

PRESERVATION CONNECTICUT NEWS

SECTION 106 UNDER ATTACK



Renée Tribert



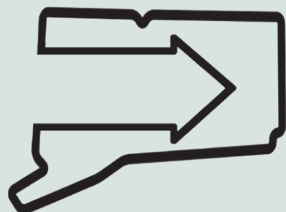
ABOVE: The Middletown Redevelopment Agency cleared several blocks of historic buildings along Main Street in the 1960s, including the background buildings still standing in this photograph. The First Baptist Church, at right, survives.

LEFT: The same area in 2026 shows the development that followed, mostly built to the scale and form of late-20th-century suburban shopping centers.

Middletown Redevelopment Agency Collection, Middlesex County Historical Society

In the years after World War II federal urban renewal programs devastated historic city neighborhoods for slum clearance, new development, and highway construction. The National Historic Preservation Act, adopted in 1966, was a reaction to the devastating loss of historic properties under Urban Renewal. Section 106 of the Act requires federal agencies to consider historic properties in planning their undertakings. Now, proposed

changes to the regulations for administering Section 106 could once again allow unrestrained demolition of historic places by federal agencies. Turn to page 4 to read about the proposed changes, and to page 6 for an inside look at some cases where Connecticut's State Historic Preservation Office conducted reviews under Section 106 that successfully avoided, reduced, or provided mitigation for harmful effects of federal projects.



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

Preservation planning presentation, Connecticut League of Museums

At this year's annual Connecticut League of Museums conference at Central Connecticut State University, Circuit Riders presented on preservation and maintenance planning—walking small-museum staff and board members through the basics of routine maintenance and the most common pitfalls that damage historic buildings. The presentation emphasized the importance of systematic observation and maintenance as a strategy to stave off costly building failures. Circuit Riders concluded with a workshop on practical maintenance planning.

Uncertain future for important Lithuanian landmark.

New England's oldest Lithuanian parish held its final Mass on August 2, closing the doors of St. Joseph's Lithuanian Catholic Church in Waterbury, established in 1894. Fearing the potential loss of this historic and cultural anchor of the Brooklyn neighborhood after 132 years, Circuit Riders visited the church and surrounding area. They met with parishioners eager to preserve the church itself, but also the adjoining parochial school, the former Lithuanian orphanage, and the residential blocks that grew up around them. The Circuit Riders are now assisting the community in pursuing formal historic recognition for the religious complex and neighborhood.

A fresh start for preservation carpentry training

Finding contractors to work on historic preservation projects is exceedingly difficult these days. To help close that gap, the Circuit Riders designed and ran a pilot training program with Fresh Start Worx, a Hartford-based nonprofit that trains people in the carpentry trade. In June, five students completed a 40-hour, two-week window restoration course led by preservation expert Steve Marshall, covering glass cutting, glazing, Dutchman repairs, sash balancing and re-hanging, and traditional hand tools. Preservation Connecticut staff rounded out the curriculum with preservation fundamentals and architectural walking tours, giving trainees a working knowledge of historic styles, construction periods, and the issues that show up repeatedly in old buildings. The results were strong enough that the Circuit Riders are already planning a second cohort. The team is finalizing a target date, with plans to share it soon.

Circuit Riders by the numbers: June-July 2026

Engagements: 75

Site visits: 25

Communities served:

38 towns, in 8 counties



Mike Forino and Anna Fossi at the Connecticut League of Museums conference.

St. Joseph's Lithuanian Catholic Church closed in July; Circuit Riders are working with parishioners to ensure the preservation of the church complex and surrounding neighborhood.



Five students from Fresh Start Worx in Hartford completed a window restoration workshop in June.



MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Every year in September, *Preservation Connecticut News* focuses on preservation threats and opportunities.

This year, historic sites nationwide face unprecedented danger as the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation has proposed major changes to the regulations for implementing Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

You can read more about the changes on page 4 of this issue. The National Trust for Historic Preservation is coordinating advocacy around this issue on September 22-24 in Washington DC, where hundreds of advocates from around the country will meet with congressional members. I will be traveling there with Charlie Janson, former PCT board chair and NTHP advisor to urge the Connecticut delegation's support.

Summer brought the opportunity to make site visits to our 2026 Connecticut Preservation Awards recipients and to bring the "big check" to The 1772 Foundation grant recipients for a photo and press



In August, PCT members toured the Dorothea Rudnick house in Hamden.

opportunity. It was great to meet so many project team members, volunteers, and local representatives. The quality of stewardship and dedication to these sites is remarkable.

Some of the places we visited were (awards) The Estate (Raynham), New Haven; Liberty Christian International, Hartford; 94-94 Edwards Street, Hartford; Tilley Corners, New London; Reid & Hughes, Norwich; Sadoce Wilcox House and Lyman Wilcox Barn, Granby; Belden House and Mews, Litchfield; (1772) Gridley-Case Cottages, Farmington

Historical Society; Eells-Stowe House, Milford Historical Society; Samuel Smith Homestead, East Lyme; Huntington Homestead, Scotland; Coventry Historical Society; Weston Center for Historic and Culture; Glebe House, Woodbury.

On Saturday, August 22, we welcomed about 100 visitors to the Dorothea Rudnick house (1958), a Modernist design by architect King-lui Wu for a pioneering embryologist.

