



Jean McKee

Tim Slocum

Brooks homestead barn,
Cheshire

Historic Snowfalls Threaten Buildings

Scores of buildings across Connecticut collapsed following record-breaking snow and ice storms in January and February. Many were large-span modern commercial buildings like warehouses, big-box stores or even schools, but a large number were historic.

One of the most dramatic losses was St. Aloysius Hall, on Main Street in Middletown. Built in 1894 and remodeled in 1916, the building was part of the Main Street National Register district. Its roof collapsed on February 3, bringing down lower portions of the structure as well. The Hall was originally built for the St. Aloysius Society, described as a Catholic alternative to the YMCA; at the time of

the collapse it housed offices and stores.

Also lost was the former Dayville Congregational Church, in the Dayville National Register district in Killingly. The Greek Revival church, constructed in 1849, was being used as a real estate office. Killingly Assistant Fire Chief Edward Briquier told the Norwich Bulletin, "It appears the snow on one side of the roof may have melted. That could have caused the remaining snow to shift its position and trigger the collapse."

In Cheshire, the rear portion of the former George Keeler stove shop fell in. The long-vacant shop, one of the few commercial buildings in the Cheshire National Register district, had been list-

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From the Executive Director

It has been a busy winter at the Connecticut Trust, with new staff members and exciting new projects. In February, we welcomed Kristen Young as Project Assistant for the Historic Barns of Connecticut project, funded by a grant from the Commission on Culture & Tourism with funds from the Community Investment Act. Kristen worked with us in July and August and then returned to Eastern Michigan University where she has received her Master's in Historic Preservation. A resident of Guilford, Kristen is a graduate of Salve Regina University, in Rhode Island, with a Bachelor's degree in Cultural and Historic Preservation. She will be responsible for data entry, administering the barns grants, and assisting in barns outreach programs.

We have recently received grants from the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Northeast Office and The 1772 Foundation for two important projects.

The National Trust grant will help fund a consultant to coordinate branding and create outreach materials for the Community Investment Act (CIA) projects. CIA revenues come from real estate recording fees and mainly support grant programs at the Department of Agriculture (including support to dairy farmers); open space protection grants from the Department of Environmental Protection; grants for affordable housing projects from the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority; and historic preservation grants from the Commission on Culture & Tourism, the Connecticut Trust, and the Connecticut Main Street Center. David Rosenthal, of Guilford, has designed a distinctive logo to use on all CIA materials. Additionally, he and two interns from

Yale Law School will produce an exhibition of success stories that have resulted from CIA investment, to be mounted at the Legislative Office Building during April.

As of the end of December, 2010, more than \$56 million of CIA funds have been invested in 626 grants to 148 towns and cities. This investment has created more than 2,000 jobs in the historic preservation and affordable housing sectors alone (see insert). While we appreciate the difficulties that the governor and General Assembly face in drawing up a budget for the state, we think it is important to keep in mind the CIA's potential for generating economic activity and creating jobs.

The 1772 Foundation has awarded the Trust a grant to study the feasibility of establishing a revolving fund through our office. Funds would be invested in historic buildings, especially those that are underutilized or in danger of demolition—either for outright acquisition of a building or to take an option on it, stabilize or rehabilitate it, and market it to a new owner/new use. Once the property is sold, ideally for more than the initial investment, the gains can

be re-invested in a new project. Variations of this model exist at local and statewide preservation organizations across the country. The Trust will evaluate the need for such a tool in Connecticut and connect it with our already existing planning grants, Historic Preservation Technical Assistance Grants and Vibrant Community grants, as well as our gap funding source for affordable housing rehabilitation, the Historic Buildings Financing Fund.

The winter also brought a less pleasant task. Like so many older houses, the Connecticut Trust's office building, the Whitney Armory boarding house, suffered from this year's extreme weather. Ice damming caused water damage in the walls on the north side of the boarding house. To forestall further damage, we bought 50 towels from Ocean State Job Lot and stuffed them in the eaves to soak up the water. It seemed to work. No more drips! Now, we need to address the source of the problem: lack of insulation in the attic and sagging gutters at the eaves.

—Helen Higgins

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

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Connecticut Commission
on Culture & Tourism

Upcoming Meetings of the Connecticut Historic Preservation Council

April 6, 2011, at 9:30 a.m.

