

PRESERVATION CONNECTICUT NEWS

Opportunities for preservation 2024

While historic buildings and neighborhoods have value for their associations or design, they also provide opportunities to meet social goals such as broadening the housing supply or reducing global warming. In this issue, Renée Tribert outlines programs and organizations addressing the need for affordable housing by renovating existing buildings. Christopher Wigren reports on a different understanding of the causes of warming that bolsters the preservationist argument that the greenest building is the one that is already built. Uniting those themes, Julie Carmelich of the State Historic Preservation Office describes a current project that contributes to both goals.

Natural light through a ceiling monitor floods the interior of Building 832 at the Landers, Frary, and Clark Company's Ellis Street Plant, in New Britain. Current renovation work will convert the complex to affordable and workforce housing while improving energy efficiency.

Keith Construction



From the field: the **Circuit Riders** report

Preservation Connecticut is thrilled to announce the addition of the position, **Circuit Rider Fellow**, to our team. Thanks to generous support from PCT Trustee Edward F. Gerber, this position is a one-year opportunity for a recent college graduate interested in historic preservation to gain hands-on experience working alongside our team of four expert Circuit Riders. Initial work will include PCT's exciting \$6 million Washington Park Preservation Project in Bridgeport.

PCT is the state's leading historic preservation organization. Our Circuit Riders are on the front lines impacting communities across Connecticut:

- Making hundreds of site visits annually
- Providing vital preservation guidance to homeowners, municipalities, and non-profit organizations



Circuit Rider Stefan Danzucik inspects the Bristol Historical Society, a recent 1772 Foundation grant recipient



Circuit Riders are using a Technical Assistance Consultancy to develop a scope of work to help save this historic storefront in Norwich.

- Facilitating hundreds of thousands of dollars in grant funding
- Listing properties on the State and National Register of Historic Places
- Providing educational programs

All to preserve the places that matter to all of us.

We are fortunate to have a robust field service preservation program, but we need more. PCT is committed to increasing our grant funding, growing our educational programs, extending outreach to historically marginalized groups, and refocusing our efforts to use historic preservation as a tool to support social equity and environmental sustainability.

Everything comes at a cost. We do not charge for Circuit Rider site visits; nonetheless, a single visit can cost PCT upwards of \$200. Funds are also used to consult engineers, architects, and other needed



Field Service Director Michael Forino visits the Old Stone Church in East Haven.

professionals to ensure the preservation of valued places.

We are grateful that the State Historic Preservation Office helps subsidize the Circuit Rider program, but to grow and achieve our goals, **we need additional support**. We need you to renew your membership and consider providing an additional donation to the Circuit Rider program to ensure we can continue our mission to

“preserve, protect, and promote the buildings, sites, and landscapes that contribute to the heritage and vitality of Connecticut communities” in perpetuity.



To make a donation in support of the Circuit Rider program or learn more about the Circuit Rider Fellowship, visit preservationct.org/circuit-riders.

Circuit Riders by the numbers: June-July 2024

site visits made: **48**
communities visited: **27**
technical consultancies: **7**
educational programs presented: **2**
historic register nominations completed: **1**

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

It's been a busy summer for Preservation Connecticut, with progress made on two major projects.

In partnership with the Connecticut State Historic Preservation Office and New Haven Preservation Trust, we launched a **capital grant program** for homeowners in the Winchester Repeating Arms National Register historic district in New Haven's Newhallville neighborhood. Forty-six homeowners applied for funding for repairs to historic houses in the district. The review committee is scheduled to meet in September to review the applications for a total distribution of \$200,000.

In the **Washington Park Community Preservation project** in Bridgeport, funded by the state's CIF2030 Project: We eagerly await a contract from the State of Connecticut and assignment of a project manager from the Department of Economic and Community Development so that the project can officially get underway. In the meantime, WSA Architects completed a condition assessment of St. Luke-St. Paul's Episcopal Church and provided guidance for immediate safety concerns. The Washington Park Committee met over the summer and will continue to guide the project.

With fall just around the corner, we're planning a series of events. Join us for **Bolton Heritage Day** at the Bolton Heritage Farm on September 28. The day involves CT Society of Genealogists "Genealogy 101" at Bolton Congregational Church's Education Building, Chandler Hall at 10:30, a Preservation Connecticut Barn Talk at 1:00, and Yoga on the Farm at 3:30.

The **Connecticut Archeology Fair** will return to the Henry Whitfield State Museum in Guilford on Saturday, October 5. Join us in celebrating Archaeology Awareness month with tables, displays, games, and talks about archaeology.

Mark your calendar to join us on November 2 at the Wilton Historical Society for an in-person **Talking About Preservation** chat. Watch emails and social media for more information as the date nears.

We were sad to hear of the death of **Richard Bergmann, FAIA, ASLA** in Florida in July. A gifted architect, landscape architect, and artist, Dick worked on historic buildings including the Lockwood-Mathews mansion in Norwalk, the Noroton Presbyterian Church in Darien, and the Maxwell Perkins house in New Canaan.

He was a vocal advocate for New Canaan's modernist houses and served on PCT's board in the 1980s. Our condolences to his wife and partner, Sandra Bergmann.

We are pleased to have summer intern **Olivia Grella** from Central Connecticut State University working with us. Olivia has been a great asset to our team, managing a multitude of tasks in development, communications and outreach. She has accompanied Circuit Riders on site visits around the state, providing detailed note keeping and thoughtful observations.

Preservation Connecticut will be hosting Circuit Rider/field staff from **statewide preservation organizations** in the Northeast for a retreat in October. We're planning to show our colleagues the preservation successes and challenges that we're working on while using New Haven as our homebase.

