

Connecticut Commission on Culture & Tourism
Historic Preservation and Museum Division/State Historic Preservation Office

CONNECTICUT STATE REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating individual properties and districts to the Connecticut State Register of Historic Places (C.G.S. Chapter 184b, Sec. 10-409(2)). See instructions in *How to Complete the Connecticut State Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets. Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Jones-Plimpton House (115 Sigourney St) and Dunn & Waterman Apartment Building (117 Sigourney St)

other names/site number 115-117 Sigourney Street (Asylum Hill)

2. Location

street & number 115 and 117 Sigourney Street

city or town Hartford

☐ vicinity

county Hartford

zip code 06105

☐ not for publication

3. State Agency Certification

I hereby certify that this nomination ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the documentation standards and criteria for registering properties in the Connecticut Register of Historic Places. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

State Historic Preservation Officer

Date

4. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

☒ private

☐ public-local

☐ public-state

☐ public-federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

☐ building(s)

☒ district

☐ site

☐ structure

☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in count.)

Contributing

Non-Contributing

2

buildings

sites

structures

objects

2

0

Total

Property Owner

name NINA Properties, LLC

address 20 Sargeant Street

city Hartford state code CT

zip code 06105 phone 860-244-9390

Jones-Plimpton House; Dunn & Waterman Apartment Building
Name of Property

Hartford
Municipality

5. Historic Preservation Council

Approval date _____

Comments _____

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic: single dwelling, multiple dwelling,
institutional housing

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Vacant/Not In Use

7. Description

Architectural/Archaeological Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Late Victorian: Queen Anne (115 Sigourney Street)
Italianate (117 Sigourney Street)

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brownstone

walls Brick

roof Asphalt shingles (# 115), Rubber (# 117)

other Half-timbering (# 115), Brownstone trim/sheet
metal cornice (# 117)

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

Jones-Plimpton House; Dunn & Waterman Apartment Building

Name of Property

Hartford

Municipality

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable Connecticut Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for State Register listing.)

☒ **1** That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to our history and lives of persons significant in our past; or

☐ **2** That embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or

☐ **3** That have yielded, or may be likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Levels of Significance (local, state)

Local

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Community Planning and Development

Significant Dates

1886-1914

Significant Person

N/A

Cultural Affiliation (Complete if Criterion 3 is marked)

N/A

Architect/Builder

Waterman, Harlan P. (Builder – 117 Sigourney Street)

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

Jones-Plimpton House; Dunn & Waterman Apartment Building

Name of Property

Hartford

Municipality

9. Major Bibliographical References**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET**10. Geographical Data****Acree of Property** Less than one acre**Municipal Map, Block and Lot Number and UTM Coordinate (If possible)**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

	<u>179</u>	<u>320</u>	<u>254 & 256</u>			
	Map	Block	Lot			
1	<u>18</u>	<u>691662</u>	<u>4626672</u>	3	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting
2	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	4	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
					<input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet	

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary follows the limits of the properties identified by on City of Hartford assessors Map 17, Block 320, Lots 254 and 256, shown on Figure 2. These properties are located on the west side of Sigourney Street with Niles Street and Asylum Avenue to their north and Farmington Avenue to their south.

Boundary Justification

The boundary is limited to the property encompassing 115 and 117 Sigourney Street, which comprises the full extent of the extant historic resources. No historically significant changes were made to the landscape on the current site that are associated with the themes of significance described in this nomination. No other related historic buildings were constructed on or moved to this site during the period of significance. These properties abut the edge of the Asylum Avenue National Register Historic District, but are immediately surrounded by highrise apartment buildings, offices, and churches.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title	<u>Timothy Adams</u>			
organization	<u>N/A</u>	date	<u>12/5/2016</u>	
street & number	<u>27314 Town Walk Drive</u>	telephone	<u>(203) 543-5433</u>	
city or town	<u>Hamden</u>	state	<u>CT</u>	zip code <u>06518</u>
name/title	<u>David Corrigan & Ken Johnson;</u>	<u>Edited by Jenny Scofield, CT SHPO</u>		
organization	<u>NINA</u>	date	<u>12/5/2016</u>	
street & number	<u>20 Sargeant Street</u>	telephone	<u>(860) 244-9390</u>	
city or town	<u>Hartford</u>	state	<u>CT</u>	zip code <u>06105</u>

CONNECTICUT STATE REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM – Continuation Form

Jones-Plimpton House; Dunn & Waterman Apartment Building

Name of Property

Hartford

Municipality

Narrative Description

The purpose of this nomination is to recognize two historic properties that were excluded from the Asylum Hill National Register Historic District, but represent consistent development patterns. The Asylum Avenue District was listed on the National Register in 1979 as part of the Historic Resources of Asylum Hill Multiple Resource Area. Asylum Hill is significant as Hartford's prominent neighborhood of the mid-nineteenth through early twentieth century. Intact buildings from this time period express a distinct and notable phase of the city's growth. The 1979 Asylum Avenue district nomination included a focus on high style residential architecture and institutional buildings, in addition to the focus of the Multiple Resource cover form on the neighborhood's historic importance. The property nominated with this State Register form is a two building district that consists of a Queen Anne-style single-family home built in 1886 and a three-unit Italianate style apartment building constructed in 1913 (Figure 1, Photo 1). At the time of the 1979 nomination, these two properties were owned by Aetna Life and Casualty Company as part of their Asylum Hill campus.

