

New Tax Credit Will Encourage Preservation

Across Connecticut, crumbling mills and vacant downtown commercial buildings have a better chance to be renovated, thanks to a new tax credit passed by the General Assembly this year and signed into law by Governor Rell on May 7.

According to its introduction, SB 539, "An Act Concerning Tax Credits for Rehabilitating Historic Structures" will "establish a program of tax credits for reuse of historic buildings to stimulate reinvestment in communities, increase municipal tax revenues, improve surrounding property values and provide increased opportunities for home ownership."

The new tax credit will help address the "appraisal gap" that plagues many historic buildings where the cost of renovation is greater than expected value after work is complete. Where

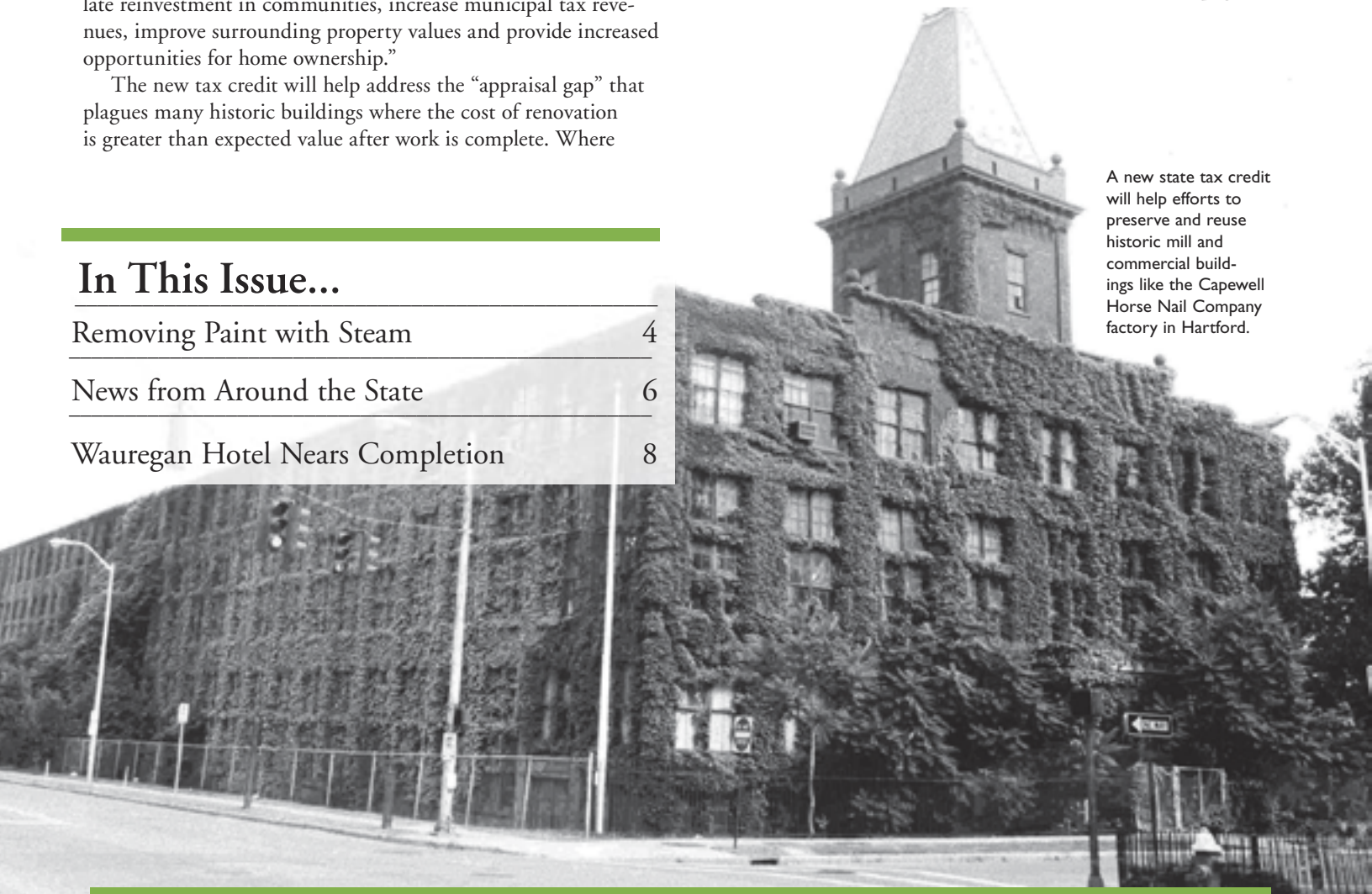
this is the case, developers cannot get adequate financing for renovation. The appraisal gap has plagued revitalization projects all over the state and for many years. In 2004, the Trust called attention to the problem, which at that time threatened a string of buildings in a National Register district in downtown Meriden. High estimated renovation costs and low expected value were hampering the city's efforts to find a developer.

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A new state tax credit will help efforts to preserve and reuse historic mill and commercial buildings like the Capewell Horse Nail Company factory in Hartford.



This summer marks the fifth anniversary of the **Connecticut Circuit Rider Program**, a partnership between the Connecticut Trust and the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Northeast Office. Conceived as field service to address the variety of preservation calls both Trusts had been fielding by telephone for years, the Circuit Rider Program has transformed the work of both Trusts and, we believe, started to have an impact on community preservation in Connecticut.

The success of the program can easily be measured in numbers alone: 142 towns served; nearly 250 projects each year; 75 preservation technical assistance grants given out in the last three years, 12 training sessions for historic district commissioners and real estate agents in just the past year. But the real measure of Circuit Riders' success is the extent to which the program is increasingly directing efforts to help communities plan for preservation of their cherished places, rather than simply responding to eleventh-hour cries of, "Help, our Building is Coming Down."

