Once upon a time, Connecticut towns and cities were graced by hundreds, even thousands, of American elm trees. By the second half of the 19th century elms had become a defining characteristic of New England villages, their gracefully drooping branches making the streets sheltered, but still open and inviting, corridors of space. Invariably they inspired visitors' comments; as one Rhode Island resident remembered, “When you came into any town in New England the landscape changed; you entered this kind of forest with 100-foot arches. The shadows changed. Everything seemed very reverent, there was a certain serenity, a certain calmness… a sweetness in the air. It was an otherworldly experience, you knew you were entering an almost sacred place.”

It wasn’t always so. For the first European settlers, trees were obstacles to be removed before they could build towns, graze animals, or plant crops. Only at the end of the 18th century, after the initial clearing had been accomplished and Romanticism inspired a new attitude toward Nature as nurturer rather than opponent, did New Englanders begin planting trees for ornament. It began with public-spirited individuals such as James Hillhouse of New Haven, who initiated efforts to plant trees on the New Haven Green and then throughout the city (actually planting many of them himself, according to legend). By mid-century, village improvement societies throughout the region had taken up the cause, incorporating tree-planting in their improvement programs.

Some of these early trees were living memorials, including the Franklin Elm in New Haven, planted to commemorate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In This Issue...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Remembering Elizabeth Mills Brown      | 3  
| Alsop House Named NHL                  | 5  
| Around the State                       | 7  

ABOVE: Temple Street then and now. Since the 19th century Temple Street, running through the center of the New Haven Green, has been famous for its vaulted corridor of arching elm branches. Maintaining the trees preserves a crucial element of the city's character.
The beginning of the year always brings the legislative session and efforts to strengthen historic preservation in state policy. This year, with the economic downturn, we are particularly concerned about the future of funding for historic preservation in general and for the Connecticut Trust’s grant programs.

Over the past six years, the Trust has given out $1.4 million in Historic Preservation Technical Assistance Grants for preservation planning and predevelopment. These grants have helped to create shovel ready projects and leverage other grants, tax credits, and private investment.

These $1.4 million in grants have stimulated an additional $5.6 million in private spending. In addition, the grants:

• have provided employment to skilled professionals such as architects, engineers, and historians;
• have made possible the preservation and reuse of historic buildings for civic and institutional uses and affordable housing;
• have increased the number of buildings eligible for state and federal historic tax credits, often a crucial element in making a project feasible; and
• now are creating a larger pool of “shovel-ready” restoration and revitalization projects.

These grants pay primarily for labor and services, rather than materials—spending that tends to circulate within our communities, spreading the economic benefit even farther.

The Trust receives funding for these grants through two state programs: a direct line item of $250,000 per year and $200,000 per year through the Community Investment Act, which levies a real estate conveyance tax to provide funding for farmland protection, open space acquisition, affordable housing, and historic preservation.

In her budget recommendations for the next two years, Governor Rell proposed reducing the Trust’s line item to $118,000 in 2009-10 and to zero in 2010-11. She also proposed shifting all Community Investment Act receipts from their legislated uses to the general fund. The governor’s proposal also eliminates funds that support grant programs and staff at the Commission on Culture and Tourism’s Historic Preservation and Museums Division. The proposal recommends merging the whole CCT into the Department of Economic and Community Development.

While we understand the importance of balancing the budget and the need for shared sacrifice in a time of unprecedented economic uncertainty, we nonetheless believe that the governor’s proposals are unnecessary, costly, and diversionary, and that they will do more harm than good.

It is our goal to enable preservationists around the state to continue the stellar work they are doing. We thank you for your continued support of the Connecticut Trust and of historic preservation in Connecticut and hope that you will join us in our efforts. As events unfold, we will post updates on our website, www.cttrust.org and we will send special email alerts as the need arises. To receive alerts, send your email address to contact@cttrust.org.

For the past year we have had the great good fortune to work with Hallock Svensk of Southport, a 2007 graduate of Williams College. With an affinity for historic preservation but no specific training, Hallock came to us as an intern, meaning free labor, and stayed on to become the paid grassroots coordinator of the Face of Connecticut legislative campaign last year. This year he worked under a grant from the Commission on Culture and Tourism to write the 1988 Handbook for Historic District and Properties Commissions. From the beginning, Hallock was a valued addition to our staff. His insights and opinions shaped our lively staff discussions on Monday mornings. Hallock’s intellect, graciousness (including his excellent phone answering skills!), and consistent good humor enhanced our work. We miss him very much but know he is thriving as a Fulbright Scholar in Argentina.

Helen Higgins

Upcoming Meetings of the Connecticut Historic Preservation Council
April 1, 2009, at 9:30 a.m.
May 6, 2009, at 9:30 a.m.
All meetings take place at the Commission on Culture and Tourism Main Conference Room
1 Constitution Plaza, Hartford
For more information call (860) 256-2800
The Connecticut Trust lost a long-time friend in December, with the death of Elizabeth Mills Brown. Betty was one the Trust's earliest Trustees and she continued to be a valued advisor and a generous donor.

As an architectural historian, Betty breathed new life into buildings with her lively and approachable writing style. Her book, *New Haven: A Guide to Architecture and Urban Design* (1976), is still the basic source for information on that city's architecture. She always found precisely the right word and took particular pride in capturing a building's essence in just one or two brief sentences. For example, see this description from the New Haven book: “To an ordinary Greek Revival house, probably built in the ’30s or ’40s, someone with dreams of glory in the Gilded Age added a super porch. One can imagine his pride.”

