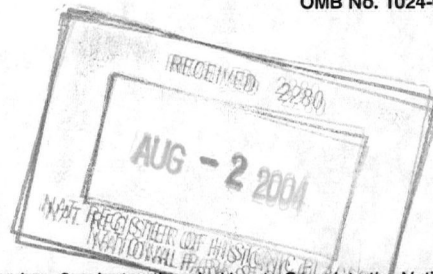


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Straight, Elisha, House

other names/site number Hartford Museum and Civil War Enlistment Center

2. Location

street & number 55 Main Street (CR 23)  not for publication

city or town Hartford  vicinity

state New York code NY county Washington code 115 zip code 12838

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally.  See continuation sheet for additional comments.

*[Signature]*  
Commissioner/SHPO  
Signature of certifying official/Title

7/5/04  
Date

New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation  
State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of certifying official/Title \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

4. 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]*  
Signature of the Keeper Edson H. Beall Date of Action 9/15/04

Elisha Straight House

Name of Property

Washington County, New York

County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

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

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

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

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
2		Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic / single dwelling

Commerce / professional

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Recreation / museum

Recreation / museum

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Colonial (New England) / Federal house

Greek Revival annex

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Field stone / concrete

walls Heavy timber frame / clapboard

roof Slate

other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See continuation sheets

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Continuation Sheet

Elisha Straight House  
Washington County, New York

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**Narrative Description**

The Elisha Straight House is located in the northwest quadrant of the village of Hartford, previously referred to as North Hartford in Washington County in New York State. It sits 20 feet back from the road and is approximately the tenth house on the west side of Main Street (CR 23) north of the "four corners." The property associated with the house is less than one acre and is bordered on the north by the Reynolds/Weer House and on the south by the old Methodist parsonage, which was moved to this site in the 1930s. To the west, the property includes a small yard that ends with a sharp rise of a hill. To the east, the property is terminated by Main Street (CR 23). Directly across Main Street is the Hartford Baptist Church and cemetery recently listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Resources included in the nominated property consist of the main house and the southwest annex building, which served as the local enlistment center during the Civil War. The house is built in the New England Colonial style and was erected at the latest in the early 1800s exhibiting architectural characteristics typical of the Federal period. The house consists of a gabled roof with the ridge oriented parallel to the front of the house and the road, a central chimney, a few remaining six-over-six wood sash windows and wood weatherboard or clapboard siding. The house began as a typical one-room Colonial plan with the front door opening into a small vestibule with a steep staircase crowded up against an immense chimney and the main room, or "keeping room" located to the north and measuring approximately 14 feet by 20 feet. It would have originally had a fireplace of cavernous size set into the huge chimney mass around which most household tasks would have revolved. Originally, the narrow staircase led to one large sleeping room upstairs under the sloping rafters in this 1-1/2 story house. This was the simplest and the earliest type of colonial house built in New England and remained common of smaller, poorer dwellings in that region throughout the century.

As was often typical of homes of early Colonial settlers, this one-room plan was later enlarged to the south with a parlor and two additional sleeping rooms. A kitchen ell off the rear (west) was also added some time shortly after the parlor addition. The kitchen addition is similar to typical "lean-to" additions of this period with the exception that the west slope of the roof was raised to accommodate a deeper addition, rather than continuing the slope in the more common "saltbox" fashion. It is believed that the annex adjacent to the southwest corner of the house was built in the 1830s. This structure was built in the Greek Revival style with a front-facing pedimented gable, articulated frieze, central doorway and symmetrically placed window openings. This building has an attic and a partially exposed cellar and is clad in weatherboard siding.

