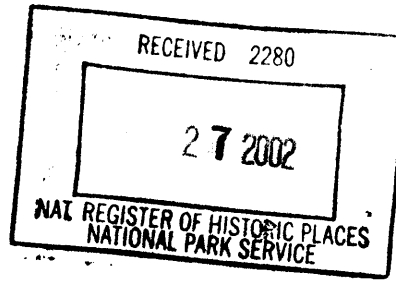


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service



*Handwritten initials and number 331*

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 How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. 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 entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Esperanza

other names/site \_\_\_\_\_

2. Location

street & number 511 Town Hill Road not for publication N/A

city or town New Hartford vicinity N/A

state Connecticut code CT county Litchfield code 005 zip code 06057

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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  nationally  statewide  locally. (  See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

*Signature of John W. Shannahan* February 25, 2002  
Signature of certifying official Date  
John W. Shannahan, Director, Connecticut Historical Commission  
Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. (  See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

Esperanza  
Name of Property

Litchfield, CT  
County and State

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I, hereby certify that this property is:  
 entered in the National Register.  
See continuation sheet.  
 determined eligible for the National Register  
See continuation sheet.  
 determined not eligible for the  
National Register  
 removed from the National Register.  
 other, (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper  
Edson M. Beall

Date of Action  
4/7/02

**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
<u>5</u>	<u>0</u> buildings
<u>—</u>	<u>—</u> sites
<u>—</u>	<u>—</u> structures
<u>5</u>	<u>0</u> objects
	<u>0</u> Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**

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

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)  
DOMESTIC/single dwelling/secondary structure.

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)  
DOMESTIC/single dwelling/secondary structure

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)  
MID-19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY/Greek Revival  
20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY REVIVALS/Colonial Revival

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)  
foundation granite  
walls asbestos shingle  
weatherboard  
roof asphalt shingle  
other brick

**Narrative Description**  
(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Esperanza, New Hartford, Litchfield County, CT

Section 7 Page 1

**Description**

Esperanza, a nineteenth-century country estate, occupies 18 acres on the west side of Town Hill Road (Route 219). All five of the estate's contributing buildings, the main house, two guest cottages, a summer kitchen, and a horse barn/carriagehouse, are located within 500 feet of the road on a relatively level site just south of the crest of Town Hill (Exhibit A). Behind the buildings, open fields slope away towards the wooded valley of North Brook to the west and provide a vista of distant hills.

Much of landscaping around the buildings dates from the late nineteenth century. Today the mature specimen trees that border the east side of the front lawn and shelter the cottage on the north include the largest black locust (*Robinia pseudoacacia*) in the state.<sup>1</sup> The remnants of a formal garden are found northeast of the building complex and there once was a tennis court between the house and the highway. Two stone pillars just northeast of the house that mark the location of the original driveway entrance are all that remain of a stone wall that once ran along Town Hill Road. The wall was removed when the highway was relocated farther east by the state in the 1930s. The present unpaved driveway at the rear of the house is accessed from Pussy Lane, which borders the property on the south and west.

The core of the main house consists of a typical Greek Revival farmhouse dating from about 1835, which was substantially enlarged and remodeled between 1874 and 1893 (Photograph #s 1, 2, 3). Formerly sheathed with clapboard, the house is now largely covered with asbestos shingles. The original form and three-bay side-hall plan of the main block of the farmhouse are still evident on the façade (east elevation) and rear elevation, as is the gable pediment with its rectangular multi-paned window. Major changes to the house included raising the farmhouse kitchen wing to two full stories in 1874, the addition of a three-story south wing extension and a larger two-story north wing in 1893, the latter designed by Melvin Hathaway Hapgood (1860-1899), a Hartford architect (see Exhibit B for the layout). A few minor changes were made in 1913, the year that running water and modern plumbing were introduced. Today the house contains 7280 square feet of living space, and has at least a dozen outside doors.

Colonial Revival features, which date from 1893, include a number of columned porches, roof dormers, bay windows, and diamond-paned casements. A veranda at grade across two thirds of the façade (approximately 800 square feet), has a flat roof for a second-story porch with balustrade over the northern half (Photograph #s 4, 5). It terminates on the left at a small second-story addition that displays a bullseye window in its gable. Posts supporting the veranda roof match the pilasters of the original Greek Revival-style main entrance; the transom there was removed and relocated in the north wall of the butler's pantry in the south wing. Another two-story porch is found at the rear of the north wing and on the south end elevation (Photograph #6). Roofs are detailed with a variety of dormers, including a wide pedimented façade dormer on the north wing that replicates the form and size of the original façade pediment. The Shingle style influence is evident in the broad north gable, which is sheathed with imbricated shingles that continue over the eyebrow lintel of the paired diamond-paned casement windows there (Photograph #5). Narrow shed dormers on both elevations of the south wing contain five-pane sash, perhaps the original attic windows of the farmhouse wing. In addition to other diamond-paned casements and double-hung sash (six-over-six, or eight-over-eight), there is a third-story oriel on the south end of the façade, with two-over-two windows, surmounted by a pediment at the eave line.

