

PRESERVATION CONNECTICUT NEWS

Connecticut's newest National Historic Landmarks

The beginning of 2021 brought two additions to Connecticut's roster of National Historic Landmarks. Newly designated, the First Presbyterian Church in Stamford is a prominent work of Modernist architecture whose design blended artistry and innovative construction technology. The listing for Hill-Stead, the Pope estate in Farmington, was expanded to reflect recent scholarship and broaden its areas of significance.

First Presbyterian Church,
Stamford, Connecticut's
newest National Historic
Landmark

Robert Gregson

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It's what's on the inside that counts

By Marena Wisniewski, Connecticut State Historic Preservation Office

Connecticut's newest National Historic Landmark, the First Presbyterian Church in Stamford is instantly recognizable from the exterior. But it is the interior of the sanctuary with its illuminated *dalle de verre* that shows the amount of skill that goes into creating a significant space.

Discussions of significant interior spaces often get put to the side when talking about historic architecture. But many of Connecticut's resources are significant precisely because of their historic interiors. From a stately Georgian residence to a Brutalist church for a 200-year-old congregation, here are some of the Nutmeg State's finest historic interiors, all listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

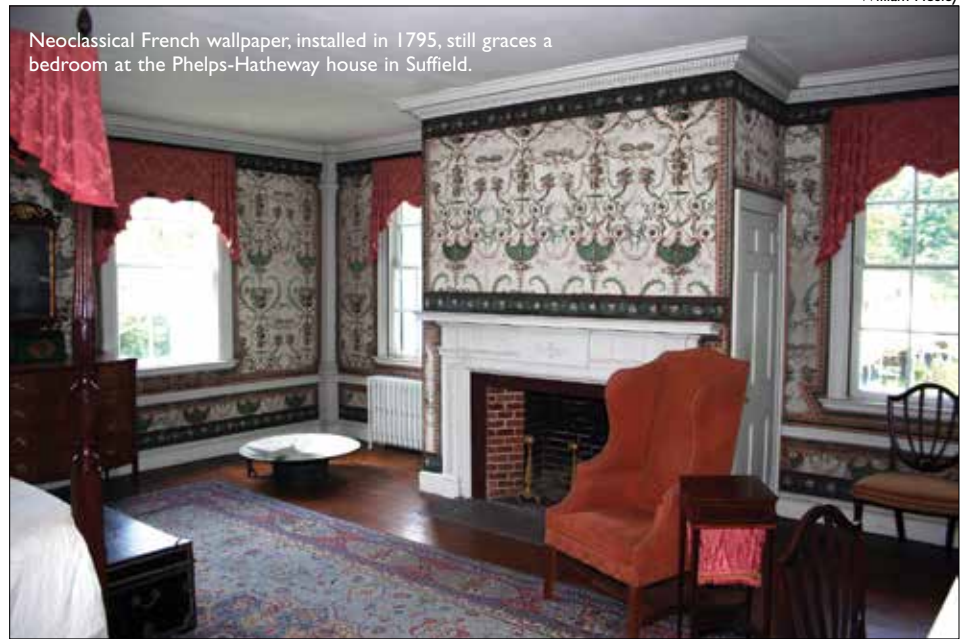
Phelps-Hatheway house, 55 Main Street, Suffield

Originally constructed in about 1762, the Phelps-Hatheway House was enlarged and redecorated in 1795 for its new owner, Oliver Phelps, Deputy Commissary under George Washington during the American Revolution and later one of the largest landholders in the new republic. Phelps decorated rooms in the new wing of the house with Louis XVI style wallpaper handblocked in 1788, as well as wainscoting and dentil cornices. The original finishes survive, except those of the dining room, which were removed to the Winterthur Museum, Garden and Library in the 1960s and replaced with reproductions.

The Phelps-Hatheway house was donated to the Antiquarian & Landmarks Society (Connecticut Landmarks) in 1956 and is now a house museum and event space.

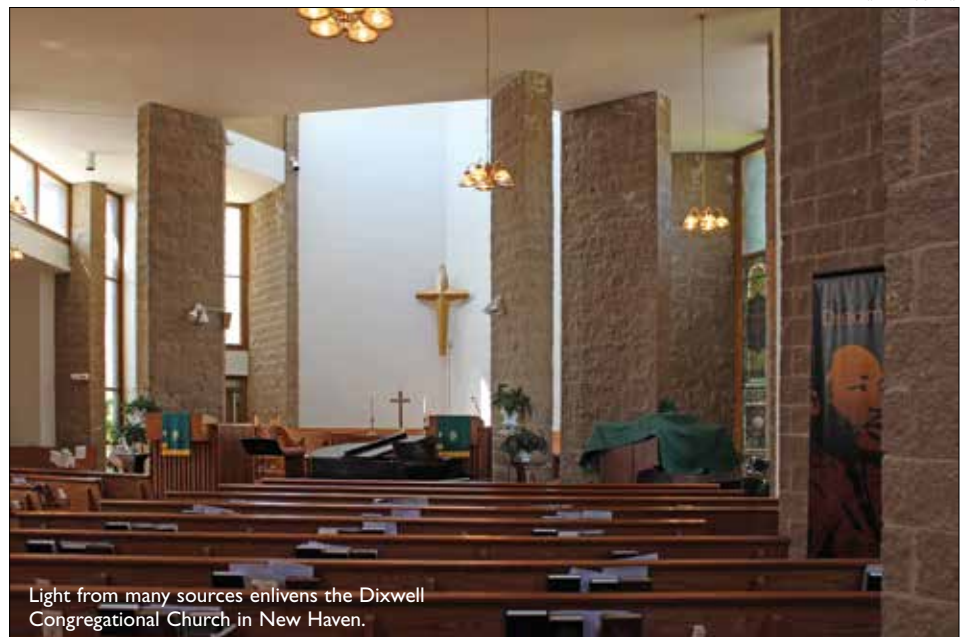
Bronson B. Tuttle house, 380 Church Street, Naugatuck

Constructed between 1879 and 1881 for industrialist Bronson B. Tuttle, this was the first and most opulent of the upscale



Neoclassical French wallpaper, installed in 1795, still graces a bedroom at the Phelps-Hatheway house in Suffield.

William Hosley



Light from many sources enlivens the Dixwell Congregational Church in New Haven.

