

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

CHATEAU-SUR-MER

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United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: Chateau-sur-Mer

Other Name/Site Number:

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: 424 Bellevue Avenue

Not for publication:

City/Town: Newport

Vicinity:

State: RI County: Newport Code: 005

Zip Code: 02840

3. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property

Private: X

Public-Local: ___

Public-State: ___

Public-Federal: ___

Category of Property

Building(s): X

District: ___

Site: ___

Structure: ___

Object: ___

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing

4

3

7

Noncontributing

3 buildings

___ sites

3 structures

___ objects

6 Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: 1

Name of Related Multiple Property Listing: N/A

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4. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this _____ nomination _____ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property _____ meets _____ does not meet the National Register Criteria.

Signature of Certifying Official

Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

In my opinion, the property _____ meets _____ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of Commenting or Other Official

Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

5. 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 Keeper

Date of Action

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6. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic: Domestic Sub: Single Dwelling

Current: Recreation and Culture Sub: Museum

7. DESCRIPTION

Architectural Classification: Late Victorian: Second Empire

Materials:

Foundation: Stone (granite)
Walls: Stone (granite)
Roof: Stone (slate) and Synthetics (rubber)
Other: Metal (roof trim)

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Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.**INTRODUCTION**

Chateau-sur-Mer was home to three generations of the Wetmore family. The house was built as an Italianate style villa by local contractor Seth Bradford for William Shepard Wetmore, who had retired from the China Trade. The house was remodeled during the 1870s by premiere American architect Richard Morris Hunt who altered many of the design features and reworked the house creating a Second Empire French style chateau. Chateau-sur-Mer is a quintessential Victorian domestic interior, exhibiting examples of almost every decorative style popular during the Victorian Era. The house is set in the middle of a 17 acre park of rare specimen trees in the picturesque manner of the late nineteenth century. The Olmsted Brothers made a major contribution to the estate plan in the period 1915 to 1918 with their design for the main south entrance drive which has all of its original plantings.

EXTERIOR

Chateau-sur-Mer was originally built between 1851 and 1852 by Seth Bradford for William Shepard Wetmore. Chateau-sur-Mer was then remodeled and enlarged by architect Richard Morris Hunt for George Peabody Wetmore between 1873 and 1880. The original concave mansard roof was converted to a straight mansard, and a new three story wing with a porte-cochere and a four story tower was added in the northeast corner of the building. Architect John Russell Pope replaced the original (1852) front door on the west façade with a bay window in 1915.

The house, and later additions, was constructed of rusticated, regularly coursed, ashlar masonry of Fall River granite. The building was capped by a steeply sloping, black slate mansard roof enclosing one and a half stories. The higher, flatter portions of the roof were constructed with flat seam metal which is now covered with modern rubber membranes. The two large towers are covered with steep pyramidal roofs with the same black slate and decorative metalwork as the rest of the roof. A large, partially-gilded, wrought iron weather vane surmounts the northeast tower.

The wall-roof eave junction is marked on all façades by a cornice of simple brackets in smooth finished granite. The ridges and cornices of the mansard roof are protected with galvanized, decorative metal trim which has been painted to mimic weathered copper. The cornices are ornamented with rosettes and acroterion.

Fenestration consists of one over one wood sash on the first two floors and dormers of two over one wood sash in the mansard roof.

The west façade, facing Bellevue Avenue and serving as the formal front of the house, is marked, on the first floor, by bay windows surmounted by ancient Roman style X shaped balustrades in smooth finished granite. The central, three story tower, consists of a bay window with Neo-Grec style incised pilasters and circular discs on the first floor. The bay window was an addition in 1917 by John Russell Pope. A porch with a concave flat seam metal roof and slender wooden columns completes the west façade, and this porch continues along the south and part of the east façades. The second story windows are finished with lintels in the shape of triangular pediments in smooth finished granite.

The north façade also has a first floor bay window topped by X shaped balusters in a smooth finished granite.

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The porte-cochere, in the center of the façade, is a Neo-Grec style structure comprised of 4 sets of paired square, monolithic columns with incised fluting topped by round discs and a balustrade in smooth finished granite. A balustrade in smooth finished granite runs the length of the north façade, concealing a below grade opening for the windows of the basement servant work rooms. Above the porte-cochere are two stories of windows divided by a balcony in smooth finished granite and surmounted by a segmental pediment in smooth finished granite. To the left of the porte-cochere is a four story tower topped by a steeply pitched room with an oculus shaped window.

The east façade is comprised of two blocks: the first block, created in the 1870s during Hunt's remodeling campaign, is comprised of a two story block marked by a segmental pediment; the second block, dating to the original Bradford construction of 1851-52, is a two story block with porch surmounted by a concave mansard roof, a second story with windows topped by lintels in triangular pediment form in smooth finish granite.

