

1857

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 of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Sumner-Carpenter House
other names/site number Ellsworth House

2. Location

street & number 333 Old Colony Road not for publication NA
city, town Eastford vicinity NA
state Connecticut code CT county Windham code 015 zip code 06242

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
		Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<u>4</u>	<u>2</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	_____	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____ structures
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	_____ objects
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>4</u>	<u>2</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: NA
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register NA

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official [Signature] Date 11/6/91
State or Federal agency and bureau Director, Connecticut Historical Commission

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official _____ Date _____
State or Federal agency and bureau _____

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register. See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:) _____

[Signature] Signature of the Keeper 12-26-91 Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic: single dwelling
 Agricultural/subsistence: _____
agricultural outbuildings
 Agricultural/subsistence: _____
agricultural fields

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic: single dwelling
 Agricultural/subsistence: _____
agricultural outbuildings

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Early Republic: Federal

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Fieldstone/granite/brick
 walls wood/clapboard/weatherboard
 roof asphalt
 other brick

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Sumner-Carpenter House is located on Old Colony Road in Eastford, Connecticut, about one-half mile east of the historic town center (photographs 1 and 2). Historically, the property consisted of a 230-acre farm; included within the National Register nomination are 27 of the approximately 93 acres still in common ownership with the house. Most of the nominated parcel lies on the north side of the road, with the exception of 1.4 acres on the south side, bordered by Bungee Brook (figure 1). Although no longer in active agricultural use, the National Register parcel is divided into fields and pastures, many of which are bordered by fieldstone walls, maintaining its historic appearance (photograph 2a).

The Sumner-Carpenter House, a two-story Federal-style dwelling, contains 11 rooms. It stands on the north side of Old Colony Road and is set back about 50 feet. A construction date of 1806 is traditionally assigned to the main block and ell for several reasons: their unity in framing and features, the inscription "J.N.S. 1806" incised in the stone block centered in one of two chimneys rising from the main roof ridge (photograph 16), and evidence in land records (note 1).

To the east and northeast of the house are five wood-framed outbuildings that vary in size and age but are similar in materials, proportions, and style (photographs 2 and 3). The garage and two sheds, vernacular expressions of the Colonial Revival style, date from c.1925 and contribute to the historical significance of the property, while the others are of more recent vintage and do not. Gable-roofed and with fieldstone foundations, the garage and sheds have novelty or flushboard siding and windows with six-over-six double-hung sash and six-light single sash. The largest outbuilding, a gambrel-roofed dairy barn (photograph 2) sheathed in novelty siding, was built c.1948 on the site of an older barn destroyed during the 1938 New England hurricane. Near this barn, to the northeast, are the stone foundations of a 19th-century barn and, beyond, a one-story sheep barn, gable-roofed and flushboard-sheathed, of c.1980. A row of trees, some quite old, lines the street in front

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

Sumner-Carpenter House
Eastford, Connecticut

of the house, and near the driveway are 19th-century granite hitching posts. The only other buildings visible from the Sumner-Carpenter House are a few 18th- or 19th-century houses several hundred feet to the west.

The house has three sections, a rectangular two-story hip-roofed main block (40' x 25'), a two-story ell (24' x 24'), and a long two-story gable-roofed wing (40' x 22') projecting from the west elevation (photographs 4 and 5; figure 2). The main block and ell were built in 1806, while the wing dates from c.1900 (note 2). Construction of the oldest part is attributed to Vini Goodell, a local builder at the turn of the 19th century who is also credited with building the Benjamin Bosworth House (c.1800) on John Perry Road (note 3).

The present owners acquired the property in three stages, the first purchase in 1976 including the house and 11 acres. Their changes to the house have restored the original appearance of the main block, responded to deterioration, and involved limited modernizations. Most of the original structural elements and detailing survive (note 4). To the limited extent that components of the house were replaced, the new elements either replicate the old or are sensitive to the old (note 5).

