

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

received NOV 8 1973  
date entered

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

1. Name

historic Locust Creek House Complex

and/or common same

2. Location VT 12

street & number Vermont Route 12 at Vermont Route 107 N/A not for publication

city, town Bethel N/A vicinity of ~~Congressional district~~

state Vermont code 50 county Windsor code 027

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Charles H. and Joan M. Cure

street & number 810 Shadowlawn Drive

city, town Westfield N/A vicinity of state New Jersey 07090

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Office of the Town Clerk

street & number South Main Street

city, town Bethel state Vermont 05032

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Vermont Historic Sites and Structures Survey has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1973  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Vermont Division for Historic Preservation

city, town Montpelier state Vermont 05602

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## 7. Description

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<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" 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 _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

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

The Locust Creek House complex incorporates an 1837 tavern in the form of a T-plan, two and one-half story, mostly clapboarded house and an 1860 north wing containing a carriage shed and second-story dance hall. A nineteenth century barn and other agricultural outbuildings - partly sheathed with wood shingles to match the tavern's decorative treatment - flank the house, representing a subsequent use of the property. The complex stands next to Locust Creek at the traditional junction of the roads from Bethel to Stockbridge and to Woodstock. Although the road junction and surrounding hamlet have been disrupted by recent highway relocation, the Locust Creek House and outbuildings retain largely intact their nineteenth century architectural character.

Named after the stream that flows past its site on the east, the Locust Creek House complex stands about two miles southwest of Bethel village at the historical junction of the roads from Bethel to Stockbridge (now Vermont Route 107) and to Woodstock (now Vermont Route 12). The latter road passes the west facade of the tavern but Route 107 and the intersection have been moved (circa 1970) a short distance to the north. A scattering of other buildings exists in the vicinity, remnants of a nineteenth century hamlet focused on the water power of Locust Creek at the point where it drops to the floodplain of the White River.

The main block (#1 on the enclosed sketch plan) of the Locust Creek House consists of a two and one-half story, five-by-two-bay, wood-framed and mostly clapboarded I-house oriented with its asphalt-shingled gable roof parallel to the road. The five-bay main (west) facade has a center entrance sheltered by a full-length porch with wood-shingled rails and four tapered columns. The two-bay south gable elevation displays on its upper one and one-half stories the decorative sheathing of wood shingles, with some imbricated courses and a dogtooth lower edge. The original south interior end chimney retains its barrel cap while the counterpart north chimney has been replaced by a metal pipe.

Attached to the east elevation of the main block, an ell (#1A) of similar height, scale and design extends four bays in length. Wood shingles sheath the second story with interspersed imbricated courses and a dogtooth lower edge. The gable roof has been covered with standing-seam metal; it carries one interior chimney.

Continuing the line of the east ell from its east gable elevation (but with a lower ridge) a one and one-half story wing (#1B) of uncertain date displays a similar appearance, being sheathed with wood shingles on its north kneewall and east gable end. An entrance exists in its four-bay

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north eaves elevation; another opens onto a crudely framed east porch with a concrete deck. A shed dormer interrupts the north slope of the asphalt-shingled gable roof, from which rise two interior chimneys. A one-story, flush-boarded, gable-roofed shed ell with central opening (#1C) projects from the wing's south elevation.

Added to the northeast corner between the I-house and the east ell, a small one-story, shed-roofed wing (#1D) contains one finished room on its interior.

At the north end of the I-house, a two and one-half story, clapboarded wing (#2) added in 1860 extends four bays parallel to the road. The first story consists of an open carriage shed with four stall openings across the main (west) facade; the openings have canted upper corners rising from the simple capitals of the supporting posts. An extension of the I-house's porch roof shelters steps leading to a north entrance into the house. The wing's second story contains the former dance hall lighted by four six-over-six sash. The second-story floor joists are separated from the longitudinal center carrying beam by natural rubber blocks. The wing's north gable elevation also has a first-story carriage opening but its upper wall surface is blank.

