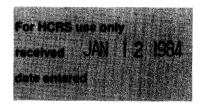
United States Department of the Interior Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form



See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms* Type all entries—complete applicable sections

| 1. Na | me | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|----------------------|------------------------------|---|--|
| historic | David | Welch House | | | |
| and/or commo | on I | David Welch Ho | use | | |
| 2. Loc | cation | | | | |
| street & numb | _{oer} on Milton | Village Green | Junction | of Potash Rd 6 | and Milton Rds |
| | 0 | filton) n/a_v | | congressional district | Control of the Contro |
| state Conn | ecticut | code 09 | county | Litchfield | code 005 |
| 3. Cla | ssificati | on | | | |
| Category district building(s structure site object | • | work sition Accessib | cupied in progress ole | Present Use agriculture commercial educational entertainment government industrial military | museum park private residence religious scientific transportation other: |
| 4. Ow | ner of Pi | operty | | | |
| name Ma | ry S. Raymor | nd | | | |
| street & numbe | er Milton | Road | | | |
| city, town L | itchfield | n/a_v | icinity of | state | Ct. 06759 |
| 5. Loc | ation of | Legal Des | criptio | n | |
| courthouse, re | egistry of deeds, etc | . Litchfield | Town Hal | 1. | |
| street & numbe | er West Str | reet | | | |
| city, town | Litchfield | l | | state | 06 7 59 |
| 6. Rep | oresenta | tion in Exi | sting S | urveys | |
| titleState I | Register of | Historia Dl | has this prope | erty been determined ele | gible? yes _x_ no |
| date 1983 | | HISTOLIC PISC | 3 8 | | e county loca |
| depository for | survey records | Connecticut H | istorical | | |
| | | pect St., Har | - | state | Ct. |
| | | | | State | |

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Historic American Buildings Survey
1938 Federal
Library of Congress
Washington, D. C.

7. Description

| Condition | | Check one | Check one | |
|---------------|--------------|------------|----------------|------|
| _X_ excellent | deteriorated | unaltered | _X_ original s | ite |
| good | ruins | X_ altered | moved | date |
| fair | unexposed | | | |

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The David Welch House is located at the junction of Milton Road and Potash Road, overlooking the village green in Milton, a village in the north-western part of the town of Litchfield, Connecticut. Milton is approximately five miles northwest of the center of Litchfield.

Westward of the David Welch House on the north side of Milton Road are other eighteenth and early nineteenth-century structures of the village of Milton. Immediately to the west is the Trinity Episcopal Church, listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The four-acre property on which the house stands independently, is surrounded on the north and east by 124 acres of woodland, part of the original Welch farm property since the mideighteenth century and consisting primarily of pastureland grown over with woods. (Photograph 1) A long picket fence faces the Milton Village Green in front of the house. Cut granite steps which lead up the bank to the house were originally foundation stones of an early nineteenth century carriage factory that once stood in the area and were added during the 1920s.

The long dimension of the two-story, rectangular house runs east and west, facing Milton Road. The portion of the house facing the road is eight bays wide. It consists of the original house, built in 1756, which is five bays wide with central entry, and a three bay extension to the east, added as a store c. 1776. To the rear, off the east extension are two smaller additions, 38' x 17', and 27' x 10'. (Photographs 2, 3) The house is of clapboard throughout, virtually all of it original. The windows are original, with twelve over twelve lights and most of the wavy, hand-blown eighteenth-century glass intact.

The original part of the house is of traditional center chimney, "saltbox" design, five bays wide and two bays deep with a long, sloping lean-to in the rear. A central doorway, probably added during the early nineteenth century, has Neo-Georgian details and lights under a simple, unpedimented cornice carried by slender pilasters flanking the doorway. The three-bay eastern extension, added as a store, has an entry in its center bay. It has a Dutch door installed during the 1780s, with separate, independently hinged upper and lower sections. (Photographs 2, 10)

In 1792 a barn was moved into the northeast corner of the rear of the house between the original lean-to and the eastern store extension. Equipped with a central brick chimney and massive granite fireplace, it provided a new kitchen with a pantry built onto the north side. A contemporary kitchen, constructed in 1924, extended this addition to the rear. (Photographs 3, 4)

