One City, One Plan

Historic Character

Chapter 3

KEY TOPICS

- Historic Preservation
- Hartford Styles
- Hartford's Historic Character
- Goals & Objectives

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Introduction

This chapter of the Plan will focus on defining Hartford's historic character, followed by an examination of opportunities to preserve and enhance desired community character elements.

Historic Preservation

Historic Preservation is the vehicle that protects the historic character of Hartford's neighborhoods. Historic Preservation enhances the attractiveness of the City and also stabilizes and increases property values.

The City of Hartford recognized the importance of historic preservation as a means to protect the historic character of each neighborhood and created guidelines to promote responsible preservation practices, to create a mechanism to identify, preserve and enhance historic buildings, to provide a resource of information and expertise for educational purposes and to foster appropriate use and wider public knowledge and appreciation of areas, sites, structures and features.

Progress has been made in preserving Hartford's historic character with the enactment of the Historic Preservation Ordinance, and with implementation of the historic preservation guidelines.

Hartford's Styles

The rich historic nature of Hartford's architectural styles are characterized in every neighborhood in the City. From the Greek Revival homes built in the South Green neighborhood to the Georgian Revival homes built in the West End, Hartford's historic resources are a treasure.

Following are descriptions of the architectural styles found in Hartford's neighborhoods:

Greek Revival 1820-1860

- Large vertical window panes
- Symmetrical placement of windows
- Gables facing street, triangular pediments
- Columned porticos, recessed entries
- Supporting pilasters at corners
- Wide entablature and moldings

Gothic Revival 1830-1860

- Tall narrow windows, vertical panes
- Asymmetrical plan, bay window
- Steeply pitched roof, tall dormers
- Pointed arch porticos
- Decorative woodwork
- Jigsaw gingerbread
- Variety of shingle/clapboard/brick patterns

Italian Villa 1830-1880

- Style based on Italian country villas
- Windows often have lintels or wood window hoods
- Shallow roofs- eaves and gables have brackets
- First floor have taller window, attics have short window below eaves.
- L-shaped single family plan

Greek Revival– Alden Street

Gothic Revival– Allen Place

Italian Villa—Wethersfield Avenue

Italianate– Wethersfield Avenue

Second Empire– Fairfield Avenue

Queen Anne– Wethersfield Avenue

- Central towers or widow's walks

Italianate 1840-1880

- Compact, rectangular plan, often stacked multi-family, 2 to 6 units
- Windows have arched or flat lintels or wood window hoods.
- Shallow pitched roofs with large over-hangs and brackets
- First floors have taller windows, attics have short windows below eaves.
- Arched porticoes with classical details

Second Empire 1860-1890

- Double pitched mansard roofs pierced with dormers
- Tall, low-arch windows, central towers
- Shallow roofs above mansard with eave brackets
- French scroll ornamentation
- Molded window caps
- Ornate cast iron and wrought iron railing or cresting

Queen Anne 1875-1915

- Variety of forms, textures, materials, and colors
- Asymmetrical, complex plans
- Projections, bay windows, towers
- 12/12 pitched roofs, dormers
- Encircling porches, leaded stained glass
- Decorative woodwork, brickwork, terra cotta, rusticated foundations

Neo-Classical Revival 1875-1915

- Variation on Queen Anne with classical detailing
- Triangular pediments, classical columns, Palladian windows
- Third story pediment overhangs over bay windows are common.
- Wide front porches with low slope roofs
- Piers at ends of balustrades are common.

Perfect 6 1880-1920

- Six units stacked 3 high and 2 wide.
- Typical wide, ornamental cornice, double bay windows and central front balconies
- Rear wood exit stair and balcony
- Typically running bond brick façade

Tudor Revival 1890-1920

- Brick or stone first story common with top stories of half timber and stucco
- Tall molded chimneys
- Large windows with leaded glass
- Heavy buttresses
- Arched doorways, multiple gabled roofs
- Contrasting sills and lintels

Bungalow (Arts and Crafts) 1890-1940

- Low pitched hip or gable hip roofs with
- surrounding verandas
- Roof may have eyebrow windows.
- Exterior materials include field stone and rough sawn shingles.
- Vertical windows, typically arranged around chimneys or doors
- Broad eave overhangs with exposed rafters underneath

