



A Look at the Past: Weeks and Warren Junior High Schools

Last winter, NCDF and the Newton History Museum co-sponsored presentations on the history of two Newton schools, Weeks and Warren Junior High Schools, each taking place within what are now NCDF communities, The John W. Weeks House and Warren House. At least two dozen people were present at each talk, presented by Alice Ingersall, Public Programs Consultant at the Newton History Museum, and Camille Arbogast, a museum volunteer.

On January 25th an audience consisting largely of former teachers and staff gathered in the former Weeks Jr. High, listened and reminisced with enthusiasm about their experiences at *the school that looked like a castle*. This was former Weeks math teacher Bill Rousseau's first time back in the building since the school closed. He was very pleased at the research that had been done and that someone thought it important enough to keep the building's history alive. "We had a tremendous amount of pride in what we did in that building," he remarked. "There were some

very forward thinking people in the school at that time, and people got a tremendous all-round education." After 12 years at Weeks, Rousseau moved over to Newton South before retiring.



A poignant moment occurred during a tour that followed the presentation when French teacher Ina Rubin walked into her former classroom, now a stunning one-bedroom corner unit with palladium windows accenting the living room. Although the apartment was not officially on the tour, its resident graciously allowed Ms. Rubin, who still teaches at Newton South, the opportunity to revisit history. Other teachers in attendance who also went on to Newton South were Cary Holmes, currently teaching history there, and Peter Bates, a retired history teacher. Eddie Costa, Head of Custodial Services at the school, came to the presentation bearing part of a door handle from the original structure and an old photograph showing the gingerbread on top of the building.

Designed by Henry and Rich-

mond, a prominent Boston architectural firm, and completed in 1931, Weeks Junior High was named after John Wingate Weeks, who served as the 14th mayor of Newton, a state representative, U.S. senator, and Sec-

retary of War. The building has architectural significance in Newton as one of the finest examples of a Tudor Revival style school and a keystone of the surrounding neighborhood—an early example of suburban community planning and development meant to elicit a Tudor England ambiance.

When Weeks Junior High closed in 1981, NCDF undertook a major renovation to convert the building into 75 mixed-income apartments, financed through Mass-Housing combined with limited partners equity through the Certified Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit Program. The renovation retained most of the historic fabric, such as the central tower, window sashes and most of the school's W-shaped structure. The former entranceway—massive wooden double doors beneath a stone archway—are still a main design feature. The building was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1984.

In the Warren House lobby today you can still see the façade of the former auditorium and stage, creating a perfect backdrop for the Newton History Museum presen-

(continued on page 6)

Save This Date!

The annual

Salute to Service

Community Event

Thursday, September 7, 2006

from 5 to 7 PM

The John W. Weeks House

You Can Make a Difference

Are you aware of all the simple gift planning options that allow you to leave a legacy to your community through a gift to a nonprofit organization you support? One of the simplest and most rewarding gifts you can make is a bequest in your will or other estate plans. Another common method is the donation of appreciated assets.

Making a Bequest

Wills are extremely flexible, allowing you to provide others with particular amounts of money, certain properties, or percentages of your estate. You should always work with your attorney to draft or make changes to your Will.

There are many options and methods for making a bequest, allowing you to choose the type that best suits your personal objectives. For example, a bequest could be a stated dollar amount, or it could be a specific property or asset. Your bequest could be immediate, or contingent upon non-survival of preferred beneficiaries, such as your spouse. A bequest can be specific (for a particular amount) or for a percentage of your estate after other obligations have been met.

Bequests to nonprofit organizations are not taxable as part of your estate. Your bequest may be unrestricted to allow the organization to use the gift where it's needed most, or restricted, designated by the donor for a specific purpose. Your bequest also can establish a trust to pay income to beneficiaries during their lifetime.

A charitable bequest through your Will provides insight into your lifetime involvements and concerns. Bequests to family members speak of your love; bequests to organizations make known your sense of values.

Gifting Appreciated Assets

One of the simplest options is using appreciated assets to make outright gifts to charity or to fund a charitable life income plan for yourself or others. Gifting appreciated assets (typically equities or stocks) can provide a significant tax advantage, providing you with an income tax deduction equal to the current value of the asset. If you've held the property for at least 12 months, you can also avoid paying capital gains taxes on the growth of the asset.

