



Newsletter of the Old Village Association of Chatham, Massachusetts

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Demolition Request Heard by Cape Cod Commission Hearing on 47 Eliphamets Lane was First for Old Village

Under the Cape Cod Commission Act, the demolition plans for 47 Eliphamets Lane, a contributing house in the Old Village National Register District, were subject to review by the Commission. On March 14, a sub-committee of the Commission held a preliminary meeting in Chatham, at which time five members reviewed the owners' request for demolition and their plans for the structure which would replace it. Both the Chatham Historical Commission and the Old Village Association expressed concerns about the total demolition of the cottage, because it was an integral part of the small collection of cottages, shanties and shacks which made up an active fishing community on the Mill Pond. At the same time, both groups were sympathetic

to the owners, who had already gone through the local permitting process and were only days from the demolition when the Act took effect.

The sub-committee suggested that, under the circumstances, the Historical Commission and the owners try to reach a suitable compromise. The Old Village Association, with Candy Jenkins, Old Village Association consultant, and Vice-President Debbie Aikman attending, joined in the discussions and helped form the agreement which would save the oldest part of the house, protect the two historic shanties on the property in perpetuity and at the same time allow the owners to retain much of their design for the new house. With that agreement, the full Commission met on May 2 and approved the

compromise. The Cape Cod Commission will continue to monitor the project.

Because this was our first hearing in our brand new National Register District, the process was an education for all concerned. Several people from the neighborhood, as well as Paula Liska from the Building Inspector's office, attended in order to familiarize themselves with the workings of the Act. The Association was impressed by the professionalism of the Cape Cod Commission and its staff, in particular Sarah Korjeff, and feel that a good solution was reached. However, both the Chatham Historical Commission and the Association reiterated that demolition of contributing houses is never in the best interest of our District and that this compromise was acceptable mainly because of the special hardships a denial would cause the owners.

Old Village Association Names Candace Jenkins as Consultant for The National Register District

The Board of the Association has named Candace Jenkins as its consultant on National Register District matters. As the Cape Cod Commission hearing on Eliphamets Lane progressed, the Board felt that the Old Village's interests would best be served by having a professional available now and in the future to consider both the historic elements of contributing properties and the best method of protecting those elements. The Cape Cod Commission welcomed Candy's help in the negotiations and her input was essential to the eventual compromise.

Candy, a former Director of the Massachusetts Historical Commission and the Old Village's consultant on the National Register application, has had wide experience in balancing the needs of builders with historic preservation goals. She has acted as a consultant in hearings before the Massachusetts Historical Commission and other Boston agencies. She will be available to help the Association at future hearings and will advise the Association in their responses.

Old Village Association

Annual Meeting

Sunday, August 25, 2002

Chatham Beach and Tennis Club

6:30 p.m. dessert and coffee

7:00 p.m. meeting

Our History's Our History – And We Love It

A while back, a well-respected architect came to town and testified at the Historical Commission that one of the Old Village's 19th c. houses was, quite simply, not worth saving. This struck most of us as highly preposterous – after all, weren't we about to become a National Register District? How could he even THINK such a thing – he who took pride in his work in historic Boston and his hometown?

After we calmed down a bit, we took a moment to figure out how he could have made this decision. First of all, he probably was only thinking about the house – not the neighborhood. A mistake, because to determine historic value, the contributing properties in a National Register District must be looked at as a whole unit. Each house plays a part in creating an area of historical and aesthetic importance, yet one house in and of itself may not be of significance. If each house in the Old Village were standing isolated in a field, only a few would meet the stricter standards necessary to be listed individually on the Register. One can argue that a specific house in a District is not particularly outstanding, as did our architect, but at the same time acknowledge how important that contributing building is to the whole (which he didn't). A system whereby we admire the District yet encourage the demolition of historic homes is, to say the least, counter-productive. There is no way to save the Old Village except by saving each contributing house *one at a time*.

The cultural history (the story) of National Register structures are an important element in deciding if they are worth saving. Professionals accustomed to working and living in towns through which Paul Revere raced and on whose Boston streets Mrs. John Gardener walked her cheetah do not necessarily see the

value of the cultural history of simple buildings in a Cape Cod town like Chatham, lived in and built by everyday people – seamen, butchers, sailors, scavengers. They don't understand that our history's our history – and we love it. Good (and Bad) Walter, Clint Hammond, Cher Gould and Mert Rogers (to name a few) are just as important to our sense of the past as the Cabots and Lodges are to theirs.

