

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

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

OMB No. 1024-0018

HENRY C. BOWEN HOUSE (Roseland Cottage)

Page 1

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: HENRY C. BOWEN HOUSE

Other Name/Site Number: Roseland Cottage

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: 556 Route 169 Not for publication: _____

City/Town: Woodstock Vicinity: _____

State: CT County: Windham Code: 015 Zip Code: 06281

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
3
1
1
5

Noncontributing
1 buildings
sites
structures
objects
1 Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: 5

Name of related multiple property listing: _____

HENRY C. BOWEN HOUSE (Roseland Cottage)

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

4. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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

HENRY C. BOWEN HOUSE (Roseland Cottage)**Page 3**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

6. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic: Domestic

Sub: Single Dwelling

Current: Recreation and Culture

Sub: Museum

7. DESCRIPTION

Architectural Classification:

Gothic Revival

Materials:

Foundation: Granite

Walls: Wood

Roof: Wood shingle

Other Description: _____

HENRY C. BOWEN HOUSE (Roseland Cottage)**Page 4**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.

The following description quotes in large part the National Register Nomination for the Bowen House written by Mardges Bacon in 1976:

The Henry C. Bowen House, Roseland Cottage, is spectacularly sited on an approximately three acre lot, facing northeast toward Woodstock Common at the crest of Woodstock Hill. Commissioned in 1845, built in 1846, this Gothic Revival house with servant's ell to the southwest, brings into focus a collection of structures which include a barn and bowling alley, ice house and classical garden pavilion. The property is defined on its northeast boundary along Route 169 by a picturesque fence with granite posts spanned in wood incised with a quatrefoil motif complementary to the Gothic ornament of the main structure. The house has always been approached from the southeast by a curved drive. the original enclosed projecting porch

Roseland Cottage is of frame construction with a granite foundation and brick-lined exterior walls. This two-and-one-half-story structure appears deceptively vertical, due to its board and batten exterior fabric, a high foundation, and steeply pitched roof with pointed gables and paired ornamental chimney stacks--all of which support a Gothic theme.

Roseland Cottage continues to maintain the striking color scheme associated with the house since the 1800s: a bright pink facade trimmed with maroon and dark green ornament. A foliation of organic imagery and picturesque Gothic details characterize both exterior and interior. Such exterior addenda as verge or barge boards, porch trellises with quatrefoil design, crockets, pinnacles, drip moldings, crenelations, oriel and bay windows with tracery and stained glass are gathered together in a dynamic expression of rural Gothic.

The main portion of the house is square in plan. Its principal facade to the southeast shows a remarkably conservative predilection for axial organization with a dominant entrance centralizing its three bays. A wide central hall contains an elaborately carved staircase. On each side of the hall, pairs of rooms are axially disposed. to the northeast and southeast, double parlors--each a mirror image in plan--are joined by an arched passage decorated in *trompe l'oeil* panelling and graining, and fitted with sliding doors. Each parlor contains a bay window with mullioned casements securing diamond-shaped panes of stained glass. A window seat is integrated with each bay window. The parlors share a conservatory which projects to the northeast. Its generous window of Gothic tracery and stained glass

HENRY C. BOWEN HOUSE (Roseland Cottage)**Page 5**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

dominates both the interior of the conservatory and the exterior plane of the east facade. Opposite the hall, a dining room to the southwest shares an interior chimney with a bedroom to the northwest. The kitchen is located in the ell to the southwest, axially aligned with the conservatory. The second floor parallels the regularized plan of the ground floor with wide central hall giving access to four bedrooms and a diminutive bedroom in the space directly above the conservatory.

The Gothic theme is extended to the interior decoration and furnishings. Original painting and graining survives on most of the first floor woodwork. Elaborately carved moldings, mantelpiece, and staircase interpret Gothic motifs.¹

Throughout their ownership, the Bowens respected the original conception of the house. The walls of the double parlor, dining room, central hall and upstairs hall retain Lincrusta Walton wall coverings of the 1880s, which complement the original design. First manufactured in this country in 1882 in Stamford, Connecticut, Lincrusta was a linoleum-like substance that could be embossed, colored and gilded to simulate the rich textures and hues of tooled leather. The installation of the Lincrusta, and the replacement of the original Gothic Revival plaster ceiling medallions with Victorian Gothic medallions also in the 1880s constitute the only major changes to the interiors.

All the furniture at Roseland Cottage dates to the lifetime of Henry C. Bowen, and includes a large number of original furnishings. Among the most notable of these pieces are an extensive parlor set carved with Gothic motifs in black walnut (possibly attributed to Thomas Brooks of Brooklyn, New York) in 1847, and four cottage bedroom sets, several of which are grained and painted with *trompe l'oeil*.²

Other furniture was brought later in the nineteenth century from the family's Brooklyn Heights residence.