Preservation issues came to the forefront in the 2024 state legislative session, and we expect that level of activity to continue in 2025. As we prepare for the next legislative session, we would be delighted to meet with you and your local legislators at historic sites in your community to **discuss preservation policy**, funding, and strategies. Please feel free to reach out to me to set up a meeting.

—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

October 2, 2024, at 9:30 a.m.
November 6, 2024, at 9:30 a.m.

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

Existing buildings and affordable homes: a pragmatic choice

By Renée Tribert

Habitat for Humanity of Greater New Haven

News media remind us regularly that there is a dearth of housing, both nationwide and in Connecticut. The people the most affected are seniors, the disabled, and those earning low wages. These households are termed “cost-burdened”—meaning that they spend more than 30 percent of their incomes on housing. In Connecticut in 2022, there were three cost-burdened households for each available affordable rental unit. The gap is even larger today after market changes wrought by the Covid pandemic and its aftermath have further increased costs for available units.

Another facet of the housing gap in Connecticut relates to zoning patterns that may deter the creation of affordable homes or apartments: 91 percent of residential zones are for single-family housing, and only two percent for multi-family units (other residential zones include village density and mixed-use areas). One legislative effort aimed at changing this landscape and promoting affordable housing, known as Section 8-30g, has been in effect since 1990: under it, developments with affordable units can generally only be denied on the basis of health or safety issues. This law sometimes results in threats to existing or historic buildings, but this is a concern that preservationists may confront with new development proposals in general.

Preservation Connecticut believes that access to affordable housing is a civic responsibility and not automatically at odds with our historic buildings and neighborhoods. Indeed, preservation offers many opportunities to support and supplement affordable housing. Donovan Rypkema, the economics guru for historic preservation, has pointed out that less expensive older homes, apartment buildings, and neighborhoods provide about 30 percent of housing for households below the poverty line, low-income renters, the elderly, and Black and Brown homeowners. He thus exhorts us “to quit tearing down



In 2019, Habitat for Humanity of Greater New Haven rehabbed this neglected Greek Revival house with financing from a variety of community sources, including a grant from the New Haven Preservation Trust for the porch.

older and historic housing.” The Urban Institute reminds us that preserving existing affordable housing and rehabbing old buildings with affordable units “prevents displacement, is generally cheaper than building new housing, and conforms to existing land-use patterns.” Perhaps just as important, many older and historic neighborhoods are home to families from differing economic levels which together knit social and communal ties into pride of place.

Affordable housing is not a new issue.

There have always been Americans struggling to make ends meet. The federal government first began seeking solutions during the Great Depression. But many federal policies and projects have only deepened divisions by wealth. From highway construction and urban renewal to the shift to voucher systems and private management in public housing, low-income communities have been displaced and isolated with fewer and fewer housing options.

How has historic preservation responded to the need for affordable housing?

Preservation literature shows a thirty-year record of arguments that favor affordable housing as a reuse for old buildings. As early as 1995, the National Park Service began issuing *Case Studies in Affordable Housing through Historic Preservation*; these examples demonstrate how buildings recognized for their architectural or historic significance can also add to the availability of housing options.

Also in 1995, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation issued a policy statement on “Affordable Housing and Historic Preservation.” Updated in 2006 and 2023, it notes the importance of the nation’s existing housing supply in meeting affordable unit needs and of rehab for the 40 percent that is at least 50 years old.

“Affordable Housing & Density,” a 2021 brief from the National Trust for Historic Preservation and Preservation Partners sums up the paths through which preservation can contribute to the supply of affordable housing: creating new units through adap-



The Hartford Land Bank renovated this 1915 apartment building on Homestead Avenue.



The Central Connecticut Coast YMCA offers permanent supportive housing in Bridgeport through Alpha Community Services. Here, the Edinburgh Crescent.

tive reuse of vacant and underused buildings; rehabbing existing subsidized and public housing; preserving older, “naturally occurring” affordable housing; and adding thoughtful infill in old neighborhoods and historic districts.

What have federal and state governments done to encourage rehab of existing buildings for affordable housing?

Since its introduction in 1976, the Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives Program has helped create more than 172,000 low- and moderate-income units in historic buildings. Much of this has likely occurred through twinning with the Low Income Housing Tax Credit created in 1986; the combination often is part of the funding stack for adaptive use of large former commercial and industrial buildings. As the gap between supply and need continued to widen, the federal government began to focus on retention of the existing public housing supply, and in 2005, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) published *Best Practices for Effecting the Rehabilitation of Affordable Housing* with recommendations for reducing barriers to rehab.

In Connecticut, the legislature authorized a five-percent increase to the 25

percent historic rehabilitation tax credit for income-generating projects with affordable units in 2007, a powerful incentive. In 2012, HUD introduced the Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) which funds public housing agencies to make repairs and improvements to existing public housing; Connecticut agencies have already rehabbed 2,365 units and have another 1,193 units lined up. More recently, responding to the post-Covid scarcity of housing options, \$85 million was appropriated in the 2023 Pathways to Removing Obstacles to Housing (PRO Housing) HUD grants to state and local governments; a variety of projects, from land use regulation revisions to rehabilitation projects, are eligible across 150 Connecticut communities.

Connecticut non-profits work to provide housing, often in existing buildings.

Housing insecurity can be found in our urban centers as well as in rural communities. Many local, regional, and national organizations have been working for decades, with and without historic incentives, to provide a decent place for people in need to live in Connecticut, often in existing buildings.

Defining support for low-income housing as an integral part of its mission,

the First Congregational Church of Coventry purchased the 19th century Lang house in 1982 and converted it to low-income apartments.

Neighborhood Housing Services of New Haven has been rehabbing distressed houses for low- and moderate-income families since 1979. A recent social media post celebrated forty years of home ownership at one of its first projects.

