



The Preservationist

Spring-Summer 2009

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Landmarks Archives



2 Major Forums Planned for Fall, 2009

When you think about the future in New London, how do you evaluate the city's long history? What critical historic resources continue to influence our lives today?

- The first ferry to cross the Thames on a regular basis began with a dug-out canoe in 1651.
- Whaling may be gone but our location on the Thames River with easy access to Long Island Sound and the Atlantic Ocean remains.
- Religious life in the city began with the first Meeting House in 1646 and the importance of religious structures to the community peaked in the mid-1800s with the construction of beautiful churches gracing our streets today.
- The luxury steamboats carrying passengers along the coast from New York to Boston have vanished but Amtrak and Cross Sound Ferry ensure that New London is still the regional transportation center.

New London Landmarks is planning two public forums on topics of major importance for New London's future.

In October we will convene a **Transit Oriented Development Forum**; this event will provide an opportunity for the public to learn about the recommendations of the Transportation Study from some of the participants in the study.

In December we will present a forum on **Our Sacred Spaces** led by Elizabeth Terry of Partners for Sacred Places, a national, non-sectarian, non-profit organization devoted to helping congregations and their communities sustain and actively use older and historic sacred places.

Transit Oriented Development

The key to Transit Oriented Development (TOD) is the ability to provide a variety of transportation options within a walkable distance of each other. Transportation planning and preservation share the common goal of enhancing quality of life, with safer, more efficient transportation options for business and pleasure. Ideally, the center is a large historic building that can provide the various amenities needed by the travelling public.

The travelling public covers a wide variety of transit needs from commuters requiring speedy, reliable service to tourists, seniors, children and the general public who wish for safe, convenient, and moderately priced travel.

Destination is important. Linking residents with their jobs and providing a variety of historic, cultural, shopping and entertainment options will create a destination for regional tourism.

Continued on page 2

Our Sacred Spaces

Whatever your religious beliefs, the churches of New London have played a vital role in the life of the city. The Congregational Church was organized in 1650 when a Rev. Blinman and about 50 followers were invited to Pequot Plantation. It remained the spiritual hub of the community until 1725 when a group of local men established the Church of England, challenging the religious monopoly of the Congregationalists.

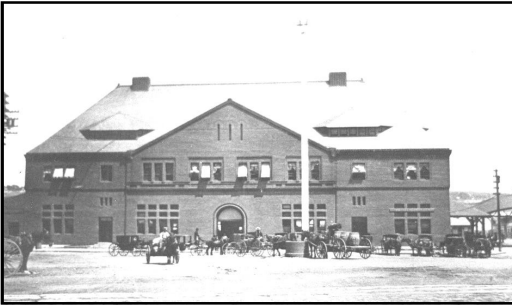
The first Episcopal church building was on the Parade—a plaque marks the space—and was destroyed during the burning of New London by Benedict Arnold in 1781.

By the mid-1800s New London was the nation's second most important whaling port and the city prospered. Wealthy benefactors contracted with noted architects to build structures worthy of the city's economic prominence.

Continued on page 2

Transit Oriented Development in New London

Continued from page 1



In the best of all possible worlds for Transit Oriented Development, an historic train station is the centerpiece of a larger, mixed-use urban environment providing a substantial variety of business opportunities, restaurants, parking, residential choices—single family homes, apartments, condos in a range of prices—along with cultural and shopping amenities.

New London has it all! Additionally, we have Cross Sound Ferry, Fishers Island Ferry, Block Island Ferry, Greyhound busses, SEAT local bus service, a 300

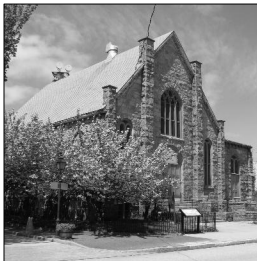
space parking garage and very nearby, Interstate 95.

The study of New London's transportation area, led by the Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments is on-going, to be completed in the late summer by TranSystems. The Forum will bring the results of this extensive study to the public and help begin the planning and decision making necessary to move forward with new ideas for a 21st century transportation center in New London.



