

Neighborhood Housing Services of New Haven and Northside Institutions Neighborhood Alliance Receive Griswold Award

The Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism and the Connecticut Trust presented the 2009 Harlan H. Griswold Award in Historic Preservation to two nonprofit housing organizations, Neighborhood Housing Services of New Haven and the Northside Institutions Neighborhood Alliance, of Hartford. In a time of economic troubles it is more than appropriate to honor these two organizations that rely on historic preservation to strengthen urban neighborhoods.

Since 1979, Neighborhood Housing Services of New Haven (NHS) has redeveloped 385 units of affordable housing for low- and moderate-income families. While the group's work always included historic buildings, until the mid-1990s there was no consistent policy for their treatment. The main goal was to make houses habitable, and finances often dictated the least expensive methods, regardless of their effect. What made the difference was the availability of Federal funding, which required following the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. "This raised our consciousness about preservation," says Henry P. Dynia, Jr., Director

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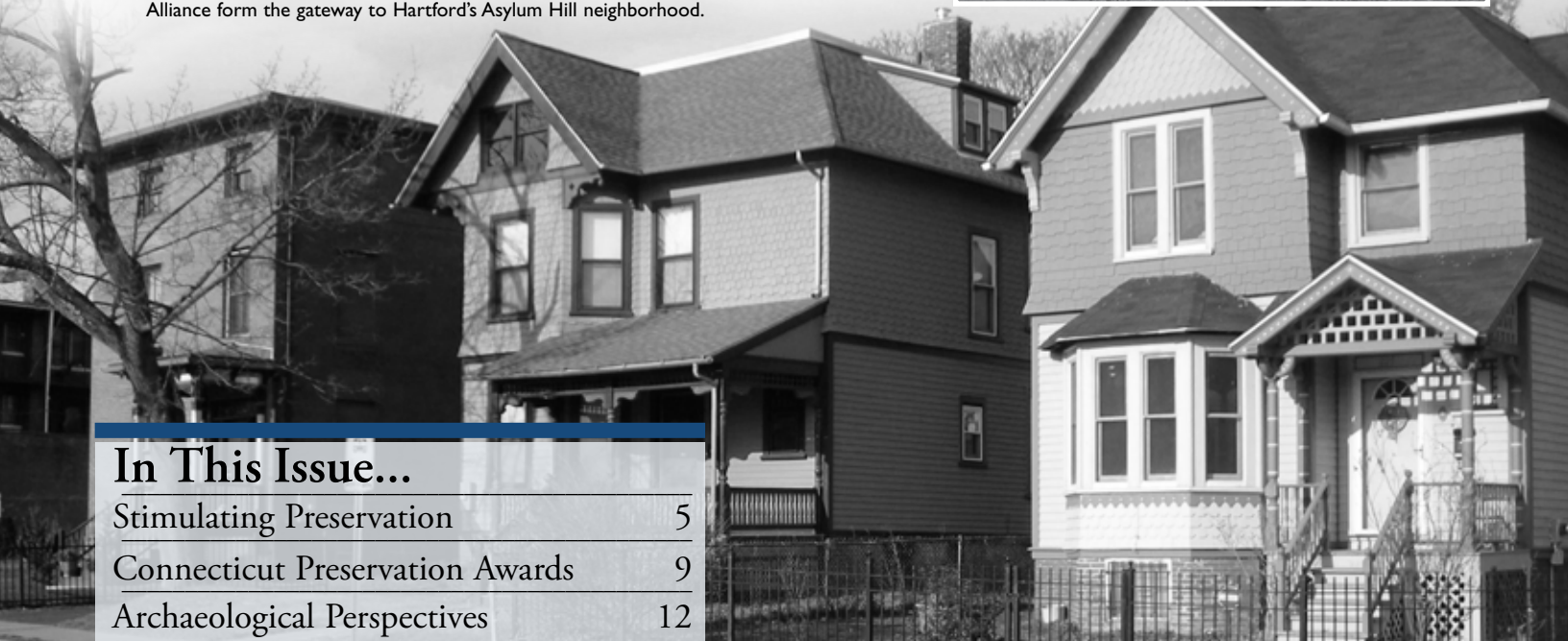
Right: Neighborhood Housing Services of New Haven is rehabbing 12 houses in the Fairlawn Manor State Register district.

Below: Three houses renovated by Northside Institutions Neighborhood Alliance form the gateway to Hartford's Asylum Hill neighborhood.



C. Wigren

C. Wigren



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From the Executive Director

We are pleased to report that the Commission on Culture and Tourism (CCT) has awarded the Connecticut Trust a Special Initiatives Grant for \$150,000 to work with two or three communities to produce revitalization and strategic investment plans for underutilized or under-recognized cultural and historic assets. Calling the end products Community Cultural Planning and Action Plans, the Trust intends that the plans will enhance the livability of the communities chosen, encourage regional cooperation, and discourage sprawl.

This project combines the vision and goals of both the Trust and the CCT. The CCT is the state's only agency whose mission is to develop and promote our culture and encourage visitors to enjoy it. The Trust believes that vibrant communities are those that mix historic buildings with a variety of cultural, commercial/retail and natural resources. Current "investment in infrastructure" initiatives do not focus on our cultural assets. There are many needs in our state right now, but it is essential that we have communities where people want to live, are happy to live, enjoy and feel enthusiastic about.

According to studies, communities that are rich in "consumption amenities" like parks, historic sites and areas, museums, and key natural assets like lakes, beaches, or preserved land disproportionately attract new residents. We believe that with this grant from the CCT we can create a model for communities as they aim to keep residents and attract new ones, without sprawl development.

The Trust is also pleased that we will receive another CCT grant in the amount of \$24,000 from its Historic Restoration Fund for exterior restoration of the Eli Whitney Boardinghouse, our office building in Hamden. We will match this grant with another \$24,000.

The Historic Restoration Fund grants come from the Community Investment Act (CIA), a source of funds that the Governor has repeatedly eyed for use to help balance the budget. As of this writing, the Governor's fourth deficit mitigation package does not include using CIA funds to help reduce the current fiscal year's deficit. And, in early April, the Appropriations Committee of the General Assembly voted a proposed budget that also did not take revenue from the CIA. It may well be that, by the time you read this, things will have changed, but for now we have a respite from months of advocating aggressively to save the Community Investment Act.

