



Norwalk's Grumman-St. John house in 2006 and 2008.

Tod Bryant

Victory in Norwalk

Advocates of preserving the Grumman-St. John house scored a victory on February 6, when state Superior Court Judge Thomas Nadeau granted a temporary injunction against demolition of the house. The judge found that there were “prudent and feasible alternatives” to tearing down the 200-plus year old structure, a contributing resource to the Norwalk Green National Register district. In 2006 the Connecticut Trust listed the house as one of the Most Important Threatened Historic Places in Connecticut.

Chris Handrinos, owner of the neighboring Norwalk Inn and Conference Center, bought the house in 2001 in order to raze it and expand his inn. After resolving a dispute with a neighbor, Handrinos obtained a demolition permit in December, 2006. Demolition was opposed by the Norwalk Preservation Trust, which brought suit under the Connecticut Environmental Protection Act. This law allows suits to prevent the unreasonable destruction of historic resources. The Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism later joined the suit, and the Connecticut Trust and the National Trust for Historic Preservation filed a joint Friend of the Court brief.

At a hearing held in January, 2007, the preservationists called two preservation architects, one also a developer, who presented several alternatives that either converted the house to part of the

inn or else expanded the inn on its present site and allowed the house to be sold for other purposes.

While none of these alternatives provided the full number of rooms that Handrinos wished to build, Judge Nadeau concluded that they had the potential to provide a reasonable return. “It is true that all of the alternatives represent fewer new rooms than defendant sought,” Nadeau wrote in his decision. “This factor alone cannot serve to drop alternatives out of the feasible and prudent atmosphere... . Were it otherwise, an applicant could claim unrealistically high needs in order to brand most posed alternatives imprudent.”

Lawsuits under CEPA have been rare and often unsuccessful, so this decision is welcome to preservationists, particularly

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From the Executive Director

In June of 2001 the Connecticut Trust, in partnership with the National Trust, launched the Connecticut Circuit Rider Program. The program, modeled on one developed in Vermont two years before, aims to provide immediate, on-site preservation assistance to communities across the state. Many of you have benefited from the services of our Circuit Riders over the years. For the Connecticut Trust, their work has allowed us to reach more broadly and in more depth around the state and to demonstrate that historic preservation practices are key tools for community development and community pride.

Last spring, the National Trust announced a major grant fund, the Wilson Challenge, to be offered to local and statewide partners of the National Trust to develop Circuit Rider programs nationwide. The National Trust has received 29 applications, which suggests that we will see this model of preservation service begin to spread across the country. Already, New Hampshire and Massachusetts have added

Circuit Riders to their staffs.

Given our experience and success with the program, the Connecticut Trust has been asked to guide and assist in developing program descriptions, guidelines and goals. Recently, Circuit Rider Greg Farmer and I participated in meetings with Preservation Massachusetts and the Northeast Office of the National Trust to try to develop a model that will allow us to identify clear goals and outcomes for the Circuit Rider program and to give guidance on how to measure success. We know that here in Connecticut we have been in almost every town and city since 2001. Our Circuit Riders have assisted in hundreds of projects. What we have not evaluated is the outcome of their work. At the meeting in Boston we all agreed that the ultimate outcome of all Circuit Rider work should be "historic places used and appreciated."

To view the most recent work of Greg Farmer and Brad Schide, our Circuit Riders, please visit www.cttrust.org, search for Circuit Rider Program and then look for the link to Circuit Rider reports, 2008.

Joining us at the Trust this winter and

spring is Hallock Svensk from Fairfield. A 2007 Phi Beta Kappa, *magna cum laude* graduate of Williams College, Hallock is assisting us with our grants and awards programs. He has also agreed to take on the responsibility of grassroots coordinator for the Face of Connecticut legislative campaign. Funding for that position comes from the National Trust for Historic Preservation Northeast Office's Intervention Fund. For more information on the Face of Connecticut campaign, please visit www.faceofconnecticut.org.

—Helen Higgins

Upcoming Meetings of the Connecticut Historic Preservation Council

April 2, 2008, at 9:30 a.m.

May 7, 2008, at 9:30 a.m.

All meetings take place at the Commission on Culture and Tourism, 1 Constitution Plaza, Hartford

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Connecticut Commission on Culture & Tourism

Two new Trustees have joined the Connecticut Trust's board.



Robinson & Cole



Charles E. Janson, of Darien, is an attorney with Robinson & Cole in Stamford, where his experience includes common interest community representation of developers and associations, commercial purchases, sales and leasing, real estate secured financing, and affordable housing. He has also worked in museum management and governmental and municipal approvals for land use and environmental matters. He has been involved in the renovation of Rippowam Park Apartments, in Stamford, and the nonprofit developer Fairfield 2000 Homes Corporation. He has worked with the Dahesh Museum of Art and its Trustees for more than 15 years as an attorney, directly involved with exhibitions, educational and development programs and renovation of the museum's Manhattan space.

