



# **NEW BRITAIN CONNECTICUT**

## **HISTORIC PRESERVATION ACTION PLAN**

**NEW BRITAIN  
DEPARTMENT OF MUNICIPAL  
DEVELOPMENT  
AND  
CONNECTICUT TRUST FOR  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION**

**2010**

**THOMASON AND ASSOCIATES  
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE**

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# I. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## II. INTRODUCTION

During the past decades, cities across the nation have taken active steps to preserve their architectural and historic resources, resulting in economic benefits, revitalized downtowns, and an enhanced quality of life for their residents. Historic preservation has become a major part of overall community planning and sustainability efforts and a city's economic development. In recognition of its importance, historic preservation plans are being completed in many communities across the country.

The New Britain Historic Preservation Action Plan outlines goals and actions to promote downtown redevelopment, encourage investment in inner-city residential areas, and increase cultural and recreational opportunities for residents and visitors. Centrally located in Connecticut, New Britain is easily accessible to travelers seeking cultural attractions, historical sites, and the unique experience the town has to offer. New Britain boasts cultural and ethnic diversity with historic Polish and Italian populations, and a growing Hispanic demographic. In particular, New Britain's Polish community has fostered economic revitalization in its "Little Poland" neighborhood centered on Broad Street. In the wake of losing its historic manufacturing base, New Britain experienced a decline in jobs and population. Historic buildings went vacant, and urban renewal efforts claimed many historic buildings. More recent consideration has been given to preservation of resources significant to the community. The New Britain Historic Preservation Action Plan intends to build on those efforts, providing recommendations to raise public awareness of historic preservation, promote downtown revitalization and encourage tourism.

New Britain has in place a number of financial incentives such as tax abatements and façade loans to stimulate investment downtown and within adjacent neighborhoods. However, other incentives such as the federal historic rehabilitation tax credit also have the potential to provide property owners with opportunities for restoration and adaptive reuse. The use of tax credits and expanding the variety of financial incentives are important recommendations of this plan.

This plan benefited from the input and involvement of citizens through public meetings and also from the Historic Preservation Action Plan Steering Committee. A public meeting was held on March 24, 2010 and was attended by over thirty residents and property owners. The Action Plan Steering Committee met on August 24, 2010 to review the draft plan and provided the Consultant with additional recommendations. Other meetings were held later in the year prior to finalization of the plan. The final plan incorporates comments received during these meetings.

This plan was written to be consistent with the state's overall historic preservation plan published in 2005, "Building Quality Communities: Historic Preservation in Connecticut." This statewide plan provides an overview of historic preservation efforts in Connecticut and a blueprint on how to move forward in the future.

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## III. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The *New Britain Historic Preservation Action Plan* provides the city with specific recommendations for moving forward to preserving, protecting and enhancing its downtown area and neighborhoods. The plan provides an overview of the past and present preservation efforts in the city, available financial incentives and the economic benefits of historic preservation. The plan identifies those areas which contain the largest number of significant buildings, the importance of their listing on the National Register and options for additional enhancements. The primary recommendations of the plan are as follows:

- ⇒ New Britain is a historic city with two-thirds of its buildings pre-dating 1960 and it is in the city government's best interest to promote effective management and stewardship of its historic resources by its citizens.
- ⇒ In order to facilitate an effective historic preservation program, the City should adopt a Historic Preservation Ordinance and appoint a Historic District Commission.
- ⇒ Fund and prepare National Register nominations for the Downtown/Franklin Square and Broad Street Historic Districts to provide property owners in these areas with significant tax incentives for rehabilitation.
- ⇒ Adopt design guidelines for downtown in order to reinforce the area's historic character, boost heritage tourism and continue efforts to be an arts and entertainment destination in the region.
- ⇒ Undertake surveys and National Register nominations for historic neighborhoods at risk from neglect and deterioration in order to spur reinvestment.
- ⇒ Create a citywide-non profit historic preservation organization.
- ⇒ Establish local financial incentives for rehabilitation such as a Revolving Fund program.
- ⇒ Complete architectural surveys and nominations of National Register-eligible neighborhoods and properties throughout the city.
- ⇒ Preserve neighborhood and character through Historic District and Village District Overlays.
- ⇒ Prepare design review guidelines for historic residential areas
- ⇒ Promote home ownership and prevent loss of historic dwellings through an Urban Homesteading program.
- ⇒ Enhance heritage tourism through the creation of driving tours, marker programs and coordination with regional sites.
- ⇒ Utilize students from Central Connecticut State University to assist with historic preservation projects.
- ⇒ Take advantage of existing history-based programs to increase elementary and high school student awareness of New Britain's rich historical legacy.
- ⇒ Provide training for contractors and builders on appropriate historic building repair and maintenance.
- ⇒ Promote a citywide "preservation ethic" because of the quality and quantity of New Britain's pre-1960 commercial districts and neighborhoods.

## IV. NEW BRITAIN'S HERITAGE

### Introduction

New Britain is located in Connecticut's Central Valley region, a hilly and well-watered area centered on the Connecticut River. The late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries were particularly significant in its development, and industry and immigration have been particularly significant historical themes.

### From Native American to British Colonial Control: ca. 1600 – ca. 1775

Before European-American settlement, this area was hunting grounds for Tunxis, Wangunk, Mattabasset, and Quinnipiac people. All were semi-sedentary, and farmed and hunted for food. As English land practices became more dominant in the 1600s these groups became more sedentary, and as fur trade became an economic staple, hunting became a year-round activity. Local roads crossed through the area that became New Britain. Europeans had begun settling in the Connecticut Valley by 1633; a year in which over half of the older, Native American populations in the area died from the smallpox new settlers brought with them. One early historian wrote that relations between newcomers and old caretakers were friendly when settlement of the area began ca. 1640. Tensions accelerated quickly, however, and settlers in the vicinity of New Britain stockaded their 1686 outpost at Christian Lane. By that year Tunxis, Wampanoag, and other tribe's populations were dramatically diminished as a result of disease and a series of wars. Colonial officials began restricting and monitoring Native American populations, and, by the mid 1770s, their presence in the area was essentially gone or subdued.

### New Britain Becomes a Parish: ca. 1746 – ca. 1785

With the decline in the Native American population, the Connecticut territory became the destination of new English settlers arriving in the Massachusetts Bay area. The earliest to settle in the vicinity of what became New Britain were part of the Connecticut Colony. Hartford was the colony's governmental center, and Congregationalism was the controlling religion; church and state coexisted closely in this place and period.

New Britain originated as a new parish in 1754, named by influential local figure Colonel Isaac Lee. About 60 farming family groups had homes there, divided among three clusters centered on East Street, Hart Quarter, and Stanley Quarter. Remaining from the East Street cluster is the ca. 1746 Ezra Belden House at 530 East Street. Surviving in Hart Quarter are the Elijah Hart II House at 655 Lincoln Street, Jehudah Hart House at 267 Shuttle Meadow Avenue, and Elijah Hart II House at 61-65 Kensington Street. The ca. 1755 John Clark House at 2414 Stanley Street, George Francis House at 1939 Stanley Street, and Osgood-Beach House at 5 Osgood Avenue all remain from the Stanley Quarter cluster. Modern-day Fairview Cemetery began in 1756 as a local burial spot within a farm.

The New Britain Ecclesiastical Society officially formed First Church in 1758, though construction began on its meeting house in 1754. The county court arranged for its construction in the center of the parish, near the present-day intersection of Smalley and Elm Streets, and for roads to connect the three settlement clusters to it. East of the meeting house, residents established the Parade, a park-like public space, around which people ultimately constructed houses with expensive white-painted fronts and cheaper red sides and backs. Along the banks of a

spring originating below the meeting house, residents constructed grist, saw, and fulling mills and a blacksmith shop. The ca. 1754 Stanley Tavern was an important social center in the Stanley Quarter.

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The Gad Stanley House reflects the early settlement of New Britain.

more closely connected to other parts of the state and country. In 1785, the parish was incorporated as part of the Town of Berlin. In 1792, subscribers formed the first library in New Britain; First Church housed it in its basement. New families from other parts of the state and region, like that headed by Elisha and Nancy Whaples, moved to New Britain. Their son Curtis Whaples's Main Street dry goods store became one of many businesses in the commercial downtown by the 1820s. Irish immigrants, fleeing famine in their country, began settling in New Britain in the 1840s. They were closely followed by German, Scandinavian, English, Scotch, Welsh, and Canadian immigrants.

New churches formed in response. The First Baptist church formed in 1808 as a small congregation. A minister preached the first Methodist sermon in New Britain in 1815, and a Methodist congregation met in homes or schools before constructing its first permanent building in 1828 at the intersection of Main and Walnut Streets. First Church replaced its original meeting house in 1822 with a building at the intersection of Main and East Main Streets. Saint Mark's Episcopal Church, the seventh of its denomination in the county, held its first service in 1836 in a small wooden building on East Main Street; it built its second, more-elaborate building, on the corner of Washington and West Main Street in 1848. Tensions within First Church over issues related to slavery and infant baptism grew during the 1830s, and in 1842 a conservative new congregation, dubbed South Church, left First

Congregational Church and established the South Congregational Ecclesiastical Society. Local Catholics held sporadic services in homes as early as 1842, and established Saint Mary's Church in 1848. The congregation built its first building on Myrtle Street between 1850 and 1853.

Though farming remained a local presence, particularly near Stanley and East Streets, the early 1800s were the beginning of an increasing amount of manufacturing activity, concentrated in the western portions of New Britain. By 1820 the economy diversified with manufacturing and retail concerns producing clothing and hardware. New Britain entrepreneurs of the early nineteenth century manufactured brass, casters, hooks and eyes, jewelry, wires, saddle irons, bellows pipes, saddles, harnesses, fur hats, and cutlery, locks, and other hardware. Local manufacturers began using steam power in 1832, and transferred their operations from homes to factories.

#### New Britain Becomes a Town: 1850 - 1870

By 1850, New Britain had established much of the major pattern of development that categorizes it today. The parish had a population of 3,026 by then, more than 1,000 more than the other two parishes in the Town of Berlin combined. Also in 1850, the Providence-Hartford-Fishkill railroad line began passing through New Britain, which enabled economical, rapid transport of raw materials and finished goods. The same year, the general assembly declared New Britain an independent town.



New Britain in 1875. (Courtesy Library of Congress).

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The decades of the 1850s and 1860s saw civic and social expansion. In its first decade of incorporation, the Town of New Britain established the Shuttle Meadow water system, a free library, the State Normal School, Connecticut's first graded school system, and a YMCA. Central Park was created, and several local individuals formed the Walnut Hill Park Company and began purchasing and developing acreage for Walnut Hill Park. The population jumped to 5,210 in 1860, with new residents continuing to come from the surrounding region, as well as Northern and Western Europe. The Methodist congregation razed its first building and built a larger one in 1854. First Church moved in 1855 to then Church Street, the new center of town (currently, the vicinity of Bank Street), and began to be known as Center Church.

The role of industry in New Britain expanded as well during these decades. The Russell and Erwin Company, manufacturers of builders' hardware, and P. and F. Corbin Company both began periods of remarkable growth. The American Hosiery Company, Hall and Knapp Company, Humason and Buckley Company, Landers, Frary, and Clark, Landers and Smith, Malleable Iron Works, New Britain Gas Light Company, North and Judd Manufacturing Company, A. Stanley and Company, Stanley Rule and Level Company, Stanley Works, Union Manufacturing Company, New Britain National Bank, and Savings Bank of New Britain were all founded. The local focus on hardware and small metal goods proved more lucrative than other industries, and the Civil War further drove demand during the period. New Britain's industrialists reinvested their profits into local manufacturing.



Downtown New Britain ca. 1880. (Courtesy Library of Congress).

### New Britain Becomes a City: 1870 - 1900

After an 1870 application, New Britain was granted a city charter, a move that acknowledged the dramatic growth that occurred following the Civil War and presaged the continued growth that followed. By 1870, New Britain's population had grown to 9,840 people. Many of the new residents were former Poles, Lithuanians, Czechs, or Armenians. Between 1880 and 1900, New Britain's population doubled

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to 28,000, helped along by the immigration of many Eastern Europeans and Southern Italians who came to work in the city's many factories.

The wide variety of immigrants and nationalities in New Britain was reflected in the city's houses of worship. South Church replaced its original building in 1868 with the present Gothic Revival brownstone building at the intersection of Arch and Main Streets. By the mid 1880s, South Church was one of the largest Congregationalist churches in Connecticut, and it had begun an informal partnership with First Baptist Church to offer support and worship services for New Britain's residents. First Baptist Church often hosted Germans and Swedes, and South Congregational did the same for Armenians, Assyrians, and Italians. Saint Mary's Catholic Church began replacing its original building with an expanded facility on Main Street in 1886. As ethnic-focused neighborhoods developed across New Britain, Saint Mary's became the mother church for new Catholic congregations such as the French-German Saint Peter's on Franklin Square, Polish Sacred Heart on Broad Street, and Lithuanian Saint Andrew's at Church and Stanley Streets. A Swedish congregation began an early Lutheran church in the 1880s, and the Vega Benefit Society, a group founded in 1879 to help Swedish immigrants integrate into New Britain, arranged for construction of the Vega Block to house their efforts in 1897. Local Jews founded the B'Nai Israel congregation in 1895.

Employment opportunities in building and transportation projects drew many of the new residents, and improved local communication, recreation, artistic, and education came with the growth. In 1870, the post office built its first New Britain building. Around the same time, the firm of Olmstead, Vaux, and Company began designing roadways and other elements for Walnut Hill Park, and Central Park added a bandstand for weekly concerts. The New Britain Opera House was built in 1880 which provided comedy, vaudeville, Shakespeare, and other productions for the next several decades before being remodeled for movies. In the State Normal School's Hillside Place building in 1884, principal Clarence Carroll and educator Clara Mingins contributed to the founding of perhaps the first American kindergarten. Mass transit, in the form of horse-drawn streetcars, began ca. 1888, and connected residential neighborhoods to the city center. Workers completed the New Britain General Hospital in 1893.

Industry and business, helped along by the 1869 construction of a spur line of the New York, New Haven, and Hartford Railroad through New Britain, boomed after the Civil War, and in the 20 years before 1900, New Britain accounted for one sixth of all the hardware output in the United States. Stores filled stylish new brick buildings like Hanna's Block, built ca. 1876 at 440 Main Street. Workers completed the Italianate Russwin Hotel in 1885, using a design by architect Joseph Merrill Wells of the noted New York architectural firm of McKim, Mead, and White (As an early example of adaptive re-use, the hotel was converted to City Hall in 1907). John Hanna, an Irish immigrant, employed 100 workers by the mid 1880s in his East Main Street company The Marble Works. Hanna also owned a popular East Main Street public hall called The Armory. The New Britain Lumber and Coal Company, the American Electric Company, a precursor to General Electric, Skinner Precision Industries, J. T. Case Engine Company/New Britain Machine Company, Burritt Mutual Savings Bank, and Mechanics National Bank all opened between issuance of the city charter and 1900.

Though the industrial growth employed many and enriched some, labor unions formed in response to abuses of workers. Particular complaints included poor working conditions and long hours. The Ten Hour League, formed in 1866, sought to decrease the average working day from eleven hours to ten. The New Britain

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Knitting Company Workingmen's Union secured a reduction from ten to nine hours a day at the Russell and Erwin Manufacturing Company. After an 1886 strike at P. and F. Corbin, however, employers across town curtailed the activities of many unions and related societies.

Walnut Hill and the West End area, located along the eastern and western border of Walnut Hill Park, were the neighborhoods favored by New Britain's late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century industrial and commercial leaders. Along these tree-lined streets were built Stick, Queen Anne, Shingle, Colonial Revival, Tudor Revival, and Craftsman style houses. Elaborate late-nineteenth-century homes include the 1859 Stanley Mansion at 1 Hillside Place, the 1878 Eastman House at 33-35 South High Street, the 1886 Platt Mansion at 25 Court Street, and the 1891 Cadwell House at 130 W. Main Street.

New Britain: International Center for Hardware Manufacture: 1900 - 1945

New Britain became a major city in Connecticut at the turn of the 20th century as it became a leading international center of hardware manufacture. The increasing wealth of the city was expressed through the establishment of new parks, municipal improvements and the construction of hundreds of new brick and frame com-



Ca. 1879 drawing of the Stanley Works Facility.  
(Courtesy Hartford History Center, Hartford Public Library).

mercial, residential and industrial buildings. Though a Civil War monument was first proposed in 1868, it was completed and dedicated in 1900 as the Sailors and Soldiers Monument and placed in Central Park. Also in 1900, workers completed the Erwin Chapel, funded by Cornelius B. Erwin, in the Fairview Cemetery. Workers built the main building housing the New Britain Public Library, dedicated in 1901, in the Beaux-Arts style. The city established A. W. Stanley Park, Stanley Quarter Park, and Willow Brook Park on the outskirts of town during the 1920s. A free-standing children's wing was added to the library in 1931. In 1935, the New Britain Museum of American Art, one of the world's first institutions to specialize in American art, was established on Lexington Street.

The early 20th century witnessed a period of dramatic population growth; 68,128

people lived there by 1930 as immigrant workers continued to be important to New Britain's industrial operations. Eastern Europeans were the primary immigrants early in the 1900s, and Saint Mary's Ukrainian Orthodox, Holy Trinity Russian Orthodox, Holy Trinity Greek Catholic, and Saint George's Greek Orthodox Church were all established during this time. Orthodox Lithuanian Jews left the conservative Temple B'Nai Israel in 1925 to form their own Congregation Tephareth Israel. These churches and synagogues served the ethnic neighborhoods



Main Street in 1911. (Courtesy Local History Room, New Britain Public Library).

around them.

The Depression resulted in an economic downturn for the city as manufacturers cut jobs and hours in order to survive. Relief agencies were formed to assist those in need and some residents moved away to find jobs elsewhere. The establishment of New Deal programs in the 1930s benefited city residents through park and other municipal improvements. With the coming of World War II the economy was revived as the city's manufacturers produced munitions and weapons for the war effort. New Britain faced a housing shortage as the need for skilled laborers increased. As a result, hundreds of new housing units were built through a cooperative effort by the federal government and the city.

### An End to Industrial Domination: 1945 - 2010

In the decades following World War II, New Britain experienced a gradual decline in manufacturing and its appearance was transformed through major urban renewal projects. New Britain developed a master plan in the late 1950s and adopted it

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in 1961. Outdated shops, housing, industrial facilities, transportation networks, schools, and other infrastructure, were of particular concern. The fifteen-year plan made the city eligible for federal urban renewal funds which provided for the construction of expressways through the city. The construction of these four-lane expressways, designated at State Routes 9 and 72, resulted in the loss of many older industrial, commercial and residential buildings and divided the city into three sections. The urban renewal projects of the 1960s and 1970s favored the razing of older buildings and their replacement with new buildings, plazas or parks. New buildings constructed during these years included Pulaski High School, New Britain High School, the New Britain Bank and Trust Company office, the John F. Kennedy Apartments, and Newbrite Plaza.

Large industrial buildings were built throughout central New Britain at the turn of the century such as the factory of Landers, Frary and Clark. (Courtesy Local History Room, New Britain Public Library).





The demolition of the Fafnir Bearing Company complex reflects the loss of many of the city's industrial and commercial buildings since World War II. (Courtesy Local History Room, New Britain Public Library).

The 1970s, however, also saw a competing interest in preservation. A 1971 city plan called for the creation of historic districts to prevent the demolition of significant buildings and monitor the building of new, adjacent buildings. That same year on June 2nd, the "night of fires," arsons destroyed the Emhart complex, the New Britain Lumber Yard, and much of the manufacturing buildings to the east of downtown's core. The City Plan Commission's 1972 Historic Preservation Plan included a city-wide listing of architecturally or historically significant buildings and urged the establishment of historic districts. The mayor established a historic district committee in 1974 to support the nomination of historic districts to the National Register of Historic Places and for state registration. The plan included other recommendations that were innovative for their time but were never enacted.

Today, New Britain is essentially a historic city with two-thirds of its buildings constructed prior to 1960. Most of the buildings in the downtown and inner city neighborhoods were built before World War II and most of the farmland on the edges of the city was subdivided and developed by the 1970s. Immigrants continue to make New Britain their home, and its Hispanic population is the latest influx of workers. With the decline in manufacturing New Britain's economic engines are healthcare and education, and many residents commute to Hartford or other locations for work. New Britain is known for its affordability and it provides inexpensive rental opportunities for many of its citizens. Like many other cities in New England, New Britain has refocused efforts on creating a livable and walkable downtown, on developing a center for the arts and is encouraging reuse and rehabilitation of its historic commercial resources.

## V. NEW BRITAIN'S ARCHITECTURAL LEGACY

New Britain's architectural heritage spans over two hundred years and reflects many of the nationwide trends and styles of the 19th and 20th centuries. Scattered throughout the city are dwellings reflective of New Britain's colonial legacy. Some of these houses have been altered but others retain much of their original character. These houses were once the centers of farms and are all that remain of the area's agricultural heritage. By the mid-1800s dwellings in the Greek and Gothic Revival styles were built throughout the community. After the Civil War, New Britain grew rapidly and the city was transformed through intensive industrial, commercial and residential development.

The architectural styles that follow reflect national trends and these styles can be found in most cities in New England. Property types in the city that are particularly noteworthy are the city's churches, apartment buildings and multi-family units. New Britain's diverse immigrants brought with them their particular customs and modes of worship from the Old World. As a result, the city boasts many fine houses of worship and their design and craftsmanship are notable for a city of its size. The large influx of immigrants at the turn of the century also led to the construction of multi-story apartment buildings and three-family flats. Most of the apartment buildings are of brick construction and were designed with Colonial Revival and Tudor Revival detailing. While many two-family flats were constructed, a very common property type is the three-story flat, also known locally as the "triple-decker." These three-story frame houses were built with porches on each floor of the front of the building and housed three or more families. Large concentrations of the triple-deckers are found south and southwest of downtown, in the Broad Street area, and in the East Side Neighborhood.



The city's architectural legacy includes a fine collection of brick apartment buildings such as the row in the 100 block of Oak Street at left and three-story "triple-decker" multi-family housing as illustrated by the well-preserved house at 168-170 Maple Street.

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## Georgian: 1700—ca. 1780

Drawing its name from the English kings who ruled from ca. 1700 until the American Revolution, this thoroughly British style was popular in American coastal cities of the period. The style, which relied on symmetry, balanced proportions, and detailing borrowed from classical Greece and Rome, represented a dramatic break from the Medieval-influenced architecture that preceded it.

Georgian buildings typically have five bays, with upper windows in each and a first-floor central entrance, often with a transom, pilasters, and a paneled door. Side-gabled roofs are common, but gambrel and hipped roofs also exist, and the cornice line is often emphasized through dentils or other molding. Builders in New England often used frame construction, and exteriors became more restrained as the period progressed.



The ca. 1746 Ezra Belden House, at 639 Arch Street in the original East Street settlement cluster, demonstrates many Georgian features, including a central chimney, side-gabled roof, symmetrical five-bay façade, and central entrance.



At 655 Lincoln Street, in the original settlement cluster of Hart Quarter, is the ca. 1750 Elijah Hart House. Paired interior chimneys, one of which remains here, were also commonly used on Georgian houses. Palladian windows like the one in the gable field were popular later in the eighteenth century, and this one may have been added then.



Hart House at 169 Linwood Street

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## Greek Revival: 1825– 1860

The young United States adopted the Greek Revival style, with its references to Athenian democracy, as a way of asserting its independence from England and European influence. It was so closely linked with the young nation that many in the United States called it the National style. Buildings in the style used Greek orders, proportions, and ornament to link themselves to ancient precedents.

Many Greek Revival buildings in New England, especially in cities, are front gabled and lack porches. Accentuated cornice lines and doorways, as well as columns, are common.



The Gad Stanley House at 2134 Stanley Street was designed in a gable front temple form in the early 1800s and features a pedimented entry portico with Doric columns (above and right).



The Andrews House at 1484 Stanley Street (left) was designed in a gable front temple form and features a lunette in the gable field. Its porch and exterior shingles were added in the late 19th century.

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## Gothic Revival: 1840—1900

The Gothic Revival style challenged the Classical influences that had dominated architecture in the colonies and United States for the preceding century, and reflected the rise of a picturesque, romantic sensibility. It was also the first formal style to be tied to specifically middle-class house types, and religious buildings made frequent use of this style.

Gothic Revival buildings are defined by their steeply pitched roofs and ebullient use of trim. Asymmetry and multiple gables are also common. Doors and windows sometimes make a pointed arch. Most houses in this style have porches.



The wooden trim in the eaves, cast iron ridge cresting on the roof, additional front-facing gable, and steeply pitched roof at 101 Fairview Street all mark it as an example of the Gothic Revival style.



The Ethan Andrews House at 1450 Stanley Street was built with board and batten siding and a prominent central Gothic arch window.



Houses of worship particularly favor the Gothic Revival style. The pointed steeples, multiple gables, and pointed-arch entrances, windows, and panes mark the Sacred Heart Church at 158 Broad Street as a Gothic Revival building.

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## Italianate: 1840—1885

Italianate was another romantic style. It loosely referenced villas of Tuscany, Umbria, and Lombardy. Common Italianate features include multiple stories; low roof pitches; eave and other brackets; square forms; square towers; and tall, narrow, arched openings, often paired or tripled; and window hoods.



