

June 13th, 2012

My name is John Quimby. I speak to you as an invited Neighbor. My wife, Carol and I, have lived at 12 Woodbury Lane, since July 2nd of 1983. In these 29 years, we have greatly appreciated our working relationship with our noisy neighbors, here in Acton center, including the irregularity of the town bell, and the occasional musket fire at 7:00 A.M. We are also proud to be living in the Acton Center Historic District and fully support its mission. We are, indeed, happy neighbors.

Now the subject at hand is the future of the Asa Parlin house.

At first, the Asa Parlin house is a deep conundrum; a challenge to the sensible, practical, historic New England values.

The house refuses to fix itself.

It's too central to ignore.

it's too unsound to patch up.

It's too chopped up to be "open meeting space".

It's the wrong scale to be made effectively "municipal office space".

And yet, it's frontage is too critical in its current location to move.

It's too 'historic' to be bulldozed in the historic district.

And It has effectively served as an island, surrounded on three sides by parking lot, holding the tide of cars at bay.

So what to do. It will not fix itself. It needs a vision. I propose to you, the following:

Strip the house down to its core, historic framing, (a la the footprint filled-in in blue on the map)
Remove each of the subsequent expansions to that footprint, the clutter, completely. Remove all water and septic from the property, completely. Provide the core frame with heat and electricity.
Expose the core wood pegged framing and construct a well lit, three season interior. Use this interior space for an unmanned, historic museum to the history and artifacts of the town of Acton.

In short, an unmanned, three season, historic museum to the town of Acton, in Acton center.

Now this is a proposal, not a demand, but I will point out 9 key features of what I have just outlined;

1. Scaling the building back to its historic core frame, on its site, dramatically reduces the rehabilitation costs to stabilize and renovate the structure.
2. Scaling the building back to its historic core frame, without water or septic, dramatically reduces the cost of ownership and preservation over the next hundred years.

3. Treating the building as historic museum space, rather than municipal cubicals, furthers the broader goals of the Historic District Commission, and the Acton Historical Commission.
4. The extraordinary location in Acton center, being on the Line of March, next to the library, the monuments, and existing parking, is highly desirable for a history museum.
5. Leaving the building frontage on Woodbury Lane is consistent with the historic residential character of Woodbury Lane.
6. Leaving the building's historic core footprint on the site helps to preserve, in the spirit of the historic district, Woodbury Lane from future municipal mission creep.
7. The museum's educational function would complement the educational roles already played by the Acton green monuments, the Acton Library, the war memorials, and the Acton Town Hall. Itself.
8. This adaptive, reuse as a museum, is not likely to offend anyone.
9. The project could be closely managed from existing management offices and done in phases.

In summary, I submit to you, that this solution is needed, highly desirable, and quite practical.

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