

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received AUG 28 1984
date entered SEP 27 1984

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

1. Name

historic Fox Hall

and/or common Fox Hall

2. Location

street & number ^{VT 55} Off Town Highway #4 N/A not for publication

city, town Westmore N/A vicinity of

state Vermont code 50 county Orleans code 019

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	N/A in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Mr. and Mrs. John Harter

street & number 276 Hathaway La.

city, town Wynnewood N/A vicinity of state PA

5. Location of Legal Description

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

street & number N/A

city, town Westmore state VT

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title None has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date federal state county local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

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

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Fox Hall and its accompanying icehouse were built c. 1900 as part of a summer estate on a rolling, windswept upland overlooking Willoughby Lake in Westmore, Vt. Prominently sited on a ledge outcropping on the northwest shore of the lake, the style of the 2½ story wood frame mansion (#1) derives from the transitional Shingle style resort architecture of McKim, Mead and White of the mid 1880's. Articulated in a modified Norman style with certain Colonial Revival characteristics, the cohesive, symmetrical mass is comprised of a 2½ story gambrel roofed main block with a gambrel wall dormer and twin semicircular corner towers on the front facade, a balustraded veranda, and twin 1½ story, gambrel roofed rear ells. The former icehouse (#2) is a simple 1½ story, gable roofed structure with an enclosed gable roofed entrance porch and square ridge cupola. The two buildings retain their original architectural integrity, with minor alterations primarily at the rear of the house dating from the early quarter of the century.

The form and massing of Fox Hall (#1) reveal a clear geometric order of well balanced proportions. The mansion has clapboard siding, a standing seam metal roof and is set on a combination of ledge outcroppings and a cut granite/rubble wall foundation. A sloping access lined with cut granite walls provides access to the cellar on the southeast facade. Painted white with green trim, the original color scheme was a creamy yellow with white trim and dark, perhaps green, louvered wood shutters. The roof was originally covered with wood shingles.

The complexity of the roofline is given coherence by the symmetry of the forms. The roofs of the three gambrel facades of the main block are distinguished by a modified jerkin head at the peak which forms an angular projection that is visually supported by three molded rafter tails. The twin, semi-circular corner towers have flared domical caps. A large, plain, rectangular brick chimney stack rises from the ridge of the center front gambrel wall dormer. Smaller twin stacks of similar form rise on the exterior rear of the corner towers where the first story of the gambrel end is recessed. These are corbelled out at the second story and pierce the wide overhanging eaves on each end of the gambrel roof of the main block. A plain brick exterior chimney rises from the rear of the northwest gambrel ell. A circular metal ventilation cupola pierces the rear slope of the main gambrel roof. Shed roofed dormers project from the northwest and southeast facades, located on the lower slopes of the gambrel roofs of the rear ells.

The wide eaves overhang is articulated with a frieze and a molded cornice, while plain cornerboards and a molded watertable further distinguish the house. The eaves moldings of the rear ells are continued as string courses across the gambrel ends of the main block, as well as across the rear gambrel ends of the ells. Sash is 1/1 throughout and has architrave trim, with the scale and combination of openings varying symmetrically on the various facades. Variations of the standard fenestration include: a blind oval oculus centered on the second story of the front facade, twin single sash windows just below the rafter tails of the attic story gambrel

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ends of the main block, and two small rectangular openings with single sash on the southeast facade of the main block.

The balustraded verandas not only provide access to the three entrances of the main block and the two of the rear, but also serve to control and harmonize the various bays and projections of the mansion. Visually and functionally unified by the porches, the otherwise separate blocks of varying shapes become part of a symmetrical balanced unit. The details of the verandas are the same: the balustrade is formed by square posts with molded tops and square balusters with a single center bead; the apron is composed of vertical slats, some wider vertical members corresponding to the posts of the balustrade and a wider horizontal band articulating the center. The center front of the veranda which wraps around the three facades of the main block is sheltered by a shed roof on plain posts with beaded sheathing on the ceiling. Under it is sheltered a projecting entrance vestibule which has a door with sidelights on its front facade and identical lights on the narrow side facades. The panel details of the door are repeated on a narrower scale in the sidelights: a long vertical light has a small rectangular cross panel above and below, all of which are set in bolection molding. The portion of the veranda which wraps across the recessed side facade of the main block provides access to the tower entrances sheltered there. A stairway ascends directly to the recessed portion of the porch on the southeast facade, while that on the northwest is located on the rounded portion of the veranda at the corner tower. The tower doors have panels set in bolection molding, as that of the principal entrance, but they have a different configuration: a large square light with three rectangular cross panels below. The porch at the rear is entirely sheltered by a shed roof and has steps on the northwest side and southwest rear. The porch extends from the rear of the northwest ell and across the shed roofed enclosed entrance hall that joins the first stories of the two rear ells.

