

PRESERVATION CONNECTICUT NEWS

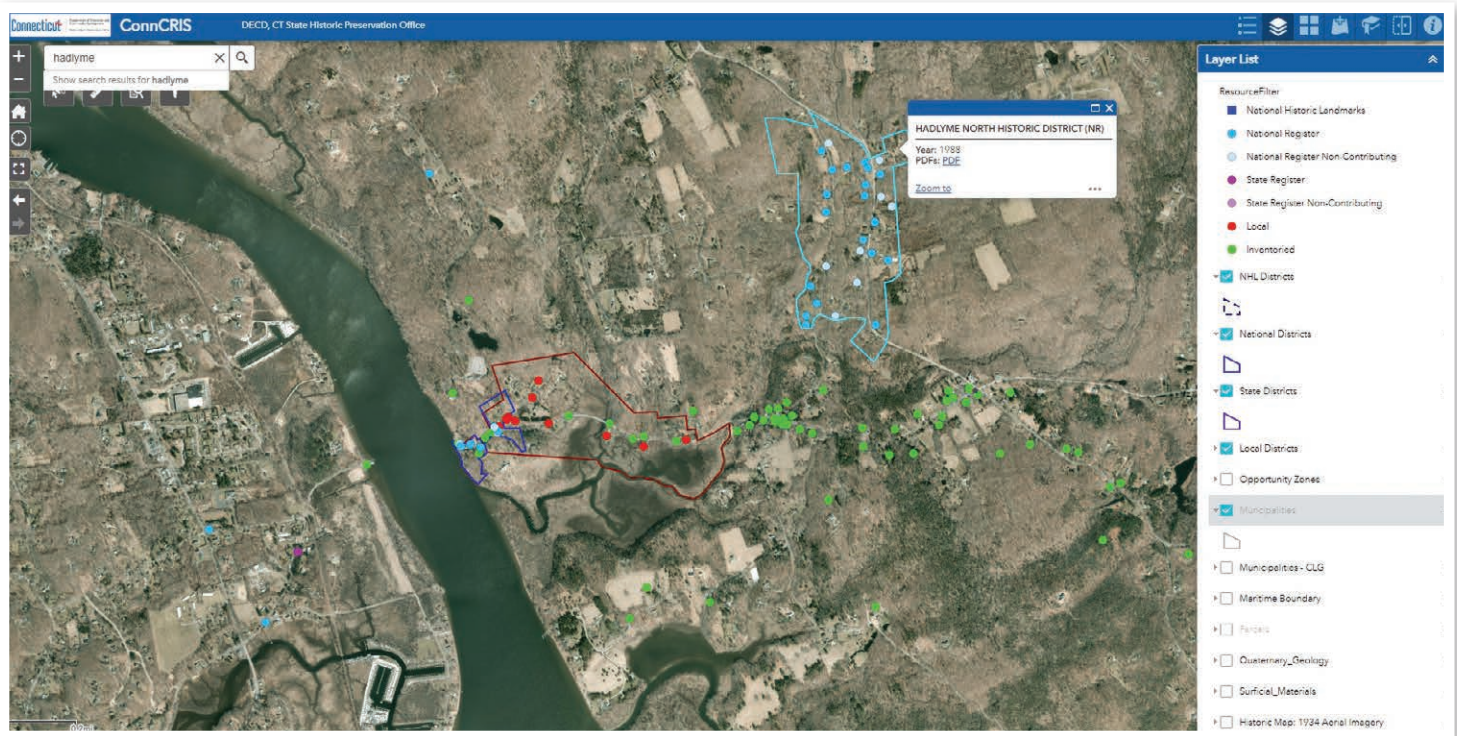
Preservation Connecticut

Seaside Under Threat

On February 1, the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) announced plans to demolish the historic Seaside Sanitarium buildings at Seaside State Park in Waterford. Although this action had long been expected, the difference is that DEEP now has funds for demolition: \$7.1 million from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), the \$1.9 trillion federal infrastructure and stimulus plan enacted in 2021.

According to the State, the work will include “removal of the deteriorated buildings, the implementation of restrooms and walking trails, shoreline improvements, picnic areas, parking improvements, historic interpretation of the site, and other elements.”

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ConnCRIS, the State's new online digital resource, will offer easy access to nearly 70 years of preservation surveys, documentation reports, and historic designation forms.

New this spring: Meet ConnCRIS!

The State Historic Preservation Office is honored to introduce the Connecticut Cultural Resource Information System, our new statewide digital resource, expected to launch in late March. ConnCRIS, as it is abbreviated, offers easy online access to 70 years of SHPO records such as surveys, documentation reports; and local, state, and national designation forms. With ConnCRIS, users will be able to find information about cultural resources within a specific area and search to see if a property is listed on the State or National Register, if it is within a Local Historic District, or has been documented in an Historic Resource Inventory.

ConnCRIS is an interactive geospatial database, created using GIS or Geographic Information System technology. "Geospatial" refers to sets of data that are tied to geographic and locational information. In this case, information about known archaeological sites and historic properties is connected to a map with multiple, searchable layers.

So far, ConnCRIS contains 96,543 location points for mapped resources plus polygons that outline historic district boundaries. These are linked to PDFs of the associated files. Nearly 100,000 pages were scanned from survey reports alone. ConnCRIS data points and historic district outlines are color-coded based on survey or designation status.

ConnCRIS, and GIS in general, allow users to understand patterns, distribution of resources, presence of resources in a specific area, geographic context, and overlap with planning areas. Data can be viewed on top of a variety of aerial, street, and topographic base maps. Other layers in ConnCRIS show property parcels, municipal boundaries, preservation restrictions, outlines of Certified Local Government communities, maritime boundaries, and 1934 state aerial photographs. ConnCRIS will be updated on a regular basis, including the adjustment of locational points as field verification is completed or new documentation is generated.

Access to ConnCRIS is free, in accordance with the state's open data policy. The system will be available online and linked to the state's open data portal. Basic information will be visible in simple format. More intensive use of the data will involve log-in access, and sensitive information, such as the location of archaeological sites, will be restricted.

