

PH0676641

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

The Spanish House

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

46 Fernwood Road

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

West Hartford

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

1st William F. Cotter

STATE

Connecticut

VICINITY OF
CODE

COUNTY
Hartford

CODE

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

OWNERSHIP

STATUS

PRESENT USE

DISTRICT

PUBLIC

X OCCUPIED

AGRICULTURE

MUSEUM

X BUILDING(S)

X PRIVATE

UNOCCUPIED

COMMERCIAL

PARK

STRUCTURE

BOTH

WORK IN PROGRESS

EDUCATIONAL

X PRIVATE RESIDENCE

SITE

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

ACCESSIBLE

ENTERTAINMENT

RELIGIOUS

OBJECT

IN PROCESS

YES: RESTRICTED

GOVERNMENT

SCIENTIFIC

BEING CONSIDERED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

INDUSTRIAL

TRANSPORTATION

NO

MILITARY

OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Patricia-Beth Levaur Rome

STREET & NUMBER

46 Fernwood Road

CITY, TOWN

West Hartford

STATE

Connecticut 06119

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Town Hall

STREET & NUMBER

28 South Main Street

CITY, TOWN

West Hartford

STATE

Connecticut 06107

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

State Register of Historic Places

DATE

1979

FEDERAL X STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Connecticut Historical Commission

CITY, TOWN

Hartford

STATE
Connecticut

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input 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

Fernwood Road in the east central part of West Hartford, Connecticut, runs north from Fern Street, the second street west of Prospect Avenue. It is only one block long. During the course of that block it bends to the west, then to the south, and again to the west before it terminates at Steele Road. The Spanish House is located on the northwest corner of the last of these curves. The lot has 110 feet frontage and ¹²⁵170 feet deep. Fernwood Road and other streets west of Prospect Avenue in this part of West Hartford were subdivided and developed primarily in the years between World War I and World War II. The proposed street and lot layout for Fernwood Road is shown on a map dated August 3, 1925. The houses that were built are substantial upper middle class homes typical of suburbia of the time, executed in such styles as Georgian Revival, Tudor Revival, Chateausque, and Olde English. Only one, the subject of this nomination, is in the Spanish Colonial Revival style.

The Spanish House is U shaped in plan, with the arms of the U running north and south along a court that is open to the south. The base of the U runs east and west, connecting the arms on the north side of the court. The rough, white stucco walls and red tile, gable roof immediately catch the eye of one entering the neighborhood, while the exquisite wrought-iron detail holds the attention of the passer by. The house is approached by a stone walk leading west from the street to the front door which is in the east end of the base of the U. The gable end over the door is truncated, giving this section the appearance of a low tower. A two-car garage is to the north, an integral part of the house. The impact of the wrought-iron detail is immediately established by the entrance facade of the tower. In addition to two spherical lamps supported by open work posts flanking the walk, there are a delicate wrought-iron lantern to the left of the door, a radial grille over the door, a vertical grille in front of the vertical window to the right, and a grille and balcony in front of the second-story window over the door. Wrought-iron work of this character is continued throughout the exterior and interior of the house.

Inside the door is the entrance hall. To the right, stairs lead up to the second floor. To the left, steps lead down to the living room, which is the east arm of the U. Straight ahead, steps lead down to the living hall that runs west through the base of the U. The walls of these rooms and all others in the house are finished in rough plaster. The wood work is cypress, both inside and out. The living room is a 20 x 30 foot room with a high ceiling that slopes up to a peak and has four exposed trusses. There is no second story over the living room. Descending into the living room from the entrance hall, the element of focal interest is the fireplace and chimney at the far (south) end. The firebox opening is a recessed semi-ellipse in the chimney. The chimney itself is half-round, projects into the room, and tapers as it ascends to the ceiling. The oblique surface between the rim of the firebox and the wall of the chimney is scalloped. Windows in the living

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room, like others in the house, are steel casement sash with bronze hardware, arranged in units two panes wide. A pane measures $7\frac{1}{2}$ x $10\frac{1}{2}$ inches. Windows one unit (two panes) in width flank the chimney, and two windows two units wide are on the east wall. On the west wall, facing the court, there is a single window three units (six panes) wide. Most of the panes are clear glass, but occasionally the glazing will be varied by introduction of a diagonal wavy leaded mullion and a small section of stained glass. In the large window two adjoining panes are painted, showing in fine detail a Renaissance city scene. At the north end of the living room, high over the steps from the entrance hall, is a pointed-arch opening to the upstairs hall that is filled with a wrought-iron grille.

