

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

FILED
OCT 17 1987
NATIONAL
REGISTER

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 PRESCOTT, BENJAMIN FRANKLIN, HOUSE
other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number PRESCOTT ROAD (Southeast of Dearborn Road) N/A not for publication
city, town EPPING N/A vicinity
state NEW HAMPSHIRE code NH county ROCKINGHAM code 015 zip code 03042

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>2</u>	<u>0</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> structures
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> objects
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: _____
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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 R. Stuart Wallace Date OCT 22 1987
New Hampshire
State or Federal agency and bureau _____

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. Patrick W. Andrews 12/3/87
 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 of the Keeper _____ Date of Action _____

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)
DOMESTIC/single dwelling

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)
DOMESTIC/multiple dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

SECOND EMPIRE

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE/granite

walls WOOD/weather board

roof ASPHALT

other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Benjamin Franklin Prescott House is the most significant example of Second Empire residential architecture in the town of Epping, New Hampshire. It was built in 1875 while Prescott was Secretary of State; two years before he became governor. The construction is attributed to Gilman C. Stone of Concord, New Hampshire. The massive structure contains two stories under a belleast Mansard roof and is well detailed with paneled corner boards, cornice and soffits as a testament to Stone's workmanship. Historic photographs document that the building survives in intact condition and is therefore identical to its historic appearance save for the color of the paint. It has functioned historically as a farmhouse for the Prescott and McPhee families and is currently being rehabilitated for use as a shared home for elderly people. Governor Prescott built his new mansion on the site of his family's 18th Century homestead. Historically the farm included an American barn and several small gable roof out buildings. These were torn down c. 1960 and replaced with the current wood frame/concrete barns and sheds. (Note: These non-contributing structures are not within the boundaries of the nominated property.) Even though the historic farm buildings are gone, the agricultural character of the surrounding environment maintains the integrity of its setting. Also contributing to the site is a small secondary structure, a two bay carriage barn in the same Second Empire style, which was converted to residential use by closing the carriage bays and introducing two windows and a central door in 1956. No historic photographs survive to document the historic appearance, but even with the change in function, the carriage barn retains sufficient integrity to contribute to the significance of the property.

The 1875 main block is 2½ stories high and measures approximately 40' x 30' in a three by two bay configuration. A connected ell, 20' x 30' is 1½ stories, but because of the slope of the property the full height of the basement is exposed on the north and east elevations. The ell is centered on the rear (north) elevation of the main block. The south and west elevations of the main block are supported by a granite foundation; but the foundation of the north and east elevations of the ell and main block are brick. Both of these sections are topped by a bellcast mansard roof sheathed in asphalt shingles. Three brick stove chimneys with corbeled caps pierce the top deck of the mansard; two in the main block, one in the ell.

The drama of the house is heightened by its diagonal siting at the curve as Prescott Road approaches the site from the south. (This view is currently obscured by a column of blue spruce trees, c.1975.) It was designed to have a stately urban character and this is most clearly articulated on the facade (south elevation), which is divided into three bays with the center bay emphasized on all three levels. This symmetrical arrangement is made particularly pleasing by the repetition of the springing shape of the bell-cast roof in the central gable wall dormer and the roof of the porch, that shelters the

 See continuation sheet

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
POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT

Period of Significance

1875-1895

Significant Dates

1875, 1901

Cultural Affiliation

Significant Person

PRESCOTT, BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

Architect/Builder

STONE, GILMAN C., BUILDER

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

The Benjamin Franklin Prescott House in Epping, New Hampshire, is a handsome French Second Empire residence which still retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. This property is significant under National Register criteria #B for its association with Benjamin Franklin Prescott, the 39th Governor of the State of New Hampshire and #C for its contribution as the finest example of the Second Empire style in the town of Epping, New Hampshire. Prescott built the house in 1875 while he was Secretary of State (two years before he became Governor), on the site of his family homestead, and died here in 1895. The builder was Gilman C. Stone of Concord, New Hampshire, who moved to Epping to build the Prescott House and stayed to complete a considerable body of work in the town in his lifetime. The Prescott House remains the finest example of his skill.

