

Norwich Heritage Trust is a nonprofit Corporation formed to promote preservation and awareness of the city's heritage - architecture, streetscapes and neighborhoods - through education, design, planning and rehabilitation



Norwich Heritage Trust

Norwich, CT

November 1991

The Wauregan Fund Established in October By Norwich Heritage Trust to Help Save the Wauregan

The proposed demolition of Norwich's Wauregan Hotel, built in 1855 and now condemned following a fire, inspired the creation of a fund to accept money to help keep the Wauregan standing until a use can be found for the building.

Acknowledging that no profitable use for the building has been identified at this time, Norwich Heritage Trust Board of Directors decided to help keep the building from demolition because of its significance to Norwich's history and its contribution to the streetscape in that part of downtown.

Wauregan owner Max Morris, who received a demolition permit in October, met with Norwich Heritage Trust directors and expressed a willingness to delay the demolition

for an undetermined amount of time while NHT tried to find a use for the building and the City Council considered a tax abatement ordinance for buildings of historic significance in danger of being torn down.



The Wauregan Fund will be run by Norwich Heritage Trust with an advisory committee consisting of community members as well as Board members. Contributions to the Fund are tax deductible and contributors will automatically become members of Norwich Heritage Trust

for the year in which they contribute.

The Fund now totals \$200.

The address is The Wauregan Fund, Norwich Heritage Trust, Box 185, Norwich CT 06360.

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Tax Abatement Ordinance For Threatened Historic Structures Is Proposed

A tax abatement ordinance proposed by alderman Olive Buddington was considered by the City Council on October 7. A response to the concern about the possible demolition of the Wauregan, the ordinance would abate taxes on threatened historic structures for a year while the owner tried to make arrangements to keep the building standing. If the building were torn down at the end of the abatement period, the owner would be required to pay the abated taxes to the town.

Because of some questions about the ordinance and the desire for aldermen to study it further, the proposed ordinance was sent out for study and will be presented again for the new council.

Norwich Heritage Trust went on record as supporting the ordinance, and was represented at the City Council meeting by Board members Jean Szafran and Paul Rak.

The text of the state statute enabling local governments to make such an ordinance appears in the right column of this page.

Sec. 12-127a. Abatement of taxes on structures of historical or architectural merit.

(a) Any municipality may by ordinance provide for the abatement in whole or in part of usual property taxes on structures of historical or architectural merit. Such municipality shall determine which structures within its locality shall be available for classification as historically or architecturally meritorious, or it may delegate such determination to local private preservation or architectural bodies.

(b) Such tax abatement shall be available to the owners of real property which is so classified if it can be shown to the satisfaction of the municipality that the current level of taxation is a material factor which threatens the continued existence of the structure, necessitating either its demolition or remodeling in a manner which destroys the historical or architectural value. If, after taxes on such structure have been abated under the terms of this section, such structure is demolished or remodeled in a way which destroys its architectural or historical value, the then owner shall pay to the municipality an amount equal to the total amount of taxes which had been abated under the provisions of this section.

Position Available On NHT Board of Directors

Due to the resignation of Jean Szafran from the Board, one place is vacant. If you are interested in serving on the Board which meets on the 4th Wednesday of the month, please call President William Champagne (889-5878) or one of the other Board

NHT has a balance of \$767.99 in the checking account and \$4352.43 in the Certificate of Deposit

Quinebaug Shetucket Rivers National Heritage Corridor To be Established With National Park Service- "Walking Week-end" Provides Tours

The final version of the 1992 Interior Appropriations legislation in the U.S. Congress includes \$200,000 for a project to protect the historic and environmental parts of the Quinebaug and Shetucket River Valleys.

The project, supported by the Quinebaug Shetucket Rivers Heritage Corridor Committee for the last two years, was supported in Congress by both Rep. Sam Gejdenson and U.S. Senator Christopher Dodd. The \$200,000 will go to the National Park Service which will study the area, identifying historic, cultural and natural areas of interest in the area. The Park Service will work with state and local officials as well as with the original Corridor committee and other volunteers in the region.

This is the first step in the establishment of the area as an official National Heritage Corridor, an act which could provide renewed interest and visits to the area, as well as protection of the assets identified in the initial study.

As part of its efforts to encourage the establishment of the corridor, the Corridor Committee organized the October 12 - 14 Walking Weekend, along with the Northeast Connecticut Visitors District and the National Park Service. On these days, guided historic, cultural and nature walks throughout the area were offered.

Although it was officially billed as a "Walking Week-end to Explore Northeastern Connecticut," several sites in Norwich (usually considered southeastern Connecticut) were visited. At 11 a.m. on Oct. 12, Rene Dugas and Leo Fanning led a tour of the Taftville Ponemah Mills; on Oct. 13, Dale Plummer led a tour of the Norwich Waterfront, and Elizabeth Warner led a tour of historic Greeneville.

A fourth tour of the Yantic Falls area where the hydroelectric power plant is pro-

posed was added by the Quinebaug River Association. Approximately 250 attended this walk.

The Quinnehticut Woolen Co. in Ponemah Mills was one of three information centers for those taking the tours.

Norwich Heritage Trust provided \$150 to sponsor radio advertisements for the tours. The Society of the Founders of Norwich also sponsored parts of this event.

According to the Norwich Bulletin, more than 4,000 people attended the walking tours during the three day week-end.

NHT Awarded \$10,000 to Survey Central City Area

The central area of Norwich (McKinley and Boswell Avenue area) will be the site of an architectural survey by Norwich Heritage Trust which was awarded \$10,000 in Community Development money. The award requires a matching grant which the city of Norwich was eligible to apply for from the Connecticut Historical Commission because Norwich is one of the few Connecticut towns which is a Certified Local Government.

Norwich City Planner Kathy Warzecha applied for the matching grant which she expects to be awarded in January.

*Make checks out to
The Wauregan Fund -NHT
Mail to
Norwich Heritage Trust
Box 185, Norwich CT 06360*