

## Connecticut Preservation Awards 2008

The Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation is pleased to announce the winners of this year's Connecticut Preservation Awards. The awards recognize outstanding preservation efforts across the state and are intended to highlight the depth and scope of the impact that the preservation of historic resources can have on our communities. The awards were presented at the Trust's Annual Meeting, held on Monday, April 28th at the Hill-Stead Museum in Farmington. The winners in each of two categories are listed below.

### The Built Environment

#### Saint Michael's School, Hartford

##### — Award of Merit

This Colonial Revival building, constructed in 1927, was renovated into 16 units of senior housing and associated common spaces for Grandfamilies Development, which provides affordable housing for grandparents raising their grandchildren. The rehabilitation was approved by the National Park Service, thereby allowing the project to utilize historic tax credits contingent upon its compliance with

federal restoration/preservation guidelines. The preservation of the interior masonry, walls, and openings demanded great creativity in producing comfortable apartment layouts that were both completely handicapped accessible and fitted with up-to-date HVAC equipment. Through the implementation of an innovative housing scheme which serves a previously unidentified needy population, an historic building which had sat vacant for over a decade has been given a new life and a humanitarian purpose.

#### Sage-Allen Building, Hartford

##### — Award of Merit

Originally constructed in 1898 and located within downtown Hartford's Department Store National Register district, the Sage-Allen Building has been restored and converted into 78 luxury apartments and 12,000 square feet of retail space. As part of the restoration, the developer, 18 Temple Street LLC, removed an adjoining structure which had been built in the 1960s and which masked much of the original façade, and they added new, historically sensitive infill in keeping with the building's overall aesthetic scheme. Other surrounding buildings on the block which had fallen into severe disrepair were demolished, but in their place, new infill structures, containing apartments and affordable student housing, were constructed on either side of Sage-Allen and given minimal detail such that the original structure would

*continued on page 8*



St. Michael's School, Hartford  
Richard Cadan Photography

### In This Issue...

Archaeological Perspectives	4
Around the State	10
New on the National Register	14

## From the Executive Director

The Trust's annual meeting, held April 28 at Hill-Stead Museum, was a perfect opportunity to recognize many who have contributed so much to preserving Connecticut's historic places and character. In this issue you can read about the awards that we presented for outstanding preservation projects and to some of the people who make our work as preservationists possible.

It's a great privilege for me to thank the Trustees who retired from the board this year, who have given much of their time and energy to the Trust. Listing their committee memberships merely hints at the depth and breadth of commitment and expertise the Trust received from each of these retiring trustees. On May 1, we welcomed eight new trustees and one new member of the Advisory Council. We will give background on them in the next issue of CPN.

Trustees retiring after six years of service:

**Martha Alexander, New Haven:**

- Executive Committee, 2007-2008
- Board Development Committee, 2002-2008; chairman, 2007-2008
- Strategic Planning Steering Committee, 2004
- Development Committee, 2003

**Joan Carty, Bridgeport:**

- Program and Projects Committee, 2002-2008
- Historic Buildings and Easements Committee, 2006-2007

**Inger McCabe Elliott, Stonington:**

- Development Committee, 2002-2004
- Program and Projects Committee, 2004-2007
- Board Development Committee, 2007-2008

**Upcoming Meetings of the Connecticut Historic Preservation Council**  
 June 4, 2008, at 9:30 a.m.  
 July 2, 2008, at 9:30 a.m.

**Historic Preservation Board**  
 June 12, 2008, at 9:30 a.m.

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

For more information call (860)256-2800

**Walter Fiederowicz, Litchfield:**

- Vice Chairman, 2006- 2008
- Executive Committee, 2002-2008
- Legislative Policy Committee, chairman, 2002-2008
- Finance Committee, 2003-2008

**Judy Miller Shanner, Bridgeport:**

- Development Committee, 2002-2008.
- Board Development Committee, 2003-2004
- Strategic Planning Steering Committee, 2004

**State Representative Patricia Widlitz, (D-98), Guilford:**

- Legislative representative, 2002-2008
- Legislative Policy Committee, 2002-2008

Retiring after five years of service:

**FiFi Sheridan, Greenwich:**

- Legislative Policy Committee, 2003-2008
- Development Committee, 2005-2008

Retiring after two years of service:

**Sue Vincent, Thompson:**

- Barns Project, 2006-2008
- Development Committee, 2006-2008

We sincerely thank **Stanley Fullwood**, North Granby, for serving in a non-board position as Assistant Treasurer, after completing his six years as a trustee last April. Following him in this position will be Walter Fiederowicz.

This winter, in cooperation with MiddleOak Specialty of Middletown, sponsors of the Restorationist insurance program for antique houses, the Trust re-printed its 1987 booklet, *How to Care for your Old House: An Owner's Manual*. Revised and updated by Trust intern Melissa Antonelli, a senior at Roger Williams University, the booklet is now called *An Owner's Manual for Antique Houses* and it is specifically targeted for sale to real estate agents taking our real estate courses, though it is available to Trust members and others interested in having a handy guide to old houses.

—Helen Higgins

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

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Connecticut Commission on Culture & Tourism

## Governor's Awards for Culture and Tourism

The Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism presented awards on April 9 to people who have made significant contributions in culture and tourism. "We are extremely fortunate to enjoy such an abundance of gifted and forward-thinking individuals who call Connecticut home," said Karen Senich, the Commission's executive director. "We are very pleased to be able to pay tribute to their exceptional spirit."

**Joan D. Hedrick, Middletown,** received a Governor's Award for Excellence in Culture and Tourism. Hedrick is the Charles A. Dana Professor of History at Trinity College in Hartford and winner of a Pulitzer Prize in 1995 for her biography, *Harriet Beecher Stowe: A Life*.

