National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

received MAY 7 1985 date entered JUN 6 1985

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

Type all entrie	es—complete appli	cable sections				
1. Nar	ne					
historic	John Winga	te Weeks Mans	ion			
and or commor	n THE WEEKS	ESTATE (pref	erred)			
2. Loc	ation	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·				
street & number	er East side	of NH Rte 3,	2.3 miles s	outh of Lancast	er, <u>n/a</u> n	ot for publication
city, town	Lancaster	` <u>n/a</u>	∠ vicinity of	New Hamp	shire	
state Ne	w Hampshire	code 33	county	Coos		code 007
3. Clas	ssificatio	m		•		
Category district _X building(s structure site object	Ownership X public private both Public Acquisit in process being consid X n/a	ion Access X yes	occupied rk in progress sible s: restricted s: unrestricted	Present Use agriculture commercial educational entertainment government industrial military	ent	museum park private residence religious scientific transportation other:
4. Ow	ner of Pro	perty			,	
name street & numbe	Department	ew Hampshire of Resources	& Economic	Development		
city, town	Concord,	n/a	_ vicinity of	s	tate New	Hampshire
5. Loc	ation of I	egal De	scriptic			
street & number	gistry of deeds, etc.	Coos County P.O. Box 28		f Deeds	Now	Vomochino
city, town		Lancaster,	•		tate riew	Hampshire
6. Rep	presentat	ion in Ex	(ISTING	Surveys		
title	None		has this pro	perty been determin	ed eligible	e? yes 🐰 no
date		N/A		federal	_ state _	county loca
depository for	survey records	N/A				
city, town		N/A		S	tate	

7. Description

Xfair unexposed	Condition excellentdeterioratedXgoodruinsXfairunexposed	Check one _X_ unaltered altered	Check one original site moved date N/A
-----------------	---	---------------------------------	--

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Located on the summit of Mount Prospect, about $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles south of the village of Lancaster, the John Wingate Weeks mansion (1912) is a rectangular building measuring about 48 by 88 feet. It is accompanied by a water and lookout tower (converted to a fire observation tower), a pump house, a four stall garage, and a small servants' cottage. The complex stands on a track of some 420 acres, assembled from portions of several farms in 1910. The land is largely covered with a forest of northern hardwood species. Extensive views of mountainous terrain in New Hampshire and neighboring Vermont are visible from the summit of the mountain.

The main house (or "lodge," as it was called when new) is a large, two-story dwelling with a clipped gable roof covered with red terra cotta tile. The feet of the rafters are left exposed to produce a deliberately rustic effect popular in bungalow architecture at the period. The walls of the lodge are finished with stucco, and are ornamented with half timber decoration in the gables beneath the principal second floor windows. Large fieldstone chimneys rise against the exterior walls at each end (east and west elevation) of the house, and the dwelling itself is set upon terraces built within fieldstone retaining walls.

The front or south elevation is a generally symmetrical facade with a central entrance portico which is supported by square fieldstone columns that frame a stairway in the center of the terrace wall. To the left (west) of the entrance are windows which formerly lighted bedrooms in this part of the house, while to the right is a window flanked by two French doors which light the original dining room of the lodge. The balustraded deck of the entrance portico is reached by a second floor doorway which is flanked by two windows. On each side of the portico are second-floor plate glass windows, set into projecting enframements of half timber work. The eaves of the lodge roof rise in gentle undulations above each of the picture windows and above the central doorway on the second floor.

The west end of the lodge is dominated by a broad, two story porch with square fieldstone columns supporting its first story and square wooden columns supporting its second. The joists and rafters of the porch are left exposed to enhance the rustic effects of the dwelling. The fieldstone chimney is divided beneath the second floor of the porch and has a small window set beneath an arch which links the two converging flues. Single windows light rooms on each side of the chimney. On the second floor, double French doors provide access to the upper story of the porch from each side of the chimney.

The rear or north elevation of the house is characterized by irregular fenestration on the first story. At the west end are two windows lighting former bedrooms; at the center of the house are three windows lighting a former bedroom and bathroom; at the east end are four windows lighting a former kitchen. On the second floor, a central bank of three windows is flanked on the east and west by plate glass picture windows set into projecting half-timber enframements. As on the front of the house, the eaves rise in a slight undulation above each of the second floor window areas. The doors provide access to the basement of the building.

