GRANT AWARD, BIDDING PROCESS, AND SELECTION OF CONTRACTOR

On January 8, 2014, we received written notification from the State Historic Preservation Office that the National Society of the Colonial Dames of America in CT had been awarded a matching grant of $56,575 for the replacement of the roof on the Silas Deane House and the restoration of three historic privies on the property. The grant application was submitted in October 2013 by the Executive Director with architectural specifications by James Vance, AIA.

After receiving the executed contract from the State, the Invitation to Bid for the project was prepared and a legal ad was placed in the *Hartford Courant* on June 11, 12, and 13, 2014 (copy attached). The pre-bid meeting was held on site on June 25 with nine contractors in attendance. The public bid opening was held on July 9 at 2 pm at the Museum and we had three bids. The low bid from JHS Restoration, Inc. was for $99,900 and the second low bid from Campos Custom Carpentry was for $111,288. Kronenberger & Sons Restoration, Inc. bid $187,000. Several days later, we met with John Snyder of JHS Restoration, Inc. along with the mason and head carpenter for the project. Jim Vance checked references for the general contractor and sub-contractors, which were all positive and confirmed that they had the skills, ability and integrity necessary to faithfully perform the work. The State gave us approval to proceed with the project on August 12, 2014.

DEANE HOUSE CHIMNEY REPAIR, FLASHING, AND ROOF REPLACEMENT

On September 22, 2014, the project began with masons working on repairing and re-pointing the chimneys on the Silas Deane House. LSJ Masonry of Hartford was the sub-contractor for the masonry work. Type N mortar mix was used for the chimneys, which is recommended for exterior and above-grade masonry that is exposed to severe weather and high heat. It is composed of one part Portland cement, one part lime, and six parts sand. Mortar samples were prepared for the approval of
the architect and executive director to match the color and texture of the original mortar as closely as possible. Later Portland cement was removed from the brick chimneys joints, and they were repointed so that the new mortar joints do not overlap the exterior surfaces of the bricks. Damaged bricks were replaced as needed and the top five courses of the of the south-front chimney were replaced due to damage and the danger of loose bricks falling to the ground. Both the front and middle chimneys were closed with a sloped mortar top. The rear kitchen chimney was left as is. The contractor used a bucket crane to access the chimneys safely.

Left: Work in progress on the south-front chimney. Right: Condition of chimney prior to starting work.

Masons working on rear chimney, left, and middle chimney, right.
The roof on the Deane House was replaced as part of the Colonial Dames restoration of the house in 1971. A written estimate for the work dated May 8, 1971 calls for the removal of one layer of asphalt shingles and one layer of wood shingles and reroofing with fire resistant Koppers wood shingles. The estimate for the work was $5,350 (copy attached). After forty-four years service, the roof was showing signs of severe wear with cupping and broken shingles and there were several minor leaks in the attic. There were also leaks in the flashing on the rear side of the main roof and rear porch roof, which was covered with a plastic tarp for the past two years.

Condition of the roof on the west rear elevation of the Deane House. Structural repairs were completed on the rear porch by Gove Restoration in 2012. They covered the roof with a tarp until the current roofing project was contracted.

The roof replacement began the first week of November 2014 starting with the rear El. The project was postponed until November because of the heavy fall schedule of visitors, school groups and special events in September and October. The work included removing the old shingles and installing one layer of 30 pound roofing felt as an underlayment followed by one layer of cedar breather. The existing wood decking was found to be in excellent condition and only minor repairs were required. The new roof is pressure-treated western red cedar shingles supplied by G & R Cedar Ltd in British Columbia, Canada. They are 18 inches long and perfection grade with a 30 year warranty. They were installed using stainless steel ring shank nails in a straight coursing pattern with a 5¾ inch weather exposure to match the original. An ice and water shield was installed on all eves, valleys and ridges three feet up from the edge of the roof.

Ripping old and installing new shingles, rear El. Installing shingles on the East front roof of Deane House.
After the old shingles were removed, JHS Restoration installed 20 ounce copper flashings around the chimneys, in the valleys, and at the juncture of the roof and side walls of the rear porch. When the contractor was installing the flashings, he discovered that the counter flashings were in bad shape. The architect’s specifications called for the replacement of only the apron and step flashings with the counter flashings staying in place. There was no way of knowing their condition since they are covered over and are usually in good condition. But when the outer flashings were removed, the counter flashing fell out of the wall and crumbled. There also were nails through the face of the flashings that were holding them in place. Because iron is not compatible with copper, holes had eaten through the copper around where the nails had been used to fasten the flashing. It was necessary to replace all of the counter flashing on the three chimneys. A Change Order was prepared for an additional $5,761 to complete the work and it was approved by the State Historic Preservation Office on February 10, 2015. Before the scaffolding was removed, the contractor reattached the lightning rod system and replaced one post on the south side of the main Deane roof. Minor repairs were also made to the gutters where they were leaking.

