

## **Friends of Richfield Heritage Preserve March 2025 Report**

### **Kirby's Mill:**

- Chris Hallohan from Gannet Flemming explained that their firm deals primarily with steel beam construction and would prefer to act as consultant to a firm that specializes in constructing areal bridges. We have since reached out to Red Point Adventures who specialize in suspension pedestrian bridges.
- Friends of RHP look forward to discussing working details for the Mill Restoration Project moving forward. For reference, previous discussions and approvals included for reference.

### **Garfield Hall:**

- Weather has warmed up and we look forward to continuing forward on the timber framing in contact with the masonry fireplace. Temporary shoring was installed. Selective demolition to remove the water damaged wood will start this weekend. We will be forming beams with pressure treated lumber and gasket break at the dissimilar materials to reduce capillary action in the future.
- In the upcoming month we will be working on the brick paver patio.
- We would also like to start relocating the demolished concrete to the pool or another location the RJRD deems appropriate.

### **Amity House:**

- Chimney caps with screening and spring-loaded dampers installed at the top of the chimney. The living room damper is too long, and the basement damper pull is too short. We are coordinating extending the basement and installing the brackets with Rustic Slate Roofing.
- The acting park director shared the RJRD is reinstating the basement laundry room. This addition was not included in the permit drawings and may impact obtaining occupancy. We are happy to assist with a bulletin if needed to document the change with the building department.

### **Utilities:**

- Friends of RHP continue to trace and mark waterlines throughout the park for documentation.
- We would like to offer the installation of the gas line at Coach/furnace at North House to condition North House as part of stabilization and mothballing.

### **Invasive Species Removal/ Native Species Restoration:**

- Friends of RHP have reached out to park staff to arrange the resumption of work.

### **Programs/Fund Development:**

- Friends of RHP are waiting for approval of submitted programming including: Mill docent training and Sundays, hikes, membership meetings (open to the public), Kirby Day, and Winter Wonders 2025.
- Friends of RHP Annual meeting is Thursday, April 24<sup>th</sup> at 7pm at Richfield United Church of Christ.



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### **RJRD / Friends of RHP MOU:**

- At the February RJRD meeting when we offered a Q & A and were happy to have the chance to clear up misinformation about the work at Kirby House. (*documentation of Friends' involvement with Kirby House attached*).
- Although Friends do not agree with all the interpretations of the RJRD's February handout, it was helpful to read that point of view. There is one section that raises serious questions. In response to "let the Friends keep working in the park", RJRD's response is that the Friends reject the park organization. This is simply not true. Considering all the accommodations the Friends have made to park board and park director requests over the years, we are asking what specific circumstances prompted this statement. We would like to investigate the problem but need specific details.



New chimney cap and screen to exterior fireplace and new chimney cap, screen, and spring-loaded damper to living room and basement.

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## Kirby House

- **June 12, 2017** RJRD encouraged Friends to work in and around Kirby House so it would not look vacant.
- **May 14, 2018** RJRD approved of Friends' plan to stabilize Amity, Kirby, and North Houses
- **August 24, 2020** Kirby House and Kirby Garage assigned to Friends for storage. Note that when the vote was taken, Ms Apidone asked that storage in Kirby House be limited to the back room so that Key rooms in Kirby House could be open to visitors during a centennial celebration [of Kirby's arrival at on the estate in 1921]. The Friends agreed to this. After the centennial was over, Friends kept the house clean and ready for visitors. Informal tours were permitted for potential donors. Kirby Kitchen began to be used as a place for invasives volunteers to take breaks.
- **September 2022** This was the first time that Kirby Day was held at the south end of the park. We had permission to have displays/ activities at all the buildings. We presented an extensive history display at Hilltop House, but were only able to keep it up for one day. It was disassembled and stored at Kirby House office. Visitors continually expressed curiosity about the display panels, so they were moved upstairs to be spread out where visitors could appreciate the history of Kirby, GS, and the transformation of the camp into a park.
- **Summer 2023 Tour the Treasure.** Most RJRD members were able to take the tour and were offered snacks on Kirby House veranda to get a sense of what donors would experience.
- **February 16, 2024** Corey emails John with an update on the northern structures and references prior permission for exploratory demolition in Kirby House. John acknowledges Coreys note with thanks (email shared at February 2025 meeting).
- **May 2024** Report on the exploration and the remedial support work submitted to RJRD.
- **December 2024.** John accuses Friends of destruction. Locks changed at Kirby House and Mill.

## The Plan as outlined at <https://www.friendsofrhp.org/kirbys-mill-restoration>

(Work on the mill will be completed in stages as the funds are raised)

- Architectural and structural engineering consultation – Completed thanks to the Ohio History Fund grant and Friends of RHP membership dues
- New roof - Completed thanks to generous donors including Helen Cappy
- Restored windows - three new windows on the west side completed thanks to generous donors and volunteer craftsman
- Concrete repair of the water wheel pit and supports - Completed (December 2022) thanks to many generous donors including the Haslinger Family Foundation
- Reconstruction of the water wheel – Completed (September 2, 2022) The many generous donors include Roy & Cindy Moore and "Anonymous" who provided matching funds to the 2021 campaign.
- Safety screening around the water wheel - Completed
- Interim, on-site donor recognition - Completed
- Restoration of the balcony that overlooks the lake - Completed
- Structural repairs to the mill house
- Replacement of exterior stairway
- Replacement of the suspension bridge
- Restoration of the water box, water box supports, flume (the water conduit between lake and wheel) Scheduled for Spring 2025
- Finishing touches: gutters, storm windows, gravel walkway
- Landscaping, viewing benches
- Hydroelectric generating equipment
- Educational displays and support First set complete Thanks to the Akron Community Foundation, William Wallace Fund, and Fran Rifici
- Fundraising (mailings, events) - In progress
- Insurance, Security, Contingencies
- Permanent Donor Recognition
- Endowment Fund for repair and maintenance - In progress

