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**CITY OF DANBURY**  
155 DEER HILL AVENUE  
DANBURY, CONNECTICUT 06810

**PLANNING & ZONING DEPARTMENT**

(203) 797-4525  
(203) 797-4586 (FAX)

June 20, 2008

To: Mayor Mark D. Boughton  
Members of Common Council

From: Dennis I. Elpern

Re: Report of the Historic Properties Study Committee  
Preservation and Restoration of the Old Library  
Connecticut 'Certified Local Government' Program

I am writing on behalf of the Historic Properties Study Committee, established by Mayor Boughton as part of the process mandated by the state for the City to be designated a 'Certified Local Government' by the Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism. The Study Committee was chaired by Dr. Laurie Weinstein, Professor of Anthropology at WCSU.

The CLG program provides assistance and financial aid to municipalities for the purpose of preserving and protecting historic buildings and districts. In order to be eligible for such assistance, the City must first receive CLG status from the Commission.

The property we are initially concerned about is the Old Library at 254 Main Street, a historic building with deteriorating masonry and valuable murals in need of restoration. If we are successful in gaining CLG designation by the state, we may then be eligible to apply for matching funds to help maintain the building and restore the murals. Moreover, such a designation may qualify us to be eligible to receive future assistance for the preservation of other public buildings.

**Background**

To achieve CLG status, the City must designate a property as a "historic property" pursuant to procedures set forth in §7-147p et seq. of the Connecticut General Statutes. The procedures include several steps: (1) the creation of a Historic Properties Study Committee to investigate the historic value of designated properties, (2) submission of a report to the CT Commission on Culture and Tourism and the Zoning and Planning Commissions for endorsement, and (3) the holding of a public hearing. The Committee has completed all of these requirements and has received endorsements from the Planning Commission on April 16, 2008, the Zoning Commission on April 22, 2008, and approval from the state Historic Preservation Council on May 7, 2008. Positive comments were received at a public hearing held May 28, 2008.

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With this memorandum, the Study Committee submits for Common Council review and action a copy of this final report. The report of the Study Committee includes the following attached documents:

- Historic Resources Inventory, Building and Structures;
- “Map Designating the Boundary of the Historic Property, The Old Library;”
- a legal description of the property;
- a letter of approval from Mary Dunne of the Connecticut Commission on Culture & Tourism, dated May 8, 2008; and,
- a proposed “Historic Property Ordinance for the City of Danbury,” prepared by Corporation Counsel for approval by Common Council.

Photos of the murals are available upon request.

### **Council Action**

Upon receipt of this Committee report, we request that Common Council continue down this somewhat long and winding road by (1) submitting it to an ad hoc committee for review and report, (2) holding a public hearing on the attached proposed “Historic Property Ordinance,” followed by (3) adoption of the Ordinance.

The Ordinance designates the Old Library as a historic property, terminates the Study Committee, and provides for the creation of a Historic Properties Commission to administer the program at the local level. Thereupon, the City may then apply to the state for CLG status.

We ask that this item be placed on the July Common Council Agenda for subsequent referral to an ad hoc committee.

