

PRESERVATION CONNECTICUT NEWS

What will happen to the preservation movement?

The outlook is mixed for preservation as we know it. In its 2025 session, Connecticut's General Assembly approved an increase in the Community Investment Act, which provides reliable funding for preservation, affordable housing, open space acquisition, and farmland protection. At the same time, proposed budget cuts and regulatory changes at the federal level threaten to undo the framework that has defined preservation in the United States since the passage of the National Historic Preservation Act in 1966. Turn to the inside for reports from Hartford and Washington.





Reunion 2025

Preservation Connecticut's 50th anniversary celebrations continued on June 14, as present and past Trustees and staff members (plus a few other friends) gathered in the Eli Whitney barn to enjoy lunch, reminisce, and hear about what's happening now at PCT and in the preservation movement.

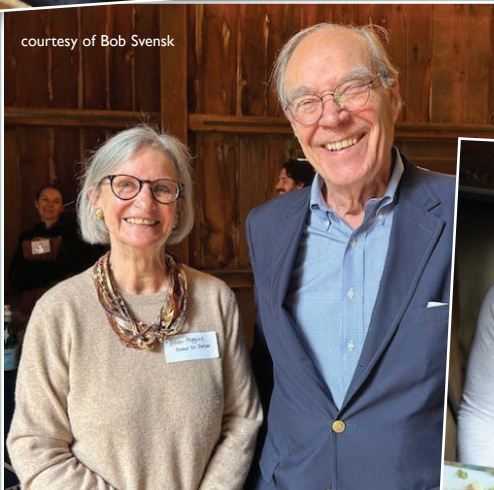


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MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Welcome new trustees

At their June meeting, held offsite at the Mystic Seaport Museum, Preservation Connecticut's Board of Trustees welcomed five new members to our team.

Nancy Bullis, Madison, brings over 25 years of strategic leadership experience in high-level positions, including directing multimillion-dollar operations and establishing a successful real estate operating company.

Nick Fabiani, New Haven, is a creative director and strategist with a passion for helping progressive organizations authentically connect with their audiences.

John Goodrich, Mystic, serves on the Groton Historic District Commission, the Old Mystic History Center and recently restored the Dr. Dudley Woodbridge Tavern, which was featured on the Magnolia Network's show, "In with the Old."

Hilary Lewis, Madison, has authored books, lectured widely, and mounted exhibitions about architecture and preservation. Notably, she served as curator of the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Glass House in New Canaan.

Alan Ponanski, East Haddam, retired Assistant Attorney General served as legal counsel and advocate for the Connecticut State Historic Preservation Office and State Historical Commission and locally as Moderator for the First Church of Christ, Congregational in East Haddam.

Each of these new Trustees brings extraordinary skills and expertise to the board and an enthusiastic commitment to PCT's mission.

At the end of July, we will bid farewell to our exceptional **Circuit Rider Fellow, Andrea Floersheimer**. This fellowship, a one-year training program for aspiring preservation professionals, equips them with valuable experience in areas such as technical preservation, public engagement, professional writing, and community organizing. In her time with us, Andrea worked on PCT's Washington Park Preservation Project in Bridgeport, including researching the East Side of Bridgeport, in hopes of enhancing the existing National Register district (watch for more about that in our September issue). She also helped monitor easements, prepare nominations for the State Register of Historic Places, and significantly advanced PCT's LGBTQ+ survey project. This fall, she will

begin graduate studies in historic preservation at the University of Pennsylvania. We appreciate Andrea's commitment and the impact she has had during her time with us.

The Circuit Rider Fellow position was generously funded by Edward F. Gerber and fellow members of Preservation Connecticut's Board of Trustees. Please consider supporting the Circuit Rider program at preservationct.org/circuit-riders.

—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

August 6, 2025, at 9:30 a.m.
September 3, 2025, at 9:30 a.m.

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

State Historic Preservation Review Board

September 12, 2025, at 9:30 a.m.

To participate, contact Jenny Scofield
(860) 500-2343; 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

General Assembly approves CIA expansion, housing bill

More money and a new name for the Community Investment Account were part of the wide-ranging budget bill passed at the close of the General Assembly's 2025 session. As we go to press, there is every indication that Governor Lamont will sign the measure.

The Community Investment Account, first set up in 2005 under the Community Investment Act, provides funding for open space, farmland preservation, historic preservation, and affordable housing through a fee levied when documents are recorded on town land records. The account is important not only for the *amount* of funding that it makes available for these programs, but for the *consistency* of funding not subject to the vagaries of the biennial budgeting process. This allows agencies to plan programs for years at a time with an idea of the level of funding they will have to work with.

Most of the preservation funds generated by the Community Investment Act are assigned to the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)—usually about \$2.1 million per year. Of that, SHPO retains ten percent for administrative costs, including salaries and benefits for three employees, and distributes the rest as grants through the Historic Restoration Fund and Survey & Planning grants. The CIA funds also serve another purpose: they go toward the legally mandated state match for federal moneys that SHPO receives through the Historic Preservation Fund (see page 6).

As SHPO's state-chartered private partner, Preservation Connecticut also receives a portion of the CIA preservation funding. This has made it possible for PCT to distribute over \$9 million in grants over the past 20 years, for planning and capital projects benefiting historic resources of all kinds—barns, churches, industrial buildings, museums, gardens, and more. In just the past two years, PCT staff has been able to conduct site visits to 720 sites to give critical technical assistance, recommend funding strategies, and help owners care for their buildings, all funded by the CIA. These projects also create jobs for tradespeople, architects, engineers, and more—at least 1,500 just from CIA funded activities.

This year's budget bill increases the Community Investment Act filing fee



Senator Donald E. Williams, Jr. posed with posters promoting the Community Investment Act in 2011.

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from forty to fifty dollars. The Office of Fiscal Analysis estimates that in the next year this will generate an additional \$700,000 for preservation activities throughout the state. Preservation Connecticut's allotment will increase by \$95,000—from \$380,000 to \$475,000 per year. The remaining increase in preservation money will go to SHPO.

In addition to the fee increase, the General Assembly action renamed the account for former Senator Donald E. Williams, Jr., of Thompson. As the President pro tempore of the Senate from 2004 to 2014, he strongly supported passage of the Community Investment Act and protected the fund from diversions as long as he was in office. Renaming the fund in his honor is a well deserved tribute to his dedication to Connecticut's open spaces, farmland, historic places, and affordability.

