



Great Preservation Opportunities

What is an opportunity? It might be a threatened building that still has potential. It might be a new funding mechanism or technological advance or some other innovation that offers a new way of preserving and revitalizing historic places. It might be a success that has the potential to fostering further successes. Building on its tradition of listing important threatened historic places around the state, the Connecticut Trust has expanded that approach to highlight opportunities for preservationists.

The big news of 2009 is the economic downturn, which was just beginning to be felt a year ago. In spite of hardships, the poor economy also offers some opportunities. Of course, the slowdown in construction has resulted in a slowdown of demolition as well. But more important, the poor economy offers preservationists, officials, and property owners breathing space in which to plan for future uses that preserve, maintain and enhance historic places—the kind of thoughtful planning that often gets short-changed during busier times, in the rush to take advantage of development opportunities. If we can lay the foundation now, by putting historic designation, appropriate zoning regulations and incentives, and broader planning guidelines in place, then some last-minute battles can be prevented in the future, and the chances of preserving historic places will be much greater.

Statewide:

Federal stimulus programs

In the wake of last year's real estate crash, historic buildings across the state have been among those subject to foreclosure. So far, money from several stimulus programs can be applied to historic buildings, but there is no

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FORECLOSURE SALE

Per order of the Superior Court this property will be sold at PUBLIC AUCTION on SATURDAY 9/19/2009 12:00 NOON a deposit of \$26,500 certified or bank check is required of the successful bidder. For further information, Contact:

Charlotte Hitchcock

The Connecticut Trust is working to incorporate historic preservation activities into federal stimulus funding for foreclosed properties like this house, in New Haven's Westville State Register district.

funding specifically for preservation projects. On the other hand, some programs also provide funding that can be used for demolition, and there are still fears that mandated reviews, such as Section 106 reviews, could be short-changed (see CPN, May/June 2009).

Opportunity: The Connecticut Trust has created a proposal for explicitly identifying and providing funding for preservation activities in any future stimulus legislation and has presented this proposal to both Senator Christopher Dodd and Commissioner Joan McDonald of the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development. The proposal has two principal elements:

- Technical assistance and funding for repair, rehabilitation, and weatherization of historic urban residential and commercial buildings; and
- Restoration incentive loans for historic houses under foreclosure.

continued on page 4

From the Executive Director

We are pleased that the Connecticut Humanities Council has awarded the Trust a grant of \$5,000 to research and fabricate the Connecticut panel of Historic New England's traveling exhibit, *The Preservation Movement Then and Now*. Starting in the spring of 2010, the exhibit will travel to three historic sites in Connecticut. Chris Wigren, Deputy Director and Senior Architectural Historian, will be the project director and chief researcher/writer.

As reported in the last issue of CPN, Todd Levine, Director of the Trust's Historic Barns of Connecticut project, funded by a grant from the Commission on Culture and Tourism, has begun the two-year project to survey as many historic barns in Connecticut as possible. This summer, we were fortunate to have working with him intern Julie Rosen from Guilford. Julie will be a senior at the University of Illinois majoring in civil engineering, but her heart seems to be in historic preservation. She did an outstanding job for the Trust on the barns project. She also helped fine tune our soon-to-be-released website for local historic district commissions and worked with our Circuit Riders to set up a new Google-based map for displaying their field work. Thank you, Julie!


Also working with Todd on the Barns Project is Charlotte Hitchcock from New Haven. An architect in retirement, Charlotte has been volunteering for two years as a barns surveyor and now it is great to have her working directly with us as our chief researcher.

Joining us as an intern this summer was Ed Perzanowski from Plainville. Ed intends to enroll in a graduate program in historic preservation but wanted to test the waters of reality here at the Trust. He spent much of his time on the telephone gathering information for this issue's Great Preservation Opportunities. Ed was personable while persistent and gathered a great deal of good information on preservation issues from around the state. We'll miss him but hope he'll be back after he receives a master's in historic preservation!

In another staff change, Jane Montanaro, formerly our Membership Manager and HouseTalk coordinator, has taken on the position of Preservation Services Officer. With a bachelor's degree in architecture, courses towards her master's in historic preservation plus six years working at the Trust, Jane is a natural to fill this position that was Todd's. Jane will be in charge of our grant programs and will be the go-to person for initial queries on preservation issues. She will work hand-in-hand with our Circuit Riders, to whom she will refer projects and thorny questions!

And she will still run HouseTalk.

In late December 2006 the Trust went to court to try to stop the demolition of the 1972 Micheels house in Westport, designed by Modernist architect Paul Rudolph. We were not successful; the house was demolished in mid-January 2007 (for a report, see CPN, March/April 2007). However, we were able to send staff members and historical consultants to the site before the demolition to document the building with photographs and detailed measured drawings. The drawings were done by hand and needed to be transferred to the electronic CAD (computer aided design) system that allows for two- and three-dimensional drawings. Recently, architect Stephen Lasar of Stephen Lasar Architects in New Milford, volunteered to transfer the hand drawn data onto CAD. The result will be a product ready to be submitted to Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS).

Finally, do check the new Circuit Rider activity report accessible from our website, www.cttrust.org. Just click on the map at the bottom of the splash page. 

—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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Connecticut Commission on Culture & Tourism

Upcoming Meetings of the Connecticut Historic Preservation Council
October 7, 2009, at 9:30 a.m.
November 4, 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

Recycling and Preservation: Making It Work

Since the beginning of the preservation movement, restorers have used old materials taken from one building to replace missing elements in another. Countless historic structures now feature mantels or doors or stairs taken from other buildings. Even floor boards and ordinary lumber, where a two-by-four actually measures two inches by four inches, can be valuable. There were cases where one old building was plundered to restore another, but most restorers soon agreed that it was only responsible to remove materials from buildings that were being demolished.

With the rise of increased environmental consciousness, this idea of reusing building materials has spread beyond preservation. Now 'deconstruction'—carefully dismantling buildings, rather than demolishing them, so that as many materials as possible can be reused—is promoted as a form of recycling. Like preservation, deconstruction promotes reusing not only trim or other decorative elements, but also such mundane items as floor boards and even two-by-fours.

As part of an overall commitment to maximize recycling, the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has convened a Materials Reuse Network whose goal is to increase awareness of deconstruction and building materials reuse and to encourage more trained workers and professionals in the industry of deconstruction. Members of the network include professionals from the fields of deconstruction, demolition, architecture, green building development, training and education, community colleges, solid

waste management, engineering, historic preservation, and environmental activism.

From its first meeting, in November 2008, the group recognized an obstacle: state law governing demolition includes deconstruction, and any person involved in building demolition or deconstruction must be registered with the Department of Public Safety. According to the deconstruction industry, deconstruction is the selective *dismantlement* of building components, specifically for reuse, recycling, or waste management. It differs from demolition, in which a site is cleared of its building by the most expedient means. The industry is suggesting ways to separate these activities in the regulations.

The key issue for historic preservationists is that no matter how desirable recycling may be, demolition and deconstruction both result in the same thing: the loss of a building. From the preservation point of view, the current demolition definition needs to be *even more* specific about what constitutes deconstruction or demolition, including what is now called 'soft stripping'—the removal of windows, doors, and other trim—which currently doesn't require a registered demolition contractor.

