

FIRST SELECTMAN'S MAINTENANCE STUDY COMMITTEE  
REPORT FOR THE BARON'S SOUTH PROPERTY, COMPO ROAD, WESTPORT, CT  
GOLDEN SHADOWS RESIDENCE  
INSPECTION: May 24, 2022  
RE-INSPECTION June 28, 2022  
DRAFT REPORT PREPARED: May 25, 2022  
FINAL REPORT PREPARED June 30, 2022  
Final Report w/ further edits prepared July 22, 2022

INSPECTION OF THE BARON'S SOUTH PROPERTY,  
RESIDENCE: GOLDEN SHADOWS – July 22, 2022

Present:

Andrea Moore	–	Second Selectwoman
Joseph Fuller, Jr., AIA	-	Chair, SMSC
John Broadbin	-	SMSC (First Inspection)
Jack Klinge	-	SMSC
John Rotondo	-	SMSC
Joe Renzulli	-	SMSC
Mr. Suggs	-	Resident
Mr. Liccione	-	RTM
Mr. Falk	-	RTM
Ms. Crowther	-	Resident

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INTRODUCTION:

As per members of the Maintenance study committee requests, and since the Golden Shadows building is non-occupied, all were agreeing this building should be more often reviewed as to the current state of its deteriorating conditions. The building is being used by the Town for light storage of first aid and critical response items.

Three previous reports have been generated one in 2014, 2018 and one in July of 2019, this is an update to that last report.

All parties present reviewed the residence, (soon after a rainstorm) both exterior and interior including the basement and again on June 28, 2022. The purpose to the committee's follow-up visit was to observe the remedial repairs made to the dining room floor joists following the overloading damage caused to same when the room at issue was used for the storage of books. The building is a two-story with basement high brick

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façade structure with pre-cast framed exterior wood windows, two glass porches on the west-side and two stone patios, one on the east and one on the western side of the

building. The structure in 2015 received funds from the CT. Department of Economic and Community Development's State Historic

Preservation Council to document the property, it is listed on Westport's Historic Resources Inventory and Golden shadows is designated as a contributing resource on the State Register of Historic Places. For the purposes of the historic designation the State of Connecticut has listed the residence under the consolidated address of record for the parcel on 21 Imperial Ave.

The residence contains a basement, first and second floors, and an almost full-height attic space. A decorative sweeping wood stair with ornate metal railing connects the two main floor levels. The brick exterior of the structure is capped with slate roof system and on the west side other flat built-up roofs over porches as best can be determined. The upper roof also maintains a lightning protection system, which appears to be now disconnected in various areas around the façade.

It should be noted that the previous copper leaders have now been replaced with an aluminum leader system to properly drain (though some are dislodged) roof water to a subsurface drainage system (most likely to the footing drains system).

It is noted that the building, aside from some more minor maintenance since its turnover to the Town some 23+/- years ago, has not received any renovations except the rebuilding of one of the beams on the west-side above the greenhouse, work recently at the north-east corner soffit rebuilding items as previously noted from the last SMSC report of 2014 and some leader work per the SMSC 2018 report. Other minor repairs of broken windows, leaders and similar small things have also been performed. Nothing major.

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1. The structure has been previously used for storage of books by the Westport Public Library, has no occupancy and now has some light storage on all floors in many rooms, prudently distributing the light loads throughout the structure.

The basement has temporary shoring (bracing) in one room, supporting approx., 8 floor joists, one of which is cracked and screwed together, over the shoring system. Observation of the foundation walls in this room do not show any cracks even with the required addition temporary shoring. A structural engineer should be engaged to further investigate and design permanent joist repair(s), and the ceiling patched. See photographs.

With regards to recent sitework, not much has been done, this is a wooded high grass area. The drive is still sand/gravel and remains potted and uneven. The staircase to the southern lower old gardens should not be used, due to various stair tread heaving and no railings.

EXTERIOR:

1. In 2014, the exterior brickwork appeared in good condition with only minor cracking and some patio pre-cast stones being out of joint. Continually, more major cracks are evident and cracks from September of 2018 are now further getting larger in the façade walls, brick patio walls and pre-cast railings and coping systems those are separating significantly. This degradation is continuing.
2. This report can state that the brick and stone window heads at all window tops needs to be replaced (removed / reset), due to continued deterioration of the upper steel lintels, the lintels need replacement with new. Also horizontal cracking is taking place at an accelerated rate, as the lintels expand. See photographs.

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Front steps are spalling, some are out of place and the front stone patio is leaking, the area will soon be lost, meaning requiring full replacement vs. repair if not attended to shortly. Work on these items should start before next winters freeze/thaw cycles. The treads are now loose and some rock, this appears a potential liability issue along with exposed steel wire reinforcing fabric showing through the precast stair treads.

3. The site and grounds are still somewhat overgrown, however, similar to last September and July 2019 thinning of trees close to the residence was accomplished. Now it appears only one new dead pine tree is close to the residence, it should be fully removed.
4. Chimney repointing is warranted, drone photograph shows the extent.
5. Patio and stair treads and risers need restoration and replacement.
6. Crack repair and window lintel repair is required shortly along with waterproof coating. Accelerated deterioration is even more evident than 2019.
7. The patio and walls are deteriorating at an accelerated rate due to the lack of on-going maintenance, and open coping joints. Patio and walls need partial removal, resetting and cleaning. Sub-patio conditions are unknown.
8. Caulking is peeling and falling from joints, between brick and wood. Thus, failing at doors and windows.
9. More fascia boards now show signs of peeling paint and rotting in spots. See photos.

INTERIOR:

1. All floor levels were reviewed including the basement, first floor, and second floor

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2. In the basement, previous mold appears to have been removed, though it was wet and damp, mold seems to be reoccurring in the northwest room only. DPW did have professional environmental services rendered in these spaces in 2018.
  
