city, town

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received

SEP 3 0 1536

date entered

mer 2.9 mad

See instructions in <i>How to Complete N</i> Type all entries—complete applicable	•		DEC 4 5 1000
1. Name Chesham Dis	e trict		
historic			
and/or common			
2. Location Harris	ville, NH		
street & number			not for publication -
city, town Harrisville	vicinity of		
state New Hampshire coc	de 33 county	Cheshire	code 5
3. Classification			
Category Ownership X district public building(s) private X both Site Public Acquisition object in process being considered	StatusX_ occupiedX_ unoccupied work in progress AccessibleX_ yes: restricted yes: unrestricted no	Present Use X agriculture X commercial educational entertainment government industrial military	museum park X private residence religious scientific transportation other:
4. Owner of Prope	rty Multiple	2	
street & number		<u>.</u>	
city, town	vicinity of	state	
5. Location of Leg	al Descriptio	<u> </u>	
courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Ch	eshire County Courtho	ouse - Registry of	Deeds
street & number Co	urt Street	·	
city, town Ke	ene	state	NH
6. Representation	in Existing S		dition to Harrisville ple resource nomination
Draft environmental impact title NH Rt. 101, Dublin/Harrisv			gible?yes _x_ no
date October 1982		federal _X_ stat	e county local
depository for survey records State	of New Hampshire Depa	artment of Public V	Works & Highways
Concord			N.H.

7. Description

Condition		
<u>x</u>	excellent	
X	good	

<u>x</u> fair

X deteriorated

_ unexposed

Check one
ed X unaltered
X altered

Check one

X original site

x moved date <u>late 1930s</u>

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Chesham District, small and very concentrated, represents the felicitous coincidence between an established family farming settlement and a grade alignment from Harrisville village to Marlborough village. This part of western Harrisville, known after 1886 as Chesham, became the hub of increasing activity after the permanent establishment of railroad service in 1880. It continues to survive as a crossroads residential nucleus of approximately one-half dozen mid-19th century houses owned now or at one time by members of an important Harrisville family (the Bemises) and includes Harrisville's best surviving railroad depot (CVD-8), watering trough at CVD-6, and example of cast iron fencing (at Riverside Cemetery, CVD-3).

As a group, Chesham District's buildings, primarily white clapboarded Greek Revival residences which also accommodated civic and commercial services (post office, livery stable, store, etc.) in the past, share such internal consistency of design, materials, workmanship, feeling and association that there are no non-contributing buildings in the district. Its tight visual focus, as well as its amenities (watering trough, cemetery, etc.) make it the easiest of Harrisville's settlement centers to comprehend. Its period of significance, 1837-1936, covers its inception and growth as a family farming nucleus and its subsequent importance as a transportation hub and gateway to surrounding summer resort enclaves in Harrisville and Dublin.

Set in the valley between Sunset Eill and the Pottersville uplands, the district straddles the intersection of Chesham Road with Old Roxbury and Harrisville Roads and the uphill road to Silver Lake. Its east-west axis corresponds to the now-unused railroad bed which parallels Minnewawa Brook. The area is dotted with large white pine, spruce and maple trees, interspersed with some shrubs, yet its plantings convey less of a sense of street border than in the Pottersville District.

The earliest house in the Chesham District (CVD-7,1837) is the Josiah Knight farmhouse at the northwest corner of the crossroads. A well-preserved 1-1/2 story center chimney, center entry clapboarded cape cottage (cf. PD-2, 3, and 7) on Brown Road and others in the uplans of northwest Harrisville, Eastview and the Harrisville Rural District), it is one of Harrisville's best surviving examples of this house form with attached barn complex or "additive architecture." (For other local examples of "additive architecture", cf. CVD-9 the George Bemis House, and IP-14 the farmhouse for the Arthur Childs estate.) Within a decade Josiah Knight's sister, Betsey Willard, had built a tiny frame cottage with entry ell (CVD-5, 1846), on the northeast corner of the same intersection. Two Greek Revival houses, built within the following decade on Harrisville Road to the east echo locally popular vernacular interpretations.

