

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

received OCT 03 1988  
date entered

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

1. Name

historic Zera Hard Farm

and or common Hard Farm Homestead

2. Location

street & number River Road

N/A not for publication

city, town Manchester

N/A vicinity of

state Vermont

code 50

county Bennington

code 003

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" 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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" 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 See Continuation Sheet

street & number

city, town

vicinity of

state

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Office of Town Clerk, Town of Manchester

street & number

city, town Manchester Center

state Vermont

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title None

has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date N/A

federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records

city, town

state

## 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 <u>N/A</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

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

The Hard Farm Homestead, located on the Battenkill River in Manchester, Vermont is composed of a c.1840 Greek Revival farmhouse, an 1804 Cape Cod style house, c.1860 corn crib, a c.1860 shed, a c.1925 chicken coop, and a c.1987 garage (non-contributing). The farmhouse features a full portico with fluted Doric columns protecting the sidehall entrance on the main block. The Cape Cod style house, which sits across River Road to the west, was restored to its original appearance in the mid-1960s and is flanked on the north by the well preserved corn crib with cornice returns and the shed. The site retains its integrity as it continues to be surrounded by open fields.

See Continuation Sheets.

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Zera Hard House:

Romi M. Perkins  
RR 1, River Road  
Battenkill Farm  
Manchester Center, VT 05255

Soper-Hard House:

Kevin Beattie  
RR 1, Box 2120  
Manchester Center, VT 05255

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The Hard Farm is located along the Battenkill River south of Manchester Village. The Zera Hard farmhouse, which is the main house of the historic Hard Farm, is sited on the east side of River Road on a piece of land bounded by the road, the Battenkill River and a small stream flowing into the Battenkill. Although the house site is quite close to river level and the adjacent fields are prone to flooding, the house and even the basement have historically remained dry. Existing landscaping consists of a row of locust trees along the fence row on the north side and several sugar maples in front of the house along the road. The barns, corn crib and pig house, along with the Soper-Hard Cape Cod style house (which belonged to other members of the Hard family) are all located on the west side of River Road across from the main house. The ground rises immediately to the rear (west) of these buildings; the short slope is forested while above the land is again open and flat.

The main house of the Hard Farm Homestead, the white, clapboarded, Greek Revival Zera Hard House, consists of a 2 1/2 story main block with a full portico on the front gable, a lower ell on the south side, and miscellaneous additions connected to the ell. Over the 130 some years that the Hards owned the house, few major alterations were undertaken, and most of those were confined to the second floor of the ell. The house has recently undergone a total rehabilitation which has involved some destruction of historic fabric but which has been generally sympathetic to the historic character. (Changes will be described below.)

In plan the house forms a capital "T" with the main block forming the top of the "T" on an east-west axis and the ell forming the stem, perpendicular to and to the south of the main block. Over the years, a series of appendages have been added to the east (rear) elevation of the ell.

The main block is a 2 1/2 story, gable roofed structure with its gable end facing west to the road. The front facade is three bays across and consists of two 6/6 double hung windows and a sidehall entrance (southern or righthanded bay) on the ground floor and three 6/6 windows on the second floor. The attic story sets forward over the lower two stories and is supported on four, slender, fluted Greek Doric columns. The pediment contains a single, small, semi-elliptical window

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with a keystone capping the molded surround. The doorway on the ground floor is made up of an 8 paneled door with 3/4-length side lights and transom which have geometric-patterned muntins. (The upper corner panels are molded wood rather than glass.) The door and lights are in turn surrounded by pilaster boards and a full entablature. The 6/6 windows are set in molded surrounds and flanked by wood louvered shutters, painted dark green. The east or rear elevation originally had two 6/6 windows on the first floor; a third has been added on the north during the recent renovation. There are also three 6/6 windows on the second story and one, small, double hung unit in the attic. All walls are covered with wood clapboards and the corners of the main house have large, tapering Doric pilasters. The roof is covered with grey slate and is pierced by a red brick chimney rising through the ridge toward the rear of the building.

