

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



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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 New England Hebrew Farmers of the Emanuel Society Synagogue and Creamery Site

other names/site number State of Connecticut Archaeological Site 86-16

2. Location

street & number Intersection of CT Route 161 and CT Route 85

N/A

not for publication

city or town Village of Chesterfield, Town of Montville

vicinity

state Connecticut

code CT

county New London

code 011

zip code

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

David Balaban

12.16.11

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

SHPO / State Historic Preservation Office

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)

For Elson H. Beall

2-28-12

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

New England Hebrew Farmers of the Emanuel Society Synagogue and Creamery Site
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County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	private
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Local
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Federal

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

<input type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing
	buildings
1	sites
	structures
	objects
1	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RELIGION/religious facility

AGRICULTURAL/SUBSISTENCE/processing

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

DOMESTIC/hotel

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION AND CULTURE/monument/marker

VACANT/NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

N/A

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: Fieldstone, concrete and brick

walls: N/A

roof: N/A

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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 New England Hebrew Farmers of the Emanuel Society (NEHFES) Synagogue and Creamery Site, measuring 1.77 acres, is located at the southwest intersection of CT Routes 85 and 161 in the Village of Chesterfield, Town of Montville, in Eastern Connecticut's New London County (Figures 1-3). It includes two modern tax lots (Town of Montville Map 5, Lot 2 and Map 5, Lot 3), which were purchased in 1892 by the Society Agudas Achim (founded in 1890) and the NEHFES, its successor organization. With the financial assistance of the Baron de Hirsch Fund, the recently arrived Jewish farmers and residents of the Chesterfield community constructed a synagogue and creamery on the property. Lot 2 contains the foundation remains of the synagogue, its associated *mikvah*, and a stone well. Lot 3 contains the foundation remains of the former creamery building (later converted into a dwelling and inn), a stone well, a barn, and several retaining walls. Although no longer visible on the landscape, there was once a small hydro-electric "powerhouse" located within the perennial stream (now known as Powers Brook) that runs under CT Route 85 and through the site, as well as a small twentieth-century bungalow to the northwest of Powers Brook facing Route 85. The property is overgrown with vegetation and woods today but historically contained a mixture of cleared land and maintained woods. A commemorative monument, noting the site of the Chesterfield synagogue, was dedicated next to the synagogue foundation remains in 1986.

Narrative Description

The two lots that comprise the site were mapped by archaeologists in July 2007, and again in June 2011 (Figure 2). In 2007, historic foundations and other landscape features were measured, photographed, and plotted on Figure 2 (Clouette and Harper 2007, revised 2008), and additional features identified in 2011 were then added to the 2007 site plan (HPI 2011). The locations of features in 2007 was determined through a combination of GPS measurement, reference to a 1928 Connecticut Highway Department survey, and interpretation of a 1934 Fairchild aerial photograph. The locations of features identified in 2011 were measured off of previously mapped features or, where measurements were not feasible due to the density of vegetation, were approximated. All orientations reference True North, and where previous investigations cited below have used other orientations, those references have been revised for consistency.

A number of historic photographs exist for the site (Photos 1-5); existing conditions were photographed in December 2010 when foliage was reduced, as well as in June 2011 during the most recent archaeological investigations. Photos 6-26 depict site features and artifacts. The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) of the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) is the owner and holds the copyright of all non-historic photographs. The photo locations are shown on Figure 3. The following historic features identified on the revised 2011 site plan (Figure 2) were inventoried:

- Map 5, Lot 2: Synagogue/*Mikvah* Parcel

Synagogue remains. The location of the former synagogue (Photo 1), built in 1892, is represented by a fieldstone-rubble foundation outlining a rectangle that measures 26 feet by 32 feet (Photos 6 and 7). After the synagogue was damaged by fire in the early 1970s, it completely burned down in 1980 – a victim of arson (*The Day* 1981). Portions of the timber sills remain, and in 2007 an extensive amount of medium-width tongue-and-groove boards that appeared to be flooring was visible. By 2011, most of the wood debris was found to be enveloped by ferns and other flora. Fragments of window glass and brick are evident on the ground surface surrounding the foundation.

Archaeological testing in 2011 entailed completing four shovel tests around the outside of the foundation. Blue window glass identified at the southeastern end of the building appears to represent the remains of an oculus that was formerly at the gable end of the building above the ark where the Torah was kept (see Photo 4; Photo 8). A shovel test placed tangential to the southwestern foundation wall found that fieldstone extends down to about 14 inches below the existing surface (Photo 9).

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Currently, a commemorative monument is sited just north of the foundation (Photo 10). Installed at a memorial celebration in September 1986, the event was attended by over 300 people, mostly descendants of NEHFES members (See Photo 5; Kolbert 1986).

Mikvah remains. Located about 100 feet to the northwest of the synagogue site are the foundation remains of a small building that contained a *mikvah*, a bath used by Orthodox Jews – more frequently women – for a variety of purification rituals (Photos 11-14).

The fieldstone foundation measures 24 feet by 16 feet, with interior walls predominantly covered with cement mortar; some of which has detached over the years. The structure's foundation was built into a natural slope, with the rear or southeast wall measuring about seven feet in height and the remains of the front or northwest wall almost at grade (see Photo 11; Photo 7). A three-foot-wide doorway appears in the center of the northwest foundation wall. A portion of the exterior has dry laid stones (Photo 12). A water pipe enters the building on the southeast side, which presumably serviced the upper floor (see Photo 14). A ca. 1938 photograph with the building at a distance in the background shows that it had a second frame-clad story, several windows, and a center chimney (see Photo 3). The upper floor of the *mikvah* is thought to be where the *shokhet*, or ritual butcher, who was often a cantor as well, was given lodging. According to the NEHFES Minutes Book, the *shokhet* was also in charge of maintaining the *mikvah* for the community.

The *mikvah* itself is at the northwest corner of the building and is constructed of poured-concrete (see Photo 13). It measures 4 feet wide by 7 feet long, with steps at its southeast end. Because of the extent of vegetation and fill, its depth could not be measured, but a shovel test placed immediately outside the *mikvah* wall found a poured-concrete floor at about nine inches below existing grade. A wall approximately four feet high on the southwest side separates the *mikvah* from the rest of the building's interior space, and on its exterior are the outlines of bricks or brick-colored staining (Photo 15). This coupled with the bricks and brick fragments found in the foundation indicate that a fireplace or stove was located in the basement to heat water for the *mikvah*. According to news accounts, the *mikvah* was built in ca. 1910, and had been funded by the women of the congregation (*The Day* 1910). The poured-concrete construction is in keeping with a date of ca. 1910 (Clouette and Harper 2007, revised 2008), and the NEHFES Minutes Book mentions the presence of a *mikvah* as early as 1911.

Well. A fieldstone-rubble lined well was identified about 26 feet southwest of the *mikvah* foundation. The well is about three feet in diameter (Clouette and Harper 2007, revised 2008), and it likely served the *mikvah* building. An iron water pipe was observed protruding from the surface immediately northwest of the building's foundation, near its northwestern end above the location of the *mikvah* (Photo 16). A second pipe was observed on the surface, not *in situ*, adjacent to the *mikvah*. Only a portion of the water in a *mikvah* could run through pipes as per religious doctrine. Likely the well supplied both the *mikvah*, in part, and the upper level of the building that reportedly served as temporary quarters for a ritual butcher and, occasionally, other religious figures.

Midden. About 30 feet southwest of the *mikvah* along the western property boundary is a fairly extensive midden consisting of nineteenth- and twentieth-century domestic debris. On the surface were several rusted galvanized buckets and pans post-dating 1870 (AGA n.d.), several screw lip bottles (post-1924, Polak 1994), and plastic toys and wrappers (Photos 17 and 18). Most remains were found along the northwestern side of a stone wall that demarcates the property boundary, and physically separates it from Powers Brook. The majority of observed artifacts lay just outside the NEHFES landholdings, but may be associated with the use of the property.

Retaining Wall. A retaining wall was identified south of the creamery foundation, along what appears to be the former access road originating on CT Route 85 (Photo 19). Little of the wall is visible due to extensive overgrowth. This is the same small, unpaved driveway leading from the road to the synagogue depicted on a 1928 state highway department survey. This retaining wall may be associated with the driveway.

- Map 5, Lot 3: Creamery Parcel

Creamery remains. Close to the intersection of CT Routes 161 and 85, and about 175 feet north of the synagogue remains, is a fairly substantial fieldstone-rubble foundation from the 1892 creamery (see Photo 2; Photos 20-22). The fieldstone foundation is set in mortar, measures 28 feet by 42 feet in plan, and has a depth of almost eight feet. There is a four foot wide doorway in the southwest wall, 14 feet from the southwest corner, and there are several window openings measuring 3 feet wide by 1'-6" feet high (Clouette and Harper 2007, revised 2008). The doorway is flanked by sloped concrete buttresses (Photo 22). According to a 2011 engineering study:

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The grade on the northeast (front) side meets what would have been the first floor. The grade on the southeast side slopes down and meets the basement level grade on the southwest wall. A battered and dry laid stone Retaining Wall connects the northwest corner of the Creamery to Route 85 and retains the high grade between Route 85 and the front of the Creamery. The grade of the site behind the Retaining Wall and adjacent to the northwest wall of the Creamery is approximately 2'-6" below the basement level. The foundation wall below the basement floor elevation is stepped out on the northwest side and parged (covered with a smooth coat of mortar concealing the stone wall behind it). The inside face of the northwest wall has an interesting 3" deep circular indentation in it with a masonry pad at its base and a partially embedded cast iron pipe running to it from the southwest corner. We surmise that this must have been an important tank or piece of cylindrical equipment for the operation of the Creamery (Acly 2011:2; orientations in original text revised to reference True North).

Foundation remains are overgrown with vegetation and some grown trees that threaten its structural integrity. Immediately northeast of the creamery foundation, the City of New London has recently installed a pipeline through the property parallel to CT Route 85.

Archaeological investigations around the Creamery remains in 2008 revealed various artifacts, including a glass fragment of a creamer or milk bottle with a maker's mark noting the New London and Mohegan Creameries of New London (Photo 23).

Retaining Wall. There is a retaining wall that extends from the northwest corner of the creamery foundation north to CT Route 85 (Photo 24). The wall serves to channel Powers Brook southwesterly until it joins Latimer Brook to the west.

Well. To the northwest of the creamery foundation is a rubble-stone lined well about four feet in diameter, with a cast-concrete cap (Photo 25). A pipe from this well leads into the creamery foundation.

