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United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

APR 20 1989

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

NATIONAL REGISTER

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 Boright, Sheldon, House
other names/site number Grey Gables; The House of Gables

2. Location

street & number 122 River Street
city, town Richford
state Vermont code VT county Franklin code 011 zip code 05476

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: private (checked)
Category of Property: building(s) (checked)
Number of Resources within Property: Contributing 1, Noncontributing 0, Total 1

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 (checked) does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.
Signature of certifying official: [Signature], SHPO
Date: April 15, 1989
State or Federal agency and bureau: VERMONT

In my opinion, the property meets (checked) 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:
[checked] entered in the National Register.
[] 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: [Signature]
Date of Action: 6-2-89

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic; Single Dwelling

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Work in Progress

Domestic; Hotel

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Queen Anne/Eastlake

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation granite

walls weatherboard

roof slate

other wood

iron

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Sheldon Boright House is a large, 2½ story, assymetrical, wood frame Queen Anne style residence, situated on its original 1.16 acre village lot on River Street in Richford, Vermont. Built between 1890-92, this rather elaborate and imposing balloon-framed building (Photo #1) is a testament to late 19th century architectural design and craftsmanship, its plan and detailing taken directly from Palliser's American Cottage Homes (1878), a then-popular architectural pattern book. The house (Photo #2) features a center, 2-staged tower which protrudes up above the rather massive, multi-gabled slate roof, whose many ridges are accentuated with decorated iron cresting. The clapboard walls of the building are broken up visually by a variety of architectural ornament, including attenuated corner pilasters, diagonal boarding, stained glass window sash with lavish moldings, and bracketed eaves and gable pediments. A one story wrap-around porch, replete with bulbous turned posts, stickwork bracing, and jig-sawn latticework, adorns the main facade and side elevation of the house, terminating in a porte-cochère which intersects the main front drive. The main block of the house is accompanied by a contemporaneous, 2½ story, rear service ell (Photo #3) composed and decorated in a similar manner, yet with more reserve, than the main house section. The well-preserved and recently restored exterior, coupled with a largely intact interior having a wealth of period detailing and original finishes, give the house an integrity of design rarely found in this day and age. Further enhanced by its original, 1.16 acre river view setting, with macadam drive and spacious front and side lawns, the Boright House is truly a valuable late 19th century architectural resource for both the Town of Richford and the State of Vermont.

(See Continuation Sheets #7-1 to 7-4)

 See continuation sheet

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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 1

The Sheldon Boright House is a 2½ story, clapboard-sided, balloon-framed Queen Anne style building with an overtly assymmetrical plan (Photo #2) featuring three prominent projecting roof gables which radiate out from a main roof punctuated by a central, two-staged tower structure. This large structure, set on a high granite foundation, is sheathed with narrow clapboards, having narrow, grooved board sheathing in all roof gable peaks. The multi-faceted main roof, consisting of a combination of projecting wall and roof gables and a central two-staged tower, is clad with grey slate and has a contrasting band of red slate in a floral motif as an accent. The many roof ridges are further accentuated by decorative cast iron cresting. A massive, brick fireplace chimney (Photo #4), sculpted in the Queen Anne manner, runs up the exterior of the building's east elevation, threading on up through the wide roof eaves to terminate in a corbelled cap.

Three main roof gables, two of which correspond to projecting, 2½ story bays (W, SW), punctuate the main roof. One of these bays is rectangular in form and protrudes at an angle from the main wall to the left of the main entrance. The other bay, polygonal in form, projects from the west wall of the house, just beyond the end of the ground level porch and porte-cochère. The last of the three main roof gables rises from the main roof to the right of the main entrance, flush with the main south wall of the house. All main gable roof sections, projecting and flush, are visually delineated with narrow corner pilasters which rise from ground level to the gable pediments, which are outlined with grooved boarding and brackets. Gable eaves, likewise, are adorned with grooved boarding and paired brackets and have prominent, projecting grooved board soffits. Smaller roof gables repeat the grooved board soffits and frieze but without brackets. (See Photos #1-4 for location of bays and architectural detailing.)

