

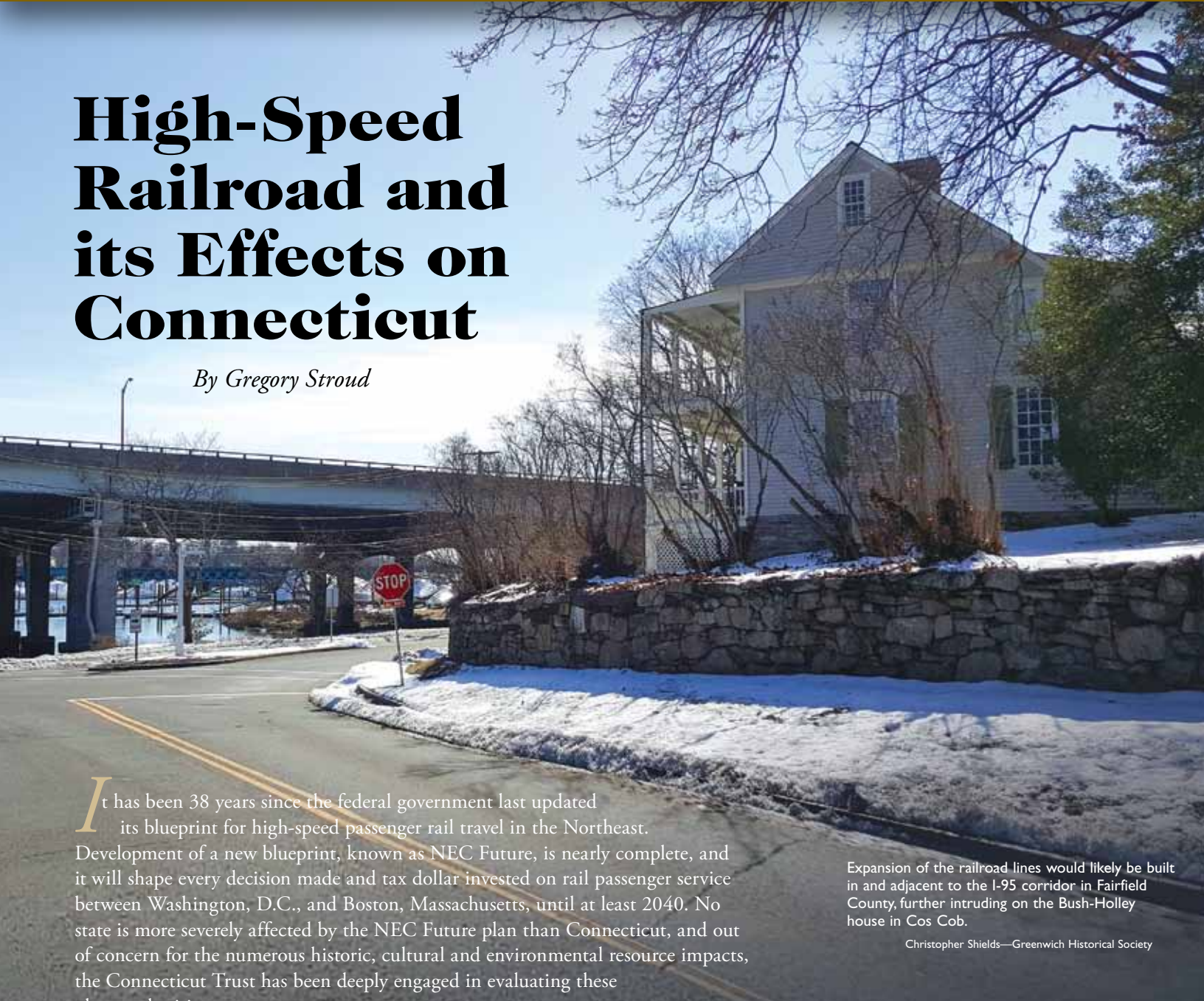
## High-Speed Railroad and its Effects on Connecticut

By Gregory Stroud

It has been 38 years since the federal government last updated its blueprint for high-speed passenger rail travel in the Northeast. Development of a new blueprint, known as NEC Future, is nearly complete, and it will shape every decision made and tax dollar invested on rail passenger service between Washington, D.C., and Boston, Massachusetts, until at least 2040. No state is more severely affected by the NEC Future plan than Connecticut, and out of concern for the numerous historic, cultural and environmental resource impacts, the Connecticut Trust has been deeply engaged in evaluating these plans and raising concerns.

What could this blueprint mean for Connecticut? In the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) released just before the December 2016 holidays, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) announced 79 miles of new rail corridors designed to shorten and straighten the coastal route across our state and into Rhode Island.

*continued on page 4*



Expansion of the railroad lines would likely be built in and adjacent to the I-95 corridor in Fairfield County, further intruding on the Bush-Holley house in Cos Cob.

Christopher Shields—Greenwich Historical Society

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# Easement Protects Downtown New Haven Buildings

Ned Goode, Historic American Buildings Survey, 1964

Three historic buildings at an important gateway to downtown New Haven will be permanently protected thanks to a preservation easement donated to the Connecticut Trust in December. Under the terms of the easement, the Trust must approve any exterior alterations, and it can require proper maintenance. In exchange, the Trust will provide guidance on preservation matters concerning the buildings.

The buildings, facing Chapel Street near State Street, are part of the Ninth Square district. Since it was listed on the National Register in 1984, the district has become a model of urban revitalization that combines new construction with renovated historic buildings. With bustling apartments and businesses, the Ninth Square demonstrates the value of preservation as an engine of urban renewal.

The preservation easement is intended to reinforce the district's vitality by ensuring that these buildings will not fall into disrepair or suffer unsympathetic alterations. In recognition of the public benefit from the easement, the owners may qualify for a federal tax deduction, which would increase the buildings' economic viability.

The easement was donated by Olympia Holdings, owned by Global X Properties, of Cleveland, Ohio, and East River Partners, of New York City. After buying the properties in late 2016, the owners are already beginning repairs to the roofs, wood trim, and masonry. They have no specific rehabilitation plans but will consider future upgrades to suit the buildings and contribute to the revitalization of the area.

