

A Glen Alpin Overview

Many Harding residents are interested in our Township's purchase and renovation of the Glen Alpin Estate. The Civic Association offers our Thumbnail readers this overview of Glen Alpin's purchase, its history, the Township's plans for the property, and associated project finances.

1. Purchase

In October 2004, the 9.5-acre Glen Alpin property was purchased for \$1.45 million from the Jean family by a consortium consisting of the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Green Acres Program, Morris County Preservation Trust Fund, Harding Township, Harding Land Trust, and Morris County Park Commission¹. Harding Township now owns and manages the property, with the Harding Land Trust holding a 6-acre conservation easement in the front bordering Route 202. Reportedly the previous owners had the property appraised at \$2.2 million.

Located within 100 yards of Morristown National Park (Jockey Hollow) on the Northwest corner of Tempe Wick Road and Mt. Kemble Avenue, Glen Alpin is rich in colonial history and includes a beautiful but un-restored 1840s Gothic Revival mansion. The land is environmentally important, providing wildlife habitat and filtering runoff pollution from Primrose Brook, which feeds the Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge. The consortium purchased Glen Alpin, believing that if it did not do so, it would be purchased for residential development, subdivided, and its historic architecture torn down.

2. History

Glen Alpin is an integral part of the Tempe Wick Road/Washington Corners Historic District, which is listed on both the New Jersey and National Register of Historic Places. In historical terms, Glen Alpin's star is Peter Kemble, for whom the Mt. Kemble area is named.

In 1751², Peter Kemble, who lived in New Brunswick, New Jersey, purchased 1,250 acres that included Mt. Kemble and today's Glen Alpin property. In 1765, Kemble built a manor house near where the current Glen Alpin house stands. Kemble, born in Turkey, was a wealthy merchant and a leading political figure in Colonial America. He served as president of the Royal Council of New Jersey under Royal Governor William Franklin, Benjamin Franklin's only son. His New Brunswick house was a popular stopping point for notable travelers journeying between Philadelphia and New York, including George Washington and William Alexander (Lord Stirling). Kemble was a schoolmate of General Thomas Gage, Britain's first Commander-in-Chief of the British Army in America during the Revolution. In 1758, Gage married Kemble's daughter, Margaret.

Kemble was an ardent loyalist and his son, Stephen, was a senior officer in the British Army. During the Continental Army's stay in Jockey Hollow in the winter of 1779-1780, Kemble's house (not confiscated probably because of Washington's prewar friendship with Kemble and because one of Kemble's sons, Richard, swore loyalty to the rebels) was occupied by General William Smallwood, a principal general in the American Army and later a Governor of Maryland. In the winter of 1780-1781, it was the quarters of General Anthony Wayne.

Peter Kemble, his wife, and three children are buried on the property, where their gravestones can be seen today. Glen Alpin stayed in the Kemble family for two more generations until 1840, when 262 acres

¹ See Figure 1 for a breakdown of the contributions of each organization towards the purchase.

² Europeans first settled in Morris County in the 1700s.

including the Kemble house were sold to Henry S. Hoyt, son of a prominent New York merchant and investor, Goold Hoyt.

Shortly after he bought the property, Hoyt had the Kemble house moved up the street³ and started to build another house. The new house – the original part of today’s Glen Alpin house - was built sometime in the 1840’s in the Gothic Revival architectural style. The Gothic Revival style came from England in the early part of the 1800’s and was popularized here by America’s most influential pre-Civil War architects including Richard Upjohn (architect of NYC’s Gothic Revival style Trinity Church), A.J. Davis (architect of New York’s Custom House) and A.J. Downing, the celebrated publisher of architectural design books, horticulturist, and landscape designer.

Originally Gothic Revival buildings were made entirely of stone, but in the United States, architects and builders capitalized on the ready availability of timber and on the new steam-powered mill and scroll-saw cutting technologies. Gothic Revival architecture is considered to be one of the first styles of what was to become Victorian architecture. Some of Gothic Revival’s characteristic features are its steeply pitched gable roofs, polygonal chimney pots, wall dormers, gingerbread trim and bargeboards. Many of these features are readily seen on the Glen Alpin house today. Another local example of Gothic Revival architecture is “The Willows,” built by Joseph Revere (a grandson of Paul Revere) in the 1850s and located at Fosterfield’s Farm in Morristown.

