

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received JUN 27 1983

date entered JUL 28 1983

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

1. Name

historic Roxbury Center

and/or common Roxbury Center Historic District ✓

2. Location CT 67, Weller's Bridge Rd, South and Church Sts.

street & number see continuation sheet N/A not for publication

city, town Roxbury N/A vicinity of

state Connecticut code 09 county Litchfield code 005

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name see continuation sheet

street & number

city, town N/A vicinity of state

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Foxbury Town Clerk, Roxbury Town Hall

street & number South Street

city, town Roxbury state Connecticut

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title State Register of Historic Places has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1983 federal state county local

depository for survey records Connecticut Historical Commission, 59 So. Prospect Street,

city, town Hartford state Connecticut

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Roxbury Center National Register District is a rural village set in a valley among surrounding hills. A small brook, Fenn Brook, runs through the valley to the Shepaug River. Several small, man-made ponds are located along this brook and several smaller streams which drain the area. Cleared fields on adjacent hillsides surround much of the village, contributing to its rural appearance (Photograph 1). Roxbury Center is the major center of population in the Town of Roxbury, which has a low, widely dispersed population. Roxbury Center accommodates various community activities, including religious worship, postal facilities, retailing and banking, town services, and elementary education. Agriculture is also pursued within the district boundaries. Fields around the village yield hay for livestock, and an apple orchard provides fruit for local consumption. Church Street, the principal street, is laid out in a northeast to southwest direction. The street has broad, tree-lined margins (Photograph 2). Houses and other structures are set back from the road and spaced widely apart. Route 67, or Southbury Road, joins Church street from the south, creating a small, triangular green at the intersection. At the southwest end of Church Street, Route 67 continues to the north. South Street and Weller's Bridge Road meet Church Street from the south and west. A large triangular green at this end of the street contains a granite obelisk in memory of Seth Warner, a local Revolutionary War hero.

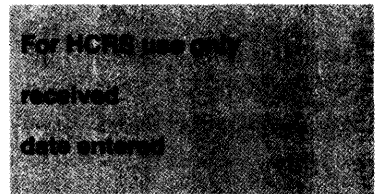
Originally part of the Town of Woodbury, Roxbury did not achieve independent status until 1796. Roxbury Center began to develop in the 1780s, when settlers from elsewhere in Woodbury began to occupy the site. The early center of settlement was located on a hilltop about $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles to the southeast. This earlier center was the location of both a Congregational and an Episcopal Church, with a nearby graveyard. The two churches relocated to the new center in 1795 and 1807, respectively. Roxbury Center flourished after Roxbury's independence in 1796. Rapid growth occurred during this period and the early decades of the 19th-century. The present appearance of Roxbury Center is that of an early 19th-century community, with a few isolated late 19th- and early 20th-century buildings. Many earlier structures were altered or added onto in the 19th-century to conform with prevailing standards of taste.

Due to the isolated position of Roxbury, little change has occurred in the district. Two 19th-century structures, the Methodist Church, built in 1867, and the Hurlbut Store, of mid-19th-century date, were demolished in the 1930s. The Methodist congregation had dwindled to the point where it was no longer feasible to maintain the structure. The Hurlbut Store was removed when a replacement building, the Roxbury Market, was built. Four recent residences are unobtrusively placed and compatible in scale and design with the older buildings of the district. Beginning in the 1930s, a number of houses in Roxbury Center have been restored. Restoration has been characterized by the removal of 19th-century additions or alterations from houses of the late 18th-century. In several cases, reproduced 18th-century details have been added. One architect associated with this restoration activity was E. William Martin. In general, the work is of good quality and well-executed. Within the past decade, several houses have been altered by the addition of aluminium siding over the original clapboard. The majority of buildings, however, have undergone little alteration since the 19th-century.

Roxbury Center exhibits a remarkable continuity of use. Many buildings continue to be used for the purpose for which they were constructed, especially those built for residential or ecclesiastical use. The decline of agriculture in the local economy has resulted in the conversion or (see continuation sheet)

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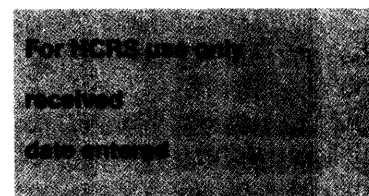
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Location

Roxbury does not have a numbering system for street addresses. The Roxbury Center National Register District includes all of Church Street; Weller's Bridge Road to the residence of Mr. & Mrs. Thomas S. VanWinkle, identified on the tax assessor's maps as Map 6, Block 12, Lot 43; South Street from Church Street to its intersection with Apple Lane; Southbury Road (Route 67), from Church Street to the property of E. White, Map 6, Block 12, Lot 74; Route 67 from Church Street north to the property of R. Munson, Map 6, Block 12, Lot 20.

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Map block and lot no.	Description
<u>Church Street</u> 6-12-9	C: lot with small pond and sheds for agricultural purposes.
6-12-10	C: 2½-story frame house with ell to north probably mid-19th-century. Few decorative details.
6-12-11	C: 2½-story Greek Revival house with corner pilasters, Greek Revival door surround. Early 19th-century.
6-12-12	C: 1-story volunteer fire house with shiplap siding. Also 1-story garage. Early 20th-century.
6-12-13	C; 1½-story Greek Revival house with enclosed porch, early 19th-century. Flush siding used on all sides.
6-12-14	C: Greek Revival church with monumental portico supported by Doric columns, 1838. Facade and pediment finished with flush siding. Steeple has two stories with pilasters and entablatures. The spire is pyramidal.
6-12-15	C: Complex consisting of the Job Warner house of 1785, a 1½-story frame house with two 2½-story Greek Revival additions probably contemporary with the Congregational Church. These have pediments in the gable ends, and entablatures supported by corner pilasters. The front addition has a recessed entry with a Greek Revival surround. The rear addition has a 1-story porch with square columns and an entry with a Greek Revival surround. The proportions of this rear addition are narrow in relation to scale. Also on the property is a 1½-story gambrel-roofed building which once served as a store, and has since been converted to a garage. The complex now serves as the parsonage for the Congregational Church. On the same lot, to the west, is the chapel of the Congregational Church built in 1844. This is Greek Revival with a portico with Doric columns.