Historic Context

The period following the Civil War was a time of prosperity in Epping, New Hampshire, as it was throughout New England. During this time, the town's economy broadened to include shoe manufacturing augmenting its agricultural base. Much new building took place in the town during this period, reflecting the new prosperity. Most of the residential architecture is of wood frame construction in the nationally popular styles of Italianate and later Stick Style and Queen Anne, embellished with sawn wooden ornamentation. Only four buildings were built in the French Second Empire style. These included the B. W. Hoyt Shoe Factory (no longer extant); the Grange Hall (since converted to a residence); the Rufus H. Smith House (a 1½ story residence); and the Governor Prescott House.

Prescott's choice of the Second Empire style reflected his rising stature in state politics, as this style was usually associated with public architecture during the Grant administration. This change from agriculture to politics probably influenced his choice to tear down the historic family homestead which might have seemed obsolete. The result was a changed character in the streetscape in this section of town. The considerable acreage associated with the farm continued, and still continues, to be farmed, but the character of the farm changed to reflect the political prominence of Governor Prescott.

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Biographical Directory of the Governors of the United States, 1789-1978. Meckler Books. Westport, CT., 1978.

"The Exeter News-Letter" Articles: August 20, 1809; January 23, 1875; June 8, 1875; October 18, 1875; March 9, 1877; March 16, 1877; February 22, 1895; April 30, 1915.

Moses, G. H., Editor. New Hampshire Men. Republican Press Associates, Concord, NH., 1893.

New England Historical & Genealogical Register. 1895.

Prescott, M. D., William. The Prescott Memorial or a Genealogical Memoir of the Prescott Families in America, in two parts. Henry W. Dotton & Son, Transcript Building, Boston, MA., 1870.

See continuation sheet

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 # _____

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 Less than one acre

UTM References

A 19 329080 4768340
 Zone Easting Northing

C _____

B _____
 Zone Easting Northing

D _____

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The Governor Benjamin Franklin Prescott House and Carriage House lie on the parcels designated Map 6, Lots 3, 15 and 16 in the Tax Records in the Town of Epping, New Hampshire. These parcels contain in excess of 150 acres of land. The boundary of the nominated 3/4 acre± portion of these parcels is traced as follows: Beginning at a point on the north side of Prescott Road and the intersection with the stone wall bound-

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary of the property surrounding the Governor Benjamin Franklin Prescott House has been drawn to include only that portion of the parcel which contains the Prescott House and its Carriage House. These buildings are the only surviving buildings historically associated with Governor Benjamin Franklin Prescott. The current agricultural buildings associated with the site were built in 1965 to serve the dairy operation of

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title LYNNE EMERSON MONROE

organization PRESERVATION COMPANY date JULY 15, 1987

street & number 5 HOBBS ROAD telephone (603) 778-1799

city or town KENSINGTON state NH zip code 03833

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DOMESTIC/secondary structure

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

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center entry. The simple clapboard walls contrast with the paneled corner pilasters and paneled freeze, which is highlighted by the paired brackets at the eave line. The center entry is composed of paired, double-leaf doors, each with a round-headed vertical pane of glass over square panels set in deeply molded trim. The entry is sheltered by a 5' x 10' porch, which is approached by three granite steps detailed by urns. The porch roof is a bellcast mansard with the same pitch as the main roof. It is supported by four freestanding, chamfered, square posts and two engaged similar posts. The posts are supported by paneled pedestals and a thick parapet fence supported by urn shaped balusters. The posts engage the eave line with a detail of paired brackets similar to those at the eave line of the main roof. (Note: Brackets are used to ornament all eave areas. Grander scroll brackets on the primary eaves and lesser ones in subordinate areas, such as porches and windowhoods.) Surmounting the entry on the second story are paired 1/1 windows flanked by narrow wooden blinds and topped by a single hood, supported by three pairs of brackets. The most important detail in the center bay is the gable wall dormer. This dormer emphasizes the springing quality lent by the bellcast shape by penetrating the mansard roof and imitating its profile. The clapboard walls of this dormer surround an arched window topped by a keystone and flanked by arched blinds. The two flanking bays are composed of double hung windows with 2/2 sash, topped with hoods supported by paired brackets. The mansard area is decorated with arched dormers. The west elevation is the other primary elevation of the main block. It is two bays wide, with the first story southwest bay highlighted by a three sided flat roofed bay window supported by a granite foundation. This single story bay is supported by a granite foundation. Its windows are 1/1 supported by horizontal panels and its eaveline is decorated with paired brackets. All windows on this elevation are 2/2, typically detailed. The east elevation of the main block is asymmetrical with a three bay fenestration. The windows on this elevation have lost their historic blinds, but are like those found elsewhere in all other details.

