

MINUTES

**State Historic Preservation Review Board
450 Columbus Boulevard, Hartford, Connecticut
Plaza Level, Meeting Room E (North Building)
Friday, September 14, 2018, 9:30 a.m.**

Present: Mr. Edwards (chair), Dr. Feder, Mr. Herzan, Mr. McMillan, Mr. Wigren

Absent: Mr. Barlow, Dr. Bucki, Ms. Saunders, Ms. Sutton

Staff: Jenny Scofield, Elizabeth Shapiro, Marena Wisniewski, Douglas Royalty

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Edwards at 9:45 a.m. Mr. Edwards introduced the role of the State Historic Preservation Review Board (SRB) and each member who was present.

II. Review of Public Comment Procedures

Copies of the public comment procedures were available at the sign-in table and read by Mr. Edwards.

III. Approval of the June 22, 2018 meeting minutes

A motion was made by Dr. Feder, second by Mr. Wigren to approve the minutes of the June 22, 2018 meeting (Y-5, N-0, Abstained-0).

IV. Action Items

A. Completed National Register Nominations

All registration forms are subject to changes made by the SRB and by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) staff.

Ms. Scofield reported that for the nominations on this agenda, all property owners were notified by mail and other interested parties were notified by email of the pending nomination, 30 days prior to the meeting. The chief executive officer of the municipality was also notified. All nominations were posted on the SHPO website and available for download during the noticing period.

1. Middle Haddam School, East Hampton (Criteria A and C, local)

Staff recommended the Middle Haddam School for listing at the local level under Criterion A in the category of Education for its association with the national movement of rural schools from one-room to consolidated in the early twentieth-century, and under Criterion C in the category of Architecture as a notable example of the rural consolidated school property type.

Ms. Scofield reported that the property is owned by the Middle Haddam Association; the nomination was initiated and written by a member of the association. Notice of the SRB meeting was sent to the Middle Haddam Association, Town Manager, Planning and Zoning Commission, and Chatham Historical Society, 30 days before the meeting. The town is not a Certified Local

Government (CLG). Letters of support were received from 11 people including: Melissa Ziobron, state representative for the 34th district, Greg Stroud of Southeast Coast, an abutting neighbor, residents, the local librarian, former students, and the secretary of the Middle Haddam Association. No letters of objection were received. Margaret Faber attended the meeting as the author of the nomination and member of the Middle Haddam Association. Two other members of the association, attended the meeting in support of the nomination, including Charles Roberts, Vice President of the association and Chairman of the Middle Haddam Historic District Commission, and Lois McCutcheon, Secretary of the association.

Mr. Edwards opened the nomination for public comment. Charles Roberts spoke in support of the nomination. He commented that he has lived in Middle Haddam for 57 years and that recognition of the building through National Register listing will help in efforts to restore the building. Margaret Faber noted that the association recently received a grant from SHPO to restore the roof and cupola.

Mr. Herzan commented that the author did a great job on the nomination. He found the comparisons to other schools enlightening and the text was thorough; it is difficult to write about common building types. He asked that in the summary paragraph on p. 7-4, the architectural firm be referred to as the Hartford architectural firm of Haynes and Mason.

Mr. Wigren asked if the moveable wall mentioned on p. 8-21 is mentioned in the description. Ms. Faber noted that it is mentioned on p. 7-7. Mr. Wigren commented that is his reading of books regarding advice for designing schools, the placement of windows along one wall was done to prevent glare and is characteristic of the 1910s and 1920s. He requested the use of the term panels instead of blank windows and noted that empty walls facing the street is also characteristic of the time period for schools.

Mr. Edwards commented that the floor plan diagrams are confusing. Instead of using highlighting to identify each portion of the building, add a text label and reduce the number of plans included.

Mr. Edwards asked what other work the firm of Haynes and Mason completed. Ms. Faber responded that she has a list and they designed approximately eight other schools. Mr. Edwards noted that Bulfinch's state house in Hartford is a prime example of the Colonial Revival style and asked if Haynes and Mason were specialists in the style. Ms. Scofield noted that text regarding the significance of the Colonial Revival was a topic of editing. Mr. Wigren commented that the nomination is strong as it is, but that the Colonial Revival was a major national movement.

