Form 10-300 (July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

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Connecticut	
COUNTY:	VI
Fairfield	
FOR NPS USE ONL	Υ
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	☐ Object	☐ Both	Being Considered	Preservation work	(restricted	-1
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CONDITION	Excellent	Good Good	☐ Fair	Deteriorated	Ruins	Unexposed
CONDITION		(Check Or	10)		(Che	ck One)
	X Alter	red	☐ Unaltered	1	Moved	Original Site

Something of an architectural curiosity, this octagonal house is perhaps the best example of the dozen or so of the style extant in the state. This one is composed of three floors, surrounded by a graceful iron veranda, extending the full three stories. Supports are finished with scrolled brackets.

The nearly flat roof has wide overhanging eaves. Atop the roof at the center is a cupola, also octagonal, with the same wide eaves. The two chimneys are incorporated into the outside walls.

The walls are of concrete, twelve inches thick, covered with stucco, painted white. At the center of the building is an enclosed spiral staircase. Windows are large, opening onto the veranda on all sides. All trim is very plain; at entrys and windows there is single board framing.

The house is very grand and its location back from the road in a residential area is fortunate for it can be more easily seen.

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ERIOD (Check One or More as	Appropriate)		
Pre-Columbian	☐ 16th Century	☐ 18th Century	20th Century
☐ 15th Century	☐ 17th Century	19th Century	
SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicat	ole and Known) 1852		
REAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Ch	sck One or More as Appropri	ale)	
Abor iginal	☐ Education	☐ Political	Urbon Planning
☐ Prehistoric	Engineering	Roligion/Phi-	Other (Specify)
Historic *	Industry	losophy	42
Agriculture	[Invention	Science	
Architecture	☐ Landscape	Sculpture	
☐ Art	Architecture	Social/Human-	
Commerce	Literature	itarian	
Communications	Military	Theater	
Conservation	Music	☐ Transportation	

This excellent example of the octagonal style house was built in 1852 by Daniel Starr as his own home. Orson Squire Fowler, a phrenologist and prolific writer on health and happiness, designed the style. Its prime advantage, he said, was that it enclosed one fifth more floor area than a square with the same total length of wall. "Scarcely less important," states Fowler, is its beauty, this due to it approaching the sphere, "the predominant or governing form in Nature." The perfect material, Fowler felt, was a mixture of lime, stone, and sand - concrete. One suspects that he would be pleased with the Danbury example.

The house is well-cared for and appreciated by the owners. However, it is in an area slated for a second phase of a redevelopment program, and the owners are concerned for its future. They feel that listing on the National Register would at least prevent demolition for redevelopment and give the house the possibility for a positive future.



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P. O. BOX 299
STAMFORD, CONNECTICUT 06904

(203) 327-0420

OF COUNSEL

October 15, 1981

Herbert Janick, Ph.D. History Department Western Connecticut State College Danbury, Connecticut 06810

Re: Octagon House 21 Spring Street Danbury, Connecticut

Dear Dr. Janick:

As you may recall, I had been appointed by the Court to sell at public auction the above-referenced house in March, 1980. Although the auction was delayed, it has now been rescheduled for January 23, 1982.

Since you had previously expressed some interest in the property, I am just writing to let you know the status.

Formal notice of the auction will be published in the Danbury News-Times and Newtown Bee in early January, 1982. If you have any questions, or if I can be of any assistance, please feel free to call me.

Very truly yours,

Thomas R. Ventre

TRV: dp

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE Washington D.C. 20240

HISTORIC PRESERVATION CERTIFICATION **APPLICATION — PART 2**

Part 2 DESCRIPTION OF REHABILITATION	Diller Lawrence Lawrence
1. NAME OF PROPERTY: Octagon House	
Address of property: Street 21 Spring Street	a la serio comita full a chen mile chilava la
city Danbury	county Fairfield State Conn. zip Code 06810
If located in National Register historic district, local or State designation	ated district, specify: <u>Individually listed on National</u> Register
2. DATA ON EXISTING STRUCTURE:	121/
Date of construction C • 1853	Existing floor area: 1314 sq. feet
Original use Residence	terms of the second sec
Type of construction: 1' thick concrete bea	ring walls, octagonal shape
	A CARREST OF THE SECOND PROPERTY.
B. DATA ON REHABILITATION PROJECT:	
Project starting date (est.): May 1982 roject completion da	ate (est): May, 1983
Estimated cost of rehabilitation \$25,000 Proposed use:	Apartments
Number of housing units to be created (if applicable) Rehabi	ilitate and upgrade existing units
Has the property received Federal or State financial assistance? □ ye	on X se
If yes, specify source:	
Are architectural plans and specifications available for review? [] yes	- W
Are architectural plans and specifications available for review? (1) yes	See the second s
Architect's or developer's name and address	
Telephone Number:	
OSTALLED DECORPORTION OF RELIABILITATION (OF REDUATION WE	DRKincludes site work, new construction, alterations, etc. Complete blocks below.
DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF HERABILITATION/PRESERVATION WO	PHAIncludes site work, new construction, afterations, etc. Complete blocks below.
NUMBER Doof	
1 Architectural feature Roof	Of roof rafters, matching existing
Approximate date of feature C . 1853	Replace damaged asphalt with doub