At 31 North High Street is a classic Italianate residence, with its overhanging eaves, arched entrance, and square form.



Some Italianate buildings are asymmetrical. The one at 56 Whiting Street's square form and brackets are especially typical.



The style was popular for commercial buildings, too, like this one at 57-61 Arch Street, with its arched windows, square central tower-like feature, and eave brackets.



Institutional buildings like Saint Joseph's Church at 195 S. Main Street adopted the style as well. It has a central square tower and arched windows.

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## Second Empire: 1855—1885

Two mid-nineteenth-century exhibitions in Paris drew international attention to the city's new architectural trends, which found a receptive audience in the United States. In contrast to its contemporaries, the Gothic Revival and Italianate styles, the Second Empire was distinctly modern.

The defining elements of Second Empire buildings are their mansard roofs. Other common features include towers, brackets, roof cresting, porch spandrels, dormers, round windows, projecting bays, paired doors and windows, and quoins.



33 Court Street's Second Empire elements include its mansard roof, dormers, eave brackets, projecting side bay, and paired doors.



The dwelling at 82 Winter Street retains its mansard roof, gable dormer windows, eave brackets and side bay windows.

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## Queen Anne: 1880—1910

The hugely popular Queen Anne style referenced multiple precedents, including Classical, Tudor, and Flemish architecture. It emphasized domesticity and comfort, and employed varied surface planes and details for visual interest.

Queen Anne buildings have irregular and steep roofs, often with a gable or gables, multiple projecting and recessed bays, asymmetrical facades, and porches. Wooden trim and towers were popularly used on Queen Anne designs.



The house at 29 South High Street is a simple example of Queen Anne architecture. Its asymmetry, varied façade planes, gabled roof, and porches with balustrades and columns all identify it as such.



The house at 198 Maple Street's crossed gables, bargeboard, asymmetry, and porch with trim all mark it as Queen Anne.



The house at 130 West Main Street, with its circular tower and wrap-around porch, is a more elaborate example of the style.



Queen Anne houses, like this one at 47 Bassett Street, often used multi-colored paint to emphasize their varied surfaces.

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## Shingle: 1880—1900

The Shingle style shares much of its aesthetic with the Queen Anne style, but is set apart by its exteriors, which are covered with shingles and lack other decoration in order to create a look both textured and smooth in which walls and a roof merge visually. The style developed around Boston and remained largely a New England phenomenon. Architect Henry Hobson Richardson is credited with originating it, and noted firm McKim, Mead, and White made frequent use of it. Shingle buildings generally have asymmetrical facades, porches, and steeply gabled roofs.



Built ca. 1900, this dwelling at 6 Rogers Place was designed with an exterior of wooden shingles.



The house at 91 Lexington Street is a rambling example of the Shingle style.



At 96 Forest Street, the designer merged Shingle surface treatments with a Dutch Colonial Revival plan and roof.

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## Victorian Romanesque: 1880—1900

The Victorian Romanesque style was based on the architecture of medieval Romanesque buildings of Europe. It was primarily a design suitable for masonry buildings making it expensive, so was largely an urban style used for churches industrial buildings, commercial buildings and schools.

Victorian Romanesque buildings often have walls of rough-hewn stone. Many have towers and are asymmetrical, and rounded arches are prevalent.



City Hall, particularly the lower floor with its rounded-arch windows and entry way, is influenced by the Victorian Romanesque style.



The influence of the Victorian Romanesque style can be seen at 53 High Street, with its masonry construction, arched windows and corner tower.



The Armory at 232 Arch Street with its massive proportions, masonry construction, rounded-arch entryway and upper motif, and towers with conical roofs, evidences the Victorian Romanesque style.

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## Colonial Revival: 1880—1950

The Colonial Revival style followed the enthusiasm of the United States' centennial anniversary. Elements of early national architectural styles like Georgian and Federal figured heavily in its aesthetic, and reflected the country's interest in its past and preservation of it. The revival style, larger and grander than its precedents, began as a style for wealthy residential clients, but expanded to become the dominant style of architecture in the United States for the first half of the twentieth century.



The house at 69 Lexington Street is an elaborate example of an Colonial Revival house, with its symmetry, hipped roof, dormers, sidelights and fanlight, double-hung windows, and porch.



Colonial Revival was a popular style for government-sponsored housing, like New Britain's Manor Housing development, built to house defense workers on Ellis Street. Colonial Revival elements in this restrained example of the style include the cupola, shutters, and pedimented entrances.



Dutch Colonial Revival houses, such as this one at 116 Hillhurst Avenue, are defined by their gambrel roofs.

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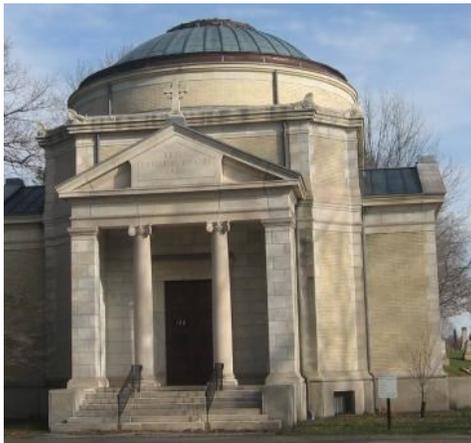
## Neoclassical: 1895—1950

The Neoclassical style popularized by the 1893 Chicago Exposition hearkened to 18th-century France and England, and was a restrained counterpart to Beaux Arts buildings of the same period.

Full-height porches and porticos, often with pediments and/or Ionic or Corinthian columns, are commonly employed, and entrance surrounds and dentils or modillions are also typical. Roofs are generally low and facades are often symmetrical.



The conservative style was also a popular choice for school buildings, like this one at 183 Vance Street. The two-story portico, complete with swags and dentils, on its central bay, broken pediment over the entrance, and overall symmetry all mark it as a Neoclassical building.



Neoclassical was a popular style choice for monuments, too, like the Erwin Chapel, with its pedimented portico with classical columns.



The monumentalism of the style made it popular for institutional buildings, like the Our Lady of Rose Hill orphanage, with its cupola, arched openings, pilasters, broken entry pediment, and symmetry.



The Neoclassical style also influenced commercial buildings, like this one at 55 West Main Street with its arched openings, exterior molding, dentils, and limestone portion.

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## Beaux Arts: 1885—1930

Beaux Arts was the baroque equivalent to Neoclassical architecture, differentiated from it by its highly decorative exterior surfaces.

Roofs are often flat or of a low pitch, and buildings are typically square or rectangular. Wall surfaces may be decorated with garland, shield, or floral motifs, and most have quoins, pilasters or columns which are often paired. Symmetry is important, and stone is a favored building material.



The banks of windows, arched openings, and generally busy façade at 9 Sunnyledge Street make it a Beaux Arts building.



The War Memorial's rounded top; decorative cartouche, figures, and other trim; pilasters; patterned vent; and band courses are all Beaux Arts elements.



The New Britain Library's roof balustrade, decorative band course, grouped windows, arched openings, recessed entry, pilasters, and decorative stonework are all reflective of Beaux Arts buildings.

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## Craftsman/Bungalow: 1905—1930

The Craftsman/Bungalow style drew inspiration from the English Arts and Crafts movement, a reaction against the industrial revolution. The movement favored the appearance of one-of-a-kind products and valued the manual labor used to create them, so materials and design details were particularly important to the style. Because of the influence of the contemporary Prairie style and interest many Craftsman architects had in Japanese design, blending the building and its setting was also important to high-style Craftsman projects.

Common features include low-pitched roofs, eave brackets, exposed rafter tails, porches, square porch posts that often extend to the ground, and contrasting materials or placement used for accent points.



The house at 34 Overhill Avenue, with its low-pitched roof, eave brackets, wraparound porch, and wood and stone columns is an excellent example of the Craftsman style.



This Bungalow at 48 Lyons Street features a wide front porch, gable dormer and wood shingles exterior.

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## Minimal Traditional: 1930—1960

Minimal Traditional style dwellings were built from the 1930s to the 1950s and were basically stripped down versions of the Colonial and Tudor Revival styles. While their overall form and plan are based on these styles, they have minimal decorative elements. These dwellings are common in the Belvedere and Hillhurst Neighborhoods and subdivisions in the north section of the city.



This Minimal Traditional dwelling at 100 Overhill Avenue has an exterior of both stone veneer and frame.



Houses built in the Minimal Traditional style were widely built throughout the city before and after World War II such as the house at 108 Linden Street.

## Ranch: 1945—1960

The Ranch style was built in the new suburbs of the city after World War II. This style originated in California and features horizontal forms, picture windows, minimal porches on the front of the house and often has an attached garage.



The Ranch style dwelling 187 Fairway Drive was designed with a picture window on the front and an inset garage.



Several subdivisions were built with simple Ranch style dwellings such as this house at 44 Howe Road.

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## VI. PAST PRESERVATION EFFORTS

The first major planning effort in New Britain was the adoption of its first comprehensive plan in 1961. Like many plans of the period it anticipated continued industrial growth and improved automobile-based transportation to assist in overall economic development. During the 1960s the city was transformed through the construction of major highways through its center. While providing a more accessible road system, this construction also divided the city into three main sections. The building of the highways also resulted in the loss of many commercial and industrial buildings, especially along Main Street.

A new plan completed in 1971 recognized the highway system as a challenge, noted the decline of manufacturing, and addressed the shift of New Britain's downtown as a regional to a sub-regional center, calling for urban renewal projects to address this. The plan also called for the creation of historic districts to prevent the demolition of significant buildings and monitoring the building of new, adjacent buildings. The same year saw the publishing of the Centennial Book Committee's *Heritage 100*, a community history and scrapbook commemorating New Britain's chartering as a city. Out of these efforts came the impetus to create a city historic preservation plan.

The City Plan Commission's 1972 *Historic Preservation Plan* included a city-wide listing of architecturally or historically significant buildings and urged the establishment of historic districts. The study showed that New Britain contained an extensive stock of historical buildings from every period of its existence and that the bulk of them are within one mile of Central Park. Significant collections of buildings were identified in the South High, Camp, Court, and Walnut Streets and Hillside Place neighborhood (now the Walnut Hill historic District); the Chestnut and Fairview Streets neighborhood, and the Hart, Winthrop, Linwood Streets neighborhood. Preservation strategies the plan recommended included:

- ⇒ a comprehensive survey and ranking of historic buildings;
- ⇒ development of protective zoning to prevent demolition and exterior modifications to significant and economically viable landmarks;
- ⇒ creation of two or three local historic districts with a Historic District Commission to supervise and control building, demolition, and exterior rehabilitation to control the spread of blight and encourage city investment;
- ⇒ tax abatement for owners of particularly significant buildings on sites that could be demonstrably occupied by more intense or lucrative uses;
- ⇒ the establishment of a "historic park" and relocation of threatened, significant historic buildings into it;
- ⇒ individualized preservation planning for major municipal landmarks;
- ⇒ listing of eligible buildings in the National Register of Historic Places;
- ⇒ City Plan staff review of building, zoning, and public agency activities for impact on historic buildings, and;
- ⇒ Increase the importance of historic preservation by liaising with owners of historic buildings to advise them on appropriate treatment of their properties, marking significant buildings, and publishing promotional materials.

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This historic preservation plan was innovative for its time and most of the recommendations remain relevant. Following the completion of the plan the mayor established a historic district committee in 1974 to support the nomination of historic districts to the National Register of Historic Places and for state registration. Nominations completed in the 1970s included the City Hall-Monument District, the Walnut Hill Historic District and the New Britain Opera House (later demolished).



As part of educational efforts, the Art Press of New Britain published in 1975 *A Walk Around Walnut Hill*, an illustrated architectural and historical survey of the Walnut Hill neighborhood and greater New Britain. The book was published with the support of the

Listed in 1973, City Hall was the first property in New Britain placed in the National Register of Historic Places.

Connecticut Commission on the Arts and the City of New Britain. Also in the 1970s the city established its Neighborhood Preservation Program which provides technical assistance in the form of inspections and estimates for repair or renovation and financial assistance for residential property rehabilitation to low and moderate income residents.

Only a few of the recommendations of the 1972 Historic Preservation Plan were adopted in the years following the study. A Historic Preservation Commission was never formed, no protected historic districts were created and there was no overall survey and National Register program established. An ad hoc non-profit organization to promote preservation was formed but after awhile it was no longer functioning. During the 1980s preservation efforts consisted of the nomination of four additional properties to the National Register and the rehabilitation of notable buildings such as the Burritt Hotel and the Washington School. There was also increased interest in rehabilitating homes in the West End Neighborhood adjacent to Walnut Hill Park.

In the 1990s, substantial historic preservation efforts were renewed. The most significant action was the completion of an architectural survey by the city using matching federal funds. Newport Collaborative Architects, Inc. completed the *Citywide Historic Properties Survey* for New Britain in 1996. The survey included a historic context for the city, architectural descriptions, and an inventory of over 550 properties from the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries related to the city's founding and its industrial, commercial, cultural, religious, and residential history.

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The survey concentrated on identifying the most significant properties in the city and identifying those that appeared to meet National Register criteria both individually and as a district. In addition to numerous buildings and structures, the survey identified several concentrations of properties meeting National Register criteria. These areas were the Broad Street Historic District, the Downtown/Franklin Square Historic District and the "Parkside" Historic District just west of Walnut Hill Park. A National Register nomination was later prepared in 1998 for the Parkside area and this area was listed by its better known name, the West End Historic District.



The 1996 survey identified the area west of Walnut Hill Park as eligible for the National Register. A nomination was prepared and this area was listed in 1998 as the West End Historic District. The district was listed for its architectural significance as illustrated by the Neo-classical style dwelling at 69 Lexington Street at left and the Dutch Colonial style dwelling at 96 Forest Street at right.

The authors of the survey also made a number of recommendations for future preservation efforts including:

- Continue to promote, reference, and research the community's past and its historic properties;
- Nominate additional properties to the National Register of Historic Places;;
- Develop an active outreach program to promote the federal investment tax credit program;;
- Reactivate a local non-profit preservation association;
- Develop an incentive program for preservation;
- Adopt a demolition delay ordinance;

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- Designate a local historic district in a city-owned property as a demonstration project to develop trust and education on the benefits of preservation;
  - Market New Britain as a tourist destination, and;
  - Work with concerned organizations to update the comprehensive preservation plan.

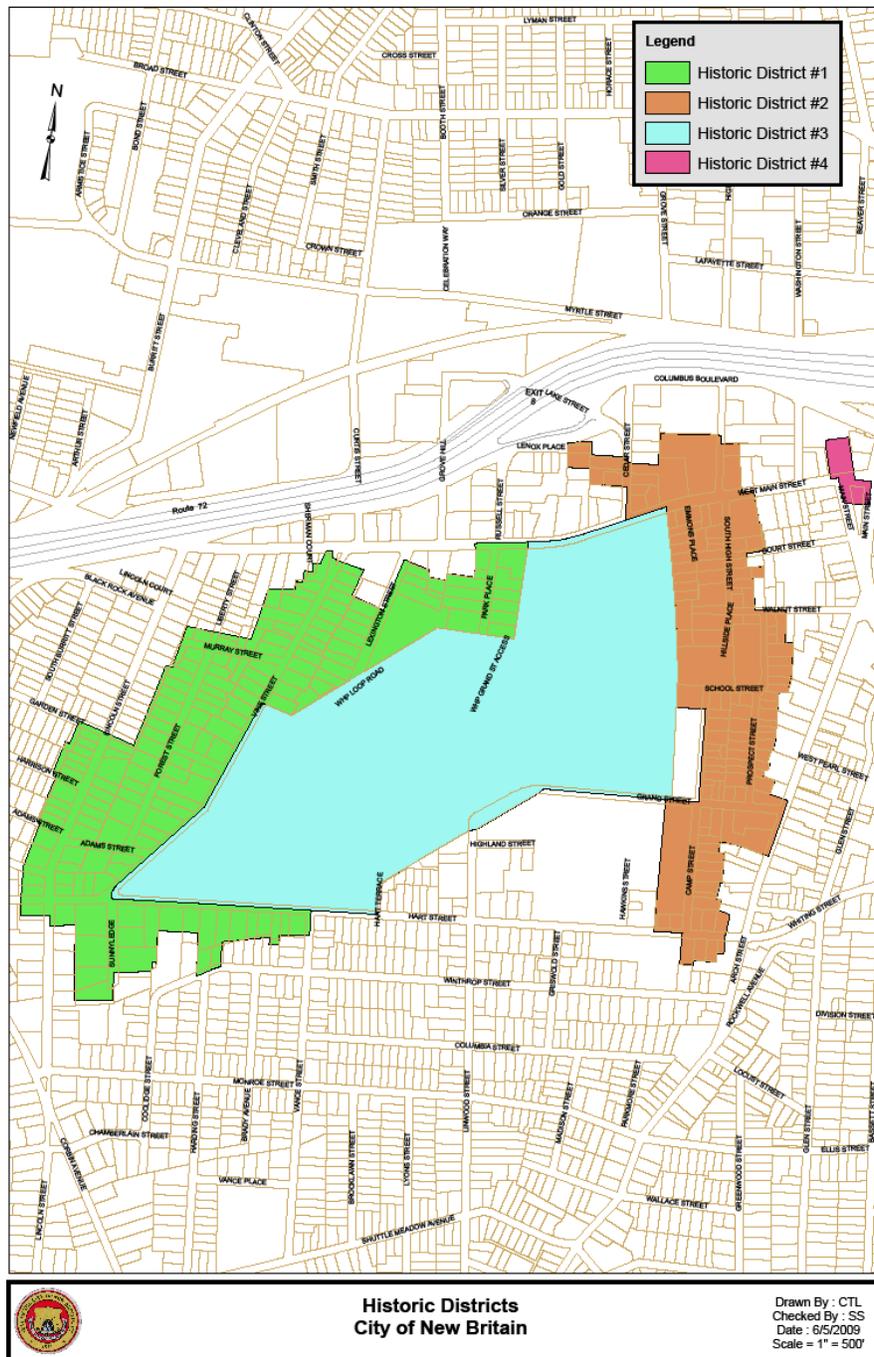
The 1996 survey was an important contribution to the city's historic preservation efforts, however, only a small number of its recommendations have since been enacted. The recommendations of the survey in large part are similar to those identified in the 1972 plan and are consistent with state and national historic preservation trends. In the 1990s five additional properties were added to the National Register along with the West End Historic District. Federal tax credits for rehabilitation were also used by property owners to rehabilitate four properties in the Walnut Hill Historic District.

From 2000 to 2010, the city has identified its historic assets as integral to downtown revitalization and overall community development. In 2001, the city, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Downtown District, combined to publish the *Downtown New Britain Architectural Walking Tour*, a colorful booklet highlighting seventeen of New Britain's most significant buildings. The printing of this brochure was in recognition of the city's architectural legacy in the downtown and Walnut Hill area and provides tourists with a self-guided tour.

Comprehensive plans developed for New Britain during this decade increasingly addressed historic preservation's role in community development, especially in downtown revitalization. Property owners in the downtown area were provided with tax abatement programs and façade restoration grants to help stimulate investments in historic buildings as well as new construction. A reuse plan was formulated to attract investment in the New Britain National Bank, also known as the Commercial Trust Building, next to City Hall. This property was listed on the National Register in 2009 and is presently undergoing rehabilitation.

The Commercial Trust Building (New Britain National Bank) at 51-55 W. Main Street was the focus of preservation plans and studies during the past decade. In 2010 it was undergoing rehabilitation into offices and residential units.





New Britain currently has four National Register Historic Districts. These are:  
 West End — Historic District 1  
 Walnut Hill — Historic District 2  
 Walnut Hill Park—Historic District 3  
 City Hall/Monument—Historic District 4

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Two important planning projects were completed between 2008 and 2010. The *Downtown Plan and Strategy for New Britain* was completed in 2008 and examined past planning efforts as well as recommending new strategies. One of these strategies is the recognition of increased demand for residential units downtown. This trend is in keeping with cities across the country as young professionals, retiring “Baby Boomers” and other demographic groups seek the convenience and amenities downtown offers for residential living. The 2008 plan also emphasized the enhancement of public spaces and pedestrian pathways and to create “destinations” downtown such as arts centers, boutique shops, museums and upscale restaurants. The plan also recommends preserving downtown’s historic buildings for adaptive reuse efforts.

The second major study, *New Britain’s Plan of Conservation and Development* was presented in draft form to the city in April of 2010. This document is a comprehensive plan that addresses the city’s existing conditions, housing, infrastructure, economic development and future land use. The plan addresses downtown, the neighborhoods, housing, transportation, parks, economic development and other aspects of the city’s growth and development. Since this is a comprehensive plan, historic preservation goals and objectives are not fully discussed but the primary recommendations of the comprehensive plan recognizes the importance of retaining and rehabilitating historic buildings as part of economic development. Goals listed in the *Conservation and Development Plan* included “Develop and implement a design review process which protects New Britain’s historic and architectural assets” and “Respect and preserve the historic and architectural heritage of the (Downtown) area,”

The Trinity Methodist Church (Trinity on Main) at 69 Main Street is an example of a successful adaptive reuse of a historic building through its conversion from a church to theater.



These studies highlight the growing awareness of historic preservation’s role in downtown revitalization and community development. In the past decade New Britain has had a resurgence in development of the arts such as theaters and art galleries. The Trinity Methodist Church (Trinity on Main) built in 1891 was rehabilitated into a community theater and other properties downtown now house art galleries and museums. Investment and rehabilitation continues to occur in the Walnut Hill and West End Historic Districts. There is also increased activity downtown with several buildings rehabilitated into office space and loft apartments. New Britain is now well poised to integrate its historic resources into overall community and economic development.

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## VII. PRESERVATION IN NEW BRITAIN TODAY

### Overview

New Britain is a historic city with more than 66% of its buildings constructed before 1960. Yet the city has yet to embrace historic preservation efforts as fully as many cities in Connecticut and New England. This ambivalence towards recognizing preservation's benefits was noted in the 1972 *Historic Preservation Plan* when the authors stated that "In New Britain...the different interests and background of its citizens, the strong demands for intense use of available real estate, and because of the great eclecticism of its historic buildings (in terms of age, style, traditions, etc.) preservation activities are more likely to meet with greater skepticism and less enthusiasm than similar activities in nearby towns." Twenty years later the 1996 *Citywide Historic Property Survey* reported that "The community has not been able to overcome its negative self-image or its overall negative image within the region. There are many areas of the city in which there are blighted and abandoned historic properties which erode the livability of neighborhoods and jeopardize neighborhood stability." However, there is much that has happened since the 1996 survey that is encouraging and suggests a renewed commitment to integrating the city's historic buildings into economic development.

One of the main obstacles confronting the preservation and rehabilitation of downtown, Broad Street and the neighborhoods is the above-average number of rental properties versus owner-occupied properties. As of 2006, New Britain had 31,164 housing units of which 12,201 were owner-occupied and 16,357 were renter-occupied. Many of the dwellings in New Britain were constructed as rental housing for the city's manufacturing and industrial workers. These rental properties are expressed in the city's numerous apartment buildings, two-family flats and multi-family "triple-decker" houses. These rental properties are an important legacy of the city and today they provide affordable housing for working-class residents and those with incomes below the poverty line. Over the past several decades many of these rental units have deteriorated through the neglect of owners and ownership increasingly is by absentee landlords. Neighborhoods throughout the city have suffered as these properties have declined in maintenance and the historic qualities the dwellings once had are hidden beneath synthetic sidings, altered porches and modern windows.

In response to the decline and abandonment of rental and owner-occupied properties, the city enacted an anti-blight program. This program works similarly to "demolition by neglect" ordinances widely used throughout the country. The program provides opportunities for rehabilitation and saving important buildings but it also serves as a mechanism for demolition.

On the positive side, most of New Britain's historic building stock was very well built and offers ample opportunities for reclamation of lost character. Buildings constructed in the 19th and early 20th centuries were built with old-growth wood and quality materials and can last indefinitely if they are maintained. Buildings can also be returned to their original design through the removal of added sidings and enclosed porches to create streetscapes reflective of the city's historic character.

Downtown is especially poised to benefit from a renewed interest in using its historic character to underpin economic development. Several buildings have been rehabilitated on Main Street in recent years and now contain market rate apartments, office space and restaurants. Adjacent to City Hall the New Britain National Bank Building is now undergoing rehabilitation. The emergence of downtown as an arts center is also transforming downtown into a destination point and is bringing more vibrancy and activity in the evenings. Arch Street is also undergoing changes through actions associated with its Neighborhood Revitalization Zone. This last effort should serve as an example to help re-invigorate inactive Neighborhood Revitalization Zones. Overall the commitment and positive actions related to historic preservation include:

- \* An array of financial incentives available for downtown revitalization.
- \* An active and vibrant arts scene.
- \* A resurgence in building rehabilitation projects downtown.
- \* Interest in passing a Historic Preservation Ordinance and creating a Historic Preservation Commission.
- \* A number of successful adaptive reuse projects of former schools and industrial buildings.
- \* Improvements through actions related to the four Neighborhood Revitalization Zones.



The New Britain Artists Cooperative at 66-68 W. Main Street is one of several initiatives underway to bring artists and galleries downtown.