Sacred Spaces—Historic Churches In Downtown New London

Continued from page 1



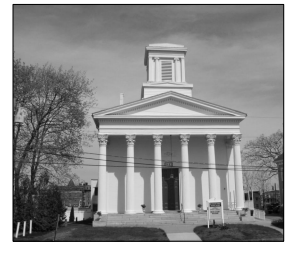
Apostolic Cathedral of Hope 1882



Universalist/Unitarian 1910



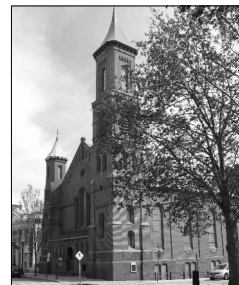
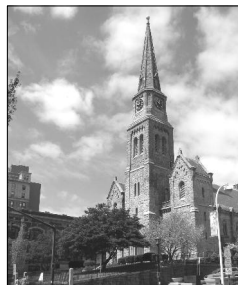
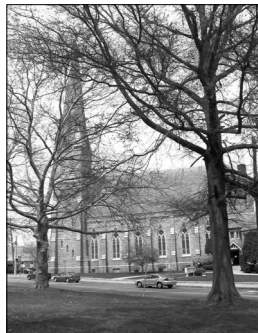
St. James Episcopal 1850



Huntington St. Baptist 1843

Part of the fabric of every city and town are the church buildings, large and small, that are tightly interwoven into the life of the community. No matter one's individual beliefs, these sacred spaces are monuments to the major events in the life of the city and the individual lives of residents.

The structures themselves attest to the men and women who planned for, raised funds for, and celebrated their consecration. Beneath the vaulted roofs, generations of New Londoners have honored their family history with donations of stained glass windows and artifacts that are the threads of community life.



St. Mary Star of the Sea, 1876 2nd Congregational, 1870 1st Congregational, 1856 1st Baptist, 1856

Today the majority of New London's downtown churches are over one hundred years old and even the best maintained structure develops maintenance issues. How would our streets look without these splendid buildings?

In the month of December Landmarks will coordinate with the churches to plan a series of events and walking tours to provide everyone in the community with the opportunity to visit these churches and experience the special character of these historic structures.

Directors' Report

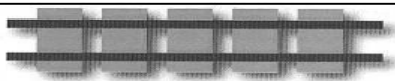
Sandra Kersten Chalk

Why the Two Forums?

New London Landmarks selected the topics for the two forums described on page 1 because of their recognized importance not only in New London but among preservationists across the country. The CT Trust for Historic Preservation and the Boston office of the National Trust are supporting NLL in these two projects.

With the Parade renovation nearing completion, Landmarks believes it is important for the public to have an opportunity to learn about and react to recommendations made in the Transportation Study. The **Transit Oriented Development Forum** will examine the next phase of transit development in New London. Landmarks began life in a grass-roots effort to preserve Henry Hobson Richardson's Union Station. Now, over 30 years later, the station continues to serve as the centerpiece of New London's transportation center.

Led by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, thousands of historic buildings, many in historic city centers, have been saved throughout the country. There is a growing national interest in reviving small cities. People are returning to urban centers to enjoy the music, arts, and entertainment there. The **Sacred Spaces Forum** will reintroduce New London's historic downtown churches as beautiful community assets in need of support, maintenance and preservation.



One More Stop to New London! Have you signed the post card urging Gov. Rell to get the commuter trains moving to New London?

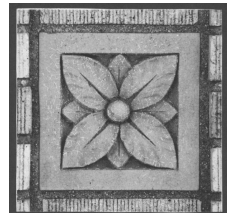
We need Shore Line East to begin regular commuter service to New London and **One More Stop** is a grass roots organization working to get it happening NOW!

Check out the web site and join the effort:

www.onemorestop.net

Join the effort for developing transportation in New London!

Do the Doo-Dad Dash!



The Doo-Dad Dash is a scavenger hunt around downtown New London. Players are challenged to discover doo-dads on historic buildings and to find the answers to questions about New London's history. It is just for fun!

WHAT IS A DOO-DAD?



A doo-dad is a unique ornamental feature on the outside of a building. New London's historic architecture boasts a wonderful variety of these ornaments. Can you identify the buildings with these doo-dads? For more doo-dads see page 7.



At the start of the Dash, players are given a brochure with a set of clues. As they find the answer to each clue, they go into a business and are given a magnet showing a doo-dad on a nearby building.

At the end of the Dash, players who have filled out all clues and identified the buildings with the doo-dads return to the Landmarks table to collect a prize.

Dates:

July 25, 11:00-3:00
August 22, 12 noon-4:00

Where:

City Pier. Start the Dash at the Landmarks table. For just \$5 you can do the Doo-Dash on one of these days and win 9 magnets.

These are two great summer days for family fun. Also on City Pier New London Main Street is holding its popular **Fish Tales, Tugs & Sails on July 25** and **Celts & Currachs on August 22**.

