

To: Diann Strausberg, Chair, Concord Historical Commission  
Cc: Heather Gill  
Re: Review of West Concord Depot  
Fr: Melissa Saalfield  
September 5, 2018

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Because of a work obligation on the evening of September 13, 2018, I will be unable to attend the regular meeting of the Concord Historical Commission so am submitting my report in writing.

I was asked to look into the terms of the preservation restriction held by the Town of Concord on the West Concord Depot.

Background:

The West Concord Depot, or Union Station as it was originally named, was built in 1894 at the height of West Concord's boom as an agricultural and industrial center. Community efforts to gain recognition for the structure eventually led in 1989 to its inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places. However, funding to restore the building was continually deferred until passage of the Community Preservation Act.

In 2006, the Friends of the West Concord Depot led efforts to restore the structure through a successful grant application to the Community Preservation Committee. The terms of the grant stipulated that the Town of Concord and MBTA each contribute 50% of the cost with the MBTA also responsible for additional project supervision and assistance. The cost for building rehabilitation was not to exceed \$440,000 - \$220,000 provided by the Town of Concord and \$220,000 from the MBTA. It should be noted that the building is owned by the MBTA. The Town/MBTA agreement stated that the MBTA would be responsible for maintaining all of the Depot property, including all improvements to the building and that the Town would not assume any obligation for maintaining, repairing or administering the premises or the building. Indeed the maintenance agreement states:

The MBTA shall, at its sole cost and expense, maintain the Building in sound structural condition and in good state of repair in accordance with *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring and Reconstructing Historic Buildings*.

On July 30, 2008, local officials and residents joined MBTA representatives in a very well attended ceremony to celebrate the successful restoration and the building (exterior only is my understanding) which included: repair and replace roof sheathing and repairs to slate, repair/replace copper flashing, replace fascia, restore original wood clapboard, removal of stucco siding to reveal underlying historic wood siding; repaint with historically accurate paint, etc.

The project team included historic preservation architect Larry Sorli, well known to the Concord historic community.

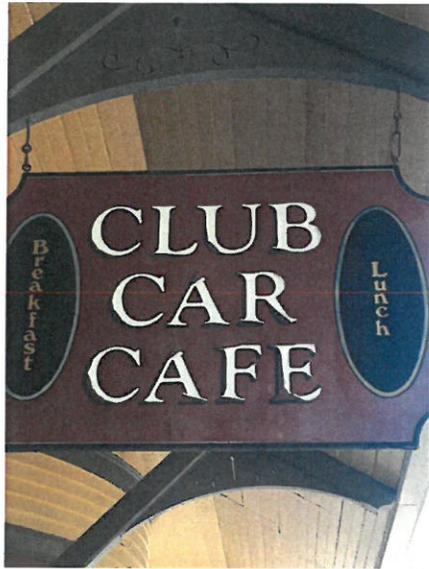
Current Status:

Unfortunately, since the 2008 unveiling, the MBTA's attention to maintenance issues has considerably waned. I made a few personal physical inspections as well as interviewed Ron Giacoppo, who runs the Club Car Café and Dorrie Kehoe, West Concord resident who led the charge in the early 2000s to repair the structure. Both Ron and Dorrie have repeatedly contacted MBTA officials to get them to address maintenance issues of the building. Dorrie has also been in contact with Greyco, a subcontractor which oversees real estate issues for the MBTA. (see attached photos) These include the repair of the chimney which was struck by lightning a few years ago and to scrape and paint the exterior which is peeling badly.