Various minor alterations were made to the mansion after its construction. The grand exterior staircase which rose in several flights over the ledge at the front of the house was removed sometime in the middle of this century. The stairways to the recessed portions of the veranda on the side facades of the main block were originally symmetrical: that on the northwest facade was changed to the tower location c. 1930. A shed roofed bathroom appearing in pictures of c. 1930 was added above the porch of the northwest rear ell. The rear entrance to the main block between the rear ells was originally recessed but open: the shed roof was later extended to form an entrance hall which was then enclosed.

The simplicity of the symmetrical massing of Fox Hall is a straightforward expression of the interior plan. The large central chimney mass defines the first floor plan of the main block and provides fireplaces to three of the rooms: a small central entrance vestibule opens into a dining room on the northwest with a breakfast nook in the tower, and into a livingroom on the southeast with a study in the tower. The entrance hall, dining room, livingroom and two tower rooms have fireplaces. The kitchen,

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pantry, butler's pantry and service stairways are located in the northwest rear ell, while a bedroom, bathroom and storage area are located in the southeast. An enclosed central rear entrance hall between the two ells was originally part of an open recessed loggia. The open stairwell in the rear of the parlor rises to the second floor in three flights of stairs with two landings. The second floor has eight bedrooms and three baths arranged along a U-shaped interior hallway. A large glass trap door leads to the attic where evidence of a skylight exists. A large water holding tank is located in a room in the southeast gambrel end of the attic.

Interior finish is rough patterned plaster walls, varnished fir moldings, and finished narrow board floors. Most interior doors are varnished with two raised vertical panels above one cross panel and two small vertical panels and with ornate brass knobs. Bedrooms have transoms with molded cornices over the entrances. Those not opening directly into a bathroom are furnished with marble sinks. Molding is generally plain, with corner-blocks with patera at the corners of window and door surrounds. The portions of the molded baseboards at the bases of the door moldings form a separate "base" defined by two bands of triple beads with an inverted cornice molding forming the transition to the door enframements. Fireplace surrounds are identical and consist of a rectangular brick opening and hearth, with the wood mantelpiece having side strips with a triple bead band and chamfered edges, and simple curved brackets in the frieze that support a molded cornice mantel shelf. The front hall is paneled entirely with varnished narrow beaded boarding: a molded baseboard has vertical board wainscoting above, a molded chair rail has horizontal boarding above, a plate rail has diagonal boarding above, with a molded cornice and horizontal ceiling boarding completing the geometric design. The dining room features vertical board molded wainscoting with molded chair rails and baseboards. The living room is plastered and has molded baseboards. The stairway at the rear of the living room features an ornate, heavily turned newel post, a molded handrail, turned balusters with square portions at the top, center and bottom, and vertical beaded board wainscoting with molded baseboards and chair rails.

Interior alterations include a wall added to divide the former kitchen roughly in half, a glass and wood wall added to divide the dining room from its adjoining tower room, and an exterior wall and shed roof enclosing the central rear entrance vestibule.

The original icehouse (#2) is a 1½ story, frame structure of c. 1900 resting on concrete cornerblocks with clapboard siding and an asphalt shingle gable roof. The facade is distinguished by plain cornerboards, a frieze and a molded box cornice with returns on the gable ends. Sash is 6/6 with plain trim. A gable roofed enclosed entrance porch provides access to the 1 x 2 bay structure. A square cupola with a bellcast hip roof and lightening rod is set on the ridge of the roof.

A 1½ story horsebarn with gambrel design echoing that of Fox Hall

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was formerly located to the northwest rear of the mansion. A variety of small cabins array the fields surrounding the mansion and date from c. 1921 when the estate became a girls' summer camp. These structures are generally in poor condition and several are proposed for demolition or removal. As they are outside the period of significance of the two original structures, they are not included in the nomination.

8. Significance

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

Specific dates c. 1900

Builder/Architect not known

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Fox Hall is a good example of transitional Shingle style/Colonial Revival resort architecture that was practiced at the turn of the twentieth century. It is especially noteworthy in the context of the very rural, rugged terrain characteristic of Westmore, where it is the only large mansion in a mountainous setting populated by vernacular hill farms and twentieth century summer camps. Together with the icehouse of the same vintage, the preservation of the original grand setting and architectural integrity is fortuitous in light of the recent development of the nearby lake frontage.

