

BUILDING-STRUCTURE INVENTORY FORM

DIVISION FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION
NEW YORK STATE PARKS AND RECREATION
ALBANY, NEW YORK (518) 474-0479

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

UNIQUE SITE NO. 10305-000186
QUAD _____
SERIES _____
NEG. NO. _____

Oa 44
green
yellow

YOUR NAME: Town of Islip Town Hall DATE: 6/13/79
655 Main Street
YOUR ADDRESS: Islip, N.Y. TELEPHONE: (516) 224-5450
ORGANIZATION (if any): Department of Planning and Development

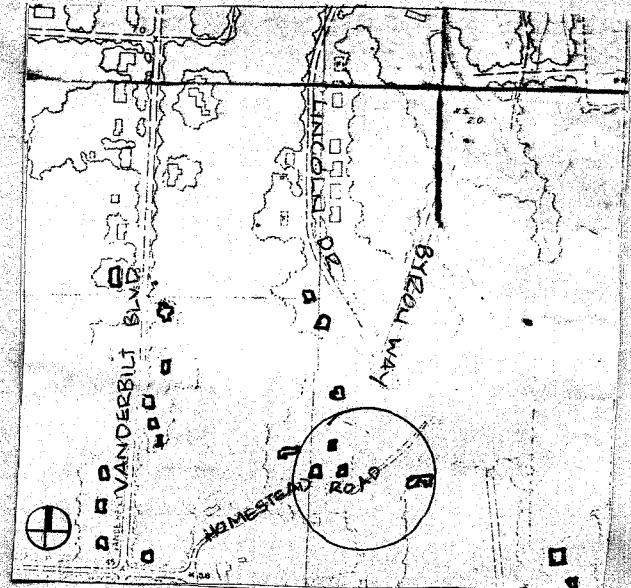
IDENTIFICATION

- 1. BUILDING NAME(S): Pepperidge Hall Estate, two farm buildings
- 2. COUNTY: Suffolk TOWN/CITY: Islip VILLAGE: Oakdale
- 3. STREET LOCATION: off Lincoln Drive, on Homestead Road
- 4. OWNERSHIP: a. public b. private
- 5. PRESENT OWNER: various owners ADDRESS: _____
- 6. USE: Original: estate buildings Present: private residences
- 7. ACCESSIBILITY TO PUBLIC: Exterior visible from public road: Yes No
Interior accessible: Explain _____

DESCRIPTION

- 8. BUILDING MATERIAL: a. clapboard b. stone c. brick d. board and batten
e. cobblestone f. shingles g. stucco other: _____
- 9. STRUCTURAL SYSTEM: (if known) a. wood frame with interlocking joints
b. wood frame with light members
c. masonry load bearing walls
d. metal (explain) _____
e. other _____
- 10. CONDITION: a. excellent b. good c. fair d. deteriorated
- 11. INTEGRITY: a. original site b. moved if so, when? _____
c. list major alterations and dates (if known): _____

12. PHOTO: Neg. 14, NJM-2 13. MAP: Bowe-Anderson
farm building #1 from the south



14. THREATS TO BUILDING: a. none known b. zoning c. roads
d. developers e. deterioration
f. other: _____
15. RELATED OUTBUILDINGS AND PROPERTY:
a. barn b. carriage house c. garage
d. privy e. shed f. greenhouse
g. shop h. gardens
i. landscape features: heavily wooded
j. other: _____
16. SURROUNDINGS OF THE BUILDING (check more than one if necessary):
a. open land b. woodland
c. scattered buildings
d. densely built-up e. commercial
f. industrial g. residential
h. other: narrow, private road

17. INTERRELATIONSHIP OF BUILDING AND SURROUNDINGS:
(Indicate if building or structure is in an historic district)

The farm buildings were part of the farm complex of Christopher Robert, and is located off Lincoln Drive, to the south, on Homestead Road. The area was later owned by William K. Aston.

18. OTHER NOTABLE FEATURES OF BUILDING AND SITE (including interior features if known):

Various brick 1½-2½ story buildings, all with gable roofs and gable roof dormers. Also see Oa 42 and Oa 43.

