

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 Major General John Sedgwick House  
other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. Location

street & number 52 Hautboy Hill Road  not for publication  
city, town Cornwall  vicinity Cornwall Hollow  
state CT code CT county Litchfield code 005 zip code 06753

### 3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	<u>1</u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	_____	_____ objects
		<u>1</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 February 20, 1992

\_\_\_\_\_  
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]* 4/8/92  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

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**6. Function or Use**

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Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

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Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

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**7. Description**

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Architectural Classification  
(enter categories from instructions)LATE VICTORIAN/Italianate

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Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONEwalls WOOD/clapboard

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roof WOOD/shingleother 

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**Describe present and historic physical appearance.**

The 1859-1860 Major General John Sedgwick House is a two-story, frame, Italianate residence with portico and entrance centered on its five-bay facade. The footprint and basic shape of the gable-roofed twin-chimney structure are those of a Colonial house, with a wing to the south, but it is elaborately embellished with Italianate features.

The house faces east on the southwest corner of the intersection of Hautboy Hill Road and Hurlburt Place in the Cornwall Hollow section of the Town of Cornwall. (Photograph 1) It is a rural setting that provides a long vista to the west over the Hollenbeck River valley into the Berkshire foothills.

A driveway leads in from Hurlburt Place through large trees that surround the house to reveal a view of the property which appears today (Photograph 2) substantially as it does in a historic photograph (Photograph 3). The flat-roofed portico to the 38' x 32' main block is supported by two large fluted columns standing on heavy bases with acanthus leaf/papyrus leaf capitals. (Photograph 4)

The portico roof overhang is supported by pairs of heavy brackets in a wide frieze that are sawn in a bold profile, establishing a design arrangement that is carried through to the window caps and main roof-line overhang on all elevations of the structure. The flat molded caps of the 2-over-2 windows, which are original, rest on small single brackets of similar design. A bead-and-reel molding fills the angle under the cap where the cap meets the wall. The windows are fitted with blinds, as in the historic photograph.

The gable roof alters its slope at the roof line to become a broad flat overhang supported by paired brackets, like those of the portico, attached to a wide frieze. The brackets are connected under the overhang at the juncture with the wall by a bead-and-reel molding. There is a second astragal-like version of the same molding at the cornice edge. The overhang returns at the corners,

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The five-sided bay window on the south elevation is equally elaborate in a different way. (Photograph 5) Its central 2-over-2 sash is flanked by two 1-over-1 windows, with panels of raised moldings below. The windows are divided by pairs of slender bulbous colonnettes that lead up to pendants rather than brackets. The pendants are connected by the bead-and-reel molding and the edge of the molded cornice above is defined by a small bead-and-reel molding, in the manner of the details at the main roof overhang.

In the gable above the bay there is a Palladian attic window which is repeated in the north elevation. (Photograph 6) Its composition of 2-over-2 window flanked by 1-over-1 is similar to that in the bay window. In the Palladian window the sash are contained in a surround with S curves at the bottom and rounded corners at the top. The top thirds of the casings are thickened to give a stilted effect. Window caps like those elsewhere support a segmental pediment whose tympanum is enriched by raised strapwork. At the first floor on the north side a balustrade runs across the full width of the elevation.

On the west or garden elevation there is a long porch, facing the view. (Photograph 7) The square porch columns, standing on high pedestals, are broken at mid height by a molding and have molded capitals. (Photograph 8) The mid-height molding is consistent with corresponding details at mid heights in the bay window and Palladian windows. The windows leading to the porch have surrounds similar to those of the Palladian windows. The porch windows are tall, under transoms, serving as floor-to-ceiling-height French doors.

The 1 1/2-story south wing is embellished with Italianate details, as is the main block. (Photograph 9) A porch on the front is supported by columns similar to those on the west porch of the main block. The roof of the wing has recently been re-covered with wooden shingles, as has the main roof. The box gutter was retained. (Photograph 10)

The front door is glazed with three tall narrow lights with rounded ends, over three panels. It opens to a narrow front hall (see floor plan), which is dominated by a curved stairway. (Photograph 11) The front rooms to left and right have plain grained marble fireplace mantels. (Photograph 12) Window casing are relatively simple moldings. The dining room opens out onto the porch through the French doors. (Photograph 13)

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On the second floor a screen of two Doric columns recently has been added in the hall. (Photograph 14) The bedrooms are plain. (Photograph 15) In the wing the southernmost area has been opened up into a two-story space. In the attic the roof framing and diagonal braces are visible, as well as the rake of the chimneys. (Photograph 16)

South of the house is a new garage and to the west is a swimming pool, both non-contributing.