Founded in 1976, Habitat for Humanity has seven chapters across Connecticut that provide housing through new construction and rehabs. In 2019, the New Haven chapter restored a neglected Greek Revival house built in 1833; the project was financed through a variety of community sources with technical assistance from the New Haven Preservation Trust and PCT but received no tax credits.

The Central Connecticut Coast YMCA offers permanent supportive housing in Bridgeport through Alpha Community Services. Hundreds of units fill both new and historic buildings including the Edinburgh Crescent rowhouses (1889), the 1929 Tudor Revival YMCA building, and ten historic homes around Washington Park.

continued on page 18

Rethinking sustainability and historic preservation

By Christopher Wigren

In preservation circles, discussions of sustainability often begin with a poster from the National Trust for Historic Preservation that depicts an historic building as a gas can. Created in 1980, the poster was a response to energy shortages caused by oil embargoes of the 1970s and promoted meeting shortages by reusing existing buildings and retrofitting them to improve their energy efficiency. The idea of conserving scarce resources has been key to preservation-related sustainability efforts ever since.

In 2024 conserving energy resources remains a goal. However, now the primary issue is not scarcity, but rather global warming caused by release of carbon into the atmosphere through burning fossil fuels, as explained by Lloyd Alter, an architect and writer based in Toronto, during an online symposium presented by the National Trust in April. Rising temperatures throughout the world are responsible for extreme heat, melting icecaps, rising ocean levels, and increasingly violent and unpredictable weather. This different understanding changes the conversation: it's still important to use less fuel, but specific strategies are different.

Carbon release is a cumulative phenomenon, and it doesn't matter whether it's from construction or operation. Once a certain amount of carbon has been released, climate change will reach an irreversible, catastrophic level. The United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change estimates that, at current rates, that level will be reached in less than ten years.

This means that energy saving will not produce the reduction in carbon emissions needed to stop global warming. According to Alter, the only way to prevent catastrophic climate change is to sharply limit the amount of carbon to be released, by any method.

Building construction and operation account for a major portion—about 40 percent—of human produced carbon emissions. In the 1970s, conservation looked at building *operations* such as

heating, cooling, and lighting, because they consumed more fuel over the lifetime of a structure than construction, and because they relied more on scarce oil, while producing construction materials like steel and concrete relied on coal, which was still in plentiful supply. But after 50 years, operating efficiency is vastly improved, while climate change is now understood to be driven as much by coal as by oil.

So, efforts to reduce carbon emissions need to shift more to construction—the production, transportation, and assembling of structural elements—and particularly to concrete and steel, the dominant materials of modern building, which are among the worst offenders. Alter cites a 2021 report from Architects for Climate Action which notes that “the embodied carbon of a building can be up to 75 percent of its total emissions over a typical 60-year lifetime.”

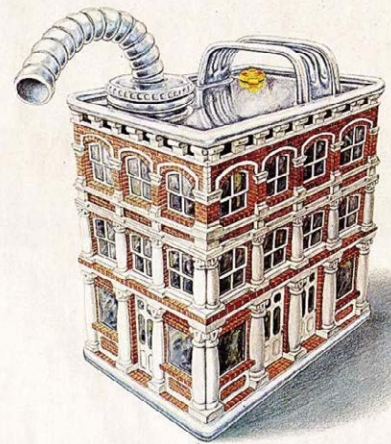
That term—“embodied carbon”—dates back to the days of the National Trust poster, when preservationists attempted to quantify the energy consumed in constructing a building as contained within it, like gasoline in a can. But for Alter, the term ‘embodied carbon’ implies that carbon is somehow *encased* in buildings. In fact, it's the opposite: construction *releases* carbon into the atmosphere, where it traps heat, causing global temperatures to rise. Alter suggests that we speak instead of what he calls ‘upfront carbon’—the carbon released upfront, in the construction of a building, as opposed to lighting, heating and cooling and other energy uses associated with using the building.

Focusing the response to climate change on upfront carbon strengthens the preservationist argument that the greenest building is the one that is already built. Constructing new buildings, even buildings that will achieve the highest level of operating efficiency, emits high levels of carbon: studies by the National Trust have determined that it can take as much as 80 years

PRESERVATION:

Reusing America's Energy

Preservation Week May 11-17, 1980



It takes energy to construct a new building.
It saves energy to preserve an old one.

It takes the energy equivalent of one gallon of gasoline to make, deliver and install eight bricks. Preserving eight old bricks instead of throwing them away and making new ones means that the energy of a gallon of gasoline can be used to heat other bricks, insulate old buildings, even the energy required to demolish and replace them with new buildings. And properly rehabilitated old buildings use no more energy, on the average, than brand new buildings for operation. For more energy-saving ideas, contact the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the U.S. Department of Energy in altering preservation work. For details write to: Preservation Week, National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1117 K Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20004. Or contact your local preservation organization.

NATIONAL TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

The National Trust for Historic Preservation created this poster in 1980 to champion saving energy through reusing old buildings.

before even the most energy-efficient new building shows a net decrease in carbon emissions over a renovated existing structure. This shows that reusing existing buildings is the best way, indeed the only way, to significantly reduce carbon emissions and slow global warming. Preservationists must make this point loudly and consistently.

But this also will require the preservation movement to rethink how it operates. Buildings that preservationists typically concern themselves with—the ones eligible for historic designation and therefore subject to preservation guidelines—represent only a tiny fraction of the total supply of existing structures representing upfront carbon emissions. How can we encourage reuse of and improvements to the majority of others?

Jim Lindberg, a senior policy director at the National Trust proposes five areas of preservation action, quoted here with slight edits from “The Reuse Imperative” published online by the National Trust:

- *Expand preservation and zoning tools.* Offer multiple designation and design review options to increase the number of buildings and neighborhoods protected through local preserva-



Conversion of the former East Haven high school to housing met stringent Passive House standards for energy efficiency but its greatest contribution to sustainability was reusing a building with significant upfront carbon.



