

MP plans to move Conner House

By NEAL SNYDER
JM Staff Writer

The first cost estimates for the restoration and relocation of Manassas Park's historic Conner House were presented to the City Council Tuesday.

Architect Jarrod Wilcox, of DLP Associates, said the project would cost \$400,000 to \$530,000, depending on which of two options Manassas Park chooses to pursue.

The city is looking at moving the house from its present site next to Conner School to Signal Hill Park as part of the recreation facilities planned for the area.

The city can either attempt to move the house whole or demolish it and use the stonework to rebuild it on its new site, Wilcox said. Of the two, DLP recommends the second option, he said.

"The structure is in very poor condition," he explained. "If you pick it up and move it you might lose 75 percent of the exterior walls."

It is also in some danger of falling. "I'm surprised it's standing today. A good windstorm will knock that house down," he said. "I think haste is appropriate here."

The demolition and reconstruction estimate includes archeological techniques of marking and photographing the stonework so it can be replaced exactly as it is now, Wilcox said. However, DLP recommends that the interior wooden structures be completely replaced.

"The roof has deteriorated enough to allow the freeze-thaw cycle to damage the structure of the house," he said.

The house has been remodeled a number of times in its life, Wilcox said.

Much of the structural damage came when some window frames were enlarged to accommodate doorways into the many additions. This put strain on the stone lintels above the frames, causing some to fail. Later steel reinforcements only partially relieved the problem.

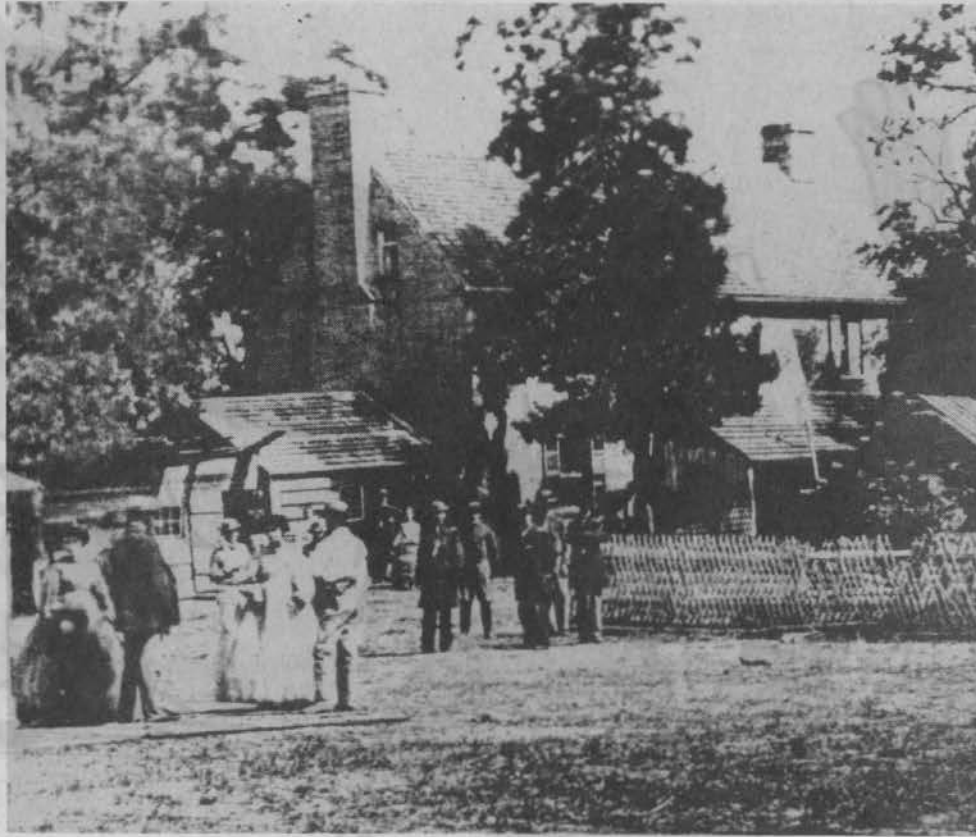
The main house was built some time between 1800 and 1820. A major addition was put on in 1855, according to DLP research.

There was also substantial remodeling in the early 1900s, including new windows and doors.

The stone exterior walls show traces of yellow paint. Civil War records identify the Conner House as "The Yellow Hospital." Apparently, the house served as a hospital for both Union and Confederate soldiers, Wilcox said.

As part of the restoration estimate, the architects have included a floor plan based on other houses of the 1800s. The original floor plan was modified too substantially to get a precise layout of the interior.

In keeping with the council's request to restore it to its Civil War appearance, the design includes the 1855 additions, a porch, and a lean-to barn on the back.



Historic house

The historic Connor House in what is now Manassas Park is shown above in an 1862 photo. The house served as a headquarters and a hospital during the Civil War.