Mr. Edwards asked how the moveable wall is detailed. Ms. Faber responded that it has removable panels at the top with a frame around it.

Dr. Feder asked if there were parental objections to the school consolidation. Ms. Faber responded that in this local area, people were excited about having access to a modern school and good education. However in the farming communities, consolidation was not popular because not all of those children were headed to high school. Mr. Roberts commented that his mother is 96 years old; her two sisters used to take the train to Middletown in order to go to high school in the 1930s. It was a big deal for a lot of parents whether or not to attend a high school that involved travel. His mother repeated eighth grade because her mother would not allow her to travel to high school yet.

Mr. McMillan commented that the names of the different schools in the area are confusing. Ms. Faber clarified that the Center School was taken over by the middle and high school.

Mr. McMillan requested that workmanship be addressed in the integrity statement. Ms. Faber and Mr. McMillan discussed that the joists (referenced on p. 8-18) did not need to be so thick, especially during the depression.

A motion was made by Mr. Herzan, second by Mr. McMillan to list the Middle Haddam School on the National Register of Historic Places (Y-5, N-0, Abstained= 0).

2. Shoreline Electric Railway Power House, Old Saybrook (Criteria A and C, local)

Ms. Scofield summarized that this nomination was tabled at the June meeting to allow more time for the property owner to learn about National Register listing. Staff recommended the Shoreline Electric Company Power House for listing at the local level under Criteria A and C in the categories of Transportation and Architecture. Under Criterion A, it is one of few extant support facilities for the Shore Line Electric Railway system. Under Criterion C it is a notable example of the power house building type with features such as fireproof and vibration resistant construction. It operated with a coal-fueled electric system and used the water available on site for cooling. The period of significance dates from its construction in 1910 to 1929, then end of its operation as a power house for the railway.

Ms. Scofield reported that she worked with the Christine Nelson, the town planner, to initiate the project with support from the owner. Notice of the SRB meeting was sent to the first selectman, town planner, Historic District Commission, and historical society 30 days before the meeting. No letters of support or objection were received, but Ms. Scofield spoke with the owner by phone to answer questions after he received the notice letter. The CLG response was positive. Ms. Scofield spoke with the property owner again after the June SRB meeting and his questions regarding nomination have been resolved. Kate Kuranda and Kirsten Peeler of R. Christopher Goodwin & Associates, attended the June meeting as consultants for the nomination. They are under contract to the State Historic Preservation Office and are out of state; staff asked them not to fly in for this meeting. Christine Nelson, Old Saybrook Town Planner, attended the meeting in support of the nomination.

Ms. Scofield noted that the SRB offered a few suggestions regarding comparative research of the power house building type during the June meeting. She summarized these comments. In June, Mr. Herzan noted that an authority on the Morton Plant was scheduled to give a lecture in July. Mr. Edwards mentioned that the Dynamo Station in Greenwich (Cos Cob) provided power for the New York, New Haven, and Hartford Railroad. Mr. Wigren noted that this building was recorded through a HAER documentation and National Register form. Ms. Kuranda mentioned that several examples of power houses associated with mills survive, but examples of the building type within these more public facilities are less frequent.

Mr. Edwards asked the SRB for additional comments on the nomination. Mr. Herzan asked if the Classical or Renaissance Revival was the best stylistic reference for this building. Mr. Edwards noted the same concern. He stated that the New York, New Haven, and Hartford Railroad used a similar style for all of their buildings constructed around 1910. This style had a Mediterranean influence, including tile roofs. Mr. Wigren commented that the building's chunkiness, broad eaves, plain walls, and brackets argues an Arts and Crafts influence (which was not just limited to Stickley). Mr. Herzan asked if eclectic was a good stylistic term. The SRB discussed that eclectic

is a bit more scholarly and this is an industrial application. In contrast, the Harkness Mansion is a clear example of the Renaissance Revival style.

Mr. Herzan commented that on p. 7-7 the historical form of the building is referred to as a box-shaped volume. He sees the shape as more horizontal; the cornice is very strong.

