Because architectural photographs are usually taken without people in them, it can be easy to forget that neighborhood revitalization is not just a matter of the right cornices or windows. As Manchester’s town planner, Mark Pellegrini, points out, successful revitalization projects consider carefully the neighborhood’s inhabitants and how they interact.

When we discuss planning for, and with, neighborhoods we need to look at three components: the neighborhood, neighboring, and neighbors. All three of these components are essential to understanding the neighborhood as a place and as an experience for the residents.

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The fall has brought some new faces to the Trust’s offices, as well as some old faces serving in new capacities.

In September Lynn Friedman was elected a new Trustee. Now a resident of Madison, Lynn became involved in preservation through her interest in the history of Norwalk, where she previously lived and was a volunteer with the Rowayton and Norwalk historical societies, as well as a founding board member of the Norwalk Preservation Trust—activities that led to professional work as an historic research consultant. Lynn has also run a consignment shop in Wilton’s historic Cannondale Village, had her own interior design business, taught interior design, and been an independent television producer. In addition to history and preservation, her volunteer activities include the Rowayton Gardeners and the Wilton Children’s Theater.

October also saw changes in the Trust’s staff. Pamela Gallagher arrived to be the Trust’s new Director of Development. Pam holds a degree in anthropology with additional coursework in history, but volunteer

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Hurricane Relief Efforts

In the wake of Hurricane Katrina, preservationists have rallied to help with the immense task of sorting out the wreckage and planning for rebuilding. Countless historic sites in a region known for its rich and diverse history were damaged or destroyed by hurricanes Katrina and Rita and the flooding associated with them.

Richard Moe, the President of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, said, “We all know that Katrina is one of the greatest human tragedies in the nation’s history—but it also could be the greatest cultural catastrophe America has ever experienced. Rebuilding is essential, but it must acknowledge the historic character of one of the nation’s most distinctive regions.”

The National Trust is part of the Heritage Emergency National Task Force, a coalition of 40 nonprofit professional and governmental organizations also includes Federal Emergency Management Agency, the American Institute of Architects, and the National Park Service. The task force has developed a disaster assistance package that includes:

- Disaster Relief Historic Homeownership Assistance Act—a proposal to provide a 30% tax credit for qualified rehabilitation expenditures to homeowners whose principle residence is a historic home in the disaster area.
- Historic Preservation Disaster Relief Grants—a proposal to create a two-year, $60 million grant program from the federal Historic Preservation Fund for repairing damaged historic properties in the disaster area.
- Waivers to the Existing Historic Preservation Tax Credit for Commercial Properties—a proposal to the Treasury Department and the Internal Revenue Service to provide certain waivers to the existing commercial historic rehabilitation tax credit to make it more effective in the disaster area.

Another important area of concern has been to urge the careful evaluation and, wherever possible, rehabilitation of historic properties and opposing wholesale demolition and abandonment of historic neighborhoods. There have been concerns about efforts to waive protections for historic properties, such as Section 106 review, in an effort to streamline clearance and rebuilding.

Finally, the National Trust has established a Hurricane Relief Fund to accept donations to support assessment teams, assist small businesses through the National Main Street Center, and disperse critical grant monies to organizations on the ground in affected communities.

Connecticut is not immune to devastating hurricanes and floods. The “September Gale” of 1815 destroyed numerous buildings, including Plainfield’s meeting house. The massive hurricane of 1938 caused widespread destruction, along the shoreline from New Haven to Providence and beyond, and as far inland as Thompson. And just this year the state is commemorating the 50th anniversary of the floods that devastated large areas of the state in 1955. Preparation is important, for both owners and managers of historic sites. The websites of both the National Trust and FEMA list resources for property owners.

