

# PRESERVATION CONNECTICUT NEWS

## Connecticut Preservation Awards 2022

**A**lthough the coronavirus pandemic continues, life is slowly taking on a more normal aspect again. As that process unfolds, we recognize the many ways that historic places contribute to the life of our communities. They are places to live, work, play, worship, create, or do several of these activities. They can provide shelter, conserve resources from the past, and remind us of who we are and where we come from. In other words, preservation is by, with, and for *people*.

Historic preservation reporting often seems overwhelmed by threats and hardships, so it's all the sweeter to be able to celebrate stories of hope and accomplishment. In this issue, Preservation Connecticut is proud to recognize some of those stories and the people who have made them.

Families enjoy the Norwalk Art Space, located in a former church and one of this year's Merit Award recipients.

Courtesy of Canyon Sharits

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## Harlan H. Griswold Award: Nancy R. Savin

The Connecticut State Historic Preservation Office and Preservation Connecticut are pleased to present the Harlan H. Griswold Award to Nancy R. Savin. Named for the longtime chair of the Connecticut Historical Commission and a founder of Preservation Connecticut, the award honors outstanding contributions to the preservation and revitalization of Connecticut's historic places. Ms. Savin has devoted her life to our state's culture in many ways and through many mediums, both traditional and original.

Ms. Savin's preservation ethic of honoring place is shaped by both happy and tragic events as a child. She fondly remembers her childhood days spent in a Russian Jewish farm community in Chesterfield, Connecticut; as well as the horror of being a young survivor of the Hartford circus fire. Both left a permanent impact on her understanding of the importance of place and honoring it.



Nancy R. Savin, the Harlan H. Griswold honoree for 2022.

As a young woman, she graduated Connecticut College as a major in Music History and Voice, won an honorary scholarship to Juilliard School of Music, earned a Master's in Education from the University of Hartford's Hartt School, and worked for the Downtown Council

in Hartford before starting a 17-year-long career with Connecticut Public Television (CPTV).

At CPTV, Ms. Savin produced and hosted numerous documentaries and programs that featured Connecticut institutions, people, ideas, and events in the visual and performing arts. Through the people she met and stories she told, her path evolved to include more preservation efforts. In particular, she did several programs about Connecticut's historic theaters that resulted in her partnering with the State Historic Preservation Office in 1981 to survey Connecticut theaters, concert halls, opera houses, and movie palaces built before 1940. The survey identified more than one hundred properties and it served as the impetus for nominating many of them to the State and National Registers of Historic Places. Her love of these places also led to her founding the Connecticut Association of Historic Theaters, the first statewide organization dedicated to returning Connecticut's historic theaters to public use. In this role, she brought together the owners of these grand buildings to exchange ideas and support each other with preservation efforts. This organization played a pivotal role in preserving Torrington's Warner Theater in the early 1980s and Manchester's Cheney Hall in the early 1990s.

Ms. Savin continued working as a freelance producer and writer for CPTV at the turn of the century, creating award-winning short features such as *Saving New Canaan's International Style Architecture*, *Outdoor Sculpture at Risk*, *Historic Preservation in Connecticut*, and *The Merritt Parkway*. During this time, and until recently, she also served on the Board of Directors for the Merritt Parkway Conservancy. She is very proud of her involvement in the celebration of the parkway's 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2015, as well as her personal connection—she was born while her uncle's construction company

*continued on page 9*



In the 1980s, the Connecticut Association of Historic Theaters, founded by Nancy Savin, played a pivotal role in preserving the Warner Theater, in Torrington.

## FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

For us at Preservation Connecticut, a new year begins on May 1, when new Trustees and officers take up their work. In April, the board elected officers for the year. With unanimous support, **Caroline Sloat** was elected to remain at the helm as chair, with **MJ Agostini** as vice chair, **Garry Leonard** as treasurer, and **Jonathan Wharton** as secretary. We thank them for their willingness to serve in these positions.

The board also welcomed two new Trustees to its ranks. **Jeffrey Kaufman**, an architect at JMKA Architects, Westport, who has also served on various building, library, and planning committees in the town of Woodbridge; and **Pieter Roos**, executive director at The Mark Twain House and Museum and creator of Keeping History Above Water, the first national level conference on the subject of climate change and historic preservation.

Two long-serving board members have stepped down. **Peter Stockman**, formerly of Killingworth and now Charleston, South Carolina, served from 2016-2022 providing invaluable expertise as Treasurer, and served on the Finance, Governance, and Strategic

Plan committees as well as the Revolving Fund board. **Rick Wies**, of Branford, served from 2008-2022, participating on the Finance Committee, Stewardship Committee, and as Vice Chair. Rick's expertise as architect guided many decisions around our easement properties. We're grateful to both for years of hard work and invaluable support.

Also announcing his retirement is Assistant Attorney General **Alan Ponanski**, after 30 years at the Connecticut Attorney General's office. A partner with Preservation Connecticut on legal action taken under the Connecticut Environmental Protection Act, Alan was instrumental in court cases to save buildings in Wallingford and downtown New London, as well as successful negotiations to save other buildings without bringing suit.

A final retiree is State Historian **Walter W. Woodward**, who steps down at the end of the academic year in May. Since 2004 Walt has dedicated himself to bringing Connecticut history alive. Reaching beyond the usual books and lectures, he has offered a weekly trivia quiz, hosted a daily

podcast, "Today in Connecticut history," and set history to music with the Band of Steady Habits. We were honored to have him narrate this year's awards video. A search for a new State Historian is underway.

