

# PRESERVATION CONNECTICUT NEWS

## Connecticut Preservation Awards 2024

The preservation business all too often seems to be about threats and losses, so it is heartening to turn instead to stories of accomplishment and creativity. The Connecticut Preservation Awards for 2024 tell stories instead of rejuvenated places where we live, work, play or create, gather and govern—in short, historic places that are part of everyday life.

Relatively few of this year's awards focus primarily on traditional restoration or rehabilitation of single buildings for private use. Many more, while involving architectural rehabilitation, also have a significant *public* component: buildings renovated for public or charitable uses; urban parks that continue

to provide open space and recreational opportunities; places where elected and professional public officials serve the public; places maintained and improved through grassroots activism, service, and education.

They show clearly how the preservation movement contributes to the public good, allowing historic places to serve common functional needs while conserving resources. Most importantly, ongoing use and care for these places strengthens the community's identity as rooted in the lives and creations of the people who first formed it and the people who continue to make it up. Turn to page 4 to start reading...



Built through an historic corridor that was first a canal then a railroad line, the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail continues to tie Connecticut communities together.



## Grants from The 1772 Foundation

The 1772 Foundation has awarded maintenance and repair grants totaling \$134,000 to 16 Connecticut organizations. This is the 14<sup>th</sup> year that Preservation Connecticut has administered grants for the foundation. PCT received 52 pre-applications; Circuit Riders visited 34 sites, and 23 applications were submitted. They were evaluated on the basis of urgency, clarity of priorities, impact, and organizational capacity. This year's recipients are:

- Music Mountain, Inc., Canaan: \$10,000 to paint Gordon Hall (1930; NR)
- Darien Historical Society: \$10,000 for roofing at the Bates-Scofield house (1736; NR)
- Mather Homestead Foundation, Darien: \$10,000 for painting at the Mather Homestead (1778; NHL)
- Farmington Historical Society: \$6,952 to paint the Gridley-Case cottages (c.1787 and c.1797; NR)
- Avery-Copp House Museum, Groton: \$7,500 to re-roof the carriage house (1800, L19C; NR)
- Haddam Historical Society: \$2,500 to repair the chimney on the Thankful Arnold house (1794-1810; NR)
- Rockfall Foundation, Middletown: \$10,000 for re-roofing of the Capt. Benjamin Williams house (c.1792; NR)
- Norfolk Foundation: \$10,000 for window repairs at the Royal Arcanum building (1905; NR)
- Society of the Founders of Norwich, CT, Inc.: \$9,705 for foundation and sill repairs to the Carpenter silversmith shop (c.1772; NR)
- Connecticut Landmarks: \$5,583 to repair the historic fence at the Phelps-Hatheway house, Suffield (1761 and ff.; NR)
- Colonial Dames of America: \$6,150 to repair the cellar entrance at the Joseph Webb house, Wethersfield (1752; NHL)
- Wilton Historical Society: \$10,000 to re-roof the Lambert house (c.1726; SR)



Music Mountain Incorporated received a grant to paint Gordon Hall, the only concert hall ever built by Sears, Roebuck & Company's prefabricated housing division.

- Windham Preservation, Inc.: \$10,000 for roofing at the Windham Inn (1783; NR)
- Amity-Woodbridge Historical Society: \$9,000 for chimney repairs at the Thomas Darling house (1774; NR)
- Seabury Society for the Preservation of the Glebe House, Inc., Woodbury: \$10,000 for re-roofing (c.1740; NR)
- Woodstock Historical Society: \$6,610 to restore stairs at Palmer Hall (1916; NR)



*For more information on preservation funding opportunities through Preservation Connecticut, visit [preservationct.org/fund](http://preservationct.org/fund).*

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## MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Welcome, Spring! May is National Preservation Month, and we have been meeting it with a full schedule of events, outreach and activities.

We held our 2024 **Connecticut Preservation Awards** on May 9 at the New Haven Country Club. About 100 attendees and guests celebrated the accomplishments of our awards (see pages 4 and following). Congratulations to all the recipients! Many thanks to the generous sponsors who supported the event, especially WSA|Modern Ruins, Hoopes Morgenthaler Rausch and Scaramozza, LLC; Colonial Restorations, LLC; Kronenberger & Sons Restoration, LLC; Neil Hauck Architects, Architectural Preservation Studio, DPC; Valley Restoration, and Glastonbury Restoration, among others: see the full list is on page 19.

The **General Assembly's 2024 legislative session** closed on May 8, just after *Preservation Connecticut News* went to press. We will provide a full report in the next issue. In the meantime, I especially want to thank everyone who responded to our multiple calls to action on HB 5433, "An Act Establishing a Procedure for the State Historic Preservation Officer to

Make Determinations Concerning Certain Environmental Effects." Your outreach made a difference.

We participated in the international celebration of Jane Jacobs' legacy by coordinating a series of **Jane's Walks** on May 4. Fifteen walks took place around the state, in Bridgeport, Clinton, Gales Ferry, Hartford, Manchester, New Haven, South Norwalk, Windham, and Windsor. A special thanks also to Professor Alan Plattus, who provided a fascinating introduction to Jane Jacobs for our Talking About Preservation Program on April 25. If you missed Alan's presentation you can watch it on Preservation Connecticut's YouTube channel.