2009 Membership—as of 6/20/09

Membership in New London Landmarks represents a commitment to the City of New London, its history and cultural resources as well as a faith in the future of the city. For over thirty years the organization has worked to encourage appreciation for the fine architecture and the historic homes and neighborhoods in this small city on the New England coast. Thank you for your membership and support for our activities. Be sure to review our calendar of events and “Do the Doo-Dad Dash” with friends and family!

Individual

John P. Anthony
Frances Baratz
Carolyn Battista
Seymour Benson
Marvin Berger
Carol Booth
Susan Cash
Carolyn Condon
Bill Cornish
Sue Davis
John Diorio
Barbara M. Dixon
Raymond Dolan
Deborah J. Donovan
Kevin Doyle
Fern Drutman
Josephine Esposito
Edgar C. Forest
Holly Frederick
Edith Geer
Edith G. Gipstein
HOPE, Inc.
Joan Humphreville
Carmelina Kanzler
Barbara Kil
Tek-Wah King
Krystal Kornegay
Michele Kripps
Armand Lambert
Hildred H. Lasser
Rita Lentine
Rose Longo
Benjamin Martin
Bud McAllister
Dorothy Miller
William Morse

Susan Munger
Robert Nye
Joy Orlando
Alma Peterson
Anne B. Pierson
Robert Richter
Marion Sandalls
Louisa Shakkour
Marie Spencer
Kieth Stone
Three R's Company
Catherine & Robert Treadwell-Hill
Kathleen Wick
Martha Williams

Family

Wadonna & Jack Ashcraft
Garrett & Victoria Brennan
Jeffrey & Evelyn Callahan
Rodney & Sandra Chalk
Bruce & Ellen Cummings
Russell & Pauline DeMarco
John & Laurie Deredita
Chris Deveau
Kasey Goss & Scott Danforth
Robert Hauschild & Margaret Palmer
Myron Hendel
Paul & Caria Henschel
Carl & Winifred Josephson
Arlan & Barbara Mantz
Morgan & Lisa McGinley
James & Ellen McGuire
Edward Murphy
Gay Myers
Penny Parsekian & Geoff Kaufman
Frederick Paxton & Sylvia Malizia
Elvia M. Penrose

Stanley Pugsley
Colin Revill
Sandalls-Beers
Robert & Ellen Scala
Pat & Tod Schaefer
Russell & Fran Vocalina
Barbara Zabel & Thomas Couser

Contributor

Nathan & Patricia Belcher
Joan H. Butler
Joseph Celli
Marianne Grube
Marian Shilstone
George A. Spreccace
Robert & Ronna Stuller
Avigail Van Slyck & Mitchell Favreau
Michael Wright & Scott Ross

Patron

Anthony & Elizabeth Enders
Mary Beth Baker
Daniel & Deborah Connors
Laura Cordes & Chris Nelson
Hughes Griffis
Valeda & Robert Grills
William Stamm
Philip & Sherry Turner
Eugene & Rodi York

Corporate

Yankee Remodeler

Other

David Hayes

Annual Appeal—January 2009—June 2009

Many thanks to the following people who donated to our Annual Appeal since January 4, 2009

Anthony & Elizabeth Enders
John & Laurie Deredita
Lawrence DeVars

Martin & Randy Berliner
Sharon P. Churchill
Rose Longo

Hubert W. Ryan
Elizabeth Whitley

Historic Plaque Application

**DAVID BISHOP
HOUSE**



c1796

If your New London home/building is at least 50 years old, it may qualify to receive an historic marker listing its date and original owner. The information gathered in this process aids in neighborhood preservation efforts.

Our volunteer title researchers study land, tax and water records, historic maps, and city directories to establish your building's first owner and date of its construction.

The researchers also welcome any oral history or copies of old documents relating to your building that you may have. Please allow at least 16 - 20 weeks for completion of the research and delivery of the durable, hand-lettered, sealed hardwood plaque.

PLAQUE ADDRESS _____

NAME _____ ADDRESS _____

DAY PHONE _____ E-MAIL ADDRESS _____

LEGAL OWNER (IF DIFFERENT) _____

APPROXIMATE DATE PURCHASED BY CURRENT OWNER _____ APPROXIMATE AGE OF PROPERTY _____

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

MEMBERSHIP STATUS: YES ☐ NO ☐

PRICE OF PLAQUE: \$250.00 Non-member \$235.00 Members

Historic Plaques Completed

**202 Glenwood Avenue
1951 Sidney M. Baron
Florence L. Baron**

**34 School Street
1916 Ann T. Cobb**

**65 Chapel Drive
1928 Nora N. Booth**

Membership Information

New London Landmarks membership drive begins at our Annual Meeting in February with a membership year April 1st through March 31st. Benefits of membership include receiving copies of The Preservationist, postcards and mailings about special events and, most importantly, support for our work to preserve and protect New London's historic urban landscape.