As I write, we're in the final stretch of organizing Preservation Connecticut's return to an in-person **awards event**, at the New Haven Country Club on May 4. We're grateful for all those who submitted nominations to the awards, and especially to our **sponsors**, whose support makes the awards presentation memorable (see page 15 for the whole list).

Looking ahead, Preservation Connecticut and the State Historic Preservation Office invite you to save **Saturday, October 1** (and October 15 as a rain date), for a joyous celebration of the **Olmsted in Connecticut** documentation project, at Lewis Fulton Memorial Park in Waterbury. We're still in the planning stage but expect to celebrate the Olmsted landscape heritage in Connecticut with a preview of the survey results plus tours, exhibits, activities for kids, food trucks, and more. Watch [preservationct.org](http://preservationct.org) for updates. 🌿

—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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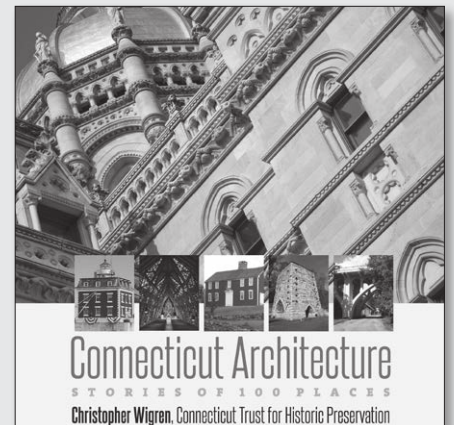
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# Preservation projects for vibrant communities

**T**he Cities of Groton and New Haven have received funding from Preservation Connecticut's Vibrant Communities Initiative (VCI) to create blueprints to revitalize historic neighborhoods. The two cities were selected through a competitive process and received \$35,000 each to hire interdisciplinary teams to investigate community revitalization and funding strategies. Final reports will be adopted by each City, and their recommendations will be acted upon in both the short and long term.

In New Haven, the City assembled a committee of residents to assist in the selection of its interdisciplinary team, Interboro Partners, a Brooklyn-based firm that specializes in urban design and architectural services. The subject of the study was reuse options for the former Horace H. Strong school (1915; NR), in Fair Haven. The community sees rehabilitation of this vacant, dilapidated, City-owned building as a catalyst to revitalize an area near the waterfront.

Interboro examined neighborhood demographics, reviewed the building's condition, held monthly committee meetings, and sought input on reuse ideas from the larger community through three community meetings, a questionnaire, and phone calls.

Interboro's report offers multiple reuse scenarios for the school. One is to use the entire structure as a community art center, with an emphasis on youth. Another is a work/office model that could house small businesses. Still another proposes mixed use, with a restaurant and housing. All the scenarios would utilize State and Federal historic rehabilitation tax credits, which the building is eligible to receive.

In conjunction with the Interboro report, the City is currently producing a



Strong School, in New Haven's Fair Haven neighborhood.

request for proposals to eventually select a developer to implement one of the reuse scenarios.

In Groton, the focus was on Thames Street, which runs along the Thames River near the Avery-Copp house museum, Fort Griswold Battlefield State Park, and the Mother Bailey house. The street and its surroundings are part of the Groton Bank National Register district.

Through the City's own process, Ninigret Partners, LLC, a Rhode Island planning and design firm, was selected.

The goal of the study is to review the existing conditions along the street and recommend short- and long-term strategies to connect its mix of uses, both current and future, to the area's historic assets.

A part of that strategy was to create ideas for Thames View Park, an underutilized City-owned parcel with water access. Adding a boat launch, a new pier, and a connection to Fort Griswold Park were some long-term strategies recommended to encourage pedestrian access to the park. The team held three public workshops, reviewed demographics, performed



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Thames Street, in Groton.

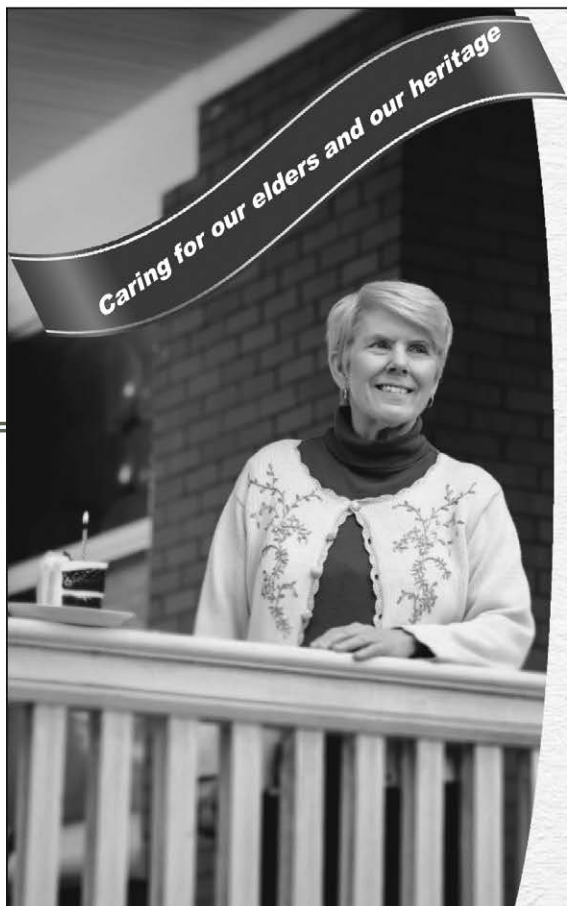
a building and land inventory, and produced placemaking ideas for the street.

