**Case Study: Behind Closed Doors**

In a recent Case Study, we talked about the probate sale of a real property in which a much-publicized murder had occurred. This Case Study deals with another sort of unexpected drama that we recently discovered behind closed doors.

Actually, the challenge started right at the property line. The yard was entirely overgrown. The garage was completely full. What we found inside was disturbing and sad: the shades drawn in an atmosphere of gloom, every room and every surface was entirely covered with the late owner’s possessions. There were clothes and books and papers and food, overloaded cartons and bulging plastic bags.

The elderly occupant, who had inherited the house from her mother, had not allowed anyone in for years. Once she passed away it became clear that she had lived in one room (the formal dining room, we later learned) and slept in a reclining chair, following a narrow pathway to and from the kitchen and bathroom.

Beyond the obvious accumulation, The Sanborn Team’s first challenge was to “figure out” the house. Some of the rooms were so full we could not even enter them to determine their size or function.

Probate real property, as we’ve mentioned before, is offered “as-is.” In a situation like this, where the impulse to clean and sanitize is so strong, we had to hold firm: the administrators were very limited in what they could do. Taking our suggestions, they hired professionals to remove all the hoarded items, scrub the house, and clean up the yard.

Their actions made a huge difference. Once that was done, we were surprised to discover a fireplace and a beautiful window in the living room, and original tilework in the small kitchen. Even without a coat of paint, a buyer can see the appeal of this older home with cove ceilings and plenty of classic charm.

Sometimes it takes a team to get a property ready for market. The Sanborn Team is grateful to a cooperative group of administrators and we look forward to making the most of this little gem.