

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received OCT 30 1986
date entered DEC 10 1986

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

1. Name

historic Howd-Linsley House

and or common Howd-Linsley House

2. Location

street & number 1795 Middletown Avenue NA not for publication

city, town North Branford X vicinity of Northford

state Connecticut code 09 county New Haven code 009

3. Classification

| | | | |
|---|---|---|--|
| Category | Ownership | Status | Present Use |
| <input type="checkbox"/> district | <input type="checkbox"/> public | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied | <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> museum |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private | <input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied | <input type="checkbox"/> commercial <input type="checkbox"/> park |
| <input type="checkbox"/> structure | <input 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 Robert B. & Elizabeth A. Wheeler

street & number 1795 Middletown Avenue

city, town North Branford X vicinity of Northford state Connecticut

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Town Clerk's Office

street & number Town Hall, Main Street

city, town North Branford state Connecticut

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

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

date 1975 federal state county local

depository for survey records Connecticut Historical Commission

city, town 59 South Prospect Street Hartford state Connecticut

7. Description

| | | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| Condition | | Check one | Check one |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent | <input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated | <input type="checkbox"/> unaltered | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site |
| <input type="checkbox"/> good | <input type="checkbox"/> ruins | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered | <input type="checkbox"/> moved |
| <input type="checkbox"/> fair | <input type="checkbox"/> unexposed | | date _____ |

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Howd-Linsley House is a large, 2½-story, 7-room, center-chimney Colonial residence situated on the south side of Middletown Avenue, approximately one mile north of the center of the village of Northford in the town of North Branford, Connecticut (Photograph #1). The building's main axis is perpendicular to the street, from which it is setback about 150 feet. It faces west onto a right-of-way known locally as "Sol's Path," an old cow path leading southward to the nearby Farm River and reputedly named for Solomon Linsley (1751-1814), the second generation of Linsleys to occupy the house. The lot includes the path and gently slopes downward to the river. Large old deciduous and fir trees frame the structure, and the land is terraced on the south and east elevations. Adjacent are several other old residences, two of which were moved here and restored in 1940 and 1941 by J. Frederick Kelly, the well-known restoration architect and antiquarian.

The building is L-shaped, with a rectangular main block (39' x 32') and a 16' deep ell projecting from the rear at the southeast corner. The framing suggests that the house originally was much smaller and had a two-room plan, with a later 18th-century lean-to addition extending across the rear (Photograph #2).¹ Various dates are put forward for the original construction, since no clear evidence exists. This part of North Branford was surveyed in 1704, at which time distribution of lots occurred. A construction date prior to 1704, therefore, is likely inaccurate. The features of the building, furthermore, are typical of the first quarter of the 18th-century. During the 19th century, additions occurred to the rear and north elevations, and an open porch extended across the facade. The Reverend and Mrs. Morris Alling purchased the house in 1928 and, in the process of a complete restoration undertaken with the advice of J. Frederick Kelly, removed these 19th-century elements and added the present rear pavilion.²

The foundation walls are brownstone and fieldstone, and are covered in part by poured concrete, which also encases the center chimney foundation. The unusual double rear foundation walls (2 feet apart) of the main block are evidence that the lean-to was enlarged at some point.³ The exterior sheathing consists of wide beaded clapboards, most of which date from the 1928 restoration and are identical to the existing pre-1928 sheathing. The north and south elevations of the main block have a four-inch overhang at eaves level. Projecting from the facade are the carved, exposed ends of the four main roof girts, which suggest a corbel table in the eaves. The L-plan center chimney is unusual, and its configuration may well date from the addition of the lean-to and the alteration of the chimney to accommodate another flue.

The double hung sash windows are mostly eight-over-twelve.⁴ From all available evidence, their asymmetrical placement in the facade is old; the Allings did add windows at the rear, first-floor corners of the side elevations. Many windows were restored or replaced in 1928 with ones similar in appearance.⁵

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Also inventoried as part of the 1980 Historical and Architectural Survey of North Branford, CT, copies of which document are on file with the Connecticut Historical Commission and with the public library of North Branford, CT.