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<sup>1</sup> Marsh was born in Goshen, Connecticut, 13 June 1824. His mother, Emeline Bradford Marsh, was one of the Cornwall Hollow Bradfords, close neighbors of the Sedgwicks. Marsh took up the trade of house joiner c. 1840; the 1860 census lists him as a master carpenter. He died in Cornwall 17 December 1899. (Source: Michael R. Gannett, letter, 24 July 1991.)

<sup>2</sup> Twelve letters from the General to his sister during the planning and building of the house have been abstracted by Michael R. Gannett. The letters refer repeatedly to Mr. Marsh, the builder, but their only reference to design is the suggestion to consult Rural Architecture.

<sup>3</sup> Allen Lewis Falley's Rural Architecture (New York: C.M. Saxton, 1852) shows designs in the Queen Anne style. Gervase Wheeler, writing from Norwichtown, Connecticut, in Rural Homes (Detroit: Kerr & Doughty, 1854, copyright, Charles Scribners' Sons, 1851), portrays an Italian Villa design, with tower, but without elaborate detailing. Perusal of A.J. Davis' The Architecture of Country Houses (1850) and Cottage Residences (1842) reveals that he published a variety of designs but, again, nothing with elaboration of the character of the Sedgwick House.

<sup>4</sup> Henry Steele Commager, "The Significance of General John Sedgwick," Centennial Observances, Cornwall Hollow, Connecticut, May 30, 1964.

<sup>5</sup> This account of the General's career is taken from Charles Dudley Rhodes, "John Sedgwick," Dictionary of American Biography (New York: Charles Scribners' Sons, 1935), Vol. 16, p. 548.

**B. 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  
MILITARY

Period of Significance

1859  
1855-1864

Significant Dates

1859  
1859

Cultural Affiliation

NA

Significant Person

Major General John Sedgwick

Architect/Builder

Cyrus W. Marsh

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

The Major General John Sedgwick House is significant architecturally because it is an elaborate example of an Italianate house. The many details are carefully worked out and well coordinated. The house is significant historically because of its association with Major General John Sedgwick (1813-1864), one of Connecticut's most prominent Civil War heroes.

Architectural Significance

As an ornate example of an Italianate structure, the Major General John Sedgwick House is unusual for the extreme degree of elaboration in the detailing. The boldness and coordination of the features are striking. The breadth of the roof overhang and the vigor of the sawn profile of the brackets are appropriate to one another. The extensive use of the bead-and-reel moldings in locations where moldings normally are not found, under the window caps and roof overhang and at the edge of the eaves, indicates a desire on the part of the architect to go to great lengths with his design program.

The coordination of design emphasis at mid-point in the height of the bay window surround, the porch window surrounds, and the porch posts is another example of the great attention to coordinated details. The S curves, rounded corners, and raised strapwork of these surrounds also indicate an unusual, for Cornwall Hollow, familiarity with architectural detailing.

The application of so much care and thought to what is basically a plain Colonial shell perhaps can be understood in terms of the history of buildings on the site. The present structure is the third Sedgwick family house at this location. The first two burned. The structure that existed at the time

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 3.843

UTM References

A 

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

B 

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Zone      Easting      Northing

C 

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Zone      Easting      Northing

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property is described in the Cornwall Land Records, volume 69, page 328.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary is drawn to include land that now goes with the house, per CLR 69/328, cited above.

See continuation sheet

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

name/title David F. Ransom

organization Architectural Historian date September 15, 1991

street & number 33 Sunrise Hill Drive telephone 203 521-2518

city or town West Hartford state CT zip code 06107

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of the Revolutionary War is suspected to have been destroyed by arson on the part of Tory sympathizers. The second burned in 1859, perhaps struck by lightning. The chances are that the earlier foundations were re-used. This availability of usable foundations perhaps suggested building a house of conventional walls and apertures similar to its predecessors.