There are full basements beneath all but the 1792 addition to the house. Walls under the original part of the house are of large cut granite blocks, some of which are eight feet long by four feet high. A large basement fireplace has a lintel of oak. The house is of pegged post and beam, mortise and tenon construction. Structural members throughout are of hand-adzed white oak. Sills, plates, posts and beams are 8" x 8" in cross section. All interior posts and beams are cased. (Photographs 6, 7, 9, 10) Floors are of broad, long, thick, random-width oak in three of the downstairs rooms and the back hall on the second floor. Wide pine boards were

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used elsewhere. Floor boards are laid without tongue-and-groove, and are secured by countersunk, hand-wrought nails.

The interior of the original house has an entrance hall and winding staircase fronting the large central chimney. A master bedroom, originally a parlor or "living room," is to the west and a parlor is to the east. There are bedrooms east and west on the second floor, with a back corridor and unfinished attic. In the rear on the ground floor is a long kitchen. (Figure 1) The original downstairs "living room" served as a bedroom. There is a small crane of wrought iron in the fireplace, indicating that at some point cooking was done in the room. The room is panelled on its east or chimney side; the other walls and ceiling are plastered and a wooden chair rail and wainscoting run around the other three sides of the room. (Photograph 6) The parlor, on the east side of the ground floor of the house, is distinguished by panelling on its chimney or west side. Moldings on the mantel are elaborate. (Photograph 7) The ceiling is plastered, and the side walls are half-plastered, with a chair rail and wainscoting again running around three sides. Two original panelled doors open into the room, one towards the front leading to the front hall (Photograph 7), the other leading to the cellar. Three more have been added at later periods. The original flooting in this room has been replaced.

In the lean-to on the ground floor is a kitchen which ran the full length of the original house. It is believed to have been added a few years after the house was built in 1756. Its low north wall, facing the prevailing northwest winds of winter, had only one window and outside door, and one window in its west end. In the twentieth century this room was shortened at both ends to provide modern living facilities to the west, and a second staircase and hallway to the east. It now serves as a library and study. On the shelves are leather-bound books, some of which have been in the house for over 150 years. Some bear the autograph of the original owner, David Welch, and many were used as textbooks by his son John, a graduate of the Yale Class of 1777. (Photograph 8) Walls are sheathed vertically. A large fireplace has a massive granite lintel, 7'7" long, 15" high and 8" deep. There is evidence on the stone that it was whitewashed at an early period to reflect available light. Over the lintel, original sheathing has been removed. In the plastered ceiling are blocks for hooks to hold herbs or strings of vegetables. There are canopy hooks in one corner, where a four-poster bed accomodated elderly people or expectant mothers who needed day and night warmth, and extra care.

The east bedroom on the second floor has full raised, fielded, vertical panelling, an unusual feature for a room of this type. The east bedroom has a small fireplace. The west bedroom, believed to have been used originally as a guest room, is panelled on its chimney side only. The room was heated by an early cast-iron Franklin stove which now sits

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in the present living room in the east extension. Canopy hooks in the plastered ceiling indicate the onetime presence of a four-poster bed. The two bedrooms are off a back hall that runs the length of the second floor of the original house. Cut into the chimney in the back hall is a smoke chimney for curing hams.

The ground floor of the eastern extension is currently used as the living room (Photographs 8, 10). Evidence of its former use as a store is seen where trapdoors were cut in its floor and ceiling for access to storage areas. A strip on the floor fills a slot in which a counter was set across the northeast quadrant of the room. The mantel and book shelves are modern renderings of older woodwork in the house, and the Franklin stove was originally used in the upstairs guest room. (Photograph 9) The second floor of this section was originally used for storage. The ceiling of this room is an extremely rare example in New England of feather-edged sheathing.