Individual: \$25

Family: \$35 Contributor: \$50 - \$75

Patron: \$100 & above

Corporate: \$200

Riverside Park

by Laurie Deredita

Located on a wooded hillside sloping down to a sandy beach on the Thames River, 18-acre Riverside Park in East New London is surrounded by the Coast Guard Academy, a residential neighborhood, industrial buildings, and the railroad tracks of the Vermont Central running parallel to the shore. The constant hum of traffic from the nearby Gold Star and railroad bridges provides a competing background to the tranquility of a woodland landscape otherwise disturbed only by birdsong. Broad paved paths wind past picnic tables, barbecue grills, handsome stone walls, a playground and a basketball court. With all the amenities, there are very few people. In its better days Riverside was one of the city's most popular parks and for many years it was the place to watch the Yale-Harvard regatta because of its great vantage point overlooking the river. Unfortunately, in recent decades, the park developed a bad reputation and fell into disuse. The maintenance of the once lovely grounds and rustic buildings was neglected, and the park's landmark stone fountain was removed.



The good news is that the Department of Public Works recently began a project to restore the natural beauty of the overgrown park by clearing out brush and diseased trees, recreating the original vistas. Division manager Dave DeNoia is excited that the department has been able to make this project a priority although lack of staffing means that the grounds crews can work on the restoration only between busy seasons. But they have already made visible progress. At present, for security reasons and to discourage illegal dumping, drive-in access is allowed only occasionally but it is possible to park cars outside and walk in if the gates are closed.

The plan to create a park in the northern part of New London began in 1893 when the city purchased 18 acres on Winthrop's Neck from the Post Hill Improvement Company, at about the same time that planning began for Ocean Beach in the southern part of town. In 1908, Frank Brandegee and Sebastian Duffy Lawrence purchased 11 acres of adjacent waterfront property, known as Lewis Woods Grove, and gave it to the city in order to expand Riverside Park. In 1924, camping grounds with a camphouse and other facilities, charging 50 cents for a 24-hour period, were established in the lower portion of the park. In 1940, a footbridge was built over the tracks to provide access to the public beach. The decline of the park began in the early 1950s when the city used the northern section as a dump and landfill; and in 1963, 12.52 acres were sold to the adjacent Coast Guard Academy for \$35,000.

In recent years there have been several proposals that would have removed Riverside Park from the list of city parks. In 2001, the Children's Museum of Southeastern Connecticut negotiated to build a new museum on the site. In 2005, there was a contentious proposal to take 7 acres to build a Maritime Magnet School. There was considerable public opposition to the 2006 proposal to give or sell the land to the Coast Guard Academy to become the site of a possible homeland security academy. Much of the opposition to these proposals has been generated by the strong feeling that the city should not eliminate public open space. On the other hand, open space that is underutilized, neglected or considered unsafe is not very valuable to the public. It now looks like Riverside Park may be experiencing a renaissance.

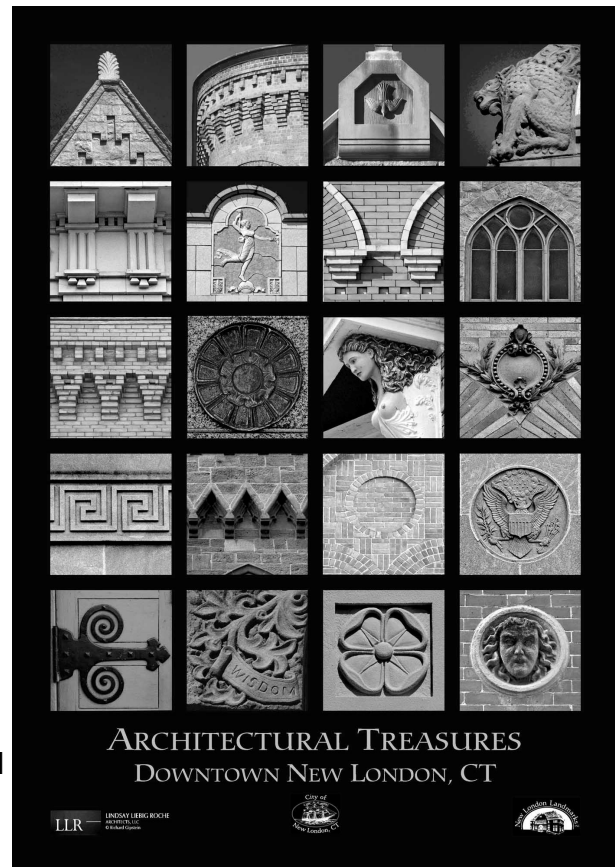
Architectural Ornaments of New London

Have you seen this wonderful poster designed by Rick Gipstein of Lindsay Liebige Roche?

