

Norwich Historic Preservation Commission

Minutes of the

Friday, November 2, 2018 Meeting

1:00 pm

At Norwich Historical Society

Members present: Peter Brink, vice-chair, Cheryl Herrmann, Bill Aldrich, and Nancy Osgood

Members absent: Anne Silberfarb, Deb Brian

Also present: Lyssa Papazian and Brian Knight, Historic Preservation Consultants; Jane Korey, NHS representative; Sarah Rooker, NHS Director

Peter called the meeting to order at one o'clock.

The Meeting

Reports from Lyssa Papazian and Brian Knight

1. Brian Knight and Lyssa Papazian spoke about what they have done so far in drafting the National Register nomination for the Mid-Century Modern Multi-Property Documentation Form (MPDF). Lyssa reported that she has done a rough draft assembling information on Mid-Century Modern houses and placing it in the MPDF format. She seeks to do more than just to put the houses in a particular time frame, but also to focus on how the houses represent what was going on internationally, nationally, and regionally in architecture and, specifically, how modern, architect-designed homes in Norwich represent the themes going on in the international style and in Frank Lloyd's work, and especially in development of Mid-Century Modern architecture.

While she will be exploring the work of such architects as E. H. and M. K. Hunter, Walter Curt Behrendt, and Allan Gelbin, she will also try to find other local architects who were influenced by the Mid-Century Modern style, and the houses they built in Norwich. Key will be defining the criteria for Mid-Century Modern designation and within that the level of architectural integrity necessary to qualify for nomination pursuant to the MPDF. For this, she will consult with Devin Colman as well as Brian, who

is taking the lead on doing the three individual nominations using the proposed Norwich MPDF framework. Lyssa also noted that there are a number of Hunter houses in Hanover, all seemingly in good condition, and that it would be nice to look at the Norwich and Hanover Hunter houses as a group, although only the Norwich houses are within the purview of our nomination.

Brian said that he has started his research on the three individual nominations pursuant to the MPDF by investigating the history of the architects who designed the houses he will be nominating. He has been in touch with the Art Institute of Chicago for certain Gelbin papers, and he will be contacting home owners to set up appointments to talk with them and document their houses.

Turning to Meeting House Farm, Brian spoke of the good meeting he had with Jay and Deb van Arman (along with Peter and Nancy) and will be going back to see the attic, basement, barns, and outbuildings, and to have a look at the farm diaries.

Brian reported that he has looked at the Peter Olcott papers at Dartmouth to see if there were any ties to Constant Murdock and Meeting House Farm. He did find that Murdock purchased rum and nails at Peter Olcott's store. Until more deed research is done, it is unclear whether Thomas Murdock or his son, Constant, built Meeting House Farm. Brian said that he has written a fairly complete rough draft of the nomination.

2. Since the last meeting, we discovered that many of the houses on Elm Street were already part of the Village of Norwich Historic District, which extends to include two houses and a sub structure beyond Blood Brook. Seeking to extend the district beyond those houses on Elm Street already included did not seem viable given the range of time periods and styles.

We therefore voted unanimously that the NHPC will apply for a CLG grant to produce under contract with the NHS one or more podcast tours of Norwich and this will be our only grant request for this round.

Sarah said that should we receive this grant, the podcasts would be developed around various themes and would not conflict with NHS's popular walking tours.

3. The members reviewed the draft minutes of their meeting of Thursday, October 25. Bill Aldrich moved and Cheryl Herrmann seconded that the minutes be approved as submitted, and the motion was approved unanimously.

There being no other business, by consensus the meeting was adjourned at 1:55.

Respectfully submitted,

*APPROVED 5-23-19*

Nancy Osgood  
Secretary pro tem