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Map,
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Description

Church Street (continued)

6-12-16

C: 2½-story frame Queen Anne residence built in 1882-1883 as a parsonage for the Congregational Church. This features clapboard and shingled siding, and a projecting bay in the front which contains two windows. At the rear is a 20th-century garage.

6-12-17

C: 2-story Georgian house, c 1796, has a central pavillion supported by four Ionic columns. The second floor of the pavillion has a palladian window. The corners of the building have rusticated wooden quoins.

6-12-18

C; 2½-story frame house with 1½-story ell to east. Has a 1-story late 19th-century porch with turned posts and brackets. 12-over-12 double-hung sash is used. Probably early 19th-century.

6-12-83

C: 2½-story frame house, 1815, on site of earlier 18th-century house. On hillside overlooking Church Street. The door, asymmetrically placed, has a Greek Revival surround. Part of an operating farm, the lot also contains a large man-made pond and several outbuildings.

6-12-77

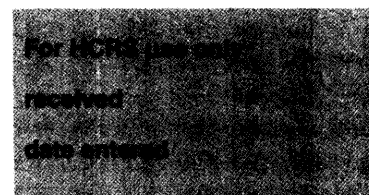
C: Lot contains two houses, a 1½-story frame house set near the road, of early 19th-century date with a Greek Revival door surround. Also, a 1½-story frame house, c1980, with bowed roof. This lot also contains an apple orchard which has been in continuous use since the late 19th-century.

6-12-76

C: Catholic Church built in 1885. The steeple was removed due to storm damage. The church is now covered in aluminium siding. Original lancet windows remain.

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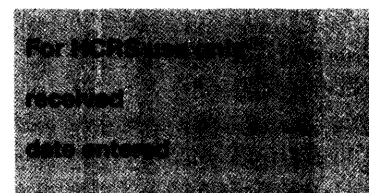
Description

Church Street (continued)

- 6-12-70 C; Phineas Smith house, 1796, Federal style with five-bay facade, 1-story portico with Ionic columns. Jetty or overhang between first and second floors, also between attic story and second floor.
- 6-12-69 C: 1½-story frame building c1831. Has open-bed pediment at gable ends. Recent addition in rear. Building may have been constructed as a hat-making shop.
- 6-12-68 C: 2½-story frame house, Greek Revival style, early 19th-century. Corner pilasters support an entablature. The gable end has a pediment with a rectangular attic window. The door surround is also Greek Revival. An addition is currently being built at the rear of this building.
- C: 1½-story frame house, early 19th-century. Building has been recently shingled. Roof dormers have casement windows.
- 6-12-64 C: General Ephraim Hinman house, 1784, Federal style. Federal entry with portico, Palladian window above. Overhangs between first and second floor, second floor and attic story. Garage of 20th-century date.
- Route 67 (From southwest end of Church St. north)
- 6-12-85 C: Roxbury Public Library, 1937, Georgian Revival. Built of stone taken from retaining wall of Roxbury blast furnace. 1-story entrance portico.
- 6-12-19 C: large open field contributing to the rural character of the district.
- 6-12-20 C: Roxbury Market, frame commercial building, 1930s. Georgian Revival with gambrel roof, flush siding, wooden quoins.

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Map,
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Description

Route 67 (continued)

6-12-22A

C: 2½-story frame house, Greek Revival door surround, early-mid 19th-century.

6-12-21

NC: Tennis Courts owned by Town of Roxbury.

6-12-34

C: Rev. Zephaniah Swift house, 1795, 2½-stories with center pavillion, palladian window on second floor.

6-12-35

NC: 2½ story frame house, 1970s

6-12-36

C: Complex consisting of former Roswell Ransom tavern, c. 1740, with 1845 Greek Revival addition. Now Rectory of Episcopal Church. Facing South St. is the Episcopal Church, a frame Gothic Revival church built 1807-1817, remodelled 1861. Pointed arches are used for window and door openings, with hood molds above these. Wooden buttresses are used at the corners of the building and of the tower. On Weller's Bridge Road is the parish house, a 1-story building built in the Greek Revival style about 1830, formerly used as the Old Center Elementary School. This has a door surround consisting of pilasters supporting an entablature.

South Street

6-12-67

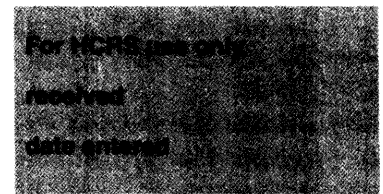
C: Town Hall, 2½-story frame building, mid-19th-century, with pilasters supporting entablature to form door surround. Cupola on roof a later addition, probably early 20th-century. An ell of 1-story has been added to the south side of the building. At the rear of the lot is the town garage.

6-12-66

C: Town Records Hall, , 1-story brick building with open-bed pediments at gable ends, rusticated brick quoins at corners. Presently museum.

