

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 Long Hill
(preferred name)
other names/site number Wadsworth Estate Historic District; The Cenacle

2. Location

street & number See continuation sheet. not for publication
city or town Middletown vicinity
state Connecticut code CT county Middlesex code 007 zip code 06457

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.)
John W. Shanahan 6/13/96
Signature of certifying official Title Date
John W. Shanahan, Director, Connecticut Historical Commission
State of Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of certifying official Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:
 entered in the National Register. See continuation sheet.
 determined eligible for the National Register See continuation sheet.
 determined not eligible for the National Register.
 removed from the National Register.
 other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper Elson Beall Date of Action 7-25-96
Entered in the National Register

Name of Property

County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property (Check only one box)

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

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

Number of Resources within Property (Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Table with 2 columns: Contributing, Noncontributing. Rows for buildings, sites, structures, objects, Total.

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

2

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling/secondary structure

LANDSCAPE/forest/State park/object

INDUSTRY/waterworks

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling/secondary structure/

vacant

LANDSCAPE/forest/State park/object

INDUSTRY/waterworks

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/

Classical Revival

COLONIAL/Postmedieval English

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete/stone

walls concrete/weatherboard

roof built-up/asphalt shingle

other

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**

Wadsworth Estate Historic District, Middletown, Middlesex County, Connecticut

Section number 2 Page 1

2. Location

Laurel Grove Road: 15, 30, 33, 59, 73, 89 and Wadsworth Falls State Park

Wadsworth Street: 421

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Continuation Sheet**

Wadsworth Estate Historic District, Middletown, Middlesex County, Connecticut

Section number 7 Page 1

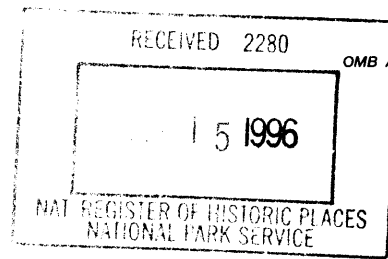
The Wadsworth Estate Historic District encompasses the major part of the original property developed by Colonel Clarence S. Wadsworth in the early twentieth century. Located in the southwestern part of Middletown, bounded on the north by Wadsworth Street and on the west by the Town of Middlefield, the nominated property consists of two main sections: a 103-acre parcel containing the mansion on the east, now owned by the City of Middletown, and 130 acres of Wadsworth Falls State Park, approximately one half of the estate acreage willed to the State of Connecticut in 1942 (see attached district map; Exhibit A). While the parkland is maintained by the state much as it was in Wadsworth's day, landscape restoration of the mansion grounds is a major component of the ongoing efforts of the City of Middletown to save and restore the estate parcel.¹ The mansion itself, after suffering from fire damage and vandalism, is presently vacant, boarded up, and awaiting restoration.

Over time the estate has been reduced in size and a century of growth has obscured the original wooded landscape planted here by Wadsworth (see exhibit A). In addition to the property now encompassed by the park, the estate originally extended all the way south to Randolph Road and on the east to Long Lane and Long Hill Road. Large parcels along these streets were carved out by a later owner and sold for various purposes. Among them are Wilbert Snow School, Mercy High School, a private parochial school, and a residential tract built by the Middletown Housing Authority.

Most of the district is heavily wooded and interconnected by a network of roads and trails. The rolling terrain generally slopes downward in a westerly and northerly direction from the 350-foot north-south ridgeline of Long Hill on its eastern border, the highest elevation in this area, to the gorge formed by Laurel Brook, a tributary of the Coginchaug River, which flows through the park. An unpaved section of Laurel Grove Road, which sets off the park acreage from the rest of the estate, runs along the east side of the gorge for part of its length, before continuing north to Wadsworth Street.

The major contributing building, the Clarence S. Wadsworth mansion, called "Long Hill" by the owner, was built between 1909 and 1917 (Inventory #15; Photograph #s 1, 2). Presently accessed from Wadsworth Street, it is sited on a fairly level terrace part way down the western slope of Long Hill, about 100 feet above Laurel Grove Road to the west. A small residential area dating from the mid-eighteenth century on the northern half of this road, once part of the estate, contains several historic contributing houses and/or secondary structures. Other contributing objects and structures attributed to Wadsworth are found throughout the estate grounds and the park.

