Form 10-300 (July 1969)

### UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

STATE:	
Rhode Island	
COUNTY:	
Newport	
FOR NPS USE ONL	Y
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	Chateau-sur-Me	r (Wetmore	House	e)					
	AND/OR HISTORIC:				_				
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	CITY OR TOWN:								
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CONDITION		(Check Or	1e)		(Ch	eck One)
	☐ Alte	red	🗓 Unaltered			Original Site

The house, while not in its "original", smaller state as first built in 1852, remains complete with all its later and very important additions and alterations. It has always had excellent maintenance, which will doubtless be continued by its new (Weptember, 1969) owner, The Preservation

Society of Newport County.

The original part of this large Victorian dwelling was built in 1851-1852 by Seth Bradford, a contractor, with perhaps design suggestions from the owner, W. S. Wetmore. It is constructed massively of rough Fall River granite ashlar, as have been the various enlargements. Later, George Peabody Wetmore made these many enlargements and improvements, c. 1870-1874, employing the already well known architect Richard Morris Hunt.

Hunt extended the house considerably, changed its main entrance from west to north, added a porte-cochere and other stone adornments, drastically and impressively changed the roof-line--and in fact the whole massing and silhouette. (The architect's drawings for these changes have lately been found in the house.)

Internally, Hunt at this time introduced many additional rooms—including a ballroom, much new trim and ornamentation, which made use of a wide variety of woods and called upon the talents of Frullini, a Florentine decorative artist, of John LaFarge, the American designer of stained glass, and also of French parquetry craftsmen.

(Comment: Winslow Ames is of the opinion that the published attribution of the glass to John LaFarge is difficult to sustain on grounds of style. If documentary proof that LaFarge designed the glass in the windows is ever found, it would be his most early and Anglo-German work. His earliest glass was probably for Trinity in Boston, after Chateau-sur-Mer.)

The dining-room wing and the adjacent service wing were raised by a full storey to bring them up to the height of the mansard over the 1872' stair. The date 1883, though here given with caution, may be too late. Alan Burnham gives 1859-1879 as the termini of Hunt's dealings with Wetmore. The only dated material in the Frullini scrapbook now in the hands of the Preservation Society of Newport County is a couple of designs for tables by Frullini dated 1874; Ames inclines to believe the Frullini work in dining room and (other) library was probably done as soon as its complexity permitted after the 1872 structure was complete; hence 1874 is plausible; 1883 is the date of some correspondence of Wetmore with Frullini in which Wetmore merely suggests further enlargement. A careful inspection of Newport newspapers from 1871 through 1889 is needed.

About 1900, the American architect-decorator Ogden Codman installed some French boiseries in private portions of the house.

The grounds, of approximately twenty acres, are surrounded by a ruggedly handsome wall, of granite like the house, with some sandstone trim. This wall encloses no elaborate gardens or parternes, but rather a vast lawn with a variety of old and spendid trees and green planting.

Form 10-300a (Dec. 1968)

### UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

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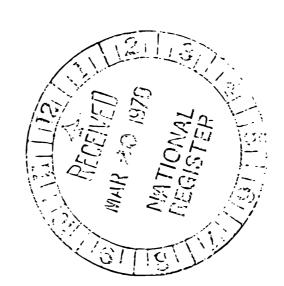
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(Number all entries)

Chateau-sur-Mer

7. Description

Between the main house and its Bellevue Avenue gate is an attendant's lodge adjoining an ornamental arch of brownstone across the drive. In the northeast portion of the grounds there is a large, long stable complex of brick.



PERIOD (Check One or More as	Appropriate)		
☐ Pre-Columbian	☐ 16th Century	18th Century	20th Century
☐ 15th Century	☐ 17th Century	19th Century	
SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicab	le and Known) 1851-1	852, c. 1870 <b>-</b> 1874	, 1883, c. 1900
AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Ch	eck One or More as Appropr	iate)	
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Chateau-sur-Mer is highly important in several respects; as a major vigourous statement in our national architectural history; as a major example of R. M. Hunt's earlier work; as a much-needed part of the sequence of period houses open to visitors in Newport; as a conspicuous member of the architectural and landscape parade which, alone, makes Bellevue Avenue known.

