

MINUTES

**State Historic Preservation Review Board
Friday, June 17, 2022, 9:30 a.m.
Teleconference via Microsoft Teams (Recorded)**

Present: Mr. Barlow, Dr. Bucki (via phone), Mr. Edwards (Chair, via phone), Mr. Herzan (via phone), Mr. McMillan, Ms. Saunders, Mr. Wigren

Absent: Dr. Feder, Ms. Dyer-Carroll

Staff: Jenny Scofield (presenting), Todd Levine (presenting), Julie Carmelich, Mary Dunne, Jonathan Kinney, Cathy Labadia, Elizabeth Shapiro, Marena Wisniewski

Guests (by Agenda Item):

IV.A.1 Elizabeth Correia (Heritage Consultants), Marek Kozikowski (City of Middletown), Michele Rulnick (President, Northern Middlesex County YMCA), Stacey Vairo (Heritage Consultants)

IV.A.2 Rachel Carley (consultant); Members of the Griswold/Ely family including Peter Griswold, Timothy C. Griswold, Anne Pierson, Jennifer Hillhouse, John Griswold, and Evan Griswold

IV.B.1 none

IV.B.2 none

I. Call to Order

Ms. Scofield confirmed that a quorum of Board members was present. Mr. Edwards called the meeting to order at 9:36 a.m.

II. Review of Public Comment Procedures

Ms. Scofield provided the digital meeting procedures and announced that the meeting will be recorded. Ms. Scofield acknowledged guests in attendance and asked that guests introduce themselves under the agenda items they are affiliated with. She reminded the SRB that voting will be done with a roll call.

III. Approval of the March 25, 2022 meeting minutes

Mr. Edwards requested comments on the March minutes. Mr. Wigren appreciated the detail in the minutes.

A motion was made by Mr. Herzan, second by Ms. Saunders, to approve the minutes of the March 25, 2022 meeting (Y-7, N-0, Abstained-0).

Board members voting yes: Mr. Barlow, Dr. Bucki, Mr. Edwards, 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. YMCA of Northern Middlesex County, Middletown (Criterion A, local level)

Ms. Scofield summarized that nominated property is a YMCA constructed as a single property in two phases in 1928 and 1972. Staff recommends the property eligible for listing under Criterion A at the local level for Social History. It represents several moments in community social history starting with the welfare movement that the YMCAs were born out of, which promoted certain ideals of citizenship, development of equal access and roles for women, and the juxtaposition of equitable community service programs and access vs. displacement of people during urban renewal. The 1972 addition was built to serve people during that time. The period of significance is 1928 to 1972.

The YMCA is still the property owner and initiated the nomination. Notice of the SRB meeting was sent to the owner, Mayor, City Land Use Director, and the Middlesex County Historical Society on May 18, 30 days before the meeting. Middletown is not a CLG and no letters were received in response to the notice.

Elizabeth Correia and Stacey Vairo of Heritage Consultants attended the meeting as the authors of the nomination. Other guests attending in support of the nomination were Marek Kozikowski (City of Middletown), and Michele Rulnick (President, Northern Middlesex County YMCA).

Ms. Scofield noted that Criterion C was not pursued as an area of significance; the 1928 section of the building is intact, but staff did not feel the 1972 portion was notable for architectural design.

Mr. Edwards invited public comment. No members of the public spoke at that time.

Mr. Edwards opened the SRB discussion.

Dr. Bucki stated that the nomination is a well-organized history of this institution. She learned a lot about the YMCA, including the role that the YMCA played in promoting African American integrity during urban renewal. She requested that the information about the role in which women were integrated into the YMCA structure, which might be unique, to the top of the narrative.

Ms. Scofield acknowledged that Michele Rulnick was present by phone, but unable to get off mute.