*continued on page 7*



Above: The Bassett Building, one of the oldest commercial buildings in New Haven, in 1964. Since then, it has lost its historic sign and storefront (second building from left on photo below).

Below: A preservation easement donated to the Connecticut Trust offers protections to a group of buildings in downtown New Haven.

Global X Properties



## From the Executive Director

“Flat out busy” describes the pace of work at our Hamden office, for each and every member of the Connecticut Trust’s staff. This issue of CPN covers new services on our website and a major addition to our easement program, as well as our preparation of final public comments on the impacts of high-speed rail planning in Connecticut.

We’re wrapping up our Making Places survey and preparing to launch our website on Connecticut industrial sites. Perhaps you heard WNPR’s story on our solar panel installation; we’re waiting for final code approvals before they can connect to the grid. Our Circuit Riders are busy in every corner of the state, consulting on religious properties, mill sites, and the relocation of a Greek-style theater in Cos Cob to Sarah Lawrence College in New York.

The General Assembly’s 2017 session has begun, and already twenty bills that could affect historic preservation are on our radar. We’ve testified in support of

legislation that provides greater local and state control over funding for high-speed rail planning—see details on page 1.

Governor Malloy’s proposed budget holds funding for the State Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit level at \$31.7 million, but the program was fully allocated in the first quarter of the current fiscal year and needs a raise to sustain private investment in redevelopment of Connecticut’s historic structures. As such, we turn to the legislature to raise the cap.

The Governor’s budget proposal does end the fifty-percent diversion of Community Investment Act revenues to the general fund. The actual impact of this diversion has been a seventy percent cut to historic preservation programs such as survey work and grant making, placing significant strain on preservation funding and operations, both at SHPO and the Trust. We will act vigilantly to prevent such a diversion in upcoming budget negotiations.

As we go to press, legislation has been introduced to enhance the federal Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit program. We’ve alerted Connecticut’s Congressional delegation to request their co-sponsorship. The federal credit—an essential twin to the state credit—is threatened with potential elimination by federal tax reform initiatives. We will be aggressive advocates for the program, and will be in Washington the week this issue arrives in your mailbox.

Thankfully, your membership and donations allow us to maintain this level of engagement with historic preservation issues. With your continued support, we can expand our capabilities and services when needed.



Gregory Stroud, the Trust’s new Director of Special Projects

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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At the beginning of January, the Trust welcomed Gregory Stroud to its staff as Director of Special Projects. Greg received a B.A. from Oberlin College and a Ph.D. in History from the University of Illinois, with a focus on modernism and early 20th-century Russian preservation. He later taught history and literature at Bennington College and worked as a writer, dramaturge and director on Nantucket, before starting a small design business with partner Robin Breeding.

Since 2016, Greg, Robin, and their compatriots have led regional opposition to high-speed rail plans on the southeast coast of Connecticut, leading to the formation of SECoast.org and a working partnership with the Trust. Greg’s work for the Trust will initially focus on transportation planning and historic resource impacts in Connecticut, including the proposed widening of I-95, the reconfiguration of I-84 in Hartford and Waterbury, review of ConnDOT’s “Let’s Go CT!” transportation funding plan, and support of the Trust’s longstanding work on the Merritt and Wilbur Cross Parkways.

Let us know how we can join you to advance historic preservation goals in your community. 🌿

—Daniel Mackay  
dmackay@cttrust.org

In Connecticut, the FRA's plans call for expanding tracks along existing rail corridors through Fairfield and New Haven counties and building a bypass from Old Saybrook to Kenyon, Rhode Island, to straighten out curves and allow faster traffic. In addition, the plans include upgrading the New Haven-to-Springfield route—an expansion of current state commuter rail investment in this route that will allow high-speed service, integration with Boston-to-New York trains, and electrification of this north-south corridor.

If approved, these plans will result in significant impacts to historic, cultural and environmental resources across coastal Connecticut. Construction could cut block-wide swaths through neighborhoods in Riverside and Darien, blight significant view-sheds in Stamford and Norwalk, and intrude on historic areas in Old Saybrook, Old Lyme, New London (including the Hodges Square historic district currently being nominated to the National Register) and North Stonington.

In Fairfield County, these proposed routes would require five miles of new bridges and viaducts. At the Connecticut River, a new crossing would be built, requiring engineering and infrastructure on a community-altering scale. FRA initially proposed a bridge, which would require miles of approach ramps and a forty-foot high "aerial structure" through Old Lyme's National Register district, looming over the Florence Griswold house, a National Historic Landmark, and historic buildings on the grounds of the Lyme Academy of Fine Arts. In response to community objections, the agency proposed to build a tunnel instead, but this would entail miles of trenching and cut-and-cover under or around the historic district and the Connecticut River's fragile estuary.

What else is in the way of the FRA's mapped route? Historic structures and sites such as the Bush-Holley house in Greenwich, National Historic Landmark that was the heart of the Cos Cob Art Colony from about 1890 to 1920. The house has already suffered from the looming encroachment of a previous federal infrastructure investment, Interstate-95. There's precious little room left for a planned widening of the Interstate, let alone for the additional 150-foot right-of-way needed for high-speed rail.

New right-of-way is not the only concern. The FRA plans propose expanding from two to four tracks along existing right-of-way between Branford and Guilford that currently holds two tracks. Whether this can be accomplished within the existing right-of-way or would need additional land is not clear. In any case, the work could adversely affect historic resources such as a late-19<sup>th</sup>-century water tower and engine house--and possibly a buried roundtable-- in Guilford, as well as historic structures in the Route 146 National Register district in Branford and Guilford, much of which is bounded by Amtrak's tracks. The current planning by FRA does not come close to recognizing these details.

Sixty miles east of Guilford, residents of Charlestown, Rhode Island, first learned of plans for the Old Saybrook-to-Kenyon high-speed rail bypass from news reports in mid-December 2016. Town leaders contacted the Connecticut Trust to glean our expertise and experience gained from more than a year of partnering with SECoast, the Trust's grassroots special project on high-speed rail. Since December, Rhode Island advocates have secured the opposition of their Congressional delegation and Governor to the bypass.

