

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

DATA SHEET

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

MAR 2 1976

DATE ENTERED

APR 20 1976

**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** *pk* Alexander King House
AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER 232 South Main Street

CITY, TOWN Suffield *vic.*

---NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

--- VICINITY OF

6th-Anthony Moffett

STATE

Connecticut

CODE

09

COUNTY

Hartford

CODE

003

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	<input type="checkbox"/> ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
			<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
			<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Suffield Historical Society

STREET & NUMBER 232 South Main Street

CITY, TOWN Suffield

--- VICINITY OF

STATE CT

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Suffield Town Hall

STREET & NUMBER Mountain Road

CITY, TOWN Suffield

STATE CT

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE Historic American Buildings Survey

DATE 1941

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS Library of Congress

CITY, TOWN Washington

STATE DC

7 DESCRIPTION

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Alexander King House is situated on a large corner lot on the outskirts of the Town of Suffield. Although there are a half dozen hardwoods near the house, most of the surrounding land is open. The house itself is a 2½ story, frame, gable-roofed dwelling with the usual five-bay main elevation. The ridgeline is parallel to Suffield's Main Street, so the front entrance faces west. Along the south side is a porch which extends somewhat beyond the depth of the house. There is a small one-room ell from the north rear of the building which was built very early, and there are two later extensions of this ell to form sheds. The restored underpinning which is exposed under both the main house and the first ell is brick, as is the large central stack. The house is sheathed with narrow clapboards (some old), except for the area within the porch, which has horizontal matched boards. The roof is covered with asphalt shingles. A picket fence enclosed the yard formed by the ell and another surrounds the entire lot. In the rear is a Greek Revival outhouse.

Except for the porch and the main entrance, the exterior features are not exceptional. The cornice is simply molded and window treatment is limited to a light molding around the inside edge of the plain frames. The windows themselves are 12/12. These details were found original and intact on the rear of the building and during the restoration in the early part of this century; they were faithfully duplicated on the front. The porch is built as a lean-to on the south wall, with square columns supporting a slightly pitched roof. Toward the rear, the porch is enclosed. Where it is open along the side there is a plain balustrade and under the eaves, a rail and picket decoration. There is a slight arch to the opening in the front, though this is made straight by a decorative treatment similar to that along the side. The porch is commonly regarded as original and from the interior of the enclosed part, appears to be nearly contemporary.

The main entrance is an example of the pilastered treatment prevalent in the Connecticut Valley before the Revolution. Straight fluted pilasters flank the doorway and rest on high pedestals. The capitals are very simple and are at the level of the bottom of the transom. In each necking is carved a six-petalled rosette. The entablature features a plain pulvinated frieze between an architrave and a heavy cornice, each made up of a number of narrow moldings of increasing projection. A central ornament is created by projecting the elements of the entablature forward; similar breaks occur over the pilasters. The panelled double doors, although appropriate, are from another house, and the seven-paned transom was reconstructed during restoration. There are hewn sandstone entrance steps.

The interior plan is the usual for central stack dwellings; two large front rooms and a large kitchen and small rooms in the rear, with corresponding chambers upstairs. The parlor or north front room is the most elaborate. The fireplace wall is completely covered with rectangular raised quarter-round panelling; the large panel above the shallow brick fireplace has a landscape of a river scene. On either side of the fireplace, which is set off by a typical bolection molding, is a fluted pilaster standing on a high panelled pedestal, with a rosette in the necking and a shell carving near the base. The rest of the room is panelled up to the chair rail. In the northwest corner is a cupboard with a shell-carved interior, three open shelves (a glazed door is an addition) and two doors with round-headed panels below. The opening is framed by fluted pilasters (again with rosettes) supporting an arch. The carved keystone of the arch forms the bottom element in an ornament created by a break in the cornice at this point. The area between the

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Alexander King House	6	one

Connecticut Statewide Inventory of Historic Resources
1975 - State
Connecticut Historical Commission
Hartford, CT

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one

arch and the cornice is filled in with panelling. Interestingly, the pilaster - and - arch motif is continued along the inside of the opening and briefly, on the sides of the cupboard until they intersect with the walls. Because of the woodwork and the plastering of the ceiling, there are no structural members visible in this room. The girts, however, are concealed with a cornice composed of a wide fascia surmounted by two cyma moldings separated by narrow fillets. Below this is a very similar group which forms a transition from the plane of the wall to that of the girt. This rather heavy cornice is continued around the room, merging into the panelling on the cupboard with breaks extending outward over the major openings and features, such as the pilasters, doorways, and corner cupboard.

