

MEMORANDUM

TO: Jenny Scofield, National Register Coordinator, Connecticut State Historic Preservation Office

FROM: James Sexton

RE: House Move, 275 Orange Street, New Haven, William Pinto House

Introduction

59 Elm Street Partners, LLC is proposing to relocate the William Pinto House, a Federal-style building located at 275 Orange Street, New Haven, Connecticut 87 feet to the adjacent lot at 283 Orange Street. Built 1810/11, the building was individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places (National Register) on September 12, 1985 under Criteria B and C in the categories of Invention and Architecture (Eldon Scott, J. Paul Loether, and John Herzan, ed., Sec. 8, n.p). Significance under Criterion B is claimed in the nomination for the property's association with New Haven's late-eighteenth and early nineteenth-century residents, William Pinto and Eli Whitney, Under Criterion C, the building is noted as the "best-preserved extant example of the locally rare, gable-to-street form of early-nineteenth-century Federal-style residential frame architecture" (Scott, Loether, and Herzan, Sec. 8, n.p).

Reason for the Move

The William Pinto House is being moved to preserve it as close to its original location as possible, without it being overshadowed by the new building planned for the site and adjacent lot. The project involves three parcels: the one occupied by the Pinto House and two others that contain long-standing parking lots. By moving the house, the developer will be able to combine two adjacent lots to take advantage of economies of scale provided by a larger building area while creating residential units that will satisfy the demand for housing in the downtown area and substantially transform a portion of New Haven's downtown. The proposed plan meets all site and zoning restraints, including parking, density and building height. The developers have elected to limit the building height to respect the character of the neighborhood. In addition, they are planning upgraded landscape, improved drainage, and an excess number of bicycle racks in order to upgrade the former parking lot sites. While leaving the historic building in place and constructing a new U-shaped building around the house was investigated by Newman Architects, this approach was determined to be too detrimental to the context of the Pinto House. Instead, the plan is to move the house next to an adjacent nineteenth-century building (currently housing the Connecticut Children's Museum) at 22 Wall Street (at the corner of Orange and Wall streets). This plan has the added preservation benefit of keeping the smaller-scale, historic buildings together, rather than separating them with the larger new building. It was proposed and approved by the

New Haven City Plan Department, constituent departments, and the City Plan Commission pursuant to a public hearing, that 275 Orange Street be moved to a new location. Therefore, it is proposed that 275 Orange Street be moved to a new site on the adjacent lot on Orange Street (presently identified as 283 Orange Street) (see attached proposed relocation plan). The building formerly housed an attorney, with some of the building vacant. Although a specific use for the moved building has not been identified it is anticipated that the plan will provide an attractive opportunity for a number of potential users. By combining new development on a relatively moribund property with the preservation of a significant historic building, the developer aims for the highest and best use of the three lots.

Existing Conditions Description

The house sits in a densely developed urban area, 1.5 blocks east of the New Haven Green, surrounded by parking lots and 19th- and 20th-century buildings. Nearby buildings range from three to eleven stories with commercial, residential, religious, educational, governmental, and mixed uses. Interspersed with these buildings are several parking lots. This mixed-use neighborhood is consistent with the character of the neighborhood in 1985 when the property was listed in the National Register. The nomination includes the statement that “the area is currently dominated by large post-1860 commercial structures and open parking lots” (Scott, Loether, and Herzan, Sec. 7, n.p.). The southwestern end of the block, on both sides of the street, is anchored by five and six-story buildings on both sides of the street.

The Pinto House sits close to the sidewalk on a relatively flat 0.17-acre lot, facing west on the east side of Orange Street in downtown New Haven. A driveway runs along the south side of the building, feeding a set of seven parking spaces at the rear of the lot. The east boundary of the lot is lined with a chain link fence and maple saplings. The north boundary of the lot also abuts a parking lot. The house is flanked on three sides by parking lots on adjacent property parcels. This site remains unchanged since the 1985 nomination; the house was surrounded by parking lots at that time.

The building is a 2 ½ -story, wood-frame, gable-front Federal house with an asphalt shingle roof and clapboard siding. The foundation is dressed red sandstone across the front while the other three sides are random-coursed trap rock. The historic building is three bays wide and five bays deep. A modern brick addition is located at the rear of the building. The main entry is a five-panel door with a leaded fanlight sitting under a gabled door hood resting on brackets. Four red sandstone steps lead to a landing as wide as the door surround. The door is flanked by paneled pilasters and the hood brackets are located at the top of broader, plain pilasters. The windows sit under projecting caps; a tri-partite window with a round-topped central section sits at the apex of the gable.

A two-story brick addition constructed in 1987 with a hipped roof is located at the rear of the building, in the location of a former 1953 brick addition. The earlier brick addition is visible in the nomination photographs, but is no longer extant.

