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A. Project Abstract

The Town of Stafford and the Stafford Historical Society, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, are seeking a Survey and Planning Grant to prepare a Historic Designation Report and the necessary documentation to nominate an area in downtown Stafford Springs to the State Register of Historic Places. If a favorable outcome is achieved, we'd also like to pursue a National Register nomination with the consent of the town's citizens and local elected officials.

The envisioned historic district focuses on the compact Main Street and what had been known as the village of Stafford Springs (legally chartered as an administrative borough from 1873 until 1991). Today, this is where state roads 190 and 32 converge at the beloved, yet infamous, rotary around the Holt Fountain (1894) that stands in front of the Warren Memorial Town Hall (1923).

Ancient river valleys and indigenous trails led here, where the mineral springs and pools were long frequented by Native peoples. Tapped and tamed by colonials as medicinally beneficial, the iron and sulphur springs became the "nation's first resort," and, in 1966, the mineral springs were placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Hyde Park, the centerpiece of our proposed historic district, is closely associated with the mineral springs, the resort hotel that loomed nearby for over 150 years, and an entrepreneurial family whose estate formed the basis of today's public park. Their legacy includes Highland Terrace, a residential enclave of 19th-century homes that overlooks Hyde Park and the spot across the Middle River where the family's textile mill once stood and where a newer brick factory (1913) now stands hard by the granite-lined river; bronze and bearings are manufactured there today.

All of this was within a short walk from the railroad station (still extant today), four churches (still extant), and an array of businesses, some housed in the two and three-story brick buildings that still stand on Main Street in 2021. This is a key portion of Stafford Springs that we now seek to formally document with this Survey and Planning Grant. We intend to cultivate taxpayer support for the preservation of this unique and increasingly fragile built environment.

The present-day downtown area is a Central Business Zone dedicated to light retail, restaurants, offices/services, arts/antiques, recreation, historic uses, and tourism-related activities. In the past decade, this Zone has become the venue for many public activities promoted by the Town of Stafford, such as "Trick-or-Treat on Main Street" (to which thousands flock), the Memorial Day parade, monthly "Arts on Main" open houses, a summertime Blues Fest in Hyde Park, Fall Festival in October, and Winter Fest in December. Such events will resume when COVID-19 mitigation efforts permit the socializing that we once took for granted.

Integrating this vintage-built environment with modern-day town life has been promoted actively by the Town's marketing and economic development efforts, bolstered community pride, and encourages future preservation.

B. Project Narrative

1. Briefly describe your organization and primary mission.

The Town of Stafford is located in the northern portion of Tolland County, Connecticut, along the Massachusetts border. Stafford is a rural-suburban community with a population of approximately 12,000 residents covering 58-square miles. As the third-largest town (land area) in the state, Stafford is distinguished by a developed downtown, historic charm, a commercial corridor, a growing residential community, numerous villages and hamlets, unique industrial resources, farmland, and large tracts of forested, undeveloped land. With rich historical heritage Stafford is a blend of old and new and is as unique as it is diverse.

To help guide future growth and development, the Town of Stafford adheres to policies, goals, and recommendations outlined in the Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD). With the Town's history in mind, the POCD identifies overarching preservation principles to guide decisions about the future that include: encouraging the conservation and preservation of existing buildings and sites to maintain the historic or distinctive character of the Village District Zones; preparing a comprehensive inventory of the Town's natural, historic, scenic, and water resources; enhancing Main Street by continued beautification efforts, renovations, historically themed decor, and by providing off-street parking; preservation of historic attributes should be foremost amongst all revitalization efforts. The POCD goes on to recommend the Town and Historical Society work in tandem to identify historical assets and recognizes the proposed project area (Main Street/Hyde Park) as vital in the economic health of the community, as well as the quality of the surrounding neighborhoods.

This proposal and project are in working partnership with the Stafford Historical Society, a volunteer-driven 501(c)(3) whose mission is to interpret, preserve and promote local history and the heritage that shaped our community. Established in 1962, the Society maintains a two-floor museum in Stafford's old library, built in 1889 as the office of the owner of the Mineral Springs Manufacturing Co. and the bottling works of the Stafford Springs Mineral Water Co. The museum sits at the center of the proposed Historic District. Volunteers also maintain a research area with files of photos, articles, and books on the town and subjects relating to the area and residents of yesteryear. Before the pandemic, the Historical Society routinely hosted special events and exhibitions, led school/group tours at the museum, and are a vested component at town events – especially during Stafford's Tricentennial in 2019.

The proposed Historic District is also endorsed by the Stafford Historical Advisory Commission (SHAC), which was appointed by the Board of Selectman in 2017. SHAC's mandate is to study and provide advice to the Board of Selectmen and Planning and Zoning Commission on the use or disposition of selected town-owned properties and buildings that are historically and culturally significant. The Commission consists of 7 members, meetings are open to the public and comply with provisions of the Freedom of Information Act.

2. For Planning and Pre-development grants, please discuss the resource and its significance. Is it listed on the State or National Register of Historic Places?

Our envisioned Historic District is a compact area within a community clustered near the confluence of two rivers—key sources of water power up through the 19th century. Known as Stafford Springs, this village gradually surpassed other nearby industrious hamlets, which in 2021 form the picturesque outlying areas of the modern-day Town of Stafford.

At first, few would have predicted this outcome. For though the mineral springs had long been known and frequented by Indigenous Americans, in the 1770s only crude facilities greeted visitors, such as future U.S. President John Adams, when he stopped by in search of relief for his chronic ailments, as recorded in his diary on Tuesday, June 4, 1771.

The pursuit of curative waters in a rural setting had seemed like a business opportunity to some, including Adams's trusted friend Dr. Joseph Warren of Boston who had visited the springs in 1766 "to ascertain their Qualities and Uses." That the waters contained iron, salt and sulphur—all believed to have medicinal value—was demonstrated. Soon after, Warren bought a three-acre parcel that included the springs, possibly renting the site to a Dr. Elihu Tudor, "lately from London." Two years later for some reason, Warren sold the springs and, within the decade, he was martyred during the Battle of Bunker Hill in 1775 at the outset of the American Revolutionary War.

By 1805, native son Simon Willard (a Harvard classmate of sixth U.S. President John Quincy Adams) was proprietor of a reputable 60-foot by 40-foot, three-story hotel in the village, where warm bathing was soon provided. In this era, the Stafford Springs House hotel register records many well-to-do guests, such as Jonathan Trumbull Jr. (1740–1809), who was the 20th governor of Connecticut (1794–1809) and had served as the second Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives (1791–1793). Joining Trumbull during his August 1805 visit was Daniel Wadsworth, who in 1842 founded America's oldest public art museum—the Wadsworth Atheneum in Hartford. This spot remained the site of a hotel, managed by a succession of owners, until the last structure (1896) was lost to fire in 1959. It was not until 1966, when the Mineral Springs were named to the National Register of Historic Places.

Change rode in rapidly in 1850, when the railroad came to town, the tracks running parallel to the Middle River and Main Street. By rail, distant visitors could travel with relative ease "to take the waters," checking in at the hotel nearby on Spring Street.

West of the mineral springs on the northern river bank stood the Mineral Springs Manufacturing Co., strategically located adjacent to the railroad line. Built in 1839 by Solva Converse, it was the village's first textile mill, marking the slow evolution of the village from a quiet rural mineral-springs resort to a busy textile mill town. Within a few years, other mills were established along the rivers that flowed through the expanding village, the population inevitably grew, and many businesses sprang up along Main Street.

By the mid-1860s, the south bank of the Middle River (site of Hyde Park today) was being transformed from a “dismal alder swamp” and “a rough, stormy, unsightly lot” into “a level and beautiful plat” by Solva Converse’s son Julius. He walled in an uphill driveway from the mineral springs through his adjacent property, creating what the local newspaper called “the prettiest avenue in the village.”

A parcel donated by Julius and his brother Orrin became the site of the still extant Methodist church (1866), at the west end of Main Street. Today, it remains the largest church edifice in the Town of Stafford and is adorned with a pipe organ and a wood-paneled sanctuary.

