



Newsletter of the Old Village Association of Chatham, Massachusetts

Volume II

Issue II

Spring 1998

On the Road with Carol and Elinor

Coffee with Chatham Realtors

Elinor Gelsey and Carol Pacun, walking tour booklets in hand, visited the monthly meeting of the Chatham branch of the Cape and Island Multiple Listing Tour (our local realtors), held at the Chatham Bars Inn, on Wednesday, April 1st. Carol spoke briefly about the work of the Association and the necessity of preserving the Old Village. In particular, she stressed how important it is for prospective buyers to appreciate the unique character of the neighborhood. "Our favorite buyer in the Old Village," she said, "is probably one who loves history and old houses. The next favorite would be someone who is informed about the history of the neighborhood, is aware of renovation possibilities (as opposed to demolition), and understands how important the Old Village is to the people who live here."

This meeting was a part of the effort of the Old Village Association Board of Directors to get the preservation message out into the community as a whole, and offer a helping hand whenever possible. Many thanks to Mary Boggess (John Ricotta and Associates) and Happy Van Sickle (Chatham Village Realty) for giving the Association this opportunity.

At the "Charette":

Main Street Reconstruction Revisited

Joined by David Veach and representatives from other interested groups, your fearless leaders traveled to the Planning Department on April 9th for a "charette" on the Main Street reconstruction project, hosted by Margaret Swanson. Pete Sorenson, engineer, and Steve Derdarian, landscape architect, from the consultants, Vanasse Hangren and Brustlin, presented revised plans for the project. A 25% design of the first phase, which deals with roadway and sidewalk locations, is almost ready to be submitted to the State for approval. The public will be able to comment on the specifics of that phase at a formal hearing sometime early this summer. In all probability, no real work will start before the spring of 1999.

Of particular interest to the Old Village participants:

- The design for the reconfiguration of the Bridge-Silverleaf-Main Street intersection presently shows sidewalks on both sides of the street from the overlook to Bridge Street-Morris Island Road. Association representatives reiterated their opposition to any land-taking in that area.
- The Main Street-Shore Road intersection plans include a small triangular island to clarify traffic routing. (If there is such an island, the Old Village Association has offered to help both with its design and plantings.)
- On Main Street proper, the new sidewalk on the north side of the street will stop at 400 Main (as requested in an earlier meeting).

The more interesting – and controversial – elements of the design, the "enhancements" phase, will be submitted for additional funding to the Transportation Department later this year. Steve Derdarian showed his new designs for Main Street, which include several "bump-outs" and a new look for the entrance to Kate Gould Park, the information booth area, Village Hall lawn, and the area around the watering trough. Some of the changes Steve proposed are necessary to comply with State law. Others are his interpretation of "the look" Chatham

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BULLETIN

Chatham Preservation and Conservation Groups Meet to Discuss Possible Alliance

On April 20th, responding to an invitation from the Old Village Association and the Friends of Chatham Waterways, 16 people, representing 10 preservation and conservation organizations in Chatham, met to discuss the feasibility of forming an alliance to share plans and discover goals of mutual interest.

The Board of the Old Village Association has encouraged the exploration of such an alliance as a means to strengthen its own preservation work and create opportunities to learn from and support the activities of other groups. The next newsletter will devote considerable time to this concept as the groups work toward a definition of common goals, purpose, and philosophy.

Public Hearings: What's Not Working and Why

The Winter of Our Discontent

This winter, we spent an inordinate amount of time chasing around Chatham after details on building applications of concern to Old Village Association members. It was a surprisingly frustrating search. We found ourselves wondering why was it so hard to get reliable, timely information out to those who wished to respond in time for the hearing?

