# National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

received JUL 2 3 1985 date entered AUG 2 6 1995

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

1. Nam	i <b>e</b>		.,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,	
	NA			·
historic				
and or common	New Preston Hill	Historic Dist	rict	
2. Loca	ation			
street & number	Portions of New and Gunn Hill			NA not for publication
city, town	Washington	x vicinity of	New Preston Hill	
state	CT code	09 county	Litchfield	code 005
3. Clas	sification			
Category  X district building(s) structure site object	Ownership public private both Public Acquisition in process being considered NA	X occupied X unoccupied work in progress Accessible yes: restricted yes: unrestricted x no	Present Use  X agriculture Commercial educational entertainment government industrial military	museum park X private residence X religious scientific transportation other:
name Mul	tiple ownership.	See continua	tion sheet.	
street & number				
city, town		vicinity of	state	
5. Loca	ation of Lega	l Descripti	on	
courthouse, regis	stry of deeds, etc. Brya	n Memorial Towr	n Hall	
	Route 109			
street & number				
city, town	Washington Depo		state	CT
6. Repi	esentation i	n Existing	Surveys	
litle State	Pl Register of Hist	aces oric has this pr	operty been determined eli	igible?yes X n
			fodoral X stat	e county loca
				County 100
depository for su		icut Historica	l Commission	
city, town	59 South Prospec Hartford	t Street	state	CT

### 7. Description

 Condition
 Check one
 Check one

 \_\_\_\_ excellent
 \_\_\_\_ deteriorated
 \_\_\_\_ unaltered
 \_\_\_\_ original site

 \_\_\_\_ good
 \_\_\_\_ ruins
 \_\_\_\_ altered
 \_\_\_\_ moved date

 \_\_\_\_ fair
 \_\_\_\_ unexposed

#### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The New Preston Hill Historic District is located at a country crossroads in the northwestern corner of the Town of Washington, Connecticut. This intersection of east-west and north-south highways became the site of a church and Common in the mid 18th century. The present stone church edifice, built in 1824, and stone schoolhouse and tavern, all at the western end of the Common, were the most prominent buildings in the residential cluster around the Common that forms the district during the 19th century and continue to be so today. (Photograph 5)

Section 1

New Preston Hill has an elevation of about 950 feet. It is approached up hill from the east and west, on New Preston Hill Road, and from the south on Findley Road. Gunn Hill Road to the north runs flat along the plateau. The east-west highway, once a toll road called the New Preston Turnpike on the route from the Hudson River to Hartford, has always been the more heavily traveled route and is now a paved highway. Findley and Gunn Hill roads, running north-south, continue to be unpaved dirt roads, reflecting the historic rural character of the district.

The district boundary encompasses ten properties. Five of them face the Common. Four are located on New Preston Hill Road west of the Common and one is on Gunn Hill Road north of the Common. This cluster of ten properties is readily identifiable because spaces to the north and east are open fields, Findley Road to the south is sharply down hill with houses at the foot of the hill of a more recent era, and the area to the west is occupied by woodlands and modern houses. There are 210 acres in the district.

On Parcel 11, in addition to the main house, there is a small, second house. On Parcel 33, in addition to the Colonial house, there is a 20th-century house. On Parcel 35, in addition to the main house there are a second house, cottage/studio, and two large barns, making a total of 16 principal structures in the district. Statistical analysis of the structures is as follows:

#### Age:

18th century - 2 19th century - 10 20th century - 4

#### Style:

18th-century vernacular - 2
19th-century vernacular - 3
Colonial - 2
Federal - 4
Italianate - 1
20th-century vernacular
(less than 50 years old) - 4

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Continuation sheet Property Owners Item number

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**Page** 

Town Map 7-4

Parcels 9, 11
Blass, Bill
550 Seventh Avenue
New York, NY 10018

Parcels 10, 27A, 28, 34
Ecclesiastical Society of New Preston
New Preston Hill Road
New Preston, CT 06777

Parcel 12
Anthony, Carol
New Preston Hill Road
New Preston, CT 06777

Parcel 24
Colmery, Naomi
New Preston Hill Road
New Preston, CT 06777

Parcel 25
Moseley, Tomas C. and Elizabeth D.
288 South Bald Hill Road
New Canaan, CT 06840

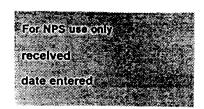
Parcel 26
Grizzard, George
c/o Becker & London
30 Lincoln Plaza
New York, NY 10023