The living room and the living hall are on the same level and are connected by an arched opening. The floors of these two rooms, in fact the floors of all the first floor rooms, the stairs, and the upstairs hall, are red quarry tile interspersed with blue and white Spanish tile depicting scenes from the story of Don Quixote. The living hall is two stories high in large part. A balcony runs along its south and west edges at the second floor. There is a fountain in the floor of the living hall in front of the middle of the north wall. Over the fountain, on the wall, are a group of twelve tiles painted with a picture of the Madonna with a votive light suspended in front of it. On the south wall two-leaf, dark wood doors in a round-headed opening lead to the patio porch.

At its west end, the living hall, now one story high, turns south and leads down steps to the 20 x 18 foot dining room, the west arm of the U. Chief features of the dining room are the embellished, exposed ceiling beams, and the central wrought-iron chandelier. The beams, in dark wood, are painted in light oils in a formal pattern terminating in fleurs de lis. The chandelier is a single tier of six lights mounted on a round rim enriched by foliate vines and roses. The east wall of the dining room, looking out into the court, has a broad, three-unit window complementing that of the living room, and again has two panes of painted glass.

Returning to the base of the U, the section north of the living hall is devoted to service. During the past year and a half, minor changes have been made in the floor plans here. The pantry and breakfast room have been eliminated and consolidated with the kitchen in a single open space. The laundry has been converted into a bedroom. The former bedroom has been made into a den. In the course of these changes the service

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hall that originally paralleled the living hall has been eliminated.

The steps from the living hall up to the entrance hall have tile risers in a pine tree pattern. The same pine tree risers are used in the stairs to the second floor. From the hall at the top of the stairs there is a view through the pointed arch opening down to the living room. The wrought-iron grille in this opening repeats the pine tree pattern. The stairway has no balustrade; its open side is stepped like one side of a Flemish gable. Toward the top of the stairs, in the wall, there is a niche painted in a stylized Spanish pattern. A wrought-iron lamp of intricate detail hangs from the ceiling of the upper hall. Formerly, there were four of these fixtures in a row. One has now been moved to a location on the first floor in the hall near the dining room, and two are in storage. The upper hall continues west along the base of the U as a balcony overlooking the living hall. There is another painted niche on the west wall of the hall. There are two bedrooms along the north wall, over the service area. The master bedroom is in the west arm of the U, over the dining room. One of the bedrooms has a painted niche; all have windows with grilles. There is no attic.

The area of floor space in the house, not counting the garage or basement is approximately 4,150 square feet.

The patio porch is arcaded. On the east wall of the porch is another twelve-tile picture of the Madonna, with suspended votive light. The court is paved with cobblestones (thought to have come from Asylum Avenue when the trolley line was torn up). There is a fountain in the center. The wall across the south end of the court is broken by a round-arched opening that rises to a small campanile in which there is a bell taken from an old mission, and now in good working order.

The planting around the house was planned at the time it was constructed by Edgar F. Brown of Hartford, landscape gardener and forester.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1928

~~BUILDER~~/ARCHITECT Lester B. Scheide

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Spanish House is unusual in the central Connecticut area for its authentic Spanish Colonial Revival architectural style and for the care and thoroughness in which the style was carried out to the most minute details. It was conceived and executed by Hartford people, Mrs. Grace M. Spear Lincoln, patron; Lester Beach Scheide, architect; R. F. Jones Company, contractor; and N. Ross Parke, artist. The house remains today, fifty years after it was built, with very few changes in its architectural and decorative fabric. Its record is completely documented.

The Spanish House has the quality of significance in American architecture because it possesses integrity of location, design, materials, and workmanship that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type of construction and possess high artistic values (Criterion C.)

The integrity of location is determined by visual inspection. There have been no intrusions at the site. There has been no change in the building and its grounds other than growth in the trees and shrubs. Comparison of the existing artifacts with the original plans, drawings, specifications, and invoices that exist in great number demonstrate that the design, materials, and workmanship exist today as they did when the house was constructed, with the exceptions noted in the Description.