Among the recommendations were streetscape improvements (lighting and sidewalks), vacant building and ground-floor rehabilitation (promoting restaurants), signs for wayfinding (highlighting the

National Register district), public art, traffic calming, and landscape screening (particularly to hide a water treatment plant). The final report is still in draft, but once complete will be presented to the City Council to enact for revitalizing Thames Street.

The Vibrant Communities Initiative is funded by the Connecticut State Historic Preservation Office through the Community Investment Act. Connecticut Circuit Riders work closely with grant recipients to define and carry out grant projects. 🌱

—Brad Schide



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# Threats in local historic districts

Charles Perini

In most cases, establishment of a local historic district (LHD), where an historic district commission has to approve building alterations visible from a public right of way—including demolition—is considered a strong protection for historic places. But even LHDs aren't foolproof, as residents of Groton and Suffield have learned when commissions recently approved the demolition of structures in local historic districts in those towns.

In both these cases, the structures are listed on the National Register, in addition to being in local historic districts. That means that the Connecticut Environmental Protection Act could be used to save them. That law allows any citizen to sue to prevent the unreasonable demolition of buildings listed on, or under consideration for, the National Register.

In Groton, the town historic district commission approved the demolition of 17 Gravel Street in March. Local sources identify it as the Henry Holdredge house, built in 1835 and updated later with a Gothic Revival front gable and twin bay windows. In addition to being part of the local historic district, it is a contributing resource in the Mystic River National Register district. The commission also approved the design for a replacement house on the site.

The owner, Dan Grace, and his architect, Bill Bertsche, claimed that the house had to be torn down because it was located in a flood zone identified by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Agency regulations require that any building in a flood zone be raised to at least the Base Flood Elevation (BFE) if substantial work is done to the building; the Town of Groton requires that buildings be raised to one foot above BFE. For 17 Gravel Street, that would mean raising the structure three feet above its current level.

The architect argued that demolishing and rebuilding the house was easier and more straightforward than elevating and reinforcing it. While the application referred to the new design as a "reconstruction to match the existing," it actually will significantly alter several important features



The Groton historic district commission approved demolition of 17 Gravel Street (center) because of the claimed need to comply with federal and town flood regulations.

of the house, including its roofline, fenestration, and the prominent bay windows.

Preservation Connecticut convened a virtual meeting of residents and other concerned citizens in early April to discuss ways of preserving the building. The first task is to seek a discussion with the historic district commission. In addition, the Mystic River Historical Society has launched an

online petition in favor of preserving the house; at press time the petition had more than 2,100 signatures. Such a demonstration of community support could be used to ask the State to take legal action under the Connecticut Environmental Protection Act.

The demolition of 17 Gravel Street could set an unfortunate precedent. As one commissioner noted, at least twenty percent

Stacey Vairo



This tobacco shed in Suffield faces demolition to make way for a new house.



of the Mystic local historic district is within a flood zone, raising fears that many more such applications could come.

A second case is in Suffield, where the historic district commission voted in February to allow Rayco Development Company to demolish a tobacco shed on North Main Street for a new house to be built as part of a larger development. In its original approval for the development, in 2018, the commission required that the shed, as well as other outbuildings on the site, be retained. However, the town apparently allowed the creation of a lot in which it would be difficult to construct a new house and leave the shed in place. This, along with the builder's reputation for high quality new construction, seems to have been the deciding factor in the commission's approval.

In addition to the configuration of the lot, one commissioner noted that the shed appeared not to have had any maintenance done since 2018. According to the meeting minutes, he added that he "did not like being put in the position where willful neglect would force the commission to make a choice about the demolition of an historic tobacco shed." Advocates note that the shed could be preserved by simply building the new house a bit closer to the street.

As with the Mystic house, the tobacco shed is also a contributing structure in the Suffield National Register district. Preservation Connecticut has consulted with residents about a possible approach to the Connecticut Historic Preservation Council to seek the assistance of the Attorney General in opposing the demolition under CEPA. Again, a petition has been posted online and as of late April had garnered 367 signatures. 🌱

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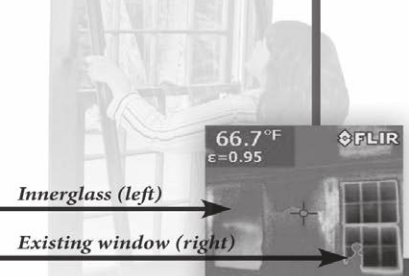


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# Researcher uncovers Lustron houses

Robert Gregson

One of Preservation Connecticut's members, Angeline Hein, is working on an independent project to locate remaining Lustron houses in the state. Lustrons are steel-framed prefabricated residences clad in porcelain-enameled tiles. They were manufactured in a former airline factory in Columbus, Ohio, between 1948 and 1950 as one solution to the post-World War II housing shortage. At the time, assembly-line production was seen as a promising way to provide large numbers of new houses quickly and inexpensively.

