



United States Department of the Interior


NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20240

July 22, 2010

Notice to file:

This property has been automatically listed in the National Register of Historic Places. This is due to the fact that the publication of our Federal Register Notice: "National Register of Historic Places: Pending Nominations and Other Actions" was delayed beyond our control to the point where the mandated 15 day public comment period ended after our required 45 day time frame to act on the nomination. If the 45th day falls on a weekend or Federal holiday, the property will be automatically listed the next business day. The nomination is technically adequate and meets the National Register criteria for evaluation, and thus, automatically listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

historic name Rock Hall

other names/site number NA

2. Location

street & number 19 Rock Hall Road not for publication

city or town Colebrook vicinity

state Connecticut code CT county Litchfield code 005 zip code 06201

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,
I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

national statewide local

Signature of certifying official

Date May 25, 2010

Title Executive Director / SHPO

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government CCT

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:)

Joe Ecken Beall
 Signature of the Keeper

7-22-10
 Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
 (Check as many boxes as apply)

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

Category of Property
 (Check only one box)

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

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
4		buildings
		district
1		site
	2	structure
		object
5	2	Total

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

NA

NA

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

NA

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
 (Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/single-family dwelling

Current Functions
 (Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/hotel

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th and early 20th century revivals/Tudor

Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: Stone

walls: Stone

Stucco

roof: Terra Cotta tile

other: Wood trim

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

Rock Hall is a 10,000-square-foot, H-plan house built in a free interpretation of the Tudor mode. It is located on seven acres on the western edge of the town of Colebrook. The main floor of the house is clad in random rubble rock, while the upper two floors are faced in stucco. A terra cotta tile roof tops the building. The fenestration is arrayed on a functional basis without regard for symmetry. The ground floor interior is an eclectic mix of styles ranging from a François 1er living hall to a late Georgian library. The upper floors contain bedrooms, mostly late Georgian in treatment on the second floor, and servant's quarters (now family quarters) on the third floor. The servant's area also has a large open hall. The property has well-landscaped grounds, complete with tree-lined allées, that are defined on the north and west sides by stone walls. Specimen trees dot the grounds, which slope gently to the south. Two outbuildings, also clad in random rubble rocks, and a modern swimming pool are located behind (east) of the main house.

Narrative Description

Grounds

The 22.5 acres surrounding Rock Hall are a carefully planned landscape that has grown up since being laid out in 1911-12. One enters the grounds from the northwest corner through a wrought iron gate with rubble stone posts as a stone wall continues southward along the main road (photo 1). The access road curves southerly in a S-shape, past the tennis courts and easterly towards the main house (photo 2). The road then turns sharply easterly and then divides, splitting off to the south to the circular entry drive or east toward the outbuildings. Passing the parking area and former garage at the rear of the house, the road continues easterly, passing the pool, and terminating at another outbuilding, another former garage at the easterly side of the property. Several of the original landscape features, although grown up in almost 100 years, are quite discernible. One allée of coniferous trees leads north from the northern elevation to a square, rubble stone, hipped roof gazebo, just east of the tennis court (photos 3, 4). South of the southwest corner of the house, south of specimen trees, is a small, concrete-balustered overlook, whose view is now occluded by second growth forest. Additionally a short allée of fruit trees leads east from the main gate (photo 5).

Main House Exterior

The main house rests on a low terrace with walls consisting of random-laid rubble stones. In plan it is generally H-shaped with the southern leg of the house being slightly narrower than the northern leg. The view of the rubble stone facing of the foundation is mostly obscured by vegetation (photo 6). The facade, facing west, consists of a random laid rubble stone first floor, an ogee molded projecting string course, and two upper stories of stuccoed walls, which flare over the wood skirt. The upper levels of the uneven H-plan wings are terminated by winged or eared gables, capped with simple projecting flat wood and metal coping and unadorned raking cornice (barge) boards. The gable roof spanning the area between the two wings is clad in curved roman-shaped terra cotta tiles with a dormer whose gable matches that of the two wings of the house.

One enters the house by the projecting random-laid rubble stone, gable-roofed vestibule (photo 7). The vestibule gable matches those of the main body of the house and is coped with concrete cast to resemble stone. This projection is flanked on the main body of the house by full-height diamond-paned casement windows. The northern end of the ground floor façade houses the dining room. Its fenestration extends approximately three-quarters of the height of the interior room and consists of four grouped casement windows resting on concrete sills. The ground floor façade of the southerly wing of the house is a Tudor-arched corner that is enclosed by removable sash rectangular panes as well as entry doors. The windows of second floor of the facade, above the flared stucco skirt, were placed asymmetrically, reflecting the use of the rooms in that part of the second floor. The northerly leg of the house's second floor has five 6/1 double hung sash windows forming a window wall for what was the master bedroom. The recessed central section of the house contains paired 6/1 double hung sash flanking the upper level of the vestibule, while the second floor façade southerly leg of the house has two-paired 6/1 sash reflecting its use as a guest bedroom. The asymmetrical placement of windows continues on the third floor of the house, in the gable ends and dormers. The southerly leg has a triple window of 6/1 double-hung sash, while the northern leg has two paired double-hung windows, again with 6/1 sash. The three gabled dormers were placed symmetrically, and now each contains a have single paned casement window. Five rubble-faced

chimneys pierce the roof—one at the intersection of the southern leg and central body of the house and two others each run up the northern and southern elevations (photos 8, 9).

The southern elevation continues the general pattern of the exterior of the house (photos 10, 11). The western side of its rubble-faced ground floor contains the enclosed corner porch. In this case, the infill glass is a recent replacement of the original small-paned sash, while the arch is a simple semi circle. A paired casement window provides light to the library on the southeast corner of the house. On the second floor, a centrally placed modern balcony has been attached to the elevation. The symmetrically placed openings consist of 6/1 sash windows located near the corners of the elevation and while a 6/1 double-hung sash window and glass door to the balcony are the central openings, the third floor wall is pierced only by paired singled light windows and a glass door leading out the modern balcony.

The eastern elevation—the rear of the house—is slightly more relaxed in composition than its counterpart to the west (photos 12, 13). The asymmetrical treatment of the fenestration was continued on the upper floors of the northern and southern legs of the house. The southern leg has triple and quadruple 6/1 double hung sash on the third and second upper respectively, while the northern wing has three evenly spaced 6/1 double hung sash windows on both upper floors. The visual clarity of the composition is sacrificed to accommodate necessary functions. In the recessed center section of the building there are two protrusions, one on the north side to make room for servants stairs and the other on the southern side to allow space for the main stair upper landing and small office below. The fenestration of the center sections responds to internal function as well. Most of the second story is a diamond paned and stained glass window wall illuminating the stairs and the rear of the living hall. On the third floor, in the gable, the dormers provide light to a large open area for servants. The ground floor fenestration consists mostly of multi-light full height paired casement windows with transoms. The ground floor of the northern leg also extends easterly providing space for an enclosed vestibule and servants' dining room.