The exterior appearance of the house has undergone very few changes. The porte-cochere canopy on the south side of the building was added between 1887 and 1901. At approximately the same time, the ell was extended to provide more servant's rooms and laundry space. The original scalloped wood shingle roof, shown in early photographs, was replaced in 1887 by a pressed tin shingle roof. This was subsequently replaced by a modern asphalt shingle roof.

¹ Mardges Bacon, "Henry C. Bowen House, 'Roseland Cottage', National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form," 1976.

² Ibid.

HENRY C. BOWEN HOUSE (Roseland Cottage)**Page 6**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Grounds and Outbuildings

In keeping with mid-nineteenth century theories that the house and grounds of a rural property should be part of a tasteful continuum, the landscape and outbuildings of the Bowen House were carefully integrated into the over-all design. The two outbuildings--the Barn and what is known as the Ice House--were designed in 1846 in the Gothic Revival style to complement the main structure. Both outbuildings received additions in later years that were faithful to the original design conception.

The Barn, designed by Joseph C. Wells, is fitted with board and batten exterior walls, pointed arched windows in the gables and decorative verge boards. Wells' plans and specifications detail, among other features, the materials and finishing of the bowling alley that was part of the original design of the Barn. The barn received a large addition including stable and animal pens probably in the early 1860s.

The Ice House, also with board and batten walls and Gothic eave trim, was constructed in several stages to accommodate the changing needs of the estate. Beginning in 1846 as a woodshed and privy, the structure grew to include an ice house in the 1860s, a potting shed in the 1880s, and a greenhouse and aviary in the early twentieth century.

The Garden Pavilion, a small structure set southwest of the parterre garden, was constructed in the 1920s at the request of Clarence Bowen. Although classical in style, it contributes to the overall picturesque quality of the landscape.

In 1850, Henry Bowen completed the landscaping of his grounds by laying out the Parterre Garden, a garden of formal planting beds separated by paths. Although the designer of the garden and other landscaping has not been identified, the architect, Joseph C. Wells may have been involved. Six hundred yards of dwarf English boxwood were set out to outline twenty-one garden beds. The parterre garden remained a focal point for events surrounding Henry C. Bowen's famous Fourth of July celebrations throughout the nineteenth century. By the mid-twentieth century, the boxwood was overgrown. In 1978, a project to restore the garden was initiated. Careful pruning of the boxwood, inventorying of surviving plant materials, and historical research to document the original plantings resulted by 1986 in a garden restored to its pre-1910 appearance.

The bowling alley, which is part of the grounds, is a non-contributing building.

HENRY C. BOWEN HOUSE (Roseland Cottage)**Page 7**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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 B X C X D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): A B C D E F G

NHL Criteria: 4

NHL Theme(s): XVI. Architecture
 E. Gothic Revival
 1. Early Gothic Revival

Areas of Significance: Architecture: Gothic Revival

Period(s) of Significance: 1846-1896

Significant Dates: 1846, late 1880s

Significant Person(s): Henry Chandler Bowen
 (National Register Listing)

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: Joseph Collins Wells, architect

HENRY C. BOWEN HOUSE (Roseland Cottage)**Page 8**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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

This statement of significance quotes portions of the significance statement prepared by Mardges Bacon in 1976 for the Bowen House National Register nomination.

The Henry C. Bowen House is one of the best documented, fully developed and most intact Gothic Revival cottage-villas to survive in America.¹ It retains virtually all of its original interior and exterior architectural features. Designed in 1846 by Joseph Collins Wells, English-born architect of a number of Gothic Revival buildings in the New York area, Roseland Cottage is a brilliant assemblage of Gothic motifs integrated into a lively and individualistic over-all design. Clearly the design of Roseland Cottage owes a debt to the architectural theories of Andrew Jackson Downing and Alexander Jackson Davis. However, it is Wells' creative use of these design ideals that sets Roseland Cottage apart from the many Gothic Revival houses that were built from Downing's designs by local carpenters. The significance of Roseland Cottage is enhanced by the survival intact of its original setting--a Downingesque planned picturesque landscape which includes a boxwood parterre garden laid out in 1850, one of two boxwood parterre gardens to survive in New England from the period; two Gothic Revival outbuildings, one of which incorporates what is believed to be the oldest bowling alley in the country; and original fencing and drives.