For Betty, historic preservation was an essential complement to architectural history, and she became a leader in preservation, starting in New Haven, where she helped start the New Haven Preservation Trust in 1961. But her presence was quickly felt far beyond New Haven: in Guilford, where she lived, she was an organizer of the Guilford Preservation Alliance and co-directed the first survey of historic resources; and on the statewide level she sat on the State Historic Preservation Board, which reviews National Register nominations. Finally, her preservation activities extended to the 19th-century industrial village of West Stockholm, New York, where she bought and restored a group of buildings—nearly the entire village—specifically to demonstrate what a private individual could accomplish.

In her last years Betty began work on a statewide architectural guidebook, *Buildings of Connecticut*, to be part of the Society of Architectural Historians' national series, *Buildings of the United States*. The Trust hopes to raise the funds needed to complete this monumental and much-needed work.

Betty summed up her twin careers as architectural historian and preservationist in a talk that she gave in the 1980s: “So all I can say to you is: architecture is for everyone, and there’s enough to go around if we’ll only learn to take care of it. We can’t write it all down on convenient lists that we can carry in our pockets, but it’s all around you wherever you go. Go out and keep your eyes open. Enjoy every bit of it whether it’s on somebody’s list or not. And, above all, guard it.” It’s a legacy that we will remember.
Two sites recently added to Connecticut’s National Register listings illustrate the growth in the scale and complexity of residential and industrial development in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

**Ambassador Apartments, Hartford.** Completed in 1921, this building was constructed during an important decade in Hartford’s residential development, when the city was in transition from single-family dwellings to apartment complexes. The 128-unit building on Farmington Avenue was constructed for developer Nicolo Carabillo. Originally called the Hotel St. Nicholas (it was renamed in 1925), the building was to be Carabillo’s crowning achievement: when completed it featured garages for the tenants’ automobiles and services that included barber, manicuring, and tailor shops. The Hartford Courant described the dining room as “spacious, well designed, decorated and lighted, [accommodating] more than 300 diners, and still [leaving] room for dancing.”

The building’s elegant Italian Renaissance design, the work of the Hartford firm of Berenson & Moses, featured a symmetrical façade, low-pitched roof, wide eaves supported by decorative brackets, and carefully balanced ornamental features such as the iron balconies and the use of both arched and bracketed window enframements.

The Ambassador exemplified a boom in apartment construction in the Asylum Hill neighborhood, driven by the influx of workers that moved into the neighborhood following the arrival of Aetna Life and several other insurance companies. The apartment boom lasted until about 1927, when real estate agents began to claim that excessive apartment development and increased accessibility to single-family housing in the suburbs had created a surplus.

Although constructed as a luxury apartment building in an upper-class neighborhood, the Ambassador lost its luster as the neighborhood declined in the mid- to late 20th century. In 1976 it was purchased by Aetna Insurance Group, which cited the need to provide housing for its workers and protect its office complex. Aetna undertook a complete renovation of the Ambassador; after 25 years of ownership, the company sold the building in 1999.

—adapted from the nomination, by Nick Kraus, Heritage Consulting Group

**William Clark Company Thread Mill, Pawcatuck.** Constructed in two stages (1892 and 1899) by the Clark Thread Company of Trenton, New Jersey, the Clark Thread Mill represents the textile industry that played an important role in transforming eastern Connecticut in the period 1850-1930, giving rise to mill villages and large manufacturing towns, an increase in population, and greater ethnic diversity. Throughout the region, ever-larger mills were built to produce cotton, woolen, and silk goods. The first mills were started by local entrepreneurs and were powered in whole or in part by fast-moving rivers and streams. Later, as in the case of the Clark Thread Mill, steam power predominated wherever coal could be economically brought in by rail or water, and the capital to finance continued on page 15
Alsop House Is Connecticut’s Newest National Historic Landmark

The Richard Alsop IV house, located at 301 High Street in Middletown, was designated a national historic landmark in January. It was built between 1838-1840 by Richard Alsop IV, son of the poet and “Hartford Wit,” Richard Alsop III. The younger Alsop, a Middletown native, was a successful merchant and banker who lived in Philadelphia. Originally occupied by Alsop’s widowed mother, Maria Pomeroy Alsop Dana, the house remained in the family (although not occupied by them for a number of years) until 1948. In that year, it was purchased by Wesleyan University with funds given by Harriet and George W. Davison, class of 1892. The house is now known as the Davison Art Center.

The Alsop house has been described as an important example of Romantic Classicism in American architecture. Although for many years the design was believed to have been the work of Ithiel Town or one of his protégés, it was actually the work of the short-lived New Haven firm of Platt & Benne, who came together under the aegis of the New Haven architect Sidney Mason Stone. Because of an idiosyncratic compositional character blending pared-down Greco-Roman and Regency forms and details, the house stands architecturally apart from most other contemporary suburban villas and, to a certain extent, defies easy categorization.

The Alsop house’s primary importance lies in its exterior and interior wall paintings, considered exceptional in their scope and artistic quality. Although believed to be used on the exterior for reasons of economy in place of marble ornament, the painting was in keeping with fashionable decorative trends of the period.

The frescoes were created in two or more campaigns between 1839 and ca. 1860. The artists, thought to be recent Italian and German immigrants, utilized a variety of stylistic sources—ancient, Renaissance, and 19th-century—from which to derive subject matter and approaches for artistic organization and representation in devising the interior painting programs. Ultimately, the house was embellished with colorful wall panels in the neoclassical modes stylistically referred to as “Pompeian” or “Empire,” fanciful cage-like frames and realistic native birds and plants, and grisaille trompe-l’œil statues and faux stonework. While there is some evidence that the Alsop house dazzled contemporary Middletown society, neoclassical fresco painting, derived from Roman antiquity as well as the Italian Renaissance, had become a customary mode of interior decoration for the haut monde in major urban centers during the first half of the 19th century. Numerous examples once existed in cities such as New York and Philadelphia, where immigrant artists were well established; sometime later, artists even found their way to smaller communities like Middletown. Inherently fragile and subject to the ravages of time, few frescoes have survived from this period. Tastes changed, especially in the late Victorian period, and many frescoes were painted over or covered with wallpaper.

