothy Schindel early in 1979. The present owners purchased it on 12th March 1987.

Two excellent photographs survive in the Landmark Society's collection which show the house as it appeared shortly after it was built. A third, taken in the 1890's, shows the added mid-section from the south. Another, taken circa 1905, shows the house after it had been completed by James K. Davis. It's exterior remains almost unaltered since that time, apart from a small enclosure at the south end of the porch which is lighted by a single 1/1 sash on its west front (since replaced by a glazed door) and paired 1/1 sash on its south.

The original house incorporated elements of the Italianate and the French Second Empire. It is most accurately described as "Victorian Eclectic." The original house was sheathed with clapboards having an exposure of 5" to the weather. It rested upon a brick foundation, laid in common bond, from the cellar floor to the sills. It was five bays wide and two bays deep. There was only a single room on each side of the center hall. The window sash were all 1/1. These were elaborately trimmed with ogee-moulded, crosstetted surrounds capped by extended, pedimented, moulded drip-caps on the front windows of the first floor. The first floor side windows were only slightly less rich in that their drip-caps lacked the extended pediments. The principal cornice brackets were based upon a flush-boarded frieze which was moulded along its lower edge. The shaped brackets consisted of three vertical layers with the inner layer slightly recessed and the outer layers panelled on their sides. The cornice brackets were terminated at their fronts with turned rondels. The principal cornice supported a mansard roof, the slopes of which were sheathed with slates arranged in a diamond pattern. The moulded mansard cap was trimmed with a delicate cast-iron cresting. The second storey windows also included 1/1 sash of which the upper sash were pointed. The sash were set in pairs in shallow, gable-ended dormers, which were based upon the lower frieze mouldings and projected upward into the slopes of the mansard. For decoration, horizontally set, recessed, diamond-shaped panels were placed between the inner slopes of the upper sash. The most important architectural feature of the house was a square tower over the front doorway, which projected a full storey above the mansard roof. The tower, in the "Italian Style," included a circular window, at the third storey level, in each of its four walls. The west front of the tower includes a round-headed window at the second storey level, which has an elaborate projecting drip-cap. The tower terminated with a very low hipped roof which appears to be flat and which incorporates projecting eaves which rest upon massive, shaped modillions. The single second-storey tower window faced the street and is "round-headed" in the Venetian manner. All but the circular tower windows, on both floors, were protected by louvered shutters. There were brick chimneys at the centers of the north and south facades. The south chimney was completely enclosed. The back of the first floor portion of the north chimney was exposed through the siding, probably so that the fireplace could be submerged further into the wall on the interior. Both chimneys had slab-type weather caps. Both also were panelled on their east, west and outer

faces. The north chimney had flat-topped panels, the south pointed arches. The original porch extended only across the principal (west) front of the house. The overhang of the porch roof was supported by paired brackets identical to the cornice brackets, but smaller. Each pair of brackets rests upon a turned column. Each of the four original porch columns was based upon a square moulded plinth which formed a part of the porch railing.

One of the earliest photographs shows the two first floor south windows, the square picket fence, with its massive gate-posts having spherical finials, which strongly resembles the fence of the Smith-Valentine House next door (TG 1964). The same photograph also shows a splendid post-lantern near the south end of the fence; a small gable-roofed building with shaped vergeboards which served as a well house, behind the southeast corner of the house, and, behind this small building, the corner of a much larger structure which was the stable and carriage house. James K. Davis' workshop was located on the second floor of this building. Most of this is gone today. South windows were replaced by a later enclosed porch; the picket fence about which the *Roslyn Tablet* enthused was replaced with a stone retaining wall when the level of East Broadway was lowered, ca. 1898 and the small well-house had disappeared. However, all the other architectural characteristics described above have survived. The Davis house did have some later additions, as described below. However, these changes involved only minor modifications of the original house.

The third photograph, taken from the South, shows a two-storey addition which had been constructed at the rear of the original main block of the house. This projected north of the original north front and was terminated at its south end by a large bay window at the first floor level. The large, central bay window sash is 2/2, one of the three sash originally in the house which departs from the 1/1 sash found elsewhere. This addition provided space for two additional ground floor rooms as well as additional second storey bedrooms. The two storey kitchen wing was placed east of the new addition. This is the original kitchen wing which had been moved far enough to the east to provide space for the new two-storey addition. The kitchen wing has brick nogging in its walls as do the walls of the original part of the house. There is only a crawl-space beneath the kitchen wing. All the remainder of the house includes full cellarage. The visible cellar foundation consists of a melange of rubble, brick and Portland cement. This represents a kitchen floor repair completed by the Wileys, in 1938. At that time, new kitchen floor joists and diagonal subflooring also were installed. The kitchen wing also retains both of its original small 2/2 windows along the south front at its first floor level.

The fourth photograph was taken about 1905, and shows four young girls and their dog, Gypsy, standing in front of the house. The youngest girl, Mary Parker Davis, appears to have been about eight years old. She was born in 1898. The other girls are, from left to right, Marjorie Carlton Davis, Ellen Pierson Davis and a cousin, Dorothy Jones. The principal changes shown in the photograph are the extension of the front porch around the north and south ends of the house. The north end forms a right angle. The south end is curved. A small single-storey wing, which rests upon a brick foundation, has been added to the south end of the original house. This is entirely contained within the new south porch and has a doorway opening to it. The doorway is set back one bay. This new wing was two bays in depth and replaced the easternmost of the two original, south first-floor windows. This small south porch addition was built to function as James K. Davis' office. The north and south porch extensions were added after the two-storey east addition had been built. In addition to the changes mentioned, the picket fence and the post-lantern had been

removed by the time of the 1905 photograph. The fence had been replaced by a fine ashlar retaining wall, having cast-stone copings, which survives today. The diamond-patterned slates, in the mansard, survived in the 1905 photograph, but the cast-iron cresting above it had been removed. The original lacy cresting was found, in the attic, by Dorothy Schindel and was reinstalled in 1982. The well-house, with its shaped vergeboards, had been removed by the time of the 1905 photograph although the barn behind it has survived, at least in part. A single-storey, gable-roofed synthetic-sided garage stands on this site today. Its ridge runs east and west, parallel with the road. It was there when the Wileys bought the house in 1938 although the building required substantial repair. Examination of its interior shows mortise-and-tenon joinery, diagonal wind-bracing, etc. The floor of the present loft appears to have been built in two sections as the floor joists of the north and south sections run at right angles to each other. The Landmark Society owns a photograph of Frederick Coles Davis (17 September 1877–5 June 1953) holding a horse in front of the original barn. The ridge of the early barn ran from north to south. It is the opinion of the writer (RGG) that the present garage is the remains of the original barn and that its present appearance represents the “repairs” done by the Wileys, in 1938.

The present house is identical to the one in the 1905 photograph except that the diamond-patterned mansard slates have been replaced with asphalt strip shingles. It has been mentioned above that the original lacy, cast-iron roof cresting has been replaced. The principal change has been the construction of a small addition at the west end of the south porch. This addition has a paired 1/1 sash along its south exterior wall. Originally, this small addition did not open directly to the porch through a doorway. However, the window at its west end was replaced by a narrow doorway during 1987–88. The new door has 1/1 glazing above an ogee-moulded panel. The door case also is ogee moulded, to conform to the remaining trim. This small addition was in place when the Wileys bought the house. Since the Davis family had not lived in the house for a number of years prior to the Wiley purchase and, during a part of this period, the house was loaned to the Masons, it seems likely that this addition had been completed prior to James K. Davis' death in 1923.

In addition to the foregoing, several changes, not involving the parts of the house shown in any of the aforementioned photographs, were made during the 1987–89 refurbishment. The most consequential of these was the removal of a “bow window” which had been inserted in the east wall of the house during the 1970's and its replacement by an ogee-moulded, cross-topped doorway, which includes paired doors having 1/1 glazing above and ogee-moulded panels, below. A smaller, similarly trimmed, doorway was inserted in the north wall of the kitchen wing, during the recent refurbishment, as was a triple window. At the same time, the exterior cellar entry, in the north-east corner, was removed. None of these minor changes significantly effects the architectural integrity of the house. The replacement of the east “bow-window” is a real improvement.

## INTERIOR

The house is entered through its original paired front doors which include later, round-headed glazing above and moulded square panels below. Both glass and panels are vigorously moulded. The doors have been repaired and “stripped” and are awaiting graining. Appropriate etched glass is to be inserted.

*Hallway:* The center hall is located immediately inside the paired front doors and extends back the entire depth of the original 1877 house, and, originally, opened

to the original kitchen through a doorway which included a four-panel ogee-moulded door which has been replaced by a similar door whose two upper panels have been fitted with etched glass. Stylistically, the hallway is typical of its period and employs vigorously moulded, stepped door surrounds which include four-panel doors which are moulded on both faces. Prior to the current refurbishment, many of the doors on the first floor of the original house retained their porcelain knobs, rosettes and keyhole covers. The ground floor hardware has been relocated to replace missing hardware on the second floor. Those, as well as the hinges, have been replaced with brass Victorian reproductions. The stair-rail originates at an octagonal walnut newel which includes an ogee-moulded panel on each face. Each recessed panel is veneered with burl walnut. Like the newel, the massive, triple-cusped railing also is walnut. The heavy, turned walnut balusters were covered with paint until recently. These were stripped and re-finished during the recent refurbishing. The panelled wall beneath the staircase also is ogee-moulded. One of the taller panels originally was the door to a closet. The adjoining panel also has been converted to a door so that, today, the sub-stairway closet has paired doors. Beyond the stairway, just above floor level, is a small cupboard. Originally, this was the access to a safe, long missing. There was a projecting shelf above the safe-cupboard originally that was the lower end of an opening to the original pantry which supplied the dining room. The original plaster cornice and chandelier medallion both have survived. The original 5" wide, yellow pine flooring has survived, for the most part. Originally, there was a large central heating grill between the front doorway and the staircase. When steam heat was installed, this grill was removed and the opening floored in. This patch was unsightly and the Milbauers installed a layer of flooring above the original. This later flooring was removed during the recent work and the patch in the original flooring restored, using old flooring. The removal of the later flooring left a space at the bottom of each doorway opening to the center hall. These defects also were restored by Wooden Bridge, who did most of the carpentry during the 1987-1989 project. According to Jean Davis Chapman, all of the wooden hallway trim, including the massive, stepped, moulded baseboards and stairway stringers, and apart from the walnut stair-rail, was wood-grained. This trim remains painted today. Today, also, the cornices and adjacent wall and ceiling areas have elaborate painted finishes. These are in period on a design basis. However, a paint analysis was not undertaken and there is no reason to feel that these painted decorations represent a phase in the paint history of the house. All the interior paint work was completed by James R. Shea, Roslyn Restoration Company, who was the general contractor. "Picture mouldings" have been installed in the east addition to replicate those in the original ground floor rooms.

*Front Parlor.* In the original house, this room was the "parlor" as no rear parlor existed at that time. This room, like the entrance hall, dates from the original house and utilizes the same prominently stepped baseboard with moulded capping. The moulded gesso cornice in the front parlor is even more elaborate than that in the hallway as it includes a secondary moulded gesso panel inside the primary cornice. The elaborate gesso chandelier medallion is executed in the pure Eastlake Style. The window surrounds employ the same mouldings as the doorways. At this point it should be noted that the wooden decorative trim of the three original principal ground floor rooms, i.e., the entrance hall, dining room and parlor, is all identical and was grained originally. However, the ceiling cornices and chandelier medallions differ in each of the three rooms.

The windows are tall and narrow and mostly paired in the manner of the period. All the windows are ogee-panelled beneath the sash. The Rococo Revival Victorian

slate mantelpiece is now painted but will be marbellized as it was originally. The round-headed fireplace opening, with its moulded cast-iron surround and pierced "summer-cover" are original to the house.

*Library.* The room behind the original parlor is part of the late 19th century addition. The entrance to this room suggests this difference in period with its shallow, keystone arch resting on clustered, panelled piers and having a barred grille within the arch itself. The room behind the original parlor was built to serve as a library. It is used as a music room, today. It, like the present dining room, is stylistically much simpler than the original, major, ground floor rooms. The door and window mouldings consist of a torus, cove and ogee and are also found in all the second storey rooms, regardless of date. These mouldings probably were copied from those in the original bedrooms. The windows are not panelled beneath, but are finished with conventional sills and stools. Originally there were paired 1/1 windows in the east wall. This was replaced by a millwork "bow-window", by the Millbauers during the 1970's. The present owners have replaced this with paired doors having 1/1 glazing above and ogee-moulded panels below. The new door facings match the others in the room. The baseboards all are plain and have ogee caps. These, also, are the same as those of the second storey. The library has its own exit to the north porch, which was extended to this point at the time the house was enlarged. The upper  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the narrow porch door is glazed. The lower  $\frac{1}{3}$  includes an ogee-moulded panel. The cornice and chandelier medallions were added by the present owners.

*Later Dining Room:* The second, and present, dining room is entered from the library through a large rectangular opening. In the original enlargement, the dining room could be entered from the center hall, or from the original dining room. The Wileys used this room as a kitchen. After the contemporary kitchen, to the east, was made usable, by reconstructing the floor and foundation, the Wileys had two kitchens. The later dining room trim is the same as that in the library and upstairs. The large bay-window, at the south end of the room, includes canted sides and is contemporary with the room. The large central window of the bay includes 2/2 sash. The window latches and sash lifts are brass reproductions and replace the cast iron originals. Due to missing pieces, the original window hardware throughout the house has been removed. The original door hardware, however, of the rooms in the addition, differed from the porcelain hardware of the original rooms. The later doors had rectangular plates on both faces for the knobs and keyholes. The replacements are the same, throughout the house. The flooring, chair-rail, cornices and chandelier medallions were installed by the current owners, as was a new doorway to the new interior cellar stairs. The four-panel, ogee-moulded doors to the hallway and kitchen were replaced by similar doors having etched glass panels above.

*Early Dining Room.* The dining room, one of the three original ground floor rooms in the original house, was replaced by the present dining room after the house was enlarged. Subsequently it has served as an accessory sitting room. The gesso cornice and chandelier medallion are more elaborate than those of the center hall; less so than those of the original parlor. The Victorian slate mantel was marbellized originally. It is painted black to resemble Belgian marble. Further marbellizing is contemplated. It is similar, but not identical, to the front parlor mantel. The moulded, round-headed cast-iron fireplace surround and summer cover are original to the room. When the house was enlarged and the porch extended on the south front, that part of the porch behind the fireplace wall was enclosed to serve as a small office for James Davis, a mason-contractor. Originally James K. Davis' massive, oak, roll-top desk stood at the north side of the room, with a built-in work shelf and



blueprint storage drawer under a small window in the east wall. This space has been reworked to serve as a lavatory. At the west end of this room there is a doorway which originally opened to the south porch but now opens to a later south porch enclosure which serves as a sort of bay window to the original dining room. The exterior doorway is, therefore, now indoors. Its elaborate door includes an etched glass panel which includes a central figure of a deer surrounded by stylized designs of leaves and flowers. The door includes moulded panels above and below the glazing. The small panels immediately beneath the glass are decorated with moulded gesso swags.

Originally there was a closet in the northeast corner of the original dining room which utilized the space under the principal stairway. This contained the original pantry which retained all its drawers and shelving. The "pass-thru" shelf to the hallway has been described. This all was identical to the pantry which has survived in the 1864 Warren Wilkey House (TG 1973-78,79,80,81). The pantry and its doorway were removed by the present owners to provide space for an interior stairway to the cellar.

The closet located in the northeast corner of the original dining room is an early pantry. Originally there was a "pass-through" window above the surviving wooden shelf, mentioned in the description of the center hall. This opening provided access to the original kitchen which was a very short distance away. The pantry is very similar to that in the Warren Wilkey House (TG 1973-1978-79-80-81). All its original drawers and shelving, some of which is removable, has survived.