For more information:

Connecticut Department of Emergency Management: www.ct.gov/demhs/site/
Heritage Emergency National Task Force: www.heritagepreservation.org/prpgrams/taskfer.htm
National Trust for Historic Preservation: www.nthp.org
Photographs, from Mississippi’s statewide preservation organization: www.mississippiheritage.com/HurricaneKatrina.html
National Council of State Historic Preservation Officers: www.ncshpo.org/newsevents/Katrina.htm

Among the countless historic sites along the Gulf Coast that were damaged or destroyed by Hurricane Katrina is Beauvoir, Jefferson Davis’ home in Biloxi, Mississippi, and a National Historic Landmark.
Connecticut Maritime Fellowship
by David Poirier
Connecticut Historic Preservation and Museum Division

The Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism’s State Historic Preservation Office and the Connecticut Office of State Archaeology at the University of Connecticut (Storrs) have jointly established a Connecticut Maritime Fellowship. The Maritime Fellowship will enhance the agencies’ on-going partnership and collaborative efforts regarding the identification, evaluation, and professional management of Connecticut’s diverse maritime-related heritage, including submerged Native American sites and historic shipwrecks.

The Fellowship will facilitate and coordinate additional outreach to professional marine archaeologists, divers, town officials, and the interested public. Equally important, the Maritime Fellowship will enable the development of a database of Connecticut’s underwater cultural resources; the updating and organizing of the Connecticut Archaeology Center’s extensive underwater archaeology library; and, will assist in the administration and implementation of maritime-focused research activities and public programs. The framework for developing a maritime stewardship program, which would encourage the interested public to monitor underwater archaeological sites for accidental and/or intentional disturbance and damage, is also under consideration.

Kristina Lammi was selected as the 2005 Connecticut Maritime Fellow. Kristina is a graduate student in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Connecticut entering her fourth year of study. Her research focus is the historical archaeology of New England and the Atlantic Maritime Provinces. Kristina works out of the Office of the Connecticut State Archaeologist. She can be contacted at kristina.lammi@uconn.edu with any suggestions or comments regarding the state’s underwater archaeology resources.

Kristina Lammi, the 2005 Maritime Fellow, and State Archaeologist Nick Bellantoni hold a portion of wooden hull recovered from an historic shipwreck in Long Island Sound.

Building Local Preservation: Grant Programs for Certified Local Governments
by Mary M. Donohue
Connecticut Historic Preservation and Museum Division

Strengthening municipal preservation programs is one of the most important aspects of the Certified Local Government (CLG) program. Under the National Historic Preservation Act, federal law requires the Connecticut State Historic Preservation Office of the Commission on Culture and Tourism to set aside ten percent of Connecticut’s annual historic preservation funding for awards to town governments. Local governments must be approved by the National Park Service to participate in the program (see box). About $60,000 is available on annual basis. For 2005, the CCT has announced the following CLG grants, for a total of $57,251.00.

- Guilford: feasibility study/landscape plans for Village Walkway/pre-development study, $8,000.00
Vernon: feasibility study for Kindergarten Building, Vernon Center, constructed 1920s, $16,251.00
Waterford: National Register guide booklet for Quaker Hill, $7,000
Woodbury: Old Town Hall architectural plans and engineering drawings, $26,000

The single most pressing need that Historic District Commissions in CLGs have is funding. In a new approach, communities will be eligible to apply for grants between $1,500 to $2,800 for projects that produce reports, public education materials, or historic preservation events. The grant awards do not have to be matched. The Enhancement grants are intended to:

- encourage new awareness of historic preservation at the local level
- expand the scope of current public education outreach
- strengthen the historic district commissions administrative or regulatory capacity
- produce written or website materials for homeowners and/or town officials
- generate fresh ideas for programming that brings historic preservation to new audiences
- allow historic district commissions to develop multi-year programs

It is anticipated that this will be an annual program.

For information on becoming a CLG, call Matt Blood at (860) 566-3005 ex327 or email: matt.blood@po.state.ct.us
For information on CLG grants, call Mary M. Donohue at (860) 566-3005 ex323 or email: mary.donohue@po.state.ct.us

Historic Restoration Fund Grants Announced

The Historic Preservation Council voted on October 12 to award a total of $683,750 in Historic Restoration Fund grants. The funding must still be approved by the State Bond Commission. The Historic Restoration Fund is administered by the state Historic Preservation and Museum Division. Municipalities and nonprofit organizations can qualify for grants to restore buildings listed in the State or National Register of Historic Places. Recipients must provide a one-to-one match.

