

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

historic name OAK HILL HISTORIC DISTRICT

other names/site number _____

related MPDF N/A

2. Location

street & number STATE ROUTE 81; OAK HILL ROAD; GILES LANE & OTHERS

not for publication

city or town OAK HILL

vicinity

state NEW YORK code NY county GREENE code 039 zip code 12460

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

national statewide local

Michael P. Lynch
Signature of certifying official/Title

16 JUNE 2017
Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official _____ Date _____

Title _____ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government _____

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register determined eligible for the National Register
 determined not eligible for the National Register removed from the National Register

other (explain): _____

David Abusler
Signature of the Keeper

9/11/17
Date of Action

OAK HILL HISTORIC DISTRICT

GREENE CO., NEW YORK

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5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- private
- public - Local
- public - State
- public - Federal

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
52	11	buildings
0	0	sites
1	4	structures
0	0	objects
53	15	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

10

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling, multiple dwelling

RELIGION: religious facility

COMMERCE/TRADE: store

EDUCATION: school

FUNERARY: cemetery

RECREATION & CULTURE: auditorium

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

RELIGION: religious facility

COMMERCE/TRADE: store

FUNERARY: cemetery

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EARLY REPUBLIC: Federal

MID-19th CENTURY: Greek Revival, Gothic Revival

LATE VICTORIAN: Italianate, Queen Anne

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: STONE, BRICK, CONCRETE

walls: WOOD, BRICK, METAL, SYNTHETIC

roof: METAL, ASPHALT

other:

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Narrative Description

Summary Paragraph

The Oak Hill Historic District encompasses most all of the eponymously named hamlet, a rural hamlet located in the Town of Durham, Greene County, in the northern Catskill Mountain region of New York. The hamlet's physical infrastructure is largely disposed along the course of State Route 81, an east-to-west transportation corridor that roughly follows the course of the Catskill Creek in this area, and on Oak Hill Road, Schoolhouse Hill Road, Giles Lane, and Lee Road. The hamlet of Oak Hill is located on a curving section of State Route 81 that follows a sharp bend in the Catskill Creek, and it is near this bend, just west of Giles Lane, that Squirmer Valley Creek empties into it. The hamlet is bounded by wooded hills and open expanses of farmland; the northern Catskill Mountains, and the Blackhead range in particular, figure prominently in the southern view shed. The district area features a cohesive and substantially intact grouping of historic buildings and structures arranged in relation to the tree-lined main road and ancillary streets and without significant intrusions; collectively these features convey a strong sense of place. The bulk of the historic resources included within the district appear to have been constructed or were otherwise modified during the second and third quarters of the nineteenth century, with the Greek Revival style being the most prevalent architectural mode expressed in the remaining building stock; in some instances earlier-constructed dwellings were likely updated with distinctive ornamental features in this mode. Domestic forms constitute the majority of the district's buildings, but there are additionally commercial, civic and religious properties contained therein. Although in the nineteenth century the hamlet boasted considerable industrial activity, this aspect of Oak Hill's physical infrastructure has long since fallen away. A total of 10 resources have previously been listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places in the hamlet; thus the nominated historic district serves to unify these already designated resources with Oak Hill's remaining historic components, thereby providing a more complete account of the hamlet's historic-period growth and development.

7. Narrative Description

General Setting & Location, District Layout

Oak Hill is a rural hamlet located in the Town of Durham, Greene County, New York. This unincorporated hamlet is situated near Greene County's north-central boundary, immediately south of Albany County, and its physical features are largely clustered alongside New York State Route 81, which runs parallel with the Catskill Creek in this part of the town. The similarly modest-sized hamlet of Durham is located to the southwest, on Greene County Route 22; to the northwest is the hamlet of Preston Hollow, located in Albany County, as is the hamlet of Medusa, which is located to the northeast of Oak Hill west of Albany County Route 403. From a point to the east, at its intersection with State Route 32 in Greenville, Route 81 follows a westerly and southwesterly course and intersects with Greene County Route 67 east of the hamlet; after traversing the hamlet it continues to the northwest and enters into Albany County where it intersects with State Route 145, the principal east-west transportation corridor in this region. The course of Route 81 largely parallels that of Route 145 from Route 32 prior to the intersection of the two roads at a point south of Preston Hollow, with Route 81 on the north side of Catskill Creek and Route 145 south of it. The character of the nominated hamlet and the surrounding area remains largely pastoral in nature, and the hamlet is framed on its periphery by agricultural land, woodlots and hilly terrain. In the distant southern view shed rise the distinctive landforms of the northern Catskill Mountains and, more specifically, the Blackhead Range and Windham Mountain, while wooded hills rise to the east and north.

The nominated district area is largely defined by the southeast-to-northwest route of Route 81 (Main Street variously), which forms the physical spine around which the nominated district's buildings and structures are, for the most part, clustered in characteristic nineteenth-century turnpike fashion. That segment of Route 81 on the southeastern side of the hamlet is generally flat, but the terrain is slightly more hilly on the opposite, northwestern side of the hamlet, and there Route 81 ascends gradually as it moves through and out of the

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hamlet; both Schoolhouse Hill Road and Giles Lane also rise in elevation as they extend eastwards and northwards, respectively, away from Route 81 into the adjacent hills. Catskill Creek, which is located to the south and west of Route 81, forms another important character-defining feature of the hamlet, as many of the associated properties on that side of the district are terminated by the course of the creek. Route 81 crosses over Squirmer Valley Creek, a tributary of the Catskill Creek, just west of where Schoolhouse Hill Road and Giles Lane intersect with Route 81; early Oak Hill industries which relied on hydraulic power were once situated near this location. The district is in large measure characterized by modest nineteenth-century wood-frame buildings oriented in relation to the road and situated on small parcels; shade trees are numerous and align both Route 81 and the roads which intersect with it within the district area, and these help lend the hamlet its distinctive rural character.

The district area presents as a cohesive, intact and definable entity with buildings, structures and landscape components that offer a strong sense of place without considerable or jarring intrusions. Absent now are the industrial enterprises which at one time formed a notable component of Oak Hill's built environment, but the hamlet nevertheless retains many aspects which speak to its historic development. It has long been identified as a potential candidate for historic district designation with recommendations for such listing dating to the late 1960s. Ten architectural resources within the district have already been individually listed on the New York State and National Register of Historic Places ("S/NRHP" hereafter) along with their associated land. Those are the L.E. Cleveland House; the Charles Pierce House; the Tripp House & Store Complex; the Mrs. Osborn House; the Oak Hill Methodist Episcopal Church; the Parsonage; the A.T. House; the W.F. DeWitt Hotel; Ford's Store; and St. Paul's Lutheran Church.

Architectural Resources: An Overview

A majority of the contributing resources located within the Oak Hill Historic District appear to date from the second and third quarters of the nineteenth century and reflect vernacular interpretations of the prevailing national architectural styles of their respective period, with the Greek Revival style being particularly well represented by the hamlet's remaining building stock. Wood-frame houses are the predominate type with only one notable exception, that being the Tripp House, a brick dwelling which features late Federal style design features and which was built ca. 1830.

The hamlet's houses exhibit a decided road orientation (as opposed to a southern orientation meant to capitalize on solar exposure) and, as such, whether gable fronted or end gabled, were constructed so that their principal entrance corresponded with the adjacent road. The oldest house in the district is believed to be that located at 7855 State Route 81, the so-called A.T. House (S/NRHP listed), the earliest portion of which was likely erected ca. 1790 and prior to 1800. It is a gable-ended building of timber frame construction, the earliest portion of its frame being of the New World Dutch type, and it was built close to the road and expanded to its current configuration over multiple building episodes. It is likely that other houses of relatively early age also survive in the hamlet though now obscured beneath subsequent stylistic updates or expansion campaigns; internal investigation of construction technology and other features is required to discern which buildings may in fact be earlier than their exterior finish work and ornamentation suggests. Nevertheless, the largest percentage of the buildings included within the district appear to have been built during the decades that corresponded with the popularity of the Greek Revival style, ca. 1830 to ca. 1850, and many were later modified with additions, typically in the form of Romantic-Picturesque or Late Victorian-era porches and verandahs. There are numerous examples of the upright-and-wing type house that was popular in the middle decades of the nineteenth century, including both story-and-a-half and two-story variations. Notable expressions of Greek Revival-style domestic design include the Charles Pierce House (S/NRHP listed), the interior woodwork of which is of a distinctive and unusual type and which employs monumental columns as an aspect of its exterior composition—all the other buildings in the hamlet which reflect discernible elements of this distinctive Neoclassical style are astylar in form. Some dwellings exhibit exterior finish work of a mature

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Greek Revival-style character suggestive of a date in the later 1830s or early 1840s, corresponding with a period of growth there.

Also well represented in the district are a number of commercial buildings which date to the nineteenth century, including the Tripp Store (S/NRHP listed), with its distinctive Late Victorian-era architectural exterior design vocabulary, and the former store located at 7821 Route 81, which features fully developed Greek Revival-style design features. Both are excellent representations of their type and respective periods of construction.

The Gothic Revival and Romantic-Picturesque movement of the middle decades of the nineteenth century is well represented by Oak Hill's surviving architectural stock. St. Paul's Lutheran Church (S/NRHP listed), originally built ca. 1834 to satisfy the worship needs of an Episcopal congregation that subsequently disbanded in the twentieth century, represents the convergence of the standard Protestant rural Wren-Gibbs meetinghouse type with relatively early and effective Gothic detailing and proportioning. Also of note is the seemingly unique "Icicle House," erected ca. 1845, a highly unusual work of domestic architecture which employs vertical board-and-batten siding and distinctive sawn bargeboards from which the popularly known house takes its name. It is an unusual regional example of antebellum Picturesque-inspired architecture in the region and one of the highlights of the district's antebellum architecture.

While most of the hamlet's physical development had occurred during the first three decades of the nineteenth century, there are, nevertheless, examples of Late Victorian-era and early to mid-twentieth century architectural motives present in the district. The store built for Isaac Tripp ca. 1888 portrays the architectural exuberance of this period and features a robust design vocabulary combining Italianate and Queen Anne-style decorative features and motives. The building erected ca. 1900 to serve as an opera house and fraternal lodge (7771 Route 81) offers itself as a vernacular expression of the Queen Anne style, albeit a modest one, but it is nevertheless conspicuous when viewed in the context of the hamlet's earlier and more sedate building stock. Also represented, albeit in small numbers, are examples of the Craftsman type house which became popular during the 1910s. The latest contributing house in the district is a ca. 1940 house of the Cape type. By this time any new residential development within the district area was limited.

Building List & Individual Building Narratives

The following building list is arranged by street and begins with those properties disposed along the east/north side of State Route 81, beginning on the southeast side of the Oak Hill hamlet near that road's intersection with Oak Hill Road (County Route 71); it then follows the course of Route 81 past Schoolhouse Hill Road, Giles Lane, and over Squirmer Valley Creek to Lee Road. At that point the properties on the opposite, west/south side of Route 81 are itemized, moving in a southeasterly direction back towards Route 81's intersection with Oak Hill Road. The properties located on Schoolhouse Hill Road, Giles Lane, Lee Road, and Oak Hill Road follows.

Each individual property is identified by street address and the corresponding tax parcel information. In those instances where a property was previously listed on the S/NRHP, the listing name is given in parentheses at the beginning of the individual descriptive narrative. Contributing and non-contributing status is also indicated, as are dates of construction, which with some exceptions are approximated and based on an analysis of physical features and documentary sources such as period maps. Builder's names, where known, are given. Secondary resources such as carriage barns and automobile garages are indented below the principal resources with which they are associated. Only those automobile garages which exhibit characteristics suggesting they were erected during the period of significance have been deemed contributing. Many instead appear to be of more recent age and thus are noted as non-contributing.

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STATE ROUTE 81, east side moving southeast to northwest

7762 State Route 81 (contributing building)/tax parcel 21.02-2-16; ca. 1840 and later

Wood-frame story-and-a-half dwelling with end-gable roof, rear lean-to and one-story flat-roofed wing on west elevation; the principal block is three-bays wide on its street-front elevation and two-bays deep on the east elevation. There is a visor roof between the upper and lower story on the south elevation in addition to a projecting hood over the entrance door. Vinyl siding, standing-seam metal roof, replacement doors and windows; the partially exposed-at-grade foundation is parged with cement. Building retains its basic nineteenth century form and fenestration pattern, in addition to its moulded wood cornices and cornice returns.

Wood timber retaining wall; this feature partially aligns the road and the house's driveway (non-contributing structure)

7770 State Route 81 (non-contributing building)/tax parcel 21.02.2-15

A non-historic modular home with attached car port.

7778 State Route 81 (contributing building)/tax parcel 21.02-2-14; ca. 1840 & later

Wood-frame story-and-a-half dwelling with self-contained rectangular footprint and end-gable roof; the façade fronts on the road and has five evenly spaced bays with a center entrance. The entrance features a recessed Greek Revival-style treatment with three-quarter length sidelights, transom and pilasters contained within a partially moulded surround. First-story windows are flanked by paneled shutters. Wood clapboard siding, wood shingle roof, replacement windows, stone foundation; narrow corner boards and moulded wood frieze and cornices.