Dr. Bucki referenced the "era of great immigration" on p. 8-12. She noted that this is not true; the 1924 Immigration Restriction Act limited immigration, but the larger point about a pool of immigrant young men and second-generation boys who needed Americanizing is true for the 1920s, or it may be that the City of Middletown was seeing an increase in population. This is not a

general era of immigration. Put the women's programming farther to the front of the nomination because of the uniqueness of this social history. She noted that we don't know why there's no YWCA in the Middletown area like there are in other big cities such as Bridgeport at the time. The quest for racial and gender diversity should be highlighted at the beginning of the significance statement and not get lost in the discussion of muscular Christianity. She recommended looking at Elizabeth Cohen's book about New Haven redevelopment [*Saving America's Cities: Ed Logue and the Struggle to Renew Urban America in the Suburban Age*, New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2019].

Mr. Wigren stated that Stacey Vairo, one of the authors of the nomination, is his co-worker at Preservation Connecticut, but she wrote this nomination as an independent contractor. Neither he nor Preservation Connecticut is getting any benefit from approval of the nomination.

Mr. Wigren commented that the side entry added to the original building in 1972, according to the nomination, but picks up on details and forms of the earlier building is unusual, given the Modern and Brutalist styles popular at the time. It was unusual that the same architects are operating in two different modes.

Mr. Wigren noted that in the discussion of muscular Christianity beginning on p. 8-14, it is discussed as beginning in the 1850s, but all of the notes and examples seem to refer to it as beginning in the 1880s. In general, this is a trend reflected in the growth of YMCAs but the date should be double-checked. He also noted that Italian immigrant groups are mentioned on p. 8-16 as using YMCA, but earlier there is a requirement for members to be Protestant. He asked when that requirement was dropped because it would be part of the story of outreach to immigrants. Lastly, Mr. Wigren referenced text on p. 8-19 about the YMCA taking out insurance on donors. He noted that as a new concept and asked if the insurance was in case they didn't fulfill their pledges. Ms. Correia responded yes, because the YMCA was in debt at the time and needed some source of funding; community members stepped up and allowed the YMCA to take out that policy [as a source of future funding].

Mr. Herzan asked why architectural significance wasn't considered because of the significance of the architect. He asked whether a statement about the potential for architectural significance could be included in the nomination. The quality of detail of design and the importance of the architect should be noted whether or not Criterion C is used. Mr. Edwards added that Douglas Orr became president of the AIA in the 1940s and he was the architect of record for the reconstruction of the White House under Truman. Mr. Edwards shared that he worked as an intern in Orr's office for several years; he was one of the architects involved with planning Yale University's program. Orr is an important architect, particularly in Connecticut architecture. Mr. Herzan noted that you can nominate a resource under any criteria if you justify it but asked if there could be a statement about architectural significance, so Orr's work is not overlooked. He suggested adding text to say it could be studied in the future. Since we look at themes to highlight what to preserve, if you only look at social history, does that send a message that architecture is insignificant? Mr. Edwards agreed and mentioned Preservation Connecticut probably has material on Orr. He is familiar with Orr's work after 1950; he thinks the time period represented in this building is more significant. There is enough information to write a paragraph about Orr's importance.

Mr. McMillan referenced the 1960s addition to the Ghirardelli Factory in San Francisco as an example of early preservation work and an addition sympathetic to the older complex. He suggested addressing that this addition was constructed in 1972 and it could be argued that this represents an early preservation work, particularly how the addition relates to the original building. Mr. Wigren noted that the addition looks a bit like Philip Johnson's addition to the Boston Public Library. He stated that the National Register nomination for the New Haven Lawn Club, which Orr designed at the same time, has a summary of Orr's career.

Ms. Scofield asked the SRB if Criterion C should be added. She commented that if it is, you would need to make a case that the 1972 portion doesn't detract from the earlier portion, which was a concern.

Mr. Herzan stated that the addition is distinctive. Brutalism is being studied in its own right, extensively and the style has significance itself as a movement. We look at different periods in a building to assess their significance and Brutalism is already there. A case could be made for Orr's significance and a case could be made for Brutalism as a reflection of its period.

