

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

For NPS use only

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

received MAR 28 1984
date entered

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

1. Name

historic MARVIN TAVERN

and/or common MATTHEW MARVIN HOUSE

2. Location

street & number 405 DANBURY ROAD, N.A. not for publication

city, town WILTON N.A. vicinity of

state CONNECTICUT code 09 county FAIRFIELD code 001

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	<u>N.A.</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name TOWN OF WILTON (see attached Continuation Sheet)

street & number 238 DANBURY ROAD

city, town WILTON _____ vicinity of state CONNECTICUT

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. WILTON TOWN HALL

street & number 238 DANBURY ROAD

city, town WILTON state CONNECTICUT

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title STATE REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1983 federal state county local

depository for survey records CONNECTICUT HISTORICAL COMMISSION, 59 S. PROSPECT STREET

city, town HARTFORD state CONNECTICUT

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" 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

Marvin Tavern, built in 1760 by Matthew Marvin V as his home and tavern, is a 2½-story, shingled and clapboarded structure with hipped and gabled roofs located on the west side of Danbury Road (U.S. Route 7) in the Cannondale section of Wilton, Connecticut. The hip-roofed original section displays a mixture of Colonial and Georgian elements, while the gable-roofed rear wing, built c.1840, shows Greek Revival influence, and the L-shaped front porch, built c.1880, has Queen Anne characteristics (Photograph #1). The site comprises 0.6 acre of level, valley-bottom land, a small portion of the original 47 acres, now occupied by Wilton High School, and is bounded on the north by the school's driveway, on the west by the school's parking lot, on the south by lightly wooded school property, and on the east by Danbury Road, beyond which flows the Norwalk River. The surrounding area is semi-rural in character and includes several nineteenth century houses (barely visible) to the north and south, a mid-twentieth century dwelling to the east, and Wilton High School, a modern structure built in 1970.

The tavern is constructed of hand-hewn posts and beams, some of which are supposed to have come from an earlier structure, located closer to the river, on the east side of the highway. The original 2½-story, hip-roofed section, measuring 34 feet by 38 feet in area, rests on a fieldstone foundation, and is covered by wood shingles on the north, south, and east elevations while wood clapboards cover the rear (west) wall (Photographs #2 - 5). The fenestration consists of single windows with a six-over-six pane arrangement. The front (east) elevation shows five narrow bays while the side elevations show only two windows to each floor (Photographs #2 - 4). The hipped roof features bell-cast eaves flaring over an unusual triglyph frieze surmounting the shingled elevations, and a plain frieze above the clapboarded rear elevation. Rising from the top of the roof is the large brick central chimney, capped by a simple soot trap.

The east (front) elevation's first story shows the centrally located Georgian entryway and the full-length L-shaped front porch (Photograph #2). The focus of the entryway is a panelled Dutch door consisting of a cross-hatched lower panel and two arched upper panels (Photograph #6). It is flanked by sidelights composed of six-over-six glass panes located over a wood panel. Framing the door and sidelights are coved pilasters, while a leaded transom with a design of interlaced arcs surmounts the doorway. The front porch extends across the entire length of the elevation and continues along the south elevation, terminating at the lower, side-entry porch (Photograph #1). Turned posts support the porch roof cornice, below which is a frieze decorated with a course of applied, perforated cutwork. Projecting outwards from the top of each post is a curved, molded bracket. Other elements include a stick valance extending below the frieze, small, open curvilinear brackets with scalloped edges supporting the valance, and a stick railing between the posts.

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MARVIN TAVERN WILTON, CONNECTICUT
Continuation sheet Owner of Property Item number 4

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Applicant is KM Associates of 248 Nod Road, Ridgefield, Connecticut, 06877. KM Associates is Lessee under a 30 year lease with Owner and is the sponsor of the renovation.

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WILTON, CONNECTICUT

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Marvin Tavern - Wilton, Connecticut

Title: Eighteenth Century Dwellings in Wilton

Date: 1976 X Local

Depository for survey records: Wilton Historical Society

Town: Wilton State: Connecticut

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Attached to the southern half of the main section's rear wall is the rear (west) wing, a 1½-story clapboarded addition measuring 16 feet by 24 feet in floor area, and featuring a low-pitched gabled roof and two, one-story shed-roofed ells (Photographs #5 and 7). Greek Revival elements characterize this addition and its ells, all of which show prominent wide frieze-boards, molded eaves, and molded cornice returns. The second story shows horizontal six-paned frieze windows at all elevations. The south elevation shows the junction of the rear wing with the original house (Photograph #3). The south ell, measuring 7 feet by 24 feet, extends along the rear wing's south wall, with the ell's roof extending past it, forming a small entry porch sheltering the side entrance to the main (original) section, and connecting to the western end of the higher L-shaped front porch. The entry porch which is supported at its southeast corner by a boxed post (showing base and capital), shows a similar corner pilaster where it adjoins the south ell, and another pilaster where it meets the main section's south wall. Flushboard siding covers the walls under the entry porch's roof, as well as the long horizontal wall between the south ell's roof and the rear wing's roof eaves. Projecting off the rear wing's west elevations is the smaller west ell, measuring five feet by ten feet in area. A rather tall brick end-chimney, its lower portion hidden by the clapboarded rear wall, emerges from the rear wing's roof to the right of its ridge, and is capped by a simple soot trap (Photograph #7).

The interior spaces of Marvin Tavern consist of nine rooms, six in the original section and three in the rear wing. Originally there were eight rooms in the original section, four on each floor, but the two northwest rooms were partially replaced by lavatory facilities and closet space, with the remaining space added to the southwest rooms. The rooms are generally arranged around the massive fieldstone central chimney, in front of which are placed the front entry hall and a staircase. There is a full basement underneath the original section, with a brick oven in the chimney stack, as well as a full attic above the second story. The number and placement of rooms in the rear wing has also varied over the years, at one time including four small rooms on the second story where there is now one large room. Unlike the original section, the rear wing lacks both basement and attic.

The post-and-beam construction of the original section is evident in the exposed posts, girts, plates, and joists of its four front rooms. However, the summer beam, traditionally the largest structural member, is missing from the lower northeast room and the upper southeast room. All exposed posts and beams are heavily flaked, indicating that they were originally covered by plaster (Photographs #12 - 14). The girts get noticeably smaller in the rear rooms and are generally covered by the ceiling's plasterboard. Interior trim is conservative in design, consisting primarily of molded door and window frames, baseboards and fireplace mantels.

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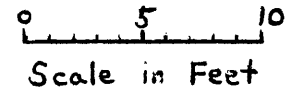
Page 2