Lustrons stand out for their use of porcelain enamel for all interior and exterior components. The houses are readily identifiable, thanks to their wide-pitched roofs, distinctive steel roof tiles and two-by-two-foot panels. They are modestly sized—most models include two bedrooms and one bath and measure 31 by 35 feet (1,021 square feet). Exterior colors included pink, tan, aqua, blue, green, gray, and yellow, while interiors came in a choice of beige or gray.

More than 2,400 of these low-maintenance, cost-effective houses were shipped throughout the United States. Research by Lustron expert Thomas Feters shows that 42 were sent to Connecticut. Angie also received information from one of our Circuit Riders, who had done her master's thesis on Lustrons and found 14 Connecticut examples. Angie quickly began adding to and correcting that list, with the help of social media outreach by Preservation Connecticut. She has already found three previously unidentified examples, in Berlin, Bethany, and Farmington. If you know of Lustrons in your community (even if they are no longer standing), we'd love to hear from you at [contact@preservationct.org](mailto:contact@preservationct.org). 🌱



Enameled steel panels still gleam on this Lustron house in Bristol.

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*Harlan H. Griswold Award*, cont'd from page 2

was building this historically significant piece of infrastructure.

With the historic theater survey, Ms. Savin learned that all good preservation efforts begin with knowing what you have and so she initiated another important architectural survey of Jewish Congregations in Connecticut during 1991. That survey resulted in the listing of 16 synagogues on the National Register of Historic Places, more than in any other state.

The survey also was important personally to Ms. Savin, who fondly remembered the synagogue she used to walk to from her grandmother's farm in Chesterfield, in the town of Montville. The New England Hebrew Farmers of the Emmanuel Society was founded in 1892 with support from the Baron Maurice de Hirsch Fund. The Farmers of the Emmanuel Society was described in 1910 as the largest and perhaps best-known Jewish settlement in New England. At that time, approximately 90 families devoted to agriculture, dairying, and hosting summer boarders lived there. The community started to decline during the 1930s, and the synagogue was destroyed by arson in 1975. However, the ruins of this building and archaeological deposits from the departed community still remain. This place reminds us that we are not the first generation to experience opportunity or endure adversity. Ms. Savin honored this community with the installation of a monument made from Mount Rushmore granite in 1986 adjacent to the synagogue foundation.

Twenty years later, in 2006, Ms. Savin reactivated the Farmers of the Emmanuel

National Register of Historic Places



Nancy Savin's efforts to preserve the New England Hebrew Farmers of the Emmanuel Society site in Chesterfield included installation of a monument, in 1986.

Society and reunited the lost community of her childhood. During the past 15 years, she has spearheaded the designation of the 1.47-acre site as Connecticut's 24th State Archaeological Preserve, in 2007, and its listing on the National Register of Historic Places, in 2012. The site welcomed a University of Connecticut Archaeological Field School in 2012 and has received several grants from the State Historic Preservation Office to develop preservation plans to manage the property, as well as capital improvement grants to rehabilitate what remains.

It would not be appropriate to say that Ms. Savin did all this alone, but her tireless commitment, admirable persistence, and constant caring for this place demonstrate her leadership in preservation. And, while many would be content with stopping here, Nancy has ensured the future care and preservation of the property by arranging for its transfer to The Archaeological Conservancy, a nonprofit organization that acquires, maintains, and manages archaeological sites throughout the United States with the goals of preservation and education.

Harlan Griswold once said, "To me, preservation is more about my grandchildren than about my grandparents." Through her selfless preservation efforts, both small and large, Nancy R. Savin is helping to build a better future for our children and grandchildren. The State Historic Preservation Office and Preservation Connecticut are honored to present the Harlan H. Griswold Award to Nancy R. Savin for her outstanding and ongoing contributions to preservation in Connecticut. 🌿

—Catherine Labadia,  
State Historic Preservation Office

Nancy Savin initiated an important architectural survey of Jewish Congregations in Connecticut, with results published in the journal *Connecticut Jewish History* in 1991.



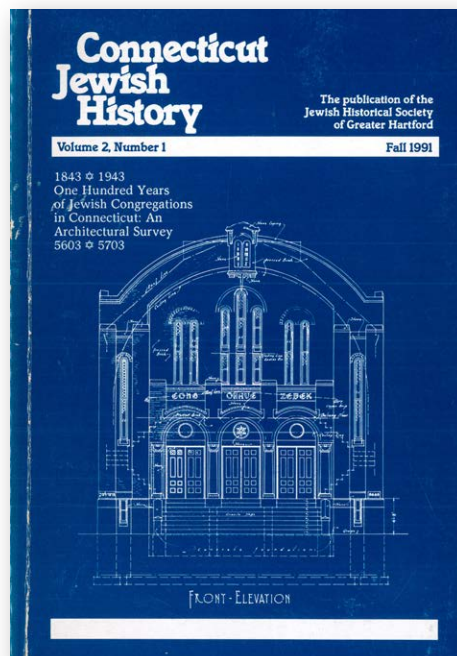
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# Awards of Merit

This year's Awards of Merit recognize historic places reborn, reimagined, or reinvigorated to serve their communities and the people in them in new, exciting ways. Here are this year's recipients:

## Legacy Theatre, Branford

*The Legacy Theatre, Inc.; Wyeth Architects llc; GNCB Consulting Engineers, P.C.; Consulting Engineering Services, Inc.; Luminous Environments LLC; Acme Professional Inc.; Criscuolo Engineering, LLC; Philip R. Sherman, P.E.; Heritage Resources; O,R&L Construction Corporation; Robert Benson Photography, LLC*

In 1914, a silent picture house was born in the Branford village of Stony Creek, now a National Register district. Within a few years it was converted to a community and summer stock theater. In 1938 it saw the premier of the Mercury Theatre's *Too Much Johnson*, adapted by Orson Welles. The building was used as a factory producing parachutes during World War II and corsets after the war. Most recently, it housed the Stony Creek Puppet House featuring a collection of nearly life-sized Sicilian marionettes. When the puppet house closed in 2009, many feared the worn-out theater would be lost.

