



BUSINESS

Rooms at the inn: Skaneateles' Hannum House reopens as hotel, gains historic designation

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SKANEATELES — After owning the building at 28 W. Genesee St. in the village of Skaneateles for nearly as long as he has owned the Sherwood Inn, why did Bill Eberhardt choose to renovate the Sherwood House office building into the Hannum House hotel?

"Look out that window," Eberhardt said, pointing at the view of the north end of Skaneateles Lake available from each of the five rooms at the inn. "Don't you think we should share that with somebody?"

He called it "quite a fascinating acquisition" when he bought the Sherwood House from Dwight Winkelman, noting he has owned the building for about 35 years.

Eberhardt said the Sherwood House hosted offices and shops throughout his ownership, offering locations for a couple of antique shops, a woman's clothing store, a hairstylist and other businesses on the lower level. Upstairs, Sherwood Inn staff had their offices up until construction began.

"I always wanted to make it into hotel rooms, but I always knew it was going to be a big project," he said,

noting the Sherwood Inn always took precedence in terms of how his company spent funds on renovations. "We couldn't get to it and couldn't get to it. Then, we got to it and did it right, and that was fun to do — maybe later than I wanted to."

Now, the Hannum House boasts five rooms — two on the first floor and three upstairs — that are all uniquely done with king beds, fireplaces, their own bathrooms and sitting areas, and views of the lake, of course.

"We never get tired of showing it off," Innkeeper Nancy Ranieri said, noting the north end of the lake offers a pleasing scene in all four seasons. "We never get tired of looking at this, especially decorated for the Christmas season."

'Long time coming'

The construction that transformed the Sherwood House into the Hannum House took nearly a year, as work began in October 2015 and the inn officially opened in the middle of August. Ranieri said there was a soft opening then, and now the hotel is filled with guests every weekend.

"It's a long time coming, but it's nice to finally have it done and see people enjoying it," administrative assistant Kait McKinney said, though she acknowledged she misses the view of the lake from her former office.

McKinney said the renovations involved local contractors and designers who already have a rapport with Eberhardt after working on projects on his personal home. Having those people now work on the Hannum House "just really puts the cherry on the top of the whole project," she said.

Eberhardt said workers gutted the building in order to start from scratch and remodel virtually every inch from top to bottom. The [building was nominated for](#) — and eventually added to — the state and national Registers of Historic Places, but that honor came with some responsibility.

For example, Eberhardt said he had to keep the original staircase — which he said was fine with him because he wanted to keep it and build another. He also had to maintain the windows, the woodwork and some of the other original aspects of the building, all of which he was happy to do.

He described as "intense" the application process for historic registry status, noting local history expert Kihm Winship provided assistance along with Cynthia Carrington Carter, who McKinney said took photos in the spring and summer of 2015 before demolition began of virtually every aspect of the building right

down to the minute details of its architecture.

That documentation, she said, included the original columns to determine whether they had to be kept or could be demolished and new ones built, the crown molding, door frames, fireplaces and other historic touches throughout the interior.

"He doesn't like to demolish those really historic, really good architecture of the building," McKinney said, noting Eberhardt wanted to maintain the integrity of the Hannum House.

Though not all of Eberhardt's properties are historic ones — he pointed to his Phoebe's Restaurant & Coffee Lounge as an example of a contemporary one — he said he does like to restore old things. His Chris-Craft boat and Porsche automobile are testaments to that passion, he noted.

"I believe in it — heritage, history," Eberhardt said. "It's rich."

'Charm of the village'

Ranieri called the Sherwood Inn "the living room of the community" — so many people spend holidays there, celebrate special occasions at the restaurant or hotel and just get together with family and friends for dinners.

If the Sherwood Inn is the community's living room, perhaps then the Hannum House is its bedroom — "one more historic property," Ranieri said, that "just adds to the charm of the village."

"So many people in the village remember these buildings and are excited to see them come back to life and to be able to enjoy them and have their family and friends stay here," she said.

In an effort to make the Hannum House look like it has been that way all along, Eberhardt pointed out walls and ceilings that are hand-painted by local artisan Heather Bruno-Sears and her crew with stencils — not wallpapered, despite what one might think upon first impression — and other measures taken to be as true as possible to the original building.

"There's a lot of effort put in by the team — and it was a team — to be as authentic as we could be," he said.

Each of the five rooms offers the charm and ambiance of a historic building and a view of the lake, Ranieri said, but also contains such modern conveniences as wireless internet and a flat-screen television.

Guests check in at the Sherwood Inn, and someone escorts them over and carries their bags. Each room has its own parking spot at the rear entrance of the Hannum House.

"All of them are a little different, but all of them have that same feel and quality," Ranieri said of the rooms.

The centerpiece of the five rooms is the bridal suite, which — as the name implies — could host a bride as she gets ready for her big day or even a pair of newlyweds or a couple celebrating their anniversary.

It is the only room that offers its view of the lake directly from the bed, and it is also the only room that has a tub in the shower.

The interior design of the Hannum House evokes a classic Skaneateles motif, McKinney pointed out: Much of the furniture is from furniture maker Gustav Stickley, who spent summers in Skaneateles with his daughter and son-in-law, Barbara Stickley and Ben Wiles. Much of the artwork along the walls is that of Skaneateles landscape painter John D. Barrow.