*Kitchen:* The two-storey kitchen wing dates from the original house (1877) and has brick nogging in its walls. It was re-located to the east when the house was enlarged during the final years of the 19th century. When the Wileys acquired the house, in 1938, its kitchen remained in its original condition. The Wileys rebuilt the kitchen foundation, floor-framing and floor, but retained most of its original interior, including a 4-foot wide, vertically boarded, beaded enclosed staircase leading to the housekeeper's room upstairs. The original kitchen included a zinc sink supplied by an indoor water-pump fed by the well just outside the south entrance and a cast-iron stove which stood upon a large stone hearth. The Galiones re-styled the kitchen in 1968 and removed the original stove and sink, but left the hearthstone. The present owners have completely rebuilt the kitchen making the ceiling approximately 8 inches higher and removing the service stairway. The two small 2/2 windows in the south wall have survived. These have ogee-moulded, back-banded surrounds. They are set high on the wall to provide for working space beneath. The south exterior doorway also survives, concealed behind a large, new cupboard. A new, small, exterior doorway has been opened in the north wall as has a new triple window.

## **SECOND STOREY**

The most interesting feature of the second storey is the Italianate tower, which may be entered from the front end of the second floor hallway via a ladder. While the interior of the tower is plastered and an early right-angled bench survives for the comfort of viewers of distant prospects, the main purpose of the tower was to control the summer heat by permitting the exhausting of rising hot air through its open windows. The present owners have removed the tower wall at the west end of the hallway. They have removed the original bench and have supplied a new, more elegant ladder. In addition, they have removed the "steps" in the tower floor and have increased the tower floor area. They also have installed a walnut railing around the floor opening which matches the principal stair-rail below.

The second storey trim is less elegant than that of the major, early rooms below. The mouldings consist of combined torus, cove and ogee mouldings identical to those of the later first floor rooms. The mouldings of these, as well as those of the later bedrooms, probably were copied from the early second storey trim. The four-panel bedchamber doors are ogee moulded on both faces. The door fittings all have been changed. The original 5" wide yellow pine flooring survives throughout the second storey. The plain baseboards are ogee capped. Originally, there was a series of small, simple bedrooms flanking both sides of the center hall.

At the rear of the hallway there is a short flight of stairs which descends to the second storey of the ell. In the original house a large linen closet was located on the north wall at the bottom of these steps, with entrance to the wainscotted bath directly opposite.

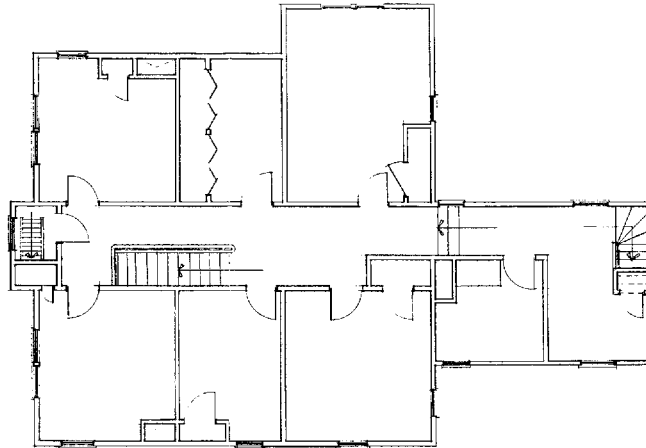
The second floor is the one which has been altered the most during the 1987-89 project. Basically, the hallway, itself, appears little changed apart from the fitting of a ceiling cornice. However, the bed-chambers have been substantially altered in the floor plan to provide floor area for fewer, larger bedrooms, fitted with simple cornices, and their associated baths. The master bedroom is located in the northeast corner. It has been fitted with the same cornice as the center hall and a new window has been added in its east wall. At the bottom of the steps, over the kitchen, is the new "master bath." It has been fitted with a splendid, marble, Victorian double washstand, which came from the re-located Jacob Sutton Mott House (TG 1988-89-90) across the lane.

## **CELLAR**

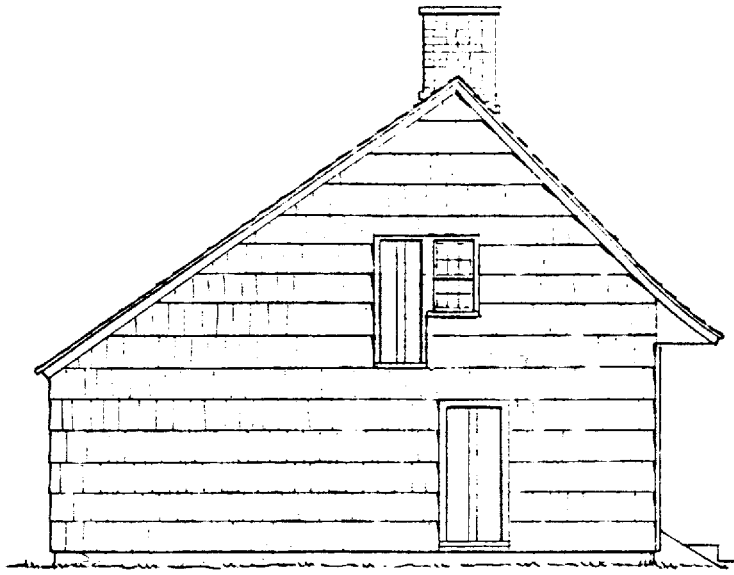
The cellar of the house is large and commodious with brick walls extending from the cellar floor to the sills, except for the area under the kitchen which has only a crawl space and which has already been described. The hearths of both fireplaces rest upon arched brick supports. The two front cellar rooms have brick dividing walls which, with their ceilings, were plastered originally. None of this plaster survives. These two rooms are located immediately beneath the original parlor and dining room. Between the two, beneath the entrance hall, there was a small room which served as a furnace room for an early, ductless, hot air furnace, which exhausted to a large grill (now replaced with flooring) in the floor of the center hall above. Part of this space served as a coal bin, as a coal chute survived which opened in the north cellar wall. This chute, obviously, dated from the original house as its entrance was covered and it became useless after the porch was extended along the north side of the house. At the east end of the early north cellar room there was the upper section of a very large corner cupboard which dated from the first half of the 18th century. This was bonded into the wall when the house was built and had a barrel-staved back. The front of the cupboard was best seen from the east side of the brick dividing wall. The cupboard retained its shaped interior shelving and was very large. It measured 56" in width and this section was 58" tall. The floor joists of the early cellar run from north to south. These are sawn, are 3 x 9", and are set on 20" centers except for two heavier, 4 x 9" beams at the center, which are set on 30" centers. The walls of the early part of the house are filled with brick nogging between the framing members. This is an early, and mostly unsuccessful, attempt at insulation. Similar brick nogging survives in the Jerusha Dewey House (TG 1982-83) and at "Locust Knoll" (TG 1969-70).

The new part of the cellar, beneath the library and new dining room, also has brick walls from floor to sills. These also, with their ceilings, were plastered originally. The south bay window also has a full foundation, which includes a small window in each of its three faces. The floor joists in the "new" cellar are  $2\frac{1}{8} \times 8$ " and run from east to west. They are set on 16" centers and are cross-braced at regular intervals. Diagonal sub-flooring survives between the floor joists which provides some indication concerning the earliest use of this technique. It is not known whether or not brick nogging was used in the walls of the new section of the house.

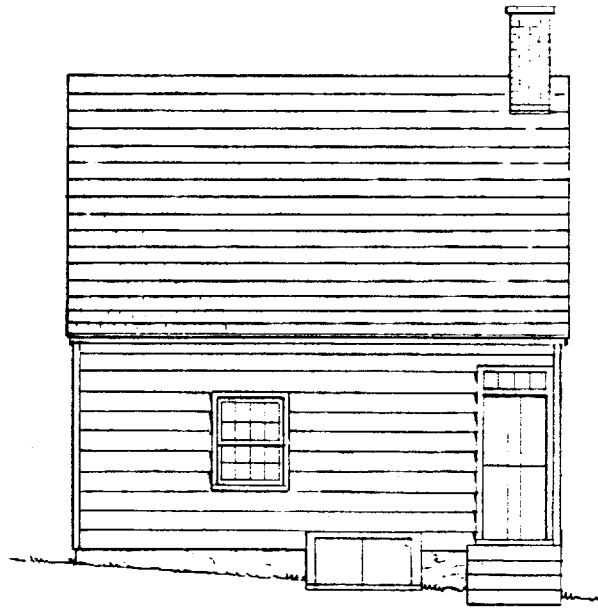
Relatively few changes were made to the cellar during the 1987-89 project. The most important of these was the removal of the late 19th century exterior entry, north of the kitchen wing, and its replacement with an interior cellar stairway beneath the principal staircase. Historically, the most important change has been the removal of the upper fragment of a monumental mid-18th century, barrel-backed, corner cupboard which had been bonded into the brick dividing wall between the two north rooms of the original cellar at the time the house was built. The created defect has been concealed with plasterboard. At the same time, the original coal-chute, in the north cellar wall of the original house, was removed. The corner cupboard, which had a vertically-panelled, thumb-nail moulded back, and unusually shaped shelves which progress downward from a single to three lobes, will be donated, by the present owners, either to the Roslyn Landmark Society, if it is to be exhibited in its present state, or to the Roslyn Preservation Corporation, if it is to be restored and used in a local house. Accurate restoration is unlikely unless an almost identical corner cupboard can be found. This is unlikely because of the size and quality of the original cupboard fragment which is 58" high, 56" wide and  $20\frac{1}{2}$ " deep. The original, intact corner cupboard must have been close to nine feet in height. In addition to the aforementioned, the original south cellar room has been divided in two; the east part serving as the furnace-room and the west as a bath. The latter includes a Victorian marble wash-stand from the Jacob Sutton Mott House. Beyond the above changes, the cellar ceilings have been sheetrocked to replace the missing, original plaster and the brick walls have been painted.



Second Floor Plan as it appeared at the time when the house was enlarged, (1890-1900). Plan by Guy Ladd Frost, AIA



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Van Nostrand-Starkins House, Stage II, ca. 1730-1800  
Drawn by John R. Stevens

**THE VAN NOSTRAND-STARKINS HOUSE (Circa 1680)**  
**221 Main Street**  
**Operated as a House Museum by The Roslyn Landmark Society**

**HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

Prior to the end of the 18th century the history of the Van Nostrand-Starkins House is only conjecture. By the 1790 Federal Census, William Van Nostrand was the head of the household there, his neighbor to the south was William Valentine. Van Nostrand and his wife Sarah sold their house and land to Joseph Starkins, a blacksmith, in 1795. There is no deed recording William Van Nostrand's acquisition of the land; no early Town record of a Van Nostrand land grant at Hempstead Harbour. Two early clues, though not clear in their references may someday lead to new knowledge.

First, in 1755 a William Van Nostrand, blacksmith, and his wife Phebe, conveyed an 18-acre parcel of land in Hempstead's "south woods" to Frederick Van Nostrand, Sr., and Frederick Van Nostrand, Jr. Whether or not William Van Nostrand was the same person who later lived in Hempstead Harbour is not known.

Second, an Aaron Van Nostrand, turner, who was neighbor to Ephraim Valentine in 1747 along a road running north and south somewhere in this vicinity, died in Jamaica in 1764, leaving his estate to two of his sons, Aaron and Isaac. He could have had additional sons who had been given their portions during his lifetime. One of these sons could have been named William Van Nostrand. Amos Denton was the executor. Aaron Van Nostrand had formerly lived in what is now North Hempstead, as he was assigned an earmark for his livestock in 1714.

In 1700 Abraham Denton bought a three-acre parcel of land with a house on it from Richard Valentine, to whom it had been given, house and all, in 1686 as his wife's dower portion from her father Timothy Halstead. It was adjacent to land on which Valentine lived.

Richard Valentine, in his own turn, was a member of a group of "planters" who joined together in 1668 to "take up land" on "the north side of the town." Timothy Halstead, too, was a member of that group.

This collection of facts may be only co-incidentally related. But if Richard Valentine's land was the same, or in part the same, as Ephraim Valentine's and later William Valentine's, and if Amos Denton inherited from Abraham Denton, then it would be fairly logical to guess that Aaron Van Nostrand, having moved on to Jamaica later in his life, drew on a neighbor's friendship in making Denton his executor. If these relationships are valid, which we do not know, then they tell us something about the earliest settlement here at Hempstead Harbour. (Historical Notes: Rosalie Fellowes Bailey)

After 1790, though, the Van Nostrand-Starkins house history is clear and easy to follow. On March 21, 1795, Van Nostrand conveyed his four-acre plot to blacksmith Joseph Starkins and Ann Elizabeth, his wife, for £120. (Queens County, Liber 65 of Deeds, Pg. 291). In 1801 Starkins bought more land, south and north, adjoining the house lot, from William Valentine. Starkins' oven house and his blacksmith shop are both mentioned in 1824 highway records. (North and South Hempstead Records, Vol. 7, Pg. 43). Joseph Starkins was born around 1769 and he died in the Town of North Hempstead in 1814. Francis Skillman states "the next house south was Joseph Starkins, the blacksmith, at the fork in the road. . . . South

of this (going up the hill) and near the stone (R.R.) bridge stands the old house given by a Richard Valentine to his son, William (ancestor of the present Valentines in Roslyn)." Skillman implies there were no houses between the Valentine (Railroad Avenue) and the Starkins (Van Nostrand) houses. Yet the 1st census shows Lt. Col. Richard Manet (Maney), the senior Revolutionary War officer in Hempstead Harbor, as living between them. He may have rented the separate east wing in the Van Nostrand House. The Walling Map (1859) shows a Kirby House between the two but this probably was not standing at the time of the 1790 Census.

In 1847 Joseph Starkins, presumably the blacksmith's son, mortgaged the four-acre property, and in 1850 he and his wife, whose name was Ann Elizabeth, sold it to William Verity. (Queens County, Liber 85 of Deeds, Pg. 486). Two years later Verity sold it to merchant Jacob M. Kirby (Queens County, Liber 101, Pg. 142) who was acquiring the land all around the Main Street—East Broadway intersection, forming the locality then known, and still today, as "Kirby's Corners." Kirby owned a fleet of ships—early in his career he sailed them—market sloops that ran between Roslyn and New York, trading farm produce and lumber for fertilizer, dry goods and agricultural implements, which he sold in his Main Street store, still standing near the Corner (TG 1986–87).

