

HARRISVILLE HISTORIC AND ARCHITECTURAL RESOURCES SURVEY
INDIVIDUAL INVENTORY FORM

AUG 31 1987

DISTRICT: -- SITE #: IP-15

PROPERTY NAME (HISTORIC): Aldworth Manor

OWNER (ORIGINAL): Arthur E. Childs

PROPERTY NAME: Mountain Missionary

OWNER: Mountain Missionary (Seventh Day Adventist)

LOCATION: On a hilltop site just above IP-14 on the north side of the Chesham-Harrisville Road.

ADDRESS: P. O. Box 163
Harrisville, NH 03450

ACREAGE: 4.0 RANGE/LOT: NA

UTM REFERENCES: 18-735275-4759075

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION/JUSTIFICATION:

USGS QUADRANGLE: Monadnock

See Site Map

DATE: ?? / 1908

SOURCE: Tax Records

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: The Arthur E. Childs house was originally Victorian before its removal in 1908 on 17 flat bed railroad cars from Worcester, MA to its present location on a hillside site (elev. 1620') above Harrisville. Upon its arrival the house, later dubbed "Aldworth Manor," was covered with stucco and classical columns, pantile roofs, and loggias giving it a marked Italian flavor.

A 1905 plan of the estate by civil engineer Samuel Wadsworth indicates the firm of Fuller & Delano Co. as architects for "Chesham Hill Farm," as Childs' newly purchased property was then known. James E. Fuller and Ward P. Delano were associated in (Continued)

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE: This estate achieves historical significance as the home for several decades of one of Harrisville's most flamboyant summer residents: Arthur E. Childs. A Worcester, MA native of great family wealth and at one time (c. 1917) manager of the Manchester, NH Travelers' Insurance Company office, Childs inherited a Victorian mansion in Worcester and a large sum of money in the early years of the 20th century. Required by a stipulation of the legacy to live in the house, Childs contrived to circumvent his benefactor's intentions by having the house moved to Harrisville by train and completely transformed into a Neo-Renaissance summer villa. This feat, which was accompanied by a costly and extensive landscaping program, reflects the boundless enthusiasm and great financial resources characteristic of the builder/owners of the premier summer estates of the period in Harrisville and Dublin. Anxious to be good

(Continued)

REFERENCES: Guiguère, Peg, Archivist, Travelers' Insurance Co. Telephone interview, July 21, 1983

Laufman, Alan. Personal interview, July 26, 1983.

Mitchell, Suzanne. Personal interview, July 5 and August 3, 1983.

Newsletter, September 1982.

Tax Records

Wadsworth, Samuel. "Location of Buildings and Elevations on Proposed Building Site of Arthur E. Childs Chesham Hill Farm, Harrisville, NH." 1905.

MAP: SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

PH

DESCRIPTION OF VIEW:

- 9-4 - Front elevation (south facade)
- 9-7 - Front (from distance) facing north
- 14-21 - Carriage house facing north-west

PHOTOGRAPHER: L. Shonk

NEGATIVE FILE #: 9-4, 7; 14-21; 8/16/83

RECORDED BY: Morgan/Shonk/Cini

SPONSORING ORGANIZATION:

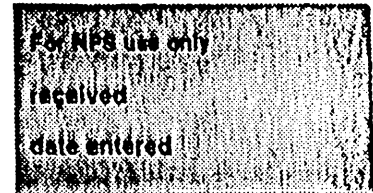
Historic Harrisville, Inc.

DATE: October 1983



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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Aldworth Manor

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PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:

the practice of architecture in Worcester between 1887 and 1915 and were responsible for a number of important public and constitutional buildings in that city.

The plan of the house (labeled 'A' on the sketch map) is basically a T, with the crosspiece of the T being a monumental 2 story block facing Mount Monadnock, while the shank of the T is a long 3 story wing extending to the north. The entire house is sheltered by a pronounced overhanging hipped roof supported by elaborate wooden brackets.

The front, or south facade, is composed of a pair of pavilions. Each has a single window set within a recessed arch on the first floor and a pair of windows framed by engaged wooden columns with simple block capitals on the second. Beneath these windows are window boxes, several of which are missing, supported by brackets similar to those under the eaves. These pavilions frame a double-story recessed porch defined by a tetra-style colonnade of paired columns (the outside ones are set in antis); the first floor level has been closed in and glazed (c.1968).