The 1792 kitchen addition is presently used as a dining room. The room is sheathed horizontally in natural pine. Interior posts in this addition are of "gunstock" type. A stone fireplace, the largest in the house, has a massive granite lintel, 6'9" long, 16" high and 7" deep. An oven and ash pit are set beside it. The cut stones surrounding this fireplace also show evidence of having been whitewashed at one time. This fireplace was once bricked up. When the bricks were taken down, an early iron bread peel and iron pot were discovered inside. The present oak flooring in the room was sawn in Milton from trees felled on the property. (Photographs 11, 12)

The wrought-iron hardware in use throughout the house is largely original, including hand-made iron nails, thumb latches, bolts, "H" or "HL" hinges on interior doors and strap-iron full moon or fleur-de-lis hinges for exterior doors and fireplace cranes. (Photographs 2, 4, 7, 8, 10, 12)

Associated with the house on the property are several outbuildings. A well-preserved necessary house is located in the yard off the northeast corner of the house. The building is white clapboard, of post and beam construction with exposed corner posts and a gable roof. (Photograph 13) It has a single wooden door in the front and windows with six over six lights in each elevation. The interior has seven seats ranging from adults' down to small childrens', and is plastered and wainscoted. The building appears to date from 1791-2, when the present dining room and pantry were added to the house. The building has the same size six over six windows as are in the pantry, as well as the same hand-split lath and plaster.

Also standing are two barns to the northwest of the house. Both have their original unpainted sawn hemlock siding. The original wooden shingles have been replaced by asphalt shingles. (Photograph 14)

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The Main Barn is a New England or English-type hay barn and housed oxen. Built in the eighteenth century, it has a post and beam, pegged frame of hand-hewn white oak. Its 54' long dimension runs east and west with four 2' x 2' posts, 24" long on each side. Three such posts are on each north-south side. Eight 30' long, 2' x 2' sills and plates run across the building. Six sills and plates form each long wall. On each side of the rooftree are eleven rafters, each l' x l' and l8' long. An original window is high in each end wall.

The Lower Barn, where cattle were housed and milked, adjoins to the south, and is also New England or English-type. Its 54' long dimension runs north and south, perpendicular to the Main Barn. It is offset westerly from the Main Barn, permitting access between the barns, and at the same time permitting an upper window and outside door on the north end. It is also of hand-hewn white oak, pegged post and beam construction.

Foundations of several adjoining barns are between the surviving barns and the foundation of the former Horse Barn behind the house. 150' of connecting structures, including carriage houses, equipment sheds and service and storage areas, ran between the House Barn and the Main Barn during the nineteenth century. About half of the foundations of these connecting buildings remain in place. They are currently utilized as the settings for sunken gardens.

Note on Photographs:

All photographs of the exteriors of buildings on the property are contemporaneous with the nomination. Interior photographs were taken to accompany an article which appeared in House Beautiful magazine in 1970. They are of high professional quality and accurately depict existing conditions in the house.

8. Significance

| Period | Areas of Significance—C | heck and justify bel | low | |
|---|-------------------------|--|--|--|
| prehistoric 1400-1499 1500-1599 1600-1699 X 1700-1799 X 1800-1899 X 1900- Criteria | | conservation economics education engineering | ning landscape arch law literature military music ement philosophy politics/govern | itecture religion science sculpture social/ humanitarian theater ment transportation _X_ other (specify) local history |
| Specific dates | 1756, 1776, 1792 | Builder/Architect | John Marsh, Jr. | (attrib.) |

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The evolution of the David Welch House and the surrounding property reflects the changes in the social, cultural and economic life of Milton and Litchfield almost since their founding. (Criterion A) Several of its owners have been idividuals who contributed to the economic growth of the village of Milton and who were active in political, religious and military affairs in Milton and in Litchfield. (Criterion B)

The house is significant architecturally as a well-preserved example of a mid-eighteenth century Colonial farmhouse which embodies the distinctive characteristics of the period. (Criterion C)