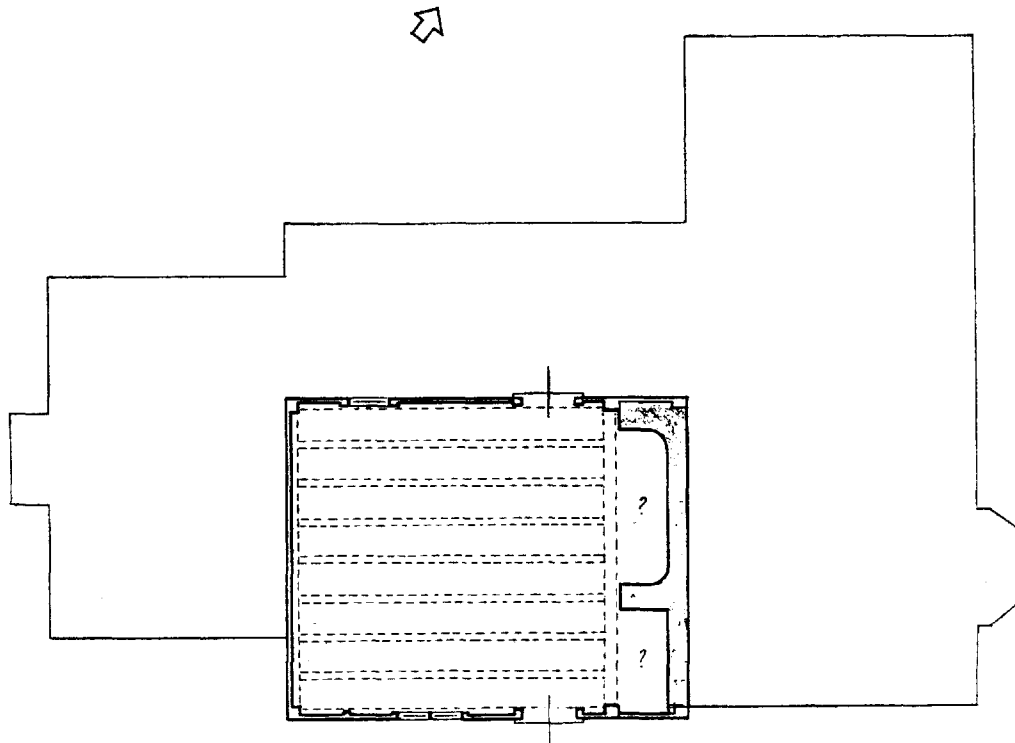
Jacob Kirby died in 1880, leaving his property (his temple-front house on the eastern side of the road south of the Corners; the store, houses (TG 1986–87) and barn within the Corners triangle; the Van Nostrand house and its neighbor to the north (TG 1979–80), with his little office in the back (TG 1978–79) to his wife Elizabeth, who conveyed it all the next year to her son, the Reverend William Wallace Kirby.

William Wallace Kirby served as pastor for the Roslyn Presbyterian Church (TG 1973–74) for a year (1870–71), and later was Justice of the Peace for the Town of North Hempstead. As an attorney he was a younger contemporary of Henry W. Eastman, and many of his legal papers survive in the collections of the Nassau County Museum and the Roslyn Landmark Society. W.W. Kirby transferred title to Ernest and Henrietta Schuman on the first of November, 1887 (Liber 771, Pg. 186) but two days later the Schumans transferred it to Susan Eliza Kirby, William Wallace's wife (Queens County, Liber 771, Pg. 189). From Susan Kirby the house passed to her son Ralph in 1918, who retained it until his death in 1935. His brother, Isaac Henry Kirby, who was resident in the Van Nostrand-Starkins House, had probably been living there even before title passed to Ralph from his mother. He willed it, with other family property, to his cousin Virginia Applegate who, after his death, lived in the Kirby-Sammis House (TG 1986–87) within the Kirby's Corners Triangle. In 1937 Mrs. Applegate sold the Van Nostrand-Starkins House to Mr. and Mrs. George J.G. Nicholson, who lived there until 1945, when they sold it to Mr. and Mrs. John G. Tarrant. In 1966 the Incorporated Village of Roslyn acquired the property from a holding company which had owned it for three years.

Through about three centuries, from the early days of Hempstead Harbour until about 1970, the house was continuously in use as a residence. During 1973–1977 the Roslyn Landmark Society, with funds partially matched by a grant from New York State, restored the house to its appearance at the time it was the home of Joseph Starkins and William Van Nostrand.

## **ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS REPORT**

It cannot now be determined if the original part of this house has always stood on its present site. Although it may have done so, it is also possible that it could have



Van Nostrand-Starkins House, First Floor Plan  
Stage I, 1680-1730

been moved in Stage II, from which time the present foundation may date. However, the construction technique differs between the “original” and the “lean-to” portions of the foundation, so it now (1989) appears that the early house always has stood on its present site. The original unit measured slightly over 20 feet in length and 16 feet in width. The front and rear walls measured 10 feet 9 inches in height, from the underside of the sills to the tops of the plates. There were knee walls, 3 feet 2 inches in height.

The main elevation faced south. There is evidence for a doorway east of the center of the wall, and a mullioned casement window to the west of the center. A doorway was also located in the north wall, opposite that in the front wall. There had also apparently been a single casement window in the north wall. No evidence could be found for a window in the west end wall. The east end wall, between the corner posts and at least as high as the plates, was either of stone or brick.

A major part of the original framing has survived. It is entirely of white oak. The original north and west sills exist, although a short piece of the north sill at the east end is missing. There is a rabbet in the west sill to receive the ends of the floor boards. The floor joists are set the thickness of the floor boards below the top surface of the north sill. Two of four original joists survive. They measure 9 inches in width by 6 inches in depth. Their tenons are flush with the top surfaces, but nailed in the rabbet of the west sill. The four main posts are about 8 inches square, without any taper. They are connected in pairs by end girts and chimney girts that measure 7 inches in thickness by 13 inches in depth. These two bents are connected at a

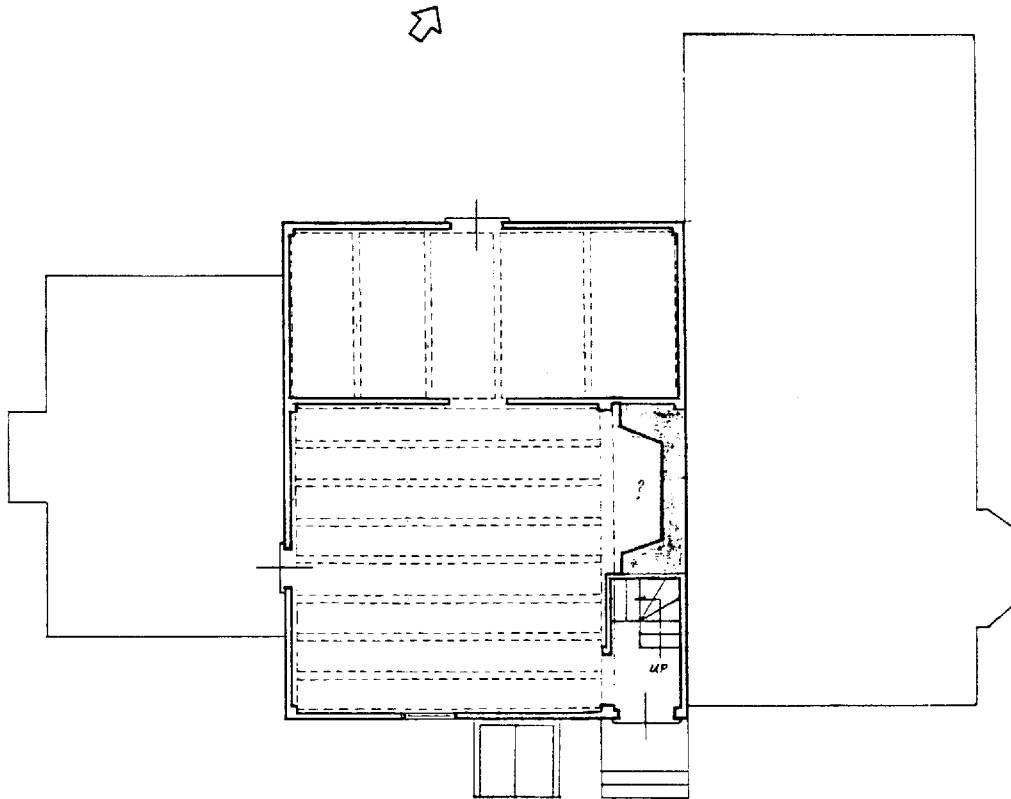
distance of 15 feet 6 inches by front and rear girts that are 4½ inches in thickness by 8 inches in depth. The inner, lower corners of the girts are chamfered, as also are the inner corners of the posts. The chamfers of the end girt and the posts are terminated by lamb's tongue stops; the chimney girt has a more elaborate treatment with a decorative notch at each end. The chamfer of the front girt is interrupted at the positions of the door posts. There are seven second floor joists, equi-distantly spaced between the front and rear girts, and lodged in notches in the end and chimney girts. The middle joist is made with dovetailed ends. They measure 4½ inches in thickness and 5½ inches in depth. They are numbered at the chimney girt end, with corresponding numbers on the girt. The original flooring of the second floor between the end and chimney girts has survived. It is of mill-sawn pine, 1 inch thick, the saw marks showing on the upper surface. The lower surface, which formed the ceiling in the first floor room, is planed. The widths are fairly uniform, being about 10 inches wide. The boards were laid in two lengths, with the joints coming on a line on the first joist in from the south wall. The joists between the boards were tongue and grooved. The boards were nailed with 2 inch rose head nails.

No original studs now survive in any of the walls. It would appear that originally there were no studs except at door and window positions. This is determined from the existence of mortises that relate to the original construction period. Later mortises or gains for studs are clearly distinguishable. There have never been any studs in the north knee wall, which became an interior wall in Stage II. It would therefore appear that the exterior of the house had originally been vertically boarded, and that the inside of this boarding formed the interior wall surface of the house. This is borne out by the presence of whitewash on the underside of the front, rear, and end girts which could only have been applied prior to the construction of studded lath and plaster walls in Stage II. In Rhode Island, where this type of construction is known, the boarding was most often covered on the exterior with riven clapboards. This may also have been the case with the Van Nostrand-Starkins House, but it is possible that the exterior may have been shingled.

At the east wall position, there are corner posts measuring about 6 inches that had no transverse timber connecting them. There had been horizontal timbers between them and the main posts measuring 3 inches by 4 inches. That in the front wall was located 2 feet 4 inches below the plate while that in the rear wall was 5 feet below the plate. The function of these timbers has not been determined. The plates measure 4½ inches in thickness and 6½ inches in width. They once extended beyond the corner posts. There are 2 inch by 4 inch braces between the main posts and the plates, and also between the upper ends of the main posts, running down to the end, and chimney girts. The two braces at the chimney girt are missing.

There were five pairs of rafters, of which the inner three pairs survive in place, in a mutilated condition. The roof pitch is 13 inches: 12 inches. Shingle lath notches, 1 inch by 3 inch, are spaced on 16-inch centers. The collar beams are made with half-dovetail ends and let into the west side of the rafters and pinned. The upper ends of the rafters are mortised and pinned. The feet of the rafters are made with a transverse cog that bears against a corresponding notch in the plate. The rafters' feet are pinned through the plate. It appears that the east gable had overhung that wall by a few inches, while the west gable had about one foot overhang. The overhangs were removed in Stage II, at which time the gable rafters were converted into studs. Both original west gable rafters survive in this re-used condition in the present west gable. One of them is almost complete, short pieces only being missing from each





Van Nostrand-Starkins House, First Floor Plan  
Stage II, ca. 1730–1800

end. In addition to the standard roof shingle lath notches, it has a series of gains, in what had been the outside face, for lath for shingles that formerly covered the gable end. The collar beam was set lower in the gable than for the other rafters, apparently to make the head of a window.

The east wall, as noted previously, was of masonry between the corner posts, and was at least as high as the plate. Whether the masonry was of brick or stone cannot now be determined, although stone is the most probable. Most of this wall was occupied by a fireplace. The stairway to the loft was probably located at the south side, as there is evidence of a door location at the south end of the chimney girt, consisting of a mortise for a door post, and in the adjacent post there are rabbets for the battens of a door. It cannot be ascertained positively whether these door clues are from Stage I or Stage II.

There is a possibility that a north lean-to of some kind existed in Stage I. The evidence for this is a notch in the rear plate, to the east of the central rafter, that would seem to relate to a lean-to rafter. As sections of this plate are missing, the evidence has been removed of any other notches. In addition, the present north cellar wall is about 18 inches inside (south) of the present (Stage II) north lean-to foundation wall. No structure of any sort rests upon this inner wall, which may have been the north foundation of the original, smaller lean-to. If this conjecture is correct and an earlier, Stage I, lean-to did exist, the present foundation may date from Stage I also.

Some time around the middle of the 18th century, and possibly as early as the beginning of the second quarter, the house underwent a major transformation. It is possible that it may have been moved to its present site from another location. The original structure would appear to have been stripped to the frame. A lean-to addition was built on the north side, 9 feet wide.

The present foundation may date from this time. It is of rubble masonry, generally about 1 foot 6 inches thick, except at the east end where there is a foundation for the fireplace and hearth, 5 feet 6 inches wide, and along the north wall to the lean-to, that was added at this time, there are inner and outer foundation walls as mentioned above. An areaway is located on the south elevation, partly under the position of the Stage I door. This location of the areaway suggests that the foundation may date from Stage II.

Extensive changes were made to the structure of the house. The south sill was replaced, along the two joists and the floor boards. The siding (clapboards or shingles?) was removed along with the vertical boarding to which it was applied. New studs were placed in the south elevation, two of them using original mortises in the girt. The others (3) were gained into the girt. The doorway was eliminated. A window, somewhat narrower than the original one, occupied the old location. One stud for it survives in place, on its east side. Gains in it indicate the size of the window frame. It was of 8 over 8 configuration with 7 inch by 9 inch glass. The other stud survives out of place and turned around so that its exterior face can be seen, with plain marks of weatherboard siding. In the south knee wall, four studs were placed, spaced more or less equi-distant between the main posts. They were mortised into the front girt and gained into the plate. Their lower ends are numbered, from the east side.

The north wall of the building became an interior wall with the construction of the lean-to addition. None of the original studs were retained in this wall and, while several of the original mortises were used for the replacement studs, most of these were gained into the rear girt. A stud from this period survives in place at the west side of the former window location. The only other surviving stud stands to the east of this one. The other Stage II studs were removed in the 19th century, when two were re-used out of place in the wall. One had pintle holes.

Six studs were erected in the west wall, some of them evidently being re-used pieces, but their former situation has yet to be determined. Four of them appear to have been studs. They have chamfered interior corners and show whitewash on three surfaces. Several of these have clear marks on one side from shingle lath, spaced on 15 inch centers. The upper ends of these pieces were gained into the end girts. Between the middle pair of these studs there was a door, not more than 26 inches wide, the jamb-ends of which went into the end girt with square gains. These door jambs were removed in the 19th century.

The overhanging west gable was cut back flush with the lower part of the wall. The new gable end was given six studs, four of which were former rafters; the pair in the middle being the former rafters of the overhang gable. Very little had been cut off the ends of these to make them fit their new situation. Between these two there had always been a window. To the north of the window there remained the lower portion of an 18th century batten door together with one of its stops.

The "stone end" east wall was removed and replaced by a stone wall that ended short of the south wall, and extended up only as high as a girt inserted at this time.

The top surface of this girt was on the same level as the original girts. Its ends are gained into the corner posts. There are seven more or less equi-distantly spaced studs above the girt, most of which have survived. Below it there were three studs toward the south side, only one of which survives, out of position. That the back of the fireplace was exposed to the exterior is confirmed by a corner board from Stage III, still in place, that had been scribed to the stone wall, which was itself later removed.

