

Oldest building gets fix

Other former Armory structures on the STCC campus could be renovated in the future.

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SPRINGFIELD - The city's oldest documented building being saved, thanks to a state grant and the persistence of the local Historical Commission.

Now called simply "Building 11" on the campus of Springfield Technical Community College, the three-story brick structure on the State Street side dates 1808 and was originally called the West Arsenal.

It was near collapse last year, prompting the Massachusetts Historical Commission to give \$715,000 to repair and restore the exterior, including two brick rooftop parapets that were pitching dangerously toward the ground. Work began in August and will be complete in the spring.

"This is great. A long time coming, but here is it," said STCC President Andrew M. Scibelli, who also worked to save the building over the past decade.

"We're hoping this will be the beginning of more restoration of the historic buildings we have here," he said.

STCC opened in 1968, on the grounds of the former Springfield Armory, one of the earliest munitions factories in the country. The campus is home to eight structures listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

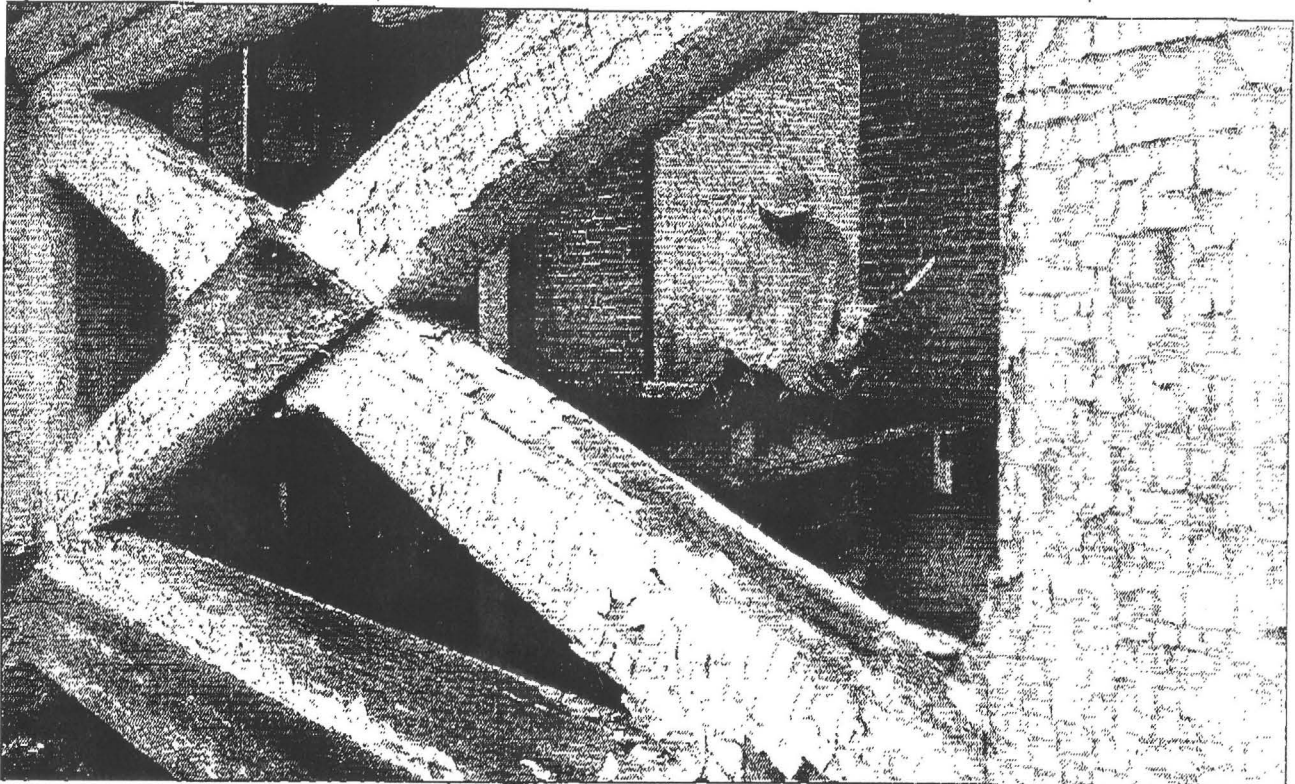
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Please see *Oldest*, Page A17

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Carpenter Ed Gormiey of Kronenberger and Sons Restoration of Middletown, Conn., works on the back porch of Building 11 on the campus of Springfield Technical Community College.

Staff photo by
MICHAEL S.
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Oldest: STCC building being saved

Continued from Page A17

Many are in need of repair, but officials say none was quite so neglected as Building 11.

"It was basically a disaster, and we were finally able to convince the state that we didn't want to lose another historic treasure," Scibelli said.

Springfield Historical Commission Chairman Frances M. Gagnon said the building is the single oldest structure in the city that has been researched and catalogued as having national significance. There may be oth-

er structures in the city built earlier, but not checked out officially, she said.

Gagnon agreed that the project under way was overdue.

"It was ready to fall apart," she said.

The bottom two floors were built in 1808. The third floor and parapets were added in 1863.

Over the years, the building was also used as a barrel house, storehouse, recreation building and an enlisted men's barracks. During World War II it was an officers' club.

Work is being done by Kro-

nenberger and Sons Restoration of Middletown, Conn., and overseen by the state Division of Capital Asset Management. Architect is Michael Rosenfeld Inc.

Among the challenges of the project: restoring the two long wooden porches on the north and south sides, fixing and in some cases replacing the 2,400 window panes, and taking down the parapets for repair.

This week, a team from the University of Massachusetts archaeological services department worked at the site, digging up artifacts such as gun flints and a clay pipe.

Scibelli said that when this project is done, the building will remain unusable until the interior can be restored. The price tag for that is about \$1.3 million.

Scibelli and Gagnon will work to win a grant, either state or federal, for that work.

Meanwhile, STCC has applied for \$220,000 from the federal Save America's Treasures program to help fund a \$560,000 restoration of two connected buildings just west of Building 11. Known as Buildings 5 and 6, they were built in 1870 as a junior officers' quarters.