

STAMFORD HISTORICAL SOCIETY PLANS URBAN RENEWAL 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.