

Town of Trumbull
CONNECTICUT



Town Hall
5866 Main Street
Trumbull, Connecticut 06611

TRUMBULL DEMOLITION REVIEW COMMITTEE
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2025, MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT: Brian Fitzgerald
Debra Silber
John Naehar

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

ALSO PRESENT: Gia Mentillo, Clerk

RESIDENTS: John Lauria, 9 Providence Drive

Mr. Fitzgerald called the meeting to order at 7:39 p.m.

PUBLIC HEARING

The Demolition Delay Committee convened to discuss a 600SF building proposed for demolition at 6600 Main Street. It is the purview of the Committee to review structures proposed for demolition built prior to 1940. All Committee members have independently visited the structure in question. The Committee sought to determine: (1) Is the structure the former Upper Long Hill School House, (2) is it historically significant, and (3), if both are true, how should the Committee proceed.

Ms. Silber conducted research into the history of the structure which the Committee reviewed (documentation attached). During Mr. Naehar's site visit, he was accompanied by Eric Lott, a professional building restoration contractor, who compared images of the Upper Long Hill School to the structure in question and determined the two were one in the same. In further support of this, Mr. Fitzgerald quoted the following, "...the Upper Long Hill School, which stands as a house just beyond the Kimberly Inn. 'It had outside johns, and we had to carry water up the hill. There was a potbellied stove...'" It is believed that the potbellied stove currently at the historic society (labelled "Upper Long Hill School") came from this building. The Committee determined the structure in question is most likely that former Upper Long Hill School.

The Committee discussed the history of the structure from its construction in 1894 to present and its historic relevance in the community (i.e. only remaining one-room schoolhouse in town, ties to Jane Ryan, etc.). The Committee determined the structure to be historically significant and would like time to further investigate the structure and possibilities for preservation.

PUBLIC COMMENT

John Lauria, 9 Providence Drive, shared his knowledge of the history of the structure in question. Mr. Lauria is a former president of the Trumbull Historic Society and a current member of the

Inland Wetlands and Watercourse Commission (though he is not attending in that capacity). He informed that many residents along Broadway Road have memories of the schoolhouse and suggested interviews could be helpful.

Mr. Naeher made a **motion** to trigger the 90-day demolition delay period, Ms. Silber seconded. The motion passed unanimously. See attached decision letter. The Committee will have 90 days to determine the full significance of the structure and a means of preservation and will reconvene once more information is garnered. The decision letter is attached here.

Mr. Fitzgerald made a **motion** to adjourn the meeting, Mr. Naeher seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Dated at Trumbull, CT this 14th day of February 2025.

By: Gia Mentillo

Preliminary Report to the Demolition Delay Committee

Re: 6600 Main St., (Upper Long Hill School)

Feb. 13, 2025

This report includes:

1. Summary
2. Historical and Cultural Significance
3. Supporting Evidence (Published References)
4. Supporting Evidence (Maps)
5. Supporting Evidence (Site visits)
6. General History of Trumbull Schools
7. Trumbull's Extant One-Room Schoolhouses
8. Unfinished Research: Trumbull Property Records

Summary:

While more research is suggested, initial evidence indicates the structure at 6600 Main St. is the Upper Long Hill School (ULHS), built ca. 1894. This evidence consists of published reports referring to the location of the school and its conversion to a residence in the first half of the 20th century, as well as by recollections of current residents of the Long Hill/Broadway area. It

If the date of construction is correct, ULHS is the last (or one of the last) one-room schoolhouses to be built in Trumbull. With regard to preserving the school, considerations might include the structure's value as an example of schools of that period, and whether any other early (or earlier) Trumbull schoolhouses remain in existence.

Historic and Cultural Significance of the ULHS

Research suggests ULHS was built ca. 1894 as a one-room schoolhouse and expanded to two rooms in 1904. It was converted to a residence sometime after 1930.

Cultural significance: Jane Ryan, a longtime Trumbull educator for whom the former Park Lane School is named, got her start teaching at the Upper Long Hill School in 1927. She and other instructors at the school helped establish the town's first library.¹ A teacher at ULHS is also credited with the first "school lunch" offered in Trumbull. Published reports indicate that the children of helicopter pioneer Igor Sikorsky were pupils at the school.

