

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

**SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD**

NRIS Reference Number: 88002691 Date Listed: 12/12/88

Plant, Morton Freeman, Hunting Lodge New London CT  
Property Name County 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 Barry L. Savage*  
Signature of the Keeper

12-12-88  
Date of Action

=====  
Amended Items in Nomination:

**Statement of significance: Criteria**

Criterion A is applicable to the property's significance. Criterion A is justified in the statement of significance for the applicable area of significance of entertainment; it was inadvertently not checked off.

This information was confirmed with John Herzan, National Register Coordinator, CTSHPO, by telephone.

**DISTRIBUTION:**

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

2691

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

RECEIVED

OCT 28 1988

NATIONAL  
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name

other names/site number Plant, Morton Freeman, Hunting Lodge

2. Location

street & number 56 Stone Ranch Road

not for publication

city, town East Lyme

vicinity

state Connecticut

code 09

county New London

code 011

zip code 06333

3. Classification

Ownership of Property

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
2	0
	buildings
	sites
	structures
	objects
2	0
	Total

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official

October 20, 1988  
Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register.  See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register.  See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain):

*Barry J. Savage*

12-12-88

*Barry J. Savage* Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

---

**6. Function or Use**

---

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/camp

---

---

---

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/single dwelling

---

---

---

---

**7. Description**

---

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Bungalow/Craftsman

---

---

---

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stonewalls Shingle

---

roof Wood/shingleother Stone piers

---

---

---

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Morton Freeman Plant Hunting Lodge consists of a two-story frame Bungalow (1908) and garage situated in the southeastern section of a 105-acre tract of wooded land, originally part of the Plant game preserve, in East Lyme, Connecticut, roughly 1/4 mile from the western border of that town with Lyme. The nominated property is surrounded by recreational land owned by the Town of East Lyme and the Stone Ranch Military Reservation of the State of Connecticut Military Department (See Figure 1).

With the exception of the house lot, the property is forested. It rises sharply on the western edge of the property and climbs in elevation along an abandoned dirt highway which forms the northeastern boundary. About 1/3 mile of the Four Mile River runs through the southeastern corner of the property and a feeder brook runs most of the length of the land in a north-south direction. The area around the head of the brook is swampy, as is the low land around the Four Mile River. Two log and plank bridges cross the Four Mile River in different places; a concrete slab bridge crosses the brook. Paths and stone walls crisscross the property randomly.

The two contributing buildings, the hunting lodge and a two-bay garage, are completely isolated at the end of a dirt road and long dirt driveway (Photograph #1). The house sits on a knoll in the middle of a grassy clearing encircled by the driveway. The wood-shingle garage is located in the northwest corner of this clearing on a fieldstone foundation (Photograph #2). A non-contributing wood-shingle shed on a slab foundation is located directly behind the garage. Alongside the driveway are the remains of a rustic fence made of cedar posts and twisted wire with an arched gateway.

The house is rectangular in plan, three bays across the front facade, with a three-bay service wing angled back from the main house on the south side and a one-story gabled addition behind the central bay. A large central gabled dormer has a projecting pediment in the gable peak over triple casement windows and is flanked by smaller gable dormers with double casement windows connected into the central dormer by shed-roofed dormers (Photographs #3, #4). The roof overhangs the porch and is supported by four columns consisting of fieldstone boulders flanked by wooden boxed columns with brackets. The base of the wooden columns is on the poured concrete floor of the porch; the fieldstone columns go into the ground in front of the porch (Photograph #5). A central Dutch door

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally  statewide  locally

Applicable National Register Criteria  A  B  C  D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)  A  B  C  D  E  F  G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Entertainment

Period of Significance

1907 - 1918

1907 - 1918

Significant Dates

1908

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Donnelly, Dudley St. Clair

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Morton Freeman Plant Hunting Lodge illustrates the recreational lifestyle in which members of the extremely wealthy families of America indulged at the turn of the century, particularly in its association with hunting activities. Morton Plant was a railroad developer whose money and influence had a major impact on the Florida coast and on southeastern Connecticut, vestiges of which are still found in the shoreline towns of the latter. The hunting lodge is architecturally significant as one of the few buildings erected specifically as a hunting lodge remaining in the state and combines stylistic elements from Craftsman and Bungalow styles with 16th-century European manorial details in an unusual but balanced design. The lodge is the work of an important local architect, Dudley St. Clair Donnelly.

