

PH0677442

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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RECEIVED MAR 20 1979

DATE ENTERED

AUG 24 1979

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS.

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Putnam Hill, *Historic District*

AND/OR COMMON

Putnam Hill National Register District

2 LOCATION

U.S. 1

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Greenwich

VICINITY OF

Fourth--Stuart McKinney

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

Connecticut

09

Fairfield

001

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

OWNERSHIP

STATUS

PRESENT USE

DISTRICT

PUBLIC

OCCUPIED

AGRICULTURE

MUSEUM

BUILDING(S)

PRIVATE

UNOCCUPIED

COMMERCIAL

PARK

STRUCTURE

BOTH

WORK IN PROGRESS

EDUCATIONAL

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

SITE

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

ACCESSIBLE

ENTERTAINMENT

RELIGIOUS

OBJECT

IN PROCESS

YES: RESTRICTED

GOVERNMENT

SCIENTIFIC

BEING CONSIDERED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

INDUSTRIAL

TRANSPORTATION

NO

MILITARY

OTHER

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Multiple--see attached list

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

VICINITY OF

STATE

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Greenwich Town Clerk

STREET & NUMBER

Greenwich Avenue

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Greenwich

Connecticut

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE State Register of Historic Places

Connecticut Statewide Inventory of Historic Places

DATE

9/78

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Connecticut Historical Commission

CITY, TOWN

STATE

59 So. Prospect St., Hartford, Connecticut

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NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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RECEIVED	MAR 20 1979
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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 4

PAGE 1

139 East Putnam Avenue	Second Congregational Church East Putnam Avenue
155 East Putnam Avenue	Town of Greenwich
181 East Putnam Avenue	Robert & Donna Weltz 181 East Putnam Avenue
211-23 East Putnam Avenue (a/k/a Lots #1 & 15)	Joseph & Dawn Marie Purcell 30 Greyrock Drive
216 East Putnam Avenue	Parish of Christ Church 250 East Putnam Avenue
220 East Putnam Avenue	Parish of Christ Church 250 East Putnam Avenue
231 East Putnam Avenue	American Red Cross 231 East Putnam Avenue
243 East Putnam Avenue	Israel Putnam House Assoc. Inc. 243 East Putnam Avenue
250 East Putnam Avenue	Parish of Christ Church 250 East Putnam Avenue
259 East Putnam Avenue	Y.W.C.A. of Greenwich 259 East Putnam Avenue
271 East Putnam Avenue (a/k/a Lot #18)	Burchard K. Moller 222 Old Church Road
279 East Putnam Avenue	Town of Greenwich
23 Maple Avenue (a/k/a lot #1B-1)	Barbara T. Coleman, Trustee 23 Maple Avenue
24 Maple Avenue	Second Congregational Church East Putnam Avenue
48 Maple Avenue	Second Congregational Church East Putnam Avenue

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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RECEIVED	MAR 20 1979
DATE ENTERED	AUG 24 1979

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 4

PAGE 2

7 Park Place

Adrian & Harriet Farley
7 Park Place

1 Old Church Road

Y.M.C.A. of Greenwich
50 East Putnam Avenue

42 Old Church Road

H. Terrell & Harriet Van Ingen
42 Old Church Road

* 206 EAST PUTNAM

H. ADAMS ASHFORTH, TRUSTEE
TRUST ESTATE, ELIZABETH M.
ASHFORTH ✓

470 N. MAPLE AVE
GREENWICH CT 06830

FHR-8-300A
(11/78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

Putnam Hill National Register District
Greenwich, Connecticut

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DATE ENTERED APR 17 1979

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 4 PAGE 3

ADDENDUM

200 East Putnam Avenue (land)

H. Adams Ashforth, Trustee
Trust Estate, Elizabeth M. Ashforth
470 North Maple Avenue
Greenwich, CT 06830

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	MAR 20 1979
DATE ENTERED	AUG 24 1979

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 6

PAGE 1

State Register of Historic Places - 1978

Connecticut Historical Commission
59 South Prospect Street
Hartford, Connecticut

(Putnam Cottage listed on National Register of Historic Places - 1978)

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Putnam Hill National Register District is a 16-building district located at the historic center of the town of Greenwich. It is situated on U.S. Route 1 (East Putnam Avenue) north and east of the central business area. The district constitutes a monumental town center at the top of a hill, forming one of the few greenswards along the length of Route 1 in Fairfield County. The hill, wide roadway, and monumental architecture combine to make it a readily identifiable entity and an architectural focal point of the entire town.