A member of the Greenwich, Fairfield County, Connecticut and American Bar Associations, he chaired the CBA's Committee on Affordable Housing and Homelessness and currently serves on the Executive Committee of the CBA's Real Property Section. He is a Trustee of the Weir Farm Trust, the national Museum Trustee Association, and the Darien Land Trust. Since 1996, he has served on the Board of Advisors of the Connecticut Quality Improvement Award Partnership.

Janson received his B.A., *cum laude*, in English and environmental studies from Williams College and his J.D., with honors, from the University of Connecticut. 🌿

Edith Pestana was appointed by Governor Rell to fill one of three gubernatorial slots on the board. She received her B.A. and M. S. in Geology from Rutgers University, where she tutored inner-city students. She moved to Houston, Texas, in the mid-1980s and worked in environmental consulting traveling extensible across the country where she first became aware of the environmental inequities in lower socio-economic and minority communities. In 1988 she moved to New Haven and subsequently received a Master of Public Health from Yale Medical School. In 1990 she began working as an epidemiologist for Connecticut Department of Public Health. Since 1994, she has been with the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection as the first Administrator of the

Environmental Justice Program. At DEP, she was responsible for design, development and implementation of the second-oldest environmental justice program in the country. She has served on numerous advisory boards and commissions including, the State's Commissioner on Human Rights and Opportunities (CHRO), Yale Medical School's Department of Pediatrics' Adopt- A- Doc Program, the State Lead Poisoning Prevention Task Force, the State Housing Code Task Force, Christian Community Action, Inc., and the Yale University Peabody Museum Associates Council. She has also published government public health assessments, and numerous articles and curriculum on environmental justice. 🌿



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Victory in Norwalk, cont'd from page 1

because Judge Nadeau refused to consider an argument that has been a deciding factor in other CEPA cases: the significance of the house. The law, he says, merely requires that a building be listed on the National Register. If property owners believe that a building does not properly qualify for the Register, they must ask the Keeper of the Register, at the National Park Service, to de-list it. Unfortunately, judges in other cases have taken it on themselves to deny protection to National Register buildings based on their own determination that the buildings lacked historic significance.

Part of the difficulty, as Judge Nadeau noted, is the lack of a clear indication of what the law considers “unreasonable” demolition or what constitutes a “prudent and feasible” alternative. This lack can be remedied either by rewriting the law to outline specific criteria or, as is frequently the case in our legal system, by building a body of decisions that set precedents to guide future decisions.

In the Grumman-St. John case, Judge Nadeau set a good precedent by his decision that “prudent and feasible” alternatives to demolition must merely show a reasonable return on investment, rather than the maximum return. Another good precedent was the judge’s willingness to look at Handrinos’ ability to meet his expansion goals on the inn property itself, effectively lessening the development pressure on the historic house.

However, the process itself has confirmed a bad precedent already seen in the case of the Micheels house in Westport (see CPN March/April 2007) requiring lengthy hearings before imposing even a temporary injunction; in the case of the Grumman-St. John house the delay lasted more than a year. This drawn-out process has left time for the building to deteriorate. It has also increased the parties’ legal costs, a factor that could discourage other organizations from taking on such lawsuits. It would be better, when a case is filed, to impose an injunction immediately if the plaintiffs appear to have any case at all. Then the judge could review the injunction and move the case to a trial, or else lift the injunction as seems most appropriate.

The injunction prohibiting demolition of the Grumman-St. John house is,



Tod Bryant

however, only temporary. Judge Nadeau has found that it seems likely that realistic alternatives to demolition exist, but the parties still must hold a trial—unless, of course, Handrinos decides to rehab or sell the house.

In the meantime, the decision does not require that the house be maintained, and

so it continues to deteriorate. The porch is collapsing, trim is falling off, and windows stand open, allowing the elements in. The preservationists are considering filing a motion requiring some upkeep until a final decision can be reached. Otherwise, Handrinos just might accomplish his demolition after all. 🌿

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

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Karen Senich to Head Culture and Tourism Commission

Governor M. Jodi Rell has appointed Karen Senich to be Executive Director of the Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism (CCT). Senich has served as the Commission's Acting Director since January 2007.