**Historical Background**

The Morton Freeman Plant Hunting Lodge was part of a 2400-acre private game preserve which Plant accumulated in East Lyme and Lyme between 1907 and 1914. According to local tradition, Plant stocked the preserve with wild game birds and kept a quantity of pens on the property for this purpose. Plant was an avid sportsman whose recreational pursuits ranged from baseball to yachting. Hunting served as another vehicle for recreational socialization with his peers. Plant would invite guests to stay with him at the lodge and join him in hunting rare and exotic fowl on his preserve.

The Plant family fortunes were made in railroads and development in Florida. Henry Bradley Plant, Morton's father, developed a system of railroads which connected the major cities of the north to the west coast of Florida, opening up the Gulf coast for development, in which Henry Plant was an active and enthusiastic participant. Morton was an executive in his father's company. After his father's death in 1899, Morton became vice-president of the Plant Investment Company, owner of the railroads, hotels, and Florida businesses. In 1902, Plant purchased land in Groton, Connecticut, and began construction of Branford House, which remains the best-known structure in the state associated with Plant.

Plant's largesse included contributions to the communities and institutions in the southeastern Connecticut region, including the Groton Town Hall building, two dormitories and a \$1 million endowment at Connecticut College, large bequests to the local hospital and cemetery association, and the creation of a hospital for wounded soldiers and sailors during World War I.

See continuation sheet

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

East Lyme Land Records, East Lyme Town Clerk.

Marshall, Benjamin Tinkham, ed. A Modern History of New London County, Connecticut. Vol. 3. New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, 1922.

Rosebrock, Ellen Fletcher. Branford House, Groton, Connecticut. National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination Form, 1982.

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of property 105, approximately

UTM References

A 

1	8
7	2
8	5
0	0

4	5
8	1
2	2
0	0

Zone Easting Northing

B 

1	8
7	2
8	4
8	0

4	5
8	1
4	6
0	0

Zone Easting Northing

C 

1	8
7	2
8	4
4	0

4	5
8	1
5	4
0	0

D 

1	8
7	2
8	4
0	0

4	5
8	1
7	6
0	0

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

See USGS map

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By** Reviewed by John Herzan, National Register Coordinator

name/title Sharon P. Churchill, Executive Director

organization New London Landmarks, Inc. date May 1988

street & number P. O. Box 1134, 309 Captain's Walk telephone 203- 442-0003

city or town New London state Connecticut zip code 06320

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Morton Freeman Plant Hunting Lodge, East Lyme, Connecticut

Section number   7   Page   1  

---

has quarrel lights above a crossed panel with chamfered edges and is flanked by 6/1 windows. Two sets of triple 6/1 windows are symmetrically arranged on the sides of the entrance. The fieldstone foundation is not visible in the front of the house, and forms walls lining a basement entrance in the rear of the south wing. This foundation is pierced at regular intervals by casement windows of varying sizes, determined by the grade and wall size. The largest has six lights, the smallest has three. A shed-roofed dormer on the south wing has two sets of double casement windows (Photograph #6). The walls are sheathed in wooden shingles; the bottom shingle course flares slightly. Other exterior detail is limited to two-panel shutters and wrought-iron shutter latches. An in-ground pebble, stone, and concrete gutter runs along the front and sides of the house. A birdbath of similar construction is in front of the porch (Photograph #7).