ConnCRIS was developed by SHPO with experts from Dewberry, a planning, environmental, and geospatial data firm; and advice from the state's new GIS Office, housed within the Office of Policy and Management. As the first comprehensive statewide cultural resources database for Connecticut, this effort fulfills a goal of SHPO's current statewide preservation plan, to improve access to and delivery of information to the public. SHPO anticipates that ConnCRIS will provide more efficient, self-service access to identify the historic status of properties and enable municipalities to integrate cultural resources data more easily into local planning. The system

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MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Connecticut General Assembly is in session, and Preservation Connecticut is tracking activity at the Capitol, on our own and with our colleagues at Connecticut Preservation Action and the Community Investment Act (CIA) Coalition. This year, the legislature is working on the next biennial budget, so support for the CIA is a priority. In addition, we're providing testimony in support of a bill to protect stone walls (HB 5400), and against a bill to allow overrides of decisions made by the State Historic Preservation Office (RB 6756), while watching for other measures that could affect historic preservation. In

early March, I also headed to Washington to meet with Connecticut's Congressional delegation.

We are honored to receive a \$30,000 **Connecticut Cultural Fund Operating Support Grant from Connecticut Humanities**, the statewide, nonprofit affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities. The funds will be used to enhance our digital infrastructure, especially to augment and maintain our five survey websites that chronicle town greens, barns, industrial mill buildings, local historic districts, and the places that inspired 20th-century artists and writers.

At a time when virtual and digital presence is key, this grant will help us keep connected with steady supporters and partners—and connect us with new audiences by making preservation tools and assistance more readily accessible. Moreover, we hope to provide inspiration to grow a preservation mindset. The grant is part of \$30.7 million of support allocated to arts, humanities, and cultural nonprofits through Connecticut Humanities over the 2022/2023 biennium by the Connecticut General Assembly and approved by Governor Ned Lamont.

In early January, several staff members joined colleagues from **New York and New England statewide preservation organizations** to swap questions, ideas, and reflections on our work. For several years this annual meeting has offered valuable opportunities to share best practices and explore ideas for joint programming. This year, the setting was the National Historic Landmark mill village of Harrisville, New Hampshire, where Historic Harrisville, Inc., has built a remarkable record since 1970 of maintaining and renovating mill buildings and related properties in a manner that provides opportunities for people to continue to live and work in the community.

Our preservation family grew by one at the end of 2022, when Development and Special Projects Manager Jordan Sorensen, along with her husband, Greg, and son, Brody, welcomed **Ellie May Sorensen**, born on December 21. Ellie is already sporting a Preservation Connecticut onesie, and we look forward to meeting her when Jordan returns from maternity leave later in March.

As this issue of Preservation Connecticut News goes to press, in mid-February, staff and board members are reviewing nominations for our annual **Connecticut Preservation Awards**. Mark your calendar now to join us for the awards presentation on **Thursday, May 4**, at the New Haven Country Club. I hope to see you there.



—Jane Montanaro

Upcoming Meetings

Connecticut Historic Preservation Council

April 5, 2023, at 9:30 a.m.
—Virtual meeting

May 3, 2023, at 9:30 a.m.
—Virtual Meeting

To participate, contact Jonathan Kinney
(860) 500-2380; Jonathan.Kinney@ct.gov

For more information call (860) 500-2343 or visit
portal.ct.gov/DECD/Services/Historic-Preservation/About-the-State-Historic-Preservation-Office

Preservation Connecticut is a statewide nonprofit membership organization established as the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation by a special act of the State Legislature in 1975. Working with local preservation groups and individuals as well as statewide organizations, it encourages, advocates, and facilitates historic preservation throughout Connecticut.

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Connecticut
still revolutionary

An important history

Seaside Sanitarium was created by the State of Connecticut in 1931 as the first purpose-built facility in the United States for the heliotropic treatment of tuberculosis in children—representing a significant advance in combating a devastating disease. In addition to its place in medical history, Seaside is important in social and political history as an example of expanded government programs in the 1930s to promote the public welfare. It is architecturally significant as the work of a nationally recognized master, Cass Gilbert. Although Gilbert was a prominent traditionalist, at Seaside he was given the task of inventing a new building type. His balancing of functional innovation with familiar forms and motifs created a facility that was technically up to date yet offered a comforting and comfortable environment for patients and staff.

Dominating the massive hospital building are the stepped terraces on which swimsuit-clad children soaked up the rays,

even in winter. Its French Norman stone and brickwork, steep roofs, big arches, and a ventilation cupola crowned with a weathervane in the form of a sailing ship are echoed in a nurses' dormitory (also by Gilbert) and two staff houses (by New London architect Fred S. Langdon). In recognition of the site's medical and architectural importance, it was listed on the National Register in 1995 as having national significance.

Antibiotic treatments replaced heliotherapy in the 1940s, and the sanatorium was transferred to the Department of Mental Health in 1961. It closed for good in 1997. Since then, the buildings, already neglected, have been mothballed but have received no visible maintenance.