Todd Levine



Barn restorer George Senerchia (left) explains about timber framing to Trust members at the Barn Talk event in May.

In the coming year, with a new second Circuit Rider joining veteran Brad Schide, the program will focus on addressing tear-down issues in Fairfield County and along the shoreline; expanded training of municipal commissioners; farm preservation initiatives in Northeastern and Northwestern Connecticut and investment in historic housing stock in urban neighborhoods. This is a big agenda that will continue to include the original Circuit Rider mantra:

Quick, on-site response to YOUR preservation needs! To read about the work of the Circuit Rider, visit www.cctrust.org and look for "Preservation Help."

Guiding the work of Circuit Rider staff will be two new task forces created by the Board of Trustees in June. **Connecticut Trust Ambassadors**, designed to be a partnership between staff and Trustees, envisions Trustee visits to municipal and legislative delegations in their regions to discuss

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- Editor: Christopher Wigren
- Editor, *Historic Properties Exchange*: Anne Stillman
- Graphic Design: David Wolfram Design, *Middletown*
- Printing: Kramer Printing, *New Haven*

Connecticut Preservation News is published bimonthly by the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation, 940 Whitney Avenue, Hamden, Connecticut 06517. Publication is made possible by support of the members of the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation and by funds provided through the Community Investment Act, Public Act 05-228, Connecticut Commission on Culture & Tourism, State of Connecticut, M. Jodi Rell, Governor. The contents and opinions stated herein do not necessarily reflect the views and policies of the State of Connecticut. The Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation assumes no responsibility for the advertisements.

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CONNECTICUT TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Trust Awards Technical Assistance Grants

In May the Connecticut Trust awarded \$80,600 in Historic Preservation Technical Assistance Grants (HPTAGs), plus \$62,000 for preservation staff positions in the greater Hartford area. These grants are funded through the Connecticut Humanities Council's Cultural Heritage Development Program. The technical assistance grants are given to municipalities or to nonprofit organizations for preservation planning and technical studies and for organizational development and support. The latest grants went to:

- Avon Congregational Church, Avon: \$1,800 to plan steeple repairs. The Federal-style church was built in 1819.
- The town of Ellington: \$2,000 toward a National Register nomination for the Pinney house, an 18th-century house possibly threatened with demolition. National Register status might open the door for rehabilitation funding.
- Hill-Stead Museum, Farmington: \$10,000 for the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) to record Hill-Stead house, designed by architect Theodate Pope in 1901, in photographs, drawings and written histories.
- The Historical Society of the Town of Greenwich: \$6,200 to expand the society's townwide landmarks program.
- Guilford Preservation Alliance: \$25,000 for a part-time executive director. Identified as a strategic priority by the GPA, an executive director will enable the organization to be more active in public advocacy and planning for preservation, smart growth, and good design.
- Guilford Keeping Society: \$2,200 for paint analysis at the Medad Stone Tavern, built c.1803, with an eye toward future restoration, and for a preservation plan for the inn's barn.
- Hamden Historical Properties Commission: \$2,250 toward a National Register nomination for the Ives House, one of the historic properties being disposed of by the South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority.

Hill-Stead Museum



A grant from the Connecticut Trust will help fund a HABS project to record Hill-Stead in Farmington.

- Northford Congregational Church, Northford: \$900 toward restoration of an architectural rendering made in 1840 by Henry Austin, the church's architect. The drawing shows the church's original interior, which was destroyed by fire in 1906.
- Norwalk Association of Silvermine Homeowners, Norwalk: \$7,000 toward a National Register nomination for Silvermine, an area with a rich historic and artistic past.
- Central Connecticut Regional Planning Agency: \$5,000 for a survey of historic resources in the town of Plymouth.
- Town of Redding: \$6,000 to expand a survey of historic buildings to include outbuildings such as barns, outhouses and wells, and \$2,000 to assess needs at the town's Heritage House, an 18th-century house that the town has voted to sell with appropriate historic easements.
- Shelton Historical Society, Shelton: \$1,750 to draw up plans for non-invasive air conditioning to help preserve the Society's Brownson house museum and its collections. The Trust also provided funding for a previous analysis of climate and humidity problems in the house.
- Mattatuck Museum, Waterbury, and Middlebury Historical Society, Middlebury: \$8,500 for Phase II of an Historic Resources Survey of Middlebury. The Trust also provided funding for Phase I of this project.

In addition, grants went to three Hartford-area organizations for professional staff positions. The Hartford Preservation Alliance received \$25,000 for an Historic Resources Advisor who will offer workshops and one-on-one consulting for homeowners. The Antiquarian and Landmarks Society also received \$25,000, for a Building Conservator and Property Manager to safeguard the architectural integrity of its 32 buildings and properties. And the Manchester

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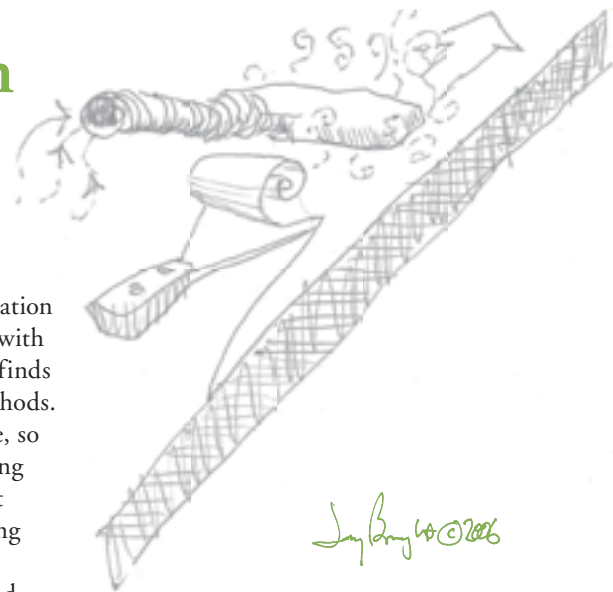
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Removing Old Paint with Steam



As an architect who frequently works with old buildings, I have often been involved with old building renovations with old (lead) paint removal. Although I have read many articles, I have no certifications or special training in the subject.