Unfortunately, Glen Alpin’s architect has not been identified, but there is a connection between the Hoyt family and A.J. Downing: In 1855, Henry Hoyt’s brother, Lydig, hired Calvert Vaux to design a house in Staatsburg, New York⁴. Vaux, one of America’s celebrated architects and co-designer of New York’s Central Park and Brooklyn’s Prospect Park, was one of Downing’s partners until Downing’s premature death in 1852.

Hoyt used Glen Alpin as a summer estate until 1885, when he sold it to David H. McAlpin. McAlpin, a wealthy New York City Tobacco merchant, first named the property “Glen Alpin” and also used it as a summer estate. Starting in 1886, McAlpin made significant changes to the exterior of Glen Alpin house, including the addition of two new porches, a tile roof, a library, and the glass conservatory. McAlpin also made changes to the interior, adding several stain-glassed windows (imported from Munich) and modifying the room trim and fireplace surrounds in the Colonial Revival style⁵.

On David McAlpin’s death in 1901, his son, Charles, inherited Glen Alpin. Charles probably built the large and once beautiful formal gardens to the north of the house. In 1933, he donated 124 acres of the original Glen Alpin property (including the 1779-89 encampment site of the Connecticut Brigades) to the US government, helping to create Morristown National Park – our Nation’s first national historic park. In 1940, Charles McAlpin sold Glen Alpin to the Princess Farid-es-Sultaneh whose life is fascinating in its own right.

Many Harding residents also know Glen Alpin as the “Princess House,” after Doris Mercer who owned Glen Alpin until her death in 1963. Mercer, the daughter of a Pittsburgh police captain, was a would-be opera star whose second marriage in 1924 was to Sebastian Kresge, founder of the present day Kmart Corporation. After four years, they divorced, and Mercer received a \$3 million settlement. Mercer moved

³ The Kemble house was moved to its present day location at 667 Mt. Kemble Avenue. It has been significantly modified such that it bears little resemblance to its original construction.

⁴ The Hoyt house still exists and is owned by NY State.

⁵ The Colonial Revival Style came out of the US Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia and reflected American patriotism and a desire for simplicity.

to Paris where she met Farid Khan Sadri-Qajar⁶, an Iranian (Persian) Prince. In 1933, she married the Prince in a Paris mosque and became Princess Farid-es-Sultaneh. Although they divorced within two years, Mercer retained her title against the Prince's wishes.

After moving to Glen Alpin, Mercer faced several tax-related lawsuits and financial setbacks resulting in her auctioning off many of her valuables in 1949. In 1960, the Princess sold a portion of the Glen Alpin property across Tempe Wick Road to the Seventh Day Adventist Church, which built a church there. Mercer regularly attended their services until her death in 1963 at the age of 74.

In 1965, Christopher DeCarlo acquired Glen Alpin. In 1970, DeCarlo further subdivided the property to the north and built a new house on the subdivision. Unfortunately, the subdivision also includes the formal gardens and part of the original driveway, neither of which are now part of Glen Alpin. Liang-Bin and Su-Hsiang Jean acquired the subdivision in 1999 and Glen Alpin in 2002. The Jeans retained the subdivision but subsequently sold Glen Alpin to Harding Township and the rest of the consortium in 2004.

3. Architectural Importance

How historically important is the Glen Alpin house? In its National Register of Historic Places Registration, Glen Alpin is described as “one of New Jersey’s great Gothic Revival Houses.”

Janet Foster, an architectural historian, author, and Assistant Director of Historic Preservation at Columbia University, specializes in New Jersey historic architecture and is quite familiar with Glen Alpin. Ms. Foster believes Glen Alpin was likely to have been constructed from building designs such as those published in A.J. Downing’s books⁷ and is an excellent and well-preserved example of Gothic Revival architecture. According to Ms. Foster, Glen Alpin’s architectural significance is of national importance. She states that Glen Alpin is also important regionally as an outstanding example of the Romantic Revival Country Houses built in the mid-19th century in Morristown. Willow Hall, the Willows, and Glen Alpin are the sole survivors of this style in the Morristown area.

