

MINUTES

**State Historic Preservation Review Board
Friday, September 13, 2024, 9:30 a.m.
In-Person at 450 Columbus Blvd, Hartford and
Teleconference via Microsoft Teams (Recorded)**

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

Absent: None

Staff: Jenny Scofield (presenting), Jonathan Kinney, Cory Atkinson (Teams), Kevin Berger (Teams), Julie Carmelich (Teams), Catherine Labadia (Teams), Elizabeth Shapiro (Teams)

Guests:

IV.A.1 David Bacchiochi, Becky Kraussmann, Beth Magura, Andrew Roblee, Amber Wakley-Whaley
IV.A.2 Mo Biegeleisen, Nathan Curwen, Mary Falvey, Zach Feldberg, David Jakubowski, David Schick
IV.A.3 Stacey Vairo
IV.A.4 Kristine Koistinen, Aaron Marcavitch, Stacey Vairo
Other: Bob Marages, Nick Stoller

I. Call to Order

Mr. Wigren confirmed a quorum and called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. He introduced the State Review Board members and the Board's role.

II. Review of Public Comment Procedures

Ms. Scofield introduced provided the hybrid meeting procedures.

III. Approval of the June 14, 2024, meeting minutes

Minor edits to the minutes were heard.

A motion was made by Mr. Barlow, second by Ms. Panjwani, to approve the minutes of the June 14, 2024 meeting, as amended (Y-8, N-0, Abstained-0).

Board members voting yes: Mr. Barlow, Dr. Bucki, Ms. Dyer-Carroll, Dr. Feder, Mr. Herzan, Ms. Panjwani, 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. Stafford Springs Historic District, Stafford Springs (Criteria A & C, local level)

Ms. Scofield stated that this is a 163-acre district comprised of Stafford's historic commercial, civic, and industrial core. It includes 85 contributing and 11 non-contributing resources – many late 19th through early 20th c. resources, including the properties associated with Julius Converse, who was the proprietor of Mineral Springs Manufacturing Company such as the former mineral springs office (then library) and Hyde Park (originally Converse's estate).

Staff recommends the district for listing under Criterion A for Industry and Community Planning & Development as the town's historic downtown, which developed in response to natural springs and the water-powered textile industry. Under Criterion C for Architecture, the district is an architecturally rich downtown with both high style and regional/vernacular resources. Those are amongst a rolling terrain, near the railroad and watercourses. The Period of Significance is 1841-1966, the earliest extant building and through the construction of the Yost building. Staff is still studying whether the end date is appropriate.

The nomination was initiated by the Stafford Historical Society and Town of Stafford and completed using a grant from SHPO. Community meetings were held at the Stafford Community/Senior Center on 2/28/23 before the draft was started and on 8/14/24, during the noticing period. Notice of the community and SRB meetings were sent by direct mail to owners and digitally to the town. The nomination was posted to SHPO's website and the town website. Information about the nomination project has been updated on the town's website. The Town of Stafford is not a CLG. No letters were received in response so far [one letter in opposition was sent to the SRB on the morning of the meeting].

Andrew Roblee, Becky Kraussmann, Beth Magura, and Amber Wakley-Whaley attended the meeting in support of the nomination. Property owners are also present.

Mr. Wigren invited public comments.

Mr. David Bacciochi [property owner] stated that he has some issues [with the nomination]. He stated that Julius Converse was a Whig and Whigs were pro-slavery. He voted for some pro-slavery bills in the house and senate. He may have owned slaves, and more research should be done on that. In terms of architectural integrity, the flood of 1955 took out part of town; the glass storefronts were put in then. Rustology is MDF; its pressboard with strips over it to look like panels. He noted that he does not want the sign on the building at 83 Main Street shown (it's plastic). The construction dates appear wrong for some buildings according to his insurance survey; he's not sure if they were taken from the assessor's card or the deed, which he trusts. He noted that this agency told the local historical society that the Witt School was not historic. Ms. Scofield clarified that the SHPO previously evaluated it as not eligible individually, but it is a contributing property within the proposed district. He asked who the owner of the school is; Ms. Wakely answered that it is owned by the town. He stated that he thinks people put the mail [notice letter] in the trash. He mentioned he was expecting to get 5 letters and he received 3. He is considering selling some buildings; in the sales property disclosure, you have to disclose if the property is in a historic district or not; he thinks some mortgage companies will turn people down. Once you try to insure a building in this zone; you have to disclose more information to your insurance agent. Mr. Bacciochi stated he has been doing his own easements and showed a sign he puts on his buildings.