Many thanks to our friend Wojtek Borowski of Edgehill Team at Pearce Real Estate for making the property available to us.

Looking ahead—Preservation Connecticut will host a Preservation Trades Fair on October 10, in partnership with the Eli Whitney Museum & Workshop in Hamden. The event is for people or organizations that own historic structures, as well as families with an interest in preservation. The goal of the event is to understand preservation as a career choice but also as a hobby. Preservation professionals will have tables and demonstrations set up to educate the public about the work they do to help demystify the preservation trades. The work being highlighted will include timber framing, window restoration, masonry repointing, and painting. Professionals interested in having a table and/or putting on demonstrations to showcase their work, please reach out to Stefon Danczuk (sdanczuk@preservationct.org) for more information. 🌿

—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 7, 2026, at 9:30 a.m.
November 4, 2026, 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

SECTION 106 UNDER ATTACK

The Trump administration has proposed dramatic changes to the regulations for Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

These changes violate the intent of the Act, by sidelining states and tribes, eliminating required consultation, weakening identification of historic properties, limiting eligible properties, and imposing unilateral agency control. If adopted, they would pose a significant threat to historic places impacted by federal undertakings.

Section 106 calls for federal agencies to “take into account the effect of” any federally funded, permitted, or licensed activity on historic, cultural, and archaeological properties. The existing regulations for administering the law outline a process that requires consultation with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, state and tribal historic preservation offices, local officials, and the public.

If the proposed activity could have an adverse effect on historic properties, the regulations call for agencies to look first for ways to avoid or reduce the adverse effect. If that is not possible, they must provide some mitigation—that is, some way to compensate for harming or destroying the historic property. For examples of successful Section 106 consultation processes, see “Section 106 in practice,” on page 6.

As outlined in an online seminar presented by the National Trust for Historic Preservation in July, the proposed changes can be grouped under three broad themes:

Consolidating agency control: federal agencies and project proponents will control the review process, and consultation with state and local bodies, tribes, and the public will be optional, at the agency’s sole discretion.

Reducing the application of Section 106: the kinds of projects subject to Section 106 review have been redefined

and narrowed, so fewer projects would be reviewed, and there are new off-ramps to avoid review altogether.

Reducing the scope of project review: “historic property” and “adverse effect” have been redefined, significantly narrowing the scope of review, excluding many traditional cultural properties and large historic districts, as well as indirect and cumulative adverse impacts. Cost is made the deciding factor for defining the work needed to identify historic properties and project effects, for determining viability of preservation and for deciding on reasonable mitigation.

In addition, the proposed regulations give the president much broader authority to declare “emergencies” to bypass even this reduced level of review.

The result of the proposed changes will be a process controlled solely by federal agencies without a requirement even to include or even inform states, tribes, localities, and the public that a review is underway before all the decisions have been made. Consequently, agencies (nearly all of which, incidentally, saw drastic staffing cuts by the so-called Department of Government Efficiency) will have to make decisions without the benefit of state, local, and tribal expertise. At the same time, citizens, and even project proponents, will lose a structured way to resolve community concerns, shifting fights to grass roots efforts and the courts.

“Who controls what history survives? This is not simply a change in procedure. It is a transfer of power over the American public’s history. It will determine who benefits from federal decisions and who is expected to suffer loss.”

—Ira Matt, *National Association of Tribal Preservation Officers*



Finally, as attorneys from the National Trust and Cultural Heritage Partners (a private law firm specializing in protecting cultural heritage) point out, the draft regulations are riddled with ambiguities and inconsistencies. The result, they say, will be regulatory confusion and an increase in costly, time-consuming, unpredictable litigation—the very opposite of the government’s stated desire to make Section 106 reviews quicker and more efficient.

The process

The federal Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) approved the proposed regulatory changes on July 24 and submitted them to the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA) for legal review and comment. After the ACHP resolves any issues identified by OIRA, there will be a period—probably 30 days—during which the public may submit comments.



Dating back 12,500 years, the Brian Jones site in Avon was excavated as part of the Section 106 agreement for a federally funded road project, thanks to information provided by then-State Archaeologist Brian Jones. The excavation yielded valuable new findings about the Paleo-Indian period when the first people arrived in New England between 13,000 and 10,000 years ago.

After the public comment period, the ACHP will vote on final version of the regulations, which will again be reviewed by OIRA and then published in the Federal Register. The regulations will become effective 30 days after publication.

What you can do

The changes to Section 106 regulations are still a draft. The National Trust offers guidelines for public efforts to keep Section 106 effective in protecting historic places subject to federal actions. NTHP President and CEO Brent Leggs has announced a goal of 250,000 letters to officials, in recognition of the nation's 250th anniversary year. Specific recommended actions are:

- Write to Governor Lamont about how the proposed regulatory changes will affect historic properties in your community.

- Write to Connecticut's senators and Congressional representatives; consider contacting their district offices during the legislative recess.
- Send the National Trust examples of Section 106 consultations that have benefited your community.
- Most important, be prepared to send comments to the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation during the public comment period. There probably will be little or no advance notice of the 30-day comment period, so the time to prepare is now.

The National Trust and Preservation Connecticut will follow the process and post notices when opportunities for action come up. Sign up for alerts through both organizations' websites or social media accounts. 🌿

For more information, including a recording of the National Trust webinar and guidance for public action, visit savingplaces.org/section106. Information can also be found at the websites of the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers, ncshpo.org, the National Association of Tribal Historic Preservation Officers, www.nathpo.org, and Cultural Heritage Partners, culturalheritagepartners.com.