The lands incorporated as the town of Westmore remained a "very back and out of the way place" until the late nineteenth century, when the above observation was made. The population increased from 122 in 1840² to 480 in 1880³ due mainly to the construction in 1852 of a north-south road along the steep slopes of the eastern shore of Willoughby Lake. The road made through travel possible and served to induce new settlement. The post village of Westmore grew up along the opposite shore of Willoughby Lake from Fox Hall where the road was located. In 1883 a small hotel, a store, two saw mills and a whetstone factory were located there.⁴ A smaller town center developed a short distance north along the road where, at the end of the nineteenth century and during the early twentieth century, a church, town hall and town office building were constructed.

The erection of Fox Hall c. 1900 marks the beginning of the development of the Willoughby Lake area as a summer resort. The land on which the house stands was part of a farm owned by Eugene Beck, who sold the property to Sarah Fox in 1886. In 1899, the mayor of Yonkers, New York, John Peene, and his wife, Ava, purchased the land. The mansion was built most probably in 1900, as the assessment on the grand list for that year tripled over that of the previous year. In subsequent years, additional property was added to the estate, until it was comprised of approximately 400 acres and had on the premises a large barn where thirty horses were kept.⁵ Two men from Derby farmed the land, living in a house about a half mile away, where there was also a large barn. The mayor, John Peene, died in 1912, and in 1919 Ava Peene "sold" the estate to Russell Bancroft, an alias assumed by an infamous swindler of the wealthy named Wilfred Bailey. Bailey never paid Mrs. Peene, and when the summer camp he started failed financially, Morris Pickel of Westmore was hired to hold possession of it. An auction of the furnishings and camp furniture helped to ward off creditors and in 1920, the mansion was rented to two men from New Hampshire who ran it as a hotel. The estate was soon sold to the Keewaydin Camp Company, which established a girls' camp Songadeewin. The property was sold to the Harter family of Philadelphia, PA in 1929, who ran Camp Songadeewin until it closed in 1975.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Child, Hamilton, Gazateer of Lamoille and Orleans Counties, Vt., 1883-84.
 Syracuse, N.Y.: The Syracuse Journal Co., 1883.
 Thompson, Zaduck, History of Vermont, Burlington, Vt.: Chauncey Goodrich, 1842.
 notes from the files of Mrs. Mabel Pickel.
 interview, Mrs. John Harter, September, 1983.

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property approximately 1 1/2

Quadrangle name Memphremagog, Vt.

Quadrangle scale 1:62500

UTM References

A

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Verbal boundary description and justification

The boundary begins at Point A, located at the intersection of a northeasterly extension of a line parallel to and 80' northwest of the northwest facade of Fox Hall and a northwesterly extension of a line parallel to and 80'

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

state	N/A	code	county	code

state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Deborah Noble, Preservation Consultant

organization KEEP IT UP ASSOCIATES date November 1983

street & number RFD Box 85 telephone (802) 695-2507

city or town Concord state VT

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

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

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer signature *Eric Robertson*

title Director, Vermont Division for Historic Preservation date July 13, 1984

For NPS use only

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

Entered in the
National Register

date 9-27-84

Joyce M. Sammons
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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Today Fox Hall and its icehouse stand as indicators of an age of opulence and optimism during which the construction of large resort residences of this type flourished. Although not now occupied, the buildings remain intact and continue to display the integrity of architecture and setting of their original period of significance at the turn of the twentieth century. Fox Hall, the icehouse and approximately fifty acres are currently for sale.

FOOTNOTES

1. Hamilton Child, Gazateer of Lamoille and Orleans Counties, Vt., 1883-1884, (Syracuse, N.Y.: The Syracuse Hournal Co., 1883), p. 288.

