

PRESERVATION CONNECTICUT NEWS

Hidden Treasure: FORT DECATUR

What may seem to be a pile of rocks is in fact part of Fort Decatur, an installation from the War of 1812 that is one of Connecticut's rarest historic sites. Read about efforts to preserve the fort on page 6.

Preservation Connecticut

FUNDING FOR PRESERVATION

Grants to preserve historic religious buildings

Preservation Connecticut is pleased to announce its 2023 Maintenance & Repair grant recipients. These grants are funded through the Community Investment Act and support work on historic buildings used by religious organizations. In the second round of the year, the program received 16 applications requesting a total of \$253,121 and granted \$130,000 for twelve time-sensitive and critical projects to keep these buildings housing vital community services. The grant projects are:

- Bolton Congregational Church, Bolton (1848; NR): \$8,000 for carpentry repairs and paint
- Calvary Temple Christian Center, Bridgeport (1870; NR, LHD): \$15,000 for repair of dormer windows
- St. Luke's-St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Bridgeport (1868; NR, LHD): \$15,000 for a condition assessment
- Saint Mary's Ukrainian Catholic Church, Bridgeport (1883; NR, LHD): \$10,000 for roof and exterior repairs
- First Congregational Church, Coventry (1848; NR): \$15,000 for column restoration
- Sacred Heart of the Lake Retreat Center, Higganum (1880; NR pending): \$1,500 for fire safety improvements
- Hartford Spanish Seventh Day Church, Hartford (1890; NR): \$15,000 for roof replacement
- Liberty Christian Center International, Hartford (1913; NR): \$15,000 for portico repairs
- St. Peter's Episcopal Church, Hebron (1826; NR): \$6,000 for electrical upgrades
- Pitts Chapel Unified Free Will Baptist Church, New Haven (1914; NR): \$8,500 for roof replacement
- St. Paul's Union American Methodist Episcopal Church, New Haven (1871; NR): \$15,000 for roof repairs
- Trumbull Congregational Church, Trumbull (1898; SR): \$6,000 for mechanical upgrades



A Maintenance & Repair grant will help restore the portico of Liberty Christian Center International in Hartford—the former Horace Bushnell Congregational Church

Not only do these buildings house worship services, they also provide much needed space for other groups to perform their work, including soup kitchens, childcare, Boy/Girl Scouts activities, food or clothing banks, and recovery programs. Since 2017, Preservation Connecticut has dedicated funds every year for preservation work on places of worship. We have awarded 40 grants totaling over \$397,000 to religious organizations in all Connecticut counties, leveraging over \$1,000,000 to help preserve their essential buildings. For more about this granting program visit preservationct.org/mrgrants or contact Michael Forino, mforino@preservationct.org. The next grant round will begin in 2024. 🌿



Pitts Chapel UFWB Church in New Haven will use its Maintenance & Repair grant for a new roof. PCT staff presented a check to the church in November.

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Happy new year!

Preservation Connecticut finished 2023 with a flurry of activity. The first Saturday in November was a busy day, with two special events. In the morning, members toured the **Dudley Farm Museum** in Guilford, recently listed on the National Register. Museum director Beth Payne presented an overview of the farm's history and long term preservation efforts. Guests enjoyed a walking tour of the farmstead and explored new exhibits. This was our first in-person Talking about Preservation event, and we hope to have more. But don't forget to join us online for Wednesday noon sessions as well. The spring series will be announced soon.

That afternoon, Trustee **John Harrington and his wife, Jenny**, hosted a gathering of John's circle of online old-house enthusiasts. Attendees toured the Harringtons' home, the Enos Kellogg house, built about 1780 and listed on the National Register. They learned about John's multi-year restoration effort, shared their own experiences and questions, and got acquainted with PCT's work.

At its regular meeting in December, the **Board of Trustees** heard reports from staff about current advocacy projects, including Fort Decatur (page 6), the UI electrical transmission lines (page 5), 80 Shore Road in Waterford (page 13), and PCT's latest application to the Community Investment Fund 2030 for churches in the Washington Park area of Bridgeport (PCN, September/October 2023). Trustees' questions, insights, and connections made a valuable contribution to our efforts. We are grateful to have such an engaged and knowledgeable Board to guide our work.

Several staff members have notable achievements. Circuit Rider **Mike Forino** successfully defended his dissertation, "Making Prison Labor Work: Capitalism and Control in America's Prisons, 1727-1935," and received his Ph.D. in History from the University of Delaware's Hagley Program in the History of Capitalism, Technology, and Culture. He has also been named Field Service Director and will provide coordination of the Circuit Rider team. Archaeology Circuit Rider **Stefon Danczuk** completed "Left in the Dirt: A Connecticut State Register of Historic

Places Nomination for the Hop River Mills Site in Columbia, Connecticut," the capstone project for his Master's degree in Public History at Central Connecticut State University. And, Deputy Director **Christopher Wigren** received a Public Service Honor Award from the Connecticut chapter of the American Institute of Architects. **Kristen Hopewood** has earned a promotion to Membership and Outreach Manager. Congratulations to all!

Looking ahead, it's time again for our annual **Connecticut Preservation Awards**. One of the most satisfying events of the year is when we recognize outstanding achievements in preservation across the state and the people who make them possible. See page 4, or our website, for nomination materials. Show us what's great in your community!

