

Thomas Barker House, 1757

- 1981 John Pitts purchased house and began to" improve the property to make it look like the Quincy Adams House"
- 1988 Pear Tree Hill Local Historic District established. Mr. Pitts stated that the Historic Districts Commission "made it difficult" (to work on the property). He said, "They wanted permits renewed and then they would hold off convening a meeting". He then said that he "got tired of the bureaucratic hassle" and stopped working on the house.
- 1989-1999 Mr. Pitts applied four times for a Certificate of Non-Applicability to repair the roof, replace clapboard siding, repair the sill, paint the house and barn, and other maintenance and repair work for which a hearing is not required. Each application was approved. Mr. Pitts did not complete any of the work.
- 2002 On 2/28 the Hingham Journal published an article about the cancellation of an auction of the property in which 58 Main Street was described as a "dilapidated-looking structure". The article went on to quote Mr. Pitts, who blamed the Historic Districts Commission for the condition of the house.
- 2003 Mr. Pitts applied for and received approval to complete the same work that was approved in August 1999, i.e., to pour concrete in the basement and crawl space, install new subflooring throughout the 1st floor, repair roof and sides of the house, repair broken windows.
- 2007 Mr. Pitts submitted an application, accompanied by an extensive proposal from General Contractor Sted Beckwith to restore the house and barn and install a driveway. The Historic Districts Commission approved the project at its hearing on May 10, 2007.
- 2012 In May, the Building Department received a complaint that the house and barn were abandoned, open to the elements and unsafe. The Deputy Building Commissioner sent Mr. Pitts a notice requiring him to repair and secure the buildings, and to provide assurance from a

structural engineer that the buildings were sound. Any unsafe structures were to be removed immediately.

2012 On August 21st, the Building Commissioner sent Mr. Pitts a notice that the Building Department “inspected two unsafe structures” at 58 Main Street. “They appear to be dangerous to life or limb...” Mr. Pitts was instructed to secure the buildings and make them safe or remove them, and to begin doing so by noon the next day.

2012 On August 26th Mr. Pitts filed an application for Historic Districts Commission approval to demolish the house and barn. The hearing opened on September 19th, was continued to October 17th and again to November 21st. At the November hearing, Mr. Pitts said that he applied for Community Preservation Act funds and Greenbush Historic Preservation Trust funds for the purpose of restoring the house and barn. The Commission told Mr. Pitts that since he was seeking grants to restore, he should withdraw his application to demolish at this time. The Commission said he was free to reapply to demolish the house and barn any time in the future if the funding did not come through.

2013 The Community Preservation Committee did not provide funding in 2013 but told Mr. Pitts that if he was working on the house, they would look more favorably on his application if he reapplied to receive funding in 2014.

In 2013 Mr. Pitts received \$7,000 from the Greenbush Trust to weatherize the house. In 2014 Mr. Pitts received \$7,000 to repair the foundation.

2015 After the Historical Commission Administrator contacted Mr. Pitts to remind him that, under the conditions of the grant, he must begin using the Greenbush Trust money awarded to him in 2013 and that he has to sign the 2013 and 2014 grant agreements in order to access

the funds. Shortly thereafter, on March 2nd, the Historical Commission received a letter from Mr. Pitts thanking the members who voted to award funds to his project. The letter went on to say that he is declining the grant awards based on advice of counsel, who recommended that he not sign the grant agreements.

2016

On September 16th, the Building Commissioner sent a letter to Mr. Pitts advising him that Housing Court issued an inspection warrant authorizing a Board of Survey to examine the premises at 58 Main Street. The Board of Survey found the buildings to be dangerous to life and limb and ordered that the house, barn and automobiles be removed from the property for public safety. In addition an X was posted on the front of the house indicating that in the event of a fire, first responders would not enter the building.

On October 20, 2016 the Building Commissioner sent a letter to Hans von der Luft, Chair of the Historic Districts Commission advising him of the Board of Survey inspection with the reports attached. The Commissioner stated in his letter that "it is unfortunate that this historic home was allowed to deteriorate to such a deplorable condition and become a safety hazard (to residents and first responders)."

On September 19th, Mr. Pitts submitted an application to the Historic Districts Commission to demolish the house and barn. The hearing took place on October 20th. After considerable discussion and encouragement from the Commission to board up the structures rather than tear them down, Mr. Pitts said he would prefer to restore the buildings rather than demolish them. Chairman von der Luft said that the Commission would support his restoration efforts in any way possible. The Commission denied the application for demolition.

On November 2nd, Mr. Pitts submitted an application for Districts Commission approval to reroof the main house with red cedar shingles, replace clapboards, repair or replace windows and doors,

and repair the foundation. The application was approved by the Administrator upon receipt.

Mr. Pitts submitted a structural inspection report dated 12/16/2016 to the Building Department with a copy to the HDC. The report stated that “the overall structure is capable of being rehabilitated to bring it back as close to its original state as possible”.

2018 July – the Building Department obtained a warrant from Housing Court to conduct another inspection of the premises at 58 Main Street. A Board of Survey was convened. Again the buildings declared unsafe. The Town, through its Building Commissioner submitted an application to demolish the buildings on the premises. The hearing will be held on August 16, 2018.