William Pierson, Jr., in his discussion of early Gothic styles in America, ranks Roseland Cottage in importance with the William Rotch House in New Bedford (1845), the Delamater House in Rhinebeck, New York (1843), both by A. J. Davis, and the Oaks Angier Ames House in North Easton, Massachusetts (1854) by an unknown architect, but taken from a design in A. J. Downing's *Cottage Residences* (1842). He distinguishes Roseland Cottage from these other buildings thus:

There are many small lively parts to the house--the repetitious open gables, the fleur-de-lis crests, the traceried trelliswork, the bays, the oriels, the varied windows, the hoods the pinnacles--all etched sharply against sky and house by the strong contrasts of pink walls and the red trim. Where both Downing and Davis in their work plead for harmonious, organic relationships, Roseland's multiple components stand in sparkling isolation, each reveling in its own

¹ "Cottage-villa", a term used by Alexander Jackson Davis to describe the William Rotch House in New Bedford, Massachusetts, defines a house that is smaller and less pretentious than the Gothic villa (of which "Lyndhurst" in Tarrytown, New York and "Kingscote" in Newport, Rhode Island are the prime surviving examples), and yet is larger and more elaborate than the true Gothic cottage.

HENRY C. BOWEN HOUSE (Roseland Cottage)**Page 9**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

decorative lace. . . . Although the sources of Roseland Cottage are conspicuous, it is an original and joyous house, singing of its independence in a brilliant convoluted line against the subdued tones and slower rythms of the... Connecticut countryside.²

The architect, Joseph Collins Wells of Brooklyn, New York, received the commission to design Henry Bowen's summer residence in Woodstock, Connecticut in 1845.

Born in 1814 and trained as an architect in England [Wells] immigrated to America in 1839. He developed a reputation as a church architect and was one of the founders of the American Institute of Architects. He is most well-known as the architect of the brownstone First Presbyterian Church (1845), a Gothic Revival church on Fifth Avenue. Wells is reported to have designed Bowen's New York store on the corner of Pine and Cedar Streets, built in 1843 (later known as the Delmonico Building; demolished) Well-documented, however, is the building commission given to Wells for the newly founded Plymouth Church of the Pilgrims (1849), on Orange Street between Hicks and Henry Streets, Brooklyn. Wells also designed a number of villas remarkably similar to the Bowen House, viz., Chas. Kneeland Villa, Bayside, Long Island.³

The importance of Roseland Cottage is enhanced by the survival of an extensive body of documents relating to its construction. These include Joseph Wells' original architectural drawings and specifications, Henry C. Bowen's ledger detailing construction expenses, contracts with the building contractor, Edwin Eaton of Chaplin, Connecticut, and materials supplier, Samuel Underwood of Pomfret, Connecticut. These materials make Roseland Cottage an unmatched resource for the scholarly study of building practices associated with rural Gothic architecture in the mid-nineteenth century.

Roseland Cottage could rest alone on its architectural merit were it not for strong historical associations as the summer residence of one of the nation's leading citizens in the mid-nineteenth century, Henry Chandler Bowen. The house remained in the possession of the distinguished Bowen family until its acquisition by SPNEA in 1971, when it became a house museum.

² William H. Pierson, Jr., *American Buildings and Their Architects: Technology and the Picturesque* (New York: Doubleday & Company, 1978): 415.

³ Mardges Bacon, "Henry C. Bowen House, 'Roseland Cottage', National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form," 1976.

HENRY C. BOWEN HOUSE (Roseland Cottage)**Page 10**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Henry Chandler Bowen (1813-1896) . . . was born and educated in Woodstock where his father kept a country store and tavern. Having worked in that store for several years, Bowen proceeded to New York to work as a clerk in a dry goods firm until 1838, when he went into partnership to establish the firm of Bowen and McNamee (later Bowen and Holmes).⁴

In 1850, Bowen and his partner were subject to attack by other merchants for their refusal to endorse the Fugitive Slave Act. In response, they published an often-quoted card, which stated in effect that their goods and not their principles were for sale.

At the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861, Bowen's firm went bankrupt. He retired from business to pursue his interests as publisher, editor and eventually sole owner of the journal which he had founded [with others] in 1848, *The Independent*.... This journal [although not an official organ of the religion, was] closely associated with Congregationalism.⁵

In 1870, the paper was at its high point of circulation. It claimed an advertising patronage three times that of any other religious newspaper and more than that of any secular paper.⁶

The paper also attracted the best writers of the day, including Harriet Beecher Stowe, Whittier, Greeley, Garrison, Phillips and Mrs. Browning, and was a strong supported of the Abolitionist movement.⁷

Bowen also ardently supported the establishment of Congregationalism on a national front, for his own ledger indicated that he personally contributed substantial funds toward the building and maintenance of Congregational churches in New York, Connecticut, Washington, D.C., and Iowa. The most famous of these was the Plymouth Church of the Pilgrims, Brooklyn, in which Henry Ward Beecher preached for forty years until his death in 1887.