Inside, the house is remarkably intact. The living room and dining room comprise the entire ground floor of the main part of the house and have plaster ceilings with finished boxed beams, plaster walls, original hardware, and two massive pre-cast concrete fireplaces which dominate the far end of each room (Photograph #8). The fireplaces appear to be modeled after 16th-century European manor house fireplaces and have massive hoods supported by panelled pilasters capped with scrolled brackets, all rendered in concrete, with red-brick hearths set in a herringbone pattern (Photograph #9). Moldings throughout the house are plain with unornamented corner blocks. The service wing includes the kitchen, pantry, and eating areas. The original cypress kitchen cabinets have cypress and ash countertops and glass-panelled doors on the upper cabinets, which have small turned supports (Photograph #10). The staircase was altered with the addition of two rooms off the living room circa 1955.

The fireplace in the master bedroom on the north side of the house has a walnut mantel and grey-brick herringbone hearth (Photograph #11). The master bathroom has the original tile walls with molded tile cornice, porcelain corner sink, and shower. All fixtures in this bathroom are original. The bedrooms in particular are irregularly shaped. Two separate hallways serve the main bedrooms and those of the service wing. A doorway cut between two bedrooms is the only passage between these distinct sleeping areas.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Morton Freeman Plant Hunting Lodge, East Lyme, Connecticut

Section number 8 Page 1

---

Plant was also instrumental in shaping the economic climate in the region. He established the New London Ship and Engine Company in Groton, which has grown to become the largest employer in southeastern Connecticut, the Electric Boat Division of General Dynamics. He founded and operated the Shoreline Electric Street Railway Company, a trolley system with tracks from East Lyme to Westerly, Rhode Island, and Norwich. He bought a baseball team, renamed the Planters, which was based in New London and won three pennants during his ownership.

Several remnants of Plant's activity in the region persist besides those already mentioned. Morton and Plant Streets in New London, which are on the edge of the home field formerly used by the Planters, bear his names. A number of structures are connected with Plant, such as the Plant Building, a large office building in downtown New London, since renamed; two dormitories at Connecticut College, Plant and Blackstone Halls; the original buildings of the New London Ship and Engine Company in Groton; and the Morton House, a restaurant and hotel in the Niantic section of East Lyme.

Plant died in 1918, a victim of the influenza epidemic. The estate in East Lyme was broken up into different tracts and sold or given to various institutions and individuals for disposal. Ten parcels were given to the State of Connecticut, Board of Fisheries and Game. A large portion of the estate was sold to the state later and comprises the Stone Ranch National Guard Training Center abutting the lodge property. In 1928, Edwin Goodwin, a broker from Hartford, acquired the lodge property.

**Architectural Significance**

The lodge is a good example of the Craftsman influence on the Bungalow style and is well preserved on both the interior and exterior (Photographs #3, 4, 6). The refined detail (although nothing as lavish as found in Branford House, Plant's home in nearby Groton) is unusual when juxtaposed with the rustic character often found in hunting lodges of the period. Of special interest are the massive fireplaces and irregular floor plan which clearly delineates the sections of the lodge (Photographs #8, 9; Figures 2, 3). Considering the extravagant, almost excessive, design of Branford House, the hunting lodge is relatively modest, providing a foil to the affluent lifestyle exemplified by Branford House.

Dudley St. Clair Donnelly (1870 - 1937) was an important architect in southeastern Connecticut. Donnelly came into prominence after 1899 as the designer of many major buildings in the area, including schools, commercial blocks, residences, factories, and other institutional structures. The hunting lodge was the first of many commissions which Donnelly executed for Plant, completing at least nine other buildings in the region for Plant before the latter's death in 1918.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Morton Freeman Plant Hunting Lodge, East Lyme, Connecticut

Section number 8 Page 2

Donnelly, a native of Barbados, worked as a draftsman under Benjamin Silliman and Arthur F. Gray of Yonkers, N.Y. and Boston, Mass. In 1892 he came to New London as chief draftsman for Cole and Chandler of Boston, to work on the design of Winthrop School (no longer extant). George W. Cole was an associate of H.H. Richardson. Cole supervised construction of two major New London institutions for Shepley, Rutan, and Coolidge, the successors of H.H. Richardson's firm, and stayed in the city until his untimely death in 1892. After Cole's death, Donnelly opened his own office in New London. In 1899, he formed a partnership with Louis R. Hazeltine of New London. The firm, Donnelly & Hazeltine, continued successfully until 1906, designing a number of institutional buildings and additions including churches, banks, schools, and libraries.

