



**375 TONS** of house got rotated 160-degrees for a water view in North Haven last week

carson photo

**MAYCROFT**

# Mansion on Wheels

*A historic home gets a better view of the harbor*

**BY JOE CARSON**

IT HAD APPEARED AS THOUGH A CHILD was playing with a toy house in a toy world, where all the trees, water, and land were made of light-weight plastic, and the hot sunny day was only an artificial state of mind.

The main building on the Maycroft Estate rotated and moved as if it were weightless, however it was no figment of the imagination, the trees, the dirt, the water, the scorching hot day, and the 375 ton house that dates

to 1885 were all very real. And when the house stopped spinning Guy Davis who was behind the controls stepped away with animation. "Nobody recycles things this large," said Guy Davis of Davis Construction, House And Building Movers.

The main building on the Maycroft Estate is undergoing a major location change and renovation on the grounds, including a 160-degree spin and a move of over 50 feet. The house was on hydraulic lifts, called dollies, Thursday and by Friday afternoon it was in its final location on the property after the rotation.

"There are 10 sets of dollies under the house. Each one has a 50 ton capacity, and four of the 10 are self-

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# Maycroft

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propelled dollies," Davis added.

The exterior is to be restored to its original state, while the interior is to be partially redesigned. "We're talking about going to the original materials," said Paul Pianpiano of Wright & Company Construction Inc., the company that is managing all of the construction and remodeling aspects of the project. "What's nice is you see so many old homes getting torn down every day and these people are working to restore the house," Davis said.

The house, before being lifted and moved, was stripped of its interior finishing, which removed some 200 tons of weight from the entire structure. "We left two fireplaces in and took two out. They were looked at by engineers and weren't stable enough to be used," said Davis.

The stripping of the house produced the discovery that this is not the first remodeling job the house has been through. "The house was built in 1885, but before 1895 was completely gutted and renovated probably to add electric and water," Pianpiano commented. "The original gas lighting pipe was still in the wall," he added.

"They used to have a powerful view of Sag Harbor, and then when the trees grew up the view was taken away," said James Merrell, of James Merrell Architects P.C., the firm that created the design plan. "We basically feel that what we suspected to be true from our modeling, is true. It truly feels settled in its sight, very settled and natural in its [new] location."

Building moving has been going on for more than 450 years and the evolution of the process has resulted in technology that makes the operation appear effortless. Guy Davis is a fourth generation building mover whose family dates back to the 1800's in the business. "I've been on the job since I was five years old," said Davis. "You know you just have to envision how it's going to look," he added.

Buildings and homes are presently moved for many varying reasons. "We move a lot of houses off of the ocean due to erosion, and we lift quite a few for structural repairs," commented Davis. In the case of the Maycroft Estate it is a matter of ideally situating the home on the property.

When asked about the ghost stories that surround the Maycroft Estate, Paul Pianpiano said, "When we first got here the house was leaking and a mess, and it would have given anyone a creepy feeling." As for ghosts, if there are any in the Maycroft Estate, they'll at least now have a more pleasing view of the water.

**"SMART-ENOUGH"**

**Joe Pantoliano embraces**