

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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NATIONAL REGISTER

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Charles E. Beach House
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 18 Brightwood Lane not for publication
city, town West Hartford vicinity
state Connecticut code CT county Hartford code 003 zip code 06110

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u> </u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u> </u>	<u> </u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u> </u>	<u> </u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u> </u>	<u> </u> objects
		<u>1</u>	<u> </u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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. See continuation sheet.
John W. Shannahan 7/23/90
Signature of certifying official John W. Shannahan, State Historic Preservation Officer Date
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.
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. Entered in the National Register
 See continuation sheet. 8/23/90
 determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.
 determined not eligible for the National Register.
 removed from the National Register.
 other, (explain:) _____

for Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

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)

Shingle Style

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation stone

walls wood-shingle

roof asphalt

other stone

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Charles E. Beach House is a large two-story Shingle-style residence built in 1900-1901 (Photograph 1)(1). It stands at the top of a rise, facing northwest, approximately 1-3/4 miles south of West Hartford center on the east side of South Main Street, deeply set back and not visible from the road. The property consists of approximately one-half acre of gently sloping lawn with mature deciduous trees. It is a remnant of the Vine Hill Farm, formerly the agricultural estate of the Beach family(2). After the dissolution of the estate in the 1940s, the land surrounding the house was subdivided for small-lot suburban residential development along a new road, Brightwood Lane. The street partially encircles the Beach House, changing the access to the house from the northwest, off Main Street, to the southeast from Brightwood Lane (Photograph 2). The surrounding houses, primarily Ranch houses and Capes constructed in the 1950s and 1960s, differ in their scales, lot sizes, and ages.

The Beach House consists of a long main block approximately 35' x 80' with a complex arrangement of open and enclosed porches, bay windows, cross gables, and dormers which create its asymmetrical facade and irregular roof line. The house rests upon a foundation of large fieldstone. The house is balloon-framed and the exterior is sheathed in wood shingles. An exposed cross-section of the second floor reveals terracotta firebrick between the first two floors (Photograph 3)(3).

Marking the entry on the northwest corner of the original facade is a one-story round-arched port-cochere of cobblestone construction. Located at about the center of the facade is a gambrel-roof cross gable. Beneath the cross-gable projects a wide two-story polygonal bay window topped by an open balcony (4). Located between the first and second stories, to the left of the port-cochere, is an oriel which lights the mid-flight landing of the main staircase (Photograph 4). Punctuating the roof to the northeast of the center cross-gable are two shed dormers with paired windows; to the southwest is another cross-gable with a row of four windows at the gable end(5). Along the northeast end of the first story runs an enclosed one-story shed-roof porch; this addition conceals the second entrance.

Staggered projecting polygonal bay windows dominate the southwest elevation. The first-floor bay with its polygonal roof projects well beyond the second-floor bay. The third-floor bay, with its overhanging polygonal roof, extends slightly beyond the second-floor bay.

The southeast elevation repeats the arrangement of cross-gables, dormers, and bay windows of the northwest facade. Along the southwest side of the facade runs a one-story enclosed porch, original to the house. A small one-bay integral garage is located on the ground level. The northeast elevation has a small one-story wing on the first story; above, a row of three windows occupies the gable end.

Most of the windows are 1-over-1 double-hung sash replacement windows with plain surrounds. The roof is asphalt shingles over the original wood shingles; three brick chimneys rise above the roofline. On the roof, the widow's walk, defined by a simple railing running between low posts, affords a panoramic view.

See continuation sheet

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Charles E. Beach House, West Hartford, CT

Section number 7 Page 1

The Charles E. Beach House has maintained its original layout with some minor modification. Its plan is open and asymmetrical, as is characteristic of the Shingle style, and is oriented along one main axis. Entry from the port-cochere is through a vestibule, which connects to the hall and adjacent living room. A second entry, now concealed by the enclosed porch alteration, features a paneled door, leaded glass sidelights, and semi-elliptical fanlight over the door (Photograph 5). The hall and living room are distinguished by their paneled wainscoting, boxed beams, and stenciled walls painted in a complex floral motif in the colors of maroon, tan, slate blue, and light blue (Photographs 6 and 7). The fireplace, built of yellow brick with a raised Latin inscription reading "BENEDIAITE IGNIS ET AESTAS DOMINO" along the edge of the mantel, shows the influence of the Arts and Crafts movement (6)(Photograph 8).