One (CVD-1 1854) reflects the size, configuration and orientation of the Calvin Smith House (PD-22, 1840) in Pottersville enough to suggest the same builder. Its entry can be compared to that of PD-21, the Aaron Smith house, also in Pottersville.

The other, the Ralph Bemis House (CVD-2,1858), built as a Baptist parsonage, established a pattern which would persist locally until the end of the century: 1-1/2 story three-bay temple form sidehall plan main house with attached ell or shed (cf.CVD-9 & PD19) and the other parsonage in West Harrisville, IP-20 and IP-21 on the Harrisville Road).

Specific dates	1837–1936	Builder/Architect		
1400–1499 1500–1599	archeology-historic agriculture x architecture art commerce communications	conservation conservation economics education engineering x exploration/settlement industry invention	law literature military music	science sculpture social/ humanitarian theater transportation other (specify)
Period prehistoric	Areas of Significance—C archeology-prehistoric		landscape architecture	e religion

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Chesham District's significance lies in its survival into the late 20th century as a concentrated, visually cohesive crossroads village of considerable integrity. Its economic and civic vitality was drawn initially from farming and, after it was chosen as the location for the west Harrisville railroad station, from its role as a local transportation hub. It has from its earliest years been associated with one of Harrisville's most active and prominent families, the Bemises, to the point where it has been referred to as "Bemisville." Thus, it satisfies Criteria A and B of the National Register of Historic Places.

Initially settled later than all of Harrisville's districts except the resort area at nearby Silver Lake, the Chesham crossroads intersection's first family was that of Josiah H. Knight, who established a farm on the northwest corner and built his house there in 1837 (CVD-7), Within a decade he had been joined by his sister Betsey Willard, who built on the northeast corner in 1846 (CVD-5).

Even before the arrival of the railroad, Chesham had achieved considerable civic identity. Several quite similar houses, one a Baptist parsonage, had been built (CVD-1, 1854; CVD-2, 1859 and CVD-9, 1875), a store with post office had begin its long service to the community in the north part of the Betsey Willard House (CVD-5) and David Willard (of CVD-7, the Knight Farm) had donated land for a cemetary (CVD-3).

A quickening influence resulting from the completion of rail service in 1880 was promptly felt. By 1883, original owner George F. Bemis had made major additions to his house (CVD9) to enable him to operate a livery stable. The ranks of his clientele were swelled by the influx of summer residents attracted by its scenery and fresh air to the area recently made accessible by the arrival of the railroad.

One wealthy and influential summer resident of Stone Pond in Dublin, George B. Chase, was responsible for having the local post office in this area, previously known as West Harrisville, renamed Chesham after the name of his own estate. This was accomplished in 1886 during the postmastership of George F. Bemis (of CVD-9) Thus the western third of Harrisville has been known as Chesham for almost a century. It had achieved enough of a sense of identity by 1904 that a popular if unsuccessful movement to form an independent town was launched.

After the cessation of rail service in 1936, Chesham reverted to a quiet, essentially residential/farming community. In keeping with Harrisville's strong tradition of thriftiness through adaptive reuse, local farmer Ralph Bemis (of CVD-2) one of the last Harrisville citizens to make his living entirely from farming, purchased the Chesham Station for use as a poultry processing plant in 1939. Also during the late 1930s, the small railroad section house was moved to the rear of