Section 106 in practice

By Catherine Labadia, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

In the 1950s and early '60s, historic preservation in the United States was led almost entirely by private individuals and nonprofit organizations. The federal government, on the other hand, was funding widespread demolition of historic buildings through urban renewal. Connecticut established the Connecticut Historical Commission in 1955, and its first meeting was devoted to saving the Colt Building, a beloved Hartford landmark that was slated for demolition to make way for Interstate 91.

A decade later, Congress passed the National Historic Preservation Act (the Act) in 1966 to establish a government sponsored program of historic preservation. The opening section states, "it is ... necessary and appropriate for the Federal Government to accelerate its historic preservation programs and activities, to give maximum encouragement to agencies and individuals undertaking preservation by private means, and to assist State and local governments and the National Trust for Historic Preservation in the United States to expand and accelerate their historic preservation programs and activities."

Section 106 of the Act, which requires the government to take historic places into account in its actions, is a pledge to the American people that the government will be thoughtful and held accountable for its actions. This pledge has been written out of the proposed revisions to the regulations that govern the implementation of Section 106 and would eliminate the democratic process that has made Section 106 successful.

The Connecticut State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) reviews more than 1,000 projects each year that

SHPO worked with the City of Waterbury's Lead and Healthy Homes program in the Hillside National Register district.



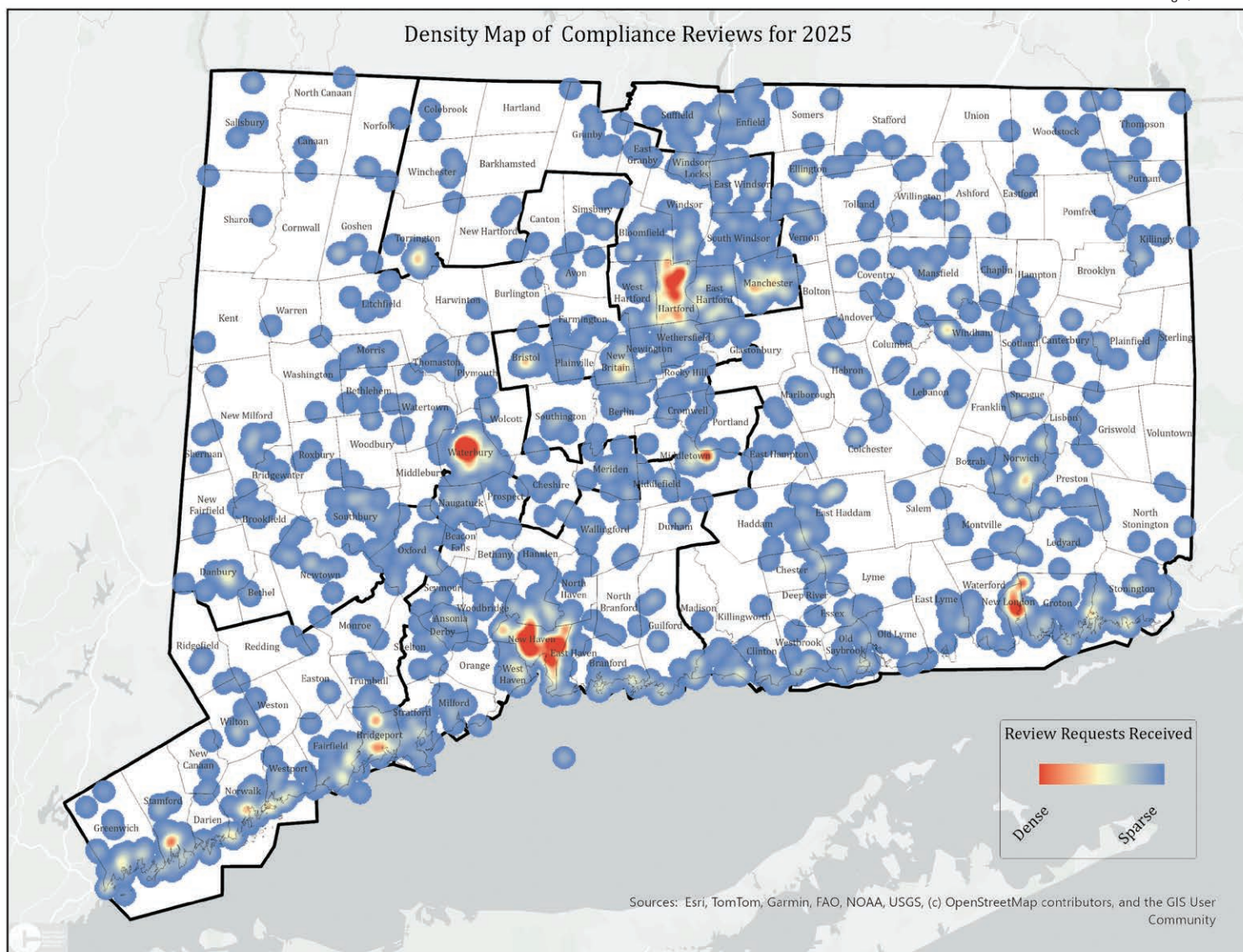
are subject to Section 106. The average response time is less than 14 days. Most of these reviews—over 85 percent—result in a determination that there are no historic properties present, or that the project will not harm any historic properties.