7786 State Route 81 (contributing building)/tax parcel 21.02-2-13; ca. 1840 & later

Wood-frame story-and-a-half dwelling with gable-front orientation and three-bay-wide façade with side entrance; in addition to this main block there is a small single-story bump-out at the northeast corner with hipped roof. Wood clapboard siding, corrugated metal roof, moulded wood frieze and cornices, stone foundation. The first-story of the street-front elevation is aligned by a small porch of Neoclassical characteristics with Tuscan colonettes and turned balusters.

7798 State Route 81 (contributing building)/tax parcel 21.02-2-8; ca. 1840 & later

Wood-frame two-story dwelling with hipped roof and three-bay façade. Building exhibits mature Greek Revival style characteristics and the front door is of an unusual three-panel type with foliate enrichment. First story windows are hung with six-over-six sash; upper frieze band windows have nine-light casements. Wood clapboard siding, corner pilasters, Greek Revival-style porch, corrugated metal roof, stone foundation, deep frieze and moulded wood cornices.

Wood-frame carriage barn with gable-front orientation; stone foundation, wood novelty siding, standing-seam metal roof (contributing building)

7808 State Route 81 (non-contributing building)/tax parcel 21.02-2-7; ca. 1970

Wood frame and concrete block ranch-type dwelling of recent age consists of one and two-story sections in addition to an attached one-bay automobile garage; outside period of significance

7818 State Route 81 (S/NRHP-listed)/tax parcel 21.02-2-6; ca. 1820 & later

"L.E. Cleveland House." Wood frame gable-end dwelling with rear gable-roofed ell; main block is two stories high with five-bay façade with center entrance. Building has exterior Italianate-style details including bracketed wood cornice and a full width front porch with scroll-sawn porch brackets and bracketed cornice. The main entrance consists of double-leaf glazed and paneled doors within an eared surround with paneled jambs. Wood

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clapboard siding, standing-seam metal roof, stone foundation wood windows (two-over-two sash on façade at first-story level).

7830 State Route 81 (contributing building)/tax parcel 21.02-2-5; ca. 1840 & later

Wood frame two-story dwelling, gable ended, with rear extension and engaged gable-roofed wing with steeply pitched roof at northeast corner. Building exhibits mature Greek Revival-style exterior including fully pedimented gable ends and the façade of the main block has dual entrances with six-paneled doors. Wood siding, corrugated metal roof, stone foundation, wood sash six-over-six windows; deep moulded wood frieze, moulded wood cornices, and later and partially deteriorated Picturesque era full-width front porch.

7838 State Route 81 (contributing building)/tax parcel 21.02-2-4; ca. 1835 & later

Wood frame two-story dwelling, gable fronted, with two-story wing on east elevation. The main block features an unusual five-bay arrangement with center entrance in concert with the front-gable arrangement. Both the façade and tympanum of the main section are flush-boarded; the gable is treated as a classical pediment and has a half-round louvered fan centered within it; sawn bargeboards trim the cornices and raking cornices of the principal gable and the principal cornice of the wing. Wood siding, standing-seam metal roof, stone foundation, wood sash windows (including nine-over-six sash at first-story level); the front porch features a sunburst motif in its gable field and is sustained by tapered wood posts. The building functioned for a time as Smith Hall in association with a Methodist organization.

7842 State Route 81 (contributing building)/tax parcel 21.02-2-3; ca. 1850 & later

Wood frame two-story dwelling, gable ended, with three-bay façade and center entrance. The center entrance bay is fronted by an engaged tiered porch of Late Victorian characteristics the design of which incorporates Tuscan colonettes and decorative fish-scale shingles. Wood clapboard siding, standing-seam metal roof, stone foundation, two-over-two wood window sash; wood frieze, moulded cornice returns, corner pilasters. This building is presently being rehabilitated.

7846 State Route 81 (S/NRHP listed)/tax parcel 21.02-2-2; ca. 1840 & later

“Charles Pierce House.” Wood frame two-story dwelling, gable ended, with rear extension and full width two-story Greek Revival-style porch sustained by four monumental Ionic columns on the façade; the latter is five-bays wide with central doors at first and second-story level. The main entrance is recessed and consists of a door with large beveled glass panel above two wood panels; it is flanked by three-quarter length sidelights (presently covered over) and has moulded pilasters with corner blocks set within a larger moulded enframingent. Wood clapboard siding, asphalt shingle roof, stone foundation, two-over-two wood sash windows.

One-bay automobile garage of brick and wood frame construction with stucco-clad side walls and gable-front orientation (non-contributing building)

7850 State Route 81 (contributing building)/tax parcel 21.02-2-1; ca. 1900 & later

Wood frame one-story commercial building, gable ended, which was banked into its site and as such presents as a two-story building road-side. The lower story features a center entrance with large commercial windows to either side of a five-panel wood door; the upper story features a center door and flanking windows and corresponds with a wood-frame porch. Wood clapboard siding, corrugated metal roof.

From the above property, moving in a northwesterly direction, State Route 81 intersects with Schoolhouse Hill Road on its east side, then Giles Lane, before crossing over Squirmer Valley Creek. 7854 Route 81 corresponds with a parcel of land situated between Schoolhouse Hill Road and Giles Lane; 7872 Route 81 is the first property on the west side of Route 81 after it crosses the creek.

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7854 State Route 81 [246 Schoolhouse Hill Road variously] (contributing building)/tax parcel 21.02-1-10; ca. 1850 & later

Wood frame commercial building located on a parcel of land between Schoolhouse Hill Road and Giles Lane comprised of two distinct sections, a story-and-a-half front block and a two-story rear block. The story-and-a-half block, gable fronted, is oriented to face the road and its façade consists of a central entrance flanked by large store windows. Shed-roof dormers punctuate the pitched roof of the gabled section, one on either side of the ridge. The wing has a flat roof and is three bays wide (south elevation) by three bays deep (east elevation). Wood siding, standing-seam metal roof, stone foundation, moulded wood cornices, replacement windows. Although its exterior features have been denatured the basic form of the building remains essentially intact.

Wood frame shed (non-contributing building)

Stone wall of recent construction (non-contributing structure)

State Route 81 Bridge over Squirmer Valley Creek (non-contributing structure)

This steel and concrete two-lane vehicular bridge with stone veneered wing walls and metal guard railing carries the road surface of Route 81 over Squirmer Valley Creek; it is of relatively recent construction, having been erected ca. 1993.

7872 State Route 81 (S/NRHP listed)/tax parcel 21.02-1-12; ca. 1850 & later

“Mrs. Osbourne House.” Wood frame dwelling with hipped roof, this building presents as a three-story construct on its east, or creek-front, elevation. The façade is five-bays wide with deeply recessed center entrance and is partially spanned by a tiered porch which exhibits Late Victorian characteristics with lathe-turned posts and railing. Wood clapboard siding, stone foundation, moulded wood trim, wood sash six-over-six windows.

7878 State Route 81 (contributing building)/tax parcel 21.02-1-13; ca. 1840 & later

Wood frame story-and-a-half dwelling, gable ended, with rear wing and large intersecting front gable. The façade is five-bays wide with center entrance and is spanned by a Late Victorian era porch with lathe-turned posts, brackets, and a wood shingle skirt. Composite shingle siding, standing-seam metal roof, stone foundation, one-over-one wood sash windows; moulded wood cornices.

7886 State Route 81 (S/NRHP listed)/tax parcel 21.02-1-14; ca. 1859 & later

“Oak Hill Methodist Episcopal Church.” Wood frame meetinghouse, gable fronted, with engaged central bell tower corresponding with the central entrance. Building exhibits distinctive Greek Revival-style detailing in treatment of the pediment and open bell tower; the latter features distinctive and cleverly executed Corinthian-order capitals. Wood clapboard siding, metal roofing, stone foundation. Builder: Stephen Osterhout.

7890 & 7892 State Route 81 (S/NRHP listed)/tax parcel 21.02-1-17; ca. 1830/ca. 1888 & later

“Tripp House & Store Complex.” This two-building complex includes a brick dwelling of Late Federal style characteristics, which is two stories, end gabled, with a five-bay façade with center entrance and rear ell; and a wood-frame commercial building, front gabled, which features exuberant Late Victorian-era detailing in the form of decorative brackets and a cantilevered porch with lathe-turned components. The store, which has a self-contained rectangular footprint, retains its early storefront configuration and glazing; the house, the main block of which is tall and narrow, has a standing-seam metal roof and a prominent entrance frontispiece with a large glazed fanlight and a narrow frieze with modillioned cornice. This property additionally contains a wood-frame barn, a small frame cottage, and an outhouse; all fall within the existing S/NRHP boundary.

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7898 State Route 81(S/NRHP listed)/tax parcel 21.02-1-18; ca. 1815/1840 & later

“The Parsonage.” Wood frame two-story dwelling, gable ended, with rear wing; the façade features a five-bay arrangement of fenestration with a central door flanked by windows; the door, recessed, is of a paneled Greek Revival-style type. The principal road-side elevation is fronted by a wood porch of Italianate-style characteristics. Wood clapboard siding, standing-seam metal roof, stone foundation, two-over-two wood sash windows; deep moulded frieze, moulded cornices and gable returns.

7904 State Route 81 (contributing building)/tax parcel 21.02-1-21; ca. 1840 & later

Wood frame story-and-a-half dwelling, gable ended; the rear features a large extension (historic period) which required alteration of the rear pitch of the gable roof. The façade features a central door with two windows to one side and a large three-sided bay window on the other side. The principal road-side elevation is fronted by a wood porch which returns around the east elevation. Wood clapboard siding, standing-seam metal roof, stone foundation, two-over-two wood sash windows, deep frieze and moulded wood cornices and cornice returns.

7910 State Route 81 (contributing building)/tax parcel 21.02-1-24; ca. 1825

Wood frame story-and-a-half dwelling, gable fronted, with three-bay façade with center entrance flanked by windows; a small ell with corresponding porch extends from the northeast corner. Wood novelty siding, asphalt roofing, stone foundation.

STATE ROUTE 81, west side moving northwest to southeast

7923 State Route 81 (contributing building)/tax parcel 21.02-1-33; ca. 1840 & later

Wood frame two-story dwelling of the upright and ell type with a front-facing main block; the ell extends from the east elevation while a small hyphen and two-bay garage are present on the opposite west elevation. The upright section has a three-bay façade with recessed entrance of a Greek Revival-style type, and a Late Victorian-era porch aligns the principal elevation of the wing. Wood clapboard siding, standing-seam metal roof, stone foundation, replacement windows; the main block’s façade has corner-boards and wood cornice returns and its principal door is of a glazed and paneled Late Victorian-era type.

7921 State Route 81 (contributing building)/tax parcel 21.02-1-34; ca. 1900 & later

Wood-frame dwelling with T-shaped plan and cross-gable roof; the gable-front section fronts on the road and has a two-bay façade with side entrance and is fronted by a porch with turned components that is carried around the elevation opposite the driveway. Wood shingle and vinyl siding, asphalt roof, some two-over-two wood sash windows.

Wood-frame shed (contributing building)

7917 State Route 81 (contributing building)/tax parcel 21.02-1-25; ca. 1890

Wood frame two-story dwelling, gable fronted, with cross-gabled bay projection on the east elevation with corresponding cut-away bay at first-story level; a lean-to extends from the rear elevation. The building exhibits modest Late Victorian-era design features including decorative gable trusses. Wood clapboard siding, asphalt shingle roof, stone foundation, two-over-two wood sash windows.

7911 State Route 81 (contributing building)/tax parcel 21.02-1-23; ca. 1840 & later

Wood frame story-and-a-half dwelling, gable ended, with three-bay façade and center entrance; a lean-to extends from the rear of the house. House exhibits characteristic Greek Revival-style detailing inclusive of corner pilasters, moulded wood cornices and cornice returns, and a trabeated entrance frontispiece. The façade was altered at a later date and the entrance is now flanked to either side by picture windows each of

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which is fitted with 32-lights. Wood clapboard siding, standing-seam metal roof, stone foundation, moulded wood cornices.

Automobile garage (non-contributing building)

7907 State Route 81 (contributing building)/tax parcel 21.02-1-20; ca. 1940

Wood frame one-story dwelling of the Cape type, gable ended with steeply pitched roof, with three-bay façade with center entrance; the windows flanking the entrance are hung with eight-over-eight wood sash. Two dormers punctuate the front pitch of the roof, and there is a car-port which extends from the east elevation. Vinyl siding, asphalt roofing.

One-bay wood frame automobile garage (contributing building)

N/A State Route 81 (non-contributing structure)/tax parcel 21.02-1-19; built 2017

A Neoclassical open-air folly consisting of a pediment and entablature sustained by six fluted Ionic order columns.

Wood-frame carriage barn; gable ended with wood clapboard siding, standing-seam metal roof, 12-over-12 and six-over-six wood sash windows, and wood batten doors with surface-mounted hardware (contributing building)

7901 State Route 81 (contributing building)/tax parcel 21.02-1-16; ca. 1845 & later

Wood frame story-and-a-half dwelling, gable fronted, with rear lean-to. This building exhibits mature and distinctive Greek Revival-style treatments including a fully pedimented gable, deep moulded frieze, moulded cornices and corner pilasters; the façade and tympanum are finished with wood flush-boarding and within the tympanum is a Gothic inspired motif. Wood clapboard and flush-board siding, stone foundation, two-over-two wood window sash at first-story level and two-light casements corresponding with the upper frieze band windows.

