

## CONNECTICUT PRESERVATION AWARDS:

# *Preservation is Many Things*

**T**he projects chosen for the Connecticut Trust's 2014 Awards of Merit recognize the breadth and depth of preservation activity in Connecticut. Some celebrate last-minute rescues and some, carefully-planned campaigns of study and restoration; their subjects range from 16th-century English craftsmanship to 20th-century factory-produced housing for the masses. They show how art or seemingly minor details can transform architecture, and they highlight the importance and joys of historic places in our lives, be they patriotic shrines or private homes, cathedrals, City Hall, or the corner bar. These places make our lives richer.

*continued on page 2*

Historic atmosphere is one of the attractions at Ordinary, a lively and successful New Haven bar. The owners recently received an award of merit from the Connecticut Trust. See page 16.

Photo credit: Colin M. Caplan

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## AVON: AVON OLD FARMS SCHOOL

*Avon Old Farms School; Nelson Edwards Company Architects, LLC; GNCB Engineers, P.C.; Kronenberger & Sons Restoration; Preservation Technology Associates, LLC.*

Avon Old Farms School is known for its storybook Old English campus designed by Theodate Pope. While the school's primary mission is education, its leaders appreciate the responsibility to preserve its buildings. In an era of escalating costs, the school developed a master plan, drew up modern specifications to restore 16<sup>th</sup>-century craftsmanship, and tested them. The revived techniques for repairing timber framing, re-setting roofing slates, and using oakum to seal joints will serve the school as it continues to maintain and restore its historic buildings. Avon Old Farms is to be honored for its dedication to its institutional history and the didactic quality of its built environment. (A)

Nelson Edwards Company Architects LLC

## COVENTRY: HALE HOMESTEAD

*Connecticut Landmarks; Pirie Associates Architects; PAC Group, LLC*

Built in 1776 for the family of Connecticut's State Hero, the Hale Homestead (NR) is a museum operated by Connecticut Landmarks, which has renovated the rear ell to accommodate a visitor center and meeting area, gift shop, office, catering kitchen, and restrooms. The project creatively addressed design challenges and budget limitations to provide the much-needed "backstage" functions that support the operation of any historic house museum. The spaces also support its expansion to other audiences and broader community activities such as the highly successful Coventry Regional Farmers' Market. (B)

Eric Freeland

## LITCHFIELD: STILLMAN AND HUVELLE HOUSES

*Kenneth Sena and Joseph Mazzaferro*

Although Litchfield is best known for its Colonial architecture, the town also boasts impressive Modernist buildings, including these houses, designed by Marcel Breuer and John Johansen—both national leaders in the postwar International Style. At a pivotal moment, Kenneth Sena and Joseph Mazzaferro acquired the properties. They removed later additions, reconstructed missing original elements—including murals by Alexander Calder and Bauhaus artist Xanti Schawinsky at the Stillman house. In a market where these houses easily could have been demolished or overwhelmed by glitzy "improvements," this sensitive renovation revives the excitement of these groundbreaking designs and provides a valuable model for owners of other significant Modernist buildings. (C)

*Article continued on page 14*



Brad Stein and Joseph Mazzaferro

# From the Executive Director

In early April the Connecticut Trust held its annual **awards presentation** in the Hall of Flags at the State Capitol. As always, it was lively, loud, and a lot of fun. It was also astonishing to see the breadth and depth of preservation activity around the state. Congratulations to all awardees. And a word to those who had trouble hearing—we're looking into having extra speakers at the back of the room next year.

Afterwards, the Board and members of the Advisory Committee sat down to a delicious dinner provided by **Lessing's Catering** from the Legislative Management Office. This is the fourth year we have had a dinner at the Capitol, and each year the food gets better. Thank you to Peter Souchuns and his wonderful staff.

Just before the awards presentation the Board of Trustees met to elect **new trustees and new officers**. We welcome Gregory Waterman and Garrett Heher to the Board (see page 9). Congratulations to Charlie Janson who will be our new

chairman, ably supported by vice-chair Garry Leonard. Edith Pestana remains as secretary, as does Ed Munster as treasurer. Rick Wies will become assistant treasurer, a non-board position.

**Ed Schmidt** has been our chairman for four years. We didn't say farewell to him, as he remains a Trustee, but we will miss the leadership and devotion to the Trust that he demonstrated constantly during his four years as chairman. He attended multiple committee meetings and gave us valuable insights and guidance as we have been more active with municipal governments and at the legislature. I know he will continue as a very active trustee.

