

Preserve America Designation Criteria

- A. *The community has supported (within the last three years) a historic or cultural preservation project that has promoted and/or is promoting heritage tourism or otherwise fostering economic vitality. The project must have involved a public-private partnership between government entities and at least one civic association, non-profit organization, or business enterprise*

Hebron's Old Town Hall sits in the center of town on Main Street, and is part of the National Register of Historic Places' Hebron Center Historic District. The historic structure was built in 1838, and has served as a church, a school, a social gathering place for residents, the center of Hebron municipal government for almost a century, and now, the headquarters of the Hebron Historical Society. On October 26, 2006, the Town of Hebron celebrated the completion of the Old Town Hall restoration project with a "Grand Reopening" celebration.

The restoration work was funded by SB 803 Section 13 (a) (2), passed by the Connecticut Legislature in 2004, along with a September 2006 grant from the state's Office of Policy and Management. Private corporations (including Bank of America, ING Corporation and United Technologies) and significant funding from the Hebron Historical Society also contributed to the restoration effort.

The renovations included: a complete upgrade of the electrical system; repair and painting of the interior domed ceiling; repair and painting of all interior woodwork; removal, repair, re-glazing, painting and re-installation of all nine windows; installation of custom, period-specific handcrafted trim for the exterior window frames; scraping and removal of all lead-based paint and repainting of the exterior building with 50-year paint; complete rebuilding of approximately 75% of the cupola; installation of a new roof on the upper level; chinking and mortaring of the basement walls; installation of safety-required items, including a shut-off switch to the basement furnace on the main floor and exit lighting; installation of new gutters and downspouts; and installation of a new custom-built lighted and lockable display case for historic artifacts.

Today the Old Town Hall is again the jewel of Hebron, especially given its location. On May 26, 2008, the historic hall stood as the backdrop for the official celebration of Hebron's anniversary of incorporation as the 41st city in Connecticut. Hundreds gathered to listen to speeches, proclamations, and stories of Hebron's colorful past delivered by numerous state and local officials. The Old Town Hall was also used as the site for providing the public with free "birthday" cake.

In addition to Historical Society meetings and programs, the building is now used for community events. In November 2008, the Local Artists Show and Exhibit, held during the celebration of Hebron's 300th anniversary of incorporation, was located at the Old Town Hall and the Douglas Library (originally the 1898 Hebron Public Library, which has since been carefully modified and expanded.) Over 1,000 visitors attended the event.

Each year, on the second weekend of March, Hebron holds its Maple Festival. Visitors come from Connecticut and surrounding states to enjoy and experience two days of education and entertainment associated with the town's time-honored tradition of maple syrup production. It is during this weekend that the Hebron Historical Society holds a Quilt Show at the Old Town Hall, drawing upwards of 2,000 visitors. The year 2009 marks the Society's 20th Annual Quilt Show.

The Old Town Hall is promoted as a "town asset." It is always available for weddings, special events, and special programs by other organizations for minimal or no charge. Additionally, in an especially meaningful ceremony, newly elected town officials are sworn in at Hebron's Old Town Hall following the town's biennial November municipal elections.

All of these activities and promotions draw both local visitors and non-residents. Direct economic benefits to the community have been derived as a result of the popularity of Old Town Hall events: an increase in customers at local restaurants, an increase in customers at local businesses, and an overall increase of interest in the town and its assets.

While this application focuses on the restoration of Old Town Hall (above), a significant number of other restoration efforts have also occurred in the past three years. In partnership with the Hebron Historical Society and Troop 28 Boy Scouts, the Town of Hebron has restored the Gull School, the Gilead Hill School, the Burrows Hill School, Prophet's Rock (an historic landmark) Nature Trail, and the Old Town Pound. All of these, with the exception of the Gilead Hill School, are easily available to the public.

As a result of local historic designation, the Center School (located in the center of town, adjacent to Old Town Hall and now owned by the Hebron VFW/American Legion) has been carefully modified and restored following Secretary of the Interior Guidelines, and is also available to the public.

It should be noted that Hebron has been a leader in Connecticut regarding the preservation of its one-room schools. Nine of the original eleven 18th century schools still stand. Five have been modified and are now private residences; four are available to the public; and the remaining two were lost to fire or decay.

B. The governing body of the community has recently adopted a resolution indicating its commitment to the preservation of its heritage assets.

See Attachment 1.