On the ground floor, the fenestration of the northern elevation provides light to the dining room on the west, the butler's pantry in the middle and the kitchen and vestibule on the eastern side of the elevation (photos 9, 14). The dining room windows, flanking a chimney, are $\frac{3}{4}$ height multi-light paired casement windows with similar transoms. Those in the pantry and kitchen are shorter 6/6 double hung casements, while the single light windows in the vestibule are modern.

Interior

The interior of the house follows a very typical plan for the era. One enters the asymmetrical U-plan house from the figural "bottom" of the U on the west side of the house in the center of the building. Once through the vestibule, one enters into a large, square plan living hall. The dining room, kitchen and service wing stretch to the north and east. Directly east of the living hall is a small office. The southerly wing of the U shape of the house contains a library to east and an enclosed porch to the west (see plan, figure 1). Floors in this main part of the house are all parquet.

The living hall is decorated in the François 1er style with a large chimneybreast on the southern wall. Light colored wood wall coffering, dark stained exposed joists and beams, and four François 1er-style fluted Corinthian $\frac{3}{4}$ piers with fluting and interspersed fillets, each pier inset from their respective corners create a stunning impression of almost free-standing support—giving highly expressive, if not actual, support for the space. The exposed joists of the ceiling run north-south to connect to deep beams running east west that, in turn rest on the piers (photos 15-19).

Between the openings leading to the library and porch the southern wall of the living hall is paneled in wood coffers. The remaining wall area is dominated by the projecting $\frac{3}{4}$ height François 1er-style mantle and fireplace (photos 15, 16). The western wall appears as an interplay of light and dark (photo 17). Triple casement windows flank the entry with its Gothic revival style paneled entry door, coffered wall paneling, and the projecting piers. The coffered paneling is continued along the northern wall, interrupted only by double pocket doors for the entry to the dining room on the northwest corner of the room, and a paneled stile and rail door that leads to the butler's pantry and kitchen (photo 18).

The eastern wall of the hall is spatially more complex (photo 19). The northern end of this coffer-paneled wall incorporates the short run of the L-plan stairs going up to a landing that has an entry to the servant's dining room and service stairs. The newel post caps are dentillated while the banister is horizontal and the double-amphora-shaped balusters, three to a tread, decrease in height as the staircase leads up to the second floor. Both walls of the staircase are coffer paneled with light provided from the eastern wall by a large abstract foliate design stained glass window. The southeastern corner of the end of the wall contains a concealed paneled door that leads to a small office/entry/changing room with a toilet (photo 20).

The southeastern corner of the building is occupied by the large library, which should be noted for its Doric mantle with contrasting colors of wood as well as large, nine-light, casement windows with six-light transoms (photo 21). Two pair of French doors with transoms open westerly from the library to the enclosed porch with its rubble-stone-walls and tiled floor (photo 22). To the north of the living hall is the bright and airy dining room, decorated with an almost $\frac{3}{4}$ height late federal-style mantle on the northern wall, flanked by large casement windows (photo 23). The room is lined with simple wainscoting that consists of a quadruple fascia and conge molded cap and similarly treated base and simple dado.

The rest of the first floor consists of service space. To the east of the dining room is the butler's pantry (photo 24), whose walls are tiled to about half height with white glass tile and bull-nose. Large cupboards with sliding multi-glass-light door provide storage for dishes, while a counter and shelves take up much of the lower space of the room. The floor is a red clay rectangular tile. Like the butler's pantry, to the west, most of the walls of the wood-floored, large rectangular kitchen are tiled to about half height with white glass tile terminated by bull-nose caps. However, the northern wall, the location of the original oven, is tiled to full height (photo 25). A large sink and modern dishwasher are located on the western wall of the kitchen and modern appliances have replaced the original equipment, but the original built-in, walk-in, ice box in the southern wall remains, flanked by doors to the service stairs and basement (photo 26). The upper panels of the doors are glass. The former servants' dining room, also tiled to half-height, is located off the south east corner of the kitchen, while the enclosed rubble stone walled porch is located to the west of the kitchen, north of the servants' dining room (photos 27, 28).

Second floor

Ascending the paneled staircase at the rear of the living hall, one reaches the second floor—a single loaded corridor with bedrooms to the south, east and north (photo 29). A balustrade matching that of the stairs separates the hall from stairs (photos 30, 31). Two bedrooms are located on the northern and southern ends of the house, while a single bedroom, now a billiard room is located in the central section of the house. All floors in the bedrooms are wood. The moldings around windows and doors are general very simple. Most of the doors are two-panel stile and rail doors. The bedrooms on the north

side of the floor are connected by a shared bathroom with tile floors and walls. The northern bedroom has a fireplace on the northern wall. Its wooden mantle is has a bolection frieze and a flaring scotia as part of its crown molding, which projects beyond the line of the chimney wall (photo 32). The molding around the windows on the side goes to the floor, creating a panel effect beneath each window. The much larger northwestern bedroom has a similar mantle for its fireplace on the northern wall, as well as a similar molding treatment around the four windows on the western side and the two flanking the fireplace (photos 33, 34). The small central bedroom, now a billiard room, has a similar floor-to ceiling treatment for the window moldings (photo 35).

The two bedrooms on the southern side of the house seem to be much more heavily decorated than those on the north side. In the southeastern bedroom molded furring strips divide the ceiling into square panels (photo 36). The window molding treatment of the northern side of the house is repeated in this room as well. The large fireplace, located in the southwest corner of the room is Federal in style with paneled pilasters *en ressaute* and a blind plaque in the frieze. The bathroom, on the north wall of the bedroom has retained its herringbone patterned tile floor and original tub. The southwestern bedroom is the largest in the house (photos 37, 38). The aforementioned molding treatment is repeated around each window and the fireplace, located in the middle of the southern wall has the most elaborate mantle. The mantel has a full ionic cornice and a Greek Revival-style patterned frieze with blind corner panels and a blind central plaque flanked by paired torus molding. Extremely flat ogee moldings lead up to the cornice. The bathroom attached to the north wall of this room is quite elaborate and has retained its herringbone tile floor and wall tiling that matches that in the other bathrooms, but it also has its original claw-foot tub and wrap around and plunge shower with a marble stall (photos 39, 40).

The third floor can only be reached by the servants' stair in the reentrant corner of the north wing. This area has been adapted to modern life with the addition of bathrooms in the northern and southern wings. The space under the central eaves, which once included a light well down and adjacent to the second floor master bath, has been kept open as a family living space (photo 41)). The northern wing of the house contained small servants rooms and two remain on the eastern and western side of the wing. The central section of the northern wing has been converted to a small home theatre room. The hallway outside these rooms has retained its original closets (photo 42). The southern wing of the floor has been converted to a large open living/sleeping space for the owners of the house.