The **Power of Place** was the subject on April 2, when Governor Malloy greeted more than 100 members of various boards or committees associated with the Department of Economic and Community Development's Office of Culture and Tourism to a convening at the Old State House. At the event, organized

by Kip Bergstrom, Deputy Commissioner of DECD, participants enjoyed small roundtable conversations sparked by questions such as "What place made you?" and "What are challenges to placemaking in Connecticut?" Future Power of Place convenings will be held in New London, at the Garde Theatre, on April 28; in Stamford, at the University of Connecticut, on June 5; and in New Haven, at the International Festival of Arts and Ideas, on June 19. For more information on how to be part of these conversations, please write to Jennifer Haag, [jennifer.haag@ct.gov](mailto:jennifer.haag@ct.gov).

At the **Thomas Lyman house**, volunteers Lucy Van Liew, of Lucy Van Liew Gardens, and Christine Darnell, of Christine Darnell Gardens, have prepared a landscape plan to help potential buyers see the possibilities for the landscape around the house, including adding a barn/garage and fencing at the foot of the driveway. We are very grateful to them both. 🌱

—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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## Upcoming Meetings

### Connecticut Historic Preservation Council

June 4, 2014, at 9:30 a.m.  
July 2, at 9:30 a.m.

All meetings take place at the State Historic Preservation Office Department of Economic and Community Development Main Conference Room 1 Constitution Plaza, 2nd Floor Hartford, Connecticut

For more information call (860) 256-2800

## Correction

Mark S. Levine Real Estate Interests was incorrectly listed in the list of 2013 Preservation Sponsor donors in the March/April issue. We regret the error and thank them for their support. 🌱



## HARLAN GRISWOLD AWARD:

# The Connecticut Light and Power Company, Thomas D. Dorsey, Manager, Governmental Affairs

E. Marchitto

*Excerpts from remarks by State Historic Preservation Officer  
Daniel Forrest*

We are happy to present the Harlan H. Griswold Award this evening to The Connecticut Light and Power Company, which has furthered the goals of historic preservation in Connecticut by major investments through the State historic rehabilitation and housing tax credits.

Harlan H. Griswold was an incorporator of the Connecticut Trust and longtime chairman of the Connecticut Historical Commission—the predecessor to today’s State Historic Preservation Office. After his death, those two bodies established the Harlan H. Griswold Award in recognition of his outstanding contributions to historic preservation over a lifetime of service to the cause. The award recognizes those individuals, corporations or organizations whose activities exemplify Harlan’s leadership, vision and selfless dedication to preserving Connecticut’s heritage and who by deed or example have made our state a better place to live for all of its citizens.

Most of us know Connecticut Light and Power (CL&P) as the state’s largest electric company, a subsidiary of Northeast Utilities that serves more than 1.2 million customers in 149 Connecticut cities and towns. But CL&P has another, less visible side. Under the direction of its Manager for Governmental Affairs, Thomas Dorsey, the company plays an active and important role in protecting Connecticut’s historic resources through state tax credit programs for housing and historic preservation. Over the past fifteen years, CL&P has invested nearly 80 million dollars in our state’s development through tax credit purchases. This investment has helped provide decent housing for those who most need it, has helped preserve the historic buildings and communities that give Connecticut its identity, and has been the catalyst for

increased economic activity.

Here’s how it works: the State offers tax credits to encourage the development of affordable housing and the rehabilitation of historic structures. Nonprofit organizations, since they pay no taxes, have no use for tax credits.

However, the law allows companies that do pay taxes to buy the credits from the nonprofits. The companies reduce their tax burden, and the nonprofits get funding for their work. For-profit developers also raise funds by selling credits.

As Tom Dorsey explains, CL&P realized it could both reduce its taxes and help provide safe, affordable housing by purchasing tax credits through the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority. As fate would have it, the very first project CL&P invested in involved an historic building: the Hygienic Building, in New London. Once threatened with demolition, the building now provides affordable

live-work space for artists and is one of the main attractions of New London’s Bank Street neighborhood. Housing tax credits were key to the success of this transformation.