Following the dissolution of the partnership, Donnelly undertook the design and supervision of residential and institutional buildings. His reputation brought him several commissions outside of southeastern Connecticut including the Hotel Garde in New Haven (1911) and Natchaug School in Willimantic (1913). Donnelly demonstrated mastery in various architectural styles, including Beaux-Arts Classicism (Savings Bank of New London, 1906); Georgian Revival (YMCA, New London, 1915; office building, 73 Washington Street, New London, 1922); and Second Renaissance Revival (Manwaring Building, New London, 1913). His residential work was also distinguished and varied. Notable examples include 308 Ocean Avenue (Colonial Revival, 1897); 61 Vauxhall Street (Shingle, 1910), both in New London, and the subject of this nomination, the Plant Hunting Lodge in East Lyme (Bungalow, 1908).

Donnelly moved to Florida in 1919 and did considerable residential design work in Miami, Miami Beach, and Coral Gables during the next decade. His residence in Florida coincided with a building boom on the eastern shore of that state. After that collapsed, Donnelly returned to New London in 1930, serving temporarily as the city building inspector and later designing projects under the auspices of the WPA.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Morton Freeman Plant Hunting Lodge, East Lyme, Connecticut

Section number 10 Page 1

## UTM References, Continued

	Zone	Easting	Northing
E.	18	728540	4581820
F.	18	728510	4582620
G.	18	728650	4582570
H.	18	728800	4582160
I.	18	729120	4581780
J.	18	729020	4581770
K.	18	728880	4581630
L.	18	728860	4581420

## Boundary Justification

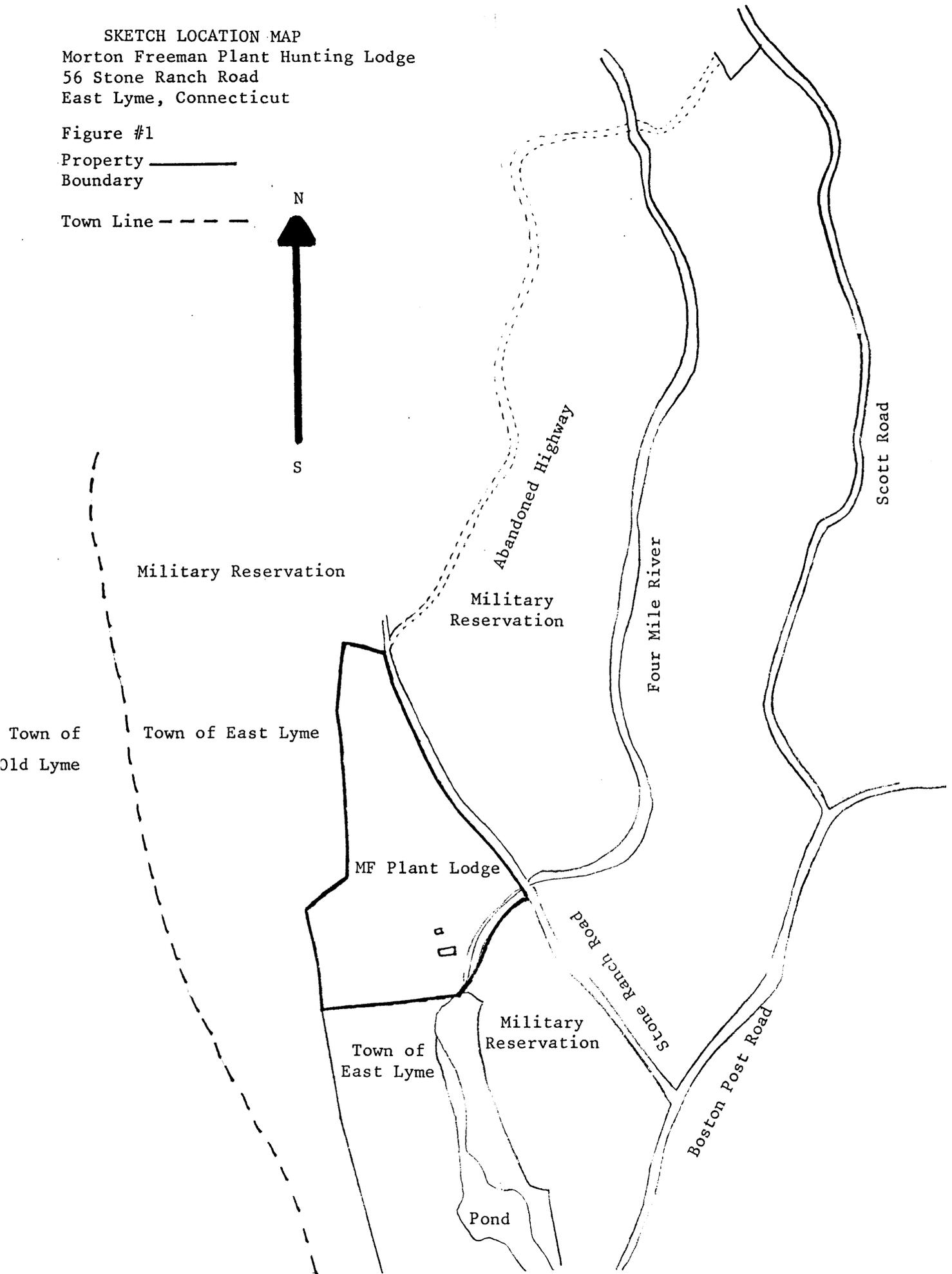
The boundaries of the nominated property incorporate approximately 105 acres of the 2400 acres which comprised Morton F. Plant's game preserve. This is the central piece of the entire parcel, the only one which has buildings associated with Plant and which remains undeveloped and undisturbed by later intrusions. The boundaries follow the contours of the land, which are the present-day property lines of the parcel and the property lines of the Joshua Brockway tract, which Plant first purchased in 1907. The property is almost completely surrounded by a military reservation, and is the only portion of the original tract which is representative of its period of significance with Plant. It retains its rural character and sense of isolation and contains the variety of terrain which made the parcel attractive for hunting.