Much of the mansion parcel was open farmland before the estate was developed. Starting in 1900, thousands of trees and shrubs were used to re-forest pasture and orchard to create a woodland setting for the house. Dense nursery plantations were established and mature specimen trees were planted. Some pasturage was left in its natural state and open areas were set aside for a lawn tennis court, the great lawn south of the mansion, and formal gardens. From aerial photographs, it is apparent that stands of conifers defined some of these outdoor spaces, and today rows of deciduous trees still border the network of carriage roads and walking paths. Similar row plantings and dry-laid stone walls, dating from the farm period, run along the estate perimeter. Since the original plantings have been overtaken by regenerating forest and mostly native species were used, only after the ongoing intensive investigation is complete will the full extent and design of the original silviculture be known.²



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Wadsworth Estate Historic District, Middletown, Middlesex County, Connecticut

Section number 7 Page 2

Of the two paved roads on the estate proper, the "North Fork," a tree-lined allée from Wadsworth Street, approximately a quarter mile in length, is still in use (Photograph #3). Only part of the "Sextantoid," the main driveway constructed in 1922, is contained within the remaining estate parcel.³ It includes a 1100-foot section bordered by white oaks and mortared stone walls and once extended to the northeast corner at Long Lane (Photograph #4). Since during Wadsworth's tenure cattle and horses grazed on the estate's pasture land, along its route are a cattle pass (a tunnel under the driveway), as well as culverts and stiles, which until recently were hidden by vegetation. An earlier main driveway followed the same path for part of its length before veering off more directly to Wadsworth Street. That driveway paralleled the path of Old Dolly Lane, part of the old stagecoach road from Middletown to Durham (now part of the estate's trail system) and its entrance was about 1000 feet to the east of the present North Fork gate. Another trail extends from the mansion to a holding pond near the crest of Long Hill. Other farm and service roads also ran from the estate's southeast corner to the house.

Designed in the Classical Revival style, the Wadsworth Mansion is composed of a central main block, with a projecting pavilion and portico, flanked by two-story wings (Inventory #15; Photograph #5). Containing 25 rooms on three levels, with mezzanines between the first and second floor hallways, it has a parapeted built-up near flat roof. Fireproof construction throughout included the use of gypsum block for walls and interior partitions. Gypsum also was used to fireproof the steel beams that carry the roof and reinforced concrete slab floors. Molded reinforced concrete was also used for exterior elements, such as columns and parapet. The two-story extension on the east wing that housed the kitchen and servants' quarters was part of the original construction. The 18-room basement level, larger than the footprint of the house, has an extension to the north that is accessed by an underground delivery entrance. Also at that location was one of two modern wings added to the house in the late 1940s (both since demolished), which utilized basement walls as a foundation. The other was attached to the west elevation.

The two facades of the mansion differ in their designs and detailing. The one on the north features a massive Doric-order portico which serves as a porte cochere for the main entrance (Photograph #6).⁴ Supported by four fluted columns, the portico entablature is detailed with mutules and stylized tryglyphs and has a coffered ceiling. The same entablature runs beneath the plain parapet of this facade and returns at the northwest corner. The pavilion projects forward from the main block in two stages, each defined by full-height panelled wall pilasters. Double pilasters, separated by sidelights, frame the Neo-Gréc doorway, which is capped by a full entablature and surmounted by a set of three windows. The main feature of the south facade is an arched, vaulted loggia recessed in the center between the lateral wings (Photograph #7). Doubled Doric columns support the loggia's open arches at the springline and frame a series of tall round-arched windows in its rear wall. Immediately above at the second floor, paired Ionic pilasters flank a central balcony and rectangular windows, set in slightly recessed arches. The south elevations of these wings are identical, with single large round-arched windows at the first floor flanked by arched recessed niches for statuary (Photograph #8). The rear parapet, which is constructed of reinforced concrete and returns on the west elevation almost to the front of the building, is more elaborate. It was composed of solid blocks that alternated with sections of balustrade, but most of the balusters are gone, destroyed by vandals in the early 1990s. Heavy molded concrete modillions, along with a narrower plain frieze define the cornices of the south and west elevations. The service wing is more simply detailed with a plain frieze and denticulated cornice and the parapet is omitted.

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Wadsworth Estate Historic District, Middletown, Middlesex County, Connecticut

Section number 7 Page 2

Other buildings nearby are a temple-fronted tennis house to the southeast on the east side of the former lawn tennis court and a stuccoed concrete block two-car garage with a flat roof to the southwest (Inventory #s 16, 15). The tennis house has been extensively vandalized and its columns are missing but its pedimented form remains relatively intact (Photograph #9). Other planned estate buildings located some distance from the house in areas since subdivided from the original parcel have not not survived. They included a farmhouse used as a gatelodge near the corner of Wadsworth Street and Long Lane and farm outbuildings on the western side of the estate.