**Main House**

Built in the first decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (c. 1810), the Elisha Straight House was originally built as a square 1-1/2 story building constructed with heavy timber framing, dry laid field stone foundations and a wood shingled roof. The sleeping niche, the south parlor and sleeping rooms and closet located to the rear of the keeping room were all new spaces provided with the enlargement of the simple house shortly after the town's settlement and the house's original construction. Today the building measures 38½ feet across the front (east) elevation and is 20 feet deep. The lean-to addition off the west elevation added another 12½ feet in depth and 34½ feet in length across the rear of the main building. The addition of the kitchen in the early 1830s nearly doubled the depth of the original house. Instead of creating an extension of the roofline over the new addition to create a "salt box" appearance typical in New England, the west slope of the main roof was altered and lifted to a shallower pitch. This allowed for a deeper addition and a higher eave at the west wall. The northwest corner of the original house reflects this change where there is a recessed portion of the original rear wall and the original eave soffit. The change is also discernible upon inspection of the attic space above the kitchen. It is evident that the original plate on the west side of the house was raised approximately five feet to support both the raised rafters of the main house and the rafter extensions for the kitchen roof. Much of the timber in this attic space has been reused. Inspection of the east attic space of the second floor also confirms the assumption that the south parlor was added to the original house. There is a recognizable difference in the roof rafters to the north of the chimney and those to the south of the chimney location. Those to the north are larger, hand hewn and still contain tree bark, while those to the east appear smaller and have a rough sawn finish. At the cellar level, the materials also offer clues to the evolution of the building. There is a small cellar under the main house located at the southwest corner. The cellar is accessed by

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Washington County, New York

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a narrow staircase in the southwest corner of the area referred to as the mudroom. The basement is no bigger than 12 feet wide and 18 feet deep running under the mudroom portion of the kitchen ell and part of the south parlor and sleeping rooms. In the cellar one can see two separate sills, one for the kitchen ell and one for the main house. This confirms that the kitchen ell was constructed after the south parlor was added. There is a crawl space beneath the rest of the house. There is access into the crawl space located on the west wall of the kitchen ell. Through this opening, one is able to see again the two sills of the main house and the kitchen addition and the differences in how the floor was framed. In the main house there are large log joists where just the top portion is hewn flat and the ends are carved into tenons to fit into joist pockets of the sills. In the kitchen, the floor is framed with much thinner joists which are sawn on all four sides. There is a cellar girt that runs parallel to the side walls in front of the chimney mass and looks like it originally would have helped support the chimney hearth. Although the chimney has been greatly altered above grade, there is a large field stone chimney foundation visible within the crawl space. It confirms the assumption that originally there was a much larger central fireplace than what exists today. The wall construction provides other evidence to help understand the evolution of the building. The exterior walls along the north and east sides of the keeping room appear to be constructed of vertical planks on which hand split lath was attached and a plaster finish applied. On the exterior, horizontal clapboard siding was attached. The total thickness of the wall measures approximately 3 inches between the framing posts. This is in contrast to the exterior walls at the kitchen and the south parlor and sleeping rooms. The walls at these locations appear to be constructed with wood studs, vertical plank sheathing and lath and plaster applied to the studs with clapboards attached on the exterior to the studs and sheathing. The result is a thicker wall dimension measuring approximately 6 inches.

The kitchen addition and the change to the roof likely occurred in the early 1830s during a time of prosperity in Hartford, while the south parlor addition likely happened prior to this period perhaps as the family became settled and grew. The changes seen in conjunction with the kitchen addition also correspond with the changes in architectural styles and features. The Greek Revival details such as the cornice returns and the white paint were most likely added at this time.

#### Floor Plans

The building was originally built with the typical one-room Colonial plan consisting simply of a front door opening into a small vestibule, in those days called the "porch" with a steep winding staircase crowded up against an immense chimney. A door on the north wall of the vestibule led into the main room often referred to as the "hall" or "keeping room" because it was a combination living-dining-cooking room of ample size. At the Straight House this room currently measures roughly 14 feet wide by 15 feet deep with a small sleeping niche off the northwest corner of the room and the fireplace located on the south wall. The original large fireplace has long since been changed to consist simply of a mantel with no hearth or open fireplace behind it. Instead there is simply a cast iron stove set in front of the fireplace. This aptly reflects the major change that was seen with regard to the function of the fireplace from a means for cooking and household tasks to solely providing an efficient means of heat. To the south of the front vestibule is a more formal room referred to as the parlor measuring 11 feet wide by 19 feet deep. It was common in Colonial times for the parlor to be added as a second unit to a previously built one-room house, although when families could afford it, both units were built at the same time resulting in the typical Colonial plan with central chimney. It is possible that for the short time before the kitchen was added, the parlor also had a large fireplace set into the back of the large central chimney mass. To the south of the parlor are two small rooms, presumably used as sleeping chambers or birthing rooms. It was typical for downstairs sleeping rooms to be added to the warm side (south) of an addition.

The vestibule currently consists of a straight run of stairs. There is evidence that the original narrow winding staircase which would have been located between the front door and the chimney mass, was later altered and replaced with the current straight run stairs. The early stair would have three or four winding steps framed into a stout newel post around which they ascended, then a short straight run of steep pitch, and more winders at the top to bring the flight into the small upper hall. There would have been an open handrail and simple square balusters or sawn flat boards made to look like lathe-turned balusters. At the second floor there would have been a narrow landing enclosed with the open handrail and balusters. The staircase would have originally led to one large sleeping room upstairs, which was under sloping rafters in a 1-1/2 story house. Currently there are two sleeping rooms separated by a narrow landing

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and the stairs. In a closet west of the existing second floor landing there are floorboards which may have been reused. Three wide plank floorboards have a series of square holes evenly spaced along the edges of the boards. It is likely that these holes are from the original square balusters from the upper landing of the original staircase. This upper landing wouldn't have accommodated full head height clearance, and it is understandable why the building occupants later altered the staircase when the house was enlarged.

In the early 1830s, the kitchen was added according to the concept of a typical lean-to addition in terms of location and purpose. The one exception was that the full west slope of the roof at this side of the roof was lifted to accommodate a deeper addition and a higher ceiling. The kitchen space measures 34 feet long and 12 feet deep. It appears that the southwest portion of the addition was finished later of lighter plank wall construction. This room, referred to as the mudroom, may have been more of a porch space or cold storage area. Typical with lean-to additions, a fireplace would have been added to the back of the central chimney mass. However, there is no evidence of a fireplace, particularly on the east wall where it would have most likely been located. Within the crawl space below the kitchen there is also no evidence of a chimney mass foundation. It appears that it was after the addition of the kitchen ell that the main chimney mass was altered to allow for a major alteration of the main staircase. It is possible that wood or coal burning stoves were introduced to all the main rooms at this point and that the chimney was reduced in size since it then only served stove pipes. There are no stone hearths or platforms remaining on which these stoves would have sat, however the portion of the chimney stack which exists at the second floor landing, while in deteriorated state, has holes on either side for stovepipes. There is an area of roofing on the back slope of the kitchen where it is possible a stovepipe penetrated, but which has since been removed and patched. When the west slope of the roof was raised, two full height bedrooms were created towards the rear of the second floor. It is presumably at this time that a new staircase was constructed to access these rooms. There are currently two sets of stairs that provide access to the second floor. One staircase leads from the kitchen to the central hall landing beside the chimney. This stair has been floored over and is no longer used. It is possible that the square baluster holes in the floorboards in this location correspond to a previous open handrail for this staircase. The other staircase is the one currently used from the front vestibule to access the second floor. It ascends from the east to the west with a landing at roughly the new center of the house. There are no newel posts, balusters or stair details which allow the dating of this staircase. The only method of dating this staircase is the fact that it couldn't have been constructed until after the dismantling of the main fireplace mass and subsequently the conversion to stoves for heating. It is possible that the kitchen stairs could have existed while the fireplace was intact, thus pre-dating the current staircase. The original narrow winder stair was likely not removed until it was replaced with this straight-run staircase from the kitchen.

Foundations and cellar

The building rests on a dry laid field stone foundation with a cellar under the southwest portion of the house, which is referred to as the mudroom. There is no cellar space under the keeping room, the vestibule, or the kitchen. The foundation walls on the north elevation and where exposed more than three feet are supplemented or reinforced with poured concrete on the exterior. The foundation walls are more than 1½ feet thick with the addition of the concrete. From the crawl space under the north side of the house, the main fireplace and the location of the hearth can be seen. The chimney mass is supported by a dry laid field stone foundation. A narrow staircase located in the southwest corner of the mudroom provides access to the cellar. The floor of the cellar is dirt and the floor to ceiling height is roughly between five and six feet. The cellar walls are roughly pointed with various layers of concrete with a high Portland cement content. This space was undoubtedly meant for storage of vegetables and other food supplies. It currently houses the no longer functional mechanical equipment consisting of a hot water heater and a water pump, as well as water supply and sewer drainage pipes. On the exterior, the foundation is hardly visible on the east and south since the house is set low on the ground. On the north and west the grade drops away and the foundation is exposed. It is on these elevations that the field stone foundation has been covered with concrete.

