

Supplementary Listing Record

NRIS Reference Number: SG100000955

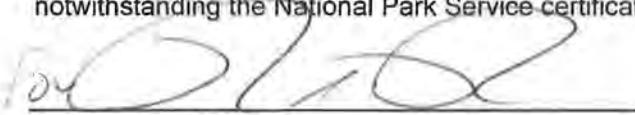
Date Listed: 5/8/2017

Property Name: Foster, Stephen and Helen, House

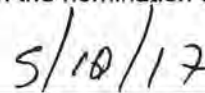
County: Litchfield

State: CT

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



Signature of the Keeper



Date of Action

Amended Items in Nomination:

The documentation presented does not support a period of significance that extends to 1934 (the year the last significant change was made to the house). A more appropriate POS for both Criterion A (association with important local events and trends) and Criterion C (embodies distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction) is 1845-1875. This date range includes all important modifications to the house and commercial/transportation developments in the village of West Cornwall.

The CONNECTICUT SHPO was notified of this amendment.

DISTRIBUTION:

National Register property file

Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

56-935

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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any 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.



1. Name of Property

Historic name: Foster, Stephen and Helen House

Other names/site number: N/A

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

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

2. Location

Street & number: 417 Sharon Goshen Turnpike

City or town: Cornwall State: CT County: Litchfield (005)

Not For Publication:

Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

 national statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A B X C D

<u>Mary B. Dunne, Deputy SHPO</u>	<u>3-17-17</u>
Signature of certifying official/Title:	Date
<u>CT State Historic Preservation Office</u>	
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

In my opinion, the property <u> </u> meets <u> </u> does not meet the National Register criteria.	
_____	_____
Signature of commenting official:	Date
_____	_____
Title :	State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

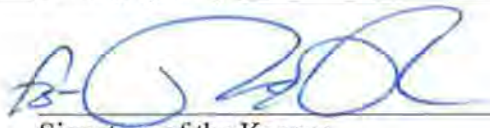
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4. National Park Service Certification

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:)



Signature of the Keeper

5/8/17

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

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u> 2 </u>	<u> </u>	buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u> 2 </u>	<u> 0 </u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling
DOMESTIC/ barn/blacksmith shop

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

VACANT/NOT IN USE
DOMESTIC/single dwelling

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE VICTORIAN:

Italianate

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Foundation: Stone: granite block

Walls: Wood: clapboard

Roof: Metal, Asphalt

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Stephen and Helen Foster House (Foster House) is a two-story, stately wood-frame residence constructed in multiple phases during the mid-nineteenth century with funds generated by rural merchants. The building is a physical expression of the wealth generated in town during the antebellum period and retains modest-design Italianate details completed by locally prolific designer-builder Cyrus William Marsh (Marsh). It consists of three sections, including a three-bay by three-bay, two-story, hip-roofed main block completed by 1859; an earlier four-bay-by-two-bay, one-and-one-half-story, gable-roofed block constructed circa 1845; and a one-story, gable-roofed side ell containing storage space and a privy, constructed during the early 1870s. The entire building is sheathed in wood clapboard and rests on a granite block foundation. The hipped roof is standing seam metal and the gable roofs are sheathed with asphalt. Located at 417 Sharon-Goshen Turnpike, the house is an integral part of the historic streetscape that forms the spine of West Cornwall, a compact village that developed around one of the town's multiple industrial nodes. The Town of Cornwall is part of Litchfield County, which encompasses the northwest corner of Connecticut. The community has a both rich nineteenth-century industrial heritage and a scenic rural quality. The Foster House faces north toward the road and occupies the front half of

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a 0.7-acre lot situated in a block of buildings between the railroad line to the east and the Cornwall covered bridge (NR listed in 1975) over the Housatonic River to the west. The terrain slopes down from the railroad toward the river. A gable-roofed, wood-frame barn constructed in the early nineteenth century (possibly as a blacksmith shop) is located southwest of the house on the rear edge of the lot. The barn was converted into a residence in 1997, but retains its original massing and is counted as a contributing building. The house is located on its original site and maintains its historic relationship to the main road, railroad, and river. It has its Italianate style design and craftsmanship, along with the majority of its original materials. The house maintains its appearance and association as a mid- to late-nineteenth-century rural residence of a prosperous local citizen.

Narrative Description

Setting

The house faces north toward State Route 128/Sharon-Goshen Turnpike, the main thoroughfare in West Cornwall (Figures 1 and 2). Views from the Foster House are of the core of West Cornwall village. Directly to the home's west is the Covered Bridge of West Cornwall that spans the Housatonic River. Across the street from the house and to the west is the original toll house of the town. The adjacent building to the east (415 Sharon-Goshen Turnpike) is the former store associated with merchant Stephen Foster. The Greek Revival style residence of Foster's business partner, Russell Pratt (413 Sharon-Goshen Turnpike) is located on the east side of the Housatonic Railroad line (Photos 1 and 2, Figure 3).

The Foster House property is compact, with informal vegetation along its periphery. The land slopes gently from east to west, but the front lawn is generally flat. The house is set back about 30 feet from the road and is accessed by a brick walkway (Photo 3). A wood fence with sections of picket hung between posts extends across the front lawn and was installed in 2014. A low, granite block wall lines the east edge of the property and has steps leading to the adjacent store building. The barn to the southwest of the house is accessed from the back yard and is oriented perpendicular to the house.

Exterior

The Foster House currently appears as a modest-design Italianate style residence that consists of two main rectangular blocks and a utilitarian ell that is set back from the façade on the west end of the building (Photos 3-7). The house was originally constructed between 1842 and 1845 as a one-and-one-half-story, Greek Revival style building with a side gable roof. This section of the building now forms the west half of the house and is located between the 1859 addition and the 1870s ell. It retains its original four-bay by two-bay massing, but the Greek Revival features are no longer extant on the exterior, with the exception of corner pilasters that are exposed on the west elevation (Photos 5-7) and a door surround on the south (rear) elevation (Photo 5). The north wall of the 1845 wing is flush with that of the 1859 wing to the east and the entire façade is unified by elaborate Italianate trim and a one-story, full-width porch. During the 1859 modifications to the

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house, the height of the original 1845 roof was raised, as evidenced by the existence of two frames visible from inside the attic (Photo 13 and 17). The design of the roofline is consistent around the entire house. It consists of widely overhanging eaves supported by scroll-sawn paired brackets, a wide, plain fascia, and continuous bead-and-reel molding (Photo 9). The 1845 wing has shorter windows although the sill heights align, and a smaller door surround, but the surrounds are the same design as those on the 1859 wing (Photos 3 and 8). The foundations of both sections of the house are also the same, even though they were constructed about 14 years apart. The entire house rests on a foundation of lime mortared granite fieldstone that is capped with large granite block visible from the exterior. It is not known whether the floor height of the original foundation was raised to match the 1859 wing. Each section of the house has a main entrance on the façade, which are adjacent to each other (Photo 8).