Mr. Andrew Roblee introduced himself as the consultant for the nomination and thanked the Town for their help in editing the nomination. He appreciated Mr. Bacciochi's comments and congratulated the Town for moving forward with the nomination.

Mr. Wigren invited SRB comments.

Dr. Bucki noted that the district is an interesting example of a mid-19th century village developed around waterpower for the mills. She requested that the raceways that seem to dominate the downtown be mentioned earlier in the text; they don't show up until p. 24. They are consequential for the district; connect it to the mill buildings earlier. She also suggested including an aspect of the community itself during the time; she is not sure where the worker housing was. Mr. Roblee responded that there are some examples of worker housing along Furnace Avenue and Silver Street that are connected directly to the factories they are adjacent to.

Dr. Feder stated that the social history is fascinating. He noted that the strike at the woolen mill was blamed on unrestricted immigration and that was 1875 [it has relevance to current events].

Mr. Barlow discussed Hyde Park. He asked who the designer was. He also asked for clarification regarding the monument; the architect listed is the fabrication company, but there may have been a designer.

Mr. McMillan also requested more information about Hyde Park and why it is included in the district because it is such a large part of it spatially. He appreciated the inclusion of information about the walls on Spring Street. He noted that the photos and figures bounce around; he requested that they be more organized.

Dr. Bucki commented that the 1877 flood seemed destructive; she asked if there were other floods and requested more information about those, based on the contemporary interest in floods.

Ms. Dyer-Carroll requested that the period of significance end date be added to the significance summary on p. 69.

Mr. Wigren commented on the period of significance end date; it is a bit circular that it ends with the date of the last significant building. It relates also to the decline of manufacturing, but there was not a reason in the history section to choose 1966. The period is the true decline of the industrial period; a major period closed. Mr. Roblee responded that the Yost Building was the last major volume added to the streetscape with any discernable architectural elements. He has been working with SHPO on the end date. Mr. Wigren suggested stating that the period ends with the physical development of town.

Mr. Wigren noted that he was happy to see Longstreth's categorization of Main Street buildings and an architectural discussion that was not just a list of styles. That could be pulled out of the footnote and placed in the text if there are other types to discuss. He asked about the out-of-town architects – where are they from (regional, national) and what does that say about the development of the district (is there growth and wealth)? He noted that the Episcopal Church was designed by Palliser and Palliser. The house at 46-48 Highland Terrace also looks Palliser-designed. You might want to note the owner and if there was a connection to the Episcopal Church. Palliser and Palliser published catalogs but were interesting because they would modify the stock plan for clients based on a conversation of the site.

Mr. Wigren commented that the Warren Woolen Mill on p. 25 is not constructed of random ashlar; the masonry pattern has alternating courses that are very wide and narrow reflecting a pattern known as

“slab and binder”. Big slabs of stone were laid vertically with rubblestone in between, then a course laid horizontally to tie it together. It was seen, particularly in northeastern Connecticut in the antebellum era. He also requested that the architectural styles be discussed in chronological order.

Mr. Herzan added to the discussion on the period of significance and asked about the construction date of the school [early 20th c.]. He requested that the contributing and non-contributing categories be reassessed once the period of significance is edited.

Mr. Wigren allowed further public comment from Mr. Bacciochi, who shared some local history. He noted that there was worker housing on Furnace Avenue and Silver Street. The mill at 2 River Road had two water wheels; he didn’t realize they were important and took them apart. There was a trolley that ran from Stafford to downtown; you could add the abutments to the district. Some trolley track was found during road improvement. Several mills in town would request an artistic component to be added to a building, to keep masons employed/expand their job.