c: Dr. Laurie Weinstein  
Robin Edwards, Corporation Counsel

Attachments

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<b>HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY BUILDING AND STRUCTURES</b> HIST-6 REV. 01/06  <b>STATE OF CONNECTICUT COMMISSION ON CULTURE AND TOURISM</b> 59 South Prospect Street, Hartford, Connecticut 06106 (860) 566-3005		<i>FOR OFFICE USE ONLY</i>										
		Town No.					Site No.					
		UTM										
		QUAD:										
DISTRICT					IF NR, SPECIFY							
<input type="checkbox"/> S <input type="checkbox"/> NR					<input type="checkbox"/> Actual <input type="checkbox"/> Potential							
1. BUILDING NAME (Common) Danbury Music Center					(Historic) Old Library							
2. TOWN/CITY Danbury					VILLAGE		Fairfield					
3. STREET AND NUMBER (and/or location) 254 Main and Library Place												
4. OWNER(S) City of Danbury  <div style="text-align: right;">XX Public      <input type="checkbox"/> Private</div>												
5. USE (Present) Music performances: 2 <sup>nd</sup> floor Danbury Music Center offices: 1 <sup>st</sup> floor Danbury Cultural Commission and Social Services: 1 <sup>st</sup> floor					(Historic) Old Library for City of Danbury							
6. ACCESSIBILITY TO PUBLIC:		EXTERIOR VISIBLE FROM PUBLIC ROAD <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			Interior accessible <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		IF YES, EXPLAIN Entire building open to public					
7. STYLE OF BUILDING High Victorian Gothic					DATE OF CONSTRUCTION 1876-78							
8. MATERIAL(S) (Indicate use or location when appropriate)												
<input type="checkbox"/> Clapboard		<input type="checkbox"/> Asbestos Siding		<input checked="" type="radio"/> Brick		<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)						
<input type="checkbox"/> Wood Shingle		<input type="checkbox"/> Asphalt Siding		<input type="checkbox"/> Fieldstone		<input type="checkbox"/> Cobblestone						
<input type="checkbox"/> Board & Batten		<input type="checkbox"/> Stucco		<input checked="" type="radio"/> Cut Stone		Type: New Jersey Free Stone, Amherst Stone						
<input type="checkbox"/> Aluminum Siding		<input type="checkbox"/> Concrete										
9. STRUCTURAL SYSTEM												
<input type="checkbox"/> Wood frame		<input type="checkbox"/> Post and beam			<input type="checkbox"/> Balloon							
<input checked="" type="radio"/> Load bearing masonry					<input type="checkbox"/> Structural iron or steel							
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____												
10. ROOF (Type)												
<input checked="" type="radio"/> Gable		<input type="checkbox"/> Flat		<input type="checkbox"/> Mansard		<input type="checkbox"/> Monitor		<input type="checkbox"/> sawtooth				
<input type="checkbox"/> Gambrel		<input type="checkbox"/> Shed		<input checked="" type="radio"/> Hip		<input type="checkbox"/> Round		<input type="checkbox"/> Other				
(Specify) _____												
(Material)												
<input type="checkbox"/> Wood Shingle		<input type="checkbox"/> Roll Asphalt		<input type="checkbox"/> Tin		<input checked="" type="radio"/> Slate						
<input type="checkbox"/> Asphalt Shingle		<input type="checkbox"/> Built up		<input type="checkbox"/> Tile		<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____						
11. NUMBER OF STORIES 2		APPROXIMATE DIMENSIONS 53 X 64										
12. CONDITION (Structural)		(Exterior)										

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<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated
<b>13. INTEGRITY (Location)</b>  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On original site <input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<b>WHEN?</b>  <b>(Alterations)</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>IF YES, EXPLAIN</b> Added elevator, removed cupola, new windows	
<b>14. RELATED OUTBUILDINGS OR LANDSCAPE FEATURES</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Barn <input type="checkbox"/> Shed <input type="checkbox"/> Garage <input type="checkbox"/> Other landscape features or buildings (Specify) <input type="checkbox"/> Carriage House <input type="checkbox"/> Shop <input type="checkbox"/> Garden	
<b>15. SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Open land <input type="checkbox"/> Woodland <input type="checkbox"/> Residential <input type="checkbox"/> Scattered buildings visible from site <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Rural <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> High building density	
<b>16. INTERRELATIONSHIP OF BUILDING AND SURROUNDINGS</b> The old library stands on the corner of Library Place, a harbinger of the architecturally imposing block that follows it to the south. It once formed a complimentary pair with the Danbury National Bank (248) next door, until its gabled roof was lost in 1973.  (over)	
<b>17. OTHER NOTABLE FEATURES OF BUILDING OR SITE (Interior and/or exterior)</b> One of Danbury's richest and most visibly engaging buildings, the old library retains so many of its attractive features that it has an exciting potential. The exterior of pressed brick is punctuated by polychromatic stone trim. The slate roof is broken by gables, in the form of a cross, while symmetry is offset by a side entrance that repeats the gabled motif, with a carved floral finial surmounting each. Rhythm is created by gothic and segmental arches. The central doorway and the actual entrance, to the side, are supported by polished granite columns, each with a slightly different capitol. Floral carving accents the space over the main entrance and the terminals of the window arches. Single and double windows alternate on the front façade. Stone acanthus leaf moldings decorate the eaves while the motif is repeated beneath the gable peaks. The first and second stories are separated by a massive stringcourse in front, while the building rests on a ground level coping of rusticated stone necessitating stairs up to the door. The sides are not as ornate, but the south side has stained glass windows positioned to light the stairway to what was the main reading room on the second floor. Architect Lorenzo Wheeler eliminated ordinary gutters for aesthetic reasons, designing instead a system which carried water inside the walls to a tank in the basement, whence it was pumped out to a street drain. The library once had a metal and slate cupola covering a lantern, which has been removed.  Inside the building is equally impressive. The first floor contains offices which were at one time the Children's Room. Murals painted by artist Charles Federer during the 1930s (WPA project) depict scenes from fairy tales on the walls. It is said that he used Danbury people for models. The magnificent second floor reading room is now the Marian Anderson Recital Hall for the Danbury Music Center.  The roof is supported by a truss of immense timbers running contrary to each other. An immense vaulted ceiling of ash, lighted by a large sky light in the middle and side windows decorated at one time with quatrefoils, creates a large and roomy interior space. Much of the original woodwork, like the book cases, and the steam radiators, are intact.  Murals have water marks and are fading.	
<b>18. ARCHITECT</b> Lamb and Wheeler, Newark, NJ	<b>BUILDER</b> William Webb Sunderland (carpenter) and John H. Benedict (mason)
<b>19. HISTORICAL OR ARCHITECTURAL IMPORTANCE</b>  Danbury's best known architectural landmark was constructed between 1876-78 on a site donated by Alexander Moss White, a member of a prominent and wealthy hatting family, who had moved to Danbury from Brooklyn. His house, built in 1790, stood on the site and was serving as the town's library. White donated almost all of the 28,000 needed to move his old house onto Library Place, which had been a cow path between the home lots of White and Alexander Wildman, to the north. Architect Lorenzo Wheeler, who had been raised in Danbury, was hired and designed a building of a design and scale that was a dramatic departure from the anonymous Italianate buildings that then predominated. The building from design to construction is the creation of Danburians. The building served as a library until the present one was built in 1970 (see 170 Main Street). The downstairs rooms originally held the Selectmen's office, commercial space and was later converted into the Children's Room.	
Sources: Write up by William Devlin, historian with Danbury Trust in the early 1980's.	