Karin Krochmal

residences that populated this area of Naugatuck in the late 19th century. Tuttle spared no expense in the construction of his home, using the finest of building materials and decorative finishes. While characterized as Queen Anne in style, the interior is more eclectic, blending gold-leaf Neo-Grecian anthemion wallpaper in the foyer, with Eastlake-inspired three-dimensional carvings in the fireplace mantels and central staircase. Even the hardware utilizes an eclectic aesthetic, embossed with East Asian influences, including figures in Japanese-style dress.

Today the house is the home of the Naugatuck Historical Society and future home of the Naugatuck History Museum at the Tuttle House, which plans to open in 2022.

Topsmead, Buell Road, Litchfield

Perched atop a crest in the Litchfield Hills, the 511-acre former estate of Edith Morton Chase, heiress to the Chase Brass & Copper Company, was designed in the Tudor Revival style, to serve as a rural summer cottage. Built in 1924 but

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MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

It has been a year since the coronavirus pandemic forced a shutdown of many normal activities. Currently, falling infection rates and accelerating vaccine distribution offer hope that we may be beginning to see the end of the pandemic, but we're not there yet. Shutdowns will continue for many months, at least. At Preservation Connecticut we continue to follow the guidelines as closely as possible while we're still seeking out new and better ways to carry out our work for Connecticut's historic places and the people who live and work in them.

So let us know about your preservation questions, problems, and opportunities. Staff members are always ready to consult by telephone or email, and can make socially-distanced in-person visits where appropriate.

In January, staff convened virtually for our annual meeting with statewide preservation organizations from the Northeast. For several years this meeting has offered valuable opportunities to share best practices and to explore ideas for joint programming. In particular, we compared notes on

a new region-wide grant program funded through The 1772 Foundation. Although Preservation Connecticut has been partnering with the Foundation for a decade, 2020 was the first year the program had been expanded throughout New England.

In the spirit of regional collaboration, we partnered with the Preservation Alliance of New Hampshire and others on "Stamp Out Barn Loss," a program celebrating the New England barn through discussion of the legacy of family farms, preservation and maintenance, and the designing of a new postage stamp commemorating the American barn. Following the main program, which concluded with contra music, we hosted a Connecticut breakout room for discussion with barn owners about local challenges and resources. Thanks to Marena Wisniewski from the State Historic Preservation Office for joining the conversation and providing helpful information.

I was invited to participate in a program hosted by Greenwich Historic Society, Historic Properties of Greenwich, and the Greenwich Association of Realtors, to address the rising threat of teardowns in the

area, which have been averaging 105 per year since 2012. We discussed the economic impact historic protections provide and resources available to property owners. You can read a message on the increase in teardowns we are experiencing statewide on our blog, preservationct.org/blog.

The winter saw another series of our online "Talking about Preservation" programs. In observance of Black History Month, February's programs highlighted African American topics, ranging from oral history of New Haven's Black churches to an update on Bridgeport's Little Liberia and student efforts to document the history of slavery in north-west Connecticut. We also heard about what's happening at the State Historic Preservation Office and in the 2021 legislative session, including proposals for statewide zoning reform. The programs will take a break in March, but we're planning to offer more in the spring. Watch our website and social media for information about dates and topics.

As we look forward to Spring, we will be tackling some overdue maintenance at our headquarters, the Eli Whitney Boarding House (1827; NR). Preservation Connecticut was awarded an Historic Restoration Fund grant from the State Historic Preservation Office for minor carpentry repairs and exterior paint of the building, which was last painted in 2011.

Please mark your calendar to join us for a virtual celebration of the 2021 Connecticut Preservation Awards on May 5. As I write this, submissions are starting to come in, and we're eagerly anticipating an inspirational array of great accomplishments to recognize. RSVP early to receive a Preservation Party Box! 🌿

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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Connecticut
still revolutionary

Upcoming Meetings

Connecticut Historic Preservation Council

April 7, 2021 at 9:30 a.m.
— Virtual Meeting

May 6, 2021 at 9:30 a.m.
— Virtual Meeting

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

For more information call (860) 500-2343

National Historic Landmarks, cont'd from page 1

National Historic Landmark designation is reserved for sites of national significance, while the National Register of Historic Places includes many sites of local or state significance. This distinction is seen in the numbers: with the addition of First Presbyterian Church, Connecticut has 64 National Historic Landmarks (one other, the building that housed the world's first commercial telephone exchange, in New Haven, was demolished in 1973), as opposed to more than fifty thousand properties in the state listed on the National Register, either individually or within historic districts.

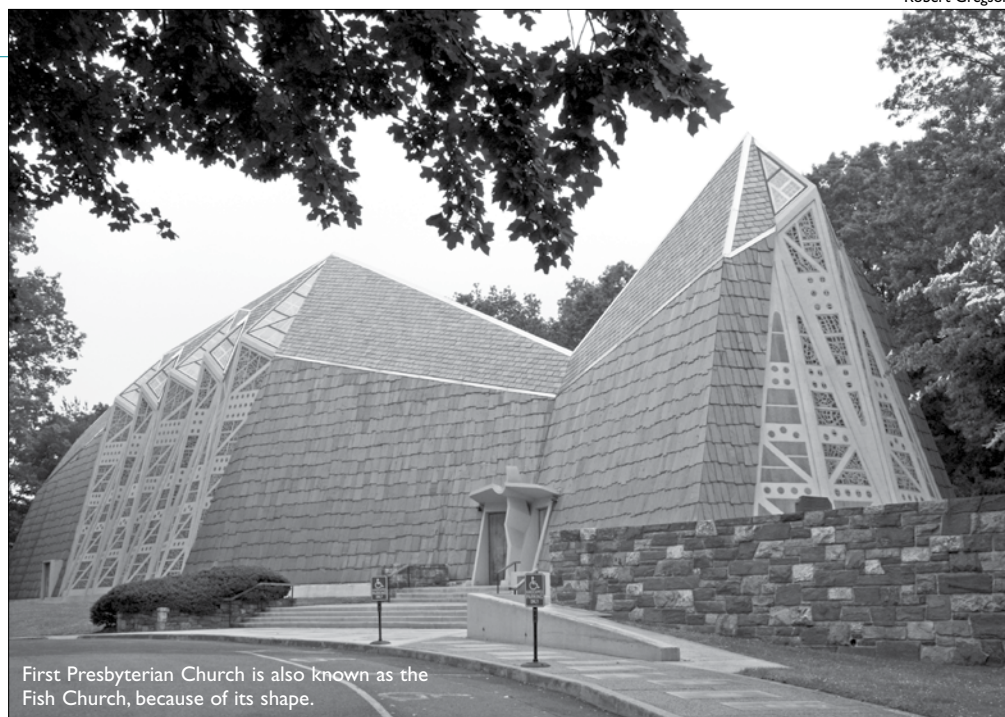
First Presbyterian Church, Stamford

Popularly known as the “Fish Church” due to its unusual shape, First Presbyterian Church was constructed for an established Stamford congregation that, like many downtown churches in the years after World War II, decided to follow its members in moving to the suburbs.

