

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED FEB 13 1980
DATE ENTERED AUG 11 1980

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Shelburne Farms

AND/OR COMMON

Shelburne Farms

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

off U.S. 7

CITY, TOWN

Shelburne and vicinity

VICINITY OF

—NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Vermont

STATE

Vermont

CODE

50

COUNTY

Chittenden

CODE

07

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC ACQUISITION	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ACCESSIBLE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
			<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
			<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Derick V. Webb/Shelburne Farms Resources Inc.

STREET & NUMBER

Shelburne Farms/Shelburne Farms

CITY, TOWN

Shelburne/Shelburne VICINITY OF

STATE

Vermont/Vermont

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Office of the Town Clerk

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Shelburne

STATE

Vermont

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Vermont Historic Sites & Structures Survey

DATE

1979

—FEDERAL STATE —COUNTY —LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

Vermont Division for Historic Preservation

CITY, TOWN

Montpelier

STATE

Vermont

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT
 GOOD
 FAIR

DETERIORATED
 RUINS
 UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
 ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE 1899

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Shelburne Farms, one of the larger estates in Vermont today, retains many of the features which made it a New England showplace prior to the First World War. The major buildings on the estate were designed by New York architect Robert Henderson Robertson and are situated on the landscaped farm laid out with the advice of Frederick Law Olmstead and Gifford Pinchot. Shelburne Farms is located along the ledgy shore of Lake Champlain with views of bays and coves, the majestic Adirondacks in New York and the gentle Green Mountains in Vermont. The farm itself has a rolling landscape which consists of open fields and pastures and thickly wooded areas. The tree lined roadways on the estate connect all areas and gracefully curve around the hillsides providing vistas of the natural environment and glimpses and distant views of the buildings.

Dr. and Mrs. William Seward Webb began to purchase land for Shelburne Farms following the death of her father, William Henry Vanderbilt, in 1885. The Webbs purchased 32 small farms for a total of 4000 acres; today, because of division and developmental pressures, the estate consists of approximately 2000 acres with approximately 2 miles of linear feet frontage on Lake Champlain. The estate has one of the most picturesque locations in Vermont and the buildings are unequalled in the State.

The structures on the estate are as follows (numbers refer to enclosed map entitled, "Shelburne Farms, Shelburne, Vermont"):

1. Shelburne Farms Main Gate: Redstone gate posts and fence with white limestone caps. Originally there were wrought iron gates attached to the posts.
2. Gate House: Wood frame, shingled, gabled roof sheathed in asphalt, 1½ stories. This "Swiss Style" cottage was designed by Robert Henderson Robertson c. 1890. The house is square in plan with a cantilevered gable front orientation. Embellishments include a double row of imbricated shingles forming a frieze below the cantilever and forming a lintel course at the second floor window head level. A recessed porch at the front south corner has been enclosed and some of the fenestration has been altered. The shingles are stained brown and the trim painted white.
- 2a. Ticket Booth: Small modern, ticket keeper's booth used by Shelburne Farm Resources; does not contribute to historic character of complex.
- 2b. Garage: 2-bay, gable roof, vertical board siding; does not contribute to historic character of complex.
3. Saint George House: Wood frame, shingled, gabled roof sheathed in standing seam copper, 1½ stories. This "Classic Cottage" was designed by Robert Henderson Robertson c. 1890 as a tenent house. The house has a traditional 5 bay facade with 9/6 sash. A rear ell, with shed and gabled roofs, has a small shingled ventilator and is attached to a gabled garage. The house has a high redstone foundation and paired interior end chimneys; the shingles are stained brown.
4. Valley View: 7-course American bonded brick painted white, gabled roof sheathed in copper shingles, 2 stories. This tenant house was existing when William Seward Webb began to purchase and develop Shelburne Farms. There is a redstone foundation

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and rectangular cut wooden lintels. A gabled 2-story period brick ell is attached to the north gable end; attached to this ell is a wood frame, clapboarded, 2-story wing. There is a modern shed roof sunporch on the south gable end. The house was altered c. 1958.

4a. Garage: 1 bay, gabled roof; does not contribute to historic character of complex.

4b. Shed: Small, gabled roof; does not contribute to historic character of complex.

5a-d. Dairy Complex: Collection of 3 (5a-c) large modern dairy buildings with metal silos and a modern (5d) wood frame, vertical board siding, gabled roof, 1½ story foreman's house. Designed by Burlington architect William Cowles c. 1952. Because of the date of construction of these four structures, they do not contribute to the historic character of Shelburne Farms.

