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Mott House: Notes from Meeting with Richard Long, 1999

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Bob Foley
2004

Name of guy up took parts
to Conn.

Plank frame
P. Charonic - tel # s.

MOTT HOUSE - PORTSMOUTH, RI

Meeting with Richard Long, 11 Nov.'99 - 13:30 >16:00.

The Mott House was located on the West Main Road, Portsmouth; west side at location of current Kings Grant Development. North of Melville and the Melville recreation area and south of Hedley St.

The building came to the attention of several people concerned with early architecture in 1974 & '75. The building was abandoned and a haven for kids. The owners of the land had no interest in the house, and allowed the group full access with the goal of documenting the building and then disassembling it for future reconstruction and restoration.

Some of the people involved were;

Richard Long, Architect

Jan Armor, Photographer

George Waterman Sr. put up initial funding

George Waterman Jr., paid for disassembly and storage

Ann "Pete" Baker, disassembled the building with a crew

Steve Tyson, managed the actual disassembly

Jim Garmen, source of archeological information

Adam Mott (who came to Portsmouth with Ann Hutchinson) received a King's Grant (100 acres) in 1639. Under Grant terms, a house had to be built within a year's time.

The original structure is thought to have dated from 1640. It would have been the earliest known structure on the island. The house remained in the Mott family until 1895. At this time it was sold to the Hall family who owned it for a considerable part of the 20th century.

There is rather good documentation including deeds and family records, including an inventory of property at Adam Mott's death in 1661.

Richard has extensive drawings – some need redoing owing to age and condition. Elevations need to be done along with a few additional cross sections, which give good indication of the stages of development. The detail is of a very high level.

There are photographic proofs taken by Jan Armor, much of the work is in 4/5 format. There are probably 25 to 30 sheets with four negs per sheet. Along with several 120 format proofs.

Jan Armor is willing to release the negatives and rights to them for a combination of cash and tax credit. As part of a total package these are very valuable.

Richard also has a collection of artifacts found in and under the house. These are numbered and referenced and include pottery and china fragments. Shoes, spoons, and a 36' long by 4 to 5" roof shingle. Brown University and Plymouth Plantations conducted a dig on the land area outside the house. We now have copies of articles published by Dell Upton and Morley Brown who were part of this "dig" project.

Drawings need to be completed, the photographic material needs to be obtained and put in order, the artifacts need examination and organization, and then copies of the materials need to be made available to various interested parties.

There is considerable interest in this project by people in the field of architectural history who have heard of the Mott House over the years. To pull all this information together, finally, and see perhaps a published report, and an exhibit of the materials, photographs, and drawings would be of considerable interest to many professionals.