Supporting Evidence (Published References)

Multiple published references to ULHS refer to the location of the school and its conversion to a residence. These include:

¹ "Up Close/Jane Ryan." The Bridgeport Post, April 5, 1990. P. 12-14.

"I came to upper Long Hill School in 1927. I taught the first three grades and the seventh grade. **The building up on the hill near the Kimberly Inn was the school, a two-room schoolhouse. It's a home now.** We had a potbellied stove. We had an outhouse. We were there until 1930. We had a wonderful time."²

"She (Jane Ryan) laughed as she recalled other details from the early days. "The pendulum swings," she said about the 'hot PTA meeting' that was held to discuss the decision to move the Long Hill seventh grade out to the Upper Long Hill School, **which still stands as a house just beyond the Kimberly Inn.** "It had outside johns, and we had to carry water up the hill. There was a potbellied stove ..."³

"By 1927 conditions were much too crowded to accommodate all eight grades. Therefore, the town decided to move the seventh grade to **the Upper Long Hill School which was a two-room schoolhouse above what is now the Kimberly Inn.** This move would also alleviate some of the work done by Miss Jane Ryan who was then the teacher for all the grades at the Upper Long Hill School. The male seventh graders were responsible for hauling wood to heat this older schoolhouse and for carrying drinking water. Seventh grade parents protested the use of the common dipper which had already been replaced in 1923 by the "bubblers" at the new (Long Hill) school. In addition, they also objected to the primitive outdoor plumbing and to the use of a wood-burning stove, as opposed to the more popular use of coal."⁴

"With 299 children of school age in Trumbull when the Town School Committee took over in 1895, the most pressing need was a school in the northern part of Long Hill. The Committee was instrumental in securing **a plot of ground for \$25 from Peter Gabler, 'on the east side of the Newtown Turnpike, across from the swamp.'** The schoolhouse complete was built for \$773.25, 'the balance of \$26.75 of the \$800 appropriation being held in reserve for grading purposes. **The school is a residence today, just north of the Kimberly Inn.**"⁵

"**The Upper Long Hill School was on Newtown Turnpike about a quarter of a mile north of the green.** It also was a one-room building, later enlarged to two rooms."⁶

Supporting Evidence (Maps)

"Educational Inquiry Trumbull" by the State Board of Education, 1916-1917 includes a map showing the location of the Upper Long Hill School in the approximate location of 6600 Main Street.

² "Up Close/Jane Ryan." The Bridgeport Post, April 5, 1990. P. 12-14.

³ She Spent It All In Trumbull: "Greatest Profession in the World," Declares Jane Ryan After 43 Years. The Trumbull Times, July 1, 1970. Sect. 2, P. 3

⁴ "School and Church Celebrate Anniversaries This Year." The Trumbull Times, May 22, 1980. (article on the closing of the Long Hill School that was built in 1920, now district offices).

⁵ "The Demise of Trumbull's One-Room Schools." Dorothy M. Seeley, CT League Bulletin, March 1978, also printed in *Tales of Trumbull's Past* by Dorothy M. Seeley.

⁶ Trumbull Church and Town, E. Merrill Beach, ch. VI.

Map #1, Upper Long Hill School dated Sept. 5, 1916, shows school situated near what appears to be Newtown-Bridgeport Turnpike (Rte. 111/Main St.).

Supporting Evidence (Site Visit)

Demolition Delay Committee Member John Naeher completed an interior and exterior inspection of the structure with Historical Building Restoration Professional Eric Iott on Feb. 8. Mr. Iott. Here is his initial finding:

Physical inspection, particularly in conjunction with original photos, strongly supports the structure we walked through is the schoolhouse.

Not only the rough width, length, pitch of the roof and the existence of that rear brick chimney, but also look at the size and location of those windows. Counting the clapboards from the sill to the bottom of the window, (average 5" exposure for each clapboard) the lower window begins 4'-4.5' from the interior floor. And the windows appear to be nearly 6' tall, again counting the clapboards.

The placement of those tall windows also supports the interior height was 10'+.

This building is indeed the schoolhouse

Very excited, what a great find.