Senator Cathy Osten, a gubernatorial appointee to Preservation Connecticut's board of trustees and co-chair of the Appropriations Committee, was a key supporter of the bill, along with her co-chair, Representative Toni Walker, and co-sponsors: Rep. Michael D. Quinn, Sen. MD Rahman, Rep. Gregory Haddad, Sen. Saud Anwar, Rep. Josh Elliott, Rep. Maria P. Horn, Rep. Nick Gauthier, Rep. Joseph P. Gresko, Rep. Laurie Sweet, Rep. Anne M. Hughes, and Rep. Ben McGorty.

The legislature also passed a wide-ranging housing bill, HB 5002, "An Act Concerning Housing and the Needs of Homeless Persons." Aimed at addressing the state's drastic shortage of housing—and particularly affordable housing—the bill includes provisions to promote transit-oriented development, make it easier to convert commercial properties to residential use, and block towns from setting minimum parking requirements for some

residential developments. The most controversial measure, under the heading "Towns Take the Lead," would call on towns to create zoning to accommodate a designated "fair share" of affordable housing units. Towns that do would be prioritized for certain state funds and would more easily gain exemption from Section 8-30g, the law that allows projects that include affordable units to bypass many local land use regulations if at least ten percent of the municipality's housing stock is not considered affordable.

It's not clear what the potential consequences for historic resources could be if the bill becomes law. In some cases, it could create incentives to redevelop historic buildings, particularly buildings near transportation hubs or underused commercial buildings. But it also could favor demolition or out-of-scale expansion, much as Section 8-30g has done in a number of cases.

Opposition to HB 5002 comes from all legislative Republicans and some Democrats, along with the Council of Small Towns and the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities, who argue that the bill "imposes sweeping top-down requirements on municipalities that will create confusion, undermine thoughtful planning, and impose compliance burdens on municipalities," according to a letter by COST's executive director, Betsy Gara.

As we go to press, Governor Lamont vetoed the bill after expressing doubts about some of its provisions, particularly the "fair share" requirement. However, he has indicated that he might support a modified version of the bill. With a special session likely, to deal with the fallout from the federal budget, negotiations on the housing bill may continue. 🌱


PRESERVATION CONNECTICUT

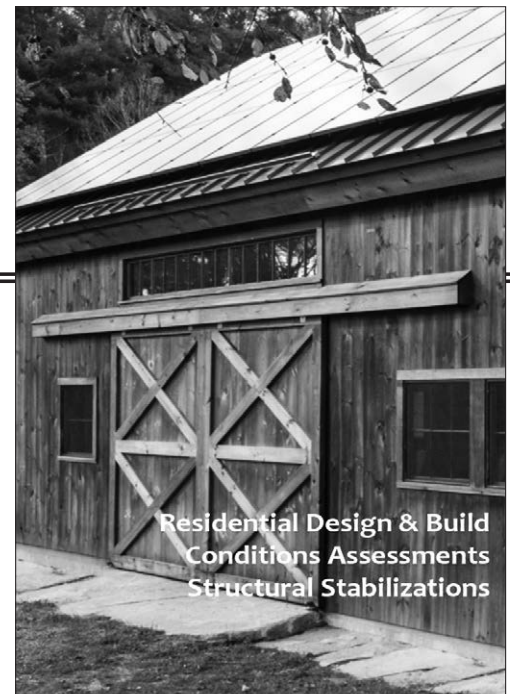
EDWARD F. GERBER'S LEGACY

"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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Federal changes affect preservation

The administration's program of reducing the size of federal government includes preservation programs. While the viability and legality of many of the proposed changes are uncertain, the effects are beginning to be felt in Connecticut and around the nation.

Funding

In mid-June, State Historic Preservation Officer Jonathan Kinney reported that the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) had not yet received notice of its federal funding for the 2025 federal fiscal year. The FY 2025 funding has been approved by Congress, so payment should follow automatically. Typically, notice of payment is issued in early spring.

The payment, coming through the Historic Preservation Fund (HPF), covers SHPO's administration of federal preservation programs, including the National Register, federal historic rehabilitation tax credits, environmental review, and the Certified Local Government program. It accounts for about 60 percent of SHPO's annual budget, including five staff positions.

Looking ahead, the president's proposed 2026 budget calls for eliminating *all* funding for State and Tribal Historic Preservation Offices, and every HPF grant program with the exception of Historically Black Colleges and Universities. To justify this measure, the budget document explains, "Many historic preservation projects have matching funds from State, local, and private sources, rendering the Historic Preservation Fund highly duplicative. Further, the projects are often of local, rather than national, significance."

The so-called Big Beautiful Bill passed by the House of Representatives does indeed include the president's proposed budget cuts. Currently, attention has turned to the Senate, which almost certainly will make changes, and where the margin between the two parties is even narrower than in the House but where tensions between tax cutters and deficit hawks in the Republican party could further complicate negotiations.

For the moment, the SHPO has resources to continue operating until sometime in September. The increase in the Community Investment Account (see page 4) will help but by itself cannot make up for the loss of federal funding.

Beyond the State Historic Preservation Office, budget cuts and layoffs also are affecting other history-based organizations. Among them, CT Humanities faces the loss of funds from the National Endowment for the Humanities, which the administration wants to close. The state budget for FY 2026 increases CT Humanities' line item—the first increase since 2009—but without federal funding the organization still faces reductions.

Museums and libraries, including historic sites like the Mark Twain house in Hartford, also will lose federal money and services with the announced closure of the Institute of Museum and Library Services. A judge temporarily halted that shutdown in May, ruling that only Congress can eliminate the institute. However, uncertainty remains, and the administration's FY 2026 budget proposal zeroes out the institute.

Regulation

Likely changes in historic preservation go beyond funding. Projects to identify, designate, and preserve sites that reflect the entire range of our history—a major thrust of the preservation movement in recent years—face attacks that characterize any mention of ethnicity, race, or sexual orientation as negative or divisive. Early examples include the removal or editing of federal websites for Harriet Tubman or the Stonewall Inn (although in some cases material was restored after public outcry), and the president's order for the NPS to remove "negative" or "unpatriotic" language from signs at national parks and historic sites. The administration's exceptionalist approach to history is sure to affect planning for America250 observances. And, measures to streamline environmental reviews and approvals could weaken procedural protections for historic places.