A motion was made by Dr. Feder, second by Mr. Herzan to recommend the Stafford Springs Historic District for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (Y-9, N-0, Abstained-0).

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

2. Fuller Brush Company Factory, Hartford (Criteria A & C, state level)

Ms. Scofield summarized that the nomination is for the headquarters of the Fuller Brush Company, which produced household cleaning products and specifically a cleaning brush. Their national marketing became engrained in American culture in references and movies. The nomination was proposed as local level significance but could be considered for state level. The complex consists of five contributing buildings constructed in 1922 with expansions 1935-1962. The district is proposed under Criterion A for Industry and Criterion C for Architecture; Criterion C was added at SHPO’s request to recognize the Gothic Revival-style factory and office designed by Buck & Sheldon. The period of significance is 1922-1959, the original construction of the complex through the end of use by the Fuller Brush Company.

The nomination was initiated by the owner/developer. Notice of the SRB meeting was sent to the owner, City Mayor, City Plan Department, Historic Properties Commission, and Hartford Preservation Alliance 30 days before the meeting. The CLG response is pending (expected next week from the HPC). No letters were received in response to the nomination.

Nathan Curwen of Heritage Consulting Group, consultant; Mary Falvey of Hartford Preservation Alliance and members of the Shelbourne Company (representing the owner) are present in support of the nomination.

Mr. Wigren invited public comment. No comments were heard.

Mr. Wigren invited SRB comment.

Mr. Herzan stated that the nomination was well written and exciting. He requested that the architectural significance text in the significance summary be toned down from an “excellent and intact example of the Gothic Revival” to be more accurate. The window replacement is a dominant

unintact aspect of it. Acknowledge the window alterations. Mr. McMillan agreed. Mr. Herzan also mentioned an edit on p. 17.

Mr. Barlow referenced p. 16. Add the value in present day to the amount referenced when Fuller started the company. He noted that Figure 5 shows the façade, which has fallen, dated 1923, but the complex was constructed in 1923. Mr. McMillan clarified that the first stair tower had collapsed.

Ms. Panjwani requested that more information about construction technology be added to the nomination, such as where the red brick came from and why the tower collapsed. She also asked that images of the 1922 Sanborn map mentioned be added and that the author edit for consistency in the spelling of multi-light/multi-lite windows.

Dr. Bucki stated that the Fuller Brush man is an interesting mid-20th century social construct; it really does represent the larger social history of commerce and shows a long history of Yankee ingenuity. In the 1940s and 1950s, the company was moving into cosmetics and soaps and thus added women salespeople.

Dr. Feder noted that this is the only nomination with screen grabs from Disney cartoons, which is indicative of how iconic the company was. Everybody knew what the Fuller Brush Man was.

Mr. Wigren clarified that there was a chimney in the complex taken down in the last 10-20 years. Fuller was spelled out with colored brick, which could show a use of architecture for PR. He asked if an image of the architecturally distinguished factory was used in marketing materials. Mr. Wigren requested that sources be added for the figures.

Mr. Wigren asked if any of the construction or design or layout of the complex is related to manufacturing or their business model. Mr. McMillan asked if there is something about the building related to the product. For example, there is a mention on p. 19 of production of 5,000 brooms every day. Is there any machinery left, any evidence in how the floors were laid out, or anything related to wire twisting [evident] in the design or floor plan? He asked that the author call those features out.

Mr. Herzan stated that the cultural aspect makes the complex stand out in a way that is not characteristic of mill buildings. The SRB discussed the level of significance for the nomination and recommended raising the significance under Criterion A to national (architectural significance under Criterion C could remain as local level).

A motion was made by Mr. Herzan, second by Ms. Saunders to recommend the Fuller Brush Company Factory for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (Y-9, N-0, Abstained-0).

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

3. Shepherd of the Sea Chapel, Groton (Criterion C, state level)

Mr. Wigren recused himself from review of the nomination since it was prepared by Preservation Connecticut, his employer. He announced he would abstain from the vote and Mr. Herzan would serve as chair for this item.