In the past, I have either relied on the owner's expert or the licensed abatement subcontractor to experiment with the existing conditions and propose materials and methods that can do the job and meet a fog of regulations. Sometimes, I received written plans that were not exactly followed. The plans described methods and facilities (changing rooms, showers, hand-wash sinks) that the workers who showed up to do the job were not fully aware of. I was told "That's just boiler plate," or "We always do it this way." In at least one case, when frustrated with the approved method the workers resorted to chipping at the old paint with tools meant for scraping and damaged some delicate details.

Imagine my delight when last summer, my friend John Leeke, a restoration expert and preservation consultant who has developed many practical approaches to difficult restoration issues, told me about his experiments with steam removal of old paint, which he finds to be much gentler than standard methods. Steam has a relatively low temperature, so unlike heat plates and heat guns, setting the building on fire seems unlikely. It is wet so the softened paint is not flying around in the air.

In fact, this supposedly new method may have been used decades ago and since forgotten. In any case, it is new to present-day contractors, and the best methods and equipment are still being developed. John Leeke leads a discussion group on his web site, historichomeworks.com, that lets anyone ask questions and share their experiences about his method. Once the wisdom and safety of this method are established, I expect some manufacturers of steamers

to provide specialty tools. I hope that paint removal contractors will add it to their array of services after testing it to their satisfaction. ❁

Jay Bright is a Historical Architect certified by the State Historic Preservation Office, but neither a workplace safety expert nor a chemist.

Jonathan Appell
Gravestone Conservator
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Conference Celebrates Olmsted Day

by Norma Williams

The Inaugural Frederick Law Olmsted Day Celebration and Conference was held on Olmsted's birthday, April 26, in Hartford. Legislation passed last year called for observances to be held on his birthday each year "to honor his legacy as the founder of American landscape architecture." The conference was organized and co-sponsored by the Connecticut Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects (CTASLA) and the newly formed Connecticut Olmsted Heritage Alliance (COHA). It brought together speakers with a long involvement in the research of Olmsted's life and beliefs and the preservation of Olmsted sites throughout the United States. They also have long been advocates for Olmsted landscapes and have played active roles in the National Association for Olmsted Parks (www.olmsted.org).

State Senator Bill Finch welcomed the group and urged the attendees to celebrate Olmsted's thinking about the importance of public parks to our lives today. He

introduced Jennifer Aniskovich, Director of the state Commission on Culture and Tourism, who read portions of a proclamation from Governor M. Jodi Rell. The proclamation ends, "I urge the citizens throughout Connecticut to take special note of this day, so that our State may gain a greater appreciation of the contributions to the face of our Nation and State made by Connecticut native Frederick Law Olmsted."

Tupper Thomas, the Administrator of Prospect Park, the 560-acre Olmsted-designed park in Brooklyn, New York, and President of the Prospect Park Alliance, spoke on "How I learned to Love Olmsted and Save Prospect Park." She gave many examples of what can be done to turn a derelict park into an active amenity for a community that fits into the fabric of the city as Olmsted desired. Prospect Park is considered one of Olmsted's greatest achievements, and after much research and restoration work it is now thriving, with over 6,000 volunteers, a Youth Council with a program for employment in the

park, and active partnerships with many other groups in the community.

Charles Beveridge, editor of the Frederick Law Olmsted Papers, discussed Olmsted's life in Connecticut, especially his early years. During Olmsted's youth his family enjoyed traveling in the Connecticut River Valley looking at scenery. Ideas about service and community were also instilled in Olmsted during his childhood in Connecticut. His familiarity with the state's landscape was extensive since after his mother died when he was a child, he studied and lived in towns throughout Connecticut, including Collinsville, Ellington, North Guilford, and Newington. The Cheshire home of his aunt was also a favorite location for Olmsted. When he was nine years old he walked from Hartford to Cheshire, staying over at an inn, in order to visit his aunt and uncle there. These experiences gave Olmsted models for his future designs and also helped develop his ideas about the restorative effect of landscape on people.

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Rob Clapper, COHA



Rudy Favretti, FASLA, and Ed Richardson of the Connecticut Botanical Society led a tour of the landscape at the Institute of Living in Hartford, designed by Frederick Law Olmsted in the early 1860s. Favretti explained that Olmsted wanted to create a landscape that would feel like a home rather than an institution and would aid in the healing of the patients. Richardson noted that the grounds contain "perhaps the greatest concentration of historic trees in Connecticut." Many of these trees date to the Olmsted period, and while they are very well cared for, their preservation is a high priority.

D. Ransom



Southport preservationists are trying to preserve not only the John Osborne house, but also its setting.

Hazardville. The long awaited rebirth of the Hazardville Institute is becoming a reality at last. Erected in 1869 as a public hall and operated by a state-chartered corporation dedicated to “moral and intellectual enlightenment,” the building was a center of community life. By the 1970s, however, the Institute was abandoned and faced demolition until the town of Enfield gave a 99-year lease to the newly formed Hazardville Institute Conservancy.