C. The community meets at least five of the criteria outlined below with at least one from each category

Category 1: Discovery Heritage Through Historic Places

(An ongoing, publicly available inventory of historic properties)

The Hebron Historic Properties Commission (HPC) first began documenting Hebron's inventory of historic assets in 2000. This effort was initially done on a very manual basis, utilizing the town's Assessor's records, the David Baber 1978 collection, and visiting each and every documented property.

As a Certified Local Government, HPC has received three Historic Properties Enhancement Grants (HPEG), totaling \$8,400, to supplement our inventory and conduct extensive research on several of the properties.

Currently the HPC stores the entire inventory of Historic Resources on a secure web site. The inventory includes approximately 250 properties including private residences, commercial properties, municipally owned properties, cemeteries, schools and archeological sites. The inventory is available to the general public in hard copy at the Town Clerk's office.

**(A community-supported museum, interpretive facility, archive, or local history records collection
(private or public))**

In 2004, with the publication of its first story on Hebron history, the Hebron Historical Society launched a web site that documents and makes public as many primary sources as possible. The site, www.HebronHistoricalSociety.org, includes a wealth of both data and pictures of Hebron history.

Almost every document the Society receives is scanned and placed on the website. The collection includes many 19th century documents and publications that are privately held. Owners of those privately-owned resources are excited to share their collection with the public, without having to physically give them up. Web visitors are encouraged to use the "Search" feature to locate information.

The site gets an average of 10,000 visitors per month (further quantified as an average of 4,000 unique visitors per month). In addition, no less than 6 emails per week are sent into the site via info@HebronHistoricalSociety.org requesting information. Those emails are answered by the organization's

historian within a minimum one-week time frame, addressing the questions with any applicable resource(s) available. The website has received communications from across America, and in a few instances, from European visitors. Approximately 60% of the inquiries have to do with genealogy-related questions.

In addition, the Society has been actively pursuing acquisitions in the past two years since lockable display cabinets and cases have been purchased. These acquisitions include 18th and 19th century documents and artifacts, original artwork by Hebron artists and manufacturers, and an ever-increasing collection of photographs.

(Active citizen volunteer involvement, such as a docent or guide program for interpretation of local history and culture, or volunteer participation in improving the condition of heritage assets within the community)

The Hebron Historical Society hosts six speakers annually who focus on interpretations of local history and culture. The Society also offers a variety of programs that are customized for particular groups. One of the most popular programs is a tour of St. Peter's Cemetery, featuring a detailed program guide of local residents who influenced Hebron's history and are buried at St. Peter's.

Second, the members of Hebron Boy Scout Troop 28, working with the Hebron Historical Society, host tours of two of Hebron's old schools. These programs at the Gull School and Burrows Hill School are a popular way for children to understand education in previous centuries. Both schools are complete with artifacts from bygone eras, and they are brought to life in stories told by the dedicated Scouts and Society members.

Third, to improve the condition of a significant heritage asset in Hebron, the Peters House at 150 East Street, the Hebron Board of Selectmen created a "Peters House Use Study Committee" in the Spring of 2008. The appointed members to this Committee spent a number of months exploring options for the property (which sits at the entrance of a 120-acre municipal park), and submitted a report for the Selectmen's consideration in October 2008. That report is available online.

(Opportunities for children to learn about local heritage in the schools, through either established curriculum or special outreach activities)

From 2006 to the present, the Hebron Historical Society offers an educational tour of St. Peter's Cemetery, where many famous Hebron residents are buried. The tour includes a brochure with a "question and answer" section that the docent helps students complete. The brochure can then be taken home for later reference.

From 2006 to the present, a docent tour of the Gull School and the Burrows Hill School has been made available to students upon request. Local Boy Scouts, who have been trained in the history of the school and 18th century educational methods by Historical Society member, typically conduct the session and answer questions.

In 2007, Hebron Girl Scout Troop 5124, at the request of Hebron Historical Society, undertook documentation of the town's oldest cemetery, the "Mann Cemetery," as their Bronze Project. For two months, the girls and their leaders gathered each weekend at the Wall Street site and carefully copied headstone information and took pictures. Those interred at the Mann Cemetery include Benjamin Pomeroy, a famous New England minister. The results of that project are now on file and available to the public at the Hebron Town Clerk's office.

In 2008, the Hebron Historical Society was asked by the elementary schools to participate in Memorial Day celebrations by performing a "one-woman show" on Lucy Freelove Nichols Smith, an early 19th century woman who attended the one-room Gilead Hill School. The show, which focused on a typical school day in 1830, was based exclusively on Smith's memoirs.