With the exception of Old Lyme, likely no other community along the Northeast

Corridor has more at stake than Charlestown, where the project would affect a wide assortment of natural and historic resources, including the Shannock National Register district, and the National Register-eligible Columbia Heights and Kenyon historic districts. The proposed route also passes through land trust properties and preserves protected by conservation easements, which raises troubling questions about the challenge of protecting such land "in perpetuity."

The multi-billion-dollar cost and long-range timing of potential construction have led some to believe that many projects proposed under NEC Future will never be built. But with significant bipartisan federal support for infrastructure spending, and with Connecticut seeking to spend billions more as part of Governor Malloy's "Let's Go CT!" initiative, tight present-day budgets offer only a modest measure of protection.

For Old Lyme, budget concerns could mean that what FRA calls its "proposed commitment" to a tunnel under the Connecticut River and the National Register district could easily revert to a less expensive, but more intrusive, aerial crossing at a future planning stage.

FRA expects to conclude the Tier 1 planning process in late March and issue a "Record of Decision" outlining its final proposal. Then, the planning process



The Chidsey-Linsley house was built about 1790 across from the East Haven Green, where General Lafayette and his troops camped during the Revolution. The 1½-story, center-chimney Cape is notable for its unusual flaring roof, which swoops out to wide eaves front and back—a feature common in Dutch houses on nearby Long Island but extremely rare in Connecticut. The builders thriftily re-used parts from an older house, which still can be seen in the basement. They even reused an older foundation, which may account for the double front door and the side door—both features typically seen only on larger dwellings. Owned for many years by an architectural historian, the Chidsey-Linsley

house retains its original layout and most of the original exterior clapboards. Interior floors, trim, and paneling remain in pristine condition. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the house is eligible for Connecticut's Historic Homes Rehabilitation Tax Credit. Within walking distance are shops and restaurants, Long Island Sound, and scenic salt marshes.

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Railroad lines run close to many historic resources in Connecticut, such as this 18th-century house in Guilford, listed on the National Register.

Island State Senator Dennis Algieri, State Representatives Devin Carney, Joe De La Cruz, and Chris Conley, as well as numerous town leaders from Rhode Island and Connecticut.

This rally was one of several such public gatherings since a late August 2016 meeting in Old Lyme which attracted over 500 people and galvanized the support of every Connecticut municipality along the route of the Kenyon to Old Saybrook Bypass. More recently, Gregory Stroud and Daniel Mackay led-off a town meeting in Charlestown which attracted over 400 residents and included representatives and staff from a number of state and federal offices. Stroud, State Senator Somers and Stonington First Selectman Rob Simmons led a meeting of over 100 people at the Firehouse in Pawcatuck in late January.

The growing geography of our advocacy is well-reflected in press coverage which now totals nearly 90 individual news stores, the great majority noting the work of the Connecticut Trust, in outlets as varied as Politico, Associated Press, Bloomberg, Hartford Courant, Providence Journal, New London Day, Westerly Sun, Stamford Advocate, New Haven Register, and Connecticut Mirror, among many others.

This early work in the southeastern portion of Connecticut has informed discussions in Fairfield County, where communities face 29 miles of proposed

*continued on page 6*

will move into Tier 2, where the master blueprint will be broken into hundreds of individual projects, small and large, a multi-decade agenda for infrastructure development along the Northeast Corridor. Federal and state agencies will then prioritize and implement projects; most will require a higher level of environmental study and analysis before construction can begin.

Already, the Connecticut Trust has concluded that given the multiple impacts, the proposed seacoast bypass has no legitimate place in this plan. Our immediate goal is to secure the best possible version of this funding blueprint before it is formalized in the Record of Decision. We've tried to accomplish this with high-tech grassroots activism and old-fashioned leveraging of

what the Connecticut Trust does best: recognizing historic resources and their potential threat, understanding state and federal regulatory safeguards and providing substantiated and unbiased information and analysis.

Over the last year this approach has allowed the Trust gradually to build a remarkable bipartisan coalition that was on full display at a recent rally against the seacoast bypass in Mystic. The speaker list included not only Congressman Joe Courtney and Connecticut Trust's Gregory Stroud to lead things off, but also Senator Richard Blumenthal, Loren Spears leading a delegation representing the Narragansett tribe, Connecticut State Senators Paul Formica and Heather Somers, Rhode

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new right-of-way. At the invitation of Darien First Selectman Jayme Stevenson, the FRA met in mid-February with municipal leadership from Darien, Westport and Stamford. However, the FRA still has not held a single public meeting of their own volition in Fairfield, Middlesex, or New London Counties, or in Rhode Island, despite a wave of public and political opposition.

For the last month, the Trust's work has focused on providing final comment to the Federal Railroad Administration and CT DOT during the mandated Waiting Period prior to the issuance of a Record of Decision. Since securing an extension of the Waiting Period into March—a request initially denied by FRA but eventually secured with the help of Senator Reed of Rhode Island—Gregory Stroud, the Trust's new Director of Special Projects, has taken the lead in crafting a rigorous final response to the NEC Future plan. This is our last formal opportunity to present arguments to the FRA that demonstrate the inadequacies of their planning process for Connecticut; it is our final opportunity

to knock the Connecticut bypass proposals out of the NEC Future plan. We've also been briefing the National Trust for Historic Preservation, as they prepare comments on the plan.

What is the Trust seeking? As far as FRA's NEC Future plan for Connecticut is concerned, the Trust supports planned upgrades to the New Haven-to-Springfield route—an expansion of current state commuter rail investment in this route that will bring higher speed trains, service integration with Boston-to-New York trains, and electrification of this north-south corridor.