Outbuildings:

Immediately east of the main house is a three bay, hipped roof, random-rubble stone-faced garage whose eastern bay has been converted from storage to a pool cabana (photo 43). Approximately 300 feet further east is another hipped roof, random-rubble stone-faced garage that has been converted to residential use (photo 44). A modern pool lies south of the first outbuilding. Opposite, and east of the tennis courts, is a square rubble stone gazebo. With large rectangular openings and an entrance on the northern side, this hipped roof structure sits at the end of an allée of coniferous trees directly on axis with the northern side of the main house (photos 3, 4).

Contributing Elements:

Main House,
Gazebo
Garage
Garage /pool house
Gates, landscape elements

Non-contributing elements:

Tennis courts
Pool

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: NA

- | | |
|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | B removed from its original location. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | C a birthplace or grave. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | D a cemetery. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | E a reconstructed building, object, or structure. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | F a commemorative property. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years. |

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Social History

Period of Significance

1911-1922

Significant Dates

1911-1912,

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above)

Alexandre Family

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Addison Mizner

Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance reflects the date when the building was constructed and includes the era of its use as a country house by the Alexandre family. It reflects the era of the flourishing of the country house movement in America.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

N/A

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

Rock Hall is significant under criteria C and A at the state level as an excellent example of an early 20th century country house in Litchfield County. Its landscape design, amenities and relaxed architectural forms are all exemplars of country house architecture. The survival of salient landscape features provides great integrity of setting to an estate that once was 175 acres. Its date of construction coincides with the publication of Liberty Hyde Bailey's *The Country Life Movement in the United States*, an exhortation to return to rural life. The general location of Rock Hall, in the Berkshires, adjacent to two quaint villages, yet accessible to railroads and a new highway further exemplified the typical country house in Northwest Connecticut and the Southern Berkshires. At the local level, the building is also associated with Jerome Alexandre (1886-1925), the client, a rather wild heir to a fortune derived from the family sale of a shipping line further fits the popular Fitzgerald-inspired stereotype for a country house owner (Criterion B). Furthermore the house is an extremely well preserved example of the early designs of a recognized master, Addison Mizner, who is better known for his later work in the Palm Beach area, of Florida, but Rock Hall is contemporaneous with Mizner's country house designs on Long Island. The design of the house reflects Mizner's free and eclectic application of style, a style that was much loved by the wealthy of the era and approved of by many architectural critics.

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

Under criterion C, architecture: Rock Hall is significant both as an excellent example of its type – a Tudor Revival of the first decades of the 20th century. It is extremely well planned, decorated in an era appropriate eclectic manner using excellent materials and demonstrating excellent craftsmanship. It is also the early work of a master architect, Addison Mizner who gained great fame for his eclectic designs in southern Florida after World War I. The design exemplifies his eclectic and free approach to historical styles and his urge to "make a building look traditional and as though it had fought its way from a small, unimportant structure to a great, rambling house." The house has retained an unusually high degree of integrity.

Under criterion A, Rock Hall also epitomizes the country house movement along the eastern seaboard. Begun in the 1870's, Americans escaping the heat of the city began to expect something more substantial than the artificial life of great hotels and summer villas in the springs, shore, and resort towns. They began to build more permanent places and by 1900 country house phenomenon was well under way, with magazines such as *Country Life in America* promoting the lifestyle. Americans wanted to live in buildings that expressed frankly and fully the national youthful self-assurance, abounding prosperity, and pleasure in a stylized country life. This phenomenon began to wane with the institution of income tax in 1914 and was destroyed by the Depression.

Under Criterion B, at the local level, the building is also associated with the client Jerome Alexandre (1886-1925), a rather wild heir to a fortune derived from the family sale of a shipping line, who fits the popular Fitzgerald-inspired stereotype for a country house owner.

Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

Built in 1911-12, Rock Hall epitomizes country house design of its era in Connecticut. The general character of the Country house had been well defined by this date. During the 1870's, Americans escaping the heat of the city began to expect something more substantial than the artificial life of great hotels and summer villas in the springs, shore, and resort towns. They began to build more permanent places where "fires do not go out, portraits of our grandfathers and mothers (if we have them) [reside] upon the wall, and gardens get their belaboring with spade as surely as every spring comes."ⁱ In the 1880's and 1890's, Bruce Price, Charles McKim, and Richard Morris Hunt, defined American country estates as a type with such famous houses as Biltmore, Harbor Hill, Southside, Florham, Ochre Court. By 1900, the country house phenomenon was well under way, with magazines such as *Country Life in America* promoting the lifestyle. As Richard Guy Wilson has observed, the editor Liberty Hyde Bailey sought to propound an ideal that was "the archetypal setting for Americans in their country places: 'Some day we shall construct great pictures out-of-doors. We shall arrange the trees and forest, direct the roads and fences, display the slopes of the hills, lay out farms, remove every feature that offends the sensitive eye; and persons will leave galleries, with their limitations and imitations, to go to the country to see some of the greatest works of art that men can make.'"ⁱⁱ

At the same time, there seemed to be a reaction to such examples of conspicuous consumption typified by Edith Wharton as "vapid watering-place amusements."ⁱⁱⁱ In creating her own house, "The Mount," in Lenox Massachusetts (1902), Wharton essentially defined an alternative to the massive estates of the very wealthy. Her smaller, less presumptuous, and perhaps more urbane approach to the design of the country estate became the most popular type of rural residence by the 1910's. Her reaction to the excesses of the previous generation, in consort with Herbert Croly's exhortations of architectural restraint in his journal *Architectural Record*, set the tone for country house design as Rock Hall was under construction. Croly further offered that:

[Rich] Americans want to live in buildings which express frankly and fully the national youthful self-assurance, abounding prosperity, and pleasure in the brave appearances of things. It is the endeavour to satisfy this demand on the part of their clients which has led the architects of expensive houses to make these houses first of all somewhat spectacular in appearance: and in many cases the attempt to be brave and spectacular has degenerated into mere flamboyancy.^{iv}

ⁱA. O. Mitchell, "The Country House," *Homes in the City and the Country* (New York: Charles A. Scribner's Sons, 1893): p. 100.

ⁱⁱRichard Guy Wilson, "Picturesque Ambiguities: The Country House Tradition in America," *The Long Island Country House 1870-1930* (Southampton, New York: Parrish Museum of Art, 1988): p. 31.

ⁱⁱⁱQuoted in Wilson, op. cit.: p. 27.

