

## MINUTES

### State Historic Preservation Review Board Friday, March 26, 2021 9:30 a.m. Teleconference via Microsoft Teams

**Present:** Mr. Barlow, Dr. Bucki, Ms. Dyer-Carroll, Mr. Edwards (Chair, via phone), Mr. Herzan (via phone), Mr. McMillan, Mr. Wigren

**Absent:** Ms. Saunders, Dr. Feder

**Staff:** Jenny Scofield (presenting), Todd Levine (presenting); Deborah Gaston, Jonathan Kinney, Cathy Labadia, Jane Schneider, Elizabeth Shapiro, Marena Wisniewski

**Guests (by Agenda Item):**

IV.A.1 Merav Canaan, Emily Correia, Michael Dimenstein, Leah Glaser, Rabbi Brian Immerman, Larry Schaefer, Richard Shaw

IV.A.2 Susan and Steven Kline, Randy Walton, other members of the Pine Grove Association

IV.A.3 Stacey Vairo

IV.A.4 Wayne Benjamin, Mary Falvey, Mike Forino

IB.B.1 Keith Ainsworth

#### **I. Call to Order**

Mr. Edwards called the meeting to order at approximately 9:45 a.m. He thanked the audience for attending.

#### **II. Review of Public Comment Procedures**

Ms. Scofield announced that under the emergency procedures [for digital meetings under Executive Order 7B] the meeting will be recorded. She requested that each person wishing to speak state their name before giving comments. All Board votes will be taken by roll call.

#### **III. Approval of the December 4, 2020 meeting minutes**

Mr. Edwards requested comments on the September minutes. Dr. Bucki provided minor edits.

*A motion was made by Mr. Herzan, second by Mr. Wigren to approve the minutes of the December 4, 2020 meeting, as amended (Y-7, N-0, Abstained-0).*

*Board members voting yes:* Mr. Barlow, Dr. Bucki, Ms. Dyer-Carroll, Mr. Edwards, Mr. Herzan, Mr. McMillan, Mr. Wigren.

#### **IV. Action Items**

##### **A. Completed National Register Nominations**

All registration forms are subject to changes made by the State Historic Preservation Review Board (SRB) and by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) staff.

Ms. Scofield reported that for the nominations on this agenda, the property owners and other interested parties were notified by email of the pending nomination, 30 days prior to the meeting. Nominations and meeting materials were posted on the State Historic Preservation Office website during the noticing period.

### **1. Congregation Mishkan Israel (Criteria A and C, Criteria Consideration A, local level)**

Ms. Scofield summarized that Congregation Mishkan Israel (CMI) is a Mid-Twentieth-Century Modern synagogue designed by Fritz Nathan in 1960. Staff recommends the property for listing at the local level under Criterion A for Social History for association with the Civil Rights Movement, and Criterion C for Architecture. The property also meets Criteria Consideration A as a religious property that derives its primary historic significance for reasons other than religion. The Period of Significance extends from construction of the building in 1960 through 1970, the 50-year age cut-off. The end date could be adjusted to 1972. A sentence was added to the nomination to indicate that the period of significance could be reevaluated once we are 50 years from 1982 because that is the date Rabbi Golberg, who was involved in the Civil Rights events hosted and organized at the property, retired.

Ms. Scofield reported that CMI is the property owner and initiated the nomination. Notice of the meeting was sent to CMI, and the Town of Hamden Mayor and Historic Properties Commission. Hamden is a Certified Local Government (CLG); the CLG response is in process. No letters were received in response to the nomination. Several guests are attending the meeting, including the consultants, Dr. Leah Glaser and Elizabeth Correia, and members of the Congregation, including Rabbi Brian Immerman, Michael Dimenstein, Larry Schaefer, and Richard Shaw.

Mr. Edwards invited the public to comment.

Mr. Michael Dimenstein stated that he was honored to represent Congregation Mishkan Israel at the meeting. He read the following remarks:

Serving as president of this 181 year old congregation, originally established in a small apartment above a dry goods store on Grand Avenue in New Haven, I am pleased to endorse this application for recognition of our current synagogue building at 785 Ridge Road in Hamden. In 1955, Congregation Mishkan Israel purchased the land to create a new, modern spiritual home in the suburbs of Hamden. This splendid temple, designed in the Modernist architectural style by Fritz Nathan and Bertram Bassuk, with its interior of Social Realism mosaics by Ben Shahn and stained glass by Robert Pinart and Jean-Jacques Duval, are more than an edifice to house the oldest Jewish congregation in Connecticut. The building is a reflection of the human experience and the struggles for religious freedom and racial justice. We believe that it is our responsibility to preserve our congregation's history as a testament to our sacred heritage and our tradition of interfaith and multi-cultural relations.

Mr. Dimenstein thanked the SRB for consideration of the nomination.