According to oral tradition passed down through the Welch family, the house was started in 1756 by John Marsh, Jr., one of the founding proprietors of Litchfield, who gave it to his daughter Irene and son-inlaw David Welch as a Wedding present upon its completion in 1758. Welch, a native of New Milford, settled in the house after having served briefly in a local militia company during the French and Indian War. Originally a farmer, Welch also dealt in land and was a significant local industrialist. The nearby Marshepaug River, a tributary of the Shepaug River, provided water power for sawmills, grist mills, forges, and later small factories. David Welch's wife Irene gave the village the name "Milton" as a contraction of "Mill-town." Welch had a part interest in two early forges in Litchfield and a half-interest in a large puddling furnace on Shearshop Road near the house. This building was incorporated into the Hinchcliff Shear Shop in 1874 and continued in service to the end of the nineteenth century. Welch was a dealer in iron and during the 1760s tradition has it that Ethan Allen, part owner of high-quality iron mines and a furnace in Salisbury, Connecticut, to the northwest of Litchfield, made several visits a year to the Welch House with trains of pack horses in summer and ox-drawn sledges in winter to deliver pig iron.

During the American Revolution, David Welch served as a major in the First Regiment, Northern Department. Sometime prior to 1776 the eastern extension was added to the Welch House as a store. The store furnished supplies to workers at the furnace in Salisbury, where cannon and other material of iron were cast for the American forces. After the war David Welch assumed a prominent role in local affairs, leading in the formation of the Milton Congregational Society and serving for five terms as Litchfield's representative in the Connecticut Assembly.

In 1784 David Welch gave the house to his son John as a wedding present and moved to a newer house in the village of Milton. John Welch graduated from Yale in 1777 and was immediately commissioned an ensign in the Continental Army, where he fought as a lieutenant in a Rhode Island

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regiment in the battle of Yorktown. Returning after the war to the Hudson Valley, where he had also fought, he married Rosannah Peebles of Half Moon, New York. The double doors in the eastern store extension of the house are evidence of the Dutch influence she brought with her.

John Welch became a successful merchant and was also active in Milton's civic and religious affairs. He ran a general store in the eastern extension of the house with the help of six black slaves. Stage routes through Milton from Hartford and New Haven to Albany (a portion of which became the modern Milton Road) passed through the village, bringing trade and a varied stock of merchandise. The proliferation of local industries - there were 26 water-powered mills and factories on the Marshepaug at one point during the early nineteenth century - provided a local clientele. The town of Litchfield as a whole enjoyed a "Golden Age" during the early nineteenth century since its merchants were beneficiaries of the China trade. John Welch followed the lead of his father in local civic affairs, serving as state representative four times. He objected to the dominance of the Congregational Church of the day and donated a corner of his land facing the Green to establish Trinity Episcopal Church in Milton. He became its greatest supporter. John Welch was a delegate to the Connecticut State Constitutional Convention in 1818, which adopted a new state constitution emphasizing the separation of church and state.

John Welch died in 1844 but the house and farm remained in the Welch family until 1860. The store remained in operation until this date also. Gerrit P. Welch, in partnership with Harold Kilborn, ran the store between 1844 and 1847. An existing Welch & Kilborn ledger for the May 1845 to April 1846 attests to the wide selection of its stock and the high standard of living enjoyed in the area. The store could satisfy almost any material need of the day. It sold 34 kinds of fabric, from diaper cloth to black mourning cloth, socks, boots, hats, gloves and tippets; a wide range of foodstuffs, from fancy spices by the dram to molasses by the gallon, flour by the barrel, beef by the side, and cod fish, blue fish and oysters by the pound or keg. There were medicines and liniments, for horse as well as man; almanacs, pencils, pens, ink, paper notebooks, primers ("easy readers") and spellers. were farm implements, harness, hammered nails and door handles; a wide range of spirits by the keg, bottle or drink (three cents) and ale by the barrel; and, as befitted Litchfield, home of the first temperance society in America, there was also "sarsaparilla."

In 1860 the house and farm passed to a collateral line, the Bissells. Owner William Bissell used the store briefly as an outlet for farm products, many of them his own. During the Civil War he stocked military supplies to help outfit soldiers recruited in the area. Bissell is one of the most significant figures in Litchfield history during the Civil

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War years. He raised a company of 112 men in the town and served as its captain. The unit became Company A of the Nineteenth Regiment of Connecticut Volunteers, which later became the Second Regiment of Heavy Artillery. The unit with Bissell at its head saw extensive action in the Shenandoah campaign, particularly at the Battle of Cold Harbor. Like the earlier Welch owners, Bissell also represented Litchfield in the State legislature, from 1856-1858 and in 1878. He showed continuing interest in the men of his unit and in Civil War veterans in general after the war. Bissell built up a large, for the time, dairy herd of eighty head of cattle, carting the milk to the Shepaug Railroad station at Bantam, three miles to the east, where it was shipped to urban markets. Commercial dairying developed in Litchfield after the Shepaug line was completed in 1872.

