

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

Historic Resources of Asylum Hill  
Hartford, Connecticut

**CONTINUATION SHEET**      Accompanying  
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Nook Farm and Woodland Street District

Location:

Forest Street, west side, 73, 77  
Forest Street, east side, 54 thru 84

Woodland Street, west side, 19, 39, 49  
Woodland Street, east side, 10 thru 46

Gillett Street, west side, 5 thru 55-59, 81  
Gillett Street, east side, 28, 36, 86 thru 104

Farmington Avenue, north side, 320 thru 370  
Farmington Avenue, south side, 351

Niles Street, north side, 104, 106  
Niles Street, south side, 95

Property Owners:

Nook Farm-Woodland-  
Forest Street-

54	Hartford Institute of Accounting	Same
78	Moses J. and Raymond J. Neiditz	111 Pearl Street, Hartford
82-84	The Forest Corporation/M.J. Neiditz	111 Pearl Street, Hartford
73	Harriet Beecher Stowe House	same
77	Stowe-Day Foundation	same

Woodland Street-

10	Farmington Avenue Congregational Church, Inc.	same
19	Hartford Secretarial School	same
22	The Town and Country Club, Inc.	same
30	Frank Beckerman and Harry Gampel	same
36	Investment Research Associates	62 LaSalle Road, West Hartford, CT
38	Morton A. Blumenthal	same
39	Univ. of Connecticut/State of Connecticut	same
40	Society for Savings	31 Pratt Street, Hartford, CT
44	Connecticut Bank and Trust	1 Constitution Plaza, Hartford
46	Grace Lutheran Church	same
49	Allan Schaefer and Harry A. Gampel	750 Main Street, Hartford, CT

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Gillett Street-

- 5-7 Kennedy Income Properties Series 7/1159 Poquonnock Ave., Groton CT
- 9-17 Mary Ann Mitchell 9 Gillett Street, Hartford
- 25-27 Irene M. Goldberg 134 Ferncliff Drive, West Htfd.
- 28 James and Margaret Carini 797 Mott Hill Rd., Glastonbury
- NC 31 ~~Larry Ross~~ 47 W. Ridge Rd., West Hartford
- 36 Calvin T. Hughes same
- 51 Bernard W. Lapuk and Richard S./ Shlomborg 69 Gillett Street, Hartford
- 57 Investment Research Associates 62 LaSalle Rd., W. Hartford
- 86 Calvin Mass 11 Osage Road, W. Hartford
- 90 Beatrice Cook/Hartford National Bank 777 Main St., Hartford
- 104 Timothy J. Curran 106 Gillett St., Hartford
- 81 Margaret Rubino 1088 No. Main St., W. Hartford

Farmington Avenue-

- 320 John A. Bergren 193 Elmfield St., W. Hartford
- 334-344 Kennedy Income Properties Series 7/1159 Poquonnock Ave., Groton CT
- 351 Mark Twain Memorial same
- 360 Immanuel Congregational Church Inc 10 Woodland Street, Hartford
- 350 " " " " " " " "

Niles Street-

- 104 Marjorie K. Clifford same
- 106 Eugene M. Clifford 104 Niles Street, Hartford
- 95 Bernard W. Lapuk and Richard Shlomborg 69 Gillett Street, Hartford

370 Farmington Avenue-

The Farmington Avenue Congregational Church Inc. 10 Woodland St., Hartford

Forest Street (con't.)-

- 60 Hartford Institute of Accounting 54 Forest Street, Hartford
- 66 Hartford Institute of Accounting 54 Forest Street, Hartford
- 70 Boy Scouts Of America/Long River Council same
- 74 Girl Scout Connecticut Valley Council same

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Description:

The Nook Farm and Woodland Street District had a concentration of the finest houses to be built in Asylum Hill during the second half of the 19th century. Many of them have been replaced by apartment houses and a high school. A number of them remain in place, along with some of the less pretentious houses of Nook Farm and Gillett Street that are important to the urban ambience of the Asylum Hill area.

Woodland and Gillett streets, north of Farmington Avenue, are combined with part of Nook Farm, south of Farmington Avenue, to form the district. The epitome of Nook Farm was the west side of Forest Street. Here the spacious grounds of the houses stretched down to the north branch of the Park River. A similar situation prevailed one block west, north of Farmington Avenue, where the west side of Woodland Street provided the same opportunity for houses with deep back yards reaching to the river. Woodland Street, like Forest Street, was built up with large, well-designed homes, while adjoining Gillett Street was lined with smaller but still upper-middle class residences.

