

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received JUL 2 1986
date entered 9-4-86

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

1. Name

historic N.A.

and or common Main Street Historic District

2. Location

street & number See continuation sheet.

N.A. not for publication

city, town Durham

N.A. vicinity of

state Connecticut

code 09

county Middlesex

code 007

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Multiple

street & number See Item #2, 7.

city, town Durham

N.A. vicinity of

state Connecticut

5. Location of Legal Description

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

street & number Town House Road

city, town Durham

state Connecticut

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title State Register of Historic Places (See continuation sheet.)
has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1986 federal state county local

depository for survey records Connecticut Historical Commission, 59 South Prospect Street

city, town Hartford

state Connecticut

AUG 20 1986

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> moved	date 1983
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			(See inventory # 127.)

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Main Street Historic District in Durham comprises the historic residential and commercial center of a small rural community in central Connecticut. Main Street, the principal street in the district, runs north and south. Several parallel streets are located on each side of Main Street: Brick and Cherry lanes on the east and Maple Avenue and Town House Road on the west. The latter street borders the Town Green in the southern portion of the district. Portions of several cross streets, Talcott and Maiden lanes, Wallingford Road, and Fowler Avenue, are also included. The district includes all of the present state-enabled local district and also extends to the south along Main Street and to the west to include historic properties and open land on the west side of Maple Avenue. Two additional houses are included on the north side of Talcott Lane.

The district contains 135 buildings. Eighty-three percent (112) contribute to the district and were built between 1708-1935. Modern intrusion is limited. Twenty-three (17%) of the buildings were built after 1935 and are non-contributing.

With few exceptions, the historic buildings in the district are of wood-frame construction. In addition to 90 historic residences, the district includes public buildings (four churches, two schools, a library, and a post office), and seven commercial buildings. Three of the buildings used as private residences today have been identified as workers' housing of the nineteenth century.

Most of Durham's colonial architecture is concentrated in the Main Street district. Twenty-eight houses pre-date 1775, which represents 85% of the total number of buildings surviving from that period in the entire town. By far the most common form is the five-bay, two-and-one-half story, center-chimney house with a gable roof. Only a few of these houses display the traditional overhang, and surprisingly enough, they are not from the earliest period, but were built about the middle of the eighteenth century (See the Moses Austin House, Inventory #47, and the Elnathan Camp House, Inventory #42; Photograph #6). The latter house is also distinguished by its gambrel roof, a feature more commonly found on Cape-style houses in Durham. Three-bay houses from the colonial period are less common on Main Street, but they include the Samuel Fenn Parsons House (Inventory #29), 1708-1714, and the Jeremiah Butler House (Inventory #40; Photograph #5), built about 70 years later.

Although the "salt-box" form was more popular in the outlying areas of town, this type of house was also built in the district. All the surviving examples have an integral ell. They include the Hall/Camp House (Inventory #68), and the James Curtis House (Inventory #11), both built just prior to the Revolution. Another less common form was the Cape-style house, an economical house favored by small farmers in the Connecticut Valley south of Middletown. Several examples can be found in the more rural areas of town. One of the best preserved in the district is the Jesse Cook House on Main Street (Inventory #71). Cook, the builder of his gambrel-roofed house, may also have been responsible for the other examples in town, most of which display the same roof type. The last type of colonial house in the district is a type rarely built in the eighteenth century. While retaining the standard form, several houses have a gable-end-to-street orientation (Inventory #31, 119) and date from the 1730s, foreshadowing by a century the orientation of the Federal and later Greek Revival styles.

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2. Location:

2-138 Main; 1-145 Main; Town House Road in its entirety; portions of Fowler Avenue, Madison Road, Maiden Lane, Maple Avenue, Talcott Lane, and Wallingford Road.

6. Representation in Existing Surveys:

Report of the Durham Historic District, 1975.

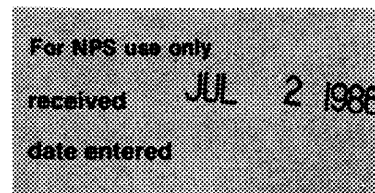
The Historical and Architectural Survey of Durham, Connecticut, 1984. Greater Middletown Preservation Trust, Middletown, Connecticut.

Repository for Surveys: Connecticut Historical Commission
59 South Prospect Street
Hartford, Connecticut

Durham Public Library, Main Street (#72). Determined eligible to the National Register of Historic Places by the National Park Service, May 24, 1984.

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Durham, CT Item number 7

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Some of the colonial-period houses in the district have been altered over time. They include the oldest house in Durham, the 1708 Colonel James Wadsworth House on Madison Road at the intersection with Higganum Road at the south end of the district. Originally built as a one-and-one-half-story house; it was raised and expanded to its present five-bay, two-and-one-half-story configuration by 1750. A Greek Revival-style doorway was added in the early nineteenth century.