Structural framing

The building is constructed with heavy hand-hewn timbers. The timber appears to be massive oak timbers and the joints throughout tend to consist of mortise and tenon, with round wood pegs or treenails running through the joints to secure them. The roof is currently clad with slate on the east and with standing seam metal on the west slope, however on the east slope earlier wood shingles exist under

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the slate. The use of slate may date to the 1880s when nearby Granville slate quarries opened and the material and skilled labor were readily available.

There are visible corner posts, which aid in understanding the evolution of the house. There are exposed posts in the northeast and southeast corners of the keeping room, as well as visible in the vestibule due to the thin wall dimensions. There is one post in the northwest corner of the sleeping niche and one wide post in the middle closet space between the keeping room and the kitchen. Lastly, there is one post on the southwest corner of the abandoned staircase leading from the kitchen. These six posts would have made up the main framing members of the original house, with other corner posts carrying the end girts and front and rear plates, while the intermediate posts would have carried the chimney girt. Because the original house was small and only 1½ stories, there is no summer beam spanning the middle as an intermediate support for the floor joists above. The ceiling joists run from front plate to the rear plate in an east-west direction and are spaced roughly 20 inches apart. The clapboards are thin wedge-shaped boards with a 5 ¾ inch exposure. They are longer than 4 – 6 feet length suggesting that they are not original but rather were changed during later alterations. They are fastened by hand-forged nails with large flat heads.

#### Finishes

The Straight house retains much of its original or early finishes. The floors on the first floor are wide plank boards with a painted finish. The walls are generally finished with a rough plaster with painted wood trim consisting of simple baseboards, chair rails, and window and door surrounds. The ceilings are finished with lath and plaster instead of exposed beams, joists and second story floorboards. There is a simple wood mantle in the keeping room set flush with the plaster surface and which likely dates to after the construction of the kitchen. The majority of the doors are vertical plank doors braced with horizontal battens with hand-forged nails and wrought-iron thumb latch hardware. Most have newer butt hinges, instead of strap hinges. The windows, with the exception of the two windows in the attic over the kitchen, have all been altered and replaced with 20<sup>th</sup> century one-over-one wood sash. The original c. 1830s windows in the kitchen attic space are six-over-six double hung wood sash with pegs.

On the exterior, the window and door architraves are simple flat board casings with a simple canted header with a very slight projection. There is a flat-board frieze and built up cornice at the raking eaves and a shallow soffit and crown molding at the lowers eaves terminating in simple cornice returns. The crown molding, cornice and returns date at the earliest to the 1830s showing the influence of the Greek Revival period.

#### **The Annex**

The building at the southwest corner of the main house appears to have been built in the early 1830s given its Greek Revival details and massing. The building is 1-½ story of timber construction with a front-facing gable roof clad in slate. The framing members tend to be lighter than those found in the main house and the walls are sheathed with vertical planks on which the wood clapboards are attached. There is a simple wood entablature on the front (east) façade with a centered window in the gable end and a centered entryway with flanking six-over-six wood sash. There are broad cornice returns on the west gable end and generous eaves with articulated cornice moldings and fascia board.

On the interior, there is large open room in the front with a door in the northwest corner leading into a small shed addition. It has been suggested that this shed may have originally been for storing wood, but in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century was converted into an attached outhouse. The interior of this space is finished with c. 1920 beaded matchboard, a small square casement window on the south wall and a bench with two privy holes. There is a wide vertical plank door with horizontal battens which lead to this outhouse room from the main room. The west wall has remnants of two layers of wallpaper on the wood planks and posts. In the center of the large room there is a ceiling hatch that provides access to the attic. The attic space is framed with thin roof rafters and ceiling joists. There is split lath and plaster attached to the underside of the ceiling joists. There is no ridge pole or ridge beam to which the roof rafters connect. Instead the roof rafters meet each other in lapped mortise and tenon joint secured with a wood peg. There is a perceptible sag in the roof from the exterior and on the interior in the attic, there is evidence of recent attempts to try and supplement the load capacity of the

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rafters. The cause of the sagging is possibly the fact that the building was originally roofed with wood shingles instead of the heavier slate tiles which exist today. From within the attic space the presence of wood roofing shingles can be seen at spaces between decking boards. There are 6-light wood windows at both gable ends providing light into the attic space. On the south wall, there is an area of patched clapboard siding that may have been the location of a stove chimney pipe in order to heat the building.

The building sits on a field stone foundation with a partially exposed cellar where the grade pitches away from the building at the west. Like the main house, the foundation walls have been reinforced with poured concrete on the exterior. There is an exterior door to the cellar on the west elevation. On the interior the cellar has a dirt floor and the head height graduates from the east where there is only a crawl space to the west where the grade slopes away providing at least 6 feet of clearance within the cellar space. On the interior where accessible, the stone foundation walls have also be reinforced with poured concrete. The visible framing consists of large log floor joists and several timbers which appear to have been reused.

Both buildings are in good condition and retain much of the architectural elements dating to the between the 1830 and 1860s. The period between 1812 and 1830 as well as the time just after the Civil War are noted as being times of prosperity for the Town of Hartford. These periods of prosperity are also reflected in the changes or alterations noted in the two buildings. While likely having modest beginnings, the house was obviously enlarged to house persons of middle class means. The construction of the annex as a mill or carpentry shop suggests the means to advance in commerce to keep up with the growing demand for such a trade. Although the main house remained a residence until the last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, there were not substantial changes or alterations made in the last century with the exception of the minor introduction of electrical and heating systems. This is fortunate in that it allows us to better understand the property's beginnings, as a home for early settlers in Washington County.

Elisha Straight House

Name of Property

Washington County, New York

County and State

8 Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria considerations

(mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
B removed from its original location.
C a birthplace or grave.
D a cemetery.
E a reconstructed building, object or structure.
F a commemorative property.
G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- X 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 #

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

- Architecture
Exploration/Settlement
Military

Period of Significance

c. 1810 - 1920

Significant Dates

- c.1810 - early settlement of community & construction of original house
1830s - construction of mill shop, improvements to house
1862 - Site used as Civil War enlistment center
1880 - slate roof added
1920 - attached outhouse added to annex building

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

N/A

Primary location of additional data

- X State Historic Preservation Office
X Other State agency
Federal agency
X Local government
University
Other

Name of repository:

Washington County Historical Society
New York State Archives & Library

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**Statement of Significance:**

The Elisha Straight House meets the National Register criterion A for its association with a significant historic event – as one of the first structures built during the early settlement of the town of North Hartford and the use of the annex building at the Civil War enlistment center in 1862 when 65 of the 134 volunteers of Company E, 123<sup>rd</sup> Regiment were enlisted. The Elisha Straight House also meets criterion C in that it embodies distinctive architectural characteristics of early republic / Federal style architecture consistent with the early settlement of the Town. This residential building is a rare surviving example of the modest Colonial New England style of architecture with minimal alterations and provides a glimpse into the methods of construction utilized by the earliest settlers of Washington County.

Built in the early 1800s, the Elisha Straight House is architecturally significant because it is one of the few remaining Federal period structures in Washington County and is one of the earliest and most intact buildings in the town. It is unique in that it demonstrates the architectural preferences the earliest settlers brought from New England in contrast to the Dutch Colonial architecture that dominated the Hudson Valley region and lower New York State. The New England Colonial construction preferences are seen in 1-½ story, central chimney, 2-room plan with lean-to kitchen addition. The annex building built c. 1830 during a time of prosperity, was constructed in the distinctly Greek Revival style and was used as a carpentry shop where Sylvanus Hatch, a well-known local furniture and cabinet maker practiced his craft.

The property has a long-reaching association with U. S. military history. The house was built on land in the present town of Hartford, which had been established as a Provincial patent in the town of Westfield in the County of Charlotte in 1764 granted to 26 veteran officers of the French & Indian War. Charlotte County was renamed Washington County in honor of the first President of the United States after the Revolutionary war. The carpentry shop (annex) adjacent to the house was the site of the Civil War Enlistment Center for Company E of the 123<sup>rd</sup> Regiment of New York State volunteers. It was here that 65 of 134 volunteers of Company E enlisted for the Civil War on August 22, 1862, more than filling the region's enlistment quota. The annex building remains the only Civil War enlistment center still existing in New York State.