NPS Form 10-900-a
(3-82)

OMB No. 1024-0018

Expires 10-31-87

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

Far NPS	use ani	¥	
received			
date ente	ered		

Continuation sheet 1 Item number 7 Page 2

The east elevation of the house has a small one-story wing and porch which projects eastward in line with the rear wall of the house. The top of this wing serves as a balustrated deck, accessible through double French windows on the second floor. As on the west end of the house, the fieldstone chimney on this elevation is divided on the first floor into two areas, connected by an arch above the two windows. Above the arch, the chimney unites in a single broad stack which rises well above the roof, flanked on the second floor by the French window on the north, a three-part leaded casement window on the south, and a pair of small casement windows in the half-timbered gable above.

The interior of the lodge utilized a novel plan which took full advantage of the extensive vistas afforded by the mountaintop site. The living and sleeping rooms were all confined to the first floor, while the second was thrown into a single 30-by-70-foot hall with large windows and with balconies extending to each point of the compass. The first floor remains divided into several rooms. At the west, in an area originally occupied by several bedrooms, is a single room used for a display interpreting New Hampshire forestry and conservation. At the northeast corner of the first floor, the original kitchen has become an administrative office, while the wing of the house is used as a first aid station. In the southeast corner of the building, the original dining room remains essentially unaltered and retains its first floor tile.

The second floor hall has massive fireplaces at each end. Its trim is dark oak, framing panels of plaster. The room remains in essentially original condition.

The Weeks lodge has undergone some changes. Original appearance: Originally, the house had terraces on all sides; that on the north was removed in 1964 during alterations carried out by the State of New Hampshire, along with a portico and second floor balcony similar to that on the front (south) At the same time, first and second floor doorways leading to this portico were replaced by windows. Originally, too, the western porch of the lodge had no second story; this was added by members of the Weeks family some years after the house was completed. In 1964, the State removed partitions which defined several bedrooms on the western end of the first floor in order to convert that part of the lodge into a display area interpreting the history of forestry and conservation in New Hampshire. At the same time, the original kitchen of the house was remodeled onto a more modern facility (now used for administration), and additional rest rooms were created for the public adjacent to the original bathroom of the lodge.

Some distance southwest of the lodge is a stone tower 87.5 feet in height. Built of uncoursed fieldstone split to provide flat faces on the exterior, the tower tapers from its base to a corbelled band which supports a concrete observation deck enclosed by a stone arcade. Above the observation story is an octagonal wooden fire observatory capped by a faceted roof with a wooden

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

Far NPS L	ise ordy	
received		
date ente	red	

Continuation sheet

2

Item number

7

Page

3

spire at its apex. Each face of the observatory is enclosed by paired wood sash windows. Access to the tower is gained by an arched doorway; arched windows are located along an ascending spiral on the walls of the tower. Access to the top of the tower is provided by a steel stairway of multiple runs.

Original appearance: The tower was originally built both as an observatory and as a water tower. The original stairway to the top spiraled around an interior tank. The top of the tower was a crenellated parapet which enclosed a deck and was topped by a faceted roof similar to the present roof. In 1941, the observation platform was enclosed by the present arcade, and the fire observatory was added above it.

Built on a steep declivity south of the tower is a small pump house of frame construction on a stepped foundation of split fieldstone. The building has clapboarded walls and a hipped roof covered by asphalt shingles. Its central doorway on the south elevation is flanked by paired six-light window sashes enclosed within case openings. Each side elevation of the building has a single-light sash.

Original appearance: The pump house essentially retains its original appearance.

Some 300 feet southeast of the lodge is a small framed servants' quarters, measuring 24 by 34 feet. This building has walls covered with stained wooden shingles and a gable roof with hipped extensions at each end. The gables of the main roof, above the intersection of the hipped extensions, are filled with half-timbered work and have single six light window sashes. The front doorway of the building, facing west, is sheltered beneath a wooden porch with a gabled roof supported by a king-post truss. On each side of the entrance are two windows. Each end elevation of the house has a pair of windows. The rear elevation of the building has a hip-roofed extension near its center, and an open porch at the southeast corner. Fenestration of the rear of the building is irregular. A fieldstone chimney pierces the center of the roof just behind the ridge. The interior of the building contains a living room, three bedrooms, a bathroom, and a kitchen.

