

Stamford Historical Society Plans Urban Exhibit and Fund Raising Gala

Stamford, CT – September 8, 2008—The Stamford Historical Society will open its newest exhibit, “Urban Renewal: The Emergence of Modern Stamford,” at the Palace Theater, 61 Atlantic Street, on September 25th at 5:30. The opening of this retrospective that looks at 50 years of Stamford development is also a fundraiser in support of the collections and activities of the Historical Society.

Speakers at the exhibit opening will include Mayor Dannel P. Malloy, developer Robert N. Rich, and Executive Director Dr. Thomas A. Zoubek of the Stamford Historical Society. Wine and hors d’oeuvres, prepared by Best in Gourmet, will be served. Guests can participate in a silent auction filled with tempting items ranging from health club certificates to weekend getaways.

The exhibit covers the history of the Southeast Quadrant Redevelopment project, which transformed the declining historic core of the City of Stamford into the vibrant center that it has become.

By taking advantage of the federal, state and city programs then in place, the Stamford Urban Redevelopment Commission seized the opportunity and selected the F. D. Rich Company as the major redeveloper. The Commission then leveraged the 100 million dollars of public money, the equivalent of almost 2 billion dollars today. The new construction included offices, retail and residential buildings.

The scope of the exhibit encompasses the early days of planning and controversy, including the law suits and organized opposition as over 1,000 families and 400 businesses were relocated.

Included in the exhibit are photographs of houses and commercial buildings long ago demolished, as well as copies of newspaper articles of the time and a number of models and photographs of the various projects which were eventually completed. Additionally, visitors can view designs of projects that were never built, projects under construction, and even some still on the drawing board.

The entrance to the exhibit will feature a little seen, recently discovered movie of the giant parade celebrating Stamford’s 300th anniversary in June 1941. At that time, downtown Stamford was still the vibrant center of our community, prior to the deterioration that set in during the years following World War II.

Dr. Thomas Zoubek of the Stamford Historical Society is the curator for the exhibit. Having spent months researching newspaper articles, photographs and oral histories, he estimates that there will be at least 500 different pieces on display. The exhibit is partially the result of a grant from F. D. Rich Company and the opening of their extensive archives for use in the exhibit. Historical Society Board member Pobie Johnston and her carefully preserved scrapbooks from the period of redevelopment were an invaluable source for this project. Many of the photos in the exhibit are available courtesy of the Urban Redevelopment Commission, Historical Society librarian Ron Marcus, and Stamford Historical Society Photo Archivist Mike Pastore.

Tickets are \$35 and all proceeds benefit the Stamford Historical Society. For reservations or further information please call the Stamford Historical Society at (203) 329-1183. The invitation can be viewed on our website, <http://www.stamfordhistory.org>.

About the Stamford Historical Society

The Stamford Historical Society, Inc., the municipal historian of Stamford, is an educational and research institution, whose primary functions are to collect, preserve, conserve, interpret, and exhibit materials relating to Stamford, Connecticut and our region to maintain and to stimulate interest in the varied experiences that reflect our cultural heritage.

The Society is dedicated to preserving regional history and providing opportunities for the community to understand and experience the past through the presentation of exhibits and displays, lectures, demonstrations, special events and participatory programs. In particular, we preserve and offer tours of the unique Hoyt Barnum house, built in 1699. As the city of Stamford's history center, we have a responsibility to all citizens of our community to engage them in the telling of their stories.

For more information visit <http://www.stamfordhistory.org> or call 203-329-1183.

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