Describe existing feature Octagonal low pitch hip roof, roll asphalt covering. Sagging due to damage to rafters, chiefly caused by blockage of gutters. Wooden gutters ran under eaves with sownspouts at corners. Blocked for long period, badly rotted and unrestoreable.

rolled overlapping roll asphalt Roof to match existing appearance. Replace rotted wooden gutters with white seamless aluminum gutters. Impact on overall appearance minimal.

Photo no _____ Drawing no __

Architectural leature Ceilings Approximate date of feature c. 1853. 1900 Approximate date of feature ceilings, 1st and and floors, patched with sheetrock. The converted to apartment c. 1900. Ondition: 1st and 2nd floor-fair, hoto no. 6.7 Drawing no. Basebadly water damaged.	Describe work and impact on existing leadures Patch cracks in ceilings, 1st and 2nd floor where need with plaster to match existing. Instance 1/2" sheetrock ceiling in basemed apartment.
Architectural feature Porches Approximate date of feature C. 1853 Socribe existing feature: Two-story wooden verandah, wide, surrounding building. Openwork olumns, ornamental scrollwork. Simple ooden railings, possibly added later. olumns and floors in good cond., some ornam. pieces missing the folions of the folions of the folions and provided the folions of the folions of the folions and floors ornam.	to match existing, where necessary.
Architectural feature Outside stairs Approximate date of feature c. 1853 scribe existing feature Stairs on north, south and west sides deteriorated.	Describe work and impact on existing leatures Replace all stairs where necessary to match existing.
Architectural feature Floors, interior Approximate date of feature C. 1900 Cribe existing feature Linoleum floor coverings lst and 2nd floor kitchens in poor ndition due to water damage. Plywood of loor in kitchen and bathroom in base nt apartment in poor condtion, also due to water damage. Drawing no Dr	Describe work and impact on existing features Replace linoleur in 1st and 2nd floor kitchens. Install new subfloor of 1/2" plywood in kitche and bathroom of basement apartment, ar install new linoleum.
ontinuation sheets attached: Gyes O no ame and mailing address of owner: Name Nick Abraham	
Street 23 Crestdale Road	
City Danbury Telephone Number (during day): (203) 743-0354 I hereby apply for certification of rehabilitation work described above for purposes of the Federal t knowledge, correct, and that I am owner of the property described above. Social Security Number or Taxpayer (dentification Number	State Conn. zip_()6810

Owner's Signature_

CONTINUATION SHEET

Application — 1	Pert 2
Name of Property: Octagon House Address of Property: 21 Spring Street, Danbury, C	onn.
Name of Owner: Nick Abraham	
Architectural feature Bathrooms Approximate date of feature C. 1890 Describe existing feature Bathrooms, added, c. 1890-1900, showers added later. In fair condition.	Describe work and impact on existing features. Install new shower stall in 1st floor bathroom Wallpaper bathrooms, 1st and 2nd floors. Install new bathroom doors utilizing old doors found stored i basement.
Photo no Örawing no	
Architectural feature Plumbing Approximate date of feature C. 1920 Describe existing feature Copper pipes inside house. Poor condition-leaks.	Describe work and impact on existing leatures Replace leaking pipes, with copper tubing inside house, outlet drain with PVC piper. Cover hanging pipes in basement with sheetrock.
NUMBER Architectural feature <u>Electrical</u> Approximate date of feature <u>c. 1900</u>	Describe work and impact on existing features Replace all switches. Replace all plugs with
Describe existing feature Light switches and outlets in poor condition, present outlets illegal. Only two outlets in each room. Walls of house are 1' thick concrete, with thin lath on interior, plastered over to form interior walls. Orig. wiri 12,13,14 prawing no snaked through from 12,13,14 basement. Telephone w	stalling new outlets with wiring within walls would have required
Approximate date of feature	rooms. telephone wires (See phone beautiful telephone wires (See phone #13)) Upgrade boilers and burner and
Describe existing leature Heating units in basement, with steam radiators in rooms. 1st floor oil-fired boiler; 2nd floor-modern gas furnace. Basement unit-gas stove with heat. System in fair condition. 13,14,15 Photo no Drawing no	piping to meet code reqs. Drain heating system. Replace damaged

