

1921

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Atwater, George, House
other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 1845 State Street not for publication
city, town Hamden vicinity
state Connecticut code CT county New Haven code 009 zip code 06517

3. Classification

| | | | |
|---|---|-------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Ownership of Property | Category of Property | Number of Resources within Property | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s) | Contributing | Noncontributing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> public-local | <input type="checkbox"/> district | <u>1</u> | <u>0</u> buildings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> public-State | <input type="checkbox"/> site | _____ | _____ sites |
| <input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal | <input type="checkbox"/> structure | _____ | _____ structures |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> object | _____ | _____ objects |
| | | <u>1</u> | <u>0</u> Total |

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official [Signature] Date 11/25/91
State or Federal agency and bureau Director, Connecticut Historical Commission

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official _____ Date _____
State or Federal agency and bureau _____

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register. [Signature] 1-17-92
 See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/multiple dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)EARLY REPUBLIC/Federal

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation stonewalls weatherboard

roof asphalt shinglesother brick chimney

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The George Atwater House is located on the east side of State Street in a residential neighborhood which developed in the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. Built about 1820 in the Federal style, it had a distinctive plan consisting of two clapboarded gable-to-street sections: a two-story main block and a smaller one-story rear section offset to the south (Photograph #s 1, 2; Exhibit A). There is also a one-story narrow shed-roofed extension on the north side of the main block which is original construction with the same foundation: dressed ochre granite in a random ashlar pattern (Photograph #3). Sometime in the late nineteenth century, probably about 1890, a two-story intersecting gabled wing with an open porch was added to the south elevation. A small two-story addition for bathrooms was added at the rear in the early twentieth century (Photograph #4). A former large woodshed on the property has been incorporated into a two-car garage which is now attached to the northeast corner of the house.

The Atwater House displays a glazed fanlight in the facade pediment, a form repeated in the unusual design of the early twentieth-century portico, which has an unglazed fan pattern applied over the door and repeated as open work in the gable (Photograph #5). The five-panelled door is flanked by reeded pilasters, part of the original Federal door surround. Six-over-six double-hung windows with molded surrounds and projecting caps are found throughout the circa 1820 portions of the house. Pintles for blinds remain in place on all the original openings, including the original main front door.

The evolution of the house is confirmed by the framing and materials exposed in the cellar and attic. In the original section, rough-hewn logs, only partially debarked, provide the joists which support two layers of flooring above: matched boards over spaced scantlings. The south wing is over a crawl space and is supported by sawn joists. The chimney foundation utilizes reused hewn timbers, with tenons and mortises on their ends, laid across three free-standing brick walls and is backed by a storage cupboard on the north side. Under the present kitchen there is what appears to be a cistern. It was originally supplied by a pump run by a windmill in the backyard, no longer extant.¹ The framing of the attic consists of debarked log rafters butted at the ridge. Spaced roofing boards, displaying the same saw marks as the flooring exposed in the older portion of the cellar, support the wood-shingled roof now covered with asphalt shingles.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

George Atwater House, Hamden, Connecticut

Section number 7 Page 2

The finishes and floor plan of the first floor of the main block are almost entirely original.² Window and door surrounds, the chair rail in the former kitchen (now the dining room) and the plastered walls are all intact. All of the interior doors have the same five-panel design. A narrow side-entrance hall with a simple balustrade is located next to the parlor at the front of the house (Photograph #6). The parlor fireplace surround is Federal in feeling with flanking pilasters but has distinctive vernacular detail, consisting of repeating half-circle molding on the pilasters and the frieze (Photograph #7). The kitchen hearth has a Colonial appearance (Photograph #8). It has a wide cooking hearth and a beehive oven to the left with its own flue set towards the front. To the north behind the kitchen is a bedroom. There the former fireplace was bricked in when central heating was installed. Two small cupboards above the kitchen mantel were removed at that time. To the rear of the dining room is the former summer kitchen and/or pantry, which was enlarged when the wing on this side was added. New glazed doors were installed to the porch at that time from both the old and new kitchen.

The second floor also retains its plaster walls, door and window trim, original five-panel doors, and a more simply designed Federal-style fireplace surround in the parlor chamber.

1. Information about the windmill was supplied by the present owner.
2. The plaster walls are all exposed because they have been stripped and patched in preparation for painting or wallpapering.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

c. 1820 - c. 1890

Significant Dates

c. 1820

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The George Atwater House is architecturally significant as a well-preserved vernacular Federal-style farmhouse, which is distinguished by its exceptional interior integrity. It derives added significance from its atypical massing and floorplan which are unique to Hamden and unusual in the state in this period.

