

## DRAFT MINUTES

**State Historic Preservation Review Board  
Friday, September 15, 2023, 9:30 a.m.  
In-Person at 450 Columbus Blvd, Hartford and  
Teleconference via Microsoft Teams (Recorded)**

**Present:** Mr. Barlow (Teams), Ms. Dyer-Carroll, Mr. Edwards (Chair), Mr. Herzan (phone), Mr. McMillan (Teams), Ms. Panjwani, Ms. Saunders (Teams), Mr. Wigren

**Absent:** Dr. Bucki, Dr. Feder

**Staff:** Jenny Scofield (presenting), Cory Atkinson (via Teams), Julie Carmelich (Teams), Mary Dunne (via Teams) Jonathan Kinney, Cathy Labadia (via Teams), Marena Wisniewski (Teams)

**Guests:** Virginia Adams (Teams), Peggy Adler (Teams), Marguerite Carnell, Greg Demirjian (Teams) Jim Demirjian (Teams), Mimi Findlay, Patricia Oxman, Rose-Scott Long-Rothbart (Teams), Gretchen Pineo (Teams), Charles Robinson (Teams), James Sexton, Neele-Banks Stichnoth, Jack Sutton (Teams), (additional guests via phone)

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

Mr. Edwards confirmed a quorum and called the meeting to order at 9:31 a.m. Board members introduced themselves.

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

Ms. Scofield provided the hybrid meeting procedures.

### **III. Approval of the June 16, 2023 meeting minutes**

No edits to the minutes were heard.

**A motion was made by Mr. Wigren, second by Ms. Dyer-Carroll, to approve the minutes of the June 16, 2023 meeting (Y-6, N-0, Abstained-0).**

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

[Mr. Barlow and Ms. Saunders joined the meeting]

### **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. Church Hill Historic District, New Canaan (Criteria A and C, local level)**

Ms. Scofield introduced the nomination as a 37-acre mixed residential and civic neighborhood centered around green space known as God's acre. It has 100 resources including 78 contributing and 18 non-contributing. The district is recommended eligible for listing under Criterion A for Exploration, Settlement, Community Planning & Development. The period of significance is 1742 to 1973. The district is also eligible under Criterion C for Architecture, through full Colonial Revival period. Much of the later construction in the district is sensitively built compatibly with the Colonial Revival style.

Ms. Scofield summarized the public noticing process. Outreach began in fall 2022 by the New Canaan Preservation Alliance (NCPA). SHPO noticing began with a letter sent on April 13, 2023 (in advance of the June SRB meeting) and a community meeting was held on April 26, 2023. A second notice was sent on May 17, 2023 5/17/23 regarding postponement of placemen of the nomination on the June agenda. A third notice was sent on July 26, 2023 notifying owners of placement on the September SRB agenda. For each notice, letters were mailed to the town and directly all property owners in the district and the owner list was rechecked each time. Notices were additionally emailed to all parties who provided one. NCPA also sent a letter to owners on June 21, 2023. The nomination was posted on the SHPO website and NCPA's website during the noticing period.

In terms of response, objections were received from 51 property owners. That includes 4 property owners who did not send an appropriate letter; they are revising those and sending them back. Objection letters were received from 2 owners who sold their property; a letter was sent to the new owner 30 days before this meeting. 15 letters of support were received, including 2 from owners of property within the district. The total response is at about 50% objection, however, the comment period per federal regulation does not close until a nomination is signed by the National Park Service. SHPO prefers to receive letters by the date of the SRB meeting; Ms. Scofield encouraged people to send letters now if they are planning to support or oppose the nomination.

Ms. Scofield acknowledged guests present for this agenda item.

Mr. Edwards invited public comments.

Mimi Findlay stated that she endorses the nomination. She introduced herself as a former member of the SRB from 1974 to 1984. She stated that the district has integrity of location, design, setting, workmanship, materials, feeling and association as a cohesive residential and institutional district. It retains early residential and key ecclesiastic properties constructed in popular architectural styles. Ms. Findlay noted that she has seen many changes as a 50-year resident of New Canaan; the district has been well preserved. The nomination includes the addition of two local streets; they are relatively unchanged and represent the evolving neighborhood around the town center. She stated that inclusion in the National Register would engender respect for New Canaan's history and end suspicion some residents feel toward federal and state historic preservation programs.

Rose-Scott Long-Rothbart introduced herself as an architectural preservationist. She supports this nomination as a person who works with properties on the National Register and works with owners of listed property. She stated that she is an owner of a National Register-listed property

and has researched the history of New Canaan. Ms. Long-Rothbart shared that the nomination of this area is important to the town, and she feels it is unfortunate that there have been misunderstandings about what the designation means. She stated that the nomination is positive and encouraged people to reach out to SHPO or NCPA for a better understanding.