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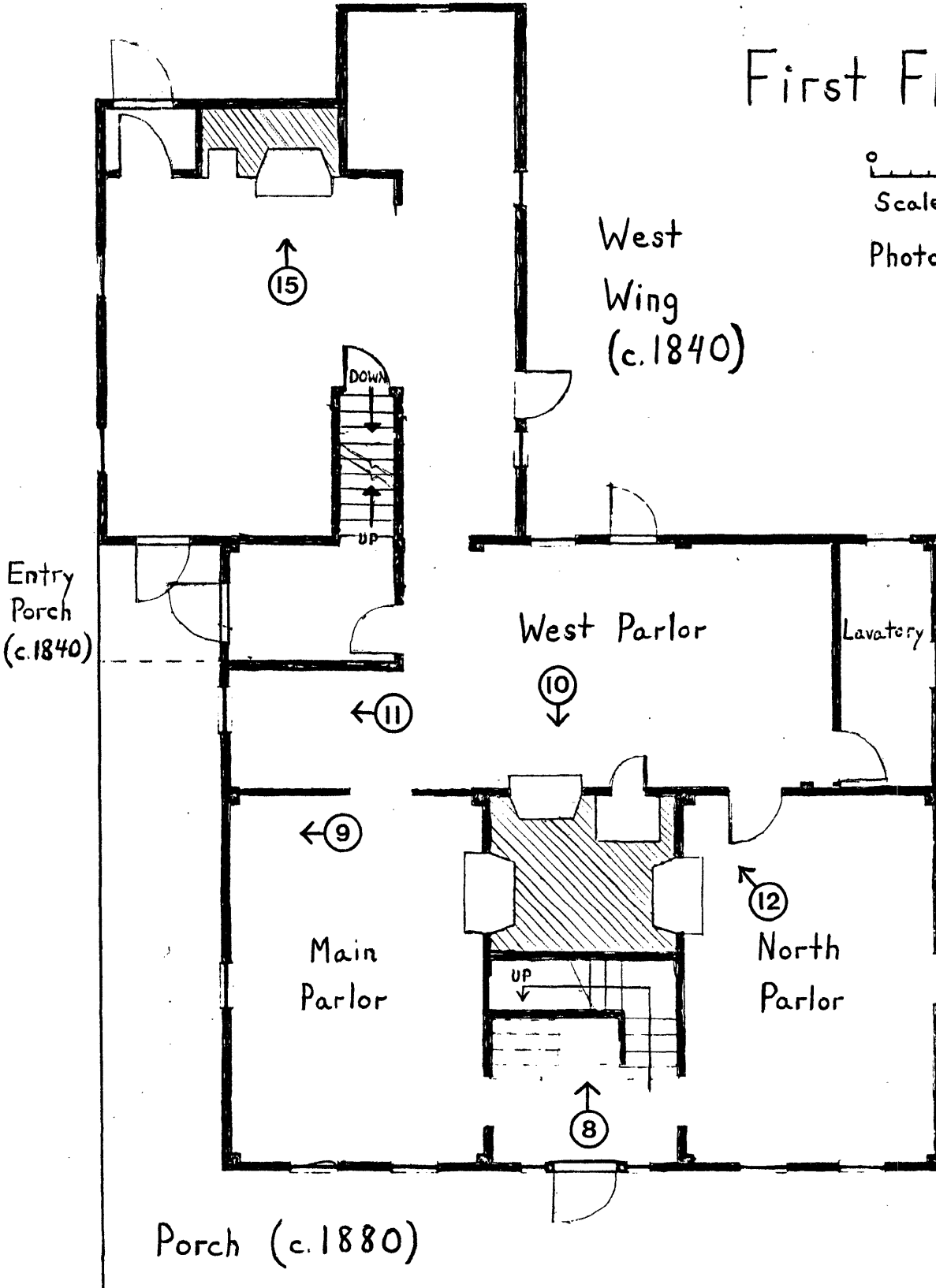
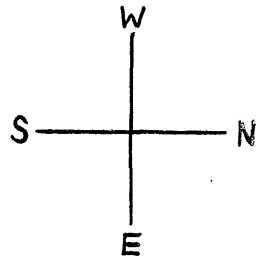
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date entered

First Floor



Photograph Positions ⑧



West Wing
(c.1840)

West Parlor

Lavatory

Entry Porch
(c.1840)

Main Parlor

North Parlor

Porch (c.1880)

Original Structure
(1760)

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The centrally placed front entry hall is dominated by the main staircase on its west wall and the interior of the Georgian doorway on its east wall. The stairway is of the open-well, three-flight variety with open-string stairs ornamented with simple, curvilinear brackets (Photograph #8). The spindle railing shows battered corner and end newel posts and is surmounted by a simple rounded bannister. The interior of the doorway differs slightly from the exterior, showing pilasters that are panelled instead of coved. The south doorway leads to the main parlor (lower southeast room), which features a cinqueglyph baseboard and a molded chair rail (Photograph #9). The north wall shows a restored fireplace with its reconstructed mantel, composed of simple, pedestaled pilasters supporting a plain frieze surmounted by an overhanging mantel shelf. Beyond the west doorway is the west parlor, extending the length of the building from north to south. The focus of the room is its original fireplace and mantel, similar to the main parlor's but larger (Photograph #10). The two windows on the south and west walls, each show a molded panel beneath the sill (Photograph #11). The southwest corner of the room has been walled off as a side entrance foyer, while the northwest corner (originally the northwest room) now comprises a lavatory and closet space. The door opposite this area leads to the north parlor (northeast room), which features its original wide plank flooring, molded chair rail and fireplace mantel (Photograph #12).

