

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received FEB 26 1987

date entered OCT 26 1987

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

1. Name

historic NA

and or common Laurel Hill Historic District

2. Location

street & number see continuation sheet

NA not for publication

city, town Norwich NA vicinity of

state Connecticut

code 09

county New London

code 011

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

4. Owner of Property

name Multiple ownership

street & number

city, town

vicinity of

state

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Norwich City Clerk

street & number Room 214, Norwich City Hall, Union Square

city, town Norwich

state Connecticut

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

State Register of Historic Places title has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1986

federal state county local

depository for survey records Connecticut Historical Commission

city, town 59 South Prospect Street, Hartford

state Connecticut

SEP 11 1987

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Laurel Hill Historic District comprises about 120 acres on the east bank of the Thames River in the city of Norwich, Connecticut. The district is bounded on the north by the Shetucket River, which separates Laurel Hill from downtown Norwich, on the east by the crest of Laurel Hill, on the south by a steep ridge along which Rogers Avenue runs, and on the west by the steep banks of the Thames River, below which is the rail line of the Norwich & Worcester railroad. The district is characterized by a linear development paralleling the river along Laurel Hill Avenue and a few side streets. This is set against the natural backdrop of the wooded, rocky slopes of Laurel Hill (Photograph 1). The area of the district encompasses that of a 19th-century development begun in 1850 by publisher Henry Bill. The district is almost entirely residential in character, with only one 19th-century industrial building represented. The houses on Laurel Hill Avenue nearest the downtown tend to be larger in scale and further apart with more setback (Photograph 2) than those further south along Laurel Hill Avenue (Photograph 3) or on side streets (Photograph 4). The district contains 124 houses and one commercial building, only three of which are non-contributing. In addition, there are 55 outbuildings, 41 of which are non-contributing, 14 contributing. 136 buildings contribute, 44 do not. Of major buildings, 117 date from the 19th century. The majority are of frame construction, only two brick buildings being present. About one third, or 45, of the houses within the Laurel Hill Historic District are in the Italianate style. 31 houses are of the Folk Victorian type, with simplified detailing borrowed from a variety of sources. Other architectural styles well represented in the district include the Queen Anne style, with 17 examples, and Carpenter Gothic, with 11 examples. Several buildings represent a combination of stylistic characteristics such as Greek Revival and Italianate or Queen Anne and Foursquare. The French Second Empire and Stick styles have five and four examples respectively, while three houses in the Foursquare style are found in the district. The Swiss Chalet Revival and Craftsman styles are represented by single examples.

The earliest houses in the Laurel Hill Historic District are in the Carpenter Gothic and Italianate styles. Scroll-cut bargeboards in the gable ends are the major stylistic feature of Carpenter Gothic homes in the district. The oldest extant house, at 124 Laurel Hill Avenue, ca. 1851, has bargeboards with a scroll-cut two- and three-lobed pattern in the gables of the main house, the dormers, and the projecting entrance bay (Photograph 5). The dormers, which break the eavesline, project boldly and are supported by molded brackets. A 1-story entrance porch has octagonal columns supporting it. 1 Winchester Place constructed about 1860, has bargeboards resembling the profile of an arched corbel table (Photograph 6). Second-floor round-arched windows have arched moldings consisting of connected circular segments each pierced with a central hole. This motif is repeated in a number of other houses, both in Carpenter Gothic and Italianate styles. A lozenge-shaped, scroll-cut ornament is in the gable peak.

The Italianate houses of the Laurel Hill Historic District occur in a variety of subtypes. The roof type is either hip roof or gable roof. Most of these houses have scroll-cut brackets under the eaves. 84 Laurel Hill Avenue, built about 1859, is gable-roofed with an open-bed pediment (Photograph 7). Dentils are used between the widely-spaced brackets. Bracketed hoods, a common feature of houses in this style, are found on the first-floor windows. The round-arched second-floor windows may once have had molding similar to that of 1 Winchester Place, described above. The 1-story porch across the front has fluted columns

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

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

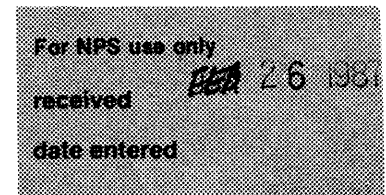
Laurel Hill Historic District

Continuation sheet Norwich, CT

Item number

2

Page 1

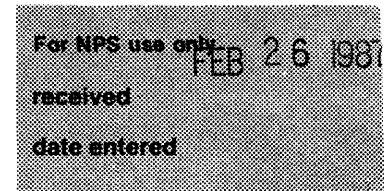


Location (Continued):

Center Street: 32; Laurel Hill Avenue: 10, 16, 26, 38, 44, 52, 60, 76, 84, 94, 104, 105, 109, 111, 115, 116, 119, 120, 124, 125-127, 130, 138, 146-148, 156, 160, 168, 169, 171, 172, 175, 176, 179, 180, 186, 187, 190-196, 191, 195-197, 198, 201, 204, 208, 209, 213, 214, 217, 218, 221-223, 225, 233, 235, 239, 240-242, 243, 248, 250, 251, 259, 269, 277; River Avenue: 24, 28, 36, 40, 46, 55, 84, 92, 95, 96, 103, 104, 108-110, 111, 112; Rogers Avenue: 8, 12, 25, 33, 35, 37, 45; Spruce Street: 17, 20, 23, 30, 39, 43, 56, 65, 67, 69, 85, 90, 100, 155, 160; Summer Street: 20, 22, 24, 28, 34, 38, 44, 50, 50, 56, 68, 74; Talman Street: 28, 29; Walnut Street: 9; Winchester Place: 1, 2, 3; Winchester Street: 13, 16, 17, 20, 21, 23-25, 24, 28, 29, 30.