On the legislative front, we also have been pleased that the Appropriations Committee did not support a merger of the CCT with the Department of Economic and Community Development. You can read on page 4 the specific reasons we in historic preservation oppose such a merger. And, importantly for our Historic Preservation Technical Assistance Grants (see page 6), the Committee also voted to restore the Trust's line item to \$237,500 for each of the next two years, up from the Governor's proposed \$118,000 for next year and zero the year after. The final budget will be negotiated between the legislative leadership and the Governor's office. We hold our breath that all this good news sticks.

Finally, thank you to all our steadfast and generous members who have already renewed their memberships for 2009. We have been gratified by the early good response to our membership drive, and are especially grateful to those who added an extra 10 percent to their annual dues. It all makes a difference! 🌸

—Helen Higgins

The Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation is a nonprofit statewide membership organization established by a special act of the State Legislature in 1975. Working with local preservation groups and individuals as well as statewide organizations, it encourages, advocates and facilitates historic preservation throughout Connecticut.

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 Editor: Christopher Wigren
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 Graphic Design: David Wolfram, *Middletown*
 Printing: Kramer Printing, *West Haven*

Connecticut Preservation News is published bimonthly by the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation, 940 Whitney Avenue, Hamden, Connecticut 06517. Publication is made possible by support of the members of the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation and by funds provided through the Community Investment Act, 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 Commission on Culture & Tourism

Upcoming Meetings of the Connecticut Historic Preservation Council

May 6, 2009, at 9:30 a.m.
 June 3, 2009, at 9:30 a.m.

State Historic Preservation Board

June 11, 2009, at 9:30 a.m.

All meetings take place at the Commission on Culture and Tourism Main Conference Room 1 Constitution Plaza

For more information call (860) 256-2800

Town of Preston Acquires Norwich State Hospital —Now What?

On March 12 the Town of Preston paid one dollar to the state and took possession of its 390-acre portion of the former hospital property, closing one chapter in a seemingly endless tale that began when the facility closed in 1996.

The hospital was one of the Connecticut Trust's "Most Important Threatened Historic Places" in 1994. It occupies a scenic bluff overlooking the Thames River and attracted the interest of several developers over the years. However, only two made serious proposals: Northland Investment Corp. planned a \$1 billion luxury resort, and Utopia Studios proposed a \$1.6 billion movie studio project with theme park. In both cases, the town decided to cancel the deals.

The purchase was approved by a town referendum on February 24. The vote was 608-564, with 32 percent of eligible voters participating. For supporters, the main issue was control over the site; if the town had

not bought the property, the state would have marketed it to private developers.

Opponents feared that, without a developer in place, the town would be stuck with the cost of holding the property—particularly environmental cleanup, estimated at \$8 million to \$10 million. The state partially allayed this fear by offering to cover the costs of insurance, security, and management of the site for one year and suggesting that Preston would be given extra time to clean up the site.

First Selectman Robert Congdon told newspapers that the town will focus first on the cleanup, although it probably will put out a request for proposals before long. The town also is expected to form an economic development commission to market the land and gain the ability to issue bonds.

An additional 61 acres of the hospital property lies in the neighboring city of Norwich, whose mayor has suggested that the two municipalities form a joint partner-

ship to redevelop the property. A developer has proposed building 450 units of housing, a hotel and banquet center, a research park, and a culinary arts college on the Norwich portion.

The difficulties of the Norwich hospital continue to parallel those faced by other unused or underused historic properties owned by the State, including the Connecticut Valley Hospital, in Middletown, and the Seaside sanatorium, in Waterford. The burden of environmental cleanup and, in some cases, official indecision (as at Waterford, where the State snatched the property back from the hands of a willing, and apparently able, developer) hamper efforts to find responsible stewards for these properties, while the lack of maintenance or preservation restrictions puts the historic structures on them at risk. The State needs to find a more efficient way of marketing these properties, as well as active stabilization and maintenance plans. 🌿

The administration building at Norwich State Hospital, which the Town of Preston bought from the State in March.



T. Levine

The State Historic Preservation Office: Essential for Recovery

by Helen Higgins

The State Historic Preservation Office, known as the SHPO (pronounced SHIP-POE), has been the center for historic preservation activity in Connecticut since 1969. Established under the federal National Preservation Act of 1966, the SHPO was originally part of the old Connecticut Historical Commission, and then in 2005 it became an equal partner in the Commission on Culture and Tourism, along with the old Arts Commission, the Department of Tourism and a film division.

Little celebrated but incredibly diligent and efficient has been the small staff of the SHPO over the years. Many of us have intersected with the National Register of Historic Places coordinator, or the historic tax credit coordinator (Connecticut now has three historic tax credits that are making major changes in stimulating investment in historic building projects), or the administrators for historic surveys, local historic districts and certified local governments or the staff archeologist. Not to forget the coordinator of Minority Sites, especially those related to African American and Puerto Rican history in our state. Among the staff there are also those who are active in the federal review requirement known as Section 106 review. There is not always one specific person assigned to each one of those jobs listed; multi-tasking is a way of life at the State Historic Preservation Office.

Earlier this year, Governor Rell proposed merging the CCT, including the

SHPO, into the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) in an effort to cut costs. The merger threatened the SHPO's visibility and identity, while severely compromising its ability to meet several key responsibilities. And, a number of key staff positions that are federally funded would be eliminated.

The SHPO reviews all federally funded and licensed projects for their impact on historic buildings, historic districts, and archaeological sites as part of the environmental-impact analysis for the projects. Under the National Historic Preservation Act, no federally supported project in Connecticut can proceed without the review of the SHPO. Nor can state funded projects, as required by the Connecticut Environmental Policy Act.

The SHPO's regulatory review includes construction, repair, maintenance projects generated by DECD. This means that the SHPO, if merged into DECD, would be reviewing for compliance to regulations the projects of its proposed parent agency, DECD. This easily could result in a conflict of interest, as defined by the National Park Service, and lead to loss of federal funds for the SHPO office. Three times in the past 35 years there have been attempts to merge the SHPO into DECD. These attempts failed mainly on this issue of conflict of interest.

Under federal law, all stimulus dollars directed to construction projects will require SHPO review. The office's work load, currently approximately 1,500 reviews

a year, can be expected to increase dramatically in the near future with this influx of federal stimulus funds especially for transportation projects and housing projects. In order for Connecticut to use stimulus funds expeditiously, the state needs to maintain or even increase its ability to conduct efficient project review. Cutting SHPO staff and submerging the office in the vast network of DECD threatens our state's ability to perform timely reviews.