From the beginning, it was clear to us that our problem was not the result of any bias, discrimination, or unfairness of the regulatory board or commission members, nor of the Planning Department staff, who were unfailingly open and helpful. The answer had to lie in the procedures themselves, which upon later reflection seem unclear, unevenly enforced, and unresponsive to the rights of abutters or the general public. For example, the Historic Business District Commission has never given advance notice of pending applications to the public. Also, although the Zoning Board of Appeals requires complete plans to accompany filed applications, applicants still feel free to ignore the rule or make revisions to original plans right up to and including the hearing date. How can any one of us comment accurately on such applications?

Not only does the present system provide inadequate opportunities for the public to respond to applications, it is also unfair to boards and commission members – and, in fact, to the applicants themselves. Uneven procedures which are not uniformly enforced have to create both confusion and a disrespect of governing bodies (leading to angry confrontations and even lawsuits) and reflect negatively on hard working staff and volunteers. Public notice and clear rules, consistently enforced, would make life easier for everyone.

Zoning decisions are the only safeguard the Old Village has against overgrowth. If we are to play a part in the process, we must have all the information about whatever project concerns us in a timely manner so we can respond appropriately. A two week notice in the paper is our first right – but there must be others. When architectural plans are not filed with the initial application, when they are changed at the last minute, when they are incomplete or inaccurate, there is no way for us to properly respond. After all, the reason for a public hearing is to involve the public.

But Hope 'Springs' Eternal! (see inset)

Interview with Kevin MacDonald **Director of Community Development**

Because of our experience this winter, we have become – rather unexpectedly – advocates for improving the system. Thankfully, our concerns have not fallen on deaf ears. Kevin MacDonald, Director of Community Development, told us in a recent interview at the Planning Department that in the near future he will be redrafting regulatory rules and procedures to reflect not only the needs of the applicants but also those of the public. He has come to understand that in Chatham, with its large population of nonresident taxpayers, he must “hold the line” on filing procedures. He is particularly concerned that board and commission hearings “deal with facts, not process.” He wants to set up a well-defined system that will be easy for his staff to monitor. Kevin will be drafting these changes later this spring, but he has already instituted a policy of public notice for the Historic Business District Commission (check your latest *Chronicle!*).

In addition, he has promised the Old Village Association a draft of the recommended changes in rules and procedures. We welcome the chance to offer our comments and suggestions. We will continue to emphasize the necessity for an orderly process. Our goals: (1) every regulatory agency must give a full two-week notice of all hearings, (2) applicants will submit completed plans and architectural drawings at the time of that filing, and (3) any major changes in these plans will automatically require a new hearing date.

Meanwhile, we will do the best we can to represent your interests. We are happy to answer questions, search for plans, and send you whatever information you need. With a new, orderly system, we hope we can be even more responsive!



Preservation Choices ~ Part Three

Going it Alone *Historic Preservation Easements*

This is the third of a series of articles on historic preservation options available to the Old Village. The first two covered present zoning rules and bylaws (including demolition delay) and reviewed Historic and National Register Districts.

The only present rules concerning the fate of Old Village homes are Chatham's zoning and demolition delay bylaws, which – to many – are inadequate safeguards. We have not yet reached consensus about creating an historic district. In the meantime, is there anything you can do personally to protect your own house – even after it is sold? Can you make a lasting contribution to the historic streetscapes of the Old Village?

YES, you can, thanks to the possibility of putting an **HISTORIC PRESERVATION EASEMENT** on the house when it is sold and then arranging for a nonprofit organization, such as the Old Village Association, to make sure that easement is enforced for as long as you wish. This preservation choice, probably the most personal available, is less known than the others and needs some explaining.

What exactly is an Historic Preservation easement?

An historic preservation easement is a document attached to a property's deed in which a seller who wishes to preserve the historic character of the property sets up restrictions on what any new owners can do to that property for a specific period of time. (This may be done for up to 20 years without state or local approval.) This restriction is "given" to a charitable, tax-exempt organization, which then has the responsibility to make sure the grantors' wishes are followed. The property still belongs totally to the new owner, who can enjoy it subject to the restrictions in the easement document.

What kind of restrictions are we talking about?