Moving on from there, Tom established a relationship with HOPE, Inc., a nonprofit housing developer in New London, helping renovate eight 19<sup>th</sup>-century houses on Belden Street. Then, some housing advocates suggested that CL&P also look into the state’s historic rehabilitation tax credits. In some ways, that was even better, Tom says, because the historic credits are always



Thomas Dorsey, of Connecticut Light & Power, accepts the Harlan Griswold award from State Historic Preservation Officer Daniel Forrest and the Connecticut Trust’s Executive Director, Helen Higgins.

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CL&P's logo appears on the construction sign for a Hartford house being rehabbed by the nonprofit developer NINA.



CL&P invested in the conversion of the former American Paper Goods mill, in Kensington, to condos

aimed at making obsolete or abandoned buildings useful again and they take advantage of existing gas and electric lines. Also, they help maintain or improve neighborhoods and communities.

One of the State's historic rehabilitation tax credits supports renovation of owner-occupied homes in low-income urban areas. Here, CL&P's participation is particularly crucial, since this credit can be applied only to corporate taxes. So, homeowners must find a commercial partner. CL&P has fulfilled that role, in spades.

From 2009 through 2013, CL&P purchased 59 out of 131 vouchers issued, an investment of more than two million dollars. In 2013 alone, the company bought 30 of the 40 vouchers issued. And so far in 2014, CL&P has purchased seven out of the eight vouchers issued. This investment has helped individual owners as well as nonprofit developers renovating houses with four or fewer units who also can use this credit.

The benefits of CL&P's investment reach beyond the buildings being worked

on. Housing rehabilitation is an important economic driver, often generating five to six times the amount invested in economic activity by creating jobs for the building trades and bringing in homeowners who help stabilize neighborhoods and generate municipal revenue in increased taxes.

CL&P's investment in tax credits has made the company a partner in some of the important preservation projects of the last decade. One of these was the Capitol Building, in Hartford, rehabbed by the Common Ground Institute with a mix of market-rate, affordable, and supportive housing. This became the first historic rehabilitation project in Connecticut to receive LEED certification for energy efficiency. CL&P bought \$2.7 million in historic rehabilitation tax credits for the project.

CL&P is continuing its investment in historic rehabilitation tax credit projects. Currently the company is working with the Globe Theater, in Norwalk; and the Talcottville mill, in Vernon; as well as ongoing projects by nonprofit housing developers.

Harlan Griswold once said, "To me, preservation is more about my grandchildren than about my grandparents." CL&P exemplifies that attitude: by investing in Connecticut's historic buildings and neighborhoods it is building a better future for our children and grandchildren, and so we are honored to present the Harlan H. Griswold Award to the Connecticut Light and Power Company for its outstanding contributions to the preservation in Connecticut. 🌿



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## JANET JAINSCHIGG AWARD: Nicholas Bellantoni

*Remarks by Helen Higgins, Executive Director,  
Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation*

Who needs Indiana Jones fantasies when the real thing is even more compelling? That's the message Nicholas Bellantoni has been proclaiming across Connecticut for 27 years.

When Nick was named State Archaeologist, in 1987, the job entailed helping towns and cities review development proposals to see if it was possible to leave threatened archaeological resources undisturbed—or, if not, to collect as much information from them as possible through excavation.

As time passed, the job description grew. Today, in addition to reviewing development proposals, the State Archaeologist also is involved with state archaeological preserves, archaeological investigation on state lands, and Native American sacred sites and burial places. He is a member of the Culture and Tourism Advisory Committee and the Historic Preservation Council. And, he

State Archaeologist Nicholas Bellantoni received the Janet Jainschigg Award, presented by Helen Higgins.



gets called in whenever human remains are found during archaeological or other excavations.

In an average year Nick takes part in 150 field reviews, 20 field excavations, and some 300 municipal project proposals; he gives 60 to 80 talks to local audiences, teaches classes at the University of Connecticut, and oversees the preservation of more than 600,000 artifacts from excavations across the state.

The most important part of Nick's job is what you might call 'archaeological diplomacy'—working with local officials,

developers and the general public to appreciate and protect archaeological resources.

That's where Nick shines. With his enthusiasm, Nick has the ability to win over doubters. He aims to create partnerships with construction industry, not make developers feel threatened. When a lawyer says "I don't see in the laws where this is required," Nick will answer, "You're right, it isn't *required*—but let's do it the right way, can't we?" It takes time and openness to build trust with developers and officials, but he has managed to do just that. Now, some developers come to him first to

Office of State Archaeology, U.Conn.