Original appearance: There are no indications of substantial changes in the servants' quarters.

South of the servants' quarters is a four-stall garage with chauffeur's quarters. The Weeks lodge was made feasible as a summer home by the advent of the automobile; it was accessible from the main highway by an auto road built in 1912 to supplant an earlier carriage road leading to the summit of Mount Prospect. The estate therefore required an automobile garage, and this was built in conformity to the design of the main house. The garage was a stuccoed building with a clipped gable roof covered with asphalt shingles; like the main house, the garage has projecting rafter feet at the eaves and half timbering in each gable. The doors of the four auto stalls face south,

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use	only	
received		
date entere	d	

Continuation sheet

-

Item number

Page 4

with a six-over-six window near the southwest corner of the building. Spaced along the south slope of the roof are three hip-roofed dormers with paired six-light sashes in each. Each end of the building has six-over-six windows on the main floor, and smaller paired six-over-six sashes enclosed in half-timbered ornamentation in each gable. Extending northward from the northwest rear corner of the garage is a hip-roofed one-story wing entered through a door in its west elevation.

Original appearance: Although the State of New Hampshire had planned extensive remodelings to the garage in 1964, the building was left, and remains, in essentially original condition.

8. Significance

1500–1599 1600–1699 1700–1799 1800–1899	Areas of Significance—C archeology-prehistoric agriculture architecture art commerce communications		literature military music philosophy politics/government	religion science sculpture social/ humanitarian theater transportation other (specify)
Specific dates	1912	Builder/Architect Unkn	nown	

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Weeks Estate was built by John Wingate Weeks (1860-1926), Congressman, Senator, United States Secretary of War, and leading conservationist. Built as a summer retreat and as a testament to Weeks' affection for the locale of his ancestry and birth, the estate also typifies a spirit of private land conservation often seen in New Hampshire at the turn of the twentieth century. Now utilized as a State park and a museum of conservation, the estate remains one of the best preserved of many grand summer homes built in New Hampshire in the early 1900s.

Architecture: The main lodge of the Weeks estate represents the then-popular bungalow house type, enlarged to an unusually ambitious scale and embellished with elements of old English half timbering and Spanish tile work. The use of split fieldstone for terraces, porches, and chimneys of the house linked the somewhat exotic bungalow form to native New Hampshire materials, while the stuccoed walls of the house and garage utilized a material then prized for its natural quality, its durability, and its resistance to fire. The inversion of the house plan, with the utilitarian rooms on the first floor and grand hall and balconies on the second, reflected the unique advantages of the mountaintop site and afforded sweeping vistas in every direction.

The present four stall garage near the house displayed the automotive orientation of the estate. Built at the end of a newly-constructed auto road, the lodge was planned to take advantage of the freedom of travel afforded by the motor car and of the hill climbing ability of the powerful Cadillac automobiles owned by the Weeks family and often commented upon by the local Lancaster newspapers. In all respects, the Weeks estate was calculated to display the best twentieth-century taste and technology and to serve as a model estate of a local man who earned success in a wider world.

Weeks' decision to convert the summit of Mount Prospect to a private estate was shaped in part by his strong sense of historical attachment to the Lancaster area, in the northern part of New Hampshire. Weeks was descended from one of the pioneer settlers of Lancaster and, through that ancestor, from one of New Hampshire's seventeenth-century immigrants. As a member of a prominent Lancaster family, Weeks benefited from an Annapolis education and began a promising political career in Massachusetts. Attaining eminence in national politics after 1904, Weeks remained interested in his native region.1 In 1908, Weeks donated the William D. Weeks Memorial Library, named in honor of his father, to the town of Lancaster.2 In 1914, a year after being elected U.S. Senator from Massachusetts and completing his lodge on Mount Prospect, Weeks served as the principal speaker at Lancaster's sesquicentennial celebration, throwing his home open to parties of automobilists who drove to the summit.3

