

PROPERTY NAME

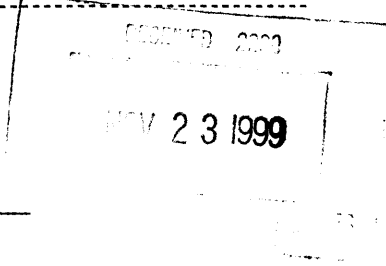
Barkhamsted Center Historic District

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United States Department of the Interior

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1594



1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: Barkhamsted Center Historic District

Other Name/Site Number: NA

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: 119, 131 Center Hill Road; 2, 5, 6, 8 Old Town Hall Road

Not for publication: NA

City/Town: Barkhamsted

Vicinity: Pleasant Valley

State: CT County: Litchfield Code: 005 Zip Code: 06063

3. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property

Private:

Public-local:

Public-State:

Public-Federal:

Category of Property

Building(s):

District:

Site:

Structure:

Object:

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing

9

9

Noncontributing

 buildings

 sites

 structures

 objects

 Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National

Register: NA

Name of related multiple property listing: NA

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4. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria.

John W. Shannahan 11/3/99
Signature of Certifying Official Date
John W. Shannahan, Director, Connecticut Historical Commission

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of Commenting or Other Official Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

5. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- Entered in the National Register
- Determined eligible for the National Register
- Determined not eligible for the National Register
- Removed from the National Register
- Other (explain):

Edson H. Beal 12/22/99

Boe Signature of Keeper Date of Action

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6. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic:	<u>DOMESTIC</u>	Sub:	<u>single dwelling</u>
	<u>COMMERCE/TRADE</u>		<u>tavern</u>
	<u>GOVERNMENT</u>		<u>town hall</u>
	<u>EDUCATION</u>		<u>school</u>
	<u>RELIGION</u>		<u>religious facility, church-</u>
			<u>related residence</u>
Current:	<u>DOMESTIC</u>	Sub:	<u>single and multiple</u>
			<u>dwellings</u>
	<u>SOCIAL</u>		<u>civic</u>
	<u>RELIGION</u>		<u>religious facility</u>

7. DESCRIPTION

Architectural Classification:	Materials:
<u>COLONIAL/Postmediev. English</u>	Foundation: <u>STONE</u>
<u>MID 19C/Greek Revival</u>	Walls: <u>WOOD/SYNTHETIC</u>
	Roof: <u>ASPHALT</u>
	Other Description: _____

Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.

The Barkhamsted Center Historic District is located in northwestern Connecticut on the north-south highway known as State Route 181 and Center Hill Road one-quarter mile west of the Barkhamsted Reservoir and five miles east of Winsted (see U.S.G.S. map). The district's six frame 18th- and 19th-century buildings are all that is left of the village of Barkhamsted Center, most of which was obliterated by flooding the land during the years 1910-1940 for construction of the Barkhamsted Reservoir.

While the district is the historic village center, its spaces, density, trees, and buildings and the relationships between them are primarily rural in character, as portrayed by a photograph of the district's traffic center at the intersection of Center Hill Road and Old Town Hall Road (see Photograph 1 and District Map).

Five of the remaining six buildings relate to town-center functions: the church, parsonage, school, town hall, and tavern. The sixth is residential.

The school at 119 Center Hill Road just south of the main intersection with Old Town Hall Road was built in 1821, altered from time to time, and moved to its present site in 1980. It is maintained by the Barkhamsted Historical Society as a museum (Photograph 2).

The Nathaniel Collins House, 131 Center Hill Road, on the east side north of the intersection with Old Town Hall Road, is the single building in the district said to date from the 18th century; it pre-dates the others, and pre-dates association of the intersection with town-center functions (Photograph 3). A secondary, later north-south thoroughfare, Boettner Road, runs in front of the Collins House.

Old Town Hall Road proceeds eastward from Center Hill Road, starting between the school and the Collins House. It formerly ran through the village of Barkhamsted Center to the east (Figure 2), but now is an unused street taking on a remote character as soon as it leaves the district on its way one-quarter mile east to Barkhamsted Reservoir (Photograph 10).

The Old Town Hall, 2 Old Town Hall Road, is the first building on the north. Its arched portico suggests the Colonial Revival style, articulating alterations made in mid-20th century. It is now a private residence (Photograph 4). Across the street, the Merrill Tavern, 5 Old Town Hall Road, essentially a five-bay two-story Colonial house, also has an arched portico which appears to be added. The house now provides staff living quarters for the Metropolitan District Commission, the owner (Photograph 5).