Of the remaining projects—approximately 100 per year—most go through a consultative process that results in avoiding or minimizing adverse effects on historic places. It is on these that SHPO staff spends most of its time and has had the greatest impact.

SHPO staff brings a wealth of special knowledge to every project we review: knowledge of specific resource types, such as barns or archaeology; knowledge of preservation techniques, such as material conservation or geotechnical explorations; contextual knowledge to determine what

makes a property significant; knowledge of preservation best practices. And, we have the experience to explore creative solutions for every project we review. The current Section 106 regulations recognize SHPO's special role, declaring that "The State historic preservation officer (SHPO) reflects the interests of the State and its citizens in the preservation of their cultural heritage." The proposed regulation changes strike this crucial statement, marking a notable shift of power to the federal government.

To further assist agencies with their responsibilities, as well as the public with their advocacy, SHPO invested in ConnCRIS, an award-winning, online Geographic Information System. ConnCRIS is the definitive source of digital information on historic resources in the state. With a dedicated staff manager, it is updated daily and constantly undergoing corrections to



Map of Section 106 reviews completed by SHPO during 2025.

legacy data. No other sources of information are as comprehensive and trustworthy. Building on this system, SHPO also created an online portal for submitting Section 106 reviews that has decreased response times, improved workflows, and enabled real-time tracking. All this was done with the goal of making compliance simple.

SHPO does not spend a lot of time publicizing its work, and often we are working on behalf of places that, while they deserve to be enjoyed by future generations, do not have a steward or community backing. Our office fights to preserve historic fabric to the greatest extent possible, so that authentic history is preserved, and cumulative minor changes

do not add up to eventual total loss.

The first goal of Section 106 consultation is to avoid adverse effects. For example, in 2025, SHPO worked with the City of Waterbury's Lead and Healthy Homes program, funded through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), to review abatement projects for approximately 90 properties. We were able to help the City ensure occupants' safety while maintaining character-defining historic features of the properties through procedures like chemical encapsulation. Projects like this do not garner much public interest, but they are part of SHPO's daily review responsibilities. Although limited in scope, their aggregate impact is the preservation of important

community character and streetscapes, while making homes safer for families.

Similarly, the Friendship Center in Hartford received funding from HUD to rehabilitate its dining room as well as creating a new, larger entry and security desk. The organization occupies the historic Henry Barnard house (1807). Barnard was instrumental in the development of the American public school system, and his home is a National Historic Landmark and one of the first places in Connecticut listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The original proposal called for complete removal of the existing side entrance. SHPO worked with the center and architect to retain classical details and

continued on next page

incorporate them into the new entry.

In these cases, SHPO's recommendations helped avoid adverse effects to historic properties, but sometimes adverse effects are unavoidable. In those situations, SHPO tries to find ways to minimize the impact. The United States Coast Guard (USCG) consulted with SHPO regarding the proposed USCG museum, located in New London between the Thames River and historic Union Station (1885; NR), designed by the renowned architect Henry Hobson Richardson. The initial design towered over the station with colorful cladding and an access bridge that required demolishing the station's baggage room. In addition, the museum would have blocked views of the station to and from the river, an important aspect of its historic siting.

Creative thinking, meaningful dialogue, and appreciation for the historic setting resulted in several design modifications. SHPO worked with the USCG, the museum association, and the project architects to agree on a design that reduced the effects on the station by using glass and subdued cladding to not overpower the train station, shifting the building to retain views between the station and the river, and moving the bridge to avoid tearing down the baggage room.

Although the adverse effect could not be avoided, it was substantially reduced. The resulting design was praised as a significant improvement by everyone involved. Captain Wes Pulver of the National Coast Guard Museum Association, Inc. thanked SHPO for a "guiding hand during this process. The design of the bridge and museum was greatly improved due to your interest and insights."

In rare instances, the loss of historic places cannot be avoided or adequately minimized. In those cases, SHPO works with project proponents to identify some mitigating actions. Once again, knowledge of our state's unique cultural environment and preservation needs is critical to creating positive outcomes. Recently, the Connecticut Department of Transportation (DOT)

with funding from the Federal Highway Administration completed mitigation agreements for the loss of a brownstone arch bridge built in 1900 over the Five Mile River in Norwalk. Although the bridge was not listed on the National Register, it was identified as eligible for listing. Unfortunately, a safety report identified extensive structural defects that would have required significant interventions to correct. Despite our efforts, alternatives to minimize the loss were not feasible. The only way to conclude the Section 106 process was to agree on actions to compensate for the loss of the bridge.

Connecticut brownstone is an important historic building material that was widely used throughout the region, particularly during the late 19th through early 20th centuries and is no longer quarried. Recently, SHPO-funded projects have struggled to find suitable brownstone for repairs or replacements, often importing stone from India or China. As a result, SHPO requested that DOT salvage and store brownstone from the Norwalk bridge rather than send it to a landfill. Although it sounds like a simple request, it challenged standard DOT contracting processes. But approximately 30 cubic yards of material were recovered and will be used for accessibility and rehabilitation projects at Trinity Episcopal Church in Wethersfield (1871; NR) and McLevy Hall in Bridgeport (1854, 1905; NR).

