

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service



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# 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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any 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 certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).

### 1. Name of Property

historic name Kuhn, Samuel and Minette House

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. Location

street & number 420 Griffins Island Road

not for publication

city or town Wellfleet

vicinity

state Massachusetts code MA county Barnstable code 001 zip code 02667

### 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 at the following level(s) of significance:

national  statewide  local

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property  meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official

Date

Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register

\_\_\_ determined eligible for the National Register

\_\_\_ determined not eligible for the National Register

\_\_\_ removed from the National Register

\_\_\_ other (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- private
- public - Local
- public - State
- public - Federal

**Category of Property**  
(Check only **one** box.)

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

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2	0	buildings
0	0	district
0	0	site
0	0	structure
0	0	object
2	0	<b>Total</b>

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

Mid-Twentieth-Century Modern Residential  
Architecture on Outer Cape Cod 1929 - 1979

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC – single dwelling  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC – single dwelling  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEMENT  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: CONCRETE  
walls: WOOD: Weatherboard  
\_\_\_\_\_  
roof: SYNTHETICS: Rubber  
other: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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### **Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

#### **Summary Paragraph**

The Samuel and Minette Kuhn House (LCS No. 757646) is a Bauhaus-inspired, Modern style vacation residence designed by Massachusetts architect Nathaniel Saltonstall in 1960 for Samuel and Minette Kuhn of New York City. The house is located in a remote section of Wellfleet, Massachusetts and is within the boundaries of the Cape Cod National Seashore. It is expressed as a low, flat-roofed rectangular form defined by square recesses, projections, and interior spaces that are proportionately manipulated within a strict orthogonal grid. The exterior has a solid, grounded appearance achieved through the structure's placement close to grade on a concrete block foundation and the use of dark-colored, diagonally laid pine sheathing boards. The interior incorporates high-quality regional materials and elements of passive solar design. The property encompasses a Saltonstall-designed garage built concurrently with the house, which contributes to its historic and architectural significance.

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### **Narrative Description**

#### **Setting**

The Kuhn property is a nearly 5-acre woodland lot located on one of four small islands in the sparsely populated west periphery of Wellfleet. The islands are arranged in a string between Wellfleet Harbor and Cape Cod Bay, and are separated by the winding course of the Herring River and Bound Brook. Duck Harbor and the outline of Bound Brook Island are visible from the roof of the Kuhn House, which is situated at the north end of Griffin's Island. Most of Wellfleet's mid-twentieth-century Modern houses are distributed between the kettle ponds and ocean at the east edge of town, with a smaller cluster on or near the islands. The Kuhn property is accessed by an approximately 150-foot-long sand driveway that extends northwest up to the house from a private road. The house is centered in the south side of the lot and is oriented facing southeast with pristine views of its unaltered forested setting in each direction. Tall scrub pine trees surround the house and the sandy terrain is covered by fallen pine needles, grass, and soft mosses. All of the vegetation on the property is native and the landscape is maintained in its natural, unaltered state. The only cleared portion of the property is the driveway, which is covered with pine needles, and several feet of land adjacent to entrances on the southeast and northeast elevations. The closest developed property to the Kuhn house is approximately one-half-mile away.

#### **Exterior**

Saltonstall's orthogonally derived Kuhn house design is expressed as a three-bay by three-bay, one-story volume fit within a plan space measuring 24 by 30 feet.<sup>1</sup> This overall plan is divided into nine rectangles, each with proportionate length and width dimensions of 8, 10, or 12 feet. The house is covered by a single, flat roof with a notched shape that extends over recessed niches and projects past the building envelope in relation to the exterior bays. The roof is built up with a rubber membrane over pine boards and is supported by 2-inch by 10-inch rafters that are exposed in the building recesses. The house is constructed of a wood platform frame with narrow walls and diagonally laid pine board sheathing, which adds strength and visual interest to the building shell. Plank trim, painted white in contrast to the darkly stained reddish-brown sheathing faces the soffits and recesses and surrounds the windows. The bright paint highlights a modular fenestration pattern, comprised of grids or stacks of rectangular wood awning sash arranged in different right-angled compositions. The grid arrangements often include a white-painted bottom panel that extends the windows to full-height. An interior brick chimney and four rectangular-plan bubble skylights rise above the roof near the center of the house.

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<sup>1</sup> The term orthogonal refers to a set of axes arranged with a right-angled relationship.



Two-thirds of the nine-square house appear as one rectangular mass with recessed edges and are set on a full concrete-block basement. The northwest (rear) third of the house is slid a few feet to the southwest of this mass, creating a more dynamic footprint through slight, perpendicular setbacks. This section of the house rests on concrete block piers and incorporates a screened-in porch and hyphen in the west corner. The facade (southeast elevation) is part of the larger rectangular volume and is defined by a 4-foot-deep, recessed central entrance. A tier of three layered platform decks ascend to a solid wood door flanked by single-pane variegated side lights. Open eaves covering the recess seamlessly continue as a narrow awning across the middle portion of the facade wall and shelter the approach to the main entrance. A single vertical stack of awning windows light the bays on either side of the main entrance.

