APPLICATION FOR LANDMARK DESIGNATION
Landmark Preservation Commission
Incorporated Village of Freeport
46 North Ocean Avenue
Freeport, NY 11520

Application No. __________
Sec. 62 Block 50 Lot 110

NAME: Freeport Historical Society    DATE: March 2012
ADDRESS: 350 South Main Street, Freeport, NY    TELEPHONE: 516-623-9632

ORGANIZATION (if any):

IDENTIFICATION
1 BUILDING NAMES (S): Freeport Historical Society Museum

2. COUNTY: Nassau       TOWN/CITY: Freeport     VILLAGE: Freeport

3. STREET LOCATION: 350 South Main Street, Freeport

4. OWNERSHIP: private

5. PRESENT OWNER: Trustees of the Freeport Historical Society    ADDRESS: as above

6. USE: Original: Bay House   Present: Local History Museum

7. ACCESSIBILITY TO PUBLIC:
   Exterior visible from public road: Yes

DESCRIPTION
8. BUILDING MATERIAL: clapboard

9 STRUCTURAL SYSTEM: Wood frame with poured concrete foundation

10. CONDITION: Excellent

11. INTEGRITY: Original site

12 PHOTO:
14. THREATS TO BUILDING: Commercial development of area

15. RELATED OUTBUILDINGS AND PROPERTY: Shed; original Bayview Avenue 9/11 Memorial; Mott Monument (Civil War monument)

16. SURROUNDINGS OF THE BUILDING: Residential and Commercial

17. INTERRELATIONSHIP OF BUILDING AND SURROUNDINGS: This building is not located in a designated historic district; however, the building is located in one of the earliest settlements in Freeport. Many of the surrounding buildings were built in the late 1700s and early 1800s.

380 South Main Street was built in 1788
348 South Main Street was built in 1838
346 South Main Street was built in 1858
340 South Main Street was built in 1858
322 South Main Street was built in 1873
378 South Main Street was built in 1878

18. OTHER NOTABLE FEATURES OF BUILDING AND SITE:

The Museum is now technically a two-story dwelling with a full attic story and a raised basement that extends beneath the entire structure. Both front (east) and back facades are roughly symmetrical in massing and fenestration, although the front appears to be of only one story beneath a long sloping roof while the back appears to be fully three stories high owing to the gambrel-roof attic. Nowhere is the complexity of the house better illustrated than on the south façade, however, where numerous multi-paned casement windows punctuate a variety of projecting gables, peaks and asymmetrical wall surfaces. On the south façade the profile of the original dwelling may be traced and the additions identified as an irregular massing of rooms that rise above and to the back of the gabled-roofed, 1 ½-story core. The uniformity of exterior wall cladding and window type is evidently due to the renovation of the pre-existing house during the construction of the back addition(s), which resulted in the removal of 6-over-6 sash and the construction of an oriel window with the upper gable of the front section. Close examination of the existing fabric further suggests, however, that the back extension was built in at least two stages as defined by a break in the concrete foundation located approximately 3’-2’ from the southwest corner. Additional photographic documentation may help to clarify the evolution of the upper structure, but it appears that the first “improvement” elevated the original house on a raised concrete foundation and extended it partially at the back. The subsequent construction of additional footings for the present configuration took place at the later date, and the questionable engineering of the cantilevered west façade raises the possibility of yet a third alteration as well. The whole detailing if not in form and is expressive of the unique personalities of its owners. Further, the plan is partially
expressed by the external room projections – a unique feature – resulting in spaces such as the attic artist’s studio clearly discernable from the outside

The front façade is a 1 ½-story side resting on a full basement, four bays wide with three bays recessed with in a subsumed porch and the remaining (north) bay projecting to the front line of the porch. A straight pitched roof rises to a peak above the original 1 ½-story core where it narrows and continues upward and back to a new ridge dominated by a brick chimney at the north end a shed-roofed dormer on the east side of the south end. The roof is now clad with composition shingle; the walls are sheathed with shiplap siding and the raised concrete basement wholly concealed by foundation plantings. The front door is centered within the porch between 6-over-6 windows that retain louvered shutters. The door is paneled, its robust applied moldings outlining four panels whose top corners are clipped diagonally in the Victoria mode. A secondary front door that leads into the projecting north bay is glazed and appears to date from the turn-of-the-century.

