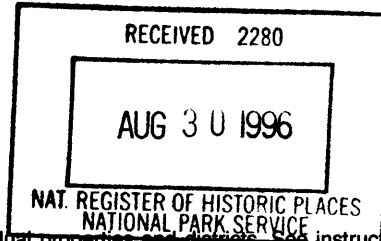


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name The Birches

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number Off E. side of Foster Lane, .15 miles south of Junction w/Rt 27 N/A not for publication

city or town Belgrade Lakes N/A vicinity

state Maine code ME county Kennebec code 011 zip code 04918

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Earl S. [Signature] ^{SHPD} 8/23/96
Signature of certifying official/Title Date
Maine Historic Preservation Commission
State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register
 See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain): _____

[Signature]
Signature of the Keeper
Edson B. Beall

Date of Action
Entered in the
National Register

The Birches

Name of Property

Kennebec, ME

County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/Single Dwelling

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/Single Dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Bungalow/Craftsman

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete

walls Wood/Wood Shingle

roof Asphalt

other Enclosed Front Porch

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

The Birches
Name of Property

Kennebec, ME
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Commerce

Entertainment/Recreation

Period of Significance

1916-1946

Significant Dates

1916

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Stevens, John Calvin and

Stevens, John Howard (Attribution)

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

The Birches
Name of Property

Kennebec, ME
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property 1.25

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1

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

3

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Zone Easting Northing

4

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 See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kirk F. Mohney, Architectural Historial

organization Maine Historic Preservation Commission date July, 1996

street & number 55 Capitol Street telephone (207) 287-2132

city or town Augusta state ME zip code 04333

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name _____

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

The Birches

Kennebec, ME

Section number 7 Page 2

The Birches is a one-and-a-half-story, rectangular, gable roofed frame building that is sheathed entirely in wood shingles. It has an enclosed, shallow hip roofed front porch and an eyebrow dormer on one side of its broad roof. A two-car garage located off the southwest corner of the house, as well as its present concrete foundation are of more recent construction.

Facing west, the building's front elevation features a nearly full width three-bay porch that is framed by the broad gable of the roof. Originally constructed as an open porch, it has been enclosed by a storm door and a pair of one-over-one storm windows in the center bay, and trios of storm windows in the flanking bays and sides. The posts and balustrade wall of this porch are covered in shingles that match those on the main body of the house. Behind the porch is a wide central doorway and flanking pairs of six-over-six double-hung windows. Immediately above the porch roof and centered below the gable peak is a set of four small six-over-sixes that are recessed from the wall surface which is curved inward to meet them. In addition to the porch alterations mentioned above, the original wide steps and balustrade have been replaced, and a section of the porch balustrade that flanked the steps and featured a slat balustrade have been filled in.

The north side elevation has a symmetrical fenestration pattern comprised of pairs of six-over-six windows near the northeast and northwest corners, and a trio of six-over-sixes between. A fieldstone chimney punctuates the roof about midpoint. On the south elevation, the paired windows are repeated in the same location as on the opposite side, but the central section of the wall is occupied by a recessed porch that has been enclosed with a storm door and large four-pane storm windows. Spanning this central area and located about a third of the way up the roof slope is the eyebrow dormer with its five window panes of varying size. The rear elevation features paired six-over-sixes separated by a ribbon window comprised of four small three-over-threes on the first story, and a set of five six-over-sixes on the upper level. A recently installed concrete block flue (for the furnace) rises between the southeast paired windows and the first story ribbon windows.

The interior of The Birches is virtually intact, and is particularly striking for its varnished tongue and groove sheathing on the walls and ceilings, as well as for the central great hall which is open to the ceiling and contains a large stone fireplace and a balcony around four sides. In plan, a short hallway separates the two front rooms that are lit by the paired windows behind the porch and at the side elevations. The hallway leads into the great hall that occupies the middle part of the house. The fireplace is located on the north side of the hall where it is flanked on the west side by a recessed doorway that opens into the kitchen (originally a sleeping porch). The secondary entrance and recessed porch is located on the opposite side of the great hall from the fireplace, and the stairway to the balcony is positioned at the southeast corner of the room. Behind the stairway and occupying the eastern third of the house are two bedrooms that are separated by a pair of bathrooms, one of which opens off the hall and the other from the southeast bedroom. There are two bedrooms and a third bath on the second story, as well as a niche under the eyebrow dormer. The window and door surrounds are composed of symmetrically molded trim with corner blocks. The stair and balcony balusters are turned as is the main newel post. Wainscot is employed in the hallways and the great hall only. Several of the original light fixtures remain in the house.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

The Birches

Kennebec, ME

Section number 8 Page 2

Constructed in 1916, The Birches is a one-and-a-half story shingled frame building that was originally part of the lodging accommodations for The Belgrade, a summer resort on Belgrade Lakes whose centerpiece was an expansive Shingle Style hotel that no longer stands. It is believed to have been designed by the Portland architectural firm of John Calvin Stevens and John Howard Stevens, the firm that designed the original hotel and its two additions. One of four cottages that were originally associated with the hotel, The Birches is the most intact example of three that survive. It is eligible for nomination to the Register under criterion A for its association with the local tourism industry in the early to mid twentieth century, and criterion C for its architectural significance.

