

PECONIC LAND TRUST



For immediate release

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PECONIC LAND TRUST RECEIVES HISTORIC PRESERVATION EASEMENT ON SLEIGHT HOUSE IN STONY BROOK FROM ELIZABETH AND BRIAN MERRICK

MAY 21, 2015. SOUTHAMPTON, NY. John v.H. Halsey, President of the Peconic Land Trust, is pleased to announce that Elizabeth and Brian Merrick have donated a Historic Preservation and Conservation Easement on the Sleight House and the surrounding 1.2 acre property in Stony Brook, New York.

The property is located north of Stony Brook Harbor on Christian Avenue in the Stony Brook Historic District, a Town of Brookhaven designation. On March 26 of this year, the Brookhaven Town Board designated the property as a Town Landmark—formally recognizing the Sleight House’s significance in Stony Brook’s rich history.

“This House has been important to my family for a long time, and we wanted to make sure that its historic character would always be preserved. We’re so pleased that our partnership with the Peconic Land Trust has enabled us to accomplish this,” said Mrs. Merrick.

Built by Charles M. Sleight, the owner of a prominent wheelwright and carpentry business around 1880, the Sleight House remained in the Sleight family until the early

1960s. Mr. Sleight's wife, Adella Abigail Sleight, was a descendent of the Bayles and Hawkins families, both of whom were descendants of Brookhaven's first settlers. The family's archives, including photographs and newspaper clippings, are a part of the collection of the Three Village Historical Society.

"By taking the additional step of placing a Historic Preservation and Conservation Easement on the Sleight House, the Merricks have protected the home's historic integrity for future generations. We are thankful to both Elizabeth and Brian for preserving a part of Stony Brook's historic character," said John v.H. Halsey, President, Peconic Land Trust.

The Sleight House is a Folk Victorian home with Queen Anne embellishments—a popular design along Long Island's North Shore during the late 19th century. Other historic features of the Sleight House include a common "L" shape cross gable configuration with simple treatment of the exterior walls, decorative verge board sawn balusters, sawn bracketing, and a decorative gable end treatment. The front porch is also original to the House and stretches nearly across its entire West façade.

Although the Town's Historic District, through the Historic District Advisory Committee, provides oversight of the Sleight House by typically requiring review and approval for additions and alterations, the Merricks' donation of an easement goes above and beyond local governance and permanently protects and preserves the Sleight House and the surrounding property's historical, cultural, scenic and aesthetic values – specifically:

- the exterior façade, elevations, fenestration, and roofs of the Sleigh House in their current location and style are preserved and protected,
- future expansion of the House’s footprint and its total square footage is prohibited,
- the number and size of the accessory structures on the property are limited, and
- the scenic view of the House from Christian Avenue is protected.

As part of the easement process, an Historic Structure and Significance Report was prepared by Stony Brook architect and Brookhaven Historic District Advisory Committee member, John Cunniffe, and is included in the easement documents to serve as a baseline for the Trust’s enforcement of the easement.

“With the Merricks’ foresight and the Peconic Land Trust’s skill set to properly guide and execute this Historic Preservation and Conservation Easement, not only does the historic nature of the Sleigh House remain protected, a new precedent has been set in this very important historic corridor. The preservation of “context” has been achieved through this process and simply put is priceless,” said John Cunniffe.

About the Peconic Land Trust

Founded in 1983, Peconic Land Trust conserves Long Island’s working farms, natural lands, and heritage. Since its inception, the nonprofit Trust has worked conscientiously with landowners, communities, municipalities, partner organizations, and donors, to conserve over 11,000 acres of land on Long Island. The Trust’s professional staff carries out the necessary research and planning to identify and implement alternatives to

outright development. While working to conserve the productive farms, watersheds, woodlands, beachfront, and historic properties of Long Island, the Trust is also protecting the unique rural heritage and natural resources of the region.

The Trust has Stewardship Centers in Cutchogue, Bridgehampton (Bridge Gardens), Southold (Agricultural Center at Charnews Farm and Shellfisher Preserve) and Amagansett (Quail Hill Farm) and its Main Office is in Southampton. *The Trust depends primarily upon private donations to support its conservation work. A common misperception, however, is that the Peconic Land Trust collects and distributes the monies raised through the Peconic Bay Region Community Preservation Fund (the CPF is also referred to as the 2% land transfer tax or the Peconic Land Tax). This is NOT the case. The CPF is a public program managed by each of the five East End Towns for the protection of farmland, open space, and community character.* For more information about the Peconic Land Trust visit www.peconiclandtrust.org or call 631.283.3195.

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