By 1872, Julius Converse had completed his ornate mansion, “Woodlawn,” which commanded a panoramic view of the northern side of the village from its south-bank hilltop. Today, the still extant Witt building (1939) marks this spot, and the meandering driveway is Hyde Park Road, which at the hill’s summit joins with Highland Terrace, a residential neighborhood promoted by Julius Converse that by 1887 had 12 houses. Shored up with stonework that is extant today, Highland Terrace extends eastward to intersect with Spring Street, just a short stroll away from the Springs House hotel and Main Street. In 2021, several dwellings remain from the 19th century, including a carriage house at 42 Highland Terrace that was listed in 2012 on the Connecticut State Register of Historic Places. Converse had not only masterminded his own elaborate estate, he had also engineered himself a well-heeled, adjoining neighborhood.

In March 1877, an upriver dam failed following heavy rains, destroying nine dams and the low-lying areas of the villages. Above the flood waters on the south bank, the Springs House hotel remained standing, surrounded by devastation. Undaunted by the flood, a burst of development occurred. Several commercial buildings—some housing multiple businesses—and a new bank building were erected in the village. The Congregational church was rebuilt in stone (1878; still extant) and the Episcopal church, which had been renting space on Main Street, constructed a stone house of worship (1877; still extant) adjacent to the mineral springs pump house. Both churches were a short walk from the Springs House hotel that dominated the scene.

Improvement on the south side of the Middle River continued apace. After Julius Converse inherited the Mineral Springs Manufacturing Co. (1885), he saw to it that “the tail race of the mill has been arched and covered some 80 feet below the mill, and a nicely laid granite wall, put in by Flynt Co., extends along the north side, a wall continuous with that in front of the railroad company’s land on the cove.” In 2021, these north-bank river walls remain daunting to behold. “The cove” may be the river’s broader area where perhaps the spring once arose “at the foot of a steep high hill between a cluster of rocks very near the side of a river,” as John Adams wrote in 1771.

Next, Converse purchased the mineral springs and the adjacent hotel property (1886). At the corner of his estate’s driveway and Spring Street, Converse built an elegant business office (1886), relocating the mineral springs to a manicured built environment accessed by steps of “nice cut granite” between his office and the neighboring Episcopal church—all of which is extant today. Serving as the Stafford Library for many decades beginning in 1896, the brick and

stone building became the Stafford Historical Society Museum in October 2001. In 2002, it was listed on the Connecticut Register of Historic Places.

Julius Converse passed from the scene in 1892, his estate remaining in limbo for many years. But, his transformation of the town's landscape lives on, although the magnitude of the physical labor required to achieve his vision may not be fully appreciated in the 21st century. In 1911, the town purchased the 157-acre Woodlawn estate, with money bequeathed for this purpose by Isaac Perkins Hyde. Hyde was a Stafford-born industrialist who moved up to Southbridge, Massachusetts to find his fortune, but never forgot his hometown. His desire was for Stafford residents to have a large, natural park that could be used in perpetuity. Hyde Park remains actively managed, centralized within the project area, and is a natural area continuously used for passive recreation, organized sports, and community activities.

3. What issue will your project address? How was this issue identified?

The Historic Designation Project will aid in the intensive survey for pursuance of establishing a formal Main Street/Hyde Park Historic District. The project will be a substantial step in identifying undocumented resources, preserving Stafford's historical integrity, planning for future stewardship, furthering understanding of local identity and heritage, and perpetuating preservation ethics for future generations. Additionally, designation reporting will embolden town officials/departments/boards to utilize town history and heritage in economic development activities, revitalization efforts, Planning and Zoning, and further the protection of finite historical resources. Documentation will assist in the pursuit of future funding opportunities for both the Town and private property owners while ensuring appropriate revisions/recommendations to the Town of Stafford Plan of Conservation and Development.

The proposed project area has been shaped by more than 300 years of history and was identified in the 1992 Historic & Architectural Resources Survey. A joint effort of the Town of Stafford and Stafford Historical Society, this high-level study included field investigation, photography, archival research, and report preparation. While this study was initiated to provide historic data for the Borough of Stafford Springs, the study expanded in scope to include broader, unsurveyed portions of town. The resulting report recommended establishing six historic districts within the Town of Stafford, augmenting the existing Stafford Hollow Historic District. One of the identified districts was the Downtown/Borough area, but, because of its size, the 1992 Survey endorsed separating the Downtown area into seven separate historic districts. Two of these acknowledged districts were the Business District (Main Street vicinity) and Highland Terrace/Hyde Park District (adjacent to Main Street). The Historic Designation Report sought in this proposal combines these two areas.

