

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	NOV 20 1979 DEC 03 1979
DATE ENTERED	MAR 20 1980

80000357

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site

AND/OR COMMON

Val-Kill

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Violet Avenue (State Route 9-G)

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Hyde Park

VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

25

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

New York

Dutchess

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

OWNERSHIP

STATUS

PRESENT USE

DISTRICT

PUBLIC

OCCUPIED

AGRICULTURE

MUSEUM

BUILDING(S)

PRIVATE

UNOCCUPIED

COMMERCIAL

PARK

STRUCTURE

BOTH

WORK IN PROGRESS

EDUCATIONAL

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

SITE

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

ACCESSIBLE

ENTERTAINMENT

RELIGIOUS

OBJECT

IN PROCESS

YES: RESTRICTED

GOVERNMENT

SCIENTIFIC

BEING CONSIDERED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

INDUSTRIAL

TRANSPORTATION

NO

MILITARY

OTHER:

4 AGENCY

REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: (If applicable)

North Atlantic Region

STREET & NUMBER

15 State Street

CITY, TOWN

Boston

VICINITY OF

STATE
Massachusetts

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Dutchess County Clerk

STREET & NUMBER

22 Market Street

CITY, TOWN

Poughkeepsie

STATE
New York

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

None

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT
 GOOD
 FAIR

DETERIORATED
 RUINS
 UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
 ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site is located on Route 9G, or Violet Avenue, in Hyde Park, Dutchess County, New York, in the Hudson River Valley nearly equidistant between Albany and New York City, approximately two miles east of the Home of Franklin Delano Roosevelt National Historic Site. The site contains 180 acres, primarily fields, woods, and wetlands, five major buildings and other features. Access to the site is via a dirt lane lined with stone fences and a wooden bridge over the Fall Kill, a stream which runs through the Hyde Park-Poughkeepsie area.

Other manmade features include the U-shaped Val-Kill Pond which the Roosevelts formed by damming the Fall Kill with wooden flashboards set in concrete sidewalls beneath the bridge. Upstream parts of the pond have been silted in. A second, smaller pond, used by John Roosevelt to water sheep (1962-1970), lies near the Caretaker's House and post-dates the significant historic period (1924-1962).

The western half of the property is low, relatively flat and open while the eastern half is hilly and densely forested. There are also tree plantations planted by Franklin D. Roosevelt as experimental plots. Among the trees are paths and trails including a loop trail east of the stone cottage. These paths were enjoyed by Mrs. Roosevelt both for walking and for riding. The sites of Nancy Cook's vegetable and flower gardens remain as do various trees that were given to Mrs. Roosevelt as gifts.

The original site leased to Eleanor Roosevelt, Nancy Cook and Marion Dickerman by Franklin D. Roosevelt was approximately 2.5 acres. The current property is approximately 180 acres. These 180 acres were part of the 825-acre tract bought by Mrs. Roosevelt and her son, Elliott, from the Franklin D. Roosevelt estate after FDR's death in 1945. Mrs. Roosevelt retained at least 250 acres until her death in 1962. The current grounds include the following structures:

1. Eleanor's House (The Factory) (No. HS1)

Eleanor's house was originally constructed in 1926 to house Val-Kill Industries, a "country industry" founded by Eleanor Roosevelt, Marion Dickerman, and Nancy Cook and directed by Nancy Cook.

From 1927 until May 1936, skilled craftsmen reproduced Early American furniture using fine woods and hand finishes in the factory building. The business was expanded to include metalwork and a forge was installed. In 1936 after the demise of the enterprise, Eleanor remodeled the interior into living quarters for herself and her secretary, Malvina Thompson.

The original utilitarian two-story, 25' x 50' factory had one-half inch stucco over cinder block exterior walls and a gabled roof on both the main building and the garage wing.