7871 State Route 81 (contributing building)/tax parcel 21.02-1-11; ca. 1850 & later

Wood frame dwelling consisting of a two-story main block, gable ended, with five-bay façade and dual entrances; there are additionally two-story and one-story wings. Beaded wood clapboard siding, standing-seam metal roof (asphalt on wings), stone foundation, two-over-two wood sash windows.

Barn grouping which forms an L-shaped complex, and which consists of two gable-roofed sections, one larger and one smaller, which are attached and aligned with parallel roof ridges on a north-to-south orientation, in addition to a large, detached shed-roofed ell with rectangular footprint that extends eastward and which has southern exposure. The main gable-roofed section has a cupola straddling its roof ridge and a lean-to on its south elevation which engages the east wall of the smaller section. Wood siding; corrugated metal roofing (contributing building)

Wood-frame one-bay outbuilding with shed-roof; wood siding, sliding door on north elevation, metal roofing (contributing building)

7855 State Route 81 (S/NRHP listed)/tax parcel 21.02-2-28; ca. 1790 & later

“A.T. House.” Wood frame dwelling, gable ended, expanded in linear construction over at least three distinctive building campaigns; in addition to the main gable-roofed section there is a flat-roofed addition at the southwest corner. Clapboard exterior with no cornice embellishment, two entrances situated on

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asymmetrical six-bay façade hung with eight and five-paneled doors; one door has detached sidelights. Wood clapboard siding, asphalt shingle roofing, wood multi-pane sash, two brick chimneys at roof ridge.

7843 State Route 81 (contributing building)/tax parcel 21.02-2-27; ca. 1920

Wood frame story-and-a-half dwelling of the Craftsman type; front pitch of roof is extended on the principal elevation to form a porch and is punctuated by a single large shed-roofed dormer. Wood shingle exterior, standing-seam metal roof, three-over-one wood sash windows.

One-story automobile garage (non-contributing building)

7833-7829 State Route 81 (contributing building)/tax parcel 21.02-2-26.1 and 26.2; ca. 1840 & later

Wood frame two-story dwelling, gable ended, with rear kitchen ell and wraparound Picturesque verandah. The house's façade is five-bays wide with center entrance with two-panel door, full-length sidelights and transom. Distinctive Greek Revival-style detailing includes the deep frieze and moulded cornices; the end gables of the main block are fully pedimented and have triangular windows. Wood clapboard siding, standing-seam metal roof, stone foundation, wood six-over-six window sash.

Greek Revival-style carriage barn, gable fronted with wide frieze, pedimented window and door crowns, six-light wood sash (contributing building).

7825 State Route 81 (contributing building)/tax parcel 21.02-2-25; ca. 1840 & later

Wood frame story-and-a-half dwelling with rear extension, gable ended, with five-bay façade and center entrance. The building is situated in such a way that the basement is accessible-at-grade on all but the principal elevation. Aluminum siding, standing-seam metal roof, stone foundation; two-over-two wood sash at first-story level, awnings on half-story gable end windows. Sign identifies house presently as "Catskill Creek Cottage."

Concrete-block automobile garage (non-contributing building)

7819 State Route 81 (contributing building)/tax parcel 21.02-2-29; ca. 1845

Wood frame story-and-a-half Greek Revival-style commercial building, gable fronted, with intact nineteenth century storefront. The storefront consists of large sheet-glass windows flanking a recessed entrance fitted with double-leaf doors. Decorative details include a deep frieze and cornice returns. Wood clapboard siding, standing-seam metal roof, stone foundation, moulded wood trim and storefront paneling. The building is widely known as The Assemblage and is associated with the late artist Norman Hasselriis who used it as an exhibition space.

Two-bay automobile garage (non-contributing building)

7815 State Route 81 (contributing building)/tax parcel 21-02-2-22; ca. 1840 & later

Wood frame story-and-a-half dwelling with rear extension, gabled ended, with five-bay façade and center entrance. The façade is partially spanned by a Picturesque porch which shields the main entrance door and the windows which flank it. Notable among the building's decorative features is the triglyph-enriched frieze of the façade, which is carried up the rakes of the gable ends. Wood clapboard siding, standing-seam metal roof, stone foundation, moulded wood cornices and frieze.

7811 State Route 81 (S/NRHP listed)/tax parcel 21.02-2-21; ca. 1880

"Ford's Store." Wood frame two-story commercial building with single-pitched roof and cantilevered hood over the first-story storefront; both the principal cornice and that of the hood are bracketed. Fenestration on

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the side elevations is sparse. Wood clapboard siding, intact glazed and paneled storefront with recessed double-leaf entrance doors, stone foundation, replacement windows.

7803 State Route 81 (S/NRHP listed)/tax parcel 21.02-2-20; ca. 1865

“W.F. DeWitt Hotel.” Wood frame two-story gable ended commercial building with a two-story flat-roofed addition. The main block is seven bays wide by three bays deep, the principal elevation’s fenestration being decidedly asymmetrical. The principal entrance corresponds with the façade and features glazed and paneled double-leaf doors of an Italianate-style type, recessed and framed a casing which incorporates angled and paneled jambs and engaged Gothic colonettes. The first-story of the façade is fitted with flush-board and the gable ends are finished with decorative cornice brackets. Wood clapboard siding, standing-seam metal roof, stone foundation, two-over-two and two-over-four (first-story façade) wood sash windows with plain surrounds and moulded wood crowns.

7787 State Route 81 (not counted)/tax parcel 21.02-2-19

An unpaved parking area situated between 7781 State Route 81 and 7803 State Route 81.

7781 State Route 81 (contributing building)/tax parcel 21.02-2-18; ca. 1920

Wood frame one-story Craftsman-type house, gable fronted, three bays wide by three bays deep. The front elevation is fronted by a hipped roof porch which has a low clapboard-clad knee wall above which are unfluted Tuscan columns. A central entrance with flanking windows and paired gable window constitute the fenestration on the principal road-side elevation. Wood clapboard siding, asphalt single roofing, concrete block foundation, one-over-one wood window sash.

7771 State Route 81 (contributing building)/tax parcel 21.02-2-17; ca. 1900

Wood frame two-story building, gable fronted, built on a rectangular plan; it was constructed as the Lyman Tremain Opera House. The building displays modest Late Victorian-era architectural design features of Queen Anne style derivation inclusive of patterned shingle work, moulded window crowns, and an elaborate tripartite window which is the central feature of the shingle-clad gable field. The design additionally includes a cupola with broached spire and a brick chimney with corbelled top, both aligned along the roof ridge. The principal entrance consists of double-leaf glazed and paneled doors spanned by a stained-glass transom. A non-historic full-width front porch with wood support posts and stone skirt aligns the road-side elevation. Wood clapboard siding and shingles, standing-seam metal roof, stone foundation, two-over-one wood sash windows, paneled wood shutters. Builder: John Burhans, Durham.

7729 State Route 81 (contributing building)/tax parcel 21.02-3-10; ca. 1845

Wood frame dwelling of the upright-and-wing type consisting of a gable-front story-and-a-half main block and one story kitchen ell; the main block has a three-bay façade with side entrance plan and the principal elevations of both are spanned by porches with both historic period and later posts. Distinguishing Greek Revival-style features of the main block include the fully pedimented treatment of the principal block’s gable, the recessed paneled door with three-quarter length sidelights, corner pilasters, and the rectilinear patterned grilles which occupy the frieze-band windows at half-story level. Wood clapboard siding, standing-seam metal roof, stone foundation, wood sash windows, two brick chimneys, moulded wood cornices.

SCHOOLHOUSE HILL ROAD

228 Schoolhouse Hill Road (contributing building)/tax parcel 21.02-1-9; ca. 1850 & later

Wood frame one-story schoolhouse with large window band on the principal road-front elevation. Wood clapboard siding, asphalt roofing, stone foundation.

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229 Schoolhouse Hill Road (contributing building)/tax parcel; ca. 1850 & later

Wood frame story-and-a-half dwelling with gable-front orientation and two one-story wings arranged in linear manner above a rectangular plan. Wood clapboard siding, corrugated metal roof, stone foundation, six-over-six wood sash windows.

GILES LANE

18 Giles Lane (contributing building)/tax parcel 21.02-1-8; ca. 1835

Wood frame story-and-a-half dwelling, gable ended, situated on an elevated position between Giles Lane and Schoolhouse Hill Road. Building exhibits distinctive Greek Revival-style detailing but is thought to potentially date to ca. 1795. Wood clapboard siding, standing-seam metal roof, stone foundation, six-over-six windows at first story level and small casements corresponding with the half story, moulded wood cornices and trim.

34 Giles Lane (contributing building)/tax parcel 21.02-1-7; ca. 1840 & later

Wood frame story-and-a-half dwelling with side ell; the four-bay façade with offset entrance faces west towards Giles Lane. Wood clapboard and novelty siding, stone foundation, replacement windows.

Automobile garage (non-contributing building).

40 Giles Lane (contributing building)/tax parcel 21.02-1-6; ca. 1840 & later

Wood frame story-and-a-half dwelling of upright and wing type. There is a large exterior chimney of stone construction on the north elevation of the main block. Wood clapboard siding, asphalt roofing, stone foundation, six-over-six wood sash windows, moulded wood cornices and cornice returns, replacement door.

Wood-frame shed (non-contributing building)

49 Giles Lane (contributing building)/tax parcel 21.02-1-4; ca. 1860 & later

Wood frame story-and-a-half dwelling with narrow front block with gable-front orientation and lean-to on the south elevation; a wing extends behind the main section.

Wood-frame barn with board-and-batten siding, corrugated metal roof (contributing building)

Wood-frame carriage barn (contributing building)

LEE ROAD

6 Lee Road (contributing building)/tax parcel 21.02-1-30; ca. 1860 & later

Wood frame two-story upright and ell type dwelling, gable roofed, with rear additions. The main block has a southern orientation and the entrance, located on that elevation, is recessed with glazed and paneled doors set within a moulded and eared surround. Vinyl siding, standing-seam metal roof, stone foundation, wood sash six-over-six and two-over-two windows.

OAK HILL ROAD (COUNTY ROUTE 71)

The Oak Hill Road portion of the building list itemizes those properties along the west side of the road beginning from that road's northern intersection with State Route 8, south of 7771 State Route 81 and immediately west of the Lutheran Church property. 47 Oak Hill Road, the so-called Icicle House, is the southernmost property within the district's boundary.

111 Oak Hill Road (non-contributing building)/tax parcel 21.02-3-1; ca. 1956 & later

Wood frame building, one story, with a broad gambrel roof the ridge of which is aligned parallel with the side elevations. The building was renovated from a previous function to serve in a commercial capacity and presently houses Oak Hill's United States Post Office branch in one of its two principal commercial spaces at ground level. Wood novelty and synthetic siding, rolled asphalt roof.

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103 Oak Hill Road (contributing building)/tax parcel 21.02-3-19; ca. 1860

Wood frame two-story dwelling of the upright and wing type with glazed front porch. The main block is three bays wide by two bays deep on its north elevation while the ell is two bays wide by two bays deep. Vinyl siding, asphalt roofing, stone foundation, replacement windows.

89 Oak Hill Road (contributing building)/tax parcel 21.02-3-18; ca. 1840 & later

Wood frame story-and-a-half dwelling, gable ended, with five bay façade and center entrance. It appears that the house was modified subsequently with the addition of a front cross gable, and that this feature was later extended to provide a finished room contained in a gable-roofed extension situated above the front porch. Vinyl siding, asphalt roofing, stone foundation, replacement windows.

Wood-frame carriage barn with gable front orientation and rear lean-to, wood novelty siding [in addition to some pressed metal on the principal gable], standing-seam metal roof (contributing building).

75 Oak Hill Road (contributing building)/tax parcel 21.02-3-17; ca. 1850 & later

Wood frame dwelling consisting of a hip-roofed main block with five-bay façade and center entrance, and a gable-roofed kitchen wing with steeply pitched roof which extends from the main block's northwest corner. The building has a porch which aligns the principal elevation and additional is carried around the north elevation to the kitchen wing. The principal entrance of the main block is fitted with glazed and paneled double-leaf doors set within a moulded wood surround. Wood clapboard siding, standing-seam metal roof, six-over-six and two-over-two wood sash windows, brick chimneys.

Wood frame carriage barn renovated to accommodate modern functions (non-contributing building)

63 Oak Hill Road (contributing building)/tax parcel 21.02-3-16; ca. 1850 & later

Wood frame dwelling of the upright and ell type consisting of a two-story main block, gable fronted, and a story-and-a-half ell. Vinyl siding, standing-seam metal roof, stone foundation, replacement windows.

Automobile garage (non-contributing building)

47 Oak Hill Road (contributing building)/tax parcel 21.00-4-12.1; ca. 1845

Wood frame one-and-one half story hip roofed residence with one-story gable-roofed wing and attached barn. The main block is cubic massed and covered by a prominent hipped roof with deeply projecting eaves which are embellished with distinctive bargeboards that have been likened to icicles, thus the building's popular name "the Icicle House." The entrance is on the northeast elevation and is contained within a small projecting vestibule flanked by windows. Siding on all three sections is of the vertical board-and-batten type. Wood board-and-batten siding, standing-seam metal roof, stone foundation, six-over-six wood window sash, intact wood "icicle" bargeboards, decorative window trim and louvered wood shutters. This building is a well-known and much photographed example of antebellum Picturesque-inspired architecture in the Catskill Mountain region and is a registered Greene County landmark.