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

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



Laurel Hill Historic District

Continuation sheet Norwich, CT

Item number

7

Page 1

with plain, flared capitals. The side porch has scroll-cut arches between narrow, plain columns. The attic window is circular. The house at 201 Laurel Hill Avenue, ca. 1878, has the scroll-cut brackets and circular attic window characteristic of the Italianate style (Photograph 8). The 1-story porch has scroll-cut woodwork in a vine motif and slightly arched openings. The house at 104 Laurel Hill Avenue, ca. 1855, has an L-plan with an arcaded porch in the angle of the ell (Photograph 9). The arched porch openings have wooden keystones.

180 Laurel Hill Avenue, ca. 1858, combines an L-plan, gable-roofed house with a large square tower (Photograph 10). The porch has columns similar to those at 84 Laurel Hill Avenue (Photograph 7) and an entablature which had a denticulated molding. The gable ends have round-arched windows in front, with molding having a wavy lower edge. The side gable end has a Palladian window. Rectangular second-floor windows in the tower have bracketed hoods. The cornice of the tower has dentils. No brackets are present.

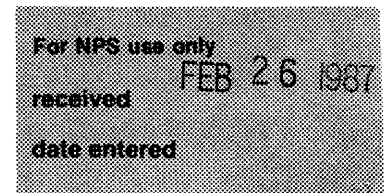
The hip-roofed Italianate house at 76 Laurel Hill Avenue, ca. 1863, has an arcaded loggia on the south side with round-arched second floor openings, and segmentally-arched first floor openings, now enclosed (Photograph 11). A round-arched entry hood is supported by brackets. The cornice has large, molded brackets between which is a wooden corbel table. 95 River Avenue, ca. 1866, has a hip roof with a cupola (Photograph 12). The cornice of both the house and cupola have paired brackets with dentils between each pair. The cupola has paired, round-arched windows. The front porch has clustered, turned supports with dentils in the porch cornice and a gable peak over the entrance. This and the side porch were probably added later. The adjoining house at 103 River Avenue is very similar in design, while houses of the same configuration are found at 38 and 44 Laurel Hill Avenue.

34 Summer Street, ca. 1868, is a gable-roofed house distinguished by an elaborate porch with detailed, scroll-cut brackets in a foliated design, pendants, and dentils in the cornice, supported by chamfered, square posts (Photograph 13). The eaves of the house have toothed, scroll-cut molding pierced with circular holes and have scroll-cut pendants at the corners and gable peak. 50 Summer Street, ca. 1869, has a low-pitch, gable roof (Photograph 14). The circular attic window is in a surround with a scroll-cut pendant and finial. The 1-story entrance porch is supported by clustered, chamfered posts with arches between the posts, the entrance arch being shaped. The spandrel above the arches is of tongue-and-groove construction. Brackets under the porch eaves match those of the body of the house. A very similar porch is used at 52 Laurel Hill Avenue.

In many instances, buildings constructed in the mid-19th century in the Laurel Hill Historic District were remodelled in the later 19th century. This was particularly common in the 1890s, when streetcar service and industrial prosperity combined to spur both new construction and alterations to existing buildings. 172 Laurel Hill Avenue, ca. 1860, is an example of this phenomenon (Photograph 15). Originally, this house was very similar to that at 86 Laurel Hill Avenue (Photograph 7). Later, a polygonal turret and a gable-roofed

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

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



Laurel Hill Historic District

Continuation sheet Norwich, CT

Item number 7

Page 2

dormer with open-bed pediment supported by an elaborate bracket and turned posts were added. At 243 Laurel Hill Avenue, the original Laurel Hill School, ca. 1871, a brick Italianate building, was remodelled in 1896 (Photograph 16). The roofline was altered, and an Eastlake style porch added.

The French Second Empire style is represented within the district by the Jennings Block, built about 1877 (Photograph 17), at 190-196 Laurel Hill Avenue, and by the house at 60 Laurel Hill Avenue, built about 1866 (Photograph 2). Of the three other French Second Empire style buildings, one was altered from an earlier Italianate house, and another has been radically altered in the 20th century.

29 Talman Street, ca. 1878, is the sole example of the Swiss Chalet Revival style in Norwich (Photograph 18). This has a second-floor balcony supported by scroll-cut brackets, scroll-cut trim in the gable peak, and a pierced, scroll-cut handrail on the first floor balcony. The second-floor balcony handrail has been covered with plywood. The house is in a dramatic location, with a steep, rocky ridge behind it on the crest of which Summer Street runs.

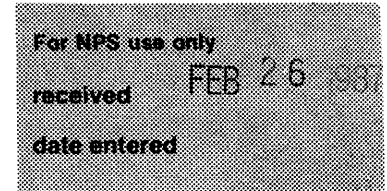
The Queen Anne style is represented both by later alterations to existing houses, such as at 172 Laurel Hill Avenue, mentioned above, and by houses constructed in the style. 146-148 Laurel Hill Avenue is a hip-roofed house with slate roof (Photograph 19). Gable-roofed dormers of a variety of sizes, a projecting bay in front with a clipped-gable roof with a balcony below, an octagonal tower on the north side, a low monitor on the roof, and large decorative chimneys create a picturesque appearance. The house at 195-197 Laurel Hill Avenue, designed in 1895 by architect James A. Hiscox, has a gable roof with two large gable-roofed dormers in front, and a 1-story porch across the front featuring turned, spiral posts and a pediment over the double entrance (Photograph 20). Balconies similar in design to the porch rest on the porch roof below the dormers. Clapboard siding is used on the first floor, shingles on the second floor and attic. Chicago-style windows on the first floor have arched transoms filled with colored glass. The Foursquare house at 175 Laurel Hill Avenue, ca. 1898, has similar windows, as does a 1-story ell at 95 River Avenue.