4. The Township’s Plan & Glen Alpin Today

The Harding Township Committee is responsible for managing Glen Alpin, its renovation and administration. Glen Alpin is routinely a subject of discussion in Township Committee meetings. The Township has created a sub-committee, the Glen Alpin Steering Liaison, chaired by Mary Prendergast, to assist it in its management duties.

Glen Alpin’s front grounds are open to the public. The Township has not determined the policy for public use of the house and the rest of the property. Glen Alpin is within a few hundred yards of the Jockey Hollow section of the Patriot’s Path, a network of paths linking dozens of parks and open spaces in Morris County. There is a possibility of Glen Alpin becoming part of Patriot’s Path, but the land in between is privately owned and it is unclear how this might be accomplished.

⁶ The Qajar dynasty ruled Iran from 1794 until 1925 when the last Qajar Shah ruled as a constitutional monarch but then was deposed by the British in favor of Reza Shah Pahlavi, whose son, Mohammed Pahlavi, was the last Shah of Iran, deposed by Ayatollah Khomeini in 1979. At its end, the Qajar dynasty was known for its corruption, poor governorship (losing much of northern Iran to Russia), and proliferation of princes.

⁷ An example of this is Willow Hall in Morristown, the design of which can be found in Downing’s book, “Victorian Cottage Residences” first published in 1842.

The Township Committee has not finally decided how it will use the Glen Alpin house, but their preferred option is to rent out the main floor for public or private functions and the second floor as office space. Before this can be done, Glen Alpin must be renovated. Renovation – including restoration - will be a major and costly construction effort. After purchasing Glen Alpin, the Township Committee hired Watson & Henry Associates, an architecture firm specializing in restorations and preservation, to conduct a feasibility study for Glen Alpin’s renovation. Watson and Henry’s February 2005 report is the primary source for this article with respect to Gen Alpin’s present condition, recommended repair, and the estimated corresponding costs. The Township has since hired Watson & Henry as the architects for Glen Alpin’s renovation including the roof replacement and exterior and interior renovations.

Glen Alpin today has 22 rooms, three floors and a basement totaling over 14,000 square feet, although only the first and second floor is rentable, and is less than 9,000 square feet. Considering its age, the structure appears to be remarkably well preserved with many details of the original 1840s house intact.

The steep, main roof is covered with red ceramic tiles some of which are broken, missing, or replaced with cheap fiberboard substitutes. Unfortunately the roof has structural problems, leaks and must be replaced. The conservatory, library, and outbuilding roofing will also have to be replaced.

Glen Alpin is mostly constructed of ‘puddingstone’ (a type of sedimentary rock which is a natural conglomeration of pebbles and quartzite) purplish in color. It appears to be in reasonably good condition though it will have to be repointed and is now inappropriately covered by white paint (possibly lead-based) that will be removed. Much of the exterior trim is original and intact with some notable exceptions. The front portico and west porch have been demolished. The exterior walkways, stairs, and terraces are in poor condition and will require extensive reconstruction.

According to the feasibility study, “the interior of Glen Alpin is in remarkably good condition, though some changes, mainly cosmetic, that were made in the 1990s were historically inappropriate.” Much of the trim either from the original Gothic Revival construction or the 1880’s Colonial Revival renovation appears also to be intact.

Asbestos remediation is required. The antiquated heating system is not functioning and will have to be replaced. An air conditioning system will be required for public or rental use. A new water service will need to be installed to increase capacity and to separate it from the Jean property. Much of the interior plumbing and bathrooms fixtures require replacement. A new septic system will have to be built. Glen Alpin has an adequate electrical service, but the interior panel and house wiring itself is inadequate, antiquated and must be replaced.

Glen Alpin, currently vacant, has never been used as a public or commercial building. Improvements will have to be made to bring it up to applicable safety and building codes the requirements of which depend on maximum occupancy requirements. Such improvements may be costly and include changes in access and egress as well as the installation of adequate emergency lighting, fire prevention, and intrusion detection systems. Car traffic issues must be considered including parking and the safe entrance to and from Rt. 202.

