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NPS Form 10-900  
(Rev. 8-86)

NATIONAL  
REGISTER

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM**

=====

1. Name of Property

historic name: LAMBERT, DAVID, HOUSE

other name/site number: N/A

=====

2. Location

street & number: 150 Danbury Road

city/town: Wilton

not for publication: N/A  
vicinity: N/A

state: CT county: Fairfield code: 001 zip code: 06897

=====

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: private

Category of Property: buildings

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	sites
<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	structures
<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	objects
<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. See cont. sheet.

Signature of certifying official: [Handwritten Signature] Director, Connecticut Historical Commission

Date: 6/17/92

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

- 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):

[Handwritten Signature] 7/24/92

Signature of Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic: DOMESTIC Sub: single dwelling
Current: DOMESTIC Sub: multiple dwelling
COMMERCE/TRADE business
VACANT

=====  
7. Description  
=====

Architectural Classification:

COLONIAL  
Federal  
Colonial Revival

Other Description: N/A

Materials: foundation STONE roof WOOD/Shingle  
walls WOOD/Weatherboard other BRICK

Describe present and historic physical appearance. X See continuation sheet.

=====  
8. Statement of Significance  
=====

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

Applicable National Register Criteria: A,C

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) : B

Areas of Significance: ARCHITECTURE  
SETTLEMENT  
EDUCATION

Period(s) of Significance: c.1750-1897

Significant Dates: c.1750

Significant Person(s): N/A

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: Unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above. X See continuation sheet.

9. Major Bibliographical References

X 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
- X recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # CT-29, CT-30
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- X State historic preservation office Connecticut Historical Commission
- Other state agency 59 South Prospect Street
- Federal agency Hartford, CT 06106
- Local government
- University
- Other -- Specify Repository: \_\_\_\_\_

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property: approx. 1

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

A	<u>18</u>	<u>632380</u>	<u>4559780</u>	B	_____	_____
C	_____	_____	_____	D	_____	_____

\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description: \_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

The boundary includes only the northwest quadrant of the lot, as shown on the accompanying site map.

Boundary Justification: \_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

The boundary includes the house and associated outbuilding; it excludes the other unrelated historic buildings that have been moved to the site.

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

Name/Title: Bruce Clouette and Matthew Roth

Organization: Historic Resource Consultants Date: February 18, 1992

Street & Number: 55 Van Dyke Avenue Telephone: 203-547-0268

City or Town: Hartford State: CT ZIP: 06106

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Description

David Lambert House  
Wilton, Fairfield County, CT

7-1

The David Lambert House (Photographs 1 and 2) occupies a large corner lot in Wilton, Connecticut, at the intersection of two state highways, Route 7 and Route 33. The house is a 2 1/2-story gambrel-roofed wood-frame dwelling dating from the first half of the 18th century. It has a five-bay facade with the entrance in the center, where there is a Dutch door of six raised panels. The house's exterior is covered with wide boards beaded along the lower edge. There are three small dormers across the front of the roof, and a large brick chimney emerges from the center of the house. The house is owned by a local historical society that is preparing to use part of it for exhibition purposes; currently, the upper levels are rented for residential and office space. Although the surrounding neighborhood is a densely built commercial and residential area, the Lambert House's large parcel provides an appropriate setting for the house, with tall oaks and maples in front and stone walls around much of the perimeter.

The current appearance of the house owes much to remodelings that appear to have occurred about 1815 and 1895. Federal-period changes include sidelights and a lintel above the entrance (Photograph 4), distinguished by a complexly molded cornice that is convex in plan; windows with twelve-over-twelve narrow-muntin sash and molded caps (Photograph 5); and small fanlights for the attic story, the south one of which retains its interlaced glazing. Colonial Revival detailing includes open porches along both sides of the building and an entrance portico in front. All three have flagstone floors and slender tapered Tuscan columns.