The Federal period in Durham was characterized by a general conservatism. Most of the houses built at that time in the district make few concessions to style and remain essentially colonial in form. Georgian influence can also be found in such features as a Palladian window (Inventory #104; Photograph #15), but purely Federal-style houses were built quite late. The most detailed example is located on Town House Road facing the green, the 1831 Elias B. Meigs House (Inventory #131; Photograph #16). A store and tavern built at this time also display very little applied detailing, a less surprising adherence to traditional norms.

The Greek Revival style had a major impact on domestic and institutional architecture in Durham after 1830. Twenty-eight of the sixty surviving houses in the district built between 1830 and 1870 are of this style. The style was utilized for modest buildings such as the Beecher Shoe Shop (Inventory #49; Photograph #8), as well as large churches: the South Congregational Church, now used as the Town Hall (Inventory #128; Photograph #22), and the North Congregational Church (Inventory #45, Photograph #7). The latter church has retained its colonnaded portico, while on the former the portico has been removed. A classical spire with an elongated conical, shingled roof was added to the North Church about 1900. Other public buildings, including the Durham Academy (Inventory #39) and the Grange Hall, originally built as a church (Inventory #74), were constructed in this style, but in a simplified form--retaining only the pediment and the temple front with pilasters. This common interpretation of the style can be found in residential construction as well. Notable examples include the William A. Parmalee House (Inventory #17; Photograph #2), and the Coe-Parsons House (Inventory #50; Photograph #9). The latter has an Italianate-style, wraparound verandah.

After the middle of the nineteenth century, the majority of the houses were simple, vernacular interpretations of the currently popular styles. Most farmhouses built in this period were totally unadorned, generally those built in the more rural areas, including such typical examples as the John Newton House on Maiden Lane (Inventory #8; Photograph #1), and the two houses on Main Street, the Andrew Hull and Henry David House (Inventory #34, 84; Photographs #3, 14). Both of the latter houses have the simple gable-to-street orientation found throughout Durham in the nineteenth century, relieved only by decorative porches, and in the case of the Hull House, stickwork in the gable peak. The Italianate-style influence is more marked on the Wadsworth House (Inventory #83) with its exposed rafter ends, and the Leverett House (Inventory #24), but again stylistic expression is limited.

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Against this background, the few public buildings built in the same period on Main Street make quite a contrast. Another church was built in the Carpenter Gothic style in 1862 (Inventory #59; Photograph #11). It is an exceptional example with lancet windows, flying buttresses, and a square belfry, highlighted by sawn work repeating the lancet-arch form. Another exceptional public building is the 1901 Public Library, erected in the Neo-Classical style (Inventory #72; Photograph #12). An architecturally compatible modern addition was added to the latter building in 1985.

Durham's twentieth-century domestic architecture includes many examples of Colonial Revival-style cottages and bungalows similar to the types that were widely advertised by pre-fabricating companies such as Aladdin of Michigan. Whether or not they were actually purchased from these companies is not known, but they are markedly similar and representative of the mass-produced cottages built in this period throughout the country (See Inventory #91, 100, 109).

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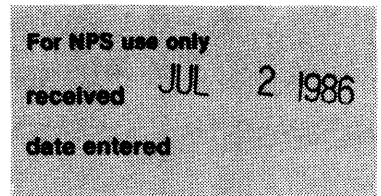
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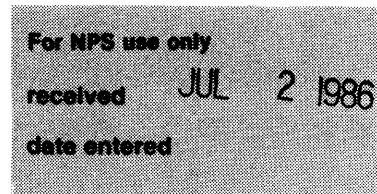


Inventory #	Building/Site	Contributing/Non-contributing (C/NC)	Photograph #
1	Fowler Avenue ELNATHAN CHAUNCEY HOUSE Georgian, 1755	C	
2	Fowler Avenue JOHN A. FOWLER HOUSE 19th c. vernacular, 1892	C	
3	Fowler Avenue ASAHEL STRONG HOUSE Federal, 1823	C	
4	Fowler Avenue ELNATHAN CHAUNCEY HOUSE #2 Colonial, 1792	C	
5	Madison Road WILLIAM WADSWORTH HOUSE Greek Revival, 1848	C	
6	Madison Road COL. JAMES WADSWORTH HOUSE Colonial, 1708	C	
7	Maiden Lane GUIDA HOUSE Colonial, 1800	C	
8	Maiden Lane JOHN B. NEWTON HOUSE 19th c. vernacular, 1861	C	1
9	Maiden Lane JOHN JOHNSON HOUSE Colonial, 1750	C	
10	Maiden Lane WILLIAM CAMP HOUSE 19th c. vernacular, 1898	C	
11	Maiden Lane JAMES CURTIS HOUSE Colonial, 1737-1761	C	