Jones-Plimpton House, 115 Sigourney Street (contributing building)

The Jones-Plimpton House is a two-and-one-half-story Queen Anne-style brick building constructed as a dwelling house in 1886. The building is located on the west side of Sigourney Street about 250 feet north of the intersection of Sigourney Street and Farmington Avenue. In plan the building consists of two blocks, slightly offset, a 33' x 17' block with a cross gable roof in the front and a 29' x 24' block with a hipped roof in the rear. There is strong physical evidence, discussed later, that the two blocks were built at different times. The house is presently flanked by a parking lot to the south that serves the commercial strip facing Farmington Avenue and 117 Sigourney Street to the north.

On the facade (east elevation), the home features two projecting bays on either side of a central entrance. To the south, a three-sided bay is crowned by a pyramidal roof while to the north there is a front gable with decorative half-timbering at the attic level (Photos 2-4). The half timbering recalls a similar design that appears directly across the street on the front gable of the 1881 parish house of the Trinity Episcopal Church. The brick wall of the façade sits on top of a brownstone foundation and is generally in good condition. Two brick string courses, slightly projecting, separate the first floor from the second floor. These brick string courses wrap around the front block of the house. Window openings feature sills of finished brownstone and splayed lintels made of brick which project slightly from the wall. Windows are one-over-one vinyl replacement sash with the exception of a pair of square windows in the attic of the front gable. These are multi-paned wood windows of the kind associated with the Queen Anne style and are most likely original.

A porch with a pedimented front gable roof and simple square columns runs across two-thirds of the façade. The porch extends around the north side of the house to accommodate a handicap ramp. The porch is not original but seems sympathetic to the original design as outlined in the Hartford City Atlas of 1909; the atlas

pictures a porch extending across two-thirds of the façade in the same manner as the present porch.¹ A large arched opening constructed of brick marks the front entrance to the home. A single wood door with a square pane of glass on the top half and two panels below is centered in the opening. The rest of the arched opening is filled in with clapboards that culminate in a diamond motif above the door. A slightly projecting brick keystone marks the top of the arch.

The rear (west) block of the house continues the pattern of window openings found on the front block (Photos 5 and 6). However, here the brownstone foundation does not appear above ground. The rear block has two ground floor entrances and one fire escape accessed from a second floor entrance. Each entrance has a plain wood door. Two of the entrances (one at the second floor and the other on the south side of the house) are later additions and were created from openings that were originally for windows. A simple wood deck is located at the rear of the house.

It is not known if the front and rear blocks were built contemporaneously. While the windows, sills, and lintels are consistent, the different roof types and the absence of a brownstone base and brick string courses on the rear block that can be found on the front block suggest different building dates. Most telling, inside the basement, the brownstone foundation of the rear block appears broken through in order to access the area underneath the front block. If the two blocks that comprise this 1886 home were built at different times, they were probably built within ten years of each other. The outline of the house in the Hartford City Atlas of 1896 already shows the two blocks in place.²

The inside of the house is organized around a central stair and has been altered from its original configuration. Recent uses (as a center for voluntarism by Aetna and a lead safe house by Saint Francis Hospital) necessitated substantial changes to the original plan. Two fireplaces with their mantels remain in the front and rear of the house.

The Jones-Plimpton House retains Queen Anne style elements, including the decorative half-timbering on the façade. Likewise, the masonry finishes, including the brownstone sills, splayed lintels, and string courses in the front block are examples of the kind of detailing found on brick Queen Anne style homes in Hartford.

Dunn & Waterman Apartment Building (contributing building)

The Dunn & Waterman Apartment Building at 117 Sigourney Street is a three-story brick apartment house of classical design completed in 1913. Originally the building contained three apartment units, one on each floor. The building is located on the west side of Sigourney Street and sits between 115 Sigourney Street to the south and a Salvation Army day care facility to the north. The building is rectangular in shape, 67 feet long running east to west and 27 feet wide at its front.

Changing twentieth century taste is reflected in the façade of 117 Sigourney Street (Photos 1 and 7). Here speckled buff brick replaces the customary red brick found on nineteenth century homes like the Jones-Plimpton House. The fenestration is organized into three bays with contemporary tripartite windows on the south bay, a door opening (boarded-up) in the center bay, and a glass entrance on the ground floor with paired windows above. The windows are primarily one-over-one vinyl replacements. The glass entry door entrance contains a single glazed replacement door with glazed sidelights and transom. A brownstone cornice and recessed panel are above the main entrance and brownstone quoins flank the opening. The window openings feature matching lintels and sills of finished brownstone. A brownstone water table rings the building. The

¹ "Plate M," *Atlas of the City of Hartford and the Town of West Hartford*, Richards (1909).