Little happened until 2001, when the Conservancy was re-organized and began looking for ways to rescue the crumbling building. They soon succeeded: in 2004 the town appropriated approximately \$125,000 for structural repairs, and shortly thereafter Connecticut Department of Social Services granted up to \$300,000 in bond money a new roof. Now, work is underway on window rehabilitation, digging a new cellar to accommodate mechanicals, and interior restoration.

When this work is complete, the Institute will once again fulfill its original mission by providing community meeting rooms and an exhibition on Hazardville’s historic gunpowder industry, which the

John Bridge (left), whose grandfather, Amos D. Bridge, founded the Bridge Manufacturing Company in Hazardville, presents a donation to the Hazardville Institute Conservancy. With him are Conservancy board members Karen LaPlante, Bill Schreffler, Gretchen Pfeifer-Hall, Gilbert Vasseur, Tony Secondo, and Edward Allen.

Richard Tangway



Conservancy hopes will benefit from restoration work at Coltsville in Hartford and with the Springfield armory in Massachusetts. A small post office, along with rental office space on the second floor, will help support the building’s ongoing operation and maintenance.

The Connecticut Circuit Rider Program provided technical and organizational advice to the Conservancy through site visits and a mini-grant.

Southport. Efforts to preserve the John Osborn house have raised questions of preservation planning and the ability of the town Planning and Zoning Commission to impose preservation restrictions on a property to be subdivided.

The Osborn house is a saltbox traditionally said to have been built in the 1670s. The house is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, but stands outside the Southport local historic district. Lowell and Nancy Hess, who have owned the house for 40 years, recently signed an agreement to sell it to Munson Builders,

conditioned on their gaining approval to subdivide the property into three lots. Two new houses could then be built, flanking the Osborn house.

On May 9, Fairfield’s Town Planning and Zoning Commission (TPZ) approved the subdivision, but imposed two restrictions: that the Osborn house be protected in perpetuity from demolition and that the local historic district commission approve the design of the new houses, as well as any alterations to the Osborn house.

No one seems satisfied by this ruling. The Hesses and Munson Builders have appealed the historic district commission requirement, claiming that the TPZ did not have the authority to impose these conditions, and that the property is outside the jurisdiction of the commission’s jurisdiction.

At the same time, neighbors Margaret Brenton and Richard and Susan White have also appealed the approval of the subdivision. They say that the Commission did not adequately consider the site’s

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“I look forward to an America which will not be afraid of grace and beauty, which will protect the beauty of our natural environment, which will preserve the great old American houses and squares and parks of our national past, and which will build handsome and balanced cities for our future.”

John F. Kennedy - October 26, 1963

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Wilde Building, Bloomfield (2000). Six years after insurance giant CIGNA announced plans to demolish the Wilde Building, built as the headquarters of the Connecticut General Life Insurance Company (CIGNA's predecessor), the company has decided to renovate and continue to occupy the building.

The Wilde Building, completed in 1957, is a masterpiece of modern architecture, designed by Gordon Bunshaft of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill with interiors by Florence Knoll and sculpture and landscaping by Isamu Noguchi. It was an early and influential example of the trend for large corporations to move out of city centers and into suburban sites, "in the vanguard of the development of office parks," according to CIGNA's website. The company intended to raze it to make room for new development that would include a golf course, club house and housing.

In late April David Cordani, president of CIGNA HealthCare, wrote to employees, "Starting later this year and proceeding through the next couple of years, we will significantly enhance the work environment and upgrade the equipment and facilities within the Wilde Building. This renovation will preserve the building's historic and aesthetic architecture while creating a new, productive and comfortable work space to help us meet the business needs of the 21st century."

The renovations will focus on improving ventilation and other systems, expanding food services and creating a new fitness center. Construction is expected to begin

later this year. The National Trust for Historic Preservation, which has advocated for preservation of the building, is now urging CIGNA to seek a federal historic rehabilitation tax credit for the work. Alicia Leuba, Director of Programs for the National Trust's Northeast Office, said, "We are hopeful that we can show CIGNA that the renovation can be done in a way that respects the Wilde Building's architectural character and also makes programmatic and economic sense for them."

Company spokesman Joseph Monday explained the change of plans as resulting from changes in CIGNA's corporate structure: the company recently sold its retirement and reinsurance divisions, leaving only health care in Bloomfield. The best way to house the remaining workers was in the Wilde Building, which has the most capacity on the site. "And an added benefit—there are historic ties between the Wilde Building and the community, so it's good for everyone," said Monday.

Tyler Smith, a Hartford architect who led the battle to save the Wilde Building, said "I'm delighted that the company has decided to save and reuse the building. I think CIGNA is owed a lot of credit." But Smith also observed that CIGNA had already demolished another landmark building on the property, the Emhart Building, also designed by Skidmore Owings and Merrill. If CIGNA had paid the same attention to it that the company eventually paid to the Wilde Building, Smith said, Emhart might have become the clubhouse for the golf course. ❁

11 Orange Street, New Haven (2003). New Haven's Building Official, Andy Rizzo, had no choice. After the rear portion of 11 Orange Street collapsed on May 22, he declared the building unsafe and ordered the rest torn down. Two days later, only rubble remained.

In 2003, the building's owners, Fred and Kimmy Leaf, proposed replacing the building with a four-story condominium building. In an effort to meet preservationists' objections, the Leafs initially agreed to retain and reuse the historic facade. The project eventually failed, largely due to objections from the owners of condos in the adjacent building, whose windows would have been blocked by the new construction. Since that time, the small commercial/industrial building remained vacant until it became yet another victim of demolition by neglect.