The church is an important and singular work by Wallace K. Harrison (1895–1981), a major American Modernist architect. Considered by Harrison to be his most successful accomplishment, it exemplifies both the architect's strength as a master planner and his personal approach to Modernist design that introduced significant innovations in construction technology to American architecture.

Harrison is best known for corporate towers such as the Alcoa building in Pittsburgh and for overseeing large-scale architectural complexes, including Rockefeller Center, the United Nations headquarters, and Lincoln Center, all in New York City, plus the South Plaza in Albany. For these projects he created master plans and coordinated the work of multiple architectural firms. But Harrison considered smaller commissions such as First Presbyterian more satisfying, as they gave him more direct contact with the details of the work.

As with his master-planning projects, Harrison's work at First Presbyterian was a collaboration with others, including British structural engineer Felix Samuely, French stained-glass artist Gabriel Loire, and acoustical engineers Boulton Beranek & Lewis. Also playing an important role



First Presbyterian Church is also known as the Fish Church, because of its shape.

was the local firm of Sherwood, Mills and Smith, who designed the parish unit containing offices, classrooms, chapel, and fellowship hall.

The sanctuary's high-profile use of *dalle de verre* stained glass (thick slabs of glass set in a concrete frame) was the largest and most publicized installation in North America when constructed and it popularized the material during the postwar building boom at mid-century. In addition, the inclined, folded-plate thin-shell construction technology was an early, if not seminal, use in a non-industrial American building.

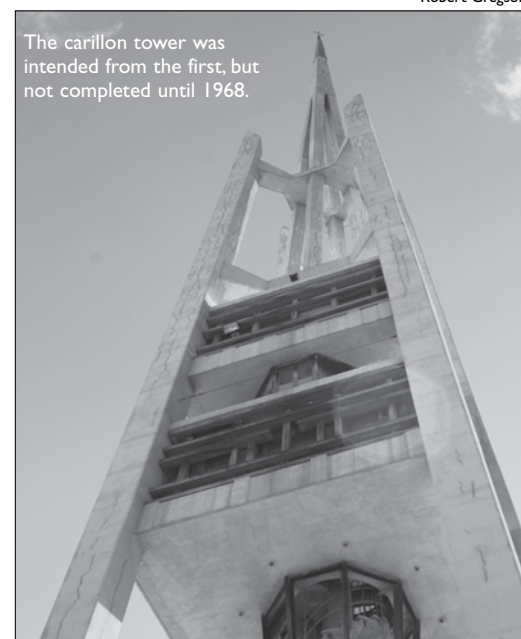
First Presbyterian also displays another less-well-known aspect of Harrison's work: his interest in a modern architecture that drew on historic precedents. For the Stamford church, he tried to reinterpret the structural and visual characteristics of Gothic cathedrals. The *dalle de verre* creates a stained-glass lantern like the 13th-century Sainte Chapelle in Paris, while the thin-slab concrete construction with its skeletal reinforcement resembles Gothic ribbed vaulting. The plan also hews to the traditional Gothic pattern of chancel, nave, and narthex aligned along a long axis.

The church's soaring carillon tower was intended from the first but not completed until 1968. Its design complements the sanctuary and brackets Harrison's accom-

plishments, beginning with the Trylon and Perisphere, theme buildings for the New York World's Fair of 1939, in creating eye-catching sculptural structures.

The Highland Green Foundation, whose mission is preservation of the Fish Church and development of arts and education programming there, initiated the National Historic Landmark nomination with the support of the congregation. The nomination was prepared by the Foundation's Director of Preservation, Wes Haynes, a former staff member of Preservation Connecticut.

Robert Gregson



The carillon tower was intended from the first, but not completed until 1968.



Hill-Stead was a working farm, yet the farm buildings were also conceived as integral parts of the estate landscape.

Hill-Stead, Farmington

Begun in 1898, and basically complete by 1917, Hill-Stead was the home built by Alfred and Ada Pope at the instigation, and to the designs of, their remarkable daughter, Theodate (1867-1946). Since Theodate's death, the estate has been operated as a museum. The house was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1991 for the interplay of its Colonial Revival architecture—primarily the work of Theodate, with assistance from McKim, Mead and White—and the Impressionist artworks

Library of Congress, Historic American Buildings Survey

Stone walls punctuate the Hill-Stead landscape, as seen from the porch of the main house.



collected by Alfred Pope.

The updated designation expands the story of Theodate Pope's role as the principal architect of the entire estate, not just the house. The documentation provides extended discussion of the farm buildings and the landscape, which, in the words of the nomination, combines "vistas, farm fields, and uncultivated woodland areas into a unified site that still reflects her vision of more than a century ago."

The new documentation was prepared by historian Rachel Carley as an amended and expanded version of the 1991 nomination by David Ransom, with additional edits by Hill-Stead Museum curator Melanie Bourbeau.

Like many gentlemen's estates, Hill-Stead was a working farm, even if the Popes did not depend on it for their livelihood. Nonetheless, it was a serious enterprise, one that employed up-to-date practices and technologies. At the same time, the farm buildings were also conceived as integral parts of Hill-Stead's landscape, including such picturesque touches as random-width clapboards, wrought-iron hardware, and a unifying color palette.

Tying it all together is the landscape. The nomination explains, "As the backdrop for the estate, the landscape contributes as much to the site's significance as does the house at its center. In building landed estates like Hill-Stead, Americans

were not only emulating the settings of the country manors they encountered on tours abroad, but also the genteel lifestyle they represented. In addition to the farm operation, the original Hill-Stead landscape accommodated the usual gardens, tennis court, golf grounds, and trails that enabled the family to enjoy the fashionable leisure pursuits of the era."

Warren H. Manning, a landscape designer trained by Frederick Law Olmsted, provided assistance and some plans, as did Beatrix Farrand and others. Nonetheless, as with the buildings the driving force was Theodate.

