

JAMES K. GRANT, P.E.

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT IN HISTORIC PRESERVATION

James K. Grant, P.E. first became involved with historic preservation in Hartford 1985 when engaged to design temporary shoring for the facade of the Goodwin Building. That introduction to Hartford's dwindling built environment and the passion of the preservation community that was desperately trying to save important, as well as not so important, structures began what was to become a new career dedicated to assisting preservationists throughout the State of Connecticut.

Since 1985, Jim has been privileged to work on the investigation and rehabilitation of many buildings in Hartford, including:

- The Amos Bull Carriage House
- The Butler-McCook House
- The Isham-Terry House
- The Linus B. Plimpton House
- The Colt Dome
- The Sealtest Building (now Chrysalis Center) on Homestead Avenue
- Trinity College (many buildings)
- 410 Asylum Street
- Brick Hollow and other Frog Hollow rehabilitations
- The "Victorian Lady" (moved from Sigourney Street to Ashley Street)
- Several NINA projects, including 87-89 Atwood St. and 246-248 Sargeant St.



The Hartford Preservation Alliance has called on Jim many times to offer his professional opinion and advice on the structural integrity of buildings deemed to be a threat to public safety. Many of these buildings, unfortunately, end up being demolished in spite of his help and our efforts to find preservation minded developers.

CONNECTICUT PRESERVATION ACTION ADVOCACY FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Connecticut Preservation Action has been “*The Voice of Historic Preservation Advocacy at the General Assembly since 1980*”. It is an advocacy group for legislative support at the local, state, and federal levels. Both new issues and legislation in need of changes are brought to the Connecticut Preservation Action’s director’s attention by many preservation-related organizations, such as the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation, the Commission on Culture and Tourism, historic district commissions, historic preservation groups and, often, interested individuals.

Connecticut Preservation Action’s advocacy has included but was not limited to:

- Legislation establishing Connecticut’s Historic Homes Tax Credit
- Opposed closing of State Museums
- Successful in maintaining essential preservation functions within the Commission on Culture and Tourism
- The Community Investment Act, creating funds available for grants for pre-development costs, local preservation organizations, and open space purchases.
- Tax Credits for Rehabilitating Historic Structures.
- The Face of Connecticut Steering Committee creating a coalition of historic preservation, farmland preservation, open space protection, and brownfields remediation.
- Defended against a merger of Commission on Culture & Tourism into the Department of Economic & Community development.
- 2010—they are currently defending against the “sweep” deletion of Community Investment Funds to the General Fund for relief of the state budget crisis.

The Board of Directors meets regularly to assess the status of historic preservation initiatives across the state. They also offer workshops in Historic Tax Credits available to historic properties on the state and national level. Working closely with those who are restoring properties ensures that all preservation issues are addressed and they offer advocacy assistance to those who need additional support to ensure properties are restored and not improperly handled, or left to demolition by neglect.



**KATE and CHRISTIAN WINKLEY
JAN and DAVID KLEIN
REHABILITATION of 79 GIRARD AVENUE**

In the spring of 2009, Janice Klein began laying the groundwork for an ambitious project to purchase and renovate the deteriorating, poorly maintained house next door to her in Hartford's historic West End. Most importantly, she and her husband David approached Christian and Kate Winkley, residents of Oxford Street and owners of Oxford Builders, which specialized in older homes. Christian's construction team had the skills to restore the home properly, and he and his wife, sharing a passion for the community, decided to get involved in the project as partners with the Kleins.

Starting in June, The Oxford Builders team began work. The tired and poorly maintained structure that nobody wanted was completely restored, both inside and out, in keeping with the original character of the home.

During deconstruction, Christian set aside features and scavenged parts from within the home for reuse. After decades of patchwork repairs to 100+-year-old systems, the home now has modern mechanicals. Now that the renovation is complete, the West End has regained another Hartford gem.



CONNECTICUT COMMISSION ON CULTURE & TOURISM
COMMUNITY EDUCATION ~ *BEING MODERN IN HARTFORD*



As an important part of the educational activities planned to accompany the Commission on Culture & Tourism Gallery exhibition “Living Modern in New Canaan,” the walking tour guide to Modern architecture in Downtown Hartford took the message of the exhibit out to the streets.

The Commission is located on Constitution Plaza, one of the great examples of mid-20th century architecture in Connecticut. The walking tour guide was meant to compliment the exhibit by allowing visitors to experience the spaces, materials and functions of Modernism first hand after viewing the exhibit.

The handsome guide was designed and photographed by Robert Gregson, CCT Creative Director and co-authored and researched by Mary M. Donohue, CCT Senior Architectural Historian. Planned from the onset with the staff of the Hartford Preservation Alliance, five lunchtime walking tours and one extended weekend tour were given by HPA’s Mary A. Falvey using the printed guide as a reference. Copies of the guide are available at the Commission’s offices, allowing visitors to explore on their own.