Barkhamsted: $17,500 to the First Congregational Church of Barkhamsted to restore the second stage of the tower belfry.
Brookfield: $40,000 to the Brookfield Crafts Center for restoration and ADA modifications to the Brookfield Railroad Station (see CPN, July/August 2005).
Brookfield: $50,000 to the Town of Brookfield for restoration of the Gurski barn.
Colchester: $50,000 to the Town of Colchester for exterior restoration of the Old Firehouse.
Farmington: $60,000 to Hill-Stead Museum for restoration of historic landscape fixtures and accessibility improvements.
Hamden: $40,000 to the Hamden Historical Society for roof restoration at the Jonathan Dickerman house.
Hartford: $33,750 to the Wadsworth Atheneum for roof restoration of the Austin house.
Hartford: $12,500 to Cedar Hill Cemetery to stabilize and restore the Welles monument.

The First Congregational Church of Barkhamsted will rebuild the second stage of its belfry with a grant from the state Historic Preservation and Museum Division.
Bridgeport. Preservationists are urging the Board of Education to give them time and help to save the home of the city's first documented Puerto Rican homeowner from destruction.

The house, located at 282-284 Logan Street, was built in 1830-32 by Edwards Johnson. In 1844 he sold it to Jóse de Rivera, a sugar and wine merchant who was one of the first immigrants from Puerto Rico to Connecticut. The house is listed in National Register, primarily on account of its connection with de Rivera. He moved away in 1858, but many of the house's subsequent occupants were also Puerto Rican, including its last private owner, Luis Negron.

The City of Bridgeport took the house from Negron by eminent domain to make way for a new two-school complex, but City Historian Mary Witkowski and the Bridgeport Architectural Landmark League hope to move the house. With more than 300 vacant lots in Bridgeport's East End, they are hopeful that a suitable site can be found.

“This is an important part of Connecticut's history and it should be preserved. It's a part of Bridgeport's history people aren't familiar with,” said Witkowski. “Give me another house in Bridgeport that has such an ethnic heritage to it. I'd like to make it part of the schools, integrate it into the curriculum.”

Redding. Putnam Memorial Park reopened on October 5 with the completion of a year-long restoration project. The park, established in 1887, occupies the site where Revolutionary War troops under General Israel Putnam spent the winter of 1778-1779. Still visible on the ground are heaps of stone that mark the location of the soldiers' cabins.

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Norwich. With the installation of the first ornamental window hood, the Wauregan Hotel was suddenly transformed from vacant hulk to the star of downtown Norwich. “It’s amazing how a community can be lifted up by one building,” said Mayor Arthur Lathrop, a member of the Connecticut Trust’s board of Trustees.

According to Bruce Becker of Becker and Becker Associates, the hotel’s developer, the original window hoods were made of stamped metal. They quickly began to deteriorate, and eventually were removed. The replacements, whose design is based on old photographs, will be made of a tough polymer that should stand up better.

Becker is still trying to raise funds for some historic details, such as better quality interior trim and solid wood doors, rather than hollow-core steel ones. A $40,000 grant from the Norwich Bulletin will help pay for period lighting in the ballroom.

Norwalk. On October 6 the Connecticut Department of Transportation (ConnDOT) announced that it would cease work on the intersection of the Merritt Parkway and Route 7. The Merritt Parkway Conservancy and six co-plaintiffs, including the Connecticut Trust, have sued ConnDOT and the Federal Highway Administration to block the project. The department’s announcement came just before Judge Mark Kravitz was to rule on the plaintiffs’ request for an injunction to stop the work, after a hearing held on September 27.

The lawsuit concerns plans to rebuild the Parkway’s intersection with Main Avenue and to complete the intersection with Route 7 nearby. The plans include new on- and off-ramps—some of them raised above level of the Parkway—demolition and reconstruction of three historic bridges, and extensive alterations to the topography and landscaping of the area.

Everyone, ConnDOT and plaintiffs alike, agrees that the project will remove a substantial amount of original material and continued on page 11
Neighborhood

A neighborhood is a place with a distinct physical form and identifiable boundaries recognized by its residents and the larger community. They may be natural boundaries like a river’s edge, a shoreline or a ridgeline, or built boundaries like interstate highways, railroad tracks, or busy commercial streets. There may be common boundaries with other neighborhoods such as a park or a public institution like a hospital or university.

