



A Study of Revitalization Opportunities in **OLD WETHERSFIELD**

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Department of Economic and
Community Development

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in OLD WETHERSFIELD

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Rich in historic and cultural resources, Old Wethersfield has long been the heart of Wethersfield and a destination for seekers of classic New England village charm. Long-term changes in commercial development throughout central Connecticut have led to the decline in economic vitality of Old Wethersfield. Concurrent efforts by the Town of Wethersfield and its many partners now seek ways to boost activity while maintaining and enhancing the historic fabric and character of the district.

Following up on the 2008 *Old Wethersfield Master Plan* funded by the *Preserve America* grant from the National Parks Service, the Town of Wethersfield has sought to develop specific analysis and implementation recommendations for several key properties in central Old Wethersfield. With *Vibrant Communities* funding from the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation and the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development, the Town sought to assess current conditions and potential redevelopment options for the Masonic Hall (245 Main Street), the Simeon Belden House (249 Main Street) and the Comstock, Ferre Seed Company (263 Main Street), all of which had been vacant or substantially underutilized for many years. As each of these properties is under private ownership, the owners of these facilities were closely involved with the analysis.

The subject properties presented a multitude of possible redevelopment options, from multi-family residential uses to restaurants, retail shops, office space, and nonprofit “living museums.” The Masonic Hall, being entirely vacant and essentially a blank canvas, was the subject of dozens of suggestions from stakeholders and members of the public. The study attempted to balance the rights and goals of the private owners with potential uses that would enhance the character of Old Wethersfield and create additional destinations for visitors, shoppers, and tourists. A multi-disciplinary technical existing conditions analysis was conducted for each property, and several redevelopment scenarios were run through basic financial pro-formas.

In most cases, particularly with the Masonic Hall and Belden House properties, the substantial cost of redevelopment and the relatively modest revenue expectations made it challenging to demonstrate clearly profitable development options. The availability of Historic Preservation Tax Credits dramatically improves the bottom line, but in most cases a successful redevelopment would depend on the participation of the Town of Wethersfield, through property tax relief. The potential redevelopment of the Comstock, Ferre complex is aided greatly by the substantial square footage across the numerous buildings, as well as the funding flexibility that a nonprofit “living museum” approach provides.

Improvements to the central intersection, on-street parking, shared parking arrangements, and wayfinding signage in Old Wethersfield would also enhance the experience of residents, businesses and visitors to the district. In most cases, these problems are more issues of perception than actual structural shortcomings.

Old Wethersfield has a rich and vibrant past and has significant potential for a bright future. The ongoing commitment of the Town of Wethersfield and the active cooperation of the stakeholders of Old Wethersfield will be needed to deliver successful redevelopment of the subject properties and build a core of cultural, retail, and historic destinations that will make Old Wethersfield thrive.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Town of Wethersfield is grateful to the **Department of Economic and Community Development** and the **Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation** for providing the funding for this study through their *Vibrant Communities Initiative*. Primary study oversight was provided by Peter Gillespie and Denise Bradley of the Town of Wethersfield Planning & Economic Development Office, along with Brad Schide of the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation, Chris Traczyk of Wethersfield Tourism Commission, Sharon Carducci on behalf of the Masonic Hall and Jere Gettle and Randel Agrella of the Comstock, Ferre Seed Company.

Participation and input was provided by Charles Lyle and Katie Sullivan of the Webb-Deane-Stevens Museum, Carol Hall and Dorcas McHugh of the Wethersfield Tourism Commission, Paul Courchaine and Kristin Stearley of the Wethersfield Historic District Commission, Ellyn Laramie of the Wethersfield Chamber of Commerce, Amy Wittorff of the Wethersfield Historical Society, Christine Donohue of the Wethersfield Academy for the Arts, Mark Trahan and Chris Lyons of the Economic Development and Improvement Commission, Dana Spicer of the Old Wethersfield Shopkeepers' Association, Robert Garrey of the Wethersfield Village Improvement Association, Doug Sacks of the Wethersfield Farmers' Market, and Tom Harley and Richard Roberts of the Wethersfield Planning & Zoning Commission.

Additional insight was provided by Old Wethersfield residents and business owners including Jim Woodward, Buzz Willard, Brent & Rita-Ann Owen, Jane Erickson, Lee Kuckro, Dave Willmer, John & Shireen Aforismo, Neill Walsh, and numerous others in attendance at public input sessions.

The participation and support of these numerous partnering organizations and interested stakeholders was critical to the success of the study, and the Town of Wethersfield is deeply appreciative.

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PROJECT INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND



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PROJECT INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

Befitting its role as “*Ye Most Auncient Towne*” in Connecticut, The Town of Wethersfield devotes substantial resources to its heritage and historic assets. Old Wethersfield, a state- and nationally-recognized Historic District is the focus and hub for many of these assets and efforts. While continuing to celebrate and preserve its historic resources, the Town recognizes the need to promote economic growth and vitality.

In 2005, the Town of Wethersfield was named a *Preserve America* community by the federal Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and its partners. Shortly afterward, the Town received funds from the National Park Service to develop an Old Wethersfield Master Plan. This Plan, completed in 2008, sought to address three primary goals:

- 1) *Protect the existing quality of life for district residents and preserve the character of the community;*
- 2) *Identify opportunities to increase usage and viability of existing historic sites and museums and encourage heritage tourism; and*
- 3) *Identify opportunities for creating a successful business atmosphere which are based on the economic realities of the local market.*

The resulting Plan was a document which looked comprehensively at the physical and economic components of Old Wethersfield and made specific recommendations toward reaching the above goals.



PROJECT INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

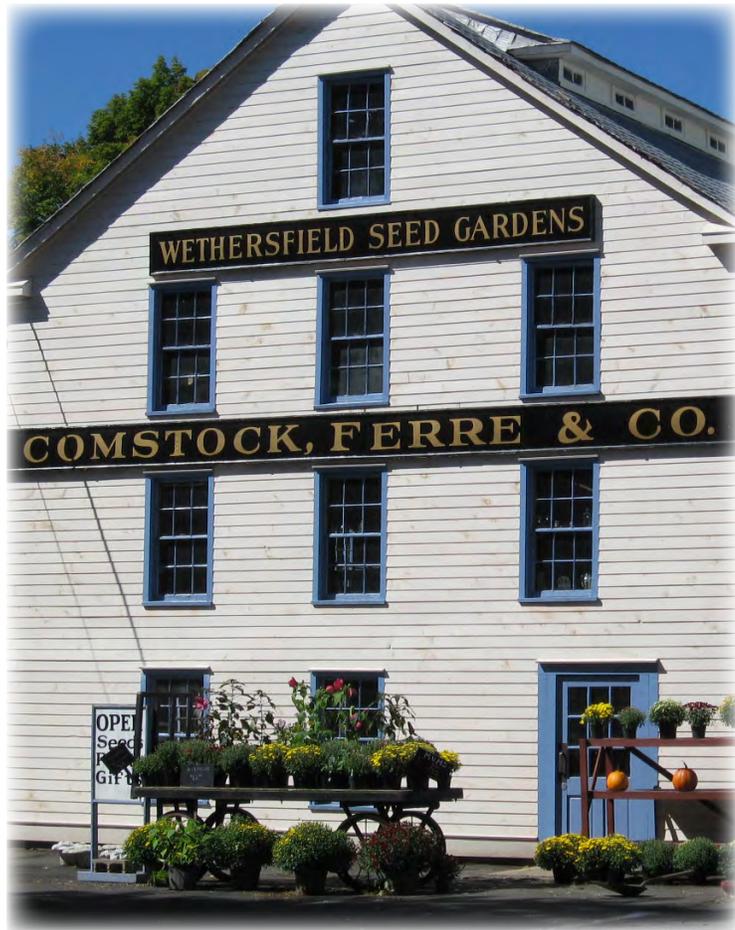
Since the adoption of the Plan in 2008, the Town and its stakeholder partners have sought to prioritize and implement its recommendations. In 2012, the Town of Wethersfield received a grant under the Vibrant Communities Initiative, a project administered by the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation (CTHP) and funded by the Preservation Division of the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD). Funds for the Vibrant Communities Initiative are derived from the Community Investment Act (PA 05-228), and the Town of Wethersfield is grateful to CTHP and DECD for its support.



The purpose of the Vibrant Communities project in Wethersfield is to follow up on several specific recommendations of the Old Wethersfield Master Plan (OWMP), including principally the recommendation to “identify appropriate uses for vacant and/or underutilized properties on Main Street.” The OWMP included a robust market study that provided key economic context that informed this Vibrant Communities analysis. The Plan further identified the building at 245 Main Street (the “Masonic Hall”), with its size, history, and location at the key intersection of Main Street and Church Street as critical. The properties adjacent to the Masonic Hall, including the “Belden House” at 249 Main Street, and the “Comstock, Ferre Seed Company”

complex at 263 Main Street are also included in this study. Finally, the intersection at Church Street and Main Street itself is an important factor in the Master Plan, which recommends “Implementation of improvements at key intersections to improve traffic flow and vehicular and pedestrian safety.” The last of these implementation recommendations, specifically dealing with the Main Street/Church Street intersection, is the subject of a pending grant with the State of Connecticut’s Main Street Investment Fund, which provides funding to improve infrastructure in support of existing Main Street plans.

GOALS & PROCESS



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GOALS & PROCESS

As was previously stated, the goals of the Old Wethersfield Master Plan, and the Town and stakeholders in Wethersfield in general, are to seek opportunities that increase the usage and vitality of historic resources while simultaneously improving the business atmosphere. It is critical to identify uses that will increase the activity and attractiveness of Old Wethersfield as a destination while also providing practical, economic benefit to the property owners.

This point is a crucial one, because in many ways it separates the approach of this study from many other planning or development studies. A municipality or government entity taking the lead on a planning study is more able to develop “blue sky” approaches without being overly concerned about the shorter-term financial interests and realities of individual property owners. Conversely, while a property owner or developer may be influenced or generally guided by municipal or community goals, the development costs and market realities are the primary factors for the type and extent of property use.

This study requires a careful hybridization of approaches. The Town of Wethersfield, along with many key community stakeholders, has taken the lead on moving this project forward. The funds provided through the Vibrant Communities Initiative are being directed and administered through the Town. The Town’s goals are to use the potential redevelopment of these Main Street properties as a springboard to increased vitality in Old Wethersfield. At the same time, nearly the entire study area of this project is privately controlled. While the streetscape, intersection, and parking areas are municipally-controlled, the three properties in question are owned by two separate private entities who are not beholden to the Town, beyond whatever incentives or regulatory constraints may apply. Accordingly, recommended approaches should be selected that match the community’s hopes and goals for Old Wethersfield, but match the vision, plans, and financial realities of the private owners. It should be noted that the owners and managers of the three subject properties were closely involved and very supportive of the Town’s initiative throughout.



Understanding Goals

The first step in the process was assembling a solid understanding of stakeholder goals. Many of the Town's goals were detailed in the Old Wethersfield Master Plan, but were further clarified by discussion with municipal officials and representatives of groups such as the Wethersfield Tourism Commission, the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation, the Economic Development and Improvement Commission, Planning & Zoning Commission, the Wethersfield Chamber of Commerce, the Old Wethersfield Shopkeepers, the Wethersfield Village Improvement Association, the Historical Society, the Historic District Commission, and the Webb-Deane-Stevens Museum. On the ownership side, multiple conversations with the owners and managers responsible for the Masonic Hall, Belden House, and Comstock, Ferre complex established the baseline understanding of goals, economic context, and flexibility. Discussion with property owners and managers also helped to develop a property history and context for current usage and vacancy.

Understanding Old Wethersfield

The context of this study is both spatial and temporal. While Old Wethersfield has a very distinct and special sense of place and identity that this project seeks to enhance, in truth Old Wethersfield has evolved and changed significantly over the past four centuries and is guaranteed to continue to do so. While striving to preserve and promote the valuable history of the area, the Town and the stakeholders must also welcome and pursue the sorts of changes that enhance the character and particularly the vitality of Old Wethersfield. This vitality, in many ways, depends on increasing the attractiveness of Old Wethersfield as a destination, and as a destination with many interesting and interrelated components. A history buff who visits the Webb-Deane-Stevens Museum should also be encouraged to visit other historic sites, and have the ability to eat and shop at various locations that are easily accessible and navigable. Identifying uses that fill missing pieces in the fabric of Old Wethersfield as a multifaceted destination and building a "critical mass" of interrelated uses, and fostering an atmosphere where visitors can "park once" and patronize numerous sites

in the district are all keys. There is a recognition underlying the project that the character of Old Wethersfield is to be protected, but not preserved under glass. Its best hope for ongoing vibrance and preservation of its heritage is to increase the number of people who know, visit and love Old Wethersfield.



Assessing Existing Conditions

This comprises the most objective and most technical phase of the study. Each of the three properties is constrained by its physical parameters, both within the structures on the sites and by the sites themselves. The condition of the buildings, their structures and systems, the potential presence of significant shortcomings or hazardous materials, the ease and suitability of potential upgrades or additions, and the size and potential of the land surrounding the buildings are all elements for identifying future use. The study team included a land-use planner, an architect with a specialty in historic buildings, a structural, a mechanical, and an electrical engineer, and a hazardous materials specialist all of whom conducted reviews and assessments of the subject properties.

Zoning and Market Realities

Narrowing the universe of possibilities for development or redevelopment is guided both by the “invisible hand” of the economic market and by the printed word of the Town’s regulatory framework. All of the properties in question lie within the Town’s Village Business (VB) Zoning District, which is fairly broad in its allowance of commercial, retail, office, institutional, residential, and mixed uses. Despite that breadth, there are certain uses, such as multi-family residential, that are not allowed as a stand-alone use. Proposed uses must also satisfy parking and other site development requirements which could place de-facto limitations on the intensity of development or could frighten potential developers away because of their own site expectations. Further along those lines, the surrounding character of Old Wethersfield, the traffic volumes on Main Street, distance from State or Interstate highways, and the cost of redevelopment relative to other areas in the market would limit the sorts of uses that could reasonably be proposed. The requirement that redevelopment must also conform to the standards of the Historic District Commission influences the decisions of potential users.



Involving the Public

Quite aside from the importance of keeping the public informed about projects and studies that involve public finances, the success of a project such as this depends substantially on its ongoing relevance and usefulness to the community. As a commercial and cultural center for both Wethersfield and the Greater Hartford region, Old Wethersfield must have the appeal and support of the public to thrive. Attempting to introduce uses that may maximize revenues in the short-term but will alienate neighbors and supporters of the other historic resources of Old Wethersfield would make little sense. Similarly, conducting a study of this type without keeping the public and the stakeholders of Old Wethersfield informed and involved would dramatically reduce the receptiveness and effectiveness of its message. Accordingly, the development of this analysis and report involved numerous meetings and individual interviews with stakeholders, and several public information and input sessions.

Developing the Concepts

Based on all of the foregoing input, two or three development scenarios will be detailed that are believed to provide a good balance between the needs and goals of the public and those of the owners of each property. Each scenario was illustrated and described with an indication of why that particular use was selected. If any changes to the exterior, systems, site, or regulations would be needed to facilitate that use, those changes were indicated. Importantly, an estimate of order-of-magnitude costs were developed for those needed changes. Finally, a simple pro forma analysis was presented to provide a cost-benefit understanding for both the community and the owners in each scenario. A potential developer would conduct a much more detailed analysis prior to seeking funding and undertaking an actual development project.

Recommending Changes

Beyond the options for developing or redeveloping the Masonic Hall, Belden House, and Comstock, Ferre properties, the goals of this project and the stakeholders of Old Wethersfield include envisioning the way that the properties and resources of this entire area interact and are connected. Whatever increased activity may happen near the corner of Church Street and Main Street should allow for connection and coordination with other shopping, dining, historic, working, and recreational opportunities throughout the Old Wethersfield core. Improvements to parking, intersection design, pedestrian circulation, landscaping, and signage are reviewed in a way that not only supports future use and activity within the focus properties, but will benefit Old Wethersfield as a whole.

FACILITY BACKGROUND & CONDITIONS ASSESSMENT





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MASONIC HALL, 245 Main Street

The Masonic Hall corner stone is dated 1922, the building having been constructed as a result of a charter granted on March 5, 1921 to Hospitality Lodge #128 AF & AM. Named after the original meeting place of the Masons in the Webb House known as Hospitality Hall, the Lodge surrendered their charter in 1997 at which time the building was sold and held by private interests to the present day without ever being occupied. Sited on a flat 0.26 acre lot at the corner of Church and Main Streets within the historic district, the formal entrance faces the Congregational Church across Main Street. Interestingly, this site was once occupied by a building similar in scale and detail to the iconic brick Comstock, Ferre building to the north of the Belden House.



A monumental two stories in height with a partially exposed full basement, the brick and structural clay tile bearing wall structure is rectangular in plan with a flat roof obscured by a high parapet wall. Oriented east/west, the overall building footprint is 40' by 70'. The front and first side bays of the simple brick mass are articulated with Federal style detailing including horizontal brick banding of the first story base and brick quoins at the front corners and between brick panels of the second floor. Cast stone detailing includes a cartouche, a framed panel with the Masonic square and compass, centered high in the middle front panel of the second floor. A cast stone band above the articulated brick panels of the front portion of the building, and the window sills, are the only other cast stone elements. The top of the building below the parapet is defined by a wide frieze and a deep, dentilated metal cornice through which gutters associated with scuppers in the parapet wall pass. The rear and sides of the building are simply articulated by recessed brick panels into which the windows are set.