Off the hallway is a smoking room finished in an unusual raised-panel wainscoting which mimics rustication (Photograph 9) and wooden coffered ceiling (Photograph 10). The dining room features a brick fireplace, square pilasters, box beams, chair rail, and wide baseboard molding framing the plaster walls (7)(Photograph 11). The adjacent serving kitchen contains most of its original cabinetry as well as a cast-iron plate warmer, embellished with a foliated scroll motif, which derives its heat from the radiator upon which it sits (Photograph 12). A dumbwaiter system runs from the kitchen to the second and third floors. Adjacent to the serving kitchen is the cooking kitchen, back staircase, and pantry.

Leading to the second floor from the hall is an open-well staircase, whose mid-flight landing occupies the bay of the oriel. The half-flight of stairs from the landing to the second floor is suspended; the horizontal panels along the string juxtaposed with the vertical rectangles of the wall panels create an intricate geometric pattern (Photograph 13).

The master bedroom occupies the southwest corner with the large polygonal bay. The master bath features an original tile-lined steam chamber for pressing clothes. This bedroom is embellished with fluted wooden pilasters, box beams, and a denticulated cornice. The brick fireplace has a wooden mantel with fluted pilasters, denticulated cornice, and paneled over-mantel (Photograph 14). The third floor features a large paneled billiard room with cathedral ceiling (Photograph 15). Encased cross-beams provide bracing. A stairway leads from the third floor to the rooftop widow's walk.

There is a full basement under most of the house. Incorporated in the basement is a garage, a built-in wine cellar, and a gable-roof room. The house features hardwood floors throughout. The original heating system is intact and most rooms have the original radiators, designed in a variety of shapes.

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Continuation Sheet**

Charles E. Beach House, West Hartford, CT

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ENDNOTES

1. The assessor's office lists date of construction as 1900; a fireplace mantel carving gives the date of 1901.
2. Other buildings which comprised Vine Hill Farm include the following: 11 Winthrop Road - Charles M. Beach House, 9 Brightwood Lane - tenant's house, 29 Brightwood Road - tenant's house, 50 Brightwood Lane - carriage house, 65 Brightwood Road - servants' quarters, and Beachland Park Clubhouse. All these properties except Beachland Park are single- or multi-family residences. These properties are not contiguous.
3. The walls and floors of the second floor are said to contain firebrick insulation construction.
4. The balcony was bounded on the front and sides by a low shingled wall that deteriorated and was subsequently removed.
5. Two windows are smaller in size and appear to have been altered.
6. The cast iron inscription along the edge of the fireplace mantel, "BENEDIATE IGNIS ET AESTAS DOMINO," is translated as "Welcome to the Fire and the Host's Warmth." On the west edge of the mantel are the Charles E. Beach's initials, CEB; on the east edge is found the date May 1901.
7. The dining room was said to have contained a Tiffany window which was subsequently donated to the Mark Twain Memorial. A window opening measuring 36 1/2" x 48" is found where the original glass has been removed. The Mark Twain Memorial's records show a window of those dimensions was donated in 1975 by Mr. and Mrs. Thomas C. Beach. Thomas Beach was the son of Charles E. Beach.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1900-1901

Significant Dates

1900-1901

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

N/A

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Charles E. Beach House is a well-preserved and relatively rare example of a Shingle-style residence in West Hartford, Connecticut. With its asymmetrical facade, complex roofline, horizontal emphasis in its massing, uniform covering of wood shingles, and open interior plan, the Beach House demonstrates most of the characteristic features of the Shingle style. Its minimally ornamented exterior belies the rich architectural detail of the home's interior. Its interior is distinguished by the high quality of its design, craftsmanship and state of preservation. In addition, the Beach House contains many examples of still-functional turn-of-the-century mechanical systems.

Architectural Assessment

In its overall proportions, open plan, and much of its detailing, the Beach House well illustrates the Shingle style. The facade employs polygonal bays, oriels, cross gables, and dormers to create an asymmetrical facade and irregular roofline, characteristics common to both the Shingle style and the Queen Anne style. It defines itself as Shingle style through its massing and use of rows of windows which emphasize the horizontal, and its use of the gambrel roof, a feature common to both the Shingle and Colonial Revival styles. Set on a foundation of large fieldstone with the upper stories sheathed in wood shingles, the Beach House demonstrates the Shingle style's embrace of natural materials used in their natural state. However, one Shingle-style element, the effect of concealing the frame so that the walls and roof appear as a thin skin shaped by the enclosed space, is not fully achieved. The house is also distinguished by high-style features such as the oriel and the massive round-arched cobblestone port-cochere, a feature frequently employed both in Shingle style and Richardsonian Romanesque buildings.