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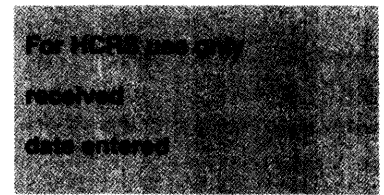
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Map, block and lot no.	Description
6-12-65	C: Former Methodist parsonage, c1867. 2½-story frame house with almost no stylistic features. Barn in rear.
6-12-49	C: Former meat market, 1-story with porch, late 19th-century vernacular. On large lot which extends to Weller's Bridge Road.
6-12-52	C: 2-story frame house with Italianate features, mid-19th-century. Boldly projecting eaves are supported by large brackets at the corners where an unusual secondary gable is formed. There is a 1-story ell to the south with a greenhouse attached. Also on the lot are a barn and a shed.
6-12-53	NC: 1½-story contemporary ranch, 1954.
6-12-54	NC: 1½-story contemporary frame "cape" c. 1950.
6-10-5	C: 2½-story frame house, vernacular, early 19th-century. Door surround may be Georgian Revival. In rear, barn and 1½-story frame dwelling, 20th-century.
6-10-38	C: 2½-story house, 1880s, Queen Anne features including use of varied siding: clapboard, shingles. Barn in rear.
6-10-6A	C: 2½-story frame house, c1847/8, three-bay facade with central door. Door surround features pilasters supporting entablature with triglyphs and metopes in the frieze. 1-story porch on south side. Barn in rear.
6-10-7	C: 2½-story frame house, Greek Revival, c. 1839, Recessed entry is set in a Greek Revival surround with pilasters and entablature. No corner pilasters. Gable ends have an open-bed pediment. Aluminium siding added over original.

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Map,
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Description

South Street (continued)

6-10-8

C: Large open lot important in establishing rural character of area.

6-10-27

C: 2½-story house, early 19th-century, five-bay facade with late 19th-century 1-story enclosed porch. Barn and carriage shed at rear of house.

6-12-55A

C: 2½-story frame house, c1792, Federal. Five-bay facade, central entrance with 1-story portico with pediment supported by slender columns with pronounced entasis. Another house on the same lot to the south has an open-bed pediment and Greek Revival entry. To the rear of the main house are three outbuildings, two with cupolas. These may have been associated with the casting of plowshares by Josiah T. Bronson in the mid 19th-century.

6-12-56

C: 2½-story frame house, c1839. Open-bed pediment, Greek Revival door surround with pilasters and entablature. No corner pilasters. Two small outbuildings.

6-12-57

C: 1½-story frame house, early 19th-century vernacular with lean-to. Roof has shed dormer, probably a later addition. Garage.

6-12-58A

C: 1½-story cobbler's shop c1870 with 1-story porch with brackets. Shop was moved back on lot and attached to a barn to afford conversion to a residence.

6-12-59

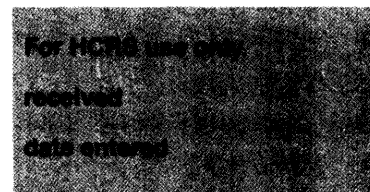
C: 2½-story frame house, early 19th-century vernacular. Five-light transom above door. No other decorative detail.

6-12-60

C: 2-story frame house, c1825, Greek Revival. Central entrance is recessed with Greek Revival surround of pilasters and entablature. Corner pilasters support entablature around cornice. Barn in rear.

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Description

South Street (continued)

6-12-61

C; 2½-story Queen Anne frame house, 1888, with clapboards, staggered shingles, and shingles with the corners cut at a 45° angle. A frieze has wooden lozenges.

6-12-62

C: Booth Free School, a 1½-story vernacular frame school built as a high school in 1903. In 1941, a 1-story addition was added, and the school was converted to an elementary school. The entrance of the 1941 addition features a Georgian Revival entry with a round arch with keystone flanked by rusticated wooden quoins.

6-12-63

C: 2½-story frame house, Queen Anne, with square turret.

Southbury Road (Route 67)

6-12-70A

C: 1½-story Greek Revival building, c. 1830. Originally office of Phineas Smith. Moved from corner lot. Roof extends to form pediment supported by fluted Doric columns resting on square bases. Facade is finished smoothly. Attic window in pediment has keystone.

6-12-71

NC: Roxbury Garage, probably built during 1930s.

6-12-72

C: 1½-story Georgian Revival house, early 20th-century.

6-12-73

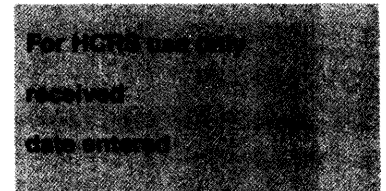
C: 1½-story frame house, 19th-century vernacular. Porch on south side is built into lean-to. Windows on front have square brackets under the sills. Garage.

6-12-86

C: 1½-story frame house, early 19th-century vernacular.

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Southbury Road (Route 67), continued

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| 6-12-74 | C: 1½-story frame house, early 19th-century vernacular lean-to. |
| 6-12-80 | C: 1½-story frame house, early 19th-century. Greek Revival portico and entry. Portico supported by square columns. Early 20th-century garage. |
| 6-12-79 | C: Wooded lot contributing to the rural character of the district. |
| 6-12-78 | C: 2½-story Greek Revival House, c1840, pediment has flush finish and two attic windows each describing a quarter-circle. Barn on property near road. |
|
<u>Weller's Bridge Road</u> | |
| 6-12-37 | C: 2½-story frame house, early 19th-century. 5-bay facade. |
| 6-12-38 | C: 2½-story frame house, early 19th-century. 5-bay facade. |
| 6-12-39 | C: 2½-story frame house, mid-19th-century vernacular. Also on lot is 1-story former blacksmith shop. |
| 6-12-40 | C: 2½-story frame house, early 19th-century. Three-bay facade, Federal door surround. |
| 6-12-42 | C: 2½-story house, c1848, with 5-bay facade, 1-story porch with slender, slotted posts. Gable ends have open-bed pediments. Barn in rear. |
| 6-12-43 | C: 2½-story frame house, 1795, with 1-story portico with open-bed pediment supported by slender columns. Panelled door has sidelights, wooden fan ornament |

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Weller's Bridge Road (continued)

6-12-43 (continued)

above. Second floor overhangs the first slightly. Addition in rear has Greek Revival portico. Two garages.

6-12-49

6-12-50

C: Large open field contributing to rural character of district.