Also, Danbury Land and Tax Records, Danbury Times article, Nov. 13, 1878  
 Danbury Library Children's Room murals  
 Danbury News Times, Sunday, December 7<sup>th</sup> 1986 F2-F4  
 Danbury News Times, Wednesday, September 18<sup>th</sup>, 1935.

PHOTOGRAPHER Zachery Storey	DATE April 2006
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VIEW Front and inside, showing murals	NEGATIVE ON FILE
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NAME Laurie Weinstein, Ph.D., and Laura Sullivan	DATE May 22, 2006
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ORGANIZATION  
Western Connecticut State University

ADDRESS  
Dept. of Social Sciences, Western Connecticut State University, Danbury, CT 06810

20. SUBSEQUENT FIELD EVALUATIONS  
  
April 2006

21. THREATS TO BUILDING OR SITE

<input type="checkbox"/> None known	<input type="checkbox"/> Highways	<input type="checkbox"/> Vandalism	<input type="checkbox"/> Developers	<input type="checkbox"/> Other
<input type="checkbox"/> Renewal	<input type="checkbox"/> Private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Deterioration	<input type="checkbox"/> Zoning	<input type="checkbox"/> Explanation

HIST-6 REV. 01/06 (Back)



28.4

**HISTORIC PROPERTY  
"THE OLD LIBRARY"  
254 MAIN STREET  
TAX ASSESSOR'S LOT No. I14164**

A certain piece or parcel of land containing 5,182 square feet (0.119 Acre), more or less, situated in the City of Danbury, County of Fairfield and State of Connecticut at 254 Main Street and known as Tax Assessor's Lot No. I14164 (portion of) bounded and described as follows:

Commencing at a point on the westerly street line of Main Street and the southerly street line of Library Place, which point is the northerly corner of land herein described, said point being the true point or place of beginning, thence running in a southeasterly direction along the westerly street line of Main Street S. 43° 04' 01" E. a distance of 60.19' to a point, thence turning and running in a southwesterly direction through the land of the Grantor S. 47° 53' 08" W. a distance of 94.38' to a point, thence turning and running in a northwesterly direction through the land of the Grantor N. 41° 40' 59" W. a distance of 27.50' to a point, thence turning and running in a northeasterly direction through the land of the Grantor N. 47° 31' 14" E. a distance of 14.88' to a point, thence turning and running in a northwesterly direction through the land of the Grantor the following courses and distances N. 42° 28' 17" W. a distance of 18.61' to a point, thence N. 21° 20' 35" W. a distance of 15.84' to a point, thence turning and running in a northeasterly direction N. 47° 45' 10" E. a distance of 62.83' to a point on the southerly street line of Library Place, thence continuing in a northeasterly direction along the southerly street line of Library Place N. 53° 32' 25" E. a distance of 10.00' to the point or place of beginning.

