

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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AUG 1 1975

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OCT 3 1975

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

~~Crovelawn or Lounsbury, Mansion~~ *Phineas Chapman, House (Crovelawn)*

AND/OR COMMON

Ridgefield Community Center

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

316 Main Street

CITY, TOWN

Ridgefield

— NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

— VICINITY OF

#5- Ronald A. Sarasin

STATE

Connecticut

CODE

09

COUNTY

Fairfield

CODE

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

OWNERSHIP

STATUS

PRESENT USE

___DISTRICT

PUBLIC

OCCUPIED

___AGRICULTURE

___MUSEUM

BUILDING(S)

___PRIVATE

___UNOCCUPIED

___COMMERCIAL

___PARK

___STRUCTURE

___BOTH

___WORK IN PROGRESS

___EDUCATIONAL

___PRIVATE RESIDENCE

___SITE

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

ACCESSIBLE

___ENTERTAINMENT

___RELIGIOUS

___OBJECT

___IN PROCESS

YES: RESTRICTED

___GOVERNMENT

___SCIENTIFIC

___BEING CONSIDERED

___YES: UNRESTRICTED

___INDUSTRIAL

___TRANSPORTATION

___NO

___MILITARY

OTHER community center

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Town of Ridgefield

STREET & NUMBER

400 Main Street

CITY, TOWN

Ridgefield

STATE

— VICINITY OF

Connecticut

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Town Hall

STREET & NUMBER

400 Main Street

CITY, TOWN

Ridgefield

STATE

Connecticut

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Connecticut Statewide Inventory of Historic Resources

DATE

1975

___FEDERAL STATE ___COUNTY ___LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Connecticut Historical Commission

CITY, TOWN

Hartford, Connecticut

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Main Street in Ridgefield, Connecticut is a very picturesque street crowded with large trees which shade the deeply set eighteenth and nineteenth century houses. An area of small retail shops on Main Street forms the town center and the pervading atmosphere is one of a quiet suburban community.

On the right, just before reaching the small shopping area, is the Ridgefield Community Center or Lounsbury Mansion, set back one hundred twenty feet from the road. It is approached along a semicircular drive passing through breaks in a ^wrought iron fence. An immensely imposing house, the Lounsbury Mansion was built to resemble the Connecticut State Building at the Columbian Exposition, Chicago in 1893. It is a two and a half story clapboard home of a very elaborate Neo-Classical style. A pedimented two story portico is supported by Ionic columns and is echoed both in the design of a 'wraparound' porch with Doric column supports and in the pedimented dormers projecting from the mansard roof. The two chimneys as well as the foundation are of brick construction, and the body of the house is frame with clapboard siding.

The interior, designed on a monumental scale, is also decorated in the Neo-Classical style and reflects the elegance of turn-of-the-century high society. All the original work survives inside the house and there have been no design modifications on the exterior, making it an exceptionally fine property.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW

<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

1895

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

Charles C. Northrop

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Built in 1895, the Lounsbury Mansion, or Grovelawn, was the home of Phineas Chapman Lounsbury, businessman and politician. Lounsbury was born in Ridgefield, Connecticut, in 1844 and lived there until he served in the Civil War. After the war he and his older brother, George (who became governor in 1898) set up a shoe and boot manufacturing business in Norwalk, Connecticut.

In 1874 Phineas was elected to serve as a representative in the Connecticut state legislature, and in 1880 was a Presidential elector. His political career brought him much prestige and in 1887 he was elected governor of the state, a post he held for two years.

While attending the Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893, Phineas Lounsbury saw the Connecticut State Building in 'The White City'. He was so impressed with it that he had architect, Charles C. Northrop, design a very similar home for him on property he had purchased in 1889 in Ridgefield. This home was named "Grovelawn".

In the early 1900's Phineas Lounsbury became president of the Exchange Merchants Bank of New York but he maintained "Grovelawn" and frequently entertained his prominent, wealthy friends there. Subsequently, some of these friends built lavish summer homes in Ridgefield.

Lounsbury resided at Grovelawn until his death in 1925, at which time the property was inherited by his niece. It was bought from her by the town in 1945 and today serves as the Ridgefield Veterans' Memorial Community Center.

It is a beautiful house, exemplary of the Neo-Classical style and, being in fine condition it is a valuable element of the Main Street streetscape. More than that, however, its historic value, as ^{for a} governors' home and as an imitation of the Connecticut State Building, make it an integral part of the history of the entire state.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 2

The Columbian Gallery: A Portfolio of Photographs from the World's Fair, The Werner Company, 1894.

"The Governors of Connecticut", Norton, Frederick Calvin, The Connecticut Magazine, Volume 8, 1903, pp. 219-220 and 760-762.