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SIGNIFICANCE

19. DATE OF INITIAL CONSTRUCTION: 1880
ARCHITECT: H. Edwards Ficken * probably
BUILDER: _____

20. HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL IMPORTANCE:

Interesting remains of a once large estate. The mansion was demolished in 1940. (see Oa 43). Of note are the cupola, elaborate gabled dormers, and the diamond pane sash windows of the former farm buildings.

*Dormers match those on Merriman house (see Oa 38)

21. SOURCES: Charles P. Dickerson, A History of the Sayville Community
Suffolk County News, 1975, p. 49.
1888 Map from Charles G. Stevenson, But as Yesterday, Sayville,
1967.

22. THEME:
Prepared by: Society for the Preservation of Long Island Antiquities
Setauket, New York 11733
Nina Monastero, Research Assistant
June, 1979

THE LARGEST EUROPEAN BEECH ON LONG ISLAND 1952-1972

Location	Circumference — Ft. In.			
	1952	1962	1972	Taken at
1. Roslyn; East side Mineola Ave., opp. "The Maples," Pierce Country Day School	N.R.	N.R.	22' 6"	1' 6"
2. Kings Point; North end, on Herman Brickman Estate	N.R.	N.R.	21' 5"	1' 0"
3. Glen Cove; Dosoris Island, 100 ft. North of Pink House, Mrs. J. Morgan Estate	18' 1"	19' 1"	20' 1"	1' 6"
4. Glen Cove; Dosoris Island, West of Mall on Mrs. J. Morgan Estate	18' 3"	20' 1"	20' 11"	2' 0"
5. Kings Point; 60 ft. N.E. of 500 E. Shore Road, Shalom residence	N.R.	17' 11"	19' 3"	2' 6"
6. Glen Cove; Dosoris Island, 10 ft. North of Pink House, Mrs. J. Morgan Estate	N.R.	N.R.	18' 9"	1' 6"
7. Roslyn; East side Mineola Ave., opp. "The Maples," Pierce Country Day School	N.R.	N.R.	17' 7"	1' 6"
8. Douglaston; 40 ft. East of 104 Arleigh Road, Fitzpatrick residence	15' 8"	16' 6"	17' 6"	4' 0"
9. Brooklyn; Greenwood Cemetery, North Side Central Ave., Section 103	15' 6"	16' 6"	17' 3"	4' 6"
10. Glen Cove; Dosoris Isl., on Mrs. J. Morgan Est.	N.R.	N.R.	17' 1"	1' 6"
11. Oakdale; Lincoln Drive & Homestead Rd., Kessler residence	N.R.	15' 9"	16' 4"	2' 0"
12. Islip; 90 Saxon Ave., South of Mrs. H. Havemeyer residence	N.R.	N.R.	16' 3"	4' 6"
13. Upper Brookville; Planting Fields Arboretum, South side drive	N.R.	14' 6"	16' 1"	4' 6"
14. Islip; 90 Saxon Ave., 200 ft. West of Mrs. H. Havemeyer residence	N.R.	N.R.	16' 0"	4' 6"
15. Roslyn; East side Mineola Ave., opp. "The Maples," Pierce Country Day School	N.R.	N.R.	15' 9"	3' 0"
16. Hempstead; North of Fulton St., 110 ft. East of Professional Building	14' 8"	Gone	Gone	4' 6"
17. Mastic; Old Floyd House, J. T. Nichols Estate	N.R.	14' 1"	14' 9"	4' 6"
18. Douglaston, 129 Ridge Road, between curb & sidewalk	13' 4"	14' 4"	14' 7"	3' 0"
19. Bridgehampton; S.W. of Ocean Road & Pauls Road, South of house	12' 2"	13' 4"	14' 6"	4' 6"
20. Upper Brookville; Planting Fields Arboretum	10' 9"	12' 10"	14' 1"	4' 6"
21. Matinecock; East side of Town Cocks Lane, Mrs. R. Lovett Estate	N.R.	13' 8"	14' 1"	1' 6"
22. Matinecock; East side of Town Cocks Lane, Mrs. R. Lovett Estate	N.R.	N.R.	13' 11"	4' 0"
23. Setauket; South of View Ave., on former Wm. Floyd Estate	N.R.	N.R.	13' 10"	4' 0"
24. Sayville; South end of Benson Drive, Dr. D. McLaughlin property	N.R.	13' 0"	Gone	2' 0"

Peters, The Trees of Long Island, 1973.

