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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

JUN 13 1993

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National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

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 Bronson, Aaron, House
other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 846 Southford Road N/A not for publication
city, town Southbury N/A vicinity
state Connecticut code CT county New Haven code 009 zip code 06488

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	_____ structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	_____	_____ objects
		<u>1</u>	<u>2</u> 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] June 10, 1993
Signature of certifying official Director, Connecticut Historical Commission 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:) _____

[Signature] 7/29/93
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)COLONIAL/Postmedieval English

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation stone

walls weatherboard

roof asphalt shingle

other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Aaron Bronson House is a circa 1785 Cape located on the south side of the Southford Road, the old highway from Southbury Center to the village of Southford (Photograph #s 1, 2). It is partially hidden from public view by the trees and shrubbery along the road-side. A short driveway to the left of the the house leads to a modern garage which is set at least partially on an old foundation. Another modern outbuilding, a shed, is located beyond and to the southeast of the garage. The open land behind the house slopes away gradually from the road.

The Bronson House consists of three sections (Exhibit A). The original main block (26' x 35') has a slightly later kitchen ell (14' x 14') attached at the left rear, which was probably added by 1820. A one-story wing with a rectangular floorplan was added to the rear of the ell in 1987 (38' x 18') and opens onto a terrace with a stone retaining wall. The shape and pitch of its west end is proportionately designed to match the west elevation of the main block (Photograph #3). Its intersecting gabled roof steps down on the east end from the gabled roof of the ell.

The center-chimney main block has the typical appearance and plan of post-Revolutionary Capes, which are characterized by a higher roof plate and a five-bay facade with paired windows on either side of the central doorway. This entrance has a later Greek Revival doorway surround. The kitchen ell has a very tall brick end chimney, tapered at the top and stone-capped. The main chimney is also brick above the ridge and has a corbeled course and a stone cap. Most of the windows contain six-over-six sash. Two windows have been replaced at the first floor on the northwest gable end by a multi-paned large window on the left and a paired set on the right.

The interior of the main block retains its original finishes and features. Both the parlor and the hall have panelled fireplace walls (Photograph #s 4, 5). The panels are flat and set within a shallow recess with a beaded edge. A continuous narrow cornice extends across these walls about six inches below the ceiling. The other walls of these rooms have cased second-floor sills and girts, which extend slightly below the ceiling, and there is a continuous chair rail at the height of the window sills. Passage doors throughout generally have four panels with the same design as those of the fireplace walls.

The actual fireplace surrounds are slightly different in their design. The one in the hall has a simple shallow molded architrave. The narrow mantel, which does not extend the full length of the surround and is only a few inches deep, appears to be a later

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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Aaron Bronson House, Southbury, Connecticut

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addition. The parlor fireplace surround is similar but the mantel is set above a pulvinated frieze. A special feature is the glazed cabinet door to the left of the fireplace. The cooking fireplace in the hall has a beehive oven to the right with its own stone lintel and probably its own flue (now concealed). The firebox has large granite-block cheeks but there are small wooden timbers on either side just below the stone lintel. A third fireplace at the rear of the main stack is much smaller and its firebox may have been rebuilt.

The hall also contains a built-in corner cupboard offset from the wall only on the left side (Photograph #6). Its glazed door is framed with the same narrow beaded molding used in the panelling of the room and there are two solid paneled cupboard doors below. Above the door is a Federal cornice with a delicate dentil course. The shelves have the characteristic scalloped pattern with a circular projection in the center. The back wall of the cupboard is sheathed in narrow vertical boards. It is notable that the glass door to the left of the parlor fireplace contains the same size panes (nominal 5" x 7"), suggesting that they are both original or at least contemporaneous features.

The second cooking fireplace at the rear of the ell has an oven on the right side (Photograph #7). The base of the beehive has a soldier course of brick and there is a brick-lined woodbox below. The wood surround and cabinet doors (in front of the oven and the cupboard above) are quite primitive when compared to the casework in the more formal front rooms. The plastered chimney breast is exposed above the mantel and two outside walls of this room have horizontal wainscot. Were it not for the fact that the roof framing system of the ell with its ridge beam indicates later work, this room with its large ceiling joists and plain board trim would appear to antedate the main block.

Both the new outbuildings have a compatible period appearance. The garage has been resided with vertical boards over new wood framing, replacing concrete-block walls for the most part. The wood-framed gable-roofed shed with its open bays in one long side is typical of the type constructed in the nineteenth century.