6. Marilyn and Alec Webb House: Wood frame, stucco, gabled roof sheathed in standing seam steel, 1½ stories. This modern bi-level house was designed by the present occupants and constructed in 1974. This well designed house is not visible from the main buildings on the estate; because of the date of its construction it does not contribute to the historic character of Shelburne Farms.

6a. Windmill: Modern windmill to generate power for this complex; does not contribute to historic character of complex.

6b. Barn: Modern barn, c. 1974; does not contribute to historic character of complex.

7. Orchard House: Common bond brick painted white, gabled roof sheathed in slate, 2 stories. This house was existing when William Seward Webb began to purchase and develop Shelburne Farms. The house was extensively altered c. 1950 by Burlington architect William Cowles and tends to give the house a modern appearance. The house is visible from the massive Shelburne House and presents an interesting massing; however because of these alterations it does not contribute to the historic character of Shelburne Farms.

7a. Horse Barn: Modern horse barns and paddock; does not contribute to historic character of complex.

8. Orchard Cottage: Wood frame, clapboarded, gabled roof sheathed in slate with imbricated bands, 1-2 stories. This house has ells creating a stepped effect of 1, 1½, and 2 stories. It is said that this house was moved from Oakledge in Burlington c. 1890.

8a-c. 20th century sheds and garage which do not contribute to the historic character of the complex.

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8d. Barn: Wood frame, shingled, gabled roof sheathed in asphalt, 1½ levels. This brown shingled barn, possibly designed by Robert Henderson Robertson c. 1890, is similar to #16a.

8e. Sheep Barn: Wood frame, shed roof, open sheep barn; does not contribute to historic character of the complex.

8f. Shed; does not contribute to historic character of the complex.

9. "Tree House": Wood frame, shingled, gabled roof sheathed in asphalt, 1½ levels. This small building was originally built as a play house and called "The Doll House". It was furnished with child size furnishing, some of which, most notably a small cook stove, are stored in Shelburne House (#19). In 1977 the Doll House was converted to a guest house. This house has a salt-box profile and a massive brick chimney; it was designed c. 1890 by Robert Henderson Robertson. A porch across the facade, overlooking Lake Champlain, has stairs which can be lowered down the steep embankment to the beach below.

10. Tea House Chimney: Brick chimney with rounded headed yellow brick fireplace opening. This is the remains of an octagonal tea house, built on the ledge point overlooking Lake Champlain, which burned in the Spring of 1978; it is located near the tennis court and back board.

11. Mrs. Vanderbilt Webb House: Wood frame, board siding and large windows, gabled roof sheathed in asphalt, 1 story. This modern house was designed by Burlington Architect William Cowles in 1960; an addition was added in 1977. This house was constructed at the northern end of the formal terrace garden which was completed in 1913. The house is not intrusive but because of the date of its construction it is non-contributory to the historic character of Shelburne Farms.

12. The Annex: Wood frame, clapboarded and shingled, hipped roof sheathed in asphalt, 2½ stories. This building has a clapboarded first story and a shingled second story which flairs out at the second floor level. There are oriel windows, eyebrow dormers, triangular dormers with exposed timbers and lattice windows. The building is L-shaped, was designed by Robert Henderson Robertson, and was originally attached to Shelburne House. When Robertson enlarged Shelburne House in 1899 this section was detached and moved to its present location between the servant's wing and the new conservatory-billiard room wing. One section of the annex contains a squash court with spectator's gallery; the remainder was used as caretakers quarters. The annex exhibits the earlier Queen Anne-Shingle styling of Shelburne House (#19).

13. Orchard Cove: Wood frame, vertical board siding, gabled roof sheathed in asphalt, 1 story. This modern house was designed by Burlington architect William Cowles in 1960

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and is not visible from the remainder of the estate. Because of the date of its construction it does not contribute to the historic character of Shelburne Farms.

13a. Modern shed for storage and animals; does not contribute to the historic character of the complex.

14. Garden House: Wood frame, clapboarded and shingled, gambrel roof sheathed in asphalt, 2 stories. This house was designed by Robert Henderson Robertson as the gardener's cottage; it has a clapboarded first floor and shingled second floor. A horizontal band is at the window head level of the second floor. The cottage has a gambrel front orientation with recessed porches on both sides. There are 1½ story gabled wings on either side of the central gambrel section and eyebrow dormers on the gambrel roof slope.

14a,b. Garages; do not contribute to the historic character of the complex.

14c. Greenhouse ruins: Brick foundations, sidewalls and chimney are all that remain today at Shelburne Farms of the 25,000 square feet of greenhouses built 1895-1900. The greenhouses were removed c. 1940; one was moved to the Gardenside Nurseries on Webster Road in Shelburne.

