

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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RECEIVED FEB 8 1982

DATE ENTERED

MAR 15 1982

**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

John Fuller House

AND/OR COMMON

Town Farm

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

463 Halladay Avenue

NA NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Suffield *Me.*

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

NA VICINITY OF

Sixth -

STATE

Connecticut

CODE

09

COUNTY

Hartford

CODE

003

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

DISTRICT
 BUILDING(S)
 STRUCTURE
 SITE
 OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

PUBLIC
 PRIVATE

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

IN PROCESS
 BEING CONSIDERED
NA

STATUS

OCCUPIED
 UNOCCUPIED
 WORK IN PROGRESS
ACCESSIBLE
 YES: RESTRICTED
 YES: UNRESTRICTED
 NO

PRESENT USE

AGRICULTURE
 COMMERCIAL
 EDUCATIONAL
 ENTERTAINMENT
 GOVERNMENT
 INDUSTRIAL
 MILITARY
 MUSEUM
 PARK
 PRIVATE RESIDENCE
 RELIGIOUS
 SCIENTIFIC
 TRANSPORTATION
 OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Robert R. & Nancy J. Close

STREET & NUMBER

463 Halladay Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Suffield

STATE

NA VICINITY OF

CT 06078

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Suffield Town Hall

STREET & NUMBER

Mountain Road

CITY, TOWN

Suffield

STATE

Connecticut

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

State Register of Historic Places

DATE

1981

 FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Connecticut Historical Commission

CITY, TOWN

Hartford

STATE

Connecticut

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT
 GOOD
 FAIR
 DETERIORATED
 RUINS
 UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
 ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

For many years the Town of Suffield, Connecticut operated a 60-acre Town Farm at a location about two miles north of the center of the community, on the southwest corner of Halladay Avenue and Blossom Street. There was a cluster of buildings on the farm, consisting of a 2½-story brick house with 2-story frame addition in the rear, a large U-shaped barn, a corn house, garage, and poultry house. In addition, there were three outlying tobacco sheds (Sketch Map A). The house has now become a private residence, with two acres of land. The rear section of the house has been reduced in size, and the corn house and poultry house are gone, but the big barn remains, as does the rural character of the area in general (Sketch Map B). Although the Town Farm function has ceased, the Town Farm presence continues (Photo 1)

The 1824 Georgian style brick house is 26 x 32 feet in size oriented north-south under a gable roof. The smaller dimension is the front, facing north toward Halladay Avenue (Photo 2). The front (north) facade has four bays with the door occupying the second bay from the left. The doorway is recessed under a round arch with blind fanlight (no glazing). The recessed blind fanlight is repeated above in the gable end; here the radial sections are louvers that ventilate the attic. The east elevation is of secondary importance, with four windows upstairs and down, and a central side door. The southwest corner of the house is cut out, or recessed, a peculiarity of plan for which there is no ready explanation. The eaves return at both of these corners (Photo 3). On the rear a diagonal line runs across the window marking the original slope of the roof of the addition. The blinds, with movable louvers, are late-19th C. but the hardware by which the blinds are fastened to the house consists of a ring that fits over a pinion, apparently original.

The U-shaped barn in its maximum dimensions is 109 feet long by 62 feet deep (Photo 4). The base of the U, the portion of the barn that serves as the hay and cattle barn, has a sloping, low-pitched roof, while the arms of the U have gable roofs. The southern arm is a tobacco shed. When the barn was built is not known, but presumably during the 19th century. It is likely that it was not built all at one time.

The interior of the house has had some partitions moved, but otherwise appears to be largely in original condition. The front door opens into a square hall that is one of two rooms across the front of the house. The stairs rise on the left against the east wall in a closed string with square spindles (Photo 5). The flight is a long, straight run to a square landing, then a 90 degree turn to the right and two risers to the second floor. The first floor west front room is the parlor. It has a brick fireplace with hearth of square bricks and flat, molded mantel shelf.