SKETCH LOCATION MAP  
Morton Freeman Plant Hunting Lodge  
56 Stone Ranch Road  
East Lyme, Connecticut

Figure #1

Property Boundary ————  
Town Line - - - - -

Town Line - - - - -

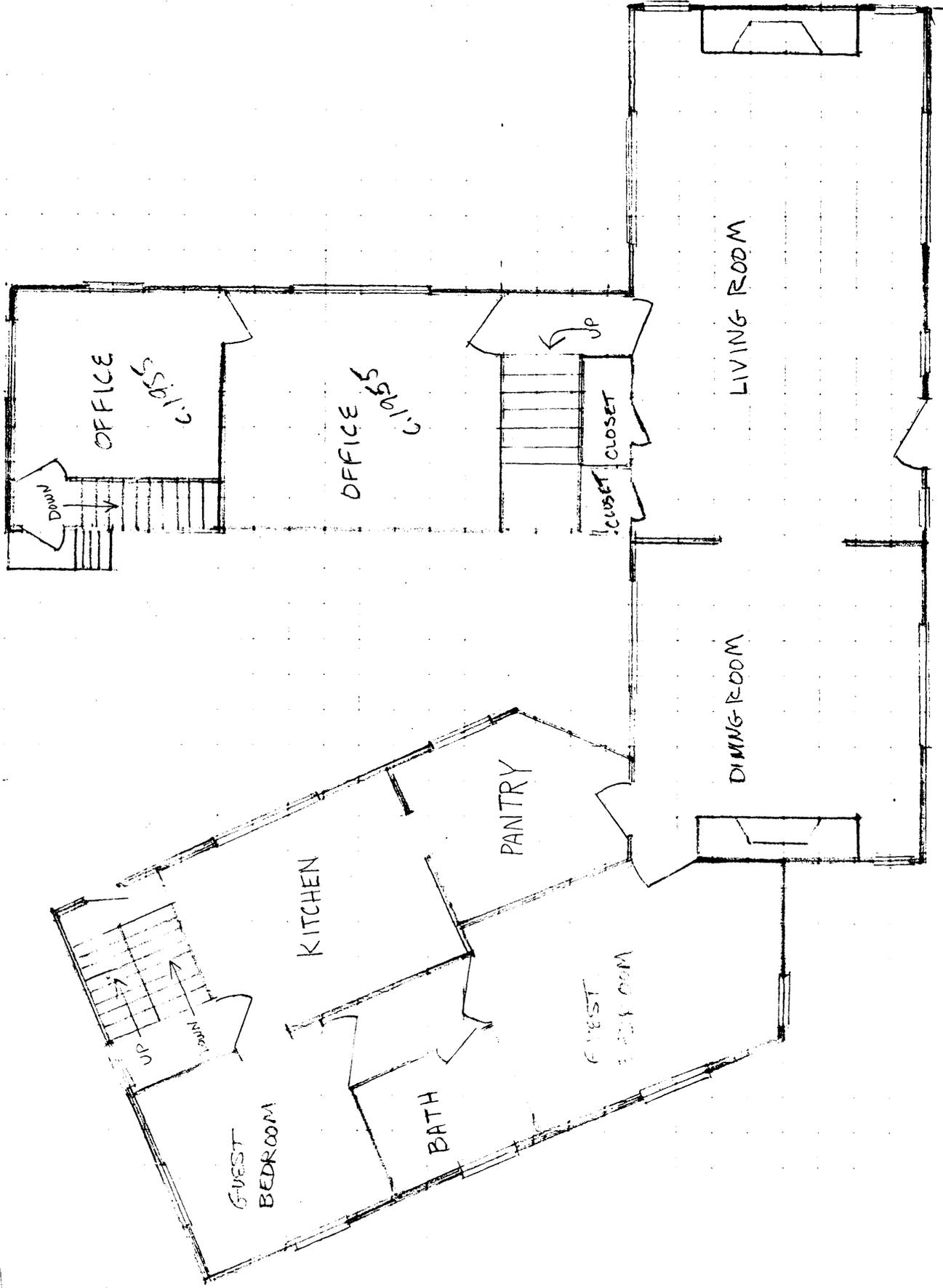


SCALE: 1 inch=1200± feet

MORTON FREEMAN PLANT HUNTING LODGE  
56 Stone Ranch Road  
East Lyme, Connecticut

