

HISTORY

Weston Historic Landmark Commission news and announcements

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The Kobelgard Haus

By Kristen Bailey

The Kobelgard Haus is a beautiful example of historic architecture in downtown Weston but, above all, it is a family home. Located at 306 Main Avenue, this late nineteenth-century gem is now owned by Robin and Kevin Hardman of Lewis County, who have devoted an incredible amount of time to the loving restoration of the home. Originally built for Jacob Kobelgard and his family in 1893, the home's original Gothic Revival style was an immediate showpiece for the downtown area. Jacob built the structure on Main Street, where he lived with his wife, Isophene (sometimes called "Icie") Powell Kobelgard, whom he married in Harrison County in 1873.



Born in Denmark in 1848, Jacob pursued an immigrant's dream of independence by immigrating to the United States, where he worked diligently at farming, and then as a wholesale merchant. The chain of dry goods stores called "Ruhl Kobelgard" was founded in approximately 1869 as a "pioneer wholesale grocery firm" and had locations in Clarksburg, Grafton and Weston.

Copy of a photo of Jacob Kobelgard in the yard of his Weston home, courtesy of Robin Hardman.

[1880 United States Federal Census - AncestryLibrary.com](#), [1900 United States Federal Census - AncestryLibrary.com](#),

"Farewell Banquet Tendered Employees (sic) of the Ruhl-Kobelgard Company," *The Daily Telegram*, February 1, 1904, page 3. [01 Feb 1904.3 - The Daily Telegram at Newspapers.com](#).

Kobelgard Haus

When the business closed in 1904, firm members John Kobelgard, John Ruhl, Jacob Kobelgard, Arthur Thorne, Riley Gregg, and Rupert Kobelgard celebrated their years of business and final sale to the General Distributing Company with a grand dinner at the Waldo Hotel in Clarksburg. An orchestra played throughout the evening, and crowd heard remarks from US Congressman John W. Davis, a prominent Clarksburg politician. The menu for the event was a sumptuous meal: (see photo of menu on next page)

Shortly after the business changed hands, in 1906 Jacob and Isophene sold the home to Lloyd Rinehart, its original builder. He owned the home for many years, but it ultimately returned to the Kobelgard family. When Jacob died in 1919, Thorn Kobelgard, Jacob and Icie's son purchased the home and returned to live there with his mother. A 1920s-30s remodeling project updated the building to its current layout, with the re-alignment of the roof most prominent in the changes. The red clay tiled roof which replaced the former mansard roof lines was designed to emulate the Spanish architectural styles the Kobelgard family were familiar with during time spent in Florida.

Thorn Kobelgard never married but remained in the home with his mother throughout his life. In the 1920's census, Thorne listed his occupation as the carbon black business, but by 1930 named his work as a manager in the oil and gas industry.

Thorne had, in the years between, gone into business with Thomas Whelan and another young immigrant named Oscar Nelson, to form the United Carbon Company. These rising entrepreneurs built a successful business, whose corporate headquarters in Charleston was regarded as a significant piece of early twentieth-century architecture. Thorn Kobelgard remained a bachelor and attained great wealth in his lifetime but placed great value on family loyalty. His last will and testament left large sums of money and property to those who worked closely with him and with his mother. Protecting his family mattered deeply to Thorne Kobelgard.

Thorn owned the home until his death, at which time it was purchased by Dr. Alexander Trefz and his wife, Dr. Emily Trefz. Beloved physicians in Weston, the pair enjoyed many years in the home. Following the death of Dr. Emily Trefz, the Weston Democrat bought the home in 1997, from which the local newspaper operated until 2016. Weston Publishing owned the home from 2016-2019, when it went up for auction in 2019 and the Hardman's purchased the property.