Among the 16 buildings are a Congregational Church, Episcopal Church, Red Cross, Y.W.C.A., and Daughters of the American Revolution historical museum, all compatible with one another and interspersed with Victorian estate houses. The east boundary is formed by the 20th century commercial district to which Putnam Hill presents a direct contrast. To the south are modern apartment complexes and a cluster of undistinguished early 20th century houses. The west boundary is formed by a steep hill, at the base of which is located Greenwich High School and its athletic fields as well as a modern tract housing development. To the north of the district are north-south side streets that contain early to mid-20th century suburban houses on spacious lots which relate to one another rather than to the buildings facing East Putnam Avenue.

The entire district is more or less uniformly landscaped, with large trees towering over the roadway (Photo 1), tying it together as a unit. Similar granite walls face the street in front of most of the buildings, both private houses and institutions, adding further distinction to the district and offering contrast with the rest of the town.

Following is a description of the individual structures that make up the district and their settings:

Second Congregational Church, 139 East Putnam Avenue (1856; Leopold Eidlitz, architect)--This masonry structure is built of cut granite blocks. It has a 220-foot corner spire with an open stone belfry and tower that dominates the important corner of East Putnam and Maple Avenues (Photo 1). The main entrance is through the base of the tower, and the front facade of the nave is highlighted by triple lancet-arch windows with a trefoil window in the gable above (an identical window arrangement exists in the transepts). The whole is surmounted by a steeply pitched roof covered with pink and tan slates laid in horizontal bands. Some of the original light-color stained glass remains in place, but most appears to have been replaced in the 1960s by highly colored windows of abstract modern design. On the east side is an early 20th century 1-story chapel built in a conforming Gothic style of architecture at right angles to the main building. At the rear is a large but unobtrusive 2-story flat roof wing built of buff brick around 1960. The cemetery adjoining serves as an effective buffer with the adjacent business district and offers some interesting studies in Victorian memorial sculpture.

Congregational Parsonage, 24 Maple Avenue (1830)--This house, which has always served as the residence of the church's ministers, is a two

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED MAR 20 1979
DATE ENTERED AUG 24 1979

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7

PAGE 2

story plus attic Federal/Greek Revival transitional period house. It is situated just to the northeast of the church on a small hill above Maple Avenue. There are fanlights in the end gables and elaborate leaded glass side and top lights in the front doorway. It is unusual with its double end chimneys in the east side wall and single end chimney in the west wall. The house has been resided with wood shingles, a Colonial Revival portico installed over the front doorway, and an early 1900s wing constructed at the rear. These alterations, however, do not significantly detract from the original design of the structure.

Solomon Mead House, 48 Maple Avenue (1858)--Built by a wealthy farmer and real estate developer, this imposing Italianate villa is set back a wide distance from the road and crowns the top of a hill (Photo 2). The masonry walls are very similar to those of the Second Congregational Church next door. The end walls are coigned with alternating light and dark color granite blocks, and the window lintels are slightly curved. The house is three stories high with a hip roof and an observatory tower at the southwest corner which was presumably built to take advantage of the prospect of Long Island Sound and the surrounding countryside. A porch formerly extended across the front, which was removed in the early 1920s and a terrace was built. The house is surrounded by a paved parking area, which is shielded from the street by shrubbery.

Dr. Hyde House, 23 Maple Avenue (c. 1906)--This house is two and one-half stories high with a front gable roof. Its first story, chimney stacks, and portions of the second story are constructed of large random boulders; the major part of the second story is covered with tan stucco, and the roof is glazed red Spanish tile. It is among the few houses in the Greenwich area to show the influence of the Prairie Style in any degree. The house, which has been converted to office use, is set well back from East Putnam Avenue, to which it relates more so than to the more modest Maple Avenue houses.

