



The Advocate

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Cazenovia Heritage
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The Accidental Preservationist

There are some of you out there who came to preservation of historic resources deliberately: those who earned a degree in it or pursued a career in it or a related field. Then, there are those -- like many of us -- who did not find ourselves in this space intentionally.

A look at participants at Cazenovia Heritage programs reveals some interesting paths to this space. One attendee was a first-time home buyer who got involved in preservation after buying an older home, since an older home was the only affordable one available. Another fell in love with a house’s porch, only later discovering fully the house’s architectural features. One felt undertaking house

restoration projects helped to relieve stress [?]. Another became intrigued after having to undertake a repair of a historical feature.

And, because the story of a house is very much a story of the people who lived there, others found themselves wanting to protect evidence for the next generation of their house’s former occupants. Still others can’t or don’t want to expend the energy and resources it can take to maintain a historic house but do appreciate the unique sense of place and character provided by our historic architecture.

And from this range of motivations, a community nonetheless has been created.

People of different motivations, different generations, and different socio-economic backgrounds all arriving the same place: the protection and preservation of Cazenovia’s historic resources. All of *you* are part of this community.

So, how did you arrive here? We’d love to hear from you.



Not a member of Cazenovia Heritage yet? Join your many neighbors in protecting the architecture of this place we love and call home. It’s never too late to become a Member. Family and Student Memberships also are available. See our website to join now: <https://cazheritage.org/support.html>

Highlighted Resource: 34 Albany Street

On the south side of Memorial Park, #34 Albany Street has witnessed much of Cazenovia's development over time. A sale of the house by the children of Abel Gridley, deceased, in 1840 indicates that the house was built some years prior, further supported by its distinctive Federal features: the fan in the triangular gable and the main cornice, almost delicate. Look under the cornice and you will notice some blocks projecting out --- *dentil molding*. The house likely had no porch originally but added a Greek Revival porch in later years -- a hint is how the porch partially covers up the door frame. You will note that its gable end faces the street, and the resulting



narrowness of the house places the main doorway to one side. This is likely to accommodate one large front room alongside of the hallway.

The occupants have some familiar names:

- Abel Gridley < 1840
- William Burton 1840 – 1845
- Lewis Fairchild 1845 – 1851
- Helen Boyce 1851 - 1862
- Sidney Roberts 1862 – ca. 1870
- Reverend Dwight Williams (Methodist Minister) ca. 1870 – 1898
- Dwight Williams Jr. (painter) 1898 – 1932

The Cazenovia Club, incorporated in 1891, leased the house from Dwight Williams during 1911 -1916. After the Club moved to its current location on the lake, Williams remained there for the duration of his life. After his death in 1932, the house passed to the Hubbard family. In 1953, Helen Ledyard Hubbard sold the house to R. Philip Hart; then to Thomas Vietor in 1964; to Eckert several years later; then to S. Dorus and H. MacNaughton.



Advocacy Update: Gothic Cottage

At the April 26th Special Work Session, the Town Board met with a representative of the architectural firm HKK who acknowledged that "Plan C" did not reflect current requirements, and that elevations and updated estimates were still needed for a new Plan X. Separately, at the Regular Work Session on May 6th, the Town invited a developer and architectural representatives to discuss a concept for an offsite location, behind Cazenovia Dental on Route 20 East. The Board agreed to have the firm conduct interviews to determine requirements.

At the Town Board meeting July 11, we asked for the status of the two approaches. HKK did submit a proposal, but it is on hold due to its **six-figure** price tag until, as Supervisor Zupan noted, "we figure out what we want to do."

As for the offsite, the developer is working on plans, though no documented requirements were issued. We highlighted the importance of having common documented requirements when considering alternatives. Mr. Zupan did state that the Compromise Plan will be included in the review of alternatives. Stay tuned.



Welcome New Charter Memberships!