In addition, Distinguished Advocates Awards were given to Connecticut residents who, without monetary compensation, have worked to strengthen, preserve or promote the arts, history, film, and tourism in the state. Recipients representing history and historic preservation were:

**Bill LaRoue, New London,** for his dedicated service as head docent at the New London Custom House Maritime Museum;

**Janet Mason Tracey, Farmington,** for her efforts and dedication to the Noah Webster House in West Hartford and the West Hartford Historical Society;

**Alfred Narcisse, Windsor,** for his efforts to promote the Connecticut Freedom Trail in Windsor; and

**Louise Pupelis, Norwalk,** for her volunteer service at the Lockwood-Mathews Mansion.

For more information visit [www.cultureandtourism.org](http://www.cultureandtourism.org).

## Vairo Takes Over Register Programs

Stacey Vairo joined the Historic Preservation and Museum Division of the Commission on Culture and Tourism as State and National Register Coordinator in January. Stacey holds a MFA in Historic Preservation from the Savannah College of Art and Design and a BA in Art History from the University of Connecticut. Since receiving her degree, she has worked in Virginia, New York and New England as a private consultant and as an architectural historian for the planning firm Fitzgerald and Halliday, Inc. CPN readers may remember Stacey's article, "Preserving Lustron Houses in Connecticut" (March/April 2001).

She can be reached at (860) 256-2766 or [stacey.vairo@ct.gov](mailto:stacey.vairo@ct.gov).



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# The Household Economy of Lydia Goodsell: Archaeology of an 18th-Century Family in North Branford

by Ross Harper

On a winter day in 1752 a small group of probate appraisers walked through the house of Lydia Goodsell of Branford. The men carefully itemized each of her deceased husband's possessions, room by room, and assigned a value to each object, which was meticulously recorded. Lydia's husband, Samuel Goodsell, had been "killed by a log at a sawmill" the previous November (1751) at the age of 41.

For her widow's share of the estate, Lydia received two and a half acres of land "whereupon ye house stands," ten acres and 50 rods of land "on the west side of the young orchard," a right in the "new house," a third part of "ye barn, south bay" and one-third interest in the sawmill. Lydia also received a share of various household goods and farm tools, including a cider mill, a barrel churn, the livestock, one "old great

[spinning] wheel," a harrow, a large hatchet, an old scythe, two broad hoes, a horse plow, a dung shovel, a pitchfork and other tools. For cooking there was a large iron kettle, a trammel and a "flesh fork," and for the table were pewter plates and spoons, an "earthen mug," a salt mortar and pestle and two "China plates." Little is mentioned of food beyond one barrel of "apple beer." The remainder of her husband's estate was divided among the six children, including Samuel Jr., who received some farm land, part of the orchard, and the "old house."

Lydia never remarried and remained in her house until her death in 1797. By the next year her heirs had dismantled both houses and filled in the cellar holes and well with household debris, chimney and foundation stones, field cobbles and soil. The remains were thereafter hidden under an agricultural field and Lydia and

her family were eventually forgotten. Only a few documents have survived to indicate that the family had ever lived in this part of Branford, which became North Branford in 1831.

During a routine archaeological survey for the Connecticut Department of Transportation (ConnDOT) by the Public Archaeology Survey Team (PAST), the lost remains of the Goodsell house and farmstead were discovered several feet under a cornfield. In all, two rectangular stone-lined cellar holes—corresponding to the "old house" and the "new house" mentioned in Samuel's 1752 probate—



Posset pot found at the Goodsell site.

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Excavation of the south cellar of Lydia Goodsell's "new house" in North Branford, by PAST archaeologists Ross K. Harper, Daniel Forest and Karen Morando.



PAST, Inc.

a fireplace base and a stone-lined well were discovered, along with 30,787 artifacts. The diversity and preservation of the artifacts is remarkable, which to a great extent can be attributed to their having been long buried and protected from weather, plowing and relic hunters.

Lydia's "new house" seems to have been of the simple one-room end chimney type, an early-period starter house that often had rooms added later. Its remains included a 16' x 13' cellar with a dirt floor, dry-laid stone walls, and a mortared-stone fireplace base. The house footprint is estimated to be about 16' x 28'; it had a south-facing yard and a well 50 feet away. Middens, or trash refuse areas, were concentrated to the east of the house and out of sight of the road. Recovered artifacts indicate that the house had simple iron hinges and latches with leaded windows of green and blue-green glass panes. A small number of red brick fragments suggest the fieldstone chimney had been "topped-off" with brick only above the roof.

As the excavations progressed, the site offered an unprecedented opportunity to

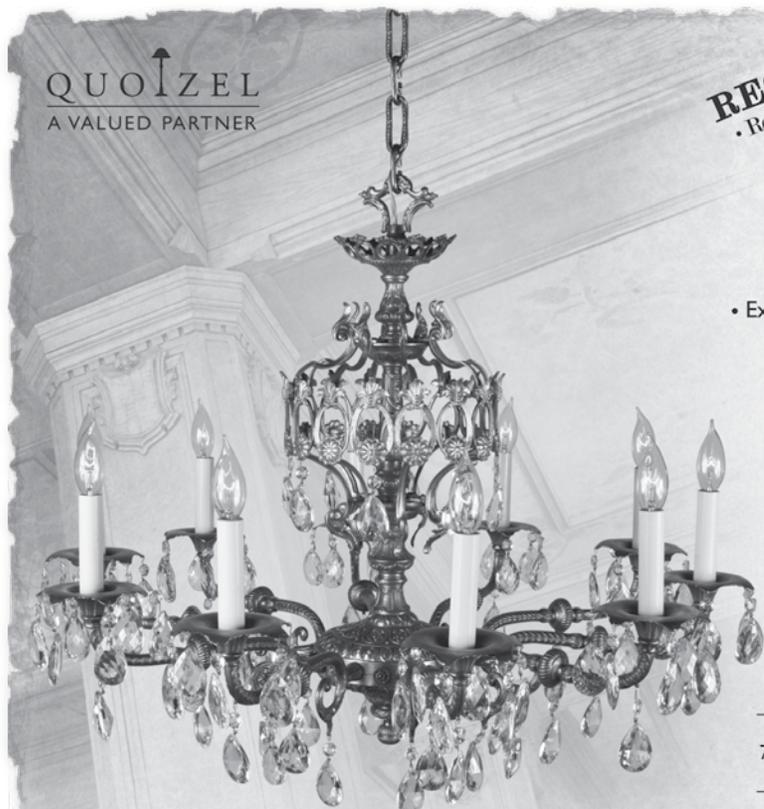
learn more about how women lived on their own in 18th-century Connecticut. Colonial women typically did not own property outright, thus few probate records were compiled for them; and few diaries or journals written by women have survived.

