

# DATA SHEET

PH 0685313

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

OCT 2 1978

DATE ENTERED

APR 13 1979

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

### 1 NAME

HISTORIC Flanders National Register District

AND/OR COMMON

### 2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER Parts of U.S. Route 7, Cobble Road,  
Cobble Lane and Studio Hill Road

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Kent

VICINITY OF

6th - Toby Moffett

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Connecticut

CODE

09

COUNTY

Litchfield

CODE

005

### 3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
			<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

### 4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Multiple Ownership

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

VICINITY OF

STATE

### 5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Kent Town Clerk

STREET & NUMBER

Town Hall - South Main Street

CITY, TOWN

Kent

STATE

CT

### 6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE Historic American Buildings Survey  
(Conn-183, 184, 185 and 186; Photographs)

DATE

1941; 1959

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

Library of Congress

CITY, TOWN

Washington

STATE

DC

## 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<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		

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### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Flanders is a small group of 18th- and early 19th-century houses in a rural area about a mile north of the present town center of Kent. The terrain in the district is mostly flat, with a rise in elevation at the southwestern end. The houses are spaced well apart, though none is visually isolated, and the land is about equally divided between woods and meadow. Much of the latter is still used for agriculture, particularly the raising of beef cattle and horses.

Of the 12 major structures in the district, five are large houses in the Federal Style, with elaborate entrance treatments, window caps, and cornices. There are also three earlier houses which have many features of interest, two simple Greek Revival farmhouses, one house which appears old but has been severely altered, and one house of modern construction. Although the interiors of most of the houses have been greatly modified, the exteriors are largely unchanged, and preserve a great deal of historic material. The character of the district is enhanced by several outbuildings, including a small building used as a school in the late 19th century and several barns, some rather decayed, likely dating back to the same period. While not as old as the houses, the barns are essential components of the district's rural ambience.

The edges of the district were delineated on a combined basis of architectural style, visual unity, physical features, and property lines. The northeast and southwest boundaries were chosen to exclude more recent houses whose 20th-century design would dilute the architectural coherence of the district. To the east and south, the boundary was drawn so as to include all the farm buildings and sufficient open land to give the district visual continuity. Land not readily visible from the center of the district, such as that on the far side of Cobble Lane or up Studio Hill, was excluded. The district's most prominent physical feature, the fast-running Cobble Brook, forms most of the northwestern boundary.

### Detailed Descriptions

At the center of the district, just north of the intersection of U.S. Route 7 and Cobble Road, is the group of three 18th-century houses. The John Beebe, Sr. House (#8) is the oldest, built in 1741, and is a two-story gable-roofed frame dwelling one room deep, with integral lean-to. The foundation is of fieldstone, as is the large central stack, which terminates in a vaulted brick cap. Except for the shingled north side, the exterior is covered with wide beaded-edge clapboards which are nailed not to studs but to vertical planking. The focal point of the five-bay main facade is the central entranceway, a set of double doors, each a single file of four panels, above which is a transom of six arched openings now fitted with rectangular panes. The whole is surrounded by a simple molded frame and cap. Windows have plain board casings and 12/12 sash, most if not all of which is modern. The narrow cornice molding forms shallow breaks above the upper-story windows and returns partially across the gable ends.

The interior of the John Beebe, Sr. House is the best preserved in the district and contains much significant historical material. Throughout the house are wide yellow pine floors and simple beaded casings enclosing the heavy posts, beams and summers. One wall of the porch, a small room off the kitchen, and the back wall of the north chamber have wide feather-edged boards, while the fireplace walls of the two front rooms downstairs and the north chamber are covered with raised panel

# 6 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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input checked="" 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			

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Within its bounds, the Flanders area of Kent, Connecticut, contains an important collection of architecturally significant houses. These ten houses, built between 1740 and 1840, are country adaptations and interpretations of the dominant styles of the period: Colonial, Federal and Greek Revival. The five large Federal houses are undoubtedly the district's centerpiece; yet the others, the three Colonial structures and the two which exhibit elements of the Greek Revival style, are not only of interest on their own merits, but form a pleasing architectural counterpoint to their outstanding Federal neighbours. It is important, therefore, to follow two lines of investigation. First, these structures must be interpreted to reveal specific examples of stylistic simplification and adaptation and to relate these illustrative details to the evolution of early domestic architecture in Connecticut. And, second, an attempt must be made to explain why the houses were built in this manner; that is, to use these structures as a visual commentary upon the economic means and social pretensions of their builders, the leading citizens of a relatively isolated, rural community.