At Preservation Connecticut, we are looking forward to a year filled with promise and progress. We hope you'll join us as we continue our efforts to widen our preservation audience and work with underserved communities to make Connecticut a better place for all its residents. 🌿



—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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 Editor, *Historic Properties Exchange*:
 Kristen Hopewood
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Upcoming Meetings

Connecticut Historic Preservation Council

February 7, 2024, at 9:30 a.m.
 March 6, 2024, at 9:30 a.m.

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

State Historic Preservation Review Board

March 22, 2024, 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





Local craftsmen restored, repaired, and replicated the historic light fixture at the Bristol Arts and Innovation Magnet School, which received a 2023 award of merit.

Preservation for People

Connecticut Preservation Awards 2024

Nominations are open for the 2024 round of Connecticut Preservation Awards, presented by Preservation Connecticut to recognize outstanding achievements in revitalizing historic places to enhance the quality of life for the people of Connecticut.

Awards of Merit honor outstanding efforts in the preservation and enhancement of historic places throughout Connecticut, with the goal of inspiring others to take similar action. In particular, we are looking for people and projects that:

- bring **new life to distressed historic places**—buildings, districts, neighborhoods, landscapes or other
- revitalize sites associated with the history of **minority or overlooked communities**
- make significant contributions to **sustainability**—environmental, economic, or social
- develop innovative **new perspectives or methods** to historic preservation

*Note: Projects that are primarily architectural in focus should be nominated for the **Elizabeth Mills Brown awards**, jointly presented by Preservation Connecticut and AIA Connecticut. Watch for an announcement in the summer.*

The Mimi Findlay Award for Young Preservationists recognizes individuals aged 35 or younger, or groups whose members are predominantly 35 or younger; who have demonstrated interest, involvement, and achievement or potential achievement in the restoration, maintenance, preservation or adaptive use of historic buildings, structures, complexes, neighborhoods, communities, and cultural landscapes or landscape features in Connecticut.

Nominations are due by 4:00 p.m., Friday, February 2, 2024.

Awards will be presented Thursday, May 9, 2024, at the New Haven Country Club in Hamden.

Find instructions and a nomination form at preservationct.org/nominate. There is no fee to submit nominations

For more information, call Christopher Wigren at (203) 562-6312 or email cwigren@preservationCT.org.

United Illuminating's transmission line proposal advances

Preservation Connecticut continues to work with property owners and other interested parties to encourage United Illuminating to seek alternatives to the current plans for a proposed project to install new 115-kilovolt (kV) electric transmission lines along approximately 7.3 miles of the Connecticut Department of Transportation's Metro-North Railroad corridor in Bridgeport and Fairfield. This project will move the lines from their current location on the railroad catenary structures to new monopoles.

The new monopoles will have a massive indirect visual effect on the landscape and require over 19 acres of permanent easements along the line. The project also poses a threat to the redevelopment efforts in Bridgeport's South End and Downtown areas. There are signs that the South End, an area that has been

overburdened by energy infrastructure for decades, is poised for a change that could bring about affordable housing, commercial enterprises, grocery stores, churches, and arts centers. All of this has been threatened by UI's plans to run power lines through the neighborhood to the newly constructed Pequonnock substation at 1 Kiefer Street.

Since September, there have been three evidentiary hearings held by the Connecticut Siting Council, which has sole authority to approve the project. Formal participation in the hearings requires a process that is both costly and difficult. Nonetheless, in late November, the City of Bridgeport entered the fray as an Intervenor opposing the project due to potential impacts on several sites slated for redevelopment, and opposition continues to grow in both Bridgeport and Fairfield.

The Siting Council held its final hearing on December 12, when preservation experts were able to discuss specific adverse effects on historic resources, particularly in Bridgeport's South End where the Mary and Eliza Freeman houses, Walters A.M.E. Zion Church, and potential archaeological sites related to Little Liberia remain in place for now. The council will issue its findings in February and announce its decision by March 24.

Meanwhile, Preservation Connecticut was invited, along with several partners, to submit a full application to the National Trust for Historic Preservation's "11 Most Endangered" program to highlight the impacts of this line and the inequity of the process to get projects such as this one approved. 🌿

Courtesy: Mary & Eliza Freeman Center for History and Community



South End of Bridgeport showing the Mary and Eliza Freeman houses. New electrical transmission lines proposed by United Illuminating will loom over the houses and other historic places in the South End.

Preserving Fort Decatur

By Stefon Danczuk

There are many forgotten sites of history scattered across Connecticut. One such site is Fort Decatur in Ledyard. Built in 1813 during the War of 1812 by Commodore Stephen Decatur, Jr., this unique fort overlooks the Thames River from the top of Allyn's Mountain, also known as Dragon Hill or Mount Decatur. Recently, modern development has cast a spotlight on this site of historical significance that has survived in obscurity for over 200 years.

Commodore Stephen Decatur, Jr. (1779-1820), was the youngest United States Navy Captain of all time and a hero of the First Barbary War (1801-05 in the Mediterranean). The place was the Thames River, specifically upriver in Ledyard, Connecticut. The event was the War of 1812 and the British blockade of New London, keeping Connecticut cut off from outside trade. After attempting to run the British blockade, Commodore Decatur sailed up the Thames River to safety with his squadron of three ships in June of 1813. Fearing British assault, Decatur set up entrenchments on the top of a local hill, called Allyn's Mountain, where he could fire upon any ships coming upriver. In April of 1814, orders were given to reassign personnel and guns from the frigates under Decatur's command and the site was abandoned.