A glance at the stimulus wish lists from municipalities indicates a great deal of interest in federal money for historic town halls and libraries, for rehabilitation of old factory buildings and mills, of older neighborhood housing, and for repairs to historic bridges. To conserve resources, we must encourage further "wishing" for federal money to be invested in historic buildings. To provide the necessary oversight and review of historic rehab projects requires the expertise of our State Historic Preservation Office.

Our leaders can make a critical statement about historic preservation as a key tool for our state's recovery by keeping a separate, visible and independent presence for historic preservation in the form of the State Historic Preservation Office within the Commission on Culture and Tourism. Cutting its staff and burying it in DECD doesn't save a dime and presents the real possibility of loss of federal funds from the National Park Service and from delays in project reviews. Most significantly, the National Park Service, as it has advised Connecticut in the past, will likely perceive a conflict of interest in SHPO reviews of DECD projects and federal funds of almost \$1 million will be withheld.

Our Connecticut Stimulus Plan must maximize federal dollars by incorporating historic preservation as a key component of growth and prosperity in all our towns. This is smart growth, smart job creation and smart thinking. To do this we need a firm commitment from the Governor and our legislators that the State Historic Preservation Office is a critical element in facilitating the impact of this money on our economy. 🌿



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Stimulating Preservation

In midst of the recession, the federal government has enacted the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, passed in February, which allots \$787 billion for economic stimulus programs to create or save jobs nationwide. While none of the stimulus money is directly targeted to historic preservation, many of the programs will have an effect on historic buildings and neighborhoods, and they suggest possibilities for a broader role for preservation in our national life.

The stimulus programs that appear to be most applicable to preservation fall into a few general categories:

Transportation: Connecticut is slated to receive about \$440 million for transportation and transit projects, of which \$9 million must be spent on transportation enhancements, a category that can benefit historic resources. In addition, the Department of Transportation has already earmarked some of its stimulus money for continuing its program of improvements on the Merritt Parkway.

Energy efficiency and conservation: Improving energy efficiency is a major goal of the recovery efforts. Historic buildings are not specifically targeted, but they clearly can qualify. There are grants to local governments to improve their facilities, such as town halls, schools, and libraries, plus tax credits for homeowners who make energy improvements, including such things as exterior doors and windows, storm windows, insulation, efficient heating systems, geothermal heat pumps, and water heaters. In addition to the \$24.5 million directly allocated to Connecticut for energy efficiency and conservation projects, the Hartford Courant reports that Governor Rell has applied for an additional \$39 million for state energy programs.

Economic development: Community Development Block Grants will be made to municipalities, which could be used for building restoration, façade programs, street improvements, or parks. Funding for New Market Tax Credits, which stimulate investment in underserved areas, has been increased. And, towns and cities can receive



Connecticut State Library

Construction of the Merritt Parkway was one of the Depression-era government programs that reshaped Connecticut. Today, stimulus spending has the potential to harm or to enhance the state's historic resources.

Neighborhood Stabilization Grants to acquire and rehabilitate vacant or foreclosed housing. New Haven, New Britain, and New Milford have already announced that they will receive funding from this program.

While these programs present many opportunities for historic buildings, they can present threats as well. There is the fear that, in the rush to get money to work as quickly as possible, legally mandated environmental and historical reviews will be rushed or skipped altogether. David Bahlman, director of the Commission on Culture and Tourism's Historic Preservation and Museum Division, notes that so far his office has only seen transportation projects, but staff members who do historical reviews are noticeably busier.

Another potential problem is that the Neighborhood Stabilization Grants, which can fund acquisition and rehabilitation of blighted properties, also can be used for demolition (there is, however, a cap on the amount that can be spent for demolition). Again, the first line of defense is the CCT staff, but local preservationists also will need to stay alert.

The availability of money for energy improvements will create opportunities for makers of replacement windows and vinyl siding who market their products as environmentally friendly. The National Trust

for Historic Preservation is distributing information on more preservation-friendly weatherization practices to the Department of Housing and Urban Development and the U.S. Conference of Mayors, which lobbied for the energy efficiency program. The National Trust is also proposing a bonus credit for owners of historic buildings who do retrofits that are consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. For information on the advantages of repairing, rather than replacing, historic windows, see CPN, January/February 2009 (also available at www.cttrust.org).

At present, the greatest difficulty seems to be finding out what recovery funding is available and how to get access to it. Local governments and other organizations will have to do their homework. A number of websites with information on stimulus programs are listed below; unfortunately, no single site seems to have all the answers.

Despite these fears and the neglect of preservation as an stated recovery strategy, the emphasis on sustainability and conservation has the potential to develop into a broader reshaping of American life and development patterns along smart-growth, historically-based lines—a reshaping potentially as far-ranging as the results of the New Deal and post-World War II govern-

continued on page 14

Trust Awards Technical Assistance Grants

In March, the Connecticut Trust awarded a total of \$325,260 in Historic Preservation Technical Assistance Grants. The grants are part of a comprehensive historic preservation technical assistance program of the Trust, in collaboration with and with generous funding from the Connecticut General Assembly, the Connecticut Humanities Council, and the Commission on Culture and Tourism, through the Community Investment Act. The grants are intended to encourage and support community efforts in planning for the preservation, restoration, and rehabilitation of historic buildings and places. (In the following list, “NR” means that a building is listed on the National Register, either individually or as part of a district.)

Town of Beacon Falls: \$5,000 for a feasibility study to explore adaptive use options and conditions for the Lewis house (1926), owned by the town.

United Congregational Church, Bridgeport (1926, NR): \$4,000 for a structural evaluation of the church’s steeple.

City of Derby: \$25,000 for architectural drawings and specifications for restoration of the interior of the Sterling Opera House (1889, NR).

Hazardville Institute Conservancy Society, Enfield: \$5,000 to develop a comprehensive restoration and development plan for the Institute (1869, NR).

Mutual Housing Association of South Central Connecticut: \$15,000 for plans to convert the former Johnson Wholesale Drug Company and Nabisco Bakery buildings (1926, 1930), in Hamden, to artists’ housing and retail space.

John E. Rogers African American Cultural Center, Hartford: up to \$25,000 for documentation, assessment, and restoration plans for the Northwest School (c.1885).