^{iv}*Ibidem*: p. 233. Royal Cortissoz echoed Croly in his condemnation of the excesses of the Modern French style:

These French dwelling houses are one of the most appalling things architecture has ever known, each one with . . . all the frippery the fashion wants. . . . They are pseudo palaces. . . . There seems now to be a general forgetfulness that the beautiful is rarely the ornate, and

That many of Mizner's earliest residential commissions were for country houses reflects the clients' greater willingness to experiment with a building that was neither used year-round nor constantly in the public eye. Nevertheless, Rock Hall was designed as a public statement (however small), confronting not only the relatively simple problem of habitation, but also that of representation.

The genesis of Rock Hall appears to be two kinds of love: the Alexandre family's love of the Berkshires and Jerome's love of Violet Adelaide Oakley. According to the *New York Times*, J. J. Alexandre, Jerome's father, frequented the nearby town of Lenox MA, a watering hole and summer resort for some of America's most wealthy. Nearby estates included parts of October Hill, the hunting preserve of financier Harry Payne Whitney, a friend of Jerome's uncle, J. H. Alexandre, who also became a member of the Lenox Village Improvement Society, a group of wealthy New Yorkers interested in maintaining the picturesque nature of the town and the Berkshire region.^v The Alexandre's father had owned a shipping line that served Cuba, Mexico and the Caribbean Islands. In 1888, they sold their interests to the Ward Line, and diversified their assets. Members of New York Society, listed in the *Social Register*, the Alexandre name frequently appeared on the *New York Times*' society page.

Following the death of J.J. Alexandre, his son Jerome was to receive one half of his estate of \$3 million on reaching his majority. Jerome's mother, who split the remaining inheritance with her daughter, remarried Paul Bonner a well known horseman and bond broker, keeping her family's estate "Nirvana" in Stamford, where the young Jerome alternated residence between there and East 65th Street in New York. While a freshman at Princeton, Jerome met and secretly married a stenographer who worked in his stepfather's, office—Violet Adelaide Oakley from the Bronx. This scandalous union created much furor, but Jerome graduated from Princeton in 1910 and, having reached his majority in 1909, set about creating a country house to go with his apartment near the Plaza. Mrs. Alexandre's mother, Mary T. Oakley, bought the 175-acre Old O'Connell farm, in 1909, was living there in 1910 and deeded it to her son in law in April 1911.^{vi} Why Colebrook as a place for a country house? There are two theories concerning this decision. Mary moved to Colebrook after her husband's death and perhaps attempted to run a farm. This difficult endeavor failed and young Jerome bought the farm deciding to make it his country place. Alternatively, Jerome may have arranged for his mother-in-law to buy the farm to avoid publicity. Colebrook was close to the society watering holes of Norfolk, Great Barrington, Stockbridge and Lenox, which had become more accessible with the completion of the Jacob's Ladder highway in Massachusetts, yet it was far enough away to avoid gossip and scandal relative their union.

In the October 14, 1911 edition of the local Port Washington NY society paper, the *Plain Talk*, it was reported that local resident architect Addison Mizner had left town on October 4, to superintend the construction of Alexandre's country house, "estimated to cost about 150,000."^{vii} Mizner was born in Benicia, California, the son of, Lansing Bond Mizner, a lawyer and the U. S. minister to Guatemala. Mizner served a 3-year apprenticeship in the office of San Francisco architect, Willis Jefferson Polk, and according to Mizner, eventually becoming a partner.^{viii} While traveling in Hawaii, he co-wrote a book with Ethel Watts Mumford entitled *The Cynic's Calendar of Revised Wisdom for 1903* and then later *The Limerick Up To Date Book*, both collections of witticisms. He relocated to New York City in 1904, where he obtained an entrée into New York Society through San Franciscans Tessie Fair and her sister Bertie, who would marry into the extremely wealthy Oelrich and Vanderbilt families. Through them he met Stanford White and received minor assignments from White. He eventually developed a small architectural practice specializing in residential commissions. In 1907, he moved to Port Washington on Long Island and subsequently designed at more than five major country houses on the Island while completing several minor commissions for parts of country estates throughout New York's Nassau and Suffolk counties.

At 46, (1918) he moved to Palm Beach, Florida where his Mediterranean Revival designs, beginning with the Everglades Club, won the attention and patronage of wealthy clients in Palm Beach and West Palm Beach. The 6 foot 2 inch, 250-pound epicurean epitomized the "society architect." Rejecting modern architecture for its "characterless copybook effect," he sought to "make a building look traditional and as though it had fought its way from a small, unimportant structure to a great, rambling house." He is best known for his work in Florida including designs for the Vanderbilts, Morgans, and Wanamakers. Since Mizner left for Florida in 1919 and never returned to the north, Rock Hall is the probably the only Connecticut house designed by Mizner.

Rock Hall is an excellent example of his free application of his loose treatment of styles and an effort to impart a sense of age and continuity to a building. The exterior, a rock bound version of the Tudor, it reflects a conflation of the social and aesthetic ideals of the wealthy during the first three decades of this century. As has been widely noted, there was a belief during this time that the United States had a personal relationship with the Renaissance, and that Americans could claim intellectual and spiritual kinship with the life and art of the 15th and 16th centuries. In addition there was a renewed interest in the values and heritage of Anglo Saxon society; this was a wistful romanticism precipitated by the harsh realities of modern life, industrial life, and the influx of southern and eastern European immigrants. Compounded with these larger social and cultural issues was the need to express one's own distinguished lineage. The architectural expression of this desire was clarified by critic and educator Howard Dwight Smith: writing in 1918, he commented:

A wave of philanglicism in architecture and decoration has been sweeping over America for the past decade. It is natural that we should look to England for precedent in domestic architecture, inasmuch as the problems to be met and solved in England are more probably nearly similar to our own than they are any others. This wave of philanglicism is spending itself in the popular demand for Adam, Georgian and Tudor work.^{ix}

that simplicity lends itself most readily to dignity. . . there is yet grievous need for plain speaking and plain building. ("Echoes of the League Dinner," *Architectural Record* 21 (May 1907): 390).

^v *New York Times*, January 1910

^{vi} Town of Colebrook land records. Vol. 21, pp. 44, 239: US Census Colebrook, 1910

^{vii} *Plain Talk*, Vol. 1, no. 3, October 14, 1911: p. 43

^{viii} Addison Mizner, *The Many Mizners*. Chicago: Sears, 1932. p. 74-75

^{ix} Howard Dwight Smith, "The Residence of Allan S. Lehman," *Architectural Record* 44 (December 1918): 483.

Other critics affirmed this sentiment. Herbert Croly, editor of the *Architectural Record*, wrote, "the tenacity of this tradition has had a very beneficial influence on the domestic architecture of a country that was in danger of becoming frenchified."^x In some areas of architectural design the trend became so pervasive that, as early as 1907, the *Architectural Record* wrote:

A contemporary American who wished to build a brick house . . . is restricted to a choice between two styles— the Georgian and the Jacobean—and with the catholicity of taste which is his most noticeable aesthetic characteristic he is as likely to choose one as he is the other.^{xi}

Clearly the Tudor was one of the styles of the moment. On the interior of the house the architectural elements are used to convey a sense of the passage of time, beginning with the Francois 1er living hall. The adjoining rooms give the impression that the house had grown as an accretion, as later styles were used to decorate the adjoining rooms. This *parti* continues on the upper floor where the rooms were designed using Federal and Greek Revival motifs, reinforcing the idea that over time, the owners had altered the interior to follow architectural fashion.

