3 George Street—
The Rest of the Story

By Jack Mentes

As many of you probably remember from our last issue, the owners of 3 George Street were seeking permission from the City to destroy this historic building. Also included in that application was the demolition of its neighbor at 13 George Street. Believe it or not, the reason for erasing these buildings and their history was “progress” and to emulate the development pattern established on Pearl Street. Ironically, the pattern of development was largely set by the applicant/owner’s previous development of Victoria Place. They received approval for that construction and the related demolition of several historic structures by promising to restore and preserve the General George Stannard House at 3 George Street.

When this was brought up in debate about the current proposal’s mass, the applicant, with a straight face, announced to everyone that the Elmwood Avenue Federal Building had already set the limits of growth in the area! Aside from the glaring fact that the Federal Building reflects all of the failed strategies of Urban Renewal and the destruction of Burlington’s Italian section for the sake of “progress,” it is also the only building big in that neighborhood—not PB’s series of most endangered structures and sites is intended to bring much needed attention to historic properties that are being threatened by development projects or neglect.

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Building New to Preserve the Old

By Jane Williamson

Rokeby Museum, located in Ferrisburgh, Vermont, completed its new Underground Railroad Education Center last fall after more than a decade of planning and fundraising. The National Park Service described Rokeby as “unrivaled” among Underground Railroad sites when designating it as a National Historic Landmark in 1997. Once home to four generations of Robinsons, Rokeby began its life as an historic site in the early 1960s and is now preparing for another transformation when the Center opens in May.

The Center will make the Museum fully accessible to a broad audience for the first time. An engaging new exhibit—“Free and Safe: The Underground Railroad in Vermont”—is going up and will soon fill the Center’s

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second floor. “Free and Safe” begins with the story of an escaped slave named Simon, set in the context of American slavery in the 1830s. Simon had been sold south and, facing the loss of home and family, risked a run for freedom instead. The exhibit evokes Simon’s escape through recorded sound and recreated environments. Visitors make their way to Vermont and Rokeby along with Simon, where they are introduced to Jesse, another former slave. The exhibit presents his story through a short drama written by Vermont playwright David Budbill. The actor-less play is staged using a set with Robinson family artifacts and recorded sound. A final, large gallery puts the individual stories of Simon and Jesse and the Robinsons into national context. Visitors can listen to abolitionist speeches and visit an antislavery bookstore. A timeline explores the tumultuous antebellum decades.

The Underground Railroad Education Center will fulfill the Museum’s mission—to “connect visitors with the human experience of the underground railroad,” but will also help to preserve the site. The historic core of the site includes a fully furnished house and ten original farm buildings set in a 90-acre landscape that evokes Vermont’s agricultural past. The Center will take pressure off the house, which has filled multiple functions for decades, and bring in new friends and funds.

The Center and Free and Safe will open on May 19 and be open daily until the end of October. In the meantime, visit the Museum’s Facebook page to follow progress on the exhibit.

www.rokeby.org • rokeby@comcast.net

The exhibit is the real heart of the new Center, but the lower floor provides amenities the Museum has lacked—public rest rooms, potable water, and comfortable meeting space. A small gift shop and staff offices are also located there.

The Underground Railroad Education Center will fulfill the Museum’s mission—to “connect visitors with the human experience of the underground railroad,” but will also help to preserve the site.
Burlington’s Most Endangered

By Matt Viens & Ron Wanamaker

Near the top Pearl Street you’ll find a number of stately homes. Perhaps none, according to the Vermont State Register in 1977, is more historically important than the Moore-Woodbury House at 416 Pearl Street. The building, once also known as the Governor’s Mansion, has sadly been in decline for years. According to a recent report by the City’s Department of Planning and Zoning, the structure is currently in an “advanced state of disrepair.”

PB’s series of most endangered structures and sites is intended to bring much needed attention to historic properties that are being threatened by development projects or neglect.

This property stands at 416 Pearl Street in Burlington. The owners are currently seeking to replace all the windows in the structure’s adjoining buildings with vinyl replacement windows.