96 Oak Hill Road (S/NRHP listed)/tax parcel 21.02-3-2; ca. 1834, 1883 & later

"St. Paul's Lutheran Church." Wood frame meetinghouse, gable fronted, three bays wide by four bays deep with a central entrance on the façade; to the rear of this original construct was added a chancel and sacristy in the 1880s. The church originally boasted a steeple, which was removed ca. 1970. The original building exhibits decidedly vertical proportioning furthered by the tall Gothic-arched windows. Wood clapboard siding,

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standing-seam metal roof, wood multi-pane sash, moulded wood cornices. In addition to the church the property includes a decorative cast-iron perimeter fence with anthemion cresting and a small burial yard.

84 Oak Hill Road (contributing building)/tax parcel 21.02-3-3; ca. 1840

Wood frame dwelling of the upright and wing type, consisting of a two-story main block with three-bay façade and side entrance plan, and a story-and-a-half ell which has a single-story wing extending from its rear. The main block exhibits characteristic Greek Revival-style design features including a deep frieze, fully pedimented gable treatment, trabeated entrance frontispiece, and corner pilasters. The street-front elevation of the ell is spanned by a full-width porch carried by antae-type posts. Wood clapboard siding, stone foundation, replacement windows, moulded wood cornices and trim.

Flagstone walkway (contributing structure)

One-story garage with gable roof (contributing building)

68 Oak Hill Road (contributing building)/tax parcel 21.02-3-20; ca. 1860

Wood frame story-and-half dwelling of the upright-and-wing type, consisting of a story-and-a-half main block with gable-front orientation and a small one-story wing which extends beyond the rear wall of the main block; the main block has a steeply pitched roof which is trimmed with decorative bargeboard of Gothic Revival derivation. The façade of the main section is three bays wide with a side entrance with corresponding trabeated frontispiece; the side elevation is two bays deep with large windows at first-story windows and small casements corresponding with the half-story. Wood clapboard siding, standing-seam metal roof, both wood sash and replacement windows.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT

COMMERCE

Period of Significance

ca. 1790- ca. 1940

Significant Dates

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Period of Significance (justification)

The cited period of significance, ca. 1790- ca. 1940, corresponds with physical features cited as contributing resources within the district boundary. The ca. 1790 date corresponds with documentation previously compiled for the NRHP-listed A.T. House, which is presently thought to be Oak Hill's oldest extant dwelling. The terminal date, ca. 1940, allows for the inclusion of various early twentieth century architectural resources that portray the last period of historic development in Oak Hill, among them houses dating to ca. 1900, ca. 1920, and ca. 1940.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

N/A

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph

The Oak Hill Historic District is an architecturally and historically significant resource located in the Town of Durham, Greene County, New York. Set amidst the rolling topography of northern Greene County, traversed by the course of the Catskill Creek and framed to the south by the prominent landforms of the northern Catskill Mountains, which rise impressively in the distance, this rural hamlet has survived to present times with much of its nineteenth and early twentieth century building stock substantially intact. The buildings, structures and associated features contained therein collectively chronicle the development of Oak Hill as it evolved from a Revolutionary War-era frontier settlement in the rugged foothills north of the Catskill Mountains and west of the Hudson River into a thriving hamlet which came to sustain its own manufacturing and commercial interests, hotels, and religious organizations by the mid-nineteenth century. Although this historic manufacturing infrastructure, located alongside the Catskill and Squirmer Valley creeks within and on the outskirts of the hamlet, has long since fallen away, resources associated with its domestic, commercial, and religious life remain to portray Oak Hill's historic growth. A majority of the resources included within the boundary date to the second and third quarters of the nineteenth century and attest to a period of relative prosperity and physical expansion which corresponded with the architectural popularity of the Greek Revival style, a national design mode which is well represented by the hamlet's domestic, commercial and religious building stock. Although examples of architecture from the pre-1830 period are also present in Oak Hill—the earliest extant identified house likely dates to ca. 1790—the Greek Revival style remains the prevailing architectural idiom found there. Expressions of the Romantic-Picturesque styles also exist, the Italianate mode being fairly well represented; also of considerable note in this particular context is the so-called Icicle House, an antebellum period dwelling which exhibits distinctive features of the Romantic-Picturesque mode. It would appear that much of the nominated building stock had been erected by the end of the third quarter of the nineteenth century, notwithstanding additions and modest upgrades such as new porches made to existing houses. Wood frame construction predominates and there is only one example of brick construction in the hamlet, albeit a prominent one, the ca. 1830 Tripp House. The last quarter of the nineteenth century is nevertheless represented by two important and conspicuous works of architecture in the hamlet, those being the former Lyman Tremain Opera House and the Tripp Store, both of which portray the architectural exuberance of the Late Victorian era, the architecture of which formed a marked contrast to the more sedate architecture of earlier periods. There are additionally a small number of resources which portray early twentieth century architectural trends, among them houses of the Craftsman and Cape types. In addition to its considerable architectural interest, Oak Hill is also historically significant as a rural hamlet the development of which was tied directly to the harnessing of water power from the Catskill Creek and the growth of which was made possible by overland transportation routes which connected its manufacturing and agricultural interests with the Hudson River to the east, namely the Schoharie and Susquehanna turnpikes. A number of important early industries were conducted there, among them iron foundries, which provided an impetus for growth and which helped sustain the hamlet's economic fortunes during the nineteenth century. While these industries have long since fallen away, the hamlet which grew up around them remains to chronicle this chapter of Durham and Greene County history. The Oak Hill Historic District is being nominated in association with NRHP Criterion A, in the areas of Exploration/Settlement and Commerce, and is additionally being nominated under Criterion C, in the area of Architecture. It is being nominated at the local significance level.

Narrative Statement of Significance

Early Settlement, Development & Historical Overview

The area within the Town of Durham that would later evolve into the hamlet of Oak Hill was among the earliest in the town settled by people of European ancestry. During the 1760s this area, at that time nothing more than an unbroken wilderness, was surveyed by Eliab Youmans, and the first scattered homesteads were established prior to the American Revolution. Youmans is credited with surveying a number of local land patents, among them the Stewart and Maitland patents. Oak Hill was situated within the latter, a land grant

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made by King George III to Colonel Richard Maitland, a Scottish officer who served in the British army. This grant was made in June 1767.¹ However, Maitland himself never settled on these lands, and the first settlers instead made lease agreements through his executors, the Reverend John Ogilvie, William McAdam, William Bruce and Thomas Moncrief. Three individuals— Lucas DeWitt, John Plank, and Hendrick Plank— are generally recognized as the first pioneers to establish permanent homesteads in Oak Hill; a fourth man, whose surname was Egbertson, is thought to have arrived shortly thereafter.² All had established themselves in the area of Oak Hill sometime around 1770, where they set themselves to the laborious task of clearing land and erecting farmsteads. Given their isolated location in the foothills west of the Hudson River, these first settlers were compelled to travel to Leeds to ground their grain, that being the location of the nearest grist mill, until that time when Lucas DeWitt developed a portable mill which satisfied this basic need.

The history of this first Oak Hill settlement forms a brief prologue to the subsequent growth and development of the hamlet, which occurred in the nineteenth century. The onset of the American Revolution and the threat of remaining on the unprotected New York frontier in the hilly terrain west of the Hudson River led to the abandonment of this settlement not more than half a decade after its initial establishment. The massacre of the Strobe family by Native Americans allied with British Crown at nearby Round Top in 1780 proved an effective deterrent to most and soon thereafter the first settlers abandoned their pioneer farmsteads. Local folklore claims that before leaving, Lucas DeWitt secreted away his portable grist mill in a hollow log and, upon returning following the conclusion of the war, found it where he had placed it years earlier.³ Of the three original settlers of Oak Hill only two would return to their farms after the cessation of hostilities. Hendrick Plank was taken prisoner during the war and died as a captive in Canada; his widow nevertheless remarried and returned to Oak Hill to live on the farm he had first established.⁴ Sustained settlement of Oak Hill, known in that early period by the name DeWittsburgh, commenced with greater vigor in the post-Revolutionary War period as the original settlers were joined by new arrivals, many of whom came to this region from other parts of the Hudson Valley, from New England, and, in particular, from Connecticut.⁵

The ability to harness waterpower from the Catskill Creek, which flows from its headwaters in Schoharie County through the Town of Durham to its confluence with the Hudson River to the east, and its tributaries for various milling enterprises made this area of Greene County extremely appealing to the early settlers. The first permanent grist mill established in Oak Hill is credited to Lucas DeWitt and was erected sometime prior to 1795; it was washed out in a spring freshet but was soon thereafter replaced, in more or less the same location, by a more substantially constructed mill. The DeWitts built a second and better grist mill near the location where the Cheritree & Brothers foundry would later be situated, and another mill, located on the south side of the hamlet, was operated by a man named Schenck; both were subsequently destroyed by fire, Schenck's having been destroyed in 1825. As the hamlet grew physically, a flurry of new construction drove the need for processing timber and to this end new saw mills were established in Oak Hill by the DeWitts and, a short distance north of the hamlet, by George Flower.⁶ These mills processed the impressive local stands of timber into the planks, floor boards and other material needed to erect new buildings. George Flower also established Oak Hill's first carding and fulling mill, complete with a dye works, near his saw mill, thereby sustaining local sheep husbandry. Also of note was Daniel Peck, who initiated the area's first tannery. Tanning remained viable

¹ J.B. Beers & Co., *History of Greene County, New York, with Biographical Sketches of its Prominent Men* (New York: George McNamara, 1884), 260.

² Ibid.

³ Raymond Beecher, "A Brief History of Oak Hill," *Greene County Historical Journal* (Summer 1991): vol. 15, issue 2, 12.

⁴ Beers, *Greene County*, 261.

⁵ Ibid, 260.

⁶ Ibid, 275.

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in the region until local supplies of hemlock bark had been exhausted, the death knell for this at one time robust Catskill Mountain region industry.

Period accounts attest to the hamlet's modest complexion at various points in the early nineteenth century. In his 1824 *Gazetteer of the State of New-York*, Horatio Spafford described Oak Hill as a "little Post-Village... situated on the Schoharie turnpike, 1 ¼ miles NE of [Durham Village], on the Schoharie Creek."⁷ Thomas Gordon, in his gazetteer of 1836, noted Oak Hill simply as "on the creek about 2 miles N. of Durham Village; around each is a cluster of dwellings."⁸ Clearly the hamlet's development and physical infrastructure had remained modest into the mid-1830s.

Communication with those areas to the east and with the primary transportation artery of the region—the Hudson River—was facilitated early on by a number of overland road improvements, which corresponded with a substantial period of turnpike development in New York State in the early nineteenth century. The Coxsackie & Oak Hill Plank Road formed a relatively dependable connection with Greenville and beyond it to the east Coxsackie and the Hudson River, and from there access to the mid and lower Hudson Valley and New York City to the south and Albany, Troy and the Erie and Champlain canals to the north. Nearby Durham was bisected by the Susquehanna Turnpike, established in 1800, which similarly provided access to the Hudson River and later the Hudson River Railroad via the Village of Catskill and, to the west, Unadilla and the Susquehanna River. Also prominent in the regional transportation network was the Schoharie Turnpike, which bisected Oak Hill. These roadways were critical to the residents of Oak Hill and the Town of Durham and defined its early intercourse with more densely settled areas, providing a means of communication and a somewhat reliable way to convey surplus agricultural products and manufactured goods to distant markets. Hotels and boardinghouses, such as that maintained by W.F. DeWitt, catered to the needs of the overland traveler; earlier established taverns would have offered accommodations to the traveler and to drovers moving their livestock to market further east.

The national advent of railroad transportation came to undermine the influence of the existing network of turnpikes and canals which had served the interests of New York during the first part of the nineteenth century. Between 1830 and 1860 an estimated 30,000 miles of railroad track were laid in the United States, which vastly improved overland transportation and as such hastened the development of industrial enterprises.⁹ Although efforts were made to link Oak Hill with other rural hamlets and more densely populated outlying areas via railroad and trolley during the mid to later nineteenth century, these efforts rapidly sputtered or otherwise failed to materialize. The most substantial effort, albeit a somewhat brief episode, occurred in the later 1830s with the establishment of the Canajoharie & Catskill Railroad Company. This rail line was incorporated in 1830 and between 1837 and 1840 built its line using money raised partly through stock subscriptions and a \$200,000 loan made to the company by the State of New York.¹⁰ Oak Hill residents were undoubtedly greatly excited when, in 1840, tracks for this new rail line were laid as far west as their hamlet. However, their collective excitement at the prospects of direct rail service would be short lived. In March 1840 two passenger cars and three freight cars of the Canajoharie & Catskill Railroad plummeted from the High Rock Bridge, which spanned a deep wooded ravine through which the Catskill Creek flowed. The bridge had been undermined and weakened by a spring freshet and its collapse claimed one life, Jehiel Tyler, a resident of East Durham. Although repairs were made and the railroad soon thereafter resumed operation, the company was ruined financially by legal actions taken against it and went bankrupt shortly thereafter. By 1842 this fleeting episode of local and regional

⁷ Horatio Spafford, *A Gazetteer of the State of New-York* (Albany: B.D. Packard: 1824), 151.

⁸ Thomas F. Gordon, *A Gazetteer of the State of New York* (Philadelphia, PA: 1836), 472.

⁹ Leo Marx, *The Machine in the Garden* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), 180.

¹⁰ Gerald M. Best, *The Ulster & Delaware: Railroad Through the Catskills* (Golden West Books, 1972), 14.