The two-story Italianate addition built by Cyrus William Marsh in 1859 is characterized by its boxy shape, wide frieze, overhanging eaves, decorative double brackets, and a hipped roof (Photos 3-5 and 8-9). The current roof dates to the early twentieth century and replaced a lower original hipped roof. It is metal standing seam and has a hipped roof dormer on each slope. Marsh altered the pitch of the gable roof on the adjacent 1845 Greek Revival section in order to incorporate the wider Italianate eaves and added a wide frieze and double brackets to the structure. This east portion of the house measures three bays by three bays and has a nearly square plan. The main entrance is located on the west side of the façade and a secondary entrance is located on the east end of the south (rear) elevation.

The majority of the windows in the house are single and consist of rectangular openings with two-over-two, double-hung wood sash. The windows and doors have elaborate surrounds with sawn trim that terminates in a scroll pattern near the sills (Photos 8 and 10). The top of these openings feature a course of bead-and-reel molding between the casing and an exaggerated lintel. Both main entrances contain a solid oak door with paired, oval recessed panels. The door on the 1859 wing has a taller surround with a divided transom and slender side lights. Some of the windows on the south (rear) elevation retain exterior wood shutters (Photos 4-6).

The full-width porch across the façade has a flat roof supported by square piers with molded capitals and rectangular bases. Recessed panels ornament the shaft of each pier. The porch roof overhang has smaller paired brackets and molding similar to the paired brackets on the cornice of the house. The paired brackets along the porch are located above the supporting piers and between supports. They are attached to a continuous beam cut to match the profile of the brackets. The porch piers are located at every other paired bracket resulting in an open space where a pier would typically be located (Photo 9). This is a unique design feature and may be the result of using pre-cut components for construction (Photo 3 and 8). A less ornate one-story porch, with Doric style piers, extends across the south (rear) elevation of the 1845 wing and is original to that section of the house (Photos 5 and 6). An enclosed porch is located at the junction of the two wings on the south elevation and appears to have originally been screened, rather than enclosed with solid walls (Photo 5). The foundation under the main portion of the house does not extend under this porch.

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The ell attached to the west side of the house is a simple wood-frame structure with a fieldstone foundation, but no basement. It is sheathed in the same clapboard as the rest of the house and has an asphalt-clad gable roof (Photos 6-7). The east side of the ell is open to the yard on the south elevation and presumably functioned as storage space. At the west end of the ell, a flight of simple wood stairs lead to an interior privy with a total of four seats. A partition wall separates two pairs of seats. Fenestration on the ell is minimal but includes small, six-over-six, double-hung windows on the west elevation.

Interior

Overall, the house has two distinct plans. The west side of the house displays the original 1845 Greek Revival hall and parlor floor plan, with the exception that there is one fireplace on the dividing wall and one on the end wall. The east side of the house is the 1859 two-story Italianate addition with a side hall plan. The house contains a total of 3,418 square feet and 13 rooms, including five bedrooms and three bathrooms. The west ell on the house functioned as an attached outbuilding and is not included in the total square footage. Its principle access is from the exterior.

The original 1845 section of the house has interior decoration reminiscent of earlier American building styles, such as chamfered ceiling joists. The main entrance opens directly into the parlor, which has one of the home's three classical marble fireplace surrounds on its west wall (Photo 11). To the south of the parlor is a very small kitchen, originally part of a porch that Marsh added with the Italianate addition. It was enclosed and turned into a kitchen, probably sometime during the twentieth century. On either side of the marble fireplace on the west wall are doors that lead to the original kitchen. The west wall of the kitchen has a large brick fireplace with traditional cooking fireplace, beehive oven and original wood lintel (Photo 12). A staircase on the south wall provides access to the second floor. A door on the west wall, to the south of the fireplace leads to the 1871-1874 ell addition, the furthest western point of the house. This ell contains an indoor privy with four seats.

This section of the house was partially destroyed by fire in 2008. The fire started in the cooking fireplace. Most of the damage from the fire is located on the west side of the second floor above the 1845 kitchen, near the top of the stairs. On the second floor of the 1845 wing, there are three northern facing bedrooms and one south-facing bathroom with a center stairway that leads to a full attic in the adjacent 1859 wing. Both the original 1845 and 1859 roof frames of the west wing of the house are intact and visible in the attic (Photo 13).

The main entrance to the east, 1859 wing opens into a long hallway with an elaborate, curved Italianate style staircase (Photo 14). The original plaster and lathe wall construction, ornate crown moldings with ten foot high plaster ceilings and original wood floors sitting directly on structural beams immediately distinguish it from the Greek Revival structure. The floor plan is similar to Downing's square suburban cottage as found in his 1850's work *The Architecture of Country Houses* (Downing 1850). The main hall opens into a front parlor to the east, which section of the house has another of the classical marble fireplace surrounds as well as four, large elaborately

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trimmed windows (Photo 14). A smaller parlor to the south houses windows of the same design with an even smaller room to the west that was renovated into a kitchen (Photo 15).

Up the stairs and to the north is a small sitting room with one large window. There is a large bedroom with the third of the house's classical marble fireplace surrounds to the east. Off that room to the south is the second bathroom. Another bedroom is off the hall to the south, with a third bathroom. This entire section is connected through a short hall to the original 1845 wing. The two areas are separated by a door. Sometime after 1973, the house was used as a two-family residence, which may have necessitated the two kitchens and the separation. The attic located below the hipped roof is accessible from the attic of the 1845 wing and retains evidence of the earlier 1859 roof design (Photo 17).