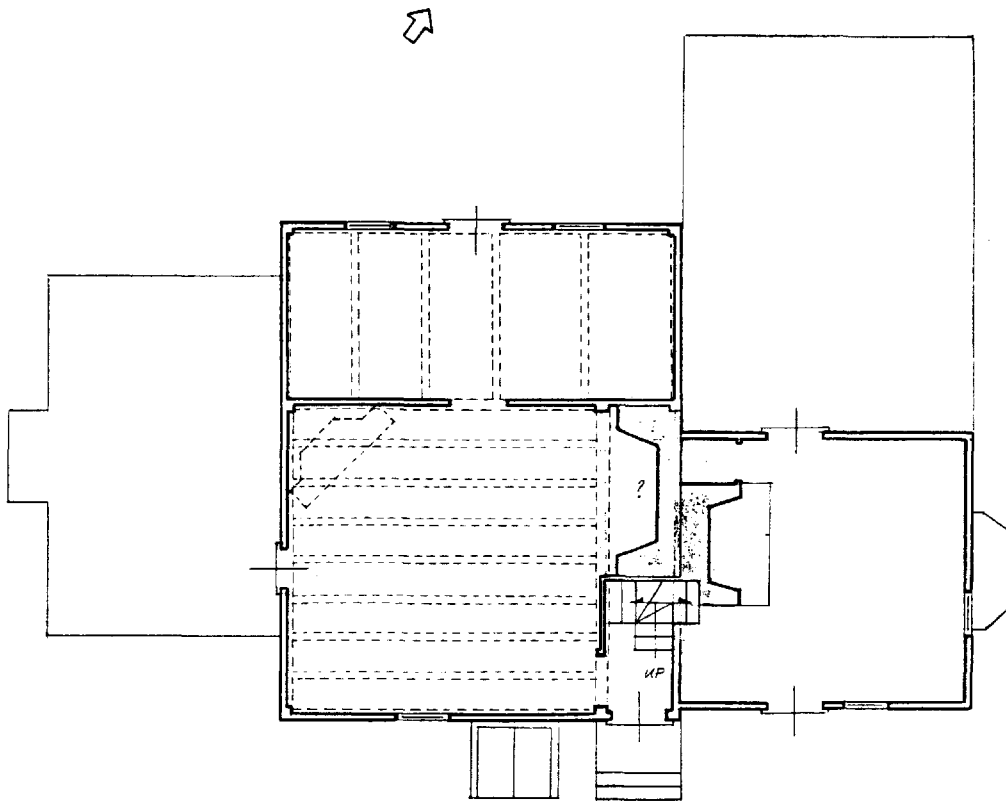
The three interior pairs of rafters were not disturbed. The original gable rafters of the projecting gables were removed and, as noted, made into studs. The new gable rafters were not notched for shingle lath, but were set with their outside surfaces on the same plane as the original rafters. This indicates that the original shingle lath were removed. The nailing pattern on the rafters shows that boarding was applied. Either at the beginning of Stage II or subsequently, extension pieces were applied to the rafters of the front slope, to make an overhang, perhaps 2 feet 6 inches wide. Notches occur in the plate beside each rafter for such a construction, and also in the posts and studs, for a soffit that would have been 2 feet below the top of the plate.

The lean-to was very simply framed. Its first floor joists were attached to the north wall of the original part by being let into it with a dovetail end joint. None of the joists survive, nor does the north sill, although the west sill still exists, made from a former rafter. The second floor joists are rather carefully finished, but spaced rather irregularly. There are six, including two end ones. The end ones are gained into, and nailed to, the north corner posts. The intermediate joists lay on top of the original Stage I north wall girt. The outer ends of these joists are mortised into the lean-to plate. The lean-to corner posts are 5½ inches square. They are braced to the plate. There are seven somewhat irregularly spaced studs in the north wall. A pair in the middle of the wall are spaced 2 feet 11 inches apart for a doorway. A head piece is gained into these. No evidence could be found for early windows in this wall. Apparently there were none. The west end wall framing shows evidence of an incomplete window frame that was apparently never used. It does, however, seem to have functioned as a shallow cupboard until some time in the 19th century when it was covered over with lath and plaster. One original stud and the upper parts of two others survive in the east wall of the lean-to. No original first floor boards survive in the lean-to, but nearly all of the original second floor boards were in place. These were damaged in restoration and were replaced according to the original dimensions and patterns. Their under surfaces, which show as the first floor ceiling, are planed. They are about 12 inches in width.

Except in the west gable, the lean-to rafters were cut on a bevel at their upper ends to lie on the original rafters. In the west gable, the rear main rafter was omitted.

A large part of the Stage II riven oak shingle lath, set on 16 inch centers, and a good-sized area of clipped-butt shingles as well, survive on the west end wall and on a portion of the east gable. While the shingles of the north wall (lean-to) are 19th century in date, they perpetuate the original arrangement, as there are scribe marks on the studs for the shingle lath positions.

On the east gable, an area of beaded, ship-lapped weatherboards has survived within the roof of the Stage III wing. Other weatherboards from this gable were re-used as boarding for shingles above the roof of the wing. The weatherboards have an exposure of about 10 inches. Nail holes in the southeast corner post and the original studs indicate that the facade of the house was weatherboarded.



Van Nostrand-Starkins House, First Floor Plan  
Stage III, ca. 1800–ca. 1830

A fireplace was located at the east end of the house, smaller than the one that had existed in Stage I, but still of generous proportions. On its south side there had been a staircase, the top step of which survives, cut out of the east side of the chimney girt. Facing the stair, in the south wall, was the main doorway. That this had a horizontally divided door is known by the four pintle holes in the corner post.

The interior walls were plastered on riven oak lath. Areas of the original lath, and small areas of the original plaster, survive on the north and east walls of the lean-to and on the walls of the main room behind the Stage III or Stage IV corner fireplace in the northwest corner of that room. Sections of original baseboard also have survived behind the corner fireplace.

The construction of the east wing is conservatively dated at c. 1810, but it could date as early as 1800. This estimate is based on the use of forged nails in the interior woodwork, and an early form of cut lath nails. The only surviving interior trim moulding is of quirked ovolo with astragal form, that came into common use at the beginning of the 19th century.

The wing is 14 feet in length and 14 feet, 2 inches in width. The side walls are 13 feet in height from the floor to the top of the plate. There are knee walls, 2 feet, 3 inches high. The front wall of the wing is set back about 6 inches from the front wall of the main unit. The frame of the wing does not come against that of the original section, but there is a 6 inch space between them.

The frame of the wing is of mill-sawn oak. The posts are 4 inches square, and are framed as bents with the second floor joists, which measure 4 inches by 6 inches. The bents are spaced about 3 feet, 6 inches on centers. The plates measure 3 inches by 5 inches. The front and rear walls have 7 foot long braces between the corner posts and the plates. The end walls have shorter braces between the corner posts and the end girts. Part of the west girt has been cut out, and both of its braces are missing. The three intermediate floor joists were replaced in the recent past. The outside walls were originally covered with beaded weatherboards having an exposure of 9½ inches. Three pieces of this material survive at the top of the north wall, along with the corner board at its west end which, as mentioned previously, was scribed to fit against a stone wall. These pieces show almost no indication of weathering, and have their original red paint. This was matched and its entire exterior painted in 1975 on the basis it represented the earliest exterior paint ever applied to the house.

The second floor boards have survived, and indicate that there was originally a staircase in the southwest corner, coming up over the side of the fireplace. The roof has a pitch of 11½ inches: 12 inches. The rafters are spaced to come over the wall posts. There are no collar beams. One of the original studs has survived in place in the east gable, and parts of the other two exist, out of place. There were no studs in the west wall. At the junction between the wing and the main unit, the ends of the shingle lath had survived, showing that the original shingle exposure had been 10½ inches.

There was a door and window in the south elevation. The existing window and its sash are possibly original, but had been taken out and re-set when later square-edged siding was installed, probably in Stage V. The extant door is a late replacement. Its jambs would seem to date to Stage V. The original door had been horizontally divided, as is evidenced by the four surviving pintle holes which had been covered by Stage V trim. There had been a window in the east elevation, towards the south side. Clear indications of its former presence were found when a bay window, added in Stage V, was removed. These two windows had 6/6 lights that were 8 inches by 10 inches in size. It was not possible to determine if there had been a window in the east gable originally.

There is an original door in the north wall, opposite that in the south wall. It is outward opening, and hung on strap hinges with driven pintles. This door is of batten construction with false applied stiles to make it appear as a two-panel door from the inside. The middle batten rail is in two parts, as if it had been intended to make a divided door. The door has its original cast-iron latch. The casing of the doorway originally had backbands on both sides, but only the exterior ones survived. It is of quirked ovolo with astragal section.

The casing of a closet door on the north side of the fireplace survives, although the door itself had been replaced. The top casing had originally extended up to the second floor boards, and only the lower part of it survives. It was determined from nail holes that the original door had been hung on H-L hinges. The other walls have a board dado, most of which survives. The projecting part of the chair rail had been cut off. Above the chair rail, the walls had been plastered on riven oak lath applied with early cut nails. Only fragments of this lathing survive. The second floor beams and the underside of the floor boards were exposed originally, and had a base coat of red paint which had later been whitewashed over.

The loft had originally been left unfinished; the inside of the roof and gable were whitewashed. The beaded ship-lapped weatherboards of the original unit formed the west wall of the wing's loft.

There was apparently no communication between the wing and the main unit for some time after the wing was constructed. Access between the two sections would seem to have been made in Stage V.

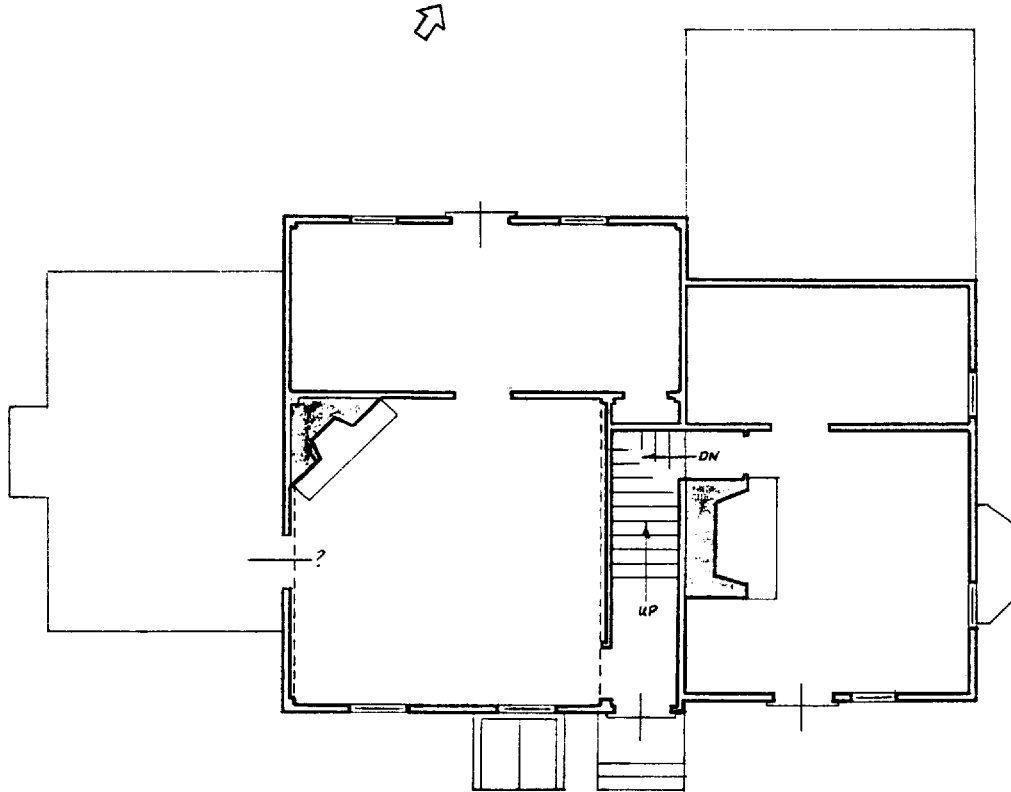
The existing structure of the lean-to of the wing evidently dates to the latter part of the 19th century. However, the unweathered condition of the original weatherboards on the north wall of the wing would indicate that they had always been protected. Also, the outward opening door from the wing into the lean-to space shows no sign of ever having means of securing it from the wing side. It would therefore appear as if there had been a lean-to on the wing from the time it was constructed, and that this feature was subsequently totally replaced.

It would seem that, at least at the beginning of Stage III, the main unit remained unaltered. A question that remains unanswered relates to the date of the corner fireplace in the main unit. It is quite definite that the east wall fireplace existed at the time that the wing was constructed. The scribed corner board confirms this, as also does the fact that the chimney flue of the wing fireplace was joined with that of the main unit within the roof of the wing, as can clearly be seen from the cut-out area of weatherboards of the main unit's gable, where the wing flue had slanted through the wall. The construction of the fireplace appears to be very old. The brick is laid up with clay. There is a wrought iron lintel bar suspended by means of a bolt from a wooden lintel, set in the brick work three courses above the opening. It is unlikely that the corner fireplace and the east end one co-existed. That it was built at some time in Stage III tends to be confirmed by the fact that the floor beams and the underside of the second floor boards in the main and lean-to rooms of the main unit were painted after the construction of the corner fireplace. Only one thin coat of paint is present, and there is no paint in the area covered by the fireplace.

With the removal of the east end fireplace, the tight, winding stair to the loft was replaced by a straight run of stairs between the chimney and the end girts. A board partition was erected under the chimney girt, extending to the north wall of the main room. Although this boarding was later removed, pieces of it survive with the paint outline of the stair. A corresponding paint outline survives on the east face of the chimney girt. A new chimney for the wing fireplace was constructed, extending straight up through the roof of the wing.

There is evidence of the existence of a transverse board partition in the loft that extended at least part of the way across the space, as can be seen from the absence of whitewash on the west face of the second rafter and collar beam from the west end. The loft had been whitewashed as high as the collar beams, and much of this survives.

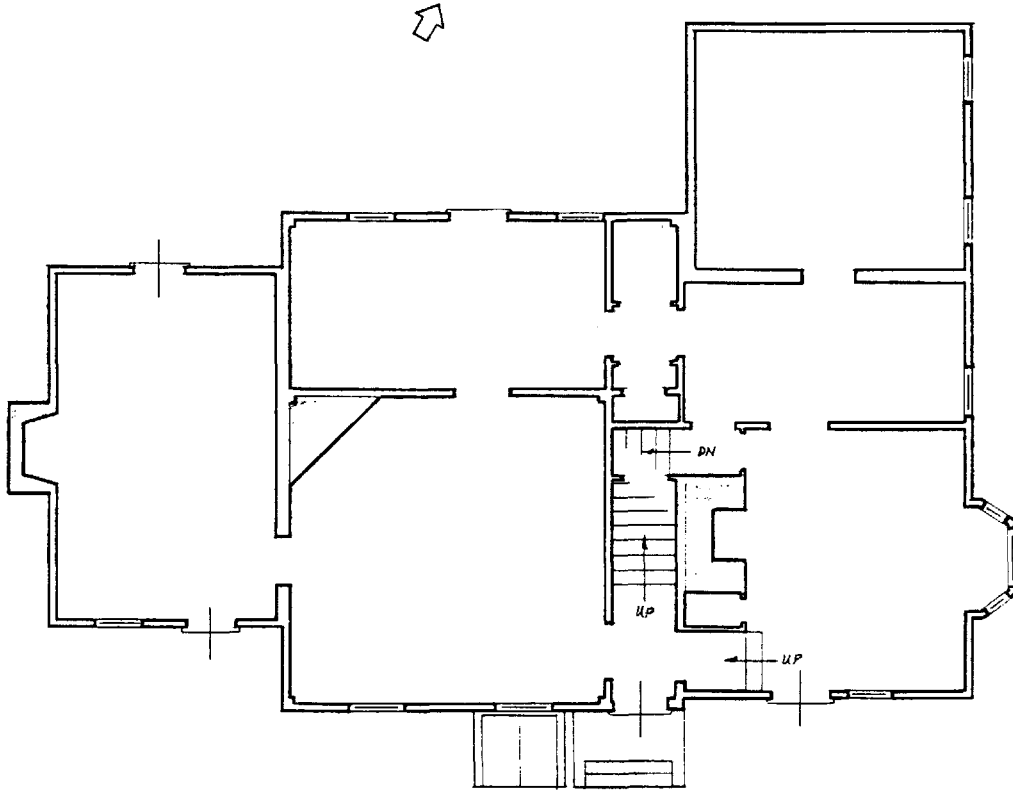
The principal change made in this period was the remodeling of the facade of the main unit in the Greek Revival style. To accommodate two large windows that had 6/6 lights of 10 inch by 12 inch glass, the studs of the front wall were shifted. Only two remain in their original locations. Additional sawn fir studs were inserted, supplementing several Stage II studs that were shifted out of their original locations. The short studs between the girt and the plate were also shifted to allow the insertion of two 3-light windows. The overhang was removed.