The house began life as an "Italian Villa" and now stands substantially as it was remodelled and enlarged after 1870 by Hunt. It is an important and solid point of departure from the "summer cottages" built before the Civil War to the competitive palaces of the Gilded Age. Set in an ample picturesque landscape with superb specimen trees, the house forms with its walls, gates and approaches a rugged and consistent whole. The building itself is remarkable for its combination of large scale with large dimensions, for its translation of wood detail into massive granite and for its use of uniquely bold three-dimensional metal ornament at the crest of its high mansard roof. H.-R. Hitchcock calls the exterior "more stern than splendid" and goes on: "The virtues of this house, the rugged wall surfaces, the monolithic trim...derive from the buff Fall River granite of which it is built. The monoliths,...the more than industrial regularity of the rock-faced ashlar walls, have surely something impressive about them. But it is not an impressiveness which was long to be capitalized by American architects" (Rhode Island Architecture, 1939, p. 56).

The interiors present a continuum of the "character" that the last quarter of the XIX Century liked before its taste became academic. In particular, the stair composition, the three story skylighted hall and the former billiard room later called the library or morning-room, whose powerfully articulated wood detail reflects the influence of Charles Eastlake, are irreplaceable. "Inside," says Vincent Scully, "Hunt produced his most impressive interiors...The stair hall...is a magnificent cavern wherein the solemn staircase, painted underneath with landscape scenes, mounts in dark and bemused majesty" (Downing and Scully: The Architectural Heritage of Newport, Rhode Island, rev. ed., 1968, p. 139). Almost unmatched in the United States are Frullini Virtuoso carved details in the library (not Hunt's billiard room) and the almost Wagnerian dining room. Some of the furniture (in part acquired by the Preservation Society of Newport County) was designed by Hunt for the house, and he chose and imported certain mantelpieces and other furnishings. By 1873 the ball-

9.	MAJOR	BIBLIOGRAPHICAL RE	FERENCES							<b>5</b> \	
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Form 10-300a (July 1969)

#### UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

#### NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENT

FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY NUMBER

STATE

COUNTY

Rhode Island

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(Number all entries)

Château-sur-Mer 8. Significance (continued)

room was already considered "the first ballroom of consequence in .. Newport." The work of enlargement and decoration, which continued into 1876, and was also resumed in 1883, includes stained glass by John LaFarge,\* the lofty dining-room with walls of stamped and gilt Spanish leather by the Florentine craftsman Frulini, and other contributions to the atmosphere of tough but disciplined splendour. There are some later interior additions, such as a remarkably convincing French boiserie by Ogden Codman, inserted soon after 1900 to suit the educated and elegant tastes of the Misses Maude and Edith Wetmore, the last private owners, who made no changes beyond this and otherwise maintained Château-sur-Mer magnificently intact.

> William H. Jordy, Winslow Ames, 1968. Revised by Richard B. Harrington, 1969.

\* See Winslow Ames comment under Description.



Form 10-300 (July 1968)

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES NATIONAL PARK SERVICE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE PECEIVED

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	AND/OR HISTORIC	NUMERIC CODE (Assigned by NPS)	
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2. LOCATION			
STATE	COUNTY	TOWN	
Rhode Island	Newport	Newport	
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DESCRIBE THE ORIGINAL (If known) AND PRESENT CONDITION

Victorian. Constructed of rough Fall River granite, laid in a kind of ashlar and left unstuccoed, so that the very massiveness of the house is enhanced by the visual weight of its stone walls. The building can be considered in very good condition. Attached are floor plans of the first and second floor and an inventory of its physical makeup as noted in the Tax Assessor's records, Newport, Rhode Island.

The original part of the building was built in 1851-52 for William S. Wetmore by a local contractor, with perhaps some suggestions from Wetmore. After his death, George Peabody Wetmore, later Governor of Rhode Island and United States Senator, made many additional improvements. By 1873 the new ballroom was considered to be the first private ballroom of any consequence in fashionable Newport. Richard Morris Hunt is believed to have designed the morning room and dining room. Frulini, the noted carver of Florence, Italy, did much of the interior work, especially in the library and dining room. Ogden Codman was believed to be the architect for the sitting room. The dining room is of Italian walnut, polished and carved into every conceivable shape from the finest vines and flowers to large heads of men and beasts. The floors are composed of thousands of pieces of choicest wood. Skilled workmen from France were brought to do the work, and in all about \$300,000 was expended for interior and exterior improvements from about 1873 to 1876.

