



GUILFORD PRESERVATION ALLIANCE

Newsletter

Winter 2006

Author assigns royalties to GPA capital campaign



GUILFORD'S NEW UP-AND-OVER TRAIN STATION PROMISES TO BE A FOCUS OF RAIL-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT. PHOTO BY ELLEN EBERT

Like the Bible, Sarah Brown McCulloch's *Guilford: A Walking Guide* is not currently on the New York Times best-seller list, but, like the Bible, it is no flash in the pan either. About to come out in its seventh printing, it enjoys sturdy sales year in and year out, the same as Dale Carnegie's *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, which, although never itself a runaway best seller, has over the long run outsold *Gone with the Wind*.

So the cash-hungry GPA capital campaign welcomed

Mrs. McCulloch's recent offer to turn over all royalty payments from the sale of the seventh printing to the campaign—which is scheduled to go into high gear in January with personal solicitations by Board members. The eventual fund will be devoted to securing and stabilizing for adaptive reuse the historic locomotive maintenance shed and octagonal water tower at the Guilford train station. (See accompanying article below.)

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TRAFFIC CALMING RETURNS WITH ACTIVE AND PASSIVE RESTRAINTS.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE WORKS TO UPDATE TOWN SURVEY OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS.

New "up-and-over" railroad station emphasizes value of historic structures

The opening in November of Guilford's new "up-and-over" commuter rail station, through which some 1,600 Shore Line East riders pass each weekday, gives heightened visibility to the GPA's campaign to restore the historic water tower and engine house that once graced the 19th-century passenger depot a stone's throw down the tracks.

Guilford is one of many Connecticut towns and cities

seeking to bring old train stations back on line as engines of economic development and thriving hubs of community life. Over the past two decades the movement to preserve the state's railroad heritage has gathered steam from Lakeville to New London and from Darien to Windsor Locks.

A handful of the more than 300 depots used by Connecticut travelers a century ago are still in active service. Others have been converted to restaurants, offices, shops, museums, art studios, and teen and daycare centers. As the GPA explores the exciting possibilities for adaptive reuse of the old



SARAH McCULLOCH, AUTHOR AND HISTORIC PRESERVATIONIST PAR EXCELLENCE PHOTO BY JOHN COX

Guilford depot buildings, we will be comparing notes with preservationists in

continued on pages 6 & 7

HISTORIC SURVEY UPDATE MARCHES ON TOWARD DEADLINE

In 2004 the GPA, working under the direction of the redoubtable Marje Noyes, began an update of the 20 year-old Town of Guilford Survey of Historic Buildings. A grant was obtained from the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation at that time and James Sexton, an architectural consultant, was hired to work with our Education Committee.

The original survey had been researched, written and published in two illustrated volumes by the GPA in 1981-82. It covered some

444 local structures, most built in the 17th, 18th or 19th century, a few exceptional examples in the 20th. In addition, 194 buildings were photographed but not researched. As Marje Noyes said later, "The Survey is intended to be useful not only as a reference tool but, more importantly, as an educational resource available to citizens' groups and schools to describe the cultural, economic and sociological history of the town through architecture."

In September 2005 the Survey belatedly acquired teeth when the Town adopted a delay-of-demolition ordinance, again largely Marje's work, which imposes a 90-day waiting period and public notice of an intention to tear down before any of the structures on the Survey can be demolished. The Survey, as updated, thus has legal significance. It includes buildings 100 or more years old as of the date of publication as well as some recent houses of marked architectural distinction.

The actual survey process consists of several steps. First, a structure is selected for inclusion using the aforementioned criteria. Second, a photograph of the structure is taken, as well as

of its mailbox if needed, to document its location. Third, the Historic Inventory Sheet from the State of Connecticut is filled out using data obtained primarily from the Tax Assessor's Office at Town Hall—date of construction, footprint, building materials, renovations if any and current owner's name, etc.

Further historical information is available by consulting Edith Nettleton in the Guilford Room at the Guilford Free Library, the collection of which contains fire insurance maps, old Town directories, newspaper and periodical articles and Town Historian Joel Helander's research materials among other archives. The source of last resort, of course, especially in the case of modernist houses, is the home owner herself.

Finally, the survey data are themselves compiled and deposited for safekeeping in the Guilford Room, a task yet to be completed. Indeed, we are feeling pressed by our approaching mid-March deadline for completion. Anyone interested in working on the Survey should contact Peter Hare, Jonathan Wuerth, Walter Weissenborn or Sandy Flatow. Keeping the Survey up to date in future will be an ongoing responsibility of the GPA.

