Rehab Tax Credits: Higher Limit, More Investment

By Daniel Mackay, Executive Director

Just two months into the State’s 2016-2017 Fiscal Year, the Connecticut State Rehabilitation Tax Credit Program is already eighty percent allocated. The program currently operates under a $31.7 million dollar limit on the amount of credits that can be issued each fiscal year. To hit this mark so early signals success and raises concerns.

This is a success because it demonstrates that the program is providing critical financing that attracts reinvestment to historic structures in downtown and neighborhood locations.

continued on page 4
Rebuild by Design, a federally-funded program, is studying efforts to cope with sea level rise in Bridgeport’s South End and Black Rock neighborhoods. The Bridgeport study, called “Resilient Bridgeport,” could provide a model for other coastal communities in Connecticut and beyond.

According to the internationally recognized Union of Concerned Scientists, the warming of the global climate has caused ocean levels to rise an average of eight inches over the past century, at constantly increasing rates. On the east coast of the United States the rise has been greater—approximately sixteen inches in the New York City area—thanks in part to the warmer waters of the Gulf Stream. Storm surges, coupled with increased rainfall caused by global warming, mean that flooding in coastal communities is becoming more frequent and more severe. In addition to the costs of physical repairs to buildings and infrastructure there are economic and emotional costs of repeated disruptions to lives, commerce, and community affairs.

What’s less frequently recognized is that rising sea levels also constitute a preservation issue. Many of our most vulnerable communities have long and rich cultural and architectural histories.

One such area is Bridgeport’s South End, which arose in the 19th century as Bridgeport grew into one of Connecticut’s leading industrial cities. Much of the neighborhood was built on filled marshes fronting on Long Island Sound.

Rich in history, the South End contains six National Register historic districts in residential neighborhoods, ranging from the tiny Gothic Revival cottages of the William D. Bishop Cottage Development to the historically working-class Division Street district to the grand houses of the Marina Park district.

Other National Register properties in the South End are the Seaside Institute, a community center built by the Warner Brother Corset Company, and the Mary and Eliza Freeman houses, remnants of a thriving antebellum community of free African-Americans. One of the South End’s greatest treasures is Seaside Park, originally designed by Frederick Law Olmsted, Calvert Vaux, and Egbert Viele. It offers historic landscapes, recreational facilities, scenic views, and public open space.

In addition, the South End has other resources that could qualify for historic designation, particularly some of its industrial sites identified by the Connecticut Trust’s Making Places project. The Warner Brothers Corset Company (or Warnaco) factory has recently attracted redevelopment interest.

The South End has suffered flooding with increasing frequency. Hurricanes Irene, in 2011, and Sandy, in 2012, were the most dramatic, but even ordinary rainstorms raise water levels. The underpasses beneath the railroad viaduct are particularly troublesome; they flood even in normal rains and hamper evacuation when needed or access for emergency vehicles. The lack of dry access has stopped public funding for revitalization and redevelopment efforts.

continued on page 6
From the Executive Director

The Connecticut Trust is no stranger to late-breaking news and last-minute alerts about preservation issues: a demolition is imminent, emergency funding is needed, a critical municipal vote is two nights hence.

Circuit Riders and other staff do our best to respond under these circumstances, and at times a last minute intervention can be successful. But at staff meetings and during general office talk, we’re frequently musing about how this organization can be better prepared to respond to such alerts. Of even greater interest is how we build capacity and infrastructure to intervene and support historic preservation before an issue hits the red alert stage, often too late in the game.

Effective partnerships are one component of an early-alert infrastructure. This summer, we’ve started to meet with Connecticut State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) staff twice monthly to discuss our respective workload and issues in greater detail, in order to further corroborate, coordinate, and collaborate in our respective roles. The Trust appreciates this invitation from Kristina Newman-Scott, Director of Culture for DECD.

Early involvement is another key component of effective intervention on preservation issues. We were the first statewide group in Connecticut to begin organizing and advocating around the potential impacts of new high-speed rail routes across Connecticut. We co-founded and sponsored a local grassroots group to research and advocate on the issue. Details on where this campaign stands are reported on page 20.

In six months, we’ve earned the respect and attention of federal and state legislators and numerous local officials from this effort to inform and influence a tone-deaf federal planning process that would route high-speed rail through some of Connecticut’s most historic communities. We’ve certainly heard comments that these rail plans are too premature and too expensive to ever implement, so why engage now? Our response: We create the most leverage by organizing as early in the process as possible. Now is the time to take bad ideas out of a rail plan that will dictate spending and construction for the next 25 years.