The guest houses, one-story clapboarded cottages of less than 700 square feet, were built in 1874, and remodeled with Colonial Revival-style porches in 1893. "Happy Thought," the cottage nestled under the trees north of the house, features a full-length columned porch along the west elevation and diamond-paned windows. (Photograph #7). The porch shelters a large west-facing, single-pane window that slides down into a pocket, opening up the cedar-paneled main room to the prevailing breeze. The columned porches on "Minnetrost," the cottage southwest of the house, have pedimented eaves, one of which has a diamond-shaped window in the peak (Photograph #8). The skylight in the north slope of the roof was installed for the convenience of artists who stayed there. A small building nearer the main house, known as the "jelly kitchen," is detailed with cedar shakes in the gables and diamond-paned casement windows (Photograph #6).

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<sup>1</sup> Registered in 1994 by the Connecticut Botanical Society in its ongoing Notable Tree project, this tree is 97 feet high and has a span of 40 feet.

(8-86)

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

**Esperanza, New Hartford, Litchfield County, CT**

**Section 7 Page 2**

The last contributing outbuilding, which is located just to the left of the driveway entrance, consists of two sections (Photograph #9). The south end, a stable outfitted with Victorian stalls detailed with wood spindles, was built in 1897. At that time, the former stable on the north was converted to a carriagehouse with coachman's quarters in one corner, and more recently serves as a garage.

Much of the first floor of the original farmhouse remains intact, with a stair hall on the south and a parlor on the north (see Exhibit B). Walls and ceilings are plastered, and shouldered door and window surrounds in the Greek Revival manner are found in the parlor. The fireplace there, which was remodeled about 1890, features applied moldings and decorative tile around the opening (Photograph #10). The original dining room at the northeast corner now opens into a large main hall, part of the remodeling for the addition of the north wing (see below). The present dining room, which is located in the former farmhouse kitchen ell, has a large bay window flanked with columns on the west wall, which was added in 1913 (Photograph #11). A door on the left end of the bay accesses the stairs to the upper floors of the wing addition, which contains bedrooms on the second level and a music conservatory on the third floor. A Colonial Revival-style fireplace surround with flanking columns, high frieze, and bolection molding framing the opening, was installed in the 1890s (Photograph #12). In the southwest corner, a passage door leads to the present kitchen, and a former outside door frame now contains a china cabinet.

The first floor of the north wing contains a living room (known to the family as the keeping room), a library, and a bedroom. Among the features of the living room, which has outside access from the veranda on the east, are a large bay window with seating in the north end wall, a columned opening to the library at the rear northwest corner, and cased ceiling beams (Photograph #13). The exceptionally large brick fireplace in the west wall has a wide segmental-arched opening of soldier-coursed brick, and a shallow, angled firebox (Photograph # 14). Bolection molding traced with a delicate bead molding frames the entire face, and a dentil course runs under the mantel board. Two small shelves on either side also display bead molding. A bronze plaque above the shelf on the right was once located on the grounds of the estate. A memorial to Julie Palmer Smith, the creator of Esperanza, it is inscribed with a poem by John Greenleaf Whittier.

Esperanza  
Name of Property

Litchfield, CT  
County and State

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

**A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

**B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

**C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

**D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

**A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

**B** removed from its original location.

**C** a birthplace or grave.

**D** a cemetery.

**E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

**F** a commemorative property.

**G** Less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**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 # \_\_\_\_\_

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

SOCIAL HISTORY

**Period of Significance**

1872-1936

**Significant Dates**

N/A

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Melvin Hathaway Hapgood

**Primary Location of Additional Data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: Esperanza

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

**Esperanza, New Hartford, Litchfield County, CT**

Section 8 Page 1

**Statement of Significance**

A notable and well-preserved example of the country estate era, Esperanza reflects and embodies the upper-class aspirations and philosophy of the late Victorian period. Designed and developed to enjoy and appreciate the natural world, the estate is further enhanced in significance by its long association with the artistic and literary communities of Hartford and New York City. Largely due to Julie Palmer Smith (1818-1883), the original owner, Esperanza became a seasonal mecca for many of the leading authors, poets, artists, and intellectuals of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a tradition carried on by her descendants and recorded in series of guest books and photographs still in possession of the family.

