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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
AUG 1 1975
RECEIVED
DATE ENTERED OCT 6 1975

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC Congress Street District

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER Congress Street

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN Hartford

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT 1st- William R. Cotter

VICINITY OF

STATE Connecticut

CODE 09

COUNTY Hartford

CODE 005

3 CLASSIFICATION

| CATEGORY | OWNERSHIP | STATUS | PRESENT USE |
|--|--|---|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT | <input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED | <input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM |
| <input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S) | <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK |
| <input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BOTH | <input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS | <input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SITE | PUBLIC ACQUISITION | ACCESSIBLE | <input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS |
| <input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS | <input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED | <input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED | <input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> NO | <input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER: |

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Hartford Redevelopment Agency (60%); multiple private (40%)

STREET & NUMBER 550 Main St. (HRA)

CITY, TOWN Hartford

STATE CT

VICINITY OF

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Hartford Town Clerk, Hartford Municipal Building

STREET & NUMBER 550 Main St.

CITY, TOWN Hartford

STATE CT

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE CT Statewide Inventory of Historic Resources

DATE 1975

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS Connecticut Historical Commission

CITY, TOWN Hartford

STATE CT

7 DESCRIPTION

| CONDITION | | CHECK ONE | CHECK ONE |
|--|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT | <input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> GOOD | <input type="checkbox"/> RUINS | <input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED | <input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR | <input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED | | |

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Congress Street is a street one block long running south from South Green, 325 yards to Morris Street. South Green is the center point or hub for a number of streets, including Congress Street, Maple Avenue, Retreat Avenue, Jefferson Street, Park Street, Main Street, Wyllys Street and Wethersfield Avenue. Specifically, Congress Street lies between Maple Avenue and Wethersfield Avenue as they converge on South Green and is a "back street" to both of these avenues (See Map, Fig. 1).

On the west side of Congress Street are five single houses, six double houses, one apartment house and one structure designed to be commercial on the ground floor and residential on the upper floors (See Photo, Fig. 7).

On the east side of Congress Street are five single houses and ten houses for residences of two or more families. Two of these are large enough to be called full-fledged apartment houses; seven are of the "perfect six" type, housing two families on each of three floors.

All of the buildings are of red brick with the exception of two frame and one brick/frame on the east side. All of the brick houses are three story transitional Greek Revival/Italianate with projecting flat roofs, columned porticos with Ionic or Corinthian capitals, and flat arched windows with sandstone lintels and sills.

The commercial/residential building and the multiple dwellings and apartment houses were all built not later than about the second decade of the twentieth century. Thus, the street is all of a piece for scale, proportions and materials, there being no high-rise, no glass bricks, no filling stations, no neon lights. Even the sidewalks are flagstone.

As shown by detail map (Fig. 2), the building line has been well maintained and the spacing between structures is even and in cadence.

At present (April, 1975), the buildings are in fair shape, about half of them serving residential purpose; the other half are waiting execution of the Congress Street Plan (See Item 8, Statement of Significance).

This residential backwater lies within easy walking distance of downtown, surrounded on the north by South Green; on the east and west by busy Wethersfield and Maple Avenues; on the south by the South End residential section of Hartford and closely adjoined on the west by the very large medical facilities of Hartford Hospital and Institute for Living.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

| PERIOD | AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW | | | |
|---|--|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC | <input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING | <input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499 | <input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC | <input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION | <input type="checkbox"/> LAW | <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599 | <input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS | <input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE | <input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION | <input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY | <input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799 | <input type="checkbox"/> ART | <input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING | <input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC | <input type="checkbox"/> THEATER |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899 | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE | <input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY | <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1900- | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS | <input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY | <input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION | | |

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

1. Congress Street is significant because it is an in situ example of modest nineteenth century residential street with its fabric wholly unimpaired by destruction or intrusion, located in center city, and now about to be sensibly rehabilitated.

2. The street was laid out, accepted by the city, and deeded to the city in 1854-1855. James H. Ashmead led the group of property owners who were involved in this transaction with the city. An incomplete study of the land records at the office of the Hartford Town Clerk shows sale of parcels of land at this time, that is, land only, thus indicating that all or most of the houses were built starting in 1855.

Houses were built first on the west side of the street because here were building lots in their own right as contrasted to the situation on the east side of the street where the Congress Street frontages were the back yards of the mansions on Wethersfield Avenue. With an occasional exception, the east side of the street was later to develop, and it was here that empty land (former back yards) could later be found for the several "perfect six" and apartment houses of the early twentieth century.

3. The three story bricks with flat projecting roofs, twin pillared classic porticos, red brick masonry and simple detail were in the standard mode of the late 1850's and 1860's and perhaps a little retardataire. While exact information on who designed and built these houses has not yet come to light, the overall situation suggests that they were built on speculation by real estate developers/contractors. None of the first residents was a carpenter, mason or builder, thus eliminating the idea that the houses were first constructed by a professional builder for his own use. Design of the houses closely resembles others of quite similar design known to have been built in the city a decade earlier, for instance, on Lewis Street, thus adding to the implication that, instead of having been designed individually by professional architects, the houses were built according to established well known designs in the public domain. Speculative building of this type is known to have been in progress at this time in the Congress Street

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Atlas of the City of Hartford, Connecticut, Springfield, Mass.,
L. G. Richards & Co., 1896, Plate II.