GREATER  
NEW BRITAIN

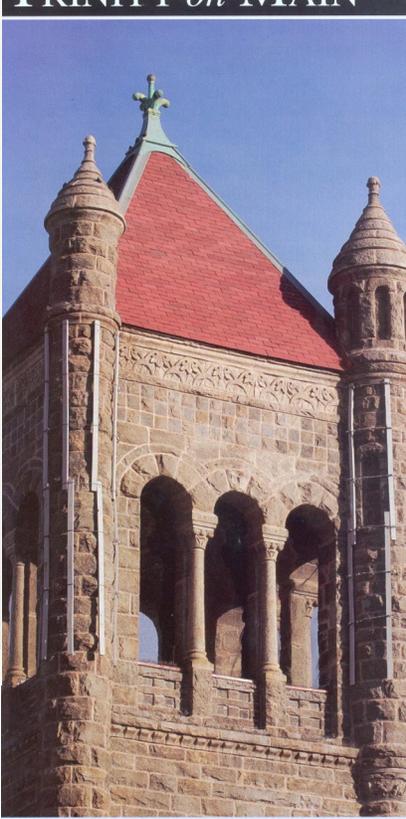
# Arts Discovery Guide

Arts Interest Groups	Pg. 3
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 **Greater New Britain  
Arts Alliance**  
Linking People and the Arts

[www.NewBritainArts.org](http://www.NewBritainArts.org)

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*A space for arts, community and culture*

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OF AMERICAN ART



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(860) 229-0257 / WWW.NBMAA.ORG

The Arts Alliance, Downtown District, city government and other organizations and agencies have made New Britain a center for the arts in central Connecticut.

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## New Britain's Zoning and Historic Preservation

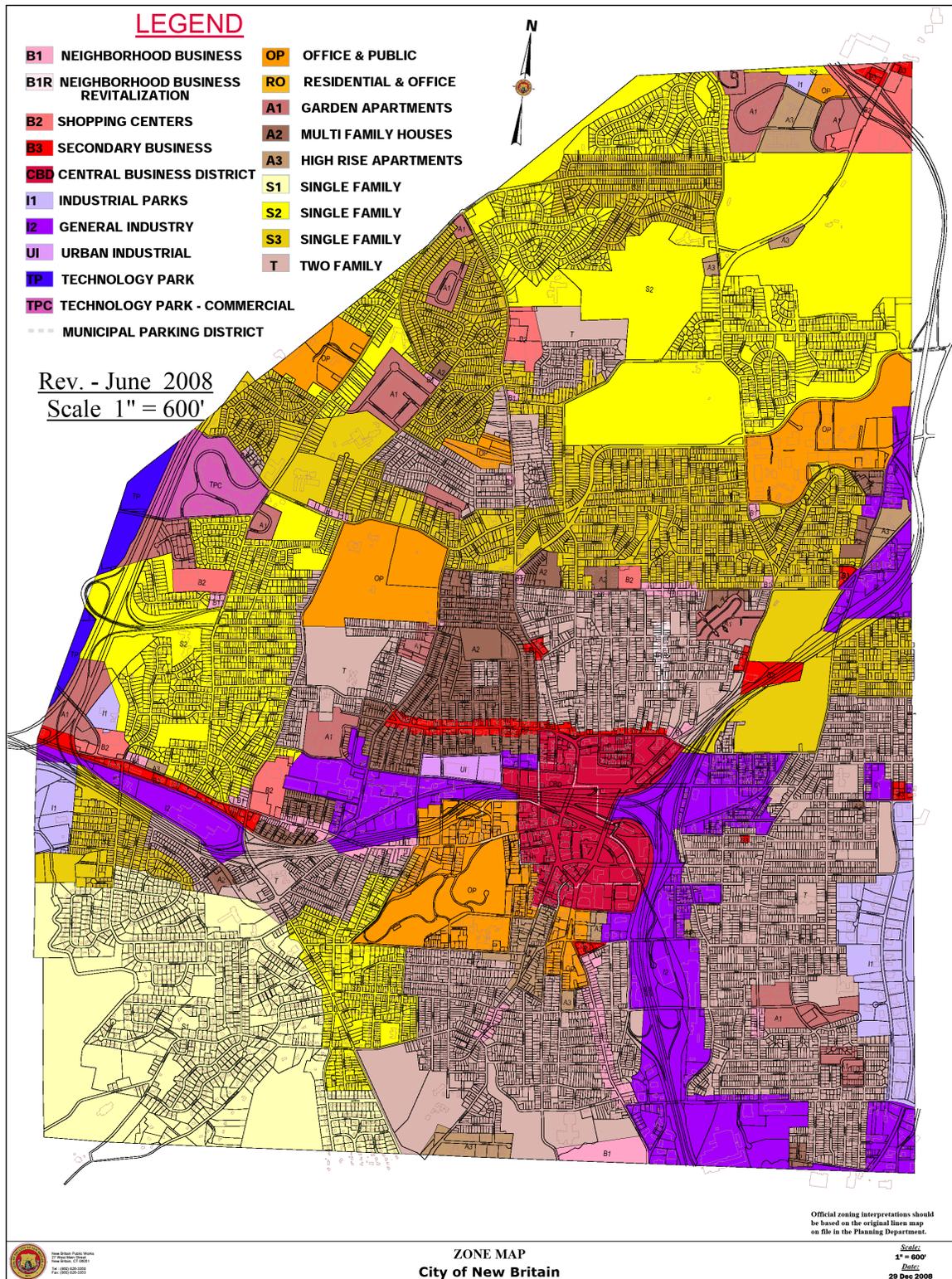
New Britain has many zoning categories which have basically followed the historic development of the city. Because of the large number of workers required in the city's factories, thousands of multi-family apartment buildings and dwellings were constructed in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. When zoning was enacted for the city the zoning overlays were designed to reflect each area's prevailing housing patterns. In the areas around downtown and Broad Street this resulted in allowing for multi-family and high density residential in the existing two- and three-family flats and apartment buildings.

The challenges presented to historic preservation by the existing zoning is not so much the overlay requirements themselves since they simply reflect the historic uses on each block. What is more problematic is how owners of rental properties alter and remodel their buildings. The great majority of frame, multi-family dwellings in the city have been remodeled with added synthetic sidings, replacement windows and removed or enclosed porches. Not only does this lose the historic character of a building but it also has the potential to lower the life expectancy of frame buildings by restricting their natural "breathability." Frame buildings need to expand and contract with heating and cooling cycles and some synthetic sidings essentially encapsulate the building resulting in moisture retention and deterioration.



The loss of architectural character has been particularly pronounced in areas zoned multi-family. Both of these houses were built in the late 19th century in the Italianate style. The house on the left at 354 S. Main Street retains much of its character while the house on the right at 247-249 Glen Street does not.

Areas zoned two- or multi-family such as the East End, LaSalle and Dublin Hill Neighborhoods have high incidences of altered dwellings and most of these areas no longer reflect their early 20th century character. To further historic preservation efforts in the city, there should be an emphasis more on adding financial incentives through National Register listing or tax abatements for improvements than changes to existing zoning.



The areas zoned multi-family adjacent to downtown and in the East End have lost much of their historic and architectural character due to inappropriate remodeling.

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## Existing Financial Incentives for Downtown Preservation

### Programs of the Downtown District of New Britain

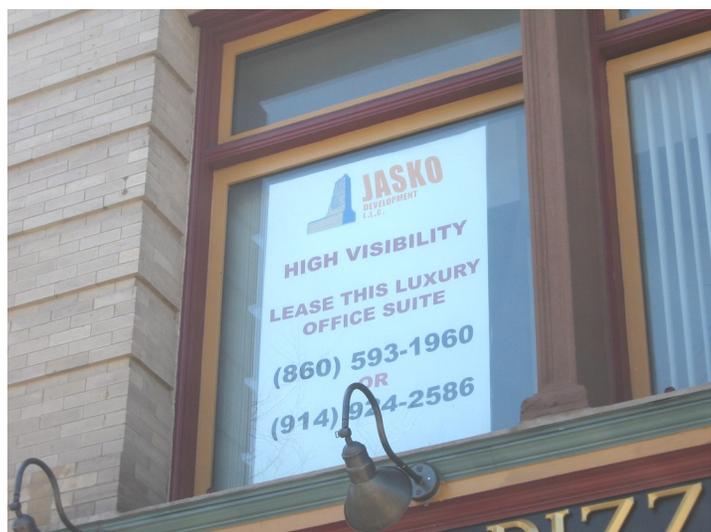
The Downtown District of New Britain works in collaboration with downtown property owners and the Chamber of Commerce and strives to encourage businesses to locate themselves in downtown New Britain. The Downtown District offers tax and training incentives in a mixed-use enterprise zone that includes downtown commercial space. It maintains an easy-to-use website which includes information and pictures about the community and downtown New Britain, current restoration projects, available incentives, investment opportunities, rental opportunities, and a downtown directory and links.

The most important incentives and benefits offered by the Downtown District include:

- A five year, 80% abatement of New Britain property taxes on qualifying real and personal property, subject to the property being new to the grand list of the City of New Britain as a direct result of business expansion or renovation project. The property tax abatement is for a full five-year period and takes effect with the start of the first full assessment year following the issuance of a 'Certificate of Eligibility'.
- Ten year, 25% credit on corporate income taxes for eligible businesses.
- Fixed rate, City of New Britain low interest loan program. Typically between 0% and current prime rate, these loans can be used for equipment procurement, leasehold improvements, code improvements, and facade renovations. Loan amounts are up to \$25,000 and are available for terms up to five years.
- Community Economic Development Fund (CEDF). This public/private partnership was established to help small businesses in New Britain to increase their access to capital and financing. Financing is available up to \$500,000 per firm.

These incentives are similar to those offered in many other communities across the country to stimulate investment and rehabilitation.

The Downtown District works in collaboration with downtown property owners and the Chamber of Commerce to spur rehabilitation through tax abatements, façade loans and other incentives. The building at 136 Main Street is an example of an adaptive reuse downtown.



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## Existing Financial Incentives for Neighborhood Preservation

### Programs of the New Britain Department of Municipal Development (DMD)

In New Britain, two agencies administer funds for housing and neighborhoods: the Commission on Community and Neighborhood Development (CCND) and the Housing Site Development Agency (HSDA). They are supported by the Department of Municipal Development (DMD). Significant private partners include Neighborhood Housing Services (NHS) of New Britain and Habitat for Humanity. NHS is a non-profit organization that provides education, loans and assistance, and advocacy, while Habitat for Humanity acquires HSDA parcels and constructs affordable housing on them. All target low-, moderate-, and middle-income homeowners and residents and are bound by the City of New Britain Department of Municipal Development Residential Rehabilitation Standards. These programs and agencies are important to preservation in New Britain, because they concern themselves both with new construction and rehabilitation of historic buildings.

Contractors must provide homeowner education services to homebuyers using City funds, and provide opportunities to instruct on using the Secretary of the Interior's Standards to care for historic buildings.

The City of New Britain's Business Assistance Program, administered by the CCND, offers low-interest loans for use with façade renovations, code improvements, leasehold improvements, and the purchase of fixtures, machinery, and equipment.



Housing programs include those undertaken by non-profit groups in coordination with the city. This Habitat for Humanity project is at the corner of Gilbert and Sexton Streets. The efforts of Habitat for Humanity help to eliminate blight; however, often their new construction designs are not compatible with adjacent historic buildings. Leaders of Habitat for Humanity should be encouraged to adopt designs that complement the historic character of New Britain's neighborhoods.

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## Existing Financial Incentives for Neighborhood Preservation

### Neighborhood Revitalization Zones

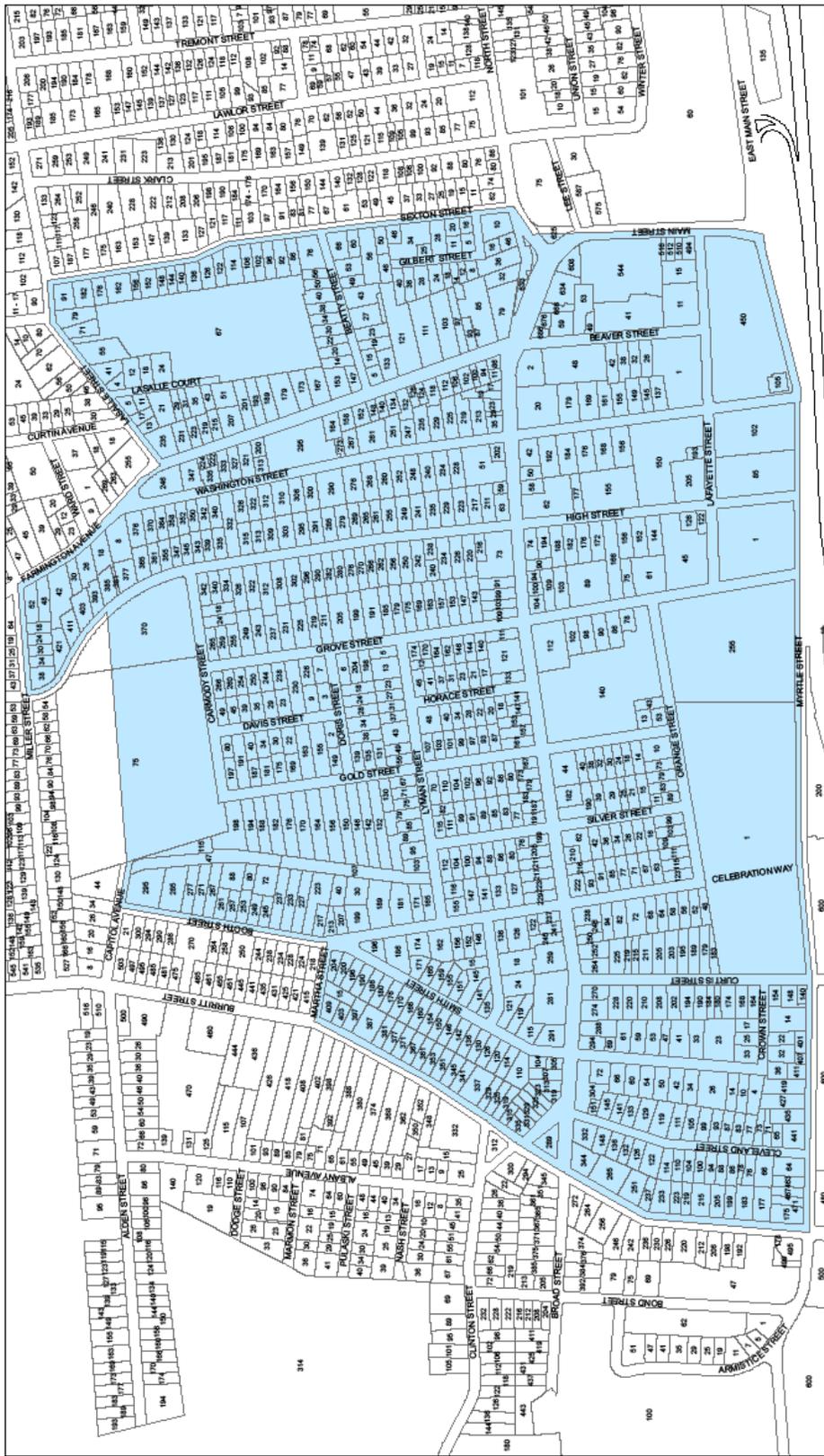
A state law enacted in 1995 established a process for the development of Neighborhood Revitalization Zones (NRZs). The objective of the NRZ process is to revitalize neighborhoods through the collaborative involvement of residents, businesses and government to determine the vision and priorities of the individual neighborhoods. The NRZ process provides a mechanism for local stakeholders, along with local municipal officials, to develop a strategic plan to revitalize their neighborhood. Connecticut General Statutes Sec. 7-600 through Sec. 7-608 are the laws covering all aspects of the NRZ program and can be found at <http://www.cga.ct.gov/2007/pub/Chap118.htm>.

New Britain has four Neighborhood Revitalization Zones (NRZs): the Broad Street NRZ, Oak-North NRZ, East Side NRZ, and Arch Street NRZ. New Britain invests its largest percentage of federal and other funding for homes and neighborhoods in these four areas.

The Broad Street NRZ adopted Rehabilitation Guidelines for Commercial Facades based on the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation in 1998, and requires that physical improvements made to NRZ properties conform to these guidelines.



Broad Street is one of four Neighborhood Revitalization Zones and this area has design guidelines to help preserve the street's architectural character.



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 Date: May, 2010



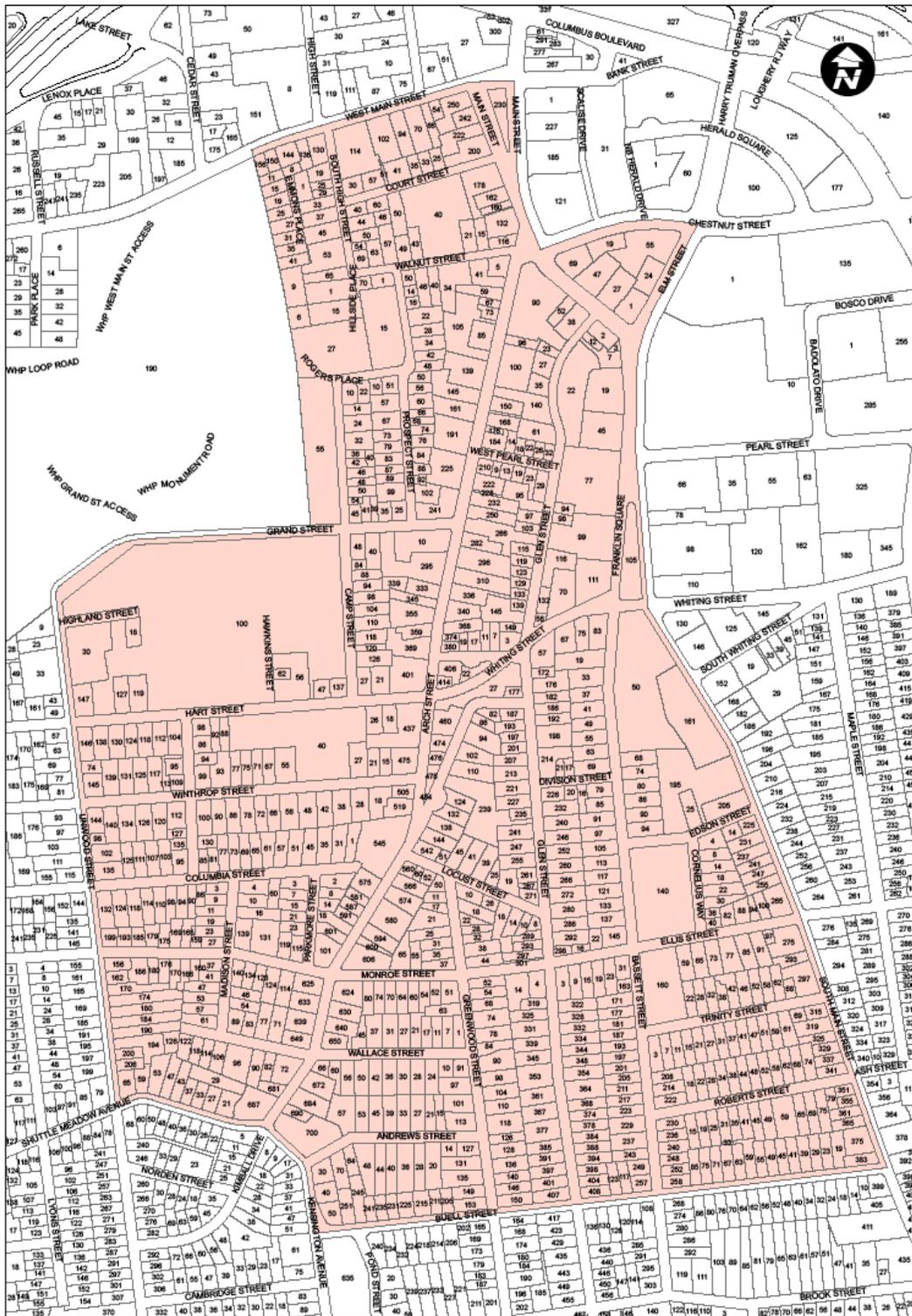
# Broad Street NRZ





The Broad Street Neighborhood Revitalization Zone encompasses the National Register-eligible Broad Street Historic District. Listing on the National Register would provide additional tax incentives for rehabilitation for buildings such as 202 Washington Street.

The Arch Street Neighborhood Revitalization Zone includes part of the National Register-listed Walnut Hill Historic District and the proposed Downtown/Franklin Square Historic District. (Map on following page.)



City of New Britain  
 Department of Public Works  
 Director: Mark E. Moriarty

# Arch Street NRZ

Drawn By: CTL  
 Checked By: SPS  
 Date: May, 2010



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## Programs of the State Historic Preservation Office

### State Historic Homes Rehabilitation Tax Credits

The Historic Preservation and Museum Division of the Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism (CCT) is Connecticut's state historic preservation office. The division administers a broad range of federal and state programs that identify, register and protect the buildings, sites, structures, districts and objects that comprise Connecticut's cultural heritage. One of the programs administered by the Commission affecting residential buildings is the Connecticut Historic Homes Rehabilitation Tax Credit program. This program is designed to encourage new homeownership and to assist existing homeowners in maintaining or renovating their property.

Highlights of the program are:

- allows allocation of up to \$3 million per state fiscal year in corporate tax credits. Corporations may qualify if providing funds in the form of cash -- purchase of the tax credits -- or loans where the value of the tax credit is used to reduce the amount owing on the loan.
- provides a thirty percent tax credit, up to \$30,000 per dwelling unit, for the rehabilitation of 1-4 family buildings. After completion of rehabilitation work, one unit must be owner-occupied for a period of five years.
- requires a minimum of \$25,000 in qualified rehabilitation expenditures to qualify.
- requires that the building be listed on the National or State Register of Historic Places and located in a targeted area (New Britain is one) to be eligible.
- The owner must submit applications to the CCT for approval prior to the start of rehabilitation work.

Properties in the 100 block of Glen Street are within the proposed Downtown/Franklin Square Historic District. Listing would make these properties eligible for the state's Historic Homes tax credit.



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## Programs of the State Historic Preservation Office

### Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program

Connecticut General Statutes Section 10-416b established a tax credit for the conversion of historic commercial and industrial buildings solely to mixed residential and nonresidential uses. The credit is for 25 percent of the total qualified rehabilitation expenditures in market-rate projects or for 30 percent of the total qualified rehabilitation expenditures if the project includes an affordable housing component, provided at least 20 percent of the rental units or 10 percent of for sale units qualify under CGS Section 839a. The per building cap is up to five million dollars in tax credits. Residential units can be rental or for sale (that is, condominiums).

To qualify, a minimum of on-third of the square footage after rehabilitation must be residential in use. Nonresidential uses include commercial, institutional, governmental or manufacturing. To qualify, buildings must be listed on the National or State Register of Historic Places, either individually or as part of an historic district, rehabilitation work must meet the Standards for Rehabilitation established by the Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism, and prior approval of proposed rehabilitation work is required. The program is administered by the Connecticut Commission on Culture & Tourism.



The state's historic tax credit program is designed to encourage adaptive reuse of former industrial and commercial buildings to residential use. The historic Parker Shirt Factory at 34 Walnut Street is an example of the type of building these tax credits target.

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## Programs of the State Historic Preservation Office

### Connecticut Historic Structures Rehabilitation Tax Credit Program

Connecticut General Statutes Section 10-416a establishes a tax credit for the conversion of historic commercial and industrial buildings to residential use, including rental or condominium units. Partial tax credits are available for buildings converted to mixed residential and commercial uses. Highlights of the program are:

- ◆ 25% tax credit of the total qualified rehabilitation expenditures associated with rehabilitation of the certified historic structure; site improvements and non-construction costs are excluded.
- ◆ Buildings must be listed on the National or State Register of Historic Places, either individually or as part of an historic district.
- ◆ State tax credits may be combined with the 20% federal historic preservation tax credits provided the project qualifies under federal law as a substantial rehabilitation of depreciable property as defined by the Internal Revenue Service.
- ◆ annual aggregate cap of \$15 million in tax credit reservations/per building cap is up to \$2.7 million in tax credits.
- ◆ Tax credits can only be used by C corporations with tax liability under Chapters 207 through 212 of the Connecticut General Statutes.
- ◆ Tax credits can be assigned, transferred or conveyed in whole or in part by the owner to others

Owners seeking tax credits under the Historic Structures Rehabilitation Tax Credit Program are required to file applications with the Commission. Proposed, ongoing and completed rehabilitation work to the historic building must meet the Standards for Rehabilitation established by the Connecticut Commission on Culture & Tourism. Prior approval of proposed rehabilitation work is required for a reservation of tax credits. Additional information concerning this program is located in Appendix A.

Vacant commercial buildings such as at 232-234 Arch Street would be eligible for the state's Historic Structures Rehabilitation Tax Credit after they are listed on the National Register.



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## **State Grants and Assistance Programs**

### **Survey & Planning Grants**

Survey & Planning Grants may be used for a wide range of historic preservation planning projects including surveys, nominations to the National and State Registers of Historic Places, pre-development studies heritage tourism and other planning documents. Grants generally range from \$1,000 to \$20,000. These types of grants should be pursued by the city for funding the proposed National Register nominations and architectural surveys.