"You wouldn't have to kick out any bricks" to demolish a building, Scott Healy, Executive Director of the Town Green Special Services District, told the New Haven Independent. "You leave the roof unrepaired, you leave doors and windows on both floors opened, you fail to enclose and mothball the building. There is a record of multiple delays in responding to issues at the site, even though Kimmy Leaf's photo studio is a block away. There are two kinds of neglect: plain old neglect, and willful neglect. Was this willful neglect? I don't know. Was this neglect? Yes. That's my frustration." ❁

Cigna has announced plans to preserve and continue to occupy the Wilde Building in Bloomfield.





Before restoration



The Wauregan Hotel nears completion

Wauregan Hotel Nears Completion

Norwich. Nearly ten years after he first proposed renovating the Wauregan Hotel, developer Bruce Becker of Becker + Becker showed the old hotel, whose seventy apartments are nearing completion, to a group of community leaders and reporters on June 5.

Becker expects to receive a certificate of occupancy sometime in July, and permission to rent from the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority, which has provided part of the funding for the project, about a month later. As of early June, there were about 20 qualifying applications for apartments, and another 50 inquiries. Because of the CHFA funding, the apartments will be rented with subsidized rents to tenants with qualifying income levels.

These are no ordinary subsidized apartments; they have high ceilings, big windows, and spectacular views of downtown Norwich with its wealth of historic architecture, as well as the surrounding hills and the Thames River. With renovated storefronts on the ground level and a ballroom that can be rented for events, the old hotel will once again contribute lots of activity to downtown Norwich.

Getting it done wasn't easy. It took years just to convince city officials, and the general public, that the building was worth saving. Located at the most prominent corner in downtown Norwich, vacant for years, and stripped of its ornamental details, the Wauregan was the city's most notorious eyesore and became a hotly

debated issue in the mayoral campaign of 2001.

Becker gave much credit to the Connecticut Trust and the National Trust for Historic Preservation, saying that both organizations "really showed their energy and creativity, not just advocating, but educating the community."

Dale Plummer, Norwich's municipal historian and one of the Wauregan's staunchest advocates, agreed. He said the turnaround came with a \$1,500 grant from the National Trust, which made it possible to commission a structural engineer to make a study that would contradict the city's engineer's conclusion that the

building was structurally unsound. Becker added, "That \$1,500 leveraged a \$20 million redevelopment project—not bad!"

Once the project was approved, funding became an equally daunting challenge. "The money always lagged behind the work," said Becker. "Sometimes it stretched us beyond our comfort zone. But we continued to make upgrades, beyond what's usually considered reasonable for a project like this, because this building will have cachet. We're still raising money, and having a good product for people to see helps." Becker hopes that he will be able to qualify for the new state tax credit (see page 1).

Was it worth it? Absolutely, says former

Work continues on the ballroom.



Recreated cornice and window hoods



C. Wigren

Becker + Becker



Inside a model apartment

mayor Arthur Lathrop, who served from 2001 to 2005 and campaigned for election on a promise to save the Wauregan despite widespread popular sentiment against the old hotel. "This project is a three-time winner. First, it's historic preservation. Second, it's affordable housing. Third, it's urban renewal."

Dale Plummer says, "Union Station was a defining preservation battle for New London, one that set the tone for the next 20 years. People said, 'If they can make that old hulk look good, then maybe some of these other old hulks can look good, too.' I think the Wauregan has the power to do the same for Norwich."

And it has, as one-time opponents of the building admit. "We're very proud of the Wauregan," said current Mayor Ben Lathrop, who as an alderman voted to demolish the building, while current alderman John Crooks says, "I'm glad I was wrong about it. It has added energy to the downtown."

The Wauregan received nationwide attention in April when the National Trust and Home and Garden Television (HGTV) announced a \$50,000 Restore America grant to the Connecticut Trust, one of eleven made across the nation out of more than 100 applicants. The grant will be used for the restoration of the

hotel's ballroom, where ornate plasterwork had to be replicated. In addition, HGTV will feature the Wauregan on its "Restore America" show, to air perhaps in the fall.

Trust members and supporters will have a chance to see the Wauregan for themselves in November, when the Trust will celebrate the building's completion with a gala in the completed ballroom. 🌿

For more information on the Wauregan, call (860) 885-6000 or visit www.thewauregan.com.



Lillian H. Brown



Leroy D. Diggs



Sarah Dodson

New Trustees

The Connecticut Trust welcomed eleven new trustees to its Board in May. These new trustees bring a wide variety of backgrounds and skills to the Trust, but they are united by their commitment to preserving and protecting Connecticut's historic places.

Lillian H. Brown is a native and current resident of Waterbury who holds degrees from Virginia State University and the University of Bridgeport, in addition to further study at Southern Connecticut State University. After a career as a guidance counselor in the Waterbury public school system, she is currently president of the Connecticut chapter of the AARP. Mrs. Brown also serves on the boards of the Waterbury Symphony Orchestra and the Waterbury Chorale, volunteers with the Oral History Committee of African Americans at the Mattatuck Museum. She is a past Director of the Palace Theater. She has been recognized as AARP-CT Volunteer of the Year, one of Post College's "Magnificent Seven" for community leadership, and a Connecticut African-American Pioneer in Education.

Leroy D. Diggs of Danbury is an electrical engineer with degrees from West Virginia University Institute of Technology and West Virginia University. He has more than 35 years' experience in production management (engineering, maintenance, operations, business management) and

his areas of expertise include infrastructure management, facilities management, energy systems, energy conservation, environmental protection, financial analysis. Mr. Diggs is currently Site Leader and Facilities Manager for Dow Chemical Company, Danbury, where he manages all aspects of the site's business requirements and leads community relations activities. He has served on the boards of the Greater Danbury Chamber of Commerce and the Youth Council of Work Force Investment Board in Waterbury and is a member of the Local Emergency Planning Council and Concerned Black Men for Youth.