The sides (northeast and southwest elevations) of the larger rectangular volume incorporate 2-foot-deep, full-width recesses shielded by transverse end and partition walls. These shallow walls are flush with the outer edge of the roof, but continue past the face of the foundation, floating above the ground. A secondary entrance located on the northeast elevation is accessed by an open porch set into the recess. Both side elevations contain full-height, white-painted grids of awning windows with solid bottom panels.

The northwest (rear) third of the house is set back approximately 2 feet from the northeast elevation and includes a flat, 2-foot-deep awning flanking the end of a central interior hall located opposite the main entrance. The awning abuts the edge of the screened-in porch, which projects an additional 2 feet past (northwest of) it. Saltonstall created an additional niche in the building footprint by incorporating a narrow connecting hyphen to the porch within the west square of the house. A grid of posts and muntins, painted white, divide the porch screens and continue the modular aesthetic of the elevations. The hyphen serves as a screened-in breezeway and contains a full-height screen door divided into three equal sections.

### **Interior**

The interior of the Kuhn house contains 1,834 square feet and expresses Saltonstall's nine-square plan through the axial arrangement of rectangular rooms. The main entrance provides access to an 8-foot-wide, double-loaded central corridor extending from the facade recess through to the back of the house. An open living room in the north corner of the house meets the corridor perpendicularly, forming a continuous L-shaped space. Two compact 8-foot-wide rooms flank each side of the hall, including two bedrooms to the southwest and a kitchen and former maid's room to the northeast. The kitchen is accessible from the secondary entrance and features a pass-through wall, allowing visual communication to the living room. Natural light illuminates the maid's room in the morning, then passes over the hall toward the porch in the west corner of the house. Skylights in the kitchen, adjacent bathroom, and hall capture the sun as it moves across the house. The bathroom abuts the interior chimney, which is enclosed within the wall between the kitchen and living room.

High-grade wood finishes on the interior visually complement exposed ceiling beams and the natural forested setting of the property. Paneled birch walls and birch kitchen cabinets in the primary living spaces are colored similarly to hardwood floors that extend throughout the house. The living room/kitchen wall contains floor to ceiling cabinets and a flush slate hearth. Painted drywall partition walls separated the bedrooms, which are equipped with closets accessed by sliding doors. Finishes in the enclosed porch are consistent with the exterior design and diagonally laid pine sheathing covers its northeast wall. A floor-to-ceiling section of the wall serves as a sliding door that exposes the living room to the open air and a louvered pedestrian door connects the hyphen to the bedrooms. White paint on the ceilings and gray paint on the floor lighten the porch space.

### **Outbuildings**

A one-story garage designed contemporaneously by Saltonstall in 1960 is located east of the house and is constructed of matching materials. It faces south and consists of one long 8-foot by 16-foot bay with openings at both ends of a flat-roofed rectangular plan. The garage is a low, rectangular wood-frame building set on a concrete slab foundation and sheathed with vertically laid pine boards identical to the house. A section of the diagonal sheathing on the facade (south elevation) serves as a top-hinged awning door, and two pairs of sliding doors form a glazed wall on the opposite elevation. The facade wall is recessed 2 feet from the edge of the roofline and three sets of vertically stacked awning windows on the east elevation light the interior. The interior is unfinished and has exposed framing.

### **Alterations**

Few changes have occurred on the Kuhn property since the construction of the house and garage in 1960. The original tar and gravel roof covering was replaced with a rubber membrane in approximately 2006 and some of the porch screens have been damaged. Historical photographs show the original porch floor with a light-colored vinyl (or similar) surface and it is currently covered with painted wood plank.

### **Integrity**

Regional architect Nathaniel Saltonstall's Bauhaus-inspired Modern style design for the Samuel and Minette Kuhn House is wholly intact as it was built, complete with the matching garage. Saltonstall's use of an orthogonal grid to develop the projecting and subtractive rectangular volume of the house is clearly evident. The house retains its proportional massing and modular feeling through the repetition of right-angled rectangular elements within the building's volume, such as its gridded fenestration pattern and wall matrix of panels and rectangular cabinets. All of the original materials and structural elements are extant including the diagonal sheathing boards and birch interior finishes. The house occupies its original site within a pristine, isolated natural setting and retains framed views of the pitch pine forest that provide a tranquil experience of the wooded environment.

**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.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

- RECREATION
- SOCIAL HISTORY
- ARCHITECTURE

**Period of Significance**

1960-1979

**Significant Dates**

1960: House and garage constructed

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Saltonstall, Nathaniel of Saltonstall & Morton  
(architect)  
Edward Whiting (builder)

**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 old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

**Period of Significance (justification)**

The period of significance for the Samuel and Minette Kuhn House begins in 1960 when the house was erected and extends to 1979, the end of the Mid-Twentieth-Century Modern Residential Architecture on Outer Cape Cod 1929 – 1979 MPDF. This timeframe encompasses the Kuhn family's ownership of the property from 1960 to 1973 and continued occupancy through 1979.

**Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)**

The end date of the period of significance meets Criteria Consideration G as part of the exceptional significance of the development of mid-twentieth-century Modern architecture on Outer Cape Cod, as discussed in the MPDF.