In its entirety, the envisioned historic district is a Priority Funding Area and, in part, a Conservation Area and Balanced Priority Funding Area as specified in the State C&D Plan. Additionally, the proposed project addresses Growth Management Principles #1 (Redevelop and Revitalize Regional Centers and Areas with Existing or Currently Planned Physical Infrastructure) and #4 (Conserve and Restore Natural Environment, Cultural and Historical Resources, and

Traditional Rural Lands). Similarly, the project addresses numerous objectives within the Statewide Historic Preservation Plan.

The project directly correlates with momentum gleaned from Stafford's Tricentennial Celebration in 2019. There was/is a surge of interest for and respect for the town's history and designating this historic area would bolster a preservation mindset. The nomination document will be used by teachers and historians to build on the known history of the town. In the 21st century, there has been little research completed and this would contribute greatly to the resources of Stafford's history.

4. Who will manage the project?

This grant will be administered by the Town's Grant Manager (*current, Amber Wakley*) and the Stafford Historical Society's Vice President (*current, Rebecca Kraussmann*). Additional support and expertise have been offered by the Stafford Historic Advisory Commission (SHAC); project updates will be included on the agenda of SHAC public meetings, held the last Monday of each month.

Once the grant is awarded and the assistance agreement/contract is fully executed, the Town will solicit qualified consultants via Request for Proposal (RFP) and then submit bidders to SHPO for review and approval. The Historic Designation Report will be conducted/completed by an Architectural Historian or a Historian who meets the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards as published in the Code of Federal Regulations, 36 CFR Part 61.

5. What specific activities will be carried out with the grant funds?

Once the grant agreement is completed with SHPO/DECD, the Town of Stafford will execute a Request for Proposals to competitively select a consultant who meets the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards 36 CFR Part 6. The Town will procure consultation services to complete a Historic Designation Report of the proposed Main Street/Hyde Park project area. The project scope of work includes:

- Identify, evaluate, and inventory survey of historic structures in proposed project area, including, commercial buildings, municipal properties, residences, objects of significance, and landscapes; nominate area to the State Register of Historic Places.
- Coordinated public outreach/notification/education efforts with the Town to affected property owner(s), as well as community stakeholders.
- Public review meeting –public presentation of draft report and criteria for evaluation.
- Pursuit of National Register nomination.

6. Who will benefit from your project?

The project offers long-reaching, important benefits to property owners, our municipality, future generations, and Stafford community as a whole. The endeavor perpetuates preservation of Stafford's history and historic resources, spurs economic development, bolster community pride,

and encourage future preservation. Benefits of reporting/documentation and [pending] subsequent listing include:

- Spur investment and broaden private access to state and federal preservation grant funds for planning and rehabilitation activities, and create possible tax benefits/credits. Having more financial incentives available could encourage and assist downtown property owners to preserve or rehabilitate their buildings, and/or spur investment of private developers.
- Designation reporting is pivotal in obtaining a State Register of Historic Places nomination and pursuit of a National Register nomination, which in turn, will expand eligibility for municipal public funding and support. Structures – such as the Christopher Allen Bridge – are not currently qualified for funding opportunities under State and Federal preservation programs. The Bridge (CT DOT No. 04779) is a 109-year-old granite structure and key neighborhood landmark that serves as a gateway to Hyde Park. It is also in need of restoration and repair of its custom-hewn fascia. Broadening eligibility for State and Federal Historic Preservation Funds will be a catalyst in supporting – and even saving – historically significant and threatened structures within the Town of Stafford.
- Upon project completion, associated documents and reports will be at the center of place-based marketing to promote heritage tourism and authenticity. We believe that celebrating our uniquely-us heritage and local flavor will not only spur more travelers, but they'll stay longer, spend more, and travel here more often. Boosted visitor numbers provides direct economic benefit that will ripple through our community and perpetuate an enhanced quality of life for local residents.
- Designation reporting will tell OUR story, interrupting virtual existences and national/international distractions to encourage a more local life. As experienced during Stafford's tricentennial celebration in 2019, the promotion of our local history strengthened relationships, cultivated pride, and connected residents to one another their "place." While the COVID-19 pandemic has shuttered residents since that time, it has also welcomed a new population of relocated remote workers. Defining and promoting our cultural and historic resources will create a stronger community identity and tangible connections to our past; benefits of this project extend to both present and future. When COVID-19 mitigation efforts permit, our residents – both old and new – will benefit from an intangible recovery strategy that promotes quality of life factors such as culture, arts, entertainment, recreation, social understanding.
- As a mechanism for nomination is pivotal in expanding eligibility for public funding and support. Structures – such as the Christopher Allen Bridge – are not currently eligible for funding opportunities under State and Federal preservation programs. The bridge, built in 1912, has displaced granite facing and possible structural shifting. Grant/public funds are desperately needed to address these issues before the historic structure is lost.
- The proposed project directly fulfills directives outlined in the Stafford Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD), specifying the preservation of historic attributes should be foremost amongst all revitalization efforts.
- As a registered municipality, the project will implement actions to achieve points toward Sustainable CT certification. Categories: 4. Vibrant and Creative Cultural Ecosystems – and – 5. Dynamic and Resilient Planning.