The challenge for preservationists is to make sure that encouraging reuse of materials is balanced by the accepted hierarchy of treatments for historic buildings. From the most to the least desirable, the options are:

1. Restoration on-site for the original use;

2. Restoration or rehabilitation on-site for a new use;
3. Relocation;
4. Recording architectural and historic features;
5. Salvaging key elements for recycling, in other words, deconstruction;
6. Demolition

At the very least, the historic preservation community needs to be assured that state statutes and regulations not encourage selective dismantling of historic buildings unless all alternatives to demolition have been evaluated.

The Connecticut Trust will continue to follow the proceedings of the MRN/deconstruction group. In the meantime, local preservationists should make sure that their historic building stock has been surveyed and, when appropriate, listed on the State or National Register of Historic Places to discourage selective dismantling. 🌿

—Helen Higgins



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Correction: The Case Study of the Colbert Barn in Woodbridge, which appeared on page 4 of the May/June issue of CPN, neglected to credit David D. Harlan Architects, LLC, which was responsible for the managing and coordinating the assessment process and report, forming a team with the owner, Gibble Norden Champion Consulting Engineers, and Soundview Manors, builders.


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These activities both can take place under current stimulus programs, but there is no guarantee that they will. Specifically incorporating preservation into stimulus planning will ensure that historic buildings will not be left behind. 🌿

**Statewide:
Urban Religious Complexes**

Urban churches with dwindling congregations and aging facilities face special challenges. While this is a long-standing concern, crises struck several important historic sites this summer.

The Archdiocese of Hartford has announced that **Sacred Heart Catholic Church**, in New Haven, will be closed as of September 19. Sacred Heart's congregation is small and poor, and its buildings need repairs—although preservationists contest the archdiocese's estimates of the extent and cost of those repairs (see CPN September/October 2008). The archdiocese is reportedly planning to demolish the massive stone church (1851) and the convent (1895), while the rectory (1884) and school (1893) will apparently continue in use. All contribute to the Trowbridge Square National Register district. Offers by



B. Schilde

Stamford: rectory, St. Andrew's Episcopal Church

the New Haven Preservation Trust to help find new users for the church and convent have received no response.

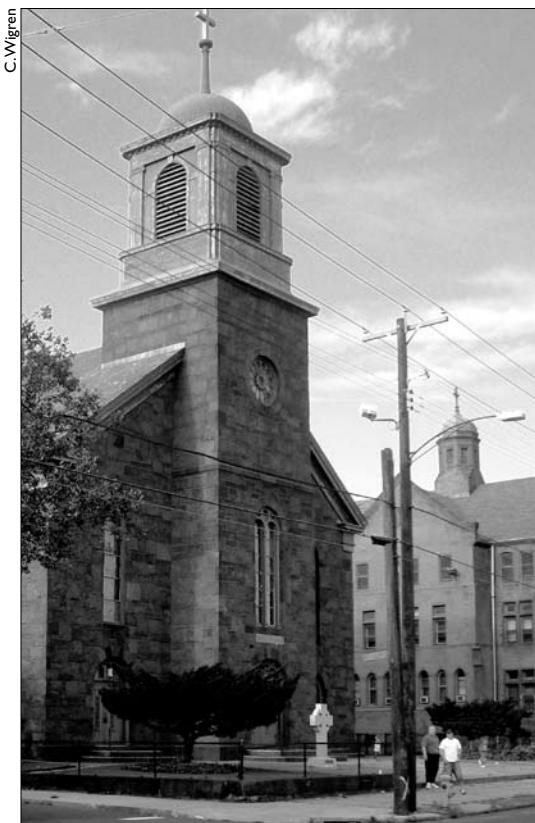
For years, **Saint Andrew's Episcopal Church**, Stamford, has pursued plans to sell part of its property to create a much needed endowment. The land to be sold contains the church's rectory, designed in 1873 by Henry Hudson Holly and, like the church, listed on the National Register. In July the city planning and zoning commission approved the plans for a 94-unit apartment building on the site, necessitating demolition of the rectory. The developer is supposed to reuse some of the stone and brick to build an addition for the church, but the rectory is being offered for one dollar to anyone who will move it off the site by November 15. The approval also reportedly includes a preservation easement to protect the church building.

In South Norwalk, the former **First Methodist Church**, a Richardsonian Romanesque structure in yellow brick and granite (1896) closed recently and is now for sale. One drawback is the lack of parking space. The church lies between a new 600,000 square-foot mixed use development and I-95, making it a possible


target for demolition—or, perhaps, offering an opportunity to build on a larger development scheme.

Opportunities: Developing underused assets can be a way for some congregations to support ministry programs. Saint Andrew's is following the example of St. John's Episcopal, also in Stamford, which built income-producing buildings in the 1980s, but without demolishing any historic structures. But Saint Andrew's rectory, as well as the buildings at Sacred Heart, could qualify for the federal rehabilitation tax credit available for buildings listed on the National Register. In addition, Stamford offers zoning incentives, such as increased density or reduced parking requirements,


New Haven: Sacred Heart Catholic Church and convent



C. Wiegren



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Norwalk: the former First United Methodist Church



Litchfield: Benjamin Tallmadge house

in exchange for rehabilitation of historic buildings.

Given the current state of the real estate market, this may not be an advantageous time for religious organizations to sell properties if there is any way they can wait. In many cases, a relatively small investment might buy a congregation a few years in which to explore long-range options, including, if necessary, sale. Extra time could also give congregations more opportunity to explore options for shaping development to allow long-range stewardship for historic buildings while providing a reasonable return to support their programs and other facilities, and to lay needed groundwork, such as National Register nominations or preservation easements. 🌿

Statewide: Residential Teardowns

When the economy was booming, all too many owners wanted to tear down historic houses in order to build bigger, grandiose replacements. In the downturn, teardowns continue to be a problem, but for different reasons. Now, some owners want to reduce taxes and other carrying costs while they wait for recovery. Other houses languish vacant on the market, and rather than being torn down outright, they may face demolition by neglect.

One example is the **Benjamin Tallmadge House** in Litchfield, home of

a Revolutionary War hero, built in 1775. While the house, which is located in a National Historic Landmark district and a local historic district, is not a likely teardown, the longer it sits empty, the more costly any repairs will be.

Neglect has led to more serious destruction in Farmington, where **123 Main Street** suffered a serious fire in July. Although located in a National Register district and a local historic district, the 18th-century house has been neglected for years and its owner has rebuffed urgings by the historic district commission to repair or maintain it.

continued on page 6

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Preservation Opportunities, cont'd from page 5

In Westport, the owners of the **Stratton-Rippe house**, built in about 1770 and remodeled in the 1890s, have filed for a demolition permit—not, they claim, because they actually intend to raze the house, but rather to call attention to it. According to a local newspaper, the house was on the market for 176 days in 2008 and 90 days in 2009; perhaps it is overpriced.

Opportunities: Preservation groups might consider purchasing options on endangered properties, which usually be done for just a few thousand dollars. Doing so would give the organization time to evaluate the property, explore potential ways of protecting it, and search for a preservation-minded buyer. Of course, the property has to be for sale; many of the most troublesome cases are houses being neglected by owners who nonetheless refuse to part with them. 🌿

Statewide: Summer Cottages

Connecticut's shoreline, lakefronts and riverbanks have a long history as summer-time escapes, and they are sprinkled with seasonal homes that range from modest bungalows to grand estates. In recent years skyrocketing property values, particularly for waterfront land, fueled orgies of demolition or drastic renovation, creating pretentious monsters that dwarf their surroundings.