An attitude which embraces only the structurally significant buildings built by professionals and lived in by famous people does not accurately portray the history of our country. Considering our democratic roots, we should take great pride in the working people who, through good times and bad, created the Old Village, often with their own hands. Their effort and vision have given the Village the qualities we cherish: its scale and its unassuming, perfectly imbalanced, typically old Cape street scenes.

Fortunately, in thinking this way, we are in step with most modern day preservationists. There was a time when neighborhoods such as ours were considered expendable, when great hunks of Boston's waterfront were allowed to be demolished or when saving Southern plantations meant restoring the main house and razing slave quarters. With time has come a new understanding that, to preserve our roots, we must not tell only one side of America's history. Certainly, the events of September 11th reconfirmed once and for all that not all of our country's heroes are in history books. The Old Village's past is a part of America's story. By protecting our neighborhood, we make sure that story is not lost.

Carol Pacun

Sailors Cemetery - A Hidden Treasure

In back of the Mack Monument, partially hidden by a privet hedge, is Chatham's least known – and least visited – historical site: Sailors Cemetery. Perhaps this lack of interest is not entirely blameworthy, because, in fact, no local people are buried there. This tiny piece of land was given to the Town in the 19th century for the purpose of a cemetery for seamen lost at sea whose bodies washed ashore at Chatham. While some bodies were claimed by relatives from afar, those that went unclaimed were buried in the Sailors Cemetery. Reports about how many graves are in the plot vary. One report puts the number at 18, while the Historic Properties Survey of the Chatham Historical Commission says the number is "up to 40 people."

At the time of burial, effort was made to identify the bodies, but that was not always possible, so some were buried as "unknown." In their research, Anne Rogers and David MacAdam found that the cemetery contains bodies from four ships that were wrecked in or near Chatham waters during the 1880's and 1890's. Six unclaimed bodies were from the "J.C. Huntington," wrecked in April of 1881. While the officers' and captain's bodies were returned to their homes in New Jersey, the entire crew of four from the "Calvin B. Orcutt" lost in December of 1896 were laid to rest at the site, as was the crew of four from the "Excelsior" wrecked in March of 1898. When the "Portland" was broke up off of Orleans in November 1898, many of the 100 men aboard washed up in Chatham. Of these, four bodies with no identification went unclaimed and are now resting in the cemetery.

The cemetery itself was originally bounded by a simple fence. At that time each of the graves was designated by a simple white marble marker, of which only one remains today. That stone carries the barely legible inscription, "In memory of Peter Campbell of Turks Island who died on board Brig Orisha, Feb. 1846. Age 40." There is some conjecture that the remaining markers may be just

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Further Afield: Town Update

The Community Preservation Act

On May 13, Chatham voters approved passage of the Community Preservation Act by a very small (28 votes!) majority. The Act, which will take effect in September of 2003, will provide matching State money to the amount collected by the town with a 3% surcharge on local real estate taxes. The total available for preservation, conservation and affordable housing should be approximately \$800,000 in the first year. Chatham is the first town on the Cape to pass the Act. Old Village residents should know that the first \$100,000 of assessed value is exempt and that there are exemptions for property occupied by persons eligible for low income housing and /or moderate income senior housing. These exemptions were placed into the Act specifically to avoid having the additional taxes hurt any individuals who cannot afford to pay them. *Please, if you think you are eligible for relief, talk to Don Poyant at Town Hall.* Coley Yeaw and Don Aikman of the Old Village should be congratulated for the enormous amount of work they did to inform voters about the CPA and encourage its passage. They are also available to answer questions.

The Long Range Plan

This winter the Long Range Planning Committee has moved ahead with "all deliberate speed." Although we'd all like to see the plan finished, the Committee, chaired by Dick Batchelder, must be commended for the care and attention to details that have gone into its work, as well as for the members' effort to listen to public comments and concerns. Progress has been made with two elements finished and almost all the others, including a new, streamlined Land Use Element near completion. The main effort in the next months will be the completion of the Economic and Natural Resources sections. Copies of all Elements are available at the Annex. The Association urges all Old Village property owners, particularly those who are not here full time, to try to go to one of the meetings of the Planning Committee during the summer.