Originally there were two more rooms behind the two front rooms, but the partition dividing them has now been removed making one large space. The area to the east was the original kitchen. The kitchen fireplace with wrought-iron lintel is intact (Photo 6). It is similar in appearance to the one in the parlor, but wider to accommodate the bake oven at upper right.

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Town Farm
Suffield, CT

CONTINUATION SHEET Description ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 1

Behind this area is a further oblong room running across the width of the house, thought initially to have been for storage.

Upstairs the floor plan closely resembles downstairs. There is a second floor hall, and in the bedroom over the parlor there is a third brick fireplace. All fireplaces have dampers. The partitions are about three inches thick, built of butted boards without studs. Ceilings throughout the house are modern wire lath and plaster, but walls and partitions are original plaster. Doors have four raised panels (Photo 7) but are thought originally to have had ceramic knobs rather than present latches.

Windows in the house are thought originally to have been 12-over-12, although the c. 1952 picture shows 2-over-2 on the front (Photo 8). Present windows are 6-over-6 throughout, custom made to fit the original enframements. The upper sash is fixed. The lower sash can be raised, but there are no counter weights. Floors are wide boards, tapered and matched.

In the cellar the foundation walls are fieldstone up to a level $1\frac{1}{2}$ feet below grade where the stone is capped by two courses of bricks. Above the brick cap the brick walls are continued upwards tapering from 14 inches in thickness above the cap to 8 inches at the second floor. On the exterior at grade there is a brownstone cap. This cap and the brownstone door sills and window sills all have chiseled finish. Each chimney is supported in the cellar by four brick piers, or thin walls. Heavy timber are laid across the tops of these vertical supports on which are built the hearth, and the stacks rise from this level.

The two-story rear addition was reduced to its present one-story dimension in mid-20th century, and a small greenhouse has been added to its rear. Two of the three tobacco sheds remain standing and continue to be part of the site visually, although the land on which they stand does not now go with the house. The garage appears to have been built in the 20th century, and probably is the newest of the buildings, although it does date from the Town Farm era as it shows on Sketch Map A which was drawn before the town disposed of the property.

When the present owners bought the house and barn in 1964 two acres of land were included in the sale, as shown by Sketch Map B. The boundaries of this plot are adopted as the boundaries of the nominated property in part because it is convenient to use the legal boundaries that are set forth in the land records (see Item 10, Verbal Boundary Description), and in part because the house and barn are the subjects of chief architectural interest. The former corn house and poultry house no longer exist, although they were located on the two-acre site, and one of the tobacco sheds no longer exists. The other two tobacco sheds are standing but they are some 700 feet away.

FHR-8-300A
(11/78)

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HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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Suffield, CT

CONTINUATION SHEET Description ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 2

It does not seem worthwhile to draw artificial boundary lines to include them. The two-acre property that includes the house and the barn is judged to be the appropriate subject for the nomination.

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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1824

BUILDER/ARCHITECT George Fuller

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Suffield Town Farm is significant as an artifact of a system once commonly used in American society to deal with the problem of caring for the poor (Criterion A). It also embodies the distinctive characteristics of early 19th-century country Georgian brick architecture, still substantially in original condition (Criterion C).

The house was built in 1824 by George Fuller at the time of his marriage. The Fuller family lived there until the Town of Suffield bought the property in 1887 to serve as the Town Farm until it was sold back to private ownership at auction in 1952. The house survives largely unchanged over a century and a half, a demonstration of country Georgian architecture. The house was built with careful attention to detail, but was not elaborate. The chiseled brownstone, louvered fanlights, and molded eaves returns show an awareness of contemporary style while the rather plain fireplace surrounds and absence of other interior decorative trim, with the exception of the raised-panel doors, is consistent with what might be expected in a farm house.

There is a striking similarity in structures and histories between the Suffield and Middletown Town Farms (Town Farms Inn, Middletown, enrolled in the National Register of Historic Places on May 4, 1979).