Park, Northeast corner of Maple and East Putnam Avenues--This small open space contains a Civil War memorial with a life-size Union soldier carrying a sword and an American flag atop a high granite pedestal. The pedestal is inscribed with the names of major battles, and the front contains the words "GREENWICH--to her loyal sons who fought for the Union 1861-1865". The statue was made by the firm of Lazzari & Barton of Woodlawn, New York and erected in 1890. The park also contains a D.A.R. Tercentenary memorial boulder commemorating the first settlers of Greenwich in 1640.

The site of the Jeremiah Milbank Estate Entrance is a 1.5-acre tract which shields East Putnam Avenue from an undistinguished modern housing develop-

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED MAR 20 1979

DATE ENTERED

MIC 24 1979

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER

7

PAGE

3

ment to the south. It is completely wooded and enclosed by a granite block wall varying in width from 3½ to 5 feet, depending on terrain. The wall was reputedly built by "Boss" Tweed in the 1860s on his estate, supposedly using workmen recruited from the New York City municipal work force. The impressive gateway, set diagonally across the corner, dates from the Milbank period (1879) and is built in the French Academic Style. It is approximately 55 feet wide and 15 feet high, constructed of polished granite. The massive wrought iron gate measures 12 feet across.

"The Columns", 181 East Putnam Avenue (c. 1840)--This house was moved to its site at some time previous to 1879. It is of unusual form--a three-story monitor roof house with a two-story recessed Doric portico across the front (Photo 3). This design probably resulted from an 1860s remodeling of a more conventional two-story house with a hip roof, of which there are other examples in the community. It is presently used for offices, and its surrounding parking lot is shielded from the street by landscaping.

Tomes-Higgins House (now Christ Church Rectory), 216 East Putnam Avenue (1861)--This impressive mansion (Photo 5), one of Connecticut's earliest to be built in the French style, is also one of only two in the state known to have been designed by Calvert Vaux (the other, described by Vaux as being "in the vicinity of New Haven", has not been located). It was illustrated as Design No. 29, "Wooden Villa with a Curved Roof", in the first edition of Vaux's Villas and Cottages, published in 1867 (p. 295). The house is two and one-half stories high with a Mansard roof. It is set back from East Putnam Avenue nearly 200 feet and retains a Victorian "rural landscape" which, although undocumented, was most likely designed by Vaux. Cedar, spruce, and hemlock trees, along with lower-growing Rhododendrons, shield the unfenced property from the road. Towering Norway Spruce trees over 100 feet high punctuate the skyline, highlighting fully matured European beech, tulip poplar, larch, and other specimen trees on the 3.6-acre property. Built for Englishman Francis Tomes as his country seat, the house was sold to New York financier A. Foster Higgins in 1877. The interior of the house, although not accessible for study, is reportedly as impressive as the exterior, with elaborately inlaid parquet floors and Minton tile fireplace openings.

Higgins Park (Photo 6) is a privately owned landscaped open space between Park Avenue and Park Place. Historically it had been used by A. Foster Higgins as a vegetable garden for his estate on the opposite side of East Putnam Avenue.

Shingle Style House, 7 Park Place (1898)--This house, although it does not

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NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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AUG 24 1979

DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7

PAGE 4

face East Putnam Avenue, is included within the district boundaries because of its comparatively early date and its relationship with Christ Church and the Higgins Estate. It was built for the rector of the church when A. Foster Higgins was its senior warden on former Higgins property. The house is 2½ stories high with a front and side gable gambrel roof, wood shingle siding, and Colonial Revival detail.

Red Cross Building (Count Nicholas Seleninoff House), 231 East Putnam Avenue (c. 1888)--This house was built by A. Foster Higgins for his sister Elizabeth, who was married to a Russian nobleman. Its original form is no longer discernable, as it was extensively remodeled around 1970 in a Colonial style of architecture (Photo 7). In its present form the building is relatively innocuous and does not visually detract from the remainder of the district.

Putnam Cottage, 243 East Putnam Avenue (c. 1700)--Already listed separately on the National Register, this two story plus attic Colonial house is maintained as an historical museum by the Daughters of the American Revolution. It has been extensively re-restored in the past five years.

Christ Episcopal Church, 250 East Putnam Avenue (1909; William S. Domenick, architect)--This English Gothic structure (Photo 8) and its auxiliary buildings along with its cemetery which dates back to the 18th century (Photo 9) combine to create a very convincing English effect. The complex is built of granite from the Byram (Greenwich) quarries with limestone trim. The church contains the standard stained glass work of its period, and includes two signed Tiffany windows at the front of the nave.