May 4, 2011, at 9:30 a.m.

All meetings take place at the
Commission on Culture and Tourism
Main Conference Room
1 Constitution Plaza

For more information call (860) 256-2800

Matching Grants for Historic Preservation

The 1772 Foundation, a leading national charitable foundation, has launched a new program to support exterior repair and restoration work at historic sites in Connecticut. Museums, historical societies and historic houses are eligible to apply for matching grants of up to \$15,000 for preservation and repair of their buildings. Eligible projects include exterior painting, sill and foundation repairs, window repairs, and roof replacement. Fire protection systems and security systems are also eligible.

“With this program, the 1772 Foundation honors the interests and commitment of its founder, Stewart B. Kean,” says the 1772 Foundation’s Executive Director Mary A. Anthony. “We hope that the matching grants will help museums

and historical societies address the effects of deferred maintenance on historic buildings throughout the state.”

The Connecticut Trust worked closely with the 1772 Foundation in developing the grant program to meet the specific needs of community-based museums and historical societies. According to Helen Higgins, Executive Director of the Connecticut Trust, “Museums and historical societies are responsible for some of the most important buildings in the state. With their reliance on volunteers and limited professional staff, the nonprofit organizations rarely have the resources to adequately maintain and improve their buildings.”

The grants are offered to nonprofit 501(c)(3) organizations that operate muse-

ums or historic sites in Connecticut. The 1772 Foundation will accept letters of inquiry until April 1 through its website (www.1772Foundation.org). For more information, contact the Connecticut Trust’s Circuit Riders, Brad Schide (860-463-0193) or Gregory Farmer (203-464-7380). ❁

Hartford Offers Loans for Preservation

Hartford homeowners can receive assistance through the City of Hartford’s PORCHES Program, which provides financing to preserve the city’s housing stock and revitalize neighborhoods. Specifically, the program assists homeowners who wish to improve the facades of their one- to six-family residential structures. No-interest loans are available for repairs and improvements including fencing, walks and driveways, windows, landscaping, front doors, hand railings, front stairs, and, of course, front porches. Such repairs will improve the

physical appearance of homes, streets and neighborhoods. These improvements help retain and enhance property values to the benefit of homeowners and their neighbors.

In addition, the Hartford Preservation Alliance offers homeowners assistance in selecting appropriate design and preservation choices. ❁

For more information, contact Julianne Lugo at the City of Hartford, (860) 757-9029; lugo001@hartford.gov, or the Hartford Preservation Alliance, (860) 570-0331; www.hartfordpreservation.org.



Alternating Currents: National Preservation Conference

This year, Connecticut preservationists will have an opportunity to attend the National Trust for Historic Preservation’s annual National Preservation Conference right here in the Northeast. The 2011 conference, titled “Alternating Currents,” will take place in Buffalo, New York, from October 19 to 22.

More than 2,000 attendees will participate in a field sessions, education workshops, and tours that showcase outstanding local examples of architecture, historic preservation and community revitalization.

In addition, the conference will highlight the breadth of Buffalo’s cultural resources—which range from a network of city parks designed by Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux to a sprawling collection of grain elevators (invented in Buffalo in 1842) to buildings designed by H. H. Richardson, Louis Sullivan, Frank Lloyd Wright, and Eliel and Eero Saarinen—as well as the significant preservation challenges that the city faces. ❁

For more information, visit: <http://www.preservationnation.org/resources/training/npcl>.

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Seven Hearths, Kent There's Always Something New to Learn

When dealing with historic buildings, it's always a good idea to pause and look at them—there's always more to be discovered. The Kent Historical Society (KHS) knew a great deal about the history of Seven Hearths, its museum house, but a new Historic Structure Report has brought to light new information about the house and its occupants.

The house, located in the Flanders National Register district, was built in 1751 for John Beebe, Jr. Beebe was involved in a number of commercial enterprises; according to KHS director Marge Smith, the house was “not only [Beebe’s] home, but also a general store, butcher shop and a fur trading post....the equivalent of today’s Town Hall, Community House, IGA, True Value and perhaps even the post office.”

In the 19th century the building may have served as an academy before being divided to house two tenant farmer families. In 1919 a prominent artist, George Laurence Nelson (1887-1978), bought the house and restored it. Nelson left the house to the Kent Historical Society after his death, and it has been a museum ever since.