The primary building, was once one of Burlington’s grandest residences, was constructed shortly after the War of 1812 by prominent Burlington merchant and principal in the Burlington Woolen Company, George Moore. Moore died in 1841 and the house passed through several owners until it was purchased by Burlington Mayor Urban A. Woodbury in 1886. Woodbury served as Lieutenant Governor from 1889–1891 and Governor from 1894–1896.

To look at the structure now, you would never know that three sitting American Presidents (William McKinley in 1897, Theodore Roosevelt in 1902, and William H. Taft in 1909) were once entertained there. It is an example of deferred maintenance and neglect, going as far back as the 1940s.

The bronze plaque once denoting the home’s historic visitors is long gone. The property has been converted into apartments and is now commonly referred to as a part of “Handy Court,” a hodgepodge of derelict rental properties to its rear. The owners are currently seeking to replace all the windows in the structure’s adjoining buildings with vinyl replacement windows.
City Attorney Nixes Planning Commission “Policy” of Not Enforcing Historic Preservation Requirements

By Norm Williams

The City Attorney has rebuked the Burlington Planning Commission’s effort to delete a key historic preservation requirement from the zoning ordinance as a matter of “policy.” Undaunted, the Commission will now seek to amend the ordinance to eliminate the requirement.

With little fanfare, the Burlington Planning Commission adopted an “Historic Building Materials Replacement Policy” on October 9, 2012. The new policy permits owners of historic buildings to remove original exterior materials and replace them with materials of their own choosing. In contrast, the zoning ordinance states that “the removal of distinctive materials is to be avoided”; that “distinctive materials that characterize a property will be preserved”; that “deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced”; and that “new additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials.” In short, the zoning ordinance recognizes that historic materials—including slate roofs and wood rather than vinyl siding—are integral to historic districts and properties.

After learning of the Commission’s action, Preservation Burlington sent a letter urging it to retract the policy. The Commission did not respond. We then notified the City Council. The City Council referred the matter to City Attorney Gene Bergman, who largely agreed with our position. Gene issued an opinion that the policy went beyond the scope of the Planning Commission’s authority, to the extent it allowed historic materials to be replaced before they had failed. In response, the Commission officially put the policy “on hold” until further notice. At the same time, however, it appointed two members to draft an amendment to the zoning ordinance reflecting the new policy. The amendment would have to be approved by both the Commission and the City Council after public notice and hearings. So far, no notice has been published.

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counting Victoria Place, of course. Thankfully the Zoning office understood that the project failed to meet the City Ordinance’s requirements and was also in breach of the original permit for Victoria Place. The Development Review Board agreed and the permit was denied. Rest easy, this fine example of Burlington’s history will remain an undisturbed anchor on this corner …. Or will it?

The latest proposal for this endangered building, while Shocking and laughable, is no joke. Although this “compromise” to demolition from the building’s owner has not made it through the Zoning process yet, it is a legitimate proposal for “saving” the building. We await the next “solution” so just when you think we can rest on our laurels and count on good taste and common sense, just remember nothing is too bizarre for the Build It and They Will Come mentality, all in the name of false progress. Real progress occurs when all parties work together to respect our heritage and encourage sustainability, ensuring a community we can be proud of.
What’s Up With the Old Packard Dealership?

By Liisa Reimann

We know you’ve seen the building—one day it was there, and the next only two walls remained! Construction of the housing development at the corner of North Avenue and Berry Street has progressed rapidly throughout the winter. What is alarming however is that the endeavor, which was billed as an adaptive reuse project when it went through the permitting process back in 2005, has destroyed practically all historic building components on the site.

That this project prompted revision of the city’s zoning ordinance to include what a clear definition of “adaptive reuse” actually means is but a small comfort. The 1923 Packard Motor Car showroom and garage (later the Cornell Trading Co. warehouse) that stood here were deemed significant to Burlington’s history, and promises were made to retain a large portion of historic building components. Unfortunately all that remains are two outer walls of the original showroom, making this the latest example of façadism in the city.

Adding to the controversy is current Burlington Mayor Miro Weinberger’s involvement (Weinberger co-founded the Hartland Group—the development company responsible for the project). Those questions aside, there is a sense that the city has been hoodwinked into yet another construction project designed to secure a bevy of bonuses for the developer rather than to protect Burlington’s heritage.