Archaeology Circuit Rider Stefon Danczuk has produced a new installment in our Forgotten Stories video series. **The Hop River Mill Site** tells the story of an industrial site in rural Columbia that was active for more than 200 years. The series focuses on lesser-known historic sites in Connecticut and also can be found on our YouTube channel.

As announced in the March issue, the Community Investment Fund 2030 committee has approved our application for \$5.1 million to support five historic churches in Bridgeport, the **Washington Park**

**Community Preservation Project.** This project will highlight the transformative power of historic preservation as a catalyst for rebuilding community strength. We're still awaiting final approval of the grant by the Bond Commission and the Governor.

Staff and board began working on our next **strategic plan** by engaging the services of consultant Susan West Montgomery. We are currently carrying out equity audits to analyze the reach of our programs and services, with the goal of reaching more aspects of Connecticut's history.

Please join us at these **upcoming events** for Preservation Month and beyond:

- May 18: Talking About Preservation, in person at the Barnes Museum, Southington
- May 21, 23: Historic district commissioners training, Old Saybrook
- June 1: Historic Homeowners Workshop & Vendor Fair, Windham
- June 7-8 : Public Archaeology Weekend at the Barnes Museum, Southington

For details, visit [www.preservationct.org](http://www.preservationct.org) or check our Facebook page. We look forward to seeing you.



—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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## Upcoming Meetings

### Connecticut Historic Preservation Council

June 5, 2024, at 9:30 a.m.  
July 10, 2024, at 9:30 a.m.

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

### State Historic Preservation Review Board

June 14, 2024, at 9:30 a.m.

To participate, contact Jenny Scofield  
(860) 500-2343; [Jenny.Scofield@ct.gov](mailto:Jenny.Scofield@ct.gov)

Meetings are hybrid meetings, held in person at the State Historic Preservation Office, 450 Columbus Boulevard, Hartford, and virtually via Microsoft Teams.

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



## Harlan Griswold Award Farmington Canal Heritage Trail

**T**he Farmington Canal Heritage Trail is Connecticut's biggest historic site, stretching 54 miles from New Haven to the Massachusetts state line.

Beginning in 1825, New Haven investors constructed a canal—the most advanced transportation technology of the day—from that city to Northampton, Massachusetts. They wanted to provide easy access between inland areas and the port of New Haven—and to divert business away from New Haven's longtime rival, Hartford. The canal opened in 1828 but was never a commercial success. Undercapitalized and poorly constructed, it was constantly springing leaks that halted traffic. In the 1840s it was sold, and a railroad—a newer transportation technology—was built, mostly following the canal bed or towpath.

Two surviving locks, in Cheshire and Hamden, were listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1973 and 1982 respectively, and twenty-five canal sections not altered by the railroad were added to the Register in 1985.

When the railroad in turn shut down, in the 1980s, developers were ready to swoop in. In 1987, the line attracted the attention of Hamden and North Haven citizens fighting a proposed regional mall in Hamden. While scouting the site for wetlands that might block the mall, they discovered instead the abandoned railroad tracks. With a bit of research, they found out about a new movement to convert abandoned rail lines to recreational trails.

What followed was a years-long struggle pitting the activists against developers, development-hungry municipal

governments, and the Interstate Commerce Commission. The Farmington Canal Rail-to-Trail Association was formed and, with advice from the national Rails-to-Trails Conservancy plus conceptual designs funded by local grants, it persuaded the Towns of Hamden and Cheshire and the City of New Haven to dedicate their portions of the rail line to a trail. Easiest to convince was Cheshire, which had already restored Lock 12 as a town park, with a small museum, as well as blacksmith and carpenter shops, lockkeeper's house, and picnic area. Hamden and New Haven had development opportunities in mind and were more difficult, but in the end they came to see a trail as a community asset.