Attached to the northeast corner of the north wing, a similarly scaled, wood-framed, flush-boarded barn (#3) extends eastward parallel to the east ell of the I-house, forming an unusual example of U-plan continuous architecture. The barn's gable roof has been sheathed with standing seam metal applied over the original wood shingles. The barn possesses various door and window openings; a large shed-roofed vestibule shelters a west entrance next to the tavern's carriage shed. A range of small windows across the barn's south eaves elevation marks the interior horse stalls. A large gable-roofed canopy (#3A) projects from the west end of the main roof's north slope to shelter an open-topped, wood stave silo standing next to the barn.

Near the northwest corner of the barn stands a small wood-framed, gable-roofed corncrib (#4). Its sheathing consists of flush boards hung vertically and separated by narrow openings intended to provide ventilation.

North of the corncrib, a one-story, wood-framed and clapboarded garage (#5) stands next to the road but oriented parallel to it. Two stall openings with double-leaf doors mark the south gable elevation of the circa 1920 building.

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A short distance from the barn's northeast corner stands a small wood-framed, gable-roofed milkhouse (#6) sheathed with wood shingles. Its entrance is located on the north gable elevation; a stuccoed chimney is attached to the exterior of its east eaves elevation.

A small wood-framed, shed-roofed chicken coop (#7) stands near the barn's southeast corner. Large screened openings mark the south elevation of this wood-shingled building.

To the east of the house's ell, a one-story, wood-framed, shed-roofed calf shed (#8) stands along the bank of Locust Creek, oriented diagonally to the other buildings. Also sheathed with wood shingles, this building is lighted on its south elevation by a range of twelve-pane windows.

The several buildings of the Locust Creek House complex appear at present (1982) in sound structural condition but share the need of exterior and interior refurbishing.

In its original appearance, the Locust Creek House was sheathed uniformly with clapboards on the walls and wood shingles on the roofs. The decorative application of wood shingles to the wall surfaces occurred probably circa 1880. During the present century, most of the roof surfaces have been covered with asphalt shingles or standing-seam/corrugated metal. The I-house was originally lighted by twelve-over-twelve sash; the present two-over-one/two sash were introduced later in the nineteenth century. The main (west) porch was originally shed-roofed and supported by four uniformly spaced posts without a railing; the alteration to its present appearance may have occurred circa 1900.

The plainly finished interior of the Locust Creek House shows its tavern origin most clearly on the second story. Seven guest rooms - numbered with small metal tags affixed to the door lintels - are arranged along an L-plan hallway reached by the central stairway of the I-house. The hallway leads also to the dance hall in the north wing, a large rectangular room with a raised platform at its north end. Three circular plaster surrounds along the longitudinal axis of the ceiling indicate the positions of chandeliers, now removed. The ceiling retains the novel feature of glass bottles mounted upside down with their necks protruding through the plaster; their purpose unknown, the bottles form two lines that flank the chandelier surrounds.

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Although distinguished by molded door and window surrounds, the first story displays less evidence of the tavern. The center entrance hall leads to an elongated dining room in the main block's ell, beyond which the one and one-half story extension contains both a finished main kitchen adjacent to the dining room and a summer kitchen in the unfinished rear. The latter space is dominated by a large free-standing chimney with beehive oven; the original fireplace opening - framed by an undressed stone mantel and hearth - has been infilled with brick to enable the use of the flue for stoves. Flanking the chimney within the half-story attic above the summer kitchen are two small plastered rooms that probably were used for servant's quarters.

## 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/ humanitarian
<input 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 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		

**Specific dates** 1837, 1860      **Builder/Architect** Daniel Putnam

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Standing on the bank of its namesake stream, the Locust Creek House comprises a nearly intact rural tavern built in 1837 and a dance hall plus carriage shed wing added in 1860. Subsequent decline of the innkeeping business brought a turn-of-the-century shift to farming and a complement of agricultural outbuildings to flank the tavern. Presently unoccupied, the tavern-farm complex retains the distinctive characteristics of both activities, and ranks among the least altered examples in Vermont of a functional combination found along many nineteenth century stage roads.