The ell to the south was built at the same time as the main house and is of the same plank construction consisting of 2 x 5 sawn lumber layed up horizontally in the manner of a log cabin. Layers of planks are alternately lapped at the corners and joints are simply butted wherever they fall in the wall. Layers are spiked together randomly. Unlike the main block, which has been changed very little over the years, the wing has undergone a series of alterations. Physical evidence indicates that the original ell was a 1 1/2 story, four bay building with two 6/6 windows, a paneled door, and a 6/6 window across the front from north to south. In c.1880, front and rear walls were raised and a nearly flat roof was built at the level of (and incorporating) the old ridge beam. A low parapet and cornice were built on the west and south facades and the roof pitched to the rear. Unlike the original building with its plank construction, the second floor was built with conventional stud construction. Two 6/6 windows were installed on the second floor front elevation when the story was added.

A c.1880 photograph shows the house with the second floor addition in place over the older lower floor, and one is struck by the stark feeling of the rather blank two story wall juxtaposed to the richly three dimensional portico of the main block. Sometime after that photo was taken, a one story, flat roofed porch with turned decorative posts was added to the west and south sides. The porch terminates on

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the north against the main block and on the southeast against a former separator room (later an apartment and recently turned into a kitchen). During recent renovation work, the turned posts were replaced by boxed Doric posts.

A red brick chimney pierces the roof of the ell on the old ridge line towards the south end of the roof. Both the porch and the ell roof were covered with soldered iron sheets of roofing. Recently (c.1986) a gable roof has been added to the ell in an attempt to rectify some of the ills associated with flat roofs. The new roof is sheathed with slate.

The small, 1 1/2 story separator wing with a slate sheathed gable roof appears to be of earlier construction than the house, and probably was moved from some other location and grafted onto the south end of the ell. The separator wing has been modernized c.1986 during its conversion into a kitchen wing. The simple plank door on the west facade was replaced by a modern door sheltered by a lattice arbor. The door on the south is also a replacement and it is flanked by modern casement and sash windows. The original 6/6 remains in the gable. A neo-Colonial Revival ventilator has been added to the roof ridge.

A c.1964, two bay, shed roofed garage constructed of dimensional lumber and pressed board (built as a small engine repair shop) which was attached to the rear of the separator wing was removed c.1986. A new, 1 1/2 story family room ell now extends to the rear from the southeast corner of the original ell. The gable roof is sheathed with slate. The south elevation features a shed roofed, greenhouse-like extension with banks of windows and skylights and a deck to the rear. The foundation was reinforced with concrete during the recent restoration.

In plan the main block contains four rooms on the first floor. A stair hall on the south side leads from the front door to a large square room at the rear which was used as a living room. To the north of the living room is a small room with a corner fireplace (This room was paneled during the recent restoration work.) North of the front hall is the parlor. The windows of the parlor are 6/6 double hung matching those in the rest of the house, but in this room alone there is wood paneling between the windows and floor to

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give the feeling of the windows carrying all the way down to the floor to complete the order. The door and window trim is also different in this room, having square corner blocks with plain, round, protruding rosettes. Finally, there is a false fireplace complete with a simple wood mantle, but no masonry opening, only a stove pipe connection to the flue of the corner fireplace in the adjacent room. During recent work it was discovered that a fourth window was planned, and the opening built on the north wall of the parlor. For some reason--perhaps exterior symmetry or to fit a certain furniture arrangement--the window was never installed and the opening was filled in with the same horizontal planking as was used in the rest of the house. The second floor of the main block contains a stair hall over the one below, a front bedroom over the parlor and two bedrooms across the rear. At the rear of the hall is a steep narrow stair to the attic.

Most of the front of the ground floor of the ell is taken up by a large room used as a dining room. A fireplace at the south end complete with an iron cooking crane and evidence that a masonry oven once existed adjacent to the fireplace (this oven was reconstructed c.1986) suggest that this room originally functioned as a kitchen. The molded fireplace surround with projecting mantel shelf is topped by a built-in cupboard. The only other room on the west, or front, side is a small room on the southwest corner which was a sewing room and before that a sick room and currently a bathroom.

East of the dining room are stairs to the basement and second floor, and behind the stairs are two pantries. A trap door in the wall to the basement stairs allowed cool basement air to be circulated into the pantry. Two pass-through windows for food lead to the living room on one end and the former kitchen on the other. A trap door in the floor at the rear of the ell gave access to a large stone cistern that was connected to rain gutters on the house. Since ground water in the area is very hard, the cistern provided soft water. The second floor of the wing has undergone more renovations than the rest of the house. After the roof was raised to create a full second floor, it contained two bedrooms, a hall, some closets and the (then) only bathroom, which was installed in the mid 1920s.