Both the First Congregational Church and its parsonage, 6 Old Town Hall Road and 8 Old Town Hall Road, which are the last two buildings in the district, are good examples of the Greek Revival style, boldly expressed. The tetrastyle church portico supports architrave and frieze in a clear strong interpretation of the style. The church continues to be used for services year round. (Photograph 6) The house next door that was the parsonage was converted to two rental apartments ca. 1940, one of which currently once again serves as the parsonage (Photograph 9).

Old Town Hall Road now stops a few feet east of the parsonage (Photograph 10). The road lies in land acquired by the Metropolitan District Commission for the Barkhamsted Reservoir, but over the decades until this year the commission kept the road open for travel. 1998 is the first year in which the road has not been passable.

Detailed descriptions of the buildings follow:

Inventory

The letter C before the street address indicates that the resource is considered to contribute to the architectural and historical significance of the district. Dates are taken from the Report of the Historic District Study Committee of the Town of Barkhamsted, unless noted as an assessor's date. The final number in parentheses (x) indicates the count of buildings used in the Number of Resources at Item 3, above.

- C 119 Center Hill Road/State Route 181 1821 Center Schoolhouse 1-story vernacular gable-roofed 31' x 22' building covered with clapboards, facing west. Front fenestration from left (north) consists of 6-panel door under 3-pane transom and two 12-over-12 windows (Photograph 2). North and south side elevations both have two 12-over-12s. Door and two 12-over-12s in rear (east) elevation. Roof is covered with wood shingles. Eaves return. Small brick chimney off center well to left. Property is owned by Metropolitan District Commission, but Town of Barkhamsted holds easement for schoolhouse and its

site. Moved to present site in 1980 by Barkhamsted Historical Society. .99
acre. (1)

- C 131 Center Hill Road/State Route 181 ca. 1776 Nathaniel Collins House. 1 1/2-story Colonial frame gable-roofed 5-bay 35' x 24' house covered with clapboards, facing east toward Boettner Road. Central chimney rebuilt from roof up; central doorway; small-pane 12-over-12 sash. Small rectangular second-floor windows over first-floor windows in space of frieze, but no visual frieze band. North side elevation has two 12-over-12 windows at first floor, one at second. In rear elevation picture window is dominate feature at first floor, while three small gabled dormers have been added in rear roof slope. Full basement. Attached breezeway, garage, and shed. (Photograph 3) 1.2 acre. (1)
- C 2 Old Town Hall Road ca. 1867 Old Town Hall 1 1/2-story 3-bay gable-roofed 38' x 28' vernacular house covered with clapboards, facing west. Thin rectangular chimney oriented east-west off center to north. Windows are 6-over-6. Front door is protected by gabled Doric tetrastyle portico with engaged columns at front wall. Components came from former top stage of church tower next door. Wide architrave and frieze. Semi-elliptical radial fanlight in tympanum. Two 6-over-6 windows at first floor of south side elevation with casements above. On north side elevation, no windows at first floor, casements above. 1-story wing set back on north elevation. Three 6-over-6s in rear (east) elevation. No basement. (Photograph 4) 2-story barn with weathered wood vertical siding, ca. 1940. 4.0 acres (2)
- C 5 Old Town Hall Road 1814 George Merrill House/Merrill Tavern 2-story, 5-bay, Colonial house, 39' x 28', covered with clapboards. Central entrance protected by wide gable-roofed portico with coved ceiling and brick floor, perhaps added in 20th century. Windows are 2-over-2. Both side elevations have two windows at first and second floors, one in attic, all regularly placed. Dentil course under eaves. Small central brick chimney. Wood shingles on roof. Arched ceiling of second-floor tavern ballroom reported in 1974 still to be in place. (Photograph 5) Barn, 1940 (assessor); 3-car garage 1940 (assessor). 2 acres. (3) (Not to be confused with another house on Boettner Road just north of district which also is sometimes called Merrill Tavern.)
- C 6 Old Town Hall Road 1844 First Congregational Church of Barkhamsted. 1-story Greek Revival gable-roofed 38' x 63' building, covered with clapboards. Foundation is massive stone blocks. Walls are 20' high. Tetrastyle Greek Doric front portico supports architrave and frieze which are divided by dentil course. Front wall and pediment tympanum are flush boarding. Doorway's three components are double door of 8-panel leaves under horizontal 8-panel feature over door. Doorway surround has recessed paneled corner blocks. Porch floor is concrete. Plain pilasters at building's four corners. Flush recessed tympanum. Square tower with Doric columns in antis is missing its original top stage (see Figure 4). Four 25-over-25 windows in both side elevations encased in plain flat surrounds; muntins are narrow. Interior space is plain. Pews and dado are natural wood color. -- Framed by Deacon Joel Tiffany in 1844; construction completed by Abraham Kellogg, 1845. (Photographs 6, 7, 8) 2.5 acre. (1)