Rabbi Brian Immerman introduced himself as the current Rabbi for CMI. He has served the Congregation for three years, following Rabbi Brockman who served for 32 years. He observed that anyone who enters CMI feels the sacredness of building through the beautiful architecture and the way the ceiling flows and envelopes you as though you're standing under a Jewish wedding canopy; and the way the walls invite the light and allow view out into the greater community. When speaking with artists about the Ben Shahn mosaic or the beautiful stained glass or the details of which prophets were chosen for the walls, there is a feeling of God's presence in the space. The recognition of the building as historically and architecturally significant is important to the Congregation. Rabbi Immerman thanked the Board for the consideration of CMI for National Register listing.

Mr. Edwards asked the SRB for comments.

Ms. Scofield noted that a photo key will be provided. The authors are also working on typos that they've caught, but that edits are not completed on a nomination during the 30 days before the SRB meeting. Those edits will be completed in the next round.

Mr. McMillan stated that he supports the nomination under Criterion A and C. He noted that Rabbi Goldberg emerged as an important figure through the social history text and asked if Criterion B should be considered.

Mr. Barlow stated that he appreciated that a site plan was included in the nomination and asked who produced the site plan. It may have been the architect, but it's not clear. He noted that a large open space is shown to the rear of the building, which is now wetlands. He asked if a use was foreseen for that or if the site planner put it aside knowing that it was wet and unusable. Mr. Barlow referenced text on p. 8-21 which reads, "Nathan however persuaded the building committee to have him develop a master plan for the entire synagogue complex, not just the religious education building. He asked for clarification about the original design intent. He asked if the Congregation's plan was just for an education center and Nathan talked them into a larger project or if a whole community center was the original intent. Dr. Glaser responded that the main impetus of the Board was to build an education center because they were busting out of the synagogue, but they were divided about that. They were undecided about that when they went to the architect and the architect chose to design the whole thing at once.

Mr. Edwards noted that he was fascinated that the sanctuary and education center were designed together on a suburban lot. This was part of the architecture of the period and is reflected in other non-centralized projects of the mid-1960s. That is important to emphasize. Dr. Glaser added that Nathan got his name out after designing the Westchester Jewish Community Center. The idea of making the synagogue a community center was one of his specialties. Mr. Edwards asked if there are similar local or regional examples that could be cited or was this unique at the time. Dr. Glaser answered that the Westchester Jewish Community Center was the model and he also designed the Woodbridge synagogue on a smaller scale at the same time. Mr. Wigren added that this was a trend in religious architecture of the time – not just Jewish facilities. You can trace it back to urban mission churches in the 1930s and earlier. In the post-war era in the suburbs, there is this idea of buildings with lots of parking, flexible planning, and lots of education and community spaces

combined in the complex; we [the SRB] have just seen it recently in the nomination for St. Mark's Episcopal Church in New Canaan. There is a book called *The Suburban Church* which focuses on the mid-west but brings out these suburban religious building characteristics. There is also the idea of softening modernism with natural materials, brick and wood. That is also a trend of the 1950s that you see on suburban houses of the time. The brickwork with the horizontal courses deeply raked so that they're recessed behind the face of the brick and the vertical joints that come out to the face of the brick, create long horizontal bands. Frank Lloyd Wright popularized this idea and used it his Prairie Houses and throughout his career. Suburban architects pick it up and you can find it in buildings of the 1950s and 1960s all over the place.

Mr. Wigren asked if Bertram Bassuk was another designer that should be mentioned in the nomination. Mr. Dimenstein responded that he worked for the firm of Fritz Nathan. Ms. Scofield added that Bassuk is not listed on the nomination cover for the significance. Dr. Glaser responded that she thinks he was more of an assistant, not making the primary design decisions.

Mr. Edwards asked for the date of the publication Chris mentioned. Mr. Wigren responded that it was published in 2015 and placed the reference in the Teams Meeting chat. Dr. Glaser added that there was a book about synagogues in the 1950s put out, which did emphasize this trend and the book is still in Rabbi Goldberg's library at CMI. It seemed to correspond with what Rabbi Goldberg was looking at when he was helping consult with the architect about the design of the building. Mr. Wigren noted that there were a lot of books like that in the era.

