

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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DATE ENTERED FEB 25 1982

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORMSEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Gothic Cottage

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

1425 Mapleton Avenue

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Suffield

VICINITY OF

Sixth

STATE

Connecticut

CODE
09

COUNTY

Hartford

CODE

003

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

 DISTRICT
 BUILDING(S)
 STRUCTURE
 SITE
 OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

 PUBLIC
 PRIVATE
 BOTH
PUBLIC ACQUISITION
 IN PROCESS
 BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

 OCCUPIED
 UNOCCUPIED
 WORK IN PROGRESS
ACCESSIBLE
 YES: RESTRICTED
 YES: UNRESTRICTED
 NO

PRESENT USE

 AGRICULTURE
 COMMERCIAL
 EDUCATIONAL
 ENTERTAINMENT
 GOVERNMENT
 INDUSTRIAL
 MILITARY
 MUSEUM
 PARK
 PRIVATE RESIDENCE
 RELIGIOUS
 SCIENTIFIC
 TRANSPORTATION
 OTHER:**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Horace T. Sikes

STREET & NUMBER

River Boulevard Extension

CITY, TOWN

Suffield

VICINITY OF

STATE

Connecticut

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTIONCOURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Suffield Town Hall

STREET & NUMBER

Mountain Road

CITY, TOWN

Suffield

STATE

Connecticut

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

State Register of Historic Places

DATE

1975

 FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Connecticut Historical Commission

CITY, TOWN

Hartford

STATE

Connecticut

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The site of the Gothic Cottage in the northeast part of Suffield, Connecticut, is in a semi-rural neighborhood about one mile west of the Connecticut River and one mile south of the Massachusetts border. The house is set back about 400 feet on the west side of Mapleton Avenue (Photograph 1) across from its junction with River Boulevard Extension, on land that has been farmed until recent years.

The house is built with exterior walls of vertical boards in an ell-shaped plan, with a wing to the rear (see sketch). The front entrance is in the angle of the L, facing south (Photograph 2). As suggested by its name, the chief design element in the Gothic Cottage is the pointed arch that appears in the windows and in the interior detail. In addition, the main roofs and the dormer roofs all are steeply pitched and the brick chimneys heavily molded (Photograph 3) in the Gothic mode. (The round chimney pots in the roof of the west wing are new replacements.) The hallmark of the house is the pronounced, elaborate, serpentine barge boards with terminal loops on the two principal gables facing east and south. The gable peaks have central finials and pendants, as well (Photographs 2 and 4).

The original ell-shaped portion of the house is built on a 16-foot modular unit. The width of the end projecting toward the street is 16 feet, and this section is 32 feet deep. The ell projecting to the south is 16 x 16 feet. To the rear (west) there is an early, possibly original, 12 by 25 foot extension that always has had shingle siding, and in the angle to the south, between it and the first ell, a 10 by 15 foot addition.

There are several paired and tripartite windows with drip molds. The front facade has paired windows at second story level, over a three-sided bay. The south facade has the same arrangement at the second story, over a pair of floor-to-ceiling height windows. The dormer in the angle of the ell has paired windows, over tall triple windows that are in a flat plane with the wall, not in a bay. In the north facade (not pictured) there is a single pointed-arch window in still another gable, and two pairs of windows at first floor level. The windows are recessed, and the pointed arch is in the casing that is flush with the exterior wall. The sash are rectangular.

On the interior the stairs rise from south to north starting inside the front door. Two-thirds of the way up, the stairs jog to the east with two winders to the right and then two winders to the left, apparently as a matter of design, as there is no apparent structural cause nor explanation related to plan. The balustrade of the stairs is arcaded with Gothic trefoils (Photograph 5). Gothic arches appear in a built-in cabinet. The parlor fireplace has a slate surround that once was marbelized. The mantel shelf was stolen during the period when the house was vacant (see below). Behind the dining room fireplace (and adjacent to the kitchen) there is a cavity of about 2½ feet in diameter and the height of a man thought to have been the early location of a "set tank" for hot water, the operation of which is not entirely clear but the water is thought to have been heated by the fireplace.

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In the cellar the foundation walls are brownstone up to the frost line, then brick. There are brick interior cellar walls, and brick walls in the form of rectangles that support the stacks. Flagstones are fitted over the tops of the rectangles to carry the first floor hearths.

The attic shows a mixture of hand-hewn and sawn rafters fastened together by nails. There is no mortise-and-tenon construction. The digits 1846, painted on the attic wall in coffee-colored paint, confirm the date of construction in accordance with family tradition.

