

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____

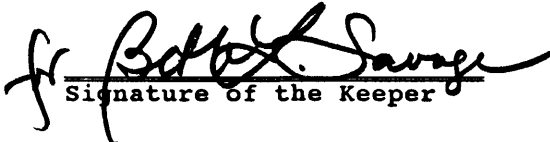
SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 96000847 Date Listed: 08/15/96

Butler, Roger, House Property Name Hartford County CT State

N/A Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

fr  Signature of the Keeper

0/15/96 Date of Action

=====
Amended Items in Nomination:

8. Statement of Significance: Area(s) and Period(s)

Architecture is the only justified applicable area of significance under Criterion C.

The appropriate period of significance is "c.1769," the date of construction for the building and "c.1870," the date of the porch's significant alteration.

This information was confirmed with John Herzan, National Register Coordinator, CTSHPO, by telephone.

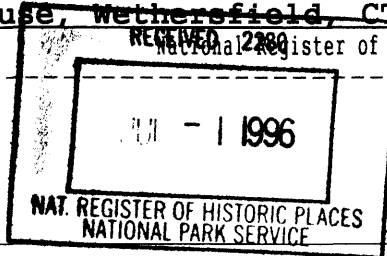
DISTRIBUTION:
National Register property file
Nominating Authority (without attachment)

PROPERTY NAME

Roger Butler House, Wethersfield, CT

United States Department of the Interior

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1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: Roger Butler House

Other Name/Site Number: NA

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: 146 Jordan Lane Not for publication: NA

City/Town: Wethersfield Vicinity: NA

State: CT County: Hartford Code: 003 Zip Code: 06109

3. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property

Private: x
 Public-local:
 Public-State:
 Public-Federal:

Category of Property

Building(s): x
 District:
 Site:
 Structure:
 Object:

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing

 2

 2

Noncontributing

 1 buildings
 sites
 1 structures
 objects
 2 Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: NA

Name of related multiple property listing: NA

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4. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria.

John W. Shannahan 06/14/96
Signature of Certifying Official Date
John W. Shannahan, Director, Connecticut Historical Commission

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

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 _____
- Determined eligible for the _____
National Register
- Determined not eligible for the _____
National Register
- Removed from the National Register _____
- Other (explain): _____

for Beth A. Savage 8/15/96
Signature of Keeper Date of Action

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6. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic: DOMESTIC Sub: single dwelling

Current: DOMESTIC Sub: single dwelling

7. DESCRIPTION

Architectural Classification:

COLONIAL/Postmedieval

English

Materials:

Foundation: STONE

Walls: WOOD

Roof: ASPHALT

Other Description: _____

Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.

The Roger Butler House, built ca.1769, is a two-story frame gable-roofed five-bay Colonial dwelling with central chimney and central entrance (Photograph 1). It is located on a triangular lot, facing south, next to the Wilbur Cross Highway in the north-central part of Wethersfield (Drawing 1). The house is well-preserved, original features both exterior and interior being little changed with the exceptions of doorway, windows, and clapboards, which now resemble the originals, and roof shingles. Porches have been added on the east side and the back and a historic one-story ell-shaped addition wraps around the north and west elevations (see Drawing 2).

The five bays of the front elevation are spaced in a 2-1-2 rhythm. Window surrounds are plain (Photograph 2). The surround of the central double door, now protected by storms doors, has been altered in the 20th century. The 1936 Works Progress Administration survey form photograph shows a heavy Italianate hood over enclosed entry, while in a mid-20th-century view the treatment has been simplified although the round-arched glazed double door remains (Photograph 3). At present there is no Italianate feature.

The posts of the side porch, which are chamfered and grooved, suggest that it may have been added during the Italianate era, perhaps about the time of the Civil War (Photograph 4). The front spandrel of the porch roof is embellished with an unexplained device, perhaps a Roman numeral, made of half-round knobs (Photograph 5). A side door is toward the front of the porch, two windows to the rear, and two windows at the second floor. The sash are thermal aluminum with grids in the sandwich creating the 12-over-12 pattern. The attic sash is the same, in a window larger than it was originally.

The side porch runs to the end of the rear of the one-story addition, suggesting that the addition was there before the porch. The eight-foot addition extends across the full width of the back and wraps around 12 feet of the west elevation (Photographs 6, 7; Drawing 2). The back porch floor is lower than the side porch's and its square posts are plain.