Cont'd

Kobelgard Haus

served in courses by the hotel waiters:

Small Oysters, Half Shell

Brown Bread Sandwiches

Olives Salted Almonds Celery

Chicken Gumbo

Baked Blue Fish with Fine Herbs
Potatoes Duchesse

Fillet of Beef, Richelieu
Asparagus Tips, Sauce Mousseline
Macaroni, Milanaise

Maraschino Cherry Sherbet

Sweet Breads in Cases
French Peas

French Salad

New York Ice Cream
Assorted Fancy Cakes

MacLaren Imperial Cheese
Toasted Crackers

Coffee

La Grand Marque

Long a gem in the crown of Weston's downtown historic architecture, the Kobelgard Haus is gaining a new life under Robin's careful attention to detail. The Kobelgard Haus is a historic space for modern celebration, designed to host special events that bring a community together. The space will be suitable for bridal parties, small weddings and rehearsal dinners, anniversary or birthday celebrations, retirement parties, holiday dinners, and business meetings. The Weston community has already benefited from the multiple special events open to the public that have been on the calendar at the Kobelgard Haus.

The home's magnificent original spaces, such as the gothic staircase, are complemented by newly envisioned spaces, such as the sumptuous second-floor bathroom suite, and bedrooms renovated to fit the original time period of the home.



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Like the Kobelgard family before her, Robin Hardman approached the restoration of the Kobelgard house with a tremendous respect for her family and the community of Weston. The rooms upstairs of the Kobelgard home are named for her sisters (including her beloved Renate, who left this world too early in 2020), a cousin (who helped work on the home for three years), and Robin herself. Major restoration of the home's interior included removal of massive amounts of concrete from both upstairs bathrooms, taking down interior walls to return spaces to their original configuration, and a realignment and repair to the home's dumbwaiter (which also functions as a manually operated elevator). The chef's kitchen offers access to the dining room via door or passthrough, and the home's Main Street facing sunroom offers bright views of the downtown area. Robin's keen eye for detail secured period hinges and light fixtures, and she brought the dining room's hand painted wallpaper to new life, with complementary wainscoting paint colors.

The Kobelgard Haus receives abundant natural light from the magnificent windows throughout, but both original and customized stained glass make interior spaces special. Of course, in an older home that has been unoccupied, there are elements of disrepair, which included many broken glass panes. Never one to be wasteful, Robin preserved the broken panes of glass, which were later re-cut to be added to the new custom cabinetry in the kitchen. Similarly, floors that had to be taken out were repurposed in other parts of the home.