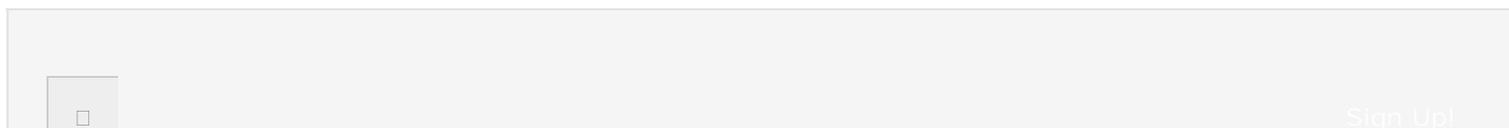
McKinney added that all of the columns on the front porch of the Hannum House are original to the building — except one that was hit by a block of ice and knocked down and that had to be repaired and replaced afterward, a job that was done by local contractor David Lee.

Along with the front porch that spans nearly the entire length of the building and another porch in the upper middle portion of the building, McKinney said the Hannum House contains a library and parlor on the first floor that serve as common areas for all guests to use during their stays.

The parlor also offers access to a handicapped lift — the construction added onto the building to slightly extend its length and accommodate the lift — to open the Hannum House to all guests, along with handicapped accessible bathrooms and guest rooms.

The plan is to eventually add a bar to the parlor exclusively for guest use, along with "a few more appointments yet to come," Eberhardt said, to finish the renovations.

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"All positive," McKinney said of the response the Hannum House has received since opening in August. "They all say how they want to have the library in their own home along with the views. We've been very fortunate."

The Shepard family

According to the evaluation of significance included with Eberhardt's application for historic register status for the Hannum House, the home was constructed around 1840 by Spencer Hannum as a Greek Revival residence that was square in plan and 1.5 stories in height.

Hannum — whose name is now seen in the side street on the corner on which the Hannum House sits — established a foundry on the lake outlet and manufactured machinery for woolen mills, employing 20 to 30 men. He was elected village president, a position similar to mayor, in 1844 and 1859 and then served as town supervisor in 1845 and 1846.

Eberhardt's application details the home's period of significance as when the Shepard family occupied it, renovating it in 1908 in the Colonial Revival style by raising the roof to a full two stories and adding a gable and porch to the West Genesee Street front of the house.

According to a piece that Winship wrote and that is on file at the Skaneateles Historical Society Museum at the Creamery, Norman Orlando Shepard — a great-great grandson of John Shepard, the namesake of the hamlet of Shepard Settlement in the town of Skaneateles — his wife, Selina, and their children, Abbie Rosalia and Norman Joseph, moved into the home in 1898.

In 1901, Norman Joseph married Inez Ethelberta Wright, and they built a home behind his father's that became 6 Hannum St. A barn was built to the east of that house and directly behind 28 W. Genesee St. with an entrance facing West Genesee Street for Norman Orlando and another entrance facing Hannum Street for Norman Joseph. The barn was later partially restored, and the West Genesee Street side houses the Patisserie bakery.

Norman Orlando was a prominent local businessman and community leader in Skaneateles, according to Eberhardt's application. He operated Hall & Shepard Dry Goods with Edwin Hall and later provided financial backing for the Bowdish Manufacturing Co. boat-building business. He served on the village

board and as village president in 1891 and 1893 and then was named town supervisor in 1896, a position he held until 1910.

After he died in 1920, Winship wrote, 28 W. Genesee St. was converted into a two-family home, and Norman Joseph and his family moved there from 6 Hannum St. Eberhardt's application states that a fire at the Hannum Street home prompted Norman Joseph's move into his late father's home.

A one-room wide, two-story addition was built onto the east side of the home in 1923 in keeping with the Colonial Revival style, according to Eberhardt's application, and other exterior changes were made to the structure. According to Winship, Norman Joseph and his family lived in one part of the house, while Selina and Abbie lived in the other.

After Selina died, Norman Joseph and Abbie lived in West Genesee Street side of the house while the Hannum Street side was rented. Norman Joseph's daughter Thelma Shepard Kuhl and her family joined Abbie after his death in 1940 and cared for her until her death in 1957. Thelma lived in the house until her death in 1968 when it was sold and passed out of the Shepard family.

'A fabulous corner'

Next year, Eberhardt said, he anticipates that brides may rent the entire Hannum House for their weddings — something that already happened four or five times this summer, with around the same number of weddings already booked for next summer — putting members of the wedding party up in the hotel and using it as a base for preparations and festivities.

"I'm proud of it," he said of finally achieving his goal of renovating the building into a hotel. "I think it's a great addition, and it's a fabulous corner in Skaneateles. There are not many more corners like this in the village."

Eberhardt is proud, too, of the Hannum House's place on the historic registers. He said the Sherwood Inn is not on those lists. That process would take a couple of years if the building even qualifies for the designation, and there might be enough of the original integrity intact that it would.

"It's a big deal," Eberhardt said of the Hannum House's designation. "It doesn't just automatically happen."

McKinney added that she is proud to have a building that is part of the Sherwood Inn campus become part of the historic register as well as become open to guests.

"To be able to share that anybody and everybody from around the world to travel and experience the same thing that I've been experiencing, I think there's nothing that can beat that, seeing other people happy and enjoying what you are happy and enjoying," she said.

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ABOUT THE HANNUM HOUSE

ADDRESS: 28 W. Genesee St., Skaneateles

RESERVATIONS: Call (315) 685-3405 or visit thesherwoodinn.com

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