The basement is characterized by exposed concrete foundation walls, two rows of steel columns dividing the space in thirds, window openings in the upper half of the wall where it is exposed above grade, and two egress doors served by exterior concrete stairs within bulkhead structures. At present, there is no interior stair access to the first floor although a framed opening exists on the rear wall of the space.



Currently gutted, the upper two floors are open floor plates afforded by clear spanning steel floor beams and steel roof trusses. Pairs of double hung windows provide natural light to the thirteen foot high first floor space. Accessed by a pair of half lite doors from the single story, open entrance portico, the first floor is approximately 5 ½ feet above grade. The second floor is reached by a wood staircase parallel to the rear wall of the building. A second means of egress at the northeast corner of the large open space leads to a wrought iron fire stair secured

to the exterior face of the building. The door sill is set off the floor to accommodate a previous raised platform around the perimeter of the space which is evidenced by the joist pockets in the exposed hollow clay tile wall.

Conditions

Constructed of durable masonry, steel and heavy timber, the exterior structure and interior framing appear to be in excellent condition. Evidence of water damage on the wood floor of the second level warrants investigation of the condition of the built up roofing material to determine if it can be repaired, or requires replacement. Exterior brickwork and mortar is in very good condition although the façade should be cleaned to remove biological growth which will damage the mortar joints over time. Doors and windows are original and should be repaired as necessary and not replaced. Cosmetic painting of the cornice and portico is necessary as the paint has failed on the fascia. Minor wood repair is required at the portico column bases. The primary required repair is to the concrete stairs on the southwest side of the building which should be totally removed and rebuilt.



As previously stated, interior systems are non-existent. New mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems will need to be installed which are suitable for the intended use of the building. Water, natural gas and sewer infrastructure is available in the street and had been connected to the building in the past. Potential hazardous materials could be found in remaining plaster, stair tread and adhesive, roofing material and window glazing. Prior to disturbance of these materials they should be tested and legally removed if found hazardous.

Based on the intended reuse of the building, code compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) may be required. One and two family residential uses are not required to be compliant. However, as per the current zoning regulations, two family use is not allowed without a business component which will require ADA compliance. In order to provide accessibility, a ramp or elevator system to the basement or first floor will be necessary. Given a 5 ½ foot elevation difference between existing grade and the first floor level and a similar difference between existing grade and the basement, a 66 foot ramp system will be required to provide accessibility to the first floor and/or the basement level. Alternatively, a multi-stop elevator could provide access to some or all floors.



Planning and Zoning Status and Considerations

The Masonic Hall is in the Village Business (VB) District, which was established to “provide for the development, maintenance, and enhancement of mixed-use pedestrian-friendly areas that support and enhance the overall community character and the ambience of this historic district.” These regulations allow for most of the individual uses and mixture of uses that would be primarily considered for this property. The one foreseeable exception is that of a development of an exclusively multi-family dwelling (apartments or condominiums). Single-family residences are allowed as-of-right, and a mix of residential (either single- or multi-family) with commercial uses are permissible via a Conditional Use Permit. There are no space-allocation requirements, so a relatively small or secondary commercial use would allow a primarily multi-family development project to move forward through the permitting process. Applicants may also pursue alternative pathways to approval such as seeking a text amendment to the Zoning Regulations or a variance from the Zoning Board of Appeals. The high standards of a use variance and the broad range of permitted uses, however, would make the variance an unlikely path.



A particular concern for this property, cited by both the owner’s representative and a number of stakeholders, is the lack of dedicated or on-site parking. The Zoning

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Regulations, Section 6.2.C.8, details the number of parking spaces needed for a variety of uses permitted for the Masonic Hall or other buildings. The required spaces could range from two spaces for the use of the Hall as a single-family residence all the way up to nearly 40 spaces if the entirety of the roughly 8,000 square foot building were to be used for retail purposes. The site itself does not have a great deal of additional square footage that is not dedicated to the existing building. Further, on-street parallel parking on Church Street is possible, but signage is inadequate and the parking area is not well marked. Finally, the public diagonal parking on Main Street stops just short of the Masonic Hall, leaving the impression that there's no parking at all for this site.

Section 6.2.C.3 does state that “In the Village Business zone, the Commission may consider the availability or provision of on-street parking spaces, off-street parking spaces, and parking spaces provided on nearby sites in determining compliance with the parking requirements.” While this does open up the discussion to flexibility of requirement of the specific number of on-site spaces, it does place the burden of proof on the applicant and requires a willing Commission. While the purpose of the Village Business District includes consideration of the overall area ambience and pedestrian-friendliness, it does not guarantee parking flexibility, which can create uncertainty in a development scenario.

All of the subject properties are within the Old Wethersfield Historic District, which is regulated by the Historic District Commission. Any changes to the exterior of the buildings and significant changes to the site visible from the street (Church or Main) must be reviewed for “appropriateness” to the District. Ongoing consultation with the Commission, and the use of a historically-savvy architect and landscape architect would be recommended to ensure a smooth and successful review process.

Refer to Appendix A for Structural and Mechanical conditions assessments and hazardous materials inspection report.



SIMEON BELDEN HOUSE, 249-251 Main Street

Erected in 1767 as the residence of Simeon Belden, the two-story, gambrel roofed post and beam building is a fine example of an early Georgian style center hall house. Facing east across Main Street, the house sits close to the road on .21 acres within the Old Wethersfield Historic District. Famous as the home of James Lockwood Belden, the son of Simeon, who founded the Wethersfield Seed Company in 1820, the building has served as a single-family residence and a mixed use property with residential and commercial components.



A five-bay structure with the gambrel roof ridge running parallel to the street, the defining feature of the front façade is the handsome, center entrance with a pair of three-paneled doors framed by pilastered trim with a deep entablature and broken scroll pediment. Other features of the front façade include wood clapboard siding with a narrow exposure to weather, pedimented first floor window heads, 12 over 12 first floor windows and 8 over 12 second story windows. Chimney stacks are visible between the first floor windows on either side of the front door confirming that fireplaces serve front and back rooms on both the north and south.



A small, hipped roof open porch has been added to the south side and is served by a door from the southeast parlor. A similar hipped roof porch on the northern elevation is set back from the front façade and serves as an entrance to the northwest room through an enclosed single-story addition which wraps around the rear of

the house along the entire west side. Access to the northern porch is via a concrete ramp and stair system running parallel to the building, constructed in 2005.

The rear of the lot to the west is currently open and serves as raised garden beds. Parking to the north side is oriented perpendicular to the building. A treed and planted setback on the south provides screening of the Masonic Hall and allows for a quiet and shady green space.

Conditions

As the structural engineer's report describes, the foundation of the original house has been rebuilt. What was once a masonry foundation is now a cast-in-place concrete foundation that defines a full basement under the entire building footprint. First floor framing was replaced with sawn lumber, possibly when the foundation was rebuilt, resulting in a sound and level first floor system. The report also states that while the gambrel roof framing is undersized according to today's standards, it carries the imposed loads without signs of any distress.



The house has been well cared for over the years and exhibits exterior finishes in extremely good condition including the clapboard siding, windows, asphalt shingle roof and decorative trim. Interior finishes are also in very good repair. Currently the majority of the structure is used for residential purposes while a portion of the first floor houses a small food service kitchen, takeout and dining area. The central stair to the second floor residential use is currently accessible by the front door to accommodate a separation of use.



The mechanical / electrical / plumbing engineer's report indicates that some upgrades and repairs are warranted. One of the two oil fired hot air furnaces located in the basement has reached its useful life expectancy and should be replaced. Other recommendations include replacement of the knob and tube wiring in the attic, upgrading of receptacles and switches, installation of energy efficient lighting fixtures and hard wiring the fire and smoke detection systems.



Environmental concerns include the potential for hazardous materials such as lead based paint, asbestos containing materials, universal waste and PCB containing materials. An inspection of the property identified a list of finishes that could possibly contain these hazardous materials. If plans for new uses include renovation that impacts these materials, they should be tested and legally removed.

Planning and Zoning Status and Considerations

Similar to the Masonic Hall, the Belden House is also within the Village Business District, and the great majority of the potential and envisioned uses for the House are allowable, either as-of-right or via Conditional Use Permit. Incorporation of office, retail, or other commercial uses would not be incompatible with the continued use of the House as a residential dwelling in this District.

The Belden House has several on-site parking spaces accessible via the driveway shared with the Comstock, Ferre property, and there are several diagonal on-street spaces directly in front of the House on Main Street. Given the relatively small size of the House relative to parking requirements and anticipated demand, it is not likely that parking considerations would impede any of the probable uses for the Belden House.

Refer to Appendix B for Structural and Mechanical conditions assessments.



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WETHERSFIELD SEED GARDENS - COMSTOCK, FERRE & CO. COMPLEX, 263 Main Street

The Wethersfield Seed Garden complex, commonly referred to as Comstock, Ferre & Co. is a grouping of mostly 19th century, connected buildings that have supported the production and distribution of vegetable and flower seed since 1820. Currently an “L” shaped site comprised of two lots totaling 1.39 acres, 1.22 acres front on Main Street and are zoned Village Business. The abutting lot forming the leg of the “L”, 32 Church Street, is .17 acres and is zoned Residential B.

A map and visual reference key of the Comstock, Ferre buildings is provided on page 32.



Picturesque and beloved by residents and visitors, the Comstock, Ferre & Co. complex is one of many iconic images of Old Wethersfield. Founded as “Wethersfield Seed Gardens” by James and Joseph Belden in 1820, and evolving into Comstock, Ferre & Co. after 1838, it represents the mid-18th century revolution in scientific agriculture and commercial horticulture. The early barns and storage facilities were destroyed by fire in 1834 at which time James Belden relocated the Old Deane Store, located to the south on Main Street adjacent to the Silas Deane house, to a position that is currently behind the two story brick office structure that faces the street.



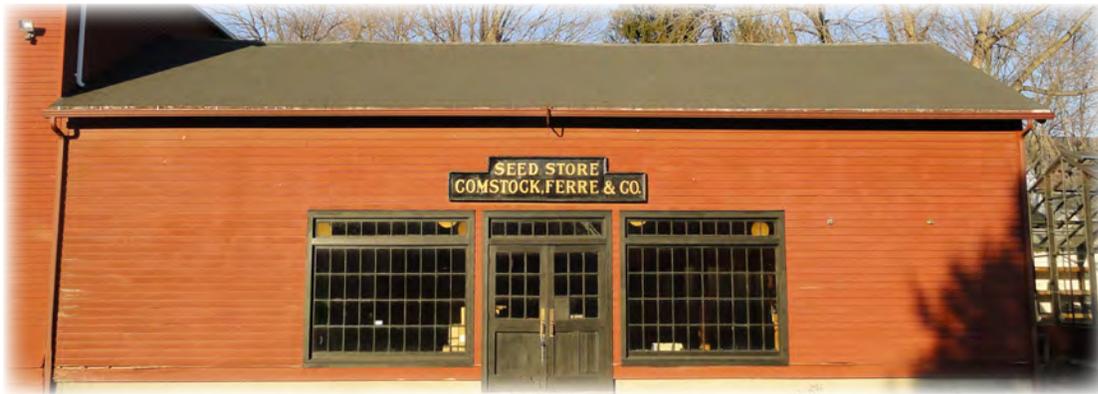
The Old Deane Store (A2) is the earliest structure on the site having been moved from its original site after the fire of 1834. After the company was purchased by William Comstock, facilities expanded in the 1850s to include the two story, gable to the street, brick office addition (A1) and the two story plus attic,

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post and beam framed, clapboard sided, “Old” warehouse (B) behind the Old Deane Store which was used for seed storage and packing. Another burst of building occurred in the 1880s when a “New” three story wood framed warehouse (D) was constructed to the south of the old warehouse, separate yet adjacent to the Store and the first warehouse building. Additional building in that era included the Tack and Wagon Barn, the Hay Barn (H) and the Horse Barn (I) all connected at the western boundary of the site.

Later additions included the one story, ramped “Bridge” (C) constructed in the early 1900s to connect the second floor of the “Old” warehouse with the second floor of the “New” warehouse. The bridge created a portal through which horse drawn deliveries accessed the warehouses beyond. The enclosure surrounding the bridge was completed in the 1960s to facilitate additional retail space.

The single story, post and beam Old Onion House (G), circa 1900, was relocated from an area south of its present location adjacent to the Hay Barn. This building served as a storage shed to over-winter the famous Wethersfield red onion and is currently a multi-purpose space connected to the 1880s Tack and Wagon Barn. A 24 foot wide by 42 foot long aluminum and glass greenhouse built in 1984, abuts the “Old” Warehouse providing a protected growing space that is accessed from the retail floor of the warehouse.



Conditions

Given that there are at least ten individual, purpose built structures, most post and beam, constructed over the span of almost 200 years, that have been moved within the site, connected to other buildings, reused and repurposed, varying conditions exist within the complex. As the structural engineer’s report suggests, there are multiple conditions, inherent in post and beam construction that may require repair or reinforcement if the complex is to be fully utilized and occupied. These conditions

include mortise and tenon joints that have either failed over time or require reinforcement to meet current building codes. Some structural members need replacement due to past water damage, but overall, the retail complex to the east of the site is in very good condition and can readily be improved to meet a variety of new uses.



The barn complex on the western portion of the property is comprised of several post and beam structures including some very early barns. The western-most barn is in the worst condition and will necessitate significant repair and replacement of historic fabric in order to be safely utilized for any purpose. This is also the case with the Horse Barn oriented east to west on the northern property line and connecting several other barn structures. The central and iconic three story Hay Barn is in very good condition and has been finished on the lower two floors for use as office and storage space. The adjacent Onion House is also in good condition as is the contemporary connecting space that links it to the nineteenth century Tack and Wagon Barn. Based on future intended use, each of these buildings will need to be thoroughly investigated to insure that structural members and joinery are suitable for the new purpose.

Architecturally, exterior materials have been repaired and maintained to reflect their original appearance. Regulatory review by the Old Wethersfield Historic District Commission has insured that recent modifications have been made appropriately. Minor repairs to siding and trim, especially in the barn complex are necessary and should be made in-kind. As interior spaces are developed and potentially outfitted with mechanical and electrical systems, care should be taken to respect the integrity of remaining historic fabric.



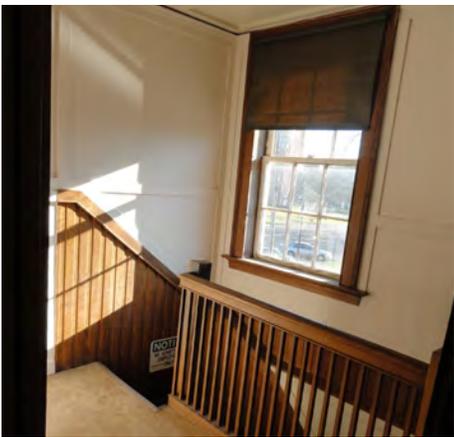
Environmental concerns relate to the potential presence of hazardous materials such as lead paint, asbestos and PCBs. Potential areas of concern throughout the complex are detailed in the report by Eagle Environmental, Inc. attached in the Appendix. Areas of concern in the retail complex include plaster, flooring and adhesive, window glazing compound, wall and ceiling finishes and chimney flue cement. Materials to be tested in the barn complex include wall and ceiling finishes, light fixture



gaskets, and window glazing compound. As spaces are renovated and exterior building materials repaired, care should be taken to abate conditions where hazardous materials may be present.

Regardless of any change of use within the facility, much of the heating equipment has served its useful life and will require replacement. The mechanical engineer's recommendation is to replace the existing oil fired furnaces with energy efficient gas fired units and to extend ductwork to previously unheated

spaces. The presence of an automatic wet and dry fire protection system throughout the retail complex allows for flexibility of any change of use that requires this type of system. Existing electrical service is 200 amp which may need upgrading dependent on future use.



The greatest challenge to revitalizing the complex will be to incorporate accessibility features that comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act and the CT State Building Code. Currently there are a multitude of interconnected floor levels which are only accessible by stairs. Incorporating an elevator or ramping within the historic structures will take considerable effort and expense. A complete survey of accessible features should be undertaken including access through the site as well as within the buildings.

Planning and Zoning Status and Considerations

The variety of uses, both current and considered, at the Comstock, Ferre property are generally well-suited to the construction of the Village Business District regulations. The retail, educational, community, restaurant, office, and other potential and even simultaneous uses are generally supported by the stated purpose of the District. The one possible exception to that is the category of agricultural use. While the Town of Wethersfield does have a dedicated zoning district where agriculture is specifically supported, agricultural uses are omitted from the list of uses in the Village Business District. Seasonal sales of agricultural products grown on-site is allowable as an accessory use, but cultivation of crops, keeping of livestock, and other elements of agriculture that have historically been associated with the Comstock, Ferre facility are not currently allowed. While the small size of the property does not

necessarily lend itself to agriculture at a significant scale, the owners have expressed an interest in incorporating more agricultural activity at Comstock, Ferre. Given the history of the site, the general flexibility of the Village Business regulations, and the potential incorporation of community or educational elements with the agricultural uses, it seems likely that a provision could be made in the Regulations to allow for this kind of use for the site.

While the overall square footage of the buildings on the Comstock, Ferre property is substantial, there is adequate on-site parking for its current level of activity. The owners have proposed to actually reduce the amount of paved and available parking area on-site, even as they seek to increase activity and usage within the buildings. While the potential flexibility of the parking regulations could allow for this otherwise paradoxical parking/development condition, the plans for increasing usage within the buildings or activity outside the buildings be phased to ensure that the balance is appropriate.

Structural and Mechanical conditions assessments and Environmental surveys for the Comstock, Ferre complex can be found in Appendix C.