**Bounded:**

Northerly: By Library Place.

Easterly: By Main Street.

Westerly: By other land of Grantor.

Southerly: By other land of Grantor.

For a more particular description, reference is made to a map entitled "Map Designating the Boundary of the Historic Property, "The Old Library", Library Place and Main Street, Danbury, Connecticut Scale: 1" = 10' October 17, 2006" prepared by the Engineering Department of the City of Danbury and certified substantially correct by Michael S. Pierwola, R.L.S. No. 70139, which map is to be filed in the Danbury Land Records.

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Connecticut Commission on Culture & Tourism

RECEIVED  
MAY 12 2008  
CORPORATION COUNSEL

Historic Preservation  
and Museum Division

One Constitution Plaza  
Second Floor  
Hartford, Connecticut  
06103

860.256.2800  
860.256.2763 (T)

May 8, 2008

Ms. Robin L. Edwards  
Assistant Corporation Counsel  
155 Deer Hill Avenue  
Danbury, CT 06810

Re: Proposed 254 Main Street, the "Old Library," Historic Property  
Danbury, Connecticut

Dear Ms. Edwards:

I am pleased to inform you that at its May 7, 2008 meeting, the Historic Preservation Council voted unanimously to recommend approval of the Danbury Historic Property Study Committee's study report for the proposed 254 Main Street, the "Old Library," Historic Property.

The council fully supports and encourages the efforts of the City of Danbury to protect and preserve its irreplaceable historic and architectural heritage.

Please keep me informed of the progress of this designation. In the meantime if you have any questions regarding this notification, please feel free to contact me at (860) 256-2756.

Sincerely,

Mary Dunne  
Local Government Grants Coordinator

CONNECTICUT  
[www.cultureandtourism.org](http://www.cultureandtourism.org)

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**SECTION 4-1 HISTORIC PROPERTY ORDINANCE FOR THE CITY OF DANBURY.**

(a) **PURPOSE:** The purpose of this ordinance is to promote the educational, cultural, economic, and general welfare of the public, through the preservation and protection of certain properties within the City of Danbury and to preserve and protect their distinctive characteristics, architectural and historic integrity, recognizing certain historic properties as landmarks in the history of the City.

(1) The premises known as 254 Main Street, the "Old Library", and its site are hereby established as a historic property. The boundaries of this property are hereby fixed and defined as follows:

A certain piece or parcel of land containing 5,182 square feet (0.119 Acre), more or less, situated in the City of Danbury, County of Fairfield and State of Connecticut at 254 Main Street and known as Tax Assessor's Lot No. 114164 (portion of) bounded and described as follows:

Commencing at a point on the westerly street line of Main Street and the southerly street line of Library Place, which point is the northerly corner of land herein described, said point being the true point or place of beginning, thence running in a southeasterly direction along the westerly street line of Main Street S. 43° 04' 01" E. a distance of 60.19' to a point, thence turning and running in a southwesterly direction through the land of the Grantor S. 47° 53' 08" W. a distance of 94.38' to a point, thence turning and running in a northwesterly direction through the land of the Grantor N. 41° 40' 59" W. a distance of 27.50' to a point, thence turning and running in a northeasterly direction through the land of the Grantor N. 47° 31' 14" E. a distance of 14.88' to a point, thence turning and running in a northwesterly direction through the land of the Grantor the following courses and distances N. 42° 28' 17" W. a distance of 18.61' to a point, thence N. 21° 20' 35" W. a distance of 15.84' to a point, thence turning and running in a northeasterly direction N. 47° 45' 10" E. a distance of 62.83' to a point on the southerly street line of Library Place, thence continuing in a northeasterly direction along the southerly street line of Library Place N. 53° 32' 25" E. a distance of 10.00' to the point or place of beginning.

Bounded:

- Northerly: By Library Place.
- Easterly: By Main Street.
- Westerly: By other land of Grantor.
- Southerly: By other land of Grantor.

For a more particular description, reference is made to a map entitled "Map Designating the Boundary of the Historic Property, "The Old Library", Library Place and Main Street, Danbury, Connecticut," dated October 17, 2006, revised October 15, 2007, prepared by the Engineering Department of the City of Danbury and certified substantially correct by Michael S. Pierwola, which map is to be filed in the Danbury Land Records.

(b) **ESTABLISHMENT:** The Historic Properties Commission is hereby established and shall have such powers and limitations and perform such functions as shall be prescribed under Sections 7-147p through 7-147y of the General Statutes of

Connecticut, as may be amended from time to time, and as provided in this Ordinance. This Historic Properties Study Committee is hereby terminated.