15. Coach House: Wood frame; brick, stucco, and half timber; gabled roof sheathed in slate; 2½ stories. This house was designed by Robert Henderson Robertson and built in 1901. Cruciform in plan, the house has a brick with red tinted mortar first story and a stucco with half timber second floor and gable peak. The house has quoining and round headed first floor windows with "quoin" surrounds. The second floor windows are flat-arched. A large corbelled chimney is at the center of the roof.

15a. Shed: Gabled roof open shed; does not contribute to the historic character of the complex.

16. Bay View: Wood frame, clapboarded, gabled roof sheathed in asphalt, 1½ stories. This house was existing when William Seward Webb began to purchase and develop Shelburne Farms. This tenant house is cruciform in plan.

16a. Barn: Wood frame, shingled, gabled roof sheathed in asphalt, 1½ levels. This brown shingled barn, possibly designed by Robert Henderson Robertson, is similar to #8d.

16b. Cattle Loading Platform: Wood ramp with platform for loading cattle onto trucks.

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17. Farm Barn: The massive Farm Barn is the first major structure seen after entering Shelburne Farms and is one of the three principal buildings on the estate. This huge barn was designed by Robert Henderson Robertson and is said to have been one of the largest wood frame buildings in the U.S. at the time of its construction in 1887.

The foundation and first floor level are of roughly coursed redstone ashlar with the window and door openings articulated with grayish limestone. The main area of the structure is clad in dark stained wood shingles (primarily straight butt with bands of round butt) with the gables and window spandrels clad in matchboards with pseudo exposed timbers. The complex gabled, hipped, and conical roofs are clad with standing seam copper; originally the roof was sheathed with wood shingles. The roof is punctuated by various symmetrically placed dormers and cupola-ventilators.

The Farm Barn, like the smaller Coach Barn (#18), has a central court. The main block of the barn is 5 levels and contains horse stalls, hay lofts, and huge tin-lined granaries with a grain elevator and mechanical distribution system. This section of the barn is capped by a large rectangular cupola with trefoil double-hung windows and contains a large Howard tower clock; the four dials, one on each face of the cupola, have Roman and Arabic numerals. The cupola is surmounted by a large copper dragon weather-vane. The gabled wings, with terminating towers capped by conical roofs, have second floor galleries or balconies. The roof is pierced by eyebrow and variously styled gabled dormers which are symmetrically placed and is surmounted by a centrally located rectangular cupola-ventilator. The wings housed the farm offices, blacksmith shop, carpenter shop, repair shop, chicken house, slaughter house, fur storage and storage of farm related equipment.

This complex structure, with its terraced court, has undergone little modernization and is being adaptively used by Shelburne Farm Resources as the base for many of its operations. The Farm Barn, which is visible from many areas of the large estate, has been under-utilized for many years and is in need of restoration. Areas which need important attention are sections of the copper roof which has had wind damage and the repointing of the mortar of the redstone sections.

18. Coach Barn: The Coach Barn is another of the three major buildings at Shelburne Farms. It was designed by Robert Henderson Robertson and completed in 1902. The brick structure has a central open court enclosed on four sides by wings containing horse stables, tack and carriage rooms with groom living quarters above, and storage bays with hay lofts.

The Coach Barn has a complex, asymmetrical yet balanced massing. There are hipped and gabled roofs pierced by assorted dormers, capped by various cupolas and a bird house which resembles a Chinese paoh-tah.

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The building is mainly brick with tinted mortar. The gable peaks are stucco with half timbering and the roof is clad in dark slate. The windows are round headed and flat arch and the doors are round headed or semi-elliptical.

The main entrance, on the north side, is placed in a centrally located gabled bay with a large compound round headed arch which has ornate wrought iron gates. Directly opposite the entrance, and across the courtyard, is an additional gabled bay which has a large Howard clock with Roman numerals in the gable peak.

This barn is a short distance from Shelburne House (#19) and is the only building totally visible from the house. The Coach Barn, Robertson's last building at Shelburne Farms, is an extremely functional and aesthetic asset to the estate.

19. Shelburne House: Shelburne House is the sprawling home built for Mr. and Mrs. William Seward Webb in 1899 from the plans of Robert Henderson Robertson. The present structure incorporates an earlier Queen Anne-Shingle style cottage designed by Robertson in 1888 for the Webbs. A section of this cottage was removed and moved towards the north in 1899 and is the present Annex (#12). The remaining section of the 1888 cottage, on the southern end of Shelburne House, was so heavily remodeled in 1899 that little of its original architectural detailing remains.