Please let us know if you are considering a bequest to NCDF. We may be able to help you achieve your estate-planning objectives, but most importantly, we'd like to be able to say thank you. For more information about planned giving, contact the NCDF administrative offices at (617) 244-4035. All inquiries are strictly confidential and without obligation. ☪



An Early Peek at Spring

Residents of Weeks and Casselman Houses and NCDF staff donned their comfortable walking shoes and enjoyed a delightful preview of Spring at the New England Spring Flower Show on March 1st at the Bayside Expo Center. The group wandered at their leisure through the many exceptionally creative exhibits and shopped in the Garden Marketplace. If you have ideas for other possible field trips, share them with Joanne Fuentes in Resident Services: (617) 964-8653 ext. 1.

A Look at the Past

(continued from page 1)

tation on February 4th. Built in 1926, the former Levi F. Warren Junior High School stood vacant for ten years until Keen Development joined forces with Newton Community Development Foundation in 1992 to rehabilitate the structure into 59 apartments, providing both market-rate and affordable rentals, and a daycare center. The award-winning architectural firm of Finegold Alexander + Associates preserved many of the building's architectural features, creating spacious units with oversized windows and high ceilings within its historic shell.

The Warren House presentation attracted many former students, as well as the wife and son of the late Newton Alderman Richard McGrath, a loyal supporter of NCDF. Guests pored over old floor plans, and were captivated by the number and nature of services offered back then, such as four home economics classrooms and separate gym classes for boys and girls. A former gym teacher shared her memory of her first day at school with 300 girls in her class, when the intense heat caused gym to be cancelled.

The Warren House tour revealed the apartment that now exists where the principal's office once was, and the wide hallways are reminiscent of the building's former use—minus the lockers, of course. Warren House is on the National Register of Historic Places, and received the 1994 Massachusetts Historical Commission's Preservation Award. ☪

NCDF is grateful to Whole Foods Supermarket for its generous donation of refreshments for the Warren Jr. High presentation, and Baker's Best for its contribution towards refreshments for the Weeks Jr. High event.

Affordable Housing at WARREN HOUSE

Affordable Units at Warren House		
<i>all affordable to low-income households (max. 50% of area median income)</i>		
no. of bedrooms per unit	current occupants have rental assistance (vouchers)	current occupants do not have rental assistance
1 bedroom	4	0
2 bedrooms	13	1
3 bedrooms	3	0
TOTAL units	20	1

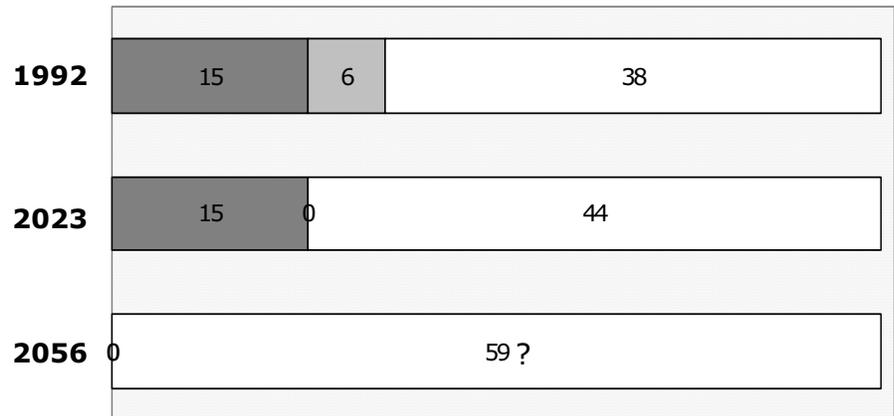
Warren House has a total of 59 units plus a daycare center. Space for the daycare center will be provided on the terms required by the Ground Lease, at a rent of \$1 per year, through the term of the lease.

Of the 59 living units, 21 are affordable and 38 are market rate. 17 of the affordable units have more than 1 bedroom and therefore serve families.

The Warren House Special Permit requires that 15 units be affordable to households with up to 50 percent of area-wide median income through the term of the ground lease. The other 6 units are affordable at the same income level through 2023, due to 30-year restrictions imposed by MassHousing and the federal Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program. Refinancing of the property in the near term will allow NCDF to extend these 6 restrictions to the full term of the lease.

