

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

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 Hill-Stead
other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 35 Mountain Road NA not for publication
city, town Farmington NA vicinity
state CT code 06 county Hartford code 003 zip code 06032

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>9</u>	<u>1</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>9</u>	<u>1</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: Included in Farmington Historic District
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 1

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 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 of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

DOMESTIC/secondary structure

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION AND CULTURE/museum

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH- and 20TH-CENTURY REVIVALS/
Colonial Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE/sandstone

walls WOOD/weatherboard

roof ASPHALT

other _____

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The focus of Hill-Stead, a 150-acre estate of rolling farmland in Farmington, Connecticut, is its 1901 Colonial Revival house, designed by Theodate Pope Riddle in collaboration with McKim, Mead & White. From the beginning, the house has been filled with French Impressionist paintings and a variety of decorative arts collected by Mrs. Riddle's father, Alfred A. Pope. The house, its outbuildings, grounds, and collections, remain intact today, substantially unchanged since 1901 and undisturbed since the death of Mrs. Riddle in 1946.

Approached from the southwest by a drive flanked with stone walls, Hill-Stead is sited on top of a hill facing northwest. (Figure 1) The homestead, on a hill, with a splendid view over the Farmington River valley, is a white two-story frame structure with five bays, central entrance, low wings, twin chimneys rising from a gable roof, and long ell that connects to barns at the rear. (Photograph 1) The grounds, laid out by Warren Manning, included a six-hole golf course to the north, now meadows (Photograph 2), while a sunken garden to the south (Photograph 3) was added by Beatrix Farrand in 1925. A country road runs north from the courtyard to a second farm complex, and the land extends east and west of the road and behind the house. (Figure 1)

The front (northwest) elevation of the house has the five bays of the Colonial style, although widely spaced because they span a width of 61 feet, perhaps twice the dimension of an 18th-century house. Windows are 6-over-6, except for multi-paned sidelights on either side of the front door and a tripartite window above at the second floor. To the south of the entrance is a one-story bay topped by a Chinese Chippendale balustrade. The windows are fitted with black-green blinds. In the roof, a large central peaked dormer is flanked by smaller single dormers, each in front of a chimney.

A full-width two-story portico in front of the main block was the first change to the house, added about a year after it was finished. The one-story wing set back to the south originally had an open recessed porch, now closed in, under the roof with two dormers. Originally, the north wing was identical, but in 1907 it was extended forward to the line of the front wall of the main section of the house and given a bay and balustrade. The new bay matched the one already existing at the south end of the porch, but, because of its different relative position, introduced asymmetry to the facade.

See continuation sheet

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 National Historic Landmark Criteria: 1, 4

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

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Art
Architecture
Theme XXIV: Painting and Sculpture
Subtheme K: Supporting Institutions
Theme XVI Architecture
Subtheme M1 Georgian Revival

Period of Significance

1898-1946

Significant Dates

1901, 1907, 1917

Cultural Affiliation

NA

Significant Person

Architect/Builder

Theodate Pope Riddle, with McKim, Mead & White/Richard F. Jones

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

Hill-Stead is significant architecturally because it is "perhaps the finest Colonial Revival house, and museum, in the United States."¹ It was designed by the woman architect, Theodate Pope Riddle, in a unique collaboration with McKim, Mead & White.² The collection of French Impressionist paintings in the house is outstanding for its quality and because it was acquired during the artists' lifetimes. The presence of the paintings and collection of decorative arts in a country house setting, integrating the art and architecture to create a cultural unity, has become a significant cultural resource because it is unchanged, an entity existing to the present time as planned and lived in by the Pope family.

Architecture

The question of who was in charge of the design of Hill-Stead was addressed by Theodate Pope Riddle (1867-1946) in a declaratory manner when she wrote to William R. Mead (1846-1928) on 17 Sept. 1898, "We have now decided instead of having you submit sketches to us, to send you the plans that I have been working over at intervals for some years.... Consequently, as it is my plan, I expect to decide on all the details as well as more important questions of plan that may arise. That must be clearly understood at the outset, so as to save unnecessary friction in the future. In other words, it will be a Pope house instead of a McKim Mead and White."

The "some years" referred to by Theodate Pope Riddle were years in which she had lived in Farmington, starting with her arrival in 1886 at the age of 19 to attend Miss Porter's School. After leaving Miss Porter's in 1888, she returned to live in Farmington, and began discussing with her father (Alfred A. Pope, 1842-1913) a proposal to build a house for the family in Farmington. Her love of the community led her to study its architecture with great care. While the details of her architectural education are not at hand, she was able to persuade her father, difficult as it may be to believe, that her talent was adequate for the task at hand.³

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheets.

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 # _____

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

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

Specify repository:

Hill-Stead, New-York Historical Society, Avery Library

10. Geographical Data

Acres of property 150

UTM References

A
 Zone Easting Northing

C

B
 Zone Easting Northing

D

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property is described in the Farmington Land Records at volume 101, page 481.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification The boundary encompasses the property delineated on "Map Showing Land Acquired by A.A. Pope in Farmington, Conn., Aug. & Sept. 1898" (see p. 8-5, fn. 7) of approximately 200 acres, less about 50 acres sold off from time to time, mostly to the southeast, by the trustees under the will of Theodate Pope Riddle. No land has been added since 1898.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title David F. Ransom/Architectural Historian

organization Consultant to Hill-Stead date 2 September 1990

street & number 33 Sunrise Hill Drive telephone 203 521-2518

city or town West Hartford, state CT zip code 06107

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In the same 1907 alterations, a room was built northeast of the north wing, opening onto a pedimented porch that brought a definitive Greek Revival feature to the house. (Photograph 4, Figure 2) The balance of the north side elevation is plain (Photograph 5), except for a dentil course at the eaves on the east side of the main block.