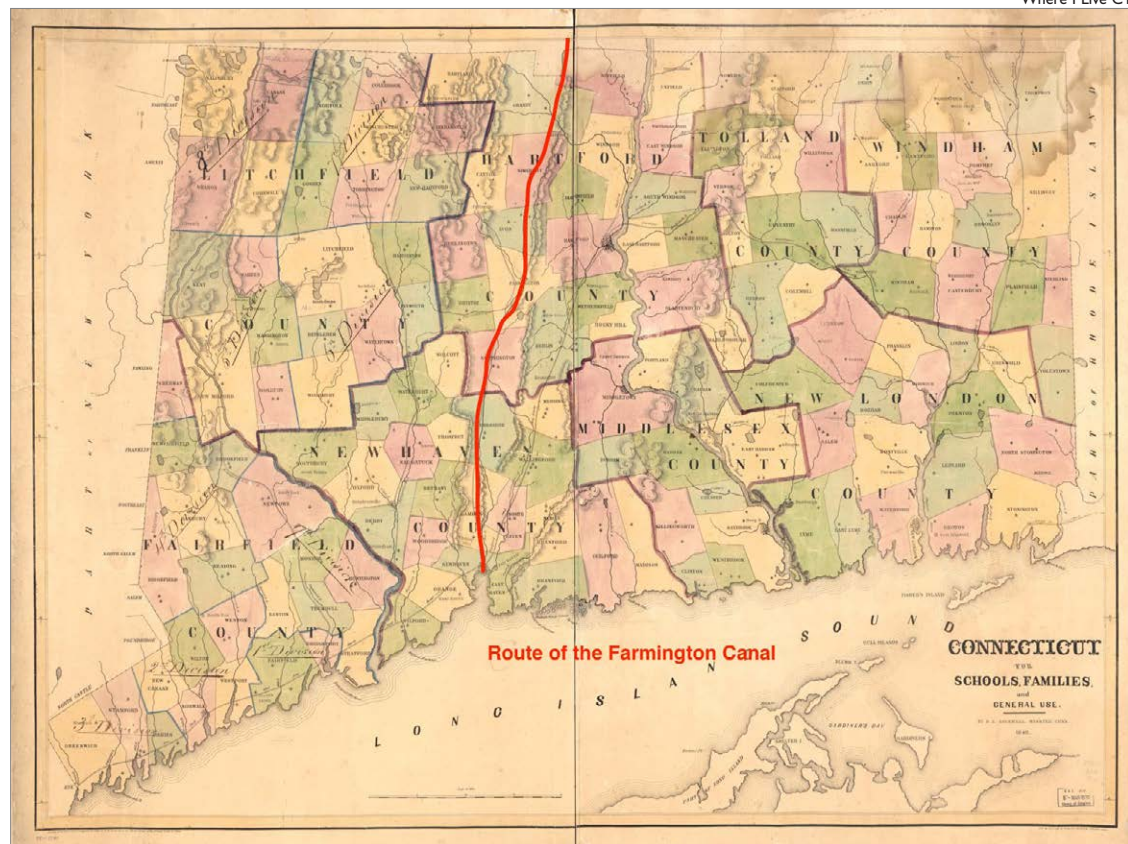
The last holdout was Yale University, which for years resisted committing the section of canal bed through its campus. Finally, under President Rick Levin, Yale joined the effort.

The first six miles of trail were opened in 1996. In a few areas, the imprint of the original canal can still be seen, along with retaining walls, canal locks, and other features. Currently, the remaining path from Yale to Long Wharf is under construction along roadways since the FBI office blocks the original canal/railroad bed.

"It's amazing that it's there at all," says Nancy Alderman, a founder of the Farmington Canal Rail-to-Trail Association, of the struggle. But once those early efforts began to show success, the process developed its own momentum and became much easier.

North of Cheshire, development of the trail occurred independently. After Congress passed the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (called ISTEA), which provided funding for Transportation Enhancements, the Farmington Valley Trails Council was formed in 1992 by Preston Reed and other concerned citizens to promote and support the conversion.

The Farmington Canal extended 54 miles from New Haven through central Connecticut and beyond into Massachusetts.





Six town governments and staff cooperated in the creation of the trail development committee and in providing matching funds not supplied by ISTEA. The first sections of the "Farmington Valley Greenway" were paved in Simsbury and Farmington beginning in 1993 and '94. Other sections followed, with construction on three final sections, through Southington and Plainville, scheduled for 2024 and 2025.

Today, the trail serves hikers, walkers, runners, cyclists, and commuters, continuing to play its historic role as a vital transportation corridor that ties Connecticut communities together.

This ongoing heritage has been a cooperative effort with many participants. Construction and maintenance are handled by the towns and cities through which it passes. Federal and state funding has made construction possible. Friends' groups or local historical societies or conservation groups sponsor events and cleanup days. Together, the Farmington Canal Rail-to-Trail Association and the Farmington Valley Trails Council provide the glue that holds all the parts together, by serving as the primary advocates for the trail.

Presented jointly by Preservation Connecticut and the State Historic Preservation Office, the Harlan Griswold Award honors outstanding contributions to the preservation and revitalization of Connecticut's historic places in memory of Harlan Griswold, the longtime chair of the Connecticut Historical Commission, forerunner to the present-day Historic Preservation Council, and a founder of the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation, now known as



Historic remnants of both the canal and the railroad line are found along the trail.

Preservation Connecticut.

Harlan Griswold once said, "To me, preservation is more about my grandchildren than about my grandparents." The Farmington Canal Rail to Trail Association and the Farmington Valley

Trails Council exemplify that attitude: In their work to create, maintain, and promote the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail, they are helping to build a better future for their children and grandchildren. 🌿

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## Janet Jainschigg Award for Preservation Professionals: Stephen C. Marshall

**F**or nearly five decades, Stephen C. Marshall has preserved historic places as a contractor, restoration carpenter, home inspector, and educator. Over time he has worked for and with a variety of constituents or clients, learned different aspects of historic building construction techniques, and shared his knowledge with others.

First in partnership with his father, Herman Marshall, and later on his own, Steve has restored an array of buildings, particularly 18th-century houses. They include private homes as well as properties of major institutions like Old Sturbridge Village, Connecticut Landmarks, and the Wadsworth Athenaeum.

Steve and his father installed the Wetmore Parlor at the Wadsworth Athenaeum. Removed from the Seth Wetmore house in Middletown, the parlor is a masterpiece of 18th-century decorative painting, including graining, marbelizing, sunburst/ombre, plus a pastoral landscape view. While its removal from the house in 1986 sparked controversy, the installation met the highest curatorial standards. They also reproduced the paneling—without the painting—in the Wetmore house.

