

DRAFT MINUTES

**State Historic Preservation Review Board
Friday, March 21, 2025, 9:30 a.m.
In-Person at 450 Columbus Blvd, Hartford and
Teleconference via Microsoft Teams (Recorded)**

Present: Dr. Bucki (Teams), Dr. Feder (Teams) Mr. Herzan (Teams), Mr. McMillan (Teams), Ms. Panjwani, Ms. Saunders (Teams), Mr. Wigren (Chair)

Absent: Mr. Barlow, Ms. Dyer-Carroll

Staff: Jenny Scofield (presenting), Jonathan Kinney,
Teams: Kevin Berger, Julie Carmelich, Mary Dunne, Marena Wisniewski

Guests:

IV.A.1 James Sexton (Teams)

IV.A.2 Judith Rondeau (Teams)

IV.A.2 Christopher Sanders, Jordan Sorensen (Teams), Renee Tribert (Teams)

I. Call to Order

Mr. Wigren confirmed a quorum and called the meeting to order at 9:34 a.m. He described the Board's role and mentioned how decisions are made using the National Register Criteria.

II. Review of Public Comment Procedures

Mr. Wigren and Ms. Scofield provided the hybrid meeting procedures.

III. Approval of the December 6, 2024, meeting minutes

Minor edits to the minutes were heard.

A motion was made by Mr. Herzan, second by Dr. Bucki, to approve the minutes of the December 6, 2024, meeting, as amended (Y-7, N-0, Abstained-0).

Board members voting yes: Dr. Bucki, Dr. Feder, Mr. Herzan, Mr. McMillan, 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. Southern Black Student Work Programs on Connecticut Tobacco Farms 1916-1962
MPDF**

Ms. Scofield summarized that this is a historical context, not a designation itself. Multiple Property Documentation Forms are used to recognize history that is shared by several properties. Those properties or districts still have to be designated, but the shared history does not have to be repeated each time. A few nominations will be completed soon using this context and the MPDF can be continually used to list additional properties.

Since this is not a designation, notice was not required. However, SHPO sent notice to municipalities with properties mentioned in the context, including Canton, Granby, Hartford, Hartland, Simsbury, Suffield, and Windsor. Notice was also sent to the tobacco museum. No letters were received in response. SHPO initiated the project with partial funding from the National Park Service Civil Rights grant program. James Sexton, consultant for the project, attended in support of the nomination.

Ms. Scofield noted that the time period for the context is 1916-1962; listings can have end dates that extend past the end date if relevant to that property, but the context period applies to all properties.

Mr. Wigren invited public comments. None were heard.

Mr. Wigren invited SRB comments.

Dr. Bucki stated that the document is well written and researched. She asked about context documents and designations.

Ms. Panjwani stated that the context writing had good flow. She requested that the CT River Valley be added to the title and that a footnote be added to include a definition of the “Jim Crow south”. She asked whether the Land Grant Colleges Act mentioned on p. 3 still exists/whether it is still on the books. Mr. Sexton answered that all of the land grant colleges that were created under the Act were created long ago; he will confirm if the Act is still on the books. On p.24 check whether the reference to Sr. is correct or if it should be Jr. Ms. Panjwani requested a schematic ma/key plan showing primary and ancillary buildings, if possible. She questioned whether any other property types besides tobacco sheds should include Criterion C in the registration requirements. Mr. Sexton answered that the other property types have a broad range of designs, not characteristics specific to tobacco production. Mr. Wigren clarified that those properties may meet Criterion C, but not for their association with tobacco farming.

Dr. Feder stated that this is a fabulous document and should be a book. He asked how properties that are already listed in the National Register would fit into this context. Ms. Scofield responded that the context could be used to complete nomination updates to include this topic.

Ms. Saunders shared a note about traveling to a northern community to experience integration. She suggested copy editing and stated that she enjoyed reading the context.

Mr. Herzan echoed the previous accolades for the context. He shared that it was an educational opportunity to read it. He suggested checking whether the Hartford Times Building (with Times Portico) is already listed or whether it has a Determination of Eligibility; he remembers reading a nomination for it. He stated that the documentation needs some editing for consistency of terms.

Mr. Wigren referenced the open fields under the Tobacco Farms property type on p. 29 and requested that provisions for tenting with poles and wires be described. Mr. Sexton responded that he was trying to keep the description inclusive [so as not to limit inclusion of landscape properties]. Mr. Wigren suggested saying, “where present”.

Mr. Wigren requested clarification of the geographic area intended to be included in the MPDF. Mr. Sexton noted that he originally focused on Simsbury, Hartford, and East Granby; Ms. Scofield clarified that there are tobacco farms in the CT River Valley (in and out of state) beyond this area, but not all are confirmed to have an association with Southern Black colleges. The current focus is the CT River Valley in Hartford County, including towns for which a connection to the theme was confirmed. The National Park Service also provided a preliminary comment to look at an expanded area. There are also other waves of labor history, outside of this focus.

A motion was made by Ms. Saunders second by Dr. Feder to recommend the Southern Black Student Work Programs on Connecticut Tobacco Farms MPDF for acceptance (Y-7, N-0, Abstained-0).

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

2. Isaac and Sarah Upham House, Thompson (Criterion C, local)

Ms. Scofield summarized that the property is a 2-story transitional Colonial/Federal style building in Thompson (North Grosvenor Dale). Staff recommend the property for listing under Criterion C at the local level because it is a notable surviving example of a transitional style farmhouse combining an 18th century, 5-bay center chimney plan with Federal style design features; in this location it is an important vernacular survivor. It reflects general knowledge of design from builders and is not the result of a pattern book or architect design. The period of significance is c. 1800-1850.