The porch itself is supported on four square wooden piers, the two at the center being more closely spaced and framing the front door. A staircase rises in two runs and turns on intermediate landings before joining a center landing in front of the door, beneath which is located a simple batten door that gives access to the basement story beneath. Balusters, newel posts and railings are of wood and unmolded, the only ornamentation being a crossed arrangement of balusters centered on each bay of the house and on the lower landings of the staircase. Much of this fabric appears to survive from one or more of the historic periods although the treads and risers are evidently new replacements of the originals. All exterior wood fabric with the exception of the steps is painted white.

The south façade, like the east, is clad with ship-lap siding measuring 7” in exposed width with two simulated clapboards of 3 ½ width each. Unlike the front façade, however, the windows are multi-paned casements and preserve a 2-story dwelling on a raised basement with a substantial attic story extending to the rear beneath a steeply pitched peak and a flattened gambrel-roof extension. As noted previously, the concrete foundation is in two parts, its 3’-2” addition appearing at the west side and evidently corresponding to a later addition of rooms above. The original 1 ½-story core of the house may be seen at the right (east) of this façade, its windows having been removed and casements inserted that are sympathetic to the others. The cantilevered second story projects approximately 3’ beyond the southwest corner of the foundation. Like the front, foundation plantings hide much of the basement story.

The west façade is gambrel-roofed, its second and attic stories overhanging the ground floor entry centered between the basement and first floor levels. Wall cladding is like that of the other facades and the windows are evenly spaced and multi-paned. The symmetry and the continuity of this wall suggests a single construction period, while the similarity of a 3-part casement window arrangement on the second story with that of the south façade indicated that these features were probably introduced at the same time.
The north façade preserves the irregular massing observed on the south. Like the south, the profile of the original 1 ½-story dwelling may be seen within the expanded structure, although it is now dominated by a large, 42-light window centered on the old roof peak. The back section of the house is recessed from the front area and, like the south façade, cantilevered on the back wall as well. A large 15-light fixed window opening is located on the third attic story beneath the gambrel roofed extension. Wall cladding repeats that observed elsewhere, and the foundation is of concrete and preserves the same physical evidence of the 3'-2" addition at the west side as that which is described on the south façade.

SIGNIFICANCE:
19. DATE OF INITIAL CONSTRUCTION: circa 1863
   ARCHITECT AND BUILDER: Unknown

20. HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL IMPORTANCE:

Preliminary historical research suggests that the museum, formerly a compact bayman’s dwelling of 1 ½ stories, was built circa 1863. It appears as “Raynor R. Smith” on Beers’ Atlas of Long Island [1873], at which time it displayed a square footprint corresponding to its earliest photographic image dated circa 1900. It was during the long tenancy of Dr. and Mrs. Thomas H. Evans [circa 1900 to 1961] that extensive alterations and additions were carried out resulting in its present form. Acquisition by the Freeport Historical Society in 1961 was followed by stabilization of the building and replacement of the heating system. The structure now serves as the society’s museum and houses an extensive collection of local memorabilia.

The names “Raynor” and “Smith” are historically linked to the development of Freeport. Edward Raynor and John Rock Smith are recorded as seventeenth century Hempstead settlers associated with the original colonization of the “Great South Woods,” later “Raynortown” and renamed Freeport by popular vote in 1853. Numerous Raynor households may be observed on the Beers’ Atlas in 1873 within the vicinity of the present museum, and the nearby grist and saw mills, are the area’s oldest industries, were still operated by the Raynor family. Also, nearby was the Richard Smith’s Hotel, and indication of Freeport’s diversified economy, which by the 1870s owed its prosperity to the arrival of the South Side Rail Road north of town. The Raynor R. Smith house is therefore rich in local historical associations of the early period whereas the structure itself, which was greatly transformed at the turn-of-the-century by a later owner, is architecturally associated with more recent building traditions.

Dr. Thomas H. Evans and his wife, Edith Gertrude Selene Evans, are credited with the extensive modification of the former Raynor R. Smith house at some point early in their ownership, circa 1910. He was a eminent professor of research and anatomy at New York Medical College and died at the age 82; she was a noted anthropologist, Egyptologist and photographer who died in 1948. Their transformation of this
formerly modest dwelling into a rambling and idiosyncratic summerhouse essentially disguised the original building, which is now subsumed within the multi-storied and intricately roofed building.

While the mid-nineteenth century origins of the Raynor R. Smith house may be further traced and developed in terms of Freeport’s early development, it is in the later period that the selling achieves its distinctive appearance and unique internal arrangement. The period of significance for the Freeport Historical Museum, therefore, stretches from its construction date until its last major alteration, circa 1863-1910.

21. SOURCES:
