The 1772 Foundation Receives Harlan Griswold Award

On April 4, the Connecticut State Historic Preservation Office and the Connecticut Trust presented the Harlan Griswold Award to The 1772 Foundation, of Pomfret. Here are remarks by the State Historic Preservation Officer, Christopher Bergstrom.

We are happy to present the Harlan Griswold Award this evening to The 1772 Foundation, which has furthered the goals of historic preservation in Connecticut by making a major commitment to invest in our historic museums and other historic properties in need of maintenance or restoration.

More than any other private funder, The 1772 Foundation has demonstrated a commitment to investing in historic sites in Connecticut. Since 1997, the Foundation has granted more than $1.2 million for historic Connecticut properties. Thanks to these grants, historical societies and other nonprofit stewards of significant sites in every part of Connecticut have been better able to care for their historic treasures.

In 2011 and 2012 The 1772 Foundation awarded grants totaling $385,000 to 37 historical societies, museums and other nonprofit heritage groups in Connecticut for capital repair maintenance projects. These smaller grants may not produce the dramatic before-and-after photographs seen in the typical preservation awards program, but they recognize an equally important aspect of preservation practice: the crucial importance of regular maintenance and, even more, maintenance planning. This is why the Foundation asks applicants to demonstrate that they have prepared and regularly update conditions assessments and maintenance, stewardship, or restoration plans.

These small grants have an economic impact as well: all are matched with cash and often leverage state and local dollars.

The 1772 Foundation’s work also extends to other kinds of grants, including funding for historic preservation revolving funds and farmland protection. The Foundation also has supported an initiative focusing on the preservation of African American heritage sites in the Northeast. Grants from that program helped with the stabilization of the Peters house in Hebron and archaeological exploration and stabilization at the Mary and Eliza Freeman houses in Bridgeport’s Little Liberia neighborhood.

The most visible signs of the 1772 Foundation’s work are the rehabilitation and improvements to historic sites. In Connecticut, the Foundation’s work can be found on National Historic Landmarks and modest local buildings alike that play important roles in the lives of their communities. Here are a few:

In Old Lyme: the Florence Griswold Museum undertook a major restoration of their museum house, a National Historic Landmark which was home to an influential art colony at the turn of the twentieth century.

In Putnam, the Aspinock Historical Society secured the continued on page 12
From the Executive Director

The Trust recently said good-bye to a number of Trustees: Lynn Friedman, on the board for seven years, held leadership positions in the Development and Grants committees and was always ready to help (see below). George Purtillo co-chaired the Grants Committee and was our go-to legal counsel on thorny grant issues. Kelvin Roldan served for five years as our legislative liaison while he was state representative and was a voice for us “on the inside.” Jane Vercelli served on Board Development and Program and Projects committees, joining us in Providence last year as we learned about Revolving Funds. She also graciously hosted an event at her historic house in Thompson. Hiram Williams resigned after five years serving on the Board Development Committee and bringing us closer to new friends in Northwest Connecticut.

The Trust also welcomed seven new Trustees, whose terms officially began on May 1: Margaret Anderson, of Southington; Sara Bronin, Hartford; Henry Griggs, Madison; Leslie King, Hamden; Matthew Peterson, Guilford; George Schoellkopf, Washington; and Myron Stachiw, East Woodstock.

As part of our ongoing project to make spaces more comfortable at the Eli Whitney Boarding House, our office in Hamden, we recently added carpeting to the conference room, stair, and halls. Now it is so quiet we have installed a shop-keeper’s bell on the front door. Trustees Lynn Friedman and Jeffrey Morgan selected the carpet, and Rick Wies found us Shaw Contract Carpet and Sullivan and Sons Carpet who gave us major discounts for materials and installation respectively.

Carpenter Martin Sullivan and team prepared our floors and front door for carpeting. We thank everyone who helped with this milestone project.

We are looking forward to seeing many of our members at the Celebration of Barns, June 7 and 8 at historic Bushnell Farm in Old Saybrook. You will receive an invitation in the mail from which you can sign up for the event online. Friday night will be hosted by Ann Nyberg, longtime news anchor at WTNH-TV. Joining her will be Deputy Commissioner Kip Bergstrom of the Department of Economic and Community Development. Without the support of the State Historic Preservation Office in that department, our very significant Historic Barns of Connecticut project would not have happened. —Helen Higgins

Upcoming Meetings of the Connecticut Historic Preservation Council

June 5, 2013, at 9:30 a.m.
July 10, 2013, at 9:30 a.m.

Connecticut Historic Preservation Council

June 17, 2013, at 9:30 a.m.