I beams inserted under sanctuary floor and basement excavated 1975. Interior color scheme researched by Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities.

- C 8 Old Town Hall Road ca. 1846 First Congregational Church Parsonage 2-story Greek Revival gable-roofed 25' x 31' building covered with synthetic siding, facing south. 3-bays of front elevation form 1-2 rhythm, with doorway deeply recessed in left (west) bay. 8-panel front door is flanked by sidelights, doorway by plain pilasters which support projecting wide frieze under boldly molded projecting cornice. Windows are 6-over-6. Pilasters at corners of house. Narrow frieze band surrounds building under eaves. Cornice and raking cornices of tympanum are strongly molded, echoing doorway crown molding. Tympanum is deeply recessed, echoing depth of doorway recess. Long rectangular window in small clapboarded central triangle of tympanum is glazed with three horizontal lights surrounded and separated by narrow border panes. Attached breezeway and 2-car garage set back on west. (Photograph 9) 2.0 acres. (1)

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8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: Nationally:___ Statewide: x Locally:___

Applicable National Register Criteria: A x B___ C x D___

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): A___ B___ C___ D___ E___ F___ G___

Areas of Significance:	Period(s) of Significance	Significant Dates
<u>ARCHITECTURE</u>	<u>1776</u> <u>1867</u>	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Significant Person(s): _____

Cultural Affiliation: _____

Architect/Builder: Joel Tiffany, Abraham Kellogg

State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.

Summary

The Barkhamsted Center Historic District comprises a group of six frame buildings, all in a good state of preservation, which were the historic civic nucleus of Barkhamsted Center village. The buildings well portray the size, scale, and mid-19th-century architecture of the rural community. The buildings are modest in style and features with the exception of the 1844 First Congregational Church of Barkhamsted, which is an outstanding example of a fully articulated Greek Revival edifice. The early-19th-century formation and growth of the village center and its 20th-century displacement by an urban water supply reservoir system are clearly depicted by the artifacts.

History

The Town of Barkhamsted in northwestern Connecticut was incorporated in 1779, but, like much of the northwestern part of the state, was never heavily settled and to this day its 39 square miles has a population of only about 3,500 people. The low average density per square mile is driven in part by the large acreages in the town held by the Metropolitan District Commission (MDC), a water supply authority, and the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). MDC owns 6,632 acres in Barkhamsted, mostly along the East Branch of the Farmington River, while four state forests occupy 4,000 acres. The two together constitute about 43 percentage of the town's land.

Due to its primarily rural character, the town as it was settled did not lend itself to establishment of a single major center of activity. Instead, several villages grew up. These included Barkhamsted Center, the subject of this documentation, Barkhamsted Hollow, which also was replaced by the reservoir, Pleasant Valley, and Riverton. Barkhamsted Center was perhaps first among equals because it was the location of the town hall and First Congregational Church.

Both the East and West Branches of the Farmington River run north-south through the town. The East Branch was identified ca. 1910 by the Metropolitan District Commission (then, and to 1929, the Board of Water Commissioners of the City of Hartford) as suitable for construction of a reservoir to supply water to the greater metropolitan area of Hartford. MDC started buying land in 1913, and completed the Barkhamsted Reservoir, just east of the district in 1940 (USGS Map). The reservoir is 8.5 miles long, has 3.63 square miles of water surface, and holds 30 billion gallons.

Old Town Hall Road ran from the district eastward through the village to the East Branch of the Farmington River. Now the road stops at the First Congregational Church Parsonage (Photograph 10). Under the new circumstances, Barkhamsted Center as a civic nucleus declined in importance. Location of the town hall has been moved to Pleasant Valley, and activity in Riverton has picked up.

