

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received

date entered

NOV 23 1987

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic NA

and or common Thompson Hill Historic District

2. Location

street & number See Inventory (Continuation Sheets to Item #7) NA not for publication

city, town Thompson NA vicinity of

state Connecticut code 09 county Windham code 015

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	NA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Multiple Ownership

street & number NA

city, town NA NA vicinity of state NA

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Thompson Town Clerk's Office

street & number Town Hall, Putnam Avenue

city, town Thompson state CT

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title State Register of Historic Places (See also: Continuation Sheet) has this property been determined eligible? ___ yes no

date 1987 ___ federal state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records Connecticut Historical Commission

city, town 59 South Prospect Street Hartford, state CT

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date _____ (Note: "P# _____" in text refers to numbered photographs)
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Thompson Hill Historic District in Thompson, Connecticut, contains approximately 550 acres. Its focus is the Thompson Common at the intersection of Routes 193 and 200, which is the historic town center. Within the district is a cluster of buildings that surrounds the common and extends outward for up to one-half mile. The common and the land around it are gently rolling and almost flat. To the north and east, the terrain drops off gradually, while to the west and south the descent is more pronounced toward the valley of the French and Quinebaug Rivers.

The district contains 130 major structures, buildings and sites, of which 101 contribute to its architectural and historical significance. The district's period of importance extends from about 1750 to 1935, which is determined both by the age and aesthetic quality of its significant elements, and by the related historical development of the area. The most prevalent formal style of architecture is the Greek Revival, of which there are sixteen examples, followed by the Colonial Revival (13) and Federal (10). Thirty-seven of the district's buildings and structures are not clearly associated with any one style and are termed "vernacular" for the purposes of this nomination. They consist primarily of barns and garages related to the residences in the district, although there are also a number of houses of this description. Several residences, furthermore, have acquired stylistic features that mask their true age. The Winthrop N. Osgood House at 333 Route 193 is an example of the Queen Anne style although it was built c. 1820. (see statistical overview on page 7-1).

Most of the district's buildings and structures are single-family residences and their out-buildings. Some of these are quite spacious and are located on sizable parcels. A few of the larger properties, at one time private estates, are now owned by the Marian Fathers and contain the buildings of the Marianapolis School and Marian Fathers Novitiate. The Thompson Congregational Church (P#1), Vernon Stiles Inn (P#2), and the public library (P#3), are the other prominent institutional buildings in the district. The non-contributing buildings date mostly from after 1950 (see, e.g., the c.1960 Boy Scout headquarters [P#4]¹, and include several Marianapolis School buildings. (P#4A).

The aesthetic cohesion and distinction of the district arise from the high percentage of stylistically well-executed buildings, their widespread similarity in materials size, and proportion, and the district's physical characteristics. The buildings and structures lining the roads in the district are virtually all wood-framed, and their prevalent exterior sheathing material is clapboards. Wood shingles, flushboards, bricks (particularly end walls), and cobblestones are also present, but to a much lesser degree. Most buildings are painted white, typically with black blinds. Two stories is the most common building height. The area is dotted with old and very mature deciduous and fir trees set in well-tended lawns, and abundant shrubbery is everywhere. The Marianapolis School and Novitiate properties heighten the effect of these landscape features because of their size and design. The school grounds, formerly the Norman B. Ream estate, are a largely intact c. 1915 landscape design that features rolling lawns, large groupings of shrubbery, and ornamental wrought-iron embellishments, such as tall light posts. Although much less intact and now consid-

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Continuation sheet Existing Surveys Item number 6

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Historic and Architectural Resources Survey of Thompson (1986)
Prepared by Mark McDonough
Thompson Public Library,
Thompson, Connecticut

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Thompson Hill Historic District, Thompson, CT
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Statistical Profile of the District

Major Contributing Elements*	104
Non-contributing Elements	<u>26</u>
Total	130

Uses (current) of Contributing Elements

--Residential	59
--Residential outbuildings	30
--Institutional	6
--Educational	5
--Commercial	1
--Sites	3**

Ages of Contributing Elements(dates of construction)

pre-1800	7
1800-1825	19
1826-1875	24
1876-1900	13
"19th century"***	17
1901-1925	20
1926-	4

Architectural Styles of Contributing Buildings & Structures

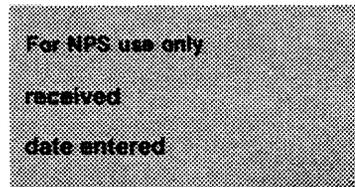
Vernacular	38
Central Chimney Colonial	2
Federal	10
Greek Revival	16
Gothic Revival	3
Italianate	3
Queen Anne	5
Shingle Style	1
Colonial Revival	13
Victorian Vernacular	6
Tudor Revival	1
Neo-Classical Revival	1
Bungalow/Craftsman	2