Within these boundaries there will be houses. There may be institutions like a church or a school. There may be shopping like a market or bakery or coffeehouse. Perhaps services like a post office or beauty shop or a bank or a laundromat. There are sometimes special places like a community garden or a vacant lot that is commandeered by neighborhood children as a play area. There may be landmarks such as a church steeple or a sculpture. And there may be unique features such as very steep streets or brick or cobble pavers or row houses or Victorian painted ladies.

Whether all or only a few of these things exist, there will always be a set of physical objects that create the image of the neighborhood. Not only do these structures and infrastructures create an image, but how the different uses are arranged affect how people experience the neighborhood. In that sense neighborhoods are personal. We draw our own boundaries based on our own experience.

In the community where I work, when our department begins neighborhood planning we start with the elementary school boundary as a neighborhood boundary, but one of the first things we do at the neighborhood meetings is ask the residents to draw their neighborhood boundary. It is fascinating for both planners and residents to see the multiple neighborhood boundaries that result from the ways different people use and experience the place. For some it may be the route they use to walk their pets or jog, the path to school or shopping or church. It may be the extent to which they know or recognize other people.

Generally, we have found that in older neighborhoods the school district boundaries are more likely to coincide with individuals’ perception of the neighborhood boundaries. These neighborhoods tend to be more compact, have similar housing stock, a mix of uses, and a grid street system. They tend to have more clearly defined boundaries than newer, more homogenous, less compact school districts.

For about the past 20 years the most popular development theory (although not the most popular development practice) has been what is known as neotraditionalism or new urbanism. This theory encourages compact development and pedestrian activity, and calls for a mix of uses in close proximity to each other. These neighborhoods are organized on a gridded street pattern with sidewalks on both sides of the street. The streets are not overly broad and primarily serve the residences. The houses are relatively close to the streets and have front porches. The architecture is attractive in material, form and detail.
This pattern is essentially a return to the physical form of the early 1900s industrial neighborhoods or the more classic farm, fishing, or mill villages of the mid to late 1800s. The idea is that the size, spacing, orientation and arrangement of housing, streets, and other uses provide opportunities for random socialization and contact. Over time this should create a sense of identity with, and responsibility for, the neighborhood by its residents. We can contrast this development form with the dominant form of the last 50 years, which is less compact, focused on single-use areas and highly auto dependent.

**Neighboring**

The second aspect of neighborhood is neighboring, the interaction among neighbors as neighbors. Neighboring can be a social activity or a security activity. Neighbors may help each other out in emergencies or lend each other tools or equipment. In some places neighbors drop in any time; in others they are expected to ring the bell first or call ahead. Do we stand in the doorway or do we invite them in for a coffee or food? Neighboring will be influenced by culture, family, and many other factors.

We do these things in all kinds of neighborhood settings. It may be that in traditional neighborhoods these opportunities occur more often because people are out walking more to school, to the park, or to the corner store. It may be that in more suburban, exclusively residential neighborhoods these opportunities occur less frequently, but they still happen, perhaps when getting the mail or mowing the lawn or gardening.

It is worth noting that regardless of neighborhood setting, modern technology has affected patterns of neighboring. Cable and satellite television, 24-hour news talk stations, the internet, e-mail, instant messaging, chat rooms and more provide convenient opportunities for people to build social networks, find communities of interest, or get information without physical proximity.

**Neighbor**

The third aspect of neighborhoods is the neighbor. What role does the neighbor play, and what are the expectations of the neighbor? They may expect to be courteous to each other and acknowledge each other. Is a good neighbor someone who keeps to himself? Who helps when asked but doesn’t interfere? Who is quiet, and keeps up their property?

**Planning for Neighborhoods**

How do neighborhood, neighboring, and neighbor influence our planning for neighborhoods? Let’s simplify things and look just at older neighborhoods.