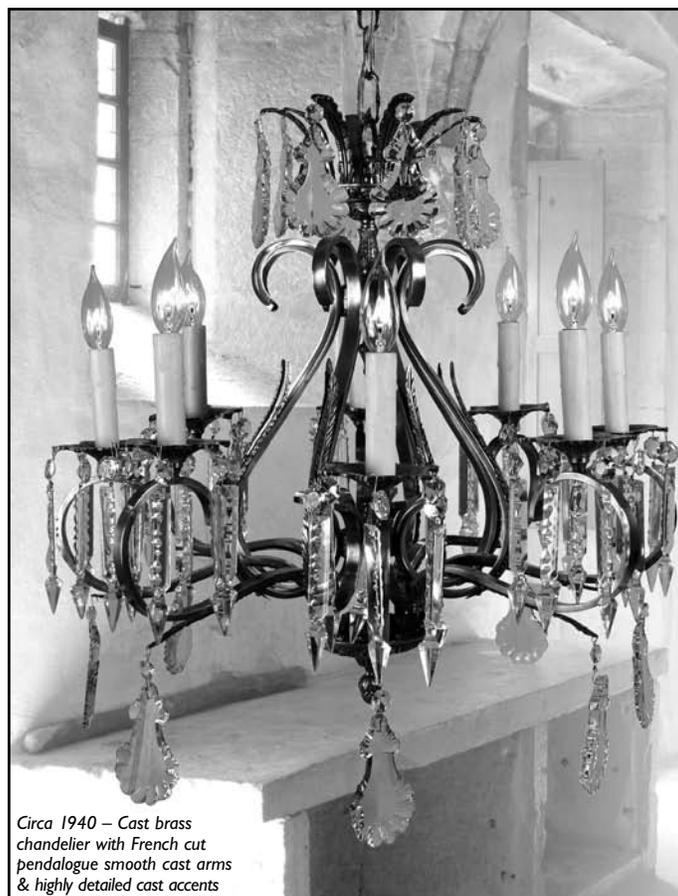
Senich, a Middlebury resident, graduated from George Washington University and Tulane University School of Law. She is a member of the Connecticut Bar Association and practiced law for more than nine years prior to working at CCT.

The CCT was created in 2003, combining the former Connecticut Historical Commission with state agencies for the arts, tourism and film. The agency provides opportunities for collaboration, coordination and growth among the different disciplines. in the arts, historic preservation, tourism and film. CCT operates as a grant making agency and the entity charged with promoting Connecticut to travelers. CCT devotes its resources to serving Connecticut's assets and individuals through funding, technical assistance, and promotion.

Governor Rell also appointed Senich to be Connecticut's State Historic Preservation Officer, the person responsible under federal law for preservation activities in the state. 🌿



Karen Senich, the new executive director of the Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism



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Hartford

One of the corporate offices that made this city the insurance capital of the world is the former headquarters of the Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Company (“Mass Mutual”) in the Asylum Hill area. The company sold its 450,000 square-foot campus to a private investor in 2001, and the site has been vacant ever since. The main building was constructed in 1926 for the Connecticut Mutual Life Insurance Company, to designs by Benjamin Wistar Morris, a fashionable New York architect with close ties to Hartford. Additional sections were added in the 1940s and 1971. The Georgian Revival edifice of brick and limestone is not listed on either the National or State Register.

In December The Hartford Insurance Company, located next to the former Mass Mutual complex, announced that it would buy the property and clear it to provide parking for its 7,000 employees. The company says it needs to replace current parking near the train station. The lease there is due to expire and apparently will not be renewed. Without this parking, the company says it may have to leave Hartford, as Mass Mutual did. The Hartford has a purchase option and plans to buy the site only if it can secure all necessary permits. The company has applied for a demolition permit, which in Hartford triggers a 90-day delay.

Staff members from the Hartford Preservation Alliance (HPA) and Connecticut Trust met with representatives of The Hartford and with community and city leaders. While The Hartford wants



The former Massachusetts Mutual building, Hartford

parking now, the company hopes eventually to develop the site as a mixed residential/retail/office complex. In response to this, the preservationists argued for keeping some parts of the building to incorporate in new development, with parking on site to meet the immediate need. Al Shehadi, Acquisitions Manager for the National Trust’s Community Investment Corporation, helped explain how historic tax credits could help finance redevelopment. In addition, the Connecticut Trust has awarded an Historic Preservation Technical Assistance Grant (HPTAG) to the HPA to pay for a State Register nomination for this site, which is underway. 🌿

Suffield

Designed in 1972 by Connecticut architect Warren Platner, the town’s Kent Memorial Library is at the center of a preservation dispute. A town building committee has recommended that the building be demolished to make way for a new library that would be larger and fully accessible. An additional factor is lingering resentment over the construction of a Modernist building in Suffield’s center, which is both a National Register district and a local historic district.

Built around a central courtyard, the library is a formal, symmetrical design intended to compliment the Colonial and Federal-era buildings of Suffield’s main street. Inside, there are elegant finishes and small nooks to provide private spaces for reading and study. Large windows provide plenty of light.