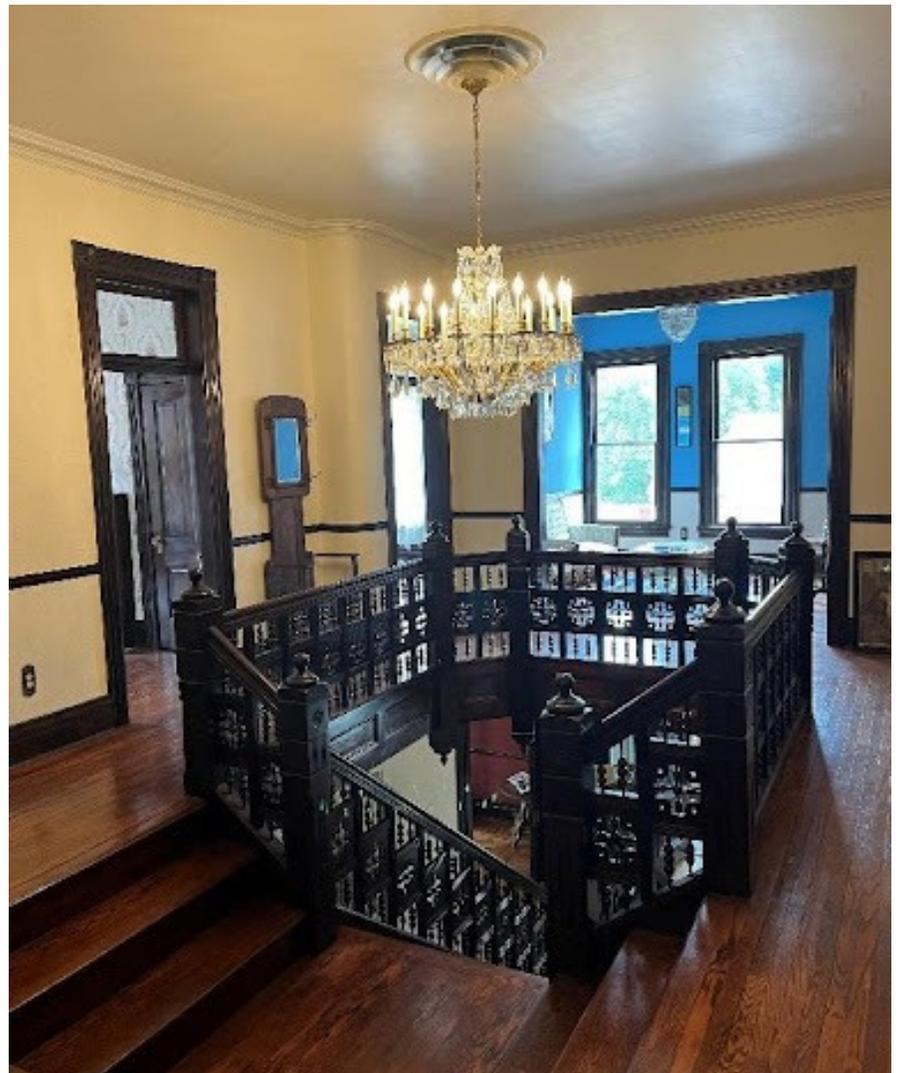
Kobelgard Haus

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Old Hill Cemetery Clean Up

By Anna Cardelli

Old Hill Cemetery is the original cemetery for the town of Weston. This cemetery is historically important and in need of preservation. This fall the access road to the top of the hill was repaved to allow for improved access to the upper portion of the cemetery. This year a focus is being made to complete the Clio tours for this site, clean up and cemetery plot maps.

The Weston has a dedicated group of volunteers who have been meeting regularly to restore headstones, plot maps and restore family grave sites at the historic cemetery. If you wish to volunteer for this opportunity or find out the next work date please contact Marty Lewis with the city of Weston at mlewis@cityofwestonwv.com

To find out more about this cemetery please visit The Clio at <https://theclio.com/entry/116270>



The Weston Cultural Center

By Anna Cardelli

The Weston Cultural Center building has been working with the Mill's Group on the final front facade drawings of the Cultural Center while we secure the remaining funding to complete the building through grants. The building has now had hazardous material abatement, removal of dilapidated addition, hillside drainage completed, a new roof, gutters, soffits, and corbel restoration.

With the generous support of the local community participation in the slate roof fundraiser, the team has been able to have the stained glass windows removed safely from the building for restoration. The team is ready to secure the last phase of construction drawings to complete the final phase of this building.

If you are interested in becoming an active participant with this project please reach out to the City of Weston or the Weston HLC. The team will be continuing to work on the final construction phase of this project as well as the opening and operation of the Weston Cultrual Center.



How you can help

How you can help? The projects you have read about in this newsletter represent a significant and long-term commitment to preserving Weston and Lewis County's heritage. The Weston Historic Landmark Commission is a 100% volunteer-based group that has dedicated participants who are very passionate about this community. If you share our passion for the City of Weston and Lewis County, you may be wondering how you can help! We need volunteers to support exhibits, restoration projects, and community activities.

Do you have time to be a member of the HLC if so please contact us directly or reach out to the City of Weston for an application to be a member of the HLC. HLC members are passionate about preserving the past history and culture of Weston, WV.

We also need volunteers to help us bring programming to the public and help us keep costs as affordable as possible. If you are unable to participate physically and want to contribute via work-at-home projects or monetary contributions, these are other ways you can support our goals. We have something for everyone, and we appreciate all contributions, large and small. If you wish to support our work, please contact westonhlc@cityofwestonwv.com to find out more.

The Weston Facade Grant Program



City of Weston
Facade Grant



PROJECTS UP TO \$5K CAN QUALIFY FOR UP TO \$2,500 IN MATCHING FUNDS

FACADE GRANT PROGRAM



Overview

About Us

The facade grant program has been developed to assist with the rehabilitation and maintenance needs of buildings and homes in Weston, WV.

A well-maintained community attracts visitors, promotes retail activity, and elevates community pride.

Application Deadline

All applications must be received by July 31st, 2023. All projects must be completed within six months of award date.

What it is:

- Improvements
- Restoration
- Painting
- Roofing
- Maintenance

APPLY NOW

Visit Our Website



CityofWestonWV.com



Contact Us

304-269-6141