There are two 2 1/2-story ells appended to the east or rear elevation (Photograph 3): the south ell was probably built c.1760, and the somewhat large north ell was built in 1828. Both have large brick chimneys on the ends. The rear of the gambrel roof was modified c.1880 so as to raise up the house to a full three stories across the rear; the present projecting cornice and dormers are also believed to date from that time. A three-bay garage was added to the south ell in the 1940s.

Surrounding the Lambert House are a number of buildings of historic interest that have been moved to the site to save them from destruction. They include a school, store, railroad station, privy, barn, corn crib, and post office. These buildings are rented for retail and professional space, with the land in between used for parking. None of the foregoing are

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Description

David Lambert House  
Wilton, Fairfield County, CT

7-2

directly related to the Lambert House and are excluded from the nominated property. However, one original outbuilding remains: a small 1 1/2-story clapboarded tenant house (Photograph 6). The house has a lean-to roof and a large chimney at the east end; it is believed to date from 1800-1825. It was moved a short distance from its original location when the intersection was enlarged in the 1970s.

The interior of the Lambert House follows the traditional center-chimney plan, with two large front rooms on either side of the massive chimney, a small stair hall in front of the stack, and a large kitchen across what was originally the rear of the house. Throughout the house are plaster walls and ceilings, floors of wide hard-pine boards, flat-paneled doors, and raised window and door surrounds formed from applied moldings. The southwest front room has a molded chair rail, beaded post and beam casings, and bed moldings beneath the horizontal structural members that create a cornice for the room. The shallow brick fireplace is framed by a Federal-style mantel consisting of a molded surround, a paneled frieze, and a shelf formed from a series of moldings (Photograph 7). The northwest front room has a similar, smaller mantel; the brick fireplace was formerly entirely faced with marble, but the side pieces have been replaced by flagstone (Photograph 8). The plaster walls in this room have been built out so as to conceal the structural members; the windows, surrounded by raised moldings like those in the opposite room, have jambs that taper in width (Photograph 9). The front stairway (Photograph 9) features raised paneling below the stairs, a paneled closet door, square newel posts, and turned balusters (Photograph 10). The kitchen, which in other houses is flanked by small rear rooms, is completely open between the two side entrances; its chief feature is a large stone fireplace, more than 9' wide and 4' high, with a bake oven built into the rear wall (Photograph 11).

Summer beams are visible in the front rooms on the second floor, and the flaring shape of the corner posts is more evident as well. The house's heavy framing members are completely exposed in the northwest room (Photograph 13), though lath marks on the joists indicate this room was originally plastered as well. The raised-panel fireplace wall in this room, while apparently authentic 18th-century material, is not original to the house. Both front rooms have shallow brick fireplaces.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Description

David Lambert House  
Wilton, Fairfield County, CT

7-3

The detail of the north ell is similar to the front of the house, though the window and door surround moldings are narrower, the floor boards somewhat narrower, and the framing members, where visible, much smaller in section. The ell contains a cooking fireplace, but smaller and shallower than the one in the main house and with the oven on the side, behind a cast-iron door. Like the small fireplace on the second floor above, it has a plain-board surround and simple shelf. The south ell also retains small fireplaces with simple surrounds on both the first and second floors.