Over the years, the KHS completed several small restoration and repair projects, but felt the need for a more coordi-

Seven Hearths, the museum house of the Kent Historical Society

Kent Historical Society



nated approach. In order to do this, the society commissioned an Historic Structure report, funded in part by an Historic Preservation Technical Assistance Grant from the Connecticut Trust. The goals of the report, being prepared by Hudson Valley Preservation, of Sherman, are to fill in details about the years between Beebe and Nelson and to determine repair and restoration needs.

The most dramatic find is evidence confirming that the house had been a fur-trading post. Opening up a later ceiling in a second-floor room, investigators found nails driven into beams, with chalked labels. One says “mink,” while others, less legible, appear to be other kinds of pelts



Kent Historical Society

The word “mink,” chalked on a beam, confirmed that Seven Hearths had been a fur trading post.

or names of trappers. While the importance of the fur trade in Canada and the Midwest is well known, in New England it is less familiar. Only one other fur-trading post is thought to survive in the region.

Researching the tenant farmer period, the society located several descendants of occupants and is taping interviews with them. One family stayed on during the

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John F. Kennedy - October 26, 1963

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Mason Lord, of Hudson Valley Preservation, investigates Seven Hearths, while Frank Galterio films.

early years of Nelson's ownership, which suggests that the house remained in its two-apartment form for some time.

In addition, excavations overseen by archaeologist Greg Walwer discovered that a sunken garden on the property marks the foundations of a former barn—perhaps a slaughterhouse related to Beebe's butcher shop. State Archaeologist Nicholas Bellantoni began another dig, of the 18th-century outhouse pit, which he will complete in the spring.

The biggest remaining question is whether the house was indeed the site of the Flanders Academy, whose best known student, Birdsey Grant Northrop (1817-1898), went on to become a prominent educator and brought the observance of Arbor Day to Connecticut. The search for documentary evidence continues.

Although the HSR is not quite complete, the most important facets of the house's history seem to remain the two on which interpretation already focuses: the Colonial period—to which the fur trade can now be added—and George Laurence Nelson, who was internationally known during his lifetime but has largely been forgotten. For some time, the society has been promoting his work. The new information will enrich the telling of these stories.

"There are so many colonial house museums out there, and we're rather out of the way, so these two things will help us to set ourselves apart from the others," says Marge Smith.

In addition to the historical information, the report will include a conditions analysis. According to a draft, the most urgent need is for a new roof. The existing roof has moss growing on it, a sign of excess moisture and impending decay. On the other hand, three connected outbuildings need

new foundations and repairs to rotted framing, and the 18th-century privy requires extensive restoration of rotted sills, posts, and floor. Finally, the draft concludes that the only way effectively to reduce energy use is to remove the clapboards and add insulation; the recommendation is to wait until the clapboards need replacing.

Once the HSR is completed, in March, the next stage will be to outline ways of implementing its recommendations—and, of course, raising money to do so. But the report is generating enthusiasm that may help with that. As Marge Smith says, "We've very excited. We know now where we want to go; we just have to figure out how we're going to get there." ❁

For more on *Seven Hearths*, visit www.kenthistoricalsociety.org

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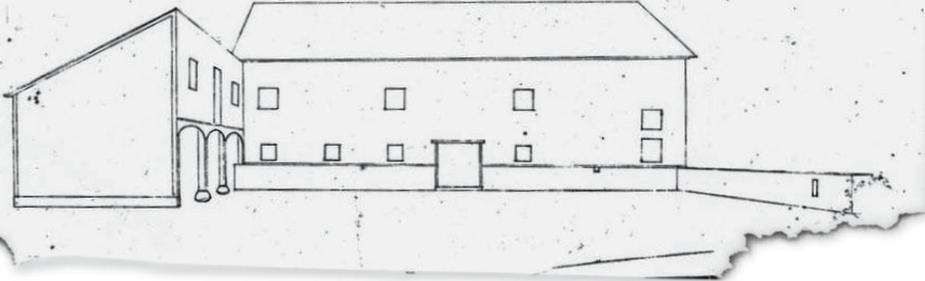
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EWA 3-11

This drawing, by Eli Whitney's nephew Eli Whitney Blake, shows the original appearance of the barn's ell, which will be reconstructed.