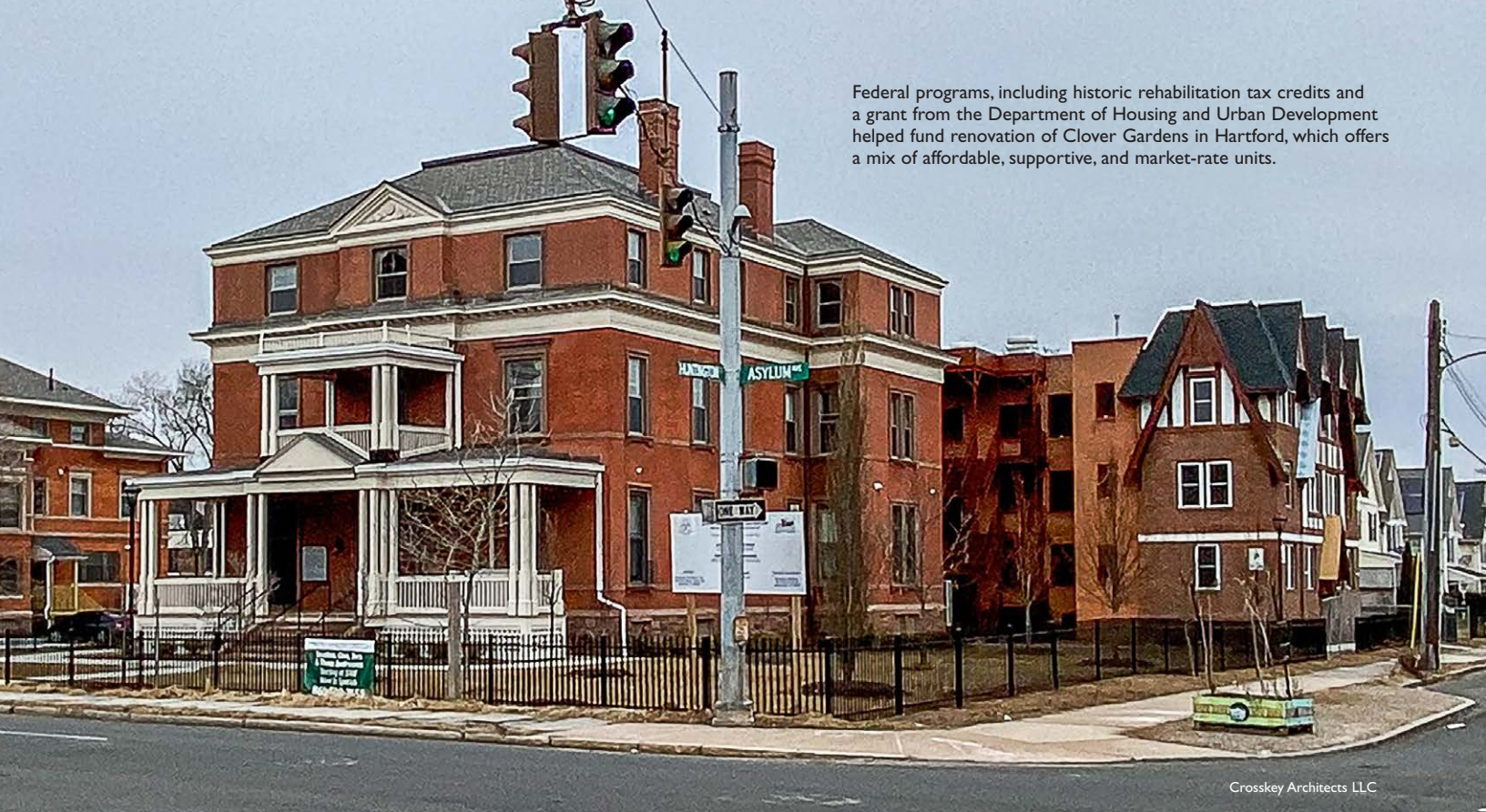


Taking action

Budget cuts, layoffs, and changing policies threaten to slow or even halt federal preservation programs including tax credits, grants, and Section 106 reviews, bolstering claims that these programs are ineffective and should be eliminated altogether—a circular effect where budget cuts cause inefficiencies that are cited to justify further budget and regulatory cuts.

Perhaps the greatest damage is the uncertainty caused by sudden funding and staffing cuts, rapid policy reversals, programs in limbo while court cases drag on, and the loss of trust in the federal government to honor commitments already made.

In early June, PCT's Jane Montanaro and Connecticut Preservation Action president Aaron Marcavitch wrote an opinion piece that was published by the Hartford Courant, the Day of New London and the online Connecticut Mirror. They said, "Our SHPO doesn't just protect old buildings. They unlock the economic and cultural value that those places hold. Preservation means dollars—dollars lost due to changes at the Federal level....If the Historic Preservation Fund is eliminated, that economic and cultural value is in jeopardy." They called on the federal delegation to fight for full HPF funding, on state legislators to look for ways to make up for federal cuts, and on



Federal programs, including historic rehabilitation tax credits and a grant from the Department of Housing and Urban Development helped fund renovation of Clover Gardens in Hartford, which offers a mix of affordable, supportive, and market-rate units.

Crosskey Architects LLC

Connecticut residents to reach out to both federal and state legislators to protect the HPF.

Lobbying for restoring the HPF is ongoing. NCSHPO (the National Council for SHPOs), the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and Preservation Action, the national lobbying organization for historic preservation, are actively engaged on the national level, while statewide and local organizations are reaching out to their membership.

State legislative leaders have indicated that they will call a special session of the General Assembly, probably in September, once more is known about the federal budget. However, the State cannot make up for the full loss of federal funding if the administration's budget is approved. *Update: On July 1 the government posted a Notice of Funding Opportunity allowing the State Historic Preservation Office to apply for its FY25 funding.* 🌱

Updates and information for joining the effort can be found at these sites:

Preservation Connecticut:
preservationct.org/advocacy-2025.

National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers: ncshpo.org.