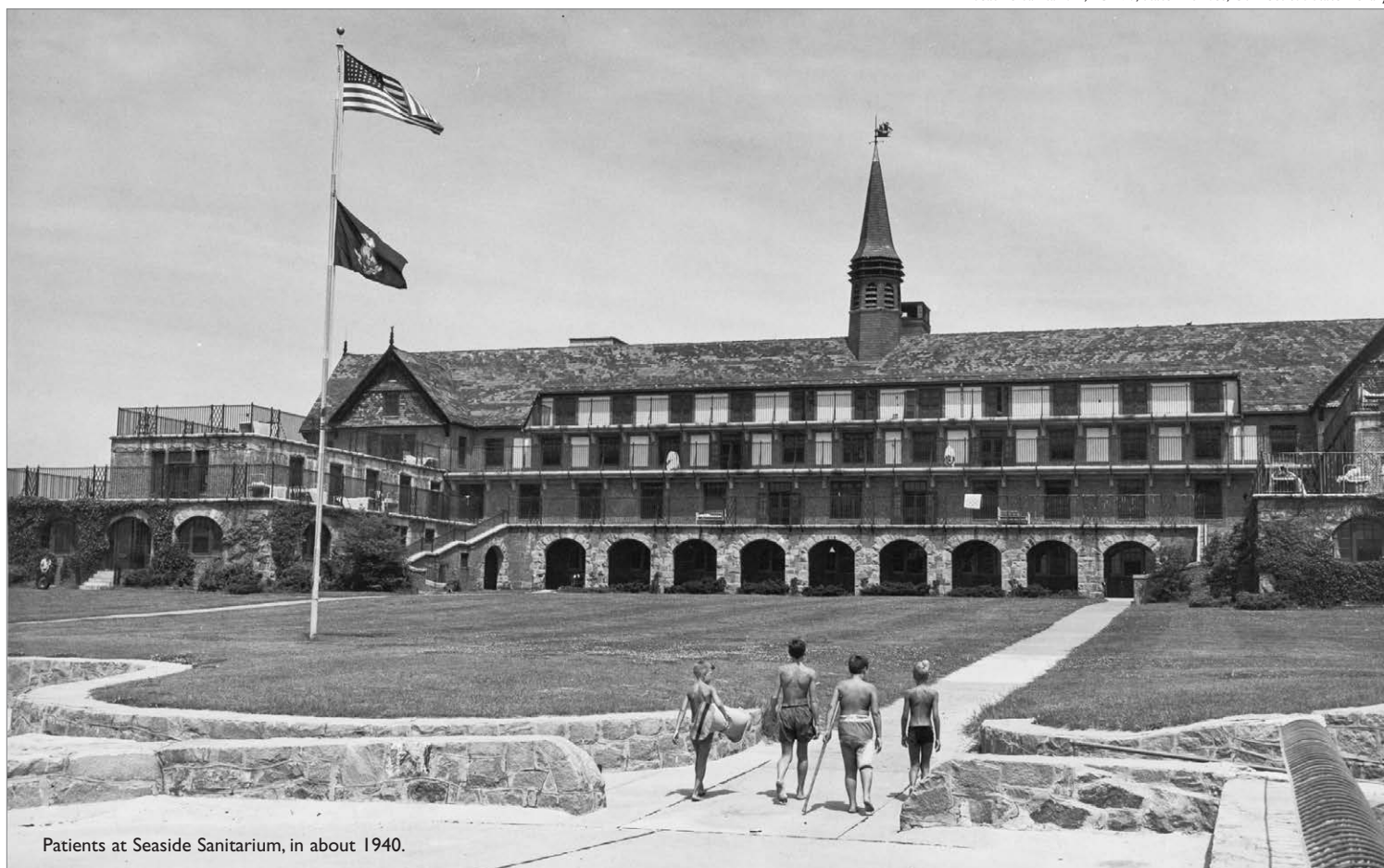
Redevelopment efforts

After Seaside had sat vacant for a decade, the State began negotiations to sell it to developer Mark Steiner for residential reuse, despite opposition from neighbors who had grown used to the vacant and

silent site and resisted any use that would bring occupants and traffic. Steiner planned to renovate the three smaller buildings. The hospital presented numerous difficulties for conversion, and Steiner considered erecting a new building resembling it, although at the urging of the State Historic Preservation Office and the then-Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation (now Preservation Connecticut), he reconsidered renovating the hospital. New townhouses on the property rounded out his plans.

This process was interrupted in 2008, when Governor Jodi Rell broke off negotiations with Mr. Steiner and announced her intention to make Seaside a state park, even as the economy was falling into recession. The State soon revived plans to sell the property, and Mr. Steiner again emerged as the preferred developer in 2010, only to have Governor Dannel Malloy abruptly halt the process once more in 2014. Governor Malloy did indeed designate Seaside as a park—a move seen as a political ploy to help a local legislator facing

Seaside Sanitarium, PG 170, State Archives, Connecticut State Library



Patients at Seaside Sanitarium, in about 1940.

an uphill election bid (if that was indeed the case, it didn't work). Mr. Steiner, in the meantime, has pursued a lawsuit against the State for breach of contract.

The question then became how the new Seaside park should be developed, and what role, if any, the historic buildings would play in it. A feasibility study done for DEEP in 2015 identified three options:

- Destination Park, featuring active uses and the historic buildings rehabbed as privately-operated lodges;
- Ecological Park, featuring uses related to ecological education or appreciation and the buildings stabilized as ruins; and
- Passive Park, with passive recreation uses and the buildings demolished.

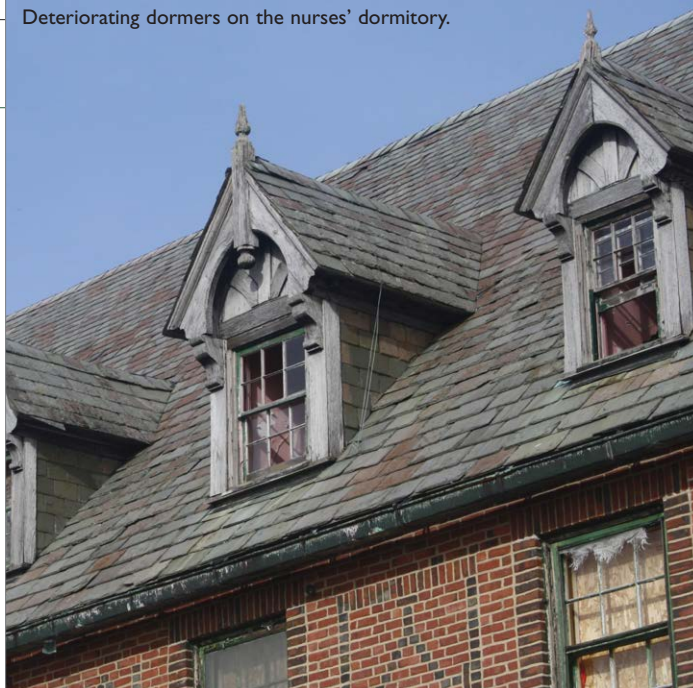
In a survey commissioned in conjunction with the feasibility study, 79.9 percent of responders supported preserving the buildings; only 12 percent favored demolishing them.

In 2016, DEEP unveiled a master plan for the Destination Park offering beach access, kayak launch, fishing pier, and bird watching platforms. The historic buildings would be reused in a public-private partnership, including conversion of the hospital building and dormitory as lodges and the superintendent's house and staff duplex as cottages for larger groups and families. In addition, DEEP would renovate the garage as a Visitor Center.

Economic and engineering studies confirmed that there was a market for the hotel and that reusing the buildings was functionally and economically feasible. This plan presented no significant impacts to environmental or historic resources, and was determined to meet State requirements by the State Office of Policy and Management in January 2018.