Henry Bowen, in 1844, married Lucy Tappan of Brooklyn. They resided at 90 Willow Street, Brooklyn Heights, during the winter months; and in Woodstock during the

⁴ Mardges Bacon, "Henry C. Bowen House, 'Roseland Cottage', National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form," 1976.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Frank Luther Mott, *A History of American Magazines* Vol. II, 1850-1865 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957), 375.

⁷ Ibid., 373

HENRY C. BOWEN HOUSE (Roseland Cottage)**Page 11**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

summers. In 1863 Bowen was widowed. In 1865, he married Ellen Holt of Pomfret.

Architecturally, Roseland Cottage represents a distinguished nineteenth century interpretation of Gothic as a revivalist style applied to domestic use. Contemporaneous theory and design, represented by Alexander Jackson Davis and Andrew Jackson Downing respectively encouraged the use of Gothic forms as the most appropriate symbol for conveying Christian piety and virtue. The Gothic residence, with its religious associations, was the obvious design approach for the dwelling of a man such as Henry Bowen who was deeply committed to the institutionalization of organized religion in America. Moreover, the Gothic Revival style lent itself to an easy harmony with its planned natural landscape whereby the organic forms of nature might find similar expression in the habitable environment. The winding approach to the house, for example, encouraged the house to be experienced from a succession of landscape perspectives. Porches mediated between the house enclosure and the natural environment.⁸

The property is also associated with Henry C. Bowen, a prominent New York merchant involved in the anti-slavery movement, a leading promoter of Congregationalism in the country, the editor and publisher of *The Independent* (a newspaper closely associated with Congregationalism that enjoyed a national readership in the 1860s and 1870s), and a benefactor of Woodstock, Connecticut.

When the Bowens were in residence during the summer months, Roseland Cottage remained a focus of community activity. Henry Bowen was as much a benefactor of local civic projects as he was a supporter of Congregationalist activities. Local works initiated by Bowen included the endowment of the Woodstock Academy and the landscaping of Woodstock Hill and the Common. Bowen's major project, however, was the purchase of a site beside Lake Woodstock (now Roseland Lake) for the creation of pleasure grounds. This area was dedicated Roseland Park and presented to the town at the time of the nation's Centennial on July 4, 1876. Here, annual Fourth of July celebrations, long associated with Woodstock, continued to be held. At the time of these Woodstock Celebrations, honored guests included Henry Ward Beecher, a frequent visitor; Oliver Wendell Holmes and on July 4, 1870, President Ulysses S. Grant; as well as four other presidents who were overnight guests

⁸ Mardges Bacon, "Henry C. Bowen House, 'Roseland Cottage' National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form," 1976.

HENRY C. BOWEN HOUSE (Roseland Cottage)**Page 12**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

at Roseland--Hayes, Harrison, Cleveland and McKinley. The northeast bedroom was named "The President's Room" in their honor.⁹

The updating of Roseland Cottage in the late 1880s with Lincrusta Walton wall covering in the downstairs rooms and stair hall, and new Victorian Gothic plaster ceiling medallions reflected its continuing importance as a place of entertainment for Bowen's distinguished friends.

As significant as the Bowen House itself is the survival in nearly intact form of the original setting of the house, a planned landscape in which gardens, outbuildings, surrounding areas and vistas are integrated into a picturesque and harmonious environment. The Bowen House and its setting may be the most complete expression of the ideals of architecture and landscape design of Andrew Jackson Downing to survive in the country.

Several components of the setting have significance beyond their role in the complex:

Parterre Garden

The Parterre Garden, in which most of the dwarf boxwood borders of the garden beds survive from their original planting in 1850, is one of two known boxwood parterre gardens of the period in New England (the other garden is at the Rotch-Jones-Duff House and Garden Museum in New Bedford, Massachusetts). That Mr. Bowen and his gardeners were able to establish the boxwood in the first place is unusual. Boxwood, much more at home in the southern states, is only marginally hardy. For it to take hold and survive in inland Connecticut is rare indeed.

The Parterre Garden, with its curvilinear paths and twenty-one beds, is an important example of gardening practices of the period. While Downing does not recommend parterre gardens as a general matter, he does offer plans for just such a rose parterre as was installed at the Bowen House in the appendix to his *Landscape Gardening. . . and Rural Architecture* (1841). The garden's significance is enhanced by the careful restoration of the 1980s.