The ell contains the secondary entrances to the house. The one closest to the main block (south) has arched, etched glass panels highlighted with the letter "P". This entry opens into the ell in a small vestibule area, and then either to the main block or the ell. The door further north enters directly into the service area of the ell. These entries are sheltered by a 5' x 15' porch whose flat roof is supported by three, freestanding chamfered square posts and two engaged posts. Its eaveline is decorated with paired brackets. The wooden deck of this porch is approached by three granite steps, both on the north and the west. The two windows on this asymmetrical elevation are placed in the northernmost bay and between the doors. Each is surmounted in the mansard by an arched dormer window. The north elevation is detailed similarly to other parts of the house, but is lit by only two narrow vertical 1/1 windows. An entry to the basement is highlighted by granite piers and lintel. The east elevation of the ell is asymmetrical. Beginning at the southernmost bay, this part includes a door and 2/2 window sheltered by a porch. This porch is isolated above ground and would have been used historically by

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those working in the kitchen. It is currently supported by a rough hewn shed which houses the milkroom of the defunct dairy operation. The historic square post supports are still located beneath this shed. On the primary story, the porch is supported by two, freestanding and two engaged, square, chamfered posts topped by paired scroll brackets, which support the flat roof. These posts are spanned by a fence supported by round balusters. Further north is a 2/2 window and an elongated narrow window, similar to the two found on the north elevation. The mansard area is detailed with two arched dormers. A simple door and 1/1 window light the milkroom in the basement area.

The Carriage House

The 3 x 1 bay (15' x 25'), mansard carriage house is sited on the south side of Prescott Road opposite the driveway. (This would have been on axis with the historic barn, no longer extant.) The carriage house is similar to the main house, but far simpler in design. Its mansard roof is straight and sheathed in asphalt with a sharply projecting cornice at both eave lines. The roof is pierced by a flat roofed dormer on all elevations, except that a closed gable "hood" projects from the eave on the facade. The facade (north elevation) was changed when the carriage house was converted to residential use in 1956, but the shape and framing of the two carriage bays is still obvious around the two 1/1 windows, which flank the c. 1956 colonial revival door. The walls are sheathed in clapboard. The rear (south) elevation is entered by a simple, six panel (1956) door. There is an exterior cinder block chimney on the east elevation.

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Criterion #B

Benjamin Franklin Prescott was the third governor to come from the town of Epping, New Hampshire, but his homestead is the only surviving governor's house in the town. He built this house during the time of his major achievements, i.e. while he was Secretary of State and Governor, and lived in this house until his death in 1895.

Benjamin Franklin Prescott was born in the family homestead of Nathan Gove Prescott in 1833.¹ He was educated at Phillips Exeter Academy and Dartmouth College, and practiced law in the city of Concord. In 1861 he became editor of the "Independent Democrat", the leading anti-slavery paper in the state and a strong supporter of Abraham Lincoln. He was Secretary of State from 1872 to 1876 and was twice elected Governor, in 1877 and 1878. During his term as Governor, Prescott worked toward more efficient handling of lawsuits and ratifying the State Constitutional Amendments. The new State prison in Concord was built. Prescott was a noted historian, and served as the Vice-President of the New Hampshire Historical Society and a fellow of the Royal Historical Society of London. His main contribution to the state was a collection of portraits of Governors, Judges, Senators and public men of New Hampshire. He collected over 270 of these portraits and they still hang in the State House,² the New Hampshire Historical Society, Dartmouth College and Phillips Exeter Academy.

