

The Year in Review

Adirondack Architectural Heritage protecting and preserving the irreplaceable architectural heritage, historic places, and communities of the Adirondack Park

Once again, we are celebrating a very successful year, during which AARCH has continued to make a difference in a variety of ways. Through our highly regarded and popular educational programs, we've continued to raise public awareness about regional architecture and historic preservation; through our advocacy work, we've succeeded in saving historic places and made many new allies along the way; through our technical assistance program, we've helped others to save and restore buildings and to make their communities better places to live; and through our partnership with NYSDEC at Camp Santanoni, we've made incredible strides in bringing this National Historic Landmark back to life. We were pleased to add Susan Arena to our staff, as our new Program Director, and to have Ellen Ryan become our Community Outreach Director. This will enable us to do more things and to do the things we already do even better. This has been a year of tremendous activity and accomplishment and it's no wonder that AARCH has been called "the best in the business."



The complex includes the Stone Mill (left) and the Stone Office Building (right), built circa 1850 of local sandstone. The Stone Mill is among the last surviving water-powered industrial buildings in the region. Both are on the National Register of Historic Places.

A New Home for AARCH

After several years of planning, we are very excited that we have just acquired an historic stone mill complex on the Ausable River in Keeseville as a new home for AARCH. During the last half of the 19th century this was the Ausable Horse Nail Company, which manufactured horse nails and the machines to mass produce them. Here we will be able to have exhibits, workshops, a meeting and classroom space, a resource center, offices, and much more. Besides developing the site for our own uses, AARCH intends to develop all or part of the stone mill for other private and public uses. The revitalization of this site has been a high priority for the village for decades and it

presents a wonderful opportunity for AARCH to establish a greater physical presence in the region and to contribute to the vitality of this historic village.

The acquisition of this property has been made possible by a grant from the New York State Environmental Protection Fund and funding through Senator Elizabeth Little. We also thank George Moore, from whom we bought the property, for his patience while we put together the initial funding for this project. Stay tuned this winter as we finalize plans for the Stone Office Building and undertake the first phase of work there – the creation of office and exhibit spaces on the ground level of the building.



AARCH staff on day one—removing late 20th century alterations to the interior of the building. Note the vault (left) that was revealed behind a partition.

The Wawbeek — R.I.P

Not all the news this year was good. In May, after months of concerted effort by AARCH, other preservation organizations, and dozens and dozens of people to save it, The Wawbeek on Upper Saranac Lake was demolished. This complex of National Register eligible buildings was designed by William L. Coulter for Moritz Walter in 1899 and, in recent years, was a popular and beloved lodge and restaurant. Despite having fallen “in love with Great Camp architecture,” the new California owners chose to demolish the buildings in order to build a new home. This is a huge loss for the region. Sadly, there was no legal mechanism at either the state or local level to prevent this from happening.



We have learned several important lessons through all of this. First, we learned how passionate our members and friends are about this place, in particular, and the region’s architectural heritage, in general, and this is great news. Dozens of people wrote to the new owners, to town and Adirondack Park Agency officials, and wrote editorials, letters to the editor, and even blogged about it. This was an unprecedented show of support for the preservation of a privately owned property. Second, we’ve realized that, as an organization, we need to do more to educate local municipalities about what tools they could have available to them to prevent, or at least slow down, this kind of thing from happening again. We are committed to doing this through an even greater public education and training and advocacy effort. This would also not have happened had the property been protected by a preservation and conservation easement. The loss of The Wawbeek demonstrates how important these voluntary agreements are as a preservation tool. AARCH already holds four preservation easements and will actively work in the future to secure more of these.



Lake Champlain Bridge. Photo by Tom Hughes

Other Advocacy for Endangered Properties

We are also likely to lose the **Alert Facility** or “Mole Hole”, a rare Cold War era structure at the former Plattsburgh Air Force Base. This fall, Clinton County ignored efforts by a fledgling museum group, dedicated to interpreting the Cold War here, to use the structure as its home. Its demolition is planned for the near future.