Colonial Revival 1900-1930

- Rectangular plan, two or three story
- Symmetrical façade, balanced windows and dormers, center entry
- Hip or gabled roofs parallel to the street
- A few well chosen classical details — Doric columns, entablatures, Palladian windows
- Flemish or American bond brickwork
- Doorways with sidelights and porticos

Georgian Revival 1900 to 1930

- Small window panes — 9/9 or 12/12
- Windows aligned symmetrically in columns and rows
- Decorative dentil moldings
- Paneled doors with pilasters and transoms
- Side gabled roofs

Downtown Commercial Buildings

- Three or more stories; often mixed use with pedestrian related functions at street level
- Styles vary. Typically architect-designed, typically masonry or stone exterior walls, flat or shallow pitched roofs
- Significant structures may be individually
- listed on National or State register.

Cultural, Historic and Architectural Landmarks

- Fifty or more years old
- Individually listed on the Historic Register
- Styles vary. Typically architect designed
- Historic landmarks are designated by the National Park Service.

Hartford's Historic Character

Each neighborhood in Hartford has unique a character as described below.

Asylum Hill

Asylum Hill was farmland through the mid-19th century. In 1821, the American School of the Deaf was built where the Hartford Fire Insurance Company now stands. In the 1840's Asylum Hill became a residential district. The Harriett Beecher Stowe House was built on Forest Street in 1871 and is a Gothic Revival design. Saint Francis Hospital was established in 1897. The Sigourney Square section of Asylum Hill is characterized as having Victorian and Queen Anne style homes built around the turn of the century. In the 1920's the Aetna Life Insurance Company and the Hartford Fire Insurance Companies moved to Asylum Hill. Since then, many two, and three family residential structures have been built, with a mixture of commercial uses.

Blue Hills

The Blue Hills neighborhood is mainly comprised of single family, two-family and three-family homes, with a commercial center located on Blue Hills Avenue. The neighborhood has suburban characteristics in that the properties tend to be larger in size than in other areas of the city. Georgian Revivals, Tutor, Dutch Colonial and Colonial style of housing are found in the Blue Hills neighborhood.

Neo-Classical Revival– Kenyon Street

Perfect 6—Park Terrace

Tudor Revival– Prospect Avenue

Bungalow (Arts and Crafts) – Fairfield Avenue

Colonial Revival– Kenyon Street

Georgian Revival– Westerly Terrace

Barry Square

The neighborhood known as Barry Square grew from the establishment of Trinity College and the Institute of Living. Tree lined streets with two-family homes, and triple-decker homes are found in the neighborhood. Single family streets with Dutch Colonial style homes are also found in Barry Square. Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, Gothic Revival cottages styles are found in the neighborhood.

Clay-Arsenal

Clay-Arsenal is one of the oldest neighborhoods in Hartford and is adjacent to the central city. The State Arsenal was once located on the corner of Main and Pavilion Streets. The neighborhood is bounded to the north by the Old North Cemetery and the Spring Grove Cemetery. The neighborhood is partially industrial, near the commercial railroad line, and primarily residential as it extends west from the downtown. Greek Revival, Gothic Revival and multi-family homes built of brick and wood are prevalent in the area. The commercial corridor running from the downtown up Albany Avenue is made of mixed use brick construction.

Downtown

Downtown Hartford was first settled in the early 1600's. Early maps reveal settlements along the Park River, which was called "Little River". The area along the Connecticut River where some of Hartford's largest buildings stand today was called "Little Meadow". Two of the oldest buildings still standing in Hartford are the Butler McCook Homestead, and the Amos Bull House built in the mid 1700's. The Old State House, a Federal style building built in 1796 is where the offices of top officials were located. Soon after, Hartford became a regional center. Magnificent churches in gothic style architecture were built with ornate details. The State Capitol building was built in the 1870's in gothic style. Italianate styled building became common place during the mid 1800 to late 1800's. Hartford experienced an economic boom around turn of the 20th century when City Hall, The G Fox building and the Travelers tower were designed and built. From 1950-1975, a new architectural style emerged which was fueled by the urban renewal initiative. New technologies, engineering and building materials led to evolution of the high rise office building. Large office towers began to pepper the Downtown landscape. Constitution Plaza, The Phoenix building, and the Gold building are examples of the architecture of that era. The trend of high-rise construction continued throughout the 1980's when City Place I and the Hartford Steam Boilers Building were built.