The archaeology and documentary data indicate that the Goodsells raised Old World grains including oats, wheat and rye, along with maize, beans and squash that colonists adopted from Native Americans. From the family's orchards, apples were made into cider with their cider mill (likely horse-powered), and a bee hive provided honey and wax and aided pollination of the fruit-tree blossoms. Milk from the family's cows was placed in large earthenware pans and the separated cream was converted into butter and cheese. Beef and pork were preserved by salting and packing into barrels; these barrels, along with cider and butter, were secured in the cellar. Geese and chickens were raised for meat, eggs, and down. Other meat was obtained through hunting and trapping; the exca-

vations found the bones of deer, squirrels, land turtles, waterfowl, and the now extinct passenger pigeon, which were taken in the family's "pigeon net." Bones of freshwater sucker were also found; these fish spawn in rivers in great numbers in the spring. The abundance of shellfish at the site, including oyster, quahog and whelk, were harvested on the shore with the "cockle riddle" [sieve] and "oyster tongs," mentioned in the probate. Charred remains of butternut, hazelnut and hickory and seeds from huckleberry, blackberry/raspberry, black cherry and grapes were also found. These simple but nutritious and hardy foods were prepared by boiling, roasting, frying and baking, which the Goodsells did in flat redware and yellow slipware dishes. Typical New England meals included roasts, chowder, succotash, "sauce" (root vegetables) and various pies, puddings, and cakes.

The Goodsell women were also involved in every stage of textile production. They grew flax and raised sheep, they processed the flax and wool with their hatchel and cards and then spun it into yarn using linen and woolen wheels before weaving it into

*continued on page 15*



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# Rep. John B. Larson Receives Harlan H. Griswold Award

*Remarks by Karen Senich, Executive Director of the Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism*

Annually, in recognition of Harlan H. Griswold's outstanding contributions to historic preservation over his lifetime, the Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism and the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation confer the Harlan H. Griswold Award. The award recognizes those individuals whose activities exemplify Harlan's leadership, vision and selfless dedication to preserving Connecticut's heritage and who by deed or example have made our state a better place to live for all of its citizens.

We are proud to recognize Congressman John B. Larson, United States Representative for the First District, for his unwavering dedication to the preservation and restoration of the Coltsville Historic District and its designation as a National Historic Landmark. Congressman Larson introduced the legislation in the House of Representatives directing the National Park Service to explore the possibility of making the Coltsville area of Hartford a part of the National Park system.

In 2003, Jack Davis, then publisher of the Hartford Courant, and Elliot Ginsberg of Congressman Larson's staff convened the Ad Hoc Committee on the Coltsville National Park Project to provide planning, communication and coordination for efforts to assist the National Park Service of the U.S. Department of the Interior in the analysis, evaluation and future development of Coltsville's heritage resources. A broad spectrum of stakeholders began to meet regularly.

Congressman Larson recognized that the Coltsville Historic District is an invaluable historic resource, not only to the State of Connecticut, but to the nation as a whole. Samuel Colt, founder of the Colt Armory and the Coltsville manufacturing village, became an internationally-known industrialist. Elizabeth Jarvis Colt, made a widow in 1862, oversaw the rebuilding of the signature buildings of the Colt manufacturing complex after a devastating fire in 1864. A tangible legacy, the district illustrates how entrepreneurship, ingenu-



Representative John B. Larson, recipient of the Harlan H. Griswold Award for Historic Preservation.

ity in invention, and a diverse workforce collectively came together to build a state's and a nation's economy.

Congressman Larson is passionately committed to making Coltsville work as not only an architectural treasure but as an important economic asset. When the first nomination for Coltsville was presented to the National Historic Landmarks Advisory Committee of the National Park Service, it was denied. Congressman Larson worked with the Governor's Office, the Commission on Culture and Tourism and the full membership of the Ad Hoc Committee to request a second hearing, at which he supported the nomination. This time, the Advisory Board voted to send the nomination onward.

What benefits have resulted from Ad Hoc Committee's continuing work? First and foremost, it drew together property owners, scholars, city planners, developers, neighborhood activists and elected officials to share a vision to preserve our past and protect our future. The National Park Service stressed the importance of deep community support for the revitalization of Coltsville. The members of the Ad Hoc

Committee have demonstrated this. The National Park Service is currently examining the area for inclusion in the National Park system and will report its findings this summer. Without Congressman Larson, this vision could have faltered or failed.

The Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism and the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation are proud to award Congressman John B. Larson, United States Representative for the First District, the 2008 Harlan H. Griswold Award for Historic Preservation. 

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## Rudy Favretti Receives Janet Jainschigg Award

The Janet Jainschigg Award for Excellence in Historic Preservation for 2008 was presented to Rudy J. Favretti, FASLA, a leading authority in the field of historic landscape preservation whose work restoring some of the country's most well known gardens and landscapes have set the standard for accurately recreating these tangible links to the past. The presentation took place at the Connecticut Trust's annual meeting, held April 28 at the Hill-Stead Museum in Farmington.