Neighbors and other interested parties waged a largely unsuccessful 8-year court battle against the project. Still, early analysis of the project by state and private preservation organizations offered hope through design recommendations that would integrate the new construction in a compatible, respectful manner. This included giving the historic showroom architectural and visual prominence by creating stepped setbacks to the upper levels of the new building. Architectural drawings initially supplied with the permitting application seemed to indicate that these design elements would be incorporated into the project. Sadly, they were not.

The new building completely overwhelmed the historic façade, which has lost all meaning and context. Questions have been raised as to whether the project should still qualify for the bonuses it was originally apportioned—however since the extent of exactly how much of the historic building would be retained was never specifically articulated, raising a legal challenge would be difficult at best. It’s another important and bitter lesson for Burlingtonians—one that reiterates the need for us all to be more vigilant and proactive when redevelopment projects are brought to the table.
Behind the Green Marker

By Marge Allard

45 HOWARD STREET

Forty-five Howard Street is a fine example of the many Queen Anne style cottage houses that builder John Roberts erected in Burlington in the last third of the 19th century. Characteristic of Roberts' homes, 45 Howard has a gable end facing the street, two narrow second story windows above a first floor bay window, a side porch, and decorative millwork on the upper story. According to the Historic Guide to Burlington Neighborhoods, Vol. III, Roberts built the houses on speculation for about $900. His own house was a grand dwelling at 227 South Willard Street.

When was 45 Howard Street built? According to the 1894 Sanborn map of Burlington, there were no buildings standing on the site as of this date. Additionally, John Roberts, having come into financial difficulties, left town in August of 1894 and never returned. The earliest houses on lower Howard Street do appear on the 1894 Sanborn map as 14 and 15 Howard Street. They were side by side and across the street from the site of 45 Howard. In an attempt to clear up this mystery, I consulted Mary O’Neill of the city's Office of Planning and Zoning. She noticed that the letter "H" had been penciled in on the map on lot 95, the current location of 45 Howard. "H" for house? I am betting that the house was built in 1894, but too late to appear on Sanborn map. This makes the home one of the last Roberts houses to be built in Burlington.

In 1902, Maria and Edward sold 45 Howard Street to John Merchant, an employee of the Malted Cereal Company. According to the City Directory, John had been living in the Old North End prior to this. With the purchase of his new home, he had only a two minute walk to work! His neighbors were mostly, like himself, of French Canadian descent. Many were employees at Horatio Hickok's box factory. John and his wife Selina lived on Howard Street for nearly 25 years. John's occupation is also listed as carpenter. For a time in the early 1900s, the house number was 21.

In 1927 the house was sold to Thomas and Beatrice Bouchard. The Bouchards, who owned a home on Shelburne Road, rented 45 Howard to Roy Yandow prior to selling it to Alderic and Mary Lapierre a few years later. The Lapierres, who are not listed in the City Directory, continued to rent to Yandow. Eight years later, they sold the home Eloi and Gabrielle Demers, who ran a business known as the South End Lunch, and actually made 45 Howard their home. Over the last half of the 20th Century, the home has changed hands a number of times. The home is currently owned by James Reagan.

The lot on which it was built was once part of the Buell estate. Col. Ozias Buell and his son Frederick were prosperous Burlington merchants. Ozias built the house at 303 Pearl Street for Frederick and his bride, Eliza Hickok as a wedding present in 1820. That house is now known as the Buell-Hungerford house, for it was the home of Frederick's only daughter, Maria, who was the Buell heiress. She was married to the Rev. Edward Hungerford, a Congregational minister, who deeded 45 Howard to the first owner of the house. The Buell and Hickok estates now are the location of the Five Sisters neighborhood.

In the last years of the 19th Century, Maria and Edward Hungerford began to develop the extensive family holdings. Their first project was the development of Hungerford Terrace from the property behind 303 Pearl. In 1898, they registered at City Hall a map of the family property in the south end of the city bordered on the north by Howard Street.

