

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

PROPERTY NAME: Main Street Historic District

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: CONNECTICUT, Windham

DATE RECEIVED: 6/13/14 DATE OF PENDING LIST:
DATE OF 16TH DAY: DATE OF 45TH DAY: 7/30/14
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 82004410

NOMINATOR: STATE

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT _____ DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Additional Documentation Approved

RECOM./CRITERIA Accept

REVIEWER Eoban Beall

DISCIPLINE History

TELEPHONE _____

DATE 7-30-14

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.

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The Main Street Historic District, Willimantic Connecticut was entered into the National Register of Historic Places on June 6, 1982. The YMCA building (1913) at 844 Main Street was listed as noncontributing at that time because its original façade was not visible. The structure covering the façade has now been removed and the original façade, which is mostly intact, has been revealed. The building now has enough architectural integrity to be included as a contributing structure to the Main Street Historic District. Work is underway to restore the facade of the YMCA building to its original appearance.

Plans for a new YMCA building in Willimantic were first announced to the public in the *Willimantic Daily Chronicle* on February 3, 1912. The article states that the building was designed by Palmer and Townsend of New Haven. The article describes the plans for the building in detail and mentions that they, "...show a building that will be an ornament to the city..." The new building was dedicated on February 5, 1913. An article in the February 6, 1913 *Willimantic Daily Chronicle* describes a well-attended ceremony which included a reception, musical selections, prayers and speeches by several dignitaries. One of the speakers, F. T Bates, State Secretary of the Young Men's Christian Association, congratulated the Willimantic organization for having, "...by far the best \$52,000 building in Connecticut." The building was a landmark on Main Street and it was photographed for a postcard (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Willimantic YMCA building c.1913.

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In 1964, The YMCA decided to expand and it bought the Gem Theater building which shared a wall with the organization's building. The modifications carried out at that time included the complete removal of the architectural detail of the Gem Theater's façade and the covering of the facades of both buildings with a new common façade designed by a local architect in the style of New York architect Edward Durrell Stone (Figure 2). Miraculously, very few changes were made to the original façade of the YMCA building and it was simply hidden under the concrete screen.



Photo 1. 1964 façade.

The 1964 façade has now been removed to reveal the mostly intact 1913 façade of the YMCA Building (Figures 3 and 4). This building has enough architectural integrity to be included as a contributing asset to Willimantic's Main Street Historic District, since it falls within the period of significance and it retains the distinctive characteristics of the type, period and methods of construction typical of the district.

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Photo 2. Workmen removing 1964 façade.

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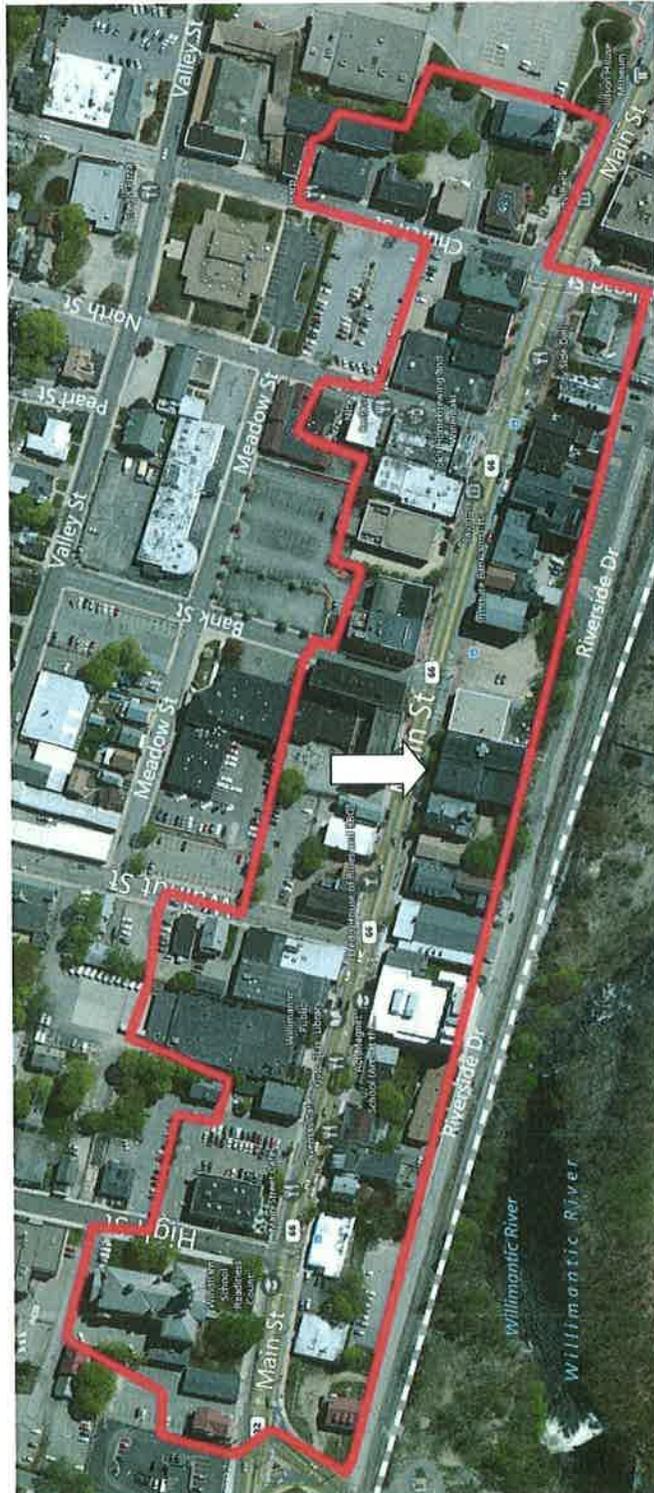
Photo 3. Detail of revealed 1913 façade of YMCA building.

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Map of district showing location of YMCA Building.