

Allendale

Ackerman-Rozmus House slated for renovation

by Nancy Sobeck

One of Allendale's oldest homes is about to receive some much-needed attention that will preserve its history for the present and into the future.

The neglected condition of the Revolutionary era Ackerman-Rozmus House on the corner of Franklin Turnpike and Rozmus Court has been made that much more obvious in recent years as developers sought and succeeded in the construction of new homes adjacent to the house on what is now

Ackerman-Rozmus House dates back to 1789

One can only image how Allendale, or at least the vicinity which is now Allendale, must have appeared in the latter part of the eighteenth century when our forefathers were still fighting for independence.

The Ackerman-Rozmus House (historic name A.C. Ackerman House) formerly 70 Franklin Tpke., now 8 Rozmus Ct., is Allendale's last architectural link to that era, dating back to about 1780. The persistence of the Allendale Historical Society and the actions of the

Rozmus Court.

Once owned by the Lebel Development Corp., the entire tract of land that includes the house was subsequently sold to the Minmetals Corp. who developed the property as it is now. When Lebel owned the land, the Allendale Planning Board set the condition that when the property was ultimately developed, the foundation and walls of the Ackerman-Rozmus House were to be retained for their historical significance. Although this met with some resistance, planners, supported by a plea from the Allendale Historical Society, insisted that the same

Survey states.

The Allendale Historical Society has traced A.C. Ackerman's ownership of the house to 1811. History tells that in 1861, someone plowing on the property struck metal. A subsequent search unearthed pieces of pewter, bowls and plates intact, dating back to the Revolution. It was said that the pewter was most likely hidden at the time to prevent it from being converted to bullets.

In 1871, Ackerman's son, James

condition apply when Minmetals sought a subdivision approval.

Meanwhile, the house has continued to deteriorate for the last few years as Minmetals and the borough have gone several rounds about what should be done with it.

In the past month, however, there have been some interesting new findings about the house. Engineer William A. Truss of T&M Engineers, an engineering consulting firm, visited the house in April along with Allendale's engineer Gerry Scott and Randy Reveley, a builder who specializes in historic renovations. Truss suggested that Reveley open up the interior of the house to expose the old walls. Once Reveley completed that work, the three men returned to the site on May 5.

Truss determined that the stone foundation and walls, with some repair work, could successfully be incorporated into a new home. The second floor joists, he said, appear to be original hand-hewn beams. Although they can no longer sup-

port a second floor, Truss suggested that they can remain partially exposed even with new floor framing. Truss also said that some of the original first floor framing can be retained. In addition, the engineer noted that removal of the updated exterior will reveal the original stone and earth-hay mortar, which can also be preserved with the appropriate care.

Last week, the planning board was presented with a preliminary building plan for a new structure. At the request of Building Inspector Gary Montroy, planners gave their approval for the issuance of permits necessary for Reveley to continue the work he has started on the renovations of the house. Once the permits are issued, a formal plan for the proposed structure will be brought before the board.

"This is a great restoration," Planning Board Chairman John Young noted enthusiastically. He added that the board is also pleased with the continuing cooperation of Minmetals as the plan progresses.