Stone structures and objects that date from the estate period are found throughout the district. Most are associated with the estate's trail and road construction, such as the stone walls, already noted, that border the Sextanoid where it joins North Fork (Inventory #18; Photograph #4). Gateways are highlighted in several places by brownstone structures. The gateposts set back from the North Fork entrance on Wadsworth Street, which are constructed with pecked and margined brownstone blocks, have chamfered corners that terminate in carved lambs tongues (Inventory #17; Photograph #3). A simple brownstone lintel supported by tall one-piece brownstone piers defines one of the trail entrances to the estate from Laurel Grove Road (Inventory #19). Among the structures in the park are two nearly identical arched bridges, which are purported to be replicas of one in Leeds, England. Built between 1908 and 1910 and constructed of stone veneer over concrete, they are in excellent condition. Only the bridge over Laurel Brook is within the boundaries of the district (Inventory #12; Photograph #10). (The other crosses Wadsworth Brook near Little Falls in the Middlefield section of the park.) A stone dam upstream from the Laurel Brook bridge may date from an earlier period (Inventory #12). Above the dam is a c. 1915 reinforced concrete pumphouse which supplied the estate (Inventory #11). Massive brownstone bollards border some sections of park trails (Inventory #14). Individual pieces of brownstone, square in section and standing about three feet high, they are detailed with *faux* blocks and joints.

The oldest of the contributing houses in the district, which predates the building of the estate by many years, is the c. 1744 Nehemiah Hubbard House, listed on the National Register in 1985 (Inventory #1; Photograph #11). A typical clapboarded saltbox with a three-bay facade, it faces east from its site on Laurel Grove Road near the corner with Wadsworth Street. Although most of the property is hidden by a wired palisade-type fence, the site is open to the road in front of the house. The central pedimented doorway with sidelights is probably part of the restoration carried out by Wadsworth in 1929, which also included the addition of a rear two-story gambrelled kitchen wing. There is a barn to the north, now joined to the house. An associated barn to the south on the same side of the road has been converted to a residence (Inventory #5; Photograph #12). The third historic house here is at 73 Laurel Grove Road, which was built in the late nineteenth century and later used to house estate staff (Inventory #73; Photograph #13). A typical farmhouse of the period, it is presently sided with vinyl. Starting in the 1950s, other parcels were carved for three more houses, all non-contributing. One across the road from the Nehemiah Hubbard House is the Robert Smithson House, built in Durham in 1741 (Inventory #3; Photograph #14). Since it was moved to this site in 1957 after the period of significance of the estate, it is considering non-contributing. The other two are modern houses (Inventory #s 6, 8; Photograph #15). To the rear of the southernmost house (Inventory #8) is an old contributing barn/chicken coop, which may once have been associated with the nearby farmhouse (Inventory #9).

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Wadsworth Estate Historic District, Middletown, Middlesex County, Connecticut

Section number 7 Page 3

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Wadsworth Estate Historic District, Middletown, Middlesex County, Connecticut

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Inventory List of Contributing and Non-Contributing Resources

Inv. #	Address	Name/Style/Date	C/NC	Ph. #
1.	15 Laurel Grove Road	NEHEMIAH HUBBARD HOUSE, Colonial, 1744	C	11
2.	15	barn/garage, c. 1900	C	
3.	30	"	NC	14
4.	30	"	NC	
5.	33	"	C	12
6.	59	"	NC	
7.	73	"	C	13
8.	89	"	NC	15
9.	--	"	C	
10.	--	"	C	
11.	--	"	C	
12.	--	"	C	
13.	--	"	C	10
14.	--	"	C	
15.	421 Wadsworth Street	LONG HILL/CLARENCE S. WADSWORTH MANSION, Classical Revival, 1909-1917	C	1,2,5 6,7,8
16.	421	"	C	
17.	421	"	C	3
18.	421	"	C	9
19.	421	"	C	4
20.	421	"	C	

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

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

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

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

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1900 - 1942

Significant Dates

1909 - 1917

1900 - 1922

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Francis L. V. Hoppin

John C. Olmsted

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository:

Library of Congress

Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site

Wadsworth Estate Historic District
Name of Property

Middlesex, CT
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property _____ 270 _____

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

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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 _____ Jan Cunningham, National Register Consultant _____

organization _____ Cunningham Associates Ltd. _____ date _____ 11/30/95 _____

street & number _____ 37 Orange Road _____ telephone _____ (860) 347 4072 _____

city or town _____ Middletown _____ state _____ CT _____ zip code _____ 06457 _____

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

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

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

Photographs

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

Additional items

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

Property Owner

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

name _____

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

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

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

**United States Department of the Interior
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Wadsworth Estate Historic District, Middletown, Middlesex County, Connecticut

Section number 8 Page 1**Statement of Significance**

The Wadsworth Estate Historic District is a significant exemplar of the country house era of the early twentieth century (1890-1940). Despite its faded grandeur, the Long Hill mansion, together with its associated wooded parkland, still evokes the "Gilded Age," a period when great fortunes were expended on building and maintaining palatial seasonal retreats. Time and neglect have exacted their toll but the essential integrity of the estate remains. While the delineation of its varied landscape has blurred over time, it still conveys the essence of its original concept, the integration of formal classicism in a pastoral and wooded setting. The nominated property derives much added significance from the contributions of prominent professionals in the fields of landscape design and architecture. Chief among the many experts who participated in the development of the estate over a 22-year period were Olmsted Brothers, undoubtedly the oldest and most noted landscape architectural firm of the period, and the architectural firm of Hoppin and Koen of New York City, who designed the mansion that became the grandest historic residence in Middletown.