This now forms the central part of Eleanor's house. The upper windows are six-over-six double-hung metal casements. The roof was shingled with creosote impregnated cedar and the stucco exterior has several coats of white lead and linseed oil paint. The interior contained a large shop on the first floor, a second, smaller shop above the garage, a three-room apartment, several closets and washrooms, and a dormitory.

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

SPECIFIC DATES 1924-1962

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Henry Toombs

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Val-Kill, more than any other residence, was the home of Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt. From 1924 until her death in 1962, she spent as much time at Val-Kill as her commitments allowed. During this time she developed and refined her approach to social and political issues. Val-Kill offered her a refuge from public life for family gatherings, a place for self renewal, and an informal setting to entertain and confer with world leaders. It was where Eleanor and two close friends translated their political convictions into action by founding a rural industry.

"Val-Kill is where I used to find myself and grow" Eleanor Roosevelt said later in life. "At Val-Kill I emerged as an individual."

Some of the physical remains at Val-Kill are intimately related to both her private life and her public leadership in humanitarian causes which made her an outstanding American woman of the twentieth century.

After her husband's death in 1945, Mrs. Roosevelt acquired the Val-Kill buildings and 225 acres of land. After turning the Home of Franklin D. Roosevelt over to the government in 1946, the house at Val-Kill (HS1), formerly the factory, became her principal home. "For myself," she wrote, "I knew I would live in the cottage that I had made out of my furniture factory... The cottage was an adjunct to our lives at Hyde Park but it was mine and I felt freer there than in the big house." Out from under the shadow of her husband, she emerged during this later period (1946-1962) as the prominent woman of American politics.

In 1952 Eleanor retained about 250 acres. Val-Kill was used for family activities as well as a gathering place for Eleanor's friends and associates, such as members of the American Association for the United Nations, politicians, and labor leaders. Groups of students, both foreign and domestic, came to picnic and to talk with Mrs. Roosevelt. She gave a picnic annually for 150 boys from a nearby home for delinquent boys. When foreign dignitaries visited the States, they would arrive in Washington, DC, then visit the United Nations, and then many would travel to Hyde Park to pay their respects at Franklin D. Roosevelt's gravesite and visit with Eleanor at Val-Kill; Nikita Khrushchev and Marshall Tito were two such prominent visitors. During these years this remarkable woman served as a United States delegate to the United Nations where she chaired the Human Rights Commission, worked on refugee problems and women's issues, and earned a bipartisan praise for her international goodwill and unofficial position as a world diplomat.

The site contains two main buildings of primary historical significance, the factory and the stone cottage. The factory housed Val-Kill Industries which represents Eleanor's

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Davis, Kenneth S. Invincible Summer. New York: Atheneum. 1974
 Lash, Joseph P. Eleanor and Franklin. New York: W.W. Norton & Co. 1971

The Years Alone. New York: W.W. Norton & Co. 1972
 Roosevelt, Eleanor On My Own. New York: Harper & Bros. 1958

This I Remember. New York: Harper & Bros. 1949
 Torres, Louis. "Historic Resource Study." National Park Service, Nov. 1978
see continuation

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 180 acres
 UTM REFERENCES

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

UTM NOT VERIFIED

note: these are replaced by new UTM's dated 2/25/80

A	18	591900	4624040	B	18	591880	4623060
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C	18	591600	4623040	D	18	591080	4624760
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

see site plan

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Bronwyn Krog, Preservation Historian

ORGANIZATION

North Atlantic Region, National Park Service

DATE

2/28/79

STREET & NUMBER

15 State Street

TELEPHONE

223-3778

CITY OR TOWN

Boston

STATE

Massachusetts

12 CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

YES

NO

NONE

See enclosed xerox copy for signature. Done

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

In compliance with Executive Order 11593, I hereby nominate this property to the National Register, certifying that the State Historic Preservation Officer has been allowed 90 days in which to present the nomination to the State Review Board and to evaluate its significance. The evaluated level of significance is National State Local.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE

Asst. Dir., Cultural Resources

DATE

11/15/79

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

W. Ray Juce

DATE

3/20/80

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST

Lynn A. Beebe

DATE

March 18, 1980

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

for

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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The main structure had a basement in which Nancy and Marion had a vegetable storage bin of wood and cinder blocks installed. The shop areas had unfinished walls and oil-stained floors whereas those of the living areas were stained, shellacked and waxed.

