



The Preservationist

January 2009

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The Preservationist

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Landmarks Archives



New London Landmarks Annual Meeting Thursday, February 19, 2009

City News, 68 State Street
5:00—7:00 pm

City Sites

How do you see the city?
Come for a look at various views . . .
and viewpoints

2008 AWARDS:

**Restoration Award — Clifford Stone Award—Rescue Award—
Volunteer Award— 2009 Most Endangered List**

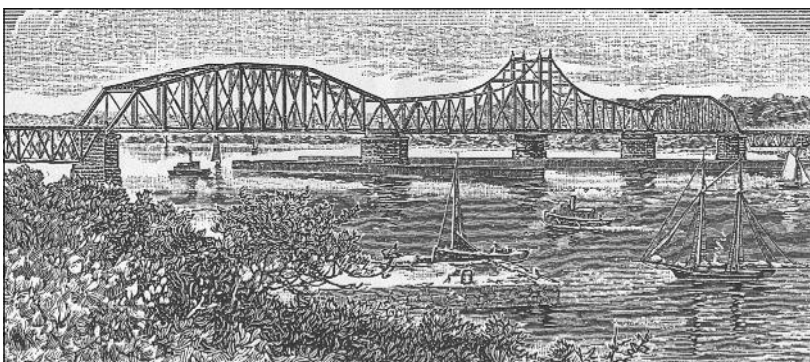
New London: A Transportation Center for the 21st Century

New London has amazing geographical advantages that have blessed the city since 1646. The wide and deep Thames River shelters ships from the ravages of the stormy Atlantic, its steep banks allowed early sailing vessels to tie up directly to the shore. Bountiful woodlands provided great trees for ship building. With the arrival of railroads, city fathers proudly hired a nationally renowned architect, Henry Hobson Richardson, to design Union Station. They realized this new form of transportation, connecting with maritime travel, would be a life-line for city economics.

Today New London is embarked on a Regional Intermodal Transportation Study to plan for new transportation needs of a traveling public. Expanding public transportation, creating an efficient and comfortable center to connect rail, ferry, bus, auto and pedestrian needs is critical to the success of public transportation in the future.

This is not a new idea for New London. The city has been the center of regional transportation since a dug-out canoe began transporting people across the river in the 1650s. As the steam engine replaced wind power, new ferries, coastal steamships and the railroad created an extensive transportation network in New London in the mid-to-late 1800s, bringing economic prosperity to the entire region.

In 1865, the Thames Tow Boat company built two sets of Marine Railways to haul out and repair large sea-going vessels, creating an additional economic factor for New London's busy port facilities. The company continues today as part of Cross Sound Ferry operations.



The construction of the railroad bridge across the Thames in 1889 completed the most modern rail connections from New York to Boston. At a cost of \$1,400,000 it was the longest double-track drawbridge in the world and immediately became a symbol of new economic hope for New London.

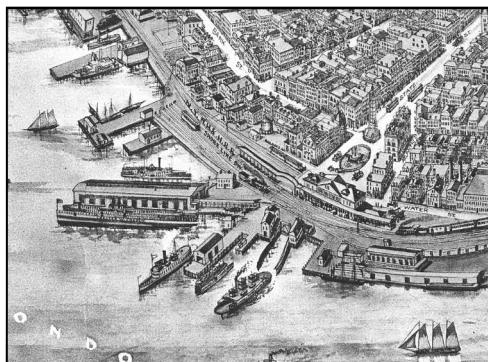
Continued on page 2

New London: A Transportation Center for the 21st Century

Continued from page 1



The great steamship *Long Island* was launched in 1892, and was described as “the most handsome and fastest boat on the Sound.” She was built to the most modern standards for safety and comfort, with a steel hull. Homeported in New London, she introduced great luxury to her 400 passengers and provided two decks, state rooms, saloons and fine furnishings in the Ladies’ Cabin.