The Eli Whitney Barn, Hamden

Preservation is in the Details



The line between rehabilitation and maintenance isn't always easy to draw. For buildings that are relatively well preserved, ongoing work usually becomes more a matter of small, everyday chores than the sort of project that generates dramatic before-and-after photographs. On the other hand, seemingly small repairs can raise intriguing, or even difficult, questions of historical interpretation.

The Eli Whitney Museum, in Hamden, has discovered this in planning repairs to Whitney's barn. Built in 1816, the barn served Whitney's rifle factory, the Whitney Armory, and also was intended to be part of what would be Whitney's own estate. But he never built the estate, so the barn remained a part of the Armory and the successor industrial enterprises on the site. Eventually it came into the ownership of the South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority (which still owns the land on which it sits) and, finally the museum, which uses the barn for its programs and workshops, designed to inspire and nurture future innovators in the tradition of Eli Whitney.

Facing Whitney Avenue, once the main road to Hartford and still a principal commuter route into New Haven, and adorned with an elegant Federal-style façade, the barn is a popular landmark. Any changes will be closely watched, and much commented on.

Last year the museum received \$150,000 in state bond funds for work on the barn—a grant that the museum will supplement from its own resources. A list of needs was drawn up in a process partly funded by an Historic Preservation Technical Assistance Grant from the Connecticut Trust. The list includes, in priority order, repairing deteriorated structural members, reducing wetness problems in the cellar, replacing the roof, and spot-replacement of siding boards.

While this list appears to focus on straightforward maintenance issues, it has raised some historical questions as well. One involves the roof: originally the barn was covered with wood shingles. However, for many years the roof has been of slate, in eye-catching, multicolored stripes. The existing slates have reached the end of their useful life, so what should replace them?

An argument could be made for either, says museum Director Bill Brown. Wood shingles would replicate the barn's original appearance and highlight its association with Whitney, a nationally significant inventor and industrialist. On the other hand, slate would reflect the barn's ongoing history—the roof actually was slate longer than it was wood—and would last much longer. For now, the museum is requesting bids for both materials and, among other things, will take cost into account in making a decision.



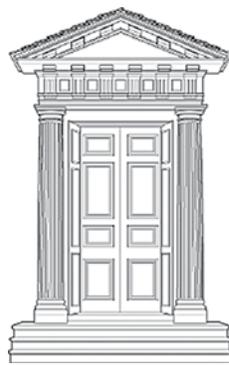
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The Eli Whitney barn, Hamden



C. Wiggen

The barn's ell collapsed under heavy snow load in February.

Another small dilemma comes in the form of deteriorated sills that seem to result from a defect in the barn's design. "How to address that?" asks Brown. "Rebuild as-is, with the expectation that it will have to be repaired again in the future? Work around the problem, using [historically inaccurate] pressure-treated wood to last longer? We haven't resolved this."

Although the barn's design may have caused one problem, in other cases it actually makes repairs easier. "The barn is so practical in its construction," Brown says. "Someone understood that there were parts that would have to be replaced." For instance, the decking just inside the doors is heavily worn, but is built so that it's easy to

take up and replace.

The rehabilitation plans took an unexpected turn on February 4, when the barn's ell collapsed under heavy snow and ice (see also page 1). Plans were already afoot for some restoration of the ell, which had been altered in about 1904 and restored in 1979. The 1979 work made some mistakes, which the museum hoped to correct, following drawings made by Whitney's nephew Eli

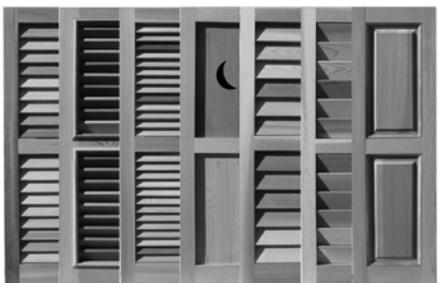
Whitney Blake. With the collapse, the ell will have to be completely rebuilt (except its rear wall, which is of stone).

These historical dilemmas may seem minor, but in addressing them the museum has reaffirmed its commitment to exploring how things work and encouraging inventiveness following Eli Whitney's example. 🌿

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New Haven.

Historic preservation and sustainability are compatible, say Nancy Greenberg and Corey Stone, two developers whose company, Verdigris Ventures, has recently completed a rehabilitation project to prove their point.

Last year, the partners bought the James L. Bassett house, a contributing resource in the Quinnipiac River National Register district, in a foreclosure sale. The Italianate house, built in 1876, had suffered severe neglect, along with cheesy plastic windows and a dicey porch.

Balancing preservation and energy efficiency isn't always easy. Tensions most often arise with treatments for windows and walls. The urge to replace historic windows can be strong, but at the price of historic character and embodied energy. However, the windows at the Bassett house were either poor-quality replacements or in very bad condition. The partners replaced them with aluminum-clad wood windows that echo the two-over-two design of the originals. One historic colored-glass window was restored and reinstalled.

In the walls, Stone and Greenberg wanted to add insulation but the building needed a vapor barrier to prevent condensation. They also wanted a solution that would minimize damage to the existing structure, block drafts, and be reversible. They

looked first at cutting solid foam boards to fit the cavities in the balloon-framed walls, but that labor-intensive approach proved prohibitively expensive. Instead, they used blown-in expanding foam, even though it cannot easily be removed. The building's poor condition actually helped: the insulation could be blown in only because the interior of the house had been gutted. "I'm not sure how we'd approach a more intact house," said Stone. "But I look forward to trying."

With high efficiency heating and air conditioning systems, as well as a tankless water heater, the partners guarantee that utility bills will average no more than \$100 per month for the first year.

Part of the funding for the project came through the Connecticut Historic Homes Rehabilitation Tax Credit, which meant that the plans had to be approved by the State Historic Preservation Office. This required preserving the exterior of the house, which was surprisingly intact despite years of neglect, as well as interior features such as the stair and pine floors. New elements, including a more open floor plan, trim, and cabinets, were designed to harmonize with the old. "We couldn't have done it without the historic tax credit," said Greenberg. The house is on the market for \$287,500. ❀

Verdigris Ventures



The James Bassett house, in New Haven, has been rehabbed for energy efficiency.

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Greenwich.

Preservationists are trying to convince town officials not to demolish the Central Fire Station, constructed in 1938 with funding from the Public Works Administration. The building originally housed Greenwich's fire and police departments and is a contributing resource in the Greenwich Municipal Center National Register district, which also includes the former town hall, the post office, and three schools that have been converted to other uses. The station's design reflects the classicism also seen, in various interpretations, in all the other buildings, but with an Art Moderne flavor that reflects the taste of the 1930s.

The police department recently moved into a new facility across the street from the Central Fire Station. The new building required several zoning variances, and in 2004 the town committed to preserving the older building as a condition for receiving the variances.

However, last summer the town announced that the fire station's unreinforced masonry walls do not meet modern earthquake requirements for public safety buildings. The first selectman, Peter Tesei, presented three options for solving this problem: insert steel reinforcement in the building and then renovate; buttress the

exterior walls, gut the building, and construct a new interior; or demolish the building and put up an entirely new structure, reusing the stone cladding and other original architectural elements. The third option is estimated to be the least expensive—\$20.8 million, versus \$28 million for rehabilitation—and that is what the town is proposing to do.

The Greenwich Preservation Trust opposes demolition. In an op-ed piece written for the Greenwich Time, Jo Conboy, the Trust's chair, suggested a fourth option: if the building is no longer suitable for its original purpose, it should be converted to other uses. "It is incumbent on public officials and the town administration to lead by example and preserve our historic resources through proper maintenance and if necessary adaptive reuse." She identified other sites in the vicinity where a new fire station could be located.

"It is particularly unacceptable when the town ignores its past agreement when it results in the destruction of an important historic resource," wrote Ms. Conboy. "The state statute that pertains to the demolition of designated historic structures requires that there is no reasonable option. The burden of proof is on the town to prove this point."

Demolition will be subject to the

Connecticut Environmental Protection Act, which allows lawsuits to prevent the unreasonable demolition of buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Suit could be brought by the Attorney General, upon the request of the Commission on Culture & Tourism's Historic Preservation Council, or by any citizen. 🌿

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The Connecticut Department of Transportation (Department) is seeking to engage two cultural resource consulting firms for historic and archaeological resource services on a task-order basis. The services to be performed by the selected firms shall include archaeological investigations and historic documentation studies for transportation projects in accordance with State and Federal regulations.