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

Significant Person

N/A

Period of Significance

c. 1785 - c. 1820

Significant Dates

c. 1785

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

unknown

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

The Aaron Bronson House is architecturally significant as an exceptional example of a late-eighteenth-century Cape which is distinguished by its interior craftsmanship and well-preserved condition. It has local importance for its association with the Bronson family, early settlers of Old Woodbury.¹

Architectural Significance

The Bronson House is a transitional building. The main block combines the form and plan of a colonial Cape with the interior formality and delicacy of the Federal period. Except for the later Greek Revival doorway, the stylistic detail is confined to the interior, which displays a level of style and elegance not often associated with rural vernacular architecture.

This detailing is exceptionally well-crafted and clearly post-colonial, yet not fully Federal in its style. A yet unknown craftsman apparently relied on traditional design precedents but his vernacular interpretation is quite sophisticated. By itself the corner cupboard is a significant feature which achieves added importance for its integration into the overall design scheme. Its only clearly Federal applied detail is the diminutive dentil work, yet its flat planes and reduced shadow lines are derived from this style. The panelling also is designed and executed in a delicate manner which is consistent with the Federal period, yet neither fireplace treatment is typical. Instead of featuring molded architraves and full panelling, pilastered Federal surrounds are usually set against plastered walls. In fact, panelled fireplace walls are more characteristic of colonial design. However, instead of the bold relief of fielded panelling, as might be expected, the panels are flat, slightly recessed, and bordered by very delicate molding, producing an overall effect of simplicity and restraint.

The recent addition does not impact on the architectural integrity of the original structure or its kitchen ell. Instead, it is placed and carefully designed to be subordinate and complementary, echoing the original roofline and proportions.

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Barbour Collection of Connecticut Vital Records.
Beers, F. W. Atlas of New Haven County: The Town of Southbury. New York: Beers & Co., 1868.
Cothren, William F. History of Ancient Woodbury from the First Indian Deed in 1659 to 1871. 3 vols. Waterbury: Bronson Brothers, 1854, 1872; Woodbury: Cothren, 1879.
Smith, H. & C.T. Map of New Haven County, Connecticut, 1856.
Southbury: Townwide Architectural Survey (intensive level). Connecticut Historical Commission, 1990-1991 (compiled by Mary McCahon).

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

Acreeage of property 5.4

UTM References

A

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 Zone Easting Northing

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 Zone Easting Northing

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D

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundaries of the nominated property are described in the Southbury Land Records in Book 133, Page 1045, and Book 144, Page 409.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundaries of the nominated property encompass all the land and buildings still associated with the Aaron Bronson House.

See continuation sheet

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

name/title Jan Cunningham, National Register Consultant
 organization Cunningham Associates Ltd. date 11/30/92
 street & number 37 Orange Road telephone (203) 347 4072
 city or town Middletown state CT zip code 06457

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Aaron Bronson House, Southbury, Connecticut

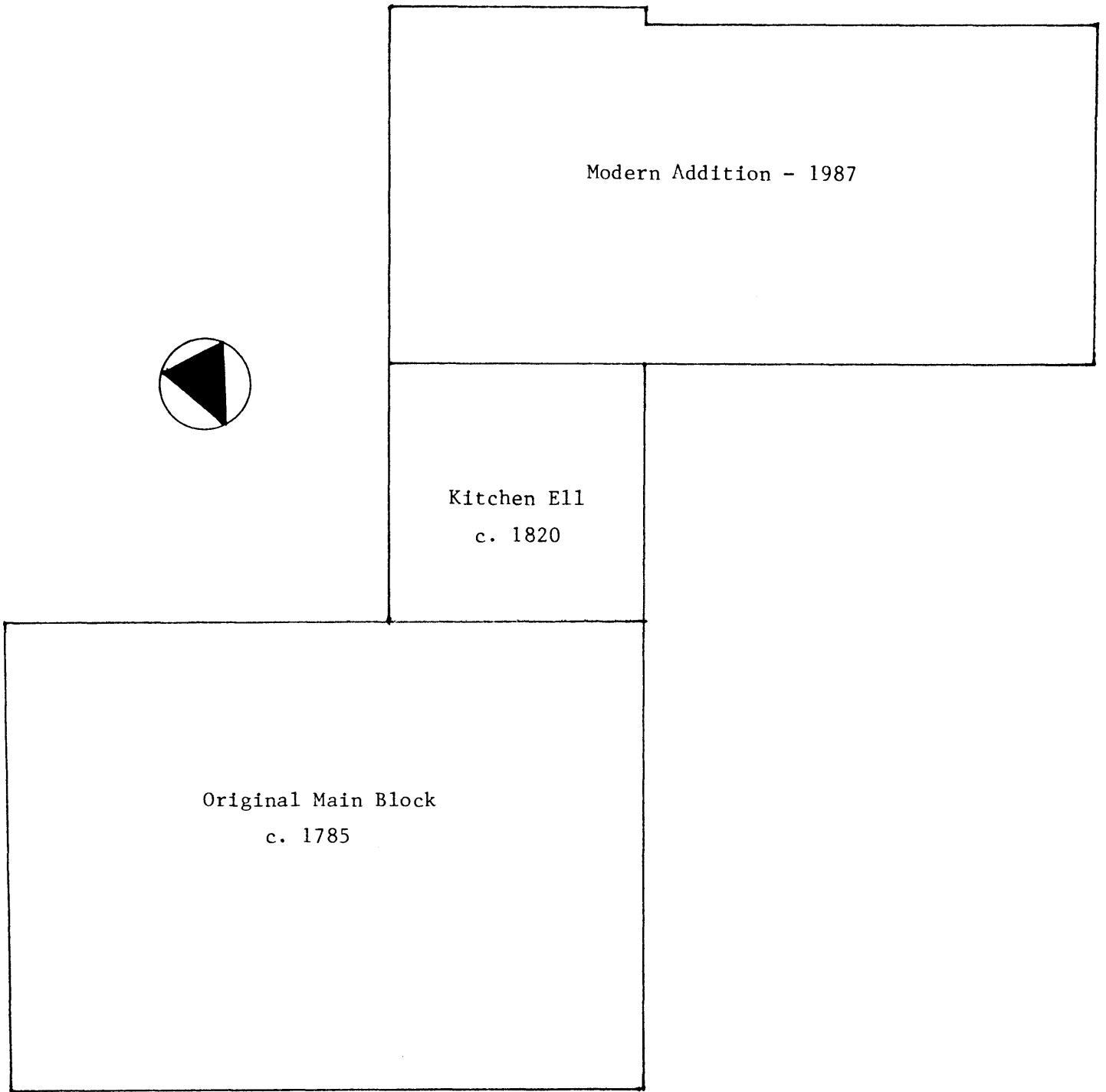
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Historical Background

Little is known about the definite origins of this house except for the fact that it was owned by the Bronson (aka Brownson) family during its early history. It was one of several houses owned by Aaron Bronson and may have been inherited from his father, Noah Bronson. Although they were not founders of Old Woodbury, several Bronsons appear as proprietors on the 1751 list, including Ebenezer, Cornelius, Richard, and Cornelius, Jr. Cornelius, Sr., and his wife Abigail joined the church in Old Woodbury in 1716 and probably were the first of that name in the community. They still could have been residents of what is now Southbury, since a separate church society was not established there until 1731.

Apparently successful in his trades as a cordwainer (shoemaker) and button maker, Aaron Bronson had a considerable estate when he died about 1835. This house, which was inherited by his son, Augustus, was identified by its location: across the highway from his (Aaron's) dwelling (no longer extant). However, when Augustus sold the property in 1847 to David Hicock (the occupant on the map of 1856), it was identified as the "Aaron Bronson Place." At that time there were two other Bronson houses to the east near the intersection of Southford and Curt Smith roads. Carlos B. Curtiss (1824-1893), the son of Japhet Curtiss and a fifth-generation descendant of Israel Curtiss, a proprietor of Old Woodbury, bought the property in 1867. He sold it in 1889 to William Smith. Twentieth-century owners included William Oleson, a dairy farmer. The present owners acquired the property in 1977 and they are responsible for the rear addition to the house and the modern outbuildings.

1. Old Woodbury is the name commonly used to differentiate the larger colonial town (173 square miles) from the smaller present-day Town of Woodbury. Until the late eighteenth century, Old Woodbury also encompassed the parishes which became the towns of Washington (incorporated 1779), Southbury and Bethlehem (both incorporated 1787), and Roxbury (incorporated 1796).



Scale: $\frac{1}{4}$ " = 1'

EXHIBIT A

Aaron Bronson House, Southbury, CT
Schematic Floor Plan