Although much of the State Archaeologist's work involves meetings and consultations, Nicholas Bellantoni also is a skilled forensic archaeologist. Here, he sifts artifacts on the New Haven Green with Gary Aronsen.



discuss a new project—before approaching town land-use boards.

Yet it's important to remember that Nick is a practicing archaeologist as well, known for his skill at analyzing human remains. He can glean a wealth of information from human bones: about the person's sex and age, health and work, and sometimes cause of death. "You know the old saying, 'Dead men tell no tales?'" he says. "Forget about it."

These forensic cases often attract publicity: such as the burials in Griswold that revealed early-19<sup>th</sup> century belief in vampires or when the History Channel called him in to authenticate what was supposed to be piece of Adolph Hitler's skull (it wasn't).

But if you ask Nick what he's proudest of, he'll list less-sensational accomplishments: building relationships with non-archaeologists, identifying the site of Lt. Eugene Bradley's World War II plane crash (which gave Bradley airport its name), or restoring the 18<sup>th</sup>-century family tombs of Elisha Pitkin, Gershom Bulkeley, and Samuel Huntington.

At the top of the list, Nick puts the procedures he has created for dealing with human remains. When he became State Archaeologist, there was no clear outline for what to do if human remains were

discovered in the course of construction or archaeological excavation. Now there is—including forensic study followed by respectful reburial according to the person's own heritage, as far as that can be determined.

Nick tells us that Connecticut has a rich archaeological heritage, encompassing Native American sites from 10,000 years ago, some of the earliest colonial sites in eastern North America, manufacturing sites from the dawn of American industry, and sites as recent as World War II. "People have no clue that there's archaeology in their back yard," he says—but thanks to his work, many of us now *do* have a clue.

The Jainschigg award commemorates Janet G. Jainschigg, a founder and benefactor of the Connecticut Trust as well as a regional leader in historic preservation. She was a mentor and inspiration to many of us and, though a volunteer herself, always insisted on the highest standards of professionalism. As archaeologist and preservationist, Nick Bellantoni exemplifies the professional excellence that the Janet Jainschigg Award celebrates. 🌻

One of Nicholas Bellantoni's proudest accomplishments as State Archaeologist is the creation of procedures for reburials of human remains, as seen here, in Griswold (1992).

Office of the State Archaeologist




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# Uncovering the Hidden Past

Highways to History: The Archaeology of Connecticut's 18<sup>th</sup>-Century Lifeways, by Ross K. Harper, Mary G. Harper, and Bruce Clouette. Connecticut Department of Transportation in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration, 2013. 117 pages.

History usually deals mostly with the lives of the prosperous—those who were leaders in their communities; those who had the means and leisure to record their activities; those whose possessions were plentiful, attractive or durable. Ordinary folk tend to leave a sparser record, even in places like 18<sup>th</sup>-century Connecticut where much of the population was literate and public records were thorough.

*Highways to History* investigates the lives of four ordinary Connecticut families from the Colonial era. The book grew out of archaeological investigations undertaken when highway construction threatened the families' home sites. Under Federal requirements, the Connecticut Department of Transportation commissioned excavations of the sites by the nonprofit Public Archaeology Survey Team, Inc. (PAST), based in Storrs.

The sites were found in Andover, Waterford, North Branford, and Wilton, and were first occupied in about 1705, 1712, 1737, and 1713 respectively. Their occupants belonged to the social stratum known at the time as 'the middling sort.' They owned land, houses, livestock, and often one or two luxury items—books or pieces of silver or porcelain. All practiced some craft or trade but also depended on farming to meet most of their day-to-day needs. On the whole they worked hard and lived modestly.