Farmington: 123 Main Street

Opportunity: Even before the crash there were the beginnings of a backlash against the excesses of the past decade. Sarah Susanka's popular "Not So Big" books, including this year's *Not So Big Remodeling*, offer suggestions for houses that base their appeal less on sheer size and more on skillful design and architectural quality. At the same time, the environmental movement encourages smaller buildings as a way of conserving energy. These trends guided Wolfried and Anita Mielert's renovation of their 1932 beach cottage in Old Saybrook. "I'm aghast at some of the wonderful homes being torn down," says Anita, a former CTHP Trustee and currently one of two National Trust Advisors for Connecticut. "Why not do sensitive

remodeling and renovation and not change the character of beach communities?" For municipalities, the cool market offers an opportunity to consider zoning regulations that don't encourage destruction by allowing out-of-scale construction. 🌿

Bristol: Bristol Armory

Built in 1927 and 1928 to designs by Payne & Keefe, a New London firm that produced several Connecticut armories, the Bristol Armory mixes vaguely medieval details with streamlined forms that anticipated Art Deco massing. The armory is closed, and the State is looking into selling it as surplus property, an option that seems very likely given Governor Rell's recent statements that such sales could help the state close its budget deficit. If so, the city will have right of first refusal, and Bristol is looking into buying the armory, although no specific use has been decided on.

Opportunity: Plan now for reuse. In early July, Michael Nicastro, president of the Central Connecticut Chamber of Commerce, wrote an op-ed piece in Bristol Press urging this. The armory's location could be a selling point, since it is only a block from the site of the 1960s strip mall that the city hopes to redevelop with a pedestrian-friendly mix of residences and shops. A National Register nomination, to allow the building to qualify for federal rehabilitation tax credits, could be a first step. 🌿

W. Mielert



Old Saybrook: the Mielert cottage

**Collinsville:
Collins Axe Company dams**

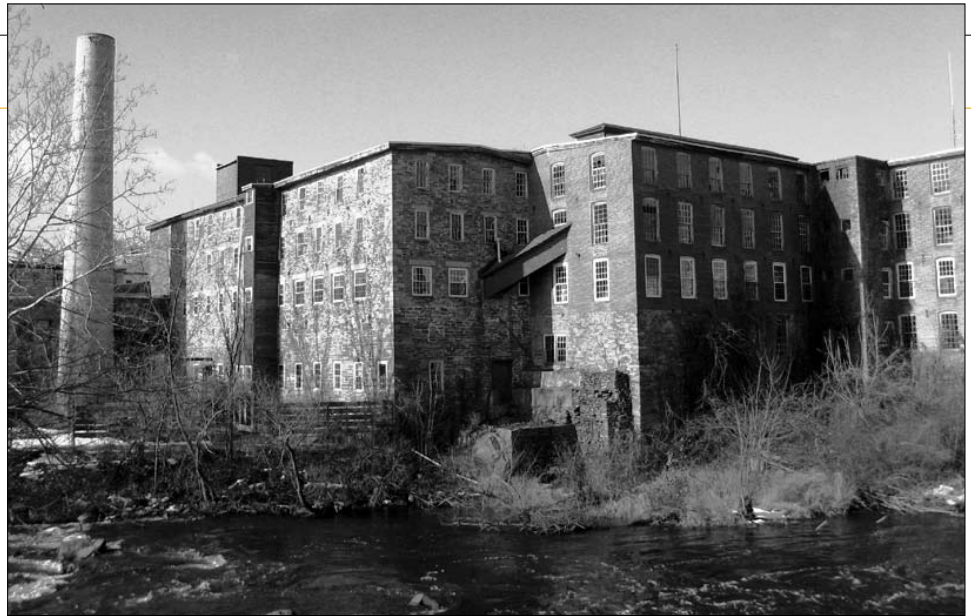
The Collins Axe Company built a worldwide market for its edge tools. The entire mill site, along with the company village, is listed on the National Register. Two dams on the Farmington River provided power for the factory, but since the company closed, they have been idle. Upkeep of historic dams can become a burden, adding fuel to efforts to remove them to restore original water flow (see CPN, September/ October 2004).

Opportunity: Canton's first selectman, Richard Barlow, wants to get a permit to reuse the Collins Company dams to generate electricity. He and other local officials think that the dams could provide low-cost, clean power to as many as 2,000 homes. The main obstacle seems to be negotiating state and federal regulations.

While some environmentalists argue that all dams should be removed, the potential benefits of flood control and relatively clean energy, as well as preserving part of the historic industrial landscape, offer arguments for keeping some of them. Careful planning and mitigation efforts such as building fish ladders, should make such projects acceptable to everyone. 🌱

**Putnam:
Cargill Falls Mill**

With surviving portions built between 1824 and late 1860s this mill currently



Putnam: Cargill Falls mill

houses storage, a real estate office and an antique shop. Its site, at entry to downtown Putnam on Route 44 and overlooking a picturesque waterfall, is ripe for redevelopment.

Opportunity: With rehabilitation, the mill could be a catalyst for further revitalization for downtown Putnam, which has reinvented itself as an antiques center. The town has established an industrial heritage overlay zone to encourage redevelopment of six historic mill properties, including Cargill. The zone allows mixed-use projects that include housing in the mills, which otherwise are zoned for commercial and manufacturing uses only. Already used successfully at two of the other mills, the zone could provide a

model for other towns looking to put new life into historic industrial buildings. 🌱

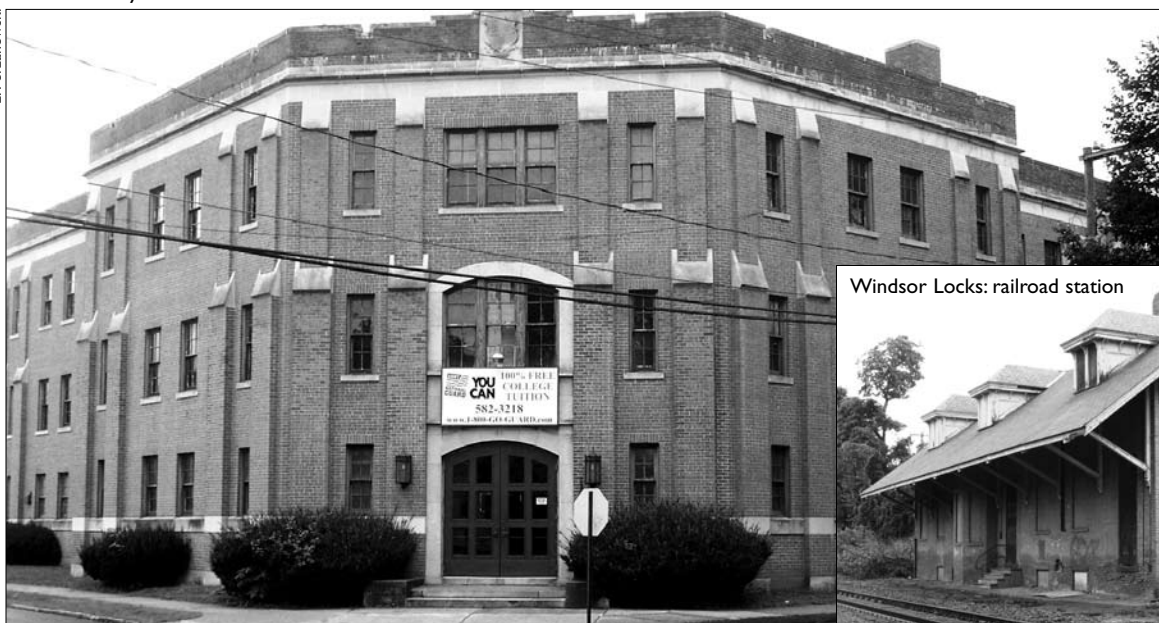
**Windsor Locks:
Windsor Locks railroad station**

Since 2004 the Windsor Locks Preservation Association has been trying to turn the abandoned building into a museum. Amtrak is currently processing the organization's request to take ownership of the station, which is listed on the National Register.

