



NEWS RELEASE  
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation Presents Awards

The Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation will present its annual Connecticut Preservation Awards on Wednesday, April 7, recognizing outstanding preservation projects and people who have made significant contributions to the preservation of Connecticut's historic buildings and places.

This year's awards:

#### The Janet Jainschigg Award of Excellence

To **Bruce Fraser**, Executive Director of the Connecticut Humanities Council. Fraser, who holds a doctorate in history from Columbia, has made engaging Connecticut citizens with their state's history a central mission of the CHC. Projects include *The Land of Steady Habits*, a brief and accessible state history that Fraser wrote in 1988 for the Connecticut Historical Commission, the Emmy-winning "Connecticut Experience," a series of history documentaries on public television, and, most recently, the newly launched Encyclopedia of Connecticut History Online. At the same time, the Council's Heritage Development program supports a wide variety of exhibits and other programs, many with local historical societies.

Realizing that it's impossible to cultivate the heritage community without investing in its historic places as well, Fraser forged an enduring partnership with the Connecticut Trust to foster the strong connection and inevitable relationship that the cultural heritage/museum community must have with historic preservation. The Connecticut Trust's Historic Preservation Technical Assistance Grant (HPTAG) program was started as a result of this relationship and has been generously funded by the CHC since 2003. From that start, the HPTAG program has become a signature program for the Trust, with grants reaching communities across the state. Further, the re-grant funds from the Humanities Council have resulted in the Trust gaining its own line item in the state budget to support part of the program, while our partnership continues.

None of this could have happened without Fraser's leadership at the state Capitol, where he has become an incredibly effective lobbyist for Connecticut's history. Fraser "makes sure people knew what his programs are," says Rep. Denise Merrill, House Majority Leader. "He has established relationships with people."

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. Bruce Fraser exemplifies the professional excellence that the Janet Jainschigg Award celebrates.

### **Community Vision Awards**

New this year, the Connecticut Trust's Community Vision Awards recognize projects in which the Trust has been substantially involved, either through grants or extensive staff involvement. "We push a lot of things that never come to anything," says Executive Director Helen Higgins. "In these cases communities really stepped up."

To the **City of Hartford** and the **Hartford Preservation Alliance** for the **Hartford Preservation Ordinance**. In 2005 Hartford became the first municipality in Connecticut to enact a citywide preservation ordinance. Promoted by the Hartford Preservation Alliance and using background research by the Connecticut Circuit Rider program, the ordinance protects some 5,000 buildings and establishes preservation as an overall priority for the city. After a three-year test period, the ordinance became permanent in 2009. The Connecticut Trust hopes that many other Connecticut cities and towns will follow Hartford's lead.

To the **Town of Hebron** for preservation of the **Peters house, Hebron**. This fine Georgian house was long thought to have been the home of the Loyalist Anglican minister Samuel Peters. Actually, its story turns out to be even more interesting: although the main portion was built after the Revolution, study suggests that the rear wing was a freestanding structure that probably home to enslaved African-American family of Cesar and Lewis, whom the townspeople helped to rescue from an attempt to sell them in 1787. The town recently acquired the house with a large parcel of open space land and has struggled to find a use for the building, even considering selling it to a developer at one point. Grants from the Connecticut Trust have helped to fund two in-depth studies of its history and physical condition, laying the groundwork for a \$200,000 restoration grant received from the state.

To the **Hotchkiss Library of Sharon**: for ongoing efforts to preserve and utilize its historic building, located in both a National Register district and a local historic district. The Romanesque Revival structure was built in 1893 to designs by New York architect Bruce Price. Instead of considering a new building location on the edge of town with spacious parking lots, the Hotchkiss Library has looked at ways to enhance and add to its historic building in the town center. Connecticut Trust grants have helped the library to study the building's history and architecture in greater detail.