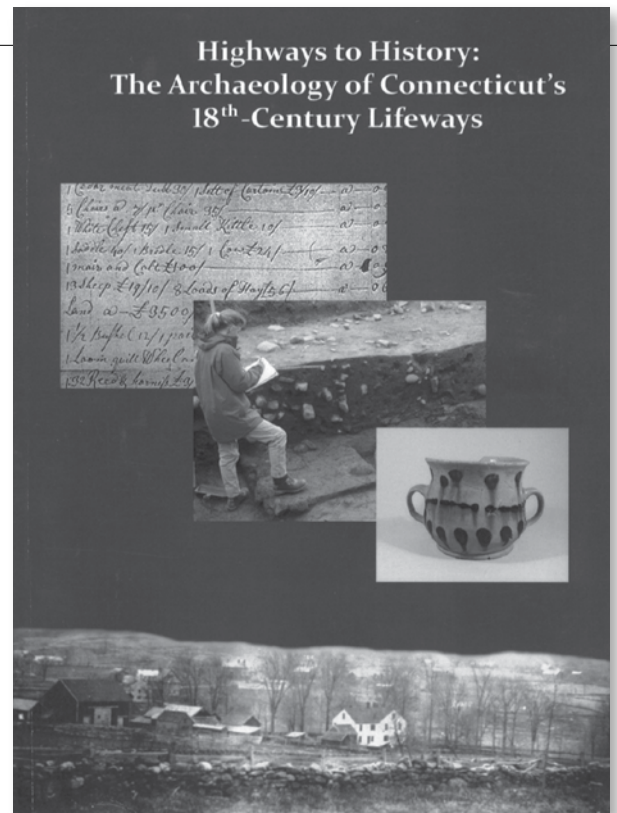
After an introduction and an historical and social overview of Connecticut in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the book summarizes the history and excavation of the four sites, followed by three topical chapters. The first, "House and Farm," describes the remains of the houses and other buildings, site layouts, and personal belongings. "Supplying the Family Larder" discusses obtaining, processing, preparing, and serving food, with information on the families' diets. Finally, "Crafts for Home and Sale" covers crafts and work that took

the families into the broader economic life of the colony.

As all the chapters show, these excavations produced much information that cannot be found in documents. For instance, they revealed that none of the four families lived in what we think of as the typical Colonial center-chimney house. Two of the sites produced evidence of building types that no longer exist in the state. The Sprague house, in Andover, followed a medieval cross-passage plan brought from western England; evidence exists of only one other house of this type in Connecticut. In Waterford, the Daniels house had an

addition framed with posts buried directly in the ground, with no foundation. While this impermanent means of construction

*continued on page 14*



## FOR SALE

### Thomas Lyman house, Durham Connecticut, c.1790

Located on 13 bucolic acres in historic Durham, Connecticut, the Thomas Lyman house is individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The landmark house boasts 13 large rooms with high ceilings, complimented by 9 fireplaces and impressive woodwork. 4,150 s.f., 5 bedrooms, 3.2 baths, 2 ponds, an outbuilding and tennis court. **\$499,000**

Sale of the Lyman house will provide capital for the Connecticut Trust Revolving Fund.

For information on the house call the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation at (203) 562-6312 or visit [www.cttrust.org](http://www.cttrust.org).

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# New Trustees Join the Trust

As of May 1, the Connecticut Trust's board welcomed two new members.

**Garrett Heher** is a residential and multi-family real estate developer with a background in architecture and commercial construction management. He is a graduate of the School of Architecture at Princeton University, where he studied the history and theory of architecture, and has a graduate degree from the School of Architecture at Columbia University. His company, Mercer Realty Partners, designs and builds multi-family projects in New York City, ranging from loft building renovations to ground-up, modernist new construction, and he has managed commercial construction projects in Connecticut. Garrett lives in Essex with his wife, Maureen, and children Catherine and Will. He is on the board

of the Essex Elementary School Foundation, and a member of the Urban Land Institute.

**Gregory Waterman**, of West Hartford, is a Vice President and Trust Officer with U.S. Trust, specializing in estate and tax planning and wealth structuring. He is a 2005 graduate of the University of Connecticut School of Law and a member of the Connecticut Bar; he also earned Certified Financial Planner designation in 2009. Greg is also a member the Estate and Business Planning Council of Hartford and Historic New England and enjoys attending events and tours at historic destinations throughout Connecticut and New England.



Garrett W. Heher



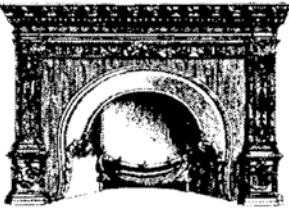
Gregory T. Waterman

Demonstrating shared family interests, his wife, Rachel Pattison, serves on the board of Connecticut Preservation Action, the statewide lobbying organization for historic preservation.

