

**HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY
BUILDING AND STRUCTURES**

HIST-6 NEW 5 77

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
CONNECTICUT HISTORICAL COMMISSION
59 SOUTH PROSPECT STREET, HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106
(203) 566-3005

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY	
Town No.:	Site No.:
UTM	
QUAD:	
DISTRICT	IF NR SPECIFY
<input type="checkbox"/> S <input type="checkbox"/> NR	<input type="checkbox"/> Actual <input type="checkbox"/> Potential

#1

IDENTIFICATION

1. BUILDING NAME (Common) <i>(Historic)</i>		Moss Hill	
2. TOWN CITY	VILLAGE	COUNTY	
Norfolk		Litchfield	
3. STREET AND NUMBER (and or location)			
Litchfield Road, east side			
4. OWNER(S)		<input type="checkbox"/> Public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private
William F. Russell		Litchfield Road, Norfolk, CT 06058	
5. USE (Present) <i>(Historic)</i>		Summer residence	
Residence			
6. ACCESSIBILITY TO PUBLIC:	EXTERIOR VISIBLE FROM PUBLIC ROAD	INTERIOR ACCESSIBLE	IF YES, EXPLAIN
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No		

DESCRIPTION

7. STYLE OF BUILDING		DATE OF CONSTRUCTION
		1903
8. MATERIAL(S) <i>(Indicate use or location when appropriate)</i>		
<input type="checkbox"/> Clapboard	<input type="checkbox"/> Asbestos Siding	<input type="checkbox"/> Brick <input type="checkbox"/> Other <i>(Specify)</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Wood Shingle	<input type="checkbox"/> Asphalt Siding	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fieldstone, granite
<input type="checkbox"/> Board & Batten	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Stucco	<input type="checkbox"/> Cobblestone
<input type="checkbox"/> Aluminum Siding	<input type="checkbox"/> Concrete Type:	<input type="checkbox"/> Cut stone Type:
9. STRUCTURAL SYSTEM		
<input type="checkbox"/> Wood frame	<input type="checkbox"/> Post and beam	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> balloon
<input type="checkbox"/> Load bearing masonry	<input type="checkbox"/> Structural iron or steel	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other <i>(Specify)</i>		
10. ROOF <i>(Type)</i>		
<input type="checkbox"/> Gable	<input type="checkbox"/> Flat	<input type="checkbox"/> Mansard <input type="checkbox"/> Monitor <input type="checkbox"/> sawtooth
<input type="checkbox"/> Gambrel	<input type="checkbox"/> Shed	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hip <input type="checkbox"/> Round <input type="checkbox"/> Other <i>(Specify)</i>
<i>(Material)</i> with gables		
<input type="checkbox"/> Wood Shingle	<input type="checkbox"/> Roll Asphalt	<input type="checkbox"/> Tin <input type="checkbox"/> Slate
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Asphalt shingle	<input type="checkbox"/> Built up	<input type="checkbox"/> Tile <input type="checkbox"/> Other <i>(Specify)</i>
11. NUMBER OF STORIES	APPROXIMATE DIMENSIONS	
3	28x58', with 22x32' wing	
12. CONDITION <i>(Structural)</i>		<i>(Exterior)</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	
13. INTEGRITY <i>(Location)</i>		WHEN? <i>(Alterations)</i> IF YES, EXPLAIN
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On original site	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
14. RELATED OUTBUILDINGS OR LANDSCAPE FEATURES		
<input type="checkbox"/> Barn <input type="checkbox"/> Shed	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Garage	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other landscape features or buildings <i>(Specify)</i> Paved terrace with stone steps leading to the grounds
<input type="checkbox"/> Carriage house	<input type="checkbox"/> Shop <input type="checkbox"/> Garden	
15. SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Open land	<input type="checkbox"/> Wood-land	<input type="checkbox"/> Residential <input type="checkbox"/> Scattered buildings visible from site
<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> Indus-trial	<input type="checkbox"/> Rural <input type="checkbox"/> High building density
16. INTERRELATIONSHIP OF BUILDING AND SURROUNDINGS		
Approached by up hill winding drive. Has fine view.		

(OVER)

17 OTHER NOTABLE FEATURES OF BUILDING OR SITE (interior and/or exterior)

Moss Hill is a three story, fieldstone and half-timbered house. The stone is rugged in appearance, and may be granite. It is thought to have been quarried on the premises. Stone lintels and sills are massive.

The house is rectangular in shape with a one story kitchen wing on the northeast corner, and a three story projecting wing in the center of the south side. This side, toward the view, also has a paved terrace and stone stairways leading to the grounds. The front doorway originally was on the north side, approached by a small gabled porch. It has been moved to the west facade, taking the place of a window opening.

