

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

PH 0675962

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED APR 25 1979	AUG 17 1979
DATE ENTERED	

**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

David Ogden House

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

1520 Bronson Road

— NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Fairfield

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Fourth--Stewart McKinney

— VICINITY OF

STATE

Connecticut

CODE

09

COUNTY

Fairfield

CODE

001

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Fairfield Historical Society

STREET & NUMBER

636 Old Post Road

CITY, TOWN

Fairfield

STATE

Connecticut

— VICINITY OF

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Fairfield Town Clerk

STREET & NUMBER

Old Post Road

CITY, TOWN

Fairfield

STATE

Connecticut

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

State Register of Historic Places (see also continuation sheet)

DATE

1978

— FEDERAL STATE — COUNTY — LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Connecticut Historical Commission

CITY, TOWN

Hartford

STATE

Connecticut

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" 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

The David Ogden House is a 2½-story integral saltbox dwelling with a central chimney. It is located in the town of Fairfield approximately midway between the village centers of Southport and Greenfield Hill. The surrounding neighborhood is suburban in character, consisting mostly of single-family mid-20th-century houses on 1-acre plots. There are a few other early houses scattered throughout the general vicinity. The Ogden House faces west and is set back more than 100 feet from Bronson Road, a heavily-traveled thoroughfare. It is situated about one-tenth mile from the flood plain of the Mill River, and a stream known as Brown's Brook flows through the rear of the property.

The Ogden House was extensively restored between 1931 and 1935. As it stands today, covered with unpainted oak shingles showing 12 inches to the weather, its appearance is strongly suggestive of its 18th-century origins. The front of the house is 3 bays wide. Its windows are comparatively large and contain 15-over-15-pane sash, installed in place of smaller Federal-period sash at the time of the restoration. The door frame is severe in its simplicity and contains an 18th-century door (a replacement for the original, reportedly stolen in the 1930s). The side walls contain 12-over-12-pane windows in the main rooms, with 4-over-4-pane sash in the attic gables and 4-pane casements in the kitchen chamber. A doorway on the south side enters into the kitchen. The chimney is unusual in the Fairfield area, with a T-shape addition to the rear of the main stack. It is of stone construction topped with brick from just below the ridgeline.

The parlor occupies the northwest corner of the house. Its dimensions are approximately 14 by 18 feet and there is a fireplace 6 feet wide in the south wall. There are gunstock posts visible at both outside corners of the room as well as an end girt, all covered with plaster (the front wall has been furred out so that no projecting beam is visible). A summer beam was apparently hewn away and has been plastered over. The floor in this room is composed of random pine boards varying from 6 to 14 inches in width, fastened with rose-head nails (all other floors in the house are oak). The fireplace is recessed some 8 inches between two closets. It is surrounded by a bolection moulding, a 1930s restoration that replaced a Federal-period mantel. Above it are two horizontal wood panels. There is a segmented hearth, and indications that the inside had once been plastered. Doors to this room are four-panel, with raised panels on the sides facing inward.

The adjoining front entry is panelled on the staircase wall, repeating the pattern of the four-panel door. The right-hand stair is entirely enclosed by this wall and is entered through a door on the north side.

The hall (south front room) corresponds in size to the parlor. It contains a cased summer beam 16 inches wide, plastered end girts which project into the room 5 by 10 inches, and cased chimney girts projecting 6 by 12 inches. The fireplace here is 10 feet wide and 3½ feet deep with

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Historic American Buildings Survey
Official Project 465-15-3-8
Connecticut Survey #56

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brick side walls and a plastered back. It contains a rear bake oven. The hearthstone measures $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet in width and is composed almost entirely of a single granite slab. There are two wood panels above the fireplace and a doorway to the left of it that formerly led to a cellar stair (now closed off). To the right of the fireplace is a cabinet which projects into the room having a two-panel door.