The mansion is built so that it overlooks Lake Champlain and terraced gardens. This formal garden has brick and marble balustraded walls, walks, statuary, planters, benches, and a marble fountain. The garden is constructed on a ledge outcropping above the shore of Lake Champlain with unexcelled views of the Adirondack Mountains to the west. The gardens were completed in 1913 and extend across the point from the tennis courts (#10) to the recently constructed Mrs. Vanderbilt Webb House (#11).

Shelburne House is basically an Elizabethian Tudor Revival, 2½-story mansion which is "Y" shaped with the main facade orientated towards Lake Champlain. The house is articulated with three distinct surface treatments: the first floor of the northern section and the first and second floor of the older southern section are brick with tinted mortar, the second floor of the northern section and the two polygonal towers are brick with white mortar and pseudo half-timbering and the gable peaks and dormers are infilled with rough stucco and pseudo half-timbers. The servant's wing, to the rear, is clapboarded at the first floor level, shingled at the second floor level and with stuccoed dormers. This section of the house is reminiscent of the earlier style of the house.

The complex roof system is sheathed with black slate and irregularly pierced by various towers, bays, dormers, and compound corbelled chimneys with corbelled caps. There are circular 1-story porches with conical roofs opening off the music room on the south and the billiard room at the north end. The exterior of the mansion is exuberantly embellished with architectural ornament including carved hammer beams, molded cornices,

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egg and dart molding, denticulated string courses, carved marble panels (one of which has the date 1899 A.D.), bay windows, oriels, towers and windows with varying sash (leaded bevelled glass, stained glass, Queen Anne sash, diamond sash, and plate glass) and configuration.

The interior of the house is equally as resplendent and retains its original furnishings and decorative arts. It is estimated that Shelburne House contains 110 rooms ranging from the marble-floored formal dining room to the simple charwoman's bedroom. The rooms are furnished as period rooms with little expense spared.

The house is a masterpiece of Victorian craftsmanship and is the finest example of its type in Vermont on what is perhaps Vermont's most scenic estate.

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 checked="" 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 checked="" 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 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 type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1887-1902

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Robert Henderson Robertson

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Situated south of Burlington, Vermont, in the town of Shelburne, is Shelburne Farms, the former estate of Dr. and Mrs. William Seward Webb. Consisting of approximately 1685 acres along Lake Champlain, the estate reached its peak prior to the First World War as one of the finest estates in New England; it remains the grandest estate in Vermont. Built on Shelburne Point with varying views of the Green Mountains in Vermont, the Adirondack Mountains in New York, and the beaches and ledges of Lake Champlain, this monumental estate with an undulating landscape is punctuated by a few massive structures. Occupying perhaps the most glorious waterfront setting in Vermont, the estate is the result of immense wealth, the product of shrewd business investments and inheritance, and a care and understanding of the natural environment in the laying out of the grounds and construction of buildings to take advantage of the natural and created landscape.

In the early 1880's Dr. William Seward Webb (1851-1926), a New York City railroad entrepreneur, began buying 32 adjacent farms in the town of Shelburne along Lake Champlain and Shelburne Bay. His wife, Lila (Eliza Osgood Vanderbilt Webb, 1860-1936), whom he married in 1880, was the daughter of William Henry Vanderbilt (1821-1885) and her substantial inheritance at his death (said to have been (\$10,000,000) enabled Dr. Webb to experiment with the most modern agricultural equipment and theory available in creating a model stock farm, Shelburne Farms. His inlaws' connections in the railroad world were useful to Dr. Webb, who gave up medicine after two years of practice for a Wall Street business and then the presidency of Wagner Palace Car Company. A man of great energy and ability, he found himself involved in many railroad enterprises including positions on the boards of trustees of several Vermont railroads. He took special interest in the Rutland Railroad, whose tracks bordered Shelburne Farms, and for several years controlled the majority of stock in that company. He also owned a steamboat line on Lake Champlain, was on the Board of Directors of the National Life Insurance Company in Montpelier, a Trustee of the University of Vermont, and served in the Vermont Legislature as the Shelburne representative.

In a very few years after the land for Shelburne Farms had been purchased, estimated to have been over 4,000 acres with 6 miles of Lake Champlain frontage, the area within its boundaries was completely transformed. Dr. Webb carefully planned the landscape with the advice and inspiration of landscape architect and planner Frederick Law Olmstead, and Gifford Pinchot, who was the Superintendent of Forests at Biltmore (North Carolina, National Historic Landmark), the home of Dr. Webb's brother-in-law, George W. Vanderbilt. In 1898 Pinchot became head of the U.S. Forest Service. As many as 100,000 trees were planted annually at Shelburne Farms to line roads, hide sharp rock outcroppings, shelter fields, or establish orchards of different varieties of fruit trees or to develop forests for lumber. The old town roads were closed and replaced

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See Continuation Sheet 9-1.