ROSS ZACHS and MIKE MILLER
HISTORIC PAINTING of 76 NORTH BEACON STREET

Ross Zachs and Michael Miller purchased their West End home in November 2007. They are grateful and fortunate that their house had been lovingly taken care of over the years and retains its charm and character from the day it was built in 1898. This house retains all the original stained glass, tiled fireplace mantels, windows, and elaborate decorative moldings.

The historic outdoor painting of 76 North Beacon Street was accomplished by two extremely professional, and meticulous people. The first being their friend, artist, and color consultant Donna Lake, who navigated and guided them through taking a chance with colors that they loved but were not sure worked together. The second is their neighbor, and painter extraordinaire Antonio Lemus. His attention to detail and his professional, friendly, and conscientious staff made the process as painless as possible.

COMMON GROUND

ADAPTIVE REUSE of 410 ASYLUM AVENUE ~ *“THE CAPITOL BUILDING”*

This seven story 1926 Neo-Classical Revival building, formerly known as “The Capitol Building,” and now Common Ground’s “The Hollander,” was designed by Thomas W. Lamb (designer of the second Madison Square Garden and several early 20th century theaters on the National Register). Situated downtown, across Asylum Street along the northern end of Bushnell Park, The Hollander offers commanding views of the State Capitol Building. Lobby details include a vaulted ceiling and mosaics of Hartford’s Old State House and the Connecticut State Capitol. The cornice is enriched with discs along the frieze, dentils, leaf-covered medallions and metal leaf cresting.

The building’s former owners generously donated the property to Common Ground. Since receiving ownership of The Hollander and working with the City of Hartford to formulate the best redevelopment plan for the building, the space has been reinvented into a mixed-use residential and commercial building that contains 70 residential rental apartments and over 13,000 square feet of ground floor commercial space.



Residential units have been specifically designed to provide a variety of rental options. The Hollander offers 56 studio, 1- and 2-bedroom units reserved for individuals and families earning 60% or less of area median income. Fourteen additional units interspersed through the building are available without limitation of income. A multi-purpose room is available at no cost to residents and local institutions and serves as a venue for celebrations, meetings, classes, discussion groups and other events of interest to the community. The Hollander, designed by Bill Crosskey, is certified LEED Gold, the first mixed-income, mixed-use historic green building in the State.

ANTONELLA BONA

HISTORIC RESTORATION of 139 FERN STREET

Antonella Bona fell in love with her home in the West End because of its bright, open interior. The outside was interesting, but was covered with grayish-blue aluminum siding. After a few years, encouraged by friends, she decided to restore the exterior to its original 1905 appearance. She hired George Dijmarescu of OLT Construction.

He turned out to be not only an excellent craftsman, but a purist, who helped guide her through many complex choices. Once the aluminum siding was removed (neighbors still remember the humongous pile of siding in a corner of the yard!) they assessed the situation. George milled new porch trim and molding to match. He found the pattern imprinted in the corner of one of the porches.



Two small bay roofs were redone in copper, three sets of porch stairs were redone in mahogany, with spindles and rails in keeping with the period. The foundation was restored to the original brownstone. Antonella decided to keep the original dark brown of the shingles, and selected two slightly different shades of cream for the trim and the other woodwork.

Once the work was completed her neighbors came by to tell her how glad they were that the aluminum siding was gone! Antonella gained personal satisfaction from giving new life to a beautiful vintage home.

MOLLY KNORR and MARK DRUSEDUM
FAÇADE and BRIDGE RESTORATION of 1144 PROSPECT AVENUE



Molly Knorr's and Mark Drusedum's project involved repairing the concrete/stucco bridge in the front of their home as well as replacing the existing white iron railing and restoring the two Juliet balconies. The façade restoration included removing the existing red plastic shutters and repainting and re-glazing the remaining original windows, as well as repainting all original woodwork on every window.

The bridge was very badly deteriorated by water penetration and vegetation growth. All stucco was removed and the concrete repaired. They found that the parapet walls were totally destroyed and needed to be removed. The rusted iron railing was replaced.

The original bridge had been paved with bluestone on the upper level, but the grout joints were failing. The lower level had been planted with Umbrella pines and rhododendron that were overgrown. The elegance of the

house was hidden from the street by the plant-life and the stucco was falling off, giving the whole structure a shabby appearance.

The goal was to save the bridge, repair it and replace the deck with a waterproof surface. Molly & Mark wanted to highlight the uniqueness of their home, rather than hide it. They replaced the shutters with operable wood shutters and the bridge deck was paved with a lighter natural stone. Railings were replaced with custom, black ornamental iron and an urn was added to bring height and color to the facade.

**NORTHSIDE INSTITUTIONS NEIGHBORHOOD ALLIANCE (NINA)
REHABILITATION of 291-293 SARGEANT STREET**



NINA – Northside Institutions Neighborhood Alliance - has again wowed the community with their rehabilitation of another Asylum Hill gem.