Mr. Edwards shared that Orr had a contemporary and close personal friend who did designing in the office and was responsible for the design of the Lawn Club; he may have been more involved in this design than Orr. He noted that according to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, an addition should not be totally in the style of the earlier structure. You could argue the fact that the addition is identifiable as Brutal(ist), as opposed to the Colonial Revival style, is in keeping with the SOI recommendations at that point. That was a problem in the 1970s because buildings that were totally unrelated got built to buildings of historic significance; we should recognize that that's what we're going to be finding.

Michele Rulnick of the YMCA let the SRB know she's available if there are any questions and she is enjoying the conversation.

The SRB discussed amending the motion to include Criterion C for architectural significance, for the reasons discussed.

A motion was made by Dr. Bucki, second by Mr. Wigren to recommend the YMCA of Northern Middlesex County for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C (Y-7, N-0, Abstained-0).

Board members voting yes: Mr. Barlow, Dr. Bucki, Mr. Edwards, Mr. Herzan, Mr. McMillan, Ms. Saunders, Mr. Wigren

Mr. Edwards added that Commodore Thomas McDonough [Macdonough] appears misspelled on p. 8-13. See also Figure 8 on p. 9-41, although the name is not included in the caption there.

Mr. Wigren asked about the procedure for review since this [adding Criterion C] is a major revision of the nomination. Ms. Scofield suggested that the SRB could review the new section via email, rather than bringing the nomination back to another meeting since the SRB already discussed the significance.

2. Griswold Point Historic District, Old Lyme (Criteria A, C, & D, state level)

Ms. Scofield summarized that this district is a 210-acre cultural landscape at the confluence of the Black Hall and Connecticut rivers on Long Island Sound. This is a place used by indigenous people dating back to at least 7,000 B.C. and by English settlers beginning in the late 1640s; it is unique as a place impeccably preserved and cared for in the same family for multiple generations. The district includes 46 contributing resources, including 5 sites. The landscape is counted as one site and there are four distinct archaeological sites that are each significant on their own. Staff recommends the district for listing at the state level under Criteria A, C, and D. Under Criterion A, we're recognizing English settlement and a long tradition of agriculture. Under Criterion C, there is a variety of architectural resources from vernacular to high style and from the Colonial Period through Mid-20th-Century Modern. Under Criterion D, we're recognizing archaeology and for the same time period Ethnic Heritage under Criterion A. That is for the documented pre-contact period human presence on the land, including Middle and Late Archaic period activity such as, hunting, and storing and preparing food. There is also Woodland Period- evidence of seasonal a seasonal camp, trading, and burial practices. The period of significance is 7000 BC to 1524, and 1635-1972 because of the different areas of significance.

Ms. Scofield reported on notes from Cathy Labadia, staff archaeologist. Under Criterion D, it is the site reflects significance from 8000+ years of occupation, but what we know about that is based on research from many sites that have been destroyed. The fact that this cluster of sites remains is unique.

Ms. Scofield stated that the majority of the district is owned by members of the same extended family who initiated the nomination. Notice of the SRB meeting was sent by direct mail to each owner 30 days before meeting and via email to the Town, Historic District Commission, and Town Historian (who also worked with the author of the nomination to provide some archaeological data). The CLG response is in process. The HDC will review the nomination at their next meeting; and a recusal was received from the First Selectman who is an owner of property in this district. Given the long period of history at this site, the nomination was also shared with the Native American Heritage Advisory Council, in line with the SRB's new policy statement to make sure we represent history in a balanced manner. Ms. Scofield acknowledged the presence of Rachel Carley, nomination author, and several members of the family.

Mr. Edwards invited public comment and asked the family members to introduce themselves and share how long they've lived at Griswold Point, if they're willing.