Mr. Edwards requested SRB comments.

Mr. Herzan shared that he processed the National Register nomination for Church Hill in 1990; the current nomination strengthens the boundary and is a positive addition to the public record about the history. He supports the re-nomination of this area to the National Register.

Mr. McMillan stated that the nomination is well-written. He requested the addition of photos for the objects that are described and counted as resources (plaque and Celtic cross).

Mr. Wigren stated that he believes the district is National Register eligible and commented on the architectural significance. He stated that there is a lot of generalization of styles that are not always related to what is on the ground. A variety of styles by itself is not significant. He requested clarification of why the district possesses architectural significance through comparison to other communities or how it reflects changes in history of community. In terms of stylistic discussions, he noted that the Hanford Silliman House looks later than 1764 and looks more Federal than Georgian. The house by Frank Forster displays his preference for French eclectics. Study what it means when someone chooses a style (at a time when there is a wide variety). The house at 40 Oenoke Ridge appears more Federal Revival than Colonial Revival. Mr. Wigren asked what the role of landscape elements is in determining the character of the district. He observed that walls/gates are counted as contributing resources at two properties and asked what the criteria was for counting those particular ones.

Mr. Jack Sutton introduced himself as the owner of 122 Seminary Street and asked to provide comment (he was muted earlier). He shared that he objected to the nomination. Mr. Sutton commented that the district is described as centered on God's acre; there is an existing historic district around God's acre, and this is an extension in one direction toward downtown. He referenced the numbers of objections; he feels they are significant. He feels the neighbors are confused and think the nomination is an attempt to prevent housing development under 8-30g. Mr. Sutton stated that 51 objections compared to 2 letters of support is an overwhelming response in favor of objection. He referenced the mailing and stated that owners did not receive the mailing because the homes are not owner-occupied. Ms. Scofield clarified that each mailing was sent to the owner of record using the owner's mailing address in the town's assessment and GIS data. Owners and mailing addresses were re-checked for each mailing.

Mr. Edwards asked if there were any other comments.

Ms. Dyer-Carroll requested correction of the statement on p. 8-45 referring to the local historic district being within the proposed National Register district; it looks like (figure 6) there is one property in the local district that is outside the proposed national district. She also commented that road patterns are called out in the significance statement; it would be helpful to consolidate those descriptions and emphasize that more. She also asked for some streetscape photos to be added to the nomination.

Ms. Panjwani asked if a map showing the various architectural styles represented in the district could be added. She also requested that the author highlight the landscape significance of the district by adding a summary on the landscape, topography, and street vistas. Ms. Panjwani requested clarification of the term “whipping post” mentioned on p.38. Ms. Scofield suggested that the reference to a whipping post be footnoted and put in quotes or to consider if that reference is relevant.

**A motion was made by Mr. Edwards, second by Mr. McMillan to recommend the Church Hill Historic District for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (Y-8, N-0, Abstained-0).**

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

## **2. Commerce Street Historic District, Clinton (Criteria A and C, local level)**

Ms. Scofield summarized that the district is a 22-acre linear district that extends from the town’s commercial area on Main Street (US Route 1), along the west side of the Indian River, which is a navigable waterway that empties into Clinton Harbor on Long Island Sound. It encompasses 72 resources, including 59 contributing and 13 non-contributing. The period of significance is c. 1800 through c. 1930. Commerce Street laid out as wharf lane and included households of people engaged in maritime activities. Staff recommends the district eligible for listing at the local level under Criterion A for Maritime History and C for Architecture. The district is located between the existing High Street Historic District and Clinton Village Historic District. Ms. Scofield noted that the consultant looked at a potential larger boundary, but the integrity in that location changed, the maritime history was not shared with that street, and the evidence of multiple kit homes expected was not discovered.

Ms. Scofield stated that the nomination was initiated by the town and Clinton Historic District Commission. A community meeting was held on November 9, 2022 before the nomination was drafted. Notice of the SRB meeting was sent to all property owners and the town on August 9, 2023. The nomination was posted on the SHPO website during the noticing period and the Town posted information about the project on their Historic District Commission webpage. Ms. Scofield stated that the CLG response was positive from the HDC and Town Manager. One letter of objection was received from an owner of property within the proposed district.

Ms. Scofield acknowledged Peggy Adler and James Sexton as guests attending on behalf of the nomination.