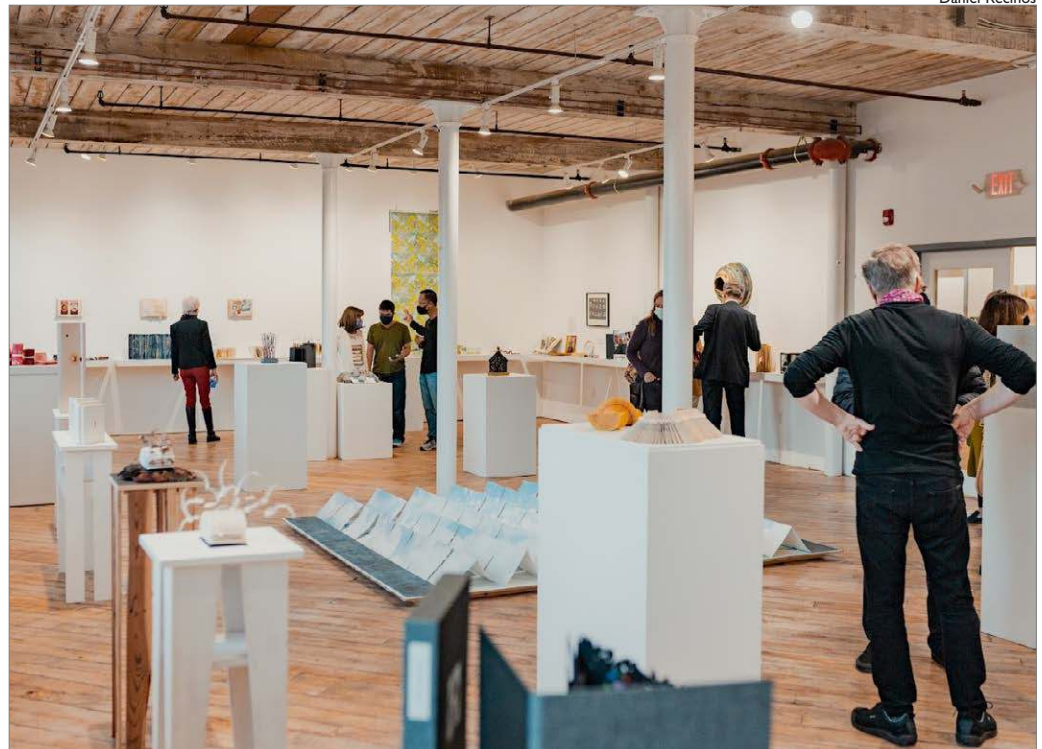
In 2013 the nonprofit Legacy Theatre acquired the old building. With community and state support, including Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits, the theater reopened in 2021 despite the Covid 19 pandemic. Now, it once again offers live musical and dramatic performances, plus classes offered in partnership with the Branford Department of Parks and Recreation. The Legacy Theatre has given new life to a century-long tradition of entertainment in Stony Creek.

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Legacy Theatre, Branford.

Daniel Recinos



Metro Arts Studios, Bridgeport.





Clover Gardens, Hartford.

### **Metro Arts Studios, 345 Railroad Avenue, Bridgeport**

*Michael Villani and Douglas Hartman;  
Jane Davila, Metro Art Studios; Rodger W.  
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Metro Art Studios is located in the historic Crown Corset factory building, built in 1909 in Bridgeport's South End. After standing vacant for many years, the three-story building has been renovated for artists' studios plus a gallery. The features that made the structure ideal for manufacturing—its narrow footprint, lofty ceilings, solid wood floors, and 90-inch-high windows—give it the space, solidity, and ample light that are also perfect for studios. A mix of restored original elements, salvaged pieces from other buildings, and modern fixtures inspired by traditional designs meld to evoke the building's manufacturing history.

The building reopened in November 2021, and by January of this year a varied and vibrant mix of artists and musicians had filled the 34 studios. This project reinforces other revitalization efforts nearby, including the merger of Paier College of Art with the University of Bridgeport and the city's designation of the South End as an arts and entertain-

ment district. It shows how private parties with a love of old buildings, determination and the interest of potential tenants can reuse once vacant space and create new energy.

### **Clover Gardens, Hartford**

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Park Service*

Four buildings in Hartford's Asylum Hill neighborhood have been returned to residential use by the nonprofit Chrysalis Center. Three were grand houses built in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century for members of Hartford's business elite and later part of a charter school. The fourth, an apartment house from the 1920s, was deteriorated and underutilized.

The complex now offers 32 apartments. Eight are marketed as affordable, and another eight will house clients from the Hartford nonprofit HARC, which provides services for individuals with intellectual disabilities. As requested by neighborhood representatives, Chrysalis provided two-, and three-bedroom units suitable for

families, as well as market-rate units.

Funding came from the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority, the state Department of Housing, the city of Hartford through the federal HOME program, and historic rehabilitation tax credits.