The second floor of the original section is noticeably lower in height than the first floor. At the top of the staircase landing is a series of cabinets into which the hall window is set. To the right is the master (southeast) bedroom, which features wide plank flooring as well as a fireplace with a mantel on the north wall. The top of the south window is inset into the southern end girt, emphasizing the low height of the second story, and features a molded frame bordering the end girt's cut-out section (Photograph #13). The exposed posts are flared at the top, but, contrary to the usual practice, are parallel to the plates instead of the girts (Photograph #14). Like the room below it, the west room now extends from the north wall to the south wall and shows a lavatory in its northwest corner. The northeast room, located to the left of the stair landing, features a north window set into the end girt, just as in the southeast room.

The west wing is reached by a hall proceeding from the west wall of the first story's west parlor. It comprises two rooms on the first story and one room on the second story. The larger downstairs room located to the left retains its narrow-width flooring and features a large fireplace with a simple mantel, located on the west wall. The left side of the fireplace shows two cabinets (Photograph #15). The upper story is reached by stairs proceeding from the west wall of the original sections' side entrance foyer. This story's one low room features wide plank flooring, and is accessible to the original section's second story by a short flight of ascending stairs to the east.

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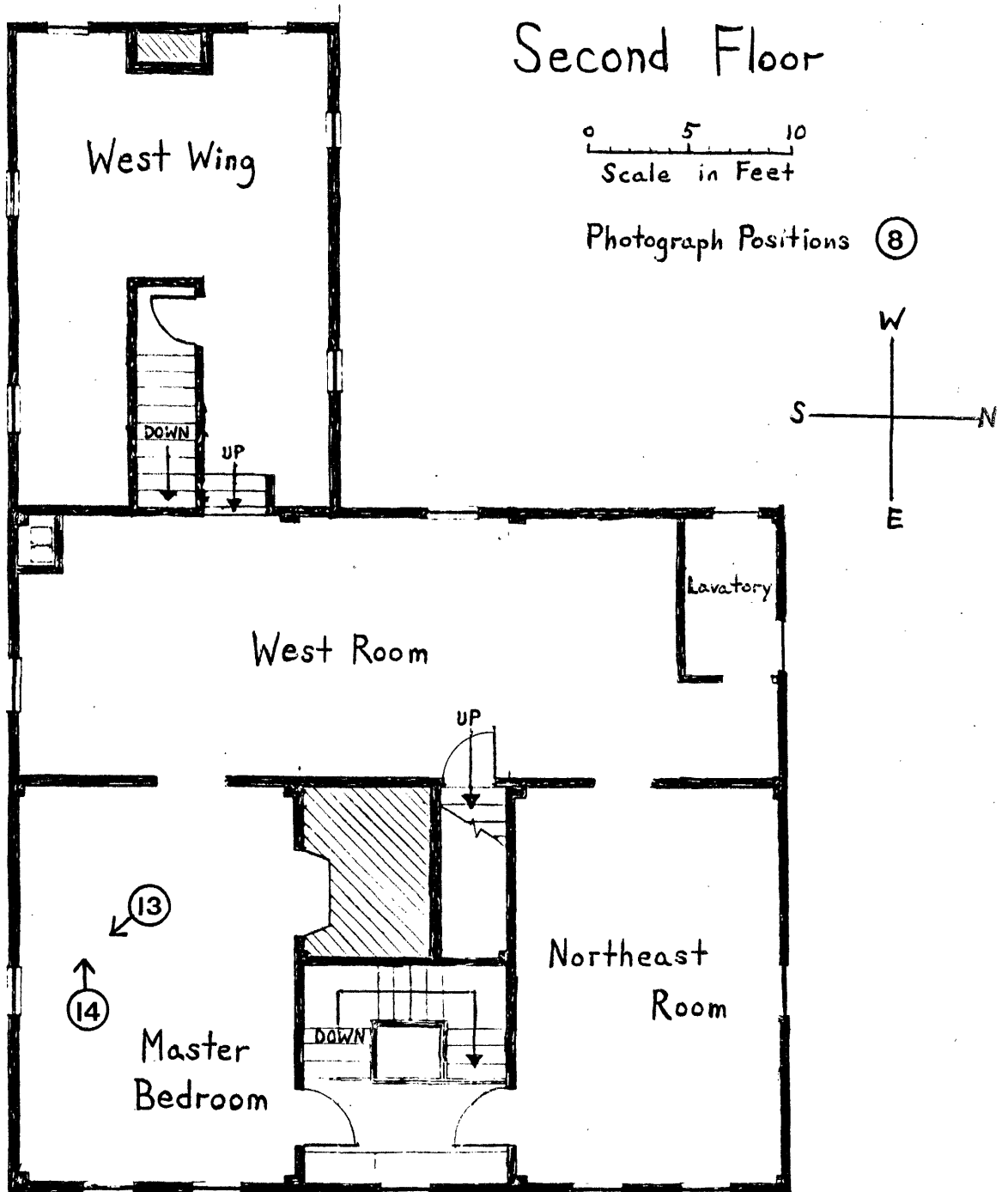
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Proceeding from the east side of the west wing's main room is the staircase descending to the cellar of the original section. The cellar's chief point of interest is the massive fieldstone foundation of the chimney stack, which features an unusually large brick oven measuring five by six feet in area and five feet in height. It was built for the preparation of food for tavern guests, and is accessible by a small rectangular opening in the north side (Photograph #16). Also notable is the pronounced batter of the chimney's inslope.

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/
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
Criteria A, B, C.				Local History
Specific dates 1760, c. 1840, c. 1880		Builder/Architect	Matthew Marvin V (1760 section)	

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Marvin Tavern is significant historically as the birthplace and home of Matthew Marvin VI, one of Wilton's founding fathers, who petitioned the town of Norwalk to cede most of its northern territory to form the Town of Wilton (Criteria A and B). Built in 1760 by his father, Matthew Marvin V, the house was also used as a tavern, making it a prominent local meeting place and traveler's stop during the Revolutionary War (Criteria A). The building is architecturally important as the only one of its kind in Wilton, due to its unusual combination of Colonial and Georgian elements, and shows changing taste in nineteenth-century architecture with its Greek Revival and Queen Anne additions (Criteria C).

Historical Significance

The original section of Marvin Tavern was built in 1760 by Matthew Marvin V (1731 - 1791), who represented the fifth generation of the locally prominent Marvin family in America. The first Matthew Marvin (1600-1687) emigrated from England in 1635 and was "one of the twelve very earliest emigrants whose names are known" of Hartford, Connecticut. In 1650 he moved to Norwalk, becoming one of the ten original settlers of that town. His grandson Samuel was one of the first to settle the Wilton area in 1702, and his great-grandson Matthew Marvin IV acquired eighty acres of land there in 1735, building a house near the present one but closer to the river. The tavern, built in 1760, was supposedly built in part with the timbers of the older house.

The location of Marvin Tavern, on the main highway midway between Norwalk and Danbury, made it an ideal spot for a tavern, traditionally the local meeting place in rural towns. Matthew Marvin V was nominated to be a tavern keeper in 1773 and his house became a prominent local meeting place and traveler's stop. During the Revolutionary War it was especially important for this reason, being frequented by officers of the Continental Army. Marvin was also the local commissioner of supplies during the war and served as a selectman for the town of Norwalk during 1778 and 1779.