O. Major Dibliographical Reservaces

See overall nomination

10. Geographical Data	
Acreage of nominated property 15 Quadrangle name Monadnock UTM References	Quadrangle scale
A 1,8 7 3,3 1,5,0 4,7 5,7 5,7 5 Zone Easting Northing C 1,8 7 3,2 8,0,0 4,7 5,7 1,0,0 E 1,8 7 3,2 8,0,0 4,7 5,7 3,2,5 G 1,8 7 3,2 8,7,5 4,7 5,7 5,2,5 Verbal boundary description and justification	B 1 8 7 3 3 2 7 5 4 7 5 7 4 2 5 Zone Easting Northing D 1 8 7 3 2 6 7 5 4 7 5 7 2 0 0 F 1 8 7 3 2 7 5 0 4 7 5 7 4 7 5 H 1 8 7 3 2 9 2 5 4 7 5 7 4 5 0
See item #7	
List all states and counties for properties overlap	pping state or county boundaries county code
state NA code	county code
11. Form Prepared By	courty
mame/title Marcia M. Cini, Project Direct Di	ctor, and Project Staff date May 1984
street & number Box 79	telephone (603) 927-3334
city or town Harrisville	state NH 03450
12. State Historic Prese	rvation Officer Certification
The evaluated significance of this property within the sta	ate is:
national state	local
	r the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89- e National Register and certify that it has been evaluated e National Park Service.
State Historic Preservation Officer signature	
itle	date
For NPS use only	
I hereby certify that this property is included in the	e National Register
	date
Keeper of the National Register	
Attest:	date
Chief of Registration	

OMB No. 1024-0018 Expires 10-31-87

United States Department of the InteriorNational Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only received date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 4

Page

CHESHAM VILLAGE DISTRICT: DWNERS LIST, ALPHABETICAL

PROPERTY OWNER	ADDRESS	SITE #	HISTORIC NAME
BEMIS, MRS. R. B. BEMIS, MS. M. BROUILLETTE, MR. & MRS. R. FRAZIER, MR. & MRS. J. D. HARRISVILLE, TOWN OF HASTINGS, MR. & MRS. J. HASTINGS, MR. & MRS. J. HISTORIC HARRISVILLE, INC. McGRATH, MR. R.	RFD CHESHAM, MARLBOROUGH, N.H. 03455 BOX 34, HARRISVILLE, N.H. 03450 RFD CHESHAM, MARLBOROUGH, N.H. 03455 RFD CHESHAM, MARLBOROUGH, N.H. 03455 BOX 79, HARRISVILLE, N.H. 03450 RFD4, BOOT POND RD., PLYMOUTH, MA 02360	CVD-02 CVD-05 CVD-01 CVD-10 CVD-03 CVD-06 CVD-07 CVD-08 CVD-08	BAPTIST PARSONAGE BETSEY WILLARD COTTAGE LYMAN CULVER HOUSE CASPER C. BEMIS HOUSE RIVERSIDE CEMETERY R. B. BEMIS CHICKEN OFFICE JOSIAH KNIGHT HOUSE CHESHAM RAILROAD STATION CHESHAM STORE
ROBINSON, MR. & MRS. K.	RFD CHESHAM, MARLBOROUGH, N.H. 03455	CVD-09	GEORGE F. BEMIS HOUSE

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United States Department of the InteriorNational Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only received date entered

Continuation sheet

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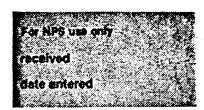
Page