Another notable job was the Nathan Hale schoolhouse in New London, which Steve prepped for one of its many moves, and then restored.

The project provided a new, sound foundation, identified pieces of original benches reused elsewhere in the building, and uncovered evidence that allowed an original chimney to be rebuilt. Some of the work was done by cadets from the Coast Guard Academy under Steve's supervision.

Cadets, as well as volunteers from the Sons of the American Revolution, also worked with Steve's guidance at the Trumbull War Office in Lebanon, Governor Jonathan Trumbull's headquarters for Connecticut government throughout the Revolutionary War. Steve and the volunteers dismantled 20th-century buildouts to make

way for restoration and reinterpretation of the interior.

For restoration work at the Cheney Homestead in Manchester, Steve learned historic plaster techniques from a local craftsman. When the job was done, the teacher announced his retirement and left his tools with Steve—a nod of approval.

In recent years, Steve has concentrated on restoring historic windows, a development which led him to work on historic buildings from later periods.

The J. B. Williams Company office building, in Glastonbury, is a 20th-century Georgian Revival structure that was rehabbed

Courtesy of Stephen Marshall



Courtesy of Stephen Marshall



Stephen Marshall, in his window workshop (above) and working at the Nathan Hale school house in New Londo (left photo, at right).


for ongoing office use. Steve restored historic windows in a project that met standards for historic rehabilitation tax credits and received a Connecticut Preservation Award. And for the Loomis-Chaffee school's Loomis Hall, built in 1913, he repaired and reglazed huge windows and restored historic doors, pediments and baseboards.

Steve is a charter member of the Window Preservation Alliance, formed with the aim of serving as a resource and clearinghouse for window restorers, helping owners find skilled craftspeople, and helping preservationists find the tools they need to educate building owners, architects, and other decision makers about the value of original windows.

In 2019, Steve led a two-day class in window restoration at his shop in conjunction with the Connecticut Trust (now called Preservation Connecticut). Other classes were scheduled but then cancelled due to the Covid outbreak.

Another area of work has been home inspection. After hearing about home inspectors who didn't think they needed to understand traditional construction methods, Steve trained to become an inspector himself, hoping to bring his expertise in the unique nature of historic buildings to serve homebuyers. While he has not obtained a license, he has consulted for inspectors or buyers and also taught continuing education sessions for home inspector associations. He notes that performing an inspection is different from reviewing a building's architectural history: unlike modern buildings which are fairly uniform, it's simply not possible to see everything in an old house in just two or three hours.




The Jainschigg award commemorates Janet G. Jainschigg, a founder and benefactor of Preservation Connecticut as well as a regional leader in historic preservation. Although a volunteer herself, she always insisted on the highest standards of professionalism. Throughout his work in restoring historic buildings and helping others do so through education, inspection, and volunteer enabler, Stephen C. Marshall exemplifies the professional excellence that the Janet Jainschigg Award celebrates. 🌿







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# Preservation Connecticut Awards of Merit 2024

Awards of merit, nominated by members of Preservation Connecticut, recognize outstanding efforts in the preservation and enhancement of historic places throughout Connecticut, with the goal of inspiring others to take similar action. Here are this year's recipients:

## Kirschenbaum dome, Branford

In 1957 the painter Susan Weil hired architect Bernard Kirschenbaum to design and build a geodesic dome for her studio. Kirschenbaum was a protégé of Buckminster Fuller, who promoted domes as a model of mass-produced, low-cost housing. Soon, the couple were married. But the dome was never fully completed, and it gradually fell into squalor and disrepair.

In 2010, Weil decided to save the dome. There were numerous challenges. Kirschenbaum fell ill early in the project, and it was sometimes difficult to intuit and honor his wishes. Decisions had to be made whether to refurbish existing elements or reproduce new ones. Luckily, the skeleton could be repaired, while glass and solid infill panels were replaced. For this unusual structure, stock parts were not available; all parts had to be custom-made. Site development included upgraded mechanical systems, moved to an underground mechanical room to retain the simplicity of the original dome.

Based on Buckminster Fuller's visionary thinking, the Kirschenbaum dome is not only an important reminder of the heritage of modernism but a place that calms and inspires.

*Project team: Bernard Kirschenbaum (1924-2016); Susan Weil, Sara Kirschenbaum; Ben Posel, AIA; Joseph Shea; Jeremy Ziemann (Studio Z); Michael Ludvik, PE; Charles Brown, PE*



Kirschenbaum dome, Branford

Sara Kirschenbaum



Goodell store, Chaplin

## Sally Zimmerman & Allen Olsen, Chaplin

The people of Chaplin owe Sally Zimmerman and Allen Olsen a debt of gratitude both for restoring the Goodell Store and contributing to history and preservation in the town.

The couple discovered Chaplin—a linear village listed on the National Register—through Sally's work for Historic New England. There they bought a decaying general store and gradually renovated it as a three-season home, overcoming zoning and structural challenges. Work included stabilizing the building frame and foundation, plus restoring roof, siding, and windows. Careful interior design preserves the store's historic ambiance.

In Chaplin, Sally and Allen delve deep into local history. Allen tracks titles, transcribes deeds, and diagrams land parcels while Sally draws on census, probate records, and other sources to trace social and economic relationships. The results have been shared in public presentations and private meetings with homeowners.

