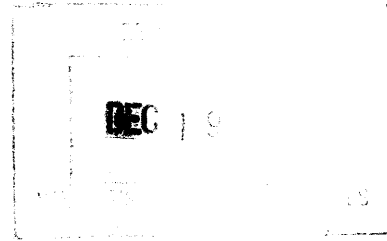


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service



# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

### 1. Name of Property

historic name Ralph S. Norton House  
other names/site number Norton House Historic District (preferred)

### 2. Location

street & number 241 and 243 Foreside Road N/A not for publication  
city or town Falmouth N/A vicinity  
state Maine code ME county Cumberland code 005 zip code 04105

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. (  See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature] 12/18/03  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Maine Historic Preservation Commission  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. (  See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register.  
 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] 1/28/04  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
		_____ buildings
		_____ sites
		_____ structures
		_____ objects
		_____ Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A \_\_\_\_\_

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

None \_\_\_\_\_

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC / Single dwelling \_\_\_\_\_

DOMESTIC / Secondary structure \_\_\_\_\_

LANDSCAPE/ Street furniture / object \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC / Single dwelling \_\_\_\_\_

LANDSCAPE/ Street furniture / object \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> AND EARLY 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY AMERICAN \_\_\_\_\_

MOVEMENTS / Prairie school \_\_\_\_\_

LATE VICTORIAN / Shingle style \_\_\_\_\_

LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> AND EARLY 20<sup>TH</sup> C. REVIVALS / Colonial Revival \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE \_\_\_\_\_

walls WEATHERBOARD \_\_\_\_\_

SHINGLE \_\_\_\_\_

roof ASPHALT \_\_\_\_\_

other \_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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NORTON HOUSE HISTORIC DISTRICT

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### DESCRIPTION

The Norton House Historic District is comprised of two parcels of land that contain the majority of the intact resources of the suburban estate designed for Ralph S. Norton by the prominent architectural firm of John Calvin Stevens and John Howard Stevens in 1912 in Falmouth Maine. This estate is located in Falmouth Foreside, (previously known as New Casco), on a high ridge running between the north-south state Route 88 and Casco Bay, in a neighborhood of fine 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century homes and early 20<sup>th</sup> century cottages. The district covers just under 2.5 acres of land, and includes the Norton House (1912), the stable (c. 1911), a stone overlook (1912) and a stone gatehouse (1914), as well as several landscape objects, including stone walls, garden beds, benches and a gated arbor. The estate was planned to take advantage of the expansive views over Casco Bay to the northeast, while at the same time creating a private enclave for the Norton family.

The historic district is located in the middle of the original Norton estate, a parcel of land that in 1911 measured approximately 350' x 1300', running southeast from Route 88 to Casco Bay. The over 500' long driveway was positioned down the middle of the long axis of the property from Route 88 to the house and stable which are located in the center of the parcel. (See map 1). The two and a half story house on a fieldstone foundation is essentially an example of Prairie school architecture melded with the Shingle and Colonial Revival elements for which the Stevens firm was known. The land facade of the building faces northwest (which, for the purpose of simplicity, will be referred to as west in this nomination), and the ocean facade looks to the east. In this direction, the land descends to a lower field before gradually sloping to the ocean's edge; a stone lined retaining wall swung to the south and east of the house and carried a dirt lane to the lower portions of the property, where a picturesque pond was installed. Commencing in the 1950s six house lots, were subdivided from the original estate: five flank the long driveway while the sixth, which is accessed by a separate driveway, is situated along the ridge the south of the Norton House. The stable, now converted into a private home, is set on a broad lawn southwest and adjacent to the Norton House, and shares use of the driveway. Perched on the edge of the ridge to the northeast of the house, is a stone lookout shelter. Another small stone shelter serves as a gatehouse at the head of the driveway. Stone walls mark the property's northern boarder. The former field and pond between the house and the ocean have also been separated from the original estate and are now the grounds of the Portland Yacht Club. Although several features from the original estate are extant on the surrounding properties, the district consists only of those resources associated with the Norton House that remain within the property owned by the current residents of the house and the stable.