NJM-2, Neg. 13



view from north
farm building
now used as a
residence.

face building #2.

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FOR OFFICE USE ONLY
UNIQUE SITE NO. <u>103-05-0015</u>
QUAD _____
SERIES _____
NEG. NO. _____

NYS DHP
APR 3 1975
Rec'd N.Y. State

YOUR NAME: Betty Keas DATE: 2/25/75
 YOUR ADDRESS: Osadae, N.Y. TELEPHONE: 479-2731
 ORGANIZATION (if any): W.V. Vanderkier Hist. Soc.

IDENTIFICATION

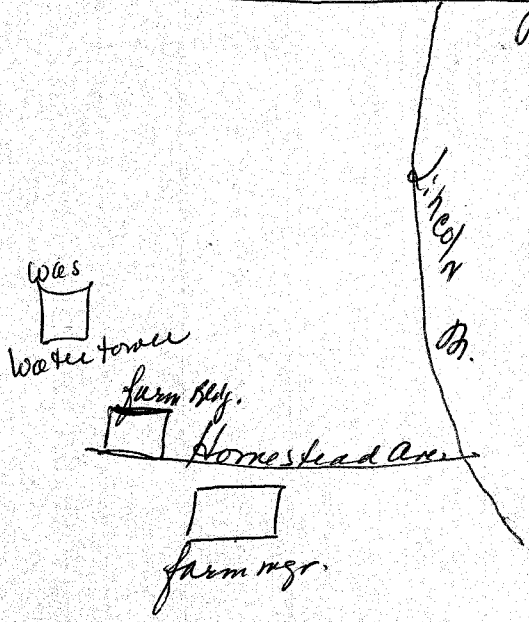
1. BUILDING NAME(S): Peperidge Hall Farm Bldgs.
 2. COUNTY: Suffolk TOWN/CITY: Salis VILLAGE: Osadae
 3. STREET LOCATION: Jackson B. Osadae
 4. OWNERSHIP: a. public b. private
 5. PRESENT OWNER: names unknown ADDRESS: Homeshead Ave.
 6. USE: Original: farm Bldgs. Present: homes - private
 7. ACCESSIBILITY TO PUBLIC: Exterior visible from public road: Yes No
 Interior accessible: Explain private homes

DESCRIPTION

8. BUILDING MATERIAL: a. clapboard b. stone c. brick d. board and batten
 e. cobblestone f. shingles g. stucco other: _____
 9. STRUCTURAL SYSTEM: (if known) a. wood frame with interlocking joints
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12. PHOTO:

13. MAP: MOXT. Hwy.



Ghostly Chateau Hidden in Long Island

Builder of Pepperidge Hall, now vacant, lived amid splendor, like his Norman ancestors

By Howard Mingo

Buried in an immense tract of woods and marshland on the shore of Great South Bay, Long Island, there stands a vacant castle built on dreams, a medieval castle where living characters of the older generation played their parts in a true life romance that rivals fantastic fiction. It is a French chateau of the twelfth century period, though it is less than fifty years old. On the tax records it is listed as Pepperidge Hall so named by the dreamer who conceived it. Others have nicknamed it, "Wild Man's Folly".

Superstitious natives say that it is haunted, they would not go near the place under any circumstances. They recall the house-warming which marked the completion of the castle. Workmen who helped build it and who aided the master when he installed his furnishings and decorative treasures recall his devotion to the place. They profess to know what broke his heart, and those of them who believe in ghosts assert that he was the sort of man to remain on earth amid the scenes that he loved intensely. He died with a bullet in his head about thirty years ago.