Please be advised that the selected firms will be required to have archaeological laboratory capabilities in-house.

The contracts will cover a three (3) year period with up to 12 assignments anticipated for each firm with an expected commencement date in September 2011 for the selected firms.

Consultant firms having a desire to provide such services may get the full solicitation that includes the required format for submittals from the Department's internet website: www.ct.gov/dot/consultant via the Consultant Solicitations link or by contacting the Consultant Selection Office at (860) 594-3017.

Deadline for submittals is April 15, 2011.

Connecticut Department of Transportation

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Agnew Fisher, National Register of Historic Places, 1987

Central Fire Station, Greenwich



Windsor.

The First Church in Windsor (Congregational) is moving toward having the William Russell house, an historic structure on church property, dismantled. But the church still could face roadblocks to its plan.

The house, constructed in 1755 for the church's then-minister, is an extraordinarily well-documented example of elegant homes of the "River Gods"—the interrelated elite who dominated the Valley's public affairs and economy in the 18th and early 19th centuries. Erected by Timothy Loomis, a local builder and furniture maker, the house is a contributing structure in the Palisado Avenue National Register district and is also located in Windsor's local historic district. It sits prominently across the street from the Palisado Green, site of the town's first settlement.

First Church acquired the house in 1953, and, according to annual congregational reports, used it as staff housing until January, 2007, when the need for repairs became acute. Last year, having decided that it had no further use for the house, the church began making plans to remove it.

Connecticut Circuit Rider Gregory Farmer met several times with the pastor and church committees, as well as the Windsor Historical Society and the historic district commission. He has urged the congregation to explore possibilities for the preserving house, including applying a HPTAG to study possible uses for the structure, leasing it for non-church uses, applying for a zoning variance to allow it to be sold on a nonconforming lot—or simply mothballing it to prevent further decay

G. Farmer



The William Russell house, in Windsor, which the First Church in Windsor wants to demolish or remove.

pending a decision on how best to use it. However, congregational representatives have continued to push for removal, citing the priority of the church's other mission goals and potential financial burden (in spite of having spent no money on it for years). They reportedly are nearing an agreement with a builder who specializes in dismantling and re-erecting historic buildings.

Despite the church's vote, the move must also be approved by the town's historic district commission. In addition, if the house is moved—particularly if it is moved outside the Palisado Avenue district—it could lose its National Register designation. 🌿



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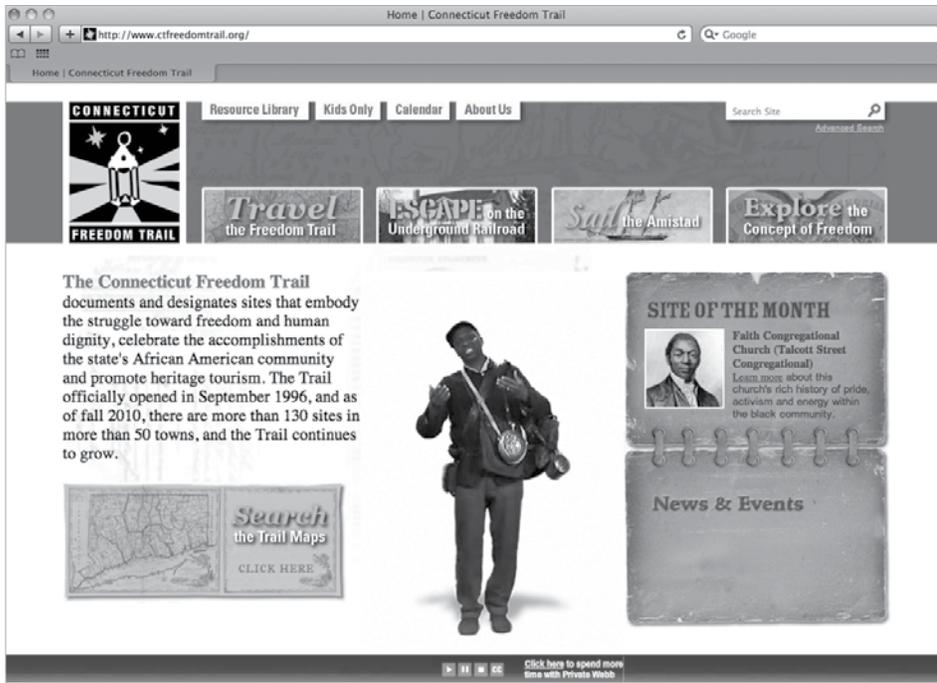
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A new website for the Connecticut Freedom Trail made its debut on February 17. Located at www.ctfreedomtrail.org, the website lists more than 130 sites that tell the story of struggle toward freedom and dignity of Connecticut’s African American citizens. More sites can be added as they are identified and documented.