The site's footprint is evident from a 2022 cultural resource management report by Heritage Consultants, LLC. Prepared for the property owner, Gales Ferry Intermodal, LLC (GFI; a subsidiary of Cashman Dredging based in Quincy, Massachusetts), the report details documentation and archaeological testing of the historic site on the mountaintop.

In its findings, Heritage suggests that Fort Decatur is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under all four criteria, which is



Stephen Decatur, oil portrait by Charles Bird King after Gilbert Stuart, c.1820

quite rare. In fact, if listed, Fort Decatur would be the only historic site in the state to meet all four criteria.

According to Heritage Consultants, Fort Decatur is eligible for Criterion A (association with an historic event) as one of the few War of 1812 sites in Connecticut and likely the only surviving fortification that was only used during the War of 1812. Most other fortifications from the war dated from the Revolutionary War or were later reused in the Civil War.

It is eligible for Criterion B (association with an historic figure) for its association with Naval Commodore Stephen Decatur, Jr., considered to be one of the first military heroes of the young

Republic and to be instrumental in shaping the Navy.

For Criterion C (architectural significance), the consultants suggest the site is eligible as perhaps the only example in North America of a *sconce*—defined as a small protective fortification, usually earthwork, in a diamond shape, which is placed on high ground for artillery. This form was easy to construct and had good sightlines on all sides.

Finally, under Criterion D (potential to yield further data—i.e., archaeological significance), the site is eligible due to the wealth of information still to be learned from the archaeological deposits that cover the mountaintop.



Dave Harned, Citizens Alliance for Land Use, Ledyard



These renderings, created for the Citizens Alliance for Land Use, show the effects of Gales Ferry Intermodal's proposal to blast away half of Mount Decatur. The site of the fort and a nearby sentry post would remain on a peninsula of hilltop but much of the surrounding landscape which gives the fort its context would be lost.

The property on which the fort sits was previously owned by Dow Chemical Company, which sold it to GFI a few years ago. Originally, the company intended to use the site as a base for dredging operations related to offshore wind development.

However, GFI later pivoted to developing the property for further industrial use, which would entail blasting 40 acres off the north side of Mount Decatur to create a level area for new construction.

The impact of such actions would

be significant to both the historic and natural character of the site. While GFI currently says it will protect the footprint of the fort, the land would be cut steeply a few hundred feet from the historic site, which would have an adverse impact on

continued on page 8

the historic integrity of the fortification. Not only could archaeological deposits potentially be destroyed, but also the landscape which helps explain the fort's design and intended function. Decatur chose the specific site and determined the design of the fort (the sconce) to maximize its strategic advantages. Because Commodore Decatur had to worry about attack from any angle, he used the sconce style of fortification. Removing half the mountain will rob the site of this context and significantly reduce its historic value.

A local group, the Citizen's Alliance for Land Use based in Ledyard, has been raising awareness about the proposed blasting and attempting to stop GFI's destruction of their hometown's historic and natural resources. It turned to the State Historic Preservation Office and Preservation Connecticut, but combined efforts to mitigate that impact still have so far not deterred GFI from their proposal.

One of the most challenging obstacles in demonstrating the site's importance as an historic and archaeological resource is the lack of visible remains. Roughly shaped stone piles and barely noticeable depressions in the ground make up this

site of national significance. It's difficult for the average person to attribute value to such features in comparison with sites that have large, ornate structures or sprawling landscapes: an all-too-familiar struggle for archaeologists and preservationists. Much of the value from archaeological sites is not in their visible elements but instead in the buried material culture that can produce a wealth of information about the people who lived and worked there.

Another difficulty with preserving archaeological resources is the question of how much to protect. During their investigations, Heritage identified the Fort Decatur site as having high sensitivity for archaeological resources due to historical documentation and the relative flatness of the area. Archaeological resources are not neat, pretty things. Human activity tends to be spread out, and artifacts tend to cover a larger area that contributes to a centralized site. In fact, a few hundred feet outside the fort site a sentry post was found that would have been missed if a wandering archaeologist hadn't decided to take a walk. While the fort is the central piece of this site, training for soldiers under Decatur's command left lead shot from target prac-

tice outside the fort proper. Latrines, not currently identified and generally rich with historic artifacts, would have also been outside the fort. With an entire mountain at their disposal, the likelihood for archaeological deposits scattered about the area is relatively high, even after centuries of disturbance from rain runoff, logging, and natural occurrences.

Also of interest to archaeologists and historians are local stories that tell of an iron chain (or boom) that spanned the Thames during the War of 1812, a typical military strategy to stop enemy ships from accessing weakly defended resources upriver. While there is no documented evidence of such a chain on the Thames, Heritage Consultants found a large iron ring fastened to a boulder while surveying an electrical transmission line in Montville, directly across the river from Fort Decatur. If a similar iron ring could be found on the Ledyard side of the river, this would provide support for the story.

Preservation Connecticut got involved with the effort to save the Fort Decatur site when a concerned citizen's group, Citizen's Alliance for Land Use, contacted us. After meeting with the group and learning more

The sentry post at Fort Decatur commanded, and still commands, a panoramic view of the Thames River.

Preservation Connecticut




about the proposed project and the impact on this historic resource, Preservation Connecticut reached out to our partners and friends to garner support. We've been working closely with The Archaeological Conservancy, a nationwide non-profit organization that preserves and protects archaeological sites, to potentially acquire the land from GFI for preservation, but as of late December, no decisions or offers have been made. The American Battlefield Trust was also consulted, given that Fort Decatur is on their list of priority sites for preservation. And the National Trust for Historic Preservation is interested in helping to protect this nationally significant site as well.