Of the few 20th-century houses in the district, 55 River Avenue, ca. 1924, is an excellent example of the Craftsman style (Photograph 21). It features an entry porch with an arched roof which merges into the roof of the house itself. The curve of the porch roof is matched by that of two dormers and of the entrance. The eaves of house and porch have a wide overhang.

Laurel Hill is heavily wooded. Chestnut oak, scarlet oak, black oak, white oak, red maple, hemlock, and white pine forest the rocky hillsides. Mountain laurel, an evergreen shrub, grows profusely in the acidic soil, blooming in early June. The yards of a number of homes are landscaped with ornamental trees and shrubs such as dogwood, rhododendron, and azalea (Photograph 19). 138 Laurel Hill Avenue, not illustrated, has a walkway lined with pollarded catalpa trees.

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

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



Continuation sheet Laurel Hill Historic District District Norwich, CT Item number 7 Page 3

Street Number or Map/Block/Lot Numbers Contributing/Noncontributing Description (stories, construction, style, age

Center Street

32 Center Street C 2-story frame house, Italianate, c1872. Garage (NC)

Laurel Hill Avenue

56/35/39 Wooded lot on west side of Laurel Hill Avenue.

10 Laurel Hill Avenue C 2-story frame house, Italianate, c1879.

16 Laurel Hill Avenue C 2½-story frame house, Italianate, c1868.

26 Laurel Hill Avenue C 2½-story frame house, Italianate, c1861.

38 Laurel Hill Avenue C 2-story frame house, Italianate, c1861. Garage

44 Laurel Hill Avenue C 2-story frame house, Italianate, c1865.

52 Laurel Hill Avenue C 2½-story frame house, Italianate, c1865. 19th century outbuilding (C).

60 Laurel Hill Avenue C 2½-story frame house, French Second Empire, c1866. Photograph 2

54/2/2 Wooded lot on east side of Laurel Hill Avenue.

76 Laurel Hill Avenue C 2-story frame house, Italianate, c1863. Photograph 11 Garage (NC).

84 Laurel Hill Avenue C 2-story frame house, Italianate, c1859. Photograph 7 Garage (NC).

94 Laurel Hill Avenue C 2-story frame house, Italianate, c1860.

104 Laurel Hill Avenue C 2½-story frame house, Italianate, c1855. Photograph 9

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

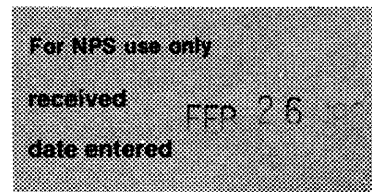
**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Laurel Hill Historic District

Continuation sheet Norwich, CT

Item number 7

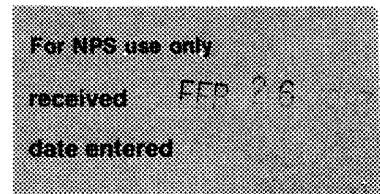
Page 4



Street Number or Map/Block/Lot number	Contributing / Noncontributing	Description (stories, construction, style, date)
<u>Laurel Hill Avenue (continued)</u>		
105 Laurel Hill Avenue	C	2½-story brick house, Italianate, c1859.
109 Laurel Hill Avenue	C	2½-story frame house, Queen Anne, 1892.
111 Laurel Hill Avenue	C	2½-story frame house, Queen Anne, 1881.
115 Laurel Hill Avenue	C	2-3 story frame house, Italianate, c1880.
116 Laurel Hill Avenue	C	2-story frame house, Italianate, c1860.
119 Laurel Hill Avenue	C	2½-story frame house, Stick, c1880. Garage (NC).
120 Laurel Hill Avenue	C	2½-story frame house, Queen Anne/Shingle, c1895. Garage on Spruce St. (NC).
124 Laurel Hill Avenue	C	2-story frame house, Carpenter Gothic, c1851. Photograph 5. Garage (NC).
125-127 Laurel Hill Avenue	C	2-story frame house, Stick, c1881. Italianate carriage house/barn (C).
130 Laurel Hill Avenue	NC	2½-story frame house, Colonial Revival, 1930s. Garage (NC).
138 Laurel Hill Avenue	C	2-3 story frame house, Italian Villa, c1867. Garage (NC).
54/6/8		Vacant lot corner of Laurel Hill Avenue and Center Street.
54/8/1	C	Laurel Hill Park, 1875.
146-148 Laurel Hill Avenue	C	2½-story frame house, Queen Anne, c1882, Photograph 19. Garage (NC).
156 Laurel Hill Avenue	C	2½-story frame house, Italianate, c1852.

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

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



Laurel Hill Historic District
Continuation sheet Norwich, CT Item number 7 Page 5

Street Number or Map/Block/Lot Numbers	Contributing/ Noncontributing	Description (stories, construction, style, date)
---	----------------------------------	---

Laurel Hill Avenue (continued)

