



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

2800 BERLIN TURNPIKE, P.O. BOX 317546
NEWINGTON, CONNECTICUT 06131-7546



Determination of Effect on Historic Properties

Author: C. Scott Speal **Date:** January 7, 2020

Project: State No.: 48-190
F.A.P. No.: H073(001)
Project Title: Connecticut River Access Project
Town: Enfield

Finding of Effect: No Adverse Effect to Historic Properties

Project Description:

The Town of Enfield, with financial assistance from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and technical support from the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT), proposes construction of a multi-use path between Pearl Street and the Connecticut River within its jurisdictional purview. The Town intends to construct a bicycle and pedestrian path along the south side of Main Street and across a vacant land parcel presently owned by the Town. A precast concrete pedestrian bridge is proposed to cross Freshwater Brook and would provide access to the existing Asnuntuck Road underpass at the AMTRAK right of way. Asnuntuck Road would be closed to vehicular traffic to the southeast of the railroad underpass to allow only bicycle and pedestrian traffic through the railroad tunnel. The bicycle path would proceed northward along South River Street and then turn westerly along Main Street to a viewing point just east of the river. Other associated improvements include creation of new on-street parking. This project is funded under the High Priority Projects Program (SAFETEA-LU) with a funding split of 80% Federal and 20% Municipal. The Town will advertise and administer the construction phase of the project. Some 10 partial acquisitions are anticipated for the proposed multipurpose path. Construction easements may also be necessary to facilitate construction of the prefabricated pedestrian bridge. Utility involvement is expected to be minor.

Under the provisions of the Programmatic Agreement executed between CTDOT, FHWA, the Connecticut State Historic Preservation Officer (CT SHPO), and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation regarding compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) for minor transportation projects¹, the Office of Environmental Planning (OEP) intends to make a determination of effect on historic properties for the described undertaking.

Resources Potentially Affected:

Online digital resources maintained by the National Park Service were consulted for the purpose of locating any historic properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) in the project vicinity. The proposed multi-use path courses directly through the ***Bigelow-Hartford Carpet Mills Historic District***, which intersects the project limits between Pleasant Street and the AMTRAK rail corridor. The District is significant in illustrating the immense impact that the carpet-making industry had on Connecticut in general, and Enfield in particular, during the 19th and 20th Centuries. It is also significant architecturally for retaining many intact examples of worker cottages and tenements dating to a time when companies commonly provided housing for their workers. Contributing elements to the District situated immediately along the proposed project route include: the commercial Neo-Classical 2-story brick structure at 86-88 Main Street (built ca. 1910), the commercial Italianate 3-story brick structure at 78 Main Street (built ca. 1880). The former carpet mills themselves stand north of the APE at 55 Main Street at such a distance that they should be subject to no substantive effect from the current undertaking. No specific mention of the rail underpasses at Main and Asnuntuck Streets, nor the channelized Freshwater Brook, was found in the NRHP nomination form.

A series of historic maps obtained from the University of Connecticut Map and Geographical Information Center were examined to assess the potential for previously unidentified historic properties to be located within the project area of potential effect (APE). The Griswold-Spiess Map of reconstructed Native settlement in Connecticut circa 1625 depicts a contact period Agawam village some distance to the northeast, but well outside of the present project APE. The 1811 Warren Map of Connecticut presents several grist and saw mills along this lower section of Freshwater Brook, the remains of which may persist along the edge of the channelized stream. By the mid-19th Century the 1855 Woodford Map of Hartford County depicts the railroad already in place and the project APE as very heavily developed with Hartford Carpet Company structures lining the full length of Main Street and on both sides of Freshwater Brook. A building labeled ‘GC Owen Store’ is depicted on this map at the corner of River Road and Main

¹ *Programmatic Agreement among the Federal Highway Administration, the Connecticut Department of Transportation, the Connecticut State Historic Preservation Officer, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation Regarding Implementation of Minor Transportation Projects*, signed October 26, 2012 and revised May 4th, 2018. Accessible online at: www.ct.gov/culturalresources

Street on the west side of the rail corridor. Examination of Fairchild Series aerial photographs from 1934 reveals that by the early 20th Century Main Street was very heavily developed with industrial buildings associated with the carpet mill. The structures apparently once came right up to the edge of the street on both sides.

Digital site records maintained by the Office of the State Archaeologist were consulted for the purpose of identifying any previously known archaeological sites within the APE. Two recorded archaeological sites were found to exist within a mile of the project limits. State Number 49-15, located over a quarter-mile to the east, represents the remains of a 19th Century homestead that has been destroyed by suburban commercial development. State Site 49-19 is a pre-Colonial indigenous Late Woodland Period encampment site located nearly a mile to the southeast. The present undertaking will have no foreseeable impact on either of these resources.

Soil classification maps available from the U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service were examined in conjunction with predictive models in common use within the State of Connecticut to assess the sensitivity of the project area for previously unknown archaeological resources. Virtually the entire project APE falls upon sediments classified as Urban Land Complex Udorthents, generally considered to be of poor quality for preservation of pre-European Contact archaeological deposits. This predictive model does not apply to post-Contact historic sites, however, and the map analysis above has suggested a considerable potential for such features to exist along the proposed route—especially along Main Street and Freshwater Brook.

Field review by OEP cultural resource staff on January 4th of 2017 revealed exposed building foundations at the surface immediately along the south side of Main Street within the project APE. The 1855 Woodford Map discussed above suggests that the former structures were once associated with the Bigelow-Hartford / Thompsonville District. The proposed bike path would also affect a potentially historic rail bridge associated with the New Haven-Hartford-Springfield (NHHS) Rail Line Historic District and pass very closely in front of a 19th (or earlier) Century house at the corner of Main Street and River Road that was also considered potentially eligible for the NRHP either independently or as part of the District. OEP therefore recommended a formal Phase I cultural resource identification effort to be conducted for this project in advance of design approval.

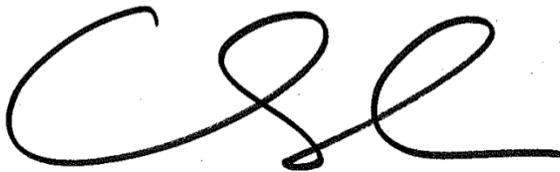
The requested Phase I survey was completed in May of 2018 by Public Archaeology Laboratory operating out of Pawtucket, Rhode Island. This effort found the Asnuntuck Street Bridge to not be a contributing resource to the NHHS District and that the project would result in no adverse effect to structural resources, but additional archaeological sub-surface investigation was recommended. A subsequent Phase Ib/II subsurface effort was therefore

completed in December 2019. Despite excavation of 5 machine assisted exploratory trenches, no archaeological deposits of research significance were encountered within the project APE and no further investigations were recommended.

Determination of Effect:

Consultation was carried out with Federally-recognized Native American Tribal authorities with ancestral ties to the State of Connecticut for this undertaking in January of 2017. None of the solicited Tribes responded to the invitation to consult within the allotted time frame.

Given the involvement of the NRHP-listed Bigelow-Hartford Carpet Mills Historic District, albeit without any anticipated project-related impacts that might compromise the integrity of the qualities that render that resource significant, OEP hereby determines that there will be *no adverse effect to historic properties* in association with the present undertaking. With this determination, FHWA, through OEP, has concluded its responsibility to consider the potential effects of the described project on cultural resources under Section 106 of the NHPA via the provisions of the Programmatic Agreement referenced above.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Speal', written in a cursive style.

C. Scott Speal
National Register Specialist
Office of Environmental Planning
Connecticut Department of Transportation