291-293 Sargeant Street is a three-story duplex constructed in 1900 by Francis Childs on land that was formerly part of the Town Farm. The City of Hartford subdivided the Town Farm into development lots and sold them to developers like Francis Childs who constructed homes on Sargeant Street in an imaginative combination of styles prevailing at the time, including Queen Anne, Shingle, and Colonial Revival.

The style of 291-293 Sargeant Street reflects the emerging twentieth century trend toward symmetrical Colonial inspired design. The home was originally constructed as two side-by-side units with a brick firewall running through

the center of the structure from front to back. The western half of the structure remains close to its original form with hardwood floors and much of the interior trim still in place. In contrast, the eastern half of the structure was renovated in 1984 to create a modern, open floor plan. The new floor plan is highlighted by a dramatic two-story space at the center of the unit which was achieved by removing a portion of the second floor. The building was vacated in 2007 after an out-of-state bank acquired the property through foreclosure. A fire in December 2007 destroyed a substantial portion of the third floor and the property was unoccupied for almost a year.



NINA restored 291-293 Sargeant Street in 2009 for sale as a two-family home. The property will be sold to an owner-occupant who will reside on one side of the property and utilize the other side as a rental. The home is Energy Star Certified to ensure sustainable affordability for any future owner.

HARTFORD SCHOOL BUILDING COMMITTEE

REHABILITATION and NEW CONSTRUCTION of 1304 MAIN STREET ~ *BARNARD BROWN SCHOOL*

The Henry Barnard School was built in 1927 and named in honor of a native of Hartford who was the first US commissioner of Education. This richly detailed building, with its beautiful brick façade in Flemish bond, its Flemish gables, brownstone water table, and large windows, was recently renovated to provide a new home for the Capital Preparatory Magnet School. The school building is gracefully sited on Main Street next to the Keney Memorial Clock Tower. The goals of the project design were to respect the urban site and context as well as the style, material, and color palette of the original building.

A well-proportioned 10,000 square foot gymnasium addition was thoughtfully placed on Pleasant Street to create a streetscape. Many of the features of the original building were carried over to the addition, in order to create a seamless transition between the old and the new. All existing brick veneer was carefully cleaned and restored. All exterior windows were replaced with windows with applied muntins, recalling another lost feature of the original.



The interior design preserved the elaborate ceiling of the existing auditorium, which was repurposed as the school's spacious new double-height library. The result is a school that feels natural in its setting and provides a dignified and protective environment.

Architects: The Slam Collaborative
Program Manager: Diggs Construction, LLC
Construction Management: Downes Construction Company
Masonry restoration: GL Capasso Restoration Inc.
New Masonry: Acranom Masonry Inc.

ARCHDIOCESE OF HARTFORD

ADAPTIVE REUSE of 809 ASYLUM AVENUE ~ “*ST. JOSEPH CATHEDRAL SCHOOL*”



Cathedral Green, an initiative of the Archdiocese of Hartford to fill a need in the Asylum Hill community for housing, opened in September 2009. Formerly St. Joseph Cathedral School, the 60,000 square foot building was renovated into 28 two and three bedroom affordable housing units for families who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Funding for the building’s renovation into Cathedral Green was provided by the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority—Next Steps Initiatives and tax credits through Connecticut Light and Power.

Cathedral Green is designed to address homelessness by providing affordable housing along with necessary services for families in maintaining housing, economic self sufficiency, and a healthy life. Catholic Charities provides the social services to families seeking support. Funding for the rental subsidies and services are provided by the Department of Social Services.

While Cathedral Green is permanent housing, families will also be provided with education and linkages to services to encourage home ownership and other community and family building savings and support programs. It is benefiting the lives of more than 80 residents, which includes over 50 children, and is the largest family-based affordable housing conversion in the City of Hartford.

PMC PROPERTY GROUP

REHABILITATION OF 210 FARMINGTON AVENUE ~ “*THE AMBASSADOR*”

This 1920 Italian Renaissance building was designed by the Hartford architectural firm of Berenson & Moses and through careful restoration has retained much of its original detailing and ornamentation. The apartment building was designed for the growing upper-class population of Hartford and had amenities uncommon to most apartments at the time. Such details included garages for tenants’ automobiles and conveniences including a barber shop, manicure shop, and tailors. In the west wing was a large dining room described as “spacious, well designed, decorated and lighted, and will accommodate more than 300 diners, and still leave room for dancing.”

Over the years however the property slowly declined into blight. When PMC Property Group began their work in 2008 they had their work cut out for them. The rehab consisted of removing all interior partition walls, shoring the bearing walls, as well as replacing roughly 60% of the flooring that through both neglect and age, were in ruin. Historically, they preserved features such as the original lobby flooring, decorative crown molding, the hardwood floors inside the rental units and pieces in the hallways. Original doors from an abandoned elevator were also saved.

In addition, the plaster walls in the stair towers were repaired to near original condition. On September 15th, the City of Hartford issued PMC their C.O. for the building which today stands at 90% occupied.