The most typical historic preservation easement applies only to the exterior of the home. At a minimum, the easement could restrict demolitions or partial demolitions. A more detailed document would also control (through architectural review by an agency of the owner's choice) major exterior alterations on the property – such as adding a third story or changing the facade. Most preservationists warn against too many detailed restrictions which – as the years roll by – become increasingly difficult to monitor. Again, **these are personal decisions to be made by the homeowner when the home is sold.**

Why should I consider an easement?

- An easement program is a very personal way to preserve the integrity of historic homes – and a true gift to the future of the neighborhood.
- Unlike other strategies, such as historic districts, the program allows the homeowner to tailor make restrictions which could protect his or her **OWN HOUSE** from demolition or inappropriate exterior alterations under new ownership.
- The owner has the ability to choose the agency of his or her choice to monitor and enforce the easement. If the Old Village Association held the easement, the homeowner would know that the monitoring would be done by a group of former neighbors and friends – people who understand the area and have similar goals. Historic District Commissions (such as the HBDC), on the other hand, are appointed by the Selectmen from an applicant pool which would include all of Chatham.
- Historic easements are yet another way of saying how important each and every house is to the whole of the Old

Village. It sets the area apart as one of special historical interest and says to all prospective buyers that they are moving into a valued house in a unique location.

Possible problems with easements

- Although an easement program can be an effective way to protect individual homes, it is somewhat slow-going in terms of preserving the whole neighborhood. Many communities have had a great deal of support from homeowners, but the best they can expect is a few houses a year.
- Easements have to be carefully drawn up. It is generally unwise to set up restrictions which are so limiting that they become impractical. On the other side, a general easement with a very limited time frame may have little purpose.
- While there has been little proof that houses with easements are more difficult to sell, there is no doubt that contractors or prospective buyers who plan to demolish a property or make extensive changes may shy away from a house with deeded restrictions. (Of course, these are the very people you may want to avoid!)
- Enforcement of easements can be a bit dicey, particularly in the case of a series of minor changes which over the years substantially alter the appearance of the house. The clearer and simpler the easement document, the better chances for the holder of the easement to enforce it. Most nonprofits insist that they be given the right to transfer the easement to another preservation organization in case they cannot for one reason or another monitor it effectively. Sometimes easements are transferred or "shared" so that a larger, well-funded organization can take appropriate action.

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150 Years of Hospitality: Old Village Inns

Preservation Choices ~ Part Three
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Easements and the Old Village Association

An historic preservation easement program would be a major step for the Association, one not to be taken lightly. The Association, with the help of its members, would have to set up procedures to make sure the process of protection was carried out efficiently and properly. The Board of Directors understands that a "gift" of an easement to us would be a deep responsibility and a reaffirmation of the Association's continuing ability to interpret our members' affection for both their homes and the Old Village itself.

What can I do now to protect my home?

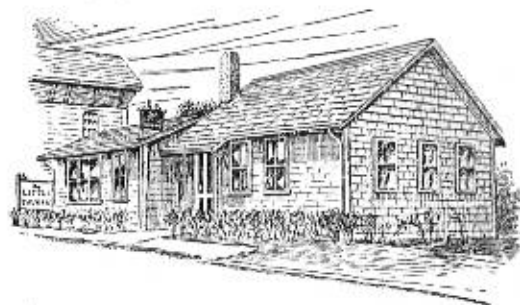
If you are interested in considering an historic preservation easement, either now as part of your estate planning or when you sell your home, we would be glad to answer your questions and send you additional information as well as sample easements. Easements, like any other official documents, must meet certain legal requirements and are best reviewed by your attorney.

From the elegant, old world Hotel Mattaquasson to small inns, boarding houses, and simple rooms to let in private homes, visitors to the Old Village over the years have had a wide choice of places to rest their weary heads after a strenuous day on the beach.