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The doors in the facade and south elevation were both installed during the 1928 restoration and are made of flush boards and set in molded frames (Photographs #1 & 3). The facade door has a six-panel inner door, with a double tulip latch that appears old and was purchased by the Allings. The flared hood over this door is the 1928 design of J. Frederick Kelly.⁶

The floor plan of the main block is typical of early to mid-18th century houses: a large center chimney with four flues; a front passage, or "porch," containing a stairway to the second floor; to the left of the passage a parlor, and to the right a keeping room; and a large kitchen across the rear (now a den/dining room). On the second floor are bed chambers over the parlor and keeping room and a long hall at the rear running the length of the lean-to. In the ell are a modern kitchen and stairway on the first floor and a bedroom above. The 1928 work enlarged the old kitchen by removing the wall separating it from a small chamber to the south and eliminated a buttery to the north by installing a stairway and modern bathroom.

The interior framing, mostly exposed, appears to be original and illustrates the chronology of construction. In the front rooms, large corner posts flare outward as they rise. Running longitudinally through the center of the house is a 13-inch wide chamfered summer beam, intersected by beaded joists (Photograph #4).⁷ The girts and joists, pegged with mortise and tenon joints, feature lamb's tongue stops. The chimney girts in the old kitchen are boxed, which helps establish the probable later date of this portion. The pine floor boards vary in width; with the exception of the six- to eight-inch boards at the north end of the old kitchen (that area involved in the 1928 alterations), most of those in the main block are 16 to 24 inches wide.

The front hall, parlor and keeping room are sheathed in beveled and beaded wide oak paneling. Plastered walls are the rule elsewhere. The interior doors display three different designs: in the parlor, paneling identical to the parlor walls; in the keeping room and upstairs, inset panels (either two or four per door; Photograph #5); and, in the door connecting the old and new kitchens, flushboards. In some cases, the Allings installed old doors as replacements for missing or badly deteriorated originals. The hardware, likewise, appears to be a mixture of old and new. Some original strap hinges survive. A few non-original locks have been removed and earlier, more authentic, latches installed. The Allings also commissioned a local blacksmith to create appropriate new hardware.

Of the four fireplaces, all stone, the three on the first floor are wide and high, while the one on the second is much smaller. The largest,

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in the old kitchen, measures (in its opening) 8'4" wide and 4'10" high (Photograph #6). This fireplace has a beehive oven in the rear wall of the firebox and three iron hooks inset in each side wall. It is also the only one that has a molded wood surround and mantel.

The steep, quarter-turn front stairway is closed and set behind a paneled wall (Photograph #7). Beneath this flight of stairs is the basement stairwell, which has large stone steps and stone walls. The attic, reached by two stairways, is framed with old rough-hewn timber. The absence of a roof ridge pole helps confirm the structure's early 18th-century age.

Footnotes

1. Many features support this conclusion, some of which are discussed in the text. One of the strongest pieces of evidence is the roof construction: the rafters of the lean-to are entirely separate from those of the main block, and are pegged to the main roof above its plate (Photograph #8).
2. Kelly's direct rôle in this restoration was limited, although his ideas influenced the course of the work. A Silent Witness to Four Centuries, Mrs. Alling's privately published and thorough 1931 discussion of the entire restoration, is helpful on this point. It is clear that the Allings sought Kelly's advice and followed his recommendations where financially feasible, but his employment on this project was limited to the design of the front door and hood. The Kelly papers and architectural drawings at the Connecticut Historical Society contain few written references to this building and no drawings to indicate any more extensive role than so far suggested.
3. The floor boards in the old kitchen above these double walls are four inches wide, much narrower than the surrounding ones, which is additional evidence of an alteration.
4. Those in the second story of the rear pavilion are six-over-twelve, and in the second floor rear elevation of the lean-to are three small six-light, single-sash windows.
5. Structural work in 1928 uncovered evidence that the original windows were casements. In Silent Witness to Four Centuries, p.26.

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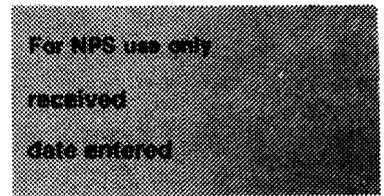
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Footnotes(continued)

6. See footnote #2.
7. The 1928 restoration removed plaster from the ceilings and from the walls of the keeping room and parlor.

