

Welcome, [planner@belmontnh.org](mailto:planner@belmontnh.org)

## Belmont bandstand stands out in original colors

By TIM CAMERATO | Jul 02, 2014

3



TIM CAMERATO/CITIZEN

RESTORATION EXPERT JR Graton, right, and restoration painter John Thompson, left, are both responsible for the work recently done on the Belmont bandstand.

**BELMONT** — People traveling on Main Street might have noticed that the historic bandstand near the library is now a lot more vibrant.

Restoration painters recently finished work to bring the exterior of the structure back to its original 1908 colors.

The bandstand, which held its first concerts in October 1908, made its third move to its current location in September after previous stints near Main Street and the Belmont Mill.

[Enlarge...](#)

Belmont Heritage Commission

Chairman Linda Frawley said the last serious restoration of the bandstand was performed in 1977 by Neil Whitcher of Belmont.

“He copied the roof and put a new roof on it, but used the old design,” Frawley said.

Whitcher also worked on the rail pieces and volunteers donated time to paint it.

Frawley said the Heritage Commission considered making the bandstand more visible and starting a restoration effort in 2008.

“In the process, we recommended an effort of beautification and village revitalization project,” Frawley said.

This restoration is made possible through taxpayer and LCHIP funds. When done, Frawley said, she's hoping the bandstand will once again be the center of life in the village.

“One of our goals is to not only have people enjoy its beauty, but program it with concerts,” Frawley said.



[Enlarge...](#)

Frawley said the bandstand could become a location where people pose for wedding or graduation photos, too.

Restoration painter John Thompson of JLT Painting in Alexandria did the painting of the bandstand.

He said workers started by placing staging all around the bandstand and covering it with plastic to keep the paint that chipped off contained. They then removed the majority of the old paint using Peel Away.

“You put the Peel Away on, you put a paper over it, and let it set for 24 hours or so, and you peel it off,”

Thompson said. “It takes most of the paint off. The rest of it is taken off with hand labor.”

Thompson said hand scraping the paint was the most laborious part of the job.

“We were here for three weeks on that,” Thompson said. “The painting part of it took two weeks.”

Thompson said removing the bandstand's lead paint was a big challenge. He said painters had to wear protective suits and be very careful with cleanup.

Thompson said some of the wood was also very fragile.

“We had to be very careful when we were scraping not to be too hard on it,” Thompson said. “You want to get the paint off, but not scar up the wood.”

Now that most of the painting is done, Thompson said he thinks the bandstand looks great.

“I'm pleased that we were able to do the research, find the original colors, and bring it back to the way it was in 1908,” Thompson said. “I think it's really cool.”

An exterior paint study of the bandstand was published in May by Building Conservation Associates Inc. They found that “the original paint treatment was predominantly a very dark blackish green with selected elements accented in red.”

The study couldn't determine the original floor treatments or ceiling color, however.

Thompson said they were also able to better reveal where the red and green were located when they began scraping off old coats.

“There's a lot of alternate stripes or bands of red and green, and that's kind of what we filled in the blanks,” Thompson said.

Thompson worked for nine years at Canterbury Shaker Village and does a lot of work on older houses. He said painting a bandstand is “unusual” for him.

Historic restoration expert JR Graton of Northfield will now take over work on the bandstand, starting with the roof.

“The hardest part of that is the two bands of decorative shingles that are diamond-shaped,” Graton said. “They all have to be cut individually and they're going to be the same red as downstairs.”

He said the roof's curve means that every shingle on the edge has to be cut to match. The top of the roof will also have a ball-style finial.

"I've seen pictures of a ball. It's been lost. I don't know where it is," Graton said. "We're going to try and replicate that."

Graton said the original railing pieces were kicked out by someone in the 1970s. He said they were replaced with cut sheets of particle board thinking it would be harder to damage.

"To do the restoration, I had the original pattern and was able to make all of the pieces out of mahogany," Graton said.

Graton said those changes will probably take a couple of months to complete. He said the future bandstand will also have stairs. They haven't been built yet because it's hard to paint underneath, according to Graton.

After that's done, electrical work will pave the way for new light fixtures and outlets for modern band equipment. Thompson will also stain the floor.

"It's been a lot of fun because you never get a chance to do that type of work because no one can afford to build that way anymore," Graton said.

"As beautiful as it is now and stable, that isn't enough to preserve something," Frawley said. "We hope to modernize it with full upgraded electric and technology appropriate to 2014."

3




---

Comments (0)

---

#### Staff Profile

Tim Camerato  
 Reporter  
 603-581-1962  
[Email Me](#)

#### Recent Stories by Tim Camerato

- **Belmont upgrades temporarily leave residents without water**  
Jul 03, 2014
- **Belmont bandstand stands out in original colors**  
Jul 02, 2014
- **Gilford Rowe House and Grange open houses planned for summer**  
Jul 02, 2014
- **Death of Plymouth chiropractor ruled homicide**  
Jun 30, 2014
- **Republicans campaign at charity golf tournament**  
Jun 30, 2014