

PH0000 914

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Connecticut	
COUNTY: New London	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER 71-70-09-0017	DATE 10/14/71

**1. NAME**

COMMON: Old Lyme Historic District

AND/OR HISTORIC:

**2. LOCATION**

STREET AND NUMBER: Lyme Street from Shore Road to Sill Lane; Old Boston Post Road from Sill Lane to Rose Lane

CITY OR TOWN: Old Lyme

STATE Connecticut	CODE 09	COUNTY: New London	CODE 011
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**3. CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ _____ _____

**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

OWNER'S NAME: Public and private

STREET AND NUMBER: Lyme Street

CITY OR TOWN: Old Lyme      STATE: Connecticut      CODE: 09

**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: Memorial Town Hall

STREET AND NUMBER: Lyme Street

CITY OR TOWN: Old Lyme      STATE: Connecticut      CODE: 09

**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE OF SURVEY: Connecticut Historic Structures and Landmarks Survey

DATE OF SURVEY: 1966       Federal       State       County       Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Connecticut Historical Commission

STREET AND NUMBER: 54 Pratt Street

CITY OR TOWN: Hartford      STATE: Connecticut      CODE: 09

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE:

COUNTY:

ENTRY NUMBER

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71-70-09-0017 10/14/71

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Old Lyme was settled in 1647 or 1648 and until 1857 was known as Lyme. The historic district runs the length of the town's main street, known as Lyme Street, and a very short distance along the Old Boston Post Road, a total of approximately a mile and a half. At the southerly end, facing the street, is a distinguished Greek Revival residence, the Marvin-Griffin House (see photo). Diagonally across is the McCurdy House, a fascinating composite structure built in 1754, where both Washington and Lafayette were guests. At the northerly end where Lyme Street divides into Sill Lane and the Old Boston Post Road is a modern house in the Colonial style. On the westerly or Sill Lane side is a handsome modified Greek Revival house of 1858. Within this district are 71 structures: 8 date from 1700 to 1800; 9 from 1801 to 1820; 11 from 1821 to 1850; 7 from 1851 to 1875; 15 from 1876 to 1900; 21 from 1901. From the 1700's through the mid-19th century, sea captains, shipbuilders, and merchants built houses along Lyme Street, many of which are among the finest in Connecticut as well as in Old Lyme. Fire and time have taken their toll but many houses still remain, and as civic needs grew, new buildings were accommodated in a homogeneous manner. The World War I Memorial Town Hall (1920) is next to the historic Justin Smith House of the early 1700's (see photo). The Phoebe Noyes Griffin Library, built in the Carnegie style of the 1890's on the corner of Library Lane and Lyme Street, is opposite the 1790 Maxon House (see photo). The Elementary School, diagonally across from the Town Hall, built in 1934 of fieldstone, brick, and wood trim, blends harmoniously with old structures.

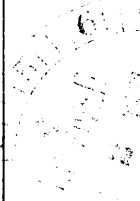
Master builder, shipwright, architect Colonel Samuel Belcher in 1817 designed three structures in Old Lyme: the John Sill House; the William Noyes House, now known as the Florence Griswold House; and the Fourth Meeting House, which was destroyed by fire in 1907. Its replica, built in 1913, now the Congregational Church, stands today at the south-erly end of the district (see photos).

Renowned architect Alexander Jackson Davis, designer of Lyndhurst-on-Hudson, a National Trust property, designed the Bartlett House in his 'country cottage' style. This house, set well back, faces Belcher's John Sill House. The second house built for William Noyes is the head-quarters for Lyme Historical Society-Florence Griswold Association and housed at the turn of the century such famous artists as Childe Hassam, William Metcalf, Henry W. Ranger, and such distinguished guests as Woodrow Wilson and his family.

Some other buildings are the Lyme Art Association, designed by Charles A. Platt in 1920, a few small stores dating from earlier days, an imposing residence of 1842 built by the Griswold family of clipper ship fame - "no loss and all gain" - and now converted into apartments by the land-owning branch of the Griswold family.