First and second floor windows are double hung sash with the lower sash glazed with a single pane. The upper sash has many small panes, the number depending on the size of the window, but in some cases 28-over-1. At second floor level on the south side there are horizontal dark wood balconies at the bedroom windows, supported by triangular (continued)

DESCRIPTION (Continued)

18 ARCHITECT

A.S.G. Taylor

BUILDER

19 HISTORICAL OR ARCHITECTURAL IMPORTANCE

In this his first Norfolk building Taylor used the rough stone, deep window reveals, small glazing pattern, horizontal balconies, red roof combining hip with gable, and basically rectangular plan on a superb site that he was to repeat in several other houses. The paved terrace with terra cotta balustrades in particular is similar to the terrace of his own home built the following year.

Interior features of Beaux-Arts derivation apparent here also were repeated. The two story stair hall lighted by a two story window was often incorporated by Taylor in his houses, although Moss Hill has the only known example of a full Palladian arch.

While the individual components of the interior, the balustraded stair, the arch, and the well proportioned living room are sound components, the manner in which they are assembled is not altogether successful. Neither the original nor the altered entrance leads to the stair hall in a satisfactory manner; the arch is much too large for the size of the room to which it serves as an entrance; and the movement from one room (continued)

SIGNIFICANCE

Interview October 12, 1978 with William F. Russell who quoted Esther Billikopf, A.S.G. Taylor's neice and heir, as telling him Moss Hill was built in 1903, and was Taylor's first work in Norfolk.

SOURCES

PHOTOGRAPHER

D. Ransom

DATE

10/78

VIEW

A northeast, B northwest

NEGATIVE ON FILE

Connecticut Historical Commission

Place

NAME

C Library

DATE

10/29/78

Photograph

ORGANIZATION

Connecticut Historical Commission

Here

ADDRESS

59 S. Prospect St., Hartford, CT 06106

20 SUBSEQUENT FIELD EVALUATIONS

Verbal boundary description: NLR 43/470, 5 acres.
UTM Reference: 18/649200/4648660

21 THREATS TO BUILDING OR SITE

- None known. Highways Vandalism Developers Other _____
- Renewal Private Deterioration Zoning Explanation _____

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
CONNECTICUT HISTORICAL COMMISSION
59 South Prospect Street, Hartford, Connecticut 06106
HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY FORM
For Buildings and Structures

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY			
TOWN NO.:			SITE NO.:
UTM: 18/	----	/----	/----
QUAD:			
DISTRICT:	S	NR:	ACTUAL POTENTIAL

CONTINUATION SHEET

Item number: 17 Date: Oct. 29, 1978

A.S.G. Taylor Thematic Group
Norfolk, CT

Moss Hill #1

wood brackets. Wooden box gutters at the eaves that proved unsatisfactory in recent years have been covered over, and the former downspouts no longer functional but still decorative have been removed. In the roof hipped dormers have casement windows. The central section of the red shingled roof is hipped with two parallel gabled sections leading from it to the west and single gables toward the south and east.

Chief feature of the interior is a two-story-high, round-headed window opening filled with small panes separated by heavy concentric mullions. A balustraded stair ascends in three runs at right angles to one another in a U shape in front of the window. Also in the hall there is a full Palladian arch leading to a small library. The arch once was complete with acroteria but the statues have been removed, although still stored in the house. In the living room one corner of the wood fireplace surround is a pilaster that is canted both vertically and horizontally. The many large windows give the house a sense of being well lighted and airy on both the first and second floors, an effect commonly carried over in other Taylor houses. There is an original brass chandelier in the living room.

The 1903 electrical wiring was installed in $\frac{1}{2}$ inch steel pipe conduit. Red tiles are used extensively in the balustrade of the paved terrace. The tradition is that these are thigh tile, imported from Italy where they were formed by placing the malleable clay over a workman's thigh. The tradition is supported by the fact that the measurements of the tiles vary somewhat from one to another, making replacement for maintenance a challenge.

Item number: 19

to another seems awkward. Moss Hill demonstrates the inventiveness, imagination, eccentricity, and combination of rugged exteriors with Beaux-Arts interiors that Taylor was to bring to Norfolk in ensuing years. The charm, convenience, and spatial relationships of the interiors he designed fifteen years later were to be an improvement on this initial plan.

Moss Hill is the only house Taylor designed in Norfolk that has a vertical thrust. All the others are horizontally oriented.

The client for Moss Hill was Taylor's mother-in-law. She made the decision to build a home in Norfolk, presumably because of friendships here. Taylor and his wife followed with their own home the next year. His mother-in-law's decision obviously was crucial, for had she elected to locate elsewhere, Taylor's Norfolk work never would have happened.