Outbuildings

The Barn and the Ice House (both begun in 1846 and later enlarged), with their Gothic Revival detailing, are part of a rapidly diminishing sample of Gothic Revival outbuildings constructed to complement the main house in style.

⁹ Mardges Bacon, "Henry C, Bowen House, 'Roseland Cottage' National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form," 1976.

HENRY C. BOWEN HOUSE (Roseland Cottage)**Page 13**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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HENRY C. BOWEN HOUSE (Roseland Cottage)**Page 14**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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HENRY C. BOWEN HOUSE (Roseland Cottage)

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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: [Photographs only: HABS Photographs 70-543-1 through 70-543-80]
- Recorded by Historic American Engineering Record: # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other: Specify Repository: Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities Archives

HENRY C. BOWEN HOUSE (Roseland Cottage)**Page 16**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreage of Property: 2.9 acres

UTM References: Zone Northing Easting

A 19 4648210 253260

Verbal Boundary Description:

Beginning at the southwesterly corner of the herein described parcel of land, at the northeasterly corner of the other land of grantor, at an iron in the westerly line of Connecticut State Highway Route #169, distant 111.0 feet northerly of the northeasterly corner of the land of Rose and Louise Dresser; thence S. 59° 20', W. 298.0 feet following the northerly line of a proposed street to an iron in the ground; thence N. 25° 46', W. 486.8 feet to an iron in the ground; thence N. 64° 37', E. 240.0 feet, along land now or formerly of John McClellan, to an iron in the ground in the westerly line of said highway; thence S. 33° 35', E. 461.71 feet, along the westerly line of said highway, to a point and place of beginning. Parcel containing 2.9 acres.

Boundary Justification:

The present 2.9 acres are the same premises conveyed in a certain Warranty Deed from Margaret Carson Holt to the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities, Incorporated, recorded in Woodstock Land Records in Volume 64 at Page 372 and 472, and includes the parcel historically associated with Roseland Cottage, the house of Henry C. Bowen.

HENRY C. BOWEN HOUSE (Roseland Cottage)**Page 17**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

