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North Bennet St. School students working on 200 year old Anna Clapp Harris Smith house built in 1804

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North Bennet Street School preservation carpentry students are currently building windows in the school shop. Once they are done, these historically accurate twelve-over-twelve divided-light sashes will be installed in the Anna Clapp Harris Smith house.

Earlier this year, clapboards around the existing door and sidelights were removed to reveal evidence of the original entrance design. After research into the appropriate design for a house of this period, Matt Diana, a second year preservation carpentry student, prepared a proposal for a new entrance that was reviewed and approved by the Boston Landmarks Commission. The door was then built and installed. Other work done by students includes repairs to the sills, posts, studs and skived clapboard.

The house, built in 1804, is believed to have been constructed on a 1636 foundation of the Jones family house and was the lifetime home of Anna Clapp Harris Smith, founder of the Animal Rescue League. This period home, rich in history and unique in its current transformation, is for sale. The restoration and the sale are made possible through a unique collaboration.

In 2010, North Bennet Street School (NBSS) received funding from the 1772 Foundation to establish "Handmade Houses," an innovative preservation trades training program that involves preservation carpentry students, instructors and school leaders in the identification and preservation of early architecture in Boston's neighborhoods. The school is working in partnership with Historic Boston Inc. and has created a revolving fund focused on the acquisition, stabilization, redevelopment and sale of historically and culturally significant first period homes in Boston.

Historic Boston Inc. (HBI), the recipient of a companion grant from the 1772 Foundation, is contributing its development expertise to the new partnership. HBI secured a 2-year purchase option from the owner with the goal of turning the building into to a two-family house.

The HBI-NBSS partnership represents an unprecedented model for preservation trades training because it enables the training program to assume a pro-active role in the historic preservation of Boston's earliest buildings. NBSS president, Miguel G3mez-lb3ez, expressed his enthusiasm for the program and said "We will be assisting in the rehabilitation of significant historic properties that may not otherwise be preserved."

For information about the ongoing work at the Anna Clapp Harris Smith house and to inquire about the sale, visit Historic Boston, Inc. online (historicboston.org). To learn about North Bennet Street School's preservation carpentry program, go to www.nbss.edu.

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