

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received NOV 15 1984
date entered 12/23/84

See instructions in How to Complete National Register Forms
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

3 Districts, 2 ind prop.

historic NA

Hartford Downtown MRA

Historic Resources of Downtown Hartford

and/or common (Partial Inventory: Historic and Architectural Properties)

2. Location

Area bounded by I-84, I-91,
street & number Bushnell Park and the railroad

NA not for publication

city, town Hartford

NA vicinity of

state Connecticut

code 09

county Hartford

code 003

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> government
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Multiple	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
Resource Area NA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> military
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Multiple Ownership

street & number

city, town

NA vicinity of

state

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Hartford Land Records

street & number Municipal Building, 550 Main Street

city, town Hartford

state Connecticut

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title See continuation sheet

has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date

federal state county local

depository for survey records

city, town

state

7. Description

Condition		Check one		Check one	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" 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

Overview

The Historic Downtown Hartford Multiple Resource Area consists of seven historic districts, four of which already are listed in the National Register of Historic Places, and 21 individual historic buildings, twelve of which already are listed. There are approximately 100 buildings in the districts, making a total of 121 structures in the Multiple Resource Area. The districts occupy approximately 34 acres, overall. The area long was the center for shopping, banking, insurance and transportation. Historic Downtown Hartford is the central business district of the city. This area near the confluence of the Park River with the Connecticut River is where Hartford was founded in 1636 and it has continued to be the activity and business center of the community for three and one-half centuries. The street grid has evolved over this time, with some of the streets dating back to the early settlement.

Initially, the structures were heavy, frame, post-and-beam, mortise-and-tenon, Colonial houses, of which none survive. The oldest structure now standing in Historic Downtown Hartford is the Old State house, designed by Charles Bulfinch in 1796. The oldest residential building is the Spencer House, a Greek Revival structure, c. 1830, at 76-80 Pratt Street. However, most of the buildings in Historic Downtown Hartford date from after 1850 and include examples of various architectural styles from the Italianate through the Art Moderne. Probably the leading structure in the area in terms of architectural quality is the Cheney Block, 920-944 Main Street, built to the design of Henry Hobson Richardson in 1875, with his young associate, Stanford White, acting as clerk of the works for its construction.

Boundary Justification

Historic Downtown Hartford is the part of the city functioning as the central business district. The boundary on the north is Interstate 84 which was laid out in the 1960s to skirt the northern edge of the shopping district. The boundary on the east is Interstate 91, and elevated highway that separates Historic Downtown Hartford from the Connecticut River. The dense mass of masonry buildings of various ages and heights stops at the edge of the highway. The border on the south is Bushnell Park, the central city's chief open space. On the west the boundary is the main-line railroad tracks, still in use; west of the railroad is a residential neighborhood. In addition to being defined as the location of traditional downtown functions, Historic Downtown Hartford has strong visual and physical boundaries.

Streetscapes

The first settlers built their houses in the vicinity of Prospect Street, then called Meetinghouse Alley, because it was near the mouth of the Park River at the point where it joined the Connecticut River, but at high

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Individual Sites Already Listed in the National Register of Historic Places

Building #1

Stackpole, Moore & Tryon Building, 105-115 Asylum Street
(October 19, 1978)

Building #2

Charter Oak Bank Building, 114-124 Asylum Street
(October 11, 1978)

Building #3

Wadsworth Atheneum, 26 Atheneum Square North
(October 6, 1970)

Building #4

U. S. Post Office and Federal Building, 135-148 High Street
(October 19, 1981)

Building #5

Municipal Building, 550 Main Street
(April 27, 1981)

Building #6

First Church of Christ and the Ancient Burying Ground, 675 Main Street
(December 5, 1972)

Building #7

The Old Hartford Statehouse, 800 Main Street
(October 15, 1966)
National Historic Landmark; Recorded by Historic American Buildings
Survey

Building #8

Cheney Block, 942 Main Street
(October 6, 1970)

Building #9

Christ Church Cathedral and Cathedral House, 955 Main Street
(December 29, 1983)