A native of Mystic, Favretti holds degrees in horticulture, landscape architecture, and regional planning from the University of Connecticut, the University of Massachusetts, and Cornell University. In 1955, he joined the faculty of the University of Connecticut where he served for 33 years as professor of landscape architecture, and founded the nationally accredited landscape architecture program, the first academic program in the country devoted to historic landscapes.



courtesy of Rudy Favretti

Rudy J. Favretti, FASLA, recipient of the Janet Jainschigg Award for Excellence in Historic Preservation

eral audiences, ranging from *New England Colonial Gardens* (1964), *Colonial Gardens* (1972), *Highlights of Connecticut Agriculture* (1976), *For Every House a Garden* (1977), and *Landscapes and Gardens for Historic Buildings* (1979) to his most recent publication, *Jacob Weidenmann: Pioneer Landscape Architect* (2007).

Presenting the award, Executive Director Helen Higgins said, "Beginning at a time when preservationists concerned themselves principally with buildings, you helped expand our concept of what is significant to include landscapes. As a practicing landscape architect you have studied and restored historic landscapes, including some of our nation's most valued landmarks. As an author you have created an awareness of historic landscapes in homeowners as well as professionals. And as an educator you have helped ensure the continuation of your work through the careers of your students at the University of Connecticut."

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

He also conducted a private practice specializing in landscape preservation. Connecticut commissions include Roseland Cottage, in Woodstock; the Jonathan Trumbull house, in Lebanon; the Governor's Mansion, in Hartford; the Captain Nathaniel B. Palmer house, in Stonington; and numerous private properties around the state.

Outside of Connecticut, Favretti has worked on nationally significant historic landscapes at Old Sturbridge Village, Monticello, Mount Vernon, Montpelier, Strawberry Banke, the Emily Dickinson house, Bartram's Garden, the Nathaniel Russell house, Shelburne Farms, and Spanish Point (the Potter Palmer estate), in Osprey, Florida.

Favretti has written numerous books and articles for both professional and gen-

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### Historic Houses in Eastern Connecticut

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Awards, cont'd from page 1

remain the principal feature of interest on the block. Finally, Temple Street was reopened to pedestrian and vehicular traffic after having been closed off for many years. The finished mixed-use development represents the culmination of ten years of work and a dynamic, historically significant addition to Hartford's burgeoning downtown scene. Though the development efforts encountered numerous obstacles in the form of legal negotiations, tenant relocations, and environmental complications, this project is proof that historic preservation can play a central role in reviving our state's urban centers.

Temple Street LLC



Sage-Allen Building, Hartford



Emily McLaury house, Westport

Post: Wendy Crowther

**Raymond Library Reference Room Project, East Hartford – Commendation**

The Raymond Library, which forms a key element of East Hartford's Garvan-Carroll National Register district, was constructed in 1889 and underwent significant alterations in 1968, which masked the original character of this Romanesque Revival style building. This project not only

restored the Reference Room to its former, pre-1968 architectural glory, exposing, repairing, and refinishing the bead board ceiling and other significant architectural features, but it also significantly increased the available space and functionality of the room as a whole. In particular, it provided public seating, added substantial shelving space, and increased the number of computer workstations available to the public by 20, while also providing an elegant and quiet area for study and research. The result is a beautiful and welcoming public space which befits an historic library of this caliber and will enable it to better serve its 21st century patrons.

**Community Service**

**Emily McLaury House Project, Westport – Award of Merit**

Under the leadership of First Selectman Gordon Joseloff, the Town of Westport and its Historic District Commission oversaw the restoration of the Emily McLaury house, a 1921 Colonial Revival home in the heart of Westport's historic district. Not only was the structure converted into affordable employee housing and not only was the entire process made as 'green' possible—reusing building materials, recycling appliances, avoiding excessive landscaping—but above all the public was successfully incorporated into the process and

*continued on page 9*

Raymond Library reference room, East Hartford—before and after restoration

Both photos courtesy of Capital Studio Architects, LLC



educated about the virtues of preservation and re-use. The Commission held five separate open houses during the restoration and also set up a website with continual updates on the progress of the house. In a town which leads the state in per capita teardowns, the Commission admirably demonstrated the way in which preservation can create affordable housing, maintain the historic integrity of a district, and

also draw on the “embodied energy” contained within all historic buildings. Most amazing, perhaps, the entire project was completed on time and under budget.

**Alfred Gonsalves,  
St. Anthony Chapel  
Reconstruction, Norwich  
– Commendation**

The St. Anthony Chapel, originally constructed in 1926, is listed on the State Register of Historic Places and constitutes an important symbol for the Cape Verdean community both here in Connecticut and beyond. The tiny chapel was razed with little forewarning in 2004, but with thoughtful planning, careful supervision of the demolition, and a grant from the Connecticut Trust, plans and specifications of the original building were drawn up and important architectural features were salvaged. The commitment that Alfred Gonsalves, who personally oversaw the entire reconstruction, demonstrated throughout the process and his atten-

tion to detail serve as powerful reminders that the historic buildings we care for and inhabit are not simply constructed of stone, mortar, and timber, but are composed of the communities they serve, the people who care for them, and the histories they hold within their walls. Thanks to his dedication, the St. Anthony Chapel will continue to serve its community for generations to come. 🌿

—Hallock Svensk



Alfred Gonsalves (framed by the doorway), at the St. Anthony Chapel, Norwich



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*John F. Kennedy - October 26, 1963*

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**Middletown.**

Once again the neon sign burns in front of the glass block and stainless steel façade, since O'Rourke's Diner reopened for business on February 11, a year and a half after it was gutted by fire in August of 2006.

