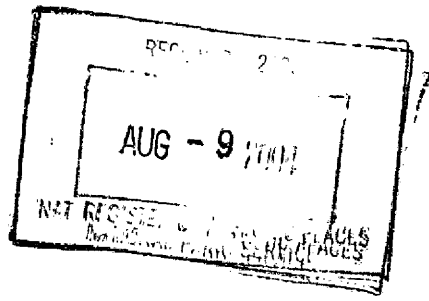


1057



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 James Leavitt House

other names/site number Taylor - Frey - Leavitt House, William Taylor House

2. Location

street & number 6 Old Alfred Road N/A not for publication

city or town Waterboro Center N/A vicinity

state Maine code ME county York code 031 zip code 04030

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.)

Edward J. Peterson 8/2/04
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Maine Historic Preservation Commission
State or 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 this 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): _____

Edison H. Beall 9/22/04
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

LEAVITT, JAMES, HOUSE
Name of Property

YORK COUNTY, MAINE
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 | |
| _____ | _____ | _____ buildings |
| _____ | _____ | _____ sites |
| _____ | _____ | _____ structures |
| _____ | _____ | _____ objects |
| _____ | _____ | _____ 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

None

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC / Single Dwelling

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION AND CULTURE / Museum

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

MID - 19TH CENTURY / Greek Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE / Granite

walls WOOD / Weatherboard

roof ASPHALT

METAL / Tin

other BRICK

Narrative Description

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

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

LEAVITT, JAMES, HOUSE

YORK COUNTY, MAINE

Section number 7 Page 2

DESCRIPTION

The 1850 James Leavitt House in Waterboro, Maine is a striking and finely-detailed example of rural Greek Revival architecture from the mid-nineteenth century. The structure, which faces north, sits at the south edge of a five road intersection that also defines a small memorial park across from the house. This section of town was known as Waterboro Center, and the Leavitt House is the most architecturally significant and best preserved of the three nineteenth-century homes situated at this intersection, which historically also supported several stores. Once part of a 20 acre farm, the property today consists of the house, ell and connected barn, situated on a lawn enhanced by mature plants, trees, and shrubs, before giving way to a small field at the south end of the holdings. To the west of the domestic complex is a garden plot bounded by a rail fence between granite posts. Shorter posts mark the former locations of a boundary fence along the north and east edges of the property. Due east of the house is a grassy plain that marks the site of a tennis court. Immediately to the south of this playing field is an open and partially overgrown cellar hole from an un-associated residential structure that burned in 1942 and was subsequently annexed to the property by the Leavitt family heirs.

The traditional center hallway, twin-chimneyed, five-bay facade of the Leavitt House is shaded by a pair of mature maple trees and accented by a partially-roofed front porch. The broad deck runs the length of the facade and is enclosed by a balustraded railing. Directly over the front door, the deck is sheltered by a shed roof supported on beveled porch supports. Added in the late 19th century, this interesting architectural detail nonetheless obscures the pilasters and entablature that surround the recessed, two-panel door with full length side lights. The Grecian-themed detailing continues with the application of corner pilasters, a wide frieze board under the slight projecting asphalt roof, and on the gabled ends, cornice returns. An unusual detail is found in the window trim: rather than utilizing flat stock as found on most rural examples in Maine, the six-over-six windows throughout the house are graced with a peaked entablature, and detailed on the sides with a molded trim board that terminates in corner blocks at the level of the sills. The porch is supported on fieldstone enclosed behind latticework; the remainder of the house and barn are built on granite foundation stones.

Although relatively narrow, the main mass of the house is two rooms deep, and the two bay eastern elevation reflects the neatly ordered interior spaces. Built with an integral, stepped, ell the western elevation is more complex. The two windows on each floor in the front portion of the house are joined by a third rank of windows and a secondary entry door, (which is almost identical to that on the front without the recess.), located under the two-story portion of ell roof. To the south of this doorway, the ell is reduced in height to one-and-one-half stories. The two first-floor windows mark the location of the summer kitchen and pantry on the interior, before giving way to a windowless-wood shed. Both of the windows on this side of the ell, and their corresponding window and back-door on the eastern side are surmounted by a three-light entablature window tucked up against the frieze boards.