Left: Condition of Flashing and Portland cement joints on South-Front Chimney. The cast iron pipe is a vent from a former bathroom located in the basement. It was removed to eliminate the possibility of water penetration through the new roof. Right: Counter flashing showing rusted nail holes.

Before and after photos of center chimney flashing.
RESTORATION OF THREE HISTORIC PRIVIES

The matching grant from the Historic Restoration Fund was also used to restore, paint, and replace the shingled roofs of three rare surviving historic privy buildings on the Museum property. They date from the late 18th century and are located behind the three historic house museums at 203, 211 and 215 Main Street in Wethersfield, CT. The privies are listed on the National Register for Historic Places. The Deane House Privy was moved from the Congregational Church property in Wethersfield in 1967 to make way for a new church parking lot. The soil was tested in the backyard of the Deane House by the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station and evidence was found “where the soil was enriched with phosphorus, potassium, and calcium,” indicating that an earlier privy was once in that location (copies of newspaper articles attached). The Webb House privy is believed to be original to the Webb House but not necessarily on its original site. The Stevens House privy was donated by the Wethersfield Historical Society and moved by the Colonial Dames from behind the Old Academy building to behind the Stevens House in 1967. It was originally located on the site of the home of Reverend Henry Smith, Rector of the Trinity Episcopal Church on Main Street in Wethersfield.

The privies had fallen into extreme disrepair. Two of the structures were used for storage and the third was opened and occasionally shown to students as part of the school program. The exterior paint was cracking, blistering and/or peeling. The roof shingles were cupped, falling off, damaged or rotting. The siding, doors and windows were also in bad shape. The preservation and future of the buildings were at a critical state and they were an eyesore on the property.
The restoration included replacing the cedar shingle roofs on all three privies with an underlayment of 30 pound roofing felt, a layer of cedar breather and pressure-treated western red cedar shingles. All of the red cedar ridge caps were installed with copper underneath and are treated with water proofing clear coat. The exteriors were stripped down to the bare wood prior to painting and damaged or rotted clapboards, sills and exterior trim elements were repaired or replaced. The painting of the exteriors was done using one coat of an oil based primer and two coats of colonial red in keeping with the less expensive paint commonly used in the service areas. Also completed was the replacement and or repair of interior plaster ceilings and walls and painting them by brush to simulate white wash, the repair and or replacement of windows and doors, the repair and replacement of some of the floor boards in the Deane privy and the replacement of all of the flooring in the Stevens privy, and minor repairs to the interior woodwork and seats. The seats and wainscoting inside the three privies were by-and-large in good condition and have been left as is with only minor repairs and cleaning. The interior paint, though not documented as the original colors, has also been retained as is to show the aged patina. New and restored woodwork elements, such as the interior of the new windows and places where rotten or damaged wood was replaced, have been painted to match the existing aged colors. The restoration also includes the use of period cut nails and reproduction window glass with bubbles and swirls. Wire mesh was also installed and buried around the foundations to prevent
woodchucks from burrowing under the structures. New dead bolts were installed in each privy. The floors, seats, window sash, and woodwork inside the three privies were hand washed with gentle soap and water at the conclusion of the project.

The privies are all of ample size, measuring roughly 8 feet by 8 feet, and feature a number of surprising amenities such as multiple seats of varying heights with arm rests, shelves to hold a candle, crown moldings on the exteriors and there was a decorative final on the top of the Webb Privy that had fallen off the roof and was in storage. The Stevens privy has five holes, two of smaller circumference for children; the Webb has five holes, one for children; and the Deane privy has six holes with two for children. Although there are multiple seats, family members would probably have had their own seat and used the facility in private. Following their restoration, beginning in May 2015, all three privies were opened to the public for tours and education programs for school children, enabling us to show students and visitors an important and “necessary” aspect of everyday life in the 18th and early 19th centuries.

The Stevens House privy

The present location of the Stevens privy is not documented or confirmed through archaeology. When it was moved here in 1967, it was set directly on the ground without a raised foundation. As a result, the sill plates were rotted and had to be replaced all around. The floor was removed to get to the floor framing, and most of it was also rotted and needed to be replaced. We also had to raise the structure two inches to help prevent further deterioration from moisture and termite damage. Stones from the property were installed to support the building. The original floor boards were not in good condition or structurally strong enough to be installed over a new plywood subfloor and they all had to be replaced. Salvaged wide board yellow pine floor boards were cut to match the size and width of the original floor boards. They were acquired from Armster Reclaimed Lumber in Springfield, Mass. The boards retain their original aged patina and are very close in color to the original flooring.