- The project will directly benefit the Stafford Historical Society Museum. Promotion of our local history, built environment, and identity can spur volunteerism, advocacy, and service-learning opportunities through newfound community pride. Similarly, the project could also garner monetary contributions, in-kind donations, and volunteer professions. Additionally, project completion will augment documentation/reporting completed by [current] volunteers to-date. There is a current research gap in documented 21st century Stafford history.
- Reporting/documentation and [potential] subsequent listing will serve as educational tools to help the community and local leaders understand why stewardship is important and as planning tools to help guide future work in their rehabilitation and stewardship.
- Expands SHPOs partnerships, advances the state’s preservation network, and perpetuates goals and objectives outlined within the Statewide Historic Preservation Plan
- Create possibility of higher resale values and increased property values.
- Documenting historical buildings and resources will allow current and future generations to observe, enjoy, and learn about Stafford’s Rich Heritage.

7. What product will be produced with the grant funds

Upon completion of the project, the Town of Stafford will retain guideline documents, photographs and/or illustrations collected or prepared as part of the Historic Designation Report, including a completed nomination, locational maps; district map; digital photographs; presentation; copies of relevant research, historical photographs, and maps; and property owner information.

8. What product will be produced with the grant funds?

Upon completion of the project, the Town of Stafford will retain guideline documents, photographs and/or illustrations collected or prepared as part of the Historic Designation Report, including a completed nomination, locational maps; district map; digital photographs; presentation; copies of relevant research, historical photographs, and maps; and property owner information.

9. How will the grant-funded project be shared with the public?

Given the role that the public plays in stewardship of resources in the historic districts and that property owners are one of the primary stakeholders, we believe this project will only be successful with an engaged community. Working in conjunction with the Qualified Consultant, the Town and designated grant administrators (noted above) communication with the public will commence early and often with project progress and to ensure understanding of the Historical Designation Report process, what a Designated Historic District entails, and its positive consequent outcomes for Stafford Springs.

The Survey and Planning Grant program has already been the centerpiece to multiple Stafford Historical Advisory Meetings with positive and supportive feedback from affected property owners.

Momentum will be continued through a variety of complementary outreach mechanisms. Public outreach activities include:

- Preliminary public information session about the program and process, in-person or via Zoom, pending State COVID-19 guidelines.
- Direct mailing or delivered flyer to all property owners within the boundaries of a proposed historic district.
- Monthly updates in conjunction with Stafford Historical Advisory Committee meetings – which are open to the public – and incorporated in Board of Selectmen meetings, as needed.
- All draft and final products will be made available for viewing on the town’s websites (*staffordct.org* and *explorestaffordct.com*), with a 30-day public review and comment period. A dedicated page will be created on ExploreStaffordCT.com, a robust platform with interactive maps, site-specific details, and program detail.
- Series of press releases and media materials announcing grant award, project updates, and detail of the State Register of Historic Places/National Register Historic District program.
- Additional outreach may include online surveys or other forums/mechanisms for feedback and data collection.
- The Stafford Historical Society will present the completed Historic Designation Report findings and share the nomination process for the State/National Register. In conjunction, a special historical exhibit of the proposed project area will be on display at the Stafford Historical Society Museum.