**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

The Samuel and Minette Kuhn House is eligible for individual listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C at the local level for its associations with the development of recreational residences, cultivation of a progressive social network, and dissemination of Modern style architecture on Outer Cape Cod during the mid-twentieth century. The building possesses significance under Criterion A in the areas of Recreation and Social History for its associations with the postwar, intellectual community that commissioned the construction of single-family, Modern style vacation houses in the underdeveloped peripheries of the Outer Cape towns. The building possesses significance under Criterion C in the area of Architecture as the Bauhaus-inspired residential work of regional architect Nathaniel Saltonstall. Saltonstall was an avid patron of mid-twentieth-century contemporary art who expressed the ideals of Modern design in several buildings he completed on Outer Cape Cod.

The Kuhn House meets the requirements for listing under the Mid-Twentieth-Century Modern Residential Architecture on Outer Cape Cod, 1929 – 1979 historic context and property type Number F.2 Geometric, as defined in the Mid-Twentieth-Century Modern Residential Architecture on Outer Cape Cod 1929 – 1979 Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF). The house exhibits the Geometric property type through its orthogonally derived, grounded cubic form and its volumetric pattern of rectangular recesses juxtaposed with additive planar elements. Its subtle, visually contrastive exterior surfacing, consisting of bright white trim set against darkly colored diagonal sheathing boards, is also a common feature of Geometric properties. The house satisfies the registration requirements of the Geometric type through its association with regionally noteworthy architect Nathaniel Saltonstall and his distinctive application of Modern design principles. It possesses associations with the Outer Cape network of urban intellectuals as a commission from the creatively inclined, New York based clients, engineer Samuel Kuhn and art patron Minette Kuhn. The house retains its original woodland setting with distant rooftop views of the water and Saltonstall's Bauhaus-inspired architectural style design, including the original form, structure, materials, plan, and finishes.

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**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

**Area of Significance: Criterion A**

**Recreation and Social History**

The construction of the Kuhn house demonstrates the rapid post-war development of single-family seasonal housing on Outer Cape Cod and the appreciation for Modern style design fostered by the community of progressive urban intellectuals who vacationed there. Cape Cod's convenient regional access, scenic natural environment, and inherent recreational opportunities led to its establishment as a leisure destination in the late nineteenth century. In the following decades, the sublime, isolated qualities of the Outer Cape landscape made it an increasingly popular summer retreat among artists and urban intelligencia with year-round residences in greater Boston or New York City, who formed a creative seasonal community. The preexisting reputation of this industrious community, coupled with the national postwar building boom and emergence of tourism as the region's leading industry encouraged the development of approximately 160 Modern style single-family vacation houses on the Outer Cape in the mid-twentieth century.

Samuel L. and Minette Kuhn of New York City filed a building permit to construct a \$20,000 vacation house in Wellfleet on March 10, 1960, just one year after the National Park Service (NPS) publicly released plans for the creation of the Cape Cod National Seashore (Cape Cod NS) (Wellfleet Building Department 1957-1971). Development in Wellfleet previously remained concentrated around Wellfleet Harbor and Route 6. The east edge of town along the Atlantic coastline and span of five islands in the west side of town where the Kuhn property is located retained an isolated quality with vast expanses of unimproved land through the 1950s. The Kuhn property originated as Griffin's Island Lot 54 within part of a subdivision drawn by Nickerson and Berger in May 1960, two months after the Kuhns filed their building permit. The Wellfleet Development Corporation sold the parcel to Samuel Kuhn on August 8 of that year (Barnstable County Registry of Deeds 1960a, 1960b).



Samuel and Minette Kuhn typify the urban intellectuals attracted to the Outer Cape by the recreational opportunities and progressive social community. Samuel L. Kuhn (b. 1894) grew up in Ohio and studied hydraulic engineering in Massachusetts from 1911 to 1916, receiving a Bachelor's degree from Harvard and subsequent Master's degree from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). He served in the Army Corps of Engineers during World War I before marrying Minette Stroock (1898–1970), who came from a wealthy New York City family. The Kuhns moved to New York City in the mid-1920s and lived briefly in Croton-on-Hudson (slightly north of Manhattan) from 1933 to 1936, where they formed personal relationships with influential socialists affiliated with the Bohemian communities in Greenwich Village, New York and the Outer Cape during the early twentieth century. Samuel Kuhn befriended writer and political activist Max Eastman (1883–1969), who formerly served as the editor of the socialist magazine, *The Masses* (later known as *The Liberator*). Minette Kuhn previously attended Vassar College with playwright and feminist Edna St. Vincent Millay (1892–1950), who lived in Greenwich Village and was an integral member of the Provincetown Players on the Outer Cape in the 1910s and early 1920s. Minette Kuhn cultivated her personal interests in contemporary art and literature, rather than pursuing a full-time career. She worked as a freelance editor and wrote pro-bono for non-profit advocacy organizations. The Kuhns returned to midtown Manhattan in the late 1930s and remained active members of progressive society there throughout their lives (Andresen 1999:S44,S48; MADHS 2005; U.S. Customs 1929).

