

Portland Preservation Alliance Events and Announcements for May 2007, National Historic Preservation Month

Portland Preservation Alliance (PPA) will celebrate National Historic Preservation month by presenting its First Annual Preservation Award to the U. S. Marine Hospital for “Best Restoration”. The building is a monument in the history of Portland and serves as an example of what’s possible for other buildings in the neighborhood. The restoration of the Marine Hospital gives everyone hope for the future of Portland. PPA would like to thank Portland Family Health Center, Metro Government, the Marine Hospital Foundation Board and Mason Rudd for their leadership. The presentation date has not been decided yet. Contact Mary Turner at Portland Museum for future information.

As another National Historic Preservation Month activity, PPA will organize a field trip to Louisville Metro Archives for a research workshop. Members want to help folks from Portland learn how to study their own houses and learn their history. There are so many buildings with fascinating backgrounds in the neighborhood! Look for the PPA newsletter this May to find out the date and time of the workshop or call Portland Museum at 776-7678.

PPA projects are funded in part by Metro Government and the Community Foundation of Louisville.

Portland Anchor March 2007

Portland Preservation Alliance News and Meeting 2/8/07

Portland Preservation Alliance (PPA) is a community group based at Portland Museum that seeks to find and bring together residents interested in preserving Portland’s history and architecture. PPA combines meetings with exciting opportunities for field trips, lectures and workshops. The next meeting is on Thursday, February 8th at 5:30 at 2308 Portland Avenue.

We will talk about recruiting two youth interns to help with our projects and ideas for a Preservation Awards Program in Portland. Richard Jett of Louisville Metro’s Planning and Design department will speak to the group about other awards programs in Louisville and Kentucky. We will also discuss the problem of historic building demolitions in the neighborhood. There are 42 properties on the city’s “Demolition List as of 12/19/06” that are located in Portland. Some of them, listed below, have already been demolished. They are on the list for a variety of reasons, including back taxes, abandonment, fire, or the homeowners were unable to bring them up to code.

As residents of this community, PPA wants your opinion on what could be done. If you are concerned about the rapid disappearance of so many historic homes, please attend the next PPA meeting at Portland Museum on February 8th at 5:30 and speak up. Call Erin Gerrity at 776-7678 for more information.

Louisville Metro Demolition List as of 12/19/06

119 N 17th St (gone)

538 N 17th St

516 N 18th St

520 N 20th St

531 N 20th St

312 N 21st St

315 N 21st St

329 N 21st St

326 N 22nd St
528 N 22nd St (gone)
355 N 23rd St
215 N 26th St
356 N 27th St
523 N 27th St
318 N 27th St
211 N 34th St
1912 Baird St
2643 Bank St
2508 Columbia St
2532 Columbia St
2121 Duncan St
2828 Griffiths Ave
2025 Lytle St
2306 Lytle St
1830 Lytle St
2527 W Main St
1800-06 W Main St (4 total)
1515 W Market St (possibly gone; fire)
1519 W Market St (possibly gone; fire)
1721 W Market St (possibly gone; fire)
2327 Montgomery St
2431 Montgomery St
3205 Northwestern Pkwy
1920 Owen St
2104 Owen St
2024 Pirtle St
2112 Pirtle St
2000 Portland Ave
2613 Portland Ave (fire)
2327 Rowan St
2431 Slevin St
2509 St Xavier St

Portland Anchor December 2006

Elements of Preservation: by Mary Turner

Most of us see preservation as a way to save houses and other structures in a neighborhood. Preservation covers a lot of other items too. It includes the preserving of a special piece of land, such as the Portland Wharf Park. It includes cultures that made a community what it is. The creating and marking of “Heritage Trails” is another form of preservation. Also, stories told by people who lived there are preserved so that they are saved for the future. Items in a museum are preserved for other generations.

Preservation is different pieces of a puzzle that fit together to make a full picture. Sharing the pieces is a necessary element, so that others who may not know about an area will learn from that area. Tours of neighborhoods and their treasures is a part of this. When preservation starts so does the learning experience. An individual can

come away from a tour, or self-motivated walk and feel good that they learned something they did not know before.

Portland is a neighborhood filled with treasures. Not the kind that can be sold for cash, but the kind that make this neighborhood what it is. The maritime history, the architecture that still remains, and the different ethnic groups that built homes, owned businesses or settled in this neighborhood. Portland was also an integral part of the freedom of African-American individuals. Portland was an important crossing place to the free land on the Indiana side and past residents were helpers in that endeavor.

Many descendants of the original Portland families remain. Many families have arrived from other areas and brought with them their lifestyles. All of this makes preservation important so that future generations will also know how special Portland was and is today.

News Release April 2006

The public is invited to a series of heritage events at the historic Earick House in Portland, May 9—13 to celebrate National Historic Preservation Month. The events include on-going demonstrations of timber framing; a talk by historian Tom Owen; and a walking tour of the Portland Historic District. All events are free and open to the public. The events will take place at the Earick House located at 719 North 34th Street.

