

UTS Barrytown Buildings & Grounds Evaluation- An open letter to the UTS Board of Trustees

Frank Zochol, Henry Christopher, Donna Ferrantello, Tony Ferrantello, Jonathan Brundrett, Tony Formby
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By a committee of concerned UTS Alumni and Unification Church members.

We have been watching with increased concern, the deterioration of the buildings and grounds at UTS Barrytown over the last few years, and the rapid acceleration of that deterioration since UTS moved to NYC two years ago. This situation we feel is not so much a result of cuts in staff and budget, but rather due to neglect and lack of a systematic approach to maintenance and caretaking responsibilities.



The Potato Barn, where True Father made and repaired fishing nets is in ruins because roof repairs were not done when needed.

We feel the whole 250 acres of this property is holy ground by virtue of the fact that it was purchased and often visited by the Lord of the 2nd Advent. The places that the Messiah worked and taught, fished and prayed are particularly sacred and should be care for and maintained as such. Unfortunately, they have been neglected and forgotten. The potato barn where he made fishing nets has collapsed into the ground because roof repairs were not done; the rocks on the Hudson River where he fished and prayed for America have become a haven for drug dealers and teen drinking and parties, and Father's Trail, where he talked so intimately to UTS students has become overgrown and uncared for.



Herring Rock—UTS waterfront property—where True Father fished and prayed for America, has been abandoned over the years by the Seminary, and has become a haven for teen drinking and drug dealing

If Christians could identify a place in Israel that they believed Jesus frequented or where he preached, they would turn it into a beautiful pilgrimage site. It would become a holy shrine, and it would feel holy by virtue of the love and care they took to preserve it. Sadly, the UTS campus has become a place that hardly reflects the love and reverence we have for the True Parents. The rundown appearance of the property conveys an almost opposite effect of neglect and lack of love for the property and True Parents.



Fallen trees on campus left to rot.

Howie Callie, our church member and groundskeeper for over 30 years, who maintained the grounds with professional and loving care was let go two years ago. He charged a rate lower than the going rate in this area for all his work, which was extensive. He often did jobs without charge and used his own equipment, which he maintained at his own expense. Nevertheless, UTS management decided it could save money by laying him off. It bought an expensive mower to cut the lawns instead of continuing his services, but has failed to keep the lawns cut on a regular basis which has contributed greatly to the unkempt appearance of the campus. UTS management also took on the snowplowing and salting responsibilities, but has failed to do an adequate job of clearing the snow and making the roads safe on a timely basis when the snow falls.

We understand that Carl Verderber, the competent, hard working and well organized building maintenance man who has served UTS for eleven years, is very frustrated by the management's inability to follow standard maintenance procedures for buildings and grounds of an institution like this—procedures that are in place at every college, community college, and golf course in the area.

The following are some other areas that have contribute to the abandoned appearance of the campus due to neglect, and grounds keeping that is not up to acceptable standards for any college. Work that Howie Callie always did with care and on a regular schedule: Drainage ditches are not kept open, causing serious erosion on gravel roads around the campus; the east gate road is full of holes due to snowplowing when the gate should have been closed in the winter as it always used to be; overhanging tree branches, vines and bushes along the roadsides go untrimmed; grass along the roadsides goes uncut giving a real abandoned look; fallen trees on campus are not cleaned up and hauled off; weeds and grass around the stone wall at the corner of River and Barrytown Roads. Are never cut, causing a neighbor on River Rd. to do the work because he doesn't like the sloppy appearance of our property in front of his house, while another neighbor mows some of our trails since UTS doesn't do it. Father's Trail is in much need of attention as well.



Roadside grass left uncut gives the campus a feeling of abandonment.

The waterfront property—called Herring Rock by the locals—where the Messiah used to fish and pray for the salvation of America has become a haven for teen drinking, drugs and parties. It is always littered with trash and beer bottles. Six months ago, a large tree, including roots and branches, washed up on the rocks where Father used to sit and fish. The dead tree now occupies his fishing spot.

Buildings in need of maintenance are neglected:

1. The potato barn—where the Messiah spent many hours in the 1970s and 1980s making and repairing his unique fishing nets to train UTS students in fishing in the Tivoli Bay—is collapsing into the earth, because a new roof was not put on it a few years ago. It now is overgrow with vines and an eyesore on campus.
2. The grey barn's roof is leaking, the silo tiles are cracked, and the barn may end up like the potato barn if not repaired soon.
3. Other outbuildings around campus are in immediate need of painting and repairs.