Powerhouse. Historical evidence exists for a "powerhouse" formerly being located in the middle of Powers Brook, northwest of the creamery foundation. It appears to have drawn water from the pond across CT Route 85 by means of a penstock (typically, a large-diameter iron pipe). A small frame shed enclosed the machinery. No evidence of this was observed in the field, likely due to foliage and/or drainage changes over time. The "powerhouse" was constructed in 1923 by James Powers, the owner of the property across the street. He made an agreement with Abraham Miller, the owner of the former creamery which was now his residence, to build the "powerhouse." The agreement noted that the arrangement was to last for 50 years (Town of Montville Land Records, Volume 3:23; Clouette 2009).

Bungalow. According to twentieth-century maps, aerial photographs and personal accounts, there was a small building, recalled as a "bungalow," located on the northwest side of Powers Brook, across from the Creamery building (U.S.G.S. 1939, 1972; Fairchild Aerial Survey 1934; Baer 2011). Due to the periodic flooding of the creek the building was raised above the ground, possibly on stilts, and did not have a basement or foundation. It appears to have been demolished in the mid-1970s. The area where this building formerly was located was both overgrown with heavy vegetation and partially flooded at the time of the 2011 archaeological study and so could not be investigated.

Barn/Shed. Approximately 50 feet southwest of the creamery remains is a section of overgrown fieldstone-rubble wall (Photo 26) that corresponds to the location of a large building shown on a 1934 aerial photograph (Clouette and Harper 2007, revised 2008). Several poured cement pads that may have served as beam footings were noted inside the foundation. A former area resident, Seymour Baer, remembers the structure as a "shed" that may have also been described as a barn, which was used for cars in the mid twentieth-century, and perhaps served earlier as an icehouse (Baer 2011).

A photograph taken in ca.1938 shows the barn from a distance (see Photo 3). A typical New England side-door barn, the wood plank-sided structure appeared to have few distinguishing traits evident in the photograph. No windows or doors were visible on its gable end, facing the camera. Based on the photograph and the known dimensions of the *mikvah*, the northwestern side of the barn, facing the camera, appeared to be approximately 36 feet in length.

Previous Archaeological Investigations

The NEHFES Synagogue and Creamery Site was given an official State of Connecticut archaeological site number (86-16) in 1996, when it was documented as part of a road widening survey for adjacent CT Route 85 (Soulsby and Clouette 1996). However, the site had been known to researchers for many years. In 1990, the SHPO approved a grant to survey

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historic synagogues in Connecticut. The survey was completed in 1991, and Nancy R. Savin, now the President of the NEHFES, contributed a photograph of the former Chesterfield synagogue and provided a short account of its creation (Ransom 1991). Of the 46 synagogues included in the survey, 15 were listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1995 and 1996 (Charles 1996). The official state context for Eastern Connecticut, published by the SHPO, notes the construction of the Chesterfield synagogue and creamery as an important ethnic milestone in the history of the Eastern Uplands region of the state (Spencer 1993). In 2007, a Connecticut Historic Resources Inventory Form was completed for the NEHFES Synagogue and Creamery Site, and it was subsequently listed by the SHPO as a Connecticut State Archaeological Preserve (Clouette 2007, revised 2008).

- 2008 Investigations

The narrow, northwestern most portions of the NEHFES Synagogue and Creamery Site that is owned by the Connecticut Department of Transportation (ConnDOT) was subjected to a Phase I Archaeological Reconnaissance Survey in 2008, prior to additional planned improvements to the intersection of CT Routes 161 and 85 by ConnDOT (Harper 2008). Phase IB shovel testing occurred along the west side of CT Route 161 (Flanders Road), in the area surrounding the former creamery building cellar foundation, and on the north side of the cellar foundation. There were a total of 32 shovel test pits excavated, with a total of 150 artifacts recovered. The artifacts included late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century architectural and domestic materials, as well as broken milk bottle fragments thought to be associated with the creamery.

- 2011 Investigations

Archaeological testing of the *mikvah* and synagogue portion of the site was completed in June 2011 (HPI 2011). At the *mikvah*, testing entailed the hand excavation of four 50 by 50cm (20 by 20in) shovel tests (STs) placed inside the building immediately outside the poured-concrete bath, and to the northwest, southwest, and southeast of the building foundation. All STs placed outside the foundation were sufficiently removed so as not to disturb the actual foundation remains.

Archaeological material from ST 1 placed adjacent to the bath recovered a large quantity of burned wood, cut and wire nails, brick fragments, white and clear bottle glass, cranberry red glass that could be from a lamp globe, and a single mother-of-pearl button. The ST terminated at a poured-concrete floor. A brick, with the letters "ING" on it, was found on the surface inside the foundation, and likely represents the remains of the brick chimney stack that abutted the ritual bath to warm the water. As will be detailed below, the NEHFES Meeting Minutes book indicates that more money could be charged for the use of a heated *mikvah*, and that the ritual butcher who periodically may have lived upstairs was responsible for heating the water in preparation for use.

STs placed outside the *mikvah* building contained architectural debris such as window glass, nails, and brick fragments. Bottle glass, some slightly melted, and three pieces of scalloped whiteware were also recovered around the foundation, likely reflecting the part time use of the upper floor of the structure as a dwelling. In addition to the recovered artifacts, a fairly extensive midden consisting of rusted galvanized buckets (post-1870, AGA n.d.), screw lip bottles (post-1924, Polak 1994), and plastic was observed west of the *mikvah* along a stone wall that demarcates the property boundary (see Photos 17 and 18). The majority of observed midden artifacts is outside the NEHFES landholdings, but may represent materials associated with the use of the property.

Four STs were also placed outside of the synagogue foundation; two immediately adjacent to the stone foundation wall, and two removed by a meter (3.3 ft). Artifacts recovered reflect both the architectural structure of the synagogue, as well as its religious function. At the east end of the structure, cobalt-blue cut window glass found in the upper levels of a ST likely represent pieces of the original stained-glass oculus that crowned the ark (see Photo 8). A photograph of the synagogue's interior taken after it suffered its first fire shows an empty circle where this stained glass window had existed (see Photo 4). Blue, the Hebrew color of divinity, is significant because it is the color of the sea and the sky, and is thought to possibly represent equilibrium, lying between dark and light (Eisenberg 2004). The recovered blue glass is not angled and would not have been part of a Magen David symbol (Star of David), but rather its curved edges suggests it was part of a more flowing motif. Likely, additional pieces of this religious icon are still buried in the soils surrounding the synagogue.

No personal items were recovered near the synagogue, but one piece of a mochaware vessel and several pieces of colorless bottle glass were identified. It is likely that additional artifacts reflecting community activities and social events would be found farther away from the synagogue structure. In addition, it is probable a privy stood on the property somewhere to serve worshipers, although this was likely removed from the synagogue structure for reasons of sacredness and cleanliness.

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Disposition of artifacts

The artifacts that were recovered during the 2008 investigations are being curated by Archaeological and Historical Services, Inc. until arrangements have been made with ConnDOT and the NEHFES for transfer to a permanent repository. The artifacts that were recovered during the 2011 investigations have been transferred to the NEHFES.

Integrity

- Map 5, Lot 2: Synagogue/*Mikvah* Parcel

Archaeological testing undertaken in 2011 found *in situ* archaeological deposits adjacent to both the *mikvah* and the synagogue (HPI 2011). An intact historical horizon was found beneath an upper layer of organic matter littered with architectural debris from each of the former structures. Artifacts recovered from around the foundation of each included architectural material as well as a few non-structural items. Archaeological integrity was found to be good, and the lack of disturbance observed across the site suggests that its overall site integrity is very good. Future archaeological excavations are likely to encounter *in situ* deposits that would further contribute to the growing database of information about these resource types, and the Jewish population that the site served.

The *mikvah* building foundation was reviewed by engineers for structural integrity in 2011 (Acly 2011). The study found that the foundation has suffered damage (see Photos 11-13), and specifically noted the following (Acly 2011:6-7):

- Vegetative overgrowth;
- Deteriorated masonry in part due to moisture damage;
- Stability issues at the east wall;
- Cracks in the south wall;
- Exposed masonry on the top wall, which leaves the masonry open to the elements and potential future damage; and,
- Cracks in the *mikvah*'s western side wall.

The foundation of the synagogue was also found to be suffering from the effects of vegetative overgrowth that is quickening the destruction of the mortar materials (see Photos 6 and 7). The loss of mortar has caused the foundation to crumble and become unstable (Acly 2011:5-6).

- Map 5, Lot 3: Creamery Parcel

Archaeological testing of the creamery was undertaken in 2008 (Clouette and Harper 2007, revised 2008). At that time archaeologists concluded that subsurface conditions were intact around the creamery, and wrote:

No episodes of ground disturbance were observed during the walkover for the State Archaeological Preserve designation; presumably, whatever cultural materials were deposited during the synagogue, creamery, or domestic occupations are still intact... Unfortunately, the north/northeast portion of the site was inadvertently damaged by the installation of a water main along Route 85 by the City of New London. Overall, the site integrity is very good, as evidenced by testing in 2008.

The disturbance caused by the installation of the water main was mostly limited to the swath of land between the creamery foundation and CT Route 85, although some loose boulders and soil were deposited within the foundation interior as a result. Likely there was also some disturbance north of the creamery where CT Route 85 was improved over Powers Brook and a culvert was installed.

Archaeological testing in 2008 at the creamery found levels of fill below an upper level of either thick duff or rich organic material immediately around the creamery foundation. Artifacts recovered during the 2008 testing reflected the use of the site as a creamery (Photo 24), as well as architectural and domestic remains dating from the late nineteenth- and twentieth-centuries.

Although soils around the creamery foundation are predominantly intact, an engineering report detailing the integrity of the foundation identified structural issues (Acly 2011:4-5). Specifically, it noted the following concerns, and recommended specific measures to prevent further deterioration of the creamery foundation (see Photos 20-22):

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- Potentially damaging vegetative overgrowth;
- Bulging of the south and east walls;
- Cracking and movement of the east wall;
- North wall slenderness (a term to describe the ratio of height to thickness), which could lead to future damage;
- Deteriorated masonry; and,
- Exposed masonry on the top wall, which leaves the masonry open to the elements and potential future damage.

A retaining wall to the north of the creamery was found to be in good condition, but overgrown with vegetation (Acly 2011:5). Additionally, there are overgrown trees within the foundation on the upper level to the south that are contributing factors in the deterioration of the creamery foundation.

The barn foundation was reviewed, and was also found to be overgrown with vegetation. A tree growing at its southwest corner was found to have dislodged the dry-laid stone foundation, causing local collapse (Acly 2011:7).

Contributing and Non-Contributing Resources

The entire NEHFES Synagogue and Creamery Site, including all of the archaeological features described above, is a contributing resource. There are no non-contributing resources.

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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.