Historical Notes: In addition to Iott's observations of the current structure, the following notes from the 1917 Educational Inquiry site visit offered these general guidelines for school buildings of the time:

"Well planned school buildings have separate large well lighted and ventilated cloak rooms for both boys and girls. They have enough hooks for all wraps and cupboards or shelves for lunch boxes if no other room for this purpose is provided."

"The walls of a good classroom are light but not dazzling. A light gray or buff is preferable. The floors are of hard wood narrow and laid tightly with concealed nails. Light comes from the left side to the pupils and never from the front. The windows are large and close together. In area they equal about 20% of the floor space."

A General History of Trumbull Schools

1761: First mention of school districts in Trumbull, in records of Christ Church, Trumbull: Foolshatch (Monroe); Cutlers Farm, Stepney, Daniels Farm, and White Plains.⁷

1778: Nine school districts include Nichols Farm (Old Farm School); White Plains, Daniels Farm, Lower End of Long Hill, Upper End of Long Hill, Chestnut Hill, Tashaway, Stepney and Booth Hill.⁸

⁷ Trumbull Church and Town, E. Merrill Beach, ch. VI.

⁸ Trumbull Church and Town

1795: School Committee established, lay out districts of Nichols, White Plains, Daniels Farm, Booth Hill, Long Hill South, Long Hill North, Mount Moria and Tashua.

E. Merrill Beach reports, without providing dates, that “first schoolhouse of record in Trumbull” was on Unity Road, east of the house owned by Merritt Vanderbuilt in 1955. A second, “little red schoolhouse” was “above the home of Mr. George Woods” (the current Trumbull Historical Society) but burned before the Civil War. Later a two-room schoolhouse was erected on the site of the Nichols Fire House on what is now Shelton Road. He describes the first school at Booth Hill as “a small crude building ... resembling a woodshed.”

1852-1859: Establishment of 5 Trumbull Schools,⁹ including
Nichols Farm (Oct. 4, 1852)
Longhill (sic) (Aug. 30, 1854)
White Plains (Nov. 21, 1856)
Daniels Farm (Mar. 28, 1857)
Chestnut Hill (Dec. 20, 1859)

1894-95: Town School Committee established, land for ULHS purchased from Peter Gabler.

1904: Upper Long Hill is made a two-room school. ¹⁰

1917: “Educational Inquiry Trumbull” by the State Board of Education, 1916-1917 includes a map showing the location of the Upper Long Hill School in the approximate location of 6600 Main Street. It also notes that the area around the school was rocky and wooded, and “near a swamp.” There were at this time 7 schools in Trumbull.

1920: By 1920 six of Trumbull’s schools had lost the distinction of being one-room schools. ¹¹

1920: Long Hill School (now the district office) and Nichols School (now the senior center) are built.

1921: The one-room Tashua School is closed and pupils are bused to the new Long Hill School amid protests from parents. The one-room school is reopened, but parents conclude their children can get a better education at the new school and it is reclosed. Busing to LHS resumes in Nov. 1921.

1922: “The nearest thing to a hot lunch program took place on Jan 12, 1922, when Miss Miriam Carpenter, teacher at Upper Long Hill, bought “Kettles” so she could make cocoa on cold days for her pupils.” ¹²

⁹ “Early School Houses in Trumbull” typewritten report for the Trumbull Historical Society, submitted by Mrs. Howard Davidson, Historical Site Chairman. (No date).

¹⁰ “Educational Inquiry Trumbull” by the State Board of Education, 1916-1917.

¹¹ “The Demise of Trumbull’s One-Room Schools.” Dorothy M. Seeley, CT League Bulletin, March 1978, also printed in *Tales of Trumbull’s Past* by Dorothy M. Seeley. (She references in the article the minutes of the Trumbull Town School Committee from July 17, 1895, to Feb. 3, 1926, were found in the Town Hall vault.)

¹² “The Demise of Trumbull’s One-Room Schools.” Dorothy M. Seeley, CT League Bulletin, March 1978, also printed in *Tales of Trumbull’s Past* by Dorothy M. Seeley.

1927: Upper Long Hill School is one of four Trumbull schools.¹³ Jane Ryan comes to teach there.

1930: ULHS closed.