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

LEAVITT, JAMES, HOUSE

YORK COUNTY, MAINE

Section number 7 Page 3

At the southern end of the complex is the barn. This timber-framed structure is substantially less ornamented than the house or its ell, and features a metal, rather than asphalt roof. The main entrance is located on the western side of the northern elevation and consists of an interior sliding carriage door on the first floor, a hay door on the second level and a six-over-six window in the attic peak. The western elevation contains only one window on the first floor, while the eastern side has a window on each floor. An additional carriage door is positioned at the center of the southern elevation, next to which is another six-over-six window. The windows are all plainly trimmed, and the barn features only narrow corner boards and tapered rake trim as ornamentation. The interior of the barn is noteworthy for its support-free first floor which is articulated only by the three cow stanchions, two horse stalls, a staircase and privy along the east wall. The second floor is currently divided into exhibition spaces but functioned originally as an open hay loft.

On the interior, the Leavitt House represents a transitional floor plan characteristic of the mid-nineteenth century. The two most formal rooms flank the straight run center hallway. A narrow room, referred to as the 'music room' is located behind (to the south) of the northeast parlor: Evidence on the floor and walls indicate that this room was once divided into two smaller spaces. An enclosed back and cellar staircase separate the northwest parlor from the diningroom. The footprint of the dining room engages both the southwestern section of the main house and the two-story section of the ell. At the southern end of this room is a cooking fireplace with bake oven, a door to the side entry, and a door to the kitchen to the south. This room, which may have been designed initially as a summer kitchen, was updated in 1894 with the addition of a soapstone sink filled by a hand pump, a Modern Glenwood Home Grand cookstove, iron set kettle, and a built in pantry. On the second floor the Leavitt house contains five bedrooms and a bath room including two long rooms over the diningroom. The garret over the summer kitchen is unfinished but connects directly to the second floor of the barn. The basement features three chimney arch storage areas, brick paving and a plastered and enclosed pantry room under the northeast parlor.

The Leavitt House, attractive on the exterior and ultimately functionally efficient on the interior, is most noteworthy for its interior finishes. All of the walls are horsehair plaster over sawn lath (except in the cellar, in which accordion lath was used, probably for economy), and the floors are painted random-width pine. The original off-white or light putty paint found on door and window trim throughout the house was only painted once (1940), and all the woodwork is hand planed. Three of the primary rooms retain their original wall paper: the machine printed papers in the northeast parlor, and east and west bedrooms were installed in the 1850s, and are in good conditional overall. In the northeast parlor the doors are topped with a decorative entablature that contains a projecting cornice supported on small paired modillions over a broad frieze. Molded panels provide a visual base for the windows, and high molded baseboards surround the floor. The black painted fireplace surround is of a simple composition, with a mantle over a beveled, tripartite frieze. The original fire box has been filled, but a cast iron parlor stove provides the room with heat. A more traditional, yet also simple, Greek Revival fireplace surround complements the Franklin Fireplace insert in the northwest parlor. However, while each of these features

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LEAVITT, JAMES, HOUSE

YORK COUNTY, MAINE

Section number 7 Page 4

help to convey the almost unchanged nature of this house, it is the decorative graining that positions the structure unique among its rural neighbors. Throughout the house, with only a few exceptions on either floor, the doors, window trim, and woodwork are finished in decorative grain painting. This surface treatment covers all of the un-plastered surfaces in the diningroom (interior and exterior sides of a china cabinet, baseboard, chair rail, dish rail, fireplace surround, mantle, and window and door trim), most of those in the northwest living room (fireplace surround, door and window trim), and all the doors in the house, with the exception of those in the summer kitchen and the northeast parlor. These two rooms are the only spaces in the house and ell which do not contain any grain painting whatsoever. In the case of the summer kitchen, this was probably due to the completely functional, non-decorative nature of the room's use. At the opposite end of the spectrum, the northeast parlor was the 'best room' and contained the most extensive use of decorative moldings and trim. However great expense and artistic achievement is apparent in the extremely well executed grain painting. Among the recognizable motifs are elements painted to resemble tiger maple, birds-eye maple, curly maple, and flame maple, as well as simpler generic pine or maple cross grains. In many instances the panels of a door are decorated in one pattern, and the rails and stiles rendered in a complementary pattern. The inside of the front door is grained to resemble quarter-sawn oak. Two particular examples may help to eventually identify the as yet unknown artist who contributed so much to this house. Hidden on the inside of the china cupboard is a grain-painted long-necked swan, and behind the door to a small wood box is an chanticleer rooster set within a foliated crest.

