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New York Landmarks Conservancy

Common Bond

The newsletter of the New York Landmarks Conservancy's Sacred Sites Program on maintenance and preservation for caretakers of architecturally significant religious buildings.

Dear Reader,

The daunting task of organizing and raising funds for preservation and maintenance work stymies many congregations. This past October, the Institute for Sacred Sites of the New York Landmarks Conservancy, in conjunction with the General Theological Seminary, sponsored a one-day workshop, "Voices of Experience: Fundraising for Religious Properties" to explore some of the issues involved in fundraising for religious properties. This issue of *Common Bond* addresses many of those same concerns. The Preservation Profile tells the story of the rebuilding of the Church of St. Luke in the Fields in New York City, which was destroyed by fire ten years ago. The article focuses on the fundraising techniques used by this Greenwich Village congregation in meeting its campaign goal of $5 million. The Technical Feature, which was written by Gordon Duggins, a consultant who specializes in fundraising for religious institutions, addresses the issue of hiring outside fundraising counsel to help with a campaign.

We are introducing a new column in this issue *News of the Sacred Sites Program*. This column will report on the activities of the Conservancy's Sacred Sites Program and will highlight projects that have received funding and technical assistance through the Sacred Sites and Properties Fund.

This past October *Signs of Grace*, a fifteen-minute video presentation on the restoration and preservation of religious properties, premiered at the Annual Meeting of the National Trust for Historic Preservation in San Francisco. This video illustrates how, in both poor and wealthy neighborhoods, in rural and urban settings, the preservation of religious buildings can be an integral part of the mission of these institutions. Our *News of the Sacred Sites Program* column provides more information on this production.

We are happy to report that the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation has scheduled an additional funding cycle of the *Environmental Quality Bond Act* for March of 1992. This issue's "Technical Services" column furnishes more information on this important funding source, as well as a variety of other excellent programs and services that can be of great assistance to religious institutions.

The Rev. Thomas F. Pike
Chair, Advisory Committee

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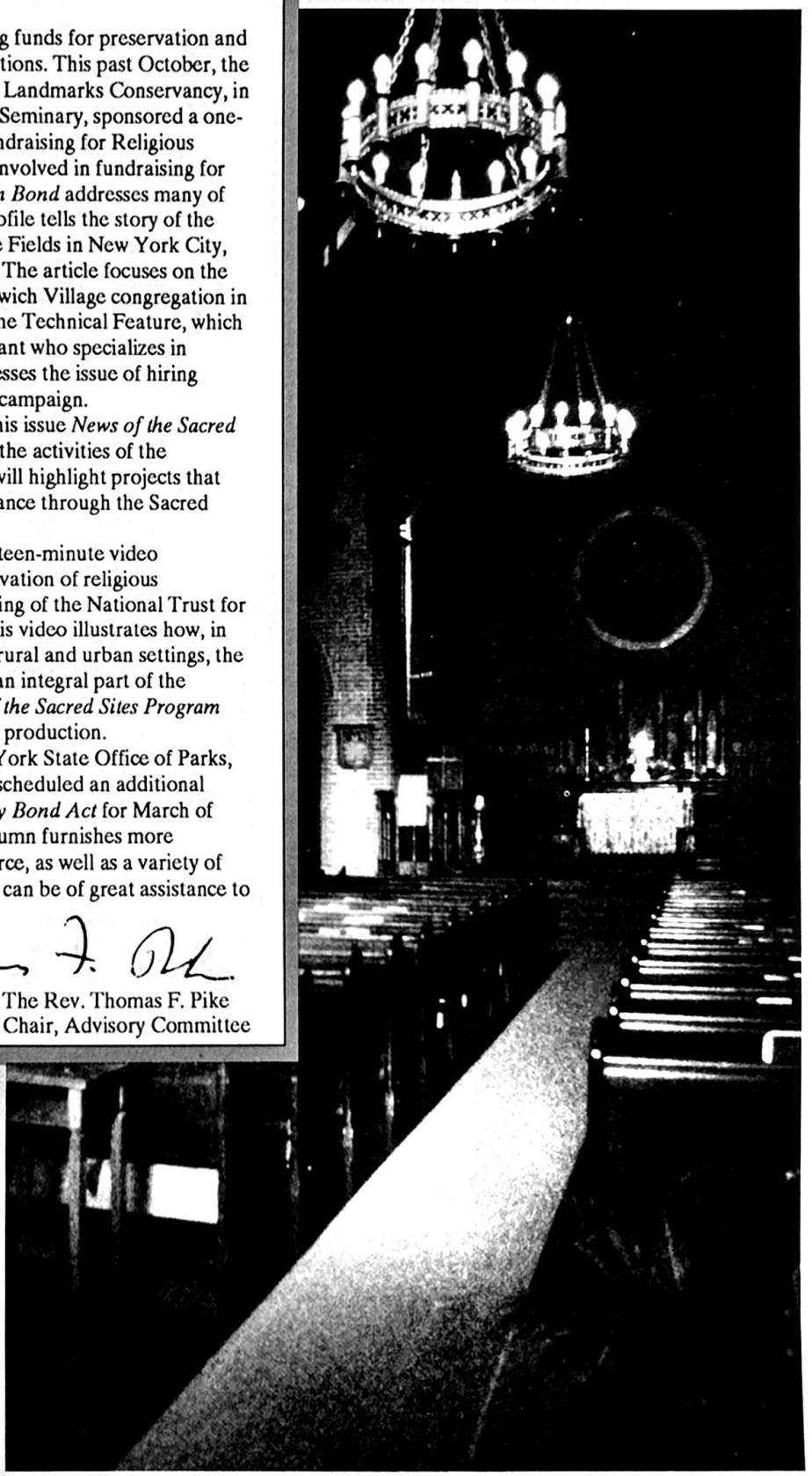

