

PORTLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P. O. Box 98, Portland, CT 06480

SPECIAL 2009 NEWSLETTER

Ruth Callander House Museum, 492 Main St., Portland, CT., 06480, Tel: 860-342-5455, [www. PortlandHistSoc.Org](http://www.PortlandHistSoc.Org)



Erastus Brainerd Jr. House



Hart/Jarvis House



John H. Sage House

HISTORIC HOUSES IN JEOPARDY

In 2 weeks, the Portland Planning & Zoning Commission will make their final decision regarding the Portland Town Place development at Marlborough and Main Streets (site of the former Elmcrest). The plan before the commission includes the **demolition of two important historic houses, the Erastus Brainerd Jr. (Wagner) House and Hart/Jarvis (Manor) House**, and the partial demolition of a third, the John Sage (Marlborough) House. Local and regional architectural and historical experts agree on the importance and reusable condition of these buildings. Experts have verified the fact that a development can go forward with these buildings intact.

The only way to save these houses now is public outcry. Your concern must be made known now, by signing petitions, writing letters to the editor, contacting the Portland Board of Selectman, Planning and Zoning Commission, and CT state politicians, contacting the developer. This must happen *before the June 4 Planning and Zoning Commission hearing*. We also need as many people as possible to come to the June 4 hearing, 7 pm, at the Brownstone Intermediate School, and voice their opinions. *After June 4, our opportunity to save these houses will be gone.*

These 3 houses are integral to the history of Portland, and unusual in size and structure for this town, and fine examples of period architecture. The Erastus Brainerd, Jr. House, built in 1852, is of stuccoed brownstone in an elegant Italianate style. It was designed by Henry Austin from New Haven, Connecticut's most important nineteenth century architect. The house has recently been documented in a book about Austin by James O'Gorman. Erastus Brainerd, Jr. was the son of the founder of the Brainerd Quarry Company which quarried brownstone in Portland throughout the 19th century and well into the 20th.

The Hart/Jarvis House was built in 1829-30, by Colonel Richard Hart of Hartford and Old Saybrook for his daughter, Elizabeth and her husband, Reverend William Jarvis, pastor of the Trinity Episcopal Church. Their daughter, Elizabeth Hart Jarvis, married Samuel Colt of Hartford and for many years after his death ran Colt's Patent Fire-Arms Manufacturing Company. After the Jarvises, the house was purchased by Erastus Brainerd, Sr. and much later by the Gildersleeve family. The Hart/Jarvis House is an impressive Greek Revival Temple mansion, comparable in some respects to Middletown's Samuel Russell House, a type rarely found in a community the size of Portland. It is set on a cut brownstone foundation.

The John H. Sage House was built in 1884 as an expansive Queen Anne style structure, for John Sage who gained national prominence in ornithology. In this house, he maintained one of the largest of private ornithological collections in the USA. In addition to being a local banker, he was a director of the Shaler & Hall Quarry Company and a long time warden of the Trinity Church. The Sage House sits on a brownstone block foundation and displays picturesque, asymmetrical qualities typical of its style.

Petitions are available from the Portland Historical Society. Please email us at PortlandHistSoc@yahoo.com, cfrisbie@gmail.com, or isinglass@worldnet.att.net; or call 860-342-0303. (See other side for specific ways to help.)

Thank you for your assistance,
Claire Frisbie, President

Chris Sullivan, Historic Sites Chair

HOW CAN YOU HELP . . .

Attend a meeting:

June 4: Planning and Zoning Commission Hearing, Brownstone Intermediate School, 7:00 PM

May 26: Portland Historical Society Program Meeting, Portland Public Library, 7:30 PM - petition available

Write or Email your concerns to:

Portland Planning & Zoning Commission, c/o Deanna Rhodes, PO Box 71, Portland, CT 06480

or drhodes@portlandct.org

Board of Selectmen or Susan Bransfield, First Selectwoman, PO Box 71, Portland, CT 06480

or sbransfield@portlandct.org

Email or call for petition - sign and circulate among your friends,

Ruth Callander House Museum of Portland History, 492 Main St., Portland

Museum open & Petition available: 12 -5 PM Sunday, May 24 & 12-4 PM Monday, May 25

Send "Letter to Editor" to:

Rivereast News Bulletin, PO Box 373, Glastonbury, CT 06033, *or* rivereast@snet.net

Middletown Press letters to editor, 386 Main St. 4th fl. Middletown. CT 06457,

or letters@middletownpress.com

NEWSLETTER - *Phyllis, Bill and Claire Frisbie, 5-23-09*

Newsletter!

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2009

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