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.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RELIGION

ETHNIC HERITAGE/EUROPEAN

INDUSTRY

ARCHEOLOGY/HISTORIC – NON-ABORIGINAL

Period of Significance

1892-1953

Significant Dates

1892 (Synagogue)

ca. 1910 (*Mikvah*)

1892 (Creamery)

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

Jewish-American

Architect/Builder

Ben and Rock Lyons, contractors

Period of Significance (justification)

The NEHFES Synagogue and Creamery Site was first developed by the NEHFES in 1892, when the synagogue and creamery were built, and represents the first year of the Period of Significance. The precise date that the *mikvah* was constructed is unknown, but is believed to date to ca. 1910, based on a news article indicating it was in use by March 1910, its poured-concrete construction, and the fact that the NEHFES Minutes mention the *mikvah* for the first time in 1911. The terminal date for the site's Period of Significance, 1953, is based on the date the synagogue closed its doors

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for good. The Creamery, built in 1892, operated only until 1909 and was foreclosed upon in 1912 by the Baron de Hirsch Fund. It was sold several years later, and remained a functioning inn and residence until it burned in 1950.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

All of the land for the NEHFES Synagogue and Creamery Site was purchased by the religious organization that is now known as the NEHFES. In 1886, several NEHFES descendants, including current President Nancy R. Savin, arranged to erect the commemorative stone monument that is situated next to the synagogue remains. In 2006, the NEHFES, which had been defunct since the synagogue closed in 1953, was reactivated as a 501 (c)(3) not for profit corporation and was able to take legal possession of the land that includes the synagogue and *mikvah* remains. Today, the entire site has been designated State of Connecticut Archaeological Preserve #24.

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

The NEHFES Synagogue and Creamery Site is significant for both its historical and archaeological value, under Criteria A and D, respectively. Beginning in the early 1890s, a number of Eastern European Orthodox Jewish families, many recently settled in Brooklyn from areas of Russia, began a migration to Eastern Connecticut towns and villages where they were able to purchase inexpensive land of former Yankee farmers, often with the financial help from philanthropic organizations such as the Baron de Hirsch Fund. Chesterfield was one of the first of these villages to be established as a Russian Jewish enclave. Hayim Pankin, a wealthy and enterprising Jewish immigrant from New York, was the first of the group to purchase land in Chesterfield in 1890, or possibly before. But it was Hirsch Kaplan, an unordained rabbi who led a small Lubovitcher group from Williamsburg, Brooklyn, who was given a Torah enabling him to establish a new congregation in Chesterfield. By January 1892, there were some 52 Jewish families in Chesterfield. The newly formed religious congregation was known initially as the Society Agudas Achim (meaning Society of Brethren) when it was formed in 1890, and worshipped initially in Kaplan's farmhouse. In 1892, at the suggestion of Baron de Hirsch agent Arthur Reichow, the group changed its name to the New England Hebrew Farmers of the Emanuel Society, and proceeded to have a synagogue built on the site. That same year, the NEHFES sold a portion of their holdings on the site to the newly formed New England Hebrew Farmers Creamery Association, which, with a mortgage from the Baron de Hirsch Fund, had a cooperative creamery built, giving the farmers an outlet for selling and processing milk produced on their farms. In time, the synagogue parcel came to include a *mikvah*, or ritual bathhouse, constructed in ca. 1910 with funds from the women of the congregation, and its associated stone well. The creamery parcel supported an associated icehouse and a second stone well, in addition to a barn (Clouette and Harper 2007, revised 2008; Harper 2008). In the 1920s, a small hydro-electric "powerhouse" was constructed within the perennial stream, now known as Powers Brook, which runs through the site. The "powerhouse," which is no longer extant, provided electricity to both the former creamery building, then converted into a dwelling and inn, and the property across the street where Powers Pond, which once served as a local ice pond, is situated (Clouette 2009). The former creamery building, once converted to an inn, continued to be owned and operated by local Jewish residents, and contributed to the summer resort trade in the area through mid-century. The "Back to the Land" movement that promoted the settlement of Jewish émigrés on farmland in late 1890s America was particularly evident in Eastern Connecticut, where a number of these small hamlets were established, with the Chesterfield community being one of the first. The NEHFES Synagogue and Creamery Site is directly associated with this cultural and historical event (Ransom 1991, Spencer 1993, Donohue and Greenfield 2010). Additionally, because the site has never been redeveloped and contains well-preserved archaeological remains associated with this settlement, the site has the potential to yield valuable archaeological data that, as will be detailed below, have been markedly understudied in the United States.

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

The NEHFES Synagogue and Creamery Site owes its significance to several important factors. It is a religious site, containing the remains of a synagogue and *mikvah* built and used by an Orthodox Jewish congregation. The families that established themselves in Chesterfield were recent Russian immigrant pioneers, who created an insular ethnic enclave based on the model of the *shtetl* they had experienced in Eastern Europe, with cooperative associations and interdependence on fellow residents as a strong focus of their heritage. The creamery that was built to spur local industry was a prime example of this type of community template. Today, the buildings and structures on the site exist only as archaeological remains, which provide an additional level of significance for this already historic site.

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The following discussion explores each of these areas of significance, outlined above.

- Religion

The Jewish residents who settled in Chesterfield beginning in about 1890 hailed from the Pale of Settlement in Eastern Europe, generally from areas in what is now Russia. They practiced Orthodox Judaism, in contrast to Jews who had emigrated earlier in the nineteenth-century, primarily from Germany, many of whom practiced Reform Judaism. The group organized themselves in 1890 as the Society Agudas Achim (or Society of Brethren) but in 1892 changed the name to the New England Hebrew Farmers of the Emanuel Society. Arthur Reichow, an agent for the Baron de Hirsch Fund, the philanthropic organization that assisted many Jews in financing resettlement in the United States, was instrumental in convincing the group to change its name, recommending that they call themselves the "Society of Hebrew Farmers in New England," a variant of the name they officially settled upon (Baron de Hirsch Fund Records, Box 64, 1892-1915). The Baron de Hirsch Fund contributed about \$1800 for construction of the synagogue, which was built by Ben and Rock Lyons in 1892 and overseen by Hirsch (Harris) Kaplan and his sons (Colby 1936). Ultimately, the synagogue was said to cost about \$2000 (*The Day* 1892). Consecrated on May 8, 1892, its purpose was recorded in the Town of Montville Land Records and is preserved on the commemorative monument that was dedicated on the site in 1986. It reads:

We, the subscribers, for the purpose of perpetuating the cause of Judaism in all its essential purity, and cherishing and promoting its great and fundamental principle in the Rock upon which our undying Faith is founded, the belief in and worship of one God, hereby unite to form a Society for public worship according to the principles and practices of our Faith.

The NEHFES Minutes Book shows that the society adopted a democratic constitution in January of 1894, elected new officers every year, governed their members' behavior, adjudicated disputes and in general conducted the society's business beyond just the running of the synagogue.

The synagogue was a simple frame building, one story in height with no basement. Photo 1 shows that its frame exterior walls had imbricated wood shingles interspersed with traditional wooden clapboards. A Jewish version of a small rustic church, it had several basic adornments, including a cupola on the roof above its entrance, a Star of David over the doorway, decorative sunbursts carved beneath the lintels above the windows, and a small stained glass window crowning the ark that held the Torah. The doors of the ark itself were draped in black velvet cloth. According to Orthodox Jewish practices, the interior, which contained wooden pews, was divided into separate spheres for men and women, marked by a long curtain, known as a *mehitzah* (Savin 2004:6). The furnishings were donated by members of the congregation and extended friends and family (*The Day* 1892). A newspaper article reported that the synagogue was to be repaired and enlarged in 1898, although the specific changes to the building were not noted (*The Day* 1898).

By 1910, according to a newspaper article, a *mikvah*, or ritual bathhouse, had been constructed on the site in conjunction with the synagogue. *The Day* (March 24, 1910) reported:

There is much excitement at the present among the Hebrews in the Chesterfield colony. The women of the Jewish society have at their own expense built a house which is used partly as a dwelling and partly as a bathing house for the women.

It was proposed by one section of the men to have the new rabbi take up his residence in the building, ousting the present occupant and disturbing the bathers, who have their quarters in the basement of the building. The whole matter was argued out in the synagogue a few days ago, the proceedings at times being quite warm. No settlement has been reached, but the women claim they will win their point.

Clouette and Harper (2007, revised 2008) note:

The remains of the ritual bath or *mikvah* on the property are especially evocative because they recall not just the presence of Jews but their commitment to preserving the rituals of their distinctive culture in new surroundings. According to Orthodox practice, women used the *mikvah* after menstruation or childbirth, men might enter the bath before certain holy days, and immersion in a *mikvah* could purify vessels and utensils for kosher use. The *mikvah* also played a role in conversion and pre-nuptial rites. For many, the

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mikvah was more important to the community than the synagogue itself. Although there remain a few country synagogues in eastern Connecticut, it is not known if any retain a similar feature.

The NEHFES Minutes contain several entries during the 1910s that address the *mikvah*. The first mention of the *mikvah* is in 1911, although as noted above it had been constructed by at least 1910 and there was discussion among the congregation (although not recorded in the Minutes) as to its use. The congregation hired a series of *shokhets*, or ritual butchers, who in addition to their kosher butchering duties for the community, were responsible for maintaining the *mikvah* and the building containing it, and drawing the water for the *mikvah* baths. The Minutes note that there were three fee categories for its use: a *mikvah* (50 cents), a bath (50 cents), and a bath when the *mikvah* was heating up (15 cents) (NEHFES Minutes, Oct. 25, 1915). This suggests that the facility was being used for both ritual *mikvah* purposes, presumably by women, but also might be used by men or women at non-ritualistic times as a standard bath.

The presence of this feature on the site, along with the NEHFES Minutes that further describe its daily use, are invaluable in illuminating a religious practice that is not well documented in archival sources, in part because it was a structure used largely by women, who especially in Orthodox Judaism, are heavily underrepresented in congregational written records from this period.

- Ethnic Heritage

In her memoir describing Chesterfield, Micki Savin (2004) describes the small enclave of Jewish residents as "A *Shtetl* in America." *Shtetl* is the name for small villages with large Jewish populations, which prior to World War II were located in Eastern Europe, most notably within the Pale of Settlement. They describe a communal way of life, organized around the synagogue and a small cluster of businesses. Savin (2004:11) writes:

Alien to the land, alien to the language, alien to the customs, they created their own village, a *shtetl*, similar to which they were accustomed. There was a blacksmith, a cobbler, a Hebrew teacher, a synagogue, a bakery, and a cemetery. Although the families had come from diverse localities in Russia, their shared culture formed a cohesive community among their Yankee neighbors.