*Elements include buildings, structures and sites

**Sites include two landscape designs and the town common

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erably overgrown, the Novitiate property was designed by Olmsted Brothers in 1916-17. Remnants of that plan are still visible.²

Of the six district buildings that appear to date from the 18th century, four are still recognizable as of that period despite alterations. Their common features include clapboard exteriors, fieldstone foundations, facades parallel to the street, and simple detailing. The most sophisticated is the Darius Dwight House (P#6, c.1780), which is a five-bay, central chimney Colonial. Highlights are the molded front entrance surround with flared brackets beneath a prominent projecting cap, and beaded corner boards. Its banked construction was a common practice in hilly New England. Similar in basic design is 104 Chase Road (mid-18th century, and with numerous alterations), with splayed lintels and a blind, semi-elliptical fan-light (a modern addition) over the front entrance. In contrast are the asymmetrical plans of 180 Chase Road (five bays, with off-center entrance, c.1790) and 10 Quaddick Road (three-bay residence with only two, off-center second-story windows, c.1800).

The ten Federal buildings share a similarity in plan (typically rectangular, with central entrance in a five-bay facade and gable-end chimneys), clapboard sheathing, and delicate Adamesque detailing. Their roofs are either pitched gable or hipped. A fully developed example is the Joseph Gay/Ellen Larned House (P#7, c.1815), with an attenuated classical front entrance composition, centered Palladian window above, and corner quoins. The brick end walls are found in several other Federal houses, but in no other style. The William G. Larned House (c.1815) at 17 Quaddick Road is even more elaborate, displaying such embellishments as two-story pilasters across the facade and a frieze decorated with swags. Some of the ornament, however, is not original. An imposing three-story hip-roofed example is the John Nichols/Theodore Dwight House (P#8, c.1806). Its front entrance features sidelights glazed in a leaded star and circle design and a scalloped, radial pattern in the transom glazing. The Palladian-inspired window above is set under a blind wood fan-light. The portico, added in 1936, complements these original features (P#9).³ 69 Chase Road (Royal Watson House, c.1825) and 343 Route 193 (c.1820) have distinctive low monitors in their hipped roofs. The original clapboard corner section of the Vernon Stiles Inn (P#2, c.1814; 1820 and later addition) has a rich Adamesque entablature with mutules and drilled plancers.

The Greek Revival structures (16) are diverse in plan and detailing. Three plans typical of the style are well represented: temple; rectangular, with ridge parallel to street; and rectangular, gable end toward street. The most historically significant temple-plan building is the Old Town Hall (P#10, 1842). Its classically detailed one-story tetrastyle portico is set beneath a square tower with complementary detailing and pilasters. The clapboard sheathing, flushboard tympanum, and granite foundation are common to most district Greek Revivals, but the twelve-over-twelve sash windows contrast with the usual six-over-six arrangement. The other temple-inspired structures are five-bay residences with wide two-story porticoes and central entrances. The Erastus Knight House (P#11, c.1845) has a paneled front door surrounded by sidelights and a transom glazed in a geometric design, and a paneled surround with corner blocks and an over-sized central overpanel. Connected to the house is a large mid-19th century barn that is simple in appearance except for its vernacular Victorian cupola (P#11).

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The five-bay, two-story Willaim H. Chandler House (c.1842, 304 Route 193) typifies Greek Revivals having their ridgepoles parallel to the street. Its detailing is well-executed; the one-story portico, with Ionic columns and a rounded corner projection, is a compatible Colonial Revival element. The most prevalent Greek Revival plan is found in the Henry Fountain House (117 Chase Road, c.1860) which has a pedimented gable-end facade and front corner entrance. Several similar houses have front porches added later in the century, such as the Italianate porch at the Comins House (365 Route 193, c.1835).

Examples of mid to late 19th-century and early 20th-century architectural styles are less numerous, but they exhibit a generally high level of sophistication and execution. The most elaborate and exuberant building is the William H. Mason House, a Gothic Revival creation of c.1845 (P#12). Its wealth of Gothic-inspired features includes an elaborate porch with clustered columns, arched windows and porch braces, and heavily embellished bargeboards with pinnacles and drop pendants. The large barn to the rear repeats these details in simpler form.

The Thompson Congregational Church (P#1, 1856) and the Reverend Edward P. Borden House (P#13, c. 1875) are fine examples of the Italianate style. Of the two, the church is the more formal and unusual in its application of Italianate detailing (pedimented overdoors, round-arched windows and paired brackets) to a traditional church plan.⁴ In contrast, the Borden House displays a customary square Italianate residential plan and other typical features such as segmental-arched window surrounds, cornice window heads, wide eaves and a central cupola. Its tripartite round-arched second-floor window under a curvilinear cornice window head is an unusual feature and suggests a Palladian inspiration. The wide wrap-around porch is a Colonial Revival addition.