The theme of simplification and adaptation is revealed in all three of the Colonial structures. For example, the oldest house in the district, constructed by John Beebe, Sr. in 1741, contains some finely worked panelled walls and a number of other decorative features. Yet, this house is much simpler and plainer than contemporaneously built houses elsewhere. There is, for instance, no delicately carved shell or six-petalled rose at the top of the arch of the corner cupboard in the south front room; and one finds only the simplest cornice molding here as well. Evidence of simplification is also readily apparent in the two Greek Revival houses (#s 2 and 11) built one hundred years later. Here, the architectural detail is confined to characteristic pillared doorways, while the remainder of the exteriors is without embellishment.

The most interesting and significant examples of this theme are found in the district's five Federal style houses, designated locally as the Pratt, Mills, Lewis, Cavarly and Rowley houses (#s 5, 1, 6, 4, and 10). Because these are also the district's most architecturally important structures, it is necessary to analyze their appearance more closely.

The Federal style (which Marcus Whiffen calls the Adam style) was a combination of a number of architectural ideas. The most important influence was the work of Robert Adam and his two brothers in England who were most noted for their use of delicate, decorative elements in the buildings they designed, such as slender pilasters and richly ornamented cornices, which gave their best compositions a light, fragile beauty. However, the influence of the

# MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Atwater, Francis. History of Kent, Connecticut. Meriden: Journal Publishing Company, 1897.

Covell, Alwyn T. "Old Chatham and Neighboring Dwellings South of the Berkshires." White Pine Series of Monographs, V, No. 5. October 1919.

Grant, Charles S. Democracy in the Connecticut Frontier Town of Kent. New York: Columbia University Press, 1961.

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 63

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,8	6,2,8	5,4,0	4,6	2,2	2,4,0	B	1,8	6,2,8	7,3,0	4,6	2,2	0,8,0
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING
C	1,8	6,2,8	5,7,0	4,6	2,1	8,4,0	D	1,8	6,2,8	4,8,0	4,6	2,1	7,8,0

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Beginning at Cobble Brook, the district boundary runs southeasterly in a line with the southwest boundary of Lot 100 as shown on Kent Assessor's Sheet 9. It crosses U.S. Route 7 and continues in a straight line for 250 feet. It then runs southwesterly, parallelling Route 7 at a distance of 250 feet, until it meets the southwest boundary of Lot 73. It follows that property line northwesterly, then runs southwesterly along the rear property lines of Lots 101A and 105,

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Bruce Clouette and Hal Keiner, Partners

ORGANIZATION

Historic Resource Consultants

DATE

June 20, 1978

STREET & NUMBER

P.O. Box 141 - Weir Court

TELEPHONE

(203) 423-7874

CITY OR TOWN

Windham

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 September 26, 1978

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
 ATTEST:   
 KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE 9.13.79  
 KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER  
 DATE 9/13/79

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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Flanders National Register District  
Kent, CT

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one

Lot Number & Location	Owner & Address	Contribution & Description
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KENT ASSESSOR'S SHEET 8

Lot 10 Route 7	The Stanley Works 195 Lake Street New Britain, CT 06052	Noncritical; land only.
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KENT ASSESSOR'S SHEET 9