Barn

A one-and-one-half-story, wood-frame barn dating to the early nineteenth century is located southwest of the house and currently faces east (Photo 18). The barn was reportedly built as the village blacksmith shop, but was converted into a two bedroom apartment in 1997. The barn has an asphalt-clad, gable roof and vertical board siding. Shed-roofed, one-story lean-tos extend from the north and south elevations. A gable-roofed cupola with louvered sides and a weathervane are located on the roof ridge. The doors and fenestration pattern of the barn have been altered. On the east elevation, a former barn door opening now contains French doors with side lights and another pair of glazed double doors is located to the north. A bay window is located at the attic level. The original form of the barn is visible from the exterior. The interior of the barn was not accessible during the preparation of this documentation, but the property owners confirmed that it retains some framing members of a post-and-beam or braced frame, with pit saw marks. Since the barn expresses retains the majority of its original form, a portion of its historic materials, and remains in its original location, it expresses its historic association as an outbuilding to this property. As such, it is counted as a contributing building.

Integrity

The Foster House remains on its original location in the center of West Cornwall and is an integral part of the historic village there. Its setting within the village and relationship to the Foster store, rail line, and river contributes to the understanding of the house's historic associations. The design of the house as updated in 1859 is highly intact, with the exception of the historic additions of the ell in the early 1870s and replacement of the roof in the early twentieth century. In 2008, the west side of the house suffered a fire at the junction of the 1845 section and ell. This caused the loss of a portion of the cornice on the west elevation of the 1845 wing and damage to the interior finishes along this west wall. The majority of the building however, including the entire 1859 wing retains almost all of its original ornament and finishes. Marsh's craftsmanship is apparent on the elaborate exterior and interior trim, casings, and moldings. The interior also contains the original plaster and lathe walls, hardwood floors, Italianate staircase, paneled doors, and marble mantels. The Foster House is expressive of its associations with the mid-nineteenth century economic boom in West Cornwall and as a rural example of an Italianate residence.

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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.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

ECONOMICS

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Period of Significance

ca. 1845-1934

Significant Dates

1859: Completion of Italianate style addition and updates

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Marsh, Cyrus William

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Foster House is significant under Criteria A and C at the local level for its associations with the rise of West Cornwall village as an affluent node of commercial activity during the mid-nineteenth century and for its expression of local economic prosperity through the use of Italianate architecture. The property meets Criterion A in the areas of Community Development and Economics. Cornwall's premier merchants acquired ownership of this property immediately after the extension of the Housatonic Railroad line to this rural area in 1842, which enabled the transport of local agricultural and industrial goods to external markets. Merchant Moses Lyman of the local firm Lyman and Porter purchased the house in 1846, approximately one year after its construction. Railroad contractor Stephen Foster (1818-1863) commissioned the expansion and redesign of the Foster House after acquiring it in 1858, with funds he amassed through his local enterprises. He served as the co-owner of Pratt and Foster, a local mercantile business that generated the majority of commercial activity in West Cornwall during the mid-nineteenth century. Pratt and Foster bought out their competitors, Lyman and Porter in 1858. The house is adjacent to an extant building at 415 Sharon-Goshen Turnpike that functioned as Pratt and Foster's store and is approximately 100 feet from the railroad line that Foster helped establish through the town. Under Criterion C, the Foster House is significant as one of the town's two most elaborate residential examples of the Italianate style and for its association with prominent local builder, Cyrus William Marsh. The other example is the Major General John Sedgwick House at 52 Hautboy Hill (NR Listed 1992). The Italianate style became fashionable in Cornwall during the peak of West Cornwall village's economic boom and represents a distinct moment in the town's aesthetic trends because the preceding Greek Revival style had greater local longevity.

The period of significance extends from 1845, the approximate construction date of earliest section of building to 1934, when the last major alteration to the house was completed. This period encompasses the Foster family's ownership of the property from approximately 1858 to 1879 and the gradual decline of West Cornwall's railroad-supported economic prominence by the end of nineteenth century. The Foster House meets the National Register criteria individually, but could also contribute to a potential West Cornwall National Register historic district.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Criterion A

Areas of Significance: Community Development and Economics

The development of the Foster House is directly associated with the establishment of West Cornwall as an important village center during the mid-nineteenth century and illustrates the pattern of wealth generated from rural industry in the northwestern region of Connecticut at the time. The establishment of the Cornwall Iron Company in 1832 and the introduction of the

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Housatonic Railroad to Cornwall in 1842 catalyzed the town's economic development. Stephen Foster was the contractor responsible for the Deep Rock Cut just south of West Cornwall that enabled the railroad to come to the area; and construction of the earliest section of the Foster House occurred approximately three years later (Anonymous map, 1842; Cornwall Land Records, 1846).

Commercial trade grew considerably during the first half of the nineteenth century throughout northwest Connecticut (Litchfield County) as the construction of turnpike and railroad systems made the transfer of goods within local, regional, and foreign markets feasible. Five major turnpikes were established through Cornwall from 1799 to 1806, including the Sharon-Goshen Turnpike in 1803, where the Foster House is located (Rossano 1997, 27). The nearby Cornwall Bridge over the Housatonic River was erected in 1806, further enhancing accessibility to West Cornwall. With an abundance of iron ore, river-based water power, and fertile soil in Litchfield County, country markets were already emerging by the early 1800s. Approximately 100 local stores existed in village centers throughout the county by 1815 and the amount of residential development rose around them (Rossano 1997, 35). Transportation connections amplified this mercantile business as regional trade increased and the foreign exchange of goods became possible. Rural merchants in the area purchased surplus agricultural goods as well as products from local foundries and other industrial concerns, then sold a variety of goods on account, including items from Europe and the Caribbean (Rossano 1997, 35).

In 1836, residents of the Housatonic River Valley petitioned the Connecticut legislature for the creation of a railroad along the Housatonic River. According to the petitioners, the county was in poor economic condition due to its distance from urban centers. The railroad would provide valley residents with new markets for their surplus farm goods and lumber like Bridgeport, Connecticut and New York City. Within a year, the Housatonic Railroad began construction of a line from Bridgeport to the Massachusetts border, which took place in two phases. After reaching New Milford in February 1840, construction halted while company executives looked for solutions to both the increasingly rough physical terrain, and the railroad's mounting financial woes. New York's *Commercial Advertiser* noted that work restarted nine months later when the company found a contractor willing to take on the project. According to historian Theodore Sedgwick Gold, railroad contractor Stephen Foster "was the first one in the construction of the Housatonic Railroad to break ground north of New Milford", which was done at the Deep Rock Cut, near West Cornwall (*History of Litchfield County*, 1881). This cut provided the single greatest impetus for economic growth to the area (Historical Records of Cornwall, Gold, 1904).