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 a 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

Period of Significance

1850 - 1876

Significant Dates

1850

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository: _____

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

LEAVITT, JAMES, HOUSE

YORK COUNTY, MAINE

Section number 8 Page 2

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The James Leavitt House in Waterboro Center, Maine is a handsome Greek Revival style structure built in 1850 and now owned by the Town and run as a house museum dedicated to local history. The home is in the heart of the village, and is located at a highly visible intersection in the vicinity of the town memorial, Town Hall, fire station, school, historic society building and a couple of small stores. As such, the Leavitt House conveys a striking manifestation of the town's mostly destroyed 19th architecture, and also provides the residents with a location in which to investigate the role and lifestyles of the Leavitt's and other leading families in the history of the town. The James Leavitt House is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places at the local level of significance under Criterion C as an extremely well-preserved example of rural Greek Revival architecture associated with a successful local merchant.

According to local and family tradition, James Leavitt built his new home at the heart of Waterboro Center in 1850. The land he purchased at this choice location in the small village had previously been the location of a tavern and lawyers office. Leavitt and his family moved from nearby Alfred, Maine to Waterboro between 1830 and 1840, and settled at a different location in town. Until the railroad bypassed Waterboro Center in the 1863, this was the most prosperous section of town, and thus an appealing place for Leavitt to construct a new house commensurate with his economic success.¹ According to local historian Jim Carll, Leavitt was an 'astute businessman' who made his living by selling local produce in Portland and Boston, as well as running a general store near the house. He also purchased pre-cut fabric in Boston and pieced it out among the local farm women, who would assemble the garments, mostly men's suits, shirts and trousers. Leavitt returned the suits to clothiers in Boston at a handsome profit; the women were paid in credit at Leavitt's store. The ledgers tracking these transactions, and listing the production of the women, are all still kept at the Leavitt House.

The home that Leavitt built is a well-proportioned and significantly detailed two-story Greek revival structure with an integral ell and connected barn. The scale and massing of the structure is not unlike that of many rural, single-family dwellings of the Federal and Greek Revival periods in Maine, especially for a family with twelve children! What sets this structure apart is the level of detail and the original finish seen on both the interior and exterior. For example, the exterior window casings on all of the windows of the house and barn are adorned with molded trim and corner blocks; a detail seldom used on rural examples of this style. On the interior, the building retains original wallpaper in the main rooms, and also features some of the finest examples of wood-graining in the state. The sheer amount of surface that was grained indicates that this was probably not the work of an itinerant artist passing through town, but undertaken a specialist like Jason Hamilton, a 'fancy painter' who lived in nearby Sanford and was listed in the Mercantile Union Business Directory in 1849.

¹According to the History of York County Maine, Waterborough Center had only 18 residences by 1880.

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LEAVITT, JAMES, HOUSE

YORK COUNTY, MAINE

Section number 8 Page 3

Using pigment and combs to grain paint wood has been practiced since the eighteenth century, but in 1850, it had become one of the preferred interior finishes advocated by Andrew Jackson Downing, in his influential work The Architecture of Country Houses.

“The most satisfactory wood-work or wainscot for the interior of a cottage is that composed of the native wood of the district where the house is built - such as maple, birch, ash, black-walnut, or oak. This requires no painting, simply a coat or two of varnish and the effect is excellent. But, in most cases, the extra cost of working hard wood will render its employment rare in economical cottages. As a substitute, however, we would strongly recommend that the wood work be either grained, in imitation of these woods or, in the cheapest cottages, *stained*, to have the same effect....Ash, maple, birch, and oak are the best woods to imitate in graining a cottage. Black-walnut, if not too dark, has an excellent effect....” (Downing, p. 367-8).

Downing felt that the varnished, grained surfaces were economical to install and easy to keep clean. Interestingly, the grain painting at the Leavitt house does not necessarily try to mimic natural wood, rather the combinations of patterns, such as birds-eye maple and tiger-maple, used together on the doors suggest a much more artistic approach to the application. This suggestion is further supported by the grained pictures of the rooster and the swan that appear on the back doors of two cabinets.

A meticulously kept household ‘log’ or ‘register’ indicates that the graining was ‘touched up’ in 1939 by Walter Durgin, and also records that portions of the front porch were removed in 1933, and that electricity was added in 1936. Other than these few changes, little else has been done to the house since a sink was added to the back kitchen in the 1894. That the structure is so unchanged is the result, to a large degree, of its predominately seasonal use.

“After the death of James in about 1880,² the house became a summer residence for the “family”. James’ son Benjamin, a business man in Saco, took care of the place and made it his summer home...After the death of Benjamin Leavitt the house passed on to his daughter, Mrs. Louella Frey and for many years it was known as the “Frey House”. Mrs. Frey’s daughters Helen Taylor and Ethelinda Innis later acquired the home. Mrs. Taylor and her husband Neil spent summers in the house until their deaths in the early 1980’s. Mrs. Taylor wrote “A Time to Recall”, which had this house as its focal point. The Taylor’s sons William, Neil and Howard sold the house to the Town of Waterboro in 1989....It is truly an unspoiled dwelling owing to the fact that it was lived in year round for only thirty years.” (Carll, 1989).