### **Basic Operational Support Grants for Historic Preservation Non-Profits**

One of the recommendations of this plan is for the creation of a citywide non-profit historic preservation organization. Basic Operational Support Grants are made to enhance and strengthen local historic preservation leadership by providing operating funds to local historic preservation groups. BOS grants allow historic preservation non-profit groups to survey historic resources, provide public education and plan for historic preservation in their communities. The award range is \$5,000 to \$75,000. A future New Britain non-profit group should request grants for basic operations, heritage tourism, education and other programs.

### **Certified Local Government Program**

Once New Britain creates a Historic Preservation Commission, it should pursue status as a Certified Local Government (CLG). The federally authorized CLG program recognizes local preservation planning expertise and allows communities to participate more formally in federal and state preservation programs. The CLG program in Connecticut promotes preservation of historic resources by establishing a partnership between local governments and the SHPO. In accordance with federal law, a minimum of 10 percent of Connecticut's annual federal appropriation for historic preservation is earmarked for grants to municipalities under the CLG program. Any general-purpose political subdivision of the state (city, town, municipality, or borough), which meets CLG requirements, is eligible to apply for funds. As of September 2009, forty municipalities had applied for and received CLG status in Connecticut.

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## **Additional State Grant and Assistance Programs Related to Historic Preservation**

In addition to the state tax credits, survey and planning grants, grants for non-profits and the CLG program, the state of Connecticut provides a wide variety of additional programs for historic preservation and rehabilitation. These are fully explained in Appendix A but summarized below.

### *- Endangered Properties Fund Grants*

Funded by the Community Investment Act, Endangered Properties Fund Grants provide financial assistance for the preservation of historic properties in Connecticut threatened by immediate loss or destruction.

### *- Capital Improvement Grant Program*

Historic Restoration Fund Grants (HRF) provide assistance for the rehabilitation, restoration or stabilization of historic buildings and structures and are available on an annual basis. Properties on the National or State Register of Historic Places, which are owned by a municipality or nonprofit organization, are eligible for these 50 percent matching grants-in-aid.

### *- Strategic Initiative Grant Program*

The purpose of the Strategic Initiative Grant (SIG) program is to support and further the mission of the Connecticut Commission on Culture & Tourism and to preserve and promote Connecticut's cultural and tourism assets in order to enhance the quality of life and economic vitality of the state.

### *- Challenge Marketing Grants*

Challenge Marketing Grants are designed to assist non-profit culture and tourism entities in their efforts to promote attractions and events that are open to visitors. This grant program creates a partnership between CCT and its constituents, supports product development and extends CCT's strategic marketing efforts. This program requires matching funds and is available to arts, historic preservation, film, and tourism entities.

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- *Cooperative Marketing Grants*

Cooperative Marketing Grants (Co-Op) are intended to provide valuable strategic marketing partnerships to all CCT constituents and leverage the collaboration of CCT's statewide marketing and regional tourism district funds allocated by the State of Connecticut.

- *Connecticut Housing Investment Fund*

The Connecticut Housing Investment Fund (CHIF) is a statewide Community Development Financial Institution providing financing, loan servicing, and technical services to improve and increase the supply of housing affordable to Connecticut residents. CHIF implements solutions to help families become and remain homeowners.

- *People's/CHIF Home Improvement Loan Program*

Homeowners who want to repair and/or renovate their homes can obtain financing through the People's Bank CHIF Home Improvement Loan Program. This program features a streamlined application process, a nominal application fee, and does not require an appraisal. Eligible owners may borrow up to \$10,000 at a fixed rate of 7.99% for a term of ten years.

- *First-Time Homebuyer Program*

The First-Time Homebuyer Program provides financing at low interest rates to first-time homebuyers purchasing their primary residence in the State of Connecticut. Both first mortgages and down payment assistance loans are available to those who qualify based past home ownership and income level.

- *Wooden Window Repair or Replacement Program*

The Wooden Window Repair or Replacement Program provides grants to owners of two-to-six unit apartment buildings constructed on or before 1950 located in Waterbury and New Britain to repair or replace wooden windows in rental units. The program is administered by the Connecticut Housing Investment Fund, Inc. (CHIF) with funding from the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD). This program provides the option for both the rehabilitation of existing windows or their replacement.

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## Easement Donations—The Trust for Architectural Easements

The Trust for Architectural Easements is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization that strives to be a leading force in the protection of America’s architectural heritage by promoting voluntary preservation through easement donations and education about historic preservation and architectural history. Easements are perpetual, individually designed, legal agreements entered into between property owners and an independent entity (the Trust for Architectural Easements, in this case) to provide for the preservation of significant properties. The community benefits through the preservation, and the owner often receives a tax deduction. The Trust currently serves areas in New England and Middle and South Atlantic states including Maryland, Virginia, Massachusetts, and the New York City metropolitan area including historic districts in Connecticut and New Jersey. The Trust has accepted more than 825 easement donations and maintains a Stewardship Fund greater than \$12 million ensuring the Trust's ability to honor its commitment to the public to protect the architectural integrity of these buildings in perpetuity. For more information, please visit: <http://www.architecturaltrust.org/home>



Architectural easements can be used to protect the historic character of National Register-listed properties such as the Daniel Capron House at 31 High Street. The donation of easements can provide property owners with a valuable tax deduction.

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## Programs of the National Park Service

### **The National Park Service**

The National Park Service manages over 400 national parks, but also works with local communities to preserve and promote cultural assets through such programs as the National Register of Historic Places, competitive grants, National Heritage Areas, and tax incentives. The Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives program offers a 20% tax credit for the rehabilitation of income-producing historic structures. Since 1976, the National Park Service has administered the program in partnership with the Internal Revenue Service and State Historic Preservation Officers. Tax incentives are one of the nation's most successful and cost-effective community revitalization programs having leveraged more than \$30 billion in private investment to rehabilitate historic buildings into rental housing, offices, and retail stores.

### **Federal Tax Credits**

The Tax Code of 1986 allows owners of depreciable residential, commercial, and industrial buildings that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places to elect a 20 percent investment tax credit in conjunction with the certified rehabilitation of certified historic structures. Since 1977, the CCT has reviewed over 600 Tax Act projects, representing a total investment of more than \$600 million. Buildings have been rehabilitated under the Tax Act program in more than 50 towns and cities throughout the state, including substantial numbers of projects in major urban areas such as Hartford, New Haven, and Norwich. In Connecticut, the use of federal tax credits for historic rehabilitation projects has resulted in several thousand units of market rate residential housing, through either the upgrading of existing substandard buildings or the creation of new residential units by conversion of school and factory buildings.

In order to obtain the historic preservation tax credit, the following requirements must be met:

- the property is listed on the [National Register of Historic Places](#)
- the property will be depreciable residential, commercial or industrial property after completion of the rehabilitation project
- the property is a certified historic structure
- the work to the building is a certified rehabilitation
- the project costs qualify as a substantial rehabilitation

Applications are submitted to Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism for review and comment and forwarded to the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior for certification action. Property owners interested in utilizing the investment tax credit program should consult with the Commission, preferably prior to the implementation of any rehabilitation work. The Commission assists property owners in identification of historic structures and provides technical advice with respect to appropriate rehabilitation treatments. The National Park Service uses the [Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation](#) as the guidelines for its review of historic preservation projects.

## VIII. ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION

### Overview

In the past two decades, dozens of economic studies have tracked and tabulated the positive economic benefits historic preservation efforts provide cities such as New Britain. One of the most relevant of these studies to the city was completed in 2006 by the Center for Urban Policy Research at Rutgers University. A conclusion of the study was that historic preservation and rehabilitation efforts generate billions of dollars annually to Connecticut and its cities. This money is generated through rehabilitation of historic buildings, heritage tourism, downtown revitalization through the Main Street program, and other initiatives. In 2004, an estimated \$1.25 billion was spent on rehabilitation in the state. Of this total \$404.8 million was spent for residential properties, \$624 million was spent for commercial properties and \$228.4 million was spent on public properties. Heritage tourism spending accounted for an additional \$890.6 million dollars in revenue and supported over 20,000 jobs in the state. These numbers are significant and point to the increasingly high profile that rehabilitation and tourism has meant to Connecticut and the possibilities for New Britain.

### Historic Districts Promote Quality of Life

Historic districts help promote a community's quality of life which is a key ingredient in economic development. Historic buildings are one of the primary ways a community differentiates itself from another. Historic buildings, the character and identity they provide, and the quality of their preservation say much about a community's self-image.

### Historic Architecture Attracts Visitors

Historic architecture attracts visitors to cities. Heritage tourism, or tourism which focuses on historic areas and sites, is one of the rapidly growing segments of the tourism industry. The quality and quantity of the historic architecture in New Britain and its history provide opportunities to further enhance tourism in the city.

### Historic Buildings Often Last Longer Than New Ones

The life expectancy of rehabilitated historic buildings is almost always greater than that of new structures. Buildings from the 18th to the mid-20th century were constructed with better quality materials, now expensive or difficult to obtain. Historic buildings are often composed of old-growth lumber, long lasting masonry, and interior materials such as plaster and were built with quality craftsmanship. Materials used in buildings over the past fifty years were often of less quality and the life expectancy of pre-1960 buildings is generally greater than those built in more recent decades.

### Historic Preservation Creates Jobs

Rehabilitation and revitalization projects create thousands of construction jobs annually, and historic preservation creates proportionally more labor jobs than new construction. Rehabilitation projects are more labor intensive than new construc-

tion. In new construction generally half of all expenditures are for labor and half are for materials. In a typical historic rehabilitation project, between 60 and 70 percent of the total cost goes toward labor, which has a beneficial ripple effect throughout the local economy. Some rehabilitation jobs also require specific skills which command above average wages.

### Historic Preservation Increases Property Values

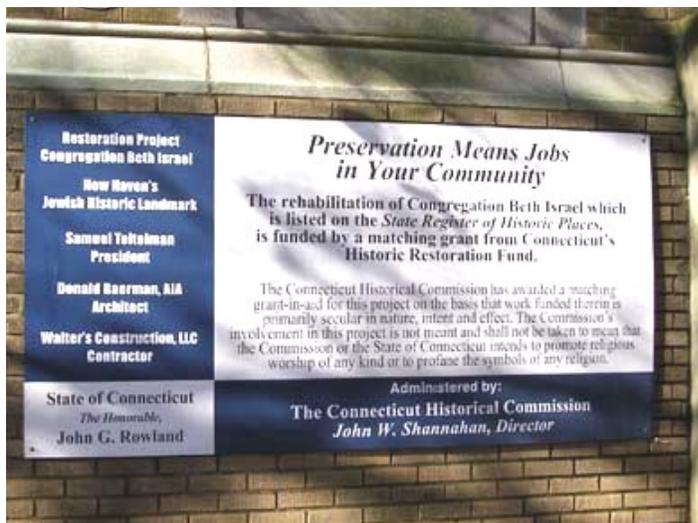
Studies across the country have shown that property and resale values in designated National Register or local historic districts at the least stabilize, but more often increase. Many times these increases are greater than surrounding neighborhoods which may have similar architecture but do not have protective overlays.

### Preserving Existing Buildings Reduces Sprawl

Preserving and reusing existing buildings revitalizes New Britain's neighborhoods and downtown. This stabilizes and increases the population density in the center-city and lowers the pressure for development on the city's edge and in central Connecticut. The reduction of sprawl helps to preserve open space, farmland, and wildlife habitats. Reducing sprawl also lessens automobile use and the continued development of environmentally and economically costly infrastructure.

### Preserving Buildings Reduces Waste in Landfills

Construction debris accounts for 25% of the waste in municipal landfills each year. Demolishing sound historic buildings is wasteful of the building's inherent materials and strains the limited capacities of landfills. Demolishing a 2,000 square foot home results in an average of 230,000 lbs of waste.



“Preservation Means Jobs in Your Community” - the restoration of the Orchard Street Shul brought jobs to New Haven.

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## **Retaining and Rehabilitating Buildings is “Green Construction” and More Sustainable than New Construction**

When studying the environmental effects of buildings, life cycle assessments are utilized. Completing a life cycle assessment of a building means that you examine and determine the material and energy usage and environmental impacts at each stage including extracting the resources, construction, use and disposal. When completing a building assessment not only is the cost of construction examined but also the costs and energy required to operate the building during its life.

One of the key considerations in a life cycle assessment of a historic building is the quality of its materials. The materials in historic houses often can last indefinitely if properly cared for. Most buildings in New Britain have old-growth wood windows, brick and wood exteriors, and stone foundations that are a hundred years old or older. These materials can easily last another one hundred years because of their inherent quality. Contrast this with common materials today such as new-growth wood elements or vinyl windows that often require replacement after just ten to twenty years. Rehabilitation of existing architecture is therefore friendly to the environment, as existing materials are kept in use, and little if any waste is produced.

## **Retaining Existing Buildings is Part of Overall Energy Conservation**

Historic buildings are often as energy efficient as new ones. Data from the U.S. Energy Information Agency found that buildings constructed before 1920 are actually more energy-efficient than those built at any time until the past decade when home builders began a concerted effort of building more energy efficient buildings. Many historic buildings have tall ceilings that help to reduce heat in the summertime and brick and plaster walls that provide substantial insulation properties. Common upgrades to historic buildings include the addition of attic insulation, installation of storm windows, and more efficient heating and cooling systems. In particular, repairing and weatherstripping historic wood windows and adding storm windows often results in energy performance equal to new vinyl or aluminum windows and at much less cost. Historic buildings can also be adapted to benefit from new technology such as solar panels and solar roof tiles.

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## IX. RECOMMENDATIONS

### Goal 1— Increase Rehabilitation and Preservation of Downtown and Commercial Historic Resources

Cities across the country are experiencing a new wave of investment in their historic downtown areas due to changing demographics, financial incentives and the quality of life downtown living can provide. A resurgence of market rate residential use is now underway in downtown areas across the country and New Britain is well suited to be part of this trend.

The city government and citizens of New Britain have undertaken substantial investments in the downtown area. In 1983, the city was one of the first in the state to establish its downtown as a business improvement district. The New Britain Downtown Improvement District works with property owners to support existing businesses, attract new businesses and coordinate overall marketing and promotion.

The Downtown Plan and Strategy for New Britain was completed in 2008 and examined past planning efforts as well as recommending new strategies. One of these strategies is the recognition of increased demand for residential units downtown. This trend is in keeping with cities across the country as young professionals, retiring “Baby Boomers” and other demographic groups seek the convenience and amenities downtown offers for residential living. The 2008 plan also emphasized the enhancement of public spaces and pedestrian pathways and to create “destinations” downtown such as arts centers, boutique shops, museums and upscale restaurants.

The recommendations of the 2008 plan focus primarily on new construction and nodes for destination centers. These include creation of a Theater Square District adjacent to the Trinity-on-Main performing arts center, new buildings in Liberty Square and an enhanced facility for the New Britain-Hartford Busway. The plan makes little mention of the existing historic buildings except for the recommendation to “Work with owners of existing buildings and new investors on a program of restoration of appropriate facades.” There is also a goal of not demolishing any “historically or architecturally significant buildings.”

Overall the plan’s goals and objectives do not conflict with the preservation and enhancement of downtown’s historic buildings. The creation of new destination centers and enhancing transportation alternatives are all part of supporting a healthy and vibrant city center. But another key ingredient not fully explored in the plan are the opportunities to utilize the vacant space in downtown buildings and using historic rehabilitation to further economic development.

New Britain’s Plan of Conservation and Development was presented in draft form to the city in April of 2010. This document is a comprehensive plan that addresses the city’s existing conditions, housing, infrastructure, economic development and future land use. One of the sections addresses the Downtown Development Plan and reinforces recommendations such as increased residential housing and improved linkage through the proposed Busway and enhanced pedestrian paths. An

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important component of both market-rate and affordable housing downtown is access to public transportation. Downtown New Britain's emerging role as a transportation node bodes well for stimulating new residential construction and adaptive reuse of historic buildings.

Downtown property owners currently have a number of financial incentives available to them such as tax abatements and façade loans. Another important step to encourage investment is preparing a National Register nomination for the Downtown/Franklin Square Historic District which would provide property owners with state and federal tax credits for rehabilitation. Other commercial areas such as Broad Street should also be listed on the National Register to spur investment. Other recommendations for commercial revitalization and rehabilitation include the adoption of design guidelines to enhance the architectural character of the city's commercial buildings, establish a revolving fund/loan program for business owners, and continue to promote the arts and festivals in commercial areas.



Vacant buildings and vacant upper floor space have great potential for rehabilitation into residential and commercial use through the use of state and federal tax credits as well as local incentives (200 block of Arch Street).

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## Prepare a National Register Nomination for the Downtown/ Franklin Square Historic District

### **National Register- Eligible Historic Districts Priority One - Downtown/Franklin Square Historic District**

The 1996 survey of New Britain identified a large area in the downtown area as meeting National Register criteria. This area meets criteria A and C for its architectural significance as well as its significance in commerce. As the commercial center of New Britain in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, the buildings facing Main Street, W. Main Street and Arch Street display architectural styles and detailing typical of regional commercial buildings of the period. Most of the buildings range in height from one to five stories and are of masonry construction. The buildings were designed with traditional storefronts with the storefronts supported by brick piers and cast iron pilasters. Upper facades generally display both rectangular and arched windows with cornices at the roofline of corbelled brick, terra cotta or sheet metal. Architectural styles and forms represented in the downtown commercial buildings include Italianate, Romanesque Revival, Colonial Revival and Tapestry Brick.

In addition to the commercial buildings, this historic district also contains other property types including apartment buildings, residences, and churches. The Hungerford and Glen Apartments date to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century on Glen Street and are part of an important row of apartment buildings just off Main Street. Glen and West Pearl Streets also contain a series of single and multi-family residences that were built from the 1880s to the early 1900s.

The district is particularly notable for its inclusion of some of New Britain's most architecturally significant churches. Within the boundary are St. Peter's Church built in 1890, the South Congregational Church built in 1865, the First Evangelical Lutheran Church built in 1903, and the National Register-listed Trinity United Methodist Church built in 1891. These churches are located within two blocks from each other and constitute an important property type. Other important buildings in the district include the Old Court House at 111 Franklin Square and the city's former high school and technical school which have been adapted into residential uses.

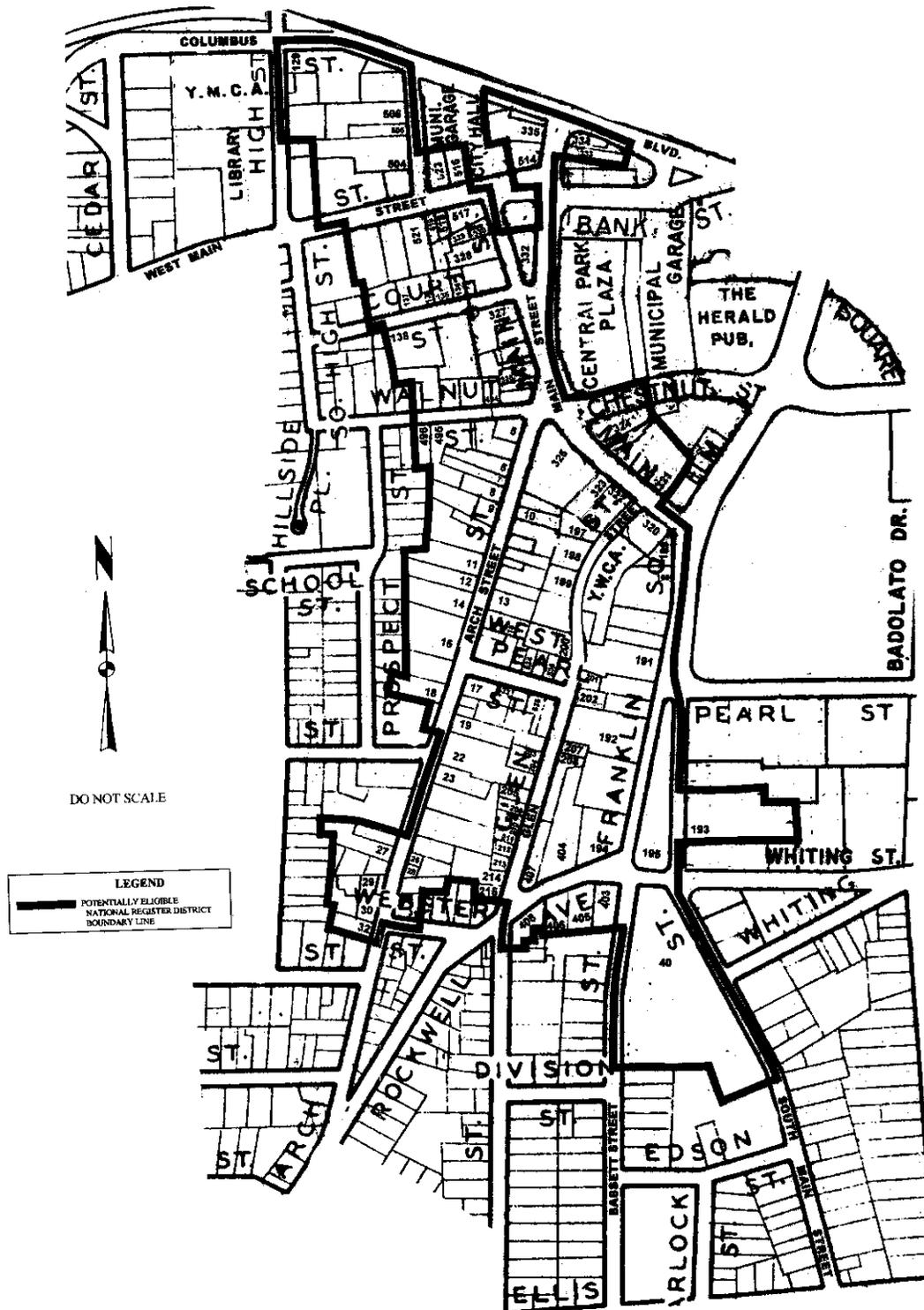
Altogether the proposed district boundary contains approximately 95 properties, the great majority of which would be considered contributing to the district. The district's boundary would connect with the boundaries of the National Register-listed Walnut Hill Historic District and City Hall/Monument Historic District.



Vega Hall (Friendship Center) at 59 Arch Street was built in 1897 with influences of the Italianate style.



Hick's Block (Artist's Collaborative) at 66-68 W. Main Street was built in 1871 and features arched windows and a corbelled brick cornice.



The  
1996

study identified the National Register-eligible Downtown/Franklin Square Historic District. The proposed boundaries should be reexamined to include adjacent eligible properties such as St. Joseph's Church.

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## Prepare a National Register Nomination for the Broad Street Historic District

The Broad Street Historic District was identified in the 1996 survey as National Register-eligible for its architectural significance and importance in ethnic history. Known as "Little Poland" this commercial area and adjacent streets has been the center of New Britain's large Polish community since the late-1800s. Of the 71,538 residents of New Britain listed in the 2000 census, approximately 14,257 or 20% are of Polish descent.

Broad Street has traditionally been the social, commercial and religious hub of the city's Polish community. The street contains a large number of commercial buildings, many of which have apartments on the upper floors. Within the district is also the Sacred Heart Church, a significant Victorian Gothic building of stone construction erected in 1904.

The buildings along Broad Street often display signs in both Polish and English. Numerous restaurants are located on Broad Street along with grocery stores, shops and offices catering to the city's Polish residents. The district boundary as proposed in 1996 would contain approximately fifty buildings; however, the edges of the boundary should be reexamined due to some building losses and alterations over the past decade. An additional dozen properties along Washington Street are also recommended for inclusion within the boundary. This row contains a notable collection of apartment buildings, many of which appear to have been built to house Polish immigrants in the early 1900s. This row includes the Juchniewicz Block as well as the Roma and Genova apartment buildings.



The buildings at 91-99 Broad Street were designed with commercial businesses on the first floor and apartments on the upper floors.



Buildings in the 100 block of Broad Street represent both the commercial and residential character of the street.

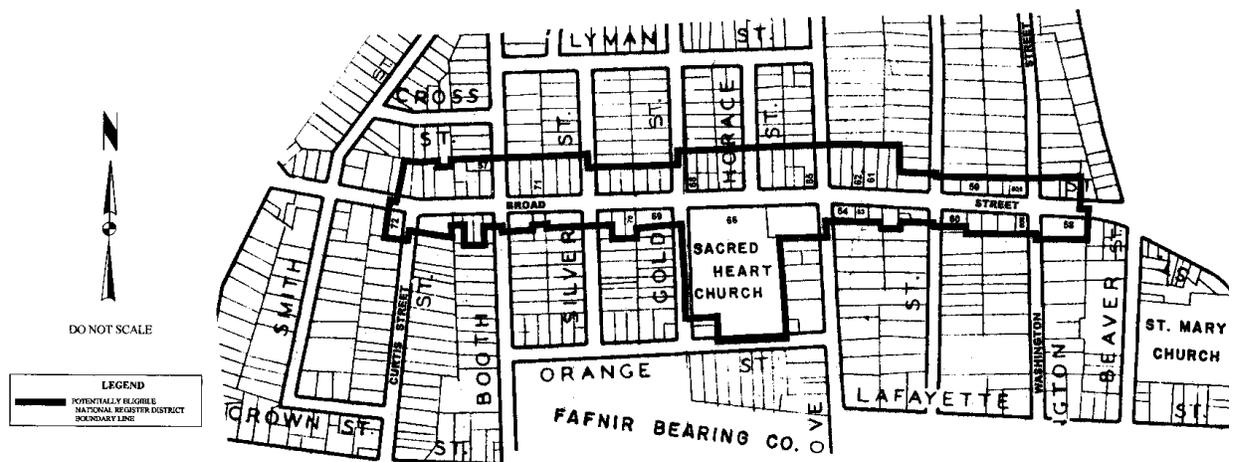


The Sacred Heart Church at 158 Broad Street is one of the city's most imposing church buildings.