Upon acquisition of the house in 1948, Wesleyan University immediately understood the uniqueness of these paintings and over almost 60 years of stewardship has made the preservation and understanding of their history an ongoing concern of the institution.

continued on page 12
In an engaging collection of photos, building materials, architectural models, period magazines and film clips, a new exhibit at the Commission on Culture & Tourism’s Hartford Gallery seeks to make the case for the beauty, fragility, and compelling preservation needs of New Canaan’s world-class collection of Modern style residences. In addition to the gallery show, the Hartford Preservation Alliance will be offering five guided walking tours of Hartford’s Modern architecture landmarks.

New Canaan, only an hour from New York City, became a center of Modern architecture when a group of Harvard University-related architects—Marcel Breuer, Landis Gores, John Johanson, Eliot Noyes and Philip Johnson—settled in the town in the late 1940s. Later known as the “Harvard Five,” the architects established what would become a center of experimental Modern residential design. Hallmarks of the style included open plans, generous expanses of glass, and an emphasis on horizontality.

The completion of Philip Johnson’s Glass House (now a museum owned by the National Trust for Historic Preservation) in 1949 caused an immediate nationwide sensation, and the architects capitalized on the attention by participating in a series of Modern House tours that showcased their work. By the end of 1952, more than 30 Modern houses had been constructed throughout New Canaan. The tours attracted a second wave of architects, and by the end of the 1970s more than 100 Modern houses made New Canaan home.

Threatened by development, McMansions, zoning, and the decay of experimental building materials, the Moderns have been under siege. In 2006, a partnership of five national, state, and local organizations sponsored a comprehensive study of New Canaan’s Moderns. Conducted by the New York City firm of Building Conservation Associates, Inc. (BCA), the survey identified and documented 100 buildings. The exhibit draws on this outstanding scholarship.

“Living Modern in New Canaan: Celebrating and Preserving Our Modern Past,” Commission on Culture & Tourism Gallery, One Constitution Plaza, Hartford, April 23 to June 19, 2009, Monday–Friday 9 am to 4 pm. Opening reception, Thursday, May 7, 5:30-7:30pm

For more information on lectures and guided walking tours, call (860) 256-2800 or log on to CTvisit.com

Co-sponsored by the CCT, New Canaan Historical Society, the Glass House Museum, Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation, and the National Trust for Historic Preservation.
**AIA Connecticut Gives Awards for Preservation Projects**

Four projects related to historic buildings were recognized in AIA Connecticut’s 2008 Design Awards. Two projects were recognized in the Preservation category; both are good examples of adaptive use. Two other projects, in the Residential category, were not specifically identified as preservation projects, but one recognizes a sympathetic addition to one of New Canaan’s famed Modernist houses, and the other is a conversion of a 19th-century barn frame into a residence. The awards jury’s comments for each project are printed in italics.

**PRESERVATION**

Recital hall at Betsy Ross Magnet School, New Haven, by Barkin Associates Architects, P.C./JCJ Architecture. The hall is the former Saint Peter’s chapel, saved from demolition after a public outcry. *This adaptive use project is a variation on the original use of the building.*

It is true to its history, and that close link helped to preserve the original fabric and sense of place. (This project also received an award from the Connecticut Trust; see CPN, May/June 2007.)

**Interstate Design Center, Greenwich,** by Halper Owns Architects LLC. For a custom millwork company, founded in 1922, Halper Owens converted the original millwork shop into a showroom; in addition to current products, displays include old tools and samples from three generations of work. *This is a successful adaptive use project with a few strategic moves that bring in light and air. It is a modest project with a high impact, taking a non-descript building and improving it with smart adaptive architecture so that it is part of the landscape. The building was also recognized in AIA Connecticut’s People’s Choice awards as “the space in which I’d most like to work.”*

**RESIDENTIAL**

Addition to a Modern House, New Canaan, by Mark Markiewicz, AIA. Markiewicz made additions in two stages to this mid-century Modern house, originally built in 1952 to designs by the New Canaan firm Gates & Ford. The latest addition comprises an in-law apartment attached to the original house by a gallery. The jury liked the way the addition fulfilled the site plan. It balanced out the original composition and first expansion. The jury also appreciated the way the project evolved over time and applauded the saving of this era of houses for the next generation of preservationists.

Mountain Road Residence, Kent, by Halper Owens Architects LLC, is an old barn frame, moved and converted to a house that retains much of its barn-like character. The jury liked the fact that the architect saved the fabric of the existing barn by moving the barn. *This was a good job of integration. The jury loved the modern use of traditional materials, especially in the fireplace. It loved the co-existence of modern and traditional vocabularies.*

For more on AIA Connecticut’s Design Awards, visit www.aia.ct.org.

---

**ELMORE DESIGN**

**COLLABORATIVE, INC.**

**HISTORICAL LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS**

Cultural Landscape Preservation
Historical research, documentation, planning and design
Suffield, CT Tel. 860-254-5498 www.elmore-design.com

---

*Connecticut Preservation News, March/April 2009*
Kronenberger & Sons Restoration Inc., founded in 1946, is a three-generation firm specializing in the restoration, preservation and adaptive re-use of period structures. We are craftspeople, with the knowledge, skills and experience to return usability to older structures while helping them meet the requirements of the 21st century. It has been our goal to balance passionate interest in historic preservation with level-headed professionalism.

