

Highfield Hall, Then and Now

by Susan Shephard

Susan Shephard has led the long, epic struggle to save and restore Highfield Hall after two decades of neglect. Her vision for its future inspired those who gathered to oppose its imminent demolition in the early 1990s. Her unquenchable optimism turned calm skeptics into ardent supporters. Her indefatigable energy inspired everyone, from carpenters and landscapers to major financial backers, to keep on giving their best efforts to the project even as the obstacles mounted and the years dragged on.

In the following article Susan Shephard tells the story of the dramatic rescue of Highfield Hall from the wrecker's ball and its gradual transformation into a "town living room."

The Past

Highfield Hall is a grand 1878 mansion at the top of Depot Avenue that appeared, until recently, to be living on borrowed time. The dramatic story of its rescue and restoration begins with the family that built it, and in building it changed Falmouth's history.

The Beebes

In 1825, James Madison Beebe, a dirt farmer's son from the Berkshires, made his way to Boston with big dreams, few possessions, and a willingness to work. He got a job as a clerk in a dry goods store, earning his way up to branch manager in just a few years. On his 21st birthday (March 18, 1830), he opened his own retail dry goods shop. By the time he married, in 1835, he was well on his way to wealth

and respectability. He retired in 1866 and died in 1875, with plenty of both. He wasn't to have as much success with family.

James and his wife Esther Elizabeth Brown, from Pittsfield, had seven children between 1836 and 1853, Emily, Mary Louisa, Charles, Frances, Pierson, J. Arthur, and Franklin. Only Frances and J. Arthur ever married. Charles and Mary Louisa died young, he in his twenties, she in her forties. Mary Louisa was memorialized by her siblings with a large brass bell that still hangs from the cove cornice of Highfield Hall.

Frances married George J. Fiske, a former business partner of her father, and had two children, of whom we know very little. Frances, a widow by 1868, inherited a summer home off Shore Street in Falmouth from her father's estate. It is the large red shingle-style "cottage" (Waterside) that still fronts Vineyard Sound today. There is no record that she had much else to do with the Beebe family.

J. Arthur married Emily Appleton, daughter of a prominent Boston family, and they had three children, Arthur, Emily and C. Philip. Theirs was a storybook beginning, with a very sad ending. None of the children ever married. Philip lived into his nineties, but he was regarded as "peculiar," and spent years in McLean Hospital. Both son Arthur and daughter Emily committed suicide, he in 1900 at age 28, she in 1913 at age 35, two years after her mother's death. J. Arthur died a year later. (One is tempted to say "of a broken heart.") But much of

the history we're concerned with here took place before his world fell apart.

How did the Beebes come to Falmouth in the first place? The Joseph Story Fay family already had a summer place in Woods Hole, and the Beebes and the Fays were well acquainted with each other. Certainly they were the "first families" of Falmouth in terms of wealth, influence, and Boston Brahmin connections, and both were instrumental in ushering in Falmouth's summer resort era. George Moses, in *Ring Around the Punch Bowl*, cites a 1941 letter to the *Falmouth Enterprise* from a Fay grandson suggesting that it was the Fays who brought the Beebes to town "by our family's enthusiasm for Woods Hole

as a summer residence...." Other evidence points to considerable competition, rather than friendship *per se*, between James Beebe and Joseph Fay. We'll never know all the details.

What we do know is that in 1872, James Beebe started acquiring property along Shore Street in Falmouth and most of the family began summering there. By 1875, he had bought property along what are now Clinton Avenue and King Street as well, bringing his total there to about 100 acres, mostly rich farmland. He had also purchased land, bit by bit, "up on the hill," and owned 668 acres extending from the Peterson Farm to Sippewissett and old Palmer Avenue.



Highfield Hall entrance, with covered porch and circular drive, ca. 1890.

And then he died. His wife lived another 10 years, wintering in their Beacon Street mansion and summering in what was then called Vineyard Lodge, on Shore Street. James Beebe's estate was valued at \$2 million, a considerable fortune at the time. Real estate was not valued highly in those times, but personal property was. (In 1917, tax assessment procedures underwent a complete overhaul, and the Beebe fortune swelled considerably.) Pierson, the oldest surviving son, and his mother were named executors of the estate, and the children soon set about spending it.