Mr. Edwards invited public comments.

Peggy Adler introduced herself. She is thrilled the nomination is before the SRB. After the High Street nomination, the town and HDC thought the Commerce Street eligible was worthy of designation. She acknowledged the town manager for supporting the nomination effort.

Mr. Edwards requested SRB comments.

Mr. Herzan asked if the proposed changes to the Lobster Shack will impact its integrity. Ms. Adler responded that the project will not be elevated. Ms. Scofield added that since the Lobster Shack was included in this proposed district, SHPO was able to write a letter for local officials to be used in seeking an exemption to flood regulations that could harm the building's character-defining features.

Ms. Panjwani requested a mention of the nearby historic districts in the setting description on p. 5. She also requested mention of where the vernacular architectural forms (such as the Cape Cod) were derived. Mr. Edwards suggested that the text describe what is distinctive about the Cape Cod house. Mr. Wigren added that the identification of the Cape Cod building type is attributed to Timothy Dwight.

Mr. Wigren noted that the text on p. 19-20, which puts the district into the context of the communities along the shoreline, is helpful. He also stated that the building in photo 3 looks more Federal style than Greek Revival and that the building shown in photo 17 is Italianate.

Mr. Wigren requested more information about the Lobster Shack as a building type (ex. buildings on piers). It is the kind of building vulnerable to climate change, but important to this kind of community. Ms. Scofield added that the type was sited at grade with access from water/by boat and land. Mr. Edwards noted that waterfronts don't shut down in the winter; the building type needed to survive New England winters like a barn.

Mr. Herzan requested the correction of the spelling of Dibble on p. 8-21.

Mr. McMillan requested more detail in the description section. He noted that there are a lot of statements about what the district is not, but limited information describing what it does have (ex. setbacks, specific forms or functions, or barns or piers).

***A motion was made by Mr. Herzan, second by Mr. Wigren to recommend the Commerce Street Historic District for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (Y-8, N-0, Abstained-0).***

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

### **3. Trinity Long Walk Historic District, Hartford (Criteria A and C, local level)**

Ms. Scofield summarized that the district is recommended for listing at the local level under Criterion C for Architecture/Community Planning & Development. The Long Walk district is comprised of a U-shaped group of connected buildings and the main quad, constructed from 1878 to 1958 that form the historic core of campus. The quad is counted as a contributing site as an integral part of the original master planning process, not for the Olmsted connection. Under the architectural significance there is various types of Gothic architecture. It has a U.S. college campus plan with a quadrangle layout, representing an early adaption of English college planning. The period of significance is 1878 to 1958. Ms. Scofield noted that Long Walk has been listed in the State Register since 1973, with a fuller documentation completed in 1997.

Ms. Scofield stated that the nomination was initiated by Trinity College in anticipation of their anniversary celebration. Notice of the SRB meeting was sent 30 days before to Trinity College's President and staff, the City of Hartford Planning Office and mayor and the Hartford Preservation Alliance. Members of Trinity's professor community had opportunities to provide edits on the draft nomination. The City of Hartford is a CLG; no CLG response or other letters were received. Ms. Scofield acknowledged Marguerite Carnell as the author of the nomination.

Mr. Edwards invited public comments. No public comments were heard.

Mr. Edwards requested SRB comments.

Mr. Edwards opened discussion by stating that he thinks this district rises to the level of national significance. He stated that there is no reference to the origins of the Long Walk building, which is the Burgess-designed building. The original building is the only [extant U.S.] work of one of the most highly regarded nineteenth-century architects who practiced in England. He only had one other foreign commission; the rest of his work was in England, Wales or Ireland. When he was commissioned to design the Trinity College plan, he was also commissioned to build an art school in Bombay, but that building was never constructed. In 1971, when English architectural historian Sir Nicholas Pevsner came to the United States to look at English architecture, he came directly to Hartford (Mr. Edwards showed him Long Walk). Mr. Edwards referenced a webinar on the work of William Burgess done by the manager of Cardiff Castle in Wales. The webinar makes clear that Burgess is as significant in English architecture as Frank Lloyd Wright is in the United States.

Mr. Wigren agreed that a bigger deal should be made of Burgess' significance. Use the Cyclopedia of American Architects as a source. Kathleen Curran wrote a book on Josiah Cleaveland Cady and cited Burgess' influence on Cady. Cady did a lot of college architecture in the late-nineteenth century including St. Anthony Hall at Trinity, which is already listed. He summarized that the architectural significance is characterized as the development of Gothic Revival architecture in colleges and universities; the narrative discusses buildings somewhat individually. This could be strengthened by adding an overview paragraph about how the image of Gothic is used in campuses. The architectural significance is building by building; a discussion of the whole campus and how it shows the evolution of Gothic Revival would be helpful. Mr. Wigren asked what is constant over that period of development and what changes. He suggested a similar discussion of changes and constants for the campus plans. He requested more text regarding what the organizing principles are that the referenced plans have in common.