The five Queen Anne buildings display, in many different forms, the asymmetrical massing, combination of exterior sheathing materials, and ornamentation associated with this style. The George Crosby House, for example (375 Route 193, c.1895), has clapboard and wood-shingle sheathing and a classically detailed wrap-around front porch highlighted by an engaged one-story corner tower. Carved wood sunbursts decorate the front porch cross gable and side-bay consoles. A completely different Queen Anne example is the Randolph Chandler Carriage House (P#16, 1888). Its imposing size is emphasized by the highly complex roof-line, tall cupola, and largely unembellished wall surfaces. The recessed balcony and fluidity of this building suggest the influence of the then-emerging Shingle Style.

Several styles are represented by one example apiece. Wood-shingle sheathing, complex massing, and rounded surfaces mark the Martha H. Chandler House as a Shingle Style building (P#14, c.1895). Its fieldstone porch piers and eyebrow dormer are picturesque details. The Thompson Public Library (P#3, 1902) is a small rustic Tudor Revival building with fieldstone walls and a flared tile roof. In great contrast are the imposing Neo-Classical Revival portico, complex symmetry, and elaborate classical ornamentation of the Frederick Reed House (330 Route 200), which is complemented by its matching carriage house.

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The thirteen Colonial Revival designs are marked by their sophistication and diversity. Equalling the Reed House in its formality and stylistic elaboration is the Georgian Revival infirmary at the Marianapolis School (P#17, c.1915). Designed by Shepley, Rutan and Coolidge of Boston as the carriage house on the Norman B. Ream estate, this building has a 5-part plan (main block and side wings, connected by hyphens) and elegant Georgian detailing. The John R. Gladding House (c.1917; Jackson, Robertson and Adams, Providence, R.I.) is a restrained, sprawling stucco-clad design in which attention focuses on its small Georgian Revival 1-bay entrance portico.⁵ Its matching carriage house is almost more imposing because of its greater height and seemingly greater bulk. The Coffee-Russell House (P#15, c.1905) nearby is an entirely different and highly complex plan with classical detailing that is a creative juxtaposition of the Colonial Revival and Queen Anne styles.

Boundary Justification

The boundaries of the historic district mark the visual extent of the buildings and structures that are most closely associated with the architectural and historic significance of Thompson Hill. These buildings form a cohesive group in which few do not contribute to the district's themes of importance. Past these boundaries, this unity does not exist. Wide expanses of fields or woods create visual barriers on all sides, and along the major thoroughfares modern residences are an additional disruptive factor just outside the district. Low stone walls that flank Route 200 on the properties of the Marianapolis School and the Marian Fathers Novitiate are included in the district because they appear to have been part of the Reams and Gladding estates' landscape designs. A few modern Ranch-style residences behind one wall at the border of the district are excluded because they present such a strong visual contrast.

Property lines of the district buildings, as set forth in the current town assessor's maps, form the basis for the delineation of the geographic borders. In a few instances of large and mostly open parcels, the boundaries include less than entire parcels where smaller portions will still afford appropriate settings. The entire properties of the Marianapolis School and Novitiate are included because they appear to represent the bulk of original estate holdings and throughout contain visual remnants of their original designed landscape features.

FOOTNOTES

1. The Boy Scout headquarters has an interesting connection to an important Thompson building, the Thompson Bank (1833-35, attributed to Ithiel Town, a Thompson native), which was acquired by Old Sturbridge Village and moved there in 1964. Prior to its departure, the Bank was used by the Boy Scouts, and the town erected the present facilities for the Scout as replacement space.
2. Partially intact elements include a formal garden, wrought-iron fence enclosing a long-disappeared cutting garden, and the tree-lined driveway.

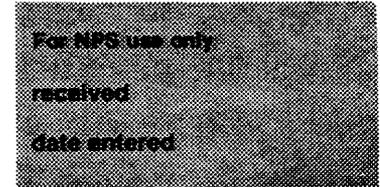
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FOOTNOTES

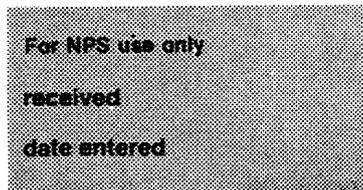
3. The 1936 alterations, executed pursuant to plans drawn by the firm of Jackson, Robertson and Adams of Providence, R.I. (architects of the John Russell Gladding House at 236 Route 200), generally restored this house to its original appearance by removing 19th-century accretions.