Capable local partners are critical to an early-intervention infrastructure. At UConn, where nine National Register-contributing structures known as Faculty Row face imminent demolition, lack of public awareness until late in the process has severely constrained opportunities for response. Advocates on this issue have since organized with great energy and intent.

Whatever the outcome for the Faculty Row houses, I am hopeful that local and alumni organizing can evolve into an advocacy effort that can identify the next set of preservation challenges on a rapidly changing campus and guide better planning and reuse for the historic resources on campus.

Statewide awareness of local preservation issues is also a critical component of an early warning/early intervention network. Nearly fifty communities around the state have demolition delay ordinances, but there is no central clearinghouse for historic structures that face this threat. We will pursue legislative action in Hartford to establish a formal mechanism for this type of statewide notification, but the Trust will act now to set up a clearinghouse website to publicize these potential saves to buyers and advocates throughout the state. We hope to launch in September.

The final, essential component of building a more effective early-alert infrastructure is your local knowledge of issues and threats to historic resources in your community. Please contact us with your local insights and concerns, to involve us early in an evaluation and a potential response.

—Daniel Mackay

dmackay@cttrust.org
Preservation Opportunities 2016

Among the projects the credit will fund this year are reuses of historic neighborhood schools and former industrial buildings. Major redevelopment is proceeding in Bristol, Bridgeport, Hartford, and New Britain.

This news raises concerns because projections indicate that the state credits for rehabilitation of historic properties will be fully allocated in just a few months. Subsequent applications to the program will have to draw on the next year’s allocation of credits, compounding the problem for future years.

Conversations with developers and related professionals indicate that there is an extensive list of pending projects, large and small, throughout Connecticut. Each project depends on the availability of the rehabilitation credits both to secure other financing and to fill gaps in capitalization.

Connecticut has two options for responding to the accelerating demand for the rehabilitation tax credits. To operate within the current annual allocation for this program, the state may need to move to a scored system, awarding credits on a competitive basis. That would offer little predictability to potential developers or investors and would require an awkward transition from the open market that the program currently provides.

The second option for the Governor and legislature is to increase the annual allocation for the credits. Raising the allocation to match demand would assure developers and investors that the program will be available at the conclusion of each project’s pre-development process—purchase, design, and financing—and allow these projects to proceed. The Connecticut Trust supports raising the annual allocation for this program.

To catch up to current demand for the tax credits and ensure that projects in the pipeline are not delayed or abandoned, we project a need to increase the credit allocation for commercial projects to $60 million from its current $30 million level for at least the next year or two. In future years, an annual allocation in the $50 million range may match demand.

Doing this will be a challenge as the Governor and Legislature attempt to address continuing revenue shortfalls. But it’s important because this program is effectively contributing to job creation, tax base growth and community renewal in Connecticut, remaking our communities and economy.
The Connecticut Trust is laying the groundwork to advance this proposal:

• We’re reaching out to the Governor’s Office and state agency officials to assess Executive Branch interest in raising the allocation. The easiest route to budget inclusion is to secure a marker in the Governor’s budget proposal.

• We’re mapping past use of the tax credits. It’s clear that New Haven, Hartford, and Bridgeport are among the major beneficiaries to date. New London and other smaller communities are also seeing program impacts. State Legislators will need to understand how their districts have benefited to date from the program.

• We’re talking to developers and related professionals, in state and out, to discover what rehabilitation projects are in early development, and where in Connecticut this reinvestment is planned. This list of pending projects will be critical to building support for increasing the cap above and beyond where the program has already been effective.

Central to this advocacy effort is the ability to justify the cost of increasing the cap for this program. The last economic impact study of Connecticut’s preservation programs was done in 2011, when the state tax credit program was still relatively new on the scene. We’re discussing the need for an updated study with the State Historic Preservation Office (a part of the Department of Economic and Community Development) and national experts, and planning a series of case studies on how completed projects have affected local and state economies.

Beyond the support of the development community, to be successful in making the case for an increased tax credit allotment, we’re going to need public engagement as well. We hope you’ll register for our new e-advocacy program, CQ Roll Call, which will allow you easily and effectively to join the outreach and advocacy needed to secure an increased allotment (for details visit www.cttrust.org).