The Kuhns' New York City societal relationships undoubtedly made them aware of the intellectual community on the Outer Cape, but their personal connections to the region increased when their sons Roger and Thomas Kuhn attended Harvard University, their father's alma mater. Roger Kuhn (b. 1925) enrolled at Harvard in 1942 and studied at the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute on the Upper Cape for three years before returning to Harvard in 1945. Thomas Samuel Kuhn (1922–1996) earned his bachelors, masters, and doctoral degrees in theoretical physics at Harvard between 1943 and 1949 and taught there from 1948 to 1956 (*New York Times* 1996). Thomas Kuhn became a renowned physicist, most recognized for his landmark book on the history of science, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962). The Kuhns' sons were affiliated with Harvard in Cambridge, Massachusetts during the same years that numerous progressive designers and intellectuals with ties to Modernism or the Outer Cape were living or working in the vicinity. American architect Edward Larrabee Barnes (1915–2004) graduated from Walter Gropius's and Marcel Breuer's Harvard Graduate School of Design (GSD) in 1942 and Gropius founded his firm, The Architects' Collaborative in Cambridge three years later, when both Roger and Thomas Kuhn were at Harvard. Physicist Laszlo Tisza and Finnish architect Alvar Aalto began teaching at MIT in 1941, followed by painter/designer Gyorgy Kepes in 1947, and structural engineer Paul Weidlinger after 1943. Breuer, Tisza, Kepes, and Weidlinger, along with Aalto's former employee, architect Olav Hammarstrom all built Modern style vacation houses in Wellfleet between 1948 and 1960.

Samuel and Minette Kuhn stayed at architect Nathaniel Saltonstall's Mayo Hill Colony Club (The Colony) located on Chequesett Neck Road near the site of a late-nineteenth-century resort, in the 1950s around the time they decided to build their own vacation home nearby. Saltonstall designed the cluster of cottages known as The Colony in 1949, which he operated as a retreat for artists, collectors, and patrons. The Colony and the Saltonstall-designed Wellfleet Art Gallery built on State Route 6 around 1952, became an integral part of Wellfleet's art and social scene (CCMHT 2009). The Colony and gallery served as crucial gathering spaces for artistic people in the immediate vicinity, since Wellfleet's population settled more dispersedly across the town than the concentrated creative network traditionally based in Provincetown center. Samuel and Minette Kuhn initially commissioned Edward Larrabee Barnes to design their summer home in 1956 while their son Thomas was still teaching at Harvard, but then hired Saltonstall in 1957, before Barnes completed draft plans.<sup>ii</sup> Local builder Edward Whiting erected the house to Saltonstall's specifications in 1960 for use by the Kuhns during their retirement. More than 50 Modern residences were extant or under construction on the Outer Cape when the Kuhns completed their vacation house, including approximately 30 houses in Wellfleet.

Minette Kuhn and Nathaniel Saltonstall shared a passion for contemporary art, which may have enticed the Kuhns to use his architectural design services. Nathaniel Saltonstall (1903–1968) came from a prominent Massachusetts family and began his professional architectural career in the Boston area where he gained exposure to Modern design. He received a Bachelor's degree from Harvard in 1928, the same year that Walter Gropius toured the United States. The Harvard Society for Contemporary Art (HSCA) was founded in Cambridge the following year “. . . for the purpose of holding displays of contemporary painting, sculpture, and decorative art that are frankly debatable, and would otherwise be

<sup>ii</sup> It is not known if the Kuhns switched architects because of their visit to The Colony.



difficult for people of greater Boston to see” (*Harvard Crimson* 1931). It was the first organization in the United States to display changing exhibits of recent art and held the first Bauhaus art exhibit in the country in 1930, before the landmark show at New York’s Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) and MIT in 1931. Saltonstall witnessed both watershed exhibits, acquiring his master’s degree in architecture from MIT in 1931. He served as the membership secretary for MoMA the following year and helped establish Boston’s Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA) in 1936, holding the position of ICA president until 1948. Saltonstall acted as a trustee of The Boston Museum of Fine Arts and established the Nathaniel Saltonstall Arts Fund in 1959 to support cultural institutions through sales of art in his private collection (Fixler 2004; Hull 2007). The concentration of intellectual, creative, and academic individuals and institutions in the Boston-Cambridge area contributed to the incubation of Modernist ideas and experimentation.

### **Area of Significance: Criterion C**

#### **Architecture**

The Kuhn House represents the residential work of regional architect Nathaniel Saltonstall, who applied the Bauhaus design principles that he absorbed through an appreciation of contemporary art to several small-scale buildings he completed on the Outer Cape. Saltonstall’s orthogonal design concept for the Kuhn house is reminiscent of Walter Gropius’s preference for right-angled orthogonal grids, from which he derived compilations of solid cubic forms juxtaposed to create consistently geometric interior and exterior spaces. Gropius considered design in terms of whole volumes rather than discrete surfaces and repeated rectangular shapes in the massing of building recesses and projections, glazed voids, gridded muntin patterns, and furnishings. The Kuhn house demonstrates a similar cubic plan matrix as Gropius’s “director’s room” (Bauhaus exhibition, 1923) and use of interconnected, staggered or sliding rectangular forms as Gropius expressed in his “masters’ houses” (Bauhaus, Dessau, Germany, 1925–1926). The Kuhn house further illustrates Bauhaus philosophy through the incorporation of all building systems within one cohesive frame, which heightened functional and structural efficiency.