Opportunity: A proposal for commuter trains between New Haven and Springfield seems to be moving toward approval, and the town is trying to convince Amtrak to build a new station just north of the historic structure to replace the current stop, a bus shelter outside of the town center. In July town voters approved funding for a feasibility study to help make the case to DOT.

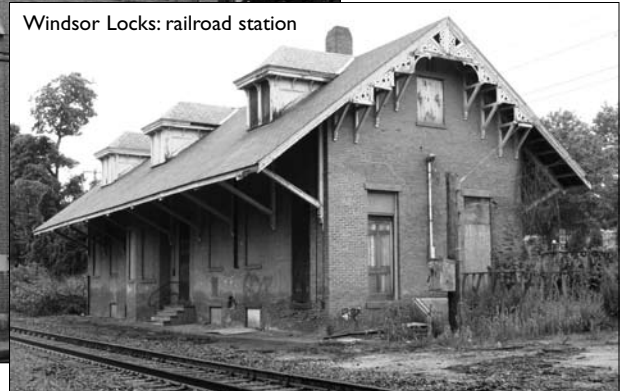
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Bristol: Armory



E. Perzanowski

Windsor Locks: railroad station



G. Farmer

Opportunities for Tobacco Sheds

N. Harkrader

If there is a single type of building that immediately says “Connecticut Valley,” it must be the tobacco shed, developed in the 19th century as the valley became a leading source of tobacco for cigars. The long, narrow structures are so completely designed for one particular use—curing tobacco—that they have been said to be not buildings, but machines (see CPN, March/April 2005 and July/August 2009). Unfortunately, that perfect union of form and function can also doom the sheds. As smoking has declined and suburban sprawl invaded the tobacco fields, countless sheds have been demolished.

The plight of the tobacco shed was highlighted this summer with the news that 14 sheds in Simsbury were slated to give way to for a new housing development. The sheds were built in the early 20th century by Cullman Brothers, Inc., one of the country’s largest growers of cigar tobacco. In addition to their agricultural importance, these sheds are also significant because it was in this part of Simsbury that Martin Luther King, Jr., spent summers picking tobacco while he was in college, an experience that King later cited as crucial in his spiritual formation.



With its long, narrow shape and ventilation louvers, the tobacco shed is an instantly identifiable element of the Connecticut agricultural landscape.

Because of this combination of agricultural and historic importance, the State Historic Preservation Office determined that the sheds could qualify for the National Register and asked the developer to provide documentation of the sheds’ appearance, construction and history as a way of mitigating for their loss.

The planning for the Simsbury development has gone too far to preserve any of these sheds on site (there is a possibility that some of them will be moved to another farm nearby that is still, for the moment, in active use). But the situation led us to wonder if other endangered tobacco sheds could successfully be adapted to other uses.

Reusing barns is difficult. Their utilitarian design and lack of windows or tight enclosure all pose significant hurdles. In fact, many converted barns simply don’t look much like barns any more, except in a Disneyland sort of way. Tobacco sheds in particular are defined by the need for ventilation, met by systems of louvers and doors. Even more than with other barns, the pattern of openings is crucial to their character. However, these openings also offer opportunities for providing light and air that many other barns don’t have.

We asked a few architects to try to come up with some ideas for reusing tobacco sheds. These are not finished plans, but

