

Wendt House, Salem

SIGNIFICANCE:

The Wendt House, built c. 1770 and moved to its present location in 1830, is located in Salem's smallest National Register Historic District. It is one of six remaining buildings in the last surviving residential enclave in downtown Salem. Members of Salem's early African-American and maritime communities once occupied the house and circumstantial evidence suggests it may have been a c. 1840 "stop" on the Underground Railroad.



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THREAT:

The owners of the house seek to demolish it and construct a parking lot in its place. Not yet successful in obtaining a demolition permit, the owners have succeeded in constructing additional parking spaces on the property and demolishing the rear porch. After years of neglect, the building has a high vagrancy rate and is considered a fire risk.

STATUS:

A neighborhood association has been established to discuss the preservation of the historic district, which has lost two of its buildings since its National Register nomination was originally prepared in 1983. A Wendt House cleanup and peaceful anti-demolition protest were conducted in May of 2001 by the neighborhood group. In September, the Salem City Council will review an order, sponsored by a fellow City Council member, to formally request that the Salem Redevelopment Authority take the property by eminent domain in an effort to stop the neglect and deterioration of the house.

Former Universalist Church Building, Southbridge

SIGNIFICANCE:

This Greek Revival church was built in 1841 and served as a Universalist Church until the early 1970's. It is the second oldest church in Southbridge and the only one built in the Greek Revival style. Currently, the building is used as rental retail and apartment space.

THREAT:

Threatened by neglect, the lack of exterior maintenance is evident in the poor condition of the roof shingles and deterioration of the trim work.

STATUS:

The community feels strongly that this building should be preserved and maintained, as it is a key component of the downtown historic district. The local Historical Commission is currently trying to work with the owner to apply for a Community Development Block Grant that would help fund needed repairs to the building.



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HISTORICAL COMMISSION