He was Christopher R. Robert, an American and the son of wealthy parents. His father was the founder of Robert College in Constantinople. As a boy he had a staff of tutors to train and keep him away from the rabble. At an age when the average youth would be learning how to take his place in this democracy, young Robert was absorbing his own family history, which was traced back to William the Conqueror. While other American boys were thrilling to the accounts of how George Washington had thrashed the British in the days of '76, our hero was glowing with pride at the manner in which the Duke of Normandy had laid conquest to England back in the eleventh century.

There were many facts for him to dwell upon. King William's son was Duke Robert of Normandy, and he also was written up in the family textbook as a crusader of note. He left a line of descendants who retained his name. Some of them were noted scholars. Others were notorious Protestants at a time when the French kings had a tendency to behead Protestants, and they, too, went down in history. The family became a leader of the Huguenot cause and the men repeatedly distinguished themselves in battle, their greatest feat being the heroic defense of Rochelle during the siege of 1627.

When Louis XIV revoked the Edict of Nantes in 1685, thereby compelling the Huguenots to flee the country, Daniel Robert came to America where he founded the Town of New Rochelle, N. Y. Christopher was of the fifth generation in America yet he could not forget his Norman lineage, the little that remained to him after all those years. As a young man he was known to be inordinately proud of that ancestry.

Decorations from France

The castle was, and is today, a mammoth pile of brick with stone trimmings, with four wings arranged in a square to cover an acre, and after placing of cellars and foundations, they went to Europe for their antiques. The entire wing grew up around that collection.

A mammoth fireplace with a mantel of solid wood in which the great Roussel had carved four of the principal scenes in the siege of La Rochelle, the affair in which one of Robert's forefathers had participated, occupies nearly all of one side of the main hall. On the opposite wall is a sixteenth century tapestry set in panels. It is fourteen feet long, or high. All the rooms on the first floor of that wing were built to accommodate such articles or decorations.

There had been a Norman Duke rich enough to play patron to struggling artists, and he had caused a wonderful balcony to be carved. This he presented to a cathedral. Later, the edifice went to ruin, but the balcony remained. Robert paid \$20,000 for it. The artist had carved the heads of his noble patron and his lady in quite the most predominant places, and there were marvelous bits of handiwork over the entire structure. The modern castellan of this Long Island chateau installed the balcony as a nucleus gallery.

An entire room from one of the old castles was transferred to Pepperidge and the walls built up around it. It is ranked among the especially beautiful works of art that have been brought to this country. The ensemble, save the fireplace which was made for the original room, is of panels carved like lace, with 150 small heads, each one different, standing out in relief from the tracery some five feet from the floor.

The panels had been worm-eaten and otherwise damaged during the centuries in the dreary old castle abroad, and on arriving here they were restored by artisans which Robert summoned. The carpenter who put them in place said that his restoration cost Robert a pretty penny. But the room is in perfect condition today. The owners used it as a dining salon.

The ballroom, music room and art galleries were also brought from France, also panels, gold furniture, hangings, tapestries, fireplaces and crystal chandeliers, all of one period. At that time there were few such rooms outside of the museums and a few of the royal palaces.

There were double walls four and five feet thick, with plenty of air space between to keep the rooms warm in winter and cool in summer. While the main wing was being built the Roberts lived in a farm house which had been erected at one corner of the estate. They superintended the work and helped them unpack the valuables which seemed to arrive in unceasing quantities. The owner was prouder than ever and he boasted in mild fashion that no woman here or abroad would have such luxury as he proposed to give his wife.

He was rated as a millionaire in the days when there were few on the tax list, and he could afford to indulge any whim. He spent much of his time in Northern France browsing about in quarters made famous by his ancient forebears. Those who knew him well say that he took especial delight in day dreaming, fancying himself still in the gorgeous days when the Roberts were dukes. They do not know when the idea struck him, the idea that he later put into operation, but they remember when he commenced buying up Norman antiques. His agents abroad had only to notify him that a certain article was for sale to bring him across the seas to examine it. He would pay a good many American dollars for something Norman made centuries ago. This he would pack carefully in copper-lined cases and store away in a French seaport.