FACILITY BACKGROUND & CONDITIONS ASSESSMENT



FACILITY REDEVELOPMENT CONCEPTS



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FACILITY REDEVELOPMENT CONCEPTS

MASONIC HALL

Finding the Best Fit

The first impression of the Masonic Hall building is one of a venerable institution. Its mass, clear architectural strength, and location anchoring a key intersection of Old Wethersfield speaks strongly to a use that would be central to the activity of the area.

Its origins and history as a gathering place for the Masons are reflected in the sturdy construction, stately aspect, and large open areas on the first and second floors.



While the building has been gutted of its major systems and any interior walls or separations, the large, uninterrupted spaces of 2,500+ square feet on each floor with high ceilings and good natural light easily lend themselves to a vision of performance or art space. Whether that is a small theatre, practice space, dance studio, or art gallery, the flexibility of the open area provides that potential. The use of the Masonic Hall for meetings, performances or other gatherings would underscore its historic use as a destination.

Apart from a gathering or performance space, the Masonic Hall would also function well, and serve the community well, as a vibrant retail-commercial space. The positioning of the site and the openness of the interior space is reminiscent of historic indoor marketplaces such as Faneuil Hall in Boston, the Antiques Marketplace in Putnam, CT or Thorne's Marketplace in Northampton, MA. Set up as a multi-vendor retail marketplace for food, crafts, artisans, antiques, the Masonic Hall could function as a constantly-changing destination that draws visitors and supports other consumer or tourist locations in Old Wethersfield. This concept of a shared destination would also be more tolerant of the lack of on-site parking.

A combination of meeting/performance space and retail marketplace would also be supportive of a vibrant Old Wethersfield and could be accommodated by the multiple levels of the Masonic Hall. Other uses, such as residential units or office uses, would certainly accomplish the goal of returning the building to productive use,

but would not add the vibrancy that the other uses would. An office use would add workers to Old Wethersfield, which would be supportive of lunchtime restaurants and related uses, but would also demand significant amounts of long-term parking without adding much activity outside the building. Similarly, residential uses would add a permanent presence to the building, but it would essentially remove the use of Masonic Hall as a public space of any type, and without adding a significant number of new consumers to Old Wethersfield.

Owner Vision

The Masonic Hall was purchased by its current owner in 2004 with the idea of developing four residential condominium units and occupying one of them. The Planning & Zoning Commission approved the plan for these condominium units, along with a small garage to be constructed to the rear of the main structure. For various reasons, this development did not happen, and the building has been vacant for over ten years. The removal of building systems and vacancy have created an interest by both the owner and the public to see the building put to some marketable use.

The owner would be open to seeing any number of uses and agrees that civic or community-oriented uses such as meeting or performance space would be acceptable, but is operating under financial constraints and is not able to consider a bargain sale or donation to a civic group for a public purpose. The owner wishes to sell, and property has been for sale for several years. The owner's representative has shown the property to a number of potential users, who have discussed largely office or residential uses. The most common concern expressed is the lack of dedicated parking either on the Masonic Hall property itself or within the public right-of-way on either Church or Main Streets.

Public Input Suggestions

The most commonly expressed sentiment by the public and Old Wethersfield stakeholders is one of disappointment that the Masonic Hall has been vacant for so long. Aside from the general desire to see the building occupied and maintained, many suggestions related to the idea of a destination. Multiple comments reflected the interest in seeing Masonic Hall being put to use as a public space, either for meetings or performances. Another common suggestion was using the building as a multi-vendor retail market or a restaurant. The multi-vendor concept seemed to resonate with a number of participants in a public session, and was further elaborated to include a combination of the flexibility and diversity of multiple antiques dealers or artisans, but the stability and ease of a single manager/cashier.

There was significant discussion and disagreement over the parking concerns presented by a redevelopment of Masonic Hall. While several stakeholders believed that the lack of on-site or immediately proximate public parking was the single largest factor preventing a vibrant redevelopment of the Masonic Hall, others stated that the flexibility of the Planning & Zoning Commission is accommodating shared parking and the potential expansion of shared use in other areas of Old Wethersfield made parking more a question of perception and management rather than actual limitation.

Masonic Hall Scenario One

Mixed Retail and Performance Space

Modifications required

Improvements to the existing building for use as mixed retail, commercial or performance space require exterior renovations and complete interior construction and infrastructure including significant structures dedicated to compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act in order to provide public access to all floor levels. The fact that the interiors and systems have been gutted allows for flexibility of future use, but also means that new systems need to be incorporated to create a fully functioning facility.

Cost implications

Following is a list of potential improvements to accommodate public use of the Masonic Hall structure.

| | |
|---|--------------|
| • New roof | \$60,000.00 |
| • Window and door repairs | \$20,000.00 |
| • Southwest exterior stair replacement | \$10,000.00 |
| • Exterior painting | \$20,000.00 |
| • HVAC systems | \$204,000.00 |
| • Interior improvements and finishes (@ \$50/ SF x 7,500 SF) | \$375,000.00 |
| • Accessibility improvements (exterior elevator tower) | \$160,000.00 |
| | \$849,000.00 |



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FACILITY REDEVELOPMENT CONCEPTS

PROFORMA
SCENARIO 1: MASONIC HALL
 MIXED RETAIL AND PERFORMANCE SPACE

| <u>FUNDING</u> | Percent | Total |
|--|---------|----------------|
| Owner Equity @ 20% | 20% | \$305,280.00 |
| Conventional Debt | 55% | \$842,616.00 |
| Federal Historic Tax Credit | 11% | \$168,224.00 |
| State Historic Tax Credit | 14% | \$210,280.00 |
| | <hr/> | |
| | 100% | \$1,526,400.00 |
| <u>DEVELOPMENT COSTS</u> | | Total |
| Acquisition (including Legal / Costing) | | \$475,000.00 |
| Soft Costs (including Design / Permitting) | | \$85,000.00 |
| Construction Costs | | \$850,000.00 |
| Interest During Construction / Bridge Loan | | \$30,000.00 |
| Contingency @ 6% | | \$86,400.00 |
| | <hr/> | |
| | | \$1,526,400.00 |
| <u>OPERATING INCOME</u> | | Total |
| Lower Level -- Flexible Retail / Craft Gallery @ \$12 / sf | | \$30,000.00 |
| 1st Floor -- Variety Specialty Retail @ \$16 / sf | | \$40,000.00 |
| 2nd Floor -- Performance Space @ \$14 / sf | | \$35,000.00 |
| | <hr/> | |
| | | \$105,000.00 |
| <u>OPERATING EXPENSES</u> | | Total |
| Property Taxes (with estimated 20% abatement) | | \$25,872.00 |
| Debt Service @ 6% | | \$50,557.00 |
| Insurance & Maintenance | | \$12,000.00 |
| Repairs & Miscellaneous | | \$10,000.00 |
| | <hr/> | |
| | | \$98,429.00 |
| <u>NET ANNUAL REVENUE / LOSS</u> | | \$6,571.00 |

NOTES:

| | |
|--|----------------|
| Eligible Rehabilitation Costs | \$1,051,400.00 |
| Maximum Federal Historic Tax Credits @ 20% | \$210,280.00 |
| Assumption -- 0.80 Equity | \$168,224.00 |
| Maximum State Historic Tax Credits @ 25% | \$262,850.00 |
| Assumption -- 0.80 Equity | \$210,280.00 |

* Assumes no vacancy

* Assume utility costs covered by tenants

* Assume developer negotiates 20% local property tax abatement with Town Council



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Masonic Hall Scenario Two

Primary Residential with Retail in Lower Level

Modifications required

The configuration of the Masonic Hall as two floors of residential use with retail use in the lower level somewhat minimizes the cost implications of developing the property for commercial use. This treatment intensifies the outfit required for residential properties and potentially still requires the installation of elevator service to support access to upper floor levels.

Cost implications

Following is a list of potential improvements to accommodate public use of the Masonic Hall structure.

| | |
|--|---------------|
| • New roof | \$60,000.00 |
| • Window and door repairs | \$20,000.00 |
| • Southwest exterior stair replacement | \$10,000.00 |
| • Exterior painting | \$20,000.00 |
| • HVAC systems | \$204,000.00 |
| • Interior improvements and finishes (@ \$100/ SF x 5,000 SF plus \$50/SF x 2,500 SF) | \$625,000.00 |
| • Accessibility improvements (interior residential elevator) | \$80,000.00 |
| | \$1,019,000.0 |



FACILITY REDEVELOPMENT CONCEPTS

PROFORMA
SCENARIO 2: MASONIC HALL
 PRIMARY RESIDENTIAL WITH RETAIL IN LOWER LEVEL

| <u>FUNDING</u> | Percent | Total |
|-----------------------------|---------|----------------|
| Owner Equity @ 20% | 20% | \$341,108.00 |
| Conventional Debt | 54% | \$921,438.00 |
| Federal Historic Tax Credit | 12% | \$196,886.00 |
| State Historic Tax Credit | 14% | \$246,108.00 |
| | 100% | \$1,705,540.00 |

| <u>DEVELOPMENT COSTS</u> | Total |
|--|----------------|
| Acquisition (including Legal / Costing) | \$475,000.00 |
| Soft Costs (including Design / Permitting) | \$85,000.00 |
| Construction Costs | \$1,019,000.00 |
| Interest During Construction / Bridge Loan | \$30,000.00 |
| Contingency @ 6% | \$96,540.00 |
| | \$1,705,540.00 |

| <u>OPERATING INCOME</u> | Total |
|--|--------------|
| Lower Level -- Flexible Retail / Craft Gallery @ \$12 / sf | \$30,000.00 |
| 1st Floor --Two 2-BR apartments @ 1,250 / sf | \$36,000.00 |
| 2nd Floor -- Two 2-BR apartments @ 1,250 / sf | \$36,000.00 |
| | \$102,000.00 |

| <u>OPERATING EXPENSES</u> | Total |
|---|-------------|
| Property Taxes (with estimated 20% abatement) | \$25,872.00 |
| Debt Service @ 6% | \$55,286.00 |
| Insurance & Maintenance | \$8,000.00 |
| Repairs & Miscellaneous | \$8,000.00 |
| | \$97,158.00 |

| | |
|----------------------------------|------------|
| <u>NET ANNUAL REVENUE / LOSS</u> | \$4,842.00 |
|----------------------------------|------------|

NOTES:

| | |
|--|----------------|
| Eligible Rehabilitation Costs | \$1,230,540.00 |
| Maximum Federal Historic Tax Credits @ 20% | \$246,108.00 |
| Assumption -- 0.80 Equity | \$196,886.00 |
| Maximum State Historic Tax Credits @ 25% | \$307,635.00 |
| Assumption -- 0.80 Equity | \$246,108.00 |

* Assumes no vacancy

* Assume utility costs covered by tenants

* Assume developer negotiates 20% local property tax abatement with Town Council

Masonic Hall Pro Forma Notes

Property acquisition costs and construction costs for Masonic Hall create a significant challenge for a successful, cash-positive redevelopment project. While some flexibility with construction costs and anticipated rental revenues may have some flexibility, the order of magnitude of those items can not be adjusted significantly. The fact that the building is essentially just a shell and in need of an elevator creates a magnitude of fixed cost. Rents are based on commercial and retail rates in the area, with minor consideration of the prestigious building and location. Other basic assumptions include utility costs paid by tenants, a negligible vacancy rate, and an 80% equity on maximum tax credit eligibility.

The project would be eligible for Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credits under either development scenario, as are State Historic Preservation Tax Credits, thanks to a revision to the tax credit policies under Public Act 10-41b. These credits dramatically improve the redevelopment cost, but do not totally close the gap on their own.

Unless there is some significant reduction in acquisition costs or increase in up-front owner equity, one of the most significant elements to the financial feasibility of this redevelopment project would be a local property tax abatement. Using the default assumptions in the pro forma, a 20% tax abatement would be the difference between a project that is \$2,000 per year in the red to one that is \$6,000 per year in the black; that is to say, it could make all of the difference from a financing perspective.

The Town's tax incentive program allows for some flexibility and the possibility for negotiating abatement rates and terms. A relatively long-term tax abatement of 20% would dramatically change the bottom line on development of this property. It is reasonable to assume that an investor redeveloping the Masonic Hall property would receive some incentive from the Town, but as the abatement is over a limited duration, the rental costs would have to be increased after several years in order to provide the income to cover the increasing tax burden.

SIMEON BELDEN HOUSE

Finding the Best Fit

The Belden House has supported a number of uses that have attempted to take advantage of its prime location on Main Street and its historic character. The structure itself has significant value as from a historic perspective in its own right, and as a contributor to the history and character of Old Wethersfield. At its core, however, it is a house, and internally is organized as such. While there is a commercial kitchen and separate accessible entrance left over from the most recent coffee-shop business that was located there, the current use is as a residence for the manager of the Comstock, Ferre Seed Company. Continued use of the Belden House as a residence does not significantly contribute to the vitality and activity of Old Wethersfield, but does provide for ongoing maintenance of the property itself, which contributes to the overall historic character.



Any increased non-residential activity in the Belden House holds the potential to increase the interest and vibrancy of Old Wethersfield, but would be necessarily modest in scale. A small coffee-shop, wine bar, boutique retail shop, or bakery would be appropriate to the scale and capacity of the structure and would provide both a free-standing destination commercial venture, but also a complementary use on Main Street. A use of that scale could also preserve a residential portion of the building for continued occupancy by an on-site manager. The upper level of the Belden House could also be put to use as office space, which could stand alone or support one of the uses downstairs or at the Comstock, Ferre complex. A larger restaurant or larger-scale commercial or retail venture would probably need to significantly disrupt the interior layout of the Belden House in such a way that it would not be economically viable.

Owner Vision

The owners of the Belden House also own the Comstock, Ferre complex, and tend to view them as a whole. The expressed vision for the overall site, and in fact a major factor in acquiring the properties originally, related to historic preservation. In their description of the Comstock, Ferre complex on that company's website, the owners describe their goals "to erase modern influences around the company and return it to something that William Comstock could recognize, if he were to walk through the doors." Their goal for the Belden House is similarly driven by this desire for historic preservation and continuance of the property's heritage.



Noting that the Belden House has been used in the recent past as a coffee shop and other small-scale commercial enterprises, the owners have no particular plans to pursue commercial use of this building, and are currently using it as housing for the manager of the Comstock, Ferre facility, as well as occasional housing for the owners themselves, who spend most of their time out of state with other business ventures. They have expressed willingness to consider alternative uses or mixed uses in the Belden House, but would strongly prefer the uses be in support of the overall mission and respect of the Belden and Comstock, Ferre properties' history.

The owner has also expressed an intent to create a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization to manage the Comstock, Ferre property and the Belden House in furtherance of this overall mission. This would seem to indicate that a traditional economic analysis for the use or redevelopment of this property, as well as the Comstock, Ferre property, would be strictly of direct interest to ownership.

Public Input Suggestions

The members of the public and other stakeholders who offered thoughts about Belden House frequently mentioned the charm of prior uses such as wine bar or café. It was lamented that none of the small-scale commercial uses seemed to survive for very long at this site and were drawn to the idea of a niche dining use that would be complementary of other restaurants, shops and historic destinations. Several individuals mentioned a bakery or pie company that could take advantage of the commercial kitchen, and others suggested a boutique clothing shop or other retail that would be directly supportive of the uses at Comstock, Ferre. There seemed to be general acknowledgement of the rather tight limitation that the space and layout of the Belden House did restrict the realistic scale of retail or commercial uses.

The most dramatic suggestion from a stakeholder focused on the location of the Belden House, rather than the house itself, as the key element. If the House was not in its current location, the location of the property as a development site held tremendous potential. Fronting Main Street



FACILITY REDEVELOPMENT CONCEPTS

and situated between two much larger buildings created opportunity for a more substantial development. Recognizing both the historic value of the Belden House itself within Old Wethersfield and the availability of land along Church Street to the rear of the Comstock, Ferre property, the stakeholder suggested relocating the Belden House entirely. The house itself would fit in very well with the historic residential character of Church Street and could physically fit on the land without cutting off vehicular access to the Comstock, Ferre property from Church Street. There is a well-established history of moving homes and other buildings in Old Wethersfield. Finally, the vacant area left by the Belden House along Main Street could be redeveloped, in a context sensitive manner, as a mixed-use property that would allow a more broad range of options such as restaurant and retail uses below office and residential uses.

When presented as a concept, however, the scenario of moving the Belden House did not receive the endorsement of either the general public or the current property owner. It was felt that the move would be too substantial a disruption of the historic home and the established character of Main Street, as well as a potential risk to the National Register status of the House itself.



Belden House Scenario One
Small-Scale Café / Retail / Office

Modifications required

No structural modifications are envisioned if the building is used as a retail and/or office facility as the property has been made code compliant for first floor commercial use and the Existing Building Code would allow other uses which increase the current residential loading within certain parameters. Utilizing the upper floors for retail, restaurant or office space may require compliance with ADA regulations that will necessitate the implementation of access to upper floor space, possibly including elevator service, unless equal facilities are provided on the lower, accessible floors.