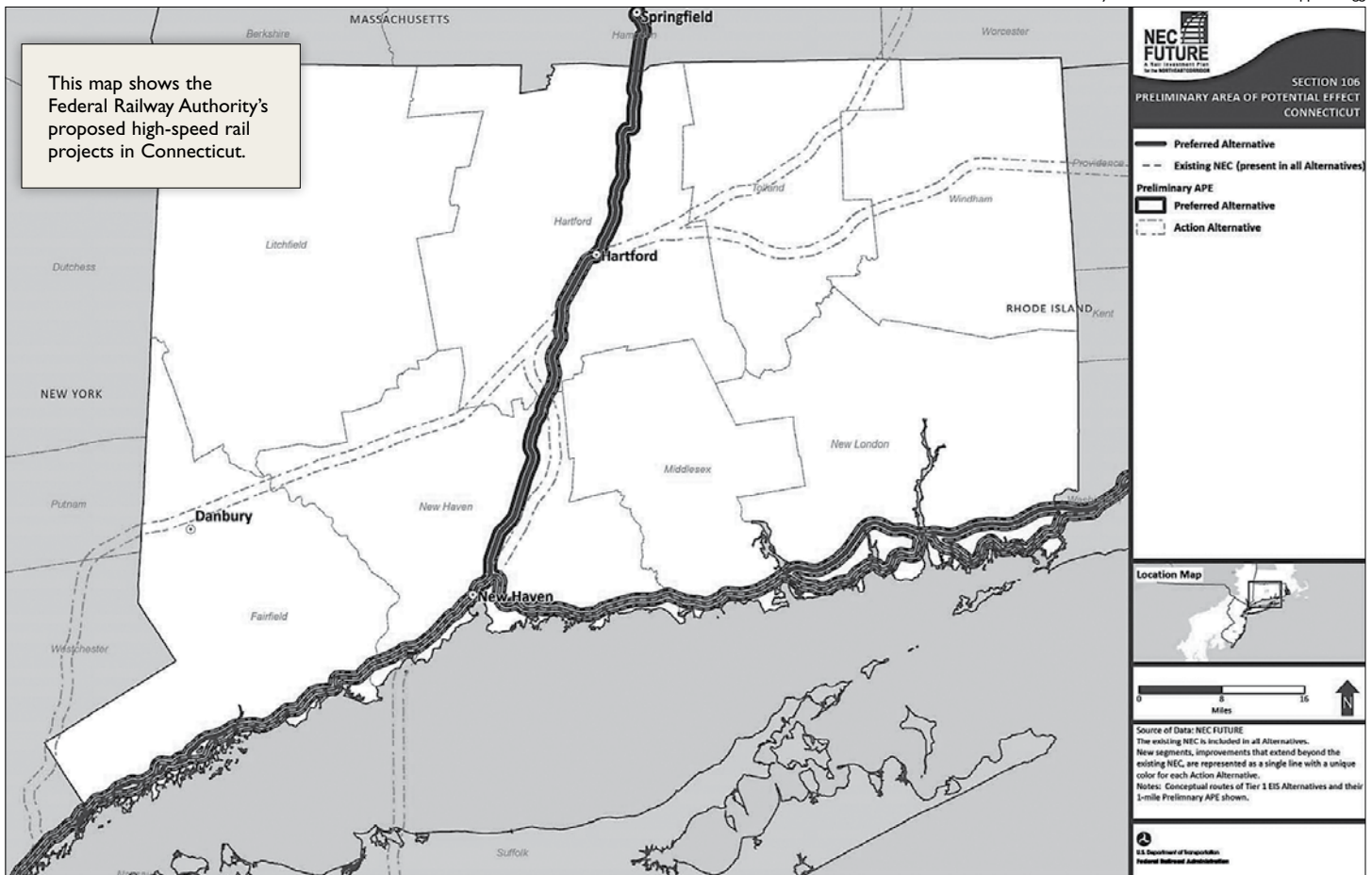
On the southeast coast, the Trust seeks removal of the coastal bypass from the Record of Decision and from the FEIS study. We do not want the final documentation from FRA to pre-qualify the bypass route in any way for future planning, funding or implementation.

Finally, the Trust believes the new right-of-way proposed in Fairfield County should be the subject of an independent Tier 1 EIS process that integrates federal rail planning with significant federal and state

transportation investments already planned in the region. High-speed service between Boston and New York can move forward with long-overdue investments in the existing corridor and through use of new high-speed rail equipment announced by Amtrak in fall of 2016.

Just as this final phase of the initial federal planning process is closing out, state legislative advocacy is beginning. The Connecticut General Assembly has been presented with two bills and one resolution, introduced by State Senator Paul Formica and State Representative Devin Carney. Designed to offer communities in Connecticut additional leverage as they grapple with impacts from such large-scale rail projects, Senate bills SB 253 and SB 263 would require municipal approval through referenda and subsequent legislative approval to release state funds for rail projects. House Joint Resolution HJ 54 would express General Assembly disapproval for the Old Saybrook to Kenyon Bypass. Executive Director Daniel Mackay testified before the Transportation Committee in early February to express support for the resolution and both bills. 🌿

Federal Railroad Authority, NEC Future F-EIS, volume 1, appendix gg



The earliest of the buildings was built in 1825 for J.E. Bassett and Company, hardware dealers. One of the oldest surviving commercial buildings in New Haven, it resembles a Federal rowhouse in form and scale, with only a storefront to indicate its commercial use. (The present storefront dates from about 1967.)

The Street Building, constructed in 1832, illustrates the advent of commercial architecture. No longer domestic in scale or form, the four-story brick building is characterized by repetitive rows of identical windows. A two-story terra-cotta façade was added in 1921, but a section of the original granite-pier storefront survives on the State Street side.

The Monson Building, constructed in stages between 1891 and 1909, belongs to the same commercial type as the Street Building. However, it is more elaborately ornamented, with Roman brick, molded string courses, arched windows, and a bold bracketed cornice.

In addition to these buildings, the easement covers an open lot facing State Street, currently used for parking. Future use of the lot must harmonize with the character of the surrounding district and allow public views of the rears of the protected buildings.

C. Wigren



Ornamental masonry and cornice on the Monson Building.

C. Wigren



Part of the original granite-pier storefront survives on the Street Building.

The owners also have stated their intention to donate an easement on a fourth building, between the Bassett and Monson buildings, in the near future. When that is in place, a continuous historic streetscape half a block long will be protected.

This easement was brought to the Trust through Global X, which manages capital and invests in historic properties across the nation. The company uses preservation easements and rehabilitation tax credits where appropriate to enhance the properties' economic viability.