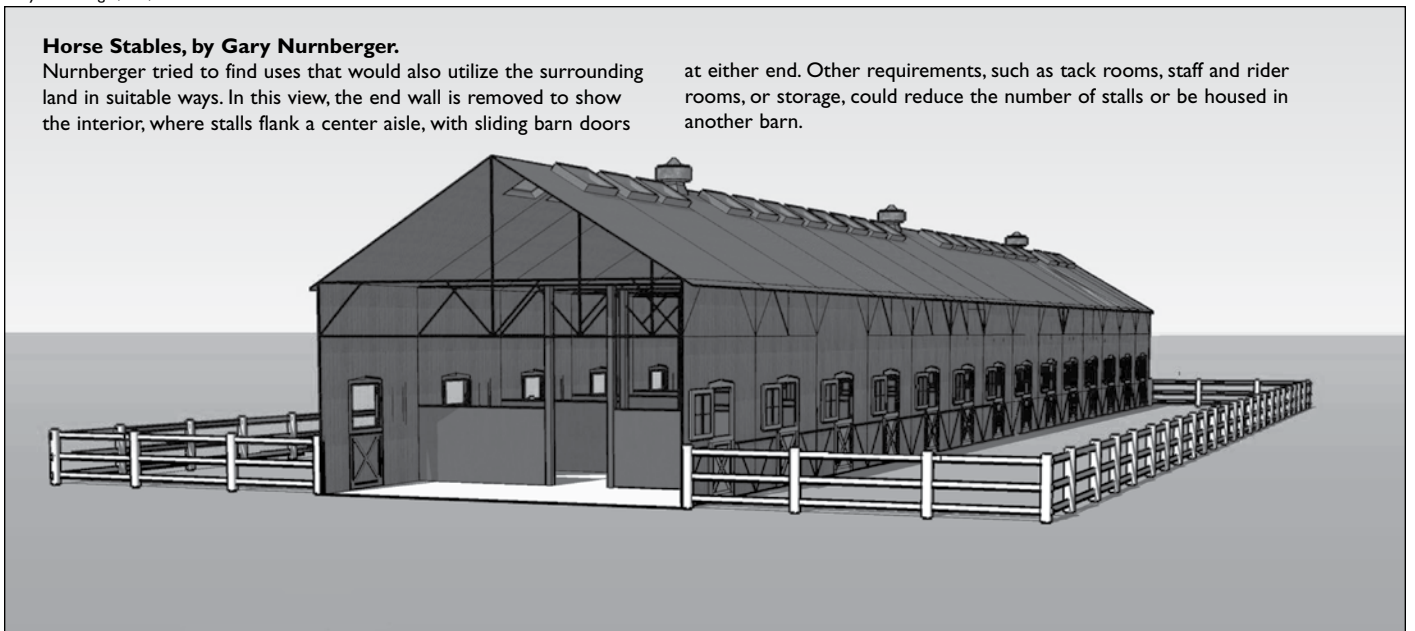
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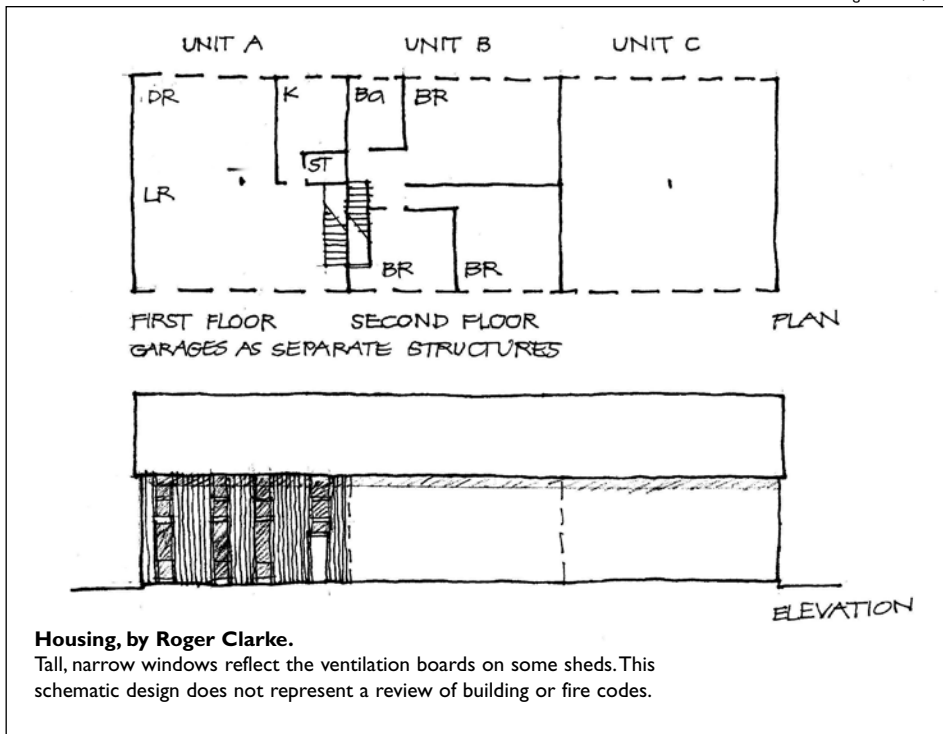
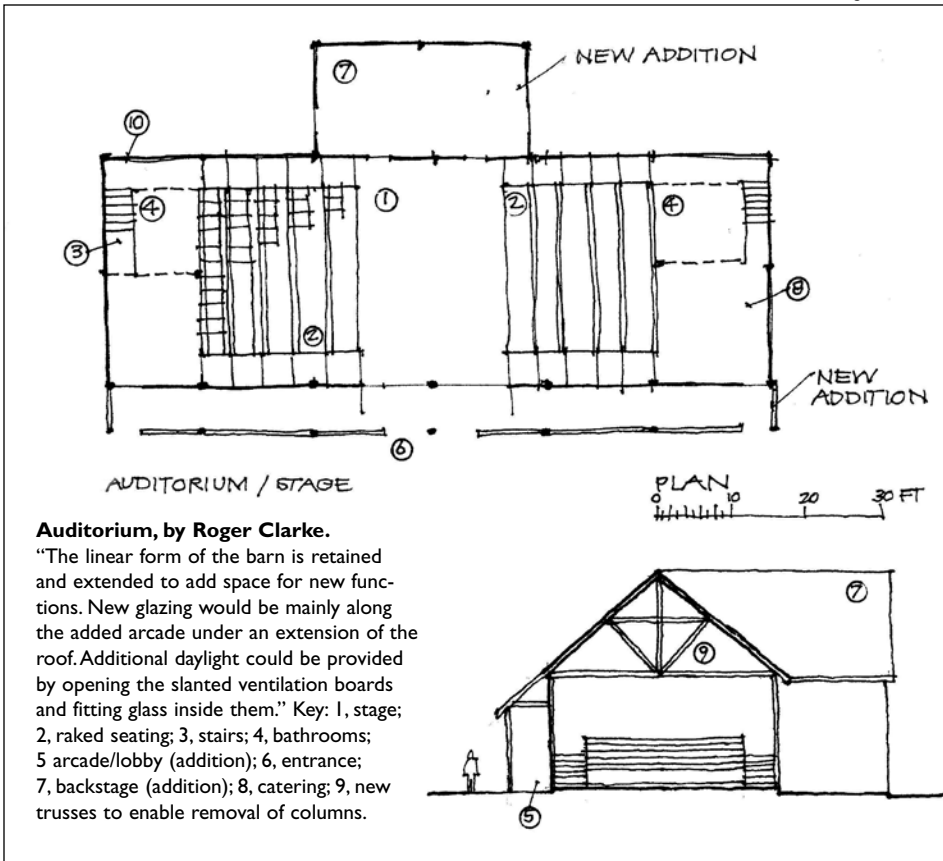
Gary Nurnberger, AIA, LEED AP

Horse Stables, by Gary Nurnberger.

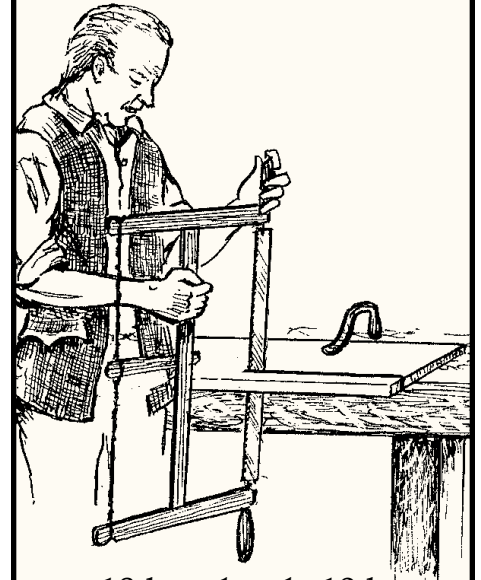
Nurnberger tried to find uses that would also utilize the surrounding land in suitable ways. In this view, the end wall is removed to show the interior, where stalls flank a center aisle, with sliding barn doors

at either end. Other requirements, such as tack rooms, staff and rider rooms, or storage, could reduce the number of stalls or be housed in another barn.



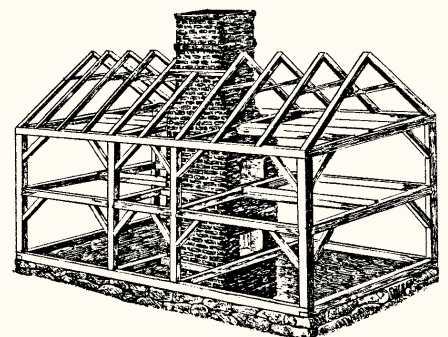


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rather cocktail-napkin sketches that we hope might inspire someone to take the next step to preserve some tobacco sheds by finding a new use for them.

Of course, it's also important to have some tobacco sheds preserved in their original state, something that doesn't currently exist, according to James F. O'Gorman's

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Portland.

On June 30 the town Planning and Zoning commission unanimously approved revised plans for Portland Town Place, a mixed-use development on the site of the former Elmcrest Hospital, turning down preservationists' requests that the commission require the preservation of two historic houses on the property (see CPN, July/August 2009).

In a slight improvement on earlier proposals, the approved plan calls for retaining, rather than demolishing, the central block of the Hart-Jarvis house (1829-30). The remnant will be rotated to face Marlborough Street and given new flanking wings. The developers made no change to the proposed fate of the Erastus Brainerd, Jr., house (1852), designed by Henry Austin. As in earlier plans, it will be razed and replaced by a so-called 'replica' ornamented with a few salvaged fragments.

The Planning and Zoning commissioners, along with the first selectman, Susan Bransfield, wanted this development to bolster the tax base and were reluctant to pose any additional requirements, for fear of driving away the developers.