Cost implications

The following potential list of cost implications could be incurred if the property was totally converted to commercial use. This listing assumes that provisions for ADA standards can be reduced by providing equal services on the accessible first floor level.

| | |
|---|-------------|
| • ADA-compliant access through existing door openings | \$10,000.00 |
| • Minor interior improvements | \$10,000.00 |
| • Upgrades to mechanical and electrical systems | \$20,000.00 |
| | \$40,000.00 |



FACILITY REDEVELOPMENT CONCEPTS

PROFORMA
SCENARIO 1: BELDEN HOUSE
 SMALL-SCALE CAFÉ / RETAIL / OFFICE

| <u>FUNDING</u> | Percent | Total |
|--|---------|-----------------------|
| Owner Equity @ 10% | 20% | \$88,100.00 |
| Conventional Debt | 75% | \$330,620.00 |
| Federal Historic Tax Credit | 2% | \$9,680.00 |
| State Historic Tax Credit | 3% | \$12,100.00 |
| | <hr/> | |
| | 100% | \$440,500.00 |
| <u>DEVELOPMENT COSTS</u> | | Total |
| Acquisition (including Legal / Costing) | | \$380,000.00 |
| Soft Costs (including Design / Permitting) | | \$15,000.00 |
| Construction Costs | | \$40,000.00 |
| Contingency @ 10% | | \$5,500.00 |
| | <hr/> | |
| | | \$440,500.00 |
| <u>OPERATING INCOME</u> | | Total |
| 1st Floor -- Café / Small Retail @ \$15 / sf | | \$22,500.00 |
| 2nd Floor -- Office / Retail @ \$13 / sf | | \$14,300.00 |
| | <hr/> | |
| | | \$36,800.00 |
| <u>OPERATING EXPENSES</u> | | Total |
| Property Taxes | | \$5,100.00 |
| Debt Service @ 6% | | \$19,837.00 |
| Insurance & Maintenance | | \$6,000.00 |
| Repairs & Miscellaneous | | \$4,800.00 |
| | <hr/> | |
| | | \$35,737.00 |
| <u>NET ANNUAL REVENUE / LOSS</u> | | \$1,063.00 |

NOTES:

| | |
|--|-------------|
| Eligible Rehabilitation Costs | \$60,500.00 |
| Maximum Federal Historic Tax Credits @ 20% | \$12,100.00 |
| Assumption -- 0.80 Equity | \$9,680.00 |
| Maximum State Historic Tax Credits @ 25% | \$15,125.00 |
| Assumption -- 0.80 Equity | \$12,100.00 |

* Assumes no vacancy

* Assume utility costs covered by tenants

FACILITY REDEVELOPMENT CONCEPTS



*A Study of Revitalization Opportunities
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Belden House Scenario Two
Relocated House and Site Redevelopment

Modifications required

If the Belden House were to be relocated to the site at 32 Church Street, in a residential zone, and utilized as a single or two-family residence, minimal code related modifications would be required. The cost of interior modifications would be at the discretion of the owner.

A new three story mixed use building could be developed on the site vacated by the relocation of the Belden House. Boutique retail shops would anchor the street level while two floors of residential units would occupy the upper levels. The scale and massing of the building would need to be carefully designed to compliment adjacent properties.

Cost implications

Costs associated with relocating the Belden House would include moving the structure to a new foundation and tying in to public utilities. Additional costs related to the new, mixed use construction are estimated below to reflect a reasonably high level of detail and quality in order to be sensitive to the context of the historic district.

Belden House Relocation

| | |
|--|-------------|
| • Site preparation and foundation construction | \$30,000.00 |
| • Relocation cost | \$50,000.00 |
| | \$80,000.00 |

New Construction on Main Street

| | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|
| • 13,680 SF @ \$200 per square foot | \$2,736,000.00 |
| • Design and permitting | \$300,000.00 |
| | \$3,036,000.00 |

NOTE:

Main Street property acquisition costs have not been included as it is assumed that current ownership would remain in place.

FACILITY REDEVELOPMENT CONCEPTS



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FACILITY REDEVELOPMENT CONCEPTS

PROFORMA
SCENARIO 2: BELDEN HOUSE
 RELOCATED HOUSE AND SITE REDEVELOPMENT

| <u>FUNDING</u> | Percent | Total |
|---|---------|------------------|
| Owner Equity @ 10% | 20% | \$705,320.00 |
| Conventional Debt | 80% | \$2,821,280.00 |
| Federal Historic Tax Credit | 0% | \$0.00 |
| State Historic Tax Credit | 0% | \$0.00 |
| | <hr/> | <hr/> |
| | 100% | \$3,526,600.00 |
| <u>DEVELOPMENT COSTS</u> | | Total |
| Relocation of Belden House | | \$80,000.00 |
| Soft Costs (including Design / Permitting) | | \$300,000.00 |
| Construction Costs | | \$2,736,000.00 |
| Interest During Construction / Bridge Loan | | \$90,000.00 |
| Contingency @ 10% | | \$320,600.00 |
| | | <hr/> |
| | | \$3,526,600.00 |
| <u>OPERATING INCOME</u> | | Total |
| 1st Floor -- Restaurant / Retail @ \$16 / sf | | \$72,000.00 |
| 2nd Floor -- Office @ \$15 / sf | | \$68,400.00 |
| 3rd Floor -- Residential | | \$60,000.00 |
| | | <hr/> |
| | | \$200,400.00 |
| <u>OPERATING EXPENSES</u> | | Total |
| Property Taxes (with estimated 20% abatement) | | \$46,200.00 |
| Debt Service @ 6% | | \$169,277.00 |
| Insurance & Maintenance | | \$18,000.00 |
| Repairs & Miscellaneous | | \$12,000.00 |
| | | <hr/> |
| | | \$245,477.00 |
| <u>NET ANNUAL REVENUE / LOSS</u> | | -\$45,077.00 |

NOTES:

- Assume acquisition cost is cost to move house
- New 13,680 square foot building @ \$200 / sf
- * Assumes no vacancy
- * Assumes two 2BR and two 1BR apartments
- * Assume utility costs covered by tenants
- * Assume developer negotiates 20% local property tax abatement with Town Council
- No historic tax credits available for new construction



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Belden House Scenario Three
Relocated House and Community Open Space

Modifications required

If the Belden House were to be relocated to the site at 32 Church Street, in a residential zone, and utilized as a single or two-family residence, minimal code related modifications would be required.

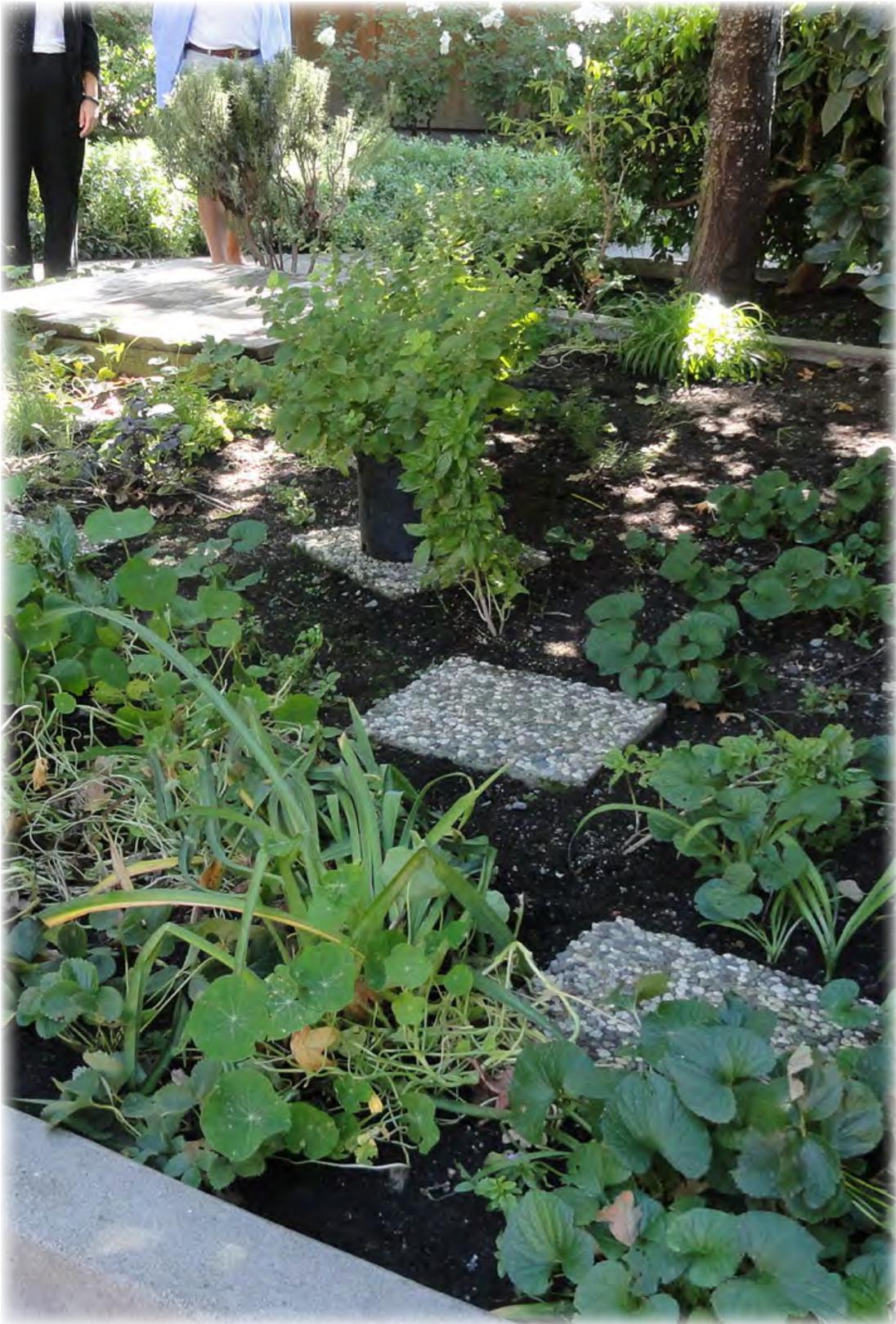
The foundation within the vacated site between Comstock, Ferre and the Masonic Hall would need to be removed and backfilled. While there is little historical significance to the existing poured concrete foundation that replaced the original stone foundation, there may be some interest in an archaeological study of the area as the foundations are removed. This study may in fact be mandated if DECD funding is used. With the site landscaped for educational or production gardens, or farmer’s market green space, it might be appropriate to incorporate landscape elements that reflect the shadow of the former Belden House foundation.

Cost implications

The major costs associated with relocating the Belden House would be the cost of moving the structure to a new foundation, as well as the soft costs associated with design and permitting.

Development of a landscaped open space could potentially require landscape design services, foundation removal and backfilling, and installation of new landscape elements. Archaeological services may also be required.

| | |
|--|--------------|
| • Church Street site preparation and foundation construction | \$30,000.00 |
| • Relocation cost | \$50,000.00 |
| • Main Street site development costs | \$40,000.00 |
| • Archaeology | \$10,000.00 |
| • Design and permitting | \$ 6,000.00 |
| | \$136,000.00 |
| • Contingency at 10% | \$13,600.00 |
| | \$149,600.00 |



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FACILITY REDEVELOPMENT CONCEPTS

PROFORMA
SCENARIO 3: BELDEN HOUSE
 RELOCATED HOUSE AND COMMUNITY OPEN SPACE

| <u>FUNDING</u> | Percent | Total |
|--|---------|-----------------|
| Owner Equity | 0% | \$0.00 |
| Conventional Debt | 0% | \$0.00 |
| State Grant | 100% | \$150,000.00 |
| | 100% | \$150,000.00 |
| <u>DEVELOPMENT COSTS</u> | | Total |
| Relocation of Belden House | | \$80,000.00 |
| Soft Costs (including Design / Permitting) | | \$6,000.00 |
| Archaeological Analysis | | \$10,000 |
| Site Restoration Costs | | \$40,000.00 |
| Contingency @ 10% | | \$13,600.00 |
| | | \$149,600.00 |
| <u>OPERATING INCOME</u> | | Total |
| Farm Market / Agricultural Rental | | \$5,000.00 |
| | | \$5,000.00 |
| <u>OPERATING EXPENSES</u> | | Total |
| Property Taxes | | \$2,250.00 |
| Debt Service @ 6% | | \$0.00 |
| Insurance & Maintenance | | \$1,200.00 |
| Repairs & Miscellaneous | | \$600.00 |
| | | 4,050.00 |
| <u>NET ANNUAL REVENUE / LOSS</u> | | \$950.00 |

Belden House Pro Forma Notes

Three scenarios were examined for the Belden House. In the first, the House was kept in place, and converted to use as a small scale café/restaurant or boutique retail shop on the first floor, and offices or additional retail space upstairs. While the building is currently being used primarily as a residence, no residential use was envisioned in the first scenario, and the entirety of the building was envisioned as commercial space.

Unlike the Masonic Hall, the current owners of the Belden House (and Comstock, Ferre property) are not interested in selling the property, so assumptions about acquisition costs and proposed use are based primarily on a blank-slate vision of a new owner. Acquisition costs are based largely on what the current owners paid for the property. In the first scenario, the exclusively commercial use of the Belden House shows a slight profit potential. Slightly higher rents or more favorable financing terms could move the project into more positive net revenues, but not at much more than maintenance levels and certainly not enough to consider it a foolproof investment, particularly given the volatility of the small and boutique shop marketplace. The use of the property for mission-driven purposes, or exclusively as a residence removes the consideration of profit or investment from the scenario, which could help explain the current ownership position.

In the second scenario, the suggestion made by one stakeholder in the process to move the Belden House and redevelop its former site was explored in more detail. In this scenario, the acquisition of the Belden House was left out, and the “cost of land” was basically seen as the expense involved with lifting the Belden House and placing it on a new foundation to the rear of the Comstock, Ferre property fronting Church Street. A new, three-story multi-use building was envisioned that would provide opportunity for new retail shops or restaurants to be added to Main Street, with office space and apartments above it. Unfortunately, the cost of construction outstrips the revenues generated at projected rental rates. Without some substantial rental premium or an unanticipated increase in Old Wethersfield market rates, the cost of quality construction (particularly with the need for a Historic District-appropriate design) doesn’t pay for itself. In the case of new construction, of course, the tax credit support isn’t available either.

Despite the apparent inability of a redevelopment of the Belden House location to generate a positive pro forma, there remains some value in considering the relocation of the Belden House to create an open, publicly-accessible space for shared functionality. Additional space adjacent to the Comstock, Ferre complex could be used for heritage gardening, a relocated Farmers’ Market, or a small pocket park to encourage picnicking and relaxation in the core of Old Wethersfield. In the case of the pro forma, modest rental fees for Farmers’ Market vendors could defray the minimal property tax burden and maintenance costs.

COMSTOCK, FERRE COMPLEX

Finding the Best Fit

Reviewing the history of the Comstock, Ferre & Co. seed business and its place in defining the character of Old Wethersfield, it becomes quickly clear that this property holds the potential to simultaneously offer commercial and historic value. While the parcel and the structures contain ample square footage to support a variety and mix of uses, prior proposals that suggest office or residential uses miss the point. In this one property, Old Wethersfield's agricultural heritage can be promoted as it is preserved.



Given the community's and the owners' desires for both increasing the visibility and attractiveness of the "destinations" of Old Wethersfield and the interest in playing up the district's historic elements, one can easily envision a plan that positions the Comstock, Ferre complex as a small-scale "living history museum." Operating as such, the existing seed business could thrive alongside other period-related retail, antiques, and heritage gifts. Portions of the complex could be dedicated to the teaching of historic arts and crafts, demonstrations of gardening or other agricultural activities, cooking or baking classes, lectures, day camps, special events, celebrations, and farmers' markets. Flexible indoor space such as that in the rear barns could support year-round activity.

Owner Vision

According to the Comstock, Ferre website (<http://comstockferre.com/about/>), the owners "are working to return Comstock, Ferre & Co. to its glorious beginnings as an heirloom seed company. Many of the varieties we are listing in this catalog are ones that Joseph and James Belden grew in the gardens around the colonial home where they were born. Also, the restoration of the grounds and eleven historic buildings, one of which was patriot Silas Deane's store in the 1700s, is an ongoing process. Our goal is to erase modern influences around the company and return it to something that William Comstock could recognize, if he were to walk through the doors. Comstock, Ferre will be a type of living history museum dedicated to agriculture and our diverse inheritance of heirloom seed varieties that are in danger of extinction, some of which have already passed through the sands of time."

This stated vision very much reflects the wishes and interests expressed by ownership in discussion and interviews for this study. The owners, who also own seed businesses in other parts of the country, intend to continue to operate Comstock, Ferre as a mail-order seed business, as well as maintaining a retail seed component to the business on-site in Wethersfield. They wish to use as much of the remainder of the complex in uses that are complementary of the seed business and reflective of the history of that use. A portion of the complex is currently devoted to the sale of antiques, and the owners would be open to expanding that use to more of the buildings. They would also be open to expanding retail sales to related uses, such as heritage crafts, local produce or locally-produced goods.

The overall programming for the Comstock, Ferre site, in the vision of the owners, would also include community educational elements. The large barns at the rear of the property have sufficient space to host community meetings, lectures, demonstrations, and other events. The owners have expressed willingness to consider hosting a farmers' market, which could be conducted both in the exterior grounds, and inside portions of the buildings. The greenhouse and the grounds offer sufficient space to establish demonstration gardens and to foster heirloom crops. The specific components of the owners' vision are still evolving, particularly as a nonprofit organization may be formed to manage the property, but they have expressed interest in collaborating with the community. Ultimately, however, the vision quoted above is quite clear about the desire to restore and elevate the historic nature, uses, and character of the property.

Public Input Suggestions

After several years of false starts and unfulfilled proposals for redevelopment of the Comstock, Ferre property, there was a general sense of optimism from stakeholders and participants in public input sessions about the direction being taken by the current property owners. Stakeholders seemed to support the promotion and use of the property as a centerpiece of a heritage tourism effort. While additional suggestions of a farm-to-plate restaurant, antiquarian book store, or centralized gift shop for Old Wethersfield and its museums, there was support and encouragement of the owners' vision. The one repeated comment about future use that departs from the current usage or plans related to hours of operation. The current Comstock, Ferre retail operation has relatively short daytime hours and is closed on Saturdays (for religious reasons). Expansion of hours, and particularly operation of the facility throughout the weekend would greatly improve Comstock, Ferre's ability to support weekend visitors, tourism, and the "critical mass" of activity in Old Wethersfield.