UTM NOT VERIFIED

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY ⁺ 2000

QUADRANGLE NAME Willsboro, N.Y.-VT./Burlington, VT.

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:62500

UTM REFERENCES

A 1,8 6,4,0 3,0,0 4,9 1,8 6,0,0

B 1,8 6,4,1 1,0,0 4,9 1,8 6,0,0

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C 1,8 6,3,6 5,0,0 4,9 1,5 8,7,5

D 1,8 6,4,1 1,0,0 4,9 1,5 7,5,0

E 1,8 6,3,9 0,0,0 4,9 1,9 3,0,0

F

G

H

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

See continuation Sheet 10-1 and enclosed sketchmap.

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

STATE CODE COUNTY CODE

STATE CODE COUNTY CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

John P. Dumville, Architectural Historian

ORGANIZATION

Division for Historic Preservation

DATE

February 1979

STREET & NUMBER

Pavilion Office Building

TELEPHONE

802-828-3226

CITY OR TOWN

Montpelier

STATE

Vermont

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

William B. Timney

TITLE Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

2-6-90

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

Sally J. Oldb

DATE

8/11/90

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST: *Patrick Andrews*

DATE

8/5/80

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

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by carriage drives connecting the various operations on the estate. Redstone, from the estate's quarry, was crushed and laid on the newly constructed roads, which had a tile drainage system, and had been relocated providing scenic vistas. The result of all this planning was a well-groomed but natural environment of rolling hills and fields with changing views of the Lake, the Adirondack Mountains, the Green Mountains, or of the buildings on the estate at every turn.

A power plant on the lakeshore generated electricity and pumped water to a hilltop reservoir serving the entire farm through pipes that are still largely in use. Buildings had steam heat and were linked by telephone. These were all amenities not provided in the town of Shelburne for another generation.

The buildings, designed by architect Robert Henderson Robertson (1849-1919) were planned to blend with and enhance the landscape. Using mostly shingles, slate, and red limestone, Robertson drew plans for barns for sheep, pigs, and poultry, a creamery and dairy, a number of Swiss-style cottages for farm employees, 25,000 square feet of greenhouses (taken down in 1940), a boat house (since destroyed), the Farm Barn, Shelburne House, the Coach Barn and the Shelburne Railroad Station (moved to the Shelburne Museum in 1959).

Robert Henderson Robertson was a graduate of Rutgers College and upon graduation entered the architectural office of Henry Sims of Philadelphia. Later he moved to New York to work with Edward T. Potter and later, George Post. In 1871 he entered private practice which he continued until 1875 when he formed a partnership with William A. Potter who had been appointed Supervising Architect of the Treasury by President Grant; this partnership lasted until 1878.

Robertson had no one distinct style but changed with the different late-nineteenth century movements. The first known example of his work is the Philips Presbyterian Church (1871) on upper Madison Avenue in New York City, which is Victorian Gothic, as were most of his early buildings. His buildings during the 1880's and 1890's followed the Richardson Romanesque style with adaptations. Previous to this he briefly practiced the picturesque Queen Anne style, and, towards the end of his career, the Classical Revival style.

Robertson designed ecclesiastical structures (three churches in New York City, 1887-96); railroad stations, at least seven public and commercial buildings in New York; at least three rural residences and at least four town houses.

The documented Robert Henderson Robertson buildings are monumental and located primarily in New York City. William Seward Webb probably learned of Robertson through the work he had done for his father-in-law's (William H. Vanderbilt) railroad, the New York Central. Robertson also designed stations for Webb's St. Lawrence & Adirondack Railroad and hunting lodges on his game preserve in the Adirondacks. It was at one of

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these hunting lodges at which Robertson died unexpectedly in 1919.

Although Dr. and Mrs. Webb had a New York City apartment and a hunting lodge in the Adirondacks, they maintained their legal residence at Shelburne and tried to spend most of their time there. When they were in New York, fresh eggs, fruits, grapes, vegetables and flowers from the greenhouses at Shelburne Farm were sent to them daily, year-round, by train.

