

Linda Schwab, Village Historian

This little building, no mere “shed,” was once featured in a news weekly for its historic importance. The claim was partly mistaken; the importance was not. As the law office and post office of Judge Walter Wood, appointed 1795, it played a significant role in Aurora’s and regional history.

There is strong evidence that this building is in fact the original: a pencil sketch on the February 1795 map consistent with the post office soon to be constructed to serve the then county seat. This building is therefore one of just five (5) in Aurora now known to date to the 1790s. Buildings of this age are very rare in Cayuga County. To have five in one village is astonishing and worth preserving.

Now to consider this in the context of Affirmative Maintenance. These photos compare the building condition in 2018 and last month, July 2025. When the property was sold to Pleasant Rowland LLC in December 2016, the building was repairable. Pleasant considered repairing it, but did not. The deterioration has been increasingly catastrophic, especially in the last couple of years, with complaints registered. Please continue to press for remedy under the Affirmative Maintenance section of the 2024 Zoning Law. The applicant needs to show responsibility to help find a viable solution for this building.

There is a practical alternative to demolition. A combination of Preservation and Reconstruction, using original material where possible, fits this case. I have consulted two experts in post and beam construction, one of whom, Rick Lazarus, worked regularly for Pleasant Rowland and the Inns, and was already familiar with the building. (The applicant’s engineer does not work in this field.) Both restorers identified a reasonable amount of original material remaining. A stepwise course of taking apart, storing, and reconstructing the building is a practical strategy. You have letters from the Aurora Ledyard Historical Society, Scipio Lodge and the Aurora Masonic Center supporting this goal.

There is a great deal here to consider. In addition, you already know that your determination on this little building may set a very large precedent. I encourage you to keep comment open until your next meeting.

In conclusion, demolition of this ca.1795 building is neither desirable nor necessary. There are practical approaches to saving this significant early structure, and taking a few additional weeks can clarify a course of action.

Thank you

(Sources for this letter are in my Documentation 2, submitted earlier, along with most pictures)