The west or entrance side of the house also has recessed loggia similar to that found on the front although only about half as wide, consisting of four Tuscan columns with those at the walls being in antis. These columns do not support a porch, as on the front, so that the courtyard is open, and features the remnants of a classical fountain on the inner wall.

On the east, or garden side of the house there is a small, glassed-in porch supporting very prominent horizontal brackets. Behind and above this porch, at the second story level, there is an open balcony defined by square columns topped with fairly elaborate capitals of unknown historical antecedents. Beyond this, to the northeast, is a concrete block, single story wing that was added about 1962 or 1963 to serve as the dining room and science laboratory of St. Thomas More School.

Inside, the mansion's oval dining room retains the original panelling and rich neo-classical decoration. This consists of wall panels, an egg-and-dart cornice molding, and a plaster ceiling oval decorated with a fruit motif. There is a black marble fireplace surrounded by a wooden mantle featuring egg-and-dart and a musical lyre motif.

The present Mountain Missionary Chapel was originally the library and still has the heavy beamed ceiling, the three-quarter wall panelling, and a prominent central fireplace with egg-and-dart and palmette decoration, plus a pair of acanthus-covered volutes supporting the architrave.

The house is approached by a long, steep entry drive flanked by banks of very large rhododendron imported by Childs during the establishment of the Aldworth Manor grounds.

To the east of the house is a large formal, terraced garden ('C' on sketch map) which is being slowly restored. Although much of the planting has disappeared, its plan consisting of 3 levels with straight walks and clipped shrubbery and its garden structures survive. Forming the eastern boundary and acting as a backdrop to the garden is a

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PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:

composition consisting of a Baroque shaped pool and a pergola with six Tuscan columns and having little recessed pavillions at both ends. Just to the south of the pool and pergola is an Italian garden house ('B' on sketch map): a single-story pavilion with a tile roof, brick floor and open sides. These openings consist of arches on the east and west and larger rectangular entrances with wooden architraves on the north and south. All of the openings have decorative wooden volutes at their imposts. Flanking the main entrance to this garden house are square bas reliefs depicting classical subjects set in the wall. Both the tan stucco walls of the garden pavilion and the stucco covering the pergola columns have been treated with a green paint or tinting which was undoubtedly an attempt to make the material seem less like plain concrete and more like expensive Italian marble.

While the garden, particularly the little garden house, is the most obvious Mediterranean aspect of the estate, the entire house has a pronounced Italian flavor--not so much as if the designer were trying to recreate a Roman or Tuscan villa in Harrisville, but more in the manner of turn-of-the-century American Neo-Renaissance architects like Charles A. Platt who designed several houses in neighboring Dublin.

Of the many other buildings, primarily residences, which have been erected on this important estate since the 1st decade of the 20th century, the 1914 carriage house ('D' on sketch map) is of the greatest interest. Located northwest of the main house it has been variously used, in addition to its original purpose, as a summer residence and as the home of the Harrisville School (now at HVD-25). A rectangular white clapboarded building, it shows a variety of window and door treatments. The carriage house's most prominent architectural feature is a very large gabled wall dormer which projects from the center of the main section of the building. A smaller yet similar dormer appears on an easterly ell which is also crowned by a small ventilated turret. The structure's eaves, dormers and turret are all accented by chunky, over-sized dentils. Inside, the carriage house retains its large steel turntable originally used for turning vehicles. A detached one bay square garage (c. 1914, 'E' on the sketch map) sits just east of the carriage house. Further to the east, at the bottom of a small knoll, sits a large 1½ story modern structure ('F' on the sketch map) which houses the businesses of the current owner: Country Life Natural Foods and the Mountain Missionary Press.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

local citizens as well, the Childs were early supporters of the Village Improvement Society and instigated the first tarred road in town in 1920.