The Architecture

In the summer of 1876, Pierson did some clearing on the hill overlooking the railroad station, began landscaping, and started construction of his English-style country manor house, Highfield Hall. Its design was heavily influenced by the British Pavilion buildings at the 1876 Philadelphia Centennial Exposition. Highfield Hall is the earliest known building on Cape Cod to exhibit some of the Pavilion's neo-Elizabethan elements: the cove cornice mentioned earlier, the very large "living hall," and the imitation half timbering that can be seen on some of the gables. Highfield is one (and perhaps the only remaining) example of the very brief late 19th century period when Stick Style architecture was being assimilated into American Queen Anne.

We don't know for sure who the architects of Highfield Hall were, but there is a lot of evidence to suggest that the firm was Peabody & Stearns. J. Arthur began construction of his own "country cottage," Tanglewood, within a year, and he definitely used Peabody & Stearns. The Beebe family compound had plenty of auxiliary buildings, structures, gardens, special plantings, and carriage trails. Overseeing all this landscaping was the firm of Ernest Bowditch. It seems likely that the two brothers, Pierson and J. Arthur, who used the same landscape

designer for the property, would have used the same architects for the buildings. Pierson had hired the firm of Peabody & Stearns at least a dozen times over the years on a multitude of projects.

Architectural style in the 1870s and 1880s was highly eclectic, drawing elements

from a wide variety of sources, including the Philadelphia Exposition and contemporary English architecture. Peabody & Stearns were much in demand, and pioneered the early Queen Anne, Shingle, and Colonial Revival styles. They designed the Henry Fay house, the Richard Olney house, and Tanglewood, all now demolished. Two other local Peabody & Stearns buildings, the ca. 1885 Joseph Story Fay, Jr. house (543 Woods Hole Road) and the 1879 John M. Glidden house (80 Church Street),



Model of Highfield Hall, front view, by Noah Greenberg, gives viewers a bird's eye view of the mansion's roof lines. Photo by Daniel Johnson.

have since been radically altered. The firm was also responsible for the renovation of the St. Barnabas church rectory as it currently stands.

When you walk around Highfield Hall and look critically at its four elevations, you begin to notice their individuality. Each has a different type of projecting bay on the main house with different decorative elements. This is not uncharacteristic of Queen Anne, but it was also a Peabody & Stearns trademark. The hooded roof vents and the polygonal section at the rear are highly characteristic of Peabody & Stearns. Another feature arguing the involvement of these architects is the billiard room, which very closely resembles the billiard room in the Peabody & Stearns-designed William Sumner Appleton house (1875) in Newton. Billiard rooms became quite popular in estate houses of the 1880s, but these were two of the earlier ones.

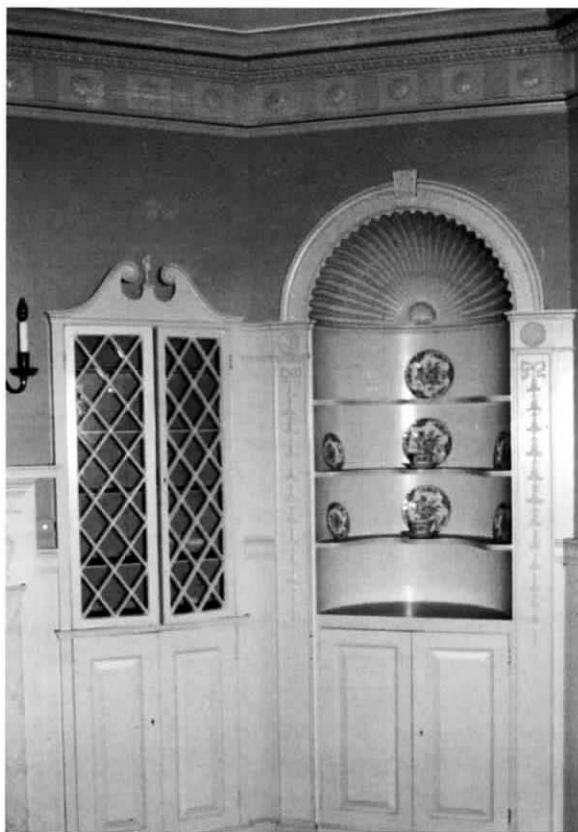
Preservation consultant and architectural historian Anne McCarthy Forbes writes that it is “rare for a summer house from the late 1870s, especially of this size and magnitude, to survive. The list of losses of large seaside ‘cottages’ built between 1877 and 1890 is long, and in it one reads one of the tragedies of American architecture... legions of these houses have disappeared. Highfield Hall is today an extremely fragile reminder of that legacy.”