YWCA, 259 East Putnam Avenue (c. 1975)--Although this is a modern institutional structure, it is fairly unobtrusive, with its low (single-story) asymmetrically-massed profile set back a substantial distance from the street. It was built on the site of a Victorian estate and retains its granite wall and gateposts as well as a row of tall Norway spruce trees across the front, thus blending its landscaping with the rest of the district. The walls of the building are faced with concrete block scored to simulate wood shingles.

Zittell House, 271 East Putnam Avenue (c. 1869)--Although the construction date of this house has not been documented, it is virtually identical to the Brush House on Strickland Road in Cos Cob, built in 1869. It is a 2½-story Mansard house which retains its original stables, cast iron fencing with limestone gateposts (Photo 10), patterned slate roof, and other details. An attempt to modernize the house in the early Colonial Revival period added the present veranda and doorway.

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INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

MAR 20 1979

DATE ENTERED

AUG 24 1979

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER

7

PAGE

5

Putnam Hill Park, Northeast corner of East Putnam Avenue and Old Church Road--This small town park contains an original segment of the Old Post Road, which formerly snaked down the steep east slope of the hill before a straight bypass was blasted through. At the top of a rocky precipice is a five foot-high granite boulder placed by the Daughters of the American Revolution commemorating the escape of General Israel Putnam down the hill from British troops. Steps have been cut into the stone ledge, perhaps at the time the marker was placed (Photo 12).

Shingle Style House, 25 Old Church Road (c. 1890)--This large house faces East Putnam Avenue and is the last house situated on the plateau which constitutes the district. It is 2½ stories high with a side gable roof. Much of the original detail has been preserved on the exterior, including the natural shingle siding with white trim, green blinds, and latticed side porch enclosure.

Dr. Darius Mead House, 42 Old Church Road (1797; remodeled c. 1840 and c. 1870)--Although it faces a side street, this house has been included within the district because of its historical and architectural relationship to it. It was originally located on the site of 25 Old Church Road and faced East Putnam Avenue (it was moved to its present location around 1890). The Mansard roof is similar to one on the Zittell House next door (Photo 11). Although the house dates back to the early Federal period, most of the surviving detail dates back only as far as the Greek Revival.

SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW

<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input checked="" 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/HUMANITARIAN
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

Criteria A, B, and C

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Putnam Hill National Register District centers on the two major churches in the town of Greenwich in the last century and a cohesive collection of mid-Victorian estate houses along with relating later infill structures. It includes what is perhaps the oldest structure in the town, and contains the work of two major nineteenth century architects.

Putnam Hill was named for General Israel Putnam, a Revolutionary War hero who was able to evade pursuing British soldiers who had cornered him at Knapp's Tavern (now the Putnam Cottage museum). A D.A.R. boulder at the top of Putnam's Steps records the event: "This marks the spot where on February 26, 1779 General Israel Putnam, cut off from his soldiers and pursued by British cavalry, galloped down this rocky steep and escaped, daring to lead where not one of many hundred foes dared to follow--Erected by the Putnam Hill Chapter of the D.A.R. of Greenwich, Connecticut, A.D. 1900".

This area was always considered a center of the town, the site of the Second Congregational Church as early as 1702 (at the same site as the present church--the First Church was located several miles away in Old Greenwich), the Town House which was in service between 1825 and 1874 (now the site of the Civil War Monument) and the Greenwich Academy from around 1830 to 1912 (near the Dr. Hyde House at 23 Maple Avenue) as well as the tavern. George Washington stopped at the Second Church in 1789 and recorded in his diary "The superb landscape which is to be seen from the Meeting House is a rich regalia" (commemorated in a placque placed on the present church building in 1932).

By the time of the Civil War Greenwich was becoming established as a rural resort town for influential New York City businessmen due to its varied scenery and proximity to both Long Island Sound and the metropolis. True rural estates were still a thing of the future in Greenwich, and development was concentrated in the town center until after 1870.

The houses that remain from the Civil War period are all built in the Mansard style with the exception of the Italianate Solomon Mead House. Set well back from the highway, they continue to influence the development of the area, as can be seen with the construction of the new Y.W.C.A. with its estate-like setting.

