



DOTTRIDGE HOUSE PRESERVATION PROJECT

Purpose

The purpose of this project is for the continued restoration and preservation of the 1808 Samuel Dottridge Homestead and the associated structures on the HSSC property.

As a Historical Society, we have the responsibility of preserving our facilities and grounds in a historically appropriate manner. With this mind, the Board of Directors conducted a property and facility audit in November 2014. We developed a long range plan addressing the upkeep required on our historic property in a fiscally responsible way. This audit identified both immediate and long term issues regarding the deteriorating condition of the Homestead.

Phase I: (2014-2015)

Our Preservation Project began with the replacement of the Homestead's shingled roof. The roof was full of missing or cracked shingles and holes, prevalent throughout the front and back. It was in immediate need of repair. We completed the roof replacement in March of 2015. We successfully fundraised a majority of the cost of that work, but not all. Another immediate need identified was the front entry door, which was rotted through at its base, allowing critters and rain to enter. We replaced the door with a complete reproduction of the existing so it stayed in historical context with the building. It included new hardware, a new frame, weatherproofing, and a fresh coat of paint.

Major grounds improvements in 2015 included the landscaping of the Main Street island in the front of the property. Over crowded trees were removed and the island was cleaned up of brush, weeds and grasses. Twelve new rhododendron shrubs were planted under the existing Maple trees for a more inviting entrance to the property. This was completed using only Society funds.

Phase II: (2016-2017)

The current sidewall shingles on the Homestead have not been replaced since the structure was moved to its current location on Shell Lane in 1962. These shingles are in need of replacement due to cracking, peeling, and warping. We plan to replace them with new cedar shingles that will weather to gray and protect the house from further damage. The four corner boards to the house are rotted at their base. This decay allows an entry for insect and small animals. We plan to replace these with the shingles to prevent further damage.

The back door, which is the main entry into the Homestead, has rotted and split at its base. There is a large air gap surrounding the door, which lets in cold air during the winter months as well as rain during heavy storms. A custom reproduction of the existing door will be built, with new weather stripping and added security features. Also in need of restoration is the bulkhead door leading to the basement which has rotted and fallen off its hinges. It will be rebuilt with new cedar planks and pressure treated framing.

Inside the Homestead, the main fireplace in the Keeping Room needs to have its back and side walls replaced, repointed and sealed. The bricks and mortar are crumbling. We have four annual events where we use the fireplace and this has become a safety issue. This fireplace is central to our educational programs as we showcase open hearth cooking and demonstrate meal preparation in the 19th century.

Additional preservation measures include reglazing of all the windows to secure the panes as well as the replacement of the split rail fence surrounding the property, which has given way to rot and warp. This fence will be a custom restoration of the existing, which will be an exact match of the fence as it was in 1812.

Grounds improvements will include additional landscaping upgrades around the museums and Ice House, to improve the look and flow of the property. Over crowded tree and shrub removal behind the museum has already been completed in 2016. Our long term landscaping plan strives to balance a design of what the Dottridge's might have had on their property in the 1800s with a more inviting landscape for our patrons today.

Phase III:

The last phase of the Project will include removal of the restroom in the Homestead and relocating it to the Museum/Gift Shop/Office building. The area in the Homestead where the bathroom is currently located will be restored to what was called the "Buttery, where the family would keep butter, perishables, and a door leading to a root cellar. This will allow for a more authentic exhibit of the early Homestead.

Our Goal

The goal of this project is to continue preserving our Dottridge Homestead so it can be enjoyed by the community for years to come. The continued restoration of the Homestead will allow us to better serve the increasing number of visitors to the Homestead and Museums each year. In 2015, over 7500 people visited our property. This Preservation Project will allow us to safely host our community events and patrons as they visit the Homestead, the museums, and gift shop.

The Dottridge Homestead is a classic example of early 19th century architecture and reflects life in coastal Massachusetts during this time. Preserving it will help us continue to educate future generations of Cotuit's rich historical heritage.