Historical Background

Colonel Clarence Seymour Wadsworth (1871-1941) was the son of Julius and Cornelia deKoven Wadsworth, a prominent New York City family that also had ties to Connecticut. Julius, an attorney associated with development of the New York Central Railroad, was a descendant of the Hartford Wadsworths, leaders of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.⁵ His wife's father was a prominent resident of Middletown who owned deKoven House, located in town near the Connecticut River. Clarence, their third son and only surviving child, was born after the tragic deaths of the first two sons. After completing his undergraduate education at Harvard in 1896, Clarence married his cousin, Katherine Fearing Hubbard (1875-1957), of Chicago, in 1897. At the time he was attending Harvard Law School. He received his law degree in 1899, having taken time out to serve with his New York National Guard regiment on the Mexican border during the Spanish American War. Katherine also had family associations with Middletown since her ancestors settled there in the seventeenth century. Prominent among them in the early nineteenth century was Nehemiah Hubbard, a wealthy merchant and the first president of the Middletown Bank. An earlier Hubbard farm inherited by Katherine Wadsworth became the nucleus of the estate. During his lifetime, Wadsworth continued to add to the estate, which finally totalled about 350 acres. Probably one of the last parcels he acquired was the Hubbard House, purchased in 1929 (Inventory #1; Photograph #11). He immediately began a program of restoration there, hiring restoration architects J. Frederick Kelly (1888-1947), who had already restored the deKoven House, and Norman Isham (1864-1943). While owned by Wadsworth, the Hubbard House was a rental property and occupied by a professor from nearby Wesleyan University.

Though the development of his estate was a project that occupied Wadsworth for most of his adult life, like so many of his generation and class, the colonel, as he preferred to be addressed, had many other interests. In addition to his stewardship of the family fortune and a lifelong devotion to nature conservation, he was a classical scholar with memberships in organizations in Hartford and New York devoted to the study of Latin. Remaining active in the New York National Guard, where he achieved his military rank, Wadsworth also was an honorary member of the Governor's Footguard in Connecticut. Even though Long Hill was a seasonal residence, he was very active in local Middletown affairs, undoubtedly due to his family associations as well as his strong sense of civic duty. He

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even served for a term as state senator from this district (33rd). Reflecting his interest in conservation, he was a member of the Middletown Park Board and the Middletown City Planning Commission. His many acts of philanthropy included offering Long Hill to the Red Cross as a hospital and training school just prior to World War I. In 1935 Wadsworth also established the Rockfall Corporation, now Rockfall Foundation, a non-profit organization devoted to the preservation of open space and forest land, headquartered in the deKoven House, which he had inherited from his maternal grandfather. It was through this foundation that the bulk of his estate was willed as a state park.

The Wadsworths maintained homes in New York (on East 41st Street), Palm Beach, Bar Harbor, Chicago, and Bermuda, but they were in residence at Long Hill in spring and fall. Elaborate social gatherings held there, complete with chamber music and illumination of the gardens with paper lanterns, dazzled the local citizenry. The large staff needed to maintain this life style included a housekeeper, who supervised upstairs and downstairs maids, and a governess for the children, as well as groundskeepers and a staff forester. A full-time chauffeur, Alexander Ewanoski (aka Evanoski), who lived on the estate in the Laurel Grove Road farmhouse (Inventory #7; Photograph #13) and served the colonel from at least 1928, continued in service to his widow for several years after the colonel's death in 1941. Following the sale of the estate parcel in 1947 to The Religious of Our Lady of The Cenacle, Inc., he became the caretaker for the convent. The order, which sold off some of the land and expanded the house, sold the remaining estate to a developer in 1986. The City of Middletown purchased the property in 1994.

Landscape Significance ⁶

From its formal classical nucleus to the naturalized wilderness of its forest, literally every square foot of the estate was shaped by the ideas of Colonel Wadsworth and the plans of his architects. The inherent dual nature of this composed environment produces a dramatic, even theatrical landscape, one that was typical of the period. Like the earlier Victorian landscapes, it combined elements from different countries and periods, but in a more refined and focussed manner. Enhanced by the symmetry of the approach allée, the formal mansion grounds, with its architectural gardens in the seventeenth-century Italian manner, gave way to the great lawns and pastures in the English landscape style. The Italian Renaissance gardens, in particular, were a typical feature of country estates, one which was introduced by Charles Adams Platt (1861-1933). ⁷ Managed reforestation, such as done at "Long Hill," was also common practice. ⁸ Along the approach driveway through this woodland, landscaped clearings characteristically provided mini-vistas of open sky and pasture.

