

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

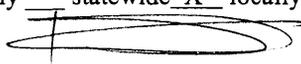
1. Name of Property

historic name Hitchcocksville; Riverton
other names/site Riverton Historic District (use for publication)

2. Location

street & number Roughly bounded by the Still and Farmington rivers and East River Road not for publication N/A
(also see continuation sheet Item #2)
city or town Riverton (Barkhamsted) vicinity _____
state Connecticut code CT county Litchfield code 005 zip code 06065

3. 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally . (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)
 3-29-07
Signature of certifying official Date
Karen Se nich, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)
Signature of commenting or other official Date
State or Federal agency and bureau

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CONTINUATION SHEET**

Riverton Historic District, Barkhamsted, Litchfield County, CT

Section 2 Page 1

Location (for notification purposes):

Note: Map /block/lot numbers are used where street address numbers are not available.

East River Road: 414, 417, 418, 419, 420, 422, 423, 424, 435, 428, 432, 434, 436, 440, 442, 444 (ROW only), 448, 452, 454.

Main Street: 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, Map 2/Block 14/Lot 1, Farmington River Bridge, Rte. 20 (no DOT #).

Mountain Road: 3, Map 2/Block 5/Lot 11A, 5, 6, 10.

Riverton Road: 1, 3, 3R, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17.

Robertsville Road: 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 11.

School Street: 2, 5, 9, 11, 12, 15, Map2/Block 3/Lot 14A, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 29.

Riverton Historic District

Name of Property

Litchfield, CT

County and State

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:
 entered in the National Register.
See continuation sheet.
 determined eligible for the National Register
See continuation sheet.
 determined not eligible for the
National Register
 removed from the National Register.
 other, (explain):

Signature of the Keeper: *Edson H. Beall* Date of Action: *5.15.07*

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)
 private
 public-local
 public-State
 public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)
 building(s)
 district
 site
 structure
 object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>78</u>	<u>17</u> buildings
<u>2</u>	<u>1</u> sites
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> structures
	objects
<u>81</u>	<u>18</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register
4

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)
DOMESTIC/single/multiple dwelling/hotel/secondary structure
INDUSTRY/manufacturing facility
RELIGION/religious facility
FUNERARY/cemetery
RECREATION/CULTURE/fair

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)
DOMESTIC/single dwelling/secondary structure/hotel
SOCIAL/meeting hall; RECREATION/CULTURE/museum/ COMMERCE/TRADE/specialty store
RELIGION/religious facility/studio
FUNERARY/cemetery
RECREATION/CULTURE/fair

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)
COLONIAL/Postmedieval English
EARLY REPUBLIC/Federal; MID-19TH
 CENTURY/Greek Revival/Gothic Revival
LATE VICTORIAN/Queen Anne/.Italianate

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)
foundation stone
walls weatherboard
roof asphalt shingle
other brick/vinyl siding

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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Riverton Historic District, Barkhamsted, Litchfield County, CT

Section 7 Page 1

Description

The Riverton Historic District is located in the northwest corner of Barkhamsted just south of the border with the Town of Hartland. Encompassing most of the nineteenth-century industrial village of Riverton, the district is situated in a triangular valley at the junction of two rivers, the Still and the West Branch of the Farmington. The village is surrounded by wooded hills that rise up to 600 feet above the valley floor, with the highest ridgeline east of the district in what is now the Peoples State Forest.

District streets, which incorporate historic roads and turnpikes, include State Route 20, the main thoroughfare. As shown on the attached district map, it enters the district from the south, crosses the Still River and runs north along Riverton Road and east on Main Street, before crossing the Farmington River and continuing north on East River Road. Historic houses there and along School Street (which now dead ends near the Hartland line) have unobstructed views of this river. The rest of East River Road to the south, and Robertsville Road, which runs northwest along the Still River to Colebrook, complete the district.

The Riverton District includes 103 resources, of which 85 (83 percent) contribute to its historic character. Most of the 29 wood-framed and brick houses that line the streets of the village were constructed before 1900, with nearly 76 percent by 1850. Other contributing resources include a general store, three inns, two churches, and two sites (cemetery and fairgrounds). While nothing remains of dams and races that powered a series of historic industries in the village, the famous Hitchcock Chair Company on the Farmington River and a grist and shingle mill on the Still River have survived to make major contributions to the district.

Other changes to the village over time include the loss of a few historic buildings to flooding or through demolition when the state built the existing contributing road bridge over the Farmington River (1938-1941). Several buildings have been relocated within the district, moves that are well documented. A number of historic houses are used today for commercial purposes, such as restaurants or shops, and the district school is now a factory.

The taverns or inns in the district, all constructed in the Federal period, are similar in scale, siting, and plan. Large two-story, gabled buildings with a ridge-to-street orientation, they include the Old Riverton Inn, built by 1804, and the Phelps-Tiffany Tavern of 1813, both facing East River Road at the entrance to Mountain Road. The Pinney Tavern, the only brick example, was erected on Robertsville Road in 1828.

The Old Riverton Inn is a classic example of a double-cube, Georgian Colonial plan (Inventory #22; Photograph 1). One-room deep with a center hall, it has two interior chimneys at the ridge and a three-story facade due to the slope of the lot. While the quarter fans in gables and the highly embellished entablatures are original Federal features, the swan's neck pediment with central tripartite window at the second-floor level are late 1940s replacements for the original arched and pedimented doorway there. It was relocated to the façade of the c. 1950 north addition, after a second-story Italianate veranda was removed when Route 20 was widened.

The Pinney and Phelps-Tiffany taverns, originally private residences, employ different materials but utilize the same form and a wider Georgian plan (Inventory #s 87, 17; Photographs 2, 3). The Pinney Tavern (the former home of D.C.Y. Moore¹), is a masonry structure, constructed of local brick (now painted), with stone lintels and sills, and a granite foundation. The door surround consists of slim pilasters with block capitals surmounted by a semi-elliptical arch with a key block over a rectangular transom. A similar arched pediment is found over the front door of the wood-framed

¹ His full name, Marque De Casso Yrujo Moore, was usually referenced as "D.C.Y." in town records.

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Riverton Historic District, Barkhamsted, Litchfield County, CT

Section 7 Page 2

Phelps-Tiffany Tavern (the former home of Pelatiah Ransom 2nd), but the transom or fanlight is covered. Both taverns have extensive rear additions.

Several other brick houses in the district associated with the Moore family have a gable-to-street orientation and dressed granite foundations. Two built in the mid-1820s by mason George Deming for the adult children of Apollos Moore, one for George's wife Belinda Moore (a gift from her father), the other for her brother Charles Moore (Inventory #s 75, 36; Photograph 4, 5), display pedimented gables with covered (or blind) fanlights, characteristic features of the late Federal style. Although there are sandstone lintels at the second floor, brick voussoirs detail the first-floor windows and the centered door (offset in the Moore house), which is set within a typical, narrow beaded frame. Similar plain doorways with stone lintels, as well as a full pediment with fanlight (now covered), detail the brick Federal built for William Moore, Jr., on Mountain Road (Inventory #43; Photograph 6). Also constructed with a dressed granite foundation, it is one of the first houses in the district to have a side-hall plan.

Simple Federal door surrounds with attenuated pilasters, high entablatures, and projecting cornices detail several frame houses in the district. They range from the Ward House, a plain vernacular dwelling on School Street (Inventory #99; Photograph 7), to the more stylish Olmsted House on East River Road, which also features corner pilasters and a full pediment (Inventory #10; Photograph 8). At the Moore-Bevins House on Main Street, a later Federal built in 1834, the gabled pediment faces the road but the Federal doorway is centered on the five-bay east elevation (Inventory #33). A second doorway of the same type is found on the west elevation of the two-story rear ell.

The bolder classicism of the Greek Revival style was introduced in the district in 1834 by the Alfred Alford House (Inventory #33; Photograph 9). Featuring a Doric order doorway *in antis*, this brick house is detailed with a continuous entablature around the main block. It also extends across the wing porch, which features four Doric columns. The bay window on the wing and the exterior stone chimney are later additions. A similar recessed doorway *in antis* is found on the Judge Goodwin House on School Street, a wood-frame building that also displays a multiple-light, rectangular window in the pediment (Inventory #92; Photograph 10), often a defining feature of the Greek Revival. Similar windows are displayed in the pediment of the Whitfield Munson House, constructed of brick in 1855 on Riverton Road (Inventory #61) and the 1796 Ransom House on Mountain Road, which also displays a Federal door surround (Inventory #46; Photograph 11). The gabled roof may be a replacement since it appears to have the lower pitch of the Greek Revival style. The pediment window on the 1822 Arba Alford House on Main Street (once partially hidden by an exterior chimney), as well as its broad corner pilasters, Greek Revival doorways, and porch on the west elevation, were part of an extensive c. 1840 remodeling (Inventory #38; Photograph 12).

A number of vernacular dwellings in the district were influenced by the Greek Revival style, as represented by the Hodges and Pond cottages at the north end of East River Road (Inventory #s 27, 28; Photograph 13). Although the Hodges cottage now has a modern door hood and synthetic siding, these buildings were once identical. Both display characteristic narrow attic windows in the frieze, the latter feature atypically defined by a bold applied molding that continues up along the rakes. Similar windows with three lights are found on the later Henry Robinson House on School Street, another vernacular house built about 1850 (Inventory #97; Photograph 14), or the Pelatiah Ransom House on Riverton Road (Inventory #58; Photograph 15). The latter was one of the earlier intersecting gable-plan houses with side porches that became more popular in the district after the Civil War, a group that included the nearby Samuel Roberts House of 1865 (Inventory #59), said to be the first balloon construction in the village, and the c.1880 Henry Lord House across the street (Inventory #56).

