

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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DATE ENTERED

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC

E. Stratton's Inn

AND/OR COMMON

Stratton's Tavern

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

E. of Brookfield on

East Street

N/A NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Brookfield *vic*

N/A VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

N/A

STATE

Vermont

CODE

50

COUNTY

Orange

CODE

017

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

DISTRICT

BUILDING(S)

STRUCTURE

SITE

OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

PUBLIC

PRIVATE

BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

IN PROCESS

BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

OCCUPIED

UNOCCUPIED

WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

YES: RESTRICTED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

NO

PRESENT USE

AGRICULTURE

COMMERCIAL

EDUCATIONAL

ENTERTAINMENT

GOVERNMENT

INDUSTRIAL

MILITARY

MUSEUM

PARK

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

RELIGIOUS

SCIENTIFIC

TRANSPORTATION

OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Misses Elizabeth A. and Helen H. Livingston

STREET & NUMBER

"Winkleyck", Five Old Forest Road

CITY, TOWN

Northford

N/A VICINITY OF

STATE

Connecticut

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Town Clerk's Office

STREET & NUMBER

N/A

CITY, TOWN

Brookfield

STATE

Vermont

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Vermont Historic Sites and Structures Survey, Town of Brookfield

DATE

1979

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Vermont Division for Historic Preservation

CITY, TOWN

Montpelier

STATE

Vermont

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Stratton's Tavern is a fine two-story, Federal-style structure with a central-chimney plan. It is in an excellent state of preservation with many of its original exterior and interior features intact. Particularly noteworthy are the large central chimney, the hip roof, and the interior's tap room.

Stratton's Tavern is located in Brookfield, Vermont on East Street (Town Highway #10) overlooking a valley. Although the location seems relatively isolated now, two roads once merged at this site. One of these roads was Paine's Turnpike, an early toll road which linked Brookfield to Montpelier. A pent road lined by trees, running downhill southeast from the Tavern, is the old Turnpike.

Stratton's Tavern is a late eighteenth century Federal-style structure, yet its plan and structural design are a continuation of an earlier era of colonial construction. Such a stylistic time freeze is common in Vermont; like their ancestors who settled the coastal states, Vermont settlers arrived and erected what they had known before, displaying little imagination since the wilderness was hardly conducive to architectural experimentation.

The exact date of construction is uncertain, yet documentary evidence suggests that the Tavern was built some time between 1795 and 1798 (see Statement of Significance). Resting on a random-laid stone foundation, the building rises two stories and is capped by a high hip roof pierced by a large central chimney. Measuring approximately 38 feet by 31 feet, the wood-frame Tavern has clapboard siding and is five by four bays with a central entrance on the east side with side entrances serving the west (rear) and south elevations. The main (east) entrance, recently restored according to a conjectural design, based upon structural evidence, has a broad, splayed lintel upon which is a cornice molding. This molding was copied from the cornice molding of the fireplace mantel in the Tavern's tap room and closely resembles in size the outline of the original doorway lintel. Supporting the lintel are two wide boards; above the door is a five-light transom. The other two entrances are less elaborate. The south entrance is a replacement of a late nineteenth century doorway. The splayed lintel was copied after the west (rear) entrance, the only original surviving. The south doorway probably had a transom light. The rear exterior kitchen door is believed to be the original front door. It is a broad, nine-panel door fastened by long, iron strap hinges. When the door was relocated, the hinges were kept in place and the door was turned upside-down so that it would open towards the inner north wall instead of into the open kitchen area. Probably this change was made when a single pitch shed was added to the west of the house in the 1890's.

Cornerboards support a plain frieze and a projecting molded box cornice. On the northwest corner part of the original cornerboard exists with a one-inch beaded molding. The windows have plain surrounds and appear at first glance to have the original 12/12 sash, although most are actually 2/2 sash with strips of tape added to resemble muntins. The second story northwest windows have the original sash and beading on the exterior casings. Wide sill boards define the base of the building.

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Attached to the southwest corner of the Tavern is a three-bay garage which was built in 1963. It has a gable roof, designed to match the pitch of the house roof, clapboard siding and an open porch across the front which is divided into three arched bays, a motif commonly found in Vermont carriage barns. The garage replaced a late nineteenth century woodshed. The original barns were across the road and burned about 1950.