Mr. Herzan noted that there is a lot of justification for state level significance on p. 8-12. Ms. Scofield asked if that level of significance applies under Criterion A. Mr. Herzan responded yes to A, maybe Criterion C if the building is rare.

Mr. McMillan commented that the property type is interesting and always looks like a temple. Power Houses in San Francisco look more like telephone switch stations. This building recalls that temple shape with its heavy projecting cornice.

Mr. Edwards mentioned the reference to the building as a rare surviving example of the railroad system on p. 7-7. He requested that the word rare be deleted because there are other surviving examples of this railroad system.

A motion was made by Mr. Wigren, second by Dr. Feder to list the Shoreline Electric Railway Power House on the National Register of Historic Places (Y-5, N-0, Abstained= 0).

3. Rowayton Depot Historic District, Norwalk (Criteria A and C, local)

Ms. Scofield summarized that a nomination for this district was originally prepared in 2013, approved by the SRB in April 2014, and sent to the National Park Service (NPS). NPS returned the nomination in July 2015. NPS commented that the district boundaries were not justified; similar resources existed outside of the boundary and the period of significance was only generally mentioned. The areas of significance were not explained. The boundary and period of significance is revised in the current nomination and text was added in each section. SRB members were provided with the original 2013 draft, NPS return sheet, and current 2018 draft.

Staff recommended the district eligible for listing at the local level under Criterion A in the categories of Transportation and Community Development as a neighborhood that developed specifically in response to the onset of rail service, and under Criterion C for its collection of late eighteenth through early twentieth-century domestic architecture. The period of significance extends from 1782, the date of the earliest house, to 1940 when the residential development pattern changed.

Ms. Scofield reported that the project was initiated by the Rowayton Historical Society. Notice of this meeting and a public information meeting held on July 23, 2018 at Rowayton library was sent to property owners by direct mail. Notice was also sent to the mayor, planning and zoning commission, and Rowayton Historical Society. The draft nomination was posted on the SHPO and Rowayton Historical Society websites during the noticing period. Following the public meeting, the district boundaries were revised slightly and second notice was posted on August 15, 2018. A separate notice of the SRB meeting was provided to the Department of Transportation regarding the railroad properties within the district. The City of Norwalk is not a CLG. Ms. Scofield responded to email inquiries from one owner, but no letters of support or objection were received. There are approximately 153 property owners in the district. Tod Bryant attended the meeting as the consultant for the nomination.

Mr. Edwards opened the nomination for public comment. Mr. Bryant stated that Wendell Livingston, the president of the Rowayton Historical Society had planned to attend the meeting in support of the nomination, but had a conflict. He noted that in the previous (2013) nomination, he tried to include a development of 1950s single-family houses located adjacent to the railroad line.

Mr. Wigren noted that not all SRB members received the 2013 nomination.

Mr. Edwards commented that the relevance of George Putnam to the district is interesting.

Mr. Herzan requested that on p. 8-19, the neighborhood be referred to as distinctive, rather than unique. He asked that a reference to Rowayton Depot be added on p. 7-5 to clarify which district is being discussed.

The SRB discussed the stylistic reference of the train station. Mr. Bryant stated that he couldn't remember where he saw a reference to the building as the Italian Renaissance style. SRB members noted that the hip roof was popular in many styles. Mr. Wigren commented that the building's diamond-pane windows are an Old English reference. The building has elements of both the Arts and Crafts and Mediterranean Revival styles; at the time of construction though, the style would not have been called Arts and Crafts.

Mr. Wigren commented on the reference to examples of the Federal and Georgian architectural styles on p. 8-24. There are no examples in the inventory or photos of Georgian buildings. Also, Prairie style is not the best term here; Four Square is more appropriate (see photo 21). Mr. Edwards commented on the properties shown in photos 20 and 21; a great deal of trouble was taken to build second-story porches. Mr. Wigren noted that the columns shown on the building in photo 21 don't line up.