**Historical Background and Significance**

Julie Palmer Smith, an early feminist, was a commercially successful author of Victorian romance novels and an expert horsewoman. Born in upstate New York in 1815, her unusual heritage combined early New England stock as well as Spanish nobility. Her father, John Palmer, was a descendant of Walter Palmer, who came to this country in 1629 and first settled in what became Charleston, South Carolina, before moving to Rehoboth, Massachusetts; her mother, Charlotte Caulkins, descended from Don Gabriel Sistare of Spain and the Caulkins and Bliss families of Connecticut. Julie's husband, Morris Woodward Smith, was a direct descendant of Captain John Smith and Thomas Morris, a settler of the New Haven Colony. Julie met Morris Smith in New York City in 1845 when she was 27 and he was just a youth of 17; they married in 1850. In the early years of their marriage, the Smiths divided their time between their home on Main Street in Hartford (no longer extant), and New Orleans, where Morris was a partner in Smith Worthington, the famous saddlers on Canal Street that supplied both the North and South during the Civil War. Since Morris spent much of the year in New Orleans, Julie joined him in the winter and often stayed through Mardi Gras. Carlotta, the second of their four daughters, was born there in 1853.

After the Civil War, like many urban dwellers, the Smiths established a summer place in the countryside as a refuge from the noise and congestion of the city. The nominated property was not the first place they considered. Julie Smith had had her eye on the Kellogg place, another property in New Hartford, even before the war. When it came on the market in 1871, Morris bought the property for Julie and she immediately set about making renovations, often driving herself out from Hartford to oversee the work. When it burned down in November of that year, the decision was made not to rebuild. Instead, Julie purchased the Frederick Lyman House next door in January of 1872, naming it Esperanza (Anchor of Hope).<sup>2</sup> At the time the \$4000 purchase price included the 18-acre house lot and adjoining farms, altogether about 85 acres. Renovations of the property were largely funded by the proceeds of her early novels. When the work was completed to her satisfaction, in 1878 Julie gave up her Hartford residence and Esperanza became the family's permanent home, a place where Julie entertained their Hartford friends and did much of her writing.

The property still remains in the family, having passed down through four generations of women: from Julie P. Smith to her daughter, Helen Smith Ellsworth; to her granddaughter Lucy Morris Ellsworth Creevey; and then to her great-granddaughter, Eileen Creevey Hall, who is still in residence there with her husband. The estate is now in the possession of James Hall, Julie's great-great-grandson, the first male in the family to own Esperanza.

In Esperanza Julie Smith created a setting where art and nature could flourish together, a classical ideal embraced by many Victorians in the late nineteenth century. That she succeeded in this goal is amply demonstrated. Esperanza was a seasonal gathering place for artists and writers for more than 60 years. Guest books filled with their sketches and poems and signed photographs attest to their presence. This tradition had begun while the Smiths still lived in Hartford. Among their guests there was Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804-1864); his dated and autographed likeness still hangs today in the hall gallery at Esperanza. Over time, the guest list expanded from the social and literary set of Hartford to include distinguished writers and artists based in New York City. Among the first to stay in New Hartford was William Gillette (1853-1937), the Shakespearean actor, a guest in "Happy Thought" right after its completion in August 1874. Among the artists the Smiths entertained was George Inness (1825-1894), a landscape painter of the Barbizon School. He was a lifelong friend of Morris, who had joined the artist on at least one of his European tours.

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<sup>2</sup>The name was derived from the title of a travel story of South America by Anne Bowman.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Esperanza, New Hartford, Litchfield County, CT

Section 8 Page 2

A prolific and popular writer, Julie P. Smith found the time to turn out ten novels between 1870 and 1883. She did much of her writing in the Bungalow, a cabin (no longer extant) on the grounds which had a porch complete with hanging parrots. Her first novel, *Widow Goldsmith's Daughter*, was published in Hartford in 1870 by C. S. Barrows. That same year a second book, *Chris and Otho: The Pansies and Orange Blossoms They Found in Roaring River and Rosenbloom*, one of several of her titles with references to nature or rural life, was published in New York City by G. W. Carleton. George W. Carleton was a personal friend and frequent guest at Esperanza; his sketch of the house when he stayed there in 1875 appears in an early guest book. His company published the rest of Smith's books, the last of which, *Blossom Bud and her Genteel Friends* came out in 1883, the year Julie died in a carriage accident at Esperanza.