4. In this century, the church has suffered two calamities. The church steeple toppled over during the Great New England Hurricane of 1938 and was rebuilt a quarter century later (1962) under the supervision of the architectural firm of Strickland, Brigham and Eldridge (Boston, MA). In August, 1987, a fire seriously damaged the steeple. As of October, 1987, the church plans to begin reconstruction as soon as possible.

5. The interior of the Gladding House survives in nearly its original condition and is as impressive as the exterior. Its features include elaborate classically-inspired woodwork, fireplaces of several kinds of marble, and fine brass hardware. Also noteworthy is the estate's well water system, located next to the carriage house, which has two 10,000-gallon storage tanks and a large gas generator.

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Inventory of Historic District Resources

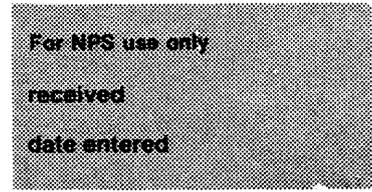
Introduction: The inventory includes all buildings and structures of any consequence on each parcel of real property located within the historic district. Barns or other outbuildings that are attached to a main residence are not listed separately unless it appears that historically they were discrete buildings. Contributing ("C") and non-contributing ("NC") structures are indicated in the inventory by the use of "C" or "NC," as appropriate, before the description of each structure. Construction dates, in the absence of strong visual or documentary evidence to the contrary, are taken from the 1986 Historic and Architectural Resources Survey of Thompson. ("P#_") indicates a numbered photograph.

<u>Chase Road, South Side</u>		<u>Style, Use, Date and Architect (if known)</u>
1	C	Old Town Hall, Greek Revival, 1842 (P#10)
2	C	Sally Thatcher House, Greek Revival, c. 1845
20	C	William H. Mason House, Gothic Revival, c. 1845, (P#12)
	C&C	-- Gothic Revival barn, c. 1840 and small Queen Anne garden house, c. 1900;
	C&C	-- Victorian Vernacular residence, at rear, c. 1850, and vernacular garage, c. 1910.
The Marianapolis Preparatory School	NC	Academic Building, modern building, 1969;
	NC	--St. John's Hall, modern residence/dining hall with chapel, 1962;
	C	--Stone water tower, c. 1905;
	NC	--Modern gymnasium, 1967;
	C	--Tudor Revival building (present use not known), c. 1915 (probably Shepley, Rutan and Coolidge) (Boston)
	C	--Infirmary (originally a carriage house), Colonial Revival, c. 1915, Shepley, Rutan and Coolidge (Boston) (P#17)
	C	--Small Craftsman building (present use not known) c. 1915 (probably Shepley, Rutan and Coolidge) (Boston)
	C	--Colonial Revival gatehouse, c. 1915 (probably Shepley, Rutan and Coolidge) (Boston)
	C	--Colonial Revival residence, c. 1935
	C	--School's landscape design, c. 1915

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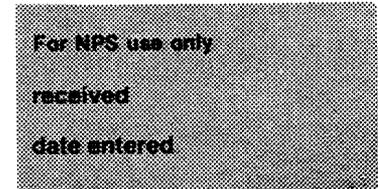
<u>Chase Road, South Side (continued)</u>		<u>Style, Use, Date and Architect (if known)</u>
32	C	Royal S. Watson House, Federal residence, c. 1825
54	C	Henry Fountain House, Greek Revival residence, c. 1850;
	NC	-- Modern garage, c. 1955?
60	NC	Modern residence.
64	C	Masonic Temple (historically, Fourth District School), Colonial Revival vernacular building, c. 1900
70	C	Thompson Fire Engine Company, Inc., vernacular building, c. 1910
<u>Chase Road, North Side</u>		
(no address)	C&C	Thompson Common, including open Colonial Revival pavilion (c. 1910)
41	C	Simon Davis House, vernacular residence, 18th century
47	C	Vernacular residence, 18th century
51	C	Vernacular residence, c. 1900;
		--Modern garage, c. 1955
59	C	Bungalow residence, c. 1915;
	NC	--Modern garage, c. 1955
67	NC	Modern Ranch-style residence, c. 1965
71	NC	Modern Ranch-style residence, c. 1965
81	C	James Frawley Homestead, vernacular residence, 18th century
85	NC	Modern residence, c. 1970?
91	C	Vernacular residence, 19th century

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Quaddick Road, South Side

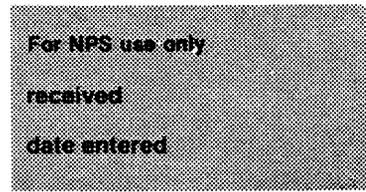
Style, Use, Date and Architect (if known)