The front door opens to a small hall. A narrow vertical paneled wall is on the right. The double dogleg closed-string stair rises from the left. Its balusters are square, its newel plain and handrail molded (Photograph 8). The hall and all of the rest of the house are filled to overflowing with decorative arts objects held by the owner, who is a collector and former dealer.

The east front room has a fine paneled fireplace wall and a fireplace surround of modest bolection molding (Photograph 9). The doors to this room and throughout the house are four-paneled, raised on one side and recessed on the other, hung on strap hinges but without latch hardware (Photographs 10, 11). The door casings and the window casings, identical, are plain with an interior bead (Photograph 12). All door and window casings throughout the principal rooms on both floors are of this description.

The fireplace surround in the west front room is formed of the same standard bead board. The summers in both front rooms have crown moldings and the two rooms have perimeter cornice moldings (Photograph 13).

The kitchen is relatively shallow in depth. Its fireplace has a bake oven in the rear wall, retardataire for 1769. The opening to the bake oven is arched (Photographs 14, 15). The fireplace wall and side walls of the kitchen are wide vertical feathered-edge boards. The rear wall probably is in the position of the original rear wall of the house, but is now a demising wall dividing the kitchen into two sections. The rear section occupies the one-story addition. Small rear rooms are on either side of the kitchen. The section of the addition which wraps around the north elevation is a small room.

In the basement a large stone chimney base has central position. Its masonry has been pointed up (Photograph 16). Three brick piers support the original rear wall of the house (Photograph 17). The basement continues beyond them to the rear and west. The stone walls of the basement to the addition appear as being the same masonry as the rest of the walls. The ceiling joists are hewn timbers or tree trunks. The joists of the addition are adzed. The ceiling framing has suffered insect infestation but after fumigating was left in place, shored up with Lally columns and additional timbers.

The second floor is laid out with east and west front chambers, both without visible fireplaces, although a stone hearth in the east chamber is remembered by the owner. The rear of the second floor accommodates two more bedrooms and bathroom. A rear stair rises in a straight run from the west end of the kitchen. All principal doors and door and window casings are identical to those on the first floor. Substantially all floors at first and second levels are wide boards.

In the attic the roof framing is seen to be five adzed or tree-trunk principal rafters on either side of the chimney joined at the peak without ridgepole, and connected by collar beams. Roof boards are wide. The chimney is front of center (Photograph 18).

In the garden behind the house is a 12' x 22' one-story gable-roofed building dating from the Victorian era (Photograph 19). Other outbuildings include a two-car garage, a shed, and a 1983 gazebo.

PROPERTY NAME

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The fence of wrought-iron arrow pickets and cast-iron posts which runs across the entire frontage of the parcel was made ca. 1985.

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8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: Nationally:___ Statewide:___ Locally: x

Applicable National Register Criteria: A___ B___ C x D___

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): A___ B___ C___ D___ E___ F___ G___

Areas of Significance:	Period(s) of Significance		Significant Dates
<u>ARCHITECTURE</u>	<u>ca.1769</u>	<u>1946</u>	<u>ca.1769</u>
<u>SOCIAL HISTORY</u>	<u>ca.1769</u>	<u>1954</u>	
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Significant Person(s): NA

Cultural Affiliation: NA

Architect/Builder: NA

State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.

Summary

The Roger Butler House is significant architecturally because it is a good example of Colonial construction that is unusually well-preserved in its overall configuration and interior finishes. The Italianate alteration to the entrance was typical of 19th-century treatment of many 18th-century houses. The historical background of the Roger Butler House includes ownership from 1769 to 1954 by the Butler family, which long was prominent in the Jordan Lane section of Wethersfield,

Historical Background

Deacon Richard Butler came to America from Braintree, Essex, England, in 1633. He joined Thomas Hooker's band in settling Hartford, ca. 1636, taking ownership of land in Wethersfield at that time. The Butlers were merchants, engaging in trade facilitated by Wethersfield's position at the head of navigation on the Connecticut River until 1764, when the channel was deepened to Hartford. Nine Butlers were sea captains or ship owners, traveling to the West Indies and conducting business with others such as Wetherfield's

more famous citizens, Silas Deane and Joseph Webb. Frederick K. Butler built a wharf in Wethersfield, ca. 1792. Seven Butler family houses were built before 1800 on Jordan Lane; five are still standing.

