

BACK TO GREENWICH" MOVEMENT STARTED THROUGH RECLAIMING OF VILLAGE HOMES

Rich Corporation Takes Over Old Trinity Dwellings and Will Modernize Them in Hope of Restoring to Section Its Former Popularity

Significance greater than the mere purchase of real estate is attached to the activities of William S. Coffin and others during the last few months in the Greenwich Village section. It has just developed that the purchase of eight of the Village's quaint and dignified old homes by Mr. Coffin is the first step in a plan to bring back to old Greenwich the residential character and social pride which won for it in the old days the appellation "Yankee Ward" of New York. Associated with Mr. Coffin in the purchase and the scheme of reclamation are a number of thoughtful and successful business men, who will discourage any attempt on the part of critics to label this movement a fantastic enterprise, one that might be expected of folks whose callings are not closely associated with commercialism. Mr. Coffin himself is a big man in a big concern, a concern which perhaps is rated as one of the largest and best known in its particular business. He did not go into this project until he had given it a try.

The building heights and zoning restrictions and the prevailing tendency of trade migration, which have created a novel situation for old Greenwich, took away at it is out of the beaten paths of commercial and structural progress, also added encouragement to the rehabilitating scheme. There are not more than half a dozen large factory buildings perhaps in that section of the village west of Greenwich street. They were built by Trinity some few years ago in the belief that traders could be attracted by the low rental rates which were possible there. The plan seemed to have failed. When William H. Wheelock took over the management of Trinity Corporation property a few months ago he brought with him similar ideas for the development of Trinity's real estate resources in Greenwich Village, but he has changed them somewhat since. Trinity is not as rich as the general public seems to think. The church corporation has just borrowed \$4,500,000 to refund the cost of the commercial construction and it has no big sum of money available for the assumption of this work. Commercial development in Greenwich Village as a consequence has been halted, for builders expect Trinity to finance their operations. These circumstances have not escaped the attention of Mr. Coffin and his associates, who are for the most part former residents of the old village. They moved away from Greenwich when it became untenable. Old Greenwich dwellers have never become reconciled to any other section, for it is impossible to duplicate elsewhere in the city the houses, the feeling and the sentiment which have made this section dear to the hearts of many.

Appreciating the wonderful opportunities which the law and business tendencies have created, they are going to take advantage of them since they show the way back to the many years ago when the old village was one of the most substantial residential sections of New York, the home of folks whose people have been associated with the affairs of this city from the time it was a suburb of the British colony of New York.

Mr. Coffin and the eighteen or more gentlemen associated with the enterprise have been greatly encouraged by the successful reclamation of the Beacon Hill section of Boston. There was no law such as the one now in force in Greenwich, and the recovery of Beacon Hill. It was just the work of a group of real estate men who appreciated the fine architecture of the houses.

Folks who know claim that there is a wealth of fine architecture in the older homes of old Greenwich. But their beauty has been marred somewhat by the tenantry of the last decade and by numerous coats of unsightly paint.

Mr. Coffin now controls practically the entire block on Charlton street, between Varick and Macdougall streets. He owns fifteen houses there, the nine on the south starting at 16 and extending to 32, which is next to a mission house conducted by Trinity. The properties on the north side controlled by Mr. Coffin are not connected like those on the south side. They include 27, 29, 31, 37, 39 and 41. Abutting these north side houses are three houses on Varick street, 41, 43 and 45, which Mr. Coffin will take over shortly. The houses are two and three stories high and range in width from 19.5 to 25 feet. Those on the north side of Charlton street which have been purchased are two stories high. In the rear of the houses on the south side of the Charlton street block are small buildings which once served as stables. The claim is made that many of the houses which have been taken for this interesting project were built a century ago. Aaron Burr lived in Macdougall street, which was known as Richmond Hill.

The little Charlton street houses are compact and quaint. They are built from top to bottom. High ceilings, marble mantelpieces, graceful stairways, white wood trimmings, dainty and slender lighting fixtures are to be found in every corner of the houses. In front are small stone steps three steps high, with simple iron railings on the side leading to doorways framed in two columns. Over a number of the houses are the fan-shaped windows, which have not been used by builders in many a day. The windows are long and well proportioned. The attic windows are gracefully curved. The houses are well constructed and are well worth the efforts that are to be made to preserve and restore their original architectural features.