The Charles E. Beach House is one of the few Shingle-style houses in West Hartford that has not been substantially modified. The West Hartford Historic Resource Survey identifies only 20 buildings classified as Shingle style or of Shingle influence. Only the houses at 201 and 205 Fern Street are examples of large, single-family homes that have not been adversely altered. All three houses have asymmetrical facades and irregular rooflines. The Beach House and the house at 205 Fern Street have cobblestone foundations and wood shingle-sheathed walls on the upper stories, while the house at 201 Fern Street has a brick foundation and wood-shingled walls, but with some stucco detailing. Of the three, the Beach House is the largest and most complex, and through its massing and fenestration it emphasizes the horizontal more than the Fern Street residences. It also incorporates high-style features such as the oriel and port-cochere.

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Burr, Nelson R. From Colonial Parish to Modern Suburb: A Brief Appreciation of West Hartford. West Hartford, CT: The Noah Webster Foundation and Historical Society of West Hartford, Inc., 1982.

Encyclopedia of Connecticut Biography, Volume VII. New York: The American Historical Society, 1919.

Hall, William H. West Hartford. West Hartford, CT: Chamber of Commerce, 1930

Osborn, N.G., ed. Men of Mark in Connecticut, Volume V. Hartford, CT: William R. Goodspeed, 1910.

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

preliminary determination of eligibility (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:

West Hartford Public Library

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 0.53

UTM References

A

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

B

Zone				Easting				Northing						

C

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

D

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundaries of the nominated property are those found in volume 1104, page 68, of the Town of West Hartford land records.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary conforms to the present property lines. The Charles E. Beach House property is a small portion of the former Vine Hill Farm, owned originally by Charles M. Beach and subsequently by his heirs. The Vine Hill Farm was divided during the 1940s.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Barbara A. Lewis and David Ransom, Reviewed by John Herzan, National Register
organization Consultants date January 2, 1990 Coordinator
street & number 34 Garfield Road telephone (203) 561-2187
city or town West Hartford state Connecticut zip code 06107

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Charles E. Beach House, West Hartford, CT

Section number 2 Page 1

In its plan, architectural detail, and craftsmanship, the Beach House provides an excellent example of a Shingle-style interior. The openness and asymmetry characteristic of the Shingle style is well illustrated in its expansive living room which connects with living hall and main staircase. The third-floor billiard room with its paneled cathedral ceiling creates an impressive open space.

The rich rendering of architectural detail is most notable in its extensive use of paneled wainscoting throughout and the excellent example of early-20th-century wall stencilling in an intricate floral pattern in colors of maroon, blue, and tan. The smoking room is remarkable for its unusual wainscoting which resembles rustication and its wooden coffered ceiling. The second-floor bedrooms, exquisitely detailed with paneling, boxed beams, and cornice moldings, exemplify the high quality of craftsmanship. Further enhancing the interior are seven working fireplaces embellished with a variety of mantel treatments, hand-painted tile, and decorative brickwork.

Also of significance are the examples of early-20th-century technology such as the firebrick insulation, the massive heating system, and integral garage, and conveniences such as the dumbwaiter and clothes steaming closet which were incorporated into the original design. Most rooms contain the original radiators in a variety of configurations and embellished with decorative motifs; many of the original bathroom fixtures have been maintained.

The most striking change to the Beach House is the reduction of property size and construction of the neighboring suburban residences which alter the rural nature of the setting. However, the half acre surrounding the residence sets the house in context with its mature deciduous trees and wisteria scaling the porch. Modifications to the exterior have been few. An asphalt-shingle roof covers the original wood-shingle roof, and some of the original windows have been replaced. The open balconies above the polygonal bay windows have deteriorated; sections of the low walls have been removed. The second entrance on the original facade is now concealed by an enclosed porch, and a raised floor installed in the port-cochere converts it to patio use. The impact of these changes does not significantly affect the exterior. The interior remains in an excellent state of preservation. With the exception of some new bathroom and kitchen fixtures, few changes have been made.