In Residence

Highfield Hall was completed in 1878, and Pierson Beebe, a lifelong bachelor, moved in. With him came his unmarried oldest sister, Emily, and his youngest brother Frank, also a confirmed bachelor. They lived together, not always in harmony, alternating between Boston in the winter and Falmouth the rest of the year, for the remainder of their lives. Tanglewood, just a few hundred yards away (where Adelpia Cable

is today), was completed in 1879, and J. Arthur installed his family there in the summers. Mary Louisa apparently wintered and summered with her mother until her premature death in 1883. Unlike most of the burgeoning population of summer elite, the brothers became quite active in Falmouth town affairs almost as soon as they'd taken up residence.

They initiated a Village Improvement Society with a gift of \$5000, and devoted themselves to the Episcopal church. In 1889-90, they financed the design and construction of St. Barnabas church and parish



Lovely shell motif corner cupboard in the ballroom, with a likely later addition between it and the other ballroom fireplace. Original sconces in place. Photo by Max Ferro, 1977. Doors have all since disappeared.



Southeastern view of Highfield Hall, September 2001, showing southern plantation-style renovations. Photo by Susan Shephard.

house, and had the grounds laid out by Olmstead Associates. (The church ground's granite fence is made partially of stone from the Highfield estate.) Pierson hired Peabody & Stearns to remodel the rectory in 1901, at a cost in excess of \$12,000, a very large sum under the circumstances. Pierson was a library trustee for many years, and Falmouth Public Library still benefits from a Beebe bequest. The brothers regularly attended Town Meeting.

The Highfield family compound was of a size and lavishness previously unknown in Falmouth. Indeed, into the 1880s, the Beebes were the largest taxpayers in town, accounting for over 25% of Falmouth's tax base. They entertained on a grand scale, inviting Boston friends and acquaintances to come by train; the depot, of course, was just minutes away. This life style, although by no means universally acclaimed, had other beneficial effects on Falmouth's economy. Local merchants and tradespeople, me-

chanics and laborers, caterers and artisans were all in demand. Scores of people were hired to fill out the household staff that traveled with the Beebes from Boston to take care of the two huge houses, outbuildings, gardens, and the (by this time) more than 700 acres of woods laced with some 14 miles of maintained carriage paths and bridle trails.

It could be said that the Beebes and the Fays (the only other family on the Cape with a family compound of comparable scale and grandeur) ushered in Falmouth's "golden age" of resort development. While other communities were barely beginning to become fashionable (it must be acknowledged that some,

such as Newport, would go on to eclipse Falmouth utterly in terms of sheer displays of wealth), Falmouth was already recovering from its decline as a whaling community and beginning to prosper as a tourist destination. Falmouth Heights was an early summer community; and Chapoquoit, Quissett, Gansett, and Penzance became the sites of large exclusive estates.

J. Arthur, whose misfortunes were briefly mentioned earlier, died in 1914; Emily in 1916, and Pierson in 1926. The last surviving Beebe son, Franklin, died in 1932. Tanglewood had been left to Harvard on J. Arthur's death and, with Frank's death, Highfield Hall and the family estate were sold.

The Post-Beebe Era

Edgar H. Bristol, a summer resident of Bristol Beach, acquired both properties. With a succession of part-

ners, he launched a series of unsuccessful enterprises, including a resort for wealthy businessmen and a “sun and diet” health spa. (He was joined, or led, in this latter effort by Helen Randle, whose notoriety as a fad diet promoter, con artist, and seductress helped contribute to its failure.) In the early forties, religious revivalist J. Elwin Wright attempted to turn Tanglewood into a hotel with a religious bent.

A theatrical producer, Arthur J. Beckhardt, purchased the property in the late forties, ran the two mansions as hotels, and converted the stable into the present Highfield Theater. Except for the theater conversion and the addition of a number of bathrooms to Highfield Hall, the property was remarkably unchanged during the thirties and forties.

Beginning in 1949, the estate, whose land had been divided into several properties, was gradually acquired by DeWitt Ter Heun, a Texas oil man who dreamed of turning it into a center for the performing arts. The Ter Heuns added the Southern plantation-style front, hiring local builder John Overy to do the job. They spent much of their time at Highfield, hosting theater companies, workshops, and classes; for many summers all of Tanglewood and part of Highfield served as dormitory space for cast and crew.