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A variety of style elements embellish the more elaborate Victorian vernacular houses in the district. Among them are cross-gable plan residences built about 1880 for Lorrin Cooke and Everett Bevins, which are situated on opposite sides of Riverton Road (Inventory #s 55, 54; Photographs 16, 17). Although differentiated by dissimilar decorative trusses in the gable peaks, features derived from the Carpenter Gothic style, these houses, which are identical in form and plan, display the same architectural Italianate-style features: arched windows; bay windows on the narrow gabled elevations; and chamfered porch posts, capped by cushion capitals and sawn brackets. Another cross-gable built about the same time, the Lucius Loomis House on East River Road, has exposed rafter ends in the gables and a wraparound veranda (Inventory #1; Photograph 18).

The 1889 Hart Brothers Store at the village crossroads has the cubic form, near-flat roof, and overhanging eaves associated with both residential and commercial Italianates (Inventory #29; Photograph 19). The only historic store to survive in the district, it displays wooden eave brackets with drops and a storefront with a pent roof. The tenement at the right rear, once a free-standing building, was moved and attached to the store about 1910.

The institutional component of the district is well represented by two churches on Robertsville Road. The Union Episcopal Church, a Gothic Revival-style building listed on the National Register in 1985, was constructed of rusticated granite in 1829/30 (Inventory #78; Photograph 20). It features lancet-arched windows with tracery, a Gothic form repeated in the main door and in the detailing of the pinnacled, wood-frame bell tower. The Riverton Congregational Church of 1834, a wood-framed building, is just down the street (Inventory #89; Photograph 21). Fully utilizing the Greek Revival style, it has a pedimented recessed entrance porch with four massive, fluted and tapered Doric columns, corner pilasters, and a full entablature. The Doric order is repeated *in antis* on the tower elevations. The façade, including the tympanum, is sheathed with flush boards and the rest of the building is clapboarded. Changes to the side elevations include some covered sash in the triple-hung windows, and the addition of an exterior brick chimney and access ramp on the west side.

The Hitchcock Chair factory on the west bank of the Farmington is the major surviving industrial building in the district (Inventory #90; Photograph 22). It consists of a 1826 three-story main block (36 x' 60') with a cupola, and an ell at the southwest front corner (which may be an early addition). Both of these sections display wrought-iron wall anchors and eave brackets, typical features of early 1800s brick factories. The two-story wing on the east is an 1848 replacement for the original wheel house that was destroyed by fire. The pedimented end gable and storefront on the ell, as well as the rear annexes to the factory, date from after 1946. The other survivor, the Munson Grist and Shingle Mill, a gabled, wood-framed structure, is located next to the Still River at the southwest corner of the district (Inventory #74; Photograph 23). Set on a granite foundation, it has a three-bay façade with a central doorway, now sheltered by a porch, possibly added after the building became the Riverton Grange Hall about 1935. More recent changes include vinyl siding and modern replacement windows.

The two historic sites in the district lie on either side of the Farmington River. The 1834 Riverton Cemetery, which is bordered by a low dry-laid stone wall along East River Road, slopes gradually down towards the east bank of the river (Inventory #5). Native undergrowth lines the bank and mature trees are found throughout. Typical nineteenth-century gravestones and a few obelisks are more or less informally arranged with some of the older markers set in rows. Ten acres along the west bank of the river has been the site of the Union Agricultural Society Fairgrounds since c. 1920 (Inventory #s 68-73). Except for a nineteenth-century scythe factory that once stood near the Still River, most of this land was originally used for agricultural purposes. Associated historic barns along the western side of the fairgrounds

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(mostly hidden from view by houses along the east side of Riverton Road) include a c. 1880 barn once associated with the Bevins farm (Inventory #69). The access road from Main Street to the fenced-in site runs between the Bevins farmhouse (Inventory #33) and the Alford property to the west (Inventory #31).

A full inventory list of all the contributing and non-contributing resources (building and sites) in the district follows. Resources are listed by street address in alphanumeric order. Map, block and lot numbers are given where there is no street number. Assigned inventory numbers identify properties in the text of the nomination and on the district map. Historic names in the inventory may refer to the original owner/builder, or if the property changed hands several times (which is relatively common in the district) to a later, more prominent or long-term owner. Dates of construction of principal buildings were based on architectural stylistic analysis and/or published sources listed in the bibliography. Dates of outbuildings included in the inventory generally were estimated in the field, or taken from tax assessor's records. Smaller temporary outbuildings, such as tool and garden sheds, were not included in the inventory. The letter "C" refers to historic resources that contribute to the architectural and/or historical character of the district. Remodeled buildings with sufficient integrity to convey their historical associations are also considered as contributing. "NC" indicates modern houses and secondary structures constructed after 1955, the end of the period of significance of the district.

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Inventory of Contributing and Non-Contributing Resources

Inv. #	Address (or map-block-lot)	Historic Name/Style/Type/Date(s)	C/NC	Photo #
EAST RIVER ROAD				
1.	414	LUCIUS LOOMIS HOUSE, cross-gable, c. 1880	C	18
2.		barn, c. 1900	C	
3.		barn, c. 1900	C	
4.		shed/garage, c. 1900	C	
5.	417	RIVERTON CEMETERY, 1834	C	
6.	418	Ranch, 1981	NC	
7.	419	ARTHUR TAYLOR HOUSE, Cape, 1936	C	
8.		garage, c. 1940	C	
9.	420	SUBMIT MENTOR HOUSE, vernacular Federal, c. 1820	C	
10.	422	OLMSTED HOUSE, Federal, c. 1825	C	8
11.	423	MERCY MENTOR HOUSE, vernacular cottage, c. 1830	C	
12.		garage, c. 1930	C	
13.	424	HODGE HOUSE, vernacular, 1825	C	
		barn, c. 1920	C	
15.	425	Cape, 1963	NC	
16.	428	Ranch. c. 1960	NC	
17.	432	PHELPS-TIFFANY TAVERN, Federal, 1813	C	2
18.		garage, c. 1940	C	
19.		shed, c. 1980	NC	
20.	434	DR. THADDEUS K. DEWOLF HOUSE & OFFICE	C	
		vernacular, c. 1825; moved here from west side of East River Road		
21.		garage/barn, c. 1940	C	
22.	436	OLD RIVERTON INN, Georgian/Federal, 1804 (NR 7/24/92)	C	1
23.		garage, c. 1950	C	
24.	440	SAMUEL HART HOUSE, vernacular, c. 1870	C	
25.		shed, c. 1930	C	
26.	442	vernacular, c. 1930	C	
	448	vacant		
27.	452	THOMAS HODGES HOUSE, vernacular Greek Revival, c. 1845	C	13
28.	454	ROSWELL POND HOUSE, vernacular Greek Revival, c. 1840	C	13

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Inventory of Contributing and Non-Contributing Resources

Inv. #	Address (or map-block-lot)	Historic Name/Style/Type/Date(s)	C/NC	Photo #
MAIN STREET (Route 20)				
	1	vacant		
29.	2	HART BROTHERS STORE & HALL, Italianate, 1889; vernacular Italianate tenement right rear, c. 1885, attached c. 1910	C	19
30.		barn, c. 1900	C	
31.	3	ALFRED ALFORD HOUSE, Greek Revival (brick), 1838	C	9
32.		garage, c. 1940	C	
33.	5	APOLLOS MOORE-EVART (aka Everett) BEVINS HOUSE, vernacular Late Federal, 1834	C	
34.		barn/garage, c. 1870	C	
35.		shed, c. 1940	C	
36.	6	CHARLES MOORE HOUSE, Federal (brick), c. 1825	C	4
37.		barn, 2005	NC	
38.	8	ARBA ALFORD HOUSE, Federal, 1822; ell, 1828; Greek Revival porch/& doorway (west side), c. 1835	C	12
39.	9	RIVERTON PARK, c. 2000	NC	
	2-4-11	vacant		
40.	---	Farmington River Bridge, concrete with metal railings, 1941	C	
MOUNTAIN ROAD				
	1	See 432 East River Road		
41.	3	MOORE HOUSE, Cape, c. 1790	C	
42.	2-5-11A	garage, c. 1940	C	
43.	5	WILLIAM MOORE., JR. HOUSE, Federal (brick), 1820 (NR 4/14/99) garage, c. 1980	C NC	6
45.	6	SHERMAN BLAIR HOUSE, vernacular, c. 1825	C	
46.	10	PELATIAH RANSOM HOUSE, Federal, 1796; Greek Revival, c. 1835	C	11
47.		barn, c. 1870	C	
48.		sugar house, c. 1970	NC	
49.		barn, c. 1940	C	
50.		shed, c. 1950	C	
RIVERTON ROAD				
51.	1	GEORGE RANSOM GAS STATION, 1934; now store	C	
52.	3	RIVERTON VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT BUILDING vernacular, c. 1946; remodeled, 1980	C	
	3 Rear	vacant		

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Inventory of Contributing and Non-Contributing Resources