Parcel 27
Hollingsworth, Helen P.
Gunn Hill Road
New Preston, CT 067777

Parcel 29
Chamberlin, Dolores
Gunn Hill Road
New Preston, CT 06777

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Parcel 33

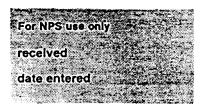
Parkas, Allister & Ann New Preston Hill Road New Preston, CT 06777

Parcel 35

Tollman, Beatrice 541 Fifth Avenue - Apartment 31 New York, NY 10017

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New Preston Hill Historic District, Washington, CT Continuation sheet Description Item number 7



Page

1

Material:

Stone - 3
Frame - 13

Designation as to contributing to the historical and architectural significance of the district:

Contributing - 12 Non-contributing - 4

The dominant structure in the district is the stone church at the western end of the Common. The church, the adjoining school, and the tavern accross the street, also both of stone, form the basic community structures for the cross roads hamlet. Other structures, which are residential in use and frame in construction, include buildings in the Colonial, Federal and Italianate architectural styles and vernacular buildings.

Despite the heterogenity of its component structures, the district, which has developed over two centuries, enjoys a cohesive sense of place from the rural setting, spaciousness and slow pace of development. Mostly 19th century in character, it has 18th-century components and 20th-century buildings of similar scale and mass that in the aggregate constitute a historic, rural, Connecticut village.

Inventory of the district follows:

Parcel numbers relate to town map 7-4. (See sketch map.) Sequence of description is clockwise from Parcel 11.

Dates are taken from the Assessor's cards, except those noted "visual." Indication of whether the property is considered to be contributing or non-contributing is given by C or NC.

Number of stories relates to the amount of usable space in the house.

- Parcel 11 C 1800. Newton's Tavern. 2½-story, Federal/Greek Revival, stone, gable-roofed, 3-bay, 30x45' house. Roof is covered with wooden shingles. Greek Revival detailing on front elevation. 12-over-12 windows. A lower 2-story, 30x27' wing extends to the rear and there are frame 1-story extensions to the north. Stone fence. 1 acre. (Photograph 1)
  - NC 1950, visual. Second structure.  $1\frac{1}{2}$ -story, frame, gable-roofed, shingled house with field stone chimney.

Second parcel (9). Woodland that works as the grounds of the house. 22 acres.

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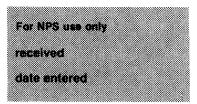
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Continuation sheet	Ι	Description Item number 7	Page 2
Parcel 12	С	1790. 1½-story, vernacular, frame, house with gable end to street, on s House has lost 18th-century visual conow plain. 1-story addition at rear	stone foundations. characteristics and is
Parcel 24	С	18th century. Tollhouse. 1½-story, gable-roofed, 20x32' house covered won stone foundations. Small added wleft. An old section of the road rugiving a sense of the tollhouse sett has lost 18th-century characteristic	with wooden shingles, wings to right and ans close to the house sing, but the house
Parcel 25	С	1800. 2-story, Federal/Greek Revivaroofed, 23x24' house covered with we stone foundations. The central door pilasters under a projecting, semi-cadditions to right and rear. The hother road, behind a stone retaining with vertical siding. 6 acres. (Projection of the control of	eathered shingles, on is flanked by fluted circular hood. 1-storuse is sited above wall. 2-story barn
Parcel 26	С	1860. 2½story, Italianate, frame, go house covered with clapboards, on steporch posts are made of sawn parts. to the rear. 35 acres. (Photograph	tone foundations. 1-story extensions
Parcels 27A, 28, 10, 34	С	1824. Hill Congregational Church. Revival, field stone, gable-roofed, with front pavilion and steeple. The has three paneled doors recessed in under half-round transoms that are glacing muntins. There are three 16-above. The entablature of the pavil which continues around the church, i modillion blocks as do the raking colouvered fanlight in the tympanum is gular in shape.	44x55' church le 6x26' pavilion paneled reveals lazed with inter- cover-16 windows ion pediment, includes small ernices. The
		Each side elevation, 22 feet high, h five 16-over-16 windows with tooled, lintels and sills. The rear elevati	grey, marble on has three

windows at each level. The roof construction is a combination of oak scissors trusses and modified post and purlin system. (Photographs 5, 6 and 7)

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Two aisles divide the auditorium into three sections of pews, facing the front doors. Three square fluted posts on high pedestals along each side and one in the rear support balconies. (Photographs 8, 9 and 10)

The structure, in an excellent state of maintenance, has no heating, plumbing or electricity. The church owns three parcels of land that constitute the common. A barn, probably a long carriage shed, formerly stoon on Parcel  $10.3\frac{1}{2}$  acres.