Older neighborhoods, in particular in cities and first-tier suburbs, were products of the technology, transportation, markets...
and values of their time. More than 100 years later, these neighborhoods retain their physical form but the systems and circumstances that influenced their construction have changed. The streets, sidewalks, and utilities probably need to be repaired or replaced. Formerly state-of-the-art materials such as lead-based paint, asbestos shingles and insulation or knob-and-tube wiring are now considered health and safety hazards. Waves of “modernization” have added aluminum or vinyl siding, asphalt shingles or pressure-treated lumber and eaten away at the architectural integrity, detail and ornament.

And there are cars. These neighborhoods were built when the principal modes of transportation were walking or mass transit, making proximity essential. Now dependence on the automobile has crowded streets and yards with vehicles and asphalt.

And of course 100 year old houses aren’t always worth as much as newer ones. The obvious challenge is how to reinvest in homes and infrastructure in ways that stabilize and ultimately revitalize older neighborhoods. Where there are abandoned or deteriorated buildings or vacant lots, the challenge is to develop these sites to fit the fabric and complement the aspirations and needs of the neighborhood.

The neighbors have also changed. The immigrant families who first came to these neighborhoods were bound together not only by the place, but also by common work, religion, food, and language. Over time they have moved on and new families taken their place. The new residents may have different cultural and social mores, and may be of different races or ethnicities. They may be less tied to the neighborhood because they work, shop or socialize outside the community.

When developing neighborhood plans we must do all we can to involve all neighborhood residents to create unity of purpose and the opportunity for dialogue and understanding. It may be that new standards for neighboring and neighbors need to emerge, or at least be understood.

We must also recognize that because older neighborhoods usually have a broader range of housing types they will also have a broader range of residents. Here neighborhood residents and the larger community and local governments must look at new ways of working together not only to revitalize the place but to re-define neighboring and neighbor, and deliver or create services to address new or emerging needs.

Communities today have the benefit of considering different development patterns using the latest planning, infrastructure, and zoning tools. There are new urbanist codes, form-based zoning, and development regulations and techniques. Planners and local officials can incorporate not only cars and transit but also the latest in telecommunications and information technology to plan neighborhoods for pedestrians and automobiles, blending current lifestyles with the physical amenities and forms of historic neighborhoods.

As we consider how to revitalize older neighborhoods, we should also think about our goals for the larger community and the region. As cities reposition themselves, or as new communities develop in the suburbs, there is an opportunity to look at neighborhoods as a way to provide a place for all types of people to live. There should be housing that is affordable to a range of income groups, for service workers as well as executives; for single income households as well as two income households; for families with children as well as empty nesters.

We must provide opportunities to build developments that transform into neighborhoods, rebuild neighborhoods that reconnect to cities, and build communities that connect to each other in a regional web of opportunity and equity for all residents.

Mark Pellegrini is Director of Planning and Economic Development for the town of Manchester and President the Connecticut Chapter of the American Planning Association. This article is excerpted from a talk given at a conference sponsored by the Rockfall Foundation.

“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.”

John F. Kennedy - October 26, 1963

We are proud to serve the architects, engineers and planners who are preserving the past for the future.
Redding, cont’d from page 6

The renovations included the restoration and conversion of the pavilion, built in 1892 and the first building in Connecticut erected specifically for a state park. It has been converted into a year-round building with exhibit space, restrooms and an office.

A significant portion of the project was the reconfiguration of the intersection of state routes 58 and 107 to provide a safer traffic pattern and entrance to the park. This work restored the park’s entrance to what was originally planned by the Park and Forest Commission in the 1890s.

The renovations also included the restoration and relocation of Anna Hyatt Huntington’s statue, “Putnam’s Escape at Horsekneck.” After conservation, the statue was re-erected on a new base located farther from the road and away from the salts and oils that had damaged it.

Kronenberger & Sons Restoration Inc., founded in 1946, is a three-generation firm specializing in the restoration, preservation and adaptive re-use of period structures.

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It has been our goal to balance passionate interest in historic preservation with level-headed professionalism.

Norwalk, cont’d from page 7

significantly alter the Merritt’s historic character around the intersections.

ConnDOT claims that the current plans represent the only way to meet traffic needs in the area, but the plaintiffs say that the department did not really consider other feasible options, as required by federal law.

At the September 27 hearing, government officials testified that they did not have any documents to show that they considered other alternatives.