10. How will you measure the success of the project?

Success of the project can be measured by both qualitative and quantitative outcomes:

- Complete documentation of structures in proposed area with successful historic district listing; Identify new or under-documented resources. Higher values of properties listed on the State/National Register.
- Preservation of existing structures.
- Establish qualification of structures/elements within District for future grant and funding opportunities through state, federal, and private programs.
- Reach new audiences and increase public outreach of Stafford’s history and preservation projects while building awareness and appreciation of historic resources.
- Utilization of nomination document within the Plan of Conservation and Development renewal.
- Increased participation of Certified Historic Structure in CT Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit Program.
- Incorporation of district and historical findings within the town’s marketing and economic development activities.

C. Photographs

The proposed district area is bounded by Main Street (Route 190) to the north, Tolland Avenue and Hyde Park Road to the west, Highland Terrace to the south, and River Road (Route 32) to the east. This boundary creates a district that includes Hyde Park, Haymarket Square, Highland Terrace, Spring Street, Main Street to where it becomes West Main Street, and a small portion of River Road.

Significant buildings, monuments, and structures within the proposed district include: Hyde Park, Earl M. Witt School, Stafford Historical Society Museum, Grace Episcopal Church, Stafford Congregational Church, Warren Memorial Town Hall, Charles Holt Fountain, Soldier’s Monument, American Sleeve Bearing factory, Christopher Allen Bridge on Spring Street, residential structures, and the Sulphur and Mineral Springs.

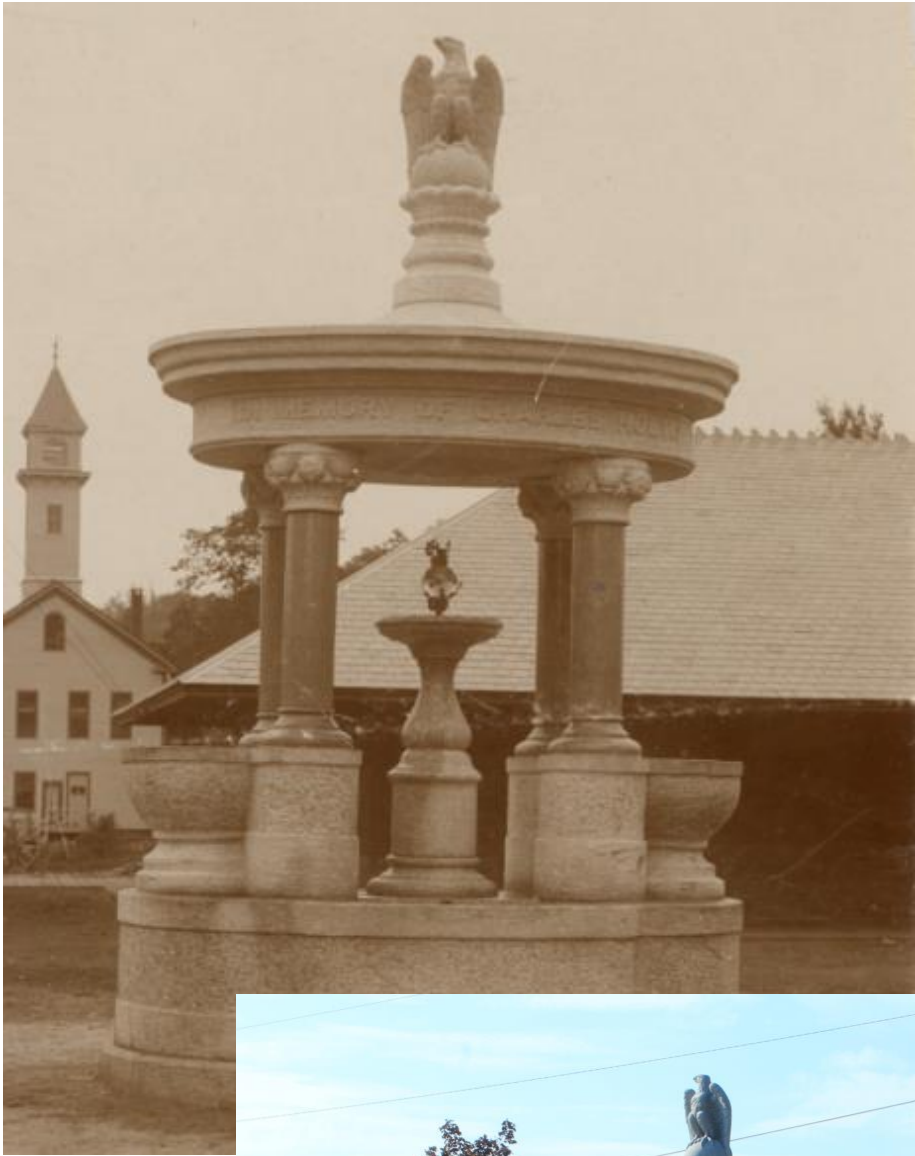
▼ The proposed district includes 48 historic buildings and 5 structures or sites.