Both houses were built as brick Georgian farmhouses, Middletown c. 1839 and Suffield 1824. Both have recessed doorways with fanlights under round brick arches. Both were purchased in mid-19th century by the local government. Both had additions built on to accommodate the residents, Middletown a brick, Mansard-roof block, Suffield a two-story frame structure. Both were operated as working farms, and then eventually re-sold to private owners, Middletown in 1946 and Suffield in 1952. The general trend of the times, typified by the sequence of events in Middletown and Suffield, was to incarcerate the poor in institutions where they were expected, in some cases, to do work. The forces in American society that caused the rise, and eventual decline, of this method of dealing with a social problem are well set forth in his definitive book on the subject, The Discovery of the Asylum, by David J. Rothman.

Some insight into the activities at the Town Farm, and the community's attitude toward the institution, may be gained from the annual Suffield Selectmen's Reports on file at the State Library beginning with the year ending October 1, 1868. Each reports consisted of a "Statement of the Receipts and Expenses of the Town of Suffield," a tabulation of figures with

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

UTM NOT VERIFIED
ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

David J. Rothman, The Discovery of the Asylum, Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1971.

Selectmen's Report, Town of Suffield, annual, 1868 - (at the State Library).

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 2

QUADRANGLE NAME West Springfield

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24,000

UTM REFERENCES

A 18 694060 4654000

B

C

D

E

F

G

H

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated property is described in the Town of Suffield Land Records, volume 108, page 433.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

David F. Ransom, Consultant

ORGANIZATION

Connecticut Historical Commission

DATE

May 12, 1979

STREET & NUMBER

59 South Prospect Street

TELEPHONE

203 566-3005

CITY OR TOWN

Hartford

STATE

Connecticut

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE X

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

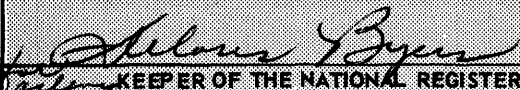


TITLE Director, Connecticut Historical Commission

DATE February 3, 1982

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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


KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Entered in the
National Register

DATE 3/15/82

ATTEST:
CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

DATE

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little or no narrative until later years. In 1868 the sum of \$1,400 paid to one William Holmes for "keeping the Town Paupers" was the second largest single entry, exceeded only by \$5,340 distributed to the school district. (Many small entries for maintaining the roads probably, in total, were larger than the school expense.) It may have been this high ranking of the cost of keeping the poor in the hierarchy of expenses that led to the purchase of the farm in 1887 for \$7,500. Additional initial costs included the following items:

Alterations and repairs of buildings (presumably including the frame addition)	\$963
Stock - 9 cows, 2 horses, 30 fowls, 3 shoats	\$774
Wagons, sleighs, and farming tools	\$539
Household furniture	\$215

Each year the value of the crops on the farm was inventoried.

The first such valuation September 20, 1887 consisted of:

Hay, 25 tons	\$ 25
Rowen (grass for grazing), 6 tons	\$ 60
Oats, 4½ acres	\$ 65
Corn, 7 acres	\$115
Potatoes, 150 bu.	\$112
Apples, 20 barrels	\$ 20
Tobacco, 3000 lbs.	\$300

In 1891 the Town Health Officer noted in his report that, "The town has an excellent and well-kept almshouse, with farm attached, but no public hospital."

One of the items on the list of expenses each year was "Cash paid for labor," in 1896 \$1,008. Also, there was a separate entry in the Selectmen's Report annually for support of "outside poor." No clue on how all this fits together appears until 1935 when mention is made of care of the aged at the Town Farm "who are unable to care for themselves," suggesting that those who could care for themselves were supported in their homes, and the raising of crops at the Town Farm was a commercial venture, employing labor as needed, to help defray the cost of caring for the aged. This theory is supported by the 1906 report which states that 473 weeks of board were provided at a cost of one week's board for one inmate of \$3.50. The \$3.50 is not the direct cost but is arrived at by dividing the 473 weeks of board into the remainder after subtracting receipts from produce sold from total expenditures.