Lots 12 & 12A (parts) Cobble Lane	Katherine Evarts Route 1 Box 60 Kent, CT 06757	Critical; #1, two-story Federal dwelling.
Lot 20A Cobble Road	L. Allen <u>et al.</u> c/o Charles E. Lauriat Washington Depot, CT 06794	Noncritical; land only.
Lot 19 Cobble Road	Anthony Thompson Route 1 Box 137 Kent, CT 06757	Critical; #2, small, greatly altered 1½ story dwelling.
Lot 18 Cobble Road	Denny A. Fuller & Norman F. Abbot Route 1 Box 136A Kent, CT 06757	Critical; #3, 1½ story dwelling with Classical details.
Lot 107 Cobble Road	Denny A. Fuller & Norman F. Abbot Route 1 Box 136A Kent, CT 06747	Critical; #5, two-story Federal dwelling.
Lot 861 Cobble Road	Pat Kaufman 465 West Broadway New York, NY 10012	Noncritical; ruins of barns.
Lot 20 Cobble Road	L. Allen <u>et al.</u> c/o Charles E. Lauriat Washington Depot, CT 06794	Critical; frame barns near road.

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Lot Number & Location	Owner & Address	Contribution & Description
Lot 112 Cobble Road and Route 7	Kent Congregational Church Kent, CT 06757	Noncritical; land only.
Lot 106 Studio Hill Road and Route 7	Estate of George L. Nelson Route 1 Box 91 Kent, CT 06757	Critical; #7, two-story 18th-century dwelling, attached store. "Seven Hearths."
Lot 105 Route 7	Fred & Charlotte F. Gardner Route 1 Box 94 Kent, CT 06757	Critical; #8, two-story, 18th-century dwelling with lean-to.
Lot 101A Route 7	Walter Gawel Route 1 Box 96 Kent, CT 06757	Noncritical; modern one-story dwelling.
Lot 73 Route 7	Peter Gawel <u>et al.</u> c/o Susie Gawel Route 1 Box 97 Kent, CT 06757	Critical; #11, two-story Greek Revival dwelling, barns.
Lot 45 Route 7	Leonard Howard Route 1 Box 87 Kent, CT 06757	Critical; #4, two-story Federal dwelling, barn.
Lot 44 Route 7	Marc Devos Kent, CT 06757	Critical; #6, two-story Federal dwelling; schoolhouse.
Lot 46 Route 7	Elaine Rush 2 Fifth Avenue New York, NY 10011	Critical; #9, two-story 18th-century dwelling; former tavern.

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three

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Lot Number &  
Location

Owner & Address

Contribution &  
Description

Lot 47  
Route 7

John E. & Olga C. Kennedy  
Route 7  
Kent, CT 06757

Critical: #10, 2 story  
Federal dwelling, gable  
end to road.

From records of Kent Assessor's Office, May 2, 1978

Representation in Existing Surveys

5

State Register of Historic Places  
State - 1975

Connecticut Historical Commission  
Hartford, CT

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arrangements. The north front room's four-tiered panelling is the most formal, with the opening of the small stone hearth arch-shaped. A bolection molding repeats the shape of the fireplace, and panelled spandrels form the transition to the basically rectilinear composition. The south room has a simple two-part corner cupboard, the lower covered by a single-panel door and the upper rectangular opening fitted with curved shelves. Other important interior features include narrow moldings along the girts, plates and summers, molded chair rails, and original doors which are integrated into the panel schemes.

Just to the south is the John Beebe, Jr. House (#7), known today as "Seven Hearths." The 2½ story frame building, built in 1754, is unusual in that its main or northwest facade is seven bays wide with two entrances. The southernmost part was a dwelling with the usual five bay facade, while the northern part is believed to have been a store and fur trading center; the structure appears to have been built all at one time. A small ell at the south rear is original and contains an old wooden well windlass. Across the rear of the ell is an old gutter, hewn from a single log, which leads to a nearby cistern. Two brick chimneys with peaked caps emerge from the asphalt-shingled gable roof. The south entrance has a wide door of seven panels, a transom with two rows of six lights, and a molded frame. The north batten door does not appear original; the frame is similar but plainer and there is no transom. The 12/12 sash is old and is set close to the plane of the clapboarded walls. The underpinning is fieldstone with limestone blocks above grade.