Red Line Encompasses Proposed Historic District



1878 "View of Stafford Springs, Conn." Published by O. H. Bailey & Co. Boston
Red Line Encompasses Proposed Historic District



Holt Memorial Fountain, 1895 – 1900, Railroad Station behind Fountain Haymarket Square.



Holt Memorial Fountain (2019). ▼





Stafford Congregational Church, 3 Main Street, and Haymarket Square with Holt Fountain (approx. 1895).



Stafford Congregational Church, 3 Main Street (2020).



Civil War veteran and local merchant Col. Charles Warren bequeathed funds to construct the Warren Memorial Town Hall (1923), the seat of today's town government at 1 Main Street. Above, Haymarket Square with Holt Fountain (1924) and below, 2018.





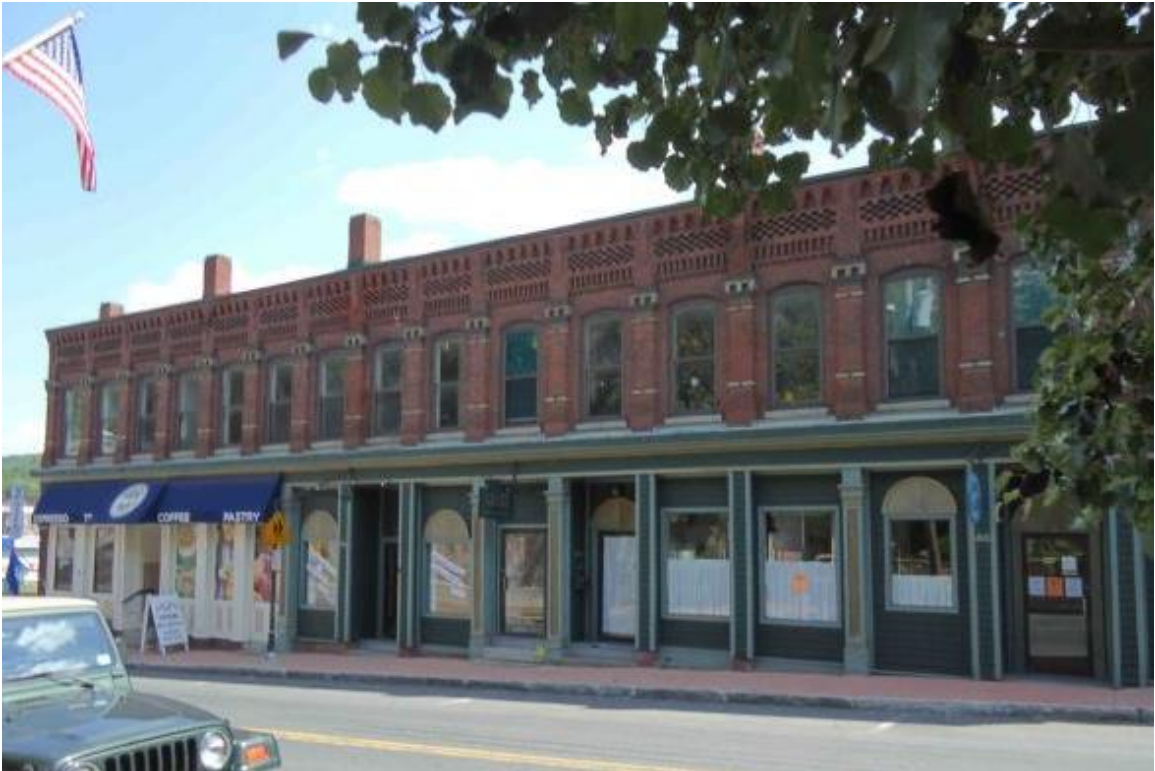
19 and 21 Main Street, Postcard of from late 1800s. Town Hall and Holt Memorial Fountain straight ahead are still standing; brick building on left still standing; Railroad Station on right is still standing.