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The 1906 report also gives, for the first time, the number of inmates, four men, two women, two adults of unspecified sex, and two small children. Dividing the 473 weeks of board by 52 weeks indicates that over the year there were nine inmates in residence, on the average. Judging from the size of the frame addition where they presumably were housed they were not overcrowded. An entry in 1940, that there is "...one empty room at the Farm because one of the inmates left because he is to receive Old Age Assistance" is of twofold interest, first, as it is a further indication of no overcrowding, and second, as an initial reference to a change in society's view on the proper source of financial support for the poor and aged from local to federal funds.

In 1914 the Selectmen reported, "The Farm has had a very successful year...and has produced a fine crop of tobacco, which is sold at 21 cents. All buildings have been thoroughly repaired and are now being painted." In 1917 the Farm for the first time in its history, they said, was "self sustaining and shows a slight profit," as it did in the subsequent three years. This may have been the state of affairs the Selectmen hoped and thought, at the time they established the farm, would be normal. But by 1927 they were obliged to report, "The Town Farm had another expensive year, due to lack of patronage, and also a destructive hail storm..." That year expenses were \$8,136 and receipts \$2,385. In 1946 the Selectmen noted that "...it would be a good thing to sell the farm while prices of real estate are high...and board the two women (the sole remaining inmates) much cheaper than we are doing today." The Farm was sold in 1952 for \$25,000.

Comparison of Rothman's authoritative analysis in The Discovery of the Asylum with conditions as revealed by the Selectmen's Reports shows substantive discrepancies. Rothman's thesis (pp. 184-199) is that the 19th century brought a policy of caring for the needy in almshouses, as contrasted with the 18th-century practice of supporting at least the mentally ill and the poor in their homes. Incarceration was considered basic to the desired norms of order, regularity, industry, and temperance. Moreover, according to Rothman, the average almshouse was poorly administered with inmates housed in crowded and nauseous quarters. On each count conditions at the Suffield Town Farm differed from Rothman's norm, as indeed they did at Middletown, giving rise to the question of whether Rothman accurately identified the norm, at least in rural Connecticut. Suffield's attitude perhaps is better summed up in the Selectmen's 1931 report during the Great Depression when they said "...our...poor have cost more than ever, and apparently will cost more yet during the coming year, because no one wants any one in Suffield, either adults or children, to go hungry or cold through no fault of their own."

FHR-8-300A
(11/78)