The exterior of the house also reflects Mizner's free and eclectic use of form and materials. Mizner made little reference to, or showed interest in complying with, the then-prevalent taste for more academically correct interpretations of the Tudor style, or alternatively, a close adaptation of the Colonial in this section of New England. His design decisions made this house a stylistic, almost eccentric, rarity in the hills of Litchfield County.

Mizner's uninhibited treatment of the forms and references to Tudor style is demonstrated in the eclectic creation of Tudor arches using rubble stone, a material that, although plentiful in the Berkshires, is rarely employed in this manner in the region. Mizner's specification of stucco for the exterior, ill advised in this climate due to the extreme changes in temperature, created a visual tension between the single sheath-like plasticity of the stucco and the equally plastic, but individually discernable and distinctive forms of the rubble stone—each individual stone combining and contributing to make the flowing forms of the arches and lower walls of the house.

This unconstrained architectural approach was rarely seen in an area more used to buildings with exact reproductions of Colonial details. Mizner's emancipated approach to architectural form can also be seen in the work of his New York mentor Stanford White's earlier shingle style buildings and the house can be interpreted both of the influence of White and as evidence of Mizner's developing an equally unbounded approach to the Mediterranean styles he would later use in Palm Beach Florida. In comparison with Mizner's contemporary Colonial Revival, Spanish Mediterranean Revival, and Tudor Revival style houses on Long Island, Rock Hall is far more adventurous in the treatment of basic forms and use of materials.

The exterior design of Rock Hall is free and playful, but the interior is academically correct in its treatment of historic styles and forms. Mizner's Francois 1er living hall is correct in the details of the columns and fireplace, as are the treatment of the architectural elements in the rest of the house, but few of his era would think to design the central space of an ostensibly Tudor building in the Francois 1er mode creating an eclectic architectural ensemble that still holds together as an overall composition. The house is a perfect exemplar of the uninhibited nature of Mizner's work. He had "[made] a building look traditional and as though it had fought its way from a small, unimportant structure to a great, rambling house.

Rock Hall was used by the Alexandres through 1919. Shortly after Jerome's return from the War, Mrs. Alexandre committed suicide at her mother-in-law's estate in Stamford. Jerome left the east for New Mexico, remarrying, and then selling the house in 1922. He died in 1925 in a house fire in Albuquerque.^{xii} The 175 acres included another house and many other outbuildings, some of which are still extant across Rock Hall Road under different ownership. Rock Hall and its acreage remained intact until 1966, when it was subdivided by Rock Hall Estates and 168 acres were sold off. From 1973 to 2005, it was used as a vacation house for a group of men from West Hartford. In 2005, the Somers family purchased the house and lovingly restored Rock Hall. Luckily, the house interior was intact but maintenance issues needed to be addressed. The exterior stucco was carefully repaired and the surviving original windows were repaired. All of the interior elements mentioned in Section 7 of this nomination survived intact in the house and were repaired only if needed. Modern intrusions in the fabric are few and most are the result of the need to update the mechanical and electrical elements of the house. New wallpaper was applied in spaces where wallpaper previously existed. When the current owner bought the house, they intended to use it as a summer home, but, since 2007, it has been operated as a bed and breakfast, providing many with an opportunity to experience living in a Mizner-designed house, a privilege previously reserved for very few.

9. Major Bibliographical References

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

- Anonymous, "Echoes of the League Dinner," *Architectural Record* 21 (May 1907): 390
Croly, Herbert "Individualism in Architecture," *Architectural Record* 32 (October 1912): 275-276.
Curl, Donald, *Mizner's Florida* (MIT: 1987)
Robert B. MacKay, Anthony K. Baker & Carol A. Traynor *Long Island Country Houses and Their Architects, 1860-1940* Norton, 1997
Mizner, Addison. *The Many Mizners*. Chicago: Sears, 1932.
New York Times
Seebohm, Caroline. *Boca Roco*. New York: Clarkson Potter, 2001.
Smith, Howard Dwight "The Residence of Allan S. Lehman," *Architectural Record* 44 (December 1918): 483-486.
Town of Colebrook Land Records
U.S. Census

^xHerbert Croly, "Individualism in Architecture," *Architectural Record* 32 (October 1912): 275.

^{xi}"Two Jacobean Houses," *Architectural Record* 21 (January 1907): 35.

^{xii} *New York Times*, Dec 25, 1925

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 # _____

Primary location of additional data:

State Historic Preservation Office
 Other State agency
 Federal agency
 Local government
 University
 Other
 Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 22.73 acres
 (Do not include previously listed resource acreage)

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1	<u>18</u>	<u>654300</u>	<u>4649680</u>	3	<u>18</u>	<u>654570</u>	<u>4649380</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u>18</u>	<u>654593</u>	<u>4649650</u>	4	<u>18</u>	<u>654310</u>	<u>4649400</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing

Verbal Boundary Description (describe the boundaries of the property)

The land was acquired in two transactions and has been combined into one lot. The first deed for approximately seven acres is described in vol. 72, p.701 of the Colebrook Land records as commencing at a concrete post on the easterly street line of Rock Hall road said point being on the southwesterly corner of the land now or formerly of Atkins; thence proceeding along Atkins southeasterly 504 feet, more or less to a concrete post; thence proceeding along Atkins southwesterly 655 feet, more or less; thence proceeding northwesterly along land of Lena Lucarelli et al. 500 feet more or less, to the easterly street line of Rock Hall Road northeasterly 590 feet, more or less, to the point of commencement. The additional 15.5 acres was acquired as part of a property realignment in June 2005, wherein the northern boundary of the property was extended easterly 494 feet and the southern boundary easterly 940 feet, making an eastern property boundary of 884 feet in length as shown on the Town of Colebrook tax map 13, lot 37.

Boundary Justification (explain why the boundaries were selected)

The boundaries conform to the portion of the original 175-acre estate that remains with the house. The other 151.5 acres of the original estate were subdivided in 1966 and sold off over time.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Steven Bedford, Ph.D.
 organization N/A date April 25, 2010
 street & number 11 Shafer Rd telephone 860-489-9908
 city or town New Hartford state CT zip code 06057
 e-mail sbedford1953@mac.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.