Building #10

Dillon Building, 69-71 Pratt Street
(February 11, 1982)

Building #11

Webster Memorial Building, 36 Trumbull Street
(April 12, 1982)

Building #12

Hartford Union Station, Union Place
(November 25, 1975)

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Historic Districts Already Listed in the National Register of Historic Places

District A

Ann Street Historic District (November 28, 1983) 22 structures:
103-121 Allyn Street; 90-122 Allyn Street; 163-203 Ann Street;
316-320 Ann Street; 275-297 Asylum Street; 265 Church Street; 228-240
Church Street; 54 Hicks Street; 185-275 Pearl Street; 234-266 Pearl
Street.

District B

Goodwin Block Historic District (March 26, 1976) 5 structures:
219-257 Asylum Street; 5-17 Haynes Street; 210-228 Pearl Street.

District C

Lewis Street Historic District (January 30, 1976) 10 structures:
1-33 Lewis Street; 24-36 Lewis Street; 8-28 Trumbull Street; 60 Gold
Street

District D

Pratt Street Historic District (March 10, 1983) 15 Structures:
31-101 Pratt Street; 32-110 Pratt Street; 196-260 Trumbull Street.

Individual Sites, with Owners, Addressed by This Nomination

Building #13
Capitol Building
402-418 Asylum Street
a/k/a 5-23 High Street
266/410 Properties Ltd. Partnership
55 Airport Road
Hartford, CT 06114

Building #14
Batterson Block
26-28 High Street
Marvin Lewton
30 High Street
Hartford, CT 06103

Building #15
Judd & Root Building
175-179 Allyn Street
a/k/a 53-59 High Street
A. Mark Frank
149 Tudor Lane
Manchester, CT 06140

Building #16
Footguard Hall
159 High Street
State of Connecticut
Governor's Footguard Armory
159 High Street
Hartford, CT 06103

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Building #17
First National Bank Building
50 State Street

Northeast Center Limited Partnership
196 Trumbull Street
Hartford, CT 06103

Building #18
Hartford Club
44-48 Prospect Street

Hartford Club
46 Prospect Street
Hartford, CT 06103

Building #19
B.P.O. Elks Lodge
34 Prospect Street

Hartford Lodge #19
B.P.O. Elks
34 Prospect Street
Hartford, CT 06103

Building #20
Hartford Times Building
10 Prospect Street

Ten Prospect Street Associates
55 Airport Road
Hartford, CT 06114

Structure #21
Stone Bridge, Main Street

City of Hartford, 550 Main Street

Districts Addressed by This Nomination

District E

Main Street Historic District #1. 13 structures:

- 11-21 Asylum Street; 18, 20 Asylum Street; 805-875 Main Street;
- 852-990 Main Street; 125-185 Market Street;
- 1- 25 Pratt Street.

18 Asylum Street
a/k/a 829 Main Street

Anna B. Konover
c/o Society for Savings
Box 2200
Hartford, CT 06103
and
Society for Savings
31 Pratt Street
Hartford, CT 06103

20 Asylum Street
a/k/a 11-21 Asylum Street

Anna B. Konover
c/o Society for Savings
Box 2200
Hartford, CT 06103
and
Society for Savings
31 Pratt Street
Hartford, CT 06103

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805 Main Street

Grace N. Royster et al
c/o Allen Schaeffer
11 Asylum Street
Hartford, CT 06103

811 Main Street
a/k/a 11-21 Asylum Street

Zelma C. Brandt
c/o Allen Schaeffer
11 Asylum Street
Hartford, CT 06103

845 Main Street

Anna B. Konover
c/o Society for Savings
Box 2200
Hartford, CT 06103
and
Society for Savings
31 Pratt Street
Hartford, CT 06103

859 Main Street

Hartford Roman Catholic Diocesan
Corp., Ethel F. Donahue
c/o K-Mart Corporation, Tax Dept.
3100 West Big Beaver Road
Troy, MI 48084