The leading mercantile businesses in Cornwall during the early to mid-nineteenth century were the partnerships of Moses Lyman and John P. Porter; and Russell Pratt and his brother-in-law, Stephen Foster (Rossano 2000, 29). On April 7, 1846, Moses Lyman purchased the property at 417 Sharon-Goshen Turnpike with the original section of the Foster House on it, from Jeresiah Dean (Cornwall Land Records, 1846). Several negotiations regarding the transfer of this land parcel occurred after the opening of the railroad in 1842 and it is not known exactly which owner constructed the original house on the site. A circa 1842 map of this vicinity shows some houses in the vicinity, but this parcel as undeveloped (Anonymous map, circa 1842). Moses Lyman VI (1810-1883) originated from the nearby community of Goshen where multiple generations of his family were

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engaged in farming and mercantile business.¹ His father was engaged in regional livestock markets in the 1790s and established a store in Goshen in 1792. The elder Moses Lyman (V) maintained a commercial partnership with his brother Erastus Lyman from 1802 until about 1827 (Hibbard 1897, 362). Moses Lyman VI established a business with John P. Porter in Goshen in 1842 using the store previously occupied by Moses (V) and Erastus Lyman. Lyman and Porter also purchased the building at 415 Sharon-Goshen Turnpike in West Cornwall in 1843, which they operated as a store until 1850 (Hibbard 1897, 363). According to a history of Goshen, Moses Lyman VI subsequently “. . . became interested in the manufacture of Salisbury pig iron, and was one of the organizers of the Hunts Lyman Iron Company of Canaan, and in later years of the Cayuta Wheel and Foundry Company of Waverly, N. Y.” (Hibbard 1897, 240). An 1854 map of Cornwall depicts John P. Porter as the resident of the house at 417 Sharon-Goshen Turnpike (Fagan 1854). Moses Lyman sold his West Cornwall property to Pratt and Foster on March 31, 1858 (Cornwall Land Records, Settlement of Russell Foster estate, 1879).

In addition to Foster’s role in securing railroad service, he possessed business connections in New York City that helped him connect local farmers with new markets for their surplus dairy products. Stephen Foster and Russell Pratt established their business in 1841 to purchase and resell local agricultural and industrial goods (Rossano 2000, 29). After he helped open upper Litchfield County to the railroad, Stephen Foster, “a man of pleasing manners, great industry, indefatigable energy, and shrewd in his business plans” (*History of Litchfield County*, 1881) strategically opened his business along the railroad tracks in West Cornwall with Pratt. Russell Pratt was the son of Chalker Pratt, an agent of the Cornwall Iron Company (Rossano 2000). He resided up the street from Foster in a Greek Revival house at 413 Sharon-Goshen Turnpike.

Initially, residents of the Housatonic River Valley hoped to ship resources like lumber south toward coastal cities. After beginning with lumber, Pratt and Foster focused on shipping local dairy products, primarily butter and cheese, to places like New York. They soon found immense success. The firm sold some local produce in their store as well as dry goods, groceries, lumber, grain and feed. Their feed business had a mill run by water that was later replaced with steam. Pratt and Foster also owned a paper mill with Noah Hart and M. D. P. Smith that burned in 1846. They bought out Lyman and Porter and dominated business in West Cornwall. The partnership essentially acted as middleman for the town of Cornwall; using their location along the railroad, the two men transported farm products to locations like New York City, and in exchange shipped exotic items like plaster, coffee, lemons, gin, annatto and clams to their store in West Cornwall. This business model was emulated throughout the Housatonic River Valley.

Farmer Seely Hart regularly listed the hundreds of pounds of cheese he traded with Pratt and Foster, sometimes as much as 730 pounds at a time, in exchange for items like molasses. Pratt and Foster’s business helped transform West Cornwall into a bustling commercial center and they contributed to the availability of luxury goods in the community (Town of Cornwall Historical Records). Foster’s expansion and addition of extravagant Italianate style ornament to the Foster

¹ Based on descriptions of the Lyman family in the *History of the Town of Goshen* (Hibbard 1897, 240-241, 363, 488-490), it is assumed that the Moses Lyman associated with this property in West Cornwall is Moses Lyman VI, who lived from 1810 to 1883.

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House in 1858-1859 is a direct reflection of the financial success of both Foster and the community. By 1850, the village of West Cornwall encompassed an ironworks; several factories manufacturing building materials such as tin sheet, sash and blinds, turned wood products, and furniture; two doctor's offices, two stores, a hotel, railroad depot, and several houses (Rossano 2000, 35-36).

Stephen Foster died on March 10, 1863 at the age of 45. His widow, Helen Foster, remained on the property. Helen Foster's contributions to West Cornwall are not known. Following the Civil War, however, rural and rail-supported industry in Litchfield County began to decline. The local iron industry waned after the introduction of the Bessemer process to the United States in 1863 and increasing competition from the iron and steel industries in the Midwestern region of the country.² The Cornwall Bridge Iron Company based in West Cornwall village ceased operations in 1892 (Rossano 2000, 46). Helen Foster died in 1875 and her son, Russell P. Foster sold the house on January 30, 1879 to Frank Reed (Cornwall Land Records, Settlement of Russell Foster estate, 1879). Prior to the transfer of the house out of the Foster family, Helen Foster added the west ell and privy onto the house (West Cornwall Insurance Company, 1871-1874). The house changed hands many times after Helen Foster's tenancy ended in 1879. A substantial increase in the property's value from 1931 to 1934 indicates that the current metal standing seamhipped roof with hipped roof dormers was installed during this time. The roof dormers are visible on a 1934 aerial map (UCONN –MAGIC 2015). The house continued to be a centerpiece of town up to and including 1954 when John Denny bought the house from Mary Sturges. John Denny was best known as the moderator of the "Town meeting of the Air" a radio broadcast fashioned after Roosevelt's fireside chats. Denny ran the house as the Covered Bridge Inn. In 1957 John Denny asked John and Elyse Harney to run the Inn. They did so for two years. On Friday nights the train would arrive in West Cornwall from New York City and such notables as cartoonist and writer, James Thurber, artist, Rose Algrant and Rachel Brecht would stay at the Inn.

Criterion C

Area of Significance: Architecture

The Foster House is locally significant under Criterion C as a key example of Italianate design in Cornwall and as one of few extant buildings that represents the work of prominent local builder, Cyrus William Marsh. Most of the historic buildings located in West Cornwall village date from approximately 1825 to 1875 and reflect the area's economic boom through their age, use of fashionable design, and quality materials. The period of popularity for the Italianate style in Cornwall is distinct and its initial introduction in the community in the 1840s was overshadowed by a long-standing preference for Greek Revival design. Cornwall has hundreds of surviving examples of Greek Revival style buildings, with the largest concentration located in the village of West Cornwall (Rossano 2000, 40-42). The original section of the Foster House, which was purchased by Moses Lyman, was completed in the Greek Revival style. Most Italianate style

² Alexander Lyman Holley of Lakeville, Litchfield County, Connecticut purchased rights to the Bessemer process for use in the United States in 1863. The process allowed for the inexpensive mass-production of steel from molten pig iron.