Mr. Herzan referenced Temple Beth Zion in Buffalo, New York, designed by Max Abramowitz in 1967, as an example of the work of Ben Shahn. The artwork and iconography in the building were designed by Shahn. Mr. Herzan requested that more emphasis be given in the nomination to Shahn's work in synagogues and his association with this building. Dr. Glaser added that Ben Shahn's work is a source of pride in the synagogue; Rabbi Goldberg emphatically insisted on Shahn's involvement in the design of the arc. Mr. Edwards commented that Ben Shahn is an internationally regarded artist, maybe more important in his field than the other designers associated with Congregation Mishkan Israel project. Dr. Bucki added that Shahn was also connected to progressive causes; this nomination could be part of a larger historical project in amplifying the progressive trends in the New Haven area. The social history adds to the extent of the significance. Ben Shahn having one foot in progressive causes and one foot in the architecture brings it all together. Dr. Glaser recognized Elizabeth Correia's work on the nomination. She noted that she is a member of the Congregation and 2021 is the 60-year anniversary of Martin Luther King, Jr. dedicating the space. Mr. Edwards stated it is important to look at the scholarship of museum and art curators and the role Shahn played in that world. Mr. Herzan appreciated Dr. Bucki's point. He stated that this is a good example of Shahn's work; add more of the story of how people engaged Shahn in design. Mr. Edwards suggested checking with MOMA archives for more information about Shahn. Mr. Herzan asked whether the level of significance identified in the nomination should be raised from local to state because of Shahn's involvement. Mr. Edwards recommended considering it, but you would have to amend the text. Mr. Herzan recommended considering Shahn's work in relation to other projects. Dr. Bucki asked what other design influences there were in terms of uniqueness of the design. She also asked whether Shahn designed all of the stained glass or parts of it. Dr. Glaser answered that he designed the whole arc in the sanctuary, but not the work in the chapel. There was a lot of conversation between Rabbi Goldberg, the Congregation, and Shahn about which prophets should be depicted.

Ms. Dyer-Carroll stated that she really enjoyed reading the nomination. The use of CMI's manuscript collection enhanced the nomination. She suggested enhancing the integrity statement [on p. 7-9] by directly referencing the seven aspects of integrity.

**A motion was made by Mr. Wigren, second by Dr. Bucki to list Congregation Mishkan Israel in the National Register of Historic Places (Y-7, N-0, Abstained= 0).**

**Board members voting yes:** Mr. Barlow, Dr. Bucki, Ms. Dyer-Carroll, Mr. Edwards, Mr. Herzan, Mr. McMillan, Mr. Wigren.

## **2. Canaan Pine Grove Association, Canaan (Criteria A and C, Criteria Consideration A, local)**

Ms. Scofield summarized that this nomination is for a 67-acre property established as a religious meeting camp in 1871. It contains 73 counted resources, of which 68 are contributing, including 55 cottages, a chapel, and a community house. The entire landscape is counted as a contributing site. Staff recommends the property for listing at the local level under Criterion A for Religion and Social History, for its associations with the camp meeting movement and social practices of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It is also recommended under Criterion C for Architecture for the vernacular camp cottage property type and landscape character that was common to camp meetings. The property meets Criteria Consideration A, for deriving historic significance for other reasons besides religion. The period of significance is 1871 to 1971, which is the date of establishment through 50-year cut-off date.

Canaan Pine Grove Association initiated the nomination. The Association owns the property; individual members have shares in the property. Notice of the SRB meeting was sent to the Association and the Town of Canaan. Ms. Scofield held an informational meeting at Pine Grove in the summer of 2019, when most association members were present. The town is not a CLG. No letters of support or objection were received. Ms. Scofield noted that some locational information will be restricted in this nomination; there is a National Park Service process for redacting information in the public copy. The redaction is because of issues with trespassing and damage to the property. Susan and Steven Kline attended the meeting as consultants for the nomination. Mr. Randall Walton attended as a member of the Canaan Pine Grove Association.

Mr. Edwards invited public comment on the nomination.

Mr. Walton introduced himself as a member of Pine Grove. His family has been there for a number of years and it is a special place. He referenced Ms. Scofield's visits to the property. He is an architect, raised in Connecticut, and has written several architectural guidelines for communities. The President of the Association Board asked him to be on the Architectural Review Board for Pine Grove. Mr. Walton outlined three reasons to nominate the property to the National Register: 1) This is a special place architecturally and deserves recognition; 2) It would help establish a timeframe for significance to judge whether modifications were appropriate or not; 3) It is a fragile place – if losses happened, it is not in compliance with current code. The place survives at the pleasure of the building inspector. The muscle that comes with listing could help with

preservation if something happens. The 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Pine Grove is this summer. This is an opportunity to compile all of the history and photos and archives. Mr. Walton thanked the SRB for their consideration of the nomination.

Mr. Edwards thanked Mr. Walton for his efforts and asked the SRB for comments.

Mr. Herzan stated that the nomination is so thoroughly and thoughtfully written and is an impressive document. He asked about the historic name of the place [listed on the front of the nomination]. An association is not a place. Mr. Herzan suggested listing the historic name as the Canaan Pine Grove Camp Meeting instead. Associate a building or district type in the historic name that is justifiable for what it was known as. Ms. Kline and Mr. Walton mentioned a concern from Association members regarding listing camp meeting in the name. Mr. Walton agreed that calling it Canaan Pine Grove could be considered.

Dr. Bucki mentioned that the connection of the camp meeting to the larger Chautauqua Movement in the early twentieth century sealed its historic importance. It's not just people at a camp ground, but rather involvement in a larger intellectual movement that is well-recognized nationally.