**Historic Context:**

Original ownership of the nominated property traces back as far as Elisha Straight. Elisha Straight was born in 1793 and was the youngest of six children of Capt. John and Patience Straight. What constitutes the present town of Hartford had been established in May of 1764 as part of the Provincial Patent in the town of Westfield in the County of Charlotte and granted to 26 commissioned officers of the New York Infantry, veterans of the French & Indian War. What began as 26,000 acres was surveyed and divided into 104 lots of 300 acres by Archibald Campbell. Although the land was granted in 1764, it was not settled until 1777 and then only briefly. Charlotte County was renamed Washington County after the Revolutionary War and true settlement began in 1782 with the majority of early settlers coming from Connecticut and Massachusetts. Unlike the first settlers of the Fort Ann portion of the town or the settlers of the other nearby patents/towns of Kingsbury and Queensbury, who were Dutch and English from lower New York, the initial patentees and subsequent settlers of Hartford were New Englanders. This fact is important in acknowledging that in early Hartford, the ways of governing, religious worship, and cultural roots were all derived from New England ways and traditions. More importantly, it can be seen that the vernacular architecture of pre-Revolutionary War New England was applied to the most of new dwellings and structures built by settlers.

Governor DeWitt Clinton, who owned some of the property rights of the original patentees, was an important factor in the early settlement of Hartford. The land on which the hamlet of North Hartford was eventually built was formerly owned by Governor Clinton. David Austin (b. 1763), who was one of its first settlers, came from Connecticut after the close of the Revolutionary War and was for some time resident agent in the town for the Governor. Austin cleared much land in and about the settlement, which is built mostly on Lot 48 of the Provincial Patent. (See attached map. C. 1866 with lot numbers) Lot 48 was originally granted to Robert

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McGinnis, who was one of the 26 officers granted land through the Provincial Patent in 1764. McGinnis never settled the lots, and instead sold his land which consisted of lot numbers 47, 48, 61 and 87 to Walter Franklin in 1769. It is probable that Franklin then sold lot number 48 and perhaps other land to DeWitt Clinton in the years that preceded the town's establishment in March 1793.

Most of the original patentees who claimed their properties seem to have at once sold them to the settlers. Several tracts of land, particularly one in the east section of the patent, continued in the possession of the heirs of the original holders for many years. The settlers held some of this land subject to long leases and it became known as the Lease Land. Much of the land remained unclaimed and passed in time to the families who had settled it.

By 1793, the patent was sufficiently settled to separate from Westfield as a separate town. This was done on March 23, 1793. The Town was given the name Hartford by Nathaniel Bull for the Hartford Indians (originally from Hartford, Connecticut) who frequented the area. In addition, the adoption of the name was no doubt influenced by the sentimental feelings of most of the settlers whom had come from Connecticut.

Deed research indicates that the Elisha Straight house sits within lot #48, the lot granted to Robert McGinnis as an original patentee. However, each lot consisted of 250 acres when first distributed. The land owned by McGinnis and later by Franklin and perhaps Gov. Clinton must have been divided into smaller lots and sold to settlers. If the Straight house were built in the early 1800s as records and physical evidence suggest, it is presumed that Elisha Straight bought the lot with a house already constructed or that the lot had not yet been developed and the house built later in the 1810s by Elisha Straight.

Elisha Straight and his wife Lydia lived most of their lives in the house with their children. It was the Straights who made most of the alterations, first with the addition of the side rooms and the addition of the kitchen, the subsequent modifications to the main staircase, the second floor rooms, then later with the construction of the annex building. It was the Straights that occupied the house during the Civil War and encouraged the use of the carpentry shop as an enlistment center. At the time of Elisha Straight's death in 1874, he owned both the property consisting of the house and mill shop on Main Street as well as a farm of 130 acres bought from John Bersey on which his eldest son, John, lived and worked. This farm was located in the westerly part of the Town of Hartford. He also owned a wood lot lying easterly of Hartford village in the town of Granville and containing 27 acres. The farm and wooded lot were bequeathed to his son by his will while the house and property on Main Street were left to Elisha's wife, Lydia, and after her death, to his eldest daughter, Betsey Hicks, widow of Henry Hicks, provided she remained with her mother during her lifetime. Lydia Straight died and passed the house onto her daughter Betsey Hicks in December 1889. Betsey Hicks lived in the house until her death in 1891. Betsey Hicks passed the property onto Mary Liddle, daughter of Stephen Reynolds and wife of George Liddle. At her death in May 1928, Mary F. Liddle passed the property onto Nellie M. Lavery. After the death of Nellie Lavery, the property was passed onto Melvin and Doris Duel in 1940. The Duels owned the property until 1977 when it became the Howard Hanna Memorial Museum owned by the Town of Hartford and managed by the Hartford Historical Group.