The basement under the main block has dry walls of fieldstone rubble, with granite ashlar supporting the sills. The basement is full height, and a dirt floor covers most of the area. At the front southeast corner is a separate room several feet lower than the main basement floor. Heavy timber and dry fieldstone bases support two chimneys, while one rests on brick. The c.1900 wing has an approximately four-foot-high basement with brick walls and concrete floor. Because of the sloping ground, the rear wall of the entire basement is above grade and wood-framed. Projecting from this wall is a small privy. Clapboards with four-inch exposure sheath the exterior of the entire building. With few exceptions, all of the windows are 12-over-12 double-hung sash (note 6).

The Federal style is articulated in numerous exterior embellishments. Centered on the five-bay facade is the front entrance (photograph 7), which is contained within a shallow projecting pavilion. The door is set under a fanlight with arched glazing and keystone, and is

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

Sumner-Carpenter House
Eastford, Connecticut

flanked by long six-over-six sidelights resting on molded pedestals. The door and sidelights, together with all first-floor windows on the facade and side elevations, have lintels decorated with flattened guttae and projecting narrow cornices supported by small compound modillions (photographs 7 and 8). Above the entrance is a projecting boxed overhang embellished with shallow modillions.

Centered on the facade at the second story is a Palladian window with arched glazing. The projecting sill is supported by shallow triglyphs with flattened guttae. Flanking the entire entrance composition are shallow two-story pilasters. Marking the front corners of the house are molded pilasters with beaded molding, and the roofline is embellished with a molded entablature.

The first- and second-floor plans are shown in the attached sketch (figure 2). Except for minor changes, the main block appears to retain its original floor plan, while the wing has been altered (note 4). The interior wood framing and detailing appear mostly original to the construction of each section of the house, and are in good condition.

In the main block and ell, the attic framing is rough-hewn, pegged with mortise and tenon joints, and braced. The wide pine floors vary in width and are painted in several rooms. Period woodwork embellishes the plaster walls and aperture casings of this section of the house. Several different molding patterns are displayed. The first-floor parlor has the most extensive and complex woodwork, including the only interior cornice. A delicate turned band, in two distinct but related forms, adds further decoration to the house. In the front hall, the inside edge of the front-door casing, the perimeters of door panels (photograph 9), and the stairway newel (photograph 10) display a beaded band. In the parlor, on the other hand, a flatter rope molding is the embellishment (photographs 11 and 12).

The main stairway features square balusters set on the diagonal and a reeded stringer band. The dining room retains remnants of possibly original wainscot stenciling (photograph 13), a section of patterned floor painting (photograph 14), and original recessed paneled blinds (photograph 15), the only set in the house. In reopening the brick

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 3

Sumner-Carpenter House
Eastford, Connecticut

and granite fireplaces in the first- and second-floor front chambers, the present owners had to introduce new components in only one case (note 7). The doors in the main block and ell are either four- or six-panel, and appear original.

Notes

1. In January 1806, John Newton Sumner acquired a 4-1/2-acre lot in the easterly part of Eastford, then part of the Town of Ashford. While the location is not conclusively established, the purchase matches the chimney stone inscription and was the first of several by which Sumner amassed a 228-acre farm. See vol. 17, p. 100 (1806), of the Ashford land records.
2. Photograph 6, taken c.1900, shows a long one-story open shed in the same location as the wing. Compare this view to photograph 4.
3. The Benjamin Bosworth House, listed February 17, 1978 on the National Register of Historic Places, and the Sumner-Carpenter House share similar front elevations and some embellishments. For example, a nearly identical rope molding decorates interior woodwork in both houses, while the compound modillions displayed in the exterior window surrounds of the Sumner-Carpenter House appear in the door casings in the first-floor hall of the Bosworth House.
4. The wing has undergone the most change in recent years. Some changes are historically based, such as removal of an enclosed non-original porch from the front elevation. The current owners have incorporated the end bay, formerly a garage, into the present kitchen, while the second floor has been finished as two bedrooms. Other changes consist of a rear deck and three solar panels on the roof.
5. Prior to the current ownership, the old kitchen was altered by the removal of a stairway to the second floor in the northeast corner and the removal of a partition that had created a small room between the kitchen and the dining room. The present owners reconstructed the fireplace in the old kitchen based on evidence

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 4

Sumner-Carpenter House
Eastford, Connecticut

found when non-original oak floors were removed. The hearthstone was taken from the summer kitchen fireplace in the basement (photograph 17).