² "Plate 20," *Atlas of the City of Hartford Connecticut*, Richards (1896).

mortar for the buff brick is tinted a reddish-brown hue which blends harmoniously with the brownstone trim found throughout the facade. As shown in the Hartford City Atlas of 1917, at one time the façade featured a three-story porch located at the center of the façade where the doors, now boarded up, opened onto.³ Today ornamental ironwork protects these openings. A classically inspired sheet metal cornice with modillions and a simple frieze crowns the façade.

The façade's design, including buff brick and sheet metal cornice, wrap around the building and run approximately one-quarter the length of each side (Photos 8-11). At that point, presumably for reasons of economy, alternative finishes take over: red brick (presently painted a pale pink) replaces the buff brick, the sills are of quarry-faced rather finished brownstone, and the brownstone lintels are substituted altogether with three courses of brick laid on end to form a segmental arch. This alternate treatment at the back of the building would become standard practice in Hartford apartment buildings in the twentieth century where the more expensive building materials were reserved for the most visible portions of the structure that faced the street. The side elevations continue in a straight line with the exception of one projection near the middle, a three-sided bay on the south side and a square bay on the north side. A fire escape spanning all three floors is located on each side elevation near the middle of the building. The rear (west) elevation continues the pattern from the back of the side elevations. The rear elevation has one entrance which leads to the basement, containing a steel six-panel door.

Inside, the front door opens to a stair hall, with the stair rising against the north wall. The stair has paneled wood newel posts and square balustrades. The original apartment layout of the building has been altered. Where three apartments, one on each floor, comprised the original layout, the building interior is now configured for six units and only the window surrounds and some of the door surrounds appear original.

Despite this interior loss, the exterior of the building, with its buff brick façade, classical sheet metal cornice, and brownstone trim, still reflects the period of the early twentieth century when 117 Sigourney Street was one of the first apartment buildings to appear in this section of Asylum Hill.

³ "Plate 7," *Atlas of the City of Hartford and the Town of West Hartford Connecticut*, Sanborn Map Company (1917). The presence of red brick below the water table where the porch foundation would have been provides further evidence of the porch's existence. This area would not have been visible to the public and so red brick was used here rather than the buff brick found everywhere else on the façade.

Statement of Significance

The Jones Plimpton House and Dunn & Waterman Apartment Building meet State Register Criterion 1 at the local level in the category of Community Development for their association with the transformation of Asylum Hill as Hartford's premier neighborhood at the turn of twentieth century. The growth of the city west into Asylum Hill occurred from the Civil War through the early twentieth century and began with the development of large country estates for the city's elite along the neighborhood's major avenues. Substantial homes were built on Farmington Avenue, just south of the Sigourney Street properties that are the subject of this nomination. A second wave of more intensive development followed, in which the side streets were filled in with fine homes built for upper-to-middle-income members of the community. The last stage of development starting around 1910 involved the replacement of large estates with denser apartment development, a trend which accelerated after World War I. The Jones-Plimpton House at 115 Sigourney Street is a good example of the second stage of development, a single-family home built in close proximity to the large estates along Farmington Avenue. The Dunn & Waterman Apartment Building at 117 Sigourney Street represents the last stage of development as a three-story apartment built on speculation, on land that was once part of the Pliny Jewell estate.⁴ These properties were initially proposed as part of the Asylum Avenue National Register Historic District, but were excluded from the nomination, which was listed in 1979. The popularity of Asylum Hill as the city's most fashionable neighborhood declined after World War I as increasing commercial and insurance business uses encroached on the neighborhood. As the area became more commercial, residential development expanded further west. The properties at 115 and 117 Sigourney Street are a vestige of the formerly residential Farmington Avenue corridor at the south edge of the Asylum Hill neighborhood.

The Jones Plimpton House and Dunn & Waterman Apartment Building were constructed on portions of larger estates after trolley service established on Farmington Avenue in 1872 made the neighborhood more accessible from Hartford's downtown. The improved transportation access and the prominence of residents who developed estates in Asylum Hill during the mid-nineteenth-century attracted continued, denser residential development in the subsequent decades. As seen in the Hartford Atlas, the Asylum Hill section of Farmington Avenue was sparsely settled in 1850, but the few homes and families in the area offered a glimpse of its future as a home for Hartford's wealthy and elite.⁵ Farmington Avenue developed as a grand avenue that served as the city's primary route to West Hartford and reflected a national trend in American cities in which the late nineteenth-century elite chose grand tree-lined avenues as the ideal showplaces for their mansions.⁶ Estates in the area included several on the grounds where the Aetna campus stands today (corner of Sigourney Street and Farmington Avenue) such as the home of James Dixon (1814-1873), lawyer and early leader of the Republican Party in Connecticut. He was United States Senator from Connecticut during the Civil War and a close friend and advisor to President Lincoln. The Dixon estate, called "Rose Mount" by Mrs. Dixon, was a park-like showplace that combined a cottage residence with a spacious veranda and a three-story brick tower.⁷ On the other side of Farmington Avenue stood the home of Junius Spencer Morgan who moved his family out of the crowded center city into a "large rambling house" on Asylum Hill in 1840.⁸ This house was the boyhood home of John Pierpont (J. P.) Morgan (1837-1913), one of the greatest financiers in United States history.

