

Bob Frew

My wife and I moved to Pearl Street in 1981 with our 1 year old son. When we headed down to State Street – on the way to Modern Apizza, of course, we would notice some of the vacant and underutilized buildings that were in pretty bad shape. When we moved to Bishop Street a couple of years later, Bishop was a little sketchy – one day we found bullet casings in the street in front of our house. But over the next several years, the street started to feel better and safer.

What was happening? Bob Frew had started buying and renovating buildings along State Street. Soon Susan joined him, and together they changed the street – and changed the neighborhood – and saved the neighborhood. You can't imagine how the street was turned around.

And as President of the New Haven Preservation Trust at the turn of the century, I came to truly appreciate how Bob Frew was restoring the buildings – saving historic details as much as possible. The Trust eventually moved down to State Street from Chapel Street – into a Bob Frew Building on the corner of State and Bishop streets – right across the street from the soon-to be Bob Frew corner. Bob and Susan were good and fair landlords and supported the Trust with significant donations and sponsorships. In 2020 the Trust awarded Bob the Margret Flint, an award for individuals or organizations whose support of preservation in the City of New Haven has contributed to the integrity of the community, the protection of its historic resources, and an appreciation of its history. And later when one of another Frew building opened up down the street with a bigger space, the Trust moved there and remains there today.

This coming weekend the Trust is sponsoring a tour of Douglas Orr buildings. It is fitting to honor the architect of these fine ~~masonry~~ buildings – Church of the Redeemer and the Lawn Club for example - that contribute so much to New Haven.

It is no less fitting to honor the architect Bob Frew, who, working with ^{MANY} ~~mostly~~ simple clapboard buildings, contributed so much to New Haven and revitalized and saved a neighborhood.

Thank You,
C. Michael Tucker, 64 Bishop St.