

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

Substantive Review

For NPS use only

received NOV 21 1983
date entered

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

1. Name

historic J. Alden Weir Farm (Dist)

and/or common Weir Farm Historic District

2. Location

street & number Nod Hill Road, Pelham Lane, Dumplin Hill Road
Thunderlake Road, proposed streets NA not for publication

city, town Ridgefield, ~~Wilton~~ NA vicinity of NA

state Connecticut code 09 county Fairfield code 001

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input checked="" 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>NA</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: cemetery,

4. Owner of Property

nature preserve, woodlands

name See continuation sheet

street & number

city, town _____ vicinity of _____ state _____

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. See continuation sheet

street & number

city, town _____ state _____

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title See continuation sheet has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date _____ federal _____ state _____ county _____ local _____

depository for survey records

city, town _____ state _____

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Overview

The farm owned by J. Alden Weir (1852-1919), American Impressionist painter, comprised approximately 238 acres located partly in Branchville, the southeastern section of the Town of Ridgefield, and partly in the Town of Wilton. The old farmhouse, altered for Weir by Charles Adams Platt and McKim, Mead & White, together with studios and barns, is sited at the northwest corner of the intersection of Nod Hill Road and Pelham Lane. (See Sketch Map 3.) The 4-acre pond that Weir had built east of the house continues as the centerpiece of extensive woodland that was the subject of many of his paintings. (See Sketch Map 6.)

Approximately 194 acres of the 238 acres once held by Weir are included in the Weir Farm Historic District. Principal structures are the Weir farmhouse, studios and farm outbuildings, the Weir Farm farmer's house located across Nod Hill Road from the main house, and an 18th-century house across Pelham Lane from the main house that is owned by Weir's daughter. There are approximately 137 acres east of Nod Hill Road, most of which, although laid out for development, are still woodland. Two houses, less than 50 years old, stand on this acreage and are designated Non-Contributing to the district.

Landscape

The 137 acres of land east of Nod Hill Road provided the subject matter for many of the Impressionist landscape paintings done by Weir at his Branchville farm. While he did paint a picture of the barns near the house, most of the subject matter for his work and that of his colleagues who visited and painted at the farm was found in the area east of Nod Hill Road. There Weir had a pond or small lake of about four acres built, c. 1896 (Photograph 7), by construction of a long earthen dam. A boat house, pavilion and picnic area, of which no traces are left, enhanced the pond.

The land slopes down to the east from Nod Hill Road. Coming from the house through the gates still in place across Nod Hill Road, it was a pleasant downhill walk, or ride down the wagon road of which traces do remain, of less than a quarter mile through the meadow and woodland to the pond. Changes have occurred since those days as the land no longer is farmed for corn and buckwheat, the meadow no longer is used for pasture for the farm animals and the vegetation has grown up in a different manner, although many of the great oaks remain. Similarity between conditions then and now may be seen by comparison of Weir's paintings "Woodland Rocks" (in the collection of the Phillips Memorial Gallery) and "Afternoon at the Pond" (privately owned) (Photographs 8 and 10) and the scenes they depict as they appear today (Photographs 9 and 11).

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 checked="" 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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates See below **Builder/Architect** See below

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Weir House: 18th century Architect: Unknown
 1900 alterations Charles Adams Platt
 1911 alterations McKim, Mead & White

Criteria B and C

J. Alden Weir's Branchville farm was integral to his leadership position in developing the American Impressionist school of painting by providing the subject matter not only for many of his pioneering landscapes but also for paintings done in the same school by other artists who frequently visited and painted at his farm. (Criterion B)

The Weir farmhouse is a valuable example of the development of an 18th-century structure through the Greek Revival style with turn-of-the-20th-century alterations by the famous architects Charles Adams Platt and McKim, Mead & White. The house with its two studios and farm outbuildings is a unique building complex in the state. (Criterion C)

Criterion B

J. Alden Weir was born in 1852 at West Point, New York, where his father taught drawing for 40 years at the United States Military Academy. Weir studied art in Europe, his first sojourn there running from 1873-1877, where he was influenced by the French Impressionists, including Monet and Manet. Weir's first one-man show in New York, indicating that he had arrived at the top of his profession, occurred in 1891, one year before he acquired his Branchville farm. His paintings now hang in the Corcoran Gallery of Art, National Collection of Fine Arts, Phillips Memorial Gallery, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Yale University Art Gallery, and the New Britain Museum of American Art, among others. A list of his paintings is appended. The Metropolitan Museum of Art is mounting a major retrospective exhibit of 100 of his works, to open October 13, 1983. Weir was, without question, a major artist.

With other American painters, Weir adapted French Impressionism to the American scene. Their French studies taught them the importance of a rural base, and a sense of the local and specific. They painted outdoors at a time when painting outdoors, in sunlight, was a vital artistic issue. They painted the immediate and specific rather than the panoramic and sublime that had been favored by earlier American landscape painters. The outdoors location for subject matter required by the new approach

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 194 acres prox.

