



Photo courtesy City of Manassas Park

The Conner House, an 1802 mansion in what is now Manassas Park, served as a headquarters for Union troops and as a field hospital (above). The city intends to preserve it through volunteer efforts and donations. It now stands near Conner Elementary (below).

Manassas Park seeks funds to preserve Conner House

Historical society is established to try to save antebellum structure

Prince William Library
Manassas, Virginia

BY NEAL SNYDER

VIRGINIANA FILE

Efforts to preserve the antebellum Conner House on its original site in Manassas Park moved forward Tuesday when a new historical society was established by the City Council.

The council unanimously approved a motion by Councilman William Wren, charging building official Fred Wharton to create a non-profit organization to raise funds and to develop and execute plans to first preserve and then restore the house.

The Conner House, built in 1802 and expanded in the 1860s, was used as both a Union headquarters and a field hospital during the Civil War. It is located on Conner Drive between New Dominion School and Conner Elementary.

The house is listed in the National Register of Historic Places, but is closed to the public for safety reasons.

A plan to move the building to Signal Hill Park for use as a museum or visitor's center is dead, Wharton said. According to a study released in January, the move would have cost \$400,000 and resulted in the loss of official historic status.

Wharton told the council he believed the approximately \$5,000 needed initially to

first take it out of the ground, but then it hardens. In about 500 or 600 years we might have a problem (from deterioration of the stone)," he said.

Restoring the Conner House where it stands will cost around \$200,000, Wharton said.

The city isn't ready to pay for a six-figure restoration project, according to Councilman William Steele.

"Our best bet is to secure it and to close it up," said Steele. "I'd like to weatherproof it."

"But other than that, when we get all the school buildings built and all the things the city needs, then we can spend money on this. \$400,000 scares me," Steele said.

The house could be preserved until the city is in financial shape to expand the project, Wharton said.