In addition, the Board re-elected Michael Blair, Scott Jackson, Jeff Muthersbaugh, Tom Nissley, and Caroline Sloat to second terms, and chose new officers: Charles Janson

(Darien), chairman; Garry Leonard (Madison), vice-chairman; and Rick Wies (Branford), assistant treasurer. Edith Pestana (Hartford) and Edward Munster (Haddam) continue as secretary and treasurer. 🌿

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# Briefly Noted

## Essex. ▶

Local observances and a series of National Register nominations are commemorating the British raid on Essex in the War of 1812. On April 8, 1814, forces invaded the village, then known as Pettipauge and a major shipbuilding center. The attackers burned 27 vessels, a serious setback to the Americans, who nonetheless defended themselves as best they could, firing on the British boats as they sailed back down the river to their warships in Long Island Sound. In the photo: the Samuel Lay house (c.1732), where volunteers gathered to defend the village.

G. Farmer



## New Haven. ▶

Artist Gregory “Krikko” Obbott has turned the once-derelict Fresenius carriage house (c.1890) into the Hill Museum of Arts. Located in the city’s Hill neighborhood, the carriage house was built to go with the mansion of Philip Fresenius, whose brewery (later known as Hull’s) was across the street; both have been demolished. The museum displays Mr. Obbott’s minutely detailed pencil drawings of American cities; he also hopes to offer art programs for neighborhood youth. For more, see [www.krikkoproductions.com](http://www.krikkoproductions.com).

C. Wigren



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◀ **Norwalk.**

Builder Jud Aley has received both LEED Silver certification and historic rehabilitation tax credits for his renovation of 21 Split Rock Road (1951; NR), demonstrating that historic preservation and green building can be compatible. The work respected the modest house's original design while adding a sympathetically-designed wing (left in photo) and installing

M. Forino



cellulose insulation, an energy-efficient HVAC system, and solar panels. Mr. Aley says, "It's not a museum, but we've kept its original feel and I've learned a lot about sustainability that I can apply to other old houses."

◀ **Rockville.**

New owner Ken Kaplan is renovating the Hockanum Mill on West Main Street to house his contracting and computer businesses along with a motorcycle repair shop. Once a major producer in Rockville's woolen industry, the Hockanum Mill offers a one-site summary of historic industrial architecture, with sections built between 1854 and 1910; it is listed on the National Register. Making the project possible were a loan from the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development and repairs by the town that kept the oldest section of the mill standing until a developer came forward.

*continued on page 12*



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**South Windsor. ▶**

After languishing for two years through a foreclosure and the slow real estate market, the John Watson house (1788; NR) has new owners, Gary Draghi and Bert Roy. They closed on the house in late March and plan to renovate it slowly, eventually re-opening it as a bed-and-breakfast. The first step was to clear away brush—"so the house could breathe," said Mr. Draghi. Restoration needs include fixing broken and damaged windows, replacing the heating system, and conserving original 18th-century wallpaper in two rooms.

**Sherman. ▶**

The Sherman Library dedicated its restored and expanded building on March 15. The original library (1926; NR) was renovated as a quiet reading room and a new wing provides a link to an historic barn (c.1850), reused as a meeting room. A grant from the Connecticut Trust in 2007 helped fund planning the expansion so as not to overwhelm the small original building.

Courtesy Sherman Library



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◀ **Thompson.**

Demolition by neglect is in the news, thanks to Dawna Sirard, a local graduate student who has taken up the cause of the William Mason house (1845; NR). Since the Trust listed the house as one of Connecticut's Most Important Threatened Historic Places, in 2004, owner Mario Buatta has continued to let the Gothic Revival masterpiece fall apart. But Ms. Sirard's campaign, centered on a website, [www.savethemasonhouse.org](http://www.savethemasonhouse.org), and an online petition, has inspired newspaper articles and, for Mr. Buatta, canceled appearances. We hope the renewed publicity will convince him to repair the house or sell it to someone who will, and the Trust is prepared to offer its assistance.

B. Schide



◀ **Wallingford.**

The Roger Austin house (c.1890; NR), also known as the American Legion building, was sold to Richard and Erin Benham, wrapping up a ten-year-long preservation effort that began when town bought the house to expand its parking lot. In 2011 a court blocked demolition under the Connecticut Environmental Protection Act. Four earlier sales offers fell through, the most recent when it was discovered that the building's sewer line had been disconnected. The Benhams plan to renovate structure as a two-family house and live in it; they have already begun by repairing the roof.