The nomination was initiated by the property owners. Notice of the meeting was sent to owners, Town of Thompson First Selectman, and Thompson Historical Society. The Town is not a CLG. No letters were received in response to the nomination. Judith Rondeau, the property owner, attended the meeting in support of the nomination.

Mr. Wigren invited public comments. None were heard.

Mr. Wigren invited SRB comments.

Mr. McMillan stated that he supports the nomination in general and will share some minor edits. He commented that the narrative was confusing. Specifically, there are multiple references to the same room using different names. He suggested choosing one descriptor [cardinal directions are ok].

Mr. Herzan requested correction of the Town name in Section 2.

Ms. Panjwani requested more information about more current updates to the house, such as HVAC. She asked that images of the houses mentioned as comparisons in Section 8 be added and requested schematic plans of the basement and attic.

Mr. Wigren identified additional features that could be documented as the Federal style coming in, such as the front door side lights, shallow roof pitch, and the greater use of plaster- the plaster wall with mantel and mantel shelf in the parlor (left front room). He also noted that terms such as “borning room” and “coffin door” were not used historically; they are the result of late-19th century romanticizing about the Colonial Period. Similarly, the room named as the kitchen was not really the kitchen in this case; the cooking fireplace is in the room on the right (this is a non-standard plan). There was a greater variety of plan types during the Colonial era and continuing into the Federal style

than are recognized in traditional sources. Other examples of this floor plan are located in Franklin and Worcester counties in Massachusetts (documented through National Register nominations). Richard Garrison and Myron Stachiw have documented some. These have kitchens in the front side rooms, but look like the typical center chimney plan from the exterior. He asked what the back center room should be called since it is not a kitchen. It is an interesting house and part of the interesting story is that it looks typical from the exterior but has some variants on the interior.

A motion was made by Ms. Panjwani, second by Mr. Herzan to recommend the Isaac and Sarah Upham House for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (Y-7, N-0, Abstained-0).

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

3. George and Jennie Curtis Fay House, Meriden (Criterion C, local)

Mr. Wigren introduced the item and recused himself. Mr. Herzan served as chair.

Ms. Scofield summarized that the nomination is for a different type of transitional house than the previous nomination. It is a single-family high-style house constructed in 1868 and updated multiple times. It is recommended eligible by staff under Criterion C for architecture at the local level for its expression of multiple popular styles, from the Second Empire in 1868 to the Stick Style and Queen Anne additions, all by architect Henry Martin Jones. The period of significance is from 1868, the initial construction, through 1903 when the library oriel was added.

The nomination was initiated by the property owners. Notice was sent to the property owners, City of Meriden mayor and city manager, and the Meriden Historical Society, 30 days before the meeting. Meriden is not a CLG, and no letters were received in response. Property owner Christopher Sanders attended the meeting in person and nomination consultants Jordan Sorensen and Renee Tribert attended the meeting digitally.

Mr. Herzan invited public comment.

Mr. Christopher Sanders introduced himself as the owner of the property. He is happy to be here and loves the house. He and his wife love the home and recognize that the house is special.

Mr. Herzan invited SRB comment.

Mr. McMillan referenced the brownstone foundation mentioned on p. 6; the 1896 portion is described as rusticated but there is no description of the 1868 brownstone. He suggested that this description be added because you can distinguish the age of these sections based on the finish. He also requested that the green and blue highlighting shown on Figure 9 (floorplan showing chronology of the house) be adjusted in the key to not block out the words on the image. Mr. McMillan stated that this is a well-written nomination.

Mr. Herzan noted that Henry Martin Jones is an interesting figure in architecture because he was not trained as an architect formally. He suggested clarifying the reference to Jones as an architect in the summary paragraph because he recalls that he was a builder with architectural awareness. He designed the Isaac C. Lewis House in Meriden. Ms. Tribert responded that Jones is referred to as an architect in various period sources; he is thought to have been tutored by an architect but this was not confirmed. He served as the architect for industrial properties in Meriden, such as the Aeolian factory. Mr. Herzan

suggested calling him an architect-builder. Ms. Scofield stated that the term designer-builder is often used to describe people with design skills who are not formally trained as architects.

Mr. Herzan asked about the three-sided “bow” described on p. 7; he suggested calling the feature an oriel because it does not touch the ground (like a bay). He asked if the square panels in photo 11 are an alteration because that section of the oriel does not have the same unity of design. Mr. Sanders added that the slate on the house is original and the curved windows in the turret are sealed shut so they don’t break; the majority of the windows in the house are wood sash, weighted rope windows with original pulleys; the kitchen area addition has more current windows. Ms. Tribert added that there is a difference in the treatment of the casing where the panels are. Mr. Herzan asked that an indication be made to acknowledge this in the nomination because it does not have the same symmetry as the rest of the house.

A motion was made by Mr. McMillan, second by Ms. Saunders, to recommend the George and Jennie Curtis Fay House for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (Y-6, N-0, Abstained-1).

Board members voting yes: Dr. Bucki, Dr. Feder, Mr. Herzan, Mr. McMillan, Ms. Panjwani, Ms. Saunders

Board members abstaining: Mr. Wigren

Mr. Wigren resumed the role of Chair.

V. Discussion

No discussion was heard.

VI. New Business

No new business was heard.

VII. SHPO Staff Report

Jonathan Kinney shared information about SHPO’s participation in national historic preservation advocacy week and provided a state legislative update. He announced upcoming SHPO educational programs. Ms. Scofield shared the SHPO is receiving a national award from ESRI for ConnCRIS.

Mr. Wigren announced Preservation Connecticut’s 50th anniversary and the preservation awards to be held on May 8, 2025.

Mr. McMillan asked about the status of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation.

VIII. Adjournment

A motion was made by Mr. Herzan, second by Dr. Feder to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 10:45 a.m.