The grandmother of the group, Traveler's Lodge or Monomoyic Inn, began to take boarders around 1830 and is still in operation as the Cranberry Inn. Other 19th century options only a stone's throw from Chatham Light(s) were the Hawes House (1898) and the Hammond House (now a condominium), which opened around 1880. In fact, in 1891, the Hammond House owners went so far as to raise the roof so that guests would have ocean views. (It is uncertain if they raised the rates as well.) With a slight pause during World War II, when it housed members of the Coast Guard, the Hammond House continued on until the mid-1980's. Well-remembered was the bathhouse on the shore, which blew down in the winter with a certain regularity, and the steak house, added in the 1950's.

During the early 20th century, the Surfside Inn (Dill Cottages), on Holway Street, opened its doors, along with The Moorings and the Dolphin on Main Street, which were converted from

private homes. They are all still in existence, having been joined by the "new kids" on the block, Breathwood and Port Fortune Inn. The latter had a multitude of previous lives, first as a gas station, a tea parlor (with a little beer available for those so inclined) called "Little Tavern," and finally the wildly popular Port Fortune Restaurant.



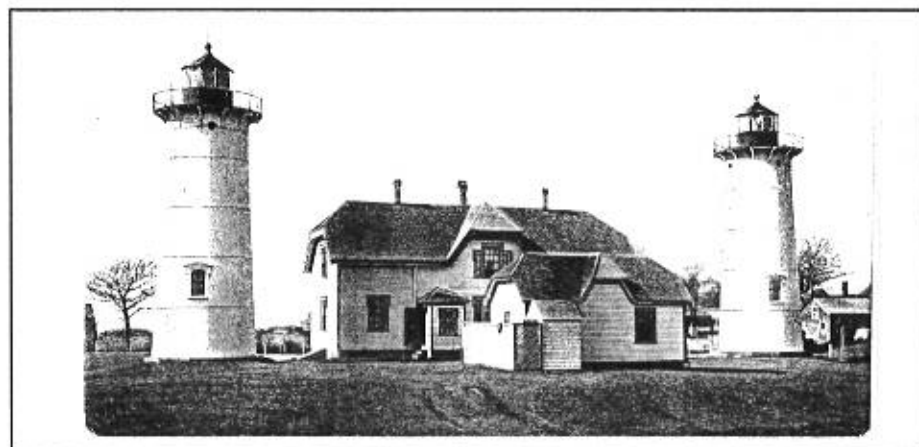
"Little Tavern," now Port Fortune Inn

Probably the most notorious of the boarding houses was The Rhode Island House, which under the management of ex-vaudevillian Billy Barlow (aka George Greene), took in guests and served shore dinners with entertainment to huge enthusiastic crowds.

If inns and boarding houses were simply too fancy for one's pocketbook, the tourist's other choice was a room in a private home – and there were certainly enough of those! At one point, it must have seemed that every other house on Lower Main Street had a "rooms to let" sign out in front, some sporting names that connoted the endless mystery of the sea – Ship's Bell or the Whistling Whale.

While none of these boarding houses or rooms were elegant (see Bill Koerner's article on page 6), their down-home friendliness and the special ambiance of the Old Village brought people back year after year to take part in a way of life we still cherish today.

Chatham Lights, Chatham, Mass.



Architect's Corner

Theodore P. (Sam) Streibert

Old Chatham Village Architecture

Windows, doors, roof trim, and construction methods all contribute to the success of the architecture of a house. In the Old Village, where small scale Capes predominate, the use of dormers to bring light into second floor rooms make a happy and varied complement to the small scale homes that are a delight in the Village Streetscape.

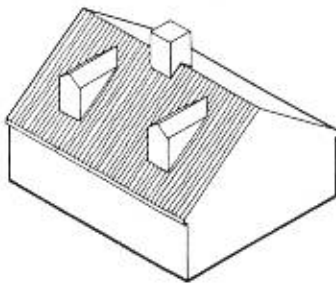
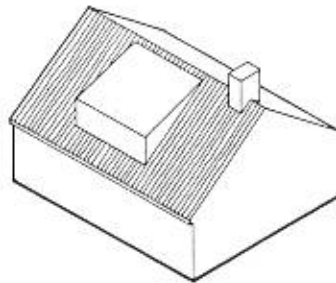


Figure 90. Gable dormers should be similar to the main roof in character.