Historical Background

The George Atwater House was built in the area that was part of the New Haven Colony known as the East Farms. New Haven settlers began to develop the land for farming there as early as 1640. The area was noted for its fertile uplands and great meadows, which were owned by descendants of these settlers for almost 300 years. Among them were the Atwaters, descendants of settler David Atwater, who owned land on both sides of the country road that eventually became State Street. The earliest remaining house associated with the Atwater family is the Jared Atwater House diagonally across the road, also known as Appledore, built about the time Hamden became a separate town in 1786. Jared's son George Atwater (1797-1867) prospered as a farmer. As there no surviving adult children at the time of his death, he left the house to his widow and the bulk of his estate, \$22,000, to the trustees of the Connecticut Valley Hospital in Middletown, then known as the Connecticut Hospital for the Insane, to establish a trust fund for treatment of the poor, with special preference to be given to residents of Hamden. The house was sold by his widow to two nephews, Horace and Charles Atwater. James, a son of Horace, was a market gardener and lived here until 1933.

Architectural Significance

The interior of the Atwater House is notable for its state of preservation, consistency of period, and craftsmanship. There have been very few changes to the original section, which has a level of detail not often found in a farmhouse. Of particular interest is the parlor fireplace surround with its well-crafted unusual moldings. Other period details of note include the five-panel doors and the original sash, many of which display original glazing. The late-nineteenth-century wing, which adds to the building's significance as a working farmhouse, also

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Becker, Martha May and Sasche, Nancy Davis. Hamden: Our Architectural Heritage. Hamden, Connecticut: Whitney Press, 1986 (for the Hamden Historical Society).

Blake, William P. History of the Town of Hamden, Connecticut with an Account of the Centennial Celebration June 15th 1886. New Haven: Price, Lee & Co., 1888.

Dickerman, J. H. "Hamden." Connecticut Quarterly Vol IV. (January to December, 1898): 377-390.

Hartley, Rachel M. The History of Hamden, Connecticut, 1786-1936. Hamden, 1943.

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property _____ .4 _____

UTM References

A

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 | 8 |
|---|---|

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6 | 7 | 5 | 7 | 0 | 0 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | 5 | 7 | 7 | 5 | 7 | 0 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

Zone Easting Northing

C

| | |
|--|--|
| | |
|--|--|

| | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|

| | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|

B

| | |
|--|--|
| | |
|--|--|

| | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|

| | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|

Zone Easting Northing

D

| | |
|--|--|
| | |
|--|--|

| | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|

| | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property is described in the Hamden Land Records Vol. 315, page 549 and Vol. 506, page 58, located in the Town Clerk's Office of the Hamden Town Hall.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The nominated property includes the remaining land and buildings associated with George Atwater.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By Reviewed by John Herzan, National Register Coordinator

name/title Jan Cunningham, National Register Consultant

organization Cunningham Associates Ltd. date March 12, 1991

street & number 37 Orange Road telephone (203) 347-4072

city or town Middletown state CT zip code 06457

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

George Atwater House, Hamden, Connecticut

Section number 8 Page 2

displays original finishes and materials.

The original layout and massing of the Atwater House is exceptional for Connecticut houses in the Federal period. Instead of a simple gabled rectangular main block, which was based on the straightforward post-and-beam framing systems of the eighteenth century, this house has a asymmetrical massing produced by the one-story extension to the north. In addition, common practice, especially for farmhouses with this gable-to-street orientation, placed the summer kitchen in a small wing rather than in a gabled ell to the rear. There are no known similar examples of this type of original massing in Hamden.¹ It is interesting that the later nineteenth-century wing reverted to the more usual layout, and even included the open porch commonly utilized with the kitchen wing in both Federal and Greek Revival farmhouses.

1. Martha May Becker and Nancy Davis Sachse, Hamden: Our Architectural Heritage, (Hamden, Connecticut: Hamden Historical Society, 1986).

