
From: Wayland, Joshua
Sent: Thursday, September 14, 2017 11:23 AM
To: 'Tingey, Andrea'
Cc: Marcopul, Kate; Rutson, Vicki
Subject: Summary of August 24 phone call with OEA and HPO

Dear Ms. Tingey:

Thank you for taking the time to speak with OEA on August 24 regarding NJ SHPO's comments on the identification phase of the Section 106 process in the Harsimus Branch abandonment case (HPO project number 08-0811). The purpose of this email is to summarize the major points that we discussed on our phone call.

First, thank you for clarifying that the bulleted list on page 10 of the HPO's July 14, 2017 comment letter represents all of the additional information that HPO requires in order to comment fully on the identification of historic properties. We understand that the completion of an addendum to our Cultural Resources Identification Report that addresses the seven points on that list would allow HPO to issue a final opinion regarding the identification of National Register-eligible historic properties within the APE for the Harsimus Branch abandonment project.

Based on our conversation, we understand that the evaluation of the Italian Village neighborhood (the second point on the list) should consist of an evaluation of the properties within the APE that may also fall within the boundaries of the Italian Village neighborhood (i.e. the Fifth Street Streetscape, the Embankment, the Harsimus Branch right-of-way, and Mary Benson Park) in the context of broader patterns of Italian immigration and the lives of Italian immigrants in Jersey City. We understand that HPO is not requesting that OEA undertake evaluation of areas of the Italian Village neighborhood that are outside of the APE or an evaluation of the eligibility of the neighborhood as a whole.

Regarding the request for additional information on the First Street Streetscape (the fourth point on the list), we understand that HPO is requesting that the report addendum address the several questions raised by HPO staff regarding the three structures that comprise this streetscape (i.e. 187-197 First Street, 183-185 First Street, and 181 First Street). The questions that the addendum should address are: What is the history behind these buildings? How were they used? What physical changes have occurred to the buildings over time? When did those changes occur? Were these buildings historically associated with other buildings or did they always function independently? And, if yes, are those other buildings extant? We understand that you are also requesting that the relevant Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps for the structures in the First Street Streetscape be included in the addendum.

Regarding the request for an opinion regarding the historic integrity of the 12 properties within the APE initially identified as National Register-eligible in 2009 (the fifth point on the list), we understand that you are requesting current photographs of each of the 12 properties and a declarative recommendation by a qualified professional stating whether each property is extant and appears to retain historic integrity. We understand that HPO is not requesting intensive-level surveys for any of these previously-identified properties.

Regarding Public School No. 4 (the seventh point on the list), we understand that you are requesting additional context regarding the historical significance of this property. We understand that HPO is not convinced of this property's National Register-eligibility under Criterion C of the National Register Criteria for Evaluation as presented in our Cultural Resources Identification Report, but that the property may be eligible under Criterion

A due to its association with John T. Rowland, who designed many public buildings in Jersey City during his 42-year career as an architect for the Jersey City Board of Education. We understand that additional contextual information about the career of John T. Rowland would be required to support the National Register-eligibility of Public School No. 4 under Criterion A. We understand that providing this contextual information would not require that OEA conduct an in-depth investigation of the numerous buildings designed by John Rowland in Jersey City that are located outside of the APE.

Finally, we understand that HPO has determined a portion of the Harsimus Branch to be eligible for listing in the National Register under Criteria A & C in the areas of Commerce, Community Planning and Development, Engineering, Politics/Government, and Transportation. We understand that the National Register-eligible portion of the rail line extends from the west side of Marin Boulevard to CP Waldo at Waldo Avenue, a distance of approximately 0.89 miles. We understand that HPO does not consider the non-extant portion of the line located to the east of Marin Boulevard to maintain sufficient historical integrity to make it eligible for listing in the National Register.

Please let me know at your convenience if the information in this summary is incorrect or incomplete. Thank you again for taking the time to answer our questions and clarify the points that we were uncertain about. We will be asking our third-party contractor for an estimate of the cost of the preparation of the addendum and will inform Conrail of the need for this additional work to conclude the Identification Stage of the Section 106 process.

Sincerely,

Josh Wayland
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