- | | | |
|----|----|------------------------------------------------------|
| 11 | C | Greek Revival residence, c. 1830 |
| 17 | C | William C. Larned House, Federal residence, c. 1815; |
| | C | --Vernacular barn, 19th century; |
| | NC | --Modern garage |
| 41 | NC | Modern Ranch-style residence, c. 1955 |
| 47 | C | Vernacular residence, mid-19th century |

Quaddick Road, North Side

- | | | |
|----|----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 10 | C | Vernacular residence, c. 1800; |
| | NC | --Modern garage |
| 14 | C | Federal residence, c. 1810 |
| | C | --Vernacular barn, 19th century |
| 20 | C | Mary Read Sherman House, vernacular residence, c. 1910 |
| 24 | C | Rev. Edward P. Borden House, Italianate residence, c. 1875 (P#13); |
| | C | --Colonial Revival carriage house, c. 1900 |
| 32 | C | Darius Dwight House, Central-chimney Colonial residence, 18th century (P#6); |
| | NC | --Modern garage |
| 40 | C | Deacon Jesse Bolles House, Federal residence, c. 1815; |
| | C | --Italianate barn, c. 1870 |
| 56 | C | Richard Bartlett House, vernacular residence, c. 1800 |

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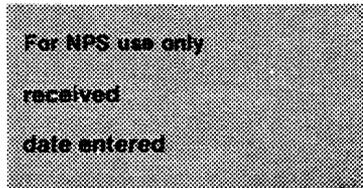
Route 193
South and East Sides

Style, Use, Date and Architect (if known)

175	C	Central-chimney Colonial residence, c. 1780
183	C	Victorian Vernacular residence, c. 1890;
	C	--Vernacular barn, 19th century;
	C	--Vernacular garage, c. 1925
195	NC	Modern residence, 1976
307	C	Martha H. Chandler House, a Shingle-Style residence, c. 1895 (P#14);
	NC	--Modern garage
313	C	Walter E. Bates House, Greek Revival residence, 1841;
	C&C	--Vernacular garage/barn and large shed, both mid-19th century
319	C	Bates/Hascall House, vernacular residence, c. 1820;
	C	--Vernacular barn/garage, mid-19th century
325	C	Jason Phipps, Jr. House, vernacular residence, c. 1840
327	C	Joseph Gay/Ellen Larned House, Federal residence, c. 1814 (P#7);
	NC	--Modern garage
329	NC	Modern residence, 1954
333	C	Winthrop N. Osgood House, Queen Anne residence, c. 1820 (extensively remodeled c.1895)
339	C	Thompson Public Library, Tudor Revival building, 1902 (P#3)
343	C	Federal residence, c. 1820;
		--Academy, Greek Revival building, c.1850
347	C	Thompson Congregational Church, Italianate building, 1856 (P#31) (Steeple fell in Great New England Hurricane of 1938, was rebuilt

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Route 193,
South and East Sides, (cont'd)

Style, Use, Date and Architect (if known)

in 1963 under supervising architects Strickland, Brigham & Eldredge, and was partially destroyed by fire in 1987).

- | | | |
|-----|---|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 351 | C | Vernon Stiles Inn, Federal building, c. 1814; 1820 and later additions (P#32) |
| 355 | C | Town House, vernacular building c. 1812 |
| 361 | C | Federal residence, c. 1815 |
| 365 | C | Comins House, Greek Revival residence, c. 1835; |
| | C | --Vernacular barn/garage, mid-19th century |
| 369 | C | Jeremiah Olney House, Greek Revival residence, c. 1860; |
| | | --Vernacular barn, mid-19th century |
| 375 | C | George Crosby House, Queen Anne residence, c. 1895; |
| | C | --Vernacular garage/barn, mid-19th century |

Route 193
North and West Sides

- | | | |
|-----|----|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 140 | C | Gothic Revival residence, c. 1820 (appears originally to have been Federal of Greek Revival) |
| 150 | NC | Modern residence, 1986 |
| 160 | NC | Modern residence, 1986 |
| 200 | C | Greek Revival residence, c. 1820 |
| | C | --Vernacular barn, 19th century |

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Route 193
North and West Sides

Style, Use, Date and Architect (if known)