In 1869 Prescott married Mary Little Noyes of Concord, and they had one son, Benjamin Franklin, Jr., born in 1879.³ Mary Prescott sold the property in 1901 and a series of rapid transfers took place until the property came into the possession of William S. Mason in 1903.⁴ Mason and his heirs, the McPhee family, have maintained the property to the present.⁵ It has continued in agricultural use and is currently being rehabilitated for use as a shared house for elder citizens.

Criterion #C

Architecturally, the house is a fine Vernacular example of the Second Empire style, applied to a rural residential farmhouse. Its three bay, three story configuration gives it a solid, box-like shape, lightened by the springing bellcast curves of the roof and dormers. The elements are solid and the detailing particularly well handled. This may be due to the eminence of its builder, Gilman C. Stone, who came to Epping from Concord to build the house for the Honorable Secretary of State. Stone continued to live in Epping after the Prescott House was completed, and is known to have built among other things 52 cottages at the Hedding Campground.⁶ These cottages are small, fanciful examples of Victorian Gothic and Stick Style wood frame construction. No documentation exists to show what other buildings were built in Epping, but the quality of several late Victorian residences may be attributable to his craftsmanship. Local newspaper accounts document the construction of the Prescott House as one of the "best houses in town".

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FOOTNOTES:

¹William Prescott, M. D., The Prescott Memorial or a Genealogical Memoir of the Prescott Families in America, (Boston: Henry W. Dotton & Son, 1870), p. 567.

²Biographical Directory of the Governors of the United States, 1789-1978. (Westport, CT: Meckler Books, 1978), p. 971.

³Prescott, loc. cit.

⁴Rockingham County Court House, Registry of Deeds and Probate Records: Book 605, p. 19.

⁵Ella May McPhee Weaver. Interview.

⁶The Exeter News-Letter. 23 Jan. 1875, 8 June 1875, 18 Oct. 1875, 22 Feb. 1895

⁷Ibid., 22 Feb. 1895.

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Sanborn, Donald R. Collection of Historic Documents and Photographs. Epping, NH.

Sanborn, Richard B. A Bicentennial History of Epping, New Hampshire (1976). The Whitney Press, Seabrook, NH.

Weaver, Ella May McPhee. Interview. April 13, 1987.

MAPS

Hurd, D. H. & Co. Town and City Atlas of the State of New Hampshire. Boston: D. H. Hurd and Co., 1892.

1857. Map of the Town of Epping, Rockingham County, New Hampshire.

DEEDS

Rockingham County Court House, Registry of Deeds and Probate Records:
Book 140, p. 407; Book 157, p. 316; Book 195, p. 261; Book 223, p. 406; Book 595,
pp. 92, 93; Book 598, pp. 63, 257; Book 601, p. 461; Book 605, p. 19.

PROBATE

Rockingham County Court House, Registry of Deeds and Probate Records:
#4716, John Prescott; #8363, Benjamin Franklin Prescott; #11125, Nathan Gove
Prescott; #13720, Captain John Prescott.

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Verbal Boundary Description

ing the east side of the yard of the Benjamin Franklin Prescott House. The boundary proceeds north, parallel to the east elevation of the house to a point 30' northeast of the northeast corner of the ell. The boundary then turns 90° and follows the north elevation of the house to a point 30' northwest of the northwest corner of the ell. The boundary then turns 45° southwest and proceeds to the intersection of the north boundary to Prescott Road. The boundary then proceeds southwest across Prescott Road, parallel to the west elevation of the Carriage House to a point 30' southwest of the southwest corner of the Carriage House and turns 45° parallel to the south elevation of the Carriage House to a point 30' southeast of the southeast corner of the Carriage House and turns 45° and proceeds northeast parallel to the east boundary of the Carriage House to a point on the north side of Prescott Road. Here the boundary turns southeast and traces the north boundary of Prescott Road to its intersection with its point of origin.

Boundary Justification

the McPhee family. At that time, all historic agricultural buildings were town down. The boundaries encompass the portion of the property which retains its historic integrity, and meet National Register eligibility requirements. It does not include newer buildings or land which has lost integrity during the last 30 years.