The diner's owner carried no insurance, but the community rallied to support restoration of the local landmark, built in 1937. The City of Middletown contributed \$25,000, and the Connecticut Trust provided an Historic Preservation Technical Assistance Grant (HPTAG) of \$1,500. Much of the cost was covered by fundraisers, individual gifts, and donated materials and labor. ❁

**Bridgeport.**

After what seems like years of relentless decline, several redevelopment projects are currently underway in downtown Bridgeport. The Arcade on Main Street and the Bijou Theater on Fairfield Avenue, both of which are on the National Register and both of which are currently being renovated, represent a different era in American architecture and a different relation to urban life than we see in much of the commercial and domestic developments that have spread across Connecticut's landscape over the past fifty years.

In contrast to the dizzying effects of contemporary mall architecture, the Arcade, built in 1889, with its glass skylight and Victorian wrought-iron detailing, dazzles its visitors without confusing them. The openness of the ceiling to the sky and of the front archway to the street signal an investment in permeability and openness to the city and its street-life, rather than a desire to shut it out.

At the Bijou Theater, built in 1909, an upstairs ballroom, at various times referred to as Colonial Hall and Quilty's Ballroom, provides a similar space for circulation. Like the Arcade, the ballroom has two floors and a balcony, as well as large windows that allow for plenty of natural light and views of the street. Combined with the ground-level movie theater, it promotes a vision of urban life in which dance and theater and social interaction are not activities to be sequestered from each other and from the city in general, but which mutually reinforce one another.



O'Rourke's Diner, Middletown

C. W. Green

The similarities between these two buildings constructed 20 years apart are not coincidental. In both, it is ultimately the city which facilitates the social interactions and exchanges which take place within their walls. They demonstrate a belief that cities, despite their density, can and should be clean, pleasurable, and safe.

This image of an integrated, mixed-use, walk-able urban center has inspired the two developers, Urban Green Builders (UGB), which is overseeing the Arcade restoration, and the Kuchma Corporation, which is responsible for the Bijou. Both stress the need for combining residential and commercial space, combining historic restoration with new development, combining old buildings with new technologies, combining transportation strategies, and also bringing together people of different income levels and different races.

These projects represent a vastly different vision of Bridgeport's future and how that future will be achieved from the proposed Steel Point redevelopment, in which an entire neighborhood was cleared to make way for new construction—construction that has yet to take place. Rather than treating the city as a blank canvas, UGB and Kuchma are trying to transform the downtown building by building, block by block, working almost entirely within the existing historic, architectural and social

fabric of the city. Both seem to have a genuine respect and appreciation for the historic resources in the downtown area that lie at their disposal, many of which are crying out for restoration.

For UGB, whose 'greenness' is derived from their re-use of old buildings, their

Bijou Theater, Fairfield Avenue, Bridgeport



Hallock Swenski

use of geo-thermal heating and cooling systems (which after a shaky winter, finally appear to be up and running), and their commitment to walk-able urban environments that have access to public transportation, the renovation of the Arcade into offices, apartments, studios, shops, and even a specialty grocery, constitutes phase II of its five-part redevelopment plan along Main Street. Their Bridgeport projects to date, which include the CityTrust complex and 144 Golden Hill Street, have used both New Market Tax Credits (NMTCs; designed to encourage mixed-use development projects in qualified low-income communities), and Federal Rehabilitation Investment Tax Credits without which the projects would not have been possible, according to Lisa Slocum, a consultant for UGB.

Phil Kuchma, who has converted the upstairs ballroom of the Bijou into office space for Antinozzi Architects and is currently finalizing the deal on the downstairs movie theater, which he hopes will be made into a venue for independent films, was also involved in the conversion of Read's Department Store into Artspace and Sterling Market Lofts (see CPN May/June

2005), a project which, despite certain failings, he nonetheless credits with ushering in the new era of downtown redevelopment. Although the Bijou will not in the end use historic tax credits, his other restoration projects on Bijou Square will, and all have been the beneficiary of NMTCs.

While the ultimate impact of these two projects is still uncertain, it is heartening to know that these two developers are invested not only in the long-term success of their respective projects, but also in the successful transformation of the downtown as a whole into a model of vibrant urban living, something which a generation of Fairfield County residents have generally sought beyond Connecticut's borders. Hopefully, their approach will mean a more integrated and less segregated future. ❖

—Hallock Svensk

### Hartford.

The Hartford Financial Services Group announced in April that it will not demolish all of the former Connecticut Mutual Life Insurance headquarters, as announced last December (see CPN, March/April 2008). The Hartford plans to buy the

16-acre property on Garden Street in the summer, initially for parking but with the hope of eventual mixed-use development. After encountering opposition from neighborhood and preservation groups, the company decided to retain the oldest portion of the building, a Georgian Revival structure constructed in 1926. Neighbors would have liked to see more of the building saved, but Laura Knott-Twine, executive director of the Hartford Preservation Alliance said, "While we are disappointed that our dialogue has not resulted in a commitment to preserving the whole building, we are pleased that the company will make a commitment to preserving the front portion. We are also pleased that The Hartford is committed to continuing dialogue with HPA and others on matters of preservation and development."

HPA led the successful effort to preserve the building, bringing together city officials, Hartford residents, and the Asylum Hill Neighborhood Revitalization Zone, with assistance from the Connecticut Circuit Rider program. The building has been vacant since MassMutual Insurance abandoned it to consolidate operations in Enfield. A real estate partnership bought the property in 2006 but has been unable to redevelop it. ❖

### New London.

After being approved by a vote of property owners, a new local historic district went down to defeat at the hands of the city council.

The proposed district was located in the Pequot Colony neighborhood, which is already listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The neighborhood was originally developed as a summer resort with cottages clustered around a large hotel. In the 20th century the hotel burned, the cottages became year-round residences, and new houses were added to the community. As a result, the district contains an eclectic mix of houses ranging from small gingerbread cottages to postwar split-levels.