Category 2: Protecting Historic Resources

(A local governmental body, such as a board or a commission, charged with leading historic preservation activities within the community)

In 1994, the Town of Hebron established a Historic Properties Commission charged with leading historic preservation activities within the community.

The charge of this Commission is to promote the educational, cultural, economic and general welfare of the Town of Hebron through the preservation and protection of Historical Properties within the Town; and to preserve and protect its architectural and historical integrity. This commission is made up of five regular members (including a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and Secretary) and three alternates. The Commission meets on the second Wednesday of each month, and all meetings are open to the public.

(An adopted community-wide historic preservation plan that is being implemented)

Hebron's Planning and Zoning Commission adopted the "Plan of Conservation and Development" (POCD) in January 2004.

The Town's community-wide historic preservation plan is detailed in Section 2.H, *Areas of Historical Heritage*, in this document, which is available online in its entirety at <http://www.hebronct.com/pdfs/pocds072704.pdf> .

The stated goal of that section of the POCD is to protect and preserve Hebron's rich, historic heritage for the education, enrichment and enjoyment of all citizens.

Historic resources are defined by the plan to include homes, schools, churches, cemeteries, objects and older manufacturing sites, as well as the outbuildings, landscaping and spaces associated with them. Additional historic resources include old rail lines, roadways, and scenic views and vistas that are an integral part of their historic setting.

(A historic preservation review ordinance and volunteer or professional staff to implement it)

As previously described, the Hebron Historic Properties Commission (HPC) was created in 1994 with the adoption of Hebron Town Ordinance 94-1, enabled by Connecticut General Statutes, Section 7-147.

The HPC, a strictly volunteer organization, members of which are appointed by Hebron's Board of Selectmen, is charged to promote the educational, cultural, economic, and general welfare of the public through the preservation and protection of properties within the town of Hebron important for their historical and architectural values.

Town Ordinance 94-1 identifies Hebron's locally designated historic properties. Properties are placed in the local ordinance following guidelines for local historic designations as defined in Connecticut State Statute Section 7-147q.: *Procedures for establishment of historic properties.*

Currently, ten properties in Hebron have been recommended by the HPC, and approved by the Selectmen, for local historic designation. These properties include town-owned properties, privately-owned properties, and properties owned by the Hebron Historical Society.

The HPC is currently researching the addition of four additional Hebron properties for local historic designation in 2009.

Secondly, Hebron is identified by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, as a Certified Local Government. As such, the town (through its appointed commission, Hebron Historic Properties

Commission) follows required state statutes for issuing a Certificate of Appropriateness for the exterior alteration, erection, relocation, or demolition of any building or structure that holds local historic designation status.

The Commission at all times utilizes the U.S. Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving Rehabilitating, Restoring, and Reconstructing Historic Buildings*.

Category 3: Promoting Historic Assets

(A local heritage tourism program or active participation in a regional program, with such promotional material as a walking/driving trail or tour itinerary, map of historic resources, etc)

First, the Town of Hebron is a vital member of the Airline Trail project in Eastern Connecticut. The trail is comprised of approximately 50 miles, and crosses through the towns of East Hampton, Colchester, Hebron, Lebanon, Columbia, Windham, Chaplin, Hampton, Pomfret, Putnam, and Thompson.

As noted on one of many available Airline Trail websites, "One hundred years ago, the New York and New England Air Line Railroad signified machines, speed, noise, and smoke; today, the Air Line Rail Trail suggests escape from the modern world. While the railroad once symbolized power over nature, the rail trail now stands for identification with nature. And while the railroad once facilitated travel to distant places, the rail trail suggests a future in which we can enjoy what is in our own back yards."

Regional resident Stan Malcolm has dedicated many years photographing and publishing – without photography fees – the changing flora and fauna of the Airline Trail in Hebron. Malcolm's photography documenting the importance of the Airline Trail for this area can be found online at <http://www.performance-vision.com/airline/>.

The Town of Hebron's Public Works Department maintains, on a constant basis, the Hebron portion of this important nature trail, and the town's Resident State Troopers frequently conduct bike patrols along the trail to greet and help the many visitors who take advantage of this natural treasure, as well as provide a security presence.

Second, the site at 150 East Street in Hebron, which includes the historic Peters House, was recently approved for inclusion in the Connecticut Freedom Trail by the Amistad Committee, Inc. and the Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism/Connecticut Freedom Trail Site Committee.