Quadrangle name Bethel

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

See continuation sheet

A	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

B	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

C	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
---	----------------------	----------------------	----------------------

D	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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E	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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F	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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G	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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H	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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Verbal boundary description and justification

The boundary of the nominated district is shown on Sketch Maps 3, 5 and 6 drawn at scales of 1"=100', 1"=300' and 1"=350'. For boundary justification see continuation sheet.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	NA	code	NA	county	NA	code	NA
state	NA	code	NA	county	NA	code	NA

11. Form Prepared By

name/title David F. Ransom, Consultant, edited by John Herzan, National Register Coordinator

organization Connecticut Historical Comm. date January 16, 1983

street & number 59 South Prospect Street telephone 203 521-2518


city or town Hartford state Connecticut

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

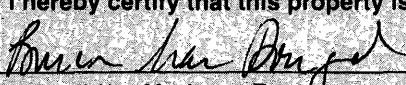
As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

title Director, Connecticut Historical Commission date November 14, 1983

For NPS use only

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

 date 1/5/84

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: _____ date _____

Chief of Registration

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Property Owners/Inventory

All properties are considered to contribute to the historic and architectural significance of the district except those marked NC before the description.

All addresses are Ridgefield, CT 06877 unless otherwise indicated. Mailing addresses for property owners are the same as property addresses unless otherwise indicated.

For purpose of discussion, the district is divided into four quadrants around the intersection of a north-south line, which is Nod Hill Road, and an east-west line, which is the boundary between the towns of Ridgefield and Wilton.

Northwest quadrant, 14 acres.

1 Nod Hill Road
Ridgefield
Andrews, C. Sperry &
Doris B.

18C with 19C and 20C alterations and additions. The Weir farmhouse. With barns, other farm out-buildings and studios. 10 acres. See Sketch Map 3.

Nod Hill Road
Ridgefield
Town of Ridgefield
Town Hall, Main Street

Old Cemetery. 7/10 acre. See Sketch Map 2.

Southwest quadrant, 47 acres

Nod Hill Road
Wilton
Burlingham, Cora Weir

c. 1725. 2-story, Colonial, frame, gable-roofed, 3-bay, central-chimney, central-doorway, shingled house with large wing added to the rear. 10 acres. See Sketch Map 5.

Nod Hill Road/Pelham Lane
Wilton

Woodland. 37½ acres. See Sketch Map 5.

Nature Conservancy of
Connecticut, Inc.
Dept. of Botany
Connecticut College
New London, CT 06320

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Northeast quadrant, 24½ acres (See Sketch Map 6.)

Nod Hill Road Woodland. 2 acres bounded by Nod Hill
Ridgefield Road and Ridgefield/Wilton town line
Andrews, C. Sperry
& Doris B.

46 Nod Hill Road NC c. 1980. 2-story, frame, gable-roofed,
Ridgefield 32 x 40' house, covered with clapboards
Barhtelman, Barry M.
& Barbara L.

Nod Hill Road 22½ acres. Woodland.
Ridgefield
Caudotowa Co.
130 Indian Cave Road
Ridgefield 06877

Southeast quadrant, 112 acres. (See Sketch Map 6.)

Nod Hill Road c. 1850. 2-story, vernacular, frame, gable-
Map 40, Lot 2 roofed, shingled house. Front porch has
Wilton bracketed posts. Weir Farm farmer's house
Andrews, C. Sperry 2 acres.
& Doris B.
1 Nod Hill Road
Ridgefield, CT 06877

39 Dumplin Hill Road NC 1957. 1-story, contemporary, gable-roofed
Map 26, Lot 19 house covered with clapboards
Wilton
Pearson, Harry & Marjorie

Dumplin Hill Road Vacant lots.
Map 26, Lots 20 and 22
State of Connecticut
State Office Building
Hartford, CT 06115

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Thunderlake Road Vacant lots

Map 40, Lot 21

Map 26, Lot 1

Wilton

Piburo, Inc.

163 Kellogg Drive

Wilton, CT 06878

114 Thunderlake Road NC 1952. 1-story, frame, contemporary, flat-
Map 26, Lot 2 roofed house with vertical siding. Moved
Wilton to this location in 1971.

Hindenbach, Philip J.

45 parcels of roughly Vacant lots

2½ acres each

Map 26, Lots 18, 22-26,
28-43

Map 40, Lots 3, 5-9,
10-20, 29-33, 38

Silvestri, Alphonse, trustee
and Tartaglia, Remo,
trustee

2349 Blackrock Turnpike
Fairfield, CT 06430

Map and lot numbers are those found in the Wilton Assessor's office.

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Ridgefield Land Records, Town Hall
400 Main Street
Ridgefield, CT

Wilton Land Records, Town Hall
238 Danbury Road
Wilton, CT

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State Register of Historic Places
1983 state

Connecticut Historical Commission, 59 South Prospect Street
Hartford, CT

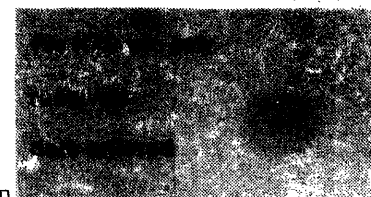
That portion of the district located in Ridgefield:

Ridgefield Architectural Resources Survey
1979 local

Connecticut Historical Commission, 59 South Prospect Street
Hartford, CT

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House and Its Outbuildings

When Weir purchased the property in 1882,¹ the house was a Greek Revival style structure with its 3-bay front elevation facing east toward Nod Hill Road. The south elevation was long enough to have three windows at the second story, that remain today, indicating the length at that time as shown by a 1900 photograph. Date of construction for the house is not known, although some indication is given by a chimney and a fireplace. There is a large, rectangular, stone-and-timber chimney base in the cellar, with an adjacent beehive oven. A second beehive oven is in place adjacent to the east living room fireplace, high up at the front on the right. Examination of the framing of the house, to help ascertain the date, is not possible because the framing is concealed, but the masonry suggests c. 1800 or earlier.

Blueprints of drawings signed (but not dated) by Charles Adams Platt² (1861-1933) exist for alterations carried out at the turn of the century. Platt did not alter the front elevation, but increased the depth of the house to its present 54-foot dimension, replaced a small porch at the southwest corner with the present columned 10 x 28-foot porch on the south elevation leading to a new door that became the principal entrance, and added a 1-story, shed-roofed section 9 feet wide the length of the north elevation, increasing the width of the first story from 28 feet to 37 feet. (Photograph 1.)

Blueprints for drawings dated 1911, not signed but by tradition attributed to McKim, Mead and White,³ relate to a 1-story, 12 x 16 foot extension of the dining room to the north. (Photograph 2.) The interior of the enlarged dining room and the interior of the long living room are done in the same dark woodwork, suggesting that the full downstairs interior decor dates from the 1909 alterations. (Photograph 3.)

The corner site where Pelham Lane dead-ends from the west into Nod Hill Road, is wholly rural in character, with large trees and a weathered wooden picket fence. The gable roof of the 2½-story house is covered with wooden shingles while the siding is clapboards. Corner boards front and rear are channeled, suggesting that they are the work of Platt. The stone foundations are faced with granite ashlar in an unusual pattern of large and small pieces, again possibly the work of Platt as the pattern continues under the front elevations of the additions.

On the Nod Hill Road (east) elevation the three bays are unevenly spaced, the central 6-over-6 window being closer to the window on the right than to the one on the left. The door is at the left with side lights over side panels and with a transom of three courses of small, long, narrow lights. The wooden front porch is approached from a stone slab at grade

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by steps with three risers. Channeled columns left and right have torus moldings as bases and conventional Doric echinus and abacus capitals. Corresponding fluted pilasters flank the doorway. The entablature supported by the columns has no architrave but a wide, plain frieze with projecting cornice and cymatium. The porch has a shed roof.

The lintels of the second-floor windows are part of the string course that defines the lower limit of the wide frieze of the gable-end pediment. The frieze has a molded cornice while the raking cornices have similar friezes. The tympanum is covered with flush boarding with a central, smaller, 6-over-6 window.

On the Pelham Lane (south) elevation the eaves cornice and frieze continue. In the roof slope above, three gabled dormers, added by Platt, have 8-over-8 windows and wooden shingled siding. In the second floor, Platt added two windows, carefully placed so that old and new windows together read 1-3-1. A plank has been placed on top of the clapboards running the length of the elevation below the second-story window sills. At the first floor, the windows at extreme left and right are leaded, having been brought from Europe by Weir. Between them, toward the rear, are the door, a large, tripartite window of small panes, and a single window, balancing the door, of 24-over-24 lights. The projecting wooden porch has a shed roof supported by six smooth, round columns with necking and square bases and abaci. At the ends of the porch, in addition to the corner column, are a free-standing column and a column attached to the wall of the house. Two wide granite steps between grade and the porch floor are flanked by wrought-iron stanchions with hammered leaves brought from Weir's New York City house at 11 East 12th Street.

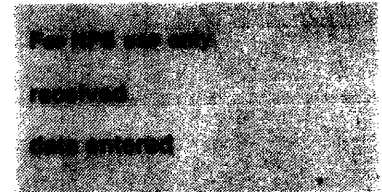
On the north elevation the second-floor and roof treatment are similar to the south elevation while at the first floor the 1-story addition the length of the elevation and the projecting dining room addition are quite different. The dining room has a gable roof with its gable end forming a pediment similar to the gable ends of the main roof of the house. Below it is another tripartite window of small panes. Each of the east and west elevations of the dining room has one of the European leaded windows.

On the west or rear elevation the ground slopes off, making possible a basement entrance at grade. There are two 6-over-6 windows in the first floor, not evenly spaced, and in the pedimented gable end one small 6-over-6 window as in the front elevation.

The door on the south porch, now the principal entrance, leads to a long living room with two large fireplaces on its north wall. The one towards the front is in a chimney that presumably is original to the house, while

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the one toward the rear is in a chimney added by Platt. At the front of the house, inside the original front door that is still operable but seldom used, the space that initially may have been an entrance hall has been made into a library. To the north the space that may originally have been the parlor is a bedroom, incorporating the area provided by the 1-story addition on the north elevation.

A large doorway in the living room leads to the dining room, which has a fireplace back to back with the living room fireplace in the original chimney. The window and doorway surrounds of all these rooms are a dark wood, flat with a central channel.⁴

The barns behind the house, near Nod Hill Road, (See Sketch Map 2), are arranged in a U shape, gable roofed, and are covered with weathered shingles. (Photograph 4.) These were the barns for a working farm in Weir's day with stalls for horses, stanchions for cows, hay loft, etc. A turn-of-the-century photo indicates that the west stem of the U was one story high and covered with clapboards, but essentially the cluster of barn buildings is unchanged since Weir owned the farm. Additional farm buildings, to the north, are a chicken house, now adaptively re-used, and a wagon shed, now deteriorated.

Weir added (or converted) a frame building on the site when he made his studio, at an unknown but perhaps early date after he bought the property in 1882, as a place to work. It is located northwest of the house, next to gardens presumably laid out by Platt of which only a fountain now remains. Weir's studio had large windows in the north wall and a tower on the south wall, added, in the top level of which a water tank was housed. (Photograph 5.) The studio is constructed of vertical siding with a gable roof that is covered with wood shingles. A saw-tooth band runs across both north and south elevation at the level of the eaves. The studio has three windows of small panes similar to those in the house, suggesting that Platt's influence was felt in the studio as well. Its interior, with wood stove, engraving press and many books, papers and pictures, looks today much the way it did when it was used by Weir. (Photograph 6.)

An additional studio was built after Weir's death in 1919 by his son-in-law, the sculptor Mahonri M. Young (1877-1957), west of Weir's studio. The newer building, although built of vertical siding like the older studio, is recognizably later in design with contemporary lines, and a saw-tooth roofline with its vertical north face glazed. The studio is unusually high, to accommodate the larger-than-life sculpture he did. A small west wing of Young's studio is an earlier building, a hand book bindery, built for and used by Weir's daughters.

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Other Land and Buildings

The farmer's cottage is located diagonally across the road intersection from the main house. It is a 2-story, vernacular, frame, gable-roofed house. The front elevation, facing south, has two bays of 6-over-6 windows and a wide, 1-story, front porch with a low hipped roof. The house is covered with clapboards.

The Foster-Webb House, c. 1725, owned by Cora Weir Burlingham, is south of Pelham Lane, in Wilton, on the west side of Nod Hill Road. It is a frame, Colonial, shingled gable-roofed, central-stone-chimney, central-doorway, 3-bay house. Windows at the first floor are 6-over-6 and at the second floor 3-over-3. A long ell has been built to the rear. The rest of the southwest quadrant is open land.

1. Ridgefield Land Records (RLR) 28/597, July 27, 1882. The initial purchase comprised 20 acres in Ridgefield and 133 acres in Wilton. Weir subsequently added to the holding. According to an apochryphal tale, Weir's patron, Erwin Davis, traded the farm to Weir for a painting. According to RLR 28/597 Erwin and Emily B. Davis conveyed the farm to Weir for \$10.

2. In the possession of Mr. and Mrs. C. Sperry Andrews.

3. In the possession of Mr. and Mrs. C. Sperry Andrews.

4. The house has a Morris type wallpaper. It is "Camelia," designed by Heywood Sumner and printed by Metford Warner of Jeffrey & Co. (Morris' printer) in 1898. See plate 1168, page 424 of Wallpapers, New York: Abrams, 1982. Sumner was a member of the Art Workers Guild. The presence of this paper in Weir's house is an indication of his awareness of and interest in the English Arts and Crafts movement.

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to painting was provided by Weir's Branchville farm, where the vistas painted by Weir and his friends are intact today. The farm was not simply a pleasant place to visit. On the contrary, it was basic and essential to his art. This direct relationship, a cause-and-effect relationship, between Weir Farm and American Impressionism gives great significance to the farm in the history of Weir's career and the history of American Impressionism.