It is particularly unfortunate that some proponents of the project were able to paint those who wanted to retain the houses as anti-development. Throughout the process the preservationists' aim clearly was not to stop the project but rather to incorporate those two buildings into it. Far from being anti-development, this would have given the project an appeal and a point of distinction that no new construction, certainly not the bland designs shown on the developer's submission, could hope to offer.

Worst of all, the developer has not actually signed agreements with tenants, and the whole project could end up stalled on the drawing board—except for the loss of one of Connecticut's most distinguished 19th-century houses and the disfiguring of another. In an attempt to prevent this from happening, the preservationists asked that the developer not be allowed to begin demolition until tenants were signed and committed. Town officials replied that they did not have the power to require this.

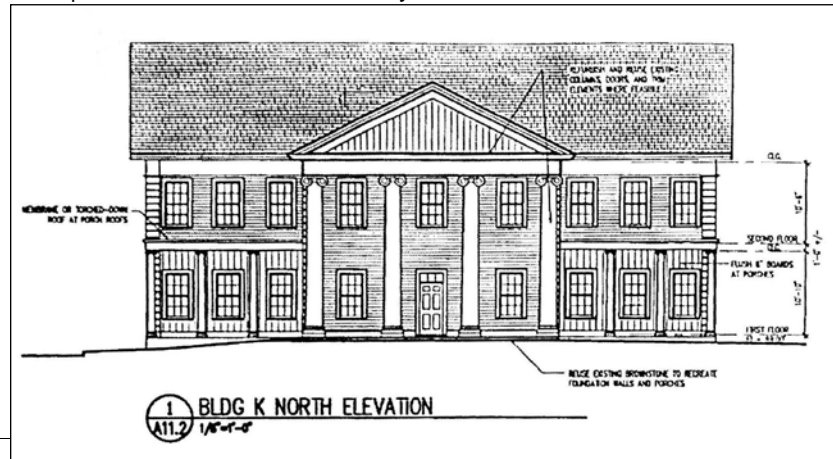
One basic lesson is for communities to ensure that important sites are listed on the National Register wherever possible, before threats arise. National Register listing provides the potential for protection through the Connecticut Environmental Protection Act, which allows lawsuits to prevent the unreasonable demolition of buildings listed on the National Register. While this law has had only mixed results, it can sometimes be a useful bargaining chip. In addition, National Register listing allows buildings to qualify for rehabilitation tax credits and, in some cases zoning incentives. Moreover, official status itself can sometimes encourage preservation.

Portland actually has a strong statement about the importance of preserving historic sites in its plan of conservation and development, which says, "Historic sites, buildings, and structures...are key

components for helping to understand the Town's cultural heritage and development. It is imperative that these historic sites and structures be preserved in order to pass along some of Portland's history to future generations." In addition, the town zoning regulations call, among other things, for considering the preservation of historic and architectural features when evaluating proposed mixed use development projects.

In this case, the town clearly was aware of the historic character of the site and could have consulted with historic organizations early in the planning process, which, according to newspaper accounts, has lasted more than three years. Unfortunately, the historical society and the public were able to be involved only after a plan had been created. If they had been in at the beginning they might have been able to help procure a better outcome.

Developer's submission to Town of Portland; John A. Mathews, architect



The Hart-Jarvis house (below) in Portland, as it is now, and according to plans to reuse its central section in a new development.



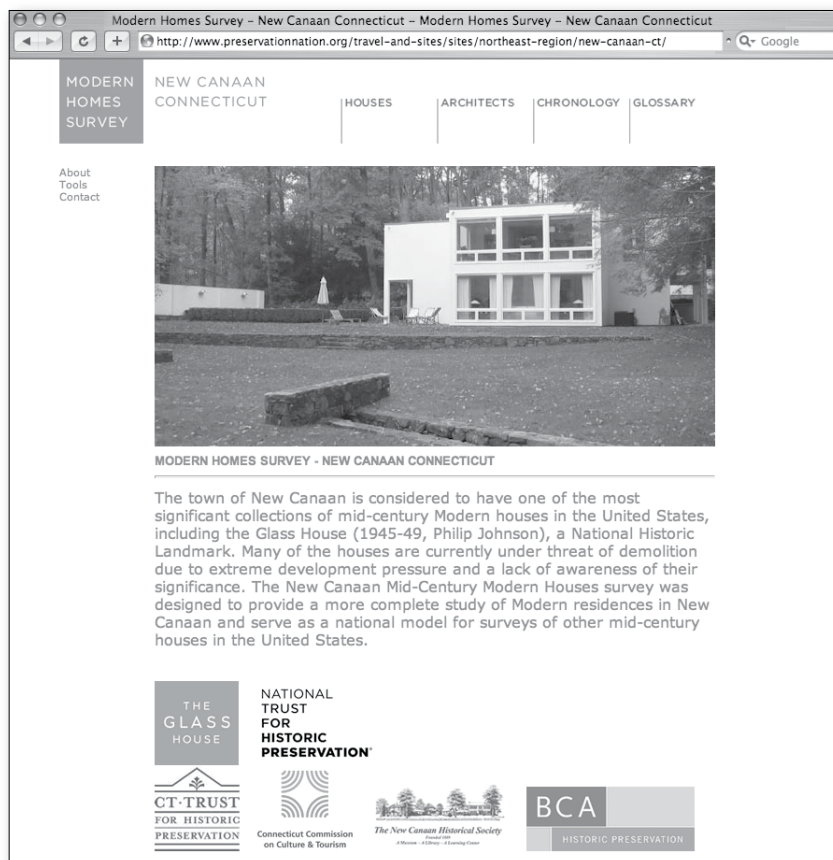
Alain Munterick

New Canaan.

Information about the town's world-famous collection of Modern houses is now available online. "Modern Homes Survey: New Canaan Connecticut," completed last year, has now been made into a website. The survey was carried out by BCA Associates, of New York, for the Glass House, which is owned by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, with assistance from the Connecticut Trust, the Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism, and the New Canaan Historical Society. A \$10,000 Historic Preservation Technical Assistance Grant from the Connecticut Trust helped fund the creation of a searchable database of the survey data, which is at the heart of the website.

The survey contains descriptions, historical and architectural information, and photographs for 91 Modernist houses built in New Canaan between 1939 and 1979. The site also contains thumbnail biographies of the 31 architects whose work is represented and a glossary. Unfortunately, the introductory material prepared for the survey is not included, but printed copies can be purchased through the website.

One of the aims of the project was to help other locales carry out their own surveys. In order to do this, the website also contains tools that include budgets, letters to homeowners, even a master survey form, as well as links to surveys of Modern architecture in other places.



"Modern Homes Survey: New Canaan Connecticut" can be found at www.preservationnation.org/modernhomesurvey

According to Christy MacLear, the Glass House's executive director, the survey and web site were inspired by the destruction of the Micheels house in Westport, in January 2007 (see CPN, March/April 2007). Although the house was designed by Paul Rudolph, a judge ruling on a motion

to prevent demolition said "there were no stated criteria or documentation to back up claims of the house's significance."

Bridgeport.

For years the empty house stood alone in a vast vacant expanse of land visible from the Connecticut Turnpike. It had been built in 1891 for the city's only member of the Baseball Hall of Fame, James O' Rourke (1850-1919). The first man to get a hit in National League history, in 1876, O'Rourke continued to play baseball into his 50s, appearing in his last major league game in 1904 at the age of 54 and in a minor league game at age 60.