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transportation history had ended and removal of the strap iron rails had been initiated.¹¹ In the 1890s plans were advanced to establish an electric trolley line which would connect Oak Hill with nearby population centers, at a time when similar lines were being built in other rural areas of the region; these plans never came to fruition, and Oak Hill would remain dependent, as it remains today, on the overland road networks which connected it with other parts of the region.

Although situated in a somewhat remote and largely rural region where agricultural endeavors predominated, by the second quarter of the nineteenth century Oak Hill boasted a number of significant industrial enterprises and as such the hamlet formed the industrial center for the entire Town of Durham. One of the earliest industrial enterprises of this nature was the iron furnace operated by Hiram Hurd and William Bullock, initiated around 1834. Also relatively early in its date of establishment was the plow manufacturing operation established by Messrs. Campbell & Scofield which produced the “Dutcher Plow No. 2.” The latter business was subsequently acquired by Sheldon Cheritree (Cherritree/Cherrytree variously) in 1844 and it was expanded following Cheritree’s acquisition of the adjacent DeWitt Mill to create the Empire Iron Works.¹² The Empire works was located near the center of the hamlet on the banks of the Catskill Creek, northwest of Squirmer Valley Creek, and it is credited with being among the first industrial complexes in the United States to utilize the malleable iron process, a somewhat remarkable feat given this company’s seemingly remote location in the foothills of Greene County. Along with the Empire Iron Works, the hamlet’s other most extensive mid-nineteenth century industrial enterprise was the Oak Hill Manufacturing Company, the mill complex of which was situated on the southern extreme of the hamlet, off of Foundry Street and on the banks of the Catskill Creek. An 1864 circular of the Oak Hill Manufacturing Company detailed the breadth of the foundry’s products, which included hardware, kitchen utensils, flower stands and foot scrapers, in addition to agricultural implements and tools.¹³ These two operations employed many Oak Hill residents during the course of their activity and helped to sustain the hamlet’s economic fortunes for parts of the nineteenth century. Another prominent local industry was the factory which produced counter scales, an enterprise operated by Gifford & Potter.

The industrial interests which operated in Oak Hill during the course of the nineteenth century—and the hamlet’s iron foundries in particular—were noted by contemporary observers, some of whom claimed surprise at the breadth of industrial activity located there and the range of products Oak Hill’s manufacturing interests were capable of producing. There, in a remote location in Greene County, industrial activity comingled with what was otherwise a rural, pastoral environment framed by the distant landforms of the Catskill Mountains, thereby recalling the nineteenth-century “Machine in the Garden” theme explored by historian Leo Marx in the book of the same name. The intersection of America’s sublime and much celebrated natural landscape with the growing influence of technology and the industrial age was on full display in Oak Hill, which, by the 1850s, had evolved into a significant seat of manufacturing in Greene County. A contributor to *The Windham Journal*, writing in 1859, indicated that many of the newspaper’s readers were probably “not aware to what extent the manufacturing of iron is carried on in the village...”

As you enter the village from the West, the large Furnace of the Oak Hill Malleable Iron Company meets the eye. Here is manufactured various articles, such as Hooks, Staples, Carriage Trimmings, and in fact more articles than I could enumerate in a week... The next Furnace is that of Cherritree & Pierce. This furnace turns out an immense number of castings of all kinds, this is also the place where

¹¹Raymond Beecher, “Oak Hill & the Problems of Transportation,” *Greene County Historical Journal* (Summer 1991): vol. 15, issue 2, 15-16.

¹²Ibid, 13.

¹³Ibid, 17.

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the celebrated Cherritree Plow is made. As you pass through the village to the East, you find the large building occupied by Gifford & Hayes, in the manufacture of Patent Ballances [sic] and Weights. A stranger would be astonished at the great quantity of Scales sent from this Furnace annually. As we proceed through the village, at the East end we find the long stone Furnace built by Calvin Adams, Esq. and occupied by the Oak Hill Manufacturing Company. This Furnace turns out a large assortment of Coffee and Spice Mills, Door Latches, Hasps, Locks, and in fact almost everything that can be made from iron. This Furnace manufactures those celebrated Meat Cutters, or Newman Mincers, that the whole nation have concluded to use... A little to the west of the village, you find the tannery of Wellington Peck, Esq., which is in operation daily, and turns out yearly a large quantity of Sole and Upper Leather.¹⁴

In addition to its various industrial interests, commercial enterprises also lent Oak Hill its distinctive character and one typical of rural New York State hamlets in the nineteenth century, as these typically served as what might best be termed agricultural service centers for outlying areas, a place where farm families could mill their agricultural products, procure necessary goods and services, and practice their religion. A number of these businesses are captured on the 1867 Beers map of Oak Hill, which provides a snapshot of the hamlet's physical features as they existed at that time, in the immediate post-Civil War period. Adjacent to the DeWitt hotel was the S.A. Frayer Stage House, which provided stagecoach service to residents and travelers, and on the opposite side another store and a harness shop. Across from the DeWitt Hotel was a tin shop, another important period business, while further to the north was a dry goods store operated by J.C. Hervey, a store operated by L.E. Cleaveland, a blacksmith shop, the Tripp family store, and the law offices of M.C. Mattice.¹⁵ The Tripp Store, the Mattice law office, the Cleaveland store and the DeWitt Hotel all remain to this day and are included within the district area.

Religious Life & Education in Oak Hill

Among the religious organizations established in Oak Hill are two whose buildings remain to this day and are included as part of the historic district. In 1834 St. Paul's Episcopal Church was erected on the south side of the hamlet and during its formative years was led by the Reverend James Thompson (d. 1844); since the 1940s and following the disbanding of the local Episcopal organization it has functioned as a Lutheran church. Also within the district is the Methodist Episcopal Church, which was completed in 1859. There was additionally a Dutch Reformed Church in the area, its house of worship being situated west of the hamlet on the road to Preston Hollow in Albany County; that building was erected on land deeded for the purpose by the Patroon, Steven Van Rensselaer.

The first efforts to establish an Episcopal church in the Town of Durham date to 1809, as in October of that year a meeting was called for this purpose at the home of Adijah Dewey in Durham village. During this meeting a church covenant was adopted, which read as follows: "We, the subscribers do hereby covenant with each other that as soon as fifteen or more shall have subscribed to this Instrument, we will meet and form ourselves into a church agreeable to law."¹⁶ This effort was apparently led by the Reverend Samuel Fuller, a Presbyterian minister for 18 years who left that denomination and was ordained by the Episcopal Church in 1811. Fuller preached part-time in Durham as a missionary, from ca. 1811 to 1818, and also in Windham and

¹⁴"Our Durham Letter," *The Windham Journal*, 21 July 1859.

¹⁵F.W. Beers, *Atlas of Greene County, New York* (New York: F.W. Beers, A.D. Ellis and G.G. Soule, 1867), 15.

¹⁶Beers, *Greene County*, 281.

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Stamford.¹⁷ In June 1812 a certificate of incorporation was drawn up for the new organization, which was recorded in the Greene County Clerk's office in December 1812.¹⁸

The Reverend James Thompson (born ca. 1767) led the Oak Hill Episcopal church in its early years, first serving as a missionary conducting services without the benefit of a dedicated house of worship that was exclusively the congregation's own and later as an established minister. The new meetinghouse was consecrated as St. Paul's Episcopal Church by the Right Reverend Benjamin Tredwell Onderdonk on November 21, 1834. A number of other men served as minister for St. Paul's church during its early years, coinciding with the Rev. Thompson's tenure, having been hired by him as assistants given that Thompson was already 67 years old at the time of the completion of the new building. Among these men were William Morris, who also preached at nearby Rensselaerville in Albany County, a Mr. Prout, John Scoville, and George Sayres.¹⁹ Thompson died in 1844 and is buried in the church's cemetery. Following his death the following men served as pastors to St. Paul's: James W. Stewart, L.A. Barrows, Mr. Parker, D.G. Wright, John W. Hoffman, Henry H. Bates, W.T. Boone, H.C. Randall, Erastus Webster, H.C. Brayton, and Joseph Norwood.

During the course of the first part of the twentieth century church membership flagged considerably. The next significant milestone in the church's history occurred in April 1918, at which time St. Paul's Episcopal Church was declared closed by the Episcopal Diocesan Convention. In February 1919 permission was granted for the sale of the property, which failed to come to pass, after which time the building fell into a period of disuse. In 1948 overtures towards the formation of a Lutheran church to serve the Durham-Oak Hill area were being undertaken under the direction of the Reverend Berthold von Schenk of Our Saviour Church in the Bronx. It was during this meeting that von Schenk recommended a building be sought locally which could serve the new group. A suggestion was forwarded that the former St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Oak Hill might be available for use; following inquiries made to the Right Reverend Frederick Barry, Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Albany, permission was granted for the use of the facility by the new group. In February 1949 the first Lutheran services were conducted in the building by von Schenk, who, for several years, traveled from the Bronx to conduct services at St. Paul's church in Oak Hill. During this period Our Saviour Church in the Bronx lent financial support to the new Oak Hill congregation. In 1954 St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church was formally incorporated with Edwin Gietz as full-time pastor, and in January 1962, the building was purchased from the Episcopal Diocese with the assistance of the Atlantic District of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.²⁰

The Town of Durham's first Methodist religious organizations were conducted by circuit riders, whose circuits in those days covered considerable geographic territory. The Methodist church that served Durham is thought to be among the oldest in Greene County, its mother church being that located in Coeymans in Albany County; its circuit included Coeymans, Catskill, Durham, and a portion of Delaware County, New York.²¹ The late Greene County historian, Raymond Beecher, provided the following brief history of the formation of the Oak Hill Methodist Episcopal Church:

At the conference of 1858, the Reverend A. F. Selleck was appointed to the Durham circuit, "requiring preaching in the morning Sunday at Cornwallville, at Durham in the afternoon, and Oak Hill in the evening, and at Cooksburg on a week-day evening." Religious services

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸*St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Oak Hill, New York: 50th Anniversary, 1949-1999*, 3.

¹⁹Beers, *Greene County*, 281.

²⁰*St. Paul's Lutheran Church*, 4.

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for the Methodists were held in the local schoolhouse until Reverend Selleck convinced his Oak Hill parishioners to purchase a Village site and build a meeting house. Following his dictum of “pay as you go,” a subscription paper was circulated, with all but six hundred dollars pledged before construction commenced. The contract to build was awarded to Stephen Osterhout and his associates, and by 1859 the work was well underway.²²

Following the church’s formation, Charles W. Pierce, Israel P. Utter, James H. Welch and William Paddock were elected as trustees of the new organization and as a building committee organized to oversee the planning and erection of a house of worship at Selleck’s urging. The construction campaign was not without incident, as a portion of the frame nearly collapsed, as recounted by Selleck himself in 1886:

After the main structure was up, the two front posts of the tower, seventy-five feet long, were framed together and, perhaps some forty feet from the foot of these posts was attached to each, what is called by builders a shear pole, some sixty feet long, by an iron bar run through the large end of the pole and post; and to keep the pole snug to the post an ox chain was wound around and hooked. One of the chains had been put on the wrong way and tightened instead of loosened as the bent went up. When the bent had reached an angle of perhaps forty degrees, the bent bound so that the chain could go no farther. The whole weight of the bent rested on these two poles. It was a fearful crisis. To let the bent come back was thought to be impossible without endangering many lives.

There was an awful suspense for a few moments, when one of the builders, Stephen Osterhout, seized a sharp narrow ax, and ran up the post to the binding-chain with the dexterity of a cat, and stood there and swung the ax, blow by blow, until he severed the cold iron links, which were more than a half an inch thick. When Mr. Selleck saw that daring deed, he felt cold shudders passing over him, as doubtless the others did also; but when the builder came down unharmed, such was the joy of the multitude at his almost miraculous escape from falling and death, and such their admiration of his coolness and skill, as well as daring, that they cheered him, and made the air ring with shouts of praise. It was felt that a merciful Providence had intervened for their good. This crisis passed, the raising was completed, and the building went forward, was finished and dedicated, free of debt, in the early fall.²³

The only significant changes made to the building occurred in late 1929, at which time seven of the original eight clear sash windows were replaced with memorial stained glass windows; the present lighting fixtures also date to this period, as do other cosmetic changes. A committee composed of the Rev. C.E. Garrett, Mrs. D.C. DeWitt, Harriet Boome, Mrs. Lovett Head, I.U. Tripp, Calvin Burnett, Horatio Hale, Dr. D.C. DeWitt and

²¹Beers, *Greene County*, 280.

²²Raymond Beecher, “Religion in Oak Hill,” *Greene County Historical Journal* (Summer 1991): volume 15, issue 2.

²³Selleck quoted in Beecher, “Religion,” 14.

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William Delamater oversaw the modifications. During the work on the building the congregation worshipped at nearby St. Paul's Episcopal Church. The six new windows were given in memoriam to the following: Addia A. Tripp, Israel DeWitt, Niles S. Gifford, Helen R. Mabey, Elcha T. DeWitt, and James and Mary Utter. New suspended lighting fixtures were presented by Ida Tripp, Augusta Hulsinger and family, Ernest Ford, Dr. D.C. DeWitt and Mrs. H. Boome; I.U. Tripp likewise gave both the pulpit and the large window, and the Epworth League the new chancel window.²⁴

Along with the religious organizations which served the spiritual needs of the Oak Hill community, there is a single educational building, District School No.15, which is included within the district area. This building is situated off of the aptly named Schoolhouse Hill Road—known in earlier times as School Street—thereby providing it with a desirable location, being both centrally located but at the same time slightly isolated from Oak Hill's principal thoroughfare. It is a building of the characteristic one-room, single story type, and remained in use until the consolidation of the former district school system into a centralized system.