After floor boards were removed, the rotted framing underneath was replaced. The underside of the floor boards were also rotted. A new subfloor was installed and salvaged yellow pine floorboards were installed that were cut to match the size and width of the original floor boards.
The sills and wall framing were also in bad condition and had to be reinforced or replaced. About 75 per cent of the siding was removed for structural repairs and replaced as required. Although it was originally believed that the top and bottom sash in the two windows at the Stevens privy could be repaired, the rot was so extensive that they both needed to be replaced. Old panes of glass were saved and reused and reproduction window glass with bubbles and swirls was installed. The roof was also leaking and the plaster ceiling was cracked and coming down. When the shingles were removed, the header plates and ties, rafters and ceiling framing were rotted and had to be taken out to be replaced with new. The decking for the roof was also in poor condition and was replaced with old wide board planks milled to match the original decking.

Work in progress replacing rotted sills and wall framing of the Stevens Privy.

Removing shingles on Stevens Privy to reveal rotted decking and framing. Repairs in progress with new header plate in place and the replacement of rafters in progress.

A temporary roof had to be constructed to protect the structure while the repairs were in progress. It was believed the plaster ceiling was in repairable condition, but the rotted framing above and damage to the plaster from water leakage required that we take the whole ceiling down and replace it. Two of the plaster walls also had to be replaced inside due to the rotted wall framing that needed to
be replaced or repaired. Only the wall on the south side is original. The work included installing Blue board over the wall and ceiling framing and coating it with a layer of new plaster over the blue board. A skim coat was applied over the old surviving plaster on the south side. It was then painted by brush with white calcimine to simulate historic white wash.

Water damage, Stevens privy interior. New rafters, decking and framing after removal of ceiling.

A change order for $9,913 for the extra work required on the Stevens privy was approved by Laura Mancuso on October 28, 2014. Not included in the original scope of work and not covered by the matching grant was the work on the interior woodwork. The seats and wainscoting are of the period, survive intact and are in good condition. Minor repairs and painting were completed, including the replacement of rotted boards in several areas, replacing the hinges and making the seats operable. New wood repairs and the inside of the replaced sash were painted to match the surviving gray paint on the seats and wainscoting.
Exterior of the Stevens Privy before and after restoration.

The Webb House Privy

In 1924, the Colonial Dames restoration consultant for the Webb House J. Frederick Kelly wrote of the outhouse then behind the Webb House: “The outhouse at the rear of the main house should receive whatever structural repairs it needs to make it sound and be painted. It is unique as to its interior arrangement, and possesses sufficient architectural interest to make it of real value.” The architectural plan below, dated March 31, 1954 by Frederic Palmer (the architect for a new bathroom and kitchen addition), shows that the Webb privy was moved several feet to the east at that time so that it squarely faces the garden and lines up with the axis of the garden cross walk and arbor. His legend on the drawing reads: “18th Century Toilet\Move to Long axis of\ Garden & Restore.”

Relocation of Webb privy: old site (with dotted line) and new site (with solid line and step). The 1954 bathroom/kitchen addition is shown below five feet to the east of the privy.
The Webb Privy was in much better condition than the Stevens Privy and no change orders or extras were required. The work started with the replacement of the cedar shingle roof. Plywood was installed over the decking with a copper drip edge around it that was painted to hide the exposed plywood. The original sash was rotted or damaged and the bottom sash on both windows was missing and covered over with plywood. New lower sash was made for the windows on the east and west side and the window on the south side was removed and repaired, glazed and painted in the shop over the winter. The door was also removed and the bottom rotted section of the door was rebuilt. The damaged side rails were replaced and the interior was repainted in the shop to match the existing brown color on the seats and woodwork. The damaged clapboard on the outside was removed and ten boards were replaced. On the west side of the door, there was rot down by the sill and some of the wall framing had to be replaced. The final climax to the exterior restoration was the installation of the decorative finial at the peak of the hipped roof. It was damaged and rotted in several areas and was restored in the shop using a wood epoxy filler.