The Roma  
155 Washington  
of a row of sig-  
ment buildings south of Broad Street.  
The proposed Broad Street Historic District extends from Washington Street to  
Curtis Street.

Apartments at  
Street are part  
nificant apart-



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## Adopt Design Guidelines for Downtown

Design guidelines are widely used throughout the country in historic commercial and residential areas to guide rehabilitation and new construction. Guidelines provide property owners with recommendations for rehabilitating historic buildings in keeping with their architectural character and promoted compatible new construction. By adopting design guidelines property owners commit themselves to an overall joint marketing approach of preserving the exterior façade's of historic commercial buildings and reinforcing each other's investment.

Design guidelines have been prepared as part of this study and are located in Appendix C. Property owners are encouraged to follow these guidelines in future rehabilitation and new construction projects. In the future, the establishment of a Historic Preservation Commission is proposed along with the recommendation that downtown be declared a local historic district. The Historic Preservation Commission would then have the role of reviewing and approving exterior work conducted on historic buildings in the downtown area.



Design guidelines would help insure the preservation of decorative detailing downtown such as the terra cotta panel at 246 Main Street.

Working with architects on compatible new construction in historic downtown areas is also an important aspect of design guidelines (18th and Vine Historic District, Kansas City, Missouri).



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## Enact a Delay of Demolition Ordinance

A demolition delay ordinance is a process that cities can use to protect their communities historically and architecturally significant resources. The State of Connecticut has enabling legislation which allows towns to impose a waiting period of not more than 180 days before granting a demolition permit. This waiting period would allow interested parties to explore alternatives to demolition and a change to find a buyer who would undertake rehabilitation. Fifty communities in the state have some type of delay of demolition ordinance.

An effective ordinance would insure that historic buildings continue to serve important and productive roles in the city and at the same time not limit or prevent development. Ordinances should clearly outline what buildings are covered by the delay, have a provision to lift the delay if building is not significant, provide for stiff penalties if the ordinance is violated and most important an organization or individual in the community willing to work on finding a viable alternative. The Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation has prepared a model Delay of Demolition Ordinance and should be consulted if New Britain moves forward with this recommendation.

In cases where properties are of particular significance but cannot be saved, consider placing a condition on demolition permits that requires the applicant to provide opportunity for photographic documentation of the inside and outside of the historic structure. This should include photographs of all exterior elevations, details and representative interior views. Digital photographs produced prior to demolition should then go to the Local History Room at the New Britain Public Library for archiving. Any known historic information concerning the property should also be documented and submitted.



A delay of demolition ordinance is designed to explore all alternatives before the loss of a historic building.

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## Create a Revolving/Equity Fund Loan Program

Investment in downtown areas can be promoted through Revolving/Equity Fund loan programs. In this type of program, the city loans funds for building rehabilitation up to a certain amount and at an interest rate several points below prime. Such loans are intended to provide additional incentives to property owners to rehabilitate and adaptively reuse historic buildings. Loan amounts can range from \$30,000 to \$100,000 with terms of 2% or 3% for ten to fifteen years. Rehabilitation usually must be in keeping with the city's historic design review guidelines. As the loans are paid back, they go back into the revolving/equity fund to be loaned again to another property.

Successful Revolving Fund programs are found throughout the country and serve as models for New Britain. The Providence, Rhode Island Revolving Fund is a community-based, non-profit, development and lending corporation which was established in 1980. It manages two capital funds, the Neighborhood Loan Fund with over \$2 million in assets and the Downcity Loan Fund with \$6.5 million. The Revolving Fund's resources are targeted to specific historic neighborhoods and primarily serve low-to-moderate income families and merchants in the Downtown Providence National Register District. The Neighborhood Loan Fund focuses on low and moderate income historic neighborhoods in need of revitalization and stabilization. The fund is used to purchase endangered properties which are developed for owner occupied affordable housing and to make rehabilitation loans to owners who cannot get conventional financing due to income level and/or the condition of the building and area. Funds are committed on a short-term basis and are "revolved" back into the capital fund when a building is resold or as loans are paid back. Since 1982, the Neighborhood Loan Fund has invested over \$7.4 million in low and moderate income neighborhoods for 460 building restorations, including the renovation of 46 previously abandoned buildings. This has leveraged over \$23.75 million in additional financing.

In Bloomington, Indiana a non-profit organization, Bloomington Restorations Inc., started a revolving fund in 1980 with \$63,800 in Community Development Block Grant funds through the City of Bloomington. The organization committee then began making loans from the fund to owners of historic buildings. As of 2009, the organization has made some 37 loans totaling more than one and a quarter million dollars for restoration projects in the city and county. Providence and Bloomington illustrate two approaches to successful Revolving Fund programs and there are many others across the country.



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## Initiate Periodic Meetings with Downtown Property Owners Including Churches and Schools to Discuss Expansion Plans and Possible Impacts to Historic Resources

Within the Walnut Hill Historic District and the proposed Downtown/Franklin Square Historic District are a half dozen major churches with active congregations. These churches are significant to the community and it is hoped that they will continue to be part of an active and vibrant downtown community. Churches tend to have unique parking requirements and sometimes adjacent older buildings are demolished for parking lots. Downtown has already lost many historic buildings and there should be ongoing dialogue and meetings with congregations and other property owners to discuss future expansion plans or parking needs and how to mitigate their impacts on historic resources. In addition to churches, there are also a number of social agencies located on Arch Street that have also have particular parking needs. A proactive planning and/or communication process to accommodate the needs of business owners and institutions is encouraged to minimize additional demolition in the downtown area.



The First Evangelical Lutheran Church at 77 Franklin Square is one of several significant churches located downtown.

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## Redesign Facades of City Parking Garages

The two main parking garages downtown are the Szczesney Garage with 1200 spaces and the Badolato Garage with 510 spaces, both of which are within one block of Memorial Park. The 2008 Downtown Plan found that these two garages were underutilized and on an average weekday approximately 400 spaces, or less than 25%, were utilized. These two parking garages were built in the 1970s and were designed in utilitarian forms of the period. The garages have not aged well and presently do not reinforce the historic architecture or new construction in the downtown area. At a minimum these garages should be remodeled on the first floors to make them contribute to the pedestrian streetscape and ideally new façade designs should be considered.

The parking garages represent a valuable asset for the downtown area. They have the capacity to accommodate many more shoppers and visitors and could be a source of dedicated parking for nearby buildings rehabilitated for residential use. A façade remodeling program would make them more attractive for shoppers, residents and tourists as well as making downtown more pedestrian friendly.



A concrete wall on the first floor makes the Badolato Garage not particularly pedestrian friendly...

...when compared to this pedestrian-scaled and context sensitive parking garage in Princeton, New Jersey.

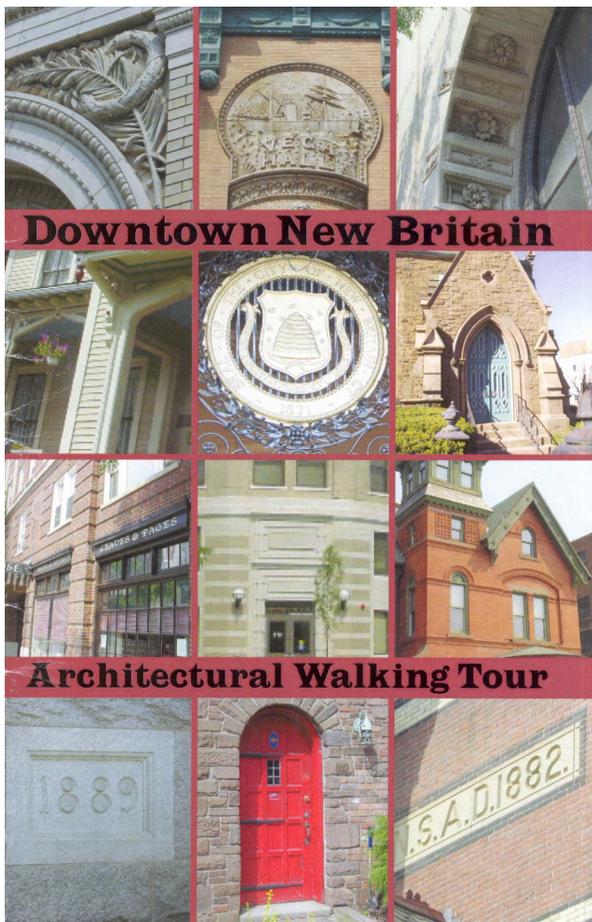


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## Enhance Streetscapes and Signage to Connect Walnut Hill, West End and Downtown

The Walnut Hill Historic District and Downtown New Britain are adjacent to one another and the West End Historic District is also within easy walking distance of downtown. However, there is little connection between these areas using signage or streetscape elements. The Downtown New Britain Architectural Walking Tour provides an acceptable map but there is no use of other signage or streetscape elements such as a common design or logo to connect the three areas. With the emphasis on a more active heritage tourism program there should be a focus on a pedestrian linkage program to tie the two areas together. This could also be in conjunction with a wayfinding project using historic markers and signage.

A related project was proposed in a grant request by the city to the federal "Preserve America" program and the city was awarded funds in 2010. This two-year project will focus on downtown signage to increase public awareness and provide information for tourists on historic buildings and New Britain's history. While specific to downtown, there should also be consideration given during this project or future grants for additional linkage with Walnut Hill and West End.



The Downtown New Britain Walking Tour booklet provides a great tour of downtown. Future revisions should include expanding the map to show additional historic areas of the city.

## Continue Downtown Festivals and Activities Highlighting New Britain's Heritage

In recent years the Downtown District and other organizations have worked together to sponsor numerous festivals and other activities to bring residents and visitors to the downtown area. These have proven to be successful in bringing increased economic activity as well as highlighting the area's historic character and amenities. Downtown festivals and celebrations are recognized as having an overall positive impact on revitalization and are part of a community's quality of life. The continuation of existing festivals and creation of new ones are encouraged to enhance the vibrancy and attractiveness of the downtown area.

The Classic Car Show in 2006 brought hundreds to Main Street.



Bring your lawn chair downtown to celebrate New Britain's

# OLD FASHIONED DAZE

SPONSORED BY CELEBRATION FOODS

 **Free Ice Cream!**

**Vintage Baseball!** 

 **Barbershop Quartet!**

Period Food & Drink For Sale  
from Vito's Tavern & Pizzeria

**Wednesday, May 19 • 4 - 7 PM**  
Rain Date: Wednesday, May 26

**CELEBRATION SQUARE  
DOWNTOWN NEW BRITAIN**  
Corner Main & Chestnut Streets  
Across from Vito's Tavern & Pizzeria

 Presented by:  
The New Britain Downtown District  
117 West Main St., New Britain • 860-229-0878 • [www.newbritaindd.com](http://www.newbritaindd.com)

Festivals such as Old Fashioned Daze have brought new attention and economic activity to downtown.

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## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Goal 2— Promote Neighborhood Preservation and Rehabilitation

#### Conduct Intensive and Reconnaissance Level Surveys of Neighborhoods

##### Overview

The architectural and historical survey of New Britain completed in 1996 focused on identifying the individual and concentrations of properties possessing the highest degree of significance. Over 500 properties were inventoried at this time and this continues to be a fine baseline survey and valuable resource. The funding of intensive and reconnaissance level surveys of the city should occur over the next ten years to assist in city planning efforts and provide additional tax incentives for rehabilitation to property owners through National Register listing.

New Britain possesses over 10,000 buildings constructed before 1960 and future surveys should focus on those areas and buildings that have the highest potential for listing on the National Register, those that are most endangered or are part of a particular theme in the city's history. These types of directed surveys should be funded by the city through grant assistance from the Connecticut Trust. Intensive surveys should be conducted in areas that have National Register potential. Reconnaissance level surveys are recommended for documenting other areas and would differ from intensive level surveys by requiring only short summaries of each property, photography and mapping. This approach is a cost effective way to document large numbers of buildings and to assess the architectural and historical significance of an area.

As part of the preparation of this plan, the survey materials completed in 1996 were reviewed and survey maps obtained. This information was utilized to assist in the field review conducted in each area of the city. All of the neighborhoods were examined for their architectural significance, levels of integrity and significance in the growth and development of the city. This effort was not intended to identify each significant property but rather to determine which areas appeared to warrant intensive survey and National Register efforts in the future. The following summaries of New Britain's historic neighborhoods reflect this effort and a baseline from which to concentrate limited time and financial resources in future survey projects.

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## **Northwest New Britain**

### Priority One, 1-3 Years

No neighborhood appeared to warrant prioritization for survey in the next few years. During this time National Register nominations should be prepared for Broad Street and the industrial buildings along Myrtle Street.

### Priority Two, 4-7 Years

The Washington Park and Daughters of Mary Neighborhoods north and northwest of Broad Street should be inventoried during this time period. These neighborhoods contain a wide variety of historic resources including many triple-decker homes. Alterations have been extensive in this area and demolition is frequent in these blocks.

### Priority Three, 8+ Years

The Hillhurst/Pinnacle Heights Neighborhood has a good collection of early 20th century architectural styles but many properties have been altered in recent years. This area is relatively stable and threats to historic resources are low.

Corbin Heights is composed largely of houses built in the mid-20th century and this neighborhood has limited architectural significance.

## **Southwest New Britain**

### Priority One, 1-3 Years

During these years a National Register nomination should be prepared for the Downtown/Franklin Square Historic District.

### Priority Two, 4-7 Years

The Vance Neighborhood south of Walnut Hill should be surveyed within these years due to the quality of its architecture and threats from deterioration and institution expansion. This area contains a fine collection of turn of the century and early 20th century architectural styles and should be assessed for its National Register potential.

### Priority Three, 8+ Years

The West End area contains a large concentration of significant architecture from the early 20th century. This area is very stable and there are no major threats to historic properties. The intensive survey of this area and preparation of National Register nominations should occur within the next ten years.

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## **Southeast New Britain**

### Priority One, 1-3 Years

The highest concentration of architecturally significant properties in this section of the city is the potentially National Register-eligible Chestnut Street Neighborhood and this area should be surveyed in the next few years. This area is also a Neighborhood Revitalization Zone and preservation efforts would be consistent with overall neighborhood goals and objectives.

### Priority Three, 8+ Years

The rest of the East End area contains large numbers of historic resources but there are few areas of continuity and alterations have been extensive.

## **Northeast New Britain**

### Priority One, 1-3 Years

The Oak/North Street Neighborhood has many blocks of pre-1960 buildings and there may be some concentrations that could be historic districts. An intensive survey of this area is recommended to occur within the next few years. This area is also a Neighborhood Revitalization Zone and faces threats due to demolition and building alterations.

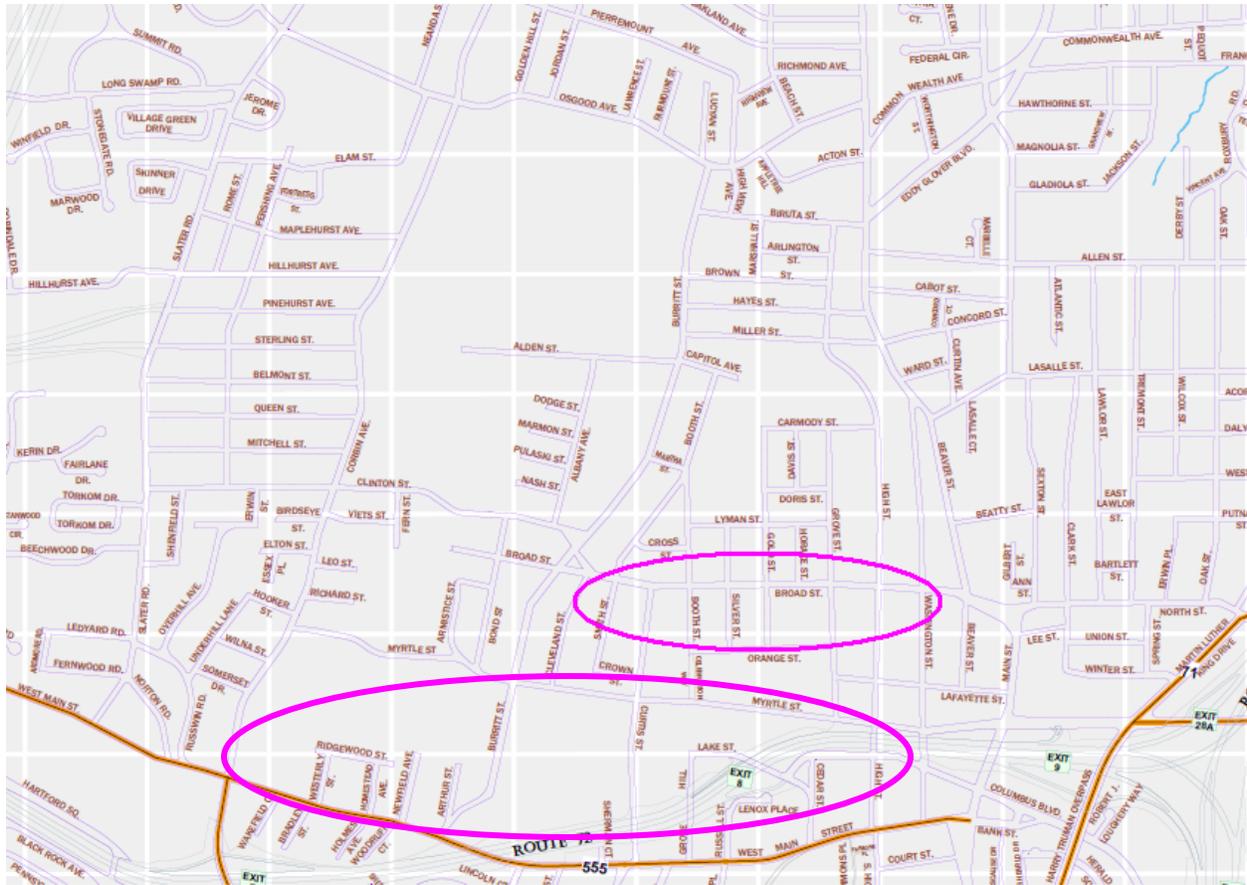
### Priority Two, 4-7 Years

The Belvedere Neighborhood north of Allen Street has the potential to be a National Register district and should be surveyed within this time period. Threats in this area are moderate and there is a higher degree of integrity along many of the blocks than other sections of the city. The expansion of Central Connecticut State University is also a factor in the area.

### Priority Three, 8+ Years

The LaSalle, Dublin Hill and Allen West areas have large numbers of historic resources but alterations have been extensive and continuity on many blocks is problematic. There are moderate threats in these areas due to deterioration and demolition.

The North Stanley and Brittany Farms Neighborhoods evolved largely in the mid-20th century. These areas are stable and there are no major threats to historic properties. At least one area appears to meet National Register criteria but many of the dwellings have limited architectural significance. Within these neighborhoods are a number of important 18th and 19th century dwellings that should be surveyed and listed as part of a thematic nomination.



National Register-eligible historic districts have been identified along Broad Street and the industrial complex along Myrtle Street.

## Overall Summary – Northwest New Britain

This area was designated as “Quadrant One” during the 1996 historical and architectural survey of the city. It is bounded on the west by the city limits, on the north and east by Farmington Avenue and on the south by the Conrail railroad line. National Register-listed properties in this area include the Washington School and St. Mary’s Parochial School. Within this area is also the National Register-eligible Broad Street Historic District and Stanley Works Historic District.

The proposed Broad Street Historic District contains a significant collection of commercial and residential architecture centered along Broad Street and is also important for its role in the Polish history of the city. The proposed Stanley Works Historic District includes the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings associated with the Stanley Hardware Company, an integral part of the city’s economy for over one hundred fifty years.

The residential neighborhoods in this section of the city were built primarily before 1960. The Washington Park neighborhood north of Broad Street contains a large number of triple-decker multi-family units as well as apartment buildings. Alterations within these blocks have been extensive and integrity of many of the buildings has been compromised. To the north and west of the Stanley Works are neighborhoods developed in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century such as Hillhurst and Pinnacle Heights. Many of these contain modest houses built in the Bungalow, Tudor Reviv-

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al, Colonial Revival styles, Minimal Traditional and Ranch styles. Infill housing has also been common in these blocks and there is little continuity of styles and integrity.

North of Osgood Avenue is the Corbin Heights Neighborhood containing dwellings built primarily between ca. 1930 and 1960. Many of these are small, one-story frame houses designed in the Minimal Traditional, Colonial Revival and Ranch styles. Many of these dwellings have added synthetic sidings and windows and overall this neighborhood lacks architectural distinction.

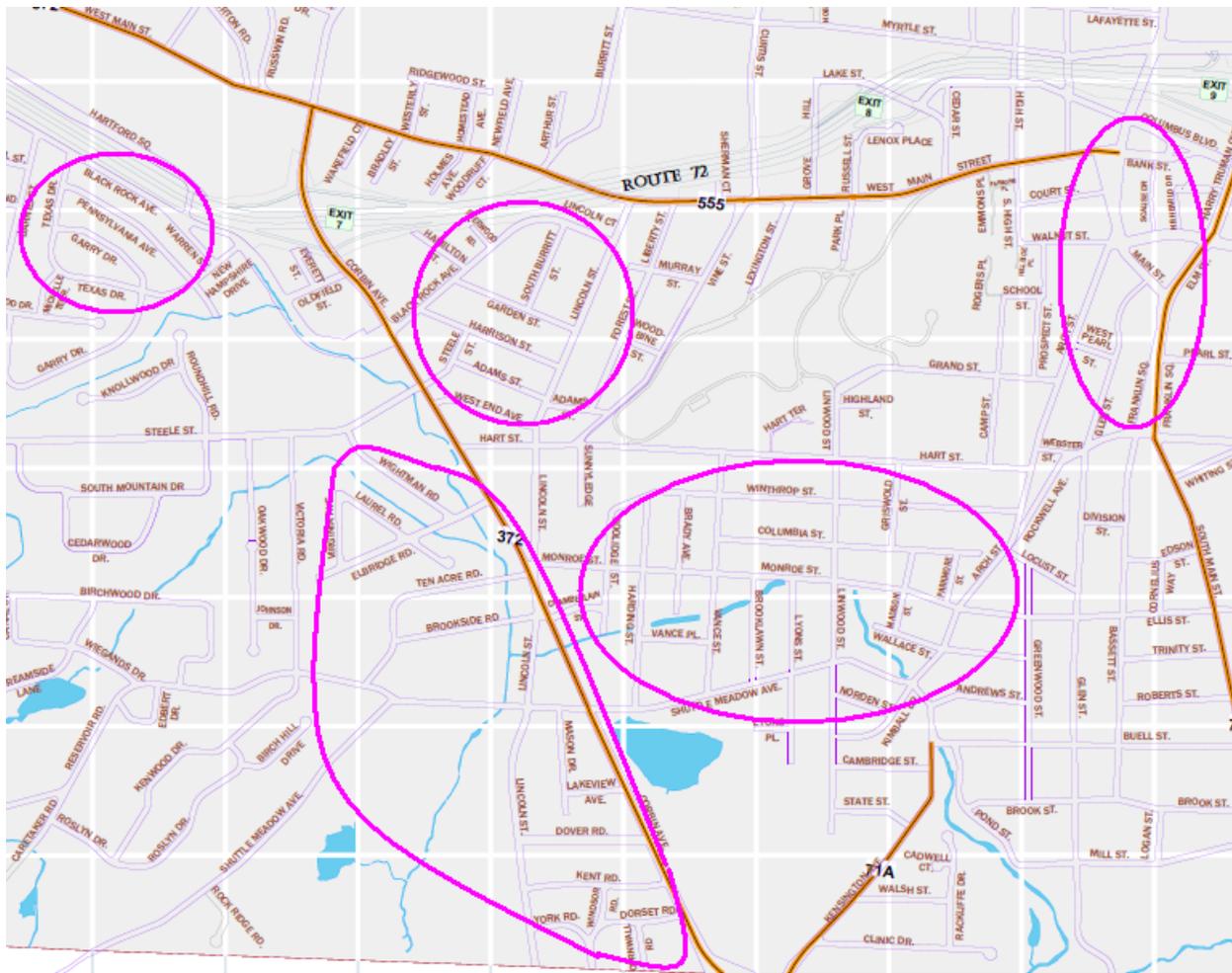
Throughout the northwest section of the city are churches and apartment buildings that should be assessed for their significance within their respective themes.



The northwest section of the city contains a wide variety of architectural styles such as this Dutch Colonial style dwelling at 116 Hillhurst Avenue.

The planned subdivisions north of Osgood Avenue resulted in the construction of hundreds of similar plan frame dwellings such as this row of houses on Heather Lane.