— Sandy Flatow



THE PATCH, SO-CALLED, A PATCHWORK OF SIMPLE, LATE-19TH-CENTURY HOUSES BUILT IN CONNECTION WITH BEATTIE'S QUARRY, COMES OF HISTORICAL AGE THIS YEAR WITH ITS INCLUSION IN THE SURVEY OF HISTORIC STRUCTURES.

PHOTO BY MARTHA COX

SAVING GUILFORD'S MODERNISM IS MAJOR GOAL OF SURVEY TEAM

Many local observers have noticed that well designed modernist houses of the 1950s have lately been demolished and replaced by larger structures of little architectural distinction. One of the notable homes remaining is pictured at right. Located in the Old Quarry and now the residence of Christian Foy and John Palmer, this example was designed in 1951 by local architect Carleton Granbery for Ralph Kirkpatrick, a world-renowned harpsichordist and music scholar.

Granbery himself lived in the Old Quarry in a house of his own design (recently demolished). The late Yale Professor of Law Ralph Brown and his wife, architectural historian Elizabeth Brown, built another Granbery-designed house next door, and Betty has lived there ever since. Their house was the first completed in the Quarry and the first modernist house in Guilford.

The architect-sculptor Tony Smith in 1953 designed two other modernist homes in the Old Quarry for the Olsen family, one of which has been restored by Rebecca Quaytman and Jeff Preiss and is the subject of an illustrated article in a recent edition of the *New York Times*; the other is being restored from the ground up by architect Fred Clarke and

his wife, Laura, a noted preservationist.

Three additional modernist homes were designed in the early 1950s by Douglas Orr. The house built for the Logans and now owned by Barbara Pearce and Norm Fleming still stands, with an addition. The Moenche house was demolished and replaced by the home of David Etzel and Jan Walzer. The residence designed by Orr for the Fairchilds (with a big addition) is now owned by the Meyers.

With the help of a consultant funded by a grant from the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation, the GPA is conducting a survey of Guilford's early modernist homes as part of its effort to update its 1980-1981 Survey of Significant Historic Buildings. Since that earlier survey excluded structures less than 50 years old, no modernist buildings were covered. Inclusion of these homes is needed in light of the threat of demolition noted above. The threat is greatest to buildings with views of the Sound, as in the Old Quarry.

A brief history of the Old Quarry Association may help. In 1937, Arthur Hall, president of the Brock-Hall Dairy Company, bought Narrows Island, off Leete's Island, on which stood a house that had been occupied by the family that earlier in the

century operated the quarry, the Beatties. In 1945, with the intention of creating "a residential park," Hall paid \$27,000 for 400 acres that included what is now the Old Quarry. The Old Quarry Association was formed in 1947; it took another year for the Connecticut legislature to approve its charter, according to which anyone wishing to build in the Association must submit plans to Hall. Hall was not always happy about



the proposals, though he was not unsympathetic with modern design. When Fred Olsen presented the Tony Smith design, Hall's reaction was, "Fred, you'll get tired of it and sell to some Greenwich Village bum." To which Fred responded, "We're the only people who have to look at it."

The next wave of modernist houses in Guilford was built, starting in the early 1960s, when architect Hugh Jones created Dromara Road as a residential development. Several architects built their own residences there—Al Reese and Herbert Noyes as well as Jones himself.

— Peter H. Hare

THE FOY-PALMER HOUSE IN THE OLD QUARRY IS A CLASSIC EXAMPLE OF MODERNIST ARCHITECTURE, WHICH ONCE CHARACTERIZED THAT ENTIRE COMMUNITY.

PHOTO BY CHRISTIAN FOY



LOOKING TOWARD TCS REPORT: A LONGSTANDING COMMITMENT

The GPA welcomed the formation of the Town Center South Committee in 2004, as GPA members had been engaged in creative thinking and planning for that part of town for many years. Guilford architects Alan Organschi and Lisa Gray had got people thinking about possibilities with the presentation of their vision for the area at the 2002 Annual Meeting, and in 2004 the GPA sponsored a town-wide charrette, conducted by Alan Plattus and the Yale Urban Design Workshop, focusing again on this part of town (i.e., the Green to the town dock between the East and West Rivers).