The central, two-staged view tower (Photos #2 and 5) rises up above the soaring roof gables, having a shed-roofed porch with incised turned posts and stick-and-spindle work detailing in valances and railings at first-stage level. The porch is reached by a pair of doors with glass in their top halves, set into a molded segmental-arched surround. The second stage of the tower features four intersecting gablets with round-arched stained glass sash set into Gothic-arched surrounds. Each gablet roof has iron cresting, as on the rest of the main roof ridges.

The decorative iron cresting and slatework of the main roof are repeated on the roofs of a one story wrap-around porch and porte-cochère on the main front (south) and side (west) elevations of the house. The slates, in this case, are grey with bands of alternating red and grey diamond-shaped slates running through the center. The porch is detailed with heavy turned posts and turned balluster railings and has arched stick-work bracing between each post (Photo #6). The porch apron is equally adorned with jig-sawn architectural elements, including a bracketed frieze and cut-out lattice screen. The porch roof rises to an iron-crested gable (Photo #7) with wide, beaded board soffits and a gently arched ceiling, in front of the building's main entrance. This sheltered entrance, reached by an original granite stoop, is composed of a pair of tall wooden doors with clouded glass top halves, having original double, wooden screen doors for

(Continued on Continuation Sheet #7-2)

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protection from the elements. The attached porte-cochère (Photo #8), projecting from the southwest corner of the porch, displays the same decorative elements, with its posts foreshortened and resting upon square posts with molded caps having unadorned granite footings. A small, north-facing wooden stoop accesses the main porch and front entry from under the overhanging porte-cochère roof.

Fenestration throughout the house is as whimsically placed and decorated as the main roof gables and projecting bays and appears in a variety of sizes, shapes, groupings and patterning of glass panes. For example, singular, small pointed sash punctuate the gable peaks of the three main roof sections (see Photo #2), while small, round-headed windows set into Gothic-arched surrounds are set into the four tower gablets (see Photo #5). All have stained glass panes of different shapes and sizes. A playful "stepped" sash of stained glass (Photo #6) indicates the location of the interior tower staircase. Larger, single and triple sash are present at the second story level in the projecting gabled bays and flush walls (see Photo #2). These sash, set into molded, segmental arched surrounds with applied floral swags, have single-paned bottom sash and stained glass top sash with central diamond-shaped panes of clear glass (Photo #9). At the first story level, singular sash with central diamond-paned and stained glass in their top halves are complimented by large picture windows (facing SE and SW on the main front facade) having leaded glass transoms and narrow side sash with stained glass top panes.

Secondary entrances to the house are reached from the east and west elevations of a contemporaneous, rear, 2½ story service ell (Photo #3) which exhibits similar, though more restrained, decorative detailing and massing as the main block of the house. The ell's main, east-west gable roof is punctuated by a north-facing gable, all clad with grey slate, yet without iron cresting on the ridges. Eaves project with a grooved board soffit, bracketed on gable ends. Walls are clad with narrow clapboards. Sash are 1/1 with molded, segmental arched surrounds. An upside-down "Palladian window motif" sash with a regular 1/1 central sash and two, smaller, flanking 1/1 sash lights the rear kitchen area on the north wall. A one story, shed-roofed entry porch lies on the ell's principal west elevation, sheltering a central entrance to the kitchen. The porch, recently screened in, retains its original chamfered posts, grooved board soffit and spindle screen valances on either end between the post and wall. The porch has a short, vertical grooved board ballustrade and novelty siding for an apron sheathing. It is reached by a set of four granite steps. A modern metal gutter has been recently added to its steeply-sloping eave. A bracketed door hood, original to the house, appears on the east elevation of the ell at first story level, indicating the presence, at one time, of a ground level entrance. The entry has since been converted to a window, which lights an interior pantry area.

Attached to the back of this service ell by means of a short, enclosed shed-roofed passage, is a one story, shed-roofed one-car garage dating from the mid-1920s. The garage is clad with narrow clapboards and retains its original pair of hinged double doors with four glass panes above and two, narrow wooden panels below. An original carriage barn, located behind and to the west of the house, burned back in the 1950s.