6. The windows in the dining room, on the west elevation in the old kitchen, and in the pantry are very old and may be original. Most of the other windows were six-over-six and deteriorated when the present owners acquired the house; they had many of them repaired and remade into twelve-over-twelve sash, and reproductions fill most other apertures.
7. The marble hearth and facing stones in the parlor are reproductions. According to the present owners, the original marble was removed by Harold Carpenter, a former owner, in 1968.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1806, c.1900, c.1925

Significant Dates

1806

Cultural Affiliation

NA

Significant Person

NA

Architect/Builder

Vini Goodell

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

The Sumner-Carpenter House, built in 1806 with a c.1900 wing, is architecturally significant because it is a skillfully executed, well-preserved Federal residence, a very fine rural example of the style in Connecticut. The framing of the main block is representative of contemporary local construction practices. Distinctive Federal detailing, both inside and out, typifies the craftsmanship of rural carpenters of the day. Taken together, the house, its associated outbuildings, and the historic landscape present a notable picture of agrarian life in Eastford of the 19th and early-20th centuries. Adding historical interest is the connection of the house with the Sumner and Carpenter families, prominent in the towns of Ashford and Eastford since the 18th century.

Historical Background

John Newman Sumner (1776-1831), the builder of the house, was active in the civic affairs of Ashford, from which the Town of Eastford was created in 1847. He represented Ashford in the state legislature in 1821, and was also one of the incorporators in 1815 of the Sprague Manufacturing Company, which produced cotton yarn and cloth. When the Eastford Congregational Church decided to erect a new sanctuary, completed in 1829, Sumner served on the building committee. He was also an active investor in local real estate, beginning around 1800. The year before his death in 1831, Sumner sold his farm of 228 acres, including this dwelling, to Asa Bosworth (note 1).

During the mid-19th century, the property passed through several owners and was farmed (note 2). Its size, assets, and productivity placed it among the largest and most successful farms in Eastford

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

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 # _____

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property approximately 27

UTM References

A

1	8
---	---

7	4	3	0	0	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

4	6	4	3	1	0	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Zone Easting Northing

B

1	8
---	---

7	4	3	5	9	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

4	6	4	3	1	6	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Zone Easting Northing

C

1	8
---	---

7	4	3	4	9	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

4	6	4	2	8	0	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Zone Easting Northing

D

1	8
---	---

7	4	3	0	7	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

4	6	4	2	7	3	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Zone Easting Northing

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By Reviewed by John Herzan, National Register Coordinator

name/title Gregory E. Andrews
organization Consultant date 30 October 1991
street & number 1643 Boulevard telephone 203-561-3841
city or town West Hartford state Connecticut zip code 06107

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 1

Sumner-Carpenter House
Eastford, Connecticut

(note 3). The crops grown, including corn and potatoes, and dairy herds pastured, were typical of the time. After the purchase by David P. Carpenter in February 1882, three generations of Carpenters lived here until 1969. The Carpenters maintained large herds of Devon cattle for their dairy enterprise (note 4), and they continued the tradition of active civic involvement. Orlo Carpenter (1864/5-1938), son of David, represented Eastford in the state legislature in 1912-14 and served as town selectman in 1919-20.

Today, 93 acres of the original 228-acre farm remain in common ownership with the Sumner-Carpenter House, and the traditional division of the rolling land into fields and pastures, defined by stone walls, survives little altered.