Property Owner:

(complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO)

name Michael and Stella Somers

street & number 19 Rock Hall Rd.

telephone 860-379-2230

city or town Colebrook

state CT

zip code 06021

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

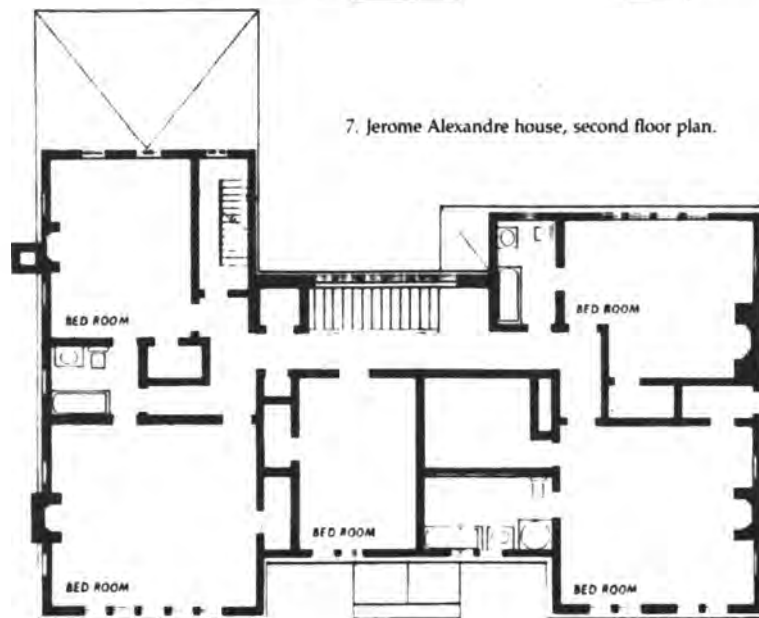
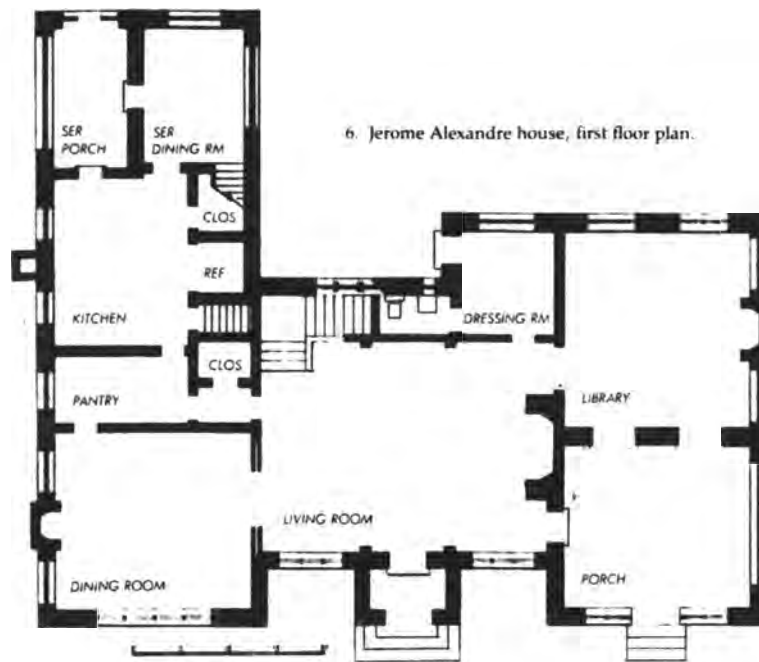
Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7. Figure 1 Plans of Rock Hall

Page 1 of 1



Source Curl, 1987

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number NA. Photo List

Page 1 of 2

Name of Property: Rock Hall

City or Vicinity: Colebrook

County: Litchfield

State: Connecticut

Photographer: Steven Bedford

Date Photographed: June 2009

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

- CT_Litchfield County_Rock Hall_0001, camera facing southwest, entry gate
- CT_Litchfield County_Rock Hall_0002, camera facing south, view to house
- CT_Litchfield County_Rock Hall_0003, camera facing north, pine alley
- CT_Litchfield County_Rock Hall_0004, camera facing north, gazebo
- CT_Litchfield County_Rock Hall_0005, camera facing west, fruit tree alley
- CT_Litchfield County_Rock Hall_0006, camera facing southeast, façade of main house
- CT_Litchfield County_Rock Hall_0007, camera facing east, vestibule area
- CT_Litchfield County_Rock Hall_0008, camera facing east, façade of main house
- CT_Litchfield County_Rock Hall_0009, camera facing southeast, north elevation and facade
- CT_Litchfield County_Rock Hall_0010, camera facing northwest, south elevation
- CT_Litchfield County_Rock Hall_0011, camera facing northeast, south elevation
- CT_Litchfield County_Rock Hall_0012, camera facing west, east elevation
- CT_Litchfield County_Rock Hall_0013, camera facing southwest, east elevation
- CT_Litchfield County_Rock Hall_0014, camera facing southeast, north elevation
- CT_Litchfield County_Rock Hall_0015, camera facing southwest, living hall
- CT_Litchfield County_Rock Hall_0016, camera facing southeast, living hall
- CT_Litchfield County_Rock Hall_0017, camera facing west, living hall
- CT_Litchfield County_Rock Hall_0018, camera facing northwest, living hall
- CT_Litchfield County_Rock Hall_0019, camera facing east, living hall
- CT_Litchfield County_Rock Hall_0020, camera facing northeast rear entry, changing room
- CT_Litchfield County_Rock Hall_0021, camera facing southeast, library
- CT_Litchfield County_Rock Hall_0022, camera facing northeast, enclosed porch
- CT_Litchfield County_Rock Hall_0023, camera facing northwest, dining room
- CT_Litchfield County_Rock Hall_0024, camera facing north, butler's pantry
- CT_Litchfield County_Rock Hall_0025, camera facing northeast, kitchen
- CT_Litchfield County_Rock Hall_0026, camera facing southwest, kitchen
- CT_Litchfield County_Rock Hall_0027, camera facing northeast, servant's dining room
- CT_Litchfield County_Rock Hall_0028, camera facing west, rear porch
- CT_Litchfield County_Rock Hall_0029, camera facing south, main stairs
- CT_Litchfield County_Rock Hall_0030, camera facing north, stairs and stained glass window
- CT_Litchfield County_Rock Hall_0031, camera facing north, second floor corridor
- CT_Litchfield County_Rock Hall_0032, camera facing northeast, northeast bedroom
- CT_Litchfield County_Rock Hall_0033, camera facing southeast, northwest bedroom
- CT_Litchfield County_Rock Hall_0034, camera facing northwest, northwest bedroom
- CT_Litchfield County_Rock Hall_0035, camera facing west, billiard room
- CT_Litchfield County_Rock Hall_0036, camera facing southwest, southeast bedroom
- CT_Litchfield County_Rock Hall_0037, camera facing southwest, southwest bedroom
- CT_Litchfield County_Rock Hall_0038, camera facing south, southwest bedroom
- CT_Litchfield County_Rock Hall_0039, camera facing southeast, master bathroom
- CT_Litchfield County_Rock Hall_0040, camera facing west, master bathroom shower