The south elevation is a second principal facade. It faces the drive as it continues from in front of the house to the barns. (Photograph 6) Across the drive is the sunken garden, now in the original design and configuration planned by Beatrix Farrand, with much of the same flora and vegetation as in the original. The central summerhouse, under a double pitched roof characteristic of American interest in Japanese forms, is original.

The south elevation includes the south wall of the ell. In its middle is a porte cochère that projects two bays from a central porch. The nearly flat three-centered arches and the paneling of the posts of the porte cochère are typical, and reappear elsewhere in the house, the paneling in posts and pilasters that flank the doorways and define the corners, and the arches in several porches. The porte cochère porch, once open, is also now enclosed. The range of windows along the south elevation shows the typical window detailing of flat-stock surrounds bordered with linear band moldings and crisp flat molded caps.

On the interior, the architectural spaces of the house and the artistic collections are blended together into a unified comprehensive whole. From the foot of the stairway in the central hall (Photograph 8, Figure 3) the drawing room and its ell room are visible on the right (Photograph 9), the dining room is straight ahead, and the two libraries are on the left (Photograph 10). The spaces flow freely from one room to another. (Figure 3) The basic color scheme of brown woodwork with yellow accents in the wall-papers provides a background for and contrast to the pastels of the Impressionist paintings. The furniture and other decorative arts help establish the domestic setting for display and enjoyment of the paintings in a totally non-gallery environment, all as the Pope family planned and arranged in the first decade of the century.

In the hallway, the wide and gracious stairway of easy rise and run has on one side a simple railing with volute terminating at the first tread and on the other side a dado of corresponding height. Along the stairway are hung 18th- and 19th-century prints by James McNeill Whistler, Jean Francois Millet, Charles Meryon, and others, against a background of custom wall-paper in a block pattern of cream, brown, and black.

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In the drawing room, the beamed ceiling, paneled dado, and fireplace mantel combine to give a Colonial feeling on a grand scale. This room has the greatest concentration of paintings in the house -- by Claude Monet, Edouard Manet, Edgar Degas, and others. They are complemented by American and English furniture of the 18th and early 19th centuries and a Steinway piano (made for Hill-Stead in 1901) and highlighted by majolica ware, two 17th-century urns from Abruzzi, and bronzes by Antoine-Louis Barye. In the ell room beyond (Photograph 11), Haystacks by Monet, over the mantel, is at home with English Chippendale chairs and a Duncan Phyfe sewing table. (Photograph 11)

The dining room is the largest room in the house, 34' x 40'. (Photograph 12) Its location is unusual, being at the rear of the central hall rather than to one side, and at the beginning of the rear ell rather than in the main block. Its paneled beams, dado, and other woodwork are painted to resemble graining. The Sheraton-style dining room table extends to seat 36. The carpet repeats in different colors the geometric design found in the hall and drawing room. A Degas pastel, Jockeys, hangs over the large fireplace mantel, while on the mantel shelf are celadon porcelains of the Sung and Ming dynasties. Sconces and chandeliers are by Shreve, Crump, and Low, as are others throughout the house. A pass-through connects the dining room to the butler's pantry, which still has its original cupboards and a door glazed with etched glass. (Photograph 13)

In the first library, floor-to-ceiling paneling and bookshelves encircle the room. Its fireplace mantel is designed with shallow pilasters, wide frieze, and dentil course in a manner similar to others in the house. The cherry sofa is Biedermeier. The double entrance to the second library results from the enlargement of that room toward the front in 1907; the column between the doorways was the original corner of the house. The second library is almost a second drawing room, but its grained paneling, browns and tans of the furnishings, and comfortable furniture make it less formal. (Photograph 14) Whistler's The Blue Wave, Biarritz, occupies the important space over the mantel visible from the entrance hall. The morning room, built in 1907 as Alfred A. Pope's office, is three steps below the floor level of the libraries and its paneled walls were painted golden yellow when Theodate Pope Riddle made it her office in the 1930s. Monet's Boats Leaving the Harbor at Le Havre hangs over the mantel, facing an 18th-century English mahogany secretary, whose front is carved to resemble a building. (Photograph 15)

On the second floor, the central hall space is repeated (Photograph 16). Three Albrecht Dürer engravings are on one wall, facing a row of Piranesi prints. The bedrooms to the south (Photograph 17), occupied by the Riddles

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after Theodate Pope's 1916 marriage to John W. Riddle (1864-1941), a career diplomat, display a small fireplace, tester beds, and furnishings typical of rooms on this floor. East of the hall, Mrs. Alfred A. Pope's suite of two rooms (Photograph 18) is decorated with Japanese prints, while north of the hall in the green room (Photograph 19) are a painting and a print by Mary Cassatt. In the mulberry suite a bathroom connects two bedrooms, the smaller of which is for a child. (Photograph 20)

Both the first and second floors of the house display the Pope family's collections, not only the French Impressionist paintings but also furniture, European and Oriental prints and engravings, porcelains, majolica, Barye bronzes, and books. Some 2,000 family letters and hundreds of photographs (25 by Gertrude Kasebier) round out the continued Pope presence in the house.

