

PRESERVATION CONNECTICUT NEWS

Preservation Connecticut

Preservation Connecticut is working with several churches that provide community services from historic buildings in Bridgeport's Washington Park neighborhood.

Opportunities for preservation

The preservation movement is often characterized as elitist, most interested in preserving the settings and status of the rich and powerful. While there sometimes is some truth to that charge, it's not the whole story. In this issue, we highlight two examples of preservation for the masses.

First, Circuit Rider Mike Forino reports on Preservation Connecticut's new initiative to support churches that provide crucial social services out of historic buildings in a Bridgeport neighborhood. A new grant program from the State has the potential to overcome some of the barriers that prevent struggling urban congregations from accessing traditional funding sources.

Then, historian and preservationist Bill Hosley reminds us that low-impact stewardship of a modest historic house over many years can be deeply satisfying. The delights, he says, far outweigh the costs, and the costs aren't really that great.

Our (historic) house

By Bill Hosley

Every Friday the *Wall Street Journal's* "Mansion" section parades another handful of posh digs, usually of extraordinary grandiosity, sometimes involving celebrities, almost always involving one-tenth-of-one-percenters, only rarely anything historic. Mansions with space for car collections, sometimes indoor *and* outdoor pools, etc., etc.

The voyeur in all of us may get a charge out of reading this stuff. But what does it do for historic preservation? What message does it send? Isn't grandiosity the antithesis of green anything? Is preservation mainly for the rich?

Years ago, as newlyweds, Christine and I put up \$15,000 each to get a mortgage to buy the 1833 Coleman Abbe house in Enfield—for \$95,000. According to Zillow, our house and barn on four-fifths of an acre would now bring \$247,000. If there was a contest for the best residential property in Connecticut in the under-\$250,000 range, we might win. We love our house and love caring for a slice of local history.

At 1,500 square feet, with three bedrooms and 1.5 baths, the house felt small but entirely manageable when our two kids were home. For two retirees it's almost too big. In the winter we only heat half the rooms. Our electric, heat, and tax bills are relatively modest. We don't pay for or get town sewer or water—so that's a saving. This is no more a money pit than most newer houses.

In *Bending the Future: 50 Ideas for the Next 50 Years of Historic Preservation in the United States* (UMass Press, 2016) Susan West Montgomery called for "Reigniting Stewardship as a Preservation Practice," noting that "most public and private funding for historic preservation...rewards...the large scale, the high cost, the dramatic rehabilitation over repair and maintenance—over stewardship," which "unwittingly gives the impression that historic preservation is always an expensive proposition." It's often not.

In Connecticut, 37 towns have a median household income above \$100,000. Enfield, at \$29,340 per capita (ranked between Groton and Scotland), is in the bottom quarter among 169 towns.



The Coleman Abbe house in Enfield might be the best residential property in Connecticut in the under-\$250,000 range, says owner Bill Hosley.

The schools are decent, town amenities and services are abundant. Enfield is one of the region's major shopping hubs—we have seven big-box grocery stores within five miles of our house—just a 17-minute drive to Hartford, even closer to Springfield, served by public transportation. Yet we're located on a quiet, rural-feeling road, near a stream-bed, surrounded by farmland, and a close walk to the Connecticut River. What's not to love?

For us housing is not mainly an investment. We bought what we could afford as newlyweds. We will never leave Connecticut, in part because of how much we love our house and (unheated) barn—which doubles as a garage, a workshop, a library, and man cave/party space. It's a Civil War vintage, timber-frame barn that also requires care and maintenance—but what a delight it is.

The house came with its original 1833 builder's contract—a great rarity in itself. It originally cost \$450 to build. It was and is a modest farmhouse of no great architectural distinction but rich in things we love—raised-panel doors, an 18th-century-style cooking fireplace and bake oven—lots of period features that make us feel enmeshed in the historic.

For us, stewardship consists of thoughtful, pro-active maintenance. Keeping a hand-made artisanal wooden house and barn

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Keeping a hand-made artisanal wooden house and barn painted is a cost, but a joy.

Bill Hosley



MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Preservation Connecticut stayed busy during the summer, but a clear highlight was the **Eli Whitney Museum's summer camp**, where nine to twelve year-olds got a chance to literally dig into the history of the museum's historic site, once Eli Whitney's armory. In the second year of this collaboration, PCT staff helped lead preservation-related projects. Chris Wigren brought the campers through our office—the former armory boarding house—and taught them how to read and draw a floor plan; Mike Forino helped them build a scaled replica barn; and Stefón Danczuk led an archaeological dig into the foundation of the forge building where they found some fun items. We can't wait until next year.

The fall brings a new round of activity, as we look forward to upcoming events in Connecticut and New England:

Our updated and improved **Local Historic Districts and Properties website** is now live. To make the site more user friendly to commissioners and property owners alike, we've added lots of helpful information, including sample Design Guidelines, FAQs, links to preservation

resources, as well as information on LHDs and LHPs established in the years since the original site, and peppered it with colorful photographs. We hope it will be a more useful tool, and welcome comments and corrections.