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buildings in town were erected during the 1850s and 1860s, at the same time that the Gothic Revival style gradually gained local momentum. Throughout Litchfield County, proprietors of the region's early nineteenth century ironworks who expressed wealth through their residences, remained consistent in their preference for the classically inspired Federal and Greek Revival aesthetics largely until 1850 (Rossano 1997, 53-58).³ Stephen Foster commissioned master carpenter Marsh (1824-1899) to build the square, two-story east wing onto his house and update the whole building in the Italianate style, after acquiring the property in 1858.

The Foster House is one of three intact examples of work attributed to Marsh in Cornwall and represents the tradition of skilled, local designer-builders in New England who perpetuated design preferences popularized through widely circulated building manuals and pattern books. It possesses many design elements characteristic of the Italianate style, which remained common in the United States from 1840 to 1885. The 1859 section of the Foster House is a simple hipped roof (square-plan) subtype of the style, with the typical three-ranked façade. Other Italianate elements present throughout the exterior include the widely overhanging eaves supported by paired scroll-sawn brackets on a wide frieze; a full-length, bracketed front porch; and tall two-over-two windows with frame trim. The trim around the windows and doors have a thick profile and terminate in a scroll shape near the sill. The continuous course of bead-and-reel molding at the roofline around the entire house that is repeated above exterior lintels is consistent of Italianate style treatment, but is also a trait of Marsh's work as seen in the Major General John Sedgwick House (Figure 4).

On the interior, the main stair displays the Italianate style through its turned balusters and the newel post, which has a solid, curved newel and a riveted, faceted shaft atop a ringed base. The stringer decoration has a sawn leaf-scroll pattern (Photo 14). Similar Italianate style stair elements appeared in publications such as the subsequent *Woodland's National Architect* (1869). Thick-profiled trim typical of the "heavy" detail of the Italianate style is extant on the interior in crown molding and casings. The expense spent on the house is evident in the existence of trim throughout the house, including the rear and second floor spaces. It is unknown whether Marsh had any prior experience building in this style, as the Foster House is the earliest known example of his work in Cornwall. Marsh would have likely consulted architectural pattern books, especially Andrew Jackson Downing's 1850 work *The Architecture of Country Houses*, which were spreading the popularity of Italianate designs during this era.

Cyrus William Marsh was born in 1824 in Goshen, Connecticut. Around 1840 at the age of sixteen, he began his trade as a house joiner. Marsh married Elizabeth Florilla, originally of Canaan, Connecticut. Very little information remains of Marsh except a photo donated by his granddaughter Elizabeth E. Marsh to the Cornwall Historical Society. Besides the Foster House, two other extant Cornwall buildings are attributed to Marsh, including the Major General John Sedgwick House at 52 Hautboy Hill Road (NR Listed 1992) and the John Thomas Andrew Carriage House at 7 Pine Street (now the Cornwall Historical Society) (Rossano 2000, 43). Marsh

³ The nationally published work of house wright and architect Asher Benjamin (1773-1845) who was from Hartland Connecticut, contributed to the Federal and Greek Revival design preferences in the state during the early nineteenth century.

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completed the Foster House renovation about one year before the Sedgwick House, which was constructed from 1859-1860. In 1859 General Sedgwick responded via letter to his sister's recommendation that he hire Marsh as a builder by saying that Marsh does good work, but his taste in design is a "bit too extravagant" (Sedgwick papers, 1859). This is a possible reference to the Foster House at 417 Sharon Goshen Turnpike that was just finished. Another clue to the connection of Marsh and the Foster House was the discovery of his initials "C.W.M ----" found on the base of one of the square porch piers by the present owner, Jim Herity and Colby W. Shove.⁴ The artistic value of the elaborate trim detail in both homes is indicative of Marsh. The brackets, frieze, soffits, cornices and window moldings in particular show the artistic value of this master builder. Similarities between the cornice brackets on the Foster and Sedgwick houses are visible in the photo below. Sedgwick's letters regarding the design of his house include a mention of Allen Lewis Falley's pattern book, *Rural Architecture*, but no other direct match has been identified with a specific pattern book design (Ransom 1992, 8-3). Marsh's affiliation with the Andrews Carriage House (constructed circa 1865) is assumed, but has not been verified (Rossano 2000, inventory form #95).

⁴ Elizabeth Mitchell, Re: National Register Nomination, e-mail message, July14, 2016

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9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

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Beers, F.W. Map of Cornwall in *County Atlas of Litchfield, Connecticut*. New York: F.W. Beers and Company, 1874.

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Starr, Edward C. *A History of Cornwall Connecticut*. New Haven: The Tuttle, Morehouse & Taylor Company, 1926.

University of Connecticut Libraries Map and Geographic Information Center - MAGIC. 2013. "1934 Connecticut Aerial Photography Index." Accessed October, 2015. http://magic.lib.uconn.edu/mash_up/1934_aerial_index.html.

Wilford, Charles H. Survey Map, July 20, 1954. On file, Drawer 1, Map Number 71, Cornwall Town Hall.

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 # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government

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University

Other

Name of repository: Cornwall Historical Society, Cornwall, CT

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): Inventory No. 160, *Historic and Architectural Resource Survey of Cornwall, Connecticut* (Rossano 2000).

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 0.71

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees)

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 41.871397 Longitude: -73.362264

2. Latitude: Longitude:

3. Latitude: Longitude:

4. Latitude: Longitude:

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

1. Zone: Easting: Northing:

2. Zone: Easting: Northing:

3. Zone: Easting: Northing:

4. Zone: Easting: Northing:

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Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundaries correspond to the property limits of Lot 3 as shown on the Town of Cornwall's Assessor's Map Number 71. These boundaries are shown on Figures 2 and 5.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundaries include the full extent of the residential historic resources associated with the Foster House at this location. This nomination is specific to the Foster House and does not extend to the entirety of West Cornwall village, which it is part of.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Elizabeth Mitchell, owner and Ryan Bachman, Cornwall Historical Society intern. Additions and edits by Jenny Scofield, CT National Register Coordinator.
organization: Property owners with assistance from Cornwall Historical Society
street & number: 340 River Road
city or town: West Cornwall state: CT zip code: 06796
e-mail: libby.mitchell60@gmail.com, jimherity@live.com, bachmanryan88@gmail.com
telephone: 203-536-1712
date: March, 2017

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

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GRAPHICS



Figure 1. Location of the Foster House, 417 Sharon-Goshen Turnpike, Cornwall (Source: Google Earth, 2015).