Hartford Preservation Alliance: \$6,500 for a State Register district nomination for the Ridgefield Street neighborhood.

Mutual Housing Association of Greater Hartford: \$25,000 for architectural and



Town of Tolland

A grant from the Connecticut Trust will help the town of Tolland plan a geothermal heating and cooling system for its historic town hall, a former school.

engineering plans for rehabilitation of four apartment buildings in the Asylum Hill neighborhood (1920s, NR).

Town of Ledyard: \$15,450 for capital needs assessments of three municipal buildings: the Bill Library (1892), the Ledyard Center School (c.1949), and Ledyard Town Hall (1956).

Episcopal Church of St. Paul and St. James, New Haven (1829 and later, NR): \$18,834 for a building condition survey and preservation plan.

St. Paul Union AME Church, New Haven (1871, NR): \$13,350 for investigation and preservation plan for historic cast-stone walls.

New London Landmarks: \$9,237 for community forums to promote preservation of houses of worship and Union Railroad Station (1885).

Wheeler School and Library, North Stonington (1900, NR): \$15,958 to create an engineering plan for exterior restoration of the building.

Norwalk Seaport Association: \$9,400 for a capital needs assessment of the Sheffield Lighthouse and Keeper’s Cottage (1868, NR).

United Congregational Church, Norwich (1855, NR): \$10,450 for the examination and preservation plan for the failing plaster ceiling.

Preston Historical Society: \$6,781 for a townwide for the cultural resource evaluation and heritage landscape plan.

Ridgebury Congregational Church, Ridgefield (1851, NR): \$6,500 for a survey and building analysis of the meeting house.

Town of Scotland: \$6,500 for a building condition assessment and preservation plan for the Town Hall (a former school, 1896).

Town of Simsbury: \$25,000 for a charrette to prepare a preservation plan for the town center.

Town of Sprague: \$24,800 to plan the renovation of the Baltic Grist Mill (c.1855, NR), now used as the library and historical society.

Stanton-Davis Homestead Museum, Stonington: \$22,500 for structural restoration plans for the Stanton-Davis house (17th century and later, NR).

Town of Tolland: \$20,000 to develop plans for a geothermal HVAC system for the Hicks Memorial Municipal Center, part of which is the former Hicks Memorial School (1908, NR).

Spanish-American Merchants’ Association, Willimantic: \$10,000 for a comprehensive feasibility study of the Nassiff Building (1940, NR).



State Awards Grants for Preservation

On April 1, the Connecticut Commission of Culture and Tourism awarded \$1,016,200 in grants to municipalities and nonprofit organizations around the state. The grants were made through four programs, all of which are funded by the Community Investment Act.

Historic Restoration Fund Grants

- Bethel Public Library, Bethel, \$90,000
- University of Bridgeport, \$100,000
- Boys' & Girls' Club and Family Center, Bristol, \$30,000
- Episcopal Church of the Holy Advent, Clinton, \$33,000
- Town of Colchester, \$50,000
- Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation, Hamden, \$24,000

- Connecticut Landmarks, Hartford, \$120,000
- First Church of Christ, Hartford, \$75,000
- New London County Historical Society, New London, \$23,000
- City of Norwalk, \$100,000
- Town of Thomaston, \$50,000
- Trinity Episcopal Church, Torrington, \$52,000
- National Society of the Colonial Dames of America, Wethersfield, \$53,000

Basic Operational Support Grants

- Hartford Preservation Alliance, \$75,000

Survey and Planning Grants

- Hartford Preservation Alliance, \$20,000
- West End Civic Association, Hartford, \$6,200
- Lyme Academy College of Fine Arts, Old Lyme, \$7,000
- Ridgefield Historical Society, \$5,000
- Town of Salem, \$10,000
- Public Archaeology Survey Team, Storrs, \$19,500
- City of West Haven, \$20,000

Supplemental Certified Local Government Grants

- Town of Lyme, \$23,500
- Town of Simsbury, \$30,000

For more information, call (860) 256-2800 or visit www.cultureandtourism.org.

Commission on Culture and Tourism Honors Preservationists

Tyler Smith and Jared I. Edwards, principals of SmithEdwards Architects received a Governor's Award for Excellence in Culture and Tourism on April 15. The award, presented by the Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism, honors Connecticut residents selected based on magnitude of achievement and sustained contribution to their field and the state.

Founded in 1977, SmithEdwards Architects is a leader in the field of historic preservation. The firm's commis-

sions include the restoration of the State Capitol, renovation of more than 50 buildings in the Congress Street area, and Hartford's first Tax Act project, the conversion of an abandoned factory, Billings Forge, to housing. Smith Edwards also designed the restoration of the Old State House, sensitive renovations to the Phoenix "Boat Building," and, in New Haven, the Ninth Square project and Exchange Building. In addition to their architectural work, Smith and Edwards both were involved in the founding of the


Hartford Architecture Conservancy in 1973 and served on its Board of Directors for over a decade.

Also presented were Culture and Tourism Distinguished Advocates Awards to Astrid T. Hanzalek, of Suffield, for her lifelong dedication to public service and numerous non-profit organizations, including the Connecticut Landmarks, and to Valerie Gail Williams, of Plainville, for her efforts and dedication to promote the Connecticut Freedom Trail and to raise public awareness of the contributions of Connecticut's African American citizenry to the nation's and state's development and history. 🌿


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"I know antique houses, and others, too!"

Tom Nissley
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Soon, what began as a requirement became a mission. Dynia continues, "We realized that the houses looked good to begin with, and most of the things that we could do to change them wouldn't improve them. So we try to stay as close as possible to the original design intent."

NHS tries to cluster its projects, hoping to inspire neighboring property owners to undertake improvements of their own. The organization is currently doing this with Fairlawn Manor, a group of 12 houses abandoned by a private developer. Each is being restored to historic standards using, among other things, the State Historic Homes Tax Credit.

In Hartford, Northside Institutions Neighborhood Alliance (NINA) concentrates on a single neighborhood, Asylum Hill. Located west of downtown, the area, a National Register district, has a rich stock of Italianate, Queen Anne, and Colonial Revival houses. In the 20th century, however, Asylum Hill fell on hard times. By the 1990s, 68 percent of the dwelling units were one-bedroom or studio apartments, and 49 properties were designated as blighted.