Above: roof replacement at Webb Privy in progress. Left and Right: Repairs in progress to framing, door trim and siding, preparation work for exterior painting, and putting a skim coat over the original interior plaster.
The floors and seats inside the Webb privy were in good condition. One shelf for a candle, on the west side, was missing and had to be replaced. There were clear markings on the wall showing the exact location of the missing shelf. A repair was also made to the child’s seat, which was nailed down with a split top which was repaired. The H and L hinges on the door are original and the surviving door pull and latch were cleaned up and painted black.
On the stone foundation on the south side, two square openings were discovered on ground level that are believed to have been used to clean the privy out. There are nicks to the lower clapboards from the shovel going in and out. The waste would be transported probably by wheel borrow to a nearby compost pile to be recycled as fertilizer. They would have kept wood ashes and lime inside the privy to help neutralize the odor.
Deane House Privy

The Deane House Privy was originally located behind the Congregational Church property at 276 Main Street in Wethersfield. The Dames Application to move the structure to the Deane House was reviewed at the December 1, 1966 meeting of the Historic District Commission. The official letter of approval (copy attached) states: “it was unanimously voted that your application seeking Certificate of Appropriateness to relocate existing 8’ x8’ privy from Congregational Church property to rear of 203 Main Street, Silas Deane House, BE APPROVED.” The privy was given to the Dames by the Church and moved here in 1967 prior to the installation of a paved parking lot for their patrons on the site of the privy.

In the fall of 2014, following a newspaper article in the Harford Courant on the privy project, we were visited by Mr. and Mrs. Charles Officer, whose family lived in the yellow stucco house at 276 Main Street where the privy originally comes from. They lived in the house from 1946 to 1952. Mr. Officer is now 92 years old and remembers that when they moved out, the house was sold by his aunt and uncle to the First Church and that they wanted the rear of the property for parking. The house was not used as the parsonage and is currently lived in by the Sexton of the Church. He said his grandfather decorated it with wall-paper, a carpet laid on the floor, the seats covered with material and curtains hung at the windows. The children used it as a play house and his grandfather put a sign over the door, “Ye Old Family Circle.”

The House at 276 Main Street where the Deane privy was originally located. The site of privy was behind the house. Charles Officer, left, and Richard Agne, W-D-S Museum Property Manager, right, are standing where the privy was before it was moved and the Church installed a paved parking lot.

The restoration of the Deane privy included the replacement of the roof, the repair of the two windows on the east and west sides and replacing the window on the north side. The roof decking was in good shape and did not require any repairs or plywood sheathing. The worst damage from moisture and rot was at the entrance where the threshold and about 1/3 of the floor boards inside in the vicinity of the door needed to be replaced. The work included putting in a new subfloor and replacing the rotted floor boards with old yellow pine boards from Armster Reclaimed Lumber. The replacement
boards with their aged patina are a perfect match to the original floors. The door also had to be removed due to rot and sent to a woodworking shop where the whole bottom half was replaced. It was repainted with a color that matched the surviving green paint left intact on the seats and woodwork inside. The plaster was in good shape and was skim coated and painted with calcimine. The only interior repair required was opening one nailed down toilet seat in the corner.


Subflooring installed at entrance and replaced threshold and old yellow pine flooring.
Painting the exterior prior to applying a finish coat of Colonial red matching the rear El of the Deane House. Applying skim coat over the old plaster on interior walls.

Interior of the Deane Privy before and after restoration.

Exterior of Deane privy before and after restoration.
CONCLUSION

The restoration project at the Silas Deane House and three historic privies at the Webb-Deane-Stevens Museum started on September 22, 2014 and concluded on May 18, 2015. The general contractor spent 1,600 man hours on carpentry, window restoration, painting, roofing, replacing the flashing on three chimneys and project supervision. The masonry contractor spent 200 hours on repointing and repairing the three chimneys. The plastering and painting of the interiors of three privies required 75 hours. The executive director and property manager of the Museum estimate their time at about 200 hours in administration and supervision.

The working relationship with John Snyder of JHS Restoration, Inc. was excellent throughout the project. He is conscientious and was willing to go the extra mile to make sure that things were done properly and that we were satisfied with the results. The Webb-Deane-Stevens Museum commends all of the people who worked on the project for doing an excellent job and is satisfied with the quality of the workmanship and the end result.

The project was completed very close to the budget estimates in the grant application. The approved budget for the project was $113,150 and the matching grant is for $56,575—50% of the total estimate. The low bid received from JHS Restoration, Inc. was for $99,900. There were two change orders for unanticipated extras discovered during the restoration not included in the bid documents. Change order #1 was for repairing the rot and damage to the floor framing, replacing the floor boards, wall framing, roof and rafter framing and replacing damaged interior plaster at the Stevens House privy. The request was approved by Laura Mancuso of the State Historic Preservation office on October 28, 2014 for $9,913. The second change order was for replacing the damaged counter flashing around the Deane House chimneys. It was approved by Laura Mancuso on February 10, 2015 for $5,761. The final cost for the project including the change orders, the legal ad in the Hartford Courant for $458.85, and the project sign at $118.62 came to $116,150.77—$3,000.77 over the original budget estimate. Not included in the above figure are the fees for the architect’s specifications and miscellaneous carpentry work and painting done on the seats and woodwork inside the three privies that was not included in the original scope of work.