Later in 2018, DEEP issued a request for proposals for development of the historic buildings. Only two proposals came in, and neither was deemed acceptable. The department then launched a listening process to create an improved RFP. Based on its staff experience in overseeing redevelopment of historic buildings, the State Historic Preservation Office offered assistance and suggestions for revising the request. Issues raised in this process included the length of a lease that the State would offer as well as the amount of site preparation, including hazardous materials remediation, the State would be responsible for. However, this effort went silent after Governor Ned Lamont took office, and

Deteriorating dormers on the nurses' dormitory.



there was no news until the announcement in February.


In the meantime, a Friends of Seaside State Park group was organized, with a membership that included both proponents and opponents of reusing the historic buildings. One of the leaders of the group is Helen Park Curry, Cass Gilbert's great-granddaughter.

Questions remain

The decision to demolish Seaside raises a number of questions.

Process. After conducting thorough feasibility studies and environmental review, DEEP had arrived at a preferred alternative for developing Seaside as a Destination Park. That alternative had overwhelming public support and was ratified by the Office of Policy and Management in a Record of Decision. Morally if not legally, abandoning this plan to demolish the historic buildings constitutes a drastic change that should be taken only after completing a new public consultative process. It's irresponsible to spend years and taxpayer money creating a plan and gaining public support and official approval for a plan and suddenly drop it simply because there is money available to do something else. Moreover, the change in plans apparently was made without consulting the public or other state agencies.

Preservation alternatives. DEEP now intends to destroy *all* the major



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Seaside under threat, cont'd from page 5

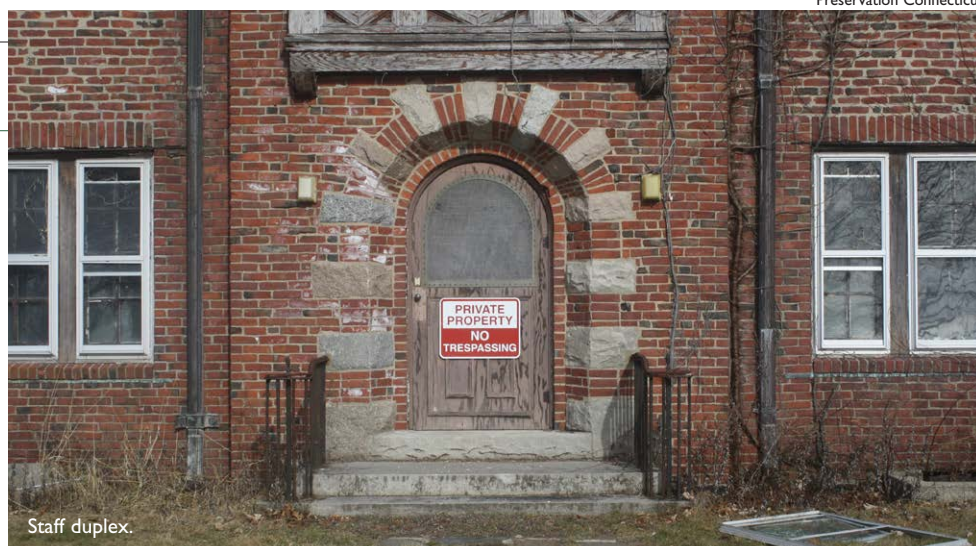
historic buildings at Seaside—hospital, dormitory, superintendent's house, and staff duplex. Is that really necessary? Parks need some structures, such as ranger station, bathrooms, visitor centers. Might one of the historic buildings be renovated for park use? What consideration was given to the Ecological Park concept, which at least contemplated preserving some ruins as educational or recreational elements of the park? Is it really all or nothing?

Environmental protection. DEEP has not explained how the demolition of these buildings can be reconciled with its mission to protect the environment and promote sustainability; the Reduce/Reuse/Recycle page of the agency website stresses the need to avoid adding unnecessary materials to landfills. DEEP must calculate the embodied energy of the Seaside buildings and disclose how the loss of that energy will be minimized. In particular, it must address the well-established principle that the greenest building is the one that is already built.

Alternatives to demolition

It is clear that DEEP must not carry out its threatened demolition until it has made a better effort at preservation, beginning with a revised, realistic request for proposals to redevelop the historic buildings. In several ways the 2018 RFP was based on unrealistic expectations. The lease offered to developers was only for 50 years, which may not be long enough to qualify for loans or many other necessary types of financing—as a rule, a 99-year lease would be considered necessary for lessors to obtain loans or attract investors.

Moreover, the State's commitment to fund structural work or remediation, without which it is difficult to see how private development could be feasible, was inadequate. Given the decades of deliberate neglect, the State needs to make a substantial contribution to the site—as any private owner of such long standing would be expected to do. With adjustments for these factors, as well as others suggested by the SHPO staff, a revised request might attract acceptable proposals.




A different option might be to revisit the prior plan to sell the site to a developer, with restrictions to preserve as much of the historic buildings as appropriate and reasonable, as well as public access to the waterfront. Preservation Connecticut opposed a proposal to sell Seaside to a private developer in 2018, arguing that park land should be inviolate. In this case, however, the State has proven such a poor steward of the site that an exception to that principle seems justified, provided the sale include restrictions to require preservation of the buildings as well as public access to the waterfront.


For now, SHPO has recommended that, because federal funds are involved, DEEP should evaluate whether a review process under the National Environmental Policy Act is needed. This law mandates that federally funded actions be evaluated for their potential effect on historic resources, similar to the State process that DEEP followed in evaluating alternatives for the park development. If adverse impacts to natural or historic resources are identified (such as demolishing historic buildings), the agency would be required to consider alternatives to eliminate or reduce those effects before considering possible mitigation efforts.

Resources


Friends of Seaside State Park: friendsofseaside.org

DEEP planning website: <https://portal.ct.gov/DEEP/State-Parks/Seaside-State-Park-Planning-Project>





**EDWARD F. GERBER'S
LEGACY**



"My entire life, I've been passionate about preserving historic buildings and places. I felt compelled to join Preservation Connecticut's Legacy Society, as well as contribute during my lifetime, because Preservation Connecticut is the only statewide preservation organization and it needs individuals like me to support it. The Legacy Society allows me to be flexible in my estate planning by donating outright today and from my estate further down the road."

What will your legacy be?

INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE? PLEASE CONTACT JORDAN SORENSEN: JSORENSEN@PRESERVATIONCT.ORG OR 203-562-6312

If DEEP persists in its plans to demolish Seaside, there remains the possibility of legal action under the Connecticut Environmental Protection Act, which allows any citizen to sue to prevent the unreasonable demolition of buildings listed on the National Register. Successful lawsuits under that law have established the presence of "prudent and feasible alternatives to demolition" as evidence that demolition is unreasonable. The continuation of Mark Steiner's lawsuit, well as the failure to issue a revised RFP for redeveloping the buildings, and the failure to consider preserving even the smaller buildings all indicate that DEEP has not eliminated prudent and feasible alternatives to demolishing the historic Seaside buildings.

As Preservation Connecticut News goes to press, Preservation Connecticut is pursuing conversations with DEEP, SHPO, the Friends of Seaside State Park, and other preservationists across the state to put a hold on DEEP's hasty and ill-considered move to destroy this historic site.



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New listings on the National Register

Five Connecticut sites have recently been listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Dating from prehistory to the 1970s, they represent significant aspects of the state's agricultural, industrial, and social history. Listing provides the prestige of recognition, identifies significant places for planners, and allows properties to qualify for certain preservation incentives and protections.

Operated by a single family for more than 100 years, the **Dudley Farm historic district**, in Guilford, provides important insight into the activities of a family-owned farm typical of its size and period, according to the nomination prepared by historian Rachel Carley. Reflecting regional agricultural patterns, the Dudleys engaged in mixed husbandry, including a small dairy operation and a diversity of field crops, as well as such cottage industries as ice harvesting and maple sugaring. The farmhouse, built in 1845 and expanded in the early 1900s, displays a sequence of tastes from Greek Revival to Colonial Revival, all virtually frozen in time. Similarly, the construction and layout of the outbuildings preserves evidence of the technology and layouts integral to Connecticut's agricultural heritage. The Dudley Farm is now a museum of farm life, dudleyfarm.com.

Located at the mouth of the Connecticut River in Old Lyme, the meadows and shoreline of the **Griswold Point historic district** have attracted human settlement as far back as 7,000 BCE and continuing through nearly four centuries of occupancy by a prominent Connecticut family. The nomination, also written by Rachel Carley, notes, "A rare continuity of ownership and use has preserved a setting of exceptional serenity and beauty, protecting archaeological sites... from the Middle Archaic to the Final Woodland periods and a rich architectural heritage extending from the late 1700s to the 1970s." Beginning about 1649, the Griswolds were magistrates, lawyers, governors, and congressmen, but always husbandmen as well, creating a family compound with houses and outbuildings that reflect the changing architecture of three centuries set in a cultural landscape, a remarkable legacy of stewardship of land and history that continues to the present.

Rachel Carley, National Register of Historic Places



Dudley Farm, farmstead

Rachel Carley, National Register of Historic Places



Roger Griswold house, Griswold Point, Old Lyme

Public Archaeology Survey Team, Inc., National Register of Historic Places



Oil Mill historic district, Watertown

Although agriculture dominated the Connecticut countryside into the early 20th century, most rural districts also included small-scale fabrication or materials processing. One example is the **Oil Mill historic district**, in Waterford, which gets its name from a series of small mills that processed local natural resources, including

sumac (used in tanning leather and as a dye), linseed oil (for paint), and birch oil (a substitute for wintergreen, with an almost identical flavor). The district's first mill, for sumac, was built in 1804, and the last, a birch oil mill, closed in 1916. Houses for mill owners and workers clustered around the mills;

Emily Dominijanni, National Register of Historic Places



Aeolian Company factory, Meriden

Emily Dominijanni, National Register of Historic Places



YMCA of Northern Middlesex County, Middletown

other residents included ship carpenters, store keepers, and farmers. Watertown operated its town farm in the district from 1847 to 1906. Although the mills and town farm buildings have been demolished, their sites are included in the district for their archaeological potential.

A little-known aspect of Connecticut's industrial heritage is seen at the **Aeolian Company factory complex**, in Meriden, home to an internationally renowned maker of automatic musical instruments, primarily organs and player pianos, as well as the perforated paper rolls that generated their music. Powered by foot pumps, and later by electricity, the instruments allowed owners to produce music, and even to personalize the performance, without any musical training. As recounted by MacRostie Historic Advisors, the company grew quickly, adding to the plant in 1893, 1901, and 1920 and building six other factories in the United States, plus two in Europe, before the advent of radio began to chip away at its market. From its founding in 1887 until production at the plant halted, in 1930, the company was a significant presence in Meriden, providing jobs for as many as 500 people, many of them women.

Industries such as the Aeolian Company attracted workers and immigrants to Connecticut's cities, creating the need for social outlets for the new residents. One such outlet was the **YMCA of Northern Middlesex County**, in Middletown. According to the National Register nomination by Elizabeth Correia and Stacey Vairo, YMCAs offered space for community instruction such as citizenship classes and leadership training, along with housing and recreational space to promote physical fitness and the productive use of leisure time. Founded as the Middletown YMCA in 1865 the organization built a new Colonial Revival facility in 1928. That building was enlarged in 1971 in conjunction with an urban renewal project that nonetheless demolished a swath of housing whose working-class and minority occupants used the YMCA services. Despite its name (Young Men's Christian Association), the local organization worked with women and girls as early as the 1890s, and the 1928 building included some facilities for them.



Briefly noted

National. ►

The U.S. Senate confirmed former Preservation Connecticut chair Sara Bronin as chair of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation in December, and she took up her duties at the end of January. A Mexican American architect, attorney, and policymaker specializing in historic preservation, property, land use, and climate change, Ms. Bronin is a professor in the Law School and Department of Architecture at Cornell University. In addition to PCT, she has served on the board of Latinos in Heritage Conservation and as an advisor for the National Trust for Historic Preservation. She also founded Desegregate

Connecticut, led an award-winning overhaul of Hartford's zoning code, and served as an advisor for the Sustainable Development Code.

"Preservationists must engage in current debates about energy policy, climate resilience, housing development, transportation infrastructure, tribal sovereignty, and the tax system," said Ms. Bronin. "I hope to work with the agency's experienced and knowledgeable staff to continue the ACHP's involvement in these key issues, bringing a spirit of innovation, a commitment to inclusion, and a sense of deep responsibility to generations to come." Her term at the ACHP will expire in January 2025.