160 Laurel Hill Avenue	C	2-story frame house, Italianate, c1852. Garage (NC), shed (C), barn (C).
168 Laurel Hill Avenue	C	2½-story frame house, Queen Anne, 1886-1890, attributed to James A. Hiscox, architect. Garage (NC).
169 Laurel Hill Avenue	C	2½-story frame house, Folk Victorian, c1892.
171 Laurel Hill Avenue	C	2½-story frame house, Queen Anne, c1892. Garage (NC).
172 Laurel Hill Avenue	C	2-story frame house, Italianate with Queen Anne alterations, c1858, Photograph 15. Garage (NC).
175 Laurel Hill Avenue	C	2½-story frame house, Foursquare, c1898.
176 Laurel Hill Avenue	C	2-story frame house, Carpenter Gothic, c1858.
179 Laurel Hill Avenue	C	2½-story frame house, Carpenter Gothic, c1871. Garage (NC).
180 Laurel Hill Avenue	C	2-story frame house, Greek Revival/Italianate, c1858, Photograph 10.
186 Laurel Hill Avenue	C	2½-story frame house, Stick, c1883.
187 Laurel Hill Avenue	C	2½-story frame house, Carpenter Gothic, c1861.
190-196 Laurel Hill Avenue	C	3½-story frame apartment block, French Second Empire, c1877, Photograph 17.
191 Laurel Hill Avenue	C	2-story frame house, Folk Victorian, c1910.
195-197 Laurel Hill Avenue	C	2½-story frame double house, Queen Anne, 1893, Photograph 20, James A. Hiscox, architect. Barn (C).
198 Laurel Hill Avenue	C	2-story frame house, Folk Victorian, c1865. Garage (NC).
201 Laurel Hill Avenue	C	2-story frame house, Italianate, c1865, Photograph 8. Garage (NC).

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

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

For NPS use only
received FEB 26 1987
date entered

Laurel Hill Historic District

Continuation sheet Norwich, CT

Item number

7

Page 6

Street Number or Contributing/ Description
Map/Block/Lot Numbers Noncontributing (stories, construction, style, date)

Laurel Hill Avenue (continued).

204 Laurel Hill Avenue	C	2-story frame house, Folk Victorian, c1868. Garage (NC).
208 Laurel Hill Avenue	C	2-story frame house, Folk Victorian, c1868. Garage (NC).
209 Laurel Hill Avenue	C	2-story frame house, Italianate, c1860. Garage (NC).
213 Laurel Hill Avenue	C	2-story frame house, Queen Anne, c1904.
214 Laurel Hill Avenue	C	2-story frame house, Folk Victorian, c1869.
217 Laurel Hill Avenue	C	2-story frame house, Italianate, c1854. Garage (NC)
218 Laurel Hill Avenue	C	2-story frame house, Queen Anne, 1890, James A. Hiscox, architect.
54/4/12		Wooded lot on east side of Laurel Hill Avenue with steep, rocky ledges.
221-223 Laurel Hill Avenue	C	2½-story frame house, Queen Anne with Stick style porch, c1889.
225 Laurel Hill Avenue	C	2½-story frame house, French Second Empire, c1870.
233 Laurel Hill Avenue	C	2½-story frame house, Italianate, c1871. Garage (NC).
235 Laurel Hill Avenue	C	2-story frame house, Folk Victorian, c1865.
239 Laurel Hill Avenue	C	2-story frame house, Queen Anne, c1899. Garage (NC).
240-242 Laurel Hill Avenue	C	2½-story frame double house, Italianate, c1870.
243 Laurel Hill Avenue	C	2-story brick schoolhouse converted to apartments, Italianate, c1871. Photograph 16.
248 Laurel Hill Avenue	C	2-story frame house, Folk Victorian, c1883.
250 Laurel Hill Avenue	C	2½-story frame house, Queen Anne, c1880. Barn (C).

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

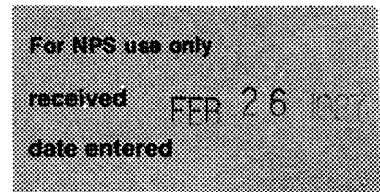
**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Laurel Hill Historic District

Continuation sheet Norwich, CT

Item number 7

Page 7



Street Number or Map/Block/Lot Numbers	Contributing/ Noncontributing	Description (stories, construction, style, date)
---	----------------------------------	---

Laurel Hill Avenue (continued)

251 Laurel Hill Avenue	NC	2½-story frame house, extensively altered French Second Empire, c1870.
259 Laurel Hill Avenue	C	2-story frame house, Folk Victorian, c1870. Barn (C).
269 Laurel Hill Avenue	C	2-story frame house, Carpenter Gothic c1866. Garage (NC).
277 Laurel Hill Avenue	C	2½-story frame house, Folk Victorian, 1877.

River Avenue

54/1/38		Wooded lot on west side of River Avenue
24 River Avenue	C	3-story frame house, Italianate, c1879.
54/1/37		Wooded lot on west side of River Avenue.
28 River Avenue	C	2-2½ story former carriage house remodelled into residence, Italianate with Queen Anne alterations, c1886.
54/1/36		Wooded lot on west side of River Avenue.
36 River Avenue	C	2-3 story frame house, Italianate, c1854. Garage (NC).
54/1/35		Wooded lot on west side of River Avenue.
40 River Avenue	C	2-story frame house, Foursquare, c1903.
54/1/34		Wooded lot on west side of River Avenue.
46 River Avenue	C	3-story house, Italianate remodelled to French Second Empire, c1853.

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

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

For NPS use only
received rrp 26
date entered

Continuation sheet Laurel Hill Historic District
Norwich, CT Item number 7 Page 8

Street Number or Map/Block/Lot Numbers Contributing/Noncontributing Description (stories, construction, style, date)

River Avenue (continued)

54/1/33	.	Wooded lot on west side of River Avenue.
55 River Avenue	C	1½-story frame house, Craftsman, c1924, Photograph 21.
54/1/31		lot covered with fill.
84 River Avenue	C	2½-story frame house, Folk, c1855. Garage (NC).
92 River Avenue	C	2-story frame house, Italianate, c1884. Outbuilding with Italianate, Greek Revival details (C).
95 River Avenue	C	2-story frame house, Italianate, c1866, Photograph 12. Garage (NC).
96 River Avenue	C	2½-story frame house, Queen Anne/Foursquare, c1900.
103 River Avenue	C	2-story frame house, Italianate, c1866.
104 River Avenue	C	2-story frame house, Carpenter Gothic, c1851. Garage (NC).
108-110 River Avenue	C	2-story frame house, Folk Victorian, c1893.
111 River Avenue	C	2½-story frame house, Italianate, c1863.
112 River Avenue	C	2-story frame house, Italianate, c1867.
54/1/27		Wooded lot at end of River Avenue.