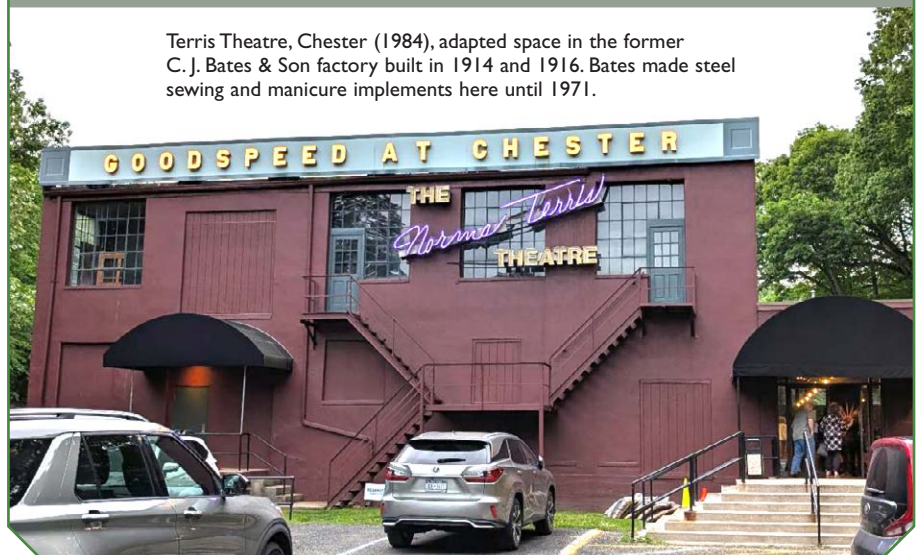
National Trust for Historic Preservation:
savingplaces.org/action-center.

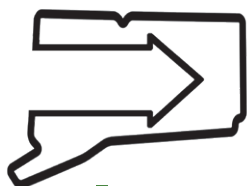
Preservation Action: preservationaction.org.

We need your help to track down theaters!

Have you ever stepped into a neighborhood theater or a community stage that's been hiding in plain sight? We're updating Connecticut's historic theater survey (originally conducted in 1982 to document pre-1940 venues) and now want to capture theaters we might have missed and any others built before 1990. If you know of a local movie venue, live-performance space, or drive-in that caught your eye, please let us know! Send its name, location, and any photos you have to contact@preservationct.org. Your tips will help us bring these hidden gems into Preservation Connecticut's Theater archive which we plan to make accessible online.

Terris Theatre, Chester (1984), adapted space in the former C. J. Bates & Son factory built in 1914 and 1916. Bates made steel sewing and manicure implements here until 1971.





From the field:

the **Circuit Riders** report

In Fairfield, Preservation Connecticut's Circuit Riders documented the soon-to-be-demolished home of William Hallett Greene (1864-1942), the first African American graduate of the City University of New York and the first African American member of the U.S. Signal Corps. Through documentation, Circuit Riders ensure that the under-represented history embedded in the site remains accessible to Greene's surviving family members, researchers, and future generations.

The Circuit Riders are broadening educational offerings across the state with various programs that address topics such as environmental sustainability, best practices in preservation, historical research, and property stewardship.

Recently, in partnership with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), Circuit Riders participated in the Connecticut League of Museums' Annual Conference, presenting a program that explored the intersection of historic preservation and environmental sustainability.

While preservation and energy efficiency are often seen as opposing

forces, the program highlighted numerous examples of historic buildings, including PCT's Whitney boarding house, that are inherently sustainable due to their embodied carbon and effective, yet often overlooked, historical methods of heating, cooling, and moisture control. They also explore how strategic upgrades can enhance energy efficiency while preserving key character-defining features of historic buildings across Connecticut. In a similar vein, PCT participated in Sustainable CT's Coffee Hour program and offered practical strategies for communities seeking to integrate historic preservation into their broader sustainability goals.

Other recent programs included a presentation at the Bridgeport Public Library, where Circuit Riders and State Historic Preservation Office staff discussed the importance of preserving Connecticut's architectural heritage, showcasing local Bridgeport examples. The Simsbury Historical Society hosted PCT for a program focused on historic homeownership, exploring practical methods for understanding a home's historic value, identifying features to preserve, and learning how to

steward properties to ensure their enjoyment for future generations.

In Redding, Circuit Riders helped the Local Historic District Study Committee outline potential boundaries for a Local Historic District in Georgetown, a small industrial village linked to the Gilbert & Bennett Wire Mill. 🌱

If you're interested in organizing a program or scheduling a presentation, please contact Stacey Vairo at svairo@preservationct.org. To receive updates about upcoming public programs, sign up for Preservation Connecticut's emails and newsletters at <https://preservationct.org/sign-up>.

Circuit Riders by the numbers:

April-May 2025

Site visits made:	30
Communities visited:	23
Educational programs:	3

A. Floersheimer



Circuit Rider Brad Schide visits a commercial building on Main Street in Willimantic.

M. Forino



Circuit Rider Fellow Andrea Floersheimer visits with congregants of the First Baptist Church in Storrs.

M. Forino



Circuit Rider Stacey Vairo and SHPO Architectural Historian Marena Wisniewski at the Connecticut League of Museums' annual conference.

1772 Foundation grants

Preservation Connecticut, partnering for the fifteenth year with The 1772 Foundation, awarded historic preservation matching grants totaling \$136,818 to seventeen private nonprofit organizations maintaining historic sites in Connecticut. The grants ranged in amount from \$1,213, the lowest, to a maximum of \$10,000, which ten organizations were able to receive. In all, the program received 80 inquiries, requesting a total of \$781,656—a sign that the need for this funding does not abate.