Inv. #	Address (or map-block-lot)	Historic Name/Style/Type/Date(s)	C/NC	Photo #
RIVERTON ROAD				
53.	5	Riverton Post Office, 1961	NC	
54.	6	EVERETT BEVINS HOUSE (2 nd), Victorian vernacular/ Carpenter Gothic, c. 1880	C	16
55.	7	GOVERNOR LORRIN A. COOKE HOUSE, Victorian vernacular/ Carpenter Gothic, c. 1880	C	17
56.	8	HENRY LORD HOUSE, vernacular, c. 1880	C	
57.		garage, c. 2000	NC	
58.	9	PELATIAH RANSOM HOUSE, vernacular, 1852	C	15
59.		garage, c. 1970	NC	
60.	12	SAMUEL J. ROBERTS HOUSE, vernacular, c. 1865	C	
61.		barn, c. 1890	C	
62.	13	WHITFIELD J. MUNSON HOUSE, Greek Revival (brick), 1855	C	
		BUTLER & HODGE LUMBER CO. (on same lot)		
63.		barn/shed, c.1930	C	
64.		barn/shed, c. 1930	C	
65.		warehouse with loading docks, c. 1970	NC	
66.		shed, 1962	NC	
67.	14	PLANTE- McCOURT HOUSE, vernacular, c. 1850	C	
68.	16	UNION AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY FAIRGROUNDS, c. 1920	C	
69.		barn, c.1880 (formerly associated with Inv. #33)	C	
70.		barn, c. 1930	C	
71.		barn, c. 1930	C	
72.		pole barn, 1955	C	
73.		ticket booth, c. 1960	NC	
74.	17	MUNSON GRIST & SHINGLE MILL, 1853; GRANGE HALL #169 after 1935	C	23
ROBERTSVILLE ROAD				
75.	2	GEORGE DEMING HOUSE, Federal (brick), 1824	C	5
76.		garage, c. 1935	C	
77.		shed, c. 1940	C	
78.	3	UNION EPISCOPAL CHURCH, Gothic Revival (stone), 1829/30 converted to artist studio, 2005 (NR 2/21/85)	C	20
79.	4	JOHN DEMING HOUSE, vernacular, c. 1860	C	
80.		barn, c. 1920	C	
81.		shed, c. 1920	C	

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Inventory of Contributing and Non-Contributing Resources

Inv. #	Address (or map-block-lot)	Historic Name/Style/Type/Date(s)	C/NC	Photo #
ROBERTSVILLE ROAD				
82.	6	DELOS (aka De Loss) H. STEPHENS HOUSE, cross-gable, c. 1865	C	
83.		barn, c. 1880 (moved from across street)	C	
84.		barn, c. 1940	C	
85.		garage, c. 1950	C	
86.		garage, c. 1993	NC	
87.	7	PINNEY TAVERN, Federal, 1828	C	3
88.		barn, 2003	NC	
89.	11	RIVERTON CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, Greek Revival, 1843	C	21
SCHOOL STREET				
90.	2	HITCHCOCK CHAIR FACTORY, industrial, (brick) c. 1826; east wing, c. 1850; south wing, by 1840; storefront & rear additions, c. 1950-70	C	22
	5	vacant		
91.	9	JUDGE HIRAM GOODWIN HOUSE, Greek Revival, c. 1840	C	10
92.	11	ALFORD-COE HOUSE, vernacular, 1841	C	
93.		garage, c. 1900	C	
94.	12	utilities shed (metal), c. 1980	NC	
95.	15	RIVERTON SCHOOL, vernacular, c. 1850 converted to factory, 1963; south addition after 1974.	C	
96.		barn/garage, c. 1980	NC	
	2-3-14A	vacant		
	20	vacant		
97.	21	HENRY ROBINSON HOUSE, vernacular Greek Revival, c. 1850	C	14
	22	vacant		
98.	23	SAMUEL COOPER HOUSE, vernacular, 1838	C	
	24	vacant		
99.	25	JOHN WARD HOUSE, vernacular with Federal doorway, c. 1825	C	7
100.		garage, 1984	NC	
101.	29	ELISHA RANSOM HOUSE, vernacular, 1848	C	
102.		shed, c. 1870	C	
103.		shop, c. 1850	C	

Riverton Historic District

Litchfield, CT

Name of Property

County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

B removed from its original location.

C a birthplace or grave.

D a cemetery.

E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

F a commemorative property.

G Less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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
- Other

Name of repository:
Connecticut State Library; Barkhamsted Historical Society

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Statement of Significance

The Riverton Historic District is a significant illustration of the impact of Industrial Revolution on the social and economic development of a rural village in Connecticut's hill country. From its association with the original Hitchcock Chair Company, significant as one of the earliest experiments in the mass production of furniture, through the manufacture of farm tools and measuring devices in the last half of the nineteenth century to the rebirth of the Hitchcock factory after World War II, the cultural landscape of the village was largely shaped and defined by the industrial experience. Associated institutional and residential construction produced a cohesive collection of historic architectural resources, which include two well-preserved country churches and an architecturally significant group of wood-framed and brick domestic architecture in the Federal, Greek Revival, and Victorian vernacular styles.

Historical Background and Significance

Barkhamsted is located in the Northwest Highlands, the last area to be settled in the Connecticut Colony. By the late seventeenth century, although the region had become a refuge for Native Americans remaining in the colony, few Europeans had ever set foot in this frontier wilderness. In 1686, when King James II established the Dominion of New England with Sir Edmund Andros as his royal governor, a threat to Connecticut's charter, the colony moved quickly to legitimize its claim to the highlands by deeding the entire area to the towns of Hartford and Windsor. There were no plans for settlement at the time, but, as population pressures became more acute in the colony, settlers and squatters pushed into the region. Pressed to resolve the issue and to regain some control over the settlement of the frontier, in 1726 the General Assembly (the former General Court) partitioned the region, awarding just the eastern half to Hartford and Windsor proprietors² and reserving the western half as colony land, which later was auctioned off to individuals. As a result, Hartland, Harwinton,³ New Hartford, and Winchester were essentially daughter towns of Hartford, while the "Half Township" awarded to Windsor eventually became the towns of Torrington, Colebrook, and Barkhamsted. The first settlers that flooded into the more fertile areas of the region founded Torrington (1740), Harwinton (1737), and New Hartford (1738). Hartland and Winchester had enough settlers for town formation before the Revolution, but Colebrook and Barkhamsted were not incorporated until 1779.

Before Windsor proprietors could claim their share of the 20,000-acre windfall in Barkhamsted, the land there had to be surveyed. Even though the first division of home lots was laid out and divided among them in 1735, settlement was delayed for many years. Lots were sold, traded, and consolidated, but few proprietors settled sons or grandsons on their land.⁴ In fact, in the first official census of Connecticut in 1756, most of the 18 people living here were presumed to be Native Americans or illegal squatters. They included James Chaugham, a Narragansett originally from Block Island, who came here from Wethersfield with his wife Molly Barber about 1740. Their cabin, located about two miles south of the district in what is now the Peoples's State Forest, was the first house in Barkhamsted.⁵ Three more areas of town land were surveyed in 1760, including the third division along the Winchester border, the area that included the future site of Riverton. And yet, as late as 1764, Barkhamsted was officially still considered an "uninhabited town." On the eve of the American Revolution, only 250 people lived within the town bounds. Instead of a cohesive nucleated settlement, the population was fairly dispersed, living in small clustered hamlets or on isolated farms along the river valleys and ridgelines. With better and cheaper land available beyond the state's borders, Connecticut's sons and daughters were already moving on into northern New England and upper New York State.

² The term "proprietors," refers to the founders of a town, whose initial investment in the community entitled them to home lots and shares of communal land in the future. These land rights, based on economic and/or social status, could be sold or passed down to future generations.

³ Part of Harwinton was originally set to Windsor.

⁴ The author is indebted to the Douglas Roberts, Barkhamsted's municipal historian, whose published research on village buildings and properties informs the historical themes developed in this nomination. See full citation in bibliography.

⁵ Later known as the "Lighthouse," a landmark for stagecoach travelers on the Farmington River Turnpike, the property was listed on National Register as the "Lighthouse Archaeological Site" on 4/25/91.

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Village Settlement

After the Revolution, when Riverton's settlement really got underway, there was extensive social and economic unrest. Virtually a whole generation was on the move. A disastrous postwar economy combined with the general decline of agriculture in the state accelerated the pace of emigration. Connecticut's economic problems, an enormous war debt and a shortage of specie (actual money), were not really resolved until the Revolution was fully secured in the early national period. While many of Connecticut's youth emigrated to the greener pastures of the Western frontier, and continued to do so well into the nineteenth century, a few still looked for new economic opportunities within the state.

The people who settled for this nearby frontier in the Connecticut highlands came from many different towns. William Moore came here from Southwick, Massachusetts. Despite his Windsor proprietorship, he had to buy into the community. After purchasing three proprietors' lots west of the Still River, where he built a house, in 1789 Moore also bought property east of the Farmington River. Two houses on Mountain Road are associated with the family, a Cape built about 1790 (Inventory #41) and the 1820 home of William Moore, Jr. (Inventory #43). Although William, Jr. removed to upper New York State in the 1830s, most of the rest of the Moore family remained in Riverton, amassing more land and building fine brick homes in the village center (Inventory #s 33, 36, 89). Other enduring names included the Ransoms, originally from Colchester. Pelatiah Ransom, the first of that name in the village, bought large tracts spanning the Farmington near the Hartland line in 1780-81 and built a house in 1796, presumed to be the present house on Mountain Road still owned by the family (Inventory #46). Two of the three other Ransom homes in the district (Inventory #s 17, 58, 101) were built by succeeding generations who carried the patriarch's name, including the home of his son, Pelatiah the Younger, which later became the Phelps-Tiffany Tavern (Inventory #17).