*Inventory numbers for this nomination only

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Inventory #	Building/Site	Contributing/Non-contributing (C/NC)	Photograph #
12	Maiden Lane CURTIS-COE HOUSE Colonial, 1745	C	17
13	Maiden Lane T.B. STRONG HOUSE Greek Revival, 1860	C	
14	Maiden Lane Modern, ca. 1950	NC	
15	145 Main Street WILLIAM S. SCRANTON HOUSE Gothic Revival, 1877	C	
16	139 Main Street SQUIRE-SCRANTON HOUSE Colonial, 1800	C	18
17	138 Main Street WILLIAM A. PARMALEE HOUSE Greek Revival, 1840	C	2
18	137 Main Street ELMER W. CROWELL HOUSE Bungaloid, 1920	C	
19	135 Main Street WILLIAM S. SCRANTON HOUSE #2 19th c. vernacular, 1870	C	
20	134-36 Main Street OSCAR LEACH HOUSE Greek Revival, 1840	C	
21	131 Main Street DANIEL MERWIN HOUSE Georgian/Colonial, ca. 1740	C	
22	132 Main Street RUSSELL SHELLY HOUSE Greek Revival, 1852	C	
23	130 Main Street ROBERT FAIRCHILD HOUSE Colonial, ca. 1730	C	
24	129 Main Street LEVERETT W. LEACH HOUSE Italianate, 1868	C	

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Inventory #	Building/Site	Contributing/Non-contributing (C/NC)	Photograph #
25	128 Main Street HENRY M. COE HOUSE 19th c. vernacular, 1859	C	19
26	126 Main Street FREDERICK PLUMB HUBBARD HOUSE 20th c. vernacular, 1910	C	
27	124 Main Street MERRIAM MANUFACTURING COMPANY 20th c. commercial, 1918	C	
28	123 Main Street NOTRE DAME CHURCH Ca. 1970	NC	
29	120 Main Street SAMUEL FENN PARSONS HOUSE Colonial, 1708-14	C	
30	118 Main Street GEORGE J. FRANCIS HOUSE Queen Anne, 1898	C	
31	117 Main Street ROBERTS-MOFFITT HOUSE Colonial, 1739	C	
32	116 Main Street JESSE COOK HOUSE Greek Revival, 1840	C	
33	115 Main Street SQUIRE-BATES STORE Colonial, 1796	C	
34	114 Main Street ANDREW HULL HOMESTEAD Stick, 1867	C	3
35	112 Main Street Modern cape, ca. 1960	NC	
36	111 Main Street ELIAS AUSTIN HOUSE Colonial/Greek Revival, 1745	C	4
37	110 Main Street PHINEAS CAMP HOUSE Colonial, 1758	C	

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Inventory #	Building/Site	Contributing/Non-contributing (C/NC)	Photograph #
38	109 Main Street MATHEWSON CHILDS HOUSE Greek Revival, 1844	C	
39	108 Main Street DURHAM ACADEMY Greek Revival, 1843	C	
40	107 Main Street JEREMIAH BUTLER HOUSE Colonial, 1775	C	5
41	105 Main Street HENRY TUCKER HOUSE Greek Revival, 1838	C	
42	104 Main Street ELNATHAN CAMP HOUSE Colonial, 1758	C	6
43	101 Main Street LEVERETT W. LEACH HOUSE Federal, 1840	C	
44	95 Main Street L. W. LEACH & SON STORE 1855	C	
45	Main Street NORTH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH Greek Revival, 1847	C	7
46.	Main Street FAIRCHILD HOUSE-SPELMAN HOTEL Colonial/Greek Revival, 1740	C	
47	100 Main Street MOSES AUSTIN HOUSE Colonial, 1750	C	
48	98 Main Street JONATHAN WALKLEY HOUSE Federal, 1778	C	
49	96 Main Street BEECHER'S SHOE SHOP Greek Revival, 1837	C	8

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Inventory #	Building/Site	Contributing/Non-contributing (C/NC)	Photograph #
50	94 Main Street COE-PARSONS HOUSE Greek Revival, 1830	C	9
51	90 Main Street FRANCIS HUBBARD HOUSE 19th c. vernacular, 1862	C	20
52	87 Main Street HALL-PARSONS HOUSE Georgian, 1830	C	
53	86 Main Street DURHAM AMBULANCE CORP. 1933	C	
54	85 Main Street CAMP & BALDWIN STORE 1820	C	
55	84 Main Street DURHAM MANUFACTURING CO. 20th c. commercial, ca. 1940	NC	
56	83 Main Street ASAHEL STRONG HOUSE 19th c. vernacular, 1830	C	
57	81 Main Street ROBINSON-ANDREWS HOUSE Greek Revival, 1840	C	21
58	80 Main Street LEMUEL CAMP TAVERN 1806	C	10
59	Main Street CHURCH OF THE EPIPHANY Carpenter Gothic, 1862	C	11
60	77 Main Street DR. ERNEST A. MARKHAM HOUSE 19th c. vernacular, 1885	C	
61	75 Main Street LEMUEL CAMP HOUSE Georgian, 1825	C	
62	73 Main Street HILL-SPELMAN HOUSE Cape, 1730	C	