William Butler, a fifth generation descendant of Deacon Richard Butler, bought the land on which the Roger Butler House stands on August 8, 1767 (Wethersfield Land Records, volume 13, page 94). He built the nominated house for his son Roger (September 20, 1746-July 28, 1799), as a wedding present upon the occasion of his marriage February 22, 1769 to Hannah Hammer.

The owner of the nominated house in 1873 was his descendant Henry G. Butler, who deeded the property, then seven acres, to his son-in-law, Albert J. Blumenthal, husband of his daughter Charlotte A. (Wethersfield Land Records, volume 51, page 60). Charlotte died on April 2, 1932; Albert on January 17, 1933. Albert J. and Charlotte A. Blumenthal had two surviving daughters, Fannie B. and Mary E. Blumenthal. The property was distributed to them in 1935 (WLR 98/67). The sisters continued to live in the homestead until the 1950s; after Mary E. died on February 10, 1953, Fannie B. Blumenthal sold in December 1954 (WLR 153/399). The house had remained in Butler family ownership/occupancy for 185 years from 1769 to 1954.

According to strong neighborhood tradition which has persisted from the 19th century, the Roger Butler house was a stop on the Underground Railroad.¹

Jordan Lane extends westward from Silas Deane Highway at the northern end of the Wethersfield Historic District established by the Town of Wethersfield. The North Wethersfield Civic Association, Inc., chaired by Orren Tench, then owner of the Roger Butler House, in 1968 petitioned the Wethersfield Historical Commission to prepare a Study Committee report on the formation of a Jordan Lane Historic District. The Study Committee report was forthcoming in 1974; the proposal, to enlarge the existing district to include Jordan Lane, was put to a ballot of property owners, but was defeated since affirmative votes came to only 53% when 75% was needed.

Recent recognition of the Roger Butler House was forthcoming in 1992 when the Wethersfield Preservation Trust awarded a plaque which is displayed near the front door. It was one of three awards made by the Trust.

Architecture

The mass, shape, window openings, and plan of the Roger Butler House are all in the standard tradition of New England Colonial architecture, making the house a good example of its type. What makes these components significant here is the integrity in which they continue to exist. The change which was made in the front entrance, converting it to the Italianate style of hood over double door with round-arched glazing, since reversed, has a significance of its own because it reflects changing taste and a not-uncommon desire on the part of the owner to keep up with the times.

The interior finishes of the Roger Butler House are significant because of their unusual uniformity and high quality. The fact that all doors, door casings, and window casings are the same, unchanged after two centuries, sets the house apart from most. The fine condition of the paneled fireplace wall, stairway, and basement and attic framing add to the totality of the interior integrity. Preliminary examination suggests that the Roger Butler House in terms of age and integrity is the most significant of the standing Butler houses.

The shallow kitchen and one-story wraparound addition at the rear do not fit any well-known pattern. When and why this arrangement was constructed is unknown from recorded history of the house; neither is it similar to other standard changes in Colonial houses, such as a lean-to addition. The configuration is a conundrum, joining the characters over the porch entry as unexplained features of the Roger Butler House.

¹The only substantive information to come to hand in possible support of the tradition has to do with the Wright sisters who lived next door to the east in a house no longer standing. Abigail Deming Wright (1816-1912) and Mary Ann Wright (died ca. 1905), sisters of Charles Wright, a leading 19th-century botanist, were feminists, suffragettes, and supporters of minorities. Abigail was also a painter.

A 1909 newspaper article noted that Abigail supported with benefactions her interest in "The education of the colored people of the south...." A Wethersfield Historical Society press release of September 13, 1995, records the "story that the Wrights' home on Jordan Lane was used by slaves passing to freedom during the Civil War," and refers to Abigail Wright's contributions to Tuskegee Institute, Alabama. The extrapolation is that the social posture and intellectual interests of the Wright family could have found expression in participation in the Underground Railroad, with the activity using the gable-roofed Butler shed next door as part of the activity. There is support for this interpretation in the fact that the grandparents of the Jordan Lane historian, George Keough, spoke of the use of the Roger Butler shed for Underground Railroad purposes (Henry J. Sliva, conversation, November 10, 1995). The local tradition in this respect is of long standing from generation to generation.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Sherman W. Adams and Henry R. Stiles. The History of Ancient Wethersfield. Somersworth, New Hampshire: New Hampshire Publishing Company and Wethersfield Historical Society, 1974, reprint of 1904, vol. I, pp. 545, 564.