Once again, Circuit Rider Stefón Danczuk is helping organize the **Connecticut Archaeology Fair**. This year, the event will be held at the Henry Whitfield State Museum in Guilford, on Saturday, October 14. The family-friendly event will include games, exhibits, and other activities on the grounds of Connecticut's oldest house. Local archaeologists will give talks throughout the day about archaeology in our state. In addition, the Whitfield House will be open for tours along with the new exhibit in the Visitor Center, *History Beneath Our Feet: Expanding Narratives with Archaeology*, curated by the SCSU Department of Anthropology. The event is free and open to the public and is presented by the Connecticut State Historic Preservation Office, Connecticut Office of State Archaeology, and Preservation Connecticut.

On October 26, former Trustee **Regina Winters-Toussaint**, who died in 2016, will be inducted into the Connecticut Women's Hall of Fame, a bittersweet but well deserved honor. After two decades administering grants and housing programs in New Haven, Regina opened her own architecture firm, Zared Enterprises, which specialized in sustainable and green design. Many of her projects, including her own office in the historic Samuel Blatchley house, harnessed the inherent greenness of reusing existing buildings. In addition to serving on Preservation Connecticut's board, Regina was a member of the State Historic Preservation Review Board. Read more about Regina's noteworthy career at www.cwhf.org.

Staff are preparing to attend **Historic New England's 2023 summit**, November 2-3, both in Providence and online. The conference will focus on how contemporary challenges and opportunities are transforming the fields of historic preservation, architecture, planning, conservation, arts and culture, museum studies, public history, philanthropy, and education. The schedule will include presentations, panel discussions, provocations, networking opportunities, awards, and more. To learn more, register, or view videos from the 2022 summit, visit summit.historicnewengland.org.

Planning is underway for the fall series of **Talking about Preservation** programs. Most of them will continue to be offered online, but we're including a live event as well, at the Dudley Farm Museum in Guilford, on Saturday, November 4.

We look forward to seeing many of you at these events. 🌸

Jane Montanaro

—Jane Montanaro

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

Elizabeth Mills Brown AWARDS

AIA Connecticut
PRESERVATION CONNECTICUT

Awards recognize architecture and preservation

Jointly presented by AIA Connecticut and Preservation Connecticut, the Elizabeth Mills Brown awards honor projects that are noteworthy both as respectful preservation and as excellent architectural designs.

Jury members this year were: David Drasba, LEED AP/AIA, of Daniel V. Scully Architects; Rick Farrar, formerly of Ralph Lauren Architecture + Design Studio; and Jennifer Goodman, of the New

Hampshire Preservation Alliance. They selected five projects for recognition: two Excellence awards, two Merit awards, and one Commendation (the two schools previously received awards from PCT). In all five projects, historic buildings were renovated to continue serving their original purposes amid changing needs, technologies, and tastes—an approach that in many cases helps to retain unique architectural character.

Robert Benson Photography



Martin Luther King Jr. Campus, Hartford

EXCELLENCE AWARDS

Martin Luther King Jr. Campus, Hartford: JCJ Architecture

The former Weaver High School, first opened in 1923, was richly designed inside and out as an inspirational place of learning featuring unique masonry and millwork details, terrazzo floors, and stained-glass windows. Altered and neglected over the years, the school was rescued from demolition in response to community outcry and now has been renovated to accommodate two schools, one elementary and one middle school. The project began with structural repairs and a sympathetic expansion. Throughout, damaged or missing features were repaired or replaced, including new, historically appropriate windows in place of awkward 1970s replacements; repairs to stained-glass windows; and stabilization, repair, or replication of decorative plaster work. Delicately matched color glazing, applied in place of paint, blends original, repaired and new surfaces.

Jury comment: This project reclaimed what was good about the original architecture and put it front and forward again.

David Sundberg/ESTO



Tudor Home, Greenwich

Tudor Home, Greenwich: Saniee Architects LLC

The architects write, “Many historic houses have been demolished in Greenwich due to the belief that they cannot be repurposed for the high-end residential market. We set out to disprove that idea and maintain rigorous preservation guidelines in the process.” They did just that, expanding the 1903 house by reclaiming attic space to reduce the size of a needed addition and siting the addition to minimize its visual impact. Rotted windows were replaced with closely matched insulated units; wood shingles once gain clad the roof, and siding and trim were repaired and repainted in accurately researched paint colors. Inside, insulation and a new HVAC system were installed with careful attention to preserving original walls and finishes, and period woodwork was restored.

Jury comment: A lot of care went into keeping the house viable as a home for this family.

Mark Adams



Christ Church Cathedral, Hartford

MERIT AWARDS

Christ Church Cathedral, Hartford: Duo Dickinson Architect

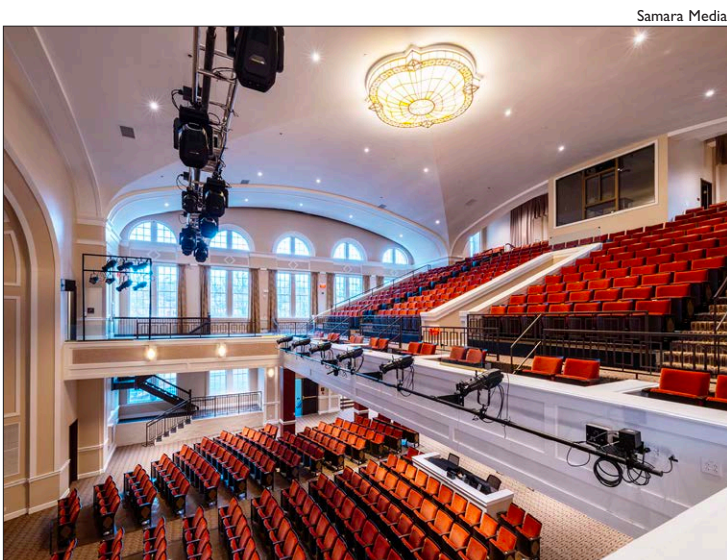
While many churches are being shuttered, Christ Church Cathedral has expanded its potential as a community center. Consecrated in 1829 and remodeled several times over the years, the cathedral's latest incarnation provides the flexibility to serve a diverse constituency, from the arts to civic discourse to community engagement for those who are housing and food insecure. The work included providing barrier-free access that promotes independence for users while preserving significant historic features, and reusing decorative material or features that had to be removed, such as pew ends repurposed as cabinet doors.