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Interior walls throughout the house were plaster, which in many places was quite deteriorated and has been replaced by sheetrock. Hardwood floors were added in the 1920s in the front hallway and dining room and some walls were moved in the second floor bedrooms, but the main house and lower floor of the wing remained largely unaltered over the 130 some years that the Hards owned it and during subsequent ownership. Windows are unchanged and doors are in original locations. Doors in the main house are eight panel while those in the wing are six panel. One door retains its painted wood graining. Hinges are iron and the knobs are wooden. The entry hall floor and the woodwork in the north parlor have been recently "marbelized."

North of this house is a c.1987, 1 1/2 story, 1 bay, gable roofed garage with entrance in the north eaves elevation. Also on the north is a paneled pass door; on other elevations are 6/6 windows. This non-contributing building is sheathed with clapboards, roofed with asphalt shingles and features cornice returns.

Directly across River Road from the Zera Hard House is the 1804 Cape Cod style Soper-Hard House of 1 1/2 stories and 5 x 2 bays with a north carriage and workshop wing. This house is sheathed with clapboards and roofed with slate. A large brick chimney projects from the center of the roof ridge. The central facade entrance features a vertical plank door flanked by tapering pilasters with simple capitals and topped by a 4-pane transom. Close beside and sharing the same lintel are two, narrow 9/9 sash windows. In c.1926, a two bay porch with turned posts and balustrade was added around this entrance; this was removed in c.1966. In the outer bays are 12/12 sash windows with plain surrounds; these windows--c.1966 replacements of 2/2 windows (which were themselves replacements)--are historically accurate and based on a c.1885 photograph. Fenestration of the gable ends is very similar: The south first floor contains two 12/12s while the second floor has two 8/12s flanked by smaller 6/6s; at the southeast corner is a hatch to the basement. The north elevation is the same with the exception of having no hatch door and no rear first floor window; instead, the wing extends from the rear portion.

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This 3 bay (based on framing) gabled wing is of post and beam, mortise and tenon construction with king posts. The entrance with sliding door is centered on the east facade. The sheathing is sheet metal, clapboard-like siding and the roofing material is asphalt shingles. Like the house block, this wing has flush eaves. In the rear is a single 6/6 window. At the juncture with the house block is a brick chimney. Projecting to the rear from this juncture is a 1 story, clapboarded shed with a vertical plank pass door on the south. To the south of this shed is a small, enclosed, shed roofed entrance porch. To the south of this are two 12/12 sash windows and a small 6-pane casement window; this latter window is placed just above the water table.

The wing has undergone changes over the years and has functioned as workshop, pantry and bathroom (installed 1933) at various times. The south portion of the east facade once held a vertical plank pass door and 6/6 sash window (as evidenced by a historic photograph).

The house block has been restored to its apparent historic layout with north and south front parlors and rear kitchen. At the rear of the chimney mass is a Dutch oven.

The corn crib which is north of the wing is 1 1/2 stories with an eaves front gable roof sheathed with slate. The siding is clapboards with corner and frieze boards and cornice returns. A 6/6 sash window is centrally placed at each floor on the south elevation. A similar 6/6 window is set in the north gable peak with a diagonal board door slightly offset to the east below. The windows and door have plain surrounds. This building sits on marble blocks at the corners and mid-points. Just below the frieze board on the eaves elevations are vertical ventilating slats.

North of the corn crib by only a few feet is a small house which was reputedly once a pig house. It is 1 1/2 stories high and like the corn crib and house features an eaves front gable roof sheathed with slate. The house is sided with flush vertical boards and sits on a fieldstone foundation. On the east facade is a centrally placed, vertical plank door with a modern 6/6 sash window to the north and a small 2/2 to the south. A large, exterior, shouldered, fieldstone chimney breaks the north gable elevation. Gable elevations have a

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6-pane window in the peak and a horizontal 3-pane window on the first story. At mid-story height on the south elevation is a vertical plank door.

Southwest of the Soper-Hard House is a badly deteriorated, 1 story, shed roofed, clapboarded chicken coop. The bank of four windows on the east elevation is largely gone but remains suggest that they were 12/1 or 12/12 windows (perhaps original windows from the house salvaged from the conversion to 2/2 windows). To the north of this bank of windows is a pass door.

