



Did you know that THE BAXTER HOUSE CAN BE SAVED?

The Baxter House: Separating FACT from FICTION

Fiction:

The Baxter House is lost to us.

Fiction:

The owner has been made to undergo serious hardship.

Fiction:

The house was landmarked after the owner bought it. She was trapped and her property was taken out of her control.

Fact:

Structures with far greater damage than the Baxter House have been restored. The Village of Baxter Estates (VBE) just has to enforce the law.

Fact:

The owner *allowed* the house to deteriorate and then filed for a permit to demolish the home and build a new house. She claimed that the house was in such disrepair that she could not afford to fix it. This is a problem that she created (yet she had the funds to hire an attorney and architect as well as to pay for the proposed new house).

Fact:

When she bought the house in August 2003, the owner knew it was over 300 years old and was the oldest house in the village. She was informed that the village had a landmark law and that the house might be landmarked, but claims that she thought she was the one responsible for submitting the application for landmark status.

In August 2004, an application was made for landmark status for the house. The owner repeatedly postponed attending the hearings. It took until 2005 for a meeting to be held, at which point landmark status was granted. She could have disputed this but did not.

(Facts, continued)

At some point after this, the house was converted for various illegal rental uses. The owner did not maintain the house and as a result, it was cited for numerous violations. She also violated the terms of the landmark code by removing the doors and windows and replacing them with poorly-made, synthetic items. The owner made no effort to correct construction code violations (such as chimneys in disrepair) but chose to let the property remain vacant after the village required that she remove all illegal tenants.

Fiction:

An engineer determined that the house should be demolished.

Fact:

The only assessment of the home has come from an engineer hired by the VBE. An independent firm with a specialty in restoration of historic structures needs be given full access to the house.

Fiction:

The fire was started by squatters.

Fact:

It has not been possible to determine the source of the fire because the basement is difficult to access. But the house had been unattended and neglected for years. Directly or indirectly, it is the a result of the owner's neglect.

Fiction:

This is out of our hands now.

Fact:

There is still a Landmarks Preservation Commission hearing planning for March 1 at 7:30 PM at the Port Washington Public Library. They will hear comments and decide whether the owner may tear down the house and build what she wishes, or if she must restore the house and build a replica.

Fiction:

There is nothing I can do.

Fact:

You can help save the Baxter House:

JOIN the Facebook group Save the Baxter House

WRITE an email about why you think it is important to restore the house to SavetheBaxterHouse@gmail.com. Emails will be presented at March 1 meeting.

SIGN the petition <https://www.change.org/p/landmark-preservation-commission-save-the-baxter-house>

ATTEND the hearing on March 1, Port Washington Public Library, 7:30 PM. Arrive early...parking will be limited!

THINK of how you feel when you drive by and see that burnt shell. It's still standing. You can help save it.