

# Town of West Hartford

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50 South Main Street  
West Hartford, CT 06107-2431

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Fairview Cemetery Office reopens after renovations**

WEST HARTFORD, CONN. (October 17, 2017) – The Fairview Cemetery Office reopened on October 13, 2017 after extensive renovations.

In 2014 the office was closed when it was discovered that the 90-year old building had suffered considerable water damage over the years mostly due to its subterranean situation.

“The office is unique in that the entire lower level of the chapel is built underground,” said William Phibbs, Town of West Hartford capital projects manager. “Moisture had gotten into the walls and the office had to be gutted.”

“I remember coming back from vacation and being surprised that the entire office had been gutted since this project started out as what I thought was a simple bathroom renovation” said Rick DiBella, Public Works grounds manager.

The project was put on pause for a year and then the Town hired architect Jerry Waters of Collinsville, CT to design the renovation. Construction began last Fall and took about one year to complete.

The lower level was completely renovated into modern office space. All new mechanical and electrical equipment were installed including energy efficient interior and exterior LED lighting, a high efficiency heat pump air conditioning and heating system, and ultra-low flow water saving plumbing fixtures. The walls and ceiling were sprayed with a closed cell foam which was selected for its high energy savings rating.

A new ADA-compliant restroom was installed as well.

The building’s stone exterior was chemically cleaned to remove nearly 100 years of contaminants.

“We were able to bring the building back to its original luster after removing the build-up of acid rain and tree sap from the stonework,” said Mr. Phibbs.

The office entryway was restored with a new retaining wall, fencing, vintage era lighting and landscaping. Stairs were removed making the building handicap accessible.

(more)

The steeply pitched roof was completely re-done with new 30-year architectural style shingles that mimic the look of slate shingles commonly found in 1920's.

Maintenance crews can access the building via the garage where all their equipment and vehicles are stored.

"Long ago, the chapel and office were used to prepare bodies for burial and to hold ceremonies. As time went on, funeral homes took over those roles and the chapel was closed," he said. "Unfortunately, the chapel remains closed to the public," he said.

"We hope to renovate the chapel sometime in the future. That project requires a skilled craftsman that is sensitive to historic structures and stain glass restoration, which are hard to find," said Mr. Phibbs.

Office staff Amanda and Kathy, and grounds maintenance crews Rick, Freddy, and Kenny are happy to move back into their home operation after nearly three years. The office staff were temporarily relocated to Town Hall during that the renovation period.

Fairview Cemetery Office is located at 200 Whitman Avenue and is open Monday through Friday, 9:00 AM-12:00 PM and 1:00-3:00 PM. The office maintains records of its nearly 20,000 past residents of West Hartford. Fairview Cemetery is managed by the Department of Public Works. The office may be reached at (860) 561-8136.

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