

In This Issue:

New Listings on the National Register	2
Plaques Reveal Hidden History	8
News from Around the State	10
Demystifying Adaptive Use for Architects	20

Tracing Connecticut's Influence on the Civil Rights Movement

By Catherine Labadia,
Connecticut State Historic Preservation Office

To understand the consequence of history, it is easiest to relate the past to the present in our own lives. We are the collection of our experiences, and while there are always events that immediately present themselves as significant, hindsight may reveal the consequential result of otherwise seemingly mundane activities. As preservationists, we frequently honor the obviously impactful moments in history or places of consequence because they have high visibility. In contrast, personal stories of inspiration are more difficult to recognize. This is true of one person who came to Connecticut and who would go on to have an impact on the lives of Americans that cannot be overstated: Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

continued on page 4

C. Labadia

Fields of Inspiration

As a college student, Martin Luther King, Jr. likely worked in these tobacco fields in Simsbury and lived in a dormitory nearby which has been demolished. The closest barn and field are owned by the Town of Simsbury, but those in the background have been threatened to make way for a subdivision.

Trains and Trolleys

Two sites recently listed on the National Register of Historic Places show how developments in transportation influenced the shaping of Connecticut in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

The **Rowayton Depot historic district**, in Norwalk, owes its development to the railroad. Although settlers appeared along the Five Mile River by the 18th century, as late as 1867 a map showed only a few houses on scattered farms in the future district. That year, a new depot opened on the New York and New Haven Railroad (which had been constructed in 1848), the result of an effort led by two New Yorkers, publisher George P. Putnam and artist Vincent Colyer, who had homes in the area. In addition to the depot itself, the railroad constructed a brownstone overpass to cross the Five Mile River, and a pumping station (no longer extant) to draw water from Chasmer's Pond to resupply locomotives.

With newly convenient access, development boomed, attracting commuters and vacationers alike. Within weeks of the depot's opening New York newspapers were advertising lots for sale. Construction scarcely slowed until the Great Depression of the 1930s. The mix of modest vernacular with more high-style buildings reflects the district's economic diversity; as early as 1880 its population included teachers, bank tellers, artists, and carpenters as well as commuters and out-of-town second-home owners.

Railroad access also fostered commercial growth, making it possible for residents to ship lumber and oysters to wider markets, and businesses to import coal and goods to stock in local stores. With the establishment of a post office, the village was renamed Rowayton, since "Five Mile River" was too long for postmarks.

In Old Saybrook, the **Shore Line Electric Railway power house** was a vital part of the network of electric railways, or trolleys, that increasingly connected urban



National Register of Historic Places; Samuel Young



The Shore Line Railway power house provided electric power for interurban trolleys in the early 20th century

Above: The Rowayton Depot National Register district grew up around a depot on the New York and New Haven Railroad. This is the second depot, built in 1910.

centers and smaller towns at the beginning of the 20th century. Opened in 1910, the Shore Line Electric Railway initially offered service between New Haven and Old Saybrook and extended its reach to New London in 1913. By 1916, it was the second largest trolley system in Connecticut. However, few electric railways were reliably profitable; in 1929 the Shore Line railway was replaced by a bus line.

Crucial to the operation of electric railways were facilities that generated electricity to power the trolleys. Between 1908 and 1910, the Shore Line railway constructed a power house in Old Saybrook, on the shore of the Connecticut River—a location that allowed coal to be delivered by barge. Containing two turbines powered by three steam boilers (with room for expansion), the power house

continued on page 6

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As leaves fall and temperatures cool, we continue to plan for the Connecticut Trust's rebirth as **Preservation Connecticut**. Designer David Wolfram is helping us integrate the new logo into the design of *Connecticut Preservation News*, and at the same time freshen up the overall appearance of our signature publication. We look forward to unveiling it in the January issue. At the same time, positive impact marketing consultants Small Good are helping us articulate our mission and messages in order to engage more effectively with the public and recruit new generations to join us in making Connecticut a better place by cherishing and enhancing its historic places.

In September, the Trust along with homeowners Eva and Jim Weber and agent Karen Coton of McCorrison D. W. Fish Real Estate, welcomed 42 visitors to an **Open House Talk** at the octagonal Henry Smith house in East Hampton. As we go to press, we're preparing for another, at Gull Cottage, a waterfront Queen Anne



PRESERVATION CONNECTICUT

Victorian in Clinton, on November 23.

Another upcoming event is Picturing History, a **photo contest featuring historic barns** of Connecticut, planned for 2020. Current plans call for photographs to be submitted through GoGo Photo Contest, an online custom fundraising site, and exhibited at the New Britain Art League's gallery—in an historic barn—from October 3–18. A formal announcement will come in the spring, but we wanted to start getting word out for photographers who wanted to start snapping fall and winter pictures.

In the field—our team of three **Circuit Riders** has been busy making site visits around the State. Brad Schide has been involved with community organizing



New handrails at the Whitney boarding house.

efforts in New Haven and New London to address development threats to historic neighborhoods. Stacey Vairo and Mike Forino have been assisting interested parties with grants, tax credits and easements. Contact us with any preservation questions or issues, large or small, we're here to help!