People in past ages often lived comfortably in much smaller buildings than we now think necessary. The 600-square-foot footprint of Benjamin Hall, Jr.'s house in Guilford was average size for middle-income Connecticut families at the turn of the 19th century.

tion programs at various levels of significance. Consider adaptive-use ordinances, conservation districts, and context-sensitive zoning to encourage reuse and discourage speculative demolition outside historic districts.

- *Create more building reuse incentives.* Reinstate a tiered system of rehabilitation tax incentives that also includes older buildings not designated as historic, like the rehabilitation tax credit for pre-1936 buildings not designated as historic, which was repealed in 2017. Support enhancements to historic rehabilitation tax credits. Work with climate advocates and other allies to position building reuse as a carbon offset in future local, state, or federal carbon tax programs.
- *Prioritize materials conservation in rehabilitation.* Add a new “reuse” treatment to the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards that prioritizes retention of high-carbon building materials, while allowing greater flexibility to improve energy performance for buildings in conservation districts as well as non-contributing buildings in historic districts. Recommend life-cycle assessment of the carbon impacts of all major rehabilitations.
- *Strengthen demolition review policies.* Flip the demolition review paradigm: instead of approving all demolition requests unless a last-minute preservation alternative can be found, adopt policies that presume demolition

permits will not be approved without documentation that replacement will achieve life-cycle carbon savings. Work with climate advocates to require carbon impact assessments for large projects.

- *Add deconstruction to the preservation policy toolbox.* Support ordinances to require salvaging of usable materials in cases when full building reuse is not feasible. Use deconstruction programs to create jobs and build awareness of the carbon content of building materials and their value for the future.

Lindberg recognizes that some of these ideas need further refinement. The deconstruction policy, for instance, must not become an incentive to remove historic or usable old buildings.

Alter offers a similar, but much simpler set of guidelines, beginning with the most effective:

- **Build nothing:** reconsider building needs and consider solutions that don’t require new construction.
- **Build less:** where new construction is necessary, reconsider building needs to reduce the amount of construction.
- **Build clever:** look closely at building needs; often when people seek more space what they really need is better planned space.
- **Build efficiently:** use low carbon technologies and materials. (Alter mentions recent increased use of building stone instead of concrete in France, made more affordable by modern tools for cutting.)

What Lindberg and Alter both are urging boils down to a single, even simpler, basic rule, which Alter quotes from Will Arnold of the Institution of Structural Engineers: **use less stuff**. Any real solution to the climate crisis will require a change in our attitudes to overall consumption. It will mean rethinking building programs, taking a harder look at the difference between what we *want* and what we truly *need*.

Again, the preservation movement can point the way. It can show how people in the past lived comfortably in smaller quarters than we ‘need’ today. It can remind us of non-technological ways of making buildings comfortable. It can remind us of the advantages of walkable communities linked by shared transportation. It can point us to traditional building materials and techniques that require less carbon to produce and that last longer. Above all, it can provide examples of old buildings once believed to be obsolete or inefficient or uncomfortable which have been made usable and attractive once again. 🌿

Read a short interview with Lloyd Alter at <https://savingplaces.org/stories/upfront-carbon-and-why-it-matters>.

Jim Lindberg’s suggestions are quoted from “The Reuse Imperative,” <https://savingplaces.org/stories/the-reuse-imperative>.

Adaptive use achieves affordable housing and energy efficiency

*By Julie Carmelich, Historic Tax Credit Administrator,
Connecticut State Historic Preservation Office*

Ongoing rehabilitation of the Landers, Frary, and Clark Company's Ellis Street Plant, in New Britain, will create affordable housing in energy efficient structures. The plant complex, which was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in August 2022, consists of 25 interconnected industrial buildings spanning the north and south sides of Ellis Street. It is one of three separate facilities owned by the Landers, Frary, and Clark Company in New Britain and was constructed between 1908 to 1962. The complex is significant for its contribution to industry and invention as a leading producer of the country's early electrical appliances and housewares. As the manufacturer of the popular Universal brand, including irons, coffee percolators, and ranges, the company also

contributed to the war effort by inventing a new life-saving filter for gas masks that proved effective in combatting mustard gas poisoning during World War I.

In 1965, the General Electric (GE) company purchased the Landers, Frary, and Clark Company. GE maintained the Universal brand, but retired the name Landers, Frary, and Clark. The Ellis Street Plant continued production of GE products until 1969. Today, the north side of the plant maintains several small industrial tenants, although there are several vacant buildings. The south side of the plant, which consists of the four remaining buildings on that side, is undergoing a rehabilitation by WinnCompanies, a national leader in the creation of affordable and workforce housing.

WinnCompanies purchased the property in June 2023 after being selected as the property's preferred developer by the City of New Britain in 2020. The South Campus rehabilitation includes the four remaining buildings on the parcel, all interconnected. Building 831 (1924), which fronts Ellis Street, is a six-story brick building that historically served as the company's maintenance shop and product assembly space. Connected to the east end of Building 831's south elevation, Building 832 is a one-story masonry building that was constructed in 1919. It served the company primarily for salvaging metal parts, pressing and stamping, washing and degreasing. Connected to the west end of Building 831's south elevation is Building 835, a five-story masonry building constructed in 1916. Building 835 historically served the company as a storage building for dies, tools, cartons, and appliance parts as well as assembly space for their larger appliances

Keith Construction

Project at a glance

Project Team:

Developer: WinnCompanies

Contractor: Keith Construction

Architect: JCJ Architecture

Historic Consultant: The Public Archaeology Laboratory, Inc.

