

MINUTES

**State Historic Preservation Review Board
Friday, March 24, 2023, 9:30 a.m.
In-Person at 450 Columbus Blvd, Hartford and
Teleconference via Microsoft Teams (Recorded)**

Present: Mr. Barlow, Dr. Bucki (via Teams), Ms. Dyer-Carroll, Dr. Feder (via Teams), Mr. Herzan (via phone), Mr. McMillan (via Teams), Ms. Saunders (via Teams), Mr. Wigren (serving as Chair)

Absent: Mr. Edwards

Staff: Jenny Scofield (presenting), Cory Atkinson, Julie Carmelich (via Teams), Jonathan Kinney, Cathy Labadia (via Teams), Todd Levine (via Teams), Elizabeth Shapiro (via Teams), Marena Wisniewski (via Teams)

Guests: Eryn Boyce, Bryan Nguyen, Mathew Robayna, Emmy Sasaki

I. Call to Order

Mr. Wigren confirmed that a quorum of Board members was present in person and via Teams. He called the meeting to order at 9:37 a.m.

II. Review of Public Comment Procedures

Mr. Wigren provided the hybrid meeting procedures.

III. Approval of the December 2, 2022 meeting minutes

Mr. Wigren requested comments on the December minutes. SRB members provided minor edits.

A motion was made by Mr. Herzan, second by Dr. Bucki, to approve the minutes of the December 2, 2022 meeting (Y-8, N-0, Abstained-0).

Board members voting yes: Mr. Barlow, Dr. Bucki, Ms. Dyer-Carroll, Dr. Feder, Mr. Herzan, Mr. McMillan, Ms. Saunders, 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.

1. Bedford-Garden Streets Historic District, Hartford (Criteria A and C, local level)

Ms. Scofield introduced this is a 6-acre district of apartment buildings in Hartford's north end. It includes 30 contributing buildings constructed from 1922-1926 and six vacant lots, which are non-contributing. All properties were part of a subdivision of the former Goodwin estate. Staff

recommends listing at the local level under Criterion A for Community Planning and Development and Criterion C for Architecture. The period of significance dates to the time of the subdivision and construction of the apartments, 1922-1926.

The project was initiated by a developer of property in the district. Notice of the SRB meeting was sent to all property owners via direct mail 30 days before the meeting. Notice was also sent to the City of Hartford mayor, planning director, and Historic Properties Commission, Hartford Preservation Alliance, and Winn Development. Meeting materials were posted on the SHPO website during the noticing period. There are 38 parcels and 11 owners of property within the district. No letters of support or objection were received. A positive Certified Local Government (CLG) response was received from the Hartford Historic Preservation Commission.

Mr. Wigren invited public comments. Ms. Eryn Boyce introduced herself as the consultant for the nomination. Mr. Mathew Robayna of Winn Development introduced himself. Winn is contemplating the purchase of several buildings in the proposed district and is planning a historically sensitive renovation.

Mr. Wigren requested SRB comments.

Mr. Herzan asked about the CLG process. Ms. Scofield clarified that both the chief elected official and local preservation commission in CLGs are invited to comment.

Mr. Herzan stated that the nomination is thoroughly written. He commented on the architectural styles described and requested that the author recognize the buildings as modest [rather than high-style] examples of the named styles. There are decorative elements borrowed from the styles named; the buildings are influenced by them, but they are mild references to the styles.

Mr. McMillan requested that the district boundary be drawn on the historic map shown in Figure 5. He also noted that the stoops of these buildings are important architecturally and for social reasons. He asked for the stoops to be described in the nomination. Ms. Boyce responded that the pedestrian plaza on Bedford Street was created during an urban renewal project in the 1970s, so the pedestrian orientation of the buildings is a later byproduct of that.

Dr. Bucki commented that this is an intact segment of the north end. These clusters of buildings, which are often deteriorated, represent the growth of the Eastern European Jewish community at an important time of stabilization of immigration and ethnicity. The fact that they are intact is remarkable. Dr. Bucki noted that she likes that the two synagogues are included in the district and asked how they are used now. Ms. Boyce stated that the buildings were Christian churches at the time of their individual listing in 1995 and were still used for religious purpose. Mr. Wigren confirmed that use.

Dr. Feder asked if there are any structural remains on the vacant lots and if they were ever developed. Ms. Boyce responded that a couple of the lots were always vacant and some had buildings that were demolished. There are no above-ground remains on the lots.

Mr. Wigren commented that there are now several National Register districts for apartment buildings from about the same time and at different economic levels, including this one, Vine

Street, Little Hollywood, and Ambassador Apartments. These nominations could be used to do a study about apartment living in Hartford in the early twentieth century. Mr Wigren suggested that the buildings in this district could be named as a specific type such as the “yellow brick type” (following up on architectural style comment). The visual coherence of the buildings, even extending to the synagogues, is remarkable. Ms. Scofield clarified that the Board defined a building type for another nomination in Norwalk, which was successfully listed. It is ok to identify and define a building type as long as a definition is provided in the nomination.