(Continued on Continuation Sheet #7-3)

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The interior of the Boright House, replete with original architectural detail and historic finishes, retains as much integrity as its recently-restored exterior. The original plan of the 19-room residence -- consisting of a full basement, first floor with formal, central stairhall, library, parlor, dining room, rear kitchen and pantry, second floor with a central hallway accessing seven bedrooms, three bathrooms, a rear stairway and the third floor space which has four rooms and the stairway leading up to the two-staged roof tower -- has been largely retained as well, despite recent changes in the building's use from a single family residence to nursing home to, at present, a bed-and-breakfast. (See attached floor plans showing existing spaces.) The only compromise to the original plan has been the insertion of two half-baths into closet spaces (marked on the second story floor plan attached) in the two, large front bedrooms on the second floor and the finishing off of previously unfinished attic space on the third floor for private use by the building's present owners. The rear kitchen area has also been slightly modernized (c.1960) through the addition of new appliances and a central work island.

Architectural elements throughout the house -- all characteristically Eastlake-Queen Anne in appearance -- date from the building's c.1892 date of construction and retain original, dark varnish finishes. They include 17" high molded baseboards, molded chair- and picture-rails, wainscotting, and elaborate door and window architraves (Photo #10) with reeded pilasters rising to rectangular and segmental arched molded entablatures. Architraves surrounding tall, double pocket doors between the central front hall and library/west parlor on the first floor of the house are similarly treated but have additional spindle screen valances set within the casings (Photo #11). Door and window casings on the rear of the second floor and on the third floor are simpler in design, featuring reeded architraves with patera blocks at the corners or simple molded cornices. Doors throughout the house are five-paneled with dark varnish and brass knobs and decorative hinges of the period. Many of the window sash have varnished, interior wooden shutters (louvered.) Floors are hardwood and are also treated with dark varnish/stain. The floor in the east library has been laid down in a geometric pattern. A set of tall, double wooden doors with clouded, beveled-edge glass panes and two molded bottom panels, set into a reeded architrave with molded cornice (Photo #12), accesses a small vestibule leading into the main stairhall from the front entrance. The interior of this shallow vestibule has plaster walls and a molded wooden frame in its ceiling which may have originally held a pane of clouded or etched glass but is now filled with insulation, awaiting new glass.

Particularly notable interior features of this Queen Anne building include a formal front hall area (Photo #13) with a sweeping mahogany and walnut staircase, having a carved newel post and turned balluster railing (Photo #14), an original brick fireplace with mirrored mantel back and mantel surround with turned posts and brackets in the library (Photo #15), and a similarly decorated bedroom fireplace having ceramic tiles facing the brick hearth (Photo #16). The surround on this latter-mentioned fireplace has narrow, fluted columns with Ionic capitals visually supporting a paneled

(Continued on Continuation Sheet #7-4)

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frieze with central floral motif (applied) decoration. The Ionic column motif is repeated on the mantel back above, but as pilasters instead of full-blown columns.

Wall and ceiling finishes throughout the house are largely original plaster over dimensioned lathe (Photos #17 and 18), though in some places sheetrock has been introduced without harming the original woodwork (i.e. bathrooms and kitchen.) In the first floor dining room original stencilled borders (Photo #19) have survived intact under subsequent layers of wallpaper. These designs have been copied onto mylar and will be restored to their original appearance. Original cast iron radiators survive throughout the house, though the old boiler in the basement has been replaced by a modern, oil-fired hot water furnace. Some original lighting survives in the house, particularly on the second floor (hall and bedrooms.) In other parts of the house, lighting and wiring have been replaced by more modern service and fixtures, though floor lamps are still used in the main front parlor, library and dining room. Plumbing has also been somewhat updated, though an original clawfoot tub and pedestal sink remain in the large, second floor bathroom. Old late-nineteenth century corner sinks and modern toilets have been used in the new half-baths on the second floor and in the third floor bathroom, added for the owners' private use. Yet, aside from these few "modern" changes which were needed to operate a bed-and-breakfast establishment, the house's interior remains strikingly intact and highly representative of its c.1892 date of construction and design.