- Parcel 29 C 1850. 1-story, field stone, gable-roofed, 24x28' district school building, now a residence. Front elevation is obscured by added, hipped-roof, enclosed front porch. Interior has high, pitched ceiling corresponding to the roof. Sold by the town in 1910 because it was unused. (Photograph 11)
- Parcel 27 C Early 19th century, visual. Widow Beardsley House. 2½-story, Colonial, frame, gable-roofed, 5-bay, central entrance, central chimney, 26x30' house, on stone foundations. Wooden-shingle siding dates from 1983. Separated from the road by a stone fence. Served as the parsonage from 1869 well into the 20th century. 1.6 acres. Photograph 5, taken in 1976, shows the house before removal of side porch. Photograph 11 shows the house as it appeared in 1984.
- Parcel 33 NC 1974. 2-story, Colonial Revival, frame, gable-roofed, 24x32', 3-bay house. 40 acres. (Photograph 12)
  - C 1800. John Ferris House. 2½-story, Colonial style, frame gable-roofed, 5-bay, central chimney, central entrance, 24x40' house covered with asbestos shingle siding, on stone foundations. No plumbing or heating. Vacant and deteriorated. (Photograph 12)
- Parcel 35 C 1808. The Rev. Samuel Whittlesey House. Kaiya Farm.

  2½-story, Federal, Frame, gable-roofed, 3-bay, 33x40'
  house covered with stucco, with fanlight in tympanum.

  An addition 46' deep and 20' wide extends the west elevation to seven bays. On the east elevation the addition takes the form of a 2-story porch with columns. Stone fence between the road and the house. The Rev. Whittle-sey was pastor of the church. The house was enlarged and

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covered with stucco c. 1920. (Photographs 13 and 14)

- C Very old (probably 19th century). 2-story, vernacular, frame, gable-roofed, ell-shaped house, on stone foundations. (Photograph 15)
- C Mid 19th century, visual. 2-story, frame, gable-roofed, 24x63' horse barn of narrow vertical boarding. Square monitor has round-arched louvers under a flat roof. (Photograph 16)
- NC 1955. 1-story, frame cottage/studio. (Photograph 15)
- NC 1972. 1-story, 53x71' sheep barn. (Photograph 17)

The buildings are located on a parcel, within the district, of 99 acres. Also under common ownership, outside the district, are an adjoining parcel to the east of 66 acres and 148 acres across the street north of New Preston Hill Road.

### 8. Significance

1400–1499 1500–1599 1600–1699 X1700–1799 _X1800–1899	archeology-historic agricultureX architecture	community planning	law literature military music	re religion science sculpture social/ humanitarian theater transportation other (specify)
Specific dates	See Item 7.		See Item 7.	oner (openly)

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

#### Criteria C (Architecture) and A (History)

The buildings of the New Preston Hill Historic District are good examples of several 19th-century rural architectural styles. The church is an excellent example, in stone, of a Federal style meetinghouse. (Criterion C). The crossroads community that makes up the district is a significant cluster of buildings surviving from 18th- and early 19th-century settlement and development. The district's sense of time and place is intact because later developments have bypassed this rural, hilltop location. (Criterion A)

#### Criterion C - Architecture

The New Preston Hill Congregational Church is a testimonial to the skill of early 19th-century Connecticut country builders. While little is known about Theodore Cadwell of Windsor and Leman Ackley of New Preston, who received the contracts for the building, the edifice they constructed bespeaks the high degree to which they excelled in their trade. The design of the church follows the tradition of London churches built early in the 18th century according to Act of Parliament which provided that the churches have steeples as "ornaments to the Towne...to shew at a distance what regard there is in it to Religious worship..." The steeple of the New Preston Hill Church, visible from a distance at the end of the Common as one approaches from the east, amply fulfills the dictum.<sup>2</sup>

With regard to the New Preston Hill Church's building material, J. Frederick Kelly, the leading scholar on Connecticut meetinghouses, states that it is "one of the few stone meetinghouses in Connecticut." The church is also distinctive because the pulpit is located next to the vestibule wall and the pews face the front doors, an arrangement categorized by Kelly as the fourth type of early Connecticut meetinghouse. According to Kelly, this is the only remaining example of its type.