The idea for NINA was born in 2003, when six major institutions located in Asylum Hill—Aetna, The Hartford, ING, Mass Mutual, Saint Francis Hospital and Webster Bank—joined forces to bring stability back to the neighborhood, says Ken Johnson, NINA's executive director.

NINA rehabilitates abandoned and neglected houses, converting them back to one- or two-family, owner occupied homes and reselling them at competitive prices.

Since 2004 the organization has renovated and resold nine historic buildings, marketing them with such fanciful names as "The Victorian Lady" and "Queen Anne with a Dutch Touch"—references to their history or architecture. "The buildings all have personalities," says Johnson, and the names help build public appreciation for them.

In addition to buying and rehabbing properties for sale, NINA helps current homeowners improve their properties. One of the group's first projects was to repair and repaint a house on Garden Street, a gateway into the neighborhood. In collaboration with AARP and Rebuilding Together Hartford, NINA provided free safety and home repair services to twenty homeowners, helping elderly residents to remain in their homes.

Both NHS and NINA rely heavily on historic rehabilitation tax credits to bring their projects to reality. NHS has been one of the largest recipients of Connecticut's Historic Homes Tax Credit; to date, the organization has used \$1.375 million from the program to rehab 52 units of housing. "The Connecticut historic homes tax credit is what really made preservation our standard approach," says NHS's Dynia. NINA also has made the historic tax credits a cornerstone of its efforts. "The tax credit program provides the vital resources necessary to create homeownership opportunities while maintaining the historic character of our neighborhood, which in the long run will sow the seeds of our future revival," says Johnson. To date, NINA has revitalized more than dozen historic homes utilizing historic tax credits.

In addition, both organizations back up

their construction projects with technical assistance, homeowner education and counseling, and community-building programs, to help ensure long-term preservation of the buildings and neighborhoods they have rehabbed.

The Harlan H. Griswold Award in Historic Preservation is presented jointly by the Connecticut Trust and the Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism, in memory of Harlan H. Griswold, long-time chair of the Connecticut Historical Commission (the CCT's predecessor agency) and a founder of the Trust. By their achievements in revitalizing two Connecticut cities through preserving historic buildings, Neighborhood Housing Services of New Haven and Northside Institutions Neighborhood Alliance exemplify Harlan Griswold's leadership, vision and dedication to preserving Connecticut's heritage and making our state a better place for all of its citizens. ❁

For more information on this year's recipients, visit their websites:

Neighborhood Housing Services of New Haven: www.nhsfnewhaven.org
Northside Institutions Neighborhood Alliance: www.ninahartford.org



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Connecticut Preservation Awards 2009

The Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation presented Connecticut Preservation Awards to six outstanding projects this year. The awards recognize outstanding preservation efforts around the state and are intended to call attention to the depth and scope of the impact that the preservation of historic resources can have on our communities. The awards were presented at the Trust's annual meeting, held on April 27 at the Comstock-Ferre barns, in Wethersfield.

AWARDS OF MERIT

Long Walk, Trinity College, Hartford. In 1873 Trinity College turned to the English architect William Burges for a new campus design. Only a part of Burges' High Victorian Gothic scheme was ever built, but that part remains the heart of Trinity's campus. Over a ten-year period, the college has carefully restored the three Burges buildings, Seabury Hall, Jarvis Hall, and Northam Tower. Designed by SmithEdwards Architects, exterior work included restoration of masonry, slate roofing, gutters and flashing, terra cotta cresting, and leaded-glass casement windows. Inside, the dormitory areas were returned to their original configuration and new provisions for accessibility and egress were provided. Heating and cooling systems, electrical service, and plumbing were upgraded; and elevators, telecom-



Long Walk, Trinity College, Hartford

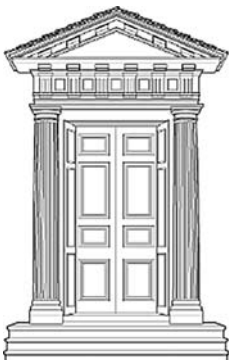
munications and audio-visual systems added. Particular care was taken to preserve original features of the interiors, such as stone chimney pieces, wood casework, hardware—even original cast iron steam manifolds and fresh-air vents were reused. Burges' original drawings, with penciled notations recording changes made in construction, were an invaluable aid. Trinity College has shown great sensitivity in introducing programmatic and infrastructure upgrades while meticulously restoring these landmark buildings.

David Field house, Madison.

Since about 1720 the David Field house has stood on a hill overlooking Green

Hill Road in Madison, its raised paneling, generous window openings, and decorated frame all representative of the homes of early Connecticut's wealthy citizens. Just a few years ago, however, the 8-acre property was subdivided and the house faced demolition for a new speculative residence. During this period, paneling and doors were stolen from the house, graffiti defaced its ceilings, and water damaged portions of the flooring and frame. The Trust listed the house in its Historic Properties Exchange, a marketing tool for endangered buildings. Finally, in 2007, Connecticut Trust Advisor John Herzog and his wife,

continued on page 10



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Rebekah Burdler

David Field house, Madison

Diana, bought the entire property to preserve the house and its setting. With restoration contractors Gulick and Spradlin LLC, they set about undoing the damage. The house received new sills, roof, and siding. Where necessary to recreate missing details, Gulick and Spradlin consulted HABS drawings made in the 1930s or other local houses. They also designed a sympathetic addition, renovated a barn and attached stables, and rebuilt stone

walls. The persistence of the Herzogs, and the skillful work of Gulick and Spradlin, in acquiring and restoring this severely threatened property make this a model preservation project.

A note: With work complete on the Field house, the Herzogs and Gulick and Spradlin have taken on another restoration project, the Shelley house, also in Madison and listed on the Trust's Most Important Threatened Historic Places in 2006.

Elizabeth Hooker house, New Haven.

The Hooker house is significant as the work of Delano and Aldrich, an architectural firm that designed many sophisticated and beautifully detailed buildings; as the home of Elizabeth Hooker, leader of the women suffrage movement; and as a prominent part of the Whitney Avenue National Register district. While the house was in sound condition and had been little altered since it was built in 1914, it was tired-looking and outdated. Located in a desirable neighborhood, it easily could have been subjected to "improvements" that wiped out its historic character. Instead, Jim and Martha Alexander, with Gregg Wies and Gardner Architects, updated the house while maintaining its appearance and character. The interior layout was modified slightly to accommodate current use patterns, but in ways that retained the basic organization and the principal rooms. The exterior elements were repaired, and renovation of the grounds cleared out overgrown plants and provided new outdoor living spaces while preserving Delano and Aldrich's well thought-out composition with its shielding wall, carriage house, pond and landscaping. This thoughtful renovation achieves the goal of not feeling like a renovation—just careful maintenance.