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

1890-92

Significant Dates

1890-92

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Palliser's American Cottage Homes (1878)
M.E. Dodge

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

The Sheldon Boright House -- also known by the name "Grey Gables" -- is architecturally significant to the State of Vermont as a well-preserved example of late nineteenth century Queen Anne-Eastlake design, lauded by many as the finest example in the entire state. Built between 1890-92 for a prosperous Richford entrepreneur, Sheldon R. Boright, the stately balloon-framed mansion exhibits a typical multi-gabled, assymmetrical design, complete with ornate exterior woodwork, a wrap-around porch and porte-cochere, projecting bays, stained glass window sash, and variegated wall and roof sheathing materials, typical of the Queen Anne style. The interior, as well, is also largely intact, displaying such period detail as found in the carved walnut and mahogany staircases, library and second floor bedroom fireplaces, an original stencilled border in the first floor dining room, and original, dark varnished door and window architraves which are composed of reeded pilasters rising up to molded cornices. The rather elaborate design and decorative detailing of the house was taken from a popular late-nineteenth century architectural pattern book entitled Palliser's American Cottage Homes (1878) and then adapted, by Richford builder M.E. Dodge, to both suit the needs of the Borights and to make use of locally-available materials. The original house design, found on the cover of Palliser's 1878 pattern book (Photo #20), was actually used by George Palliser, himself, in the construction of his home in Seaside Park, a suburb of Bridgeport, Connecticut on Long Island Sound. This building, however, is no longer standing, leaving the Boright House as perhaps the only surviving example of its kind in the country, and, certainly, the only one of its kind in the State of Vermont. Complete on its spacious, well-manicured, 1.16 acre lot, with unfettered views to the lazily flowing Missisquoi River across the road to the south, the Boright House has been preserved intact in its original setting and in its original form by present owners, Robert and Geraldine Atherton, who plan to open the building to the public in its new use as a bed-and-breakfast establishment.

(Continued on Continuation Sheet #8-1_

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet #9-1

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 1.16 acres

UTM References

A 18 681291410 4981531810
 Zone Easting Northing

C _____

B _____
 Zone Easting Northing

D _____

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property occupies its original village lot on River Street and is roughly 1.16 acres in size as indicated in a property deed dated June 16, 1915 (Box 27, Page 91, 1915) and a property survey made for the current owners, Robert and Geraldine Atherton (October 10, 1986.) The lot was sold to Sheldon Boright by Chapman & Eliza Smith on November 11, 1869 (Book 12, Pages 58-59) indicating its existence as a village lot prior to Mr. Boright's purchase.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The nominated property occupies its original village lot, as represented in a 1986 survey map (#8622 - Harvey W. Chaffee, Registered Land Surveyor) recorded in Book 61, Pages 8-9, Richford Land Records and is roughly 214' by 236' in size.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Lauren H. Murphy date February 25, 1989
 organization Historic Preservation Consultant telephone (802) 527-0463
 street & number 21 Farrar Street state Vermont zip code 05478
 city or town St. Albans

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Boright adapted the design of the house, as mentioned previously, from architectural plans published in Palliser's American Cottage Homes of 1878, a mass-produced builder's guide which was then distributed through both stores and mail order. In this manner, Boright and his builder, M.E. Dodge of Richford, had access to one of the more elaborate and fashionable residential designs of the late 19th century. The popularity of these pattern book designs in their time is exemplified in the design and construction of the Boright House, which was built 12 years after Palliser's American Cottage Homes was available in print to the public. The Boright House -- "Grey Gables" -- was actually one of the Palliser firm's more imposing and imaginative designs. George Palliser, himself, used this particular design to build his own home at Seaside Park, a then-fashionable suburb of Bridgeport, Connecticut on the shores of Long Island Sound. This house is no longer standing, which gives the Boright House additional importance for its place in the evolution of architectural pattern book designs.

Using largely local materials such as Vermont red and grey slate, wooden clapboards and jig-sawn, incised wooden decorative elements, doors and sash from a nearby mill-working factory on the Missisquoi River, locally-quarried granite and metal cresting from a local ironworks (Richford Foundry, Eastern Avenue, est.1890), builder M.E. Dodge was able to adapt Palliser's design and construct this rather imposing, balloon-framed mansion over a period of 2½ years at a cost of \$20,000. The rather remarkable feat, which produced such a high-calibre residence in a small, rural Vermont town such as Richford, is a testament to the success of pattern books published and distributed by the Palliser firm (and others), who were hopeful of "raising the level of popular taste and practical understanding of design,"¹ as well as making a decent living.