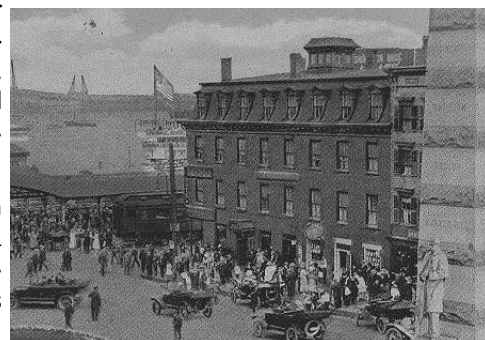
Everything was up-to-date in New London in the early 1900s; business thrived, manufacturing plants employed hundreds of workers and the population expanded rapidly, leading to a building boom of homes and expansion of neighborhoods—all connected by new roads and the trolley system. The New London Street Railway Company began in 1886 as a horse railway but rapidly became motor-powered in 1893. The Parade was the terminal for all trolley lines which followed the main routes of street travel through the city. In the summer months the Ocean Beach Line ran open trolleys along Montauk Avenue to Ocean Beach, “as consistent with health and safety.”

New London boasted a number of fine hotels surrounding Union Station and the various steamboat lines.

The Winthrop Hotel was top grade with excellent cuisine and courteous and efficient service. Lighted throughout by electricity and gas, it was a reputable, up-to-date house, receiving generous patronage.



The Royal Hotel, one of the oldest in the city on the site of an earlier hotel, had a fine reputation; its service and cuisine considered excellent. It offered special rates for commercial travelers.



The Parade and Winthrop Hotel, early 1900s

The Crocker House was New London’s luxury hotel catering to the business and social elite. The nearby Lyceum Theatre brought the era’s greatest theatrical stars to the city and the Crocker House was

the place to stay. Celebrity guests included five U.S. Presidents, Charles Dickens, and prize-fighter John L. Sullivan. The Crocker House bar was actor James O’Neill’s favorite drinking establishment and a meeting place for his admirers. His sons Jamie and Eugene also found comfort and companionship at the Crocker House.



Most of the balance of the 20th century wasn’t so kind to New London. The city lost its edge as manufacturing moved south, the population that swelled to 30,000 in 1928 stopped growing, and slowly the effects of the Depression, the Second World War, changing life styles, the automobile, the suburbs, even movies, radio and eventually television changed the way people lived, worked and were entertained. From a thriving transportation and shopping center with 11 theatres, the city fell victim first to the Depression and later to urban renewal, the expanding suburbs, Route 95 and shopping centers.

Captain’s Walk couldn’t save State Street, but as the end of the century approached, momentum changed. A few public-spirited citizens, led by the New London Savings Bank began relatively small projects that led to greater changes. Starr Street, a run-down, derelict street near downtown was renovated and homes were sold to private owners. In 1988 a group of local businessmen made an amazing investment. They purchased the Garde Arts Center for \$300,000 and revived one of New London’s historic theatres. A new arts community now had a home, and young artists discovered New London. The Hygienic was reborn, people began moving back downtown into renovated upper floors, New London was on a roll!

Continued on page 6

Directors' Report

Sandra Kersten Chalk

New London's Transportation Study

In November NLL's Board of Directors attended the public meeting held by the Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments (SCCOG) to learn more about the Regional Intermodal Transportation Center Master Plan. This study is critical to the future of public transportation in New London and the region and we feel it is important to be well informed about the study.

Jim Butler, Executive Director of SCCOG opened the meeting and turned it over to Project Manager Larry Englisher who led the meeting and announced their preliminary findings. A clear recommendation has been made that downtown New London is a significantly better location than Fort Trumbull for bringing together rail, ferry, bus and auto in a central location. As their study continues, the downtown area anchored by Union Station will be the focus of their attention.

They conducted extensive surveys last summer to gather information from users of all New London's transportation options. One question they sought to answer was how many travelers come into downtown New London, and if they don't, why not? The answers were interesting. Very few travelers come into downtown for shopping or business. Currently New London is a "pass-through" not a destination. Also, travelers don't know New London, are not aware of what is here, and, perhaps most importantly, they cannot "see" the city from the ferry, train or parking garage.

This information led to a discussion of how these perceptions can be changed.

- How do we make New London a "destination" for tourists?
- How do we inform the traveling public about what is available in downtown shops and restaurants?
- How do we encourage them to explore downtown?