CHESHAM VILLAGE DISTRICT: DWNERS LIST, BY SITE NUMBER

SITE #	PROPERTY OWNER	ADDRESS	HISTORIC NAME
CVD-01 CVD-02 CVD-03 CVD-04 CVD-05	BROUILLETTE, MR. & MRS. R. BEMIS, MRS. R. B. HARRISVILLE, TOWN OF MCGRATH, MR. R.	RFD CHESHAM, MARLBOROUGH, N.H. 03455 RFD CHESHAM, MARLBOROUGH, N.H. 03455 BOX 34, HARRISVILLE, N.H. 03450 RFD4, BOOT POND RD., PLYMOUTH, MA 02360	LYMAN CULVER HOUSE BAPTIST PARSONAGE RIVERSIDE CEMETERY CHESHAM STORE
CVD-05 CVD-07 CVD-08 CVD-09 CVD-10	BEMIS, MS. M. HASTINGS, MR. & MRS. J. HASTINGS, MR. & MRS. J. HISTORIC HARRISVILLE, INC. ROBINSON, MR. & MRS. K. FRAZIER, MR. & MRS. J. D.	RFD CHESHAM, MARLBOROUGH, N.H. 03455 RFD CHESHAM, MARLBOROUGH, N.H. 03455 RFD CHESHAM, MARLBOROUGH, N.H. 03455 BOX 79, HARRISVILLE, N.H. 03450 RFD CHESHAM, MARLBOROUGH, N.H. 03455 RFD CHESHAM, MARLBOROUGH, N.H. 03455	BETSEY WILLARD COTTAGE R. B. BEMIS CHICKEN OFFICE JOSIAH KNIGHT HOUSE CHESHAM RAILROAD STATION GEORGE F. BEMIS HOUSE CASPER C. BEMIS HOUSE

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet Description

Item number

Page

7.2

The Chesham store (CVD-4) of the third quarter of the 19th century sits abandoned just north of the Betsey Willard House. Its pronounced cornice and corner pilasters mark the 2-1/2 story frame building as yet another familiar example of local Greek Revival vernacular.

One of the Chesham District houses (CVD-9, 1875, with major additions in 1883, the George R. Bemis House) represents a number of locally popular building traditions: 1-1/2 story temple form sidehall plan very late Greek Revival (cf. CVD-2 and PD-19) main house and ell with single dormer and porch joined at right angles to which was later added an attached building and barn to expand the property's uses to include a livery stable.

The most distinguished building in the Chesham District both architecturally and in its contribution to community life is the 1879 Chesham Station (CVD-8) of the Manchester and Keene Railroad. One of the three best presented Stick Style buildings in Harrisville (cf. the barn at SHD-2 and SLD-38 at nearby Silver Lake), it is also the better preserved of the two surviving stations (cf. HVD-1, the Harrisville village station). Its fishscale shingles, broad overhanging roof supported by large arched braces and the decorative brackets in the gable end are more representative of the stylistic importance given to rural railroad stations of the period than they are of other Harrisville buildings. The transition of Chesham's role from that of a farming community to that of the transportation hub for western Harrisville and Dublin summering areas is symbolized by this building. (Note as well the survival of its section house, now moved to the rear lot of CVD-2).

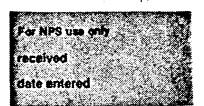
The ensuing renewal of civic vitality in late 19th _{Century} Chesham also results in its enrichment with at least two amenities which continue to reflect local pride and civic consciousness:

- 1. The granite "Pro Bono Publico" watering trough at the base of the Silver Lake Road hill (now used as a planter) and
- 2. The Riverside Cemetery, established in 1873 on land on the south side of Chesham Road given by David Willard (of CVD-7). It is shaded by four rows of Large maples behind cast iron fencing in a handsome fleur-de-lis design, Harrisville's only surviving example of this type of fencing.

The simple frame foursquare house of Casper Bemis, Chesham postmaster, (CVD-10) reflects a continuation of civic identity into the early 20th century in a residence which has several stylistic counterparts in Harrisville (cf. HVD-74 in Harrisville village.)