The oldest of the civic buildings, the school, was built in 1821 at the road intersection next east (Figure 2). The location has been described as "On the Green, southwest of the old church" (Wheeler, p. 53). Scholars numbered as many as 40. Turnover in teachers was constant; Amherst and Yale undergraduates were among them. A prayer service at 5:00 Sunday afternoon was a regular feature, the Literary Society met in the school, and occasionally it was used for dances.

The MDC bought the building in 1940, and continued it in use as a toolshed on the Barkhamsted watershed, perhaps at its original location, which appears to have been near the water's edge (Figure 2). It was moved to its present location by the Barkhamsted Historical Society in 1980.

The first Congregational Church building was constructed at the same road intersection as the school, at the southern end of the burying ground which was relocated by the MDC to Center Hill Road just south of the district. The Ecclesiastical Society was organized in 1781 pursuant to Connecticut General Assembly authority granted in 1779. The church was built over a period of eight years, 1784-1782. Talk of a new meetinghouse began in 1843, and despite considerable disagreement about the need, the present edifice was completed in 1844-45. The new society of 33

members was organized on July 21, 1845, as the First Orthodox Congregational Society of Barkhamsted.

The house next door was built privately in 1846. The church purchased it for use as a parsonage in 1916, but it was converted to two rental apartments ca. 1940, although the church retained ownership. In recent years the lower unit has again become the parsonage.

The last of the civic buildings to be constructed was the town hall, in 1867. Previously, meetings had been held in the old church, one-quarter mile to the east. Use of the building as a town hall ceased in 1954, when it was privately purchased and remodelled as a residence.

Architecture

Buildings in the Barkhamsted Center Historic District are good examples of the Colonial, vernacular, and Greek Revival modes. They are representative of changing tastes in architectural styles during the district's period of significance.

The Collins House is an archetypical five-bay, central-doorway, central-chimney, 1 1/2-story clapboarded house, of which there are many in Barkhamsted and adjoining towns. Its frieze windows give it distinguishing character, and it appears to be in a good state of preservation, at least on the exterior. Frieze windows of this type traditionally are associated with the Greek Revival style which came into widespread use in the early 19th century, raising the possibility that the house as it now appears was erected in the early 19th century.

The Merrill House/Tavern followed early in the 19th century with similar five-bay, central-chimney, central-entrance configuration, but in a full two-story height. Its windows now are fitted with 2-over-2 sash, a late-19th-/early 20th-century feature, and its portico is of undetermined origin. Historically, it contributed to the town-center activities by its function as a tavern, fulfilled in part by its second-floor coved-ceiling ballroom.

The school, the oldest town-owned building in the district, started its varied career in 1821 as a two-story four-bay building in which the second story was finished in 1824 (Figure 3). About 60 years later, it was determined that the ground floor was unrepairable, so it was removed (Wheeler, 3). It functioned as a school through the 1920s. After several decades of toolshed use by the MDC, it was moved to its present location in 1980 (Figure 3). Since the move, it has been rehabilitated with new 12-over-12 windows (Photograph 2). Through all the changes the footprint and roof with its chimney have remained constant, and the door at the left under its three-pane transom appears to have survived as an original feature.

Documentary and photographic records for the Town Hall are meager by comparison. The overall dimensions appear in the 1867 request for bids, and a 19th-century photograph of the church happens to catch the three windows in the Town Hall rear elevation. The front portico was built in 1970 using components from the top stage of the church tower, demolished ca. 1910, which had been stored by the private owner's family during the interval (Figure 4). Elements from other historic buildings, including the radial windows, have also been incorporated in the Town Hall since it became a residence.

The differences between the 1784 meetinghouse and the 1844 edifice illustrate changes in Congregational church architecture and liturgy which occurred during the period. In 1784 there was a double door on the front elevation (presumably with no columnar portico), and a double door on each side elevation. On the front, single windows flanked the door, with a row of five above. On the sides, single windows flanked the doors, with three above, suggesting that the church was domestically oriented, broader than deep. On the rear, a large central window was flanked by single small windows. In the interior, there were three blocks of box pews that had seats on three sides. Galleries were suspended on three sides of the sanctuary consistent with the windows pattern, while the high pulpit was backed by a suspended sounding board and the large window in the long rear wall, providing audio-visual drama to the strong religious message delivered by the minister.