Shed dormers should not be less than 4 in 12 inches in pitch.

The type or style of the dormer used, its size, placement on the roof, and types of windows and trim play the most important role in making the dormers part of a harmonious whole. After all, a unified composition of elements is the hallmark of good design.

Dormers that abound in the Village are carefully proportioned to the roof and house they adorn. They are modest in size to fit the house's scale. The most common are gable dormers. These have small gabled roofs with the pitch and trim matching that of the main roof of the house. A shed roofed dormer has a lower pitched roof that spreads from the ridge out to a flat roof cave. It was often in the back. In all cases, the walls of the former are one or two feet back from the first floor walls. Dormers that are on the front of a house are always balanced to reflect and reinforce the composition of the wall below.

The elements of a dormer, the windows, and the surrounding trim are similarly scaled down versions of the house's trim. The crown molding and facias are

consistent with those of the house. The use of moldings and trim details contribute to the breakdown in scale reducing the apparent size of the house and give the eye something to linger over and become involved.

The size of a dormer being built today often is a result of the owners wanting and the builders being able to maximize the space available. The space of the room being developed can be visualized to extend out to the walls of the first floor. Structurally, the roof loads from the dormer can then be directly transferred to walls below.

However, the gain of space on the interior is the tragic loss of proportion and scale on the exterior. The sides of the dormer have precious little roof around it. Such dormers are usually shed dormers whose now almost flat roofs dominate the steeper main roofs of which they were only supposed to be a part. The walls above are now almost as tall as the walls below, with windows only slightly smaller. The natural extension of this method is a two story box with a shallow roof and some vestigial roof trim line outlining the one story shadow of the Cape style house.

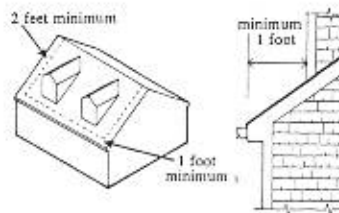


Figure 91. Dormers should be set back at least 1 foot from the roof edge, 2 feet from either gable end.

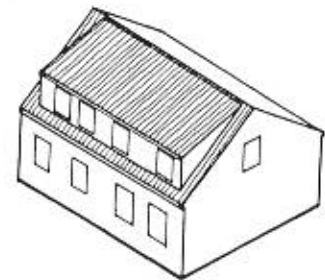


Figure 92. Large shed dormers obliterate the roof.

When you look around the Old Village, the dormers that will greet you do not dominate the house. They always seem to act as smaller parts of the house almost as if they were thought of as decorative elements to brighten up and add interest to the front of the house.

This is one article in a series to discuss the details and other issues of the architecture of the Old Village. The drawings are from Building with Nantucket in Mind: Guidelines for Protecting the Historic Architecture and Landscape of Nantucket Island by J. Christopher Lang (Nantucket Historic District Commission).

Bill Koerner Remembers the
Hawes House

*"How I came to marry a boarding house waitress" or
"Glamour Manor, 32 rooms and a bath"*



To give a perspective on the subject of the Hawes House, we should go back 106 years. Zenas and Selena Hawes bought property at the southeast corner of Main and Water Streets from a relative and opened a summer boarding house called "Hawes House." They were pioneers because it was just the beginning of that phenomenon called "Tourist" (thanks to the arrival of the train to Chatham).

