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Jenna Lapachinski
Preservation Trust of Vermont
90 Main Street
Suite 304
Montpelier, VT 05602

Dear Ms. Lapachinski,

This letter addresses the next steps for the South Hero Meeting House in South Hero, Vermont. We are currently completing the Construction Documents for the first phase of the project which addresses the stabilization of the foundation and structure. The drawings are 50 percent complete and gives a good picture of the scope of the work needed to repair and begin restoration of the building. This phase includes jacking the building and replacing the failed foundation with full depth frost walls that will be faced with cut stone from the original stone foundation wall. Structural repairs include replacing missing perimeter sill beams and floor beams to support new wood floor joists and floor sheathing. The second floor framing will be leveled and reinforced to meet structural loads. The existing attic trusses will also be reinforced.

Prior to the building being jacked and moved, the wood shed, concrete block chimney and wood egress stair and the front steps will be removed. The existing wood windows will also be removed and salvaged for repair and restoration. The window openings will be filled temporarily with plywood panels until the windows can be reinstalled in the next phase. After the building is placed on the new foundation, the overhead door openings on the east wall will be infilled with new framing, siding to match the existing siding and four new window openings to match the other first floor 2/2 windows. These window openings will be temporarily filled in with plywood panels until new and restored windows can be installed in the next phase. The 2x5 wood water table at the base of the siding will need to be removed and replaced with a new 2x6½ wood water table to cover the new wood sill plate installed on top of the new foundation wall.

Interior finishes in the first floor garage bays will be removed to expose the existing framing. The tin ceiling in the north bay will be salvaged for repair and restoration for reinstallation in the next phase. The plaster in the north bay is cracked, in poor condition, contains asbestos and will be removed. Some wood wainscoting remains on the west and north walls of the north bay. We hope this can be salvaged and reinstalled in the next phase. The south bay has fiber board installed on the walls and ceiling and will be removed to expose the existing framing.

In the second phase, the building will be weatherized and renovated. The existing exterior walls do not have wood board sheathing behind the tongue and groove siding. This will require the remaining interior finishes on the exterior walls be removed to expose the existing framing for wall prep and installation of insulation. These finishes include fiberboard panels on the first floor walls and ceiling, fiberboard on the second floor walls, and plaster and wood wainscoting on the second floor of the front stairs. After the walls have been insulated, the external walls will be finished with gypsum wallboard and the wood wainscoting will be reinstalled. If the existing wood wainscoting is not salvageable, new wood wainscoting replicating the original wainscoting will be installed. The tin ceilings at the top of the stairs will remain in place and painted.

The former garage bays on the first floor will be restored for use as a community meeting space. The walls will be finished with wood wainscoting, salvaged and new replicating the original, up to the window sill height and gypsum wallboard installed above. The salvaged tin ceiling will be installed in the north bay where it was removed. A new tin ceiling with a plain design is proposed for the south bay ceiling. A new hardwood floor with natural finish will be installed over the floor sheathing.

The restored windows salvaged from the first phase will be installed in their original locations. Since two original windows were installed in the south garage bay as interior storms, these windows will be installed in two of the new window openings in the east wall infills. This means only two new windows will need to be installed in the east wall infills. The new windows will be custom made to match the existing wood windows. New exterior storm windows will be installed at all of the window openings.

The exterior tongue and grove siding will be inspected and any damaged boards will be replaced with custom wood boards to match the existing. The siding on the south façade, from the first floor to the second floor, was replaced at one time with different wood clapboard siding. This siding will be removed and replaced with new board siding to match the original tongue and grove siding. The exterior wood trim will also be inspected for damage and be replaced as necessary to match the original trim. The exterior will then be painted.

The slate roof has some areas of damaged and failing shingles. The slate roof will be repaired with matching slate.

New front steps and railings will be installed at the front of the building. At the rear of the building, a new entry door will be installed at the center of the building replacing a non-original window opening. A new covered egress stair from the second floor will be installed incorporating a covered entrance to the new Meeting Hall. A ramp will be built opposite the stair to provide an accessible route.

The building will also have a new heat pump system installed so that the building can be used year round. A new electrical system will be installed in the newly renovated Meeting Hall with new LED lighting and electrical outlets. The existing “schoolhouse” light fixtures on the second floor will remain. New LED lighting will be installed at the Front Entry and the two front rooms on the second floor.

Conceptual plans and elevations have been provided to show the finished project.

Once the building has been fully restored in this second phase, the Town of South Hero will have a building that can be used and enjoyed by the community for many years to come.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Arnold
Principal