## Overall Summary – Southwest New Britain

This area was designated as “Quadrant Two” during the 1996 historical and architectural survey of the city. It is bounded on the west and south by the city limits and on the north and east by the Conrail railroad line. This area contains a variety of distinctive areas and historic resources. National Register-listed properties include the Walnut Hill Historic District, Walnut Hill Park, the West Side Historic District and the City Hall/Monument Historic District. Individually listed properties are the Temple B’Nai Israel, the Burritt Hotel, the Trinity Methodist Church (Trinity on Main), the Erwin Home, South Congregational Church, the Sloper-Wesley House and the New Britain National Bank. The 1996 survey also identified as National Register-eligible the Downtown/Franklin Square Historic District. Other areas appear to meet National Register criteria. One of these is along Bassett Street between Whiting and Ellis Streets. These two blocks contain an impressive collection of Queen Anne and Colonial Revival dwellings retaining integrity. Maple Street south of Whiting Street should also be assessed for its eligibility and together with Bassett Avenue may constitute a larger district. Maple Street suffers by comparison with Bassett Street due to the extent of alterations and its architecture is less notable and diverse. However, it does retain numerous examples of the triple-decker multi-family units built throughout the city.

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South of Walnut Hill Park is the National Register-eligible Vance Neighborhood bounded by Corbin Avenue on the west, Martha Hart Park and the Klingberg Home on the south and Rockwell Avenue on the east. This area contains a notable collection of late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century dwellings. Single-family homes include Tudor Revival, Bungalow and Colonial Revival styles while some blocks display triple-decker multi-family units. The exact boundaries of an eligible district would need to be formalized following an architectural survey.

Along Corbin Avenue and Lincoln Street are residential neighborhoods that evolved in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. One concentration of these houses is in the planned subdivision encompassing Dover, Mason and adjacent roads. Dwellings in this area have a high level of integrity and were designed in the Tudor and Colonial Revival styles of the period. Another possibly eligible area are the streets subdivided and developed between Corbin Avenue and Victoria Road. These also have impressive revival style homes built primarily from the 1920s to the 1940s.

The West End Historic District boundary should also be reexamined. The western boundary currently ends along sections of Lincoln and Forest Streets. While not containing as many individually significant properties, the neighborhood extending westward to Black Rock Avenue also possesses an intact collection of turn of the century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century residential architecture. Within these blocks are numerous examples of the triple-decker design and overall the area should be considered for inclusion within an amended district boundary.

Finally, the White Oaks Meadow Neighborhood along Pennsylvania Avenue and adjacent streets appears eligible within the theme of World War II defense housing. Along with Sunvale Manor Housing and Ledgecrest Housing, these three areas constitute an important historical legacy of planned developments of the 1940s.



The house at 15 Brady Avenue is representative of the many Tudor Revival style dwellings in the blocks south of Walnut Hill Park.



Lyons Street south of Walnut Hill Park contains a large number of triple-decker dwellings...



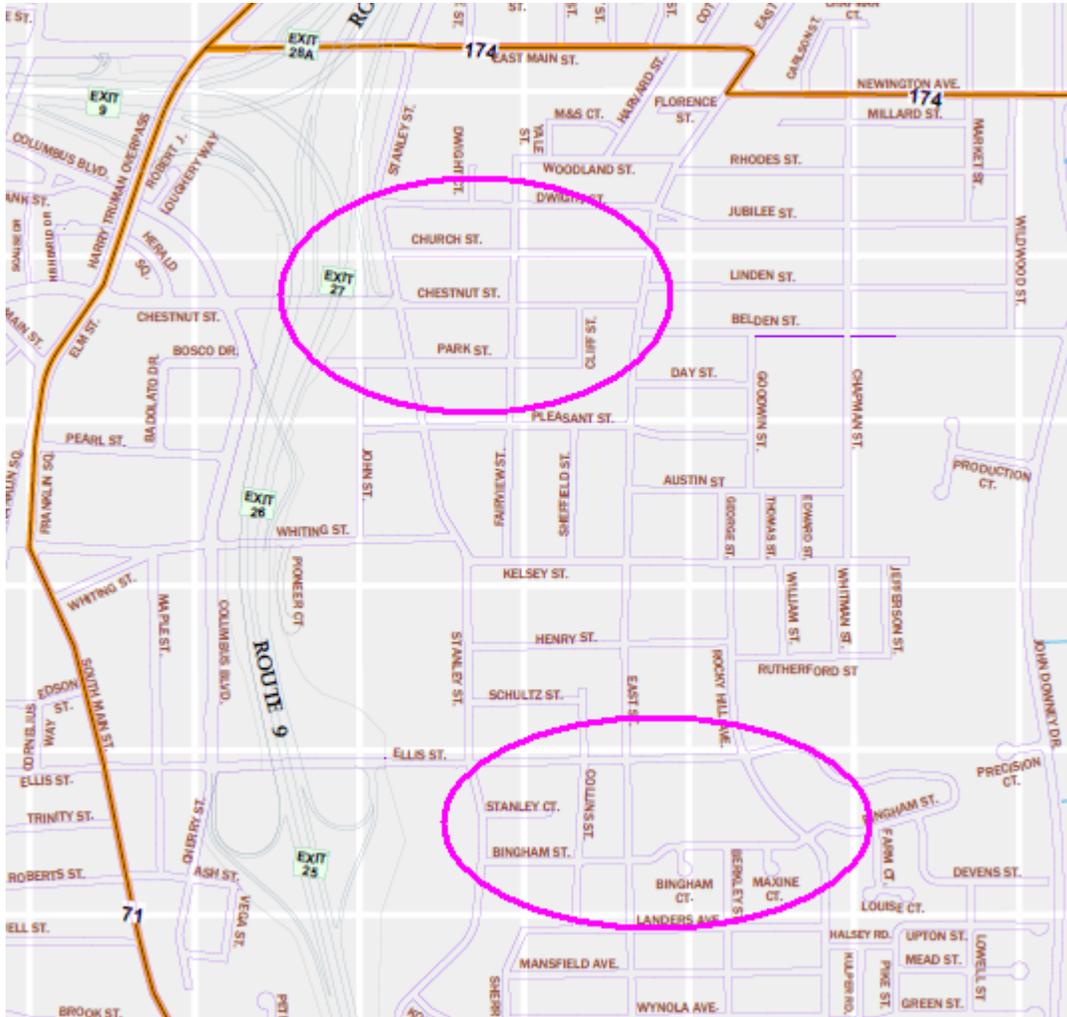
...as does the 200 block of Linwood Street.



The dwelling at 62 Dover Road is representative of the fine examples of the Tudor Revival style in this neighborhood.



The blocks between Lincoln Street and Black Rock Avenue should be considered for inclusion within the West End Historic District. This area contains a large number of multi-family dwellings as well as single-family homes. This view is of S. Burritt Street at the corner of Black Rock Avenue.



**Overall Summary – Southeast New Britain**

This area was designated as “Quadrant Three” during the 1996 historical and architectural survey of the city. It is bounded on the west by the Conrail railroad line, on the south and east by the city limits and on the north by an abandoned railroad right-of-way. This area is known as East End and is primarily residential in character with industries located along the railroad and along South Street. A section of Fairview Cemetery is also located within this section of the city. One National Register-listed property is located in this section of New Britain; the Francis H. Holmes House at 347 Rocky Hill Avenue.

Most of the building stock in this section was built prior to 1960. The oldest concentration of dwellings are located in the 300 and 400 blocks of Chestnut, Church and Park Streets. These blocks contain a number of triple-decker rental houses some of which were designed with Colonial Revival detailing and others in the Queen Anne style. Although many of these dwellings have been altered, the proposed Chestnut Street Historic District appears to retain sufficient integrity to meet National Register criteria as an historic district.

Another area of historical significance is the Sunvale Manor Housing located along Ellis Street. Built in the early 1940s, these Colonial Revival style multi-family

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dwellings were built as part of federal housing efforts to increase the supply of living quarters for defense workers. The Sunvale Manor Housing is one of three areas remaining extant in New Britain built as part of housing projects in World War II and all of these areas appear to meet National Register criteria for their historical significance.

The rest of the East End section of New Britain is characterized by residential architectural styles of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Many examples of Colonial Revival, Minimal Traditional, Dutch Colonial and Bungalow styles can be found along the streets. East Street and adjacent streets also contain representative examples of the multi-family triple-decker houses found in abundance across the city. While the area is largely composed of pre-1960 architecture, most blocks lack continuity of design through the loss of historic materials. Alterations such as porch enclosures, addition of synthetic siding and windows and insensitive additions have had negative impacts on the architectural heritage of the area.



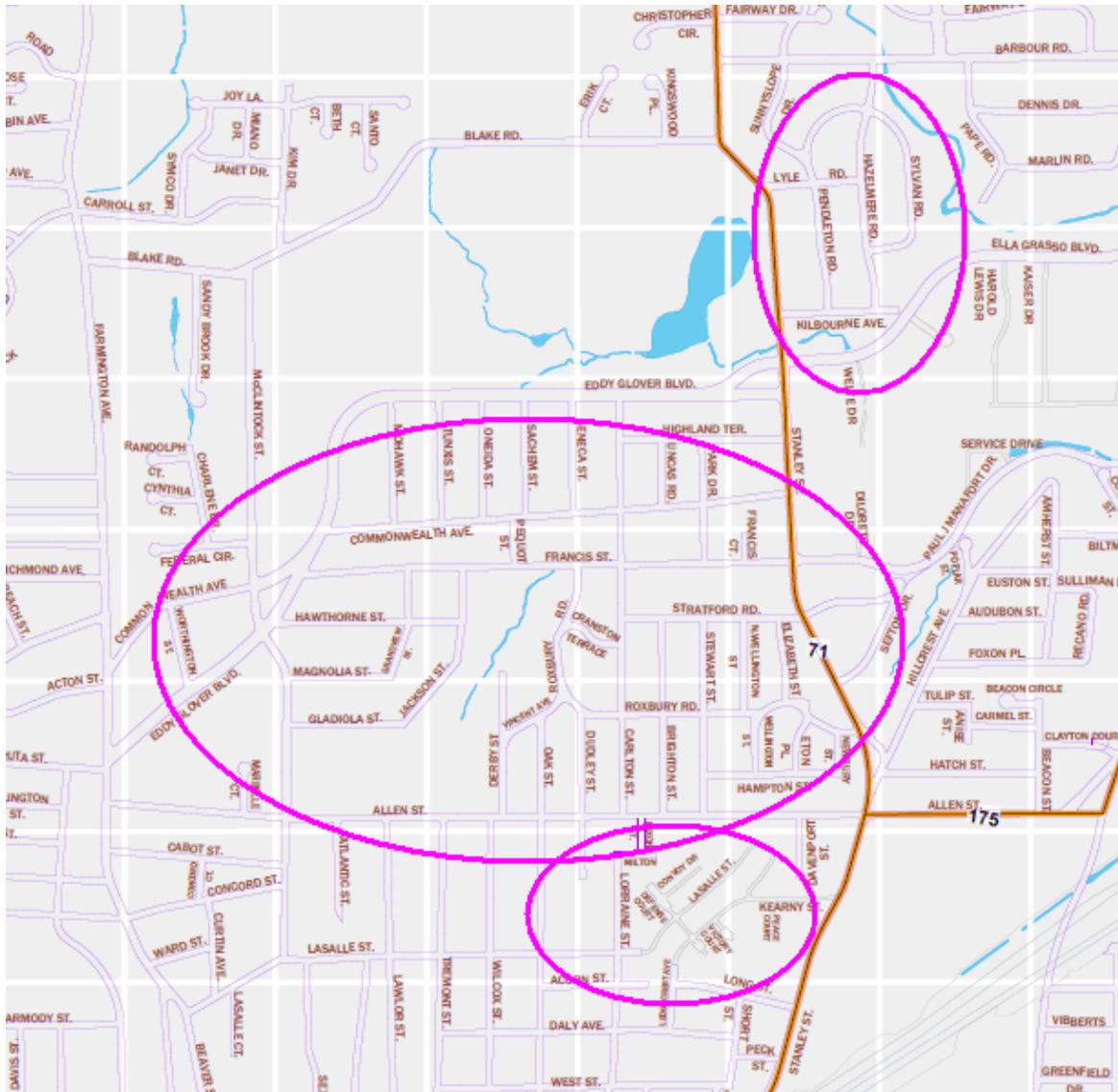
While the form and plan of some dwellings remain intact in this section of New Britain, most have been altered through the addition of synthetic siding and windows. This streetscape is along Connecticut Avenue.



Cottage Place is representative of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century dwellings located in this section of New Britain.



The Olson Building at 181-183 Dwight Street is an example of a corner commercial building with apartments on the upper two floors.



## Overall Summary – Northeast New Britain

This area was designated as “Quadrant Four” during the 1996 historical and architectural survey of the city. It is bounded on the north and east by the city limits, on the west by Farmington Avenue and on the south by the Conrail railroad line. This area contains a wide variety of resources including the Stanley Quarter and A.W. Stanley Parks and Golf Course, Central Connecticut State University, Fairview Cemetery and a wide variety of residential neighborhoods. One National Register-listed property is in this area; the Tephareth Israel Synagogue at 76 Winter Street.

The blocks between North Street and LaSalle Street contain single- and multi-family dwellings built from the turn of the century to World War II. This area contains a large number of triple-decker rental units and most have been altered with enclosed porches, added sidings and windows. Part of this area is designated as the Oak-North Neighborhood Revitalization Zone.

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To the north of Allen Street are two neighborhoods which appear to possess sufficient architectural distinction and integrity to meet National Register criteria. The proposed Belvedere Historic District is located in the northeast section of the city adjacent to Central Connecticut State University. This area is bounded approximately on the north by Eddy Glover Boulevard, on the west by McClintock Street, on the south by Allen Street and on the east by Stanley Street. This area contains a large collection of early 20th century architectural styles such as Colonial, Dutch and Tudor Revival. A section of the Stanley Quarter Neighborhood that also appears eligible is bounded on the north by Barbour Road, on the west by Stanley Street, on the south by properties along Kilbourne Avenue and on the east by properties on Sylvan Road. This planned development was platted and subdivided with curved streets and single-family dwellings. The character of the area is dominated by the Tudor Revival style and there are also examples of the Dutch Colonial, Colonial Revival and Minimal Traditional styles.

The Ledgecrest Housing complex west of Stanley Street also appears eligible as part of the thematic nomination of defense housing from World War II. This neighborhood, more commonly known as Farmingdale, is largely intact and retains much of its character. The northeast section of the city is also noted for retaining several intact 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century dwellings such as the Amon Stanley House and Noah Stanley Tavern. These properties should be assessed and nominated to the National Register as part of the proposed thematic nomination for these resources.



Cabot Street in the northeast section of the city is representative of the type of altered triple-decker houses found on these blocks.

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## Prepare National Register Nominations for Eligible Districts

New Britain contains a number of neighborhoods that appear to meet the criteria for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. National Register listing is important for several reasons. Listing brings with it a strong sense of pride and community which often translates into higher property values and resale prices. It also provides tax incentives for savvy developers and owners who rehabilitate properties using the state and federal tax credits. Through this approach dwellings are rehabilitated in keeping with their architectural character and the owners or developers reap the federal and state tax credits for their rehabilitation expenditures. The federal tax credit can be used to rehabilitate a single- or multi-family dwelling as long as it is then used as rental property for five years. After five years there is no recapture of any of the tax credit and property can then be sold. It is also possible that within the next decade the 20% federal tax credit for the rehabilitation of income producing properties will be extended to property owners for the rehabilitation of their own historic dwellings. If this tax credit is approved it would be of great benefit to property owners in New Britain's National Register listed historic districts.

When discussing the possibility of National Register listing, it is crucial that owners understand that listing places no restrictions upon them. National Register designation and being in a local ordinance historic district are often confused, leading to hesitancy on the part of property owners to have their properties included in the National Register. Prior to initiating a nomination's preparation, property owners should be fully informed as to the effects of National Register listing through neighborhood meetings and/or information sheets or summaries.



Property owners in potentially eligible historic districts such as downtown should be informed about the financial incentives that result from listing on the National Register.

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## Southwest Quadrant – Bassett Street Historic District

Bassett Street contains a significant collection of Queen Anne, Tudor Revival and Colonial Revival dwellings in the blocks bounded by Whiting Street on the north and Ellis Street on the south. These two blocks contain approximately two dozen properties, all of which were built before ca. 1930. While a number of properties have been altered through the application of synthetic sidings and windows, overall the area retains more integrity than nearby sections of the city. The district is particularly distinguished by fine examples of the Queen Anne style of the 1880s and 1890s.



Queen Anne style dwelling at 47 Bassett Street.



Streetscape in the 100 block of Bassett Street.

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## Southwest Quadrant – Vance Neighborhood Historic District

The proposed Vance Neighborhood Historic District is located in the southwest section of the city south of Walnut Hill Park. This neighborhood is bounded by Corbin Avenue on the west, Martha Hart Park and the Klingberg Home on the south and Rockwell Avenue on the east. This area contains a notable collection of late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century dwellings. Single-family homes include Tudor Revival, Bungalow and Colonial Revival styles while some blocks display triple-decker multi-family units. The district is centered around the Neo-classical style Robert Vance School built in 1926.

Most of the neighborhood appears to be stable with few threats to its historic integrity. One concern is the impact of the New Britain Campus of the Hospital Central Connecticut in the northeastern boundary of the area. A number of dwellings have been razed in this area for new buildings and parking lots and any future expansions of the hospital should take into account the effects to the neighborhood.

Overall this neighborhood retains a strong sense of time and place as an early 20<sup>th</sup> century residential area. Its streets are lined with large shade trees and many blocks have similar setbacks and lot sizes. The neighborhood contains both brick and frame dwellings and while some properties have added siding materials, most blocks retain their integrity of design, form and plan.



The 200 block of Winthrop Street displays a variety of single- and multi-family dwellings.

At 271 Winthrop Street is a notable example of the Tudor Revival style with an arched doorway and an exterior of stucco and half-timbering.



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## Southwest Quadrant – Lincoln Street/Corbin Avenue Historic District

To the west of the Vance Neighborhood are blocks along Corbin Avenue and Lincoln Streets that evolved in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Two areas appear to possess sufficient architectural character and distinction to meet National Register criteria. One concentration of these houses is the planned subdivision between Lincoln Street and Corbin Avenue. These streets were given British names such as Dover and Kent. Dwellings in this area have a high level of integrity and were designed in the Tudor and Colonial Revival styles of the period. These properties are sited on large lots and retain large shade trees.

A second concentration of similar design houses is the area subdivided and developed between Corbin Avenue and Victoria Road. Elbridge Road, Brookside Road and the adjacent streets have impressive revival style homes built primarily from the 1920s to the 1950s. These streets also were designed with large lots and extensive landscaping. The area has a high degree of integrity as a middle and upper class residential neighborhood of the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century.



Mason Drive displays an impressive collection of Colonial Revival, Tudor Revival and other period style houses.

This Colonial Revival style dwelling at 5 Elbridge Road is representative of the architectural styles found in the neighborhood west of Corbin Avenue.



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## Southwest Quadrant – West End Historic District – Boundary Extension

The West End Historic District was listed on the National Register in 1998. The district contains 151 contributing buildings just west of Walnut Hill Park and most dwellings are located on Lincoln, Forest and Lexington Streets. The district was listed on the National Register for its architectural significance and contains some of the “city’s best-preserved Late-Victorian and early twentieth century domestic architecture.” The majority of the properties within the district are single-family homes.

The western boundary of the district omits a dense collection of both single-family and multi-family dwellings of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. This area contains a large number of triple-decker apartments as well as other large multi-family houses. The boundary justification in the nomination does not state why the boundary was drawn to leave out these blocks but it appears this was done because of the increase in rental properties and more integrity issues.

This area should be reevaluated for its ability to be a separate historic district or simply a boundary extension of the existing district. The blocks west to Black Rock and Corbin Avenues have over one hundred properties designed in Colonial Revival, Tudor Revival, Queen Anne and other styles of the period. Although the application of synthetic sidings and windows is common, most properties in this area retain integrity of their original form and plan.



Streetscape in the 100 block of Black Rock Avenue.

Dutch Colonial style dwelling at 85 Black Rock Avenue.



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## Northwest Quadrant – Stanley Works Historic District

The proposed Stanley Works Historic District is located between Myrtle Street and Connecticut Route 72 just to the northwest of downtown New Britain. The proposed district contains over a dozen large industrial buildings constructed primarily in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The Stanley Hardware Company began in the city in 1843 and gradually became one of the largest hardware companies in America. The district is eligible for the National Register because of its significance in industry and architecture.

Most of the buildings within this industrial complex are vacant and contain an estimated 900,000 square feet. If listed on the National Register, the complex would provide an attractive opportunity for rehabilitation through use of the state and federal tax credits. New Britain and many other cities in New England have numerous examples of successful adaptive reuse projects involving historic industrial buildings.



The proposed Stanley Works Historic District is a large complex of industrial buildings along Myrtle Street.

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## Northeast Quadrant – Belvedere Historic District

The proposed Belvedere Historic District is located in the northeast section of the city adjacent to Central State Connecticut University. This area is bounded approximately on the north by Eddy Glover Boulevard, on the west by McClintock Street, on the south by Allen Street and on the east by Stanley Street. This area was developed after the turn of the century and contains a large collection of early 20th century architectural styles. While many dwellings have been altered through the application of synthetic sidings and windows, the overall form and plan of most properties in these blocks remains intact.

Architectural styles represented along these streets include Colonial Revival, Dutch Colonial, Craftsman/Bungalow, Tudor Revival, Minimal Traditional and Ranch variations. The majority of properties are single-family homes and are sited along streets with ample shade trees. The area appears to have sufficient integrity to meet National Register criteria, however an architectural survey should be undertaken prior to the initiation of a nomination to determine exact boundaries.



Well preserved Bungalow at 52 Park Drive.



Row of Dutch Colonial style houses in the 100 block of Francis Street.

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## Northeast Quadrant – Stanley Quarter Historic District

This historic district is bounded on the north by Barbour Road, on the west by Stanley Street, on the south by properties along Kilbourne Avenue and on the east by properties on Sylvan Road. This planned development was platted and subdivided with curved streets and single-family dwellings. The houses were constructed primarily in the 1920s and 1930s. The character of the area is dominated by the Tudor Revival style and there are also examples of the Dutch Colonial, Colonial Revival and Minimal Traditional styles. The neighborhood appears eligible for the National Register for its architectural significance due to its integrity of design and overall feeling and association as a planned neighborhood of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.



Tudor Revival influenced dwelling at 113 Hazelmere Road.



This Tudor Revival style dwelling located at 29 Lyle Road features a prominent brick chimney on the main façade.

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## Thematic Nomination – 18<sup>th</sup> and Early 19<sup>th</sup> Century Dwellings

The 1996 architectural survey identified approximately fifteen frame dwellings built in the 1700s and early 1800s in the city. These properties are an important historical resource and reflect the early settlement and agricultural history of New Britain. While a number of these homes have been extensively altered, they should all be assessed for their integrity and ability to meet National Register criteria. Several of these properties are now vacant and in disrepair and during the past ten years the ca. 1858 Elijah Hart House on Arch Street has been demolished and replaced with a modern home.

A thematic or multiple property nomination should be prepared within the next one to three years to recognize and help preserve these rare resources in the city. This nomination would include a discussion of the importance of this property type within the context of the city and establish registration requirements for eligibility. Shown below are clockwise from lower left: Gad Stanley II House at 2162 Stanley Street built ca. 1790; the John Clark House at the house at 2414 Stanley Street built ca. 1753; the dwelling at 5 Osgood Avenue built ca. 1670, and the dwelling at 61-65 Kensington Avenue built ca. 1759.



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## Thematic Nomination – Religious Buildings

New Britain has a significant collection of religious buildings including churches and synagogues, schools, convents, and support buildings such as rectories. Five religious properties are currently listed on the National Register; the South Congregational Church, the First Lutheran Church, St. Mary's Parochial School, Tephareth Israel Synagogue, Temple B'Nai Israel, and the Trinity Methodist Church (Trinity on Main).

In addition to these properties, a many other religious buildings appear to meet National Register criteria for their architectural design or significance in local religious history. This effort should include an evaluation of the architectural significance of each building and its role in the religious life of the city. For those properties deemed eligible, discussions should be held with the owners to explain the effects of National Register listing. Listing on the National Register would provide federal and state incentives for restoration. In the future if properties are no longer viable for religious purposes and are sold for other uses, the tax incentives could assist in their adaptive reuse.

A thematic or multiple property nomination should be prepared within the next one to three years to recognize and help preserve religious buildings in the city. This nomination would include a discussion of the importance of this property type within the context of the city and establish registration requirements for eligibility.



Our Lady of Rose Hill Orphanage was built in 1922 at 584 Burritt Street and is significant for its role in local social and religious history.

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## Thematic Nomination – Educational Buildings

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, numerous public and private school buildings were built throughout the city. Many of these remain extant and continue to be used as schools while others have been successfully adapted for residential and other uses. Examples of this type of residential conversion include the Washington School, the New Britain High School, Goodwin Tech, the Rockwell School and the State Normal School on Hillside Place. With declining enrollment and consolidation, it is possible that buildings currently used as schools will need to have a new use in the future.

Listing on the National Register would provide federal and state incentives for rehabilitation and adaptive reuse. If educational properties are no longer needed the tax incentives could assist in their conversion to new uses. Within the next three to seven years a thematic or multiple property nomination should be prepared to evaluate and help preserve educational buildings in the city. This nomination would include a discussion of the importance of this property type within the context of the city and establish registration requirements for eligibility.



The St. Thomas Aquinas School at 74 Kelsey Street is vacant and awaits a new use.

The Benjamin Franklin School on Clinton Street is representative of the Colonial Revival style of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.