Whereas the exterior of the Tavern is of simple design, the interior exhibits a variety of features and stylistic embellishments, all of which are enhanced by their excellent state of preservation. Many of the original elements such as exposed encased corner posts, floorboards, chair rails, fireplace mantels, panelling, and hardware remain intact.

The plan of Stratton's Tavern is a common, mid-eighteenth century, central chimney house plan. The central entrance opens into a small entry hall and a lefthanded stairway with three principal rooms placed on the two sides and rear. With such a plan, the central chimney dominates; the stairway is utilitarian and positioned without any ceremonial effect.

The chimney is perhaps the most interesting interior feature; throughout the building it is ever present. In the cellar, it measures a massive 12 feet by 12 feet with the stack gradually tapering as it rises towards the roof. The chimney is built of stone and brick and, like the frame of the building, appears "over-engineered," sturdy far beyond structural necessity. The chimney serves five fireplaces, of which three are on the first floor and two are on the second floor. All of the fireplaces have large, monolithic stone lintels and their original mantelpieces. And particularly interesting is that all three first-floor fireplaces have openings in the back face leading to an ash pit in the base of the chimney. Another rare feature is a smoke oven located in the attic level of the chimney.

The first floor has three main rooms: a parlor on the north side, a tap room on the south side, and the original kitchen at the rear with attending storage rooms. There is also a small bedroom at the southwest corner (now a modern kitchen). All have beaded corner posts. The parlor, used for more formal entertaining, has a chair rail encircling the room and a mantelpiece using some of the same moldings as the tap room. The tap room is more informal in nature. It is sheathed horizontally below the simple "thumbnail" molded chair rail which has been partially removed. The mantelpiece, about 8 feet long, is strongly molded. To the right of the fireplace is a small closet under the front stairs from which Mr. Stratton likely dispensed drinks to his customers. The closet has a Dutch door and the inside floorboards of the closet are worn, undoubtedly from someone having stood many hours behind this door.

The kitchen is distinguished by its large fireplace and the beehive-shaped bake oven on the left side of the hearth. Unlike the other rooms which have plastered walls, the kitchen has wood sheathing throughout. Above the fireplace is raised table panelling set in a horizontal pattern. On the north side, two smaller rooms originally served as but-teries. One is now used for storage and the other has been converted into a bathroom.

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On the second floor, the northern half of the Tavern has a large ballroom extending the depth of the building. Like the other rooms, it has exposed encased corner posts with beaded edges. The ballroom fireplace has a delicate Federal-style mantelpiece displaying a denticulated cornice and a panelled frieze. It also has a chair rail. At one time, this room was partitioned into two rooms but recently was returned to its original size. Two smaller rooms are located on the south and west sides. The southeast room is the same size as the tap room below and has a small fireplace with no mantel shelf. The chair rail and door surrounds are moldings recurring throughout the house. A plain room with the back stairs and doors into three rooms is above the original kitchen. A small room in the southwest corner has been converted into a bathroom and contains the steeply pitched stairway (not enclosed until the 1870's) leading to the attic.

Since purchasing the Tavern in 1959, the present owners have been restoring the structure with painstaking care and sensitivity to the original fabric, working at a speed which allows the Tavern to slowly unfold its secrets. The owners were fortunate in that few alterations had been made prior to their stewardship; most changes have been reversible and much of the work has involved stabilization of the building. That which has been restored has been done according to the highest and most exacting preservation standards.

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When Stratton died in 1814, his family continued to operate the Tavern, and stagecoaches stopped there as late as 1838. However, the business was ultimately doomed when the Gulf Road was opened, providing faster transit for travelers between Brookfield and points north.

Stratton's descendents held onto the farm until 1890. After that, it changed ownership three times until purchased by the present owners in 1959.

Architecturally, Stratton's Tavern is significant for several reasons. It is the only extant structure in Brookfield known to have its original central chimney intact; an increasingly rare feature. The Tavern is also noteworthy for retaining its hip roof. Although the hip roof was relatively common in early Vermont, many were later converted to gable roofs because of flashing problems. Since hip roofs were originally shingled and low pitched, the winter's snow would accumulate on the roof. The snow would then begin to melt, re-form as ice at the colder eaves edge of the roof and form an "ice dam." This dam would cause melted snow to leak along the ridges of the hip. Tin or lead flashing was often prohibitively expensive and hard to obtain, so the easier solution was to rebuild the roof into the more current and fashionable gabled style.