The ell of the house continues east beyond the pantry, providing space for the kitchen, staff living quarters, and a laundry. The east end of the building is a thick brick wall, which is credited with saving the house from destruction at the time the barns beyond burned in 1908.¹ Theodate replaced the north-south section of barns in 1917² with a Y-shaped structure that includes a barn and theater. (Figure 21) The Makeshift Theater (Photograph 22), in one stem of the Y, was an early movie house for the Farmington community, with a capacity of 118. Its ceiling is hung on steel rods from the roof structure, while the seats of its benches rise to ever higher levels toward the back, providing an artificial pitch to the seating level for better viewing. The other stem of the Y is now used for a book shop and garages. South of the principal barns is another structure of cobblestone, the only masonry building in the complex, providing additional space for shops and garage (Photograph 23). Behind it, foundations of a former attached greenhouse, lost by fire, are still in place. To the south, the complex is completed by a mid-20th-century staff residence built on the foundations of another greenhouse lost to fire.

A second farm complex exists at the north boundary of the estate, connected to the main buildings by a lane. The 18th-century Timothy North House (Photograph 24) was acquired by Alfred A. Pope in 1898 as part of the assembly of the site. At that time, one barn was standing across the lane from the house; it was replaced, a second barn added, the house remodelled, and two small buildings constructed, to the design of Theodate Pope Riddle.

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The landscaped areas of the grounds remain much as they were laid out by Warren Manning. The golf course is now a meadow, and land once used for farming and sheep raising is not now worked, but provides sweeping views and informal walking paths.

1
Farmington Valley Herald, 22 May 1908

2
Ibid., 28 September 1917.

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Architectural Inventory

<u>Name of Building</u>	<u>Contributing (C) or Non-Contributing (NC) to the architectural and historic signifi- cance of the property</u>	<u>Date</u>
Principal House	C	1898-1901
Front portico		c. 1902
Extension of original den to form second library, morning room		1907
Barns, including Makeshift Theater	C	1917
Cobblestone shop and garage	C	1898-1901
Staff residence	NC	Mid-20C
Brownstone pumphouse	C	Early 20C
Timothy North House	C	Early 19C
Barn	C	Early 20C
Frame shepherd's shelter	C	Early 20C
Cottage	C	Early 20C
Barn	C	Early 20C

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Inventory of Nineteenth-Century European Paintings

Mary Cassatt	<u>Mother and Children</u>
Edgar Degas	<u>The Jockeys</u>
Edgar Degas	<u>The Tub</u>
Edgar Degas	<u>Dancers in Pink</u>
Edouard Manet	<u>The Guitar Player</u>
Edouard Manet	<u>La Posada</u>
Edouard Manet	<u>The Absinthe Drinker</u>
Claude Monet	<u>View of the Bay and Alps at Antibes</u>
Claude Monet	<u>Haystacks 1889</u>
Claude Monet	<u>Haystacks 1890</u>
Claude Monet	<u>Boats Leaving the Harbor</u>
Pierre Puvis de Chavannes	<u>Peace</u>
Eugene Carrière	<u>Head of a Woman</u>
Eugene Carrière	<u>Child at Table</u>
Eugene Carrière	<u>Maternity</u>
James McNeill Whistler	<u>The Blue Wave, Biarritz</u>
James McNeill Whistler	<u>Symphony in Violet and Blue</u>
James McNeill Whistler	<u>Carmen Rossi</u>
William Nicholson	<u>Morris Nicholson</u>

Note: Alfred A. Pope acquired additional paintings during his lifetime. He traded or sold several, and several were sold by Theodate Pope Riddle. Nothing has been sold, or added, since her death.

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Perhaps more difficult to understand is the willingness on the part of McKim, Mead & White to accept such an arrangement. The explanation stems, in part, from the period of economic weakness (the Depression of the 1890s) then coming to a close -- the firm probably needed the business -- and, in part, from the association of Alfred A. Pope with the Whittemore family of nearby Naugatuck. Pope was in the business of manufacturing malleable iron castings in Cleveland. The Whittemores were in the same business in Naugatuck, and there was a loose relationship between the two firms. The presence of good friends nearby may have influenced Pope's decision to agree to his daughter's proposal for a house in Farmington. Since the Whittemores were important clients of McKim, Mead & White,⁴ the firm could well have deemed it impolitic to offend a close associate of so valuable a client.

McKim, Mead & White's recognition of the facts of the arrangement is evidenced by the way they handled the commission. The partner in charge was Mead, the firm's business manager, not known for his talent as a designer. The associate with whom Theodate Pope Riddle dealt on details was Egerton Swartout (1870-1943), a young man who left McKim, Mead & White, c. 1900, to enter into partnership for himself.⁵ Perhaps most indicative of Theodate Pope Riddle's strong contribution was adjustment in the firm's fee from the usual 5% or more to 3½%, the only known instance of such adjustment by McKim, Mead & White in recognition of client input.⁶ The 1907 work for which McKim, Mead & White were given full responsibility was charged at 5%.