GFI's proposal went before the Ledyard Planning and Zoning Commission on December 14 for review and public comment. However, company representatives took up the entire time and no members of the public were able to speak, although more than 200 concerned citizens did show up. Another hearing is scheduled for December 21, when citizens should be able to comment on the application.

Preservation of Fort Decatur and future archaeological investigations could answer many questions about life during the occupation of the fort and about the fort's construction; they also might establish the truth of the legend of the chain. But these questions can only be answered if the site survives. Just as coal, oil, gas, and nuclear energy are all non-renewable resources, so too are the nation's historic and archaeological resources, and these resources have just as important an impact on the economy and cultural life. While we understand the need for development in our state, we also ask that development be responsible and respectful of the historic character that defines what Connecticut is. There are very few sites of history related to the War of 1812 in our state; Fort Decatur provides a unique opportunity to not just preserve a story, but also preserve the physical location where said history lives. ❁


Update: Members of the public testified at the hearing on December 21. The commission did not reach a decision, and the hearing was continued again, to January 11.




SCHOLAR PAINTING & RESTORATION

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Historic Masonry	Trim Restoration	Structural Repair
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Historic House in New Haven




Bull's Bridge in Kent




Liberty Community Housing




Enfield Old Town Hall



Smith Street Barn



South Britain Library



The Southbury Old Town Hall

Website: www.Scholarpainting.com
 email: scholarpainting@gmail.com
 Phone: 877-447-2465

Celebrate with us!

Thursday, March 28, 2024 (5:30-7:00pm)
 Keeney Memorial Cultural Center, Old Wethersfield

Audrey Beck Award for Historic Preservation

presented to
Charles Janson



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Briefly noted

Preservation Connecticut



Granby. ▲

The Frederick H. Cossitt Library in North Granby is adapting to the 21st century by converting its children's section to a maker space. The new "Cossitt Creation Station" is intended to bring community members together to work on projects, share ideas, and learn new skills, as Amber Wyzik, the director of Library Service, told Connecticut Insider. The lower-level space will offer

equipment such as 3-D printers, sewing machines, laser cutters, and Cricut machines for public use. The library, built in 1890, is listed on the National Register. The upper level, where a tall clerestory lights Queen Anne shelving, will remain a reading room. Cossitt Creation Station is slated to open in April.



Handley family, from Legacy.com

Passings. ▲

Former Trustee Mary Ann Handley died in December. Handley was a history professor at Manchester Community College (now Connecticut State Community College Manchester) from 1967 to 1997. As a civic leader, she served Manchester as a member of its Board of Directors (town council) and as deputy mayor. On the state level she represented Manchester, Bolton, Glastonbury, and Marlborough in the State Senate from 1997 to 2011. As senator, Handley promoted education and helped obtain funding to rehabilitate the Spruce Street firehouse for the East Side youth center. In addition to PCT's board, she served on the Cheney Historic District Commission and the Connecticut Historical Commission.

Guilford and New Haven. ►

Two more sites have been added to the Connecticut Freedom Trail, which documents and designates sites that embody the struggle toward freedom and human dignity, celebrate the accomplishments of the state's African American community, and promote heritage tourism. In Guilford, the Ham Primus house (c.1816; pictured) is a rare surviving property owned by a free African American in the early 19th century. The unpretentious building currently stands in the way of proposed road improvements, but the Guilford Preservation Alliance is working with town officials to find a solution that

will preserve the little house. Town engineer Janice Plaziak told the New Haven Register, "We are looking at all options, preservation of the original part of the house is a goal, either relocated or on its current foundation if possible."

In New Haven, the Goffe Street Armory (1928; NR) played a significant role in the civil rights movement and local Black history. In 1970, the armory was a rallying point as the National Guard prepared for demonstrations related to the trial of Black Panther Party leaders Bobby Seale and Ericka