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### House, 1912. *Contributing*

The description of the Ralph S. Norton house in the following paragraph was prepared by Earle G. Shettleworth, Jr. in his book John Calvin Stevens Domestic Architecture, 1890-1930.

"The Norton House is a two story L-shaped shingled dwelling which is covered by a high hip roof with broad eaves. Its land facade has a pronounced horizontal configuration that is expressed in the shingle pattern and projecting entrance overhang on the first story, the grouped casement windows on the second story, the expansive and unbroken line of the eaves, and the long low shed dormer. Contained within this overriding form is a segmentally arched central doorway derived from Georgian precedents, a glazed sun porch off the south side, and a projecting two story service wing at the northeast corner. The ocean elevation maintains the central theme of horizontality through shingle courses, eaves, and tripartite first story windows. However, this is set against a central entrance pavilion comprised of first story Doric columns which support beams and a large double gabled bay. This latter feature, which is a common Shingle Style device, joins the double-hung second story windows, the columns, and the balanced projection of sun porch and pergola on the ends to lend the elevation an eclectic appearance." (*Shettleworth, p. 148-149*).

The interior of the Norton House is finished in Arts and Crafts woodwork and features beamed ceilings throughout. The house contains a diningroom, central hall, living room, conservatory and four bedrooms all stretched along the eastern side of the house to take advantage of the ocean views. A small den, the kitchen ell and a corner nook, with sleeping porch above, and one bedroom are positioned on the western side of the house. At the heart of the house is the magnificent open hall that features an handsome mahogany-stained, red-birch staircase with inlaid maple veneer and brass fittings, across from which French doors and large sash windows lead to a brick terrace under the entrance pavilion. North of the hall, the dining room is richly finished with tall mahogany-stained wainscoting topped with a plate rail. The room is further enhanced by a leaded glass china cupboard, and a two-panel door into the kitchen wing. As with the hall, large windows look to the east, while French doors connect the dining room to the former location of a Doric columned, but orientally-detailed pergola, which has not survived. Continuing to the exterior on the same axis as the diningroom and pergola, a stone walk leads to a curved bench built into the property boundary's north wall. At the southern end of the house is the sunny livingroom, with a Colonial Revival fireplace flanked by arched side niches on the chimney mass. In contrast to the hall and dining room, in this room the paneled walls and boxed beams have been painted, which reinforces the more formal classical elements. An attached conservatory with red tile floor opens off the living room. This seasonal space is lined with large windows, under which are positioned wide benches with steam heating vents below to warm the flowers the room was designed to hold.

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The third floor of the house contains two bedrooms and a bath for servants. As originally designed, the kitchen service wing was separated from the dining room by a butler's pantry, while on the west end of the wing was located a walk-in refrigerator and second pantry. From a door next to the refrigerator a rear porch gave access to a laundry yard which was enclosed by latticework. The use of the lattice work enclosure and the positioning of this wing ensured that the exterior service areas were easily accessible to the driveway in front of the house, yet at the same time sheltered from view of any family activities in the gardens, terraces, pergola or vistas. Over the years the kitchen has been remodeled, and the kitchen chimney, hearth and boilers, the pantries and refrigerator and the laundry yard have all been replaced.

**Stable, c. 1911. Contributing.**

The stable in the Norton House Historic District is a one-and one-half story, asymmetrical, U- shaped structure that applies the Prairie School of architecture to a non-residential building. The main mass of the building consists of a dominant hipped-roof rectangular block that faces north. Attached to the southwest corner of this block is a one story wing that runs first west and then turns to the north, where it terminates under another hipped roof. A one-story, round, silo is attached to the wing within the crook of the U. The silo features a eyebrow dormer on its low, conical roof. A through-cornice dormer with wide hipped roof is located on the front, east, and south elevations of the main block, which is crowned with a broad roofed ventilator on the main mass and a lower ventilator on the ridge behind the silo. The roof is covered with asphalt shingles, and the building sits on a mortared field stone foundation with beaded mortar joints identical to those that Stevens specified in his plans for the house. Previously shingled, the stable is now clad with clapboards.

As depicted in early photographs, the main carriage entrance was located in the middle of the facade of the main block, and a small door was placed directly overhead in the through-cornice dormer to admit hay into the second story of the facility. According to tradition, the horses were stabled in the building's basement, with access through a basement entrance on the eastern side of the barn. The first leg of the wing is said to have housed the tack room and the western leg was the grain room. However, the 1924 Sanborn Fire Insurance map indicates that this last section was utilized as for automobile storage. On the interior of this leg the floor height has been raised about three feet above that in the rest of the wing, probably to provide head height in the automobile storage room below.

Although the footprint of the stable is present on the 1911 survey of the Norton property prepared by E.C. Jordan, no firm date has been established for the building's construction. Nineteenth century maps indicate an earlier outbuilding in the same location, and it is possible that the extant building represents a renovation of an earlier barn. To date, no plans for this structure have been located among the Stevens collections or in possession of the property owner, and it is not possible to firmly state that this structure is

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the work of Stevens, although it is entirely probably.

Ownership of the stable was separated from the original Norton estate in 1967, and shortly thereafter the structure was converted into a house. As a result, the front entrance to the carriage house was blocked up, windows installed in new locations, and the front door placed within the silo. On the interior, the vast space that housed the horses in the basement and the carriages on the first floor has been divided into rooms. However, the original hay loft retains its open floor plan and exposed cased beams, as well as the original floor into which several trap doors were installed. One of the original features that remains in the stable is the large turntable built into the floor of the carriage house. This wheeled and geared iron unit is supported on cross I beams and a brick pier in the basement. The wheel was used to rotate the floor under the carriages within the structure so that they could enter and exit the building through the front door. Although this structure has undergone significant alteration, it retains the unusual footprint that is dates to at least 1911, as well as the broad overhanging roof, through-cornice dormers, eyebrow dormers and foundation detailing that define it as a uniquely designed and detailed stable that compliments the Prairie style elements in the Norton House.

**Lookout, 1912. *Contributing***

As part of the original plan of the estate, the Steven firm designed a picturesque wood and stone lookout located on an area of exposed ledge to the north east of the house. It is built against the northern boundary wall, and fieldstone steps lead to the interior on the western side of the building. This small structure is essentially rectangular in form, with a semi-circular bump-out on the south side. The simple physical elements which form the lookout are separated into three distinct and equal layers which create a strong sense of horizontality and visually anchor it to the ledge and landscape. The foundation of the lookout is of irregularly shaped, free-coursed mortared fieldstone, which rises between three and five feet from the surface of the ledge. On the interior of the structure the foundation also forms the low interior wall, upon which are set painted wooden posts wedged to frames of latticework which form view openings to the south, west and east. The rear elevation contains a full wall of latticework into which a diamond shaped lattice design has been formed. Capping the structure is a hipped, wood-shingled roof that extends into a conical shape over the round projection. The overhanging eaves are wide, a feature shared with the Norton House and the stable. Wooden seats and a small table are built into the structure, from which views of Casco Bay are unobstructed.

**Gatehouse**

Located at the edge of the historic district, where the driveway encounters Route 88, the gatehouse is a later addition to the Norton estate. John Howard Stevens was called back to design this utilitarian

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stone structure in 1914. The small rectangular building faces the driveway to the north. Three walls of free-coarsed fieldstone rise directly to the high gabled slate roof, under which exposed rafter tails are displayed on both the eave and gabled ends. A tripartite window is set into the southern wall (offering views of the road to the south) and an oval window is set into each of the gable-end walls. The twelve-light hinged door designed by Stevens has not survived, nor has the similar sash set into the southern window, but the interior seat remains. The gate house is tied into a low, arched stone wall which curves south and west from the building. This wall is mirrored on the opposite side of the driveway, and continues down the drive for approximately 6 feet before terminating on a square pedestal topped with a gate light.

### Landscape

In addition to the pergola, lookout, and gatehouse described above, the Historic District is enhanced by a circular driveway in front of the house beyond which a terraced lawn is slightly raised on a stone retaining wall. At the present terminus of the driveway, between the house and the stable, is a circular stone patio enclosed by a low stone wall, which then continues east towards the edge of the ridge. The ocean side of the structure also features a terraced lawn in addition to the stone and brick patio. The northern boundary of the property is delineated by a high stone wall, into which is set an oval niche with stone benches, and a wooden, gated arbor, designed by Stevens, which connects a path from the kitchen porch to Ramsdell Street to the North. The design of each of these elements are carefully unified throughout the entire property: the horizontal cross piece on the arbor reflects the pergola, while the latticework found in the lookout was visually linked to the laundry-yard surround, as well as the small paned windows set into the French doors and the conservatory. Stone-lined paths and walls connect these exterior elements and set the boundaries of the property, as well as frame several picturesque or directed views of the house, grounds, and the bay.

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or a grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

**Period of Significance**

1912-14

**Significant Dates**

1912

1914

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

**Cultural Affiliation**

**Architect/Builder**

Stevens, John Calvin, (1855-1940) & John Howard, (1879 - 1958)

Parker, Carl Rust, Landscape Architect (1882-1966)

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**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

Name of repository:

Maine Historic Society, Portland, Maine



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**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

For Portland insurance executive Ralph S. Norton, the erection of his new home in Falmouth Foreside in 1912 was a symbol of his success, as well as an evolution away from his rural background. Built on the site of his family's small farm at the edge of Casco Bay, Norton could not have found a better site upon which to erect a house that befitted his economic and social advances. In the first decade of the twentieth century coastal property in the Portland suburbs of Falmouth Foreside and Cape Elizabeth had become the locations of choice for new architect designed homes of the area's professional elite. Following the lead of his neighbors, Ralph Norton secured the firm John Calvin Stevens and John Howard Stevens to design an eclectic Prairie style house on a high ridge overlooking Casco Bay. The estate also included an unusually shaped, Prairie Style stable for Norton's carriages and horses, and surrounding the house were carefully crafted picturesque walks, terraces, ponds, gardens and small structures, which may have been prepared in conjunction with noted Portland landscape architect Carl Rust Parker. The Norton House Historic District is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C as a significant local example of a suburban estate designed by the prominent architectural firm of John Calvin Stevens and John Howard Stevens, along with landscape consultation by Carl Rust Parker.

Ralph S. Norton was a very successful insurance executive with an office in Portland Maine. Born in 1866 in Falmouth, he was a life long resident of the community, and a member of one of its oldest families. Little is known about his early years; by the time he was 14 his father had died; and by 1892 Norton was listed in the local directory as a fruit dealer, a profession that his brother Frank Norton continued later in the decade. In 1895 Ralph was in the insurance business and was working in Portland. The property on which Norton built his house had been in the family for at least forty years. In 1871 a map of New Casco the town post office was located at the residence of S.V. Norton (possibly Ralph's father), and an even earlier depiction of the property, as seen on the 1908 editions of the Coast and Geodetic Survey Map for Casco Bay (with topography surveyed between 1852-1863) indicates the presence of two structures on land that Ralph later owned. Careful examination of the Federal census records (1880, 1900, 1910) and the Federal Agricultural Census in 1880 signal that Ralph's widowed mother ran a small farm on the land in 1880, and that Ralph's older brother Loren was renting the property with his family in 1900. Ralph appears as the head of household on this property in 1910, and although his profession was listed as 'insurance agent', he was also described as living on and owning a farm. Whereas in 1880 seven of Vienna Norton's immediate neighbors were living on farms, albeit small ones, by 1910 only three of these properties retained their agricultural associations. Starting at the turn of the century one of Norton's neighbor's, Eben Ramsdell, started to break up his ocean side property and sell small lots for summer cottages. The Underwood Casino, park and theater just to the north increasingly helped to characterize Falmouth Foreside as a summer resort and in turn the presence of this attraction encouraged the construction of

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several larger, architect designed cottages to the north and south of the Norton property.

There is no indication what became of the house shown on the earlier maps, however, the 1911 survey done for Ralph Norton does show a small house and outbuilding near the ocean, below the lower pond. These structures were accessed by an older road, now truncated and termed Power House Road, on the southern edge of the land. Later maps created by the Sanborn Fire Insurance Company indicate that R.S. Norton owned this small I-shaped house, as well as an automobile garage and another 'bungalow'. In addition, Norton owned a mid-nineteenth century Greek Revival Farmhouse situated on the north western edge of his lot, directly on Foreside Road. His carpenter cousin William P. Norton also lived on Foreside Road, just to the south of Ralph's lot. It is tempting to link Norton's decision to build his stately new home to either the recent availability of suburban public transportation, or the growing popularity of the Foreside area in the summer. However it is just as likely that as Norton chose to build his new home to accentuate his professional success and demonstrate his evolution away from his families agricultural roots. However, this was a gradual transition: photographs of the house just at the close of construction in January of 1913 show fields of dry corn left standing in what became the front yard of Norton's new house.

Although somewhat tangential to the significance of the Norton Historic District, the history of the property is important for developing the background and context of the stable. Among the John Calvin Stevens and John Howard Stevens Collection at the Maine Historical Society are the plans for Ralph C. Norton's house, the outlook, and the gatehouse.<sup>1</sup> In 1913 the firm also drew plans for a three room, hipped roof, Prairie- style poultry house, which has not survived, if indeed it was ever constructed. There are no plans for the stable. An October 1911 survey for Norton contains a rough outline of the house, (in the form of a simple rectangle), stable and hen house all drawn with a thick dark line. Subsequently, the Stevens design for the house was added to the plan (slightly to the west of the rectangle), and the stable and hen house were given hatch lines that match those in the designed house. This suggests that the stable and hen house may predate the Norton house, and be remnants of the earlier Norton farm, although the style and location of the stable suggest that any earlier structure underwent a considerable renovation.

According to research by Earle Shettleworth, "[I]n 1911, Norton asked his friend John Howard Stevens to design a substantial residence on an elevated portion of the site. Stevens responded in March of 1912 with a design that drew its primary inspiration from the Prairie School of architecture that had developed recently in the Midwest. Although the house exhibits characteristic elements of both the Shingle Style and the Colonial Revival, these features are confined within an overall scheme that embodies the spirit of this new American movement." (Shettleworth, p. 148.)

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<sup>1</sup> Additional plans for the house are in the possession of the owner.

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John Calvin Stevens started his career in the office of Francis H. Fassett in 1873, where over the next eleven years his principal design work evolved from Queen Anne to the more regionally grounded Shingle Style. Some of his signature expressions of the Shingle Style were developed after 1884, when he started his own practice, and include the use of an all-encompassing gambrel roof to help order the volume of a house, and the distinctive double side-gable roof, an example of which is incorporated into the Norton House. Between 1881 and 1891, Steven partnered with Albert Winslow Cobb, and produced, along with some of his best Shingle style structures, a book of Steven's work, *Examples of American Domestic Architecture*, which illustrated his most successful structures, including over a dozen ocean side cottages in Maine. After his association with Cobb ended, "Stevens practiced alone from 1891 until his son, John Howard Stevens (1879 - 1958), became a partner in 1904. While John Calvin Stevens continued to work in the shingle style until well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, more formal interpretations of the Colonial Revival came to dominate his work after 1890. By that time he had acquired a national reputation and was the leading architect in Maine. Although residential work had secured his reputation, he also designed other types of building throughout the country. His practice continued until his death." (*Turner, p. 479-80*).