By restoring the Goodsell store, Sally and Allen helped highlight the 19<sup>th</sup>-century commercial activities of Chaplin, while their work in researching and disseminating information about the village encourages others to do their own part to preserve it.

*Recipients: Sally Zimmerman and Allen Olsen*

Sally Zimmerman



## Frederick Sturges house, Fairfield

This imposing Italianate house was built in 1855 for Frederick Sturges, member of a prominent Fairfield family. When Steve and D'vorah Schiffman acquired the house, in 1998, it had suffered years of poor-quality alterations.

The Schiffmans wanted to restore the house in a way that would be historically accurate while making it a comfortable modern residence. Top priority was to ensure the house's structural soundness, by putting on a new roof and shoring up the foundation. Next came central air conditioning with a flexible duct system to minimize disruption to the historic fabric. Later, they completely gutted the kitchen and bathrooms which had been remuddled in 1970s style.

Additions were designed to echo the original structure's deep eaves, moldings, and window frames. Finally, they transformed the interior into a showcase of Victorian design featuring reproductions and historic wallpapers, hardware, light fixtures, and furnishings garnered from salvage yards, flea markets, and antique dealers all over the country.

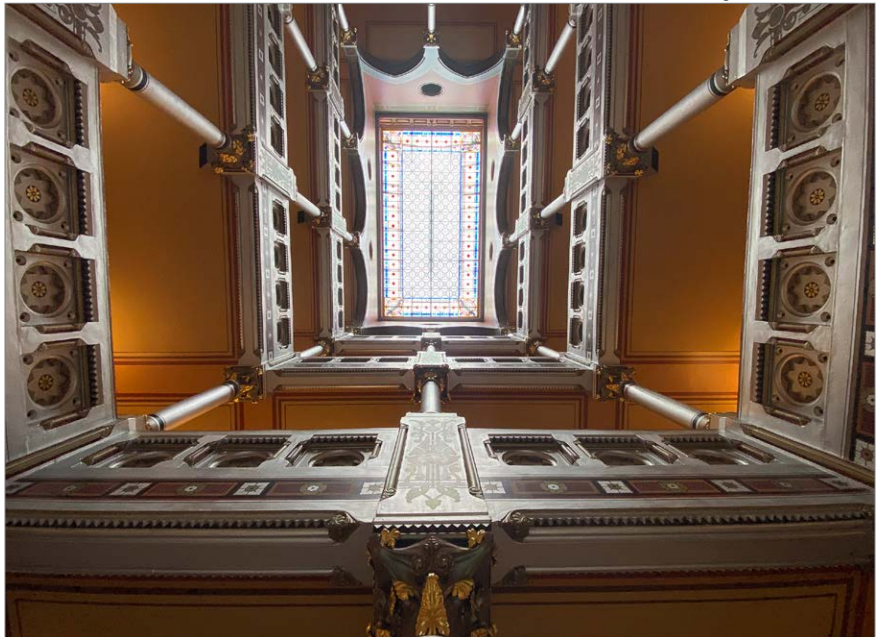
This house serves as an example that historic restoration can yield spaces that beautifully integrate functionality and comfort.

*Project team: Steven and D'vorah Schiffman; JP Ludwig Builders Inc.; Jennifer Anderson Designs; Meehan & Ramos Pools; Chris West Company LLC; Terra Green Landscaping; Cileene The Gourmet Gardener; Rich Mead Wallcovering; Cassandra Gilmore*



Frederick Sturges house, Fairfield

Kronenberger & Sons Restoration



Connecticut State Capitol laylights, Hartford

## State Capitol skylights, Hartford

Bathed in light from stained-glass laylights, two multi-story atria are important gathering places in the Capitol. In 2008, investigators found that the laylights were in severe disrepair. It was recommended that the atria be closed until the laylights could be removed or stabilized.

Restoration included re-caming existing glass panels while replicating missing ones. The laylights were then stored at the Capitol until new waterproof skylight enclosures could be constructed above each.

In the meantime, the project team determined that the painting around the laylights was original. Details were reproduced on canvas applied to the walls—a reversible treatment that will allow the originals to be uncovered in the future if desired.

One unique constraint was that no scaffolding was allowed to be in place during legislative sessions. This created a strict

schedule for removing the existing laylights, constructing new skylights, repainting, and re-installing the laylights.

This project shows how modern preservation technology, thoughtful planning, and a team bound by the same goals can successfully come together.

*Project team: Connecticut General Assembly, Joint Committee of Legislative Management; Crosskey Architects LLC; Julie L. Sloan LLC; James K. Grant Associates; Kronenberger & Sons Restoration, Inc.; John Canning & Company; Lynchburg Stained Glass; Cherry Hill Glass Co.; Apex Construction Group LLC*

*continued on next page*



*Awards of Merit, cont'd from page 9*

## Shepherd Home, Middletown

This brick building was built in 1925 to house nurses at Connecticut Valley Hospital, the state's first public mental hospital. Now, it has been renovated as housing for homeless or at-risk veterans.

The design created 32 one-bedroom and studio apartments, with entry doors integrated into historic corridor trim. In addition to apartments, the building offers a large gathering room with adjacent kitchen plus administrative offices, conference room, and laundry.