In the feasibility report, Watson and Henry have identified 5 construction priorities as follows:

	Phase	Included
1.	Roof Replacement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Replace and repair the roof and roof structure.
2.	Renovations required for Occupancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Replace heating, plumbing, septic, and electrical systems. ▪ Install new systems for air-conditioning, fire prevention, and intrusion detection systems. ▪ Eliminate/remediate health and safety hazards. ▪ Implement improvements required by code. ▪ Protect murals, stained glass.
3.	Exterior Restoration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Restore exterior walls, foundations, and masonry. ▪ Restore/replace exterior trim and doors. ▪ Restoration of the conservatory.
4.	Interior Restoration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Restoration of interior trim, doors, floors, hardware, and miscellaneous decorative arts.
5.	Non-essential Restoration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Terrace restoration. ▪ Entranceway balcony reconstruction. ▪ Removal of some of the late construction. ▪ Remove paint from exterior, replace damaged plaster ▪ West porch reconstruction.

The Township has started the renovation process and has hired a project manager, David Tillou, who will help the Township Committee regularly monitor the status of the renovation at least for the roof replacement project.

The first renovation priority is to complete Phase 1 – the roof replacement. The Township put the work out for competitive bid, but the initial responses exceeded the planned \$600,000 budget so requirements have been revised and put out for re-bid. The Township hopes to complete the roof replacement in 2006 with a revised expected cost of approximately \$1,000,000.

A contract for specifying and overseeing the asbestos remediation has been awarded to PMK Group, a consulting and environmental engineering firm. The contract to remove the asbestos has been awarded to Niram Construction, which specializes in Asbestos Removal & Abatement Services. Femenella & Associates, a firm specializing in restoration services, has been hired to review the condition of the stained glass windows installed by the McAlpins. The Township has planned for the construction of a new 1,999 gallon-per-day septic system necessary to handle 199-person maximum occupancy.

5. Finances

The following summarizes our understanding of the costs and funding associated with Glen Alpin, although complete financial information was not available. A rough sources and uses estimate is also shown in Figure 1, below.

Costs

To date, The Township has authorized a total expenditure of \$1,850,000 to be spent on plan development and on the roof replacement. Based on the information available, a summary breakdown of Glen Alpin’s actual and projected costs is as follows:

<i>Purchase</i>	Property price.	\$1,450,000
<i>House Renovation</i>	According to the feasibility study, Watson & Henry estimate the costs (in 2004 dollars) to complete the Glen Alpin renovation phases 1 through 4 (but not including 5) to be approximately \$2,981,000. The estimate has been revised upwards.	\$3,400,000
<i>Grounds and Landscaping</i>	The Township has a landscape plan but does not have a finalized budget. In the 2005 budget, the Township forecasted a future cost of \$500,000 to complete the landscaping	\$500,000
<i>Operating Costs</i>	The Township does not yet have an estimate for the expected operating costs. Operating costs may be significant and include the cost of utilities, grounds and buildings maintenance, property management, insurance etc.	TBD
<i>Debt Service</i>	Municipal debt will be issued by the Township to pay for Glen Alpin renovation expenses. The amount issued, repayment terms, and interest cost have not yet been determined.	TBD
<i>Implicit Costs</i>	The Township will use the Department of Public Works for Glen Alpin related work; this is an implicit but material cost of the project that may not be separately identified. Glen Alpin will not pay property taxes, which could be considered an implicit cost of public ownership worth conservatively \$20,000 or more per year.	TBD

In total, the Glen Alpin purchase and renovation cost will be at least a \$5,400,000 project - not including operating costs. In contrast, the Township's total 2005 annual budget for all Township expenditures is about \$6 million, not including Open Spaces expenditures.

Funding

The Township has stated that its goal is to have Glen Alpin self-funded. Presumably the Township is only referring to Glen Alpin's operating cost as it has also estimated that only 30% to 40% of the renovation costs will be funded by grants and donations.

The Township has been applying for federal, state, and county grants to assist funding Glen Alpin and appears to be successful in this. In 2005, the Township raised nearly \$300,000 in grants and donations. In 2006, the Township is intending to apply to the Morris County Historic Trust Fund for approximately \$365,000 to help fund Phase 2 of the renovation. The Glen Alpin Conservancy, a private charitable organization, has been formed to assist with renovation costs. The Conservancy, chaired by Mary Prendergast, currently has 280 members.