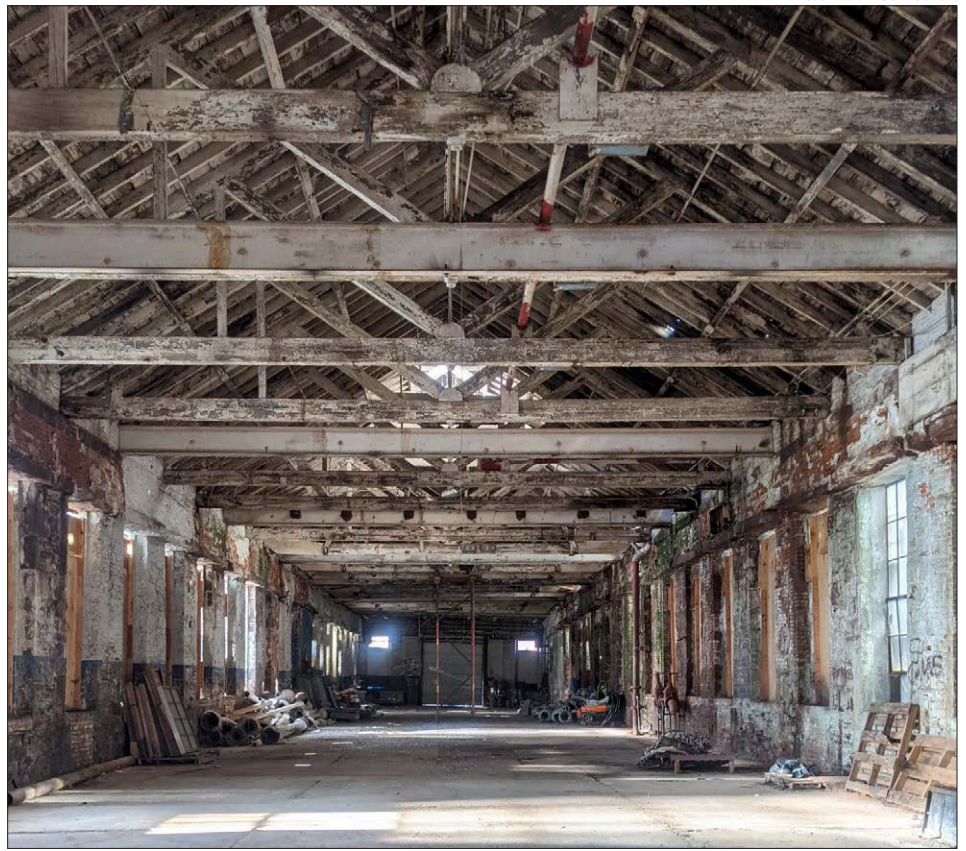
Huggins for the murder of Alex Rackley—demonstrations which remained peaceful, thanks to careful planning by community leaders. From 1972 to 1977 the armory hosted Black Expos, regional meetings of Black business owners and community agencies from across New England. The City of New Haven has applied for grants to begin repairs to the vacant building and is collecting public input on how the armory can continue to serve citizens. For more information visit www.ctfreedom-trail.org.

Hartford. ▶

On December 18th, Rep. John B. Larson, Senator Richard Blumenthal, and Hartford Mayor Luke Bronin announced a major milestone in the development of the Coltsville National Historical Park: the donation of two brownstone buildings in the Colt Gateway complex, which are designated to become the park's visitor center. Built in the 1850s, the buildings housed a forge and a foundry for Samuel Colt's manufacturing company. They are the only portions of the original factory to survive the fire that destroyed most of the complex in 1864.

The donation by Coltsville's developers—CG Management and the tax-credit investing arm of oil giant Chevron—is “the last major milestone before the official establishment of the park, which will bolster the economic growth at the Colt complex and ensure visitors can appreciate and learn about the legacy of Coltsville for decades to come,” Larson said. Rep. His Coltsville National Historical Park Act was signed into law by President Obama in 2014, authorizing Coltsville as a unit of the National Park System.

Under CG Management, the rest of the factory complex (rebuilt after the fire under the ownership of Elizabeth Colt) has been



gradually redeveloped as apartments and commercial and office space. The National Park Service will finalize the real estate paperwork over the next few months, and

then stabilize the exterior of the buildings as a next step toward opening the visitor center.

J. E. Helander



Hartford. ▶

The Bedford-Garden streets historic district was added to the National Register of Historic Places in November. Concentrated on two adjacent blocks in Hartford's North End, the district includes 30 apartment or mixed-use buildings as well as two houses of worship, all built between 1922 and 1926. Many of the district's developers and many residents were Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe. The district's population also included non-Jews from Eastern Europe plus Italians, Irish, and French Canadians. Most worked in local factories, in the building trades, or in retail. Although the residential buildings display design influences and ornamentation drawn from a variety of popular styles, they are more similar than different. All belong to what has been dubbed the "Yellow/Buff-Brick Apartment Building" type, which succeeded the Perfect Six as the dominant form of low-income housing in Hartford in the early 20th century. Typically three or four stories high with symmetrical massing and roof parapets, the buildings are clad in yellow brick, often with patterning and door or window outlines in brick of contrasting color or cast stone. This similarity gives the district great visual continuity; even one of the religious buildings, originally Chevry Lomday Mishnays Synagogue (1924-1926), exhibits these characteristics.



New Haven Preservation Trust

New Haven. ▶

Yale University is preparing to demolish a contributing building to the Chapel Street National Register district even though the university has no plans for the property. Yale bought 166 York Street—a town house built about 1890—in 2019 along with a neighboring property. Yale officials say the building has structural problems and is unsafe to occupy; however they have not released an underlying engineering report, so it is not possible to determine how serious the problems are. Yale has successfully repaired seriously unsafe buildings in the past, notably the Davies Mansion, which suffered a devastating fire in 1990 but now houses the Yale Center for the Study of Globalization.

Local preservationists fear that the demolition of 166 York Street is a harbinger for future losses. In December, the New Haven Preservation Trust posted on its Facebook page: "Yale also owns most of the neighboring properties, including the adjoining pair of c.1870 brick townhouses at 168 York and the distinctive building at the corner of Chapel and York, all within the National Historic District. The Trust is concerned about the future of these historic properties. It is unfortunate



when anyone acquires National Register properties and chooses to demolish them. Losing such properties is a loss both locally and nationally, and diminishes the cohesiveness of the Historic District."

National Register of Historic Places, Cunningham



Waterford. ▲

A house at the center of an historic summer colony was razed in December. The house at 80 Shore Road was part of a summer community developed largely by families from Hartford, giving the community the name by which it was listed on the National Register, the Hartford Colony. Robert and Susan Marelli, who bought the property in June, 2023, proposed razing the house and building a new one on its site. The Marellis, through their attorney and architect, claimed that the house was unsuitable for modern living and lacked historic significance. Its oldest section was a Greek Revival farmhouse built about 1850; however the building's significance in the district stemmed from its use by summer vacationers beginning in the 1890s. In 1930 it was bought by Hartford banker William H. Putnam, who soon added two large wings, using the Colonial Revival style popular for other houses in the Hartford Colony. Later additions fell outside the district's period of significance but were in keeping with its character.