Eligible projects are any exterior preservation work on a historic structure such as roof replacement, window restoration, or sill work, as well as fire safety and security upgrades to protect historic structures. The grant recipients for 2025 are:

Finnish American Heritage Society, Canterbury: \$10,000 to replace the roof at Finnish Hall (1925; NR)

Trustees and Proprietors of Bacon Academy, Colchester: \$10,000 for chimney repairs of the Bacon Academy building (1803; NR)

Fairfield Museum and History Center: \$2,820 for fire safety at the Ogden house (1740; NR)

Hill-Stead Museum, Farmington: \$10,000 for exterior painting (1901; NHL)

Merwinsville Hotel Restoration Inc., Gaylordsville: \$10,000 to paint the exterior of the hotel (1843; NR)

Hyland House Museum, Guilford: \$1,213 for fire safety (1713; NR)

Connecticut Fair Housing Center Inc., Hartford: \$10,000 for exterior repairs to the Capewell Horse Nail Company office building (c.1900; NR)

Connecticut Daughters of the American Revolution: \$10,000 for sill and foundation stabilization of the Wadsworth stable (c.1820; NR), Lebanon

Manchester Historical Society: \$8,890 for electrical/fire safety improvements to the Cheney Brothers machine shop (1895; NHL)

North Stonington Historical Society: \$8,500 for chimney repair at the Stephan Main homestead (1781; NR)



Finnish American Heritage Society



Merwinsville Hotel Restoration Inc.

Pomfret Historical Society: \$3,750 to restore windows at the Pomfret Town House (1841; NR)

Simsbury Historical Society: \$10,000 for window restoration at the Captain Elisha Phelps tavern (1771; NR)

Yellow Farmhouse Education Center, Stonington: \$10,000 for painting of the Yellow Farmhouse at Stone Acre Farms (late 19th century; SR)

Hicks-Stearns Family Museum, Tolland: \$6,425 for masonry repairs (1788, 1880s; NR)

Gunn Memorial Library and Museum, Washington: \$5,220 for security/lighting upgrades at the museum building (1781; NR)

West Cornwall Public Library Association Inc.: \$10,000 for roof replacement, Hughes Memorial Library (1845)

Windham Historical Society, Willimantic: \$10,000 for window restoration at the Jillson house (1825; NR)

The next round of grants is expected to begin in the fall; for more information, visit preservationct.org/fund.

Briefly noted

Statewide.

Connecticut's State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) will receive a Special Achievement in GIS award at the 2025 Esri User Conference. Based in Redlands, California, Esri is considered one of the world's leading suppliers of GIS (geographic information system) software. The award honors ConnCRIS, SHPO's online map-based cultural resources information system, which allows users to locate and access information about historic resources identified in the State and National Registers of Historic Places, Historic Resource Inventories, Local Historic Districts and Properties, and more. According to Esri, ConnCRIS stands out from hundreds of thousands of other sites around the world for its outstanding use of GIS technology. The award will be accepted by Kevin Berger, SHPO's GIS analyst. Visit ConnCRIS at <https://conncris.ct.gov/>.



Manchester. ▲

In March, the town Planning and Zoning Commission granted a special exception to convert the vacant Nathan Hale school (1922; NR) into apartments. The school closed in 2012, and this project is consistent with the town's school repurposing plans that began in 2014. Farmington-based developer Parker Benjamin will

construct 41 apartments in the building as well as amenities such as a banquet hall and recreational facilities. The developer plans to use state and federal historic rehabilitation tax credits in the project. Apartments will range from studios to one- and two-bedroom units.

Preservation Connecticut, 2015



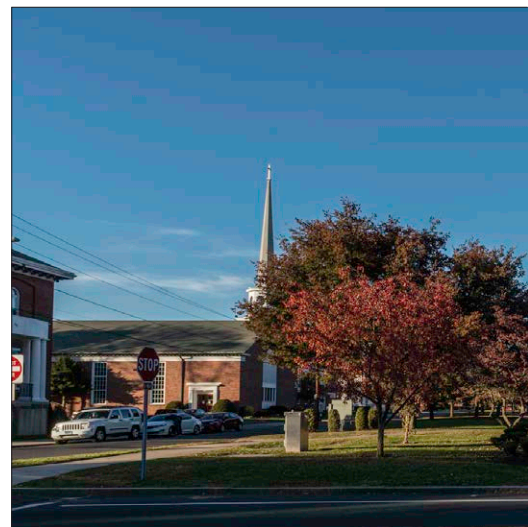
Naugatuck. ▲

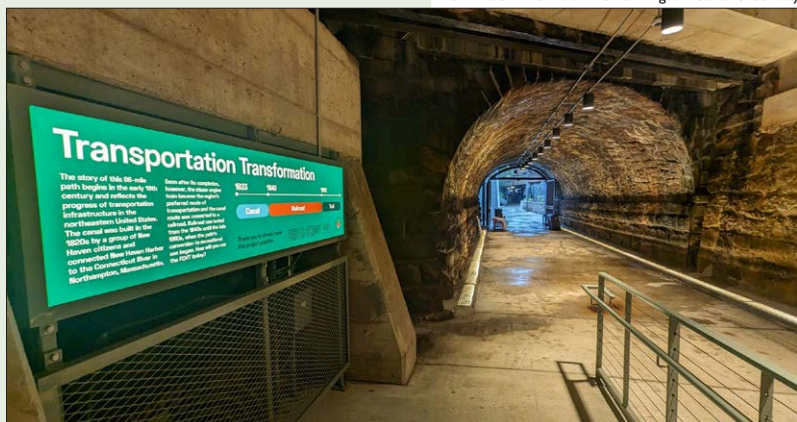
The Salem School will close at the end of the academic year. Built in 1893 and listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the school was the first of eight projects designed by the nation's leading architecture firm of the era, McKim, Mead and White, in a program initiated by industrialist John Howard Whittemore that transformed the center of Naugatuck. However, the building lacks many amenities common in modern schools, like a full-size gym or above-ground cafeteria. Despite this, Salem School got high marks

in math for high-needs students, and its downtown location made it possible for students to walk to the Whittemore Library, Naugatuck Historical Society, and senior center for programs. "We've been able to really utilize our location and really get out into the community and do stuff," principal Kristine Murphy-Salvucci told the Connecticut Insider. The closure reflects a promise by town officials to reduce taxes. No plans for the building's future have been announced.

New Britain. ▼

Former members of Saint Peter Catholic church (1890-1900; NR) have filed suit under the Connecticut Environmental Protection Act to prevent demolition of the historic church building. Founded by German and Austrian immigrants, Saint Peter, with its 100-foot-high steeple, is a prominent presence on Franklin Square in downtown New Britain (at right in photo). Attendance dropped in recent years, and the Archdiocese





New Haven. ▲

The final downtown segment of the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail opened in early May. Constructed largely along the path of the Farmington Canal and the railroad line that succeeded it, the trail extends 80 miles from New Haven to Northampton, Massachusetts. Sections remain unfinished in Southington and Plainville. The New Haven segment begins with a tunnel under Whitney Avenue and continues below-grade to Grove Street,

where it rises to grade level past the FBI building and continues along city streets to Long Wharf Drive.