Jury comment: Making the landmark more useful in today's society is a benefit.

Bristol Arts and Innovation Magnet School, Bristol: QA+M Architecture

After standing vacant for ten years, the former Bristol High School once again serves students. During design, forensic investigations uncovered the need for mortar injection and hand patching of existing concrete beams, avoiding a major financial pitfall. Great care was taken in restoring and refurbishing building details, including cast stone and brick masonry, glazed brick wainscots, and windows that required historically appropriate replacements. A key element was reconfiguring the main entrance with a new plaza at grade level so everyone could enter the building at one central location. The restored auditorium, a stunning feature of the original 1923 design, provides a perfect setting for professional-grade performing arts education.

Jury comment: Inspiring revival of vacant and deteriorating community landmark that showcases environmental sustainability with re-use, repair, and stewardship strategies.



Bristol Arts and Innovation Magnet School, Bristol

Robert Benson Photography

COMMENDATION FOR COMPATIBLE ADDITION

Tudor Revival, West Hartford: Haver & Skolnick Architects

Replacing a flat-roofed addition from the 1970s, this well-crafted addition blends seamlessly with the exterior of the original 1931 house, thanks to careful attention to detail. Finding masons to duplicate the wavy brick and irregular roofing slates was a challenge.

Jury comment: For integration with the original house, it doesn't get much better than this.

For more on this year's Elizabeth Mills Brown Awards, visit aiact.org.



Tudor Revival, West Hartford



Calvary Temple Christian Center received a grant for a conditions assessment to understand how its building can continue to serve the community.



Clergy and congregation members meet with Preservation Connecticut staff.

Historic preservation as a tool for social equity

By Michael Forino

Connecticut is home to thousands of churches, temples, and other religious landmarks. Many of them are invaluable works of architecture and art, boasting stained-glass windows, monumental stonework, elaborate wood carvings, plasterwork, tapestries, mosaics, paintings, grand spires, belfries, and steeples. But even the most modest play a crucial role in shaping our historic landscape, strengthening community cohesion, creating a sense of belonging, and providing inspiration for believers and non-believers alike.

In recent decades, the place of religion in American society has changed dramatically. With membership and income declining while costs of labor and material rise, even thriving congregations face significant challenges to maintain, let alone restore, their historic structures.

This is not just an aesthetic or historical concern, since congregations also offer essential services to their communities and support the hungry, the needy, the mentally ill, and the lost, services

which are most important in our state's urban centers. So important is this role that congregations often put off urgent repair work in order to devote all their resources to helping those in need.

But what happens when repairs can no longer be avoided? How are they to be paid for? Especially in poverty-stricken cities, many church buildings are threatened with decay, abandonment, even catastrophic structural failure. The loss of church buildings threatens the viability of these essential community programs.

FUNDING FOR HISTORIC RELIGIOUS PROPERTIES

Despite the social service role that religious institutions fill, finding outside financial support can be difficult. Some private funders will not grant to religious groups, in order to avoid the appearance of sectarianism. Government funders can be constrained by the separation of church and state, although early blanket prohibitions against funding religious entities have been modified over the years.

One funding source specifically for historic religious structures is Preservation Connecticut's Maintenance and Repair Grants, launched in 2015 and funded through the Community Investment Act. This program provides matching grants of up to \$15,000 for capital improvements at historic religious sites. Since its inception, PCT has leveraged \$650,000 of our funds to support more than \$1.3 million in capital projects. However, the program is oversubscribed every year, and the \$15,000 grants are increasingly less effective as the cost and complexity of preservation work surge. In addition to the Maintenance and Repair grants, stewards of historic religious buildings can qualify for Survey and Planning grant or Historic Restoration Fund grants from the State Historic Preservation Office. Many historically significant religious buildings have benefited from these programs.

However, numerous hurdles stand in the way of urban churches seeking to access these funds. The application process can be overwhelming for those who are unused to the kind of paperwork and technical language involved. A more serious hurdle is the requirement to provide a match for grant funds. Most difficult for struggling congregations, these grants typically are paid as reimbursement for eligible expenditures, meaning that recipients must fully finance a project up-front. The result of these requirements is that many funding sources are only feasible for groups that already



Miracle Faith World Outreach/ Universal Faith Outreach distributes food to those in need.

have significant financial resources. This is an issue that needs to be acknowledged and addressed, as it leaves the most disadvantaged groups and the most needy historic buildings out of the picture.

WASHINGTON PARK, BRIDGEPORT

Preservation Connecticut Circuit Riders routinely meet with owners of historic religious properties throughout the state to assist them in evaluating and planning for the care of their historic buildings, including introducing them to funding resources.