The source of the desire to add the elaborate details is not clear. The architect/builder, Mr. Marsh, presumably was Cyrus W. Marsh of Cornwall, about whose architectural training little is known.<sup>1</sup> General Sedgwick's letters written while the house was being planned<sup>2</sup> suggest consultation with a book entitled Rural Architecture, but reference to books of this title has failed to discover designs with elaborate Italianate trim.<sup>3</sup>

Historical Significance

The Major General John Sedgwick House is historically significant because of its association with the man. "No soldier in our history, it is safe to say," according to Henry Steele Commager, "was more deeply involved in the defense of the nation than John Sedgwick of Cornwall Hollow."<sup>4</sup>

John Sedgwick II (13 September 1818 - 9 May 1864) was born in Cornwall Hollow, Connecticut, the grandson of John Sedgwick I, an officer in the American War of the Revolution. John II graduated from the United States Military Academy at West Point in 1837. After serving in the Seminole War in Florida, he assisted in moving Cherokee Indians west of the Mississippi River.

In 1846 Sedgwick joined General Taylor's army on the Rio Grande, then Scott's army at Vera Cruz, Mexico, where he participated in various battles, culminating in the final assault on Mexico City. He became a major in the 1st Regiment of Cavalry 8 March 1855, a colonel 3 August 1861.



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At the outbreak of the Civil War, Sedgwick was engaged in constructing the frontier post of Fort Wise, Colorado, but soon was a brigadier general in command of a division in the Army of the Potomac. He participated in McClellan's campaign on the Peninsula, where he was severely wounded 30 June 1862. Promoted to major general 4 July 1862, General Sedgwick played a prominent part in the battles of Antietam (again he became a casualty), Chancellorsville, the Rappahannock campaign, Fredericksburg, and Salem Heights. After pursuing Lee's retiring army at Gettysburg, Sedgwick commanded a corps in the Battle of the Wilderness in the Richmond campaign in May 1864. A few days later at Spottsylvania, while directing the location of artillery, he was shot and killed by a Confederate sharpshooter.<sup>5</sup>

Having participated in most of the battles whose names are inscribed in granite Civil War monuments throughout Connecticut, Major General John Sedgwick was buried 15 May 1864 in the Cornwall Hollow cemetery near his house. On 30 May 1900 a monument to him, designed by George Keller, Hartford's leading 19th-century architect, was dedicated there. Other monuments to him include one at Spottsylvania, a bronze statue at West Point (1868) cast from cannon of his Sixth Corps and erected by its officers and men, and an equestrian statue at Gettysburg (1913).

The General bought the Revolutionary War house from his parents in 1852. His father, who had suffered financial reverses, also lost his sight. After the 1859 fire, Sedgwick promptly wrote to his sister, instructing her to prepare to rebuild. He also took leave for several months to oversee the beginning of the work and re-visited his new home for some weeks while it was nearing completion in 1860. He was there again for three months while recuperating from wounds suffered at Antietam. His letters indicate that while he re-built to provide a home for his aged mother and his sister (his father had died several years earlier), he also planned to live in the house permanently upon leaving military service. His mother died before the house was completed.

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Bibliography

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Starr, Edward C. A History of Cornwall. New Haven: Tuttle, Morehouse & Taylor Company, 1926.

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Photographs were taken by David F. Ransom in July, 1991.  
Negatives are on file at the Connecticut Historical Commission.

Photograph 1  
Major General John Sedgwick House  
Cornwall, CT  
View northwest

Photograph 2  
Major General John Sedgwick House  
Cornwall, CT  
View northwest

Photograph 3  
Major General John Sedgwick House  
Cornwall, CT  
Historic Photograph  
Dedication of the Equestrian  
Statue...  
View northwest

Photograph 4  
Major General John Sedgwick House  
Cornwall, CT  
View southwest

Photograph 5  
Major General John Sedgwick House  
Cornwall, CT  
Bay, view northwest

Photograph 6  
Major General John Sedgwick House  
Cornwall, CT  
North elevation  
View northwest

Photograph 7  
Major General John Sedgwick House  
Cornwall, CT  
West elevation  
View east

Photograph 8  
Major General John Sedgwick House  
Cornwall, CT  
West elevation  
Porch window  
View east

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Photograph 9  
Major General John Sedgwick House  
Cornwall, CT  
View northeast

Photograph 10  
Major General John Sedgwick House  
Cornwall, CT  
Roof of wing  
View south

Photograph 11  
Major General John Sedgwick House  
Cornwall, CT  
Front hall stairway  
View west

