

# INDEPENDENT

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## SOUTH COUNTY



PHOTOS: MICHAEL DERR

A section of the 19th-century home "Broadmoor" makes its way down Boston Neck Road to its new location near Wood Avenue on Tuesday morning.

# MOVE IT OR LOSE IT

### The journey to save a historic home in Narragansett comes to an end with a memorable trip down the road

By Bill Seymour

Special to the Independent

NARRAGANSETT — It's not every day that a very large house rolls slowly along Boston Neck Road, taking up the full width of the street and with only about four inches on each side at the tightest spots.

That is exactly what happened Tuesday morning when "Broadmoor" — an 1896 house — moved on a motorized dolly about 1,000 feet down the road to its new location. Even more unusual for this day and mid-morning were 200 people gathered as if on a parade route.

They snapped pictures on cell phones, took videos and stood in the middle of the road to watch as the creeping 6,000-foot structure pushed them back as it invaded their space. "The thrill is to see something happen you don't see often, with kids watching and history in the making," said Susan Flynn of Narragansett, standing alongside the road as the journey began around 10:30 a.m.

Not far away, Lynnette Vallejo watched the behemoth literally drop inch by inch over



Greg Slattery trims branches from an upper-level window of the 19th-century home "Broadmoor" as it makes its way down Boston Neck Road to its new location near Wood Avenue on Tuesday morning.

the curb to the road in front of the property at 175 Boston Neck Road where it sat for over 100 years when this town was very different.

The two-and-a-half-story wood frame house measures 53 feet by 75 feet and has seven

bedrooms and two fireplaces. It features a 34-by-65-foot wraparound porch and a rear deck. It has been assessed at \$2.1 million.

When the owners wanted to build a new home on the property, Greg Slattery learned of

the house being for sale and bought it. Slattery and the owners wanted to avoid destroying this home that is part of Narragansett's history.

Slattery and a real estate



PHOTO COURTESY: KEENE ARCHITECTURE

A drone photo taken by Josh Bolaski of Keene Architecture shows the slow path workers took down Boston Neck Road while moving a home approximately 1,000 feet to a new location Tuesday morning.

## Move

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agent worked to find a nearby location that would be south of the current site. Going north would be impossible due to overhanging trees and utility lines. They finally found a property that had two lots, with one not used. He bought the

property, which is just across from the Dunes Club at the edge of the beachfront that stretches further down into The Pier area.

Once more, as the old house moved just a few inches at a time, it became clear that it would continue to sit by that ocean.

"What an undertaking and what an enormous feat,"

Vallejo said as it rolled past her in a choreographed fashion to avoid trees, wires and mailboxes without going too fast or too slow on the sloping road.

Pennsylvania-based Wolfe Home and Building Movers staff used high-tech tablets to control every move of this old structure.

The move also included preparing another house in its

future location to be moved elsewhere on the property. To pull this off, Slattery needed assistance and approvals from town officials and to schedule a variety of temporary utilities changes to prevent taking down electrical, cable and other wires strung overhead along the road.

"It's going just awesome. It's amazing. I'm so happy," said Slattery as the house rolled toward him and no real hitches developed in the detailed plans.

He frequently walked in front of the house, which was moved in two pieces — one small and the other very large. Various people who worked with him took pictures of him and he smiled at the cameras like a local celebrity.

At one point, the moving came to a short halt. The house had about four inches of clearance on either side sandwiched by two utility poles. A tree branch hanging out started to scrape the building.

"We're just barely making it," Slattery, who ran from one side of the house to another, yelled to the moving crew.

A ladder was propped up and Slattery climbed into the house and then went up to the second



PHOTO: MICHAEL DERR

Greg Slattery, the new owner of the 19th-century home "Broadmoor" in Narragansett shares a laugh with architect Laurie Keene, left, and surveyor Amy Sonder as the house makes its way down Boston Neck Road to its new location near Wood Avenue on Tuesday morning.

floor. He opened a window and sawed off portions of the branches in the way and dollies carrying the house started to move again.

After removing those small obstacles to a smooth ride, both sections — large and small — arrived at their intended location known as 0 Boston Neck Road. It will be put into position over a series of "footers" instead of a poured foundation.

"Then they put it on cribbing and we build a foundation up to the house," said Slattery, who would not disclose the total costs for the moving of two houses, improvements and cost to buy the land.

Gary and Lesley Engelson, who live nearby, came out to watch and walked over to Slattery to introduce themselves. "When is the house warming party? Don't forget to invite us,"

Lesley said with a laugh.

"How often do you get to see something like this," Gary Engelson said later. Many others there agreed and Michael DeLuca, the town's community development director, said that house-moving projects don't regularly happen in Narragansett.

Jim Bennett sold a lot on his land to Slattery for the more-than-century-old house. Bennett's current house is the one to be moved onto the adjoining property. He came to watch the festivities.

"This house is being saved. This house is beautiful and you don't tear down these houses," he said.

Write to Bill Seymour, freelance writer covering news and feature stories, at independent.south-countylife@gmail.com.



PHOTO: MICHAEL DERR

A crowd gathers to watch sections of the 19th-century home "Broadmoor" make their way down Boston Neck Road to the house's new location near Wood Avenue on Tuesday morning.