The interior of the building at the time of listing consisted of a semi-finished basement, with brick floor pavers and whitewashed walls, two finished floors with similar plans, and a finished attic space. Several aspects of the building were highlighted in the 1985 nomination:

. . . despite the incorporation of a projecting first story window bay in 1929, modifications made to its original front porch in conjunction with the widening of Orange Street in the late 19th century, and the addition of a single-story masonry rear wing in 1953, the bulk of the historic exterior features and fabric of the Pinto-Whitney house remain remarkably intact. The well-crafted Palladian window found in its front gable remains one of the best surviving examples of this fenestration form within the confines of the City as a whole. Most major original interior features, such as mantelpieces, trim moldings and doors, as well as the basic floor plans of the original portion of the structure also survive remarkably intact, providing an important record of the kind of detailing and craftsmanship originally found even in somewhat modestly scaled early 19th -century Federal-style urban houses (Scott, Loether, and Herzan, Sec. 8, p. 1).

Evaluation of Property Integrity Since NRHP-Listing in 1985

The house has been somewhat changed since 1985. The one-story modern addition was replaced in 1987 by a 2-story addition. A renovation in 1990 affected some of the elements documented in the nomination; others were left undisturbed. (Please see Table 1 below for a summary of changes made after the NRHP-nomination was completed.) On the exterior, the bay window was removed and replaced with two windows matching those elsewhere in the house. The two chimneys in the north slope of the roof were removed, the front door was changed and the railing on the stoop was replaced. Throughout the building the 1/1 sash were returned to 6/6, presumably matching the gable window shown in the nomination photographs. The orientation of the building, the door surround and hood, the Palladian window, the window surrounds, the cladding and the foundation were all preserved. Inside, a new stairway from the ground floor to the attic was added. It runs through the middle room on north side of both the first and second floor and terminates in the attic space under a dormer in the middle of the northeast side of the building. At the same time, the historic back stair was closed off, the cellar stairs removed, and several doors were moved. The brick cellar floor is no longer visible. While the renovation added elements to the building, it also removed some inappropriate modern accretions, including the dropped ceilings visible in several nomination photographs. The “many major original interior features, such as mantelpieces, trim moldings and doors” identified in the nomination, including the front staircase, remain intact.

The retention of these interior character-defining features, along with the limited changes to the exterior of the building since NRHP listing, suggest that although the integrity of design has been affected the building retains enough of its character-defining features for this aspect of integrity to be preserved. Aerial photographs demonstrate that this block of Orange Street has not been substantially changed since 1985; no buildings appear to have been added or removed since that time (Google Earth maps). North of this property, in the next block of Orange Street, the new FBI Field Office was added between 1991 and 2004. The other five aspects of integrity also are intact enough for the renovations that have taken place since 1985 to not jeopardize the William Pinto

House's continued listing. Similarly, in its existing condition, the house retains sufficient significance to continue to be listed under both Criteria B and C.

Relocation Methods

The house will be moved by High Caliber Contracting, LLC, a highly experienced, locally-based, house mover who has been lifting and moving house for almost 30 years. High Caliber has been a member of the IASM (International Association of Structural Movers) for more than 20 years. The approach to the move is based on their extensive experience moving buildings and standard practice in the industry. As is standard practice in the industry (for most moves), no engineer will be used for the house move.

The roughly 80-ton house will be moved as follows: Prior to the move the one-story, approximately 8'x12' (ca. 1960) brick parking lot attendant building in the location proposed for the moved building, will be demolished. Next, a new basement approximately 8'x28'x50' will be dug on the new site and footings for the new foundation wall will be poured at the new location. The project mason will then number and remove the red sandstone foundation stones at the front of the house. These will be carefully stored for re-use in the same locations in the new foundations. If needed at this time the house will be temporarily shored up to accommodate the removal of the sandstone from the foundation. Wooden shoring called cribs will be placed on the existing surface and are not expected to disturb the existing ground surface. (The rest of the above ground foundation stones will be removed and stored for re-use once the building has been lifted off of them.) The lift contractor will then assemble what he calls "a table of steel" under the building – with main I-beams going the length of the building with cross steel inserted at approximately every 7 feet. Minor trenching to a depth of no more than a foot may be needed to facilitate the placing of the steel support beams. This is the only potential ground disturbance associated with the current location of the house. The fireplaces, chimney and chimney remnants will get additional steel needle beams to support them. Once in place, the steel will be shimmed to the existing wood framing, pre-deflecting it with wedges to keep the floor planes stable. Temporary shoring inside the house will be placed at this time, if on-site investigations suggest it is needed. Once the "steel table" is in place, the building will be lifted off its foundation by a unified jacking system of hydraulic jacks and held on cribs. There will likely be six pick-up points each with 2, 15-ton capacity crib jacks for a total of 12 jacks. Once lifted the house will be placed on purpose built rollers called *skates* located at the six jack points. The house on its skates will then be moved along heavy I-beam rails, perpendicular to those supporting the building, to its new location. After the house is moved to the new location, it will rest above the cellar hole so that the plumb bobs can be used to match the foundation wall to the shape of the building. The foundation and basement will be poured and the historic materials incorporated into its exterior as a veneer. Once the new foundation is completed, the house will be lowered onto it using the same hydraulic unified jacking system that raised it. Any evidence left by the steel or other aspects of the move shall be removed once the building reaches its new foundation. The original cellar hole will be filled. Utility trenches will be dug once the house is placed on its new foundation. Beyond the possibility of minor trenching to allow for the insertion of the beams, the digging of the new basement, and trenching for utilities, this process is not expected to create any ground disturbance. This approach