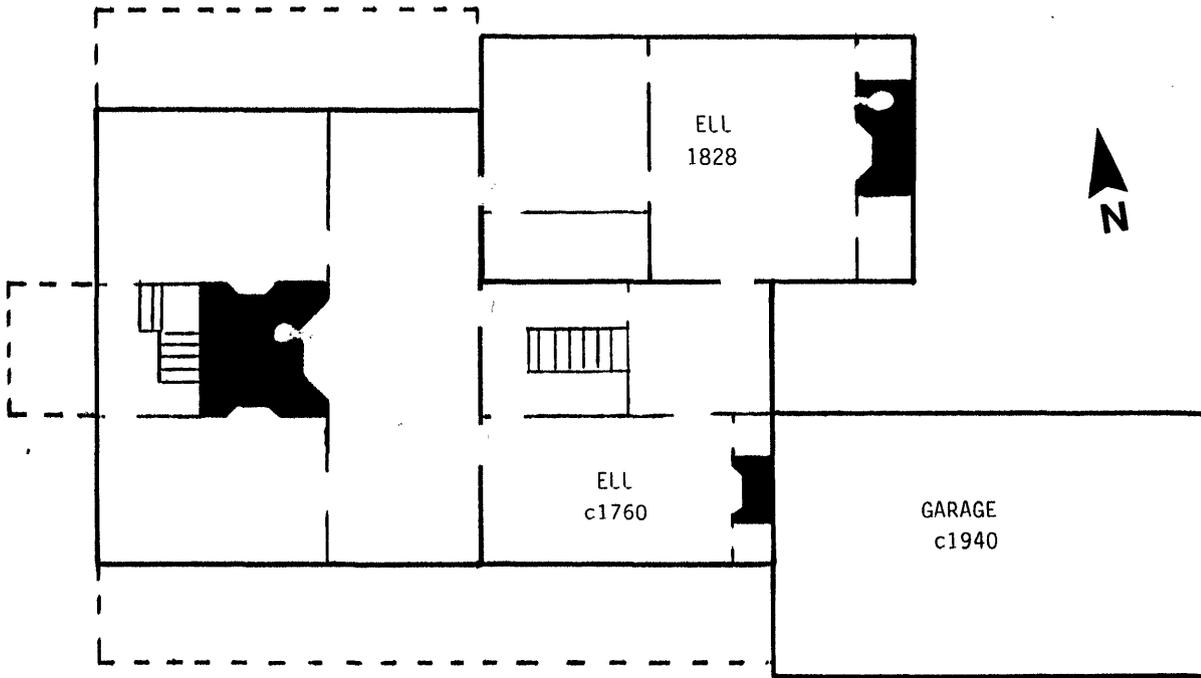
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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

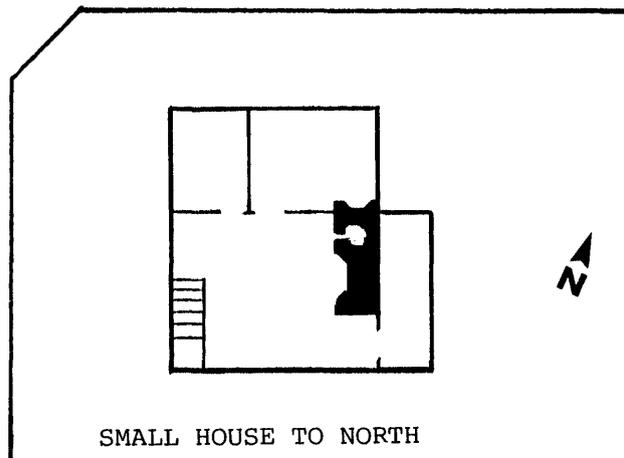
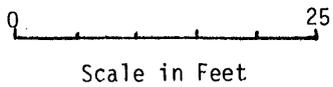
Description

David Lambert House  
Wilton, Fairfield County, CT

7-4



SKETCH PLAN



SMALL HOUSE TO NORTH

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Significance

David Lambert House  
Wilton, Fairfield County, CT

8-1

Summary

The David Lambert House is significant as the home of one of Wilton's early settlers, the progenitor of a family that for several generations played a prominent role in the town's political, social, and educational spheres (Criterion A). David Lambert (1700-1782) began buying land in what was then an outlying part of Norwalk in 1722, and he is credited with suggesting the name for the parish that was organized in 1725, Wilton being the home of his father, Jesse Lambert, who had emigrated from England around 1680. Both David Lambert and his son David, Jr., were substantial farmers and held numerous public offices. Later generations of Lamberts were merchants in New York City, using the Wilton home as a country retreat or place of retirement, and in the 1880s and 1890s, David S. R. Lambert operated a boys school in the house, one of several such academies in Wilton during the 19th century. The Lambert House is also significant for its many features of architectural interest (Criterion C). With its heavy post and beam construction, huge stone kitchen fireplace, and stairway paneling, it embodies some of the chief distinguishing characteristics of 18th-century Connecticut domestic architecture, while other features, such as the entry treatment and mantels, are typical Federal-period details.