Covering a group of properties in an historic downtown, this agreement increases the scale of the Connecticut Trust's easement program. The Trust hopes that it will demonstrate the value of preservation easements as one tool for promoting the revitalization of Connecticut's cities. 🌿

*The Connecticut Trust's preservation easements program offers long-term protection and guidance to owners of historic properties across the state. For information, visit [www.cttrust.org](http://www.cttrust.org).*

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# New Online Resources for Preservation

The Connecticut Trust and the Connecticut State Historic Preservation Office have added new features to their websites that offer improved resources and tools for preserving historic places.

## Historic Designation Database

It's easier to find out if a Connecticut site has historic designation, thanks to a new database released by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). Available through the SHPO website, the database provides information on:

- State Register of Historic Places,
- National Register of Historic Places,
- National Historic Landmarks,
- local historic districts, and
- local historic properties.

Among other things, the database provides addresses, designation types, and, where available, style, and date of construction.

Since the database was created with funding for resiliency planning in coastal counties, it currently covers only Fairfield, New Haven, Middlesex, and New London counties. SHPO staff hope to add the remaining counties in the near future. To access the new database, visit [www.cultureandtourism.org](http://www.cultureandtourism.org), click on

“Historic Preservation,” and scroll down to “State Register of Historic Places.” Researchers seeking further information about properties in the northern part of the state can make arrangements by emailing Jenny Scofield, [jenny.scofield@ct.gov](mailto:jenny.scofield@ct.gov).

## Policy and Legislation Updates

As the State legislative session begins and a new administration takes office in Washington, the potential for changes to preservation policy is high. To help keep its members and friends informed, the Connecticut Trust is offering updates on key legislation and budget issues affecting historic preservation. When matters arise on the State or Federal levels, the Trust will send an Action Alert containing an issue brief, a response message, and links to contact elected officials by email, fax, letter, or telephone.

To sign up for Action Alerts, go to [cttrust.org](http://cttrust.org) and click on “Policy and Legislation.”

## Delay of Demolition

Town Delay of Demolition ordinances impose a waiting period of up to 180 days before an historic structure can be torn down, so that preservationists and owners can explore alternatives to demolition.

Since the ordinances were introduced in 1983, they have helped numerous communities find new uses for historic buildings. But getting to a desired result requires participation by activists, town officials, and the public.

To get the news out about proposed demolitions and the preservation opportunities they present, the Connecticut Trust has created a new section of its website where delay notices are posted. A separate page offers information about each town's ordinance and a link to the text of the ordinance.

For towns looking to enact a demolition delay ordinance or improve an existing ordinance, the Trust recently revised its model ordinance, which can be found in Demolition Delay section of the website. Coming soon are a model ordinance for deconstruction of historic buildings and a model Request for Proposals for disposition of historic municipally-owned properties.

To reach the Demolition Delay page, go to [cttrust.org](http://cttrust.org) and click on “Demolition Delay.” 🌿



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# Preservation in a Changing Environment: Conference to Feature Innovation

Library of Congress, Carol M. Highsmith Archive

The theme of the upcoming Connecticut State Historic Preservation Office (CT SHPO) statewide conference is one that will resonate with everyone: *Preservation in a Changing Environment*. Local and national speakers will engage the audience in a conversation about how historic preservation is adapting, or should adapt, to our rapidly changing cultural, economic, environmental, and political setting.

Through this conference, the CT SHPO seeks to spark a vibrant conversation that will help practitioners throughout the region stay on the cutting edge of the issues affecting preservation now and in the near future. Break-out panel sessions will feature three to four speakers each and topics will include local approaches to historic preservation, resiliency, diversity, technology, and regulatory changes. Speakers will explore how urban, suburban, and rural municipalities across the state address preservation; the ways in which preservationists are planning for inevitable environmental changes; how practitioners can best engage under-represented groups; the newest technological trends for preservation planning; and how the current political climate may change the field's long-standing regulatory procedures.

The conference will also feature a series of short, fast-paced presentations that highlight innovative projects around the state. For this, the CT SHPO is gathering speakers from outside the preservation field—artists, entrepreneurs, inventors, and others—to share their experience working with historic resources through energizing and evocative presentations.



The State Historic Preservation Office conference, "Preservation in a Changing Environment," will be held at the University of Connecticut on May 18.

The conference will be held on **Thursday, May 18 from 8:30am to 4:00pm at the University of Connecticut Campus in Storrs**. Registration is required and free of charge. In addition to presentations, the day will include the CT SHPO's Progress in Preservation awards and plenty of time to network with colleagues during lunch and a closing reception.

For updates regarding the conference, as well as the CT SHPO's work, you can follow the Office on Facebook, Instagram, or sign-up for their newsletter by contacting Julie Carmelich at [julie.carmelich@ct.gov](mailto:julie.carmelich@ct.gov). 🌱