Rock Hall
Name of Property

Litchfield, Connecticut
County and State

NPS Form 10-900-a
(8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number NA. Photo List

Page 2 of 2

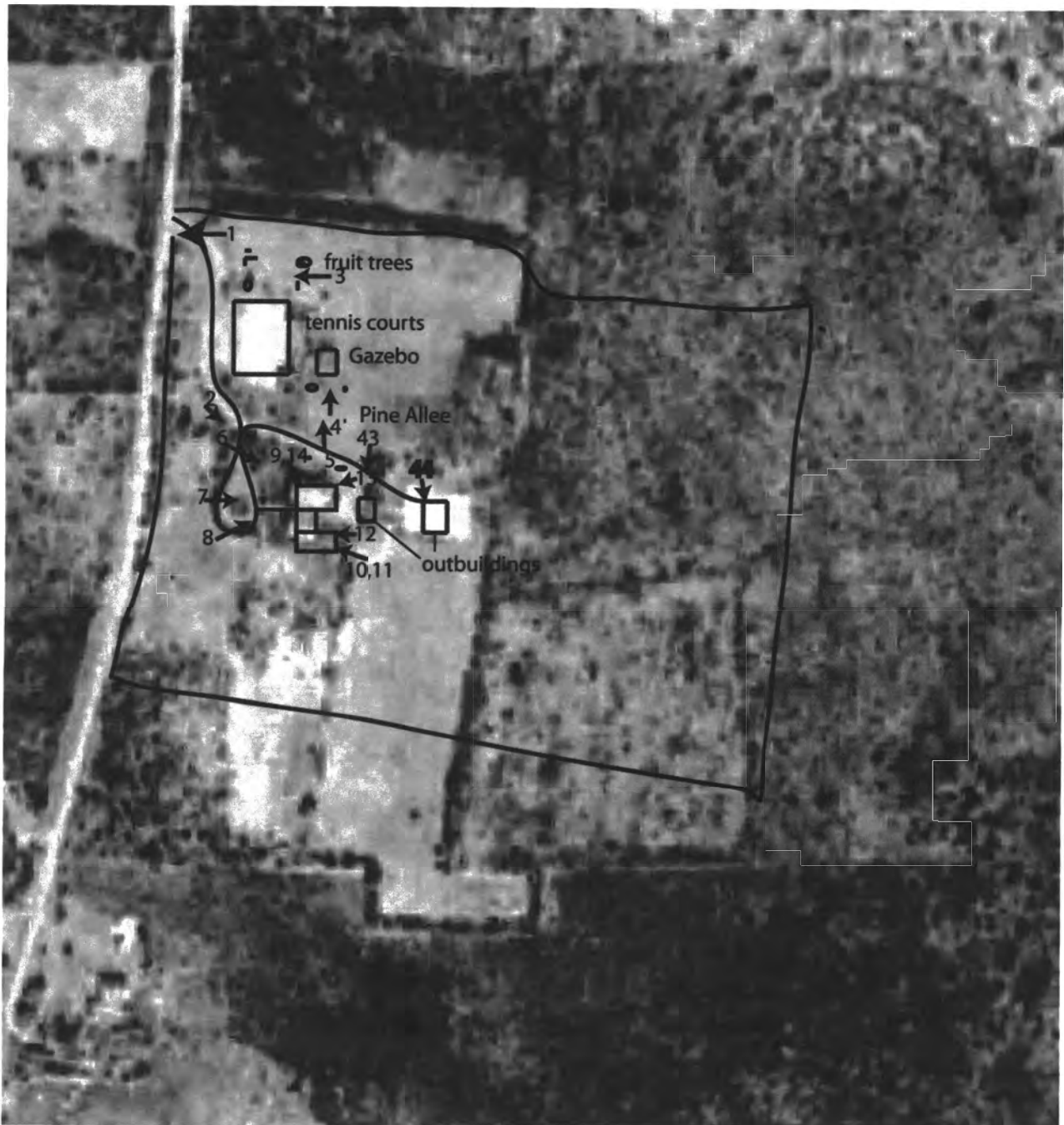
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CT_Litchfield County_Rock Hall_0042, camera facing west, third floor north corridor
CT_Litchfield County_Rock Hall_00043, camera facing southeast, garage
CT_Litchfield County_Rock Hall_0044, camera facing southeast, garage/residence

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number NA. exterior photo key and sketch map

Page 1 of 1

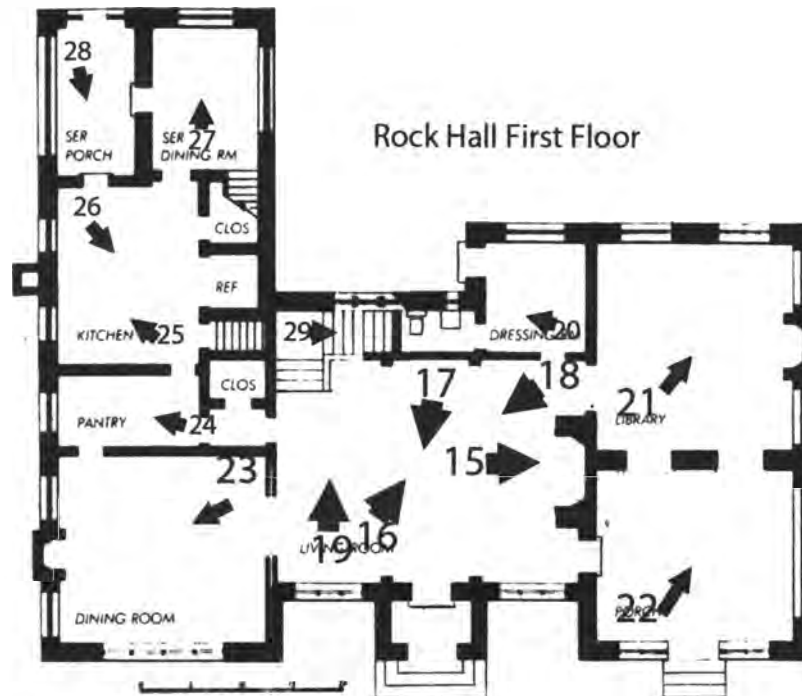


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number NA. Interior Photo Key