Like any regulations, those governing Section 106 undoubtedly need to be revisited for improvements, clarifications, and efficiencies. However, the changes proposed by the ACHP, while purportedly aiming to increase efficiency, will in fact make preservation much less effective.

In addition to limiting the types of historic resources and projects that would be subject to Section 106, the proposed language strikes all requirements for consultation, giving the federal agency—or even a single federal employee—sole authority to decide if an historic place is important to a local community. There are no provisions for tapping technical expertise or local knowledge.

Finally, the proposed changes have no requirement for agencies to consider ways

to avoid or minimize adverse impacts on important historic resources. Instead, the priority is to move projects forward immediately moving to mitigation.

As currently written, the Section 106 regulations provide time for thoughtful decisions about what should change, what should remain, and how development and preservation can coexist. The proposed changes to the regulations do not provide a way to reconcile these competing demands. Instead, they limit the federal government to choosing either preservation or development—not both. The ability to avoid or minimize effects on historic resources is removed from the regulations and replaced with a direct path to destruction. As a result, demolition will become a regular course of action and there will be no state or local voices contributing to appropriate mitigation.

Under the current Section 106 regulations, avoiding harm to historic places is the more frequent outcome, but it only happens when consultation connects people who know how to design and build a project with people who understand the goals of historic preservation.

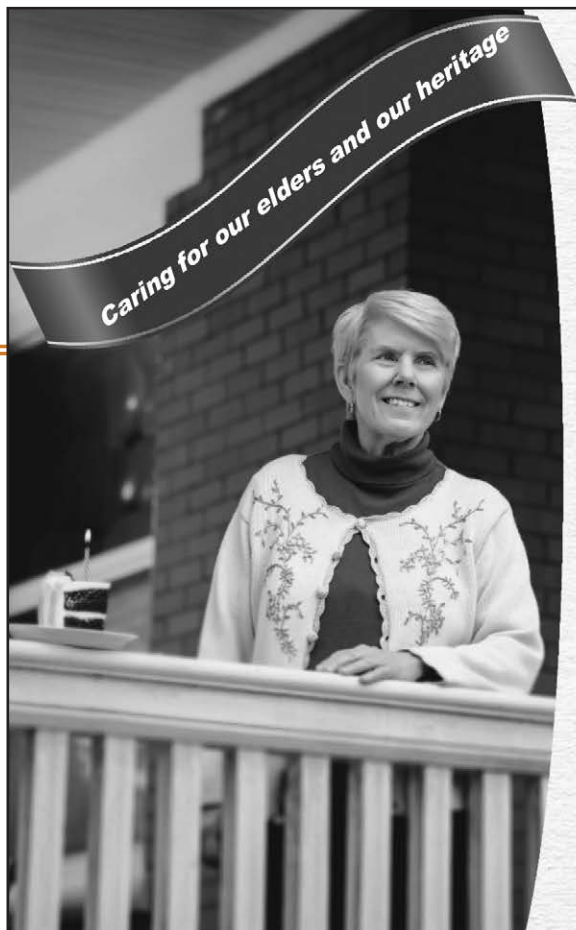
State Historic Preservation Offices, as established by the Act, play a crucial role in that process. SHPOs represent the federal government's commitment to historic preservation and provide a check on the actions of federal agencies in keeping with the American principle of federalism. The work of SHPOs is technical, defined by the provisions of the Act, and provides a compliment to the passionate work of local experts and nonprofit organizations.

Day in and day out, Connecticut's SHPO is at the table fighting for preservation, whether the project is in the public's eye or not. We stand at the forefront of responsible development that considers and cares for the unrenowable historic fabric of Connecticut. No other agency or group in our state reviews as many projects and has a greater impact on the Connecticut we hand down to future generations. 🌿





The United States Coast Guard museum under construction in New London. The museum's design was modified to respect the historic Union Station.



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Briefly noted

Bridgeport. ►

The Mary & Eliza Freeman Center for History and Community has received \$140,000 in funding from the African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund, a program of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The funding will support the structural stabilization and exterior rehabilitation of the Eliza Freeman house (1848; NR), one of two surviving structures from Little Liberia, an antebellum community of free African Americans and others. The Freeman Center is one of 27 sites to receive a total of \$3 million in grants for preservation activities for African American heritage sites, buildings, and landscapes. Sadly, at almost the same time, Walters Memorial AME Zion church (1882; SR, photo from 2018), home of the oldest Black congregation in Bridgeport and a site on the Freedom Trail, was demolished. The church had been damaged by flooding from Hurricane Sandy in 2012. The congregation continues to meet in a newer building next to the site of the historic church.

Coventry. ►

Burglars broke into, robbed, and vandalized the Hale homestead (1776; NR) on August 3. Suspects took cash and objects from the house and barns, and stripped parts from appliances and systems, apparently to sell them. The homestead was built for the family of patriot spy Nathan Hale (1755-1776), although he never lived in it. The building is a museum property of Connecticut Landmarks, which had been carrying out renovations in recognition of the structure's 250th anniversary. The damage is estimated at thousands of dollars; Governor Ned Lamont has pledged state funding assistance for repairs. As of press time, Coventry police were still asking for assistance in locating a man seen in a surveillance video.