Staff at the Connecticut Trust have seen first-hand the community redevelopment and economic impact of the state’s historic rehabilitation tax credit programs. We believe these programs are a bright spot in the state’s economic and community redevelopment portfolio. Continued investment in Connecticut’s historic properties depends on raising the rehabilitation tax credit allotment to ensure sustained, long-term investment in Connecticut’s communities.

Please remember the Connecticut Trust in your will or estate plan.

We are incredibly grateful for the visionary donors who have given to us.
Sea Level Rise in Bridgeport, cont’d from page 2

Resilient Bridgeport is part of a nationwide program of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), called Rebuild by Design, with a goal of developing creative strategies for coping with sea level rise. Through Rebuild by Design, HUD awarded $10 million to the State of Connecticut in 2015 for resiliency planning in Bridgeport.

The study area extends beyond the South End to encompass areas to the west, including the Black Rock neighborhood, an older maritime village that eventually was engulfed by the city. Most of Black Rock is a National Register district.

Waggonner & Ball architects, of New Orleans, are the lead consultants for Resilient Bridgeport, along with the international design and environmental consulting group Arcadis, the Yale Urban Design Workshop, and, locally, Dorgan Architecture and Planning, the Bridgeport Neighborhood Trust, and the City of Bridgeport.

The $10 million HUD grant is funding two activities: $2.5 million to develop strategies for reducing flood risk and improving resilience in the South End and Black Rock areas, and $7.5 million to complete a pilot project demonstrating possible resilience solutions on the western side of the South End. A second HUD grant, of $45 million, will fund a larger construction project in the eastern portion of the neighborhood.

Resiliency planning for the study area as a whole is organized around six strategies:

Green edge. In nature, shoreline marshes and lowlands absorb tides and storm surges. Many shoreline communities are built on filled marshland. However, Bridgeport is fortunate in having Seaside Park on its waterfront. Not only an historic and recreational asset, the park’s open space serves as a buffer for the neighborhood behind it. Adjustments to its design may improve the park’s function as a buffer to rising water.

Raised egress. Access to the South End from the rest of Bridgeport is through underpasses under the railroad line and Interstate 95, low spots which flood often. The planning team is looking at the possibility of raising principal streets such as Park, South, and University avenues. Park Avenue already runs along a high spine, safer from flooding than areas to either side. It’s not yet clear how these raised streets will cross the interstate or the railroad with its high catenary cables.

Perimeter protection. Floodwalls and dikes are an age-old strategy for keeping water out, but they’re expensive to build and maintain. Barriers can cost less if they’re farther inland but that raises the question of what gets protected and what gets left outside. Less obvious are the effects on daily life. In Bridgeport, planners are studying barriers on the eastern and western sides of the South End, on either side of the Park Avenue spine. Some of the barriers could be built in conjunction with raised streets.

Green and Blue streets. Changes to street design can help manage the flow of water. Green streets include landscape elements such as swales or gardens that
can absorb water. Blue streets incorporate drains to channel storm water into sewers.

**Utility microgrids.** Dividing utilities into smaller components can avoid widespread service interruptions when one portion of the grid goes down. For example, the University of Bridgeport already has fuel cells to supply backup power to key buildings.

**Building adaptation.** Buildings can be made more flood resistant in a number of ways, from applying sealants to moving furnaces, water heaters, and electrical panels out of flood-prone basements. The most obvious, lifting structures onto higher foundations, is very expensive. New construction can be designed to lift buildings above expected flood levels.

In addition to the general resilience plan, Resilient Bridgeport includes a pilot project on the western side of the South End. Centered on the site of the Marina Village public housing project, the pilot project area also includes Seaside Village, a World War I-era housing development for munitions workers that’s listed on the National Register.

One peculiarity of the funding structure is that the pilot project must be planned and constructed at the same time as the general resiliency plan is being developed, rather than following a completed plan. Both must be completed by the end of 2021. Taking permitting, bidding, and construction into account, the basic shape of the pilot project must be determined by next spring. With a budget of only $7.5 million, the pilot project will be very limited in scope.

So far, the Rebuild by Design process has paid relatively little attention specifically to historic resources. Presentations have looked at the study area as a whole. Since nearly the entire area consists of traditional urban neighborhoods, in a sense the whole study could be seen as addressing the preservation of historic resources. However, as consultants, residents, and officials evaluate the options under consideration federal and state environmental review policies will require them to consider potential impacts on historic resources (see page 8).

