

Braintree Historical Commission
Minutes
June 9, 2014

Present: Elizabeth Mees (Chair) Kate Nedelman Herbst
 Ron Frazier Al Varraso

Also present Kathleen Broomer

Meeting convened at 7:49 pm after joint meeting with CPA

New Business:

Presentation by Kathleen Broomer

- 101 parcels in study area, 84 parcels had buildings 50 years + (Cutoff date 1963), 7 parcels less than 50 years, 9 vacant or undeveloped including railroad depot site, plus parcel that is Elm Street Cemetery
- Many different themes among all different buildings
- Mix of properties that were documented in 80s/90s; looked at previous inventory forms on file with State and added any new information as needed; some properties done from scratch
- Only time period when not any buildings in this area was colonial period, only one from federal period
 - Even with deeds on record it was difficult to identify actually date of some buildings
 - Building currently housing Hugs Plus has extensive history demonstrating multiple uses since its construction during federal period but has been greatly altered since 1960s form filed with State
- Early Industrial Period—standout is 216 Elm Street, laconias Thayer house; been restored several times in 19th century, first circa WWI
 - Hollis/Hobart house
 - Barnabus House
 - Morrison & Bros Woolen Mill (25 Adams); substantial amount of land owned by this family
 - Union School; updated older form; oldest institutional building in study area (1869)
- Late Industrial Period (1875-1915)
 - Vinton House (163 Elm St);highly altered but was center of neighborhood that was Elm St to South Shore Railroad
 - Charles French House (173 Elm St); believed to be first parcel subdivided from Vinton parcel
 - Drinkwater family; many holdings until 1960s; would be great area for research
 - Deering Family (Dr. Thomas Haven Deering); lived 469-471 Washington, old David Hollis house; Dr. Henry dealing at 445 Washington; numerous houses built by Deering family in area; 459 Washington Victorian eclectic house

- Commercial buildings during this period
 - Hollis block—early 1880s (365-367 Washington)
 - Schraut's Bakery near Railroad St, building has not fared well; Schraut family operated three bakeries in different villages in Braintree
 - Storrs Square development
 - 2 Elm was once Braintree National Bank; 8 Elm was a department store/hardware store (Warren's Hardware)
 - Cochato Club; updated info with State
 - Delta Lodge Masonic Temple/VFW—highly altered but extensive information available about building
 - All Souls Unitarian Church; undergoing nomination to National Register with assistance from MHC (hiring consultant for them); should be done by July 1
 - First Congregational Church
 - Hollis School
- Early Modern Phase 1915-1940
 - Corners of Storrs Square started to fill out during this period
 - Block of storefronts built in front yard of Rev. Storrs' house; house appears to have been there until 1920s or 1930s
 - Additional commercial buildings such as garages
 - Braintree Theater built during this period
 - Peck Funeral Home
 - Building approx. 1900 but did not become business until 1930s
 - Churches & Old Braintree High School good examples under this time period
- Mid Century Modern 1940-1960s (not declared a period by MHC yet)
 - Many residential buildings at far end of study area on Elm Street
 - Quincy Carpenter Edgar Baker built at least seven houses beyond St Thomas More on land purchased from Drinkwater; 3 ranches on north side of Elm St (old Morrison & Abercrombie estate)
 - Brick apartment buildings may not appear historic but qualify by years; distinctive architectural style & wave of future of architectural surveys
 - St Thomas More church, rectory & school updated
 - 293 Elm, Danny's Cleaners perfect demonstration of post WWII commercial development (as is liquor store on Washington St)
 - Telephone Exchange building
 - Dr. Max Pearlstein's house; first house that was built in study area with the intention of him living and working in home (as opposed to homes that were converted to accommodate office buildings)
 - Doherty Gym built in 1948; post war traditional classic example

RF asks if Elm St Cemetery should be documented along with properties

KB says MHC has assigned an inventory number to it (#801?); ask MHC how to document on an MHC form (as opposed to submitting entire Cemetery report) so that it is included

RF says MHC has it listed as one of the most important historical cemeteries in the state

KB asks if we are considering doing any historic designation in this year

RF and EM say it is something we have thought about doing but at least we are prepared to do so now if we want to

KB leaves

RF says that we have been thinking about the next area to do; one area that has not been done is the area around South Braintree. Nancy Nicosia knows all these details and should be done so someone like Nancy could add her knowledge to whatever research someone like KB would be doing.

-consensus that we should focus on that area

RF moved to accept minutes from 5/5/15, seconded by AV, accepted, then RF critiqued one portion of them.

EM—next meeting July 28

AV-motion to adjourn

KNH--seconded

Meeting adjourned at 8:40 pm

Submitted by

Kate Nedelman Herbst