Number of buildings in project: 4

Units created: 154

Affordable and workforce units created: 154

Sustainability measures: rooftop solar panels, ground mounted solar arrays, wall insulation, and insulated windows

State historic rehabilitation tax credits reserved: \$15,020,000 (4 buildings total)

Estimated federal historic rehabilitation tax credit: \$9,983,400



Buildings 836, 835, 831, and 832 of the Landers Frary and Clark Company's Ellis Street plant in New Britain are being rehabbed for affordable housing.

including washers and electrical ranges. Finally, building 836 is connected to the south elevation of Building 835. The five-story masonry building was constructed in 1936 and was used for shipping and product storage. All four buildings total 237,844 square feet in size.

The ongoing rehabilitation of the four buildings includes the creation of 154 affordable and workforce apartments. To enhance the building's efficiency and improve indoor air quality, the bedroom of each unit will be insulated and finished with drywall while the living spaces retain their exposed brickwork. Other interior finishes will include exposed beams and columns, and wood floors. Sustainable measures include a complete replacement of the windows with insulated glass, solar panels on the roofs of Buildings 831, 835, and 836, as well as ground-mounted solar arrays at the rear of the property. The owner is on track to complete the rehabilitation by February 2025.

WinnCompanies has been a leader in creating affordable, sustainable housing in Connecticut. Another recent rehabilitation project, the Tyler in East Haven, rehabilitated the former East Haven High School following the Passive House Institute's EnerPHit Standard with applicable exceptions for historic properties. The State Historic Preservation Office supported these rehabs through the administration of the state and federal historic tax credit programs, which reinforces the notion that adaptive reuse of historic properties can be the most sustainable form of development. 🌱



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Connecticut Archaeology Fair

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October 5th, 2024
From 10am to 4pm
**At Henry Whitfield
State Museum**
Guilford, CT

Join us in celebrating Archaeology Awareness Month with tables, displays, games, and talks about the great archaeology that is taking place in our state! Free and open to the public. Food vendors will be on site with a variety of options. We hope to see you there!

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ARCHAEOLOGY**



CONNECTICUT
State Historic Preservation Office



Briefly noted

Fairfield.

The Connecticut Supreme Court has allowed a five-story apartment building containing affordable units to be built within sight of a local historic district in a zone ordinarily limited to single-family houses no more than 32 feet tall. This ruling overturned a planning and zoning commission approval that limited the new building to three stories, citing the need to protect views from the historic district. According to the developer, 131 Beach Road LLC, this requirement would have reduced the number of affordable units created, in a town where the percentage of units that met state criteria for affordability declined from 2011 to 2019. In the court's decision, Justice Steven D. Ecker acknowledged that historic preservation is "among the panoply of interests that a zoning commission may properly consider." However, he noted, the proposed building was neither within nor immediately adjacent to the district. Even if the legislature intended the public interest in historic preservation to extend outside the historic district, Ecker wrote, "the commission failed to prove that the restriction it had imposed to protect that interest clearly outweighed the need for affordable housing in Fairfield." While this decision allows the Fairfield project to go forward, it leaves open, for now, the question of to what degree affordable housing projects can be regulated *within* local historic districts (and, arguably, immediately adjacent to them), where the public interest in protecting historic characteristics such as scale and design might be thought to carry more weight.



Hartford. ▲

Vox Church, a multi-site nondenominational church, has bought the former Second Church of Christ Scientist (1924) from the State of Connecticut. The State acquired the building in 2008 with plans to use it as storage for the State Library and rehearsal space for the Hartford Symphony Orchestra, but funding fell through and the church sat vacant, apart from brief use as an emergency homeless shelter in 2009. In recent years preservationists have worried about the building's future. Vox Church focuses on homelessness and has

renovated vacant buildings in Branford, Middletown, Springfield, and other places. Mary Falvey, executive director of the Hartford Preservation Alliance, welcomed the purchase. She told the Hartford Courant, "Revitalization of the church building also could help drive the creation of a Washington Street Corridor Plan that the Frog Hollow neighborhood would like to see happen. Too many buildings south of the Second Church have been left vacant and blighted, and a redevelopment plan is very much needed along this major traffic artery."



- Period Fireplace Restoration,
 - Firebox Restoration,
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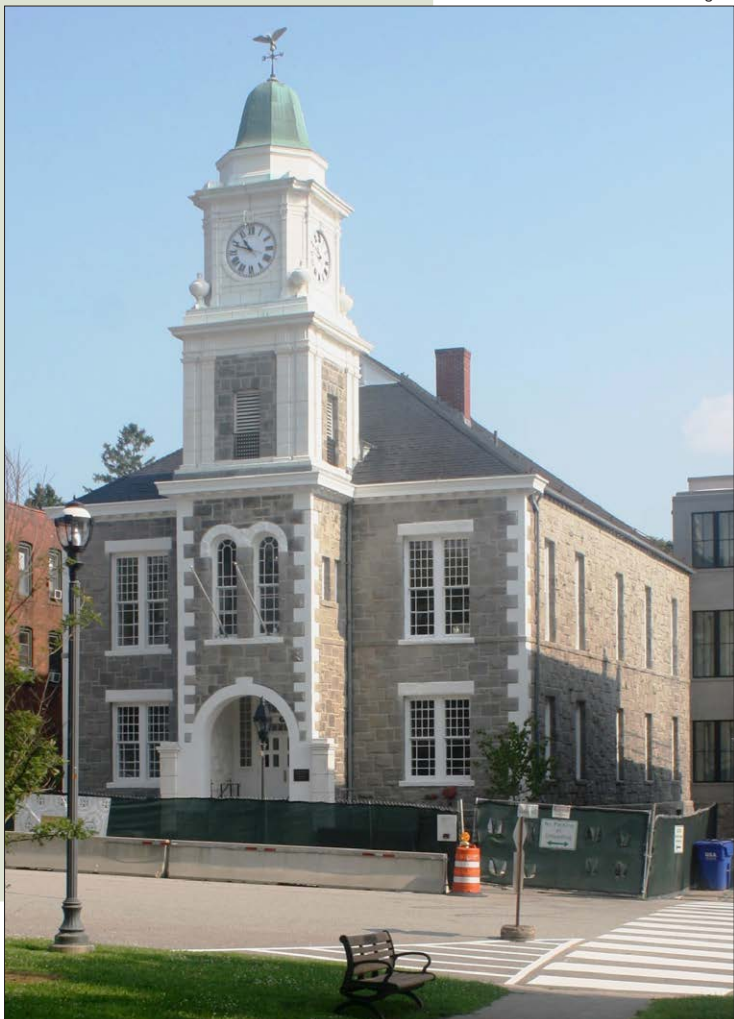


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◀ Litchfield.