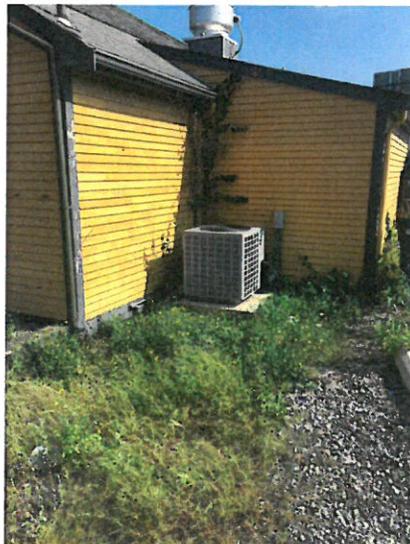
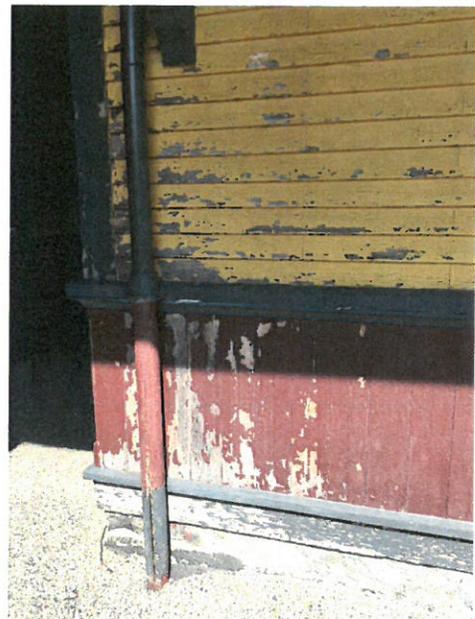
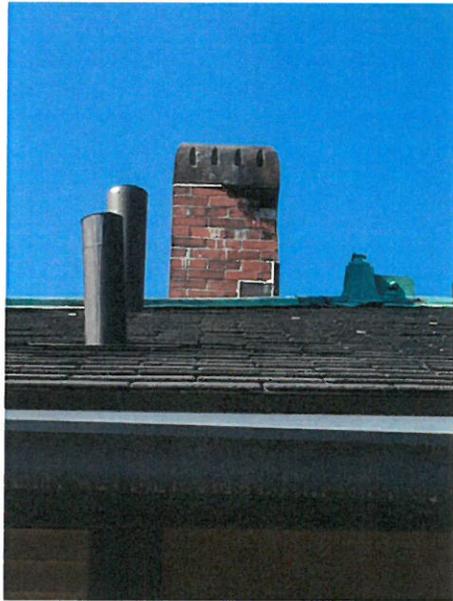
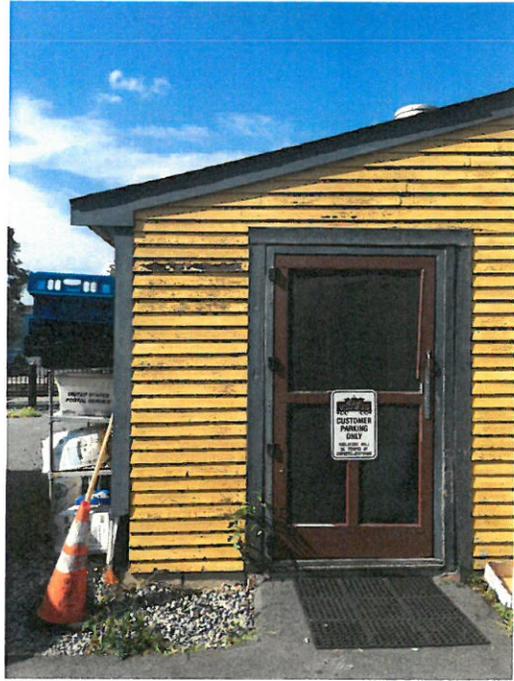
Additionally, the exterior premises are unkempt with overgrown weeds, inadequate and unsightly storage outside. Grounds maintenance is minimal at best – weeds clearly have the upper hand around the back of the building and the RR crossing area at Commonwealth Avenue. Structurally, the building appears to be sound and the essential physical repairs done in 2007/8 still hold. It would probably be wise to inspect the roof/flashing while attending to the needs of the chimney.

Given the highly visible presence of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail which goes through this area and is expected to be completed for a public celebration in the Spring of 2019, the need to address the Depot's maintenance issues is critical. There has been huge public investment in creating the trail, reconfiguring the intersection adjacent to the Depot and the creation of Junction Park. The current, decrepit state of the Depot is a big eyesore.

Dorrie is eager to engage support from the Town Manager, the Historical Commission and other parties (e.g. Select Board, West Concord Advisory Committee, Friends of Bruce Freeman Railtrail and the Community Preservation Committee). I explained to her that the Historical Commission would review this issue and recommend a course of action.



Images of West Concord Depot showing peeling paint, damaged chimney and overall neglect.





WEST CONCORD DEPOT  
THIS SITE PLACED ON THE  
NATIONAL REGISTER  
OF HISTORIC PLACES  
BY THE UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
1987