Frog Hollow

Farmland and several large estates were prominent in the area known today as Frog Hollow until around 1850. Industrial uses emerged, creating some of the large industrial buildings that exist

today including the factory buildings lined along Capitol Avenue during that period. Homes built from brick were created for the workers during the industrial era in the southern parts of the neighborhood. Many Italianate, Greek Revival, Queen Anne, and Colonial Revival style homes still exist today. Mixed use buildings also made of brick characterize the neighborhood's business districts, adding a sense of nostalgia and historic presence to the area.

Northeast

The Northeast neighborhood is a diverse neighborhood containing a mixture of parkland, commercial corridors and residential streets. Keney Park, a 633 acre park was designed by Frederick Law Olmsted's architectural firm, borders the neighborhood on the north and west side. Keney Park was a destination for urban dwellers to explore during the turn of the 20th century. The residential areas in the North-east neighborhood contains a mixture of new construction with the development of Stowe Village and recent infill development. Single-family, two-family and three-family structures are found throughout the neighborhood. Colonial Revivals, Second Empire, and Queen Anne style homes are found on most streets.

Parkville

Parkville was an industrial area extending from the Frog Hollow industrial area. The neighborhood has been going through a transformation in to a mixed use residential neighborhood. The Hartford Rubber Works Plant, once a located at 1429 Park Street is now a bustling mixed used building with shops, residential units, and restaurants.

Most of Parkville homes are constructed of wood frame structures with Gothic Revival, Colonial Queen and Colonial styles.