He had passed his forty-fifth birthday when he met Mrs. Julia Morgan, a young and vivacious widow of a wealthy American shipowner who had bequeathed her an income from his estate. They found each other congenial from the first. Their close friendship over a number of years warranted the prediction among acquaintances that they eventually would marry, though Robert's friends often said that his austere bearing and cold dignity would not seem to harmonize with Mrs. Morgan's care-free temperament.

One day, their servants afterward learned, Robert confided to her, his great plan. He wanted to perpetuate his family name in a castle. He asked her to marry him and promised to install her amid luxury and beautiful surroundings fit for a Dutchess of the Conqueror's line.

Built in a Swamp

Soon after the wedding he went out to Oakdale and bought more than a thousand acres. A mile back from the highway he paced off a full acre of land that was then swampy and covered with an undergrowth. This he designated as the site for his chateau.

An army of workmen was soon converting the marsh into foundations for the building. A dike was dug around the plot and the water drained off. Hundreds of truckloads of brick were laid underground and interwoven with logs with more brick on top to form the bottom of the cellars. They knew very little about reinforced concrete and this was the best method available for keeping out the water. A fortune was spent on the foundations alone. Carpenters, plumbers, masons and other artisans were called from nearby villages and placed in charge of construction gangs. They say that Robert was an asset to the county. He paid three dollars a day to the bosses and a dollar and a half to the laborers, good wages in the '80's. They were ten years building Pepperidge Hall. During that time the workers had plenty of opportunity to observe the Robert romance and were prepared for the sequel.

A Marble Bathroom

Assuredly no chatelaine was ever blessed with so many beautiful objects under one roof. Her rooms were on the second floor of the main wing, all brought over from the Old World. There were mirrors framed in solid gold, bronze arruwa, paintings by the old masters set into panels. Each room had its fireplace which had been made for a similar decorative scheme centuries before.

Her bathroom was of solid marble, a rare thing in the New Yorkage of innocence. Her boudoir was paneled with love scenes wrought in the manner of Fragonard and done with such grace and beauty that the place even today, deserted though it is, seems full of life, while all the rest of the demesne has the aspect of an abandoned farmhouse.

Robert placed choice rugs and carpets in these rooms. There were secret closets behind the panels where his wife could keep her jewels. Her bed was a copy of Marie Antoinette's famous bed, procured at a cost of \$20,000.

When the other wings had been built up and roofed the Roberts held a celebration, inviting some fifty guests from abroad and those who came were amazed to find an ancient chateau in so new a country. In one wing were 15 guest rooms and apartments, kitchens, floored with tile brought from Holland, an icehouse holding a thousand tons, great refrigerators and other modern apparatus so camouflaged that they were inconspicuous.

Two servants were employed solely to keep the brass and copper cleaned and they were known in that establishment by the ancient and honorable term of potwallopers, as in the days of the Norman Conquest, though it would be somewhat lower than slang today. There were accommodations for 30 servants in that wing, with a hall resembling the old ward rooms.

Across the court was the conservatory taking up all that side, a greenhouse containing rare plants and flowers from the tropics. Today the panes are broken, the pots are empty. There is no trace of the mushrooms garden in the cellar.

The fourth wing, which is opposite the main part of the building, and thus forms the square, contains eight box stalls and as many others built of solid mahogany, for horses. Above are quarters for the grooms and other attendants. The wrought iron gates in this wing, the stables, affords the only means of entering the chateau except by way of the front. And those gates were kept closed like the drawbridge of a castle. Robert instructed his flunkies to open them in the morning and again late in the afternoon. After 7 P.M. at night they were shut.

It was the only means by which the servants could enter or leave the castle and one of the first domestic strikes of record occurred at Pepperidge. The servants left. Others took their places but they, too, left after the first payday. They did not like the customs transplanted from the historic past, for they were constantly being

summoned to perform extra duty until theirs became a twenty-four hour job.