Timeline

KEY	
affordability guaranteed by special permit through 2056	
affordability guaranteed by deed restrictions through 2023	
market-rate	



NCDF's ground lease with the City of Newton runs through 2056. When the lease expires, the status of all 59 units is uncertain.

NEWTON HOUSING PARTNERSHIP

Newton Housing & Community Development Program
492 Waltham St., West Newton, MA 02465. Phone 617-796-1156. TDD/TTY 617-796-1089

January 14, 2009

Community Preservation Committee (CPC)
City Hall
1000 Commonwealth Avenue
Newton, MA 02459

Re: Warren House Preservation Proposal

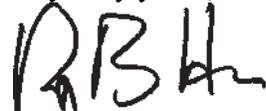
Dear Committee members:

At its meeting January 14th the Housing Partnership voted unanimously to support the application by NCDF for \$1,080,000 in CPC funds in support of its preservation proposal at Warren House, 1600 Washington St., West Newton. The Partnership has given the proposal substantial review, including discussions with the applicant at two of our meetings and one review by our Project Review Committee. The Partnership has four comments:

- Merits of the Proposal: The Partnership recognizes the critical need for immediate repair of the roof and walls to preserve the property for both its historic nature and to protect the affordable (and market) housing contained within. We believe that the cost estimates are reasonable given the types of repairs needed. We recognize that the requested funding will cover the most immediate needs in this first phase of the project, but that additional funds must be located to complete the needed repairs to the property in a second phase.
- Need for public funding: We support the use of Community Preservation funds and other City funds such as Newton Inclusionary Zoning funds, to support this phase of the project.
- We do request that the applicant provide greater clarity on the level and timing of assurance regarding continued affordability of the price-restricted units.
- We urge the applicants to re-approach MassHousing to press for the refinancing of the loan on the property, enlisting the support of Newton's elected public officials such as the Mayor, State Representatives, and State Senator. Refinancing of the project would provide at least some of the funds necessary to complete the second phase of the necessary work.

If you have further questions for the Partnership please let me know.

Very truly yours,



Philip B. Herr, Chairman

Cc: Jeanne Strickland, Director, NCDF

Trisha Guditz, Housing Development Coordinator

March 12, 2009

Hi Jeanne,

It was so nice talking with you at the CAN-DO Fund raising party at the Marriott Hotel. I haven't seen you for a while, but I can see you are still doing a great job with Warren House and NCDF housing.

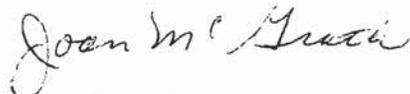
I am sorry that I can not join you this Saturday, March 14, for a tour of Warren House. We had such a great time at the previous get-together you had in 2006 of former neighbors, Warren Jr. High School graduates and teachers. One of my sons who also went to Warren and was there that day could not get away with all the friends he met there.

As a neighbor, I am interested in preserving the historic façade of Warren House. It has such an excellent architectural significance to those of us in the immediate neighborhood and certainly needs to be maintained. Approval by the Newton Historic Commission of such a scope of work is also momentous. Slate roof repair and replacement and weather joints on the brick sidewalls are such important restoration items as well as that wonderful original metal cupola. Many people particularly on their spring and summer walks and game attendance mention the cupola.

I strongly support you in requesting CPA funds for this project and I know there are many neighbors who are in agreement with this. We definitely enjoy our walks and ball playing in McGrath Park (your backyard) and will for many more years.

Please let me know if there is anyone you would like us to contact directly to help with the passage and funding of this very important project. I can write letters, call them or email. It would be money well spent and many will benefit.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Joan McGrath". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Joan McGrath

March 17, 2009

To Whom It May Concern:

NCDF Request for \$1,080,000 in CPA preservation funds to perform roof and above-roof line masonry and cast stone restorations at the former Levi F. Warren Junior High School – now Warren House.

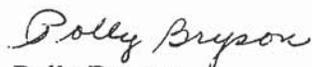
Growing up, marrying and settling in Auburndale, after my graduating from Warren Jr. High School (and Newton High School) followed by my daughters, Warren was an important part of our interests and our life experiences. Among other interests, my family was very active with a variety of school and community activities and so it followed that when Warren was closing in the early 1980s, I was a part of many discussions with neighbors and city officials regarding its future.