We continued our work to save the 1929 **Lake Champlain Bridge**, which crosses between Crown Point (New York) and Chimney Point (Vermont). The New York State Department of Transportation and the Vermont Agency of Transportation are

currently studying several options for the bridge, including rehabilitation and replacement, and AARCH is serving on the Public Advisory Committee during the decision making process. We are doing everything we can to raise public awareness about the historic and engineering importance of this bridge and were responsible for getting it listed on the National Register of Historic Places and to be considered as a National Historic Landmark. In the year ahead we will also complete our *Lake Champlain Bridge Education Project*, which will include the creation of interpretive signs, a brochure, and web-based information about the bridge. This project is supported by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the Preservation League of New York State, the Preservation Trust of Vermont, and the Lake Champlain Basin Program.

There continues to be good news about the fate of the **McNaughton Cottage** (1834) and **McIntyre Furnace** (1854) in Newcomb. Last year, the Open Space Institute completed stabilization work on both structures and this year OSI is working with Sasaki Associates and a team of interested people and organizations to develop a Master Plan for the future of the 300 acre Tahawus Historic area.

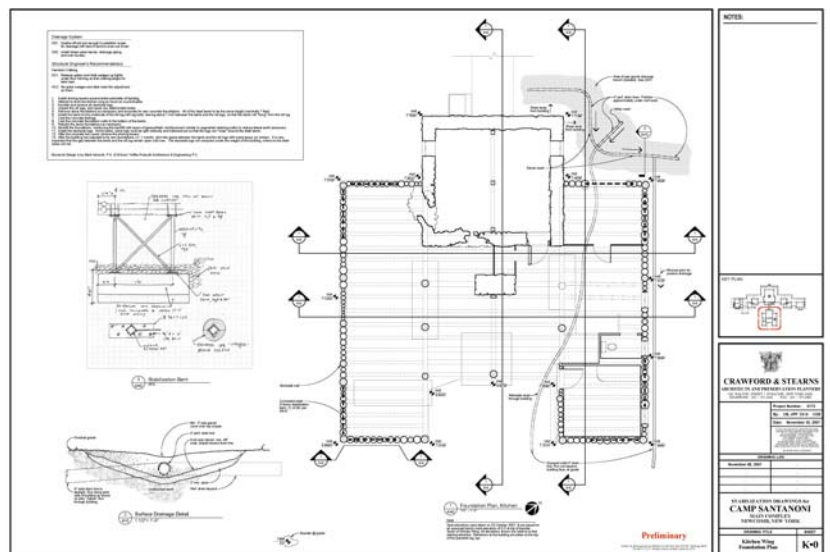
In addition, AARCH worked with the Arto Monaco Historical Society to preserve the **Castle at the Land of Makebelieve**; co-wrote a federal grant application to rehabilitate the 1878 **Upper Bridge** in Keeseville; advocated for the adaptive reuse of the **Essex County Jail** in Elizabethtown; and spoke out, with many others, for the preservation of **Hodson Hall** at the North Country Community College campus in Saranac Lake. The fate of the **fire observation towers** on Hurricane and St. Regis mountains awaits the completion of a region-wide fire tower plan by NYSDEC. The future of other historic structures within the Forest Preserve, such as **Debar Pond Lodge** in Duane, the railroad station at **Nehasene**, and ruins associated with Great **Camp Sagamore** will hinge on how they are treated by unit management plans currently under development by DEC.



The most recent master plan for NCCC calls for preserving and rehabilitating Hodson Hall. This was originally built in 1913 as the General Hospital of Saranac Lake.

Continued Progress at Camp Santanoni

Thanks to continued support from NYSDEC, the Town of Newcomb, the Friends of Camp Santanoni, and a *Save America's Treasures* grant to AARCH, we have continued to plan and complete important conservation work at the camp. In 2008, the main conservation project was restoration of the porte-cochere at the Main Lodge by Michael Frenette and crew. This work corrected two long standing problems - a leaking roof that damaged some of the log work beneath it and some chronic structural problems with the original design of the structure. In the fall, the rehabilitation of one of the stone culverts that carries the Newcomb Lake Road commenced.