869 Main Street

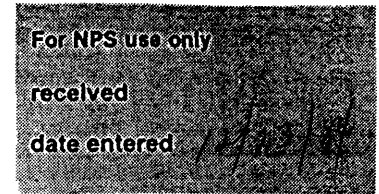
Society for Savings
31 Pratt St.
Hartford, CT 06103
and
Zion Park Associates Ltd. Partnership
Box 17-098
West Hartford, CT 06117

875 Main Street
a/k/a 1-25 Pratt St.

Society for Savings
31 Pratt Street
Hartford, CT 06103

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884 Main Street

Sage, Allen & Co., Inc.
898 Main Street
Hartford, CT 06103

890 Main Street

do

896-902 Main Street

do

NC 906 Main Street

Connecticut General Life Insurance Co.
c/o Lerner Shops
460 West 33rd Street
New York, NY 10501

920-926-944 Main Street

City of Hartford
c/o Metropolitan Properties
15 Lewis Street
Hartford, CT 06103

956 Main Street

May Department Stores Co.
956 Main Street
Hartford, CT 06103

990 Main Street

Anna B. Konover, Trustee
5445 Collins Avenue
Miami Beach, FL 33140

125 Market Street

Hartford Roman Catholic Diocesan Corp.
140 Farmington Avenue
Hartford, CT 06105

NC 135 Market Street

Hartford Roman Catholic Diocesan Corp.
140 Farmington Avenue
Hartford, CT 06105

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District F

Main Street Historic District #2, 7 structures:

2-24 Central Row; 740-760 Main Street (east side); 59 Prospect Street;
One Tower Square

6 Central Row	Putnam & Co., Inc. 6 Central Row Hartford, CT 06103
9, 10, 17 Central Row	Travelers Insurance Co. One Tower Square Hartford, CT 06103
19-24 Central Row	do
740 Main Street	do
750, 760 Main Street	Seven-Fifty Main Street Associates Limited Partnership 750 Main Street Hartford, CT 06103
56 Prospect Street	Travelers Insurance Co. One Tower Square Hartford, CT 06103
59 Prospect Street	Travelers Insurance Co. One Tower Square Hartford, CT 06103
One Tower Square	do

District G

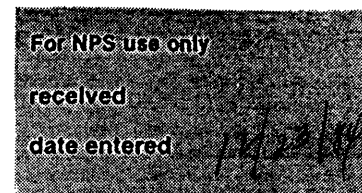
Asylum-Trumbull-Pearl Streets Historic District, 15 structures:

81-115 Asylum Street; 76-124 Asylum Street; 80-100 Pearl Street
(north side); 140-190 Trumbull Street (east side)

81 Asylum Street	Savitt, Incorporated 35 Asylum Street Hartford, CT 06103
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89 Asylum Street

Yip H. Chung
89 Asylum Street
Hartford, cT 06103

93 Asylum Street

Yip H. Chung
93 Asylum Street
Hartford, CT 06103

103 Asylum Street

American Property Investors VII
907 Semmons Tower East
Dallas, TX 75027

105-115 Asylum Street

Allyn Seymour, Trustee
73 Ledyard Road
West Hartford, CT 06117

76 Asylum Street

Tramix Corporation
241 Asylum Street
Hartford, CT 06103

78-80 Asylum Street

William Selstsky
59 Brainard Road
West Hartford, CT 06107

82 Asylum Street

Michael William Corp.
241 Asylum Street
Hartford, CT 06103

94-110 Asylum Street

The Michael William Corp.
241 Asylum Street
Hartford, CT 06103

114-124 Asylum Street
a/k/a 190 Trumbull Street

Leonard Udoff
15 The Crossways
West Hartford, CT 06117

80 Pearl Street

Mechanics Savings Bank
80 Pearl Street
Hartford, CT 06103

NC 90 Pearl Street

Colonial Bank
90 Pearl Street
Hartford, CT 06103

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100 Pearl Street

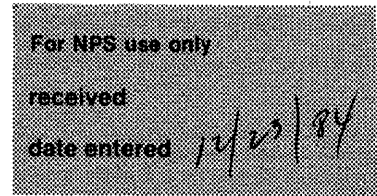
Arthur L. Blumberg et al
30 Forest Hill Drive
West Hartford, CT 06117