In 1986, I was elected as Ward 4 Alderman (which included the Warren site). I was appointed to the Real Property Reuse Committee, and became Chairman. In the eighteen years I was on the Board of Aldermen, the committee dealt with changes and discussions on many properties and I was very pleased to Chair the committee. The reuse of Warren was personally the most exciting project and one that came to fruition in 1992. It transformed this historic property into 59 units of mixed income housing, as well as a Head-Start Day Care Center in conjunction with Newton Recreation play fields, tennis courts and wonderful park land. It continues to be an intensely-used mixed community property that makes those of us who have been involved so very proud of its up-keep, its beautiful grounds and its uses that mesh together so beautifully and give both aesthetic and cohesiveness in this wonderful location.

Decisions regarding changes and up-grades continue to include neighbors and those of us who have been involved over the years. The accolades and awards that have been received over the years are well-deserved and create a sense of great pride. We are all so fortunate to have sincere, qualified, intelligent people serve on the NCDF Board of Directors, the Advisory Committee and especially Executive Director Jeanne Strickland.

I sincerely hope that the Community Preservation Committee will approve the CPA funding so as to preserve and restore this historic site.

Best Wishes,



Polly Bryson.

Former Alderman, Ward 4

Judy Weber

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Newton, MA 02458
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juditheweber@comcast.net

March 17, 2009

Members of the City of Newton Community Preservation Committee
Alice Ingerson, Program Manager
City Hall
100 Commonwealth Avenue
Newton, MA -2459

Re: Warren House

Dear Committee Members and Ms. Ingerson:

I am writing in support of the Newton Community Development Foundation (NCDF)'s proposal for CPA funds to perform roof and above roof line masonry and cast stone restoration at the former Levi F. Warren Junior High School, now known as Warren House. Most regrettably, I am unable to attend tomorrow night's CPC meeting to show my support in person.

My reason for support of this proposal is simple. We have a woefully meager number of affordable housing units in Newton where I have owned a home for over 30 years, raised a family and been an active member of the NCDF Board of Directors for more than 10 years. It has, quite frankly, been very frustrating that my home town has not been able to do better in providing more housing opportunities for our less affluent neighbors. Therefore, with all the impediments to creating new affordable housing, it is imperative that we make every effort to preserve those units we have been able to create. 21 of the 59 apartments at Warren House are affordable and NCDF is committed to keeping these units affordable as long as it possibly can. We need you to join us in making that possible by helping preserve the physical integrity of the building.

You know NCDF's mission and history, the properties it owns and manages as well as the residents who sing its praises. It has a stellar reputation and its properties are a source of pride to our community. I look forward to learning that we have received your support for Warren House!

Respectfully,


Judy Weber

RECEIVED 18 March 2009

**League of Women Voters of Newton
PO Box 610207
Newton, MA 02461**

Joyce Moss, Chair
Community Preservation Committee
1000 Commonwealth Ave.
Newton, MA 02459

Dear Ms. Moss:

The League of Women Voters of Newton would like to clarify its support of using \$1,080,000 in CPA funds for slate roof replacement and above roof line masonry and waterproofing repairs at the Warren House, as proposed in the Newton Community Development Foundation (NCDF) application.

LWVN recognizes that this work is essential to preserve the structure, was not accomplished during the initial renovation, and will help to bring maintenance costs under control. We believe this would be a wise investment both to ensure the future of this historic structure and help sustain the much needed mixed income housing within. We feel the cost of the proposed repairs is reasonable given the extent of the work required.

We also urge that funding be secured from other sources to complete the remaining work needed on exterior building elements below the roof line as described in the Gale Engineering Report. To this end, we recommend the petitioner take aggressive steps to refinance the MHFA mortgage. We also urge Warren to explore current state and federal weatherization grants and/or performance contracting arrangements that may expand the work to include better insulating the building as well as high efficiency HVAC equipment. A comprehensive retrofit of this order would serve to further curb operating expenses.

In conclusion, the League supports the CPC recommending funding the Warren request now, and hopes that Warren will seek to complete needed repairs and upgrades in the near future by aggressively seeking outside funds.

Yours,

Terry Yoffie, President