The south façade is a simple two story block with a first floor porch topped by a concave mansard roof, two second story windows with triangular pediment shaped lintels in smooth finished granite, and a mansard roof with three dormers.

The roofline is marked on all façades by a cornice of brackets in smooth finished granite. The sides and the peaks of the mansard roof are edged in cast lead casings decorated with rosettes. The corners of the roof on the house and the west tower are decorated with acroterion in cast lead. There are eight chimneys punctuating the roof. The chimneys are made of smooth finished granite.

The Wetmore family owned Chateau-sur-Mer from its construction in 1851 until the 1966 death of Miss Edith Wetmore. Chateau-sur-Mer was purchased from the Wetmore estate by the Preservation Society of Newport County in 1969.

FIRST FLOOR

Billiard Room

The Billiard Room, designated as a morning reception room by Hunt, is designed in the Eastlake Style. In keeping with the Eastlake style, the room's design incorporates the use of light woods and simplistic carvings.

The oak paneling consists of alternating diagonal panels, which are separated by pilasters with chamfered edges. Trefoil patterns act as the capitals for the pilasters. Above the paneling are colonettes incised with Egyptian patterns on the capitals. The ceiling, also oak, is decorated by heavy timber beams arranged diagonally across the ceiling. Where these beams meet are decorative knobs, repeated around the wall paneling. The floor is of oak, in a herringbone pattern. These alternating diagonal patterns echo those of the ceiling.

The fireplace surround is in the Eastlake style with Minton tiles depicting the four seasons. These tiles are based on designs of the English Arts and Crafts artist Walter Crane. Coordinating with the Eastlake Style are inset oak bookcases. Lining the north and south walls on either side are built in oak window seat.

The Eastlake furniture contained in the room is original, containing the same trefoil motifs of the wall paneling.

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Great Hall

Richard Morris Hunt used Chateau-sur-Mer's Great Hall as an experiment; it prepared him well for his work on later palatial homes, such as Marble House and The Breakers. The forty-five foot ceiling of this hall space was exaggerated through broadening of the balconies and the narrowing of the openings, as this three story hall rises to the top of the house. The walls of the great hall like those of the billiard room are covered in oak paneling with Eastlake design features. Square knobs divide the walls into rectangular and square sections. Above the paneling are Pompeiian Red walls. The floor has a herringbone pattern similar to the billiard room floor.

This area also features a fireplace with Minton tiles containing runic designs representing fish and lions. Leaf and rose pattern tiles line the floor of the fireplace. The ceiling panel is painted glass that was backlit by a skylight and a series of gas jets which were used to illuminate the glass at night. The underside of the balcony is painted to resemble straw matting with a bronze powder border.

Library

The library is one of two rooms in Chateau-sur-Mer designed by the Florentine craftsman, Luigi Fruillini. It was constructed in Florence and then transported to Newport for assemblage in Chateau. This room, done in the Renaissance Revival style, is a distinct departure from the Eastlake style of the reception room.

Renaissance Revival decoration, because of its association with classical Greek and Roman learning, was a popular mode of decoration for libraries during the Victorian era. The walls, ceilings, bookcases, and floors are of carved walnut and rosewood pilasters. The names of famous statesmen, artists, scientists, and explorers, such as Columbus, Dante, Raphael, Washington, and Lincoln, can be found carved in the pilasters lining the south wall of the room. Also, the south wall has a built-in fall-front writing desk, depicting a scholar of the Italian Renaissance in his study, and bearing the date 1876.

Marble Hallway

The doors along the south wall of the library open into the Marble Hall. The marble hall once served as the house's main entrance. However, during Hunt's 1870s renovations, he added the porte-cochere to the north entrance, designating it as the formal entryway. Although the marble hall, or the original entranceway, remained intact after Hunt's renovations, it was enclosed in 1917 by a bay-window designed by architect John Russell Pope. The room receives its name from the marble flooring which features black and white marble tiles laid in a diagonal pattern. The room's wainscoting and door frames are of mahogany. The plaster walls, painted dark green with stenciled lines, separate the wainscoting from the Egyptian Revival frieze of painted and gilt lotus patterning. The ceiling is divided into three sections by thick mahogany beams. Between these exposed beams lie intricate Japanese Revival style stenciling, which were also added during Hunt's 1870s alterations.

Green Salon

This small salon served as a ladies reception room. It was redecorated in the early 1900s by Ogden Codman who was a master of recreating eighteenth century style French interiors. The room was done in the Louis XV style to serve as an appropriate setting to showcase Edith Wetmore's significant collections of eighteenth century French furniture, porcelains and paintings. The walls of the parlor are covered in green silk damask,

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framed by carved panel work depicting shell and foliate pattering. A smooth concave cornice rests below the ceiling, with a low relief plaster decoration. The marble of the fireplace is French Rouge Griott, and the hearth is tiled with a mixture of African and white marble.