Historical Background

Charles Edward Beach was born in West Hartford, Connecticut, on September 2, 1862, the youngest of seven children of Charles Mason and Frances (Belknap) Beach. The Beach family was a prominent Hartford family; their ancestors were among the first settlers of Hartford. George Beach, the grandfather of Charles E. Beach, was a merchant who successfully engaged in trade with the West Indies, and later in his career, as the president of the Phoenix Bank, became one of Hartford's leading bankers. Charles Mason Beach (the father of Charles E. Beach), along with his brothers George and J. Watson Beach, established the firm of Beach & Co. in Hartford; originally dry salters and commission merchants, they later became importers and dealers in aniline dyes and other chemicals. Charles Mason Beach also served as a director of the Phoenix Bank for over 50 years and served on the boards of several other prominent businesses including the Connecticut Mutual Life Insurance Company, the Hartford Carpet Corporation, the Hartford Steam Boiler Inspection and Insurance Company, the Holyoke Power Company, and the Illinois Central Railroad.

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Charles E. Beach House, West Hartford, CT

Section number 8 Page 2

Charles Mason Beach and his family moved to West Hartford in 1859, five years after it became a separate town, to establish the Beach family home on what would become known as Vine Hill Farm. The farm grew to include the lands along South Main Street from the Newington line to a mile north of New Britain Avenue, and from Main Street east to South Quaker Lane. Charles Mason Beach pursued his interest in hygienic dairy farming and directed efforts aimed at the production of high-grade butter and sanitary milk. Vine Hill Farm achieved an area-wide reputation.

Charles E. Beach attended West Middle School and Hartford Public High School and received a degree in civil engineering from the Massachusetts Agricultural College, Amherst (now University of Massachusetts). For many years he managed Vine Hill Farm. Working with Frank Stadtmueller, who was later appointed Connecticut's State Dairy Commissioner, Charles E. Beach achieved for Vine Hill Farm an area-wide reputation as a model dairy farm. It was noted for its production of milk specially processed for infant formula that would keep for two to three weeks if kept cool. In addition to his duties at Vine Hill Farm, Charles E. Beach performed survey and engineering work for the Town of West Hartford and in his later years became president of Beach & Co. He served several terms on the Board of Selectmen and was elected to the Connecticut General Assembly in 1907.

In 1900-1901, Charles E. Beach built his spacious Shingle-style home on the Vine Hill Farm property. He lived there until his death on January 12, 1940. During the 1940s, the Vine Hill property was disbursed; a large section was donated to the Town of West Hartford for a public park, now Beachland Park. The segment around the Beach houses was sold for development as a subdivision, which was constructed during the 1950s and 1960s.

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Charles E. Beach House, West Hartford, CT

Section number 9 Page 1

Newspaper Articles

Hartford Courant, January 13, 1940, p.4.

West Hartford News, February 3, 1972.

Documents

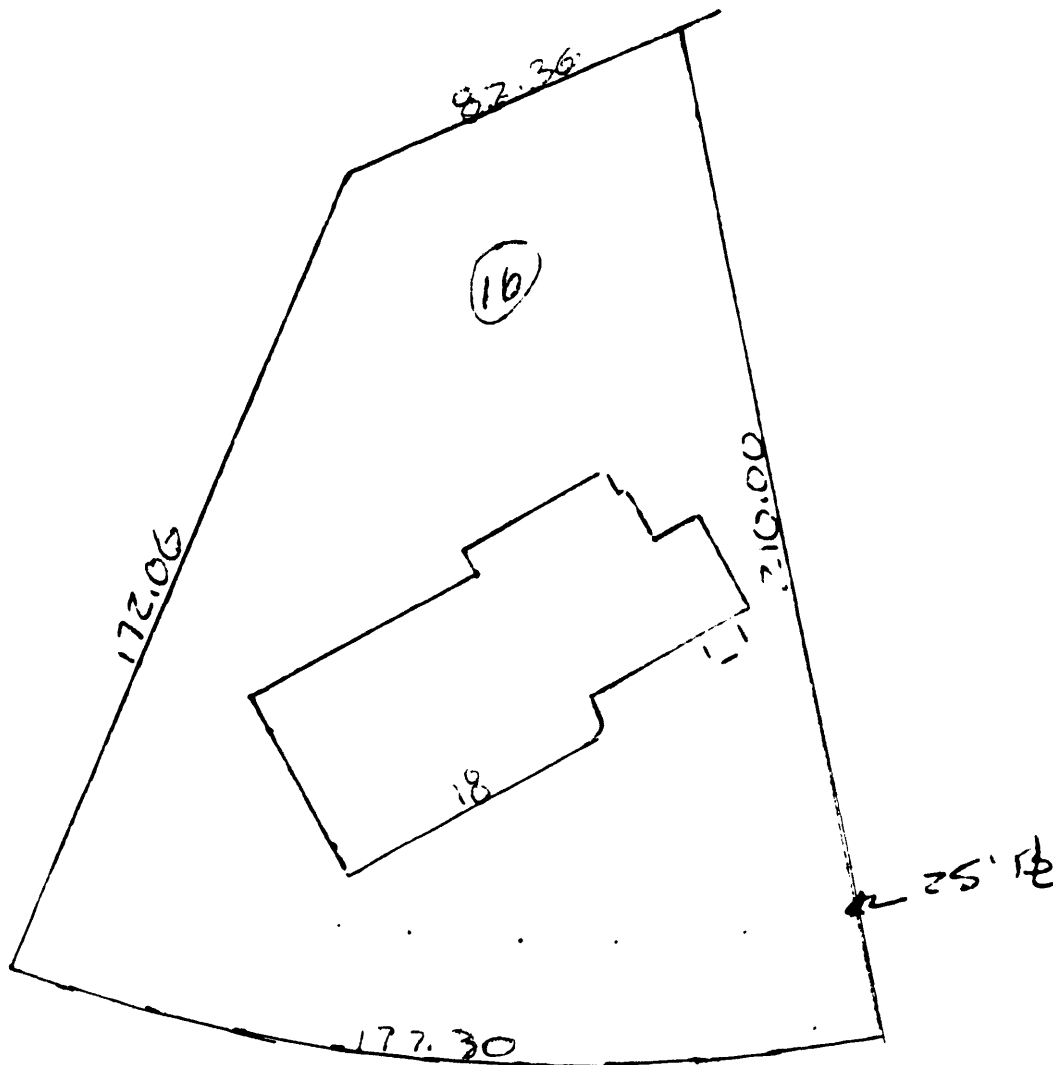
Town of West Hartford Land Records, Town Hall, West Hartford, CT.