Judah Roberts, "the boy soldier of the Revolution," was the first of his proprietor family to live in the village.⁶ As was the case with several other families, his father had already settled elsewhere in town. Judah's house on East River Road was dismantled in 1914 to be rebuilt as an authentic New England Saltbox at the Brooklyn Museum. John Ives, the grandfather of Jesse Ives, Riverton's innkeeper (Inventory #22), came from Hamden or North Haven to live near Center Hill in 1772. Arba Alford of Simsbury settled in the flats below Riverton in 1793, but his descendants lived in the village center (Inventory #s 31, 38, 92).

Early access to a regional transportation network was the key to Riverton's early development. With a bridge over the Farmington by 1790, the only crossing (except for fords) between New Hartford and the Massachusetts line, and the opening of the Farmington River Turnpike (now East River Road and Route 20) by the turn of the century, the village became part of a turnpike system that extended all the way north to Albany, New York, and south to Hartford, a ready market for surplus agricultural goods and dressed lumber. From there, shingles and barrel staves for the West Indies trade, and later, industrial goods destined for East Coast markets, were shipped down the Connecticut River. The original Farmington River bridge, probably a log and plank structure, was rebuilt several times. Destroyed by ice buildup in 1879, it was replaced by a lenticular truss iron bridge, which was depicted in a photograph from this period.⁷ The present concrete bridge was built by the state following the hurricane flood of 1938 (Inventory #40).

Village resources supplied most of the settlers' basic needs. Timber was harvested from the surrounding hills for building materials and firewood. Oxen dragged down felled trees to be fashioned by housewrights into hand-hewn posts or floated to a mill on the Farmington River, just over the town line in Hartland, which supplied sawn lumber, boards, and planks. Enterprising village residents produced potash and supplied the iron forges of Colebrook with charcoal.

⁶ The only enlisted man mentioned by name in George Washington's memoirs, at age 12, Roberts volunteered to replace his father, Joel, who had returned from the war badly wounded.

⁷ Undated photograph reproduced in John Tarrant Kenney, *The Hitchcock Chair....* (New York: Clarkson Potter, Inc., 1971), p. 160.

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Clay beds in the pasture behind the Ward House on School Street (Inventory #99) produced brick to build houses. Stone was quarried in the hills for foundations and gravestones. A "Monumental Works" was established in 1828 on the east bank of the Farmington, just south of the bridge, by a stone mason from Lee, Massachusetts.

Although farming was a way of life for most Riverton families, it was a hard scrabble existence. In 1780 less than 200 acres in the whole town was considered plowland, with approximately 700 acres used for pasture.⁸ Forty years later, *The Pease and Niles Gazeteer* noted that the town's farmland "affords tolerable grazing" but was generally "inadmissible for tillage," certainly an apt description of soil conditions in the district. It is likely that only large landowners in the village, such as the Moores, produced a surplus for market. Except for the ten-acre Bevins farm on the west bank of the Farmington (Inventory #33), the Moores owned much of the limited plowland and pasture in the village center. Cleared hillsides on the east side of the village supported larger farms like the Ransom's (Inventory #46), which were used for grazing cattle or growing hay. Air drainage on the western slope of this ridge also provided an ideal environment for apple orchards. Although the requisite tannery was not located in the village, shoemakers practiced their trade and eventually had shops on East River Road, and at least one distillery produced cider brandy.

By the 1830s, however, a nascent industrial community was emerging, a cultural landscape captured in a woodcut of the village by artist/historian John Barber, published in 1836 (see Exhibit C). As Barber observed, "Hitchcocksville contains upwards of 20 dwellings [18 of which still stand today], one chair factory, 2 mercantile stores and an Episcopal church..." The owner of that "chair factory," was, of course, Lambert Hitchcock. For a quarter century, Hitchcock, often in partnership with the Alford's, provided employment for 100 men, women, and children in the village. (For more on the Hitchcock firm, see the industry section below.) After taking the name Hitchcocksville in 1827, the village grew to be the largest manufacturing center in Barkhamsted, even rivaling Winsted in production value, but Hitchcock's presence here was a catalyst for fundamental social change. As the seasonal rhythms of an agrarian way of life gave way to the factory time clock, a modern wage economy evolved, generating a demand for goods and services. Although the quality of village life improved, once independent subsistence farm families lost much of their autonomy.

Even as Riverton entered the industrial age, land records attest to considerable land speculation and out-migration, a trend reflected to some degree in the population statistics for Barkhamsted. The town as a whole had already begun a century-long decline, dropping from a high of 1715 in 1830 to less than 700 in 1930.⁹ In the village, however, the rate of new construction, the size of the school population and the industrial workforce suggest that Riverton continued to thrive well past the *antebellum* period. Villagers left town, some leaving behind new or unfinished dwellings, but they were replaced by skilled and unskilled workers seeking factory jobs. Few were immigrants from other countries; in fact, Riverton remained ethnically homogeneous well into the twentieth century.

A small but important group of newcomers arrived from nearby towns to invest in Riverton's future. The foundation of a substantial mercantile, industrial, and professional class, they provided the industrial capital and the political leadership that carried the village through the rest of the century. A remarkable number of these newcomers successfully aspired to

⁸ According to the poll lists at that time, this amount worked out to be only two acres of plowland per adult male. The average amount of land of all types was just about ten acres per household, a far cry from the 40 acres considered necessary in Windsor and other colonial communities. For this and the following quote see *Barkhamsted Heritage*..., 1975, pp. 202, 202.

⁹ No comparable census statistics are available for the village. In 1846 innkeeper Jesse Ives estimated that about 700 people lived in or near Riverton, which would be 40 percent of the entire town's population of 1700, the number reported in the industrial statistics compiled by the Secretary of State that year. See *A Short History of Riverton, Conn.*, p. 14. It is likely that that both population estimates were inflated since the federal census of Barkhamsted listed only 1524 persons in 1850.

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elective office at the federal and state level, a testament to the disproportionate political power of the state's hinterland even as the rural population declined.¹⁰

Nineteenth-Century Society and Commerce

Turnpikes and improved country roads had opened Riverton to the wider world. Peddlers' wagons carried goods to and from neighboring towns and by the 1830s two stage companies made regular stops in the village carrying the mail and the latest news. Travelers stayed at the Old Riverton Inn in the early 1800s, and by the 1840s, they had a choice of two more inns in the village (Inventory #s 22, 17, 87). Associated businesses included a livery stable owned by brick mason George Deming, located behind the family home on Robertsville Road (Inventory #75), which he ran for at least 20 years with the help of his son, John, who had his own house next door by about 1860 (Inventory #79). Roswell Pond once had a blacksmith shop near his house on the turnpike (East River Road; Inventory #28); another shop was located on Riverton Road near the Still River.

The first post office for the entire town of Barkhamsted was located in the village in 1813; Judah Roberts, the first postmaster, was one of 23 who held this federal appointment in the nineteenth century. As was customary, post offices were established in various homes or stores, with the location changing to suit new appointees. Among them was Jesse Ives, appointed postmaster when the village was officially named "Hitchcocksville." He had his office in the Old Riverton Inn, which he had purchased in 1816 (Inventory #22). Dr. Flavel Graham, appointed in 1837, combined the post office with his medical practice in the building erected earlier by Dr. DeWolfe, Riverton's first resident physician (Inventory #20). From 1843 to 1846, the building next door was the post office and store of William and John Phelps, sons of Dr. Launcelot Phelps, who owned the tavern across the road (Inventory #17). That Dr. Phelps had served two terms in Congress (1835-1839) may have helped his sons secure their appointments.

Most of the post offices on the west side of the river were located in stores, such as the former Hitchcock & Couch store across from the chair factory, which was owned and run by several appointees. Judge Hiram Goodwin (Inventory #91) moved the post office to his law office on the second floor of this building when he was appointed in 1838. James Smith, appointed in 1861, was still postmaster when the village officially became Riverton in 1865. His post office was located in his store, later the site of Hart Brothers Store (Inventory #29). The post office there was run by a series of store proprietors, starting with Myron (aka Meyron) Hart, appointed postmaster in 1881, followed by his brother Everett in 1889.

Timber and stone were still major commodities. In 1853 Whitfield Munson sold his mill on the East Branch of the Farmington River and moved to Riverton to build a shingle and feed mill on the Still River (Inventory #74), just down the street from where he built his new brick home (Inventory #62). Census records in 1870 indicate that Samuel Hart, a lumber dealer, lived in his new house on East River Road (Inventory #24), which he shared with his son Charles, who tended a sawmill (probably Myron Hart's) on the south bank of the Still River (beyond the district). The village monument works was still thriving. By mid-century, the business was owned by postmaster Samuel Pine, who may have employed stonecutters Justin Hodge and Lucius Kentfield (whose families shared a house nearby), and two of several stone masons in the village who boarded at the Riverton Inn in 1850. By 1880 Hodge, then known as the "Colonel" for his military service in the Mexican and Civil wars, had already owned the monument business for five years and was a major neighborhood property owner. Having run a percussion cap factory on the east side of the Farmington River and served

¹⁰ Even though the vast majority lived in the cities, Connecticut politics was dominated by rural towns until the issue was resolved in the "one-man, one-vote" ruling in 1920.