One notable feature of Hill-Stead's landscape is its stone walls. Carefully laid and employing an unusual mixture of fieldstone and traprock, the walls display a consistency of form, structure, and design that testifies to Theodate Pope's "vigilant oversight." They serve both to relate Hill-Stead to its New England setting and to set it off from surrounding properties.

The nomination concludes, "Together the outbuildings and designed landscape have particular significance as an expression of late Victorian-era design principles....Ultimately, the entire composition of grounds, house, collection, and archives communicates the aspirations and sensibilities of not only one strongly intelligent family, but of an entire class of turn-of-the-century America."

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Goodbye to the Transfer Act

by Wayne Bugden

For several decades, the Connecticut Property Transfer Act (Conn. Gen. Stat. 22a-134a-e) has been the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection's (DEEP's) primary tool with which to compel environmental cleanup of certain properties. Although a Transfer Act cleanup achieves a high environmental standard, the path to this goal is lengthy and expensive. It has been particularly troublesome for historic industrial properties, many of which have languished in the Transfer Act for years. Unable to achieve Transfer Act closure, would-be developers of many mills and factories have abandoned their dreams of preservation and reuse. Some properties become deteriorating "brownfields" instead of the rich historic and architectural resources they could be.

One casualty was the historic Dayville Mill (1882; also known as the Prym Mill). Portions of the mill's roof collapsed in 2010 and again in 2011, while in the Transfer Act program. Not only was costly remediation work being deferred, but so too was maintenance of the building. The main mill was subsequently demolished, leaving the tower and ancillary buildings. Ten years later, the property still has not closed out of the program.

Given the law's failings, there was reason for optimism last October when Governor Lamont signed "An Act Revising Provisions of the Transfer Act and Authorizing the Development and Implementation of a Release-Based Remediation Program." Public Act 20-9 will eventually eliminate the Transfer Act, replacing it with a program of "release-based reporting and cleanup."

The new law has bold, laudable objectives. It requires DEEP to develop new

The roof of the historic Dayville Mill collapsed while the building was in the Transfer Act program.



regulations and authorized a Working Group that has already begun the process of planning these changes. The timeline is ambitious, with the first new regulations scheduled to go into effect in just two years.

Ideally, the new release-based remediation program will benefit Connecticut's economy and environment while improving the prospects for redevelopment and preservation of historic properties. However, even the best-intentioned laws can have unintended consequences. For example, a particular cleanup requirement may make sense at a school property but may place an unnecessary burden on efforts to clean up an historic mill site. Members of the preservation community should become familiar with each proposed regulation and try to anticipate how it may affect historic properties. Voicing concerns to state policymakers early in the process can improve the new regulations and help prevent inadvertent roadblocks to preservation.

Of particular concern for historic properties is how the new release-based program will deal with contamination that has been around for many years. Soils at mills and factories are commonly polluted—a legacy of former waste disposal methods that are not acceptable today. Establishing effective, pragmatic standards to remediate such contamination has always been a challenge and will be a major objective of

the new program. Two subcommittees are developing methods for the discovery and reporting of such "historical releases," and an important challenge will be to ensure these do not unduly impact the redevelopment of historic properties.

DEEP is committed to transparency and engaging stakeholders in developing the release-based remediation program. You can find out how to get involved at the DEEP website below. It contains links to information regarding the Working Group and subcommittees, including guidelines, agendas, and recorded meetings. All meetings are open to the public and are currently held remotely via Zoom. These web pages will be expanded as more subcommittees are formed and regulatory concepts and draft regulations are issued for public comment.

With the eventual end of the Transfer Act—and a lot of hard work by stakeholders—Connecticut should eventually have a new environmental cleanup program that will benefit the economy and the environment, while improving the outlook for preservation and reuse of our important industrial landmarks. 🌿

Wayne Bugden is the Owner/Manager of One Earth Environmental, LLC. For more information visit <https://portal.ct.gov/DEEP/Remediation--Site-Clean-Up/Comprehensive-Evaluation-and-Transformation/Release-Based-Clean-Up-Program-Regulation-Development>.

Zoning reform could reinforce preservation

Inspired by the Black Lives Movement and the unequal effects of the coronavirus pandemic, a movement for statewide zoning reform has arisen under the name Desegregate Connecticut. Its aims are to increase equity in housing, promote inclusive economic development, and reduce harm to the environment.

According to Sara Bronin, who founded and leads DesegregateCT (note: she is a trustee and former chair of PCT), housing creation in Connecticut is heavily weighted in favor of building new single-family dwellings. About ninety percent of the state's land area is zoned for single-family construction as of right (that is, without special permits or hearings). At the same time, housing with four or more units is permitted as of right on only about two percent of the land. Some towns allow no multifamily housing; some allow it only in very limited areas.

This pattern creates sprawl and reduces the diversity of residential options. With lower-cost housing concentrated in a few communities, Connecticut is largely segregated by income—and therefore, given the disparities in income distribution, by race and ethnicity as well. However, the lack of housing diversity also affects others who might not choose or be able to afford single-family houses—young people starting out,

for instance, or older people wishing to downsize.

Legislative agenda

Desegregate Connecticut has released a series of legislative proposals to increase housing supply and broaden the diversity of housing options. Measures in the group's platform include:

- *Allow accessory dwelling units.* Many towns already permit small subsidiary units within a larger principal dwelling; they would become an as-of-right option.
- *Encourage transit oriented development.* Towns would zone fifty percent of the land within one-half mile of railroad stations, rapid bus lines, or ferry terminals for four or more unit construction as of right. In big developments, ten percent of units would be set aside for low- and moderate-income households.
- *Create Main Street middle housing,* allowing two-to-four-unit housing as of right within one-quarter mile of built-up commercial areas in towns with a population over 7,500. This would include traditional housing such as apartments over stores.
- *Reduce parking requirements.* Some towns require as many as three

parking spaces even for a studio apartment. DesegregateCT proposes reducing parking requirements and increasing flexibility in providing parking.

- *Encourage form-based zoning,* which focuses on building type and size rather than solely on use. Already adopted in Hartford and Canton, form-based zoning is considered more effective for enhancing community character.

Links to preservation

Many of Desegregate Connecticut's proposals are consistent with preservation practice. The goal of reducing sprawl parallels preservationists' longtime efforts to redirect investment to existing historic neighborhoods rather than eat up open space. Allowing mixed-use development in and adjacent to commercial centers parallels historic building patterns. And, lower parking requirements would save many historic buildings and neighborhoods from demolition.