113 Cross Highway, Westport.

In what some have called the teardown capital of Connecticut, this house dodged the bulldozers. Built about 1835 and added to over the years, the house and its outbuildings had steadily declined for a couple of decades. Happily, Kim and Mike Ronemus, nearby neighbors, managed to buy it in 2006, just ahead of a developer. Working

Elizabeth Hooker house, New Haven



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113 Cross Highway, Westport, with the gas station in the center foreground



Michael Glynn

with preservation architect Michael Glynn they removed poorly built 20th century additions (but saved the original windows and most of the exterior shingles) and added a new, sympathetically designed wing with a living room and master bedroom. The

outbuildings proved a greater challenge, particularly a former gas station—Westport’s oldest, in operation from 1912 to the 1980s. Town zoning regulations allowed outbuildings only for garages and pool houses, but in this case the only logical use was as a home office. The application for a zoning variance was only approved with less-than-ideal modifications to the original design. Finally, the gas station was restored. Now complete, 113 Cross Highway stands out as a model project and has been designated a Local Historic Property. But its greatest significance is its legacy to other historic properties in Westport: inspired by this project, the town has adopted new zoning regulations

that allow owners to put historic outbuildings to new uses, a sure route to encouraging their long-term preservation.

COMMENDATIONS

River House, Greenwich. This former pumping station, built in 1927 by the New York, New Haven & Hartford Railroad to supply water to its Cos Cob power plant, found new use as an adult day care center for Greenwich Adult Day Care (GADC), a nonprofit organization that leases the building from the town of Greenwich. With designs by Granoff Architects,

continued on page 14

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River House, Greenwich



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“Ancient and Ordinary” Archaeology and Changing Perceptions of Connecticut’s 18th-Century Architecture

By Ross K. Harper

While traveling through Branford in 1800, Yale president and early Connecticut historian Timothy Dwight wrote: “The town of Branford is destitute of beauty. The situation is unpleasant, and the houses are chiefly ancient and ordinary.” For the most part, the homes that Dwight saw are now gone. Some small houses were incorporated into larger ones and are no longer visible, though architectural historians can sometimes find these early structures enveloped in later expansions. Archaeologists can also recover evidence of early houses, but in the ground rather than in building fabric. Archaeological excavations are discovering that the center-chimney cape and saltbox houses often thought to be typical 18th-century dwellings are not an accurate representation of the period architectural landscape.

At the c.1737–c.1797 Goodsell homestead site in North Branford, excavations found what is believed to be the remains of the “new house” mentioned in Samuel Goodsell’s 1752 probate record (see CPN May/June 2008). Because no foundation stones remained, the size of the new house is estimated to have been about 16’ x 28’. Based on the archaeological evidence and references to “the chamber” in Samuel’s probate, the house was likely a one-over-one, with a single first-floor room (the “hall”) and perhaps a smaller room with stairs next to the fireplace (the “porch”). Such small dwellings were usually abandoned for better houses as they became old or were added onto as families increased in size and more space was needed. Samuel died young, however, leaving a widow and daughter who never married, and perhaps this was the reason that the new house was never expanded.

Excavations at the 1712–c.1770s homestead of Thomas Daniels in Waterford found the house was built with foundation

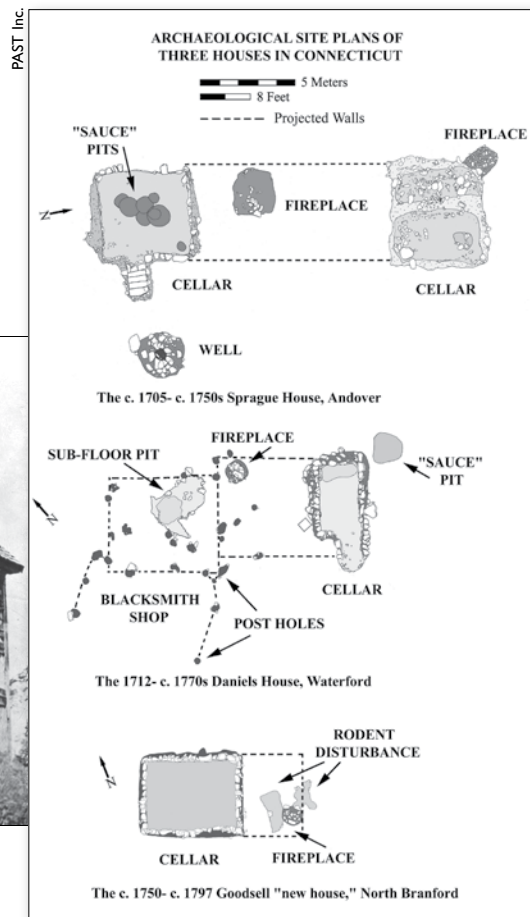


Bertha Trowbridge, *Old Houses of Connecticut* (1923)

One example of small one-room end-chimney type, like the Goodsell and Daniels houses, was the Norton house in Guilford, probably built in the mid-18th century and demolished in 1921.

stones laid directly on the ground surface, which had long since been removed. Measuring approximately 16’ x 24’, the house appears to have started as a small one-room end-chimney type like Goodsell’s new house, but was expanded after Daniels’ widow Hannah died in 1744. An approximately 16’-x-19’ addition off the west end of the house made a basic hall and parlor house plan. A blacksmith shop lean-to was also attached to the back of the house. The addition and lean-to were built using earthfast or post-in-ground construction, in which the framing members of the house were set into holes directly in the ground. Because the posts would eventually rot, earthfast houses were by their very nature impermanent. Archaeological evidence for earthfast architecture has been found in northern New England and throughout the Chesapeake region, but as far as can be determined, it previously had been undocumented for Connecticut.