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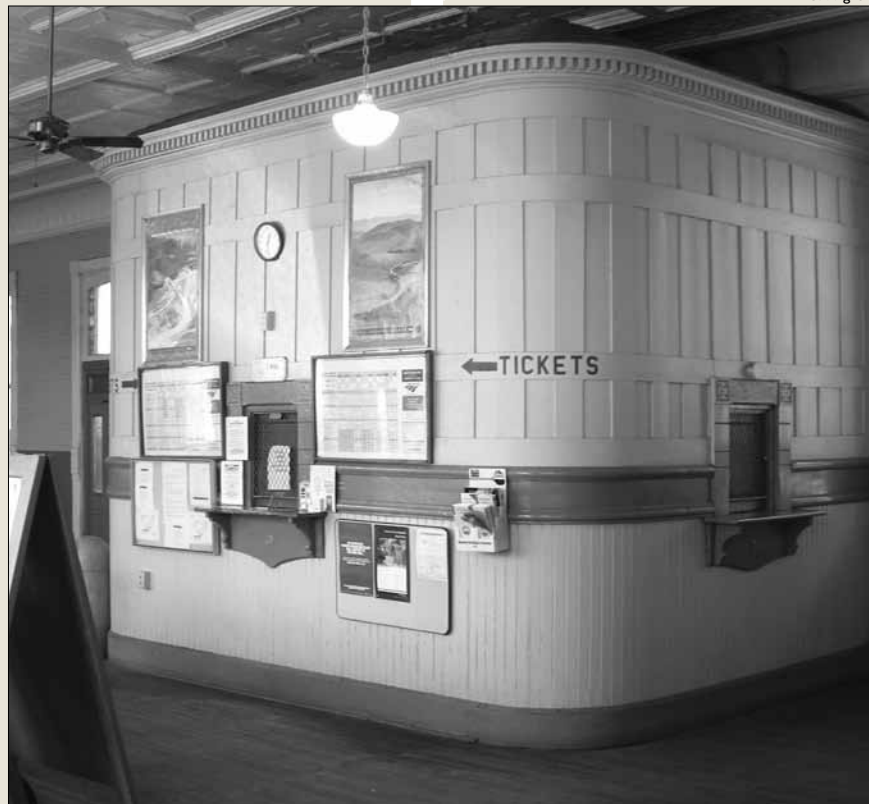
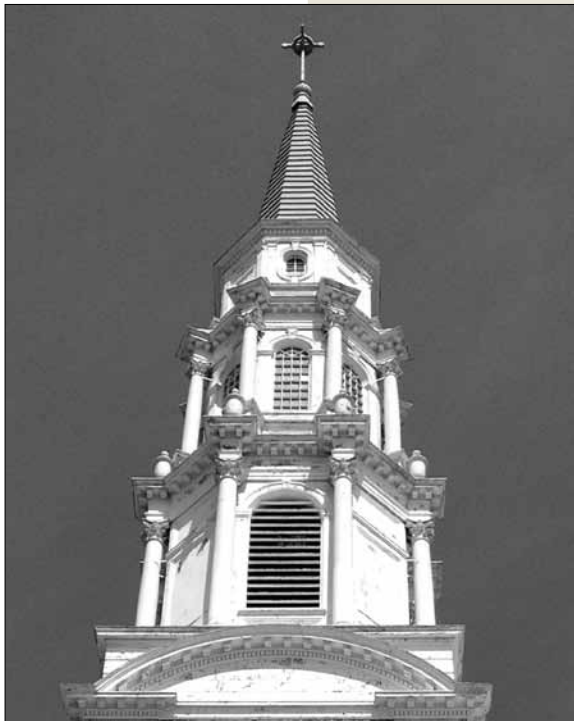
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C. Wigren

United Congregational Church



## Bridgeport. ▲

The city's oldest religious body, the United Congregational Church, has announced the sale of its building (1924-1926; NR\*) to the Bridgeport Islamic Community Center. In recent years, the church has lost members, and caring for the monumental Georgian Revival structure has become burdensome. At the same time, the Muslim group has grown to 1,000 families. After the sale—set for May 1—is completed, the groups plan to collaborate on services such as a soup kitchen and homeless shelter at the site. The Islamic Center is committed to preserving the historic building with minimal changes; the church is removing overtly Christian symbols, such as crosses in stained-glass windows, but in keeping with Congregationalist tradition religious symbolism played only a minor role in the building's design. Many historic houses of worship in Connecticut have been sold across religious lines and owe their preservation to new owners from different traditions.

## Berlin. ▲

The town suffered a loss in December, when fire destroyed the Kensington railroad station (1900). Among the best preserved small depots in the state, the station had been built to replace an earlier building also lost to fire. It was owned by Amtrak but leased to the Connecticut Department of Transportation, which was overseeing renovations while constructing a new station next door. CTDOT officials declared the station to be a total loss; meanwhile, local residents are circulating a petition asking the department to rebuild the structure. The cause of the fire has not been determined.

\*NR = National Register of Historic Places

## West River Restoration



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Mandy Ranslow, Connecticut Department of Transportation



◀ **Canaan.**

This past summer, the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) carried out an excavation of a Native American archaeological site before construction of an access road for replacement of a railroad bridge. This was the biggest excavation done in some time by CTDOT, and one of the few large-scale excavations carried out in the Northwestern corner of the state. CTDOT undertook the dig as mitigation for the destruction of the archaeological site and of the railroad bridge, which dates from 1933 and was deemed eligible for the National Register. CTDOT archaeologist Mandy Ranslow reports that the site yielded projectile points, debitage (waste from tool making and maintenance), and other evidence of Native use. Follow-up will include an exhibit in the Town of Canaan, newsletter articles, and public talks to share the findings.

Capewell Lofts Hartford



**Hartford.** ▲

The long-awaited renovation of the Capewell Horse Nail Company factory (1903; NR) finally reached completion in January, when its developer, the Corporation for Independent Living (CIL), hosted a ribbon cutting. An important site of industrial innovation, Capewell received several patents for innovative machinery

to make nails for horse shoes. CIL has converted the building to 72 apartments ranging from studios to three-bedroom units. Leasing began in November; as of January, 22 units were occupied and leases had been signed for 42 others. Before CIL, numerous efforts to renovate the long-vacant factory had failed. Financing for

the \$27 million project included loans from InsurBanc of Westport, Guilford Savings Bank, the Capital Region Development Authority, and state brownfields funds. State and federal historic rehabilitation tax credits, purchased by Eversource, also were crucial to the project's success.

*continued on page 12*

cont'd from page 11

Dean Sakamoto Architects



**New Haven. ▲**

Agreements reached with two property owners will make it possible for the City of New Haven to complete the final leg of the Farmington Canal rail trail through the city. Built along the

path of the former Farmington Canal/ Canal Line Railroad (1828; NR), the trail currently ends at Temple Street. Easements with property owners will allow construction of an additional two miles of trail, extending through Wooster Square to New Haven harbor. The agreements have been reached with owners of the Foundry condos (a converted industrial building) and the Grove Street parking garage. Beyond Grove Street, the trail will depart from the canal path, which is blocked by the FBI building. Construction of the rail trail, extending to Northampton, Massachusetts, has been underway in phases since the 1990s.

**Southington. ▲**

A former Pratt & Whitney plant has been put to use as a distribution center. Milford-based 3PL Worldwide leased the building in November and opened it in January. According to the Connecticut Trust's Making Places survey, the facility was built in 1942 as Pratt & Whitney expanded for World War II production and closed in 1995. The Hartford Business Journal cited Connecticut's location near major population centers and along major interstates as factors that make it attractive for fulfillment centers, businesses that ship merchandise to customers for retailers. Older manufacturing plants, particularly sprawling one-story facilities constructed in the middle of the 20th century—like Pratt & Whitney—can meet the needs of such enterprises.