In the 1844 church, the front elevation is the narrow dimension of the building, displaying a full Greek Doric portico in the tradition of the temple front. The front wall is occupied only by the multi-paneled tall double door with one of its leaves repeated as a blind transom. Side elevations have two-story windows, consistent with the absence of galleries on these walls. There is one interior aisle, and seating is in slips, not box pews. The high pulpit and its accompanying high back window are gone, consistent with a less dramatic approach to preaching.

The present building was constructed without basement. In 1975 the floor framing was reinforced with steel beams to permit excavation below grade and a church parlor was created in the space thus made available.

A 1992 State of Connecticut grant administered by the Connecticut Historical Commission assisted a project to renew interior and exterior finishes. The wainscot and pews were refinished in a graining technique called "flogging" recommended by the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities pursuant to its paint analysis of original conditions. In addition to other interior work, the portico also was repaired and painted.

The two contemporary Greek Revival-style buildings, church and parsonage, standing side by side, provide an excellent opportunity to compare two interpretations of the Greek Revival style of the 1840s. The restrained, academic treatment of the style in the church contrasts with the more vigorous, visually stronger, somewhat vernacular treatment in the parsonage. The proportions of components in the church, the depth of the moldings, and the relationships of the planes of the church all are modular, with the purpose of creating the desired unity in overall effect. While the addition of synthetic siding to the parsonage adds difficulty to analysis, the relationships of details are heavy, detracting from the overall effect. The sophisticated and successful unity of the church, by comparison, makes it one of the finest examples of a Greek Revival church in Connecticut, despite the loss of the top stage of its steeple ca. 1910.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Beers, F.W. *County Atlas of Litchfield County*. New York City: F.W. Beers, 1874, Plate 24A.

Connecticut Historical Commission. Exhibit B to preservation easement executed with First Congregational Church of Barkhamsted, December 30, 1992.

Cosgrove, Leslie, historian of First Congregational Church of Barkhamsted. Conversation, August 9, 1998.

Fox, Michael D., First Selectman, Town of Barkhamsted. Interview, June 4, 1998,

Gidman, David N., owner of Old Town Hall. Interview, August 7, 1998.

Hillman, the Reverend William, minister, First Congregational Church of Barkhamsted, and Mrs. Hillman. Interview, August 7, 1998.

Report of Historic District Study Committee of the Town of Barkhamsted, December 7, 1981.

Repp, Elisabeth M., owner of Collins House. Interview, August 7, 1998.

State Register of Historic Places

Wheeler, Richard G., and George Hilton. *Barkhamsted Heritage, Culture and Industry in a Rural Connecticut Town*. Barkhamsted: Barkamsted Historical Society, 1975.

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: # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other: Specify Repository: _____

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10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreage of Property: 12.7

UTM References: Zone Northing Easting Zone Northing Easting

A	<u>18</u>	<u>4643920</u>	<u>668720</u>	B	<u>18</u>	<u>4643740</u>	<u>668740</u>
C	<u>18</u>	<u>4643560</u>	<u>668700</u>	D	<u>18</u>	<u>4643550</u>	<u>668600</u>
E	<u>18</u>	<u>4643800</u>	<u>668420</u>	F	<u>18</u>	<u>4643800</u>	<u>668480</u>
G	<u>18</u>	<u>4643880</u>	<u>668460</u>				

Verbal Boundary Description:

The district boundary is shown by the dotted line on the District Map (Figure 1).

Boundary Justification:

The boundary is drawn to encompass the nucleus of buildings that constituted Barkhamsted Center in the 19th century. The boundary is composed of the peripheral lines of the district's properties as recorded in the Barkhamsted Land Records, except for the arbitrary diagonal line behind 5 Old Town Hall Road. This arbitrary line is needed because the house lot, owned by MDC, is part of a holding of several hundred acres.

11. FORM PREPARED BY

Name/Title: David F. Ransom, Consultant, reviewed by John F.A. Herzan, National Register Coordinator

Org.: Architectural Historian

Date: August 1998

Street/#: 83 Avery Heights

City/Town: Hartford

State: CT

ZIP: 06106

Telephone: 860 953-8626

List of Photographs

Photographs were taken by David F. Ransom in August 1998. Negatives are on file at the Connecticut Historical Commission.