The Trust's offices at the **Whitney boarding house** in Hamden are easier to get into, thanks to new handrails installed at the front entry in October. For some time, we had realized that the steps posed a challenge to some who visited the building, but it took a while to work out the right solution. (Of course, there's also a ramp at the back door.) Elegant, while not calling attention away from the historic boarding house, the bronze railings represent one small step in making our building more welcoming to all. Note how they're attached to the porch piers with no visible brackets—a great detail! Warm thanks to Trustee Rick Wies for creating a design, to Carrano's Railings & Welding of Branford for fabricating and installing the railings, and to Trustee Ellen Gould for a generous donation toward the project.

Finally, please remember the Connecticut Trust—Preservation Connecticut—in your end of year giving. It's your support that make this organization run and your desire to protect and nurture the special places of Connecticut that inspires us. We are grateful for your support and honored to work on your behalf.

—Jane Montanaro

The Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation is a nonprofit statewide membership organization established 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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Printing: Kramer Printing,
West Haven

Connecticut Preservation News is published bimonthly by the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation, 940 Whitney Avenue, Hamden, Connecticut 06517. Publication is made possible by support of the members of the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation and by funds provided through the Community Investment Act in the State of Connecticut. The contents and opinions stated herein do not necessarily reflect the views and policies of the State of Connecticut. Advertisements do not reflect the views or opinions of the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation. The Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation does not endorse advertisers and assumes no responsibility for advertisements.

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ISSN 1084-189X

Connecticut
still revolutionary

The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) recently has received a \$30,000 African American Civil Rights Grant from the National Park Service to document and recognize places associated with King and other Morehouse College students who came to work in Connecticut's tobacco fields during the 1940s. The funding will be used to expand on existing research and prepare a document called a Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF) that can be used to nominate properties with a related context to the National Register of Historic Places or update existing listings to include a new theme of significance. The MPDF is an important first step in ensuring that Connecticut's connection to the birth of the Civil Rights Movement is recognized, honored appropriately, and, most importantly, preserved.

Tobacco was an important crop in Connecticut in the 20th century. Its production was labor-intensive, and labor shortages during World War I forced employers to seek workers from greater distances. The president of the Connecticut Tobacco Company turned to the recently established National Urban League, which served as an intermediary that arranged for the employment of African Americans, including a group of students from Morehouse College in Atlanta.

The arrangement continued for more than two decades, but the terms of employment did not become reliable until World War II, when the local labor pool once again was reduced. In the 1940s, large tobacco corporations created a wholly dependent labor force by providing housing for migrant laborers in residential camps. This led to a formal recruitment program of high school and college students, both men and women, from Southern states. For at least one of these students, Martin Luther King, Jr., the experience was transformative.

The story of these students remained largely forgotten until thirty years ago, when King's personal papers were made available to scholars for the first time. The five letters King wrote to his parents during the two summers he worked in

Connecticut's tobacco fields (1944 and 1947) demonstrated the impact of his time in a desegregated state.

"I never thought that a person of my race could eat anywhere but we ate in one of the finest restaurants in Hartford," he wrote on June 18, 1944. "And we went to the largest shows there." Recognizing that this was an important chapter in King's life, the *Hartford Courant* conducted an interview in 1991 with William Pickens, a fellow Morehouse student who worked alongside King. Pickens recounted their amazement that local high school students had joined them for lunch.

"It was just an unfamiliar situation that one could chat with a white person who was a peer," Pickens said. "They were workers just like we were and we could talk with them briefly during lunch time and not get taken to jail for it."

While these letters made a connection between Connecticut and the King legacy, it was *The Autobiography of Martin Luther King Jr.* published in 1998, that communicated the powerful impression his time in Connecticut had on him. He said, "After that summer in Connecticut, it was a bitter feeling going back to segregation."

Although racism and discrimination existed in Connecticut, the absence of state-sanctioned segregation, like the Jim Crow laws that governed life in the South, must have given the impression of an ideal society to the thousands of young African American students who came to our state for summer work programs. As Pickens stated in the 1991 article, "We'd say, 'We're going to God's country,' and that meant going to the Connecticut Valley, to New England."

For King, Connecticut also was where he found his future calling as a minister. "Sunday morning we had church in the board house and I lead [sic] it," he wrote in 1944. He continued by describing



The Simsbury Grange hosted integrated social events, most notably dances, that the Morehouse College students attended.

himself as the religious leader to more than 100 young men every Sunday. Pickens and another student, Silas W. Davis, recalled these religious meetings, observing that King did not just read from the Bible, but gave sermons about helping people. The call to become a minister and the profound influence this experience had on his life is further documented in his February 1948 application to Crozer Theological Seminary, in which King wrote that he traced his call to the ministry to "the summer of 1944 when I felt an inescapable urge to serve society."

The churches, community halls, recreational facilities, dormitories, and tobacco barns where students from the South experienced a reprieve from segregation are an essential part of Connecticut's history and the supporting role it played in the birth of the Civil Rights movement. During this period, Southern students laboring in Connecticut's tobacco fields were exposed to an ideal that King recounted as having influenced their lives and led them to activism. SHPO believes that additional research may reveal similar influence on other notable Civil Rights activists. Although Connecticut also was characterized by racial and social inequalities, King saw a situation that was better than where he came from and, with his youthful passion, a vision for a better future. In letters he wrote home,



Morehouse College students describe going to watch movies at Eno Memorial Hall in the center of Simsbury. The National Register nomination for this individually listed property would be updated to include the property's association with these students and its social influence.