he Inte			il Referen		
711 <u>C 111</u> 10	entory of the Pape	ers of John W. W	eeks 1860-1926,	Hanover NH:	Dartmouth College; 197
listory	of Coos County, S	Syracuse NY: W.	A. Fergusson & (كo.; 1833	
amplet	: Washington, D.C	C.: GP0907421;	1961.		
harles	G. Washburn, The	Life of John W.	Weeks, Boston 8	NY: Houghto	n Mifflin Co.; 1928.
10.	Geographi	ical Data			
Acreage	e of nominated property	Z.91 acres		_	1.25 000
	ngle name <u>Lancaster</u>	, MI & VEINDITC		Quadrang	le scale 1:25 000
J I W He	ferences				
1 9 Zone	┛ <u>┖╌┸╌┸╾╂╼╋╼</u> ╬ <u>╼</u> ┛ └┈	9 2 5 0 1 0 orthing	B Zone	Easting	Northing
cl i	111.1.11		الاام		
EL		. .	Flil		
- <u>L</u>					
G			,Н		
the both the gister	old-dashed line on Weeks Mansion from and is sufficient	the attached sl m its construct: to protect.	ketch map. The ion; it includes	nominated property	ated property are indicoperty is that associate y eligible for the Nati
List all	states and counties f	or properties overl	apping state or co	inty boundaries	
tate	N/A	code	county		code
tate	N/A	code	county		code
11.	Form Prep				·
name/titl		mes Lawrence es Garvin			
	TIME. Dail	es dai vin			
	. Weeks S	tate Park Associ	iation		
rganiza		tate Park Associates		e August 19	84
	* N.H. Hi Weeks R	storical Society oad	y dat	(603)	788–4057
	* N.H. Hi Weeks R number * 30 Park	storical Society oad Street	y dat	(603)	788–4057 225–3381
treet &	* N.H. Hi Weeks R number * 30 Park Lancast	storical Society oad Street er,	y dat	(603) ephone * (603) New H	788–4057
treet &	* N.H. Hi Weeks R number * 30 Park Lancast wm * Concord	storical Society oad Street er,	y dat tele sta	(603) ephone * (603) New H te * New H	788-4057 225-3381 ampshire 03584 ampshire 03301
treet &	* N.H. Hi Weeks R number * 30 Park Lancast wm * Concord	storical Society oad Street er,	y dat tele sta	(603) ephone * (603) New H te * New H	788-4057 225-3381 ampshire 03584
treet & lity or to	* N.H. Hi Weeks R number * 30 Park Lancast wm * Concord	storical Society oad Street er, oric Pres	telesta telest	(603) ephone * (603) New H te * New H	788-4057 225-3381 ampshire 03584 ampshire 03301
itreet & sity or to	wn * N.H. Hi Weeks R 10 Park Lancast Concord State Hist	storical Society oad Street er, oric Pres	telesta telest	(603) ephone * (603) New H te * New H	788-4057 225-3381 ampshire 03584 ampshire 03301
itreet & sity or to	weeks R number * 30 Park Lancast Concord * Concord State Hist uated significance of this national esignated State Historic	storical Society oad Street er, oric Pres s property within the s _X_ state Preservation Officer f	telestation Constate is: local for the National Histor	(603) Pephone * (603) New H te * New H Officer C	788-4057 225-3381 ampshire 03584 ampshire 03301 ertification ct of 1966 (Public Law 89-
itreet & eity or to 12. The evaluation is the decision in the	wn * N.H. Hi Weeks R Number * 30 Park Lancast * Concord State Hist uated significance of this national	storical Society oad Street er, Oric Pres s property within the s X state Preservation Officer ferty for inclusion in the	telestation Cervation Cervation Cervation Certate is: local for the National Histor the National Register a	(603) Pephone * (603) New Home * New Home * New Home * New Home * New Home Home Home Home Home Home Home Home	788-4057 225-3381 ampshire 03584 ampshire 03301 ertification ct of 1966 (Public Law 89-
ity or to 12. The evaluation of the decording of the dec	weeks R weeks R weeks R and * 30 Park Lancast * Concord * Concord	storical Society oad Street er, Oric Pres s property within the s X state Preservation Officer f erty for inclusion in the cedures set forth by the	telestation Cervation Cervation Cervation Certate is: local for the National Histor the National Register a	(603) Pephone * (603) New H The New H The Preservation Act of the certify that it is ince.	788-4057 225-3381 ampshire 03584 ampshire 03301 ertification ct of 1966 (Public Law 89-
ity or to 12. The evaluation of the decording of the dec	wn * N.H. Hi Weeks R Number * 30 Park Lancast * Concord State Hist uated significance of this national esignated State Historic ereby nominate this prop	storical Society oad Street er, Oric Pres s property within the s X state Preservation Officer f erty for inclusion in the cedures set forth by the	telestation Cervation Cervation Cervation Certate is: local for the National Histor the National Register a	(603) Pephone * (603) New Home * New Home * New Home * New Home * New Home Home Home Home Home Home Home Home	788-4057 225-3381 ampshire 03584 ampshire 03301 ertification ct of 1966 (Public Law 89-
ity or to 12. The evaluation of the decording state His	weeks R weeks R weeks R and * 30 Park Lancast * Concord * Concord	storical Society oad Street er, Oric Pres sproperty within the s X state Preservation Officer ferty for inclusion in the sedures set forth by the state of the state of the sedures set forth by the state of the sedures set forth by the state of the state	state is: local for the National Histor he National Park Serve he National Park Serve	(603) Pephone * (603) New H The New H The Preservation Act of the certify that it he certifies the certifi	788-4057 225-3381 ampshire 03584 ampshire 03301 ertification ct of 1966 (Public Law 89-
itreet & sity or to 12. The evaluate Historian State Historian Rewards of the New York (1988) itle New York (1988)	weeks R number * 30 Park Lancast * Concord * Concord State Hist uated significance of this national esignated State Historic ereby nominate this proping to the criteria and processoric Preservation Officer Hampshire State Historic	storical Society oad Street er, Oric Pres sproperty within the s X state Preservation Officer ferty for inclusion in the sedures set forth by the state of the state of the sedures set forth by the state of the sedures set forth by the state of the state	state is: local for the National Histor he National Park Serve he National Park Serve	(603) Pephone * (603) New H Te * New H To Preservation Act of certify that it he Tice.	788-4057 225-3381 ampshire 03584 ampshire 03301 Certification et of 1966 (Public Law 89- as been evaluated