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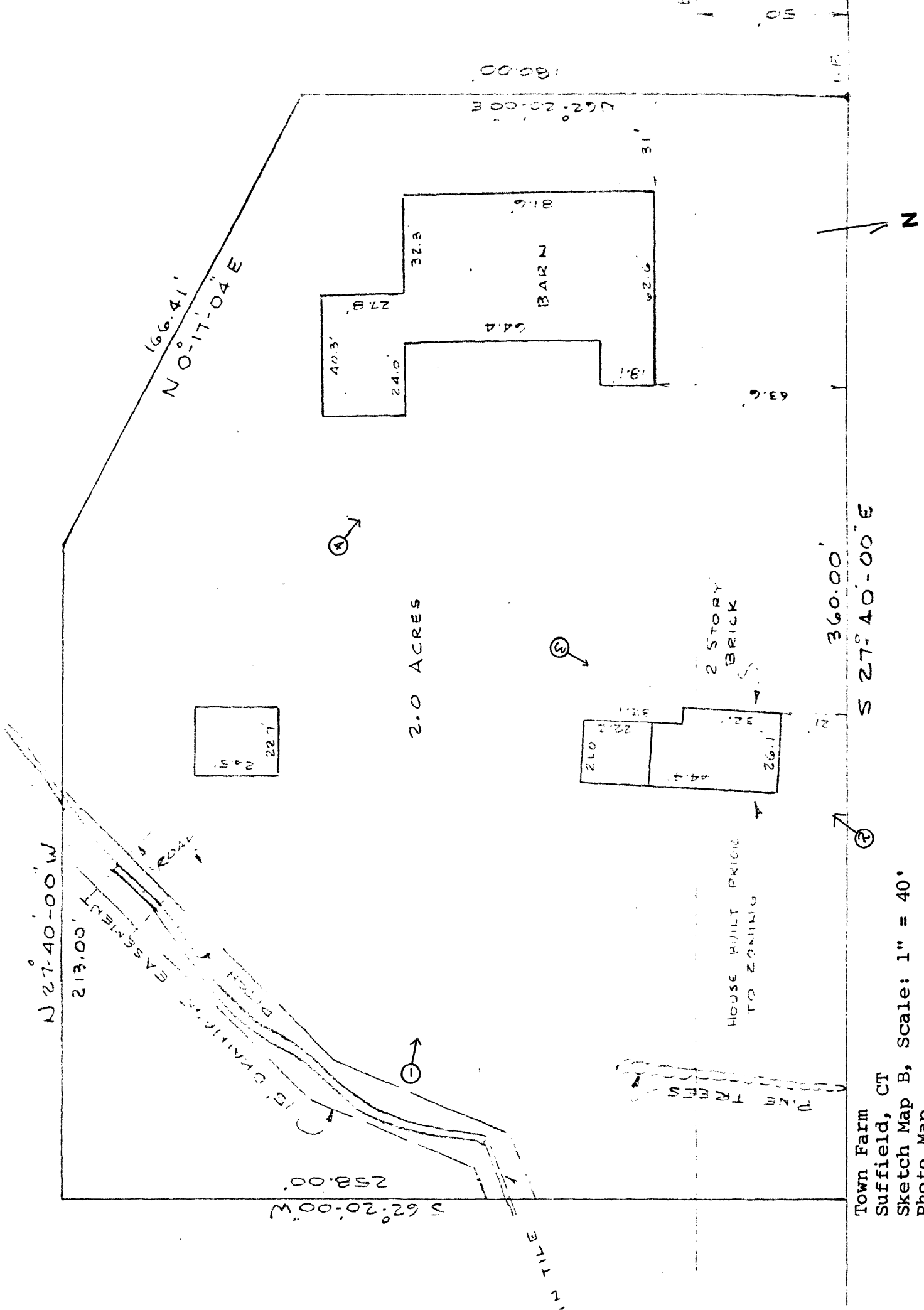
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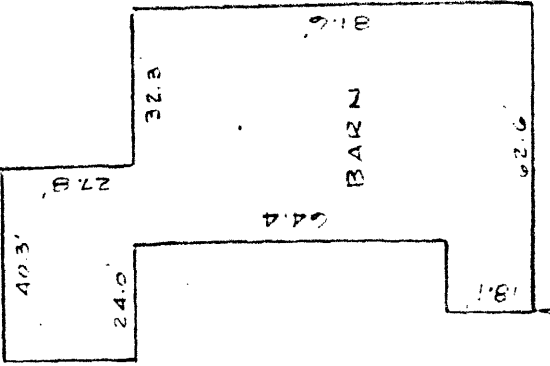
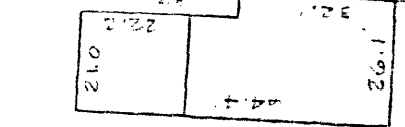
CONTINUATION SHEET Significance ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 3

Rothman's observations relate primarily to early 19th century conditions while Suffield did not begin its Town Farm operation until 1887, a relatively late date. It is to be noted, however, that all during the 19th century both Suffield and Middletown continued expenditures for "outside poor" (caring for poor people in their homes), in contrast to incarceration so heavily emphasized by Rothman. The reason why Suffield at the relatively late date of 1887 decided to augment care of the "outside poor" by instituting a Town Farm is not spelled out in the Selecmen's Reports. The inferences, however, suggest two possible motivations, first, the need for a facility where those not capable of caring for themselves could be looked after, and, second, a desire to generate some income from the farm operation.