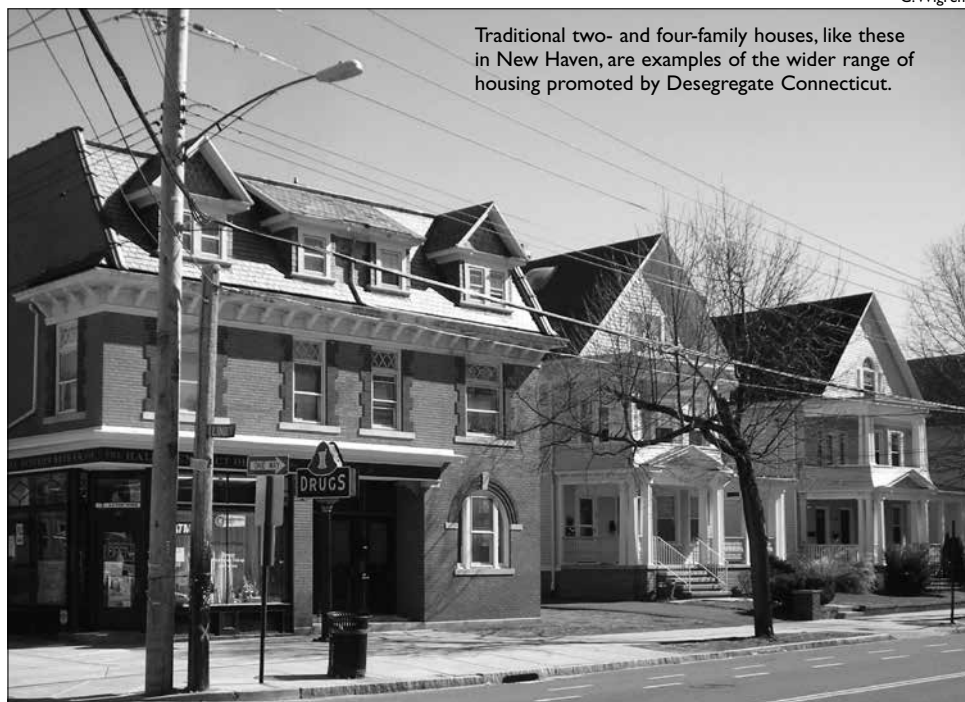
Preservationists might worry that increased multifamily development could encourage demolition for new construction. It is important that any new regulations be carefully crafted so they don't result in the kind of losses seen in Stamford's historic South End, which has been devastated by development pressures around the Stamford train station.

Will it pass?

Desegregate Connecticut is the latest in a long string of efforts to reform planning and zoning in the state. Most have failed in the face of Connecticut towns' jealously guarded independence. In fact, the group is already meeting vocal opposition in the name of local control and community character.

To address that opposition, DesegregateCT advocates point out that towns would retain a high level of control over how the new measures are carried out. For transit-area and Main Street developments, towns would be able to choose which areas to zone, determine types of buildings that could be constructed, and establish architectural guidelines. Towns also could set architectural standards for accessory units, as well as requiring owner occupancy

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Traditional two- and four-family houses, like these in New Haven, are examples of the wider range of housing promoted by Desegregate Connecticut.

C. Wigren

Briefly noted

Nona Bloomer



Branford and Guilford. ▲

The South Central Region Council of Governments (SCRCOG) is conducting a study of the Connecticut Route 146 corridor in Branford and Guilford, at the request of those two towns. The aim of the study is to “evaluate existing conditions for roadway, amenities and land use, evaluate impacts of roadway flooding and sea level rise, traffic calming, future development, traffic volumes, historic and scenic impacts, evacuation routes and possible alternative scenarios.”

Route 146 is a State Scenic Road, punctuated by views of marshland, farmland, town and villages, rock outcroppings, stone walls, and more. In addition, the road passes through four National Register districts as well as by places individually listed on the National or State Register. In the Route 146 National Register district, the road itself is considered a contributing resource.

However, residents and others have voiced concerns that the study focuses too much on road conditions and not enough on traffic calming and protection of the road’s scenic, historic, and environmental character. A citizen group called Friends of Historic 146 has asked SCRCOG to modify the study to reflect these concerns. SCRCOG, in turn, maintains that the study is not intended to address design or planning issues, but only to provide background for future planning.

As a result, the Friends group is advocating for the creation of a corridor management plan for the road, similar to plans created for the Merritt Parkway and other scenic roadways, including a 1996 plan for Routes 146 and 77 in Guilford. The SCRCOG study could inform that plan. For more information, visit scrcog.org/route-146-corridor-study/ and www.friendsof146.com.



Charlotte Hitchcock

Coventry. ▲

The home and studio of sculptor David Hayes (1931-2013) were featured in February on the PBS show “Legacy List with Matt Paxton.” The property, where Hayes lived and worked for forty years, was listed on the State Register through Preservation Connecticut’s Creative Places project (connecticutcreativeplaces.org). On the program, Matt Paxton and his staff help Hayes’ son David sort through thousands of sculptures and paintings created or collected by the senior Hayes, as a step toward creating a museum to be operated by the David Hayes Art Foundation. Highlighting Hayes’ life and art, the program provides a glimpse into Connecticut’s creative history. For more information visit pbs.org/show/legacy-list/.



ConnecticutMills.org

Hartford. ▲

Colt Gateway has completed rehabilitation of the North Armory at the Colt industrial complex (1916; NHL), constructed for production of gun barrels during World War I. The rehabilitation created 48 apartment units and over 16,000 square feet of nonresidential space. According to Nick Kraus of Heritage Consulting Group, tax credit consultants on the project, “The most significant challenge was from spalled exterior masonry and window sills and rusted window frames, due to water infiltration. The sills and windows were custom manufactured to match the historic appearance. On the interior, historic images of the Colt complex in the public spaces provide residents a sense of place and history.” Federal and State historic rehabilitation tax credits helped make the conversion a reality; the State Historic Preservation Office reports that the project cost \$23,000,000 and will generate approximately \$4,600,000 in federal credits and \$3,600,000 in state credits. After years of hard work, the rehabilitation of the Colt complex is nearly complete, with only a few buildings left for redevelopment.

Middletown. ▲

The City Common Council approved the creation of space for four additional incubator tenants at the former Remington Rand factory in February. Documented on ConnecticutMills.org, the factory was constructed in 1896 for the Keating Wheel Company, a maker of bicycles. Later occupants produced automobiles, typewriters, and office machinery and built several additions. Acquired by the City and renamed the Robert M. Keating Historical Enterprise Park, the property has hosted fledgling businesses since 2013. Rents kept below market rate enable new business development and job creation. The facility currently has nearly twenty tenants, including brewers, food truck operators, and a self-defense studio. Leasing is handled through the City Department of Planning, Conservation & Development; for information visit middletownct.gov or call (860) 638-4840.