6-12-51

C: 2½-story frame house, 1784, built for Asahel Bacon. Front faces South Street. 1-story portico has pediment supported by narrow columns. Door has sidelights, semi-circular transom. On the second floor is a palladian window above which the roof-line is broken by a gable. The north side of the house, facing Weller's Bridge Road, has a similar door treatment. The lot is a large one, with frontage on both South Street and Weller's Bridge Road. Formerly a hatmaker's shop stood nearby on Weller's Bridge Road, and a general store and postoffice facing South Street. Both are no longer extant.

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the reuse of many barns and outbuildings for garages and for storage puposes. Some farm buildings continue to fulfill their original function. Two 19th-century craft shops have been converted to residential use. The former Center School is now the Episcopal parish house.

Within the Roxbury Center National Register District are at least 67 major buildings with more than 30 surviving outbuildings. Only five structures within the district may be regarded as not contributing to the character of the district. Buildings range in height from 1-story to 2½-stories. Almost all are of frame construction, with the exception of the Roxbury Public Library, built of local stone, and the Town Records Hall, built of brick. The primary color used for houses and outbuildings is white. Red, yellow, and tan are also frequently used. Architectural styles within the district include the Georgian, Federal, Greek Revival, Gothic Revival, Queen Anne, and Georgian Revival styles. Many buildings are vernacular structures which cannot be classified as belonging to any architectural style. Examples of the architecture of the district are given below. A complete listing of properties within the district is included under Section 2 of this nomination.

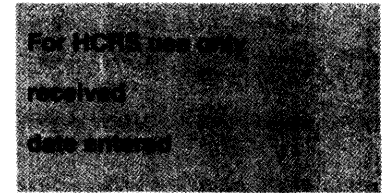
The earliest known building in the Roxbury Center National Register District is the Roswell Ransom Tavern, built about 1740. (Photograph 3) A 1½-story frame building, it has been substantially altered by a Greek Revival addition in 1845, shortly before conversion to a rectory for the adjacent Episcopal church. A porch and a Queen Anne style dormer were added to the older portion of the building in the latter part of the 19th-century. The Greek Revival addition is of interest because of its unusually narrow proportions.

In the 1780s and 1790s, a number of houses were constructed in the area in both the Federal and Georgian styles. These homes all have a five-bay facade with a central entrance. The Asahel Bacon house of 1784 has a one-story portico with a pediment supported by plain columns. (Photograph 4) The pediment has small dentils under the cornice. Four fluted pilasters flank the entry door and sidelights. Above the door is a semicircular transom. On the second floor above this entry is a Palladian window. The roofline above this window is broken by a small gable suggesting the central pavillion typical of the Georgian style. The cornice along the entire front of the house has dentils. The side entrance is similar to the main entrance. 12-over-12 double-hung sash is used. According to Mrs. Seth Houck, owner of the house, it was restored extensively by her father. In contrast to the Bacon house, the Burwell tavern of 1785 has almost no exterior decorative detail. A 1-story porch which extends across the entire front of the building is of mid-19thcentury date. (Photograph 5) Windows have 6-over-6 double-hung sash. The gable roof has a pronounced overhang. The Burwell tavern reflects the 19th-century adaptation of an earlier building.

The 1795 Stephen Sanford house features a portico with an open-bed pediment supported by narrow plain columns. (Photograph 6) Dentils are used in the cornice of the portico. The panelled door has sidelights and a semicircular fan ornament above it. Between the first and second floors is a slight overhang or jetty. The 6-over-6 double-hung sash used in the house is probably a 19th-century replacement of the original. An addition at the rear of the house has a 1-story Greek Revival portico. The Nathan Smith house, built about 1796, contains many features of the Georgian style. (Photograph 7) A center pavillion supported by four Ionic columns projects from the facade. The panelled entrance door, at the base of the pavillion, has sidelights and transom. The second floor of the pavillion features a palladian window. Windows have 12-over-12 double-hung sash set in molded surrounds with hoods. Rusticated wooden quoins are set at each corner of the facade.

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A house on Weller's Bridge Road which probably dates from the first decade of the 19th-century has some Federal characteristics. (Photograph 9) The front of this house is three bays in width. The door surround is in the Federal style. (Photograph 10) Fluted pilasters flanking each door have an incised flower design at the head of each pilaster. A heavily modelled entablature is supported by the pilasters. A five-light transom is placed over the panelled door. 12-over-12 double-hung sash is used throughout.

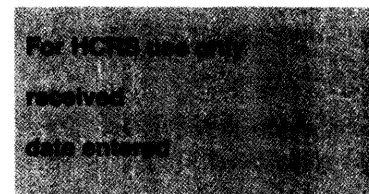
The Episcopal Church, which faces South Street, is a frame structure of Gothic Revival design. (Photograph 11) Begun in 1807, the church was completed in 1817. In 1861, the church was moved from its original location facing Church street to face South Street. Extensive remodelling was undertaken at this time. A central tower at the gable end of the church contains the main entrance. Pointed or lancet arches are used throughout the building for both window and door openings. Molded wooden labels or hood moldings are used over all windows and doors. At the corners of the tower and of the main structure itself are non-functional wooden buttresses (Photograph 12).