There were always various activities at Shelburne Farms. The Webbs and their seemingly endless stream of houseguests could choose between a ride on the 147 foot yacht, the ELFREIDA, or an afternoon swim from one of the many beautiful stone beaches on Lake Champlain. If one didn't want to brave the Lake, there was a marble swimming pool (filled in c. 1941) in the formal garden which was near the house on a bluff overlooking the Lake with the Adirondacks in the distance. There were miles of bridle paths, a nine-hole golf course (the third in America), and a grass tennis court (later made hard surface). In winter, when the lake froze, Dr. Webb would have a section of ice cleared of snow and lanterns placed around the edges for day or night skating. When the children were young a huge toboggan run was built out of wood, starting on the hill near the house, covering several hundred feet and ending below on the frozen lake.

Shelburne Farms is the most baronial estate in Vermont. The main buildings are architecturally magnificent and the land fertile and visually exciting. The estate was constructed and developed from 1886-1901 at which time Mrs. William Seward Webb's brothers were building their estates. Cornelius Vanderbilt's Breakers in Newport, Rhode Island (1893-5), William Vanderbilt's Marble House in Newport, Rhode Island (1888-92), Frederick Vanderbilt's Vanderbilt Mansion in Hyde Park, New York (1896-8), and George Vanderbilt's Biltmore in North Carolina (1890-5) are now open to the public and owned by governmental or non-profit organizations. Shelburne Farms, however, is still owned and the land profitability managed by Mrs. Webb's descendants. Private uses, besides residential (in modern, secluded unobtrusive houses) include a modern dairy operation and planned forestry management.

Derick V. Webb, grandson of Dr. and Mrs. William Seward Webb, owns and operates a large modern dairy at Shelburne Farms which consists of ± 2000 acres with 10,200 linear feet of frontage on Lake Champlain. His son manages the Shelburne Farms wood lots and was named in 1978 Vermont Tree Farmer of the Year.

In 1972 six great-grand children of Dr. and Mrs. William Seward Webb incorporated as Shelburne Farms Resources in an effort to preserve and put into more productive use the farm and its three major buildings. They have reintroduced sheep, bees, pigs, poultry, horses, beef cattle, and grain crops. The massive 110 room Shelburne House has been opened for concerts, workshops, seminars, and for conferences. The Coach Barn is utilized as an environmental center, classroom area, as a dormitory, and for

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boarding of riding and work horses. The large Farm Barn is an agricultural center where grains and hay are stored, farm machinery repaired, offices for Shelburne Farms Resources, and as a center for the producers of farm grown products such as a bakery and wool weavers.

Shelburne Farms was originally developed as a family estate and model stock farm. Today its use has been expanded and diversified and attempts are being made to preserve the estate while developing it as a center to illustrate and teach natural resource management and conservation.

The boundaries of the nominated property were chosen to recognize the influences of Dr. William Seward Webb, architect Robert Henderson Robertson, and landscape architects Frederick Law Olmstead and Gifford Pinchot on the estate.

The impact of Dr. Webb is clear; it was he who assembled the estate from many smaller farms, some of the buildings of which are still standing. Robertson, the architect of the original estate buildings; transformed the Webb's vision into tangible structures; and Olmstead and Pinchot, by unifying the grounds into a coherent (albeit massive) planned estate. A nomination which included only the major Robertson buildings would not do justice to the efforts of Olmstead and Pinchot.

The extensive acreage is also unified by historic use. Dr. Webb used the estate as a model stock farm and to experiment with modern farming practices and equipment. This use of the estate at its creation justifies the inclusion of the remaining 1685 acres in this nomination.

There have been several newer structures and buildings erected since the first period of Webb construction. These house the various members of the family unobtrusively throughout the grounds. While, due to their age, they cannot contribute to the historic character of the estate, they are discreetly secluded and do not detract from the magnificence of the Robertson-Olmstead-Pinchot works.

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CONTINUATION SHEET 9-1

ITEM NUMBER 9

PAGE 1

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Continuation sheet 10-1

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Page 1

The subject property is an approximately 2,000 acre farm estate situated easterly and westerly of Shelburne Point Road (Harbor Road) in Shelburne, Vermont. The property is bounded on the north by lands now or formerly owned by George Peterson and is bounded on the south by lands owned by J. Watson Webb Jr. and Samuel B. Webb.

The far eastern boundary is bounded by the LaPlatte River and the old Ticonderoga Road Bed. The western boundary is Lake Champlain and includes approximately 10,000 linear feet of lakeshore. The property is referred to as Shelburne Farms and is the land and buildings originally acquired by Derick V. Webb as devised under Article Seventh of the Last Will and Testament of Vanderbilt Webb, deceased, said Will being dated March 25, 1954, and recorded in Volume 36, pages 399-401, of the Land Records of the Town of Shelburne and Decree of Distribution of Chittenden District Probate Court in the estate of Vanderbilt Webb, dated October 10, 1960, and recorded in Volume 60, page 300, of said Land Records.