After Julie's death, Morris Smith still came to Esperanza for the summer, as did their daughter, Helen, and her husband, William Webster Ellsworth (a descendant of Noah Webster), whom she married in 1878. The young couple soon began to oversee the management of the estate and the farm with the help of a year-round caretaker, who also served as coachman. Helen's unmarried sisters, Fanny and Carlotta, were also often in residence. In addition to their extended family, the Ellsworths soon needed more space for their growing family of four. Their new addition to the south wing included a music room on the third floor for Fanny, an accomplished pianist with the Steinway company in New York City, and they later commissioned Melvin H. Hapgood, a cousin, to design the north wing. The Ellsworths made their home in Yonkers, New York (later moving to West End Avenue in Manhattan), where William was secretary and later president of the Century Company, publishers of *The Century Magazine*, an illustrated monthly. One of the early literary journals, it was published from 1881 to 1925. Largely due to these connections, the Ellsworths socialized with many of the luminaries of the New York art world, and a number joined their house parties in the country on summer weekends.

As was customary the family arrived for the season in late May or June, travelling by train from the city. Their private car, the last on the train, which was fully occupied by the family entourage; governess, servants, and mounds of luggage, was taken off at Farmington and pulled by another engine to the Pine Meadow station in New Hartford. As recorded by Helen's daughter, Lucy Morris Creevey, in her charming memoir of Esperanza, the presence of distinguished guests was but a footnote to the children's memories of idyllic summers. Days were taken up with driving the pony cart, long walks in the woods, gathering eggs from the farm, or swimming lessons and boating at West Hill Pond.<sup>3</sup> But like all privileged Victorian children, their life was structured even in summer. All had their chores, such as sweeping the paths or the bower under the trees where they played or had their morning lessons with the governess or tutor. As they grew older, the children joined the guests in tableaux and theatricals performed in the dining room, and charades and musical evenings in the keeping room.

Many of the Ellsworths' guests were associated with *The Century Magazine*, including editor/poet Richard Watson Gilder (1844-1909), who added his photograph to the hall gallery in 1894. Under his editorship, the magazine was the first to publish some of the new poets and authors of the period, including "Maggie," an early work of Stephen Crane. The magazine's series "Battles and Leaders of the Civil War," was the inspiration for Crane's later *Red Badge of Courage*. Although considered an elitist publication in its day, the magazine also drew upon talents as diverse as socialist James Weldon Johnson (1871-1938), a black musician, poet, and author, and Edwin Markham (1852-1940), a populist rural poet best known for "Man with a Hoe," a sentimental evocation of the Millet painting of the same name.

Some of the more famous friends of the Ellsworths were artist Louis Comfort Tiffany (1848-1933), sculptor Augustus St. Gaudens (Helen was the model for the angel for Grant's Tomb), and poet Walt Whitman (1819-1892). Tiffany, who incidentally had studied painting with Inness before starting his famous company, designed and created a stained-glass window for the new living room at Esperanza.<sup>4</sup> Whitman, who had moved to New York City in 1841, was a weekend visitor at Esperanza in 1887, an occasion marked by his dated photograph in the hall. Other photographs in the collection include those of Charles W. Eliot (1834-1926), the noted

<sup>3</sup> "Camp Esperanza" there, which once included a boathouse and a barn for the horses of those who came to fish at the pond, was on a separate parcel purchased in the 1890s. Sold off in the 1920s, it now is a Boy Scout camp.

<sup>4</sup> Unfortunately, this special feature could not be photographed.

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

**Esperanza, New Hartford, Litchfield County, CT**

**Section 8 Page 3**

educator and president of Harvard, who visited in 1902, and Herbert George Wells ((1886-1946), better known as H.G. Wells, author of *War of the Worlds* and other science fiction, a guest in 1913. The musical world was represented by Ephraim Zimbalist, Sr., and his wife, Alma Gluck, an opera singer. Zimbalist, a violinist and father of the twentieth-century actor of that name, was one visitor who was inspired to build his own retreat in the New Hartford hills, which he named the "Rafters."

Although distinguished guests still visit from time to time and the family has maintained contact with people in the arts, the hospitality that had been so central to Esperanza's history essentially came to a close with William Ellsworth's death in 1936. Indeed, by then, the special privileged world of the country estate era was largely over. Places such as Esperanza, where families and guests attended by a host of servants could commune with nature, virtually vanished in the more egalitarian society that evolved out of the Great Depression.