- | | | |
|-----|----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 212 | C | Colonial Revival residence, 1928 |
| 304 | C | William H. Chandler House, Greek Revival residence, c.1842 |
| 308 | C | Randolph H. Chandler Carriage House, Queen Anne residence, 1888 (P#16) |
| 318 | NC | Modern residence, 1972 |
| 326 | C | Victorian Vernacular residence, c.1880: |
| | C | --Vernacular garage, mid-19th century |
| 330 | C | Asa Ross House, vernacular residence, c.1860; |
| | C | --Vernacular garage, c.1880 |
| 362 | C | Talcott Crosby House, Queen Anne residence, c. 1827 (extensively remodeled, c. 1885); |
| | C | --Vernacular barn, mid-19th century |
| | C | --Large vernacular shed, mid-19th century |
| 366 | C | Dr. Horatio Holbrook House, Victorian Vernacular residence, c.1822 (extensively remodeled, mid-19th century); |
| | NC | --Modern garage |
| 374 | C | Samuel Watson House, Greek Revival residence, c.1760 (extensively remodeled c.1845) |
| 382 | C | Talcott Crosby/Horace Elliott House, Victorian Vernacular residence, c.1830 (extensively remodeled, c. 1870); |
| | C | --Vernacular barn, mid-19th century |
| | NC | --Modern garage |

Route 200, South Side

- | | | |
|-----|---|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| 281 | C | Colonial Revival residence, c.1933 |
| | C | --Colonial Revival garage, c.1933 |
| 327 | C | Coffee-Russell House, Colonial Revival residence, c.1905 (P#15) |

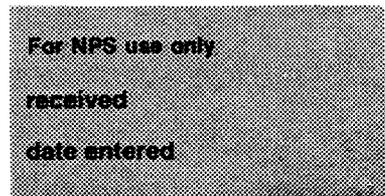
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Route 200, South Side
(cont'd)

Style, Use, Date and Architect (if known)

- 341 C Nichols House, Queen Anne residence, c.1890
(Villa Maria Rest Home);
- (same address) C --Vernacular garage, c.1930
- C Royal S. Watson House, Federal residence,
c.1815 (Villa Maria Rest Home)

Route 200, North Side

- 236 (Marian Fathers C John R. Gladding House, Colonial Revival
Novitiate) residence, 1917. Jackson, Robertson, and
Adams, (Providence, R.I.)
- C --Colonial Revival carriage house, 1917,
(same architect)
- C --Underground pump house, c.1917
- C --Estate grounds, designed 1916-17 by Olm-
sted Brothers (Brookline, MA)
- 310 C Greek Revival residence, c.1840;
- C --Vernacular barn, mid-19th century
- 330 C Frederick Reed House, Neo-Classical Revival
residence ("Thornfield Hall,") 1900
- C --Colonial Revival barn/carriage house, c.1900
- 340 C Waldo Comins House, Greek Revival residence,
c. 1840
- 342 C Vernacular residence, c.1820
- 348 C Greek Revival residence, c.1840;
- NC --Modern garage, c.1950?
- 354 NC Modern building, c.1960 (Boy Scout head-
quarters) (P#4)
- 358 C Erastus Knight House, Greek Revival residence,
c.1845

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Route 200, North Side (cont'd)

Style, Use, Date and Architect (if known)

362	C	Erastus Knight House, Greek Revival residence, c. 1845 (P#11)
366	NC	Modern building, 1965 (U. S. Post Office)
376	C	John Nichols/Theodore Dwight House, Federal residence, c.1806 with 1936 alterations (Jackson, Robertson & Adams, Providence, R. I.) c. 1806 (P#8 & P#9);
	C	-- Vernacular barn, early 20th century

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-1935	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Criterion C (Architecture)

Specific dates see Item #7 **Builder/Architect** see Item #7

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Thompson Hill Historic District is architecturally significant because of the outstanding quality, diversity, and high state of preservation of its buildings and structures which, with their surroundings, span and effectively document the district's long history. Located here also are residential designs of the nationally known and respected Boston architectural firm of Shepley, Rutan and Coolidge, and the Providence, R.I., firm of Jackson, Robertson and Adams, a prolific and prominent firm in that city during the first half of the 20th century (Criterion C).

Rare and elegant features mark the Thompson Hill Historic District's examples of the Federal style. The brick end walls and monitor roofs of a few buildings in this group are unusual components of this style in Connecticut (duplicated elsewhere in only a few cases), and they add considerably to the district's architectural value. The Joseph Gay/Ellen Larned House, furthermore, displays a comprehensive and beautifully executed array of classic Federal features. Its Adamesque detailing is equal to that in many large and more cosmopolitan communities of the period.

The Greek Revival buildings are noteworthy because of their diversity in plan, ranging from the temple-inspired massing of such structures as the Old Town Hall and Erastus Knight House to the more familiar and widespread gable-end-toward-street orientation of many residences. While ranging in its formality, the classical detailing of these buildings is uniformly appropriate and well-proportioned.