The Greek Revival style is manifested in a variety of forms in Roxbury Center. The Phineas Smith office, built about 1830, is a 1½-story building the gable end of which projects to form the pediment of a portico supported by Doric columns which rest on raised square bases. (Photograph 13) The panelled front door has a surround consisting of narrow pilasters supporting an entablature. Large front windows flanking the door have 8-over-8 double-hung sash. Above these are small attic or "eyebrow" windows. The front of the building and the pediment are finished with flush boards. A fan window in the pediment has a molded wooden surround with a keystone. Several Greek Revival houses in Roxbury Center are characterized by having the side of the building rather than the gable end facing the street. These are five bays in width with a central doorway. The Dr. Myron Downs house, which may date from the early 1830s, has pilasters at the corners and a door surround consisting of pilasters supporting a plain entablature. (Photograph 14) Narrow sidelights on either side of the panelled door are framed in a simple, plain molding. 6-over-6 double-hung sash is used. The Charles Barnes house, said to have been built in 1825, is similar, although the entry is recessed within the door surround. (Photograph 15) The panelled door has narrow sidelights and transom. The Congregational Church, built in 1838, has a monumental portico supported by Doric columns. (Photograph 16) The pediment and facade are finished with flush boards. The two double-panelled entrance doors are set in a surround with pilasters supporting an entablature. The church steeple has a square base and second stage, both with pilasters and entablature and a smooth finish. A pyramidal spire is flanked by smaller spirelets. The Congregational chapel, built in 1844, is a 1-story building with a portico supported by four Doric columns. (Photograph 17) The panelled central door has a classical surround.

A 1-story dwelling, built in 1831, probably as a hat-making shop, is typical of the vernacular structures of the period. (Photograph 18) The front of the building is five bays wide with a central door. Windows have 8-over-8 double-hung sash. The gable ends have open-bed

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pediments. Recently, an addition has been made to the rear of the building. This is not readily visible from the street.

Most of the later 19th-century architectural styles are not represented in Roxbury Center. The Queen Anne style, however, was used for several residences. A house on South Street built in 1888 displays the characteristic use of differing siding materials. (Photograph 19) Clapboard, staggered shingles, and shingles with the corners cut at a 45° angle are used. The attic window is round-arched with a wooden keystone. A frieze below the cornice is decorated with wooden lozenges. The most recent style used in the village is the Georgian Revival. The Booth Free School addition of 1941 has an elaborate Georgian Revival entry with wooden quoins and fluted pilasters flanking a round-arched entrance. (Photograph 20) Another example is the Town Records Hall, built in 1933 at a cost of \$800. A 1-story gable-roofed building, the gable end faces the street. (Photograph 8). The gable end has an open-bed pediment. A panelled door is framed by wooden pilasters supporting an entablature. Rusticated brick quoins are set at each corner of the building. Windows have 6-over-6 double-hung sash. The building now functions as a museum. 2.

Footnotes

1. Interview with Mrs. Seth Houck, April 2, 1981.
2. Interview with Mrs. Seth Houck, March 16, 1983. According to Mrs. Houck, the Town Records Hall was designed by Hartford architect Lester Beach Sheidy. However, this information could not be verified by the writer. Mrs. Houck believes the Roxbury Public Library was designed by the same architect.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
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<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Criteria C, A, B, and D

Specific dates See Inventory # 4 Builder/Architect See Inventory #4, also Item #7

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph) (Criteria C, A, B, and D)
(Criterion C)

Roxbury Center is characterized by exceptionally good examples of a wide variety of architectural styles. The Georgian and Federal styles of the late 18th- and early 19th-centuries are represented, as well as the Greek Revival style, Gothic Revival, Queen Anne, and Georgian Revival styles. The context of the buildings, set in a rural village, enhances their value. Few alterations have been made since the 19th-century, and restoration activity in the 20th-century has served to reinforce the integrity of the district. (Criterion A) Roxbury Center is also a well-preserved example of an agrarian 19th-century community. Dependent on diversified agricultural production supplemented by income from crafts such as hatmaking, the local economy shifted to more specialized agriculture in the late 19th-century. The pattern of land use and the configuration of streets and man-made structures in Roxbury Center is typical of rural 19th-century Connecticut communities. (Criterion B). Several important 18th- and 19th-century figures resided in the district. General Ephraim Hinman, an important merchant and military leader, built his home here in 1784. Asahel Bacon, merchant and investor in the Roxbury iron mine, built his home the same year. Colonel George Hurlbut was a state legislator and local postmaster who also operated a store and hat-making shop. Colonel Seth Warner, associated with Ethan Allen in the capture of Fort Ticonderoga, is buried beneath an obelisk on the Town green. (Criterion D). Roxbury Center also offers potential for scholarly research. The district itself is an important document of 19th-century rural economy. The stability of the community, in which several families continue to occupy homes and land acquired by ancestors in the 18th- and 19th-centuries, promises opportunity for oral history to supplement town and family archives.

The homes built by the first settlers in Roxbury Center are exceptional in the quality of their design and workmanship. Many of these settlers were already well-established residents of the Town of Woodbury, of which Roxbury was a part. The Nathan Smith house, built about 1797, is the most elaborate example of the Georgian style of architecture to be found within the district. The central pavillion is supported on Ionic columns, and has a Palladian window on the second floor. Rusticated quoins are executed in wood. (Photograph 7). The Smith house displays strong similarities with the Bellamy house in Bethlehem and the Boardman house in New Milford. The Bacon house, in which the central pavillion is reduced to a gable over a Palladian window on the second floor, is a more modest example of the Georgian style (Photograph 4). Other buildings, such as the Burwell tavern of 1785, are almost devoid of ornamental detail (Photograph 5).

The Federal style is also well represented in the district. The Stephen Sanford house, built in 1795, has an entrance with excellent Federal detail, including the portico with open-bed pediment and the fan-ornament over the door. The jetty or overhang between the first and second floors is a very conservative feature unusual at this date (Photograph 6).