Rogers Avenue

8 Rogers Avenue	C	2½-story frame residence, Stick, c1898.
12 Rogers Avenue	C	2-story frame house, Folk Victorian, c1890.

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

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

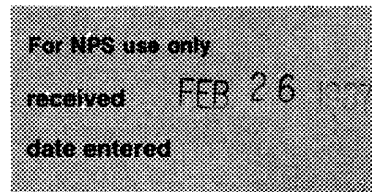
Laurel Hill Historic District

Continuation sheet Norwich, CT

Item number

7

Page 9



Street Number or Map/Block/lot Numbers	Contributing/ Noncontributing	Description (stories, construction, style, date)
---	----------------------------------	---

Rogers Avenue (continued)

25 Rogers Avenue	C	2-story frame house, Folk Victorian, c1894.
33 Rogers Avenue	C	2-story frame house, Folk Victorian, c1890.
35 Rogers Avenue	C	2-story frame house, Folk Victorian, c1895.
37 Rogers Avenue	C	2-story frame house, Folk Victorian, c1895.
45 Rogers Avenue	C	2½-story frame house, Folk Victorian, c1895.
54/4/40		wooded lot with steep rocky ledge on east side of Laurel Hill Avenue at corner of Rogers Avenue.
54/4/41		triangular lot at intersection of Laurel Hill Avenue and Rogers Avenue.

Spruce Street

17 Spruce Street	C	2-3 story frame house, Italianate, c1869.
20 Spruce Street	NC	1-story frame house, c1930s.
23 Spruce Street	C	2½-story frame house, Italianate, c1877.
30 Spruce Street	C	1½-story frame house, Folk Victorian, c1908.
39 Spruce Street	C	2-story frame house, Folk Victorian, c1868.
43 Spruce Street	C	2-story frame house, Folk Victorian, 1881.
56 Spruce Street	C	2½-story frame house, Italianate, c1866. Garage built into hill (C).

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

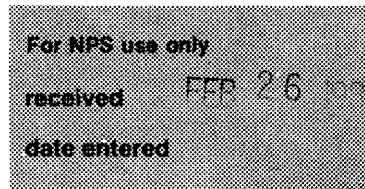
**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Laurel Hill Historic District

Continuation sheet Norwich, CT

Item number 7

Page 10



Street Number or Map/Block/Lot Numbers	Contributing/ Noncontributing	Description (stories, construction, style, date)
---	----------------------------------	---

Spruce Street

65 Spruce Street	C	2-story frame house, Italianate, c 1865.
54/4/1		Large wooded lot with pastures, steep rocky slopes, part of former Bill farm. Fronts Spruce, Rogers.
67 Spruce Street	C	2-story frame house, Folk Victorian, c1897.
69 Spruce Street	C	2-story frame house, Folk Victorian, c1897. Garage (NC).
85 Spruce Street	C	2½-story frame house, Queen Anne, 1883. Garage (NC).
90 Spruce Street	C	2-story folk outbuilding converted to residence c1927. Garage (NC).
54/4/6		Wooded lot east of Spruce Street.
54/4/3		Wooded lot east of Spruce Street.
100 Spruce Street	C	2-story frame house, Queen Anne, c1903.
155 Spruce Street	C	2½-story frame house, Folk Victorian, c1896. Garage (NC).
160 Spruce Street	C	Two 2½-story frame houses, Folk Victorian, c1853, c1870. Part of Henry Bill farm. Two garages (NC).

Summer Street

20 Summer Street	C	2-story frame house, Folk Victorian, c1868.
22 Summer Street		Vacant lot.
24 Summer Street	C	2½-story frame house, Queen Anne, 1894/5.
28 Summer Street	C	2½-story frame house, Queen Anne, 1894/5.

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

For NPS use only
received FEB 26 1987
date entered

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

Laurel Hill Historic District
Norwich, CT

Continuation sheet

Item number

7

Page 11

Street Number or Map/Block/Lot Numbers Contributing/Noncontributing Description (stories, construction, style, date)

Summer Street (continued)

- | | | |
|------------------|---|---|
| 34 Summer Street | C | 2½-story frame house, Italianate, c1868, Photograph 13. |
| 38 Summer Street | C | 2-story frame house, Folk Victorian, c1867. |
| 44 Summer Street | C | 2-story frame house, Folk Victorian, c1862. Garage (NC). |
| 50 Summer Street | C | 2½-story frame house, Italianate, c1869, Photograph 14. |
| 56 Summer Street | C | 2-story frame house, Italianate, c1866. |
| 68 Summer Street | C | 2-story frame house, Folk Victorian, c1867. Small barn (C). |
| 74 Summer Street | C | 2-story frame house, Queen Anne, 1880. Garage (NC). |

Talman Street

- | | | |
|------------------|---|---|
| 56/34/11 | | Riverbank lot |
| 56/34/12 | | Riverbank lot |
| 28 Talman Street | C | 1-2 story frame industrial building, 19th-century industrial, 1878. |
| 29 Talman Street | C | 2½-3½ story frame house, Swiss Chalet Revival style. Photograph 18. Two garages (NC). |
| 56/34/15 | | Riverbank lot. |