The interior is well-preserved, especially on the first floor. The long north room is plainly finished with horizontal beaded boards; the room above has been modernized, but reportedly, one could read the names of pelts chalked on some of the beams. The corner fireplace in the middle front room has a Georgian chimneypiece composed of a single large (42 x 51") panel above the opening with fluted pilasters reaching to the ceiling. Other significant interior details are the flat-panel dado in this room and the central hall, the raised-panel dado in the south front room, beaded casings, a small mantel with dentils and pulvinated frieze upstairs, the vaulted south chimney foundation, and some beaded board walls in the back stairway and kitchen.

Across the street is the Morgan House (#9), a 2½ story dwelling one room deep. There are two additions, a lean-to on the north rear and a gable-roofed ell on the south rear, an extension whose floor levels are both about 2' below those of the main house. A brick central chimney emerges from behind the ridge of the gable roof. The exterior is covered with wood shingles and the windows have old 12/8 sash. The five bay main or east facade has a central entrance flanked by sidelights with four fluted pilasters. There is also an entrance to the basement story which, because of the slope of the lot, is fully exposed on



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the north side and partly on the east. The house's kitchen fireplace and oven are in this north basement room; this room was presumably the tap room when the house served as a tavern. The most important interior original details are the old floors upstairs and the full-height wainscot of horizontal wide, beaded boards in the north room on the main floor. Cobble Brook runs close to the rear of the house, and there was at one time a mill privilege here. The date of the house has been variously given as 1738 and 1765. The framing is much lighter than the Beebe, Sr. House opposite, there are no summers visible, and the pilastered entrance is certainly a late feature.

The district's five Federal Style houses are all large, 2½ story frame dwellings.<sup>1</sup> In general, they have porticoed entrances in the center of their five-bay main facades, with the ridgeline of their gable roofs parallel to the road. The exteriors are mostly clapboarded, and in most cases, their windows have old 12/12 sash. The most elaborate is the Mills House (#1, HABS CONN-183) overlooking the district from Cobble Lane. Although the outstanding exterior detailing of the house is from the Federal period, the west side and the 1½ story ell to the rear are said to be parts of an earlier structure, an idea substantiated by the heavy cased framing found in these parts alone, the difference in floor levels between the east and west sides, the irregular placement of the two brick chimneys, and the slight asymmetry to the main (north) facade. The entrance portico has a shallow peaked roof supported by Tuscan columns of unusual profile: beginning at their limestone plinths, they increase in diameter rapidly to a point one-fourth of the way up, then taper off normally. The portico's entablature has a plain frieze, a band of fluting giving the effect of dentils, and a molded cornice with block-like mutules. The soffit of the portico is finished with plain boards, but the shape of the front suggests an elliptical vault. Spindle-backed benches (not the original) run between the columns and corresponding fluted pilasters framing the doorway. Above the doorway is a rectangular transom leaded in a geometric pattern of intersecting ellipse segments. There are also sidelights with 6/6 double-hung sash.

Above the entranceway is a rectangular window transformed by a wooden fan and shuttered sidelights into a Palladian window. The side windows have boldly projecting caps, similar to the portico cornice, which form breaks over the panelled pilasters applied to the jambs. The arched head of the center window is surrounded by a saw-tooth molding with a carved key block. The house's other windows have caps which repeat the portico entablature. In plan, the window caps have a convex shape, with breaks simulating capitals at the ends. The corner boards of the house are intricately molded with a rope-turn molding at the corner edge. The west gable has flush-board siding and a window with a wooden fan above, similar to the center one in the Palladian window. The main cornice extends across the front of the house, up the rake and across the gable on the west side, and about half of the way across the rear. Like the portico entablature, it has

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six

mutules and fluting, but it also has an unusual frieze of applied blocks with semi-circular cutouts at the top, at once suggesting both festoons and triglyphs. The interior is based on the central hall plan. There is a very plain staircase leading to the second floor, but due to a fire there is little historical material left. The most notable feature is the mantel in the single large west room: it has fluted pilasters, a central elliptical ornament, and an elaborately molded shelf.