A motion was made by Mr. Barlow, second by Dr. Feder to recommend the Bedford-Garden Streets Historic District for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (Y-8, N-0, Abstained-0).

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

B. Review of Eligibility Status of National Register Listed Property

1. 31-35 South Main Street, South Main and Washington Streets Historic District, Norwalk (Property address is 33-35 South Main Street in the original nomination)

Mr. Wigren stated that the SRB is asked to advise whether the building still qualifies as a contributing to the South Main and Washington Streets Historic District.

Ms. Scofield noted that this is not an application to add or remove property to the National Register; staff is seeking a recommendation. Notice of this review was sent to the property owner’s representatives on March 10, 2023 in accordance with the SRB’s policy statement. Staff did complete a site visit.

Mr. Levine introduced himself as the staff liaison for Protection Act cases. He stated that SHPO is not moving forward with this case to the Historic Preservation Council. SHPO’s involvement in these cases happens when there is a community petition and when there is a prudent and feasible alternative to demolition. In this case, there is a petition, but no letters of support for preservation and there is no “shepherd” or person helping with saving the building. Preservation Connecticut’s Technical Assistance team did not identify any reasonable alternatives to demolition.

Mr. Herzan commented that the SRB’s charge is to look at the resource in terms of the National Register program and how the building should be classified. He stated that the scale and period of the building compliments the district architecturally and thematically. If the building is going to be demolished, the replacement should still maintain the scale of the streetscape.

The SRB decided to continue with the review of the contributing status of the building to the district.

Mr. Wigren opened the item for public comment. No comments were heard.

Mr. Barlow commented that the scale of the building is appropriate for the street and that it is currently documented as contributing. He asked if the architect or structural engineer determined

that the building was not able to be restored. Mr. Levine stated the building is a wood structure with a brick façade; there is a limited amount of building that could be added on top of that structure. The plan for development is 40 units with 45 parking spaces. A compromise was researched, such as a rear addition, because of the construction technique of the existing building and the site constraints (street, railroad, other buildings). Mr. Barlow asked if the building as it is, is salvageable. Mr. Levine clarified that the architect and engineer found that it is.

Mr. Herzan advocated for the retention of the historic building or a design that honors the placement, scale, and identity of the original building. Mr. Levine noted that a similar compromise was discussed.

Mr. Wigren asked for other comments on the contributing status.

A motion was made by Mr. Herzan, second by Ms. Saunders, that 31-35 South Main Street still contributes to the architectural and historic significance of the South Main and Washington Streets Historic District (Y-7, N-0, Abstained-1).

Board members voting yes: Mr. Barlow, Ms. Dyer-Carroll, Dr. Feder, Mr. Herzan, Mr. McMillan, Ms. Saunders, Mr. Wigren

Board members abstaining: Dr. Bucki

V. Discussion

A. National Register Updates Project

Ms. Scofield stated that Stacey Vairo of Preservation Connecticut is still helping with the project under the circuit rider program. She is studying nominations listed after 1982 and making a spreadsheet that includes everything in Connecticut. Ms. Scofield and Ms. Vairo are completing the first de-listing, which is for the Octagon House at 120 Strawberry Hill Avenue in Stamford. The resource is completely demolished and replaced with apartment buildings. Ms. Scofield noted that simple de-listings, where a resource is demolished, will not come to the SRB for review, but the regular noticing process is still followed.

VI. New Business

No new business was discussed.

VII. SHPO Staff Report

Ms. Scofield announced the Docomomo US Symposium, coming to New Haven in June. SHPO provided a subsidy to encourage CT residents to attend the full conference.

Mr. Kinney provided a summary of SHPO staff activity during the national Preservation Advocacy Week in Washington D.C. Staff visited all seven congressional offices for the CT delegation.

Mr. Kinney announced that SHPO is starting work on the next statewide historic preservation plan and is holding a webinar on Friday, March 31, 2023.

Mr. Wigren announced that Sara Bronin was sworn in as chair of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. He shared that Preservation Connecticut's awards ceremony, including awards of merit and the Harlan Griswold award (presented jointly with SHPO), will be held on May 4.

Ms. Labadia shared that workforce development issues specific to cultural resource management were discussed during the Hill visits. Senator Chris Murphy invited the application for congressionally directed spending for a program at Southern Connecticut State University. The application is for the development of a Master's degree program in archaeology with a focus on cultural resource management work. The application has since been submitted, with several support letters.

VIII. Adjournment

A motion was made by Mr. Barlow, second by Mr. Herzan to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 11:10 a.m.