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Figure 2. Location of Foster House, showing parcel lines.

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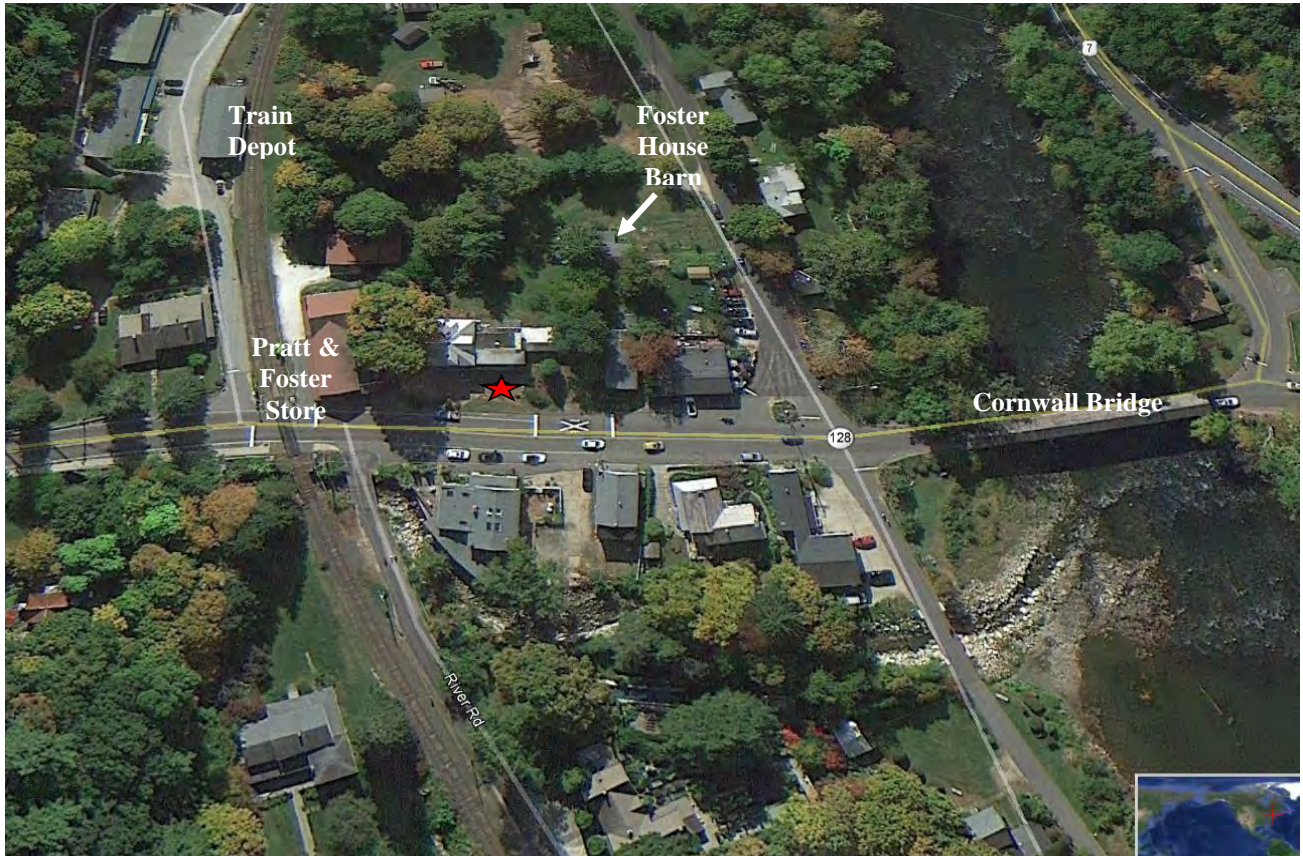


Figure 3. Aerial map oriented south (source: Google Earth, 2015).

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417 sharon-goshen tpk



General Sedgewick House



Figure 4. Comparison of trim and bracketed cornice on Cornwall houses designed by Cyrus William Marsh, 2015.

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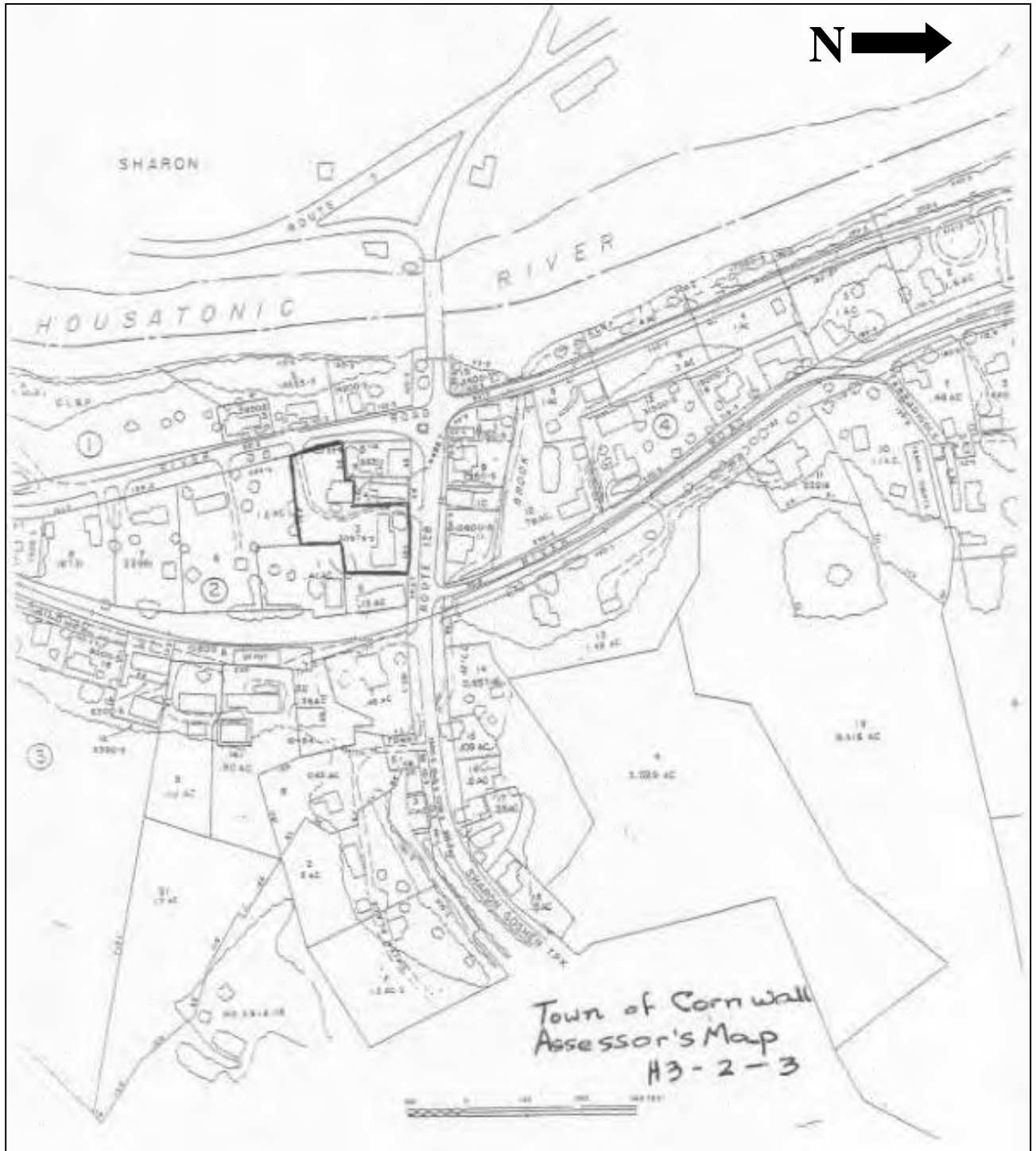