Down toward the center of the district is another Federal Style dwelling, the Cavarly House (#4, HABS CONN-185). The somewhat asymmetrical long side of the house, with its Palladian window above the central entrance, faces east toward nearby Cobble Brook, but there is also an entrance with a portico on the south gable end, facing the road, so the house is indefinite in its orientation. There are four smooth engaged columns flanking the east entrance's doorway and its accompanying sidelights. The transom is leaded in a semi-elliptical pattern, but this is a reproduction of other windows in the neighborhood. An entablature composed of a plain frieze, a row of dentils, and thin mutules below the cornice forms breaks over each column. The Palladian window, the round-arched window in the wood-shingled south gable, and the doorway of the south entrance are similarly detailed, with engaged columns and a similar entablature. Like the Mills House, the arched window heads are really wooden fans, and the sidelights of the Palladian window are covered with shutters. The entablature of dentils and thin mutules is repeated in the main cornice and in the detailing of the south entrance's portico. The latter has a peaked roof and vaulted soffit; the supporting columns are missing. The rear of the house has been built out somewhat and there is a modern one-story ell to the rear. The interior is quite plain with an entrance hall and stairway inside the south entrance and a few simple mantels. The room arrangement is odd, with the kitchen just inside the east entrance and two small rooms behind it, one of which still has its corner fireplace.

Across Route 7 and an open field is the Pratt House (#5, HABS CONN-184) on Cobble Road. Its main or southwest facade is symmetrical with a Palladian window (wooden fan and real sidelights) over the entranceway. Like the previous houses, the entrance has a peaked-roof portico treated as a pediment, with a plastered vaulted soffit. There are benches between the slender columns and the corresponding panelled pilasters. The doorway has sidelights with moveable sash and a rectangular transom leaded with a semi-elliptical curve, festoons (most now missing) between the radii, and an eagle at the center. The portico and main cornice are similarly detailed with a row of small dentils and flat mutules. Despite the outstanding transom, the exterior as a whole is plainer than the previous houses: there are no Classical window caps, nor does the cornice form a pediment on the gable ends. The 12/12 sash on the second story is original. An

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seven

ell to the rear of the house is constructed of older material, perhaps part of an earlier dwelling or outbuilding. The interior plan is unusual, with three rooms across the front of the house. The south room has a flat-panel dado and a simple arrangement of cupboards around a kitchen fireplace and oven. The center room is smaller and contains a corner fireplace sharing the south stack. It is not really a central hall, as the steep stairs to the second floor are reached by a door at the rear of this room. The north front room's mantel is rather elaborate, having panelled pilasters with diamond-shaped carving in the neckings, two rows of dentils, and a shelf with fluting along the edge.

In the center of the district is another Federal Style residence, the Lewis House (#6, HABS Conn-186). The entrance portico is similar to others in the district, with smooth thin columns, peaked roof, vaulted soffit and dentils and mutules along the cornice. There are four panelled pilasters around the doorway and leaded sidelights; the transom above the door is rectangular with semi-elliptical leading. Although there is a tripartite window above the main entrance, the openings are all rectangular. The entablature of the portico is used again in the window caps and the main cornice, which returns across the gable ends. On the southwest side facade, there is an entrance with a similar portico, and in the gable, an elliptical louver with its major axis placed vertically. A 1½ story ell with peaked dormer extends to the rear. The exterior is covered with wood shingles. The interior is based on the central hall plan and contains a simple stairway and several mantels, the most elaborate of which is in the north front room. The most well-developed Federal mantel in the district, it has a large carved elliptical sunburst in the middle, with smaller ones in the neckings of the fluted engaged columns. The shelf is shaped so as to form capitals over the columns and is curved outward slightly between them. Nearby the Lewis House is a small one-story frame building which was the village school in the late 19th century.