tity or to 12. The evaluate the decording state History	weeks R number * 30 Park Lancast * Concord * Concor	storical Society oad Street er, Oric Pres s property within the s X state Preservation Officer ferty for inclusion in the sedures set forth by the state reservation of the sedures set forth by the state reservation of the sedures set forth by the state reservation of the sedures set forth by the state reservation of the sedures set forth by the state reservation of the sedures set forth by the state reservation of the sedures set forth by the state reservation of the sedures set forth by the seduces set forth seduces seduces set forth seduces sedu	tele sta ervation C state is: local for the National Histor he National Register a me National Park Serv ration Officer	(603) Pephone * (603) New H Te * New H To Preservation Act of certify that it he Tice.	788-4057 225-3381 ampshire 03584 ampshire 03301 Certification et of 1966 (Public Law 89- as been evaluated
itreet & sity or to 12. The evaluate History of the Ev	weeks R weeks R Lancast Lancast Concord State Hist uated significance of this national esignated State Historic ereby nominate this property to the criteria and processoric Preservation Office Hampshire State Historic ereby certify that this property is the criteria and processoric Preservation Office Hampshire State Historic ereby certify that this processoric Preservation Office Hampshire State Historic ereby certify that this processoric Preservation Office Hampshire State Historic ereby certify that this processoric Preservation Office Hampshire State Historic ereby certify that this processoric Preservation Office Hampshire State Historic ereby certify that this processoric Preservation Office Hampshire State Historic ereby certify that this processoric Preservation Office Hampshire State Historic ereby certify that this processoric Preservation Office Hampshire State Historic ereby certify that this processoric Preservation Office Hampshire State Historic ereby certify that this processoric Preservation Office Hampshire State Historic Preservation Office Historic Preservati	storical Society oad Street er, Oric Pres sproperty within the s X state Preservation Officer ferty for inclusion in the sedures set forth by the signature Preservation Preservation of the sedures set forth by the state of the sedures set forth by the seduces set forth by the sedures set forth by the seduces set fort	telestation Castate is: local for the National Historican Register and Park Servertation Officer the National Register faction Officer the National Register The National Register The National Register The National Register	(603) Phone * (603) New H The * New H The servation Act of the side of the servation Act of the side of the side of the side of the servation Act of the side of	788-4057 225-3381 ampshire 03584 ampshire 03301 ct of 1966 (Public Law 89- as been evaluated
treet & sity or to 12. The evaluate History of the Example of the	weeks R number * 30 Park Lancast * Concord State Hist uated significance of this national esignated State Historic ereby nominate this proping to the criteria and processoric Preservation Officer Hampshire State Historic ereby certify that this processory certify that this property certify that this processory certification certificat	storical Society oad Street er, Oric Pres sproperty within the s X state Preservation Officer ferty for inclusion in the sedures set forth by the signature Preserve preserve preserve preserve preserve included in the second	state is: local for the National Histor he National Park Serv ration Officer he National Register a	(603) Phone * (603) New H The * New H The servation Act of the side of the servation Act of the side of the side of the side of the servation Act of the side of	788-4057 225-3381 ampshire 03584 ampshire 03301 Certification et of 1966 (Public Law 89- as been evaluated
ity or to 12. The evaluation of the evaluation	weeks R weeks R Lancast Lancast Concord State Hist uated significance of this national esignated State Historic ereby nominate this property to the criteria and processoric Preservation Office Hampshire State Historic ereby certify that this property is the criteria and processoric Preservation Office Hampshire State Historic ereby certify that this processoric Preservation Office Hampshire State Historic ereby certify that this processoric Preservation Office Hampshire State Historic ereby certify that this processoric Preservation Office Hampshire State Historic ereby certify that this processoric Preservation Office Hampshire State Historic ereby certify that this processoric Preservation Office Hampshire State Historic ereby certify that this processoric Preservation Office Hampshire State Historic ereby certify that this processoric Preservation Office Hampshire State Historic ereby certify that this processoric Preservation Office Hampshire State Historic ereby certify that this processoric Preservation Office Hampshire State Historic Preservation Office Historic Preservati	storical Society oad Street er, Oric Pres sproperty within the s X state Preservation Officer ferty for inclusion in the sedures set forth by the signature Preserve preserve preserve preserve preserve included in the second	telestation Castate is: local for the National Historican Register and Park Servertation Officer the National Register faction Officer the National Register The National Register The National Register The National Register	(603) Phone * (603) New H The * New H The servation Act of the side of the servation Act of the side of the side of the side of the servation Act of the side of	788-4057 225-3381 ampshire 03584 ampshire 03301 ct of 1966 (Public Law 89- as been evaluated

