

# NEWS & VIEWS

Summer 2016

## From Workers to Families — Winchester Lofts



New Haven continues the phoenix-like transformation of her industrial architectural heritage with the adaptive conversion of a key building of the former Winchester Repeating Arms Company complex. Vacant for many years, the now-renovated brick building at 275 Winchester Avenue is a compelling fit of contemporary living into the historic character of this 125-year-old structure.

One of the three winners of the 2016 New Haven Preservation Trust Awards, this classic industrial shed was transformed without losing its essential character.

The block-long, three- and four-story structures are a classic form of factory architecture, with tall windows originally for naturally lit workspaces and high ceilings for shaft and belt-driven lathes and

other machinery, as well as wood, concrete, and steel framing and wood floors. An adjacent portion was built in 1914. Chief architect for the complex of attractive and functional buildings from about 1890 to 1920 was Leoni Robinson of New Haven. Now rebuilt, repointed, and restored to the standards of the Secretary of the Interior and the National Park Service, the project is receiving \$19.6 million in federal and state historic tax credits. New window treatments reflect the original large openings with smaller panes, while interior walls reveal the original warm, red-brick construction.

Founded in 1866, the Winchester Company manufactured firearms for military, hunting, and sport users, growing particularly during World Wars I and II, and it was also known for the lever-action rifle seen in many Westerns of the twentieth century, “the gun that won the West.” More than 10,000 people worked here at the peak of production, when there were over sixty buildings in the complex. This site was ideal for the company because of its location next to the historic New Haven and Northampton Railroad (now the Farmington Canal Heritage Greenway). However, over the decades business declined and many buildings were demolished; production ceased in New Haven in 2006.

The adaptive use of this 200,000-square-foot former factory is a \$60 million combined commitment of the developer, Forest City, and lending institutions, with help from a \$4 million state CHAMP (Competitive Housing Assistance for Multifamily Properties) grant in addition to the nearly \$20 million in federal and state historic tax credits. It is a mixed-income residential development with a blend of market-rate and affordable units.

The entire original factory complex was nominated to the National Register for Historic Places in 1988, qualifying it for the tax-credit program. In 2013 this district was significantly expanded to include the Newhallville residential area of over 1,200 residences, which originally served as

**continued on page 2**

## Contents

- 1 From Workers to Families—  
Winchester Lofts
- 2 Recognition for the  
Preservation Trust's  
New Haven Modern Website
- 3 President's Letter
- 4 Continuing Presence  
but Changing Purpose:  
Trinity Church Home Chapel
- 5 Adapt or Die:  
The 2016 New Haven  
Preservation Trust Awards
- 6 Tours & Lectures:  
Learning from the Past  
  
Grants from  
the Preservation Trust's  
Historic Structures Fund
- 7 Creative Thinking:  
The Preservation Trust  
and the Development of  
Upper State Street

### Winchester Lofts, continued

housing for many of the factory workers and their families. In April 2015, the district expansion was approved by the U.S. Department of the Interior's National Park Service.

The project is adjacent to another recent adaptive use of a former Winchester building, the headquarter offices of Higher One, a financial services company. The company, along with Winstanley Enterprises, Forest City Residential Group, and Science Park Development Corporation, converted the buildings, which date back to 1915 and encompass 140,000 square feet.

This is the latest phase of projects involving Winchester renovations, dating back to the 1983 creation of Science Park Development Corporation with Yale University's involvement for business incubator spaces. Yale has since moved a number of administrative functions to the complex and built a new garage. Another renovation of a historic building for an additional 200 residential units, with additional state aid

for environmental remediation, is currently under consideration by Forest City.

The Winchester Lofts redevelopment site is in accord with the State of Connecticut's Conservation and Development Policies Plan as an infill project within an existing developed area because it meets the following criteria: it is located within existing

**More than 10,000 people  
worked here at the peak of production,  
when there were over sixty  
buildings in the complex.**

public utilities service areas; it encourages transit-oriented development by connecting with multiple modes of transportation; it promotes energy conservation through sustainable materials and practices; it avoids impact to natural and cultural resources; and it also promotes mixed uses, in this case residential and office. \*