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Inventory #	Building/Site	Contributing/Non-contributing (C/NC)	Photograph #
63	71 Main Street PARSONS-CAMP HOUSE 19th c. vernacular, 1840	C	
64	70 Main Street REUBEN HUBBARD HOMESTEAD 19th c. vernacular, 1870	C	
65	69 Main Street SAMUEL ROBERTS HOUSE Colonial, 1728	C	
66	68 Main Street RAYMOND GAVETTE HOUSE 20th c. vernacular, 1911	C	
67	Main Street TIMOTHY HALL HOUSE Colonial, 1750	C	
68	61-63 Main Street HALL-CAMP HOUSE Saltbox, 1775	C	
69	60 Main Street GODDARD-WADSWORTH HOUSE Colonial, 1755	C	
70	59 Main Street METHODIST EPISCOPAL PARSONAGE 19th c. vernacular, 1895	C	
71	58 Main Street COOK/FOWLER HOUSE Colonial, 1772	C	
72	Main Street DURHAM PUBLIC LIBRARY Neo-Classical, 1901, addition 1984	C	12
73	54 Main Street POST OFFICE	NC	
74	52 Main Street METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH Greek Revival, 1826	C	
75	50 Main Street ZEBULON HALE HOUSE Greek Revival, 1840	C	

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Inventory #	Building/Site	Contributing/Non-contributing (C/NC)	Photograph #
76	48 Main Street CATHERINE & DENCY PARSONS HOUSE Greek Revival, 1832	C	
77	46 Main Street POST OFFICE, 1853	C	
78	42 Main Street REV. ELIZUR GOODRICH HOUSE Colonial, 1763	C	13
79	40 Main Street Modern	NC	
80	38 Main Street ARNOLD WARD HOUSE Federal/Greek Revival, 1828	C	
81	34 Main Street HENRY WILLIAMS HOUSE 19th c. vernacular, 1852	C	
82	33 Main Street CANFIELD-PARSONS HOUSE 19th c. vernacular, 1880	C	
83	32 Main Street WEDWORTH WADSWORTH HOUSE Italianate, 1855	C	
84	31 Main Street HENRY DAVID HOUSE 19th c. vernacular, 1878-81	C	14
85	30 Main Street GILBERT H. STONE HOUSE Greek Revival, 1900	C	
86	28 Main Street DAVIS-BRAINERD HOUSE 19th c. vernacular, 1884	C	
87	27-29 Main Street HENRY DAVID STORE 1851	C	
88	26 Main Street MALY ASMAN HOUSE 20th c. vernacular, 1928	C	

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Inventory #	Building/Site	Contributing/Non-contributing (C/NC)	Photograph #
89	24 Main Street Modern	NC	
90	23 Main Street WILLIAM A. PARSONS HOMESTEAD Dutch-Colonial Revival, 1930	C	
91	21 Main Street FREDERICK H. PAGE HOUSE Bungaloid, 1920	C	
92	20 Main Street CHARLES G. STONE HOUSE 20th c. vernacular, 1930	C	
93	19 Main Street CAMP-MEIGS HOUSE Colonial, 1760	C	
94	Main Street CAMP'S TAVERN Commercial, modern	NC	
95	Main Street DURHAM FIRE STATION Modern	NC	
96	14-16 Main Street DAVID CAMP HOUSE Greek Revival, 1865	C	
97	12 Main Street BELA DAVIS HOUSE Greek Revival, 1865	C	
98	8 Main Street REUBEN HUBBARD HOUSE 20th c. vernacular, 1903	C	
99	6 Main Street DARI SERVICE Commercial, modern	NC	
100	2 Main Street ADOLPH A. H. ZIEROTH HOUSE Bungaloid, 1932	C	
101	Maple Avenue ABEL COE HOUSE 18th c. vernacular, 1780	C	

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Inventory #	Building/Site	Contributing/Non-contributing (C/NC)	Photograph #
102	Maple Avenue Modern cape, ca. 1950	NC	
103	Maple Avenue HATTIE M. NEWTON HOUSE Queen Anne, 1905	C	
104	Maple Avenue JOHN SWATHEL HOUSE Georgian/Federal, 1829	C	15
105	Maple Avenue Modern, ca. 1960	NC	
106	Maple Avenue Modern, ca. 1960	NC	
107	Maple Avenue Modern, ca. 1960	NC	
108	Maple Avenue HUBBARD WORKERS' HOUSING #1 1890	C	
109	Maple Avenue MARY F. CRAWFORD HOUSE Bungalow, 1922	C	
110	Maple Avenue HUBBARD WORKERS' HOUSING #2 1895	C	
111	Maple Avenue ELIJAH J. CRAWFORD HOUSE Colonial Revival, 1926	C	
112	Maple Avenue HENRY P. RYAN HOUSE 20th c. vernacular, ca. 1910	C	
113	Maple Avenue JOEL BLARCHLEY HOUSE 19th c. vernacular, 1835	C	
114	Maple Avenue ELIAS CAMP HOUSE 19th c. Cape, 1840	C	
115	Maple Avenue HUBBARD WORKERS' HOUSING #3 1895	C	

