

Frequently Asked Questions regarding the Michael Preserve

Why did SLCS buy this property?

The Michael/Rogers house remained vacant for over five years. The property was on the market for over two years, with no buyers willing to purchase the buildings that had been neglected for many years. Prior to SLCS's purchase, the wooden barn on the property, near collapsing, was demolished. In 2020, SLCS raised the charitable funds to buy the property to restore the entire parcel to a natural condition.

Will there be a parking lot? Originally, we thought it would be desirable to have some parking available. After hearing the neighbors' concerns, we decided against any formal parking spaces, but SLCS will reserve the right to create a limited number of them in the future if parking is restricted on the pull-offs that have been used historically, or if requested by the road associations.

The house qualifies to be on the Register of Historic Places, does that matter? Yes, it matters. The people who lived in the farmhouse are important to the fabric and history of the community, and we intend to tell their story. However, the structures themselves have seen better days. Mold, sill-rot, insect damage, collapsing ceilings, buckling floors, leaking roofs, and overall condition of the structures, in addition to the location near the flowing stream all lead to the painful decision to let the buildings go, restore the property to a natural condition, and work to preserve the history of the families that lived there.

Why are the structures being removed?

The structures are within 40 feet of Thompson Brook and the existing septic system is even closer. The buildings are in serious disrepair. A working group spent five months looking at options and uses for the building, but eventually determined that the house and buildings were beyond repair, and that the costs of a full restoration were not at all practicable. Lastly, restoring the property to a natural condition is clearly in line with our mission.

I heard that the neighbors offered to fund 100% of the renovation to the home's exterior.

SLCS did receive offers to undertake an exterior façade restoration, but they all came with conditions that would restrict our ability to manage the property as a natural area for responsible enjoyment by members of the community. Given the condition of the structures, simply fixing up the home's exterior is not viewed as a long-term solution.

Was a petition sent to the organization regarding saving the buildings? We received a nine page petition signed by a group of neighbors stating their concerns about the removal of the buildings and SLCS promoting public access. We take neighbors' concerns seriously. We have since modified our plans and delayed activities on the property so that we could hear and understand their concerns. We participated in a meeting of the Intervale Pond Road Association to address their questions. And, we will be placing a conservation easement on the property as has been suggested. There are a majority of neighbors who support our decision and understand that our approach is consistent with our mission.