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## Thematic Nomination – Apartment Buildings

One of the distinguishing characteristics of New Britain is the large number of apartment buildings located throughout the city. Many of these buildings were constructed between 1900 and 1930 when the population of the city soared from 28,000 to 68,000 residents. Immigrants from Italy, Poland, Russia and other European countries came to New Britain during these years to work in the city's many manufacturing industries. Apartments provided affordable housing without the financial obligations of ownership and multi-story brick and frame buildings were constructed in each section of the city.

Apartment buildings constitute an important property type in New Britain and the preparation of a thematic or multiple property nomination would identify those which have particular architectural or historical significance. Listing on the National Register would provide owners with federal and state tax incentives for their preservation and rehabilitation since they are income-producing properties. The preparation of this nomination should take place within the next three to seven years.



This row of apartment buildings on Washington Street is representative of the importance of apartments to the city's growth and development.

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## Thematic Nomination – Social Clubs and Buildings

As immigrants came to America and New Britain, social organizations were organized to provide assistance in employment and home support. Some of these organizations were fraternal in nature and encompassed many ethnic groups such as the Oddfellows and Elks Club. Others were more ethnically based and various clubs and organizations were formed in New Britain to serve the Italian, Polish, Lithuanian and other communities. These types of social clubs played a valuable role in both perpetuating old world customs and traditions while assimilating ethnic groups into the American melting pot.

The 1996 survey of the city identified several buildings which continue to be used as social and fraternal clubs. Some of these have been in existence for over 100 years and represent an important heritage in New Britain. A survey and assessment of these buildings would provide a comprehensive overview of those that remain and their historical importance. Listing on the National Register would recognize the contributions these clubs and organizations played in the social heritage of the community. The preparation of this study and nomination should take place within the next three to seven years.



The Lithuanian Club at 356 Park Street was built in 1912 and served this ethnic community for many years .

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## Thematic Nomination – Industrial Buildings

New Britain's rapid growth and development in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries was largely due to the city's many industries. The city's factories employed thousands of workers as New Britain became known as the "Hardware Capital of the World." After World War II, a number of these industries closed and urban renewal projects and fires in the 1960s and 1970s resulted in the loss of many of the city's historic factories.

The architectural survey of 1996 identified a number of properties remaining in the city which reflect its industrial heritage. The largest of these is the Stanley Works complex which has been recommended as its own historic district. This property has been recorded for inclusion within the Historic American Engineering Record (HAER) along with other buildings such as the Russell & Erwin Manufacturing Company at Myrtle and Washington Streets, the Fafnir Booth Street Plant at Booth and Orange Streets and the Landers, Frary & Clark Plant at 321 Ellis Street.

Within the next three to seven years a thematic or multiple property nomination should be prepared to evaluate and help preserve industrial buildings in the city. This nomination would include a discussion of the importance of this property type within the context of the city and establish registration requirements for eligibility.



The Landers, Frary & Clark Plant at 321 Ellis Street was begun in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and specialized in household appliances.

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## Thematic Nomination – World War II Defense Housing

New Britain retains three large housing complexes constructed during World War II specifically to house those working in the defense industry. During the war, New Britain's factories produced ball bearings, shell cases, precision parts for aircraft and small arms and a wide variety of hardware for multiple uses. As the factories increased their output and hired workers to respond to the demands of the defense industry there was an acute housing shortage in the city. To help alleviate this shortage, the New Britain Housing Authority utilized federal funds to build six housing projects in the city. Altogether 1,300 housing units were built at a cost of over five million dollars and most units were occupied by 1943.

Three of these housing projects were designed to be temporary, built with modular units and dismantled after the war. The other three, Sunvale Manor, White Oaks and Ledgecrest were built to be permanent and designed in the Colonial Revival style with exteriors of frame and brick veneer. These three housing projects were designed to house 800 families and they continue to be used and occupied today.

These three housing projects are modest architecturally but they represent an important role in the growth and development of the city. They represent one of the first joint efforts by the city and federal government to address housing problems and were also important in supporting the families working in the city's vital defense industries. A thematic or multiple property nomination should be prepared within the next three to seven years to recognize this important community resource.



Sunvale Manor on Ellis Street was designed in the Colonial Revival style to house defense workers.

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## Promote and Adopt Historic District and Village District Overlays and Prepare a Residential Design Review Guideline Manual

Connecticut law provides for the establishment of Historic Overlay Districts. This tool for preservation adds another layer of protection to the base zoning of a given area of a town and introduces historic design review through a zoning ordinance. Within local historic districts actions such as rehabilitation, demolition and new construction are reviewed by the city's Historic Preservation Commission in order to preserve a neighborhood or area's particular character. Prior to getting a Building Permit property owners are required to get a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) from the Commission or staff. In many cases the staff can provide approval for minor work and replacement in kind of building elements. For more complicated projects typically the COA applicant presents the request before the Commission. This type of overlay zoning would be an important step in protecting New Britain's historic neighborhoods.

The Connecticut General assembly also enacted the Historic District Acts in 1998 as a means for local municipalities to preserve historic patterns of development and community character. This legislation allows a town to designate a specific section of the town as a village district and to adopt zoning regulations for the district to govern the design and maintenance of public views therein. Village District zoning encourages the conservation of the town's distinctive historic buildings, landscape, of community character. Village District regulations are under the purview of the town's zoning commission and provide that alterations to existing building or construction of proposed buildings blend harmoniously with surroundings, expressing visual and functional compatibility in scale, massing, setback, proportions, arrangement and orientation. Village District zoning helps to minimize the loss of historic structures and their architectural elements.

The Village District Act lists five steps in the creation of local zoning enactment. First, a municipality should educate residents and/or business owners on the benefits and terms of such a provision. Next, an inventory should be undertaken to identify buildings, landscapes, and settings within the proposed area. The inventory should also identify problems. The third step is to develop design standards unique to the area and also common to other proposed village districts, including sidewalks, public light fixtures and furniture, pedestrian, bicycle, and auto circulation, and landscaping. Next, a timeframe should be established for funding and adoption of needed regulations. Finally, a town should monitor the effects of the local zoning and make revisions as needed.

The preparation of a residential design guideline manual is also recommended for property owners in New Britain. Such a manual would provide information on proper rehabilitation through illustrations and photographs. This type of manual would be applicable for historic neighborhoods throughout the city. Such a manual would serve as the basis for design review by the proposed New Britain Historic Commission for any future overlay areas.

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## Create an Urban Homesteading Program to Promote Rehabilitation

Vacant houses can be found in many of New Britain's neighborhoods, especially those close to downtown and the Broad Street commercial district. In order to address the problem of deteriorated and vacant housing in these neighborhoods, the city should consider establishing an Urban Homestead Program. In this type of program a city buys and renovates vacant and abandoned houses for resale to low- or moderate-income households. Homesteaders must meet certain income requirements and are offered a low-interest loan. They must live in and maintain the dwelling for a minimum period of time. Such programs have proven to be effective tools in revitalizing neighborhoods in cities across the country, including Davenport, Iowa. In other communities such as Richmond, Virginia, properties are condemned, acquired by the local government, rehabilitated and then sold for \$1 plus the cost of rehabilitation.

An example of an urban homesteading program in Connecticut is found in Norwich. In this program abandoned buildings are acquired by the city and sold by the city's Board of Review of Dangerous Buildings for one dollar. Bidders are required to supply restoration plans, demonstrate expertise and financial ability to carry out the project, and be willing to post a \$5,000 performance bond. In awarding bids, preference is given to bidders who planned to occupy the houses and who intended to preserve or restore the historic character of the building. Renovations have to be completed within a year and the building must be owned five years or the city recaptures part of the sale price.

Houses available through most Urban Homesteading programs are generally valued from \$75,000 to \$150,000 after rehabilitation. Houses of various sizes are targeted for these programs. To purchase an Urban Homesteading house, a family (consisting of at least one steadily employed person who is 21 years old or older), must have good credit and qualify for a low-interest loan. The family must generally also be a first-time homebuyer and own no other real property. Program guidelines also prescribe minimum and maximum incomes, such as combined gross family income being at least \$35,000 - \$40,000 per year.

Urban Homesteading Programs have proven to rejuvenate neighborhoods that are in decline by improving one building at a time. This type of incremental revitalization typically has a longer lasting impact on areas than more traditional large-scale projects. Urban Homesteading is cost-effective as it utilizes existing resources. It can also have a positive ripple effect by enhancing neighborhoods and encouraging additional housing rehabilitation. This type of program helps to build community pride and identity by maintaining the historic character of a neighborhood and strengthening residents' commitment to the area.

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## Sponsor Training for Contractors and Builders

Identifying contractors and builders sensitive to historic building renovation is often a challenge, and there is a need to provide additional venues and opportunities for the sharing of information and preservation rehabilitation techniques. The proposed New Britain Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) and/or a citywide non-profit should prepare a list of contractors and builders known to have skills and crafts in historic building rehabilitation and make this list available to the general public at their meetings or on the web. It should be a policy that the HPC and/or non-profit should state that the list does not reflect endorsement but simply provides the names of those known to have successfully completed rehabilitation projects in the city.

A good model for this type of list is that utilized by the Connecticut Trust which updates a list of professionals regularly on its website. Nearby training classes are provided by the nearby Hartford Preservation Alliance. This citywide non-profit organization conducts periodic workshops for builders and contractors in areas such as window restoration, masonry repointing and siding repair. The sponsorship of this type of training and list of professionals would assist preservation efforts in the city.

Old House Live is one of the programs offered by the Connecticut Trust providing restoration training.



## Develop Programs for the Public on Historic Building Repair and Maintenance

New Britain's historic property owners would benefit from programs and workshops that highlight the proper methods of historic building rehabilitation and repair. The city should seek opportunities to sponsor or co-sponsor programs with other local governments or organizations associated with historic preservation such as the Connecticut Trust and Hartford Preservation Alliance. For example, these organizations have sponsored window and plaster restoration workshops. The window workshop included recommendations and methods for rebuilding historic wood windows and basic repair. The plaster workshop involved hands-on repair and application of new plaster in a house undergoing restoration. These workshops attracted dozens of participants and provided valuable information to historic home owners.

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## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Goal 3— Create a Governmental Framework and Advocacy Program for Historic Preservation

#### Pass an Ordinance and Create a City Historic District Commission

Historic preservation ordinances are legal statutes that establish official procedures and authority for protecting and preserving a community's historic resources. Essential elements of a preservation ordinance include establishment of a Local Historic District Commission (Commission) and an explanation of its powers, duties and responsibilities. Most ordinances provide two basic authorities – designation of historic properties and design review. Design review is the process of examination and evaluation of plans for exterior alterations to historic properties, proposals for demolition and requests for new construction within designated districts. Design review can be advisory or binding. If design review is to be binding, the ordinance should outline this process including the circumstances when a Certificate of Appropriateness is required and when it is not, coordination with other required permits, and procedures for appeals. The preservation ordinance should also establish basic criteria and procedures for designation of local historic districts and landmarks. The Commission can then use these criteria to develop more specific guidelines.

The creation of a Commission is an essential step in recognizing and protecting New Britain's historic resources. Commissions can play an important role in advocacy and education as well as overseeing the survey and designation of historic areas and design review. The preparation of a city ordinance and creation of a Commission should occur within the next year. An example of a historic preservation ordinance has been prepared for this study and is located in Appendix B. This ordinance is based upon typical language used in ordinances enacted in Connecticut and specifically for the city of Hartford.

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## Prepare a Plan for Recruitment and Training for HDC Members

With the creation of a Historic District Commission (Commission), its bylaws or a separate document should outline procedures for recruitment of members, qualifications, and recommended training. Commission's in Connecticut are composed of five members with three alternates. Typically, Commission members should have an interest in historic preservation but can also represent diverse interests and have expertise in architecture, property development, construction and real estate.

The bylaws should emphasize the need for members to continuously educate themselves about historic preservation and its role in the community. It is important that members receive training at state workshops and consider attending the meetings of the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions (NAPC). The NAPC meets once every two years and members are encouraged to join the organization and to attend their meetings.

The Commission bylaws or plan should recommend that new members receive basic training and orientation to their new position. This could include introductory packets consisting of copies of the local preservation ordinance, Commission bylaws, standards and procedures, design guidelines, maps of existing historic districts, *Roberts Rules of Order*, and other explanatory materials that describe the role and responsibilities of the Commission. Training sessions or workshops are also beneficial and can help ease a shift in Commission membership. It is important that members, throughout their tenure on the Commission, continue to educate themselves and keep informed of issues concerning historic preservation within the city.

## Create a Preservation/Economic Planning Position within Municipal Development

The creation of a Historic District Commission should include the designation of staff or creation of a position within New Britain's government to provide assistance and act as the liaison between the Commission and citizens. The staff to the Commission may be full-time or part-time depending on the work load and responsibilities assigned to the Commission. It may also be desirable for the staff person to also have a background in finance in order to assist citizens with the completion of state and federal tax certification applications. As in the case of Commission members, Town staff assigned to assist the Commission should also receive regular training in historic preservation issues and be familiar with the ordinance. Staff members should take advantage of training offered by the State Historic Preservation Office and the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions.

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## After the Establishment of a Historic Preservation Program, Apply for Certified Local Government Status

Certified Local Governments (CLGs) are those municipalities and counties that have enacted a local preservation ordinance meeting certain standards, as certified by the State Historic Preservation Office and the U.S. Department of the Interior. As New Britain develops a historic preservation program, it will be important to understand and meet the standards for becoming a CLG. CLGs are eligible for an earmarked pool of federal grants. The Connecticut SHPO must set aside at least ten percent of the money it receives from the federal Historic Preservation Fund for CLGs. Each CLG in the state is eligible to compete for a portion of that money to be used as a matching grant for eligible survey, planning, pre-development, or development activities.

CLGs also review all new nominations to the National Register of Historic Places for properties and districts within their boundaries. Consequently, CLGs share their local expertise with state and federal preservationists and gain a say in state and federal recognition of historic resources in their areas. The community benefits from the increased expertise and knowledge of preservationists at the local level, and CLG commission members benefit from increased opportunities and from the recognition of their communities.

## Conduct Annual Training for City Staff Who Administer the Preservation Program

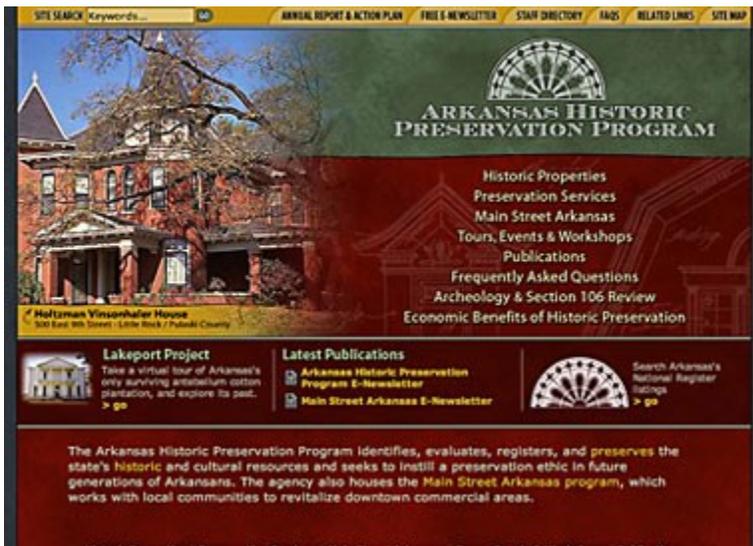
A formal historic preservation program for New Britain should include a full-time or part-time preservation planner. This staff member, or any other planning staff who deal with preservation issues, should receive regular training at workshops and conferences held in the state during the year. In addition to the training at the state level, the City of New Britain should provide funding to send staff members and/or Commission members to the bi-annual conferences held by the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions (NAPC). This nation-wide organization supports the work of design review boards and commissions across the country through an on-line list-serve, newsletters and the conference.



Staff for the city's future preservation program should take advantage of available training opportunities with the state and the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions which sponsors regional and national conferences.

## Create a Citywide Non-Profit Historic Preservation Organization

In the early 1970s the city prepared a historic preservation plan and during these years a non-profit advocacy group was formed. The New Britain Historic Preservation Trust operated for a number of years but could not sustain its momentum and disbanded by the end of the decade. There is a need for a new non-profit group to advocate for historic preservation in the city. Typically these types of organizations are formed by citizen volunteers and have specific goals such as providing educational information, sponsoring awards programs and working with governmental agencies. Non-profit groups are important because they can speak out on issues and provide an advocacy role outside of city government. Such groups can also apply for grants and other funding that may not be available to municipalities. Over time these volunteer organizations can sometimes raise sufficient funds to hire part- or full-time staff. New Britain's wealth of historic resources would benefit greatly from the establishment of a non-profit historic preservation organization.



## Develop and Maintain a Preservation Web Page

Many states and cities have useful and educative websites such as the site for the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program.

## Profit

## by the City or Non-

A number of cities in Connecticut have web pages that discuss historic preservation efforts in their community and provide links to related sites. With the establishment of a city preservation program, a web page will be an important addition to the city's website. The web page should be a ready source of information for citizens -- providing helpful technical information, links to relevant the city's historic preservation regulations and policies, and updates on the city's historic preservation activities. The web page should also contain links to the Connecticut SHPO, the Connecticut Trust, the National Trust for Historic Preservation and other relevant organizations.

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## Conduct Annual Home Tours and Downtown Loft Tours

An effective way to build support for historic preservation and encourage investment is conducting annual home tours. These types of tours are usually held on an annual basis and consist of opening up homes for tours by the general public. Often neighborhoods sponsor such tours and have anywhere from six to fifteen homes available for viewing. These types of tours require lots of volunteer hours as well as willing homeowners to put their houses on tour. In return, neighborhoods reap the financial benefits of admittance fees for tours and promoting the qualities of the area. Historic homes tours are held in many cities in Connecticut and across the country and property owners in the West End Historic District and other areas should consider sponsoring such tours.

As downtown living increases there should also be the creation of loft tours. The Downtown District and Arts Alliance should consider sponsorship of such tours once sufficient restored lofts are available. In other cities these types of tours have stimulated increased interest in living downtown and investment by developers and property owners.

Rehabilitation of upper floor space in downtown New Britain for offices and lofts is increasing and tours would help promote living and working in these spaces such as at 160 Main Street.



## Sponsor Annual Preservation Awards Programs

A city sponsored preservation awards program should be created with input from organizations such as the Downtown District and the proposed New Britain Historic Preservation Commission, to recognize citizens who have been good stewards of their historic buildings or have completed significant rehabilitation projects. These types of awards help to identify and support those involved in historic preservation activities and instill a sense of pride among owners. There are numerous such awards programs in place in the state in communities such as Danbury and Manchester which can serve as models for New Britain. Developing an annual awards program is recommended to occur within the next two to three years.

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## Create Materials and Programs on Historic Preservation for Realtors

With two-thirds of the city's buildings at least fifty years old, most Realtors in New Britain engage in buying and selling older properties as part of their everyday work. As the number of National Register districts increase in the future, the proposed Historic District Commission and non-profit group should work with the real estate community in New Britain to create an informational brochure on historic properties. This brochure should include maps of the National Register Districts and financial incentives available for older homes for prospective buyers.

The city's proposed Historic District Commission and non-profit group should consider sponsoring an annual one-day workshop for Realtors. This should focus on selling historic properties as relates to new building regulations and local historic districts. The course, which could be structured for Continuing Education credits, should be designed primarily for real estate agents who want to improve their knowledge and skills in working with old and historic homes. Another course could focus on marketing historic properties and provide an overview of the history of the city's architecture and neighborhoods and information on federal, state and local tax incentives for rehabilitation of historic buildings. This type of program would prove useful in marketing and selling historic properties as additional National Register districts are added in the city.



Realtors should be informed about the federal and state tax credits available for the rehabilitation of historic properties. Buildings used for income-producing purposes such as 61 Lexington Street would qualify for both credits.

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## Involve Central Connecticut State University with City Historic Preservation Efforts

Central Connecticut State University (CCSU) is located adjacent to the historic Belvedere Neighborhood in northeast New Britain. The University's History Department offers an M.A. in Public History which has an emphasis on historic preservation, museums, and educational programming. CCSU's Public History Program specializes in preparing students for careers in museum interpretation, local and community history and educational programming. On consultation with the Public History Coordinator, students may also design specialized programs in such areas as public policy, documentary filmmaking, archives, museum administration and historic preservation. The University offers a class on historic preservation and students have worked on projects in the city including creating an ipod walking tour of Walnut Hill Park.

Members of the proposed Historic District Commission or non-profit group should work with the Public History program to suggest projects of benefit to the city as well as providing practical experience for students. These types of projects could include architectural surveys, preparation of National Register nominations, oral history projects and educational studies. There should also be consideration of creating an internship program providing students with a modest stipend in exchange for studies or nominations of particular neighborhoods or buildings. The CCSU Public History Program has the potential to play an increasingly larger role in the city's preservation activities.



Internship programs are one way to get historic preservation students more involved surveys, National Register nominations and hands-on restoration work.

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## Utilize Available History-Based Curriculum and Programs for Public and Private Schools

Students in New Britain’s public and private schools should participate in available history-based curriculums and be educated as to the significance of the city’s history through field trips and tours. One program available through the Central Connecticut State University History Department is “History is Central.” This is a collaborative project based funded by a grant from the federal Department of Education. “History Is Central” aims to increase student learning in U.S. history by connecting participating teachers to the best in history scholarship, to local historical resources, and to an ongoing network of colleagues. Programs include workshops and scholarly presentations, book circle discussions, and visits to historic sites and museums, as well as ongoing consultation with project staff. These programs are open to middle- and high school teachers in the participating districts. New Britain should consider participation in this program as a way of educating students with the heritage of the city.



The “History is Central” program involves students across the state with local history projects. Study topics include manufacturing in the state as illustrated by the typewriter assembler in Hartford at right shown in the 1950s.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## Goal 4— Enhance Heritage Tourism

### Overview

In Connecticut, tourism is a multi-million dollar industry creating jobs and tax revenues. In 2003, out-of-state visitors spent \$366 million and it is estimated that every state dollar invested in tourism promotion generates a return of \$51 from the private sector. Over 110,000 jobs are sustained through the state's tourism industry. Heritage tourists are the best tourists there are—they stay longer, spend more money and make more repeat visits.

Historic properties play an important role in generating tourism dollars whether properties operated as house museums or those included in self-directed multi-site thematic trails. State designated scenic highways — roads lined by both historic properties and/or natural features — encourage visitation as well. A study authorized by the Connecticut General Assembly indicated that the desire for “heritage experiences” ranks second in motivating tourists visiting the state. Heritage tourism builds on the unique historic and cultural aspects of a community to encourage local economic development. The special character of historic buildings and their environments — their authenticity, architectural design, and ability to convey a sense of time and place — are community assets.

New Britain has yet to develop a focused heritage tourism program but the city has ample historic resources to justify such a program. Downtown has a good walking tour available and over the next two years a wayfinding and pedestrian linkage program will be completed. The Walnut Hill and West End Historic Districts contain significant homes that could be more fully recognized through walking tour brochures. The city's architecturally significant churches and industrial buildings also offer opportunities for driving tours and a marker program. Heritage tourists often visit art museums and other cultural attractions and the city is increasing these venues as well. An emphasis on heritage tourism has the potential to stimulate economic development downtown and increase visitation to the city.



State tourism efforts are divided into different regions and New Britain is located in River Valley.

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## Prepare Walking Tours for the West End Historic District and Future National Register Districts

The West End Historic District is located within easy walking distance of downtown. While downtown has a good walking tour brochure, no such brochure is available for West End. West End contains some of the city's most architecturally significant homes and is also directly adjacent to the Museum of American Art. The preparation of a walking tour brochure for this historic neighborhood would be part of a citywide heritage tourism program to provide visitors with additional places to see and experience in the city and capture more tourism dollars.

The brochure prepared for the West End Historic District should include information on the architectural styles found in the neighborhood, stories of well-known residents, and maps linking the neighborhood with downtown, Walnut Hill Park and the Walnut Hill Historic District. The city's Parks and Recreation Department and Central Connecticut State University have developed an Ipod walking tour of Walnut Hill Park and these types of tours can be an effective alternative to brochures.

The proposed Broad Street Historic District should also have a walking tour brochure prepared in the next few years. This district has a fine collection of both residential and commercial buildings and is distinguished by its Polish heritage. The brochure should be printed both in English and Polish for residents and visitors from Poland and other countries.

Additional areas have also been identified as potential National Register districts such as the Belvedere Neighborhood and blocks along Bassett Street. The creation of walking tour brochures for these areas should be considered along with an overall map of historic districts throughout the city.



Lexington Street is representative of the historic architecture within the West End Historic District.

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## Prepare Driving Tours of the City's Colonial Architecture, Churches, and Industrial Buildings

Some of the finest assets of the city are its remaining Colonial dwellings from the 18th and early 19th centuries, its churches and industrial buildings. These are architectural resources that visitors often seek to visit and tour and informational brochures should be prepared for these properties. The brochures should include maps with a recommended driving tour, as well as historical and architectural information. Some of the most significant Colonial homes are located in the Stanley Quarter area and are accessible by foot after parking in the A.W. Stanley Park.



The Ezra Belden House is one of over a dozen Colonial homes remaining in the city.