Names of many of the residents who settled in Chesterfield can be found in the NEHFES synagogue Minutes. The men were referred to as "brothers," and many took an active part in the collective governance of the synagogue. The NEHFES Minutes were written in Yiddish, their native language. An offshoot of the NEHFES organization was the New England Hebrew Farmers Creamery Association, formed in 1892. Its cooperative members were all part of the NEHFES community as well, and oversaw the operation of the creamery on the site. The strong bond among the Chesterfield Jewish residents, similar to that found in the *shtetls* of Eastern Europe, allowed for a collective existence that relied heavily on interdependence between residents and families, and harkened to an ethnic heritage of previous generations (Kline 1976; Savin 2004; Donohue and Greenfield 2010).

- Industry

The NEHFES site contains the foundation remains of a former creamery building, erected in 1892. Most of the Jewish farmers in Chesterfield and surrounding areas had settled on land that already had been farmed for years and whose soil was now depleted and frequently rocky. Because the farms were not well suited for large scale agriculture, most Jewish farmers turned to dairying as a primary means of income. The Baron de Hirsch Fund, recognizing that the Jewish farmers would need an outlet for processing their milk into cream, butter, and cheese for market, and that no one farmer could afford the means to do so independently, financed the creation of a cooperative creamery in Chesterfield. The Fund provided \$3000 to build the creamery, and held the mortgage (Baron de Hirsch Fund Records, Box 64, 1892-1915; Joseph 1935; Donohue and Greenfield 2010). In 1900, a newly formed credit institution of the Baron de Hirsch Fund, known as "The Jewish Agricultural and Industrial Aid Society," included as one of its objectives "the encouragement of cooperative creameries" (Joseph 1935:129; Donohue and Greenfield 2010).

At the height of its production during the spring months, the creamery processed 1300 quarts of milk a day; local farmers were paid 1.5 to 2 cents a quart for their raw milk (Colby 1936; Donohue and Greenfield 2010). The process relied on steam power; a list of equipment made in June 1892 when the creamery was mortgaged (Montville Land Records, Vol. 20, p. 579) noted the following inventory:

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1 10 H.P. boiler, 1 injector, 1 engine, 1 Alpha de Laval belt-driven separator, 1 churn, 1 upright pump, 1 Mason P. butter worker, 50 twenty- and forty-quart cans, 2 scales, 2 receiving vats, 2 water casks, 1 milk cooler, and all iron shafting, pipes, pulleys and hangers, all belting, and tools.

The NEHFES Minutes and a recent archaeological study of the creamery portion of the site (Harper 2008) note that there was an icehouse associated with the creamery as well. Clouette and Harper (2007, revised 2008) note:

Such small steam-powered cooperative creameries were found throughout the Connecticut countryside in the years 1880-1920. The development of large belt-driven rotary churns and centrifugal cream separators made possible a scale of operation within the capabilities of a group of nearby farmers but beyond what most individual farmers could hope to achieve. Eventually, competition from large urban dairies, which brought in milk by train from a wide area, put Connecticut's small creameries at a disadvantage, and few operated beyond the World War I period.

The demise of the NEHFES creamery was due to several factors. As the Chesterfield community grew, many farmers supplemented their income by taking in boarders during the summer months (Savin 2004). These visitors, Orthodox Jews themselves, hailed from urban areas and were attracted to countryside retreats where they could escape the heat of the city and partake in generous kosher meals offered by farm families. In order to feed the visitors, farmers kept much of their milk for the boarders during summer months; production at the creamery dropped to only 200-300 quarts per day (Colby 1936; Donohue and Greenfield 2010). Without a reliable supply of raw milk, the creamery could not operate economically for long. Additionally, by the 1910s norms were changing, and milk was now being touted as a nutritional element in children's diets (Jordan 1921). Until this time, much milk was discarded after its cream had been extracted, but now that milk was being seen as a worthwhile product in its own right, small scale creameries that could not process large quantities of milk were becoming obsolete.

Additionally, there was a high turnover of personnel operating the creamery. A letter to the Baron de Hirsch Fund from the General Manager of the Jewish Agricultural and Industrial Aid Society in 1911 indicates:

This creamery, as I understand it, was at first conducted by the Association who kept a paid superintendent for about two years. Then it was taken over by P. Schwartz who conducted it as an independent enterprise under some agreement with the Association. In 1903 the creamery was closed and was not occupied again until 1907, when an arrangement was made with Louis Schwartz who operated it until 1909. It has been idle since.

The foreman of the creamery during the time it was operated by P. Schwartz was J. Edward Powers, who lived across the street on CT Route 85 and for whom Powers Pond and Powers Brook are named (Colby 1936; Clouette 2009). Another letter in the Baron de Hirsch Fund collection notes that Louis Schwartz spent several months over the winter of 1907-1908 "rebuilding and refitting" the creamery before he could reopen it (Baron de Hirsch Fund Records, Box 64, 1892-1915).

In 1912, the Baron de Hirsch Fund foreclosed on the creamery property, and for several years there was much correspondence within the organization about the fate of the creamery building. In 1915, a public auction was proposed (and then revoked, although an advertisement for the event was printed), and eventually the property was sold to Julius Kaplan, a NEHFES member. Kaplan in turn sold the creamery building (with its icehouse) and its land to Abraham Miller, who converted the building into a residence by removing its gabled dormer and cupola and adding a full second floor. The building served as both a dwelling, and later, an inn (known as Galper's Inn and operated by Miller's daughter, Rebecca Miller Galper, during the 1940s). The building burned down in April 1950 (Colby 1936; *The Day* 1950; Harper 2008; Donohue and Greenfield 2010).

The NEHFES creamery operated for only about 12 or 13 years over a 20 year period. Local conditions, as well as market forces, ultimately doomed the creamery to obsolescence. This phenomenon was not unique to Chesterfield; the heyday for these types of industries across the Northeast was the late nineteenth-century, with few surviving beyond the 1910s (e.g. NYAC 1986-2009). However, the limited dates of the rural creamery industry afford a targeted window into a very specific production process. Phase IB archaeological investigations have been completed at the creamery portion of the site, revealing evidence of its use during that period. The well maintained records of both the Baron de Hirsch Fund archives for Chesterfield, as well as the detailed Minutes of the NEHFES, provide additional insights into the mechanisms

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by which the industry of rural creameries in Eastern Connecticut operated during the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century.

Galper's Inn was part of the larger Jewish resort trade that began in earnest in the 1920s in Connecticut. Whereas during the 1890s and 1910s urban Jews came to the Connecticut countryside to partake of farm life during the summers, by the 1920s the movement had expanded to include larger Jewish-owned and operated hotels and resorts that catered specifically to Jewish clientele with their kosher food and culture and proximity to local synagogues (Donohue and Greenfield 2010; Hoffman 2010). Galper's Inn was a small establishment, but nonetheless was a part of this overall trend.

- Archaeology and Research Questions

In addition to its rich historical value, the NEHFES Synagogue and Creamery Site has added significance as an archaeological site. The State of Connecticut has given the site both an archaeological site designation (86-16), and has listed it as State Archaeological Preserve #24. The site was listed on the State Register of Historic Places in 2007.

Today, none of the former structures on the property are standing, and only features and foundation remains are visible on the modern landscape. These include the foundation of the synagogue, the *mikvah* and an associated well, the creamery and an associated well, a barn, retaining walls, cement footing pads, and a midden. Although many historical records are available relating to the site, most notably the NEHFES Minutes that have entries ranging from 1892-1918, there are still many questions about the site that cannot be known from written records or personal recollections, and which future archaeological investigations could address.

For instance, there are large sections of the site that are heavily foliated and, as such, have never been studied. Although historical records and interviews with former residents have not indicated such features, it seems reasonable to expect that there could be additional archaeological resources, such as former privies, located on the property. There might also be additional trash middens, pits, or other deposits associated with the use of the site that are not visible due to the dense understory.

Secondly, while there are good records indicating the date of construction for the synagogue, much less is known about the *mikvah*. The newspaper account from *The Day* in March 1910 indicates that the *mikvah* had been constructed by this time, and the poured-concrete construction supports a date of ca. 1910 (Clouette and Harper 2007, revised 2008). Interestingly, the NEHFES Minutes do not mention a *mikvah* until 1911, but clearly it had been built at least by 1910, and had been funded by the women of the congregation. A 1914 entry indicates the *mikvah* was being both "built" and "fixed," but the translation from Yiddish may be inexact. Additional archaeological investigations may be able to provide more details about the original *mikvah* construction, indicate whether an earlier *mikvah* could have been located on the site prior to 1910, and provide clues about its use. Clouette and Harper (2007, revised 2008) write:

According to orthodox practice, the *mikvah* had to be part of the structure of its building, not a freestanding tub or pool, so close examination of the stonework might show different episodes of construction. The nearby well appears to be an obvious source of water for the ritual bath; however, pumped and piped water was not allowed. How was the water conveyed to the bath? Is there evidence of a cistern or other storage device? Was the well water used to supplement collected rainwater? Footnote: According to a common understanding of the requirements, once the *mikvah* was filled with requisite amount of freeflowing water (approximately 150 gallons), the remainder could be from some other source.

The Phase IB testing that occurred in 2011 surrounding the *mikvah* did not include removing all of the accumulated soil and vegetation from the tank portion of the feature to investigate any construction details, including possible tiling or adornment, that could be present, because the goal was to garner archaeological data without destroying or otherwise impacting any of the already fragile site features. For example, a *mikvah* thought to be constructed in the early twentieth century in the basement of a former tenement building on East Third Street in Lower Manhattan, which was excavated in 2003, was found to have a patterned tiling on the side walls and a tiled Star of David on the floor (CITY/SCAPE 2003). It is possible that the NEHFES *mikvah* could have had similar decorations. It is also possible that future archaeological investigations could provide additional data about use of the facility. NEHFES Minutes show that the person responsible for maintaining and filling the *mikvah* was also the ritual butcher, or *shokhet*, who was hired on a yearly basis and was given free housing by the congregation, in a building referred to in the Minutes variously as a house, a hut, or rooms, and probably referred to the upper story of the *mikvah* building. There is an entry noting a well would be built by the butcher

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"near the hut" in 1914, which likely refers to the well recorded adjacent to the *mikvah* building. The Phase IB archaeological investigations at limited locations within and surrounding the *mikvah* revealed artifacts including a button, as well as some domestic material. Future testing could illuminate further use of the structure by both bathers in the *mikvah* and the use of the upper floor as a residence by the butcher, and could possibly locate any associated cisterns or privies.

There is also much that could be learned about the creamery building. Phase IB testing conducted in 2008 identified artifacts both associated with the creamery (such as milk bottle glass) and with later use of the building as a residence and inn. But due to the heavy vegetation obscuring visibility, little is known of other features thought to be associated with the building, such as an icehouse and a small hydro-electric "powerhouse" and its frame shed that was built in the 1920s within the creek bed near the creamery. More information about these features, along with additional testing in the vicinity of the building that could reveal evidence of piping or drainage features, privies, and trash middens, could provide important data about the use of the site.