United States Department of the InteriorNational Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet

Description

Item number

Page 7.3

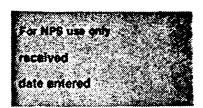
Structures Contributing to the Significance of the Chesham District: The Lyman Culver House

- CVD-1 (on the north side of Harrisville Road): An 1854 vernacular clapboard Greek Revival dwelling characterized by a very broad gable end (similar to the Calvin Smith House, Pottersville District). The house sits on a sight rise above the road with its gable end to the street. The recessed central door is 6 panels covered with a modern storm/screen door. Twelve sidelights surround the door opening (6 on each side)

 A 1-1/2 story ell extends east from the main house with a large wooden deck on the front facade: a secondary sliding glass door entrance is accessable from this deck. All windows are 6/6; two on the ell have been modified to a larger size. Roof is simple peak, asphalt shingled; one dormer window pierces the ell roof. A rectangular two-car garage with gambrel roof and 6/6 windows is situated northeast of the main house.
- The Ralph Bemis House (on the south side of Harrisville Road west of CVD-1): A 1-1/2 story clapboard temple form Greek Revival residence built in 1858 as the area parsonage. The off-center entrance in the gable end of the building has a Victorian windowed door covered with a wooden combination storm/screen door. All windows are 2/2; roof is asphalt shingled and pierced by 2 shed dormer windows. An ell extension attached the rear of the house has a three-bay shed dormer on the west side above a large, square, screened-in porch. A 1-1/2 story clapboarded rectangular chicken house, a one story small rectangular barn, a small one room, one story clapboarded office building are situated to the east and south of the main house complex. Situated in the middle of open pasture and fields.
- CVD-3 Riverside Cemetery (on the south side of Harrisville Road just east of (CVD-2): a maple shaded burying ground established in 1873 as the final resting place for members of prominent local families. Its most important physical feature is a handsome cast iron fence in a fleur-de-lis pattern.
- CVD-4 Chesham Store (on Silver Lake Road north of CVD-5): A dilapidated 2-1/2 story clapboarded temple form Greek Revival commercial structure built ca. 1860; situated very close to Silver Lake Road. Two doors with window and 2 small panels below pierce the front facade. A small shed like roof the length of the facade projects over the first story doors and window openings. Windows are 2/2; the gable roof is ashpalt shingles.
- CVD-5 Betsey Willard House (on the northeast corner of the intersection of Old Roxbury, Silver Lake, and Harrisville Roads): A 1-1/2 story vernacular clapboard cape with one-story ell extension off the north facade. Built in 1846 this house has its main entrance off the east side of the ell. Small cornice returns are located on each gable end, windows are 2/2, located in two pairs on the street facades. A shed dormer pierces the north roof. Side entrance door is covered with pik stered portico.

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet Description

Item number

Page 7.4

A two-car, one story clapboard garage is situated just east of the house.

- CVD-7 Josiah Knight Homestead (on the northwest corner of Silver Lake Road, Chesham Road and Old Roxbury Road interestion): Built in 1837, this center entrance clapboarded 5-bay cape has been expanded to the west with a series of ells and barns which overwhelm the main 1-1/2 story house. The house has simple gabled roof and central chimney. Windows are 2/2, four sidelights and lower panels surround the door. A 1-story ell exterior to the west has full length screened in porch and asymmetrical shed dormer on the south facade. A 1-story clapboarded shed with center wooden unpaneled door and asymm. shed dormer on roof connects two large barns with the house and ell. Both barns are unstained, vertically sided rectangular 2-story structures, the western most barn is "L" fashion to the rest of the house complex. A small one story, one room rectangular office building sits north of the house complex on Silver Lake Road.
- CVD-8 The Chesham Station (on the south side of Old Roxbury Road west of its intersection with Silver Lake and Harrisville Roads): an 1879 Stick style station with surviving fishscale shingles and decorative brackets in its gable ends.
- CVD-9 George Bemis House (on the southeast corner on the intersection of Old Roxbury, Silver Lake and Harrisville Roads): A large 2-story temple form Greek Revival house built in 1875. Main house is oriented gable end to Silver Lake Road with a side entrance, side hall plan. Windows are 2/2. A one-story ell with two gabled dormers and second entrance is situated on the south side of the main house under a small overhanging roof. Ell extends one room deep beyond the east side of the main house. Series of four rectangular gabled roof barns are connected to the ell.
- CVD-10 Casper Bemis House (east side of Chesham Road): A 1911 Colonial Revival 2-story building with foursquare plan and hip roof. Windows are mostly 2/2 some, especially on the first floor, are oversized. A wide porch runs the legth of the street facade with a central triangular pediment in roof imitating the peak of the hip roof on the main house. The central oversized door has one window and panelling beneath a small one-story garage . is located on the south side of the basement level.