will be refined in response to field conditions, such as the location of the best places to place steel based on the arrangement of the masonry elements in the foundation

The move is expected to take approximately two weeks. At this time, no additional studies or documentation of the building are planned prior to the move.

Effects of the Proposed Move on Property Integrity

The house is being moved from 275 Orange Street (Map 224, Block 292, Lot 700) to the adjacent lot, 283 Orange Street (Map 224, Block 292 Lot 800), a distance of approximately 87 feet. (See attached figures for renderings of the current location and the house in its proposed location.) The modern addition at the rear of the building will be demolished in preparation for the move (see attached plans for proposed work). The house will be relocated onto a new basement and foundation. The new above-grade foundation will be clad using stone salvaged from the original foundation to replicate its appearance. The rear wall of the house, which has been modified for the two additions, will be patched to match the appearance of the adjacent historic walls. A new wheelchair lift will be added at the rear of the building.

Criterion B

The two aspects of integrity that are likely be affected by the move are location and association. Because the building will be moved from its original site, it will lose its integrity of location. The question of integrity of association is more nuanced. Moving the building may affect the integrity of association, as the Pinto House is listed under Criterion B for its association with both William Pinto and Eli Whitney. As the building's NRHP nomination notes:

William Pinto (1760-1847) was a descendant of one of the earliest and most prestigious Jewish families to settle in Connecticut during the eighteenth century. He was the second son of Jacob Pinto, a Sephardic Jew who along with his wife Thankful moved to New Haven from Stratford, Connecticut in 1755. According to a letter written by former Yale president Ezra Stiles, the Pintos were the only family of Jewish descent to have lived in New Haven prior to 1772. William Pinto and his brothers Abraham and Solomon were the first children of Jewish extraction born in New Haven, as well as the first students of Jewish extraction admitted to Yale University. (Scott, Loether, and Herzan Sec. 8, p. [1])

Under Criteria Consideration B, the Pinto House would retain its NRHP eligibility for its association with William Pinto after the move as the “surviving property most importantly associated with a particular historic event or an important aspect of a historic person's life,” for the way in which it represents the Pinto family's significance to the early Jewish community in New Haven (National Register Bulletin 15, “How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation,” p. 30). No other property in New Haven reflects the William Pinto's significance in New Haven better than this site. The connection to Eli Whitney is more tangential. Whitney is thought by some to have died in the house while visiting William Pinto, but he is also associated with the intact Eli Whitney Gun Factory site (Aaron Goode, “Walk New Haven – Downtown North Tour – William Pinto House”). Without its integrity of location after the move, the association of the house with Whitney would likely no longer be sufficient to support the continued listing of the

property under Criterion B for Eli Whitney. The moved house would continue to support a listing under Criterion B for William Pinto.

Criterion C

The Pinto House is also listed under Criterion C. National Register Bulletin 15, “How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation” notes a “moved property significant under Criterion C must retain enough historic features to convey its architectural values and retain integrity of design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association” (National Register Bulletin 15, “How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation,” p.29) Since it will be moved intact, after the move the Pinto House will continue to retain integrity of design, workmanship, and materials. The foundation and exterior stairs will be rebuilt on the new site using the historic materials and matching their historic appearance, and the rest of the exterior features will be left in place. Due to site constraints and health and safety concerns, the front stairs will be reoriented to run from the door towards the center of the gable. The stairs currently run towards the corner of the building and open directly onto a driveway. In order to avoid this situation when the house is moved the stairs will be turned away from the new driveway. The interior will also be left undisturbed by the move. (see Table 1 for a summary of how key features will be affected by the proposed move.) The building will remain a recognizable example of a “rare Federal-style, gable-front house with exceptional interior woodwork” (Scott, Loether, and Herzan, Sec. 8). It will remain on the same side of the same street in the same mixed-use neighborhood. As the house is being moved to the adjacent lot, the new setting will be quite similar to its current setting, with the building retaining its current orientation and relationship to the street. The building has been in a modern, mixed-use urban setting for many years. Sanborn maps and aerial photographs show that the proposed location for the house has been a parking lot since as early as 1934. At that time, the five-story at the northwest corner of Orange and Elm Streets had been constructed (Fairchild 1934 Aerial photograph 8376). Although it will now sit closed to a new modern building, this will not be the first modern, or taller, building in the neighborhood. These buildings, with the exception of the FBI Field Office, were all present at the time of the Pinto House’s listing. Based on the guidance, and the continued presence of the character-defining features throughout the building, the Pinto House should retain its NRHP eligibility under Criterion C.