Archaeological investigations at the c.1705 Ephraim Sprague homestead in Andover also found a house plan that is



Archaeological site plans of three houses show the variety of plan types found in colonial Connecticut.

quite different from standing colonial-period houses. Based on the distribution of datable artifacts such as ceramics and tobacco pipes, the first phase of the Sprague house likely started as a basic one-room end-chimney-type plan with a dug cellar underneath measuring 16’ x 16’. The fireplace was built into the extreme northwest corner of the house. Soon after, the house was expanded to 64’ x 16’,

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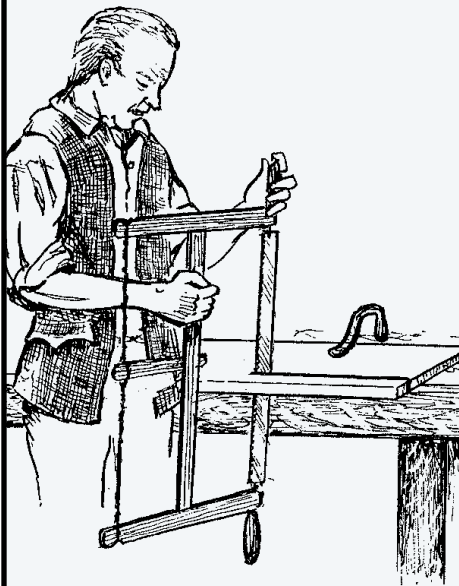


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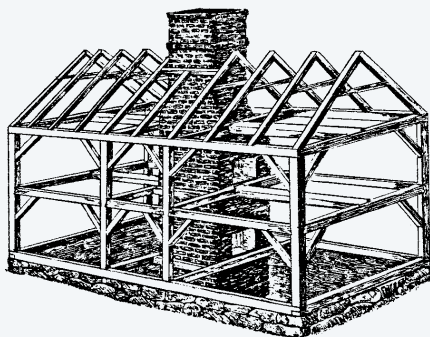
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with a stone-lined cellar at the opposite end of the house and a large central fireplace. A series of "sauce" or root vegetable storage pits were found in the floor of the south cellar. Again, the foundation stones had been laid directly on the ground surface and had been removed after the house burned down in the 1750s and the homelot converted to an agricultural field.

The long and narrow plan resembles cross-passage houses of the British Isles, which had a narrow passage that cut through the house separating work space (kitchen) from social space (parlor). Such hybrid house forms selected various aspects of lowland and highland architecture, and were once common throughout Britain. New evidence is suggesting that they were widespread in the American colonies as well. Archaeologists have found similar house plans in northern New England and in the Chesapeake region, but to our knowledge no standing cross-passage houses have survived in North America.

These examples demonstrate that Connecticut's architectural past is far more complex and dynamic than what we can see in standing houses today. Archaeological evidence adds a new dimension to architectural historian Abbott Lowell Cummings' observations on Connecticut architectural traditions when he wrote:

...the surprising range and variety of framing alternatives in the early

houses of Connecticut stand in marked contrast to the greater uniformity of forms in other regions of New England where strong respect for inherited customs is very much in evidence. The diversity found in Connecticut, as we have suggested, provides for the state a unique status among the original thirteen colonies. The richness of texture is owing almost entirely to the contributory strains of different European vernacular building traditions, and their distinctive intermingling in this cohesive corner of the New World, poised significantly between two major urban axes of the colonial northeast.

There is no doubt that many more examples of buried "lost" architecture lie hidden in farm fields and empty lots, and even on the immediate edges of early roads (a c.1713 house site was recently found in Wilton). It is noteworthy that each of the houses discussed here was found in archaeological surveys preceding Connecticut DOT road-improvement projects. The surveys were mandated under federal and state law; without such laws, important information about Connecticut's architectural history never would have been found. 🌿

Ross K. Harper Ph.D. is a senior archaeologist with the Public Archaeology Survey Team, in Storrs.

"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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ment initiatives which fueled sprawl, urban renewal, and widespread demolition. As Robert Ivy, editor of *Architectural Record*, writes in the March issue: "While architects love a new construction site, strategically, preservation is sounding better and better—whether the historic variety or the act of saving or revitalizing ordinary structures. In a down economy, it makes good sense to make the most of what you already have." As recovery efforts continue, we hope that more will heed this message.

—*Christopher Wigren*



For more information:

The National Trust for Historic Preservation's website has an economic recovery page: www.preservationnation.org/resources/public-policy/perfect-storm/

A summary of recovery programs, compiled by Sen. Christopher Dodd: <http://dodd.senate.gov/?q=node/4791>

Information on recovery programs in Connecticut: www.recovery.ct.gov

Information on programs in other states: www.statercovery.org

Energy Tax Credit for Homeowners: <http://taxes.about.com/od/deductionscredits/qt/energytaxcredit.htm>

GADC retained much of the brick exterior with its cast-stone ornamentation, and transformed the interior into sunny, inviting activity rooms, offices, and staff areas.

Handel Performing Arts Center, University of Hartford, Hartford.

Albert Kahn, known as the prolific architect of manufacturing plants in the first half of the 20th century, the Thomas Cadillac dealership in 1928. Long vacant and a drag on the Upper Albany neigh-

borhood, the building was turned into an asset by the University of Hartford's Hartt School of Music, with SmithEdwards Architects and Performance Architecture. Adapting the dealership to a performing arts center

presented special challenges: parts of the roof had to be popped up to provide high fly spaces, and performing and rehearsal spaces needed special lighting, sound systems, and sound insulation. 🌿

Handel Performing Arts Center, Hartford



Robert Benson Photography

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Thank you for your article, "Elms on the Rebound" (CPN March/April 2009). I'd like to add some follow-up information for your readers.

It is estimated that 77-110 million American elms were lost due to the introduction of Dutch elm disease (DED) from a shipment of elm veneer logs from France in 1931. Elms had formed the high arching canopies of elm street and main street, which were particularly popular in southern New England. As few as two or three percent of the elms survived the invasive fungus.

Some of those Heritage Elms are still around and may be 100-150 years old. The Champion Massachusetts Elm in Lanesborough is 60 inches in diameter at breast height (dbh) and may be close to 200 years of age. It is protected, initially through the efforts of Elm Watch, with the macro-injection of a fungicide called Arbotect, repeated every three years. The other reliable treatment is Dutch Trig, which enhances the immune response of the elm with an annual injection. This is the treatment used on the elms of the New Haven Green. Both of these treatments provide very good protection.