Transit Oriented Development (TOD) is another concept the Master Plan will explore. Basically, TOD districts are mixed-use districts within a comfortable walking distance of a major transit stop and core commercial area.

A walkable environment makes it attractive for residents, visitors, and employees to travel on foot to transit and conveniences.

The study will identify TOD opportunities offered by a multimodal transportation center that will foster overall community development.

New London is "ripe" for TOD.

For more detailed information on this study, log on to www.seccog.org and plan to attend the next public meeting.

[See the Cover Story, New London: A Transportation Center for the 21st Century for additional information]

1000 Friends of Connecticut

Susan Munger and I joined over 250 people attending the 1000 Friends Annual Meeting in New Haven in November. I

was part of a panel discussion entitled: **TOD—Not Just a Building: a New London Case Study**, bringing the issue of transportation planning to a state-wide audience. The panel was led by Sam Gardner, architect for the Parade Project and included Todd O'Donnell, co-owner of Union Station and Al Martin, deputy Commissioner of the Connecticut DOT. About forty people attended the workshop as we explored New London's history and the potential for Transit Oriented Development principles as they relate to the city today. Issues explored by participants included: What opportunities exist in New London that will lead to vibrant downtown redevelopment? How can we use TOD design principles to promote a pedestrian-friendly environment, leading to increased economic development? Answers to these questions are part of the long-range planning process for New London's transportation center.

In the afternoon I attended a workshop on **Complete Streets**, opening my eyes to ways to encourage pedestrian enjoyment of street life. Ideas on how to re-organize streets to attract pedestrians were discussed. Sidewalk cafes, clean, safe sidewalks, attractive signage and wayfinding signs, safe crosswalks, attractive storefronts are an integrated part of "Complete Streets." Certainly food for thought when looking at New London's sidewalks.

New concepts of urban planning and development are an exciting state-wide issue, judging from the interest and attendance at this meeting. All of these smart growth ideas and principles relate directly to the preservation of Connecticut's historic cities and NLL's work in New London.

Susan Munger attended the session on **Historic Preservation Is Smart Growth**. The panel presented many strong arguments for historic preservation from a variety of perspectives. The panel included Mary Donohue, CT Commission on Culture and Tourism; Helen Higgins, CT Trust of Historic Preservation; Catherine Johnson, Architect/Urban Planner, Congress for New Urbanism; Eric O'Brien, New Haven Historic Preservation Commission and Urbane New Haven; Henry Dynia, Director of Design and Construction, Neighborhood Housing Services of New Haven; John Simone, CT Main Street.

Several good comments included "*the greenest building is the existing building.*" In other words, the energy required to build anew is greater than the energy required to maintain an existing building. And how about this concept, "*blight is contagious from plant to plant but not from building to building.*" Or this, "*the only time a building should be demolished is when it is 75 percent compost.*" The discussion following could have gone on much longer; hopefully future conferences will include more on historic preservation.

Also attending the conference from New London were Landmarks board member Art Costa, Green Party member Ken Hanson, and City Planner Harry Smith.

Annual Appeal—as of December 29, 2008

\$500 and above

Kathleen & Rick Barrett
Lloyd & Sandy Beachy
Charles W. Curtin
Dime Bank
Yankee Remodeler

\$250 and above

John & Sarah Steffian
Wick & Rodi York

\$100 and above

Bruce Baratz, Baratz Realty
Chelsea Groton Savings Bank
Dino Dart
Daniel & Deborah Connors
Valeda & Robert Grills
Heather & Rick Grigsby
Susan Munger
Philip & Sherry Turner
William Morse

Jerry Olsen & Vivian Stanley
Emmett O'Neill
Carl Stoner
Abigail Van Slyck & Mitch Favreau

\$50 and above

Harold Arkava
Trix Bodde
Conway & Londregan, LLC
Anna Deveau
J.D. & Kathy Diaz-Saavedra
Deborah Donovan
Edgar Forest
Edward Hammond
Benjamin Martin
Morgan & Lisa McGinley
James & Ellen McGuire
Frank & Linda McLaughlin
Dr. & Mrs. Daniel Moalli
Gerald & Martha Myers
Tod & Patricia Schaefer