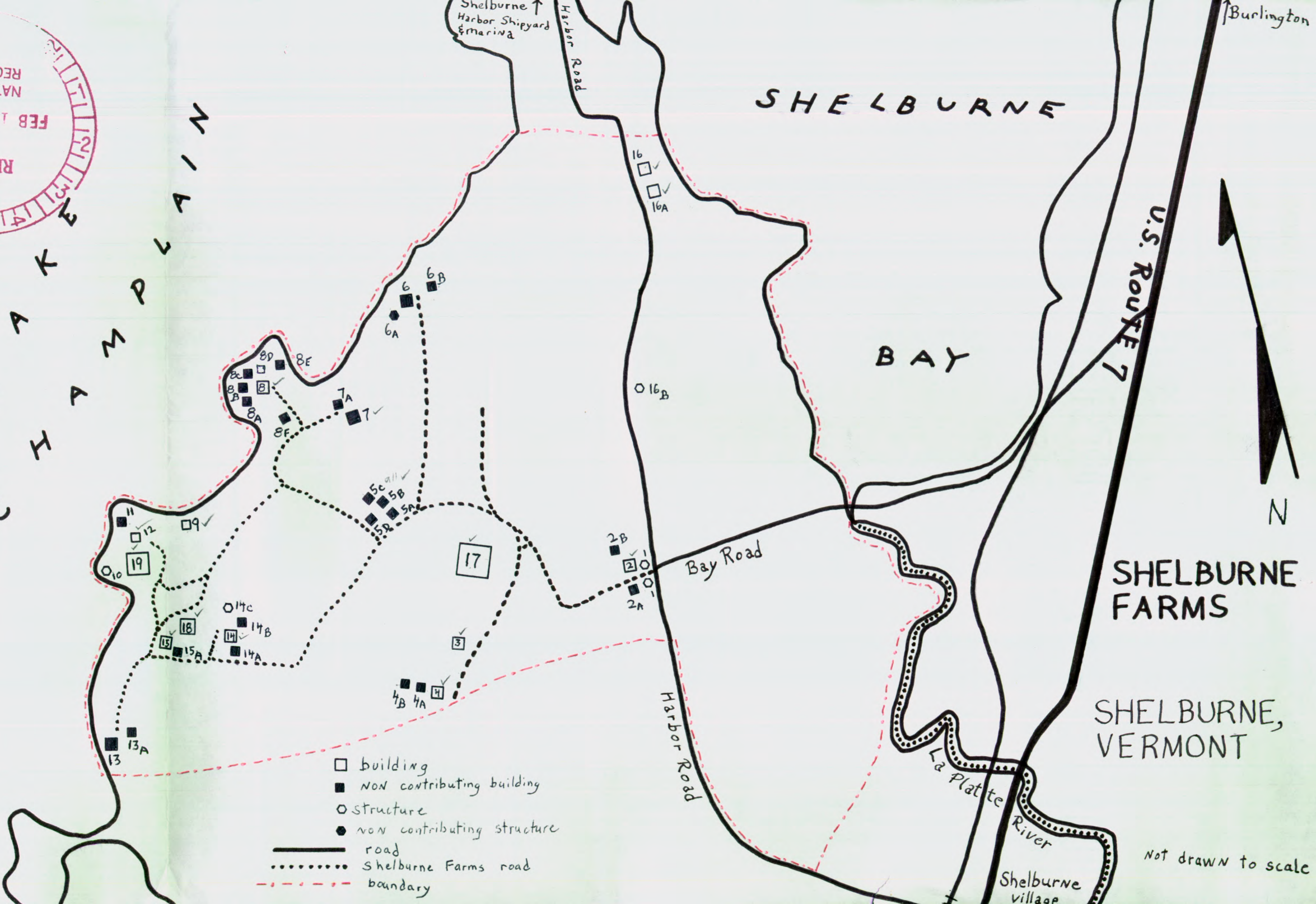
As mentioned in Item 8, the Farm Barn, Coach Barn, and Shelburne House are owned by Shelburne Farms Resources.

Reference is made to the enclosed sketchmap entitled, "Shelburne Farms, Shelburne, Vermont."

