

Exhibit C
Union Hotel Statement of Significance

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally

Applicable National Register Criteria ☒ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Commerce

Period of Significance

1860-1918

Significant Dates

1860

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Zook, Abraham W.

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Meets Criteria A & C

SUMMARY STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Union Hotel, built in 1860 by Abraham W. and Mary J. Zook, is significant under criterion "A" as an excellently preserved example of a 19th century inn along a major early north-south state constructed road, and as an example of the commercial enterprise which grew up directly as a result of early state actions to encourage transportation. It especially helps to convey the history of travel in the middle of the 19th century between the state capitol in Harrisburg, and Gettysburg and points beyond the Maryland border. By the early 1800's, with commercial, military, and travel necessities requiring closer and more reliable communications between Harrisburg and Frederick, Maryland, and even Washington, D.C., to the south, a new road was mandated, a road which gave birth to new villages and towns, and led directly to the establishment of inns and other travelers' services. As the century moved into the railroad era, with no rail connections ever built along this route, this road and the inns that served it took on increased significance to commerce. Inns like the Union Hotel, consequently, made vital links in the commercial chain, often placed in villages every four or five miles along the new State Road, providing food and lodging for overnight guests and their animals, as well as more extended accommodations for salesmen and "drummers" who came to do business with the farmers and trades people in the vicinity. Thus, like all of the inns along this road, the Union Hotel was an important aspect of 19th century local economy and commerce, and remained such until 1918, when the coming of Prohibition effectively ended its heyday. This inn is also significant under criterion

☒ See continuation sheet

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"C" for its architecture as a little-altered example of a mid-19th century Georgian form modified by elements of other later forms, and the requirements of commercial use. Among its most significant features--all dating to its 1860 construction by Abraham W. Zook--are an iron-railed platform or "widow's walk" atop the roof, the very large third floor "public hall with a room-width stage still in place and perfectly intact, the first floor tavern room of large proportions, a 55'-long ornamental porch or overhang at the second floor level with cast iron railing, and the exterior beer cellar entrance below ground level. Among the non-Georgian features are the Italianate brackets on the main exterior cornice, and the Federal influences in the main staircase with its light balusters and general lack of ornamentation.

Historically the Union Hotel is significant for the role it played as a principal stopping place for travelers on the old "State Road" linking Harrisburg with Maryland. Inns and hotels figured prominently in local transportation and commerce in the 19th century, and inns along this road in particular witnessed an enormous burgeoning of traffic in the years following the Civil War. Indeed, by the early 20th century, the old State Road, upon which the Union Hotel is the dominant hostelry in Cumberland County, had become U.S. Highway 15, and remained so--Harrisburg's major highway link to the south--until construction of a new divided highway in the late 1960's.

By 1810, the demands of travel and commerce for the relatively new Pennsylvania capital city of Harrisburg had become such that direct communications with Philadelphia, York, Lancaster, and Carlisle, and thereby indirectly with points south, were no longer sufficient. A good all weather road to Gettysburg and the south were necessary. In that year, then, the legislature mandated that a new "State Road" be laid out, connecting Harrisburg to Gettysburg, and passing through Cumberland, York, and Adams Counties. In Cumberland County, at least, there was considerable opposition to the new road, and even on the part of those selected to choose its exact route. Consequently, according to some sources these surveyors actually routed the road over the highest hills, hoping thereby to discourage its construction.¹ Some weight is added to this allegation by the fact that when the new U.S. Highway 15 was laid out in the 1960's, it was moved only a few hundred yards east of the old road, and thereby avoided passing over a series of steep hills. In any event, the State Road was built after all, and soon became known as the Gettysburg Pike.

Traffic and transportation over the new road grew rapidly, especially since it now gave Harrisburg a direct link to the

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commerce from the west flowing along the "Great Road," the Pittsburgh-Philadelphia turnpike, which it met in Gettysburg. Very quickly, also, inns and taverns sprang up to serve the needs of travelers along the new pike. Central Pennsylvania in general was a region filled with such hostelries. By 1846 more than 77 communities in the six counties comprising south-central Pennsylvania had one or more inns.² In Cumberland County alone, by 1846 there were more than 40 inns and taverns, and by 1860 that number had risen markedly.³ It was no wonder, for the manufactures alone which flowed out of the county included carriages and wagons for the freight trade, tanned hides and harness, and in 1840 some 2,830 tons of iron, 2,150 tons of bar iron, hundreds of tons of lime, and not insignificantly, 250,305 gallons of liquor from some 28 distilleries.⁴

