

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number _____ Page _____

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 88000094 Date Listed: 2/19/88

Daniels, Charles, House Middlesex CT
Property Name County State

N/A
Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

Patrick Andrus
Signature of the Keeper

2/19/88
Date of Action

=====
Amended Items in Nomination:

Recommended Level of significance should be: State

Criteria Exception B should be checked for a moved property, and 1978 entered under significant date (for the move).

This information was confirmed with John Herzan, CTSHPO, by telephone on the date of listing.

DISTRIBUTION:

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

RECEIVED

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

JAN 12 1983

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 Daniels, Charles, House
other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 43 Liberty Street N/A not for publication
city, town Chester N/A vicinity
state Connecticut code CT county Middlesex code 007 zip code 06412

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	_____ structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	_____	_____ objects
		_____	_____ Total

Name of related multiple property listing:
N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

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 does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

[Signature] January 5, 1988
Signature of certifying official Date

Connecticut Historical Commission
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets 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:

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:)

Patrick Andrews 2/19/88
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)
Domestic/single dwelling

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)
Domestic/single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

Greek Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete block

walls Weatherboard

roof Wooden shingles

other _____

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Charles Daniels House is a 1½-story frame Greek Revival structure located about two blocks northwest of the center of Chester. The house faces north. Its back yard slopes down to Deep Hollow Brook, the stream that provided waterpower for Charles Daniels' nearby gimlet¹ factory. The area is generally residential despite the presence of the mill that now occupies the site of the former gimlet factory. The buildings are well spaced from one another in the atmosphere of a small town. (Photograph 1)

Stone steps of three risers lead from the lot line to the front walk that slopes up to the house. The structure's front elevation of five bays is dominated by the central hipped-roof Doric portico. (Photograph 2) Paired columns of correct proportions rest directly on the stone porch floor in the Greek manner. Above, a plain architrave and frieze that run completely around the house are separated by a course of round guttae. (Photograph 3) There are wide plain pilasters at the corners of the vertical flush boarding walls. The 6-over-6 sash, apparently original and with 90% original glass, have slightly projecting rectangular sills and lintels. Pane size is large, 10" x 18". In the frieze above are four rectangular windows to light the upper floor. The low hipped roof of wooden shingles rises to a square drum which conceals a central wooden skylight. There are four brick chimneys.

The west side elevation consists of vertical flush boards, without fenestration at the main floor, divided by a central pilaster. Two rectangular windows are found in the frieze. (Photograph 4) On the east side elevation a corresponding central pilaster divides the wall in two, but there is a single window in each of the divisions, toward the front and back. (Photograph 5)

On the rear elevation, where the lower floor level is at grade, there are five apertures in all three floors. (Photographs 6 and 7) The rear wall of the lower level is a veneer of granite ashlar blocks that have large dimensions in width and height but are only 5"/6" deep. The wall continues left and right as a retaining wall.

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Upon entering the house, the 2-panel front door opens to a central hall with stairway rising against the left wall. (Photograph 8) The handrail of the stair terminates in a vertical volute. There are two rooms on either side of the central hall. (See Drawing 1.) The two rooms on the right are separated by a wall with a 2-panel mahogany sliding doors. (Photograph 9) By opening the doors the two rooms are thrown into a single space. (Photographs 10 and 11) The front wall has paired pilasters at the corners, and paired pilasters flank the sliding doors.² The elaborate cast-plaster entablature includes three tiers of moldings, one of egg and dart and two of a double pointed leaf motif. (Photograph 12) The architrave of the door to the hall is battered in an early example of Egyptian Revival influence.³ (Photograph 13) The fireplaces in the front and back sections of the double space have surrounds consisting of plain pilasters and entablatures. The floor boards are continuous from the front wall of the house to the back wall, butted periodically but never varying in width or alignment. There are molded panels under all windows of this floor, and high baseboards. The ceilings, 11 feet high, have central medallions. (Photograph 14)