For instance, efforts to improve Seaside Park’s function as a buffer will have to be considered in light of its historic landscape. Given the park’s naturalistic character, sensitive designers should be able to incorporate new features into the existing landscape, and perhaps even restore historic elements that have been lost.

The effect of raised roadways or green or blue streets on historic structures and streetscapes remains uncertain. Will occupants find themselves looking out at blank walls? Is there space to construct green street elements within existing rights of way?

Alterations to historic structures have already encountered difficulties. The National Park Service discourages elevating historic structures, considered to have an adverse effect on historic character. On the other hand, grants from the Federal Emergency Management Administration may require elevation. Is preserving historic character worth leaving structures vulnerable to flood damage or destruction?

These and other questions will arise as the study continues. The Bridgeport projects have really only begun. However, their extent, complexity, and costs show vividly the scale of the problems faced by other coastal communities in Connecticut and beyond.
Many people think of historic preservation and environmental protection as separate activities, but the environmental review process is one of the most valuable, yet little-known, tools for preserving historic sites. Both federal and Connecticut state law give the same importance to the consideration of archeological sites or the historic built environment that they give to animals, plants, water quality, and other natural resources. The premise is that once these resources—natural or cultural—are damaged or destroyed, they cannot be brought back. For this reason, the Connecticut State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) is considered an environmental review agency and environmental review constitutes a large portion of staff activities.

Passed in the wake of massive post-World War II redevelopment, the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966 set up a framework for preservation. Section 106 of that law requires review of any project that involves federal funding or permitting. Similarly, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), passed in 1971, requires that, prior to any federal undertaking, the government consider the effects of its actions on the environment, including historic resources. On the state level, the Connecticut Environmental Policy Act (CGS 22a-1a through 22a-1h) is a parallel to NEPA and requires the State to identify and evaluate the impacts of its actions before beginning work. The process requires that each state department, institution, or agency engaging in activities that are being funded, either fully or in part, by the State to make a preliminary assessment of the potential impacts of its actions.

If these impacts are significant, the project sponsor must prepare an Environmental Impact Evaluation. This document thoroughly details the existing conditions of the project location, presents a consideration of alternatives to achieve the project goals, and analyzes potential impacts to the environment by the proposed alternatives. The results are shared with other agencies and the public.

Environmental review determined that replacing water lines would have no permanent effect on the Durham National Register district.
for review and comment. The project sponsor must review and respond to all comments in a final document called the Record of Decision. The Office of Policy Management provides a final review and determines whether or not the environmental documentation is adequate and the project may go forward.

Last year, SHPO reviewed approximately 2,500 state or federally funded or permitted projects pursuant only to the Policy Act. In all these cases, the first thing we consider is whether or not historic properties have been recorded within the area to be affected by the project or if there is a need for an identification survey. If there are no properties listed on or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, then our office makes a finding of No Historic Properties Affected, and no further review is necessary. This finding is made for nearly three-quarters of the projects our office reviews.

If historic properties will be affected by the undertaking, then SHPO evaluates those effects. For example, the United States Environmental Protection Agency is replacing water lines in the Durham Historic District. The project related impacts are temporary, such as increased noise during construction, and will not impact the significance of the district. As a result, SHPO made a finding of No Adverse Effect.

While cases where there are no historic properties or no adverse effects are easily reviewed, other projects present greater challenges. SHPO frequently works with project proponents to avoid or minimize adverse effects. For example, plans for a new magnet school in Bloomfield called for the access drive to be built through an archeologically sensitive area. During consultation, SHPO requested that an archeological survey be completed. The survey identified a significant site, but through a re-design of the access drive adverse impacts to the site were avoided. SHPO makes or negotiates a finding of No Adverse Effect in approximately one quarter of its reviews.

Sometimes, however, consultation is not able to avoid or reduce harm to historic resources. In these situations, SHPO makes a finding of Adverse Effect. Last year, this finding was made in less than one percent of all projects reviewed by SHPO. In these rare cases, SHPO requests mitigation measures to compensate for the historic loss. For example, the City of Shelton is receiving money from the State to promote development along its historic industrial canal. The original plan included a significant amount of historic building loss. Through intense negotiations, SHPO and the City have worked out a plan that includes far less loss, as well as a National Register nomination for the remainder of the historic resources. In addition, Shelton will become a Certified Local Government, offer tax abatements for improving blighted properties, adopt a demolition delay ordinance, and allow SHPO to review designs for any new construction.