Middletown. ►

This summer Wesleyan University sought to rezone eleven acres in the town's Downtown Village District (DVD) to upgrade its student housing. The DVD, created to protect the character of the historic buildings (photo: 208 High Street, c.1820; SR) and streetscapes, limits demolition and building height and requires advisory design review. Wesleyan wanted to change the area to the Institutional Development zone, which allows five-story building height and eliminates design review and typical coverage, width, and yard requirements for individual lots with the same owner. Rezoning would give the university greater freedom for future expansion, in the process eroding the DVD, undoing protections against demolition, and setting a precedent for taking other properties out of the DVD. A hearing conducted by the planning and zoning commission elicited hundreds of public comments, all opposing the proposal. The hearing was continued on August 26 with another round of opposition, and the commission voted unanimously not to approve the rezoning petition.



C. Wigren

Connecticut Landmarks



Renée Tribert





◀ Mystic.

In June, the Mystic Seaport Museum re-launched the newly restored *Emma C. Berry* (1866). A National Historic Landmark, the *Berry* is considered the last known surviving American smack (a fishing boat with an internal well to keep fish alive before refrigeration). Restoration of the 46-foot-long vessel included building a new keel, repairing decking and rigging hardware, rebuilding the windlass, and replacing the rudder. Principal funding came from Save America's Treasures, a grant program of the National Park Service. The *Berry* was constructed at the Palmer Shipyards in Noank and saw use in Noank as well as Maine and New Jersey before the Seaport acquired her in 1969.

Todd Levine, State Historic Preservation Office



J. Montanaro

◀ New Haven.

The building that houses the Lighthouse Point Park carousel (1916; NR) was severely damaged by a heavy storm on August 13. The carousel itself seems to have survived without any significant damage. Originally an amusement park opened by the local trolley company in 1905, Lighthouse Point was bought by the City to be a park in 1925. The carousel building and attached pavilion have been stabilized for the present but according to City Engineer Giovanni Zinn plans for repairs or reconstruction will also have to consider long-term resiliency of the carousel, which lies within a flood zone.

◀ Old Saybrook.

The James Pharmacy (NR) reopened as "The James," a butcher shop, deli, and ice cream parlor. Built in about 1820 as a general store, the building housed a succession of businesses over the years but is best known as the drugstore and soda fountain operated by Anna Louise James (1886-1977), Connecticut's first Black female pharmacist. Taking over from her brother-in-law, she ran the pharmacy from about 1917 to 1967. Colt Taylor, a local chef, renovated the historic building, a job that included restoring the carved mortar and pestle that Miss James added to the building's pediment in the 1920s.

continued on next page



Putnam. ►

The Congregational Church of Putnam was forced to close its building after the sanctuary ceiling collapsed on August 7. Fortunately, no one was in the building at the time. Plaster, lath, and wood framing cover the pews, floor, and pipe organ, and tests are needed to determine if there is asbestos from insulation. The Romanesque Revival church building was dedicated in 1870 and has no historic designation. Older photos appear to show a pressed-metal ceiling of the type developed in the late 19th century as a less expensive alternative to decorative plasterwork.

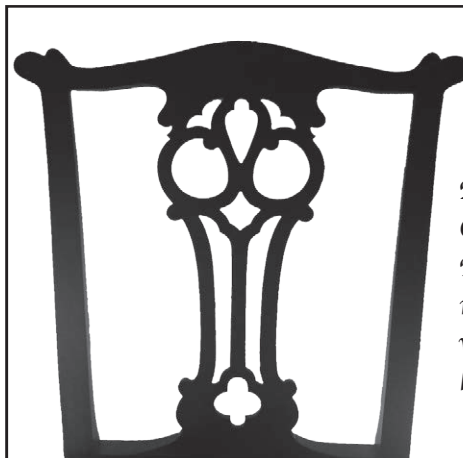
**Sterling. ►**

The Dorrance Inn (c.1722) was demolished in July. The building was listed on the National Register as part of the Sterling Hill historic district and individually for its role in hosting French officers as troops commanded by the Comte de Rochambeau marched from Rhode Island to Virginia in 1781, where they took part in the battle of Yorktown. Dorrance's was one of the few taverns mentioned by name in multiple accounts by French officers. One of them, the Marquis de Chastellux, reported that he was "very well lodged and very well received" by Mr. Dorrance.

According to a Facebook post by the Sterling Historical Society, the owner said demolition was necessary because of severe damage by powder post beetles; plans are to build "in the original footprint and style." Sterling Hill had an historic district commission, which could have reviewed the demolition and requested a second opinion on the possibility of repair. However, the commission has been defunct since 2002 and was only advisory, so it could not have stopped the demolition.