In December 2021, PCT received a typical request for a visit from Jenice and John Thompson, pastors at Calvary Temple Christian Center (CTCC) located on Barnum Avenue in Bridgeport, across the street from historic Washington Park.

The Washington Park neighborhood, developed by P.T. Barnum and William H. Noble beginning in 1850, boasts a rich cultural, social, and architectural heritage. Listed on the National Register as part of the East Bridgeport National Register district and also located within the Pembroke City local historic district, the area is often referred to as Bridgeport's most intact 19th-century neighborhood.

That architectural distinction is marred by gross social inequity. The neighborhood is one of the poorest in Bridgeport, with 33 percent of residents living in poverty—significantly surpassing the state average. Seventy-four percent of the area's

children live in low-income families, with 41 percent of them beneath the poverty line. The area's senior residents also face economic difficulties, with 28 percent living in poverty and 52 percent identified as low-income earners. Homeownership, typically a factor contributing to community stability, is strikingly low in the area, at a scant 21 percent.

PCT learned that the Thompsons and the CTCC actively work to counteract this inequality through charitable activities that include donating computers, offering haircuts, assisting with rent, and giving out items such as gift cards, food vouchers, clothing, winter gear, children's bicycles, and even vehicles to those in need. Regular community meetings feature guest speakers who discuss topics such as mental health, self-awareness, self-esteem, and overcoming addictive behaviors. The church also runs programs specifically aimed at feeding and clothing the homeless. The church's commitment to its community is truly inspiring.

CTCC is not only confronted with neighborhood challenges but also with the responsibility of maintaining its beautiful yet needy historic structure, built in 1870 as the Park Congregational Church. They have made significant progress in restructuring and securing the building's exterior, but much work remains. Our collaboration with Jenice commenced with the application for state funding for a conditions

assessment, a grant awarded by the State Historic Preservation Office in 2022.

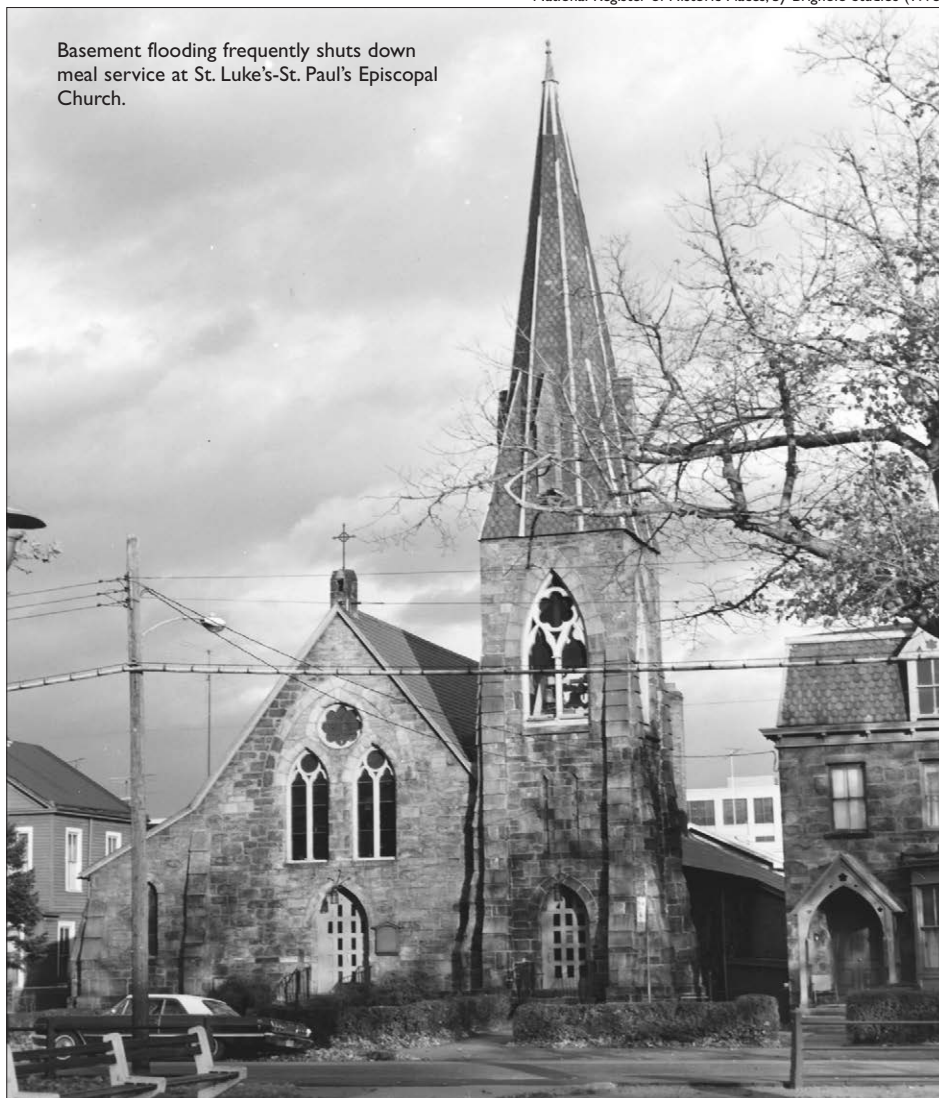
Coincidentally, Circuit Riders were called to another location in Washington Park just a few weeks later. This time, it was to St. Luke's-St. Paul's Episcopal Church, at the invitation of former State Representative Edna Garcia, a parishioner. Like CTCC's, this congregation's commitment to their community is truly inspiring, as are their historic stone church and rectory erected shortly after the Civil War. However, the church's grandeur is tarnished by plastic buckets strategically placed to catch water leaking from the century-old roof. These leaks not only pose a risk to the historic building, they also flood the basement, regularly shutting down the church's food services, which provide meals to hundreds of people weekly.