New Setting and Environment

The archeological potential of the new site is limited. Based on test borings performed by GZA GeoEnvironmental, Inc., for their “Preliminary Geotechnical Engineering Report” (September, 2018), it is our understanding that the top layer of soil is asphalt and fill (with trace amounts of debris) to levels between 2.5 and 6.4 feet. See the attached archaeological report on the existing and proposed house locations. The report concludes that the potential for adversely impacting significant archaeological deposits is minimal.

Similarly, the late nineteenth-century building housing the Connecticut Children’s Museum at 22 Wall Street will be minimally affected by the proposed building move. The building is currently oriented toward Wall Street with its former entrance on Orange Street closed off; access to the property will not be affected by the proposed move. While the view from the south side of this

building will change, the plan calls for preservation of the trees that currently separate the museum from the parking lot that currently occupies the proposed new location for the Pinto House.

Table 1 – Changes to Key Features of the Pinto House after the 1985 NRHP Nomination

Feature	Date	1985 Condition	2020 Condition	Post Move Condition
Front Stoop	Likely ca. 1810	Intact with modern railing; NRHP nomination raises question of re-orientation from perpendicular to the façade to parallel	Intact with replacement railing	Intact but reoriented towards the middle of the gable and new railing
Front Door	Likely ca. 1810	Intact	Replaced 1990	1990 door to remain
Door Surround	Likely ca. 1810 except for late 19C consoles	Intact	Intact	Intact
Windows	Late 19C	Late 19C, 1/1 windows intact	Replaced 1990 with 6/6	6/6 Intact
Window Surrounds	Likely ca. 1810	Intact	Intact	Intact
Chimney 1 (South)	Likely ca. 1810	Intact	Intact	Intact
Chimney 2 (Northwest)	Likely ca. 1810	Intact	Removed 1990	Removed
Chimney 3 (Northeast)	Likely ca. 1810	Intact	Removed 1990	Removed
Basement floor	Likely ca. 1810	Intact	Removed 1990	Removed
Front Stair	Likely ca. 1810	Intact	Intact	Intact
Interior Trim	Likely ca. 1810	Intact	Intact	Intact
Fireplace surround north wall, 1 st story front room	Likely ca. 1810	Intact	Intact	Intact
Fireplace surround original kitchen	Likely ca. 1810	Intact	Intact	Intact
Fireplace surround south [sic]* wall, 1 st floor central room north [sic] side of house	Likely ca. 1810	Intact	Intact	Intact
Fireplace surround north wall, 2 nd story front room	Likely ca. 1810	Intact	Intact	Intact

Fireplace surround west [sic] wall*, 2 nd story central room	Likely ca. 1810	Intact	Intact	Intact
Fireplace surround south wall, central room north* side	Likely ca. 1810	Intact	Intact	Intact
Back stairs	Likely ca. 1810	Intact	Removed 1990	Removed

Bibliography

Fairchild 1934 Aerial Survey of Connecticut. Photograph 8376. Collection of the Connecticut State Library.

Goode, Aaron. "Walk New Haven – Downtown North Tour – William Pinto House". Electronic Resource, accessed at http://walknewhaven.org/tours/sites/downtown_north/downtown_north_site01.html February, 2020.

GoogleEarth aerial photographs. Online resource at Googleearth.com, accessed February, 2020.

GZA GeoEnvironmental, Inc. "Preliminary Geotechnical Engineering Report." September, 2018.

National Register Bulletin 15. "How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation."

Scott, Eldon, J. Paul Loether, and John Herzan, ed. "William Pinto House." National Register of Historic Places Inventory/Nomination Form. Connecticut Historical Commission, Hartford, February 19, 1985.

Site Photographs



Looking south across the proposed site for the Pinto House from Orange Street. (9/11/2019)



Looking northwest across the proposed site for the Pinto House. It will be located near where the parking lot attendant's booth is located. (1/15/2020)



Google Earth image looking southeast across the proposed location for the Pinto House. (Google Earth)