Finally, Stratton's Tavern is in a remarkable state of preservation. It is unusual to find so much of the original fabric of a building undisturbed. The architectural-archeological value of the Tavern increases each year because the structure is one of the few early intact taverns remaining in the state and provides a rich record of early building techniques and stylistic trends in Vermont.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES c.1795

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Ebenezer Stratton

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Located on the former Paine's Turnpike, in Brookfield, Stratton's Tavern was built c.1795-1798 by Ebenezer Stratton and served travelers for many years. The Tavern is architecturally significant because it is a well preserved, late-eighteenth century Federal-style structure.

Stratton's Tavern was built around 1795-1798 by Ebenezer Stratton, one of the first settlers of Brookfield, Vermont. Stratton was born in Northfield, Massachusetts in 1762 and like most colonists, made his living as a farmer. However, he grew up familiar with the tavern keeping trade as his uncle, Hezekiah Stratton, operated a tavern in Northfield.

In 1784, Ebenezer Stratton bought one share of the Brookfield territory from Phineas Lyman of Hadley, Massachusetts. Two years later, Stratton purchased a 100-acre lot in Brookfield for Ten Pounds from Benjamin Coult of Hanover, New Hampshire. By March, 1786, Stratton was among those named on the first list of Freemen recorded in the Brookfield Town Records.

Little is known about Stratton's activities in Brookfield until around 1798. What is odd is that Stratton eventually built his tavern not on the 100-acre lot to which he had title, but on a lot which was owned by Obadiah Dickinson of Northfield, Massachusetts. Such casual disregard for legal fine points was fairly common at the time and land claims were often left in a confused state for many years. Stratton's title to the tavern lot was eventually settled in court in 1798. Testimony submitted by Dickinson stated that Stratton was living on this lot in that year. Thus, considering the size of the tavern, it seems reasonable to conclude that construction had begun two to three years earlier.

Although Stratton remained a farmer, he outfitted his house to also serve as a tavern. It is uncertain whether or not this sideline venture preceded the construction of Elijah Paine's turnpike (which formerly ran from southeast to northwest of the Tavern) in 1799, but the turnpike undoubtedly helped the tavern business.

A fine tavern sign bearing the name, E. Stratton's Inn, is located at the Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. Although the sign lacks a provenance, it seems likely that it hung in front of this tavern. Based upon its neo-classical stylistic elements such as a broken pediment supported by narrow spindle-like columns and the oval-shaped center, the sign probably dates c.1790-1820. An American eagle is portrayed on one side while a decanter flanked by two glasses is painted on the opposite side.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See Continuation Sheet.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY One Acre
UTM REFERENCES USGS Barre Quadrangle 15' Series

A	1,8	6,9,3	5,0,0	4,8	7,9	7,5,0	B					
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING						
C							D					

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

See Continuation Sheet.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
N/A			

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Margaret N. DeLaitre, Architectural Historian

October, 1981

ORGANIZATION

DATE

STREET & NUMBER

271 Elm Street

TELEPHONE

802-229-0135

CITY OR TOWN

Montpelier

STATE

Vermont 05602

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

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

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

William B. Timney

6-23-82

TITLE

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

Debra Byers

NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

7/29/82

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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Hemenway, Abby Maria, The Vermont Historical Gazetteer, Vol. II, Burlington, Vt., 1871.

Livingston, Elizabeth A. Typescript of lecture on Stratton Tavern delivered to Brookfield Historical Society, September 14, 1963 (copy in possession of author).

Stratton, Harriet Russell, comp. A Book of Strattons, 2 Vols., New York, 1908, 1918.

Vermont Division for Historic Preservation. Historic Sites and Structures Survey, Town of Brookfield, 1979.

Walling, H. F., Atlas of Orange County, Vermont, 1858, New York, 1858.

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The boundaries of the Stratton Tavern Property are described as follows:

Beginning on the westerly side of the so-called East Street running past said premises at a point seventy (70) feet north of the northeast corner of the house on said premises; thence running west two hundred (200) feet; thence turning at right angles and running in a southerly direction parallel with said highway two hundred ten (210) feet; thence turning at right angles and running east two hundred (200) feet to the west line of said highway; thence following the west boundary of said highway two hundred ten (210) feet to the place of beginning, estimated to contain one acre of land be the same more or less together with the buildings thereon standing.

- Land Records of the Town of Brookfield, Book 32, Page 309.