Though fewer in number, the examples of other styles do not suffer in comparison. The surviving 18th-century homes are well-preserved and illustrate the simple detailing and variety in house plans in early Thompson. In contrast, the William H. Mason House is a superb Gothic Revival design in which the expected intricacy and medieval-inspired embellishments of this style are present in abundance. This structure is matched by few others of its style in the state. The Congregational Church and the Reverend Edward P. Borden House offer distinctive interpretations of the Italianate style. The church is an effective, clear and rare combination of restrained Italianate detailing and traditional Gibbs-inspired plan. In contrast, the Borden House is a well-executed example of a typical residential design.

The turn-of-the-century buildings are no less distinguished than their predecessors. The Martha Chandler House is an elegant Shingle-Style dwelling that possesses a fluid massing and formal detailing. The Frederick E. Reed (go to Continuation Sheet 8-1)

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property approximately 550

Quadrangle name Thompson, CT - R.I. and Putnam

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

1	9	2	6	2	3	3	0	4	6	5	0	5	3	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

B

1	9	2	6	1	0	0	0	4	6	4	8	0	0	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

C

1	9	2	6	1	9	1	0	4	6	4	7	2	7	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

D

1	9	2	6	3	6	8	0	4	6	4	9	0	8	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

E

Zone			Easting				Northing							

F

Zone			Easting				Northing							

G

Zone			Easting				Northing							

H

Zone			Easting				Northing							

Verbal boundary description and justification

The district is shown by the heavy line on the attached map. See also the "Boundary Justification" found in Item #7 of this form.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state NA code NA county NA code NA

state NA code NA county NA code NA

11. Form Prepared By

name/title David Ransom and Gregory Andrews, edited by John Herzan, National Register

Coordinator

organization Connecticut Historical Commission

date

59 South Prospect Street

street & number Hartford, CT 06106

telephone (203) 566-3005

city or town

state

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title Director, Connecticut Historical Commission

date November 12, 1987

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Kept on file
National Register

Keeper of the National Register

date 12-31-87

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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House, "Thornfield Hall," is a highly elaborate and sophisticated Neo-Classical Revival design. A stimulating contrast in Colonial Revival interpretations is offered by the John Russell Gladding and Coffee-Russell Houses. While the former is an example of restrained good taste, the latter boldly ventures to the limits of this style in its strong and visually stimulating juxtaposition of eclectic stylistic forms.

The district also contains an unusually fine and stylistically diverse collection of outbuildings, primarily carriage houses. In several cases, these buildings are closely related in design to the larger residence on the property, which adds considerable architectural interest to their appearance. The carriage house behind the William H. Mason House, for example, is embellished with Gothic Revival detailing that is shared with the main house. The largest and stylistically most sophisticated of these buildings is the Randolph Chandler Carriage House. Its bold and complex roofline, simple detailing, and recessed balcony are a creative and singular architectural statement that draws its inspiration from both the Queen Anne and Shingle Styles.

Shepley, Rutan and Coolidge (designers of the infirmary at Marianapolis School and the primary surviving building from the Norman Bruce Ream estate) was one of the most distinguished American architectural firms at the end of the 19th century and during the first decade of the 20th. This firm was the successor to the practice of H.H. Richardson, and its noteworthy commissions included the original plan for Stanford University (1892), the Art Institute of Chicago (1897), and the John Carter Brown Library of Brown University (1904). Jackson, Robertson and Adams (1912-1956) were the architects of the John Russell Gladding House. This prolific Providence firm is best known for its Providence County Courthouse (1923) and other Colonial Revival designs. Frederic Ellis Jackson (1879-1950) received a diploma at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris (1905), while his partner John Howard Adams (1876-1924) also studied in Paris after receiving his degree from M.I.T. (1899). Among their other well-known and extant designs are the Rhode Island State Office Building and the Myron Taylor Hall at Cornell University.

Key aspects of Thompson Hill's once preeminent role in town life are embodied in the district buildings. The evolution of town government from a theocracy to democracy is represented by the Old Town Hall and by the Congregational Church, which has remained an influential religious and social presence in the town. The presence of many late 18th and early to mid-19th century buildings confirms the era of the village's greatest prosperity and influence. The Vernon Stiles Inn, at the intersection of the two old turnpikes, is the best surviving symbol of this prior age, while the residences, in the breadth of their ages, materials, and other features, portray the habits, tastes, and affluence of the local residents, both in the early part of the 19th century and later during Thompson Hill's popularity as a summer resort.

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Historical Background

Scattered European settlement of the area now known as Thompson Hill began soon after 1700, at which time the area was the far northeastern corner of the Town of Killingly. Though the terrain is rocky in many places, efforts began to farm the land, with some success. A few prosperous farmers are known to have shipped their produce to larger, more populated settlements, even occasionally to Providence. The first commercial establishment in the area was the "Old Red Tavern," which was built about 1716 at Thompson Hill to serve travelers on the rudimentary "main road."