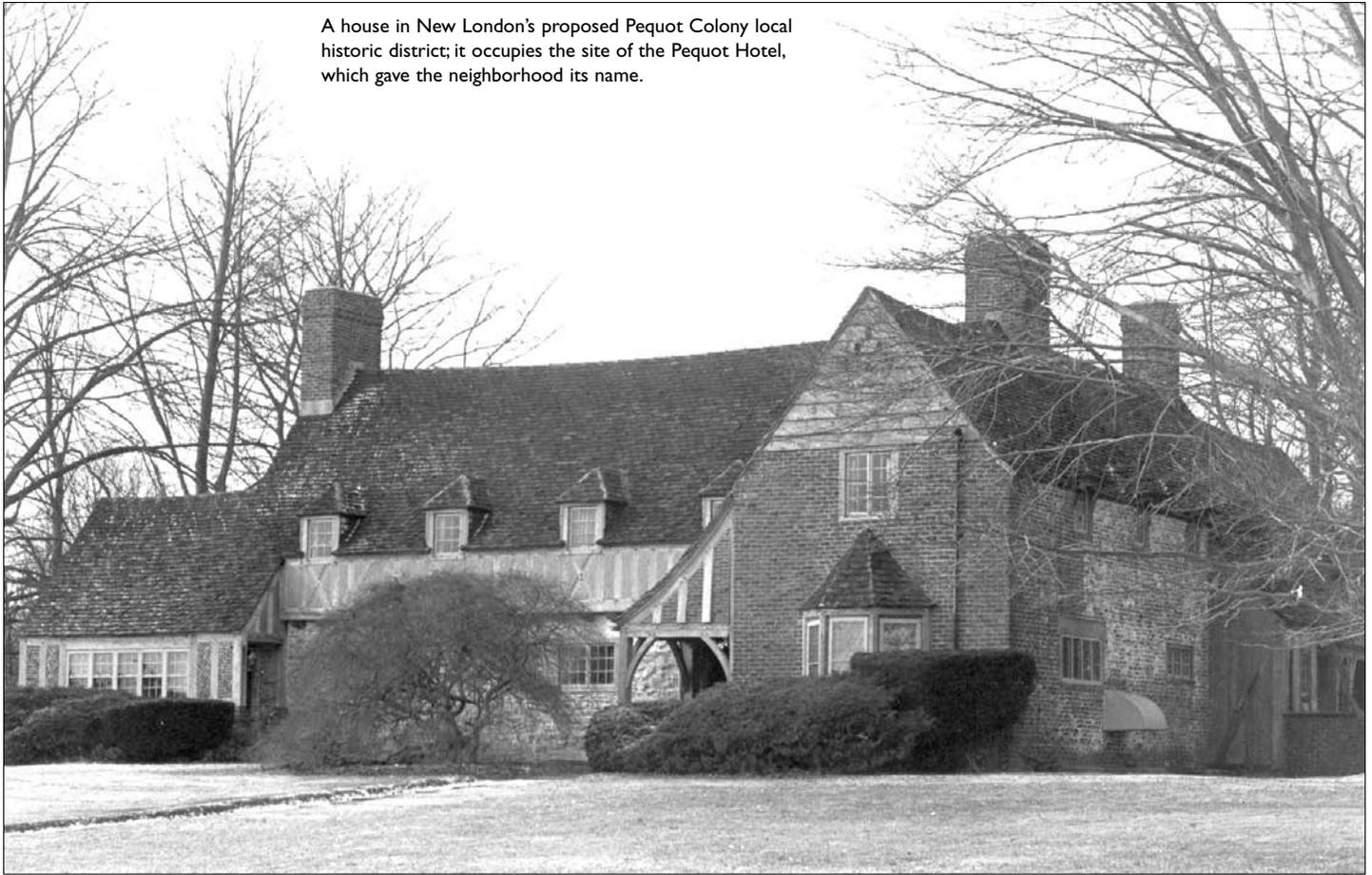
Designation as a local historic district would add architectural controls to the largely honorary National Register status. Any new construction or alterations visible

*continued on page 12*

The Arcade, Main Street, Bridgeport



A house in New London's proposed Pequot Colony local historic district; it occupies the site of the Pequot Hotel, which gave the neighborhood its name.



### **New London, cont'd from page 11**

from a public right-of-way would have to be approved by a local commission.

State law requires that local historic districts be approved by a two-thirds vote of affected property owners before adoption by the municipal legislative body. The Pequot Colony district is only the second in Connecticut history to be rejected after it was approved by the property owners. (The other was in Watertown, where citizens subsequently elected a new council that passed the district.)

Some residents objected to the district on the grounds that its regulations would impinge on their rights as property owners. As much as possible the study committee tried to exclude them from the district. It is not uncommon for study committees to draw district boundaries to exclude owners who don't want to be in a local historic district. In New London that attempt led to accusations of gerrymandering, when three prominent properties were included even though their owners objected. Sandra Kersten Chalke, the executive director of New London Landmarks, who consulted

with the study committee, said, "We would have been laughed out of town if we tried to create a local historic district and left those three homes out." ❁

### **Norwalk.**

The Connecticut Department of Transportation (DOT) unveiled two alternative plans for the intersection of the Merritt Parkway and U.S. Route 7 at a meeting held in March. The plans were created in response to a lawsuit in which the Merritt Parkway Conservancy successfully argued that the Federal Highway Administration did not document that it had considered all alternatives to DOT's plans for the intersection (see CPN March/April 2006).

After the decision, Governor Rell asked DOT to work with the Conservancy to come up with the new designs. Both alternatives attempt to resolve issues raised by the Conservancy in its lawsuit, particularly the plan to build two parallel ramps that would tower some 30 feet above the

Merritt, effectively walling the roadway off from the landscape.