Plattus and the YUDW combined their expertise in transit-oriented development

(an increasingly common term referring to planning that integrates transit and land uses so as to facilitate the use of pedestrian, bicycle and public transportation as workable alternatives to private automobile use) with the recommendations of the many and diverse charrette participants. Plattus and his collaborators devised an extensive and detailed framework for improved development and land use of the area. A great deal of interest and enthusiasm was stimulated by this event, and although the GPA did not have a direct hand in the formation of TCS, it seemed clear from the start that much of the energy and ideas of the charrette were infused into the workings of the committee.

In the ‘vision process’ described in the accompanying article, the priorities of the Committee

seemed very close to those highlighted by the GPA charrette. Both would like the train station and its surroundings to be a more inviting and functional ‘gateway to Guilford.’ The Committee has expressed support for the GPA’s plan to restore the original water tower and engine house there. Both groups recognize the importance of types of development that might encourage increased ridership on the Shoreline East, as well as increased train service.

Not only are the preservation and enhancement of natural resources generally advocated, but better access to these resources and views by way of walkways and boardwalks are thought to be important. TCS has shown strong support for the pathway plan that would connect historic sites south of the Green, a

project that the GPA’s Village Center Committee hopes to implement in the near future.

Most importantly, the list of criteria described in the companion article clearly reflects values and concerns that have been held by the GPA in all the prior work we’ve done. The design and scale of buildings, a sense of community, opportunities for pedestrians, the protection of the fragile ecosystems where land and water meet, the preservation of historic landmarks—these important issues are paramount to TCS discussions. As the GPA representative to this committee, and judging from the process itself, I feel I can say with some confidence that the GPA will not find much to criticize in the TCS’s final report.

—Valerie Brown



AN URBAN PLANNER'S CONCEPTION OF A MIXED-USE, LOW-RISE DEVELOPMENT CENTERED ON THE RESTORED 19TH-CENTURY ENGINE HOUSE AND WATER TOWER IS SHOWN IN THE DRAWINGS AT LEFT. THE STREET PLAN FOR THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT, WHICH WOULD OCCUPY TOWN-OWNED LAND AND OTHER PROPERTY NORTH OF THE TRACKS, APPEARS AS BACKDROP TO THE TEXT BELOW. THE PLAN WAS DEVELOPED BY THE YALE URBAN DESIGN WORKSHOP USING IDEAS GENERATED BY LOCAL TOWNSPEOPLE AT THE GPA'S 2004 CHARRETTE.

TCS recapitulates GPA vision process

The Town Center South Committee, formed by the Planning and Zoning Commission with the approval of the Board of Selectmen, is responsible to the Planning & Zoning Commission. Shirley Girioni, a champion of the TCS project on the P&Z, represents the Commission on the project.

TCS members were selected to represent an extraordinarily broad range of community interests—from economic development to environmental and historic preservation. And thanks to the leadership of Sid Gale, the original chairman, and Dennis Dostert, the present chairman, there has been an uncommonly consistent focus on common interests. The group is working effectively; there is active

debate and discussion based on mutual respect and on finding an approach that is best for Guilford.

At the outset the TCS engaged in a fact-gathering phase and then undertook a vision process that identified the characteristics of a preferred state for Town Center South—essentially a description of what the area would be like if the committee's work was successful. Then characteristics of the "preferred state" were broken down into about 25 physical elements that are being discussed and evaluated in detail.

To conduct the evaluation, members of the TCS Committee developed criteria and a technique for evaluating each element in a consistent way. The criteria represented all of the

seemingly disparate interests and concerns of membership and the community at large.

For example: Each element is being evaluated by the committee according to 12 criteria, which are weighted equally:

- Affects on the coastal ecosystems
- Susceptibility to flooding and rising sea levels
- Contribution to the historic scale and character of Town Center South area
- Contribution to the village character of the community
- Enhancement of the natural and built environment
- Contribution to the economic development and vitality of the town
- Expansion of public access and public spaces

- Enhancement of the use of the train and mass transit
- Support for other positive elements in the plan
- Political and economic feasibility or practical potential for implementation.

In addition to the physical elements of the plan, the group anticipates making recommendations to the P&Z and to the Board of Selectmen for changes in policy that will allow and encourage constructive development while restricting changes that would harm the character of the neighborhood and the environment.

The committee is hoping to finish its work and present a draft report to the P&Z in the Spring of 2006.