COMMUNITY INVESTMENT FUND 2030

A new opportunity for assisting these churches emerged early last year, when the General Assembly approved Governor Lamont's proposal for The Community Investment Fund 2030 (CIF2030). This program aims to stimulate economic growth in historically underserved communities throughout the state, including Bridgeport. The initiative

continued on next page

Basement flooding frequently shuts down meal service at St. Luke's-St. Paul's Episcopal Church.



Preservation Connecticut



Historic preservation, cont'd from page 9

makes a total of \$875 million available to nonprofit organizations, churches included. Unlike other funding programs, CIF2030 is ideal for these churches because it does not require a cash match, and it is not necessarily a reimbursement grant, meaning that funds may be distributed before the project's conclusion.

PCT saw CIF2030 as a potential tool to bring about enduring and transformative change to the Washington Park community. The first step in developing a proposal was to conduct a comprehensive survey of the neighborhood with the aim of identifying other churches and nonprofits that could potentially benefit from the fund. These institutions, like the initial two churches, provide invaluable services to their community. The team was able to successfully connect with several key institutions, in addition to CTCC and St. Luke's-St. Paul's:

- The Apostolic Worship Center, located in the historic Bethesda mission chapel (1866; later a synagogue), houses a range of community-focused ministries, including a food pantry;
- Holy Protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary Ukrainian Catholic Church, whose building was originally the Washington Park Methodist Episcopal Church (1883), offers ministry services and housing for Ukrainian immigrants and refugees;
- The Miracle Faith World Outreach/ Universal Faith Outreach, in the former St. Paulus German Lutheran Church (1894) and A. E. Lines livery stable (1869), plays a crucial role in food donation throughout Connecticut;
- Iglesia Bautista Emanuel, in the former St. Joseph's Polish National Catholic Church (1936), provides ministerial services and childcare for young women.

PCT created a proposal to carry out needed repair and restoration work at these eight historic buildings. With the help of Crosskey Architects, staff prepared a project scope and budget for each loca-

Staff visit the Apostolic Worship Center to analyze building needs.

tion. Tasks included installing new roofs, updating kitchen facilities, ensuring ADA compliance, upgrading electrical systems, repointing masonry, restoring windows, and other surface renovations. Because the project will be complex, lengthy, and time intensive, PCT will serve as project manager to ensure that the project is completed in a timely and efficient fashion and in a manner consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. The restoration of eight historic sites around Washington Park is expected to generate hundreds of construction jobs in this area over the next five years, as PCT will mandate that contractors employ individuals from the local community. The total projected cost for the project is close to \$6.2 million. PCT also hopes to help the churches raise private funding for additional work.

In July 2022, PCT applied to the State for CIF2030 funding. That application was rejected, but support from former City Council Representatives, Mayor Ganim, numerous church members, and PCT's board, encouraged us to press on.

The State provided positive feedback but stressed the need for more information on how the project would not just support but also expand the churches' initiatives. In the fall of 2022, we engaged the community in gathering statistical data and anecdotal experiences. With this additional information, we revised our project scope, budget, and overall application before resubmitting. Unfortunately, we encountered another rejection in January 2023.

We don't give up that easily. But the question is, how do we move forward? First, we need support from members of Bridgeport's legislative delegation—and not only support but input on how this project can take shape and coincide with others. PCT also is persistently refining the project scope, adding community partners, and strengthening the application. In the meantime, we still can offer Maintenance and Repair Grants and Technical Assistance Consultancy funding for planning and urgent capital projects. Thanks to the generous contribution of Trustee Edward F. Gerber, we have allocated the time of our newly appointed Edward F. Gerber Fellow,

Anna Fossi, to this project. Anna is not only working with the community but also conducting research on the history of the area and its significance. Furthermore, we are planning to hire a part-time community outreach coordinator to support our team in advancing the project with the help of Bridgeport community members and representatives.

Preservation Connecticut's mission is to preserve, protect, and promote the buildings, sites, and landscapes integral to the heritage and vitality of Connecticut communities. By supporting churches that provide essential services, we not only fulfill our mission to the highest standard, but we further the churches' missions to improve the lives of the needy, the underprivileged, and those forgotten by society. 🌿

You can help! To sign an online petition in support of the CIF2030 application, visit <https://chnng.it/pfJ4ZM66rJ>.

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Briefly noted

Bolton. ►

Thirteen French and sixteen American high school students learned about archaeology in July with a dig at the Bolton Heritage Farm, one of the sites where the comte de Rochambeau's army camped in 1781 as they marched across Connecticut from Rhode Island to meet American forces in New York. The students were taking part in Digging into History (Creuser dans l'histoire), sponsored by the Museum of Connecticut History of the Connecticut State Library along with the State Archaeologist. Students uncovered artifacts such as musket balls and pipe fragments; on rainy days they learned more about archaeology at the University of Connecticut. The Connecticut dig followed a previous joint project, the restoration of World War I trenches in Seicheprey, France, in 2019. Listed on the National Register, Bolton Heritage Farm is a state archaeological preserve, where unauthorized digging is prohibited by law.