We think that after UTS moved to New York City, one of the first decisions to be made should have been to create a clear plan to ensure that the maintenance of the buildings and grounds were not neglected. However, the focus for nearly two years has been on poorly conceived and executed projects to make money off the property. Thousands of dollars have been spent and wasted on one bad idea after another, such as turning rooms in the Massena House into grand wedding suites with the now dashed hopes of renting out to weddings and conferences. Attempts to start an English language school have failed; a plan to rent rooms to 40 or more Bard students came to nothing, because the bathrooms and shower rooms on the third floor were ripped out and an attempt to rebuild them in one month failed. A lot of time and money has been spent trying to renovate them, but they still are unfinished. The time required to complete the bathroom project was badly estimated, even without considering the engineering problems which were not foreseen.



Corner of Barrytown and River Rds. First sight of UTS property. A neighbor, unhappy with the weeds on the stone wall in front of his house, partially cleans up the wall, leaving the rest covered in growth.

None of these plans had the financial backing needed to do all the renovations that might have given them a chance at

success. The latest money-making scheme has involved spending thousands of more dollars in farm equipment with the hope of making and selling hay. With just a little research, and listening to the advice of two of our members—Frank Zochol UTS alumnus (UTS’79) and Howie Callie, who did farming here in the early years—it would have been understood that the poor soils and labor intensive work needed to produce good quality hay would make this idea a bad investment of time, labor and money. But without working out the details, UTS has again embarked on another dubious project, while daily maintenance of the buildings and grounds are neglected.

The UTS Community Garden is in its sixth season and the Labyrinth even older. They were started and maintained by church members at no cost to the Seminary, and they both continue to add beauty to the campus, while attracting normal, law abiding citizens in the area. However, absence of normal and necessary maintenance of buildings and grounds have unfortunately attracted teenagers of low character, seeking places to drink, use drugs and play not so harmless pranks. (Garbage has been dumped on the campus; tire marks made in the soccer field, and a carload of kids with a rifle in the middle of the day this spring shot at windows of the main building and the Massena House while speeding through the campus.)

We understand that UTS has initiated the beginnings of a security system to rid the campus of these people, and to ensure that the campus is safe when the college students arrive in Sept. 2012; and that Henry Christopher (UTS ’80), former UTS Admissions Director, Marketing Director and presently Community Relations/ Security Director) is implementing that plan with a security patrol on weekend nights. Since April, he has managed with the help of friendly concerned neighbors to have the Red Hook police raid one such party on our waterfront property which resulted in multiply arrests for underage drinking, and selling and using drugs. We also understand that he has tracked down, confronted and removed from the main campus two or three carloads of kids each weekend night in April.

We hope that his suggestions—which we understand were supported by the Red Hook Police Chief Jim Truitt—to modestly increase patrolling during weekdays will be put into action immediately, as well as his other recommendations to further secure the campus from trespassers and to begin to gain back control over the campus, such as putting an electric gate at the main entrance accessible at night by card; locking the doors of the main building at night; putting posts and steel cable at the waterfront so that kids can’t park there or turn their cars around on the narrow CXS service road; putting up signs at both the main entrance and the east gate stating visiting hours and other rules for visitors, such as no alcoholic beverages, no smoking or drugs, etc. And finally, we hope that better efforts will be undertaken to maintain the buildings and grounds at a level that will stop attracting teen troublemakers to the campus.

We, the undersigned, and many others in the church community who share our sentiments, have the professional skills and knowledge that can be tapped into to resolve these issues and once again restore our pride and that of all American members in our beloved Barrytown campus. We would like to meet with members of the UTS Board of Trustees to discuss these issues, with the hope that with our consultation, measures will be taken and implemented to better maintain the buildings and grounds at UTS Barrytown, and in doing so, reflect the sincere love and devotion American members have for True Parents and the places which they have made holy by their presence.

Signed,

Frank Zochol (UTS’79), Henry Christopher (UTS ’80), Donna Ferrantello (UTS ’82), Tony Ferrantello (UTS ’83), Jonathan Brundrett (former UTS Engineer and Buildings & Grounds Manager), Tony Formby (former UTS Engineer and Buildings & Grounds Manager).