The kitchen is 12 feet wide and 32 feet long across the rear of the house. The fireplace protrudes some 3 feet into the room; it measures 10 feet by $4\frac{1}{2}$ feet and is $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet deep with a segmented hearth. To the right of it is a rear staircase (now closed off at the top). The recess to the left was reportedly formerly occupied by a cupboard. The entire structure of this room is exposed and the wood left unpainted, and the floorboards of the kitchen chamber are visible above the 6-inch-square joists. The 10-by-14-inch chimney girts show axe marks below these joists, indicating that they were once plastered. The former kitchen bedroom at the northeast corner of the house serves as a modern kitchen.

The second story is arranged in typical 18th-century fashion, with two bedchambers separated by a stairhall and a storage area across the rear. The main stairway to it consists of four diagonal treads at the bottom and two at the top, with five square treads in between. There is a simple railing across the top with square balusters and a moulded handrail.

The parlor chamber contains a fireplace 4 feet wide and a panelled chimney wall. The arrangement of these panels is similar to that in the parlor below, with two horizontal panels above the opening and four vertical to the right. There is a small closet (14 inches deep) to the left enclosed by a two-panel door. The panelling in this room is joined to the ceiling by a heavy moulding, and the beams are plastered.

The hall chamber is without a fireplace (its usual space is occupied by a closet) and has been restored to an earlier appearance than the parlor chamber. It has batten doors, beaded sheathing boards along the chimney and rear walls, and exposed beams (apparently formerly plastered). A rear door leads to a modern back staircase, built along the south side of the chimney. The kitchen chamber is now occupied in part by a modern bathroom, reached through a doorway in the parlor chamber.

Today the house is furnished with appropriate 18th century pieces and its interior woodwork painted what are reputed to be original colors. It is opened during the summer months as an interpretive museum by the Fairfield Historical Society. It was first opened to the public May 23, 1974.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
	<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			Preservation History

Criteria A and C

SPECIFIC DATES c. 1721--1750

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The David Ogden House is a typical example of Connecticut domestic architecture of the first half of the 18th century, restored to its supposed original appearance in the 1930s. It has long been recognized as one of Fairfield's outstanding examples of early building, an importance given added weight when it is considered that much of the pre-Revolutionary town was burned by the British in 1779.

The building began as a farmhouse in a fertile agricultural area. An extensive title search conducted by Mrs. Henry Elstein¹ fixes its date between 1721 (when, according to the report, "Joseph Ogden obtained 7½ acres from Robert Rumfrey...In the next deed...Joseph Ogden sold an orchard to Joseph Perry in consideration of Perry's bearing one-half the cost of building for the said Joseph Ogden a dwelling house like that of Samuel Smith's on Mill Hill) and 1750 (where it cites a record of David Ogden Sr. giving to his son David Jr. "10 acres of land west of the Mill River, 'together with the new house standing on ye granted premissis'").

The architectural evolution of the house has stirred debate² among the experts who have studied it. In his historiography of the house, preservation consultant Richard M. Candee states:

Several Connecticut antiquarians and architect-historians have looked into the architectural history or ownership of the David Ogden house in Fairfield over the past forty-five years or so. Among the most experienced architectural experts were J.F. Kelly and Elmer Keith, who both seem to have studied the house after (possibly during) the restoration...Each shared a set of opinions, however, which have created interpretive difficulties. They all were, to one degree or another, followers of the late 19th c. architect and antiquarian Norman Isham who espoused a theory of sequential growth from one room plan to central chimney and two room plan which culminated in the addition of a rear leanto...Stubborn insistence on the theory of evolutionary growth (and the dates connected to buildings of each type) had led former investigators to "see" that the two story southern end

¹on file at the Fairfield Historical Society

²Ogden House Report on file at the Fairfield Historical Society

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Antiques Magazine, Vol. LVI No. 6, December, 1949, pp. 446-9; Vol. XCVI No. 5, November 1969, pp. 755-62.
 Candee, Richard M. Ogden House Report. Unpublished manuscript on file at Fairfield Historical Society.
 Comstock, Helen. 100 Most Beautiful Rooms in America. New York: Studio Publications, 1955.

