

This old house is on the move

18th century Dutch home transported from Jersey, reassembled in Ulster

BY ROBERT FORD

Ulster County Press

Families move, houses don't. Well, normally houses don't move, except for this one home built in the 1790s in Montville, N.J., which is in the process of making its third and last move.

Built in the late 18th Century, the Zabriskie House is a Dutch Home that was the subject of a Discovery Channel "Dirty Jobs" show when it was first moved, according to Brian Kennedy, owner of Historic Housewrights, Inc. of Accord, which is overseeing the house's final move.

About a year ago, the then-owner of the home, Sal Saia, moved it in one piece from its original location a short distance up the road. Saia purchased the home named for a former local miller about a year-and-a-half ago. He then had the house jacked up, placed on two steel girders and then onto a flat-bed truck and moved up the street to a piece of property he owned. The house was slated for demolition, and Saia told the television show that he couldn't see a piece of Montville's historic Dutch past destroyed.

He had planned on putting it on the property next to the home he lived in, which was also a home built by the township's original Dutch settlers, and slowly restore the old house.

But his plans were thwarted when the township's planning board would not grant him approval to subdivide his property. So Saia put the home up on the Internet, which is where local resident and old house restorer Brian Kennedy spotted it.



COURTESY PHOTO

OLD DUTCH HOME being disassembled.

Kennedy purchased the home for \$1 with an eye to moving to a piece of land he owns on Palenville Road in Kerhonkson. Kennedy and a crew of four spent 14 days photographing the house, doing detailed drawings - including numbering every piece of the house - and then dismantling it.

The four-bedroom, 1,700-square foot house will be packed into a 40-foot tractor-trailer and moved to Kerhonkson this week. Kennedy said he is unsure of how long it will take to put the house back together, but when it is completed it will be totally restored. Reassembly is slated to begin in the spring.

"I've always been a huge fan of American architecture," Kennedy said of his love for old homes. "And we are losing it at a rapid rate."

He said that too many of America's traditional homes are being torn down to make room for generic "McMansions." "This is a beautiful old Dutch house and needed to be saved," Kennedy said.

The original house, Kennedy said, was about 28-feet-by-28-feet, and two additions were added in the 1800s. Another addition was added in the 1960s, but Kennedy said he would not be saving that section. "I'm a purist," Kennedy said of his desire to only save and restore the most historic portions of the house.

Parts of the home that were lost to rot or removed over the course of the years will be replicated in Kennedy's shop. "We will reproduce what we can't save," Kennedy said. "But the house is in really good shape."

When the house is finished, it will have all the modern amenities, Kennedy said.

Kennedy, who lived with his family on Long Island until he

was 13 years old, said he became interested in old homes when his family took a tour of a Bethpage, Long Island restoration project.

The family was looking to move up the Hudson Valley, and it was decided that when they moved they would look for an old house to live in. They found a home built in the 1800s in Gardiner.

When he was 19, Kennedy saw a story in the *New York Times* about a man who was restoring an old home. "The next day, I decided that's what I wanted to do with my life," Kennedy said.

He said his wife Sharon and three children, Levi, Maeve and Nash, are totally supportive of his venture. When his eldest son, Levi, was old enough to talk, Kennedy said, he would spot a dilapidated house and say, "broke down house, daddy fix." And for the last 16 years, the 36-year old Kennedy has been working on historic old homes and breathing new life into them.