



Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

ANDREW M. CUOMO
Governor

ERIK KULLESEID
Commissioner

September 6, 2019

John Sharkey, AIA
Rhinebeck Architecture & Planning PC
21 East Market Street
Rhinebeck, New York 12572
(via email)

Re: SED
Hudson City School District/M.C. Smith MS Athletic Field Modification
102 Harry Howard Avenue, Hudson, Columbia County
19PR05465

Dear Mr. Sharkey:

Thank you for requesting the comments of the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP). We have reviewed the project in accordance with the New York State Historic Preservation Act of 1980 (Section 14.09 of the New York Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation Law). These comments are those of the OPRHP and relate only to Historic/Cultural resources.

As you know, the M.C. Smith School had previously been determined to be eligible for inclusion in the New York State and National Registers of Historic Places. Based upon additional information our office recently expanded the 2007 determination to include the athletic field area, which was designed by noted landscape architect, Laurie Davidson Cox. (See attached)

After reviewing the submitted material our office found that the District has proposed to retain the ballfield and circulation track that were the centerpiece of the executed Cox design. The current proposal will install 4-foot perimeter fencing (between the track and field) and replace the backstop and dugouts. The Homeplate bleachers (metal and concrete sections) will be removed and the area seeded.

In reviewing the current plan and the historic material we noted that the original Cox plan was never fully executed. We also found that changes in the landscape have occurred over the decades. These include the installation of the backstop, dugouts, lighting, fencing, expansion of the building and parking, and the renovations of the north bleachers and tennis courts.

When this office reviews proposed renovations to historic buildings we are guided by the United States Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. The preamble to that document defines "*rehabilitation*" as "*the process of returning a property to a state of utility, through repair or alteration, which makes possible an efficient contemporary use while preserving those portions and features of the property which are significant to its historic, architectural and cultural values.*" Although this a landscape feature and not a historic building we believe that the core philosophy can be applied to this action.

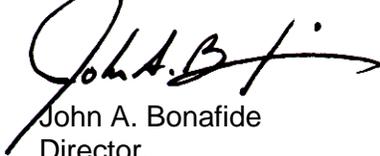
To that end, we are pleased to see that the Hudson School District has chosen to retain and *rehabilitate* the center piece of the Laurie Davidson Cox landscape plan. The ballfield and

perimeter track were clearly intended to be the centerpiece of his design and the proposed updating by the district of this component to a state of modern utility does not alter this intention.

As such, our office found that the plan will not adversely impact the eligibility of the M.C. Smith School property. We do however request that district consider using a dark coated perimeter fencing, which will help to minimize the visual impacts of the new installation.

If I can be of any further assistance, I can be reached at john.bonafide@parks.ny.gov or (518) 268-2166.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John A. Bonafide". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

John A. Bonafide
Director,
Technical Preservation Services Bureau
Agency Historic Preservation Officer

cc: Ken Sheffer



Date: 08/28/2019

Staff: Daniel Bagrow

USN Number: 02140.000897

Name: M.C. Smith Middle School

Location: 102 Harry Howard Avenue, Hudson NY 12534

Resource Status:

- Determination:** Determined SR/NR eligible by the Commissioner of the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation on the date noted above.
- Contributing:**

Criteria for Inclusion in the National Register:

- Associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns in our history.
- Associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction; or represents the work of a master; or poses high artistic values; or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.
- Have yielded, or may be likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Summary Statement:

The original c. 1936 section of the M.C. Smith Middle School in Hudson—significant additions were made c. 1967-- is eligible for listing on the State and National Registers of Historic Places as an intact example of institutional Georgian Revival design. This three-story brick-walled building featured parapet ends and a facade distinguished by a projecting center pavilion, the flanking bays of which were arranged as three groupings with four windows per group as a feature of a symmetrical scheme. The school was built with characteristic yet high-style detailing including quoins; belt courses; roof balustrades; dormers; a prominent central cupola; Palladian and oculi windows; and projecting balconies. Other intact features include double-hung 12-over-12 window sash and slate roofing. Further additions to the southern addition occurred in 2018.

Additionally, the school's landscape is a contributing feature to the historic property and was designed by Laurie Davidson Cox (1883-1968), a nationally known park designer, landscape architect, and a professor of landscape architecture in the New York State College of Forestry at Syracuse University. The contributing features of the landscape include the athletic fields and associated structures (running track, baseball diamond and field, tennis courts, grandstand bleachers (adjacent to the tennis courts and behind the backstop), and adjacent parking) which closely convey their original design as shown in Cox's conceptual site drawings. It does not appear that Cox's proposed playground to the east of the running track or the outdoor theater southwest of the track were implemented. Cox's overall plan can be easily read on the landscape and is relatively unchanged since its initial construction.

Author: William Krattinger (2007) and Daniel Bagrow (2019)