Courtesy of Sara Bronin

Cheshire. ►

The Cheshire Land Trust has sold the development rights to the Ives Farm to the State Department of Agriculture. The property comprises 164 acres of farm- and woodland, as well as the Bradley-Ives house and outbuildings—all listed on the State Register. According to the Working Lands Alliance, the DOA's Farmland Preservation Program allows "the state to purchase agricultural easements on privately held farmland, permanently protecting the land from development and ensuring its use for agriculture in perpetuity. The properties remain in private ownership and on the local tax rolls, with a permanent conservation restriction placed on the property." The purchase money will support maintenance of the farm, including invasive plant removal and reforestation. The fields are rented to a farmer, preserving Cheshire's long agricultural history. For more information, see www.cheshirelandtrust.org and IvesFarmstand on Facebook.



Preservation Connecticut

Coventry. ►

After years of probate, the way was cleared for preservation of Caprilands, for many years the home, garden, and event locale of the eminent American herbalist and author Adelma Grenier Simmons (1903-1997). In 2020, Simmons' estate and the Town of Coventry issued a request for proposals for adaptive reuse of the property as a center for agriculture and education in keeping with Simmons' wishes, but no acceptable proposals were received. The Federal-style house, probably built in 1817 for Zemas Loomis, has been dismantled by the Glastonbury Restoration Company and is to be re-erected for a private client. For more photos, visit www.facebook.com/GlastonburyRestoration/.



Glastonbury Restoration Company

National Park Service, Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site



◀ Greenwich.

In February, Hobbs Incorporated of New Canaan filed a notice of intent to demolish 76 Khakum Wood Road, on behalf of the property's owner, NTC Group, Inc. A history compiled by the Greenwich Historical Society calls it the Country Life House, built in 1928 in a unique collaborative effort between *Country Life* magazine and the Real Estate Board of Greenwich as a model country estate. It is located in Khakum Wood, a subdivision laid out by Olmsted Brothers Landscape Architects for I.N. Phelps Stokes in 1925; the firm also designed landscapes for some lots within the subdivision, including this one. Like most Khakum Wood properties, the house was conceived by architect Julius Gregory as an English manor house in brick or stone (stone, in this case), with steep roofs, leaded windows, and tall chimneys. The Olmsteds' landscape follows and accentuates natural rock outcroppings, with terraces overlooking a pond. Based on real estate listings, house and landscape appear to be remarkably intact; the property likely could qualify for National Register designation.

Preservation Connecticut



◀ Hartford.

In December, the Board of Directors of the Polish National Home approved the sale of their building (1929; NR) to For His Glory Church Ministries. The organization had struggled for several years, facing declining membership, unpaid property taxes, and repair needs. Established in 1917, the club was a center of Polish heritage in Hartford, hosting weddings, wakes, and a restaurant that provided crucial income until the pandemic forced it to close in 2020 and 2021. The Art Deco building was designed by Polish American architect Henry Ludorf and features eagles, a Polish national symbol. For His Glory Church Ministries is a nondenominational church founded in 2001; it also operates an accredited bible college.

continued on next page

New Britain. ►

Renovation of the long-vacant Berkowitz building (1915; SR) has finally been completed, and leasing began in January. New Britain spent decades trying to get the previous owners to clean up the building, and finally took title to it in 2012. Developer Douglas Bromfield of Capital Restoration, Inc., bought the property in 2015, but rehab work was slowed by delays in obtaining financing, including state historic rehabilitation tax credits. The 24 apartments will be rented at market rates. Located at a curve of Main Street between downtown and Little Poland, the building forms a strategic gateway between both areas.

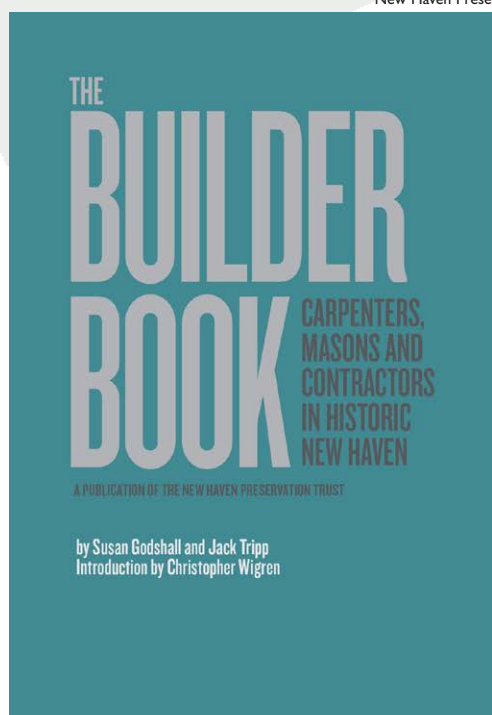
New Haven. ▼

The New Haven Preservation Trust has published *The Builder Book: Carpenters, Masons and Contractors in Historic New Haven*, by Susan Godshall and Jack Tripp. Histories and architectural guides give the names of a building's first owner or architect, but rarely identify those who actually constructed it. *The Builder Book* makes the record more complete, telling the stories of little-known men—and one woman—who built houses, commercial, civic, and academic buildings, monuments, and other structures in New Haven between 1810 and 1930. Maps and full-color illustrations

guide readers to see surviving examples of each builder's work, while the biographies outline the personal and professional life of each. *The Builder Book* was funded by the Connecticut State Historic

Preservation Office. Free copies are available to NHPT members, and an electronic version can be viewed at https://issuu.com/nhpt/docs/nhpt_builder_book_2022. For more information visit nhpt.org.

New Haven Preservation Trust; photograph courtesy of Yale University: Photographs (RU 608), Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library.



Norwalk. ►

Preservationists are rallying to block demolition of the Udelman building (1927), part of the Washington and South Main streets National Register district in South Norwalk. Stamford developer F. D. Rich wants to raze the building to expand its neighboring Norwalk Residence Inn by Marriott. The Norwalk Preservation Trust urged the developer to incorporate the building's two-story façade into the eight-story hotel expansion. F. D. Rich rejected that suggestion, arguing that the Udelman building has structural problems and is not individually significant—although National Register districts are intended to recognize areas with an overall significance greater than the individual elements that make them up. The Norwalk Trust fears that removing this building will lead to further erosion of the district. A petition opposing F. D. Rich's plans is posted on Change.org; by mid-February it had more than 500 signatures. In the meantime, the city planning and zoning commission approved the project on February 16.