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According to Hard family records, the Cape Cod style house was built by a Quaker family of the name Soper and later acquired by Jesse Hard. Jesse and his son Zera built the Greek Revival house in 1840-41 for Zera and his bride (who were married in 1841). The 1897 recollections of L.D. Coy (see Bibliography) refer to the houses: "Next the farmhouse of Mr. Jesse Hard, Sr.--this building now used as a tenant house. . . On the opposite side of the road now a fine house built by the late Dea. Zerah Hard, about 1840. Deacon Hard's children: Cyrus, Walter, Jesse, Katie, Willis. The entire farm now owned by Willis." Subsequent generations of Hards continued to farm the land along the Battenkill until the 1960s. Until the Civil War the Hards raised sheep but then switched to dairy cattle. By the 1920s the farm supported one of the finest registered Jersey herds in the state. Income from the dairy business was supplemented by production of several hundred gallons of maple syrup in the spring, some timber cutting, and the sale of butter, eggs and from time to time, hay or grain. While one branch of the family stayed with the farm, one of Zera's sons moved into town and opened a well known drug store in the Equinox Junior complex (listed on the National Register June 3, 1980) and another son, Walter, was the well known poet and proprietor of the bookstore next to the Equinox House Hotel (listed on the National Register November 21, 1972).

Although the Greek Revival style may be common in the Manchester area--reflecting a period of general prosperity in the second quarter of the 19th Century--houses in the temple form with a full pedimented portico are rare. The log cabin-like construction of the building is noteworthy though not rare in the area. The planks, cut on an up-and-down saw, were produced by a sawmill further north on the Battenkill off Richville Road. This type of construction was being used in the Manchester area by the 1830s.

The entrance to the Soper-Hard House is also unusual in that the sidelights are actually narrow 9/9 sash windows not directly abutting the entrance but sharing a common lintel.

## 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
	<input type="checkbox"/> invention			

**Specific dates** 1840-41      **Builder/Architect** Jesse & Zera Hard

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Zera Hard Farm is a rare combination of early Vermont farm buildings. The 1804 Soper-Hard Cape Cod style house and the c.1840 Greek Revival Zera Hard House along with the c.1860 corn crib and pig house retain their open, rural setting and continue to evoke the character of a 19th century farmstead. This is especially noteworthy in light of the heavy development pressures in Manchester. The full, two story portico and stacked plank construction of the Zera Hard House and the plank door with flanking, narrow windows and transom of the Soper-Hard House are notable features. The Hards themselves are a well known Manchester family whose members have included farmers, local merchants, and a poet of regional acclaim (Walter Hard).

See Continuation Sheet.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Interview with Mary Hard Bort, Manchester, Vermont December 14, 1984; July 29, 1988  
Coy, L.D., Personal Recollections, 1987, Manchester, Vermont  
Congdon, H.W., Old Vermont Houses, 1968, Peterborough, New Hampshire

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 7.7 acres +/-

Quadrangle name Manchester, Vermont

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UTM References

A 

1	8	6	5	6	0	0	0	4	7	7	6	8	5	0
Zone			Easting					Northing						

B 

Zone			Easting					Northing						

C 

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D 

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E 

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F 

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G 

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H 

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### Verbal boundary description and justification

See Continuation Sheet.

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

state N/A code county code

state code county code

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title See Continuation Sheet.

organization date

street & number telephone

city or town state

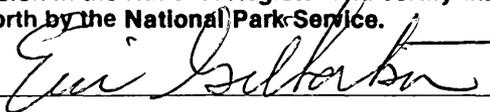
## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

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 National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature



title Vermont Director/State Historic Preservation Officer

date 09/28/88

### For NPS use only

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

*See*   
Keeper of the National Register

date 11-9-88

Attest:

Chief of Registration

date

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The nominated property is approximately 7.7 acres as indicated by the attached tracing from the tax maps in the Town Offices of Manchester. The boundaries are largely defined by natural features. The parcel is bounded on the east by the Battenkill River and the stream which flows into it from the south. Richville Road forms the northern boundary on the east side of the parcel. Muddy Lane forms the southern boundary of the property. The ridge behind the Soper-Hard House is the western boundary. The nominated parcel is adequate to protect the historic buildings.