—Howard Brown

Sarah McCulloch *continued from page 1*

While the seventh printing is not a new edition, Mrs. McCulloch says, she did “do some tweaking [of the text]” because “people living in these old houses keep doing things to them.” While she stands proudly behind her product, however, she dismisses any suggestion she has made a charitable foundation of herself, although, she adds, “It was the best I could do.”

Mrs. McCulloch began work on the book in 1987, the year she graduated from college, at age 63, with a degree in art history—mostly architectural history, she explains. She first asked Joel Helander, the town historian, to consider writing the book, the publication of which was planned to

coincide with the 350th anniversary, in 1989, of the plantation of Guilford under a royal charter from Charles I of England. However, Helander was then at work on a book about Faulkner’s Lighthouse and declined. So, encouraged by her sister-in-law Betty Brown, herself an eminent authority on Connecticut architecture and the founding president of the GPA, she went to work.

After reconnoitering the town center in depth and on foot, she wrote a book proposal and submitted it to the GPA Board, which voted to support the project by absorbing its production costs. (She contributed from her own purse as well, but says she was eventually reimbursed.)

The hardest decision about organizing the book, she recalls, “was whether to do it alphabetically [by last name of each builder] or the way you would normally walk.” Sensibly, she chose to do the latter and away she went. The first two printings sold out the year of publication and sales have been brisk ever since.

Subsequently chair of the GPA Board herself, Mrs. McCulloch is now retired from it, although she continues to work on updating the Town of Guilford Survey of Significant Buildings (described on page 2) in collaboration with the GPA’s Education Committee.

— John Cox

New “up-and-over” railroad station *continued from page 1*



ACROSS THE TRACKS FROM GUILFORD’S NEW TRAIN STATION SURVIVORS OF THE AGE OF STEAM LOCOMOTION AWAIT RESTORATION AND REUSE.
PHOTO BY ELLEN EBERT

communities such as Milford, Stratford, Canaan, and Windsor Locks.

MILFORD. In the early 1990s, the Milford Fine Arts Council desperately needed more space for its rapidly expanding programs. When town officials proposed the eastbound passenger station on Railroad Avenue, built in 1881 and long abandoned, the nonprofit group jumped

at the chance to own its own home. Within a year the FAC raised \$200,000 to stabilize the deteriorating structure and leverage \$640,000 in federal funds earmarked for transit-related infrastructure improvements.

In 1995 the local transit district turned the refurbished station over to the FAC on a renewable 50-year lease for a token \$1 per year. The three-story multipurpose arts center houses council offices, a 110-seat theater, space for exhibitions and performance workshops, and a meeting room, equipped with kitchen and bar, that generates rental income. According to FAC director Bill Medick, the center’s success has created one unexpected problem—a shortage of parking places.

STRATFORD. The National Helicopter Museum was still on the drawing board when

Dr. Raymond Jankovich first floated the idea with local officials and business leaders in the late 1970s. After rejecting several town-owned sites, the enterprising physician set his sights on the 19th-century depot as a fitting home for a museum commemorating Stratford’s important contribution to aviation history.

Metro-North Railroad readily agreed to donate the dilapidated wood-frame building to the town, which in turn leased it to the nonprofit group for a nominal fee. Renovation was funded by a grant from Avco Lycoming, a Stratford-based aerospace company. Staffed entirely by volunteers, the Helicopter Museum got off the ground in 1983 and, with solid grass-roots support, quickly became a significant tourist attraction.

CANAAN. This small community in the Berkshire foothills owes its existence to the Connecticut Western and Housatonic Railroads, whose once-humming tracks crossed at the intersection known as "Railroad and Main." Union Depot, a grand Victorian structure erected in 1872, was the town's architectural centerpiece until half of it burned down early one autumn morning in 2001, the apparent target of an arsonist.

With its ornate tower and popular restaurant, the station had been a highly visible focal point of Canaan's economic renaissance since the 1980s. Local preservationists and civic leaders are determined to see it rise again. Recently their hopes were buoyed by Congresswoman Nancy Johnson's announcement of a \$1.36 million federal grant. The new owners, the nonprofit Connecticut Railroad Historical Association, estimate the cost of reconstruction at \$2.5 million.

WINDSOR LOCKS. A modest depot laced with Victorian gingerbread stands as a forlorn survivor of the redevelopment binge that gutted this canal town's historic Main Street. Dating from 1875, the two-story wood structure narrowly escaped the bulldozer a century later, only to sit vacant as trains stopped at the nearby Amtrak station. After years of neglect and vandalism, Amtrak has no plans for the depot but, as with Guilford's historic railroad buildings, may be willing to allow someone else to salvage it.