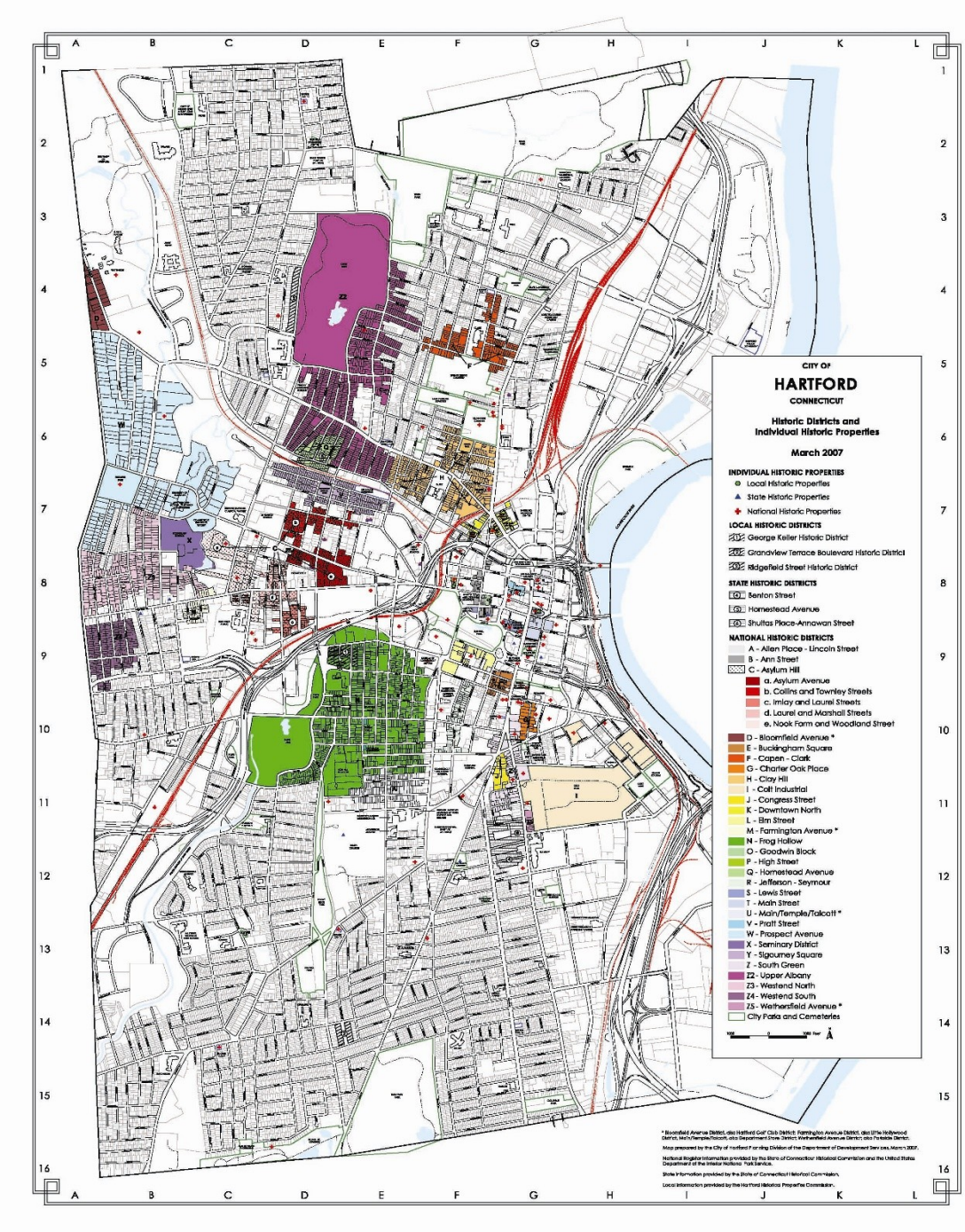
Sheldon-Charter Oak and South Green

The Sheldon– Charter Oak and South Green area of the city has many significant historic icons. Dutch Point, where the Dutch came to settle in the early 1600's, now owned by the Hartford Housing Authority, has been redeveloped with brightly colored multifamily housing reminiscent of seaside housing. The Charter Oak Tree, where legend has it the charter from King Charles II was hidden in a large oak tree on the corner of Charter Oak Terrace and Charter Oak Avenue is also in this area of the city.

Several iconic structures come to mind when thinking of the Sheldon-Charter Oak and South Green neighborhood including the Colt Armory with its magnificent dome, an the Barnard Brown House at the South Green. Much of the character of this neighborhood arises from the Colt Factory and worker housing. Many of the buildings are made of brick material in the Gothic Revival, and Queen Anne style of architecture.

CT State Library & Supreme Court Building

Old State House



City of Hartford Historic Districts and Individual Historic Properties *** See Appendix A for Full Size Map**

South End

The South End neighborhood has a mixture of neighborhood business, single-family, two-family, three-family, and higher density apartment complexes. Many of the streets were developed during the turn of the century. Bungalow, Colonial Revival, Queen Anne styles of homes are found in this area.

Southwest

The Southwest neighborhood is characterized as suburban in nature. Large lot sizes, single family housing and a planned street network make up much of the neighborhood. The neighborhood is peppered with historic influences including the Cedar Hill Cemetery. Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, and Bungalow style housing is found in the Southwest neighborhood.

Upper Albany

The Upper Albany area was established following the boom time of the early 1900's. The area contained a mixture of single-family, two-family , and three-family housing. Albany Avenue intersects the north and south areas in the Upper Albany neighborhood. The railroad extends along Homestead Avenue, an industrial corridor. Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, triple-deckers, and Gothic style homes are found in the area.

West End

Many stately homes are found in the West End of Hartford. These home were built with fine architectural details. Revival styles homes such as the Tutor, Colonial and Georgian are found on many streets in the West End. The West End also has several commercial corridors including Farmington Avenue, Albany Avenue and Capitol Avenue to the south. The streets located north of Farmington Avenue primarily consist of large single family homes, while the homes south of Farmington Avenue primarily consist of two-family and three- family homes.

Goals and Objectives

GOAL 1 : Protect historic resources.

Objectives:

- Designate Hartford as a Certified Local Government to qualify for Federal Historic Preservation Grants.
- Proactively identify Hartford's most vital historic properties and designate them individually.
- Utilize Local District Designation to maximize property owner input and participation.
- Build upon the successes of the historic preservation ordinance to protect all historically significant properties.

GOAL2: Ensure appropriate redevelopment, restoration and rehabilitation of historic resources.

Objectives:

- Utilize design standards & incentives to

Trinity College

Governor's Residence