The former Litchfield courthouse (1888; NR, LHD) reopened in early September as The Abner, a 20-room boutique hotel. The courthouse, which closed in 2017, was bought from the Greater Litchfield Preservation Trust in 2023 by Lexington Partners developers and renovated in partnership with Salt Hotels. The renovation plans were approved by the Litchfield Borough historic commission and by the State Historic Preservation Office, making possible federal and state historic rehabilitation tax credits. A preservation easement held by Preservation Connecticut assures long-term protection to the exterior. Salt operates hotels in historic buildings in a number of locations, including Nantucket, Provincetown, and Miami Beach. This summer, the company offered a free, five-week training program in Litchfield for local residents hoping to work at The Abner.

▼ Norwalk.

On August 7 the Connecticut Historic Preservation Council voted unanimously to request that the Attorney General take legal action to prevent the unreasonable demolition of two historic buildings in South Norwalk. The McMahon (1900; right in photo) and Udelman (1927; left) buildings are typical contributing structures in the South Main and Washington Streets National Register district, which developed as a commercial center in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Last year, F. D. Rich sought to demolish the Udelman building to expand the Residence Inn next door. Rich dropped that project, however, and sold the hotel. Now, the company wants to build a new hotel, demolishing two buildings. The Residence Inn's new owners unsuccessfully opposed zoning approval for the new hotel. At the Council hearing, preservationists presented two alternatives to demolition: one proposed

redevelopment of the historic buildings using preservation incentives, the other, a new hotel constructed behind the historic facades. Consultants hired by the developer argued that the buildings lacked significance or historic integrity to justify retaining them. The Attorney General's office now must decide whether to let the demolition proceed or attempt to prevent demolition by negotiation or a lawsuit under the Connecticut Environmental Protection Act (CEPA). After two recent unsuccessful CEPA actions, it is uncertain what the decision will be.

Norwalk Preservation Trust





HISTORIC PROPERTIES EXCHANGE

Threatened Buildings and Easement Properties Available — September/October 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, or contact Christopher Wigren, Deputy Director.

Olympia Diner 3413 Berlin Turnpike, Newington

Opportunity to purchase the iconic Olympia Diner in Newington. Built by the Jerry O'Mahony Diner Company in New Jersey, this primarily metal building was originally trucked to a location in Massachusetts and moved to its Newington location in 1954. The Olympia claims to be the longest stainless-steel diner in the country. An adjoining dining room was added to the diner in 1986. 1-acre property.

Contact: Helene Cavalieri,
Berkshire Hathaway, 860-209-5312,
hcavalieri@bhhsne.com



54 North Street, Willimantic (1889, 1920, 1960) \$389,000

Redevelopment opportunity for historic industrial building in Willimantic. Hall and Bill Printing Co. operated until 1970, printing newspapers (Willimantic Journal, Willimantic Chronicle) and other materials including thread labels for the Willimantic Linen Company. Listed in Preservation Connecticut's *Mills: Making Places of Connecticut* industrial survey and part of the Willimantic Main Street National Register historic district which makes it eligible for historic rehabilitation tax credits. Building area is 8,712 sq.ft.; 0.20 acres; in opportunity zone. Being sold "as is."

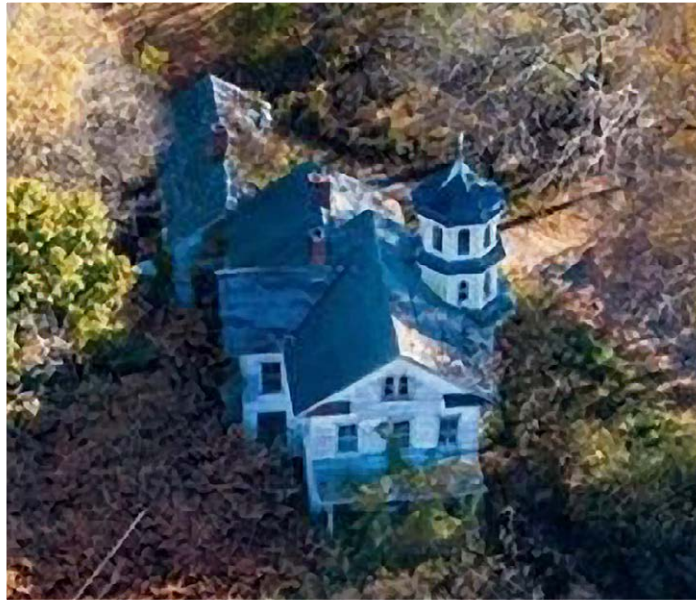
Contact: Michael Collins, Berkshire Hathaway,
860-336-6675, michaelcollins@bhhsne.com



Deadline for the next issue is October 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, or call (203) 562-6312.