School group visits the restored Stevens privy in May 2015.
CREDITS:

Architect:

General Contractor:

Subcontractors:
LSJ Masonry, LLC, for Deane House chimney repairs and repointing.
Brian Flannigan’s Home Fixes, LLC for plaster repairs and painting inside privies.
Manchester Safe and Lock, dead bolt lock sets for privies.

Project Administration and Supervision:
Charles T. Lyle, Executive Director, Webb-Deane-Stevens Museum.
Richard Agne, Property Manager, Webb-Deane-Stevens Museum.

SOURCES:

Cedar Shingles:  G&R Cedar 18 inch pressure treated “Perfections” with a 30 year warranty, Matsqui British Columbia, Canada.


Mortar:  Type N. One part Portland cement, one part lime, and six parts sand.

Replacement Floor Boards:  Armster Reclaimed Lumber Company, East Windsor, Connecticut. The flooring for the Stevens and Deane privies came from their facility in Springfield, MA.

Paint:

Cedar ridge caps: Rustoleum Wood Life Classic Clear Coat.

Interior plaster walls in privies: Benjamin Moore Calcimine Recoater.

Exterior and interior paints for the privies:

Custom mixed at Sherwin-Williams Store #5346, Buckland Hill, 100 Tolland Tpke, Manchester, CT 06042, (860) 533-9548

Privy exteriors: Exterior Red; JHS NEW SHAKER RED ---K42TOO154 Resilience Exterior Acrylic Latex Flat Ultradeep. Custom on file at store: W1-24+01; B1-58; R2-2Y42+11; R3-2Y35=01.

Privy Interior windows and woodwork:

Webb Privy: JHS PURPLE FRAME; B30W02653---ProMar 200 Zero VOC Interior Latex Flat Deep Base; store file OE077412Q5346*. 

Stevens Privy: JHS GRAY FRAME; B30W02653---ProMar 200 Zero VOC Interior Latex Flat Deep Base; store file OE0077412Q5346, B1-2Y46+11, R2-1+01, Y3-16+01.

ATTACHMENTS:

#1. Project Sign.

S. OLSON & SON

May 8, 1971

Miss Susan Finley
Webb House
211 Main Street
Wethersfield, Connecticut

Dear Miss Finley:

Below is the estimate for the Silas Deane House:

- Remove one layer of asphalt shingles and one layer of wood shingles and reroof with fire resistant Koppers wood shingles $5,350.00
- Furnish and hang one 47" screen on front door of the house, with hardware and painting $ 112.00
- Price for 37" rear door would be $102.00.

Very truly yours,

S. Olson & Son

[Signature]

Norman R. Olson

NRO/erb
December 5, 1966

Colonial Dames of America
203 Main Street
Wethersfield, Connecticut

Re: Application No. 192-66

Mesdames:

At a public meeting of the Historic District Commission held on December 1, 1966, it was unanimously voted that your application seeking Certificate of Appropriateness to relocate existing 8'x8' privy from Congregational Church property to rear of 203 Main Street, Silas Deane House, BE APPROVED.

It is understood that the clapboards used will match the clapboards on the Silas Deane House.

Very truly yours,

TOWN OF WETHERSFIELD
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

[Signature]

Eleanor B. Welf
Clerk

encl.

Historic Privy’s Site Is Located By Soil Samples

WETHERSFIELD (AP) – Scientists, in an attempt to determine the site of a backyard privy in colonial times, have determined the site where a backyard privy stood in colonial times.

Who would want to know such a thing? The Connecticut Society of the Daughters of the American Colonists restoration committee doing work at the colonial Silas Deane House wanted to place the privy in its proper spot where it had stood for centuries.

The committee called on Henry C. De Ru, soil scientist with the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station, to test the soil around the backyard. De Ru found a spot where the privy had stood, enriched with phosphorus, potassium, and calcium. The rest of the soil tested normally.

There are, however, three big questions to be answered when the Weathersfield Historical Society restoration committee met today to select the exact spot for the privy, which now stands on the site of the former privy.

The first question concerns the privy, which now stands on the property of the First Congregational Church, and the second question concerns the privy’s soil content. The third question concerns the privy’s construction.

Historic Privy’s Site Is Located By Soil Samples