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8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

INCLUDE HISTORY, PERSONAGES, EVENTS, MAJOR SOURCES OF INFORMATION, ETC.

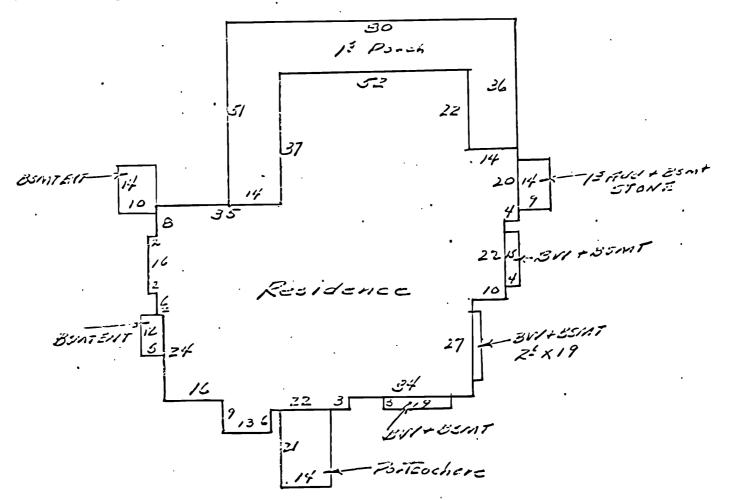
Because of the names of Hunt, Codman and Frulini, the building is worthy of preservation. Another artisan is represented, John LaFarge, who made the stained glass window which dominates the staircase connecting the first with the second floor. Many famous personalities were entertained here or were guests of the Wetmores. Among them was George Peabody, who became one of the greatest philanthropists of this nation.

Major sources of information is the book noted above, "The Architectural Heritage...," and newspapers in the files of the Newport Historical Society. The newspapers give good accounts of the building progress, and of course, social activities.

The last two occupants were the Misses Maude A. K. Wetmore and Edith M. K. Wetmore. Miss Maude died November 3, 1951; Miss Edith died March 10, 1966. The two sisters agreed by will to deed the property to the Preservation Society of New England Antiquities.

9. CERTIFICATION	
FORM PREPARED BY: (Name, organization)	STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION
Historical Preservation Commission of	The state of the s
Rhode Island	As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National
har Is and	Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National
HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER.	Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service
Preservation  (Keeper of the National Register)	NAME Coepl T. Schmidt
DATE Horberton 1968	TITLE: State Liaison Officer

Chateau-sur-Mer -- Newport, R. I. First floor plan as noted in tax assessor's records



# Chateau-sur-Mer -- Newport, R. I. Second floor plan as noted in tax assessor's records

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ROOF	T	PE		HOT AIR								•		FLOOR	rs		
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ROC	FII	1G	٠	AIR COND.	GAS LIGHTING	<u> </u>	BATH FLO	OR & WAL	LS	PIER FO	UNDATION	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	INT. F	INISH		
ASPHALT SHIP	GLE				PLUMBING		BATH FLO	OR ONLY		SINGLE	WALL SDG		LISTED BY	HEATI	NG SYSTEM		· _
WOOD SHINGL	E		<del></del>	PIFELESS FURNACE	BATH ROOMS	L	TOILET R	4. FL. & W	AINS.	DOUBLE	WALL SD	G.	_		HTC. UNIT		
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LATE			12	OIL DURNER	STALL. SHOWER EXTRA	L	TOILET R	M. FL.ONL	Y	STUCCO	ON		AREA COMP. BY	FIREPL	ACES		_
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	3	IST 2N	BRD		LAVATORY EXTRA	L	L	CCATIO	N	CONC. F	LOOR		_	·			<del>-</del>
CEMENT	$ \bot $		lacksquare	FIREPLACES	SINK EXTRA	_	COOD	FAIR	POOR	EARTH I	FLOOR			I TOTAL	BASE PRICE		
ARTH	_	_	1_	FIREPLACE STACKS		_						_	TOTAL				17.31/3
PINE	[	11	.	FIREPLACES 1.7.	SEPTIC TANK OR CESSPL.			INCOME		SHINGLE	E ROOF		COST SACT	OP			-  <del></del>
HARDWOOD			$\bot$	ARTIFICIAL FIREPLACES	WATER ONLY					ROLL RO	OOFING		COST FACT				-
SINGLE FL.				INCHERATOR	NO PLUMBING	$\Box$				ELECTRI	C LIGHTS		REPLACEN	ENT VA	LUE		