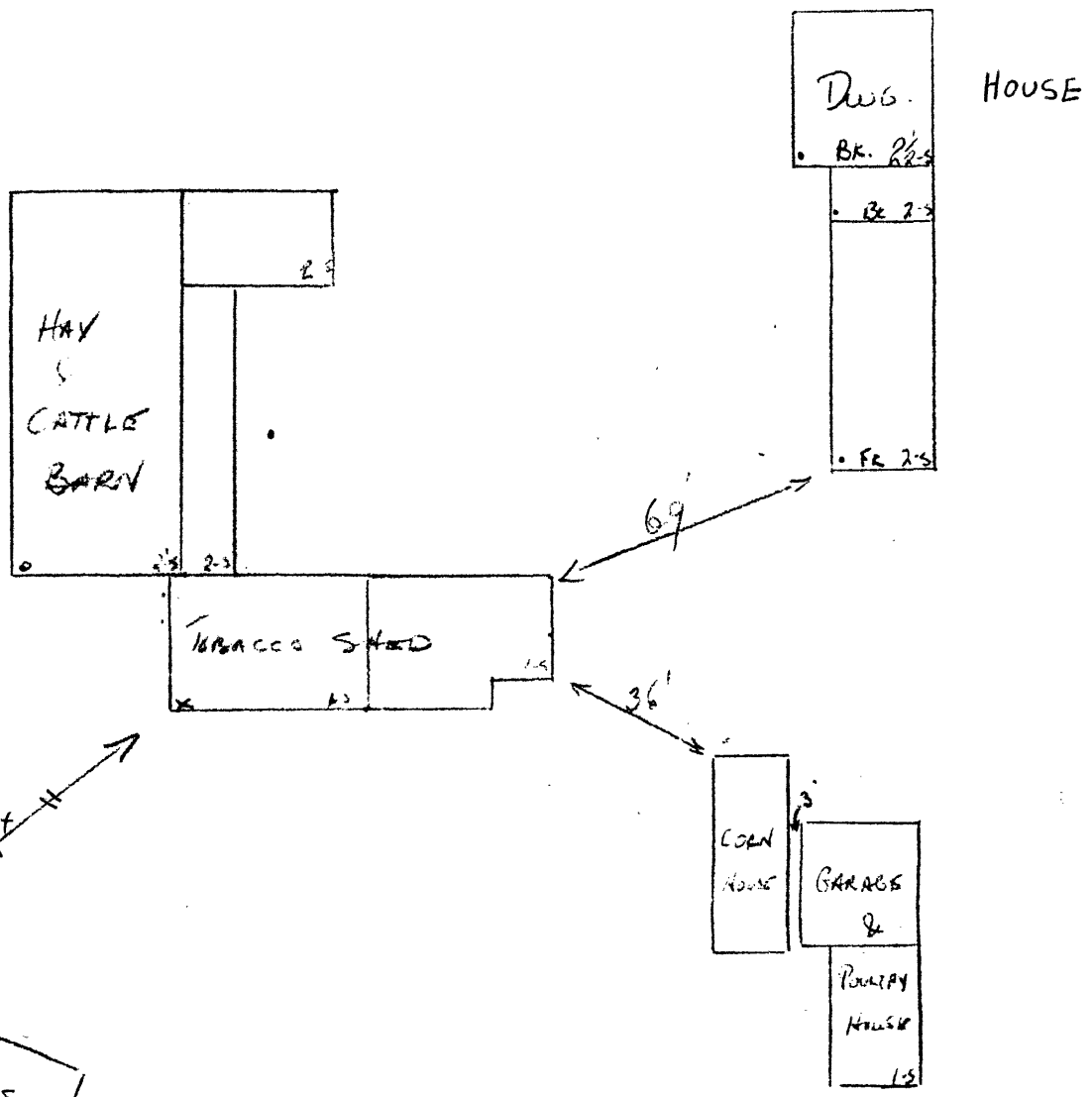
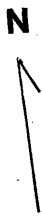


2.0 ACRES

2 STORY BRICK



Town Farm
 Suffield, CT
 Sketch Map B, Scale: 1" = 40'
 Photo Map



Town Farm
Suffield, CT

Sketch Map A
Scale: 1"=40'