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12/18/86 Addendum to Description:

Behind the Howd-Linsley House, at its rear northeast corner, is an old, wood-framed barn that is used by the present owners as a garage and storage building. The main part of the building is 1½-stories high and measures approximately 26' x 24'; projecting from its south elevation is a 10' x 18' one-story pavilion known as the "potting shed." The building reputedly dates from the mid-19th century and originally stood in Middlefield, Connecticut. The prior owners arranged for the structure to be dismantled and relocated here in 1984¹ (Photograph #9).

The barn does not contribute to the historic or architectural significance of the Howd-Linsley House. Because of its entirely different original location and only recent addition to the property, the building has no historic or architectural associations with the house. Nevertheless, it is compatible in appearance.

See the revised attached site plan showing the locations of the Howd-Linsley House and the barn.

Footnote

1. The town of North Branford, Connecticut issued building permit #1661 on July 2, 1984 for the erection of the barn on this property. The 18th Century Company of Durham, Connecticut moved the building.

8. Significance

| Period | Areas of Significance—Check and justify below | | | |
|---|--|--|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| prehistoric | archeology-prehistoric | community planning | landscape architecture | religion |
| 1400-1499 | archeology-historic | conservation | law | science |
| 1500-1599 | agriculture | economics | literature | sculpture |
| 1600-1699 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture | education | military | social/ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799 | art | engineering | music | humanitarian |
| 1800-1899 | commerce | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement | philosophy | theater |
| 1900- | communications | industry | politics/government | transportation |
| | | invention | | other (specify) |

Criteria C(Architecture) and A(History)

Specific dates c.1705-1750 **Builder/Architect** Benjamin Howd & Joseph Linsley

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Howd-Linsley House is architecturally significant because it is a largely intact and excellent example of an early 18th-century Colonial Connecticut residence. Though the exact date of its construction is not clear, it is one of the oldest, and perhaps the oldest, surviving house in North Branford. Some of its features, such as its corbeled girts supporting the roof plate in the facade and its L-plan chimney, are unusual and add visual and architectural interest to the house. The Howd-Linsley House is also historically important because of its long and intimate association with the Linsley family of North Branford, which occupied the residence continuously between c.1750 and 1873, and then reacquired it in 1928. The Linsleys were early settlers in Branford and North Branford, and they have been a prominent family for generations since the first settlements.

Criterion C (Architecture)

The structural framework of the house is almost completely intact and in excellent condition, as is much of its detailing. The building clearly illustrates early 18th-century construction techniques and stylistic elements. Its original plan appears to have consisted of two rooms on each floor around the large central chimney. Two-room plan houses of this sort were the second stage of Colonial Connecticut residential development, and they date primarily from the late 17th century. Lean-to additions similar to the rear part of the Howd-Linsley House are typical of late 17th- and early 18th-century houses. Other original features that all characterize early 18th-century construction are the massive proportions of the central chimney and each of the first-floor fireplaces; the basically three-bay configuration of the facade; the exposed and chamfered summer beams; and the beveled and beaded interior wall sheathing.

Despite some changes made during the course of the 1928 restoration, this undertaking greatly improved the condition of the building and enhanced its architectural importance. Original features, long hidden by intervening alterations, were uncovered, such as the interior wall paneling and exposed ceiling framework. The removal of the 19th-century rear and side pavilions, for example, restored the structure's early lines. Though much of the interior hardware and some of the doors are not original to the house, replacements were used out of necessity and are con-

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property approximately 2

Quadrangle name Wallingford

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------|---|---------|---|---|---|----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 8 | 6 | 8 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 0 | 4 | 5 | 8 | 6 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| Zone | | Easting | | | | Northing | | | | | | | | |

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| Zone | | Easting | | | | Northing | | | | | | | | |

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| Zone | | Easting | | | | Northing | | | | | | | | |

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|------|--|---------|--|--|--|----------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Zone | | Easting | | | | Northing | | | | | | | | |

H

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|------|--|---------|--|--|--|----------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Zone | | Easting | | | | Northing | | | | | | | | |

Verbal boundary description and justification

The boundaries of this parcel, for National Register purposes, are the same as those found in volume 154, page 420 of the North Branford land records, being the deed into the present owners of the Howd-Linsley House.