Following Bissell's death in 1902 the house was acquired by several absentee owners who used it as a retirement home or hunting lodge. In 1921 the property was purchased by Edward Holman Raymond, Professor of Oral Pathology and Bacteriology at Columbia University. Retiring to the house in 1928 he devoted most of his remaining thirty years to the restoration and improvement of the Welch House and several other early Milton buildings. The property remains in his family today.

The house is a particularly well-preserved example of traditional Colonial architecture, with Georgian influence added later in the doorway and interior detail, testifying to the Welch family's participation in the growing wealth and commercial importance of Litchfield. The building retains its original exterior materials, with the exception of the roof where the wood shingles have been replaced by asphalt shingles. Permanent changes in the structure of the house have been additions. The lines of the house have not been compromised by these additions, the scale and rooflines of which complement the original structure. (Photographs 2, 3, 4)

The necessary house is unusual for its size and stylishness. Its wainscoting echoes that in the main part of the house. It is an exceptionally large, well-preserved example of its building type and has frequently been visited for its architectural value by classes from the University of Connecticut at Storrs. (Photograph 13) The progression of cooking fireplaces in the David Welch House is of interest. The cooking fireplace in the west downstairs room is small, with no bread oven. It was necessary to brave all kinds of weather to bake in a stone oven outdoors, no longer standing. The much larger fireplace in the kitchen in the rear of the house, c. 1770, had an oven, built inconveniently into the inner back wall of the fireplace. The 1792 extension to the rear added an even larger fireplace, this time with an oven and ash pit set beside it.

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OMB No. 1024-0018 Exp. 10-31-84

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The house is representative of the taste and lifestyle of an affluent, mid-eighteenth-century Litchfield family. The downstairs rooms and even an upstairs bedroom in the original part of the house are richly panelled. Other aspects of the property enhance its significance. The surviving outbuildings which stand on the property are those which date from the eighteenth century, and contribute to its integrity as an eighteenth century farm complex.

Footnote:

1/ Salisbury Furnace Ledger 1777, p.5 & 5A. Connecticut State Library.

9. Major Bibliographical References

see continuation sheet

| 10. Geographical | <u>Data</u> | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| Acreage of nominated property <u>4.7</u> Quadrangle name <u>Cornwall</u> UMT References | 07 | Quadrang | le scale 1:24000 |
| A 1 8 6 4 1 0 0 4 6 2 Northing | 5 5 1 0 | Zone Easting | Northing |
| E | | | |
| Verbal boundary description and ju by Town of Litchfield, T Road; east by Raymond Re Litchfield. See Item No | stification Bounded rinity Episcopa alty Co; west b • 7 | north by Raymond l Church, Milton y Shearshop Road | Realty Co; south Road and Potash and Town of |
| List all states and counties for pro | perties overlapping sta | te or county boundaries | |
| state n/a | code n/a county | n/a | code n/a |
| state n/a | code n/a county | n/a | code n/a |
| 11. Form Prepare name/title William E. Devli organization n/a | ···· | ohn Herzan, Natio | nal Register Coordinate |
| street & number 368 Curtis R | oad | telephone 203-3 | 54-1370 |
| city or town Bridgewater, 12. State Historic | | state Connecti | |
| The evaluated significance of this prope | | . • | |
| As the designated State Historic Preserv 665), I hereby nominate this property for according to the criteria and procedures | inclusion in the National I | Register and certify that it ha | as been evaluated |
| State Historic Preservation Officer signa | ture My | In flower | house |
| title Director, Connecticut | Historical Com | nission date | January 6, 1984 |
| For HCRS use only I hereby certify that this property is | | Register in the Register date | 2/16/84 |
| Keeper of the National Register | man and the second seco | | |
| Attest: Chief of Registration | | date | |

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