19, 21 and 27 Main Street (2021)



44 Main Street (1908)



44 Main Street (2018)



Mid-Main Street between (1890-1895)



Mid-Main Street (2021)



63 Main Street (approximately 1895)



63 Main Street (2021)



1912 Grace Episcopal Church (building in background). Stafford Mineral Springs Bottling Manufacturing (now Stafford Historical Society, in foreground). Christopher Allen Bridge.



Grace Episcopal Church (background) Stafford Historical Society (foreground), 2019.



Entrance to Hyde Park from Spring Street. Christopher Allen Bridge on right and Stafford Historical Society Museum on left (1912). Below, entrance to Hyde Park from Spring (February 2021), Christopher Allen Bridge (right), Stafford Historical Society Museum (left), and Soldier’s Monument (middle background).





Christopher Allen Bridge Postcard, Bridge No. 04779. 1912 and 2018



Christopher Allen Bridge continued...

To formalize the eastern entrance to Hyde Park, businessman Christopher Allen funded an arched stone bridge over the Middle River that is estimated to have cost \$400,000 in today's currency. Designed by architect Eugene C. Gardner and his MIT-educated son George C. Gardner, the bridge was constructed in 1912 by the Flynt Granite Co. of Monson, Massachusetts. The decorative light poles on the bridge were manufactured by the J. L. Mott Iron Works of Trenton, New Jersey.

The eponymous Christopher Allen Bridge (Bridge No. 4779) was included in the *1991 Connecticut Historic Bridge Inventory* (Federal Aid Project #HPR-PR-1 [27]), Conn. Dept. of Transportation, Office of Environmental Planning, May 1991. CDOT inspects the Allen Bridge regularly, providing the Town's Department of Public Works with its findings.

Although a majority of the bridge is intact, in February 2018, citizens first noticed the loss of granite veneer from the southwestern side of the Christopher Allen Bridge. Blocks fell off the substructure of the bridge on the upstream (westerly) side of the bridge wingwall and are now on the river bed.

However, gaps between the granite blocks, after exposure to many cycles of freezing and thawing, increase the vulnerability of the substructure of the bridge. Close inspection of the bridge reveals chips to the granite blocks; degraded or missing mortar; variations in the mortar texture, color and durability; variations in the mortar application technique; crumbling corners of the granite capstones; some rusting and paint blistering on the iron lamp poles; and missing metal doors that formerly covered junction boxes. The town is currently seeking funds for engineering.



Soldiers' Monument, Hyde Park

Civil War veteran and local merchant Col. Charles Warren bequeathed funds to construct the Soldiers' Monument in Hyde Park, designed by R.L. McGovern of Hartford and dedicated in 1924. The memorial prominently features Frederic Wellington Ruckstull's bronze statue of Columbia, who from colonial times till the early 20th century was the chief symbol of the United States, personifying freedom and the pursuit of liberty. Beginning in 2018, the Stafford Garden Club began adorning the Soldiers' Monument annually with an encircling floral planting to resurrect the tradition of honoring those who fought in the Civil War.

Flower beds maintained by Stafford Garden Club, September 2018.



Woodlawn Road about 1900 through Julius Converse Estate.
Today this is Hyde Park Road.





Built in 1939 as the Town's second high school, the Earl M. Witt School on the site of the old Converse mansion. With its Art Deco façade, the building has been vacant for 14 years and is currently the primary focus of a Brownfield Town-wide Assessment Grant through the U.S. EPA. 1940 (top) and 2014 (bottom).





Hyde Park 1911 - Mineral Springs Manufacturing Company Mill (left), Middle River between Hyde Park and Mill.



Hyde Park 2021, looking across Park to American Sleeve Bearing on site of Mineral Springs Manufacturing Company Mill.



Highland Terrace, above what is now Hyde Park (approximately 1890).



Highland Terrace (2021). The first two houses are first two houses in 1890 photo.



Highland Terrace 2021



B. P. Cooley Mill about 1880, 2 River Road

