

THE PRESERVATION EDUCATION INSTITUTE
A Division Historic Windsor, Inc.
PO BOX 1777, 54 MAIN STREET
WINDSOR, VT 05089-0021
802-674-6752 802-674-6179 Fax
histwininc@valley.net
www.preservationworks.org

For Immediate Release: December 3, 2008

Contact: Judy L. Hayward, Executive Director

Historic Windsor Purchases Historic House

Windsor, VT - Historic Windsor, Inc., purchased the historic Stephen Jacob House on State Street in Windsor, Vermont on Tuesday, November 4, 2008 from Windsor resident Elton J. Davis.

The house, built in approximately 1784, is a good example of transitional architecture retaining elements of Georgian, Federal, and Greek Revival styles.

The site is significant to Vermont history; its original owner, Judge Jacob, kept a slave-Dina Mason White in spite of the fact that Vermont's Constitution was the first document in the world to prohibit slavery. When Dina became infirm and blind and was no longer able to serve him, Jacob dismissed her with no means of support. The Town of Windsor sued Jacob in 1802 for Dina's upkeep, but Jacob prevailed. The Court ruled that because the Vermont Constitution prohibited slavery, Jacob's New Hampshire bill of sale for Dina was null and void in Vermont, and she could not be considered a slave. The case affirmed the validity of the State's constitutional ban on slavery law, nevertheless.

HWI executive director Judy Hayward said that the intent of the purchase is to use the house for the next 5-10 years for on-site, preservation skills training programs conducted through its Preservation Education Institute. This use will be subject to local and state permitting that needs to be secured, but before any work can begin, the house must be studied, and an historic structure report prepared. Preliminary documentation has commenced thanks to the efforts of a graduate student from the University of Vermont Historic Preservation Program. Jessie Brackenwagen is gathering information as part of requirements for two courses. The results of the structures report will inform the decision about the building's ultimate use.

Brackenwagen is conducting research of primary source documents- maps, wills, deeds, and more. Additionally, she is surveying the condition of the building from roof to basement with the help of Aubrey Von Lindern, another student in the program. They will prepare the baseline data for the structures report. They are near the end of the term so we expect to see a draft of their work with in a week or so, said Hayward. Hayward

indicated that landscape and archeology studies may be needed. “The house is clearly one of Windsor’s earliest and deserves an in-depth analysis before we commence any work.”

“The building will be mothballed with appropriate security measures taken for the winter months,” said HWI President Henry Duffy. “That gives us time to assess the building’s ultimate use, apply for appropriate permits, and plan for the work on the building. The process for seeking grant support has already begun,” he noted.

Historic Windsor is particularly grateful to Mr. Davis and his family. While there was other interest in the building, Mr. Davis and his family were keenly interested in the preservation of the building, and that made for an amiable, but fair negotiation process. Historic Windsor acquired the building with funds that it had received from the estate of Mary and Eric Lagercrantz in 2006.

While some of the work on the house must be done by contractors, such as roofing, plumbing, heating, and electrical, much of what needs to be done can be accomplished through preservation skills training workshops.

The Preservation Education Institute (PEI) was founded by Historic Windsor, (HWI) in the fall of 1982 to provide training in historic preservation for building professionals and property owners. Since early 1983, it has conducted training programs on such diverse topics as plaster repair, window sash replication and repair, stone wall repair, and repointing brick masonry from Vermont to Idaho and Louisiana. It teaches preservation philosophy, structural repair, and project planning for professionals who work on historic buildings. “Do-it-yourself” property owners are welcome to enroll in its programs as well.

From time to time it has taken on special educational initiatives through grants or contracts, such as fire safety and historic preservation, accessibility and historic preservation, and a current project with the State of Vermont to train volunteers working on the statewide barn census.

For project updates, visit www.preservationworks.org or contact Historic Windsor’s office at 802 674-6752.

Historic Windsor, Inc., was formed in 1971 to save the Windsor House from demolition. Its mission today is to foster the preservation of historic buildings through education.

####