2. Zaduck Thompson, History of Vermont, (Burlington, Vt.: Chauncey Goodrich, 1842), p.188.

3. Child, op. cit., p. 288.

4. Ibid, p. 289.

5. Notes from the files of Mrs. Mable pidkel.

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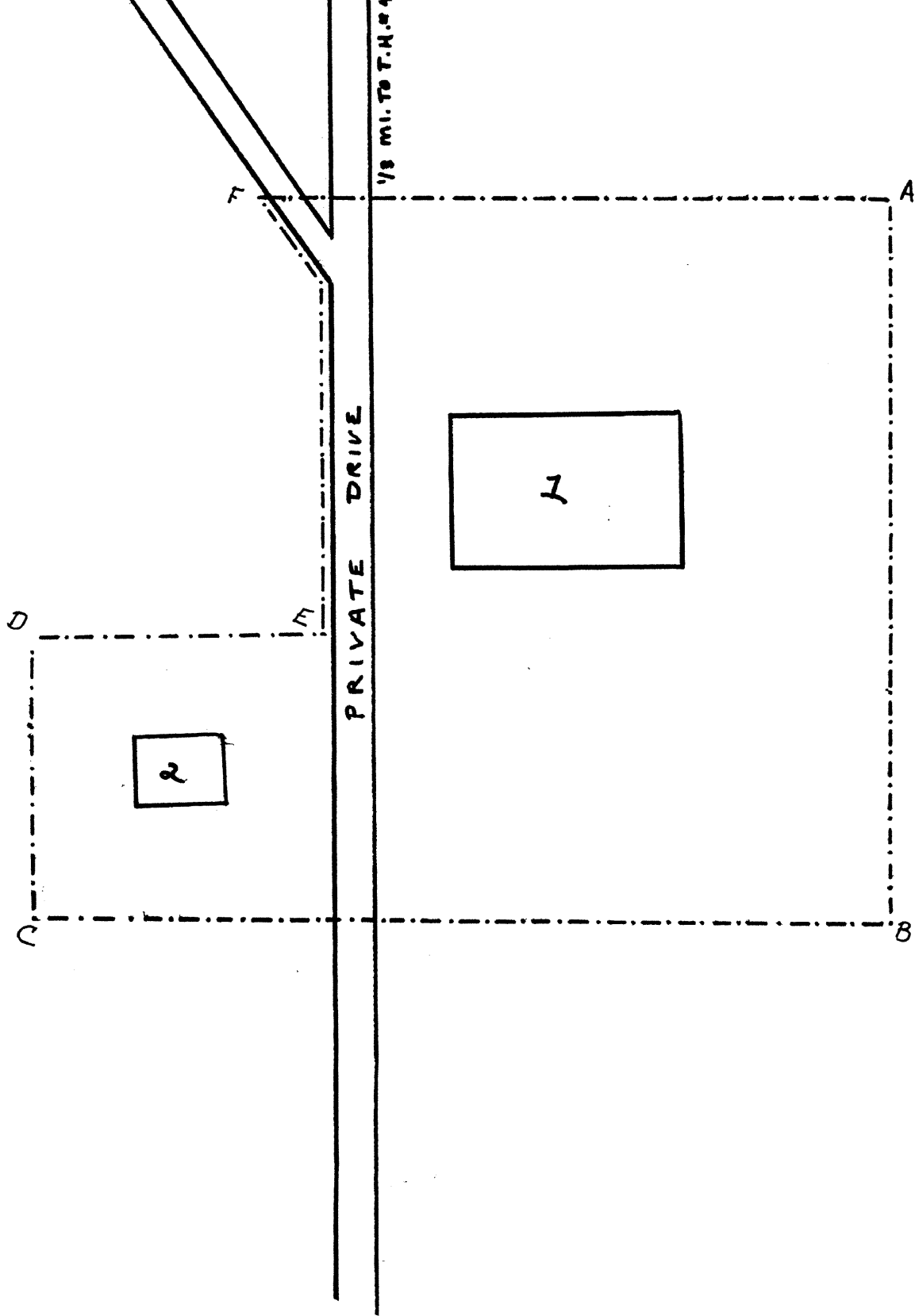
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northeast of the northeast front facade of Fox Hall (#1). It then proceeds generally southeasterly, along said extension, said line and a southeasterly extension thereof, to Point B, located at the intersection of said extension and a northeasterly extension of a line parallel to and 15' southeast of the southeast facade of the icehouse (#2). It then proceeds generally southwest, along said extension, said line and a southwesterly extension thereof, across a private drive, to Point C, located at the intersection of said extension with a southeasterly extension of a line parallel to and 15' southwest of the southwest rear facade of the icehouse. It then proceeds generally northwesterly along said extension, said line and a northwesterly extension thereof to Point D, located at the intersection of said extension with a southwesterly extension of a line parallel to and 15' northwest of the northwest facade of the icehouse. It then proceeds generally northeast along said extension, said line and a northeasterly extension thereof, to Point E, located at the intersection of said extension with a line parallel to and following the southwest edge of the private access road leading through the estate. It then proceeds generally northwest along said line to Point F, located at the intersection of said line with a southwesterly extension of a line parallel to and 80' northwest of the northwest facade of Fox Hall (#1). It then proceeds generally northeast along said extension, said line and a northeasterly extension thereof to Point A, the point of beginning.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The nominated property includes the open land immediately surrounding the historic structures and is sufficient to convey their context as well as to protect them. An array of deteriorated camp cabins which are proposed for demolition and/or removal is not included with the boundary as the cabins are outside of the period of significance of Fox Hall and the icehouse.



FOX HALL
WESTMORE, VERMONT
September 1983