St. Mary's Church, Manhattanville

Ask The Technical Preservation services Center

Question.

The exterior masonry of our church is marred by orange stains (Figure 1). What causes these stains and how can we clean them off?

The Reverend Darrell Berger
The Universalist Church
New York, New York

Answer:

Before attempting any cleaning, you must first determine the cause of the staining. The orange and brown stains on your building are probably common rust stains. Occasionally such rust stains are caused by iron-oxides in the stone itself and, as such, cannot be removed but rather form part of the character of the masonry. This is particularly true of certain types of bluestone or schist, and also some sandstones. Occasionally this high iron content may result from a structural flaw in the stone and necessitate extensive patching and repair. (This sort of masonry repair cannot be addressed within the context of this short article.)

There are other causes of rust stains. Concealed structural members, such as iron tie rods or fasteners, can corrode and cause stains on the exterior masonry. Such staining is cause for concern since it indicates that water is getting behind the masonry, probably through cracks and open mortar joints, and is affecting the building's structural system. In such cases you must first address the sources of moisture penetration. Otherwise no cleaning will be effective in the long-term and continued water penetration may lead to severe structural damage. If the masonry has already shifted or appears out of place, consult with a structural engineer or building conservator and be sure to address all structural concerns before attempting any cleaning.

Iron stains may also be caused by the corrosion of exterior iron work, such as railings, ornamental crestings, or iron tie bars for stained glass windows. In such cases the corrosion is not usually an occasion for undue concern provided the affected ironwork is scraped, repaired, primed, and painted.

When cleaning masonry the general "rule of thumb" is to use the gentlest and least intensive methods possible to get the job done. Although masonry is among the most durable of building materials, it is still quite fragile and susceptible to damage by high pressure water, sandblasting, and chemicals, even those found in common household detergents. Abrasive cleaning methods are never an acceptable means of cleaning older masonry. If gentle cleaning methods do not get rid of the stains, it is best to live with them rather than damage the integrity of the masonry.

The only type of cleaning that your congregation should attempt on its own is simple hand scrubbing with water and, if needed, a gentle detergent, such as dishwashing liquid. This should only be attempted during warm weather when there is no threat of frost for at least a week, preferably longer. Wet the stained area by sprinkling it with a hose. (Do not saturate the stone with water as this may cause damage to hidden structural elements and interior finishes.) Then brush the stained area with a soft nylon or natural bristle brush, using a small amount of detergent, if necessary. Be sure to lightly hose down the area after cleaning it to remove any soapy deposits. Do not use a steel brush. Besides being too abrasive, steel brushes leave specks behind that rust.