On the upper floor the rear wall of the hall is concave, as opposed to being convex on the main floor. (See Drawings 1 and 2.) Only the two front rooms are accessible from the upper floor front hall, which has the skylight in its ceiling (Photograph 15), not operable.⁴ Ceilings are low. Cast-iron grilles may be seen in four of the rectangular windows near the floor. (Photograph 16) The rear two rooms may be reached by the rear spiral stairway (Photograph 17) The risers and treads of the stairway wind around an open central cylinder, that is built like a barrel, to the lower level, without access to the main floor. It is a service stairway.

The kitchen is located in the southwest corner of the lower level (Drawing 3), where ceilings are 7 foot 10 inches high. The bake oven at the right front of the firebox (Photograph 18) has a cast-iron door with raised lettering reading, "Russell and Beach, Chester, Conn.," the name of a local foundry. (Photograph 19) In the dining room across the hall the fireplace is fitted with a fire frame of the same origin. (Photograph 20)

The house is framed with large timbers, post and beam, fastened by mortise and tenon with pegs. The floor boards of the first floor are seen to have been adzed where they pass over the joists, to ensure a flat fit.

The Charles Daniels House was moved to its present location in June 1978 from its original site 300 feet to the east, near the factory. (Photographs 21 and 22) The house had not been lived in since about 1940,

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having been used for storage by the factory over the ensuing years. In 1975 it was declared to be an "Endangered Building" by the Connecticut Historical Commission. The house originally was positioned between the street and the brook, which run parallel with one another, as it is now, a few feet above the street (Photographs 23 and 24) with the lower level at grade in the rear. (Photograph 25) The move was made by Turgeon Brothers of Newington. (Photograph 26)

When the house was lifted off its foundations, it became apparent that the ashlar was a veneer over rubble. The veneer was photographed and disassembled, each stone being numbered and the number located on a drawing. After the new foundations were built of concrete blocks, the ashlar veneer, both the granite of the rear wall and the sandstone above ground on the front and sides, was reassembled according to photographic record and the numbering system. The rubble was used in the retaining walls to left and right at the rear. The brick chimneys and fireplaces were taken down and re-built using the same brick in the same manner as originally built. Before the move the house had no plumbing, no central heating, and little electricity. Heating ducts now run horizontally below the floors and vertically in the housing of the spiral stair. Ceilings and walls at the lower level have been covered with sheet rock; the rest of the house has the original plaster on wood lath.

A second structure was added to the site in 1985. (Photographs 21 and 27) Compatible with the house in mass, materials, and design, it is used as an office and studio.

¹A gimlet is a small hand tool with a screw point, grooved shank and cross handle for boring holes. In Charles Daniels' probate records the spelling is gimblet.

²The scheme of 2-panel sliding doors flanked by paired pilasters is found on Plate 70 of Minard Lefever, The Modern Builder's Guide (New York: Dover Publications 1969; reprint of 1833 ed.).

³A battered architrave for parlor doors is shown at Fig. 1, Plate 60 of Lefever. Lefever also shows several designs for a 2-panel front door with side and transom lights, similar to that of the Daniels House.

⁴The skylight glass is new. It replaces glass that overlapped in shingle style. The enclosure around the skylight is supported above the roof, the clearance space enabling ice and snow to melt and drain away. The enclosure has pilasters at its corners.

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

c. 1830

Significant Dates

c. 1830

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

See discussion below.

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

The Charles Daniels House is a sophisticated well-proportioned expertly-designed example of the Greek Revival style. Its Doric portico, flush boarding, frieze windows, and fine interior details, including main stairway under skylight and spiral service stair, are components of a skillful design that is unusual in a country town. According to local tradition, the architects were Town & Davis, but there is no documentation to support the tradition. (Criterion C - Architecture)

Architecture

In Connecticut the majority of Greek Revival style houses are patterned after the temple form, with 2½-story gable end of three bays facing the street and gable itself treated as a pediment. Often there is a small portico at the doorway in the left or right bay. Alternatively, the Greek Revival style may be expressed in a house of five bays with central portico and with side gable ends forming pediments. On occasion, 2-story porticos are found, as well as hipped roofs.

In comparison with the large number of houses in the foregoing sub-types, the census of structures similar to the Charles Daniels House is quite small. Its distinctive features include the high one story of flush boards, the paired columns of the portico and corresponding paired pilasters of the interior, the side elevations with little fenestration, the 2-panel design of both the front door and interior doors, the battered architraves of the first-floor doorways, the main stairway under the skylight, and spiral back stair.¹

9. Major Bibliographical References

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

Acreeage of property 1 _____

UTM References

A

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7	1	2	3	9	0
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4	5	8	6	8	9	0
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 Zone Easting Northing

C

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B

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 Zone Easting Northing

D

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property occupies Map 3-8A, Block 8, Lot 9A and is roughly 200' x 200' in size according to the Tax Assessor's Map. See Volume 50, pp. 786-87 of the Chester Land Records for legal boundary description.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the lot that is now associated with the house.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title David F. Ransom/Consultant
 organization Connecticut Historical Commission date September 27, 1987
 street & number 59 South Prospect Street telephone 203 566-3005
 city or town Hartford state CT zip code 06106

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Local tradition has it that the Charles Daniels House was designed "by a firm in New Haven,"² about the only likely candidate being Town & Davis. The house does seem to fit the characteristics of Ithiel Town's Greek Revival work, such as the use of the Doric order and the floor plan of four rooms symmetrically disposed around a central hall. In addition, the circumstances that the plan of the house is site specific to take advantage of the change in grade suggests that it is a custom design, as opposed to being a standard design of repeated use.³

Reference to various features of the house may be found in several sources. Talbot Hamlin describes at length modifications made by American architects in classical Greek precedents, including the absence of triglyphs in the frieze and extension of the entablature around all four sides of the building,⁴ as found at the Charles Daniels House. Pattern books by Asher Benjamin, from 1797, and by Minard Lefever, from 1829, were among the most influential sources that guided many architects and builders. The most unusual feature of the Daniels House, the rear spiral stair, may have its antecedents in Benjamin's explanation of a helix⁵ and Lefever's plan of a "cylinder put up in staves, glued and screwed together."⁶ Usually, such a stair was the front stair.

The Charles Daniels House is a fine example of a particular variation of the Greek Revival style exhibiting unusual elegance and sophistication, and still enjoying superb integrity despite its move.

Historical Note

The first indication of the presence of Charles Daniels (1799-1838) in Chester is the record of his purchase of 17 acres located in the center of town in 1823.⁷ About 1825 he built a factory on Deep Hollow Brook at the site now occupied by M. S. Brooks & Sons, Inc., the mill building seen in Photograph 21.⁸ He may have built the nominated house at about the same time he constructed the factory (gimlets were found in the walls at the time the house was moved), or, after the death of his first wife Ann (1801-1828), at the time of his remarriage at an unknown date to Abby L. Gilbert (1814-1905) prior to his death in 1838.⁹

Something of the character of Charles Daniels may be read from a study of his probate records.¹⁰ The value of the inventory of his estate was \$8325, the chief items being the factory at \$2000 and the house and barn¹¹ at \$1800. In addition, however, the inventory lists a piano at \$200 and a violin at \$5. Moreover, in liquidation of his business assets, proceeds were realized from the sale of gimlets in Boston, New York and Philadelphia. Since Chester was a river town, these centers were easily

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reached by sea. Charles Daniels emerges from the records as a well-traveled man of taste and culture. It would be consistent with his life style to have a house built to plans drawn by a well-known architect. That Daniels had inventory in principal cities provides the possibility of a meeting between him and such an architect.

