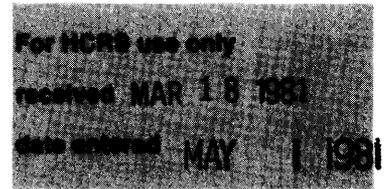


**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

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



**1. Name**

historic David Hotchkiss House

and/or common

**2. Location**

street & number Waterbury Road not for publication

city, town Prospect vicinity of congressional district 5th -

state Connecticut code 09 county New Haven code 009

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name Town of Prospect, Connecticut

street & number Town Office Building - Center Street

city, town Prospect vicinity of state CT

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Prospect Town Clerk

street & number Town Office Building - Center Street

city, town Prospect state CT

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title State Register of Historic Places has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1981  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Connecticut Historical Commission

city, town Hartford state CT

## 7. Description

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

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The David Hotchkiss House faces northeast on Waterbury Road, Route 69, about three quarters of a mile northwest of the center of Prospect. It is now set back about five yards from the two-lane highway, which has been widened over the years at the expense of the front yard. In addition to the house, the property includes a small twentieth-century shed to the rear of the house and a small barn, built about 1900, which was formerly attached to a larger, older barn. All that can be seen of the latter is the rubblestone foundation and one or two hewn timbers lying nearby. There are nearly two acres which, along with the house and other buildings, are under a long-term lease to the Prospect Historical Society. Although there are another 40 acres associated with the house, the owner, the Town of Prospect, has reserved these for possible future development and is already using part of the field for recreational purposes. The nominated property includes only the two acres immediately around the house leased to the historical society. This is sufficient to include the barn and some of the field and represents the acreage that is under lease to the Prospect Historical Society for use as a museum.

The house was built in 1820 and is of post-and-beam construction, two and one half stories high. It presently has a two and one half story wing the width of which is equal to the entire length of the front part. The wing extends back with its ridgeline set at right angles to, and slightly below, the roof of the main part. An old one-story shed built of both hewn and sawn members is attached to the back of the wing, and a modern garage extends from its western corner. The house has a symmetrical five-bay facade, with a central entrance lighted by both sidelights and a transom, the latter glazed in a geometric pattern. Paneled pilasters between the doorway and the sidelights and flanking the entire entrance, four in all, support a paneled frieze, above which is a band of reeding and a projecting cornice with breaks above the sidelights. The reed motif is repeated in the main cornice, where reeded strips separate the panels in the frieze; the cornice has partial returns across the gable ends. The exterior of the house is covered with clapboards painted white (some original), and the whole fabric, both structural and exterior, appears in very good condition. The house rests on a foundation of fieldstone blocks, with rubble masonry below grade. The original large central chimney was removed in the 1870s and a smaller one now takes its place. The original nine-over-six sash were replaced in the 1870s, as was the front door. The door, however, was re-used in the ell: it is of the flush-panel type with old strap hinges and Suffolk-style latch.

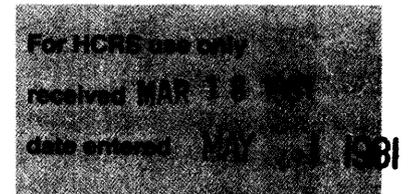
The plan of the house is unusual but found in other houses nearby. The center back room, the original kitchen, extends about eight feet into the back wing. The extent of excavation in the cellar suggests that this arrangement was original to the house, giving it a T-shaped plan. The original back room, probably a story or story and a half high, is now entirely encased in more modern additions, including an enclosed veranda to the southeast, the extension of the northwest wall flush with the wall of the main house, and the addition of a second story over the entire width of the ell. In 1878, a small rectangular bay was added to the southeast side of the main house.

Although the central stack was removed, the front rooms retain their mantels, as well as other decorative woodwork. The south room's is the plainer of the two, with a simple frame around the opening and a plain frieze above with cutouts at the ends, below the shelf. The north room or parlor is more elaborately detailed. The mantel in that room has a row of dentils below the molded shelf, which forms breaks

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

David Hotchkiss House, Prospect, CT



Continuation sheet

Item number 7

Page 1

Description (continued):

over the pilasters framing the opening. A similar dentil course is repeated beneath each window sill. Throughout the house are original six-panel doors and molded trim. In the attic the roof framing can be seen: it has the hewn rafters pegged into a stout ridgepiece, the typical type of Federal-period roof.

When the old chimney stack was removed, it left room for a central hall leading from the front entrance to the back room. An open string stairway now rises from the back to the front on the left side, with late 19th-century balusters and oak newel. The original stairway undoubtedly ran in front of the chimney in two or three short, turning flights. In the attic there is a delicate Federal archway, which comparison with other nearby examples suggests may have been an entrance to an enclosed winder stair.

The plantings around the house have been changed somewhat, although there are still large trees in the front yard. According to a 19th-century landscaping plan, there formerly were a large row of maples along the road, a vegetable garden and apple trees to the north, and beehives near the south side of the house. The land behind the house has changed as well: to the southwest is the rubblestone cellar hole of the large barn and just west of that, a root cellar with a deteriorated wooden cover.