Architectural Significance

The Sumner-Carpenter House retains most of its original features in excellent condition. The main block, for example, exemplifies c.1800 Connecticut construction techniques and design in the pegged post-and-beam framing; the size, proportion, and arrangement of the five-bay facade; and inside, the layout featuring a central hall, two symmetrically placed interior chimneys, and recessed interior blinds (note 5).

The house serves as an instructive example of how rural builders and carpenters interpreted the Federal style. Their obvious skill and creativity display a certain artistic naivete and provincialism; the proportions and detailing of the front entrance composition are the prime example (note 6). The craftsmanship is of high quality, however, both inside and out (note 7). Among the fine features expressing the style are the Palladian motifs in the projecting front entrance pavilion and the attenuated proportions of building forms and detailing. The interior woodwork displays the delicacy found in architectural handbooks of the period (note 8). Unusual surviving remnants of patterned floor painting and wainscot stenciling typify popular decorative forms and are significant elements.

Other aspects of the house and property contribute to their importance. The c.1900 wing, in the Colonial Revival style, is

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 2

Sumner-Carpenter House
Eastford, Connecticut

sympathetic in proportion and style, if not in size, to the older part. The outbuildings erected c.1925 similarly are representative of their time in size and features, and are compatible with the house. Surrounding the buildings is an intact historic landscape that strongly evokes the agrarian past of these resources.

Notes

1. See v. 17, p. 100, and v. 22, p. 262, of Ashford land records for these transactions. Subsequent transfers of the property, with two exceptions indicated, are found in the Eastford land records, and include: v.24/p.323 (1837, Ashford); v.1/p.211 (1859, Eastford Probate Records); v.4/p.385 (1872); v.6/p.102 (1882); v.11/p.192 (1928); v.11/p.513 (1941); v.19/p.244 (1969); v.22/p.534 (1976); v.24/p.812 (1982); and v.26/p.66 (1985).
2. Russell Randall died owning the property in 1859, and his estate inventory reveals the nature of the farming enterprise. Property assets included quantities of several kinds of grain, such as 25 bushels of potatoes and 15 bushels of corn, 2 hogs and 9 pigs, 2 pairs of oxen, a cultivator and 2 plows, 2 bulls, and 9 cows. See vol. 1, p. 211, Eastford probate records.
3. The assessed value of the property on the 1844 town grand list, for example, was \$5196, the second highest in Eastford. In 1890, it was the third highest at \$4290. Covering 225-230 acres throughout the 19th century, the farm was also one of the most sizable.
4. The Carpenters' herd of over 30 "neat" (dairy) Devon cattle was long among the largest in Eastford, according to town grand lists at the turn of the century.
5. The exterior plan and roofline are similar to houses of the period throughout New England. See McAlester, A Field Guide to American Houses (1984), p. 162. Another Eastford dwelling, the Jonathan Hayward Mansion in North Ashford, is nearly identical to

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 3

Sumner-Carpenter House
Eastford, Connecticut

the Sumner-Carpenter House in these respects; the traditional date of c.1733 assigned to it is probably incorrect unless the house was altered considerably around 1800.

6. The sidelights flanking the front door are unusually high, and it is rare in the Federal style for the proportions of the doorway composition to match those of a second-floor Palladian window above.
7. The Benjamin Bosworth House (see note 3 of section 7) is the only more pretentious house from the period in Eastford.
8. Asher Benjamin's architectural handbooks were a well-known source for Federal designs. See, for example, the 1805 edition of The Country Builder's Assistant and the 1806 edition of The American Builder's Companion. The interior woodwork in the Sumner House displays simplified forms of patterns set forth in these books.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 1