Comstock, Ferre Scenario One

Living History Museum / Retail / Community Education

Modifications required

Limited interior improvements are envisioned in this scenario that would feature open spaces that reflect the historic past of the buildings. The greatest costs will be incurred to insure that the facility is ADA compliant and energy efficient. Other significant costs will include upgrades to mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems as well as development of exterior landscaping.

Improvements could be prioritized to reflect immediate preservation needs and subsequently, those projects that will bring the greatest economic impact or attract the greatest amount of visitors to the site. It will be necessary for the owner to prioritize project goals in order to establish a pecking order for site development and property improvements. Initial projects that establish weather-tight building envelopes will insure that buildings that are not put into service right away, will remain stable for future use.

Developing the educational spaces and inviting the farmers’ market to share space will bring in a good deal of foot traffic that could benefit retail uses within the complex. Site development that ties together the passage from the street to the retail areas and then to the rear educational spaces could be relatively easily installed to provide not only visual delight, but also educational opportunities to showcase heirloom plantings.

Cost implications

Following is a list of potential improvements to accommodate public use of the Comstock, Ferre complex.

| | |
|---|----------------|
| • Window, door and exterior repairs | \$150,000.00 |
| • Structural improvements | \$260,000.00 |
| • HVAC systems | \$294,000.00 |
| • Interior improvements and finishes (@ \$10 / SF x 26,000 SF) | \$260,000.00 |
| • Accessibility improvements (elevator, ramps, etc.) | \$200,000.00 |
| • Site improvements | \$100,000.00 |
| | \$1,264,000.00 |

FACILITY REDEVELOPMENT CONCEPTS



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FACILITY REDEVELOPMENT CONCEPTS

PROFORMA

SCENARIO 1: COMSTOCK, FERRE

LIVING HISTORY MUSEUM / RETAIL / COMMUNITY EDUCATION

| <u>FUNDING</u> | Percent | Total |
|---|---------|-----------------|
| Owner Equity @ 20% | 20% | \$519,800.00 |
| Conventional Debt | 56% | \$1,460,360.00 |
| Federal Historic Tax Credit | 11% | \$275,040.00 |
| State Historic Tax Credit | 13% | \$343,800.00 |
| | <hr/> | <hr/> |
| | 100% | \$2,599,000.00 |
| <u>DEVELOPMENT COSTS</u> | | Total |
| Acquisition (including Legal / Costing) | | \$880,000.00 |
| Soft Costs (including Design / Permitting) | | \$150,000.00 |
| Construction Costs | | \$1,264,000.00 |
| Grounds / Landscape Renovation Costs | | \$100,000.00 |
| Interest During Construction / Bridge Loan | | \$75,000.00 |
| Contingency @ 10% | | \$130,000.00 |
| | | <hr/> |
| | | \$2,599,000.00 |
| <u>OPERATING INCOME</u> | | Total |
| Building A - 3,840 sf @ \$12 / sf | | \$46,080.00 |
| Building B - 4,608 sf @ \$10 / sf | | \$46,080.00 |
| Building C - 1,164 sf @ \$10 / sf | | \$11,640.00 |
| Building D - 3,690 sf @ \$10 / sf | | \$36,900.00 |
| Building E - 720 sf @ \$10 / sf | | \$7,200.00 |
| Building F - 648 sf @ \$8 / sf | | \$5,184.00 |
| Building G - 2,600 sf @ \$12 / sf | | \$31,200.00 |
| Building H - 3,328 sf @ \$12 / sf | | \$39,936.00 |
| Building I - 3,162 sf @ \$8 / sf | | \$25,296.00 |
| | | <hr/> |
| | | \$249,516.00 |
| <u>OPERATING EXPENSES</u> | | Total |
| Property Taxes (with estimated 20% abatement) | | \$55,440.00 |
| Debt Service @ 6% | | \$87,622.00 |
| Insurance & Maintenance | | \$18,000.00 |
| Repairs & Miscellaneous | | \$12,000.00 |
| | | <hr/> |
| | | \$173,062.00 |
| <u>NET ANNUAL REVENUE / LOSS</u> | | \$76,454.00 |

FACILITY REDEVELOPMENT CONCEPTS

NOTES:

| | |
|--|----------------|
| Eligible Rehabilitation Costs | \$1,719,000.00 |
| Maximum Federal Historic Tax Credits @ 20% | \$343,800.00 |
| Assumption -- 0.80 Equity | \$275,040.00 |
| Maximum State Historic Tax Credits @ 25% | \$429,750.00 |
| Assumption -- 0.80 Equity | \$343,800.00 |

* Assumes no vacancy

* Assume utility costs covered by tenants

* Assumes Renovation costs for 26,000 sf @ \$50 / sf

* Assumes developer negotiates 20% local property tax abatement with Town Council

Comstock, Ferre Pro Forma Notes

Because of the general consensus between owners, Town, and stakeholders, only one scenario was envisioned for the Comstock, Ferre property. While the specific uses in each building is somewhat uncertain and flexible, the overall approach was fairly straightforward. The majority of the buildings in the complex would be renovated and improved to make them appropriate and safe to use as retail, office, meeting, or community education space while still retaining the historic integrity of the property. The facility would become a “living museum” combined with appropriate retail and the grounds would largely be restored to green space or gardens.

Property acquisition figures are based on the cost the current owners took on in buying the site. The cost of acquisition, while high in isolation, can be seen as comparatively modest on a per-square-foot basis because there are so many buildings. Because the goal of the project is not to convert existing buildings into Class A office or high-end residential units, the cost of renovation and upgrades is considerably lower on a unit basis than it would be for the Masonic Hall, for instance. The rental rates for the resulting flexible commercial space would necessarily be lower. All of these factors result in a pro forma that seems to indicate a renovated and active Comstock, Ferre site could be a net revenue generator. The most significant and likely variable assumption in the pro forma is that all of the space available in all buildings that could reasonably be renovated and rented would be rented, and at moderate rates.

The specific ownership arrangement, a phased approach, and more modest rental expectations could change this analysis considerably. A transfer of ownership to a nonprofit, mission-based group that runs the property as an educational facility/museum could possibly eliminate the significant property tax line from the operating expenses portion of the analysis. Similarly, donations to and fundraising by a nonprofit group constitute an income stream quite apart from a traditional site-based pro forma.

FACILITY REDEVELOPMENT CONCEPTS



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FURTHER
RECOMMENDATIONS





FURTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

Aside from the potential for successful redevelopment and reuse of the subject properties, the entirety of Old Wethersfield will only benefit if the projects are integrated into the structure and function of the surrounding area. Input from owners, stakeholders, officials, and analysis of the area and existing plans have led to a number of additional recommendations for improvement of Old Wethersfield. These include the following:

Expanding On-Street Parking / Striping Parallel Parking

The most significant shortcoming to the redevelopment of the Masonic Hall (apart from cost considerations) is that of its lack of on-site or perceived dedicated parking. While assurances from the Planning & Zoning Commission that ample consideration will be given for off-site or shared parking relative to a redevelopment proposal for the Masonic Hall, the provision of additional parking in its immediate vicinity will substantially improve the prospects for a successful redevelopment of this property.

Additional parking could be provided along Main Street by expanding the public diagonal spaces to the south in front of the Masonic Hall. The diagonal spaces currently end in front of the Belden House. While diagonal parking should not get any closer to the intersection than 20-30 feet, there appears to be adequate space to add 5-6 new parking spaces in front of the Masonic Hall. An existing bench that is street-side of the sidewalk will have to be relocated, but the two large trees in front of the Masonic Hall appear to be sufficiently away from the street line to be unaffected by the parking expansion. A similar extension of diagonal parking area took place on the opposite side of Main Street, in front of Lucky Lou's restaurant, to allow for additional public parking accommodation.





Figure 1

Extend parking in front of Masonic Hall. Six additional spaces.

Identify dedicated parallel parking spaces on Church Street.

Parallel parking, while currently allowed on Church Street, is poorly marked and is inconsistently and inefficiently used. There is sufficient width on Church Street to accommodate on-street public parking on both sides of the street, particularly approaching the Main Street intersection. Addition of signage and on-street striping of parking spaces would encourage the use of this area of public parking, which would have the effect not only of supporting the vitality and reuse of the Masonic Hall building, but also reducing speeds at this intersection and calming the traffic in the core of Old Wethersfield.

Improvement of Intersection

The Main Street/Church Street/Marsh Street intersection is one of the most important gateways to Old Wethersfield, yet it is both confusing to vehicles and unfriendly to pedestrians. The overall effect of the intersection is to discourage pedestrian connection from the north to the south sides of Old Wethersfield and limiting the potential for shared parking opportunities. Substantial improvements to the intersection would significantly improve the character and connectivity of this portion of Old Wethersfield.

The two most significant problems at this intersection are the long and disjointed pedestrian crossings and the fact that traffic on Main Street is uncontrolled and does not have to stop at Church Street or March Streets. In the 2008 Old Wethersfield Master Plan, several alternative intersection designs were presented. A recent Main Street Investment Fund grant application was submitted by the Town of Wethersfield to pursue Alternative B.

FURTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

The proposed improvements to this intersection, while improving the pedestrian environment crossing Main Street and Church Street, also present the potential for additional visitor amenities. The intersection improvements will create new areas at the intersection curb that can be landscaped, and can host place-making and way-finding signage. A well-designed sign, with a map of the Old Wethersfield points of interest, shops, restaurants, parking, and other destinations, would serve multiple purposes. It would promote a park-once-and-walk approach; it would support a unified sense of center; and it would create or support a design theme for wayfinding and signage throughout the district. It should be noted, however, that the map should be created in such a manner that individual destinations, such as shop or restaurant names, be able to be changed easily to accommodate turnover.

Formalize Shared Parking with First Church

The most commonly voiced concern about Old Wethersfield's readiness and friendliness to commercial and tourist enterprise is the perception of insufficient parking. While in certain cases, such as the Masonic Hall property, there is a lack of proximate parking, the district overall has numerous parking resources and facilities. Public on-street parking and public lots behind the Keeney Center and other municipally-owned or community buildings in Old Wethersfield combine to be numerically sufficient to all but the highest-demand times.

The problem, based on the findings of multiple previous parking analyses conducted by the Town, and confirmed by direct observation, is one of convenience and perception. The highway-strip retail development pattern seen along the Silas Deane Highway and throughout suburban Connecticut has fostered an anticipation that ample, free dedicated parking will be located immediately in front of any destination. Historic villages that existed well prior to the advent of the automobile cannot and should not attempt to directly accommodate that perception, and the creation of substantial, new parking facilities is generally not perfectly harmonious with fostering a sense of historic charm. Generally speaking, shared parking and adequate signage to locate this parking should suffice to meet parking demand.

In Old Wethersfield, and particularly in the area of the subject properties on Main Street, the parking lot of the First Church holds the greatest potential to satisfy the desire for nearby parking. The Church is located at the corner of Marsh and Main Street, and has a parking area lot with over 150 spaces. The parking is very convenient to the shops and destinations along Main Street, but is set back from the street and is nicely screened and landscaped.



Aside from Church services and events, this lot spends the vast majority of its time mostly empty. A formal arrangement between the Church and the Town of Wethersfield or Old Wethersfield stakeholders such as the Shopkeepers Association or the Chamber of Commerce for the shared use and maintenance of this parking lot would simply and directly address this most commonly-voiced “shortcoming” of Old Wethersfield.

The Church lot, while certainly the largest pool of available parking in close proximity to the Main Street/Church Street intersection, is not the only private parking lot in the vicinity. Shared parking arrangements throughout the core of Old Wethersfield that make additional spaces available during peak demand times would not only alleviate perceptions of parking spot shortfalls, but would also support a spirit of cooperation and mutual promotion for Old Wethersfield as a destination. Finally, ample and appropriate signage directing visitors to this and other public parking resources would avoid the perception that parking is not available or is too remote.



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in OLD WETHERSFIELD*

CONCLUSION





*A Study of Revitalization Opportunities
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CONCLUSION

To point out that the Masonic Hall, Belden House, and Comstock, Ferre properties were important to the vitality of Old Wethersfield would be an exercise in understatement. Not only do these properties possess substantial historic and cultural relevance to the fabric of the Historic District, and not only are these properties situated in the geographic and activity center of the District, but their relative under-use and lack of activity over the past several years has made clear that Old Wethersfield's success as an economic and cultural entity depends in significant part on these three properties.

The flexibility of the Zoning Regulations for the Village Business District and the variety of uses that would be welcome in Old Wethersfield present different options to owners or potential developers of these properties. The Masonic Hall property presents a fairly blank canvas, with the potential for restaurant, retail, office, residential, or performance uses. From the Town's or the District's perspective, this property would most benefit the community with an active mix of uses, encouraging frequent visits and interaction with other Old Wethersfield destinations. Office or residential uses, while providing active use of the building itself, bring less vibrancy to the District.



Its location and history provides valuable ballast for Old Wethersfield, but the size and scale of the Belden House limit its impact as an economic driver. Redevelopment as a small-scale café, retail or office facility will provide some variety of activity and interest that would support surrounding uses, but are difficult to justify and sustain on purely economic terms. It does, however, improve on the otherwise "sunk" cost of a single-family residential use.

Although the challenges are significant, the path forward seems brightest for the Comstock, Ferre property. A best-fit analysis of the use of this property seems nearly perfectly aligned with the goals and plans of ownership and the interests of the



CONCLUSION

stakeholders and the community. Restoring the site to its historic glory and promoting it as a living museum would provide Old Wethersfield with a true destination and cultural asset that is able to simultaneously contribute to the economic activity throughout the District.

A physical and economic analysis of these properties has revealed, again to little surprise, that breathing new life into the buildings and integrating their use into the activity of Old Wethersfield is a complicated and costly endeavor. In most of the redevelopment scenarios examined, a positive cash flow is unlikely without significant outside support in the form of tax credits, property tax relief or grant funding. In order to improve the chance of success for these properties, the Town and the stakeholders of Old Wethersfield must be active partners and be truly invested. Assistance with shared parking agreements, intersection and landscape improvements, consideration of tax incentives, pursuit of additional grant funding, and engagement of regulatory and advisory commissions will all be critical components of successful redevelopment and a vibrant Old Wethersfield.

While the individual property owners hold the majority of responsibility for action and improvement of the subject properties, there are a number of specific implementation steps that can be undertaken by the Town of Wethersfield. Following is a list of these items, along with key implementation entities and likely timeframes.

Implementation Steps

| ACTION ITEM | RESPONSIBLE ENTITY | TIMEFRAME |
|--|---|---------------------------------------|
| Intersection improvements for Church / Main Streets | Planning & Development; Town Engineer; Public Works | 1-2 years, depending on MSIF Grant |
| Additional On-Street Parking on Main Street; Striping on Church Street | Town Engineer; Public Works | 1 year |
| Tax Abatement for Masonic Hall to support Improvement / Redevelopment | Town Council; Board of Finance | Year 1 and ongoing for 7-10 years |
| Identify Old Wethersfield as primary focus area for STEAP, MSIF, and Small Cities grants | PZC; Town Council (via formal resolution) | Less than 1 year |
| Develop formal shared parking agreement with First Church and other private parking areas on Main Street | Planning & Development; Town Manager; Chamber of Commerce | 1-2 years |
| Pursue additional funding resources through CT Main Street Center, DECD, STEAP, MSIF, Small Cities | Planning & Development Office | Ongoing |
| Explore relocating Wethersfield Farmers' Market to Comstock, Ferre property | Wethersfield Farmers' Market; Comstock, Ferre; Planning & Development | 1 year |
| Signage / Wayfinding improvements | EDIC; Chamber of Commerce; Planning & Development | 1-2 years |



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APPENDICES

Appendix A

MASONIC HALL PHYSICAL PROPERTIES STUDY

Structural Evaluation

•

Mechanical, Electrical, Plumbing Assessment

•

Hazardous Materials Survey



STRUCTURAL EVALUATION OF MASONIC HALL WETHERSFIELD, CONNECTICUT

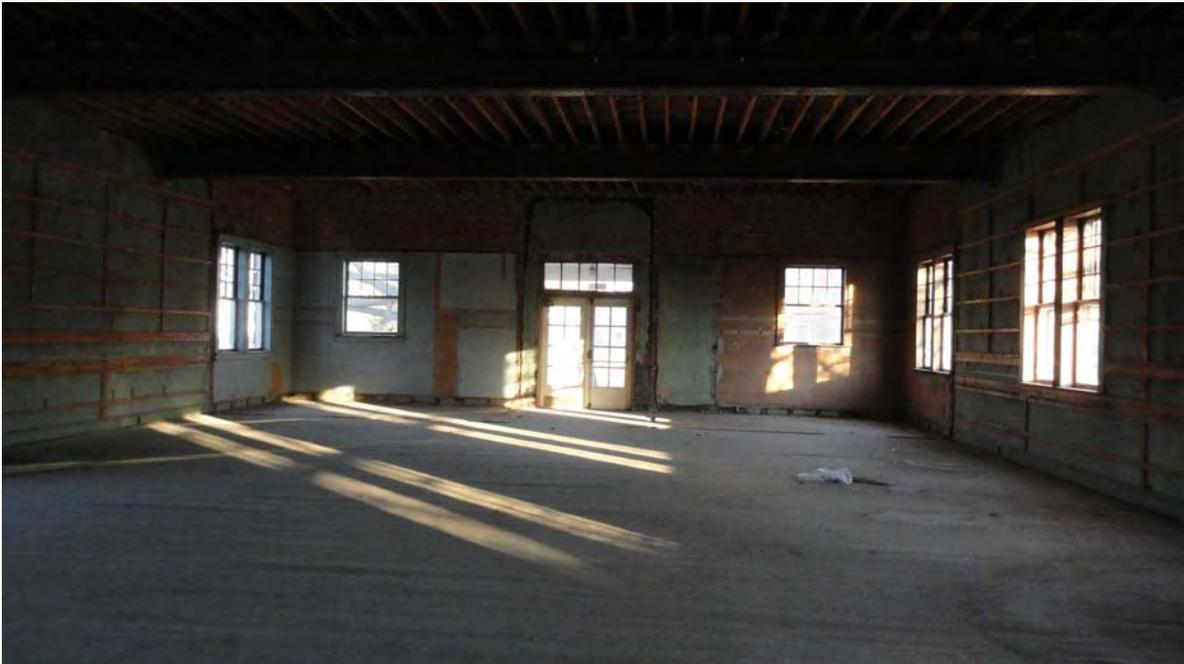
This purpose of this report is to provide a cursory review of the structural conditions of the existing building located at 245 Main St. in Wethersfield, CT. This review is based on a visual inspection performed by a CME engineer on December 13, 2012. No calculations were performed for this report.