9. Major Bibliographical References

(see continuation sheet)

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 217

Quadrangle name Roxbury

Quadrangle scale 1: 24,000

UTM References

A

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B

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Zone	Easting			Northing										

C

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Zone	Easting			Northing										

D

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Zone	Easting			Northing										

E

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Zone	Easting			Northing										

F

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Zone	Easting			Northing										

G

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Zone	Easting			Northing										

H

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Zone	Easting			Northing										

Verbal boundary description and justification

(see continuation sheet)

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

state	N/A	code	county	N/A	code
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state	N/A	code	county	N/A	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Dale S. Plummer, Consultant edited by John Herzan, National Register

organization Connecticut Historical Commission date December 31, 1982
Coordinator

street & number 59 South Prospect Street telephone 566-3005

city or town Hartford state Connecticut

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title Director, Connecticut Historical Commission

date June 16, 1983

For NPS use only

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

Entered in the
National Register

date

7/28/83

for Melrose Byers
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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The Greek Revival style is well represented in Roxbury Center. The Congregational Church of 1838 and the chapel of 1844 are correct in their design and proportions (Photographs 16 and 17). The Congregational Church is also the dominant building on Church Street. The Phineas Smith office, built about 1830, reveals strong Federal influence in the narrower proportions of the columns supporting the portico and in the keystone in the pediment window (Photograph 13). The square bases on which the columns rest have no classical precedent. Architecturally, the building is of interest as a transitional structure between the Federal and the Greek Revival styles.

The domestic Greek Revival buildings in Roxbury Center are well proportioned and of good workmanship. Unlike urban Greek Revival houses, most have no portico over the entrance. In several instances, such as the Charles Barnes house, the entry is recessed, giving some shelter from the elements (Photograph 15). Pilasters and entablatures are simple in form, resulting in structures of restrained design. Both the Barnes house and the Dr. Myron Downs house, probably built in the early 1830s, are placed with the longer side of the building facing the street, rather than the gable end (Photograph 14). 1.

Late 19th-century houses in the district are all in the Queen Anne style. These houses are characterized by the use of several types of siding, but do not have the more elaborate Eastlake porches and detail of their urban counterparts. The 1888 Smith house is a good example of this interpretation (Photograph 19). Clapboards and two types of shingle are used. A plain frieze bears lozenge-shaped wooden ornaments. This home and others built about the same time seem to be adaptations of prevailing styles by local carpenters. The resulting product is more muted than the more elaborate examples found elsewhere and harmonizes well with the older buildings of the district.

The few 20th-century buildings in Roxbury Center are of compatible style with the earlier architecture of the district. It is likely that the early 20th-century residents of Roxbury Center were aware of the value of their architectural heritage and sensitive to it in planning new buildings. The presence of Cass Gilbert in the Town in the 1930s, as well as other wealthy New Yorkers may well have influenced 20th-century design. The Public Library, built in 1937, has an attractive Georgian Revival entrance portico, and is built of local stone removed from the retaining walls at Roxbury furnace. Roxbury Market, the replacement of the Hurlbut store, has a gambrel roof with an overhang forming a porch. The Booth Free School addition of 1941 has an excellent Georgian Revival entrance with rusticated quoins (Photograph 20). Although small in scale, The Town Records Hall of 1933 has sophisticated design features, including an open-bed pediment, pilastered door surround, and rusticated quoins. (Photograph 8)

Roxbury was originally part of the town of Woodbury. Settled in 1672, Woodbury encompassed the present towns of Woodbury, Bethlehem, Southbury, Washington, and

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Roxbury. The fission of the original town occurred along the lines of separate Congregational parishes established in the 18th-century. In 1732/3, a Congregational church was built in what later became Roxbury. This was located on a hilltop site about 1½ miles from the present church. An Episcopal church was constructed nearby in 1763. This early center of worship served scattered farmsteads throughout the area. In the 1780s, a number of newcomers from other sections of Woodbury began to settle on the site of the present Roxbury Center. Among these new residents were General Ephraim Hinman and Asahel Bacon. On the route from New Milford in the Housatonic River Valley to Woodbury in the Pomperaug River Valley, and sheltered by surrounding hills, the new center of settlement prospered.

During the 1780s, the inhabitants of Roxbury began to petition for status as a separate town. This was granted by the Connecticut General Assembly in 1796. A Town Records Hall was constructed on South Street to house land records and other documents (Photograph 8). As a precaution against fire, this was built of brick. The relocation of the Congregational Church to Church Street in 1795, and the Episcopal Church to its present location in 1807, reinforced the status of the new center. The opening of the Oxford Turnpike to Southbury and Oxford in the 1830s provided more access to Roxbury Center.

The basis of the local economy was general agriculture: raising a variety of products for both household consumption and for sale. Wheat, rye, and other cereals were grown by Roxbury farmers in the late 18th- and early 19th-centuries. Flax and wool for cloth manufacture was also produced. Livestock grazed in fields and along the highway. In addition to farming, many inhabitants of Roxbury engaged in handicrafts and other occupations to earn supplementary income, a common practice in rural New England communities. Hatmaking was the principal activity of this period. Small shops in Roxbury supplied hats for trade with the American South. Colonel George Hurlburt operated one such shop from about 1840 to 1860. This shop is no longer extant. Another building, which may well have served as a hat shop, survives on Church Street (Photograph 18). Other income producing activities included the operation of a garnet mine by Stephen Sanford and the casting of plowshares by J.T. Bronson. Despite the declining population of the town from 1217 in 1810 to 971 in 1840, and almost no growth to the turn of the century, Roxbury Center continued to prosper through providing services to the rest of the town. The Congregational Church built a new house of worship in 1838, adding a chapel in 1844. The Episcopal church acquired the former Roswell Ransom tavern as a rectory in 1846 (Photograph 3). The Center School, built in 1830, provided for the educational needs of local children. 2.

In the latter half of the 19th-century, the local economy shifted from diversified agriculture and small-scale handicrafts to specialized agricultural production. The opening of the Shepaug Railroad in 1871 was an important factor in this change. Milk and other perishable farm products could be transported readily to urban centers such as New York City. Coal, grain, and other merchandise was imported. Tobacco was grown in low-lying fields near the Shepaug River. Dairy farming and fruit production replaced less profitable farming operations. The Hurlbut apple orchard, within the district boundaries, was started in this period.

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Other specialized agricultural activities included fattening cattle sent from the western United States and Canada, and raising and training trotters and other horses. 3.