The Historic Business District Review Committee

The tolerance for the Long Range Planning Committee's careful work has not been extended to the HBDC Review Committee, which was soundly scolded by the Selectmen for not coming up with a quick rewrite of the Act. However, this Committee's effort is just as complicated and also requires careful thought and workable solutions. All of us will benefit by a final product which solves some of the past difficulties without leaving the downtown area of Chatham with controls so weak that they cannot prevent inappropriate development. Also needed is a Commission which will have enough power to enforce the rules. David Veach, who chaired the Review Committee, deserves credit for the hundreds of hours he dedicated to finding solutions and reaching consensus. He will be difficult to replace. If you have any questions, please call Norm Pacun, who was a member of the group which drafted the original Act and who has been attending the meetings.

Around the Old Village

Sailors Cemetery

Sailors Cemetery (in back of the Mack Monument) is about to get a new look. Dan Tobin, Parks' Commissioner, told the Old Village Association that his staff will be trimming the hedge on a regular basis, starting early this summer.

The Cemetery Commission agreed that some flowers might be appropriate. Thanks to Kin Smith's hard work, a small grouping of pink geraniums in front of the memorial stone adds a touch of color to this seldom visited spot. Rumor has it that those who have entered the cemetery did so primarily to "go behind the bushes" – a situation which a lower hedge and new evidence of special concern should alleviate. (See p.2 for full story)

Lighthouse Beach

The Selectmen have made no decisions about Lighthouse Beach facilities, clean-up or life guards. This is not remarkable, in that there seems to be no good solution to these problems. However, the shuttle bus will drop off beach-goers on a somewhat reduced basis for five weeks this summer.

83 Holway Street

As required by the Cape Cod Commission Act, the Chatham Historical Commission held a hearing about substantial exterior changes to 83 Holway Street. The work on this contributing property which involved the addition of first and second story decks as well as a crow's nest was determined not to meet thresholds necessary to require review by the Cape Cod Commission. At the meeting, Nancy Yeaw, Chairman of the Historical Commission, and Debbie Aikman, Vice-President of the Old Village Association, reiterated the importance of protecting the contributing properties along the Old Village's historic seashore and hoped that owners would take the character of the waterfront into account when they plan additions to their homes.



National Register Certificates Ready this Summer



Personalized certificates for each homeowner designating his or her property as part of the National Register District will be available at the Old Village Annual Meeting on Aug. 25. Those who cannot attend may obtain their certificates at a later date at a place to be determined.

Andrew Hardings Lane

We have asked Dan Tobin for a trash receptacle to be placed at the foot of Andrew Hardings Lane for the convenience of beach goers. He is checking with the Parks and Recreation Commission and the Town Manager. There are concerns about the garbage truck having enough space to turn around. Meanwhile, Dick Perry, who owns the beach you probably sat on all summer, has complimented us on how very clean the sand is kept – even on those days when over 100 people are in attendance. Keep up the good work! The best way we can show Dick and others how much we appreciate AHL beach is to make it the most pristine in Chatham, even if we have to carry our trash away.



The Fitz tennis court 1930's

Beach Erosion Again a Problem

Ted Keon, Director of Coastal Resources, reports that the beach at Andrew Hardings Lane has suffered considerable erosion over the winter months. The dredge working at Aunt Lydia's Cove has been dumping additional sand as close as possible to the beach in the hope that it will move onshore. Conditions make it difficult for the dredge to get close to the beach, so the effectiveness of this effort is uncertain.

Sailors Cemetery - continued from page 2

under the surface. A central memorial stone dedicated to "the remains of the unknown sailors who lost their lives in shipwrecks off Chatham" is in the center of the cemetery.

This graveyard is a reminder of how difficult life at sea was in the late nineteenth century and imparts a sense of sadness that these seamen left home, never to return and are forever resting on Chatham soil. Yet this tiny spot is also a monument to a generous spirit of the people of Chatham, who dedicated a memorial to sailors they never knew.

This article was compiled from information provided by Anne J. Rogers and David P. MacAdam, the Historic Properties Survey (Chatham Historical Commission) and Mary Ann Gray from the Chatham Historical Society. All questions about the cemetery are far from being answered. If any of our readers has additional information, it would be greatly appreciated.

After the National Register District Planning for the Next Five Years

With the National Register District in place, the Board of Directors of the Association is asking for your help in defining our work in the future. The Association will, of course, continue to play an active role in the preservation of our neighborhood. However, there are other issues which may also be important. Since we want to serve our members in the best way possible, we would appreciate your filling out this rather long (sorry!) questionnaire and mailing it in the envelope supplied. Thank you.