In addition to a church, other needed facilities at a country crossroads were a tavern and school which, at New Preston Hill, were built of the same stone as the church. The tavern (Parcel 11) reflects the same pre-Greek Revival architectural characteristics as the church, sharing the pitched roof and gable-end-to-street features and complementary detailing. The school (Parcel 29) can be seen to have similar roof configuration, but whatever architectural features its front elevation may have are obscured by the added, enclosed porch.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

10. Geog	graphical	Data				
Acreage of nominate		210 , Kent		Quadrangle	scale1:24	1000
Zone Easting  C	Northing  L   L   L   L   L   L   L   L   L   L		B	ng	Northing  Lilililililililililililililililililili	
The distric	description and just to boundary is 1" = 445'.	s shown by For bounda	ry justificat	ion, see	e sketch ma Item 7.	ap draw
List all states and state	NA		ounty	boundaries NA	code	NA
state E o rec			ounty	NA	code	NA
name/title		Ransom, Con	surtant Na	tional Reg	nn F. A. Herz ister Coordin	ator
organization	CT Historic				ary 29, 198	<u>} 5</u>
street & number	59 South Pr	ospect St,	telephor	<u>ie 20.</u>	3 566-3005	
12. State	e Historic	Preserv	ation Off	icer Co	ertificat	ion
The evaluated signif	icance of this property	y within the state i	s: ocal			
665), I hereby nominaccording to the crite	ate this property for in eria and procedures s vation Officer signatu	nclusion in the Na et forth by the Na	ional Register and ce			
title Director -	Connecticut His	torical Commi	ssion	date J	une 27, 1985	
For NPS use only I hereby certify	y that this property is i  Syen	In fer	ional Register of In the	date	8/26/8	
Keeper of the Na	tional Register					
Ohief of Registra	tion			date		

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The two other structures in the district from the pre-Greek Revival era share the design success of the church and tavern and establish this era as the most notable in the district's architectural development. The frame houses at Parcels 25 and 35 have gable ends toward the street in the Federal mode with careful classical detailing. Together, these four structures give the district its architectural distinction. The two earlier Colonial houses at Parcels 27 and 33 are conventional and have been either altered or allowed to deteriorate. The two 18th-century structures at Parcels 12 and 24 appear to have been vernacular at the time they were built and, in any event, have been altered and added onto over time so as to make it difficult to determine their original architectural features. The Italianate house on Parcel 26 and the horse barn of similar style on Parcel 35 are contributing structures of later date.

#### Criterion A - History of Development

The New Preston section of the Town of Washington was settled before 1750. A leader among the settlers had the name Coggswell, and members of the Coggswell family lived in the district to mid 19th century. In 1752 local citizens' petition to form an ecclesiastical society was granted. In 1753 a tax was voted, and in 1754 the first church was built, on the highway opposite Parcel 24. This was the New Preston Congregational Church, a name that the church was to lose 100 years later.

A second church building was constructed in 1766 on the site of the present edifice, at the crossroads. The cluster of buildings at the crossroads was the center of a larger farming community that propspered into the first quarter of the 19th century, generating sufficient confidence among the parishioners for them to undertake the ambitious project of building the stone church in 1824. This event marked the height of development as thereafter New Preston Hill was bypassed by the events of the 19th century. Industry developed at New Preston Center, a mile eastward along New Preston Hill Road, where waterpower was available. (See USGS map.) The marble quarries at Marble Dale, source of the grey marble used as trim for the church, became more active. None of this industrial development depended upon or enhanced the importance of the community on New Preston Hill.

Many members of the church congregation responded to these changing circumstances by advocating the construction of a new church at New Preston. The argument over whether to move raged for several years until, in 1853, a majority of the church membership but a minority of the society membership voted to move. A new church was built that year in New Preston and, by decision of the Consociation, it became known as the New Preston Congregational Church. The group at the country crossroads retained the stone meetinghouse, the communion service and the name New Preston Ecclesiastical Society.

NPS:Form 10-909-a (3-82)

OMB No. 1024-0018 Exp. 10-31-84

#### United States Department of the Interior **National Park Service**

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The church members who abandoned the country crossroads location in mid 19th century properly evaluated the course of the future. The absence of further development on the hill was the reason that the crossroads cluster of structures would endure without intrusions and eminently qualify as a historic district.