"Jordan Lane: A Study in Contrast." North Wethersfield Civic Association, Inc., 1972.

"Jordan Lane Historic District Is Turned Down By Residents." Wethersfield Post, July 11, 1974, p. 3.

George Keough, owner of A. & J. Butler House, 244 Jordan Lane, and historian of Jordan Lane's Butler family. Letters to Connecticut Historical Commission, July 1, 1982, September 30, 1987.

Henry R. Stiles. The History of Ancient Wethersfield. Somersworth, New Hampshire: New Hampshire Publishing Company and Wethersfield Historical Society, 1975, reprint of 1904, vol. II, pp. 171, 178..

Wethersfield Land Records, volume 13, page 94; 51/60; 153/399.

Lois M. Wieder. "Historical Significance of Jordan Lane," section of Wethersfield Historic District Commission Study Committee report, January 3, 1973.

Abigail D. Wright. Unidentified newspaper clipping, hand dated 1909, on occasion of her 94th birthday. Wethersfield Historical Society.

_____ Press release on exhibition of her paintings, September 13, 1995.
Wethersfield Historical Society.

Works Progress Administration. Federal Writers' Project. Census of Old Buildings in Connecticut. Roger Butler House, 1936.

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: George Keough, 244 Jordan Lane, Wethersfield, CT; Wethersfield Historical Society

PROPERTY NAME

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10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreage of Property: 0.5

UTM References: Zone Northing Easting Zone Northing Easting

A	<u>18</u>	<u>4622420</u>	<u>693640</u>	B	___	___	___
C	___	___	___	D	___	___	___
E	___	___	___	F	___	___	___

Verbal Boundary Description:

The nominated property is described at Wethersfield Land Records, volume 319, page 195. The property is parcel 4 on Engineer's map 167.

Boundary Justification:

The boundary is the property line of the parcel that has gone with the house for several decades.

11. FORM PREPARED BY

Name/Title: David F. Ransom, Consultant, reviewed by John F.A. Herzan, National Register Coordinator

Org.: Architectural Historian

Date: October 1995

Street/#: 33 Sunrise Hill Drive

City/Town: West Hartford

State: CT

ZIP: 06107

Telephone: 203 521-3387

List of Photographs

Photographs were taken by David F. Ransom in October 1995. Negatives are on file with Connecticut Historical Commission. Exception is historical Photograph 3, courtesy of Wethersfield Historical Society, which holds the negative.

Photograph 1

Roger Butler House
Wethersfield, CT
View northeast

Photograph 2

Roger Butler House
Wethersfield, CT
Window casing, first floor,
west elevation, view
northeast

Photograph 3

Roger Butler House
Wethersfield, CT
Mid-20th-century view
northeast, courtesy
Wethersfield Historical
Society

Photograph 4

Roger Butler House
Wethersfield, CT
East elevation, view west

Photograph 5

Roger Butler House
Wethersfield, CT
Porch spandrel, view north

Photograph 6

Roger Butler House
Wethersfield, CT
Back porch, view southwest

Photograph 7

Roger Butler House
Wethersfield, CT
Back porch and wraparound
addition, view southeast

Photograph 8

Roger Butler House
Wethersfield, CT
Front stair, view down,
southwest

Photograph 9

Roger Butler House
Wethersfield, CT
East front room fireplace
wall, view southwest

Photograph 10

Roger Butler House
Wethersfield, CT
Door between east front room
and kitchen, view north

Photograph 11

Roger Butler House
Wethersfield, CT
Door between east front room
and kitchen, view southeast

Photograph 12

Roger Butler House
Wethersfield, CT
Doorway casing, typical

Photograph 13

Roger Butler House
Wethersfield, CT
West front room, view
northwest

Photograph 14

Roger Butler House
Wethersfield, CT
Kitchen fireplace wall,
view southwest

Photograph 15

Roger Butler House
Wethersfield, CT
Kitchen fireplace bake
oven arch

Photograph 16

Roger Butler House
Wethersfield, CT
Chimney base, view
southeast

Photograph 17

Roger Butler House
Wethersfield, CT
One of three brick piers
in basement, view
northeast