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Hidden Past, cont'd from page 8

was common in the Chesapeake region, it was rare in southern New England.

Clearly written and addressed to a general audience—the book would be ideal for a high school history class—*Highways to History* gives a clearer picture of what it really was like to live in 18<sup>th</sup>-century Connecticut. One can only imagine how much more could be learned from excavating more such sites.

In fact, this is just what the authors call for. They write, “For every CDOT project that uncovers and preserves our past, other projects are destroying it. The vast majority of construction in Connecticut does not require archaeological study. Every site lost is a piece of our collective past gone forever. A few Connecticut towns have made pre-development archaeological surveys mandatory, but only the public can encourage towns to make discovery and understanding of our past, in concert with development, a priority. That would be revolutionary.” Indeed. 🌱

—Christopher Wigren

*Highways to History can be obtained from Mandy Ranslow at the Connecticut Department of Transportation, (860) 594-2929, or mandy.ranslow@ct.gov.*

**MILFORD: SANFORD-BRISTOL HOUSE**

*Milford Preservation Trust*

A well preserved example of a distinctive Milford house type, the Sanford-Bristol house (c.1790 ff.; NR) was threatened with demolition, with approval from the city’s historic district commission. Recognizing the house’s importance as part of a larger historic neighborhood, the Milford Preservation Trust sued under the Connecticut Environmental Protection Act to block demolition, not knowing how the organization would pay its lawyers. The owners settled, and the house was sold to Griswold Home Care, who will preserve and restore it. But without the Milford Preservation Trust’s willingness to take a chance, not knowing whether anyone else would join them, the house would not have been saved. (A)

**NEW LONDON: STEEL HOUSE**

*Connecticut College; Barun Basu Associates, architects; Materials Conservation Co., LLC; Douglas Royalty, consultant*

This odd-looking little house (1933; NR) is a rare survivor of Modernist experiments during the Depression to create affordable housing through prefabrication. It was rapidly rusting away by the time historians and preservationists at Connecticut College embarked on what became a seven-year process of advocacy, study, documentation, National Register listing, and planning, and, finally, restoration. The house was disassembled and its parts sent away for conservation before they were re-erected on the original site. Today, the house is the college’s Office of Sustainability. Connecticut College and its team have set a high standard for comprehensive study, planning, and sensitive adaptation. (C)

**WESTPORT: JOHN SHERWOOD HOUSE**

*Westport Historic District Commission; David Waldman*

In 2010 developer David Waldman wanted to demolish the Sherwood house (1808); he wanted the site for parking. However, the town’s historic district commission convinced him to reconsider. In the end he rehabilitated it as The Spotted Horse restaurant. The restaurant’s success has inspired him to move, rather than demolish, another historic building in his redevelopment area. In addition to reviewing proposed changes to local historic properties and districts, Westport’s historic district commission serves as an advocate for historic preservation planning throughout the town. With the enactment of state enabling legislation for municipal preservation ordinances, other towns might take the commission as a model. (B)

**NORWICH: CITY HALL**

*City of Norwich; TO Design, LLC; James Vance & Associates; James Grant Associates; Mattern Construction; Richter Associates*

Key to the monumental quality of Norwich’s city hall are the building’s richly ornamented cast-iron stairs with their swooping balustrade. By 2011, though, the ironwork had become deteriorated. With a grant from the State, the city was able to restore the iron. The stairs and balustrades were disassembled, stripped, repaired, and coated before being re-installed—one more step in the city hall’s gradual restoration. This project is important for its focus is on a contributing element of an historic building that is often overlooked, historic metals. It shows that careful attention to details can make a real difference. (D)