The establishment of a great summer estate like Aldworth Manor on an earlier farm site which was subsequently subsumed by the new, larger scale development is illustrative of an important early 20th century trend in Harrisville history. Fasnacloich (IP-16), Wellscroft (IP-23), now razed and the summer residences on Beech Hill (SHD-2, 5 & 6 on Old Harrisville Road) are other examples.

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

Further many of these large houses face a common challenge in the last decades of the same century: the discovery of an economically viable use for structures of such size and remote location. Fasnaclocich stands empty, Wellscroft was razed a decade ago, and the Aldworth Manor estate, dwindled from over 500 acres to 172, has seen since the 1950s a rapid succession of owner/ occupants: a sanitorium, the St. Thomas More School, Antioch College and the affiliated Harrisville School, and since 1975, the Mountain Missionary arm of the Seventh Day Adventist Church.

The Aldworth Manor building derives considerable architectural importance not despite its move but precisely because of it. In addition to being a fine (and Harrisville's only) turn of the 20th century American Neo-Renaissance summer house, it also represents an impressive engineering achievement. Moved all the way from Worcester on 17 flatbed railroad cars, it then had to be unloaded at the Chesham station (CVD-8) later to be reassembled on a special caission-like foundation on a 1620' hilltop at Chesham Hill Farm. Further, its post-transformation appearance shows a remarkably successful response to a difficult design challenge.

Aldworth Manor's many reuses, while necessary for its survival, have not produced especially felicitous results for the building itself. Pragmatic interior changes such as the partitioning of larger rooms to create offices, small classrooms and living spaces have somewhat compromised the building's integrity. However the changed use of the library to a chapel has not marred the structural or aesthetic character of the room. Likewise the building's main and rear stairwells and the large oval dining room retain their historic integrity. The 1962 concrete block one-story wing which was added to serve as the dining room and science laboratory of the St. Thomas More School has compromised the building's exterior historic integrity. The placement of this wing at the northeast corner of the building lessens the overall impact of the wing. As it is not visible from the south, east or north sides, and it is screened on the east side by the garden shrubbery.

The current owners have put considerable effort into the restoration of the extensive gardens. It is hoped that the vast expense involved in maintaining such a property with respect will not prove overwhelming to present and future owners.

Because of the individuality and local contributions of its original owner, its remarkable physical history and the several themes central to Harrisville history which it illustrates, the Aldworth Manor/Mountain Missionary estate meets Criteria A, B and C of the National Register of Historic Places.

Serial 1084

NPS Form 10-900-a
(3-82)

Aldworth Manor IP-15

OMB No. 1024-0010
Exp. 10-31-84

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DESCRIPTION OF VIEW:

Garden house and trellis
Facing south (north facade)

PHOTOGRAPHER: L. Shonk

NEGATIVE FILE #: 21-16; 8/24/83



DESCRIPTION OF VIEW:

PHOTOGRAPHER:

NEGATIVE FILE #:

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DESCRIPTION OF VIEW:

Front, south elevation
(from a distance)
Facing north

PHOTOGRAPHER: L. Shonk

NEGATIVE FILE #: 9-7;8/16/83



DESCRIPTION OF VIEW:

Carriage house front (south)-
side (east)
Facing northwest

PHOTOGRAPHER: L. Shonk

NEGATIVE FILE #: 14-21



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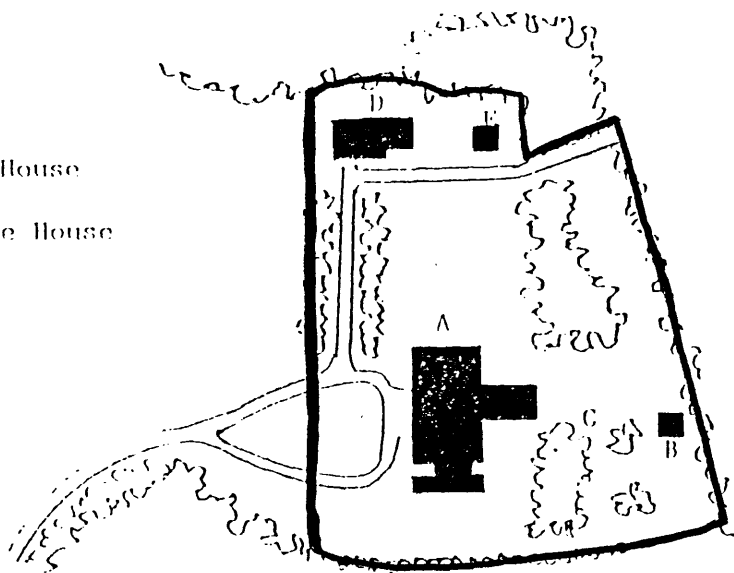
DISTRICT