Much of the credit for the successful integration of this landscape must go to John Charles Olmsted (1853-1920), who apparently played a major role in the design of the estate. John Charles and his brother, Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. (1870-1957), were the principals in the firm of Olmsted Brothers of New York City, the successor to their father's practice. They are best known in Connecticut for their design of several of Hartford's major parks during the period when Charles Elliot was a partner (1893-1897). Surviving correspondence, notes of site meetings, and preliminary plans and some construction drawings document the firm's 22-year association with Wadsworth. ⁹ The full extent of Olmsted's influence on the final design is not really known, but the firm's well-known organic approach to site development is evident. Furthermore, although Wadsworth was a strong-willed client with many definite and diverse ideas, under Olmsted's guidance they were integrated into a well-planned landscape, unified by the circulation system and plantings, and punctuated by useful structures.

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The Olmsteds were retained to plan the estate landscape long before the house was constructed. (Although such pre-planning is recommended by the profession, it rarely occurs.¹⁰) In November 1900 Wadsworth met with Frederick L. Olmsted, Jr., in New York and John C. Olmsted made the first of many site visits to Middletown. After walking over this site and another in Berlin, the Middletown acreage was selected and its salient features recorded by Olmsted in a small sketch. It was established that the estate would remain a working farm and a tentative house site was staked out near the crest of Long Hill. In later correspondence that year, the cost of the firm's services for engineering drawings and a working planting plan were discussed, and a plant list for nursery propagation on the estate was provided in 1901.

Among the design documents produced by Olmsted Brothers was a preliminary site plan, which included the original location of the house and its access roads, and the layout of the immediate mansion grounds. Conventionally classical in its design, it placed the house perpendicular to a long north-south axis with the approach drive on its north leg. After determining that the hilltop site was too exposed and windy, Wadsworth selected a new location for the house down the west slope, disrupting the symmetry of the Olmsted plan. Even though the firm was not asked to produce a final plan to reflect the change, J. C. Olmsted did have considerable input into the mansion's siting and orientation, even after Hoppin and Koen had submitted its final architectural plans. After the house was done, E. C. Whiting of Olmsted Brothers, who made a site visit in 1919, felt the grounds around the house were still "pretty ragged and unfinished," and he made extensive detailed suggestions for improvement "which might or might not be carried out..."¹¹ Whiting also commented that Katherine Wadsworth took responsibility for designing and planting of the formal gardens near the mansion, but he credited landscape architect Charles W. Leavitt (1871-1928) for their final plan. Family tradition holds that Katherine also sketched the design for the park bridges after a trip to England (Inventory #13; Photograph #10).¹²

Insight into the workings of the Olmsted firm and its relationship with an often difficult client are also revealed by extensive correspondence and notes. Second-guessed at every turn by Wadsworth and his array of local experts, surveyors, engineers, and foresters, the Olmsteds must have found their long association with the Wadsworth estate quite a trying experience. Though they often were consulted, it is apparent that Wadsworth avoided the drafting of final plans in order to reduce the cost of their services. And as J. C. Olmsted put it in 1907, all Wadsworth "... wants is advice about details as he feels the need of it...Evidently [he] wishes to direct all stages of planning and the actual work as an entertaining occupation."¹³ But it is clear that their advice, even in small matters, was often taken under advisement and later acted upon. For example, the Olmsted suggestion of a circular Greek temple for the crest of Long Hill was surely the genesis of the temple-fronted tennis house. On another occasion, although Wadsworth retained the services of D. C. Potter of Farmington as a tree expert, when he wished to replenish existing forest depleted by chestnut blight, he consulted with Hans J. Koehler, who was recommended by the firm because of his extensive experience on Long Island estates.

At least five years (1917-1922) were spent on development of plans and specifications for the Sextanoid, which was staked and restaked several times. Unable to come to a decision about paving materials and concerned about expenses, Wadsworth even had the firm consult with the highway departments of several states for cost estimates of various types. Although several of his letters during this time were devoted to complaints about the quality of the firm's drafting and expressed doubt that "the spirit of his various instructions would be grasped by artistic draftsmen who often confuse means with ends," this time Olmsted Brothers was allowed to prepare final bid documents.¹⁴ As it turned out, despite all the planning, construction was hampered because Wadsworth had already

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completed the bordering stone walls that still stand at the Sextanoid's south end (Inventory #19; Photograph #4).