Daniel Putnam constructed the Locust Creek House at the junction of the roads from Bethel to Stockbridge (west) and Woodstock (south) but his son, Sumner, actually opened the tavern on the premises. Sumner's proprietorship continued only two or three years and then Daniel and another son, Julius, took their turn at the venture. Other proprietors subsequently leased the tavern from the Putnams until the family left Vermont in the mid nineteenth century. A succession of other owners followed, suggesting that the business was not overly remunerative.

The north wing containing the dance hall was added to the house probably in 1860, whereupon its name was changed to Locust Creek Hotel. On July 3rd of that year, a Dedicatory Ball was held to celebrate the opening of the second-story hall. The program for the event offers the "full bill" featuring a five-piece band for the price of \$2.00. To create a "sprung" dance floor, the hall's floor joists rest on natural rubber blocks placed between the joists and the longitudinal center carrying beam. The hall soon became a favored place for local dances, and probably the most successful aspect of the hotel business.

During the late 1870s, the Locust Creek Hotel became involved in a short-lived enterprise to extract iron from magnetic sand deposits along the White River in the vicinity. The White River Iron Company constructed its works near the confluence of Locust Creek and the White River a short distance north of the hotel, and purchased the hotel to contain its offices and quarters for its superintendent. Operations began in 1878 but the enterprise soon failed for lack of sufficient raw material. Thereafter, a Boston iron merchant and investor in the company, George T. McLaughlin, obtained possession of what was locally called the "Creek House"; McLaughlin may have applied the decorative wood shingling to the exterior of the building.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet 9-1.

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 1.25

Quadrangle name Bethel, Vermont

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A 

1	8	6	8	8	9	4	0	4	8	5	3	1	0	5
Zone			Easting				Northing							

B 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

C 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

D 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

E 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

F 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

G 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

H 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

Verbal boundary description and justification

See Continuation Sheet 10-1.

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

state N/A code county code

state code county code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Hugh H. Henry

organization Historic Preservation Consultant date August 1982

street & number Green Mountain Turnpike telephone 802-875-3379

city or town Chester state Vermont 05143

# 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

*William B. Primery*

title Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

date 11-1-82

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

Entered in the  
National Register

date

12/10/82

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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Subsequently William M. Rogers acquired the property, and, during the last years of the nineteenth century, his son, George, attempted to revive the hotel business. However the opening of the White River Valley Railroad through the area in 1899 diverted most of the transient patronage, and the hostelry was soon closed permanently.

Varying degrees of agricultural activity undoubtedly accompanied the innkeeping efforts of the building's nineteenth century owners. After 1900, agriculture became the dominant use of the property as a small dairy farm emerged with the present group of outbuildings surrounding the original tavern. Twentieth century dairy farming, however, did not outlast the time span of nineteenth century innkeeping at Locust Creek, dwindling to its end during the 1960s.

Although not now occupied, the buildings remain intact and continue to display the characteristic features of both tavern and farm. The main block's numbered second-story rooms appear from the hallway to await nineteenth century guests while the adjoining dance hall offers a floor that springs sympathetically to rhythmic steps. In a similar manner, the barn and complementing outbuildings constitute a typical small Vermont farmstead that apparently lacks only animals and equipment.

This combination of historic characteristics gives the Locust Creek House special significance, representing two principal strands of cultural and economic activity in nineteenth century Vermont. Although numerous other examples of the tavern-farm have existed in the state, most have been severely altered in recent decades while being converted to other uses. The Locust Creek House retains to an extraordinary extent its architectural and historical integrity, and deserves careful preservation to maintain that character in the future.

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1. Beers, F.W. Atlas of Windsor County, Vermont. New York, 1869.
2. Cushing, Irene and Stafford, Irene, eds. Bethel: The Early Years. Bethel, Vt.: The Bethel Historical Society, 1974.
3. "Locust Creek House." Bethel (Vt.) Courier. August 30, 1917.
4. "White River Iron Works." Randolph (Vt.) Herald and News. August 8, 1978.
5. Interviews of Irene Cushing, Bethel, Vermont by Hugh H. Henry on May 21 and July 27, 1982.



LOCUST CREEK HOUSE

BETHEL, VERMONT

August, 1982

Not Drawn to Scale