A town-imposed delay of demolition expired in November, but the Marellis agreed to hold off on demolition until December 23. This delay allowed Preservation Connecticut, working with the State Historic Preservation Office, to bring in a preservation architect and a structural engineer to evaluate the feasibility of renovating the house; both found it to be basically structurally sound.

Based on the house's significance as a key property in the Hartford Colony historic district, the Connecticut Historic Preservation Council voted to request that the Attorney General's office take legal action under the Connecticut Environmental Protection Act to prevent the demolition. However, the AG's office announced on December 14 it would not act on that request, stating that the decision was based on "architectural assessments and the public record." While the AG's decision was a blow, PCT continued to work with local preservationists and Hartford Colony on a way to save the house, only to learn that the Marellis began demolition on December 16.



Litchfield—Correction:

The September/October 2023 edition of *Preservation Connecticut News* stated that the former Litchfield courthouse was given to the Greater Litchfield Preservation Trust (GLPT). This is not correct. According to Eileen Porter Schmidt, a member of the GLPT Board of Trustees, the group in fact purchased the property after paying for a search of the families that inherited the land. In addition the GLPT hired an architectural firm to create plans for turning the building into a town hall and commissioned a structural study, an underground radar test for tanks, and an environmental study. During its ownership from 2017 to 2023, the GLPT incurred costs for repairs, security systems, utilities, insurance, and legal fees, culminating in the donation of a preservation easement to PCT. The GLPT's investment of significant resources to ensure the preservation of this important building deserves recognition. Preservation Connecticut regrets the error.



HISTORIC PROPERTIES EXCHANGE

Threatened Buildings and Easement Properties Available — January/February 2024

Preservation easements protect the historic character of old buildings, structures and landscapes and require approval of proposed changes. When one of the many properties throughout the state on which Preservation Connecticut holds

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

136 East Main Street, Meriden (1870) \$800,000

Gothic Revival brownstone church available in downtown Meriden. Currently operating as St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, but parish is planning to relocate. Located on 2-acre lot, church is 22,724 square feet and includes vaulted ceilings, stained glass windows, and Austin Organ. Space also has multiple classrooms, cafeteria, and commercial kitchen. May be eligible for listing on the State or National Register of Historic Places to obtain historic rehabilitation tax credits.

Contact: Jeffrey Nable, RIPCO Real Estate, 201-302-1701, jnable@ripcony.com

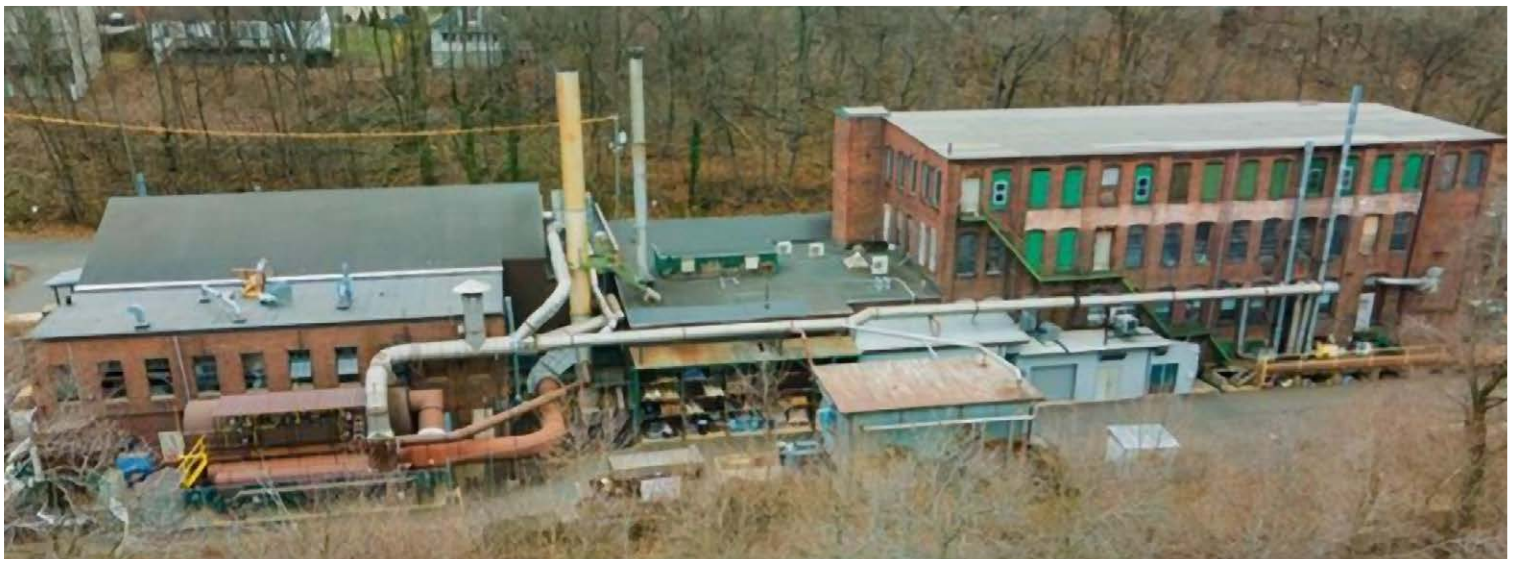
30 Lenox Street, New Haven (1905) \$3,000,000

Redevelopment opportunity for historic industrial building in New Haven's Fair Haven Heights neighborhood. Constructed for George G. Prentice and Company which manufactured machine tools until 1911 when acquired by New Britain Machine Company. Later occupants include John T. Doyle Company (packaged foods), J.C. Haartz Inc. (mohair and rubberized fabrics), Duro-Gloss Rubber Company, and Uretex (fabrics). Listed in Preservation Connecticut's Mills: Making Places of Connecticut industrial survey and is a candidate for listing on



the State Register of Historic Places which would make eligible for historic rehabilitation tax credits. Building area is 65,000 sq. ft.; lot 2.47 acres.