Atlas of Hartford City and County, Hartford, Baker & Tildan, 1869.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 10

UTM REFERENCES

| | | | | | |
|--------------------|---------------|----------------|--------------------|---------------|----------------|
| <u>D</u> <u>18</u> | <u>693110</u> | <u>4625020</u> | <u>A</u> <u>18</u> | <u>693250</u> | <u>4625020</u> |
| ZONE | EASTING | NORTHING | ZONE | EASTING | NORTHING |
| <u>c</u> <u>18</u> | <u>693110</u> | <u>4621700</u> | <u>S</u> <u>18</u> | <u>693250</u> | <u>4621700</u> |
| ZONE | EASTING | NORTHING | ZONE | EASTING | NORTHING |

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

| | | | |
|-------|------|--------|------|
| STATE | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |
| STATE | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Clark J. Strickland, Historic Sites Researcher

ORGANIZATION

Connecticut Historical Commission

DATE

3/7/75

STREET & NUMBER

59 South Prospect St.

TELEPHONE

203-566-3005

CITY OR TOWN

Hartford

STATE

CT

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL X

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

John W. Schenck

TITLE

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER

DATE

7/28/75

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE

10/6/75

ATTEST:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

OCT 2 1975

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 1

part of the city, notably by the firm of H. & S. Bissell. Indeed, Bissell, as a speculation, put up the Day/Taylor House at 81 Wethersfield Avenue and at that time the building lot ran through to Congress Street, including the lots on which now stand the buildings at 58-60 Congress Street and 64-66 Congress Street.

The integrity of the street as a whole cannot be overemphasized. The spacing, proportion, and rhythm of the buildings, relative uniformity of the materials and of the building heights make for a whole that is unique. For example, the building lines are intact (See detail map, Fig. 2). The brick solidity of the neighborhood is accented by the presence on the east side of the street of one turn-of-the-century frame dwelling which can be classified under the broad Queen Anne umbrella, plus on the southeast corner of Congress and Morris Streets, a house suggestive of the shingle style with red brick for the first floor and shingle expanses for the second floor and roof, which was constructed in late 1890's.

The best of the apartment houses is the Argyle at #10-12 Congress Street, built in 1908 of red brick, with broached and fine pointed sandstone trim for window surrounds and quoins. This structure is built in a handsome U-shape which provides excellent lighting for its comfortable six room apartments (See Fig. 8).

4. Several men of local importance have lived on Congress Street. In the 1860's, Francis Pratt lived at 39, and Amos Whitney at 33. During these years they started a machine shop which was many years later to become famous for Pratt & Whitney Aircraft engines produced by United Aircraft, now Connecticut's largest employer. In the 1870's, James B. Shultas, president of the Hartford County Mutual Fire Insurance Company, lived at #3 (now #71) on the corner of Morris, while next door lived Henry C. Dwight, subsequently to become Mayor. At the other end of the street in the imposing home now known as #2 was Stephen Marston of the C. T. Marston & Company Lumber, who was followed in this home by Dr. James Campbell, Jr., president of the Board of Health.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

On the whole, however, this was not a street of prominent citizens. Indeed, indication to the contrary is clearly given by the assessments for real estate taxes. For instance, in 1858, the house known as #17 Congress, which was one-half of a duplex, was assessed for \$2,800. Number 19, a single house, was assessed for \$3,200. In the same year the Albert Day house on Wethersfield Avenue, whose back yard extended to Congress Street, was assessed for \$16,000. The residents in 1858 included a pistol maker, a harness maker, a clerk of the Probate Court, a gold beater and an organist, which are all modest occupations.

While the street on the one hand did have stability, witness the fact that two families were on the street for 45 years and one family (Condron) for 57 years; at the same time the street accommodated itself to Hartford's incoming nationalities. Augustus Fiege was there in 1865. Fifty years later, Motto, Weinstein, Eckersen, Beaudet, Mintz and Fitzgerald were neighbors of Hollings, Cowlshaw and Goodel. Today, Gonzales and Vasques have joined Dufresne, Podgorsky and Jones. A poignant statement of this ambience is in the lettering at the cornice of the flatiron building at the corner of Wyllys Street, which proudly reads, "NICOLA MOTTO BLDG." (See Fig. 7). Mr. Motto was a dealer in fruits and confectionery in the 1890's.

5. Congress Street presently is the subject of a substantial program for preservation and restoration under a plan of the Hartford Redevelopment Agency and a HUD redevelopment plan. The Hartford Architecture Conservancy has completed for the Hartford Redevelopment Agency the Congress Street Plan pursuant to which the Redevelopment Agency has applied to HUD for a change in the redevelopment program, so that an historic area renewal may be undertaken in the Charter Oak-South Green Redevelopment Area of which Congress Street is a part. A developer is being sought for Congress Street who would restore the houses in full or in part for resale to owner-occupants or as condominiums. At present, the Hartford Redevelopment Agency is proceeding with acquisition of the properties on Congress Street, including apartment houses and the flatiron commercial building, already owning about 40% with summer, 1975 as target date for completion of acquisitions after which restoration by the developer is expected to commence.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 1

City Atlas of Hartford, Connecticut, Philadelphia, G. M. Hopkins,
C.E., 1880, Plate Q.

Commemorative Biographical Record of Hartford County, Connecticut,
Chicago, J. H. Beers Co., 1901 (biographical sketch of James
Babcock Shultas, half owner of United States Hotel, president
Hartford County Mutual Fire Insurance Co.).

Assessments, Hartford 1858 and 1865, State Library, list of taxable
property.

Hartford City Directory, various editions 1855 and later.

Hartford Town Clerk, Land Records, various volumes starting 1854.