Finally, it should be stressed that the NEHFES Synagogue and Creamery Site contains what may be a nearly unique set of archaeological characteristics. Within the United States, and certainly within the Northeast and Connecticut, there appear to be very few (if any) archaeological sites that contain ruins of both a synagogue and a *mikvah*, and none that could be found that contain a creamery building as well. Synagogue buildings, when they are studied by cultural resource specialists, generally are limited to extant architectural examples, with an emphasis placed on the superstructure and historic significance (e.g. Ransom 1991). It is rare to find synagogue buildings in the United States subjected to archaeological study, although certainly some examples exist, and more exist in other countries. More critically, however, there have been only a very few *mikvot* (plural of *mikvah*) excavated within the United States, although clearly with a sizeable Orthodox Jewish population in many areas of the country many of these baths must have existed at one time, and some are still in use by these populations today. There are also *mikvot* that have been subjected to archaeological investigations in other countries. However, to our knowledge, the only other *mikvot* excavated by archaeologists within the United States are two examples in Lower Manhattan, New York (at 5 Allen Street [Bergoffen 1997] and 308 East Third Street [CITY/SCAPE 2003]), and at the Lloyd Street Synagogue in Baltimore, Maryland (Ecker and Jackson 2000). The *mikvah* at the NEHFES site appears to be the first rural example found in an archaeological context. Although there were specific rules governing the construction of *mikvot*, including basic size requirements to accommodate a standard adult, the use of specific water sources, and drainage considerations, site specific conditions appear to have played not inconsequential roles in determining the exact characteristics of each *mikvah*, with variations observed depending on resources at hand (Bergoffen 1997, 2011). The NEHFES site *mikvah* has the potential to add critical data to a vastly underrepresented archaeological resource category.

Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

The NEHFES Synagogue and Creamery Site owes its genesis to outside financing provided by the Baron de Hirsch Fund, a philanthropic organization founded in New York City in 1891 with funds from Baron Maurice de Hirsch, a wealthy German Jew who had made his fortune in industry and railroads. The Baron de Hirsch Fund was incorporated to assist recently arrived Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe through financial aid, and held as one of its main goals the resettlement of Russian Jews on farmland, known as the "Back to the Land" movement. Baron de Hirsch wrote:

What I desire to accomplish, what after many failures has come to be the object of my life and that for which I am ready to stake my wealth and intellectual powers, is to give a portion of my companions in faith the possibility of finding a new existence primarily as farmers and also as handicraftsmen in those lands where the laws and religious tolerance permit them to carry on the struggle for existence as noble and responsible subjects of a human government (Lee 1970:214).

The Fund helped identify areas where farmland could be purchased inexpensively, often because former owners had "abandoned" the land due to poor conditions or had migrated away from the countryside to urban areas, or, by government invitation, to the West. Eastern Connecticut was one such location where many Russian Jews bought land, often with help from the Fund. One of the goals of the Fund was to loan money to Russian Jewish immigrants to help them buy farms, although those applying for aid had to have some money of their own to invest, as a condition of the mortgage (Joseph

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1935:34). In Montville, the Fund issued over 120 loans between 1895 and 1924, with most of the new farmers settling in Chesterfield (Cunningham and Warner 2001:37; Clouette and Harper 2007, revised 2008).

In addition to the personal loans given to the farmers of Chesterfield, the Fund provided the money to build both the NEHFES Synagogue and Creamery on the site. Both of these buildings served to anchor the Chesterfield community, albeit in different ways. In order for a Jewish hamlet to thrive, a synagogue was needed. Since Orthodox Jews were forbidden to drive on the Sabbath, the synagogue needed to be within walking distance from their homes. And because many Orthodox Jewish prayer services required a *minyan*, or quorum of ten male adults, it was advantageous to build the synagogue in a central location (Kline 1976:68; Donohue and Greenfield 2010:83). The NEHFES site, located at the crossroads of the two local roadways that define Chesterfield, and with an available and robust nearby water supply, was an obvious choice to build a synagogue. Likewise, the Creamery building, erected the same year as the synagogue on the site, gave Jewish farmers, who relied heavily on dairying, a market for their milk, and a way to supplement their farm income.

The Chesterfield community was one of the first rural enclaves of Orthodox Jews established in Connecticut. Later areas included Colchester, Lebanon, Vernon, Ellington, and Somers, with the Baron de Hirsch Fund financing a second synagogue in Ellington in 1915 (Donohue and Greenfield 2010:14). But the "Back to the Land" movement was not limited to Connecticut. Perhaps the most well-known Jewish farming colony that resulted from this popular trend was established in Woodbine, New Jersey. Some 5,300 acres were purchased by the Fund in 1891, and the first Baron de Hirsch Agricultural School was established at Woodbine in 1894. Several students enrolled at the Woodbine Agricultural School in those early years were from Chesterfield (Joseph 1935:60; Donohue and Greenfield 2010:12). Ultimately, the "Back to the Land" movement, led by the Baron de Hirsch Fund and other similar Jewish aid organizations, empowered Jewish farmers to settle individually or collectively in numerous locations throughout the United States, including New York, Louisiana, Arkansas, Colorado, Michigan, North and South Dakota, and Oregon (Herscher 1981).

The experience of the NEHFES community speaks to both local conditions and national trends, both in its beginnings and its demise. The "Back to the Land" movement and its associated Jewish aid organizations permitted communities like Chesterfield to establish and sustain themselves during the 1890s and the first decades of the 1900s. The children of the original settlers learned English and assimilated into the larger local and national culture. But ultimately, the lure of big cities and the failure of small scale agricultural farms and dairies to compete with larger urban operations meant that these hamlets could not endure. In Chesterfield, the children of the original Jewish settlers increasingly left for better opportunities elsewhere, and many of them went on to lead highly successful lives in New London and Hartford. However, as a result of this urban migration, by the 1920s and 1930s the Chesterfield community had dwindled to only a few families (Colby 1936). Savin (2004) writes that by about 1930 the synagogue had difficulty generating a *minyan*, and that often it was only on the Jewish High Holy Days of *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur* that extended families returned to Chesterfield to fill the synagogue again. The synagogue sustained fire damage to its roof in 1950 when the former creamery building burned down (*The Day* 1950), and with the dwindling population, in 1953, the synagogue closed its doors for good. The Creamery, which had been built in 1892, lasted only until 1909, and was foreclosed upon in 1912 by the Baron de Hirsch Fund. These dates coincide with national developments. By at least the 1920s, larger regional dairies were being built to process and sell not only cream and butter, but also bottled milk, which was becoming increasingly popular for children due to national advertising campaigns that touted its nutritional value. Combined with improved transportation that allowed perishable dairy items to be shipped longer distances, small scale creameries simply could not compete. For example, a review of archaeological studies conducted in New York State that included rural creameries showed that none endured much beyond the early twentieth century (NYAC 1986-2009). At the NEHFES site, the creamery building was sold in 1915 to NEHFES member Abraham Miller, who converted the building into a residence, which later was operated as an inn by his daughter Rebecca Miller Galper, catering to the Jewish tourist trade during the 1940s. In 1950, this building burned down and was never reconstructed.

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New England Hebrew Farmers of the Emanuel Society Synagogue and Creamery Site **New London, Connecticut**
Name of Property County and State

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New England Hebrew Farmers of the Emanuel Society Synagogue and Creamery Site New London, Connecticut
Name of Property County and State

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New England Hebrew Farmers of the Emanuel Society Synagogue and Creamery Site New London, Connecticut
Name of Property County and State

Personal communication

Baer, Seymour

2011 Personal telephone communication with Faline Schneiderman-Fox of Historical Perspectives, Inc. June 15, 2011.

Bergoffen, Celia

2011 Personal telephone communication with Julie Abell Horn of Historical Perspectives, Inc. June 7, 2011.

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: NEHFES c/o Nancy R. Savin

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 1.77 acres

(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	Zone	Easting	Northing	3	Zone	Easting	Northing
	18	732640	4589700				
2	Zone	Easting	Northing	4	Zone	Easting	Northing

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

The site is located at the southwest corner of the intersection of CT Route 85 and CT Route 161. It contains two modern tax lots, known as Town of Montville Map 5, Lots 2 and 3. The site is bounded by CT Route 85 on the east, CT Route 161 on the north, Town of Montville Map 5, Lot 4 on the west, and Town of Montville Map 5, Lot 9 on the south. A perennial stream, now known as Powers Brook, runs through Lot 3 and along the western side of Lot 2.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The two modern tax lots that comprise the site were first purchased in 1892 by the Society Agudas Achim and the New England Hebrew Farmers of the Emanuel Society, its successor organization (Montville Land Records, Vol. 21, pages 614 and 627). The NEHFES used the southern of the two lots (Lot 2) for its synagogue and *mikvah*, and sold a portion of the northern of the two lots (Lot 3) to the New England Hebrew Farmers Creamery Association in 1892 (Montville Land Records, Vol. 20, page 579). The creamery portion of the site ultimately was sold to Abraham Miller after the creamery ceased operations in 1916 (Montville Land Records, Vol. 31, page 611). Miller converted the creamery building to a dwelling and inn, and his descendants continued to own the land until 2001, when they sold it to the State of Connecticut Department of Transportation, the current owner (Colby 1936, Montville Land Records, Vol. 354, page 696).

New England Hebrew Farmers of the Emanuel Society Synagogue and Creamery Site New London, Connecticut
Name of Property County and State

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Julie Abell Horn and Faline Schneiderman-Fox
organization Historical Perspectives, Inc. date November 16, 2011
street & number P.O. Box 3037 telephone (203) 226-7654
city or town Westport state CT zip code 06880
e-mail HPIx2@aol.com

Additional Documentation

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: New England Hebrew Farmers of the Emanuel Society Synagogue and Creamery Site
City or Vicinity: Chesterfield (Montville)
County: New London County
State: CT
Name of Photographer: Varies
Date of Photograph: Varies
Location of Original Digital Files: 7 Peters Lane, Westport, CT
Number of Photographs: 26

Photo #1, photographer unknown, date unknown.
Synagogue northwest façade (right) and northeast elevation (left), camera facing south.

Photo #2, photographer unknown, 1892-1909.
Creamery northeast façade, camera facing southwest.

Photo #3, photographer unknown, ca.1938.
Ira May in foreground, barn in background (extreme upper left corner), *mikvah* in background (upper left), synagogue roof visible behind *mikvah*, camera facing southeast.

Photo #4, photographer Nancy R. Savin, early 1970s.
Synagogue after fire, southeast interior elevation oculus above ark (center), camera facing southeast.