Mr. Wigren provided several comments on the nomination. He thanked the authors for the description of the atmosphere in the Grove on p. 7-6 and appreciated the comparison of this property to other camp meeting sites. Mr. Wigren requested an edit to the description of pointed arches on the chapel windows; they are not really arches. He noted that the practice of listing real estate in the wife's name was common during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, particularly when the husband was involved in business. If the business failed, there was some protection of the house if it was in the wife's name. Mr. Wigren noted that photographs of African Americans are referenced; he requested that one of the photos be included in the nomination if possible, to make that point more vivid.

Mr. Wigren requested the correction of select terminology. The reference to the property as south of the Town of Canaan is confusing because the property is in the town; he suggested the intended meaning is south of the built-up place. In reference to Methodists, the name changed frequently over time. During the nineteenth century to the 1930s, it is called the Methodist Episcopal Church; it is Methodist Church from 1939 to 1968 and United Methodist Church after 1968. Mr. Wigren asked what mass-planned meant on p. 8-46. Ms. Kline responded that she was trying to convey a bigger floor plan than a single space; it refers to cottages that are two rooms wide and two rooms deep or larger. They were bigger and more delineated into rooms. Ms. Scofield noted that a definition or footnote could be added.

Ms. Dyer-Carroll requested that the inflation calculations shown on p. 8-39 be checked for accuracy. It appears that the proportion is not the same.

Mr. Barlow stated that he agrees with the comment about the importance of the landscape. It is well described. Equally important is the site plan and how these cottages were laid out. Mr. Barlow requested that the land surveyor (shown on the survey map) be credited as a designer because he likely laid out the site plan and the layout is so important to the function and use of the camp.



**A motion was made by Mr. Herzan, second by Dr. Bucki to list Canaan Pine Grove in the National Register of Historic Places (Y-7, N-0, Abstained= 0).**

**Board members voting yes:** Mr. Barlow, Dr. Bucki, Ms. Dyer-Carroll, Mr. Edwards, Mr. Herzan, Mr. McMillan, Mr. Wigren.

### **3. Aetna Diner, Hartford (Criteria A and C, local)**

Mr. Edwards changed the order of the agenda to hear the Aetna Diner before the Westfield Plate Company nomination [because of the recent fire and loss of the Westfield Plate Company building).

Ms. Scofield summarized that the property is a prefabricated stainless steel diner manufactured by Paramount Dining Cars of New Jersey and transported to this site in sections in 1948. The prefabricated diner was connected to a brick kitchen built on the site at the same time. Staff recommends the property for listing at the local level under Criterion A for Commerce for its representation of changes in the diner industry to a broader customer base and Criterion C under Architecture as an increasingly rare building type. The period of significance extends from the placement of the diner on the site in 1948, through 1970 when it was rebranded as a more traditional restaurant. Ms. Scofield noted that the author of the nomination is working on a photo key. Mr. Richard Gutman, author, historian, and diner restoration specialist also reviewed the nomination and provided guidance.

The nomination was initiated by the owner who is doing a rehabilitation of the property. Notice of the SRB meeting was sent to the owner, City of Hartford Mayor and Planning and Zoning Commission, and the Hartford Preservation Alliance. The CLG response is in process and a positive response was received from the Historic Properties Commission. Seven letters of support were received from Richard Gutman, the Northside Institutions Neighborhood Alliance (NINA), the CT Main Street Center, Hartford Chamber of Commerce, Hartford Community Loan Fund, Hartford Business Improvement District, and Capital Region Development Authority. The letters were forwarded to the SRB prior to the meeting. Mr. Wayne Benjamin, owner, and Mr. Mike Forino, consultant for the nomination, attending the meeting, as well as Mary Falvey from Hartford Preservation Alliance. Ms. Scofield noted that she's also been working with Mr. Richard Gutman, who is author, historian, and diner restoration specialist. Mr. Gutman reviewed the nomination and advised on the history at her request. He provided additional comments, which will be incorporated into the next round of edits.

Mr. Edwards invited public comment on the nomination.

Mr. Wayne Benjamin introduced himself as owner of the property. He purchased it in 2017 and from then until now he has been doing design work and environmental investigations. The plan is to rehab the building and bring it back to life as a restaurant during its glory days. This property is significant; it is in the Marshall and Laurel Streets Historic District in Hartford. Mr. Benjamin worked for the City of Hartford as the Economic Development Director from 2010 to 2015. He has worked on a number of projects that have gone through the nomination process, including 777 Main Street (Hartford National Bank), and the Colt Project, the only national park in Connecticut.

He has been doing consulting work since 2015. Eric LaChapelle worked with him to move the project forward.

Mr. Edwards asked the SRB for comments.

