

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received SEP 30 1987

date entered NOV -2 1987

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

1. Name

historic ELIAS SPRAGUE HOUSE

and or common

2. Location

street & number 2187 South Street

N/A not for publication

city, town Coventry N/A vicinity of

state Connecticut code 09 county Tolland code 013

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Coventry Historical Society

street & number P.O. Box

city, town Coventry N/A vicinity of state CT

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Coventry Town Clerk

street & number Town Office Building - 1712 Main Street

city, town Coventry state CT

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title State Register of Historic Places has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1987  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Connecticut Historical Commission

city, town 59 South Prospect Street, Hartford state CT

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Elias Sprague House is a small, 1 1/2-story clapboarded house built in 1821 (Photographs 1 and 2). Located on South Street in Coventry, Connecticut, its four-acre lot, partly wooded and partly open, is situated between a neighborhood of modern residential construction and the Nathan Hale State Forest. Oriented with the ridge of its wood-shingled gable roof parallel to the road, the house has a five-bay facade with the entry in the center; the door of six raised panels is modern. Windows are small and have plain-board frames and reproduction nine-over-six sash. There is a large brick central chimney shouldered out at the top in a single large step; like the fieldstone foundation, it is covered with stucco. At the west rear of the house is a small one-story ell believed to have been added about 1900 (Photograph 3).

The interior follows the traditional plan of two front rooms on either side of a small hall with the kitchen at the rear. Original interior features (Photographs 4 through 6) include three brick fireplaces with stone lintels; simple mantels consisting of board frames with back moldings around the fireplaces in the west front room and kitchen, the latter of which has a side oven; a fancier mantel with moldings forming a crosset-shaped surround in the east front room; a dado of horizontal boards in the kitchen; and several doors of four raised panels with old hinges and latches. There is a tall cupboard with a raised-panel door in each front room and two small cupboards high above the kitchen fireplace. Walls and ceilings are plastered; the joists have been exposed in the kitchen only. The original floor boards are concealed by later narrow-board oak flooring.

The house is owned by the Coventry Historical Society, which maintains it as a historic-house site; it is also the residence of the society's tenant. In 1964 and 1965, the society undertook a program of restoration for the house, including the present wood-shingle roof, copying the existing sash with reproduction windows, and changing the shed roof on the ell to the present gable roof.

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Criterion C

Specific dates	1821	Builder/Architect	Not known
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### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Elias Sprague House is significant as a representative example of the ordinary vernacular house of early 19th-century Connecticut. Through preservation and restoration, the house possesses much of its correct historical appearance, and it embodies the distinguishing characteristics of its type (Criterion C). Among these characteristics are the five-bay, gable-roofed form; the central-chimney plan, with the rooms arranged around a large central stack; small-pane sash; clapboarded exterior; and wood-shingle roof. Although the exterior primarily represents restoration with appropriate materials, the interior is almost entirely original, including fireplaces, paneled doors, and mantels typical of the period. Thus the house retains the integrity which allows it to serve as a representative of its type.

The house in many ways resembles its 18th-century precedents; indeed, the five-bay, gable-roofed, center-chimney, clapboarded house is the archetype of New England 18th-century domestic architecture. The use of raised panels for the interior doors, particularly with the juxtaposition of the cupboard and room doors (Photographs 4 and 5), also harkens back to the latter half of the 18th century, when panel arrangements against plastered walls provided the most common form of interior finish. What distinguishes this house from earlier examples are its smaller framing members, with no protruding summer or other large beams; its use of brick for the chimney, rather than the stone more common in the earlier period; the relatively shallow depth of the fireplaces; and the mantel in the east front room, which with its crosssetted shape clearly alludes to the classical architecture popular in the period.

Although the architecture of the 1820s which comes most quickly to mind today is the elaborate Federal or Adam-inspired style found throughout the state (including Coventry), the traditional vernacular form, of which this house is a fine example, continued unchanged well into the 19th century, particularly for the homes of the less prosperous.

The house was built in 1821 by Elias Sprague, who lived in it only a few years before selling it to his sister Eliza Metcalf and her husband Nathaniel. In the 20th century, it was owned by noted antiquarian George Dudley Seymour as part of a large tract of land which eventually became the Nathan Hale State Forest.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

"Significance of the Proposed Nathan Hale District." Manuscript, Coventry Historical Society, 1979. Copy at Connecticut Historical Commission, Hartford.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acree of nominated property approx. 4

Quadrangle name Coventry

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UTM References

A 

18	7	2	1	0	0	0	4	6	2	6	9	4	0
Zone	Easting						Northing						

B 

Zone	Easting						Northing						

C 

Zone	Easting						Northing						

D 

Zone	Easting						Northing						

E 

Zone	Easting						Northing						

F 

Zone	Easting						Northing						

G 

Zone	Easting						Northing						

H 

Zone	Easting						Northing						

### Verbal boundary description and justification

The nominated property includes the house and associated lot known as 2187 South Street, shown as Map 25, Block 36, Lot 5 in the Coventry Assessor's records, and recorded in the land records, Volume 111, page 273-74 and Volume 117, page 62.

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

N/A

state code county code

state code county code

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Bruce Clouette and Matthew Roth, edited by John Herzan, National Register Coordinator

organization Historic Resource Consultants

date March 24, 1987

The Colt Armory

street & number 55 Van Dyke Avenue

telephone (203) 547-0268

city or town Hartford

state CT

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title Director, Connecticut Historical Commission

date

### For NPS use only

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

John Clouette Byers  
Keeper of the National Register

date

11-2-87

Attest:

Chief of Registration

date