



New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
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~~Orin Lehman~~
~~Commissioner~~

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Commissioner

August 16, 1996

To: Lorraine Gilligan
From: Deborah Trupin
Re: Textiles and upholstered settees at Coe Hall

On July 23, 1996 when I visited Coe Hall, I examined three settees (two upholstered in needlepoint, in the Den and Gallery, and one upholstered in tapestry, in the Dining Room). Condition reports, with treatment proposals and prognoses, for these pieces are attached. Slides illustrating aspects of the condition reports are also attached.

Although treatments are proposed for all three pieces, none is in dire need of treatment at this time; the settee in the Gallery needs treatment the most. Should Coe Hall wish to have the treatments done, they are ones that I could execute. We should talk with Jim Gold and/or John Lovell about scheduling and fees (if any).

I know that David Bayne, while visiting at the same time, proposed that he and I return to the site for an upholstery survey. I would definitely like to do this and would recommend holding off on deciding about treatment of the settees until after the upholstery survey. This survey may tell us more about the settees, so you could make a more informed decision about treatments and priorities.

While at the site, I also briefly looked at a number of other pieces. I did not do complete condition reports and treatment proposals for these pieces, but rather made some notes about their condition and possible treatment and/or preventive conservation needs. The following notes summarize by observations and recommendations about these pieces:

- o Tapestry in the Dining Room, "Spring". (Slides A, B and C) This is actually a fragment of a larger tapestry. It is in fair/good condition. It is hung with rings, which provide uneven support and rippling. The proper right side is longer than the proper left side, by about 3". There are many areas of reweaving, but they are stable now. The tapestry has a heavy linen lining. **Recommendations:** Remove from the wall, vacuum both sides, examine more closely. If it is as stable as it seems, provide a velcro hanging strap for better support. No further treatment might be needed. If the piece is not stable, a complete examination report and treatment proposal can be done while the tapestry is off the wall. (Work to be done by a textile conservator).

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- o Tapestry in the Gallery, an armorial. (Slide D) This tapestry was only viewed at a distance, as it hangs very high. It appears to be stable. It is hung with a pole, with the top nailed to the pole(?). The hanging system is causing some distortion. The tapestry appears to be lined, with a lining that is too small for it, causing the tapestry to turn under. **Recommendations:** Remove from the wall, vacuum both sides, examine more closely. If it is as stable as it seems, provide a velcro hanging strap for better support. No further treatment might be needed. If the piece is not stable, a complete examination report and treatment proposal can be done while the tapestry is off the wall. (Work to be done by a textile conservator).
- o An embroidered {metal and silk threads on silk and silk velvet fabric on linen(?)} armorial piece (a hatchment?) over the rail in the Gallery. (Slides E, F, and G) Poor condition. Approximately 50% of the metal threads are coming loose. The silk behind the metal threads is shattering and splitting. The velvet ground appears to be more stable. The fringe and trim around the perimeter are secure. **Recommendations:** Research age and provenance; the piece may be a more significant textile than is realized. Until more is known about the piece and until a full treatment can be designed, retire from display. Pack the piece for storage in an acid-free textile storage box, with the folds padded with crumpled acid-free tissue paper. (To be done by Coe Hall staff; materials can be provided by Peebles Island.) Alternatively, or in addition, have a detailed examination report and treatment proposal prepared by a textile conservator.
- o Framed needlework fragment, Gallery. This piece appears to be stable, but it is not properly framed. It is pressed against the glass and is most likely on an acidic cardboard or wood shingle. **Recommendations:** Have a conservator remount and reframe the piece, using conservation methods and materials. Note that this may require adding depth to the frame.
- o French Room, draperies. These relatively new draperies appear to be wearing well; so far no signs of light damage are observed. **Recommendations:** When Coe Hall closes for the season, take off the tie backs, and take the weight off the draperies by supporting the bottoms of the draperies on (modern) chairs. Whenever possible, block all light from the room using opaque shades. Once per year, gently vacuum the draperies, using an upholstery brush on a low suction vacuum cleaner. (To be done by Coe Hall staff.)

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- o French Room, tablecloth. This piece is resting on a plywood-topped table. The plywood, being acidic, is harmful to the tablecloth. It will eventually cause staining and fiber damage. **Recommendation: Replace the plywood top with a piece of plexiglas, which is a more stable material. (To be done by Coe Hall staff.)**
- o Various textile fragments used throughout the Hall as "table scarves." These are in varying conditions from good/fair through poor. **Recommendations: Consider replacing these with modern textiles in similar patterns or techniques, given the viewing distance of most of these textiles from the visitor. Alternatively, put mylar between the textiles and the pieces of furniture on which they rest and another piece of mylar between the textile and any object resting on it.**

I hope these notes and recommendations are useful to you. Please feel free to call if you have any questions about these or about the enclosed condition reports and treatment proposals.

As always, I greatly enjoyed my visit to Coe Hall. I look forward to continuing to work with you and the Coe Hall collection.