Highfield Endangered

When Ter Heun died in 1963, the Highfield property was purchased by a summer resident of The Moors in Falmouth. The estate entered a precarious period, because under consideration was a plan for building 500 houses in its surrounding woods.

In 1972, to forestall just such a development, Josephine and Josiah K. Lilly III purchased the entire estate (487 acres.) They then donated 383 acres (the present Beebe Woods) as permanent conservation land to the town of Falmouth. They gave additional parcels of land to the Falmouth Hospital, the Falmouth Nursing Association, the Falmouth Sports Center and Falmouth Academy. They gave Highfield Hall and Tanglewood with 26 surrounding acres to the Cape Cod Conservatory of Music and Art headquartered in Barnstable. Tanglewood had been used for years during the summer as a dormitory for the College Light Opera Company. Highfield Hall at that time was still in year-round use. The Conservatory used it as a studio for lessons, and a thrift shop (appropriately named Encore) occupied a front room.

Sadly, on May 20, 1977, Tanglewood succumbed to the wrecker’s ball and bulldozers, and Highfield Hall entered two decades of neglect and vandalism. Dur-



Ballroom fireplace with majolica tiles; original sconces. Photo by Max Ferro, 1977.

ing that period, local artists Kathy Twombly and Annie Vose led a series of efforts to persuade the Conservatory that Highfield had enormous potential. In 1992, after reading in the local newspaper of the Conservatory's repeated assertion that it could find no use for the building, the Falmouth Historical Commission led by Mary Lou Smith attempted to open negotiations regarding the preservation of the Hall.

In the fall of 1993, Falmouth town meeting (on its third try) passed a demolition delay bylaw scheduled to go into effect the following spring. This bylaw provides that the proposed demolition of any

historical structure will be delayed for a period of 90 days after the demolition permit is applied for while the Historical Commission tries to work out a means of saving the structure.

By early in 1994, there was a growing sense of doom surrounding the Hall. The first meetings, held at the Moonakis Cafe in Waquoit, were attended by people concerned about the alarming amount of deterioration and vandalism that had taken place since the building was evaluated by architect Max Ferro in 1977. At the time of Ferro's report, which contained many pictures, Highfield Hall was still in amazingly good shape with its glass cabinet doors and fireplaces intact. Nearly all the valuable imported tiles surrounding the fireplaces have since been removed, as have the beautiful cabinet doors. The original wall sconces were still in place; wall and ceiling damage was minimal. A group named Friends of Highfield was formed to reverse the slow-motion destruction of this grand old building.

Threat of Demolition

In March of 1994, the Cape Cod Conservatory of Music and Art applied for a demolition permit for Highfield Hall. The demolition delay bylaw had gone into effect just two days earlier. The Historical Commission and the Friends of Highfield went into overdrive, circulating petitions, lobbying Selectmen, and consulting lawyers. They asked Historic Massachusetts Inc., a statewide historic preservation organization that advocates preserving and reusing old buildings, to send an Action Team to Falmouth to evaluate the building and its historical significance. That team, headed by architect Ray Warner, wrote a report and Historic Massachusetts proceeded to put Highfield Hall on its annual "Ten Most Endangered" list. Paul Rifken began filming a documentary about efforts to save the building. In May 1994, Historic



Large breakfront in the ballroom. Photo by Max Ferro, 1977. The glass doors above and wooden doors below have since disappeared.



Volunteers clearing brush and undergrowth from the grass tennis court area, ca. 1994.

Highfield, Inc., a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation was formed to help save the Hall.

Armed with the Action Team's report, letters from interested parties everywhere, and 5375 signatures on a petition to save Highfield Hall (the largest number ever presented to Falmouth officials), the Friends and Historic Highfield appealed to the Selectmen to make a discretionary referral of the proposed demolition to the Cape Cod Commission. On June 1, 1994, only days before the demolition delay period expired, at a heated hearing attended by both sides and both sides' lawyers, the Selectmen voted to do just that. The Cape Cod Commission met in Falmouth on June 11, 1994. During another long and sometimes very volatile meeting, both sides presented their argu-

ments. Toward the end of the meeting, the Conservatory's lawyer asked that the matter be sent to alternate dispute resolution (ADR), i.e., mediation, in lieu of a full regulatory review by the Cape Cod Commission. Seven years of legal skirmishes ensued.