Along the new Gettysburg Pike specifically, inns arose quickly. The first, in fact, may have pre-dated the road, being opened around 1800, though its location has not been pinpointed. By about 1825, Nicholas Urich had built his small log tavern in the Village of Center Square, one mile south of Shepherdstown, and in 1829 Jacob Gehr opened his inn on the State Road, apparently near Wormleysburg. In or before 1835, D. Shaffer opened a new inn on the pike, in the 13-year-old village of Shepherdstown, and then or later the Rail Road Hotel was opened in Bridgeport, on the Susquehanna River, where the State Road terminated at the bridge to Harrisburg.⁵ Nearby villages also sprouted inns, and Mechanicsburg, just three miles off the pike from Shepherdstown, became known as a village of taverns, with more inns than churches.

It was into this historical context that the Union Hotel was opened in 1860. By 1872, as a result, there were five inns or taverns in operation along the Gettysburg Pike on its Cumberland County progress. Urich's small tavern was still running, as was Shaffer's, both modest log hostelries. Then came the larger Rail Road Hotel in Bridgeport, a small inn run by the Eichelbergers on the pike near Shiremanstown, and the Union Hotel.⁶ Of the five of these inns spread over a ten-mile stretch of the pike that falls within the county, only two remain standing: the modest Urich tavern, a one room affair of which a recent architectural survey concluded that "very little remains of the very simple interior of this structure"; and the Union Hotel.⁷ That Shepherdstown itself had acquired a measure of special importance is evidenced by the fact that it was the only community on this stretch of the pike to have two inns, one on each of its two hills. No doubt this came about because the village was ten miles from Harrisburg, a good day's leisurely foot walk for the ambulatory traveler, and a good day's transit for a freight wagon. Also its town well afforded dependable water year round, even in drought years, as it does today. That the new Union Hotel

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itself assumed an immediate and important role is evident as well, for it occupied the first and highest hill in Shepherdstown for the south-bound traveler from Harrisburg. It also owned the town well from which thirsty men and animals needed to drink. It offered a tavern of substantial proportions, a cool beer and liquor cellar, a dining room, and overnight accommodations for a dozen or more guests. Furthermore, a retail store in the building provided access to some kind of merchandise for the traveler, and its huge third floor "hall" could host civil, political, and social events for travelers and area residents alike. Evidence of its stature in comparison to its near competitors is revealed in the fact that an 1868 county tax assessment of the other Shepherdstown inn, run by Joshua Culp, evaluates it at \$1,200, whereas the same assessment three years previously evaluated the Union Hotel at \$2,400, and the 1860 census placed its value as high as \$7,000.⁸

Thus, while details are sketchy for the other hotels no longer standing, it appears that all but the Bridgeport inn were modest log structures with very limited capacity. By contrast, the Union Hotel was a major enterprise, even larger than the Railroad House Hotel in nearby Mechanicsburg, built at about the same time, and serving a highway and railroad community more than seven times the size of Shepherdstown. Besides being remarkable for its proportions, the Union Hotel stands out due to the unchanged setting of rural Shepherdstown, which today still boasts a preponderance of 1860-1880 houses. And the inn itself is a virtually intact example of its kind, with 95% of its original exterior in place and unchanged, and its interior restored with only minor exceptions to its 1860 configuration and appearance.

In sum, the building of the State Road in 1810, and its rapid growth in travel and commerce, provided a major intra- and inter-state link for trade and communications in the mid-19th century. Inns all along its length contributed to their local economy and life, as well as to regional economic life and development. Without those inns there could be little or no movement along vital arteries like the Gettysburg Pike; without new major roads like that pike, the growth of the region would have been stunted. The Union Hotel contributed very directly to the success of that vital highway, and to the commercial growth of the locale.

Not a lot is known about Abraham W. Zook, builder of the inn. He was born June 6, 1828, the son of Christian and Anna Zook of Leacock Township, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. The Zooks--also spelled Zug--were of Swiss descent, and some time between 1840 and 1850 the family moved to Cumberland County's Upper Allen Township.⁹ There, on March 27, 1858, Zook and his wife Mary purchased approximately 21 acres of land in Shepherdstown

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from Thomas Gold.¹⁰ It was on the southernmost corner of this property, in 1860, that Zook built and opened his inn, and on March 3, 1860, he and partners John Floyd and George Miller posted bond in applying for a tavern license in the name of Zook's apparent tavern keeper Floyd, certifying that "your petitioner is a citizen of the United States and occupies a commodious house . . . well calculated for a public house of entertainment, and from its neighborhood and situation is suitable, as well as necessary, for the accommodation of the public and the entertainment of strangers and travellers; that he is well provided with stabling for horses and all conveniences necessary for the entertainment of strangers and travellers, having for the exclusive use of travellers at least 4 bed-rooms and 8 beds."¹¹