220 Middlesex Turnpike, Old Saybrook (1875) \$2,950,000

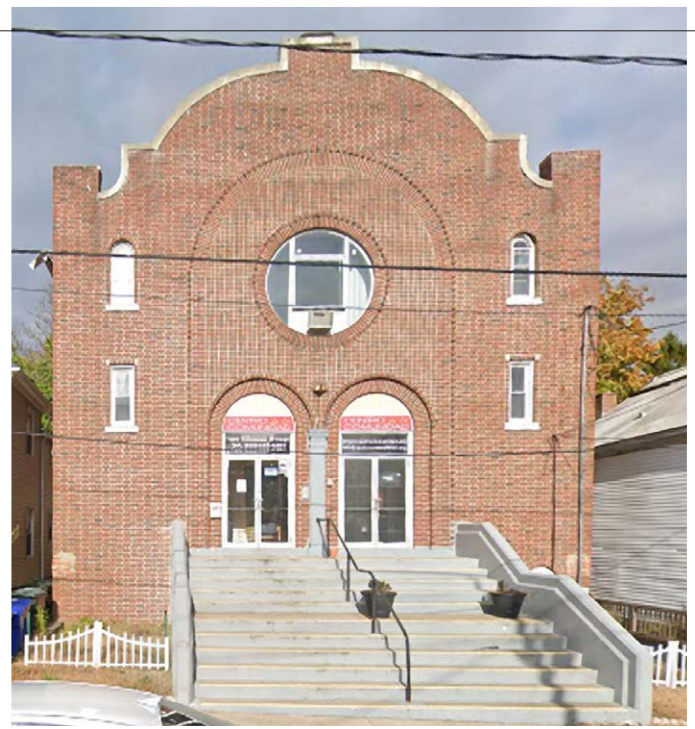
Restoration opportunity in Old Saybrook on 124-acres. Historic house built in 1875 by sea captain. Features include an octagonal tower with views of the Connecticut River and Long Island Sound and front porch with hand carved columns and pilasters. At one point known as Fairview Farm, the property, including the house, accompanying acreage, and a manmade reservoir, supplied goods and produce to Hartford. Received later attention as a filming location for the 1971 horror movie, *Let's Scare Jessica to Death*. 7 bedrooms, 5 ½ bathrooms, 5,000 sq. ft. Vacant for decades, needs TLC to be restored to original grandeur.

Contact: Michael Hvizdo, Coldwell Banker, 917-721-1332, michael.hvizdo@cbrealty.com

Ham Primus House (c. 1816, c. 1915) 3431 Durham Road, Guilford

Guilford's Ham Primus House is available for relocation. Recently listed on the Connecticut Freedom Trail, this important house was owned by a Black freeman whose family progressed from slavery to prominence in the African American community. Three bedroom, two bath house measures 2,054 sq. ft. and includes original pine clapboards and batten door. Owned by the Town of Guilford, the house is vacant and needs to be relocated due to road realignment project related to repair of Lake Quonnipaug Dam.

Contact: Traci Brinkman, Town of Guilford Communications Specialist, 203-453-8015



109 Blinman Street, New London (1919) \$365,900

Former Ohev Sholem Synagogue available for purchase. Built in 1919, the building operated as a synagogue until a merger with Congregation Beth El in 1974. Next occupant was Centro de la Comunidad (community center) until recent closure. Neo-Classical Revival/Colonial Revival building is individually listed on National Register of Historic Places for architectural significance and part of Coit Street West State Register historic district, which makes eligible for historic rehabilitation tax credits. Building area is 5,264 sq.ft.; 0.11 acres; in opportunity zone.

Contact: Jonathan Ayala, Mikasa Realty Group, (860) 718-5523, jayala@mikasagroup.com





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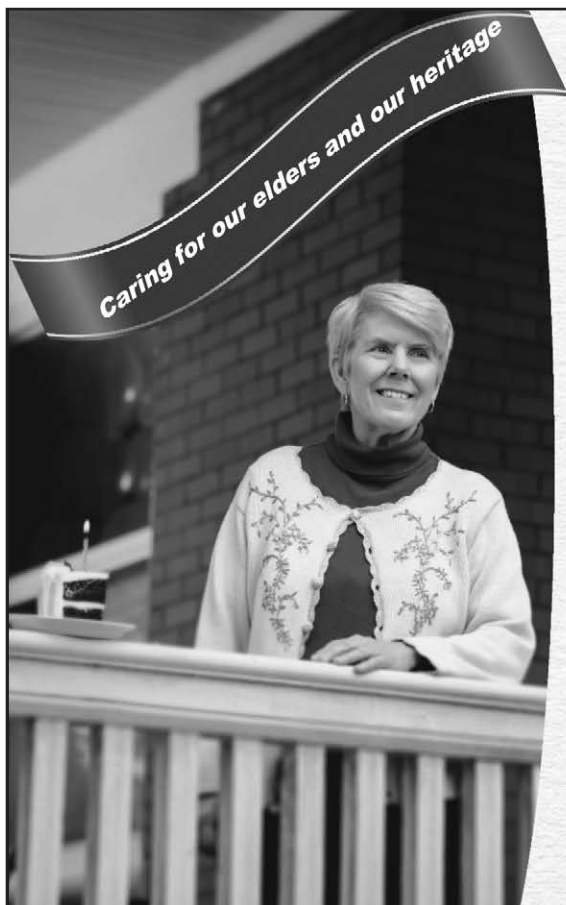
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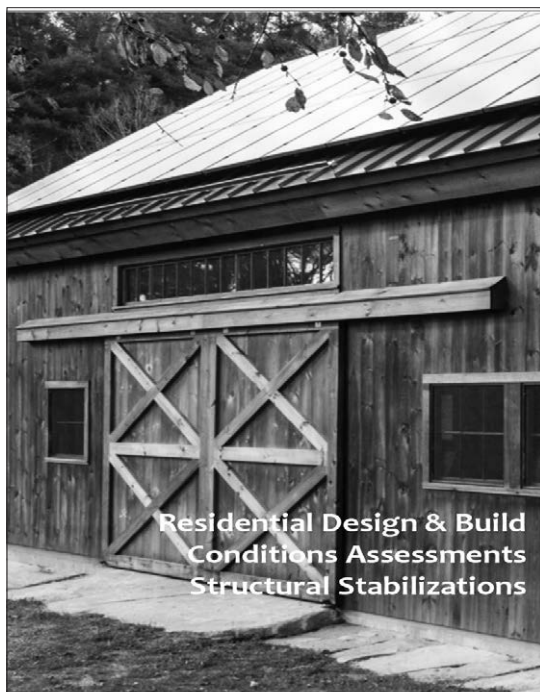
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Affordable homes, cont'd from page 5

These properties were all purchased between 1996 and 1998; only those on Washington Park received federal historic rehab credits.