Kevin Ring, Sr., Facebook



Hayden Woodworking

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Uncasville, CT
Haydenww@netzero.net

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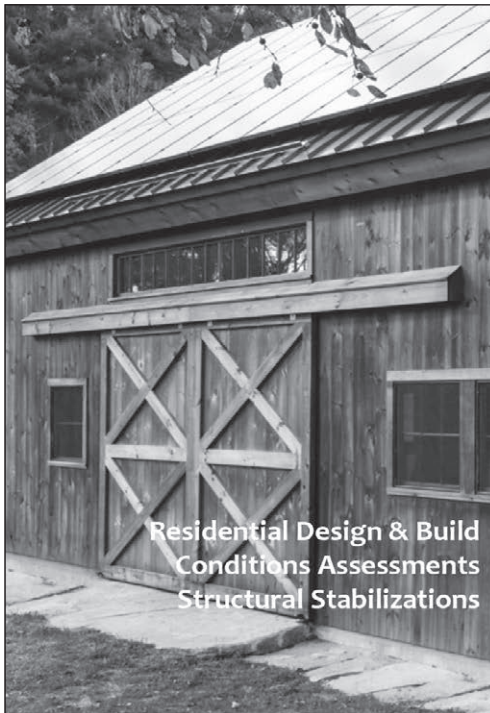


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easements is on the market, we may list it here. To learn how to safeguard your property for future generations through an easement, explore Stewardship on our website, preservationct.org/ steward, or contact Christopher Wigren, Deputy Director.

Jabez Bacon house 30 Hollow Road, Woodbury (1760) \$1,395,000

PRESERVATION CONNECTICUT EASEMENT

Home of wealthy Woodbury merchant Jabez Bacon and, later, Preservation Connecticut founder Harlan H. Griswold. Original architectural details include wide wood floorboards, seven fireplaces, and fine paneling. Individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places as an example of Georgian architecture; also located in Woodbury's Local Historic District No. 1. Five bedrooms, five baths. Building area is 4,884 sq. ft.; 2.24 acres. Preservation easement covers exterior of building and open space of property.

Contact: Lisa Titcomb, William Pitt Sotheby's International, (203) 419-5919, ltitcomb@wpsir.com



Elisha Bushnell house and farm (c. 1678) 1405, 1445, 1469 Boston Post Road, Old Saybrook \$12,708,000

One of Connecticut's oldest surviving houses on 21.18-acres in Old Saybrook. Documented by J. Frederick Kelly in his book *Early Domestic Architecture of Connecticut* and individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places for its architectural significance. Originally two single-story rooms, centered on a massive stone chimney. Later (c.1700), a rear lean-to and east-side ell were added and the roof was raised. Retains central chimney, projecting sills, shouldered posts and evidence of an early thatched roof. House has 4 bedrooms, 1 bath, measuring 2,059 sq. ft. Farm includes multiple historic accessory buildings such as barns, loom house, outhouse, and "slave house," all illustrating the long history of the property. Eligible for federal and state historic rehabilitation tax credits.

Contact: Carey Fisher, Houlihan Lawrence, (970) 209-0781, cfisher@houlihanlawrence.com



Deadline for the next issue is October 20, 2026

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.



Colonial Theatre (c. 1923) 27 Railroad Street, North Canaan \$695,000

Historic Connecticut theater is on the market. Once known as "Little Radio City," the Colonial Theatre served as a venue for movies, vaudeville, graduations, dances and more in its 100+ year life span. The Art Deco inspired interior contains two stories which include a performance stage, two movie screens, and a dance floor. Included in the sale are two commercial units on street-front façade. Listed in Preservation Connecticut's Historic Theatre's of Connecticut survey and located in Cannan Village National Register historic district, which makes it eligible for historic rehabilitation tax credits. Building area is 10,383 sq. ft.; 0.24 acres.

Contact: Lenore Mallett, William Pitt Sotheby's, (203) 209-1777, lmallett@wpsir.com



Deacon John Peck house Dismantled c. 1740 saltbox \$190,000

Opportunity to purchase dismantled Connecticut River Valley Saltbox. Cheshire's Deacon John Peck House, 38' X 30', 2,964 sq. ft. saltbox with center chimney and four fireplaces, expertly disassembled and stored. Retains many original interior features, including wide board floors, wainscoting, paneling, mantelpieces, and trim.

Contact: Wes & Jeanne Fredericks, (203) 722-5156, jeanne.fredericks@gmail.com.



365 Lake Road, Warren (c. 1905)

Charming cottage overlooking Lake Waramaug available for relocation. Claims are made that a portion of the residence is a Sears kit house. 2,117 sq. ft.; 4 beds, 2 baths. The house faces demolition in January 2027, so time is of the essence. Anyone interested in moving this piece of Northwestern CT recreational history at their own cost can contact Preservation Connecticut for additional information.



C. Wigren

495 Farmington Avenue housed a number of LGBTQ+ activities, including *Metroline* magazine. PCT is updating the building's National Register listing to reflect that history.



Stacey Vairo

William Mann, chair of the LGBTQ+ advisory committee, spoke at the project kickoff event at the Palmer-Warner house in June.

The project consists of several phases. Phase 1, now complete, identified and documented 130 significant sites on a preliminary mapping site. Phase 2 is underway, with a goal of adding 150 more sites to the map.

Alongside this work, an oral history project is capturing stories of these historic places that aren't readily found, or aren't found at all, in published or archival sources; the goal was 50 interviews, a goal that's now been met, though the team is eager to do more.

The project has also completed approximately 40 of a targeted 150 Historic

Resource Inventory (HRI) forms. These forms lay the groundwork for potential listing on the State or National Register of Historic Places, a status that brings with it official recognition, greater visibility, and preservation incentives that can help save these sites from the bulldozer. An historic context statement, providing a background to better understand the importance of these buildings and institutions, is also being drafted.

Funding for Phase 2 has come primarily from a \$25,000 grant from Connecticut Humanities, which supports research, survey completion, oral histories, and the

creation of the historic context statement.