All the while a devoted cadre of volunteers kept boarding up windows, patching the roof, and staving off human, animal, and vegetative intruders. Artist Jim Tobey painted the faux windows that greatly improved the look of the boarded-up building. Mike Twombly and Tom Chase repeatedly patched the leaking roof, and Bob Bowman and Mike Duffany

helped with repairs and dump runs. Art Calfee and Charles Lowe spent many hours cutting brush and mowing; it is hard now to remember how overgrown the property had become. Ray Culpan and Bob Sears installed an alarm system, and the police



Volunteers relax after clearing brush, ca. 1994.



One of the Cardeira brothers setting bricks for the new billiard room chimney, summer 2002. Photo by Susan Shephard.



Tom and Anne Renshaw reinstalling the beautiful dining room windows that they painstakingly restored. Photo by Susan Shephard.



Liza Fox washing woodwork in the ballroom preparing for the fall wedding of her sister, Sophia Fox, and Murro Van Meter, summer 2001. Photo by Susan Shephard.



Tom Chase working on the new roof, summer 2002. Photo by Paul Rifkin.



Tom Chase working on the new roof. Shingles are 24-inch red cedar royals, stained red to match the original. Photo by Paul Rifkin.

uncomplainingly responded to the numerous middle-of-the-night alarms during those years. Many of our local arborists and landscapers were recruited to donate time and equipment to repairing and maintaining the grounds. The FHS Class of 2000 helped clean the basement of decades' worth of debris, and enhanced the landscape by planting some 800 daffodil bulbs donated by the Beautification Council. The list of those who contributed time, materials, and energy during those years would go on for pages.

At one point during the ongoing legal battle, under a negotiated agreement with the Conservatory, Historic Highfield had just a few months in 1997 to meet their first fundraising deadline, by which time they needed donations and pledges totaling nearly \$700,000. This seemingly impossible goal was met with just hours to spare, thanks to the help of Bob Bidwell and Connie Gorman, Norman and Sally Cross, Jim and Ruth Clark, and a whole host of others who came forward on the side of historic preservation.

Reprieve

In April 2000, Historic Highfield, tired of the years of wrangling, made an impassioned plea to Town Meeting. Against all predictions, town meeting members voted to authorize the Selectmen to take Highfield Hall and the surrounding six acres by eminent domain. This highly significant act followed unprecedented interest in an open house at Highfield Hall in late March, which was attended by more than 2500 people, some from out of state. The Town filed the necessary eminent domain papers at the Registry of Deeds on January 3, 2001, but extended the deadline to try for a negotiated settlement. On February 1, 2001, the Town signed a lease with Historic Highfield to renovate and operate Highfield Hall.

The Present

In spring of 2001, repairs and renovation began in earnest. A great amount of cleanup and cosmetic work, outside and in, was undertaken by both professionals and volunteers under the able supervision



The library mantel, cleaned up and ready to be reinstalled. This mantel, one of sixteen original mantels, all different, miraculously survived the ravages of both time and vandals. Photo by Susan Shephard.

of Eric McLaughlin. A number of structural and safety concerns were addressed. The outside of the building was pressure-washed and spray-primed by Tim Connolly and Bill Burgers, both to protect the siding from further deterioration and to spruce up the building's appearance. Pete Antonellis and Dan Webb spent many hours working on the building, and Charles Mixer was unstinting in his contribution of skills, labor, and tools. Months of paint prep (washing, patching with sheetrock, filling holes, etc.) by volunteers took place in the front hall, library, ballroom, dining room and stairwell. The windows in those rooms were sent out for restoration by local artisans Tom and Anne Renshaw and Julie Doohan. Re-installed last fall, they are unbelievably beautiful. The wood floors in those rooms were given a protective coat of bowling alley wax.

A very special and beautiful wedding reception was held at a flower-bedecked Highfield

in September, just days after the tragedies of September 11, reaffirming our faith in the future and in the strength of the human spirit. Sophia Fox and Murro Van Meter celebrated their marriage on what was surely one of the most beautiful days of the year. It was the first use of the Hall in 40 years or more that was worthy of its potential. Several weeks later,

Highfield was the site of a stunning piano and cello concert by artists Donna Farese McHugh and Natalia Khoma.