Additions to the factory were planned and executed during the industries' greatest growth period up until 1930. The first small addition, later a bedroom in her secretary's apartment, was in place by June 1928 and housed a mortise machine and possibly a woodturning lathe. A one-story wing built later that year was used originally as an enlarged finishing room and later became Nancy's showroom and photography studio for the Val-Kill Industries catalog. When the shop closed in 1936, it was converted into a caretaker's apartment. A loading platform was built between the two additions which later became the kitchen porch of Malvina Thompson's apartment.

The third and largest addition was a two-story expansion of the shop built in mid-to-late 1929. A large, open ground floor was used for woodworking and the second story provided new finishing space. In 1934 the work area for the forge was installed in what later became Eleanor's living room. Originally, the two-story addition was a separate building and it was probably joined when Eleanor converted the factory into her home.

In On My Own, published in 1958, Mrs. Roosevelt describes the building as containing a small apartment for the caretakers, two living rooms, a dining room, seven bedrooms, a dormitory for young guests, two large porches downstairs, and a sleeping porch upstairs. An excellent set of photographs of the interior of her apartment were taken several days after she died in 1962. The building today has been converted into four apartments although many of the historic interior finishes remain.

2. The Stone Cottage (No. HS2)

The stone cottage was built during 1925 and completed in early 1926 as a rural residence and retreat for Eleanor, Nancy and Marion who each paid a share of its cost. It was designed by Henry Toombs of McKim, Mead and White of New York with significant assistance from Franklin Roosevelt. Roosevelt's interest in the Dutch architecture of the Hudson River Valley prompted him to take an active interest in the design. He also acted as contractor.

The stone cottage is an L-shaped, one-and-one-half story structure with gabled roofs and an end fieldstone chimney built of local fieldstone in conformance with traditional design. The ridgepole of the wing is set a foot lower than that of the main house. Its three bays have six-over-six double-hung sash windows with white-painted batten board shutters. The rafters and other wood trim are from trees cut on the property. The roof is covered with asbestos shingles. On its northwest slope is a clapboard gabled dormer with two narrow windows. On the southwest is a glazed lean-to porch which overlooks the pond. The cottage's windows and recessed doorway are capped with flat-headed arches of vertically set rough-cut stones and the sills are single stone slabs.

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The first floor interior had a living room with a ceiling open to the rafters and a massive fieldstone fireplace with a stone mantel. Also on the first floor were a bedroom, a dining room that was designated but not used as a shop, a bathroom, a kitchen and pantry. The second floor contained another bedroom, a bathroom, and hallway space.

In 1936-37, Nancy and Marion made some major structural changes extending the kitchen a few feet, adding a large room with a fireplace, and a bathroom to the first floor and enlarging the second floor bedroom with a dormer. The addition was clapboarded. An enclosed brick patio with outdoor cooking hearth was installed adjoining it.

John Roosevelt added a dormer and a laundry room to the cottage sometime after 1950. He also enclosed the porch with a low stone wall and windows. Otherwise, the building has been little altered since 1937.

3. The Playhouse (No. HS3)

The playhouse was built in 1928 near the Factory as a three-car garage and tool storage space. In 1936 the structure was adapted as the new workshop for the forge. In 1941 the Roosevelts converted the space into a playhouse where they held square dances and other social events. In later years the structure was used as an office by Elliott Roosevelt, as an apartment for Eleanor's driver, Tubby Curnan, and finally was converted into a three bedroom home by John Roosevelt.

The playhouse is a long, one-story clapboarded building with a shallow sloped roof covered in asbestos shingles. The windows are six-over-six double-hung sash in wood frames.

4. The Dollhouse

The Dollhouse is a small, one-story wood frame clapboarded structure located between the tennis courts and the pond. Originally located near the tennis court at the Home of Franklin D. Roosevelt, it was moved in 1945 or 1946 to Val-Kill for Mrs. Roosevelt's grandchildren. It has three bays, a tin hipped roof, a flat roofed portico supported by round wooden columns, and six-over-six double-hung sash windows. It was used in later years as a small apartment for a Roosevelt nursemaid.

5. The Swimming Pool

The original swimming pool, the first manmade addition to the Val-Kill site, was underway by August, 1924. It was 50' x 25', had concrete sides and bottom, and ranged from 4' to 6' in depth. This pool, which no longer exists, was fed from the Fall Kill. In 1935 as a result of a doctor's warning that the pool might endanger the president's health, a new pool was built.

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The new pool was designed by a well-known engineer, M. Hasbrouk, and was situated southeast of the cottage. It was 51' x 20', and ranged from 3'8" to 9' in depth. The plant equipment recirculated the water from a nearby spring four times per day.

6. The Stable-Garage

Eleanor, who had been riding in Washington, decided to build a stable at Val-Kill in 1935. Designed by H. A. Osthagen, the utilitarian concrete block structure was erected in 1937. It has a salt-box roof and three overhead garage doors. Inside were an upper apartment, four stalls, a corridor, a feed storage room, a tack room and stairwell. A garage was added later. Eleanor kept her favorite horse, Dot, stabled there and John Roosevelt later kept horses there.

7. The Tennis Court

The tennis court was installed in 1950 under the supervision of Earl Miller. The double court has a 6" gravel base and is blacktopped in two courses, 2" in depth, with an additional surface. There are backstops of wire mesh intertwined with vines and the courts are in a deteriorated condition. John Roosevelt has stated a badminton court was removed in 1960 to make way for Eleanor's garden.

8. The Stone Barbecue

The stone barbecue is built of rough fieldstone masonry and was used during the frequent picnics held at Val-Kill. A 3' metal relief figure of a boy eating a frankfurter hung on the stack for nearly two decades.

Eight additional structures as listed below and numbered on enclosed map #1 exist within the National Historic Site. With the exception of structure #4, the wooden garage; structure #6, the tool shed; and structure #7, the potting shed; the structures post-date Eleanor's occupancy and are not part of the historic scene.

Curnan House is a wooden structure built in mid-1960's as residence for Charles Curnan, Val-Kill superintendent c. 1946-to 1970. The building is one story with full basement (now a workshop for the National Historic Site), livingroom, two bedrooms, kitchen, bath, foyer, and a 14' x 10' heated porch. It is not of the historic period.

Structure #1, located next to Curnan House, is a wooden structure, built in mid-1960's, and used as a chicken coop. It is not of the historic period.

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Structure #2, located on the west side of Curnan Road, was built in the mid-1960's as a pheasant coop/pen. The interior has roosts along one wall and "pigeon" holes along the opposite wall. It is not of the historic period.

Structure #3, located west side of Curnan Road between main road and pheasant pen is a wooden structure with shed roof and was built in the mid-1960's as kennel for bird dogs. Half of the interior is divided into 5 wood and wire cages with small doors opening to outside. The fenced-in area attached to structure is divided into 5 runs with doors at far end and the top of the runs covered with wire. It is not of the historic period.

Structure #4, east side of Curnan Road across from house site near main road is a wooden garage with attached shed. It was built in early 1950's for old tenant house according to Charles Curnan.

Structure #5 is a four-bay wooden sheepshed with corrugated metal shed roof. It was built in mid-1960's by John Roosevelt and Charles Curnan and is not of the historic period.

A non-extant house site is found on the northwest corner of the main road and Curnan Road. The house was probably built between 1878 and 1911 by William G. Bennett.

Structure #6, the tool shed, is located next to the playhouse. It is a wooden storage structure with a shed roof. The building date is unknown but the structure has been there since 1955.

Structure #7, the potting shed for cutting garden, is located behind cutting garden hedge back of the playhouse. It was built as a potting shed for gardens--possibly in the 1930's. John Roosevelt converted it to a dog kennel after 1963 and it was used as a kennel until the new kennel was built.

Stone gateposts at the entrance to the orchard from the road apparently predate the Roosevelt buildings.

A dump is located along one of the trails in the eastern high wooded area of the site. This dump has been used at least since the time of Eleanor Roosevelt.

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early interest in social and humanitarian causes. Val-Kill Industries was intended to provide rural people with skills that would supplement their income and discourage migration from the countryside to the city. Although the industry did not attain its objective, its skilled craftsmen did produce fine reproductions of Early American furniture.

After Val-Kill Industries was dissolved in 1936, Eleanor remodelled the building to produce an apartment for herself which remained her private residence from 1937 to her death in 1962. Mrs. Roosevelt supervised the finish on the interior walls, the furnishing placement and the outdoor plantings. Part of the house was converted into rooms for Mrs. Roosevelt's secretary, Malvina Thompson. The rest of the building was used for guest rooms. The interior of the structure as well as exterior are significant for their close association with Eleanor Roosevelt.

The stone cottage, designed by Henry Toombs of the architectural firm of McKim, Mead and White in the manner of a traditional Hudson River Dutch Farmhouse, was the first structure built on the land that Franklin D. Roosevelt leased to the three women and is integral to the historic setting at Val-Kill.

Upon its completion, Nancy Cook and Marion Dickerman took up residence in the cottage. They occupied the house until 1947. Eleanor stayed at the cottage whenever she could until she moved into the factory. While the cottage was being built, the three women conceived the plan for Val-Kill Industries. The exterior appearance of this structure and the following ancillary structures and features are important for maintenance of the historic setting or to provide information about Eleanor Roosevelt's occupation:

1) the stone barbecue which was the scene of many famous picnics attended by visiting leaders such as Winston Churchill and Queen Julianna of the Netherlands; 2) the playhouse; 3) the dollhouse; 4) tennis court; 5) garage-stable; and 6) swimming pool used by the Roosevelt family and their guests. Structures #4, 6, 7 as shown on Map #1 were part of the historic scene. 7) Much of the original acreage was leased to farmers between 1946 and 1962. The land within the National Historic Site boundaries should maintain the undeveloped pastoral setting which reflects Eleanor's use of the area.

8) The trash dump used during Eleanor's occupation is extant and likely to contain important information about her occupation of the site. 9) The trails around the building area were used by Eleanor and are associated with her use of the site.

The Curnan house and structures #1, 2, 3 and 5 (as shown on Map #1) which are within the National Historic Site were built subsequent to Eleanor's occupation of Val-Kill and are not an integral part of the setting or associated with her.

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A preliminary assessment of archeological potential of the National Historical Site identified the archeological remains of a 19th/20th century farm within its boundary. This area is likely to have at least local significance in its own right. The present hayfield and area of historic structures might also contain prehistoric archeological resources with at least local significance (see Map #2).

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Original unpublished research by Emily Wright, Historian at Eleanor Roosevelt N.H.S.
discussed during conversations with Park Personnel, August, 1978.

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ELEANOR ROOSEVELT NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE
CONTINUATION SHEET