The final Federal House is the Rowley House (#10) on Route 7, north of the Morgan House. Unlike the others, its main entrance is on the gable end, which faces the road. There is a small 1½ story wing with eyebrow windows on either side of the central mass; the southern one is said to pre-date the main house. There is a central brick chimney, and smaller ones in each wing. The main entrance is set to the right within the three-bay southeast facade and is sheltered by a flat-roofed portico supported on slender Tuscan columns. The portico is classically detailed with a row of small dentils below the cornice moldings, and the frieze has elliptical carvings centered over the columns. Above the pilastered doorway is a transom leaded in a geometric pattern of elliptical segments. The house's main cornice is carried up the gable's rake with only a partial return across the front; it is composed of a row of dentils, shallow mutules, and the usual moldings. In the gable is a delicately leaded semi-elliptical window with two rows of festoons between the radii. The interior

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eight

was not available for inspection but reportedly contains an original stairway and at least one Federal mantel.

The remaining houses in the district are somewhat smaller than the five Federal period houses. Across the road from the Rowley House is #11, a 2½ story frame dwelling with a smaller 1½ story wing to the north; the ridges of both gable roofs parallel the road. The sidelighted and transomed entrance is located to the left of the three-bay main facade and is recessed behind the plane of the wall. Above the opening is a lintel and projecting cap suggestive of the Greek Revival.

Somewhat more developed is the entrance to #3, a small 1½ story gable roofed dwelling on Cobble Road. Centered between two windows, the entrance has sidelights and four fluted pilasters, but the entablature consists only of a row of dentils and a single molding; perhaps there are elements missing. The rest of the house is very plain, with no window or cornice elaboration; without other details, it is difficult to judge whether the entrance reflects Federal or Greek Revival Classicism. The exterior is partly clapboarded and partly shingled. There is a full basement story in the rear. Even more problematic is the nearby #2, a small 1½ story house with porches added to either end. As there is no exterior detailing, only the form of the house and the eyebrow windows on the east facade suggest that this house may be a contemporary of its neighbor.

Several of the houses have barns on the property: #11 has several farm buildings of various ages, #10, 4 and 3 each have a large old barn nearby, and in the woods behind #5 there are two barns in a state of decay. The most visible, however, are the group of barns on Cobble Road near the brook. These are frame structures with gable roofs and vertical board siding. The largest has a peaked-roof cupola with paired round-arched louvered openings. As part of the openings' frame there is an ogee design suggestive of half-timbering.

At one time, Flanders had several industries, including a sawmill, gristmill, fulling mill, tannery, cider mill, and blacksmith shop, though there is no general agreement where these were located. According to one interpretation, the stone underpinning of one of the barns on Cobble Road near the brook is actually part of the foundation of the fulling mill. Some say that stones that were part of the gristmill behind the Morgan House (#9) can be seen, although an investigation along the course of Cobble Brook failed to confirm this. The archeological value of these sites, should they be discovered, cannot be dismissed.

The future preservation of the district, at least in part, is encouraged by the existence of a local historic district. The boundaries of the local district and the nominated area are generally similar, except that the Mills House (#1), House #11, and the barns along Cobble Road were excluded from the local study.

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Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Extensive research in local histories, manuscripts and legal records has of yet failed to specifically date any of these houses, though the dates 1805 to 1825 are a reasonable estimate based upon better documented examples such as the John Glover Noble House in New Milford and the Wheeler-Beecher house in Bethany, both nominated to the National Register. During the 1930's, Elmer Keith dated the Mills House (#1) and the Pratt House (#5) as 1815-1820, while his co-worker "J.D." dated the Lewis House (#6) c. 1810.

As in many towns, the deeds in Kent are not very specific in their descriptions of property. In some cases, such as the Mills House, the property remained in one family until recently. Finally, there is no way to tell if "Dwellinghouse" mentioned in early deeds is the house in question.

Researchers from the local historical society have thought that all the houses incorporate parts of the earliest houses on each site. They have therefore named the houses after the first owner and dated them all around the mid-18th century.

Further research in the documentary record and examination of the houses' structures may clarify the dates of the buildings.