Hartford. ►

The National Park Service determined in July that the Deborah Chapel and Beth Israel Cemetery are not listed on the National Register of Historic Places as contributing resources in the Frog Hollow historic district. As a result, the Office of the Attorney General withdrew the lawsuit to prevent the chapel's demolition by its owner, Congregation Beth Israel of Hartford. The Park Service's determination was based on the failure of the chapel and cemetery to be properly documented in the National Register nomination. This was a bureaucratic technicality, not a reflection on the Deborah Chapel's historic significance or integrity. The chapel remains a highly important element of the history of Hartford's Jewish community, as emphasized by testimony from Jewish scholars and activists. Its significance also was reflected in the chapel's designation by the National Trust for Historic Preservation as one of the 11 Most Endangered Historic Places in the country in 2022.

Since the Park Service decision was announced, Preservation Connecticut, along with the State Historic Preservation



Office of State Archaeology

Cary Shea



Office, the Hartford Preservation Alliance, the National Trust, and other preservation activists, hoped to help Congregation Beth Israel create a strategy for reusing the Deborah Chapel. We believed there still were prudent and feasible alternatives to demolition, alternatives that would allow

the congregation to pursue its goals for reusing the chapel site and would provide a new way of contributing to the life of the Frog Hollow neighborhood while commemorating Beth Israel's place in Hartford's history. However, synagogue leaders had the building demolished on August 23.

Preservation Connecticut

Litchfield. ►

A preservation easement donated to Preservation Connecticut will ensure long-term protection of the former Litchfield County courthouse. Begun in 1888, remodeled in 1914, and expanded in 1930, the building continued to serve its original purpose until 2017 and subsequently was given to the Greater Litchfield Preservation Trust. After finalizing the easement in July, the Litchfield Trust sold the building to Lexington Partners of Hartford, which plans to redevelop it as a boutique hotel using Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits. Built on the site of a previous courthouse dating to 1796, the building is the centerpiece of Litchfield's commercial district. With a new use and long-term protections, it will continue to contribute to the community's vitality.

Merriitt Parkway. ▼

The Connecticut Department of Transportation has released its preferred plan for improvements to the intersection of the Merriitt Parkway with Route 7 in Norwalk, a project that has gone through many versions over three decades. The goals of the project are to supply missing connections between the Merriitt and the Route 7 expressway, ease traffic flow, improve pedestrian and bicycle access, and improve safety. Preservation Connecticut has participated on a project advisory committee helping



CONNDOT weigh the alternatives for the project. Along with the Merriitt Parkway Conservancy, Connecticut ASLA, and Norwalk Preservation Trust, PCT has urged that any design not only preserve but also enhance the parkway's historic character.

The preferred alternative calls for adding intersections with traffic signals to Route 7, a design approach that CONNDOT is currently using on Route 34 in New Haven. This will vastly reduce the amount of road construction and disruption to the landscape and better

preserve the parkway's historic landscape. A second choice would provide unimpeded traffic flow but require nearly twice the new ramp and bridge construction. After a public comment period, CONNDOT will finalize the environmental review documentation and, when that is approved, move to actual design. PCT will continue to participate in the advisory committee. In the illustration, the Parkway runs right-to-left between Route 7 at the left, and Main Avenue at the right. To see the plans, visit 7-15norwalk.com.

Connecticut Department of Transportation

RDVSYSTEMS

*continued on next page*

NEWS FROM AROUND THE STATE

Middletown and Portland. ►

The Arrigoni Bridge over the Connecticut River is featured on a new postage stamp first released on August 24 as one of a series of four stamps also featuring structures in Nebraska, Oklahoma, and Illinois/Iowa. Built between 1936 and 1938, and named for local legislator Charles J. Arrigoni, the bridge exemplifies the trend in the 20th century to allow uninterrupted highway passage by constructing high bridges that did not need to open for water traffic below. With its two 600-foot arches, it still has the longest span length of any bridge in the

state. In recent years it has undergone a multiphase repair project. The 25-cent stamps are intended for presorted first-class mailings and are only available for bulk purchase by permit holders. A celebration event was held at the Waverly Senior Center in Portland.

Norwich Public Utilities



University of Connecticut

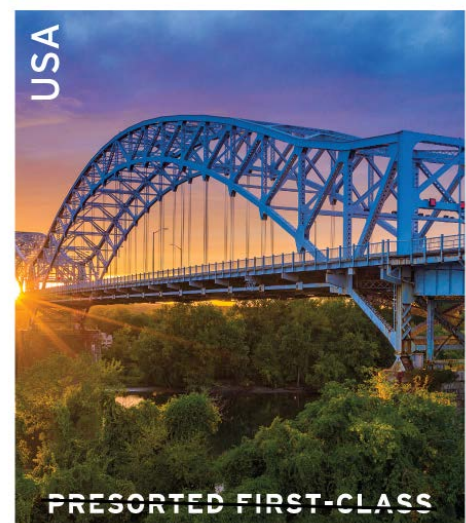
**Norwich.** ►

The City of Norwich, the Norwich Community Development Corporation, the Mohegan Tribal Nation, and the Norwich Historical Society broke ground at Uncas Leap Heritage Park in August. The park, along a natural gorge on the Yantic River, is important in Native American, colonial, and industrial history. Long sacred to the Mohegan people, it was the site of the Battle of Great Plains between Mohegan and Narragansett tribes in 1643. Later, settlers harnessed the falls to power mills. The park is being developed with a path along a former hydropower canal, an observation deck overlooking the gorge, and ruins of a former textile mill. Construction started August 1, and the park is expected to be completed in the summer of 2024. Funding for the work includes over \$2 million through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA).