A new accessible entry was created at ground level, reached by a ramp and sheltered by a porch that echoes the original Colonial Revival design. Other exterior work included window restoration, repairing and painting trim, and cleaning and repointing brick where necessary.

To restore the front portico, two stable columns were repaired, and two damaged ones replaced with replicated capitals and bases. As the highlight of the building's design, the dignified portico honors those who have served their country.

As many state-owned buildings no longer needed for their original purposes face decay and demolition, this project is a model for adapting them to new uses.

*Project team: Columbus House; Northeast Collaborative Architects; Martinez Couch & Associates, LLC.; GNCB Consulting Engineers, P.C.; RZ Design; Enterprise Builders*



Shepherd Home, Middletown

Tim Bombria



New London City Hall

## New London city hall, New London

New London has renovated its historic city hall, a highlight of the Downtown New London National Register district, making needed repairs while successfully adapting the building to 21<sup>st</sup>-century needs.

The work began with a conditions assessment to identify needs and set priorities. The assessment revealed deterioration from moisture, cracked masonry, rusted pipes, and crumbling plaster. Mechanical systems were antiquated or non-functional, bathrooms were not accessible, and hazardous materials raised costs of repairs.

Major work accomplished included cleaning and repairs to exterior masonry, mechanical upgrades, hazardous material abatement, accessibility improvements, and an expanded city clerk's office. In addition, decorative plaster and paintings in the city council chamber were restored, garnering a separate award in 2023.

As impressive as the list of tasks was the way they were accomplished. Phasing allowed city business to continue with little disruption, while imaginative funding overcame limited resources. In addition to state grants, the city used historic rehabilitation tax credits. And, city staff managed construction to save on construction fees, making it possible to bring the project in below the original bids in spite of Covid, supply chain disruptions, and inflation.

*Project team: City of New London; Architectural Preservation Studio; C.W. Kraus Preservation and Development; Connecticut DECD, State Historic Preservation Office; Valley Restoration LLC; John Canning & Company; Otis Elevator; Grand Light; D/E/F Services; Kronenberger and Sons Restoration; Giliberto and Sons Restoration*



## Fulton Park stewardship, Waterbury

For 15 years, the City of Waterbury and volunteers have cooperated to preserve Lewis Fulton Memorial Park, designed by Olmsted Brothers Landscape Architects and listed on the National Register.

The park was sadly neglected in 2009, when the Historic Overlook Community Club sponsored a cleanup day. Repeated annually, this inspired the founding of a friends group, the Fulton Park Conservancy. Leaders included Sen. Joan Hartley, Cathy Smith, Kathy McNamara, and Alderman Michael Salvio.

Together, the City and Conservancy have overseen numerous projects, including:

- Trails restored, ponds dredged, and invasive plants cleared.
- A renovated parks office, with new equipment shed nearby.
- The warming hut restored as an events venue.
- The original lilac grove recreated based on research to identify and source historic varieties.
- Modern additions, including a playscape and splash pad.



Youth cleanup at Fulton Park, Waterbury

Today, the park is a favorite site for community events but, more importantly, it is filled every day with users from all walks of life enjoying the historic landscape. The revitalization and ongoing maintenance of Fulton Park are a model of community stewardship to preserve a beloved outdoor space.

*Project team: City of Waterbury, Department of Public Works; Alderman Michael Salvio; Fulton Park Conservancy; Historic Overlook Community Club; the people of Waterbury*

## Honorable mention:

### Walnut Hill Park steps, New Britain

A principal entry into Walnut Hill Park is by way of curving limestone steps that were added in 1931 to the Olmsted-designed park in conjunction with the World War I memorial that crowns the hill. After years, neglect, atmospheric soiling, biological staining, birds, graffiti, and wear attacked the stone to the extent that the city had to close this popular entrance to the park.

Repair and cleaning procedures were carefully researched to define an approach that would not damage the stone or integrity of the composition. The solution was using historically appropriate patching material and stone replacements of Indiana limestone to match the original stone.

Like Fulton Park, Walnut Hill Park is an historic resource that continues to serve its community thanks to careful stewardship.

*Project team: City of New Britain; FHI Studio; Armani Restoration*



Walnut Hill Park steps, New Britain

FHI Studio



# Briefly noted

## Statewide.

Since the debut of *ConnCRIS*, the State Historic Preservation Office's statewide geospatial database, last spring, the office has been busy adding features. A full version of the application is now available and provides links to survey and register materials available through a log-in supplied by SHPO. Restricted information, including archaeological data, is available to qualified individuals. To request access, visit <https://conncris.ct.gov>. The State Historic Preservation Office will contact you once your request is processed. The public viewer will remain online and does not require a log-in. All versions of ConnCRIS are free.

## Wilton. ►

The Wilton Historical Society has rediscovered the historic Spruce Bank Cemetery, a burial ground for enslaved and free Blacks and Native Americans. According to Julie Hughes, archivist at the Wilton History Room and a trustee of the historical society, the cemetery pre-dated 1749, when the proprietors of Norwalk deeded land to Daniel Belden for a mill site, while reserving the African American burial ground located on the parcel. The last documented burial took place in 1878, and years of vandalism and encroachments erased the burial ground from sight. Based on Dr. Hughes' research, which established an approximate location, the historical society engaged archaeologist David Leslie of TerraSearch Geophysical to conduct a ground-penetrating radar (GPR) survey. The survey confirmed at least eight burials at the site. Based on this, the burial area will be protected from development. A task force including members of African American community and religious groups is being assembled to discuss memorializing the site and educational outreach. For more information visit [wiltonhistorical.org](http://wiltonhistorical.org).