Connecticut Circuit Rider Brad Schide met with the historic district commission, who initially were disposed to approve demolition. However, as a result of the meeting the commissioners came to understand the significance of the structure. They wanted to know if there were alternatives that would allow the building to be preserved. William Crosskey, an architect and member of the Connecticut Trust’s Board of Trustees, agreed to provide infor-



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mation on possibilities for rehabilitation.

Crosskey presented schematic drawings to the commission and the building committee at separate meetings in January, showing how the needs for accessibility and additional space could be met while preserving Platner's vision—and less expensively than a new building. This alternative set off a round of strongly-worded arguments in the media and around town.

If the building committee goes forward with its plans, the historic district commission will have to approve demolition of the existing library. Unfortunately, proponents of a new building are accusing the commission of obstructionism, even though no application has yet been made. In the meantime, the Trust is planning to hold one of its regular workshops for historic district commissioners in Suffield in March. It is hoped that this event will help commissioners make a thoughtful and informed decision when they are called to do so. 🌿

Kent Memorial Library, Suffield



Litchfield

On December 20, the Litchfield Borough historic district commission turned down plans by Chabad Lubavitch of Litchfield County to convert a 19th-century house into a synagogue and community center. The house, built in 1872 and long associated with the town's prominent Deming family, was converted to commercial use in the 1980s, but according to the commission it retains much of its historic residential character.

Chabad proposed to restore many of the house's features, with some modifications to make it identifiable as a religious structure, and to construct a large addition on the rear for, among other things, worship space, kitchens, a swimming pool, meeting and class rooms, and an apartment for the rabbi. Any alterations or new construction visible from a public right-of-way are subject to approval by the commission, the oldest of its kind in Connecticut.

Unfortunately, the commission got off on the wrong foot at a preliminary meeting when the chair, Wendy Kuhne expressed reservations about the early plans, saying that a Star of David might not be appropriate—even though, as it turned out, the Methodist church a few doors away has one. Amid accusations of anti-Semitism, Kuhne had to recuse herself from future deliberations.

As the atmosphere became more charged, the commission hired John Herzan, former National Register coordinator for the State Historic Preservation Office and now Preservation Services Officer of the New Haven Preservation Trust, to comment on the plans. Chabad hired Jared Edwards, FAIA, a Hartford architect, to champion its design. In addition, a group of neighbors opposed to the alterations hired a third expert.

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Courtesy of Robert Nye

The Seaside, Waterford (1994)

In her State of the State address on February 6, Governor M. Jodi Rell announced plans to halt the ten-year-old process of selling off this historic waterfront property.

Opened in 1934 as a tuberculosis sanatorium for children, Seaside eventually became a facility for the mentally retarded before it closed in 1995. The complex, largely designed by Cass Gilbert, architect of the U. S. Supreme Court building and a resident of Ridgefield, is listed on the National Register.

Once Seaside was declared surplus, the town of Waterford had first chance into buy it, but the town twice declined the offer. As recently as last summer, the state was negotiating with a potential buyer, the Farmington-based Healthcare Consulting Corporation. The proposed sales agreement required that:

- the site be used for age restricted housing;
- the four principal buildings included in the National Register be reused;
- five acres, including the entire waterfront, be set aside for public use; and
- the buyer provide a public park and parking at the site, keep the beach clean, and maintain the seawall, all at its own expense.

The agreement set a price of \$7.1 million, which would go to the Department of Developmental Services for its group home program.

In November the House Government Administration and Elections Committee rejected the sale on a procedural basis,

The Seaside, Waterford, in an old photograph.



but Healthcare remained confident that it could come to an agreement with the state.

In announcing her decision, Rell cited the state's interest in responsible growth: "Sometimes the responsible thing is to not grow, to not develop. For that reason I will ask our state Department of Public Works not to sell the Seaside property in Waterford. Thirty-six acres of beautiful land, fronting along the coast, with the ocean as a neighbor. A beautiful, scenic parcel that would be lost to development forever."

A matter of concern is the state of the buildings, which have been vacant for over a decade now. The site is out of public view, and it is uncertain how much care the buildings have received, but they are sure to be suffering. In her speech, Governor Rell announced that "I have

included monies in the budget to secure the property and to mothball the handful of historic structures that are stunning in their artistry." They should have been secured and mothballed all along.

The condition of Seaside and other surplus state properties that are in the process of being sold off has long been of concern to preservationists, who have watched sites such as Norwich State Hospital in Preston/Norwich visibly crumbling as the disposition process has dragged on much longer than anticipated.