Contact: Gena Ruocco-Lockery, GRL & Realtors, 203-641-4862, grlrealtor@aol.com





151, 159, 163, 167, and 171 Vine Street, Middletown

Five houses, 151-171 Vine Street in Middletown, with historical ties to the SR- and Freedom Trail-listed free African American neighborhood known as the “Beman Triangle” 0.25 mile to the south, are available for relocation or salvage. The land and mid-19th century frame house at 171 were owned by Mary Allen, wife of pastor and abolitionist Amos Beman, and a Black woman landowner and entrepreneur. The other 4 dwellings were built between 1910 and 1924. Demolition slated to begin in March 2024.

Contact: Joe Banks, Wesleyan Director of Construction, 860-685-3794, jbanks01@wesleyan.edu or Marco Hahn, Asst. PM, 860-685-2432, mhahn@wesleyan.edu



231 Gungywamp Road, Groton (1966) \$900,000

Former Shepherd of the Sea Naval Chapel on 13.41 acres available in Groton. A-frame chapel measures 23,000 sq. ft. and includes an Austin Organ. Closed in 2012 due to declining attendance and maintenance costs. Connecticut State Historic Preservation Office holds preservation easement on the property. Assistance may be available from the State Historic Preservation Office to nominate the property for listing on the National Register of Historic Places which would make eligible for historic rehabilitation tax credits.

Contact: Danielle Verboski, RE/MAX Legends, 860-237-0571, daniellectrealtor@gmail.com

Deadline for the next issue is February 20, 2024

Historic Properties Exchange is published to advertise endangered properties in Connecticut by Preservation Connecticut, a statewide nonprofit organization located at 940 Whitney Avenue, Hamden, Connecticut 06517. Real estate advertised in this publication is subject to the Federal Housing Act of 1968.

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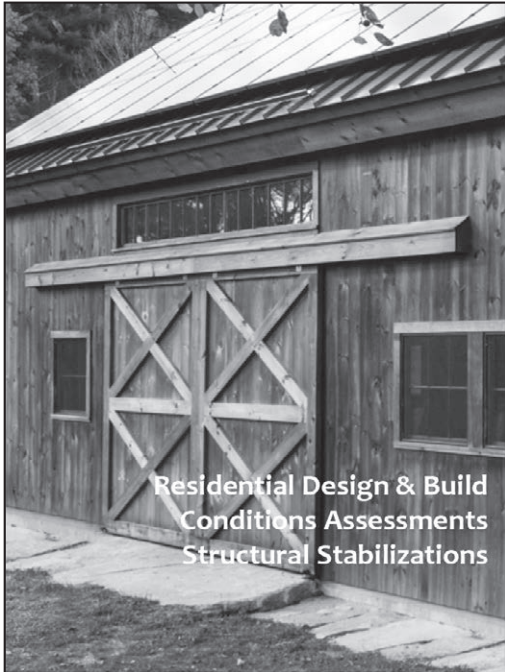
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Jane's Walk, cont'd from page 20

Here's how to organize a Jane's Walk:

Step 1: Think of a place you'd like to explore or a topic you'd like to discuss. For inspiration, browse photos from past walks at janeswalk.org/cities.

In Connecticut past Jane's Walks have included *New Haven: Turn of the Century and Beyond on Autumn Street*; *Imagine Waterbury: Creative Community Building by Foot*; *Downtown Norwich Then and Now*; and *Jane & Cesar's Way in Bridgeport*.

Step 2: Grab a friend and go for a walk. Look, listen, smell, feel, and observe. Make eye contact. Talk to people. Hear what they have to say. Be active and present in the city around you. Take notes.

Step 3: Plan a route. Be mindful of terrain, curbs, staircases, gates, and other barriers that could hinder someone's ease of movement. Keep your walk focused on local knowledge that will help participants feel engaged and energized.

Step 4: Invite your friends, family, and community. Preservation Connecticut will post times and descriptions on its website, but you should help get the word out, too.

Step 5: Show up. Walk. Have fun. The Jane's Walk website has tips for leading a walk, but the key one is this: Don't worry about being an "expert." You are an expert in your own experiences, and you have plenty to share. At the same time, don't feel you have to do all the talking. The idea is to start a conversation, not present a lecture.

Preservation Connecticut will hold a virtual information and planning meeting on January 22. Check the PCT website to register. 🌸

For more information, visit **Preservation Connecticut**, preservationct.org/janes-walk-connecticut, or *Jane's Walk*, janeswalk.org.

For questions, mail Kristen Hopewood, khopewood@preservationct.org.