Years of successful projects and satisfied clients are a testament to that goal.

Our clients have included museums, municipalities, architects, historical societies and homeowners. As varied as our clients, so are their projects. They have included barns, carriage houses, covered bridges, churches, town halls and a vast array of period homes and out buildings.

For history in the remaking, call us, toll-free in Connecticut 1-800-255-0089.

Kronenberger & Sons Restoration Inc., • 80 East Main St., Middletown, CT 06457 • 860-347-4600 • Fax: 860-343-0309 • www.kronenbergersons.com

New London. The Nathan Hale Schoolhouse was moved for the sixth time in early January, to a new plaza adjacent to the Water Street parking garage.

Since 1988 the school had been located on the Parade, the historic square at the foot of State Street in downtown New London. Built in 1773 as the Union School, the small, shingled building is best known as the place where Colonial patriot and state hero Nathan Hale taught in 1774. The Connecticut Sons of the American Revolution have controlled the building since 1890. On the Parade, the building served as a museum and visitor center, uses that will continue at the new location. Once the building was moved, the Sons could go forward with an interior renovation, by Stephen C. Marshall, LLC, of Coventry.

The move is part of a larger project to renovate the Parade. Work also includes improving traffic patterns and removing a raised plaza constructed in the 1970s, which blocked views to and from Union Station.

New London Landmarks, which has promoted the Parade redesign, wrote in its Fall, 2008, newsletter, "Historically, the Parade was the center continued on page 12"
Currently a wide U of buildings around a building in the 1960s, would be demolished. Plaza, a suburban-style shopping center in the southern end of downtown, Torrington on areas other than Water Street. At the consultant Milone & MacBroom, focuses on the style. He proposed.

Wouldn’t be able to support all the retail impact study concluded that the town would be unreasonable under the Connecticut Environmental Protection Act.

Hayes withdrew after an economic impact study concluded that the town wouldn’t be able to support all the retail sector. During the hearings, Handrinos and Katsaros argued that the LLC cannot make any repairs since it has no assets other than the house itself. However, Mintz concluded that the LLC and the Inn had “such a unity of interest and ownership that the independence of the corporations ceased to exist.”

Then, on February 10, the judge withdrew that portion of the ruling. He also dropped the order for boarding up the windows and locking the doors, and required only that the porch be propped up and the house be maintained in its condition as of January 23, 2009. What this means is that the house can remain in its deteriorated condition for the foreseeable future.

According to Attorney General Richard Blumenthal, the ruling is important despite these changes. The judge “preserved the core of his (January) ruling . . . which is that the owners cannot demolish this historic structure through neglect,” Blumenthal said.

Downtown Torrington (2006). Nearly eight years after Farmington developer Jed Hayes called for demolishing several historic buildings on Water Street to bring in big-box stores, the city is working on a downtown redevelopment plan that is much more preservation-friendly. Hayes withdrew after an economic impact study concluded that the town wouldn’t be able to support all the retail he proposed.

The new plan, by Cheshire-based consultants Milone & MacBroom, focuses on areas other than Water Street. At the southern end of downtown, Torrington Plaza, a suburban-style shopping center built in the 1960s, would be demolished. Currently a wide U of buildings around a sprawling parking lot, it would be replaced with mixed-use buildings along a traditional streetscape.

The plan also calls for making Main Street one-way, with a new parallel street to the east. One contributing structure in the Downtown Torrington National Register district would be demolished. A concrete storefront built in the 1930s, it belongs to a burst of Moderne construction in Torrington during that period, but is not one of the city’s more noteworthy examples of the style.

On Water Street, another National Register district, the plan calls for incremental redevelopment of all existing buildings along with new infill construction, in line with schematic plans created by architect Patrick Pinnell for the Torrington Preservation Trust in 2002.

“The new plan makes a lot of sense, correcting problems that have been around since the 1960s, like the shopping center,” said Mark McEachern of the Preservation Trust. “On the whole it’s a huge improvement.” A public information session held in January elicited enthusiastic comments from the public, although some residents expressed concerns about the one-way traffic. Milone & MacBroom is revising its plan based on public comment. More hearings on a final plan, which will eventually be adopted as a city ordinance, will take place by April.

For more information, visit www.torringtonct.org/Public_Documents/TorringtonCT_Downtown/index
Benjamin Franklin’s death, or the thirteen sycamores that Oliver Wolcott planted in Litchfield in 1779 to honor the thirteen states. But the predominant motivation was beautification. Elms quickly became the favorite variety. They were hardy and fast-growing, and their high branches and light foliage cast a dappled shade that was soothing rather than gloomy. Their form appealed to romantic taste because it suggested Gothic arches; writer after writer claimed that tree-lined streets were the American equivalent of Europe’s cathedrals. The poet Nathaniel Parker Willis called the elms of New Haven “an unhewn cathedral, in whose choirs/ Breezes and storm-winds, and the many birds/ Join’d in the varied anthem.” By the 1840s New Haven was known as the “Elm City” for its trees. There were so many that Willis wrote in 1837 that the city “…has the appearance of a town roofed in with leaves.”

Towns and cities all across New England followed New Haven’s lead; in some, elms eventually represented as much as 75 percent of all street trees. Unfortunately, this enthusiasm hastened the trees’ destruction. While long streets planted with only a single species were visually coherent, by the late 19th century they were already proving vulnerable to pests.