King remarked about the fundamental freedoms he enjoyed while in Connecticut, "On our way here we saw some things I had never antiscipated [sic] to see...We go to any place we want to and sit anywhere we want to."

As demand for Connecticut's shade tobacco declined in the late 20th century, the fields, barns, and work camps associated with the tobacco industry were left to deteriorate or were demolished to make room for development. In 1984, before the Town of Simsbury knew of its association with Martin Luther King Jr., the dormitory on Barndoor Hills Road where King likely slept, cooked, and preached for the first time was burned as part of a training exercise for volunteer firefighters. Approximately a decade later the building's historic significance emerged in national publications, and the community mourned its loss.

Since then the Simsbury Historical Society has researched the history of Southern students recruited for summer work programs; local high school students have produced a highly praised short documentary about King's time in Simsbury; the Town has hosted annual Martin Luther King Jr. Day events; and the Simsbury Free Library has raised funds for a memorial to King. In 2003, CT SHPO funded a research

project, completed by current Connecticut Circuit Rider Stacey Vairo, about King's time in Connecticut. The report identified seven locations that shaped his experience; of these, four are already listed on the National Register of Historic Places as contributing resources to district nominations based on architecture. Additional research also revealed properties associated with several other individuals important to the Civil Rights movement who also came to Connecticut to work in the tobacco fields, including Thurgood Marshall, Arthur Ashe, and Mahalia Jackson.

The demolition of the dormitory on Barndoor Hills Road demonstrates the importance of identifying significant historic resources before they are threatened. Its loss is somewhat understandable because properties associated with the birth of the Civil Rights movement may lack obvious architectural interest or obvious association with people or events of transcending importance. Even trained professionals could easily overlook the importance of the sites being considered for the MPDF. Between the time SHPO applied for this grant and its award, the remaining dormitory used by Morehouse students, on Hoskins Road, was demolished. The MPDF will identify places that may have been overlooked and provide additional protections before additional loss occurs. Designation is an important first step that allows SHPO to support these resources long after the grant project is complete through incentive programs, technical guidance, and partnerships.

In his own words, King acknowledged that his time in Connecticut inspired him to "serve society." It is the place where he led his first Sunday service and where he experienced a motivational sense of equality. His youthful idealism perceived a world that could exist where people of all backgrounds could share in the same activities without distinction. The places that shaped these experiences were inspirational to a man whose life was and continues to be an inspiration to society. 🌿



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Left: Railroad-fueled growth of Rowayton continued into the 20th century, as witnessed by this Colonial Revival house (1939).

Above: Big brackets support the eaves on the poured-concrete power house.

Trains and Trolleys, cont'd from page 2

provided power for the Shore Line Electric Railway, the New London and East Lyme Railway, and the nearby Connecticut River bascule bridge. The system also included two substations and a car barn

Designed to contain the generating equipment, the powerhouse has big windows to provide light for reading gauges and meters. It is constructed of reinforced

concrete—still a new material in 1908, yet one that was increasingly being used for industrial and engineering structures, since it was fireproof, able to support heavy loads, and could isolate and absorb vibrations. The structure is a striking design, particularly for an industrial structure,

with a blocky form, belt courses, and broad eaves supported by brackets that refer both to Renaissance forms and the Arts and Crafts movement of time. 🌿



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Sample language:

"I give, devise, and bequeath to the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation, Tax ID Number 06-0979808, a not-for-profit Connecticut corporation, the sum of _____ dollars (OR, _____ percent of the rest, residue, and remainder of my estate), for its general purposes to be used and/or disposed of as the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation may in its sole discretion deem appropriate."

If you let us know that you have mentioned the Trust in your estate plans, we would honor your commitment to preservation with membership in our Legacy Society. For more information, please visit www.cttrust.org/bequests or call Jordan Sorensen at (203) 562-6312.



Matching Grants Support Preservation for Nonprofits, Religious Organizations

1772 Foundation grants

The 1772 Foundation, in cooperation with the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation, offers matching grants of up to \$10,000 for the following historic preservation projects:

- exterior painting
- finishes and surface restoration
- fire detection
- lightning protection
- security systems
- repairs to/restoration of porches, roofs, and windows
- repairs to foundation and sills
- repairs to chimney
- masonry repointing

Organizations that wish to be considered should send a one-page letter of inquiry to 1772@cttrust.org and include the organization's name in the subject line. Letters of inquiry will be accepted until Tuesday, December 31, 2019; full applications will be due February 21, 2020.

For full instructions visit www.cttrust.org

Connecticut Trust Maintenance & Repair grants

The Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation is offering Maintenance & Repair grants (M&R) of up to \$15,000 to nonprofit religious organizations for critical maintenance and repair of historic religious buildings, sites, and structures listed on



Cedar Hill Cemetery

Reroofing the superintendent's cottage at Cedar Hill Cemetery, in Hartford was completed this summer with a grant from The 1772 Foundation.

the National or State Register of Historic Places, including:

- steeple repair, exterior restoration, and painting
- roof repair or replacement
- window repair or restoration
- structural sill repair or replacement

- repair or repointing of masonry foundations, walls, or chimneys

Pre-applications are due December 1, 2019; full applications will be due February 1, 2020. 🌿

For full instructions, visit www.cttrust.org or call Erin Fink at (203) 562-6312.