Ballroom

When completed in 1854 the ballroom was one of the first French style interiors in Newport. This room is the only to survive relatively unchanged from its original appearance in the 1850s. The ballroom's paneling and furnishing were supplied by Leon Marcotte of the New York decorating and cabinetmaking firm, Le Prince and Marcotte. Marcotte's interiors were very influential; introducing high-style Second Empire French Revival style furnishing and designs to wealthy Americans.

Subtly shaded with seven tones of gray paint, the walls are highlighted with gold leaf and finely cast plaster depicting ribbon and floral patterns. The white marble fireplace surround is embellished by fruit and flower patterning. The north and south walls of the salon are hung with very large scale mirrors by Cornelius and Baker of Philadelphia. The floor is oak parquet and is designed with 10" x 20" rectangles laid in a herringbone pattern with a square border trim. The ceiling, from which hang crystal chandeliers, is accentuated by plaster moldings.

Dining Room

This room was an addition during the Hunt remodeling of the 1870s. Like the library, the dining room was designed and installed by Luigi Fruillini and his workshop. The dining room is also in the Renaissance Revival style with intricate carvings which celebrate the hunt, and the joys associated with gathering to enjoy fine food and drink.

Chateau-sur-Mer's dining room offers a large decorative sideboard, adorned with carvings of a youthful Bacchus, god of wine, as well as game birds, and fruit and flowers. Laden with fine silver and some of the family's original Chinese export pieces, the sideboard serves a showcase.

Over the sideboard is a majolica ceramic plaque by Theodore Deck showing the end of a hunt.

The upper portion of the dining room walls are covered with Florentine decorative leather. The leather was silvered, covered in a gold wash, stamped with pattern and then painted with floral motifs adding unique color and texture to this interior. Gold plated rivets affix the leather panels to the wall.

The room's Renaissance Revival furnishings are matched with the interior, and covered with the same decorative leather.

The wainscoting on the lower portion of the walls is separated into pilasters and half-columns, adorned with fruit, flower, and ribbon carvings. Each capital has been stippled and stamped to give the appearance of leather-like texture. The rectangular sections of the wainscoting are fashioned from burl cuts of wood in accordance with the Renaissance style of the room.

Opposite the sideboard is a fireplace carved from a single block of Circassian walnut that has been decorated with cherub figures celebrating the joys of eating and drinking. Life sized clusters of grapes are also carved on the surround. On the fireplace surround are French majolica tiles depicting a hunting scene. The ceiling is carved with grape clusters, vines, and elaborate moldings. In the center is an oblong whimsical painting done

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by nineteenth century Italian artist Annibale Gatti. This painting incorporates a depiction of Edith Wetmore as a child in the midst of wine-drinking cherubs. The floor is an elaborate herringbone parquet with several different shaded woods.

Butler's Pantry and China Closet

A blind door to the right of the dining room fireplace leads to the butler's pantry and china closet. These rooms have red and black Minton tile floors, and cabinetry made of edge grain and quarter sawn cherry. The wainscoting is cherry and the walls above are painted deep red with black rosette patterning.

SECOND FLOOR

The second floor contains a majority of the family bedrooms. Hunt's 1870s renovation to the northeast side of the house included two nurseries and a bedchamber with bath and closet. Today, this area is the home of Chateau's caretaker and has been moderately altered.

Stair Hall

The underside of the staircase is painted with a colorful fresco of the tree of life.

The stair hall paneling is done in the Eastlake Style. The walls, done by Charles Salagand of Paris in 1876, are covered in jute, which is painted to imitate tapestry. Two bronze figures are attached to either side of the first floor landing posts. The Parisian-made figures, by Emile Guillemin, represent maidens in Oriental dress. The sash windows on the second floor landing contain stained glass by MacPherson of Boston done in 1876.

Mrs. Wetmore's Bedroom

During the 1970s this room was restored to its 1870s period of decoration. The Wetmores had decorated this room in the English Aesthetic taste. This style of decoration as applied by Hunt in the 1870s, was very avant-garde, yet grew in popularity in America during the 1880s. The aesthetic taste is an intricate mixture of European Medieval and Renaissance inspired motifs with Far Eastern design and patterns. The restored stenciled ceiling is patterned with intertwining vines and flowers. A gilded border with an outer border of ornate flowers runs along the ceiling. The walls of the bedroom are covered with a reproduction wallpaper and frieze paper made based on documents in the Copper-Hewitt museum collection. The aesthetic movement papers had been donated to the Copper-Hewitt Museum by the Misses Wetmore when they opted to change the room's decoration in the 1920s. The fireplace has a rosewood mantel made by Gregory and Co. of Regent St., London in 1876, and has carved panels with floral and insect designs. The parquet floor is made of oak.

Mrs. Wetmore's Boudoir

This dressing room was redone in the 1930s. The Colonial Revival Style fireplace was added at that time, as well as Dutch Delft tile surround depicting passages from the Bible.