The Town and the Conservatory eventually reached a settlement, thanks in large part to the persistence of Representative Eric Turkington. The Town, with the cooperation of Historic Highfield, agreed to pay \$450,000 for the property. Historic Highfield has also undertaken to raise the money for the restoration effort currently underway. New management is in place at the Conservatory, and a refreshing new

spirit of cooperation has taken firm hold at the top of the hill.

Real structural repairs began in the fall of 2001. There were two main objectives: (1) to make the house, and specifically the roof, weather tight, and (2) to address some major structural issues highlighted by our own and our engineers' examinations. The

house was jacked up almost two inches on the south side beneath the French doors of the ballroom, where the rotted sill had led to progressive sagging. The entire roof was stripped of its asphalt shingles, roof sheathing was repaired where needed (remarkably few boards), all the sheathing was renailed, and the roof was recovered with a moisture barrier.



View out the bow window from the library. The bow windows were added by the Ter Heuns. Although they will be removed when the front is restored to its original appearance, a place has been found for them in the restoration. Photo by Liza Fox.

The roof trim and original gutters, in tough shape and missing in places, were removed. This exposed the rafter tails, which were examined and repaired or replaced as needed, and their ends were epoxied to forestall rot. The eaves and rafter tails were then scraped, sanded, primed, and painted.

New wooden gutters and trim, a four-piece assembly matching the original, were primed and painted. At this writing, these have been installed everywhere except along the very front of the house where the plantation porch added by the Ter Heuns will be removed. Roof shingling could not begin until the gutters and trim were up. The shingles are 24-inch red cedar royals (5/8-inch thickness at the base) that have been pre-stained to match the original red color, and Tom Chase (local master roofer) is well along the lengthy task of applying them, weaving the valleys and using Boston hips for the ridges. He is also flashing the chimneys and all the valleys. The seven dormers will be covered in copper, as they had been originally; four of them will have been completed by the fall of 2002.

The billiard room chimney was demolished in early March of 2002. It had been declared unsound and in need of replacement from the ground up. Fortunately it was on an exterior wall. The resulting opening revealed some (not unexpected) extensive rot; that part of the building was essentially hanging from the second floor. A granite foundation was built by local mason Fran Cardeira for the chimney and the structure to rest on. Fran has completed the chimney (he did a spectacular job), which has a fireplace

in the basement/future café and one in the billiard room. Fran is also scheduled to take the triple chimney down to roof level and rebuild it, as it is in considerable disrepair. The remaining chimneys have been repointed.

One objective for the past year has been to obtain a certificate of occupancy for the front portion of the house that would allow it to be used even during renovation of the rest of the building. In addition to the previous improvements to those rooms, more interior painting and woodwork touchup was done in that area, and more ceiling and wall areas in the stairwell were patched. Chandeliers and wall sconces have been installed in the main rooms and stairwell. The stairwell was walled off (a temporary wall with a door in it) six feet or so beyond the top stair, a condition of occupancy required by the building department.



New billiard room chimney. Photo by Susan Shephard.

Another condition was working bathrooms, which entailed installation of a new septic system. There are now two functioning bathrooms in the public area of the house, something many of us have looked forward to over the years! In late April the building inspector signed off on this phase, and we held our first event with the town's approval on April 28, 2002. Falmouth Academy had its prom on the premises, complete with a catered dinner. The building looked beautiful, the kids looked beautiful, and a great time was had by all.

This was a major milestone. We now have a place that can be open to the public, where we can hold events, and

where we can showcase our vision for the future of this property.

The Future

Phase I of the architect's vision and planning is nearly complete. The architect consulting with Historic Highfield in this project is Noah Greenberg, and he has constructed a model of the entire building. Even those of us completely familiar with the building were awestruck when we saw the model. It really helps you "see" the building as it was intended to be seen, and also reveals roof details that can never be fully appreciated from the ground.

The next two phases will involve the actual construction/renovation, a little less volunteer labor, and many more local contractors and suppliers. The focus will be on exterior, structural, and building envelope areas. One of Historic Highfield's goals is to keep as much of the work (and pay) as possible in local hands. These phases will incorporate the plumbing, HVAC, and electrical aspects of fully modernizing the building. One of the first tasks will be to return the front of the building to its original configuration. This will also permit the remaining area of the roof to be shingled.

Phase IV will follow as time and budget allow. During this phase, renovation of existing rooms will continue, increasing the usable areas of the building. Some final lighting decisions, final finishes, furnishings, and so forth may wait, in some cases, until it is evident how the building is actually used to best advantage. The once fine gardens will be brought to life again, and the sprawling rhododendron grove will be pruned to reveal the wonderful stonework now obscured by overgrowth.