This prestigious designation is based on the documented history of Cesar and Lowis Peters and their eight children, slaves of the Reverend Samuel Peters, a notorious Tory.

The Peters Story was captured by Yale University's Gilder Lehrman Center for the Study of Slavery, Resistance and Abolitionism in 2007 as one of five significant Connecticut slave stories. The program, entitled "Citizens All: African Americans in Connecticut 1700-1850," is available online at http://cmi2.yale.edu/citizens_all/stories/index.html (click on Hebron.)

Original documents regarding this event are available at the Hebron Town Clerk's Office and at the Connecticut State Library. Those original documents, along with transcriptions done by the Hebron Historical Society, are available online at the Society's website.

The Connecticut Freedom Trail brochure, distributed nationwide and online at www.CTFreedomTrail.com, is expected to bring new attention and visitors to Hebron, especially during September, which has been designated by Connecticut Public Act No. 04-25 as "Connecticut Freedom Trail Month." The Freedom Trail website is scheduled to be updated with Hebron-specific information by June 2009.

The updated Freedom Trail brochure that includes Hebron is scheduled for release in June 2009. Driving tours of Freedom Trail sites will also be updated to include Hebron.

In addition, the Hebron Historical Society is producing a film documenting this abolitionist event, *Testimonies of a Quiet New England Town*. *Testimonies*, written and directed by local Hebron resident Matthew Troy and executive-produced by five-time Emmy winner Karyl Evans, will be shot in May 2009. The premiere of the film is scheduled for September 2009 in Hebron.

The Society has received \$60,000 in Special Initiative Grants from the Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism, and almost \$20,000 in In-Kind Contributions from local residents and businesses, to support the production of *Testimonies*.

(A regularly scheduled heritage observance or event)

As indicated previously, each year on the second weekend of March, Hebron holds its Maple Festival. In addition to activities previously described, Troop 28 Boy Scouts host tours of two of Hebron's old schools. The Hebron Women's Club sells commemorative coffee mugs that highlight a particular town historic resource. Visitors tour sugarhouses throughout town and learn the traditional art of maple syrup production along with sampling the many maple-themed sweet treats.

Information about the Hebron Maple Festival can be found online at <http://www.hebronmaplefest.com/>.

Secondly, with the addition of the 150 East Street site to the Connecticut Freedom Trail, and inclusion of that designation in upcoming statewide publicity, Hebron will be automatically included in the statutorily-declared month of September as "Connecticut Freedom Trail Month."

(A historic preservation awards or recognition program)

For the past 10 years, the Hebron Historical Society has recognized a senior student at the Regional School District Number 8 (RHAM High School) for superior efforts in the field of history and historical studies. RHAM teachers determine the recipient, and notify the Historical Society of their decision.

At graduation, the nominated student receives a gift and a personal letter of congratulations from the Hebron Historical Society.

D. *Provide approximately 100-200 words on the history of your community, including founding date, key events, evolution of the economy, and information on historic attractions not otherwise noted in the application. This information will be edited and incorporated into profiles of designated communities*

Hebron, Connecticut (population 9,491), situated 20 miles southeast of Hartford, became the state's 41st town when it was officially incorporated on May 26, 1708.

Throughout the 1700's, Hebron was known for harnessing its water power with wood, saw, cider and textile mills, as well as several blacksmith shops and general stores. By the 19th century, the community had extensive farming and dairy operations, paper and grist mills. An earlier wagon shop thrived, but an attempt to manufacture automobiles (the Ams Sterling) in the early 1900's fell flat.

While there is no manufacturing today, several historic farms still thrive, such as the Ellis family's MapleLeaf farm, a founder of the popular "Farmer's Cow" milk brand.

Hebron's population has more than doubled since 1960; people are drawn to the town's rural charm intermixed with its accommodations for modern lifestyles. Many historic resources have been successfully incorporated into daily life and business.

Three real estate companies occupy historic dwellings in the town center, and Hebron's 18th century post office houses an art and framing store. Other successful businesses are located in historic buildings.

Of the nine one-room schools still standing, Center School houses the American Legion and VFW. The historic Horton House serves as municipal office space.

Hope Valley Methodist Church (1840) and the original Town Records Building (1910) are owned by the town and available to the public on a limited basis. Four historic churches still greet parishioners every week: St. Peter's Episcopal (1826), Gilead Congregational (1838), First Congregational (rebuilt in 1882), and United Brethren of Hebron synagogue (1940).