His son, Matthew Marvin VI, was born in the house in 1764. He represented Norwalk in the State Legislature between 1796 and 1802, and was among the founding fathers of Wilton, being one of those who petitioned the town of Norwalk in 1802 to cede Wilton parish so that it could become the town of Wilton. Subsequently he served on Wilton's first board of selectmen. He was also a judge in the Fairfield County Court and a deacon in the Congregational Church. He died in 1842.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 0.6

Quadrangle name Norwalk North

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A 18 631400 4563240
Zone Easting Northing

B [] [] [] [] [] [] [] []
Zone Easting Northing

C [] [] [] [] [] [] [] []

D [] [] [] [] [] [] [] []

E [] [] [] [] [] [] [] []

F [] [] [] [] [] [] [] []

G [] [] [] [] [] [] [] []

H [] [] [] [] [] [] [] []

Verbal boundary description and justification

The nominated property is described in volume 384, Pages 17 and 40 of the Wilton Land Records.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state 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 Prepared By

name/title Nils Kerschus - edited by John Herzan, National Register Coordinator

organization Preservation Development Group date July, 1983

street & number 96 Main Street telephone 324-9317

city or town Stamford state Connecticut

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

___ national ___ state local

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 *[Signature]*

title Director, Connecticut Historical Commission date March 20, 1984

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

[Signature]
Keeper of the National Register

Entered in the
National Register

date 4/26/84

Attest:

Chief of Registration

date

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Charles Marvin (1803-1883), Matthew V's son, also served on the Wilton Board of Selectmen, and represented the town both in the State Assembly and the State Senate. In addition, he was the director of the Fairfield Bank and a trustee of the Norwalk Savings Society. His son Samuel represented the eighth generation of the Marvin family in America, and the last to live in the house, dying in 1889. His widow Sarah sold the family homestead to William Wood of New Haven. The property changed hands rather frequently over the next forty years, being owned at one point by a nursery and at another by a restaurant. In 1933 it passed into the DeBenigno family, who owned it until 1969 when it was sold to the town of Wilton, which built its high school on the property and demolished the barn which stood to the northwest of the house. Today, Marvin Tavern is still owned by the town but leased to KM Associates, which has restored it and converted the interior spaces for office use.

Architectural Importance

Marvin Tavern displays a combination of Colonial and Georgian elements that is unique in the town of Wilton and rare elsewhere in Connecticut. Its most notable Colonial elements consist of the massive central chimney, the huge basement oven, and the position of the staircase in front of the chimney. Superimposed on this basic Colonial theme are several Georgian elements which set the house apart from contemporaneous structures: the hipped roof, the Georgian entryway, and certain areas of wood trim. Hipped roofs of this age are very uncommon in Connecticut; they usually appeared after 1800. Even more unusual are the roof's flaring eaves, possibly a Dutch influence. The beams of the roof are hand-hewn, indicating that they are probably original since they predate the establishment of sawmills. The wooden wedges nailed on top of the beam ends to create the roof's flaring eaves also seem to be original since several still show strips of bark. The front entrance with its sidelights and traceried transom is comparable to other Georgian entrances of this era, but also has a unique character due to its Dutch Door, another uncommon feature in this area. The most notable trim element is the triglyph frieze, also very rare in Connecticut before 1800. Interior trim of note includes the main parlor's cinqueglyph baseboard, an interesting echo of the exterior frieze, and the large panelled sills of the west parlor.

The Greek Revival addition is more conventional in appearance but is significant for the acute attention to detail lavished on it: even its shed-roofed ells feature prominent frieze boards and cornice returns. The more recent Queen Anne style porch is also a good example of its genre, particularly for its applied cutwork frieze. The wood shingles covering the front and side elevations apparently date from a nineteenth-century remodelling in which they replaced the original clapboard covering, including watertable and cornerboards. This alteration probably took place at the same time when the front porch was being constructed.

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Kelly, J. Frederick, A.I.A.,
The Early Domestic Architecture of Connecticut
New York: Dover Publications, Inc.
(Unabridged and unaltered republication of the work
first published by Yale University Press in 1924)

Marvin Tavern file.
Wilton Historical Society

Wilton, Town of
Land Records

Wilton, Town of
Tax Assessor's Records