But a week later, ConnDOT claimed that it had found papers showing that it had indeed met the legal requirement. A hearing is scheduled for November 28 to determine whether or not these papers should be admitted into evidence. The judge is expected to rule on the case as a whole by early January.

In the meantime, ConnDOT has agreed “to cease all project activities, including blasting, in the Interchange area except such safety-related activities and other necessary activities that are required to close the site.” The department had previously agreed to postpone work on the bridges, but continued with other construction, including rock blasting. The plaintiffs protested that action, since it affected the parkway’s historic landscape. Laurie Heiss, the Conservancy’s executive director, said, “We are very pleased with this agreement and after the merits of the case are resolved we hope to act as a partner with ConnDOT moving forward to assist in developing an interchange which will fit well into the Merritt without further damage and without costing taxpayers as much money.”
The wide-ranging changes that many Connecticut communities have experienced over time are seen in three historic districts recently nominated to the National Register of Historic Places. Two of the districts have been listed; the third was not, due to objections by a majority of property owners. The summary descriptions are taken from the nominations, all prepared by Cunningham Preservation Associates.

The Glastonbury-Rocky Hill Ferry Historic District encompasses a significant and well-preserved historic vernacular landscape on the banks of the Connecticut River. Shaped and differentiated by a unique natural and cultural history, the farmers of Nayaug in South Glastonbury and the merchants at the Rocky Hill landing exploited the natural resources of their riverine communities and remained linked together by the oldest continuously operating ferry in the United States. Although little remains of a distinguished shipbuilding tradition that once prevailed on both sides of the river, much of this historic legacy is preserved in the homes of district shipbuilders. The historic maritime focus of the Rocky Hill Landing is expressed in the surviving nearby homes and stores of merchant traders, which include several examples of the Colonial and Italianate styles. Of particular architectural interest are the well-preserved farmscapes of the Great Meadows in South Glastonbury that still display historic land-use patterns that date back to the 17th century. Broad expanses of cultivated fields and pastures radiating out to the river’s edge provide an authentic historic setting for a fine collection of Colonial and Greek Revival farmhouses, which are enhanced by an impressive array of associated outbuildings.

In Norwich, the Greeneville Historic District is a historically significant industrial village that was created to support and sustain water-powered industry from 1828 to about 1940. Much of the enduring success of this industrial enterprise can be attributed to the entrepreneurial vision of industrialist William P. Greene (1795-1862). His development of this planned community and a company to deliver a centralized power system, combined with significant technological infrastructure improvements in the late 19th century, supported the largest industrial presence in Norwich. Although nominally a part of the City of Norwich after 1875, from its creation in 1833 until after World War I, the Greeneville Historic District remained a separate entity.

Not only a ferry landing, the Glastonbury-Rocky Hill Ferry historic district was the site of shipyards and an active river port.
War I Greeneville remained a relatively independent and self-sufficient, working-class community—an evolution fully expressed by the district’s large, cohesive collection of generally well-preserved domestic, institutional and commercial architecture. While much of the architecture has the vernacular character expected in a mill town, the district also includes representative examples of the major styles of the period, including Greek Revival, Second Empire, Italianate, and Carpenter Gothic.

Not listed in the Register but declared officially eligible is the Avon Center Historic District in Avon. This district became controversial when the Town of Avon objected to the inclusion of some of its properties and presented the novel argument that town-owned properties could never be considered “contributing properties” in a National Register district (see CPN, November/December 2004). That question became moot when a majority of property owners objected to listing.

Cunningham writes that the Avon district illuminates the transformation of a rural crossroads in the Farmington River Valley into an institutional and commercial town center. During this 150-year evolutionary process, the economic, social, demographic and environmental character of the district was directly affected by 19th-century advances in canal and rail transportation and the significant presence of the Ensign-Bickford Company, a 20th-century leader in the safety fuse industry.

The Norwich Water Power Company’s dam and canal supplied power to a variety of industries, including textile, papermaking, and smaller manufacturers, which formed the Greeneville’s economic base.

In addition to mills and housing, Greeneville developed a thriving commercial center, epitomized by the Kelly Block, 1896, as sophisticated and stylish as any found in downtown Norwich.