The other front room has similar raised panelling on the fireplace wall and partial wainscoting. Built in to the wall next to the fireplace is an open rectangular-shaped cupboard with three curved shelves above and panelled doors below. The cornice moldings are quite simple. In the panelled hall between the front rooms is the staircase, an open stringer with square newels and delicately turned balusters. In the chambers above the fireplace walls are panelled but there is no wainscoting and again, the cornice moldings are less elaborate than in the first room. Throughout the house most doors have two large plain panels.

The kitchen features plainly cased structural members, a dado of horizontal featheredged boards, and a plain mantel over a large fireplace with ovens. The walls separating the kitchen from the side rooms are also featheredged boards but placed vertically. There is a similar wall treatment in the ell (which is unfinished, having no ceiling) and in the office off the porch, though the latter has horizontal boards with a bead molding. With the exception of some minor replacements, such as stairway balusters, the interior was found and has continued in virtually untouched condition. The King House is situated at the southern end of an historic area. The structure was surveyed by the Historic American Buildings Survey in 1941 and was identified in 1966 as an outstanding residence by the Connecticut Review Board for the National Register. A nomination for the Suffield Historic District is scheduled to be prepared as soon as time permits. However, the King House documentation was complete and ready for submission.

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 1764

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Alexander King House is of considerable importance in Connecticut architecture because of its unusually well-preserved panelling, cupboards, and other interior woodwork. It is representative of the high degree of refinement with which a prominent townsman could provide himself. Its present use as a museum retains the domestic appearance of the building and enhances it with appropriate furnishings. The long porch, believed to have led to King's medical office, is thought to be original and is also of architectural interest, primarily because such appendages appear so infrequently.

Built in 1764, the house's features are typical, but well-executed examples of 18th century Connecticut building. The main entrance is the only relief from the stark exterior lines; the fluted pilasters, Tudor roses and swelling of the entablature introduce motifs which are repeated in the interior, particularly in the north front room. Especially noteworthy are the beautiful shell-carved corner cupboard, attributed to Eliphalet King of Suffield, and the panel painting done by Carlos King, son of the original owner and an artist in Hartford. The woodwork in this room is quite ornate; the fluted pilasters flanking the fireplace and the elaborate cornice. The other front room is not nearly as ostentatious, yet it too is well-finished, with its panelled fireplace wall and wainscot, its pilastered ceiling and its simpler moldings. Even the back rooms, which are much blunter about exposing structural members and dispensing with cornice moldings and other trim, show a high degree of workmanship with their feather-edged wainscot. There is a marked progression toward elaborate and formal detail as one moves from the private and utilitarian rooms to those that are more public. At the same time, there is a uniformity in the attention and workmanship given to finishing well each room within its function. The King House is remarkable, not only for its individual elements, some of which are quite distinguished, but because taken together, they constitute an unusually well-preserved example of a prosperous pre-Revolutionary interior.

Alexander King (1737-1802) is a prominent figure in Suffield's history. A graduate of Yale, he practiced medicine and wrote essays in moral philosophy, which he burned shortly before his death to avoid scandal. He was involved in politics, serving as Selectman and Town Clerk for almost thirty years. He was also a Justice of the Peace, Representative to the Assembly, participant in agitation against British colonialism, and delegate to the Ratifying Convention of 1788.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Alexander King House, 1764, Suffield: Suffield Historical Society, n.d.

Kelly, J. Frederick, Early Domestic Architecture of Connecticut, New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1963, reprint of 1924 ed.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY two

UTM REFERENCES

A

1	8	6	9	4	4	4	0	4	6	4	9	4	8	0
ZONE				EASTING				NORTHING						

B

ZONE				EASTING				NORTHING					

C

ZONE				EASTING				NORTHING					

D

ZONE				EASTING				NORTHING					

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Bruce Clouette, Consultant

ORGANIZATION

Connecticut Historical Commission

DATE

November 20, 1975

STREET & NUMBER

59 South Prospect Street

TELEPHONE

(203) 566-3005

CITY OR TOWN

Hartford

STATE

CT

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

John W. Shannahan

TITLE

State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

3/1/76

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DIRECTOR OF OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

4/26/86

DATE

4.23.76