Diane & Steve Smith
J. Solomon, Inc.
Marion Shilstone
George A. Sprecace
Kathleen Wick
Russell Vocalina

\$25 and above

Carol Booth
Rodney & Sandra Chalk
Bill Cornish
Barbara M Dixon
Kevin Doyle
Josephine Esposito
Peter Kreckovic
Dorothy Miller
Edward Murphy
Penny Parsekian
Fred Paxton & Sylvia Malizia
Rob Richter
Ruth Sussler

Connecticut Main Street, Downtown Revitalization Institute Workshop

Sandra Kersten Chalk

Downtown Master Planning was the focus of this workshop and the presenters offered a fascinating over-view of how Master Planning is being used in cities throughout the state—and beyond—to revitalize the economics of large and small inner cities. A number of interesting points were made in the first presentation by David Spillane, Director of Planning and Urban Design, Goody Clancy Architects, Boston, MA.

“The future of downtown is in finding a bold new vision, not going back to what was lost.”

- Capture new trends—green buildings, environmental consciousness, energy efficiency
- Lively walkable neighborhoods build economic competitiveness
- Downtown defines the region
- A new vision requires engaged citizens
- Downtown housing is essential to economic improvement
- The market is here if the right product is developed
- New housing plus re-hab of historic buildings is required
- Mixed: townhouse, condo, apartments, lofts reflect the needs of the new urbanist community—High Quality is demanded!
- Significant tax abatement may be needed to make new housing work in urban areas
- Public transportation is an essential part of walkable urban communities

- Downtown amenities serving new urbanists create economic development for inner cities

Many of these “new” ideas of urban planning reflect concepts preservationists have promoted for years. The “greenest building” is a renovated historic building such as the old SNET building on Washington Street and the Crocker House.

New London IS a walkable city with great public transportation right downtown.

“Engaged Citizens” was a phrase constantly repeated by all the speakers. We need engaged citizens in New London as a variety of new development ideas are presented for Fort Trumbull and Howard Street. What kind of development do we want to see in these areas?

Then there are the parking lots on Eugene O'Neill Drive. They are part of NLDC's Request for Qualifications (RFQ) recently sent to potential developers. How would we, citizens of New London and the region, like to see this area transformed? What is the best use for this property?

New London has no detailed Master Plan for development, nor does the city have a clearly defined process for hearing and evaluating development ideas. Engaged citizens need to think about what we want to see in New London in the next ten to twenty years, just think of the changes that have taken place here since 1990! Change comes, but it comes s...l...o...w...l...y!

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: \$200.00 Non-member \$175.00 Members

A non-refundable deposit of \$100.00 is required with this application. Balance is due upon completion.

Historic Plaques Completed

813 Ocean Avenue
1902 George H. Gardner

49 Mott Avenue
1907 Rudolph H. & Margaret Siebler

25 Gorton Street
1913 Frank I. Carter
Edith M. Carter

615 Montauk Avenue
Circa 1890 Samuel J. Simmons
Sarah J. Simmons

13 Bolles Avenue
1920 Thomas H. Sisk

32 Worthington
1951 Louis Kaplan
Sadie Kaplan

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

New London: A Transportation Center for the 21st Century

continued from page 2

OpSail 2000

introduced the new century with an incredible celebration of maritime glory. New London's new Waterfront Park hosted an international fleet of ships and visitors from throughout the country.

