

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED  
DATE ENTERED  
MAR 8 1982  
APR 12 1982

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

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC Peck Tavern

AND/OR COMMON  
Peck Tavern

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER 1 Sill Lane N/A NOT FOR PUBLICATION  
CITY, TOWN Old Lyme N/A VICINITY OF 3rd CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT  
STATE Connecticut CODE 09 COUNTY New London CODE 011

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input 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	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> 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
	N/A	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME Robert N. and Doris E. Einig  
STREET & NUMBER 1 Sill Lane  
CITY, TOWN Old Lyme N/A VICINITY OF Connecticut STATE

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Town Clerk of Old Lyme  
STREET & NUMBER Lyme Street  
CITY, TOWN Old Lyme Connecticut STATE

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE State Register of Historic Places  
DATE 1975  FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL  
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS Connecticut State Historical Commission  
CITY, TOWN Hartford Connecticut STATE

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

---

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Peck Tavern is situated in the Town of Old Lyme at the northernmost end of Lyme Street, the major street of the village. Lyme Street runs roughly north-south, with the village center located at the southern end, approximately one mile south of the tavern. Lyme Street has a formal character, with eighteenth- and nineteenth-century homes well set back from the street on large lots. The broad lawns with formal plantings are often set off by picket or iron fences or trimmed hedges.

The Peck Tavern is located in the triangle at the northern terminus of Lyme Street, where the old Boston Post Road continues to the northeast and Sill Road runs northwest. The former was the major road east through Waterford to New London, and the latter was the major eighteenth-century road north.

The southernmost part of the triangle is a small park enclosed by trees on all sides and maintained by the Town of Old Lyme. Near the southeastern edge of the park is a stone milestone marker with the legend: 14 M NL. Immediately to the north begins the property legally associated with the tavern. It is lined on the east and west edges by large conifers which screen the building and land from the road. The house is located near the western edge of the property, approximately forty feet from Sill Road. Immediately in front of the house, which faces south, are two large conifers and a gravel drive and turnaround. To the rear is a second driveway and small paved parking area. The turn-of-the-20th century barn, converted to a garage, has vertical sheathing and a second floor loading door. (Photograph #2) A broad lawn dotted with bushes and trees slopes gently to the Boston Post Road to the east. The northern part of the property is wooded.

The original tavern is a two-and-one-half story rectangular main block. A large two-and-one-half story wing extends to the rear (north). The wing is plain, and is relatively sympathetic in appearance to the original house. Both the main house and the wing have granite foundations.

The tavern is framed with heavy timbers and was clapboarded in stages during the twentieth century. (The building was completely shingled around 1900.) The sash are mostly early-twentieth century replacements, with the exception of those of the entrance porch and a few on the second floor and attic level.

In the center of the five-bay wide facade is an enclosed, gabled, entrance porch of two stories. (Photograph #1) The main entrance doorway with six-light transom is framed by fluted pilasters. The wide door is original with two large panels over two panels.

The house was a typical central-chimney plan, in this case with the parlor to the right of the hall, and what is believed to be the taproom to the left. Originally, there were two rooms to the rear; however, the rear east room was opened into the parlor sometime around the turn of the century. On the second floor there are two chambers on the east side and one large room opposite.

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A variety of interior finish treatments is seen, from vertical feather-edged sheathing, to plaster, to simply-or elaborately-panelled walls. These are largely original, with the exception of the tap room and new plastering, discussed below. Doors, hardware and floors are largely original throughout the house.

Entry is into a small one-story room in the porch. (Photograph #4) With the exception of the wooden baseboard, the walls have been replastered by the present owner because of severe deterioration. The corner posts are cased and have a beaded edge. The triple-run staircase has square newel posts with molded rectangular caps, molded handrail, and plain diamond-shaped balusters turned on edge. Under the stairway is a closet with a door made from old feather-edged sheathing. This door apparently provided access to old stone steps, still visible in the cellar.

To the right of the hall is the parlor. (Photograph #5 and 6) The north wall of this room has been removed, opening it up to a former small room. This in turn has been increased in size by a one-story shed-roofed addition to the east. The shed addition probably dates from the late-nineteenth century, while the glass doors are recent. The walls in the parlor are plastered; the plain molded chair-rail and baseboard were probably installed by an early-twentieth century owner. The posts and beams are all cased and have a molded or beaded edge.

The panelling of the fireplace wall is bold and rich, and is the most outstanding interior feature of the house. The upper panels are arched with a reverse curve below the arch. Half-height fluted pilasters with carved rosettes in the caps frame the fireplace. Pinwheels are carved into keystones below the crown molding. (Photograph #6) The corner posts have stop-fluting at the same level as the pilasters. The fireplace itself is brick and granite, surrounded by a plain molding and a shallow replacement mantel shelf.