Simsbury. ►

The Meadowood historic district was added to the Connecticut State Register in January, based on a nomination prepared by Stacey Vairo of Preservation Connecticut. For much of the 20th century, the 286-acre site was a tobacco farm operated by Cullman Brothers, the world's largest growers of shade tobacco used to make cigar wrappers. The fields and surviving tobacco sheds illustrate the process of growing and curing this important crop. During World War II, Cullman, like other large firms, turned to southern students, many from traditionally Black colleges to fill war-related labor shortages. One of these students was Martin Luther King, Jr., then studying at Morehouse College, who worked here in 1944 and 1947. In letters written home, King described how this experience gave him a glimpse of a world beyond the segregation he had grown up with. The summers spent at Meadowood helped to solidify King's future as a religious leader and driving force of the Civil Rights movement.



Tod Bryant



Stacey Vairo

After the Cullman firm purchased General Cigar in 1961, production in Simsbury increased, and the company recruited workers from Puerto Rico. In the early 1970s, low pay and deplorable living conditions impelled a coalition including churches, labor leaders, the Puerto Rican Socialist Party of Connecticut, and lawyers to advocate for the workers. Although

unionization efforts failed, the publicity did lead to some improvements. However, rising labor costs, mechanization, and anti-smoking efforts were already causing a decline in tobacco growing. In 2021, the Town of Simsbury partnered with the Trust for Public Land to buy the Meadowood property and save it from development.

continued on page 19



HISTORIC PROPERTIES EXCHANGE

Threatened Buildings and Easement Properties Available — March/April 2023

Preservation easements protect the historic character of old buildings, structures and landscapes and require approval of proposed changes. When one of the many properties throughout the state on which Preservation Connecticut holds

easements is on the market, we may list it here. To learn how to safeguard your property for future generations through an easement, explore Stewardship on our website, preservationct.org/steward, or contact Christopher Wigren, Deputy Director.



Stanley P. Rockwell Company 296 Homestead Avenue, Hartford (1929, c.1940, c.1970) \$400,000

Redevelopment opportunity of historic industrial building. Constructed in 1929 for the Stanley P. Rockwell Company, which specialized in heat treating of metals. Later additions made in c.1940 and c.1970. Although acquired by a New Haven based investment company, Etherington Cos., in 1974, the Stanley P. Rockwell Company continued to operate at the site until c.2010. The property is listed in Preservation Connecticut's *Mills: Making Places of Connecticut* industrial survey and is individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places, which makes it eligible for both State and Federal historic rehabilitation tax credits. In Opportunity Zone, building area is 15,691 sq. ft.; lot 0.87 acre.

Contact: Nadia Goracy, Berkshire Hathaway, 860-633-3674



630 Main Street, Winsted (1904) \$409,000

Former Winsted United Methodist Church available for purchase. Closed after merger with Barkhamsted's Pleasant Valley United Methodist Church in 2022. Romanesque Revival church designed by New York-based architect George Kramer. Includes pipe organ and stained glass windows designed by Benjamin

Sellers. May be eligible for listing on the State Register of Historic Places and therefore qualify for historic rehabilitation tax credits. Building area 18,616 sq. ft.; lot, 0.94 acre.

Contact: Alton Moss, Berkshire Hathaway, 860-343-3646, altonmoss@bhhsne.com

211 Main Street, West Haven (1920) \$695,000

Former St. Lawrence Catholic Church and accompanying rectory on 0.72 acre available in West Haven. Closed in 2022 due to high maintenance costs. Romanesque Revival church is 12,383 sq. ft. and includes hall on lower level. Rectory is 3,752 sq. ft. with six bedrooms and 4.5 baths. Church may be eligible for listing on the State Register of Historic Places and therefore qualify for historic rehabilitation tax credits.

Contact: David Melillo, Pearce Commercial, 203-281-9313

John I. Howe House 213 Caroline Street, Derby (between c. 1850 and c.1870) \$550,000

PRESERVATION CONNECTICUT EASEMENT

Rare granite, Greek Revival house in Derby on 0.37 acre lot. Built for inventor John I. Howe who is known for his contribution to the Industrial Revolution, successfully automating the manufacture of straight pins. House measures 4,494 sq. ft. and features a unique cross-gable plan; has been converted to multi-family housing. Preservation easement protects the exterior of the house. Individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places which makes it eligible for historic rehabilitation tax credits.

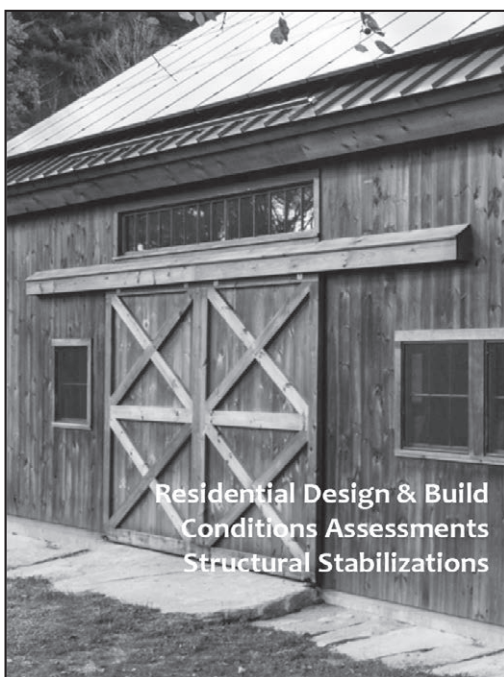
Contact: Pamela Benanto, Benanto Real Estate, 203-734-8300



Deadline for the next issue is April 20, 2023

Historic Properties Exchange is published to advertise endangered properties in Connecticut by Preservation Connecticut, a statewide nonprofit organization located at 940 Whitney Avenue, Hamden, Connecticut 06517. Real estate advertised in this publication is subject to the Federal Housing Act of 1968.

Neither advertisers nor Preservation Connecticut are responsible or liable for any misinformation, misprints, or typographical errors contained in Historic Properties Exchange. To list a property or learn about properties listed, contact Kristen Hopewood, at khopewood@preservationct.org, or call (203) 562-6312.



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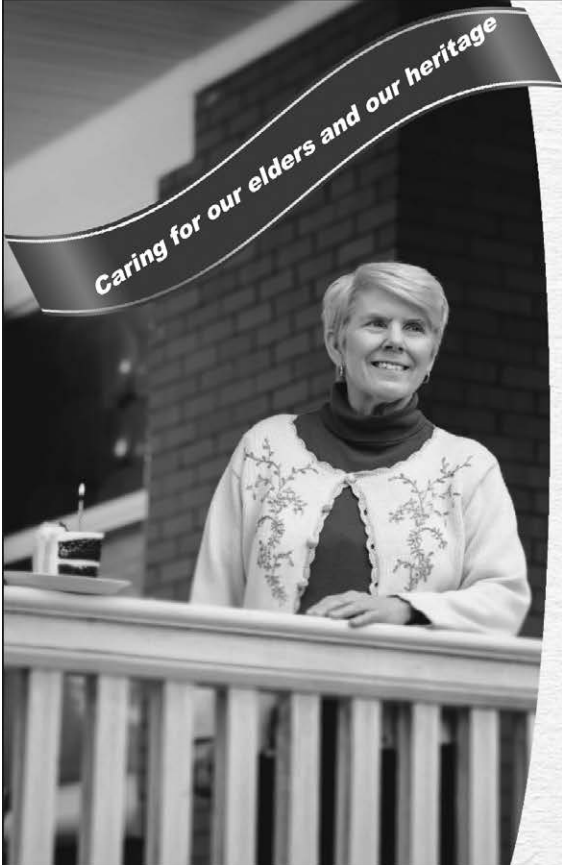
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will improve timeframes and reduce costs for completing required environmental reviews and assist state and federal agencies in meeting their obligations under environmental laws.


There's more to come during 2023. In addition to ConnCRIS, SHPO staff is updating survey guidelines, creating inventory forms for additional resource types, and developing an online system for

submitting environmental reviews. Users can get to know ConnCRIS through SHPO demonstrations and an online guide created in StoryMaps, a digital story-telling format. Stay tuned for more information.






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Prudence Crandall Museum, cont'd from page 20

integration and parents threatened to withdraw their students, Crandall closed her school and reopened in 1833 for non-White students. Young women traveled from several states to attend the school. Connecticut responded by passing the “Black Law,” which prevented out-of-state Black and Brown people from attending school in Connecticut towns without local town approval. Crandall was arrested, spent one night in jail, and faced three court trials before the case was dismissed. In September 1834, a nighttime mob attack closed the school.

These events made national and international news in the 1830s and galvanized the burgeoning Abolitionist movement. Many of the students, such as Julia Williams, Mary Miles, and Mary Harris, went on to become educators, reformers, and leaders in their communities.

It's easy to draw parallels between the story of Prudence Crandall's school and current debates about education. In the Connecticut Supreme Court case *Sheff vs. O'Neill*—filed in 1989 and not settled until 2020—parents argued that unequal funding for schools discriminated against minority

A statue depicting Prudence Crandall and Sarah Harris, Crandall's first Black student, stands in the Connecticut state capitol.



children. Similarly, debates about how schools teach history, sexuality, climate, evolution, and other topics fill current news reports. These all reflect the conviction that the ability to determine who learns what can determine how they will act in the future. In short, they're based on the conviction that knowledge is power.

Visit the Prudence Crandall Museum to think about education and power, in the 19th century and today. In addition, the National Park Service and the

Gilder Lehrman Center for the Study of Slavery, Resistance, and Abolition at Yale University have created online teaching guides based on Prudence Crandall's story.



The Prudence Crandall Museum, a National Historic Landmark, is located at 1 South Canterbury Road in Canterbury and will open June 21 this year. For information, visit <https://portal.ct.gov/ECD-PrudenceCrandallMuseum>. The first three paragraphs of this article are taken from the website.

Around the state, cont'd from page 13**Stamford.** ►

Preservation Connecticut has distributed \$89,100 in repair grants to ten homeowners in the South End National Register district. Most of the funding comes through an agreement between the State of Connecticut and the developer Building and Land Technology (BLT) as partial mitigation for the company's demolition of two late-19th-century houses and a portion of the Blickensderfer typewriter factory, all contributing resources to the district. In October 2020, the State Historic Preservation Council voted to ask the Attorney General to take legal action to prevent the demolition. BLT claimed the houses had to come down to widen an access street, and part of the factory in order to abate hazardous materials in the remaining portion—contentions opposed by local and statewide preservationists. The AG's office negotiated the agreement, under which BLT provided \$100,000. The funds, administered with



Brad Schide

no charge by Preservation Connecticut, were targeted for roof work and repairs to porches, siding and decks. Preservation Connecticut administered the grants, and as PCN goes to press, one final project

is underway (Photo: Owner Gina Rosario, her husband, and local contact Terry Adams at 10 Woodland Avenue, accepting the final payment towards a front porch repairs.) 🌱



Connecticut's
SITES of CONSCIENCE

Each issue of *Preservation Connecticut News* in 2023 will look at one of the sites named as "Connecticut Sites of Conscience" by Connecticut Humanities (CTH). These places highlight the legacy, relevance, and persistence of issues which have influenced our state and our nation, and which continue to drive public discourse—issues such as human rights; social, economic, and environmental justice; carceral policy; education rights; and tribal affairs. For the project, CTH collaborated with the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience, a global network that connects past struggles to today's movements for human rights. The Connecticut sites are: Mary & Eliza Freeman Center for History and Community, Bridgeport; Prudence Crandall Museum, Canterbury; Old New-Gate Prison & Copper Mine, East Granby; Old State House, Hartford; and Pequot Hill, Mystic.

For more information, visit
<https://cthumanities.org/ct-soc/>.

The Prudence Crandall Museum, in Canterbury, was recently named a Connecticut Site of Conscience.

Knowledge is power: Prudence Crandall Museum, Canterbury

In 1832, Prudence Crandall, the White principal of the Canterbury Female Boarding School, was approached by a young Black woman named Sarah Harris asking to attend the school. Encouraged by conversations with both Harris and Maria Davis,

a Black woman who shared copies of the abolitionist newspaper *The Liberator* with her, Crandall agreed to admit Harris.

When residents protested the school's

continued on page 19

Buildings of New England, buildingsofnewengland.com