Architectural Significance

Like many classically trained architects of the period, Francis L. V. Hoppin (b. 1866) was a product of both American and French architectural schools. After graduating from Brown University, he studied architecture at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and attended the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris. He was also influenced by his apprenticeship with McKim, Mead, and White, of New York, noted practitioners of the Beaux-Arts style, where he was hired as head renderer because of his artistic ability. While there he met Terrance Koen, an apprentice draftsman, who later became his partner. Although Robert Palmer Huntington joined Hoppin-Koen in 1904, Hoppin remained the chief designer and became known for his country estates, most notably The Mount, Edith Wharton's home in Lenox, Massachusetts, which was built in 1902. Hoppin's other commissions in the Berkshires included Brookhurst for Newbold Morris in 1905 and Eastover for Harris Fahnestock in 1910, both classical in their form and style. Sherwood, a Newport mansion, is also attributed to him. After Koen's death in 1923, Hoppin retired from practice and devoted himself to watercolor painting, a lifelong avocation.

Hoppin and his professional reputation as a designer of country estates were undoubtedly well known to Wadsworth. Even though the two men did not move in quite the same social circles, they were contemporaries and at least acquaintances, particularly through their membership in the same New York National Guard regiment, where Hoppin too rose to colonel. Although Hoppin's plans for the mansion have survived, little is known about their working relationship. Given that Hoppin believed "the architect is the general of the forces ... the supreme commander of all architectural undertakings," he may have met his match in Wadsworth.¹⁵ In fact, when construction started in 1909, it was reported that rather than spending his usual summer in Bar Harbor, Wadsworth camped out on the grounds to oversee the work.

Elements of many of Hoppin's mansion designs are echoed in Long Hill and they also can be found in some of the grander Beaux-Arts mansions of Newport, such as the Breakers, designed by Richard Morris Hunt. However, the suggestion that this estate house is a pastiche of borrowings from his own work or the work of others is misguided.¹⁶ To create the fully integrated design of Long Hill, Hoppin had only to look to his academic training. Honesty of form and plan predominates, the chief tenet of the French school. The clarity of design is even more focussed because the excessive exterior embellishment that also characterized the Beaux-Arts is omitted. With its smaller scale and restrained detailing, Long Hill is more Classical Revival in style, sometimes known as the Academic Classical style. Though dissimilar and inspired by both Greek and Roman sources, the facades serve as guides to the symmetry of the interior plan. The massive Greek portico used to create an imposing entrance is typical of Classical Revival work. The loggia on the south facade, the more interesting of the two elevations, is derived from the villas of Palladio. Nicely scaled to this elevation, it provided a suitable transition from the more public interior spaces to the formal Italian gardens once there.

The contract for the house was let to the Dennis O'Brien Construction Company, masonry contractors, at a cost \$90,000, a considerable sum even then, probably due in part to the use of reinforced structural concrete and fireproofing. Relatively new technologies at the time, they were rarely employed in residential buildings. The O'Brien company was

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probably hired because of its considerable experience in large-scale public construction, such as the brick masonry buildings at Connecticut Valley Hospital in Middletown.

Surprisingly, corners were cut on the design of the interior of the house, which was not as lavishly finished or appointed as might be expected in a mansion of this size and period. Perhaps the reason can be found in the new federal income tax, enacted in 1913 while the house was under construction, which caused many of the wealthy to limit their extravagant lifestyles. Some put their wealth in land trusts and foundations, as Wadsworth did, but, as demonstrated with the Olmsteds, he always had had a reputation for being close with his money. It is said that he allowed his wife only a limited budget for interior decoration. However, whatever economies she practiced did not include her buying trips to Europe for French Regency-style furniture.

After years of neglect while in private hands, the Wadsworth mansion has been rescued by the City of Middletown. Plans are underway to restore this significant part of the city's heritage as a community resource. Although deteriorated and the target of arson and vandalism, it has retained its basic structural and architectural integrity as revealed by a detailed analysis by Gilley-Hinkel Architects.¹⁷ With the aid of a set of Hoppin's exterior and interior plans and elevations, and an "as found" set produced by this firm, an accurate restoration can be accomplished and the mansion will once again deserve its reputation as the grandest residence in town.

End Notes:

1. Soon after the City of Middletown purchased the estate in 1994, the Long Hill Estate Committee was appointed by the mayor. It was charged with making recommendations for the stewardship and development of the property; three subcommittees were formed to deal with history, architecture, and landscape. Much of the information incorporated in this nomination is drawn from the extensive research of these subcommittees, which included oral histories and the gathering of a photographic archive. Experts were consulted in various fields and a site visit was made to the Frederick L. Olmsted National Historic Site in Brookline, Massachusetts, which produced preliminary plans and construction documents used at the estate. Relevant correspondence between the Olmsted firm and Colonel Wadsworth at the Library of Congress was copied. See "Interim Report to the Mayor and Common Council from Long Hill Estate Committee," December 1994. As recommended by the estate committee, in 1995 the Wadsworth Mansion Building Committee was created to oversee the restoration and development of the house.

2. The Long Hill Estate Committee has already initiated a program of selected clearing of underbrush and removal of dead material. No further clearing or restoration of the landscape will take place until the estate is mapped by forestry and landscape specialists, who will locate and identify tree and plant species and coordinate this data with historic maps, plans, and plant lists.