Photograph 1

Old Town Hall Road
View east from Center
Hill Road

Photograph 2

Center School
View northeast

Photograph 3

Collins House
View west

Photograph 4

Old Town Hall
View southeast

Photograph 5

George Merrill House/Tavern
View southeast

Photograph 6

First Congregational Church
View north

Photograph 7

First Congregational Church
doorway
View north

Photograph 8

First Congregational Church
interior
View northwest

Photograph 9

Parsonage
View north

Photograph 10

Old Town Hall Road,
View west from Parsonage

List of Figures

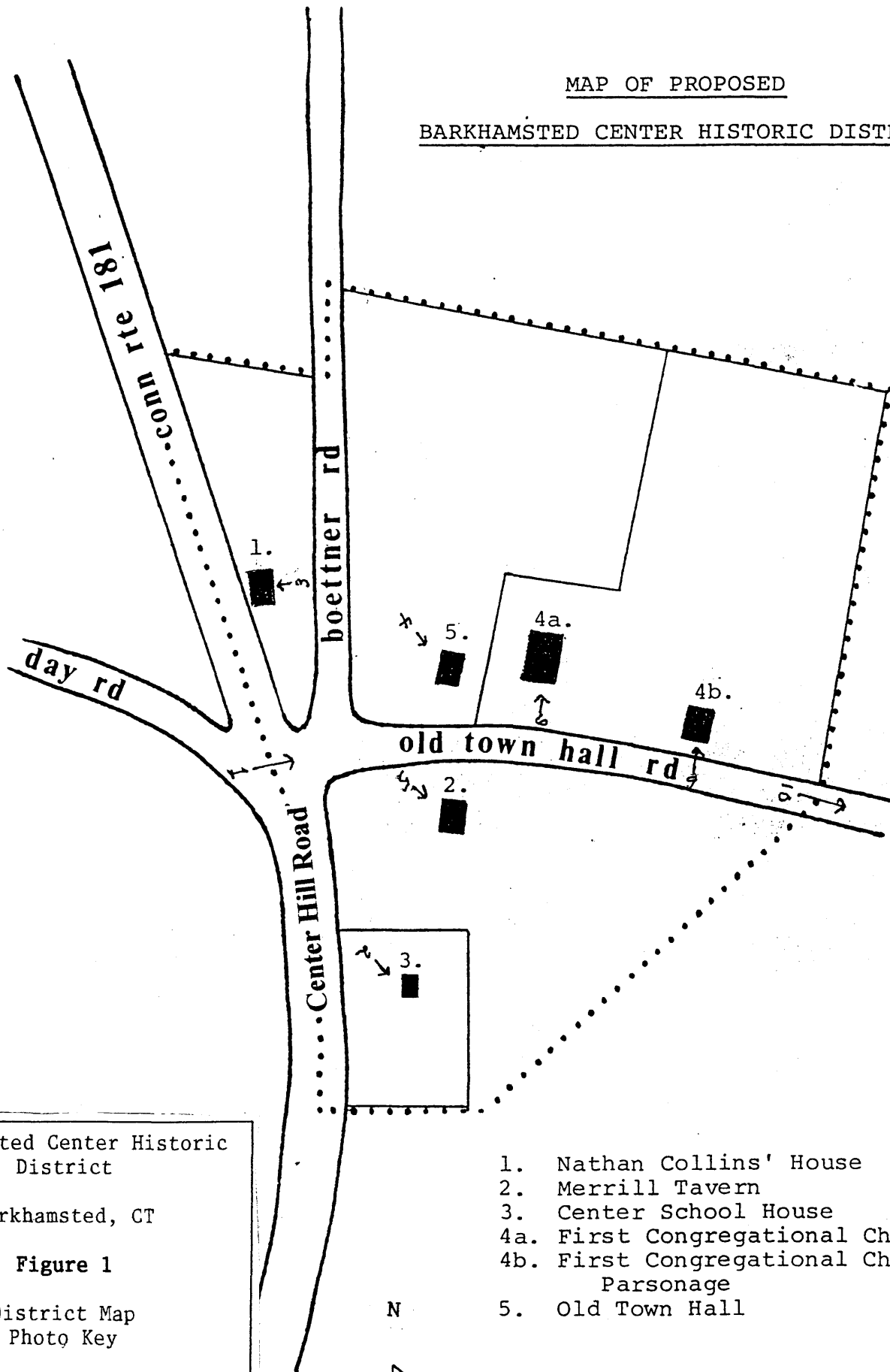
Figure 1. District Map, Photo Key

Figure 2. 1874 Beers Atlas