Following in his father's footsteps, John Howard Stevens demonstrated early on a penchant for drawing. After high school he joined his father's practice and while John Calvin Stevens exercised final say over all of the firm's work until his death in 1940, John Howard Stevens produced a number of projects which were entirely of his design and testify to his talents as an architect. Perhaps as a result of the younger Stevens input, the firm's 20<sup>th</sup> century domestic designs show signs of an increasing hybridization of Colonial Revival, Arts and Crafts, and Shingle-style elements. This is seen in the Arts and Crafts interiors of the Charles M. Hays Cottage on Cushing's Island (1900-10) and even earlier in the Gould House on Vaughan Street in Portland (1904), as well as at the Norton House.

The partnership of John Calvin Stevens and John Howard Stevens created one of the best known and most widely respected architectural firms in Maine, and their attention to the organic elements of complimentary siting and material are well known, and in evidence at the Norton estate.

"Completed by the end of 1912, the Norton House was surrounded by attractively landscaped grounds. A picturesque lookout was placed by the northwest corner of the property. With its stone base and shingled hip roof, this structure is reminiscent of the rustic shelters which John Calvin Stevens created in the 1880s for Cushing's Island and the Cape Elizabeth shore. In 1914 Ralph Norton called John Howard Stevens back to design a small gable roofed entrance house on Route 88 as a final touch to his suburban enclave." (*Shettleworth, p. 149.*)

Complimenting and integrating the Stevens' designs are the grounds of the estate. The landscape

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forms, including the walls, gardens and small structures are reminiscent to those done by Hans Heisted, who was working during the same period at coastal cottages in the Camden and Rockport area, however it is not possible to ascertain who was fully responsible for the design of the landscape. The Norton estate was enclosed not in the formal brick and smooth granite of some of the more formal Colonial Revival works of the Stevens firm, (such as the Hyde Mansion in Bath), but in rough and irregular Maine fieldstone, which like the work of Heisted, invokes a relaxed playful relationship with the surrounding environment. For example, the lookout is located atop a ledge outcrop and backs up to the high northern boundary wall, melding comfortably with both to the extent that it appears to undulate from the fabric of the landscape. Also tucked into the stone walls are a curved stone bench and an arched wooden arbor with swinging door. Gently rounded garden beds bend around small grassy terraces, and stone lined paths lead to long lost destinations around the grounds. At the foot of the drive another circular stone walled terrace forms a cozy shaded way station near the sunroom/conservatory. Clusters of mature trees line the stone walls, gather in conversation around the houses and gardens and punctuate the water views from their positions on the lower levels of the terrace. It is known from extant plans that the arbor and outlook were designed by the architects, and that a landscape architect from Portland was involved, at least at one point in the process. Carl Rust Parker was a contemporary of Heisted's whose work in Maine was just one period of a long and successful career in landscape architecture. Parker's involvement is signified on a survey plan for R.S. Norton by E.C. Jordan and Co. Civil Engineers (1911). By turns, both the Stevens architectural office and Parker added to the base plan, outlining first the approximate outlines of the house, stable and hen house and then refining those footprints and adding roads, vegetation, paths and small features. No further information is available to verify that the finished landscape at the Norton estate was the result of Parker's efforts, however some of the features he drew on the preliminary plans are still present within the historic district.

The following brief biography of Parker was produced by the National Park Service at the Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site in Norfolk, Massachusetts.