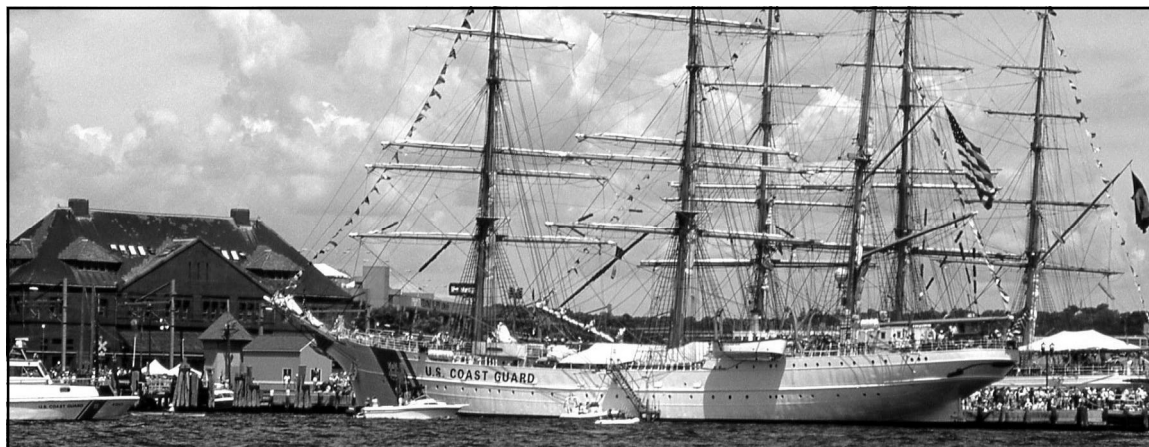


Photo: A. Vincent Scarano

As the 21st century progresses, so-called new ideas of urban planning, smart growth, transit oriented development and public transportation are picking up on ideas that preservationists have been promoting for thirty or more years. Finding new uses for and updating historic buildings IS an environmentally sound practice AND spurs economic development.

Walkable cities, improved sidewalk amenities, "complete streets," public transportation, all address concerns about the environment, our oil-based lifestyle and potentially debilitating economic issues.

Historic inner cities across the country are being revived through the preservation and renovation of housing and creative re-use of large historic buildings. Walkable cities and mixed-use neighborhoods close to convenient transportation are the goals of new urban planners. New London is ahead of the curve! Check out what's happened to the Winthrop Hotel (Zavala's and office space), the Crocker House (street-level retail and apartments), and the redesign of the Parade, returning it to an open public plaza.

The Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments (SCCOG) is overseeing an extensive study of New London's transportation area. The work has been undertaken by a team of transportation professionals led by TranSystems who have extensive national experience working in communities to plan integrated, intermodal, transportation centers that will comfortably and efficiently assist the traveling public to access all transportation options within a given area. Their report, due in the spring of 2009, will be a Master Plan and Efficiency Study for a Regional Intermodal Transportation Center.

This report will be a critical piece of New London's development planning for the next five to ten years. Recommendations they make will impact all of New London and especially the Historic Waterfront District. Business, residential and retail establishments will all be affected by the decisions made as a result of this study.

In the next few months study participants will examine the city's entire transportation infrastructure and analyze current and future needs of public transportation. While looking at the existing conditions, they will seek opportunities for improvement to the physical state of the buildings and the way people move through the area.

Some specific concerns to be addressed are:

- ✓ Safe and convenient pedestrian access to all transportation options
- ✓ Parade reconstruction to provide immediate improvement
- ✓ Shore Line East commuter rail services to bring many more people into the center
- ✓ Improved access to the Cross Sound Ferry terminals
- ✓ Access and use of the parking garage (the new glass-enclosed elevator and stairs are part of Parade improvements)
- ✓ Local and long distance bus service and passenger accommodations to be factored into long-range transportation planning
- ✓ Essential directional signage

Their next report is due in the early spring and a public meeting will be held. Landmarks encourages all members to keep informed about this process and express their own concerns about the future of transportation in the New London region.



A snowy December scene hides the dirt, and gives a hint to what a paved and open plaza will look like!

Welcome new Board Member, Krystal Kornegay

Susan Munger, President



Krystal D. Kornegay joined the board of New London Landmarks in the fall of 2008. She works at the Mystic Seaport Museum as Collections Management Technician and Interim Registrar, where she is responsible for assisting the curators and collections manager in caring for valuable and often fragile art, objects, photographs, and prints. She is a graduate of the University of North Carolina and in 2007 earned a Master of Fine Arts Degree in Historic Preservation from the Savannah College of Art and Design in Savannah, Georgia.