**Architectural Significance**

To be in tune with nature clearly was the organizing principle of Esperanza as it developed over several decades. Fostered by artists and poets of the day, this Victorian world view was the touchstone that sustained many Americans in the rapidly changing society of the post-Civil War era. For many owners, these country estates expressed a deeper yearning, a desire to reconnect with the pre-modern world and thus recapture lost innocence after the horrors of the war. As it was at Esperanza, rural life was idealized; its inconveniences embraced, almost as a moral imperative. Although under Julie Smith's direction, the estate evolved as a carefully cultivated facsimile of country life, Esperanza's architecture displayed no outward signs of wealth, not surprising given her New England heritage. Indeed, it could be said that, like the Boston Brahmins, if Julie Smith had any vanity, it was one of intellect. While many later country estates and lake- and seaside cottages were high-style expressions of vast wealth, Esperanza remained an unpretentious country place, even as its design was refined and integrated by a professional architect. In his plans for Esperanza, Melvin Hathaway Hapgood clearly favored communication with nature over stylistic embellishment, thus remaining true to Julie Smith's original vision.

Melvin H. Hapgood was born in Minneapolis in 1859 and moved with his family to the Boston area. His public-school education there, with its emphasis on the decorative arts, was a major influence on his later career as an architect.<sup>5</sup> While still in high school, Hapgood had an opportunity to study design with Walter Smith (1836-1886), a practitioner of the English Aesthetic Movement who ran the Massachusetts Normal Art School.<sup>6</sup> This state-supported institution was founded to provide training in decorative design and its application to industry, a revolutionary approach to design education that had originated in South Kensington in London in the late 1830s.<sup>7</sup> Upon his graduation from Charleston High School at age 17, Hapgood was employed as a draftsman in the Boston office of architect William G. Preston. During his apprenticeship, Hapgood managed the obligatory European tour and continued his studies with Walter Smith. He also found time to attend classes at the Lowell Institute Drawing School and Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

In 1882 Hapgood came to Hartford, where he became a draftsman in the office of John E. Mead, an architect/builder with his own millwork shop, which employed 60 people. By 1885 Hapgood had opened his own office in Hartford and specialized in ornamental interior design. In 1890 he founded Cook, Hapgood and Company. His partner, Charles C. Cook (1857-1940), a former colleague at the Mead firm, was essentially a builder, while Hapgood was responsible for the architectural design, his role in most of his professional relationships. Among the important buildings he designed in this period were the Simsbury Free Library in 1890 and the Middletown YMCA in 1893, both of which reveal his rather eclectic approach to stylistic development. His architect cousin, Edward Thomas Hapgood (1866-1915), joined the company in 1893. That same year, however, the firm dissolved, and the cousins practiced together as Hapgood & Hapgood until Melvin's untimely death from cancer in 1899 at the age of 40. Edward, who

<sup>5</sup> The biographical information and the history of Hapgood's career are from David F. Ransom, "The Architecture of Melvin H. Hapgood and Edward T. Hapgood," in *The Architecture of Melvin H. Hapgood and Edward T. Hapgood: An Exhibition at the Stowe-Day Foundation, April-September, 1992*, pp. 5-15.

<sup>6</sup> This nineteenth-century movement was based on several principles, most notably, the abstraction of natural forms as design elements, and did much to establish the decorative arts as a separate field of study. Many examples of Hapgood's school exercises from this period were included in his scrapbooks, now at the Stowe-Day Foundation.

<sup>7</sup> The South Kensington system, as it came to be known, was established by Parliament to improve the design quality of English manufactured goods.



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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

**Esperanza, New Hartford, Litchfield County, CT**

**Section 8 Page 4**

remained in business until his death in 1915, is best known for his major buildings for Hartford insurance companies and the 1910 Connecticut State Library and Supreme Court Building (with Donn Barber), as well as a number of Colonial Revival houses in the Hartford area.<sup>8</sup>

Melvin H. Hapgood was an ideal architect for Esperanza. With his preference for unconventional, almost abstract stylistic interpretation, and a sure sense of design, clearly derived from his early art training, Hapgood brought coherence and continuity to the estate. Originally commissioned to design just the north wing, the architect made significant and subtle changes to the rest of the complex that served to integrate the overall design of the estate buildings into a coordinated, coherent whole. As shown in his rendering reproduced here (Exhibit C), Hapgood's principal contribution to the main house was the diffusion of structural boundaries, most notably by employing extensive verandas that directly or visually provide greater access to the external world. These porches also effectively incorporate the new wing, as does the repetition of the form of the farmhouse pediment in the wing dormer.