The presence of distinctive characteristics of a type of construction and the presence of high artistic values is assayed in the discussion that follows of the concept of the house, the development of its plans, and the talents of the people who carried out its design and construction.

The concept of the house originated with Mrs. Grace M. Spear Lincoln (d. 1971), a Hartford resident who had lived for a period in Spain. Upon her return to Hartford, she determined to have a Spanish house. She bought the land December 5, 1927 (West Hartford Land Records 80/17) and retained the services of Lester B. Scheide as her architect. Scheide (1897-1953) was born in San Francisco, fought with the French army in World War I, and graduated from the Yale School of

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Architecture in 1920. He practiced architecture by himself in Hartford from 1920 to 1939 when he admitted Willard Wilkens and I. L. R. Browne to partnership and the firm continued as Scheide, Browne and Wilkins to the time of Scheide's death. The firm was known for its design of the Dutch Point Colony housing project and the Charter Oak Terrace project.

Mrs. Lincoln and Scheide began their consideration of the house with rough sketches. These sketches, together with subsequent elevations, original architectural drawings, blueprints of construction drawings, specifications, construction contract, invoices for materials, and invoices for furnishings remain in the house. The step-by-step documentation is thorough and complete. The number of items, counted page by page, runs into the hundreds.

During the period of planning, Mrs. Lincoln was living in the Heublein Hotel. A sketch on the hotel's stationery, perhaps in her hand, shows several proposed designs for wrought-iron grilles. The one checked, showing the pine tree motif, subsequently was used in the second-floor hall opening to the living room.

Several schemes for overall design of the house quite different from that finally adopted were considered. One proposed elevation shows a high roof in a broad gable over the garage doors. This proposal was carried into floor plans dated March, 1928 that match up with the elevation, demonstrating that the plan was strongly favored for a time, before giving way to revised plans for the house as actually executed that are dated May 25, 1928.

Contract with the builder followed immediately on May 29, 1928. The house is referred to as a "frame and stucco dwelling." The work was undertaken by the contractor on the basis of cost plus 10%. Estimated cost was \$47,600. The contractor was R. F. Jones Co., probably the most prominent building firm in the Hartford area at the time. Richard F. Jones, Sr. (1874-1951) as a young man of 22 had built Hill-Stead for Albert Pope in Farmington, Connecticut, now the Hill-Stead Museum. During his long career as a contractor in and around Hartford, he built all or part of the Garde and Bond Hotels, Allyn Theater, Society for Savings, Hartford Hospital, Loomis School, and Bushnell Memorial, as well as many private homes.

Much of the interest in the Spanish House arises from the carefully coordinated detail. One of the important elements is the wrought-iron

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work. Scheide's original pencil drawing No. D31 for the grilles, brackets, and balconies exists, dated May 27, 1928. There are bills for wrought iron, apparently executed to Scheide's design, from Burnham and Parker, Inc., Marblehead, Massachusetts. Other wrought-iron work came from other sources. A bill dated July 23, 1928 from Carbone, Inc., 338 Boylston Street, Boston covers two wrought-iron lamps, \$76.00. The patio gate was supplied by Gertrude Baker, 181 Armory Street, New Haven for \$99.00 according to a November 8, 1928 invoice.

Tile is a second critical element in the house, both indoors and out. The roof tiles are 18" Tapered Habana Engrove Mission Tiles manufactured by B. Mifflin Hood Brick Co. of Daisy, Tennessee. They are secured with copper nails. The floor tile came from Spain, as determined by examining the backs of extra tiles still on hand, some from Sevilla, some from Triana. The fountains in the court and living hall are marked Triana. The two twelve-tile Madonnas are signed P. P. Molina, Triana.

When construction of the house was substantially completed, the Hartford artist, N. Ross Parke (b. 1906), was given the assignment of adding final artistic touches. Parke had graduated in 1928 from the Yale School of Fine Arts where he had excelled in ornamentation. He felt that creating decorative effects in The Spanish House was in his field of specialization. He consulted ornamentation books, and from them made sketches in light oils, each identified with its Spanish source, that he submitted to the architect and the patron. He has these sketches in his possession at the present time. One group of sketches presents several schemes for the dining room ceiling. One of them is marked as being selected. Parke then executed the design in light oils on the ceiling beams, where it may be seen today. Parke also did the stylistic designs in the several niches throughout the house, in these cases painting on the plaster itself.