By 1885, more prominent members of the community established estates along Farmington Avenue, including the Nook Farm homes of the celebrated authors Samuel Clemens (better known today as the Mark Twain House) and Harriet Beecher Stowe (the Harriet Beecher Stowe Center) as well as the well-regarded attorney Franklin Chamberlain (today known as the Katherine Seymour Day House, also part of the Stowe Center). Marshall Jewell (1825-1883), twice-elected Governor of Connecticut, Minister to Russia, and

⁴ "Jewell Property Sold for \$18,000," Hartford Courant, May 6, 1918.

⁵ "Home of Pliny Jewell to Become Apartment," Hartford Courant, May 14, 1912.

⁶ *Domesticating the Street*, Baldwin, p. 212 (1999).

⁷ "United States Senator James Dixon," Historical Magazine of the Episcopal Church, p. 36 (March 1981).

⁸ *The House of Morgan*, Hoyt, p. 45 (1966).

Postmaster General during the Grant administration, built his own monumental brick home (not extant) on the north side of Farmington Avenue between what are today Marshall and Gillett Streets. Marshall Street is named in his honor.

The Dunn & Waterman Apartment Building was constructed on land previously owned by Marshall Jewell's brother, Pliny Jewell (1823-1911). The Pliny Jewell estate stretched north to Niles Street and included frontage on Sigourney Street. Pliny Jewell was an important local businessman, founding most significantly the Jewell Belting Company out of the firm he inherited from his father. He also served as a director for several major companies in Hartford, including Travelers.⁹ In 1909, his home was leased to Governor George Lilley, and during Lilley's brief tenure in office served as the state's de facto executive mansion.¹⁰

The mansions on Farmington Avenue were soon joined by a wave of new residential development on the adjacent side streets including Imlay, Laurel, and Sigourney Streets. This new development was spurred on by the arrival of trolley service on Farmington Avenue in 1872 which provided direct access to downtown Hartford.¹¹ Among the new residents at this time were Samuel F. Jones (1837-1891) and his family who purchased in 1874 the brick double house at 192-194 Farmington Avenue located at the northwest corner of Sigourney Street and Farmington Avenue. In 1886, Jones constructed the Queen Anne-style home at 115 Sigourney Street as a second residence on the back of his 192-194 Farmington Avenue lot (Figure 3).¹² The 50' x 100' lot known as 115 Sigourney Street was created in 1886 from the northern rear of the parcel occupied by Samuel F. Jones at 192-194 Farmington Avenue. The Hartford Courant's report of building improvements in the city during 1886 includes the listing, "S.F. Jones, dwelling house on Sigourney Street, \$4,500". The house's existence is confirmed by an 1890 deed recorded in the Hartford Land Records which describes the property as "a certain piece of land with the dwelling house thereon standing and known as No. 115 Sigourney St."¹³

Jones was a prominent criminal attorney in Hartford and was well-known around Connecticut.¹⁴ His family consisted of three daughters, one of whom, Ellen (sometimes referred to as Nellie) married James M. Plimpton in 1882 at a ceremony at the family home at 192 Farmington Avenue.¹⁵ The young couple resided in the Jones home for the next 18 years. James M. Plimpton and his wife moved into 115 Sigourney Street in 1900 and resided there for the remainder of their lives, James until he died in 1926, and Ellen until just before she died in 1937.¹⁶

James M. Plimpton (1854-1926) rose to become an important figure in Hartford's business circles.¹⁷ At age 18, Plimpton came to Hartford in 1872 to work for his uncle, Linus Plimpton, founder and president of the Plimpton Manufacturing Company, whose principal line of business was the manufacture of envelopes.¹⁸ In 1874, the company won the federal contract to supply stamped envelopes to post offices around the country.¹⁹ By 1889, Plimpton Manufacturing Company and its affiliate were reputed to be the largest producers of envelopes in the world. James oversaw the company's federal contract to produce envelopes as well as the

⁹ "Pliny Jewell Dies Early Today," Hartford Courant (October 31, 1911).

¹⁰ "Lilley Leases Jewell House," Hartford Courant (November 13, 1908).

¹¹ *Hartford Trolleys*, Connecticut Motor Coach Museum, p. 7 (2004).

¹² "The Building Record," Hartford Courant (December 30, 1886).