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Plaques Reveal Hidden History


One longstanding activity of the preservation movement has been erecting plaques, either to mark extant historic places or to indicate the significant sites that no longer exist in their historic form. Many historical societies offer plaques indicating the dates and original owners of important buildings, and it's not uncommon to see markers along the roadside that tell the stories of past battles or demolished factories or homes. Recently, three plaquing programs have come up in the Connecticut Trust's news feeds.

In Middletown, a marker was dedicated at Harbor Park in September to recognize Connecticut's participation in the slave trade. The marker was erected as part of the UNESCO Middle Passage Ceremonies and Port Markers Project, which organizes research, ceremonies, plaque installation, and educational events in partnership with local organizations. At least two vessels carrying enslaved people from Africa landed in the port of Middletown in the 17th and 18th centuries. Even after Connecticut abolished slavery, textile mills in Middletown and elsewhere in the state depended on cotton produced with slave labor in the South.

In Hartford, the Mark Twain and Harriet Beecher Stowe houses were dedicated as Literary Landmarks on October 16. The designation was made by United for Libraries (a division of the American Library Association), in partnership with

the Connecticut Center for the Book, Connecticut Humanities, and the Hartford Public Library. The Twain and Stowe houses join 150 other sites across the country, including homes of famous writers, libraries, museums, and literary scenes. Connecticut places already designated Literary Landmarks are the home of editor Maxwell Perkins, in New Canaan; Old Wethersfield, which was the setting for Elizabeth George Speare's book *The Witch of Blackbird Pond*; and the Elihu Burritt Library at Central Connecticut State University in New Britain, named for a noted abolitionist, peace activist, and writer, and the repository of his papers.

A third program, launched by the Connecticut Historical Society and The William G. Pomeroy Foundation, will erect roadside markers at sites connected to folklore and folklife, part of the Pomeroy Foundation's national Legends & Lore Marker Grant Program. The program is meant to recognize local heritage and to affirm the cultures, traditions, and communities that make Connecticut distinctive. According to the project website, folklore "...encompasses many forms of informal, traditional culture. Markers reflect...local tales as well as traditions, crafts, celebrations, music, and people whose identity is important to a place. What matters is not so



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Spectators look on as Chairperson and Municipal Historian Debby Shapiro, Mayor Dan Drew, and Remington and Robinson Manning unveil the Middletown Middle Passage plaque.



much that a tradition, story, or person be historically verifiable, but that it be locally meaningful.”

One thing these programs have in common is that they reflect the broadening scope of historical study and preservation. This process is hardly new—it dates back more than fifty years—but it’s never-ending. We’re constantly learning new things about our past and finding significance in events and trends and places that earlier generations didn’t see.

While plaques may be viewed by some as an inadequate substitute for preserving the actual places connected to significant events or personages of history, they can add to the value of preserved places by identifying areas of significance that aren’t immediately obvious. The State Historic Preservation Office’s new effort to document Connecticut’s contributions to the civil rights movement highlights the need for such identifications (see page 1). Another program is the Witness Stones program in Guilford, which places markers at places associated with enslaved people in the town’s history. They add to the richness of local history by opening up

new layers of meaning that speak to other audiences.

Erecting plaques is not just an academic pursuit. These markers have the power to lift history out of books and classrooms and put it on the ground, in the middle of our day-to-day lives. Surrounded by such tangible reminders of our past, we are led to reflect on the forces that made us and our society what we are, and to consider how we can draw on the best of the past—or overcome or repair the worst of our past—as we build our future. 🌿

For more information...

Literary Landmarks:

www.ala.org/united/products_services/literarylandmarks

Middle Passage:

www.middlepassageproject.org/

Legends & Lore:

<https://chs.org/legends-lore-roadside-marker-program/>



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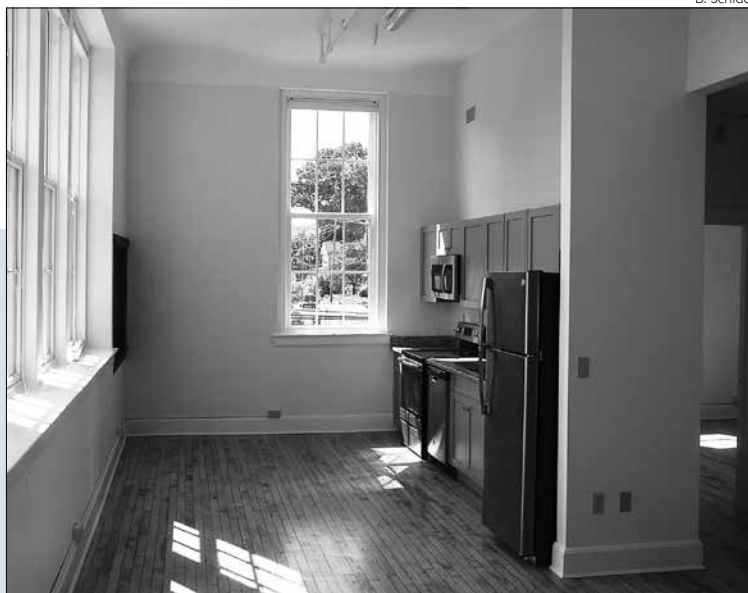
Briefly Noted