Saltonstall’s individual interpretations of the Modern style fused with his New England background and resulted in the consistent expression of specific design characteristics. The Kuhn house portrays Saltonstall’s archetypal building form comprised of a perpendicular assemblage of solid, low rectangular units featuring roof overhangs that shelter entrances, glazed wall sections, or exterior living spaces. Saltonstall merged his Bauhaus-inspired plans and volumes with regionally common high-quality materials such as the birch panels on the Kuhn house interior. His interest in passive solar design is evident in the incorporation of the skylights, east-facing maid’s room, and southeast-northwest oriented central corridor in the Kuhn house. The subtractive recesses in the volume of the house created a more dynamic shape, but also deflected excessive summer heat off of the building. Saltonstall’s understanding of color patterns is further illustrated in his choice of contrasting exterior sheathing and trim and his use of materials with textural qualities.

The Kuhn House is one of five Modern style buildings on the Outer Cape besides The Colony development attributed solely to Saltonstall, but he completed numerous design commissions during his architectural career in Boston from about 1930 until the 1960s. Saltonstall worked for the firm of Little and Russell while completing his graduate education at MIT and subsequently gained employment at Putnam and Cox, where he worked until 1942. He made partner in the firm by 1939 (AIA 1956:393, 481; 1962:499, 609–610; CCMHT 2009). During his tenure there, Saltonstall met his future professional partner Oliver Perry Morton, and experimented with Modernism in the design for his own house in Medfield, Massachusetts (southwest of Boston), constructed circa 1932. Saltonstall served in the Army during World War II, first as a Lieutenant in Camouflage Division, then as a Major in the Special Services Art Division (Bailey and McMahon 2006:10). Upon his return from the war in 1945, Saltonstall established his own architectural practice with Morton that operated into the 1960s (Morton died in 1964, followed by Saltonstall in 1968). Oliver Morton’s son, Peter Morton joined the firm as a partner briefly from 1953 to 1957, after working with Eero Saarinen and Associates (1949–1953). He subsequently gained employment with Marcel Breuer and Associates in New York (1957–1959) before establishing himself as a managing designer at TAC from 1959 until his retirement in 1985. Peter Morton’s presence at the firm and personal relationship with its founders likely strengthened their affiliations with preeminent Modern architects Eero Saarinen and Marcel Breuer.

Saltonstall was registered in Massachusetts, New York, and Virginia and his firm received a mixture of commercial, institutional, and residential commissions for new buildings and renovations in the northeast region. Saltonstall and Morton are recognized for their design of the Christian Herter Center art museum in Boston (1960), which served as a model for the design of the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. (Crisson and Burke 2003). Among the firm's Massachusetts works are the Veterans Housing Development (Boston, 1948), St. Andrews Episcopal Church (Wellesley, 1949), Yankee Traveler Inn (Plymouth, 1950), and the Horizons motel (Truro, 1953). Although Saltonstall conceived of and developed The Colony, he designed its 13 buildings in collaboration with his employees and other artists. The gallery building, near the street side of the complex features a raised relief wall by Xavier Gonzales and the remainder of the complex incorporates landscape designs by Stanley Underhill and furnishings by Charles and Ray Eames and Hans Krull. Edward Whiting, who constructed the Kuhn house, also erected The Colony buildings (Cipriani 2010:61; Korjeff 2002).

Saltonstall's distinct characteristics are identifiable in The Colony and two other extant residences he designed on the Outer Cape—the Comfort House (1951), and the Yeston-Nossitor House (1966). Both houses are located on Griffin's Island approximately one-half mile south of the Kuhn property and slightly more than 1 mile northwest of The Colony. A third residence located in Wellfleet, the Stuart Harrod House, has been destroyed by a fire. Each of the houses exhibit Saltonstall's low cubist forms, but The Colony buildings exaggerate the effect through the use of planar vertical walls that intersect with the horizontal overhanging roofs and full-height glazing that fills the surface of each rectangular face. The Comfort house reiterates Saltonstall's affinity for passive solar design through expansive, southeast-facing glazed walls divided by prominent muntin grids; screened-in porches; and open-air walkways sheltered by brise soleil screens. Saltonstall's lifelong passion for Modern art especially influenced the design of the Yeston-Nossitor house, in which he arranged geometric building sections with various height changes, setbacks, and glazed or open spaces. The interior doorways, wall cutouts, and fireplace are created from rectangular openings of varying sizes and orientations that present the space as a highly sculptural volume. The setting of the house features a concrete block retaining wall painted to resemble the De Stijl artwork of Piet Mondrian.