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**Windsor Locks. ▲**

In November voters approved a Downtown Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district, the first in Connecticut that takes advantage of changes to the state enabling statute approved in 2015. TIF districts allow municipalities to fund economic development in blighted or depressed commercial areas by borrowing against the future value of finished projects in the districts. The Windsor Locks TIF district encompasses the Main

Street corridor and includes the historic Windsor Locks Canal (1827; NR), Windsor Locks railroad station (1875; NR) and Montgomery Mill (1904, 1920; NR; pictured). Boston-based Beacon Communities has recently received planning approvals to convert the long-vacant Montgomery Mill to apartments. The company cited the TIF district as an important factor in its decision to take on the project.

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### Restmore (1912)

#### 375 Warner Hill Road, Southport

Majestically set on 5.5 acres atop Mill Hill overlooking Long Island Sound is “Restmore.” This landmark dwelling, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, is a custom-designed Cape Dutch-style estate by renowned architect Ehrick Kensett Rossiter. The estate was commissioned in 1910 by Dr. Ira DeVer Warner, Sr., founder of Warner Brothers Women’s Apparel Company of Bridgeport. It is patterned after “Groote Schuur,” the Cape Town, South Africa, summer estate of Cecil J. Rhodes, Britain’s famed “Empire Builder.” To the Cape Dutch style, Rossiter added his classic interior molding and trim detail to produce the quiet elegance of “Restmore.” Completed in 1912, “Restmore” boasts over 6,900 SF, with 11 rooms, 5 bedrooms, 4.5 baths, 5 working fireplaces, and porches both open and enclosed—all of which once enjoyed the company of John D. Rockefeller, Sr., a close friend of Dr. Warner. The property also includes a Lord & Burnham greenhouse, a classic Hodgson Playhouse, a barn with full loft, a two-bay garage and a maintenance/workshop area. This magnificent residence has undergone an extensive restoration, painstakingly returning it to its original grandeur. The Connecticut Trust will hold a preservation easement on the property.

**Contact: Nicholas Mastrangelo, Weichert Regional Properties, 203-641-2100**



### 1170 Litchfield Turnpike (Rt. 202), New Hartford

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G. Farmer



#### **4 Haddam Neck Road, East Hampton**

House has many charms, but needs work. Built in 1732, this single family residence has the classic four-square format associated with early New England architecture with an addition constructed in later years on south side creating a saltbox shape. There are three fireplaces off of the center chimney. Fireplace in the keeping room has large firebox with crane. Millwork appears to be original, including paneled doors, period hardware, and built-in china cupboard. This property is a good candidate for restoration—historic homes tax credits may apply. The Connecticut Trust has performed a preliminary structural assessment and will hold a preservation easement on the property. **Contact: Greg Farmer, Connecticut Circuit Rider (203) 464-7380**

[historicbuildingsct.com](http://historicbuildingsct.com)

#### **33 Curcombe Street, Potsdam Village, Coltsville, Hartford**

Part of a row of cottages built in 1859 as part of Samuel Colt's factory village of Coltsville, now a National Historic Landmark. Colt built these Swiss-style houses for German workers at his willow-wares factory. According to legend, the storybook cottages were part of a promise to give the workers surroundings similar to their native land. Built as two-family houses, most have been greatly altered, but several still display original architectural features, including brick first floors with decorative half-timbering, board-and-batten siding on the second floor and prominent overhanging eaves. Today the cottages are across from the park space used as Hartford's old time baseball grounds. The cottages are included in the Coltsville National Historical Park. Restoration may qualify for the historic homes tax credit program. **Contact: Carol Coburn, Coltsville Heritage Partnership (860) 558-6304 for more information**



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# Repair and Resiliency in Practice

**R**epair of a tiny but admired shed in Stamford's Cove Island Park was completed by SoundWaters, Inc. in December, 2016. The origin of the shed is unknown beyond its first depiction on an 1879 map, but its picturesque perch atop a dry-laid rubble stone foundation at the edge of Holly Pond has earned it many admirers among the park's users over the years.

SoundWaters leases the shed along with the adjacent National Register-listed Holly House (by 1835) for its headquarters. The nonprofit environmental education organization uses the structure for small-boat storage.

A tidal surge during Hurricane Sandy damaged the shed. The surge racked its timber frame and splintered about two-thirds of its board-and-batten siding but surprisingly left its dry-laid stone foundation and asphalt shingle roof unscathed.

After the City condemned the shed, it became clear that replacing it with a new code-compliant structure in a FEMA-designated flood hazard zone would be cost prohibitive. Repairing the existing building while introducing flood mitigation measures would be compliant and less costly if feasible.

Historic Neighborhood Preservation (HNP), Stamford's nonprofit historic preservation organization, arranged for an assessment by Jim Norden of GNCP of Old Saybrook, a structural engineer experienced with historic framing. Finding the frame joints unbroken and most of the existing siding reusable, he outlined

a scope of repairs including strengthening structural connections and providing flood relief vents. The recommendations, augmented by historical research conducted by HNP, served as the basis for a successful application for a Hurricane Sandy Disaster Relief Assistance Grant (DRAG) provided by the State Historic Preservation Office to fund the repairs.

Architect Richard Vail of Faesy-Smith Architects in Wilton prepared construction. Although it was a small project, obtaining a permit to repair an existing building in a VE zone was rigorous, requiring approvals by the Zoning Board of Appeals and Coastal Area Management (CAM) staff. Keeping the project within the scope of a repair was essential and required discipline. The salvaged siding boards were entirely removed, sorted to cull defects, and re-installed on three elevations.

The most unusual detail is the flood venting, a collaboration by the architect, contractor Tucker Kellogg, and the CAM staff. On the long elevations, new and salvaged siding is installed as weathertight panels attached to secondary two-by-four frames set within the shed's original six-by-six framing members.