New England Hebrew Farmers of the Emanuel Society Synagogue and Creamery Site
Name of Property

New London, Connecticut
County and State

Photo #5, photographer unknown, September 1986.

Commemorative monument memorial service, plaque (right) and synagogue foundation remains (left), camera facing southwest.

Photo #6, photographer Elizabeth Acly, December 2010.

Fieldstone-rubble synagogue foundation, camera facing northwest.

Photo #7, photographer Elizabeth Acly, December 2010.

Fieldstone-rubble synagogue foundation, southwest elevation, camera facing northeast.

Photo #8, photographer Faline Schneiderman-Fox, June 2011.

Blue window glass likely from oculus, recovered from archaeological Shovel Test 6 placed one meter from southeast elevation of synagogue foundation.

Photo #9, photographer Faline Schneiderman-Fox, June 2011.

Shovel Test 7 placed immediately adjacent to southwest elevation of synagogue foundation, with foundation stones extending to 14 inches below grade and timber sill visible above, camera facing northeast.

Photo #10, photographer Faline Schneiderman-Fox, June 2011.

Memorial monument and plaque installed on site by descendents of the NEHFES, September 28, 1986, camera facing southeast.

Photo #11, photographer Elizabeth Acly, December 2010.

Mikvah building foundation with poured cement *mikvah* in foreground (left), camera facing south.

Photo #12, photographer Elizabeth Acly, December 2010.

Unbraced portion of dry-set exterior northeast elevation (foreground) of *mikvah* building foundation, and southeast interior wall (center right), camera facing south.

Photo #13, photographer Elizabeth Acly, December 2010.

Poured concrete *mikvah* (center), camera facing northwest.

Photo #14, photographer Elizabeth Acly, December 2010.

Water pipe protruding from surface and turning at an el into the former location of the second floor of the *mikvah* building (foreground), camera facing northwest.

Photo #15, photographer Faline Schneiderman-Fox, June 2011.

Exterior southwest *mikvah* wall bearing outlines of bricks or brick-colored staining (center), camera facing northeast.

Photo #16, photographer Faline Schneiderman-Fox, June 2011.

Water pipe on surface immediately northwest of *mikvah*.

Photo #17, photographer Faline Schneiderman-Fox, June 2011.

Galvanized metal pan on surface at midden located southwest of *mikvah* foundation.

Photo #18, photographer Faline Schneiderman-Fox, June 2011.

Glass bottle necks post-dating 1924 on surface at midden located southwest of *mikvah* foundation.

Photo #19, photographer Faline Schneiderman-Fox, June 2011.

Stone retaining wall along former driveway south of creamery, camera facing southeast.

Photo #20, photographer Elizabeth Acly, December 2010.

Fieldstone rubble creamery foundation, northwest (left) and southwest (right) elevations, camera facing east.

New England Hebrew Farmers of the Emanuel Society Synagogue and Creamery Site **New London, Connecticut**
Name of Property County and State

Photo #21, photographer Elizabeth Acly, December 2010.

Southeast wall of creamery foundation (right), and northeast wall of creamery foundation (center), camera facing northeast.

Photo #22, photographer Elizabeth Acly, December 2010.

Sloped concrete buttresses flanking door in southwest elevation of creamery foundation, camera facing northeast.

Photo #23, photographer Bruce Clouette, 2008.

Fragment of a creamer or milk bottle from the *New London and Mohegan Creameries* of New London. Found in test pit J-2 on the south side of the creamery foundation.

Photo #24, photographer Elizabeth Acly, December 2010.

Fieldstone rubble retaining wall north of creamery foundation, camera facing northeast.

Photo #25, photographer Elizabeth Acly, December 2010.

Rubble-stone lined well located northwest of the creamery foundation, measuring about four feet in diameter with a cast concrete cap, camera facing north.

Photo #26, photographer Elizabeth Acly, December 2010.

Fieldstone wall of former barn or shed south of creamery foundation, camera facing southeast.

Property Owner:

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

name New England Hebrew Farmers of the Emanuel Society, c/o Nancy R. Savin, President
street & number Apt. 3F, 3215 Netherland Avenue telephone 718-884-8362
city or town Riverdale state NY zip code 10463
Map 5, Lot 2

name State of Connecticut Department of Transportation
street & number 2800 Berlin Turnpike telephone 860-594-2000
city or town Newington state CT zip code 06131-7546
Map 5, Lot 3

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.

New England Hebrew Farmers of the Emanuel Society Synagogue and Creamery Site
Name of Property

New London, Connecticut
County and State

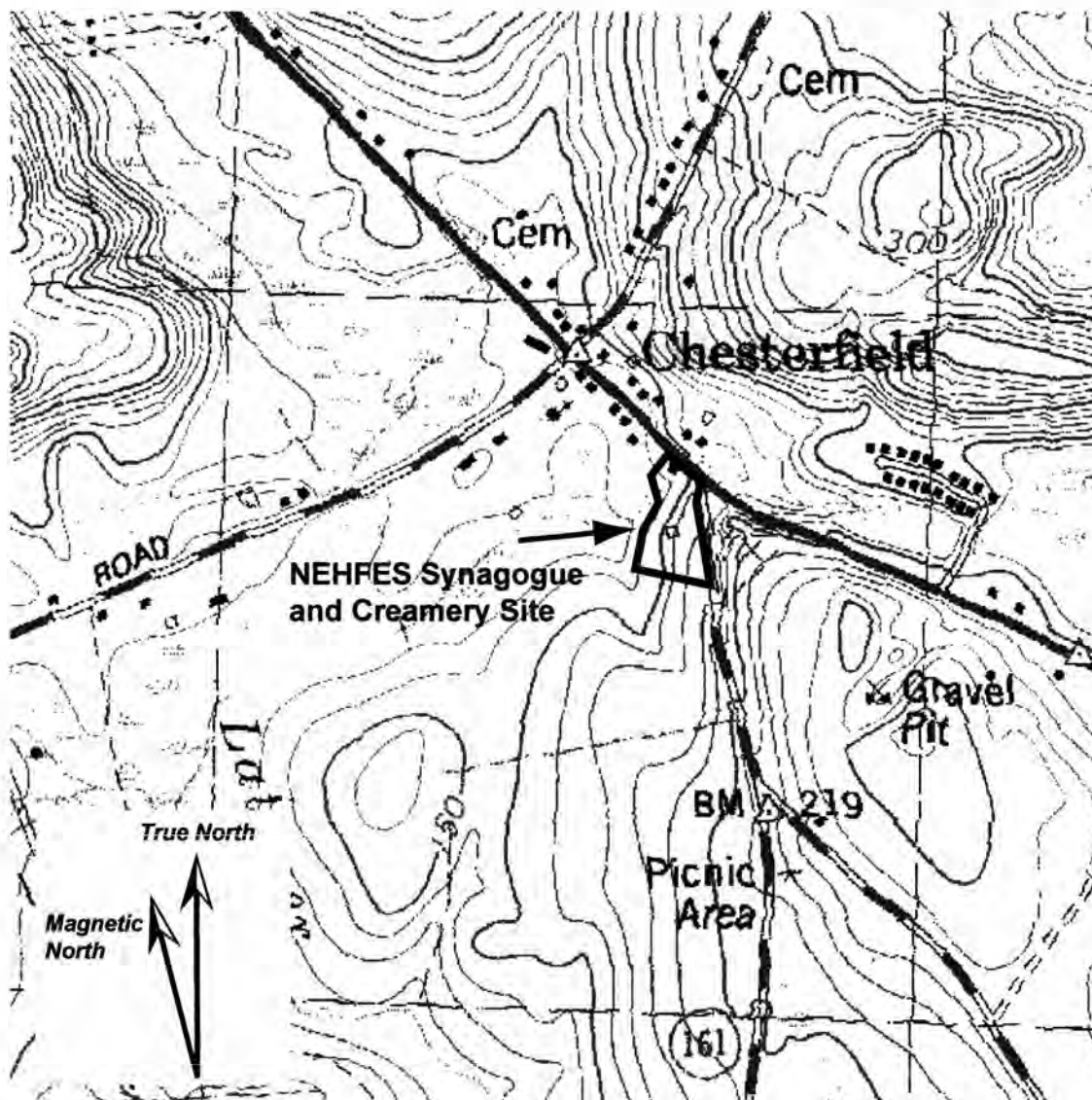


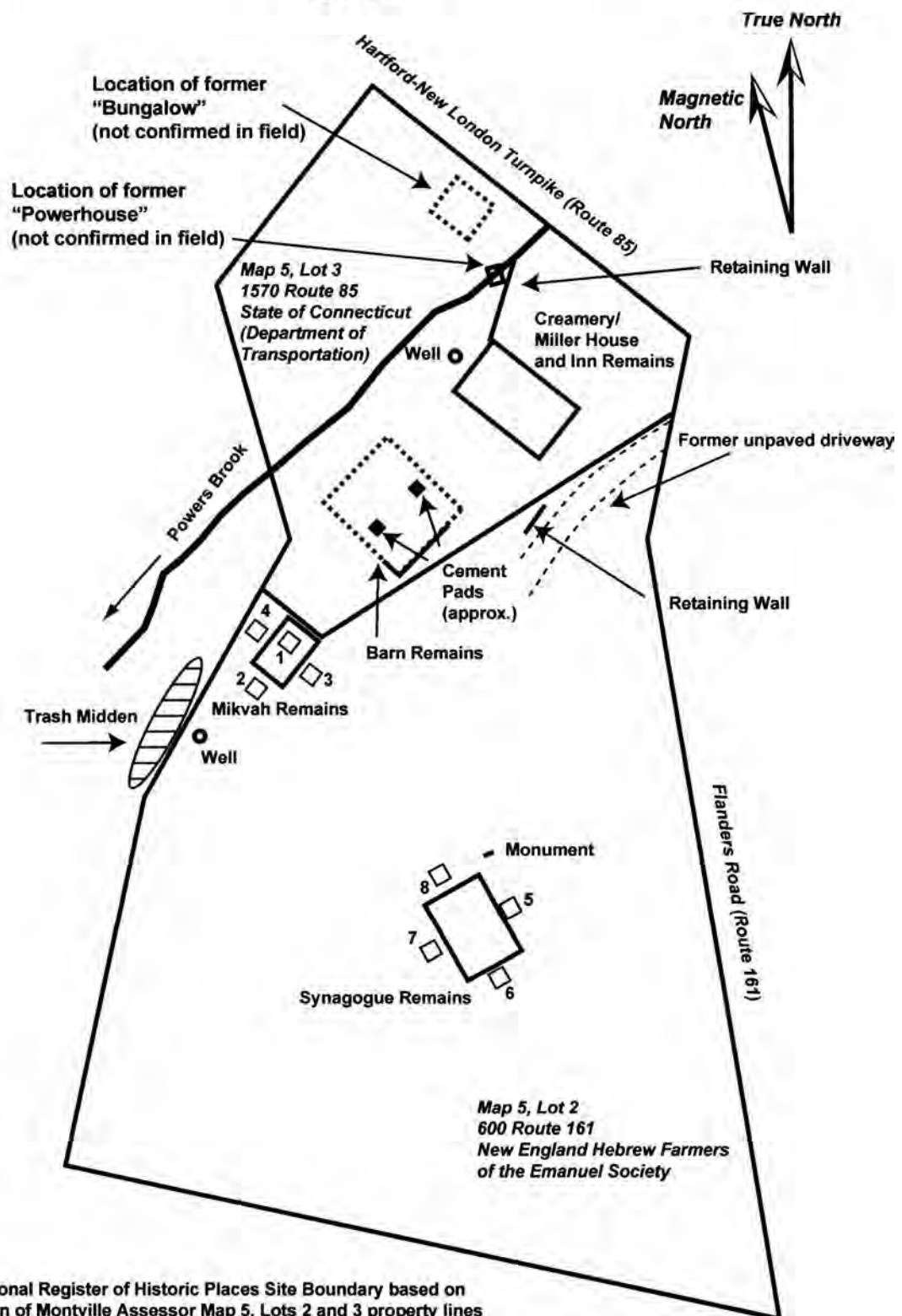
Figure 1: NEHFES Synagogue and Creamery Site on Montville, CT 7.5 Minute map (U.S.G.S. 1983 [surveyed 1972]).

UTM Reference (center of site, as recorded on CT State Register of Historic Places Form)
Zone 18, Easting 732640, Northing 4589700

New England Hebrew Farmers of the Emanuel Society Synagogue and Creamery Site
Name of Property

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Figure 2



— National Register of Historic Places Site Boundary based on
Town of Montville Assessor Map 5, Lots 2 and 3 property lines

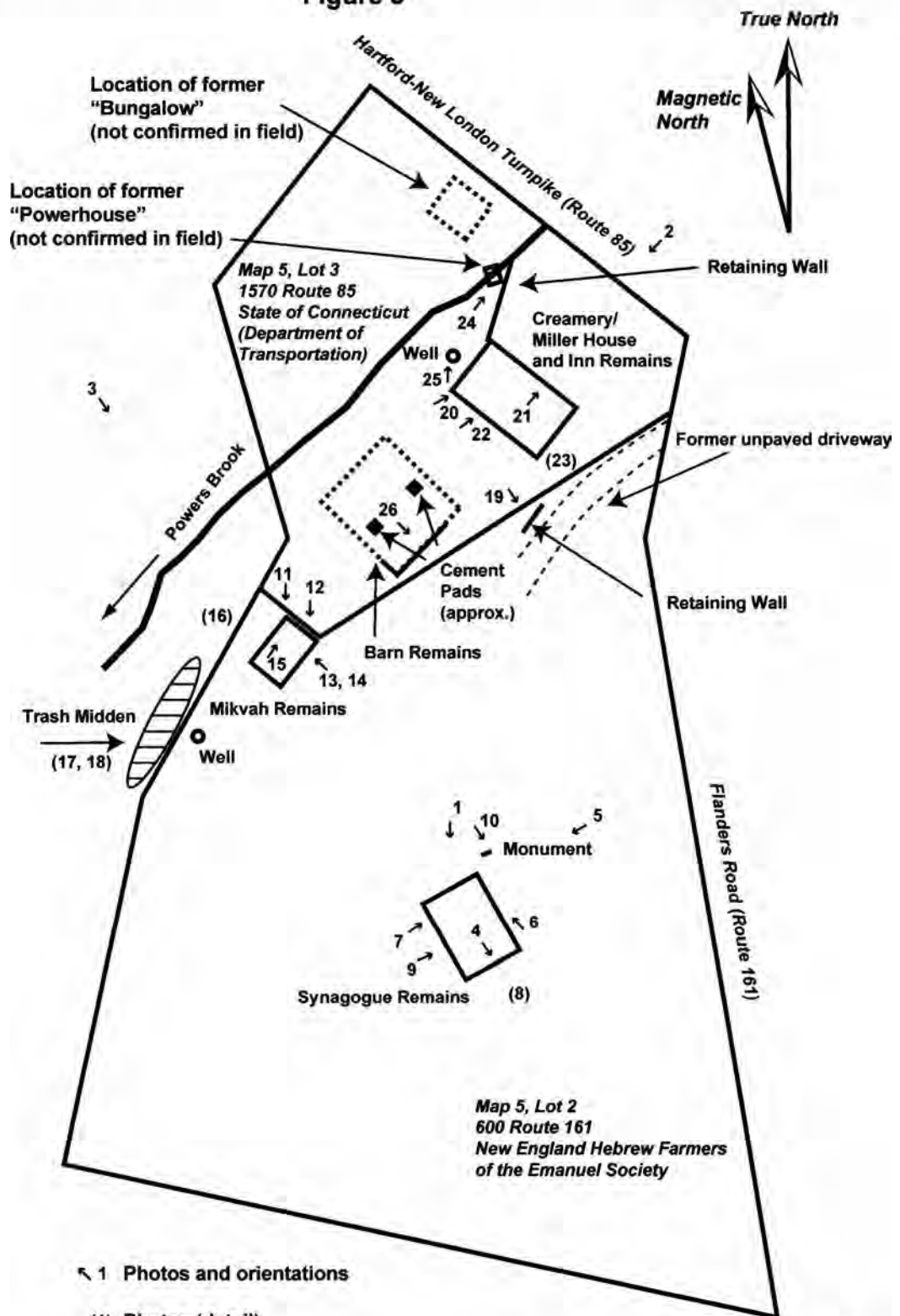
□ Approximate locations of Shovel Tests excavated in 2011. Not to scale.

Note: All orientations reference True North.

50 Feet
15 Meters

New England Hebrew Farmers of the Emanuel Society Synagogue and Creamery Site New London, Connecticut
Name of Property County and State

Figure 3



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY New England Hebrew Farmers of the Emanuel Society Synagogue
NAME: and Creamery Site

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: CONNECTICUT, New London

DATE RECEIVED: 1/13/12 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 2/06/12
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 2/21/12 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 2/28/12
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 12000039

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

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

COMMENT WAIVER: N

☒ ACCEPT ☐ RETURN ☐ REJECT 2-28-12 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in
The National Register
of
Historic Places

RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER _____ DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

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.

New England Hebrew Farmers of the Emanuel Society Synagogue and Creamery Site

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New England Hebrew Farmers of the Emanuel Society Synagogue and Creamery Site
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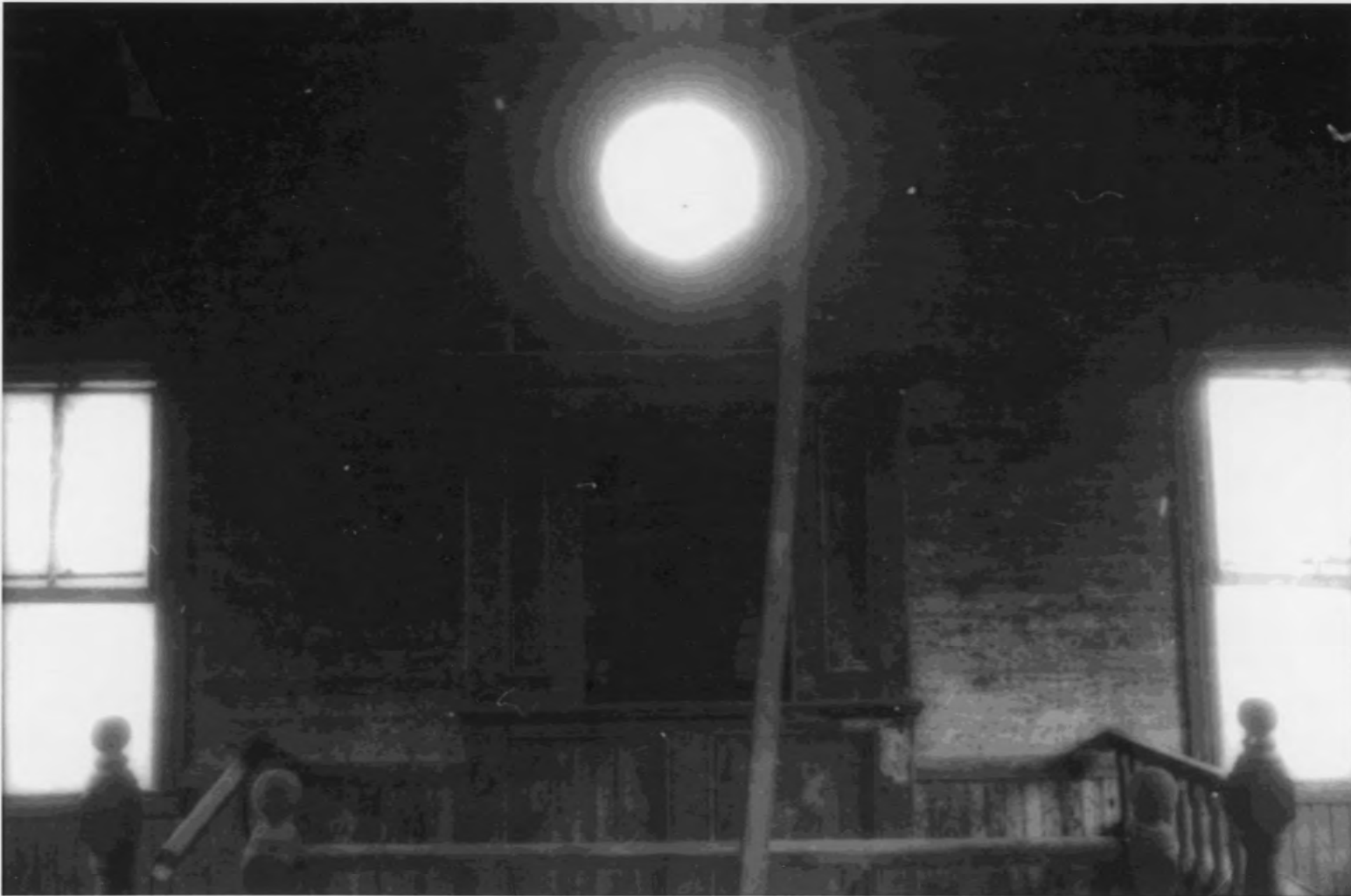
New England Hebrew Farmers of the Emanuel Society Synagogue and Creamery Site, New London County, CT
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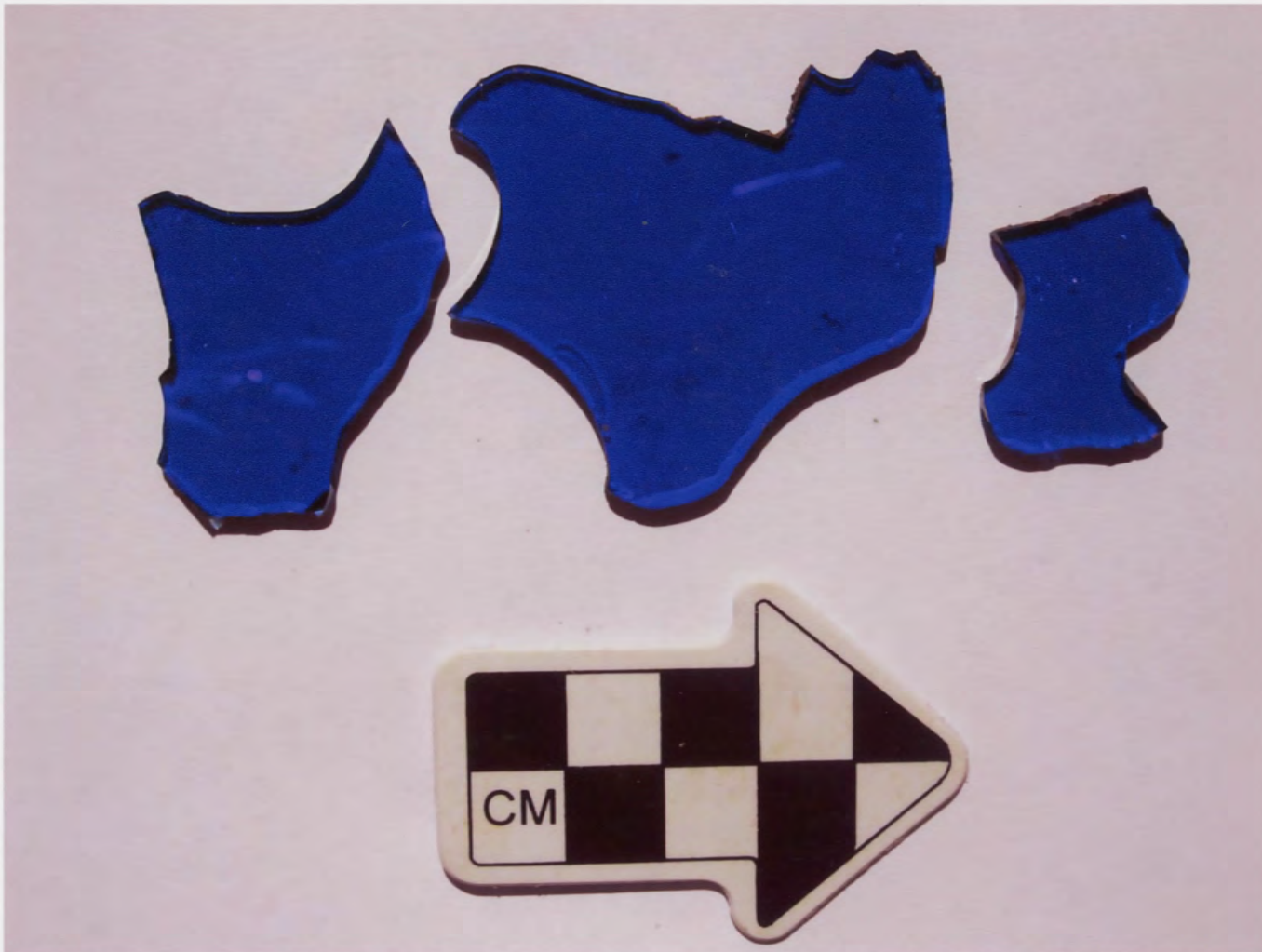
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New England Hebrew Farmers of the Emanuel Society Synagogue and Creamery Site

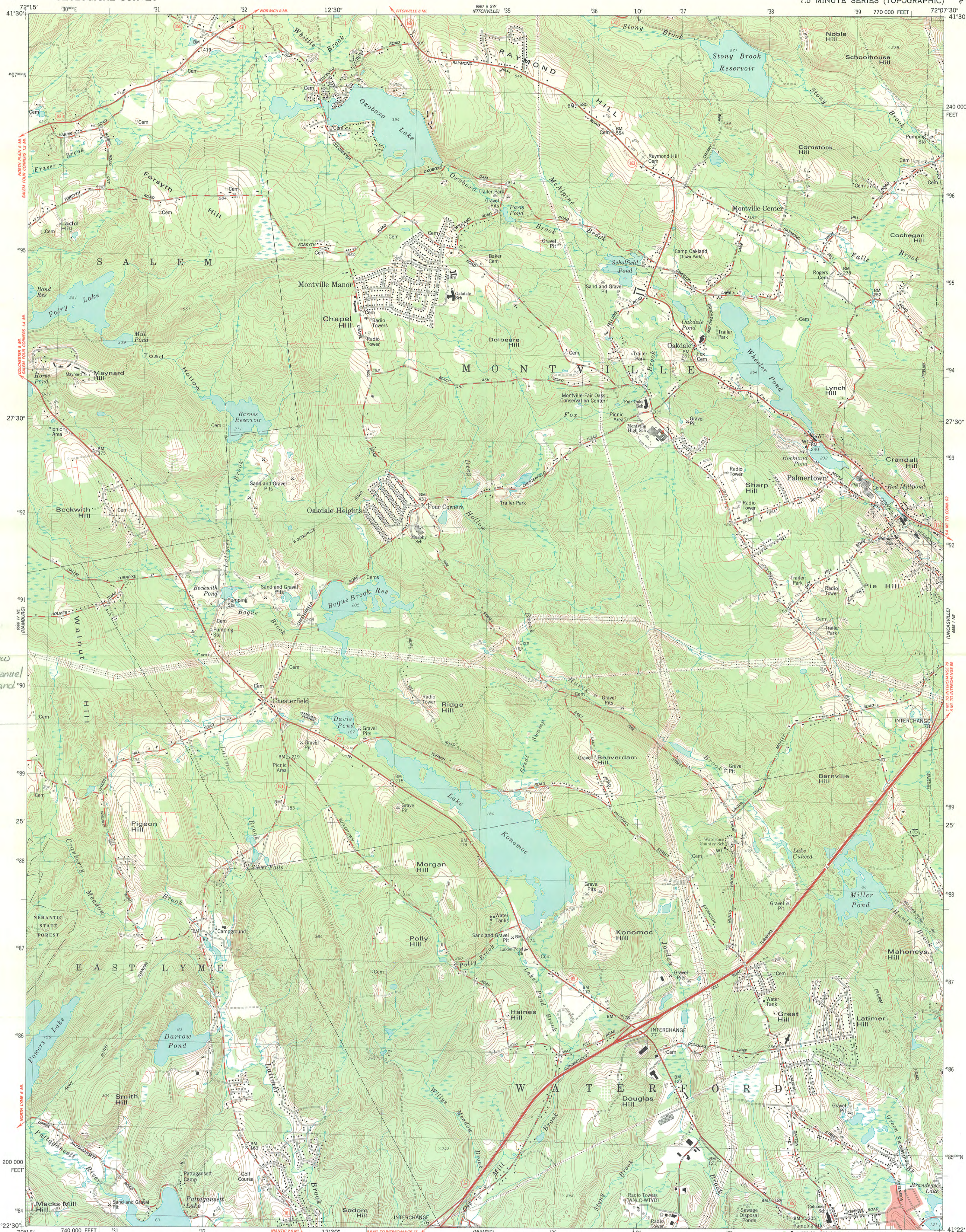
New London, Connecticut

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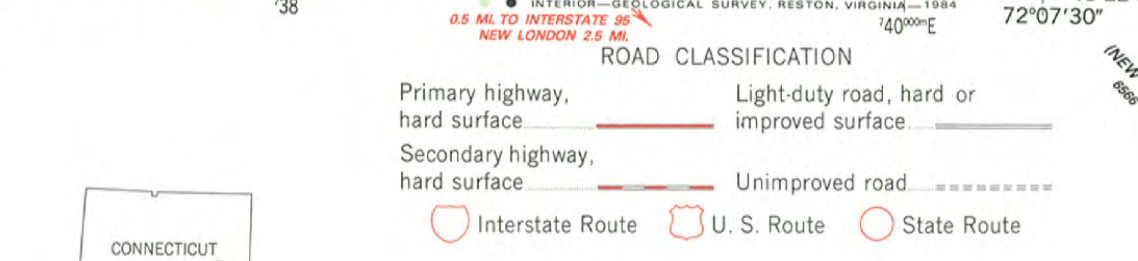
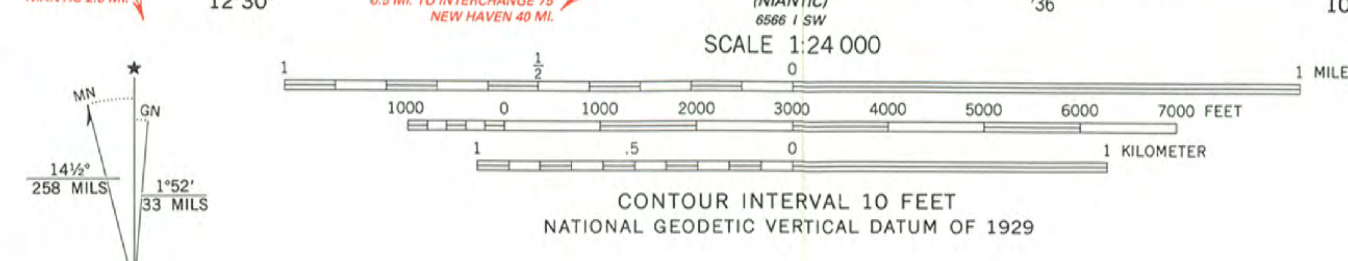


New England Hebrew Farmers of the Emanuel Society Synagogue and Creamery Site, New London County, CT
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New England Hebrew
Farmers of the Emanuel
Society Synagogue and
Creamery Site
E 732640
N 4589700

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
in cooperation with Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection
Control by USGS, NOS/NOAA, and State of Connecticut agencies
Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs
taken 1974. Field checked 1975. Revised from aerial photographs
taken 1980. Limited field check 1983. Map edited 1983
Supersedes map dated 1958
Projection and 10,000-foot grid ticks: Connecticut coordinate
system (Lambert conformal conic)
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid, zone 18
1927 North American Datum
To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983
move the projection lines 5 meters south and
39 meters west as shown by dashed corner ticks
Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where
generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked
Red tint indicates area in which only landmark buildings are shown
There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of
the National or State reservations shown on this map



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

MONTVILLE, CONN.
41072-D2-TF-024
1983
DMA 6566 1 NW-SERIES V816