11. FORM PREPARED BY

Name/Title: Ms. Anne Andrus Grady, Research Historian

Org.: Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities

Street/#: 141 Cambridge Street

City/Town: Boston

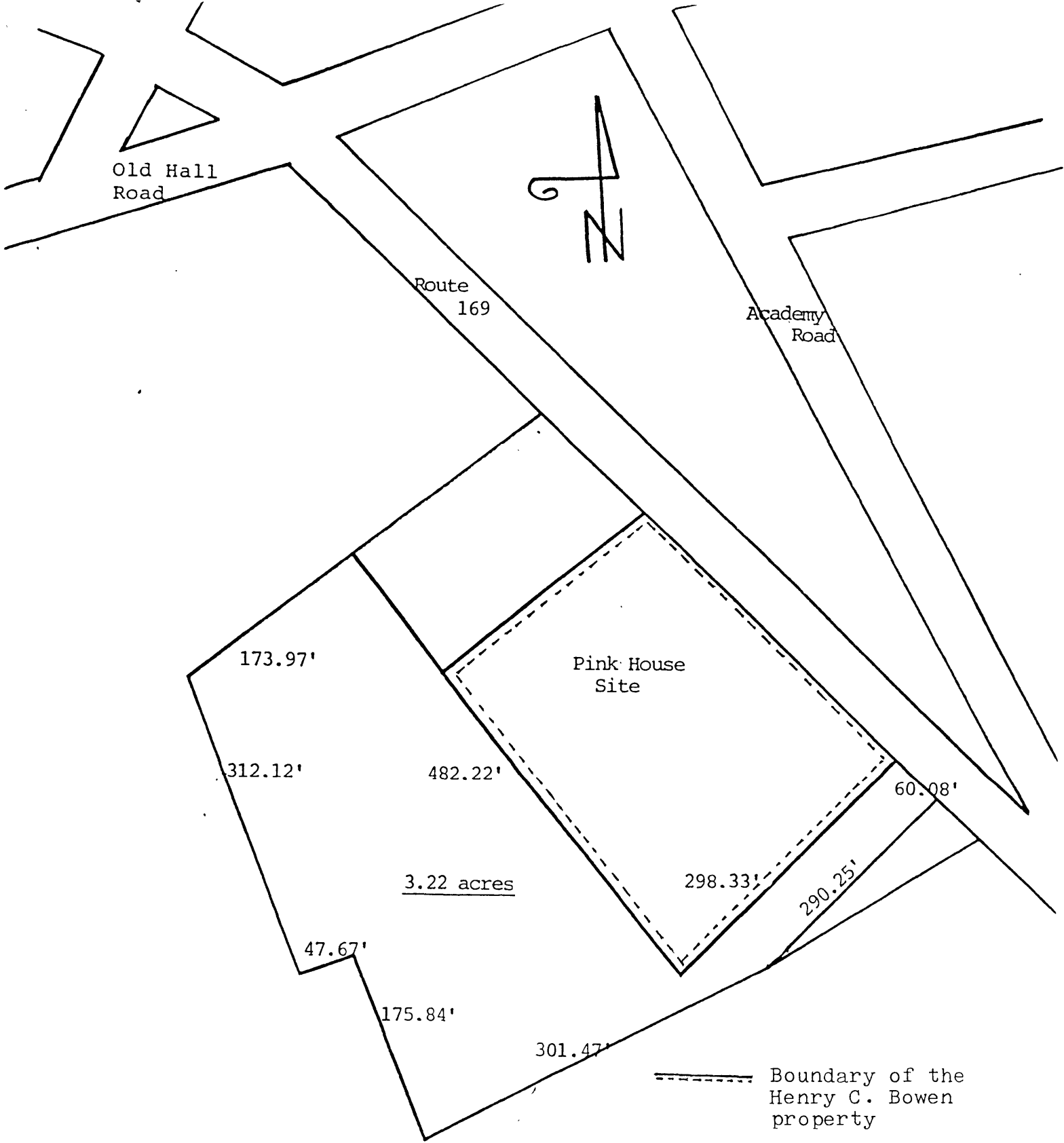
State: Massachusetts

ZIP: 02114

Telephone: (617) 227-3956