The majority of the distinguished houses along Forest Street have been demolished in favor of apartment houses on the east side and in favor of a high school on the west side. Of the houses that remain, that of John Hooker, co-developer of Nook Farm, is now cut off and surrounded by apartment buildings, and is inventoried separately. At the southwest corner of Forest Street and Farmington Avenue, however, a cluster of three houses is well maintained. These three houses are the second Harriet Beecher Stowe House (1873) at 73 Forest Street, the Day-Chamberlin House (1884), which quarters The Stowe-Day Memorial Library, at 77 Forest Street, and the Mark Twain Memorial (1874), as Samuel Clemens's house is known, at 351 Farmington Avenue. The Stowe and Day-Chamberlin houses are listed in the National Register of Historic Places (October 6, 1970, and April 16, 1971). The Mark Twain Memorial is a National Historic Landmark (October 15, 1966).

Across the way at 66 Forest Street, the Charles B. Smith House of 1870, built of brick and brownstone, has a pronounced asymmetry, structural polychromy, and heavy jagged silhouette that make it one of the few true High Victorian Gothic houses in Hartford.

The setting of the houses on Forest Street was semi-rural, with curved drives leading through the trees, spacious grounds that, on the west side of the street, led down to the river, and an overall picturesque effect.

Across Farmington Avenue from Samuel Clemens's house are five structures on land once owned by the Goodwins, and sold by them at the end of the century. The lot on the northeast corner of Woodland Street and Farmington Avenue, 370 Farmington Avenue, was sold to the Pearl Street Congregational Church, then located downtown, who in 1899 proceeded to put up the present edifice, now called Immanuel Congregational Church, in the Beaux Arts

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idiom with Roman dome, adding yet another style to the melting pot of styles on Asylum Hill. At about the same time, the Goodwins sold the land next door east of the church on Farmington Avenue to two friends, Mrs. Storrs and Mrs. Chapin, who erected comfortable houses, one in brick, the other frame, in similar mass and with similar elaborate interiors filled with free-standing Doric columns, fluted pilasters, ceiling rosettes, and Adamesque fireplace surrounds.

Behind the church at 22 Woodland Street is the Lyman House of 1895, listed in the National Register of Historic Places (October 31, 1975), and across from it at 19 Woodland Street is the Talcott House. The Talcott House has timbered porches and porte cochere and carved cherry panelling on the interior, sympathetic to its near neighbor, the Jacobus House, at 39 Woodland Street. The Jacobus House (1908) was designed in the Tudor Revival style with brick first story and half-timbering above. Three oriel windows on the second floor lead up to gables and a tile roof. The house has large windows with small panes, and tall molded chimneys. Further north on the same side of the street is the Perkins-Clark House, a masonry Gothic villa, which the State Historic Preservation Officer has nominated to the National Register of Historic Places.

At the northwest corner of Farmington Avenue and Gillett Street, Caleb M. Holbrook built a large, Second Empire house at the end of the Civil War. Now replaced by apartment houses, its brick carriage house does remain at 15 Gillett Street. It has high mansard roof under pyramidal tower with round-headed windows in the dormers. First floor windows and doors have carved brownstone lintels. The slates that cover the mansard roof are exposed to the weather in hexagonal shapes. The carriage house is free of alterations.

Substantial early 20th century apartment houses occupy both the northwest and northeast corners of Gillett Street and Farmington Avenue. The one on the northeast corner is four stories high, built of buff-colored brick in a U shape. The design of the top part of the building suggests the Spanish Colonial Revival Style by its tall, round-headed windows and iron balconies, and hip roof and truncated dormers covered with round red tiles.

Eleven other apartment houses take up most of the block of Gillett Street running to Niles Street, but six typical Asylum Hill single-family houses also remain. Chief among them is the Trask House at 55-59 Gillett Street (1895). It has two stories and attic under high hip roof with many gables, executed in a combination of Richardsonian Romanesque and Queen Anne styles. Rock-faced brownstone foundations support the brick first story and shingled second story. A vast Richardsonian arch defines the recessed entranceway at the right, balanced on the left by a bay window. Over the entranceway is another bay at the second story, and at attic level a shingled gable with elliptical window. Crowning the whole is a slate roof with tall molded chimneys of different shapes. Three more houses of this general character are still located in the next block, on the east side of Gillett Street between Niles Street and Farmington Avenue.

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Significance:

In 1853 John Hooker and Francis Gillette bought the Imlay farm, which occupied most of the land from Imlay Street west to the north branch of the Park River and from Farmington Avenue south to the Park River, for the purpose of a real estate development. There they built their own houses and encouraged their friends to join them. A literary colony grew up that included the Hookers (Mrs. Hooker was Isabella Beecher, the feminist), the Gillettes (their son, Will, was the famous actor of the part of Sherlock Holmes), Charles Dudley Warner, George Warner, General Joseph Hawley, Harriet Beecher Stowe, and Samuel Clemens. A later arrival was the Hepburn family, whose daughter became the actress, Katherine Hepburn.