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Inventory #	Building/Site	Contributing/Non-contributing (C/NC)	Photograph #
116	Maple Avenue Modern, ca. 1970	NC	
117	Maple Avenue Modern, ca. 1980	NC	
118	Maple Avenue ANDREW JACKSON ROBINSON HOUSE 19th c. vernacular, 1836	C	
119	Maple Avenue DAVID ROBINSON HOUSE Colonial, ca. 1735	C	
120	Maple Avenue Modern, ca. 1980	NC	
121	Maple Avenue Modern, ca. 1985	NC	
122	Maple Avenue Modern, ca. 1960	NC	
123	Maple Avenue Modern, ca. 1960	NC	
124	Maple Avenue DAVID SMITH HOUSE Federal, 1803	C	
125	Talcott Lane REYNOLD MARVIN MOORE HOUSE Colonial, ca. 1755	C	
126	Town House Road OLD CENTER SCHOOL 1775	C	
127	Town House Road Sabbath Day House (Moved to site) 1984	C	
128	Town House Road SOUTH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH Greek Revival, 1849	C	22
129	Town House Road OLIVER KNOWLES HOUSE Greek Revival, 1839	C	
130	Town House Road DURHAM FAIRGROUND BUILDING, ca. 1960	NC	

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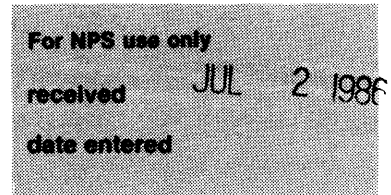
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<u>Inventory #</u>	<u>Building/Site</u>	<u>Contributing/Non- contributing (C/NC)</u>	<u>Photograph #</u>
131	Town House Road ELIAS B. MEIGS HOUSE Federal, 1831	C	16
132	Town House Road JONES CAMP HOUSE Colonial/Federal, 1780	C	
133	Wallingford Road Modern, ca. 1950	NC	
134	Wallingford Road JAMES HINMAN, JR. HOUSE 19th c. vernacular, ca. 1835	C	
135	Wallingford Road Modern, ca. 1950	NC	

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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) shoemaking
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1708–1930 **Builder/Architect** Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Main Street Historic District contains a particularly high concentration of contributing historic buildings (83%) which trace the town's development for over 200 years (Criterion A). More than half of the surviving historic resources in Durham are contained within the district; it displays an exceptional degree of architectural integrity and craftsmanship (Criterion C). A remarkable cross section of social classes and occupations is represented in the district, expressed in the style and function of the buildings. Included are a few relatively high-style houses built by descendants of the first settlers, simple vernacular dwellings of craftsmen and farmers, and workers' housing built to accommodate the laborers in the town's industries, as well as stores, hotels, and taverns from the stagecoach era, when Durham's Main Street was a thoroughfare between New Haven and Hartford. Of particular note is the unusual number of well-preserved eighteenth-century houses, as well as the quality of the public buildings erected in the Greek Revival style.

History

Geographical constraints, as well as advantages, and a particularly heterogeneous settlement population drawn from all over the Connecticut Colony, were some of the factors that shaped the course of Durham's history, transforming the town from a self-sufficient farming village into a relatively cosmopolitan center of commercial agriculture and small-scale, agrarian-based industry.

Prior to settlement the Town of Durham was known as the Coginchaug, or Great Swamp. Most of the land in the town had been granted to individuals for distinguished service to the colony in military or civic affairs in the seventeenth century. All of these men were absentee owners; none were anxious to occupy what was then one of the least desirable areas for settlement in the colony. Swamp and marshland occupied most of the central part of the area, surrounded by rolling hills overlaying rocky ledges. Less than one third of the mere 15,000 acres was suitable for cultivation.

The majority of the absentee owners were from Hartford, with a smaller group from Guilford. A petition in 1699 by the Guilford interests to locate the town plat in the southern part of town was acted on favorably by the General Court. But the more powerful Hartford group was successful in having this decision overturned, with the result that the town was laid out at its present location in 1703, where the land was owned by Hartford men. The swampy terrain had much to do with the axial pattern of the "Great Street," as Main Street was first known. It traced a more or less direct course along the high ground from about the Wadsworth House (Inventory #6) to the present-day intersection of Route 147 and Main Street. There was little room for expansion to the east or west, but "back lanes" were laid out along the rear of the homelots, present-day Maple Avenue on the west and Cherry and Brick lanes on the east.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 160

Quadrangle name Durham

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References See continuation sheet.

A
 Zone Easting Northing

B
 Zone Easting Northing

C

D

E

F

G

H

Verbal boundary description and justification

See continuation sheet.