Planning for the segment began in 2009, and construction in 2021. Easement negotiations, public safety concerns, and electrical connections caused delays. Historical displays lining the walls of the Whitney Avenue tunnel recount the corridor's history from canal to railroad to heritage trail.



Waterbury. ▲

The Pearl Street Neighborhood House was rededicated in June after renovations. Built in 1929, the building was a neighborhood center that offered a community kitchen, club rooms, showers, bowling alleys, gymnasium, and auditorium to the city's Black residents. For Black migrants who moved to Waterbury in the Great Migration, the Neighborhood House provided leads to jobs and housing, and for travelers—directed there by the Green Book travel guides—it offered information about welcoming accommodations and other services. Waterbury's chapter of the NAACP was founded there in 1942 by the House's longtime social director, Leila T. Alexander. The renovations, funded in part by a \$150,000 federal grant, included improvements to the building's offices, kitchen, main hall, ceiling, and stage. Also known as the Hopkins Street Center, the House is now operated by Zion Baptist Church and is a stop on the Connecticut Freedom Trail.

of Hartford merged Saint Peter with two other parishes in 2017 and ended regular Sunday masses in 2022, although the building continued to be used occasionally. Last year, a structural study commissioned by the Archdiocese identified heavy cracks in the steeple and choir loft, the result of the 2024 earthquake centered in New Jersey. Repairs would cost millions of dollars, according to the

pastor. The City condemned the building, and the Historic Preservation Commission approved demolition in February, waiving the 180-day delay period. However, parishioners, organized as the Franklin Square Preservation Society, believe that repairs may be feasible. The society hired an engineer who raised a number of questions about the completeness and accuracy of the first report. After a hearing in May, the court paused the demolition and ordered the Archdiocese to provide access for a second engineering report. The society is also pursuing an appeal under Catholic Canon Law to re-open the church. For more information, visit saveourstpetterchurch.org.

National Register of Historic Places, Tod Bryant, 201



From agriculture to the Cold War

Sites recently added to the National Register of Historic Places illustrate the breadth and variety of Connecticut's history, ranging from agriculture reliant on enslaved labor to industrial growth to military life in the Cold War. In between, these places also provide glimpses into changing architectural fashions, marketing strategies, and funding for public libraries.

The **Darling Family Farmstead and Tavern**, in Woodbridge, has been on the National Register since 1979 but its listing has been updated to include the well-documented presence of enslaved people from approximately 1772 to 1791. The Darling family enslaved at least ten people, including Timonhy II, Chloe, and their children Hila, Gad, Lettice (perhaps transcribed as Lettise or Lillie) and Luke. Their lives shed light on the practice and experience of slavery in Connecticut as rapid policy changes in the late 18th century transformed and gradually eliminated slavery in the state. The updated nomination also provides new information about the site's significance in the areas of architecture, agriculture, and transportation. In addition to noting the well preserved one-and-one-half-story gambrel-roofed house, the nomination shows that the site was farmed until at least 1920 and that



Darling Family Farmstead and Tavern, Woodbridge

Thomas Darling, Jr. played an important role in the development of the Straights (aka Straits) Turnpike, which divides the property in two.

The Town of Stafford celebrates the creation of the **Stafford Springs Historic District** in its downtown area. Encompassing 77 buildings, four structures, two sites, and two objects, the district developed along the Middle River and Furnace Brook, which provided power for the area's textile industry during the 19th and early 20th centuries. While Stafford Springs' earliest woolen mills dated to 1810 and 1812, the arrival of Andrew Porter's Granite Mill Company in the 1840s and a railroad connection in 1850 accelerated the growth of the textile industry and the local economy in general. As workers migrated to the area for employment, residential and commer-

cial development boomed beginning in the 1860s, including notable examples of Greek Revival, Italianate, Gothic Revival, Stick, Queen Anne, Neoclassical, and other architectural styles. Stafford Springs enjoyed significant economic prosperity until the mid-20th century when textile manufacturing migrated South. The Stafford Spring district encompasses the largest collection of historic commercial architecture in the town of Stafford, distinguishing it from the seven smaller villages in the town.

The **George A. and Jennie Curtis Fay house** in the town of Meriden (built in 1868) has been added to the National Register for its distinctive blend of Second Empire and Queen Anne architecture. George and Jennie Fay commissioned Meriden architect Henry Martin Jones (1828–1908) to design a striking wood-frame Victorian residence that reflected

Andrew Roblee, Roblee Historic Preservation, LLC

Jordan Sorensen and Renée Tribert, Preservation Connecticut



Stafford Springs historic district, Stafford



George A. and Jennie Curtis Fay house, Meriden



Carnegie Library, Enfield



Fuller Brush Company factory, Hartford

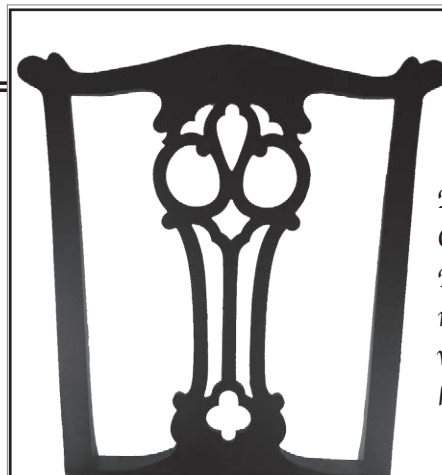
George Fay's increasingly successful legal career. The couple rehired Jones several times over the following decades to design fashionable additions and structural improvements, mirroring the rapid evolution of residential technology and architectural trends in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The house is significant as a rare and exceptional example of overlapping architectural styles, uniquely executed by the same architect in close succession.