A local group of baseball enthusiasts, called The First Hit, Inc., tried to make the house a museum to O'Rourke. They commissioned plans showing display areas on the ground floor and a caretaker's apartment above, but couldn't raise the money or get control of the site, which was located in the middle of a prime redevelopment site.

A maritime community in the 19th century, the neighborhood is generally known

continued on page 14

Bridgeport: the James O'Rourke house, in 2004.



Grants from the Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism

Historic Restoration Fund

The Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism (CCT) will be accepting applications for the Historic Restoration Fund grant program. The deadline for application submission is October 30, 2009, no later than 4:30 pm, at the CCT offices at 1 Constitution Plaza, Second Floor, Hartford, Connecticut 06103, attention David Bahlman, HPMD Director. For further information including guidelines and applications requirements on the HRF program, go to the CCT website under the Historic Preservation and Museum Division.

Two Workshops on the HRF program will be presented at the CCT offices. The dates are August 26 and September 23, 2009, from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm. The workshops are free but require reservations. To reserve a seat at either of the workshops, please contact Jennifer Haag at jennifer.haag@ct.gov or by telephone at (860) 256-2800. 🌿

Historic Preservation Grant Programs

Applications are being accepted for all historic preservation grant programs with

the exception of the Cultural Capital Grant program. For guidelines and applications, please consult the CCT website under the Historic Preservation and Museum Division. 🌿

Cultural Capital Grants

CCT will not accept Cultural Capital Grant applications during the 2009-2010 fiscal year. 🌿

For more information, visit <http://www.cultureandtourism.org/cct/site/default.asp>.

Opportunities, cont'd from page 7

Bringing railroad passengers back into the town center could support revitalization efforts, including redevelopment of the impressive string of factories along the Windsor Locks Canal. The historic station could be an important part of that effort. However, a museum alone probably wouldn't generate much activity. Adding commercial use, such as a coffee shop for commuters, could support the museum as well as broader economic development. 🌿

Woodstock: Chamberlin mill

This saw mill was in existence by 1869 and operated until the 1970s. Listed on the State Register in July, the mill is unique in its completeness and preservation, including most of its machinery—even a cut-down 1928 Studebaker truck which supplanted water power in the mill's later years. The

Nature Conservancy acquired the mill in 2008 as part of the Still River Preserve. While the Conservancy is interested in preserving the mill, doing so is outside the organization's mission or expertise.

Opportunity: A group of local residents, including the Woodstock Historical Society, an agricultural society, and some old-tractor buffs, prepared the State Register nomination, has begun cleaning up the site, and has commissioned a building condition assessment as the first step in ensuring its long-term preservation. This cooperative venture between historical and environmental groups provides a good model for preserving historic buildings on open space land, a need that the Connecticut Trust first identified three years ago (see CPN, September/October 2006).

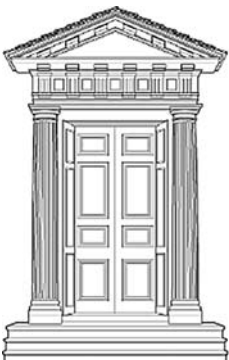
In another approach, the Department

Woodstock: Chamberlin mill



J. McCellan

of Environmental Protection is looking at establishing resident curatorships at six historic buildings. This program, as practiced in Massachusetts and other states, gives long-term leases of publicly-owned historic buildings to private individuals who will commit to renovating and maintaining the buildings to professional standards—a way of putting these unused historic buildings to good use without further straining limited public budgets. 🌿



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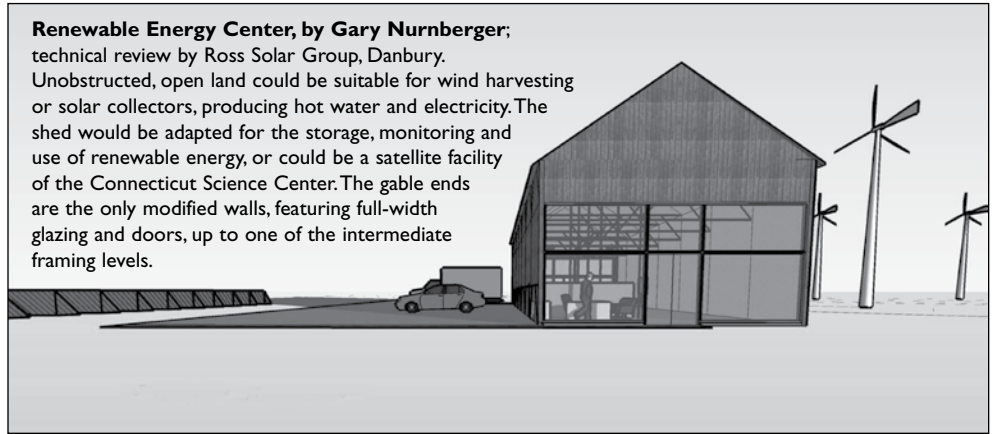
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book *Connecticut Valley Vernacular: The Vanishing Landscape and Architecture of the New England Tobacco Fields* (2004). Even at sites dedicated to interpreting tobacco growing, the sheds have been cleaned up, made weathertight, given concrete floors—as O’Gorman says, they have lost “the rust of time.” Surely some historical society could make it their mission to preserve an unimproved tobacco shed, preferably with a field of shaded tobacco growing around it in the summer, so that visitors can experience for themselves the Connecticut Valley tobacco landscape. 🌿



Renewable Energy Center, by Gary Nurnberger; technical review by Ross Solar Group, Danbury. Unobstructed, open land could be suitable for wind harvesting or solar collectors, producing hot water and electricity. The shed would be adapted for the storage, monitoring and use of renewable energy, or could be a satellite facility of the Connecticut Science Center. The gable ends are the only modified walls, featuring full-width glazing and doors, up to one of the intermediate framing levels.

The Connecticut Trust thanks Roger Clarke, AIA, and Gary Nurnberger, AIA, LEED AP, for preparing feasibility studies, and Roy Gilley, AIA, of Gilley Design Associates, for sharing his thoughts. Sara Nelson, of NEC Architects, also devoted time to the study but other commitments prevented her from meeting CPN’s deadline.

The problem is that tobacco sheds are a bunch of poles stuck in the ground, with no foundation. That makes them hard to convert to any other use. The best thing would be to leave them as they are as much as possible. One thing you could use them for would be a fair or carnival. Heat wouldn’t be a

problem, insulation wouldn’t be a problem; and the framing and board siding would give them great flavor. I could see a cluster of sheds as a marvelous farmers’ market, with stalls between the posts, and the ventilation slats open for air and light.

—Roy Gilley, AIA, Gilley Design Associates



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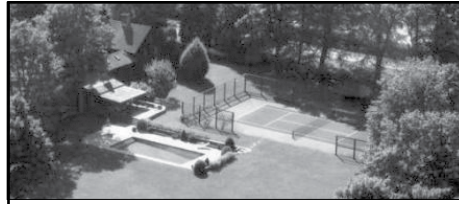
as Steel Point in honor of a steel mill once located there. Since the early 1990s the area has been the subject of several redevelopment schemes variously called Harbour Place, Harbour Pointe, Steel Point and Steel Point Harbor. None of the proposals ever seemed to go anywhere, so the city cleared the entire site, hoping that vacant land would prove more enticing. However, the historic buildings could have been the raw material for a new and attractive development.

