

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

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**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

received MAY 7 1985

date entered JUN 6 1985

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic The Birchwood Inn

and/or common THE BIRCHWOOD INN

2. Location

street & number NH Route 45 (at the intersection of the n/a not for publication
General Miller Highway)

city, town Temple, _____ vicinity of

state New Hampshire code 33 county Hillsborough code 011

3. Classification

| | | | | |
|-------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| Category | Ownership | Status | Present Use | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> district | <input type="checkbox"/> public | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied | <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> museum |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private | <input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial | <input type="checkbox"/> park |
| <input type="checkbox"/> structure | <input type="checkbox"/> both | <input type="checkbox"/> work in progress | <input type="checkbox"/> educational | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence |
| <input type="checkbox"/> site | Public Acquisition | Accessible | <input type="checkbox"/> entertainment | <input type="checkbox"/> religious |
| <input type="checkbox"/> object | <input type="checkbox"/> in process | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted | <input type="checkbox"/> government | <input type="checkbox"/> scientific |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> being considered | <input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted | <input type="checkbox"/> industrial | <input type="checkbox"/> transportation |
| | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A | <input type="checkbox"/> no | <input type="checkbox"/> military | <input type="checkbox"/> other: |

4. Owner of Property

name William and Judy Wolfe

street & number Route 45

city, town Temple, _____ vicinity of state New Hampshire 03084

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Hillsborough County Courthouse

street & number Hillsborough County Registry of Deeds
19 Temple Street

city, town Nashua, state New Hampshire 03060

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title None has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date N/A federal state county local

depository for survey records N/A

city, town _____ state _____

7. Description

| | | | | |
|-----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Condition | | Check one | Check one | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent | <input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated | <input type="checkbox"/> unaltered | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> good | <input type="checkbox"/> ruins | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered | <input type="checkbox"/> moved | date <u> N/A </u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> fair | <input type="checkbox"/> unexposed | | | |

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Birchwood Inn is a two-and-a-half story, gable-roofed structure with attached sheds, wings, and barns. It stands on a corner lot north of Temple common and faces west. The body of the main house is composed of a brick front half and a framed rear section, all standing on a foundation of fieldstones and split granite. The entire main structure is covered by a broad roof of moderate pitch, shingled with asphalt roofing. The coherence of all parts of the foundation walls and the roof frame, together with a general similarity between interior joiner's work in the front and rear sections of the house, suggest either that the structure was originally built with a deliberate combination of brick and framed walls or, more likely, that the wooden section at the rear was added soon after the brick portion was constructed, perhaps with the same joiners employed on both parts of the building.

The facade of the main building, facing west, is five bays wide and is composed of bricks laid in a running bond. The first floor is sheltered by a broad porch which extends across the end elevations until it intersects appendages to the main building; the porch roof is supported by widely-spaced square wooden columns with chamfered shafts, and has an entablature which is embellished by paired sawn brackets above each column. The front door of the main building is framed by four-pane sidelights and is surmounted by a semielliptical brick arch with a louvered fan. The front door dates from the late nineteenth century and has seven panels surrounded by Grecian ogee mouldings with a single large window of plate glass. First floor windows of the facade have flat brick arches; second floor window openings have hidden wrought iron lintels. Window sashes are two-over-two. The cornice of the building has an ogee crown moulding and a bed moulding composed of a Grecian ovolo above a cavetto.

Both side elevations of the house are divided at mid-depth by the juncture between brick and framed walls, and both have framed and clapboarded gables. The northern side elevation has two windows in the second floor of the front brick section. A doorway on the first floor, now bricked up, formerly provided access to the taproom when the house was used as a tavern. The framed rear section of this elevation is intersected by a wooden wing. The gable has one attic window which retains early six-over-six sashes.

The southern side elevation has two windows in the brick front section of the first floor and a window and doorway in the framed section. The second story has two windows in each section, and two attic windows with six-over-six sashes.

The roof of the house is pierced at the ridge by two single-flue stove chimneys. The roof frame consists of hewn rafters and purlins, and is strongly braced by diagonal wind braces linking a number of the principal members.

The interior of the house is characterized by woodwork which reflects the influence of early Greek Revival detailing illustrated in some of the later books of Asher Benjamin. Door casings in the front rooms are symmetrically moulded and have plain square corner blocks; some window casings are similar. The house has a central hallway with a well-turned newel post and angle posts. The left (north) front room, originally a taproom, has relatively simple detailing, while the south front room, with somewhat more elaborate joiner's work, has wall murals attributed to the itinerant New England artist Rufus Porter (1792-1884).

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet 1

Item number 7

Page 2

At the southeastern corner of the main house is a small, one-story gable-roofed addition which is entered through a door beneath the porch roof and is also accessible from the main house. Its pine frame, fabricated from second-hand timbers, has a roof of common rafters.

North of the main house is a short two-story ell with clapboarded walls and an asphalt-shingled gable roof. This is connected to a much larger wing which originally housed a stable or "bait room" for transient horses on the first floor and a hall on the second. The hall, still intact, has four windows across the front and simple square-edged door and window casings. This room was often used for public meetings and for dancing, and it has a "spring floor," suspended in a manner that allows it to flex with the movements of the dancers.

Attached to the north end of the hall is a clapboarded gable-roofed barn with an end doorway facing the road to the west. The central driveway of the barn is flanked by stalls and haylofts. Its heavy pine frame has rafters which are braced by a system of diagonal struts springing from the tops of a series of posts that flank the central bay of the barn.

Original appearance: Birchwood Inn was first constructed as a country tavern with typical Federal-style detailing. As shown in an early photograph, the building's fan-lighted doorway was exposed to view with no piazza or portico, it had two large brick chimneys in place of the small stacks now in use, and its windows were fitted with six-over-six sashes. The building remained in original condition until 1892, when the present porch was added, the window sashes replaced, and the chimneys rebuilt. The bricks of the house were painted white at the same time, and remained white until 1929 when a later owner painted them red and lined the mortar joints with white. Originally, too, the lower story of the large wing had several large doors providing access to the bait room; only one remains, the rest having been walled over. The remaining features of the house, sheds, and barn remain close to their original appearance or at least to their mid-nineteenth-century appearance.

There are no additional outbuildings on the property being nominated. In addition to what is visible in the front view photograph (1 of 4 showing driveway and small lawn area), the remainder of the property is characterized by wooded land. There is a small pond (approx. 20'x30') directly behine the main section of the building. This pond is fed by a small nameless stream which winds down off the top of Temple Mountain from the northwest.

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 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 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 1892 **Builder/Architect** unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Birchwood Inn is a typical New Hampshire tavern of the early nineteenth century which has undergone an evolution in use and architecture. Its changes epitomize the history of the tavern in northern New England. At first a fine public house with an architectural quality considerably above that of many New Hampshire inns, the building remained in use longer than many because of its attractive village setting and because of the growth of tourism as a substitute for earlier commercial travel. The continuing attractiveness of the building and its village permitted the inn to evolve from a tavern to a boarding house and hotel, and finally to a well-patronized restaurant in the twentieth century—a use it continues to the present day.

Architecture: Birchwood Inn records in its fabric a history of changing uses which mirror the evolution of the small-town tavern in New England. Although the precise history of its construction is unclear, the tavern was clearly an establishment of above-average architectural quality, being constructed with brick and finished with detailing that reflected the Federal style in a well-defined rural form. Whether the wooden rear portion of the building is original or an early enlargement, it is clear that the tavern was a prosperous and important institution in its town and region. The taproom, with its separate public entrance, was an active meeting place in which public notices were posted and much town business was conducted on an informal basis. Here were kept the village post office and a store, rendering the structure a center of commerce, communication, entertainment, and sustenance.¹

After the construction of the present barn in 1847–8 and the spacious connecting wing, the building accommodated still more traffic and served a wider use. In keeping with a tendency at the mid-nineteenth century to seek out heated and comfortable rooms for annual March town meetings in lieu of large, drafty, and unheated meeting houses, the second-floor hall of the wing was rented for town meetings from 1848 to 1876, rendering the building a still more central fixture in the public life of its community.²

The same hall has a floor suspended on wagon springs, a refinement occasionally found in nineteenth-century buildings for the pleasure of dancers. During the period from 1860 on, the building (formerly designated a "tavern") was referred to as a hotel, perhaps losing some of its former attributes and evolving from a tavern in the eighteenth-century sense into a small version of the urban hotels then being constructed in larger American cities at this period. The building continued to be sought out for public purposes; here was the site of the town's centennial banquet on August 16, 1858.³ During the mid-1800s the hotel was kept by Elias Colburn, who lived there with his wife, five children, and the one or more young farm hands who made the nearly one hundred acres then associated with the property a flourishing source of food for the family, tavern employees, and travellers.⁴ While Temple village was not located on the line of any of New Hampshire's numerous turn-pikes, its location between the Second and Third New Hampshire Turnpikes made it a natural focus for overland travellers, and this building was the only consistently-maintained public house in the village during most of the nineteenth century.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Blood, Henry Ames, The History of Temple, N.H. Boston: George C. Rand & Avery, 1860.
 Temple Historical Society, A History of Temple, New Hampshire, 1768-1976. Dublin, N.H.:
 William L. Bauhan, 1976.
 United States Census Records, original returns in the New Hampshire State Library, Concord, NH

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 2 acres
 Quadrangle name Peterborough, NH Quadrangle scale 1:62 00

UTM References

| | | | | | | | |
|---|-----------|---------------|----------------|---|------|---------|----------|
| A | <u>19</u> | <u>266925</u> | <u>4744510</u> | B | | | |
| | Zone | Easting | Northing | | Zone | Easting | Northing |
| C | | | | D | | | |
| E | | | | F | | | |
| G | | | | H | | | |

Verbal boundary description and justification

(see continuation sheet)

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

| | | | | |
|-------|------------|------|--------|------|
| state | <u>N/A</u> | code | county | code |
| state | <u>N/A</u> | code | county | code |

11. Form Prepared By

name/title William James Wolfe
 organization _____ date October, 1984
 street & number Route #45 telephone (603) 878-3285
 city or town Temple, state New Hampshire 03084

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state 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 *John T. Sherrin*
 title New Hampshire State Historic Preservation Officer date APR 26 1985

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

John A. Brown date 6-6-85
 Keeper of the National Register

Attest: _____ date _____
 Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet 2

Item number 8

Page 2

By the late nineteenth century, the continuing growth of New Hampshire railroads led to a decline in overland freight traffic. Some of this was regained through the "Good Roads" movement of the late 1800s, in which private and public New Hampshire interests combined their efforts to promote the improvement of the state's highway system. This improvement was intended to encourage an increase in road-borne freight--especially the pine logs and lumber which were then being cut from the reforested fields of long-abandoned farms.⁵ In the late 1800s, too, the Temple hotel derived much business from the spring and fall drives which herded New Hampshire cattle to markets outside Boston.⁶

In 1892 the old tavern was acquired by Daniel and Maria Gilson. In keeping with a prevailing fashion of adapting old taverns to compatible new uses, the Gilsons remodelled the building into a fashionable boarding house. Such a conversion was commonplace in New Hampshire at a time when the state first realized that its economic future depended upon the cultivation of the tourist. Frank West Rollins, who had just completed a term as governor, published a popular guide to the boarding houses of New Hampshire in 1902 and described the Temple hotel as one "which has recently been remodeled inside and out [and] stands on high grounds in the centre of the quiet old historic town. One minute's walk from stores, post office, churches, and public library. Fine views of Temple mountains from its spacious piazzas. A beautiful grove of white birches adjoins the house, well supplied with hammocks, swings, etc., and the lawns are laid out with flower beds. The house is abundantly supplied with the purest of spring water."⁷

The Gilsons renamed the hotel "The Birchwood," advertising that their table offered "pure milk and butter, fresh eggs and fruits, and neat, prompt service," that "to furnish social advantage, a large hall has been provided apart from the house [and] a piano is placed here where it will not disturb those who retire early," and that "guests who wish to bring horses can have them boarded at the stable connected with the house."⁸

The Birchwood remained a boarding house intermittently through the early twentieth century, receiving electricity, central heating, and modern plumbing under the ownership of the Hedman family, who maintained the building as a year-round vacation spot for some thirty-five years after acquiring the property in 1929. Today the building continues these traditional uses, serving as a small restaurant with fine cuisine. The building has been altered little since modern utilities were installed some fifty years ago, and preserves vestiges of each period of its use.

Birchwood Inn remains the epitome of these New Hampshire taverns that have survived changing fashions and modes of transportation. It is among a small number that continue their original use, as adapted to twentieth-century needs, and is an important and well-preserved example of a once common but now increasingly rare type of architecture.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet 3

Item number 8

Page 3

NOTES

- ¹Henry Ames Blood, The History of Temple, N.H., p. 88; Temple Historical Society, A History of Temple, New Hampshire, pp. 227-37; The New-Hampshire Register (various dates; various publishers), lists of post offices.
- ²Blood, The History of Temple, N.H., pp. 85-86; Temple Historical Society, A History of Temple, New Hampshire, p. 229.
- ³Temple Historical Society, A History of Temple, New Hampshire, p. 229.
- ⁴1850 United States Census, New Hampshire, Hillsborough County, Temple.
- ⁵Frank West Rollins, "Roads and Road-Building in New Hampshire," typescript, New Hampshire Historical Society; Report of the New Hampshire Board of Agriculture from October 1, 1898, to January 1, 1901, pp, 119-192.
- ⁶Temple Historical Society, A History of Temple, New Hampshire, p. 230.
- ⁷Frank West Rollins, The Tourists' Guide-Book to the State of New Hampshire, p. 203.
- ⁸Temple Historical Society, A History of Temple, New Hampshire, p. 231.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet 4

Item number 10

Page 2

The nominated property is indicated as lot number 45 on assessor's map number 7 of Temple, New Hampshire. The nominated property is bounded on the north by the Anna E. Auricchio property, on the east by the Carl I. Hedman property on the south by the General Miller Highway and on the west by New Hampshire Route 45.

The 2.8 acres has always been historically associated with the nominated property with the exception of the following incident, which began shortly after the purchase of the property by Daniel and Maria Gilson in 1892.

"At that time the main road from the north through the village divided at the Inn's barn, with one branch passing within 10 feet of the front porch of the Inn and continuing in the back of the present firehouse to the Village Blacksmith Shop. Gilson decided that he wanted no teams crossing his property, and so informed the men of the town. They were aghast at the idea of driving all around the common to take the horses to be shod, when such a shortcut existed. The selectmen decided that the town should purchase the land and consulted with Gilson as to price. Gilson was furious and refused to sell one foot to the town. The town talked of proceedings to take the land by eminent domain; Gilson, realizing that he was fighting a losing battle, sold the land to a friend, who in turn sold it to the town. In 1912, when shortcuts were apparently less important to the townspeople, the town voted to return the land to the inn, close the road as a public road, and leave it as a driveway for the inn's owners. It has been the inn's driveway ever since."⁹

the remainder of the land has always been historically associated with the nominated property except for the small triangle and road which belonged to the town between c.1892 to 1912.

⁹Temple Historical Society, A History of Temple, New Hampshire, p. 232.

Note: The boundaries on the nominated property have been highlighted in yellow on the attached sketch map.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

5

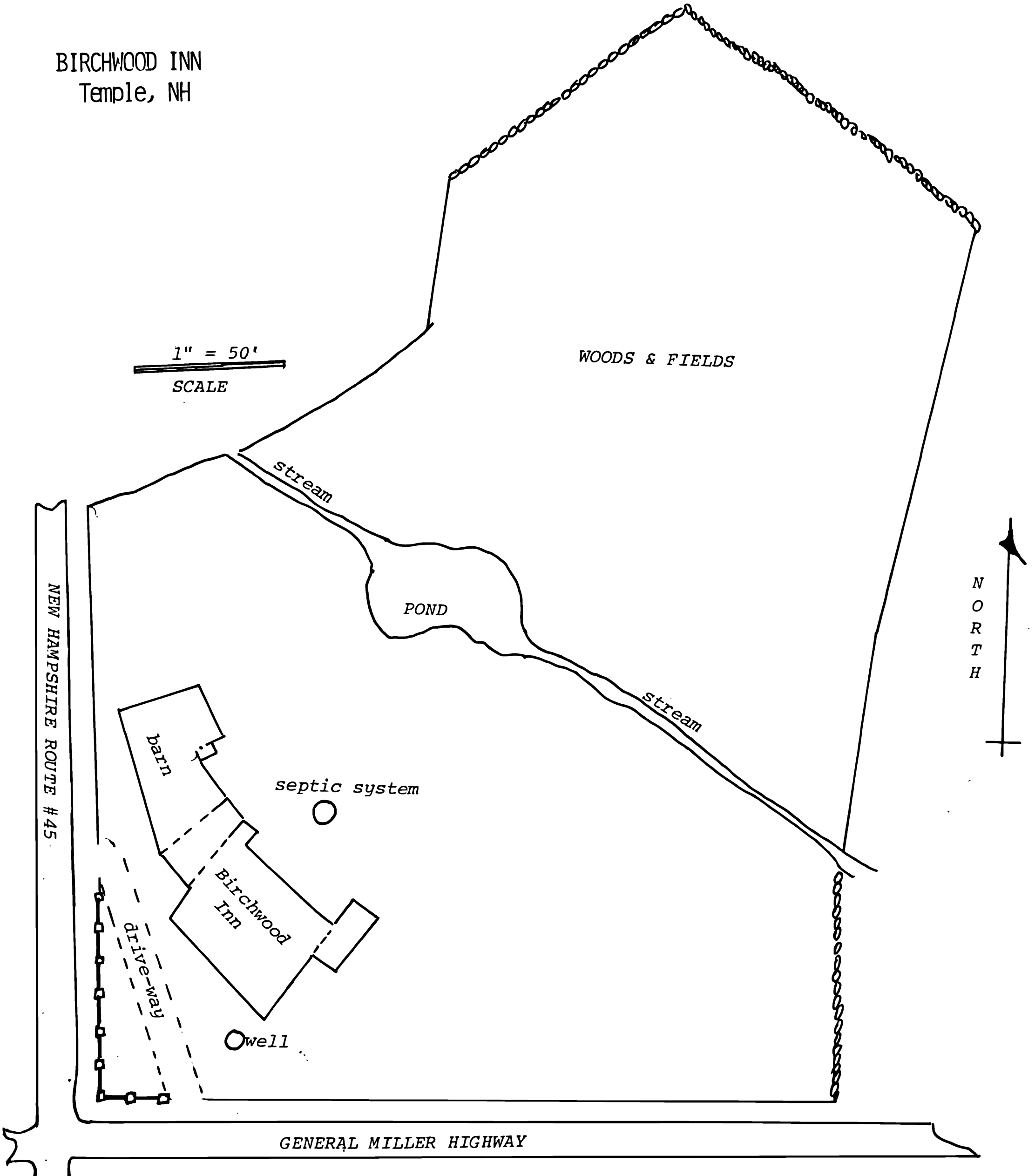
Item number

10

Page

3

BIRCHWOOD INN
Temple, NH



**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet 6

Item number

Page 1

This certifies that the appearance of the photographs has not changed