The owners meanwhile were completing the courtyard. Robert told the workmen that he was installing the huge swimming pool in the courts simply to please his wife, because it would be years before the grounds extending to the beach would be in shape to attract her in that direction. As she liked swimming, he would provide a pool, though it meant the outlay of another fortune. Brick and foundations extend under the court for a depth of many feet, and the water mains lead to the tower where a big tank was kept filled from artesian wells in the courtyard. During the few years that the Roberts occupied the place a special attendant was at hand to keep the pool at a pleasing temperature by means of warm water which he was compelled to carry from the kitchen -- another strenuous task. Yet it is recorded that Mrs. Robert never once entered the pool.

By this time gossip had been carried by disgruntled servants beyond the confines of the estate, until everybody in the county was made acquainted with details of the bitter quarrels between the master and mistress of the chateau. They rarely entertained. They had few callers, though they had been there for more than a decade. Occasionally a hunting party would arrive and spend a few days. There were special quarters for them in the tower where they could do their drinking and from which they could depart to the hunt without disturbing or being disturbed by the others in the chateau. Such was the feudal atmosphere at Pepperidge.

The workmen who had been employed there from the beginning were amazed by the change in Robert when he completed the details of the billiard room which were to receive his personal attention. He seemed to have aged rapidly and his temper was uneven, to say the least. Strangers who had taken rather a personal interest in this great love affair after seeing the extent to which the principals had gone to create a happy home, were astonished by the new situation.

They said they knew Robert was broken-hearted because no children had arrived to bless the new home and incidentally, to be reared in the old Norman style. Mrs. Robert's personal servants quoted her as saying that she had come to hate Pepperidge and all that it stood for. The chilly atmosphere had cooled her ardor for the place and its master, and finally she had grown to hate him. They say that she told him so in the presence of others and that this drove him into a frenzy of rage.

One day, without saying a word to anyone, he drove fifty miles into New York and exchanged Pepperidge and all its broad acres for a few parcels of land in the city. Before another sunset the Roberts had moved out, leaving everything except their personal belongings. He built a hotel in uptown N.Y., and they occupied an apartment there for several months. Then they made reservations to sail for France.

Their baggage was on the pier an hour before the departure when Robert phoned to cancel their passage. A few hours later he was found dead in his rooms. A cheap revolver lay on the floor near by. It was a nine days' sensation and also a mystery, but the police finally termed it a suicide. The natives on L.I. say that if Robert

shot himself it was because of his shattered dream and the loss of his treasures, which he had not cared to own after the domestic troubles started. Mrs. Robert died in France about seven years ago.

There Pepperidge Hall stands today, very much as he left it, except that the terraced gardens and the acres leading down to the shore have gone back to their former wild state. The castle is in good condition save that some of the window shutters have been twisted off by high winds. The priceless rooms are still intact, except for some of the furniture which was removed after several attempts to rob the place. Several persons have owned the property with a view of selling it at a handsome profit to somebody who desires to live in a castle.

At times the motion picture companies have had good use of it. Anita Stewart in "My Lady's Slipper" was filmed there. One company spent a fortune producing "Dead Men Tales" a melodrama with secret passages and a gruesome plot which moves with blood-curdling swiftness to the bitter end. "To Hell with the Kaiser" was also made at Pepperidge. For years a little old lady has been the caretaker. She keeps the place spotlessly clean, and she does not like the picnic parties which litter up the front yard with rubbish after they have failed to force an entrance. Her name is Mrs. Walters.

Sometime ago she was roaming about the great hall late at night. A hay party had landed from a boat and were making merry close to the front door. Mrs. Walters, anticipating the work as a result of their visit, groaned loudly at the thought of the work she would have to do the next morning.

"Did you hear that?" cried one of the intruders. Mrs. Walters groaned again, most dismally. The party fled. She believes she is the only ghost at Pepperidge, with the possible exception of the movie plots, though no concoction of a scenario writer could surpass the real tragedy that left this castle deserted.