While his Shingle-style end gable introduced an appropriately rustic note, overall, stylistic integration was achieved by a limited application of the Colonial Revival. That this style was chosen was perhaps inevitable, given the dates of Hapgood's commission (1893-1895). However, much of the same philosophy that created Esperanza crystallized in the Colonial Revival movement, making it an eminently suitable choice. Instead of elaborate applied classical detail often employed in new estates of the period, Hapgood utilized the repetition of key motifs to establish the stylistic theme. For example, diamond-paned casements are found in the north wing gable, the cottages, and even the summer kitchen. The Colonial Revival porches, of course, were another hallmark of this style that the architect used to good effect on the main house and repeated on the cottages. In less skillful hands, the essential rustic nature of the cottages might have been overwhelmed by the formality of columns and pediments. But there these elements are delicate and appropriately scaled to create a frame for the buildings.

Hapgood's skills as an interior designer are also evident in this commission. Although known for his love of stylized ornamentation, at Esperanza, a certain simple elegance informs his open plan for the north wing. Setting off the well-proportioned living room from the adjoining library by a columned enframing is particularly effective. The fireplace design here is exceptional, so different, in fact, that masons hired for the project were convinced that such a low brick arch was not structurally sound. Hapgood's response is a treasured part of family lore. Perhaps exhibiting the rash enthusiasm of a young architect, he went ahead and built the fireplace himself. Deliberately understated in its refined detailing, his design reinterprets the traditional colonial hearth in a new manner. The focal point of this comfortable keeping room, it has been the heart of this extraordinary home for more than a century.

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<sup>8</sup> For a listing of both architects' commissions, see the index in the exhibition catalog cited above.

Esperanza  
Name of Property

Litchfield, CT  
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property 18

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1	18	665410	4635730	3	18	665940	4635500
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	18	665910	4635640	4	18	665550	4635520

\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By:

Reviewed by John Herzan, National Register Coordinator

name/title Jan Cunningham, National Register Consultant

organization Cunningham Preservation Associates, LLC date 8/15/01

street & number 37 Orange Road telephone (860) 347 4072

city or town Middletown state CT zip code 06457

Property Owner

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

name James C. Hall  
street & number 518 Town Hill Road telephone (860) 379 7977  
city or town New Hartford state CT zip code 06057

**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. 470 et seq.)

(8-86)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Esperanza, New Hartford, Litchfield County, CT

Section 9/10 Page 1

**9. Major Bibliographic References**

Creevey, Lucy Morris Ellsworth. *The Story of Our Esperanza*. By the Author, 1929.

Hall, James C. Interview, April 22, 2001.

Mulhearn, Molly. "I Get Little Time: Julie Palmer Smith, 19<sup>th</sup> Century Novelist." Master's Thesis American and New England Studies, University of Southern Maine, 1994.

New Hartford Land and Probate Records.

New Hartford Tax Records.

Ransom, David F. "The Architecture of Melvin H. Hapgood and Edward T. Hapgood." *The Architecture of Melvin H. Hapgood and Edward T. Hapgood: An Exhibition at the Stowe-Day Foundation, April-September, 1992*.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Biographical Dictionary of Hartford Architects," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*. Vol. 54, Nos. 1-2 (Winter/Spring, 1989).

**10. Geographical Data**

**Verbal Boundary Description:**

The nominated property is described in the New Hartford Land Records in Volume 94, Page 626.

**Boundary Justification:**

The boundaries encompass the land and buildings associated with the development of the core of the estate during its period of significance.

(8-86)

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

**Esperanza, New Hartford, Litchfield County, CT**

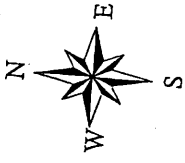
**Section: Photo Page 1**

**List of Photographs**

Photographer: Cunningham Preservation Associates, LLC

Date: 4/22/01      Negatives on File: Connecticut Historical Commission

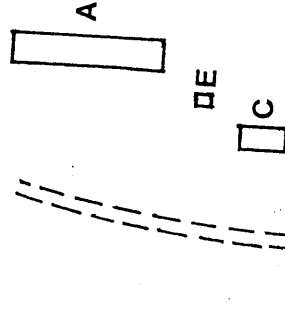
1. General view of Esperanza from front lawn, camera facing W
2. Rear elevation with south wing, camera facing NE
3. Rear elevation with north wing, camera facing E
4. North wing with veranda, camera facing SW
5. Façade veranda (original main farmhouse doorway on left), camera facing N
6. South end elevation (summer kitchen left front), camera facing NE
7. Happy Thought, camera facing NE
8. Minnetrost, camera facing NE
9. Stable/garage (l-r), camera facing NW
10. Parlor fireplace (original main block), camera facing SW
11. Dining room (south wing), camera facing W
12. Dining room fireplace, camera facing SW
13. Living room (north wing), NW
14. Living room fireplace, camera facing W