Historic Resource Survey of West Hartford, Phase III, Noah Webster
Foundation and Historical Society of West Hartford, May 1985,
University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT.

Maps

Atlas of the City of Hartford & Town of West Hartford. N.Y.: Sanborn
Map Co., 1921, plate 28.

Hilltop Subdivision Maps. Town Hall, Town of West Hartford, CT., 1948.



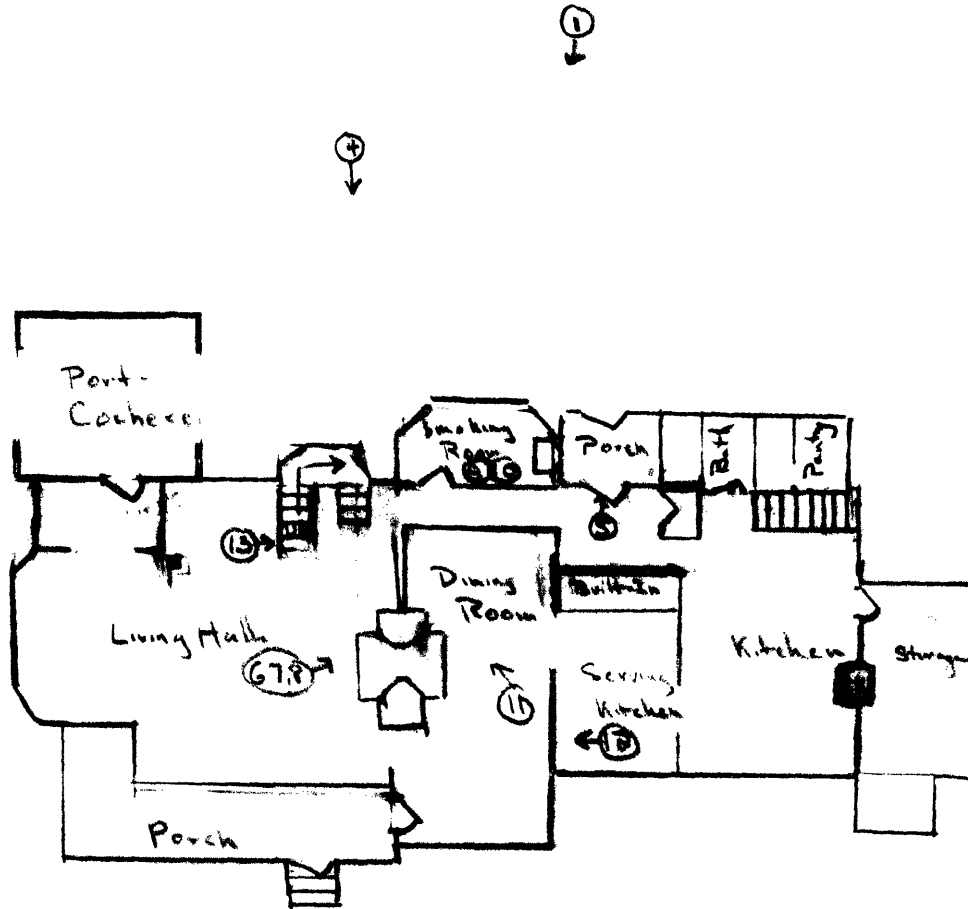
Brightwood Lane

CHARLES E. BEACH HOUSE
WEST HARTFORD, CT.
SITE PLAN



1" = 40'

CHARLES E. BEACH HOUSE
 WEST HARTFORD, CT.
 FLOOR PLAN



FIRST FLOOR PLAN

(Not to Scale)

1" = approximately 20'

Photo Key ♂ or ○



- ③ Floor Construction
- ⑭ Mrs. Beach's Bedroom
- ⑮ Billiard Room

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Charles E. Beach House

Section number Photos Page 1

Photograph 1.

- | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Charles E. Beach House | 4. December 7, 1989 |
| 2. West Hartford, CT | 5. Connecticut Historical Commission |
| 3. Barbara A. Lewis | 6. Looking southeast |

Photograph 2

- | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Charles E. Beach House | 4. December 7, 1989 |
| 2. West Hartford, CT | 5. Connecticut Historical Commission |
| 3. Barbara A. Lewis | 6. Looking northwest |

Photograph 3

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Beach House - Floor Construction | 4. December 7, 1989 |
| 2. West Hartford, CT | 5. Connecticut Historical Commission |
| 3. Barbara A. Lewis | 6. Interior |

Photograph 4

- | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Beach House - Oriel | 4. December 7, 1989 |
| 2. West Hartford, CT | 5. Connecticut Historical Commission |
| 3. Barbara A. Lewis | 6. Looking southeast |

Photograph 5

- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Beach House - Doorway | 4. December 7, 1989 |
| 2. West Hartford, CT | 5. Connecticut Historical Commission |
| 3. Barbara A. Lewis | 6. Interior |

Photograph 6

- | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Beach House - Living Room | 4. March 3, 1990 |
| 2. West Hartford, CT | 5. Connecticut Historical Commission |
| 3. Barbara A. Lewis | 6. Interior |

Photograph 7