When only the O'Rourke house remained, it seemed inconceivable that with so much open land a new development couldn't be designed around one little house, but officials insisted that the site be totally clear, and so on June 15 O'Rourke's

house finally came down.

Steel Point's current developer, Bob Christoph Sr., has pledged \$50,000

toward a life-sized statue of O'Rourke to be erected at Harbor Yard, Bridgeport's baseball stadium. 🌿



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Tar on Sandstone

How can I remove drips of tar from my sandstone steps? —Omaha, Nebraska

If the tar drips are recent and have not soaked deeply into a porous stone surface, just pop them off with a putty knife on a sub-zero day in the middle of the winter. Has spring already sprung in Omaha? If so try a preliminary application of dry ice to freeze the tar. This method may leave some

tar residue. To remove at least some of the residue let the stone dry out, cover with a couple layers of absorbent cotton cloth and heat carefully right over the spot with a hot clothes iron. The tar should soak up into the cloth. As always, test first in an obscure location. Any solvent method is likely to make the tar soak deeper into the stone.

Window Glazing

I will soon be replacing broken lights and reglazing 50 windows. I would like to know how to take out old hard brittle window glazing without breaking the glass. Also, where can I get old bubbly, wavy glass in various sizes? —Athol, Massachusetts

Heat methods work best and fastest. When brittle glazing putty is heated, it softens up quite quickly. It can then be easily scraped away. For this work I use a Makita heat gun (model HG1100, about \$80, with the separately available flat nozzle) and a pull-type scraper (Embee Molding Scraper Set, No. 1240, about \$15).

When working with heat methods always remove the sash from the frame and work outdoors or in a separate shop building to reduce the risk of fire. Since you are doing so many windows it will be worth setting up a shop or work station that has everything you need to make the job easy. Set up a bench that holds the sash up at an angle with the center of the sash at about elbow height. Removing putty and paint from the sash generates hazardous lead-containing dust and debris. Use a rated respirator, wear a hat and remove your clothes after each work session and take a shower. Wash the clothes separately

and give the washing machine an extra rinse cycle after removing the washed clothes. Keep your work area clean with a HEPA rated vacuum machine.

Adjust the heat gun to the lowest temperature that softens the putty. The maximum temperature will make the work go faster but it is so hot that it can vaporize lead in the glazing and paint, creating an additional health hazard. Lay the wide nozzle down on the glass right along the base of the glazing and shift it up along the glazing as you scrape away the softened putty just heated. The hot air will crack the glass if it blows directly onto it. Make a heat pad to protect the glass on the other side of the glazing from the hot air. Cut a piece of cardboard (off the back of a pad of writing paper) to about 1/8" less than the size of the exposed glass and wrap the cardboard with 3 or 4 layers of aluminum foil. Lay the pad on the glass on the other side of the glazing to protect it from the stream of hot air. With this method we usually have less than 10% breakage.

Our best and lowest cost source of glass is from all the old windows that are removed by the window replacement companies. Usually they are free for the taking right at the site. Of course, you have to deglaze and clean up the glass before you can use it. 🌱

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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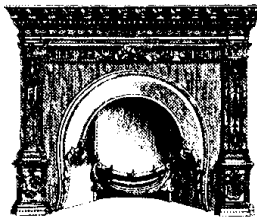
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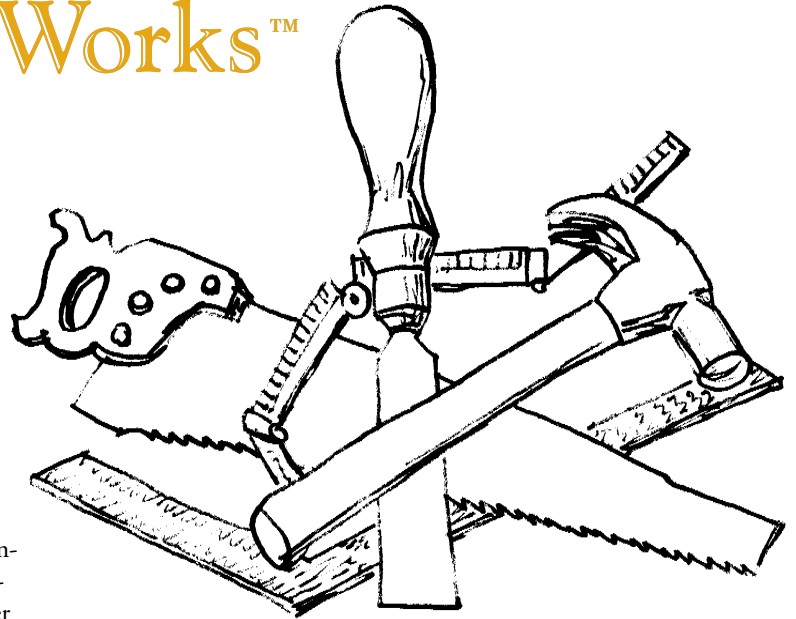
My wife and I recently bought an old 1872 Victorian home that as you can imagine needs a lot of work. We are interested in keeping the historic integrity of the house. The largest concern right now is the exterior of the house. It is currently an aggregate stucco exterior that is in very poor condition. Our concern is the renovation of the exterior. In order to keep the historic integrity do we need to re-stucco with the same aggregate look (little stones mixed in with the stucco) or can we either re-stucco with a smooth finish, or can we replace with cedar clapboard? If we re-stucco, does the color matter?

—Wilmington, Delaware

To keep the building's architectural character you will want to repair and preserve the original stucco if possible. If not, complete replacement with an exact or near match would be acceptable. Replacement with cedar siding would change the character of the building dramatically. The color can be as important as the texture, but realize that the color may have been changed with later coatings or paint.

"Stucco" is a type of exterior plaster applied as a two- or three-layer coating directly on masonry or on wood or metal lath that is fastened to the wood frame structure beneath. In the 18th and 19th centuries stucco was made of lime, sand and hair troweled onto masonry walls as a weatherproofing skim coat. It was usually applied with a flat and smooth surface sometimes tooled and troweled to simulate more costly stone masonry. By the 20th century stucco was more commonly formulated with Portland cement and lime, making it more durable. It was applied in two or three layers on a system of furring and metal or wood lath making it an integral part of the wall system. By this time a variety of additional novelty finishes and textures were used, including Spanish adobe, pebble-dashed or dry-dash surface, fan and sponge texture, and roughcast (or wet-dash), each with its characteristic appearance.

It is important to assess damage and determine the causes. Water leaks in cornices above or rising damp from below are the



probable causes of damage. Reduce or eliminate these sources of moisture before repairs are made or complete replacement is considered. Shifting foundations or changing structural loads within the building may be causing cracks in the stucco. Call in a structural engineer before stucco repairs for a structural assessment if you have cracks wider than 1/8".

Repairs should duplicate the original methods and materials. Successful stucco repairs require the skill and experience of a professional plasterer who understands the original stucco system and materials used. It is possible to repair up to one-fourth of a wall at lower cost than complete replacement. If you decide for complete replacement be wary of Exterior Insulation and Finish System (EIFS). This system of materials and methods was recently developed for modern buildings and even on them it has a reputation for costly failures.

For more information consult the 16-page Preservation Brief #22, "The Preservation and Repair of Historic Stucco," available online at <http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/briefs/brief22.htm>.

continued on page 15