Don Weber, a greenwood bodger (chair-maker), black smith, and timber framing expert from Paint Lick, Kentucky will demonstrate to the public how a log is transformed into a framing timber and how various methods of joinery are used to build a timber framed structure. He will be working with restoration carpenter Mike Mullinix of Lexington, Kentucky. The timber framing will be on-going daily between 10:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. The demonstrations will be concluded by 2:00 on Saturday, May 13th.

Louisville historian Tom Owen will speak on Friday, May 12th at the Earick House, at 5:30. His talk will set the building of the Earick House into the context of Louisville's history. This talk is sponsored by a grant from the Kentucky Humanities Council.

Members of the Portland community will give a walking tour of Historic Portland on Saturday, May 13th at 2:00. The tour will leave from the Earick House. Comfortable walking shoes are suggested.

The Earick House, an "American Treasure" under the federal Save America's Treasures program, is being restored by the Portland Museum. The house wrights and framers who built the Earick House used a technique called timber framing in which large, heavy timbers are hand cut from trees and joined with mortise and tenons. Each mortise joint is secured with a wooden peg. The technique results in a very sturdy structure and was used almost exclusively until the advent of saw mills and standardized lumber.

The Earick House is located at 719 North 34th Street at the corner of 34th and Rudd Avenue. Call the Portland Museum at 776-7678 for more information.

Portland Anchor May 2006

Timber framer Don Weber and restoration carpenter Mike Mullinix are about to restore the framing of the front porch of the Earick House. The house wrights and framers who built the Earick House used a technique called timber framing in which large, heavy timbers are hand cut from trees and joined with mortise and tenons. Each mortise joint is secured with a wooden peg. The technique results in a very sturdy structure and was used almost exclusively until the advent of saw mills and standardized lumber.

Don Weber, a greenwood bodger (chair-maker), black smith, and timber framing expert from Paint Lick, Kentucky will demonstrate to the public how a log is transformed into a framing timber and how various methods of joinery are used to build a timber framed structure. The timber will arrive on May 9 and the shaping will begin.

You are invited to see the demonstrations anytime May 9-13. The work will be over at 2:00 on Saturday, May 13, when Don Weber returns to Paint Lick.

Louisville historian Tom Owen will speak on Friday, May 12th at the Earick House, at 5:30. His talk will set the building of the Earick House into the context of Louisville's history. His talk is made possible by a grant from the Kentucky Humanities Council.

Portland Museum newsletter article May 2006

The Portland Preservation Alliance had its first meetings in February and March 2006. Those attending are very committed to preserving the historic fabric of the Portland neighborhood. We are exploring ways to encourage restoration and rehabilitation of the many houses that are being demolished due to lack of owner concern or safety concerns.

Several ideas were given:

— Salvage items that can be used in other houses for restoration or rehabilitation and “warehouse” them. These items would be made available to homeowners, who wish to keep the architectural character of their homes, for an economical price.

— Provide workshops to educate those who wish to repair, to restore or to rehabilitate their homes.

Inform the elderly of resources available to them so that they may repair and remain in their homes for as long as possible.

— Not only will the PPA work to save our architecture they will also be involved in other forms of preserving the history of Portland.

— Involving community members to help in the creation of “Heritage Trails” that will connect the built community to the river heritage of Portland.

— Promote Heritage Tourism in the Portland neighborhood.

— Preserve the culture of Portland.

The Portland Preservation Alliance (PPA) welcomes participation from those who live, work or care about Portland.

— Submitted by Mary Turner

Portland Anchor August 2005

Our group took a field trip to Don Weber's Handcraft Woodworks Studio in Paint Lick, KY on Saturday, July 16th, 2005. The trip was interesting as well as a lot of fun. A cheerful man with a strong Welsh accent, Don Weber made us feel right at home in his shop. He is a timber-framer and bodger (a maker of chairs and chair parts). He was brought to Kentucky because of Appalachian woodcraft traditions. His workshop is housed in a general store built in 1901. He does his chair making and other piecework in the shop, but erects timber structures on-site. He even makes his own tools, such as chisels and knives, in a blacksmith shop at the back of the general store. He creates almost everything by hand and has all kinds of innovative measuring devices that don't require any math at all! His methods are not old-fashioned, but timeless. They still work after all these years. He uses a pole lathe (first designed over 2000 years ago!) to carve the curved part of chair legs and spindles. He uses axes and adzes to strip the bark from a timber. He knows which types of wood absorb the least moisture, therefore lasting the longest. We learned so many things.

He talked to our group about doing a youth apprentice program in Portland. He has erected timber frame structures with other groups of youth that proved to be very positive learning experiences. One idea is to build a timber framed structure in the Wharf Park with Portland youth. Another idea is to re-build the Squire Earick House porch with Portland youth as a model for a local apprenticeship program.