3. It was named "Sextanoid" by Colonel Wadsworth, possibly a reference to its metric length, which is approximately 360 meters, or a multiple of 6 by 60. Wadsworth preferred the metric system and all his architects and engineers were required to use it.

4. Columns used here were reputed to be from the 1830s remodeling of the 1788 Nehemiah Hubbard House that once stood on Main Street in Middletown. This tradition seems highly unlikely, since columns of that period would either be constructed of stone,

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stuccoed brick, or wood, and these are of formed concrete. Perhaps the originals served as a model.

5. The best known members of the family were Jeremiah Wadsworth, Commissary General during the American Revolution, considered one of the wealthiest men of his generation, and his son, Daniel Wadsworth, who endowed the Wadsworth Atheneum in Hartford.

6. The author is indebted to landscape architect Rudy J. Favretti for his detailed review of an earlier draft of the nomination. His many contributions to the following section are gratefully acknowledged, especially his insightful analysis of the Wadsworth estate landscape as a representative example of the country estate era, which brought much needed focus to the landscape significance statement. R. J. Favretti to J. Cunningham, March 3, 1996, Connecticut Historical Commission.

7. Platt's 1894 book, *Italian Gardens*, based on his travels in Italy, was a major influence on landscape design of the period. Many of his landscape designs in the New York area and on Long Island included this feature and were often copied. *Ibid.*, p. 2.

8. For example, at Biltmore, George Vanderbilt's estate, thousands of acres were planted according to plans done by Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr. *Ibid.*, p. 2.

9. Except for plans and maps stored at the Olmsted National Historic Site in Brookline, the rest of existing material is contained in two folders in the archives of the Library of Congress. In the following paragraphs, the more relevant highlights are discussed and citations are provided only for quoted passages.

10. Favretti to Cunningham, p. 4.

11. Wadsworth Correspondence, File 35-1-74 and 75, May 19, 1919. Also the source of the following reference to Charles Leavitt. At the present time, Leavitt's plans have not been located.

12. According to R. Favretti, photographs of similar bridges were published at the time and they were relatively common in the Stockbridge, Massachusetts, area.

13. Record of site visit by J. C. Olmsted, July 17 and 18, 1907, Wadsworth/Olmsted Correspondence, Library of Congress, File 35-1-60.

14. Wadsworth Correspondence, File 35/2-84, 85, February 4, 1922.

15. Barr Ferree, "Talks with Architects: Mr F. L. V. Hoppin on the House and Garden," *Scientific American Building Monthly*, vol. 35:3, March 1903, pp. 47, 61. Such hubris was perhaps unwarranted since it is known that he largely deferred to Edith Wharton in the design of her estate, completed the previous year.

16. Katherine Altshul, "The Legacy of Colonel Clarence Wadsworth: Long Hill Revisited," 1995. The report was prepared as a summer intern project for Gilley-Hinkel Architects.

17. "Facility Report and Recommendations for Long Hill" (Bristol, Connecticut: Gilley-Hinkel Architects, 1993), pp. 1-7.

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10. Geographical Data

UTMS Middletown Quad

- | | | | | | | | |
|----|----|--------|---------|-----|----|--------|---------|
| 1. | 18 | 694100 | 4601340 | 8. | 18 | 693320 | 4599910 |
| 2. | 18 | 694060 | 4600840 | 9. | 18 | 693100 | 4600350 |
| 3. | 18 | 694320 | 4600820 | 10. | 18 | 693060 | 4600760 |
| 4. | 18 | 694240 | 4600320 | 11. | 18 | 693150 | 4600810 |
| 5. | 18 | 693980 | 4600390 | 12. | 18 | 693160 | 4600660 |
| 6. | 18 | 693660 | 4600230 | 13. | 18 | 693360 | 4600760 |
| 7. | 18 | 693600 | 4599890 | 14. | 18 | 693360 | 4600950 |

Verbal Boundary Description:

The nominated property is depicted on the attached map drawn to scale from the City of Middletown Tax Assessor's Map #s 15, 16, 27.

Boundary Justification:

The nominated property, which includes the estate grounds and the Middletown portion of Wadsworth Falls State Park, encompasses the majority of the land, buildings, structures, and objects associated with the Wadsworth Estate during its period of significance. The Middlefield portion of the state park was excluded because of its limited amount of associated construction and/or man-made landscape features. Also excluded are estate parcels sold and developed for modern use after the period of significance along the eastern and southern boundaries.