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as the local militia commander during the Civil War, he was a state representative in 1884. Among his several residential properties was his own house below the cemetery (south of the district) which was destroyed in a flood. Another Hodge house on the east side of the road still stands (Inventory #13). It was occupied by his son, Kosiuscko, known as "Kosky," one of the later nineteenth-century farmers in Riverton. One of the few in the village to employ farm labor, he hired the only African American recorded in the district.

Riverton's newly affluent society supported several institutions, including three churches by mid-century (Inventory #s 78, 89, and the Methodist's building that once stood on School Street). A private academy in the "select high-school rooms of Bronson and Blair" enrolled 40 pupils; 28 were sons and daughters of prominent village families, and the rest came from towns in the region. School trustees included chairmaker Arba Alford and the Reverend Luther Barber, the first Congregational minister. The first two-room district school in the Town of Barkhamsted was erected here in 1850 and served 100 pupils (Inventory #95). It still had an average enrollment of 60 in 1881 (about a quarter of the total school population) and remained open until 1952.

Nineteenth-Century Industry

The success of several village industries was largely due to the inventive genius of their founders, certainly the case with proto-industrialist Lambert Hitchcock. An entrepreneurial Yankee ahead of his time, Hitchcock applied the principles of mass production to furniture making as early as 1818 and by the late 1820s his company was the largest furniture producer in the state. Born in 1793 into a family of several generations of builders and joiners in Cheshire, Connecticut, Hitchcock learned the cabinet maker's craft in a time-honored way, by serving as an apprentice and journeyman with Silas Cheney of Litchfield. Hitchcock's first local venture was in an annex of the Doolittle & Benham sawmill and lumberyard in Hartland, just upstream from the village on the Farmington River. Ezra Doolittle and Lent Benham, the owners of the mill since 1804, were old friends from Cheshire (Hitchcock's sister was married to Lent's brother). It was an ideal arrangement for both parties. Hitchcock utilized the yard's waterpower to mechanize his craft and they had a surplus of maple, birch, cherry, and tulip, desirable woods for furniture, which otherwise would go unsold.

Some of Hitchcock's mass-produced, standardized chair parts were bundled to be sold by peddlers in Connecticut and upstate New York, but the bulk of his output was shipped by boat from Hartford to the Southern market. By 1820 Hitchcock, having outgrown this first shop, purchased an existing frame building nearby for assembling and finishing completed chairs. In 1826 he relocated to the village to construct the first dam on the Farmington and his new brick factory, which contained shaping and turning machines powered by a waterwheel (Inventory #90). By 1828, a second building, essentially a company store for employees, was standing across the street. Doing business under the name of Hitchcock & Couch, it also housed a company showroom and sales office.

With the expansion of the business, Hitchcock was subject to external market forces that were the downfall of many early industrial entrepreneurs: a largely unregulated boom or bust economy, pre-modern methods of capital formation, and a shortage of skilled labor. As was customary at the time, Hitchcock relied on partnerships with relatives, thereby incurring considerable personal financial risk. Despite efficiencies introduced to maximize production, such as functional division and organization of labor, the finishing stages of chair manufacture were labor intensive. Even with 100 villagers on the payroll, more workers were needed. Hitchcock even contracted with the state prison at Wethersfield for inmates to weave chair seats (from cattail rushes gathered in local marshes). These "rushers" and other unskilled workers needed special training. For example, itinerant artists were hired to teach the village women who stenciled, striped, and gilded finished chairs in the characteristic Hitchcock manner, work that was done on an assembly-line basis, with each worker performing discrete tasks.

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Although Hitchcock ran the business six days a week and turned out at least 15,000 chairs annually, the expected economies of scale afforded by the factory system never fully materialized. With chairs retailing for less than \$1.50, all the market would bear, shipping costs for this bulky product ate up much of his slim profit margin, a problem compounded by the seasonal shipping constraints faced by all rural manufacturers: frozen rivers and roads which were nearly impassable in winter and spring.

The firm was deeply in debt even before the company store burned to the ground in 1829 and Hitchcock was forced into receivership. After turning over all his personal and business assets to the court-appointed trustees, Hitchcock was given three years to pay his creditors, which included many of his employees, his pledge to the building fund of the Union Episcopal Church (Inventory #78), and his only local competitor, William Moore Jr., who produced chairs on a much smaller scale in a shop near his house (Inventory #43). Hitchcock even owed money to his then fiancée, Eunice Alford. After their marriage in 1830, they lived in half of a house near the factory (Inventory #38) owned by his brother-in-law, Arba Alford, his factory superintendent. Alford became Hitchcock's partner in 1832 when he emerged from receivership.

One of the first acts of the Hitchcock, Alford & Co. was the construction of a new sales building on the site of the burned-out store, under the management of Alfred Alford, a younger brother who built his house just up present-day Main Street (Inventory #31). As Hitchcock chairs began to decline in popularity, Hitchcock added a line of cabinet furniture and opened a showroom in Hartford. After serving a term in the U.S. Congress (1840-41), Hitchcock restructured his business as a private stock corporation. The investors were his former partners and Josiah Sage from Sandisfield, Massachusetts, who now lived on School Street (Inventory #98). After the purchase of another factory in Robertsville (Colebrook), production doubled. In 1843-44, Hitchcock, having failed to persuade his stockholders to open a new factory to manufacture cabinet furniture, struck out on his own. The Riverton company was officially dissolved and Hitchcock moved to a farm in Unionville and rented a factory building from the Cowles of Farmington. It was located near the Farmington Canal, which he planned on using for shipping. While the Alfords continued to supply him with chairs, Hitchcock manufactured cabinet furniture in Unionville until 1847 when the canal closed, and he died there in 1852. The Alfords continued the chair business in Riverton until 1853. Although they had an interest in the successor firm, the Phoenix Company, manufacturers of planes and carpenters' tools, both brothers listed their occupation as "farmer" in the 1870 census. With a combined net worth of \$33,000, of which \$14,500 was in real estate, it is likely that much of their farm property was located outside the village.

In 1864 the factory was sold to Delos H. Stephens, who manufactured ivory and German silver foot rules, levels, and other measuring devices for an international market. Stephens, the only industrialist to move an already established company to the village, is credited as the designer and fabricator of a number of patented precision machine tools. According to the 1874 Beers map, Stephens also owned considerable additional property in the district including his Robertsville Road residence, which he bought from Dr. Young (Inventory #82), and another small rule shop across the street that he had moved to use as a barn behind his house. Stephens upgraded the power system (replacing the waterwheel with a turbine) and employed almost 60 residents of Riverton by 1870. In 1901 the company was bought out by Chapin Rule, which moved the operation (including the machinery) out of town, and Stephens retired to his village home.

The federal census of 1870 provides some information about his workers' living arrangements. A few married employees with families, like Lucius Loomis, Ephraim Oaks, or Leander Plante, had their own homes (Inventory #s 1, 45, 67);

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George Van Ostrum, a company machinist, and his family boarded with Loomis. The company accountant and his family lived at Stephen's house. Other married men lived in two company-owned tenements on the east bank of the Farmington; one was located where the present 1936 Taylor House now stands at 419 East River Road (Inventory #7). Working sons and daughters of local families usually lived at home, but unattached single men, who comprised the majority of workforce, were boarders either in private homes or at inns in the district. There were few workers boarding at Pinney's establishment, even though it reportedly had the best food and a rowdier taproom (Inventory #87). Only one was living at Deacon Tiffany's place, which now was owned by his daughter Clarissa, the widow of Ezra Doolittle (Inventory #17), but workers outnumbered the guests at Hiram Brown's Hotel (Old Riverton Inn; Inventory #22). Six of his boarders were rule makers; another seven were employed at the scythe factory, the first industrial site in the village on the Still River.

The first scythe company, started in 1849 by two Massachusetts men who came here from Winsted, failed in 1851.¹¹ It was taken over by Eagle Scythe, a privately held stock company, capitalized at \$15,000 in 1853. Local investors included Ezra Doolittle, (former owner of lumberyard); and several village residents: Michael Ward, whose family came to Riverton from North Adams, Massachusetts, to establish a calico mill on that site (#99); Everett Bevins (Inventory #s 33, 54); Hiram Goodwin (Inventory #9); and Joseph Gould (Inventory #58); the latter two became company directors. Eagle Scythe rebuilt and enlarged the dam and millpond, which also served other water-powered enterprises such as Whitfield Munson's new feed and shingle mill (Inventory #75), and also made some major changes to the village infrastructure. Mill Street (today's Riverton Road) was laid out and the Still River was bridged, thus linking the village center for the first time to the west side of the Farmington River. More importantly, since the firm imported iron and steel from Norway and England, and shipped 2000 dozen scythes annually, the new bridge provided a shorter route to the railroad in Winsted. After 1871 company wagons may have carried goods and raw materials to and from a more convenient Barkhamsted siding on the Connecticut Western Railroad, a branch line from Winsted to Hartford that ran through the southwest corner of town. When the factory complex was enlarged in 1868, it provided employment for at least 60 workers. With the installation of an auxiliary steam engine and a complex race system, which even ran under Riverton Road (see map; Exhibit B), production quadrupled. By then the product line also included other agricultural implements, such as hay and corn knives, and grass hooks. With the introduction of mechanized farming equipment, however, the market for hand tools declined. Although the company added sleigh shoes to its product line, the business finally closed down in 1889.

Directors and officers of the Eagle Scythe Company included some of Barkhamsted's most prominent citizens. Judge Hiram Goodwin, who studied at Tapping Reeve's law school in Litchfield, came to Riverton from New Hartford in 1835. Elected to a seat in the U.S. Congress in 1860, he also served two terms in the state senate, the last as president *pro tem* (1862, 1864). Active in the Congregational Church in Riverton (Inventory #89), he was superintendent of the Sunday school for more than 30 years and donated his Greek Revival house on School Street for a parsonage (Inventory # 92). Lorrin A. Cooke, secretary/treasurer and later president of the company, built his Victorian house on Riverton Road in 1880 (Inventory #55). A farmer and teacher in Colebrook, where he had served as a selectman and state representative, after he came to Riverton, Cooke was elected a state senator in 1881 and later served as governor of Connecticut (1897-1899). Director Joseph Gould, who was born in England, was one the wealthiest men in the village, with real estate valued at \$118,000 in 1870, property that then included the former Munson mill (Inventory #75) and his residence, the former Pelatiah Ransom House, which he purchased in 1865 (Inventory #58).

¹¹Aaron S. Burbank, who lived with Charles Moore (Inventory #36), and Chester D. Williams (Inventory #99).

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Riverton's New Era

In the twentieth century, Riverton participated with other towns to achieve common goals, ushering in a new era of regional cooperation. With industry's decline, agriculture returned center stage, with new organizations devoted to farmers' interests. Although tobacco became a major cash crop elsewhere in Barkhamsted, villagers turned to dairy or poultry farming. It also was a period marked by natural and manmade disasters. The district was spared the impact of the development of a water supply for Hartford, which resulted in the impoundment of thousands of acres in Barkhamsted and the destruction of nearly 100 homes in the watershed of the East Branch of the Farmington, but it suffered considerable damage in the 100-year floods of 1936 and 1955. The Great Depression came earlier to rural areas and lasted longer; in the village, accommodations to hard times began in the 1920s. Few could afford to build, and two property owners actually tore down part of their homes (Inventory #s 45, 92).

More benign was the state forest program that acquired 5000 acres in Barkhamsted between 1921 and 1944. The People's State Forest along the east side of the district, established in 1924, encompassed about 2500 acres set aside for conservation and recreation. A related depression-era program for unemployment relief, the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), built one of its first youth work camps in the American Legion Forest to the south. Although few local men were employed, Riverton benefited from CCC work programs, which included building the camping facilities, roads, and trails now enjoyed by tourists, as well as dams and current deflectors along the Farmington River.

Social life in the village still centered around the old Hart Brothers store (Inventory #29). Villagers came here to pick up their mail and the latest gossip and various groups, such as the Barkhamsted Chamber of Commerce, met in the upstairs hall. Charles Rowley, who bought the property in 1899, turned it over to his son, Alcott, in 1907. Like his father before him, Alcott Rowley was the village postmaster. He also was one of the 36 charter members of the Riverton Grange #169, founded here in 1908. The Grange continued to meet in Rowley's Hall until 1935, when it converted the old Munson mill into a permanent meeting place (Inventory #74).

Although succeeding storeowners maintained the hall for public use, in 1914 the post office moved down the street to the Abra Alford House (Inventory #38), now the home of the new post mistress Dora Roberts, and her husband, Carleton, a direct descendant of Judah Roberts. Ernest Jordan, appointed in 1921, moved the whole operation (including mailboxes installed by Roberts) across the river into the high stone-walled basement of his home on East River Road (the former Samuel Hart place; Inventory #24). After he bought the general store in 1935, Jordan converted the public hall to apartments and ran the post office here until his death in 1960.

Compelling evidence for the renewed importance of farming was the founding of the Union Agricultural Society at a meeting in Rowley's Hall in 1909. A joint organization which included the towns of Barkhamsted, Hartland, and Colebrook, Riverton played a leadership role, and many of the founders were village residents. They included Charles Rowley and members of old families, like Moore, Ransom, and Deming. The first annual fair was held on the grounds of the district school, and then in Moore's pasture behind his house every year except 1918, the year of the flu pandemic. In 1919, for the first time, a fee for teams and autos was added to the price of admission, then set at 35 cents. In 1920 the society purchased the former Bevins farm and established a permanent fairgrounds (Inventory #s 68-73). Exhibit tents were purchased and the existing barn there was converted to an exhibit hall. Additional parking area was rented for automobiles by 1927. By 1934 visitors arriving by car had a convenient gas station right across the street, owned and run by George Ransom (Inventory #51). Development of the grounds over the years included portable bleachers, a band stand, and more exhibit and animal buildings, with electricity and water provided at the site after World War II, when the number of visitors exceeded 10,000. Most of these structures, along with the siding for a new pole barn under

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construction, were swept away in the flood of 1955, considered to be the worst in Connecticut's history. The fair grounds were rebuilt and still flourish today, bringing thousands of visitors to Riverton every year.

Another important joint venture was the establishment of a fire district with Hartland. The present Riverton Fire Department Building was erected in 1946 by the volunteer firemen, formally organized the previous year (Inventory #52). In a display of Yankee frugality, the building was constructed from materials salvaged from the abandoned CCC camp.

After standing vacant for many years, the former Hitchcock Chair factory was bought by John Tarrant Kenney in 1946. Reviving the Hitchcock tradition, he employed Riverton residents to manufacture reproductions of Hitchcock chairs and cabinetry. Even though modern finishing techniques were utilized, for example, precision cut stencils or airbrush gilding, many of the basic steps in chair making process were carried out just as they were in the 1800s, with similar shaping and boring machinery. The workforce, which eventually reached 50, included village women who were trained as rushers, cane weavers, and decorators. Beset by many of same financial, shipping, and labor problems as Hitchcock, Kenney also experienced the near destruction by fire of his storage and finishing buildings at the former Butler and Hodge lumberyard (Inventory #63, 64). The worst disaster occurred in August of 1955, when flood waters rose to just under the second story of the original factory. Fortunately the structural framing had just been rebuilt and reinforced and withstood the force of the current, but machinery and materials were destroyed. Flood damage in the rest of the village was extensive: two lives were lost, five houses disappeared, and 15 others needed repair. With the financial assistance from the federal government, the factory and the village were restored.

Kenney's plans for Riverton went well beyond re-establishing the historic Hitchcock Chair Company. He founded a chair museum in the former Episcopal Church (Inventory #78), and formed a subsidiary, Connecticut House, Inc., to buy and renovate several residential properties on the west side of Riverton Road, presumably to house some of his workers (Inventory #s 55, 58, 62). In 1961 he built the new Riverton post office building and leased it to the federal government (Inventory #53). By then tour buses were making regular stops at the museum and factory showroom and enjoying lunch at the Old Riverton Inn, another tourist attraction.

Although Kenney was quite successful with national market showrooms in Chicago and Dallas, in 1989 he sold the company to the Facienda Group of Great Britain, which expanded the business to include new manufacturing facilities in New Hartford and other buildings in Glastonbury, Orange, and Wilton. In November 2005, the English company announced plans to sell the entire operation and the salesroom in Riverton closed for good.

Architectural Significance

The Riverton Historic District developed from a village crossroads into a rather densely settled nineteenth-century industrial community. Constrained and defined by wooded hills and rivers, with little room for expansion, the evolving cultural landscape took on a more urban character after 1820. While the taverns, with their five-bay facades, were modeled on the Georgian colonial precedent established by the Old Riverton Inn, most of the houses now presented their gabled ends to the street. Standing side-by-side on narrow lots, with outbuildings and additions often set to the rear, they established a streetscape rhythm more commonly found in the city neighborhoods of the period. Such a high concentration of nineteenth-century resources and similarities of form and orientation add to the exceptional cohesiveness and collective integrity of the district.

Although buildings have been moved and some lost to floods, the district still clearly reflects more than a century of growth, a continuity little disturbed by modern intrusion or insensitive rehabilitation. Conversion of residences to new uses such as restaurants has largely preserved the exteriors and has even left much of the interiors intact; there has been

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limited use of inappropriate artificial siding. The few modern non-contributing resources such as garages are generally unobtrusive or hidden from public view, and post 1955 houses are confined to the periphery of the district on East River Road.

The stylistic progression from the Federal through the Greek Revival period produced some of the more architecturally significant buildings in the district. In their numbers, as well as level of style, they reflect the prosperity of the village of Riverton in the first half of the nineteenth century. The Old Riverton Inn set a high tone for the period (Inventory #22; Photograph 1). As originally constructed with an elegant doorway at the second level, probably accessed by a graceful, double staircase, it resembled the Georgian and Federal mansions built for urban merchants of the day. Despite the relocation of this doorway to the north wing, the level and extent of the remaining original Federal detailing of the main block is still remarkable. Although the builder is not known, he may also have been responsible for the Federal-style Amasa Mallory Tavern, also in Barkhamsted, which was erected on the Greenwoods Turnpike about the same time. Its simple colonial form is embellished with a nearly identical pedimented doorway with a fanlight. These entranceways, as well as the fine Federal doorway with the elongated fanlight that highlights the much later, but better preserved Pinney Tavern on Robertsville Road (Inventory #87; Photograph 3), are representative examples of designs readily available in the published builders' handbooks of the period.