¹³ Hartford Land Records, Vol. 218 at Pg. 235.

¹⁴ "Famous Criminal Cases," Hartford Courant (September 29, 1891).

¹⁵ "Hartford and Vicinity: City Briefs," Hartford Courant (February 22, 1882).

¹⁶ "Mrs. J. M. Plimpton, 80, Dies at Son's Home," Hartford Courant, (February 1, 1937).

¹⁷ "Plimpton, Envelope Co. Head, Dies," Hartford Courant, (August 5, 1926).

¹⁸ "Death of Linus Plimpton," Hartford Courant (February 17, 1904). Linus Plimpton built and lived in the house at 847 Asylum Avenue, which is around the corner from 115 Sigourney Street and which still stands today.

¹⁹ "The Stamped Envelope Contract – The Plimpton Manufacturing Company Successful," Hartford Courant (September 24, 1874). The US Postmaster General who awarded the contract to the Plimptons was Marshall Jewell, former Connecticut governor, brother of Pliny Jewell, and neighbor to both Linus and James Plimpton.

company's office supply store, which eventually became Plimpton's stationery store with outlets in Hartford, West Hartford, and Windsor.²⁰ James succeeded his uncle as manager of the company upon his uncle's death in 1904 and continued as the head of the company until his death in 1926. His obituary stated he could rightly claim the title as the "dean of envelope manufacturers". He was locally renowned for his private library, as well. Ernest deF. Miel, pastor at Trinity Episcopal Church, frequently borrowed books from Mr. Plimpton's library at 115 Sigourney Street.²¹

The Plimptons remained at 115 Sigourney Street well past the area's period of peak social prominence. The broad straight street that originally attracted the wealthy and elite to Farmington Avenue was becoming crowded with cars and trolleys and the rich were now choosing to make their homes further out in the West End or West Hartford. As the old guard moved on or passed away, their estates would become the source for the next stage of neighborhood development: the rise of the apartment house. The death of Pliny Jewell in 1911 in many ways marks the end of Farmington Avenue as Hartford's "grand avenue of mansions." After he died, two developers, John Dunn and Harlan Waterman, purchased his estate and began to develop apartments on the site. They started by converting Jewell's home into apartments, and then in 1913 they constructed 117 Sigourney Street on what had been a plot of land that served as Jewell's carriage driveway.²² 117 Sigourney Street featured three spacious apartments, with each apartment containing seven rooms and two baths on one full floor. The apartments offered an attractive residential alternative to the standard single-family homes that were customary for middle-income families. Dunn and Waterman built two more apartment buildings along Farmington Avenue (not extant).

Dunn and Waterman sold their properties to Colonial Realty Company, which in turn sold the Jewell home to Nicholas Cabrillo. In 1919, Cabrillo demolished the Jewell home in order to construct an H-shaped Renaissance Revival apartment building with 100 units known as the Hotel Saint Nicholas.²³ Cabrillo's apartment building represents the culmination of this block's transition from estates and single-family homes into apartment properties, which first began with the construction of 117 Sigourney Street.²⁴

One of the first residents of 117 Sigourney Street was a businessman who presaged the arrival of the insurance companies on Asylum Hill. Eugene Bolmar was a prominent executive at the Hartford Fire Insurance Company when that company was still located on Trumbull Street in downtown Hartford.²⁵ His wife Nina was a noted soprano who had studied with the Chicago Opera Company and in Paris; she offered music lessons from her apartment at 117 Sigourney Street.²⁶ The Hartford relocated to Asylum Hill in 1921, only 8 years after the construction of 117 Sigourney Street. Several other insurance companies followed The Hartford to Asylum Hill, including Connecticut Mutual Insurance Company in 1926, Aetna Life in 1931 (on the grounds of the old Dixon estate), and National Fire Insurance Company in 1941. Two of the residents with the longest tenure at 117 Sigourney Street were Mr. and Mrs. George F. Ruppe who purchased the property in 1918. Mr. and Mrs. Ruppe occupied their apartment for almost 20 years before leaving Hartford. Mrs. Ruppe was very active in Hartford's civic affairs, and she appears to have been one of the founders of the Hartford Motherhood Club, one of the oldest and most significant organizations for politically active women in Hartford. In this capacity, Mrs. Ruppe was an early proponent for the "pure foods movement," which advocated for clearer labels (i.e., no

²⁰ "Plimpton's Hartford History Started 111 Years Ago," *Hartford Courant* (May 10, 1976). Plimpton's in West Hartford, which was the last of the three stationery stores to remain in business, closed its doors in 2014 (*Hartford Courant*, "Plimpton's, A Tradition in West Hartford, to Close as Owners Retire," November 26, 2014).

²¹ "Two Old Files of 'Conn. Courant' Return to Office," *Hartford Courant* (September 6, 1926).

²² "New Building Permits," *Hartford Courant* (December 7, 1912), as well as original building permits available online with the City of Hartford.