Sara Dodson of Lyme has a Bachelor's degree from Skidmore College in "Aesthetics of Design"—a synthesis of art history, studio art and technical theatre—as well as a Master's degree in Architecture from the University of Pennsylvania. She is currently an architect with Centerbrook Architects in Essex. Ms. Dodson enjoys European travel and unwinds at museums, theatre, and the opera.

Maggie Feczko lived in California, New Jersey, Florida, and Texas before finally arriving in Connecticut in 1996. She lives in Westport. With a degree in Art History from Skidmore College, she has worked in retail management at Bloomingdale's and served as Vice President for Sales at M.D. Systems, a skin care company based in Florida. Volunteer work includes the Westport League of Women Voters (president 2001-2003), Westport Historical Society (president

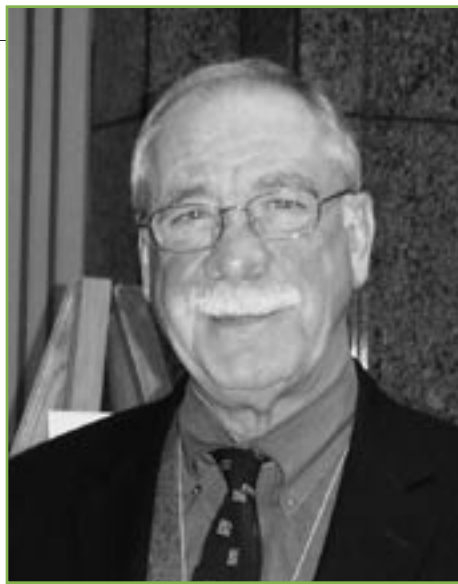
2001-2003), and the Westport Historic District Commission. She has recently been sworn in as a Justice of the Peace.

James W. McLaughlin is currently First Selectman of Durham, where he lives. He attended the University of Kentucky, Louisville, and recently retired as president, CEO and founder of McLaughlin, DelVecchio & Casey, Inc., a New Haven marketing, advertising and public relations firm that has created campaigns for the Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism and Connecticut Open House Day, as well as a pro bono brochure for the Trust's Circuit Rider program. He has served as chair of Durham's Historic District Commission, as director and vice president for marketing of the Durham Fair Association, founder and director of the Durham Fair Foundation, and on the board of directors of the Connecticut River Valley Tourism District, which recognized him as "Tourism Person of the Year."

Donald J. Poland of Hartford holds bachelor's and master's degrees in geography from Central Connecticut State University and works as the executive director and CEO of The Neighborhoods of Hartford, Inc. (NHI), which is charged with startup and implementation of a home improvement loan fund. In addition, he serves as vice president of the Connecticut Chapter of the American Planning Association and a member of Hartford's Historic Preservation Task Force. Don helped to draft Connecticut's first Smart Growth legislation and was



Maggie Feczko



James W. McLaughlin



Donald J. Poland

Connecticut delegate at National Delegates Assembly that adopted American Planning Association Policy Guide on Smart Growth. He has written in The Hartford Courant's "Place" section and spoken on radio and TV about the NHI Healthy Neighborhoods Program.

During high school and college **George M. Purtil** worked on local farms and also for his father, restoring Colonial houses in Glastonbury. He holds degrees from the College of William and Mary and the University of Connecticut and is a principal in the law firm of Purtil, Purtil, Pfeffer & Jacoby, practicing in areas of commercial litigation, creditors' and debtors' rights and bankruptcy. Mr. Purtil also manages his family's Old Maids Farm, located on banks of Connecticut River in South Glastonbury—the largest certified organic farm in Connecticut. He lives in a Greek Revival house on Main Street in Glastonbury, built in 1851.

Edmund F. Schmidt holds degrees from Western Connecticut State University and the Wayne State University Law School. He is the former Chief of Staff to the Mayor of Norwalk and before that, Senior Counsel to Speaker of Connecticut House of Representatives. His volunteer experience includes Trustee for the Lockwood-Matthews Mansion in Norwalk; Secretary for the Darien Task Force on Downtown Improvements; President of the Darien Historical Society; and author of "Noroton Heights, A Neighborhood for Generations." Mr. Schmidt lives in a

tavern built c.1750 that he dismantled in Burlington, Connecticut, and reconstructed in Darien. It incorporates two barns that were already on the property.

Michelle Valerio of Hamden holds degrees from Pace University and SUNY Farmingdale. She currently serves as the Associate Director of Procurement Systems for Yale University. Before that, she was Manager for KPMG Consulting, LLC. Ms. Valerio was referred to the Trust by Community Accounting Aid & Services, Inc., an organization that, among other things, finds volunteers to serve on boards of nonprofit organizations. CAAS matches volunteers with organization on the basis of the expertise and personal interest of the volunteer and the type of organization requesting help. As a CPA, she will be the Trust's new treasurer.

Jane Vercelli lives in Thompson, but grew up in Woodbury, where she knew the family of Harlan Griswold, one of the Trust's founders. She says, "I think listening to Harlan talk passionately about historic preservation in Woodbury in front of

continued on page 15

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At that time, CPN noted, "Once other buildings are rehabbed and the area begins to have a better reputation, this gap can disappear, but that takes time and a broader approach than just fixing up one building" (see CPN, September/October 2004).