It’s important to note that the State Historic Preservation office does not have the authority to approve or reject a project; it only provides consultation or comments. Nonetheless, environmental review gives SHPO a very real ability to promote the protection of historic resources. But the final element is you—although these laws give a defined role to SHPO for consultation, public involvement is also critical to the environmental review process.

To follow Connecticut Environmental Policy Act reviews, visit www.ct.gov/ceq/monitor.
Hartford. ►
In August, Governor Dannell Malloy and leaders of the General Assembly agreed to halt the transfer of the Old State House (1796; NHL) from the Office of Legislative Management (OLM) to the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP), as mandated by the General Assembly. Faced with insufficient funds for operations, or even for security and climate control, DEEP had announced plans to return borrowed artworks and artifacts to their owners. The announcement raised worries among historians that dispersing exhibits would make it impossible to reopen the building. In a letter dated August 5, the governor wrote, “It is my understanding that legislative leaders have agreed...[that] OLM would maintain responsibility for the Old State House until new alternatives for the future of that facility could be acted on during the 2017 legislative session.” For the moment, Old State House staff is operating out of the offices of CPAN, a nonprofit that is paying staff out of its own pocket, reports Donald Rogers, president of the Connecticut Coordinating Committee for the Promotion of History. However, notes Rogers, if the Old State House does not reopen soon its programs will unravel. He and other history advocates are urging legislators to find a way to get the museum running again without waiting for the next legislative session and to work with Old State House staff to provide for the landmark’s future operation.

Bloomfield. ►
Volunteers from Ironwood Community Partners dismantled a rare prefabricated house from the 1930s in July. Manufactured by General Houses, Inc., of Chicago, the house was one example of Depression-era efforts to boost homeownership through mass production. The Bloomfield house, erected in 1936, was built with a steel frame and asbestos cement wall panels and featured up-to-date heating system and kitchen and bathroom fittings. (Another of the company’s houses is located at Connecticut College and listed on the National Register.) Over the years, owners installed new siding and a pitched roof over the original flat roof. The house has been donated to the University of Hartford, where architecture students will develop ideas for its reuse. New apartments will be built on the original site.
Around the State

弇 Lebanon.
Expansion of the Jonathan Trumbull Library, located on the Lebanon Green (1705; NR), hit a snag when the town could not prove ownership of the land, as required to receive state funding. A title search revealed that the green still belongs to the heirs of the town’s original proprietors. This historical twist has helped preserve the mile-long open space from improvements, since tracking down thousands of heirs to approve changes is impossibly difficult. In New Haven, where the proprietors’ heirs also retain ownership of the green, the General Assembly authorized a committee in 1810 to act on behalf of the owners. A similar arrangement would seem to be the solution for Lebanon. However, whatever the process the effect of enlarging both the library building and its parking lot on the historic appearance of the green remains to be considered.

弇 Mansfield.
The University of Connecticut is proceeding with plans to demolish nine historic faculty dwellings variously known as Faculty Row or the Brown Houses (c.1910-1920; NR). The houses are significant as part of a campus master plan created in 1910 by landscape architect Charles N. Lowrie. Despite spotty maintenance they remain attractive; with their shady setting the houses provide rare human-scaled oasis in the UConn campus. Since 1989, University statements have consistently indicated an intention to demolish the houses. According to UConn’s current master plan, part of the area will be kept as open space; the remainder is slated for new buildings for which there are plans but no current funding. The university has already fenced off some of the houses in preparation for demolition. However, the Office of Policy and Management has ruled that actual demolition cannot begin until UConn completes mitigation measures agreed to with the State Historic Preservation Office. These measures include documentation of the houses and hosting a statewide preservation symposium to be presented by SHPO in the spring of 2017. Potentially the most important mitigation measure is the creation of more extensive guidelines for the preservation of other historic campus build-

continued on page 12
nings and sites, which could change UConn’s building culture into the future. In the meantime, local advocates have launched an online petition and a Facebook page to urge preserving the houses on-site.