Figure 3. Center School

Figure 4. First Congregational Church

MAP OF PROPOSED
BARKHAMSTED CENTER HISTORIC DISTRICT



Barkhamsted Center Historic District

Barkhamsted, CT

Figure 1

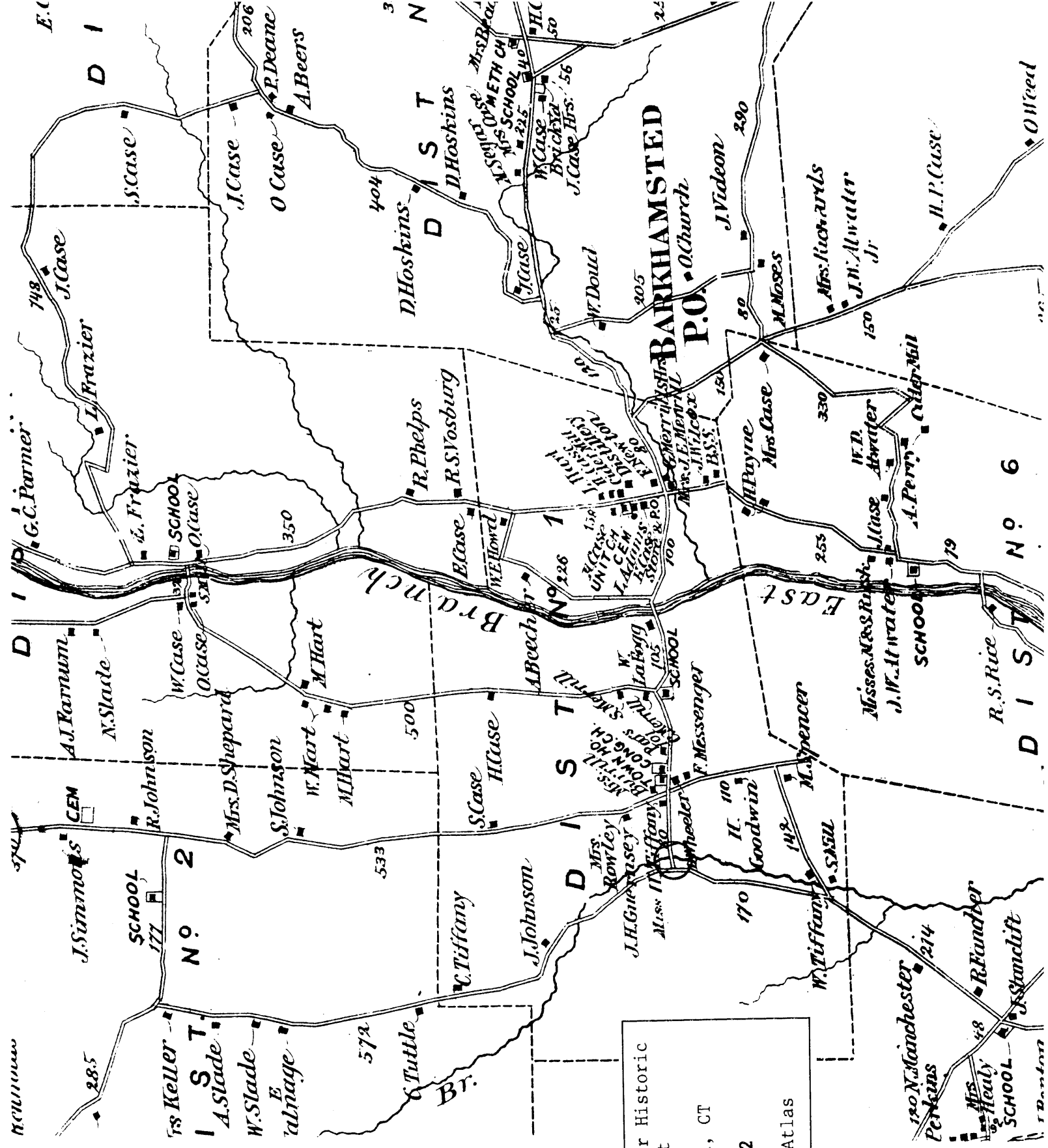
District Map
Photo Key

District Boundary

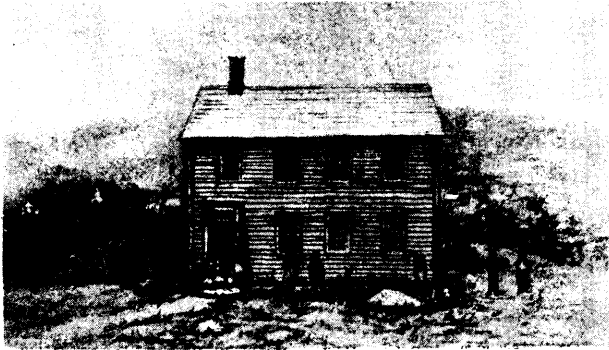
Scale: 1" = 200'

- 1. Nathan Collins' House
- 2. Merrill Tavern
- 3. Center School House
- 4a. First Congregational Church
- 4b. First Congregational Church Parsonage
- 5. Old Town Hall

N

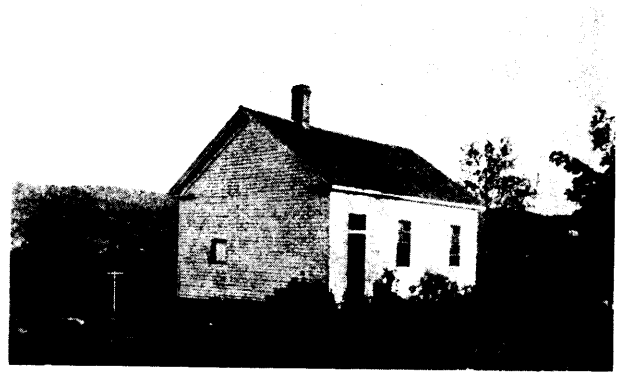


Barkhamsted Center Historic District
 Barkhamsted, CT
 Figure 2
 Beers 1874 Atlas