Each apartment is unique, boasting historic trim, paneling, fireplaces, and parquet or hardwood flooring. Similarly, the landscape design retains an individual appearance for each building, to avoid an institutional appearance. This project exemplifies how historic preservation and affordable housing work together.

### **Martin Luther King, Jr., Campus, Hartford**

*Hartford Public Schools; JCJ Architecture;  
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Glass Resources; Evergreene Architectural  
Arts; Depaoli Mosaic Company*

This Collegiate Gothic building opened in 1923 as Weaver High School and became a middle school in 1974.

*continued on next page*





Martin Luther King, Jr., Campus, Hartford.

The school held a prominent place within Hartford's Blue Hills neighborhood, but alterations and neglect left it in deteriorated condition. Now, the building has been reinstated as an important community asset to house the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Social Justice Middle School as well as the Breakthrough North Magnet School.

In addition to creating a state-of-the-art learning environment, the renovation restored rich architectural details, including terrazzo, plasterwork, stained glass, and millwork. Windows were especially important: boarded-up or broken windows were repaired, and plexiglass panels removed to open classrooms to natural light and views of the outdoors.

"We know that the conditions of our learning spaces matter in supporting both student and adult learning," writes the middle school principal, Dr. Doreen Crawford. "Here on this beautifully restored campus, our neighborhood school and magnet school teachers, staff, and families along with students from our

city and the region, will learn from and with each other in an environment that is conducive to learning."

### Swift factory, Hartford

*Community Solutions; Bruner/Cott Architects; Consigli Construction Company; Banton Construction Company; Capital Restoration, Inc.; Centek Engineering; Cirrus Structural Engineering; Richard Burck Associates; MacRostie Historic Advisors; Langan Engineering; Deliver All, LLC; Kalin Associates; Total Business Network Group; Kolram Access Services; Pirie Associates; Newfield Construction*

The M. Swift and Sons gold leaf factory was once the economic heart of North Hartford. When production ceased in 2005, unemployment and poverty in the neighborhood increased dramatically.

In 2010, the nonprofit developer Community Solutions acquired the site. Intensive consultation with the community

identified public safety, jobs, and youth engagement as top concerns. Following National Register listing and the neighborhood's designation as a Promise Zone in 2015, the Swift factory became the focal point for redevelopment.

Renovation has provided space for commissary kitchens for fledgling local businesses, a community-based private school, a healthcare clinic, and shared office space for local entrepreneurs and start-ups, of which 90 percent are Black-owned. The Hartford Public Library plans to open a branch here as well.

The project began by asking community members what they needed and wanted. And it resulted in a reimagined facility designed to bring jobs and life back to the former neighborhood anchor. In a time of significant social and cultural change, the new uses of the Swift factory address economic, health, social, and environmental conditions in North Hartford.



© Robert Benson Photograph



Swift Factory, Hartford.

### Seven Hearths pelt room

*Kent Historical Society; Jeffrey Morgan;  
Roger Gonzales; Hudson Valley Preservation;  
Mark Peterson; Zordan Brothers*

In 1979, the artist George Laurence Nelson bequeathed his home, called “Seven Hearths,” to the Kent Historical Society. Built in 1751 by John Beebe, Jr., in what is now the Flanders National Register district, the structure was not only Beebe’s home but also housed his general store, a butcher shop, and, intriguingly, a pelt room on the second floor.

Nelson had converted the pelt room to a bathroom, and the historical society used the space for storage. But in 2014 society members found beams chalk-marked with the words “mink,” “bear,” and “BOUGHT,” as well names and initials that must have designated individual traders’ nails.

Careful investigation guided restoration of the pelt room, including replacement of wainscoting and the original attic stairs. Now the room provides first-hand

*continued on next page*



Seven Hearths pelt room, Kent

Kent Historical Society





Norwalk Art Space, Norwalk.

evidence of the vital role that fur played in the Colonial economy for both local use and export. In today's world, when wearing fur is mostly taboo, this provides an opportunity for visitors to put themselves in the place of early Americans rather than to judge them by today's standards.

### Norwalk Art Space

*Alexandra Korry; The Norwalk Art Space; Frederick William Hoag Architect LLC; Wesley Stout Associates; A.V. Tuchy Builders Inc.; DeStefano & Chamberlain Inc.*

The First Church of Christ Scientist was built in 1935. After falling into disuse, it became an oriental rug store, but lawyer and civil rights activist Alexandra Korry recognized the building's potential as a center for the arts—promoting local artists, enhancing educational opportunities for under-served students, and providing a welcoming space for the public to enjoy art and music.

Alexandra's program included resident artists' studios, an art gallery to exhibit their work and that of others, a classroom where resident artists would teach, and a café serving both the facility and the neighborhood.

Sadly, Alexandra died before construction was completed, but her ambitions were realized. Today, the building hums: four resident artists occupy the studios and in exchange offer art classes for community children free of charge. Activities include art and jazz classes, the café, and exhibitions in the gallery and an outdoor sculpture garden.

The onetime church is now a vibrant community art hub, serving as both a physical and symbolic manifestation of ambition, community outreach, artistic expression, and inspiration for all.

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C. J. Starr barn, Stamford.

