

Tower Top to Be Dismantled and Stored Offsite



PTF's storage shed and workshop building (lower right) in Nottingham, NH where the tower top, weathervane, and bell will be stored and refurbished.

In September, our experts Arron Sturgis and Preservation Timber Framing (PTF) successfully removed the top of the Meetinghouse tower and lowered it onto the lawn. There is much upcoming work to do on the tower box (the lower section of tower still attached to the Meetinghouse) and on the tower top (currently located on staging) as well as significant work on the Meetinghouse foundation and roof. First Parish knew that there was extensive rot in some of the timbers within the tower. With the removal of the tower top, and placement of the temporary roof on the tower box, the church is more stable and better able to withstand severe weather.

In assessing the situation after the top takedown, the Building Advisory Committee (BAC) and PTF have had several exchanges regarding the safety of the weathervane, issues with the bell, and overall security and stability of the tower top. PTF recommended dismantling the tower top before winter and storing all the components in their secure warehouse in Nottingham, thus protecting them from theft and further weather damage. The BAC thoroughly reviewed the recommendation and discussed the pros and cons of disassembling the tower top at this time. Also, several committee members visited the storage facility.

The BAC decided that the disassembly of the tower top should take place this year, and PTF plans to do this work in December. It will involve removing the lantern from the belfry frame, extracting the bell and removing the weathervane, and also carefully dismantling and cataloging all the components in the entire top. The trim boards and other material removed from the tower and now stored on church property will also be moved to the Nottingham facility.



Moving the tower also presents savings in two areas: eliminating the ongoing rental costs of the staging currently positioned around the tower top on the lawn, and avoiding the planned need for some storage unit onsite for the removed trim and materials. In addition, security concerns for the weathervane and liability related to someone being hurt around the tower platform are addressed by the move.

If you have questions, please see one of the BAC team.

- Nancy Heywood and Paul Lindemann (submitted on behalf of the Building Advisory Committee: (Paul Ambler, Larry Krantz, Bill Mann)