### **Connecticut Preservation Awards: Awards of Merit**

To **Bridgeport Neighborhood Trust and Mutual Housing of Southwestern Connecticut** for renovation of **101-103 Barnum Avenue, Bridgeport**. Located in a National Register district and a local historic district, this Gothic Revival house, built in 1853, had suffered extensive water and fire damage. The city condemned the house, but eventually these two nonprofit organizations were able to buy it in a foreclosure sale. They restored the exterior and remodeled the interior, converting the two-family house to four condominium units for first-time homebuyers.

To **Common Ground Institute**, for renovation of the **Betty Ruth and Milton B. Hollander Foundation Center, Hartford**. The Capitol Building was built in 1926 as an office building; it is located in a National Register district. After threatened demolition was averted through two lawsuits, the building was donated to Common Ground, which has

converted it to a mix of retail and offices, plus supportive, affordable, and market-rate housing. Demonstrating that preservation is green building, the Hollander Center is the first LEED-certified mixed-use building in Connecticut, the first LEED-certified multifamily residential building in Connecticut, and the first LEED-certified building utilizing historic tax credits in Connecticut.

To the **Town of Old Lyme and Paul B. Bailey Architect** for restoration, renovation and sympathetic additions to **Memorial Town Hall, Old Lyme**. To update this c.1920 municipal building, located in a National Register district and a local historic district, the town removed vinyl siding, improved code and accessibility provisions, restored significant interior spaces, and added new meeting room and offices with minimal impact on the original structure.

To **William Bretschger** for the restoration of **Orient Lodge, Stamford**. Orient Lodge, an unusual Asian-themed Arts and Crafts bungalow, escaped becoming yet another Fairfield County teardown after Stamford designated it a Public Historic Property. But preventing demolition was only the first step. Working with a treasure trove of original photographs, Bretschger cleared out choking underbrush and invasive wildlife, replaced the leaky roof, repaired extensive wood rot, replaced mechanicals, and reglazed existing windows, all to bring this amazing house back to prime condition.

To the **Friends of Elizabeth Park**: for restoration of historic rose arches and overall stewardship for the Elizabeth Park Rose Garden, in West Hartford. Elizabeth Park boasts the oldest municipal rose garden in the nation. Since the 1970s, the Friends of Elizabeth Park have overseen the care of the garden, a job beyond the capacity of city parks department. Most recently, they have seen the repair or replacement of the wood-and-steel arches that support rambling roses and form a central feature of the garden. Many of Connecticut's most treasured public places depend on this sort of public-private partnership.

To **Stephen Lasar Architects**, of New Milford, for documentation of the Micheels house, in Westport. Designed by the famed Modernist architect Paul Rudolph, the Micheels house fell in 2007, demolished for yet another overblown McMansion. Before demolition, Connecticut Trust staff members were able to photograph and measure the house. Stephen Lasar Architects volunteered the technical expertise to convert those rough field notes into a computer-assisted record done to the standards of the Historic American Buildings Survey so that future generations will have some record of this lost masterpiece.

To **Connecticut Explored magazine** and the **Connecticut Commission on Culture & Tourism** for "Built It/Razed It III," the Winter 2009-2010 issue of *Connecticut Explored*. The third of an ongoing series of thematic issues focusing on historic preservation, "Built It/Razed It III" focuses on Connecticut's 20<sup>th</sup>-century architecture and history in all their range and diversity, from Philip Johnson's Glass House to prefabricated Lustron Houses, from roadside culture to furniture by Jens Risom, from Connecticut's image in the movies to the modern aspects of the seemingly traditional architecture of Theodore Pope.

#### **Connecticut Preservation Awards: Commendation**

To **Carol and Henry Hill and Rob Sanders Architects** for the rescue, preservation and adaptive use of two endangered historic barns for the Hills' business in Wilton.

The awards will be presented at a public ceremony on Wednesday, April 7, at the State Capitol, beginning at 5:30.

**About the Connecticut Trust:** Currently celebrating its 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary, The Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation is a nonprofit statewide membership organization established by special act of the Connecticut General Assembly in 1975. Working with local preservation groups and individuals as well as statewide organizations, the Trust encourages, advocates, and facilitates historic preservation throughout Connecticut.

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