Walnut Street

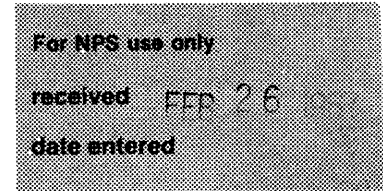
- | | | |
|-----------------|---|---|
| 9 Walnut Street | C | 2-story frame house, Italianate, c1864. |
|-----------------|---|---|

Winchester Place

- | | | |
|--------------------|---|--|
| 1 Winchester Place | C | 2-story frame house, Carpenter Gothic, c1860, Photograph 6. Outbuilding (C). |
|--------------------|---|--|

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

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



Laurel Hill Historic District

Continuation sheet Norwich, CT

Item number

7

Page 12

Street Number or Map/Block/Lot Numbers	Contributing/ Noncontributing	Description (stories, construction, style, date)
---	----------------------------------	---

Winchester Place (continued)

2 Winchester Place	C	2-story frame house, Carpenter Gothic ca. 1860.
3 Winchester Place	C	2-story frame house, Italianate/ Gothic Revival, ca. 1869. Garage on Spruce St (NC).
<u>Winchester Street</u> (Photograph 4, even numbered side of street, 30 through 16).		
13 Winchester Street	C	2-story frame house, Foursquare, ca. 1917.
16 Winchester Street	C	2-story frame house, Italianate, ca. 1873. Garage (NC).
17 Winchester Street	C	2-story frame house, Carpenter Gothic ca. 1865. Garage (NC).
20 Winchester Street	C	2-story frame house, Italianate, ca. 1867.
21 Winchester Street	C	2-story frame house, Carpenter Gothic, ca. 1862.
23-25 Winchester Street	C	2-story frame house, Italianate, ca. 1864. Garage (NC).
24 Winchester Street	C	2-story frame house, Italianate, ca. 1862.
28 Winchester Street	C	2½-story frame house, Carpenter Gothic, ca. 1868.
29 Winchester Street	C	2½-story frame house, Italianate, ca. 1867. Barn (C).
30 Winchester Street	C	2-story frame house, Italianate, ca. 1863.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input checked="" 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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<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)

(Criteria A, C)

See Inventory, Item 7
Specific dates **Builder/Architect** See Inventory, Item 7

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

(Criterion A) The Laurel Hill Historic District is a well-preserved example of a suburban development of the mid-19th century. The district encompasses virtually the entire holdings of publisher Henry Bill, who, with two partners, began developing the site in 1850. The layout and siting of the district expresses the picturesque and romantic ideals of a country setting as articulated by writers such as Andrew Jackson Downing. The success of the Laurel Hill development was the result of its proximity to downtown Norwich and of the prosperity of the downtown in the latter half of the 19th century and the early 20th century. Commercial, retail, financial, and transportation developments lead to the emergence of a new social class many of whom settled on Laurel Hill. (Criterion C) The Laurel Hill Historic District displays good design in its location: the backdrop of the wooded, rocky hill providing an effective foil for the late 19th-century houses of the district. Most of the architectural styles of the latter half of the 19th century are represented within the district. The Italianate, Carpenter Gothic, and Queen Anne styles are the most common. Standards of design, materials, and workmanship are of a very high quality. The use of scroll-cut ornamentation, most of excellent design and execution, is common throughout the district. Other late 19th and early 20th century styles represented in the district are of similar quality. These include the French Second Empire, Swiss Chalet Revival, Stick, Foursquare, and Bungalow styles.

Development of Laurel Hill

With the exceptions of train tracks for the railroad and an isolated farmstead Laurel Hill remained undeveloped until 1850. The separation of the area from the city proper by the Shetucket River, and the steep, rocky slopes of most of the section, served to delay earlier development. Frances Manwaring Caulkins, in her History of Norwich, described the beginnings of the development:

The northern portion of the tract (Laurel Hill), lying nearest the city, which consisted chiefly of rock-bound heights and tangled thickets, was purchased, Oct. 8, 1850, by three partners, John A. Rockwell, Thos. Robinson, and Henry Bill, with the express purpose of bringing it into notice as an eligible position for a suburban village. Under their direction the land was surveyed, a street opened, and house-lots laid out, and the whole thrown open to purchasers. The name of Laurel Hill was bestowed upon it on account of the preponderance of that beautiful evergreen in its woods and on its sunny slopes. Other wild flowers were also abundant. The trailing arbutus, the scarlet columbine, the wild pink and the purple gentian, were among its noted floral treasures. 1.

Henry Bill acquired the interests of Rockwell and Robinson in 1853. Bill was a publisher who sold books through subscription. His publications were primarily of a religious nature, although he also published works on America in the German language.² Bill actively promoted the development of Laurel Hill. In 1853, he was one of several subscribers who incorporated to erect a toll-free bridge over the Shetucket. At the same time, a new road was opened along the river bank, "furnishing a drive of two or three miles

9. Major Bibliographical References

Caulkins, Frances Manwaring. History of Norwich, Connecticut: from its earliest Possession by the Indians to the Year 1866. Hartford: Case, Lockwood, and Company, 1966.