Bristol. ►

The Clarence Bingham school (1916; NR*) was formally reopened as Bingham Place apartments on September 18, when mayor Ellen Zoppo-Sassu cut the ribbon on the newly rehabbed structure. Vacant since 2010, the former elementary school has been converted to 44 apartments for seniors ages 55 older. Developer Bristol Enterprises LLC used both federal and state historic rehabilitation tax credits as part of the funding package. The company bought the school in 2015, beating out Bristol Hospital, which wanted to demolish the building to construct medical offices. Following the rehabilitation, many original features can still be found throughout the building, including glazed tile in the hallways and tall windows and chalkboards in many of the apartments. In addition to repurposing an important historic resource, the project incorporates solar and geothermal systems to reduce energy consumption for future residents. Bristol Enterprises is also converting the Clara O'Connell school (1914; NR), to senior apartments. The Connecticut Trust is providing tax credit consulting on the projects.

Fairfield. ►

Is paint a material? Fairfield's historic district commission faced this question when the owners of the former telephone company building in Southport (1913; NR, LHD) painted the brick structure last summer. At issue was whether they should have applied for a certificate of appropriateness, or at least consulted with the commission. Under state law, local historic districts may not regulate paint color, but painting a masonry surface not only changes its color but also changes its texture and, potentially, its performance. The Handbook for Historic District Commissions and Historic Property Commissions in Connecticut (available at www.lhdct.org) cites language in the state enabling statute which authorizes commissions to consider "type and texture of building materials," which the handbook interprets as including "Surface Treatment: the condition of exterior surfaces (for example, painted or unpainted, finished or unfinished)." Furthermore, Fairfield's historic district handbook says, "Brick buildings should be re-painted if they presently are painted, however, a coat of paint should not be applied to unpainted brick in lieu of cleaning and repointing." Although commissioners read this passage as advisory, not regulatory, they voted in July to issue a violation notice to the owners. However, further investigation revealed that the brick had in fact been painted in the 1980s, and the violation notice was dropped, with one commissioner calling for district regulations to be clarified.



Fairfield assessor



St. Thomas & St. Anne parish, Voluntown



Griswold. ▲

The former St. Anne Catholic Church in Glasgo (1891) will be converted to community use, after voters authorized the town of Griswold to buy the property from the Diocese of Norwich in October. The church, vacant since 2012, is one of many Catholic parishes merged or closed in the past decade as membership has declined and fewer men are becoming priests. Operated as a mission of St. Thomas the Apostle church in Voluntown, St. Anne's was built to serve French Canadian mill workers on land donated by the Glasgo Finishing Company. The small building was said to have been modeled on a church in Quebec. Although structurally sound, it lacks heat and running water and needs some carpentry repairs. The town has maintained a playground on the property since the church closed. Potential uses for the property include a park or a farmers' market, and a meeting place, museum, or veterans' center in the church building.

*NR: National Register of Historic Places
LHD: local historic district



Milford. ▲

After their application to demolish an historic house was denied, would-be developers are challenging Milford's preservation ordinance, as well as state enabling legislation for municipal preservation ordinances. In 2018, 67 Prospect Street LLC wanted to demolish the Baldwin house (c.1835), a contributing resource in the River Park National Register district, in order to construct a new apartment complex. (In addition to the house, the site may contain early burials, according to Milford preservationists.) The application was denied by the Milford Historic Preservation Commission, which was established in 2015 with powers to regulate changes to properties listed on the National Register and located outside Milford's two local historic districts. The developers sued to overturn that decision, claiming that the enabling legislation on which the ordinance is based, which permits towns and cities to "protect the historic or architectural character of properties or districts that are listed, under consideration for listing on the National Register of Historic Places," is unconstitutional because it does not specify what measures municipalities may take, and because its language is unconstitutionally vague. A hearing is scheduled for November 18.



New London. ▲

New London Landmarks (NLL) is restoring the home of civil rights activist Linwood Bland, Jr. (1926-2005). Bland was president of the local NAACP branch in the 1960s and continued to be active in local affairs as late as 1997, when he withheld property taxes to protest the lack of diversity in the city fire and police departments. In 2001 he published *A View from the Sixties: The Black Experience in Southeastern Connecticut*. The organization bought the vacant Greek Revival house (c.1845) at a tax auction in 2018 and has been working, first to secure the structure, then to remove unsympathetic additions, on its way to converting the structure back from a two-family rental to a single-family owner-occupied home. When complete, it will be sold to a low-income family, not only providing affordable housing but helping stabilize the Hempstead National Register district, which is located in a census tract where the homeownership rate is just ten percent. Funding has included state Housing Tax Credit Contribution program, as well as community donations, grants, and loans from the City of New London, Equity Trust, and NLL board members.

S.Vairo



◀ Southbury.