New Haven.  ►
Expansion of the Wooster Square National Register district was halted after a small group of residents claimed the designation could be a first step to government regulation of their properties. The district, listed in 1971, suffers from a sketchy nomination that doesn’t clearly indicate whether properties contribute to the area’s historic importance—a requirement for some federal programs. In addition, historical understandings now put greater emphasis on topics such as immigration and urban renewal, two important themes in Wooster Square. Extending the boundaries would better match neighborhood identity and allow more owners to qualify for public programs such as Hurricane Sandy relief and historic rehabilitation tax credits. Nonetheless, opponents pointed to the state enabling legislation for local preservation commissions, which allows municipalities to adopt a range of preservation measures, with design review as one option, but not a necessary one. Repeated assurances that the City had no intention of adopting such an ordinance had no effect, and in the end the State Historic Preservation Office opted to update the nomination within its current boundaries.

Putnam  ►
The Connecticut Department of Transportation has restored Memorial Bridge, which carries US Route 44 over the Quinebaug River. Constructed in 1925, the concrete-arch bridge was conceived as a memorial to Putnam’s World War I veterans, with the town contributing additional funding for a wider roadway, sidewalks, brass lamps, and bronze plaques commemorating town residents who served in the war. Eighty years later, the substructure was still sound, but the sidewalks, parapets, and concrete lamp bases were severely deteriorated. DOT replaced them in-kind, with the work done by contractor Northern Construction Service LLC of Palmer, Massachusetts. Work was completed last year, but residents and the department are continuing efforts to reproduce two of the plaques, which had disappeared. One of Connecticut’s mostly finely detailed spans of the 1920s, the Memorial Bridge will continue to provide an imposing gateway to downtown Putnam.
Southington Community Cultural Arts (SoCCA) held a soft opening of the Gura Building (1925; NR) in July, marking its rebirth as a community arts center. The town-owned structure faced possible demolition in 2012, when SoCCA lobbied to lease and renovate it. Historic Preservation Technical Assistance Grants from the Connecticut Trust assisted with planning, and state bonds and Connecticut Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits funded much of the renovation, along with community donations and volunteer labor. SoCCA rents studio space to artists and offers classes. The renovated building also contains a gallery and performance space. For more information, visit www.southingtonarts.org.

The Chidsey-Linsley house was built about 1790 across from the East Haven Green, where General Lafayette and his troops camped during the Revolution. The 1½-story, center-chimney Cape is notable for its unusual flaring roof, which swoops out to wide eaves front and back—a feature common in Dutch houses on nearby Long Island but extremely rare in Connecticut. The builders thriftily re-used parts from an older house, which still can be seen in the basement. They even reused an older foundation, which may account for the double front door and the side door—both features typically seen only on larger dwellings. Owned for many years by an architectural historian, the Chidsey-Linsley house retains its original layout and most of the original exterior clapboards. Interior floors, trim, and paneling remain in pristine condition. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the house is eligible for Connecticut’s Historic Homes Rehabilitation Tax Credit. Within walking distance are shops and restaurants, Long Island Sound, and scenic salt marshes.

$199,500

Katherine Bennett, Betsy Grauer Realty, (203) 787-3434; katherine@betsygrauerrealty.com
The National Park Service recently added three Connecticut sites to the National Register of Historic Places—an 18th-century house and historic districts in a town center and an urban downtown. The district nominations both grew out of the Trust’s Vibrant Communities Initiative and are part of broader preservation activities in both communities. New applications to the VCI program, which is funded by grants from the State Historic Preservation Office through the Community Investment Act, are currently suspended due to state budget cuts.

The Amos Baldwin house, in Norfolk, was built between about 1765 and remained the center of an active farm into the 20th century. The house gets its name from Amos Baldwin, who bought the property in 1811. In addition to agriculture, Baldwin operated a shingle mill, a sawmill, and, briefly, a factory that made cheese boxes. From 1940 to 1943 the house was a dormitory for the Norfolk School, a boys’ boarding school at which students supplemented classwork with farming to develop self-sufficiency and an appreciation for country living.

Since the school closed the house has been a private residence. In addition to simple Georgian ornament, it is notable for its gambrel roof, with unusual framing. Restoration for modern living followed the common Colonial Revival practice of using salvaged elements from other 18th-century buildings while installing modern bathrooms and kitchen.

The Westport Center historic district encompasses that town’s center, an area that grew between the 18th and 20th centuries from an agricultural village to a maritime shipping center and then a commercial and civic core.