FIRST FLOOR

Figure 2

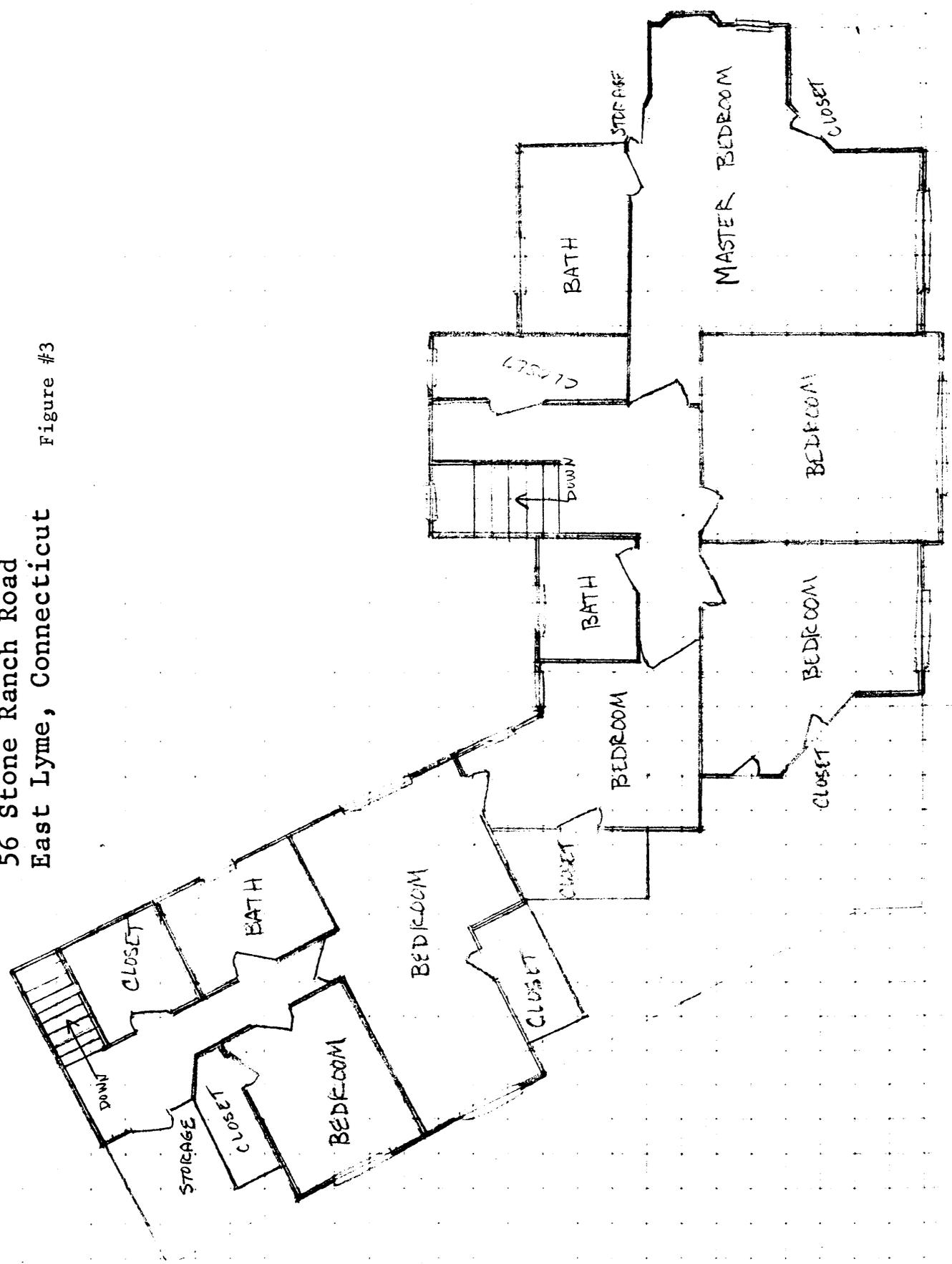


MORTON FREEMAN PLANT HUNTING LODGE SECOND FLOOR

56 Stone Ranch Road

East Lyme, Connecticut

Figure #3



**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number Photograph Page 1

---

Morton Freeman Plant Hunting Lodge  
56 Stone Ranch Road  
East Lyme, Connecticut  
Negative on file with Connecticut  
Historical Commission, Hartford

The above information is the same for all photographs listed.

Photograph #1  
118 Photo. Sec. A.C.C.N.G., C.1940  
Aerial photograph, looking west

Photograph #2  
118 Photo. Sec. A.C.C.N.G., C.1940  
Aerial photograph, looking west

Photograph #3  
New London Landmarks Photograph, 2/88  
Looking west

Photograph #4  
New London Landmarks Photograph, 2/88  
Looking southwest

Photograph #5  
New London Landmarks Photograph, 2/88  
Column detail, looking northwest

~~Negative on file with Connecticut  
Historical Commission, Hartford~~

Photograph #6  
New London Landmarks Photograph, 2/88  
Looking northeast

Photograph #7  
New London Landmarks Photograph, 2/88  
Porch detail, gutter, and birdbath  
Looking northwest

Photograph #8  
New London Landmarks Photograph, 2/88  
Living room, looking north

Photograph #9  
New London Landmarks Photograph, 2/88  
Living room fireplace, looking south

Photograph #10  
New London Landmarks Photograph, 2/88  
Kitchen pantry, looking northeast

Photograph #11  
New London Landmarks Photograph, 2/88  
Master bedroom fireplace  
Looking north