²³ "New Hotel Ready by October 1," *Hartford Courant* (July 8, 1920).

²⁴ "Jewell Property Sold for \$18,000," *Hartford Courant* (May 6, 1916).

²⁵ "The Hartford Fire Club," *Hartford Courant* (July 18, 1915).

²⁶ "Concert by Singer and a Harpist," *Hartford Courant* (January 16, 1914), and "Nina Bolmar Soprano" (classified ad), *Hartford Courant* (February 1, 1914).

chemical names) on commercially prepared and sold foods.²⁷ Their purchase of and residency at 117 Sigourney Street demonstrated the staying power of Asylum Hill as a respectable residential address even as the neighborhood was increasingly evolving into a business and commercial center. Today, 117 Sigourney Street stands as the last remaining example of the original apartment construction completed by Dunn and Waterman on this block of Farmington Avenue.

Both 115 and 117 Sigourney Street suffered after World War II as many of the employees at the insurance companies left the city for the suburbs. Both homes were subdivided and they remained under the control of absentee landlords into the 1970s. In an effort to improve its surroundings, Aetna began purchasing properties around its campus during this time. In 1974, Aetna purchased 115 and 117 Sigourney Street from private owners.²⁸ The properties are now owned by Northside Institutions Neighborhood Alliance ("NINA"), a community development corporation whose mission is the revitalization of the Asylum Hill neighborhood.

Bibliography

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Hartford Courant. "The Hartford Fire Club." July 18, 1915.

²⁷ "Tells Problems of Housewives," *Hartford Courant* (February 18, 1915).

²⁸ "Major Renovations for Sigourney Street," *Hartford Courant* (December 5, 1976).

Hartford Courant. "Home of Pliny Jewell to Become Apartment." May 14, 1912.

Hartford Courant. "James M. Plimpton." August 5, 1926.

Hartford Courant. "Jewell Property Sold for \$18,000." May 6, 1916.

Hartford Courant. "J. M. Plimpton Appointed." March 2, 1904.

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Hartford Courant. "Mrs. J. M. Plimpton, 80, Dies at Son's Home." February 1, 1937, Obituary.