Sheldon Boright, the original owner of "Grey Gables", moved from Quebec, Canada to the small border town of Richford, Vermont in 1869, where he quickly established a modest drygoods store. As the town grew, fueled by the milling and manufacturing activity built up along the nearby Missisquoi River, which ran through the middle of the village, and the extension of the Vermont Central Railroad to Richford from the railhead in nearby St. Albans, Boright's business expanded and prospered. By the late 1880s he owned a number of outlying farms and a creamery, in addition to his initial business. He also represented the Standard Oil Company in the area, as well as serving as a board member of the Richford Savings Bank. Perhaps he built this showplace, which was (and still is) unquestionably the largest and grandest house in town, to show off his accumulated wealth and business success. The house certainly attracted the town residents' attention as evidenced by a report in the Richford Journal on September 11, 1890 which stated that the house "...is looming up well and bids fair to being the finest residence in the village." Boright lived in this grand village home until his death in 1909, after which time his son assumed ownership. The house remained in the Boright family until 1947, after which time it served as a private residence, a nursing home and, presently, as a bed-and-breakfast establishment.

The house has been recently restored by the present owners, Robert and Geraldine Atherton, who plan to preserve the building's exterior and interior intact by using

(Continued on Continuation Sheet #8-2)

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it for a bed-and-breakfast establishment. Located on its original, spacious 1.16 acre lot, with unobstructed views to the nearby Missisquoi River across River Street, the old residence continues to appear very much like it must have back in the early 1890s when it was constructed, still the talk of Richford village.

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PROPERTY OWNER:

Robert and Geraldine Atherton
122 River Street
Richford, Vermont 05476

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PHOTOGRAPH LABELS

PHOTOGRAPHS

This information is the same for all photographs:

The Sheldon Boright House/Grey Gables
Richford, Vermont
Credit: Francis Brawley Foster
Date: July 1987
Negative filed at the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation

Photograph #1

Description: View looking northwest at the south (facade) elevation of the house.

Photograph #2

Description: View looking east-northeast at the west and south elevations of the house and the west elevation of the rear service ell (far left of photo.)

Photograph #3

Description: View looking south at the north and west elevations of the rear service ell with attached garage (left foreground.)

Photograph #4

Description: View looking west at the corbelled chimney, eaves treatment, and gable end detailing on the house's east elevation.

Photograph #5

Description: View of the central tower looking north-northeast. Note the stepped window at the right side of the tower.

Photograph #6

Description: View looking northeast at the front porch with stick-work detailing and decorative lattice screen (south elevation.)

Photograph #7

Description: View looking northwest at the front porch entry treatment and granite stoop (south elevation.)

Photograph #8

Description: View looking south at the porte-cochere on the west elevation of the house.

Photograph #9

Description: View looking southwest at the second story window sash.

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Photograph #10

Description: Door architrave leading from the dining room to the front hall, looking south.

Photograph #11

Description: Spindle valances in doorways of the front parlor and library on the first floor (off the central stairhall.)

Photograph #12

Description: Front door (interior) detail, looking south from front hall.

Photograph #13

Description: Front stairhall, first floor, with main staircase, looking north-northeast.

Photograph #14

Description: Main staircase, front hall, looking northeast.

Photograph #15

Description: Library fireplace, looking east-northeast.

Photograph #16

Description: East front bedroom fireplace, looking east-northeast, second floor.

Photograph #17

Description: Wall and decorative trim treatments, rear hallway, second floor, looking north-northeast.