Even more troubling was a comment that the Governor made during a visit to Seaside in December. According to The Day of New London, Rell speculated that the state might ask the National Park Service to remove the principal building

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from the National Register, to clear the way for its demolition. The Day reported that the governor's chief spokesman later said that no decision had been made about razing any buildings and that Rell's comment had merely been one option. ❁

Comstock-Ferre barns, Wethersfield (2007)

Plans to include part of this historic barn complex into new development now seem shaky at best. The developer, Thomas Coccoma of Coccoma Brothers Associates, indicated last November that he would consider incorporating the oldest section of the complex into the proposed development. Coccoma told the Connecticut Trust that he had re-submitted plans to the Wethersfield Planning and Zoning office using schematic drawings prepared by the Trust and Crosskey Architects, although it is not clear that the plans ever made it to the town.

Since then, Coccoma has said that he is under extreme pressure to move forward quickly. A neighborhood group is appeal-

ing the Local Historic District (LHD) ruling that allowed the development in the first place; the owner of the complex simply wants to sell as soon as possible; and Coccoma's partners are losing patience. Because of this, the developer may give up on any preservation efforts or even pull out of the project entirely.

The Trust has offered to help the developers apply for historic rehabilitation tax credits, which could defray

the added costs of incorporating the historic barn into the new development, but Coccoma has not responded to this offer.

As of February 15th, Peter Gillespie, Economic Developer for the Town of Wethersfield, reports that Coccoma had re-submitted new plans, but those plans did not match the historic barn's footprint. The plans also did not fit the minimum requirements for the P&Z regulations and so were rejected. ❁



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Comstock-Ferre barns, Wethersfield

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For the Common Good

The French author Alexis de Tocqueville famously observed in his *Democracy in America* (1835) that Americans are joiners: “In no country in the world has the principle of association been more successfully used or applied to a greater multitude of objects than in America. ...In the United States associations are established to promote the public safety, commerce, industry, morality, and religion. There is no end which the human will despairs of attaining through the combined power of individuals united into a society.” Three recent listings on the National Register of Historic Places highlight ways in which residents of rural Connecticut communities formed associations for common goals.

Depopulation and road widening have nearly erased the once-thriving mill village of Phoenixville, located in the town of Eastford. One of the village’s few remaining structures is a small, simple house probably built in about 1806 and acquired in 1907 by the Union Society of Phoenixville, a group incorporated to “maintain and conduct occasional undenominational public religious worship and Sunday School...and any other unsectarian religious or social endeavor conducive to good morals and the best interests of society.”

Sunday Schools grew rapidly in the United States in the 19th century, a result of changing theological attitudes, promoted by Hartford’s Horace Bushnell,

that emphasized instructing believers in the Christian faith, rather than sudden conversion. Many congregations started their own Sunday Schools, but in the countryside interdenominational schools served entire communities.

The records aren’t clear, but it appears that the Clark family, who owned the little house, allowed local groups to use it as early as 1880. Even before the Union Society was incorporated, the inventory of Albert Clark’s estate, drawn up in 1904, mentioned the “Sunday School House & Lot.” By 1921 the Society reported five teachers and 22 students who met for an hour every Sunday afternoon.

In addition to the Sunday School, the house served as a community center for Phoenixville, hosting suppers, Christmas parties, and other organizations such as the Boy Scouts, the PTA and the 4-H Club. Use of the building declined after the 1950s, as local industry closed and growing automobile use expanded social outlets. In 2002 the Union Society sold the house to the town of Eastford, which is trying to stabilize the building.

B. Clouette



Union Society of Phoenixville House, in Eastford

Overlooking the Connecticut River in the town of Haddam, Camp Bethel represents another form of association, the camp meeting. Beginning in the late 1700s, large open-air revivals attracted crowds who often sought social as much as religious renewal. By the middle of the 19th century, the camp meetings had become institutionalized, often with permanent campgrounds, regular schedules, and, increasingly, permanent structures.

In 1877 members of the Life and Advent Union, a denomination that expected Christ’s imminent return to earth (they are related to the more numerous Seventh-Day Adventists) held a camp meeting in Haddam, on land that they eventually bought and named Camp Bethel. They set up tents in a circle around a preachers’ stand and, as the

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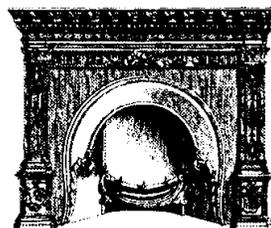


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Camp Bethel, Haddam



Greenfield Hill Grange #133, Fairfield

camp grew, laid out additional roads radiating from the original circle or paralleling the bluffs along the river. Over the years, small cottages replaced the tents, and communal facilities, including a chapel, boardinghouses, and a caretaker's cottage, also were built.

Their cottages' small size and steep roofs evoke the image of the original tents, while their gingerbread ornament creates a joyous atmosphere. Historian Jan Cunningham points out that the intimate setting, small size, and openness of the campground form "a highly organized, non-hierarchical setting that embodied the democratic sensibilities of the community."