Schoolhouse at Barkhamsted Center (C-164), before the remodeling of 1880

Barkhamsted Heritage, p. 53.



Schoolhouse at Barkhamsted Center (C-164), after the remodeling of 1880

Barkhamsted Heritage, p. 54.



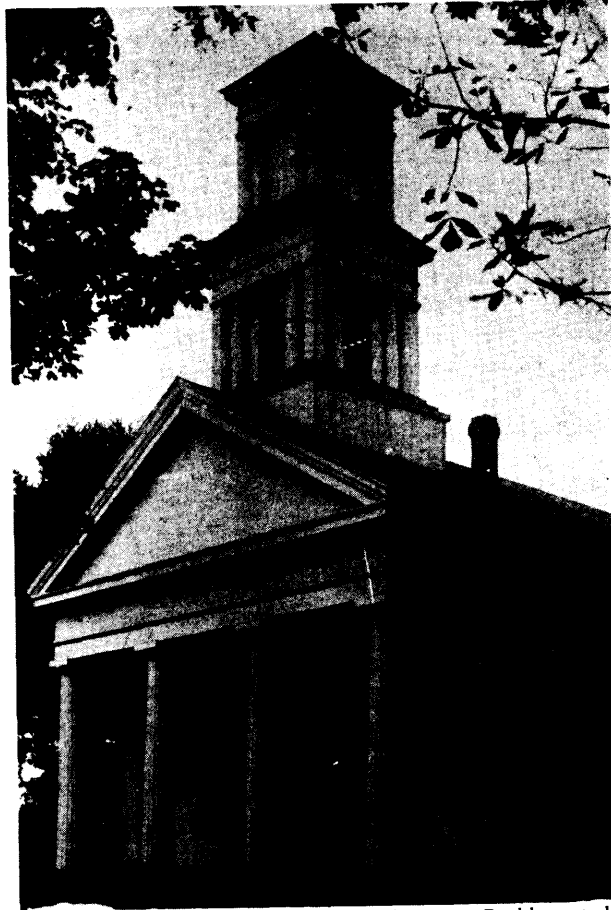
Report of Historic District Study
Committee of the Town of
Barkhamsted. December 7, 1981.

Barkhamsted Center Historic
District

Barkhamsted, CT

Figure 3

Center School



The "New" Congregational Meetinghouse at Barkhamsted Center (C-83), built 1844-45, pictured before removal of third stage of belfrey

Barkhamsted Heritage, p. 20.

Barkhamsted Center Historic
District

Barkhamsted, CT

Figure 4

Congregational Church
before 1910