--cont.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than 1 acre

QUADRANGLE NAME Westport

QUADRANGLE SCALE 7.5 minute

UTM REFERENCES

A

1	8	6	4	5	6	0	4	5	5	7	6	6	0
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B

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ZONE EASTING NORTHING

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C

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D

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E

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F

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G

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H

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
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STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
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11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Charles W. Brilvitch

National Register Consultant

ORGANIZATION

Connecticut Historical Commission

DATE

October 1978

STREET & NUMBER

59 South Prospect Street

TELEPHONE

203-566-3005

CITY OR TOWN

Hartford

STATE

Connecticut

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL x

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE



TITLE Director, Connecticut Historical Commission

DATE March 23, 1979

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Carol Anne Skell
 KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE 8-17-79

ATTEST: *Bruce W. Doye*
 CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

DATE 8/17/79

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of the house was erected before the rooms at the northern end, and that both were followed by the addition of a rear leanto. This is simply not so.

Actually, the Ogden House is a straightforward integral leanto roofed house of a single construction...This revised interpretation is based on

- (1) roof--original 18th c. numbering system of common rafters, whose rear rafters are single sticks from apex to rear leanto plate.
- (2) chimney--the base (as restored) shows no indication of two stages of growth.
- (3) frame--the rear parts of the walls dividing the front rooms from the leanto show that there never was a rear wall of sheathing to hold shingles (which would have been needed before an "added" leanto).

David Ogden Jr. died in 1776, and the house eventually passed into the hands of his son Sturges. Sturges' daughter Ellen Silliman sold the house out of the family in 1839 to Henry W. Banks, who continued to farm the surrounding land into the 20th century. By the 1920s, however, after a succession of tenant occupants, the house was in a severe state of disrepair. People concerned about area history began to agitate for the preservation of what was thought to be the oldest house in the community.

Annie B. Jennings, a local heiress with a great concern for Fairfield's past, acquired the property from its absentee owners in February, 1931. She in turn sold the house to Mary C. Allis the following April. Miss Allis, a noted expert on antiques and collector of Americana, immediately commenced what was probably the largest restoration project Fairfield had seen up to that time. Norman Isham and Henry Stoddard were retained as consultants, and Howard Gray was the contractor. The collapsed chimney and foundation walls were rebuilt following closely what were determined to be original lines; plaster was stripped from kitchen walls, and additions of the Federal period and later were removed. A series of "before" photographs documents the works³. The result was hailed in national publications as an exemplary work of American preservation⁴. The Ogden House passed to Lillian Wadsworth in 1944, who devised it to the present owner, the Fairfield Historical Society, in 1974.

³set of 50 8 x 10 photographs by Howard Gray, on file Fairfield Hist. Soc.

⁴see particularly Antiques Magazine, Dec. 1949; Ladies Home Journal, Aug. 1948, 100 Most Beautiful Rooms in America by Helen Comstock, pub. 1955.

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The David Ogden House today embodies distinctive characteristics of two periods of American history--the construction methods used in the first half of the 18th century and the restoration techniques employed by the early 20th century generation of preservationists. A substantial amount of original fabric has been maintained to convey a sense of the house's early origins, and the modifications of the present century have contributed to the overall development and significance of the structure.

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Elstein, Mrs. Henry. Ogden House Title Search. Unpublished manuscript on file at Fairfield Historical Society.

Keith, Elmer. Research Material on Ogden House Architecture. Unpublished manuscript on file at Connecticut Historical Society.

Perry, Loretta B. (compiler). Old Houses of Connecticut: Historical and Technical Information. Hartford: Connecticut Society of Colonial Dames of America, 1938.

FHR-8-300A
(11/78)

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HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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David Ogden House
Fairfield, Connecticut

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The Ogden House includes all of Parcel 15 on Assesor's Map 176 in the Town of Fairfield.