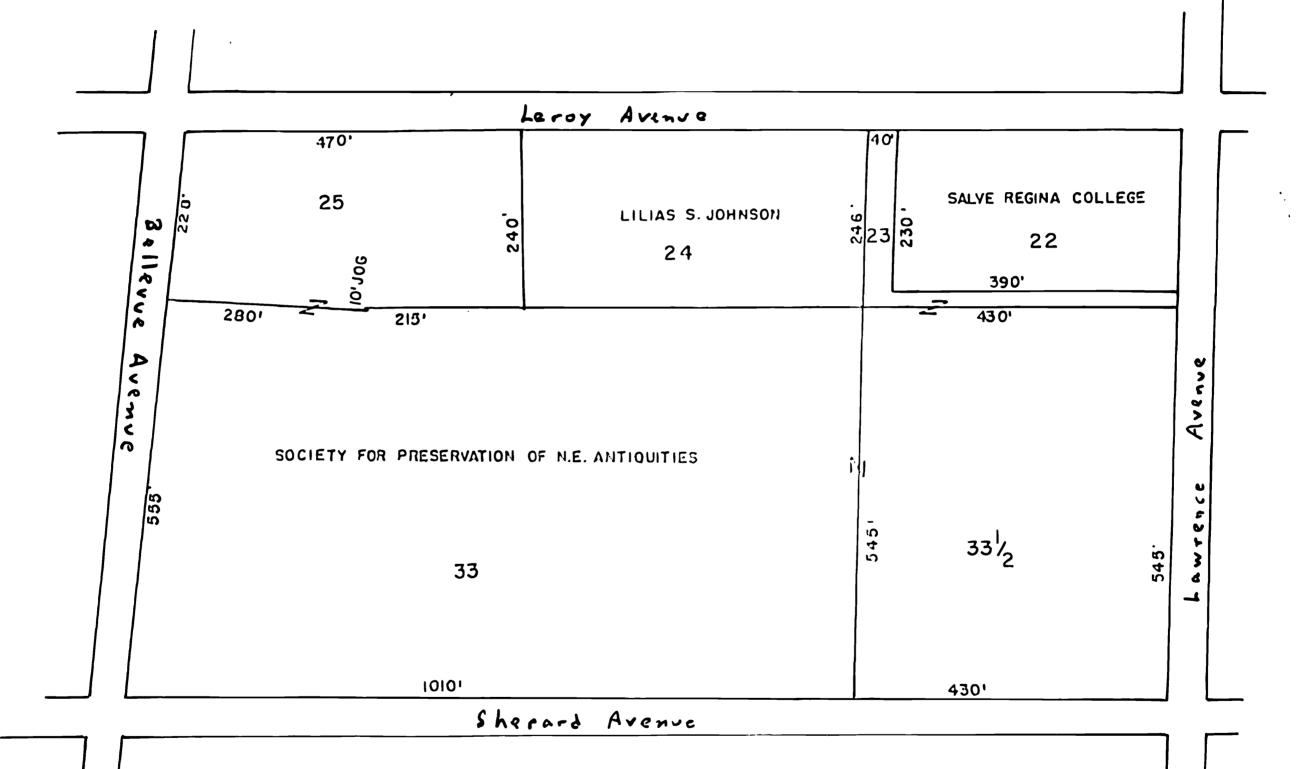
#### Chateau-sur-Mer -- Newport, R. I.