All meetings take place at the State Historic Preservation Office Department of Economic and Community Development Main Conference Room 1 Constitution Plaza, 2nd Floor Hartford, Connecticut

For more information call (860) 256-2800

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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G. Farmer

New Trustees Margaret Anderson, Leslie King, Sara Bronin, and Myron Stachiw at the Trust’s Awards presentation
In March, the Connecticut Trust approved Historic Preservation Technical Assistance Grants, totaling $123,909, to ten municipalities and nonprofit organizations. The grants will make possible a minimum initial investment of $247,818 in these historic sites.

The grants, intended to encourage and support community efforts in planning for the preservation, restoration, and rehabilitation of historic buildings and places, are part of the Trust’s technical assistance program, in collaboration with and with generous funding from the Connecticut General Assembly, the Connecticut Humanities Council, and the State Historic Preservation Office, Department of Economic and Community Development, through the Community Investment Act. The grants went to:

- **Bristol Historical Society**: $16,000 to plan roof replacement at the former Bristol High School (1890; NR).
- **Cheshire Historical Society**: $694 to develop a walking tour mobile device app for Cheshire Town Center (NR).
- **Town of Fairfield and Fairfield Historical Society**: $11,280 for a stewardship plan for the Fairfield Green (NR, LHD).
- **Town of Harwinton and Harwinton Historical Society**: $10,900 to plan the reconstruction of the “Harwinton House” (1795).
- **Town of Lyme and Hadlyme Ferry Historic District Commission**: $2,500 to nominate Lyme Town Hall (1862) to the State Register.
- **New Haven Museum**: $20,000 for an updated condition assessment and preservation plan for the Pardee-Morris House (1780; NR).
- **Simsbury, First Church of Christ**: $2,535 for pre-construction planning for replacement of the roof (1830; NR).
- **Southbury Historic Buildings Commission**: $20,000 to plan maintenance and upgrades to the Bullet Hill School (1762; NR).

**Funding for Historic Preservation**

Old Lighthouse, Stonington

G. Farmer

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Jainschigg Award Goes to Renée Kahn

When you say “Stamford” and “Preservation,” the next word is sure to be “Renée”—Renée Kahn, that is. For more than 35 years, Renée has been the principal champion of Stamford’s historic buildings, neighborhoods, and streetscapes.

The story goes back to 1977, when Renée founded the Stamford Historic Neighborhood Preservation Program (HNPP), the organization she continued to lead until just a few months ago. HNPP started off by surveying and designating historic buildings and neighborhoods. At the same time, there were demolitions to fight, and Renée’s name appears frequently as an eloquent and determined advocate for historic sites. But tackling one building at a time, as threats arise, is not the best way to ensure the preservation and reuse of historic buildings, and Renée has put much effort into getting out ahead of the threats.

In the 1980s Renée found herself endlessly advising property owners, builders, and building officials to find ways to preserve character-defining porches. Out of this grew a book, *Preserving Porches*, written by Renée with Ellen Maegher. It still is an authoritative source on the history of American porches and the practical issues of preserving them.

In exchange for completing exterior rehabilitation to the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards, an owner can qualify for additional density; for modifications of setback, lot coverage, or parking requirements; or for commercial uses in residential zones where appropriate. Thanks to this groundbreaking program, dozens of historic buildings in Stamford continue to contribute to the life and character of their neighborhoods.

The zoning regulations represent just one facet of the longtime partnership between the Historic Neighborhood Preservation Program and city government. This contrasts vividly with the fate of many other preservation organizations nationally, which operate as perpetual outsiders. Renée was one of the first to recognize that working with municipal leaders would bring more benefit to historic preservation than fighting defensive battles.

At the same time Renée has main-
Zoning incentives introduced by Renée Kahn and Richard Redniss have ensured the preservation of dozens of historic Stamford buildings.

...tained her ability to be critical where necessary. Jack Shannahan, the former State Historic Preservation Officer, says, “Renée has a way of being able to work with people to get to the heart of the matter without compromising her standards.” That is a rare ability, and it accounts for many preservation successes in Stamford.

Thanks to Renée’s training and experience as an artist, her sensibilities have always been at the nexus of Art and Historic Preservation. Her artist’s eye is evident in such varied activities as the illustrations in the HNPP newsletter, her photographic exhibitions to raise awareness of Stamford’s barns and industrial buildings, and her skill in celebrating the small architectural touches that allow even ordinary buildings to give delight to those who use or see them. Renée helps us find interest and beauty in all things historic. She leads us to want to preserve, for the sake of Art as much as for community revitalization.