Timothy Griswold introduced himself as the First Selectman and a property owner and is present with Anne Pierson, his first cousin and Jennifer Hillhouse. He's lived there since 1976 permanently but has been coming to the area since birth. Ms. Pierson shared that she also started coming in 1976 and lives in the Colonel Charles Griswold House. Ms. Hillhouse lived in Old Lyme for 89 years. John Griswold has been coming to Old Lyme since birth and grew up there. He introduced his brother Evan Griswold, who has visited the property since birth but has been a permanent resident since 1981; he built a house in 1983, which is still the most recent house on the property.

Mr. Edwards thanked the family for bringing the nomination forward. He opened SRB discussion.

Ms. Saunders shared that she applauds the Griswold family. From an archaeological perspective, it is a delight to find so much open and undeveloped land along the coast for future research questions. She requested that some additional ibids be added as footnotes [and sent those to Ms. Scofield]. She is excited about the nomination.

Mr. Herzan commented that he has been involved with the National Register for a long time and can't recall a nomination that has integrated architecture and archaeology so successfully. He complimented everyone involved in this vision.

Mr. McMillan stated that this is a remarkable nomination. He requested some clarification to improve readability, since the nomination is so detailed. He asked that a few more visuals such as aerial images be added. Show topographical features, circulation, and archaeology. There is a lot of information to capture that is all placed on one parcel map. The various buildings and construction periods merit more than one illustration. Clarify what figure/source the ID numbers for individual resources go to.

Ms. Saunders agreed with adding more graphics and also requested more subheadings for clarity.

Ms. Carley asked if a separate map just for archaeological sites would be helpful. Mr. McMillan requested more variations of Figure 2.

Mr. McMillan observed that the district data table has blank spots [in the contributing/non-contributing column] for the undeveloped sites and features. He requested that the features be identified as contributing. Ms. Saunders noted that the initial entry in the table is for the whole site. Ms. Scofield clarified that the features are acknowledged under the counted site; she did not want to confuse the resource count. Ms. Carley clarified that she was also trying to catch every land parcel in the data table; there are some slivers of land.

Mr. Edwards suggested showing the 7000 BC-1524 period of significance on a separate map.

Ms. Carley thanked the Griswold family for the privilege to be a part of the nomination. She learned a lot about archaeology; she acknowledged assistance from John Pfeiffer and Lucianne Lavin. She shared that this is an extraordinary place and how meaningful the family's role in keeping it that way is. It deserves to be preserved.

Mr. Edwards stated that this is an outstanding nomination.

Mr. Wigren added that the nomination is very readable. He wished for a family tree a couple times. In the discussion of the Roger Griswold House, there is a multi-part Palladian composition. That is notable in Georgian architecture. The only other example he knows of is the William Bristol House in New Haven, which was demolished. The design idea of spreading out in a grand form on the land could be played up; it is unusual in Connecticut.

Mr. Wigren asked for some significance discussion of cultural landscape; some text edges into it on p. 8-50. Add some summary significance statement about the cultural landscape. The vernacular cultural landscapes are harder to grasp.

Mr. Herzan provided some copy edits on p. 7-14, 7-28, 8-37, and 8-50.

Peter Griswold thanked everyone. He mentioned that this has been a 3-year project. They created the Griswold Point Association 11 years ago with the motto to “preserve Griswold Point”. The Association felt that this listing would help with preservation.

A motion was made by Ms. Saunders, second by Mr. Herzan to recommend the Griswold Point Historic district for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (Y-7, N-0, Abstained-0).

Board members voting yes: Mr. Barlow, Dr. Bucki [via chat], Mr. Edwards, Mr. Herzan, Mr. McMillan, Ms. Saunders, Mr. Wigren

B. Review of Eligibility Status of National Register Listed Property

1. 17 Gravel Street, Mystic River Historic District, Groton

Ms. Scofield stated that the SRB is looking at listed property proposed for demolition. This is not an application to add or remove property for the National Register. Staff is seeking an advisory opinion from the SRB. Notice of this review was sent to the property owners on June 1, 2022, two weeks before meeting, in accordance with the SRB policy statement [December 2020].