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Milford. ►

The City and developer have reached an agreement to avoid demolition of the David Baldwin house (1835; NR). The matter has been in litigation since 2018, when the Milford Historic Preservation Commission denied approval to raze the house. Under the agreement, the house will be renovated as offices and a fitness center for an apartment building to be constructed behind it. The apartment building will be smaller than originally proposed. In addition, the developers paid for a ground-penetrating radar investigation, which concluded that there appeared to be no unmarked graves on the property, settling speculation that part of Milford's first burying ground might be on the property. They also agreed to restore a bronze historical plaque on the property and restore the exterior of the house. Some preservationists still object that the new building will be out of scale with the historic district, but it is allowed by Milford Center Design District regulations. Where zoning allows intensive development, incorporating existing historic structures into new projects provides a reasonable alternative to demolition.

Newington. ►

Historic town-owned properties were included in a facilities assessment, commissioned to identify needed repairs and upgrades. By looking at all properties at once, the town is able to establish priorities and plan effectively to address current and upcoming needs. In addition to schools, park facilities, and community centers, the study looked at the Enoch Kelsey house (c.1799; NR, pictured) and Kellogg-Eddy house (c.1808, 1927; NR), both operated by the Newington Historical Society; the Deming-Young farmhouse (1784), operated by the Deming-Young Farm Foundation; and the Newington Fire Museum (1929). All these were found to have structural needs that might be addressed through grant programs or by soliciting donations.



G. Farmer



C. Wigren



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C. Wigren, 2011

◀ **Norwich.**

Grants through the Neighborhood Assistance Act are benefiting several historic sites here. The Norwich Historical Society will receive \$32,546 for energy-efficiency upgrades to the East District and Daniel Lathrop schools (1789 and 1783; NR). Funds will be used for a new heating and ventilation system at the East District School, allowing it to be used for programming, and for weatherization of the Lathrop School (pictured), which houses the Norwich Heritage and Regional Visitor's Center. In addition, the St. Vincent de Paul Place soup kitchen will receive \$92,772 for a new heating and ventilation system in its building, a former school constructed in 1925. The Neighborhood Assistance Act provides tax credits for businesses that make cash contributions to local municipal agencies or nonprofits. Groups that wish to receive funds must file with the municipality each year. For information, visit portal.ct.gov/DRS/Credit-Programs/Neighborhood-Assistance/Neighborhood-Assistance-Act-Tax-Credit-Program.

◀ **Torrington.**

A new state law offers a possible solution to the deteriorating Yankee Pedlar Inn on Main Street (1893, 1920; NR; photo, 2011). The building was bought in 2014 by Jayson Hospitality, which began renovations but then stopped, leaving the structure vacant and vulnerable. In January, the City filed paperwork asking a State court to assign the property to the nonprofit Torrington Development Corporation. The action is being taken under Public Act 19-92, "An Act Concerning Abandoned and Blighted Property Receivership." This law, which took effect in 2020, allows courts to appoint receivers to take possession of neglected properties in municipalities with a population of 35,000 or more in order to make repairs. The measure was conceived as a tool to combat blighted structures, which not only are dangerous, but also affect the value of nearby properties and the viability of nearby businesses.

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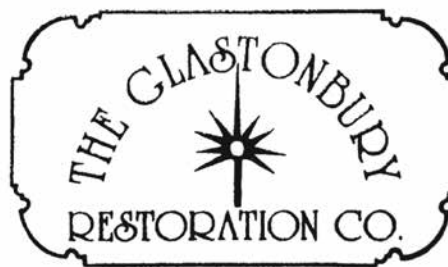


continued from page 10

C. Wigen

Wilton and Ridgefield. ►

As of January 6, Weir Farm National Historic Site is now Weir Farm National Historical Park. The change in designation will make no difference in programming or budgets; however, it better reflects the diversity of resources and stories embodied in the site, says Kristin Lessard, Weir Farm's Visitor Experience Program Manager. The National Park Service operates a wide variety of natural, scenic, and historic places through the country. All are officially National Parks, but there are numerous subcategories, including national monuments, national historic sites, national seashores, and national historical parks. Typically national historic sites center on a single person, event, or theme, while national historical parks are areas of greater physical extent and complexity. When Weir Farm became part of the National Park system in 1990, it was recognized primarily as the home of the American Impressionist artist J. Alden Weir, but the site tells the overlapping historic stories of three generations of artists across 60-some acres that include 16 historic buildings, a vast art collection, orchards and landscapes, trails, stone walls, and more than 250 historic painting sites. The Park Service hopes that the change will better communicate to the public the breadth of Weir Farm's significance and offerings.



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Correction. The name of one element of the Winsted Water Works was misspelled in the article "From Farm to City" in the January/February 2021 issue: it should be the Rugg Brook reservoir, not Ragg Brook.

860-212-3750 www.glastonburyrestoration.com Stevebielitz@yahoo.com
Facebook: Glastonbury Restoration Company, Architectural and Historical Preservation

and restricting short-term rentals.

As for community character, Ms. Bronin noted that the term can be vague, seemingly focused on controlling who lives in a community rather than how land is used. She suggested that a more effective way to protect character would be to adopt targeted language calling for development to "be made with reasonable consideration to the physical site characteristics and architectural context of the district."

