

**Slate Roof Replacement Recommendation for the Forgione Barn
National Register Williston Village Historic District, #24**

November 25, 2024

**Ann Cousins, 36CFR61 qualified Architectural Historian,
Working 35 years as a Professional Historic Preservationis**

The Forgione House and Barn (#24) are listed on the National Register of Historic Places as contributing to the Williston Village Historic District (listed Dec. 19, 1979; amended with outbuildings and barn documentation, October 1992). In 2002, the house, ell and barn were photo-documented as part of a Federal Reinvestment Tax Credit project (2003-2006).

The CLG Committee is correct in noting that the slate roof diamond pattern is uncommon, a feature primarily found on barns in Vermont because the single layer pattern, also known as a “French” method or roof, uses considerably fewer slates than a standard roofing pattern, saving money on barns. An excellent example is the Lyon Apartment House Barn (#23a), documented in Williston Village Historic District amendment (October 1992).

The existing Forgione barn roof has failed and is leaking. Slate roofer Micah Sanguedolce correctly advises using the industry standard of a double layer slate roof pattern for the replacement roof rather than replicating the inferior single layer diamond pattern. This report supports Micah’s recommendation citing 1) 2004-06 changes to the barn; and 2) industry standards and recommendations, 3) conversations with slate roofing experts.

In a phone interview with Mary O’Neil, AICP, Principal Planner for Burlington, she explained that the Burlington Historic Preservation Ordinance never requires replication of a lost historic feature. Slate roofs are approved for removal when a threshold of half the slates have failed. The owner is not required to replace with a new slate roof (11/25/24).

Re. Context and Integrity: 2004-2006 adapted use project impacted integrity:

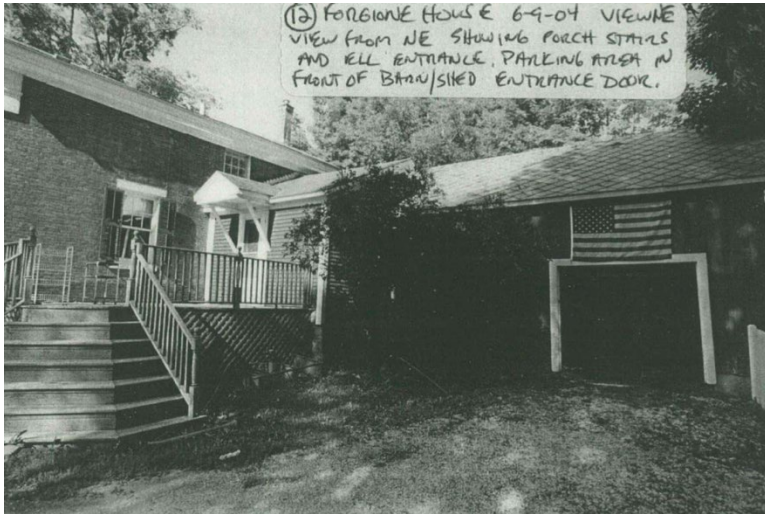
The NPS approved a historic preservation tax credit project to adapt the residence to a restaurant that resulted in major changes to the barn, ell and back of the house:

- 1) A new hipped roof “link” (architect’s plans) replaced the c.1840 gable-roofed ell.
- 2) The new “link” spans nearly the full width of the back of the house doubling the ell square footage. The original ell spanned half the width of the house.
- 3) The barn was relocated and raised on a new concrete foundation so that its floor is level with the house floor.
- 4) A pedestrian door and new square window were added to barn’s east façade.
- 5) A stone veneer simulated foundation was added to the “link” and barn.
- 6) Replacement board-and-batten siding on the barn’s east and north sides appear to be composite; the rear west façade retains wood board-and-batten.
- 7) Historic windows were removed, and a new stair wing was added to the barn’s north end. That new addition has a standard slate roof pattern.
- 8) The barn was weatherized and finished for use as a commercial kitchen.

Photographic Record of 2003-2006 Changes



C.1840 Barn, attached to historic c.1840 ell. Wood board and batten siding described as replaced (1992). Poured concrete foundation. Overhead garage door within the original barn opening. View looking southwest.
Williston Village Historic District, Boundary Addition. Entered on the National Register, October 1992. Photo 1991, credit Ann Cousins.