Van Nostrand-Starkins House, First Floor Plan  
Stage IV, ca. 1830-ca. 1875

The front wall was given square edge weatherboards, applied directly on the frame, with a flush-boarded frieze starting at the bottom of the second-floor windows. A two-panel door with a three-light transom replaced the Stage II doorway. The door panels are flush-beaded on the inside, while the exterior had applied panel mouldings of ovolo with astragal section. A porch roof was probably built at this time, as old photographs show one with a shed roof. The first floor windows have three-panelled shutters.

Owing to the height of the new windows and the lowness of the front girt, the window stools are very close to the floor. There are panels under the windows. It is difficult to determine internal changes made at this time, as further changes made in Stage V obliterated most of the evidence. It would seem, though, that plaster ceilings were installed in the first floor rooms of the main unit, if not the wing also. The two windows in the north wall of the lean-to of the main unit would seem to have been inserted at this time. These windows are similar to that in the south wall of the wing, being 6/6 and having 8 inch by 10 inch glass, but they have parting strips, which the other window does not. The frames of the two windows are slightly different and may be re-used units. The doorway was apparently altered at this time, judging from the casings and drip caps that have survived under Stage V trim. These pieces show that the door had been outward opening and hung on strap hinges with driven pintles.



Van Nostrand-Starkins House, First Floor Plan  
Stage V, ca. 1875-1970

Added at this time was a shed addition across the west end of the main unit, 12 feet, 4 inches wide. The lean-to of the wing, as it presently exists, was built, probably replacing earlier construction. A bay window was added on the east elevation of the wing, replacing an original window. A small dormer window was constructed in the front slope of the roof. Part of the middle rafter was cut out for it. The square-edged weatherboarding of the wing and the lean-to date from this time, as probably did the hipped porch roof that extended over the door and window of the south wall of the wing and which is known only from photographs. Following soon after this, a separate structure, the Kirby Cottage (TG 1974-75), was moved against the wing lean-to and joined to it. This building, 12 by 14 feet, one and a half storeys in height, which originally had raked eaves, appears to date to the 1860's.

Nearly all of the surviving interior finish dates from this time. Most wall surfaces were replastered on new lath, and new door and window trim applied. The openings of both fireplaces were reduced in size. The floor boards of the first floor of the wing were replaced, and additional joists inset.

The board partition for the stairway in the main unit was replaced by studded framing, lath and plaster being applied on the room side, and the old boarding with the pieces out of order on the stair side. The stair itself was reconstructed with a landing at the level of the second floor of the wing, with a door to the wing loft. Most of the wall between the main and lean-to rooms of the main unit was replaced except



for a section at the west end. An interior cellar stairway was built, leading from the closet on the north side of the wing fireplace. The access between the main unit and the wing at the south side of this fireplace, as it now exists, was constructed at this time. The original stair to the wing loft was removed.

## 20TH CENTURY ALTERATIONS

Most of the 20th century work involved the second floor of the main unit. On the first floor, the only significant change was the replacement of the flooring. In the main room the original joists were retained, but short joists were installed between them so that the new flooring ran from north to south. In the lean-to, the joists were replaced, but the flooring continued to run from east to west.

At the rear, a dormer was constructed, almost the full length of the main unit. Except at the gables, sections were cut out of the Stage I and Stage II rafters. Sections were also cut out of the Stage I rear plate, and the top of the north main post at the chimney girt was cut off, level with the floor. The removed sections of the rear, Stage I, rafters were built into the front slope of the roof as reinforcing. The new rooms on the second floor were lathed and plastered as was the loft space of the wing.

## EPILOGUE

The foregoing structural analysis of the Van Nostrand-Starkins House was prepared by John Stevens, Architectural Historian-in-Charge of the Old Bethpage Village Restoration and an authority on early Dutch Colonial architecture. Mr. Stevens also is the Architectural Historian for the Van Nostrand-Starkins House restoration project, and, in this capacity, established the structural history of the house and developed the plans for and supervised its restoration. The chimney and fireplace design and construction were accomplished under the direction of Lt. Colonel Frederic N. Whitley, Jr., U.S. Army Engineers Ret., who has rendered similar service in connection with most Roslyn restoration projects. Most of the carpentry was accomplished by Steve Tlockowski and Edward Soukup who previously had worked on the Smith-Hegeman and James Sexton houses and, subsequently, worked on many other local restoration projects. Mr. Soukup continues (1989) to work on local restorations. The interior color analysis was completed by Frank Welsh, and the interior painting was accomplished under the direction of Kenneth Rosevear.

The analysis presented here describes the structure of the house as it was immediately prior to the restoration procedure. In developing a restoration program, it was necessary to decide which stage of the development of the house should be restored. To restore it to Stage I, circa 1680, would have involved the destruction of a large amount of original 18th century work. Restoration to Stage IV was contraindicated because almost all the interesting early work would have been concealed. In addition, the Stage IV modifications were not particularly impressive, especially in view of Roslyn's wealth of surviving buildings of this period. It was decided to restore the house to the very beginning of Stage III, circa 1800. At this time the original house (circa 1680) with its early 18th century lean-to (circa 1730) had remained virtually unchanged for well over half a century. The only modification which Stage III actually involved was the construction of the East Wing (circa 1800) of which there was an extensive survival. To accomplish this project the only notable structure which would be lost was the late Stage III corner fireplace of which the chimney was

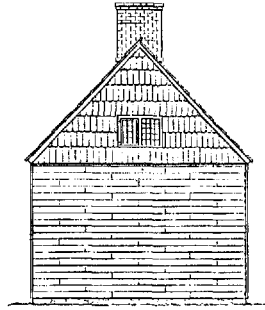
missing and the fireplace itself badly damaged and in poor repair. The reward for the loss of this corner fireplace was the exposure of a Stage II early 18th century plaster wall with its original baseboards. There was sufficient evidence to accomplish the contemplated restoration without conjecture, apart from the reconstruction of the Stage II fireplace and chimney. In this case, considerable information was available in the surviving chimney foundation, Stage III scribed corner board, etc. all of which Mr. Stevens describes in his text.

The restoration of the Van Nostrand-Starkins House was completed in 1977 and the house was exhibited in the Landmark Society tours in 1975, 1976 and 1977. Since then it has been open to the public as a house museum, on Saturday afternoons, from May through October. The Society has been fortunate in acquiring furnishings, mostly by gift, which have descended in Roslyn families, some of them in the Van Nostrand House itself. These include the Kirby lowboy and the Kirby kas, both of which must have resided on this corner for well over a century. The Kirby lowboy was exhibited in S.P.L.I.A.'s "Long Island Is My Nation" exhibit. Numerous other Kirby family gifts also are on exhibit in the house. Several pieces descended in the Bogart-Seaman families, including the painted kitchen cupboard. The Long Island type gumwood kas, which descended from Adam and Phoebe Mott, of Cow Neck, was made between 1741 and 1749. Almost equally important is the two-panel, two-drawer cherry blanket chest whose history is not known but which unquestionably is of Long Island origin. The permanent exhibit of samplers worked by local girls is unique on Long Island. Since the completion of the restoration, the general site grading has been completed and a rubble retaining wall constructed along the house's north boundary. In addition, the only free-standing rubble wall construction in Roslyn during the past century has been erected along the east boundary. Both were built by Frank Tiberia. This site development program was made possible by a Community Development Grant awarded by the Town of North Hempstead American Revolution BiCentennial Commission.

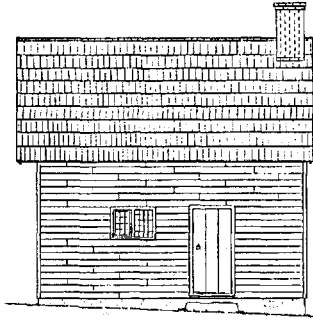
In 1982, the fourth, and most comprehensive, archaeological investigation was completed under the supervision of Donna Ottusch-Kianka, of New York University. Significant quantities of relevant artifacts were unearthed which help significantly in understanding the life practices of early occupants of the house. Some of these have been placed on permanent exhibit in the cellar, which recently was re-worked for this purpose, along with comparable artifacts excavated near other local houses. Wooden sheathing from the John Rogers and Arthur Duffett Houses has been installed here for exhibit and to preserve them.

Similarly, all of the framing of the 17th and 18th century loft has been color-coded so that chronologic evaluation is easily possible. Local architectural fragments are exhibited here, including sections of the seven examples of 19th century fencing surviving in Roslyn. To enhance this fence exhibit, a replica of an early 18th century oak and locust fence was erected along the south boundary of the site, in 1988. This was designed by John Stevens and executed by Edward Soukup and Giulio Parente.

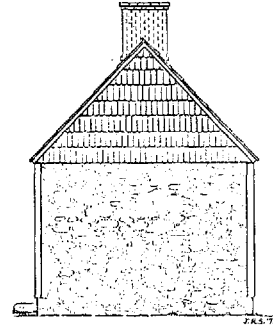
In addition to the foregoing, an appropriate garden plan has been developed for the Van Nostrand-Starkins House with the assistance of a grant from the Roslyn Heights Garden Club. The plan was prepared by Julia S. Berrall, author of "The Garden" and an authority on garden history. Mrs. Berrall's description of her project follows: "The small gardens planned for the Van Nostrand-Starkins House fall into two categories. Close by will be the housewife's bed of medical and culinary



West elevation

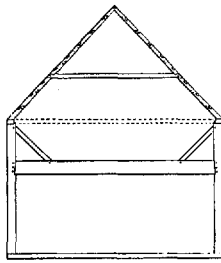


South elevation

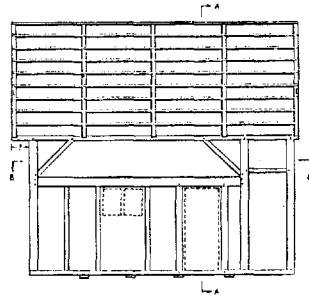


East elevation

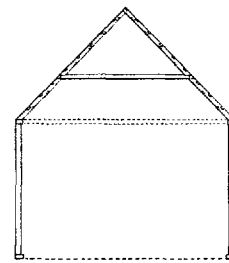
**Van Nostrand-Starkins House  
Framing Details  
Stage I, ca. 1680–ca. 1730  
Drawn by John R. Stevens**



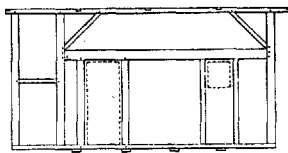
West elevation



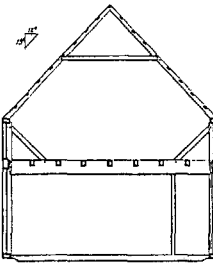
South elevation



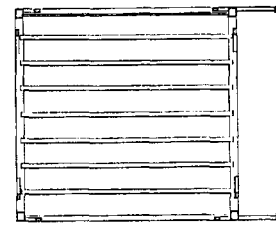
East elevation



North elevation



Section A-A



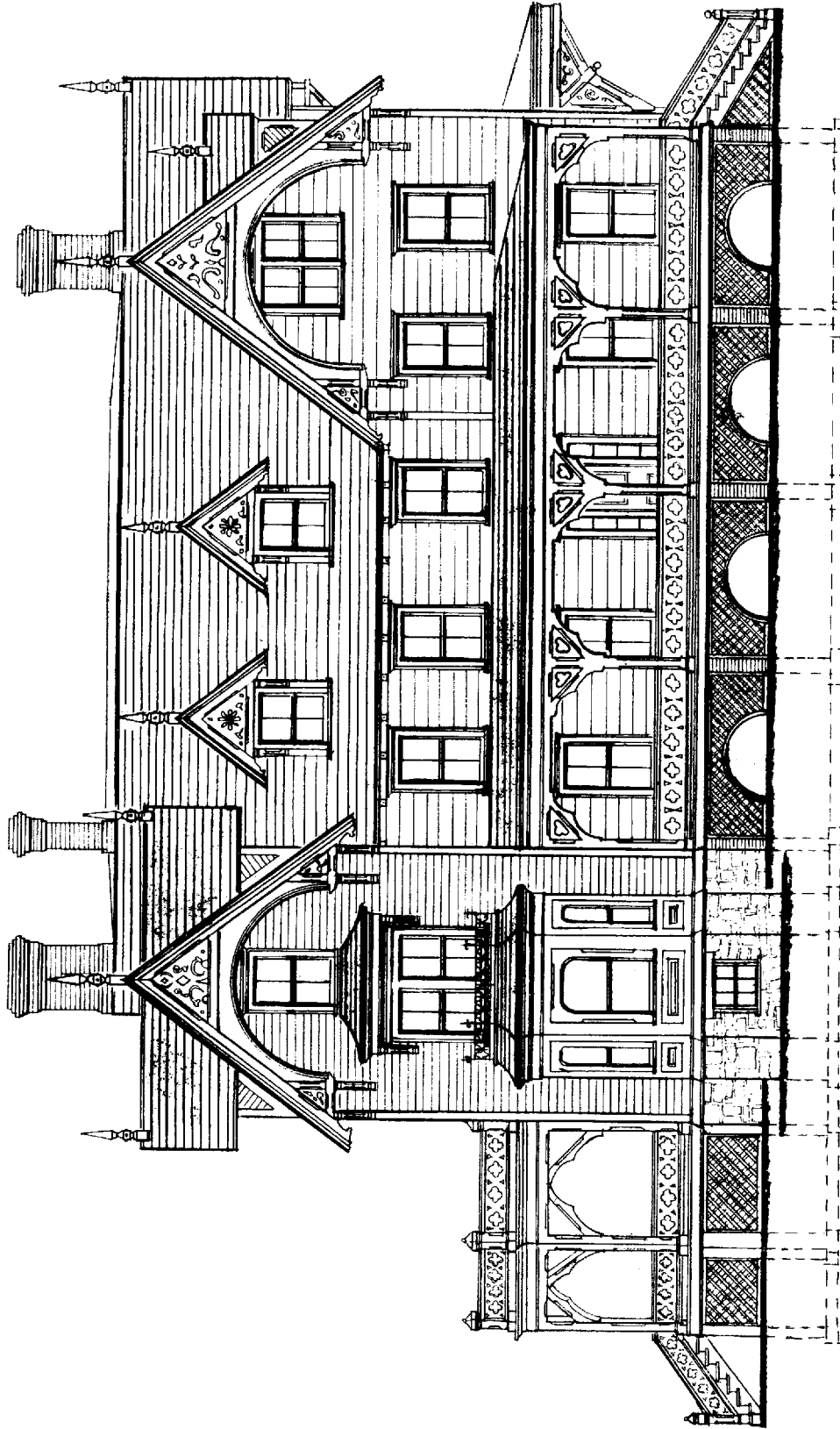
Section B-B

**Van Nostrand-Starkins House  
Reconstructed elevations  
Stage I, ca. 1680  
Drawn by John R. Stevens**

herbs and, at the far end of the garden space, will be rows of root vegetables and other food crops." Unfortunately, the Landmark Society has never developed the beds as it has not yet been possible to find some dedicated person who will agree to care for them. Perhaps 1989 will be a better year.

During 1989, the cellar of the Van Nostrand Starkins House was improved so that it could be used as an exhibition area for archaeological artifacts collected on the site and, to a lesser extent, elsewhere in Roslyn. Because the cellar is heated, it also could be used as an all-year work area. No changes were made which affected any of the original fabric of the house. The 17th century west rubble wall, which was powdering badly, was re-pointed as required. Overhead electric lines were concealed and improved lighting installed and the concrete floor was covered with plastic tiles. The new, east chimney wall was sheathed with wall panels from the second storey, west room of the demolished Arthur Duffett House (TG 1987). The utility panels, on the south cellar wall, were concealed behind early 19th century beaded wall-boards which had been used as flooring in the John Rogers House (TG 1987-88).





"Montrose", ca. 1830-1835  
West Elevation for 1869 alterations  
Conjectural reconstruction of Vaux, Withers plates by Guy Ladd Frost, A.I.A.