Charles Daniels' business and his house illustrate the manner in which river and coastal transportation structured early-19th-century society. Through coastal shipping Daniels was able to market his manufactured product and simultaneously develop cultural contacts that affected his house. In addition to the likelihood that the plans for the house originated in an urban center, the probability is that the cast-plaster architraves and ceiling medallions of the interior and perhaps the 2-paneled doors and other fine millwork and hardware were shipped to Chester by water.

Upon Daniels' death in 1838 without a will, the house passed by right of dower to his wife Abby.¹² She remarried to Clark N. Smith (1819-1911) who resided in the house until it was purchased by the Brooks factory interests in 1910.¹³ Upon sale of the factory in the mid-1950s, the new owners both recognized the architectural significance of the house and felt that it was too close to the factory. Accordingly, they offered for sale the house and an acre of land up stream, on condition that the house be moved. The present owners acquired the house under these terms, moved and restored it.

¹Other Greek Revival houses in Connecticut with similar features of high one story of flush boarding and central columned portico include the George Baldwin House in North Branford, listed in the National Register of Historic Places September 15, 1977, and the Governor Chauncey F. Cleveland House, a contributing structure in the Hampton Hill Historic District, listed in the National Register September 23, 1982. The Baldwin House, with three bays instead of five, is attributed to Ithiel Town on local tradition without documentation. The Cleveland House has a gable-roofed portico and columns and pilasters in the Ionic order. The nomination makes no attribution of architect.

²Theodore Foster, Old Homes of Chester, Connecticut (West Haven, Connecticut: O.K. Walker, 1936), item 49.

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3. Two architectural historians who probably have devoted as much attention to the Greek Revival period and to the work of Town & Davis as anyone are Jane B. Davies and Elizabeth Mills Brown. Davies in letter written February 5, 1976, about the house commented, "It is a striking design, which has the strength and boldness that could mark it as by Town & Davis. However..." and she went on in some detail outlining the lack of documentation. Her letter indicates that if either Town or Davis was the architect, the more likely candidate is Davis. Brown in an interview September 26, 1987, said she believes the single pilaster in the middle of the side elevations and the spiral rear stair are more idiosyncratic than is consistent with Town's work, since his designs were thoroughly straightforward.

The primary thrust of the observations of both of these architectural historians was to emphasize the fine quality of the design for the Daniels House, its high level of architectural significance, and the likelihood that the architect was one of the small handful of practitioners in the country capable of such work at the time, a group including Town, Davis, Lefever, and Alexander Parris.

4. Talbot Hamlin, Greek Revival Architecture in America (New York: Dover Publications, 1964; reprint of 1944 ed.), pp. 341-355.

5. Asher Benjamin, The American Builder's Companion (New York: Dover Publications, 1964; reprint of 1827 ed.), p. 98.

6. Lefever, op. cit., p. 60, Pl. 31, Fig. b.

7. Deep River Land Records, volume 19, page 283. Presumably, this acreage included the site of the mill and house. (The first town in this part of Connecticut was Saybrook. It encompassed what are now Chester and Deep River. The town center was at Deep River, which is the location of the early land records. Chester became a separate town in 1836).

8. History of Middlesex County (New York: J. W. Beers & Co., 1884) p. 225. Daniels here is referred to as Colonel Charles Daniels.

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9. DRLR 24/463 records the purchase of riparian rights by Russell & Beach in 1831. If the oven door is original equipment, a date for the house in the 1830s is suggested.

10. Charles Daniels' Probate Records, Saybrook No. 544, at Connecticut State Library.

11. The barn, seen in Photograph 23, was demolished some time after the picture was taken, c. 1942, and before 1977.

12. She also purchased the house from the executor for \$245. (Chester Land Records, volume 3, page 65).

13. CLR 14/248.

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Benjamin, Asher. The American Builder's Companion. New York: Dover Publications, 1969; reprint of 1827 ed.