Figure 5. Town of Cornwall Assessor's Map H3-2-3, showing Foster House property outlined in black.

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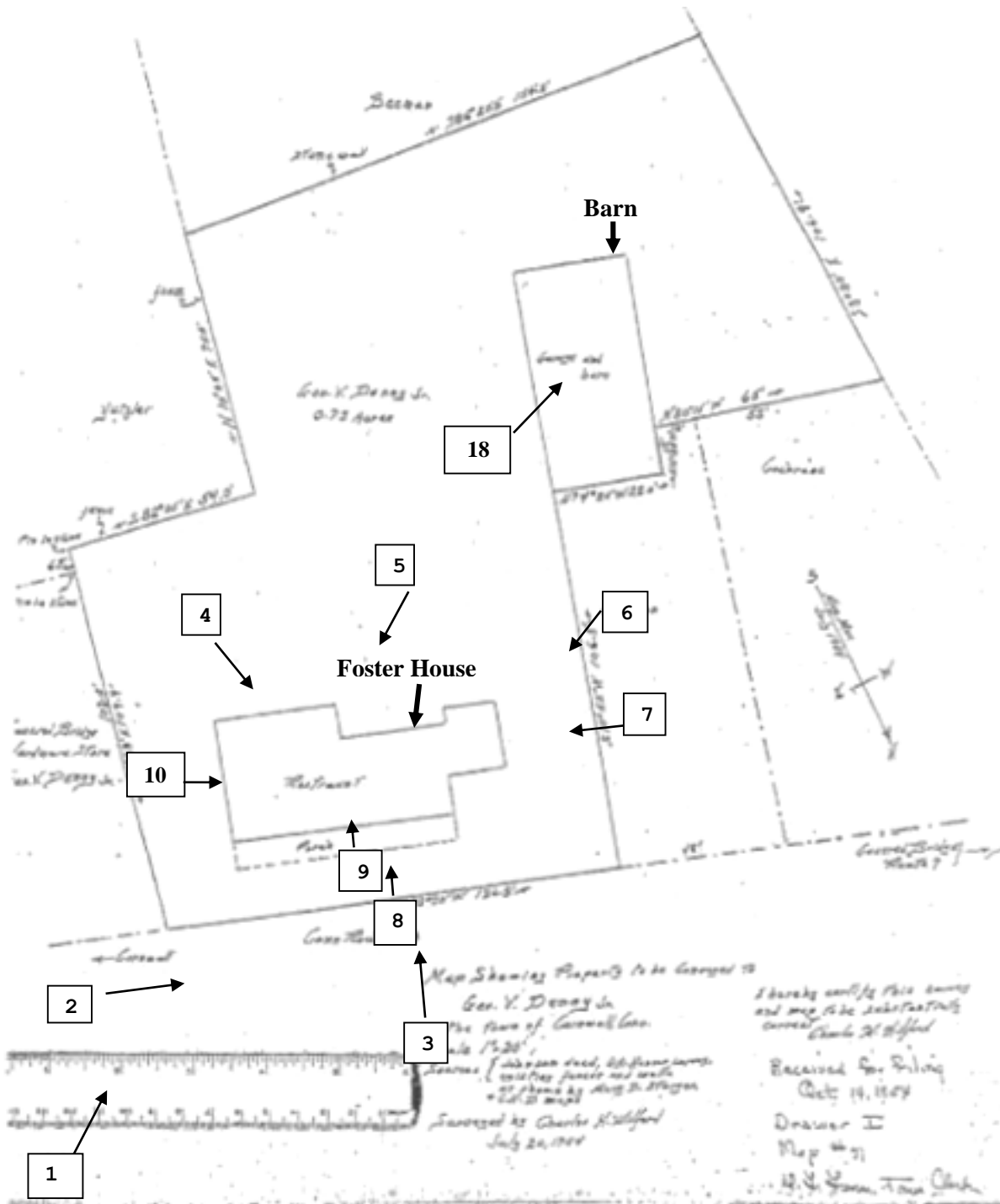


Figure 6. Site plan of 417 Sharon-Goshen Turnpike with key to exterior photos.