The Hawes House had a main building with bedrooms, dining room, and parlor. The remembered rates were \$7.00 per week for room and board. During the following years a small house (early 1920's) and barn-like building (early 1920's) were added at the back of the main house. The total of bedrooms was now 32 with five tiny bathrooms (sink and toilet). Guests took outside showers with only cold water. "Running water" in the rooms came from a "tip pitcher." Later on, sinks were added in most of the rooms. Hired help in the early years were local people, but that changed in the

drastically), and they owned and managed the Hawes House for many years. In the later 1930's my parents and I arrived as guests. (Children had to be six years or older.) Apparently my grandmother, who was a guest back in the early 1900's, recommended this wonderful place on the beach in Chatham. I have pictures of my grandfather catching the biggest fluke you have ever seen! Ike and Eva had a son, Freeman, who later married Lucille Chandler, and they continued to manage the Hawes House until it closed in 1970. Since the closure, the back buildings and main house have had massive changes.

My recollection as a youth was how long the trip took from New Jersey to Cape Cod. Top speed was 45 mph. No Mid-Cape Highway. You would have to go through Sandwich, Barnstable, and Yarmouth before cutting across to Hyannis and up Rt. 28 to Chatham. Upon arrival at the inn you signed up at the front door of the house on Main Street, and usually you would stay in the same room as in the past summers. There was an unspoken law that prevented you from asking for your friends' room (because it was better) unless they made it clear they were not coming back next year. The keys to the room were handed to you – although all the keys looked the same and fit almost every room – and then you were on your own to find the room and settle in. Only newcomers ever locked their rooms.

Meals were served three times a day in the dining room in the main house. Guests were assigned to tables of 10 or 12 people. Meals were served at 8–9 am, 12–1 pm, and 6–7 in the evening. You were frowned upon if you came in the latter part of the serving hour. Guests were notified of the meals by a waitress who rang a bell at the top main house porch. A big honor was when a young guest was allowed to ring it.

The meals were basic, wholesome, and satisfying. Breakfast included cereal, steak or fried fish, eggs and bacon, or pancakes. Lunch was the main meal, complete with soup, meat, or fish. Supper was cold cuts, left-overs from lunch, or on Friday a small lobster salad. Desserts and bread were homemade and delicious. The Hawes House was an extraordinary place. All of us who stayed there felt privileged indeed.



The Hawes House 1882

late 1930's. The same guests would come back year after year at the same time and their teenage children became part of the summer staff. The inn was only open late June until early September, and those returning guests were referred to as the "July" or "August" crowd.

Zenas and Selena had a daughter, Eva, who married Isaac Howes (I guess she didn't want to change her name too

This is the first in a two-part series on the Hawes House. The second part will include recollections of other regular customers, many of whom live in Chatham . . . Do you know who they are? Answers in the next issue!!!

A special note of thanks to Lucille Howes and Harriet Maddox for their help with this article.



"The Hawes House (Showing main house and annexes), Chatham, Cape Cod, Mass."

Memories of the Good Old Days

by Harriet Maddox

In the 1920's and 1930's, there were people who came to town besides the tourists that I looked forward to seeing each year – the scissors grinder, a mender of pots and pans, the gypsies with their baskets, a hurdy gurdy man, a balloon man, and a lady with a large suitcase full of dresses. You'd be amazed at how many she could squeeze in it all rolled up. The waitresses at the Hawes House all welcomed her. Then there was "Bobby" the monkey with his organ grinder man (my favorite) and Mr. Puk, who sold sheets, towels, etc.

Jesse Tuttle's Meat Market at the northeast corner of Main Street and Andrew Hardings Lane is sharp in my memories of the Village, mainly because of the large wooden box of salt codfish he kept on an upended crate behind the entrance door. A trip to the market always meant to me a chance to snatch a bit of codfish to chew on. I do mean just a bit. That stuff was SALTY!

Occasionally, I used to go with my dad to visit Good Walter and learned about the cat he had that slept in the oven at night. I couldn't imagine a cat sleeping in our oven. We kept the fire going all night (baked cat for breakfast?), but of course, Walter let his fire die down after he had cooked his supper. He'd open the oven door and the cat would jump in when the oven reached a comfortable temperature.