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

state NA code county code

state NA code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Gregory E. Andrews and David F. Ransom, edited by John Herzan,
National Register Coordinator

organization on behalf of Connecticut Historical Commission date June 24, 1986

street & number 59 South Prospect Street telephone 203-566-3005

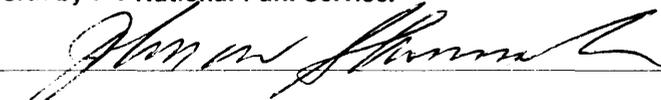
city or town Hartford state Connecticut

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 October 24, 1986

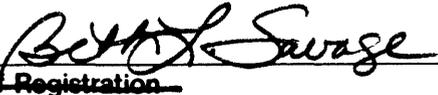
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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register



date 12/10/86

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: 
Chief of Registration

date 12/10/86

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sistent, in design if not in age, with surviving elements of the house. The gambrel-roofed rear ell likewise blends harmoniously, in both style and materials, with the older portions of the house.

The participation of J. Frederick Kelly AIA (1888-1947) in the Allings' 1928 restoration, though limited in extent, adds to the significance of this structure. Kelly was an influential proponent of early American architecture and himself restored a number of Connecticut buildings, including the Henry Whitfield House in Guilford and the First Congregational Church in Lebanon. His many books, including Early Domestic Architecture of Connecticut(1924) and Early Connecticut Meeting-houses(2 vols., 1948). are important reference works in the field. His acquaintance with the Allings led to his collaboration with their daughter, Elizabeth Alling Carter, and her husband, William Carter, in the relocation and restoration (on parcels adjoining the Howd-Linsley House) in 1940-41 of the Pardee House(c.1700) and the Barnes House (c.1700).

Criterion A (History)

The characteristics of the Howd-Linsley House, together with the historical development of Northford, indicate that this structure was built either in the late 17th-century or early 18th-century. The lean-to, in particular, is an addition and not an integral part of the original house; the different slopes and construction of the two roofs strongly support this conclusion. The earliest portion of the house, therefore, has the two-room plan that is typical primarily of the late 17th century. Most of the other features of the building, such as the framing, floor boards and staircase, are found in turn-of-the-century houses. Perhaps the best evidence for the age of this structure is the fact that the town of Branford laid out its "fourth division," which included much of present Northford and this property, in 1704. At that time, the town granted lots in this area for the first time. It would be appropriate, therefore, to date the erection of this house as c.1705. Though not the oldest documented house in North Branford (the John Linsley House on Foxon Road dates from 1698-99), the Howd-Linsley House nevertheless is from the time of the town's early settlement. The property belonged to Benjamin Howd I (?-1749), a carpenter, and it is likely that he built the present house soon after the land grant.

The date when Lieutenant Joseph Linsley (1709-1786) acquired the property is also somewhat unclear. In the 1740 will (probated in 1748) of his father John, Joseph received "All my houseing(sic) & lands lying at Pistopauge on the north side of the farther Great Hill." Some sources have accepted this date for his acquisition.¹ On the other hand, Joseph purchased a total of 126 acres in this part of Northford in three separate transactions between 1752 and 1765, according to the Branford land records, In one of these, the 1762 purchase from Ichabod

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Foot of ten acres, fourteen rods, Linsley obtained property described as the homestead of the late Benjamin Howd. This transaction offers stronger evidence for concluding that the house came into the Linsley family in 1762.

Joseph Linsley received a commission from Roger Wolcott, Captain General and Commander-in-Chief of His Majesty's Colony in Connecticut, in 1753 as lieutenant of the Third Company in Branford. His son Solomon (1751-1814) received the property upon his death. "Sol's Path," the cow path in front of the house leading to the Farm River, traditionally is understood to be named for this Solomon Linsley. The parcel remained in this branch of the family for three succeeding generations until sold in 1873. The Reverend Morris Alling, a direct descendant of Joseph Linsley, purchased the property in 1928, and portions of that then 90-acre parcel still remain in the Alling family.