Former elements of the house no longer present include a front porch that ran along the east wall of the south ell, in front of the flat tripartite window. The dormer above this window and the side lights of the front entrance once were glazed with diamond-shaped panes. Until the 1930's the roof was covered with embossed, triangular, interlocking tin shingles that, according to tradition, were imported from England as the original roof covering for the house. Asphalt shingles are now in place.

In 1964 the house sustained a fire on the north side that destroyed a porch and entrance there that have never been replaced, but that do show in the sketch. After the fire the house was vacant for 12 years. It has been restored over the last several years. The restoration has included introduction of new roof, doors, windows, some flooring, wiring, plumbing, and heating. The original floor plan has been maintained. The windows were formerly 9-over-9 and are now 6-over-6, that is, the panes are oblong instead of nearly square. The barge boards and window casings, in part, have been restored where damaged or deteriorated. Black oak from the property has been used for the new floors, replacing random width boards of fir and hemlock. Black walnut from nearby Massachusetts has been used for cabinets and window surrounds.

In past decades the land was actively farmed and there were gardens and orchards, now turned to woodland. Outbuildings included a silo and greenhouses (for tomato plants). Now there is one outbuilding, a barn (Photograph 6), approximately 25 x 38 feet, thought to have been built in the 19th century. It has weathered vertical-board siding and gable roof.

In the 20th century the house has been painted white. During the course of the present restoration some early boards have been found that are painted coffee color, about the same shade as the year date 1846 found in the attic. Thinking this probably was the original color, several efforts were made to match the shade, without success, and the house has now been painted yellow with white trim.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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CONTINUATION SHEET Description ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 2

Only 7½ acres are left of the original farm. This land has always gone with the house. The boundaries are described in the land records (see Verbal Boundary Description). Because the acreage is historically associated with the land, and because the legal description is convenient and clear, the legal boundaries are used as the boundaries of the nominated property.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		local history

SPECIFIC DATES **1846**

BUILDER/~~ARCHITECT~~ **David Lyman Sikes**

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Gothic Cottage is a fine example of the style popularized by Calvert Vaux and A. J. Downing in mid-19th century and it is unusually complete with vertical siding, Gothic-arched windows with drip molds, steeply pitched gables with serpentine barge boards, and molded brick chimneys. (Criterion A) Moreover, the house has a place in local history because it was built by a descendant of one of the founders of Suffield, and has always been owned and occupied by descendants of the builder (Criterion B).

Plans for houses such as the Gothic Cottage were published in books written by a group of architect-authors among whom Calvert Vaux (1824-1892) and Andrew Jackson Downing (1815-1852) were leaders. Vaux was an English architect who collaborated with Downing, a landscape architect of Newberg, New York. Both published. Downing dealt at greater length with the setting and grounds than did Vaux, and often used architectural plans of others, with credit, in his books. Vaux went on to achieve fame in association with F. L. Olmsted for creation of Central Park, New York City, while Downing met an early end in a steamboat accident. Other writers in the field were Gervase Wheeler, Lewis F. Allen, C. W. Elliott, Daniel T. Atwood, and Henry W. Cleaveland, William Backus, and Samuel D. Backus.

Downing's Cottage Residences, first published in 1842, has a plate¹ that well could be the source of the design for the Gothic Cottage. Features in Downing's plate that are found in the Gothic Cottage include walls of vertical boards, ell-shaped plan, steeply pitched roofs and chimneys, paired windows in the end walls, a dormer in the front slope of the ell, a porch in front of the ell leading to the entrance, and finials at the gable peaks. Downing shows barge boards that are pierced solids rather than pronounced serpentine curves (Downing does use a similar effect elsewhere²), windows without pointed arch casing, and roof cresting. Roof cresting was common, and it seems likely that the Gothic Cottage may originally have had roof cresting.

Other work in the Gothic Revival style in central and northern Connecticut included three houses in Hartford by Octavius Jordan, the John Hooker House (1861), at the northeast corner of Forest and Hawthorne Streets (included in the pending Asylum Hill Multiple Resources Nomination), the Perkins-Clark House (1861), 49 Woodland Street (enrolled in the National Register of Historic Places), and Oakholm (1864), the first Harriet Beecher Stowe House, at the end of Sigourney Street near the Park River (demolished). In addition to steep roofs, barge boards, and other usual Gothic Revival features,

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See continuation sheet.