The district’s streets are densely lined with buildings, the products of new construction and adaptation of existing structures to accommodate changing and growing needs of the district’s businesses.

**New Listings on the National Register**

Around the State

**West River Restoration**

18th and early 19th century structural repair, restoration and recreation.

Doors, windows, trim, siding, period rooms, floors, sills, framing, fireplaces, masonry, kitchens, baths, and barns.

**Thomas Linskey**

350 Middle Haddam Rd.
Portland, CT 06486
860-342-2289 860-463-1185

“As an old house craftsman dedicated to perpetuating early Connecticut architecture, one job at a time, large or small, for individuals and organizations.”
By the 20th century, nearly uniform building heights and continuous street frontage reflected efforts to maximize profitable land use.

In addition to commercial design, high-style dwellings and civic structures in a mix of styles provide evidence of Westport's consistent prosperity amid changing tastes. The picturesque Old English design of the former Westport YMCA building (1923) reflected the transformation of the district into a prosperous suburban commercial and civic center, as well as the romanticism of its inhabitants. Continuing the district's history of commercial development and adaptation, the building is currently being converted to retail use.

A community center at a different scale is seen in the Downtown New Britain historic district, befitting the industrial city that emerged in the mid-19th century as the self-proclaimed “Hardware Capital of the World.”

Almost no manufacturing buildings are located within the district. Instead, it is dominated by blocky multi-story structures with imposing facades which served New Britain’s commercial, business, and residential needs. Amid them, institutional structures such as churches and civic buildings, as well as public open spaces, punctuate the urban landscape. Many of the buildings are the work of local architects and architectural firms that thrived in the prospering city.
Lighthouse Inn (1902)
48 Guthrie Place, New London

On the auction block again! The Lighthouse Inn, its three buildings (the Mansion, Watchman’s House and Carriage House) on 4.2 acres, will go to public auction on October 5, when the storied local landmark will be sold to the highest bidder. The auction will take place at 2 p.m. at New London City Hall. A property tour is scheduled from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. on September 28.

The Mission-style Lighthouse Inn is individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The inn was designed by Boston architect William Ralph Emerson (1833-1917), one of New England’s leading designers of the late 19th century and an originator of the Shingle style. Lighthouse Inn blends elements of earlier work with the Mission idiom, marking a skillful transition to the late-century fashion of period revivals.

Rehabilitation of the property may qualify for historic tax credits and grants.

Contact: JJ Manning & Co Auctioneers, http://jjmanning.com

National Register listing: http://npgallery.nps.gov/nrhp/AssetDetail?assetID=d4d0c837-aba7-4b96-9336-011addca6659

(photo credit jjmanning.com)
198 Sherman Avenue (1870)
New Haven
This stately French Second Empire-style residence suffers from a significant amount of deferred maintenance but has great potential. Built in 1870, the house boasts a grand central entry, mansard roof, mahogany doors, and other period details. Located near Yale-New Haven Hospital, the property may be rehabbed for several uses including commercial. Rehab of the property may qualify for historic tax credits and grants.

Contact: Tom Simjian, Keller Williams Realty, Tsimjian@kw.com, 203-506-0388

Pinney School (1895)
Stafford
Owned by Town of Stafford and located in the Stafford Hollow National Register Historic District, the Pinney School is available for purchase. Pinney School, built in 1895, was the town’s first graded school and illustrates the evolution of education away from the district or one-room schoolhouse system. Stafford Hollow is one of several manufacturing-based villages within the town of Stafford, but it is one which has changed relatively little since the 19th century. The mill pond, mill, dam, and stores remain the focus of the village, around which the former homes of mill owners, machinists, and other workers stand as evidence of the role of textile mills and machine shops in the village’s origin and development. Redevelopment of the property may qualify for historic tax credits and grants.

Contact: Anthony Frassinelli – First Selectman, Warren Memorial Town Hall, Second Floor, 1 Main Street, Stafford Springs, CT 06076 staffordtownhall@staffordct.org
National Register listing: http://npgallery.nps.gov/nrhp/AssetDetail?assetID=0143039c-298e-4bf4-b3bc-e9c2a859caf4

Deadline for the next issue is October 21, 2016.