### RECOGNITION FOR THE PRESERVATION TRUST'S NEW HAVEN MODERN WEBSITE

DOCOMOMO (The International Committee for the Documentation and Conservation of Buildings, Sites, and Neighborhoods of the Modern Movement) gave its highest recognition to the first fruits of the Preservation Trust's long-term effort to record the exceptional Modernist architecture in New Haven, found in its New Haven Modern website ([newhavenmodern.org](http://newhavenmodern.org)). As a recipient of one of the six 2015 "Awards of Excellence" given by DOCOMOMO as part of its Modernism in America Awards program, the Preservation Trust's website shared the spotlight with the renovations of Saarinen's JFK Terminal, the restoration and expansion of Yale's Ingalls Hockey Rink, the renovation of E. Stuart Williams' Palm Springs Art Museum, the restoration of Neutra's Hafley House in Long Beach, California, and the public education efforts on behalf of the Harris County Domed Stadium in Houston. It was the single website to be recognized with a "Survey Award of Excellence."

The Modernism project was launched five years ago, obtaining state funding, and is now endeavoring to implement its second phase of construction, as more of the over 100 projects slated for presentation are added to the site's more than thirty existing exemplars of New Haven's unique cache of Modernist buildings. Interviews, including one with Kevin Roche, have been added to the growing portfolio of photos and project descriptions. Cesar Pelli has also been interviewed (pictured left) and that video will be available soon. This site reveals the Modernist work that makes New Haven one of the richest resources in the world for a broad spectrum of work done by Modern Masters and their acolytes. \*



## Dear Friends:

The New Haven Preservation Trust's Mission Statement clearly sets forth the goals of the Preservation Trust: To honor and preserve New Haven's architectural heritage—historic buildings and neighborhoods—through advocacy, education, and collaboration. Many people are familiar with the Preservation Trust's educational activities in our wonderful tours and workshops, but they may not be as familiar with the very successful advocacy and collaboration that is part of the Preservation Trust's work.

The Preservation Trust provides tailored, high-quality services that no other local organization offers. We serve the entire city, helping to enhance the built environment of each neighborhood. We advise and advocate on complex community development issues that may require balancing new development opportunities with the city's long-term well being.

The Preservation Trust regularly meets with developers and architects to consult and give guidance as site plans and architectural details are drawn up. More often than not, the Preservation Trust's influence is apparent in the outcome. In the past two years, Preservation Trust consultation has resulted in several preservation successes:

- \* a **historic house on Chapel Street** in the path of a new apartment building was moved a few parcels away and rehabilitated instead of being demolished
- \* a unique "**oyster barge**," one of the last of its type in the country, was saved and will be rebuilt as part of a waterfront neighborhood by new and enthusiastic owners
- \* a widely publicized coalition of Preservation Trust representatives and neighborhood residents saved a group of nineteenth-century brick industrial buildings that have become the face of a new residential development on **Upper State Street**, in lieu of the original plan for total demolition
- \* a unique and priceless **chapel designed by New Haven architect Henry Austin** in the nineteenth century, located in the middle of a busy downtown block between College and High Streets, will be saved and renovated as part of a sophisticated

residential complex, thanks to thoughtful reworking of the site plan by the project's architect and owners at the Preservation Trust's urging. The exterior of the iconic chapel will be restored and will serve as a reminder of the cluster of buildings that once stood on the site.

The Preservation Trust responds to approximately 120 requests for technical assistance annually, from property owners, realtors, architects, developers, city officials, students, non-profit agencies, and others. Many seek guidance on the historic significance of their property, rehabilitation standards, or economic incentives for preservation.

This year we are proud to be initiating five new listings on the National Register of Historic Places. Staff will work closely with consultants and the State Historic Preservation Office to prepare and submit materials on these listings to the National Park Service later this year:

- \* the **Dixwell Congregational Church**, a famous Modernist building designed by John Johansen, located at 217 Dixwell Avenue; Rev. Dr. Frederick J. Streets, pastor,
- \* the **Dr. Mary Blair Moody House**, an elegant 1875 Victorian residence at 154 East Grand Avenue,
- \* expansion of the **Orange Street Historic District**,
- \* revision of the **Wooster Square Historic District**,
- \* a **new historic district** in the residential area along the seawall in **Morris Cove**.

In a city like New Haven at a time like now, with new buildings and rehabilitated buildings at many locations, the Preservation Trust is a strong voice and a strong asset in the community to remind everyone that each project should enhance what is special about New Haven—so that New Haven remains a place we are proud to call home. The Preservation Trust's staff, board members, and volunteers are proud of the work being done.