TOWN HILL ROAD

KEY

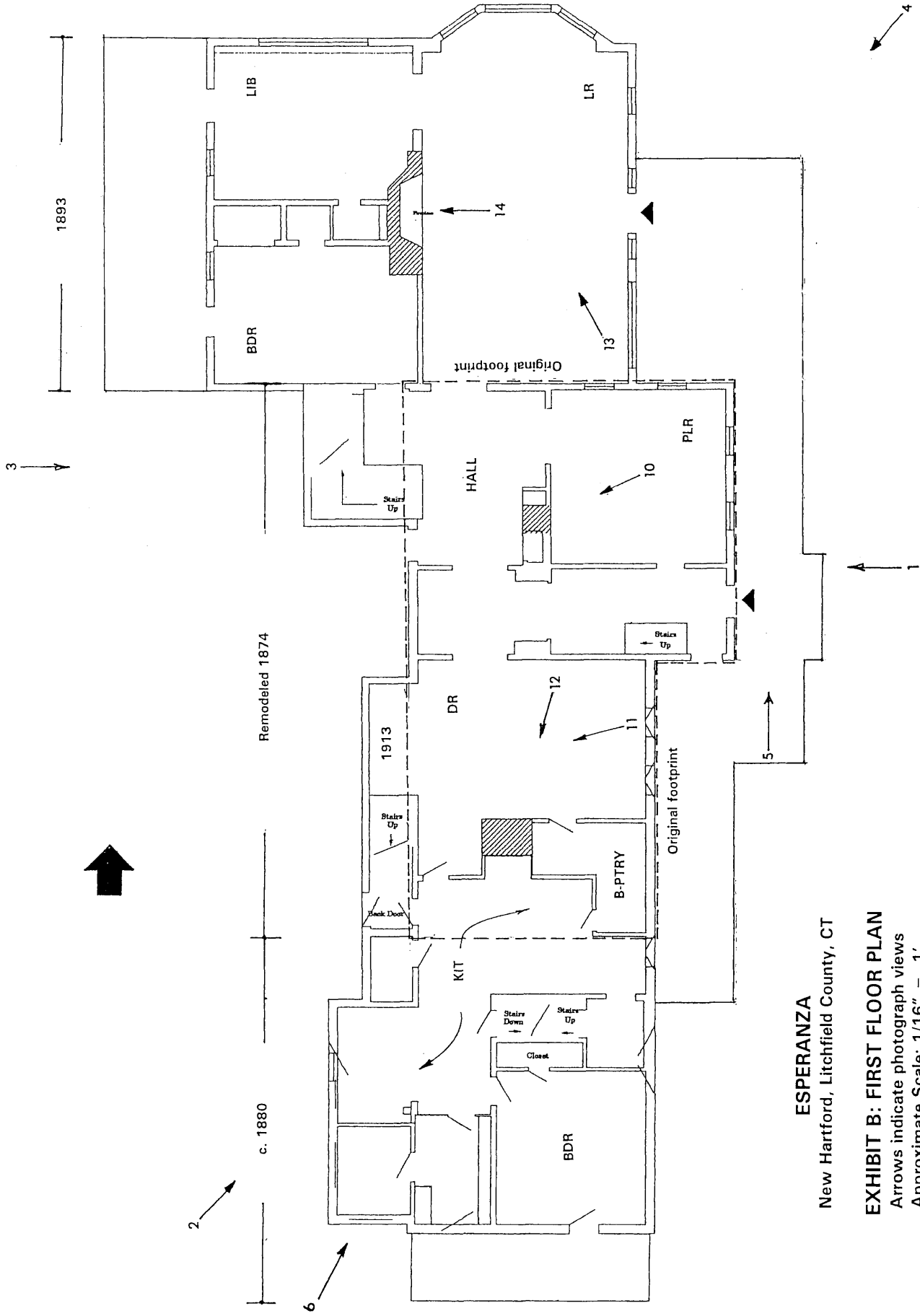
- A: Main House
- B: Cottage (Happy Thought)
- C: Cottage (Minnetrost)
- D: Stable/Carriagehouse
- E: Summer Kitchen