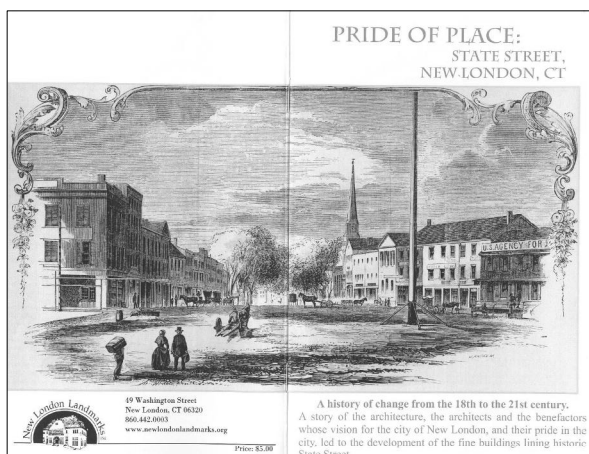
Architectural Ornaments have embellished fine architecture since man first began to construct important buildings. The ornamental objects can be carved from stone, wood or precious metals, or be intricate ways of laying brick to support windows, doorways and roofs. Modern architecture has simplified buildings, eliminating these details that traditionally enhanced a structure.

The poster provides great photographs of small architectural details on some of New London's historic buildings to call attention to those places passed each day, but not really looked at. Landmarks encouraged the production of this poster in the hopes it would inspire people to enjoy the splendid buildings in the Downtown Waterfront District. We have great architectural treasures here—take a closer look!

Posters are for sale at Yah-Ta-Hey Galleries, Studio 33 and the Landmarks office. \$5.00.



Pride of Place



New London Landmarks most recent publication is a small, illustrated booklet about the historic buildings on State Street. It introduces the architects and city benefactors who had a great vision for the city and turned their visions into reality. A reality we all enjoy today as the restoration process, begun with the Garde Arts Center, has moved down the street to include nearly every historic building.

While there is still much restoration work to be done, Lyric Hall and the Cronin Building come quickly to mind, *Pride of Place* provides a new way of looking at the familiar street.

Beginning at the Parade, New London's historic gathering place, to the Courthouse at the top of this hill, it has always been the primary street leading to the busy harbor and Thames River.

Originally the street was largely residential. Then, through most of the 19th century, fine commercial buildings were constructed with the wealth whaling, manufacturing and transportation services brought to the city. Many buildings were designed by noted national architects, others by the talents of an expanding group of local architects.

The booklet was written and researched by Landmarks archivist Heather Tichenor and supported by a grant from the Frank Loomis Palmer Fund, Bank of America Trustee. It is available for \$5.00 at the Landmarks office, the Custom House Maritime Museum, the Shaw Mansion and Yah-Ta-Hey Galleries.



49 Washington Street
Post Office Box 1134
New London, CT 06320

U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
New London, CT
06320
Permit No. 64
Non-Profit Org.

NEW LONDON LANDMARKS

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- July 25:** Do the Doo-Dad Dash
Fish Tales and Tug Boats on the Waterfront Park
11:00 am—3:00 pm
- August 22:** Do the Doo-Dad Dash
Irish Curraugh Festival on the Waterfront Park
12 noon—4:00 pm
- September 12:** Walking Tour Bank Street
Led by Sally Ryan, City Historian
11:00 - begin at the Civil War Monument on the Parade
- September 26:** Walking Tour State Street
Led by Sally Ryan, City Historian
11:00 - begin at the Civil War Monument on the Parade
- September 26:** Power Point Show: Pride of Place, State Street
At the Landmarks office following the Walking Tour
- October 31:** Antientest Buriall Ground Tour
Led by Lance Mayer and Sally Ryan
1:00 pm Reservations only: \$20.
(Rain Date November 1)

The Forums:

October: Date TBA:

Transit Oriented Development (TOD) in New London

The date will be set in coordination with the South-eastern Connecticut Council of Governments when the Transportation Study is complete. Nationally recognized leaders of the TOD movement are being invited to participate and representatives from the Study will present their recommendations.

December 2009

Our Sacred Spaces

A calendar of events in the eight churches in the Downtown New London Historic District will be developed to encourage everyone to attend the events and experience the beauty of these historic buildings.

A Forum, led by Elizabeth Terry, Director of Training with Partners for Sacred Places will lead the Forum.