Name of Property: Historic Moravian Bethlehem Historic District (update)

City, State: Bethlehem, Pennsylvania

Period of Significance: 1741-1810

NHL Criteria: 1, 4 (Exceptions 1 and 5)

NHL Theme: III. Expressing Cultural Values  
1. Educational and intellectual currents  
5. Architecture, landscape architecture, and urban design  
V. Developing the American Economy  
4. Workers and work culture

Previous Recognition: 2012 - National Historic Landmark

National Historic Context: III. Development of the English Colonies, 1688-1763  
D. Social and Economic Affairs  
2. Economic Affairs and Ways of Life  
XXX. American Ways of Life  
E. Ethnic Communities
NHL Significance:

- Nationally significant under NHL Criterion 1 as a physical expression of an eighteenth-century structured communal religious society with a distinctive economic structure.

- NHL Criterion 4 as an outstanding example of Moravian architecture and town planning. Bethlehem is a physical manifestation of the artistic, architectural, cultural, religious, and industrial attributes that set the Moravians apart from other colonial settlers. The Gemeine or community planned town created here was done in conjunction with the larger Moravian Community based in Herrnhut, Germany.

- This update to the original nomination of 2011 relates to the addition of the 1748 Second Single Brethren’s House. At the time of the original nomination submittal, there were integrity questions about the later additions to the Single Brethren’s House which have now been resolved. In addition, the owner, Moravian College (now University), was uncertain if they wanted the Single Brethren’s House to be included in the NHL district. Now Moravian University is supportive of the inclusion of the Single Brethren’s House within the National Historic Landmark District.

Integrity:

- With its intact core of buildings, the district preserves some of the most important structures and sites relating to the Moravians in the New World.

- The Second Single Brethren’s House was constructed of local limestone in 1748, using plans sent from the Moravian Church leadership in Europe. Located at the intersection of West Church and Main Streets, the Single Brethren’s House is the largest and most ambitious 18th-century building in Bethlehem. At 83 ft. by 30 ft. with six stories, it is a powerful manifestation of the local Moravian Church architectural-style with herringbone-patterned doors, shallow segmental brick arched windows, kicked eaves, and a jerkinhead roof with roof deck and wooden balustrade, shed dormers on the upper attic, and gabled dormers on the lower attic.

- Several brick additions from the mid- to late-19th century, although imposing, connect only minimally to the original 1748 Second Single Brethren’s House. The Single Brethren’s House is still distinguishable and appears almost as it would have when it was a free-standing building. It contributes to the historical significance of the Moravian community as well as to the architectural significance of the overall historic district.

Owner of Property: Moravian University; Historic Bethlehem Museum & Sites

Acreage of Property: 14.7 acres

Origins of Nomination: Updated documentation was prepared by Historic Bethlehem Museums & Sites and NPS legacy Northeast Regional office. Historic Moravian Bethlehem is part of a multiple, international World Heritage nomination for the Moravians and their communities. After research was conducted for that submittal, it was determined that the Single Brethren’s House was an integral part of these Moravian communities and Historic Bethlehem should seek to revise their NHL to include this important resource as part of their nationally significant story. This would strengthen their case for inclusion within the World Heritage nomination.
Potential for Positive Public Response or Reflection on NHL Program: Update to NHL documentation supports preservation of district and potential listing of Historic Moravian Bethlehem as a World Heritage Site.

Potential for Negative Public Response or Reflection on NHL Program: None known.

Public Comments Favoring Designation (received as of *Add Date*):

Landmarks Committee Comments:

Landmarks Committee Recommendation:

Advisory Board Recommendation: