

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM**

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1. Name of Property

historic name: WOODWARD, ASHBEL, HOUSE

other name/site number: N/A

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2. Location

street & number: 387 Route 32

city/town: Franklin not for publication: N/A  
vicinity: N/A

state: CT county: New London code: 011 zip code: 06254

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3. Classification

Ownership of Property: public-state

Category of Property: buildings

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>4</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	sites
<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	structures
<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	objects
<u>4</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A



7. Description

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Architectural Classification:

Greek Revival  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Other Description: N/A\_\_\_\_\_

Materials: foundation GRANITE roof ASPHALT  
walls WOOD other BRICK  
\_\_\_\_\_

Describe present and historic physical appearance. X See continuation sheet.

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8. Statement of Significance

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

Applicable National Register Criteria: A,C

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) : \_\_\_\_\_

Areas of Significance: ARCHITECTURE  
HEALTH/MEDICINE  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Period(s) of Significance: c.1835 \_\_\_\_\_

Significant Dates: c.1835 \_\_\_\_\_

Significant Person(s): N/A \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Affiliation: N/A\_\_\_\_\_

Architect/Builder: Unknown\_\_\_\_\_

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above. X See continuation sheet.

9. Major Bibliographical References

X 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:

- X State historic preservation office Connecticut Historical Commission
- Other state agency 59 South Prospect Street
- Federal agency Hartford, CT 06106
- Local government
- University
- Other -- Specify Repository: \_\_\_\_\_

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: 1.6 acres

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

A	18	738620	4609640	B	_____	_____
C	_____	_____	_____	D	_____	_____

See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description: See continuation sheet.

The boundary of the nominated property runs northwesterly 300' along Route 32 from the property's southwest corner and extends back to the rear property line, exclusive of the modern office building (see sketch map, scale 1"=100', traced and enlarged from Franklin Assessor's Map 9).

Boundary Justification: See continuation sheet.

The boundary includes the house and historic outbuildings.

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

Name/Title: Bruce Clouette and Matthew Roth

Organization: Historic Resource Consultants Date: July 31, 1991

Street & Number: 55 Van Dyke Avenue Telephone: 203-547-0268

City or Town: Hartford State: CT ZIP: 06106

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CONTINUATION SHEET**

Description	Ashbel Woodward House Franklin, New London County, CT	7-1
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The Ashbel Woodward House (Photographs 1, 2, and 3) in Franklin, Connecticut, is a 2 1/2-story, wood-frame clapboarded house built about 1835 in a vernacular version of the Greek Revival style. The house is situated close to Connecticut Route 32 in a rural area of widely scattered houses. In addition to the house, the property includes three associated outbuildings, two barns and a small gable-roofed storage building, all of which appear to date from the middle of the 19th century. Tall shade trees line the road in front of the house. The area around the house and outbuildings is mostly lawn, separated from the road by a modern wooden picket fence. The property, currently occupied as a single-family residence, is part of the Franklin Swamp Conservation Area. The administration building for the conservation area, a large one-story structure of relatively recent construction, lies to the east of the historic buildings; the administration building is not included as part of the nominated property. Although some of the land surrounding the buildings is open farmland, with the fields outlined by stone walls, most of it is now wooded, with trails, driveways, and parking areas associated with the conservation center. Therefore, only the land immediately surrounding the house and barns was included in the nominated property.

The house has the ridge of its gable roof set parallel to the road, with the main entrance in the center of the five-bay facade. The entrance (Photograph 4) features pilasters supporting a wide entablature whose plain frieze and architrave are separated by dentils. Another smaller row of dentils runs between the transom and sidelights that enframe the doorway, which contains an original door of five sunken panels. Windows have plain board frames and six-over-six sash. Paneled pilasters at the house's corners support a denticulated entablature that is a larger version of the one above the entrance; it forms a full return across the gables, where the attic story is lighted by large semi-elliptical windows with radial wooden muntins. The pilaster capitals and cornice moldings (Photograph 5) all make use of a large-scale ovolo as the principal molding. The house currently has one small brick chimney near the south end of the ridge; presumably, the house originally had a corresponding chimney near the north end.

A one-story ell, probably original, extends from the rear of the house. Because of the slope of the land, the granite-ashlar

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Ashbel Woodward House  
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foundation (Photograph 6) is exposed for a full-story on the ell, which forms an open passageway where it joins a two-story extension. To the rear of the house stands a small gable-roofed building on granite piers (Photograph 7) that probably was originally used for the storage of corn and other grain; its board-and-batten siding and boxed cornice suggest a mid-19th century date. The two barns (Photograph 8) are similar to each other, with main openings centered on the broad side, stone foundations, and simple cupolas with hipped roofs and turned wooden finials. The one nearest to the house has board-and-batten siding, while the somewhat smaller and more distant one is sided with wide vertical boards.