We welcome the following who became Charter Members in **2022**:

Leigh and Susan Baldwin
Craig and Carol Buckhout
Dale Bowers
Pat Carmeli
Larry and Mary Leatherman
Dave Porter and Betsy Moore
David Murray and Elizabeth Manley Murray
Anne Marie and Bill Newland
Robert and Teresa Parke
David Ridings
Mark Smith
Larry and Sally Tully
Dianne Webb
Sarah Webster
Larry and Glenda Wetzel

While Regular Memberships are always available, Charter Memberships are now closed. We appreciate the strong support provided by our **2021 and 2022** Charter Members – over 100 Charter Members in all! *Thank You!*

Michael MacHugh Joins Cazenovia Heritage Board

We welcome the addition of Michael MacHugh to the Board of Directors of Cazenovia Heritage. Mike graduated from Cazenovia College in 2007 with a Bachelor's degree in business management. Originally from the Hudson Valley region of New York, Mike felt a connection with Cazenovia that kept him in the area after college, and he currently resides in the Village. His career has revolved around the insurance industry, currently working with Liberty Mutual Insurance as a manager in the claims department. A Charter Member, Mike served as a volunteer with Cazenovia Heritage for six months, taking a lead role in the *Renew Albany Street* effort. We look forward to his continued participation and insight.



Advocacy Update: Renew Albany Street!

This past Spring, we approached the Village Trustees to address the deteriorating condition of the buildings on Albany Street -- our National Register Historic Business District and the supposed showcase of the Village. The Mayor sent letters to building owners noting concerns; the owners were invited to a webinar on rehabilitation tax credits; and, Cazenovia Heritage and CACDA researched and confirmed that there were no grants available to the building owners. Not surprising, there was minimal response from the building owners to the letters.

As a result, we recommended to the Mayor that the Village Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) and Code Enforcement Officer undertake a tour, document recommendations, and provide them to owners, prior to issuing citations. And, that such walking tours become an annual activity during National Preservation Month. The Mayor has declined this approach, out of a concern that this could be viewed as "selective enforcement of the code." On the contrary, we would welcome the existing code be applied equally to all within the District, including the buildings on Albany Street.

Protection of historic architecture means on-going maintenance and care. When questioned on how their communities keep their buildings and communities consistently looking attractive, officials at Skaneateles and Pittsford cited a common response: Enforcement. The Village of Cazenovia already has historic preservation law that calls on the Code Enforcement Officer to enforce compliance. It also provides for the HPC to refer concerns to the Code Enforcement Officer for action. Its intent is an on-going, proactive and preventative process. We will continue to pursue additional avenues toward an optimal outcome.



In Memoriam

On Friday, July 1, the Jabez Abell House of 1873 burned to the ground. The stately facades and three-story spiral butternut staircase are gone.

The irreversible decline of this *grande old dame* of Italianate architecture is what motivated the creation of Cazenovia Heritage in late 2020. Its cupola became our logo as a constant reminder: Never again will we stand idly by while historic properties suffer demolition-by-neglect. That a showcase building of one of Cazenovia's earliest and finest families could be allowed to decline and then be reduced to rubble deserves our collective mourning.

It can now, however, finally rest in peace.

For a look at the house in 2020: Download a short powerpoint of photos prepared by Gene Gisson:

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/9vwixjgqpuxd9dk/Abell%20Homestead%20Powerpoint.ppsx?dl=0>



L: Remnants of foundation are all that remain.



R: Aerial view; Note extent of tree burn.

A Look into the Past

A shout-out goes to Glenda and Larry Wetzel for *literally* opening up their property to allow a look at timber frame construction. On July 10, over 60 architecture lovers and curiosity seekers stopped by 8 Liberty Street to see an extant example of settlement-period construction.

The house spoke to us. Among other insights, it said that its second story had been heightened by 48” of stick framing after the Civil War. Visitors were fascinated by the original “transitional” (also called “accordion”) wooden plaster lath. Hand-sawn hemlock boards were split while being nailed in place.



And A Look Ahead:

September 17 *The Art of Reproduction: Three Generations of Scalamandre Interior Appointments* [Registration Required]

October 17 *Cemetery Clean-Up Part II & Headstone Raising*

November (Date TBD) *Architectural Styles, Part II: Late Victorian to Post-Modern*

For a schedule of all upcoming programs, visit www.cazheritage.org