The Holy Trinity Russian Orthodox Church on Washington Street is representative of the wide ethnic diversity of the city.



city's churches are particularly noteworthy for their associations with the many ethnic groups that settled in New Britain as well as their outstanding architectural designs. Several churches are already listed on the National Register and many more are potentially eligible. A driving tour for visitors should include not only information on church history and architecture but times when worship services and/or tours are available.

New Britain's industrial heritage is also of particular significance and a downtown wayfinding and walking tour project is to be completed over the next two years which will highlight this aspect of the city's heritage. A recommended outcome of this project is to also produce a driving tour brochure that will enable visitors to also drive to the significant complexes associated with the Stanley Hardware Company and other remaining industrial buildings.

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## Create an Arts Trail Connecting Downtown Arts Venues with the Museum of American Art

New Britain has developed great arts venues in the downtown area but lacks way-finding and signage to connect downtown arts visitors with the Museum of American Art. Such an Arts Trail could extend down W. Main Street and through Walnut Hill Park. This would take visitors through downtown, by notable buildings in the Walnut Hill Historic District and Walnut Hill Park. Such a trail could be marked by signage, sidewalk markers, wayside exhibits and a brochure.



An Arts Trail could connect the downtown arts area at Main and Arch Streets...

...past historic buildings such as the old Post Office and Public Library...



...and then through Walnut Hill Park to the Museum of American Art.

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## Create a Marker Program for Historic Properties

Historic marker and exhibit programs are successful in many communities in raising public awareness of historic resources and assisting in heritage tourism efforts. Many communities have established standardized designs for their historic districts including markers either freestanding in front yards or affixed to the front of buildings. These designs are often not expensive and only include the historic name of the house and date. More elaborate marker programs provide short histories of the house and owner names. A marker program was initiated in New Britain in the 1970s to identify properties remaining from the 18th and early 19th centuries. These markers are affixed to the front of the houses along with their historic names and dates. Expanding on this marker initiative or devising a new program with standardized and enhanced markers is recommended. These markers should be added to locations in Walnut Hill, West End and future historic districts.

In addition to historic markers, wayside exhibits are also an effective means of presenting historical information for citizens and visitors. Wayside exhibits are generally freestanding platforms or plaques of metal and/or wood design that tell a particular story or commemorate a special event. There are many standardized designs used for wayside exhibits which are durable and long lasting.

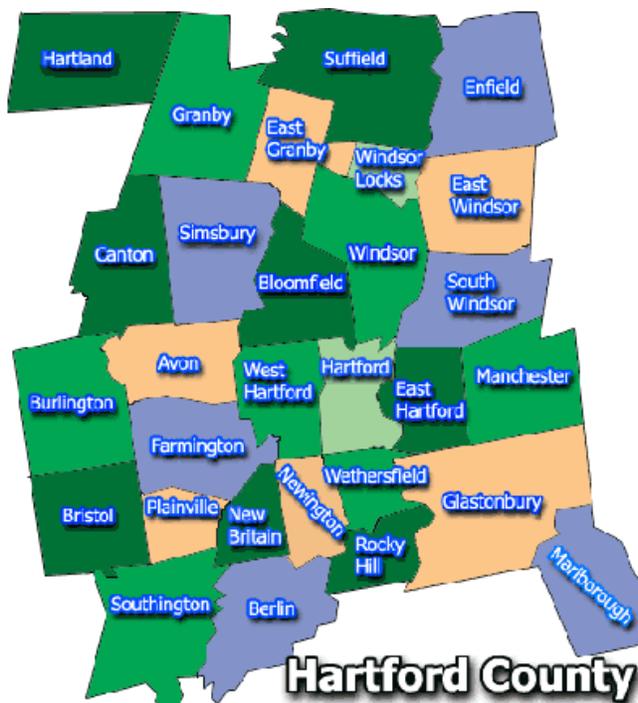


New London's heritage as a whaling and fishing community is used as the logo for their marker and house plaque program.

## Coordinate Heritage Tourism with Regional Sites

As New Britain's heritage tourism program develops, there should be coordination with state and regional offices on overall tourism promotion. Of particular importance would be providing information on walking tours, arts events, and festivals to the Central Regional Tourism District - River Valley which publishes regional tourism information for central Connecticut. This agency produces printed materials as well maintaining a website with suggestions for vacations and weekend excursions. The website currently has information on New Britain's arts venues such as the Industrial Museum and Museum of American Art but there is no mention of historic resources. As downtown and neighborhood walking and driving tours are developed this information should be provided to state and regional offices to assist in tourism development.

Statewide and regional tourist brochures should be updated with information on New Britain's heritage tourism programs in the future.



Hartford County offers website resources for tourism in each of the county's municipalities.

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## X. NEW BRITAIN HISTORIC PRESERVATION ACTION PLAN SUMMARY

### **First Steps - Creating the Framework**

The establishment of a citywide historic preservation program was recommended in the 1970s and remains an important goal today. Most communities create such a program through the adoption of a Historic Preservation Ordinance and appointing a Historic District Commission. This first step is the framework on which much of a historic preservation program will follow.

In addition to the adoption of an ordinance and creation of a Historic District Commission, other initial recommendations are to fund and prepare National Register nominations for the Downtown/Franklin Square and Broad Street Historic Districts. Listing on the National Register would provide property owners in these areas with significant tax incentives for rehabilitation. Design guidelines should also be followed by downtown property owners in order to reinforce the area's historic character, boost heritage tourism and continue efforts to be an arts and entertainment destination in the region. Another important effort to accomplish within the next three years includes undertaking surveys and National Register nominations for historic neighborhoods at risk from neglect and deterioration in order to spur reinvestment. Other recommendations include creating a citywide-non profit historic preservation organization and establishing local financial incentives for rehabilitation such as a Revolving Fund program.

### **Developing the Preservation Program**

Once a historic preservation program is well underway there should be continual surveys and nominations of National Register-eligible properties. These efforts should focus on areas which contain significant architectural resources but are at less risk than those threatened by vacancies and deterioration. The Municipal Development Office should also work with property owners who are interested in preserving their neighborhood's character through Historic District and Village District Overlays. If sufficient interest is expressed and overlays enacted, a set of design review guidelines for residential areas should be prepared. The loss of older buildings could also be abated through the creation of additional incentives such as an Urban Homesteading program.

Heritage tourism should be enhanced through the creation of driving tours of historic properties, developing a marker program for historic properties and coordinating heritage tourism with regional sites. Students from Central Connecticut State University could provide additional assistance with historic preservation pro-

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jects and there are a number of available history-based programs that should be considered to increase elementary and high school student awareness of New Britain's rich historical legacy. Public educational efforts should also be targeted to contractors and builders on historic building repair and maintenance.

### **Planning Ahead**

New Britain's historic and architectural resources span over two hundred years and there is increased appreciation for buildings and neighborhoods that developed in the 20th century. Neighborhoods which evolved during World War II and after should also be assessed within the next ten years to identify those areas that may have particular significance as the city matured in these years. Downtown's appearance would improve through the redesign of the facades of the city-owned parking garages to reflect the kind of quality and attractiveness the city strives for.

### **Conclusion**

Like many New England cities, New Britain is reinventing itself for the 21st century. After the loss or downsizing of the hardware industry and other traditional manufacturing companies, the city is now aggressively recruiting new businesses and revitalizing downtown. New Britain's historic building stock is not only well built but also well suited to be part of the growing "restoration economy." Because of the quality of construction of most pre-1960 buildings and residences, rehabilitation and restoration will be a vital part of future economic activities. The historic character of downtown is an important aspect of making this a center of entertainment and arts in the region. The growing heritage tourism industry in Connecticut also has great potential for the city as it interprets and recognizes its historic resources. As New Britain moves forward, creating a vibrant historic preservation program will reap benefits for years to come through economic activity and enhancing resident's quality of life.

# XI. ACTION PLAN AND IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE

## First Steps - Creating the Framework Years 1 -3

Action	Implementation Year(s)	Involved Party(s)
Develop and adopt an ordinance for Common Council review and adoption establishing a New Britain Historic District Commission; Coordinate with SHPO.	Year 1	Mayor and Common Council Municipal Development Connecticut SHPO Connecticut Trust
Fund and prepare National Register Nominations for the Downtown/Franklin Square and Broad Street Historic Districts.	Year 1	Municipal Development Connecticut SHPO Consultant
Adopt design guidelines for the proposed Downtown/Franklin Square Historic District. Conduct meetings with property owners to decide on level of regulatory review.	Year 1	Mayor and Common Council Municipal Development Property Owners
Initiate periodic meetings with downtown property owners, including churches and social agencies to discuss their future expansion plans and their potential impact on historic resources.	Year 1	Municipal Development Property Owners Relevant Church Committees

<b>Action</b>	<b>Implementation Year(s)</b>	<b>Involved Party(s)</b>
Develop workshops on the federal and state tax incentives for historic rehabilitation in association with the Connecticut SHPO.	Years 1-3	Municipal Development Connecticut SHPO Connecticut Trust
Prepare a plan for recruitment, involvement and training of Historic District Commission members.	Years 2-3	Municipal Development Connecticut SHPO Connecticut Trust
Undertake surveys and National Register nominations for Priority One neighborhoods.	Years 2-3	Municipal Development Connecticut SHPO Consultant(s) CCSU
Create walking/driving tour brochures to connect downtown with Walnut Hill and West End Historic Districts.	Years 2-3	New Britain Downtown Development Greater New Britain Arts Alliance
Following establishment of the New Britain Historic District Commission, identify and train department staff responsible for supporting the activities of the HDC.	Years 2-3	Municipal Development Connecticut SHPO National Alliance of Preservation Commis- sions
Create a citywide non-profit historic preservation organization to assist in overall planning, education and advocacy efforts.	Years 2-3	Property Owners Interested Citizens Connecticut SHPO Connecticut Trust
Develop an annual awards program to recognize those who have rehabilitated historic buildings or contributed to the preservation of the community.	Years 2-3	Greater New Britain Arts Alliance Citywide Non-profit

<b>Action</b>	<b>Implementation Year(s)</b>	<b>Involved Party(s)</b>
Enact a Delay of Demolition Ordinance.	Years 2-3	Mayor and Common Council Municipal Development Connecticut SHPO Connecticut Trust
Create a Revolving/Equity Fund Loan Program.	Years 2-3	Mayor and Common Council Municipal Development Downtown District
Enhance Streetscapes and Signage to Connect Walnut Hill, West End and Downtown.	Years 2-3	Municipal Development Downtown District
Create a Preservation/Economic Planning Position within Municipal Development.	Years 2-3	Mayor and Common Council Municipal Development
After the Establishment of a Historic Preservation Program, Apply for Certified Local Government Status.	Years 2-3	Mayor and Common Council Municipal Development Connecticut SHPO
Continue Downtown Festivals and Activities Highlighting New Britain's Heritage.	Ongoing	Downtown Development Greater New Britain Arts Alliance

# ACTION PLAN AND IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE

## Developing the Preservation Program Years 4 -7

<b>Action</b>	<b>Implementation Year(s)</b>	<b>Involved Party(s)</b>
Develop an internship program with Central Connecticut State University to assist in historic preservation projects and educational efforts in the city.	Year 4	Non-Profit Organization Central Connecticut State University
Develop and maintain a city historic preservation webpage to highlight neighborhoods, downtown rehabilitation and overall education.	Year 4	Municipal Development
Sponsor Training for Contractors and Builders.	Years 4-5	Municipal Development Connecticut Trust Non-Profit
Develop Programs for the Public on Historic Building Repair and Maintenance.	Years 4-5	Municipal Development Connecticut Trust Non-Profit
Create an Urban Homesteading Program to Promote Rehabilitation.	Years 4-7	Mayor and Common Council Municipal Development
Undertake surveys and National Register nominations for Priority Two neighborhoods.	Years 4-7	Municipal Development Connecticut SHPO Consultant(s) CCSU
Promote and Adopt Historic District and Village District Overlays and Prepare a Residential Design Review Guideline Manual.	Years 4-7	Mayor and Common Council Municipal Development Connecticut SHPO Consultant

<b>Action</b>	<b>Implementation Year(s)</b>	<b>Involved Party(s)</b>
Create Materials and Programs on Historic Preservation for Realtors.	Years 4-5	Non-Profit Organization Central Connecticut State University Connecticut Trust
Utilize Available History-Based Curriculum and Programs for Public and Private Schools.	Year 4	Central Connecticut State University Non-Profit Board of Education
Prepare Driving Tours of the City's Colonial Architecture, Churches and Industrial Buildings.	Years 4-5	Municipal Development Arts Alliance Non-Profit Central Connecticut State University
Create an Arts Trail Connecting Downtown Arts Venues with the Museum of American Art.	Years 4-5	Arts Alliance Non-Profit Central Connecticut State University
Create a Marker Program for Historic Properties.	Years 4-7	Arts Alliance Non-Profit Central Connecticut State University
Coordinate Heritage Tourism with Regional Sites.	Years 4-7	Arts Alliance Non-Profit Municipal Development

# ACTION PLAN AND IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE

## The Preservation Program - Planning Ahead Years 8+ Years

<b>Action</b>	<b>Implementation Year(s)</b>	<b>Involved Party(s)</b>
Survey and prepare National Register nominations for Priority Three neighborhoods.	Years 8-10	Municipal Development Connecticut SHPO Consultant(s) CCSU
Redesign Facades of City Parking Garages.	Years 8-10	Mayor and Common Council Municipal Development Downtown District

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# APPENDIX A—FINANCIAL INCENTIVES FOR PRESERVATION

## State Programs

### State Historic Homes Rehabilitation Tax Credits

The Historic Preservation and Museum Division of the Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism (CCT) is Connecticut's state historic preservation office. The division administers a broad range of federal and state programs that identify, register and protect the buildings, sites, structures, districts and objects that comprise Connecticut's cultural heritage. One of the programs administered by the Commission affecting residential buildings is the Connecticut Historic Homes Rehabilitation Tax Credit program. This program is designed to encourage new homeownership and to assist existing homeowners in maintaining or renovating their property.

Highlights of the program are:

- allows allocation of up to \$3 million per state fiscal year in corporate tax credits. Corporations may qualify if providing funds in the form of cash -- purchase of the tax credits -- or loans where the value of the tax credit is used to reduce the amount owing on the loan.
- provides a thirty percent tax credit, up to \$30,000 per dwelling unit, for the rehabilitation of 1-4 family buildings. After completion of rehabilitation work, one unit must be owner-occupied for a period of five years.
- requires a minimum of \$25,000 in qualified rehabilitation expenditures to qualify.
- requires that the building be listed on the National or State Register of Historic Places and located in a targeted area (New Britain is one) to be eligible. Targeted areas include:
  - selected federal census tracts with family income levels below the state median,
  - state designated areas of chronic economic distress, or
  - urban/regional centers identified in the State of Connecticut Conservation and Development Policies Plan of the Office of Policy and Management.

The owner must submit applications to the CCT for approval prior to the start of rehabilitation work.

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## **Connecticut Historic Structures Rehabilitation Tax Credit Program**

Connecticut General Statutes Section 10-416a establishes a tax credit for the conversion of historic commercial and industrial buildings to residential use, including rental or condominium units. Partial tax credits are available for buildings converted to mixed residential and commercial uses. Highlights of the program are:

- 25% tax credit of the total qualified rehabilitation expenditures associated with rehabilitation of the certified historic structure; site improvements and non-construction costs are excluded.
- Buildings must be listed on the National or State Register of Historic Places, either individually or as part of an historic district.
- Projects under construction but not placed in service as of July 1, 2006, may qualify.
- State tax credits may be combined with the 20% federal historic preservation tax credits provided the project qualifies under federal law as a substantial rehabilitation of depreciable property as defined by the Internal Revenue Service.
- Annual aggregate cap of \$15 million in tax credit reservations.
- Per building cap is up to \$2.7 million in tax credits.
- Tax credit vouchers are issued after completion of rehabilitation work or, in phased projects, completion of rehabilitation work to an identifiable portion of the building placed in service for residential use.
- Tax credits are available for the tax year in which the building or, in phased projects, an identifiable portion of the building is placed in service for residential use.
- Tax credits can only be used by C corporations with tax liability under Chapters 207 through 212 of the Connecticut General Statutes.
- Tax credits can be assigned, transferred or conveyed in whole or in part by the owner to others.

Owners seeking tax credits under the Historic Structures Rehabilitation Tax Credit Program are required to file applications with the Commission. Proposed, ongoing and completed rehabilitation work to the historic building must meet the Standards for Rehabilitation established by the Connecticut Commission on Culture & Tourism. Prior approval of proposed rehabilitation work is required for a reservation of tax credits. Projects underway after July 1, 2006, without prior approval may qualify if work already undertaken as well as proposed work meet the Standards for Rehabilitation. Partial tax credits may be available.

## **Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program**

Connecticut General Statutes Section 10-416b establishes a tax credit for the conversion of historic commercial and industrial buildings solely to mixed residential and nonresidential uses. The credit is for 25 percent of the total qualified rehabilitation expenditures in market-rate projects or for 30 percent of the total qualified

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rehabilitation expenditures if the project includes an affordable housing component, provided at least 20 percent of the rental units or 10 percent of for sale units qualify under CGS Section 839a. The per building cap is up to five million dollars in tax credits. Residential units can be rental or for sale (that is, condominiums).

To qualify, a minimum of one-third of the square footage after rehabilitation must be residential in use. Nonresidential uses include commercial, institutional, governmental or manufacturing. To qualify, buildings must be listed on the National or State Register of Historic Places, either individually or as part of an historic district, rehabilitation work must meet the Standards for Rehabilitation established by the Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism, and prior approval of proposed rehabilitation work is required. The program is administered by the Connecticut Commission on Culture & Tourism.

### **Endangered Properties Fund Grants**

Funded by the Community Investment Act, Endangered Properties Fund Grants provide financial assistance for the preservation of historic properties in Connecticut threatened by immediate loss or destruction. Submission of a full application is by request from CCT.

### **Capital Improvement Grant Program**

Historic Restoration Fund Grants (HRF) provide assistance for the rehabilitation, restoration or stabilization of historic buildings and structures and are available on an annual basis. Properties on the National or State Register of Historic Places, which are owned by a municipality or nonprofit organization, are eligible for these 50 percent matching grants-in-aid.

- Grant awards will range from \$10,000-\$200,000;
- Grant awards must be matched on a one-to-one basis with cash (no in-kind services allowed);
- Matching funds cannot be funds from the State of Connecticut. Federal funds or other non-state funds may be used;
- Facilities must be open to the public or work must be visible to the public;
- A preservation easement of limited duration must be placed on the property following completion of the project;
- Grant funds are paid to grantees on a single-payment reimbursement basis following the completion of the project and approval of all work by CCT; and project work must be consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's [Standards for Rehabilitation](#)

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## **Strategic Initiative Grant Program**

The purpose of the Strategic Initiative Grant (SIG) program is to support and further the mission of the Connecticut Commission on Culture & Tourism: to preserve and promote Connecticut's cultural and tourism assets in order to enhance the quality of life and economic vitality of the state.

Strategic Initiative grants support cross-discipline projects and activities that develop or expand the scope of current programming, generate product development, or represent fresh ideas/strategies which attract new or greater participation. Projects may be a one-time initiative with long-lasting impact or may be the germination of an innovation with potential for sequential annual growth. This grant program does not support marketing efforts.

## **Challenge Marketing Grants**

Challenge Marketing Grants are designed to assist non-profit culture and tourism entities in their efforts to promote attractions and events that are open to visitors. This grant program creates a partnership between CCT and its constituents, supports product development and extends CCT's strategic marketing efforts. This program requires matching funds and is available to arts, historic preservation, film, and tourism entities. The minimum grant funds that may be requested are \$7,500 and the maximum is \$30,000.

The proposed projects considered for funding must have a definable impact on the culture and tourism industry and encourage innovation and job development. The following types of projects will receive greater consideration: new or unique projects, projects that encourage culture and tourism visitation to a region rather than a single community, projects that expand existing cultural and tourism marketing efforts, and projects that ensure extended stays. Any proposed project must support or further [CCT's Statewide Strategic Marketing Plan](#).

Challenge Grant Program deadline, award date and grant funding period to be advised. A matching formula of 1-1 is required. State or Federal funds cannot be used as a match. The program seeks to raise dollars by creating partnerships with private sector industry. Applicants must have a non profit status prior to application. If there are partners in the project, the lead applicant must have non-profit status while other partners can be either non-profits and/or for-profits.

## **Cooperative Marketing Grants**

Cooperative Marketing Grants (Co-Op) are intended to provide valuable strategic marketing partnerships to all CCT constituents and leverage the collaboration of CCT's statewide marketing and regional tourism district funds allocated by the State of Connecticut. Four subsidized pre-selected marketing partnerships are offered. The preselected partnership projects will be advised at a later date. This program requires matching funds and is available to arts, historic preservation, film and tourism entities. The maximum grant funds varies dependent upon the co-op project.

The Co-op Grants Program funds culture and/or tourism marketing projects. A match is required that varies from 30% to 60% depending on project selection as well as non-profit or for-profit status. State or federal funds cannot be used as your match contribution. Eligibility varies by project for non-profit and for-profit entities.

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Co-operative Grants application deadline, award date and grant funding period to be advised. Culture and tourism partners may apply for more than one of the four eligible projects, but must submit a separate application form for each project requested.

For more information about any tax credit or grant program administered by the Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism, please visit <http://www.cultureandtourism.org/cct/taxonomy/taxonomy.asp?DLN=43543&cctNav=|43543|&cctPNavCtr=|49155|#49155>

### **Connecticut Housing Investment Fund**

The Connecticut Housing Investment Fund (CHIF) is a statewide Community Development Financial Institution providing financing, loan servicing, and technical services to improve and increase the supply of housing affordable to Connecticut residents. CHIF implements solutions to help families become and remain homeowners.

#### **People's/CHIF Home Improvement Loan Program**

Homeowners who want to repair and/or renovate their homes can obtain financing through the People's Bank CHIF Home Improvement Loan Program. This program features a streamlined application process, a nominal application fee, and does not require an appraisal. Eligible owners may borrow up to \$10,000 at a fixed rate of 7.99% for a term of ten years. Loans may be used for:

- Additions to the structure, finished attics, repair of termite damage
- Remodeled kitchens and bathrooms
- Elimination of health and safety hazards
- New exterior siding and exterior painting
- Roofing, gutters and downspouts
- Reconditioning or replacement of plumbing, air conditioning, and electrical systems
- Flooring, tiling and carpeting
- Energy conservation improvements

Improvements for accessibility to the handicapped

Or E-mail: [loans@chif.org](mailto:loans@chif.org)

#### **First-Time Homebuyer Program**

The First-Time Homebuyer Program provides financing at low interest rates to first-time homebuyers purchasing their primary residence in the State of Connecticut. Both first mortgages and down payment assistance loans are available to those who qualify based past home ownership and income level. Key Features include:

- Low interest rates
  - 30 year fixed rate term
  - Low closing costs
  - Down payment assistance
  - One-on-one personal attention
  - No application fee
  - No prepayment penalty
  - Special programs for police officers, military personnel, and teachers
- CHFA approved lender

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For more information, or to determine your eligibility for the First-Time Homebuyer Program, please contact Kristen Caplin at: (860) 761-1627 or (800) 992-3665 ext. 2033 Or E-mail: [homebuyers@chif.org](mailto:homebuyers@chif.org)

### **Wooden Window Repair or Replacement Program**

The Wooden Window Repair or Replacement Program provides grants to owners of two-to-six unit apartment buildings constructed on or before 1950 located in Waterbury and New Britain to repair or replace wooden windows in rental units. The program is administered by the Connecticut Housing Investment Fund, Inc. (CHIF) with funding from the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD). Apartment owners who own buildings constructed on or before 1950, and who provide matching funds equal to or greater than the grant amount of up to \$100 are eligible to apply for a grant. Matching funds may be provided through a grant from another program, private funds, or another loan source. E-mail your questions to [loans@chif.org](mailto:loans@chif.org)

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## Federal Tax Credits

The Tax Code of 1986 allows owners of depreciable residential, commercial, and industrial buildings that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places to elect a 20 percent investment tax credit in conjunction with the certified rehabilitation of certified historic structures.

Since 1977, the CCT has reviewed over 600 Tax Act projects, representing a total investment of more than \$600 million. Buildings have been rehabilitated under the Tax Act program in more than 50 towns and cities throughout the state, including substantial numbers of projects in major urban areas such as Hartford, New Haven, and Norwich. In Connecticut, the use of federal tax credits for historic rehabilitation projects has resulted in several thousand units of housing, through either the upgrading of existing substandard buildings or the creation of new residential units by conversion of school and factory buildings.

In order to obtain the historic preservation tax credit, the following requirements must be met:

the property is listed on the [National Register of Historic Places](#)

- the property will be depreciable residential, commercial or industrial property after completion of the rehabilitation project
  - the property is a certified historic structure
  - the work to the building is a certified rehabilitation
- the project costs qualify as a substantial rehabilitation

Applications are submitted to Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism for review and comment and forwarded to the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior for certification action. Property owners interested in utilizing the investment tax credit program should consult with the Commission, preferably prior to the implementation of any rehabilitation work. The Commission assists property owners in identification of historic structures and provides technical advice with respect to appropriate rehabilitation treatments. The National Park Service uses the [Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation](#) as the guidelines for its review of historic preservation projects.

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**APPENDIX B— HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
ORDINANCE**