In the 20th century this vulnerability became a disaster with the invasion of the Dutch elm disease, a fungal infection spread by beetles that burrow in the trees’ bark. Unwittingly introduced to the United States in packing cases, the disease first appeared in Ohio in 1931 and reached Connecticut only two years later. The blight quickly outpaced efforts to remove infected trees and was gaining the upper hand even before the great hurricane of 1938 destroyed thousands of trees, leaving huge piles of dead timber that proved a perfect breeding ground for the beetles. As the blight continued to spread, even widespread application of DDT could not stop the beetles, though it aggravated the environmental havoc.

By the 1950s New England’s elms were decimated, and by the ’60s, scarcely any remained. More than just a loss of the trees themselves, the death of the elms seemed to stand for broader upheavals of the time. Historian Thomas Campanella writes that the blight “…coincided with some of the most difficult urban and social transformations of the 20th century. This was an era of racial discord and urban rebellion, of ill-conceived urban renewal projects and highway-building schemes that gutted stable older neighborhoods across the region—many of which had been rich in elm shade. The passing of the elm also coincided with the great postwar exodus of the white
middle class to suburbia, a migration that brought about the precipitous decline of many New England cities... And through all this the elms came crashing down, laying waste, it seemed, the glory and essence of Yankee urbanism.”

A few elms survived, thanks to isolated location or natural resistance, and gradually citizens began efforts to preserve and restore the historic treescapes by protecting existing elms, breeding disease-resistant varieties, and promoting the planting of new elms. One organization, the Elm Research Institute, founded in 1967, pioneered the use of fungicide injections to protect existing elms and developed a series of disease-resistant cultivars under the name “American Liberty.”

Tom Zetterstrom, a photographer who lives in North Canaan, has dedicated much of his time to elms in northwestern Connecticut and western Massachusetts. In 1999, Zetterstrom launched an organization called Elm Watch to protect existing elms in the region and promote planting new ones. Elm Watch’s preservation and restoration programs include:

- creating an inventory of elms in the Housatonic region of Massachusetts and Connecticut;
- an Adopt-an-Elm program, sponsoring injections of preventive fungicide into existing elms; and
- promoting the planting of disease-resistant cultivars and elm hybrids.

Municipalities and local organizations have taken on elm programs as well. In New Haven, the New Haven Garden Club and the city parks department have worked to protect elms growing on the New Haven Green, where the garden club sponsored the planting of Liberty elms beginning in 1984. More elms were planted in the city in 1988 by Boy Scouts and the Rotary Club, and in the late 1990s when Broadway was redesigned.

In Farmington, the Farmington Historical Society has planted more than 20 elms throughout the town center beginning in 2001, including two in front of its headquarters, the Gridley-Case cottages. The project has since been expanded to Unionville, another village in the town.

As in the late 18th century, some trees serve commemorative purposes: In Salisbury, an elm was planted in 2002 as a memorial to Susan Getzendanner, a resident who died in the World Trade Center. Elms will never again become the predominant ornament of Connecticut and New England landscapes—the cost of care and the hazards of monoculture argue against that. But with the work of groups around the state, survivors will continue to grace the landscape and the trees may once again play a prominent role in shaping the region’s character.

For more information...
- Elm Watch: www.elmwatch.org; (413) 266-1062
- Elm Research Institute: www.libertyelm.com; (800) 367-3567
- “The Return of the American Elm,” a public education and documentary film project: www.myelmstory.com
Alsop House, cont’d from page 5

The paintings have long been known to scholars. In 1926, Edward B. Allen placed their significance within the broader historical context of American decorative arts, noting: “their superior execution, classical inspiration, fine rich color, and excellent drawing and decorative quality.” Allyn Cox, a New York artist hired to conserve some of the wall paintings in 1949, commented, “the Alsop House...has always been alone among old New England places for its finished and elegant mural painting, inside and out.” In 1966, art historian Samuel Green drew attention to the significant scope of the painting, calling it “the most elaborate program of decoration in American domes tic architecture before the Civil War.” In 1980, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York selected the painted stone walls and other painted elements of the Alsop House stair hall for reproduction in a new American Wing gallery. More recently, Peter Kenny, the curator of American Decorative Arts at the Met, described the Alsop frescoes as “unique and irreplaceable treasures [which] are truly part of our national cultural patrimony.” The paintings’ unique survival provides a window onto a once-flourishing decorative approach and design aesthetic that has largely disappeared in the United States.

This article is excerpted from the National Historic Landmark nomination prepared by Janice P. Cunningham, of Cunningham Associates. The full nomination is available at http://www.nps.gov/nhl/Fall08Nominations/Alsop%20Final.pdf.

New London, cont’d from page 8

of all commerce. In the early settlement of the city local farmers drove herds of cattle through the streets to be loaded onto ships bound for the West Indies. Barrels of sugar, molasses and rum made the return trip enriching early city fathers. Thus, the new Parade Plaza will also be a site for people to learn about the history of New London.” A Connecticut Trust Historic Preservation Technical Assistance Grant helped fund a charrette in 2004 that started the redesign process.

For more photographs of the move, visit www.ConnecticutSAR.org.

New Administrator for Tax Credit Programs

Julie Carmelich joined the Commission on Culture and Tourism in November 2008 as the new Administrator of the Federal and State Historic Tax Credit Programs. Prior to her position at CCT, Julie was the Cultural Resources Manager at IVI Due Diligence Services, a private environmental consulting group in White Plains, New York. She has also held positions at ARCH², Inc. in Metuchen, New Jersey and Historic New England in Boston. Julie received her B.A. in history from Colgate University in 1995 and her M.A. in Preservation Studies from Boston University in 2000. A native of Clinton, CT, Julie is excited to be working in the state again and especially with such great preservation programs!

