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Kenniston Hill Inn joins the Boothbay Green

By SUE MELLO, Staff Reporter | Posted: Tuesday, December 16, 2014 - 9:00am



The old Kenniston House joined its neighbor the Boothbay Green on Monday, Dec. 15, after months of fundraising and weeks of careful preparation. SUE MELLO/Boothbay Register

After weeks of careful preparation,







(<http://www.boothbayregister.com/article/kenniston-hill-inn-begins-its-journey/45313>) the Kenniston Hill Inn slipped easily over to its new home at the Boothbay Green on Monday, Dec. 15.

Over the course of five hours, under clear skies, Jewett Builders painstakingly moved the centuries-old house east onto steel plates in the excavated driveway, and then north onto a gravel-filled pad in the side yard at the Boothbay Green.

By 10 a.m. on Monday morning, exactly two weeks after the Kenniston house was scheduled to be demolished (<http://www.boothbayregister.com/article/demolition-set-boothbay-s-kenniston-hill-inn/44349>), Fairpoint and Time Warner crews were on site to lower utility lines to allow the house to cross the road.

Later, Central Maine Power arrived. The power company donated its time to support Kenniston's new owners, the ElderCare Network.

Everyone expected the house would be able to pass under the higher power lines, but it was a little too close to call. A CMP worker ascended in a bucket to watch the transit close up.

Meanwhile, the Jewetts adjusted, arranged and operated all the various machinery needed to transport the 130-ton house to its new home.

With the Boothbay Harbor Country Club's construction churning behind and the Jewetts front and center, Boothbay Center was a Bob-the-Bulder wonderland.

Onlookers began to gather around 11 a.m. Among them was a hawk, seen to fly low over the Boothbay Green property, soar over the road and then perch in an old Kenniston property tree as the house began its journey.

Later, another hawk flew in and landed in a tree at the end of the gravel pad at the Green and watched the proceedings.

The hawk drew a lot of human attention, and some who have worked so hard to save the Kenniston house said they saw the animal as a sign of spirit.

Susan Brackett, who started the fundraising effort to stop the demolition last August, said tears filled her eyes when she arrived on the scene. She stood for an hour or so on the former front lawn of the Kenniston house with friends; and then, as the house began to cross the street, Brackett and friends accompanied the house to the other side.

Steve Teel, whose grandfather owned the house and golf course, has been a quiet, constant presence on the scene these last weeks, tending to the daily needs of the operation.

Teel has moved furniture, taken down chimney and flues in torrential rains, and most recently arranged for the gravel that now rests under the house. On Monday, he meandered from house to workers to friends, visiting and standing by.

By 2 p.m., the house was secure on its temporary perch on the wheels and steel beams that allowed its move to the Green. Inside, all was relatively undisturbed. There were a few minor cracks in the walls but a cabinet of glassware and china was unaffected.

Its journey a success, the Kenniston house now awaits the next chapter in its very long life.

In the next few weeks, a new foundation will be excavated and poured, and then the Jewetts will be back to move the house once more, this time onto its new foundation.

From there, the Kenniston house's future rests in the hands of the ElderCare Network and Community Housing of Maine.