Asylum Hill historic MRA

1. BUILDING NAME (Common) 
   Spencer House

2. TOWN CITY 
   Hartford

3. STREET AND NUMBER
   1039 Asylum Ave.

4. OWNER(S) 
   Parkside Management Co., 90 Park Ave., New York, NY 10016
   □ Public  □ Private

5. USE (Present) 
   New vacant; will become studios for radio station.
   □ History (Historic) □ Residence

6. ACCESSIBILITY TO PUBLIC: 
   □ Yes  □ No
   □ Yes  □ No

7. STYLE OF BUILDING
   Georgian Revival

8. MATERIAL(S) (Indicate use or location when appropriate)
   □ Clapboard  □ Asbestos Siding  □ Brick  □ Other (Specify)
   □ Wood Shingle  □ Asphalt Siding  □ Fieldstone
   □ Board & Batten  □ Stucco  □ Cobblestone
   □ Aluminum Siding  □ Concrete  □ Cut stone
   □ Fieldstone  □ Other (Specify)

9. STRUCTURAL SYSTEM
   □ Wood frame  □ Post and beam  □ balloon
   □ Load bearing masonry  □ Structural iron or steel
   □ Other (Specify)

10. ROOF (Type) 
    □ Gable 
    □ Gambrel 
    □ Wood Shingle  □ Roll Asphalt  □ Tin  □ Slate
    □ Asphalt shingle  □ Built up  □ Tile  □ Other (Specify)

11. NUMBER OF STORIES
    2½

12. CONDITION
    □ Excellent  □ Good  □ Fair  □ Deteriorated
    □ Excellent  □ Good  □ Fair  □ Deteriorated

13. INTEGRITY
    □ On original site  □ Moved
    □ On original site  □ Moved

14. RELATED OUTBUILDINGS OR LANDSCAPE FEATURES
    □ Barn  □ Shed  □ Garage  □ Other landscape features or buildings (Specify)
    □ Carriage house  □ Shop  □ Garden

15. SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT
    □ Open land  □ Woodland  □ Residential
    □ Open land  □ Woodland  □ Residential

16. INTERRELATIONSHIP OF BUILDING AND SURROUNDINGS
    Asylum Avenue is a main east-west artery. It is built up with apartment and office buildings in large part. Behind the Spencer House, however, there are several square blocks that are still residential in use.
The house is a 2½-story, 5-bay, red brick, Georgian Revival structure with a high, slate, gabled roof, facing north. There are three, prominent, gabled dormers in the front slope of the roof. The central entrance has a small, gabled portico supported by simple, round columns. There is an exterior chimney on the west wall and a central chimney in the wing that runs to the south. Windows are 12/1 double hung sash. The interior ground floor plan includes a central hall with living room (originally) to the west and library to the east. Behind the library was the dining room, and then the service wing.

### Architect
- Ebbe's & Frid

### Builder
- Carlson-Torrell

### Historical or Architectural Importance
The Spencer House is one of the last fine homes to be built in Asylum Hill, the neighborhood that from the Civil War to World War II was the most fashionable of Hartford neighborhoods. It is a workmanlike example of tasteful, Georgian Revival architecture by Ebbe's & Frid, then and now (through a successor firm that continues the Frid name) a leading firm of Hartford architects. The house was built for Alfred Spencer, Jr., who was Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Hartford National Bank and Trust Co. and Chairman of the Gray Telephone Pay Station Co. (the pay telephone was invented in Hartford). He was precisely the sort of person who lived in Asylum Hill by the score, whose homes, churches, and schools are memorialized by the Asylum Hill Multiple Resources nomination.

### Geographical Data:
- **Acreage** - Less than one (0.30 acre prox.).

### Verbal boundary description - The nominated property is described in the Hartford Land Records at volume 1654, page 212.
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1039 Asylum Avenue
Hartford, CT

Item number 19 (continued)

The Georgian Revival style became popular in Hartford in the first quarter of the 20th century, toward the end of the era of development for Asylum Hill. As Asylum Hill developed from downtown westward, the remaining vacant lots after 1900 were on such streets as Woodland and Forest, near the Little River, the area's western boundary. The Spencer House, located less than a block from Woodland Street, is in this final section to be built up and is in the architectural style that characterized several houses built there in the opening decades of the 20th century.

Perhaps the earliest, and finest, Georgian Revival style house to be built in Asylum Hill is the Cheney House at 40 Woodland Street, 1895, William C. Brocklesby, architect. Its 2-story central portico is imposing and its elaborate details of columns, pilasters and entablatures are carefully designed and well executed. Four houses standing on the east side of Forest Street are later and more representative work. 54 Forest Street, 1923, Russell F. Barker, architect, is similar to the Spencer House with its exterior of red brick and white trim and its interior of pilasters and moldings associated with the Georgian Revival style.

The Spencer House, competently designed and constructed, is no better example than the others of its architectural style, but is outstanding for its date. Constructed in 1929, it is one of the last houses to be built in Asylum Hill and is representative of the last in the series of architectural styles that were popular in the area. The Spencer House was built in the year of Black Friday and the beginning of the Great Depression that marked the end of Asylum Hill's preeminence as the fashionable residential neighborhood for Hartford's leaders.
MULTIPLE RESOURCES
OF ASYLUM HILL

A. NOOK FARM- WOODLAND
B. COLLINS- TOWNLEY
C. LAUREL- MARSHALL
D. IMLAY- LAUREL
E. ASYLUM AVENUE