Town officials are seeking ways to preserve two stone-arch bridges over Eight-Mile brook along Jeremy Swamp and Plaster House roads. Authorized by the Connecticut General Court in 1676 to run from Derby to Woodbury, the road was largely bypassed in the 18th century and remains unpaved in sections and generally pristine. The arches are thought to date to road improvements undertaken in 1810. The larger one, at the lower pond, still carries Plaster House Road over top of the dam; its arched opening creates a spillway for the water used to power an 18th-century trip-hammer iron forge and, later, a mill producing strawboard paper which operated until about 1884. This bridge was largely reconstructed in about 1991, with only the arched portion remaining from the original structure. In 2018 erosion weakened the ground around the arch and in February 2019 it

continued on page 12

Around the State, cont'd from page 11

partially collapsed, forcing the town to close the road. Town engineers think the arch will have to be replaced with a modern bridge, but officials are looking for ways to repurpose the existing arch. They are also working to find a way to repair rather than replace the other arched bridge. Local residents are working with the Circuit Riders and the State Historic Preservation Office to determine the best way to proceed.

Stamford. ►

The city Board of Representatives voted 25-3 not to contribute funds toward a section of the proposed Merritt Parkway trail. City funding would have activated a grant from the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection to design a one-mile pilot segment of the trail. For more than 25 years, cycling and greenway activists have called for a trail in the National Register-listed Parkway's wide right-of-way. However, preliminary findings from a feasibility study undertaken by the Connecticut Department of Transportation indicate that, unlike trails built on relatively level railway lines or canal towpaths, a Merritt Parkway trail would have to negotiate steep slopes, rock outcrops, watercourses, and busy roads. (Shown: the bridge over the Rippowam River in Stamford, in 1940.) In addition, it would require widespread tree-cutting in the historic parkway landscape and bring walkers or cyclists close to high-speed traffic and private backyards. To meet accessibility standards, protect wetlands, and ensure safety, DOT estimates construction would cost about \$6.6 million per mile. Applauding the Stamford board's decision, Peter Malkin, chairman of the Merritt Parkway Conservancy, and Wes Haynes, its executive director, wrote in the Stamford Advocate, "The Conservancy believes that the time has come to admit that despite the best intentions to introduce an east-west trail across Fairfield County it will not work in the Merritt's right of way."



Heritage Land Preservation Trust

**Torrington.** ▲

The Heritage Land Preservation Trust has completed restoration of the gatehouse at the Coe Brass Company dam (1908; SR). Built for the machinery that controlled water flow to power the company's mill, that gatehouse, though small, represents a crucial element of industrial operations. The land trust acquired the gatehouse, along with the dam area, in 1986 and has redeveloped the site as a community park and wildlife sanctuary. Using grant funds from The 1772 Foundation, administered by the Connecticut Trust, the land trust cleaned and painted the exterior of the gatehouse, replaced missing windows, created observation ports in the floor, and constructed a new stairway to a viewing platform.

Colleen L. Young



◀ **Waterbury.** The board of aldermen adopted a delay of demolition ordinance in September. Under the ordinance, demolition of buildings listed on or under consideration for the National or State Registers is subject to a 90-day waiting period, which will allow preservationists to explore alternatives to demolition. The ordinance was adopted in response to community concern after the Immaculate Conception Catholic parish tore down the former Trinity Episcopal church (1883; NR; pictured) in 2018. While a state enabling statute allow municipalities to impose a waiting period of up to 180 days, Waterbury chose a lesser period in light of possible opposition by property owners or developers. Connecticut Trust circuit rider Brad Schide met several times with citizens and city officials to assist in the process. Waterbury was the last large city in Connecticut to adopt a delay of demolition ordinance.

▼ **Woodbury.** The Hurd house (1680; NR, LHD) reopened in late September after a year-long renovation. The biggest part of the \$100,000 project was replacement of three sagging support beams in the south end of the house, which was built in 1690 and attached to the older section in 1718. In addition, hand-split clapboards were replaced, using hand-forged nails. Built for John Miller in 1680, the house has been a museum operated by the Old Woodbury Historical Society since 1967. The Connecticut Trust helped the society find qualified contractors to do the work.

Old Woodbury Historical Society



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HISTORIC PROPERTIES EXCHANGE

Threatened Buildings Available

November/December 2019



Coggshe Robinson House, (c.1810) **43 Broadway, Colchester**

A contributing resource to the Colchester Village National Register Historic District, this elegant two-story Federal style house was built between 1800 and 1816. Located at the west end of the town green, the 3,440 square foot building features corner quoins, decorative molded window surrounds, and interior architectural details. The 3.73-acre parcel is zoned commercial (residential use also allowed). Development proposals for the site have included the possibility of demolition or removal of the house.

Contact: Jamie Noel, at noels15@comcast.net or (860) 537-5988

C. Wigren



95 Howe Street, New Haven

c. 1835 (with small additions)

Funds available to move!

Rare opportunity to acquire this c. 1835 2 ½ story Greek Revival that is a contributing resource to the Dwight Street National Register Historic District. Approximately 1,500 sq. ft. on 2 floors. Clad in wooden shingles; first floor façade dressed in brick with modern bay. Rest of windows are 6-over-6 wood sash. Prior uses have been mixed but can be converted back to single family. House must be moved from the site whole and put back into service. \$50,000 available for moving expenses! Time is of the essence; building must be removed from its site by the end of 2019.