Architectural Analysis

In addition to its importance as a collective entity which comprehensively portrays the historic development and growth of the hamlet of Oak Hill, the nominated district contains any number of buildings which are of individual distinction, being excellent representations of particular periods, forms, or expressions of prevailing national architectural styles and trends. Houses constitute the bulk of the historic district's extant building stock and were erected with timber frames and later yet with lighter frames of the balloon type which employed all dimensional lumber; the Tripp House is the only masonry-walled dwelling located in Oak Hill. While many buildings were subsequently expanded or otherwise modified in ensuing periods, observations can nevertheless be offered about how the existing domestic building stock relates to larger regional and national design trends and more localized vernacular building traditions. The housing stock included within the district illustrates the hamlet's diverse historic socio-economic composition, from the larger dwellings of prominent citizens and business owners to the more mundane "mechanic's cottages" of mill and foundry workers, tradesman and laborers.

The oldest identified dwelling, the so-called "A.T. House," recalls the influence of New World Dutch building practices in the Hudson Valley, fostered by its earliest Dutch, Palatine German and other northern European settlers. The earliest section of the house was erected with a timber frame of the New World Dutch type, consisting of a series of closely spaced H bents, a framing system in marked contrast to the framing traditions brought to this region by Connecticut settlers and other New Englanders. The New World Dutch framing system created a knee wall above the anchor beams and thus accounts for a building's story-and-a-half form, as opposed to the single and two-story forms more typical of New England vernacular houses of the center chimney type. While its precise date of construction and its early history are not presently known, it is nevertheless distinctive as an early vernacular house which relates to the established New World Dutch building culture of this part of the Hudson Valley. Later houses of the story-and-a-half gable end type, often in concert with a rear lean-to, speak the continued influence of New World Dutch building practices into the early nineteenth century.

The advent of New England settlement in the post-Revolutionary War period corresponded with the introduction of new architectural forms and fashions into this region of New York State. By the early nineteenth century this influx of New Englanders helped to account for the popularity of the Roman-inspired Federal style, with its emphasis on finely wrought wood finish work derived from English and American builder's guides. In this period the two-story gable-ended house with five-bay façade and center entrance plan

²⁴Unidentified source, "Methodist Church Notes," 5 January 1930.

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became prevalent, oftentimes in concert with a rear kitchen ell. The preeminent example of this housing form and style is the Tripp House, ca. 1830, which is all the more conspicuous given it was erected with brick walls laid up in brick in a Flemish bond pattern. While a later example of the Federal idiom erected in the transitional period spanning the popularity of the Federal and Greek Revival styles, it nevertheless exhibits characteristic design motives of the earlier mode, among them a prominent fanlight over the principal entrance, in addition to a paneled frieze and soffits finished with mutule blocks. The tall and narrow proportions of the main block also comport with period trends, albeit in a period of stylistic transition to the bolder forms of the Greek Revival style, which would become increasingly popular from the early 1830s onward and seemingly ubiquitous by 1840. The Tripp House, which remains conspicuous today by virtue of its brick construction and well-preserved details, can be viewed as the culmination of the Federal style locally and a transitional example, given that some of the interior work speaks to the newer and developing Greek Revival aesthetic. Also related to the Federal style of the early nineteenth century, but unusual in its form, is the house at 7838 State Route 81, which employed a five-bay façade with center entrance but in combination with a broad front-facing gable, the tympanum of which was flush-boarded and features a louvered elliptical fanlight. The attenuated cornices of this building form a strong point of comparison with the bolder finish work that came into vogue during the 1830s with the Greek Revival style and which culminated in the 1840s.

As noted, the Greek Revival style is the best represented nineteenth-century architectural design mode in Oak Hill; this style is manifested not only in Oak Hill's remaining housing stock but also in a number of commercial constructs and one of its two houses of worship. A pervasive style with a broad expressive range, it dominated the architectural landscape of the 1830s and 1840s before giving way to the Romantic-Picturesque idioms championed by A.J. Downing and others of like mind in the antebellum period. Examples of this style formed a decided departure from the Roman Neoclassicism of the previous era in terms of the nature of ornamentation and finish work. During this period new housing types emerged while older forms continued to be employed, among them houses of the story-and-a-half type with gable ends and five-bay facades with center entrances—sometimes in concert with a rear lean-to that provided additional living space on the principal floor—a form which shares associations with the region's earlier New World Dutch architecture. More common to this period and well represented in Oak Hill are numerous examples of the upright-and-wing type house, consisting of a main block with gable-front orientation and side entrance plan, and a wing with roof ridge set perpendicular to that of the main section. Both story-and-a-half and two-story examples of this particular type remain and these bear distinctive features of the Greek Revival style, in the form of recessed entrances framed by pilasters and spanned by entablatures, fully pedimented gables, corner pilasters, deep friezes and broad moulded cornices. A deviation from these more characteristic types is the house at 7901 State Route 81, likely built in the early to mid-1840s given the robust nature of its exterior ornamentation. In this instance the story-and-a-half house is gable fronted with a three-bay façade and center entrance, which allowed for the fully pedimented gable, deep frieze and flush-boarded walls to create an approximation of a classical temple, albeit in astylar fashion. The dwelling at 7815 State Route 81 exhibits the well-established gable end story-and-a-half type with center entrance, but it features an unusual triglyph-enriched frieze that speaks to the creative and free use of classical motifs by a local carpenter-joiner. While almost all the district's Greek Revival-style buildings are of the astylar type, there is one notable exception, that being the Charles Pierce House. In that instance the two-story front block is gable ended and spanned by four Ionic order columns, along with corresponding engaged pilasters, into which a second-story porch is incorporated. The exterior detailing, including the recessed entrance with boldly rendered architrave mouldings, and the interior woodwork portray the work of an anonymous but skilled carpenter-joiner who was active in this region at the time.

The Romantic-Picturesque era is best represented by a singular work of domestic architecture in Oak Hill, the so-called Icicle House, which is believed to date to the mid-1840s. The property was acquired in 1852 by Calvin

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Adams (1809-1879), an inventor and notable figure in the malleable iron works in both Oak Hill and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and the dwelling could instead date to this slightly later period. This unusual dwelling with hipped roof features vertical board-and-batten siding and unusual bargeboard detailing at the eaves from which the house takes its name. While it does not seem to have a precise derivation from a contemporary pattern book such as A.J. Downing's *Cottage Residences* of 1842, it nevertheless exhibits the vertical siding and eaves trim that indicates familiarity with the developing concepts of the Picturesque championed by Downing. It offers itself as marked point of comparison from the entrenched Neoclassicism of the Greek Revival style, the local popularity of which continued through the construction of the Methodist meetinghouse in 1859. During this period many existing dwellings were retrofitted with new porches employing Italianate and Gothic Revival style design vocabulary, an indication of the permeation of these new concepts both before and after the Civil War.

In addition to its domestic building stock, the hamlet boasts two Protestant meetinghouses which accommodated the worship needs of adherents of the Methodist and Episcopal faith. Both buildings are expressive of nineteenth century architectural themes in terms of their form and stylistic aspects and represent the continuing popularity of the so-called Wren-Gibbs meetinghouse type; they are gable-front buildings erected above rectangular plans, the Methodist church additionally incorporating an engaged central tower as an aspect of its design. The Episcopal church featured the use of distinctive Gothic motifs on what was otherwise a traditional meetinghouse form; although not an authentic Gothic Revival church of the type which became popular with Episcopal parishes with the emergence of the Ecclesiological movement in the United States during the later 1830s, the building nevertheless exhibits decidedly vertical lines and proportioning and thus moves beyond the naïve Gothic-Neoclassical forms of earlier periods towards a more authentic Gothic idiom. As for the Methodist church, it illustrates the persistence of the Greek Revival style up to the dawn of the Civil War and the continued popularity of the Wren-Gibbs type house of worship into the third quarter of the nineteenth century. Although stylistically different, the two buildings are nevertheless related as examples of the traditional rural Protestant meetinghouse type.

The Late Victorian period is best illustrated architecturally by two buildings which remain prominent in Oak Hill, the former Lyman Tremain Opera House and the Tripp Store, both located on Route 81. These were among the last large-scale buildings erected in the hamlet and they remain keynote features of the community's built environment and the historic district. The opera house was constructed in 1900 by contractor John Burhans, a prominent local builder and resident of Durham, for a cost of \$2,675, a seemingly modest sum for this period and scale of the building.²⁵ This large light wood frame edifice was built above a rectangular plan and features a broad gable, oriented towards the road, which is highlighted by patterned shingle work and a Palladian inspired window motif. A prominent cupola rises from the ridge and thereby enlivens the roofline of what is otherwise a largely self-contained building. Built for Isaac Tripp in the later 1880s, the Tripp Store, which incorporates an earlier commercial manifestation as a rear adjunct to the present building, exhibits Italianate and Queen Anne-style design vocabulary and its façade offers the most exuberant display of architectural detailing in the hamlet. The two storefronts and recessed entrance are spanned by transoms fitted with colored Queen Anne sash while cornices are trimmed with closely spaced brackets; at second-story level there is a cantilevered porch with corresponding support brackets, lathe-turned posts with scroll-sawn brackets, and decorative railing. The new building garnered considerable attention locally, as new works of architecture often did in that day; as noted in the *Windham Journal* "The large and splendid store erected in Oak Hill by Mr. Isaac Tripp is almost completed. It is the finest store in this section of the country, and already adds greatly to the appearance of Oak Hill."²⁶

²⁵*The Windham Journal*, 9 August 1900.

²⁶*Ibid*, 13 September 1888.

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Conclusion

The hamlet of Oak Hill was first settled at the time of the American Revolution, at which time the first pioneer farmsteads were established in this hilly region north of the Catskill Mountains and west of the Hudson River. After the war settlement increased rapidly as an influx of New Englanders, mostly hailing from Connecticut, came into the area then known as New Durham. Although somewhat isolated from the Hudson River corridor to the east, the establishment of reliable overland transportation networks and the considerable opportunities offered by the harnessing of the Catskill Creek's hydraulic power offered the necessary impetus for growth. By the dawn of the nineteenth century Oak Hill had grown but nevertheless remained a sparsely populated hamlet; however, during the ensuing decades, it experienced sustained growth as a consequence of the industrial enterprises which operated there. The buildings, structures, and landscape features included within the Oak Hill Historic District collectively portray the development of this locale during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The nominated district retains much of its rural character and sense of place and its built environment recalls its heyday as an important nineteenth century commercial center in the Town of Durham.

Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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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 # _____
- ____ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- ____ State Historic Preservation Office
- ____ Other State agency
- ____ Federal agency
- ____ Local government
- ____ University
- ____ Other
- Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property 43.76 acres

UTM References

1	<u>18</u> Zone	<u>569615</u> Easting	<u>4696024</u> Northing	7	<u>18</u> Zone	<u>569810</u> Easting	<u>4695030</u> Northing
2	<u>18</u> Zone	<u>569682</u> Easting	<u>4695997</u> Northing	8	<u>18</u> Zone	<u>569794</u> Easting	<u>4695143</u> Northing
3	<u>18</u> Zone	<u>569874</u> Easting	<u>4695697</u> Northing	9	<u>18</u> Zone	<u>569433</u> Easting	<u>4695750</u> Northing
4	<u>18</u> Zone	<u>569895</u> Easting	<u>4695562</u> Northing	10	<u>18</u> Zone	<u>569286</u> Easting	<u>4695826</u> Northing
5	<u>18</u> Zone	<u>569949</u> Easting	<u>4695256</u> Northing	11	<u>18</u> Zone	<u>569328</u> Easting	<u>4695958</u> Northing
6	<u>18</u> Zone	<u>569892</u> Easting	<u>4695005</u> Northing	12	<u>18</u> Zone	<u>569550</u> Easting	<u>4696022</u> Northing

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Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundary is depicted on the enclosed maps, all of which are entitled "Oak Hill Historic District, Oak Hill, Greene Co., New York." The mapping was drawn at a scale of 1:24,000, 1: 12,000, 1:7,000 and 1: 3,000. Existing S/NRHP-designated properties and non-contributing properties are depicted on the mapping rendered at a scale of 1: 3,000.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The nomination boundary largely follows the historic district boundary as first surveyed and drawn ca. 2004. The district takes in the bulk of those properties located within the hamlet along the course of State Route 81, along with properties disposed along Oak Hill Road and a smaller number of properties located on Schoolhouse Hill Road, Giles Lane and Lee Road. The district boundary includes a total of 10 previously listed S/NRHP properties and serves to unify those with the remaining non-designated historic-era resources, thereby offering a more comprehensive view of Oak Hill's historic growth and development. Only a small number of non-contributing resources—11 buildings and 4 structures, many of which are resources of an ancillary type—are located within the district boundary, which retains a strong sense of place given its combination of architectural and natural features. No additional or "buffer land" is included within the nomination boundary, which has been drawn to present the most cohesive and intact grouping of historic-era resources possible.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title William E. Krattinger

organization NYS Division for Historic Preservation

date April 2017

street & number PO Box 189

telephone (518) 268-2167

city or town Waterford

State NY

zip code 12188

e-mail William.Krattinger@parks.ny.gov

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs:

Photographs by William E. Krattinger

March 2017, TIFF file format; original digital files at NYS Division for Historic Preservation, Waterford NY 12188.

