

Torrington Historic Preservation Trust

Fall 2018 Newsletter

Summer Is Over and Fall Is Here!

We take the time to reflect on the past summer featuring the 2018 Historic Preservation Awards and work accomplished on Skee's Diner as well as the next step for Skee's.

2018 Historic Preservation Awards

The awards were presented on June 4 at our office on 41 Water Street, Torrington.

Residential Property

Edward and Kathi Cook for their home at 311 Migeon Avenue

This elegant Victorian era house was built in 1896 for Frederick Hoerle, who was a manager at Union Hardware Company at the north end of Migeon Avenue, referred to locally as the "Skate Shop."

At the same time Mr. Hoerle's brother built an equally elegant, though stylistically different home next door. Both houses were designed by Wilfred Elizur Griggs (1866-1918).

The Cooks tackled large scale restoration projects which would have daunted seasoned pros, such as re-creating the original, but long-gone front porch to period perfection, and painting the clapboards and trim in appropriate period colors. They were also able to bring interior, woodwork, walls, and floors back to period elegance.



Commercial Structure

Julian Sawyer for Sawyer's Bar and Grill at 79 Center Street

Sawyer's is a fine example of a modest early 20th-century commercial building of the "corner store" typology. It is one-story brick with some decorative detailing on the facade, four bays with recessed corner entry, and original transoms above the bays.

The structure was built by Luigi Ficca, a local grocer, in 1934, and opened as Center Tavern. In 1939 the name was changed to Ficca's Tavern, then in 1948 it became Ficca's Restaurant and stayed in business until about 2008.

Julian Sawyer spent 18 months carefully preserving and restoring interior elements such as the stamped metal ceiling and mahogany topped bar. Interior brick walls were revealed to add vintage ambience. Sawyer's is a thriving restaurant and bar in downtown Torrington.



Skee's Diner Restoration Continues

The undercarriage of Skee's Diner needed welding repairs to stabilize it before other restoration work could be done. Special thanks to Marty Marola for donating the welding. The photos below illustrate the extensive repairs required.

BEFORE



AFTER



Next Step for Skee's

We will be doing repair on the wood frame of the diner using white oak for its natural resistance to rot. The white oak timber is being donated by Duke Besozzi. We will be forming a volunteer crew of people with skilled carpentry skills to work on this project. If you are interested in volunteering, contact Mark McEachern at mceach@att.net

VIEW OF WOOD FRAME SECTION



Join us in our work to strengthen Torrington's economic development through preservation!
To become a member or make a donation visit www.PreserveTorrington.org

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