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Location Map

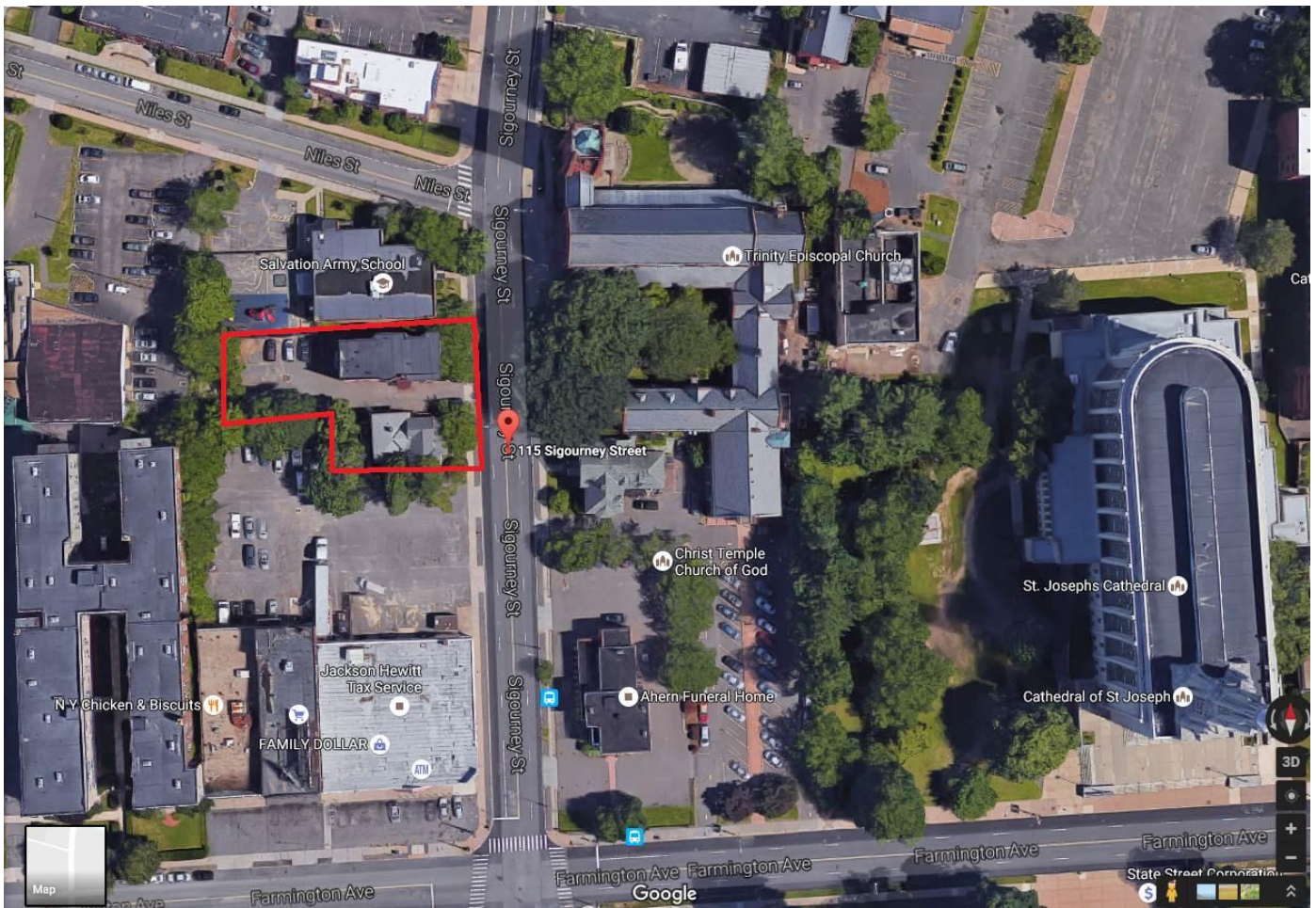


Figure 1. Aerial map showing 115 and 117 Sigourney Street outlined in red (source: maps.google.com)



Figure 2. Parcel Map showing 115 and 117 Sigourney Street (source: City of Hartford, 2017).