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

For NI	S use	anty	
receiv	est.		
1040)1	ou.		
date z	nterec	ı	

Continuation sheet

4

Item number

8

Page

2

In 1919, Weeks contributed an eleven-page article on White Mountain history to New Hampshire's Granite Monthly magazine.4

Weeks interest in his native area and its history played a determining role in his decision to create an estate which would rival those being constructed in New Hampshire by other men of wealth and prestige. In 1911, Weeks wrote to the Secretary to the New Hampshire State Board of Agriculture, "Relative to my purchase of Mount Prospect at Lancaster, I have no definite final plans about this purchase, but I am greatly interested in that town because my ancestors for three generations have lived there, and my father was born on one of the farms which go to make up the mountain..... I have bought substantially the rest of the mountain, including the top, and am having a good automobile road built from the Lancaster-Whitefield highway to the top of the mountain. I think I shall erect some kind of a house there for my own personal puposes, although I have not yet definitely decided to do this."5

In building Mount Prospect lodge, Weeks contributed to a movement which had already gained great momentum in New Hampshire, partly through the encouragement of the State itself. Spurred by the alarmingly rapid abandonment of thousands of less profitable farms in the late nineteenth century, the New Hampshire State Board of Agriculture adopted a deliberate policy of attracting out-of-state investment in real estate. In 1889, the Board published a Price List of Abandoned Farms in New Hampshire, followed in 1891 by a book urging visitors to Secure a Home in New Hampshire--Where Comfort, Health and Prosperity Abound. Between 1902 and 1916, the State annually published its New Hampshire Farms for Summer Homes.