Storrs. ►

The University of Connecticut is moving ahead with plans to demolish the Whitney house on Storrs Road. Built between 1802 and 1807, the house is one of the oldest structures in the University of Connecticut National Register district. In January, the house, vacant since 2004, was damaged by fire, apparently caused by faulty wiring. Although structural damage appears to be primarily located within a modern ell, there also is extensive smoke and water damage, and university officials determined that a full investigation of the feasibility of repair

was not possible. Demolition is expected to start in early 2024; PCT and SHPO are consulting with the University on mitigation. For more information visit updc.uconn.edu/whitney-house.



painted—is a cost, but a joy. Schlepping coal and wood for years was work but we recently transitioned to natural gas. The biggest change we made involved enlarging the kitchen in a way that was deliberately—even painstakingly—compatible with the original ell.

The house came with those modern commercial windows with fake muntins. Miraculously, we salvaged contemporary period sash from a neighboring house before it was demolished. They replicated the six-by-six sash specified in the contract with builder Jabez Phelps (1785-1857) of East Windsor.

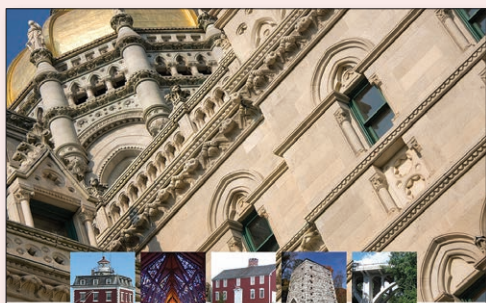
We've learned a lot about the family history. Coleman Abbe (1805-1877) operated a packet boat on the Connecticut River and Enfield Falls Canal. He and generations of his family are buried just up the street where we will end up. Retirement has provided time for gardening and fine tuning the way we live—which gets more joyful by the year.

The joy of being caretakers of a property worth caring about in a town worth caring about in the state we love—is inexpressible.

Moral of the story: Preservation is incredibly rewarding and not especially

costly. We only have this one example to point to—but wouldn't trade it for anything. I am sure there are many comparable situations if you search them out. It's the road we've taken, and it has made all the difference. 🌸

Curator, museum director, public speaker, project manager, writer, photographer and cultural resource entrepreneur, Bill Hosley has more than 30 years' experience in museums and historic preservation. He is the principal of Terra Firma Northeast and a former Trustee of Preservation Connecticut.



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HISTORIC PROPERTIES EXCHANGE

Threatened Buildings and Easement Properties Available — September/October 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.

12 Schoolhouse Lane, East Hampton (1930)

Redevelopment opportunity for former Middle Haddam School. Two-story Colonial Revival building measures 10,000 sq. ft. and sits on 2.2-acre property. Individually listed on National Register of Historic Places and part of Middle Haddam Local Historic District. Eligible for historic rehabilitation tax credits. Deadline for proposal submission is September 30, 2023.

Contact: Margaret McCutcheon Faber,
msmfaber@gmail.com.

115 Lewis Avenue, Meriden (1892) \$449,000

Our Lady of Mt. Carmel School available for purchase. Originally the city-run Lewis Avenue School, it became Our Lady of Mt. Carmel School in 1944 and closed in 2020 due to declining enrollment. Two-story brick building includes an arched entry recess, stone lintels, and bands of decorative brickwork. May be eligible for listing on the State Register of Historic Places, which would qualify it for historic rehabilitation tax credits. Building area is 13,114 sq. ft.; lot 0.44 acre.

Contact: Shari DiDomenico, Berkshire Hathaway,
203-213-3168, sharididomenico@bhhsne.com



Deadline for the next issue is October 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.



184-196 Chapel Street, New Haven (1883, 1899, 1915, 1946) \$2,500,000

Redevelopment opportunity for historic industrial complex on 1.26 acres in New Haven. Former occupants include National Pipe Bending Company (internal boiler tubes), Lavigne Manufacturing Company (hardware and machinery), Kilborn and Bishop Company (iron and steel), and A.W. Flint Co. (ladders). 196 Chapel Street is listed in Preservation Connecticut's *Mills: Making Places of Connecticut* industrial survey and is part of River Street National Register Historic District, which makes eligible for historic rehabilitation tax credits. Totals 55,850 sq. ft.; in opportunity zone.