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

state	code	county	code

state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Jan Cunningham, Consultant, and Ruth B. Matteson, edited by John Herzan,
Greater Middletown Preservation Trust National Register Coordinator

organization Greater Middletown Preservation Trust date 9/12/85

street & number 27 Washington Street telephone (203) 346-1646

city or town Middletown state Connecticut

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local


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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

title Director, Connecticut Historical Commission date June 24, 1986

For NPS use only

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

 National Register date 9-4-86
 Keeper of the National Register

Attest: _____ date _____
 Chief of Registration

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More than 30 families were living in the town center by this time. They came from 11 different towns in the Connecticut and Massachusetts Bay Colonies. The boundaries of the township, however, were not so easily settled; land on the borders with Killingworth and Haddam remained in dispute for most of the rest of the century.

By the end of the eighteenth century, Main Street was lined with houses built in the colonial period and appeared to be a quite typical center of a rural community--with a major difference. Durham was located on the old Mattebeseck Trail, which was becoming the preferred route from New Haven to Hartford. With fewer ferry crossings, it was replacing the Boston Post Road to the east along the coast. Travellers were soon accommodated in Lemuel Camp's Tavern (Inventory #58); several general stores were built between 1796 and 1850 (Inventory # 44, 54). This road also gave Durham's farmers ready access to the port of Middletown, where they shipped their farm products to the West Indies and East Coast ports.

By 1820 shoemaking had become a major cottage industry. Shoemakers were the largest listed occupational group on the census that year; a disproportionate number of homes contained unskilled laborers or apprentices in the shoe trade. This circumstance, together with the fact that a "factory" was established in an existing colonial house (Inventory #6), suggests that the shoe industry had weathered that difficult transition from a craft to a full-fledged but small-scale factory system. While Durham certainly never approached the scale of major shoe manufacturing centers established in Massachusetts, the era of the autonomous craftsman-merchant who was also a farmer was over. Apprentices or hired laborers were needed as the industry expanded, but the entrepreneurial shoe manufacturer was increasingly at the mercy of outside market forces. The Panic of 1837 followed an extended period when the wholesale price of shoes was down, resulting in several business failures. Overextended manufacturers who had mortgaged their property for needed credit lost their homes and their factories as well. Only a few survived this period. Bennet Beecher, a journeyman shoemaker who came to Durham in 1830, ran the last of the larger operations in town. His "factory," built in the Greek Revival style, remains on Main Street (Inventory #49). By the end of the Civil War, shoemaking as the industrial base for the town was at an end. The last shoe shop was operated by a German immigrant family who came to Durham in the last half of the nineteenth century, joining many other immigrants who made their homes in the town in this period.

While the prosperity engendered by the industry lasted, and commercial agriculture was still a viable proposition, the impact on Durham was considerable. It was evident not only in the fine Federal and Greek Revival-style houses and public buildings in this period, but also in the general wealth of the community, which produced an increasingly educated and cultivated class. Daughters as well as sons in this group were sent to the best seminaries and schools in the state. By 1840 Durham had its own academy, a private secondary school (Inventory #39). The Durham Book Company (1733) evolved into one of the first free libraries in the state. A lyceum was formed to debate the weighty topics of the day. Skilled artists such as Benjamin Coe, the painter, and John Johnson, the noted stone carver, were products of this rural

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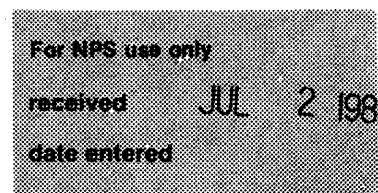
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renaissance. The rise of a sophisticated leisure class implies the existence of a laboring class. In fact, in the census of 1850, a surprising number of houses contained more than one family (261 families in 180 houses). Eighteen percent of the population were unskilled laborers; only four of these owned land.

The decline of the shoe industry was followed by a decline in commercial farming. Despite the founding of the Merriman Manufacturing Company that specialized in tin-ware products and employed both men and women, the economy of nineteenth-century Durham never recovered. With the drop in farm commodity prices after the Civil War, many farms were abandoned, especially in the outlying areas. Many of the farms were purchased by newly arrived immigrants from Europe, most notably by Russian and Polish emigrés who financed their purchases through the Jewish Agricultural Society of New York, an organization founded for this purpose. Even with a substantial influx of immigrants, population levels which had reached a peak in 1860 dropped off dramatically and did not return to the same level until 1930.

A few native sons returned to their hometown either to retire or use the old family homestead for summer vacations. One of these was S.S. Scranton, who remodelled the family's colonial house at the corner of Talcott Lane and Main Street with the most up-to-date Victorian detailing (Inventory #16). Like many towns in central Connecticut, Durham was also a popular seasonal resort area for people from New York, New Haven, and Hartford who bought some of the abandoned farms.