Please call or email for more information:

Jacob Feldman, President, MOD Equities

Cell: (516) 318-6710 Fax: (516) 977-4488

Address: 129 Church St., Suite 705, New Haven, CT 06510

continued on page 16

HISTORIC PROPERTIES EXCHANGE continued

Preservation Easement Properties Available

Preservation easements protect the historic character of old buildings, structures and landscapes. The Connecticut Trust holds easements on properties throughout the state; three are currently on the market. To learn how to safeguard your property for future generations through an easement, explore Stewardship on our website, cttrust.org/steward, or contact Christopher Wigren, Deputy Director.



Hoyt-Burwell Morse House

8 Ferris Hill Road, New Canaan, CT 06840
\$850,000

One of the oldest and finest antique homes in New Canaan, built by the Hoyt family, sold to the Burwell and Carter family, later owned by the Morse family and other distinguished citizens. Faithfully upgraded in mid-20th century. An amazing chimney stack anchors the structure. The documentation of its placement on the National Register of Historic Places is fully available. Changes to exterior of house must be approved by the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation. However, the house could be expanded toward the rear of the property, and/or a barn could be added. 3 bedrooms; 3 baths, 1,90s sq. ft.; 2.14 acres.

Contact: Tom Nissley, Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices New England Properties, (203) 322-1400, tnissley@bhhsne.com



Marlborough House

226 Grove Street, Bristol, CT 06010
\$659,900

Beautiful Georgian Revival house in the historic Federal Hill neighborhood. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, designed by Richard Henry Dana, and built in 1929 for Edward Ingraham, member of leading Bristol clockmaking family. Beautifully appointed house has intricate woodwork, 9 fireplaces, and large bay windows for abundant light. Remodeled kitchen with high-end appliances. Master suite with fireplace, dressing room, and bath. Four more bedrooms, with adjoining baths, on second level, plus recreation room/office. Four bedrooms and common space on third floor. Full basement with two-bay garage and entertainment space. Many closets, tennis court, patio, 3-car garage, and apartment. 9 bedrooms; 9 baths; 8,749 sq. ft.; 2.00 acres.

Contact: Chloe White, White Door Group,
Keller Williams Agency,
(860) 302-7717, chloe-whitedoor@gmail.com



Perro House

29 Hollow Road, Woodbury, CT 06798
\$339,000 FOR SALE OR LEASE

Charming c.1850 Greek Revival home in Woodbury's picturesque Local and National Register Historic District #1. Updated kitchen and bath, hardwood floors, open floor plan and walk up attic. One car garage and a garden shed offer extra convenience. Fantastic location within walking distance to Hollow Park and center of town, museums, numerous restaurants and brew pub. 3 bedrooms; 1 bath; 1,457 sq. ft.; 0.91 acre.

Contact: Lisa Titcomb, William Pitt Sotheby's, (203)419-5959,
ltitcomb@wpsir.com

Deadline for the next issue is December 10, 2019.

Historic Properties Exchange is published to advertise endangered properties in Connecticut by the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation, 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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Capewell Horse Nail factory in Hartford to apartments, the travel distance from some center units to egress exceeded the maximum allowed by code. The design solution expanded the stairwell access corridor, thereby achieving compliance.

Sustainability & Historic Buildings

Sustainability is one of today's biggest 'buzz thoughts' and touches on any activity that

reduces depletion of our natural resources. Our panel conveyed the breadth of that premise.

Reminding us of Carl Elefante's famous quote, "The greenest building is the one that's already built," Connecticut Trust Circuit Rider Stacey Vairo addressed some of the basic energy efficiency interventions that can be made by architects and homeowners alike: take advantage of energy audits, apply insulating materials and

features that can easily be changed, and use passive heating and cooling methods, often already built into older buildings and their settings. Underlying these strategies are two basic principles: avoid loss of distinctive historic fabric, and use products or techniques that are reversible.

Synfoni Bailey-Green of Northeast Collaborative, architect for the Mary & Eliza Freeman Center in Bridgeport,

Upcoming Meetings

Connecticut Historic Preservation Council

December 4, 2019 at 9:30 a.m.
Conference call

To participate contact Liz Shapiro
(860) 500-2360; Elizabeth.Shapiro@ct.gov

January 2, 2020 at 9:30 a.m.

at the
State Historic Preservation Office, Department
of Economic and Community Development
450 Columbus Boulevard,
Hartford, Connecticut

State Historic Preservation Board

at the
State Historic Preservation Office, Department
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December 6, 2019 at 9:30 a.m.

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spoke of a holistic approach to sustainability over time. Will the materials and labor used have reduced processing and transportation impacts? Will the projected new uses have staying power in the community? Will they in turn contribute to the community's economic health and vitality?

The Freeman Houses were once at the core of Little Liberia, an antebellum community of free African Americans, and the reuse program seeks to place them again at the center of the community in the 21st century. It will include a museum, an affordable apartment, office space, and a resiliency center to serve a neighborhood threatened by sea level rise. Materials from local sources will be used for construction, and workers and staff will come from the community.