Historic Map

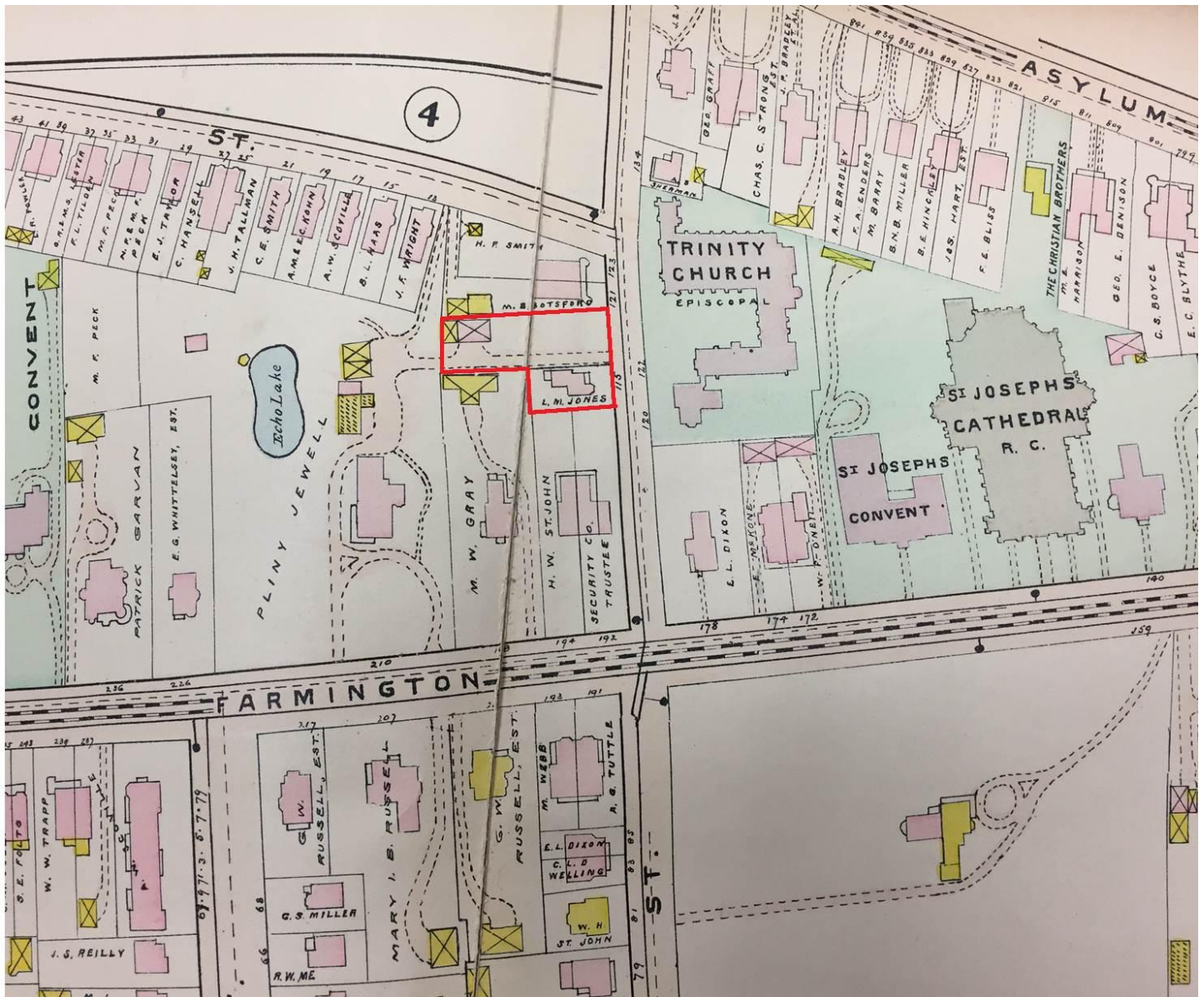


Figure 3. Detail of 1896 L. J. Richards Map with 115 and 117 Sigourney Street outlined in red. Map shows 115 Sigourney Street in place while 117 Sigourney Street is still part of Pliny Jewell estate. The old Dixon estate is at lower right hand corner of map (where Aetna stands today) and 192-194 Farmington Avenue can be seen at the northwest corner of Farmington Avenue and Sigourney Street (source: Connecticut Historical Society).

Photographs



Photo 1. Front (eastern) elevation showing 115 Sigourney Street (left) and 117 Sigourney Street (right).



Photo 2. Decorative half-timbering in gable, 115 Sigourney Street.



Photo 3. 115 Sigourney Street – facade (eastelevation).



Photo 4. 115 Sigourney Street – side (south) elevation.



Photo 5. 115 Sigourney Street – side (north) elevation.



Photo 6. 115 Sigourney Street – rear (west) elevation.



Photo 7. 117 Sigourney Street – facade (east elevation).



Photo 8. 117 Sigourney Street – side (north) elevation.



Photo 9. 117 Sigourney Street – side (south) elevation.

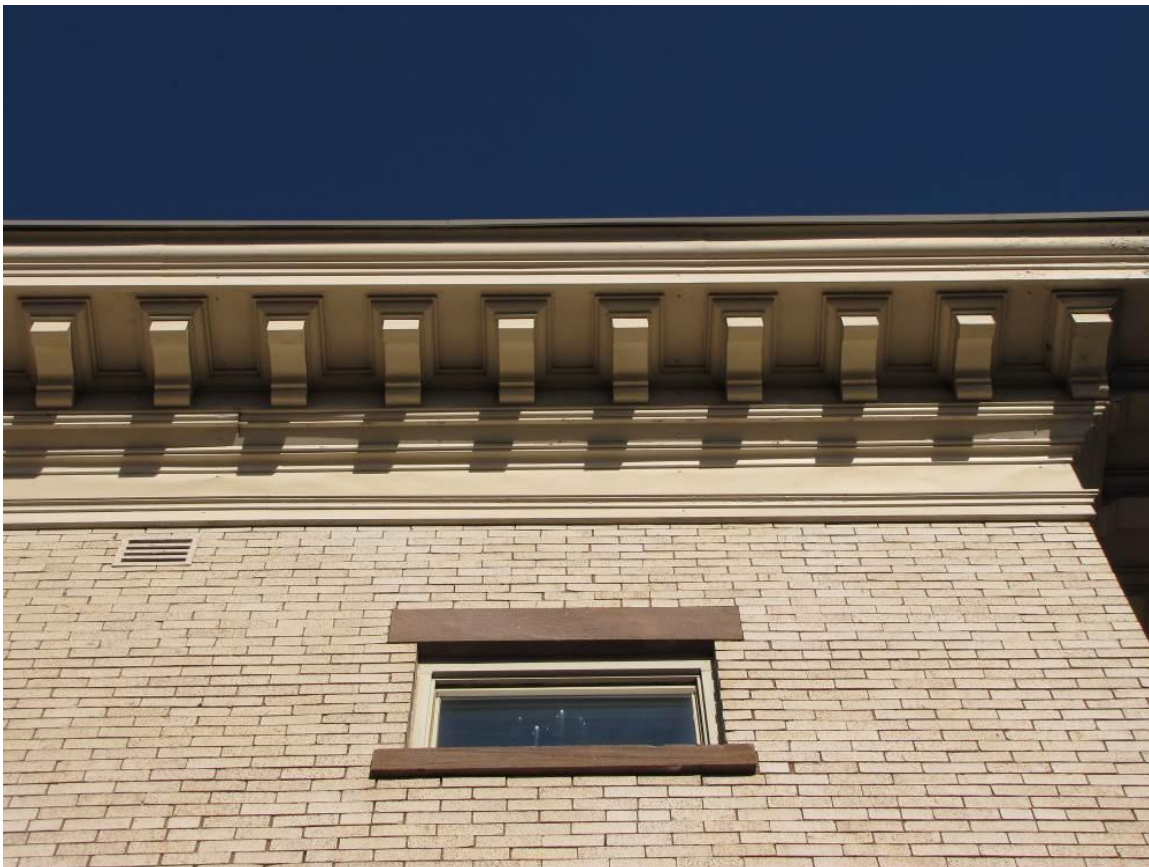


Photo 10. 117 Sigourney Street – detail of cornice, side (south) elevation.



Photo 11. 117 Sigourney Street – detail of cornice, side (north) elevation, showing egg-and-dart molding.