



Kathleen O'Rourke/Staff photo

Demolition begins yesterday on the front steps of the former Old Town Hall in Stamford as part of a \$14.5 million renovation.

By Doug Dalena  
Staff Writer

STAMFORD — Construction crews started demolishing steps and sidewalks in front of Old Town Hall this week, kicking off the second phase of a renovation project designed to bring some bustle back to the historic building's halls.

The \$14.5 million project will convert the long-vacant municipal building at Bank, Main and Atlantic streets into a mix of leased offices and public space, said Jeff Pardo, construction manager for the city's engineering department.

The current phase of construction, costing \$1.4 million, will restore the building's main steps and sidewalks to their original 1906 appearance, with a few exceptions to meet modern building codes, Pardo said.

The work includes rounded white concrete steps like the originals, with porcelain pavers that will simulate limestone, and granite borders. Contractors also will install concrete sidewalks on three sides of the building, accented with brick pavers and granite curbs.

New bus shelters, streetlights and lights to illuminate the building's cupola will complete the exterior renovations,

# Return to glory

## Old Town Hall renovations enter into second phase

Pardo said.

The plan calls for pouring concrete by the end of next month, and, barring major delays, completing all or most of the remaining construction in time for the annual balloon parade, he said.

One lane of Main Street will be closed during construction to accommodate sidewalk detours.

The original plan called for renovations to a small park outside the building, but no changes will be made at the park until the construction is done.

The third and final phase will include major interior renovations and an addition to increase marketable space. Contractors finished the \$1.4 million first phase in January, renovating the exterior and removing lead paint and asbestos inside.

Most design work for the interior renovations is complete, said city Rep. Harry Day, R-13, a member of the building's steering committee. Besides the addition, the ground floor along Bank Street can now accommodate a

restaurant, Day said.

Original plans for the addition included a new elevator and staircase, but officials decided to put those in the existing building so the addition can house leasable space, Pardo said.

The city, through a steering committee, is working with the National Development Council, a New York-based nonprofit developer that specializes in public projects and historic properties, to attract business tenants to the building once the renovations are complete.

"A lot of this doesn't happen until people have a better opportunity to see what's ultimately built," Day said.

Although most of the building will be leased, a portion must be reserved for some kind of public use, according to terms set by the Board of Representatives when it approved the city's portion of the funding.

"We don't want it all taken over by some tenant who locks the front door," Day said. "What the ultimate use is, we don't know, but certainly the place lends itself beautifully to a museum."

State grants will cover \$6.4 million. Please see **GLORY**, Page A12

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million of the project's \$14.5 million cost and city bonding will pay for \$1.4 million. The city expects to qualify for \$4.3 million in federal tax credits for his-

toric preservation.

The cornerstone of Old Town Hall was laid at Bank and Main streets in 1905, at the crossing of ancient American Indian foot paths. Previous town halls also occupied the site.