Ms. Scofield summarized that the nomination is for a Modern style A-frame building designed by Carl Blanchard Jr. of New Haven and constructed in 1966 for use as a multi-denominational chapel for the

US Naval Base in Groton. It has an attached religious education building from 1966 and a religious education addition from 1995. A freestanding community center constructed in 1975 is non-contributing. The Navy closed the chapel in 2012 and deacquisitioned it in 2016. The SHPO holds an easement on the property as a result of the deacquisition and it was subsequently sold as private property. Staff recommends the property for listing at the state level under Criterion C for Architecture as a notable example of the A-frame building type, which proliferated during the Mid-Twentieth-Century Modern period. The Navy did not use one standardized chapel plan during this time. The Period of Significance is 1966, the construction of the building.

The nomination was initiated by the current owner, with assistance from SHPO through an agreement with Preservation Connecticut to assist in the preservation of the building. The integrity has been declining since the initial determination of eligibility. Ms. Scofield stated that the author of the nomination was asked by SHPO to make the best case possible in the nomination, despite the integrity. Notice of the SRB meeting was sent to the property owner; Town of Groton Mayor, Town Manager, Director of Planning, and Manager of Inspection, 30 days before. The nomination posted to the SHPO website during the noticing period. The Town of Groton is a CLG and was invited to respond. No CLG response or letters were received. Stacey Vairo attended the meeting as consultant for the nomination.

Ms. Scofield shared that Stacey was asked by the SHPO to write the nomination to the best of her abilities. SHPO is aware that there is an integrity issue.

Mr. Herzan invited public comment. None were heard.

Mr. Herzan invited SRB comment. He reminded the SRB to consider whether the building is eligible based on its current condition.

Ms. Saunders questioned how the nomination can move forward; she stated that she was uncomfortable with the condition of the building.

Mr. McMillan commented that the nomination is well written. He noted that A-frame structures may be rare as a church type in Connecticut but are not rare as a building type. They are very common in California.

Mr. Barlow stated that the integrity of the building is disturbing. He referenced the timbers in Photograph 9, being almost destroyed.

Dr. Bucki commented that the SRB has looked at deteriorated buildings before and still nominated them; she asked what the difference is with this one. Mr. McMillan responded that the SRB has looked at interesting and innovative churches; the difference is that he does not think the building is significant for architecture. Dr. Barlow questioned whether the building would retain integrity if a repair was made.

Mr. Herzan asked where the building stands from a Connecticut perspective; there aren't more than a handful of A-frame buildings in the state. It is still an A-frame despite the missing pews and rotting timbers. He is uncomfortable dismissing the building. Mr. McMillan shared that on the west coast, the building type is very common, but for Connecticut it may be unusual.

Mr. Herzan asked if National Register listing would give the property a boost for reconstruction; he shared that he has a hard time seeing it go.

Ms. Scofield shared that this property was determined eligible by the Navy, in consultation with SHPO when it was deaccessioned in 2016. The SRB is asked to assess its history and significance compared to its current condition in 2024. Mr. Herzan clarified that the SRB is to look at the significance of the building and its current integrity; does it have enough integrity to fly as a listing at the local level.

Dr. Bucki asked how it is tied to the sub-base.

Mr. McMillan noted that the nomination is well written, and many other examples of Modern design and A-frames were provided in the text. A case is made for significance under Criterion C. SRB discussed that the level of significance is local.

Mr. Barlow questioned the significance of the A-frame.

Ms. Panjwani responded that the architectural quality of the building is good, and she has not seen many A-frames [in Connecticut].

Ms. Dyer-Carroll stated that there is substantial loss but there is enough to understand the modern design intent.

Dr. Feder commented that it the building is not perfect, but it is good.

Mr. McMillan suggested comparing the original appearance in Figure 5 to the current condition in photograph 12. You can still read the design.

Ms. Vairo, consultant for the nomination, shared that the condition of the building was shocking in person, but the integrity of the building is intact. It is important to distinguish between the condition and the integrity.

Mr. Barlow asked what is known about the architect, Carl Blanchard. Ms. Scofield clarified that there is a summary of him on p. 15-17. Mr. Herzan shared that he gave Ms. Vairo some more information about Blanchard; he had a substantial firm in New Haven, although he was not well known. Mr. Herzan requested that more information on Blanchard be added to the bibliography.