SITE #:

IP-15

PROPERTY NAME (HISTORIC): Aldworth Manor	OWNER (ORIGINAL): Arthur E. Childs
PROPERTY NAME: Mountain Missionary	OWNER: Mountain Missionary
LOCATION: On a hilltop site just above IP-14 on the north side of the Chesham-Harrisville Road.	ADDRESS: P. O. Box 163 Harrisville, NH 03450
	ACREAGE: 6.0 RANGE/LOT: NA

- A - House
- B - Garden House
- C - Garden
- D - Carriage House
- E - Garage



SCALE 1"=200'

- - Contributing
- - Non-contributing

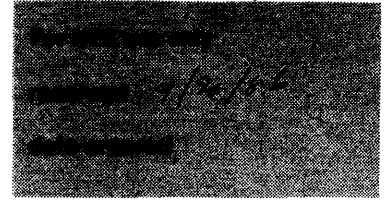
LEGAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION / JUSTIFICATION:

Bounded on the north by the edge of trees and the edge of the driveway, on the east by the edge of trees and the pergolas surrounding the garden pool next to the garden house. Bounded on the south by a stone wall and the edge of trees to the point of the driveway turnout; and bounded on the west by a line 50' from the west edge of the driveway. The boundaries of the property are indicated by a heavy black line on the sketch map above.

Includes the immediate visual surroundings incorporating the features contributing to the property's architectural and historical significance. Designated as IP-15 on the Town of Harrisville Map, included with this nomination. Those areas outside the property boundaries indicated on the map above do not retain the same integrity as those inside the property boundaries. Land outside of the boundaries has been put into other uses (i.e. farming or secondary growth woodlands) than the type of use experienced during the property's period of significance.

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Multiple Resource Area
Thematic Group

Name Harrisville MRA
State Cheshire County, NEW HAMPSHIRE

Nomination/Type of Review

Date/Signature

- | | | | |
|--|-------------------------------|------------|------------------------|
| 11. Acre (The) ✓ | Substantive Review | for Keeper | Patrick Andrus 1/14/88 |
| | | Attest | Beth L. Sarge 1/14/88 |
| 12. Adams, Moses, Farm ✓ | Substantive Review | Keeper | return S |
| | | Attest | |
| 13. Adams Farm ✓ | Substantive Review | for Keeper | Patrick Andrus 1/14/88 |
| | | Attest | Beth L. Sarge 1/14/88 |
| 14. Aldworth Manor ✓ | Substantive Review | for Keeper | Patrick Andrus 1/14/88 |
| | | Attest | Beth L. Sarge 1/14/88 |
| 15. Adams, John, Homestead--Wellscroft ✓ | Substantive Review | for Keeper | Patrick Andrus 1/14/88 |
| | | Attest | Beth L. Sarge 1/14/88 |
| 16. Bancroft, Timothy, House ✓ | Substantive Review | for Keeper | Patrick Andrus 1/14/88 |
| | | Attest | Beth L. Sarge 1/14/88 |
| 17. Beal, Persia, House ✓ | Substantive Review | for Keeper | Patrick Andrus 1/14/88 |
| | | Attest | Beth L. Sarge 1/14/88 |
| 18. Bemis, Elbridge G., House ✓ | Substantive Review | for Keeper | Patrick Andrus 1/14/88 |
| | | Attest | Beth L. Sarge 1/14/88 |
| 19. Bemis, George, House ✓ | Substantive Review | for Keeper | Patrick Andrus 1/14/88 |
| | | Attest | Beth L. Sarge 1/14/88 |
| 20. Cheever, George, Farm ✓ | Substantive Review | for Keeper | Patrick Andrus 1/14/88 |
| | | Attest | Beth L. Sarge 1/14/88 |