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED
UTM NOT VERIFIED

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 7.5

QUADRANGLE NAME Springfield South

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24,000

UTM REFERENCES

A 1,8 6,9,7,0,7,0 4,6,5,4,2,8,0

B 1,8 6,9,6,9,5,0 4,6,5,4,1,7,0

C 1,8 6,9,6,8,2,0 4,6,5,4,2,2,0

D 1,8 6,9,6,9,2,0 4,6,5,4,4,0,0

E

F

G

H

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated property is described in the Suffield Land Records, volume 139, page 559.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

David F. Ransom, Consultant

ORGANIZATION

Connecticut Historical Commission

DATE

May 28, 1979

STREET & NUMBER

59 South Prospect Street

TELEPHONE

203 566-3005

CITY OR TOWN

Hartford

STATE

Connecticut

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE X

LOCAL

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

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE



TITLE Director, Connecticut Historical Commission

DATE January 21, 1982

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Entered in the

National Register

DATE

2/25/82

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

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these three houses were unusual because they were built of brick (covered with stucco in the case of the Perkins-Clark House). The distinguishing architectural element common to the three houses was the three high gables on the facade, the center one taller than the two flanking it. Downing published such a design in 1840.³

A further example, in wooden construction, is found closer to the Gothic Cottage across the Connecticut River at 36 Prospect Street in the Thompsonville Section of Enfield. The features of this house, central gable, twin chimneys, flat-roofed portico, paired windows at the first floor, single windows above, and gable-peak finials, are found in a design published by Vaux.⁴ Alexander Jackson Davis (1803-1892) was also an important contributor to the Gothic Revival. His Wadsworth Atheneum (1844) in Hartford, Connecticut, is an example of the castellated, masonry variety of the style. Of all the books that were published the most influential was Downing's Cottage Residences and it uses many of Davis' designs. After Cottage Residences was first published in 1842 it was re-issued no less than twelve times down to 1888, with the result that Downing's Gothic Revival houses may be found from Maine to Florida. He caught the spirit of the picturesque effect in a way that appealed to many Americans, including David Lyman Sikes of Suffield, a member of one of the town's original families.

In 1670 when the proprietors of the proposed new town of Suffield (then part of Massachusetts) petitioned the town of Springfield for approval of their plan, the head of the Springfield town government was Richard Sikes. His son, Victory Sikes, came and settled in Suffield. His descendant David Lyman Sikes (1815-1892) built the Gothic Cottage. Subsequently, it has been owned and occupied in father-son sequence by Leroy Hamilton Sikes (1857-1937), Maynard Lyman Sikes (b. 1892), Horace Thrall Sikes (b. 1923), present owner, and Brian Edward Sikes (b. 1952), who with his wife, Cathy Sikes, is the present occupant. At one time there were 17 houses in this neighborhood occupied by Sikes families.

David Lyman Sikes, the builder, did not buy the land at the time he constructed his house because it was already owned by the Sikes family. David Lyman Sikes was a gunsmith at the Springfield Armory, and according to family tradition also had a shop in the present barn where he carried on his trade, perhaps after retiring from the Armory.

For more than a century and a quarter the Gothic Cottage has maintained its stylistic integrity, and is now enjoying a renaissance of care and activity in the hands of a young family descended from one of Suffield's founding fathers.

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1. Downing, Cottage Residences, Design XL, p. 172.
2. Downing, The Architecture of Country Houses, Design XXVIII, fig. 148, opposite p. 332.
3. _____, Design XIX, fig. 76, opposite p. 170.
4. Vaux, p. 188.

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CONTINUATION SHEET Bibliography ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 1

Louis E. Allen, Rural Architecture, New York: A. O. Moore, 1852.

Danield T. Atwood, Country and Suburban Houses, New York: Orange Judd & Co., 1871.

Henry W. Cleaveland, William Backus and Samuel D. Backus, Village and Farm Cottages, New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1856.

A. J. Downing, The Architecture of Country Houses, New York: D. Appleton, 1840.

A. J. Downing, Cottage Residences, New York: John Wiley, 1853, fourth edition.

C. W. Elliott, Cottages and Cottage Life, Cincinnati: H. W. Derby & Co., 1848.

Interview with Dorothy Sikes Underhill, April 29, 1979.

Calvert Vaux, Villas and Cottages, New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1970 (reprint of second edition published by Harper & Row, 1864).

Gervase Wheeler, Rural Homes, New York: Charles Scribner, 1852.

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Sketch of Plan
1"=14'