(See Continuation Sheet for additional entries)

10. Geographical Data

Acree of nominated property 120

Quadrangle name Norwich

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A

1	8	7	4	3	9	8	0	4	6	0	0	7	2	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B

1	8	7	4	4	0	8	0	4	6	0	0	6	5	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

C

1	8	7	4	4	2	0	0	4	6	0	0	6	1	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

D

1	8	7	4	4	2	5	0	4	6	0	0	3	6	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

E

1	8	7	4	4	2	2	0	4	6	0	0	0	4	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

F

1	8	7	4	4	2	2	0	4	5	9	9	6	6	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

G

1	8	7	4	4	0	0	0	4	5	9	9	6	7	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

H

1	8	7	4	3	9	6	0	4	5	9	9	9	0	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

Verbal boundary description and justification

See Continuation Sheet

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

state	code	county	code
-------	------	--------	------

state	code	county	code
-------	------	--------	------

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Dale S. Plummer, National Register Nominations Consultant,

edited by John Herzan, National Register Coordinator

organization NA

date June 10, 1986

street & number 85 Church Street

telephone (203) 889- 0325

city or town Norwich,

state Connecticut

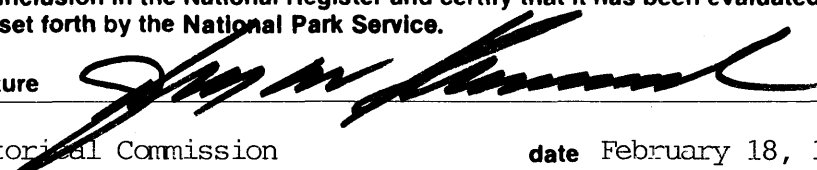
12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

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

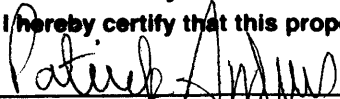


title Director, Connecticut Historical Commission

date February 18, 1987

For NPS use only

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



date 10/26/87

Keeper of the National Register

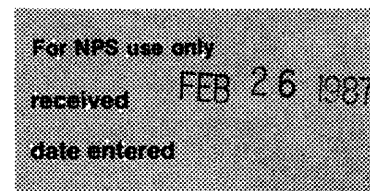
Attest: 

date 10/26/87

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form



Laurel Hill Historic District
Continuation sheet Norwich, CT Item number 8 Page 1

with a varied and beautiful landscape spreading before the eye in its whole course." 3. In 1875, Bill gave a lot to the city for Laurel Hill Park. He also established a farm and a reservoir near the end of what is now Spruce Street. Bill remained interested in Laurel Hill until his death in 1891, at which time he still owned considerable property in the district.

Although no direct evidence is available, it is apparent that Henry Bill was profoundly influenced by the the rural or suburban movement of the 1840s and 1850s. This movement emphasized the values of country living, of picturesque and romantic scenery. In America, the most influential proponent of the new movement was a young landscape architect, Andrew Jackson Downing. Cottage Residences was first published in 1842. His last book, The Architecture of Country Houses, was first printed in 1850, the year development on Laurel Hill started. In 1866, Caulkins referred to Laurel Hill as a "wild and romantic" district, probably reflecting popular opinion. Her remarks indicate the entirely residential character of the development:

It has had no magic touch from the wand of manufacture, no mines or marble quarries lurk beneath the surface; it stands apart from the clash of mills and machinery, but under the management of taste and enterprise, pleasant homes and fertile gardens have risen along the rugged slopes, bursting out one after another, like the old laurel blossoms, for which the place was noted, at the call of June. 4.

By the mid-19th century, Norwich had become a center of textile manufacture, with mill villages at Greenville, the Falls, Taftville, Yantic, and Occum. The downtown served as an entrepot where raw materials and finished products were imported and exported using steamboat and railroad connections. The downtown also served as the retail center for the area, as the home of several lending institutions, and the seat of town and city government. Demand for firearms and textiles during the Civil War transformed Norwich into a boom town. Housing was needed, and the growing merchant class in Norwich found Laurel Hill attractive. The wealthier residents of Laurel Hill clustered near the north end of Laurel Hill Avenue and on River Avenue, where Bill's own residence overlooked the Thames River and Norwich harbor.

Architecture of Laurel Hill

Each of the three major architectural styles most commonly found in the Laurel Hill Historic District is well represented in terms of quality of design, materials, and workmanship. The Carpenter Gothic style is represented by the Supply T. Holbrook house, ca. 1851, (Photograph 5) at 124 Laurel Hill Avenue, and by 1 Winchester Place, ca. 1860, built for James Winchester. The Holbrook house, with scroll-cut bargeboards, projecting dormers and entrance bays, and octagonal porch supports, is an excellent, well-balanced design. The Winchester house, while smaller in scale, has scroll-cut bargeboards and gable peak design of high quality.

The Italianate style, the commonest style in the Laurel Hill Historic District, has a variety of examples. Many, like 84 Laurel Hill Avenue, are small-scale, gable-roofed houses with Italianate brackets and other details added (Photograph 7). Others are remarkable for the quality of details such as porches, as the houses at 34 Summer Street

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

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

Laurel Hill Historic District

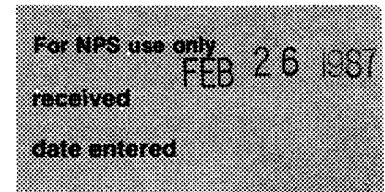
Continuation sheet Norwich, CT

Item number

8

Page

2



(Photograph 13) and 50 Summer Street (Photograph 14), built about 1868 and 1869, respectively. The porch at 34 Summer Street is remarkable for the intricacy of its design and the high standards of workmanship evident in its execution. The porch at 50 Summer Street has a shaped entrance arch and scroll-cut brackets which contrast with the smooth surface of the spandrel above the arches. Similarly, the arcaded porch at 104 Laurel Hill Avenue, ca. 1855, enlivens the facade of the building (Photograph 9).

Certain motifs are repeated in many houses throughout the district. The arched molding over second floor windows, consisting of overlapping circular segments with circular holes, is common (Photographs 6, 15). Several houses, such as that at 84 Laurel Hill Avenue (Photograph 7), probably had them originally. This is a simple device which adds visual interest to the second floor windows.