The Linsley family settled early in Branford and North Branford, and they have distinguished themselves by their civic accomplishments. Colonel Solomon Linsley (not specifically identified as the same Solomon previously discussed) served in the Revolutionary War. John and Francis Linsley were two of the original 17th-century settlers in Totoket, the forerunner of modern Branford and North Branford. Prominent family members have included doctors, lawyers, ministers, and the first first selectman and first town clerk in North Branford following its incorporation in 1831. Three family members have also served in the Connecticut General Assembly.

Footnote.

1. Alling, Jeane Cook, A Silent Witness in Four Centuries (1931), p.1 and preface.

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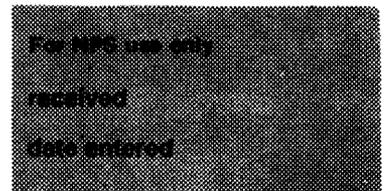
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1. Alling, Jeane Cooke, A Silent Witness in Four Centuries, Northford, Connecticut: privately printed (under direction of Yale University Press), 1931.
2. Cummings, Abbott Lowell, The Framed Houses of Massachusetts Bay, 1625-1725, Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1979.
3. Kelly, J. Frederick, Early Domestic Architecture of Connecticut, New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1963 (republication; first published, 1924).
4. Livingston, Elizabeth, The Historical and Architectural Survey of North Branford, 1980.
5. Miller, Herbert C., M.D., The History of North Branford and Northford, North Branford: The Totoket Historical Society, 1982.
6. Town of North Branford, land records:
 - a. vol. 154, p. 420 (deed from Mahlon Hale et al, grantor, to Robert B. and Elizabeth A. Wheeler, grantees, recorded 8/1/85)
 - b. vol. 12, p.182 (Herman Wustrock, grantor, to Victor and Gregorio Lampasano, grantees, recorded 10/10/1911) (90 acres, with dwelling and barn, except a "pent highway through said farm" and a "right reserved to Solomon Linsley, his heirs and assigns, of crossing a river lot west of the pent highway to a river meadow....")
 - c. vol. 7, p. 139 (Solomon Linsley, grantor, to Lorenzo E. and Reuben Harrison, grantees, recorded 9/6/1873)(90 acres, with a right of crossing a river meadow [wording similar to that found in deed referred to above at vol. 12, p.182])
7. Town of Branford, land records:
 - a. vol. 8, p. 323 (several named individuals, grantors, to Joseph Linsley, grantee)(92 acres on south side of highway) (recorded 8/21/1765)
 - b. vol.8, p. 234 (Ichabod Foot, grantor, to Lieutenant Joseph Linsley, grantee, recorded 12/28/1762)(10 acres, 14 rods in Northford, with allowance of a pent highway to pass through homestead of Benjamin Howd "until it comes to [the] Highway or County Road that leads from said Northford Parish to said Branford....")
 - c. vol. 7, p.228 (David Page, grantor, to Ensign Joseph Linsley, grantee, recorded 2/7/1752)(24 acres, including tenement, dwelling house and barn, for £ 1900)
 - d. vol. 7, p. 229 (David Page, grantor, to Joseph Linsley, grantee, recorded 2/7/1752)(9½ acres at Totonet Hill")
 - e. vol. 7, p. 423 (Benjamin Howd, grantor, to Ichabod Foot, grantee, recorded 6/14/1751)(10 acres, 14 rods in Northford; referred to as the homestead where grantor's father, Benjamin Howd, last dwelt, and received by grantor in estate).