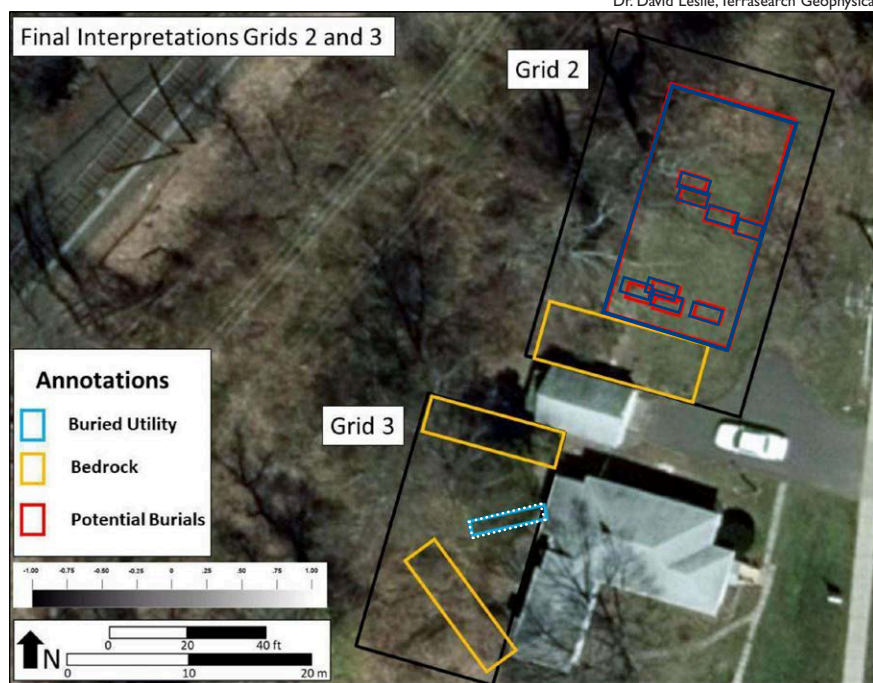


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## Waterford. ▲

Plans by the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) to demolish the former Seaside sanitarium buildings (1931-1934; NR) may have hit a roadblock. On March 14 developer Mark Steiner filed a lawsuit in Hartford Superior Court, seeking to halt destruction of the buildings under the Connecticut Environmental Protection Act. The buildings have been vacant since 1997 and were neglected before that. Mr. Steiner's contract to buy the property from the State was

canceled in 2014, when former Governor Dannel Malloy designated the site a state park. Over the next four years the state created a plan to seek a private developer to convert the historic buildings to an inn within the state park. A request for proposals issued in 2018 yielded no acceptable submissions, according to DEEP. In February 2023 the agency announced it would tear down all the buildings to build the park. An evidentiary hearing likely will be held in June or July.





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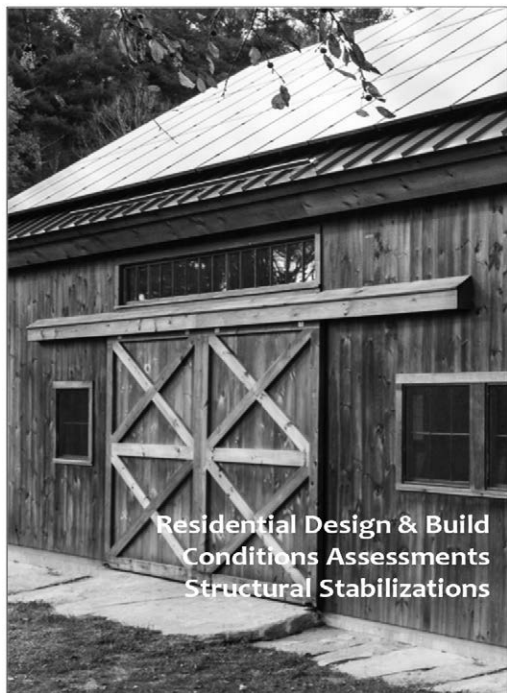
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## EDWARD F. GERBER'S LEGACY



"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."

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# HISTORIC PROPERTIES EXCHANGE

Threatened Buildings and Easement Properties Available — May/June 2024

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](http://preservationct.org/steward), or contact Christopher Wigren, Deputy Director.

## 85 Pulaski Street, Torrington (1927) \$399,000

Romanesque Revival church on 1.5-acres available for purchase. Built in 1927, the church was founded by Torrington's Polish-American community and operated as St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church until its closure due to church consolidations in 2017. Features include stone construction, rounded-arch windows, stained glass, and vaulted ceiling. Church is 14,420 sq. ft., which includes partially finished lower level. Property may be eligible for listing on the State Register of Historic Places and receiving historic rehabilitation tax credits.