The small house to the north, called the Lambert Servants House by the Historic American Buildings Survey, also has historical and architectural significance. Believed to have been built between 1800 and 1825 to house people employed on the Lambert farm, it is a well-preserved example of a tenant house, a type of building which must have once been common on Connecticut's larger farms. Its plan, with one large front room and small rooms in the rear and garret, illustrates the great diversity that characterized smaller houses in the Connecticut countryside in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Although moved a short distance from its original location in the 1970s, it retains its essential architectural character as well as the spatial relationship of an outbuilding to the main house (Criteria Consideration B).

Historical Background

Although the shoreline towns of southwestern Connecticut were

United States Department of the Interior  
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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Significance

David Lambert House  
Wilton, Fairfield County, CT

8-2

settled very early, most by the middle 17th century, the next tier inland remained sparsely populated for two or three generations. Wilton was typical of these towns; the area was simply an outlying part of the coastal town of Norwalk for many years. By 1725, however, there were enough families to organize a Congregational church society or parish, and Wilton came into being as a distinct entity. The parish remained part of Norwalk until its incorporation as a separate town in 1802.

David Lambert was one of Wilton's early settlers; it is believed he moved from Milford, Connecticut, in 1724, and by 1733, when the area was surveyed in great detail, this parcel was called his "home lot," so he can be presumed to be living there with his wife and (at that time) two children. Lambert was a substantial farmer, holding numerous local offices and representing Norwalk at the General Court; he also took advantage of his location on a main road by operating a tavern. Although the house has few clues to his wealth other than its generous proportions, Lambert undoubtedly enjoyed exceptional social status, and his son David, Jr., married Susannah Rogers, the grand-niece of Thomas Fitch, a Norwalk resident who served many years as Governor of Connecticut. At the time of his death in 1782, David Lambert left a large estate, valued at over £1,800 (including what he had given to his children in his lifetime). Paralleling the lack of ostentation in his house, however, the probate inventory listed few trappings of wealth among the farmland, agricultural implements, and household furnishings that made up his estate. Only the exceptionally large library, including several volumes of history and philosophy, and a coat and vest with silver buttons distinguished Lambert from the typical Connecticut farmer. Such plainness among the wealthy farmers of Connecticut, while far from universal, was often commented upon by visitors from Europe and other American colonies.

Although he graduated from Yale College (Class of 1761), David Lambert, Jr. (1739-1815), followed in his father's footsteps, and was remembered as a "substantial farmer, and a worthy and respected gentleman." His father gave him the north half of the house and home farm in 1769, the year the younger man married, with the remainder of the house, "with a new end adjoining" (presumably the south ell), coming to him upon his father's death in 1782. David Lambert, Jr., served several terms as a selectman after the town of Wilton became independent in 1802, and he was

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National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Significance

David Lambert House  
Wilton, Fairfield County, CT

8-3

an organizer and benefactor of St. Matthew's Episcopal Church.(1)

The house and large farm next came into the possession of the third generation, David Rogers Lambert and Samuel Fitch Lambert, both of whom were prominent merchants in New York City. David Rogers Lambert was killed by a "blow from a ruffian" on the streets of New York in 1825, and shortly thereafter his brother Samuel returned to Wilton, where he lived as a gentleman farmer. The federal census of 1860 indicates that Samuel F. Lambert's real estate holdings were by then worth \$14,000, and his household included both an Irish-born servant, Margaret Foran, and Charles King, an African-American who worked as a farm laborer. In this period, the Lambert House is remembered as a mansion, a vibrant center for such activities as balls and coach rides that included not only local Connecticut "society," but visitors from New York City as well.