In most other respects the house is very much as the last of the Hotchkiss family left it. It is now the home of the Prospect Historical Society museum, and will be further developed to illustrate rural life in the town. In addition to numerous family papers, some of which describe the building of the house in great detail, the house is filled with artifacts of great historical interest, such as David Hotchkiss's militia uniform, schoolbooks from the house's days as a privately-conducted school, and even the old stone wash sink, now stored in the attached shed.

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
___ prehistoric	___ archeology-prehistoric	___ community planning	___ landscape architecture	___ religion
___ 1400-1499	___ archeology-historic	___ conservation	___ law	___ science
___ 1500-1599	___ agriculture	___ economics	___ literature	___ sculpture
___ 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	___ education	___ military	___ social/ humanitarian
___ 1700-1799	___ art	___ engineering	___ music	___ theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	___ commerce	___ exploration/settlement	___ philosophy	___ transportation
___ 1900-	___ communications	___ industry	___ politics/government	___ other (specify)
	___ invention			

1870s - remodelled

Specific dates	Builder/Architect
1820 - built	Enos S. Root

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Hotchkiss House, standing in a still rural landscape among meadows and woodland, is a fine example of the better class of farmhouse, at least in this country area, of the the early 19th century (Criterion C). Before World War II it was one of many such houses on working farms in this part of New Haven County. Now, as the landscape has changed so radically and so fast, it is a rare survivor, and therefore has become of the greatest significance to the citizens of Prospect. Its importance is heightened by its association with a family which played a large role in the early history of the town (Criterion A). In style it is country-Federal; its entranceway and embellished cornice are representative of the work of rural builders of the period. With the exception of the removal of the central stack, the house is substantially intact.

The form of the house is traditional: the five-bay facade and gable roof was the standard arrangement since the beginning of the 18th century. To this was added the decorative devices - pilasters, bands of reeding, and other embellishment - loosely based upon the designs of the Scottish Adam brothers and handed down through the patternbooks of Asher Benjamin and others. The Adams had called for light, delicate ornament freely derived from Classical precedent. In the David Hotchkiss House, this aesthetic can be seen in the thinness of the pilasters, the small scale of the moldings and reed band, and the geometric pattern in the transom glazing, based upon the ellipse, the favored shape of the period. Although the Hotchkiss House is rather plain compared with more elaborate examples, such as the work of master builder David Hoadley, its decorative features (applied to a strictly traditional form) are typical of Federal-period country building.

The house has another claim to significance which would make it outstanding in any area: because of the excellent records kept by the Hotchkiss family, it is possible to piece together a detailed history of the building of the house. The digging of the well in the autumn of 1819, the cutting of the timbers that winter, and the erection of the house are fully recorded. Sources of supplies are noted, and there is mention of nails, glass, stone, the sink in the shed, and paint. Accounts were kept with the builder, Enos S. Root, and there is correspondence as well, mentioning other workers such as plasterers and journeymen. Such detailed accounts are rare: the value of the Hotchkiss accounts is increased by the fact that the house in question still exists. The artifact and the documentation complement each other, together forming a valuable source for the historian.

The house was built by Frederick Hotchkiss (born 1768) for his son David Miles (1797-1878). The Hotchkiss family was one of the earliest to settle the area and were prominent in local church and political affairs. They were farmers and had extensive land holdings. David Miles Hotchkiss, who received the house the year he was married, was a captain in the local militia, a selectman, and a representative to the General Assembly. He was instrumental in securing the incorporation of Prospect as a separate town, set off from Waterbury. David M. Hotchkiss kept a private school in the house for many years. Later in life, he suffered harassment for his ideas, as he was an early Free-Soiler in politics,

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

Anderson, Joseph (ed.). The Town and City of Waterbury. 3 vols. New Haven: Price & Lee, 1896.

Commemorative Biographical Record of New Haven County. Chicago: J.H. Beers, 1902.  
Hotchkiss Papers, Prospect Historical Society.

**ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED**

# 10. Geographical Data

**UTM NOT VERIFIED**

Acree of nominated property 2

Quadrangle name Southington

Quadrangle scale 1:24 000

### UMT References

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Zone Easting Northing

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**Verbal boundary description and justification** The nominated property includes the house, barn, shed and surrounding land which is presently leased to the historical society,

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

state	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Herbert Richardson & Bruce Clouette

organization Prospect Historical Society

date November 7, 1980

c/o Nellie Cowdell

street & number 31 Summit Road

telephone 758-4138

city or town Prospect

state CT

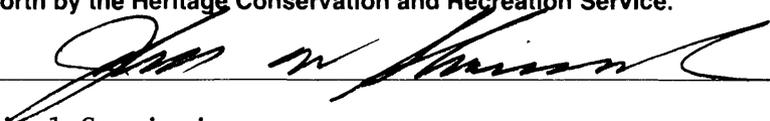
# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature



title Director, Connecticut Historical Commission

date March 12, 1981

For HCERS use only

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

*Signature of Keeper of the National Register*  
Keeper of the National Register

date 5/1/81

*Signature of Chief of Registration*  
Chief of Registration

date 5/1/81

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**



David Hotchkiss House, Prospect, CT  
Continuation sheet

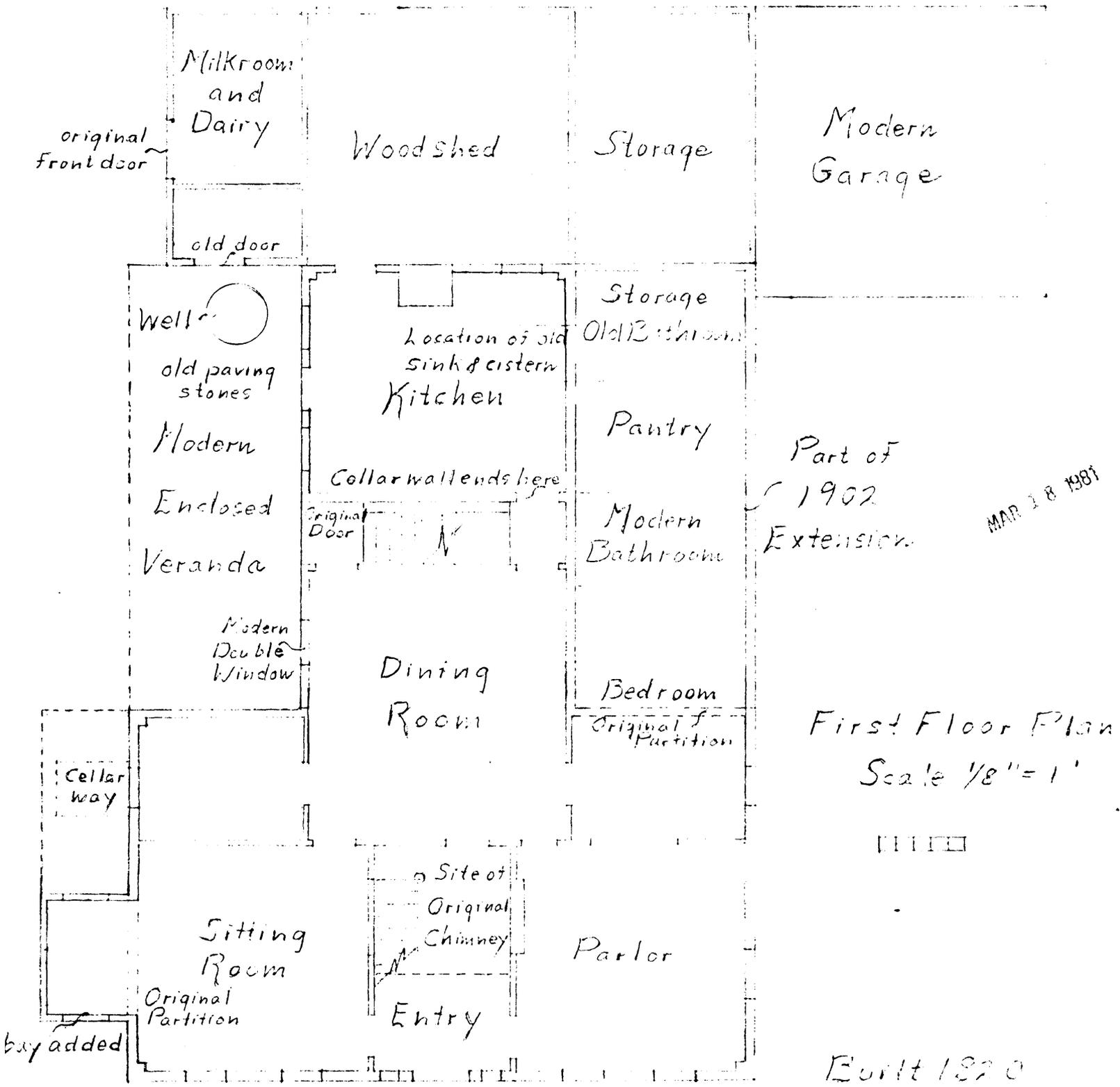
Item number 8

Page 2

Significance (Continued):

and for a short while, a follower of John Humphrey Noyes' Perfectionist religion. After his death in 1878, the house and farm passed to his son David Bryant Hotchkiss, who ran it as a dairy and fruit farm, also raising livestock. In 1978, the last of his children died, and the family sold the property to the Town, which has leased the homelot to the local historical society for preservation.

Although plain compared with its contemporaries in large towns like New Haven or Litchfield, the David Hotchkiss House is a cut above the ordinary, with its frieze of reeding (suggesting triglyphs), pilastered entranceway, and dentillated mantel and window sills, just as the Hotchkisses, while basically farming people, were leaders in civic affairs in their community. The close association of the house with the town's early history, the extensive documentation of its construction, the numerous furnishings and other artifacts left from its original owner (such as the school desk, books and uniform), the architectural merit of the house as an example of country Federal-period building, and the relative paucity of old houses in the town of Prospect combine to make the David Hotchkiss House a significant historic resource.



MAR 28 1981

First Floor Plan  
 Scale 1/8" = 1'

NOTCHKISS HOUSE  
 PROSPECT CO. N.