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**Draft prepared by:**

William C. Badger  
RR 1, Box 3075  
Manchester Center, Vermont

(802) 362-1294

October 1, 1985

**Revised, edited and expanded by:**

David Tansey  
Vermont Division for Historic Preservation  
58 East State Street  
Montpelier, Vermont

(802) 828-3226

September, 1988

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SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 88002230

Date Listed: 11/09/88

Hard, Zera, House  
Property Name

Bennington  
County

VT  
State

N/A  
Multiple Name

-----  
This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

*for* Beth L. Sarge  
Signature of the Keeper

11-9-88  
Date of Action

=====

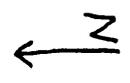
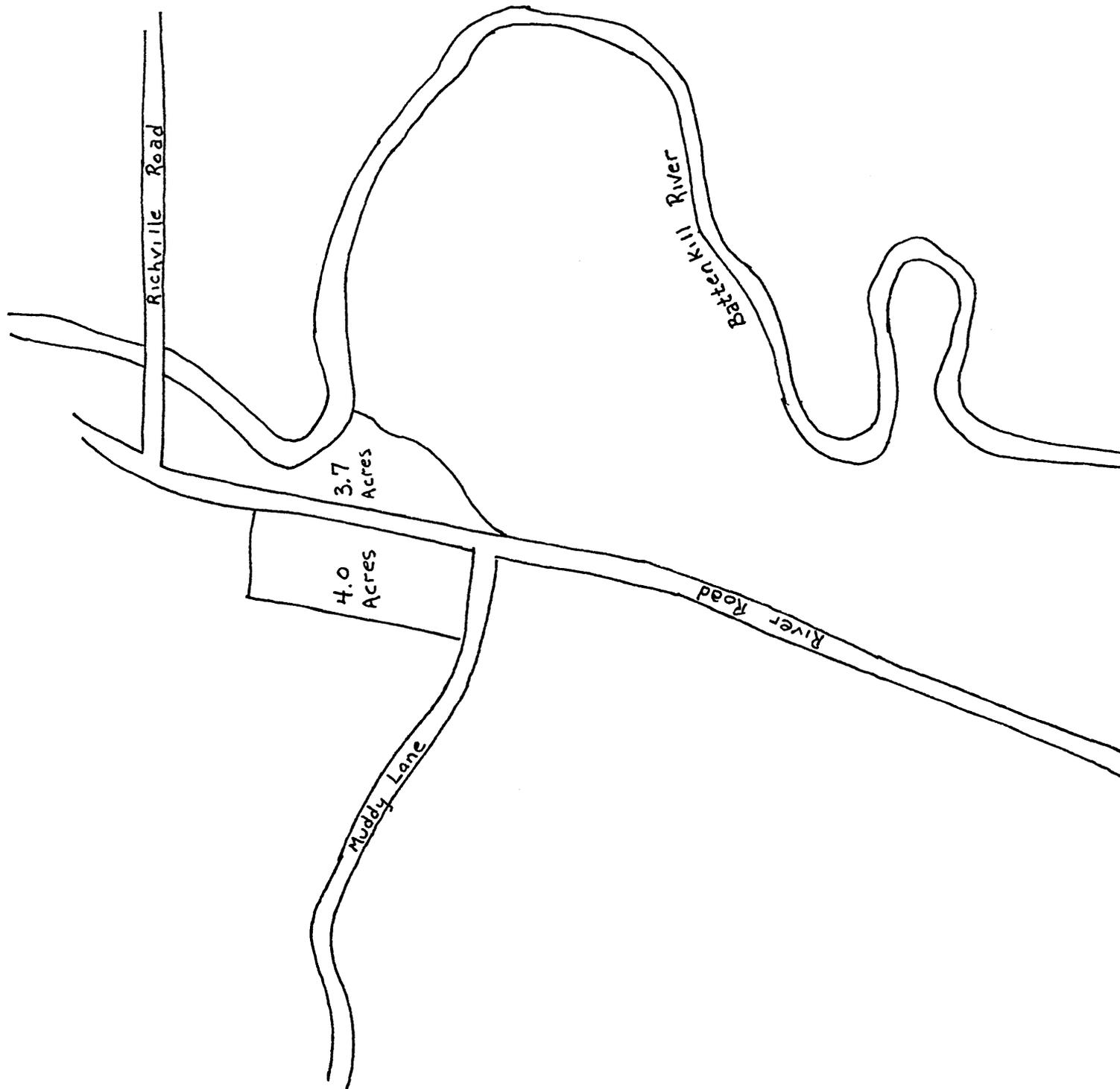
Amended Items in Nomination:

Accompanying Documentation: The scale for the sketch map is approximately 5,000 feet=1 inch. The nomination documentation is amended to indicate this because the sketch map suffices as the verbal boundary description.