Threatened properties highlight the urgent need for recognition

Because so many sites with LGBTQ+ significance are not widely known outside the community, they remain vulnerable to being demolished without consideration of their significance. Even buildings listed on the State or National Register as part of an historic district often make no mention of an LGBTQ+ association, despite one existing. Two properties illustrate this urgency.

Bloodroot Restaurant, at 85 Ferris Street in Bridgeport, was a feminist bookstore,

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vegetarian restaurant, and community gathering place created by Noel Furie and Selma Miriam. For nearly fifty years, it served as a vital anchor for the community before closing on December 21, 2025. Plans for the building remain uncertain: the Aspetuck Land Trust has expressed interest in acquiring the land but has stated no interest in retaining the building itself. Preserving the building as an interpretive site or adapting it for Land Trust use would honor its history and the significant role it played in so many lives.

The second is a two-story brick commercial building at 495 Farmington Avenue in Hartford, already listed on the National Register as part of the Sisson-South Whitney historic district. PCT intern Chris Gabianelli, a graduate student in Public History at Central Connecticut State University, is currently updating the building's listing to reflect its LGBTQ+ history. It served first as a meeting space called the Loft in 1970 and later, in the late 1970s, as home to the Metropolitan Community Church and the Hartford Gay Switchboard. The church's newsletter, *MCC News*, evolved into *Metroline* magazine in 1982,

published by John Crowley from the building's second floor. *Metroline*—and its later editors, William Mann and Surina Khan—became a vital source of information and advocacy on the era's most pressing issues, including the AIDS epidemic and the 1991 Connecticut Gay Rights Law. The building is currently owned by the City of Hartford, which has issued an RFP for its reuse.

With uncertain futures, both Bloodroot and the *Metroline* building are at risk of being lost. Capturing their histories, before they change hands or are altered beyond recognition, is critical. The time for preservation is now.

A night at the Palmer-Warner house

The project's kickoff event, held at the 18th-century Palmer-Warner house in East Haddam in June, showed exactly how these stories can enrich a historic site. The house, owned by Connecticut Landmarks, is itself interpreted for its LGBTQ+ history as the 20th-century home of preservation architect Frederic Palmer and his partner, Howard Metzger; it served as a haven for their social circle. The event brought together community members, advisory committee members, and Preservation Connecticut

staff for intimate tours of the house, along with the project's first fundraising effort.

Next steps and how you can help

The places we choose to recognize as significant—what we ensure survives—signal what we value as a society. Preservation allows us not just to see history but to feel it and, most importantly, to learn from it. But we cannot save what we do not know exists. And we cannot know what we do not choose to save. With Phase 1 complete and Phase 2 well underway, the team is now preparing an application to the LGBTQ+ Heritage Alliance for a grant to continue work on the historic context statement and to complete additional survey forms. Notification of the award is expected in November. But the work also depends on public support. Please consider helping Preservation Connecticut by supporting the project with a donation at preservationct.org/lgbtq.

Do you have a story or a site you'd like to share? Do you want to stay up-to-date on the project? You can support the project or sign up for our e-blasts at preservationct.org to stay informed and get involved. 🌿

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Connecticut's first LGBTQ+ historic sites survey launched as histories of the marginalized are actively erased

Speaking recently about historical memory tied to the Nation's 1876 Centennial celebration, the famed historian of the Constitution Jill Lepore said something simple, profound, and deeply relevant to our work as preservationists. "The people who suffer the most," she stated, "leave the least evidence behind. So, any history that begins with what survives faces a real challenge in arriving at any proper perspective on the human condition. That puts a special obligation on anyone trying to tell the story of the past to be attentive—and to try to repair the historical record."

The physical places tied to the histories of marginalized communities—Native Americans, women, people of color, diverse ethnic groups, and the LGBTQ+ community—have long gone unrecognized and undocumented. This creates an uneven and often dangerous impression that history belongs only to the few and to the powerful. In fact, it belongs to all of us.

If we, as preservationists, are to attempt to repair "the historical record," we must expand our efforts to preserve places that represent and encompass the history of all Connecticut's peoples. The task will not be easy. At a moment when evidence of these histories is actively being erased—the Stonewall National Monument is on the National Trust's Eleven Most Endangered list—these places are increasingly vulnerable—to neglect, to destruction, and ultimately to the permanent loss of the connection between history and the people to whom it matters most.

In response, Preservation Connecticut has launched Connecticut's first statewide survey to identify, memorialize, and elevate the contributions of LGBTQ+ individuals and the significance of the public and private spaces, buildings, and landscapes tied to their history in Connecticut.

The "LGBTQ+ Places of Connecticut" project began in 2023 with Preservation Connecticut's inaugural Edward F. Gerber Fellow, Anna Fossi, who began identifying sites and placing them on an interactive map at PreservationCT.org.

The overwhelming public interest in and support for that initial project led staff to explore the possibility of expanding the project in earnest. Since then, Preservation Connecticut has held open community discussions and formed an official project advisory committee made up of public historians, community historians, and community activists to guide the work of broadening our understanding of Connecticut's nuanced and complex past, present, and future.

continued on page 18



Bloodroot, a feminist bookstore, and vegetarian restaurant in Bridgeport, was a popular community gathering place for more than 40 years. The building's future is uncertain.

C. Wigen, 2015