



The restoration of Innis Arden Cottage at Greenwich Point into an environmental education facility is now in its second phase, which includes putting in new windows and doors on the first floor. The project began in 2006 and supporters hope to complete it within two years (Sara Poirier photo). An ancillary building on the private estate of J. Kennedy Tod, Innis Arden previously served as a summer retreat for student nurses from Presbyterian Hospital in New York City.

Summer retreat

Former seasonal cottage gets a makeover on the Point

By Sara Poirier, Assistant Editor

Anurses' summer retreat in the early 1900s, Innis Arden Cottage at Greenwich Point is the first building people see when driving onto the now public property. Christopher Franco, president of the Greenwich Point Conservancy, told the *Post* that's part of the reason why his group chose the cottage as the starting point to carry out its mission of restoring all buildings on the once-private land.

The second phase of the cottage restoration project, which began in 2006, started in April and is scheduled to be completed by

this summer. The conservancy will host its fifth annual Beach Ball fund-raiser for the project on Saturday, July 11, at the Point.

"We're excited at the prospect of completing work at the cottage, which is re-emerging after decades of neglect to be recognized as one of the most beautiful and historic buildings on Long Island Sound," Mr. Franco said in a press release. "We remain committed to the restoration of all the historic buildings at Greenwich Point in the future: the chimes building, in need of major repair; the historic boathouse on Eagle Pond; the present Seaside Center building, which is the oldest building at the Point; and the

other historical buildings there."

The cottage, which is on what once was the private estate of J. Kennedy Tod, was an ancillary building replicated after the former main house, known as Innis Arden. Anna Maxwell, a prominent figure in American nursing history, stayed at the cottage during the summer months between 1906 and 1913 with her student nurses from the School of Nursing at the Presbyterian Hospital in New York City. She was largely responsible for the use of trained nurses during the Spanish-American War, establishing the Army Nurse Corps and adopting rigorous educational standards for nursing students,

according to history compiled by Nils Kerschus.

"It really hasn't been used and has been neglected for many decades," Mr. Franco said of the cottage Monday. He cited its historical significance as another reason to restore the property.

Costing about \$300,000, the second phase of the restoration project follows \$305,000 of Phase I work, which was completed in about two months in 2006. The first phase included rebuilding and replacing the roof and dormers and installing new second floor windows. Also, restoration architect Mark H. Thompson was brought on board to complete the exterior restoration plan and design the interior of the building to be used as an environmental education facility.

The architectural, design and engineering work for the cottage has cost about \$100,000, all funded by the Greenwich Point Conservancy.

The second phase of the restoration project includes putting in new windows and doors on the first floor; replacing the foundation and slabs on the two ends of the cottage and providing additional structural support work to the building's core; enclosing the end of the building closest to the Seaside Center with new custom doors/walls that can be opened in fair weather and closed off-season or after hours; new ground floor lockers on the end of the building closest to the park entrance, closing off that corner and adding an outdoor shower there; installing new siding on the entire building; new sidewalks and entrance; and installing porches on the cove and beach sides of the cottage (consistent with the original cottage design).

Peter Grunow of GroPro Landscaping of Old Greenwich is donating a landscaping plan for the area around the building, and the Friends of Greenwich Point will

donate plants.

The final phase, a press release said, is expected to cost between \$800,000 and \$1 million, and will begin when all money is raised and the town has completed its plans for operation of the planned environmental education center. To date, the conservancy has funds held in reserve and several outstanding pledges that are expected to cover about 20% of this goal.

The interior of the cottage is planned to have lab space, an area for a touch tank, lecture space, storage space, a reception area, a handicap lift, a "historical" area, a small kitchenette and bathrooms.

"We would love to think we would have it done in a year or year and a half from now," Mr. Franco said, adding that completion depends on coordination with the town on how the facility will be staffed.

He said conservancy board members will determine which Point building to work on next, but many, including himself, have their sights set on the four-story tower that once housed chimes imported from Scotland.

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Above, the cottage is shown in photos from 1907, archived at the George Eastman House in Rochester, N.Y. At left is the cottage as it stands today, under the care of the Greenwich Point Conservancy (Sara Poirier photo).