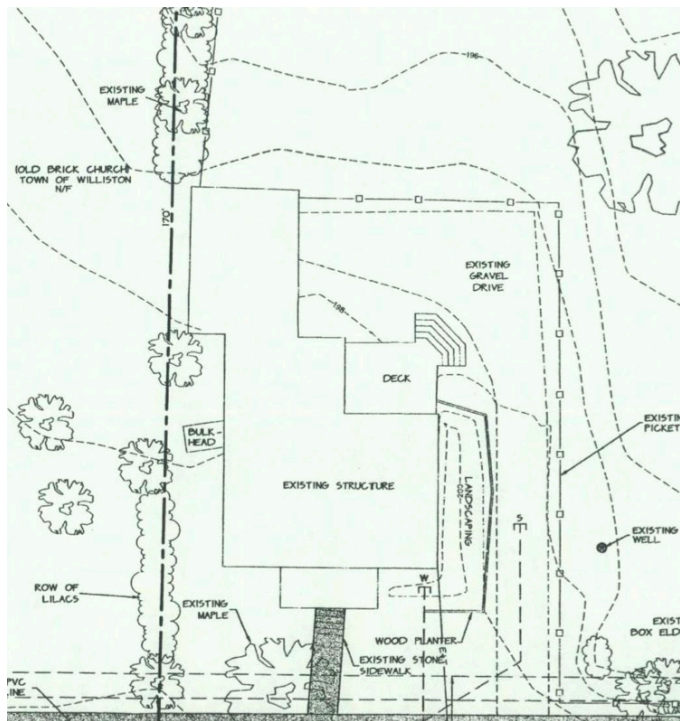


(12) FORGIONE HOUSE 6-9-04 VIEWING VIEW FROM NE SHOWING PORCH STAIRS AND ELL ENTRANCE. PARKING AREA IN FRONT OF BARN/SIDED ENTRANCE DOOR.

RITC application, Part 1 (Photo 2002)
Barn, ell and house are c.1840. Original ell spans half the width of the house. The barn sits approx. 3 feet lower than the ell.
View looking west-southwest



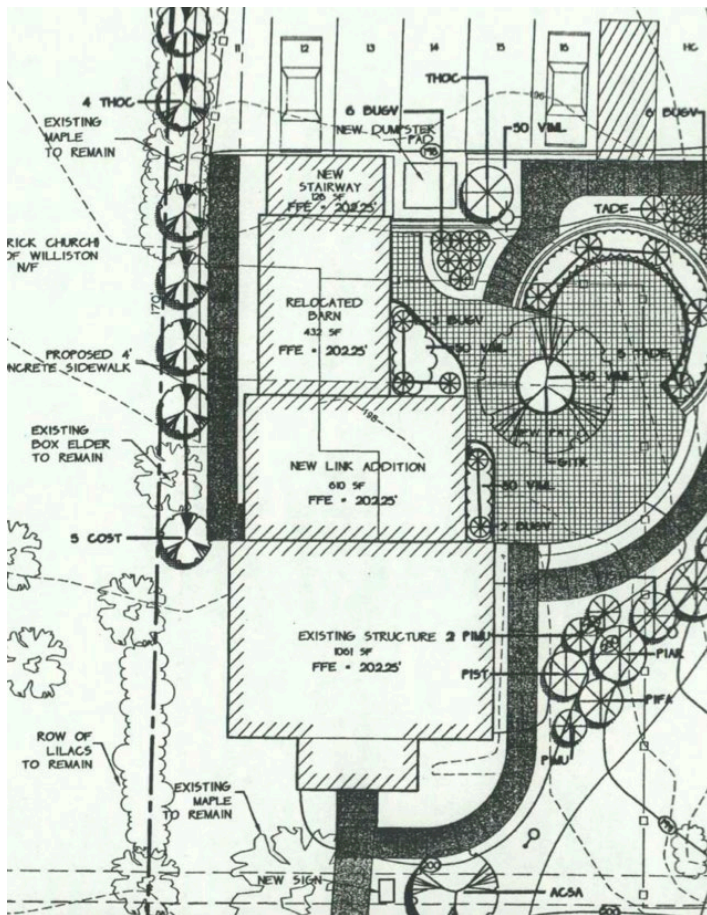
Photo: November 2024
2004-06 renovations included a new hipped roof "link" replacing original 1840 ell adding approx. 300 sq. ft. Barn is elevated and relocated. Renovated barn has new window and pedestrian door on east side; north gable end windows removed and two story stair tower added (2004-06 building project).