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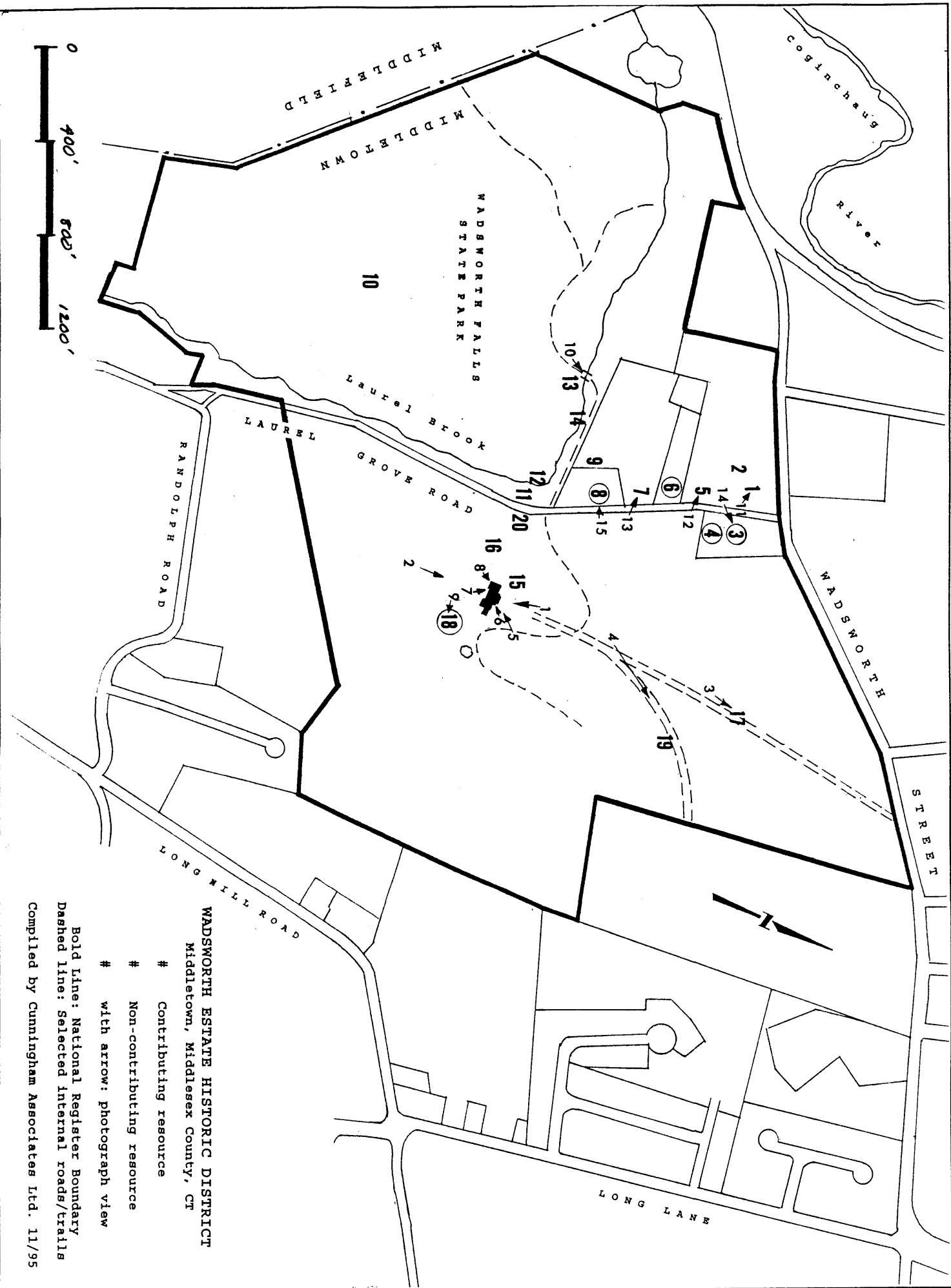
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Photographer: Cunningham Associates Ltd.
Date: 11/95
Negatives on file: Connecticut Historical Commission

1. WADSWORTH MANSION, north facade, facing SE
2. WADSWORTH MANSION, south facade, facing N
3. Estate Entrance (North Fork) with gateposts, facing N
4. South end of Sextanoid, facing NE
5. WADSWORTH MANSION, north facade, facing SW
6. WADSWORTH MANSION, portico, facing W
7. WADSWORTH MANSION, loggia, facing NW
8. WADSWORTH MANSION, west wing, facing N
9. Tennis house, facing SE
10. Laurel Brook Bridge, facing NE
11. NEHEMIAH HUBBARD HOUSE, facing NW
12. Hubbard Barn, 33 Laurel Grove Road, facing NW
13. Farmhouse, 73 Laurel Grove Road, facing NW
14. ROBERT SMITHSON HOUSE, facing NE
15. 89 Laurel Grove Road, facing W



WADSWORTH ESTATE HISTORIC DISTRICT
 Middlesex County, CT

- # Contributing resource
- # Non-contributing resource
- # with arrow: photograph view

Bold line: National Register Boundary
 Dashed line: Selected internal roads/trails
 Compiled by Cunningham Associates Ltd. 11/95