Two new churches were also established in Roxbury Center during this period. A Methodist church was constructed on South Street next to the Town Records Hall in 1867. This was demolished during the 1930s. In 1885, a Roman Catholic church was built on Church Street across from the Congregational church. This is still extant, although the steeple was destroyed in a storm. Several homes in the Queen Anne style were constructed in the 1880s, including a new Congregational parsonage on Church Street, and a house of South Street built for a member of the Smith family (Photograph 19). The Hurlburt store, built in the mid 19th-century, which also served as a post office, was demolished in the 1930s. Extant buildings from the second half of the 19th-century include a cobbler's shop and a meat market, both on South Street, and a blacksmith shop on Weller's Bridge Road. With the exception of the meat market, now vacant, these have been converted to residential use. 4.

In the early 20th-century, the population of Roxbury declined rapidly. From 1900 to 1930, the population of the town decreased by 49%, from 1087 to 553. During the 1930s, Roxbury began to be colonized by wealthy individuals, primarily from New York, who saw the rural community as a haven from the city. Purchasing outlying farms, these newcomers had little direct influence on Roxbury Center. Increased demands for goods and services, however, resulted in some modest building activity. The Roxbury Market, a combined post office and general store, replaced the earlier Hurlburt store in the 1930s. The Roxbury Public Library, formerly housed in the rear of the town hall, moved to a new building in 1927. The Booth Free School, constructed with funds donated by Hervey M. Booth in 1903, was enlarged in 1941 (Photograph 20). This functioned as the high school until 1941. Since 1941, it has served as the town elementary school. The lack of any intensive development in the 20th-century has left Roxbury Center as an important example of a rural 19th-century community. The open fields surrounding the village, the numerous outbuildings which survive, and the wide spacing of the houses are important elements of Roxbury Center. 5.

Roxbury Center is associated with several individuals of prominence in local and state affairs. General Ephraim Hinman and Asahel Bacon, both of whom settled in Roxbury in 1784, were merchants of at least local note. Hinman was also an important figure in the Connecticut militia. Bacon, the son of Woodbury merchant Jabez Bacon, invested in the Roxbury iron mine. In 1850, Bacon's house and land was sold to Colonel George Hurlburt (Photograph 4). Elected to the state legislature in 1845, Hurlburt was also involved in hat manufacture and ran a general store next to his home. After the election of Lincoln to the Presidency, Hurlburt was appointed postmaster of Roxbury. Colonel Seth Warner, born in Roxbury, led the "Green Mountain Boys" who captured the British fortress at Crown Point during the American Revolution. Warner also played a decisive role in the Battle of Bennington. The Warner home is no longer extant. The only site

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in Roxbury associated with Warner is the obelisk on the green beneath which he is buried.

Residents of Roxbury were very active in politics during the late 18th- and the 19th-centuries. Many prominent lawmakers and jurists came from Roxbury, a remarkable fact considering that the town was so sparsely populated and isolated. Among these distinguished residents were Royal Hinman, Secretary of the State of Connecticut, Nation Smith, Superior Court judge and U.S. Senator., Truman Smith, member of the House of Representatives and later of the U.S. Senate., John Sanford, also a member of the House of Representatives, and Henry Booth, a Superior Court judge of the state of Illinois. Almost all these individuals lived in Roxbury Center. 6.

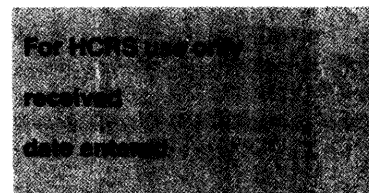
Little research has been done on the history of Roxbury. Investigation into the economy of the community during the 18th- and 19th- centuries could result in valuable contributions to the understanding of Connecticut's rural agrarian communities. The relationship of the Roxbury hat industry to the large-scale development of hatmaking in Danbury might be explored fruitfully, for example. Another potential field of research is the political and social history of the town. The prominent role played by many residents of Roxbury Center in local, state, and even national politics is a significant fact that bears further investigation. Many of the 18th- and 19th-century families which resided in Roxbury Center are still represented there today. Potential exists for oral history interviews with many of the older residents. In addition, both family and local archives have yet to be exhaustively investigated, as well as the actual physical evidence offered by the district itself. 7.

Footnotes

1. The Barnes house is dated at 1825 in Homes of Old Woodbury, the Woodbury Historical Society, Waterbury, The Heminway Press, 1959, page 257. Stylistically, this writer feels it is somewhat later in date.
2. Humphry, Helen Hunt W. Sketches of Roxbury. New Milford: Litch-fair, Marsh & Loewe, 1967, pages 15-16 on Roxbury's economy.
3. Ibid, page 16.
4. Roxbury did undergo demographic change in the 19th-century. First, there was a steady outflow of population, particularly to the western states. For example, Henry Booth removed to Illinois, where he later became a Superior Court judge. However, many of the local families were also represented by members who stayed within the town boundaries, providing stability. At the same time, there was also an influx of newer residents, primarily agricultural and mining workers. Out-migration was not balanced by in-migration, however, and the population slowly declined.
5. Interview with Mrs. Seth Houck, March 25th, 1981, on the Hurlburt store and Roxbury Market.
6. Humphrey, op.cit., page 14.
7. There are numerous individuals in Roxbury who have lived in town their entire lives and whose families have lived for many generations in town. Mrs. Seth Houck, of South Street, has provided valuable information used in the preparation of this nomination. The following list of potential inform-

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ants was provided by Mrs Houck, who is a direct descendant of Colonel George Hurlburt and continues to reside in the family home:

Miss Gladys Camp
Minor's Bridge Road
Roxbury, Ct.

Member of one of Roxbury's old families.
Age over 80

Mrs. Emeline Hodge
South Sreet
Roxbury, Ct.

Widow of Philo Hodge, proprietor of the
general store for many years. Has a good
knowledge of koxbury History.