Sumner-Carpenter House
Eastford, Connecticut

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Appleton, William S. Record of the Descendants of William Sumner of
Dorchester, Massachusetts, 1636. Boston: David Clapp & Son, 1879.
- Ashford, Town of. Town Clerk's Office (land records) and Town
Assessor's Office.
- Benjamin, Asher. The American Builder's Companion. Boston:
Etheridge and Bliss, 1806.
- Benjamin, Asher. The Country Builder's Assistant. Boston, 1805.
- Cameron, Diane Maher. Eastford: The Biography of a New England Town.
Eastford, Connecticut: The Eastford Historical Society, 1976.
- Eastford, Town of. Annual Report for year ending 9/30/1921; Town
Clerk's Office (land records) and Town Assessor's Office.
- Larned, Ellen Douglas. History of Windham County. vol.2: 1760-1880.
Worcester, Massachusetts: Charles Hamilton, 1880.
- Lincoln, Allen B. A Modern History of Windham County, Connecticut.
vol. 1. Chicago: S.J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1920.
- McAlester, Virginia and Lee. A Field Guide to American Houses. New
York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984.
- Pierson, William N. American Buildings and Their Architects: The
Colonial and NeoClassical Styles. New York: Oxford University
Press, 1986.
- United States Government, Office of the Census. Federal Censuses of
1850-1900. (On file at Connecticut State Library, Hartford)
- Yulo, Christopher. The Sumner-Ellsworth House: Architectural Fashion
in Nineteenth-Century Eastford. (Unpublished student paper, Yale
College, 1982).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 10 Page 1

Sumner-Carpenter House
Eastford, Connecticut

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundaries of this property, for National Register purposes, are shown on Figure 1, attached, and encompass a parcel that includes the following three components:

- a) the 11 acres acquired by the present owners in 1976 in the deed recorded at volume 22, page 534, of the Eastford land records, which 11 acres are shown as Parcel A on Figure 1.
- b) a portion of the property acquired by the present owners in 1982 in the deed recorded at volume 24, page 812, of the Eastford land records, which portion is marked Parcel B on Figure 1. Parcel B lies southerly of a line running south 78 degrees, 38 feet, 55 minutes east approximately 1300 feet from point D on Figure 1 to Old Colony Road. Parcel B is bounded on the north by the said line, on the east and south by Old Colony Road, and on the west by Parcel A.
- c) a portion of the property received by the present owners in 1985 in the deed recorded at volume 26, page 66, of the Eastford land records, which portion is marked Parcel C on Figure 1. Parcel C lies southerly of a line running north 58 degrees, 10 feet, 20 minutes east approximately 30 feet from point E to point F on Figure 1.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 10 Page 2

Sumner-Carpenter House
Eastford, Connecticut

Boundary Justification

The boundaries for the National Register nomination demarcate a parcel that forms a cohesive visual setting for the Sumner-Carpenter House and its related outbuildings. The parcel includes pastures and meadows that retain their historic landscape appearance. The National Register nomination covers only part of the property now commonly owned with the Sumner-Carpenter House; the historic significance of the remainder of the property, open land formerly farmed, is not clearly established and, therefore, it is excluded from National Register consideration.

Natural or man-made features that form appropriate visual limits, together with property lines, are the basis for the National Register boundaries. On the north the boundary is a fieldstone wall, about 475 feet behind the Sumner-Carpenter House on a hillside, along the boundary of the 11-acre parcel acquired by the present owners in 1976. The line of this wall is extended eastward to Old Colony Road, following the approximate extent of the view north and northeast from the Sumner-Carpenter House. On the east, the boundary is Old Colony Road, while on the south it is Bungee Brook, which is also the southern property boundary. On the west, north of Old Colony Road, the National Register boundary is the western property line, which is marked by a fieldstone wall.