Saltonstall's Wellfleet portfolio may have additionally included the Surfside Cottages, a platted and partially completed development of late 1950s and early 1960s vacation houses located along Ocean View Drive in east Wellfleet. The cottages exhibit an emphasis on horizontality, overhanging or cantilevered planes, subtle asymmetry, grouped windows, and flat roofs set at slightly varied heights that are similar to Saltonstall's expression of the Modern style. However, the buildings were constructed with simple, economic materials and may be the work of a local designer/builder familiar with Saltonstall's architecture.

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**Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)**

The Kuhn family used their Wellfleet vacation house for approximately 40 years, from its construction in 1960 through approximately 2000. Samuel Kuhn sold the property to the United States on July 12, 1973, but retained 25-year use and occupancy rights. Samuel and Minette Kuhn's children and grandchildren, and year-round caretaker continued to occupy the house through extended use permits until 2003, when the National Park Service acquired management of the property (Barnstable County Registry of Deeds 1973; NPS 2010).

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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### Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

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#### Bailey, Bob, and Peter McMahon, co-curators

- 2006 A Chain of Events: Modernist Architecture on the Outer Cape, Marcel Breuer to Charles Jencks. Exhibit Catalogue. Provincetown Art Association and Museum, Provincetown, MA.

#### Barnstable County Registry of Deeds

- 1960a Subdivision Plan of Land in Wellfleet, Nickerson & Berger, Engineers, May - 1960. Wellfleet Plan Number 18775-L, Certificate Number 25338. Barnstable County Registry of Deeds, Barnstable, MA.
- 1960b Deed transferring Lot 54 from Wellfleet Development Corp. to Samuel Kuhn, August 8, 1960. Wellfleet Land Record Number 65568, Book 95, Page 118. Barnstable County Registry of Deeds, Barnstable, MA.
- 1973 Deed from Samuel Kuhn to the United States of America, April 12, 1973. Wellfleet Land Record Number 177452. Barnstable County Registry of Deeds, Barnstable, MA.

#### Cape Cod Modern House Trust (CCMHT)

- 2009 Architects and Buildings. Retrieved December 2009 from: <http://ccmht.org/architects>.

#### Cipriani, Christine

- 2010 Bauhaus in the Breeze: Modernist Architecture on Outer Cape Cod. *Modernism Magazine* 12:4. Lambertville, NJ.

#### Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Department of Health Services (MADHS)

- 2005 Massachusetts Death Index, 170-2003. Online database. Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Department of Health Services, Boston, MA. Retrieved September 2010 from: <http://www.ancestry.com>.

#### Crisson, Richard, and William Burke

- 2003 Massachusetts Historical Commission Building Inventory Form, Kuhn House, Wellfleet, MA. On file, Massachusetts Historical Commission, Boston, MA.

#### Fixler, David

- 2004 Revolution in the Dunes: Modernism on the Outer Cape. *Architecture Boston* 7(3): 36-38.

#### Harvard Crimson

- 1931 Modern Art Exhibit Starts Today: Show Marks Second Anniversary of Harvard Society. *Harvard Crimson* 21 February 1931. Cambridge, MA.



Hull, Judith S.  
2007 Modernist Residential Architecture in Massachusetts: A Report to the Massachusetts Historical Commission. On file, Massachusetts Historical Commission, Boston, MA.

Korjeff, Sarah  
2002 Massachusetts Historical Commission Area Inventory Form, The Colony, Wellfleet, MA. On file, Massachusetts Historical Commission, Boston, MA.

National Park Service (NPS)  
2010 Land records and administrative files for Modern Style properties within the Cape Cod National Seashore. National Park Service, Waltham, MA.

New York Times  
1996 Thomas S. Kuhn. Obituary. *New York Times* 19 September 1996. New York, NY.

United States Customs Service (U.S. Customs)  
1929 List of United States Citizens on board the Leviathan, arriving in New York, New York from Southampton, England, April 26, 1929. New York Passenger Lists 1820-1957 online database. Microfilm T715\_4479, page 9. Records of the United States Customs Service, Record Group 36, National Archives, Washington, D.C. Retrieved September 23, 2010 from the world wide web: <http://www.ancestry.com>.

Wellfleet Building Department  
1957-1971 Building Permit Logbook. Town of Wellfleet Building Department, Wellfleet, MA.

**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 # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other
- Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): \_\_\_\_\_

---

**10. Geographical Data**

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**Acreage of Property** 4.92  
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

**UTM References**  
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

A	<u>19</u>	<u>0417220</u>	<u>4643840</u>	C	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
B	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	D	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The property boundaries encompass the legally recorded lines of Lot 3, shown on Map 11, containing 4.92 acres.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundaries include the house and full extent of the associated landscape features that contribute to the setting and appearance of the property.

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**11. Form Prepared By**

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name/title Jenny Fields Scofield AICP/Architectural Historian and Virginia H. Adams/Sr. Architectural Historian  
organization PAL date February 2011  
street & number 210 Lonsdale Avenue telephone (401) 728-8780  
city or town Pawtucket state RI zip code 02860  
e-mail jscofield@palinc.com; vadams@palinc.com

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**Additional Documentation**

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Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **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. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

---

**Photographs:**

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

**Name of Property:** Samuel and Minette Kuhn House

**City or Vicinity:** Wellfleet

**County:** Barnstable                      **State:** Massachusetts

**Photographer:** Virginia H. Adams

**Date Photographed:** December 10, 2009

**Description of Photograph(s) and number:**

- Photo 1 of 5. View looking southwest at southeast and northeast elevations.
- Photo 2 of 5. View of front porch and entrance on southeast elevation.
- Photo 3 of 5. View looking southeast at northwest elevation.
- Photo 4 of 5. View looking northeast at southwest elevation.
- Photo 5 of 5. View of garage.



