

The Old SAU Building Demolished

The white building at 169 Main Street, formerly used as School Administrative Offices in New London, was demolished Thursday, April 28, 2012. According to New London tax records the site was originally built on in 1850. Previously used as the first Catholic Church in New London, the building was acquired by the New London School District in 1941. In 1990 the Kearsarge Regional School District formed their own School Administrative Unit, SAU 65, breaking away from SAU 43 in Newport. At that time, offices were established in the building housing the first Superintendent for the Kearsarge School District, Dr. Howard Goodrow. In 2008 due to health, safety, energy efficiency, and code enforcement issues an architectural study was completed estimating that \$850,000- \$1,400,000 would be required to renovate the building to meet current codes and needs.

In 2009, the School District sought and received permission from the voters to proceed with the sale of the building and the relocation of the SAU Offices. The economic downturn, decreasing market values, and zoning restrictions made the sale of the deteriorating building unattractive to potential buyers and impacted the access to the District's property. The School Board determined that the limited income from the sale of the property coupled with limiting access to district property, did not serve the best interest of the taxpayers. Faced with a decision of upkeep of the old structure or the demolition of it, the Board decided to seek permission to raze the old building and proceeded with the relocation of SAU Offices to a wing of the existing school district facilities at 114 Cougar Court (formerly Kearsarge Regional Middle School).

The relocation of the SAU Offices in the spring of 2011 cost approximately \$350,000 vs. the \$850,000- \$1,400,000 needed for the renovations to the old structure. The move to 114 Cougar Court addressed all of the health, safety, energy and code enforcement needs as well as expanded the much needed, office, conference and Professional Development space to accommodate staff trainings.

In 2011, the voters approved an article to demolish the old building at 169 Main Street. That parcel of land will remain "green space" with a bench, plantings and small sign honoring the history of the site.



