



Fish-Benedict House is oldest brick building in state

Oakland Press photo by Janet Talcott

Historical home faces demolition

*BIRMINGHAM HISTORY ARCHIVE
BLOOMFIELD HISTORY*

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BLOOMFIELD TWP. — A caretaker's dream of preserving the state's oldest brick building on its original location appears doomed.

Owner Frances Avadenka says the 158-year-old Fish-Benedict House, on Woodward Avenue north of Long Pine Road, will be demolished by Friday.

Robert Vlastic of the Vlastic Pickle Co. says he is negotiating with Avadenka and her partner Barry Keller to build an office-building on the site.

The historic Benedict home was built by one of the area's first settlers and was owned by that family for nearly a century.

Framed by a canopy of century-old maple trees, the landmark will be leveled before the week's end by a local excavating company, Ms. Avadenka said.

Thure Rosene, the 70-year-old custodian, who protested the destruction of the house and gained statewide attention by living under a plastic sheet beside the home after he was evicted from it, says he is a bitter man.

Rosene had attempted to publicize the plight of the house, but it appears television and newspaper coverage, letters to state senators and Gov. William G. Miliken have failed to save the building.

The caretaker had been living alone

PAMPHLET FILE
in the home since 1966 with the permission of the owners, the Harlan Estate of Birmingham. Last year, Ms. Avadenka and Keller purchased the land. They allowed Rosene to stay in the house through the winter, but ordered him evicted in May.

The battle over the future of the house led to a "grass-roots" effort by many residents to help Rosene and to save the house. An Ad Hoc Committee to Save the Benedict House was formed in February.

The committee appeared before the city commission last week and asked officials to lease a three-quarter acre parcel of land just north of the Benedict House. It wants to reconstruct a replica of the Benedict House and make it an archives center for Bloomfield Township.

Rosene is not associated with the project. He says he wants to keep the house where it is.

Ron Swanson, a member of the committee, says he has contracted with the excavating company to purchase 19,000 of the original bricks covering the two-story house. He says he will store the bricks and other valuables until they are used on the new building or sold.

Swanson says he has received over \$30,000 in pledges to build the replica. He estimates it will cost over \$100,000 to construct.