Samuel and Minette Kuhn House  
Name of Property

Barnstable County, MA  
County and State

---

**Property Owner:**

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

---

name National Park Service, Cape Cod National Seashore  
street & number 99 Marconi Site Road telephone (508) 349-3785  
city or town Wellfleet state \_\_\_\_\_ zip code 02267

**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.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

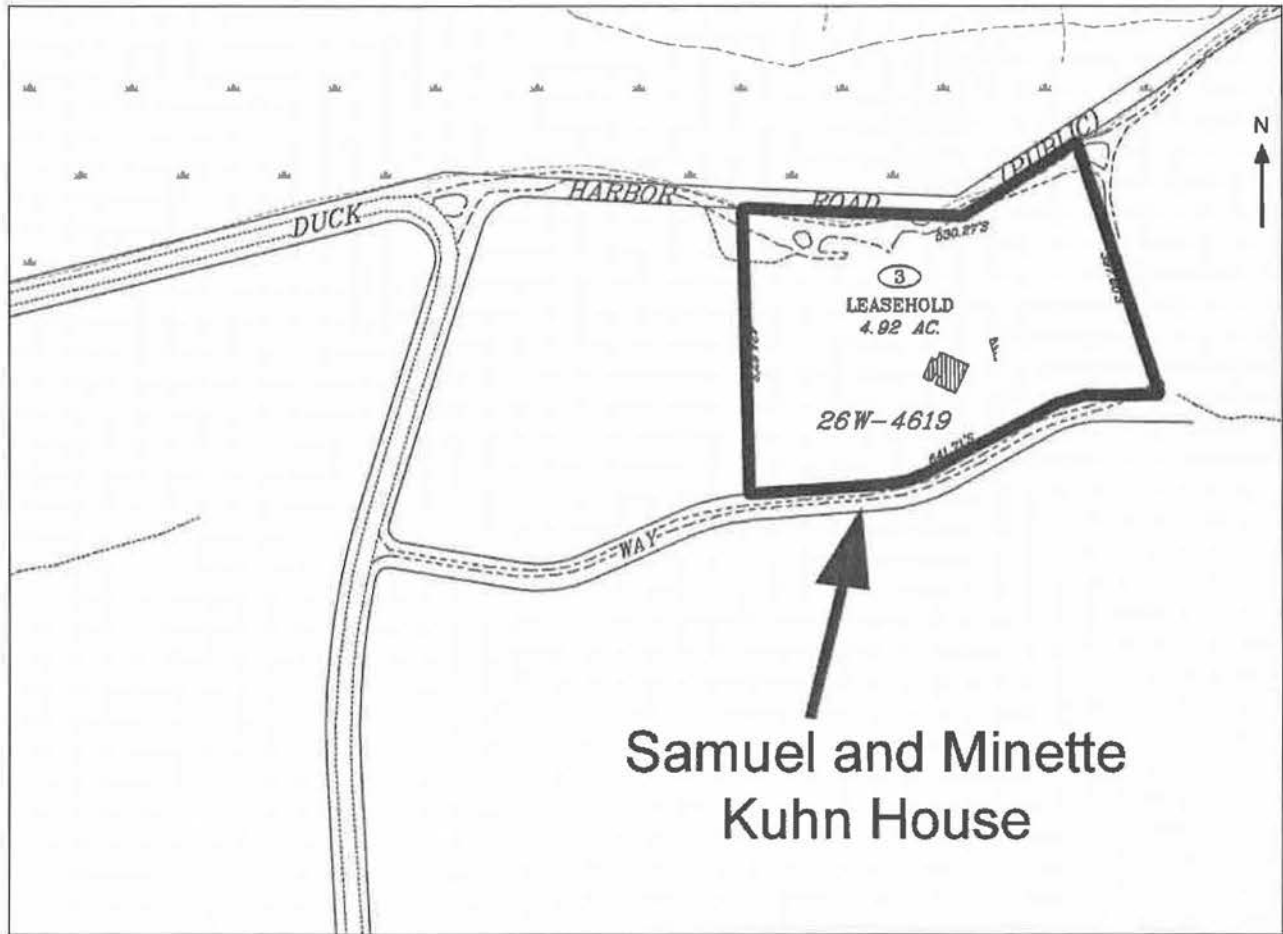
National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Samuel and Minette Kuhn House

Barnstable County, Massachusetts

Mid-Twentieth-Century Modern Residential  
Architecture on Outer Cape Cod 1929 - 1979