In its last phase under the ownership of the Lamberts, the house became a boarding school for boys. Wilton in the 19th century was home to a large number of such academies, two or three of them at a time. The place was conveniently located, offering a country setting with easy access by railroad from New York City and other urban areas. These schools typically taught a Classical and scientific curriculum that would prepare students for college. Samuel F. Lambert's son, David S. R. Lambert, operated such an institution in this house. Educated at Yale, from which poor health forced him to withdraw before graduation, he completed his studies on his own and began taking in the "sons of well-to-do New Yorkers," as well as area day students. On December 18, 1897, a former student murdered Professor Lambert during a robbery at the house. Mrs. Lambert continued to reside there until the 1930s, at which time the property was sold out of the family.

Architectural Significance

Although it has been remodeled, once in the Federal style and again with Colonial Revival porches, the David Lambert House retains many of the key characteristics of 18th-century Connecticut domestic architecture. It has the five-bay facade and center-chimney plan that were nearly universal for houses of this size, as well as the heavy post-and-beam framing built from oak or chestnut. Its kitchen fireplace is notable for its large

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Significance

David Lambert House  
Wilton, Fairfield County, CT

8-4

size and back bake oven, generally considered to be more common early in the century rather than later, and it retains something of its original interior finish in the raised-panel walls and turned balusters in the stair hall, both typical of 18th-century woodwork. The wide beaded weatherboards represent an interesting architectural survival; since they appear on both the earliest parts of the house and the ell thought to have been built in 1828, they cannot all be original. However, such an exterior treatment was once common in coastal areas in the early 18th century, and the boards on this house may well represent a long history of replacement in kind. Distinct breaks in the siding are only obvious in the side walls, where the full rear third story, said to have been raised up in the 1880s, interrupts the roof line.(2)

Some of the Federal-style features are significant in their own right, since they epitomize the period's interest in elegant, Classically inspired ornament. The cornice over the entry, for example (Photograph 5), is built up of a series of fine-scale moldings, with the convex shape of the top piece and the breaks over the neckings giving it a complex geometry. Similarly, the front mantels convey a Classical appearance with the delicate moldings and flat-paneled surfaces that were favored in the period. Despite the wealth and prominence of the house's owners, these features, while representative and well-preserved, illustrate a common, unsophisticated interpretation of the style, in contrast to the richly embellished woodwork found in the most stylish houses of the period, many of which are in areas as rural as Wilton.

The Colonial Revival porches, which appear in photographs as early as 1898, add a further layer to the house. They represent an early example of a common occurrence in Wilton and other Fairfield County towns influenced by New York City, the re-"Colonialization" of 18th-century houses. Indeed, so pervasive was this activity that a recent survey of Wilton architecture noted that by the early 20th century, Wilton's old houses were far more "Colonial" than they had been in the 19th century.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Significance

David Lambert House  
Wilton, Fairfield County, CT

8-5

NOTES

1. At the time, the Congregational Church was still the established religion, and David Lambert, Sr., had been a member all his life and had his children baptized in that religion. However, the Church of England had made substantial progress by 1800, especially among prominent people in the southern part of the state, so it is not surprising that someone like David Lambert, Jr., who had been a classmate of Bishop Abraham Jarvis at Yale, would support the Episcopal Church.
2. The traditional date given to the house's construction, 1724 or 1725, may be too early, since plastered walls and ceilings are thought to have come into general use only around 1740; there is no evidence (i.e., chamfered summers or other carved framing member) to suggest the house was not built with plastering in mind. Also, visible summers could be expected on both stories in a house of the 1720s. However, the protruding summers on the second level, the flared posts and overall heaviness of the framing, and the inclusion of features less common in the latter part of the century, such as pine floors and the large cooking hearth with back bake oven, suggest that the house was built c.1750 or even slightly earlier.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Bibliography

David Lambert House  
Wilton, Fairfield County, CT

9-1

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Norwalk, Town of. Land records, Vol. 6, p. 127 (1733); Vol. 13,  
p. 273 (1769).