HOW IMPORTANT ARE THE FOLLOWING ISSUES TO YOU

	Very imp't	Of no concern	No opinion
Parking and traffic	_____	_____	_____
Beach usage	_____	_____	_____
Continuing public access AHL Beach	_____	_____	_____
Nitrogen loading/possible OV sewers	_____	_____	_____
Main Street reconstruction	_____	_____	_____
Beautification and signage	_____	_____	_____
Other issues of concern _____			

	Agree (Y)	Disagree(N)	No opinion/ need info
PARKING AND TRAFFIC			
1. Parking/traffic at Overlook is satisfactory	1. _____	_____	_____
2. There are congestion, safety problems at Overlook	2. _____	_____	_____
Shuttle			
1. Is helping with traffic/ parking	1. _____	_____	_____
2. Has no effect	2. _____	_____	_____
3. Makes things worse	3. _____	_____	_____
4. Is too costly for town to maintain w/o outside help	4. _____	_____	_____
Bridge Street: Too many cars park there			
1. Further parking restriction should be added	1. _____	_____	_____
Intersection of Bridge St.-Main St.			
1. Continue sidewalk around corner	1. _____	_____	_____
2. Add crosswalk	2. _____	_____	_____
3. Redesign intersection	3. _____	_____	_____
4. Add stop signs	4. _____	_____	_____
5. Ask police to monitor traffic speed	5. _____	_____	_____
6. There are so many people, nothing will help	6. _____	_____	_____
Other _____			

LIGHTHOUSE BEACH

1. In favor of portable bathrooms	1. _____	_____	_____
2. In favor of permanent bathrooms (If yes, where? _____)	2. _____	_____	_____
3. In favor of lifeguards	3. _____	_____	_____
4. In favor of daily town beach cleanup	4. _____	_____	_____
5. Erosion makes it impossible to plan	5. _____	_____	_____
6. Leave well enough alone	6. _____	_____	_____
Other _____			

MAIN STREET RECONSTRUCTION

1. Resurfacing of road and sidewalks will be adequate	1. _____	_____	_____
2. Crosswalks needed at Andrew Hardings Lane and Overlook	2. _____	_____	_____

WASTE WATER ISSUES

	Agree (Y)	Disagree(N)	No opinion/ need info
1. Town should sewer entire Old Village	1. _____	_____	_____
2. Town should sewer only those sections which affect Mill and Little Mill Ponds	2. _____	_____	_____
3. Town should explore solutions other than sewers	3. _____	_____	_____
a. Individual treatment systems	a. _____	_____	_____
b. Localized shared systems	b. _____	_____	_____
4. I'm worried about cost	4. _____	_____	_____
a. Everyone should pay	a. _____	_____	_____
b. Only those affected should pay	b. _____	_____	_____
5. I have never understood the issue and need more information	5. _____	_____	_____
Other _____			

SIGNAGE AND BEAUTIFICATION

1. New street signs are needed	1. _____	_____	_____
2. I'd like to see sign "Old Village National Register District" somewhere in the Village	2. _____	_____	_____
If yes, where? _____			
3. Temporary signs (construction, painting etc) are out of control	3. _____	_____	_____
4. The Old Village is beautiful -don't change a thing	4. _____	_____	_____

OLD VILLAGE ASSOCIATION ANNUAL MEETING

(Microphones are a given)

1. Continue neighborhood discussion format	1. _____	_____	_____
2. Have a longer social time at beginning	2. _____	_____	_____
3. Add a speaker to agenda	3. _____	_____	_____
Other _____			

IN THE FUTURE I WOULD LIKE TO ATTEND

1. Informal neighborhood focus groups	1. _____	_____	_____
2. Family barbeques or pot luck suppers	2. _____	_____	_____
3. I would host one of the above	3. _____	_____	_____
4. I have no time for this stuff	4. _____	_____	_____
Other _____			

INFORMATION – OLD VILLAGE WEB SITE

I have internet access	_____	_____	_____
I would access an Old Village Web Site	_____	_____	_____
On the site I would like to read:			
Old Village oriented information on town affairs	_____	_____	_____
Schedules of meetings of Boards, Commissions, Committees	_____	_____	_____
Articles on the Old Village and its history	_____	_____	_____
I would be interested in links to other local preservation groups (such as South Chatham Village Assoc, the Historical Society)	_____	_____	_____
I would also be interested in an interactive web site where I could contact the Association or its members.	_____	_____	_____

Other comments (including issues you'd be willing to work on)

Thanks for your time. We promise you'll be safe from one of these for at least 5 years!

NAME _____
(optional)