The current state Historic Homes Tax Credit, passed in 1999, can help bridge the appraisal gap in urban neighborhoods, but it can be used only for owner-occupied buildings of not more than four units. The other important tax credit program, the federal rehabilitation tax credit, can be used only for income-producing properties, so it doesn't work for owner-occupied condominiums. The new law corrects both of these shortcomings. It can be applied to larger buildings, buildings that are not owner-occupied, and buildings that contain either rental apartments or condominiums. "This program really is intended for industrial or commercial buildings that are being converted to residential use. It isn't intended for buildings that already have residential or mixed residential and commercial uses," says Linda Spencer of the state Historic Preservation and Museum Division, which will administer the tax credit.

A number of potential candidates for the new credit are already in the wings. A key project is the former Clark Thread factory in Pawcatuck, which developer Ken Olson of Poko Partners, LLC, is converting to condominiums. Olson supported revisions to the town of Stonington's zoning regulations to ease the conversion of historic industrial buildings. He also was a prime mover in the new credit, introducing its first version in 2004. Olson said, "This is a big win. The legislature took a very progressive view of the need to preserve

The new tax credit at a glance:

- Developers will receive a credit in the amount of 25% of qualifying rehabilitation work. The credit applies to Connecticut income tax.
- The credit applies to rehabilitation for residential purposes only, not commercial purposes. It can apply to both rental and owner-occupied (condominium or coop) properties.
- The credit applies to the rehabilitation of historic industrial or commercial buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places or the Connecticut State Register of Historic Places.
- The credit applies to rehabilitation of historic structures and not for construction of additions, unless they are required to comply with the building code or fire code.
- The cost of the rehabilitation work must be greater than 25% of the building's assessed value.
- The tax credit program will be administered by the state Historic Preservation and Museum Division, which is currently creating regulations and procedures. The Division hopes to have the program in operation early in 2007.
- For rental properties, the tax credit can be combined with the federal rehabilitation tax credit of 20%, for a total credit of 45% of qualifying rehabilitation costs.

historic properties and make them economically viable. They did as right a thing as they could possibly do."

In addition to ongoing projects, the credit may provide the key to unlock some of the seemingly hopeless cases that have languished for years for lack of adequate funding. One of those is the Palace and Majestic theaters in Bridgeport. "This gives hope that the hotel attached to the theaters could be redone as housing with this credit," says Bob Halsted of Bridgeport. Another is the Capewell Horse Nail Company factory in Hartford, whose developer has been unable to get anything going for years, despite a prime location just a few blocks from downtown offices and the state capitol.

"We have great hopes that the ability to use tax credits for larger residential rehabilitation projects will greatly stimulate preservation activity in Connecticut," says Connecticut Circuit Rider Brad Schide. 🌱

For more information:

Linda Spencer, Connecticut Historic Preservation and Museum Division: (860) 566-3005 or linda.spencer@po.state.ct.us

Brad Schide, Connecticut Circuit Rider: (860) 463-0193 or circuitrider@cttrust.org.

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At The Trust, cont'd from page 2

historic preservation issues and offer the resources of the Connecticut Trust. The **Affordable Housing Task Force** will review the current information on the affordable housing crisis in Connecticut, compiled by the Partnership for Strong Communities for its initiative, "HomesConnecticut." The task force will develop Trust policy and a set of priorities that link the housing crisis in this state with the solutions that re-use of historic buildings can provide.

As part of the Trust's two-year study and **survey of historic barns**, our Membership Manager, Jane Montanaro, organized a free event in May called Barn Talk. More than 50 Trust members spent an educational and engaging day learning about barn histories and construction techniques in Northford where George Senerchia has dismantled and reconstructed five barns whose history spans five centuries. The day even included a demonstration of plowing with two draft horses. The next barn-related event for members and friends alike will be held at Old Maids Farm, a working organic farm in Glastonbury owned by new trustee George Purtill. Save Saturday, August 26 (rain date Sunday, August 27), for this event that will feature a feast of fresh late summer produce! 🌿

—Helen Higgins

Around the State, cont'd from page 6

historic character and whether or not the subdivision was consistent with the town's Plan of Conservation and Development. According to them, subdividing the property "will destroy its historic integrity and irreparably alter a critical historic landmark forever."

The Southport Conservancy, a local historical and preservation organization, has offered to buy the property, with the plan of making the house a museum. Fairfield's first selectman has pledged \$500,000 toward the purchase (a pledge that must still receive town approval), but to date the Conservancy has not been able to agree with the developer on a price. 🌿

Grants, cont'd from page 3

Historical Society was granted \$12,000 for a Preservation Services Officer who will manage the daily preservation issues that the society addresses. These grants were awarded in collaboration with the Greater Hartford Arts Council and the Connecticut Humanities Council, with funding from the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving. 🌿

Applications for the next round of grants are due September 15. For more information, call (203) 562-6312 or visit www.cttrust.org.

Olmsted, cont'd from page 5

Beveridge discussed several major projects that Olmsted designed in Connecticut, most notably Seaside and Beardsley Parks in Bridgeport, Walnut Hill Park in New Britain, and Memorial Park in New London (one of only two cemeteries that he designed), and the Institute of Living in Hartford. Olmsted also made many sketches for the state Capitol in Hartford which were never realized. Many other projects in the state were designed later by the Olmsted Brothers firm.

Fay Harwell, a landscape architect who has worked on the preservation of seven Olmsted landscapes, spoke about the importance of thorough research, committed volunteers and government officials in successfully preserving Olmsted parks so that they can become assets to their communities.