140-150 Trumbull Street

American Property Investors VII
907 Semmons Tower East
Dallas, TX 75027

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Hartford Architecture Conservancy's Survey of Hartford Architecture

1979 x local

The Stowe-Day Library
77 Forest Street
Hartford Connecticut

State Register of Historic Places

1984 x state

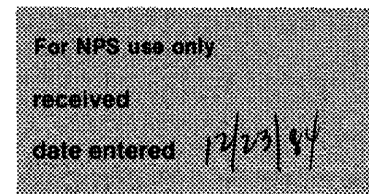
Connecticut Historical Commission
59 South Prospect Street
Hartford Connecticut

The multiple resource area nomination for The Historic Resources of Downtown Hartford is based upon Hartford Architecture, Volume One: Downtown, a publication of the Hartford Architecture Conservancy. This publication is the report of the Conservancy's survey of Hartford's downtown, giving an overview of the buildings, their dates and historic and architectural significance and, for principal structures, their architects. Inventory forms from the survey, available at The Stowe-Day Library, 77 Forest Street, Hartford, rate the historic and architectural significance of the buildings on a scale of one to four. The survey data, augmented by supplementary research, was used to select buildings and districts deemed eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.

At the time the multiple resource area nomination was undertaken, many of the resources of Historic Downtown Hartford already had been listed in the National Register and are here simply referenced. The existence of prior listings added complexity to the task of organizing the balance of the eligible resources. The complexity arose especially with respect to districts. Already existing districts are street oriented, as in the Lewis Street, Pratt Street and Ann Street historic districts, which, although they are qualifying individual units, are somewhat limited visual and historic environments. The rationale was per force continued with the three additional districts. Two Main Street districts, one at each end of the street within the multiple resource area, were selected rather than a single district because the dominant functions of the two areas are different, shopping at the north and insurance to the south, and the two sections are separated by existing and ongoing large-scale new construction, the Gold Building, Hartford National Bank and Northeast Plaza. The Asylum-Trumbull-pearl Streets district was formed to encompass 19th- and 20th-century buildings and streetscapes of merit not otherwise recognized.

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enough elevation, about 50 feet above sea level, to avoid the periodic flooding that made the farmland especially fertile. Today Prospect Street, running north from the Park River to the Old State House, which is on the site of the first meetinghouse is lined, on the east side, with the Stanford White colonnade of the Hartford Times Building, the Neo-Classical Revival Elks Lodge and the Georgian Revival Hartford Club, while on the west side are found the Municipal Building and Morgan and Avery Memorial buildings of the Wadsworth Atheneum, all in the Beaux-Arts style, and the buildings of Travelers Insurance Company of Main Street Historic District #2. Prospect Street was officially laid out by the city in 1788, four years after the city was incorporated in 1784.

At the top of Prospect Street is State Street, also one of the original streets that show on the 1640 map, running west from the Connecticut River to Main Street. Ernest Flagg's Beaux-Arts First National Bank Building faces south on State Street, but other 19th-century buildings that once flanked it are no longer standing. As State Street approaches Main Street a Y branches off becoming Central Row. The triangular space between State Street and Central Row is the location of the Old Statehouse, with its principal elevation facing east toward the Connecticut River. The city was river oriented at the end of the 18th century when the Statehouse was built. Today, most people view the structure's west elevation, on Main Street. A Second Empire Post Office building crowded onto the site in front of the Statehouse in the third quarter of the 19th century was removed in the second quarter of the 20th.

Central Row is the northern edge of Main Street Historic District #2, with a range of low-rise, brownstone-faced 19th-century buildings and two early-20th-century brick-faced skyscrapers.