Ed Mohylowski

Figure 1: Iron Stains at The Universalist Church

If hand scrubbing is not an effective means of removing the stains, the stains have probably sunk below the surface of the stone. This is likely to happen with masonry that is particularly porous in nature, such as limestone, sandstone, and marble. In this instance it will be necessary to bring in a professional skilled in masonry conservation to examine the problem and devise the best means of removing the stain. In general, rust stains can be removed from non-acid-sensitive masonry (i.e. sandstone, slate, granite, unglazed brick, and unglazed terra cotta) using a weak, hydrofluoric (not hydrochloric) acid solution. However, many building stones, particularly marble and limestone, are acid sensitive, and consequently acid solutions are out of the question. In such cases an appropriate alkaline salt must be found that can do the job. Such determinations can only be made by a skilled professional experienced in masonry conservation.

With deep stains a method called "poulticing" is needed to remove the stains. A poultice is composed of an absorbent, chemically inert material which, when mixed with liquid, forms a paste or slurry that can be applied to the stained area. The poultice is mixed with the cleaning agent and water or a solvent (depending on the cleaning agent being used) and applied to the affected area in a layer 1/4-3/4 of an inch thick. The cleaning agent is then absorbed into the masonry. As the poultice dries out, the cleaning agent is re-absorbed, thus drawing the stain out of the stone. When the poultice has dried out completely, it is gently removed with a scraper or a non-metallic brush. If practicable, this process of cleaning may be executed by volunteers or an in-house work crew as long as it is done according to specifications devised by a professional in building conservation and under his or her supervision.

The answer to this question was prepared by Christopher Jenks, Consulting Editor for *Common Bond.*
For more information on masonry cleaning see "Some Thoughts on Masonry Cleaning" in the Spring, 1988 issue of *Common Bond.*
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Conferences and Exhibitions

Sacred Trusts V, the fifth annual national conference on the care and preservation of religious properties, will be held from May 6 to 9, 1992 in Baltimore, Maryland. The conference, which is being co-sponsored by the New York Landmarks Conservancy, will focus on fundraising for repair and restoration projects; sharing or redeveloping underutilized portions of a religious property; techniques for repairing and maintaining stained glass, towers and steeples, roofs and walls, and other portions of older buildings; and much, much more! For further information and a registration brochure, contact: Partners for Sacred Places, 1616 Walnut Street, Suite 2210, Philadelphia, PA 19103, (215) 546-1288.

The **Institute for Sacred Sites** of the New York Landmarks Conservancy will offer its "Long-term Maintenance Planning for Religious Properties" workshop in Syracuse, New York on Saturday, April 4, 1992. It will be held at the Church of the Saviour, 437 James Street, Syracuse, New York 13203. For further information, or to receive a registration brochure, contact Ed Mohylowski at the New York Landmarks Conservancy, 141 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10010, (212) 995-5260.
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Resources For Religious Property Owners: Funding Sources

The **Sacred Sites and Properties Fund** provides matching grants of up to $15,000 to religious institutions in New York State for restoration projects. In order to be eligible for a grant, a property must be owned by a religious institution and be either a locally designated landmark or listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Grants are available to help fund planning and restoration work. Priority is given to essential repairs and restoration projects for houses of worship. Deadlines for grant requests are January 15, May 1, and September 1. Funds for emergency work are available on an ongoing basis. For more information, please contact: Ed Mohylowski or Anita Rask, New York Landmarks Conservancy, 141 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10010, (212) 995-5260.

In early 1992, the **New York State Environmental Quality Bond Act (EQBA)** will be re-activated for one additional funding cycle using funds left over from previous grant cycles. In this funding cycle, the EQBA will award matching grants of up to $50,000 for rehabilitation projects undertaken by non-profit organizations or municipalities on properties in New York State that are listed on the State or National Registers of Historic Places. This program will concentrate on smaller scale projects where the total project cost is no more than $150,000. Applications will be available from regional Parks offices located throughout New York State in late December. The deadline for receiving applications will be March 31, 1992. To obtain more information on the program, contact Michael Lynch, Historic Preservation Fields Services Bureau, New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, Agency Tower #1, Empire State Plaza, Albany, NY 12238, (518) 474-0479. In New York City contact Ron Rader, New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, New York City region, 915 Broadway, New York, NY 10010, (212) 387-0271 x324.