The taproom to the right of the porch is finished with vertical sheathing which dates from an early or mid-twentieth century restoration. A turn-of-the-20th-century bay window opens to the west. The hand-hewn posts, beams, and square-sawn studs are exposed. The fireplace has a large granite hearth, later brick sides, and a granite back. The northern wall has an opening and swing door cut into it, as in a taproom window; however, as the work which can be seen on this is twentieth century, it is not possible to determine if the opening is original. In the taproom hangs the original tavern sign with the legend "John Peck", and a crest with a lion, three anchors, and the motto "Hope and Courage." (Photograph #7)

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Through the taproom one enters the kitchen. (Photograph #8) This room has a small, probably early addition, now an integral part of the wing to the north side. The walls of the kitchen are finished in well-crafted, vertical, feather-edged sheathing. The hand-hewn posts and beams are exposed. The fireplace is large, with a granite hearthstone and walls. Inside the fireplace to the left of the back wall is a brick beehive oven. The fireplace appears to predate most of the other interior features, and lends credence to the idea that the house was substantially enlarged from a smaller structure. In the northwest corner of this room is a corner cupboard with molded edges, and applied dentils around the square cupboard opening and two panelled doors below. The open curved shelves are simple with the exception of the lowest one which has a trefoil shape. The cupboard is probably not in its original location, and may be the cupboard mentioned in a 1913 article as being in the west second-floor chamber.

The large room on the west side of the second floor which runs the length of the house is highly unusual. In the center is a wall which is attached to the ceiling on hinges. The wall swings up to be fastened against the ceiling to create a large open space, probably for meetings and/or dances. The room to the south created when the vertically-sheathed wall is down is plastered with a dado panelling. The fireplace wall has fielded panelling, one cupboard built into the wall, and a shallow fireplace framed with a simple molding. (Photograph #9) The posts are cased, but the beams and studs are unfinished, and were not originally exposed. To the north of the swinging partition, the fireplace wall is finished with plain vertical sheathing. In this room the beam from the chimney is joined to the northeast post at a slight but definite angle, suggesting the presence of an earlier and lower roofline.

The chamber to the east of the porch has a dado panelling, plastered walls, and fireplace wall of fielded panelling with a cupboard, all similar in treatment to those of the southwest room. A small northeast chamber has been converted to a study.

The large wing (Photograph #2 and 3) probably dates from the 1930s and replaces a late-nineteenth century addition visible in early photographs. The first floor is primarily a large kitchen, and there are three bedrooms on the the second floor.

# 6 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input 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

Unknown

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

Unknown

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Peck Tavern in Old Lyme, the most important public tavern surviving intact from the eighteenth century in the town, is a significant local historical landmark (criteria A), and has a distinguished architectural character (Criteria C). The historical and architectural significance of the Peck Tavern are closely associated. It was a major stopping place on the main thoroughfare along the Long Island shore, first the Lyme-New London Road, later the Boston Post Road, and finally the New London-Lyme Turnpike. It has long been recognized locally as an important landmark, as illustrated by the Old Lyme Guild's use of the building in the early-twentieth century. Architecturally, the Peck Tavern is distinguished by fine panelling expressive of a distinct local design tradition, a two-story entrance porch, swinging chamber wall, and surviving tavern sign, features related to its role as a tavern.

In addition, the Tavern may well incorporate one of the earliest structures built in Old Lyme, as structural and documentary evidence indicate that a smaller house, probably 1-1/2 stories in height, is incorporated into the main house. A house was on this corner site as early as the 1680s, for Samuel Tinker was granted ten acres of land here in December of 1681, "provided he makes improvement of the same within a year."<sup>1</sup> In 1730 Samuel Tinker granted the same piece to his son with the "dwelling house."<sup>2</sup> This same piece was purchased with "the dwelling house now standing" by John Peck in 1769.<sup>3</sup> Tradition and stylistic evidence suggest that around this date the house then standing was substantially altered and enlarged, probably by adding a two-bay addition to the east side and raising the roof to 2-1/2 stories.

The house was used as a tavern in the second half of the eighteenth century and in the early part of the nineteenth century. Old Lyme in the late 1700s was primarily an agricultural community with a well-established West Indies trade and extensive shipbuilding. In 1765 Lyme was "one of the largest and more populous towns in Connecticut."<sup>4</sup>

1. Lyme Land Records, Book of Grants, p.22
2. Lyme Land Records, Vol. 4, p.34
3. Lyme Land Records, Vol. 14, p.467
4. Bruce P. Stark, Lyme, Connecticut: From Founding to Independence (Lyme Tercentenary Committee, 1976) p.40

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Land Records of Old Lyme, Old Lyme, CT  
 Trowbridge, Bertha Chadwick, "The Joseph Peck House," Old Houses  
 of Connecticut, Colonial Dames of America, 1913, Connecticut  
 State Library, Hartford, Connecticut  
 "Landmarks of Old Lyme, Connecticut" (Old Lyme: The Tercentenary  
 Committee of Old Lyme, 1935)

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 3.02

QUADRANGLE NAME Old Lyme, Conn.