Date: November 1, 1991

Edited By: Architectural Historian Carolyn Pitts
NPS/WASO/History Division (418)
P.O Box 37127
Washington, DC 20013-7127
(202) 343-8166



1. Site Plan, Henry C, Biowen Property, 1987.

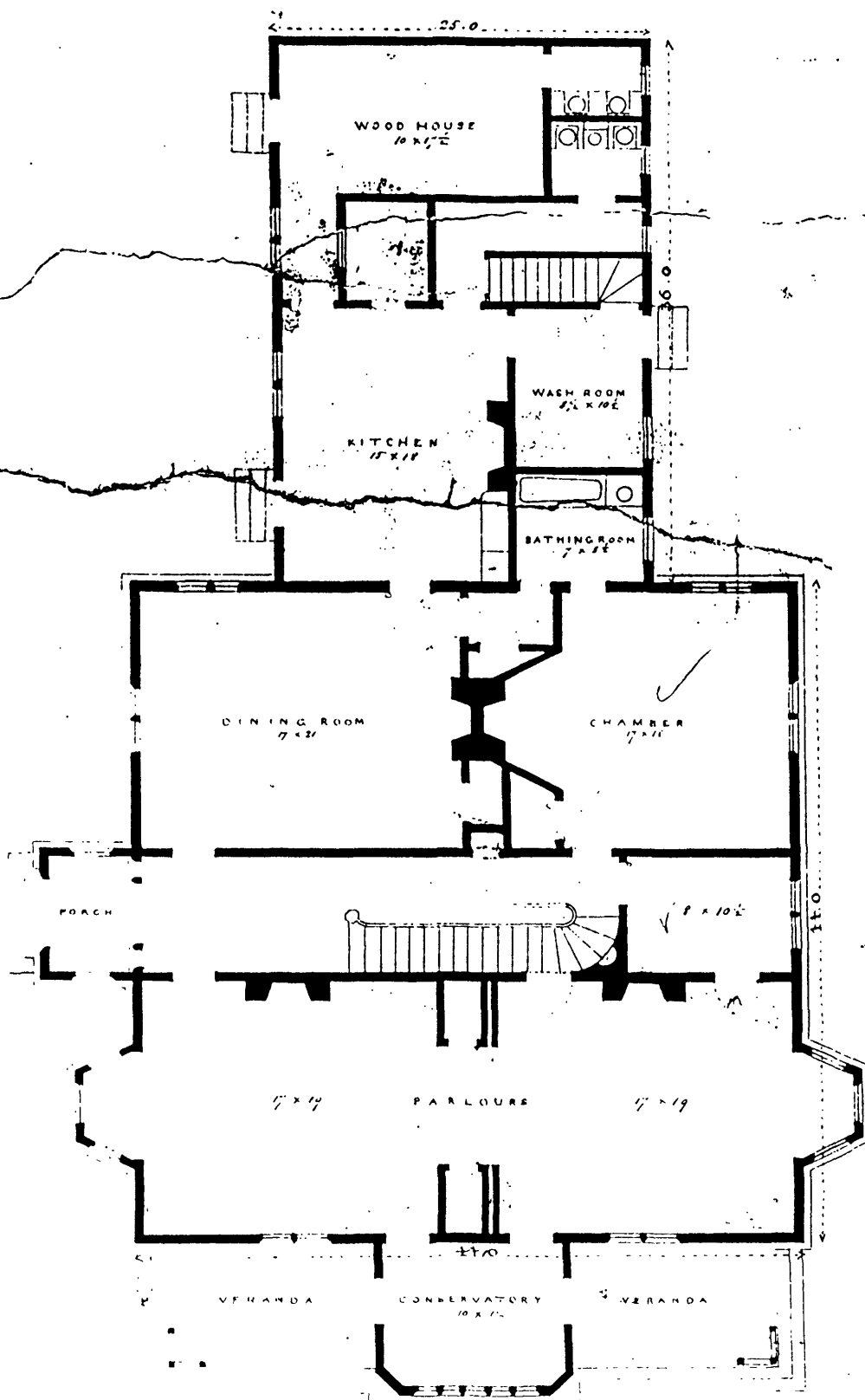
Source: James N. Platt, M.A.I., "Appraiser's Report."