The Leavitt House is also important as one of the few structures in the entire town of Waterboro to avoid being consumed by devastating wild fires in the dry fall of 1947. Starting on October 17th, and

²1876 according to family records.

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Continuation Sheet

LEAVITT, JAMES, HOUSE

YORK COUNTY, MAINE

Section number 8 Page 4

continuing unchecked for over a week, the wildfire devastated the town, destroying over 60 houses, and approximately 20,000 of the towns 26,000 acres. The neighborhood immediately around the Leavitt House was spared, but the other settlements, including South and North Waterboro, and the cottages around Ossipee Lake, were almost completely destroyed. Thus, the Leavitt House, significant in its own right for its architectural merits, is significant also as one of the few houses to remain in the town from before 1947.

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LEAVITT, JAMES, HOUSE

YORK COUNTY, MAINE

Section number 9 Page 2

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Carll, Jim. "The Taylor House." Brochure prepared for the Town of Waterboro, Taylor/Frey/Leavitt House, October 1989. Copy on file at the Maine Historic Preservation Commission.

Downing, Andrew Jackson. The Architecture of Country Houses. (New York: Dover Publications, Inc.), 1969.

History of York County, Maine. (Philadelphia: Everts & Peck), 1880.

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The Old Maps of York, Maine in 1872. (Fryeburg, Maine: Saco Valley Printing), 1990.

United States Federal Population Census, 1830 - 1930. Microfilm available at the Maine State Archives, Augusta, Maine.

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www.waterborolibrary.org/waterfire.htm [June 28, 2004].

LEAVITT, JAMES, HOUSE
Name of Property

YORK COUNTY, MAINE
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Approximately 3 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1

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

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Zone Easting Northing

2

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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 CHRISTI A. MITCHELL, ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIAN

organization MAINE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION date 9 July 2004

street & number 55 CAPITOL STREET, STATION 65 telephone (207) 287-2132

city or town AUGUSTA state ME zip code 04333 -0065

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 Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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LEAVITT, JAMES, HOUSE

YORK COUNTY, MAINE

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundaries of the James Leavitt House are indicated on the accompanying map "Taylor House, Waterboro, Historic Site Analysis".

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The property now most closely associated with the Leavitt House is a segment of a 19 1/2 acre parcel originally purchased by Leavitt in 1849. Since that time, the property boundaries have changed incrementally. Currently owned by the Town of Waterboro, the property is included on Tax Map number lot 80: however the southern section of this lot has been recently developed for the town fire station and no longer retains its historic association with the property. The boundaries, as delineated on the map, are drawn to include the three acres of house lot and adjacent field that retain integrity of location, setting feeling and association.

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Continuation Sheet

LEAVITT, JAMES, HOUSE

YORK COUNTY, MAINE

Section number _____ Page _____

PHOTOGRAPHS

Photograph 1 of 4
Christi A. Mitchell
Maine Historic Preservation Commission
25 June 2004
North elevation; facing south.

Photograph 2 of 4
Christi A. Mitchell
Maine Historic Preservation Commission
25 June 2004
Interior, grain painted doors in northeast parlor and hall; facing west.

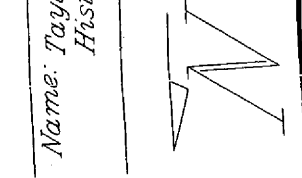
Photograph 3 of 4
Christi A. Mitchell
Maine Historic Preservation Commission
25 June 2004
Interior, northwest parlor; facing southwest.

Photograph 4 of 4
Christi A. Mitchell
Maine Historic Preservation Commission
25 June 2004
Interior, grain painted door in central hall: facing west.