Prior to joining the Mystic Seaport, Krystal worked on a number of interesting preservation projects. She was a preservation team member with the Coastal Heritage Society in Savannah, Georgia, working on historic masonry repair and documentation at the Central of Georgia Roundhouse Railroad Museum, Savannah Visitor's Center, and Old Fort Jackson. She also researched and documented an historic Tybee Island gas station, developing an adaptive rehabilitation plan for the structure to become an ice cream parlor. She has created a hands-on history program for non-profit historic preservation organizations where middle school students learn the basics of historic preservation in the form of a week long camp.

Krystal's experience also includes work in paint analysis, cemetery restoration, surveying, and architectural photography. She is a member of several preservation organizations. As you can see, she brings wonderful experience to New London Landmarks, where she is already getting involved in various activities, including planning the upcoming lecture series.

Archives & Donations

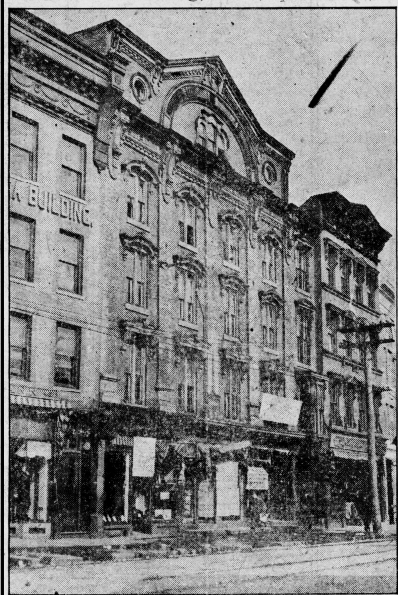
Heather Tichenor, Archivist

The archives here at NLL already have a large amount of information about the buildings of New London, which is understandable, as Landmarks has spent over thirty years acquiring and using such information in their historic preservation mission. But we can always use more. Recently, we have received two generous donations to the NLL archives. The first was a large series of photographs from the City of New London Building Department. These photos, taken in the 1970s and 1980s, document the deplorable condition of many houses around town before steps were taken to rehabilitate them. There are many photos of the houses on Washington and Tilley streets – all I need to do is look out the window and see how far they've come! They will help us document the changes in New London's housing fabric in the last 30 years.



72 Washington Street was restored by House New London and Hope, completing the renewal of the street from Methodist to Coit Streets and enhancing the entire neighborhood.

Aborn Hall Building, Now Capitol Theatre



The second donation was a complete copy of The Day's Fiftieth Anniversary Edition, printed in 1931, and given to us by Kip Bochain. This fascinating newspaper, all 14 sections of it, contains a wealth of information about the history of New London. It documents the period of 1881-1931, when many of the buildings we have now were erected, and perhaps even better, has a lot of photographs!



We knew that the Capitol Theatre evolved from Aborn Hall, but this is the first photo we have seen of the building. Scanning these pictures from the old newspaper will never create a perfect photo, but they do tell a story—notice the original cornice on the roof of the Laurence Shea building and the changing storefronts.

These donations help NLL build a more complete picture of the architecture and history of this city. While we have been able to help many homeowners, developers, and researchers with their requests for information, there are questions we have not been able to answer. Any new piece of information, be it a newspaper article, photograph, or document, helps us preserve our architecturally rich heritage.



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Non-Profit Org.

NEW LONDON LANDMARKS

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

New London Landmarks Annual Meeting
Thursday, February 19, 2009
5:00—7:00 pm
City News, 68 State Street, New London

A new New London site!

Come and see the beautiful historic wall tiles uncovered when Charlotte Hennegan began restoration of Parade News. As New London's historic buildings change with different owners and new uses they often reveal unexpected details from an earlier time.

Our theme for the meeting is "City Sites," designed to encourage guests to take a new and unusual look at New London.

We will also honor local people with New London Landmarks Awards:

Restoration Award
Clifford Stone Award
Rescue Award
Volunteer Award
The Most Endangered List

Congratulations to the Old Town Mill Restoration Committee

Congressman Joe Courtney, Mayor Kevin Cavanagh &
Councilor Adam Spreace cut the ribbon.