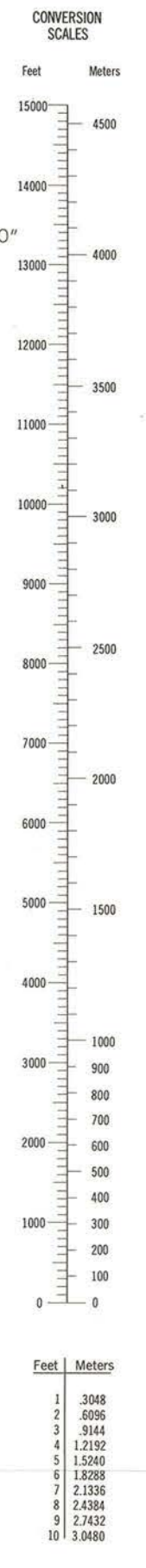
Town of Wellfleet Assessor's Map Number 11



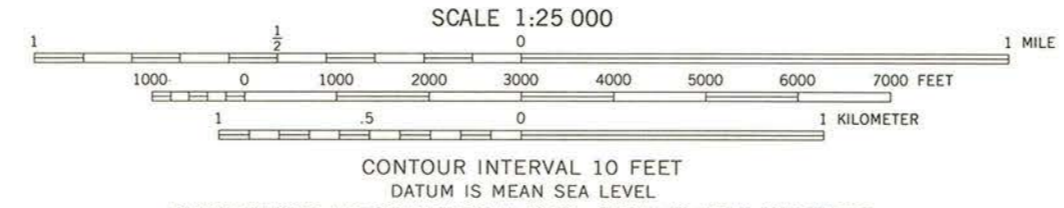
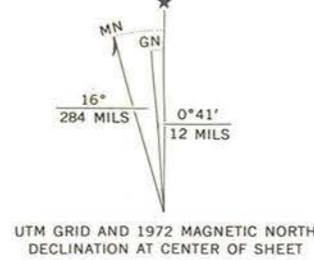




Kuhn, Samuel & Minette House  
Wellfleet, Barnstable County, MA  
UTM References  
A. 19 0417220 4643840

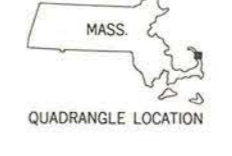
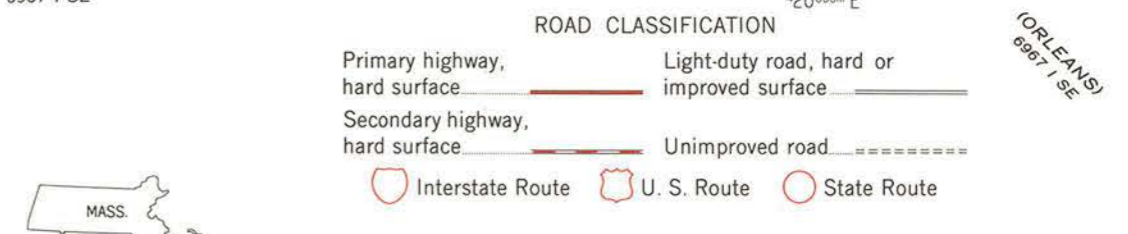


Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey  
Control by USGS, USC&GS, and Massachusetts Geodetic Survey  
Planimetry by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1938. Topography by planetable surveys 1941. Revised from aerial photographs taken 1971. Field checked 1972  
Selected hydrographic data compiled from USC&GS Charts 580 (1972), 581 (1971), and 1208 (1972). This information is not intended for navigational purposes  
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum 10,000-foot grid based on Massachusetts coordinate system, mainland zone  
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid, zone 19



CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET  
DATUM IS MEAN SEA LEVEL  
DEPTH CURVES AND SOUNDINGS IN FEET—DATUM IS MEAN LOW WATER  
SHORELINE SHOWN REPRESENTS THE APPROXIMATE LINE OF MEAN HIGH WATER  
THE MEAN RANGE OF TIDE IS APPROXIMATELY 7 FEET IN ATLANTIC OCEAN AND 10 FEET IN WELLFLEET HARBOR

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS  
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY  
DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092  
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST



WELLFLEET, MASS.  
N4152.5—W6957.5/7.5  
1972  
AMS 6967 1 NE—SERIES V814







NO





NO  
PROPERTY

















UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Kuhn, Samuel and Minette, House

MULTIPLE NAME: Mid 20th Century Modern Residential Architecture on Outer Cape Cod MPS

STATE & COUNTY: MASSACHUSETTS, Barnstable

DATE RECEIVED: 1/10/14      DATE OF PENDING LIST: 2/10/14  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 2/25/14      DATE OF 45TH DAY: 2/26/14  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 14000020

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N    DATA PROBLEM: N    LANDSCAPE: N    LESS THAN 50 YEARS: Y  
OTHER: N    PDIL: N    PERIOD: N    PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N  
REQUEST: Y    SAMPLE: N    SLR DRAFT: N    NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT     RETURN     REJECT    2/25/2014 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

*Historically & architecturally significant modern residence. Meets the registration requirements for the Geometric Property type established in the MPS cover form.*

RECOM./CRITERIA Accept A&C  
REVIEWER Patrick Andrews      DISCIPLINE Historian  
TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_      DATE 2/25/2014

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.