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Sunday, Oct. 3, 1999

By NORM SINGLETON
Times Reporter

Lynn Farthing says she had four options as she debated what to do about the roof on the landmark Dover home at 728 N. Wooster Ave., which she and Karen Gustafson purchased 1½ years ago.

Farthing, a recent graduate of the building preservation/restoration associate degree program at Belmont Technical College in St. Clairsville, decided to go for total restoration at more than double the cost of any other option.

To accomplish the task she enlisted the expertise of the Durable Slate Co. of Columbus, which replaced all the valley, chimney, hip and ridge flashings in copper. Broken and missing slates were replaced with recycled slate of the same type as is on the roof. Durable Slate also rebuilt the box gutters and relined them in copper, as well as rebuilt both chimneys because the mortar was totally gone.

Durable Slate Co. was founded in 1988 as a slate roof restoration contractor. One of the first actions of Durable Slate was to salvage as much roofing slate as possible. Most newly quarried slates do not match old weathered slates. With the large selection of salvaged roofing slate, Durable Slate could complete major restorations without altering the original beauty intrinsic to slate roofs.

Today, Durable Slate Co. is one of the largest installers and restorers of slate roofs in North America. With a salvaged slate stock of more than 250,000 pieces and new slate from most major quarries around the world, the company is able to match most slate roofs anywhere in the country.

For Farthing, a graduate of Strasburg High who now lives in Grosse Pointe, Mich. — as does Gustafson — it has been a labor of love to reha-



T-R Bob Christy

Matt Wolf (L) and Gary Howes of the Durable Slate Co. in Columbus work on the roof of the house at 728 N. Wooster Ave., Dover, being rehabilitated by Lynn Farthing.

bilitate the structure which has served various uses over the years.

It was built as a home in the 1890-92 period — and still is a home for the people who have apartments in the structure today. For many years it housed Hennis Nursing Home, now Hennis Care Centre and Assisted Living Center at 1720 Cross St., Dover.

"I think there is no way not to be

attracted to this house if you have any respect for craftsmanship and materials from the past," said Farthing.

She said the reason she and her business partner purchased the structure was as an investment. "However, I think monetarily it's not an investment for ourselves," Farthing said. "We feel we are investing in the community of Dover."

Farthing said that with the school-

ing she has had in the last year she understands how people get involved in such rehabilitation projects.

"You start to see it come back to life," Farthing said. "It becomes sturdier and sturdier with every brick I have reset under the cornice. It's kind of like resuscitating someone."

The project has been part of Farthing's practicum to complete

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her degree in building preservation at Belmont Technical College.

According to Farthing when the project is completed the roof is going to be back the way it was when it was constructed. "However, to say that doesn't cover the reasoning why we chose that method of intervention," she explained.

She said that when it was determined the level of the water problem the house had she researched different materials to use because the roof has box gutters, which is something a little out of the ordinary and presents a special challenge.

"I talked to many, many roofers and I read many, many articles on different materials," she said. "I also stopped between here and Michigan and here and school to look at houses with box gutters to see how they had intervened. I would just knock on the doors. Everybody was forthcoming with information and they all had their own story."

She said the bottom line in her opinion and the opinion of an independent consultant she hired — Simon Herbert, one of the professors in the Belmont Tech program — was to make sure that it was going to function properly and actually restore it with the materials that were used to build the house.

That was Buckingham slate, which was designed to last 300 years. "It is 100-years-old now, so it has a good 200 years left on it," Farthing said. The slate comes from Buckingham County, Va.

She said Durable Slate Co. probably put about 2,500 pieces of Buckingham slate on the roof that the company had salvaged from around the state.

Durable has completed the first phase of the project as Farthing puts the finishing touches to the cornices. Farthing said she plans to have Durable Slate Co. return sometime in the future to put standing seam copper on the front porch roof and replace the asphalt shingles that are on the front gable with slate.

The box gutters were totally rebuilt by Durable Slate Co. That project involved removing wood that had rotted over the years and replacing it with new lumber as well as relining them with copper that workers formed on site with their machines.

Farthing pointed out that Durable Slate Co. has an extensive staff of craftsmen who are highly trained. "I've really never seen a company like it in my life," she said. She said they came in the first day with truck after truck and the crew literally hit the roof running. They did not stop except for rain.

"They have their own mason crew, own slate crew, and own engineering crew," Farthing said.

Underneath the box gutters were cornices approximately two feet high, a project for which Farthing received assistance from Jeff Miller of Fieldview Cabinet & Wood Products in Dover.

Describing Miller as a preservationist and her mentor, Farthing said, "He has literally saved me on this job. I simply could not have restored the

cornice without him. He is a wealth of information."

Also contributing their talents to the project have been:

□ Dennis Wees, a stained glass master who teaches stained glass at Belmont Tech. Wees and Farthing removed the very large stained glass window in the building so that it can be restored.

□ Sue Pratt, a preservation student from Dayton who is helping with the cornice restoration.

□ Liz Hipp of Bright Ideas store in New Philadelphia, who is also a graduate of the preservation program at Belmont Tech. "She has been a source of inspiration to me as she is restoring her own house in New Philadelphia," Farthing said.

□ Belmont Technical College's preservation program. "The only way I could have hoped to have done this right is through the knowledge I gained from that program," Farthing said. "That simply cannot be overstated. There is so much to know about materials and applicability for a job of this type. Without proper training the time and money would simply be wasted."

Meanwhile, Farthing is working to rehabilitate the interior, noting that when she finds things such as the oak and walnut floor she has them restored.

She said she has found parts from two of the original fireplaces, but said the mantels no longer exist. She said that Miller has given her a Victorian mantel piece that will be put over one of the hearths. "It will be a conversation piece because the fireplace will be nonfunctioning," Farthing said.

Miller has also made baseboard to match the original in one of the apartments. So far four of the seven apartments have been rehabilitated.

Farthing said that when the structure was converted into an apartment building new walls were constructed. As a result the woodwork on those walls are not original.

An addition that was built when the house was being used by Hennis Nursing Home has a flat roof on it. "Ron Pruett of Commercial Roofing really helped me in a lot of ways," Farthing said. "He provided me all kinds of different information on roofing materials and different options I could go with."

She noted that Pruett actually doesn't do residential work. "But he knew the jam I was in and said he would do it for me," Farthing said.

Pruett took all the old sheeting material off and put down new insulation and Duralast roofing membrane.

Teresa Prince, who operates Personal Touch Painting in New Philadelphia, will be painting the wood exterior surfaces of the house next spring. Prince is also serving as a color consultant on the project.

"My tenants have been patient, wonderful and kind through all of this," Farthing said. "I've told all of them they are going to be so proud to live in this building. And I want them to love it here. That's the whole point. It's about people first and building second."