

The Restoration of Gordon Hall

Facts, Plans, and Talking Points

Gordon Hall Background

- Gordon Hall was built in 1841 by Judge Samuel W. Dexter as his family home, founder of Dexter, 1st Chief Justice of Washtenaw County, a pioneer, abolitionist, visionary, and first public advocate for a transcontinental railroad.
- Visited by Presidents Polk and Buchanan, a likely stop on the “underground railroad”, and one of the most imposing Michigan examples of early Greek Revival architecture.
- Purchased from the University of Michigan in 2006 for \$1,500,000 by the Dexter Area Historical Society (DAHS) as a Historical Community Asset.
- The historic interior was converted to 4-apartments in the 1950s. Estimated Total Cost for the property and full restoration of Gordon Hall: \$5,500,000

DAHS Actions Taken and Funded

- 2006, DAHS purchases Gordon Hall. \$1,500,000
 - 2009, Completed Rehabilitation Master Plan. \$ 53,000
 - 2016, Completed basic exterior work. \$224,000
 - 2018/19, Additional exterior improvements. \$17,000
 - 2019, Developed plans & drawings for full restoration. \$94,000
 - 2020, Restored west porch, rooflines, new restrooms. \$345,000
 - 2021, Refinished interior 1st floors and painted. \$5,000
 - 2024, New electrical entrance lines and panels. \$235,000
 - 2025, Reinforced floor structure and foundation. \$229,000
- Total Money Raised & Spent:** \$2,702,000
Remaining Restoration Cost: \$2,798,000

Available Gifts and Pledges as of 4/2025: \$723,000
Progress towards remaining Goal of \$2,798,000 **26%**

Construction Phases to Complete Restoration

- 2026/7, Demo 1950s interior, less new restrooms and meeting room, repair the plank flooring, rough in the 1841 floor plan, stairs, elevator shaft and mechanism, and finish the main hall as a showroom for later interior finishing. \$900,000
- 2027, Install HVAC, interior wiring, plumbing, and restore chimneys. \$400,000
- 2028, Drywall, skim-coat, install doors, decorative trim and plaster work, rebuild windows, install lighting, alarms, coat flooring, & paint. \$1,400,000

Examples of Gordon Halls Usage: historical programs and tours, town meetings, business retreats, school activities, seminars, Dexter Summer Festival, recitals, civil war enactments, weddings and showers, and the enjoyment of experiencing a truly magnificent historical building . . . to mention a few.