Dr. Bucki stated that the building gives you a sense of what that strip of Farmington Avenue looked like. The streetscape needs to be preserved as an example of how a mid-size city expands. The design is very unique and there aren't many left. Dr. Bucki noted that from a social history point of view, she liked the discussion of the immigrant origins of the first owners; they are three Greek immigrants. It points to the early to mid-twentieth-century immigrant entrepreneurship. That needs to be highlighted in general and she appreciates that addition.

Mr. Edwards discussed the mention of institutional landmarks in the neighborhood and suggested that their historic names be mentioned, such as the Mark Twain Memorial. He noted that there was a concentration of three restaurants in this vicinity, including the Aetna, Scoler's diagonally across from the Aetna [at Farmington Ave. and Laurel Street] until 1970 when it moved to West Hartford, and the Maple Shade sandwich shop one block to the west.

Mr. Barlow noted that there is no explanation of why the diner was called the Aetna Diner originally. He suggested it was because of the proximity of the diner to the Aetna insurance company's offices in Hartford. Mr. Barlow requested that the author say more about the original diner and how it was replaced by this one. He also asked about the canopy shown in the historic figure on p. 33; add a mention of this in the history description. Mr. Forino responded that he didn't mention the proximity of the Aetna company because its relationship to the name of the diner was assumed. He also noted he will mention the canopy shown in the historic image. Mr. Forino didn't find any photos or maps about the earlier diner.

Mr. Wigren stated that he was confused about the edge materials on the windows – clarify what is old vs. new. He also requested that a photo of the window ventilation slide be included in the nomination. He has seen similar operations on windows in houses – plate glass with ventilation hoppers underneath. It is interesting to see this in a mass-produced example.

Mr. McMillan noted that he thinks the property merits listing. There are places in the nomination where the significance could be teased out more. He requested that the author talk more about the design. He asked how the juncture of the three cells related to the interior plan and what seating arrangements were allowed by large size of the diner. Mr. McMillan suggested that the nomination include more information about how the Paramount Company catered to the needs of the client here. He asked why the kitchen annex was separate, what the layout of the kitchen was, and what kind of food was served. That kind of information would highlight the individual eligibility of the property. He requested clarification about whether Figure 7 was of the Aetna insurance company. Mr. McMillan asked that some of the text on p. 8-20 be moved into the interior description in Section 7.

Mr. Edwards asked how a diner can be produced in three sections and suggested adding a diagram to show this. He requested clarification of how the diner was divided into three parts; where were the cuts and what are the three pieces? Mr. Forino answered that the diner was divided longitudinally so that it would fit onto train or truck beds for transport. The middle section would



have less structural integrity so temporary walls were used to shore it up. Mr. McMillan added that structurally speaking, there has to be something showing where the parts were stitched together. That should inform how the layout of the interior goes.

Mr. Edwards noted that the Aetna insurance company built a new wing [at their Hartford offices] in 1952 and asked if the kitchen attached to the diner was constructed to accommodate an expanded clientele. Mr. Forino answered that the kitchen was built the same year as the diner, but the expansion of clientele was the reason this diner replaced the old one on the site. The back bar counter may have been used as a prep station.

**A motion was made by Mr. Dr. Bucki, second by Mr. Edwards to list the Aetna Diner in the National Register of Historic Places (Y-7, N-0, Abstained= 0).**

**Board members voting yes:** Mr. Barlow, Dr. Bucki, Ms. Dyer-Carroll, Mr. Edwards, Mr. Herzan, Mr. McMillan, Mr. Wigren.

#### **4. Westfield Plate Company, Enfield (Criteria A and C, local)**

The SRB acknowledged that an extensive fire occurred at the Westfield Plate Company on March 24, 2021 and that the building was sadly lost. The ruins of the building are currently being demolished.

Ms. Scofield confirmed that the SRB is not asked to vote on this nomination because the building is now gone. She requested that the SRB provide comments on the nomination so that the nomination can be finalized as a documentation and provided to the town for their historical records. Ms. Scofield noted that this is town property; the Town of Enfield initiated the nomination and had plans to rehabilitate the building. She noted that Stacey Vairo, consultant for the nomination was present at the meeting.

Mr. Edwards asked the SRB for comments. He opened the discussion by stating that the pilasters on the building are mentioned many times and that the description could be edited. Talk about the fact that this was rebuilt as a “fire-proof” building [with features considered more fire resistive at the time]. Mr. Edwards recognized the irony of the building have fire-proof elements. He asked where the expansion joints are and suggested the original building on site may have been wood-frame.

Ms. Vairo responded that she will reduce the descriptive portion of the text regarding pilasters. The factory that this building replaced was also brick.

Mr. Edwards shared that the type of sliding fire door located in the party walls was intended to contain fires. There was a counterweight that was held open by a piece of metal that would melt at a certain temperature; it would melt, and the door would close. This type of door was called a calamine door and was used throughout Hartford in buildings of the same period. These were recognized fire doors – they would not burn and would hold fires back. There are many features in the building that harken to the demise of the earlier building on the site. The SRB recognized that these features did not stop the recent fire.

