



Newsletter | August 26, 2023



Trivia question

What's the location of the plaque below? For the answer, see the end of this newsletter.



Deborah Chapel comes down

Despite years of opposition from preservationists, Congregation Beth Israel of West Hartford proceeded this week with the demolition of Deborah Chapel, a 137-year-old funeral chapel at its cemetery on Zion Hill. The National Trust for Historic Preservation had declared brick building one of the country's most endangered

[places in 2022](#), calling it a "rare and early American example of an intact Jewish funerary structure." The Congregation said that with the opening of the first Jewish funeral homes in the 1940s, the structure had outlived its original purpose as a mortuary. It had been vacant since the 1990s. You'll find photos from the first day of demolition on the HartfordHistory.net [Facebook page](#).

[Congregation Beth Israel news release \(PDF\)](#)

[VIDEO: Historic chapel in Hartford starts being demolished Wednesday morning](#) - Fox61.com

[Decade-long fight ends with the demolition of historic Connecticut chapel](#) - Hartford Courant*

[Historic Hartford chapel is demolished after years-long battle](#) - Connecticut Public

More news

[CT AIDS memorial proposed for Hartford park, 'an everlasting tribute' to activist and those lost](#) - Hartford Courant*

[Author of Hartford Circus Fire book, former investigator dies at 74](#) - CT Insider*

[New museum-based program hopes to get kids excited about civics](#) - Connecticut Public Radio

Hartford-related articles from "Today in Connecticut History":

[August 25: The state's first POW from "the undeclared war" comes home](#)

[August 23: Circumnavigating celebrity aviator lands in Connecticut](#)

[August 22: A president makes transportation history in Hartford](#)

[August 21: The death of the Charter Oak](#)

* Requires paid subscription, usually after a certain number of free articles.

Trivia question answer

At the corner of Main Street and Central Row. It's affixed to the Hartford-Connecticut Trust Company Building -- though that's not the building where the phone was installed. The phone went into the four-story Hungerford & Cone building, one of the city's more prestigious office spaces until it was torn down in 1920 to make room for the skyscraper. For more photos, [visit HartfordHistory.net](#).

For more on William Gray and his invention:

- ["The pay phone's journey from patent to urban relic,"](#) Smithsonian Magazine, September 2014

- "[Site of the first public payphone: Hartford, Connecticut,](#)" Atlas Obscura



The plaque, circled here in red, is at the base of the Hartford-Connecticut Trust Company Building. Opposite it on Central Row: the Old State House.

More trivia questions at HartfordHistory.net



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