

A link to the past - get inside Green farmhouse

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March 6, 2001

The Green House now stands, as it has for nearly 200 years, on a grassy section of land surrounded by trees and foliage. The shrubbery is overgrown; the house, dilapidated. Academic buildings, residence halls and sports fields long ago replaced acres of apple orchards and farmland.

Built around 1717, a date that has never been proven exactly, the Green House served as a residence for several generations of Greens. Daniel Coxe sold the 345-acre tract of land to William Green in 1712. Green himself emigrated from England in the 1600s and after living in New York and Pennsylvania, moved to Ewing with his wife, Joanna Reeder. The house was passed from generation to generation, most notably to William Green III, who was born in the house in 1743 and reportedly later served as a scout for George Washington's revolutionary army as they marched down Pennington Road toward Trenton.

The house changed hands multiple times but remained within the family until 1880. It eventually became property of the state of New Jersey when the College was established on the land.

The two-story house, which stands along Metzger Drive, less than 100 yards from Townhouses South, was built in three periods of construction over the years.

According to the National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination form, "the first phase of construction seems to have been a one room, one story frame house set on a masonry foundation the southwest corner of the present building. The earliest section, from existing evidence, probably dates from the last decade of the 17th century."

It was enlarged several times throughout the years, with one of the enlargements creating the distinct brickwork still visible. The brickwork was laid in a Flemish checker pattern, rarely seen in the central region of New Jersey but a favorite in southern Jersey.

There are several other unusual elements to the house, including a "segmentally arched cellar doorway" and an attempt to integrate the distinct architectural styles of the three periods of construction.

According to the New Jersey Historic Trust 1991 Site Report, "the house is an excellent example of the vernacular of Georgian architecture." The house was put on both the national and state registry of historic places on Dec. 4, 1973 and because it stands on state land, may not be torn down.

If not preserved, however, a demolition by neglect may be granted by the New Jersey Historic Preservation Office, and the building could be destroyed. "The house is currently in extremely poor condition due to over 20 years of neglect," said Anne McArthur of the Friends of Green Farmhouse, a local group currently seeking funds for restoration.

Restoration has been attempted throughout the years, with little success. In 1988, the campus and local communities banded together to push for restoration, led by Professor James Silver and SGA member Mike McCormick. However, according to Greg Bressler, associate vice president of facilities planning and management, relatively little money was

raised. "I would say there is less than \$20,000 in that account," said Bressler. Because full funds for restoration have not been available, the College's only work to the house was roof stabilization in 1990.

Unfortunately, while the roof work was being performed, a fire broke out in the house, damaging its west wall. According to the Campus Police report for Jan. 12, 1990, "the fire appears to have begun inside the wall. It should be noted that the deteriorated nature of the building is likely to have provided multiple orifices into the interior of the wall and the most likely cause of the fire appears to have been a careless discarded, smoldering or burning cigarette."

The College has made several attempts to gain funding to restore the house, but grant proposals to the New Jersey Historic Trust have been rejected. However, the College allocated \$400,000 for stabilization of the exterior of the house. The current estimate for full restoration of both the interior and exterior stands at \$1.2 million.

Anne McArthur and the Friends have been seeking funding through state government. Democrat assemblyman Reed Gusciora is in the process of proposing a bill for a one-time allocation of \$700,000 to restore the house.

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