Selection of the site was the first important step undertaken by Theodate Pope Riddle. She chose a hilltop she was familiar with because it was behind a house she owned and was living in. It was an excellent choice, with panoramic views. The various parcels were assembled in 1898 by Harris Whittemore on behalf of Alfred Pope while the family was in Europe.⁷

In her 17 September 1898 letter to Mead, Theodate Pope Riddle did not send an elevation, and, indeed proposed that McKim, Mead & White prepare one. Thus, the exterior appearance of the house appears to have been the firm's responsibility. An early drawing (Figure 6) shows the house without the portico but with 12-over-12 windows, much truer to 18th-century precedent than the house as built. On the other hand, the portico with its Chinese Chippendale balustrade and the 6-over-6 windows with their larger panes better articulate the Colonial Revival interpretation of the 18th-century precedent which was gaining in popularity toward the end of the 19th century. While many 18th-century farmhouses were five-bay central-entrance twin-chimney structures with an ell leading to barns, none was the size of Hill-Stead. Hill-Stead is an over-scaled interpretation of a Colonial

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prototype. This non-archeologically correct approach to interpreting Colonial precedent was the basis and strength of the Colonial Revival at the turn of the century. Hill-Stead well fits the mode.

The plans that Theodate Pope Riddle sent to McKim, Mead & White are not at hand. It may well be, however, that the firm modified and improved them. The interior spaces of Hill-Stead flow from one to another and work together with great success to form a cohesive whole. McKim, Mead & White had been developing interior spaces of this character in their early Queen Anne houses and particularly in their Shingle-style houses at Newport, Rhode Island, and on the New Jersey shore. Their great skill in managing domestic interior space appears to be in evidence at Hill-Stead, particularly on the first floor. The experience of viewing the entire first floor from the foot of the entrance hall stairway, through to the fireplace of the ell room on the right, into the great dining room straight ahead, and all the way to Whistler's Blue Wave in the second library on the left, is memorable. Some 4900 square feet of floor space is comprehensible at a glance, and is orderly, convenient, and flowing. At the same time, the asymmetry of the plan and the location of the dining room in the center of the house are unlike anything else in McKim, Mead & White's work, and must be attributed to Theodate Pope Riddle. Functionally, the interior provides convenient and effective opportunity for showing the collections, serving well the dual purpose of domestic and gallery space.

Another interested participant in planning the house was the client of record, Alfred A. Pope. On 26 June 1899 he wrote a five-page typed letter to his daughter outlining his ideas for many practical aspects of the construction. He dealt with insulation, heating, plumbing, sound control, paint mix, plaster, mortar, and crowning the floor joists. As did his daughter, he provided much input that the architects might normally have felt to be within their area of responsibility.

The contractor was R. F. Jones (1875-1951), a young man from the Unionville section of Farmington. He was selected over four others, including Norcross Brothers. He went on to become the most prominent builder of the Hartford area. Jones, however, built only the shell; the millwork came from W. C. McAlister of Cleveland, a choice that reflects Alfred A. Pope's continued involvement in the construction of the house.

Warren H. Manning (1860-1938) was the landscape architect.⁹ The particulars of what he did are not at hand, but since he was known for his work in designing parks, he would seem to have been a good choice. Beatrix Farrand (1872-1959), architect of the sunken garden, was a colleague of Theodate Pope Riddle's. Farrand's interest in landscape gardening was stimulated by her observations of her family's homes in Bar Harbor and Newport; she had a

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client list of wealthy people.¹⁰ The sunken garden works well in a natural depression across from and below the east elevation of the house and porte cochère; she made the most of the topographical opportunity.

The interior and exterior of Hill-Stead benefitted from comprehensive planning by a talented and strong-willed architect, Theodate Pope Riddle. Her thorough oversight of all aspects of the design produced a well-integrated final product. The marked sense of cohesiveness is a tribute to her ability to think through the development of the estate. Its present condition, exactly as she left it in 1946, makes Hill-Stead an unusually well-preserved architectural resource.

Art

Alfred Pope began his career as an art collector in his late forties, toward the end of the decade of the 1880s. A frequent traveler to Europe, Pope used a grand tour following the completion of his daughter's schooling, as the occasion for a visit to his nephew Ned, a painter in Paris,¹¹ and for making his first purchase, which was Monet's View of the Bay and Alps at Antibes, painted the preceding year. The dealer, Boussod, Valadon of Paris, proved to be a steady source for Pope over the years. In addition to buying recent works, Pope was not averse to acquiring earlier examples of paintings by artists he liked, for example, Whistler's The Blue Wave at Biarritz, 1862, which he bought in 1894, and Monet's Boats Leaving the Harbor at Le Havre, 1868, bought in 1894. Pope was known in the art world for his determination; Camille Pissarro wrote in a letter of 21 October 1894 of "this American who came to Paris to find a beautiful Manet at any cost, if the painting met his expectations. All the dealers were exhausted from looking in every corner for the pearl. Finally, this nabob purchased Woman with Guitar /Manet, 1867/ for 75,000 fr. Amazement far and wide!"¹² His final purchase, in 1907, from Durand-Ruel, New York and Paris, another dealer he used regularly, was Degas' The Tub, a bold choice of a sensuous pastel of a nude woman.¹³ During Pope's lifetime his paintings were widely loaned for exhibition in Paris, London, New York, Cleveland, and Boston.¹⁴

The Popes knew and corresponded with James McNeill Whistler (1834-1903) and Mary Cassatt (1844-1926). Cassatt took an interest in the art education of Theodate Pope Riddle.¹⁵ The Whittemores traveled in the same circles and also collected Impressionist paintings for their homes. Regrettably, the Whittemore homes have been demolished and the collections dispersed. The Popes were also acquainted with the Henry Osborne Havemeyers of New York (he was known as "H.O.") who were the first (starting in 1871) and largest American collectors of French Impressionist paintings. Their paintings were hung in their New York home, which the Popes visited,

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throughout the house and also in a gallery. At Mrs. (Louisine) Havemeyer's death in 1929, the collection was dispersed, the bulk of it going to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and their house has been demolished.¹⁶ Thus, of the three early and serious American collectors of French Impressionism for their homes, only Alfred A. Pope at Hill-Stead has left his mark with his collection intact and in its original setting, available to the public as a museum since 1947.

Henry James, in writing of his 1904 visit to Hill-Stead, described "... a great new house on a hilltop that overlooked the most composed of communities; a house apparently conceived - and with great felicity - on the lines of a magnified Mount Vernon, and in which an array of modern 'impressionistic' pictures, mainly French, wondrous examples of Manet, of Degas, of Claude Monet, of Whistler, of other rare recent hands, treated us to the momentary effect of a large slipperly sweet inserted, without a warning, between the compressed lips of half-conscious inanition...no proof of the sovereign power of art could have been, for the moment, sharper...it was like the sudden trill of a nightingale, lord of the hushed evening."¹⁷

The "recent hands" of whom Henry James wrote have now become the recognized masters of the 19th century. The images they created are the icons of a revolutionary and regenerative art movement. The survival of these paintings in the home of the people who collected them is rare, if not unique. The collection of French bronzes, Italian and Chinese ceramics, and American and English furniture, serves not only as a complement to the better known works. These items are also significant for their quality and as a reflection of the sensitivity of the people who owned and preserved them. These people were largely responsible for the architecture of their house. The quiet complexity of its design and coloristic subtlety of its decoration are part of the art historical significance of the ensemble.

Ultimately, the entire composition of grounds, house, collection, and archives communicates the aspirations and sensibilities of not only one strongly intelligent family, but of an entire class of turn-of-the-century America.¹⁸

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1

Mark Alan Hewitt, The Architect & the American Country House, 1890-1940 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), p. 157.

2

For a discussion of this unique client relationship in the history of McKim, Mead & White, see Leland M. Roth, letter to Hill-Stead, 24 April 1988.

3

Theodate Pope Riddle renovated two houses in Farmington in the 1890s, thereby demonstrating her capability. She also studied fine arts with members of the Princeton faculty in the spring of 1895 and 1896. She opened an office for the practice of architecture in New York City in 1913, which she maintained sporadically until 1924, and became a certified architect in New York State in 1916. Her works include Westover School, Middlebury (1909); Hop Brook School, Naugatuck (1916); Avon Old Farms School, Avon (1920s); rehabilitation of the home where Theodore Roosevelt was born, New York City (1923); and several houses and estates. (For a discussion of Theodate Pope Riddle's life and career, see Judith Paine, Theodate Pope Riddle: Her Life and Work (National Park Service, 1979).

4

For an account of the McKim, Mead & White work for John H. Whittemore, see Leland M. Roth, "Three Industrial Towns by McKim, Mead & White," Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians, 38 (December 1979), pp. 317-347.

5

For an account of Swartout's subsequent successful career, see Henry F. Withey and Elsie Rathbun Withey, Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased) (Los Angeles: Hennessy and Ingalls, Inc., 1970, reprint of 1956 ed.), p. 586.

6

Roth, ibid.

7

A "Map Showing Land Acquired by A. A. Pope in Farmington, Conn., Aug. & Sept., 1898 by C. B. Vorge, Engr." indicates that about a dozen parcels making up approximately 200 acres constituted the original property, including land already owned by Theodate Pope Riddle that became part of the estate. Some acreage has been sold off from time to time. Alfred A. Pope also owned other land in Farmington.

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8

For an account of the career of R. F. Jones, see David F. Ransom, Biographical Dictionary of Hartford Architects (Hartford: Connecticut Historical Society, forthcoming).

9

Noted as item #232, 1898, in University of Lowell Warren H. Manning Collection Client List. Manning was a disciple of Frederick Law Olsted. Among his many prestigious commissions are work for the Chicago and Buffalo World's fairs, for Princeton and Cornell universities, and for Rockefeller, McCormick, and Seiberling country estates. For an account of Manning's life and career, see New York Times, 6 February 1938, II, 9:1.

10

Beatrice Cadwalader Jones Farrand was the only woman charter member of the American Society of Landscape Architects (1899). (Dictionary of American Biography, Supplement Six [New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1980], pp. 196-197.) Records of her work at Hill-Stead, undated, are at the University of California, Berkeley.

11

Ned was Arthur Pope (1880-1974), later Professor of Art at Harvard University. His portrait of Alfred A. Pope hangs in the dining room at Hill-Stead.

12

Quoted in Helen Hall, Hill-Stead Museum guide (Farmington: Hill-Stead Museum, 1988), p. 41.

13. The Tub has been called "a matchless drawing of the human figure and an example of superlative design and luminous atmosphere" by Harold Haydon in Great Art Treasures in America's Smaller Museums (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1967), p. 17.