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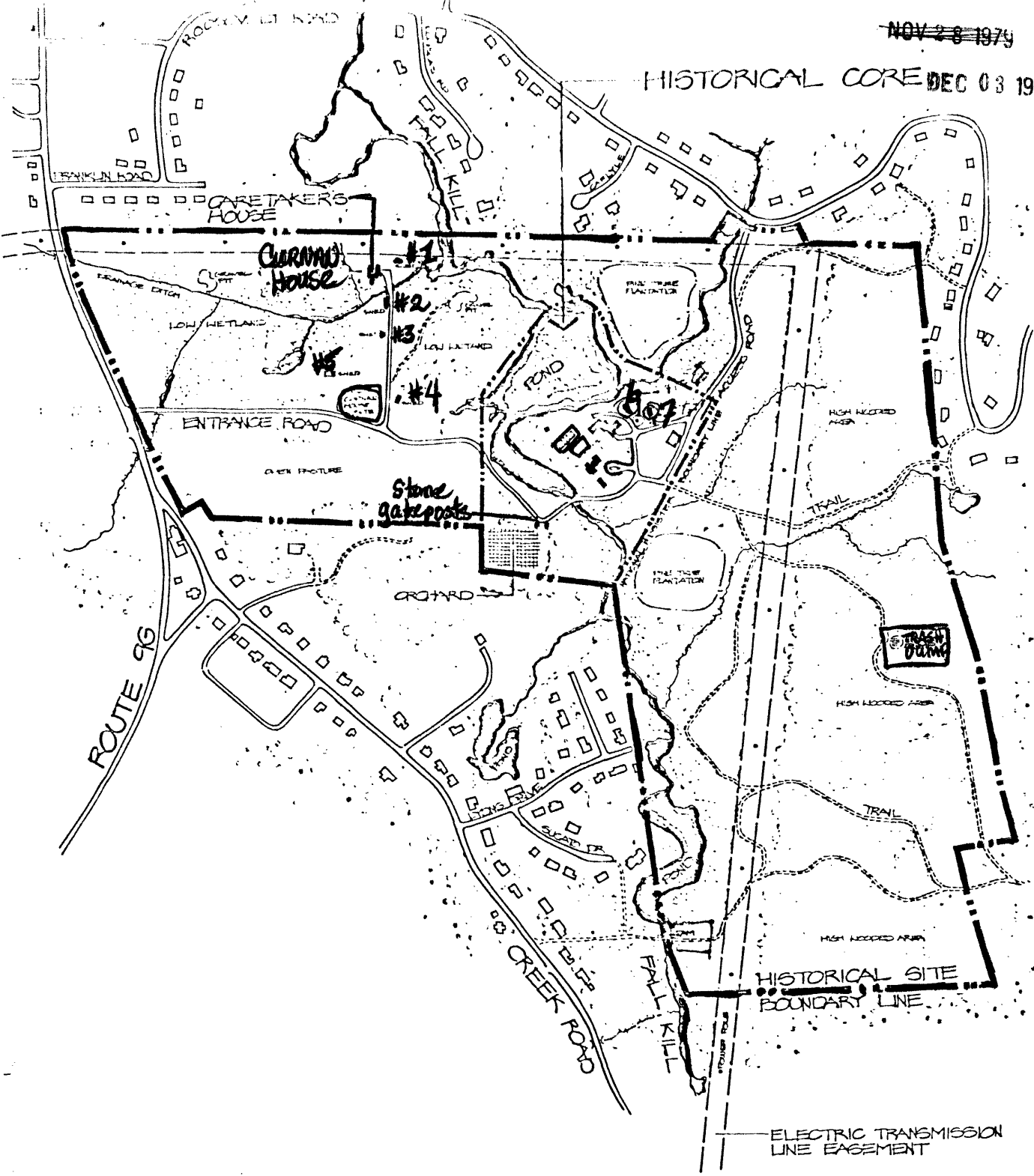
Corrected UTM references:

Zone 18

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B	592020	4623000
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D	590825	4623780
E	590720	4624120

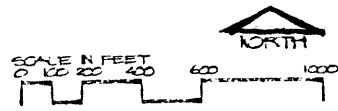
NOV 28 1979

HISTORICAL CORE DEC 03 1979



HISTORIC SITE

MAP 1



Map 2 AREAS OF SENSITIVITY



SENSITIVE AREA



LOW LYING AREA, NOT SENSITIVE



UPLAND AREA, NOT SENSITIVE



PROJECT BOUNDARY