The house's interior plan features a central hall with a stairway on one side ascending in a straight run from front to back, two large front rooms on either side, and a long room across the rear (the hall does not extend the full depth of the house). Much of the interior has been modernized, and all fireplaces have been removed or blocked off. However, remaining original woodwork includes several paneled interior doors (Photograph 9), scalloped decoration applied to the sides of the stairs (Photograph 10), fluted architraves with corner blocks on the window and door openings in the front rooms and hall, and one fireplace mantel consisting of fluted pilasters, corner blocks with a meander or Greek key design, and a plain entablature (Photograph 11). The entire second floor has been blocked off and was not accessible.

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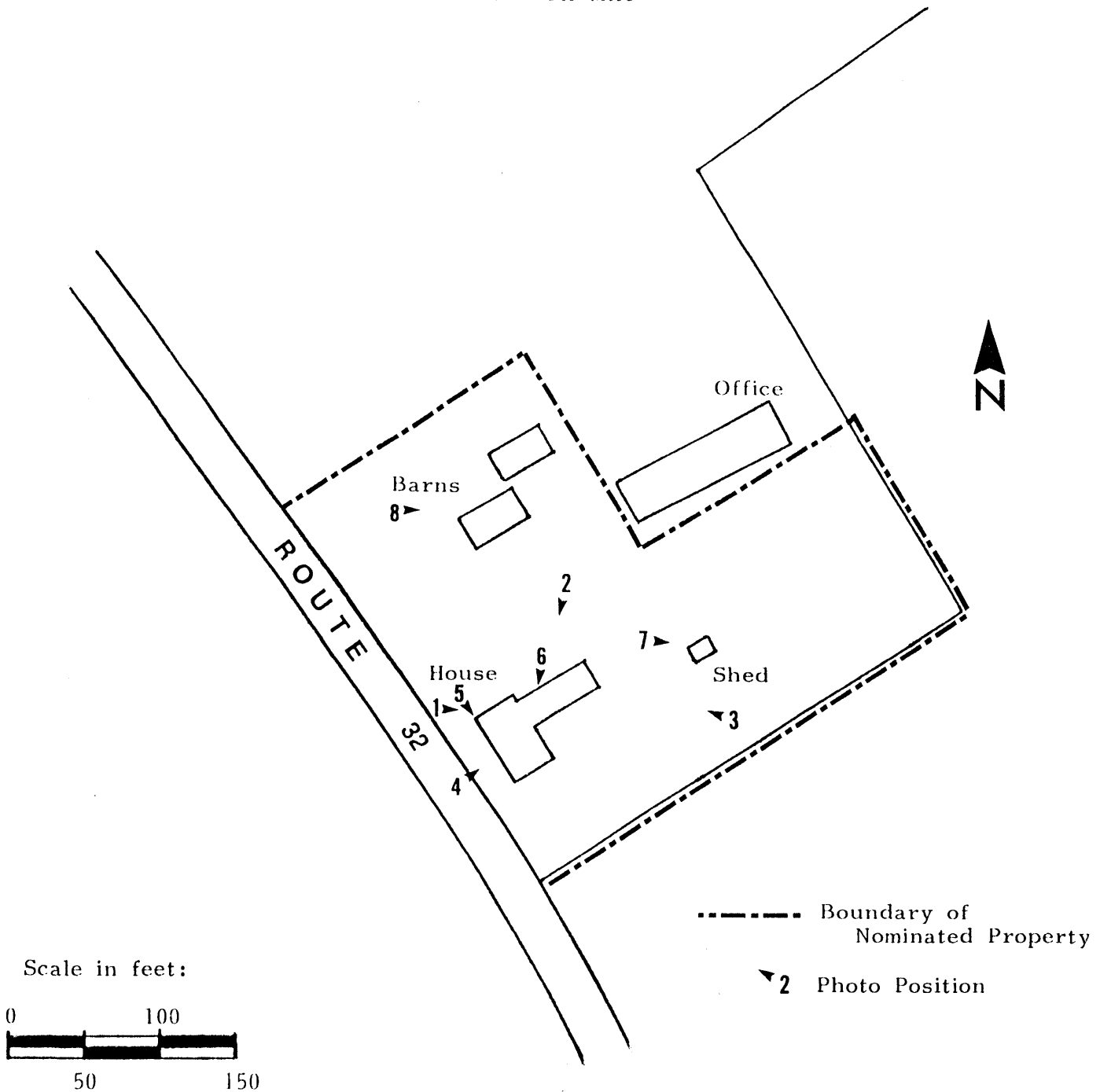
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SKETCH MAP



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Summary

The Ashbel Woodward House is significant as a well-preserved example of the Greek Revival style as applied to a traditional rural dwelling (Criterion C). In using pilasters, dentilated cornices, and other details modeled on the Classical architecture of ancient Greece to embellish the five-bay, gable-roofed form inherited from the 18th century, the Woodward House epitomizes one of the major types of houses found throughout antebellum America. The house is also significant as the home of Dr. Ashbel Woodward (1802-1885), a prominent local physician whose career affected generations of Franklin residents (Criterion A).