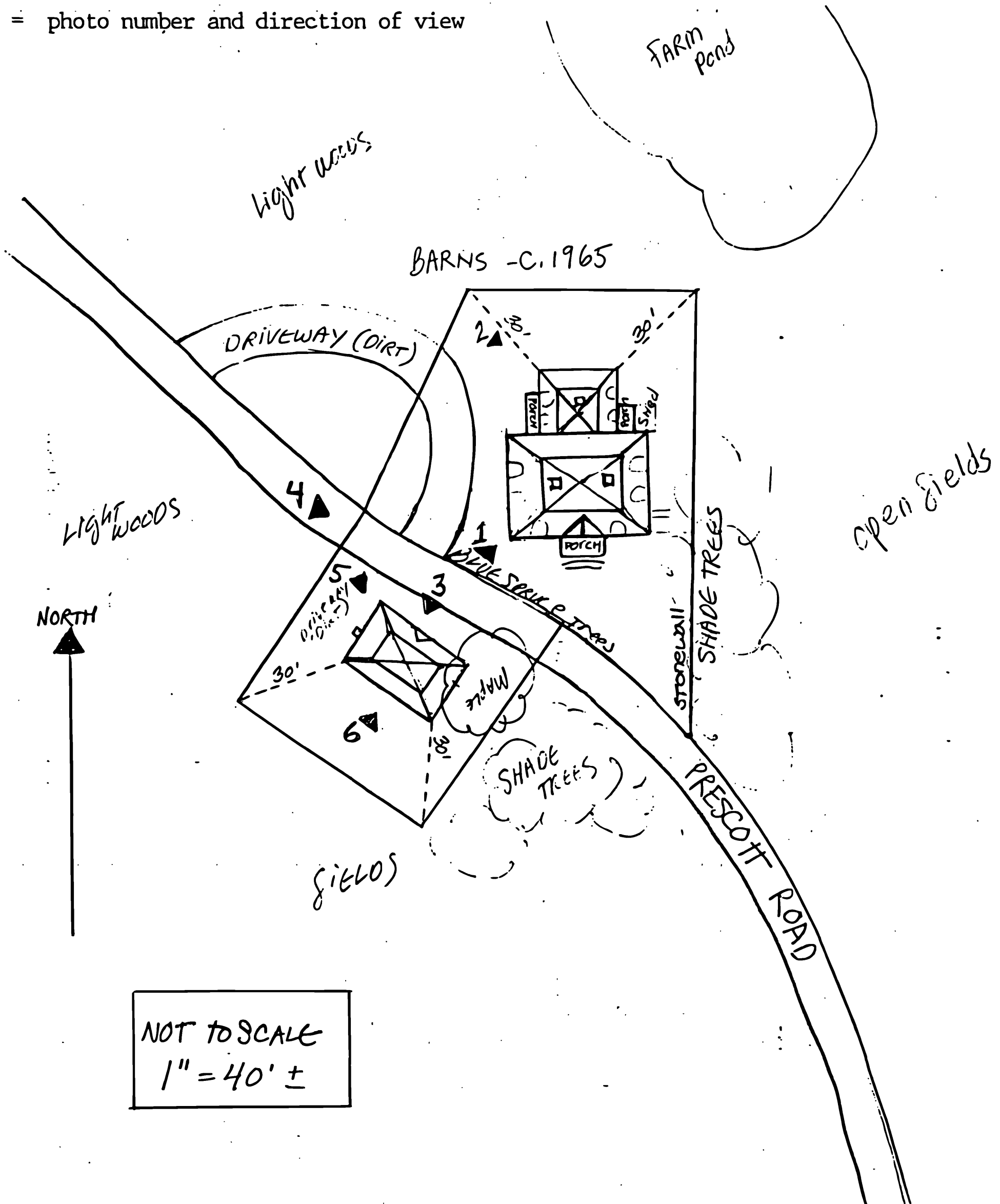
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SKETCH MAP: GOVERNOR BENJAMIN FRANKLIN PRESCOTT HOUSE, Epping, NH

▶ = photo number and direction of view



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Section number _____ Page 1 ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTATION

OWNER:

DANIEL & ELLA MAE WEAVER
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EXETER, NH 03833