### C. J. Starr barn, Stamford

*City of Stamford; Stamford Historic Preservation Advisory Commission; State Historic Preservation Office; Stamford Historical Society; Perkins Eastman, Architects; BVH Integrated Services; Milone and MacBroom; Richter and Cegan; Dagostino and Associates; Diversified Technology Consultants; DVS Security; Acentech; Atelier Ten; Kronenberger and Sons Restoration*

A barn from a 19<sup>th</sup>-century estate has found new life as part of a city school. Built about 1860 for businessman C. J. Starr and expanded about 1880, the barn later became a gymnasium for Sacred Heart Academy and was listed on the National Register. In 2014, the academy property was sold to the City of Stamford for development of a new K-through-8 school.

A conditions assessment revealed that the barn was usable but needed substantial structural reinforcement. A new load-bearing foundation and framing were installed on the interior, leaving the exterior dimensions, siding, and trim unchanged and allowing the walls to be insulated for energy efficiency. Windows were restored to match the shapes and locations shown in an historic photograph.

A different approach was taken on the south wall, where framing shows how the original barn was expanded. Adding a

steel-framed wall on the exterior allowed this unusual feature to remain visible on the interior. It provides a vivid lesson about historic construction and reuse to students and community users in the new multipurpose space.

Congratulations and thanks to all these awardees for their hard work and their contributions to the preservation of our state's historic built environment!

*To learn more about Preservation Connecticut and these award recipients, visit [PreservationCT.org](http://PreservationCT.org).*

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# HISTORIC PROPERTIES EXCHANGE

Threatened Buildings and Easement Properties Available — May/June 2022

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

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



## 5 Maple Street, Simsbury (1895) \$550,000

Wood-framed Gothic Revival church available in Tariffville. Built in 1895, formerly operated as St. Bernard's Catholic Church, until its closure in 2017 due to parish consolidations. Located on 1.69-acre lot, church measures 3,832 sq. ft. and features a rose window, tourelles, and stained glass. Lower level has 3,500 sq. ft. kitchen and banquet hall. Property also includes 4-bedroom vernacular rectory (1880) and garage. All buildings are contributing resources in the Tariffville National Register Historic District and eligible for historic rehabilitation tax credits.

Contact: Tess Cullen, Chozick Realty, [tess@chozickrealty.com](mailto:tess@chozickrealty.com), 860-247-7400

## 85 Pulaski Street, Torrington (1927, 1960) \$550,000

Romanesque Revival church and accompanying Modernist school on 1.5-acres available for purchase. Built in 1927, the church was founded by Torrington's Polish-American community and operated as St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church until its closure due to church consolidations in 2017. Features include stone construction, rounded-arch windows, stained glass, and vaulted ceiling. Church is 14,420 sq. ft., which includes partially finished lower level. School was built in 1960 and is 14,688 sq. ft. Property may be eligible for listing on the State Register of Historic Places and receiving historic rehabilitation tax credits.

Contact: Dom Giglio, Giglio Commercial Real Estate, [dgiglio@gigliocre.com](mailto:dgiglio@gigliocre.com), 203-755-0030







## 535 Migeon Avenue, Torrington (c. 1896) \$4,500,000

Redevelopment opportunity of historic industrial building. Built c. 1896 for the growing Union Hardware Company. Union Hardware was established to produce ice skates, but expanded to manufacture roller skates, later growing further to include items ranging from golf clubs to police handcuffs. In 1960, Union Hardware was purchased by Brunswick Sports Products which shifted the production focus to sporting goods. Later occupants include FM Precision Golf Manufacturing Corp., Royal Precision, and the final owner, True Temper Sports, which closed the factory in 2006. This property is listed in Preservation Connecticut's Mills: Making Places of Connecticut industrial survey and may be eligible for listing on the State Register of Historic Places and receiving historic rehabilitation tax credits. Building area is 225,000 sq.ft.; 11.51 acres.

**Contact: Dom Giglio, Giglio Commercial Real Estate, [dgiglio@gigliocre.com](mailto:dgiglio@gigliocre.com), 203-755-0030**



## 23 Pomfret Road, Brooklyn (c.1820) \$175,000

Restoration opportunity available in Brooklyn. Federal-style house features rooftop monitor, pilasters, and Italianate wraparound porch with chamfered posts and brackets plus long kitchen ell to rear. Interior is 2,905 sq. ft. and includes five bedrooms and two bathrooms, with original trim, mantels, paneling, and wood floors. The 0.9-acre property also includes detached one-car garage. Located in the Brooklyn Green National Register Historic District which makes eligible for historic rehabilitation tax credits.

**Contact: Anthony Quintiliani, Agnelli Real Estate, [agnellipartners@gmail.com](mailto:agnellipartners@gmail.com), 860-633-4000**

### Deadline for the next issue is June 20, 2022

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

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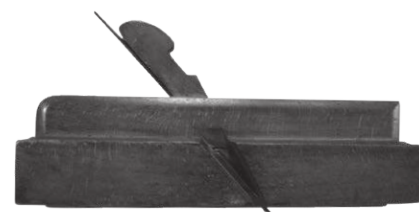


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## Upcoming Meetings

### Connecticut Historic Preservation Council

June 1, 2022, at 9:30 a.m.

—Virtual meeting

July 6, 2022, at 9:30 a.m.

—Virtual Meeting

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

### State Historic Preservation Board

June 17, 2021, at 9:30 a.m.

—Virtual meeting

To participate, contact Jenny Scofield  
(860) 500-2343; Jenny.Scofield@ct.gov  
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At the top of the park is an open lawn with views over the city; the oval curb once surrounded a fountain.