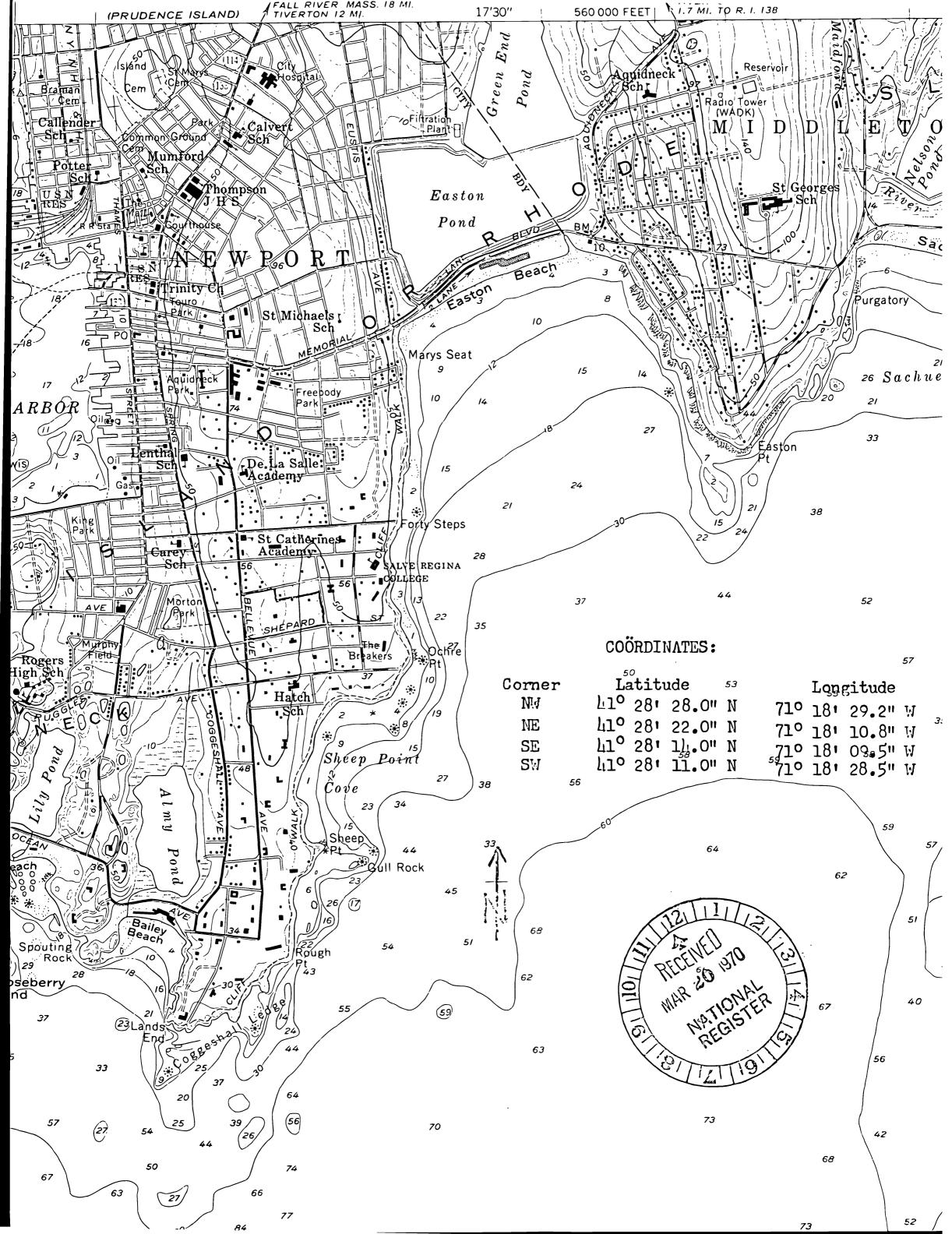
## Physical makeup of inventory as noted in tax assessor's records