Architectural Evaluation

A remarkably representative collection of historic buildings is contained within the Main Street Historic District, tangible evidence of the historic development of the Town of Durham from settlement to the present day. The significance of this architectural evolution is undeniable because it so closely parallels the major periods of development. The primary significance of the district, however, lies in the number and diversity of its surviving colonial-period buildings. Of added but somewhat lesser significance are the early nineteenth-century domestic and institutional buildings. Not only do they represent the cultural and economic heyday of historical Durham, but they are also exceptionally well-preserved and finely detailed.

Unlike many other towns in central Connecticut where colonial buildings were demolished on Main Street in the progressive spirit of the nineteenth century, most of Durham's colonial buildings have survived in the center of town. The survival of such a concentration of well-preserved houses dating from 1708 to 1775 is itself a remarkable occurrence. They have added significance, however, because they are a representative collection of regional types from a wide geographic area. Regional preferences in building types were brought to Durham from both the Connecticut and Massachusetts Bay colonies, affording a rare opportunity to study the full range of colonial types in one locality. In addition to an architectural analysis by geographic area, such a study may refute some conventionally held theories. For example, the idea of

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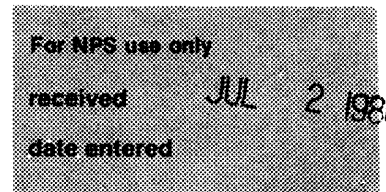
organic development in Connecticut's colonial architecture as espoused by J. Frederick Kelly and others is contradicted by the architectural evidence of the district. Not only are all types and forms built at more or less the same time in Durham, but specific features, such as the overhang, did not evolve in any ordered manner. None of the extant early buildings displays an overhang, even in a vestigial form. It is only found on houses dating from the middle of the eighteenth century.

The apparent external integrity of the majority of these buildings, while affording a rare opportunity to view the basic form of the major colonial building types, is somewhat suspect. Twentieth-century restoration efforts have generally been directed towards the removal of historic accretions, such as porticos or Victorian porches, and in some cases the addition of inappropriate doorways (see 107 Main Street, Inventory #40, Photograph # 5). Some of these changes can be documented from historic photographs and written sources; others are evident only to the trained architectural observer. have architectural integrity. Included in this group are the Curtis-Coe House on Maiden Lane (Inventory #12, Photograph #17), the Elias Austin House, 111 Main Street (Inventory #16, Photographs #18). The Curtis-Coe House, a center-chimney, colonial-period building, was built about 1745. During the nineteenth century it was highlighted by the addition of a Victorian-period porch of turned posts, sawn brackets, and a balustrade. The Elias Austin House features a Victorian-period porch of brackets and posts on its original 1745 facade. The Italianate-style details found on the Squires-Scanton House, built around 1880, are also an important part of its building history. Around 1870 the original roof was reconstructed, eliminating one overhang and adding cross-gabled dormers on the east and west elevations. The sawn double brackets and the hip-roofed portico, supported by pilasters, represent an interesting and typical nineteenth-century "modernization."

As Durham became more prosperous in the late eighteenth century, its architecture began to display a growing sophistication. Quite typically at first, colonial house forms were overlaid with Georgian- or Federal-style detailing. Durhamites built houses such as the well-preserved John Swathel House on Maple Avenue (Inventory #104; Photograph #15). Its Georgian floorplan and Adamesque detailing do not obscure its basic five-bay colonial form. By the first half of the nineteenth century a more culturally aware and stratified society produced a truly cosmopolitan body of architecture. In the small concentration of houses and public buildings built in the vicinity of the Town Green, especially on Townhouse Road, can be found the better examples of purely Federal-style architecture in town. The 1803 David Smith House, the earliest of side-hall plan houses built in Durham, is a classic example of its type (Inventory #124). It is distinguished by its Federal-style entranceway with a leaded fanlight and the delicate crown molding of the window caps. The later houses erected in this style had more typical gable-to-street orientation, culminating in the Elias Meigs House, built nearby 28 years later (Inventory #131; Photograph #16). Its delicate, cove-ceiling portico shields a fanlight doorway, and the fanlight is repeated in the gable peak.

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With the emergence of a national esthetic introduced by pattern books during the nineteenth century, Durham's architecture became more uniform through the use of two major styles: the Greek Revival, derived from the Grecian temple, a symbol of democracy, and the nineteenth-century vernacular. The first Greek Revival-style house constructed was the Coe-Parsons House (1829-30), 94 Main Street (Inventory #50, Photograph #9). Built by Benjamin Hutchins Coe, an artist clearly aware of Asher Benjamin's pattern books, the house is perhaps the best example of a Greek Revival-style residence due to its sophisticated temple form, pilasters, full pediment, flushboard facade, and side-hall plan. Eventually other Greek Revival-style buildings were erected, several for wealthy Durham citizens who hired local craftsmen. These craftsmen created unique variations of the style in accordance with their skills, knowledge, and understanding of the style. For instance, the Robinson-Andrews House (ca. 1840), 81 Main Street (Inventory #57, Photograph #21), and the William Wadsworth House (ca. 1848), Madison Road (Inventory #5) are cube-shaped and capped with a hip roof and central chimney. Other houses, such as the Bela Davis House, 12 Main Street (Inventory #97) exhibit other interpretations of the style by using the traditional five-bay facade, a Greek Revival-style entry, and cornice returns on the gable ends.