The 1854 map and 1873 atlas show names of residents in the district that include old families, such as Newton, Coggswell, Ferris and Patterson. In examination of the Washington Land Records, present ownership can be traced back to these names. Starting about 1900 ownership began to pass out of the old families to people from large cities such as Bridgeport, New Haven and New York, who wished to maintain a second home in the The record is especially clear in this respect in regard to the two largest and most prepossessing homes, those on Parcels 11 and 35. As the 20th century progressed, other smaller properties also became second homes for city people.

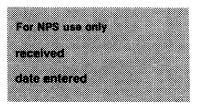
During the years of the 20th century the New Preston Hill Congregational church continued to function with a full time minister who resided in the parsonage on Parcel 27. But this state of affairs came to an end with the retirement of the Rev. Evan Evans in 1936. Thereafter, the church has been used for summer services only, and these services have been arranged by the New Preston Congregational Church. The Hill Church, as it is known, underwent a major program of renovations in 1961.

In the buildings, streetscape and rural atmosphere of the New Preston Hill Historic District may be seen the pattern of 18th-century settlement, 19th-century development and 20th-century adjustment to reduced activity and adaptive use. The total experience gives significant insight into the architecture and history of a rural community in Western Connec-Free of major visual intrusions, surrounded by open fields and woodlands and even retaining dirt roads, the hill top community has the ambience of an earlier age.

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- 1. <u>James Gibbs as a Church Designer</u>, exhibition catalog, Derby: Chapterhouse Press, 1972.
- 2. The general design characteristic of three doors under round arches in a projecting pavilion found at New Preston Hill was used on a frame church at Warren, five miles to the north, in 1818. Similar churches were built in East Canaan in 1822 and at Avon, to the design of David Hoadley in 1818/1819.
- 3. J. Frederick Kelly, <u>Early Connecticut Meetinghouses</u>, New York: Columbia University Press, 1948, v. 2, p. 57.
- 4. A Consociation was a regional association of Congregational churches. The dual structure of ecclesiatical society and church was a carry over from the years prior to 1818 when the Congregational Church was established in Connecticut. The ecclesiastical society, formed by the General Court, governed matters relating to property, and all voters participated in its affairs. Membership in the church, which governed spiritual matters, was by confession of faith. Most ecclesiastical societies have now ceased to exist; there are about 19 left in Connecticut. See letter, the Rev. Allen F. Tinkham, Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ, to author, January 30, 1985.

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- Boardman, Charles A., "A Sermon Delivered at the Dedication of the New Congregational Meeting-House in New-Preston, Connecticut, January 19, 1825."
- Contributions to the Ecclesiastical History of Connecticut, Hartford, Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ, 1967.
- 1873 County Atlas of Litchfield, Connecticut, New York: F. W. Beers & Co., 1874.
- Fagan, L., Map of Town of Washington, 1854.
- Gibbs, James, as a Church Designer, exhibition catalog, Derby: Chapter-house Press, 1972.
- History of Litchfield County, Connecticut, Philadelphia: J. W. Lewis & Co., 1881.
- Kelly, J. Frederick, <u>Early Connecticut Meeting Houses</u>, New York: Columbia University Press, 1948, v. 2.
- Orcutt, Samuel, <u>History of the Towns of New Milford and Bridgewater</u>, Connecticut, <u>1703-1882</u>, Hartford: Case, Lockwood & Brainard Co., 1882.
- Washington Historic District Study Committee Report, 1975.
- Washington Land Records, volume 24, page 187, 31/436, 45/310, 52/266.
- Tinkham, The Rev. Allen F., Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ, letter to author, January 30, 1985.

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New Preston Hill Historic District, Washington, CT Continuation sheet Geographical Data Item number 10

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#### UTM References:

- A 18/635880/4615480
- B 18/635880/4615400
- C 18/635360/4615400
- D 18/635360/4614990
- E 18/635620/4615000
- F 18/636020/4615080
- G 18/636020/4614220
- H 18/635430/4614220
- I 18/635370/4614510
- J 18/635260/4614520
- K 18/635100/4614690
- L 18/635100/4614880
- M 18/634980/4614860
- N 18/634970/4614700
- 0 18/634750/4614620
- P 18/634720/4614980
- Q 18/635260/4615070
- R 18/635380/4615070
- S 18/635220/4615500

### **National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form**

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Historic American Buildings Survey Connecticut No. 236, four drawings of the church 1956

x federal

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Washington

D. C.