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United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

Sational Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only received date entered

Continuation sheet

Significance

Item number

Page CVD 8.2

his house lot to serve as a storage shed. Since 1978, the station itself has been the headquarters of Finestkind Timber Frames, Inc., builders of post and beam houses and barns.

A central unifying theme which has persisted throughout Chesham's century and a half of adaptability has been its close association with the Bemis family. Family members have owned seven of the village's major buildings (all but CVD-1) over many decades and built two of them (CVD-10 and 9). The Knight Farm (CVD-7) owned by Bemises for over a century, was at one time the home of Samuel Dana Bemis, in Harrisville's first group of three selectmen, an office he held for 40 years, and Bernard F. Bemis, selectman for 35 years. Bemis brothers ran the store (CVD-4) which included the post office, for many years.

A livery stable was operated by George F. Bemis at(CVD9) in the late 19th century. Casper Bemis' house(CVD10) was specifically built to provide space which would allow him to fulfill his duties as Chesham postmaster, a position he held from 1902 to at least 1920.

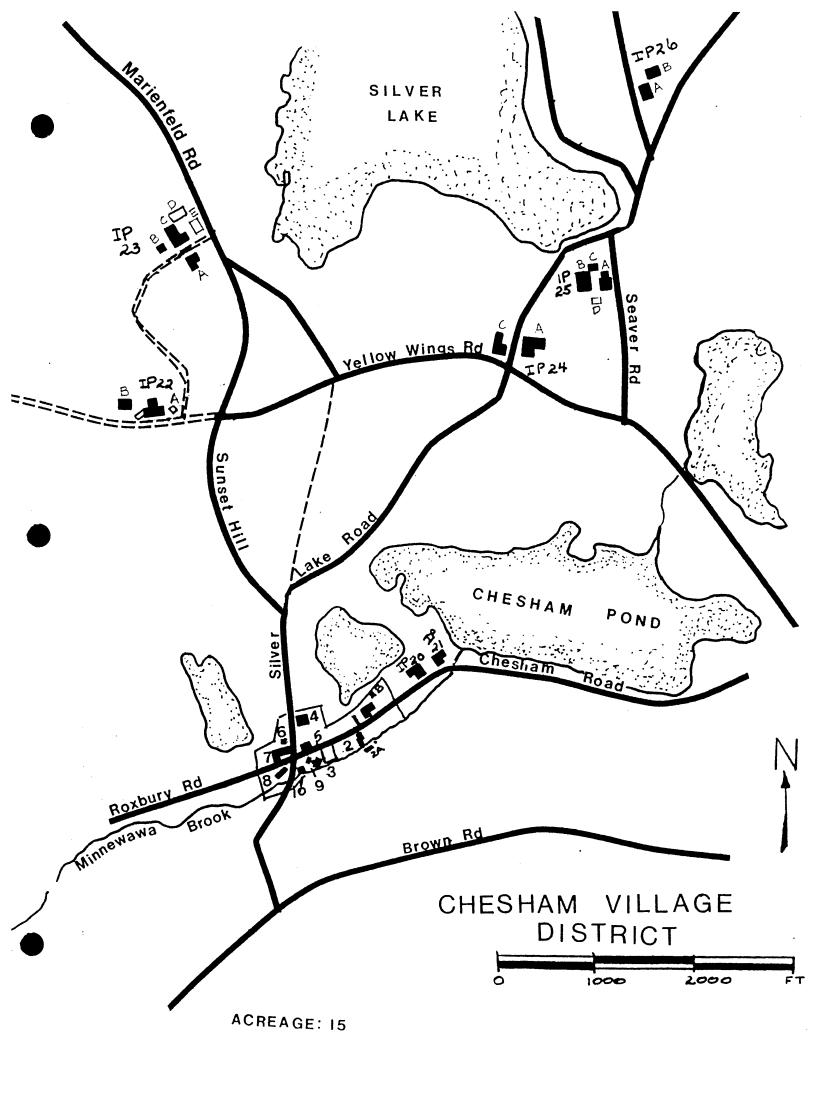
Riverside Cemetery (CVD3) which is still in use, has been the traditional final resting place for members of the Bemis family as well as for other locally prominent citizens including Willards, Masons, Symonds and Hastings.