Across Main Street, once known as Kings Highway, from Main Street Historic District #2 are the Gibbs-inspired First Church of Christ and the remaining segment of the Ancient Burying Ground, which once filled out the block bounded by Main, Pearl, Lewis and Gold streets. As the community grew, the residential area expanded westward from Main Street. Five mid-19th-century brick Italianate houses remain standing in the Lewis Street Historic District, abutting the Ancient Burying Group. James Goodwin's house was on Asylum Street; its grounds became the site of the Queen Anne Goodwin Block which together with two 5-story, cast-iron-front buildings next to it constitute the chief interest of the Goodwin Block Historic District. Further north, on Pratt Street, the Greek Revival, brick Spencer House is a reminder of what once was a fine residential block.

By early in the 18th century, Main Street was the chief mercantile thoroughfare. Free-standing houses and taverns gradually were replaced with shops

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in brick buildings with common walls, and in the 19th century by hotels, banks and insurance companies. None of these buildings remain in place, but the Town & Davis early Gothic Revival Christ Church Cathedral continues to stand at the southwest corner of Church and Main streets. By early 20th century, the northern section of Main Street had become the heart of the shopping center. Large stores lined both sides of the street in Main Street Historic District #1, including national variety chains and the city's largest store, G. Fox & Co., in its Cass Gilbert-designed building. The Pratt Street Historic District became the locale for prestigious specialty shops.

Asylum Street developed from the early Road to Litchfield. Its present brownstone-faced buildings of stores with offices above date from mid-19th-century with an unusual example of late 19th-century modernization through addition of a cast-iron front found at the Stackpole, Moore & Tryon store. The other two parts of the U-shaped Asylum-Trumbull-Pearl Streets Historic District include, first the Neo-Classical Revival Shoor Brothers store by Isaac A. Allen, Jr., Hartford's most prolific downtown architect, on Trumbull Street, a thoroughfare whose name has changed many times since it first was recorded on the 1640 map, and, second, two 20th-century limestone buildings on Pearl Street, the Greek Revival Mechanics Bank and the Art Deco Corning Building.

As the city expanded further westward from the Connecticut River, Ann Street became a street of houses, now replaced by the 19th-century brick mercantile buildings of the Ann Street Historic District. Further west, at the edge of Historic Downtown Hartford, the Shepley, Rutan and Coolidge brownstone Union Station provides passenger access to the elevated tracks. To the north, bordering the railway, the Beaux-Arts/Art Deco Federal Building and Post Office is an imposing presence while next door its neighbor, Footguard Hall, a 19th-century brick auditorium, continues to house the Governor's Footguard, a military organization founded in 1771.

1. The map is reproduced at p. 25 of Glenn Weaver, Hartford, An Illustrated History of Connecticut's Capital, Woodland Hills, California: Windsor Publications, 1982.

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/
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
	See forms on		See forms on	social history
Specific dates	bldgs. & dists.	Builder/Architect	bldgs. & dists.	and finance

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Criteria C (Architecture) and A (History)

The Historic Downtown Hartford Multiple Resource Area includes good examples, executed in masonry, of many American architectural styles from the Federal through Art Moderne. The buildings are in a dense urban setting that has grown and developed continuously since 1636. (Criterion C) Events that have been planned and that have transpired in Historic Downtown Hartford during this time span have been of great importance to the city in terms of government, commerce, finance and social history. (Criterion A)

Criterion C - Architecture

Historic Downtown Hartford is the heart of a 20th-century city that has expanded in size many fold from the time of its settlement in 1636. The area has been built and re-built several times, with consequent destruction of most early structures. Fortunately, the city has prized its Old Statehouse, designed in the Federal style by Charles Bulfinch in 1796 as the state Capitol. The Statehouse has been altered and rehabilitated from time to time, but continues to retain much of its original character at the very center of downtown activity. Its position as an historic symbol is unparalleled in the city.

The next oldest structures in Historic Downtown Hartford are domestic in character, the houses on Pratt and Lewis streets. The Spencer House on Pratt Street, c. 1830, is a brick example of the Greek Revival style, significant despite alterations because it is the last remaining 19th-century example of the style in Historic Downtown Hartford. Many examples have been lost, including the imposing, stone, temple-like Hall of Records. The five brick Italianate houses on Lewis Street, built in mid-19th century, are typical of the style that probably was used for more houses than any other in Historic Downtown Hartford. The proliferation of speculative, brick, Italianate houses was noted with dismay in 1886 by Hartford architect William C. Brocklesby, who thought the brick cubes were pedestrian.