14

Since 1946, loans by Hill-Stead have been prohibited by the terms of the will of Theodate Pope Riddle.

15

Cassatt was unable to infuse Theodate with an interest in art. The Hill-Stead architecture was Theodate's, but the art was her father's.

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16

Ann Havemeyer, great-granddaughter of H. O. and Louisine Havemeyer, interview, 1 September 1990.

17

Henry James, The American Scene (New York: 1907), quoted in Helen Hall, Hill-Stead Museum guide (Farmington: Hill-Stead Museum, 1988), p. 2.

18

This assessment of Hill-Stead was made by its curator of collections, Shepherd M. Holcombe, Jr., 31 August 1990.

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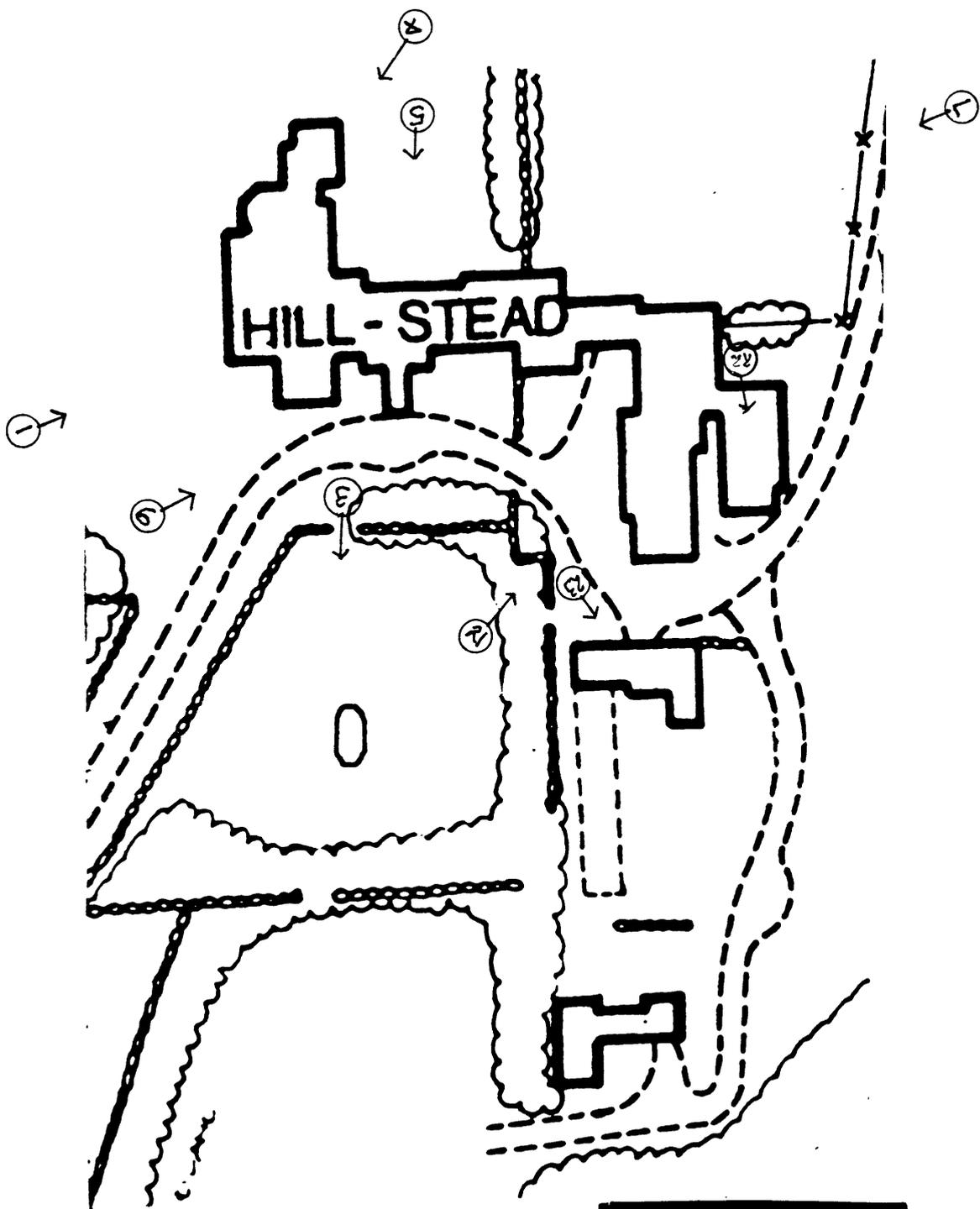
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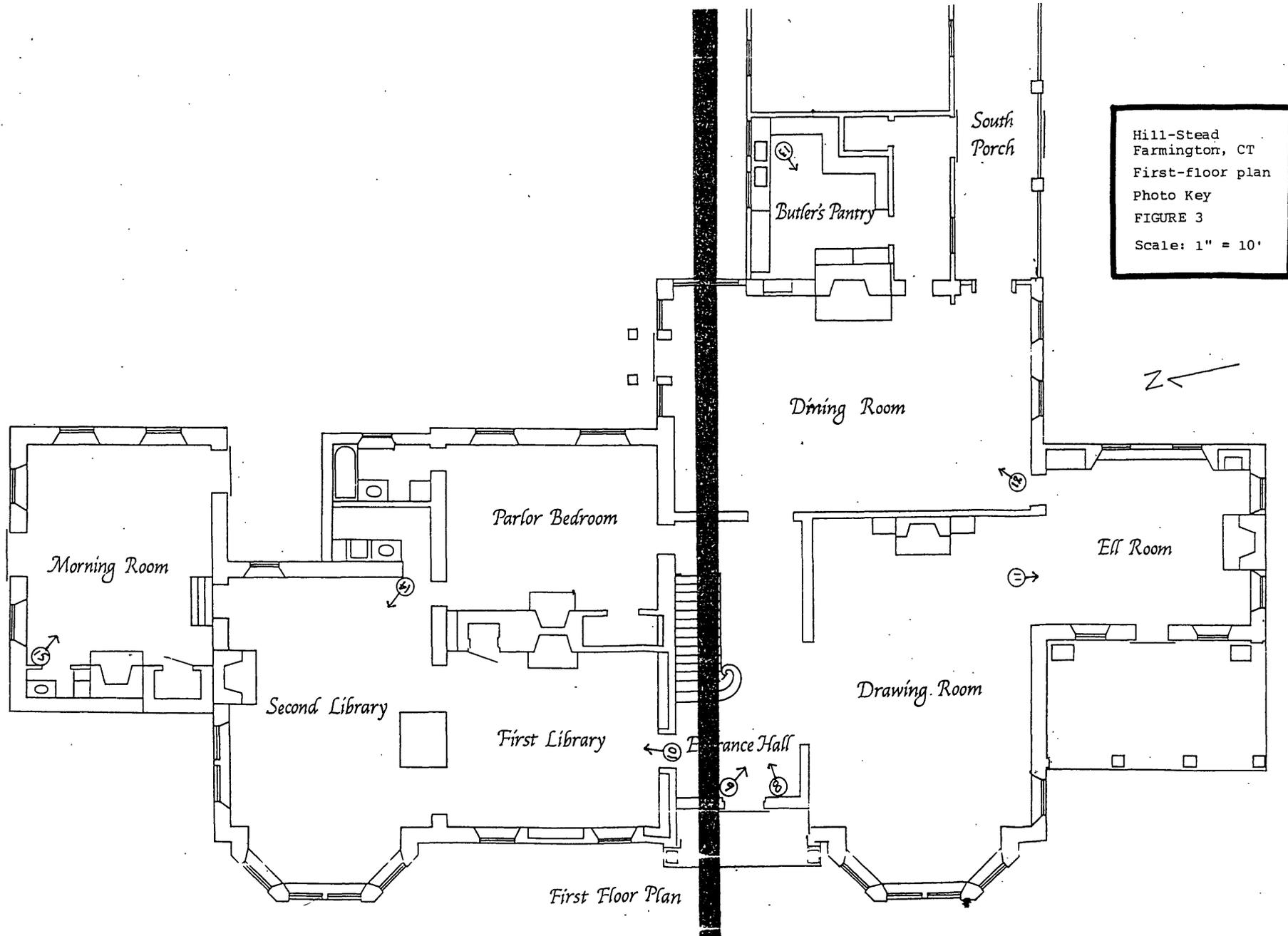
Geographical Data