Mrs. Wetmore's Bathroom

This bathroom is of white glazed tile and mahogany. There is a wooden encased bathtub, and a black and white

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diamond tiled floor. The stained glass insert in the ceiling depicts sunburst designs.

Mr. Wetmore's Bedroom

This bedroom appears much as it did in the nineteenth century and survives as an untouched example of an interior in the style of the English Aesthetic movement. The woodwork in the room is ebonized mahogany with red highlights, as seen over the doorways, bed, and fireplace. Conserved wallpaper by William Morris covers the walls of the bed alcove. Much of the red stained and ebonized mahogany furnishing were custom fit to the room and are matched in decorative style. An arcade of Gothic arches and trefoil cutouts is in the molding over the bed.

The ceiling was painted and stenciled to complement the wallpaper. Decorated with a colorful willow and orange motif, the ceiling is bordered by two rows of black and gilt patterning. The four corners of the ceiling contain rosettes and the black and gold color scheme is repeated on the ceiling's molded plaster cornice. The ebonized woodwork is continued in the fireplace mantel and over mantel. The fire back is of red-orange glazed brick.

Shaving Closet

Attached to the bedroom is Mr. Wetmore's shaving closet, also done in the Aesthetic taste. The room has painted red and gray walls, and a white diamond tiled floor. Mahogany wooden shelves and porcelain hooks are original to the room.

Turkish Room

An intimate second floor sitting room, full of rich eastern textiles, Middle Eastern inspired ceiling decoration, and a blend of exotic decorative objects, classify this as a quintessential Turkish Style room of the High Victorian Era.

The ceiling is decorated with a central flower, and painted red, gray, with gilded borders depicting arabesque and other intricate patterning. Dark wood wainscoting runs along the lower portion of the room. The wallpaper is a reproduction of the original, recreated from a document piece that is archived at the Copper-Hewitt Museum, and installed during the room's restoration in the 1970s.

Upper Hall Gallery

The upper hall gallery is in keeping with The Eastlake Style as seen in the large first floor reception areas.

The Gray Bedroom

The bedroom suite was occupied by Miss Annie Derby Wetmore until her marriage to Mr. William Watts Sherman. The fireplace mantel of Italian marble has an Italianate arch. The Colonial Revival wallpaper is a reproduction of the original silver toned paper of the 1920s, and was installed in 1979. Attached is a dressing room with reproduction wallpaper and the original white and gray marble fireplace. The room also has an attached bath of white marble tiles and fixtures.

The Butternut Room

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This room is located in the northwest corner of the house. Named for its light colored woodwork and furniture, the Butternut Room features many influences from the late nineteenth century Arts and Crafts Movement. The wall frieze of griffins was created by English artist William Burges, and reappears on the hand-stenciled ceiling. The Egyptian style ceiling has a yellow border of Egyptian lotus, copied after a pattern in Owen Jones' *Grammar of Ornament* (1854), as well as an ornate lotus pattern in each corner. The fireplace is made of Vermont marble and possibly survives from the 1852 house. The room also features an adjoining dressing room and bath. The room has its original wool and metallic thread draperies

Butternut Dressing Room

This room is done in the Aesthetic taste and is a compliment to the bedroom. The ceiling has similar lotus flower patterning and complimentary decoration.

THIRD FLOOR

The third floor had additional bedroom spaces to accommodate both the Wetmore sons, guests, and staff. There are ten rooms in all, each with minimal decoration. The house is thought to have operated with a household staff of eleven or twelve, with some of them probably housed on the third floor.

Adjacent to the rooms used by the Wetmore's sons are simple plaster walled rooms. There are two-and-a-half bathrooms on the third floor, each decorated with blue and white floor tiles and white wall tiles.

FOURTH FLOOR

The fourth floor consists of a water tank storage room, three servants bedrooms, two trunk rooms and a liquor storage room. These spaces consist of simple plastered walls with stained wooden door and window frames. The remainder of the fourth floor is attic space.

BASEMENT

The stairs and hallway into the basement service area are lined with the same red and black tiling as the china room and butler's pantry on the ground floor. The servants' hall, kitchen, and pantries were moved during Hunt's renovation of the 1870s from the area that is now the morning room to the basement on the northeast side of the house. The floor of the delivery entrance located adjacent to the kitchen is tiled with colorful, decorative patterns not found anywhere else in the house. The laundry and ironing rooms are located on the northwest side of the building while the heating system and coal bins can be found on the southwest side of the basement. Two wine rooms on the south side are illuminated by skylights projecting from the ground-floor terrace.

Kitchen

This room contains blue and white delft tiled walls, with red and black diamond floor tiles. The Garland brand stove is still in place as is the original water heater for the house. The ceiling is plaster with exposed wooden beams. Blue marbleized tiles run the perimeter of the walls and continue into the two adjoining pantries. The

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walls of the pantries are lined with wooden cabinets.