2004 Existing Conditions Plan by O'Leary - Burke Civil Engineers.

Part 1 Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credit Application (RITC).

Williston Town Files orc.vermont.gov



2004 Landscape Plan by O'Leary-Burke Civil Engineers illustrating "New Link Addition," "Relocated Barn" and "New Stairway."

Part 1 Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credit Application (RITC).

Williston Town Files orc.vermont.gov



2024 Photograph of the c.2006 ell, attached c.1840 barn, c.2006 wing attachment

With the extensive 2004-2006 changes to the ell and barn, the integrity of the barn is compromised. The changes were appropriate and approved by the National Park Service in part because the extensive exterior changes were at the rear of the building. The restaurant use brought new life to the historic building, just as the current use as a dental office continues to use the historic property in an appropriate way.

The slate acquired for the current barn reroofing is in-kind, Vermont Sea Green Slate. Micah's recommendation is correct, to lay the slates in a 2-ply standard pattern on the new roof. His recommendation is supported in [The Slate Roof Bible: Everything You Need to Know About the World's Finest Roof](#) by Joseph Jenkins, and in my direct correspondences with Mr. Jenkins (11/24/24) and conversation with Vermont slate roof expert, Keith Schumacher (11/25/24). As an aside, Mr. Jenkins and Keith brainstormed a further consideration that will be presented following the Case for the Standard Pattern.

“Remember that you are creating a roof that should last a century or two, and that it should be installed with future maintenance in mind (Jenkins, p196).

The Case for a Standard Slate Pattern on the Forgione Barn Replacement Roof

Slate roofer, Micah Sanguelocce, correctly explained why the existing 1-ply diamond-shaped slate pattern with 2” headgap is not appropriate a new replacement roof. The standard pattern, which was used on the house and north stair tower roofs, is the correct roof to increase roof longevity and ease its maintenance, in contrast to existing diamond pattern laid in the French (single thickness) method, which is easily damaged and difficult to repair.

Per the Slate Roof Bible, “some styles of laying slate were developed in order to conserve materials, such as the Dutch Lap (or “sidelap”), Open Slating, and “French” methods, which require far fewer slates to cover a roof than the standard overlap pattern does. These styles tend to be found on barns and outbuildings where the owner probably didn’t want to spend extra money on materials. The main problem with these conservative slating styles is that the roofs are difficult to restore properly when they get old. The standard lap style is ingenious in that it allows for easy replacement of any broken slates in such a manner that the nail holding the replacement slate is covered by flashing and therefore rendered leakproof.... These alternative slating methods leave much of the roof area covered by only a single layer of slate — a situation more vulnerable to such threats as hail damage. Therefore, when installing a slate roof, it’s recommended that the slates be laid in a standard lap fashion...to be the most durable, waterproof, strongest, and easiest to maintain and restore” (Jenkins, p. 195).

Vermont Slate roofer, Keith Schumacher, and Joseph Jenkins talked about an alternative, that I cannot recommend. “To maintain a similar look, they can probably lay the slates in the standard overlap but cut them all to a point on the exposed surface” (Jenkins email to Cousins 11/24/25) and (Cousins conversation with Keith Schumacher (11/25/24). This “appearance-only” approach does not meet the Secretary of Interior Standard because it creates a false sense of history, in that this method uses a high style slate pattern method to “look like” a low cost “French” roof. It lacks authenticity. I present it to demonstrate that the slate experts looked at the problem from all perspectives, but neither suggested a single layer “French” roof.