Photograph #18

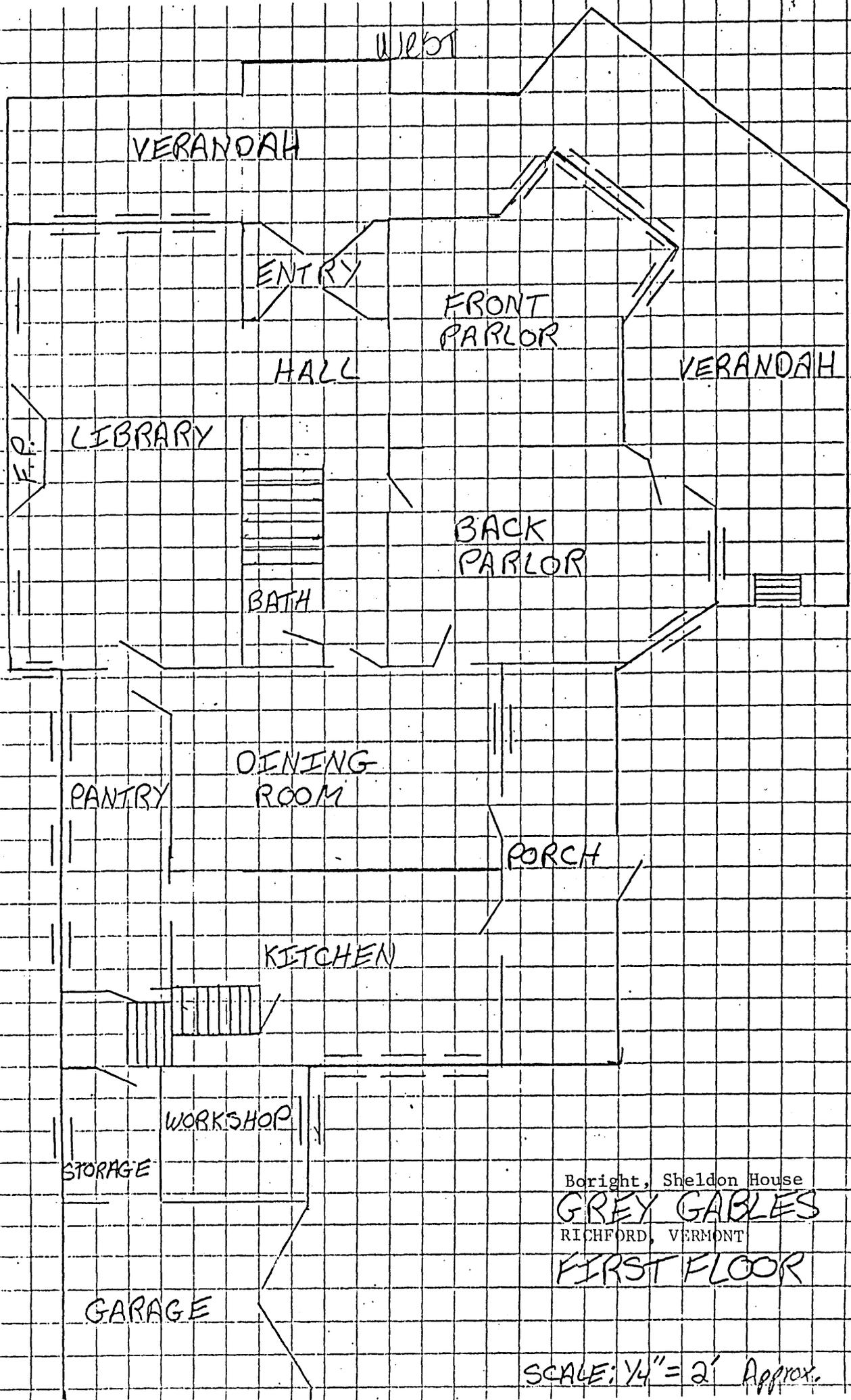
Description: Wall treatment, finished attic bedroom, looking southwest.

Photograph #19

Description: Stencilled frieze and border, north wall, dining room, first floor of the house.