Pussy Lane

ESPERANZA  
New Hartford, Litchfield County, CT

EXHIBIT A: SCHEMATIC SITE PLAN  
(Not to Scale)



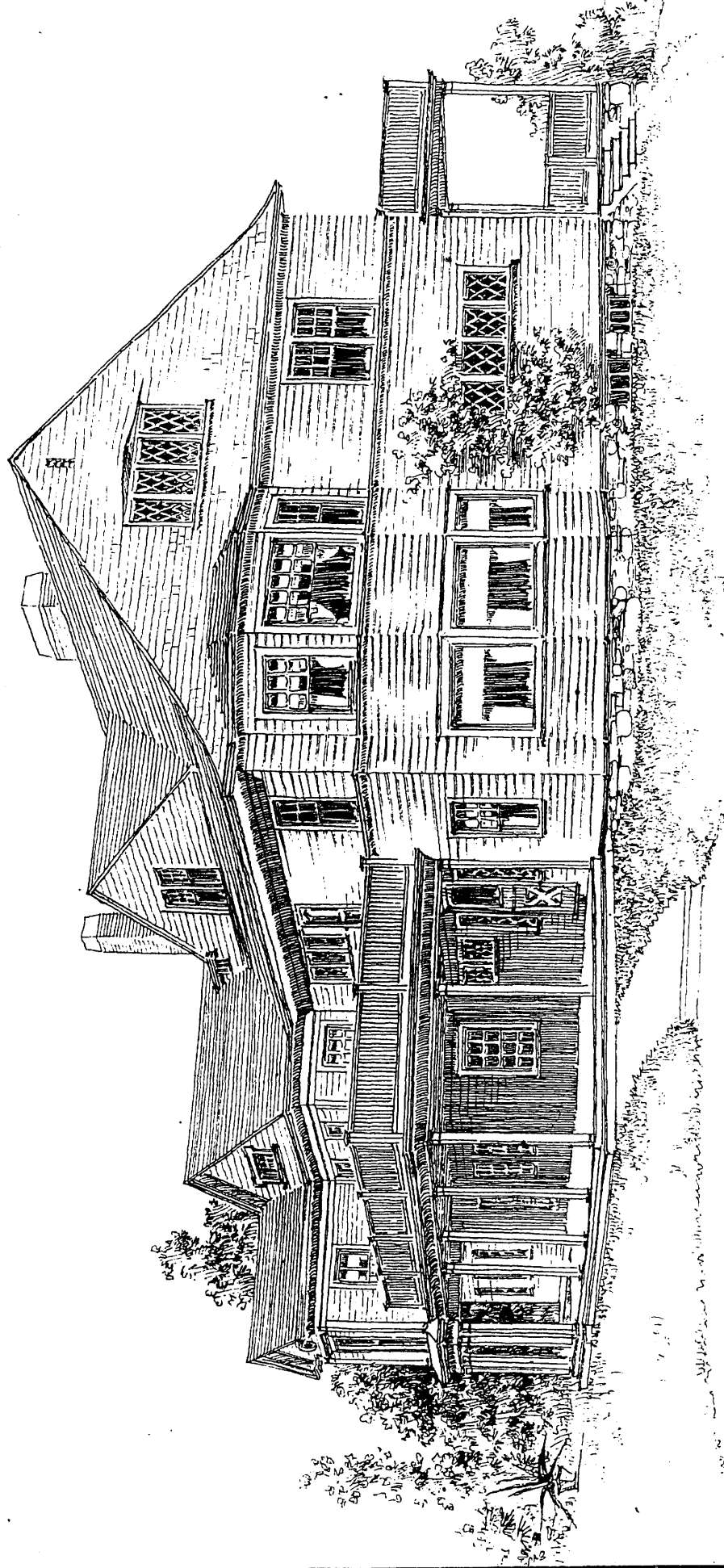
**ESPERANZA**  
 New Hartford, Litchfield County, CT

**EXHIBIT B: FIRST FLOOR PLAN**

Arrows indicate photograph views  
 Approximate Scale: 1/16" = 1'

Cunningham Preservation Associates 9/01

**ESPERANZA**  
New Hartford, Litchfield County, CT



*View of Esperanza  
from the North east  
Happold/Hosford Architects*