In the afternoon, a bus tour took participants to two sites in Hartford that are directly related to Frederick Law Olmsted. At the Institute of Living, Rudy Favretti, a Fellow of the American Society of Landscape Architects, and Ed Richardson, a member of the Notable Tree Committee of the Connecticut Botanical Society, gave a brief tour of the landscape, pointing out Olmsted's design intentions and the remarkable trees at the site, many of which date back to the 1860s when Jacob Weidenmann supervised the implementation of Olmsted's design. The next stop was the Olmsted family grave at Old North Cemetery where attendees also visited the grave of the Reverend Horace Bushnell who recommended the establishment of the first publicly funded public park in the United States, later named Bushnell Park in his honor.

Plans for future Olmsted Day observances include conferences that directly address issues in Connecticut's public designed landscapes and tours that highlight our cultural landscapes and work being done to protect and celebrate them. For more information or suggestions about future events, please contact COHA at www.ctolmsted.org. 🌿

HPTAG funds will help provide a preservation plan for the barn at the Medad Stone Tavern in Guilford.



Cy Miller

Insuring Your Valuables: The Common Sense of Scheduling

by Richard Young,
Middlesex Mutual Assurance Co.

Over the years I've had the good fortune of being able to see the interior of hundreds of antique homes. Not surprisingly, many of these homes were filled with fine antique furniture and artwork. Many also contained collections of items as diverse as the owners themselves; from teddy bears to tapestries, you name it.

As an insurance professional, it was important to me that our policy owners knew what their coverages were in regard to these types of items. Overall, I found that while many people understood the coverage for the house itself, they were often in the dark when it came to contents coverage. The general presumption was that everything was covered. Unfortunately, this is rarely the case, often leaving people with significant gaps in coverage. Here are a few things to consider:

Many policies use the term *actual cash value* for your personal property. This is a depreciated value based on age and condition of an item and will not cover its full *replacement cost*. Even policies using the term replacement cost will only pay the full cost to replace your possessions. Look for policies that use the term *guaranteed replacement cost*; with this you may also get additional coverage for antiques, collector's items and fine arts.

Jack Boucher, Historic American Buildings Survey



Like historic houses, antique furnishings, artwork and collectibles have special insurance requirements. This is the Stephen Tyng Mather house in Darien, photographed in 1964.

However, even the best policies will have dollar limits in regard to such items as jewelry, silverware, stamps, coins and items of that nature. The limits for each category can be surprisingly low; the limit for jewelry for example, is \$1,500 on many policies.

You must also be aware of what *perils* the items are insured against. A *peril* is an insurance term for the cause of loss. For contents this would typically be such things as fire or theft etc. If a visiting child were to take a magic marker to a piece of artwork or an antique chair were accidentally broken you would probably be without coverage.

So how can you avoid such coverage gaps? By scheduling an item on your policy. By doing so you and your insurance company will have an established replacement value for the item beforehand. This will avoid category limits and also facilitate claims settlement. Scheduling will also broaden your coverage as it protects you

against additional perils such as accidental breakage. Should you have a claim on a scheduled item, the deductible is usually eliminated, leaving more money toward settling the claim. 🌱

Richard Young is the manager of the Restorationist Program, an insurance policy specifically designed for antique homes.

Upcoming Meetings of the Connecticut Historic Preservation Council

August 2, 2006, at 9:30 a.m.
September 6, 2006, at 9:30 a.m.

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George M. Purtill



Edmund F. Schmidt



Michelle Valerio

New Board Members, cont'd from page 11

his wonderfully old and huge fireplace was one of the early influences in my own life that led to my interest in the subject.” She also cites more recent influences: “[State Senator] Don Williams was first selectman in Thompson in 1989 when we worked together to fight the commercialization of Thompson Common and to build a consensus for the creation of the Thompson Common Preservation Zone.”

Sue Vincent writes, “I grew up in Meriden in a Frank Lloyd Wright type house that my father, who is a retired architect, designed. Now, my husband and I live on an 18th-century farm that was settled in 1718 and is one of the oldest properties in Thompson. We have restored the farm’s house and barn, relocated an 18th-century cape and another barn here, and restored stone walls throughout our 90

acres. I have been active in the Thompson Historical Society and am currently Vice President. I am a member of the New England Historic Genealogical Society, the Mayflower Society and am becoming a member of the DAR. I’m interested in gardening, genealogy and the future development of Thompson. I am very interested in the Trust’s barn project.”



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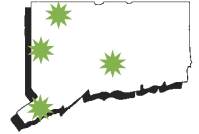
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Connecticut Barns Survive by Adapting

CONNECTICUT *Closeups*



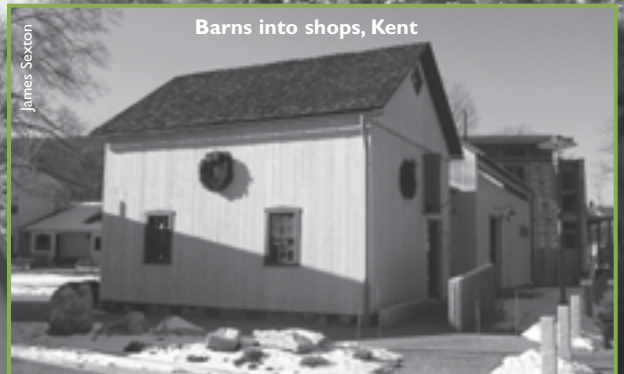
Connecticut barns have historically been used for agriculture, housing animals, storing farming equipment and hay, curing tobacco, production of dairy products, and work space. But as farming has declined and the needs of farmers and other barn owners have changed, many barns have

survived by changing. Converted into workshops, reception halls, restaurants, museums, living spaces, and stores, they take on a new life and continue to be contributing parts of the landscape. Here are some examples from the Trust's survey of Connecticut barns. ❁



Barn into house, Durham

Todd Levine



Barns into shops, Kent

James Sexton



Barn into house, New Canaan



Barn into house, Canton

Todd Levine