The panel frames are fastened to the primary frame by widely-spaced common nails intended to resist wind loads and intrusion but not strong enough to survive the



The SoundWaters shed, in Cove Island Park, Stamford, was repaired with funds from a Hurricane Sandy Disaster Relief Assistance Grant

force of a flood surge. Moreover, the panels of the windward east wall are designed to break inward from the primary frame while those of the west wall break outward. The break-away panels are tethered to the primary frame by 1/8-inch stainless steel cables to prevent them from drifting away.

SoundWater's project succeeds pragmatically, aesthetically, and economically, and demonstrates an intelligent, site-specific approach to improving resiliency in historic buildings. The size of the flood vent panels greatly exceeds what is required by code, reducing the strain of a surge on the historic frame while also minimizing their visual impact. And the cost of the repair, \$76,688, was about 65 percent less than the projected cost of a new shed.

"This project made sense in two ways," notes SoundWaters President Leigh Shemitz, Ph.D. "On a practical level, we need to store boats for the student learning and research. Equally important is our sense of stewardship for these unique historic buildings. At SoundWaters, we are stewards of the environment, and that includes our beloved boat shed!"

—Wes Haynes

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National Register of Historic Places, Tod Bryant



National Register of Historic Places, Tod Bryant

## National Register, cont'd from page 20

The **Hubbard Heights historic district**, in Stamford, is a well-preserved residential neighborhood of the early 20th century. Its establishment represented a transition in Stamford's development patterns from single-family farms and large country estates to middle-class suburban neighborhoods.

At the heart of the neighborhood is the Second Empire mansion of William Hubbard (1869), whose family had been property owners in the vicinity since the 18th century. After Hubbard's death, his estate was sold to the Home Building and Development Company, which laid out

streets and began selling lots in 1910. In 1912 the Atlantic Realty Company started another subdivision nearby, giving it the name Hubbard Heights. The construction of Stamford Hospital in 1913 just across West Broad Street from the new subdivision promised a ready market for new houses.

Other tracts in what now is considered Hubbard Heights continued to be developed through the 1910s and '20s, followed by another spurt of activity after World War II.

Hubbard Heights is laid out on a rectilinear street grid, rather than the curvilinear streets more common after World War II. The nature of the neighborhood was in part determined by deed restrictions imposed by the developers. These typically forbade subdividing lots, mandated single-family residential construction, established minimum setback lines, and required minimum costs of houses.

Houses vary in size between the various developments and even from street to street. Between them they exhibit a wide range of styles, making the neighborhood a microcosm of American single-family domestic architecture from about 1905 to the 1960s.

The National Register designation was initiated by the Hubbard Heights Neighborhood Association, whose members wanted to protect the neighborhood from the teardowns plaguing many Fairfield County communities.

Located on Elm Street, just off Main Street, in Hartford, the **Mansuy and Smith Automobile Showroom** is an unprepossessing small brick building. But, in the word of National Register consultant

Tod Bryant, it's also "a rare reminder of the early era of motoring in Connecticut and the transitional period between horse-powered vehicles and vehicles with horsepower."

The structure was built sometime before 1885, and in 1900 it appears on a map as "the Mansuy & Smith carriage repository," serving the company's principal factory, located just across the street. The company and its predecessors had been making carriages since 1841. In the 1890s, however, it began to branch into the new automobile business, producing bodies for the Pope Model 1 electric car, manufactured in Hartford.

As automobile ownership increased in the early 20th century, independent dealers emerged to help manufacturers get their cars to buyers. Mansuy and Smith became the local dealers for Rambler autos in 1909 and apparently moved their sales operation into the building in 1910, when they switched from Rambler to Abbot-Detroit and Firestone-Columbus cars. It was probably about this time that they enlarged the repository building for a showroom, adding a second story and a decorative gable.

However, the business was short-lived. Mansuy and Smith closed in 1913, presumably under increasing competition in the fast-expanding automobile business. The showroom property was sold to Otto Epstein, who operated a plumbing fixture company there for many years. Since the National Register nomination was completed, Developer Daniel Peabody has rehabbed the building as apartments, using historic rehabilitation tax credits. 🌿

## Upcoming Meetings

### Connecticut Historic Preservation Council April 5, 9:30 a.m. Conference call

To participate contact Todd Levine  
(860) 256-2759  
Todd.Levine@ct.gov

### May 3, 2017, 9:30 a.m. at the

State Historic Preservation Office, Department  
of Economic and Community Development  
Main Conference Room  
1 Constitution Plaza, 2nd Floor  
Hartford, Connecticut

### Connecticut Historic Preservation Board March 31, 2017, 9:30 a.m. 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

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## AROUND THE STATE

# New Listings on the National Register

Three Connecticut sites have recently been added to the National Register of Historic Places: an 18th-century house with Colonial Revival additions in New Canaan, an historic district in Stamford, and an early automobile showroom in Hartford.

Built about 1735, the **Hoyt-Burwell-Morse house** is one of the oldest buildings in New Canaan. Its long history parallels that of the town as it evolved from farming community to summer resort to suburb.

The house's first owner, Abner Hoyt (or Hoyt), belonged to a family that helped establish the parish that eventually became New Canaan. Except for a brief period in the 1740s, the house remained in the Hoyt/Hoyt family for more than 120 years, through the period of subsistence farming and into the decline of local agriculture.

In the 1870s it passed to Gilbert Birdsall, a New York businessman who helped make New Canaan a fashionable seasonal resort. In addition to opening a hotel in the town center, Birdsall acquired several farmhouses for his own family, including the Hoyt house, which passed to Birdsall's daughter, Annabelle Stevens, and then to her daughter, Anna Morse, who with her husband continued to run the Birdsall House hotel until the mid-20th century.



Hoyt-Burwell-Morse house

The Morses lived in the Hoyt house, which they modernized by installing indoor plumbing and central heat. These renovations made the house livable in 20th-century terms while preserving and enhancing its Colonial character, a principal aim of the Colonial Revival movement which has shaped much construction in new Canaan from the 1890s to the present.

The Hoyt-Burwell-Morse house became the center of a townwide historic preservation effort in 2015 and 2016, when it faced demolition to make way for a new house. Local residents Tom and Sandy Nissley, working with other local preservationists, bought the property and donated a preservation easement to the Connecticut Trust. They are currently preparing to put the house on the market.

*continued on page 19*