The importance of the farm as subject matter for painting extended beyond Weir's own work. Weir was an important artistic figure, with many artistic friends. Several of them visited him at the farm, some frequently and for extended periods, including Albert Pinkham Ryder, John H. Twachtman, Childe Hassam, John F. Weir, his brother, John Singer Sargent, Theodore Robinson, Edmund Tarbell and Frank D. Millet. They came to paint, and did so. Weir, Twachtman and Hassam were considered to be the founders of the "Group of Ten", an influential circle of contemporary artists. The approach to painting, the philosophy of painting and the subject matter of their paintings were all tied to Weir Farm for this group of American Impressionists, and especially for Weir.

When Weir won the Boston Art Club's prize of \$2500 in 1896, he used the money to create a pond or small lake of four acres or so on the Ridgefield-Wilton town line, east of Nod Hill Road. A brisk walk down the hill from the house, the pond soon became the center of interest and activity to Weir and his friends. The pond and the woodland around the pond were favorite subject matter for painting.¹

The net result on the canvas in Weir's case has been characterized by one critic in the following words. "As a painter his brushwork was assured but subtle, his color high keyed but exquisitely harmonious. His pictures are reticent in rendering and tranquil in effect -- good to live with but not what today would be called exciting." By contrast, Weir's etchings, that he turned out for a few brief years from 1887 to 1894, earn this critic's unbounded praise. "So amazingly clever are they," she writes, "so spontaneous and brilliant that they literally sweep the print lover off his feet and leave him breathless with admiration." Almost without exception they are delightful and extremely artistic.² Weir's etchings may be seen at the Library of Congress.

Weir married Anna Baker of Windham, Connecticut, daughter of Charles T. Baker, the largest landowner in town. The Weirs spent some summers in the big Baker house in Windham. Several years after Anna died, Weir married her sister, Ella, and, according to one account, spent every other summer in Windham, entertaining fellow artists. Weir, of course, painted while he was in Windham. "The Red Bridge", "Ploughing for Buckwheat", "The Upland Pasture", "Windham Village", "Snow in Windham" and

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"The Building of the Dam" are claimed for Windham.³ At least two of these, "Ploughing for Buckwheat" and "The Upland Pasture," are also claimed for Branchville.

Weir was accorded national honors during his lifetime. In 1915 he was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Letters and became president of the National Academy of Design. In 1916 he was appointed to the National Commission of Fine Arts, and received an honorary degree from Princeton. Yale awarded him an honorary degree the following year. For two years he served as president of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

After Weir's death in 1919, one of his daughters, Dorothy, married the sculptor Mahonri M. Young, grandson of Brigham Young. They lived at the farm. Young built his new, larger studio in which he sculpted such famous works as his statue of Brigham Young that stands in the United States Capitol and his largest piece, "This is the Place," a monument commemorating the Mormon arrival in Utah.

After Young's death the house and its outbuildings were purchased by his friends, the present owners, C. Sperry and Doris B. Andrews. Sperry Andrews is a distinguished landscape painter.

The landscapes at his farm were essential to J. Alden Weir's painting, and, through his friends and leadership position, to the thrust of American Impressionist art. The acreage of the Weir Farm, especially the pond and woodland east of Nod Hill Road, provided the specific subject matter for an important American school of painting. This gently rolling landscape with its vegetation and lake was fundamentally significant to the development of American Impressionism.

Criterion C

While the date is not known for the initial construction of the Weir house, the great chimney base in the cellar is evidence that it probably was constructed in the 18th century, perhaps facing north as a 3-bay Colonial house, similar to the Cora Weir Burlingham House across Pelham Lane. The Beers family was prominent in this section of Branchville, the Beers name is on gravestones in the adjoining cemetery with dates ranging from 1820 to 1886, and it may be that the house was in the Beers family when it was built, and when it was altered to the Greek Revival style. The name "The Beers Place" was associated with the property.

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When the gable end facing Nod Hill Road was converted to a pediment and the east porch added is uncertain, but such work in the Greek Revival style commonly was done in the second quarter of the 19th century. An 1890s photograph⁴ shows the portico and pediment much as it appears today.

The next alterations were those of 1900 by Charles Adams Platt (1861-1933), who was one of Weir's many friends in the art world. Platt was an artist, like Weir a painter of landscapes, as well as an architect. Like Weir he had studied in Europe, and the fact that they were friends is not surprising.⁵ Platt's drawings for the alterations are signed but not dated, and specifications for the work on his office stationery also are not dated.⁶ The date is established by identity of wording written onto the specification regarding piping for the butler's pantry and the same language on a contractor's note that is dated July 16, 1900.

Platt made no change in the pediment and portico facing Nod Hill Road. The specifications provide that the existing west pediment was to be re-located as the west pediment of the enlarged structure, again indicating Platt's respect for the 19th-century Greek Revival features. He did increase the depth of the house, making room for the long living room with two large fireplaces. This room with its European leaded glass windows and windows of many small panes became the chief architectural feature of the house. The new porch on the south elevation expressed America's contemporary love of a broad veranda, with columns in the fashionable Neo-Classical Revival mode, and provided an impressive new entrance on the south elevation to the newly enlarged living room.