Unlike some earlier zoning-reform efforts, Desegregate Connecticut has strong leadership and a carefully focused message. Moreover, it comes at a time when the shortcomings of traditional planning and zoning in the state are increasingly apparent. Will it be able to succeed where others have failed? Only time will tell, but it's crucial that preservationists continue to play an active part in any discussion that affects Connecticut's built environment. 🌿

*For more information, visit
www.desegregatect.org.*

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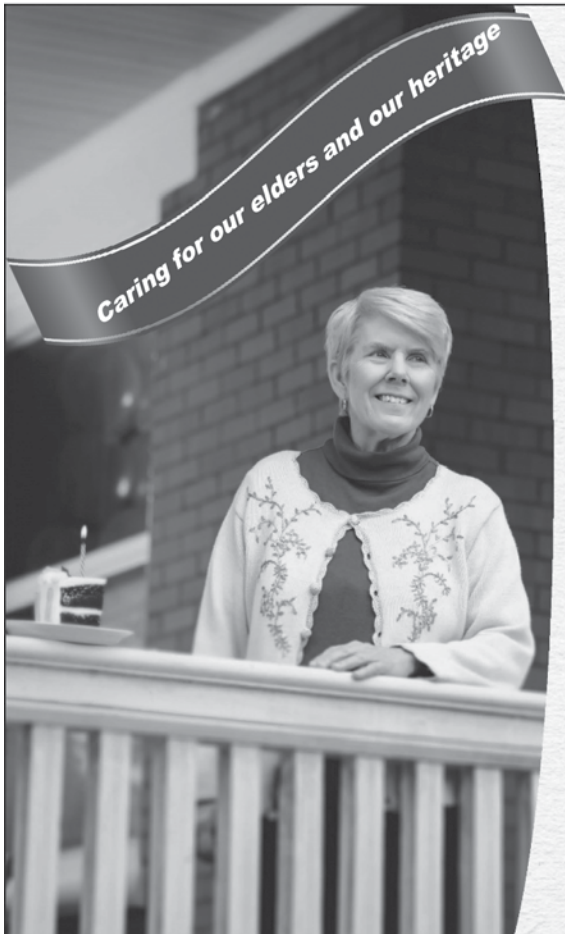
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Historic House in New Haven



Bull's Bridge in Kent



Liberty Community Housing



Enfield Old Town Hall



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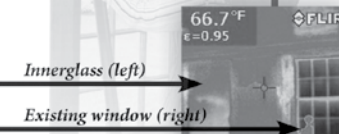
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easements is on the market, we may list it here. To learn how to safeguard your property for future generations through an easement, explore Stewardship on our website, preservationct.org/steward, or contact Christopher Wigren, Deputy Director.

176 South Street (1700s)

Plymouth
\$335,000

Restoration opportunity in 18th century post and beam house on 25 acres with views across the valley. First floor includes two bedrooms and full bath and second floor is loft; 1056 square feet of livable space. Exposed timber framing, beautiful wide board flooring, stone fireplace and foundation. Kitchen in midst of renovations, has some rotted floor joists. Water damage in basement due to flooding. Property includes detached four-car garage. Listing references salvage opportunities, so time may be running out!

Contact: Susan Holway, SH Properties, 860-601-8217, sue@sueholway.com



Photo courtesy of SH Properties



Photos courtesy of The D'Amore Agency



Jacob Strong House (1750)

1167 Highland Ave, Torrington
\$149,000

Center-chimney colonial believed to be oldest house in Torrington. This saltbox with flared eave over front porch has 1,900 square feet on 1.3 acres, includes four bedrooms and one bathroom. Exposed wood beams throughout, wide wood floorboards and multiple fireplaces. In need of TLC. Former residence of realist sculptor Paola Abbate, who used the barn as his studio, and featured on connecticutcreativeplaces.org. Listed on State Register of Historic Places and may be eligible for historic rehabilitation tax credits. Don't miss this chance to preserve a piece of Torrington history.

Contact: Amanda Balaski, The D'Amore Agency, 860-605-6618

Cohanzie Elementary School (1923)

40-48 Dayton Road, Waterford
\$795,000

Former Cohanzie Elementary School available for mixed-use or multi-family redevelopment opportunity. Located on over 10 acres, this Neoclassical building has been vacant since school's closure in 2008. Site remediation and demolition of 1954 and 1972 additions have been completed by the town. Listed on the State Register of Historic Places and may be eligible for historic tax credits.

Contact: Vance Taylor, Commercial Real Estate Group, 860-482-9695, vance.taylor@snet.net

St. Mark's Church & School (1921 and 1950)

151 West Main Street, New Britain
\$699,000

Opportunity to purchase granite church, parish hall and mid-century modern classroom building on 1-acre lot in downtown New Britain across from Walnut Hill Park. The church was built in 1921 and includes stained glass windows, some commissioned from the studio of William Morris. The two-story attached school was built in 1950 and includes fourteen classrooms, five offices, and an elevator. Church is 16,678 square feet; school is 8,875 square feet. St. Mark's Episcopal Parish operated in the facility until 2019 when it relocated to South Church, also in New Britain, becoming one of five parishes using the site for worship and illustrating the national tendency of church closures in urban areas. Building could be eligible for listing on the State or National Register of Historic Places. Great potential for user or developer to stake their claim in revitalizing New Britain.

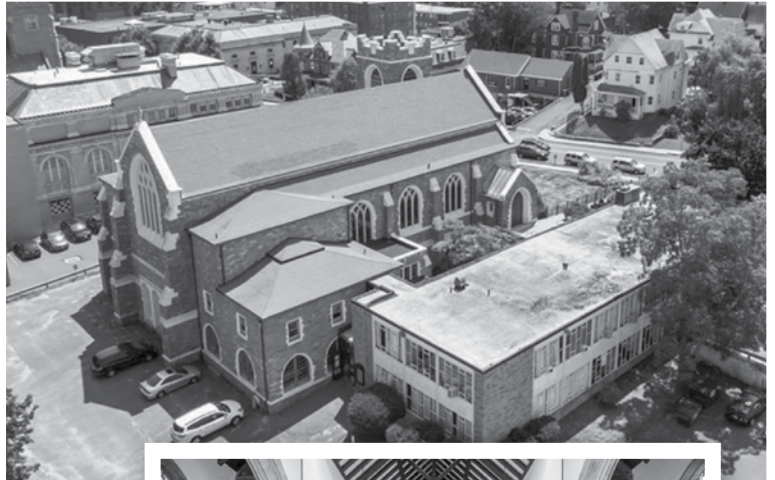
Contact: Frank Amodio, Amodio & Co, 860-982-0174, frank@amodio.com

Bailey Manufacturing Company (1888, c.1920, post-1947)

207 Church Street, Wethersfield
\$1,050,000

This historic industrial building was constructed for the Bailey Manufacturing Company, which made patented letter-copying machines and copying pads. Later occupants included the National Machine Company (printing presses), the Gra-Rock Company (ginger ale), and the Clearinghouse Auction Gallery. Preservation Connecticut's Making Places industrial heritage project identified the property as potentially eligible for listing on the State Register of Historic Places, which would allow it to qualify for historic rehabilitation tax credits. Property currently has no historic designation and is listed for redevelopment or demolition. Building area is 21,510 sq.ft; 0.88 acres; zoned Mixed Use.