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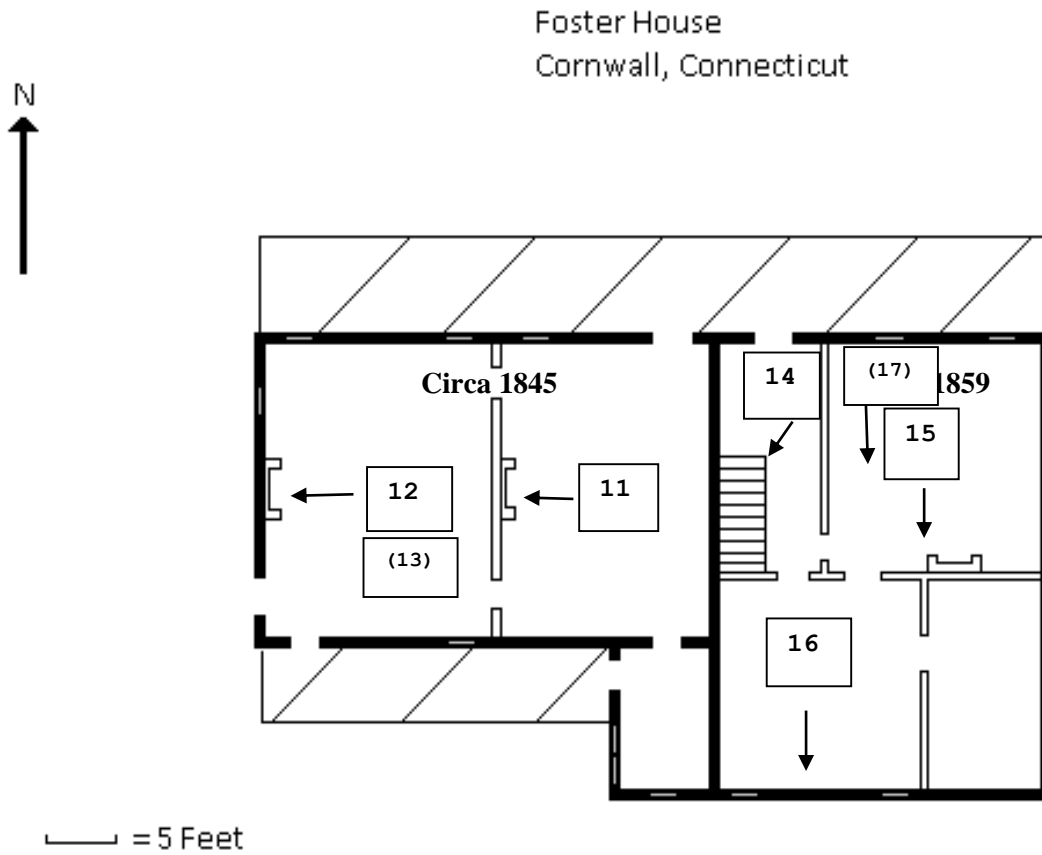


Figure 7. First floor plan of Foster House (façade to top of page; west ell not drawn) with key to interior photos. Note: (13) and (17) in attic.

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Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Foster House

City or Vicinity: Cornwall

County: Litchfield

State: Connecticut

Photographer: Jim Herity

Date Photographed: October 10, 2015

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

1 of 18. View of Foster House within setting of West Cornwall village, showing Foster store and railroad to right. Camera facing south.

2 of 18. View of West Cornwall village. Camera facing west toward Cornwall Bridge.

3 of 18. Façade of Foster House. Camera facing south.

4 of 18. East and south elevations of 1859 section of Foster House. Camera facing northwest.

5 of 18. South (rear) elevation of Foster House. Camera facing north

6 of 18. South (rear) elevation of Foster House. Camera facing northeast.

7 of 18. West elevation of Foster House, showing ell. Camera facing east.

8 of 18. Detail of entrances on façade. Camera facing south.

9 of 18. Detail of brackets and trim on façade. Camera facing south.

10 of 18. Detail of window on east (side) elevation. Camera facing west.

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- 11 of 18. View of parlor in 1845 section of house. Camera facing west.
- 12 of 18. View of kitchen 1845 section of house. Camera facing southwest.
- 13 of 18. Detail of roof framing in 1845 section of house. Camera facing southwest.
- 14 of 18. Main stair in 1859 section of house. Camera facing southwest.
- 15 of 18. View of front parlor in 1859 section of house. Camera facing southeast.
- 16 of 18. View of dining room in 1859 section of house. Camera facing east.
- 17 of 18. View of attic in 1859 section of house. Camera facing south.
- 18 of 18. Foster House Barn. Camera facing southwest.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

















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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:

Property Name:

Multiple Name:

State & County:

Date Received: Date of Pending List: Date of 16th Day: Date of 45th Day: Date of Weekly List:

Reference number:

Nominator:

Reason For Review:

Accept Return Reject Date

Abstract/Summary
Comments:

Recommendation/
Criteria

Reviewer Roger Reed Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2278 Date

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : No see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.

TOWN OF CORNWALL

P.O. Box 97, Cornwall, CT 06753
(860) 672-4959 Fax (860) 672-4068
cwselectmen@optonline.net

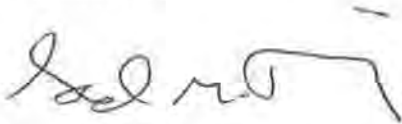
November 23, 2015

State Historic Preservation Board
State Historic Preservation Office
One Constitution Plaza
Hartford, CT 06103

Dear State Preservation Board:

At its November 17, 2015 meeting, the Cornwall Board of Selectmen authorized me to write you to convey the Town's strong support of Elizabeth Mitchell's and Jim Herity's application to list the Helen Foster House at 417 Sharon Goshen Turnpike on the National Register of Historic Places. They have been hard at work trying to restore this unique and important property to its former glory. I urge you to act positively upon their application.

Sincerely,



Gordon M. Ridgway
First Selectman

GMR/jh
Cc: Elizabeth Mitchell
Jim Herity

March 17, 2017

Mr. Roger Reed
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
1201 Eye Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20005



Subject: Stephen and Helen Foster House, Litchfield County, Connecticut, National Register
Nomination

Dear Mr. Reed:

The following National Register nomination materials are submitted for your review:

- Printed cover sheet
- Letter of Support
- CD of National Register text. The enclosed disk contains the true and correct copy of the nomination for the Foster House to the National Register of Historic Places.
- CD of Digital Photographs

This National Register nomination was approved by the Connecticut State Historic Preservation Review Board (SRB) on December 7, 2015. The photos included in this submittal are the same as those viewed by the SRB at the meeting. The SRB requested that the outbuilding be counted as a contributing building; this edit is reflected in the final nomination.

One letter of support from Gordon Ridgway, First Selectman was received. Cornwall is not a CLG community, so no CLG forms are included.

If you have any questions, or if this office can be of assistance, please call Jenny Scofield at 860-256-2766.

Sincerely,

Jenny Scofield,
National Register Coordinator, CT SHPO

Enclosures