Page 1 of 2

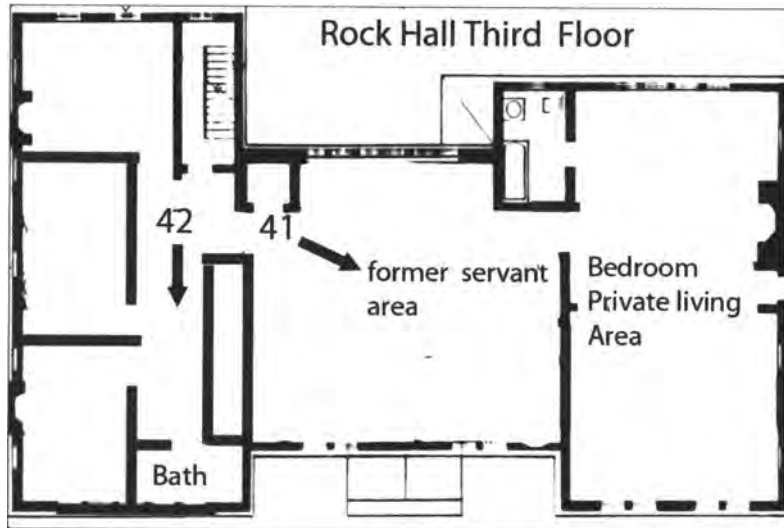


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number NA. Interior Photo Key

Page 2 of 2



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Rock Hall
NAME:

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: CONNECTICUT, Litchfield

DATE RECEIVED: 6/07/10 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 7/14/10
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 7/29/10 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 7/22/10
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 10000495

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 JUL 22 2010 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.



CT_Litchfield County_Rock Hall_0001



CT_Litchfield County_Rock Hall_0002



CT_Litchfield County_Rock Hall_0003



CT_Litchfield County_Rock Hall_0004



CT_Litchfield County_Rock Hall_0005



CT_Litchfield County_Rock Hall_0006



CT_Litchfield County_Rock Hall_0007



CT_Litchfield County_Rock Hall_0008



CT_Litchfield County_Rock Hall_0009



CT_Litchfield County_Rock Hall_0010



CT_Litchfield County_Rock Hall_0011



CT_Litchfield County_Rock Hall_012



CT_Litchfield County_Rock Hall_0013



CT_Litchfield County_Rock Hall_0014



CT_Litchfield County_Rock Hall_0015



CT_Litchfield County_Rock Hall_0016



CT_Litchfield County_Rock Hall_0017



CT_Litchfield County_Rock Hall_0018



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CT_Litchfield County_Rock Hall_0020



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hfield County_Rock Hall_0022



CT_Litchfield County_Rock Hall_0023



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CT_Litchfield County_Rock Hall_0026



CT_Litchfield County_Rock Hall_0027



Ct_Litchfield County_Rock Hall_0028



CT_Litchfield County_Rock Hall_0029



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CT_Litchfield County_Rock Hall_0031



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CT_Litchfield_County_Rock Hall_0037



CT_Litchfield County_Rock Hall_0038



CT_Litchfield County_Rock Hall_0039



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CT_Litchfield County_Rock Hall_0043

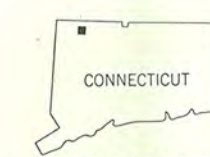
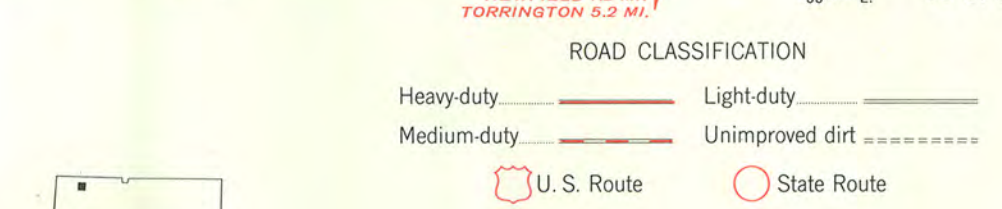
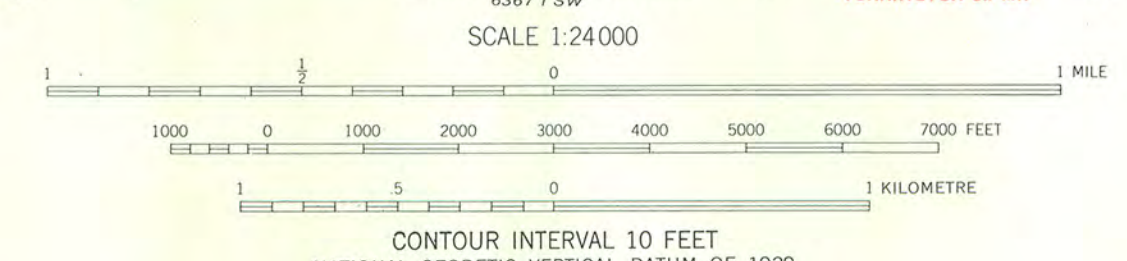
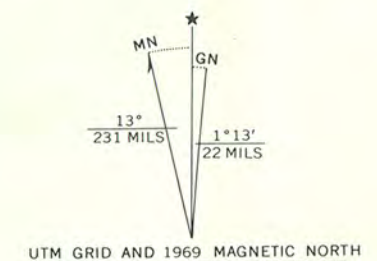


CT_Litchfield County_Rock Hall_0044



Rock Hill
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4641680/N
2.654530/E
4649650/N
3.654570/E
4649380/N
4.654310/E
4649400/N

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USGS, USC&GS, and Connecticut Geodetic Survey
Topography from aerial photographs by multiplex methods
Aerial photographs taken 1944. Field check 1948
Revised 1956
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on Connecticut coordinate system
1000-metre Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,
zone 18, shown in blue
Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines
visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked



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

Revisions shown in purple compiled in cooperation with
Connecticut Highway Department from aerial photographs taken 1969
This information not field checked
Areas covered by dashed light-purple pattern are subject to controlled
inundation.

NORFOLK, CONN.
N4152.5-W7307.5/7.5

1956
PHOTOREVISED 1969
AMS 6367 1 NW—SERIES V816





Connecticut Commission on Culture & Tourism



Arts
Tourism
Film
History

MEMORANDUM

One Constitution Plaza
Second Floor
Hartford, Connecticut
06103

860.256.2800
860.256.2811 (f)

**TO: Roger Reed
National Register of Historic Places**

FROM: Stacey Vairo, National Register Coordinator

DATE: June 3, 2010

SUBJECT: National Register Nomination Rock Hall, Colebrook

The following materials are submitted for nomination of the Rock Hall, Colebrook, Litchfield County Connecticut

to the National Register of Historic Places:

- Edited National Register of Historic Places nomination form
- Multiple Property Nomination form
- Photographs
- Original USGS maps
- Sketch map(s)/figure(s)/exhibit(s)
- Pieces of correspondence
- Other _____

COMMENTS:

- Please insure that this nomination is reviewed
- This property has been certified under 36 CFR 67
- The enclosed owner objections do _____ do not _____ constitute a majority of property owners.
- Other: _____

CONNECTICUT
www.cultureandtourism.org

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