At the heart of the website are four interactive maps—one for the Freedom Trail as a whole, and one for each of the site’s three themes: the Underground

Railroad, the *Amistad* story, and the Concept of Freedom. The maps have links to descriptions of sites listed and, for the Underground Railroad and *Amistad*, brief introductory essays. There are also historic images from museums around the country, directions for visiting sites, a “kids only” activities section, and resources for teachers and students.

The site was created by the Amistad Committee, the Connecticut Freedom Trail Committee, and the Connecticut Commission on Culture & Tourism. ♣

GREAT PRESERVATION OPPORTUNITIES—UPDATED

New Haven, Crown Street buildings (2008).

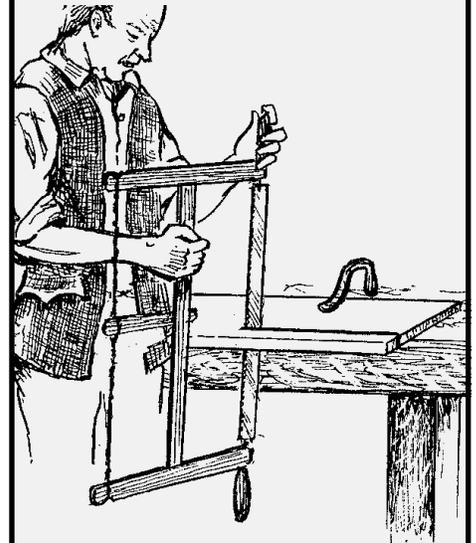
Redevelopment of three long-vacant buildings in the Ninth Square National Register district is scheduled to re-start, thanks to variances approved by the city board of zoning appeals on December 14. The board voted to allow more building coverage, smaller side and rear yards, more square footage, less open space, and a greater number of units than otherwise allowed.

Rehabilitation began in 2008, but the developer at the time, David Nyberg, began demolition without a permit and

was forced to stop, leaving the buildings in unstable condition. Now, Nyberg is out of the picture, and redevelopment is proceeding under PMC Property Management, a Philadelphia-based company that also owns the Strouse-Adler building, an historic factory that has been converted to apartments. Doug Hitchner, of PMC, told the board of zoning appeals that he expects the Crown Street buildings to be ready for occupancy in August of this year.

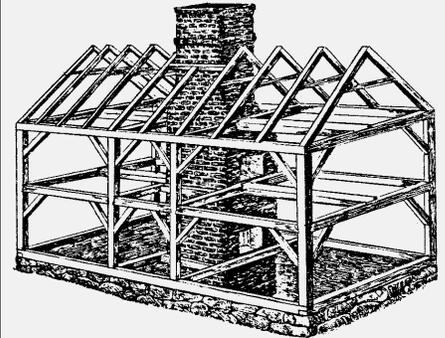
One of Connecticut’s most successful downtown revitalization areas, the Ninth Square has a lively mix of residences, offices, shops and restaurants. ♣

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Historic Snowfall, cont'd from page 1

ed in the Trust's Historic Properties Exchange in 2009. Other historic buildings lost were a former duckpin lane, built in the 1920s, in Waterbury, and a late-19th-century commercial block, in Stafford Springs.

Barns and outbuildings were especially hard hit. Among them were three barns whose owners were in the process of applying to the Connecticut Trust for stabilization grants. In Cheshire, one section of the Brooks homestead barn fell in. The owners were applying for assistance in making repairs recommended in a conditions assessment funded by an earlier barns grant. That study called for stabilizing that section of the barn "before heavy snowfall!"

In Hartford, the city building official ordered an historic carriage house on Gillette Street demolished after its slate roof caved in. According to the Hartford Preservation Alliance, the carriage house was built about 1865 to serve a house, since razed, on Farmington Avenue.