Such promotions had the desired effect of including hundreds of moderately well-to-do people to purchase small farms and repair them for summer use. In addition, many wealthier purchasers, like Weeks, chose sites which afforded grand mountain or water views purchased several adjoining farms, and consolidated their holdings into large estates of many hundred or even thousand acres.

The motive behind the creation of all these grand summer estates tended to be similar: escape from large cities and the atmosphere of work, enjoyment of natural beauty and fresh air, privacy, an opportunity to indulge in local philanthropy, and, often, the practice of some sort of agriculture. A number of artists, writers, though generally possessed of lesser means than industrialists and politicians, also established summer homes and studios in New Hampshire. A few estate builders, like Weeks, wished to return to their ancestral home; one such was Wyman Kneeland Flint, who rebuilt his father's old home in Antrim on a grand scale.

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

Far N	PS use	anly	
recei	ved		
date	entered	1	

Continuation sheet

5

Item number

8

Page

3

Among those who created New Hampshire summer estates in striking settings akin to that of Mount Prospect was Austin Corbin, a New Hampshire native who had become wealthy as a New York banker and railroad president. Corbin's Blue Mountain Park, perhaps the largest private park in the United States, embraces 28,000 acres in parts of six townships in western New Hampshire. Thomas G. Plant's mountaintop estate, "Lucknow" (1910-13) in Moultonborough, was a stone castle with a 75-mile view that rivaled Weeks'. Railroad president Benjamin A. Kimball constructed another castle, The "Broads" (1894-97), overlooking Lake Winnipesaukee on 240 acres. Also on Lake Winnipesaukee was Kona Farm (c.1905), a 1,200-acre estate builtby the Dumaresque family of Massachusetts. In the southern part of the state, Edward F. Searles constructed two complexes of castle-like buildings in Salem (1898-1905) and Windham (1907-15).

Weeks was not the only statesman to construct a grand estate in New Hampshire. Former President Grover Cleveland combined two farms into a summer estate in Tamworth in 1905. Former Secretary of Stae John Hay built "The Fells" on the shores of Lake Sunapee in Newbury, New Hampshire. Secretary of the Treasury Franklin MacVeagh built a home in Dublin with an extensive view of the Mount Monadnock skyline. Secretary of the Interior Ethan A. Hitchcock built"Westmere", also in Dublin. Massachusetts Congressman Samuel W. McCall bought Weeks' father's birthplace on the slopes of Mount Prospect; an earlier owner had called it "the one farm that had the best mountain view, as I thought then and think now, that could be seen from a dwelling house in all America."6

In building his Mount Prospect Lodge, Weeks also engaged in a quiet form of philanthropy. The summit of Mount Prospect had long been sought by those who wanted a spectacular view of the White Mountains of New Hampshire. Weeks' ancestors maintained a bridle path to the summit in the early 1800s.7 A road was built in 1859, followed by an improved carriage road in 1882.8 In 1883, William H. Smith built a hotel at the top of the mountain; this was unsuccessful, and eventually fell into decay. Still, Lancaster natives and visitors often travelled to the summit to enjoy the view. One of Weeks' motives in improving the road for automobiles and in building the combination water and observation tower was to welcome visitors to an enjoyment of the view that many had so long sought out.9 The stone tower thus served as a gift to the public and as an adjunct to the estate.

The Weeks Estate is thus one of New Hampshire's most significant examples of estate architecture, embodying a dominant architectural style of early twentieth century, reflecting the new importance of the automobile in American life, symbolizing its builder's place among prominent Americans of his day, and incorporating a token of hospitality to the people of the local area.

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

Far N	IPS usi	anly		
rece	ived			
data				
GRIE	entere	C		

Continuation sheet

6

Item number

8

Page 4

Conservation: The Weeks Estate was built by one of the leading conservationists of the early twentieth century, represented an act of private conservation, and is maintained by the State of New Hampshire as a memorial to its builder and as a museum of conservation history.