In the third quarter of the 19th century Putnam Hill was the purview of such notable individuals as "Boss" Tweed, New York City politician, and A. Foster Higgins, founder of the Johnson & Higgins insurance company of New York. Tweed's estate was located at the southeast corner of Milbank and East Putnam Avenues and has long since been demolished. The wall enclosure from his house, however, remains intact.

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INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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AUG 24 1979

DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8

PAGE 2

A. Foster Higgins moved to Putnam Hill in 1877 and occupied the house built 16 years previous by Francis Tomes (there is an undocumented legend that Higgins had held Tomes' mortgage). He became one of the prominent citizens of Greenwich, and senior warden of Christ Episcopal Church. The Tomes-Higgins House was designed by Calvert Vaux and had a very apparent impact on its neighborhood. Most of the nearby structures constructed subsequently followed its lead and were built with Mansard roofs and spacious, informally landscaped grounds.

Vaux's landscaping beliefs and techniques, which had perhaps a wider influence on 19th century American practice than his architecture, are supremely exemplified by this estate. Each specimen tree, grown today to full stature, contributes to a whole greater than the sum of its individual parts. The grounds form a small rural park, a suitable setting for such a grand house of nature modified by man to its supreme degree of perfection, comparable in many ways to the scheme of Vaux and Frederick Law Olmsted for developing New York City's Central Park. This site is of first rate importance as its integrity has never been compromised by either attrition or drastic changes in environment.

The wealthy sections of Greenwich began to change with the advent of the automobile age. New estates were built in even more informal locations, in the rural "back country" or directly on the shores of Long Island Sound. Throughout the twentieth century Putnam Hill has become the property more and more of institutional owners, who have thus far succeeded in maintaining the scale of the 19th century estate barons.

Putnam Hill, with representations of the works of two major mid-19th century architects, Vaux and Eidlitz, is an important remainder of American architectural and landscape design in the Victorian era which has substantially resisted uncomplementary intrusion to the present day.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Proposed East Putnam Avenue District, a report compiled by Paul Van Der Stricht, Chairman, Greenwich Historical Commission, July, 1978. Conversations with William Finch, Greenwich Town Historian, throughout October, 1978.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 36

QUADRANGLE NAME Stamford

QUADRANGLE SCALE 7.5 minute

UTM REFERENCES 760

740

A | 1.8 | 61.5 | 16.0 | 4.5 | 4.3 | 3.3 | 0

B | 1.8 | 61.5 | 0.8 | 0 | 4.5 | 4.3 | 4.8 | 0

C | 1.8 | 61.6 | 21.0 | 0 | 4.5 | 4.3 | 7.6 | 0

D | 1.8 | 61.6 | 3.6 | 0 | 4.5 | 4.3 | 5.8 | 0

E | 1.8 | 61.6 | 21.6 | 0 | 4.5 | 4.3 | 3.6 | 0

F | 1.8 | 61.5 | 3.2 | 0 | 4.5 | 4.3 | 3.3 | 0

G | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

H | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION The district contains the following lots from plat map 199 of Greenwich: 1, 1A, 1B, 2, 3, 4, 6C, 7, 8, 9, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 26, and 27 as delineated on the accompanying map

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Charles W. Brillvitch Consultant

ORGANIZATION

DATE

Greenwich Historical Comm. October 1978

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

128 Walnut Street 203-336-5737

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Bridgeport Connecticut

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

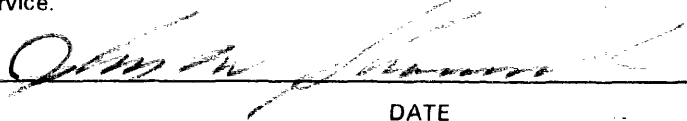
NATIONAL X

STATE X

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

March 13, 1979

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER



DATE

8-24-79

ATTEST:

Prince Van Deyck
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

8/29/79

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

- Col. - Colonial (to 1789)
- Fed. - Federal (1789-1830)
- G.R. - Greek Revival (1830-50)
- E.V. - Early Victorian (1850-1875)
- L.V. - Late Victorian (1875-1900)
- E.T.C. - Early 20th Century (1900-1950)
- L.T.C. - Late 20th Century (1950-present)