In his long career as an artist in the Hartford area, Parke has done other architectural work. Another tour de force in a particular idiom was the decoration for what was perhaps the first "modernistic" house in the Hartford area, the Paul M. Butterworth home on Sunset Farm Road, West Hartford, Milton E. Hayman of Hartford, architect. Parke was also responsible for the artistic effects in the Directors' Room of the Hartford Steam Boiler Insurance Co. building.

After The Spanish House was built, Mrs. Lincoln proceeded with the furnishings. Again, the bills were saved, and are now at the house. For example, the brocade drapes came from Alphonse L. Lovecon, 578

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Madison Avenue, New York City. There are some ten invoices from the Spanish Gallery, Woodbridge, New Haven; one, dated October 28, 1928 covers two Salamanca beds for \$300.00. Furniture, busts, copper pots, rugs, and velvet pillows are among the diverse items acquired. In many instances, the items appear to have come from estate sales, or to have been imported. Most of the furnishings were disposed of from time to time after Mrs. Lincoln ceased to use the house and other members of the Lincoln family became the householders. A few remain, including some of the brocade drapes.

The house created quite a local splash. Some weeks after Mrs. Lincoln moved in, a local paper devoted three-quarters of a page to text and photographs describing its appearance. (The Hartford Daily Times, June 15, 1929, p. 18.)

The Spanish House was one in a series of houses in various revival styles that Scheide designed in West Hartford during the course of his active and fashionable practice. Most of them were larger and grander than The Spanish House. West Hartford was then at the peak of its period of development. Seven of Scheide's houses, clustered on Mohawk Drive, Westwood Road, and Colony Road, about half a mile due north of The Spanish House, are the following:

11 Westwood Road. A spacious Tudor Revival house.

18 Westwood Road. An example of the Chateausque style, built of stone and brick. The silhouette of its high, hipped, red roof is broken by an octagonal tower with conical roof.

54 Westwood Road. A brownstone Jacobethan Revival house. A bow over the front door is surmounted by a castellated parapet. Tall, twin, square chimneys are arranged diagonally to one another.

4 Mohawk Drive. A Georgian Revival house in brick painted white. The high, gabled, slate roof has three dormers. The small, central, columned portico has an iron balustrade under a Palladian window. Two bay windows in the first floor, right and left of the doorway, provide an exception to the academic correctness of the style.

105 Mohawk Drive. A more modest Dutch Colonial house with central chimney, gambrel roof, and shed dormers. The first floor is recessed under the eaves of the gambrel roof. The small, columned portico for the

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central doorway has a gabled roof and coved ceiling. Construction materials are brick for the first floor and clapboards above, both painted white.

13 Colony Road. A central-chimney, five-bay Georgian Colonial Revival house with a broken pediment over the central doorway. The first floor is constructed of bricks painted white, and the upper floors are covered with shingles painted white.

33 Colony Road. This is another house constructed of brick painted white, but in a style that is difficult to categorize. At the left there is a tall, broad gable whose roof slopes down to first floor level. In the center, at first floor level, there is a section of half timbering. To the right a truncated gable roof faces the street. Windows are broad, each consisting of several sections, similar to those in The Spanish House. There is a second floor oriel. The design of this house is innovative, and successful.

These houses, except for 33 Colony Road, run the gamut of revival styles then fashionable for suburban homes. Scheide's work in all of these styles is assured, facile, and sophisticated. The house at 33 Colony Road does not fit the mold of any of the standard revival styles and therefore is an exercise in originality. Another building designed by Scheide that is outside the stream of revival fashion, and also contrasts with the domesticity of his residences, is a small office building he designed in a bold and austere manner in 1934 at 100 Pearl Street, Hartford. The building consists of three vertical blocks incised with Art Deco decorative designs centered on an entrance that is framed in black onyx.