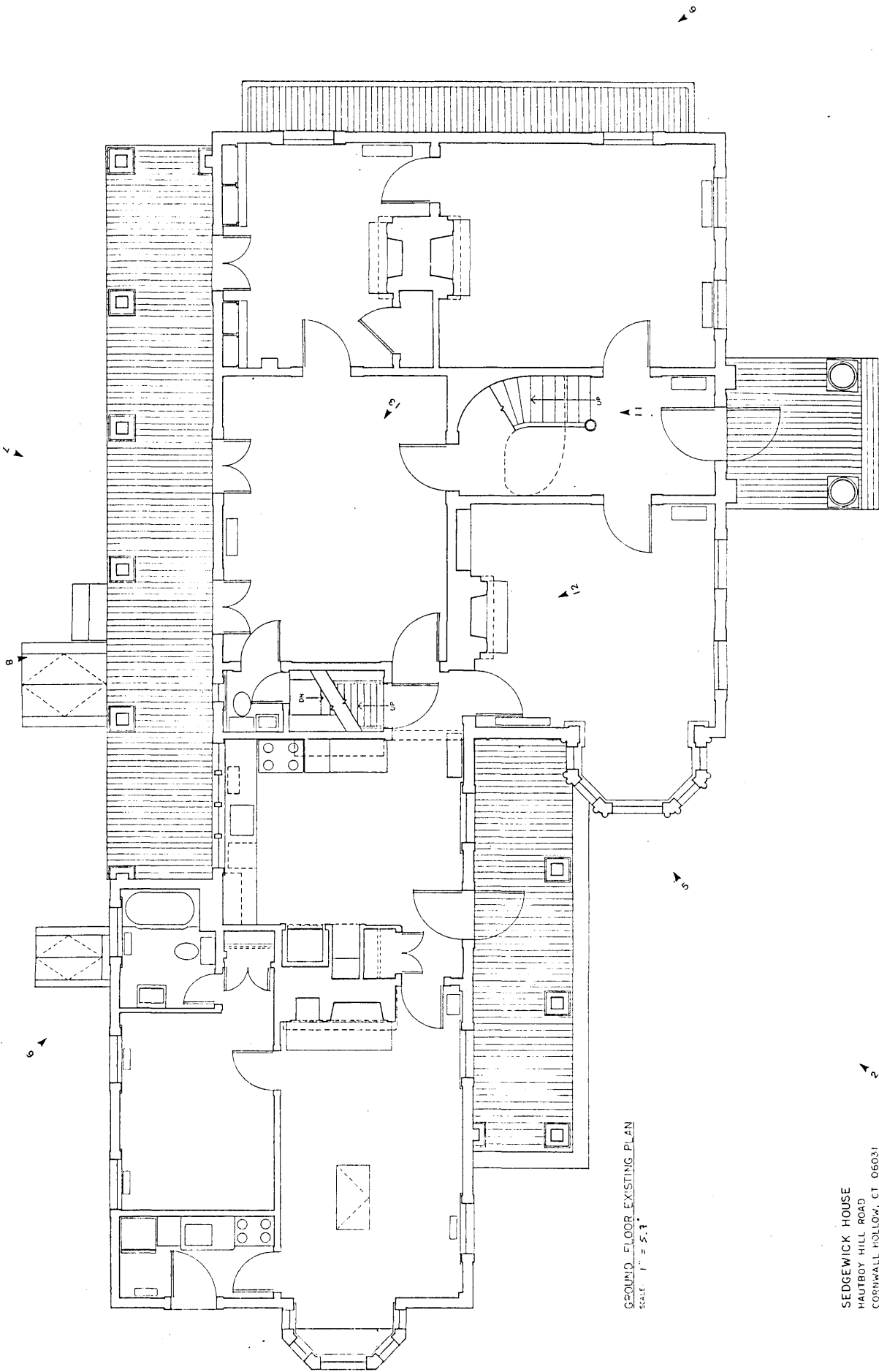
Photograph 12  
Major General John Sedgwick House  
Cornwall, CT  
South front room  
View southwest

Photograph 13  
Major General John Sedgwick House  
Cornwall, CT  
Dining room  
View southwest

Photograph 14  
Major General John Sedgwick House  
Cornwall, CT  
Second-floor hall  
View northeast

Photograph 15  
Major General John Sedgwick House  
Cornwall, CT  
Northeast bedroom  
View northwest

Photograph 16  
Major General John Sedgwick House  
Cornwall, CT  
Attic  
View north



GROUND FLOOR EXISTING PLAN  
SCALE 1" = 5'-1"

SEDGWICK HOUSE  
HAUTOY HILL ROAD  
CORNWALL HOLLOW, CT 06031