OCCUPANCY	CONSTRUCTIO	N	SIZE	GRADE	AGE	REMODL'	cond.	PHY. DEP.	FUNCT. D	EP. REPL. VA	LUE	PHYSI- CAL	AVI'NE	ACTUAL VALUE
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		•	<del></del>		<del>                                     </del>	}	<del></del>		, 0		<del></del>			30,00
				<u> </u>						_{			<u> </u>	
FOUNDATION	ATTIC & BSMT. FIN	<u>.                                    </u>						TO.	TAL		l			•
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CEMENT BLK.WALLS	THE PROPERTY AND A PARTY OF THE	<u>^</u>					•					BUZILDI	NG COMP	UTATION
CONCRETE WALLS	FIN. BSMT. AREA S/CL	<u> </u>	•								7-	59 ·s. F.	72. "	52,4808
BRICK WALLS	RECREATION RM.BSMT.	_{												
STONE WALLS	GARAGE IN BSMT・	<del>- </del> -										9 / :s. F.	202	্ ক্রান্ত
BASEMENT AREA	ROOMS											57 s.f.	36	20521
14 1/2 14 E	BSMT (2) 1ST 7	⊣										47 :S. F.	362	16920
EXTERIOR WALLS	2ND /: 3RD (n+1)	Ħ										(00 :S. F.	360	-2160
SIDING ON SHEATHING	INTERIOR FINISH	$\dashv$	•											
SINGLE SIDING	1ST 2ND 3	R D	•	•		•						24 34	36:	4536
WOOD SHINGLES		<u></u>								•	19	3/6 5.5.		5733
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STUCCO ON FRAME	CHESTHUT	_	•								<u> </u>			-
STUCCO ON TILE OR C.B.	HARDWOOD L- Im			<i>C</i>	7 1	<b>د</b> رتر ر	San	Suclas	<b>L</b>					
FACE BRICK VENEER		_		200	Sara	183	-5-011	Skelch	•				<u> </u>	
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STONE VENEER	INT. COND.	_] <i>•</i>			_									
Cr. D. S. M. T. C.	LAYOUT										ROOF	-		
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ROOF INSULATION	HEATING					•					FLOO	RS		
ROOF TYPE	HOT AIR 2115	2									FLOO	RS		
HIP GABLE	STEAM	_									ATTIC	:		
MANSARD FLAT	HOT WATER	_	LIGHTING	_!	TILING			BLDGS.		MEASURED B		FINISH	-	- <del> </del>
GANGREL	VAFOR		ECTRIC LTG.	BATH FL	OOR & WAI	NSCOT J		NOITADNUC		_	-			-
ROOFING	AIR COND.	_	IGHTING	_	OOR & WAL	LS	PIER FO	UNDATION		_	INT.	FINISH		
ASPHALT SHINGLE			PLUMBING	BATH FL	OOR ONLY		1	WALL SDG.	<del></del>	LISTED BY	HEAT	ING SYESTEM		
WOOD SHINGLE	PIPELESS FURNACE		ROOMS SWY		RM. FL. & 1V	<del></del>	DOUGLE	WALL SDG	·	_[	AUTO	HTG. U NIT	-	
ASBESTOS SHINGLE	NO HEATING SYSTEM		OWER BATH ROOM		RM. FL.A W	———	-	E WALLS	_	AREA COMP. BY				
SLATE VINNING A UT	OIL BURNER		SHOWER EXTRA	TOILET	RM. FL.ONL	<u> </u>	STUCCO		<del></del>		FIREP	LACES		<u> </u>
	COAL STOKER	_	TROOMS				CEMENT				PLUM	BING		
FLOORS	GAS BOILER		CLOSET EXTRA	_ :	WAINSCOT	<u>_</u>	}	BRICK	├├-	PRICED BY	TILING			
B IST 2NC 3RD	SINER! AGG	<del>-</del> {			OCATIO		CONCF				TOTAL	BASE P RICE		
CENCHT 1/1/25 2/	FIREPLACES	- SINK	EXTRA	COOD	FAIR	POOR	EARTH I	FLOOR	_	_	TOTAL	DASE F RICE		
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Chateau-sur-Mer -- Newport, R. I.

Real estate of the property as noted in the tax assessor's records





Free - Sul - 1167 (well more "build)

Compare Contract Phone 12 and

U.S. 3 COLOR, 162 S. 1 C 1: T. 2 M. 1620 . 12 / NCLIPHA G. 1 1. 6 2 C