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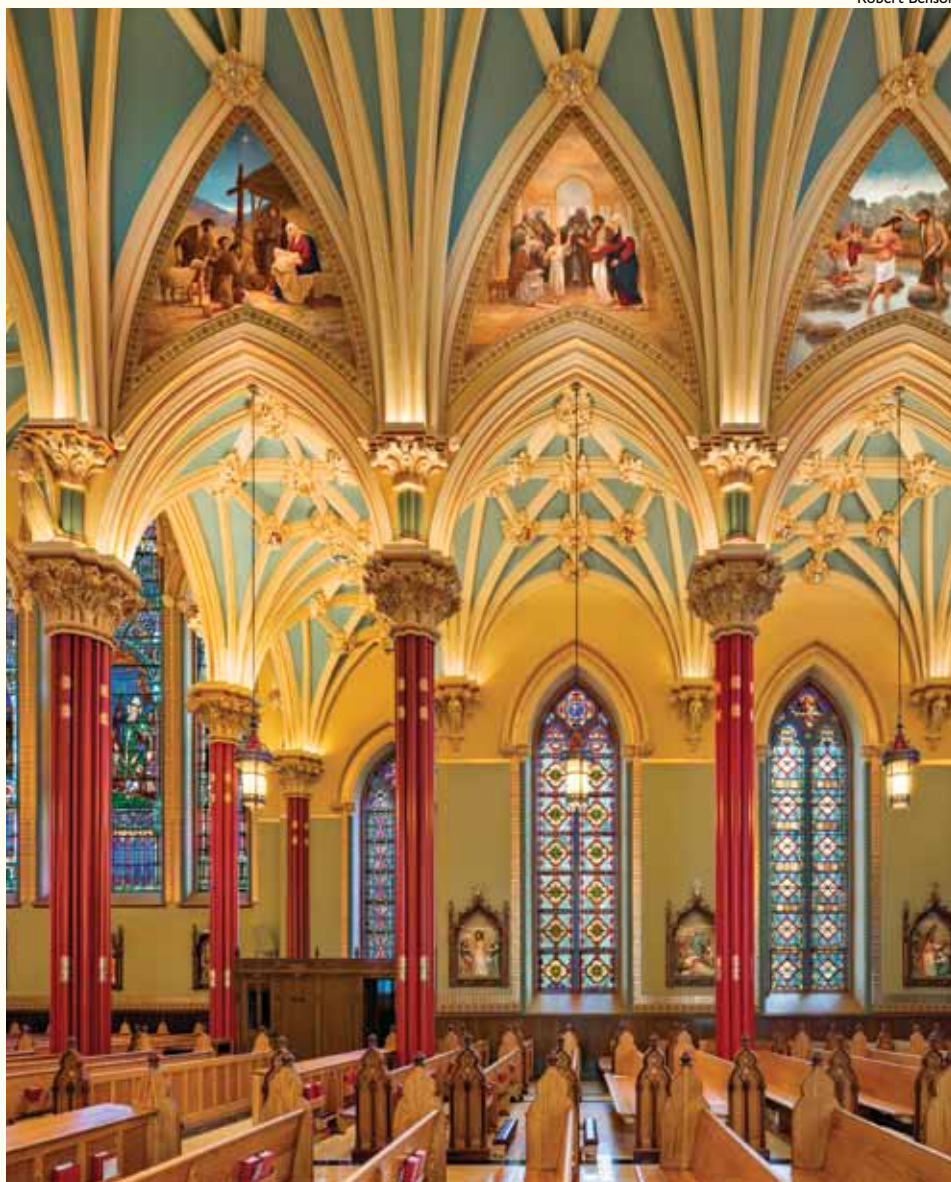
*Roman Catholic Diocese of Norwich;  
John Canning Studios; F. William Brown Construction*

The Church—later Cathedral—of Saint Patrick (1870; NR) originally boasted rich stenciling and murals, but they were covered over in the 20th century. When the church decided to restore them, the artists found and replicated much of the decoration, but they had to create new murals, as no traces remained of the originals. Combining restoration with new creation in the manner of the original, Saint Patrick's once again demonstrates art's power to complete an architectural design. Canning Studios' knowledge of historic decorative principles made possible the seamless reintegration of art and architecture to reflect the original design while serving present-day needs.

### **NEW HAVEN: ORDINARY (TAFT HOTEL TAP ROOM)**

*Jason Sobocinski, Tom Sobocinski, Tim Cabral,  
Mike Farber, owners; Colin Caplan, architect; Brian Way,  
carpentry*

The tap room (1911, 1935; NR) sits on a spot long associated with sociable drinking—all the way back to 1646, when beer-brewing was authorized on the site and continuing through generations of taverns and hotels. The new owners have brought the bar back to its historic glory, restoring its Old-English woodwork while adding modern equipment to make it function well. In addition, they created and installed a series of wall panels that recount the long history of the site. Ordinary successfully capitalizes on its evocative cocktail of history and architecture to create a lively place of public gathering. (Photo, page 1)



Robert Benson