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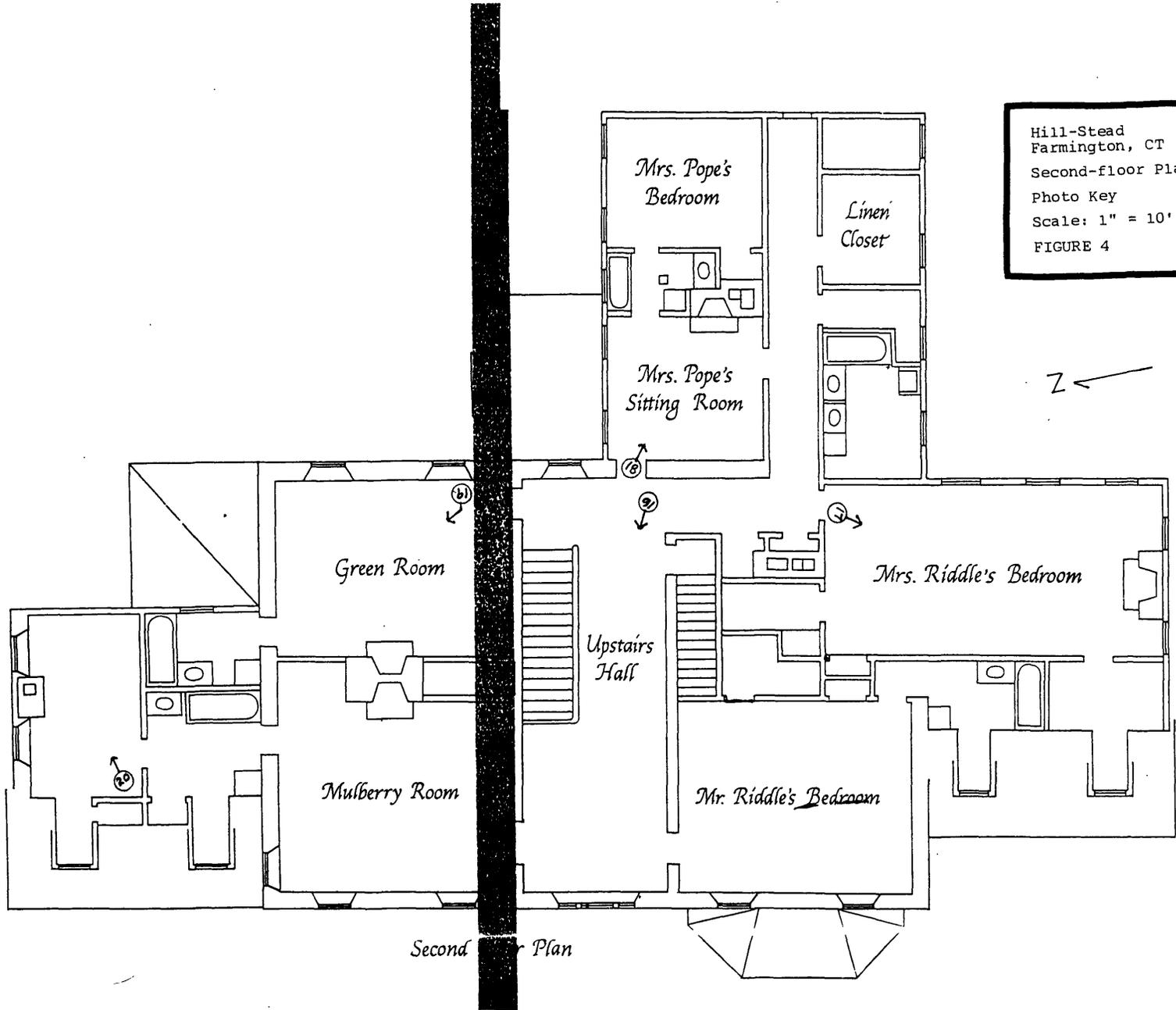
Hill-Stead
 Farmington, CT
Site Plan
Photo Key
 FIGURE 1A