The **Enfield Carnegie Library** (or Pearl Street Library) is a single-story, Classical Revival-style library constructed in 1914 and funded by Andrew Carnegie's philanthropic organization, the Carnegie Corporation. Andrew Carnegie, a first-generation Scottish immigrant, grew up reading books through the generosity of Colonel James Anderson who allowed working boys from Pittsburgh to access his personal library every Saturday. The experience would inspire Carnegie's later philanthropy and conviction in the value of libraries. Carnegie funded eleven libraries in Connecticut between 1901 and 1914, including the Enfield Carnegie Library which was a notable gift for a town predominantly composed of wage laborers who struggled to secure the necessary municipal investment to qualify for the gift. John Pickens, a child of immigrants and Library Board member, became

the principal advocate for the library and correspondent with the Carnegie Corporation, often testing the patience and good will of its staff. Despite a number of obstacles, including disagreements over the library's architectural design and the town's willingness to commit to an annual maintenance fund, the Carnegie grant was approved. The library's architecture reflects the classicism and modesty stipulated by the Carnegie funders who emphasized maximum utility over decorative embellishments. The library's distinction as the sole Carnegie library in Connecticut to retain its original design and use speaks to its lasting importance to the Enfield community.

The **Fuller Brush Company Factory Complex** in Hartford joins the National Register for its historic and architectural significance. The company was founded in 1906 by Alfred Fuller, a door-to-door salesman who developed a more durable cleaning brush by twisting wires in a small vise of his own design. The construction of the factory in 1922 precipitated an era of rapid development and growth during which the Fuller Brush Company became an American household name. The factory is also notable for Gothic Revival influence on an industrial building: The Main Factory and Office Building features a cast-stone door surround with a Tudor arch, and the top of the stair tower is designed

continued on page 19



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HISTORIC PROPERTIES EXCHANGE

Threatened Buildings and Easement Properties Available — July/August 2025

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.

Huntington-Callender house 93 Elm Street, Hartford (1863)

\$1,295,000

Preservation Connecticut Easement

Italianate brownstone rowhouse, built in 1863 by Andrew West, a Hartford builder-architect. Fully updated interior with original details, including exposed brick walls and brownstone arches. Single-family home with four stories, 5 beds, 5 baths, totaling 5,227 sq. ft. Located in Hartford-Elm Street National Register Historic District. Preservation easement covers exterior of building.

Contact: Ellen Sebastian, William Pitt | Sotheby's, (860) 930-8407, esebastian@wpsir.com

Penfield Reef Lighthouse (1874) Long Island Sound, Bridgeport

Opportunity to own Second Empire style lighthouse mounted on granite pier off the coast of Bridgeport. The property contains a 51-foot-tall octagonal lighthouse and a two-story, 1,568 square foot keeper's quarters. Includes boat dock. Weatherized and restored in 2015. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Currently being sold via online auction. Bidding ends August 12, 2025.

Contact: Giselle Rubiera, U.S. General Services Administration, 617-565-5841, Giselle.rubiera@gsa.gov



Deadline for the next issue is August 20, 2025

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.



Bryant Electric Company/Monger's Market **1155 Railroad Avenue, Bridgeport (c.1915, 1935, 1946, 1960)** **\$5,995,000**

Redevelopment opportunity of former Bryant Electric Company. Founded in 1888, the Bryant Electric Company remained in operation at this site until 1988, producing a variety of electrical supplies over its lifespan. The most recent occupant, Monger's Market, used the site as retail space for vendors and announced its closure in June 2025, after eight years in operation. This

property is listed in Preservation Connecticut's Mills: Making Places of Connecticut industrial survey and located in Railroad Avenue Industrial National Register Historic District which makes it eligible for both State and Federal Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits. Building area is 126,471 sq. ft.; lot 2.88 acres. In Opportunity Zone.

Contact: Angel Commercial, 203-335-6600

Seth Thomas Clock Company **219 Elm Street, Thomaston** **(c.1870, c.1950)** **\$2,250,000**

Redevelopment opportunity of former Seth Thomas Clock Company building. Originally a cotton mill, it was converted by Seth Thomas Clock to a "movement shop" was used for storage, dial painting and assembly. Hartley Tool and Die Company (carbide crush rolls and cemented carbide dies) occupied by 1940. Last occupant, Drawn Metal Tube Company, purchased it in 1967 and operated until recently. The property is listed in Preservation Connecticut's *Mills: Making Places of Connecticut* industrial survey, which identifies the complex as a candidate for listing on the State Register of Historic Places. If listed, it would be eligible for State historic rehabilitation tax credits. Building area is 48,124 sq. ft.; 0.97 acres.

Contact: Dan Garofalo, Reno Properties Group, LLC, 860-573-9227





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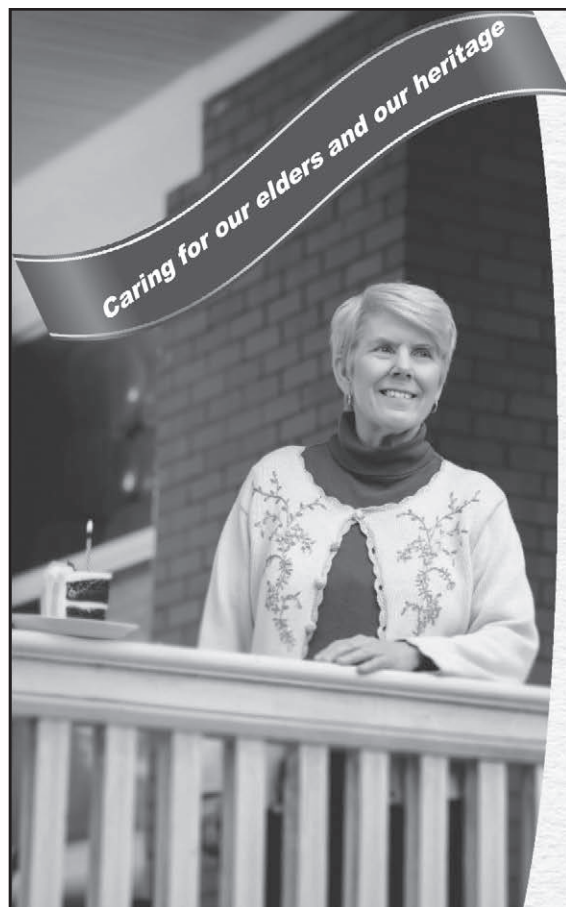
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with castings of ornate tripartite windows at each façade. The company's survival through the Great Depression and booming growth during the post-WWII economic era speak to its enduring influence during periods of intense transformation.