Note: the other property dimensioned is a parcel of land belonging to the Woodstock Historical Society, which is leased to SPNEA for parking.

LAND SKETCH
 WOODSTOCK HISTORICAL SOCIETY
 ROUTE 169
 WOODSTOCK, CONNECTICUT

2. Henry C. Bowen House "Roseland Cottage"
Plan of the First Floor, watercolor rendering,
by Joseph C. Wells, architect, c. 1846

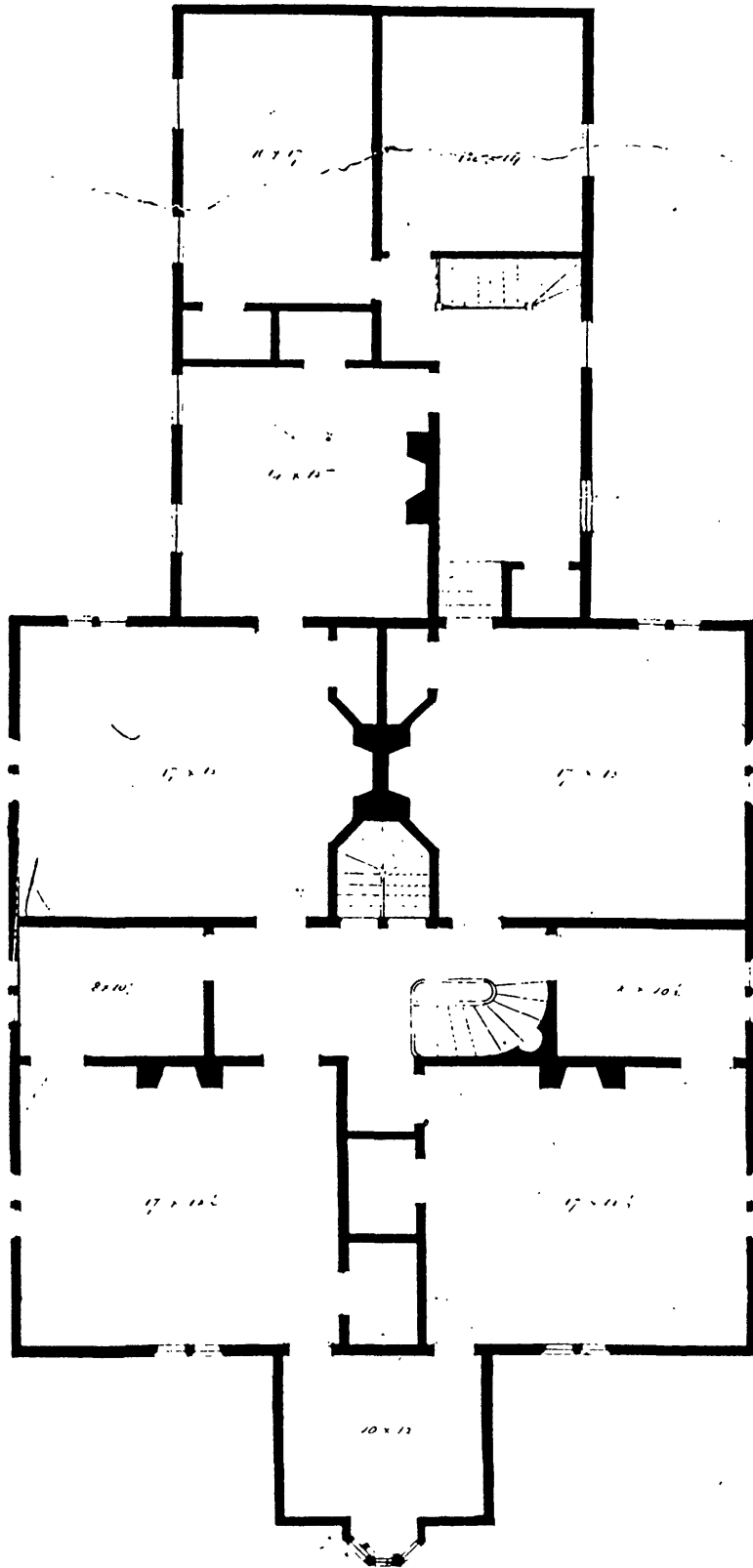
Source: SPNEA Archives



• FIRST STORY •

3. Henry C. Bowen House "Roseland Cottage"
Plan of Second Floor, watercolor rendering,
by Joseph C. Wells, architect, c. 1846

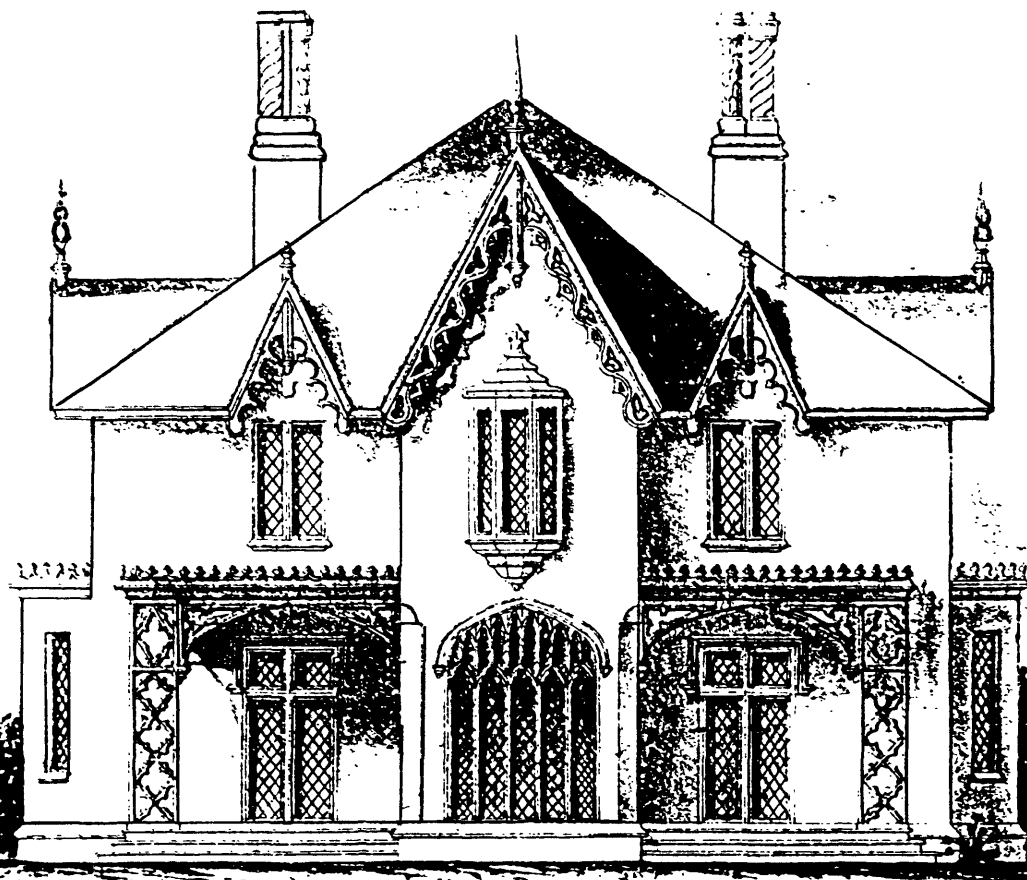
Source: SPNEA Archives



- SECOND STORY -

4. Henry C. Bowen House "Roseland Cottage"
East Elevation, watercolor rendering
by Joseph C. Wells, architect, c. 1846

Source: SPNEA Archives



- EAST - FRONT -

5. Henry C. Bowen House "Roseland Cottage"
South Elevation, watercolor rendering
by Joseph C. Wells, architect, c. 1846

Source: SPNEA Archives



South front

6. Henry C. Bowen House "Roseland Cottage"
North Elevation, watercolor rendering
by Joseph C. Wells, architect, c. 1846

Source: SPNEA Archives



• NORTH • FRONT •