As downtown took on its mid-19th-century commercial character, brownstone, presumably from quarries in nearby Portland, became the dominant material for front elevations. On Main Street, most buildings with brownstone fronts have been replaced, but good examples, particularly in their upper stories, are found on Asylum and State streets. These brick commercial buildings faced with brownstone, with pedimented window caps and bold roof lines, form an important chapter in the development of the architecture of Historic Downtown Hartford. Later examples are found on Central Row.

The multiple resource area has been fortunate in benefitting from the services of many nationally known architects, including Charles Bulfinch

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property See continuation sheets

Quadrangle name Hartford North

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References See continuation sheets.

A	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	B	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	D	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
E	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	F	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
G	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	H	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Verbal boundary description and justification

See Item 7.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state NA code NA county NA code NA

state NA code NA county NA code NA

11. Form Prepared By

name/title David F. Ransom, Architectural Historian, edited by John Herzan, National

organization Hartford Architecture Conservancy date January 19, 1984
Register Coordinator

street & number 51 Wethersfield Avenue telephone 203 525-0279

city or town Hartford state Connecticut

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

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.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

title Director, Connecticut Historical Commission

date 11/1/84

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

See Continuation sheet for listings date 11/1/84
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior
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(Old Statehouse), Ithiel Town (Wadsworth Atheneum and Christ Church Cathedral), H. H. Richardson (Cheney Block, and Phoenix building on Pearl Street, demolished), Shepley, Rutan and Coolidge (Union Station), Ernest Flagg (First National Bank, 50 State Street), Benjamin Wistar Morris (Wadsworth Atheneum and 750 Main Street), Donn Barber (Travelers Tower and 18 Asylum Street) and Cass Gilbert (G. Fox and Co.).

Hartford architects also participated in designing buildings for the district. One of them was John C. Mead, who drew plans for the Armory of the venerable Governor's Footguard, which is still in use for its original purpose. At the turn of the century, Isaac A. Allen, Jr., was responsible for four designs in the Neo-Classical Revival style (Sage, Allen & Co. store, Dillon Block on Pratt Street, Shoor Brothers store, cast-iron front added to Stackpole, Moore & Tryon store). In the 20th century, Lester B. Scheide made a valuable contribution in the Corning Building, an Art Deco design on Pearl Street. One Hartford-based architect, Francis H. Kimball, responsible for the Queen Anne-style Goodwin Building, notable for its elaborate terra-cotta decoration, went on to become a New York architect for theater designs.

The nature and character of historic architecture in downtown Hartford reflect the talents of many good architects with diverse backgrounds. Their work as it stands today establishes the quality of the area, rich in the architecture of the past and filled with a sense of the history of the city, that is essential to understanding its past and planning its future.

Criterion A - History

The great significance of Historic Downtown Hartford in the history of the city arises from the fact that not only was the city founded there but also its activity center has remained there for 3½ centuries. The founding father, the Rev. Thomas Hooker (1586-1647), led his flock in 1636 overland from Massachusetts Bay Colony to the confluence of the Park and Connecticut rivers to establish the new community.² It was in the first meeting-house on the site of the Old Statehouse that the Fundamental Orders were drawn up in 1639, America's first written constitution. It was in a tavern on the site of the Travelers Tower in 1687 that the lights went out when Governor Sir Edmund Andros demanded the return of the Royal Charter, only to find that in the ensuing confusion it had disappeared. It was in the Old Statehouse that the Hartford Convention met in December 1814/January 1815 to protest against the war of 1812. During this meeting a proposal was put forward that New England secede from the Union.

The seat of city government always has been located in Historic Downtown Hartford and the area has been the scene of much political activity. Abraham Lincoln slept in a hotel on Asylum Street and four successful presidential candidates addressed the crowd from the terrace of the Hartford Times Building. Campaign parades regularly proceeded down Main Street.

