

HUNTINGTON

It took \$1.5M and 2 years

Trade school restored as Historical Society home on Main Street

BY DEBORAH S. MORRIS
deborah.morris@newsday.com

The \$1.5 million restoration and expansion of the Huntington Historical Society's Trade School building on Main Street is complete, officials said.

A ribbon-cutting ceremony and celebration to say thank you to donors was held Nov. 21, two years after construction started.

Restoring the 1905 building was conceived almost 20 years ago when the society's volunteers were asked by philanthropist Doris Buffett, the sister of financier Warren Buffett, what they needed most. They cited the need for additional archive space.

Since that time, volunteers raised enough money for the project through a \$400,000 matching grant from the state, a challenge matching grant of \$162,000 from Doris Buffett, grants from the Robert David Lion Gardiner Foundation and the Gerry Charitable Trust, and private donations.

The new addition will provide more climate-controlled space to preserve the society's extensive archival collec-

tion that includes a letter penned by Walt Whitman, hand-drawn maps from the 1830s, and thousands of photographs that chronicle Huntington's history.

"Through the hard work of the society's volunteers and the generous support of so many donors from across the country, we are pleased that the project has now been completed," said Lucie Blohm, president of the Historical Society board of trustees.

The restoration was designed by Huntington-based Hoffman Grayson Architects.

The Trade School building opened as a sewing school for girls and a place where boys learned caning, or chair-seat weaving. The Historical Society has been based in the building since 1982. The building reopened to the public this summer.

The structure, at 209 Main St., had to be vacated during the renovation, so the society offices were moved to the Conklin House on High Street. The archives and staff temporarily moved to a building that was formally the South Huntington Library on Depot Road in Huntington Station.

"This was a long time in planning and a long time in construction," said Toby Kissam, a Huntington Historical society board member and former president. "We're happy to be home in our newly renovated and expanded facility."



Claudia Fortunato-Napolitano, left, executive director of the Huntington Historical Society, with Lucie Blohm, trustees board president, and Rob Dickson, assistant director.

JESSICA ROTKIEWICZ

SUFFOLK COUNTY

New law on septic systems and cesspools

BY DAVID M. SCHWARTZ
david.schwartz@newsday.com

Suffolk lawmakers took the first steps Tuesday toward updating how the county handles wastewater from unsewered homes when they approved a bill requiring permits for new septic systems and mandating the installation of septic tanks by those looking to replace cesspools.

After almost three hours of debate at the county Legislative Building in Riverhead and two last-minute emergency versions, the amendments to Suffolk's sanitary code passed 12-5 with all Democrats and Republican Legis. Thomas Barraga (R-West

Islip) voting in favor of it.

County Executive Steve Belone is expected to sign the bill into law.

Other Republicans argued the bill should go back to committee next week because of the last-minute changes, expressed concern about the fee the county would charge for a permit, and said the law didn't do enough to improve water quality.

Requiring a septic tank when a cesspool fails will cost an estimated additional \$2,000 to \$2,500 for a homeowner, county officials said.

There are an estimated 360,000 unsewered homes in Suffolk County with about 252,000

using cesspools, officials said

Legislators backed off a provision in the original bill that would have forced homeowners to replace failed cesspools based on the number of pump-outs after lawmakers worried about the cost to homeowners. Presiding Officer DuWayne Gregory (D-Copiague) had balked at imposing the mandate on residents.

Deputy County Executive Peter Scully said the changes approved Tuesday had "broad support" from the environmental community, a home builders lobbying group, town officials, and a working group of lawmakers.

"We considered these to be the easy steps, but as you can

see, it's complicated," Scully said about two hours into the debate before the evening vote. Scully said the bill approved Tuesday is the first of many he expects to be considered as Suffolk continues efforts to reduce nitrogen pollution from unsewered homes.

Bills requiring advanced septic treatment systems in some cases and designed to remove nitrogen from wastewater will be brought before the legislature in 2018, Scully said.

As required by the bill passed Tuesday, homeowners who want to replace aging cesspools starting in July of 2019 would have to add a septic tank. Since 1973, the county has required new homes

to install both a septic tank and a cesspool. But those homes with failing cesspools have had the choice of installing a new one.

As part of the bill, the county will also issue permits for new septic systems and require liquid waste providers to report pump-outs and failed systems. Scully estimated the cost of a permit would be \$70, adding that the county was exploring not imposing a fee at all and using a state grant to cover staff costs.

The bill also closes a loophole that had allowed commercial builders to discharge untreated wastewater based on past usage, a practice known as grandfathering.

newsday.com NEWSDAY, WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2017