Much of the rest of the Federal domestic architecture in the district is transitional, in that it anticipates and incorporates the classical gabled pediment more commonly associated with the later Greek Revival style. Of particular interest in this group is the stark geometry of the George Deming and Charles Moore houses, a simplicity relieved only by the mellow tones of the handmade water-struck brick and the elongated voussoirs that detail the first-floor windows (Inventory #s 75, 75; Photographs 4, 5). In these vernacular late Federal examples, mason Deming simply rotated the plan used in the village inns to achieve the more modern, gable-to-street orientation. However, by retaining the front end-wall chimney and placing the front door in or near the center of the façades (a location more common in commercial buildings of the period), Deming created some design and construction issues. His plan not only restricted size of the front rooms, certainly the case in his own much smaller house, but required a considerable offset for the chimney stack. Deming's solution is somewhat surprising given that other Federal-style houses in the district of both brick and wood, particularly the 1822 Arba Alford House on Main Street (Inventory #38; Photograph 12) had already introduced the more efficient side-hall plan. Another arrangement is found in the plan of the slightly earlier 1820 William Moore, Jr., House on Mountain Road (Inventory #43; Photograph 6). Although it has a side-hall plan entrance on the façade gable, the principal doorway is actually in the long elevation. Such a door location was the choice of several villagers, like Apollos Moore, whose gabled houses faced the street to make maximum use of their deep, narrow lots (Inventory #33).

Two Greek Revival residences, the brick Alfred Alford House and the wood-framed Hiram Goodwin House, achieve a level of style rarely found in rural areas (Inventory #s 33, 91; which are Photographs 9, 10). These well-preserved Doric order buildings display exceptional recessed doorways *in antis*, an elegant conceit more often associated with the few professional architects in this period, such as Ithiel Town, who designed town houses for urban elites. For example, a doorway attributed to this architect on the Edward Augustus Russell House in Middletown, Connecticut, is quite similar to those in Riverton. Located in the fashionable High Street neighborhood, it was listed on the National Register in 1982.

The two nearly identical cross-gable plan houses built in the 1880s for Everett Bevins and Lorrin Cooke are well preserved, rather straightforward examples of the Victorian penchant for stylistic embellishment (Inventory #s 54, 55; Photographs 16, 17). Mirror images in plan and Italianate detailing, individual expression here is limited to the different design of the Carpenter Gothic trusses and bargeboards. In fact, these similarities suggest that they were built from mail-order plans, just coming into common use at this time. In an era when even rural elites built more extravagantly, as

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status symbols they are quite modest examples. Nevertheless, these resources represent the height of domestic style in the later nineteenth century in the district.

The two country churches on Robertsville Road, well-preserved examples of the two most popular ecclesiastical styles of the period, make a major architectural contribution to the streetscape and the district as a whole. Their differing building histories and design approaches add to this significance. The earlier Union Episcopal Church is especially notable for its fine ashlar stonework typically employed the Gothic Revival, the style so closely identified with this denomination (Inventory #78; Photograph 20). The delightfully naïve interpretation here is attributed to innkeeper Jesse Ives, who designed the building, supervised its construction, and even underwrote most of its cost. Given the tension between Episcopalians and Congregationalists, it is somewhat ironic that the basic plan and form of the building can be traced to eighteenth-century colonial meetinghouses of the second period, which also placed the entrance in the bell tower on the gabled end elevation.

The proliferation of Greek Revival churches in the 1830s was largely due to the disestablishment of Congregationalism as the official state religion. Although not the situation in Riverton, many of these new Congregational churches were replacements for older deteriorating meetinghouses. That they were constructed by a limited number of master builders working at the height of Greek Revival period accounts for their consistent scale and style. In fact, Riverton Congregationalists turned to a builder with demonstrated experience. Their nicely proportioned church, built in 1843 by Willard S. Wetmore of Winsted at a cost of \$1995, was an exact copy of the Baptist Church in Canton (Inventory #89).

Riverton Historic District

Name of Property

Litchfield, CT

County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 94

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1	_____	_____	_____	3	_____	_____	_____
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	_____	_____	_____	4	_____	_____	_____

See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By:

Reviewed by National Register Coordinator

name/title Jan Cunningham, National Register Consultant

organization Cunningham Preservation Associates, LLC date 4/30/06

street & number 37 Orange Road telephone (860) 347 4072

city or town Middletown state CT zip code 06457

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name _____
street & number _____ telephone _____
city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

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9. Major Bibliographic References

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www.BARKHAMSTEDHISTORY.ORG.

www.sots.ct.gov/RegisterManual/SectionVII/Population1830.htm.

Geographical Data

UTMS (Winsted Quad)

1. 18 664140 4647800
2. 18 664280 4647810
3. 18 664500 4647430
4. 18 664500 4646980
5. 18 664180 4646920
6. 18 663810 4647290
7. 18 663910 4647290

Verbal Boundary Description:

The boundaries are shown on the attached district map drawn to scale from Barkhamsted Tax Assessor’s Maps 1 and 2.

Boundary Justification:

The boundaries are drawn to encompass the maximum number of contributing resources associated with the development of Riverton during the period of significance.

(Rev. 10-90)

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Riverton Historic District, Barkhamsted, Litchfield County, CT**Section: Photo Page 1****List of Photographs:**

Photographer: Cunningham Preservation Associates, LLC

Date: 11/05 Negatives on File: SHPO, Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism

1. OLD RIVERTON INN, camera facing SE
2. PHELPS-TIFFANY TAVERN, camera facing NE
3. PINNEY TAVERN, camera facing SE
4. CHARLES MOORE HOUSE, camera facing NW
5. GEORGE DEMING HOUSE, camera facing NE
6. WILLIAM MOORE, JR. HOUSE, camera facing NE
7. JOHN WARD HOUSE, camera facing NW
8. OLMSTED HOUSE, camera facing NE
9. ALFRED ALFORD HOUSE, camera facing SW
10. JUDGE HIRAM GOODWIN HOUSE, camera facing W
11. GEORGE RANSOM HOUSE, camera facing NE
12. ARBA ALFORD HOUSE, camera facing NE
13. ROSWELL POND & THOMAS HODGE HOUSES, camera facing N
14. HENRY ROBINSON HOUSE, camera facing NW
15. PELATIAH RANSOM HOUSE, camera facing NW
16. EVERETT BEVINS HOUSE (2nd), camera facing NE
17. GOVERNOR LORRIN COOKE HOUSE, camera facing SE
18. LUCIUS LOOMIS HOUSE, camera facing NE
19. HART BROTHERS STORE & HALL, camera facing NW
20. UNION EPISCOPAL CHURCH, camera facing SE
21. RIVERTON CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, camera facing SE
22. HITCHCOCK CHAIR FACTORY, camera facing NW
23. MUNSON GRIST & SHINGLE MILL, camera facing NW

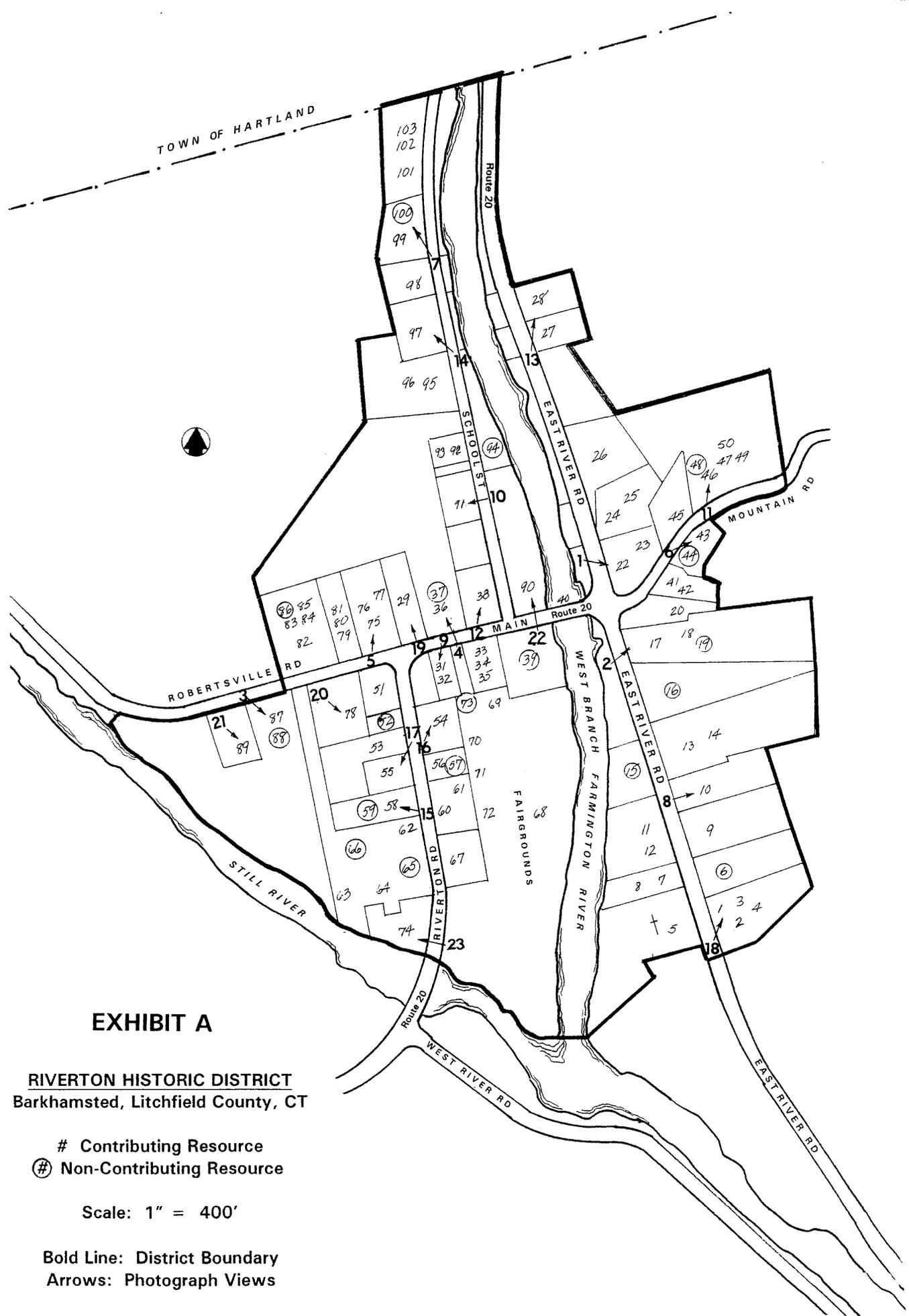


EXHIBIT A

RIVERTON HISTORIC DISTRICT
 Barkhamsted, Litchfield County, CT

- # Contributing Resource
- Ⓝ Non-Contributing Resource

Scale: 1" = 400'