The interior of each house will be modernized without ruining the Colonial architecture of the rooms. New plumbing will be installed; so will gas and electricity and other modern conveniences. That is to be the extent of the modernization. Of course the rooms will be changed so that each house may be used by two or three families. The walls of the houses will be painted an attractive red and the door of every house will be pure white. In front of each house along the curb lines are carefully curved. They will also be planted in the rear yards, which are very long, since there was no desire when these houses were built to spare the rear yards. It is estimated that about \$2,000 will be spent on the revamping of each dwelling. They will be rebuilt with the same of meeting the needs of families rather than the desires of artists. No objection is to be raised to artists, but since no special provisions are to be made for them, they will be treated as ordinary people. They will be applied for these houses, which will be rented for from \$80 to \$125 a month. Although the plans of the houses of these houses were kept secret, folks about town have heard of them, and fifteen of the eighteen houses have been asked for, even though the renovations have just been started. This has



REAR YARD OF GARDNER HALE'S HOUSE at 25 CHARLTON STREET

RENOVATED DOWNING STREET HOUSE RESPONSIBLE FOR MOVEMENT TO RESTORE RESIDENTIAL CHARACTER OF OLD VILLAGE

The men in the belief that their estimate of the wants of folks in Greenwich Village is not wrong. They are of the firm belief that residents of the best type are coming back to Greenwich. High rentals in other parts of the town will also go a great way in assuring success for the project. Folk means are as much disturbed by the upward trend of rentals and the new demands of apartment house owners as folk of little means. This is reflected in the fact that a resident of Park avenue is going to occupy one of the Charlton street houses as soon as it is completed. As soon as these houses prove successful beyond a doubt other houses in the section will be taken over by Mr. Coffin and his associates and altered in the same way. It is understood that the Trinity Corporation is in favor of the scheme and will sell its old dwellings to the organization of the group of investors. Charlton street is one of the village streets which has been restricted to residences. Some one wanted the street unrestricted, but since more than 75 per cent of the Charlton street dwellers were opposed to trade invasion the street was restricted. The idea of renovating old Greenwich houses can be attributed to the successful renting of the house at 45 Downing street which Mr. Coffin bought over about a year ago. He was in an experimenting mood when he bought it, and at small expense he altered the interior and painted the exterior. Before it had been finished the house was rented at a remarkably good rental considering the price which was paid for the house before it was put in order. This little incident is directly responsible for the organization of the group of investors who plan to bring back the bloom to Greenwich Village. The investors will incorporate their company the end of this month. The name of it has not been decided on yet, but it will probably be the Charlton Colony Company. Henry W. Wilkinson and Max G. Heidelberg, from whose plans the houses are to be altered, are interested in the organization.

TENEMENT ORDER HALTED. Owners Need Not Put in Extra Toilets "Until Further Notice."

"Until further notice," the Tenement House Department will not insist upon the enforcement of the violations imposed recently requiring owners to install additional toilets in tenement houses. A brief prepared by the attorneys for the Real Estate Owners Association has been submitted to the Tenement House Commissioner, contending that the construction now sought to be placed on section 29 of the tenement house act is an improper one and that the Commissioner is without power or authority to issue the order in question. The brief was submitted by the department to the Corporation Counsel for opinion and until further word is received owners need not comply with the order. **TRANSIT MAN BUYS HOME.** The Robert E. Farley Organization has sold for the Glens Falls Trust Company, as trustee, the modern Colonial house at the corner of Hasbaway Drive and Park lane in the Nassau Haven section of Hyde Park. L. L. to John Campbell Norris of the Interborough Rapid Transit Company.

LET BUYERS KNOW WHAT YOU HAVE

Mountain Lakes Man Suggests Advertising—It Has Sold Their Property.