While these changes are reasonably straightforward, it is not so easy to understand the nine-foot wide, 1-story, shed-roofed addition across the length of the north elevation. It can only be surmised that additional space on the first floor was desired, and this was a way to get it.

Platt's work on the north elevation, in turn, was altered by changes made in 1911 to drawings that are dated, but not signed.⁷ The attribution of this work to McKim, Mead & White is largely by tradition. Stanford White was a friend of Weir's. An undated note⁸ between Weir and White refers to getting together on some work for the Branchville farm. The chief feature of the 1909 work, done after White's death, was to increase the size of the dining room, making it comparable to the living room with similar leaded glass windows and windows of many small panes. Presumably the dark woodwork of both rooms was also installed at this time.

Since 1911 there have been few if any changes to the house, with the exception of creating a library in the space near the Nod Hill door, a project of Weir's daughters. Mahonri M. Young added his studio some

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time after 1919. The west stem of the U-shaped group of barns received a second story and the wagon shed gently fell down. J. Alden Weir would feel at home were he to return to the farm today. His personal combination of Colonial, Greek Revival, and turn-of-the-20th-century architecture is intact.

1. The pond was important to Weir for a second reason, as well. He was an avid fisherman. It was said of him that he always had in his hand either a paint brush or a fishing pole.
2. Leila Mechlin, "Etchings of J. Alden Weir Are Acquired by Library," unidentified, undated newspaper clipping, copy at Connecticut Historical Commission.
3. Harold Keiner, memorandum to Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, dated November 21, 1978, drawing from A History of the Village and the First Congregational Church, Windham, Connecticut, Windham, 1975. In notations that she made on a list of Weir's paintings, Weir's daughter, Cora Weir Burlingham, has indicated that "Upland Pasture" and "Plowing for Buckwheat" were painted at Branchville. Sperry Andrews has suggested that "Upland Pasture" may be a composite scene drawn from both locations.
4. The photograph is in the possession of Mr. and Mrs. C. Sperry Andrews.
5. Henry F. Withey and Elsie Rathbun Withey in their Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased), Los Angeles: Hennessey & Ingalls, Inc., 1970 (reprint of original 1956 edition), p. 475, state that Platt did not engage in architectural practice until 1916, in which event his work for Weir was very early. But Keith N. Morgan of Boston University whose monograph on Platt is to be published in 1983, in a letter dated January 3, 1983 to author, states that Platt began his professional architectural career in 1900. Morgan holds correspondence between Platt and Weir relating to affairs of the Century Club in New York, of which they both were members.
6. Blueprints of the drawings and a copy of the specifications are in the possession of Mr. and Mrs. C. Sperry Andrews.

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7. Blueprints of the 1911 drawings are in the possession of Mr. and Mrs. C. Sperry Andrews. There is an initial or cipher in the lower right hand corner. Copy of a drawing showing this initial was sent to Leland M. Roth, University of Oregon, with inquiry. Roth's The Architecture of McKim, Mead & White, 1970-1920, Building List, New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1978, does not include the Weir Farm commission. In letter to author dated January 19, 1983, Roth states that the initials on the drawing may be those of Frederick J. Adams, a long-time draughtsman at the McKim, Mead & White firm. Roth states that failure of a relatively small job such as this to be clearly identified in his examination of the firm's records is not unexpected.

8. In possession of Mr. and Mrs. C. Sperry Andrews.

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Paintings Done by J. Alden Weir at Branchville

A list has been made up of paintings mentioned in Dorothy Weir Young's Life and Letters... and in the Dutton John Alden Weir,.... Weir's daughter, Cora Weir Burlingham, noted on the list those paintings that she believes were done at Branchville. Original of the list, with notations, is in the possession of Mr. & Mrs. C. Sperry Andrews. The following Branchville paintings are on the list:

Afternoon by the Pond	The Land of Nod
Apple Blossoms	Late October
Approaching Storm	
Autumn	Melting Snow
Autumn in the Woods	A Misty Day
Autumn Rain	Misty Morning
	The Moon Obscured
A Belt of Wood	Moonlight
A Bit of New England	
Black Birch Rock	Noonday Rest
Branchville	
Branchville in Early Autumn	October Day
	October Sunshine
Chestnut Trees in Blossom	The Old Sentinel on the Farm
A Connecticut Farm	On the Porch
A Connecticut Grainfield	On the Shore
A Connecticut Landscape	
A Corner of the Field	A Pasture Lot
Cutting Ice	The Pasture by the Pond
	A Path in the Woods
Danbury Hills	Pelham's Lane
Driving the Cows to Pasture	Plowing for Buckwheat
Early Fall	A Quiet Home
Early Morning	
	The Return of the Fishing Party
Fall Pasture	The Road to Nod
The Fishing Party	
A Fog in Winter	The Shadow of My Studio
	Spring
Gray October	Summer in Connecticut
A Group of Elms	Summertime
The Haunt of the Woodcock	The Upland Pasture
The High Pasture	Woodland Rocks
The Hill Road	
Hillside in Snow	
Hunter and Dogs	
In the Shadow	
In the Sun	

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Platt, Charles Adams, specification for alterations to house owned by J. Alden Weir, copy in possession of Mr. and Mrs. C. Sperry Andrews.