“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.

Schwartz & Hoflich, LLP
CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANTS
FINANCIAL ADVISORS

37 NORTH AVENUE, NORWALK, CONNECTICUT 06851-3832
(203) 847-4068 (212) 397-0090 FAX (203) 849-6624 • E-MAIL INFO@SHCPA.COM • WEB: HTTP://WWW.SHCPA.COM MEMBER OF DPK INTERNATIONAL WITH AFFILIATED OFFICES WORLDWIDE

Improve Your Old Wood Windows

• Restored
• Double Paned
• Weather Stripped

When only the original window will do! Keep the beauty of your original wooden windows - and it costs less than quality wood replacement windows.

1.888.966.3937 • www.ct-bi-glass.com

Julie Carmelich, the CCT’s new administrator for tax credit programs

Julie Carmelich joined the Commission on Culture and Tourism in November 2008 as the new Administrator of the Federal and State Historic Tax Credit Programs. Prior to her position at CCT, Julie was the Cultural Resources Manager at IVI Due Diligence Services, a private environmental consulting group in White Plains, New York. She has also held positions at ARCH², Inc. in Metuchen, New Jersey and Historic New England in Boston. Julie received her B.A. in history from Colgate University in 1995 and her M.A. in Preservation Studies from Boston University in 2000. A native of Clinton, CT, Julie is excited to be working in the state again and especially with such great preservation programs!

“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.

Schwartz & Hoflich, LLP
CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANTS
FINANCIAL ADVISORS

37 NORTH AVENUE, NORWALK, CONNECTICUT 06851-3832
(203) 847-4068 (212) 397-0090 FAX (203) 849-6624 • E-MAIL INFO@SHCPA.COM • WEB: HTTP://WWW.SHCPA.COM MEMBER OF DPK INTERNATIONAL WITH AFFILIATED OFFICES WORLDWIDE

Improve Your Old Wood Windows

• Restored
• Double Paned
• Weather Stripped

When only the original window will do! Keep the beauty of your original wooden windows - and it costs less than quality wood replacement windows.

1.888.966.3937 • www.ct-bi-glass.com

Julie Carmelich, the CCT’s new administrator for tax credit programs

Julie Carmelich joined the Commission on Culture and Tourism in November 2008 as the new Administrator of the Federal and State Historic Tax Credit Programs. Prior to her position at CCT, Julie was the Cultural Resources Manager at IVI Due Diligence Services, a private environmental consulting group in White Plains, New York. She has also held positions at ARCH², Inc. in Metuchen, New Jersey and Historic New England in Boston. Julie received her B.A. in history from Colgate University in 1995 and her M.A. in Preservation Studies from Boston University in 2000. A native of Clinton, CT, Julie is excited to be working in the state again and especially with such great preservation programs!

“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.

Schwartz & Hoflich, LLP
CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANTS
FINANCIAL ADVISORS

37 NORTH AVENUE, NORWALK, CONNECTICUT 06851-3832
(203) 847-4068 (212) 397-0090 FAX (203) 849-6624 • E-MAIL INFO@SHCPA.COM • WEB: HTTP://WWW.SHCPA.COM MEMBER OF DPK INTERNATIONAL WITH AFFILIATED OFFICES WORLDWIDE

Improve Your Old Wood Windows

• Restored
• Double Paned
• Weather Stripped

When only the original window will do! Keep the beauty of your original wooden windows - and it costs less than quality wood replacement windows.

1.888.966.3937 • www.ct-bi-glass.com
The Connecticut Trust’s Preservation Circle Members for 2008

Jeffry and Maryan Muthersbaugh
Thomas W. Nisley
C. Roderick O’Neill
Mr. and Mrs. David C. Oxman
Stanley Peck
Pelli Clarke Pelli Architects, Inc.
Petra Construction Corporation
Press + Coozo
Stephen D. Ramsey
Ann E. Jones
Ann Sheffer and Bill Scheffler
Fifi M. Sheridan
Society of the Cincinnati in
Connecticut
Jane K. Talanini
TPA Design Group
Jane and Peter Vercelli
Sue and Robert Vincent
D. R. A. Wiersdsm
Hiram P. Williams, Jr.
Winn Development

Preservation Patrons,
$500 or above
18 Temple Street, LLC
Paul B. Bailey Architect, LLC
Bi-Glass Systems
Edie Blair
Ralph C. Bloom
Lynne Brickley
Robert E. Buckholz, Jr. and
Lizanne Fontaine
John Canning & Co., Ltd.
Mr. and Mrs. David G. Carter
Mr. and Mrs. Fred Clarke
Connecticut Lighting Center
Mr. and Mrs. Robert B. Dianis
Mr. and Mrs. Joel N. Davis
Mr. and Mrs. John Deans
Leroy Digs
Fasey-Smith Architects, PC
Mr. and Mrs. John Fath
Steve Feldman
J.P. Franzen and Assoc., Architects
Bruce Fraser
Charles Frosk
Melanie Ginter and John Lapides
Thomas B. Gorin
H. Clark Griswold
Gulick & Spaldin, Renovation
Contractors
H. D. Segur
Helen and Edmund Higgins
Mr. and Mrs. Jon T. Hirschoff
Eric Jackson Chimney
Paullette C. Kaufmann
Mr. and Mrs. Harvey L. Koizim
Mr. and Mrs. Lee G. Kuckro
Mr. and Mrs. Garry Leonard
Ruth Lord
Linda Lorimer
Melanie Marks
Jim McLaughlin
Mrs. Robert B. O’Reilly
Matthew Preston
Rob Sanders Architects
Schwantz & Hofflich
Mr. and Mrs. John Simon
Mr. and Mrs. Gary J. Ringer
Mr. and Mrs. Tyler Smith
Mr. and Mrs. Steven Snyder
John Steffan
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Svensk
Threadmill Partners, LLC
Gal Wall
Jeanne Webb
Mr. and Mrs. Wick York