Scheide contributed his taste for variety, his breadth of skills, and his technical competence to The Spanish House and created a work whose unusual significance and integrity may be expressed in five points. First, the concept of a Spanish house was out of the ordinary for Hartford. Second, the concept was carried out successfully and thoroughly on the exterior and interior with systematic attention given to all major considerations of design and materials and to all details. Third, the scheme was conceived and carried out by talented Hartford people. Fourth, the documentation for the entire project is extensive and complete; the record is clear on the contributions made by the several participants, and on the sources of materials, components, and furnishings. Fifth, the house with all its architectural components is intact and free from intrusions, and the documentation, instead of having been removed to a library or museum, continues to be present in the house itself.

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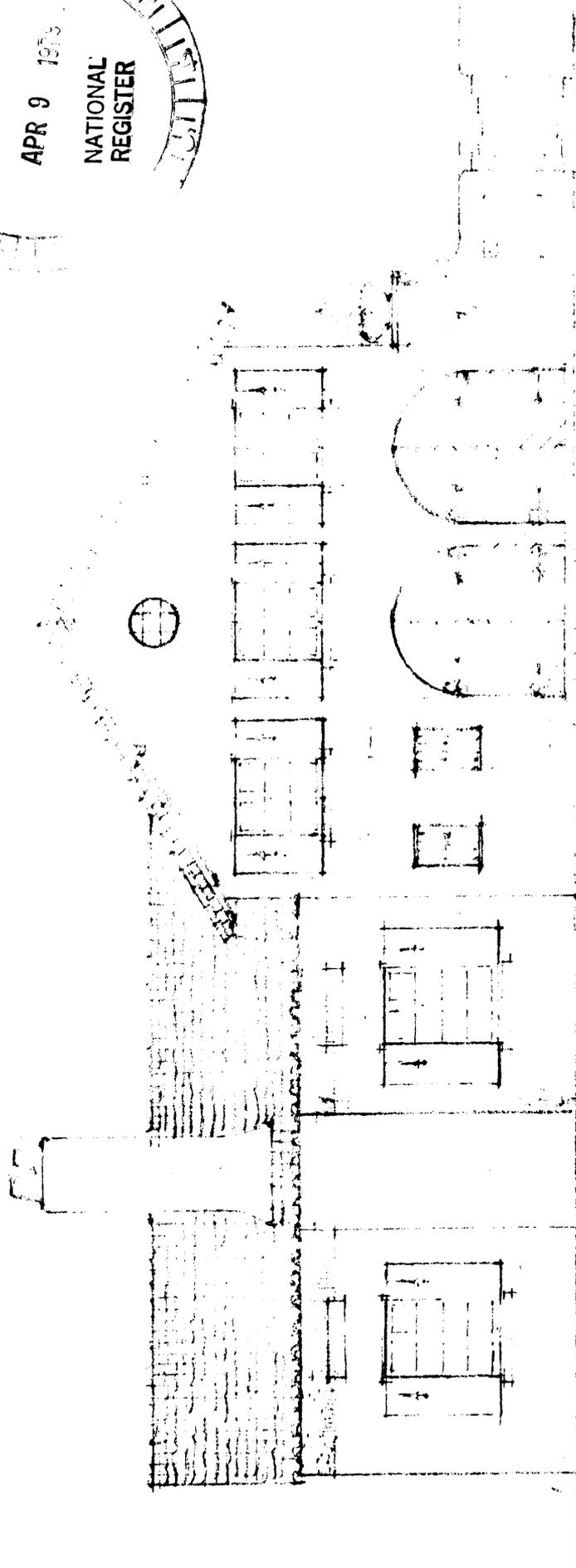
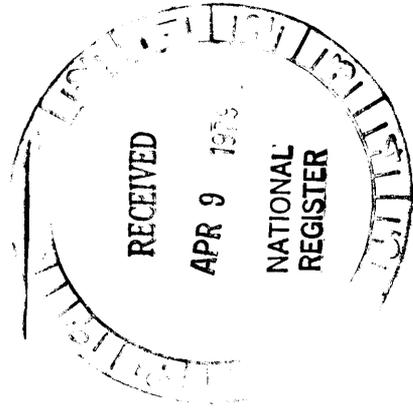
The Hartford Daily Times, June 15, 1929.

The Hartford Courant, November 6, 1951 (R.F. Jones, Sr. obituary).

The Hartford Courant, March 1, 1953 (Scheide obituary).

Interview with N. Ross Parke, December 13, 1978.