Mr. Wigren stated that he was fascinated by the concept of glass coffins described in the nomination; he was not aware of the demand for them. The structural implications of glass coffins are interesting. Mr. Wigren referenced the specialization of small manufacturing companies that produced parts for a larger item that is assembled by another company. You see a lot of that with the carriage industry in New Haven and maybe the arms manufacturers as well. This indicated the growth in the size of various industries as industry was broken down into specializations.

Ms. Vairo noted that Mike Forino also worked on the nomination.

Mr. Wigren stated that he forgot to mention that two of the consultants for nominations on this agenda are colleagues at Preservation Connecticut. However, the consultants prepared the nominations as private consultants and Preservation Connecticut has no direct involvement with the nominations and is not benefiting from their listings.

Dr. Bucki requested clarification of the relationship of this factory to the surrounding mills in Thompsonville. She asked that a map showing these factories be added to the nomination. Mr. Edwards requested editing of a cut-off sentence on p. 7-4. He asked where the Bigelow Carpet mill was.

Mr. Herzan requested that Factory be added to the historic name of the property on the first page so that the building type is known.

Ms. Scofield affirmed that the SRB's comments will be incorporated into final edits before the nomination is given to the town for their historical records.

Ms. Deborah Gaston, Secretary for the State Historic Preservation Office, added a comment about the Aetna Diner. She shared that she has family in the neighborhood. She remembers Scoler's and is familiar with the Aetna. She is glad work is being done to the property.

[Mr. Barlow left the meeting at approximately 11:15 a.m.]

## **B. Review of Eligibility Status of National Register Listed Property**

Ms. Scofield summarized that the SRB just approved a policy statement for these reviews last December and it is posted on the SHPO website. The SRB is asked to review the current status of three National Register-listed properties that are proposed for demolition potentially or are in conversation about that. Owners of each property were notified of the meeting and provided a link to the policy statement on this topic approved by the SRB last December. SHPO staff member Todd Levine will present each agenda item.

### **1. Dowd House and "Corn Crib", 151-153 East Main St, Clinton Village Historic District, Clinton**

Mr. Levine summarized that 151 East Main Street, identified as 153 East Main Street are contributing properties to the Clinton Village Historic District, which was listed on the National

Register in 1994. One is a corn crib with a number of additions attached to it and the other is a residence, which is a 2.5-story Federal house with clapboard, built ca. 1800. 151 Main Street was once 153 Main Street, but the address was changed. The corn crib, which is now 151R Main Street was once 155-157 Main Street and was as a flower shop with the additions that are behind it. The district was listed under Criterion A in the categories of Community Planning and Development as “as an example of a coastal town center, a particular settlement pattern associated with the development of Connecticut towns along Long Island Sound in the 18th and 19th centuries.” The district is also listed under Criterion C for “its many historic buildings [that] embody the distinctive characteristics of several styles of architecture, including the vernacular architecture of 18th century New England, the Federal style, and the Greek Revival style, each of which is represented by numerous well-preserved examples.” SHPO staff have been to the site and the SRB has photos showing the current conditions.

Mr. Edwards opened discussion.

Mr. Herzan stated that he was involved with the delineation of the district in the 1990s when he worked as the National Register Coordinator. This building is prominent in the district and is part of the pattern of the main street in Clinton – the houses are close to the road. It would be sorely missed if demolished.

Dr. Bucki referenced the aerial view of the property and asked what the streetscape looked like. There doesn't seem to be much of a center in the Clinton Town Center. Mr. Herzan answered that it is very linear; there is no town green. The pattern of the placement of buildings in Clinton is close to the street. The Town Hall is a Colonial Revival down the street. Dr. Bucki asked about alterations on the street in proximity and asked if this is the last intact property. Mr. Wigren stated that some of the buildings in the vicinity which have parking around them, were noted as contributing in the nomination. Losing this building would cut the district in half.

Mr. Edwards asked about the 1950s addition to the property. Mr. Wigren and Ms. Wisniewski clarified that the addition is still there. Mr. Edwards noted that the addition on the back is not part of the historic portion of the property. Mr. Wigren stated that it does not detract from the house. Mr. Levine clarified that the addition is a one-story pool house. Ms. Wisniewski clarified that the north side of the road is in the district and the south side is not.

Mr. Keith Ainsworth introduced himself as an attorney who represents the owner of the property. He stated that he wanted to comment on some misimpressions. Mr. Ainsworth referenced the comment that the loss of the building would cut the district in half. He stated that the property is at the far end of the district; most of the buildings in the district are about a mile away at the west end. This is one of the last buildings noted in the nomination. He added that a photo of the building was not included in the nomination. Mr. Ainsworth addressed the comment that this was a prominent structure in the district. This building was not photographed, but a couple buildings beyond this one were. He noted that there are two buildings on the property – a corn crib and a house. The corn crib was not original to this location; this was not a farming property. The property was apparently a merchant house. The corn crib was brought there sometime after the 1970s. It is identified as contributing in the nomination, but that may have been an error. It is clearly a nineteenth-century corn crib, moved at a later time. It is severely altered with an addition

and it now has windows in it and planters attached to it. Mr. Ainsworth mentioned that the SRB might consider that the corn crib never contributed to the district.