"Carl Rust Parker was born in Andover, Massachusetts, attended the public schools there and graduated from Phillips Academy in 1901. From 1901 to 1910, he was in the office of Olmsted Brothers, Brookline, Massachusetts as a draftsman, planting designer and supervisor of both construction and planting operations. In the period 1910 to 1917 he had private office in Portland, Maine and Springfield, Massachusetts doing work on private estates, subdivisions and parks, both design and construction....In 1919 he returned to Olmsted Brothers where, as a principal assistant to members of the firm in both the office and field, his work covered a wide range - private estates, subdivisions, industrial plants, town and city planning, parks and recreation areas and cemeteries. In 1950 he became a member of the firm, continuing the same types of work, some as his principal

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responsibility, some in collaboration with others. He retired in 1961. "Some of the more important projects in which he had a special interest were the development of Kohler Village in Wisconsin; Bell Telephone Laboratories New Jersey, plants for the Western Electric Company; the National Cash Register Company; Armco Steel Corporation; the University of Maine; University of Mississippi; Mississippi State University; Parks in Union and Essex Counties, New Jersey; the National Life insurance company; Berkshire Life Insurance Company; Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Company; and George Washington Masonic Memorial." (Marquis).

During his tenure in Maine Parker set up office in Portland, where he advertised "designer parks, playgrounds, private grounds, gardens and land developments. Special attention given to Continued Care of Summer Residents' Property. Construction and Planting plans furnished and work supervised". Among the important commissions that Parker received were the Percy V. Hill House in Augusta, the Blaine House in Augusta (NHL: 66000024) and the Hyde Mansion in Bath (NR: 78000197). He was also active in the Village Improvement movement and designed public and commercial landscapes including a Village Green in Yarmouth and, the New Mount Kineo House on Moosehead Lake (1911), and the Goodwill-Hinckley School in Fairfield. (NR: 87000232). The extent to which Parker was actively involved with the implementation of the landscape design for Norton is not known: a newspaper article from February of 1913 stated that "...Mr. Norton plans to arrange the drives, walks, and planting so as to get the best possible effect", (*Portland Sunday Telegram*, February 16, 1913), but does not mention Parker. However many of the features seen in his preliminary plans survive on the landscape, including location of the front driveway, and the paths through the wall and to the pond, and the road to the shore, yet the existing plans do not mention the stone walls and outlook which feature so pleasingly on the Norton property today.

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### **VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

The nominated historic district is composed of two parcels of land, which are fully defined by the Town of Falmouth tax map U16 lot 80C and U 16 lot 80.

### **BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

As originally constructed, the Norton House and grounds covered approximately four acres, and stretched from Foreside Road almost all the way to ocean on the east. Over time the property was subdivided into seven separate parcels, and four new homes were constructed. The nominated property encompasses the two major structures, (house and the carriage house), as well as the entry gate, gazebo and much of the landscaping that accompanied Steven's plans for the property in the immediate vicinity of the house. The remaining sections of the original lot have lost their integrity and are not included within this Historic District.