*Bruce R. Peabody*

## Continuing Presence but Changing Purpose: Trinity Church Home Chapel

The New Haven Preservation Trust strives to collaborate with developers and architects when the preservation of a historic resource is at stake. Such was the case when Robert Smith of Metro Star Properties, LLC, of Milford, and Sam Gardner of Gregg Wies & Gardner Architects, LLC, called the Trust to inquire whether the old chapel at 305 George Street was architecturally significant and worth saving as the centerpiece of a new apartment complex.

The development team attended a meeting of the Trust's Preservation Committee and was informed that the former Trinity Church Home Chapel and adjacent residence for aged women were designed by Henry Austin, New Haven's preeminent nineteenth-century architect. Yes, the chapel was definitely worth saving! Unfortunately, the church home would have to be sacrificed to make the project economically feasible, but the developer was willing to restore much of the chapel's exterior in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards

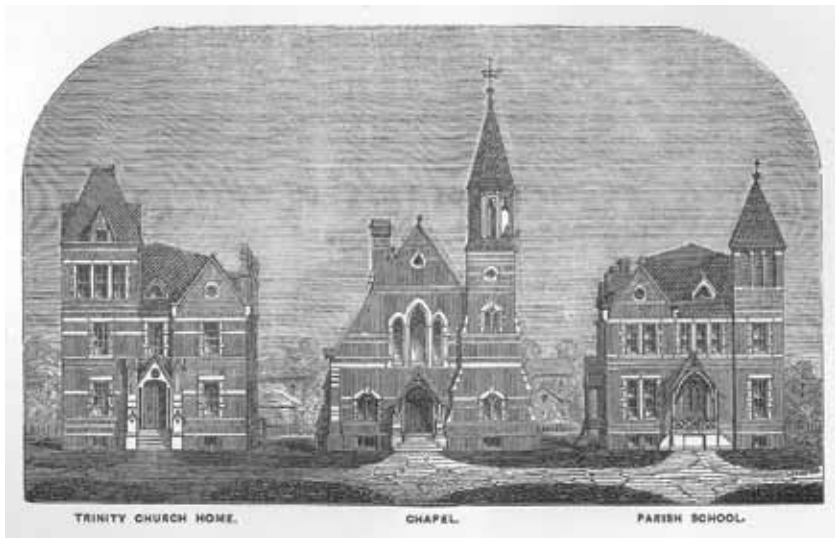
for Rehabilitation. John Herzan, the Trust's Preservation Services Officer, was hired to research the chapel's original appearance and to advise on its exterior restoration.

Architectural historian Elizabeth Mills Brown, author of *New Haven: A Guide to Architecture and Urban Design* (1976), maintained that the Trinity Church Home complex was one of architect Henry Austin's most interesting projects. Commissioned by Joseph Sheffield, a successful entrepreneur, and constructed in 1868 in the then-popular Ruskinian Gothic architectural style, the property originally comprised seven buildings.

Up front were two pairs of row houses, each of which Sheffield gave to one of his four daughters. Set back from the street was the Trinity Church Home Chapel, flanked by a school and a residence for aged women. When Trinity Church Home residents moved into the George Street facility, they numbered eight. Between 1869 and 1905 the average number of residents was sixteen.

By August 1905 the neighborhood had declined, and it was deemed necessary to relocate the women. The heirs of Mr. Sheffield, to whom by deed of trust the property would have reverted after the church home disbanded, generously agreed to a quit claim. The land and the buildings were sold to the Italian Baptist Mission, which occupied them until 1917. Between 1919 and 1943 the Orthodox Jewish Congregation Tefereth Adas Israel repurposed the chapel as a synagogue. During their occupancy, the original steeple and chimney were removed. When the synagogue dissolved in 1943, the Salvation Army acquired the buildings and remained there until 2015, when the facility was purchased by Metro Star Properties, LLC.

The developer of the new 78-unit complex on George Street plans to restore many of the chapel's original exterior features and to convert its interior space into distinctive residential units. \*





## Adapt or Die: The 2016 New Haven Preservation Trust Awards

New Haven Preservation Trust Awards for 2016 focus on the adaptation of historic structures as a preservation strategy. Darwin had it right: without adaptation living things do not survive. To keep New Haven's architectural legacies alive and to contribute to the city's cultural environment, buildings need to accept adaptation. They can become museums to the past or change to be useful in the present, or they can be gone forever.

The thoughtful adaptation of the buildings that received the Preservation Trust's three awards in 2016 ensured the viability and value of their architecture would not be compromised. When a building loses value, it often becomes a liability—and liabilities are often removed.

Our three exemplars of appropriate adaptation focus on three very different buildings.