*Name: Taylor House, Waterboro
Historic Site Analysis*

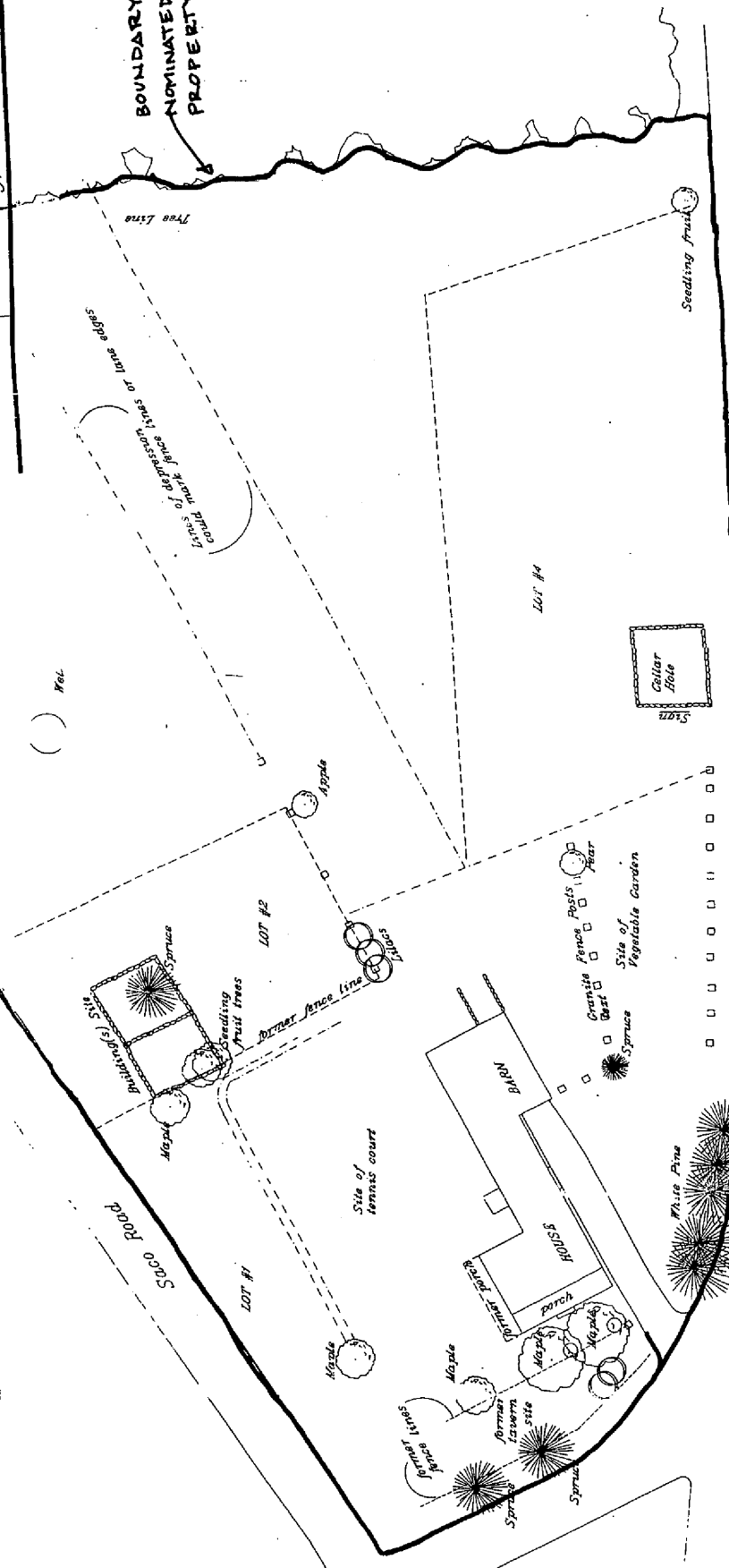
*By: PAST DESIGNS
59 High Street, Kennebunk, ME 04043
207-985-4326*

*Scale: 30' = 1" AS 60'
Date: May, 1991*



- NOTES:**
- 1. Information for this plan compiled from 1889 survey plan, 1889 survey plan, 1889 survey plan, 1889 survey plan, and site inspection by David Beachley, 5/19/91.*
 - 2. Lot #1 consisted of 1 1/2 acres with barn, house, stable and other outbuildings, acquired by Benjamin Stevens from the estate of John Stevens in 1889, when lots #2 and #4 were subdivided from the early 20th a had retained its same configuration since April 1, 1988.*
 - 3. Lot #2 was retained by Peter Cook until his death in 1897 to the inheritance. The configuration shown on this map is from the 1889 survey. This deed notes Benjamin Leavitt's land to the north and well, and James Stevens's land to the south. The house on this lot burned in 1942 and was acquired by Helen Taylor in 1945.*
 - 4. This lot is owned by the Stevens family in 1885, but its exact configuration is as yet unknown. Presumably a house site sits under the stand of black and poplar.*
 - 5. Lot #4 was subdivided from the original Carle lot in 1889 as a 1/2 acre lot with one building. This deed describes the lot as the "woodburn lot" & reads by 18 1/2 rods. The map of the lot in 1885 they owned the land surrounding this lot on the north, south and east.*

**BOUNDARY OF
NOMINATED
PROPERTY**



Old Alfred Road