Roth, Leland, The Architecture of McKim, Mead & White, 1870-1920, A Building List, New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1978.

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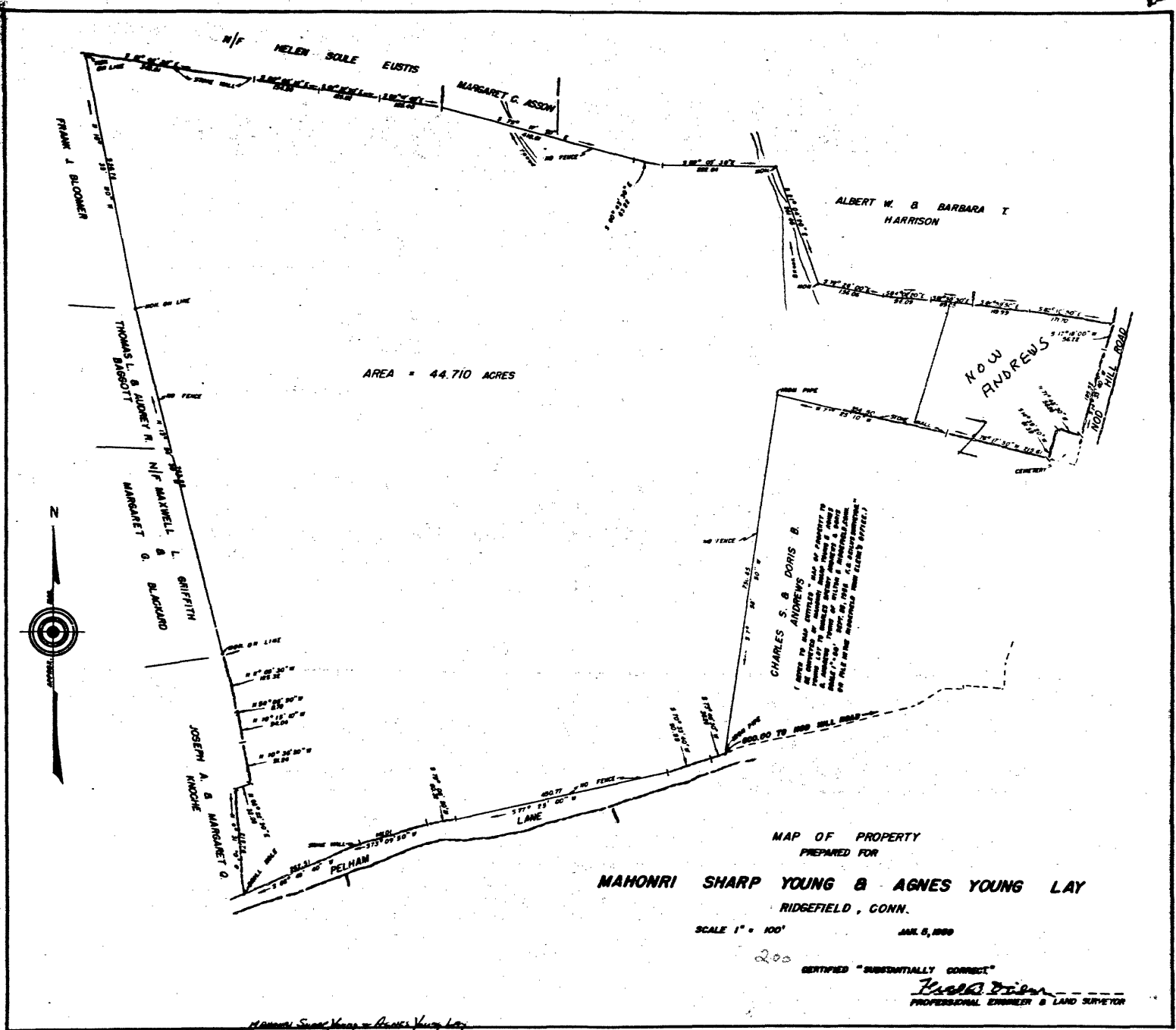
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UTM References

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F 18/130100/4568340
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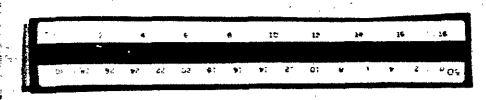