Forty-five Howard Street is a fine example of the homes built for working people in late 19th Century Burlington. There are about 50 of these John Roberts homes around Burlington, in various states of preservation. Two others are also located on Howard Street.
I hope everyone had a good winter and getting ready for spring! While winter is not necessarily PB’s busy season, we certainly haven’t been hibernating either. As with most people, those of us at PB started off the New Year by reflecting on the past year and looking forward to the months to come. On February 20th we once again awarded our friends and neighbors with our Annual Preservation Awards during a ceremony at Burlington’s Unitarian Universalist Meeting House. Elise Guyette, author of “Discovering Black Vermont,” gave an inspiring presentation on her research into Hinesburg’s early African American settlers.

We also took great pleasure in presenting a new award this year called the “Spirit of Preservation” award. Unlike our other award categories, which reward property owners for restoration projects completed in the previous calendar year, the Spirit of Preservation award is designed to acknowledge property owners who are continually working to maintain the historic integrity of their property. The recipient of this award was Leonard St. Peter for his beautiful home on at 110 Charlotte Street. The house, a 1½-story, gable-front Arts and Crafts bungalow with a deep entry porch across half of the façade, has been in his late wife’s family since it was built in 1932. Awards in our three other property categories (commercial, institutional, and residential) went, respectively, to the Flynn Center for the Performing Arts for the theater’s recent interior and exterior renovations; City Neighborhood Housing LP for the non-profit organization’s restoration of 221 Pine Street; and Holly and Dan Trahan for the thorough restoration of their residential rental property at 97 North Winooski Avenue.

Also receiving an award was Emily Lee of Bradley Street, who was presented with the Ray O’Connor award for her efforts in getting city council to extend the “four unrelated adults” ordinance to the city’s “high-density” residential zone.

Before we know it, Burlington’s frozen landscape will give way to flowering trees, daffodils, and newly mown lawns. When making plans for spring, don’t forget to reserve the afternoon of Saturday, June 8, 2013 to attend our annual homes tour. We’ve lined up a great collection of homes for you to see! Also remember to check out one of our regularly scheduled walking tours. We have an expanded selection of tours this year for your enjoyment.

And speaking of tours, PB is excited to partner with Local Motion for this year’s Cycle the City historic bicycle path rejuvenation. The Cycle the City route is a 10-mile self-guided tour showcasing the history, culture, and natural splendor of Burlington. The spring kick off will be April 28th beginning at Maglianero’s Cafe at 47 Maple Street, Burlington and running the entire loop. Start with coffee and brioche and end with lunch and refreshments.

Preservation Burlington will have our very talented and energetic tour guides available for guided tours during the entire celebration. More information can be had at www.localmotion.org and www.champlainbikeways.org.

We look forward to seeing you!

—Matt Viens
PB Supports New Marker for Church Street

By Tom Simon

Have you noticed the relatively new historical marker at the north end of Church Street?

In 1962 architecture student Bill Truex experienced the transformation of Stroget, Copenhagen’s main shopping area, from traffic-snarled nightmare to successful pedestrian mall. Seven years later, while on the Burlington Planning Commission, Truex enlisted support from Pat Robins of the Street Commission and together they promoted turning Church Street into a pedestrian district. U.S. Senator Patrick Leahy and his chief of staff, Paul Bruhn, secured a federal grant and Burlington voters, with support from Mayor Gordon Paquette, passed a bond for the city’s share of construction costs.

The Church Street Marketplace, which opened on September 15, 1981, has been described as the gem in the crown of the Queen City of Burlington.

“It is definitely humbling and an honor to be cast in bronze,” said Truex, who is in the process of moving from his lakefront home in Grand Isle back to Burlington. “Thank goodness we have a community that takes such pride in itself. That spirit is what has enabled good things to happen here over the years. It has fostered the team building so essential to getting things done here. My hope is that this marker will be a continuing reminder of this remarkable asset which exists in Burlington.”

The Vermont Division for Historic Preservation paid for the marker, but the idea for it came from Preservation Burlington. Ron Redmond, executive director of the Marketplace, likes it so much that he is raising $2,200 for a duplicate marker for Preservation Trust at the south end of the Marketplace, near City Hall. So far he has raised $500 from Preservation Burlington, $500 from Preservation Trust of Vermont, $500 from Truex Cullins, and $500 from Symquest, leaving him only $200 short. If you would like to donate to the project, please contact Ron at 865-7254.