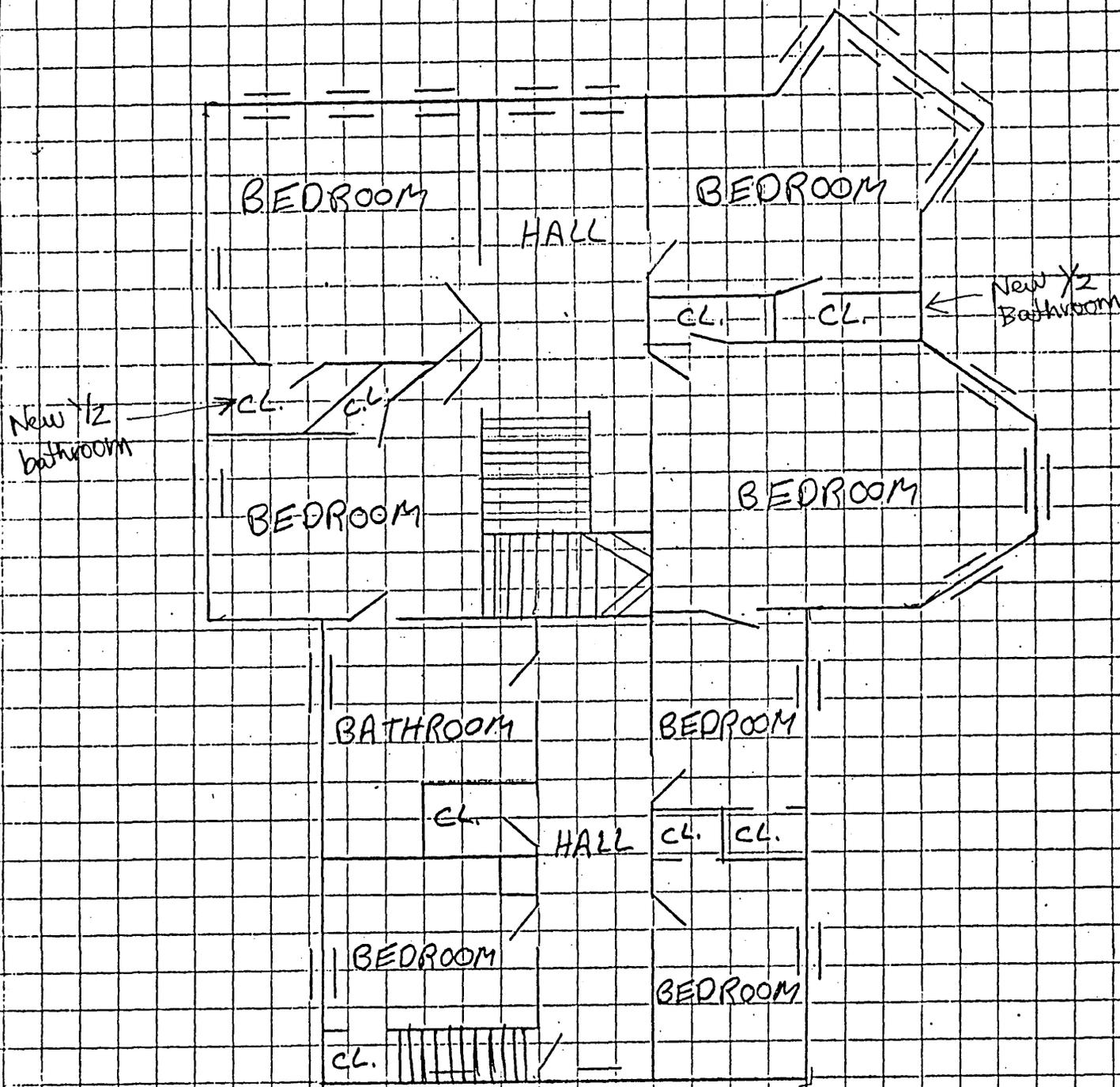
Photograph #20

Description: Photographic reproduction of the cover to Palliser's American Cottage Homes (1878) showing Palliser's home in Bridgeport, CT in plan and elevation. This design was used for the Boright House in Richford, Vermont (1890-92.)



Boright, Sheldon House
GREY GABLES
RICHFORD, VERMONT
FIRST FLOOR

SCALE: 1/4" = 2' Approx.