**MONTROSE (Circa 1830)**  
**(Clovercroft)**  
**410 Bryant Avenue, Roslyn Harbor**  
**Residence of Mr. and Mrs. Richard O'Hara**

### **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

The tract where Montrose stands, overlooking Hempstead Harbor, was part of the 100-acre farm of Richard Kirk, who built a house (later owned by William Cullen Bryant and named "Cedarmere") that replaced an earlier family "mansion." The original owner of the tract is said to be Samuel Pine, from whom it passed to the Kirk family before the mid-18th century (J.M. Moulton, *Account Book*, 1836-37, Ms., New York Historical Society.) On the land south of the homestead, on the harbor side of the pond, Kirk built a mill which he used variously as a fulling and a paper mill which constituted one of the earliest important industries in Hempstead Harbor.

Kirk died "at an advanced age" in 1818, and in 1821 his heirs sold the farm to Obadiah Jackson and his wife Sarah Boerum. Their daughter Ruth married Hempstead Harbor postmaster William Hicks in 1827 (Wm. Hicks family bible), and the couple bought the Jackson land in two installments, in 1828 (Queens Co. Liber X of Deeds, pg. 185) and in 1834 (Queens Co. Liber F.F. of Deeds, pg. 142), acquiring a half-interest in the entire property with each of the deeds. According to Henry Western Eastman's history of Roslyn, which appeared in the *Roslyn News* during 1879, prior to William Hicks' ownership of the Kirk property the only dwelling houses along the east side of the harbor in this vicinity were the Kirk-Jackson farmhouse, the Pearsall house (Willowmere), the Mudge farmhouse, and a small tenant house built for a laborer. When Hicks acquired half title to the land he probably moved into the Kirk farmhouse, as it was there he received Joseph W. Moulton, N.Y. attorney, and his wife as they passed through Hempstead Harbor in 1834, the year Moulton retired from his law practice on Nassau Street in New York. (NYC Directories).

Joseph W. Moulton was a historian whose book, *History of the State of New York, Including its Aboriginal and Colonial Annals*, published in 1824, was an important early work on the state's origins. In 1833 he married Leonice Marston Sampson, of Plymouth, Mass., "a life-long friend of William Cullen Bryant." The Moultons were the adoptive parents of Dr. John Ordronaux, an eminent local physician and lawyer and one of the founders of The Roslyn Savings Bank. (TG St. Mary's Church 1972 and TG Trinity Episcopal Church 1970). In 1834 Moulton bought an 18-acre parcel at the southern end of the farm, including the Kirk house, from Hicks, and with his family moved to Hempstead Harbor. In 1836 he bought two more parcels from Hicks, bringing his property to about 40 acres, nearly half of the original farm.

Whether Hicks had already built the house which he called "Montrose" before he planned to sell the older Kirk house to Moulton is not known. It was certainly to the "Montrose" house that he moved in 1834 and by comparison with other local houses it seems to date from around that year.

Hicks was indefatigable in his schemes to increase the usefulness and productivity of his land and was one of the most important figures in the development of what is now Roslyn Harbor. In addition to his sawmill and lumber yard, begun in 1832, he built and ran a store and was the founder of a steamboat line between Hempstead

Harbor and New York, with the wharf on his property. He was also appointed Overseer of Highways for the district on the east side of the harbor in 1830. It was during his incumbency that "Musqueto Cove Road," the forerunner of Bryant Avenue, was laid out along the east shore, although a road or lane along the shore actually existed long before.

Hicks' determination to improve the district was implemented by the arrival of the Moultons. Together the two men devised a scheme to sub-divide their joint property into lots of 25' by 100', laid out along the imaginary streets of a town plat. A map commissioned by Moulton and prepared by Andrew Hegeman in January–February of 1837 (Moulton, *Account Book*, 1836–37, Ms., New York Historical Society) and lithographed by John L. Bufford of New York City, shows the property with the planned divisions. The Kirk farmhouse is clearly shown as Moulton's residence, and Hicks' house is labelled "Hotel," probably reflecting Hicks' sale of "Montrose" on a five acre plot in May 1837 to two businessmen from New York, James Evans, a liquor dealer, and George Derick, a saddler, (Queens Co., Liber XX of Deeds, pg. 218). Subsequently Hicks sold his remaining land to Charles Coles (RR:468), Silas Titus (SS:398) and Joseph Berry (unregistered deed). In 1835 Hicks was given permission to dig out the "creek running through the town common." In 1838 he purchased the Anderis Onderdonk House (TG 1970–71) and moved his sawmill to the new location. In that same year he became Overseer of Highways for the district covering the Village.

In 1843 Joseph Moulton sold the Kirk farmhouse, then known as "Springbank," and 40 acres of land to William Cullen Bryant. In 1852 Bryant purchased the land and the "Montrose" house on the east side of the highway for his daughter Fanny and her husband Parke Godwin.

By 1869 the Godwin family had outgrown the house as originally built and the prominent architectural firm of Vaux, Withers & Co. were retained to renovate it. Calvert Vaux is probably best known for his handbook, *Villas and Cottages*, first published in 1864. One of his chapters is devoted to the art of renovating farmhouses to reflect the latest developments in comfort and style, concluding that "without much tearing to pieces, a new character may be given to a house, if it is only well built at first." (Vaux, *Villas and Cottages*, N.Y., Dover, 1970, pg. 221). This respectful attitude toward original fabric can be seen in the Vaux, Withers handling of "Montrose." While exterior trim was exuberantly Victorian, the original shingling, window surrounds and elegant doorway and front door of the original house were left untouched. Interior trim and finish in the Federal block of the house were left alone, though newly created rooms and spaces have the prominent mouldings characteristic of Vaux and his period.

At Fanny Bryant Godwin's death, in 1893, Parke Godwin inherited the house and property. In 1898 he deeded it to his daughter, Minna, who had married Frederick Goddard (Queens Co. Liber 1182, pg. 460). After the death of Minna's brother, Bryant Godwin, she adopted his son Conrad who lived at Montrose (called "Clovercroft" by Minna) with the Goddards. It was Conrad who changed the name back to the original Hicks name of "Montrose," as more appropriate to the history of the house and its location. Parke Godwin's deed to Minna Goddard included, in addition to the house and grounds, the "furniture, bric-a-brac, books, prints, pictures, china, linen . . . and all other personal property" comprising the contents of the estate.



In 1904 Benjamin Speedling, son of Stephen Speedling, a Roslyn carpenter (see Epenetus Oakley House, TG 1973-74) was doing some work on the house (*Roslyn News*, Sept. 23, 1904), possibly some of the alterations in the Colonial- Revival Style which were made during the Goddard ownership.

After Minna Goddard's death, in 1927, Conrad Goddard occupied the house, which was still owned by Minna Goddard's estate. He lived there until about 1955, at which time the property was sold to a firm of builders who built the modern houses surrounding "Montrose."

Dr. and Mrs. Frederick A Zenz owned the house from 1957 to 1972, and the present owners, Mr. and Mrs. Richard L. O'Hara, have now been residents for more than 15 years. "Montrose" has been exhibited on the Landmark Society tours in 1974, 1975 and 1989.

## EXTERIOR

"Montrose" has survived three major periods of construction. The original 2½ storey shingled house, which appears to have been built in 1834, was a substantial center hall residence in the local late Federal style. The house in its earliest state may be seen in the John H. Bufford lithograph of Hempstead Harbor which was printed between 1838 and 1840. This plate was also used on the illustration for Joseph W. Moulton's proposed Montrose development. The early straightforward, four-square residence was altered and romanticized significantly in 1869 by Vaux, Withers & Company for Parke Godwin. Prints of the plans and elevations for the Vaux, Withers alteration, except for that of the principal west facade, survive in the house. The original architectural renderings of the elevations are included in the Local History Collection of the Bryant Library in Roslyn. The missing, principal, west elevation has been reconstructed by Guy Ladd Frost, A.I.A., and has been used as the frontispiece of this article. Additional changes were made during the 20th century by Conrad Goddard, Parke Godwin's grandson, and more recently by Dr. Frederick A. Zenz. To make this description more understandable, the exterior of the early Federal house will be described first, followed by descriptions of the Vaux-Withers and more recent changes.

## EARLY EXTERIOR

The Federal style house was five bays wide by three bays deep. Its gable ends were at right angles to the ridge and it was sheathed with butt-nailed yellow pine shingles having an exposure of ten inches to the weather. Much of this early sheathing has survived. The house has a full cellar which has survived with relatively minor alterations. The foundation was laid in rubble to the grade and brick, in American bond, between the grade and the sills, a masonry technique commonplace locally between 1835 and 1870. The four original chimneys survive although altered and extended by Vaux, Withers. Interestingly enough the two north chimneys in the Federal house are set at right angles to the ridge while the two on the south are parallel to the ridge. Even more interesting, Bufford has rotated all four chimneys 90° from their actual position in his view of Hempstead Harbor.

The early house had 6/6 windows throughout flanked by pairs of 2½ panel shutters on the first floor. Most have survived. The second storey windows now are flanked by louvered shutters of the heavy type made by carpenters on the job and not at a mill. Many of these also survive and probably are original to the house. Similar

second storey shutters have survived in the contemporary Henry Clay Thorne House (TG 1962–63, TG 1982–83) and the A. Nostrand House (TG 1974–75). The window surrounds under the large west porch roof are flat and trimmed only with a simple bead on their interior margins. These windows have no drip caps which suggests the presence of a porch in the original house. The Bufford lithograph shows a porch in the present location although the present porch probably dates from the Vaux, Withers alteration. The Bufford plate shows two smaller 6/6 windows included in this south gable field.

The late Federal style doorway has four-light sidelights and a nine-light transom. The sidelights have Tuscan moulded panels beneath. Both transom and sidelight reveals are trimmed with Tuscan moulded flat panels, all original. The sidelights utilize sturdy, carpenter-made louvered shutters which are contemporary with the doorway. The doorway is flanked by inner and outer pilasters of identical size and configuration. These are not moulded but have slightly convex panels set vertically. The upper part of the pilaster capitals are lightly chamfered and are based upon a lower moulding composed of three separate reeds identical to those of the restored mantel shelf moulding in the front parlor of the James and William Smith House (TG 1973–74, TG 1984–85). The entire doorway is enclosed in a surround of double cyma-reversa mouldings and includes flat panelled, double-stepped corner blocks and a matching central rectangular panel. This outer surround lies in the same plane as the sheathing. The remainder of the doorway is slightly recessed. The door consists of eight cove-moulded raised panels, alternatively short and long, and is trimmed with Tuscan mouldings. The rectangular brass knocker with shell ornamentation appears to be original. If it is, it is the finest example of the three surviving local knockers of its type.

The water-table utilizes a bull-nose drip cap supported by a cove moulding. This continued around the entire house and dates from the Vaux, Withers alteration.

The rear (East) doorway utilizes a simple, double-stepped Tuscan moulded surround, flat panelled corner blocks, and a simple drip cap. The door is the standard 2½ panel Tuscan moulded type. The small window opening to the south of this doorway may be original to this house but is included in the Vaux, Withers rendering and probably was inserted at that time. Its “mill-made” louvered shutters may substantiate this dating.

## **1869 EXTERIOR**

The original gable-ended house with its north-south ridge was extended to the north and south, and south facade gables installed in the east and west fronts. This northern addition was clapboarded while the Federal house retained its original shingles. The original framing was demolished from the attic floor upwards and the present roof built. This is much taller than the early roof and is capped by a shallow hip with steeply sloping sides along the east and west fronts which creates a roof which is a flattened gambrel in cross-section. The new roof ridge was also north-south in orientation although the paired facade gables are connected by collateral ridges and the whole pierced in many places by dormer windows of varying shapes and sizes. The Vaux, Withers rendering shows all of these capped by turned wooden pinnacles—missing today but present in early 20th century photographs. The Vaux, Withers roof is sheathed with dark red and grey slates laid in three wide horizontal bands. A stylish new panelled chimney was installed to serve the new north wing and

the four original chimneys were extended to conform to the new roof height. These extensions were panelled to match the new north chimney.

A new two-storey kitchen wing capped by a steep jerkin-headed roof with shaped decorative rafter ends was built—probably on the site of the original Federal kitchen. A legend on the Vaux, Withers cellar floor plan establishes that the new (1869) kitchen was “4’ wider than (the) frame of the present (Federal) kitchen.” The new kitchen was connected to the house by means of a covered breezeway open on the north and south sides and covered by a steeply pitched slate-sheathed gable-ended roof. The lamb’s tongue and chamfered bracketted framing of the south breezeway opening survives but was filled in during the 1960’s by Dr. Frederick Zenz. The new classic doorway in the filled portion was fabricated from Colonial Revival display cases given by the Traphagen School of Fashion.

The original Vaux, Withers elevations for all but the principal (west) facade survive in the Bryant Library Local History Department and copies of these remain in the house. The location of the west elevation is unknown but Mr. Conrad Goddard’s recollection (RGG/1971) is that he had never seen it. This west elevation was reconstructed by Guy Ladd Frost, A.I.A., for the 1974 Tour Guide. These renderings are extremely useful in calculating changes to the original house and those which have taken place since the 1869 alteration. It should be pointed out, however, that in many instances details shown in the Vaux, Withers plates were never implemented. For example, the renderings show all the windows changed to the 2/2 type when actually the original 6/6 fenestration was retained in the entire early house and even employed in the new kitchen wing.

## SOUTH FACADE

The south facade will be described first as it alone is unaffected by the 1869 wing. This front retains much of its original 6/6 fenestration although the window surrounds have been retrimmed utilizing ogee mouldings and prominent drip caps. The truncated 2/2 pine tree window in the large dormer gable field dates from this alteration as do the two small hipped-roof dormers, utilizing circular windows, which flank it. This large facade gable is trimmed with lamb’s tongue and chamfered brackets and ornamental bracing. The heavy braced verge boards are heavily moulded with lamb’s tongue and chamfer and are based upon chamfered lamb’s tongue brackets. The original Vaux, Withers rendering provided for much richer, pierced verge boards which apparently were never installed. The lamb’s tongue and chamfer of the decorative structural trim is followed throughout the Vaux, Withers alteration. The paired windows in the second storey also have 2/2 sash and date from the 1869 alteration. It should be noted that these have conventional mill-made, louvered shutters lighter in construction than the louvered shutters of the Federal style house. Beneath the paired windows is a 20th century Colonial Revival gable-ended entablature supported by two piers which, oddly enough, rise from the grade rather than from the foundation. When this enframing was applied, it surrounded a doorway installed by Conrad Goddard during the early 20th century, rather than the present window. The 1869 alteration provided for a carriage entrance with a porte-cochere in this location. The Vaux, Withers south elevation shows this supported by lamb’s tongue and chamfer tri-partite colonettes while the profile renderings show the porte-cochere roof supported by massive decorative brackets. Probably the former solution was used to conform to the gable field finish. During the 1960’s this doorway was replaced by the present paired 6/6 windows.

## WEST FACADE

This is the principal facade and the only one for which the 1869 Vaux, Withers rendering has not survived. All the third storey windows were, of course, added during the 1869 alteration and the original second storey, but not the first storey, windows were remoulded to conform. The second storey windows retain their solidly constructed louvered shutters of the second quarter of the 19th century. The gable fields are massively but simply trimmed with lamb's tongue and chamfered bracing which frames a single moulded round-headed arch in each facade gable field. A late 19th century photograph shows the triangular spaces above these arches filled with pierced wooden decorative screens which must have been designed by Vaux, Withers. The dormer windows are shown with matching pierced verge boards which are braced and which rest upon brackets. A bracketed lamb's tongue and chamfer porch extends along the Federal front, probably dating from 1869, and replacing the original porch in the same location shown in the Bufford print (1838-40). The present railing dates from the 20th century and replaces the pierced quatrefoil railing shown in the Vaux, Withers rendering. Elements resembling the original railing survive in the exterior stairway of the new (1960's) garage. A surviving early 20th century photograph shows the present porch when it still retained its pierced and chamfered quatrefoil railing. This photo also shows the Colonial Revival south carriage entrance and it is assumed that both changes were made by Conrad Goddard.