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

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Wide-Ranging Awards of Merit

The projects chosen for the Connecticut Trust’s Awards of Merit this year exemplify the breadth and depth of preservation in Connecticut. Encompassing landscapes, sacred places, adaptive use, public and private owners, high-end, and do-it-yourself, they demonstrate that historic preservation is many different things.

HARTFORD: OLD NORTH CEMETERY
City of Hartford, Friends of Old North Cemetery, TO Design, LLC, Capitol Restoration, Aegis Restauro

Established in 1807, Hartford’s second-oldest cemetery is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is a stop on the Connecticut Freedom Trail. But like too many historic urban cemeteries, Old North had fallen into serious disrepair. In 2010, the City of Hartford began the first phase of restoration. Safety was the first priority, with roads and paths repaved. Unsafe trees were removed or pruned and fertilized, and new trees planted. The historic fence along Main Street was dismantled and repaired. At the urging of neighbors, 80 grave markers were repaired or cleaned. Much remains to be done, but the City of Hartford is to be honored for investing in this crucial piece of its own heritage despite so many other pressing needs.

HARTFORD: 93 ELM STREET

Even though it is located in a National Register district, unsympathetic owners had mangled this once-grand brownstone, built in 1865 overlooking Bushnell Park. Against the odds, Luke and Sara Bronin bought the house and restored it. They patched the crumbling stone and reconstructed the bay, raising it an additional story to match the neighboring house—reasoning that, since the original had been completely removed, enhancing the rhythm of the street was more important than a precise reconstruction. Inside, they restored remaining fragments and created an energy-efficient design that enhances the historic character. Most important, on this busy street, traveled every day by lawmakers and officials, they have visibly demonstrated the power of preservation to improve the appearance, economy, and morale of our cities and towns.

NEW CANAAN: GORES PAVILION
Friends of the Gores Pavilion, New Canaan Historical Society, Town of New Canaan, William D. Earls, AIA

This poolhouse is a rare work by Landis Gores, one of the “Harvard Five” architects who helped make New Canaan a nationally-known laboratory of Modernist architecture in the mid-20th century. Nonetheless, when the town bought the property for a park, the little building, already in disrepair, faced demolition. A group, known as the Friends of the Gores Pavilion and coordinated through the New Canaan Historical Society, convinced the town to lease the building to the Historical Society. Since then, the poolhouse was listed on the National Register of Historic Places and restored with a grant from the state’s Historic Restoration Fund. The main room has been returned to its original appearance, while gallery spaces occupy the wings.
NEW HAVEN: LOVELL SCHOOL

Built in 1888, the Lovell School is a part of the State Street National Register district. When the city put the building up for sale in 2011, community-based developers Bob and Susan Frew bought it and converted the school to apartments, using state and federal historic rehabilitation tax credits. They cleaned the brick, installed replicas of the original windows, and saved original interior elements—even reusing blackboards as kitchen counters. With ingenious planning they preserved original corridors as well as classroom spaces. The project epitomizes the Frews’ commitment to the State Street neighborhood: as owners and managers of apartments and commercial spaces, mostly in historic buildings, they are important in keeping this historic neighborhood vibrant and exciting.

NEW HAVEN: CONGREGATION BETH ISRAEL (ORCHARD STREET SHUL)

Congregation Beth Israel, Bruce Spiewak, AIA, Robert Spear, Walter’s Construction, LLC, Cherry Hill Construction, Dan Ellis, Dan Ellis, Mark Ndoj, Tony Ndoj, CMC Construction, Parker Electric, Carroll Cut Rate Furniture, Coastline Mechanical, Howie's Flooring

Built in 1924, the Orchard Street Shul is listed on the National Register as the last remaining synagogue in Connecticut with a traditional central bema, or platform, and as a visible remnant of an historically Jewish neighborhood. For many years, as the congregation dwindled, the building saw little use and little care. But recently an energetic rabbi and congregational leaders have revitalized the congregation and, despite limited resources, lovingly restored the building. Volunteers and professionals have repaired brickwork, roof and windows, and modernized mechanical systems. The first phase of work was completed in 2012, in time for the High Holidays and the congregation's 100th anniversary in 2013. It is truly a labor of love.

STAMFORD: ATLANTIC PARK APARTMENTS

Inspirica, Inc., Elena Kalman, A. Emerson Construction, LLC, City of Stamford, Historic Neighborhood Preservation Program of Stamford

Atlantic Park Apartments are two tenement houses built in the 1890s when Stamford’s South End was a bustling neighborhood of factories and factory workers. Now the buildings have now been connected and renovated for permanent supportive housing. The project involved complete restoration of the facades, including new siding and roofing, historically accurate double-hung windows, and total reconstruction of the deteriorated porches, a true gift to the street. In the face of intense redevelopment pressures, this project also assures that at least some historic fabric remains to reflect the South End’s rich history. In Stamford, as in all our communities, it is vital that future redevelopment efforts incorporate wonderful vernacular structures such as these.