#### Town Development

The Colonial architecture in each region and of each generation reflects prevalent conditions of climate, materials, building techniques and social organization. But more importantly it was influenced by the historic national traditions of the people settling the new location and by the architectural trends originating in Europe. While dictated by the styles and techniques that were familiar to the individual settlers, simplicity and practicality were the keynotes of Colonial architecture. Building was a direct outgrowth of urgent practical necessities – there was little time or money for elaboration or adornment and thus Colonial houses had very little ornament. Exteriors were frank and honest statements of interior uses and structural necessities. Colonial styles were entirely unpretentious since they were the expression of a pioneer society. As originally built, the Straight house was simple in its detailing and practical in its construction. It most likely began with a modest footprint of one or two rooms. From 1800 to 1821 was a period of change from pioneer to more civilized conditions in the Town of Hartford. During this time the earliest settlers were changing their log cabins or roughly-constructed dwellings into more comfortable frame houses, now that saw mills were at hand to fashion the plentiful supply of

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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Continuation Sheet

Elisha Straight House  
Washington County, New York

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raw lumber into usable form. It was during this time that the Straight house was built conforming to the changes the pioneers were making. The first frame houses were mostly one-story or story and a half structures. The color brown or red were the colors most of the first houses were painted. There is evidence on the main house of the color brown and red beneath the peeling white paint.

The period between 1812 and 1830 was a time of development and increasing prosperity in and around Hartford. It was a time of growth of numerous small industries and a time when everything that could be needed by the inhabitants was being manufactured. Among the local establishments in the settlement of North Hartford, Sylvanus Hatch's cabinet shop was located in the Straight house. Hatch did very fine cabinetwork and it is presumed that the annex building constructed to the southwest of the Straight house was built by him and for his use. The prosperity experienced during this period became tangible as many families began again to enlarge their houses. More two-story structures began to appear, generally being placed in front of the older houses. There also appeared during the later part of this period the welcomed change in heating methods with the introduction of the stove. It is likely that this time period coincided with the major changes seen at the Straight house in addition to the construction of the annex. The kitchen ell was built off the rear (west) elevation, the west slope of the roof was raised and the upstairs rooms enlarged with a new staircase constructed. It is probable that the south rooms off the parlor were also constructed at this time and that the chimney was reduced in size, making way for the new staircase and the use of stoves.

**Property's Role in the Civil War**

In the earliest beginnings of the town of Hartford there was the presence of slaves, yet there was evidence of the rejection of this institution of human bondage here as elsewhere in the North. Through the intervening years, the attacks on slavery grew and the townspeople of Hartford joined in them. When Lincoln deemed war a necessity to enforce federal rights within the Confederacy, the town of Hartford was loyally ready for all that might happen. On receipt of news of the attack on Fort Sumter and the subsequent call from the President for volunteers, the first war meeting was held in the Baptist Church in Hartford on April 25, 1861. Resolutions were adopted commending the action of the Government and urging efforts to secure enlistments. As a visible emblem of inward patriotism and support, the flag was raised and a committee named to obtain subscriptions for the support of the families of any volunteers. Elisha Straight was one of seven local town leaders named to this committee. In 1861, there were formed several regiments, in which a number of the young men of Hartford enlisted. Following the disasters of 1862 for the Union forces, particularly after McClennan's campaign before Richmond in June and July of 1862, the country became aware that a mighty effort must be put forward to save its cause. Northern patriotism was sweeping through the countryside with the resounding cry "To arms!" President Lincoln issued a call for 300,000 volunteers. In response to this call several war meetings were held, and the back annex of Elisha Straight's home was used as the recruiting station. The 123<sup>rd</sup> Regiment, Company E was made up of 65 men from Hartford and 69 men from Hebron. This was more than enough to fill the quota for one company, so when the men reached Salem, Capt. Norman F. Weer selected the best men, and the balance was transferred to the other companies. On their march down the street to Salem, they were stopped in front of the little green where a Civil War monument now stands, to be blessed by the prayer of "Grandma" Morrison. They arrived in Salem and joined the regiment as the fifth company to be mustered in on August 23<sup>rd</sup> of 1862.