Mr. Herzan responded that it is irrelevant that the property wasn't photographed. Nominations include representative images; there is no requirement to document every house through photographs. He stated that the fact about the corn crib is interesting and the addition is non-contributing. Mr. Herzan stated that the corn crib was likely listed as contributing because of its age and mentioned that buildings get moved around over time. He suggested that the integrity of the corn crib could be reassessed, but he's not sure the SRB has enough information. The house is within the period of significance and is very well preserved. The photos show that clearly.

Mr. Levine added that the corn crib has a mortise-and-tenon, square-rule frame. The additional buildings are 20-30 years old and not significant. During SHPO's discussions with the owner, a number of organizations offered to move the corn crib to their properties. There may be an opportunity for the corn crib to be moved again in the future.

Mr. Edwards stated that these accessory buildings are often ignored, and an effort should be made to make sure they continue to survive. The integrity of the house would not be affected by the moving of the corn crib.

Mr. Wigren noted that there are three properties to the east of this one. The corn crib was considered contributing when the district was listed. It has not materially changed from its condition at that time. Ms. Scofield stated that in a historic district, there is more flexibility for relocated buildings to be contributing.

Ms. Scofield asked if the SRB wanted to vote on the status of the two buildings separately. Mr. Wigren responded that there is no need to separate the buildings, but that they should be named in the motion. In reference to the corn crib, this does not include the later additions.

**A motion was made by Mr. Wigren, second by Mr. Herzan that the House at 151 East Main Street and the Corn Crib at 153 East Main Street continue to contribute to the significance of the Clinton Village Historic District (Y-6, N-0, Abstained= 0).**

**Board members voting in favor:** Dr. Bucki, Ms. Dyer-Carroll, Mr. Edwards, Mr. Herzan, Mr. McMillan, Mr. Wigren.

## **2. House, 1 Old Kings Highway, Silvermine Historic District, Norwalk**

Mr. Levine summarized that 1 Old Kings Highway in Norwalk is part of the Silvermine Historic District was listed on the National Register 2009. It is described as a vernacular, ca. 1812 house with additions/alterations, ca. 1925 and 1980. The district is significant under Criterion C for "its numerous extant examples of 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century residential, industrial and commercial architecture as well as a few examples of 20<sup>th</sup> century historical revival residential and arts-culture buildings." The district is also significant under Criterion A for its "contribution to the broad patterns of local and regional history for its early mill industry; and locally, regionally and nationally significant for its later incarnation as a notable arts colony and cultural community."

Further, the district is significant under Criterion B at the local level “for the association with the Guthrie family and other Silvermine mill owners and the industrial development of Silvermine,” and at the local, regional, and national level “for the individual notable artists who both resided in the village and created the nucleus for the Silvermine Arts Guild.” The building is wood-clad with asphalt shingles and has numerous additions that you can see off the main block. SHPO staff has been to the site.

Mr. Herzan asked how close the house is to other buildings. Mr. Levine responded that it is part of a residential neighborhood; there are buildings across the street and down the road. Dr. Bucki stated that the map doesn’t give any indication of its relationship to Silvermine Center. Mr. Levine clarified that behind the house and across the little stream is where the main area.

Mr. Edwards asked what the significance is of the Guthrie family to this property and why they’re mentioned. Ms. Wisniewski responded that this house does not have a direct connection to the Guthries. The mention of the family in the district nomination is general.

Dr. Bucki asked for a district map; it would help if the location of the house in relation to the district was more delineated. Mr. Levine stated he will provide that in future requests.

Mr. Herzan asked about the history of this building in context of the theme of Silvermine. He asked if this was the house of an artist. He noted that the architecture has been reworked quite a bit, but the age of the house falls within the period of significance. Ms. Wisniewski responded that there is no elaboration in the National Register nomination about which [if any] artist or author resided in the house. This property is not in the list of properties noted for associations with specific artists. You can surmise that an addition around 1925 is in line with the other artists moving in at the time, but there is no reference to a specific person.

Mr. McMillan put a map of the district in the Teams chat. Ms. Wisniewski referenced the additions and relationship to adjacent properties shown on the map. The property to the north looks reworked or rebuilt.

Mr. Herzan asked Mr. Levine if based on the site visit, the absence of this property would be missed from the streetscape. Ms. Wisniewski responded yes because this is a corner lot and the house is close to the road.