Perhaps the purest application of the "temple form" is found on several of Durham's public buildings: the Methodist Episcopal Church/Grange Hall (1836) (Inventory #74), the Durham Academy (1843-44) (Inventory #39), and the North Congregational Church/United Churches (Inventory #45, Photograph #7), and the South Congregational/Town Hall (1849) (Inventory #128, Photograph #22). As originally built, both Congregational churches are distinguished by full pediments, huge Doric columns, pilasters, and flushboarded exteriors. The Academy and the Methodist Church/Grange Hall feature many modest decoration, but retain an entablature and pediment.

The majority of the houses built throughout the Town of Durham after 1830 are simple vernacular buildings displaying little or no architectural detail, and utilizing a gable-to-street orientation. Sixteen of these remain in the district; almost half were rented by farm workers or laborers. A good example of this type is the James Hinman, Jr., House (ca. 1835) on Wallingford Road (Inventory #134). By the late 1850s, however, wealthier Durham citizens began to construct houses of similar form on a much grander scale, with rear and side additions and scroll-sawn porches. The Henry M. Coe House (1859), 128 Main Street (Inventory #25, Photograph #19), and the home of Francis Hubbard at 90 Main Street (Inventory #51, Photograph #20) retain these features unchanged.

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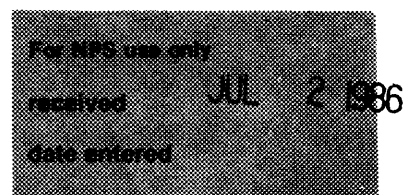
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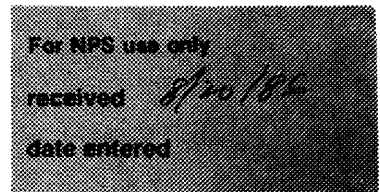
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UTM References:

A 18 693490 4594840	O 18 693670 4593010
B 18 693500 4594740	P 18 693550 4593380
C 18 693580 4594750	Q 18 693440 4593370
D 18 693650 4594380	R 18 693370 4593640
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F 18 693800 4594260	T 18 693320 4594180
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L 18 693920 4592780	Z 18 693240 4594870
M 18 693840 4592760	AA 18 693400 4594820
N 18 693750 4593050	

Boundary Description and Justification:

The boundaries of the Main Street Historic District encompass all of the existing local state-mandated historic district with the following additions: Maple Avenue to the west of Main Street, including open farmland to the west and south, and five properties on the east side of Main Street below the southern boundary of the existing district. In addition two properties are included beyond the local district boundaries to the north and west of the intersection of Talcott Lane and Maple Avenue. These boundaries were established for maximum conformance to historic and geographic considerations and to maintain visual continuity between historic properties. (See attached map.)

Beginning at the northeast corner of Lot 22 (138 Main Street), as shown on the Durham Tax Assessor's Map 97, the eastern district boundary extends in a southerly direction along the rear property lines on the east side of Main Street to the rear property lines on the north side of Maiden Lane. Here the district boundary turns to the east to the northeast corner of Lot 26 before turning south across Maiden Lane to the southeast corner of Lot 65. Here the boundary returns to the west, before continuing in a southerly direction along the said rear property lines to 58 Main Street before turning east and extending along the rear property lines of the north side of Fowler Avenue to include Lot 24, Map 95. Here it returns in a westerly direction along the north side of the street to a point opposite the rear property line of Lot 31. Once again the boundary turns to the south and crosses Fowler Avenue before continuing along the rear property lines on the east side of Main Street, crosses Higganum Road and passes around Lot 93, Map 19 before returning to the north along the east side of Main Street to a point opposite the southern property line of Lot 51 Map 97 (on the west side of Main Street). The boundary then crosses Main Street (Route 17) and runs along the southern border of said property to the southwest corner before turning north.
(Continued)

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From this point the western boundary of the district runs in a northerly direction along the rear properties line of all property the west side of Main Street, Town House Road, and Maple Avenue to the northwest corner of Lot 46, Map 97 on said avenue. Here it returns to Maple Avenue and runs up the east side of Maple Avenue until it crosses Wallingford Road, thereby excluding the east side properties on Maple Avenue between said lot and Lot 72. At the northeast corner of Wallingford Road the boundary returns across Maple Avenue to include Lot 72 through 70. Before returning to the east side of the street and continues north until it reaches a point opposite the southern boundary of Lot 14. There it crosses the street in a westerly direction along the southern border of Lot 14 before returning to the north to Lot 70 Map 99, extends around said lot and returns to Main Street along the rear property lines of the properties on the north side of Talcott Lane. At the northeast corner of Lot 5 Map 97 (on Main Street) it turns to the south to the northeast corner of Talcott Lane before returning east to meet the first point.