The west end of the 1869 wing originally was terminated at the first storey level by a semi-octagonal bay window. The brick foundation and concave, heavily moulded, metal-sheathed roof survive. The Vaux, Withers rendering shows this roof capped by an elaborate wrought iron railing which is no longer present. The bay window, itself, between the foundation and roof, has been replaced by an overhanging rectangular projection which dates from the 1960's and which was installed by Frederick Zenz.

## NORTH FACADE

This entire facade dates from the Vaux, Withers alteration and the second storey windows all have 2/2 sash. The ground floor windows which are now contained in a modern kitchen have been substantially reduced in size and the fenestration changed. This facade originally had a handsome large semi-octagonal porch with pierced quatrefoil railings at the first and second storeys and lamb's tongue and chamfered bracketed colonettes. The brick porch foundation survives but the remainder of the structure was removed by Frederick Zenz and replaced with the present semi-octagonal clapboarded wing. The north addition to the kitchen breezeway has a concrete foundation and dates from the 20th century.

## EAST FACADE

Much of the east end of the 1869 north transept is partially concealed behind the kitchen wing and its breezeway. It has already been mentioned that the 1869 north extension projects less to the east than it does to the west. Similarly the major gable fields in the east front are less elaborately decorated than their equivalents to the west and are simply trimmed with the lamb's tongue and chamfered braces in the form of verge boards. These are supported by brackets and diagonal bracing, all of which are similarly trimmed. The small rear porch dates from the 1869 alteration and retains its original shallow metal-sheathed hipped roof and the lamb's tongue

and chamfer piers and bracing characteristic of the rest of the house. The present railing with its square balusters shows in the Vaux, Withers rendering as does the small 1/1 window to the south of the doorway.

## **CARRIAGE HOUSE**

A large brick carriage house dating from the Vaux, Withers alteration survives in an unused state on the property immediately to the south.

## **CELLAR**

The cellar of the original Federal house has rubble foundation walls to the grade topped by brick walls from grade to sills. The present brick floor is modern and was installed for the most part during the 1960's. In addition to the original exterior walls there are interior dividing walls almost certainly original to the house. These divide the cellar into convenient compartments for storage of coal, wine, root foods as potatoes, etc., as shown on the Vaux, Withers floor plan. These drawings also show that the southeast room included a furnace which was installed during the Vaux, Withers alteration. The interior brick walls also provided bearing surfaces for the floor beams. For the most part these are vertically sawn and 3 × 9 inches in cross section. A pair of 5 × 9 inch vertically sawn beams extend from east to west and provide support for the walls of the central hall above. The central hall floor joists are joined to the support beams by means of carefully fitted mortise-and-tenon joints. The heaviest of the cellar beams extend from north to south and serve as collateral sills atop the brick interior walls. These are 7 × 9 inches in cross section and are adze trimmed. It cannot be conjectured today whether these were reused from an earlier structure or simply too large to be feasible for the saw mill.

Brick arches survive under all four original chimneys and the brick hearth supports survive in front of them. These may have been rebuilt during the Vaux, Withers alteration but probably represent original work.

The entire cellar originally had a plaster ceiling and marks of the lathing survive on the overhead beams. The interior and exterior cellar walls may also originally have been plastered with the plaster applied directly to the brick or rubble. The cellar windows are large 3/3 sash, protected on the exterior by wrought iron grilles which may date from the Vaux, Withers alteration. Much of the supportive domestic life of the original house took place here.

The cellar of the 1869 wing was similarly constructed and finished and included a wine cellar next to the interior cellar stairway and a larder behind it.

The kitchen cellar alone includes a completely brick foundation. This small building dates from the Vaux, Withers alteration in 1869, by which time full brick foundation walls had appeared in Roslyn. The two earliest known local brick foundation walls are Frederick Copley's "Jerusha Dewey House" (TG 1982-83) and his "Clifton" (Sycamore Lodge) built in the same year (TG 1961-62/ 1987-88).

Today there is a subterranean passage which connects the larder to the kitchen cellar. This has been much altered and enlarged and is sheathed temporarily with plywood. This passageway does not show in the Vaux, Withers floor plan except as a pencilled change. It may have been included in the 1869 alteration, in a narrower form, as other pencilled changes, i.e., a kitchen cellar stairway and two windows, all are present today.

## **FIRST FLOOR (VAUX, WITHERS PRINCIPAL FLOOR)**

The Federal center hall remains relatively unchanged except for the flooring which dates from the early 20th century. The stairway appears unchanged from the 1869 floor plan, curving across the east end of the hall. The stair rail includes late 19th and early 20th century elements. Conrad Goddard installed the present square newel as he "could not stand the elaborate Victorian newel post" (RGG/1971).

The remainder of the center hall is Federal in execution. The inner face of the principal doorway is a simplified version of its exterior with flat panels trimmed with conventional Tuscan moulding. The corner blocks are stepped like those on the exterior although on the inside face the inner step is slightly separated from the flat outer frame. The doorway, door and window surrounds are all trimmed with opposing Tuscan mouldings separated by a double-stepped bead. This facing pattern is employed on all the door surrounds associated with the center hall. The large iron lock is not marked but is original to the house. Probably it was made by Mackrell and Richardson of New York. The back plates of the two wrought iron bolts resemble those of the Norfolk latches of the period and are probably original to the house. The interior door knobs and keyhole covers are all porcelain and date from the Vaux, Withers alteration. In the original house all of these fittings are brass.

The hall baseboard is broad and its capped moulding, like the hall ceiling cornice, is characteristic of the second quarter of the 19th century.

The rear (east) exterior door is double faced and its surround matches the other doorways of the center hall. The Vaux, Withers floor plan shows a small rear "lobby" at the east end of the hall with a curved stair fascia continued downward to form a first floor niche. It is doubtful this detail was ever executed. However, the present powder room under the stairway occupies the site of the Vaux, Withers "earth-closet," a mid-19th century sanitary arrangement invented by a Boston clergyman and carefully described by Catherine E. Beecher and Harriet Beecher Stowe in their book "The American Woman's Home," J.B. Ford & Co., N.Y. 1869 (pgs. 403-418). The hall closet dates from the 20th century.

## **LIBRARY**

The southwest corner room dates from the original late Federal house and opens to the center hall. It is identified as the "library" in the Vaux, Withers floor plan. Its door surround has corner blocks and is similar to those of the center hall except that its central vertical double step is flat and not beaded. The window surrounds match the door surround and enclose a stepped, double-Tuscan moulded, flat panel beneath the sash. The baseboards are stepped and their capped mouldings, like the plaster cornice, are characteristic of the second quarter of the 19th century. The baseboard along the east wall is flat and not moulded to permit installation of bookshelves. The present shelving, however, dates from the 20th century. The brick chimney is now exposed in this room. Originally it was faced with plaster. The simple wooden country-Gothic mantel which dates from the Vaux, Withers alteration has been moved forward away from the chimney to provide space for a deeper fire box. This modification and the present hearth both date from the mid-20th century.

## **SOUTHEAST PRINCIPAL FLOOR CHAMBER**

This room also is included in the original house although its original use is not known and almost none of the original late Federal detail remains. Some vestiges of

the Vaux, Withers detail have survived. The present door dates from the Vaux, Withers alteration but the door surround was replaced during the mid-20th century, and the door itself relocated from another part of the house. The ceiling was dropped during the 1960's and the original baseboards have been almost completely replaced. The "striped" hardwood floor of alternating strips of walnut and oak may date from the Vaux, Withers period. The simple wooden lamb's tongue and chamfer Victorian mantel was designed for a coal grate and was installed by Vaux, Withers. As in the library, the plaster chimney facing was removed during the 1960's and the hearth replaced at the same time. The two 6/6 windows retain their Vaux, Withers surrounds which are trimmed with prominent ogee mouldings.

The Vaux, Withers floor plans indicate this room was intended as a "spare bedroom" or guest room. The floor plan also provided for a side hall which extended from the present doorway to the carriage entrance with its porte-cochere. The east wall of this side hall was removed during the 1960's although its location can be easily seen where the striped flooring joined beneath it, an observation which suggests that the present flooring may date back to the Vaux, Withers alteration. The now missing side hall and the wall which contained it almost certainly did not exist in the original late Federal house as the Bufford print shows a simple 6/6 window at the site of the later carriage entrance. The present window in this room is modern.

## **DRAWING ROOM**

This large room extends across the entire depth of the original late Federal structure. Originally it was two rooms separated by large sliding doors and is shown in the Vaux, Withers floor plan as the "parlor," (in this case the front or formal parlor) and the dining room. In the original house these two rooms probably were used for the front and back parlors. The sliding doors with their surrounds and the dividing wall all were removed during the 1960's, at which time the present redwood plank ceiling was installed within the original plaster cornice. The present redwood-sheathed beam shows the location of the original division. The early dining room was very slightly wider than the front parlor and it was necessary to "furr out" a section of the north dining room wall, concealing a part of the cornice, to make the wall come out even. As a result, the doorway is recessed a few inches within the wall. During this procedure the chimneys were stripped of plaster and the present hearths were installed. These changes were made by Dr. Frederick Zenz. The late Federal pine mantels similar to those in the front parlor of the James and William Smith house (TG 1962-63, TG 1973-74, TG 1984-85) and the dining room of the 1827 part of the Williams-Wood House (TG 1965-66, TG 1975-76, TG 1988-89), have both survived although stripped of paint and without their original facings. Both have moulded, straight-edge shelves with rounded corners, concave-convex panels and free standing unfluted Doric columns capped by panelled blocks and trimmed with Tuscan mouldings.

The baseboards and door-and-window surrounds are the same as those in the center hall and there are Tuscan moulded raised panels beneath the window sash. The plaster cornices are the same as in the center hall but appear somewhat richer because of a band of reeded modern moulding added to the inner edge of the cornice at the time the redwood ceiling was installed. The original yellow pine flooring has survived.

## **FAMILY PARLOR**

The second parlor is located more or less to the north of the front parlor entirely within the Vaux, Withers north addition of 1869. The room is used as a dining room today and extends somewhat further to the west than it did originally, using space originally containing a semi-octagonal window. The present triple window dates from the 1960's. The original door surround, from the front parlor, with its prominent mouldings, survives, as do the matching surrounds of the two French windows in the north and south walls. The south window leads to the front porch as it always did. The north window originally opened to the semi-octagonal open porch but now opens to a sun parlor on the original porch foundation. The Colonial Revival sun porch window surrounds were made up from early 20th century display cases obtained from the Traphagen School of Fashion during the 1960's. A short section of the original plaster cornice survives in front of the present dining room chimney. The remainder of the cornice is wood, and, like the present baseboard, was installed during the 20th century. The chimney has been stripped of its plaster sheathing. The neo-Classic mantel with its marble facings and hearth all date from the early 20th century. The present striped hardwood flooring probably was installed by Vaux, Withers. The early 20th century changes presumably were made by Conrad Goddard, and the latter by Fred Zenz.

## **BACK STAIRWAY**

This stairway, east of the present dining room, was designed by Vaux, Withers and remains unchanged. Its stair rail, which utilizes conventional urn-turned balusters, is executed in chestnut. The Vaux, Withers cellar stairway is located beneath this. The Vaux, Withers floor plan shows a store room and pantry to the north of the back stairway and the "servants' hall" to its east. These spaces have all been combined to form the present kitchen. Beyond this is the former open passageway to the Vaux, Withers kitchen and scullery, now enclosed and much enlarged, which have been combined to form a playroom.

The kitchen dependency is entered through an ogee moulded doorway which dates from the Vaux, Withers alteration. The door is of the single-faced 2½ panel, Tuscan moulded type and was relocated from the second floor of the Federal part of the house. The plain flat kitchen window surrounds probably have survived from the early Vaux, Withers kitchen. According to their floor plan, the small stage in the original scullery represents the site of the original "servants' privy." An enclosed stairway winds upward from the former scullery to male servants' quarters above. The doorway beneath the stairway dates from the Vaux, Withers alteration and has a flat unmoulded surround. The door is four panel and ogee moulded. This door opens to a stairway which leads to the cellar of this small building. This stairway is not shown in the Vaux, Withers floor plan.

## **SECOND FLOOR**

The principal stairway rises from the center hall of the original Federal house and is repeated on the second floor except for being cut short at the west end to provide space for a small chamber used as a dressing room. The dressing room doorway has been relocated from the center hall, as shown in the Vaux, Withers floor plan, to the southwest chamber. The second floor center hall is essentially unchanged and retains its original pine flooring, late Federal baseboards, corner-blocked door surrounds and 2½ panel Tuscan-moulded doors, moulded on the



hallway sides only. Two of the doorways are continuous with their corner blocks combined into a joint rectangular panel which does not appear elsewhere in Roslyn. One of these opens to the present attic stairway which shows only as a correction on the Vaux, Withers floor plan. The ceiling "beams" are decorations applied by Fred Zenz in the 1960's.

### **SOUTHWEST CHAMBER**

The southwest chamber retains its Federal characteristics, i.e., stepped Tuscan moulded door-and-window surrounds with corner blocks, Tuscan-moulded panels beneath the sash and 2½ panel Tuscan-moulded single face doors. One of these leads to a closet, the other to a bath which shows as a small bedroom on the Vaux, Withers floor plan. The surviving divisions appear on the Vaux, Withers plan as a later correction. The small mantel in the southwest chamber utilizes Tuscan-moulded panelled pilasters capped by Federally-moulded capitals. The moulded stepped baseboards date from the original late Federal house.

### **SOUTHEAST CHAMBER**

This room dates from the original late Federal house and originally, as today, was entered from the center hall. The Vaux, Withers floor plan shows a small anteroom off the hall to provide entry to this chamber and to the small bedroom, now a bath, between the southwest and southeast chambers. Corrections to the Vaux, Withers plan suggest this alteration may not have taken place. In any case the room has been much altered over the years. The east window has a stepped surround and a cyma curved Federal type moulding which dates from the original house. All other door and window surrounds are prominently ogee moulded and date from the Vaux, Withers alteration. The Tuscan moulded 2½ panel door to the bath is only a single panel wide. The 2½ panel closet door apparently dates from the Federal house but was retrimmed with ogee moulding during the Vaux, Withers alteration.

### **NORTHWEST CHAMBER**

This room dates from the original house and retains its early door and window surrounds and baseboards which match those of the southwest chamber across the hall. It also retains its original mantel with flat panelled, Tuscan moulded pilasters capped by Tuscan moulded capitals which include a slightly raised panel. A matching rectangular moulded panel breaks forward between the capitals beneath the straight edge moulded shelf. The "beamed" ceiling was applied beneath the original ceiling by Fred Zenz.

The Vaux, Withers plan called for two closets in the east wall. Only one of these is present today. Since the baseboard in the area of the second has been patched it is likely it was relocated into the north wall which is the end of the original Federal house. This relocated doorway shows in the Vaux, Withers plan.