Mr. Levine summarized that 17 Gravel Street is a contributing resource to the Mystic River Historic District and referenced the information prepared in advance of the meeting. The building is a one-and-one-half-story Downing cottage built in 1835. Staff is requesting SRB comments about whether the property continues to contribute to the Mystic River Historic District.

Mr. Edwards opened the item for discussion. There were no comments.

A motion was made by Mr. Wigren second by Mr. Herzan that the property at 17 Gravel Street, continues to possess historic integrity and significance to continue to contribute to the Mystic River Historic District (Y-7, N-0, Abstained= 0).

Board members voting yes: Mr. Barlow, Dr. Bucki [via chat], Mr. Edwards, Mr. Herzan, Mr. McMillan, Ms. Saunders, Mr. Wigren

510 North Main Street, Suffield Historic District, Suffield

Ms. Scofield stated that staff requests the SRB’s advisory opinion on the status of the outbuilding, a barn, at 510 North Main Street and whether or not this building continues to contribute to the Suffield Historic District. Notice of this review sent to the property owners two weeks before meeting in accordance with the SRB’s policy statement [December 2020].

Mr. Levine noted that this outbuilding was is clearly within the boundaries of what is defined as the borders of the district, even though there is no list of buildings in the nomination. He noted

that the building is an early example of a tobacco shed; many were lost in the 1938 hurricane, and they became standardized after that. This example is unusual because it has bays similar to an English Barn, instead of aisles.

No members of the public spoke in reference to this agenda item.

Mr. Edwards invited SRB discussion. He asked if there is another barn like this extant anywhere. Mr. Levine answered that he has seen few examples in the state but has heard there is another one in Suffield; this one is at least uncommon, if not rare.

Mr. Wigren observed that tobacco cultivation was a key industry in the Connecticut River Valley, which is mentioned in the National Register nomination. These barns are a key part of the cultural landscape.

Ms. Saunders stated that the early publication of the nomination – 1979 – reflects what we’re working with. 1979 nominations didn’t have the depth that we have now or pull in information about how outbuildings worked in the system of an economy or cultural landscape. The building was not remiss, it’s just a reflection of a 1979 nomination. You can’t argue that it wasn’t recognized. Ms. Saunders stated that the barn should be preserved. Mr. Herzan added that as the National Register Coordinator in that period, district nominations did not include detailed inventories of properties; the nominations were simpler. NPS and SHPO started to document every structure within the boundaries of a district when the federal historic rehabilitation tax credit program started in the 1980s. This nomination was before that.

A motion was made by Mr. Wigren second by Mr. Herzan that the outbuilding at 510 North Main Street, continues to possess historic significance and integrity to continue to contribute to the significance of the Suffield Historic District (Y-7, N-0, Abstained= 0).

Board members voting yes: Mr. Barlow, Dr. Bucki [via chat], Mr. Edwards, Mr. Herzan, Mr. McMillan, Ms. Saunders, Mr. Wigren

V. Discussion

No items were discussed.

VI. New Business

No new business was heard.

VII. SHPO Staff Report

Ms. Scofield noted that the SRB’s new policy statement is signed and posted online. She will also make some minor updates to make to the SRB bylaws before the next meeting. She announced a new listing initiated by federal agency (West Haven VA Hospital). She noted that federal agency nominations don’t come to the SRB. Pending nominations at NPS, include the Barnum NHL, Newington VA Hospital and Landers, Frary, and Clark. SHPO staff has been in the office at least every Friday and will be switching to Wednesdays, with the rest of DECD.



Mr. Edwards asked about holding meetings in person. Ms. Scofield responded that SHPO is trying to obtain technical equipment needed for hybrid meetings.

VIII. Adjournment

A motion was made by Ms. Saunders, second by Mr. McMillan to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 10:58 a.m.