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Historic Downtown Hartford

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Decisions in the world of banking and insurance long have emanated from offices in the area. The Travelers Insurance Co. continues to dominate Main Street Historic District #2, while the Mechanics Savings Bank today has its headquarters in a 20th-century Greek Revival building on Pearl Street. Other banks and insurance companies either are now housed in new buildings within the area or have established new headquarters elsewhere. The daily life of the citizenry has always been strongly influenced by Historic Downtown Hartford. It was the place to come for shopping and for social, educational and entertainment functions. Fine buildings were constructed for fraternal organizations, such as the Elks Lodge on Prospect Street and the Masonic Hall on Ann Street. At least eight churches stood in Historic Downtown Hartford in mid-19th century; Thomas Hooker's First Church, now occupying its fourth meeting house, and Christ Church Cathedral continue in place. Restaurants abounded, as they still do, and theaters drew crowds, although the early-20th-century elaborate movie palaces that once stood in the area have been demolished. The Wadsworth Atehenum, the earliest public art museum in the country, continues to be the center for art appreciation in the city. The Union Station long was the transportation hub for people entering and leaving the city and is now undergoing rehabilitation to resume that function.

Through the 3½ centuries of its existence, Historic Downtown Hartford has continued to be the scene of important events and decisions in the realm of government, commerce, and finance that have affected the entire city. In terms of personal lives of city residents it has continued to provide facilities and amenities indispensable to the development of a cultivated, urban society.

1. William C. Brocklesby, "Architecture of Hartford" in J. Hammond Trumbull, ed., The Memorial History Hartford County, Connecticut, Boston; Edward L. Osgood, 1886, p. 475.

2. Hooker had sent an advance party the year before. The Dutch had established a fort and trading post in 1833 at the junction of the Park and Connecticut rivers, which they continued to occupy for some years after finding themselves outnumbered by the English arrivals.

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National Park Service

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Multiple Resource Area
Thematic Group

dnr-11

Name Hartford Downtown Multiple Resource Area

State Hartford County, CONNECTICUT

Conn 12/23/84

Nomination/Type of Review

1. Main Street Historic District No. 1

Substantive Review

Determined Eligible

Keeper

Date/Signature

Ann Lee Dwyer 12/23/84

Attest

2. Main Street Historic District No. 2

Entered in the National Register

Keeper

Delores Byers 12/23/84

Attest

3. Asylum-Trumbull-Pearl Streets Historic District

Substantive Review

Determined Eligible

Keeper

Ann Lee Dwyer 3/28/85

DOE/OWNER OBJECTION

Attest

4. B.P.O. Elks Lodge

Entered in the National Register

Keeper

Delores Byers 12/23/84

Attest

5. Batterson Block

Entered in the National Register

Keeper

Delores Byers 12/23/84

Attest

6. Capitol Building

Entered in the National Register

Keeper

Delores Byers 12/23/84

Attest

7. First National Bank Building

Entered in the National Register

Keeper

Delores Byers 12/23/84

Attest

8. Footguard Hall

Entered in the National Register

Keeper

Delores Byers 12/23/84

Attest

9. Hartford Club

Entered in the National Register

Keeper

Delores Byers 12/23/84

Attest

10. Hartford Times Building

Substantive Review

Determined Eligible

Keeper

Ann Lee Dwyer 12/23/84

DOE/OWNER OBJECTION

Attest

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form



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Continuation sheet

Item number

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Multiple Resource Area
Thematic Group

Name Hartford Downtown Multiple Resource Area
State Hartford County, CONNECTICUT

Nomination/Type of Review	Entered in the National Register	Keeper	Date/Signature
11. Judd and Root Building	Entered in the National Register	for Keeper	<u>Melvin Byers 12/22/84</u>
12. Stone Bridge	* [faded text]	for Keeper	<u>[Signature] 3/28/85</u>
13.		Keeper	
		Attest	
14.		Keeper	
		Attest	
15.		Keeper	
		Attest	
16.		Keeper	
		Attest	
17.		Keeper	
		Attest	
18.		Keeper	
		Attest	
19.		Keeper	
		Attest	
20.		Keeper	
		Attest	