At the time of the inspection, all interior partitions had been removed and the existing roof and floor framing was clearly visible. The roof framing consists of rough-sawn 2x wood purlins on steel trusses. No sagging or obvious signs of distress were observed. The first floor framing consists of rough-sawn 2x wood joists framed into ledgers on large timber beams which are then supported on round steel columns. Second floor framing was designed to create a clear and open space at the first floor level through the use of steel beams framing into the brick bearing walls with 2x wood joists spanning between the beams. It is evident that the framing was sized for large assembly loads and is in sound condition. It is anticipated that the existing framing would be suitable to support the required loads, given a future use of retail, assembly, or residential space.



In several areas however, buckling of the oak flooring and water stains were observed which indicates past or present water intrusion through the roof. It is recommended that the wide-board roof sheathing and sub-floor be inspected for water damage and replaced as necessary.



SALAMONE & ASSOCIATES, P.C.

Consulting Engineers

3035 Whitney Avenue • Hamden • Connecticut • 06518 • Phone (203) 281-6895 • Fax (203) 287-8728

EXISTING PLUMBING, MECHANICAL AND ELECTRICAL EVALUATION **245 MAIN STREET:**

Plumbing System:



The building is equipped with a natural gas riser from the street. The natural gas meter and main piping have been removed.



Domestic cold water enters the building in the basement. The meter and main piping have been removed.



Sanitary main and branch piping is located throughout the building. The majority of the piping appears to be in bad condition. Replacement is warranted due to age and condition.

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An existing bathroom has domestic pipe stubs that appeared to be abandoned in place. Replacement is warranted due to condition.

Mechanical System:



The only mechanical component in place is an atmospheric flue damper that is routed to the chimney. Removal is required.

Electrical System:



The electrical service for the building is routed overhead from a utility pole located on Church Street. Service conductors are routed down the side of the building in conduit and terminate in an antiquated panel located in the basement with the electrical meter located adjacent to it. Both the panel and meter enclosure are in very poor condition and require replacement.

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Branch circuit wiring for the building appeared to have been run in flexible metal conduit. Although some flexible metal conduit remains in place, it appears that the vast majority has been removed.



Electrical switches and most of the receptacles within the building were removed. Only a few receptacles installed in the baseboard remained and were in poor condition.



The only lighting remaining within the building are a damaged dual head emergency lighting unit, antiquated exit sign and a few exterior light fixtures in poor condition. All other light fixtures have been removed.



Telecommunications wiring runs overhead from a utility pole on Church Street and down the side of the building and through the framework of the basement window. No interior telecommunications wiring was observed within the building.

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Only components remaining of the fire alarm system observed were a combination horn/strobe device and associated conduit located on the exterior of the building which was in poor condition and the disconnect switch located in the basement above the electrical panel.

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PLUMBING SYSTEM DESIGN CONCEPT:

Proposed Plumbing System:

The vast majority of plumbing fixtures, piping, valves and meter have been removed from the building. What remains is antiquated or in very poor conduit and should also be demolished. The building requires all new plumbing systems.

Our office recommends the following proposed Plumbing System:

New sanitary and domestic water system for the building.

New plumbing fixtures including water closets, lavatories, etc.

MECHANICAL SYSTEM DESIGN CONCEPT:

Proposed Mechanical System:

All the mechanical equipment has been removed from the building. The building requires all new mechanical systems.

Our office recommends the following proposed Mechanical System:

New gas fired furnaces.

New ductwork.

New condensing units.

New bathroom exhaust fans.

New controls.

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Consulting Engineers

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ELECTRICAL SYSTEM DESIGN CONCEPT:

Proposed Electrical System:

The vast majority of electrical equipment, devices, wiring, conduit, etc. have been removed from the building. What remains is antiquated or in very poor conduit and should also be demolished. The building requires all new electrical systems.

Our office recommends the following proposed Electrical System:

New electrical service and distribution system for the building including all associated panels, wiring, conduit, etc.

New lighting (interior and exterior) provided by energy efficient fixtures.

New emergency and egress lighting systems.

New receptacles, switches and all associated wiring and conduit.

New telecommunications system.

New fire alarm system.

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ESTIMATED DESIGN COSTS

*Does not include hazardous materials

*Based upon renovation as an apartment building

Proposed Plumbing System:

*Based upon renovation as an apartment building

| | |
|--|--------------|
| • Demolition of remaining piping: | \$3,000.00 |
| • Proposed sanitary pipe distribution: | \$15,000.00 |
| • Proposed gas pipe distribution: | \$3,000.00 |
| • Proposed domestic water pipe distribution: | \$12,000.00 |
| • Proposed plumbing fixtures: | \$20,000.00 |
| • Proposed water heaters: | \$6,000.00 |
| • Subtotal: | \$59,000.00 |
| • 10% Overhead: | \$5,900.00 |
| • Subtotal: | \$ 64,900.00 |
| • 10% Profit: | \$ 6,490.00 |
| • Total: | \$ 71,390.00 |
| • Say: | \$ 71,500.00 |

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Proposed Mechanical System:

*Based upon renovation as an apartment building

| | |
|--|-------------|
| • Proposed gas fired furnaces: | \$20,000.00 |
| • Air cooled condensing units for cooling: | \$12,000.00 |
| • Proposed ductwork distribution: | \$10,000.00 |
| • Proposed bathroom exhaust fans: | \$3,000.00 |
| • Proposed thermostats: | \$2,000.00 |
| • Subtotal: | \$47,000.00 |
| • 10% Overhead: | \$4,700.00 |
| • Subtotal: | \$51,700.00 |
| • 10% Profit: | \$5,170.00 |
| • Total: | \$56,870.00 |
| • Say: | \$57,000.00 |

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Proposed Electrical System:

*Based upon renovation as an apartment building

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ESTIMATED DESIGN COSTS

*Does not include hazardous materials

*Based upon renovation as an office building

Proposed Plumbing System:

*Based upon renovation as an office building

| | |
|--|-------------|
| • Demolition of remaining piping: | \$3,000.00 |
| • Proposed sanitary pipe distribution: | \$13,000.00 |
| • Proposed gas pipe distribution: | \$1,500.00 |
| • Proposed domestic water pipe distribution: | \$8,000.00 |
| • Proposed plumbing fixtures: | \$10,000.00 |
| • Proposed water heaters: | \$3,000.00 |
| • Subtotal: | \$38,500.00 |
| • 10% Overhead: | \$3,850.00 |
| • Subtotal: | \$42,350.00 |
| • 10% Profit: | \$4,235.00 |
| • Total: | \$46,585.00 |
| • Say: | \$47,000.00 |

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Proposed Mechanical System:

*Based upon renovation as an office building

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Proposed Electrical System:

*Based upon renovation as an office building

| | |
|---|-------------|
| • Demolition of remaining electrical equipment: | \$1,000.00 |
| • Proposed electrical service/distribution: | \$18,000.00 |
| • Proposed energy efficient light fixtures: | \$25,000.00 |
| • Proposed switches and receptacles: | \$4,000.00 |
| • Miscellaneous electrical connections, equipment, wiring, conduit, etc.: | \$6,000.00 |
| • Proposed fire alarm: | \$10,000.00 |
| • Proposed telecommunications: | \$6,400.00 |
| • Subtotal: | \$70,400.00 |
| • 10% Overhead: | \$7,040.00 |
| • Subtotal: | \$77,040.00 |
| • 10% Profit: | \$7,744.00 |
| • Total: | \$84,784.00 |
| • Say: | \$85,000.00 |

**INITIAL WALKTHROUGH INSPECTION REPORT
FOR**

**MASONIC HALL BUILDING
245 MAIN STREET
WETHERSFIELD, CONNECTICUT**

PROVIDED TO

**CME ENGINEERING, INC.
32 CRABTREE LANE
WOODSTOCK, CONNECTICUT**

PROVIDED BY

**EAGLE ENVIRONMENTAL, INC.
531 NORTH MAIN STREET
BRISTOL, CONNECTICUT**

MARCH 21, 2013

EAGLE PROJECT NO. 13-014.11

**EAGLE ENVIRONMENTAL, INC.
531 NORTH MAIN STREET • BRISTOL, CT 06010
PHONE (860) 589-8257 • FAX (860) 585-7034**

1.0 INTRODUCTION

CME Engineering, Inc. (CME) retained Eagle Environmental, Inc. (Eagle) to perform an initial walkthrough inspection to document suspect hazardous building materials at the former Masonic Hall building at 245 Main Street in Wethersfield, Connecticut.

Eagle's Senior Manager, Ashis Roychowdhury, performed this inspection on February 21, 2013.

2.0 BUILDING DESCRIPTION

The subject property is a 2,800 SF two-story structure with a basement, porch and a flat roof constructed in 1921. The interior construction is plaster walls with plywood flooring. The exterior walls are brick.

3.0 SCOPE OF INSPECTION

The inspection was intended to identify presence of potential hazardous materials existing in the buildings that will be impacted by the proposed renovation. This included asbestos-containing materials (ACM), lead-based paint (LBP), universal waste and PCB-containing materials. The basement and the roof were inaccessible for inspection.

Following summarize our findings:

3.1 Asbestos Containing Materials

The following suspect asbestos-containing materials were observed in the building:

Interior

1. Wall plaster – skim and rough coats
2. Black tar on brick walls
3. Possible vapor barrier under wood floor
4. Stair tread and adhesive

Exterior

1. Roofing materials (built-up roof, perimeter/penetration flashing)
2. Window glazing compound

3.2 Other Hazardous Materials

Lead-based Paint

In absence of knowledge of painting history, we recommend a screening of building materials for lead-based paint.

Universal Waste

We recommend visual inspection and inventory for universal waste materials such as fluorescent light bulbs, PCB/DEHP ballast and thermostats.

Chlorofluorocarbons

No discernable sources of Chlorofluorocarbon were identified in the buildings.

PCB-Containing Materials

Exterior window glazing compound and stair tread adhesive may have PCB and should be sampled.

Appendix B

SIMEON BELDEN HOUSE PHYSICAL PROPERTIES STUDY

Structural Evaluation

•

Mechanical, Electrical, Plumbing Assessment

•

Hazardous Materials Survey



STRUCTURAL EVALUATION OF SIMEON BELDEN HOUSE WETHERSFIELD, CONNECTICUT

This purpose of this report is to provide a cursory review of the structural conditions of the existing building Simeon Belden House located on 249 Main Street in Wethersfield, CT. This review is based on a visual inspection performed by a CME engineer on December 13, 2012. No calculations were performed for this report.

The Belden House, currently in use as a residence, is located between the Comstock Ferre property and the Masonic Temple. This building was originally constructed in the 1767 but the first floor framing appears to have been replaced at one point in its history. The first floor joists are 2x sawn timbers. The 2nd floor framing is not visible but exhibits slight sagging and sloping which is common to homes of this age. The gambrel roof framing, while probably undersized according to modern standards appears to be carrying all vertical loads without signs of extreme distress.



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EXISTING PLUMBING, MECHANICAL AND ELECTRICAL EVALUATION FOR THE SIMEON BELDEN HOUSE:

Plumbing System:



The kitchen has a stainless steel three (3) bay sink with single faucet and grease trap. The fixture appeared to be in good condition.



Adjacent to the three (3) bay sink a hand wash sink and dishwasher were observed. The fixtures appear to be in good condition.



The basement has an abandoned electric hot water heater. Removal is required.

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Domestic hot water is provided by a oil fired water heater, manufactured by the Bock Company and a oil fired burner by Carlin. The tank and burner appeared to in good condition.



The first floor bathroom has a tank type water closet that appeared to be in good condition.



Adjacent to the water closet a newer wall mounted lavatory with a single lever faucet is installed and appeared to be in good condition.

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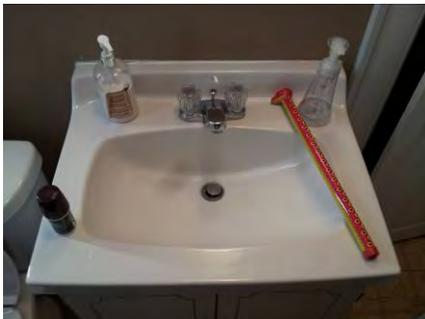
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The second floor bathroom has a freestanding bath tub with an detachable shower head. Each fixture appears to be in good condition.



Adjacent to the bath tub a tank type water closet appeared to be in good condition.



A newer lavatory appears to be in good condition.

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Mechanical System:



A new oil fired furnace manufactured by the American Standard Company provides heating for one side of the house. It is controlled by a wall mounted thermostat and appeared to be in good condition.



The basement has an additional oil fired furnace that serves the other living unit in the house. The unit appeared to be over twenty five (25) years old and in poor condition. Replacement is warranted due to age and condition.



Floor and wall grilles were observed throughout the first and second floors. Each grille appeared to be in good condition

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The majority of the rooms have sidewall grilles. All the grilles appear to be newer and in good condition.



A wall mounted thermostat in the living room controls the oil fired furnace. The unit is manufactured by the Honeywell Company and is in good condition.

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Electrical System:



Electrical service for both address of the Belden House (#251 & #249) is routed underground from a utility pole on Main Street via a single PVC conduit to the basement of the building. The service rating for each address is 100 ampere at a 120/208V, 1-phase, 3-wire voltage configuration.

The electrical meter and panel for each respective address is also located in the basement. In addition, to the main panel for address #251, a 60 ampere sub-panel is located below it. This sub-panel appears to have been installed for the prior coffee shop located on the ground floor of #251.



Branch circuit wiring for both addresses of the building consisted primarily of nonmetallic-sheathed cable (NMC). The few remaining circuits not NMC were routed in flexible metal conduit with the exception of the attic lighting circuit. Attic lighting is currently still utilizing Knob and Tube wiring.

EMT was installed in limited distances on HVAC equipment.

Surface mounted raceway (Wiremold) was observed in a few rooms.

Electrical junction box in basement was missing a cover plate.

Existing knob and tube wiring should be removed and replaced with new NMC cable. Appropriate cover plates should be provided for junction boxes missing them.



Switches primarily consisted of an antiquated push on push off type with the remainder being a standard toggle type. The switches controlled the lighting for the respective area.

Receptacles consisted of NEMA 5 type duplex receptacles with GFCI type duplex receptacles installed in the kitchen/coffee shop area. Receptacles were observed to be recessed mounted, surface mounted or mounted horizontal in

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the baseboard. Solid cover plates were located in the floor a small distance from the wall. The plates are most likely for a floor receptacle that has been removed.

All receptacles and switches should be removed and replaced and GFCI duplex receptacles installed in all locations required by the National Electrical Code (NEC).



Lighting consisted of surface mounted light fixtures utilizing incandescent bulbs. Incandescent wall sconces were also observed.

Knob and Tube type porcelain sockets were observed in the attic.

Existing light fixtures are inefficient and antiquated in the attic. Lighting should be removed and replaced with new energy efficient fixtures.



Telecommunications wiring is routed underground from utility pole on Main Street to SNI and punch down blocks located in basement.

Telephone jacks were observed in only a few areas.

Existing system should remain and be reused with additional jacks installed.



Fire alarm system consisted of smoke detectors located in limited areas of the building.

Existing fire alarm devices should be removed and replaced with hardwired smoke detectors with battery backup. These detectors should be wired in tandem and located as required by current fire alarm code. Due to the historic nature of the building consideration should be given to providing a monitored fire alarm system.

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PLUMBING SYSTEM DESIGN CONCEPT:

The plumbing system appears to be in good condition. No work required except for removal of the abandoned water heater.

MECHANICAL SYSTEM DESIGN CONCEPT:

Proposed Mechanical System:

One of the oil fired furnaces appear to be beyond their useful life and in poor condition. Given the useful service life of this equipment and current condition, cost of service and replacement parts along with labor to maintain units could become cost prohibitive. Energy savings will be present with an introduction of proposed components due to the modern day concern for savings and operations. Our office recommends completely removing the older oil fired furnace system and clean related ductwork.

Our office recommends the following proposed Mechanical System:

Replace existing oil fired furnace with high efficiency oil fired furnace.

Clean existing ductwork for each furnace system.

Add direct expansion cooling via high efficiency air cooled condensing units and coils. (optional)

ELECTRICAL SYSTEM DESIGN CONCEPT:

Proposed Electrical System:

The existing lighting fixtures are in good to fair condition but are energy inefficient. Switches are antiquated and beyond their useful life expectancy. Receptacles are in good to fair condition with their years of use varying.