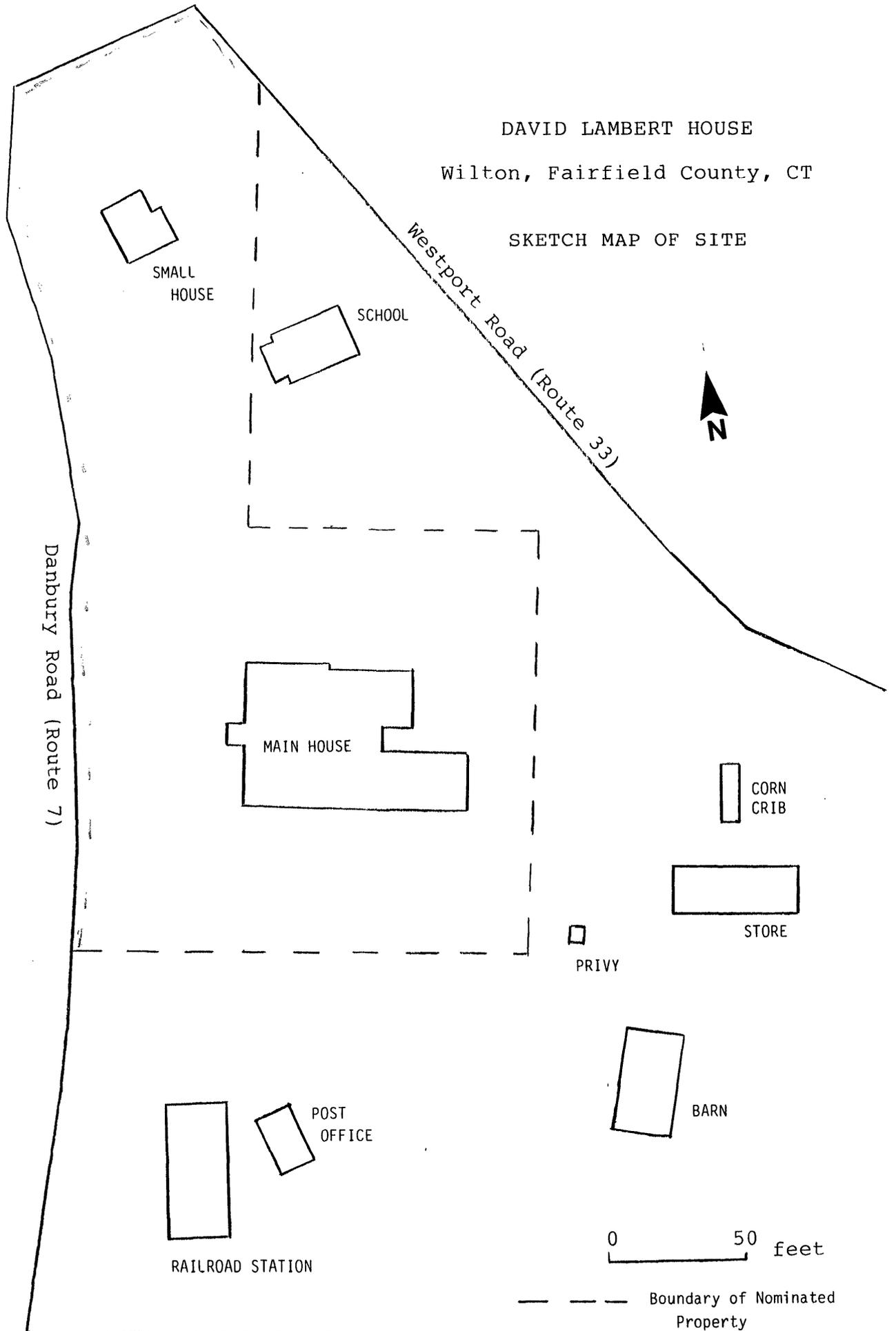
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Norwalk: Norwalk Chapter, Daughters of the American  
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DAVID LAMBERT HOUSE  
Wilton, Fairfield County, CT

SKETCH MAP OF SITE



0 50 feet

--- Boundary of Nominated Property