Brown, Elizabeth Mills. Interview. September 26, 1987.

Daniels, Charles. Probate Records, Saybrook No. 544. At State Library.

Davies, Jane. "Ithiel Town" in Adolph K. Placzek, ed., MacMillan Encyclopedia of Architects. New York: The Free Press, 1982. Pp. 220-222.

_____ Letter. February 5, 1976.

Delaney, Barbara S., ed. The Houses and History of Chester. 2nd ed. Chester: Chester Historical Society, 1984.

Deep River Land Records. Volume 19, page 283.

Foster, Theodore. Old Homes of Chester, Connecticut. West Haven, Connecticut: O. K. Walker, 1936.

Hamlin, Talbot. Greek Revival Architecture in America. New York: Dover Publications, 1964; reprint of 1944 ed.).

History of Middlesex County. New York: J. W. Beers & Co., 1884.

Lefever, Minard. The Modern Builder's Guide. New York: Dover Publications, 1969; reprint of 1833 ed.

Newton, Roger Hale. Town & Davis, Architects. New York: Columbia University Press, 1945.

Norton, Thomas A., AIA. 13 measured drawings of the Charles Daniels House, elevations, sections, roof plan and details. 1977. In possession of owner.

Silliman, Kate. Chester Scrapbook. 2nd ed. Chester: Chester Historical Society, 1986.

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Section number Photos Page 1

All photographs were taken by D. Ransom in August, 1987, unless otherwise noted.

All negatives are in possession of Connecticut Historical Commission.

Captions follow:

General view southwest
showing, from right,
house, studio, factory
Photograph 1

View south
Photograph 2

Northeast corner,
view west
Photograph 3

View southeast
Photograph 4

View southwest
Photograph 5

View northeast
Photograph 6

View northwest
Photograph 7

Main floor, front stair-
way, view southeast
Photograph 8

Main floor, west side,
double doors, view
southeast
Photograph 9

Main floor, west side,
view southwest
Photograph 10

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First floor, west side,
view northwest
Photograph 11

Main floor, front room,
view northwest
Photograph 12

Main floor, doorway from
west front room to hall,
view east
Photograph 13

Main floor, ceiling
medallion
Photograph 14

Upper floor, skylight,
view southeast
Photograph 15

Upper floor, northeast
room, view northeast
Photograph 16

Upper floor, rear stair-
way, view southwest
Photograph 17

Lower floor, southwest
room, view northwest
Photograph 18

Lower floor, oven
door, view west
Photograph 19

Lower floor, southeast
room, view southeast
Photograph 20

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Anonymous photographer, copied
by D. Ransom 8/87
Aerial view northeast,
c. 1930s
Photograph 21