Repeated petitions by the local citizenry for the creation of a separate Thompson parish within Killingly succeeded in 1730 when the Connecticut General Assembly approved the idea. Having thereby gained a measure of local taxing power, the residents were able to build a meeting-house on Thompson Hill in 1735. Their efforts thereafter obtained the incorporation by the General Assembly in 1785 of the Town of Thompson.

Thompson Hill's fortunes changed and improved dramatically with the upgrading of local roads into major "turnpikes" after 1797. In that year and again in 1803, the General Assembly granted charters to local entrepreneurs for highway improvements. Thompson Hill sat, fortuitously, at the intersection of these two "modern" turnpikes, one linking Boston and Hartford (now Route 193) and the other connecting Providence and Springfield (now the Quaddick Road and part of Route 200). The Hill witnessed a marked increase in traffic, trade, and the attendant growth of retail and service establishments. The Vernon Stiles Inn opened in about 1814 to serve this trade, replacing an older inn on the same site. The brick extension on the Inn's north elevation was added around 1820 to house the "New York Hat & Cap Store," a sign of the growing sophistication of passersby and local residents. Famous guests, including the Marquis de Lafayette (1825), demonstrate the Hill's prominent location for travel. Across the green, the John Nichols/Theodore Dwight House (c. 1806) (Photograph #8) was originally both a residence and a store, and it also, later in mid-century, housed a tavern. Darius Dwight operated a blacksmith's shop across the street from his home on Quaddick Road (P#6).

Growth in Thompson Hill continued, and prosperity reigned, until the advent of the railroad in the 1850s. This new mode of transportation bypassed the Hill and ran through the eastern part of town. The concurrent drop in traffic on the turnpikes was precipitous. Thompson Hill declined economically to a point from which it never recovered. One mark of the devastation was the closing, for a time, of the Vernon Stiles Inn. With the sole exception of a cabinet and coffin-making shop, every enterprise on the Hill closed.

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The railroad spurred the development of the textile industry in the river valleys west of Thompson Hill, an event that further eroded the Hill's economic and political importance. The booming mills and their accompanying mill villages soon far outstripped Thompson Hill both in commercial power and in population. The increasingly immigrant make-up of the mill workers (in 1900, e.g., roughly 90% of the townspeople were of mixed or foreign parentage) also isolated the predominately Yankee population of Thompson Hill.

Notwithstanding this drastic change of fortune, Thompson Hill remained for some time at least the nominal town center. The Town Hall, built in 1842 (P#10), continued to serve that purpose, although during the early years of the 20th century it began to share that role with the Salle Union in North Grosvenordale. The Congregational Church (P#1) remained an important religious and social institution. Also nearby were the public library (P#3) (1902), the Fourth District School (1899) and the Thompson Fire Engine Company (c. 1900). Despite the presence of these community institutions, Thompson Hill never recovered the central role it had formerly occupied.

The Hill's decline provided the conditions, however, for its temporary resurgence as a vacation haven for the affluent. Its archetypically New England green and fine old buildings, remnants of a more influential past, attracted the eyes of wealthy capitalists such as Norman Bruce Ream and John Russell Gladding, who built lavish homes on the village's outskirts. This interlude passed around the time of the First World War, in most instances with the deaths of these owner/builders. The Congregation of Marians of the Immaculate Conception acquired the Ream and Gladding estates in the early 1930s and relocated their educational facilities here from Clarendon Hills, Illinois.

Thompson Hill was the home of individuals prominent in all aspects of town affairs throughout its long period of significance. The Nichols family, among them John Nichols (P#8, the Nichols/Dwight House), were key participants in the organization of the turnpike companies which led to the village's commercial boom. Darius Dwight (P#6, the Darius Dwight House) served as the local blacksmith. Erastus Knight and William H. Mason (P#11 and P#12 are of their respective homes) were prosperous entrepreneurs, the former a merchant and the latter an owner of Thompson's most extensive mid-19th century textile mill complexes. The town's noted historian, Ellen Larned, lived at 327 Route 193 (P#7) in a residence long associated with the related Gay and Larned families. Charles Searls (1846-1926), state legislator, Secretary of the State (1880), and prominent local attorney, resided in the Borden House for many years.

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3. A Brief Historical Tour of the Town of Thompson. Thompson, CT: Thompson Historical Society & Thompson Bicentennial Committee, n.d. (c. 1976)
4. Collection of the Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site, Brookline, MA (National Park Service) (information re John Russell Gladding estate landscape design, prepared by Olmsted Brothers, 1916-17).
5. Collection of the Manuscript Division, Library of Congress (information re John Russell Gladding estate landscape design, prepared by Olmsted Brothers, 1916-1917).
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