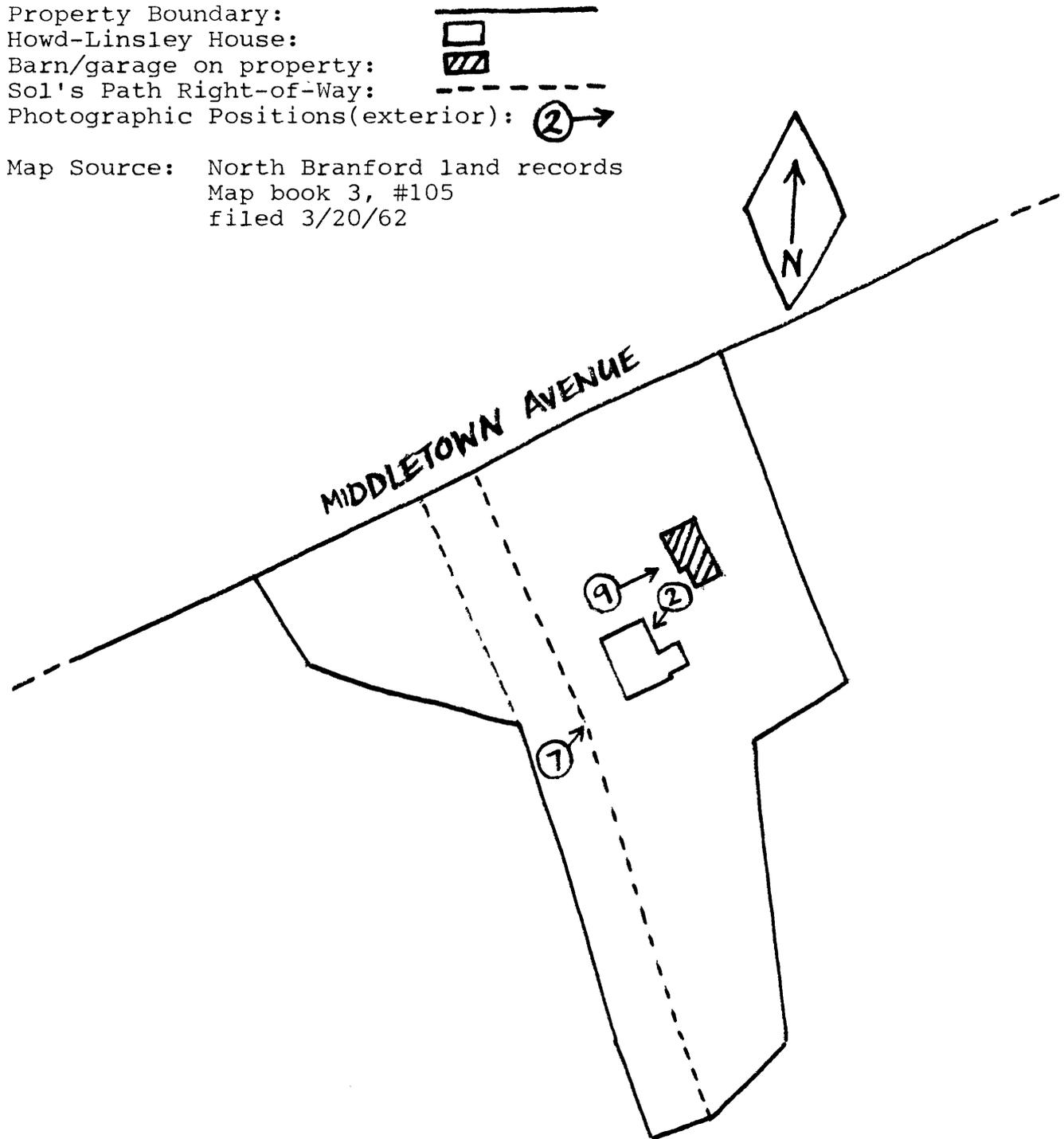
Howd-Linsley House
1795 Middletown Avenue
North Branford, Connecticut

Site Plan of National Register Property
(Revised as of 12/18/86) Scale: 1" = 100 ft.

KEY:

- Property Boundary: _____
- Howd-Linsley House: 
- Barn/garage on property: 
- Sol's Path Right-of-Way: - - - - -
- Photographic Positions(exterior): ② →

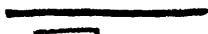
Map Source: North Branford land records
Map book 3, #105
filed 3/20/62



Howd-Linsley House
1795 Middletown Avenue
North Branford, Connecticut

Key:

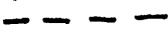
Property Boundary:



Howd-Linsley House:



Sol's Path right-of-way:



Photographic positions:



Map source: North Branford land records
Map book 3, #105
filed 3/20/62
scale: 1" = 40'