In 2004 the 170-member Windsor Locks Preservation Association was formed for that specific purpose. The town recently applied for \$225,000 in state grants to help defray the estimated \$600,000 cost of renovations, including preliminary stabilization of the structure, environmental testing, and a market study. Meanwhile, WLPA leader Barbara Schley and her fellow preservationists

have raised \$30,000 to pay for the appraisal that Amtrak requires before discussing the sale or lease of the station.

The GPA real estate committee is continuing preparations for stabilizing the structures of the Guilford Depot project. During this phase the water tower will be secured with a protective roof and masonry repairs. The architects have lined up several contractors interested in the job. Michael Salzbach, the GPA attorney working on our behalf, is devising the best acquisition strategy for the site, which allows the GPA to do the work yet protects the GPA from any environmental liabilities. GPA President Preston Maynard stated, "We are hoping AMTRAK will agree to our beginning the stabilization of the water tower in the spring. Given completion of the new station, it's time to secure and repair these important historic structures."

— Harry Haskell

"Guilford is one of many Connecticut towns and cities seeking to bring old train stations back on line as engines of economic development and thriving hubs of community life. Over the past two decades the movement to preserve the state's railroad heritage has gathered steam from Lakeville to New London and from Darien to Windsor Locks."

Updated Web site now on-line

<http://guilfordpreservation.org>

The Guilford Preservation Alliance has a new and improved Web site. The new Web site is more user-friendly, and can now be recognized by most search engines, including Google. In addition, it features more photographs and pull-down menus. Ryan Design Studio of Guilford created the design, which includes an on-line viewable copy of our fall Newsletter.

This is the place to go to see what the GPA is doing, as well as to find updates on some of our current projects. The membership form is available on-line, for those who would like to download the form and send in their membership dues. Through the "Contact Us" button, you can e-mail questions and concerns, which will then be forwarded to the person best able to address your e-mail.

Plans for the future of the site involve adding more photographs as well as descriptions of the photos. In addition, we plan to include future copies of the Newsletter, while continuing to have available past ones.

Be sure to check it out!

— Ann Weeden



GPA RETURNS TO TRAFFIC *calming*

The enjoyment of a town like Guilford is a combination of qualities that are not always apparent to all of our residents. As we meander the quiet country roads gazing over our rural landscapes or stroll the sidewalks of the Historic District, we are not always aware of the efforts it takes to maintain these vistas.

Since its inception in 1980, the GPA has striven to save the landscapes and architecture that give our town indefinable attributes that continue to attract new residents. While growth is inescapable, controlling the resultant congestion in order to maintain the character and feel of our town will continue to challenge us. Many citizens of Guilford, as well as of other towns and cities, have long recognized the need to preserve such intangible assets through traffic calming measures.

Traffic calming can be as simple as the pedestrian-crosswalk signs that were utilized around the green this past year or as complex as visually or physically narrowing streets. Other examples in Guilford include the redesign of the intersection at the junction of State Street, Nut Plains Road and Little Meadow Road and the traffic islands erected on South Hoop Pole Road and Boston Street (at the intersection of Whitfield Street). All of these measures



have the effect of slowing the flow of vehicular traffic through design rather than law enforcement. Traffic-calming solutions can be expensive and other municipalities have partnered with residents to bear the financial burden.

To the credit of our local officials, many additional sidewalks have been added in the past ten years, creating an extensive network of traversable urban terrain. In fact, this has encouraged an ever-growing number of pedestrians to take advantage of these amenities. As a result, the need to control both vehicular and pedestrian traffic for the safety of all will only increase with time.

The main focus of this sub-committee of the Village Center Committee will be to provide support to those attempting to implement measures to improve pedestrian flow and safety, initiate measures where appropriate and to offer constructive comment on traffic-calming initiatives of the town, neighborhood action groups or other organizations. After a brief hiatus, the GPA is reinitiating its pursuit of this other vital facet of preservation.

— Patrick Smith

ISLANDS AND ZEBRA STRIPES, SUCH AS THESE AT THE SOUTHWEST CORNER OF THE TOWN GREEN, TELL DRIVERS IN THE TOWN CENTER TO SLOW DOWN. ACTIVE INTERVENTION, IF NECESSARY, IS STILL PROVIDED BY GUILFORD'S FINEST. PHOTOS BY ELLEN EBERT