Mr. Wigren noted that "dentils" is really a classical term; a "corbel table" is a term to use for the element that looks like a cornice but is not classical. The supports that are bigger and more widely spaced should be called corbels instead of dentils.

Mr. Wigren requested a photo of champion elm. Ms. Carnell responded that the elm is in poor condition.

Mr. Barlow referenced the description of the chemistry building; the studio sign is not discussed. He asked why the Brownell statue is non-contributing; it seems like an important element of the courtyard. He stated that he appreciated the Olmsted discussion; there could be more to add to that. Olmsted was working independently of the architects. He suggested adding Olmsted's

sketches for Trinity to the nomination. He requested that the plan for the Chapel garden be added. There is an image of Cooper and Roberts masterplan, but that is not mentioned in the narrative.

Ms. Carnell asked for clarification about the images to include. Mr. Barlow answered that he would like to see the Olmsted sketches such as the grading and roadway plans.

Mr. Carnell noted that the statue was classified as non-contributing because it pre-dates the campus (1869). It was moved in 1878. The SRB discussed it as contributing as a furnishing that contributes to the quad. Ms. Scofield clarified that it would be contributing within the period of significance (not going back to 1869).

Mr. Edwards requested the addition of interior photos. Ms. Scofield clarified that the consultant is working on that. Mr. Edwards expanded upon the national significance of the district as an example of Burgess' work. He shared that Frances Kimball was sent to work in Burgess' office in London, England before he came back to work as the supervising architect on the site. The plan for Trinity [from Burgess] is marked up in red ink by Kimball. Kimball later gets local commissions from the Goodwins. Mr. Edwards observed that Hartford has a concentration of nineteenth-century English architecture that is challenged by residential architecture in the Hudson Valley. The Morgan family in Hartford became a national influence. They commissioned the James Goodwin Mansion on Woodland Street in Hartford (destroyed 1940); Julia Spencer Morgan's sister was Mrs. Goodwin and their son was the Reverend Francis Goodwin who was behind the parks movement in Hartford, the building of Trinity College, additions to the Wadsworth, and the Gothic arch as the Civil War memorial. Architectural photographs that Frances Morgan bought were used by Russell Hitchcock in his *Pelican History*, in describing the English projects. He also mentioned Hartford architect George Keller (who designed the arch); there were a dozen architectural projects in Hartford that all stemmed from English forms.

Mr. Edwards referenced Trinity's renovations and the influence of local building code on alterations to the building. The City of Hartford told Trinity that an entry-door system could not be used for Jarvis. A central corridor was created in the building in 1980. Trinity reconstructed the destroyed features in the early 2000s after Yale found a solution to the entry door system by using electronic locks. He requested a mention of the Kimball feature destroyed on Northam tower in order to create a view (archway). Clarify what work on the interior is original from Frances Kimball's influence.

Mr. McMillan referenced the setting description on p. 5. He asked that clarification be added to the text to explain that the parks/green space around Trinity were developed after the college. Highlight the idea that the college originally had a monumental setting on top of the hill/ridge. Start the text with the hilltop setting and move the park reference further down. Mr. Edwards added that Rocky Ridge was notorious before the park was created and was the subject of the first French observations of Hartford. Mr. Barlow noted that Rocky Ridge was originally considered to be a country location at the outside of town. Mr. Edwards referenced the trap rock that originally stuck out of the ground.

*A motion was made by Mr. Edwards second by Ms. Saunders to recommend the Trinity Long Walk Historic District for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (Y-8, N-0, Abstained-0).*

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

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

No items were heard under Agenda Item B.

**V. Discussion**

No discussion items were raised.

**VI. New Business**

No new business was discussed.

**VII. SHPO Staff Report**

Ms. Scofield announced that the National Park Service Advisory Board approved the National Historic Landmark (NHL) designation for the Barnum Institute of Science and History (Barnum Museum) on August 16, 2023 and it will be Connecticut's 65<sup>th</sup> NHL. She also stated that the State Historic Preservation Office is in the process of hiring a GIS Specialist to manage the new ConnCRIS geospatial system.

**VIII. Adjournment**

A motion was made by Ms. Panjwani to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 11:00 a.m.