In Newtown, a late 18th-century barn on Currituck Road had been turned down for a Connecticut Trust Barns Grant in 2009. The owners were reapplying when the barn collapsed in January. Other barns lost included one in the Gales Ferry National Register district #1, in Ledyard, and the ell of the Eli Whitney barn, in Hamden (see page 6).

In many cases, collapses seemed to be caused by inadequate design. James K. Grant, a structural engineer who has extensive experience with old and historic buildings, observed, "Generally, the more conventionally designed buildings did better than ones that were pre-engineered, with less redundancy. They weren't able to take the overloads."

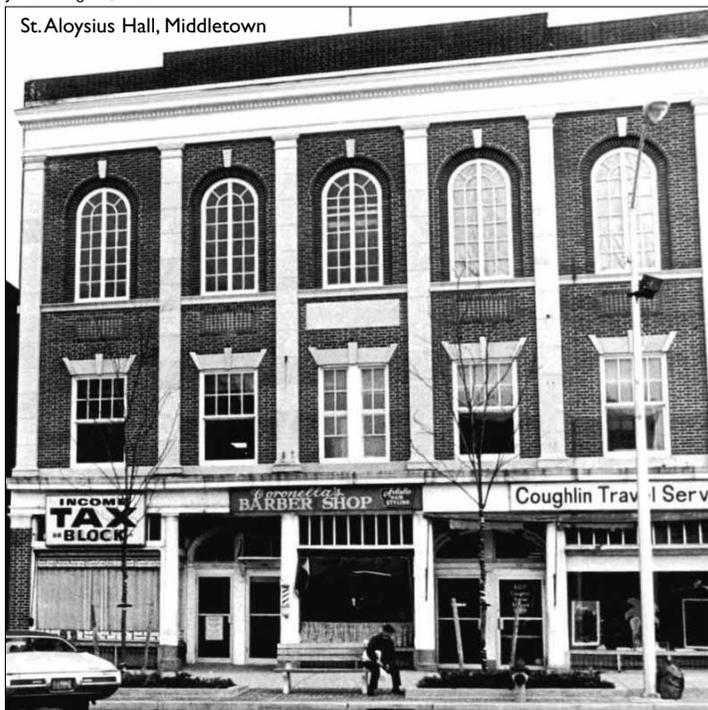
The other major cause was neglect. News reports repeatedly noted that collapsed buildings were vacant or partly vacant. "In many cases we'll probably never know what caused buildings to collapse," said Grant. "But even if nothing is visible, there probably were hidden defects."

Where buildings did not collapse, the snow and ice still caused problems. As melting began, ice dams were causing leaks, which can foster structural deterioration or mold, and reduce the effectiveness of insulation. Grant advises clients to clear some or all snow from vulnerable roofs. Roof rakes, an old-fashioned piece of equipment, were making a comeback. However, clearing roofs can be hazardous, and should often be left to insured professionals.

Once again, the key to preservation is maintenance. Preservationists need to encourage stewards of historic buildings to make themselves aware of structural problems and to address those problems before they cause further losses. Grant programs such as the Connecticut Trust's Historic Preservation Technical Assistance Grants (HPTAG) and its Barns Grants can help fund structural evaluation of historic buildings, and the Barns Grants can also be applied to stabilization efforts. Unfortunately, demand far outpaces available money, but the sooner problems are addressed, the less it costs. ❁

Jan Cunningham, 1982

St. Aloysius Hall, Middletown



C. Wigren



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CONNECTICUT *Snapshots*



Barkhamsted Restoration

The First Congregational Church of Barkhamsted regained an important element of its dignity in December, when the top stage of its steeple was restored. The original stage rotted and had to be removed in the 1920s, leaving the Greek Revival church looking incomplete. Now, the restored tower strengthens the building's function as a visual expression of the church's historic and institutional importance in the community.

Funding for the project included a grant from the Connecticut Commission on Culture & Tourism and a loan from the Fellowship of Congregational Christian Churches.

The steeple reconstruction is part of a restoration project that the church has been carrying out, one step at a time, for more than twenty years. The next steps, according to Leslie Cosgrove, chair of the restoration committee, are to paint the exterior and restore the wood floor of the portico, which was replaced with concrete in the 1970s.

Leslie Cosgrove

Greg Farmer



First Congregational Church of Barkhamsted, before (above) and after (right) its steeple was restored.