Former site of house,
view southeast
Photograph 22

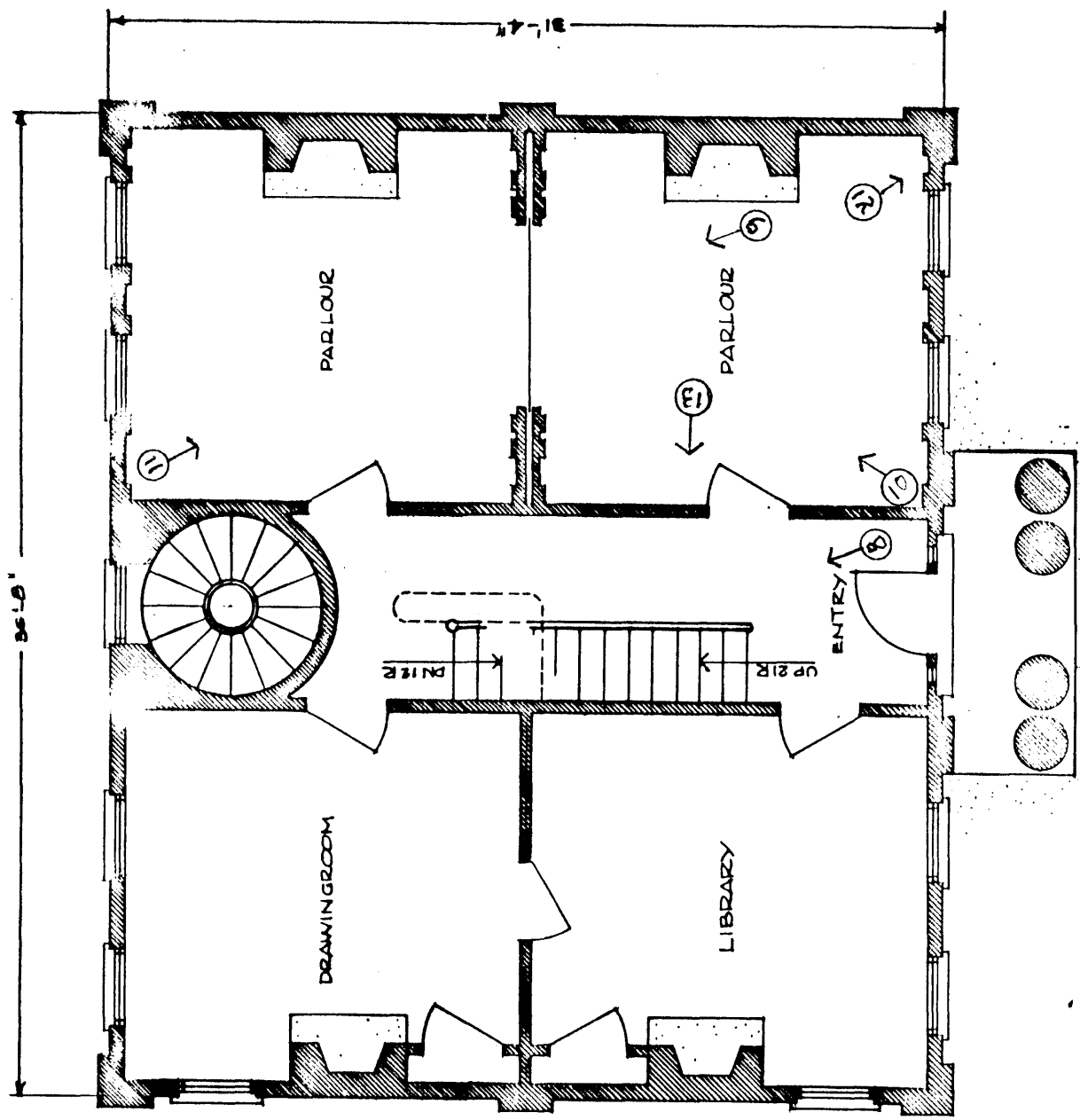
Anonymous photographer, copied
by T.A. Norton 1977
House at former location,
view south, 1942
Photograph 23

T.A. Norton photo, 1977
House on former location,
view south
Photograph 24

T.A. Norton photo, 1977
House on former location,
view north
Photograph 25

T.A. Norton photo 1978,
copied by D. Ransom 8/87
House in course of move, 1978
Photograph 26

Studio, view southeast
Photograph 27



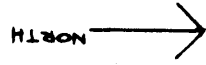
Drawing 1

MAIN FLOOR

Charles Daniels Hse.
 43 Liberty Street
 Chester, Connecticut
 Measured drawing by Thomas A. Norton, AIA