Meet the Board Member

Britta Fenniman Tonn joined Preservation Burlington’s Board in 2012 after having worked with the organization since the summer of 2010 to revive and coordinate the walking tour program. Organizing and leading historic and architectural walking tours perfectly merges Britta’s background and interests — she holds a BA in the History of Art and Architecture from Middlebury College, an MA in Education from Goddard College, and an MS in Historic Preservation from the University of Vermont. Britta is an Architectural Historian for EBI Consulting, a company which specializes in environmental due diligence and cultural resource management for the telecommunications industry, working from her home office in Winooski and traveling extensively throughout New England and beyond. Britta also works with the Church Street Marketplace to prepare historical reports and plaques for downtown Burlington buildings, teaches piano lessons to young children, and serves on the Winooski Planning Commission. She has a deep appreciation for Vermont’s vernacular architecture and historic industrial buildings, but is also in love with her native New York City’s Art Deco architecture; in the summer of 2009, she worked with the New York Landmarks Conservancy to conduct an extensive survey of historic synagogue buildings in the Bronx. In all that extra free time she has you’ll find her playing classical piano, backcountry telemark skiing, bicycling (her love for biking runs deep as she is half Dutch), gardening, and slowly repairing her 1860s vernacular home in Winooski. No doubt life will change dramatically for Britta in the coming months—she and her husband are expecting a baby boy, their first, in late-March!
Preservation Burlington Walking Tours

Burlington’s fascinating history and alluring architecture come alive through guided walking tours. Our knowledgeable guides will entertain you with stories of the past and introduce you to Burlington’s diverse architectural styles. We offer a number of different types of tours and cover a variety of Burlington’s neighborhoods... Be sure to check out our ever-expanding menu of tour options on our website.

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Downtown Burlington Walking Tour
Uncover the intriguing history and architecture of Vermont’s bustling Queen City. Every Saturday, late-May through October. Meet on Church Street in front of City Hall at 11:00 AM. Tours last approximately 1½ hours.

Waterfront Walking Tour
Explore Burlington’s thriving industrial and maritime past while taking in the beauty of the Lake Champlain shoreline. Saturdays, June through October. Meet at the waterfront visitor’s center at the bottom of College Street at 1:00 PM. Tours last approximately 1½ hours.

Old North End Walking Tour
Experience Burlington’s most diverse neighborhood through an historic lens. First Saturday of the month, June through October. Meet at the William Wells statue in Battery Park at 11:00 AM. Tours last approximately 2 hours.

Pine Street Walking Tour
One day only! Celebrate the commercial and industrial history of Burlington’s South End during Art Hop on the first Saturday in September.

Cemetery Walking Tour
We use the last weekend in October to stroll through one of Burlington’s historic cemeteries, investigating its history and the stories of several of its “residents” along the way.

Bicycle Tours
Preservation Burlington, in partnership with local non-profit Local Motion, offers exciting tours of Burlington via bicycle!

School Group/Summer Program Tours
Walking tours are a great way for students and children to step outside the classroom and experience history. Popular topics include the Revolutionary War, War of 1812, industrialization and architecture. Preservation Burlington can accommodate any size group and will tailor the tour to the class’ specific learning goals.

Private/Specialty Tours
Want to schedule a private tour? Interested in a tour for your community group? We are more than happy to arrange a special tour for you.

Bus Tours
Have a few hours to spend in Burlington? Why not offer a guided walk for your tour group? Preservation Burlington can accommodate any size group and is happy to offer a “Highlights of Burlington” tour to enrich your attendee’s trip.

Check our website for more details: www.preservationburlington.org.
Email info@preservationburlington.org to arrange a tour.
Fee, unless otherwise noted:
$10 (non-PB members)
$5 (PB members and students)
**Save the Date!**

Preservation Burlington
Annual Homes Tour
June 8, 2013

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**Show your pride and buy a new Preservation Burlington T-Shirt!**

PB’s logo on the front and motto, **LOOKING TO THE FUTURE WITH RESPECT FOR THE PAST**
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Only $15. Available in Forest Green
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**Historic Building Markers**

Preservation Burlington Historic Markers are the perfect way to celebrate the age of your home!

The markers can be hung on the exterior or interior of your home.

Cost: $75 includes: basic research on your home, a marker, and one-year membership to Preservation Burlington.