Our office recommends the following proposed Electrical System:

Replace existing light fixtures with energy efficient fixtures.

Replace existing receptacles, switches and add additional where warranted/required by code.

Removal of obsolete and abandoned wiring and conduit.

Upgrade fire alarm system to comply with current code.

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ESTIMATED DESIGN COSTS

*Does not include hazardous materials

Proposed Plumbing System:

Not Applicable.

Proposed Mechanical System:

*Does not include hazardous materials

| | |
|---|-------------|
| • Demolition of the existing oil fired furnace: | \$1,500.00 |
| • Proposed high efficiency oil fired furnace: | \$4,000.00 |
| • Duct cleaning: | \$1,000.00 |
| • Proposed DX cooling for furnaces: | \$5,000.00 |
| • Subtotal: | \$11,500.00 |
| • 10% Overhead: | \$1,150.00 |
| • Subtotal: | \$12,650.00 |
| • 10% Profit: | \$1,265.00 |
| • Total: | \$13,915.00 |
| • Say: | \$14,000.00 |

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Proposed Electrical System:

*Does not include hazardous materials

*Does not include electrical upgrade for cooling

| | |
|--|------------|
| • Demolition of knob and tube wiring: | \$200.00 |
| • Proposed energy efficient light fixtures: | \$1,500.00 |
| • Proposed switches and receptacles: | \$1,000.00 |
| • Miscellaneous electrical connections, equipment, wiring, conduit, etc: | \$1,500.00 |
| • Proposed fire alarm: | \$1,000.00 |
| • Subtotal: | \$5,200.00 |
| • 10% Overhead: | \$520.00 |
| • Subtotal: | \$5,720.00 |
| • 10% Profit: | \$572.00 |
| • Total: | \$6,292.00 |
| • Say: | \$6,300.00 |

**INITIAL WALKTHROUGH INSPECTION REPORT
FOR**

**SIMEON BELDEN HOUSE
249 MAIN STREET
WETHERSFIELD, CONNECTICUT**

PROVIDED TO

**CME ENGINEERING, INC.
32 CRABTREE LANE
WOODSTOCK, CONNECTICUT**

PROVIDED BY

**EAGLE ENVIRONMENTAL, INC.
531 NORTH MAIN STREET
BRISTOL, CONNECTICUT**

MARCH 21, 2013

EAGLE PROJECT NO. 13-014.11

**EAGLE ENVIRONMENTAL, INC.
531 NORTH MAIN STREET • BRISTOL, CT 06010
PHONE (860) 589-8257 • FAX (860) 585-7034**

1.0 INTRODUCTION

CME Engineering, Inc. (CME) retained Eagle Environmental, Inc. (Eagle) to perform an initial walkthrough inspection to document suspect hazardous building materials at the Simeon Belden House at 245 Main Street in Wethersfield, Connecticut. This historic property is planned to be renovated. Eagle's Senior Manager, Ashis Roychowdhury, performed this inspection on February 21, 2013. Mr. Randel Agrella of Comstock-Ferre Seed Company was present during the walkthrough.

2.0 BUILDING DESCRIPTION

This is a 1,584 SF two-story structure with a basement and a porch constructed in 1767. The interior construction is drywall/hardwood. The exterior is wood clapboard walls with pitched shingled roof.

3.0 SCOPE OF INSPECTION

The inspection was intended to identify presence of potential hazardous materials existing in the buildings that will be impacted by the proposed renovation. This included asbestos-containing materials (ACM), lead-based paint (LBP), universal waste and PCB-containing materials.

Following summarize our findings:

3.1 Asbestos Containing Materials

The following suspect asbestos-containing materials were observed in the building:

Interiors

Basement

1. Ceiling plaster
2. Flue patch/mud on boiler breeching
3. Undercoat on stored stainless steel sinks

First Floor

1. Sheetrock walls and ceiling
2. Ceiling plaster
3. Door caulk
4. Window glazing compound
5. Glue behind wood panels (bathroom)

Second Floor

1. Popcorn ceiling plaster
2. Sheetrock walls & ceiling
3. 12"x12" Floor tile and mastic-Type I (bathroom)
4. Sheet vinyl flooring and adhesive (bathroom)
5. 12"x12" Floor tile and mastic-Type II (kitchen)
6. Window glazing compound
7. Sink undercoat

Apartment Unit

1. Sheet vinyl flooring and adhesive (bathroom)
2. Ceiling plaster
3. 12"x12" Floor tile and mastic (kitchen)
4. Sink undercoat

Attic

No suspect ACM was found

Exterior

1. Roofing shingles
2. Chimney flue cement
3. Door/window glazing compound
4. Potential vapor barrier behind clapboard siding

3.2 Other Hazardous Materials

Lead-based Paint

In absence of knowledge of painting history, we recommend a screening of building materials for lead-based paint in both the buildings.

Universal Waste

We recommend visual inspection and inventory for universal waste materials such as fluorescent light bulbs, PCB/DEHP ballast and thermostats.

Chlorofluorocarbons

No discernable sources of Chlorofluorocarbon were identified in the buildings.

PCB-Containing Materials

Interior and exterior window glazing compounds may have PCB and should be sampled.

Appendix C

COMSTOCK, FERRE SEED COMPANY COMPLEX PHYSICAL PROPERTIES STUDY

Structural Evaluation

•

Mechanical, Electrical, Plumbing Assessment

•

Hazardous Materials Survey



STRUCTURAL EVALUATION OF COMSTOCK, FERRE & CO. BUILDINGS WETHERSFIELD, CONNECTICUT

This purpose of this report is to provide a cursory review of the structural conditions of the existing buildings located on the Comstock Ferre & CO. property located on 263 Main Street in Wethersfield, CT. Three buildings are evaluated in this report. These include the structure currently being used as retail space located at the East of the property (Building "A" on the site plan), the barn located at extreme West end of the property (Building "B" on the site plan), and the residential property located on the East of the property (Building "C" on the site plan).

This review is based on a visual inspection performed by a CME engineer on December 13, 2012. No calculations were performed for this report.

BUILDING A

Building "A" is an L shaped buildings which is comprised of two distinct structures. The Easternmost structure consists of brick walls and timber framing. It also appears to be the oldest portion of building A as the exposed timbers are hand-hewn as opposed to saw-cut timbers used in other areas. These timbers also appear to be recycled from other structures.



Much of the structure is concealed by paneling or plaster, however several portions of the floor and wall framing are visible. The floor framing consists of wide-board subfloor over widely spaced (>4') shallow joists. Signs of water intrusion and deterioration exist. It should be noted that a newer roof is on the building and this damage has most likely occurred in the past. There is a noticeable sloping and sag to the floors between supports. This is most likely due to undersized floor framing members and the possibility of failed mortise and tenon joints.



Regardless of the intended use of this portion of the building (either as retail, office, or assembly space) the floor and possibly the roof framing will require strengthening to conform to the current building code. As the depth of the existing floor system is fairly shallow (approx. 6”), the use of additional floor framing members are anticipated. New floor joists can be added (sistered) adjacent to the deteriorated joist. We recommend that the original joist be left in place to maintain the original nature of the structure. It is also likely that the mortise and tendon joints at the ends of the existing floor framing members have failed. The use of steel joist hangers would be required if this were the case. The condition of the remainder of the post-and-beam structure was not visible but it should be anticipated that a large portion will need to be strengthened to support the required loads.



The western portion of Building A, which is currently in use as retail space on the first floor is a post-and-beam structure. A large portion of the second floor is currently unused. The second floor framing consists of 2 inch wide joists spaced at approximately 16” O.C. Many of the posts appear to be recycled from other structures as many have section loss due to past notching. The type of connections between beams and posts varies across the structure.



If the second floor were to be used as a retail or assembly space, it is expected that the floor joists would require little strengthening. It is anticipated that many of the post and beam connections are sub-standard and may require upgrading.

If an analysis of the floor framing reveals minor deficiencies, it may be possible to obtain a waiver from the building official for a lower floor load (CT Building Code 3407). The building code does allow for this type of waiver for historic structures. A limitation of maximum building occupancy or maximum storage load may be in order if this approach is taken.

BUILDING B

Building B is a large barn located at the extreme West end of the property. The barn has three distinct portions: the west unfinished portion, the central finished portion, and the east finished portion. This structure has recently been evaluated by visual means by three different consultant engineers. An assessment was performed by Marc D. D'Amore, P.E. of Hewitt Engineering in May 2007. Two assessments were performed in June of 2008 by Carl S. Cianci, P.E. of Cianci Engineering and Robert N. Smart, P.E.



As stated previously in the past evaluations, the western portion of the barn is in the poorest condition. In many areas the roof is leaking and the existing timber framing is heavily deteriorated in places. While this portion of the barn may be rehabilitated, the cost may be prohibitively high.



The center and eastern portions are currently finished and do not allow for a clear visual inspection of the framing. However, as no signs of distress are present (sagging, out of plumb walls, water intrusion, etc.) it is reasonable to conclude that the structure is structurally sufficient. If the upper floors of the center portion were to be used as retail or assembly it is likely that the floor framing would require strengthening to support these high proposed loads.

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EXISTING FIRE PROTECTION PLUMBING, MECHANICAL AND ELECTRICAL EVALUATION FOR COMSTOCK FERRE BUILDING:

Fire Protection System:



Located within the basement the fire service piping enters the building and is routed throughout the building. The wet system is comprised of upright sprinkler heads located on the first and second floors. The attic areas are not heated and are equipped with a dry system. The system valves and pipes appeared to have been recently serviced and in good condition.



Typical upright sprinkler head observed on the first floor. In some areas the heads are equipped with baffles for protection. The heads appeared to be over twenty five (25) years old and in fair condition.



The dry system has two (2) compressors located on the second floor and bridge. Each has been recently serviced and appeared to be in fair condition.

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Plumbing System:



The building's water meter is located within the front of the basement. The piping and associated valves appeared to be in poor condition due to age. Replacement is warranted due to age and condition.



An electric domestic hot water heater is located in the basement and provides hot water to the plumbing fixtures. The unit is manufactured by the State Company, has a capacity of forty (40) gallons and appeared to be in good condition.



A single bowl sink was observed on the first floor. The sink and faucet appeared to be over twenty five (25) years old and in poor condition. Replacement is warranted due to age and condition.

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The building has one (1) bathroom located on the second floor. The bathroom has a tank type water closet and lavatory. Both fixtures appeared to average working condition.



The basement has an fiberglass two (2) bay service sink with a single faucet. The fixture appears to be over twenty five (25) years old and in poor condition. Replacement is warranted due to age and condition.



Natural gas for the building is provided by an exterior meter located in front of the building. The meter serves the gas fired heating equipment.

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Two (2) fuel oil tanks are located within the basement. Each tank has a separate fill/vent and a capacity of two hundred and seventy five (275) gallons. The tanks appeared to be over twenty five (25) years old with exterior deterioration present. Removal is warranted for conversion to natural gas.

Mechanical System:



An oil fired hydronic boiler system is located within the basement. The boiler is manufactured by the Pennsotti Company and serves the cast iron radiation located on the second floor. The boiler system appears to be over twenty five (25) years old and in poor condition. Replacement is warranted due to age, efficiency, condition and the proposed system shall be gas fired.



Wall mounted thermostats manufactured by the Honeywell Company provide control for the boiler and furnaces. The units are heating only, appear to be in fair condition and over twenty five (25) years old. Replacement is warranted due to age.

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Cast iron floor air supply grilles are located on the first and second floors. The grilles appeared to be in fair condition with debris located within and minor deterioration present. Each grill should be cleaned and refinished.



The second floor office area is heated by several hydronic cast iron radiation units. Each unit is manufactured by the Thatcher Company and is equipped with a shut off valve and air vent. The units appeared to be over fifty (50) years old and in fair condition.



The first floor is heated by an oil fired furnace located within the basement. The unit is manufactured by the Machtron Company and serves the floor supply grilles on the first floor. The furnace appears to be over twenty five (25) years old and in poor condition. Replacement is warranted due to age, efficiency and condition. Proposed system shall be gas fired and all existing ductwork shall be cleaned.

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The second floor is heated by an oil fired furnace is located within a small area in the basement. The unit is manufactured by the Williamson Company and serves the floor supply grilles on the first floor. The furnace appears to be over twenty five (25) years old and in poor condition. Replacement is warranted due to age, efficiency and condition. Proposed system shall be gas fired and all the existing ductwork shall be cleaned.



The first floor museum is heated by a single gas fired non-ducted furnace. A local thermostat provides control of the unit and the blower is constant volume. The unit appeared to be in good condition.



The building's front entry is heated by a ceiling mounted gas fired unit heater manufactured by the Bryant Company. A wall mounted thermostat manufactured by the White Rogers Company provides unit control. Each component appeared to be over twenty five (25) years old and in fair condition. Replacement is warranted due to age.

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The Greenhouse is heated by a gas fired furnace manufactured by the Williamson Company. The furnace appears to be over twenty five (25) years old and in poor condition. Replacement is warranted due to age and condition. Existing ductwork should be cleaned prior to proposed unit installation.



General ventilation for the Greenhouse is provided by a wall mounted propeller fan. The fan is controlled by a wall switch, appeared to be over twenty five (25) years old and in poor condition. Replacement is warranted due to age and condition.

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Electrical System:

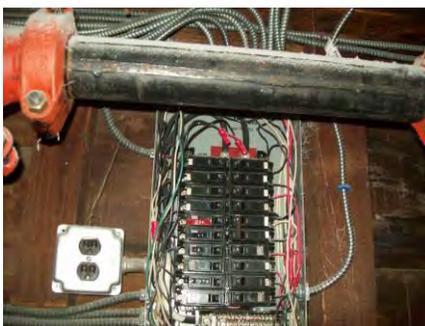


The service for the Comstock, Ferre & Company main building is routed underground from a street utility pole located on Main Street to the main electrical panel located in the basement of the building. The service is rated at 200 amperes at a 120/208V, 3-phase, 4-wire voltage configuration.

Dependent upon electrical load increase due to envisioned upgrades, electrical service for the building may have to be increased.



The electrical meter for the building is also located in the basement to the left of the main panel. A manual generator transfer switch was located adjacent to the meter. However, no generator is located on site and the generator connection point could not be located at the time of this site visit.



Five electrical panels were observed within the building. The main electrical panel and sub-panel were located in the basement. Two panels were observed on the second floor above the seed room below. An additional panel was located in the attic (pictured right). Attic panel was missing cover.

In addition, another panel was located in the mechanical closet of the green house attached to the building.

The electrical panels are in various condition states for their age with the conditions ranging from good to poor. Cover for electrical panel in attic should be installed. Panels in fair or poor condition should be upgraded.

Numerous types of wiring/conduit were observed throughout the building. It appears as original Knob and Tube wiring and

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insulators (picture right) were not completely removed when demolished in the past. A number of insulators and some wiring remnants were still in place.

Service wiring to the meter and main electrical panel is routed in PVC conduit. The feeder wiring to respective panels within the building is routed in electrical metallic conduit (EMT).



Branch circuit wiring is primarily run in flexible metal conduit in both concealed and exposed areas. EMT was also utilized for some branch circuits where installation required surface mounting of conduits. Wiremold surface raceway was also installed in some areas which required surface mounting. In addition, nonmetallic-sheathed cable (NMC) was also observed in a couple of instances in the attics and in the basement.

All remnants of the knob and tube wiring still in place should be removed. All NMC circuits should be replaced with wire installed in metal clad (MC) conduit.



A number of electrical outlet and junction boxes were missing covers.

Electrical outlets and junction boxes missing covers should have appropriate cover plates installed.



The vast majority of receptacles within the building are NEMA 5 duplex receptacles. They are primarily surface mounted on the walls as well as the ceiling in some instances. A large number of them have been painted over. A few were observed to be NEMA 1 and do not contain a blade for a ground prong.

Switches were primarily single pole and controlled the lighting within their respective areas. A few switches were also painted over.

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All receptacles and switches should be removed and replaced and GFCI duplex receptacles installed in all locations required by the National Electrical Code (NEC).



Lighting within the building consisted primarily of eight foot two lamp surface mounted fluorescent fixtures utilizing T-12 lamps. Porcelain sockets with incandescent bulbs provided lighting in the attic spaces. Lighting within the seed area was provided by festoon lighting. Also observed were a few incandescent wall sconces, four foot fluorescent fixtures with T-12 lamps and a ceiling fan. Lighting in the green house was provided by incandescent fixtures mounted at the peak with floodlight bulbs installed. Also observed were surface mounted two lamp fluorescent fixtures.

Existing light fixtures are inefficient, antiquated and in overall poor condition. All lighting should be removed and replaced with new energy efficient fixtures.



Telecommunications wiring is routed underground from a utility pole on Main Street. The demarcation point is located in the basement adjacent to the main electrical panel on a plywood backboard. The backboard contains punch down blocks and a security control panel which is no longer in use.

A limited number of jacks were observed in the office areas of the building.

Obsolete wiring and equipment should be removed entirely. The telecommunications system should be upgraded with new wiring utilizing CAT 5e or CAT 6 cabling and jacks.

The building did not contain a fire alarm system. The fire suppression system flow switches appeared to be connected to a local 120V bell.

An addressable fire alarm system should be installed for complete coverage of the building.

Consideration should be given to installing a security and/or CCTV system.

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FIRE PROTECTION SYSTEM DESIGN CONCEPT:

Existing Fire Protection System:

The existing systems should be tested and modified as required for the proposed layout space. Most areas appear to have minimal heat and the existing wet system is in these areas. Adding more to the dry system would assist in preventing future issues. This work should occur as soon as possible.