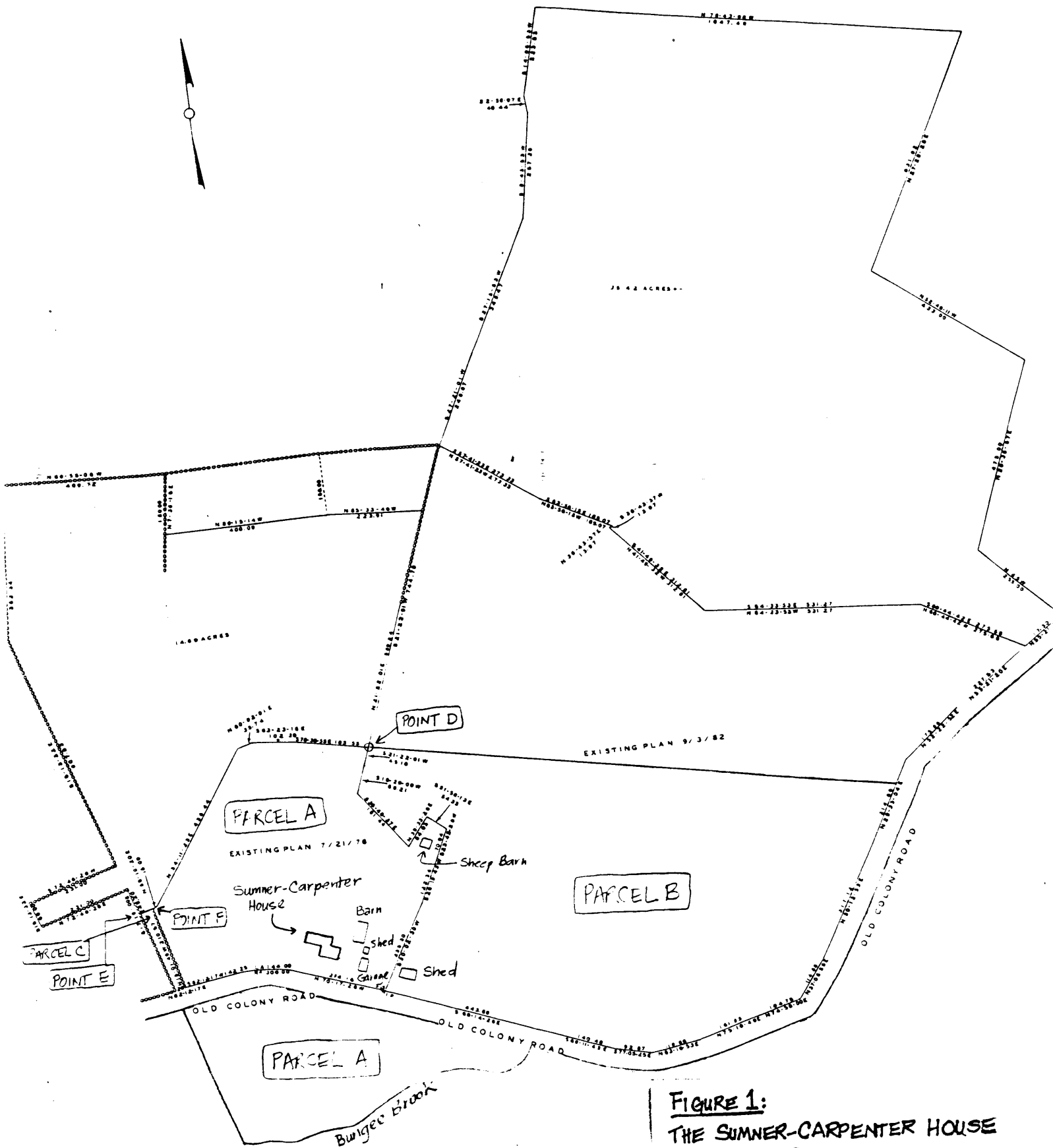
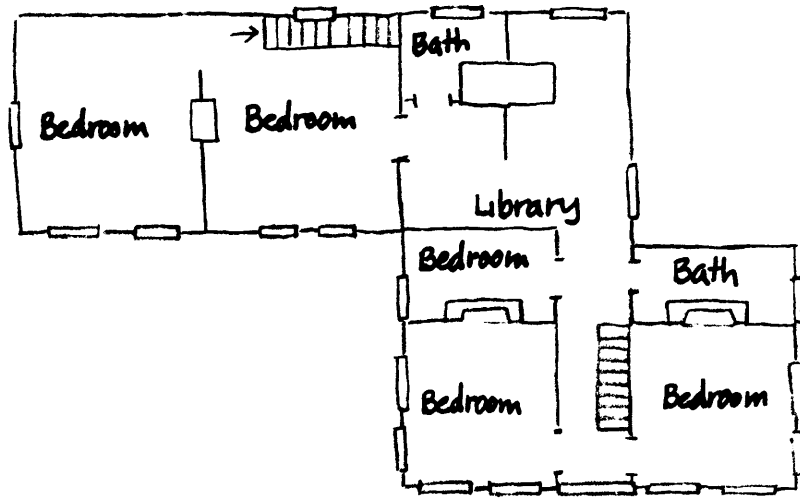
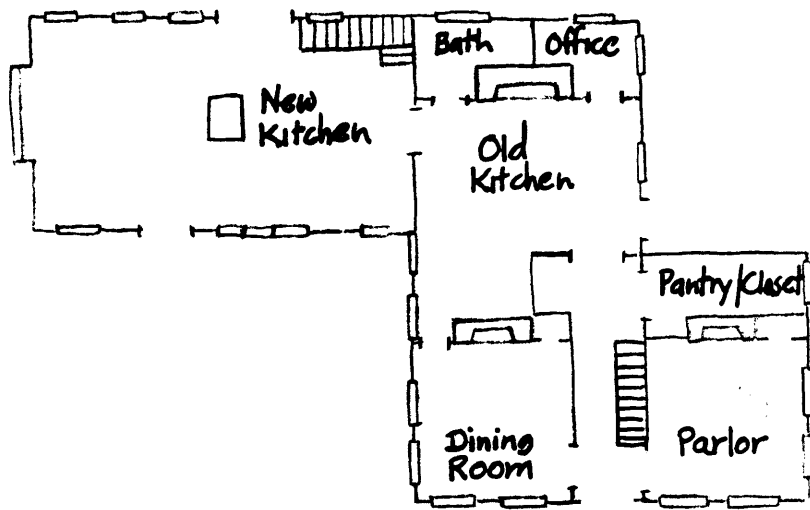