In 1998, Alderhouse Residential Communities Inc. (ARC) converted the vacant Union School in East Haven to apartments for seniors with low incomes; it is now owned by NeighborWorks New Horizon (NWNH) which is rehabbing it again to avoid closure and resident displacement. NWNH has an extensive portfolio of affordable multi-family rentals in rehabbed older buildings.

Founded in 2003, Northside Institutions Neighborhood Alliance, Inc. (NINA) has rehabbed more than 25 historic houses in Hartford's Asylum Hill for low- to moderate-income household ownership and continues to work to revitalize the neighborhood.

The Hartford Land Bank began acquiring vacant, abandoned, tax-delinquent, or distressed properties in 2020 and works with local developers to rehab them to increase local homeownership. Eight mostly multi-family projects have been completed, including a six-unit 1915 apartment building at 196 Homestead Avenue.

The Sharon Housing Trust, established in 2005, has recently acquired three historic buildings on North Main Street and is converting them to six affordable units.



The First Congregational Church of Coventry purchased the 19th-century Lang house in 1982 and converted it to low-income apartments. The conversion didn't follow preservation standards but kept an historic building in use.

Our existing built environment offers many and varied opportunities to broaden the availability of low-cost housing. The advantages are many: older structures are often well built, convenient to business and services that supply life's daily needs, and served by public transportation. Maintaining or adapting them for housing conserves environmental resources. Historic preservation incentives can help provide needed funding, but they cannot by themselves meet the need, and not all older build-

ings qualify for historic designation—even though they may be usable and contribute to neighborhood appeal. Indeed, many projects successfully create or maintain affordable units in older houses, apartments, and commercial buildings without entering the preservation arena. Providing housing for all levels of society contributes to safe, stable neighborhoods for all. 🌿

A version of this article with links to sources will be posted on preservationct.org. See also Preservation Connecticut News, January/February 2022, for more on incentives.

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Bob Gundersen

Lee's Academy, in Madison, with its new egress ramp and stair.



Linonia & Brothers reading room has been called the living room of Yale's Sterling Memorial Library.

AIA/PCT Awards, cont'd from page 20

had to be done to a tight schedule so as not to interfere with legislative sessions.

Jury comment: An exemplary restoration project that demonstrated mastery of preservation technology, planning, and a high level of craftsmanship.

Excellence award: Restoration of the Brick House, New Canaan: The Glass House

An integral, original part of Philip Johnson's Glass House estate, the Brick House (1949; NHL) received exterior and interior repairs as well as restoration of decorative schemes from differing periods of significance.

Jury comment: A methodical, almost scholarly intervention guided by fierce adherence to preservation best practices, made more prominent yet by the team's acknowledgement of change as a distinctive feature to be preserved at this unique modern historic site. High profile project requiring extensive research and restoration—great to have the building open to the public again.

Excellence award: Sterling Memorial Library Linonia & Brothers Reading Room, New Haven: Apicella + Bunton Architects

Often described as the living room of Yale's main library building (1930), the Linonia & Brothers reading room retained many original features, including furnishings, but needed repairs, new wiring, and replication of missing elements. Care was taken not to over-clean or over-repair, resulting in a room that is refreshed but that still looks its age, bearing marks that tell its story.

Jury comment: Very well presented, beautiful restoration/preservation project with a remarkably sensitive intervention.

Merit award: Lee's Academy, Madison: Duo Dickinson, Architect

Sensitive renovation of the academy building (1821, NR) improved spaces for the Madison Historical Society's exhibits and programs, while handicapped accessibility was provided with the addition of an exterior door and construction of a new exterior stair.

Jury comment: An ambitious project for a small organization, accomplished with simplicity. 🌿

The awards will be presented at AIA/Connecticut's annual gala in December. For more information, visit aiact.org.

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AIA/PCT awards honor architecture and preservation

The Connecticut chapter of the American Institute of Architects and Preservation Connecticut announced the 2024 Elizabeth Mills Brown awards in July. Named in honor of the late architectural historian and preservationist, the awards are presented jointly to recognize excellence in both preservation and architectural design.

Jury members for this year's awards comprised Angel Ayón, AYON Studio Architecture • Preservation, P.C.; Randall Crawford, Crawford & Stearns / Architects and Preservation Planners, PLLC; and Ruth Pierpont, retired Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer—all current or past trustees of the Preservation League of New York State. They reviewed 14 submissions and selected four for recognition.

Excellence award: State Capitol laylight & skylight restoration, Hartford; Crosskey Architects LLC

Historic skylights and stained-and-painted glass laylights in the Capitol (1878; NHL) had sagged and lost much of their decorative overpainting. Restoration involved removing and restoring the laylights, constructing new protective skylights above them, and restoring painted decoration in the lightwells. All work

Ian Christmann

Restored laylight and stenciling at the Connecticut State Capitol, Hartford.



Michael Biondo

Philip Johnson's restored Brick House, in its geometric purity.