*Note - this site plan is supplanted by the site map dated 8/5/80.
P. Andrus*



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- building
- non contributing building
- structure
- non contributing structure
- road
- Shelburne Farms road
- - - - boundary

Not drawn to scale

SHELBURNE FARMS

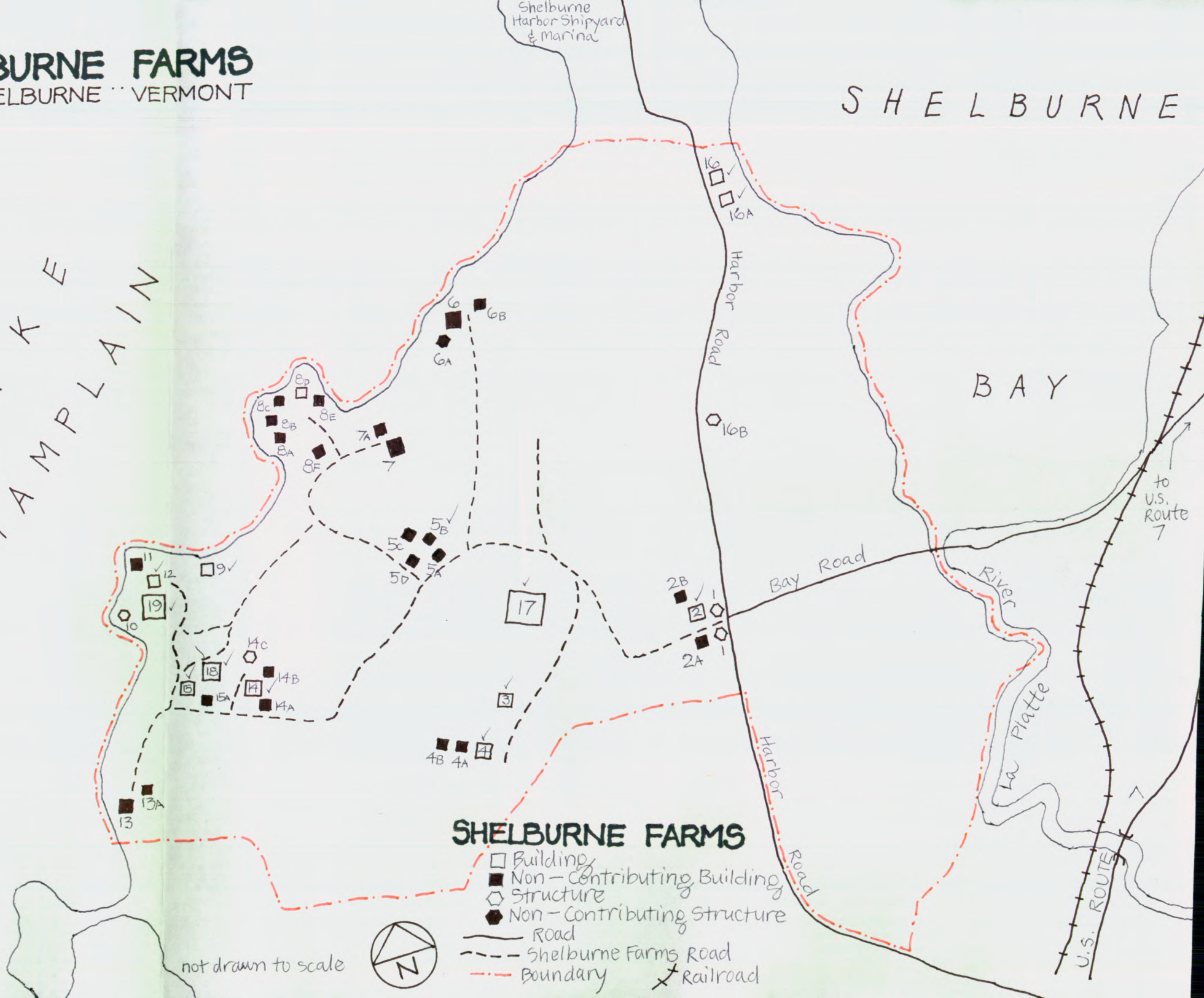
SHELBURNE VERMONT

Shelburne Harbor Shipyard & Marina

SHELBURNE

L A K E
C H A M P L A I N

B A Y



SHELBURNE FARMS

- Building
- Non-Contributing Building
- ◇ Structure
- ◆ Non-Contributing Structure
- Road
- - - Shelburne Farms Road
- · - · - Boundary
- ✕ Railroad

not drawn to scale



received N.R.
8/5/80

to U.S. Route 7

U.S. ROUTE 7

15A
16A

Harbor Road

16B

Bay Road

2B
2A

Harbor Road

River
La Platte

8D
8C
8B
8A
8E
8F

6
6A
6B

7A
7

5C
5B
5A
5D
5E

17

14C
14B
14A
15A
15B

4B
4A

11
12
19
10

13
13A