(c) **AUTHORIZATION:** This ordinance is enacted pursuant to the provisions of Sections 7-147p through 7-147y of the Connecticut General Statutes, as may be amended from time to time, and incorporates all the powers and duties described therein.

(d) **COMMISSION:** Said Commission shall consist of five (5) Regular Members and three (3) Alternate Members all of whom shall be electors of the City of Danbury, holding no salaried municipal office in said town. Commissioners are to be appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the Common Council, and shall serve without compensation. Appointments to the Commission shall be made within thirty (30) days of the effective date of this Ordinance. Alternate members when seated shall have all powers and duties of a member.

(1) **TERMS:**

(a) Initial Terms are as follows: one (1) member for a term of five (5) years, one (1) member for a term of four (4) years, one (1) member for a term of three (3) year, one member for a term of two (2) years and one (1) member for a term of one (1) year. Thereafter, their successors shall be appointed in a like manner for terms of five (5) years.

(b) Vacancies shall be filled for the unexpired term and in the same manner as the original appointment. Vacancies shall be filled within ninety (90) days. Any member or alternate may be appointed for another term or terms. Each member and alternate shall continue in office until his or her successor is duly appointed.

(2) **OFFICERS:** Within thirty (30) days after the appointment of the original members to the Commission, and annually thereafter, the regular members will meet and elect a Chairman, a Vice Chairman, and a Clerk from their own members for a term of one (1) year.

(3) **ALTERNATES:** When a regular member is unavailable to act at a particular time due to absence or a conflict of interest, the Chairman shall designate an alternate member to act in place of such member, choosing alternates in rotation so that they shall act as nearly equal a number of times as possible. If any alternate is not available in accordance with such rotation, such fact shall be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

(e) **QUORUM:** Three (3) members of the Commission shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of its business, or the performance of its functions and the concurring vote of a majority of those constituting a quorum shall be necessary for the adoption of any recommendation, motions, or other acts of the Commission; except that the affirmative vote of at least three (3) members shall be necessary for the approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness.

(f) **POWERS:** The Commission shall have such powers, shall perform such functions and shall be subject to such limitations as prescribed by Sections 7-147p through 7-147y of the Connecticut General Statutes, as may be amended from time to

time. The Commission shall adopt rules of procedure and regulations not inconsistent with the provisions of said Statutes and may accept grants and gifts, employ clerical and technical assistance or consultants, and incur other expenses appropriate to the carrying on of its work, subject to appropriation or receipt of such grants or gifts and expend the same for such purposes.

(g) ACTION BY COMMISSION TO PREVENT ILLEGAL ACTS OR TO OBTAIN COMPLIANCE:

(1) If any provision of Sections 7-147p through 7-147y of the Connecticut General Statutes, or any action taken, or ruling made by the Commission has been violated, the Commission may, in addition to other remedies, institute an action in accordance with the provisions of Sections 7-147w and 7-147h of the Connecticut General Statutes, to restrain, correct or remove such violation. Regulations and orders of the Commission issued pursuant to the Connecticut General Statutes or to any regulation or ordinance adopted under the Connecticut General Statutes shall be enforced by the Zoning Enforcement Official or Building Inspector.

(2) The owner or agent of any building, structure or place where a violation of any provision of Sections 7-147p through 7-147y of the Connecticut General Statutes or of any regulation or ordinance adopted under said sections has been committed or exists, or the lessee or tenant of an entire building, entire structure or place where such violation has been committed or exists, or the owner, agent, lessee or tenant of any part of the building, structure or place in which such violation has been committed or exists, or the agent, architect, builder, contractor, or any other person who commits, takes part or assists in any such violation or who maintains any building, structure or place in which any such violation exists, shall be fined not less than ten dollars nor more than one hundred dollars for each day that such violation continues; but, if the offense is willful, the person convicted thereof shall be fined not less than one hundred dollars nor more than two hundred fifty dollars for each day that such violation continues. The superior court for the judicial district wherein such violation continues or exists shall have jurisdiction of all such offenses, subject to appeal as in other cases. Each day that a violation continues to exist shall constitute a separate offense. All costs, fees and expenses in connection with actions under this section may, in the discretion of the court, be assessed as damages against the violator, which together with reasonable attorney's fees, may be awarded to the Historic Property Commission which brought such action. Any funds collected as fines pursuant to this section shall be used by the Commission to restore the affected buildings, structures, or places to their condition prior to the violation wherever possible and any excess shall be paid to the City of Danbury.