Architectural Significance

The essential characteristic of the Greek Revival style is the use of elements drawn from Classical Greek architecture. Greek Revival houses form a continuum from simple vernacular houses, with only a pilaster-and-lintel entry treatment to indicate their stylistic intent, all the way to architect-designed houses that were full reproductions of ancient Greek temples. The Woodward house is near the vernacular end of that continuum. A suggestion of the temple form is conveyed by the Woodward House's full cornice return across the gables. Its pilasters, entablatures, and mantle's meander motif are clearly Greek in inspiration, their bold proportions distinguishing them from the Classical elements common in the earlier Federal period. Similarly, the size and proportion of the gable fanlight (not properly a Greek element) contrasts with the more delicately proportioned Federal or Adam-style ellipses.<sup>1</sup> Finally, the house makes extensive use of the ovolo molding, which pattern books of the period recommended as a distinctly Greek and exceptionally beautiful form.<sup>2</sup>

At the same time, the basic form of the house reflects the traditional five-bay, rectangular-plan, gable-roofed house form found throughout New England from the 1600s to the middle of the 19th century. Although four-room, central-hall plans and the gable-end-to-the-road orientation were both common in the period, the older tradition endured in large numbers. The Woodward House is a well-preserved example of such a combination of traditional



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form with Greek Revival ornament, retaining intact most of its historic features such as small-pane sash, clapboarded exterior, original door and entry treatment, cornice details, and representative interior woodwork. In most examples from the period, replacement windows, modern siding materials, and other modernizations have obscured or destroyed such original material.

Health and Medicine Significance: Dr. Ashbel Woodward

The house is significant for its long association with Dr. Ashbel Woodward, who for more than 55 years, from 1829 to his death in 1885, served the medical needs of the residents of the small farming town of Franklin, Connecticut. After graduating from the medical department of Bowdoin College, he settled in Franklin, married in 1832, and bought this property from the estate of Dr. Reuban Burgess in 1834. He was an early member of the Connecticut Medical Society, serving as its president from 1858 to 1861 and contributing frequently to its publications. He also was a member of the American Medical Association from 1849 on, and he received an honorary M.D. from Yale in recognition of his accomplishments in 1855. Although in his sixties at the time, Dr. Woodward served at the front during the Civil War as a surgeon and inspector of medical facilities.

Dr. Woodward collected pamphlets, coins, and Indian relics. He wrote the only book-length history of the town in 1869 and amassed a library of local history and genealogy unsurpassed in Franklin. He was a deacon of the Congregational Church and was remembered as "a marked survival of the Puritans . . . in beliefs, sympathies, and character."<sup>3</sup>

For most of his tenure in Franklin, Dr. Woodward was the only physician in town, and his practice therefore extended to the entire community throughout much of the 19th century. On the occasion of his 50th anniversary as a Franklin resident, two to three hundred of his neighbors gathered at his house for a testimonial. Dr. Woodward was given a gold-headed cane by the community, the total population of which numbered only 685 at the time, and local leaders and former U.S. Senator Lafayette S. Foster made speeches.

Like most of his neighbors, Dr. Woodward engaged in agricultural

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pursuits, with about 30 cultivated acres yielding crops of corn, peas, potatoes, and hay. In addition to his horse, Dr. Woodward kept three cows and two pigs in 1850, and his farm, which included "orchards and vines of his own planting," produced \$150 worth of fruit that year.

Although at least some of the time he lived in another house on the property (no longer extant, but formerly on the west side of the road), the nominated house was Woodward's long-time residence and thus serves as a memorial to a man who for many years was central to the life of his community.<sup>4</sup> In addition to the house, which reflects his status as a young physician just starting his career, the agricultural outbuildings have significance because they recall his role as a part-time farmer. The house and barns were owned by Dr. Woodward his entire life. His descendants conveyed the property to the State of Connecticut in 1947.

NOTES

1. Rectangular and triangular attic windows soon superceded the use of fanlights in Greek Revival houses after the 1830s.
2. See, for example, Asher Benjamin, The American Builder's Companion (New York: Dover Publications, repr., 1969, of 6th ed., 1827), 20.
3. P. H. Woodward, "Memoir of Ashbel Woodward, M.D.," New England Historical and Genealogical Record, 40 (April, 1886): 133-37.
4. The 1854 map notates the other house as "Dr. A. Woodward (res.)," though two years earlier (Franklin Land Records, Vol. 7, p. 276), the other house was rented to Rev. J.R. Avery and the nominated property was described by Woodward as "the house where I now live." When Dr. Woodward bought the Burgess property in 1836, it included a house and barn. However, given their stylistic details, it is unlikely that the present house and barns date back to the previous owner, who settled here around 1816.

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