The first option, called "12A," is a modified version of the original DOT design, on which construction had been started before the lawsuit began in 2005. In the modified version, the long on- and off-ramps are lowered to approximately the same level as the roadway, an improvement, but it still creates a wide expanse of pavement not in keeping with the Parkway's road-in-a-landscape character.

The second design, endorsed by the Conservancy and preferred by DOT, is a modified version of a design that the Conservancy submitted at DOT's invitation. That design, created by a leading national engineering firm, Vollmer Associates, eliminates the long parallel ramps entirely by constructing an irregular cloverleaf intersection. DOT generally tries to avoid cloverleaves, since they require cars entering and leaving the road to cross in a pattern called "weaving," but officials noted that numerous cloverleaves in the state operate without serious problems. To mini-



C. Wiggins

Restoration work on the David Field house, Madison

mize weaving, the design puts the ramps as far apart as possible.

Since the modified cloverleaf design is smaller than 12A, it will cost less and take less time to construct. According to DOT, the cloverleaf intrudes on a somewhat larger area of wetlands (1.2 acres, versus 0.6 acres), but Conservancy vice-chair Keith Simpson, a landscape architect, said he believes that that calculation may not be correct.

During the negotiations, the Conservancy acquiesced to DOT's insistence that the original bridges carrying the Merritt over Main Avenue would have to be replaced to accommodate increased traffic levels. DOT says that the historic bridges' general appearance and stone facing will be replicated.

At a public information session held at Norwalk City Hall on March 18, comments from elected officials, interested organizations and the general public was predominantly in favor of the cloverleaf plan. State Senator William Nickerson (R-Greenwich) praised both DOT and the

Conservancy for working with each other. "This plan happened because DOT listened to the advocates and because the advocates were willing to compromise," he said.

Since that meeting, however, residents of the nearby Silvermine area, who feel that they were not consulted on the project, have objected to the cloverleaf design, citing concerns about wetlands, safety, and the road's impact on their neighborhood. DOT officials plan to hold another meeting in the neighborhood in May.

If the Department feels that there is public support for adopting the cloverleaf design, it will have to produce a new environmental study, which will add close to a year to the project, meaning that construction, estimated to take two years, would probably begin in 2012. ❁

*For more information, including a view of the proposed redesign, visit [www.merrittparkway.org](http://www.merrittparkway.org)*

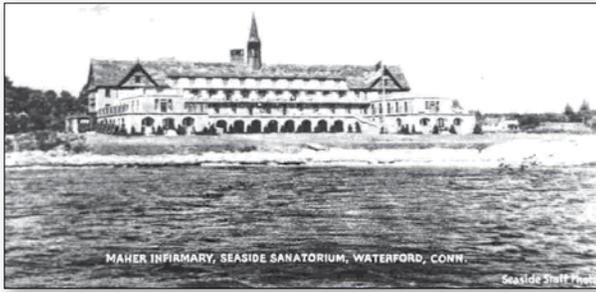
## Madison.

Two Colonial houses have been rescued from neglect and decay. The Shelley house, individually listed on the National Register for its early-18th century architecture, sat vacant and deteriorating for several years. The house's location on the busy Boston Post Road led to fears that it could become another victim of commercial development, prompting the Trust to include the house in its 2006 list of the Most Important Threatened Historic Places.

However, the house has recently been bought by John Herzog, a member of the Trust's Advisory Council who is planning to restore it for resale. Though neglected and in need of some structural repairs, a fair amount of original, or old, interior detail remains. Peter Gulick, of Gulick & Spradlin contractors, reports that they have uncovered wonderful paneling in an upstairs room, hidden for years under plaster and three layers of wallpaper.

Gulick says the Shelley house could be used as a residence or, if the owner lives on

*continued on page 15*

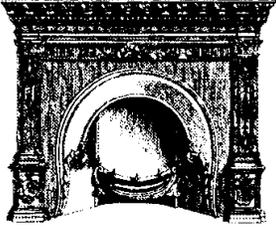


**The Seaside, Waterford (1994).**

The Day of New London reported that a fire extensively damaged a maintenance building at the Seaside on April 8. According to Stephen Percy of Waterford, it is possible that the structure still contained file cabinets holding original architectural drawings for buildings on the property designed by the renowned architect Cass Gilbert. Percy is a commercial real estate agent and a friend of Mark Steiner, the preferred developer for the property until Governor Rell decided not to sell it (see CPN, March/April 2008).

“How much better it would be—given the straitened financial circumstances of the state of Connecticut—if our governor had let the process...go forward to the final disposition of the property to the selected developer,” Percy wrote in a letter to The Day’s editor. “Under those circumstances, perhaps the fire would not have occurred because there would have been proper security on the property, those valuable documents would not have been lost, the waterfront would have been turned over to the Department of Environmental Protection and Seaside would be in the process of being turned into a tax-paying property for the town of Waterford.”

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cloth on their loom. Scissor fragments, needles and straight pins indicate they made and repaired their own clothing. The discovery of a small child's thimble at the site shows how these activities began with girls at an early age.

Like others of the middling sort in 18th-century Connecticut, Lydia Goodsell and her family combined farming and craft production, but they were not living at a mere subsistence level. Indeed, the excavations found that they drank tea with sets of imported bowls, saucers and tea pots, ate from matching ceramic plates, used table knives and forks, and drank from fluted and etched tumblers and stemware. Many of the fine ceramics discovered postdate Samuel's probate inventory in 1752, so we know they were purchased by Lydia herself.

The archaeology also showed that the Goodsells were practical, frugal and resourceful. Lydia continued to use older-style vessels, such a dot-decorated yellow slipware posset pot. Its two handles allowed it to be passed around the table for all to drink from. Lydia repaired her broken dishes by drilling pairs of holes along a break and lashing the sides together; simple scraping tools were improvised from pieces of broken glass; strike-a-lights for fire-making were obtained by breaking up European flint cobbles, probably collected from coastal ballast dumps; and she reworked scraps of lead, iron and brass into various objects such as fishing weights.