# NORTON HOUSE HISTORIC DISTRICT


Cumberland County, Maine

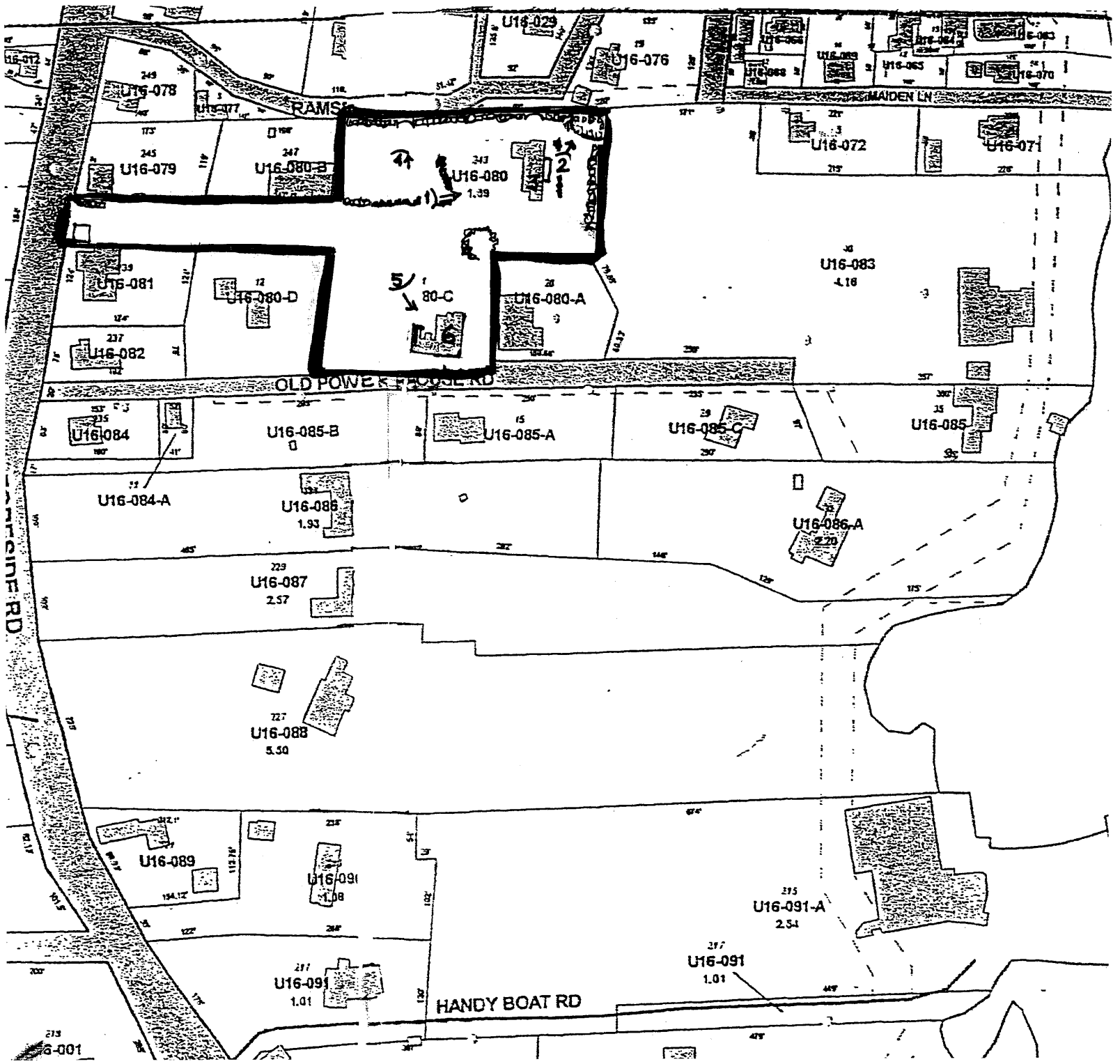
Sketch map based on Town of Falmouth Tax Sheet 162.

October 2003



Boundary of district 

Stone walls or terraces 



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**PHOTOGRAPHS**

Photograph 1 of 6  
Christi A. Mitchell  
Maine Historic Preservation Commission  
30 September 2003  
Norton house: west elevation; facing northeast.

Photograph 2 of 6  
Christi A. Mitchell  
Maine Historic Preservation Commission  
30 September 2003  
Overlook, facing north east.

Photograph 3 of 6  
Christi A. Mitchell  
Maine Historic Preservation Commission  
30 September 2003  
Norton house hall: facing north.

Photograph 4 of 6  
Christi A. Mitchell  
Maine Historic Preservation Commission  
30 September 2003  
Arbor gate and wall, facing north.

Photograph 5 of 6  
Christi A. Mitchell  
Maine Historic Preservation Commission  
30 September 2003  
Norton stable: north elevation, facing southeast.

Photograph 6 of 6  
Christi A. Mitchell  
Maine Historic Preservation Commission  
30 September 2003  
Norton stable interior (hay loft), facing south.