OUTBUILDINGS

Porter's Lodge and Entrance Arch

The porter's lodge and entrance arch were built between 1851 and 1852 of Connecticut red freestone. The roof of the porter's lodge is a concave mansard form marked by dormers. The entrance arch, also built of Connecticut red freestone, is modeled after an ancient Roman triumphal arch form with a central arched entrance flanked by two arched pedestrian openings which are topped by arched openings containing urns.

Moon Gate

The moon gate (1860) is made of Fall River (MA) granite. The circular gate, flanked by steps at either side, is modeled after Chinese garden gates.

Main Entrance Gates

Architect Richard Morris Hunt designed the main entrance to Chateau-sur-Mer's grounds in circa 1870 in the southwest corner of the estate facing Bellevue Avenue. The gates, built of Fall River (MA) granite, are in the Neo-Grec manner with two posts modeled after ancient Egyptian obelisks, framing the entrance to the main drive. These post support cast iron gates and fencing in the Neo-Grec manner.

Garden House

Architect Frederick Rhineland King designed the garden house (c. 1920) for Miss Edith Wetmore in the Colonial Revival style. The site for the garden house and its enclosed garden was the original palm house (c. 1870) in the northeastern section of the grounds. The Wetmores demolished the greenhouses in the period 1915 to 1918 and converted the area into cutting and pleasure grounds. The garden house is a one-story brick structure covered in stucco. Delicate classical columns support a triangular pediment with a central lunette window inspired by Federal windows. Beneath the window is the main door, also in the Federal style, with a molding of Classical brackets.

Carriage House and Stable Complex

Located at the east end of the estate, the Carriage House and Stable complex was constructed over the course of three campaigns. Seth Bradford built the original Carriage House in 1851-1852; with board-and-batten stables to the northeast (the second campaign obliterated these stables.) The original structure consists of a two-bay barn built of rough-cut sandstone laid in a random horizontal fashion. Its principal character-defining feature is a massive double opening on the south façade. A slate mansard roof with gable dormers covered the structure. Historic photographs indicate that a cupola capped the center of the roof and provided needed ventilation for the hayloft.

Between 1876 and 1883, plans for alterations to the carriage house may have been completed by

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Richard Morris Hunt, who was also designing the alterations to the main house. Ultimately George Champlin Mason, a local architect of some renown, was commissioned to expand the building in the style of Bradford, adding 14 stalls to the east. In extending the structure 84 feet, Mason maintained the same materials, roofline and cornice details that Bradford had used in the original structure. A new two-story cross-gable entrance masked the transition from the original building to the addition. Gabled dormers with six-over-six sash contributed to the echoing of the original structure.

A second campaign of alterations between 1883 and 1893 added a two-level, flat-roofed, L-shaped brick wing for additional stables, feed rooms and a carpenter's shop to the eastern side of the carriage house. Here the character-defining features include two stories of flat-arch openings along the southern façade. An eight-foot tall wall along the northern and eastern borders of the property formed the exterior walls of the wing. Between 1893 and 1907 the final additions were made to the carriage house and stables. The most significant of these was the construction of an enclosed Belgian block exercise yard with a circular trough at its center. The carpenter's shop was removed at this time to accommodate a wider gate for the Lawrence Avenue entrance.

The Carriage House retains a high level of decorative finish throughout its interior, including cast iron hardware, Minton tile in the stalls, and decorative yellow brick flooring laid in a black grout throughout the Hunt/Mason addition. More significant is the retention of engineering systems for the building, including complex and still-functioning systems of ventilation and heating /cooling. Now owned by Salve Regina University and designated for adaptive reuse as an academic building, the Carriage House in every way retains the aspects of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association required for integrity. It is an important contributing element of the Chateau-sur-Mer estate.

Chateau-sur-Mer's landscape, much like the building, evolved over time. Chateau-sur-Mer's landscape underwent significant change over the years, from the open windswept meadow on the sea to today's picturesque park with specimen trees and attendant garden architecture. In the 1850s when Chateau-sur-Mer was built, William Shepard Wetmore owned thirty-five acres of land down to the waterline. Construction of outbuildings on the property began as early as 1852. An entrance arch with adjoining red sandstone porter's lodge, a carriage house with attached barn, a complex of greenhouses used for growing grapes, flowers, and potted palms, also stood on Mr. Wetmore's property. A small, freestanding building about 20' by 20' may also have been built at this time. This building, apparently serving as the billiard room, follows the same general style as the other outbuildings with the exception of the cornice brackets. When Hunt designed the morning room for George Peabody Wetmore, the billiard building became obsolete and was taken down by 1871. Other additions to the landscape included a Chinese Moongate (1860), stables renovations (circa 1883) and a garden house (circa 1920).