In *The American Frugal Housewife* (1844), Lydia Child emphasized this important and reoccurring theme among New Englanders: "The true economy of housekeeping is simply the art of gathering up all the fragments, so that nothing be lost. I mean fragments of time, as well as materials. Nothing should be thrown away so long as it is possible to make any use of it, however trifling that use may be; and whatever be the size of a family, every member should be employed either in earning or saving money." Indeed, Lydia Goodsell seems to have personified the "steady habits" and "make-do" character which defined Connecticut Yankee culture. ❀

*Ross Harper is a senior archaeologist with the Public Archaeology Survey Team, headquartered in Storrs.*

### Window Sash Tracks

*I have heard of a sash repair kit, basically you remove the molding and remove the window sash and replace the sash channels with those of the kit. The springs are behind the channels to keep the window open and there is some give to the channels so the window will raise and lower. I can't seem to locate the supplier for these kits.*

—Archer Yates, Arden, North Carolina.

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Trimming away more than 25% of the width of the side stiles could weaken their joints. Trimming might not be appropriate if you are trying to preserve the historic value and character of your windows.

*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*

the property, for a small business such as an architect's or lawyer's office. Restoration work is still being planned and could be shaped to suit a buyer's needs.

Before buying the Shelley house, Herzog had already acquired and begun restoring another endangered Colonial dwelling in Madison: the David Field house of the 1720s, which had been allowed to fall into serious disrepair (it was offered for sale in the Trust's *Historic Properties Exchange* in 2004). Clapboards, windows, some structural elements, and all the plaster walls had to be replaced, and part of the interior paneling and sheathing had disappeared. But the house is still a presence in the landscape and it, too, is being restored for resale.

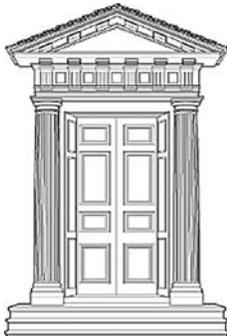
The Madison Historical Society is sponsoring before-and-after open houses at each site. As Gulick says, "We want to make people aware of the possibilities for preserving and reusing old houses." ❀

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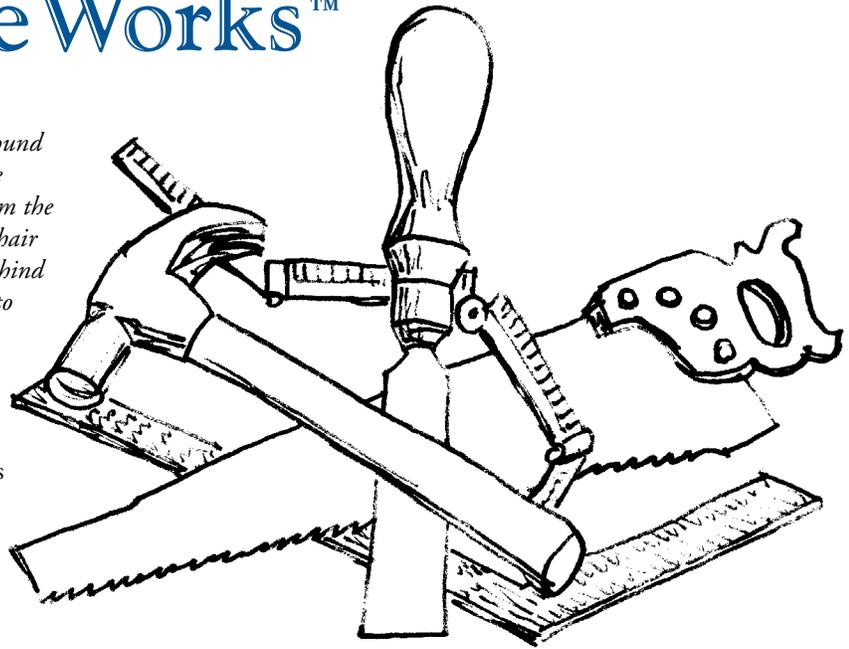
*Our house is a small one-bedroom federal brick house built around 1774. All of the walls are brick and plaster. In many places the plaster has separated from the brick, creating bubbles away from the wall. The plaster is between 1/2" and 3/4" thick, with a horsehair rough plaster and then a skim coat. In some places the brick behind the wall has deteriorated into dust. What is the best approach to these walls?*

Before you do any repairs to the plaster you need to determine what is causing the deterioration. Causes will be related to movement and moisture. There may be structural movement within the wall. Look for patterns of cracks on the exterior of the wall that are near the interior plaster deterioration. Water may be penetrating the wall through these cracks or at other locations such as the roof and gutters above or down near the foundation and cellar. As moisture migrates toward the interior surface of the wall it can deteriorate the mortar and the bricks, reducing them to powder. Even if the bricks and mortar are in good condition the moisture can loosen the bond of the plaster to the wall. If water is penetrating it can dissolve the lime or gypsum that holds the plaster together resulting in loose and crumbling plaster.

Correct any moisture and movement problems and repair the brick masonry before proceeding with plaster repairs. This might involve minor gutter and downspout repairs to major foundation work to stabilize movement in the wall and brick and mortar repairs to the wall itself.

Reattachment of the plaster is possible but usually justified only when the plaster has some particular importance such as an unusual texture that cannot be easily reproduced or decorative paintings that must be preserved.

If you have more ordinary plaster the deteriorated areas can be removed and filled back in again with hand-troweled plaster with the same materials and methods originally used. The same two-coat plaster system should be used. If you cannot find a plasterer who knows how to do this, or just want to try it yourself start with the book *Plastering Skills*, by F. Van Den Branden and Thomas L. Hartsell.



## Replacement Window Glass

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—Jim Black, Hatfield, PA

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*continued on page 15*