Sketches, plans, construction drawings, blueprints, invoices (at the house).



The Spanish House
West Hartford, CT

Proposed elevation, discarded

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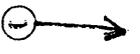
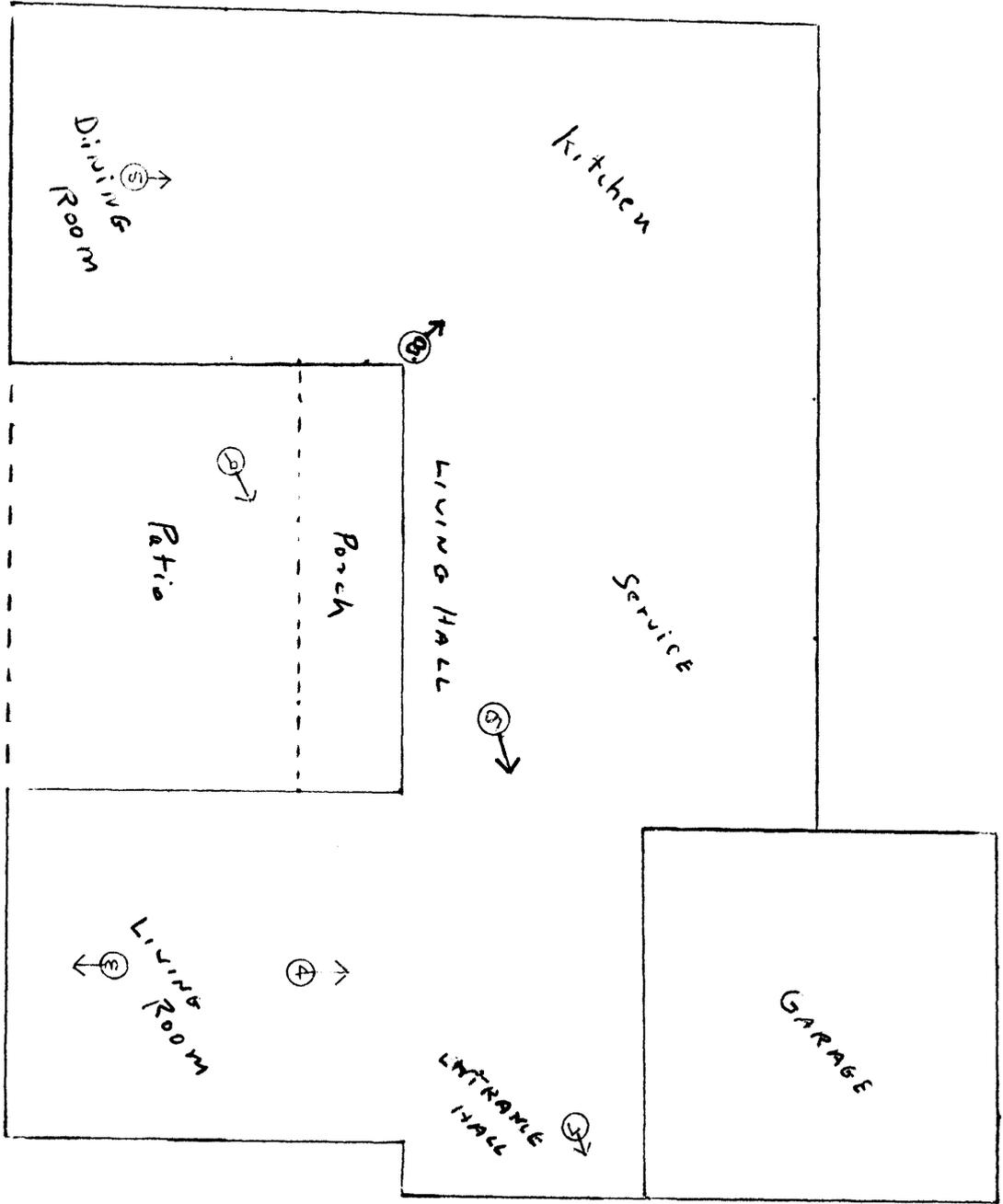
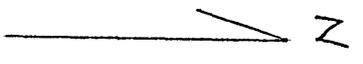


Photo Map

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West Hartford, CT