A motion was made by Ms. Saunders, second by Mr. Barlow to recommend the Shepherd of the Sea Chapel for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (Y-7, N-1, Abstained-1).

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

Board members voting no: Ms. Saunders

Board members abstaining: Mr. Wigren

4. Enfield Carnegie Library, Enfield (Criteria A & C, local level)

Mr. Wigren disclosed that the author of the nomination for Enfield library is the same but is working independently on this project and not for Preservation Connecticut. He does not have a direct relationship to this nomination.

Ms. Scofield introduced the nomination for a Classical Revival-style Carnegie library designed in 1911 by McClean & Wright of Boston and constructed in 1914. Staff recommends it for listing at the local level under Criterion A and C. It is significant under Criterion A for Social History as an example of the philanthropic program administered by Andrew Carnegie to fund libraries for the purpose of self-taught education. It is the first purpose-built free library in town with funding was secured by John Lamont Pickens; he is the son of a Scotch immigrant and an Irish immigrant; there were many immigrants working in the factories at that time. It has architectural significance under Criterion C for its Classical Revival design that resulted from negotiations between James Bertram (Carnegie's secretary who managed library grant program) and the Town/library association. The period of significance is 1914, the date of construction; the social history fits into that discussion of getting the funding and what the library was going to be.

The nomination was initiated by the Town (as property owner) with a grant from SHPO. Notice was sent to the Town Manager, Director of Economic and Community Development, Director of Planning, Historic District Commission, and Enfield Historical Society 30 days before. The nomination was posted to the SHPO website during the noticing period. A positive CLG response was received from the Town Manager and the HDC. No other letters were received. Aaron Marcavitch, Economic Development Director for Enfield and Stacey Vairo, consultant, attended the meeting in support of the nomination.

Mr. Wigren invited public comment.

Mr. Aaron Marcavitch introduced himself as the Economic Development Director for Enfield. The Town is thrilled and honored to have this considered.

Mr. Wigren invited SRB comment.

Dr. Feder asked how many Carnegie libraries in CT are already listed. He stated that this building type is perfect for a thematic nomination.

Dr. Bucki noted that in Western Pennsylvania, Carnegie would build a library after he broke the labor union in iron and steel towns. These were built after he divested himself of the steel industry and became totally philanthropic. Many point to the 1892 the Homestead Strike and loss in that struggle that turned him toward more philosophical endeavors.

Mr. Herzan stated that the nomination was well written. He requested consistency in the use of the term Neoclassical (choose one variation).

Mr. Wigren compared Figures 6 and 7 (images of post cards) and asked if the acroteria were added to the building later or if the dates on the postcards are switched. He observed that the moldings at the top of the wall is a complete Ionic entablature that is running all the way around the building. He noted that Mr. Pickens' persistence is a great story.

Ms. Dyer-Carroll noted the nomination was entertaining to read. She noted a missing word on p. 5 and requested that the photo order be checked.

Ms. Scofield clarified that there are some multiple property nominations in the country for Carnegie libraries and SHPO could consider that.

A motion was made by Mr. Herzan, second by Dr. Bucki to recommend the Enfield Carnegie Library for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (Y-9, N-0, Abstained-0).

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

V. Discussion

Ms. Scofield mentioned the vacancy on the Board (for a historical architect).

VI. New Business

Mr. Wigren announced archaeology day at Whitfield State Museum and an open house in Asylum Hill hosted by Preservation Connecticut and Hartford Preservation Alliance.

VII. SHPO Staff Report

Jonathan Kinney shared an update about the statewide historic preservation plan. SHPO is in the early stages of that process. FHI will be managing outreach and public survey efforts. Ms. Scofield added that the SRB will be asked to look at the plan as advisors to the office. The plan is preservation policy for Connecticut, not just SHPO's programs.

Ms. Scofield shared that the National Park Service returned the nomination for Webutuck, for edits. New York SHPO handled the edits and resubmitted the nomination.

VIII. Adjournment

A motion was made by Mr. McMillan, second by Mr. Barlow to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 11:40 a.m.