Sketch Map 4
Weir Farm Historic
District

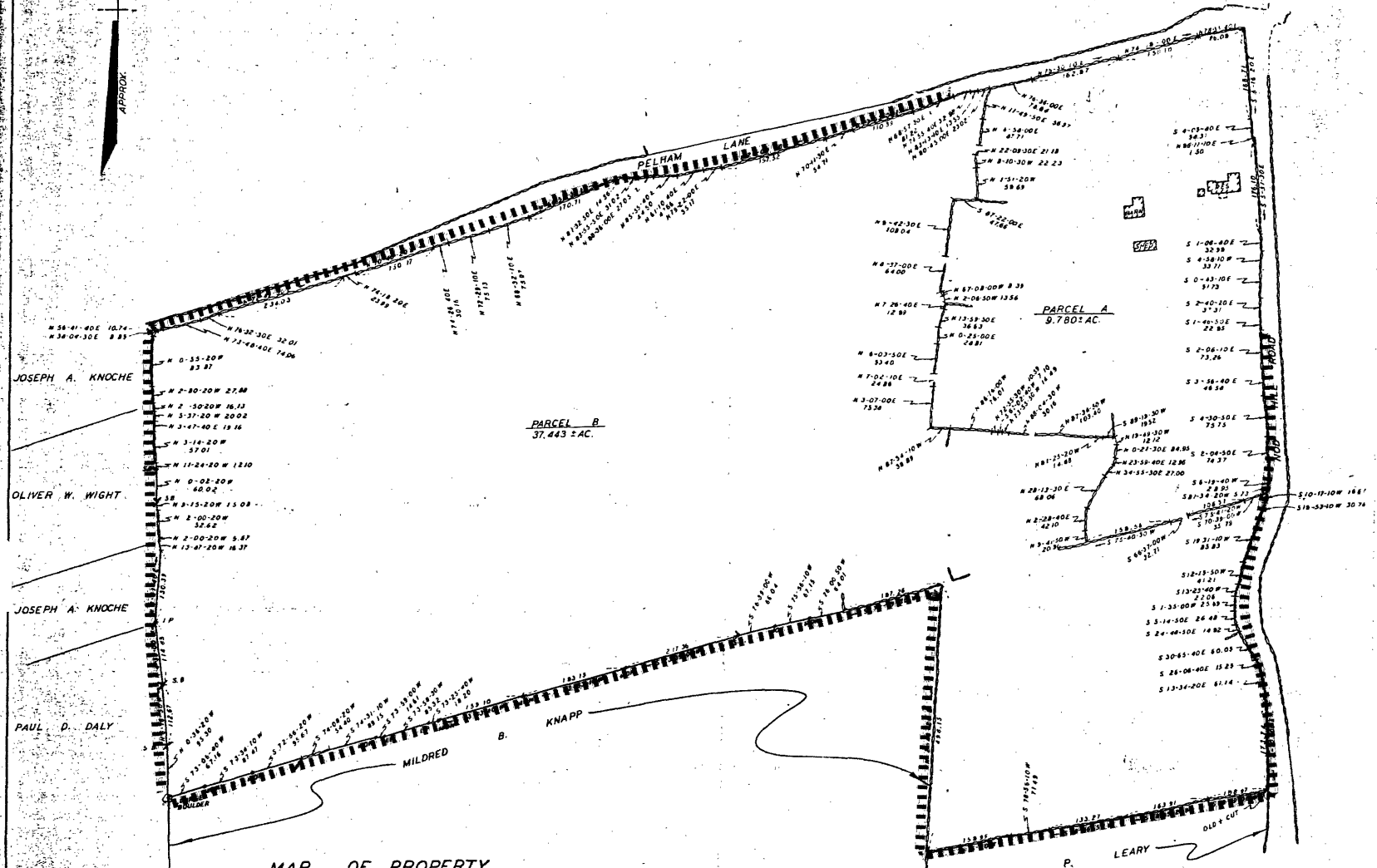
Scale: 1" = 200'

Former Weir Farm land
not included in dis-
trict

#2437 I. K. 1/11/09 - 40 P.M.
Mahonri Sharp Young & Agnes Young Lay
Robert W. Young, Jr. Clerk



NOTE: REF TO MAP OF PROPERTY PREPARED FOR CORA WEIR BURLINGHAM WILTON, CONN. SCALE 1"=100' FEB 2, 1943, MAP NUMBER WILTON LAND RECORDS.



Sketch Map 5
Weir Farm Historic District
Scale: 1" = 300'
District boundary

MAP OF PROPERTY
PREPARED FOR
CORA WEIR BURLINGHAM
WILTON CONN.

SCALE 1"=100' JULY 22, 1968
BY ROLAND H. GARDNER LAND SURVEYOR WILTON, CONN.
CERTIFIED SUBSTANTIALLY CORRECT
Roland H. Gardner
CONN. REG. NO. 5179



NOTE: REFER TO MAPS NO. 587, 612 & 1202 WILTON LAND RECORDS.

TOTAL AREA OF PROPERTY=47.223 ACRES