The citation for the Preservation Trust's House Preservation Award reads, "For houses as outstanding representatives of their period. They exhibit much of their original character and condition by virtue of continued appropriate maintenance or sensitive rehabilitation." The House Preservation Award for 2016

has been given to the **Nelson Hotchkiss House** (left), at 621 Chapel Street, owned by Jane Lee and Andrew Ehrgood. In the era of urban renewal, hundreds of significant historic houses were simply removed from New Haven's fabric. "Progress" meant massing homes in new blocks. Fortunately, some avoided clear cutting—this Italianate c. 1850 single-family house was large enough to support three units within its existing walls, created in a 1970 renovation. The current owners have since painstakingly worked to preserve the historical character of the building. Their vision has included the meticulous restoration of the portico, undertaken with the support of a grant from the Preservation Trust.

The Preservation Trust's Merit Plaque is awarded "For historic buildings that have been authentically restored or sensitively rehabilitated for adaptive use." The award recognized the adaptive use of part of the **1915 Winchester Repeating Arms Company complex** (center). Rows of industrial sheds filled a large site, and the weapons produced therein helped grow the city. Forest City Residential Group saw the virtue of adapting old industrial buildings for new uses. Housing

and offices have replaced machines, materials, and workers, allowing this building type an extended presence in New Haven's living history.

The Landmark Plaque for Extraordinary Devotion to Preservation is awarded by the Preservation Trust "For buildings or sites of outstanding and enduring architectural and historical significance." In 2016 that plaque was given in acknowledgment of the exceptionally careful complete adaptive replacement of the glazing at the iconic **Knights of Columbus Tower** (right), designed in 1969 by Kevin Roche. Committed to architectural excellence, the Knights of Columbus reinvented the tower's glass infill and integrated HVAC systems while preserving the building's distinctive design and functional viability.

It's a simple reality: adapt or die. But that adaptation must be thoughtful, otherwise our legacy buildings still face ruin. The Nelson Hotchkiss House, the Winchester Lofts in the Winchester Repeating Arms Company buildings, and the Knights of Columbus Tower stand as thoughtful updates that avoid desecration. The New Haven Preservation Trust salutes their owners. \*

## Tours & Lectures: Learning from the Past



Recent residential tours organized by the Preservation Trust have provided an enjoyable way of learning about the importance and feasibility of preserving historic buildings through the excellent means of adaptive use. Two tours took place at the last brick Federal house on Crown Street, before and after renovation; the Winchester Repeating Arms Company building was visited in advance of the refurbishment that would change the structure into residential apartments; and participants in the tour of a Shingle-style house on Forest Road were able to view the plans for its modernizing.

Non-residential buildings recently visited include the Colonial Revival Masonic Lodge (right) on Whitney Avenue with its intriguing rooms designed in Greek and Egyptian style and The Knights of Columbus Museum, which has been



renovated from an office complex. One tour took in two of the three churches on New Haven's historic Green: Center Church was designed by Asher Benjamin, perhaps influenced by Ithiel Town, the designer of Trinity Church and a prominent architect in New Haven; the two churches were constructed between 1812 and 1815. One group also participated in a most informative tour of the Neo-classical Revival building on the east side of the Green, next to City Hall, which once housed both the courthouse and the post office (above).

Lectures held by the Preservation Trust help fulfill its mission to educate and inform about architectural preservation. At the Graduate Club, we heard about Lost New Haven, with a special focus on the vibrant neighborhoods that were demolished to prepare for the construction of the Oak Street Connector during urban redevelopment in the 1960s. Another talk explored New Haven's wealth of modernist buildings, a good number of which are by renowned architects such as Paul Rudolph, Eero Saarinen, and Louis Kahn; many have been preserved, but many others, such as the Coliseum and the Malley Department Store, have been lost to changing tastes through the years.

The focus of our tours and talks is not necessarily to bemoan past decisions but to help the public appreciate deeply the power of historic architecture to give a sense of place and a visible symbol of our common heritage.

The tours organized by the Preservation Trust are free and range in size from about twenty people to more than fifty, with registration required. Please check our website for a list of upcoming events and consider joining us in the future. \*

## Grants from the Preservation Trust's Historic Structures Fund

The Historic Structures Fund was established in 1985 to provide small matching grants to preserve historic buildings, sites, and monuments throughout the City of New Haven. These funds are intended to assist property owners conserve or restore noteworthy elements of a historic building. Grants are not awarded for basic maintenance or ordinary repairs unless the work is considered integral to the preservation of a distinctive architectural feature.