Photograph 18

Roger Butler House
Wethersfield, CT
Chimney in attic, view
southeast

Photograph 19

Roger Butler House
Wethersfield, CT
Small building in garden
view northeast

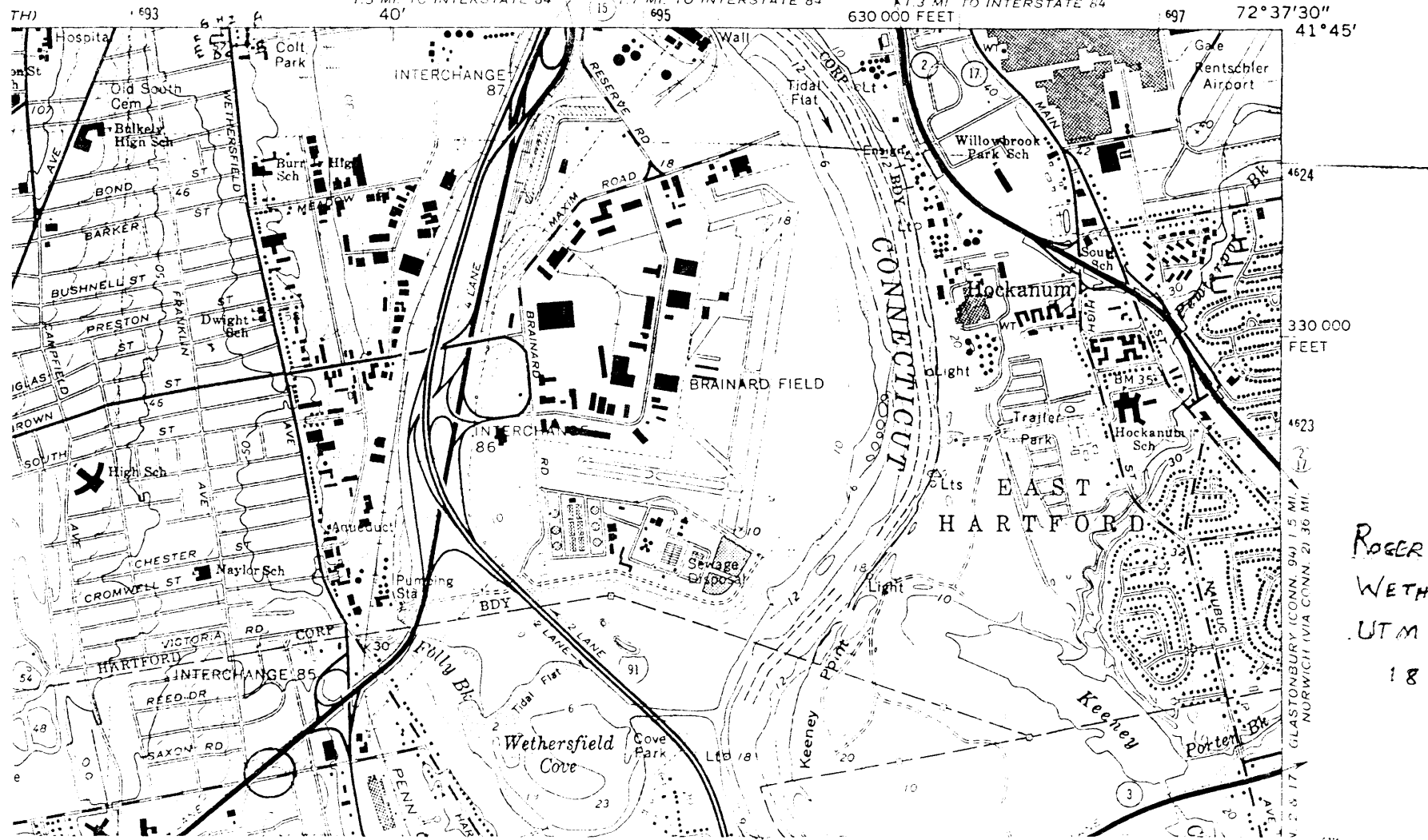
HARTFORD SOUTH QUADRANGLE
CONNECTICUT

7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

WINDSOR 8 MI 44 MI. TO INTERSTATE 90
1.5 MI. TO INTERSTATE 84 1.7 MI. TO INTERSTATE 84
630 000 FEET 1.3 MI. TO INTERSTATE 84