Mr. Edwards opened a discussion about how the present house evolved. There is a 1.5-story Cape in the middle. The original front was to the road, a lean-to shed and bay were added. There is an addition up to the ridge of the house on the south. The chimney was part of the 1920s addition. Mr. Wigren noted that the door in the porch is facing the street.

Mr. Wigren noted that the building was deemed as contributing in the 1990s when the nomination was completed, and it has not been altered since then. The SRB clarified the photos and orientation of the house.

Mr. Herzan stated that this was largely an artist settlement; it evolved into one, partly because of the scenic qualities near the river. In his impression of the nomination, this is not significant as a

collection of classic period houses. It is a collection of old buildings that have been adapted in many ways. This house fits that pattern of development.

Mr. Edwards referenced that the front porch had been enclosed. Dr. Bucki asked if that was material to the integrity of the building. Mr. Herzan stated that it was considered contributing in 2006 in its present shape.

**A motion was made by Mr. McMillan, second by Mr. Edwards that the House at 1 Old Kings Highway continues to contribute to the significance of the Silvermine Historic District (Y-6, N-0, Abstained= 0).**

**Board members voting in favor:** Dr. Bucki, Ms. Dyer-Carroll, Mr. Edwards, Mr. Herzan, Mr. McMillan, Mr. Wigren.

### **3. Building 85, 68 Thermos Avenue, American Thermos Bottle Company, Norwich**

Mr. Levine summarized that 68 Thermos Avenue, Building 85 is contributing to the American Thermos Bottle Company Laurel Hill Plant Historic District listed on the National Register in 1989. The building was constructed in 1861 and is described as an office.

The district was listed under Criterion C as, “a good example of late 19<sup>th</sup>- and early 20<sup>th</sup>-century textile mill design applied to a new industry.” It was also listed under Criterion A, “as the primary factory for the production of Thermos bottles.”

Mr. Edwards pointed out that Building 86 is circled on the site plan in the packet provided, rather than Building 85. The SRB discussed the location of the building subject to this review. Mr. Levine noted that the building is a two-story Italianate house constructed in 1861. Ms. Wisniewski clarified that the circle on the map is wrong and that the SRB is asked to review Building 85. Ms. Wisniewski put a map of the district with the correct building circled in the chat.

Dr. Bucki asked about the attachments to the building. She asked that if Building 85 is altered or demolished, what does that do to the buildings in the back. Mr. Levine responded that he will not have that answer until he can do a site visit to the property with a structural engineer.

Mr. Edwards commented that the SRB does not have current photos of the building.

Mr. Edwards asked if any members of the public were present to comment. Ms. Wisniewski clarified that the owner is no longer on the call.

Mr. Wigren noted that the exterior looks intact [based on the Google Earth image provided]. He stated that it is hard to tell what the interior is like, but since this is a district, interiors are less crucial.

Mr. Herzan stated that he doesn't know if structural integrity should inform the SRB's decision about the contributing status of the property. Dr. Bucki stated that it is contributing if you look at the exterior, but the interior is dilapidated. She asked if the SRB should be concerned with the



interior. Mr. Herzan noted its Italianate form and history with the Thermos Company are important. He doesn't know if there is some structural or engineering problem that would factor into the consideration. If not, Mr. Herzan recommended that the building retain its contributing status. Mr. Wigren responded that the structural soundness of the building is a separate issue from the historic integrity. Dr. Bucki referenced information in the packet regarding the owner's concerns about structural integrity and willingness to look at other options besides demolition. Mr. Levine confirmed that the SRB is looking at the historic integrity, not structural integrity.

Mr. McMillan noted [from the nomination] that although this building was added onto in 1929 and 1941, it is the oldest and first building in the district. It is the anchor of this district and was physically connected to Building 2 in 1929. It could have an impact on other buildings. This is an important building that contributes to the district. Mr. Wigren responded that it is an interesting story because this was a residential neighborhood developed in the 1840s and 1850s. The Chamber of Commerce then bought the site and developed it to attract business to Norwich. Development occurred around this suburban villa and the area was converted to industrial use.

**A motion was made by Mr. Wigren, second by Mr. McMillan that Building 85 at 68 Thermos Avenue continues to contribute to the significance of the American Thermos Bottle Company Historic District (Y-6, N-0, Abstained= 0).**

**Board members voting in favor:** Dr. Bucki, Ms. Dyer-Carroll, Mr. Edwards, Mr. Herzan, Mr. McMillan, Mr. Wigren.

**V. Discussion**

There were no discussion items.

**VI. New Business**

No new business was discussed.

**VII. Staff Report**

Dr. Bucki asked if the staff report could be provided later. Ms. Scofield announced that she would send updates from staff by email. The staff summary will include the status of changes to the CGS to match the SRB in SB 936, the launch of the Olmsted landscape documentation project, and the announcement of two actions under the NHL program.

**VIII. Adjournment**

A motion was made by Mr. Herzan, second, Mr. Edwards, to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 12:28 p.m.