1. NAME

COMMON: Nathaniel Backus House

AND/OR HISTORIC: 

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER: 44 Rockwell Street
CITY OR TOWN: Norwich
STATE: Connecticut

3. CLASSIFICATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY (Check One)</th>
<th>OWNERSHIP</th>
<th>STATUS</th>
<th>ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>District</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>In Process</td>
<td>Yes: Occupied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Being Considered</td>
<td>Unoccupied</td>
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<tr>
<td>Structure</td>
<td>Both</td>
<td>Preservation work in progress</td>
<td>No</td>
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</table>

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Agricultural
- Commercial
- Educational
- Entertainment
- Government
- Industrial
- Military
- Private Residence
- Religious
- Park
- Museum
- Scientific
- Transportation
- Other (Specify)

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME: Faith Trumbull Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution

STREET AND NUMBER: 
CITY OR TOWN: Norwich
STATE: Connecticut

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC: City Hall
STREET AND NUMBER: 
CITY OR TOWN: Norwich
STATE: Connecticut

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY: Connecticut Historic Structures and Landmarks Survey
DATE OF SURVEY: 1968
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Connecticut Historical Commission
STREET AND NUMBER: 75 Elm Street
CITY OR TOWN: Hartford
STATE: Connecticut
Originally this clapboarded structure stood in the center of Norwich on lower Broadway. It now stands on property owned by the Daughters of the American Revolution and it is a museum.

The house is a sparkling and individualized example of Greek Revival architecture. It is painted white and is placed with gable end to the street. Its front entrance is located to the south side of its three bay facade. The eaves cornice which is decorated with mutules is carried across the gable ends of the building. This cornice together with the cornice of the shallow sloped roof creates a pediment which encloses an elliptical window with muntins in rising sun pattern.

The panelled door, which according to tradition is original, is enclosed in a rectangular frame of side lights and engaged Ionic columns supporting an entablature and an overdoor light, while all this is framed by fluted moldings with rosettes enclosed in squares at the level of the intersection of the entablature with the moldings and at the corners of the upper limits of the door frame. The entablature directly above the door contains a cushion frieze above which is a band of egg and dart molding which continues in the trim above the overdoor light. A tiny break in the center of the fluting of the door frame suggests a keystone.

The very slight projection of the plain window frames from the clapboarded exterior gives the building a forthright plainness despite its elaborate door. The sash is six over six panes. The foundation is stone as are the broad steps at front and rear of the building. There are two chimneys, both the product of later additions and alterations on northeast and southwest sides of the house most probably with respect to window and door openings there.

DAR investigations have shown the date of the original house to be 1750. That this building was originally a colonial house is evident in the width of the cornice and the proximity of the windows to it, as well as the absence of pilasters from the corners of the structure. When this building was altered to its present Greek Revival form alterations in the positions of the windows and the elimination of a central door must have occurred. Further investigation would undoubtedly reveal additional changes in the interior, including changes in the position of the fireplaces and their chimney connections.
6. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)
☐ Pre-Columbian
☐ 16th Century
☒ 18th Century
☐ 15th Century
☐ 17th Century
☐ 19th Century
☐ 20th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1750 with 19th century alterations

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)
☐ Aboriginal  ☒ Prehistoric
☐ Historic
☐ Agriculture
☒ Architecture
☐ Art
☐ Commerce
☐ Communications
☐ Conservation
☐ Education
☐ Engineering
☐ Industry
☐ Invention
☐ Landscape
☐ Literature
☐ Military
☐ Music
☐ Political
☐ Religion/Philosophy
☐ Science
☐ Sculpture
☐ Social/Humanitarian
☐ Theater
☐ Transportation
☐ Urban Planning
☒ Other (Specify)
☐ Local history

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

This building has historical and aesthetic interest which justifies its nomination to the National Register. It was built by Nathaniel Backus who was a descendent of two of the founders of the town (William Backus and William Backus, Jr.). Nathaniel was born on April 5, 1704. In 1726 he married Hannah Baldwin and they had seven children. According to record, Nathaniel Backus was one of the six men in Norwich who owned their own carriages prior to the Revolutionary War.

The house is a fine and beautifully maintained example of Greek Revival domestic architecture. It stands in a quiet suburban area where most of the structures excepting the John A. Rockwell house (1818) next to it were built at a later period. The simplicity of the Backus house contrasts pleasantly with the verandahs and asymmetric forms of the surrounding buildings. A plaque on the doorway of the house commemorates the original owner who was one of the most substantial citizens of the town prior to the revolution.
### 9. Major Bibliographical References


### 10. Geographical Data

**Latitude and Longitude Coordinates Defining a Rectangle Locating the Property**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CORNER</th>
<th>LATITUDE</th>
<th>LONGITUDE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<tr>
<td>SW</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Approximate Acreage of Nominated Property:** 2

### 11. Form Prepared By

**Name and Title:**

Constance Luyster, Administrative Trainee

**Organization:**

Connecticut Historical Commission

**Street and Number:**

75 Elm Street

**City or Town:**

Hartford

### 12. State Liaison Officer Certification

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

- National [ ]
- State [ ]
- Local [X]

**Name:**

[Signature]

**Title:**

Chairman State Historical Commission

**Date:**

[Signature]  

**State Liaison Officer Certification**

**National Register Verification**

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

**Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation**

[Signature]  

**Date:**

[Signature]  

**ATTEST:**

[Signature]  

**Date:**

AUG 26 1970
BACKUS HSE
Latitude 41° 32' 04"
Longitude 72° 4' 42"

Gales Ferry 6.6 Mi.
GROTON II MI.

SCALE 1:24000

1 MILE

1000 2000 3000 4000 5000 6000 7000 FEET

1 KILOMETER

CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET
DATUM IS MEAN SEA LEVEL

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, WASHINGTON, D.C. 20242
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

THAMES
RIVER

(UNCASVILLE)
6566 N E

N

JUL 5 1979
NATIONAL REGISTER