Preservation Sponsors,
$250 or above
Peter Anderson
Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Antonelli
Architectural Preservation, LLC
Auto Gates
Robin M. Beckett
Richard Bergmann Architects
Susan Bishop
Doug Braush & Meg Palmateer
Elizabeth Mills Brown
Jody Bush
Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence C.
Caldwell
William Casey
John Cavalieri
Martha Daniels Cohen
Abbot L. Cummings
Mr. and Mrs. Charles B. Curtis
Radley H. Daly
Maggie Daly
ECSU Foundation, Inc.
Dr. and Mrs. Malcolm S. Edgar
F. Aldrich Edwards
Mr. and Mrs. Michael Elgee
Elmore Design Collaborative, Inc.
Linda Ferocodini
Sally Ferguson
 Fitzgerald & Halliday, Inc.
Jacqueline Fowler
Lynn Friedman
Pam and Paul Gallagher
Gilley Design Associates, LLC
Mr. and Mrs. Richard B. Gould
Roe Granger
James K. Grant Associates
Stuart Gray
Greater Litchfield Preservation
Trust
Rowan A. Greer
H. Pearce Real Estate
Hartford Preservation
Alliance, Inc.
Harold Heck
James Heym
Christopher Holbrook
Adrienne Farrar Houel
Virginia W. Hughes
Ina Jaffe
Charles E. Janson
Johnson Millwork, Inc.
Jean R. Kelley
Mr. and Mrs. Frank Kenna
Meghan and George Knight
Ralph Knighton
Mr. and Mrs. Keith L. Knowlton
Konowitz, Kahn and Company,
P.C.
J & R Lamb Studios, Inc.
Ruth R. Lapides
Stephen S. Lash
Mr. and Mrs. Rip Litig
Kenneth and Kathleen Lundgren
Alexandra D. Lyman
Jeanne R. Manning
Leonard H. Marks
Stephen C. Marshall, LLC
Maurer & Shepherd-Joyner, Inc.
Dr. and Mrs. William B.
McCullough
Kate McKenzie and Craig Crews
New England Stone, Inc.
David Newton
Eeva Pelkonen and Turner Brooks
Patrick Pinell
Lauren Pinsky
Donald Poland
Cynthia Powell
Reeding Preservation Society
Vanessa Reiman
Troy and Zoe Resch
The Rev. Arthur B. Roberts
Charles S. Rotenberg, AICP
The S/L/A/M Collaborative
Architects
Jane Feerar Safer
Allison Schieffelin
Edmund Schmidt
Marvin & Joyce S. Schwartz Fund
Dennis A. Sciancalepore
Pamela E. Searle
Paul H. Serenbentz
Anita M. Shaffer
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Steinbaum
Bonne and Shaun Sullivan
Michael S. Thomas
Bill and Christine Tocchi
Lealand Torrence Enterprises
Mr. and Mrs. Francis X. Walsh
Winokur Family Foundation
Katherine Wilshtire and
Christopher Jones
Scott and Missy Wolfe
Mr. and Mrs. Joe Zaring

Heritage Partners,
$100 or above
Steven J. Adamowski
George W. Adams, III
Agricola Corporation
Jeffrey Alexander and
Morel Morton
Deborah Mattison Angotti
Fauzia Ansari
The Architects
Mary B. Armstrong
Mr. and Mrs. Alan Aronow
Austen Patterson Disston
Architects, LLC
Babbidge Facilities Construction
Company, Inc.

Babol Capitoel
Mr. and Mrs. William Bailey
Baker Batchelder Architects
Ruth K. Balchunas
David Barkin
Catherine Barna
Barun K. Basu
Scott Bates
Leonard J. Baum
Becker and Becker Associates, Inc.
Mr. and Mrs. Timothy R. Beeble
Bruce Bellingham
S.A. Bendheim Company, Ltd.
David Berto
Bruce E. Bidwell and
Roberta Roy
Board & Beam
Neil H. Bonney
The C.G. Bostwick Company
Lynne Boyd
Mary M. Bradley
Mr. and Mrs. Bill Bresnan
Jay Bright
H. P. Broom Housewright, Inc.
Carol Ann Brown
Barbara D. Bryan
Ted Bryant
Robinson D. Buck
Building Conservation Associates
Jonathan P. Butler
Edwin N. Cady & Sons
Mr. and Mrs. Guido Calabresi
Jay E. Cantor
Anne Carbone
Mr. and Mrs. Joseph E.
Carbonell, Ill
Fred A. Cazal, Jr.
Center Development
Corporation
Citizens Restoring Congamond
City of Bridgeport
The Clancy Ovian Family
Mr. and Mrs. Herbert T. Clark, III
Laura B. Clementson
Michael D. Coo
Colleen Colbert
Mr. and Mrs. John H. Cole
William G. Conway
James H. Cropy
Andrea K. Cross
Dorothy E. Curran
Mr. and Mrs. Edward A. Currie
Custom Copper
Carol Davidge
MaryLou Davis, Inc.
Barbara S. Delaney
Mr. and Mrs. Philip C. Denney
Mr. and Mrs. Frank C. Derato
Design Associates, Inc.
John Dixon
Barbara Donahue
Mr. and Mrs. James Donnelly
Nena Donovan-Levine
Mr. and Mrs. Henry E. Dunn, III
Mark S. Dunn Jr.

continued on page 14
JOIN THE CONNECTICUT TRUST!