Mrs. Seth Houck
South Street
Roxbury, Ct.

See above.

Mr. John Humphrey
Church Street
Koxbury, Ct.

The town librarian for many years, Mr. Humphrey
is the son of the former Episcopal rector.
Age over 80.

Lewis Hurlbut
Church Street
Roxbury, Ct.

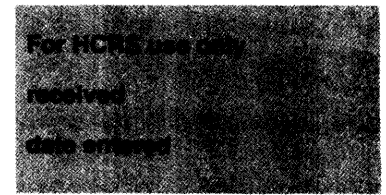
Former town official and farmer. Member of
of the earliest families (Hurlbut/Hurlburt)

Mrs. Mabel Bernhardt Smith
South Street
koxbury, Ct.

Former school teacher at the Center School
and Booth Free School.
Age 75-80.

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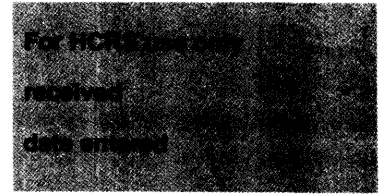
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- Old Woodbury Historical Society. Homes of Old Woodbury. Waterbury, Ct.: The Heminway Press, 1959.
- Report of the Historic District Study Committee of Roxbury. January 27, 1966. Typewritten manuscript on file at Connecticut Historical Commission, Hartford, Ct.

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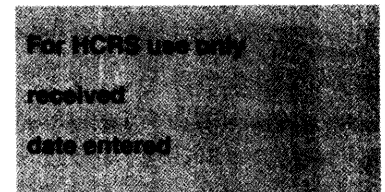
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Verbal Boundary Description:

The Roxbury Center National Register District boundary commences at the eastern corner of the lot identified on the accompanying map as 6-12-9, at the intersection of Church Street and Kanney Hill Road. From here the boundary follows Kanney Hill Road to the western corner of the same lot, then follows the property line in a southeast direction to the point where it meets the northern corner of lot 6-12-10. The boundary then follows Fenn Brook, the border of this lot, to the southwest. The line then turns to the northwest and then west until it meets the northeast corner of lot 6-12-11. It then follows the northwest side of lots 6-12-11, 6-12-13, 6-12-14, and 6-12-17, in a southwest direction. At the western corner of lot 6-12-17, the boundary turns northward along the eastern border of lot 6-12-19 and 6-12-20, then west-southwest at the northeast corner of 6-12-20 to Route 67 (North Road). The district boundary then continues along the northeast side of Route 67 in a southeast direction until a point opposite the northeast corner of lot 6-12-22A. Crossing Route 67, the boundary follows the northern border of lot 6-12-22A to the west, then the western border to the south. At the southwest corner of the lot, the boundary turns east, following the southern border of the lot to the northwest corner of lot 6-12-21. Turning south along the western border of 6-12-21, the boundary line crosses Chalybes Road and follows the northwest and western border of lot 6-12-34. Continuing south along the western border of 6-12-35, the boundary then turns west and southeast along the perimeter of this lot until its southwest corner is reached. The boundary then follows the north borders of lots 6-12-39, 40, 42, and 43 to the westwards, continuing around the perimeter of lot 6-12-43 to Weller's Bridge Road. Following Weller's Bridge Road, the boundary turns northeast to a point opposite the northwest corner of lot 6-12-49. It then crosses Weller's Bridge Road and continues south along the western boundary of that lot. At a point approximately 1,000 feet south of Weller's Bridge Road, the boundary line departs from the property line and turns east in a straight line to the northwest corner of lot 6-12-54, following then the western and southern borders of this lot. At the corner of lot 6-10-5, the boundary line continues to the south, east, and south again along its perimeters. It then follows the western border of lot 6-10-6A to the south, turns east along its southern border, and then south along the western border of lot 6-10-7. Rather than follow the boundary line of lot 6-10-8, the district boundary continues in a straight line from lot 6-10-7 across 6-10-8 to Apple Lane. Following the northern edge of Apple Lane, the boundary crosses the intersection of Apple Lane and South Street, and continues to the east along Apple Lane to the southeast corner of 6-10-27. Turning north along the eastern boundary of this lot, it then turns east and northwest along the south and east borders of lot 6-12-55A. The boundary continues northwest on the border of lot 6-12-56, then follows the southern border of 6-12-58A to the northwest corner of a large pond, the shore of which it follows to the east a distance of about 250 feet, at which point it crosses lot 6-12-86 in a northeast direction to the southwest corner of 6-12-74. The boundary then runs east and north and northeast along the edge of this lot, crossing Southbury Road (Route 67) and continuing northwest along the northeast side of the road. The district boundary then turns east-northeast at the south corner of 6-12-80, following the borders of lots 6-12-79 and 83

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Verbal Boundary Description (continued)

to a point where a stream feeding a large pond on lot 6-12-63 crosses this border. The district boundary then departs from the property line, following the stream to the pond, continuing along the east shore of the pond to the outlet, and following the dam outlet to the point where it intersects the driveway leading to the farmhouse. The district boundary then follows the driveway to Church Street, where it crosses to return to the point of origin.

Boundary Justification

The significance of Roxbury Center derives from the excellence of its late 18th and 19th century architecture, preserved in a village setting, and the fact that it is an exceptionally well-preserved example of a rural agricultural community of the period. Fortunately, Roxbury Center, although not densely settled, is relatively easy to define as an entity. The community is centered in a valley among surrounding hills. The major artery is Church Street, which connects with roads leading in various directions, along which can be found homes and other structures. Visually, the village is enhanced by the surrounding cleared fields, which both provide an appropriate setting and are historically important in understanding the agrarian nature of the community. Fortuitously, the lines of these cleared fields correspond very closely to the property boundaries. Thus, the lines of the district boundary reflect the actual extent of man's visual impact on the area as one drives or walks along the roads of Roxbury Center.