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24000

UTM REFERENCES

A	<u>13</u>	<u>723350</u>	<u>4570630</u>	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			
E				F			
G				H			

## VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated property is a triangular-shaped piece of land comprising 3.02 acres and is designated as Parcel #1 on Map #1742 filed in the Land Records of Old Lyme and dated October 1, 1977.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE Barbara Ann Cleary

ORGANIZATION	DATE
<u>Hartford Architecture Conservancy</u>	<u>January 1980</u>
STREET & NUMBER	TELEPHONE
<u>130 Washington Street</u>	<u>(203) 525-0279</u>
CITY OR TOWN	STATE
<u>Hartford</u>	<u>Connecticut</u>

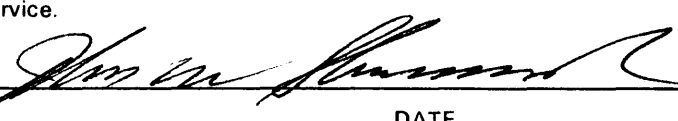
# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

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.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE



TITLE Director, Connecticut Historical Commission

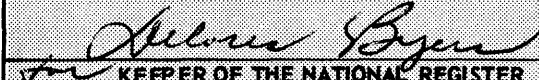
DATE February 19, 1982

## FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Entered in the  
National Register

DATE 4/2/82

  
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST:  
CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

DATE

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The Peck Tavern was favorably located at the intersection of the old road north to Hamburg, now Sill Lane, and on the east, the main road to New London, laid out in 1698. This was later part of the Boston Post Road. In 1753, Benjamin Franklin, then joint postmaster with William Hunter, passed through Lyme surveying and measuring distances for the postal route. The granite milestone with the legend 14M NL at the intersection of the two roads is supposed to date from his trip.

Strong tradition indicates that John McCurdy, who became "Lyme's best known and wealthiest merchant", operated a tavern there in the 1750s.<sup>5</sup> The Pecks probably ran a tavern in the house in the late 1760s and 1770s. Contemporary court records show that licenses for these years were issued in the name of Nathaniel Peck, perhaps a son of John Peck. Circumstantial evidence and tradition say that when John Peck and four others were constituted a committee to distribute clothes and supplies to non-commissioned officers and soldiers from Lyme, Peck's tavern was used as the distribution center. John Peck, Jr., son of John Peck, was issued licences to run a "house of Public entertainment" continuously from 1790 to at least 1803 (the date of the last available records).<sup>6</sup> Peck was also an incorporator of the New London and Lyme Turnpike, organized in 1806 - 1807, which improved parts of the Old Post Road, and conveniently ran by Peck's tavern.<sup>7</sup> It was probably also John Peck, Jr. who commissioned the sign with his name and crest which now hangs in the taproom of the tavern.

The house remained in the possession of the Peck family through five generations until 1904. During the subsequent ownership of the Beardsley family, which lasted until 1978, it was used for some years as the headquarters for the Old Lyme Guild. The Guild was organized in 1934 "as a center for the exhibition and sale of varied arts and crafts of highest possible standard, prepared in this vicinity."<sup>8</sup> Shops for cabinetmakers, bookbinders, metal workers, potters, and weavers were established in the barn. The tavern itself was used to display "the fascinating objects designed and made by men and women who are carrying on the splendid tradition of hand work in an age of quantity production by machine methods."<sup>9</sup> Devoted to a revival of Colonial handcrafts, the Old Lyme Guild self-consciously chose a local landmark with a romantic tradition as a Colonial gathering place, and hung the sign of John Peck in the front.

5. Ibid., p.50

6. New London County Court Records, Boxes 499-F and 500-F, Connecticut State Library, Hartford, Connecticut

7. New London County Court Records, XIV:14d, Connecticut State Library

8. "Landmarks of Old Lyme, Connecticut" (The Tercentenary Committee of Old Lyme, 1935), p.15

9. New London Day, August 8, 1935, p.6

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In form and construction, the tavern is typical of its period. The interior is largely original, with the exception of the restoration panelling in the tap room, and the removal of the north wall of the parlor (an early alteration).

The two-story entrance porch is an unusual feature, and gives to the building a more public appearance appropriate to its function, as well as providing a large and useful entrance hall. (Photographs #1 and 4) Similar entrance porches are seen on at least two other houses in Old Lyme on lower Lyme Street.

The interior finish of the Tavern ranges from vertical sheathing to fielded panelling, and is generally well-crafted and in good condition. The most notable interior feature is the panelling of the fireplace wall in the parlor. (Photographs #5 and 6) The work of a master craftsman, it features double-arched panels and carved rosettes and pinwheels. A few other examples of similar arched panelling are found in Essex, Saybrook, and Old Lyme, as well as in Colchester.<sup>10</sup> According to J. Frederick Kelly: "Panels with this double curve termination are not common; and such work appears without exception to have been confined to the Connecticut River Valley."<sup>11</sup>

A final unique feature, and one which more than any other expresses the building's use as a tavern, is the swinging wall in the west chamber, which lowers on hinges to create two small rooms, or raises and hooks to the ceiling to make one large open ballroom or gathering place.

The Peck Tavern has important local historical significance and distinctive architectural features. Still on its site at the juncture of two old thoroughfares, it remains the best local illustration of the "Public House" so prominent in early American life.

10. J. Frederick Kelly, Early Domestic Architecture of Connecticut (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1924), Figs. 167-169; Bertha C. Trowbridge, Old Houses of Connecticut (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1923), p. 141

11. Kelly, op.cit., p.152