3. The first floor has numerous interior spaces including a kitchen, pantry, breakfast room, offices, toilets, living room and grand hallway. Also, two greenhouses the westward side of the residence. All seem dry on the interior. One window was found open, with evidence of someone being inside the patio, more recently.
  
4. The heating system is functioning according to the Town. However, the two hot water heaters have been turned off. Boiler was last reviewed October 2021 all is current.
  
5. All of the walls seem in a satisfactory condition except around some window openings where water penetration is taking place. Some windowsills are getting rotted, repairs, preparation and painting is required.
  
6. Some of the rooms (most) on the upper floor have some signs of small water intrusions, with stains on the wall paper/plaster at the ceiling to wall vaulted areas in spots along the outside wall.
  
7. All of the wall woodwork appears in satisfactory shape along with the metal cabinetry in the kitchen. Ceiling paint is peeling, repairs are needed.
  
8. A few areas of water intrusion were noticed along the rotted windowsills and other such typical deterioration over the last twenty-three year span since the residence was fully resided in. More than a few areas of water intrusion are now easily observed. Many wood window frames are getting more rotted, they will be lost shortly. The lower floor sill to the SW is quite deteriorated. See photographs.
  
9. The second floor was reviewed including the bedroom, study and bathrooms. It appears that previous roof leaks under or near the building's exterior gutter

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system have been repaired. Some paint is spalled. The second floor SE side has a more major leak which continues to grow.

10. It should be noted that windows within the building are not energy efficient, some single pane lead cased systems. Some wood framed.
11. Second floor finishes are highly decorative and have a bleached wood wall finish of high quality. Also, the full parquet floors and other surfaces including
12. decorative ceiling. All need cleaning and some are getting soiled. The main floor wood area below the staircase has joints opening. Further deterioration of some of the woodwork of floors and areas of ceiling trim can be observed. These should be attended to, floors sanded and refinished as soon as possible if the building is to be kept well maintained.
13. The attic was not reviewed on this visit.
14. It also appeared via the drone pictures of the roof all slates are in good shape, the internal perimeter gutter does need patching to keep water out of the interior.

MECHANICAL:

1. No update on Mechanicals: except the Boiler was services October 2021, all is reported in order.
2. From the previous 2018 Report, it as noted that the heating system for the entire house consists of a warm air oil fired furnace located in the basement. The furnace manufacturer is Williamson, a reputable company with a relatively new Becket burner. The Town noted that though the boiler is not on today, the house is warmed in the winter with two fuel tanks located in the adjacent furnace room totally 660 gallons. The domestic hot water system is not used anymore and not functional. All was the same as the last report.

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3. At one point the house had air conditioning via the two items of equipment stacked next to the furnace on the left. They are Carrier indoor condensing units —something more common in the 1980's than today. Indoor condensers were popular with owners who didn't want to have to look at them outside. They put them in basements and ducted condenser air to the outside. These indoor condensers have large ducts discharging air via louvers through the outside wall. They remain non-functional; therefore, pipes are not used.
  
4. It appears the return ducts from the house terminate in the furnace room and when the condenser is run, they intake air from the house. It appears the furnace was the air handler because there are no other air handlers in the residence.
5. Indoor condensers tend to have lower energy efficiencies compared to outdoor condensers. They are still in the building though disconnected.
6. It does appear there was still asbestos insulation in the furnace room ceiling. Edgerton is noted as continuing to maintain the furnace.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Discussions took place and it was noted the structure should be considered for exterior improvements almost immediately, this is the same comment as 2019, 2018 and the 2014 report. Exterior envelope work, roof inspection and rotted sills repair, re-caulking, lintel replacements, masonry wall cracks, masonry terraces repairs and general cleaning. Afterward, interior ceiling and floor work should be provided in order to maintain the building interiors if the building is to be kept. The costs for the continued deterioration is mounting faster and faster, with cost of construction today, related required scaffolding to make many repairs and other general conditions this residential renovation interior and exterior with items listed in this report, including the exterior stair, would be over \$1M dollars. Added would be design documentation and potential construction management fees.

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2. Attached are photographs and drone pictures with descriptions of the various items noted in the above report.
3. Attached please find a photographic file with items in need of repairs. These repairs are to bring the structure to a reasonable level of maintenance, not to reconstruct to pristine condition.
4. Kept as an old note: *It should be noted, since the previous reports of 2014 and September 2018 suggested repairs, most of which could not be afforded, it does seem costs have risen quickly and due to accelerated deterioration, now much*

more work is required more urgently. As reported earlier, Investment in this structure is needed or it will be a major project or complete loss in just a few years. The above is now more on point in 2022.

SITE WORK:

1. New driveway repairs should take place soon, as large areas of standing water can be observed. No roadwork close to the residence has happened since the September 2018 report, though repaving of the main drive did occur.
2. Grass needs cutting and bushes trimmed.
3. The stone walled steps to the SE of the front requires extensive repairs and handrails.
4. One large dead pine tree requires removing on the east side of the building. Tree warden should be notified. See photograph.

A "committee member" did note that if the building was restored, it could most certainly be rented like three other adjacent residential buildings on the property.

It was stated this building costs the Town approximately \$50K per year to maintain.

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Many aspects of this property should be considered by the Town administration in this committee's opinion. We hope to share this report with a potential firm hired to perform the Masterplan for Barons South when that occurs.

Please see attached photographs documenting much of the above.

Submitted by:



Joseph Fuller, Jr., AIA, Chairperson  
Selectman's Maintenance Study Committee Chair

JFF/cm

Cc: SMSC Members  
Enc. Report  
Color Photographs

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