Today, Camp Bethel is operated by a nondenominational, nonprofit organization. An annual camp meeting week is held every summer, as it has since 1878.

The facilities are also used by other groups, and families vacation at the cottages, many of which have been handed down through several generations.

Agriculture played a central role in rural life. In 1867 a group of seven men founded the Order of Patrons of Husbandry, more commonly known as the Grange, intending that the new organization "would bring the farmers of the country together in a fraternity which would bind them as closely as the Masonic fraternity binds its people for the mutual benefit and interests of the men who till the soil." The Grange spread through the country, establishing state, county and local chapters and championing such improvements to rural life and agriculture as rural free delivery, good roads, and community farming.

The Greenfield Hill Grange #133 was established in 1893 in an agricultural area of the town of Fairfield whose primary crop was flax. The group erected a building in 1897 and enlarged it in 1931, enlarging the stage and adding a kitchen and a wraparound porch. These facilities, along with beaded wainscot and pressed-metal sheathing inside, made it one of the most elaborate Grange buildings in New England.

Over the years, the Greenfield Hill Grange became one of Connecticut's largest and most active, and its building witnessed Grange fairs, dinners, and theatrical productions. The organization's fair reached its acme in the 1950s; more than 2,000 attended the 1956 fair, with its competitive exhibits of vegetables, food, flowers, dressmaking and animals.

However, as agriculture dwindled the Grange's populist rural values were less and less in synch with the community's increasingly suburban population. Membership has declined, and now the organization is negotiating to transfer the property to the Greenfield Hill Village Improvement Society—yet another vestige of 19th-century community associationism. 🌻

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Dealing with Antiquity and Weathering

by Charles A. Birnbaum, FASLA

Many resource stewards like their buildings, outdoor art, and landscapes tidy, neat, and clean—this is an intriguing goal when we consider that our visitors often have an affinity for sponging walls, distressing furniture, and purchasing antique garden statues, benches, and urns on eBay and siting them in places where they never existed.

As historic preservation professionals, when we remove gritty layers of the industrial revolution-era soot from a pink granite Gothic church, re-gild a City Beautiful-era statue, or install a manicured lawn where a compacted, dusty ground plane was once present, do we take into consideration the appearance of the overall property during the period of significance or do we aspire to create cleanliness and order? Do we have an adversity to patina?

Nowhere in the Secretary of the Interior's Standards is the concept of patina or weathering addressed.

Is this patina, or weathering process, additive or merely subtractive? Do nature's forces add to rather than detract from the meaning of a structure or landscape?

This question was addressed by Mohsen Mostafavi and David Leatherbarrow in their book *On Weathering: The Life of Buildings in Time* (1993). Here, the authors' central discovery was that weathering makes the "final" state of construction necessarily indefinite, and challenges that conventional notion of a building's completeness. In sum, by accepting the inherent uncertainty and inevitability of weathering, and viewing it as a continuing force in the building process, rather than one that is antagonistic to it, the authors suggest we re-think technical problems of maintenance and decay, with a focused consideration of their philosophical and ethical implications.

One project where the antiquity of time was addressed was the Ajuga Botanical Gardens in Lisbon, Portugal. Here, just before a wholesale cleaning of its Italianate walls was to occur, a chance discovery of an extensive population of lichens was made—in fact, a number of the lichens



At Yale, weathered edges, dirt and lichens give this stone wall an aura of age that would be lost if it were cleaned and restored.

discovered were considered rare and worthy of conservation. As a result, the decision was made not to clean the walls, to allow the patina to remain, and to instead manage the lichen population with peacocks. When viewing the balustrade walls in the context of the newly planted shrub and flower beds, one might suggest that the preservation and protection of the weathered walls have allowed visitors to comprehend that the gardens are in fact the oldest in the country, dating to the late 18th century.

Visualize the Forum of Rome as you ponder the following passage from Charles Dickens' *Letters from Italy*, written more than 150 years ago:

To see it crumbling there, an inch a year; its walls and arches overgrown; its corridors open to the day; the long grass growing in the porches; young trees of yesterday, springing up on its ragged parapets, and bearing fruit: chance produce of the seeds dropped there by the birds who build their nests within its chinks and crannies; to climb into its upper halls, and look down on ruin, ruin, all about it... is to see the ghost of the old Rome, wicked wonderful old

city, haunting the very ground on which its people trod. It is the most impressive, the most stately, the most solemn, grand, majestic, mournful sight conceivable. Never, in its bloodiest prime, can the sight of a gigantic Coliseum, full and running over with the lustiest life, have moved one heart, as it must move all who look upon it now, a ruin. GOD be thanked: a ruin!