It is not known what Zook called his new inn--if he gave it any name at all--but he did not keep it for long. On April 1, 1868, he sold it to James Reed, the first in a long line of absentee owners who employed innkeepers to manage the place.¹² When Reed died intestate in 1887, the property was sold at an orphan's court public sale, and here for the first time are found names associated with the inn. On December 31, 1887, it was ordered by the court that Reed's heirs "expose the said property, which is commonly known as the Shepherdstown Hotel property, to public sale."¹³ Two months later, advertisements appeared in the local press, announcing the sale and highlighting the "THREE-STORY BRICK BUILDING about 50ft by 60ft, Brick and frame back building, known as the Shepherdstown Hotel, large hall for public purposes and large store room in the building, also commodious stables."¹⁴ A few days later, however, when the sale had taken place, it was referred to in the press as "the Union Hotel property in Shepherdstown."¹⁵

The inn has operated under several names in its history, but the name Shepherdstown Hotel has been associated with it from the 1880's until after the turn of the century when, during the 1910's it was known as the "Stop Inn," and then later renamed "Hilltop Inn." Thus, in explaining this contradiction of having two names in 1888, and keeping in mind that the name Shepherdstown Hotel was in use for many years thereafter, it seems logical to speculate that a recent name change had taken place, and that the sale advertisement, written by the owner's heirs, used the new name--Shepherdstown Hotel--whereas the newspaper report of its sale, published some distance away in Carlisle, and written by an editor or reporter not closely involved with either the inn or the sale, used what must have been an older name--Union Hotel--still in some general use. Thus it appears that Union Hotel is the earlier usage, though it is not necessarily what Zook called the hotel when he first opened it. There may be some significance in the fact that immediately across York

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Street from the inn stands the old Union Church.

The inn changed hands many times during the next century. Reed's son James bought it at the orphan's court sale, then in turn sold it on May 2, 1896, to M.P. Johnson, and he sold it to Adolphus Busch of the Anheuser-Busch Brewing Co. on March 16, 1897. It was under the Busch ownership that the inn saw its final days of true commercial significance. When Prohibition loomed, Busch sold it on October 26, 1918, for a mere \$700. Apparently the inn remained a private home until John Ungar bought it on October 26, 1922. He renamed it Hilltop Inn and operated a Pennsylvania Dutch restaurant, at the same time adding the 1920's renovations mentioned in Section 7.¹⁷ From 1932 onward, however, after Ungar sold the property, it has been a private home, as it is today.¹⁸ Thus it is for the years of its height of activity, 1860-1918, that the inn is deemed significant, with its construction and opening in 1860 most significant of all.

The architectural significance of the Union Hotel derives in large part from its almost entirely intact and unchanged structure and appearance, and from the fact that of a number of major inns built in the 1840-1870 period in this area, it is the only one which still survives in such condition. As already stated, five inns occupied the old State Road or Gettysburg Pike in the 1870's. Three were modest log structures, of which only one, the Urich tavern, still survives. Of the other two, the Rail Road Hotel at Bridgeport also no longer survives, and no details of its construction are available. However, in nearby Mechanicsburg there were a number of inns and taverns that offer comparisons with the Union Hotel in Shepherdstown. In particular, during the period of the Union Hotel's early years, 1860-1880, there are five such hostelries.

In the 100 block of West Main Street stood the National Hotel, a three story brick structure five bays wide on the street, and seven bays deep. Built in the 1850's, it still stands, though so drastically altered that no architectural features remain for comparison. Now called the Paradise Nightspot, it has been covered on all sides with flagstone facing, its front entrance replaced with aluminum and glass doors, and the ground floor interior completely gutted in the 1950's to turn it into a coffee shop and bar. All that visibly remains of its original woodwork is a cornice, which has also seen some alteration.¹⁹

At the opposite end of Main Street once stood the 1850's Eastern Inn, which had been renamed the Mansion House by 1872. It was a three story brick hotel, too, but no other details are known, it being taken down in the last century and no

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photographs having survived. Judging from the size of the lot upon which it stood, it was about the same size as the National Hotel.²⁰

Between these two, in the center of Mechanicsburg on Main Street, stood the Merchant's Hotel. This was apparently the old Cumberland Wagon tavern which dated back to the 1810's, and which was rebuilt of brick in the late 1820's. This tavern, too, no longer stands, though early tax records indicate that it was brick, and two story. Beyond this, no details are known.

