

Historic commission eying Masonic temple

By Dan McCosh

FARMINGTON—Farmington's Masonic Temple has become a major concern of the Farmington Historical Preservation Commission, according to Paul Schreiber, committee member.

"The serious issue that has arisen concerning the Masonic Temple building calls for some very sober thinking on various means to save the structure and determine its future use," Schreiber told the Farmington City Council recently.

Schreiber said he was reacting only as a "member" of the historical commission, not an official spokesman. The Temple was on a recent agenda but a quorum was not present, he said, and no official action was taken.

The Temple became the concern of the Historical Commission following the announcement its sale was being considered by the Masons.

NO BIDS HAVE been received or actively solicited yet, according to a spokesman for the Masons. The Masons are considering building a smaller, and hopefully less expensive, meeting place for the Farmington lodge.

The future of the old landmark became the concern of the Farmington

City Council, which is currently getting appraisals of the property and is reviewing the zoning in the area.

The Historical Commission is the body charged with reviewing proposed changes in the Farmington Historic District, mainly a triangle of land bounded roughly by Shiawassee, Warner and Grand River.

The Temple is included in the district, and has also been suggested as a state historic site, a designation still pending, according to Schreiber.

"The commission is an advisory board, with no power to withhold building permits in the district, but any proposed exterior change in a building must be reviewed by the board."

Schreiber made five suggestions to the council on the future of the building:

- The city purchase the property with a special millage for one year. "It is felt by many that such a special levy would attract very strong public support because of the importance of the building as a characteristic landmark to the citizens of our city."

- If acquired by the city it could be used by the district court, or an annex to the municipal building. A city coup-

cil decision recently ruled out the chance the court could move into the site, however.

- If acquired by the city, it might be leased back to the Masonic Order on terms equitable to both parties. Historically, this was the arrangement under which the building was built, by the old township and the Masons.

- If acquired by a private party, the party should be a resident of the Farmington area or an adjacent municipality.

- If acquired by a private party it could be turned into a place of business, small offices constructed inside or small shops similar to the mini mall.

"It is felt if the building is destroyed the character of the entire Farmington area would be grievously wounded and that Farmington, both ethnically and socially, would become a semi-suburban desert," Schreiber added.

"Because of the location of this building in the center of our city, the entire area enjoys a very sound and envious prestige. For esthetic reasons let us keep it that way."

Shirley Richardson leaves local post

By DAN MCCOSH

FARMINGTON—Mrs. Shirley Richardson is stepping down from a career with the Farmington Beautification Commission which spans two city administrations and eight years trying to improve the appearance of the city.

The city council recently presented her with a plaque honoring her service to the community. Mrs. Mardi Reichardt was appointed to the commission to fill the seat.

Mrs. Richardson is going to devote full time to the presidency of the Southeast Michigan Beautification Council, a post she was elected to this year.

She became chairman of the Farmington Beautification group in 1968. "We planted 350 trees that first year," she said, referring to one of

the projects she was responsible for, a city-wide planting program.

Under her guidance, the committee also started an awards program for groups and businesses, and began sending out commendatory letters for beautification well done.

After two years as chairman of the Farmington committee, Mrs. Richardson was named a delegate to the Southeast Council.

She was secretary for two years before accepting the top post this year.

The area of the council covers Wayne, Oakland, Macomb, Livingston, Washtenaw, St. Clair and Monroe counties. Her first aim is to add a lot more communities to the 75 that now participate.

"A primary goal is to increase the awareness of the council's work so that more cities and towns will join," she said.



MRS. SHIRLEY RICHARDSON

Dance classes

A six-week term of ballet, jazz dancing and tap begins July 8 at the Farmington Community Center. Mrs. Barbary Burgess is the ballet instructor, teaching

Sara Jane Gilman. Late registration is still open for the class.

How the friend of court works in Oakland County

By SUSAN L. SILK

OAKLAND COUNTY—If Oakland County's Friend of the Court were renamed "friend of the child," it might better explain its function.

That department, according to state statute, is responsible for the protection of children of a couple involved in divorce proceedings, said Friend of the Court John J. Houghton.

The department supervises more than 21,000 cases, or families, who are in the process of a divorce.

At the time attorneys file legal papers for those seeking a divorce, they must contact the Friend of the Court, if children less than 18 years old are involved.

THEN TRAINED interviewers meet with the parents to try and determine the reason for divorce.

Houghton said the interviewer may also visit the home of the family on several occasions, if he thinks it is necessary.

Attorneys for either parent may also ask for a special home study before the case is assigned a court date. "Once a hearing for custody, visitation rights or support has been scheduled the Friend of the Court of-

fice will make its written recommendations to the court," Houghton said.

But the judge is not bound by the Friend of the Court recommendations, he added.

WHEN THE DIVORCE is finalized in court, property division, support and visitation conditions are ordered.

In Oakland County one parent has custody of the children and the other supports the children.

The father usually is the one to pay child support, Houghton said. Most often the court will order the father to make his payments through the banking services of the Friend of the Court.

For a fee of \$18 a year, divorced fathers are given a record of their support payments, Houghton said.

The money from these fees, (more than \$375,000 in 1974) will be used to offset the cost of converting the records to the county data processing system, Houghton said.

Complaints on delinquent support or requests for a change of support or visitation can then be addressed to the Friend of the Court so long as the case is open or until the last child has reached 18 years of age, Houghton said.

WITH NO-FAULT divorce the law and improving economic status for

women, Houghton foresees future changes affecting his department's job.

"In the past, men traditionally were thought to have little interest in custody. Now, we're reading of bachelor fathers."

"Now, as we look at women coming into management positions, they (women) may no longer have time to be full-time custodians."

"The strict categories of 'supporter' or 'custodian' will soon disappear, and then the issue will be a matter of which newly-defined parental home will be in the best interest of the child," Houghton said.

Already one case has come to Houghton's attention where the father-supporter's job has fallen through. His ex-wife was awarded child support, but has been supporting herself.

NOW, THE ex-husband complains, his former wife is able to contribute to the support of their children, but refuses to, and the law does not require her to do so.

"I don't know if she can be required to contribute to the support," Houghton said. He expects future court decisions to address themselves to this question.

Boys State is teacher

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"We look for leadership and an outgoing personality."

She recommended students interested in the program for their junior year contact the junior adviser in their high school.

After screening, the students are chosen, along with runners-up, and sponsors are solicited for each position.

Some of the representatives chosen will eventually get to go to Boys and Girls Nation, a similar program in

Washington, D.C. Four students from Farmington have been selected for this honor in the past.

"They really have to know government for that," Mrs. Currie said. "It's not a popularity contest."

Davis graduates

Daniel Davis, 24738 Roosevelt Court, Farmington, recently received an M.S. degree in mechanical engineering from the University of Arizona.

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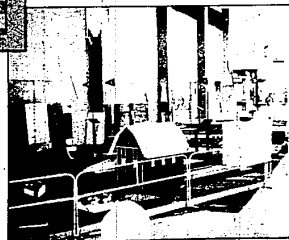
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