C. Verbal Boundary Description

The eastern boundary of the Chesham Village District begins at the eastern intersection of a stone wall marking the east property line of R. Bemis (CVD-2) and the Chesham Road. It continues south along this property line to where it intersects the Minnewawa Brook, it then follows the brook to the west where it continues under the Silver Lake Road and continues west marking the southern border of the lot owned by Historic Harrisville on which sits the Chesham Depot (CVD-8) The western boundary follows the property line north from the brook to the Old Roxbury Road. It crosses the road diagonally to join the southeast corner of the Hastings (CVD-7) property line and follows it on a northeasterly direction to the Silver Lake Road. It then goes north on the Silver Lake Road to a point 150' north of the Store(CVD-4). It continues east following the northerly property lines of Peterson (CVD5) and Brouilette (CVD1) to a point 100' across the Chesham Road to the stonewall first mentioned.

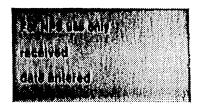
D. District Boundary Justification

The Chesham Village District boundaries encompass the furthest extent of this nuclear settlement's 19th century development which still retains cohesiveness and integrity stimulated by the arrival of railroad service in 1880. The growth of this village is reflected in its district boundaries which follow property ownership lines and include no intrusions.



United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet Description

Item number

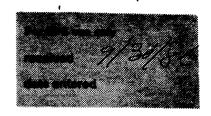
Page

Individual Properties IP-20 through TP-26

There are 14 contributing buildings and 5 non-contributing buildings in these properties.

United States Department of the InteriorNational Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet

Item number

Page

Multiple Resource Area Thematic Group dnr-11

9	State	Cheshire County, NEW	HAMPSHIRE //		Valleda A. C. T.
			Substantive Revie	nu	TOWNON HANNIN 1/(4)9
,	Nomi	nation/Type of Review			Date/Signature
	1.	Beech Hill Summer Home District	Substantive Herier &	Keeper	Patrick Ward Andres
		2232233		Attest	Both Javole
:	2.	Chesham Village Dîstrict	Markonal negista	Keeper	Selmer Byen,
			Ban spile in	Attest	
:	3.	Eaton, Moses, Jr.,	in the second of the second of	_N Keeper	Patiels Andur 1/14/6
		House	V	Attest	Both Survey 1/16
V Z	4.	Gilchrest Homestead 🗸	Substantive Review	, Keeper	Patrick Andrews 1/14/
			·	Attest	Bethe surve 1/19
;	5.	Glenchrest /	Substitutive Reviews	į	Patrib Andres 1/14/88
				Attest	Ref Swige 1/1
er e	5.	Harrisville Rural Distric	Substantive Review	Keeper	J. Roger 2-18-
	•		Million American A Co. VIII. A. T. C. E.	Attest	
7	7.	Pottersville District	intered in the		Helow Byes
				Attest	
8	3.	Silver Lake District	MARKA IN WAS	Keeper	Silver By 1
				Attest	_
ç	9.	Stationmaster's House √	exectentive devices	Keeper	Pateido Andres 1/4/80
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. 1	١٥.	Townsend, Jabez, House	41	Keeper (Patrick Andres 1/14/58
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