Any person or institution that owns property in one of the Preservation Trust's target areas can apply for a grant. The Preservation Trust's first priority is to assist property owners in the Wooster Square, Quinnipiac River, and City Point local historic districts. Its second priority is properties that have been designated New Haven Landmarks by the Preservation Trust. The third priority is for properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Preservation Trust may make awards for resources located outside these categories if they possess outstanding historic or architectural significance. Preference is given to low- and moderate-income residents. Non-profit organizations, be they educational, religious, or cultural, are encouraged to apply.

Funding for grants fluctuates each year. For further information contact Preservation Services Officer John Herzan at [johnherzan@nhpt.org](mailto:johnherzan@nhpt.org). Please note that if the Preservation Trust receives applications for more funds than are available, preference will be given to projects for buildings with the greatest architectural or historical significance. \*



113 Lawrence Street, before and after



## Creative Thinking: The Preservation Trust and the Development of Upper State Street

For over 130 years the Elm City Dye Works and Laundry and its subsequent manufacturing activities at 1040 State Street defined the industrial character of Upper State Street, an architecturally distinctive commercial and residential neighborhood listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1984.

When developer Andy Montelli of Post Road Residential approached the Preservation Trust in 2013 with plans to demolish several vacant buildings for the new Corsair apartment complex, the Trust's Preservation Committee had some basic concerns: Why did so many of the buildings have to go? What could

be saved? How would the proposed apartment buildings fit into the historic district?

Mr. Montelli understood the Trust's preservation and design issues and agreed to carefully rehabilitate the oldest section of the factory, fronting Lawrence Street and the small triangular park on State Street. Given the prominence of the building in the neighborhood, that decision greatly pleased the Preservation Trust. The Preservation Committee also recognized the extensive deterioration of the long-vacant industrial buildings slated for demolition and the architectural merits of the new design in complementing the historic streetscape.

The first practical hurdle was fundamental. Mr. Montelli needed a zoning use variance to allow residential use in an industrial zone. As the Preservation Committee had met with the developer in advance, understood the proposed work program, and had input into the final design, the Preservation Trust publicly supported the requested use variance, noting that the increased residential population would add substantially to the economic life of Upper State Street, thereby creating a more viable and desirable neighborhood. \*

Photograph by Karin Krochmal

**Join the New Haven Preservation Trust** Please become a member of the New Haven Preservation Trust today. Membership support is a key part of our operating budget. We need you to support preservation in New Haven!

Name

Address

City/State/Zip

Phone

Email

### LEVELS OF MEMBERSHIP

- Member \$50
- Alice Washburn Fellow \$100
- Henry Austin Fellow \$250
- James Hillhouse Fellow \$1000
- Preservation Fellow \$75
- Ithiel Town Fellow \$150
- The Proprietors' Circle \$500
- I am interested in volunteering for the Trust.

Please enclose completed form and your check made payable to:

**The New Haven Preservation Trust**  
 922 State Street  
 P.O. Box 8968  
 New Haven, CT 06532

tel 203 562-5919 fax 203 789-8806  
 info@nhpt.org

Donations may be made by credit card on our website: [www.nhpt.org](http://www.nhpt.org)

**Thank you!**

The New Haven Preservation Trust  
922 State Street  
P.O. Box 8968  
New Haven, CT 06532

Non-profit Org.  
US Postage Paid  
Permit No. 235  
New Haven, CT

The New Haven Preservation Trust's  
Mission is to honor and preserve  
New Haven's architectural heritage—  
historic buildings and neighborhoods—  
through advocacy, education, and  
collaboration.

**EDITOR:** Rona Johnston  
**CONTRIBUTING WRITERS:** Duo Dickinson,  
John Herzan, Bruce R. Peabody, and  
Charlotte Rea; **DESIGN:** Jack Design.

Support for this publication comes from the  
Connecticut Department of Community &  
Economic Development and from members,  
friends, and sponsors of the New Haven  
Preservation Trust.

© 2016, The New Haven Preservation Trust.  
All rights reserved.

**BELOW** View looking south from the Winchester  
Repeating Arms Company Historic District.  
Photograph by Jean Pogwizd

Inside  
Winchester Lofts  
Development of Upper State Street  
2016 New Haven Preservation Trust Awards

# NEWS & VIEWS NHPT

The New Haven  
Preservation Trust

Summer 2016