Mr. Herzan asked what point the author was trying to make in the last paragraph of p. 8-24; why is it mentioned that Norwalk had three railroad depots but this is the only one with a neighborhood extant around it? Mr. Bryant stated that Ms. Scofield requested this statement. Ms. Scofield clarified that the staff edit requested here was to describe what was distinct about the Rowayton neighborhood and place it into context with the rest of Norwalk. She had asked for comparison of other similar neighborhoods. Mr. McMillan asked where the other historic railroad depots are. Mr. Bryant responded that they are in South Norwalk and East Norwalk; the neighborhoods around those stations have been pushed back. The South Norwalk station dates to 1896 and is historic, but the neighborhood has been altered through 1960s urban renewal projects, 1970s apartments, and a police station. Mr. Herzan requested more context about the other two historic railroad stations.

A motion was made by Dr. Feder, second by Mr. Edwards to list the Rowayton Depot Historic District on the National Register of Historic Places (Y-5, N-0, Abstained= 0).

B. Review of National Register Status of Properties Proposed for Demolition

1. Grange Hall, 11 Main Street, Bridgewater, Bridgewater Center Historic District

Staff requested that the SRB evaluate whether or not this building continues to contribute to the Bridgewater Center National Register Historic District. The building is threatened by potential demolition. Prior to the meeting, SRB members were provided with current and historic

photographs of the building and the National Register nomination. Todd Levine, the SHPO staff person who receives inquiries about the Protection Act attended the meeting to answer questions. Ms. Scofield summarized that the building is described in the nomination as one of the four major buildings comprising a historic crossroads and is one of 66 contributing properties in the district.

Mr. Herzan stated that the building is very important to the village center and it would be a real loss if it was demolished.

Mr. Edwards commented that in looking at the 1854 photo compared to the current photo, the only changes to the exterior of the building include a change in window sash, loss of the cupola, and loss of the two chimneys. Mr. Wigren noted that the original sash appear to be extant, but covered with storm windows in the photo.

Mr. Edwards stated that the building functions as the text describes. He read from p. 7-1 of the National Register nomination and stated that all of the physical components mentioned in the nomination are still extant. Mr. Wigren noted that the cupola was probably already gone by the time the nomination was written or it would have been mentioned.

A motion was made by Dr. Feder, second by Mr. McMillan to affirm that the Grange Hall at 11 Main Street in Bridgewater continues to contribute to the historic and architectural significance of the Bridgewater Center National Register Historic District (Y-5, N-0, Abstained= 0).

V. Discussion

A. 2019 Meeting Schedule

Ms. Scofield distributed a proposed SRB meeting schedule for 2019 (also distributed 30 days before the meeting). She noted that the dates reflect generally the same quarterly schedule as the last couple of years and the meetings will continue to be held on Fridays. She asked for any SRB objections to the dates.

The SRB agreed to change the fall meeting from September 13 to September 20. All other dates were approved.

B. Update of Old National Register nominations

Ms. Scofield reported on activity involving updates to old National Register nominations. She stated that she met with the Hartford Preservation Alliance and NINA regarding their plan to do an architectural survey of Asylum Hill, followed by an update of the Asylum Hill Multiple Resource Area nomination. The update would be treated as one district, rather than multiple districts under an Asylum Hill multiple property nomination. Ms. Scofield also stated that there may be a panel about nomination updates at the National Council on Public History annual meeting, which will be held at the Hartford Convention Center from March 27 to March 29. SHPO staff has also discussed developing a Request for Proposals to complete four National Register nomination updates per year (one per SRB meeting), starting with individually listed properties.

VI. New Business

Mr. Wigren mentioned that the CT Trust for Historic Preservation will be hosting open house tours this fall. He also announced the November 6 release of his new book on Connecticut architecture.

VII. Staff Report

Ms. Scofield announced her maternity leave during November and December.

Ms. Shapiro reported on the status of the statewide historic preservation plan. She stated that the draft plan would be available for review by Monday and staff would send an eblast requesting comments. SRB members are encouraged to review and comment on the plan.

VIII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:20 a.m.

A motion was made by Mr. Edwards, second by Dr. Feder to adjourn the meeting (Y-5, N-0, Abstained= 0).