Contact: John Zubretsky, Jr., Weichert, (860) 263-2121 x101



Deadline for the next issue is April 20, 2021

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

Neither advertisers nor Preservation Connecticut are responsible or liable for any misinformation, misprints, or typographical errors contained in Historic Properties Exchange. To list a property or learn about properties listed, contact Kristen Hopewood at khopewood@preservationct.org, or call (203) 562-6312.

incorporating an existing structure from 1917, the cottage takes full advantage of the surrounding views. However, the interior certainly draws the eye, with tile floors, stone fireplaces, adzed timbers, and the monumental timber truss ceiling of the living room. To complement this cozy, informal interior, Chase furnished the house with Tudor-period antiques, which were donated, along with the house and surrounding grounds, to the state upon her death in 1972.

The house and grounds now operate as Topsmead State Forest. The house is open for tours from June through October, and the grounds year-round.

Dixwell Avenue Congregational United Church of Christ, 217 Dixwell Avenue, New Haven

Designed in 1968-69 by American architect John MacLane Johansen, the Brutalist edifice of the Dixwell Avenue church is the third home of the oldest African American Congregational church in the world. While the concrete-block exterior of the building may seem forbidding, the interior is consistently bathed in a golden hue of light from the floor-to-ceiling windows. Ornament is simple and restrained, letting the materials speak for themselves. The architect wrote that the design was intended to focus on the central sanctuary, "with simple, economic construction [that] achieves interesting and ever-changing experience of form and light. It expresses the mystery

and awe of life rather than the rationalism and secularism of religious feeling today."

Dixwell Avenue Congregational UCC continues to hold weekly services and

community events in the building. It is also part of Sharing Sacred Spaces, a group that uses architecture as a means of interfaith connection and community building. 🌿

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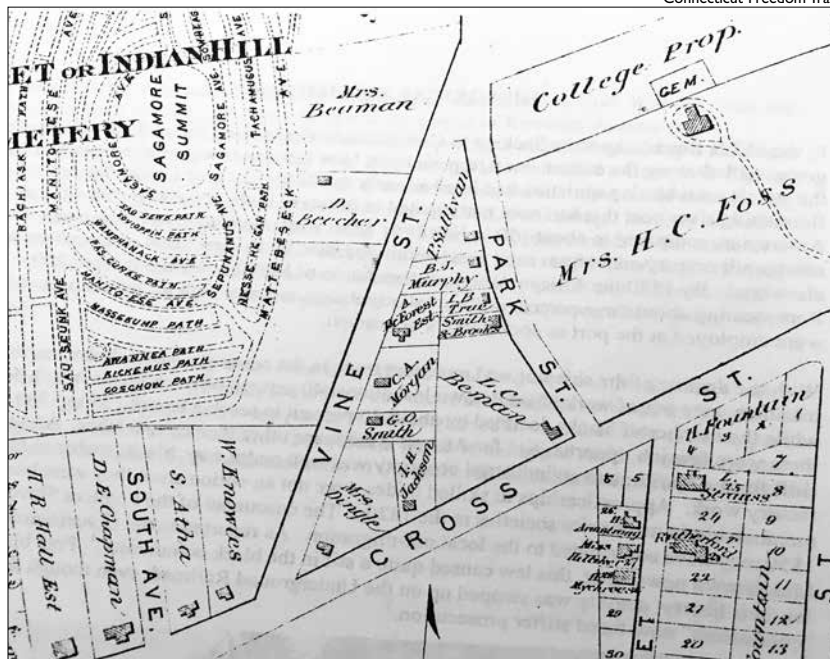
Beman's neighborhood was organized and coalesced into a relatively stable community within forty years. Residents worked for low wages, but paid off their mortgages, raised families and put down roots in the neighborhood. Sons and daughters intermarried, and some stayed in the area. Everyone had boarders to make ends meet. Two-family households were common, even in smaller cottages, and some houses were enlarged with wings or ells to accommodate more people.

The Beman family were leaders in the anti-slavery movement. Leverett's father, Jehiel, was the first pastor of the Cross Street A.M.E. Zion Church which was originally located in the neighborhood, and it was under his direction that it became known as the Freedom Church. Leverett's wife, Clarissa Beman, founded the Middletown Colored Female Anti-Slavery Society in 1834. Leverett's brother, Amos Beman, was the pastor of the Temple Street Congregational Church in New Haven and often represented Connecticut at national anti-slavery conventions.

The neighborhood was home to several other remarkable African Americans. Resident Isaac Truitt had been a slave in Delaware before he moved to the community. He and several other residents were veterans who fought with the 29th Regiment in the Civil War.

By the middle of the 20th century, members of other ethnic groups largely replaced African Americans in the neighborhood. Today, most of the properties are owned by Wesleyan University; faculty and students from Wesleyan have carried out historical and archaeological research there. 🌿

This undated map shows the Beman district in the 19th century
Connecticut Freedom Trail



The Leverett Beman historic district is located on Knowles Avenue and Cross and Vine streets in Middletown. For more information on the Connecticut Freedom Trail, visit ctfreedomtrail.org. For some of the Wesleyan research, visit beman-triangle.research.wesleyan.edu.

Editor's note: The Connecticut Freedom Trail documents and designates sites that embody the struggle toward freedom and human dignity of the state's African American community, that celebrate their accomplishments, and that promote heritage tourism. In 2021 each issue of Preservation Connecticut News will feature one of the stops on the Freedom Trail.

National Historic Landmarks, cont'd from page 4

As National Historic Landmarks, these two Connecticut places rise to the highest level of significance. They both display the work of notable and pioneering designers and highlight the nature of architecture as the product of many collaborators who are guided by a single overriding vision. They also embody themes in American history—Edwardian estate life in the case of Hill-Stead, and mid-century suburban development at First Presbyterian Church. Together, they help tell the nation's story. 🌿

For more information:

First Presbyterian Church, www.fishchurch.org

*Highland Green Foundation,
highlandgreenfoundation.org*

Hill-Stead, www.hillstead.org

Library of Congress, Historic American Buildings Survey



The National Historic Landmark designation for Hill-Stead in Farmington was expanded to recognize its landscape.



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Stops on the Freedom Trail

Leverett Beman historic district, Middletown

R. Tribert



The five-acre triangle of land at Cross and Vine Streets was laid out by Leverett C. Beman (1810-1883) in 1847. The neighborhood is the first known residential subdivision in the state to have been laid out by a free Black man for Black homeowners.

continued on page 19