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Education, Culture, and Urban Planning: New Listings on the National Register

Three sites recently listed on the National Register of Historic Places tell stories from Connecticut’s 20th-century history—as an educational center, an outpost of the New York cultural scene, and a national leader in urban renewal. The following descriptions have been excerpted from the nominations.

**Hotel America, Hartford**

The Hotel America played a critical role as a central component of Hartford’s signature downtown urban renewal project, Constitution Plaza. Completed, after several delays, in April 1964 and never redeveloped, the hotel is a fine example of urban renewal-era Modernist architecture. The building was designed by the nationally-recognized firm of Curtis and Davis, a partnership with a notable domestic and international design portfolio.

In addition, the Hotel America is notable for two technological aspects of its design. The massive steel trusses which support the building were, at the time, the largest steel members ever implemented in the construction of a building in Connecticut, and its climate control came from the first central plant to provide both heating and cooling service, rather than heat only, to multiple buildings.

—Lucas Karmazinas, FuturePast Preservation

**Eclectic House, Middletown**

Founded in 1837 at Wesleyan, the Eclectic Society of Phi Nu Theta dedicated this structure in 1911. Architect Henry Bacon’s choice of a building
resembling a Greek temple was no accident. The Doric order, so dominant on the front portico, has masculine associations, hence its appropriateness for a fraternity. Yet Eclectic was not just a fraternity but a literary society as well. In 1906, literary education was still rooted in the classical languages and literatures, the most fundamental of which was Greek. However, by 1970 all pretense of being a literary society had been dropped, and the building was given to the University. Since then, the house has basically been a dormitory. The interior has suffered somewhat as a result, but the exterior remains virtually unchanged from the day it was built.


Leroy Anderson house, Woodbury

Leroy Anderson (1908-1975), preeminent American composer, arranger, and conductor, was a specialist in light music for the standard orchestra. Throughout his career, Anderson earned renown for the distinctive rhythms and infectious melodies of Boston Pops favorites like *The Syncopated Clock* (1945), *Sleigh Ride* (1948), and *Blue Tango* (1951), a top single for 1952. Built in 1953, Anderson’s residence is a pristine example of a mid-20th-century Modernist house by Waterbury architect Joseph Stein. The house epitomizes the optimism of an era when Modern design found a place in the American mainstream based on the movement’s ability to deliver a comfortable, easy-maintenance residence geared to family life and casual entertaining. Nearly sixty years after its construction, the house remains an important part of the nation’s cultural heritage.

—Rachel Carley
News for Preservation Month

- Torrington
- Manchester
- Bristol
- Watertown
- Norwich
- New Haven
- Fairfield
- Norwalk

▲ Fairfield. Greenfield Hill Congregational Church (1855, 1944; NR), recently completed repairs to correct inadequate engineering which threatened the building’s roof. Coordinated by architects J. P. Franzen Associates, a team of professionals and church volunteers prepared grant requests, consulted on Park Service standards, and carried out the remediation.

▼ Bristol. The City of Bristol has restored many of the distinctive landscape features and structures of Rockwell Park (1914; NR) and introduced new elements using similar design, working with landscape architects Milone & MacBroom, Inc. Neglect and vandalism led the Trust to list the park as one of Connecticut’s Most Important Threatened Historic Places in 2000.
Around the State

**Norwalk.** With rehabilitation completed, the Grumman-Saint John house opened for business as a guest house of the Norwalk Inn on April 22. The 18th-century house was saved from demolition through an agreement between the Inn, the Norwalk Preservation Trust, and the State of Connecticut. “This was a years-long process that went from people being adversaries to working together and understanding each other’s points of view,” said Tod Bryant, president of the Norwalk Trust. “It’s a powerful thing, that our city’s past can get so many people working toward a single goal.”

**Watertown.** Vociferous protests have followed the historic district commission’s approval of an application by the Taft School to demolish a North Street house (c.1850; NR, LHD)—a highly rare action by any such body. School representatives claim that the house is no longer suitable as a faculty residence, but preservationists are urging the school to sell the building rather than tear it down.

**Manchester.** The Spruce Street firehouse (1923; NR) is now the East Side Public Safety Youth Center. Silver/Petrucelli Architects adapted the decommissioned firehouse as a community youth center and associated Town staff offices, providing space for recreational, youth and community service programs in an underserved neighborhood.