- 001 7771 State Route 81 (Lyman Tremain Opera House, foreground) and 7781 State Route 81, view looking to northwest
- 002 7890 and 7892 State Route 81, view looking north
- 003 47 Oak Hill Road (the Icicle House), view looking to southeast
- 004 96 Oak Hill Road (St. Paul's Lutheran Church), view looking to southeast
- 005 84 Oak Hill Road, view looking to northeast
- 006 7818 State Route 81 (L.E. Cleveland House), view looking to southeast
- 007 7878 (foreground) and 7872 State Route 81, view looking to southeast
- 008 7904 and 7898 State Route 81, view looking to southeast
- 009 7846 to 7830 State Route 81, view looking to southeast
- 010 7846 State Route 81, view looking to northeast
- 011 7901 State Route 81 (left), view looking to southwest
- 012 7886, Oak Hill Methodist Church, view looking north

OAK HILL HISTORIC DISTRICT

Name of Property

GREENE CO., NEW YORK

County and State

Property Owner:

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name VARIOUS: historic district

street & number _____ telephone _____

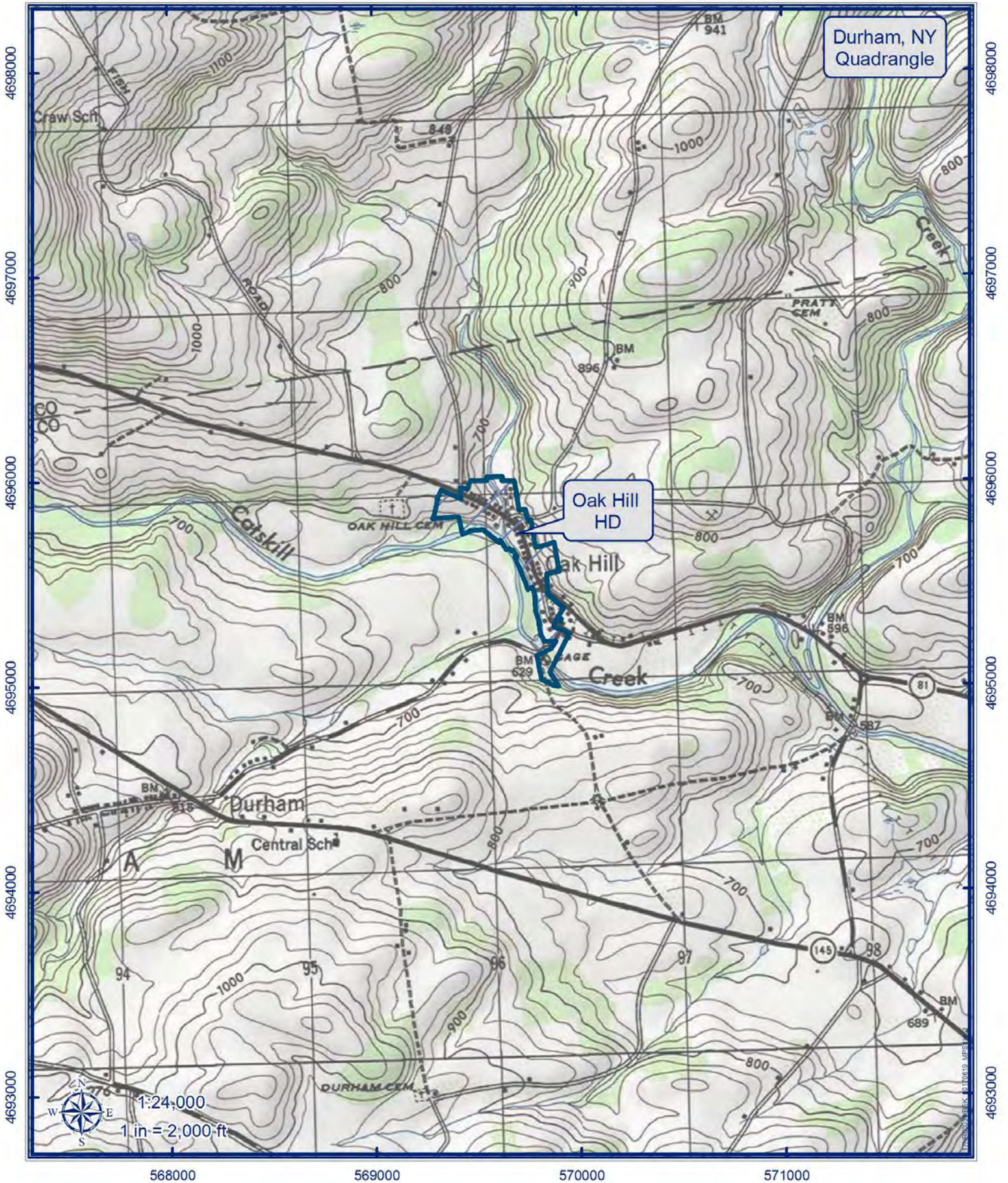
city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Oak Hill Historic District

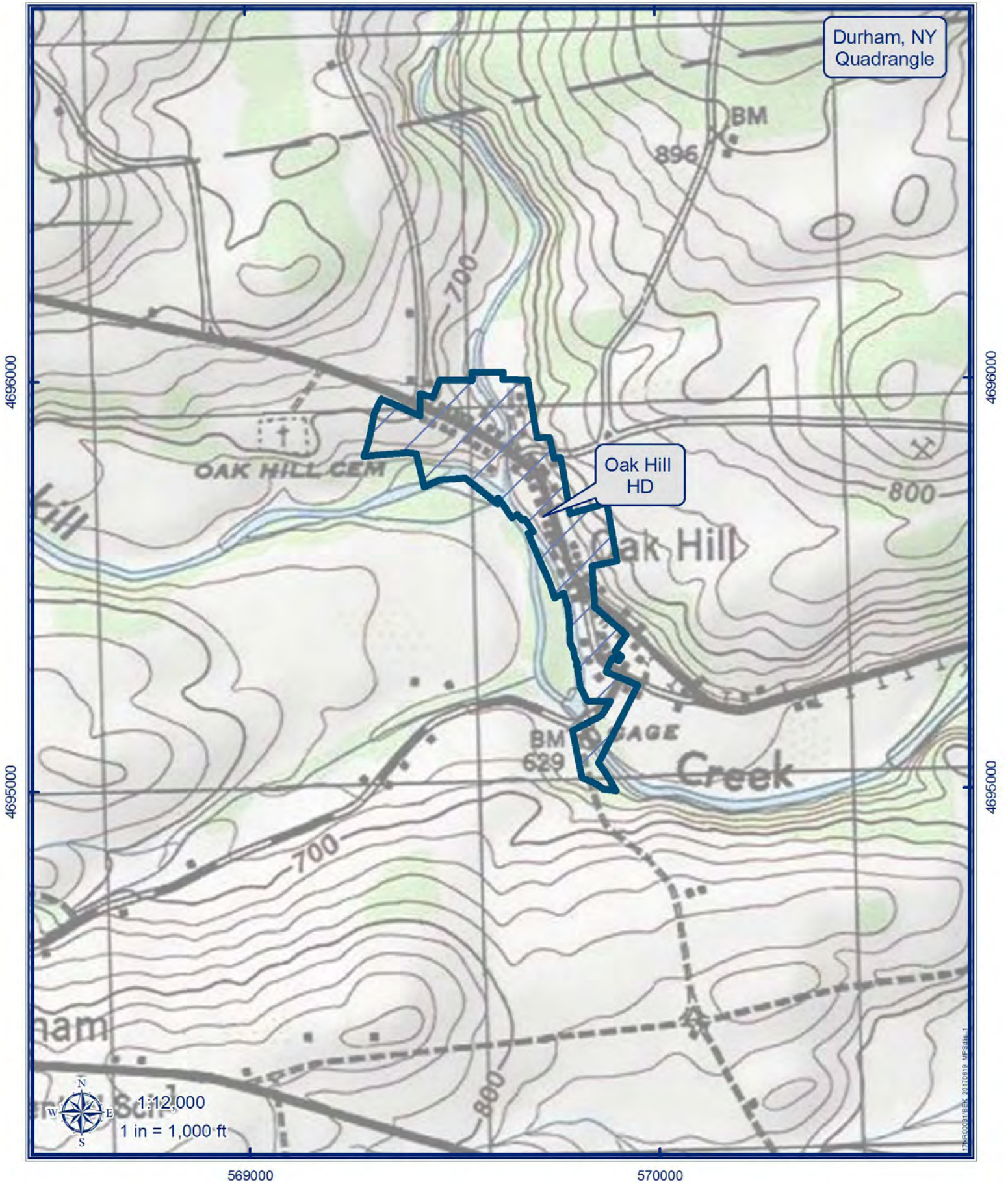
Oak Hill,
Greene Co., New York



Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N
Projection: Transverse Mercator
Datum: North American 1983
Units: Meter



Parks, Recreation
and Historic Preservation



Durham, NY
Quadrangle

Oak Hill
HD

1:12,000
1 in = 1,000 ft

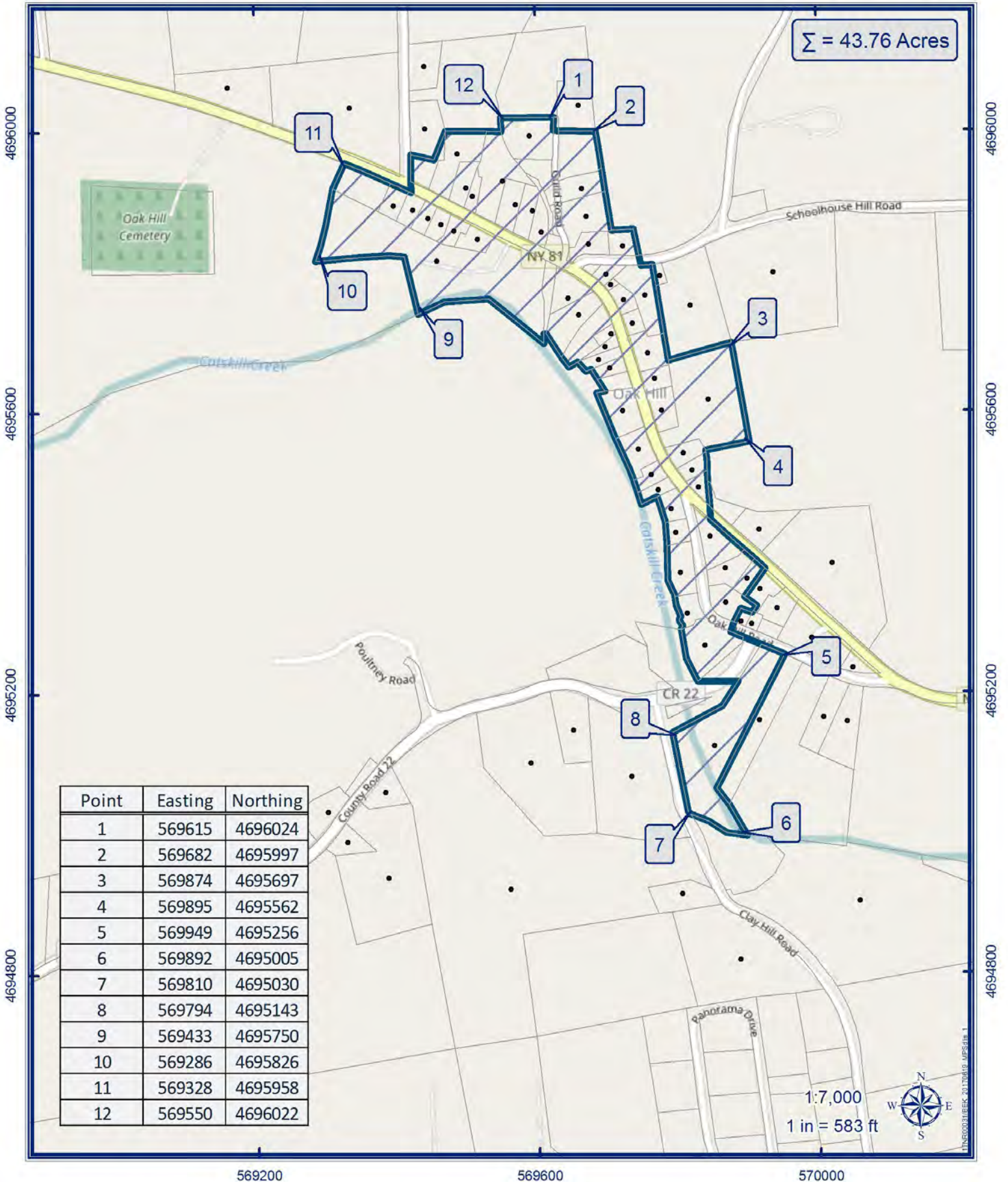
Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N
Projection: Transverse Mercator
Datum: North American 1983
Units: Meter