In 1915, George Peabody Wetmore hired the Olmsted brothers to produce landscape drawings for redesigning the property. Their work included eliminating the south drive and moving the service entrance to the east. A picturesque landscape of specimen trees, rhododendron, and other exotic flowers, found throughout the estate grounds were installed between 1915 and 1918. Today, Chateau-sur-Mer's grounds remain one of the best preserved arboretums in the nation with its rare specimen trees planted in the period 1870s to 1880s.

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8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

Nationally: X Statewide: __ Locally: __

Applicable National

Register Criteria: A__ BX CX D

Criteria Considerations

(Exceptions): A__ B__ C__ D__ E__ F__ G

NHL Criteria: 4

NHL Theme(s):

III. Expressing Cultural Values

5. architecture, landscape architecture, and urban design

Areas of Significance:

Architecture

Social History

Period(s) of Significance: 1850 - 1918

Significant Dates: 1851 – 1852

1871 – 1880

1915 - 1918

Significant Person(s):

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: Richard Morris Hunt

Historic Contexts:

XVI. Architecture

M. Period Revivals (1870–1940)

5. Neo-Classical (1890–1915)

XXX. American Ways of Life

F. Industrial Wealth of the Last Half of 19th Century

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State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.

Chateau-sur-Mer is nationally significant as a textbook example of the major design trends of the second half of the nineteenth century. The house and its interiors represent the United States' adaptation of popular nineteenth century British and European design. Chateau-sur-Mer is a significant manifestation of the architectural and social life of America during the High Victorian Age, built and subsequently remodeled by the Wetmore family, who were prominent China Trade merchants and who produced a governor of Rhode Island and United State senator. Chateau-sur-Mer was a prominent building occupied by important architectural and cultural patrons in American life during the late nineteenth century. The architectural evolution of Chateau-sur-Mer from 1851 to 1918 was achieved by the participation of major figures in the American design field. As a result, Chateau-sur-Mer is a case study in the social and architectural evolution of American culture during the last half of the nineteenth century.

Chateau-sur-Mer was built between 1851 and 1852 in the Italianate style for the retired China Trade merchant William Shepard Wetmore by the contractor Seth Bradford. Leading figures in American architecture and design were brought to Chateau-sur-Mer during successive renovations. Richard Morris Hunt, known as the Dean of American Architecture, was hired for two renovations to Chateau-sur-Mer between 1873 and 1880. Hunt (1827 - 1895) later went on to design Ochre Court (1891), Marble House (1892), and The Breakers (1895)(NHL, 1994), all in Newport. Ogden Codman was hired in 1903 to redecorate a sitting room in the house. Codman (1868 - 1951), co-author of *The Decoration of Houses* (1897) with Edith Wharton, was an accomplished interior designer and advocate for French Classicism. In addition, John Russell Pope designed a bay window on the main (west) façade in 1915. His later designs include the Jefferson Memorial and the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. Finally, in the early part of the twentieth century, Olmsted Brothers and Co. was hired to make improvements to the landscape of Chateau-sur-Mer.

Richard Morris Hunt was commissioned for Chateau-sur-Mer's first renovation in 1873. This was a crucial phase in Hunt's career. By 1870, Hunt was at the mid-point of his career and he was just beginning to cultivate his own formula for houses in the grand manner.

Hunt's designs for domestic architecture in the 1860s and 1870s were primarily in the picturesque Stick Style. His work on the J.N.A. Griswold House (1861) (NHL, 2000) and the Thomas G. Appleton House (1871), both in Newport, are examples of Hunt's previous domestic work which typify the romantic, picturesque style. Chateau-sur-Mer reflects the 1850s prevailing taste for mass and stability in residential architecture. Since the architecture of Chateau-sur-Mer was a departure from Hunt's usual style, he might have been more inclined to explore the new trends in architecture and design. In retrospect, it is clear that his work at Chateau-sur-Mer offered him an opportunity to experiment with the kind of palatial, grand manner architecture that would dominate the second half of his career.

It was at Chateau-sur-Mer that Hunt worked out his formula for the design of great country houses. During his work at this mansion he experimented with the design for a multi-story great hall and large double-sided stairs as the center of a building's plan with a ceremonial access to all reception rooms. The house was completed with elaborate interiors, woodwork, and fixtures that were made to order in England, France, Italy and the United States. The Eastlake style morning room and entrance hall, the Renaissance Revival style dining room and library designed by Frullini, and the Aesthetic style bedrooms were all decorated using European designers and influences. The great hall, grand staircase and custom made European interiors of Chateau-sur-Mer are features that would reappear in Hunt's later and more assertively Beaux Arts designs for Ochre Court (1888 - 1891) and The Breakers (1893-1895) where great halls, axial planning and custom made furnishings and

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interiors were used on a much grander scale.

Chateau-sur-Mer also reflects Hunt's introduction of the latest French designs to America. The use of Neo-Grec ornament, popular during Second Empire France, was introduced to America in large part by Hunt's architecture. The porte-cochere on the north side of the house was designed by Hunt with typical Neo-Grec influences. Hunt's improvements to the roofline are also ornamented with classical influences such as rosettes and acroterion.