Route I-95 cuts a four-lane swath through a portion of Lyme Street adjacent to Belcher's John Sill House and only two properties away from his Florence Griswold House. This is the major damage the area has suffered.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



**3. SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |                                       |  |                                       |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century  | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century |                                       |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |                                      |  |  |
|--|--------------------------------------|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal              | <input type="checkbox"/> Education   | <input type="checkbox"/> Political           | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric             | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic                | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry    | <input type="checkbox"/> Science             | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture             | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention   | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture           | _____                                    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape   | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____                                    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Art          | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature  | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater             | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce                | <input type="checkbox"/> Military    | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation      | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications          | <input type="checkbox"/> Music       |  | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation            |                                      |  | _____                                    |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Old Lyme is situated at the mouth of the Connecticut River on Long Island Sound, giving it a unique setting with a long and varied shoreline, many tidal marshes, and extensive open land. These very attractions threaten the town with incongruous development. Within the established historic district of Old Lyme, the main street has retained many agreeable characteristics now difficult to find even in historic New England. Nevertheless, the pressures for change in an age when decisions are made without careful evaluation are increasing.

The historic district shows a remarkable continuity from village life of the earliest pre-Revolutionary years to the present day. It is a compact area of 71 structures within which architectural growth is reflected in a wide range of historical needs.

Adjacent to the man-made setting of the district is the still unspoiled Lieutenant River. For two centuries a center of shipbuilding, it figures prominently in the history of the town. Today the river's tidal marshes remain a haven for birds, fish, and wildlife. The Old Lyme Conservation Trust, Inc., founded in 1966, is acquiring wetlands of its marshes for their protection. Many of the properties in the district extend from Lyme Street to the river. Preservation of the center of Old Lyme complements the existing conservation program. This is still an area that has staved off the irreparable damage that is removing much that remains of our natural, cultural, and historical background. The town's long awareness of the necessity for strong stewardship for both the historical and environmental aspects of Old Lyme needs strengthening. This is especially so when the destructive forces of accelerated change are all too apparent.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Allis, Margaret: Connecticut Trilogy. G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1934  
 Barber, John Warner: Connecticut Historical Collections. E. J. Hamlen, New Haven, 1836  
 Burr, Jean Chandler: Lyme Records, 1667-1730. Pequot Press, 1968  
 Crofut, Florence S. M.: Guide to the History and the Historic Sites of Connecticut. Yale University Press, 1937  
 \_\_\_\_\_: "Lyme, a Chapter of American Genealogy". Harper's Magazine, vol. LII, February, 1878  
 James, May Hall: Educational History of Old Lyme, 1636-1935. Yale University Press for New Haven Colony Historical Society, 1939

**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	41° 20' "	72° 20' "		° ' "	° ' "	
NE	41° 20' "	72° 19' 20.4"				
SE	41° 18' 36.4"	72° 19' 20.4"				
SW	41° 18' 36.4"	72° 20' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 109

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE: Mrs. John Crosby Brown, President

ORGANIZATION: Lyme Historical Society-Florence Griswold Association

DATE: 9 April, 1971

STREET AND NUMBER: Lyme Street

CITY OR TOWN: Old Lyme

STATE: Connecticut

CODE: 09

**12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION**

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National  State  Local

Name: [Signature]  
 Title: Chairman - Connecticut Historical Commission

Date: 28 June, 1971

**NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

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

[Signature]  
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: OCT 14 1971

ATTEST:

[Signature]  
 Keeper of The National Register

Date: OCT 7 1971

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

OLD LYME QUADRANGLE

CONNECTICUT

Goose Island

Calves Island

41°20'

72°20'

72°19'20"

Lower Stillpond Mill

No 227

No 226

Light

Project Depth 15 Feet Oct. 1955

Ferry Pt.

RAYMOND E. BALDWIN BRIDGE (TOLL)

INTERCHANGE 70

Jr High Sch  
High Sch  
Old Lyme

POHANGES Ferry

Toll Gate

Chadwick

Lieutenant

Duck River Cem.

Springdale Pond

Piles

Piles

41°18'36.4"

Rugged

NEW YORK

72°19'20.1"

Joannyake Hill

MIDDLESEX CO  
NEW LONDON CO

N

Lyme Station

Old Lyme Country Club

BM 24

Black Hall

St Anns Ch.

NEW HAVEN

Town Landing

Smiths Neck

41°17'30"

72°20'

Back River  
Island

Pile  
Gibraltar Rocks

St Anns Ch. ROAD

River

Tidal Flat

rth Cove

Saybrook Point

Saybrook 2

Saybrook