FIGURE 1:
THE SUMNER-CARPENTER HOUSE
EASTFORD, CONNECTICUT
 scale: 1 inch = 200 feet
 All parcels are in common ownership
 (Source: 1985 property survey)



Second Floor



First Floor

SUMNER-CARPENTER HOUSE
 OLD COLONY ROAD
 EASTFORD, CT
 SCALE: 1 inch = 20 feet

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____

Sumner-Carpenter House
Eastford, Connecticut

PHOTOGRAPHS

Photographs #1-4, 6-17 of Sumner-Carpenter House, Old Colony Road, Eastford, CT 06242, were taken by Gregory E. Andrews in November, 1990, and June, 1991. Negatives for the photographs are on file with the Connecticut Historical Commission, Hartford, CT. Photograph #5 is excerpted from Eastford: The Biography of a New England Town (1976), by Diane Maher Cameron.

<u>Number</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>View</u>
1	Facade (south elevation)	Northwest
2	Facade and adjacent barn	North
2a	Fields to east of house	Northeast
3	Rear elevation and barn	Southeast
4	Facade and side wing	Northeast
5	Rear elevation	South
6	c.1900 view of facade	Northeast
7	Front entrance	Northeast
8	Facade window	Northeast
9	Door to parlor	Southeast
10	Front hall stairway	Northeast
11	Window in parlor	Southeast
12	Parlor fireplace	North
13	Wainscot stenciling in dining room	Southeast
14	Lozenge-pattern floor floor painting in dining room	Southeast
15	Window with blind in dining room	South
16	Chimney	Northeast
17	Kitchen fireplace	Northeast