Other than funds received from grants and donations, the Township plans to use the Harding Open Space Trust Fund (HOST) to pay for Glen Alpin. HOST receives its funding from the Harding Open Space Tax⁸. HOST may be used to pay for historic preservation as well as open space preservation initiatives.

▪ ⁸ Both Harding Township and Morris County have open space taxes that are .04% and .05% of property value respectively. Both tax rates were approved by voter referendum and together make up over 10% of the Harding property tax rate.

Glen Alpin expenditures paid for by the Town will either come directly from HOST or from municipal debt proceeds issued by the Township. Debt interest and principal repayments will be paid when due from HOST. The 2005 revenue from the Harding Open Space tax was approximately \$780,000. A summary of the Glen Alpin's funding follows:

Purchase	Township Open Space Trust Fund.	\$175,000
	Other consortium members	\$1,275,000
House Renovation & Landscaping	From 2005 grants and donations including: \$50,000 from the New Jersey Historic Trust to help pay for a preservation plan. This includes work to plan the roof replacement, assessment of interior artifacts, and archaeological management planning. \$223,000 from the Morris County Historic Preservation Trust Fund to fund the roof, gutter, and downspout replacement. \$5,000 and \$2,000 from the New Vernon and Morristown Garden Clubs respectively, to help fund a landscape plan. \$18,000 from private donations.	\$300,000
Rental Income	The Township does not yet have an estimate for the expected revenues received from rent.	TBD
Debt	Other expenditures not paid for with Open Space Funds, grants, or donations will be funded by municipal debt. The Township has authorized the issuance of a \$1,850,000 bond, the proceeds of which will be used to pay for the roof renovation, architectural fees, and HVAC replacement. Debt service ⁹ will be paid with Open Space funds.	\$1,850,000+

Most of the funding (85%) to date is from the Township, County, and State. Morris County has either funded or committed nearly \$800,000 and the State has contributed \$500,000.

6. Observations

As an open space initiative, the Glen Alpin purchase was a very successful transaction for the Township. The Township protected 9.5 acres at a relatively low cost of \$18,421 per acre, paying only 12% of the \$1.45 million purchase price and only 8% of the appraised value.

In cost terms, however, the Glen Alpin project is an historic preservation effort rather than an open spaces preservation project. The total spending on the project will be from 50-60% on historic preservation, but the Township's expenditures will be over 90% on historic preservation. Because of its connection with Peter Kemble and the Revolutionary war, the Glen Alpin property is historically very important. The Glen Alpin House, too, appears to be a nationally and locally important example of historic architecture that should, at least in principle, be preserved. Both Morris County and the State of New Jersey agree having already made significant financial contributions to the project.

Nonetheless, renovating and managing Glen Alpin will still be a financial and administrative challenge for the Township:

⁹ Debt service on \$1,850,000 is about \$350,000 annually if paid down over 6 years at 4.5%. Debt must be backed by Township revenues.

- According to our calculation, the Township will need to raise a minimum additional \$1.7 million (from grants, donations, debt issuance, or Open Space funds) to complete the renovation. This amount does not include debt service payments.
- The Township hopes that operating revenues will cover operating costs, but there is no financial estimate supporting that this will be the case. Any shortfall will be covered by tax revenue. The Township will also have to spend its personnel resources administering and maintaining the Glen Alpin property including fulfilling its duties as a landlord.
- Since Glen Alpin renovation will ultimately be paid with Open Space funds, it will be a significant part of the Open Space budget for some time. It is likely to compete with other open space initiatives the Township wants to pursue.
- Glen Alpin can be compared to other large projects such as the Harding Township School capital improvement budget - which required voter approval: The first school proposal of \$7.5 million made in the mid 90s was soundly defeated by a 4-1 margin, but a subsequent budget in 2000 totaling \$6.7 million was approved by referendum.

7. Information Sources

The information contained in this article has been assembled from a variety of sources including those listed below. Information has been crosschecked when feasible, but some information is from single sources only. We apologize in advance for any errors we may have made.

