

IMAGES

... then and now

From The Indian Hill Historical Society



Buckingham Lodge
1861

The Phinney House



One early residence of rural Indian Hill is the H. Phinney house at 8260 Shawnee Run Rd. Adjacent to the Village Administration Building, it was purchased in 2001 for municipal use. After careful planning and a year long renovation, it will be soon be ready for occupancy. Built in the 1840's on a 49-acre parcel, the house originally was a single room with the entry on the west side. It had a creekstone foundation, with rough log floor beams above a root cellar. The frame of the house consisted of oak timbers, mortised together and joined with wood pegs. In the 1850's the house was expanded and reoriented on a north-south basis

with the addition of a two-story brick building. The new basement also had a creekstone foundation, and the limestone lintels and sandstone sills were common construction motifs in the Ohio valley in that era. Later a kitchen addition was made on the north side. Hamilton County deed books record 10 owners of the residence, including the Russell family, who lived there 1961-1995, and the Lemmon family, who sold the property to the village.

After a delay, an architect was engaged to determine the best use of the building. The original plan was revised by the Grounds Committee of Village Council. The newly renovated Phinney House retains its historic charm while providing space for four municipal functions, restrooms, conference room, kitchenette, small reception area, and storage space. The entrance is now on the east side of the building. Downstairs the Health Department and Tax Office are on the north; and the Recreation Commission is on the south. The Information Technology Manager's workstation is on the north upstairs mezzanine. By moving these staff members from their current cupboard-sized offices to the Phinney House, Council Chambers are now available for various subcommittee and employee committee meetings, and also for Ranger training sessions.

The architect, Frank Russell, who grew up living there, faithfully married the old and new portions of the Phinney House. About 1100 square feet of the residence were retained, and 800 square feet were razed and replaced by 1000 square feet of new construction. The new portion of the building replicates the 1850's brick Greek Revival style structure, with an identical roof pitch, matching box gutters, and new columns and windows in the style of the older structure. The new portion of Phinney House is slightly smaller than the old – the old being 2 stories tall and the new only 1 ½. The exterior porch is improved also. Some of the oldest features of the house have been saved, including the posts and beams in the 1840's cellar and the creekstone foundation. The interior fireplaces, cabinets, stairway and trim are preserved and refreshed. During the renovation, the electrician discovered that the walls were solidly filled between the gaps with bricks, which required drilling and chipping away to install electric lines. Obviously construction techniques were different in the nineteenth century!

The landscaping plan, designed by John Bentley, integrates the Phinney House with the Administration Building while buffering the municipal offices from neighboring residences. A driveway on the west side was removed and substantial plantings of both evergreen and deciduous trees create a green barrier there. On the east, a circular driveway is attached to the existing drive and parking area, with 10 additional parking spaces adjacent. Where construction required removing some older trees, new plants are to be installed later this fall or next spring.

Phinney House provides much needed office space for the overcrowded Village Administration building. The Village has protected the historic character of the original building while efficiently utilizing this newly refurbished structure.