PLUMBING SYSTEM DESIGN CONCEPT:

Proposed Plumbing System:

The components that are a part of the plumbing system appear to be beyond their useful life and in poor condition. Given the useful service life of this equipment and current condition, cost of service and replacement parts along with labor to maintain units could become cost prohibitive. Energy savings will be present with an introduction of proposed components due to the modern day concern for savings and operations. Our office recommends completely removing all the plumbing fixtures and miscellaneous piping.

Our office recommends the following proposed Plumbing System:

Replace existing plumbing fixtures with low consumption models.

Replace piping where applicable.

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MECHANICAL SYSTEM DESIGN CONCEPT:

Proposed Mechanical System:

The heating systems appear to be beyond their useful life and in poor condition excluding the museum furnace. Given the useful service life of this equipment and current condition, cost of service and replacement parts along with labor to maintain units could become cost prohibitive. Energy savings will be present with an introduction of proposed components due to the modern day concern for savings and operations. Our office recommends completely removing the oil fired furnace system and related ductwork.

Our office recommends the following proposed Mechanical System:

Replace existing oil fired boiler system.

Add a gas fired furnace to heat the unheated areas of the second floor.

Replace existing oil fired furnaces with high efficiency gas fired furnaces.

Refinish/clean floor supply grilles and add distribution ductwork to the second floor.

Clean existing ductwork.

Replace existing ventilation fan in Greenhouse.

Add direct expansion cooling via high efficiency air cooled condensing units and coils. (optional)

* Cooling may required upgrading the electrical service.

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ELECTRICAL SYSTEM DESIGN CONCEPT:

Proposed Electrical System:

The existing lighting fixtures appear to be beyond their useful life and in poor condition. Receptacles and switches have been painted over and also in overall fair to poor condition. Upgrades to the electrical service would be dependent upon the envisioned upgrades/use of the empty spaces within the building.

Our office recommends the following proposed Electrical System:

Replace existing light fixtures with energy efficient fixtures.

Replace existing receptacles, switches and add additional where warranted/required by code.

Removal of obsolete and abandoned wiring and conduit.

Replacement of NMC circuits with Metal Clad (MC) cable.

Upgrade electrical service as required for proposed renovations.

Replacement of greenhouse electrical panel.

Upgrade telecommunication system.

Installation of fire alarm system.

Installation of emergency and egress lighting systems.

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ESTIMATED DESIGN COSTS

*Does not include hazardous materials

Proposed Plumbing System:

| | |
|--|-------------|
| • Demolition of the existing plumbing fixtures: | \$1,000.00 |
| • Proposed plumbing fixtures and related piping: | \$7,000.00 |
| • Pipe/insulation: | \$3,000.00 |
| • Subtotal: | \$11,000.00 |
| • 10% Overhead: | \$1,100.00 |
| • Subtotal: | \$12,100.00 |
| • 10% Profit: | \$1,210.00 |
| • Total: | \$13,310.00 |
| • Say: | \$13,500.00 |

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Proposed Mechanical System:

*Does not include hazardous materials

*Does not include electrical service upgrade

| | |
|---|-------------|
| • Demolition of the existing oil fired furnace systems: | \$2,000.00 |
| • Demolition of the existing oil fired boiler system: | \$700.00 |
| • Demolition of the existing gas fired unit heater: | \$200.00 |
| • Demolition of the existing ventilation fan: | \$200.00 |
| • Refinish grilles and clean ductwork: | \$4,000.00 |
| • Proposed gas fired furnace systems: (includes the new system for the second floor) | \$11,500.00 |
| • Proposed gas fired boiler system: | \$6,000.00 |
| • Proposed Ventilation fan: | \$1,500.00 |
| • Proposed DX cooling for furnaces: | \$14,000.00 |
| • Subtotal: | \$40,100.00 |
| • 10% Overhead: | \$4,010.00 |
| • Subtotal: | \$44,110.00 |
| • 10% Profit: | \$4,411.00 |
| • Total: | \$48,521.00 |
| • Say: | \$49,000.00 |

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Proposed Electrical System:

*Does not include hazardous materials

*Does not include electrical service upgrade

| | |
|---|--------------|
| • Demolition of abandoned/obsolete electrical equipment, Wiring and conduit: | \$4,000.00 |
| • Proposed energy efficient light fixtures, emergency And egress lighting: | \$60,000.00 |
| • Proposed switches and receptacles: | \$10,500.00 |
| • Miscellaneous electrical connections, equipment, wiring, conduit, etc: | \$45,500.00 |
| • Proposed fire alarm: | \$45,000.00 |
| • Proposed telecommunications: | \$9,000.00 |
| • Proposed CCTV system: | \$15,000.00 |
| • Replacement of greenhouse panel: | \$1,000.00 |
| • Subtotal: | \$190,000.00 |
| • 10% Overhead: | \$19,000.00 |
| • Subtotal: | \$209,000.00 |
| • 10% Profit: | \$20,900.00 |
| • Total: | \$229,900.00 |
| • Say: | \$230,000.00 |

INITIAL WALKTHROUGH INSPECTION REPORT
FOR

FORMER COMSTOCK FERRE & COMPANY AND ADJOINING BARN
263 MAIN STREET
WETHERSFIELD, CONNECTICUT

PROVIDED TO

CME ENGINEERING, INC.
32 CRABTREE LANE
WOODSTOCK, CONNECTICUT

PROVIDED BY

EAGLE ENVIRONMENTAL, INC.
531 NORTH MAIN STREET
BRISTOL, CONNECTICUT

FEBRUARY 14, 2013

EAGLE PROJECT NO. 13-014.11

EAGLE ENVIRONMENTAL, INC.
531 NORTH MAIN STREET • BRISTOL, CT 06010
PHONE (860) 589-8257 • FAX (860) 585-7034

1.0 INTRODUCTION

CME Engineering, Inc. (CME) retained Eagle Environmental, Inc. (Eagle) to perform an initial walkthrough inspection to document suspect hazardous building materials at the former Comstock Ferre & Company building and the adjoining barn at 263 Main Street in Wethersfield, Connecticut. This historic property is planned to be renovated. Eagle's Senior Manager, Ashis Roychowdhury, performed this inspection on December 13, 2012. Representatives of CME and Wethersfield Garden Seeds LLC, which owns the property, were present during the walkthrough.

2.0 BUILDING DESCRIPTION

The subject property consists of two structures identified herein as Building #1 and Building #2.

Building #1, which has the office and showroom of Wethersfield Garden Seeds LLC, is a 16,628 SF two-story structure with a porch, basement and an attic space constructed in 1850. The interior construction is plaster/masonry walls with vinyl/asphalt flooring. The exterior is brick/clapboard with pitched asphalt roof.

Building #2, the adjoining barn (seed store), is a 7,399 SF two-story structure constructed in 1642. The interior construction is plaster/masonry walls with concrete/hard wood flooring. The exterior is brick/clapboard with pitched asphalt roof.

3.0 SCOPE OF INSPECTION

The inspection was intended to identify presence of potential hazardous materials existing in the buildings that will be impacted by the proposed renovation. This included asbestos-containing materials (ACM), lead-based paint (LBP), universal waste and PCB-containing materials. Following summarize our findings:

3.1 Asbestos Containing Materials

Building #1

The following suspect asbestos-containing materials were observed in the building:

Interior

1. Ceiling plaster
2. Sheetrock/joint compound – ceilings and walls
3. Carpet adhesive
4. Potential vapor barrier under wood floor
5. Sheet vinyl flooring
6. Stair tread and adhesive
7. Window glazing compound
8. Skim coat on wood columns
9. Skim coat on concrete floor (museum area)
10. Particle board
11. Flue patch on fire box
12. Blown-in insulation (attic)

Exterior

1. Roofing shingles
2. Chimney flue cement

3. Window glazing compound
4. Potential vapor barrier behind clapboard siding

Building #2

The following suspect asbestos-containing materials were observed in this building:

Interior

13. Sheetrock/joint compound – ceilings and walls
14. Gasket around light fixtures
15. Window glazing compound
16. Perlite board

Exterior

5. Roofing shingles
6. Window glazing compound

3.2 Other Hazardous Materials

Lead-based Paint

In absence of knowledge of painting history, we recommend a screening of building materials for lead-based paint in both the buildings.

Universal Waste

We recommend visual inspection and inventory for universal waste materials such as fluorescent light bulbs, PCB/DEHP ballast and thermostats.

Chlorofluorocarbons

No discernable sources of Chlorofluorocarbon were identified in the buildings.

PCB-Containing Materials

Interior and exterior window glazing compounds may have PCB and should be sampled.

Appendix D

FEDERAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION
TAX CREDIT PROGRAM

Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credit

Federal 20 and 10 Percent Historic Tax Credits

To qualify for either the 20 percent or the 10 percent historic tax credit, the rehabilitation must be “substantial”. A substantial rehabilitation means that a taxpayer’s QREs during a 24-month or 60-month measuring period (for a phased project) must exceed the “adjusted basis” of the building or \$5,000, whichever is greater. The adjusted basis is generally defined as the purchase price, minus the cost of the land, plus the value of any capital improvements made since the building acquisition, minus any depreciation already taken. Eligible properties must be income-producing to qualify for historic tax credits; therefore, owner-occupied residences are not eligible.

To qualify for the 20 percent credit, the rehabilitation must also be certified as conforming to the Secretary’s Standards for Historic Rehabilitation. This certification is achieved by completing a three-part application process which is reviewed first by the state historic preservation office (SHPO) and then by the National Park Service (NPS).

- Part 1 makes the case for National Register property listing or verifies that a property is a contributing structure in a National Register District;
- Part 2 summarizes the scope of the rehabilitation; and
- Part 3 documents that the work has been done as proposed in the approved Part 2.

Virtually all of the rules that apply to the 20 percent historic credit apply to the 10 percent credit with a few notable exceptions. The 10 percent credit requires no design review at the state or federal level, but there is a “wall test” requiring that three of the original four exterior walls remain intact. If this property is located within a historic district, the Part 1 application must be filed and approved by the National Park Service to confirm its non-contributing status. To redeem the 10 percent credit, the developer simply needs to attach **Form 3468** to his/her tax return.

The compliance and recapture period for the federal historic credits is five years from the date the property is placed in service. Twenty percent of the recapture risk burns off every year.

How Nonprofit Groups Can Use Tax Credits

Nonprofit organizations and public agencies do not pay federal or state income taxes and therefore have no tax liability against which to apply historic tax credits. Also, many for-profit entities are not in a tax position to make full use of the value of the credit. Fortunately, in these instances, it is still possible to tap into the value of the historic tax credit by transferring (or ‘syndicating’) the tax credit to a corporate investor, or in certain instances, individuals, who then use the tax credit to offset some of their own tax liability. The following information pertains to the 20% federal tax credit for the rehabilitation of historic properties.

Tax Credit Basics

- The amount of credit available under this program equals 20% of the qualifying expenses of your rehabilitation.

- The tax credit is only available to properties that will be used for a business or other income-producing purpose, and a "substantial" amount must be spent rehabilitating the historic building.
- The building needs to be certified as a historic structure by the National Park Service.
- Rehabilitation work has to meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, as determined by the National Park Service.

Before applying, an accountant or tax advisor should be consulted to make sure that this federal tax credit is beneficial to the project. Certain income and other restrictions may have a bearing on whether an owner is able to use the credit. IRS administers the Department of the Treasury's involvement with the Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives Program. The IRS has provided written guidance on these complex federal regulations which is available as easy-to-read guidance in IRS Info.

Appendix E

STATE HISTORIC TAX PROGRAMS

State Historic Structures Rehabilitation Tax Credit Program

The **Historic Structures Rehabilitation Tax Credit** program, established by Connecticut General Statutes Section 10-41a, establishes a tax credit for the conversion of historic commercial, industrial, institutional, former government buildings, cultural building, or residential property of more than four (4) units to residential use, including rental or condominium units. Partial tax credits are available for buildings converted to mixed residential and nonresidential uses.

Program Specifics:

- 25% tax credit of the total qualified rehabilitation expenditures.
- qualified rehabilitation expenditures are hard costs associated with rehabilitation of the certified historic structure; site improvements and non-construction costs are excluded.
- 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.

Eligibility Requirements:

- the building must be listed on the State or National Register of Historic Places, either individually or as part of an historic district.
- the property owner must be a person, firm, limited liability company, nonprofit or for-profit corporation or other business entity that possesses title to the historic property.
- projects under construction but not placed in service as of July 1, 2006, may qualify.

How to Apply:

The program is administered by the Connecticut State Historic Preservation Office located within the Department of Economic and Community Development. There is a five step application process.

The **Historic Preservation Tax Credit** program, established by Connecticut General Statutes Section 10-41b, as amended in Public Act 11-48 Section 122, establishes a tax credit for the conversion of historic commercial, industrial, former government property, cultural building, institutional, or mixed residential and nonresidential property to mixed residential and nonresidential uses or nonresidential use. Nonresidential uses include commercial, institutional, governmental or manufacturing.

Program Specifics:

- 25% tax credit of the total qualified rehabilitation expenditures.
- 30% tax credit of the total qualified rehabilitation expenditures if the project includes an affordable housing component provided at least 20% of the rental units or 10% of for sale units qualify under CGS Section 839a.
- qualified rehabilitation expenditures are hard costs associated with rehabilitation of the certified historic structure; site improvements and non-construction costs are excluded.
- 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.
- \$50 million in tax credit reservations are available in three year cycles.
- per building cap is up to \$5 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.
-

Eligibility Requirements:

- buildings must be listed on the National or State Register of Historic Places, either individually or as part of an historic district.
- the property owner must be a person, firm, limited liability company, nonprofit or for-profit corporation, or other business entity or municipality which possesses title to the historic property.

How to Apply:

The program is administered by the Connecticut State Historic Preservation Office located within the Department of Economic and Community Development. There is a five step application process.

Appendix F

OTHER FUNDING SOURCES

Other Funding Opportunities

Municipal, For-profit and Nonprofit Projects

- ***Small Town Economic Assistance Program (STEAP)***

Wethersfield, as an eligible town, may apply for grants to fund projects that provide economic development opportunity, community conservation and quality of life improvements. Capital projects eligible for STEAP funds include:

 - economic development projects such as (a) constructing or rehabilitating commercial, industrial, or mixed-use structures and (b) constructing, reconstructing, or repairing roads, access ways, and other site improvements;
 - recreation and solid waste disposal projects;
 - social service-related projects, including day care centers, elderly centers, domestic violence and emergency homeless shelters, multi purpose human resource centers, and food distribution facilities;
 - housing projects;
 - pilot historic preservation and redevelopment programs that leverage private funds;
 - other kinds of development projects involving economic and community development, transportation, environmental protection, public safety, children and families and social service programs

- ***Connecticut Main Street - Main Street Investment Fund Program***

Grants not to exceed \$500,000 are available to eligible municipalities that can be used for improvements to property owned by the municipality. A portion of the proceeds of the grant may be used to provide a one-time reimbursement to owners of commercial private property for eligible expenditures that directly support and enhance an eligible project. Eligible uses of the grant funds include:

 - Expenses for cosmetic and structural exterior building improvements;
 - Signage;
 - Lighting;
 - Landscaping that is visible from the street; and/or
 - Other architectural features approved by OPM.

Municipal and Nonprofit Projects

▪ ***CT DECD Historic Restoration Fund Grant***

The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) offers matching, reimbursement Historic Restoration Fund Grants to Connecticut municipalities and 501(c)3 and 501(c)13 nonprofits to be used for the restoration, rehabilitation, stabilization, archaeological investigation or acquisition of Connecticut's historic resources which are listed in the State or National Registers of Historic Places.

- Grant awards range from \$5,000-\$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 staff; and
- Project work must be consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties

▪ ***CT Trust for Historic Preservation Technical Assistance Grants (HPTAG)***

Funded through the Connecticut General Assembly, the Connecticut Humanities Council and the State Historic Preservation Office, Department of Economic and Community Development, HPTAG grants support efforts that help communities plan for the preservation, restoration and rehabilitation of historic places. Grants to municipalities and 501(c)3 non-profit organizations for historic resources that are listed or eligible for listing on the State Register of Historic Places, require a one-to-one match, and awards range between \$2,500 and \$25,000 to fund projects such as:

- Feasibility studies for re-use of a historic resource, business plans and strategic plans for resource adaptability.
- Conditions Assessments; plans and specifications for the restoration/rehabilitation of a building.
- Structural and engineering analyses of historic resources.
- Historic Structures Reports

- ***National Trust Preservation Fund***

Nonprofit organizations and public agencies that are members of the National Trust are eligible to apply for grants to fund preservation planning and educational projects. Grants are matching and range from \$2,500 to \$5,000.

- Planning projects include obtaining professional expertise in areas such as architecture, archaeology, engineering, preservation planning, land-use planning, and law.
- Education projects relate to preservation activities aimed at the public such as interpretation and outreach.

- ***The 1772 Foundation***

Matching grants up to \$15,000 are awarded by the 1772 Foundation in cooperation with the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation for preservation projects undertaken by 501(c)3 organizations. Grants for specific efforts such as exterior painting, window restoration, structural sill repair, and re-pointing as well as the installation or upgrading of security, lightning protection and fire detection systems.

For-profit Projects

- ***Town of Wethersfield Tax Incentives***

In an effort to attract, retain and expand businesses, the Town of Wethersfield has adopted a tax incentive policy. This policy establishes a tax incentive program which allows the Town to enter into written agreements with the owners and/or lessees of certain real property located within the Town Wethersfield in order to fix tax assessments of real and/or personal property.

- ***Town of Wethersfield Façade Improvement Matching Loan***

The Town of Wethersfield through the Economic Development and Improvement Commission administers a matching, low interest loan program to assist commercial businesses and tenants to enhance the facades of properties in the town's business districts.