The interiors of Chateau-sur-Mer exhibit significant examples of the historic revivalism that dominated so much of nineteenth and early twentieth century design. They are some of the best examples of British and European design in America. For example, the ballroom at Chateau-sur-Mer was decorated by Leon Marcotte in 1854 and reflects the Second Empire style that was becoming fashionable in New York and other urban centers. It was one of the first Second Empire French style interiors in Newport. The hall, staircase, and morning room with their light wood paneling and furniture, follow the style espoused by Charles Locke Eastlake. The Italian Renaissance Revival style is used in the library and dining room. These rooms were designed in Florence by Luigi Frullini (1839-1897), dismantled, and brought to Newport for reassembly. Both rooms feature major decorative elements such as the elaborately carved sideboard in the dining room and the pilasters modeled after Raphael's arabesque frescoes in the loggia of the Vatican library. Finally, the Aesthetic Movement is represented in the second floor bedrooms of Mr. and Mrs. George Peabody Wetmore featuring wallpaper from William Morris and Company.

Chateau-sur-Mer's landscape, much like the building, evolved over time. The landscape underwent significant change over the years, from the open windswept meadow on the sea to today's picturesque park with specimen trees and attendant garden architecture. In the 1850s when Chateau-sur-Mer was built, William Shepard Wetmore owned thirty-five acres of land down to the waterline. Construction of outbuildings on the property began as early as 1852. An entrance arch with adjoining red sandstone porter's lodge, a carriage house with attached barn, a complex of greenhouses used for growing grapes, flowers, and potted palms, also stood on Mr. Wetmore's property. A small, freestanding building about 20' by 20' may also have been built at this time. This building, apparently serving as the billiard room, follows the same general style as the other outbuildings with the exception of the cornice brackets. When Hunt designed the morning room for George Peabody Wetmore, the billiard building became obsolete and was taken down by 1871. Other additions to the landscape included a Chinese Moongate (1860), stables renovations (circa 1883) and a garden house (circa 1920).

In 1915, George Peabody Wetmore hired the Olmsted brothers to produce landscape drawings for redesigning the property. Their work included eliminating the south drive and moving the service entrance to the east. The estate grounds were installed in the period 1916-1918 and included a picturesque landscape of specimen trees, rhododendron, and other exotic flowers. Today, Chateau-sur-Mer's grounds remain one of the best preserved arboretums in the nation with its rare specimen trees planted in the period 1870s to 1880s.

Chateau-sur-Mer was lived in by members of the Wetmore family until 1966 when it was purchased by the Preservation Society of Newport County, after the death of Edith Wetmore. For over one hundred years the Wetmores were fixtures in the Newport social scene. Their story starts with William Shepard Wetmore (1801 - 1862), whose career began with the Providence China trade firm of Carrington & Co. At 19 he sailed to Canton as supercargo of one of the company's merchantmen. At 22, he was a partner in a trading company in Valparaiso, Chile. Also, Wetmore, and Cryder became the port's exclusive agent for British and American trade and made the fortunes of its founders. In 1834, Wetmore formed a China trade company and in a few years made it one of the largest foreign houses in Canton. By 1840, William Shepard Wetmore amassed a great fortune and retired from the trading business. Four years later he founded a New York banking firm in

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association with George Peabody, a London-based American banker.

After the Civil War, when the American Industrial Revolution reached its peak, the Wetmore family fortune was partially reinvested in trading commodities with the banking concern of J.P. Morgan. Thus, the Wetmores are a prime example of the transfer of wealth in nineteenth century America from old and established mercantile trading fortunes to the burgeoning new industrial economy.

William Shepherd Wetmore and his wife, Anstice Derby Wetmore, had three children: William Shepard, Jr., George Peabody, and Annie Derby. At the time of his death in 1862, William Sr. was survived by only two of his children, George and Annie. George Peabody became head of the Wetmore family when he was only 16 years old. He went on to graduate from Yale and Columbia Law School, and was admitted to the bar in New York and Rhode Island. He married Edith Keteltas in 1869. The young couple lived abroad from 1869 until they made Chateau-sur-Mer their permanent residence in 1880. During the period 1873 to 1880, the Wetmores engaged the architect Richard Morris Hunt to renovate Chateau-sur-Mer. With the renovated Chateau-sur-Mer as his local base, Wetmore entered Rhode Island's political scene. He served two terms as Republican Governor of Rhode Island (1885–1894) and three as a U.S. Senator (1894–1921). While in Washington, Senator Wetmore served on planning commissions for the Lincoln and Grant memorials and supported completion of the United States Capitol building. As chairman of the Library Appropriations Committee, he was an effective advocate of the Library of Congress and its collections.