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Harland Griswold Award, cont’d from page 1

Cady-Copp cottage, an endangered early 18th-century dwelling.

In Wallingford, the Wallingford Historic Preservation Trust restored the outhouse behind the Johnson Mansion, future home of the American Silver Museum.

In Suffield, the friends of Hilltop Farm installed an enclosed fire escape and a fire detection-suppression system in their monumental dairy barn.

In Sherman, the Sherman library repaired its slate roof.

In Lebanon, the Connecticut Farmland Trust was able permanently to protect three family farms.

In Bridgeport: Beacon Preservation, of Ansonia, installed a sustainable energy system in the Penfield Light through its Green Light Academy program for students.

This is only a sample. But it’s enough to make it clear that the 1772 Foundation is the single most important private foundation investing in Connecticut’s historic resources today.

Harlan Griswold once said, “To me, preservation is more about my grandchildren than about my grandparents.” In a similar vein, Stewart Kean, the founder of the 1772 Foundation, cited the words of Graeme Shankland, the City Planner of Dublin: “A city without old buildings is like a man without a memory.” Mr. Kean worked diligently during his lifetime to keep our cultural memory alive by protecting historic structures, and the 1772 Foundation is continuing this work. The Foundation is preserving our memories for our grandchildren, and so we are honored to present it with the Harlan H. Griswold Award.

Grants, cont’d from page 3

Old Town Hall Museum (1873; NR), and South Britain Library (1904; NR).

Stonington Historical Society: $20,000 for pre-construction planning for upgrades to the Old Lighthouse (1840; NR).

Waterbury, Neighborworks New Horizons (Mutual Housing of South Central Connecticut): $20,000 for rehabilitation plans and specifications for five properties in the Hillside neighborhood. (NR)

For more information, visit www.cttrust.org and click on “Seek Grants and Loans.”

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Norwich. Public Works employees returned the Osgood statue, stolen from Yantic Cemetery and cut up for scrap in 2010 (see CPN, March/April 2010), to its rightful place on the grave of Sarah Osgood in February. The city’s Cemetery Trust Fund paid for the restoration.

Torrington. Skee’s Diner (c.1926; NR), a beloved local landmark and noteworthy example of early diner design, began its journey to reuse on April 14, when the tiny structure was moved from Main Street, its location since 1944, to a warehouse for restoration. The Torrington Historic Preservation Trust, which is overseeing the project, is negotiating with the city for a permanent site where the diner can once again serve hungry customers.
UNCASVILLE: MOHEGAN VILLAGE
Mohegan Tribe

Since 1931 the Mohegan Tribe has maintained a wigwam and longhouse village at the Tantiquidgeon Museum—the oldest Indian-built Native American museum village in America. Since these structures are not permanent, the village has been rebuilt several times. In the most recent version, completed in 2012, the tribe focused on historical accuracy. Consulting with researchers from Plimoth Plantation, tribe members constructed frames of cedar saplings lashed together with cedar bark. For the covering they obtained yellow poplar and tulip bark from Native Americans in Maryland, as no adequate bark was available in Connecticut. Thanks to this project, the oldest construction technology in the state is being preserved by the descendants of the people who first used it.

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Stowe House Designated National Historic Landmark

The Harriet Beecher Stowe house, in Hartford’s Nook Farm neighborhood, became Connecticut’s newest National Historic Landmark on February 27. The highest level of federal recognition, National Historic Landmarks are places significant to all Americans because of their exceptional values or qualities, which help illustrate or interpret the heritage of the United States.

Although Stowe is most widely known as the author of the best-selling anti-slavery novel *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, the National Historic Landmark designation commemorates a later period in her life (the house where Stowe wrote the novel, in Brunswick, Maine, is already a National Historic Landmark). In the Hartford house, where she lived from 1873 until her death in 1896, Stowe continued her literary and social pursuits. These included producing her last novel, *Poganuc People*, and overseeing new editions of earlier works. Most importantly, she continued her work as a social reformer, particularly on women’s and family issues.

Restored to appear as it did during Stowe’s lifetime, the house is operated by the Harriet Beecher Stowe Center, which also maintains an archive in the neighboring Katherine Seymour Day house, home to Stowe’s niece. Both serve the Center’s primary mission of commemorating Stowe’s life and building on her commitment to social justice to promote discussions of the contemporary issues of race relations, class and gender issues, economic justice, and education equality.

Katherine Kane, the Stowe Center’s Executive Director, said, “We’re delighted to have this recognition. As the only museum devoted to Harriet Beecher Stowe we focus on the central importance of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, but women’s issues and family were at the core of what she was writing about across her career, and they’re still in the news today.”