The **Shepherd of the Sea Chapel** (completed in 1966) is a soaring A-frame structure built in Groton to serve servicemembers stationed at the rapidly growing Naval Submarine Base in New London. Designed by New Haven architect Carl Blanchard, the non-denominational space served Protestant, Catholic and Jewish servicemembers, additionally hosting community events such as military ceremonies, commemorative occasions and non-religious holidays. The chapel



Shepherd of the Sea Chapel, Groton

demonstrates several key design tenets of Modern architecture such as its sculptural use of plane, volume and light, while its A-frame shape echoes familiar Gothic churches. The building is a noteworthy example of the many chapels commissioned by the Navy during the Cold War. 🌿

Stacey Vairo, Preservation Connecticut

In cyberspace, PCT staff can interact more quickly with the public. Emails bring news of preservation threats or opportunities and allow us to send information in response. Grant applications and award nominations are submitted through the website, saving postage and allowing for easy gathering, processing, and review. More recently, thanks to Zoom and other virtual programming tools, PCT could continue to operate during the Covid-19 pandemic and now can offer programs that attract participants from far beyond Connecticut's borders. For staff, the ability to attend lengthy municipal meetings without a long drive home late at night has been a welcome change.

With these gains have come some losses. Research on the web means that we spend less time with local historians and advocates whose local knowledge can be invaluable in understanding and building support for historic places. On the Internet, everything moves faster, too: this makes rapid responses possible but also makes it easier to react to an issue before we understand it clearly. The rise of social media, while adding more ways to communicate with the world, also has allowed the rapid spread of misinformation. And, computer systems are vulnerable to hacking, viruses, or crashes.

For better or worse, the computer revolution has changed how we do preservation. But it's still about moving into the future with the best of the past. 🌿



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Connecticut Preservation News

July/August 2003 Volume XXVII, No. 4

An Informational Portal for Connecticut Preservation

The Connecticut Trust kicked off its new and improved website, www.cttrust.org, on July 10. No longer a mere website, it has been revamped as a complete information portal, a resource center and clearing house for preservation related information and services in Connecticut with direct links to other relevant websites. The revised www.cttrust.org includes an online version of our Restoration Services Directory, an index to 26 years of *Connecticut Preservation News*, downloadable preservation regulations and ordinances, details on historic tax credits and grants, direct access to the Connecticut Circuit Riders, a glossary of preservation terms, and much more.

Planning for the new preservation portal included an extensive review of the Trust's resource files, as well as an evaluation of approximately 2,500 technical assistance service requests that the Trust has documented over the past several years. Finally, Trust members received either a printed or an on-line survey asking what they would like to see on a new preservation web site. All this research yielded a comprehensive list of information and resources requested on a regular basis, and serves as the core for the functional requirements of the information portal. Additional information and insight into the system's conceptual design results emerged on page 13.

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The Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation is a private, nonprofit organization.

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Connecticut Preservation News announced the launch of the Connecticut Trust's information portal in 2003.



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Fifty years / fifty places 2000s: Cyberspace

Preservation is all about *places*: buildings, structures, objects, neighborhoods, landscapes, and more, that connect us to our past. Whatever Preservation Connecticut does, the focus is always on the physical: What is it made of? How does its look and feel convey the look and feel of the past? How can we protect, recapture, or enhance its physical qualities?

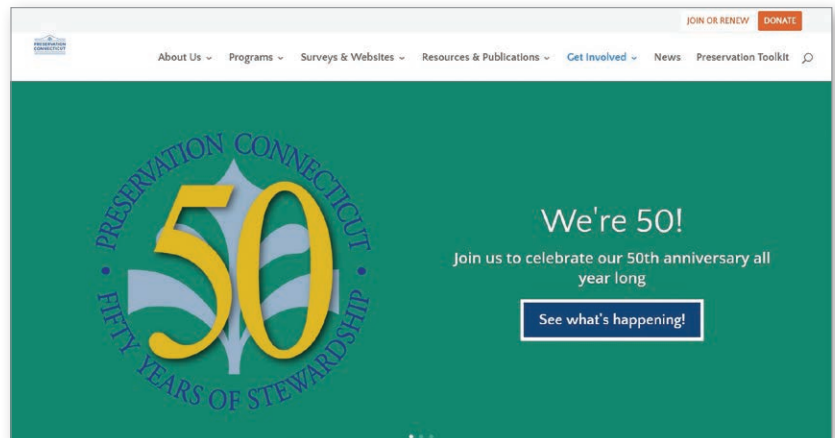
Yet, since 2000 (or a bit before), Preservation Connecticut has also functioned in the unphysical world of cyberspace. It has changed how we gather information, how we communicate with the world. It has opened us to new audiences and occasionally robbed us of old audiences.

Preservation Connecticut (then called the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation) began using the Internet for email in the late 1990s. At that time, a single email address—ct_trust@yahoo.com—served the entire organization. It first appeared on *Connecticut Preservation News* in September/October, 1998.

Just about a year later, the November/December, 1999, issue announced the Trust's new website, www.cttrust.org, set up by Jonathen Biebesheimer (the son of former Trustee Frederick Biebesheimer). The website came on a "secure server" (with quotation marks), allowing members to order publications, sign up for conferences and workshops, and renew membership with confidence.

By the 2000s, the pace of progress stepped up markedly. In 2001, TownGreens.com was launched to disseminate the results of the Trust's survey of town greens. This was the first of Preservation Connecticut's array of special-subject websites, designed to make our work easily and widely available to the

Preservation Connecticut's website in 2025.



public. Since 2001, TownGreens.com has been joined by survey-based websites for historic barns (2006), mills and industrial communities (2017), and creative places (2021), as well as a website for local historic districts and properties (2010).

The role of the Internet as a research tool also shaped a revised version of cttrust.org in 2003, which was announced as no "mere website," but rather a "complete information portal" for all things preservation. Once again, Jonathan Biebesheimer was the creator, but this time the website was designed so staff could manage almost all the content in-house, with no technical skills or knowledge.

The Internet has also reshaped how PCT staff build knowledge about historic places. Websites offer information that previously could be gained only by visiting libraries. Documents, public records, newspapers, surveys, National Register nominations, and more are available at the click of a mouse. It's made the process of research much faster and made remote sources easily available.

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