Development of The Belgrade hotel and its surrounding grounds commenced in 1899 when Charles A. Hill engaged John Calvin Stevens to design what he subsequently promoted as "The Best Sportsman's Hotel in Maine." Stevens proposed a long rectangular Shingle Style building whose principal elevation was dominated by a broad, centrally placed projecting gambrel roof while its first story was sheltered by a wraparound porch. Promotional brochures described the hotel, which was completed in time for the season of 1900, as "... a new structure of the colonial style of architecture, and presenting a very attractive appearance in the beautiful setting Nature has given it."

In 1900 the Town of Belgrade, whose principal villages were Belgrade Mills (now Belgrade Lakes), North Belgrade, and Belgrade, had a population of 1,058 persons. Traditionally, agriculture had been the chief occupation of the town's inhabitants, although several small scale manufacturing establishments offered some diversity to the local economy. By the turn of the nineteenth century, however, facilities like The Belgrade that catered to recreational tourists began to offer another means for employment, at least on a seasonal basis. The town's location between a chain of lakes locally known as the Kennebec Ponds and renowned for their game fish (at least as reported by those who were promoting the industry), apparently offered the ideal combination of location and proximity to rail connections to attract people to the area. By this time, in fact, there were no fewer than four hotels in the town, several of which appear (judging from their names) to have been in the business of accommodating the seasonal tourist.

Although the initial promotional campaigns for The Belgrade appear to have emphasized the quality of the fishing that was to be had in the Kennebec Ponds, opportunities for boating and golfing on the newly established links offered additional attractions. The initial brochure also described the planned development of three or four log cabins in the vicinity of the hotel and the lake as a means to accommodate fishing parties "...who want to go off by themselves." The success of The Belgrade appears to have been immediate since a large addition was opened in 1902 with a second constructed five years later. In addition, by 1908 two log cabins had been built on the grounds, and the nine hole golf course, which had been laid out by Alex H. Findlay, was completed and ready for use (the prior references to golf links were apparently only practice greens). In its 1910 brochure, the management announced the completion of an Italian Garden "...where the spray of the fountain, the artistically-planned walks and bedded flowers and plants, backed by the gems of lake and mountain in the near distance, bring to the senses one of the most attractive and reposeful pictures on which the eye could rest." The continual improvements made to the grounds

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

The Birches

Kennebec, ME

Section number 8 Page 3

of The Belgrade catered to an expanding clientele whose recreational interests and therefore their tourist accommodations were more diverse than those for fishermen alone. This is evident in the construction of one and then a second tennis court, and the erection of an automobile garage which initially had a capacity for fifty cars, but was subsequently enlarged to accommodate seventy.

The season of 1916 opened with the addition of a third detached cottage that expanded the range of lodging accommodations. Described as a large bungalow, The Birches contained "...six large sleeping-rooms with four windows in each room, two baths and a living-room with open fireplace. Electric lights, electric heat, telephone and hot and cold water add to its comforts." Within the next several years the fourth and final cottage, The Elms, was built.

The Belgrade hotel remained in use until 1955 when it was destroyed by fire, a fate that befell the majority of Maine's nineteenth and early twentieth century hotel complexes. Shortly after the fire, The Birches was sold but remained in use as a summer cottage until 1994 when it was converted for year-round occupancy.

Architecturally, The Birches exhibits many features of the informal bungalow building type. From the exterior, its shingled exterior surface, expansive porch, and broad low pitched gable roof are common elements of bungalow design. Inside, the principal character defining space is the great hall with its large fieldstone fireplace, floor to ceiling height, and the balcony that wraps around the four walls. In this respect, The Birches successfully evokes the image of a hunting lodge. The balance of the interior finishes further projects the sense of being in a rustic setting.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

The Birches

Kennebec, ME

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Bibliography

Donham, Grenville M., comp. *Maine Register, State Year-Book and Legislative Manual*. No. 31-
June 1900. Portland, Maine: Grenville M. Donham. 1900.

Promotional brochures for The Belgrade for the years 1900 to 1920. Original copies were
made available to the owner of The Birches, and others are on file at the Maine Historic
Preservation Commission, Augusta.

Stevens, John Calvin, Architect File. Maine Historic Preservation Commission, Augusta.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

The Birches

Kennebec, ME

Section number 10 Page 2

Verbal Boundary Description:

The nominated property of 1.25 acres occupies the Town of Belgrade tax map 25, lot 16.

Boundary Justification:

The boundary embraces the entire residential lot that has been associated with The Birches since 1957. At that time (two years after the destruction by fire of The Belgrade hotel of which The Birches was a part), this property was separated from the larger parcel of land that had comprised The Belgrade hotel and resort.