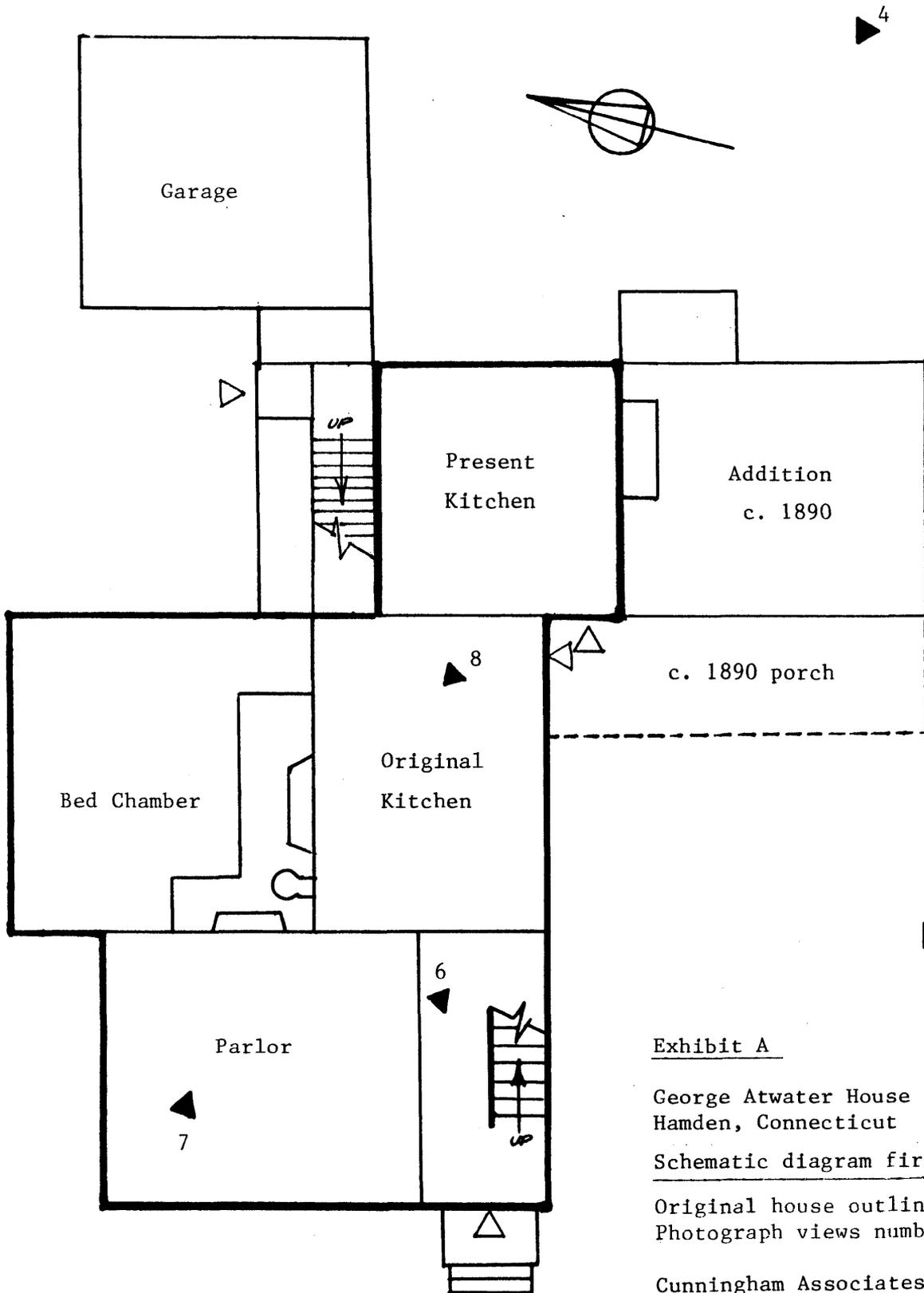


Exhibit A

George Atwater House
Hamden, Connecticut

Schematic diagram first floor

Original house outlined in bold
Photograph views numbered

Cunningham Associates 3/91

3

5

1

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

George Atwater House, Hamden, Connecticut

Section number Photos Page 1

List of Photographs

Property: George Atwater House, Hamden, Connecticut

Photographer: Cunningham Associates Ltd.

Date: 2/91

Negatives on File: Connecticut Historical Commission

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. House and Site Facing: NE | 2. South elevation with wing Facing: NE |
| 3. Facade and north elevation Facing: SE | 4. Rear elevations Facing: NW |
| 5. Entrance portico Facing: E | 6. Front hall and staircase Facing: W |
| 7. Parlor with fireplace Facing: W | 8. Kitchen fireplace Facing: NW |