Parks, Recreation
and Historic Preservation

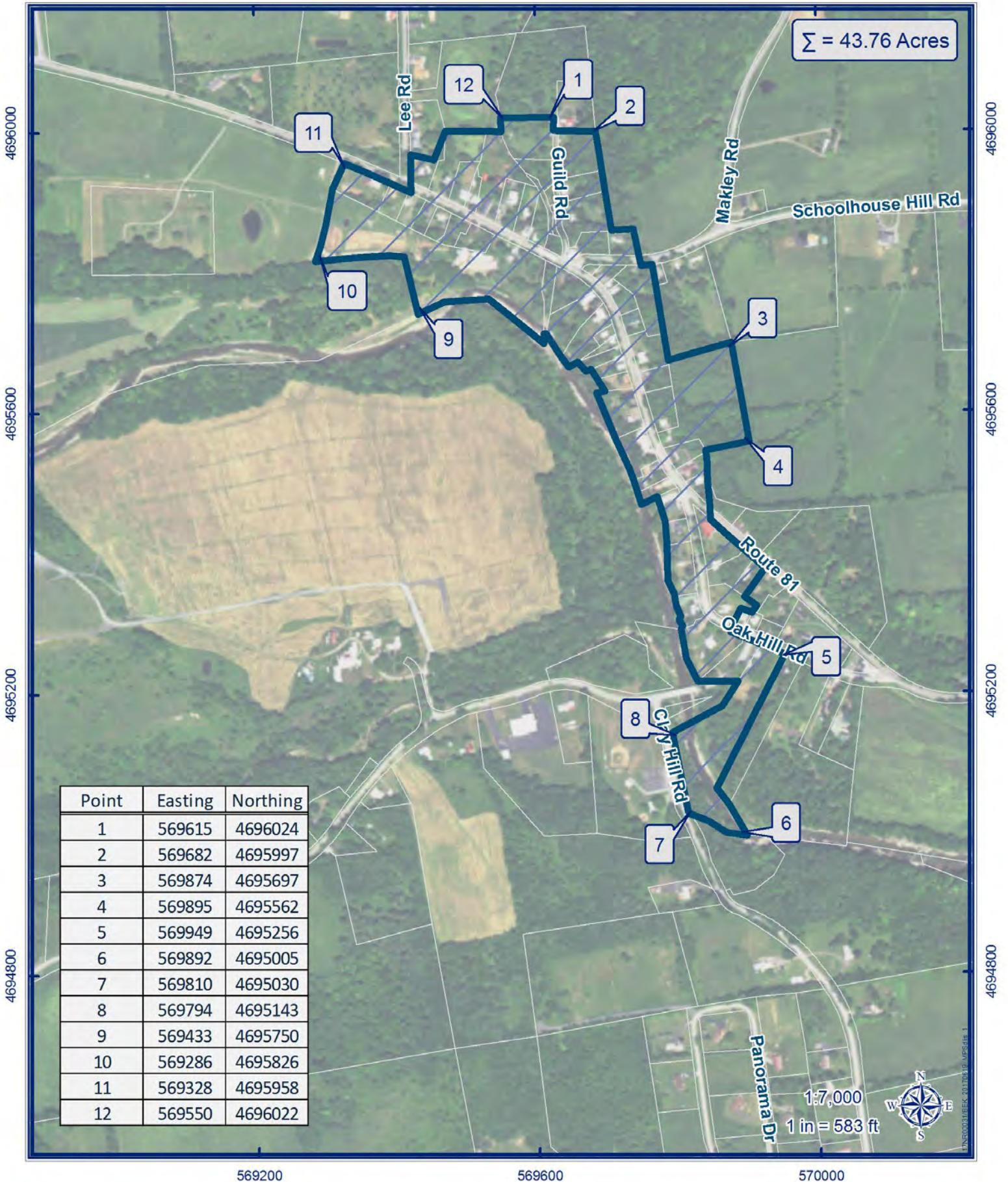
Oak Hill Historic District

Oak Hill,
Greene Co., New York



Oak Hill Historic District

Oak Hill,
Greene Co., New York

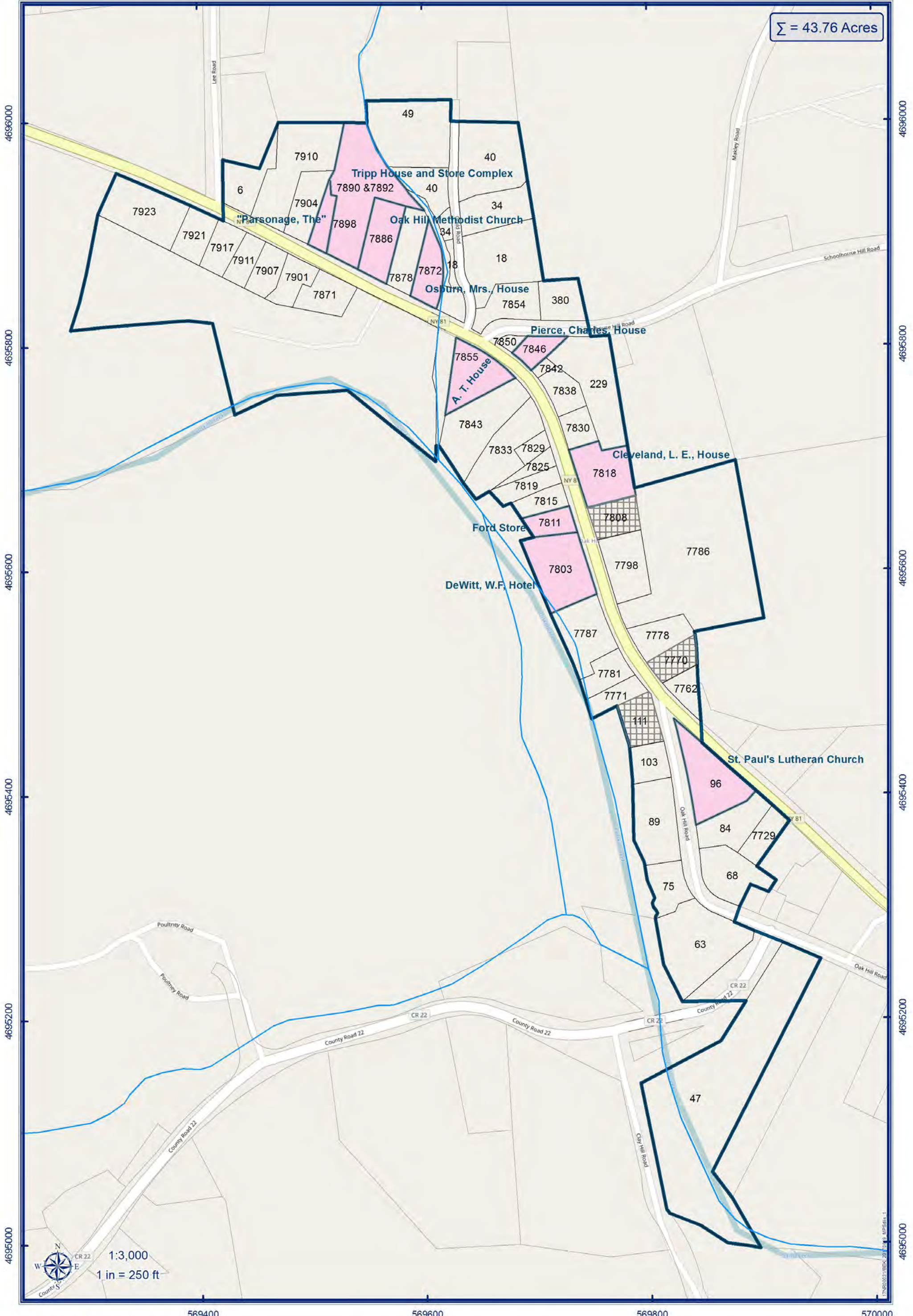


Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N
Projection: Transverse Mercator
Datum: North American 1983
Units: Meter



Parks, Recreation
and Historic Preservation

Σ = 43.76 Acres



Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N
 Projection: Transverse Mercator
 Datum: North American 1983
 Units: Meter

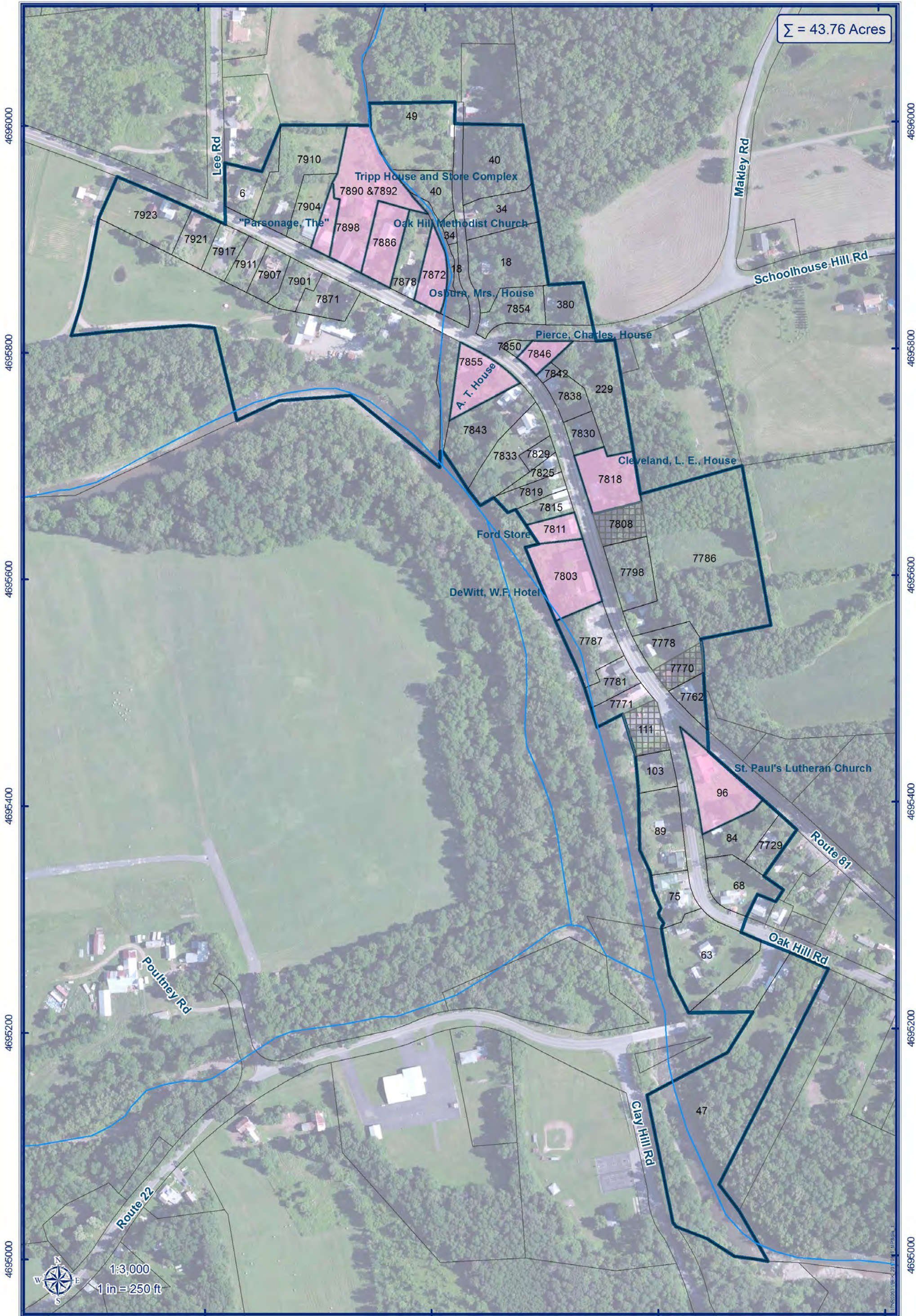


- Oak Hill HD
- PreviousNRs
- Contributing
- Non-Contributing



17NR000311/BECK, 2011.11.18, MPS/SHS, L

Σ = 43.76 Acres



Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N
 Projection: Transverse Mercator
 Datum: North American 1983
 Units: Meter



- Oak Hill HD
- PreviousNRs
- Contributing
- Non-Contributing



VTN50031UBK 201018 5 11P5JBL 1



The Yellow Deli

PLEASE
CLOSED

171







St. Paul's Lutheran Church
Worship & Communion 10:00 AM
Sunday - 9:00 AM
Parish Office: 431-399-9100

ST PAUL'S
LUTHERAN
CHURCH



96







7878

7878



7304





7846





UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:

Property Name:

Multiple Name:

State & County:

Date Received: Date of Pending List: Date of 16th Day: Date of 45th Day: Date of Weekly List:

Reference number:

Nominator:

Reason For Review:

Accept Return Reject Date

Abstract/Summary
Comments:

Recommendation/
Criteria

Reviewer Alexis Abernathy Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2236 Date _____

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : No see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.



**Parks, Recreation
and Historic Preservation**

ANDREW M. CUOMO
Governor

ROSE HARVEY
Commissioner



24 July 2017

Alexis Abernathy
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places

Mail Stop 7228

1849 C Street NW
Washington DC 20240

Re: National Register Nominations

Dear Ms. Abernathy:

I am pleased to submit the following four nominations, all on disc, to be considered for listing by the Keeper of the National Register:

Oak Hill Historic District, Greene County
Newberry Building, Genesee County
Linde Air Products Factory, Erie County
First Baptist Church of Springville (Expansion), Erie County

Please feel free to call me at 518.268.2165 if you any questions.

Sincerely:

Kathleen LaFrank
National Register Coordinator
New York State Historic Preservation Office