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Adam brothers should not be overstressed; for in England their work and doctrines were vigorously opposed by a number of architects led by Sir William Chambers, who called for a more strict adherence to classical forms and proportions. These two streams of thought crossed the Atlantic in the treatises and pattern books of the contending architects and their popularizers, and were combined here with the older but still flourishing Georgian tradition of design. The result was the American Federal style, a felicitous mixture which emphasized the delicacy of the Adams' ornamentation, paid deference to the traditional proportions favored by Chambers, and included some design features from the earlier period such as the Palladian window. A number of American architects popularized the Federal style from the 1790's onward, including Charles Bulfinch in Boston, Samuel McIntyre in Salem, and John McComb in New York, while another impetus was the publication of Asher Benjamin's American Builder's Companion in 1806, which contained detailed drawings of many Adamesque features.

Properly speaking, the five houses in Flanders are not "Federal Style" buildings: they exhibit none of the innovative changes in form, such as bow fronts or oval-shaped rooms, which characterized the best work of builders in cosmopolitan centers. Nor do they have the hipped roofs, full-width porticoes, or pavilions found on some buildings in larger Connecticut towns such as nearby Litchfield. Rather, the rural builders responsible for these houses, inspired by pattern books and the example of more sophisticated buildings, applied Adamesque ornament to the basic house form inherited from the previous century. Their well-defined cornices, bold window caps, variety in window shape, pediment-like gables, and elaborate entrance treatments create an exterior that is richer and more sculptural than the homogenous and flat 18th-century facade, but underneath is the same gable-roofed box.

The district's structures, therefore, are "country" Federal: simplified adaptations of the high-style houses which inspired them. For example, the most notable feature of each of the houses is its porch: a gable-roofed extension over the main doorway, supported by slender columns. In the Pratt house, the soffit of the porch's roof is a flattened plaster vault, and one would expect this gentle curve to be repeated in the transom light over the doorway. But, although this window does contain a leaded, elliptical light, complete with festoons and eagle ornament, the entire composition is set in a rectangular transom opening. Obviously, the builder did not wish to undertake the complicated construction of an elliptical transom and thus had simplified the design while preserving its essential Federal characteristics. Another interesting adaptation found in some of the houses occurs in the sidelights of the main entrances. While the Lewis house contains delicately

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leaded designs in these openings, the sidelights of the Mills and Cavarly houses are filled with simple, double-hung sash. Finally, this theme is illustrated in the Palladian windows of the Mills and Cavarly houses. Instead of a semi-circular light above the center window, there is only a wooden fan ornament, surrounded by a delicate molding, which provides the appearance rather than the reality of a true Palladian composition.

The reasons why the houses in the proposed Flanders district are simplified adaptations of the period's dominant styles are closely related to the historical development of the community in which they are located.

Flanders was the original settlement center in Kent, a town formed when Connecticut's General Assembly decided to auction off the remainder of the colony's "western lands" in Litchfield county. Lots in the first division of the new settlement were sold at Windham courthouse in 1738; and the first residents arrived to take up their holdings shortly thereafter. Until the 1840's, Flanders remained the town's administrative and religious center; but, after a railroad and an accompanying station were constructed to the south, Kent's focal point gradually shifted to encompass this bearer of economic progress and prosperity, leaving Flanders to mellow in its antique beauty, free, until now, from pressures for change.

Throughout the first one hundred years of its existence, Kent remained a self-sufficient settlement whose prosperity was based upon agriculture. The town's most prominent men not only were engaged in farming but ran small businesses, invested in the local iron industry, and speculated in land.<sup>1</sup> These varied activities allowed individuals to accumulate moderate fortunes and to build houses on a scale commensurate with their wealth. Here, then, is the key to understanding the need for adaptation. These men, although they were the richest members of their community, could not rival the means of the emerging merchant aristocracy along the coast or the leading men of the larger inland towns such as Litchfield. Thus, the house of John Beebe, Sr., was the commodious structure of a yeoman-proprietor and Kent's first constable, but it was certainly not as refined as the highly embellished Georgian structures of contemporary Wethersfield and other merchant dominated towns.