Bold Line: District Boundary
Arrows: Photograph Views

RIVERTON

TOWN OF BARKHAMSTED
Scale 30 Rods to the inch

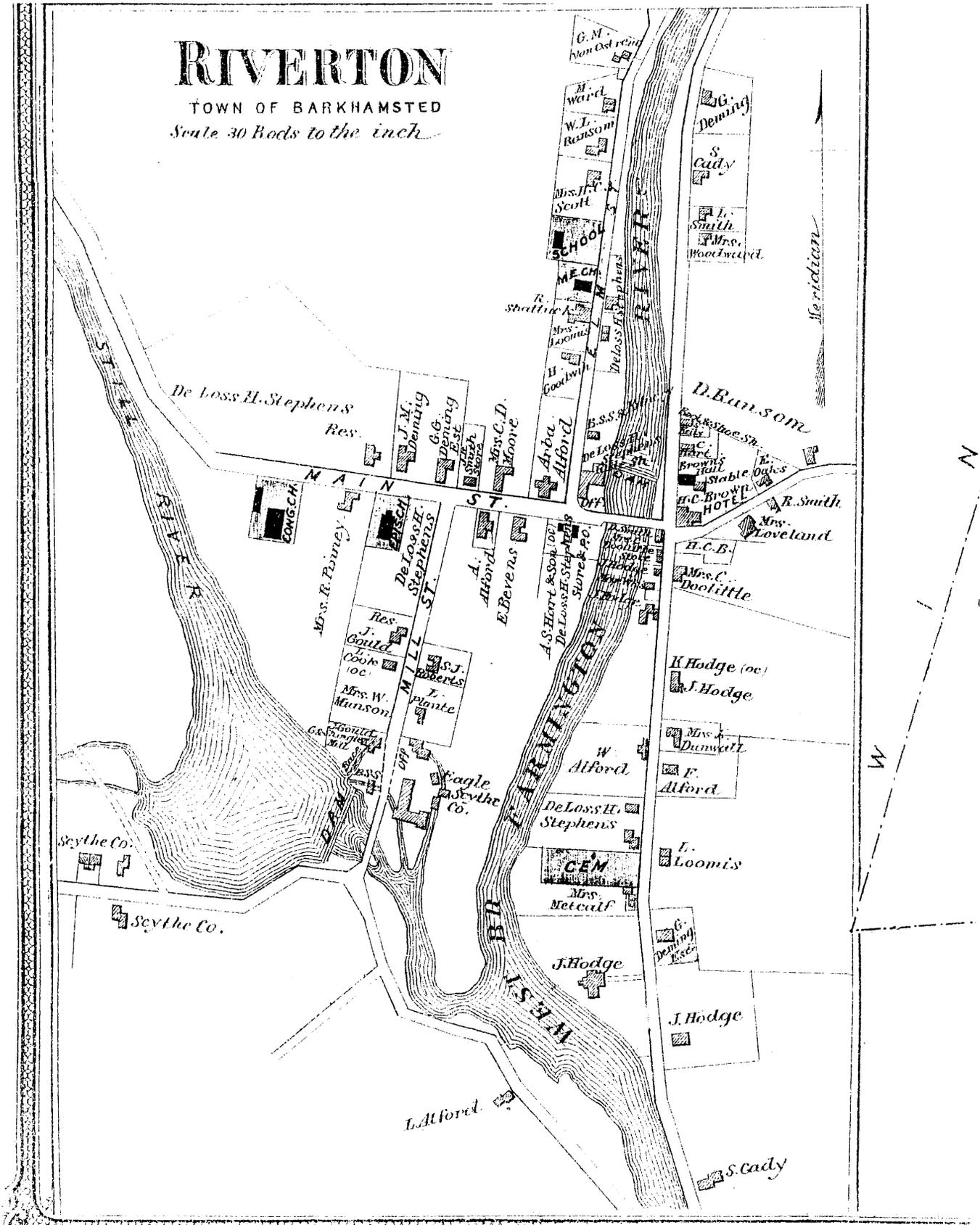


EXHIBIT B

Riverton in 1874

Reproduced from Beers Atlas of Litchfield County, Connecticut
(Courtesy of Barkhamsted Historical Society)

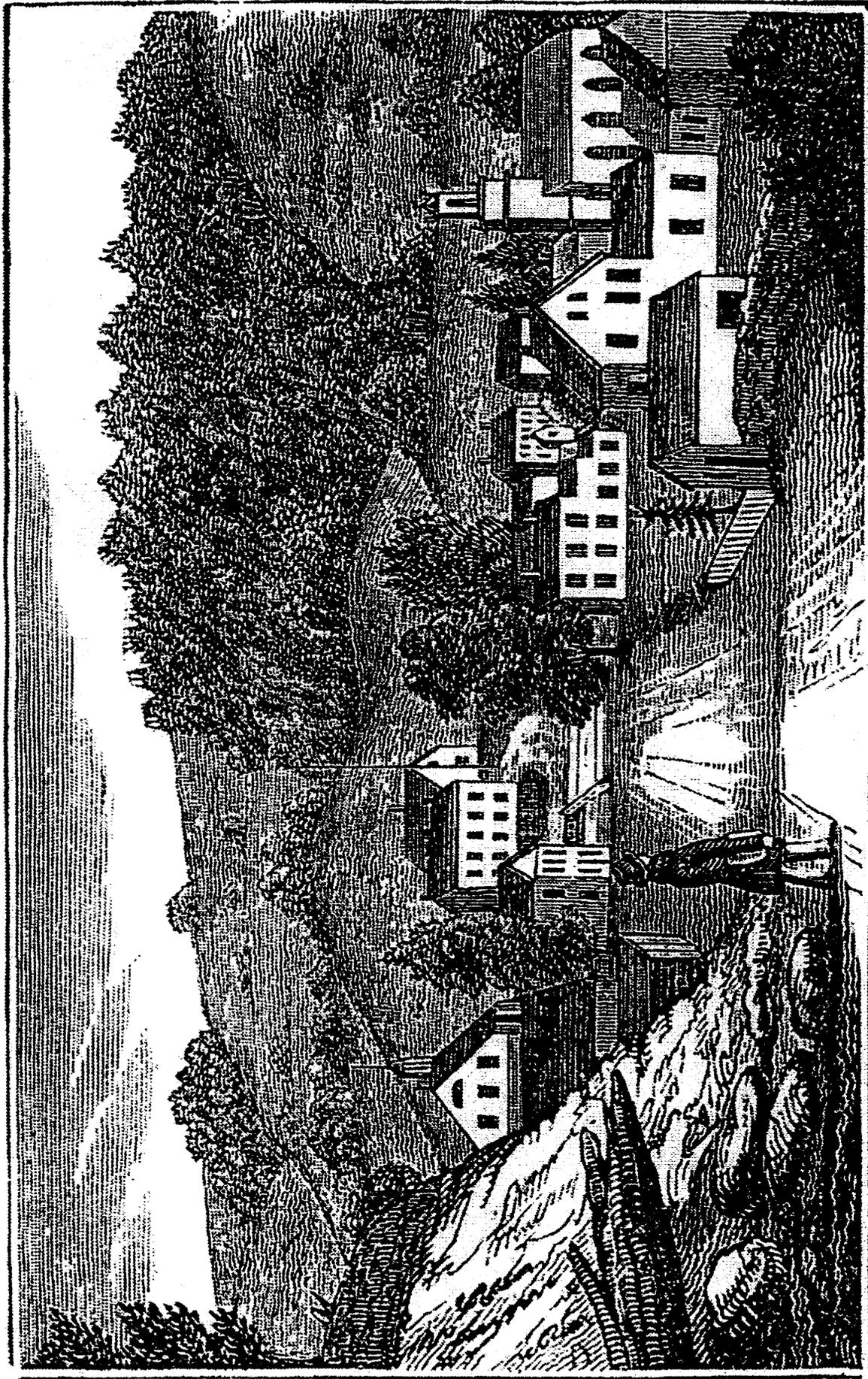


EXHIBIT C

Woodcut of Hitchcocksville c. 1836 View to the east along Robertsville Road to Farmington River Bridge
Barber, John W. *Connecticut Historical Collections*. New Haven: Peck and Barber, 1836