George Peabody Wetmore and his wife Edith Keteltas had four children: two sons and two daughters. While the sons died rather young, Edith and Maude Wetmore survived well into old age. The Wetmore sisters commissioned architect John Russell Pope in 1915 to remodel the former front entrance in the main tower (west façade) of Chateau-sur-Mer. The former front door in the tower was replaced with a bay window in the Neo-Grec manner.

With its British and European styled interiors, its pristine landscape with rare specimen trees and its renovations by the leading architects Richard Morris Hunt and John Russell Pope, Chateau-sur-Mer is a national repository of late nineteenth century architecture and design.

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- Preliminary Determination of Individual Listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
 Previously Listed in the National Register.
 Previously Determined Eligible by the National Register.
 Designated a National Historic Landmark.
 Recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey: #
 Recorded by Historic American Engineering Record: #

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 Other State Agency
 Federal Agency
 Local Government
 University

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X Other (Specify Repository): American Institute of Architects, Hunt Collection, The Octagon, Washington, D.C.
 The Preservation Society of Newport County, Library and Archives
 The Wetmore letter, Rhode Island Historical Society

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreage of Property: 17 acres

UTM References:	Zone	Easting	Northing
A	19	307689	4593333
B	19	307709	4593157
C	19	307271	4593088
D	19	307262	4593332
E	19	307402	4593353
F	19	307410	4593292

Verbal Boundary Description:

The boundary of the property is defined in the deed dated January 23, 1970, Land Evidence Book 229, pp. 25-26, held by the City Clerk's Office of Newport County, Rhode Island. The property is located in Plat 36, Lots 23, 25, 33, and 33 ½. The boundary of the property is defined as follows: BEGINNING at the southeasterly corner of Bellevue Avenue and Leroy Avenue and running easterly to the northwest corner of land of Lilius Sanford Sheffield Johnson, bounded NORTHERLY by Leroy Avenue; thence turning and running southerly, easterly, and northerly to a stone bound, bounded EASTERLY, NORTHERLY and WESTERLY by land of said Lilius Sanford Sheffield Johnson; thence turning and running easterly a distance of forty (40) feet, to the northwesterly corner of land of Salve Regina College, bounded NORTHERLY by Leroy Avenue; thence turning and running southerly a distance of two hundred thirty one and eighty six hundredths (231.86) feet, bounded EASTERLY by land of Salve Regina College; thence turning and running easterly a distance of three hundred eighty seven and nine tenths (387.9) feet to Lawrence Avenue, bounded NORTHERLY by land of said Salve Regina College; thence turning and running southerly in the westerly line of Lawrence Avenue to the northwesterly corner of Shepherd Avenue, bounded EASTERLY by said Lawrence Avenue; thence turning and running westerly in the northerly line of Shepard Avenue to the northeasterly corner of Bellevue Avenue, bounded SOUTHERLY by Shepherd Avenue; thence turning and running northerly in the easterly line of Bellevue Avenue to the southeasterly corner of Leroy Avenue and at the point or place of beginning, bounded WESTERLY by Bellevue Avenue.

Of the parcel of land described above, the following portion (lots 23 and 33 ½ on Newport Tax Assessor Plat 36) was granted by the Preservation Society of Newport County to Salve Regina College (now University) on February 10, 1970 (Land Evidence Book 229, pp.28-29, held by Newport City Clerk's Office):

Commencing at a point of intersection of the northerly side of Shepard Avenue with the westerly side of Lawrence Avenue, said intersection forming an interior angle of 91°06' 59"; thence running in a northerly direction 559.40 feet in said westerly side of Lawrence Avenue to other land of this grantee; thence turning on an interior angle of 88°31'44" and running in a westerly direction 387.16 feet, bounded NORTHERLY by other land of this grantee; thence turning at an interior angle of 271° 26' 04" and running in a northerly direction

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231.78 feet to the southerly side of Leroy Avenue, bounded **EASTERLY** on other land of this grantee; thence turning at an interior angle of 88° 20' 10" and running in a westerly direction along the southerly side of Leroy Avenue 40 feet to a stone bound; thence turning at an interior angle of 91° 39' 50" and running in a southerly direction 246.78 feet to a stone bound bounded **WESTERLY** on land of L.S.S. Johnson; thence continuing in a southerly direction 541.95 feet to a stone bound in the northerly side of Shepherd Avenue; bounded **WESTERLY** by other land of this grantor; thence turning at an interior angle of 88° 52' 22" and running in an easterly direction in said northerly side of Shepard Avenue for a distance of 427.20 ft. to the point or place of beginning; containing 5.685 acres of land (being lots 23 and 33 ½ on Newport Tax Assessor's Plat 36.)

Boundary Justification:

The boundary includes the house, gatekeeper's cottage and adjacent arch, teahouse, carriage house and stable complex, and land which have historically been part of the Chateau-sur-Mer estate and which retain historic integrity.

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11. FORM PREPARED BY

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July 27, 2006