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Beach House - Stenciling Detail | 4. December 7, 1989 |
| 2. West Hartford, CT | 5. Connecticut Historical Commission |
| 3. Barbara A. Lewis | 6. Interior |

Photograph 8

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Beach House - Living Room Mantel
Detail | 4. December 7, 1989 |
| 2. West Hartford, CT | 5. Connecticut Historical Commission |
| 3. Barbara A. Lewis | 6. Interior |

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Charles E. Beach House, West Hartford, CT

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Photograph 9

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Beach House Smoking Room | 4. December 7, 1989 |
| 2. West Hartford, CT | 5. Connecticut Historical Commission |
| 3. Barbara A. Lewis | 6. Interior |

Photograph 10

- | | |
|------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Beach House - Smoking Room
Ceiling | 4. December 7, 1989 |
| 2. West Hartford, CT | 5. Connecticut Historical Commission |
| 3. Barbara A, Lewis | 6. Interior |

Photograph 11

- | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Beach House - Dining Room | 4. December 7, 1989 |
| 2. West Hartford, CT | 5. Connecticut Historical Commission |
| 3. Barbara A. Lewis | 6. Interior |

Photograph 12

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Beach House - Warming Oven | 4. December 7, 1989 |
| 2. West Hartford, CT | 5. Connecticut Historical Commission |
| 3. Barbara A. Lewis | 6. Interior |

Photograph 13

- | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Beach House - Staircase | 4. December 7, 1989 |
| 2. West Hartford, CT | 5. Connecticut Historical Commission |
| 3. Barbara A. Lewis | 6. Interior |

Photograph 14

- | | |
|------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Beach House - Mrs. Beach's
Bedroom | 4. December 7, 1989 |
| 2. West Hartford, CT | 5. Connecticut Historical Commission |
| 3. Barbara A. Lewis | 6. Interior |

Photograph 15

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Beach House - Billiard Room | 4. March 3, 1990 |
| 2. West Hartford, CT | 5. Connecticut Historical Commission |
| 3. Barbara A. Lewis | 6. Interior |