**Contact: Marshall Cohen, Cohen Agency, (860) 618-5800**

## 272 Litchfield Road, New Milford (1821) \$479,000

Former Northville Baptist Church meetinghouse on over 2-acres. Built in 1821 in the Greek Revival style, the meetinghouse has interior balcony and original oak floors. Also includes full basement with commercial kitchen and bathroom. Building area is 2,464 sq. ft., 2.02 acres.

**Contact: Jackie Gardner, Coldwell Banker, 860-354-4111**



### Deadline for the next issue is June 20, 2024

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](mailto:khopewood@preservationct.org), or call (203) 562-6312.





## Monohansett Mill (1868) 83 Canal Street, Putnam \$1,600,000

Monohansett Mill available for redevelopment. The Monohansett Manufacturing Company occupied the space from 1872 to about 1912, producing cotton sheetings. The mill was later occupied by Putnam Worsted Mills. This property is listed in Preservation Connecticut's *Mills: Making Places of Connecticut* industrial survey and may be eligible for listing on the State Register of Historic Places and receiving historic rehabilitation tax credits. Building area is 45,140 sq. ft.; 2.01 acres.

**Contact: Anthony Chabot, Chabot & Associates Real Estate, 508-847-0902**



## 433 Chapel Street, New Haven (1882)

Redevelopment opportunity in New Haven's Mill River neighborhood. Former M. Armstrong and Company Carriage Factory, built in 1882, and situated in the heart of New Haven's carriage district. In 1909, Armstrong added automobile bodies to the production line to counter falling demands for older carriage technology and in 1919 discontinued all carriage production. The company closed in 1927 as auto production shifted to the Midwest. The next occupant was the John P. Smith Company, which manufactured wire fencing and stayed until closing in 1963. This 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. Building area is 32,953 sq. ft.; 0.59 acres. In Opportunity Zone.

**Contact: Michael Maldonado, Scalzo Commercial, 203.313.1554**



## 58 Main Street, Griswold (1841) \$200,000

Former Jewett City Baptist Church available in Griswold. Closed in 2023 due to small, aging congregation and rising expenses. Greek Revival church includes original stained glass windows, basement with kitchen, community room, and office space. Property may be eligible for listing on the State Register of Historic Places and receiving historic rehabilitation tax credits. Building area is 10,324 sq. ft., 1 acre.

**Contact: Heather Bassett, Team Bassett, 860-334-1693**



*Mimi Findlay Award*, cont'd from page 20

donations of money and materials and brought in volunteer helpers.

The restoration involved repairing or replacing steel support beams for floor and roof, sheet metal work, replacing missing or damaged floor boards, and replacing rotted siding with Southern yellow pine custom milled by a local wood products company. The final touch was fresh paint, a reddish brown determined by historical research and scraping. After six years' work, the boxcar was completed in 2021 and is now on long-term lease to the Danbury Railroad Museum.

In the meantime, Orion kept in touch with the Thomaston museum. After he graduated from high school, that relationship landed him a job at the Naugatuck Valley Railroad, successor to the Naugatuck railroad, established in 1845 to provide service between Bridgeport and Winsted. Now owned by the Railroad Museum of New England, the NVRR provides freight service and passenger service from Waterbury to Torrington mostly along the original route.

Orion's job involves organizing excursion trains for the Railroad Museum of New England. In addition to ordinary rides, the excursions include holiday-themed trains such as the Santa Express and a special Sun, Moon and Stars excursion for children with sensory sensitivity,



One of the excursion trains Orion organizes for the Railroad Museum of New England

who might not feel comfortable on a regular run. For Orion, it's a way to make it possible for more people to experience the train in a comfortable way.

In a volunteer capacity, Orion serves as treasurer of the Railroad Museum of New England and recently completed a term on the board of the Danbury Railroad Museum.

Railroads have played a significant role in Connecticut history, when access often determined whether a community grew or stagnated. From the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century to the 1940s when automobiles and highways began to supplant them,

trains were a vital part of everyday life in Connecticut, serving commuters and travelers and carrying goods to and from the state's factories. Though much diminished, they continue to be an important means of transportation. They also contribute to sustainability, using much less fuel to move goods than by truck.

Preserving history, contributing to sustainability in the present day—for Orion, it's all important work. But the best part, as he said in a radio interview, is this: "I get to wake up every day and go down and make people happy and run a Christmas train." ❄️

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## CONNECTICUT PRESERVATION AWARDS 2024

### Mimi Findlay Award for Young Preservationists: Orion Newall

Courtesy Orion Newall

**P**reserving railroad history is a passion for Orion Newall, a passion that goes back to when he was 6 or 7 and his mother volunteered at a railroad museum in Washington state. The interest continued after moving to Connecticut. When he was 15, Orion bought a surplus boxcar from the Railroad Museum of New England in Thomaston.

The Boston & Maine boxcar, #72249, was built in 1930 by the Standard Steel Car Company. It was one of the last outside braced boxcars produced for the B&M, measuring about 40 feet long and weighing roughly 44,000 pounds. The railroad museum had advertised the car for sale at \$1,500 but nothing panned out. When Orion got in touch, the museum offered it to him for one dollar. The teen raised money to disassemble the car and move it to his family's back yard in Woodstock, where he spent five years restoring it.

Facebook postings plus a fund-raising page and other information on the internet helped him attract

*continued on page 18*



Orion Newall with his restored boxcar, in 2021