Plans by architect Carl Stearns call for the structural stabilization, exterior conservation, and drainage improvements to the kitchen wing of the Main Lodge. Crawford & Stearns, Architects

Two other large conservation projects, for the year ahead, also moved through their planning phases. Crawford & Stearns, Architects have prepared documents for a project to stabilize and conserve the kitchen wing at the Main Lodge. Argus Architecture & Preservation is preparing plans for extensive conservation and restoration work on the Farm Manager's Cottage and Herdsman's Cottage at the Farm. Both of these projects will be undertaken in 2009.

Our 2008 summer staff included Matt Bowling, Melissa Leggett, Andrew Athanas, and Emily Clark-Watson. They interpreted the camp to thousands of visitors over the summer, continued to do painting and staining at the Main Lodge, began the restoration of the Bath House on Newcomb Lake, and supervised two groups of volunteers, including fourteen high school age students from the *Landmark Volunteer* program.

Tours, Workshops, and Special Events

This year AARCH sponsored thirty public educational tours throughout the region. These explored a wide variety of places and were extremely popular with our members and the general public. We offered two workshops, including "What Style Is It?" in Schroon Lake and a cemetery preservation workshop in Elizabethtown. We also gave twenty public tours of White Pine Camp, the 1926 summer White House of Calvin Coolidge, did more than a dozen public lectures, and held three special events - our annual meeting at the Grange Hall in Keeseville, a benefit event at Camp Uncas, and an awards luncheon at The Hedges on Blue Mountain Lake. These outings continue to be among our most popular and recognizable activities and, over the last seventeen years, we have cumulatively offered more than 500 outings to more than eighty-five different places, which were attended by more than 11,000 people.



Tour participants explore one of the cottages on Crag Point as part of our Rustic Architecture of Big Moose Lake outing.

Technical Assistance and Support

We routinely provide helpful technical assistance to dozens of historic property owners on a range of preservation issues each year. This included providing support for National Register nominations, distributing information on preservation grants and tax credits, giving conservation advice, and helping to nurture fledgling preservation organizations. Some of the preservation efforts we've helped with over the past year include: advising PRIDE of Ticonderoga with their New York Main Street Program funded work along Montcalm Street; conservation and funding advice to the owners of the Ross Mill and the former Willsboro Central School in Willsboro; help with planning the restoration of the Pliny Moore Summer House in Champlain, and encouragement for the Brighton Town Hall restoration project, to name a few.

AARCH Awards.

Our thirteenth annual Adirondack Architectural Heritage Awards were presented at a luncheon at The Hedges on Blue Mountain Lake in October. We recognized six preservation and stewardship projects, including: Ann Miller for the restoration of Common Ground Gallery, Northville; Stewart and Susan Calkins for the long-term stewardship of Knollwood, near Wanakena; the Friends of Mountainside Library for long-term stewardship, Queensbury; the Lee Family for restoration of the Big House, Westport; Grace Memorial Chapel for restoration, Sabbath Day Point; and Vince and Tracy Giuseffi for the restoration of Warren Point Lodge on Tupper Lake.



2008 AARCH Award winners: (bottom) Tracey Giuseffi, Faith Wiesner and Tupper Limbert [Mountainside Library], Elizabeth Lee; (top) Vince Giuseffi, Stewart and Susan Calkins, and Bob Strong [Grace Memorial Chapel].

Other Activities

We agreed to hold our fourth historic preservation easement, on "The Castle", a wonderfully eclectic Queen Ann style house in Keene. The staff also worked on National Register of Historic Places nominations for The Hedges on Blue Mountain Lake, the Alice T. Miner Museum in Chazy, and Debar Pond Lodge in Duane. With the help of our web designer, we have continued to add content to our web site, including a new "Resources" and "Endangered Properties" sections.

We are most appreciative for the support we receive from the New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA), a state agency