Trumbull's Extant One-Room Schoolhouses:

To establish the importance of this building, it is worthwhile to determine how many other early Trumbull Schools remain in existence, typically as dwellings. Most references to these schools being extant date to the late 20th century. This research should be completed.

Tashua (est. uncertain): "The old Tashua School building on the northwest corner of the intersection of Madison Avenue and Fuller Road is also a dwelling house."¹⁴ Another source gives this address as 5005 Madison Avenue.

Chestnut Hill: The third iteration of this schoolhouse, on Chestnut Hill Road, "still stands and is in use as a dwelling," according to the report on early schoolhouses by Mrs. Harold Davidson (1970s?)

Daniels Farm: In his 1955 book, E. Merrill Beach reports the 1857 schoolhouse "is now a dwelling ... across the street from, and a little south of, the entrance to Mohawk Drive."

Lakeville District School (possibly White Plains, 1856): According to E. Merrill Beach, appears on the 1867 map. Located at the lower end of White Plains Rd., "it is now (1955) a dwelling at the corner of Beardsley Parkway."

Lower Long Hill School (1854): According to E. Merrill Beach was located on a small triangle of land on Main and Lake. It was later moved onto Lake Steet and converted into a dwelling.

(Unfinished research) Trumbull Property Records

Property transactions related to 6600 Main Street are underway but incomplete, with conveyances traced back to 1944. This research should be continued.

¹³ She Spent It All In Trumbull: "Greatest Profession in the World," Declares Jane Ryan After 43 Years. The Trumbull Times, July 1, 1970. Sect. 2, P. 3

¹⁴ "Early School Houses in Trumbull" typewritten report for the Trumbull Historical Society, submitted by Mrs. Howard Davidson, Historical Site Chairman. (No date).



**Planning and Zoning
Department**
Telephone (203) 452-5047
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Town Hall
5866 Main Street
Trumbull, Connecticut 06611

**Brian Fitzgerald
Zoning Enforcement Officer**
(203) 452-5052
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February 14, 2025

Angelo Magliocco
49 Harvester Road
Trumbull, CT. 06611

Re: 6600 Main Street

Dear Angelo:

On January 22, 2025, the Town of Trumbull received a completed application to demolish a structure standing on 6600 Main Street Trumbull, CT 06611. Town records show that this structure was built in 1910. According to Town of Trumbull Ordinance, section 5-5, no permit for the demolition of any building, structure, or part thereof which is five hundred square feet or larger and constructed prior to 1940 shall be issued until a review and determination has been made by the Demolition Review Committee as to whether the building or structure may have historical, architectural or cultural significance to the Town of Trumbull.

Since the structure you propose to demolish was constructed prior to 1940, the Demolition Review Committee was advised and began researching the history of the structure, including two site visits. On February 13, 2025, the Demolition Review Committee conducted a public hearing to discuss the proposed demolition of the structure and during that meeting determined that a portion of the structure may have historical significance, and that it is likely a single room schoolhouse built in 1894 known as Upper Long Hill School.

Town of Trumbull Ordinance section 5-5, subsection 8 states that "if a determination is made by the Demolition Review Committee that a property for which demolition has been requested may have historic, architectural or cultural significance to the Town of Trumbull, demolition shall not proceed until ninety (90) days after a determination by the Demolition Review Committee of potential significance. This 90-day period shall be called the Demolition Delay Review Period."

Town of Trumbull Ordinance section 5-5, subsection 9 states "During the 90-day Demolition Delay Review Period, the Planning and Zoning Department and other Town Departments, Town Officials and/or members of the Trumbull Historical Society shall meet with the applicant for demolition to determine whether there is potential to prevent the demolition by allowing a new use for the structure, move the structure, save and preserve portions of the structure or save and preserve objects in the structure that may be of significance to the Town of Trumbull."

The demolition delay committee recognizes that you are operating on a timeline to complete construction at this site by October 2025 and we are already working to validate whether this structure is in fact the Upper Long Hill School. We are also exploring the logistical and financial resources necessary to move the schoolhouse

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portion of the structure from your property to another site. The Town of Trumbull is grateful for your patience and anticipated cooperation as we work to preserve historical structures in town.

Sincerely,


Brian Fitzgerald
Zoning Enforcement Officer