Likewise, the Federal and Greek Revival houses in Flanders reflect the

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means of later generations of successful, prosperous farmer-businessmen who wanted to emulate the new styles but could not afford to build exact copies of the homes they admired elsewhere. Besides the specific examples of simplification found in the Federal houses which have been previously discussed, it is interesting to note that in all five houses it was obviously the desire of their owners to concentrate the decorative features where they would be most noticeable to a passer-by. Thus, the elaborate cornice of the Mills House extends only around 2 1/2 sides of the structure--those most noticeable from the road. Moreover, the interiors of the houses are extremely plain and do not reflect the exterior ornamentation except in the few decorative mantels found in the "best" parlors. For example, the outside embellishment of the Palladian window of the Cavarly House with its slender pilasters between the three elements is not repeated (as it is, for instance, in Hoadley's Wheeler-Beecher House) on the inside, where the window is surrounded and divided by a very simple and unadorned frame.

If the interiors of these five houses are somewhat disappointing, the interesting interpretations of Federal decoration on the exteriors provide more than enough compensation. There is great unity to the houses, particularly in their highly imaginative entry porches which establish the Federal tone of each structure. This unity is also apparent in the leaded lights of the entry way transom windows, the decorative cornices with their delicate dentils and mutules, the slender rails of the main staircases, and the attenuated pilasters of porches, mantelpieces and Palladian windows. Finally, as one goes from house to house, one finds that design forms reappear in the most intriguing ways. For example, the shape of the window caps of the Mills House appear again in the mantelshelves of the Pratt and Lewis houses.

In sum, the Flanders area of Kent within the bounds of the proposed National Register District contains a number of houses of great interest. The ten major structures, thanks to their setting along tree-shaded roads surrounded by open fields with few non-contributing buildings, form a unified, aesthetically pleasing composition. The houses are architecturally significant, providing a visual catalogue of some of the ways in which the dominant styles of the period between 1740 and 1840 were adapted and interpreted in a provincial atmosphere. As such, they also reflect the wealth and intellectual outlook of their owners, and are tangible evidence which contributes to an understanding of the social history of this community.



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In addition to the architectural significance of the district, Flanders is important because it includes the possible birthplace of Birdsey Grant Northrop (1817-1898), who may have been born in the Pratt House (#5; the house has been dated c. 1815-1820). Although best known as the founder of Arbor Day, Northrop was also the champion of village improvement societies. As Secretary of the State Board of Education, he worked for state-wide educational reform. It is perhaps fitting, therefore, that of all the public buildings which once were located in the Flanders area, the small building (near #6) which served as the public school in the late 19th century has survived.

Notes:

<sup>1</sup>The social and economic background of Kent and its inhabitants in this period is thoroughly discussed in Charles S. Grant, Democracy in the Connecticut Frontier Town of Kent (Columbia Studies in the Social Sciences No. 601; New York: Columbia University Press, 1961).

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<sup>470</sup>  
E: 18/628450/4621490

F: 18/628200/4621510

<sup>030</sup> G: 18/628010/4621370

H: 18/627950/4621420

I: 18/628100/4621710

J: 18/628110/4621930

K: 18/628280/4622020

<sup>410</sup> L: 18/628030/4622410 <sup>030</sup>

M: 18/628430/4622140

(Verbal Boundary Description continued)

crossing Studio Hill Road. It continues along the rear property lines of Lots 106 and 107, until it comes to the boundary between Lots 107 and 861. From there it runs southerly in a straight line to the southernmost corner of Lot 861, and then westerly in a straight line to the southwest corner of Cobble Road and Cobble Lane. From that point it runs approximately 480 feet in a straight line to the eastern corner of the enclosed yard of the house on Lot 12A now owned and occupied by Katherine Evarts. The district boundary runs southwesterly and then northwesterly along the rear of the yard, following the driveway to its intersection with Cobble Lane. From there it runs northeasterly to a point on the boundary between Lots 12 and 20A approximately 540 feet from Cobble Road, and then continues to Route 7 in a line with the boundary between Lots 17 and 20A. It then crosses Route 7 to the southwest corner of Lot 45, and from there runs northwesterly along the property line of Lot 45, and then northeasterly along the rear property lines of Lots 45,44 and 46, until it comes to Cobble Brook. The line then follows Cobble Brook northeasterly to the first point.