Will all this take a lot of money? Of course. But support for this project has been generous and unwavering. We have an investment in the past, made in the present, for the future. Because so much needs to be done, the building will be essentially new, its old shell, gracious spaces, and intact architectural details supported by a fully modern infrastructure. Highfield Hall has gracefully withstood the test of time, and we intend to give her another century to share in Falmouth's history.

When the restoration is complete, the Town will have a resource of enormous community and cultural value. The grounds of Highfield lead to beautiful



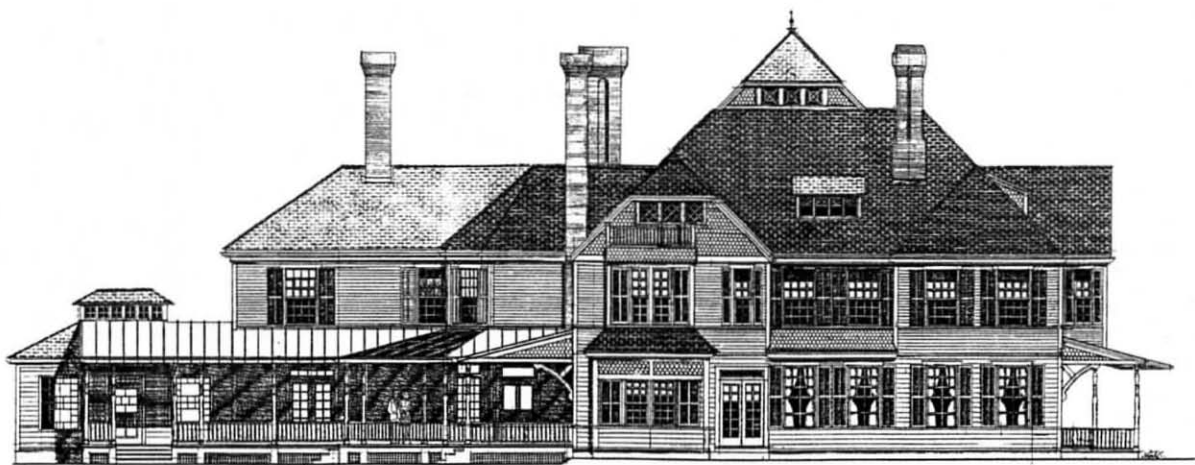
Some of Bill Hendel's blue glass collection displayed in Highfield's ballroom corner cupboards. Photo by Susan Shephard.

walking trails through the town-owned Beebe Woods and Peterson Farm. The Shining Sea Bikeway is just down the hill. The Village Green and downtown Falmouth are just a short walk away.

At Highfield Hall there will be concerts, dances, exhibits, lectures, films, poetry readings, and individual and group performances of all kinds. The property will be a stunning place for wedding receptions and other functions and special events. Historic Highfield will give historical tours of the building and grounds (which will eventually become an arboretum), and host historical lecture series. There will be meeting rooms available to the public, something Falmouth constantly needs. Highfield Hall will become the "town living room" with a sitting room and library stocked with books and papers of local and regional interest that people can read, study, and photocopy. It will also be a quiet and delightful place to read or

write your own novel. A wraparound porch in the rear will, we hope, provide the same ambience once offered by the old Cape Codder Hotel—a place to rock and chat, meet a friend, read a book, nod off on a sleepy summer afternoon. Bring your lunch.

Susan Shephard dropped out of graduate school in marine biology to join the Peace Corps in 1968. She and her husband Frank were assigned to Kenya, where they taught secondary school for two years and then worked another year for Dr. Louis Leakey. They spent the best part of 1972 taking the long way home, and moved to Falmouth in December of that year. In 1982 she rejoined the workforce (three children fully occupied the intervening ten years), writing and editing for *Oceanographic Literature Review*. She and her husband co-founded Woods Hole Data Base, Inc., a consulting and production company specializing in science information, database architecture, abstracting and indexing, and information science research and development. In 1993, Mary Lou Smith recruited her to Friends of Highfield, in which capacity she has remained pretty busy, although she continues to operate as a "pen for hire," working on the occasional science manuscript or biology textbook.



Highfield Hall restoration: preliminary design of proposed southeast elevation by architect Noah Greenberg, August 2001.