In 1909, Weeks presented to the U.S. House of Representatives a bill which authorized Federal-State cooperation "for the protection of the watersheds of navigable streams." The effect of this bill, popularly known as the Weeks Law, was to permit the acquisition by the Federal government of forest and lands which act as a catchment for rivers. This acquisition in turn, led to the establishment of National Forest in regions where previous laws had not authorized the creation of such forests. Despite agitation for such a law to protect lands in the eastern United States, all bills introduced to authorize such protection had been defeated in Congress. Weeks' skillful phrasing of his bill, and his careful lobbying for cooperation between New England and Southern interests, resulted in the final enactment of the law in 1911. This in turn, led to the rapid Federal acquisition of land in the Southern Appalachians and of 42,000 acres in the White Mountains of New Hampshire, in an area literally within the view of Mount Prospect. Although Weeks never claimed special knowledge of forestry and conversation, his foresight in obtaining passage of this bill established him as one of the leading figures in American conservation in the early twentieth century. Weeks understood that his law "will not only be a great advantage to the country along the lines covered by the purposes of the bill, that is, in promoting stream flow and protecting watersheds, but will continue the beauty of mountain regions which are visited by millions of people, which beauty under other conditions, might be destroyed; I have not been associated with any legislation since I have been in Congress which has given me any more satisfaction than this."10 Within fifty years from the passage of the Weeks Law, the Federal government had aquired some 20 million acres of land in the eastern United States. Today, such lands, located in some 48 National Forest, are regarded by the public as recreation and wilderness areas; as Weeks foresaw, the natural beauty of such tracts has supplanted their hidden functions as watersheds in the public regard.

Prior to the passage of the Weeks Law, much conservation in New Hampshire was accomplished by the purchase of private tracts of land, which were thus removed from the dangers of the rampant clearcutting that had scarred much of the White Mountain region. The same tradition continued after 1911, and Weeks' purchase of Mount Prospect, embracing not only the summit but several farms on the eastern and northeastern slopes of the mountain, was in part motivated by the desire to protect this land from unsympathetic use.11

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

For NF	S use c	inly	
receiv	ed		
date e	ntered		

Continuation sheet

7

Item number 8

Page 5

The theme of conservation which played so strong a role in the creation of the estate on Mount Prospect was perpetuated through the gift of the property to the State of New Hampshire in 1941. Sinclair Weeks and Katherine Weeks Davidge, children of John W. Weeks, donated the property to the State with the stipulations that the land "be forever maintained by the State for the practice and demonstration of forestry and for the use and enjoyment of the people of New Hampshire and its visitors," and that "the stone tower with such alterations as are necessary may be maintained and used for services in forest fire protection and as an observatory by the public."12 The State has fulfilled these stipulations by maintaining the lodge as a memorial to Weeks and by remodeling part of the first story as an area where exhibits on the history of conservation and the effects of the Weeks Law are maintained. Thus, the property continues to fulfill a role related to conservation.

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only received date entered

Continuation sheet

8

Item number 8

Page 6

- 1 Charles G. Washburn, The Life of John W. Weeks (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1928), passim.
- 2 Lancaster Gazette, March 25, 1908.
- David M. White, ed., The One Hundred & Fiftieth Anniversary of Lancaster, New Hampshire, 1764–1914 (n.p., n.d.), pp. 122–125.
- 4 John W. Weeks, "A White Mountain Centenary," The Granite Monthly 51 (August, 1919),pp.330-344.
- New Hampshire Farms for Summer Homes (Concord, N.H.: New Hampshire State Board of Agriculture, 1912), pp.14-15.
- New Hampshire Farms for Summer Homes (Concord, N.H.: New Hampshire State Board of Agriculture, 1905), p. 12.
- 7
 New Hampshire Farms for Summer Homes (1912), p. 16.
- A.N. Somers, History of Lancaster, New Hampshire (Concord, N.H.: Rumford Press, 1899), p.156.
- Lancaster Gazette, Feb. 28, 1912; Aug. 28, 1912; Oct. 9, 1912; David M. White, ed., The One Hundred & Fiftieth Anniversary of Lancaster, New Hampshire, 1764-1914, p. 122.
- Washburn, The Life of John W. Weeks, p. 81.
- 11 Lancaster Gazette, Nov. 23, 1910.
- New Hampshire Laws, 1941, Chapter 73.

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

Far NPS use only received date entered

Continuation sheet

9

Item number

10

Page 2