A narrow, tightly planted footpath offers a different route to the top of the park.

### *Hayden Homestead Park, cont'd from page 20*

From Grove Street, visitors to the park face three paths leading to the top. To the right is a roadway which, according to the Olmsted Brothers' correspondence, follows the path of the Hayden's driveway and was intended to provide access for maintenance vehicles.

Straight ahead is a straight flight of granite stairs. Landings break the climb, and lampposts mark the top and bottom

of the stair. From the bottom, a glimpse of sky promises an open area and sunlight at the top.

The third path opens to the left from one of the stair landings. This is a narrow footpath, lined with rough rocks and closely planted with shrubs under the trees of the hillside. Between the trees, one can glimpse the towers of downtown Waterbury, and at the top, a bend brings

the climber out into the lawn.

These paths offer three different experiences of movement: the climb on the stair is straight, formal, and steep, with clear sight of the brightly lit clearing at the top. The road to the right is more gradual but wide enough for several to walk abreast, and it bends to draw the traveler on without revealing what is to come. The footpath, mostly closed in by shrubs and trees, offers a few views across the rooftops.

All three ways up are thickly shaded by trees and shrubs, dark and closed-in until they emerge into the bright and open lawn. Once there, the path continues in a loop offering changing perspectives onto the open lawn (imagine the sun sparkling on water drops from the fountain), or the tree-dotted lawn beyond, or views over the city between trees to the south.

Hayden Homestead Park is small—less than three acres—but with passages from shade to sun, alternating feelings of enclosure and openness, and tantalizing hints of something new around the next bend, it offers a variety of experiences that entice the visitor to explore. 🌿

*Hayden Homestead Park is located at 250 Grove Street in Waterbury. The park is within the boundaries of the Hillside National Register district but is not identified in the district nomination. To see some of the Olmsted plans, visit [olmstedonline.org](http://olmstedonline.org).*



## EDWARD F. GERBER'S LEGACY

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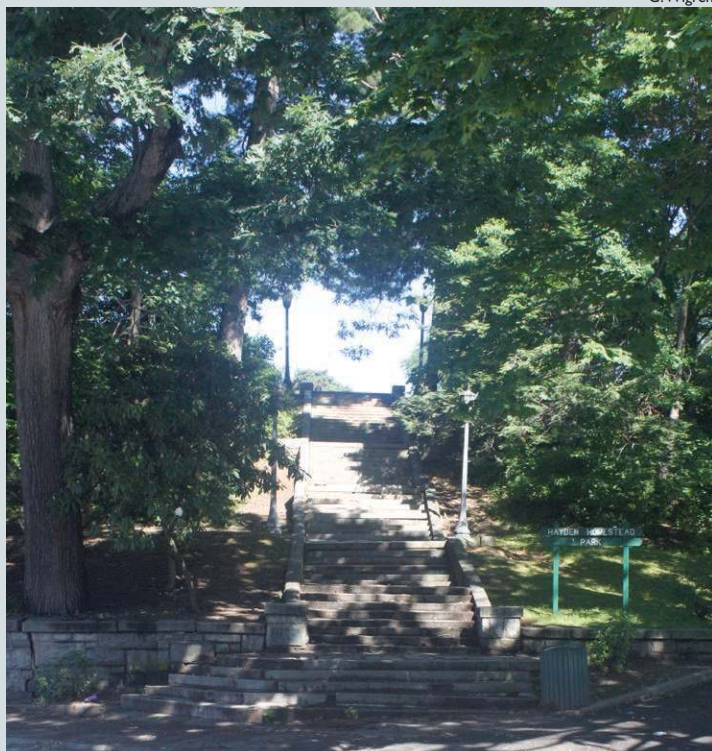




## Connecticut's Olmsted Heritage

# To make movement a pleasure: Hayden Homestead Park, Waterbury

C. Wigen



A formal stair offers one way to climb the hill at Waterbury's Hayden Homestead Park.

*Editor's note: In 2022 each issue of Preservation Connecticut News features a Connecticut site associated with Frederick Law Olmsted and the Olmsted landscape firm. Material is drawn from the Olmsted in Connecticut landscape documentation project being carried out by Preservation Connecticut, the Connecticut State Historic Preservation Office, and consultants from the Red Bridge Group in observance of the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Olmsted's birth.*

**A** landscape is not a painting, to be looked at from a single vantage point. The attraction of landscape is the potential to move through it, discovering different views and experiences in the process.

Movement was a central element of Frederick Law Olmsted's landscape designs—as he wrote, “A park as a work of design... should be a ground which invites, encourages, and facilitates movement; its topographical conditions such as make movement a pleasure; such as offer inducements to variety... & such as appeal to the common and elementary impulses of all classes of mankind.” In later generations this principle continued to shape the Olmsted firm's work.

One Olmsted landscape that invites movement is the Hayden Homestead Park, in Waterbury. The park had been the home site of local industrialist Hiram Hayden and was donated to the city in 1920 by Hayden's granddaughters, who commissioned Olmsted Brothers Landscape Architects to design it.

The park occupies a hilltop rising steeply above Grove Street. The top of the hill is level, with an open lawn roughly oval in shape and encircled by a path. In its center an oval curb outlines what originally was a pool with a small fountain. To the north is more lawn, loosely dotted with shade trees, while thicker plantings screen properties to the east and west.

*continued on page 19*