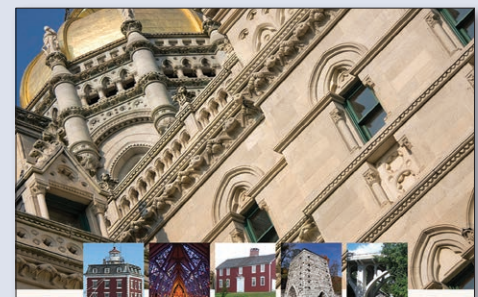
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"My entire life, I've been passionate about preserving historic buildings and places. I felt compelled to join Preservation Connecticut's Legacy Society, as well as contribute during my lifetime, because Preservation Connecticut is the only statewide 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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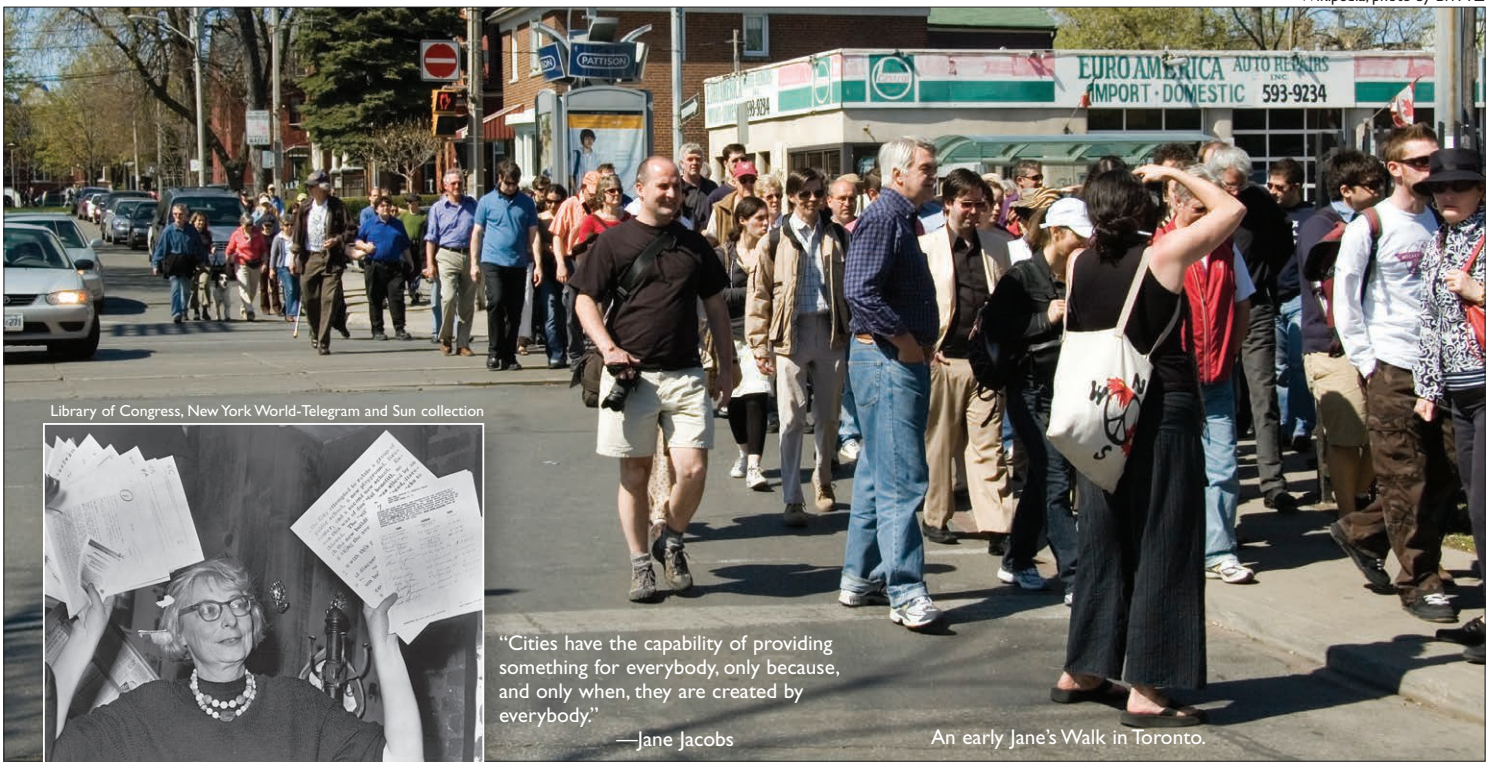
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"Cities have the capability of providing something for everybody, only because, and only when, they are created by everybody."

—Jane Jacobs

An early Jane's Walk in Toronto.

Jane's Walks come to Connecticut

Jane's Walk is a movement of free, citizen-led walking tours inspired by Jane Jacobs (1916-2006), a writer, urbanist and activist who championed a community-based approach to city-building. Her first book, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961), upended ideas of modernist city planning and offered a new vision of diverse, fine grained cities made for and by

ordinary people. The walks get people to tell stories about their communities, explore their cities, and connect with neighbors. Jane's Walk was founded in Toronto in 2006 by a group of Jane Jacobs' friends and colleagues to honor her life and activate her ideas. By 2017, 1,700 Jane's Walks had taken place in 225 cities around the world,

spanning 37 countries and 6 continents. Each year the walks take place on the first weekend in May. This year, Preservation Connecticut is bringing Jane's Walks to Connecticut on Saturday, May 4, 2024. PCT is asking preservationists, historians, local activists and citizens—anyone who cares about their communities—to organize walks on that day.

continued on page 19