Zenas W. Hawes Innkeeper and Hero

Before he opened the Hawes House, Zenas W. Hawes (1854–1947) had a long career at sea. Starting at the age of 14, he travelled all over the world and crossed the equator twice. On one of his most famous journeys, back from Messina, Italy with a load of oranges and lemons, his vessel lost its mast and he did not arrive home for 157 days. (There are no reports on the condition of the fruit.)

When Zenas returned to Chatham, he joined the Life Saving Service, a precursor to the Coast Guard. For his aid in rescuing the crew of the schooner Grecian, which was stranded on a bar off Chatham, he and Captain George W. Bloomer, the sole survivors of the brave crew that made the rescue, were given Congressional Medals. He retired as the manager of the Hawes House in 1925. At the time of his death in 1947, he was the oldest resident in Chatham.

From
New Haven Railroad
Train Schedule, 1950's.

APRIL 25, 1951

Cape Cod and
NEW YORK

Martha's Vineyard and
Nantucket Islands

New Haven

APRIL 25, 1951

APRIL 26, 1952

New York and
CAPE COD

Martha's Vineyard and
Nantucket Islands

New Haven

APRIL 26, 1952

EAT—
While Traveling

•

FOR A SNACK
OR A COMPLETE MEAL

You will find a Dining Car, Grill Car or Cafe Coach ready to serve you. Have luncheon, dinner, afternoon tea, or cocktails . . . all at popular prices. Enjoy delicious food, skillfully prepared, promptly served while you travel New Haven.

Remember when you
could take the train to
Chatham?

Old Village Association, Inc.

<i>President</i>	Carol Pacun	<i>Directors</i>	Barbara Burke	David MacAdam	Theodore Streibert
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On the Road with Carol and Elinor *continued from page 1*

homeowners want. While all those present made suggestions, the participants agreed that the public should be brought into the process. They urged the Planning Department to give everyone an ample opportunity to study and comment upon the designs.

Margaret Swanson is planning to hold a public meeting on Main Street Reconstruction late this spring. David, Elinor, and Carol urge all to attend. What is done on Main Street will be around for a very long time!

Off to Town Hall: More Sewers for Chatham? Waste Water Management Study is Underway

On March 19th, Village Hall was the setting for a "scoping session" on the Comprehensive Wastewater Management Planning Study. At this meeting the consultants, Stearns and Wheeler, described their projected two-year long process of identifying and evaluating Chatham's wastewater problems, which will hopefully result in a suggested solution "that will be accepted and implemented by the residents of Chatham."

Wastewater management is a difficult and potentially expensive problem for all of Chatham. The Old Village is lucky to have an expert – Ralph Lightfoot – representing our interests on the Citizens' Advisory Committee. If you have any questions as this study moves along (believe me, we are going to have questions!), Ralph would be glad to answer them for you.

Historic Survey of Old Village Homes in Process

Three Old Village Association members, Lynn Fear, Ellen McKinley, and Ann O'Connell, have volunteered to help the staff of the Chatham Historical Commission complete an historic survey of Old Village homes. This work will document the age, design, and history of every home in the Old Village. Thanks to a generous, anonymous gift to the Association, we will be able to partially fund an architectural analysis of each home by an historic preservation expert. The Association will be applying for grants to finish that part of the work.

Many Old Village homes were surveyed by the Commission in 1990, but there are over 100 homes remaining. A completed list will confirm the unique quality of the Old Village and will serve as a research document for the public. Any designation of the Old Village as an Historic, Conservation, or National Register district would require such a survey.

The Association urges all homeowners to help the volunteers find accurate information on their homes. If there are inaccuracies in the 1990 survey (a copy of which is in the reading room of the Eldredge Public Library), Nancy Yeaw, Chairman of the Historical Commission, would appreciate your bringing them to her attention.

Additional helpers are welcome. This project offers an exciting opportunity to delve into Old Village history while providing a much-needed service.