It is my hope that as we go forward we broaden our perspective and further integrate our young discipline into the broader design and historic preservation communities. In this process let us look forward and look back to early work that will hold answers and provide the essential inspiration as we grapple with these ambitious and exciting challenges for the next decades to follow. 🌿

Charles A. Birnbaum, FASLA, is Founder and President of the Cultural Landscape Foundation. This is an excerpt from "Philosophies for Cultural Landscapes and Historic Preservation," *Forum Journal* 19/3 (Spring 2005): 4-13, itself taken from a longer talk. Complete copies can be obtained from Birnbaum at (202)483-0553 or cbirnbaum@tclf.org.

Chabad's architect made several modifications to the proposed design in response to Herzan's suggestions. Nonetheless, the commission voted to reject the application, as announced in a decision written by James Stedronsky, the commission's lawyer.

In general, the commission commended Chabad for its restoration plans, noting that they "...constitute a historically appropriate enhancement to the house and neighborhood." However, the commission rejected the use of double doors on the façade; the existing door, while not in its original position, is either the original door or else one from the same period matching many others found in the district. Also rejected was a proposed clock tower on the roof, which was found to be completely different in design from the monitors or cupolas found on some 19th-century houses and incompatible with the historic residential use.

The commission stated that it would, however, approve replacing the glass panels of the present door with stained glass, as well as adding cresting to the roof, along with a finial or other roof emblem in the form of a Star of David. "While such a finial and emblem is not historical in style, this is an accommodation that the Commission would allow to this Applicant because of the importance of announcing the religious, adaptive reuse of the building."

The real difficulty was the size of the addition, nearly 20,000 square feet in area and four stories in height, with its roofline substantially the same as that of the Deming house. The commission determined that this would dwarf the original house and its neighbors, particularly given the tight site.

The decision notes that the Secretary of the Interior's Guidelines "specifically recommend that when additions are added to historic structures the historic relationship between buildings and the open space is to be preserved." It also quotes Herzan's report: "Rear additions to historic houses are common in the Litchfield

Historic District, but most are smaller in size, scale and mass than the buildings to which they are attached. Additions to historic buildings in the district are commonly less than half the volume of the principal residence." Where the commission had approved additions equal in size to original houses, they were visually subordinate, by virtue of lower ground, lower rooflines, or larger sites where the additions were less visible from the street.

The commission indicated that it would approve an addition equal in square footage to the Deming house, which would result in a building with more than 6,000 square feet of usable space.

In its presentation, Chabad argued that the First Amendment and the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act (RLUIPA) of 2000, which forbids regulatory bodies from putting undue burdens on religious practices, overrode the historic district regulations in this case. However, the commission argued that it was ruling solely on the appearance, not the use, of the house and noted that it had taken special care not to rule on religious matters or to treat Chabad differently from any other applicant.

Chabad let pass a deadline to appeal the commission's decision in state court, but there remains speculation that the group may be planning to sue in federal court, claiming infringement of its religious freedom. In previous cases, however, courts have generally upheld historic district decisions that were consistent, well documented, and dealt only with appearance, not use. 🌿



C. W. Green

Deming house, Litchfield

Brick Wall Exposé

I understand you're the man to talk to! My wife and I are buying a home in historic Fells Point of Baltimore, and we would like to expose some brick on the interior walls. Do you have any ideas or procedures?

—Kevin A. Perkins

First determine if an exposed brick wall is really what you want. Many historic masonry buildings were not constructed with the intent of leaving the interior brick walls exposed. They were left rather rough and unfinished because the builders knew they would be covered up with finished plaster and woodwork. It became a trend in the mid-20th century to expose brick walls because it cost less than restoring the seriously deteriorating plaster and woodwork that originally covered the brick. Many brick walls were exposed, looked too ugly, and had to be covered back up at great expense. The trend of exposing bricks became a "style" of historic building renovation. It is still sometimes done even when the finish plaster and woodwork are in good condition or could be restored or preserved, sometimes at lower cost.

Also you may want to consider heating cost and comfort issues. Removing the finish plaster and woodwork from an exterior wall will increase heating costs and may make the living space less comfortable due to drafts and radiational cooling.

If you still want to expose the brick, begin by investigating the character of the bricks. Look through openings that may already be in the wall such as those made for heating and electrical fixtures. You may have to make some openings by cutting through plaster in small areas (perhaps 2"x3" or 6"x6") or carefully removing woodwork. If you find the brick surfaces do not look good in these areas it will be much easier to repair this minor investigation damage than if you just started ripping out large sections of the finish walls. Also determine the construction of the walls and consider how you will run electrical line to the space and how windows and doors will be finished off as they meet the bricks.