Economics of Reusing Historic Buildings

"Myth: building new is always cheaper than preserving and adapting." So began Daniel Stevens of Camoin Associates 310. The economic benefits of adaptive use may come from lower construction costs per square foot, compared to new construction; funding incentives from tax credits to tax increment financing; and higher values and revenues from completed rehab projects.

It is important to be aware of the architectural implications of the various municipal, state and national funding programs. Karin Patriquin, of Patriquin Architects, offered case studies in which local façade improvement grants, low-interest loans from the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority, and state and federal historic tax credits affected design decisions. As when reconciling adaptive use and building code requirements, early dialogue with funding program staff about potential conflicts and solutions is recommended.

Approval Process & Putting It All Together

Building codes are integral to any architect's practice. On the other hand, historic designations and the review processes for work on historic buildings by local historic district commissions, the State Historic Preservation Office and the National Park Service, may be less well known and understood. To elucidate some of the differences in programs, Julie Carmelich, SHPO Tax Credit Coordinator,

described eligibility considerations for State or National Register listing, laid out agency purviews and distinctions between local, state and federal reviews. A concise outline of approval timing for the various review programs provided practical information for formulating project timelines.

The last panel speaker, Patrick McKenna, Senior Project Manager for the nonprofit Community Solutions, pulled together the threads from the previous speakers in a discussion of the conversion of the Swift Factory in the North End of Hartford. The project has overcome many hurdles. Code compliance for stairs, ceiling height, and fire suppression was achieved by obtaining code modifications and a code exception. Sustainability tactics included increased insulation on flat roofs to offset bare brick walls, solar panels, and native landscaping and storm water management to direct runoff to bioswale areas. The economics have required a mix of predevelopment, construction, local, state and federal grants and loans, including historic rehabilitation tax credits, which accounted for 27 percent of the funding and required SHPO design review. Located in a predominantly residential neighborhood, Swift Co. was an economic engine for the community for over 115 years. The factory's new incarnation as a neighborhood hub once again brings jobs to the community, healthful food, education and wellness services, and office space

for community-oriented businesses.

The panel was moderated by Patrick McMahon, CEO of the Connecticut Main Street Center, who deftly managed the conversation with questions that circled back to the premise that adaptive use is an effective way of preserving our historic buildings, our sense of community, and our economic vitality—and that it can be done. 🌿

Panel Participants and Organizers

Synfoni Bailey-Green, AIA, Northeast Collaborative Architects

Julie Carmelich, Historic Tax Credit Coordinator, Connecticut State Historic Preservation Office

Nina Caruso, Historic Preservation Specialist, Crosskey Architects, LLC

David Goslin, AIA, Crosskey Architects LLC

Patrick McKenna, Senior Project Manager, Community Solutions

Patrick McMahon, President & CEO, Connecticut Main Street Center

Thomas Manning, AIA, Russell & Dawson

Karin Patriquin, AIA, Patriquin Architects

Daniel Stevens, AICP, Camoin Associates 301 Ltd.

Renée Tribert, Preservation Services Manager, Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation

Stacey Vairo, Circuit Rider, Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation

Courtesy Patriquin Architects



Funding for the renovation of Roia Restaurant in New Haven's historic Taft Hotel included a façade improvement grant from the City of New Haven.

Courtesy of Crosskey Architects, LLC



To meet code requirements for emergency egress at the Capewell Horse Nail factory in Hartford, designers expanded the exit passage, reducing the distance to it from living units (see color highlight).

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Demystifying Adaptive Use for Architects

By *Renée Tribert*

Courtesy of Community Solutions



Rehabilitation of the Swift factory, in Hartford, is bringing jobs and services to the North End of Hartford. Here, workers from the neighborhood install new windows.

As preservationists, we often tout the rewards of preserving and adapting historic buildings for new purposes. Such work may seem daunting to architects who do not have prior rehab experience: it requires sensitivity to historic design and materials, and, when seeking historic rehabilitation tax credits, knowledge of how to apply the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties while meeting building code.

To encourage adaptive use of historic buildings at the core of so many Connecticut communities, the Connecticut Trust, Connecticut Main Street Center, and Crosskey Architects gathered a panel of professionals and practitioners to present "Historic Reuse and Rehab: An Architect's Guide to a Successful Project," a session at CACX 2019, the AIA Connecticut Architecture Conference and Expo. The panel broke down some of the perceived barriers and offered practical advice for tackling rehab projects, small or large. The discussion covered four broadly defined areas.

Code & Compliance Alternatives for Historic Reuse

David Goslin, of Crosskey Architects, and Thomas Manning, of Russell & Dawson, started the program with a practical discussion of how to work with the building code to achieve compliance for rehab design programs.

First, they counseled, be familiar with all the relevant sections of the building code, beginning with what qualifies as historic (chapter 2), what's different for historic buildings (chapter 12), possible exemptions for historic buildings (chapter 4), and code implications for changing building use.

Second, and most important, be creative and apply problem-solving skills to the project. Explore all the avenues the code offers for compliance when converting an existing building while retaining its historical integrity. Work with the building official and fire marshal, who may well have previous experience with similar situations. When designing the conversion of the former

continued on page 18