Another Italianate house of noteworthy design is that at 76 Laurel Hill Avenue (Photograph 11), ca. 1863. The elevated location of the house, the large brackets and corbel course, and the large hood over the door, combine to give the house a monumental aspect. The loggia on the south side creates a contrast between the mass of the house and the opening.

The Queen Anne style is prominent in the district. Earlier buildings, such as that at 172 Laurel Hill Avenue, ca. 1860, (Photograph 15), were often remodelled in the last decade of the 19th century. Here the polygonal turret and dormer/balcony combination result in a picturesque, asymmetrical building. Houses such as that at 146-148 Laurel Hill Avenue, ca. 1882, indicate the full potential of the Queen Anne style (Photograph 19). Various sized dormers, a polygonal tower, an overhanging clipped-gable roof which serves as a balcony roof, the monitor, slate roof, and decorative chimneys, combine to produce a highly individualistic building. The double house at 195-197 Laurel Hill Avenue, designed by local architect James A. Hiscox, offers another interpretation of the Queen Anne style, influenced by the Shingle and Colonial Revival styles (Photograph 20). The house is symmetrical, but the spiral turned porch posts, the use of different siding for various floors, and the massing of the house are all indicative of Hiscox's feeling for design.

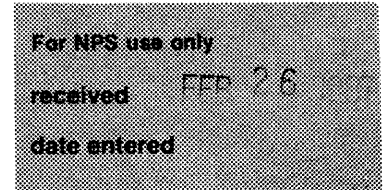
Other styles, represented by single examples, have high-quality design. 29 Talman Street, 1878, is a rare example of the Swiss Chalet Revival style (Photograph 18). The steeply pitched roof, the projecting second floor balcony, and its dramatic location near a rocky cliff, are important elements in the success of the house's design. The Craftsman style house built about 1924 at 55 River Avenue, also incorporates good design (Photograph 21). Here the curve of the porch roof is matched by the curvature of the dormers and of the entrance, unifying the design of the building. The fold houses of the Laurel Hill Historic District incorporate stylistic features from the major styles, often borrowing from more than one style. A whole series of these modest homes were built in the late 1860s (Photograph 22).

Endnotes

1. Caulkins, Frances Manwaring, History of Norwich, Hartford: Case, Lockwood, and Co., 1866, page 576.
2. Interview, Reference Librarian, Bill Library, Ledyard, November 7, 1985.
3. Caulkins, op.cit., page 350.
4. Caulkins, op.cit., page 25.

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

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



Continuation sheet Laurel Hill Historic District Item number 9 Page 1
Norwich, CT

Major Bibliographical References (continued):

Fetzner, Anne P. A Guide to the James A. Hiscox Architectural Drawings in the Stowe-Day Library, December, 1984. Typewritten manuscript at the Stowe-Day Foundation, 77 Forest Street, Hartford, Connecticut.

Plummer, Dale S., and Plummer, John M. Historic and Architectural Survey of Laurel Hill, July 1985, Norwich Heritage Trust. Survey on file at Connecticut Historical Commission, 59 South Prospect Street, Hartford, Connecticut.

Reed, Eleanor B., and Nettles, Diane. Norwich: Century of Growth. Norwich: The Franklin Press, Inc., 1978.

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

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

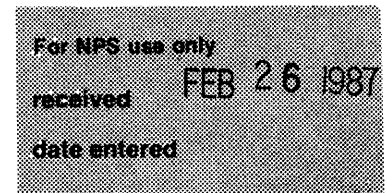
Laurel Hill Historic District

Continuation sheet Norwich, Connecticut

Item number

10

Page 1



UMT References (continued):

- I 18/743940/4600250
- J 18/743910/4600570

Verbal Boundary Description

The Laurel Hill Historic District Boundary begins at the intersection of Laurel Hill Avenue and New Dock Road. The district boundary continues southward along the rear property lines of the lots on the west side of Laurel Hill Avenue until the intersection of River Avenue. The boundary continues along the rear property lines of the lots on the west side of River Avenue. To the west of the boundary line is the property of the Norwich & Worcester Railroad. At the end of River Avenue, the boundary continues along the rear property lines of the house lots facing Laurel Hill Avenue until the property at 277 Laurel Hill Avenue is reached. Here the boundary turns eastward along the south side of the lot to Laurel Hill Avenue. The boundary then turns south along Laurel Hill Avenue to a point directly across from the southwest corner of the house lot at 25 Rogers Avenue. The boundary crosses Laurel Hill Avenue and follows the south or rear property lines of the houses on Rogers Avenue to the end of Rogers Avenue. The boundary then continues west to the crest of the ridge of Laurel Hill. The boundary turns northward along the highest point along the ridge, paralleling Spruce Street. The boundary then crosses Talman Street to the eastern boundary of the lot described as Map 56, Block 30, Lot 15, which it follows north to the bank of the Shetucket River. The boundary then follows the bank of the river in a westward direction until the Route 12 viaduct is reached. It then follows the south side of the viaduct to its intersection with Laurel Hill Avenue, crossing the intersection to the point of origin. (See accompanying map of Laurel Hill Historic District).

Boundary Justification

The boundaries of the Laurel Hill Historic District are very similar to those of the development started by Henry Bill in 1850. The major difference is that the east boundary of the district has been determined by the visual line of sight created by the ridge of Laurel Hill. Otherwise, vast acreage which formed part of the Bill farm would be included, some stretching to the neighboring town of Preston. The Laurel Hill Historic District boundaries are also determined by the clear distinction between Laurel Hill and the downtown, and by the property of the Norwich & Worcester Railroad to the west, with the industrial use of New Dock. To the south, a working-class development of the 1890s is clearly distinct in character from the Laurel Hill development.