### **NORTHEAST CHAMBER**

This room is shown in its present form in the Vaux, Withers floor plan. Much of its architectural detail, i.e., Tuscan capped baseboards, Tuscan-moulded stepped door surround and cyma moulded stepped window surrounds seem to date from the original house. The closet door surround is stepped, but is prominently ogee moulded and dates from the Vaux, Withers alteration even though it includes a Tuscan-moulded 2½ panel single face door from the original house. The simple

mantel is Gothic in style and dates from the Vaux, Withers alteration and is an obvious attempt at modernization at that time. There is an accessory hallway between it and the northwest chamber which leads to the back stairway. Prior to the Vaux, Withers northern addition there appears to have been no place for it to lead to as the Federal house ended at the north wall of these chambers. The different door and window surrounds suggest the northeast chamber was altered at the time the hallway was built and that originally it included the hallway. In this case the northeast bedroom doorway would have been at the present junction of the principal and collateral hallways. When the north addition was built the floor plan shows this passage extending to a bedroom and a range of utility rooms, i.e., sewing room, bathroom, linnen (sic) room and a seamstress room. These all survive today, although the utility rooms have been substantially altered. The north window has quotations signed by "Raleigh" and "Elizabeth R (I)" scratched in the glass pane. These incised quotes cannot be attributed or dated.

### **NEW NORTHWEST BEDROOM**

The new northwest bedroom is entirely in the Vaux, Withers addition and retains its period flavor which includes prominently moulded door and window surrounds, the latter with panels beneath, stepped baseboards and four-panel ogee moulded door. The period moulding of the east-west hallway doorways was removed in the 1960's and strips of lathing applied to conceal the join. A similar alteration was made in the small chamber at the east end of this passageway, the original "seamstress room." Beyond the seamstress room a covered passageway, now a bath, connects with the upper storey of the 1869 detached kitchen. There are two small rooms here, both intended for male servants. The original Vaux, Withers floor plan does not show a second floor level for the connecting passage. The space obviously existed but the doorways to it at each end almost certainly did not, as in a Victorian household there would never have been a connection between the bedrooms of male and female servants.

### **ATTIC**

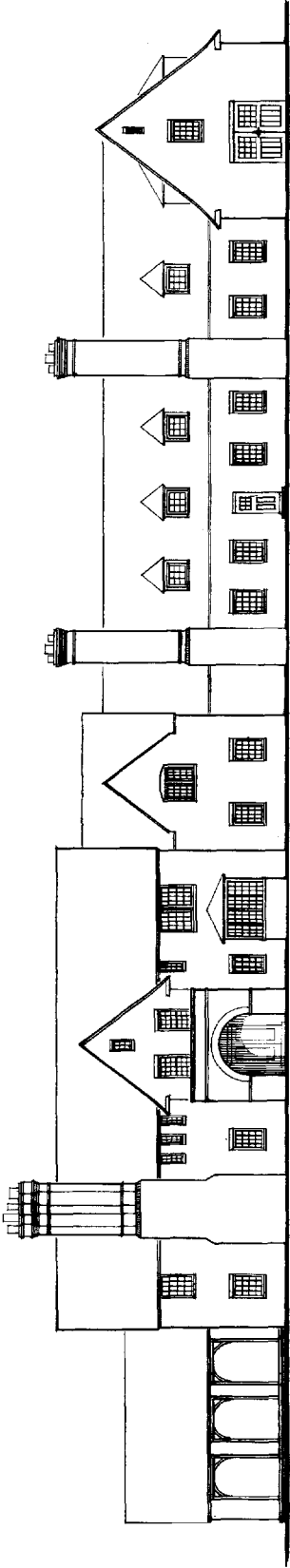
The entire attic from the floor up dates from the Vaux, Withers alteration as the result of the substantial redesign and rebuilding of the early roof. According to the Vaux, Withers floor plan a central passage extended from north to south the entire length of the original house. The space to the east of this passage was to be reserved as an unfinished garret, as it remains today. Since the framing in this space is exposed the notches may be seen in the original plate from which the rafters of the original roof were sprung. These were set on 20-inch centers. A stairway extends from the garret to an upper garret in which the mansard-like quality of the present roof interior may also be seen. The portions of the original chimneys which extend through the upper garret were probably exposed in the original house.

The Vaux, Withers floor plan called for the continuation of the original curving center hall stairway to the third floor garret dividing it into two separate rooms. This apparently never was executed and the present principal attic doorway presumably dates from the Vaux, Withers alteration. For some reason a portion of its stair rail has been altered and some of the balusters have been shortened to permit the occasional removal of this section of rail. The chamfered rail and the tapering lamb's tongue and chamfered newel both have been sectioned to permit this removal.

The Vaux, Withers floor plan provides for three bedrooms along the west side of the north-south passage. All survive essentially unchanged and retain their original floors, baseboards and ogee moulded door-and-window surrounds. The southernmost chamber has access to a chimney flue and retains the chimney opening for a small iron stove.

There is a large bedroom at the north end of the central passage in the west end of the Vaux, Withers northern addition. With the possible exception of its hardwood floor this room remains unchanged. It is much larger and far more elaborately trimmed than the three bedrooms over the original Federal house. It was probably designed for use by an adult member of the family or even as a study as it retains a large original built-in bookcase.

To the rear of the north addition, at the upper end of the back stairs, but two steps below the principal attic floor level, there are two small bedrooms for female servants. Except for later hardwood flooring these date from the Vaux, Withers alteration and have survived unchanged.



“Greenridge” (1916) The principal (south) front as it appeared when built. Drawing by Cecilia Wheeler.

**"GREENRIDGE"**  
**875 Bryant Avenue, Roslyn Harbor**  
**Residence of Mr. Mead L. Briggs**

### **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

The estate known as "Greenridge" was built by Arthur Williams. Williams purchased a parcel of land, 14 acres, bounded by Glen Cove Road on the east, Greenvale Station Road (now Bryant Avenue) on the south, and the Engineer's Golf Club on the north and west, on February 11, 1916. The land was purchased from Louise F. Phillips of Palo Alto. At the time of Williams' purchase, it appears there were no buildings on the property. Williams must have begun construction quite soon after obtaining the property, for a mere four years later, he sold the property to Margery K. Mergargel, and moved on to his next Roslyn Harbor project, "Brook Corners," known now as the Swan Club. "Greenridge," meanwhile, changed hands with regularity: in 1921, Margery Mergargel sold the property to Josephine Seligman; in 1945, Seligman sold to the William P. McDonald Corporation; in 1950, Adelaide McDowell and William P. McDonald bought the house from the McDonald Corporation. It was during the tenure of these owners that the property was subdivided, reducing the land associated with the house to 3.2955 acres, its present size.

After the death of William P. McDonald, his wife remarried, becoming Adelaide J. Bolling. Following her death, the estate trustees sold the property to Xzov Realty in 1969. In 1971, David and Doris Marcus bought the property in three lots, 277, 278, and 284, all from Xzov Realty. A small section of land on the north side of the property was sold back to Xzov Realty, creating lot 283.

All four lots were bought by Alan B. and Barbara Libshy in 1973. Mrs. Libshy's father, Ben Libshy bought the house in 1981. In 1983, the present owner, Mead L. Briggs purchased the property, with the intention of restoring the building to its original condition.

### **ARTHUR WILLIAMS**

Arthur Williams was born in Norfolk, Virginia, in 1868, son of Rev. Christopher S. Williams and Hannah Sanford Williams. Williams went to work for the electric light and power company when he was seventeen years old. His professional involvement in the relatively new field of use and distribution of electricity earned him a membership in the Edison Pioneers, an organization of men who helped Thomas Edison develop and apply electricity for the use of all. At New York Edison Company, Williams served successively as superintendent of interior construction, electrician, superintendent of the third district, and superintendent of the underground department. He eventually rose to the position of vice-president in charge of commercial relations. During World War I, Williams served as Food Administrator of the district, which included Greater New York and Suffolk, Nassau and Westchester Counties. He never married, and died at Miami, Florida, in 1937.

Williams was a tireless public servant, and used his early retirement, at the age of fifty, as an opportunity to devote himself more fully to his charitable work, and put his creative energies into improving his Roslyn Harbor Spanish style residence, "Brook Corners". Williams' special interest work included his fellowship in the American Institute of Electrical Engineers, membership in the American Academy of Political and Social Science and service as president of the American Safety

Museum. He was active in numerous clubs and museums in New York City, and devoted a great deal of time to a world-wide campaign for greater safety in industry.

Williams was known to entertain friends with evenings of musical and dramatic events, and both "Greenridge" and "Brook Corners" were constructed with grand spaces for dining and socializing. Though it is not known why "Greenridge" was sold after Williams had occupied the house for less than four years, a tradition exists that "the dining room was too small." The house appears to have been built entirely during Williams' tenure, and has had remarkably few alterations through the several following owners and residents.

## ARCHITECTURAL BACKGROUND

The design of "Greenridge" is attributed to Harold Victor Hartman (*American Architect*, October 12, 1921, advertisement for Rising Nelson Slate Co.), of whom no other information has been found. The house is built in a style known as Tudor Revival, a style used frequently in the wealthier suburbs of the early 20th century. American Tudor Revival buildings borrow their design vocabulary from the country houses of 16th century England. Buildings of this era were predominantly brick and stone, and though their floor plans were similar to earlier, Gothic, buildings, the decorative details both inside and out looked forward to the renaissance classicism of continental Europe. The intention at "Greenridge" clearly was to create an American estate reminiscent of an English country seat.

## EXTERIOR

The building exterior is long and expansive. Steeply pitched roofs allow the roofing material, slate, to be a dominant feature of the design. Projecting bays, gables, dormers, and chimneys, and deep eaves create shadows and multiple angles, making the house appear less massive and more picturesque. The house is oriented on an east-west axis, facing south, with the service wing extending to the east, and the residential portions to the west.

The house is built primarily of red brick, laid in Flemish bond. Window lintels and sills are also brick, lintels laid in soldier courses, and sills in header courses. Original sash (see note below on alterations) are multi-pane wood casements, outward swinging, painted a dark chocolate brown. Gutters and downspouts are copper, the downspouts square in section. All pitched roofs are Vermont slate, and the slates are cut thick and laid in graduated courses, resembling stone roofed country houses in England. The intersection of roof planes are slated in "swept" or "round" valleys, giving a soft, gently sloping effect. Step flashings at the intersection of walls and roof planes are laid in copper. Dormers are faced with wood, but their sides are hung with slate.

The chimneys are laid in ashlar cut stone to the roof line, and in brick above. The patterns of brickwork vary from chimney to chimney, showing the mastery and creativity of the mason. New chimney pots, cast in concrete, have recently replaced the original, deteriorated pots.

The south facade, starting from the west: There is an open porch with brick piers supporting a heavy timber roof. This is connected to the two and a half story "main block," which has a projecting, gabled, entrance bay. Attached to this entrance is a projecting porte-cochere, semi-circular openings on three sides, heavy timber framing within, and a brick parapet wall on top. East of the entrance is the

dining room bay window (with original casement windows intact). Set back from the main block is another two story section; this has a gable perpendicular to the main east-west ridge. A smaller one and a half story "service wing", with five dormers and faced by two stone chimneys, terminates in the garage. The garage is also gabled, ridge running north-south, and has one dormer in the west slope and four in the east slope. Garage doors are wood panel, glazed above, with original hardware.

The west elevation, starting from the north: The "great hall" is in a one and a half story wing, which terminates on northern wall in a five-sided bay with a crenelated parapet. This wing has leaded glass windows with stone hood-molds above. At the intersection of the stone wing and the main house, there is a stone stairtower which projects into the patio area. This stonework is laid in an ashlar pattern, similar to that of the chimneys. The tower is topped with winged gargoyles. Attached to the west end of the main house, is the open porch, which has a half-timbered gable end, showing peg joinery, hewn timber and panels of brickwork laid in Flemish bond, common bond and herringbone. The interior of the porch is finished with a heavy moulded cornice and plaster ceiling.

The north elevation, from the east: The back kitchen and semi-circular arched entrance porch are located in the rear of the service wing. There is a recessed entrance where the back door and hardware appear to be original. Parallel to the wing, starting at the porch, is a set of exterior stairs heading to the basement. A flat-roofed projecting room is used as a potting shed. The rear of the main block has two gables perpendicular to the ridge, and an all-brick chimney. The "great hall" wing has a stone foundation and stone window surrounds, as on its patio elevation, and a stone-based chimney. The five-sided bay has Hope Co. metal windows.

The east elevation consists of the garage, and a flat-roofed workroom which contains the site of the old well. All windows on this elevation are original to the house's construction date.

There is one outbuilding, an ice house, which has brick walls, with a new roof and roof covering. The ice house is set into the ground, so that most of the storage area is located well below grade.

## INTERIOR

The house is entered from the porte-cochere, through wrought bronze and glass doors, to a vestibule. The vestibule is tiled with the first of many German ceramic tiles used in the house, and the steps are travertine. The height of the ceiling in this space increases the grandeur of the entrance to the main hall, which is arranged as a reception room. The floor is finished with another German tile floor. The carved stone fireplace is the prominent feature of this room. Here, as in most rooms, the beams are cased and plastered; they are, in fact, I-beams, representing what would have been traditionally wood framing members in English 16th Century construction.

To the west of the reception area is the library, walls paneled in oak, floor tiled with German tiles, and another carved stone fireplace. The three panels above the fireplace, arches shown in perspective, are an indication of the classical renaissance details that are typical of the Tudor style. French doors on the west wall allow access to the covered porch, patio and pool. The beams in the library are cased in oak.

North of the reception area is the "great hall", an impressive and stately space reminiscent of the great medieval halls of 14th and 15th century England. The

exposed hewn beams, leaded glass windows containing heraldic ornaments, a stone fireplace and dark wood floor all contribute to the feeling of the medieval. Above the entrance to the room there is a gallery, perhaps used for musicians or dramatic actors in Williams' entertainments. The north end of the room is graced with a large circular window, and a five-sided bay projecting into the wooded yard.

To the southeast of the reception area is the dining room, and to the northeast, the breakfast room. Both rooms have tile floors and marble fireplaces, the breakfast room in white, and the dining room in black. Both of these fireplaces are classical in design, compared to the more gothic style fireplaces in the library, great hall, and reception area.

To the east of the dining areas are the modern kitchen (built in the former pantry), modern family room (built in the former kitchen), potting shed, second kitchen, laundry, and garage. Features of this area that reflect original functions include a safe now used as a cupboard (in the former pantry); the site of the original kitchen stove (currently used for a wood stove in the family room); and an ice closet to store ice brought from the ice house (now a coat closet near the potting shed).

Leading to the northwest from the reception area is the grand staircase, rising in three runs within the stone stairtower. The newels and balusters, all oak, are decorated with strapwork, interlacing bands and forms originating in 16th century Dutch ornament. The proportions of the staircase are generous and graceful.

Upstairs, there are five chambers, all with baths. The master suite is above the library, with two baths, and a dressing room above the open porch. The other four chambers are organized above the reception, dining and kitchen areas. The service wing contains eleven bedrooms, all identical in size and finished simply. An original bathroom survives in the service wing, with a hexagonal tiled floor, pedestal sink and cast iron bathtub.

## **BASEMENT**

A full basement is located under the entire house, including the service wing. Under the library there are dressing areas and a shower for the pool. Under the front entrance vestibule there is a wine cellar, which appears to have been built as a bomb shelter.

## **LANDSCAPE**

"Greenridge" formerly had a reflecting pool, swimming pool, chicken coop, ice house and barn as part of the estate. Only the ice house remains as part of the property; fragments of the other buildings have been incorporated in neighboring properties, as are the pool and reflecting pool. Currently, the property contains 3.29 acres, and includes a new swimming pool on the west side terrace. The fact that the property is bordered on two sides by the golf club insures a certain amount of underdeveloped and wild feeling; the other side is more densely developed. Most of the landscape plantings have been installed by the current owner.

## **ALTERATIONS FROM THE ORIGINAL HOUSE**

The most obvious alterations to "Greenridge" are also the most typical; baths and kitchens, which demand to be updated periodically, have been altered by several owners. The next most obvious alteration is the replacement of many of the original



doors and windows with new, mahogany thermopane casement windows. These replicate the original windows in having through-muntins and small panes, but lack the bottom rail moulding and dark brown paint found on the originals, and sometimes substitute one window for the original pair. Jambs and trim have also been replaced in this work.

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