

The New Haven Preservation Trust
934 State Street
New Haven, Conn. 06511

Commission on Enhancing Agency Outcomes
Connecticut General Assembly
Hartford, Conn. 06106

SUBJECT: Proposed merger of the Connecticut Commission on Culture & Tourism into the state Department of Economic and Community Development


Dear Commissioners:

It has recently come to the attention of the New Haven Preservation Trust that plans are under consideration to merge the Connecticut Commission on Culture & Tourism into the state Department of Economic and Community Development. The Trust is greatly concerned that such a merger will adversely affect the operation of the Commission's Historic Preservation Division in the following ways:

1. The merger would indefinitely disrupt the reliable technical support that the Commission has provided to the state's diverse preservation constituency, including grant support to non-profit organizations such as the New Haven Preservation Trust.
2. A merger with the Department of Economic and Community Development would create a conflict of interest for the State Historic Preservation Office's preservation program, which is administered under the provisions of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. This act requires the Historic Preservation Division to conduct environmental reviews of all federally- and state-funded projects, including those administered by the Department of Economic and Community Development.
3. At least three previous proposals for mergers with other state agencies have not been enacted because of the conflict of interest issue. In each case, the agency itself had projects that needed to be reviewed by the State Historic Preservation Office, creating an inherent conflict. In 2003, the merger with arts, film and tourism had no such conflict and the merger went through smoothly. A merger with the Department of Economic and Community Development, however, would significantly restrain the progress Connecticut's historic preservation movement has made over the last 20 years.

Thank you for your thoughtful attention to our concerns.

Sincerely,



John Herzan
Preservation Services Officer

