The “Westly” Sears Kit House
Lewisburg, Greenbrier County

This ready-to-assemble Sears Kit Home is located in the Lewisburg Historic District. Known as “The Westly”, this style was one of the most popular sold through the Sears, Roebuck, and Company mail order catalogs. The home was delivered in over 10,000 labeled pieces with assembly instructions. Delivery of such commodities was made possible when the railroad expanded into downtown Lewisburg from 1905-1907.

In 1941, the Greenbrier County Commission purchased the dwelling and used it as the office for the West Virginia University Extension Service. Currently, the building maintains the original floor plan but is vacant and deteriorating.

The Lewisburg Historic Landmarks Commission and Lewisburg Preservation Alliance are engaging the Greenbrier County Commission in hopes to prepare a preservation plan for the Westly to either be used by the county or sold to a sensitive buyer looking to restore it.

Preservation Alliance of West Virginia
PO Box 3371, Charleston WV 25333 / 304-345-6005 / www.pawv.org
The Westly, Sears Kit Home

Location: Lewisburg, Greenbrier County

Endangerment: Neglect

Construction Date: 1924-1925

Background: This ready-to-assemble Sears kit home is located in the Lewisburg Historic District. Known as the Westly, this style was one of the most popular sold through the Sears, Roebuck, and Company mail-order catalogs. The home was delivered in over 10,000 labeled pieces with assembly instructions. In 1941, the Greenbrier County Commission purchased the dwelling and used it as the office for the West Virginia University Extension Service. Currently, the building maintains the original floor plan but is vacant and deteriorating.

Description: The Westly is a two-story Bungalow located between the Greenbrier County Court House and the Governor Price House. It is easily recognizable because the roofline on the rear of the house is higher than the roofline on the front of the house. It also maintains the distinctive double porch columns. This particular model has had its dormer extended and the upper-level balcony enclosed leading to water infiltration. The floor plan remains remarkably unchanged.

Significance: Sears kit homes represent the new economic opportunities available to Americans in the early twentieth century. The kit homes are significant because of their affordability, modernity, and accessibility during the inter-war period. They offered the latest technology to home buyers and made owning a home more economically feasible. For southeastern West Virginia, railroad construction and expansion into Ronceverte and Lewisburg from 1905-1907 made the delivery of kit homes possible.

2013 Preservation Steps: The Lewisburg Historic Landmarks Commission and Lewisburg Preservation Alliance are engaging the Greenbrier County Commission in hopes of preparing a preservation plan for the Westly to either be used by the county or sold to a sensitive buyer looking to restore it.

Ultimate Goal: Reuse and preserve the dwelling.

Resources: The Greenbrier County Commission has limited resources for preservation. Since the Greenbrier County Commission is the owner, no other groups have been identified for potential fundraising or other resources.

Nominated by: Lewisburg Historic Landmarks Commission