In response to DED, the National Arboretum began the rigorous screening of 80,000 elms, which after half a century resulted in the identification

of four top performing American elm cultivars which are now available in nurseries. These American elm cultivars are Princeton—the most widely available—Valley Forge, New Harmony, and one of the most promising new releases, called Jefferson.

There are many DED resistant Asian elm hybrids to select from, but their size and crown habit differ and they are generally smaller than American elms. The Asian elm with best American elm form is Accolade, which also is resistant to Elm Yellows, a disease which has been reported in PA and NY but not yet in New England.

Elm Watch has planted 150 American elms in public spaces—campuses, streets, parking lots and historic properties. Elms, if well sited and properly pruned, can enhance historic architectural settings. As with all new trees, they require good planting practices and early tree care. Proper pruning develops a strong main stem and good branch unions which become the gracious high canopy, vase shaped crown. Elms are tough urban trees and if properly planted can thrive if soil volume and overhead space are sufficient. Go to <http://www.elmwatch.org> for more information.

Tom Zetterstrom
Elm Watch

doors just like mine. Even more amazing, there were two extra doors tucked up in the rafters of the garage, left over from a remodeling project done years ago. I traded some simple fence repairs for the doors and made good friends with my new neighbor in the bargain. Cost: next to nothing.

Check your nearest building salvage company. Look up "Architectural Salvage" in your yellow pages directory. Or, you might find a local carpenter who just hates to haul good woodworking to the dump and has accumulated a backyard full of treasures and junk. (Which depends on whether you are an old-house owner in need of doors, or the carpenter's next door neighbor.) Cost: \$5 to \$50.

It is always possible to have new doors made to match. Look for a restoration contractor or cabinetmaking shop with building restoration experience. If you cannot find one with experience or if an exact match is critical, be sure to have them make samples of moldings, finishes and other critical details for your approval before they make up the door itself. Chestnut wood is usually not commercially available, so you will probably pay a premium and have to wait while the shop locates a source from the lumber salvage companies. Cost: \$500 to \$1000.



Contact Leeke directly for answers to your questions and more information on techniques for restoring and maintaining your historic building. Write to John Leeke, Preservation Consultant at 26 Higgins St., Portland ME 04103, (207) 773-2306; or by email to johnleeke@aol.com or visit his Internet Web Site, www.HistoricHomeWorks.com.

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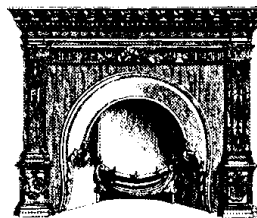
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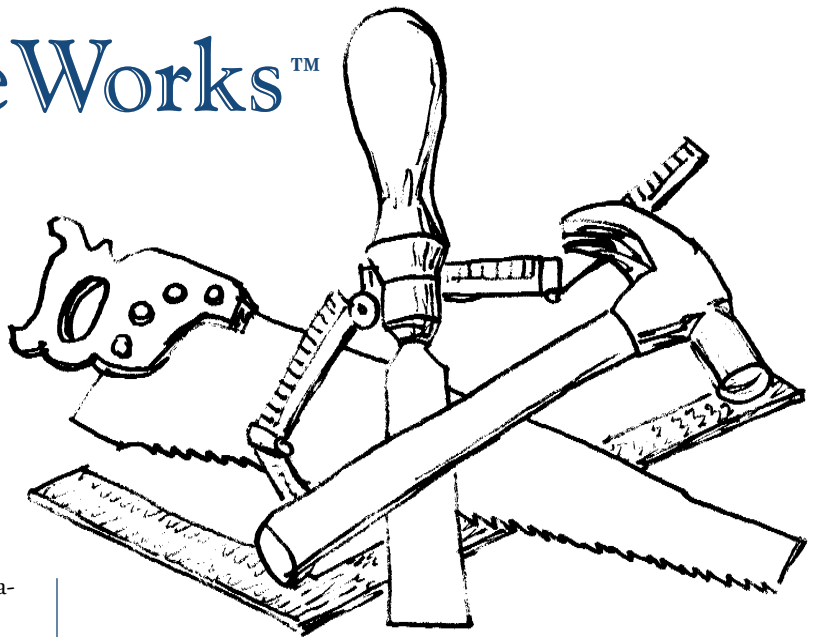
We are currently considering the purchase of a fairly well preserved Victorian in southwest Illinois. It is approximately 2400 square feet with a full brick basement around 7.5 feet deep. The problem is a substantial inward bow of several basement walls. One in particular is fairly well pronounced.

—Illinois

A common cause of foundation problems is frost heaving. This occurs when excessive moisture builds up in the soil just outside the foundation. In winter the water freezes, pushing against the foundation with enough pressure to force the foundation wall inward. Look for water sources such as reverse grade at the ground surface around the foundation which allows water to flow toward the foundation and then soak into the ground or seep down along the foundation wall. Another cause of excessive moisture is gutters and downspouts that do not work, or have been removed. I have seen cases where the gutters were capped over and the foundation walls were bowed in 5" after just a couple years. It is common to see downspouts that pour roof water on the ground right at the foundation, instead of channeling it at least 10 feet away.

To determine if this is the cause of bowing, check for sources of moisture and see if they relate to the foundation walls that bow in. For example, you will know freezing moisture is the culprit if every bowed wall has a gutterless roof eave above it, and there is no bowing where there are no eaves. Also check to see if the wall with the pronounced bow has a wide roof valley above that pours down substantial water or if it is on the north side of the house where the frost forms deeper underground.

To determine the methods and cost of repairs call in a qualified contractor or engineer who has plenty of experience working on old-house foundations. Be sure to include mitigating the moisture with drainage work on gutters, downspouts and regrading the ground around the house for a positive slope



away from the foundation.

For information on controlling moisture order Leeke's Practical Restoration Report on gutters and drainage. (16 pages, \$11.95).

Door, Doors Everywhere, But...

Any ideas on where I can find a single panel hardwood (preferably chestnut) door, size: 32" x 79" x 1-3/8"? I'm trying to match existing doors in a Northern New Jersey house built in the 1920s. What should I expect to pay?

The best source will be closest to home. I have often gotten an exact match for a prominent first floor door by taking one from an upstairs back closet doorway. Even the finish matched precisely. Then I replaced the upstairs door with a less than perfect match.

When I moved into my new old-house I needed a couple of matching doors. I paid a visit to each of my neighbors with houses similar to mine in age and style. Sure enough, one of them had

continued on page 15