**Contact: Dan Garofalo, Reno Properties Group,
860-666-7400**

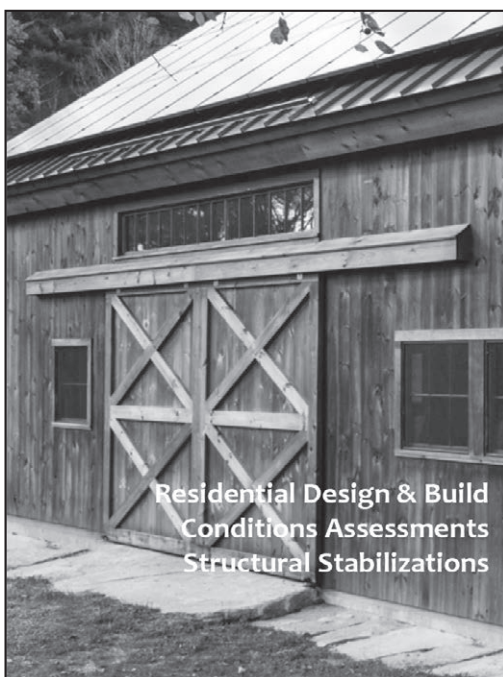


123 Camp Street, Meriden (c.1888) \$675,000

Former St. Laurent Roman Catholic Church and accompanying rectory with garage available in Meriden. The Gothic Revival church was built c. 1888 for the German and French-Canadian community but closed in 2018 after merging with Meriden's St. Joseph's parish. Sanul Presbyterian Church later purchased the property, but it is now vacant. Property is 3 parcels on 1.94 acres. Church measures 7,000 sq. ft.; rectory 4,200 sq. ft.; and garage 560 sq. ft. Church and rectory may be eligible for listing on the State Register of Historic Places and therefore could qualify for historic rehabilitation tax credits. In opportunity zone.

**Contact: Michael Robinson, RE/MAX Showcase,
203-200-9401**





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Upcoming Meetings

Connecticut Historic Preservation Council

October 4, 2023, at 9:30 a.m.

—Virtual meeting

November 1, 2023, at 9:30 a.m.

—Virtual Meeting

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

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No record was kept of the proceedings, but the meeting produced a list of proposed constitutional amendments which would have:

- prohibited any trade embargo lasting over 60 days;
- required a two-thirds Congressional majority to declare war, admit a new state, or interdict foreign commerce;
- removed the three-fifths representation advantage of the South;
- limited future presidents to one term; and
- required each president to be from a different state than the preceding (a provision aimed at Virginia, which had dominated the presidency since 1800).

By the time representatives delivered these proposals to Washington, news had arrived of the Treaty of Ghent, ending the war, and of Andrew Jackson's victory in the Battle of New Orleans. The New England proposals suddenly seemed disloyal, if not treasonous, and they were dropped.

Although leaving the union was not proposed, and the extreme radicals had been blocked from attending, the convention has ever since been associated with secession. In fact, it was cited by Southern secessionists in 1861 as a precedent for their effort to leave the union.

The Hartford Convention is a reminder of ongoing tensions in the United States and around the world. Law professor Mark Janis wrote in *UConn Today* in 2014, "There is ongoing debate in America over the competing pulls of loyalty between the states on the one hand and the federal government on the other. When Americans are divided on issues like immigration, health care, abortion, the size and role of government, and education, the contest often is framed in terms of 'Who should decide?'—the states or the federal government?...Moreover, secession remains a live issue elsewhere from Ukraine to Scotland, from Quebec to Catalonia."

Similarly, Professor Rachel Gunter of Collin College in McKinney, Texas, writes in notes for a lecture posted on www.studocu.com, "...the Hartford Convention serves as a cautionary tale about the dangers of political polarization and the potential for partisan interests to override national unity. The convention highlighted the importance of compromise and dialogue in addressing regional grievances and preserving the integrity of the nation. This lesson has particular relevance in the current political climate, which is marked by deep divisions and polarization on a wide range of issues."

The United States did not pull apart at the Old State House, but we should remember that keeping us together is a never-ending job. 🌸

The Old State House is located at 800 Main Street in Hartford. For more information visit <https://wp.cga.ct.gov/osh/>.

Library of Congress, digital ID ppmca 10755

This satire by cartoonist William Charles attacks the Hartford Convention as disloyal with the treasonous New England states (the top middle figure represents Connecticut) leaping into the arms of King George III.





Connecticut's
SITES of CONSCIENCE

In 2023, each issue of Preservation Connecticut News will look at one of the historic places named as "Connecticut Sites of Conscience" by Connecticut Humanities—places that highlight the legacy, relevance, and persistence of issues which have influenced our state and our nation, and which continue to drive public discourse.

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



Robert Gregson

The Old State House in Hartford, site of the Hartford Convention

Union and disunion Old State House, Hartford

From 1796 to 1878, the Old State House was the part-time home of Connecticut's state government. The building, designed by Boston architect Charles Bulfinch, was the site of the Constitutional Convention of 1818, which finally replaced the outmoded Royal Charter of 1662. Many famous trials were held in the State House, including the beginning of the Amistad trial and the trials against Prudence Crandall.

Less widely known is another event, the Hartford Convention of 1814. Held in the midst of the War of 1812, the convention reflected the New England states' frustrations with the war as well as earlier embargoes of trade with Great Britain, all of which hit the region's mercantile and shipping economy. Behind these complaints lay the decline in power of the Federalist party, with its power base in New England while

rival Republicans were expanding through the South and West. The most radical voices called for New England to secede from the Union and seek a separate peace agreement with the British.

On December 15, 1814, 26 delegates from the five New England states (Maine was still part of Massachusetts) met in secret at the Old State House to discuss their grievances against the federal government.

continued on page 19