The Ensign-Bickford Company was a major employer in Avon from the 1880s until the 1960s. When the company moved, its buildings were sensitively redeveloped as town offices and commercial space.

The Avon Congregational Church of 1817, a federal-style masterpiece by David Hoadley, stands next to a warehouse that served the Farmington Canal, which provided citizens of Avon and surrounding region with direct access to faraway markets as early as 1828.
The state Historic Preservation and Museum Division has approved a grant for restoration of Lincrusta wall coverings at Roseland Cottage in Woodstock.

For more information on the Historic Restoration Fund, call Matt Blood at (860) 566-3005 x327 or email to matt.blood@po.state.ct.us

Applications for the next round of grants will be due next year.

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Editor's note: As reported in the March/April issue of CPN, the Trust is undertaking a survey of historic barns in Connecticut. In the next several issues, we will share some of the results as the survey progresses.

Closeups, cont’d from page 16

on free-standing diagonal braces, board-and-batten walls, diamond-paned windows, and doors with a lacy lattice-patterned overlay—features that the barn shares with at least two fashionable Gothic Revival houses built nearby in Guilford at about the same time.

The barn’s design may have come from an architect from New York or New Haven, or perhaps from an architectural pattern book. One best-seller was Andrew Jackson Downing’s Architecture of Country Houses, published in 1850, which shows a “Model Cottage Stable.” It’s just about the size and shape of Chittenden’s barn, and like it has board-and-batten siding and a bracketed roof. Whatever the source, the message is clear: this is no merely functional shed, but the possession of a man of means and taste. As the century progressed, gentlemen’s barns grew ever larger and their fittings ever more sophisticated, but the impulse to elaboration had been firmly established.

Join the Connecticut Trust!
THE MOST IMPORTANT THREATENED PLACES
– UPDATES

Alcoa Administration Building, Fairfield (2005). Despite efforts by local preservationists, demolition of the Alcoa building began on Friday, September 30, as soon as a demolition permit was issued. By Monday afternoon, nothing remained of the building but a pile of rubble.

Up to the last, preservationists repeatedly pushed town officials and International Nickel, Inc. (INCO), the owner, to test the administration building and see if it was affected by the contaminants that polluted most of the former factory, which was used at one time for assembling batteries. If the building was truly not usable it could be demolished, they argued, but if it was not irretrievably contaminated it could be an attractive feature of any new development.

Unfortunately, INCO was unresponsive and Kenneth Flatto, Fairfield’s First Selectman, incorrectly told reporters that “nobody from these organizations [the Connecticut Trust] felt this was a significant enough building to save.”

Jane Talamini, a Fairfield preservationist and CTHP trustee who played a leading role in the effort to save the building, said, “My complaint will always be that all we wanted was to have the building looked at, and no one would even go for that.”

Talamini and other Fairfield residents had begun the process of nominating the administration building to the National Register, and the State Historic Preservation Office approved the site for study only two days before demolition began. This could have allowed a lawsuit under the Connecticut Environmental Protection Act’s provisions against the unreasonable demolition of sites listed in or under consideration for the National Register, but legal action was not taken.

One small portion of the building escaped destruction: the demolition contractors carefully removed the cast-stone doorway for reuse, either on the site or elsewhere. Its destination is yet to be determined.
Fancy barns had long been a hallmark of economic success, but the 19th century saw the introduction of something new: the gentleman's barn, built on a country estate and intended as much for display as for practical use. These barns frequently were designed by professional architects and were part of complexes that combined the luxury of a weekend or summer retreat with the grit of a working farm. One Connecticut gentleman was Simeon B. Chittenden, a Guilford native who became a successful merchant in New York. In 1851 he bought back the ancestral Chittenden home and transformed it into a splendid country estate with such embellishments as a park for deer (later replaced by peacocks) and a fountain. Among the new buildings were a free-standing bowling alley and a 60-foot stone windmill to supply water to the fountain—and an ornamented barn. Probably built about 1868, Chittenden's barn was architecturally advanced for its day. It boasted a cupola for light and ventilation, extravagantly wide eaves supported continued on page 14