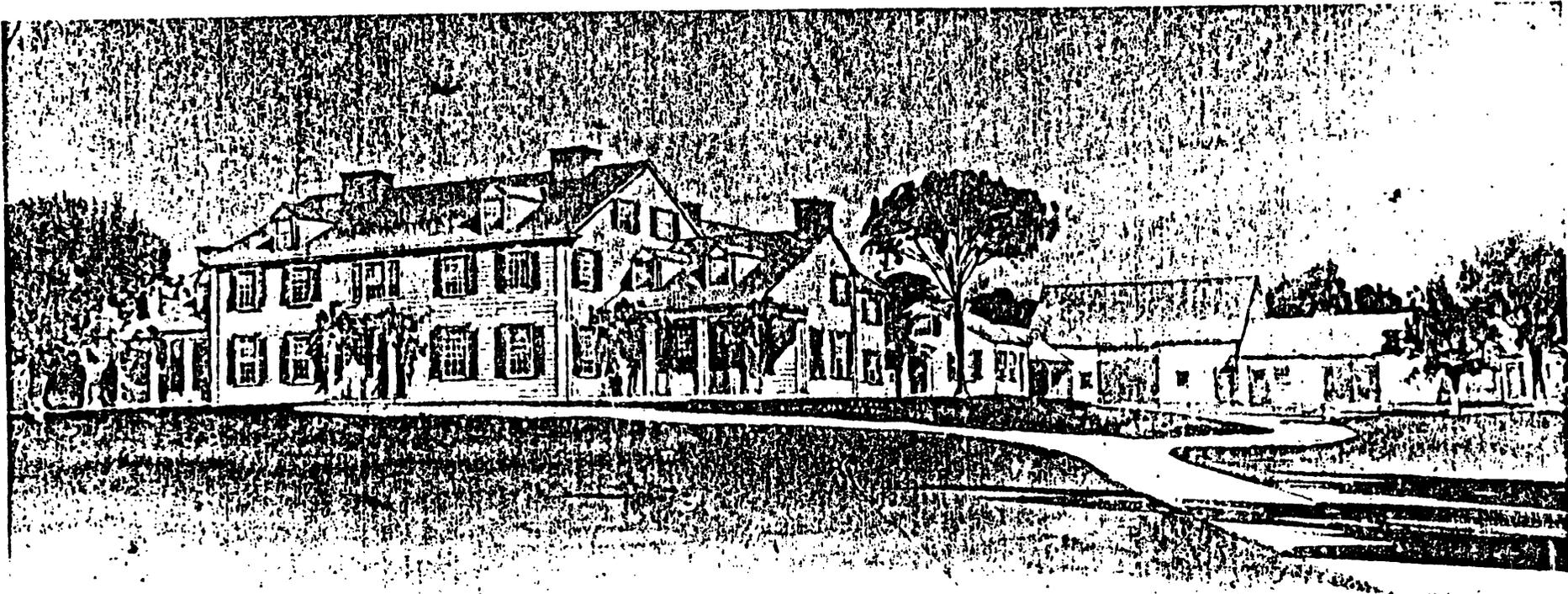
Hill-Stead
 Farmington, CT
 First-floor plan
 Photo Key
 FIGURE 3
 Scale: 1" = 10'

First Floor Plan

Hill-Stead
Farmington, CT
Second-floor Plan
Photo Key
Scale: 1" = 10'
FIGURE 4



Second Floor Plan



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Early Perspective
Original at Hill-
Stead

FIGURE 5