Sources

1. Downing, A.J., Victorian Cottage Residences, Dover Publications, Inc.
2. Feasibility Report for Glen Alpin, Watson & Henry Associates, February 2005
3. Foster, Janet W., Assistant Director of Historic Preservation at Columbia University
4. Guter and Foster, Building by the Book, Pattern-Book Architecture in New Jersey, Rutgers U. Press
5. Harding Township, Harding Township Committee Meetings
6. Harding Township 2005 Municipal Budget
7. Last Will and Testament of Goold Hoyt
8. Morris County Preservation Trust. www.morrispreservation.org
9. Morristown National Historic Park, National Park Service
Historical Handbook Series No. 7
10. National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, Tempe Wick Road/Washington Corners
Historic District
11. New Jersey DEP Green Acres Program. www.state.nj.us/dep/greenacres
12. New Jersey Historic Trust. www.njht.org/dca/njht/funded/sitedetails/glen_alpin.html
13. Pittsburgh's Persian Princess; Princess Farid-es-Sultaneh, Janet Kettering.
www.lupec.org/events/2003/princess/Pittsburgh.pdf
14. Recorder Newspapers, various articles
15. Thumbnail, Harding Township Civic Association, various editions
16. Trust for Public Land, The. www.tpl.org
17. Winslow, Thomas J.; Park Ranger/Education Specialist, Morristown National Historical Park

Figure 1 – Glen Alpin Sources & Uses Estimate
(Amounts x \$1,000)

Note: This is our own rough estimate only, and is based on incomplete information and our own assumptions.

Sources	Notes	Actual 2004	Actual 2005	Forecast> 2006	2007	2008	2009
<u>Township</u>							
Open Space Trust Fund		175.0	15.0	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
Municipal Debt				1,850.0	TBD	TBD	TBD
Town Budget							
<u>Morris County</u>							
Preservation Trust Fund	\$500k towards purchase.	500.0					
Historic Preservation Trust	\$223k grant for roof replace.			223.0			
	'06 for \$365k grant for HVAC.				365.0		
Park Commission	\$75k contribution to purchase	75.0					
<u>State/Federal</u>							
NJ DEP Green Acres	\$450k towards purchase	450.0					
NJ Historic Trust	\$50k grant for architect plan.		50.0				
<u>Private NPOs, Donations</u>							
Harding Land Trust	\$250k towards purchase	250.0					
Glen Alpin Conservancy							
Morristown Garden Club			2.0				
New Vernon Garden Club			5.0				
Fund Raising			10.2				
Donations			7.5				
<u>Projected Rental Income</u>							
Tenants	Not available				TBD	TBD	TBD
Events	Not available				TBD	TBD	TBD
Total Sources		1,450.0	89.7	2,073.0	365.0	0.0	0.0

Uses	Notes	Actual 2004	Actual 2005	Forecast> 2006	2007	2008	2009
<u>Property Purchase</u>	Property Purchase	1,450.0					
<u>House Renovation</u>							
Project Manager	\$43k per year.			43.0	43.0	43.0	
Asbestos removal				39.6			
Watson/Henry Architect's fees: Phase 1-4	\$15k study; \$432k for Ph1-4. Assume over 3 yrs.		15.0	144.0	144.0	144.0	
Phase 1: Roof Replacement	\$1,000k estimated cost			1,000.0			
Phase 2: Occupancy	Arch. Prelim. est.: \$1,025k			512.5	512.5		
Phase 3: Exterior	Arch. Prelim. est.: \$740k				370.0	370.0	
Phase 4: Interior	Arch. Prelim. est.: \$393k				196.5	196.5	
Phase 5: Non-essential	Not yet estimated. Cost TBD						
<u>Grounds & Landscaping</u>	Township forecast: \$500k. Assume over 2 years.			250.0	250.0		
<u>Annual Operating Costs</u>	Utilities, Repairs, Grounds, Taxes, etc. Est. not available		TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
<u>Debt Service</u>	Assume 1.850k repaid over 6 years at 4.5%				352.4	352.4	352.4
<u>Other</u>	TBD						
Total Uses		1,450.0	15.0	1,989.1	1,868.4	1,105.9	352.4

Annual Net Surplus/Funding Required	0.0	74.7	83.9	(1,503.4)	(1,105.9)	(352.4)
Accumulated Net Surplus/Funding Required	0.0	74.7	158.6	(1,344.8)	(2,450.7)	(2,803.1)