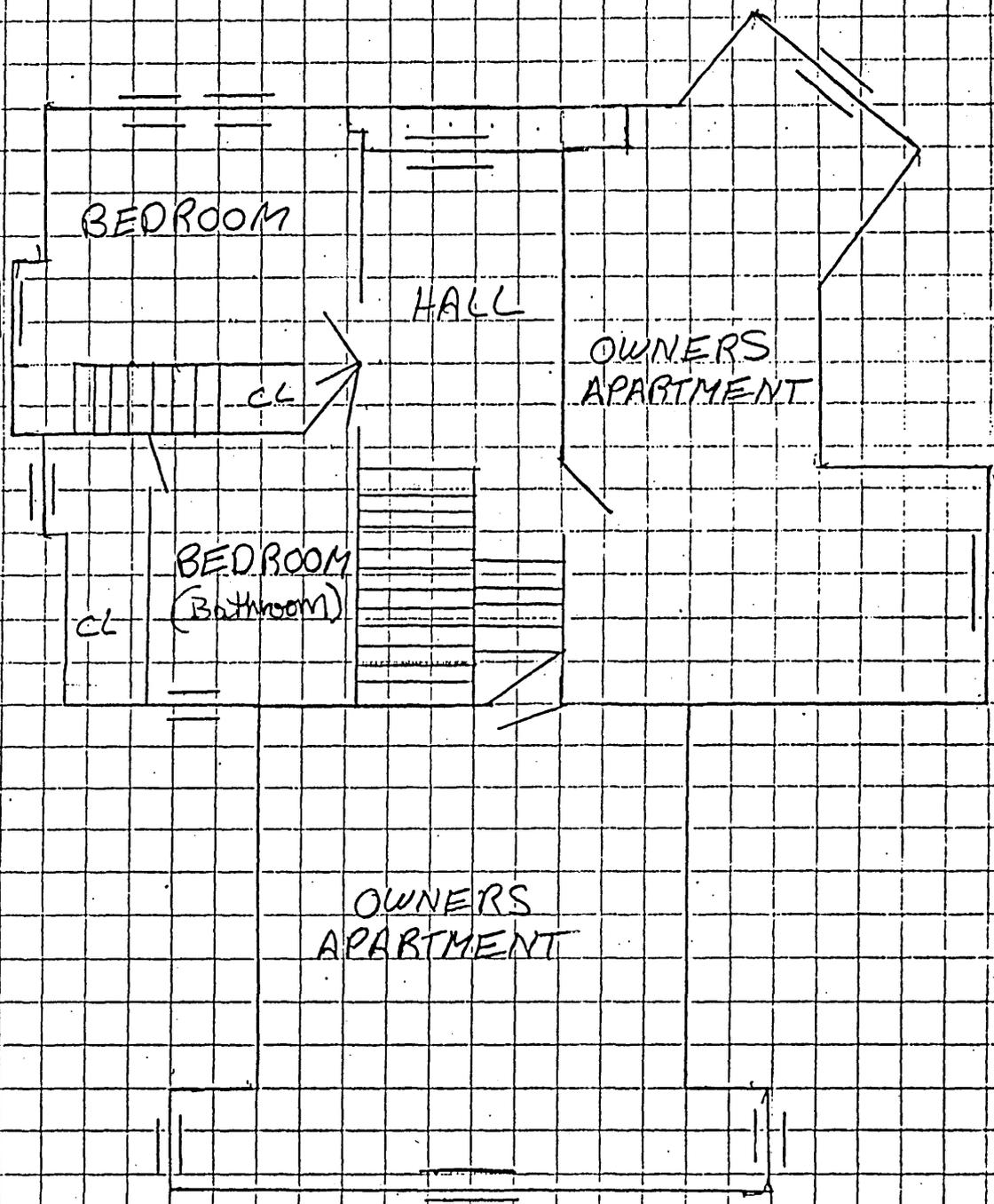


Boright, Sheldon House

GREY GABLES
RICHFORD, VERMONT

SECOND FLOOR

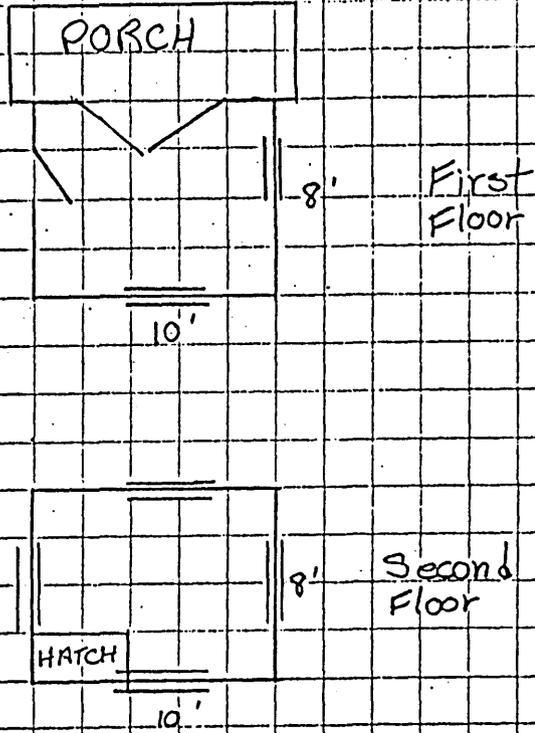
SCALE: 1/4" = 2' Approx.



Boright, Sheldon House
GREY GABLES
RICHFORD, VERMONT
THIRD FLOOR

SCALE 1/4" = 2' APPROX.

TOWER



Boright, Sheldon House
GREY GABLES
RICHFORD, VERMONT
TOWER

SCALE: $\frac{1}{4}'' = 2'$ Approx.