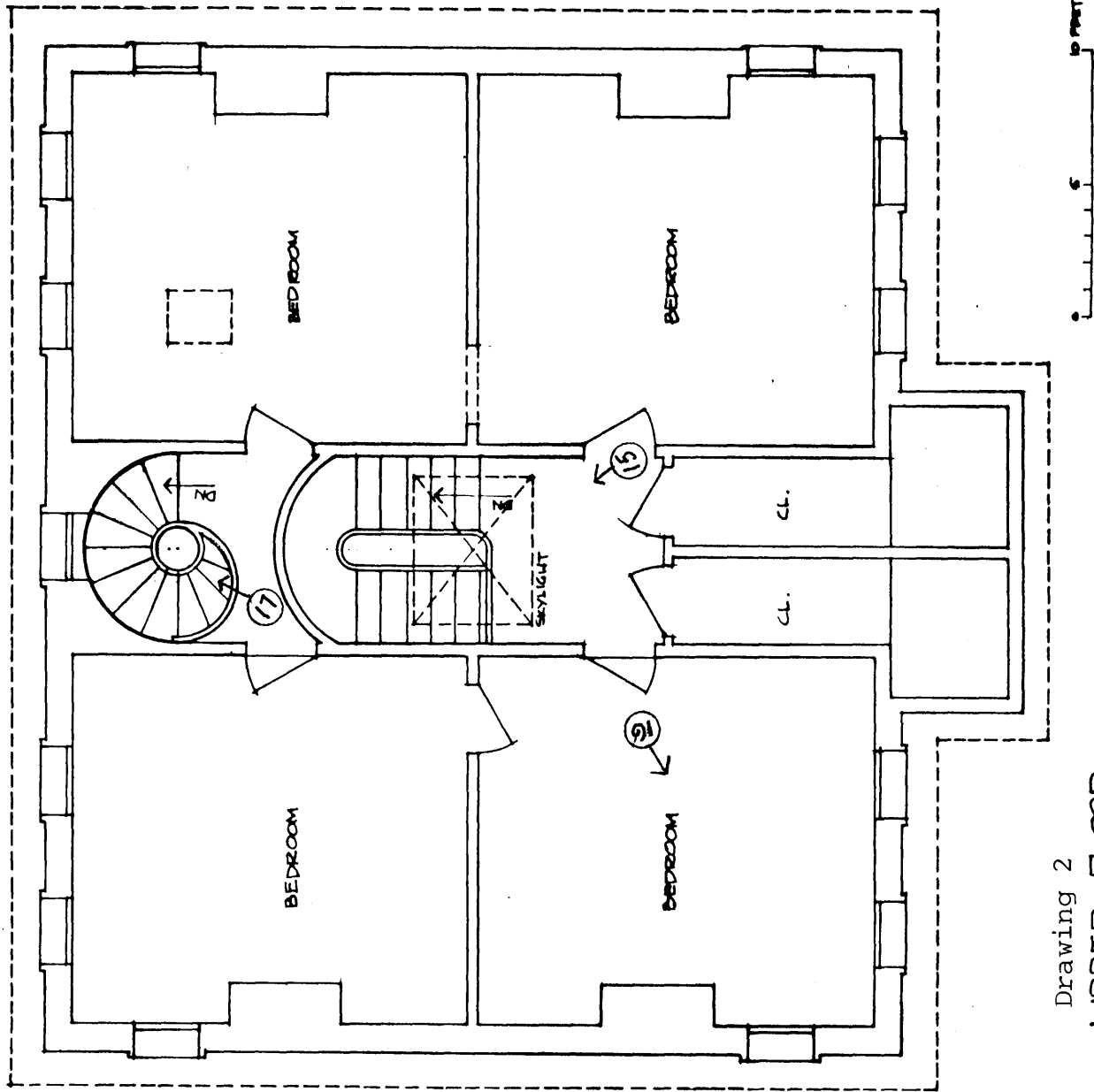
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④