Historic Properties Exchange is published to advertise endangered properties in Connecticut by the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation, a statewide nonprofit organization located at 940 Whitney Avenue, Hamden, Connecticut 06517. Real estate advertised in this publication is subject to the Federal Housing Act of 1968. Neither advertisers nor the Connecticut Trust are responsible or liable for any misinformation, misprints, or typographical errors contained in Historic Properties Exchange.

To list a property, learn about properties listed or to subscribe, contact Jane Montanaro, Director of Preservation Services, at jmontanaro@cttrust.org or call 203-562-6312.
Immigrants drawn to New Britain's factories contributed to the district's development. Churches provide the most obvious evidence of the newcomers, but another outstanding example is the elaborately ornamented Vega Hall (1897), built by a Swedish-American fraternal organization.

The district nomination was prepared by graduate students from Central Connecticut State University’s public history program, under the direction of Professor Leah Glaser.

In addition to these new listings, the Park Service approved plans for moving the Hoyt-Barnum House in Stamford, currently a museum operated by the Stamford Historic Society. The City wants the house’s site for a new police station and has agreed to move the structure to another location. Because the new site lies north of the Merritt Parkway, the house will be cut into three parts—main block, roof, and leanto—to fit through the Parkway underpass.

Normally, relocated structures are not eligible for the National Register. However, the Park Service has determined that as long as the move follows the approved plans the Hoyt-Barnum house will retain its architectural significance and can remain listed. Final determination must await completion of the move and restoration on the new site.
nears. The Trust’s concern is that committing to a route before understanding its effects on historic and natural resources is a fundamentally flawed process.

Unlike other states along Amtrak’s Northeast Corridor between Boston and Washington, Connecticut faces potential dramatic changes in where and how the Federal Railway Administration (FRA) builds the next generation of high-speed rail service. Three options are proposed for the state; all involve construction of new rail lines outside existing corridors, with dramatic effects.

Internal emails from the Connecticut Department of Transportation, obtained by SECoast through a Freedom of Information Act request in June, indicate that the FRA committed to a preferred route just two days after the close of a national public comment period in February, despite more than 1,200 comments from Connecticut residents.

While the FRA and ConnDOT deny the preemptory selection of a route, all signs point to FRA’s recommitting to a coastal route throughout Connecticut, with fifty miles of re-routing for dedicated high-speed rail service between Old Saybrook and Kenyon, Rhode Island. A Freedom of Information Act request filed with the FRA for early details on their routing selection, process, and potential impacts remains unfilled five months after filing.

U.S. Senators Richard Blumenthal and Chris Murphy and Representative Joe Courtney, have collectively called on the FRA to abandon the coastal bypass and assure Connecticut communities that historic, cultural, and environmental resources will be protected. In both committee testimony in Washington and appearances in Connecticut, Senator Blumenthal has repeatedly described the coastal bypass option as “hare-brained and half-baked.” State Senator Paul Formica and Representative Devin Carney have been highly engaged in representing their constituents’ concerns about bypass impacts.

Fairfield County communities also appear to be subject to new routing for the successor for Acela service. Upgraded service and new railroad cars appear to be planned for the Springfield/Hartford/New Haven corridor to better integrate those cities to the coastal route.

Residents in Old Lyme remain extremely concerned about potential re-routing through the community’s National Register District, should the coastal bypass be selected. Impacts on communities further east are now also facing public scrutiny.

The FRA finally consented to hold a public forum in late August. The tightly controlled event required the public to submit questions in advance. A standing-room only crowd of more than 500 citizens heard political leaders from every municipality between Old Saybrook and Stonington express opposition to the bypass. Instead, they asked for reinvestment and upgrades to existing infrastructure.

A senior FRA representative twice stated that any bypass plan would commit to tunnelling under the Connecticut River and Old Lyme’s National Register District. Another senior FRA official told the CT Mirror that the agency could not make that commitment, but retracted that statement the day following the event. For details, visit www.SECoast.org.
Over the last eight months, the Connecticut Trust has partnered with SECoast, a grassroots group based in southeastern Connecticut, to assess and publicize the impacts of proposed new high-speed rail routes through Connecticut. Public announcement of a preferred route is expected in early September. A final decision, expected before year’s end, will determine rail investments in the Northeast through at least 2040.

Worries about the impacts of new route though Connecticut started in the historic coastal community of Old Lyme but through effective outreach and advocacy have now spread to other communities as a decision.

continued on page 19