John Leeke is a preservation consultant who helps homeowners, contractors and architects understand and maintain their historic buildings. You can contact him at 26 Higgins Street, Portland, Maine 04103, (207)773-2306; or by email: johnleeke@HistoricHomeWorks.com; or log onto his website at: www.HistoricHomeWorks.com. Copyright © 2004 John Leeke

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John Leeke's Historic Home Works™

Insulation Retrofit

Last year, we bought an 1850s vintage house in Maine with no insulation. After paying our oil company too much we want to add some insulation. The plaster on the inside appears to be in good shape and the clapboards on the outside are in good shape. Despite post and beam walls, the wall cavities appear to be only 2 to 3 inches thick. We'd prefer to have the installation done from the inside, which I gather isn't quite "standard" but I've never seen a "plug job" in clapboards that isn't obvious from 100' away.

—East Boothbay, ME.

If the stud space within your walls is only 2" you may have "back plastering" which is a lath and plaster sealing within the stud space.

Ordinary insulation contractors may not recognize this complication and may install the insulation so that condensation occurs within the wall causing moisture damage. Before doing any insulating at all, be sure to do everything you can to limit air infiltration. Tighten up the exterior weather envelope by repairing woodwork and caulking open joints between woodwork elements. Add storm windows (interior or exterior) and refurbish the existing windows if they contribute to the historic character of the house instead of replacing them with plastic windows. In a 140 year old house this is bound to give you the greatest "bang for the buck." Then insulate the ceilings above heated spaces. This should only be done if the attic spaces above can be effectively ventilated to prevent moisture buildup. Painting the ceilings with a vapor retardant primer can help prevent moisture migrating through the ceilings, but the ventilation is a necessity. One of my recent clients in Belgrade Lakes, Maine, just had extensive ice damming and moisture damage due to a poorly designed insulation project. She had to remove most of the insulation, take off all the roofing, and reinstall it along with an effective ventilation scheme.

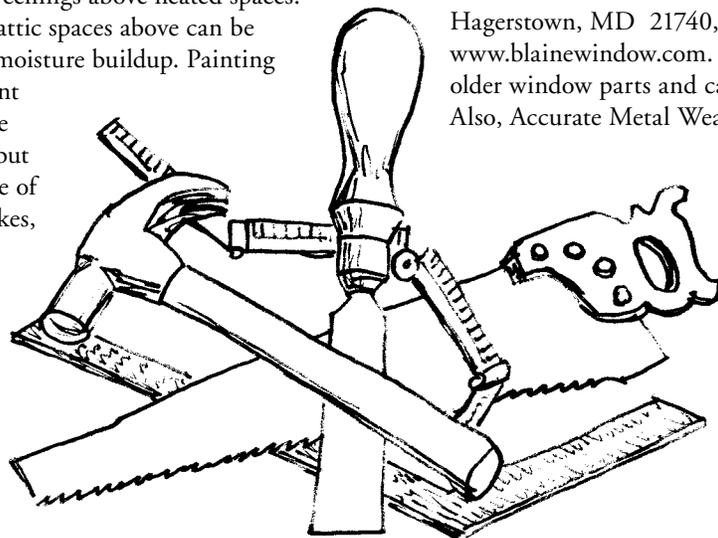
It is worth getting the details right in the first place. The last thing you should consider is insulating the side walls. Insulation in the side walls of an older house can trap moisture within the wall during the winter, causing superficial damage (exterior peeling paint) as well as significant structural damage (fungal decay). The source of the moisture is usually within the house, due to a damp cellar or moisture generated from showers, cooking, etc. This situation is frequently compounded by adding vinyl siding, which traps even more moisture within the wall. In my experience over the past 25 years about half of the pre-1940 houses with insulation and vinyl siding have excessive moisture within the walls, and about 10-15% have developed at least some superficial or more serious structural damage.

Window Weather Stripping

Some time since 1924, when our house was built, one of the owners tried to fix the counter weight ropes in some windows. They left out the zinc guide track which is really necessary to keep the wind out when the window is pulled down. This is the usual zinc metal track with a protruding guide rail folded out to accept the groove cut in the window sides. It is trimmed at the foot to sit over the zinc strip tacked across the bottom. The bottom piece is still in place; I just need side pieces.

Check with Blaine Window Hardware, 17319 Blaine Dr., Hagerstown, MD 21740, (301) 797-6500, 800 678-1919, www.blainewindow.com. They have an extensive supply of older window parts and can fabricate practically anything. Also, Accurate Metal Weatherstripping Co. Inc., 725 S.

Futon Ave., Mt. Vernon, NY 10550, (914) 668-6042, may have your type of weatherstripping in stock. Be prepared to send samples for an exact match. If you cannot find an exact match you may end up replacing the weatherstripping with a similar type from these same sources.



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