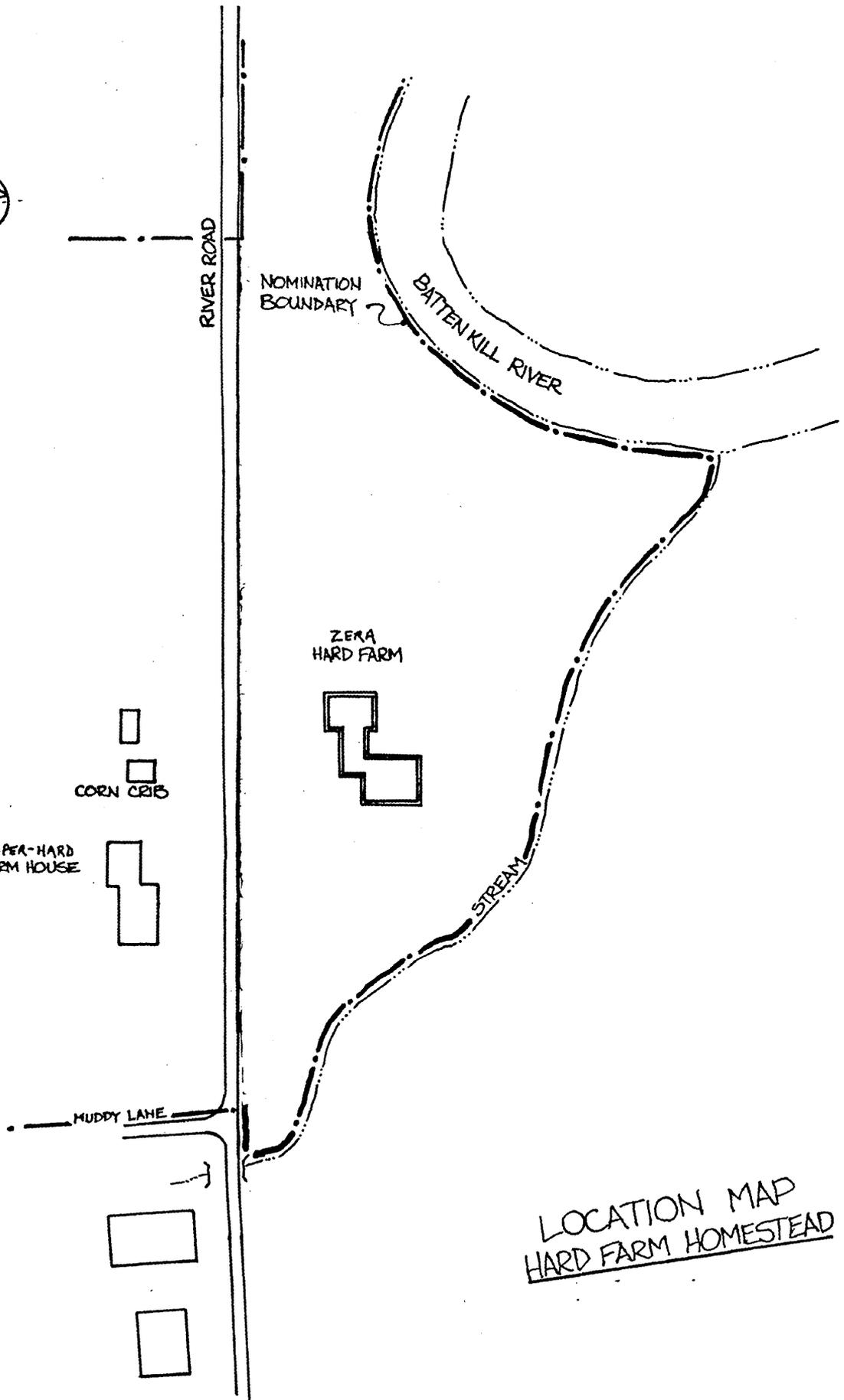
This information was confirmed with David Tansey, VTSHPO, by telephone.

DISTRIBUTION:

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)



TRACING TAKEN FROM TAX MAP  
IN MANCHESTER TOWN OFFICES.  
JULY, 1988



LOCATION MAP  
HARD FARM HOMESTEAD