

LITCHFIELD

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[Site repairs under way at museum](#)

The work is expected to be completed within two weeks

By [Betty Adamsbadams@centralmaine.com](mailto:Betty.Adamsbadams@centralmaine.com)

Staff Writer

LITCHFIELD -- Nate Clark was in the attic of the Old Town House Museum Thursday ensuring efforts to level the building were not causing structural damage.



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Nate Clark scrapes a post with a slick on the corner of the Town House Museum on Thursday in Litchfield. Clark and Otis Carroll were removing the rotten section of the post and replacing that part with new piece of wood cut to fit.

Staff photo by Joe Phelan



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Nate Clark, left, and Otis Carroll work at the Town House Museum on Thursday in Litchfield. The men who do business as Pownalborough Restorations were hired to do repairs at the building located near the Litchfield Fairgrounds.

Staff photo by Joe Phelan

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Clark and Otis Carroll of Pownalborough Restorations, Newcastle, were rehabilitating the 1840 wood-on-granite building that began life as the Town Office.

"It was well-built to begin with, so it's repairable but it's been neglected for a while," Clark said.

The building, unoccupied and closed for much of the year, proved a convenient nesting place for a variety of rodents and other critters, including red squirrels, chipmunks, mice and bats. The animals damaged the building, as did rain.

"They got into the building and made little burrows in all kinds of different spots," Clark said. "I'm sitting next to a dead gray squirrel."

The carpenters are repairing a rotten corner post, a small section of sill and some fascia and leveling the building.

"It's an interesting building all around," Clark said. "It was built as a townhouse, so it had no interior walls."

Clark said the building has king post truss, which allows for a large room without posts. "It makes jacking more interesting because there's a lot of triangulation issues you have to take into account when you're lifting things," Clark said.

The work, which is expected to be completed within two weeks, is funded by the town and by a Historical Facilities grant from the New Century Community Program grant for a total of

\$7,100.

To provide an in-kind match for the grant, Christine Stenberg, a member of the Historical Society of Litchfield, catalogued the items in the museum.

"I tagged each thing, wrote it on spread sheet, described it and put a picture of it," she said on Thursday. "There's a lot of old things in there."

In April, members of the historical society aired out the building, swept away dust and cobwebs, and raked the lawn in front of the one-story clapboard building, which is adjacent to Veterans Memorial Park on Hallowell-Litchfield Road.

That work was in anticipation of visits by Litchfield school children and some public tours.

The building houses a barn room, a Victorian parlor, a schoolroom, a general store and a room devoted to the various businesses that once flourished in town.

Once the building repairs are completed, Stenberg said historical society members plan to give the exterior a new coat of white paint.

"I don't know if we'll get it done this season," she said.

The building became a museum after 1973 when Litchfield built a new town office.

"The historical society banded together and took over the care of the building," Stenberg said. "It's still owned by the town."

The museum collection was assembled by Earl Lamoreau, a high school student at the time.

Stenberg said the society next plans to see a grant to support roof repairs.

Betty Adams -- 621-5631

badams@centralmaine.com

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