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Preserving Our Past APVA Works To Renovate Old 'Tucker's Store'

By Robert Benning

Preserving Virginia's history while improving communities for modern needs is not an easy task, but in the case of one centuries-old Charlotte Court House structure, the 'old and the new' will come together in one location!

Used in more recent years for the offices of the Farm Bureau Insurance Agency, the old 'Tucker's Store' on the north-west side of the intersection of Highways 40 and 47 was first constructed in 1825 as a general store.

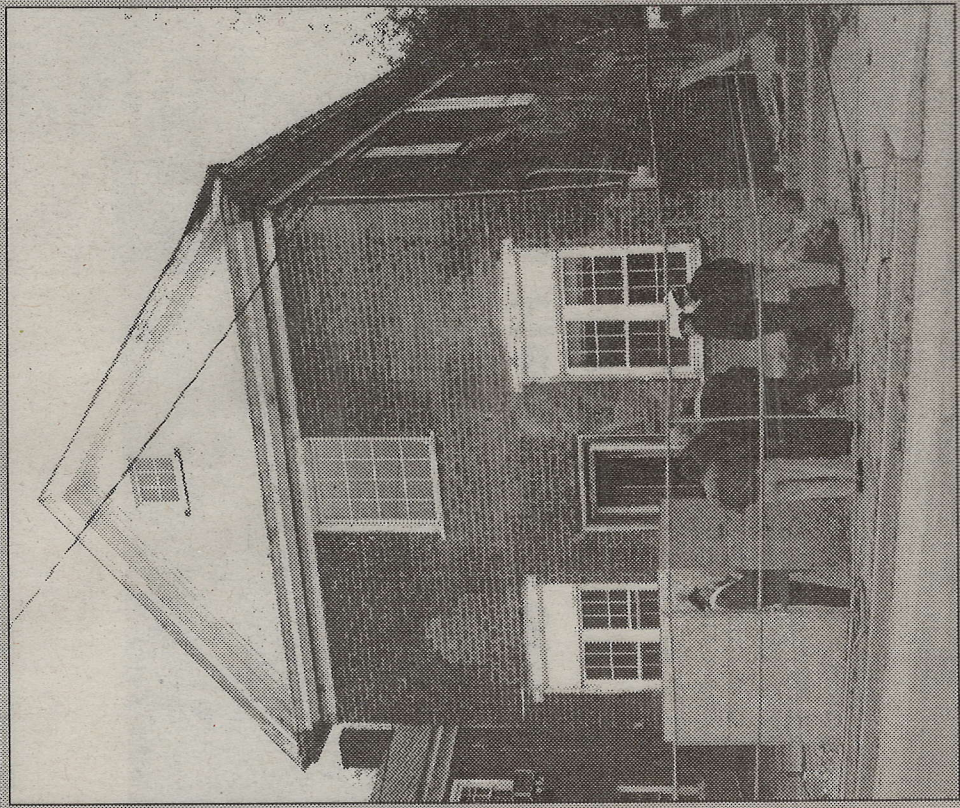
While the Farm Bureau is now located in a new building on the other side of town, the old store had served that busi-

ness, and for more than a century has served in numerous capacities - sitting majestically at that intersection with other buildings from that time period helping to give the county seat its noble and historic flair.

But over the years time took its toll, and the structure began to weaken, reaching a point where it would either need full renovation or be demolished for safety reasons.

That is when the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities (APVA) stepped in and began work to save the historic structure for the future of the community!

According to APVA Director



Representatives from the APVA joined project architects and contractors at the site of the old Tucker's Store in Charlotte County last week, to discuss aspects of the work in progress. Sitting between buildings of similar design, the old store was originally constructed in 1825, and will soon look very

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Preserving Our Past

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of Preservation Services Louisville is Malon, the organization's local chapter led the way in purchasing the structure from Farm Bureau several years ago.

"After that purchase, we spent a couple years trying to determine if the building could truly be saved," Malon said, referring to the fact that the walls of the structure had begun to bulge. "When our engineers informed us renovation was possible, we decided to move forward with the project, and renovate the building so it could be preserved and used for modern needs in the community."

The APVA obtained the money it needed for the project from a special fund set up in the 1980s for such purposes.

A woman named Ellen Mercer Clark Maxwell earmarked money made from the sale of her Maple Rose estate for pres-

ervation purposes in Charlotte County, and that fund grew over the years enabling the APVA to save historic local landmarks such as the Tucker's Store building.

Even though the renovation project will cost approximately \$430,000, about 20 percent of that amount will return to the fund through tax credits when the work is complete - leaving money for future work elsewhere.

Malon went on to say that the work must satisfy two purposes - one to keep the building's architecture within Historic Register guidelines, and the second involving the building being capable of serving as rental and office space.

To keep the building in line with Historic Register guidelines, the façade will not only retain its current architectural style, it will be returned to close to its original splendor.

"The building once had a portico with supporting columns," Malon said. "But all that was removed from the building back in the 1950s when the highway was widened."

"To restore that look, we will be adding a porch and columns, but it will be placed behind the sidewalk and won't extend out as far as the original."

For modern use purposes and to help create jobs in the community, project Architect Joseph Yeates and Contractor Daniel and Company, both of Richmond, are building one large office/store space in the front, downstairs portion of the building, and a large meeting room towards the back. Upstairs, there will be at least two separate spaces for renting for offices or other purposes.

"We continue to work on the usage plan for the interior of the building, so that may

change in the future as we near completion," Malon added.

The actual construction work began in November, and anyone passing through Charlotte Court House has surely seen the protective fence around the building, and contractors hard at work.

Malon said the exterior walls of the building are now stabilized, and the roof will be replaced in the near future.

He said he expected the project to be complete by late May, or early June at the latest.

In closing, Malon commended the work of the architect and contractor on the project, and expressed his appreciation to the members of the local chapter of the APVA and others in the community, for their ongoing support of preservation work here.