10 Architectural leature Interior walls & trim	Describe work and impact on existing features Re-paint 1st an
Approximate date of feature c. 1853	2nd floor rooms beige and trim white
valls, ornamental cornice moldings, medallions of plaster, wooden baseboard vindow and doorway surrounds-with shouldered architrave-lst flr., simples	12, 13 and 14.
on 2nd. No trim in basement.Paint pee	*
Architectural feature Central spiral stairca	Sescribe work and impact on existing features. Sand down to
Approximate date of feature _ C . 1853	remove digs and re-paint, matching
winding from 1st floor, rising to cupola. Condition fair, many digs and chips in railing.	original color.
hote no15_ Drawing no	
Architectural feature Exterior walls	Describe work and impact on existing features Cracks to be cu
Approximate date of feature <u>C. 1853</u>	out and patched with mortar to match
escribe existing feature 1'thick concrete walls,	existing compostion after analysis. Re-paint walls white to match existing
air condition-cracks in outer layer f finer grained stucco-like concrete.	color.
hoto no Drawing no	
Architectural feature	Describe work and impact on existing features
Approximate date of feature	The second secon
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8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—C archeology-prehistoric archeology-historic agriculture architecture art		landscape architecture law literature military X_ music	x religion science sculpture x social/ humanitarian
_X_1800-1899	_X commerce _X communications	exploration/settlement industry invention	philosophy Xpolitics/government	theater transportation other (specify) ocal_history
, Specific dates	See Inventory Item 7	Builder: Architect Se	e Inventory - Ite	The second secon

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Main Street Historic District is significant historically as the focus of Danbury's public and commercial life since its founding in 1684, and as the institutional and commercial center for the surrounding region of northern Fairfield County (Criterion A). Throughout its history, its development has been associated with local businessmen and civic leaders significant to the history of Danbury, and has also been associated with figures of state and national prominence, including newspaper publisher James Montgomery Bailey, the "Danbury News Man," widely known during the late nineteenth century as a humorist; and composer Charles E. Ives (Criterion B). The Main Street Historic District is significant architecturally for its individual buildings which are well-preserved examples of their periods, often the work of leading Connecticut and New York architects, as well as for its unified streetscapes in which buildings of different eras and styles blend harmoniously. Of particular note is the concentration of commercial architecture built from the late eighteenth century to the early twentieth.

HISTORICAL ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT Main Street Historic District can be characterized as what Carole Rifkind calls "The thickened spine of a New England village." Laid out in 1684 as "the Town Street" when the settlement was founded by eight families from Norwalk, Main Street has remained the focus of Danbury's public and commercial life. The first frontier settlement in northern Fairfield County, Danbury was founded as an agricultural community. The Main Street area was chosen as the site for the first settlement because of its central location. Danbury began to assume the role of regional trading center as new towns such as New Milford, Newtown and Ridgefield were founded on its borders during the early eighteenth century. Its strategic location in the Still River valley at the intersection of the east-west road connecting the Hudson River area with the central region of Connecticut and the northsouth route from Long Island Sound to Litchfield County made it the natural focus for commerce in the region. During the American Revolution, the town served as an important depot on the supply line to Continental forces in the Middle Atlantic colonies, and as the site of an army hospital and the base of a company of "artificers" who manufactured nails, wagons, shoes, harnesses and other materiel. Most of the early village was destroyed during a British raid in April, 1777, but industries which blossomed after the war laid the groundwork for a continuing growth.

The manufacture of men's hats had pre-existed the Revolution but during the 1780s and 1790s Danbury became one of the leading national centers for the industry, producing 20,000 hats in 1800. Shortly after that date several local manufacturers established retail outlets in southern port cities, setting up a trade that remained lucrative until the Civil War.



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

DANBURY, CONNECTICUT 06810

JAMES E. DYER

Dear Historic Property Owner:

Congratulations on having your building designated as an historic structure as part of Danbury's National Register Historic District. Membership in this district affords significant benefits to you, and to the City without in any way limiting your freedom to use your building as you see fit. I enthusiastically endorse the establishment of the district, and urge you to read carefully the materials in this kit which explain the benefits available to you.

Sincerely yours

James E. Dyer

Mayor of the City of Danbury