The development of Nook Farm was not a financial success for John Hooker and Francis Gillette. In fact, their inability to satisfy the mortgage holder, Connecticut Mutual Life Insurance Co., led to the construction in 1895 of the Queen Anne frame house still in place at 36 Forest Street. What happened was that Connecticut Mutual required a lot 90 x 180 feet, small by Nook Farm standards, to be deeded to them in lieu of cash payment. The Connecticut Mutual re-sold the land to A. Lyman Williston, who erected the house standing today.

But the lack of financial success was more than made up by the great number of famous names, literary and architectural, that were associated with Nook Farm. Harriet Beecher Stowe's Uncle Tom's Cabin affected the course of history. Mark Twain's books about Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn, among others, are classics. Charles Dudley Warner was an editor and widely read author. Isabella Beecher Hooker gained national fame as a feminist leader. General Joseph R. Hawley was publisher of the Courant, a Civil War hero, chairman of the 1876 Philadelphia Centennial Exposition, and United States Senator. Will Gillette received wide popular and critical acclaim for his dramatic portrayal of Sherlock Holmes. All these people lived on one block at the same time.

Their houses were designed by the leading architects of the day. Octavius Jordan drew the plans for the first Harriet Beecher Stowe House (demolished) near the Park River, for the John and Isabella Beecher Hooker House, and for the Perkins-Clark House. Edward Tuckerman Potter (1831-1904) designed the Charles Dudley Warner House (demolished) and the Mark Twain Memorial, Francis H. Kimball (1845-1919) who was Burges' supervising architect for Trinity College, the Day-Chamberlin House. The Day-Chamberlin House was featured in a Paris publication of 1886, L'Architecture Americaine, said by its publishers to show the best of designs from the United States. Ernest Flagg (1857-1947) was responsible for the Immanuel Congregational Church and Mrs. Chapin's home nearby, while Isaac A. Allen, Jr., (1859-1953) drew plans for Mrs. Storrs's house in between them. Melvin P. Hapgood (1859-1899) and Edward T. Hapgood (1866-1915) were the architects for the Lyman

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House and A. W. Scoville the contractor, and William C. Brocklesby (1848-1910) designed the Jacobus House.

Gillett Street, laid out in 1865, was named after Francis Gillette and initially spelled the same way, although in later years the final e has been dropped. Putting through the street in that year coincided with the construction of the corner house by Caleb M. Holbrook, and permitted access to his Second Empire carriage house, still standing. His daughter, Grace Holbrook, married Henry White, the Hartford painter.

The concentration of artistic, literary, and architectural talent in the district was exceptional.

Geographical Data:

Acreage of nominated property: 41

Quadrangle name: Hartford North

UTM references:

- A. 18/691780/4626350
- B. 18/691780/4626230
- C. 18/691740/4626080
- D. 18/691860/4626080
- E. 18/690040/4626290
- F. 18/690240/4626440
- G. 18/690190/4626600
- H. 18/691980/4626720
- I. 18/691720/4626770

Verbal Boundary Description: Starting from the northeast corner of 104 Gillett Street, the line runs south along the rear borders of properties fronting on Gillett Street to the southeast corner of 86 Gillett Street, west along its south border to Gillett Street, south along Gillett Street to Niles Street, west along Niles Street to the northwest corner of 69 Gillett Street, south and east along its borders to Gillett Street, south along Gillett Street to the northwest corner of 36 Gillett Street, east, south, and west along its borders to Gillett Street, south along Gillett Street to the northwest corner of 28 Gillett Street, east, south, and west along its borders to Gillett Street, south along Gillett Street to the northwest corner of 320 Farmington Avenue, east and south along its borders to Farmington Avenue,

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east along Farmington Avenue to the northeast corner of 84 Forest Street, south along rear borders of properties fronting on Forest Street to the north border of 54 Forest Street, east, south, and west along its borders to Forest Street, north along Forest Street to the southeast corner of 73 Forest Street, west along its south border and south, west, and north along the borders of 77 Forest Street and 351 Farmington Avenue to Farmington Avenue, west along Farmington Avenue to Woodland Street, north along Woodland Street to the southeast corner of 19 Woodland Street, west, north, and east along its borders to Woodland Street, north along Woodland Street to the southeast corner of 39 Woodland Street, west, north, and east along its borders and the borders of 49 Woodland Street to Woodland Street, south along Woodland Street to Niles Street, east along Niles Street to the southwest corner of 106 Niles Street, north along its west border to its northwest corner, east along the north borders of 106 and 104 Niles Street and 81 Gillett Street to Gillett Street, north along Gillett Street to the northwest corner of 104 Gillett Street, and east along its north border to the point of beginning.