6467 1 SE
(MANCHESTER)

697 72° 37' 30"
41° 45'



ROGER BUTLER House
WETHERSFIELD, CT
UTM REFERENCE
18T46224201693640

Roger Butler House
 Wethersfield, CT

Drawing 1

Section of Engineer's Map 167

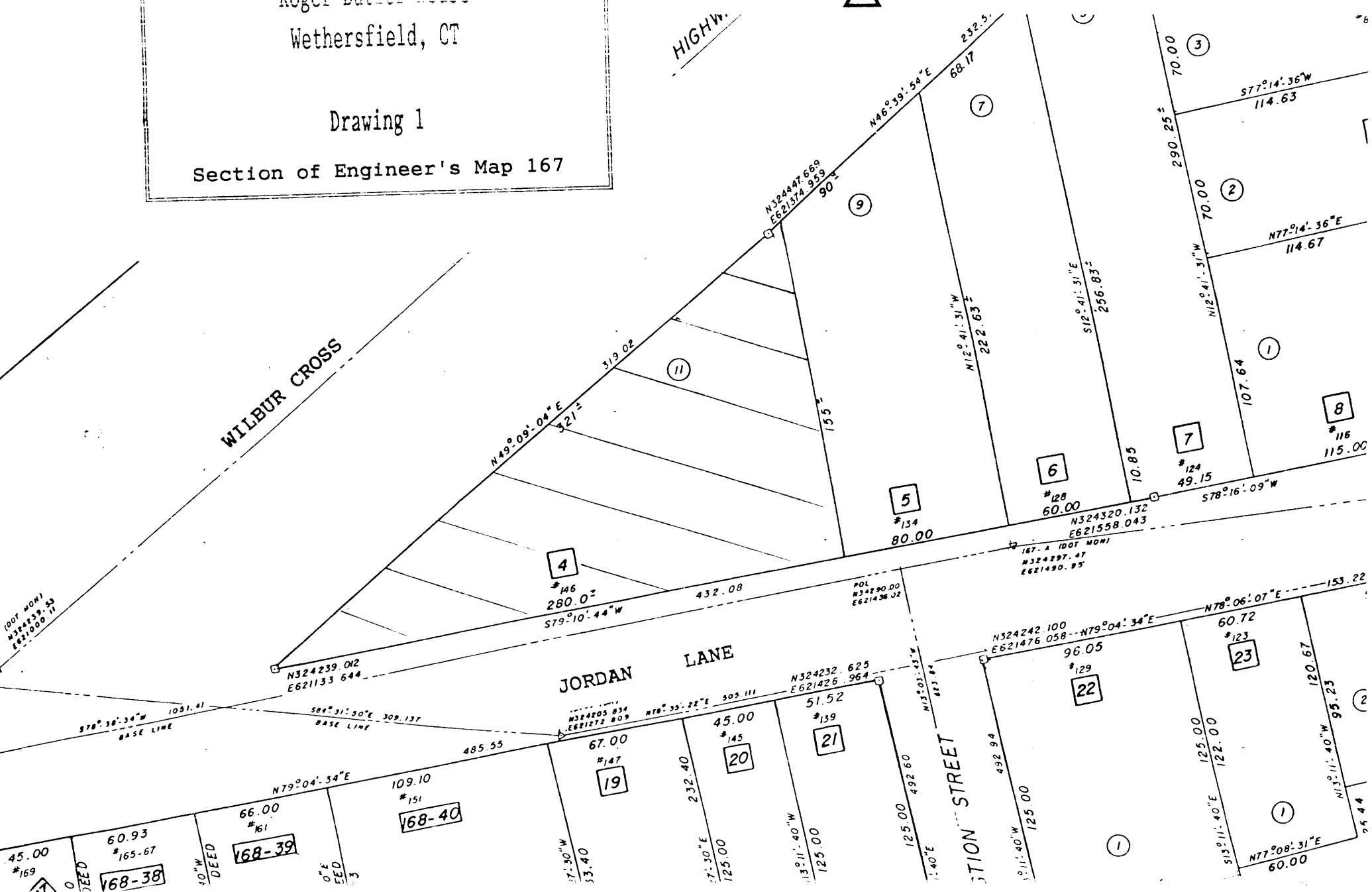


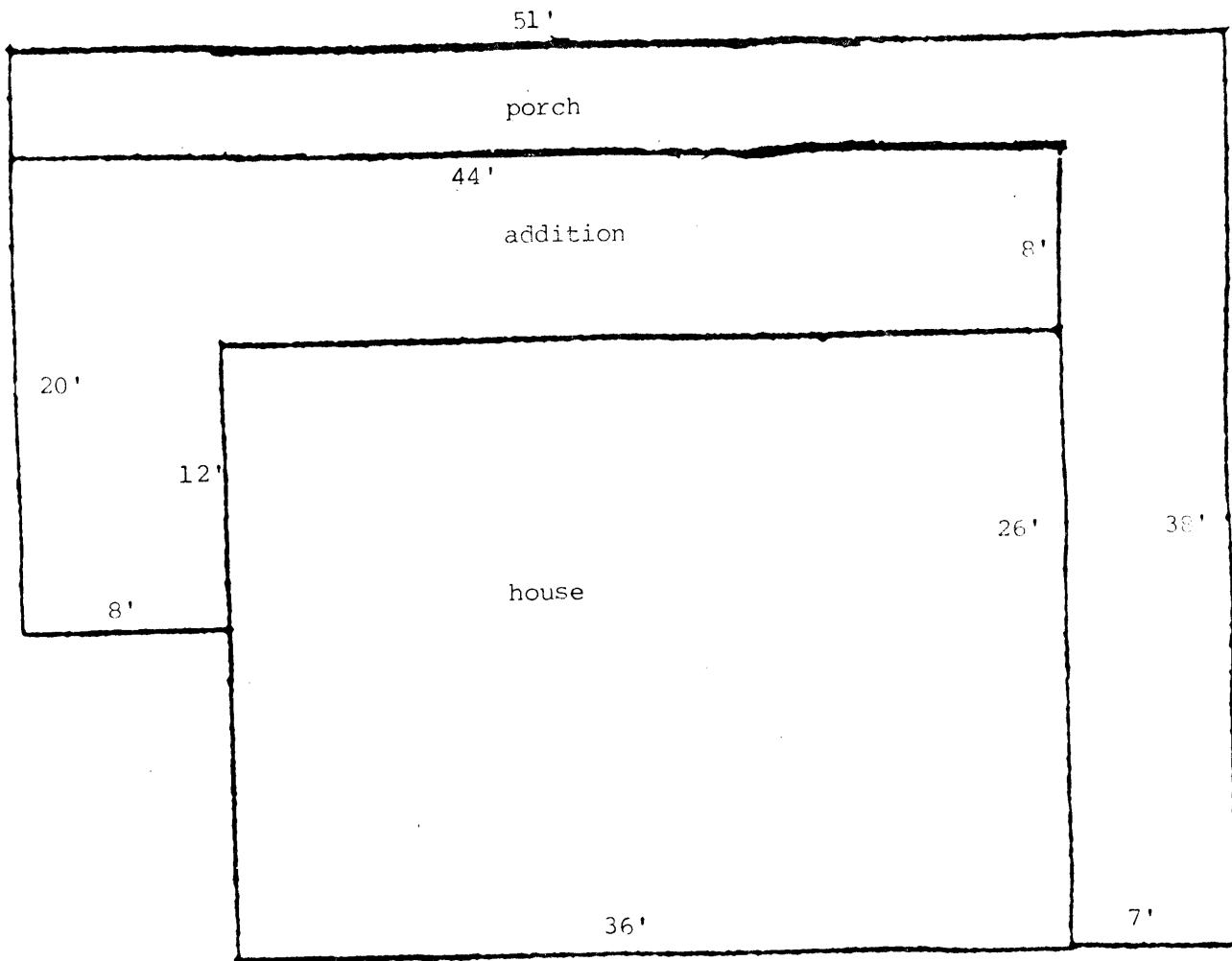
HIGHW.

WILBUR CROSS

JORDAN LANE

STATION STREET





Roger Butler House
Wethersfield, CT

Drawing 2

Ground Plan