In the 1840's, the Rail Road Hotel was built by George Singeiser on Strawberry Alley, immediately next to the Cumberland Valley Rail Road depot. This inn, too, is no longer standing, having been destroyed by fire. One surviving photograph does show it to be brick, two story, and eight bays wide.²¹

Finally, sometime between 1867 and 1872, the American Hotel was built on Market Street, across from the depot. As originally constructed, it was a brick three story inn, five bays wide on Market, and five bays deep on Strawberry Alley. At a later date, as evidenced by brick not integrated into the face of the original building, an additional bay was added on the Market Street facade, and an additional four bays were added extending the Strawberry Alley rear of the inn. It still stands today, now called the American House, and some of its original architectural features are preserved, most notably a very handsome cornice with pairs of brackets alternating with raised panels in the frieze. What appear to be original two-over-two sash windows are in place everywhere except the first floor front. Unfortunately, substantial alterations have occurred here, too. The entire exterior was sandblasted in the 1970's, and then the Market Street first level facade was changed by the addition of a sort of mansard porch with green wooden rough-cut boards covering the brick beneath. Store front windows were inserted. The interior first floor has also undergone considerable alteration in making it into a restaurant and bar, though how much the actual floor plan has been altered, if any, has not been determined. Neither here nor in the other surviving Mechanicsburg inn, were the upper floors available for inspection.²²

With this as background, the architectural context within which the Union Hotel was constructed can be established. Immediately evident is the unusual size of the inn. When built in 1860 it was larger than any of the other inns on the State Road, and even larger than any of the inns in the much more populated railroad town of Mechanicsburg, so far as can be determined at this time. Only later alterations made the American Hotel larger with six by nine bays compared to the eight by six bays of the Union Hotel. Thus, while

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representative of the trend toward three story brick inns in the region in that era, still the Union Hotel stood out from the rest by its size, especially considering that it was not located in a substantial town, but in a rural village, emphasizing its important link with, and service to, the State Road.

Architecturally, too, the Union Hotel stands out among its kind for its details. No specifics are available for those which are no longer standing. However, from what can be seen of those inns that survive, and from the extant photo of the Rail Road Hotel, we may determine a few meaningful things. The widow's walk on the Union Hotel is unique among area inns. Indeed, throughout the region, the nearest similar platform on any structure, commercial or residential, is just north of Chambersburg, forty miles distant. Similarly, the second floor porch overhang with ornamental ironwork does not exist on any other surviving inns in the area, the nearest comparable example being in Carlisle on what appears to be an 1870's hotel on High Street near the public square. While nothing can be said of the inns now gone, it is known that none of those standing and mentioned above have anything like the large third floor public room with stage, nor do any still standing have or show evidence of any below ground exterior beer cellar entrance, though such may have been covered with paving subsequently. The Union Hotel is the only surviving inn in the area, of those surveyed, which still has its original summer kitchen and large cooking fireplace intact. It is the only one still retaining its original six-over-six windows, and the only one with a substantial main entrance with side-lights and full transom. Only the Union Hotel and the American House retain their full original cornices, and while the latter's is definitely more ornate, the former's is considerably more imposing thanks to its size. Exterior window details, including the bull's-eyes and reeded lintels, occur only on the Union Hotel.

Finally, the Union Hotel stands out among other remaining inns in the area due to its significantly higher comparable degree of integrity. The National Hotel is altered almost beyond recognition, inside and out. The American Hotel has suffered destructive remodeling on its brick, having been sandblasted and repointed with a high portland cement content mortar, the eradication of its main front first level facade, and apparent extensive interior change on at least the first level. Reportedly the upper floors are in bad condition and are being left that way, but this is only hearsay. By comparison, the Union Hotel retains 95% of its original exterior intact and virtually unchanged since 1860, the only changes being the new six-over-six windows on the third floor, and the substitution of replacement 1860's-era brick in the store

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front area which was originally wooden. The brick has been carefully cleaned using a mild chemical and water, with no abrasive of any kind being used. All exterior woodwork survives intact excepting the store front. And on the interior the original first floor layout has survived unchanged, while the extensive alterations of the 1920's to the second floor were easily read, and have been reversed, returning it to its original configuration. Only on the third floor, which is still an apartment, is there any deviation from the 1860 room plan. Unfortunately, no interior detail features remain from other area inns to allow a comparison, but that, in itself, speaks for the significance of the Union Hotel.

In sum, the Union Hotel survives as a virtually intact prime example of an unusually commodious and architecturally detailed mid-19th century country inn in the Georgian form, modified by Federal and Italianate elements and the requirements of commercial use, and representative of an unusual degree of attention to size, detail, and service, for its location and era.