



P. O. Box 184, Newburyport, MA 01950  
www.nbptpreservationtrust.org

*Linking the past with the present and future*



Quarterly Newsletter of the Newburyport Preservation Trust

Summer/Fall 2015

## Zoning amendment addressing bizarre infill projects passes 2nd reading by unanimous City Council vote

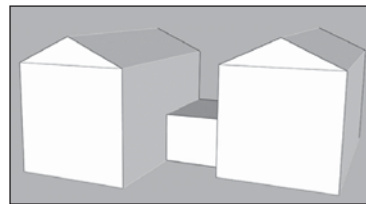
*Many voices speaking at public meetings made the difference*

In an effort to put an end to strangely-configured multi-family infill projects, the Newburyport City Council approved a revision of the Zoning Ordinance that amends the definition of multi-family and two-family structures, and clarifies the requirements of a common wall connector.

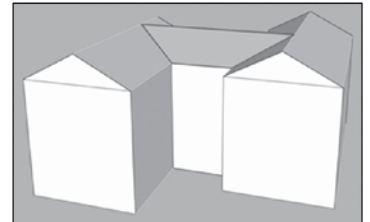
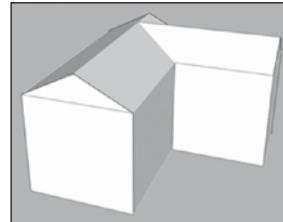
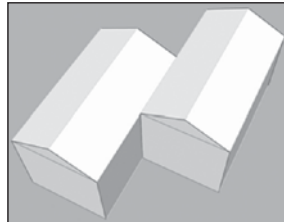
The number of citizens that spoke their mind on this issue at several public meetings made an impact: City Council votes on the first reading (June 29) and second reading (July 13) were unanimous.

In spring 2015, an incongruous new development at 77 Lime Street brought into question what constitutes "a building." On May 11, Ward 2 Councilor Jared Eigerman introduced a zoning amendment to clarify the requirement of a common wall connector. The new language is as follows:

**"Common Wall Connector.** An interior wall that is shared by and separates the two



The new zoning amendment clarifies the definitions of two-family and multi-family structures by specifying the requirements of the "common wall connector." The designs in the top row are "unacceptable," and do not meet requirements. The designs below are examples of an "acceptable" common wall connector. In the above right photo is the "two-family house" at 77 Lime Street, joined only by a "storage connector," that prompted the issue.



dwelling units of a two-family dwelling, or the dwelling units of a multifamily dwelling, and meets all four of the following requirements: (1) the shared length of the common wall is no less than 50% of the longest dimension of the rectangle in which the footprint of the larger unit exists; (2) it exists at the ground-level story and is at least

as high as the eaves line of the lowest dwelling unit; (3) it separates enclosed interior space(s) in each of the dwelling units it separates; and (4) it connects the dwelling units in such a way that the building or structure containing them appears to be an integral whole rather than conjoined masses, as depicted in the diagrams." ■



## Newburyport Preservation Trust takes message to the streets at Yankee Homecoming sidewalk sales

The Yankee Homecoming Sidewalk Sales on Saturday, August 1 provided an opportunity for the Newburyport Preservation Trust to take its message and mission to the streets and get shoulder-to-shoulder with the teeming summer crowd.

For the first time, NPT mounted a booth at the Sidewalk Sale, complete with canopy, display table, banner, props, reams of hard-

copy support materials, and brochures to thrust in the hands of passersby.

The consensus of table-staffers reporting was that while our presence, display, materials, message, and chat-'em-up index were excellent, perhaps the event and the Inn Street location did not draw passersby who were interested in history, preservation, or cultural issues. One table-staffer noted that a few local residents stopped at the booth, but that most out-of-towners passed without notice on their hunt for bargains, food, or particular shops. Next year's fine-tuning will be based on these observations. ■

At left is the NPT booth at the 2015 Yankee Homecoming Sidewalk Sale. At the far right in the photo is the award-winning Powder House poster by Nock Middle School student Zack Naughton.

## Powder House Park & Learning Center continues to extend its reach – to Germany

### Yankee Homecoming, Trails & Sails, and visitors enliven the season

You can still have a guided tour of the Powder House! Stop by the restored 1822 structure on Low Street at the Essex Heritage Trails & Sails event on Sunday, September 20 (10-4) or Sunday, September 27 (12-4).

Of course you can explore the site on your own at anytime during the daylight

open hours until the park closes for the season October 31.

Some notes on the summer season:

- Katrin & Timon Kolterjahn visited from Lübeck, Germany. They translated the interpretive panels into German for future visitors.
- Mowing is done weekly. Weeds in paths are controlled by environmentally-safe spraying of white vinegar.
- Park environs are home to five rabbits, six groundhogs, two deer, and countless species of birds. ■



At right are siblings Katrin and Timon Kolterjahn, visiting from Lübeck, Germany. As cousins of NPT's co-president Tom Kolterjahn, they were designated as "Powder House Keepers for a Day." Timon is a city councilor in his preservation-focused home city.



Above is proud homeowner Chris Rutchick (left) holding her new historic house sign for 82 Bromfield Street in Newburyport. At right is Martha Muldoon, coordinator of the Newburyport Preservation Trust's Historic House Plaque Program that has gathered momentum in the past year.

## NPT's Historic House Plaque Program continues to keep research team busy

The Mary Loring/Parsons Brown House at 82 Bromfield Street is the newest property to be researched and documented by the Newburyport Preservation Trust Historic House Plaque Program.

While many Newburyport homes sport signs of various origins, at the core of NPT's program is rigorous professional research. To learn how you can "get with the program," visit [www.NbptPreservationTrust.org](http://www.NbptPreservationTrust.org). ■

## Condemned 1824 house is on the fast track for demolition – Another loophole to close?



The home at 8 Strong Street, variously identified in the news recently as "the hoarder house" and the "house of squalor," was condemned by the Newburyport Health Department, which has apparently put it on the fast track for demolition.

While the building is undeniably an example of neglect and deterioration, the 1824 house is still a contributing structure in the National Register Historic District.

Does the condemned status supersede the city's zoning laws and procedures? Is this another loophole to be addressed? ■

## Words not necessary

Is this the new normal? Below is a newly-constructed fake chimney, a half-baked 21st-century effort to "blend in" here in highly-marketable "quaint olde Newburyport." ■



## In some cases, many words are necessary ...

Many words and many voices, including NPT's, are being heard by the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service over the city's plan to excavate Custom House Way to place utilities for the new harbor master's building – without regard for historical/archaeological resources. ■