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Drawing 2

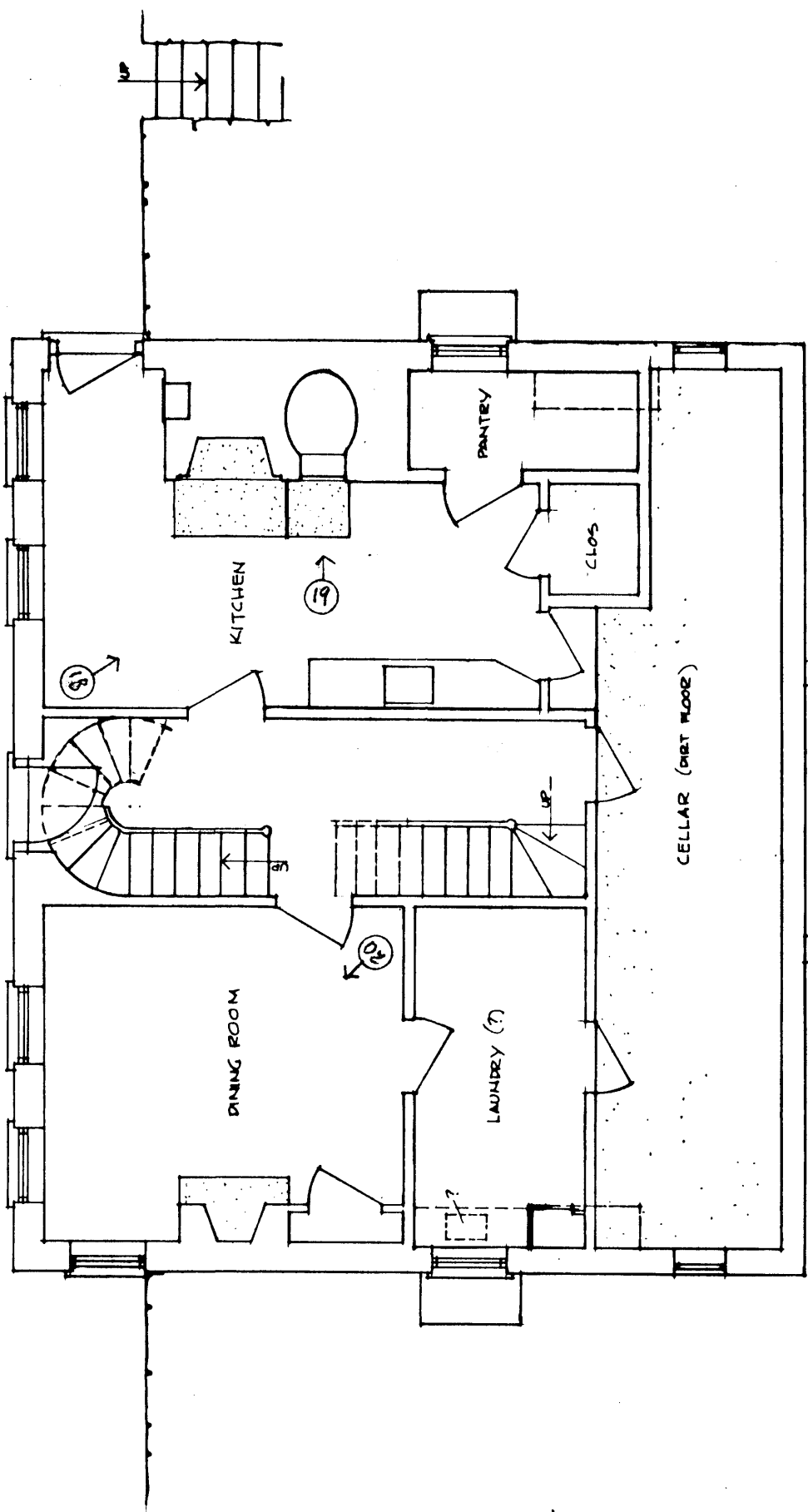
UPPER FLOOR

Charles Daniels Hse.

43 Liberty Street

Chester, Connecticut

Measured drawing by Thomas A. Norton, AIA



Drawing 3

LOWER FLOOR

Charles Daniels Hse.
 43 Liberty Street
 Chester, Connecticut
 Measured drawing by Thomas A. Norton, AIA