Conditions produced by America's entrance into the war have worked well for the marketing of building sites and dwellings at Mountain Lakes Residential Park near Pompton, N. J. It was the general opinion that investments such as in homes were greatly affected by the President's down. In a circular letter sent out from the Astor estate office several days ago building superintendents were instructed to be careful about the use of light, heat and power. The question of fuel supply is serious. You are directed to practice the utmost economy in the use of light, heat, power and water to the end that so far as possible this danger can be minimized. Be sure all unnecessary lights are extinguished after cleaners are finished. Turn off radiators where they have done in the last few months, and for that matter since the first of the year, they are unwilling to make any changes in their policy of other projects. During April the sales department sold eight homes at prices ranging from \$8,500 to \$9,500, and the building department, which is building five additional homes varying in size and price. This additional building plan is to be carried on, as is all other work started or planned. Speaking of the current buying at Mountain Lakes, a member of the campaign to advertise. Every parcel or home sold at Mountain Lakes has been through newspaper advertising. It has been demonstrated to our satisfaction that prospective buyers can be reached more effectively through the newspapers than by any other means. We have tried every channel to reach possible home buyers.

DON'T BUY WITHOUT A LOOK. Court Has Just Ruled So in Interesting Realty Suit.

Justice Jaxoy in the Queens county Supreme Court ruled last week that a map handed out by an agent for a realty concern does not have to show all buildings on the land so mapped. He thereby dismissed the suit of Rufus L. Scott, a lawyer, of 93 Wall street, who claimed that when he attended the auction sale conducted by the Belle Harbor Realty Company on July 31, 1915, he was given a map, and from that map selected a plot 50x100 feet, fronting on the Atlantic ocean at the foot of 130th street, Belle Harbor, which he believed, was not adjacent to any buildings. After buying the land he learned that an adjoining plot, which he decided he would buy after looking over the map contained a house and a bulkhead. He sued to have the deed to the property purchased by him set aside on the ground of fraud.

TAKES RICHMOND DWELLINGS. W. R. E. Hall has sold for the Narrow Company a dwelling on Manor road, West New Brighton, to John Spelman.

Moffat & Schwab has sold for Mrs. Rebecca Kelly of Rosebank to Mrs. Bertha T. Smith, the residence at 67 Evelyn place, Fort Wadsworth, S. L., now rented by Mrs. Smith.

FLUSHING HOUSE BUYER. J. Albert Johntra has sold for William Wadms the two family brick dwelling at 14 Kalmia street, Flushing, on plot 50x100 to Thomas Thibault.

Of Equal Importance To Landlords and Tenants

THE time has come when premises for rent must be advertised as being "completely piped for gas." This statement will advance the rental value.

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3 FAMILY HOUSE MAY CUT RENTALS

New Law Permitting Changes in Old Dwellings Makes Way for Many Homes.

Steadily advancing rents, attributed to a lack of new building, has stimulated action in the preparation for the conversion of thousands of former private residences which have outgrown their usefulness as such into three family tenements. The bill amending the tenement house law so as to permit profitable alterations was signed by Gov. Whitman last week. Within four days a company whose express purpose is to remodel one family houses into three family tenements was incorporated at Albany. It is composed of Jacob A. Hartscherer, J. E. Herriman and Frederick Weinsartner, all Brooklyn men, and its name, The Three Family House Alteration Company, distinctly indicates its purpose. It is estimated that there are about 25,000 dwellings in Brooklyn convertible into small tenements.

NEW ZONING REPORT.

The cloth edition of the final report of the Commission on Building Districts and Restrictions, with appendices, has been published and is now on sale in the office of the Commission on the City Hall, room 515, Municipal Building, New York city. The report contains 299 pages and 149 maps, charts, photographs and other illustrations. It includes an abstract of the testimony taken by the commission, the report of the committee of the whole of the Board of Estimate and Apportionment, a copy of the building zone resolution as adopted by the Board of Estimate and Apportionment and small scale maps of the districts established. A pamphlet edition of the report of the commission without the appendices and illustrations was printed in June, 1916.

TORRENS TITLE LEAGUE.

A Torrens Title League has been organized by the owners and other interested parties for the purpose of carrying on the fight for a true Torrens law in New York State.