Micah sourced in-kind Sea Green slate for the new roof from the same slate belt as the c.1880s slate roof. The original Sea Green slates were transported from Vermont’s slate valley by railroad and the roof was laid over the original cedar roofing, possibly adding an extra layer of protection.

In closing, this property owner has invested heavily in the historic Forgione House and Barn's rehabilitation for use as a dental office. The investment included sourcing in-kind slates for the house and barn roof replacement. Today, the slate roof on the barn is half removed, and the remaining portion is in poor condition and leaking. I urge the DRB and Williston planning staff to accommodate an immediate return to work to complete the barn roof replacement using the recommended standard overlay slate pattern, with a goal to protect the owner's investment and secure the historic barn from further damage.

References:

2003-2006 NPS Approved Tax Credit Project. Applicant David Herskowitz, DCBY Properties, LLC, to convert house to a restaurant. Estimated project cost \$345,000 with \$136,000 attributed for rehabilitation. (NPS rehabilitation project #12745) downloaded from Williston Town Files, orc.vermont.gov.

Jenkins, Joseph C. The Slate Roof Bible: Everything You Need to Know About the Worl's Finest Roof, Third Edition. Published by Joseph Jenkins, Inc., Grove City, PA. Distributed by Chelsea Green Publishing. 2016.

Jenkins, Joseph, owner *Joseph Jenkins Inc.* Slate Roofing Consultant josephjenkins.com. Email exchange with Ann Cousins 11/24/2024.

National Register of Historic Places, Williston Village Historic District Nomination Documentation (1979) by Louisa Judge and (1992) by Ann Cousins.

O'Neil, Mary, AICP, Principal Planner; Burlington Zoning Division. Phone Interview with Ann Cousins 11/25/2024.

Schumacher, Keith, Co-owner *Watershed Construction and Restoration*. Phone Interview with Ann Cousins 11/25/2024.

Appendix

Williston Village Historic District National Register Documentation (1979)

24. Forgione House: Greek Revival style, circa 1840.

l-2-story brick dwelling. The gable ends are two bays wide with cornice returns. All windowsills and lintels are painted wood, and the windows were originally six over six. The main entrance is located at the center of the 1-story elevation which fronts Route 2. The unusually wide entablature is interrupted above the front entrance by a fully pedimented dormer containing one window. Sheltering the doorway below is a wooden porch with turned posts supporting a roof surmounted by a small triangular cap. A square cut-out pattern embellishes the roof line of the porch. Both the porch and the dormer were added before 1920 but are not original. Rectangular lights above the small, paneled inserts on either side of the door have been blocked in. A 1-room, 1-story clapboard addition at right angles to the rear of the main block of the house and an attached barn were both 19th century additions; the siding on both is new. The foundation is rough-cut grey stone patched with concrete.

Williston Village National Register (Boundary Increase) (1992)

24. Forgione House, c. 1840.

Connected to the rear ell of the Forgione House is a one-story, two bay, 18 foot x 24 foot rectangular, gable-roofed shed so that the 24 foot eaves front faces east. Originally constructed, probably at the same time as the house, on a dry rubble foundation, the timber sills of the structure now rest on a concrete foundation which was poured in 1967 when the shed was converted to a garage. The building had been used to house horses. The floor is dirt. Hand-hewn post and beam framing, connected with treenail fasteners is original to the structure along with the pine log rafters, fastened to form the gable roof without the aid of a ridge pole. The vertically sawn 12" to 18" horizontal board, roof sheathing appears to be original. The vertical board-and-batten siding may have replaced the original exterior sheathing in the late 1800 's. These boards show a circular saw mark, were fastened with cut nails and appear newer than the framing. The gable roof of the shed is covered with one-foot square gray slate tiles which are laid diagonally, forming horizontal diamond shaped bands across the roof. This same tile pattern is found on the roof of the Lyon House Barn adjacent to the east of the Forgione House. On the northern bay of the west facade of the shed, the base of the board- and-batten siding flares out approximately 6" at the foundation. This curious minor alteration was made at the time that the shed was converted to a garage in order to make room for an automobile. A modern overhead garage door replaced the barn doors on the northern bay of the east facade in the late 1960's.