Name [Mr. □ Mrs. □ Ms. □ Miss □]

Street _____________________________________________________________

City _____________________________________________________________ State ________ Zip ________

Telephone (____________________) _______________________________________

Email _____________________________________________________________

Employer (for matching gift program) ____________________________________

☐ Check enclosed (payable to “Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation”)  Charge my: ☐ Mastercard ☐ Visa ☐ American Express

Card Number ___________________________ Exp. Date _______/___________

Signature ____________________________________________________________________________

Mail to: 940 Whitney Avenue, Hamden, CT 06517-4002    Telephone: (203) 562-6312    All contributions are tax deductible.

CT.TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

You can join the Connecticut Trust online too, at www.cttrust.org

All contributions are tax deductible.
New Listings, cont’d from page 4

In-kind Donations
Agricola Corporation
Martha and Jim Alexander
R.J. Aley Building Contractors
Chip and Chrissey Baird
Jay Bright
Elizabeth Mills Brown
J. Barclay Collins, II
Crosskey Architects
Gregg, Wies & Gardner Architects
David D. Harlan Architects
Historic New England
Jean McKee
New Canaan Historical Society
New Canaan Preservation Alliance
E.M. Rose

Great care has been taken to ensure that all donations are accurately acknowledged. If an error has been made, please notify our office.

Please remember the Connecticut Trust in your will.

these ventures increasingly came from out-of-state sources.

In the 20th century, many of Connecticut’s textile mills were acquired by oligopolies that were national or international in scope; the Clark Thread Mill became one of the holdings of the American Thread Company in 1901. American Thread operated the mill until the late 1930s, at which time local investors bought the property. It continued in use for thread production for a time but by 1962 had been converted to light industry and storage.

The Clark mill also typifies the industrial architecture of the period. In the late 19th century, to meet the expectations of fire-insurance providers, a standard form of textile mill emerged, characterized by masonry construction, internal framing using massive timber members, long and narrow proportions, flat roofs, and wide windows.

The mill was severely damaged by the Hurricane of 1938, which blew off half the top story. Instead of rebuilding, the owners simply decked over the third story as a roof and enclosed the remainder of the fourth story with frame construction. The hurricane also damaged some of the subsidiary buildings on the site: the roof monitor of the former power house and the third story as a roof and enclosed the storehouse were both blown off and never rebuilt.

The Clark Thread Mill is currently slated for conversion to residential use by POKO Management Corporation of Port Chester, New York. POKO hopes to use federal and state historic rehabilitation tax credits in the conversion. In December 2008 the company also gave a preservation easement on Mill 1 to the Connecticut Trust. 

—adapted from the National Register nomination, by Bruce Clouette, Archaeological and Historical Services, Inc.
Practical Wallpaper Treatment

We just bought an old house with a recently papered front hall. We would like to paint over the paper, since pulling down the paper will probably reveal some deteriorating areas of the old plaster wall. The paper seems to be very heavy duty, vinyl-like. Is painting over wallpaper really such a no-no?

—J. Wright, Jamaica Plain, Mass.

The standard for best appearance is to remove old wallpaper before painting or applying new wallpaper. But, you have to determine for yourself when it makes sense to break the rules. Test your methods and materials by painting a section of the wall to see how it comes out. Shine a light at a low angle across the painted surface to make surface irregularities and texture show up. This is especially important if you have wall-sconce lighting.

If you decide to remove the paper and then paint, keep in mind that many plaster walls were intended for wallpaper and only roughly finished. They may require extensive preparation or full skim coating to make a surface smooth enough for painting. Painting or adding another layer of paper leaves the old paper and plaster in place which could be considered very good preservation by protecting and keeping the historic materials in their original location.

Porch Column Cracks

We operate a bed-and-breakfast in an historic house. The porch has six eight-foot tall Ionic columns made of wood. The shafts of the columns have several vertical cracks, otherwise the columns are in good condition.

—Lincoln, Nebraska

These cracks can often be repaired with the shaft right in place. First determine how the shaft is constructed. If the cracks are straight and parallel to each other the shaft is hollow and stave-built like a barrel. The crack develops over time as the joints between the staves separate. If the cracks are irregular and spiral around the shaft lightly, the shafts are probably solid wood, but may be hollow-bored from solid tree trunks with most of their core drilled out leaving a shell 1” to 2” thick. Cracks in solid or hollow-bored shafts are known as “checks.”

Begin by cleaning any old putty or paint out of the cracks or checks. Fill minor cracks or checks (1/16” or less) with caulking. Larger checks need special consideration. Fill wider checks on solid or hollow-bored shafts with a flexible sealant, such as high-performance caulk, that will allow for the inevitable movement of the wood. Never try to close a check by any method of clamping. It is impossible to close checks on solid shafts and you may crack a hollow-bored shaft.

Stave-joint separation of less than 1/8” can often be re-glued and filled with epoxy materials formulated especially for wood. These two-part adhesives and fillers form a long-lasting weather resistant bond. After application the joints can be drawn together with band clamps.

If cracks or checks are wider than 1/4” it may indicate structural problems. Call in a knowledgeable professional to assess conditions and make recommendations. For more on repairing wood columns read the Practical Restoration Report, “Exterior Wood Columns.” You can obtain a copy of this 20-page report by sending $11.95 to the address listed below.

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 St., Portland, Maine, 04103; or by E-mail: johnleeke@HistoricHomeWorks.com; or log onto his website at: www.HistoricHomeWorks.com

© Copyright 2005 John Leeke