The 123<sup>rd</sup> Regiment experienced its first combat in April 1863 after crossing at Kelly's Ford and Rapidan at Germanic Hills, where when marching on the Fredericksburg plank road until 10 o'clock they were fired upon by a division of rebel cavalry operating a battery. Under the commands of superior officers they marched into the indescribable confusion and ordeal of a great battle of two day's duration, in which part of the time the Union forces fought without leadership, as General Hooker lay unconscious from a cannonball. In the battle of Chancellorsville, the 123<sup>rd</sup> regiment met with heavy casualties, nearly a hundred men being wounded and 50 killed. Company E lost two of its number (Byron Briggs & James Allen) and had four among the wounded (Capt. Norman Weer, Dennis Baker, Joseph Tellier and Sydney Weer). The 123<sup>rd</sup> Regiment marched for three years over more than 3,000 miles and took an honorable part in five great campaigns of the war, before the welcome news of Lee's surrender came on April 12<sup>th</sup> 1865 as they traveled northward toward Richmond. The next day they pushed onto the vicinity of Raleigh and remained there until the surrender of Johnston. They moved northward with lightened and carefree hearts to Washington where they took part in the Grand Review before President Johnson and General Grant on the 24<sup>th</sup> of May. They were mustered out of service and started their way home on the 8th of

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Elisha Straight House  
Washington County, New York

Section number 8 Page 4

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June, 1865. Today a state historical reference plaque sits in the front yard before the Annex and commemorates the gathering of the enlisted volunteers. It reads:

“65 OF 134 CIVIL WAR VETERANS  
ENLISTED HERE IN  
CO. E. 123 REGT. N.Y.S. VOL.  
AUG. 22, 1862”

The post-Civil War era had brought a sudden increase of wealth to the north region and farming paid off as never before or since. It was a period when the expansion of business and speculation in all lines of endeavor started. It was primarily the era of the potato and on the rich soils of Hartford and vicinity many farmers and produce dealers made comfortable fortunes and land values steadily increased. It was during this period that Elisha Straight was retired and conveyed parcels of land from his original lot to the Hartford Baptist Church and to Jane Merrill, to whom he conveyed 1.3 acres. Elisha Straight died in 1874, and the house remains much as it had been throughout his life. The house, annex and much of its remaining 1.3 acres maintains substantial architectural integrity today and is an important historical property in the Town of Hartford. Essentially the Straight House and Annex stand as they did when the 65 enlisted men of Company E of the 123<sup>rd</sup> Regiment of New York State volunteers left on their march to Salem in August of 1862. Its architecture and setting tells the important story of how hardworking citizens of rural New York played a significant role in the social history and development of the region and state and in the military history of the nation.

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National Park Service

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Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 1

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Elisha Straight House  
Name of Property

Washington County, New York  
County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of property** less than one acre

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	18	630150	4802360	3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2				4			

See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

The nominated property is identified on the attached tax map. The boundaries begin at a point in the westerly bounds of Main Street in said Town of Hartford where the line of lands the old Straight property meet the line of lands formerly of Florence W. Bardin, then in a generally westerly direction along the division a distance of approximately 92 feet to an iron pipe placed in the ground; then in a southerly direction on a line generally parallel to Main Street, a distance of 70 feet to another iron pipe placed in the ground; then in an easterly direction perpendicular to Main Street a distance of 92 feet to an iron pipe placed in the ground in the westerly bounds of Main Street, then finally in a northerly direction along the western bounds of Main Street a distance of 70 feet to the beginning point. One this parcel is situated the old enlistment center and adjacent house.

**Boundary Justification**

The boundaries of the nominated property are consistent with those historically associated with the Elisha Straight House.

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Kimberly Konrad Alvarez, Preservation Consultant (Ed. By L. Garofalini, NYSOPRHP/518-237-8643 ext. 3267)  
Organization Landmark Consulting Date January 6, 2004  
street & number 83 Grove Avenue telephone 518-458-8942  
city or town Albany state New York zip code 12208

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps**

- A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

**Additional items**

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

**Property Owner**

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

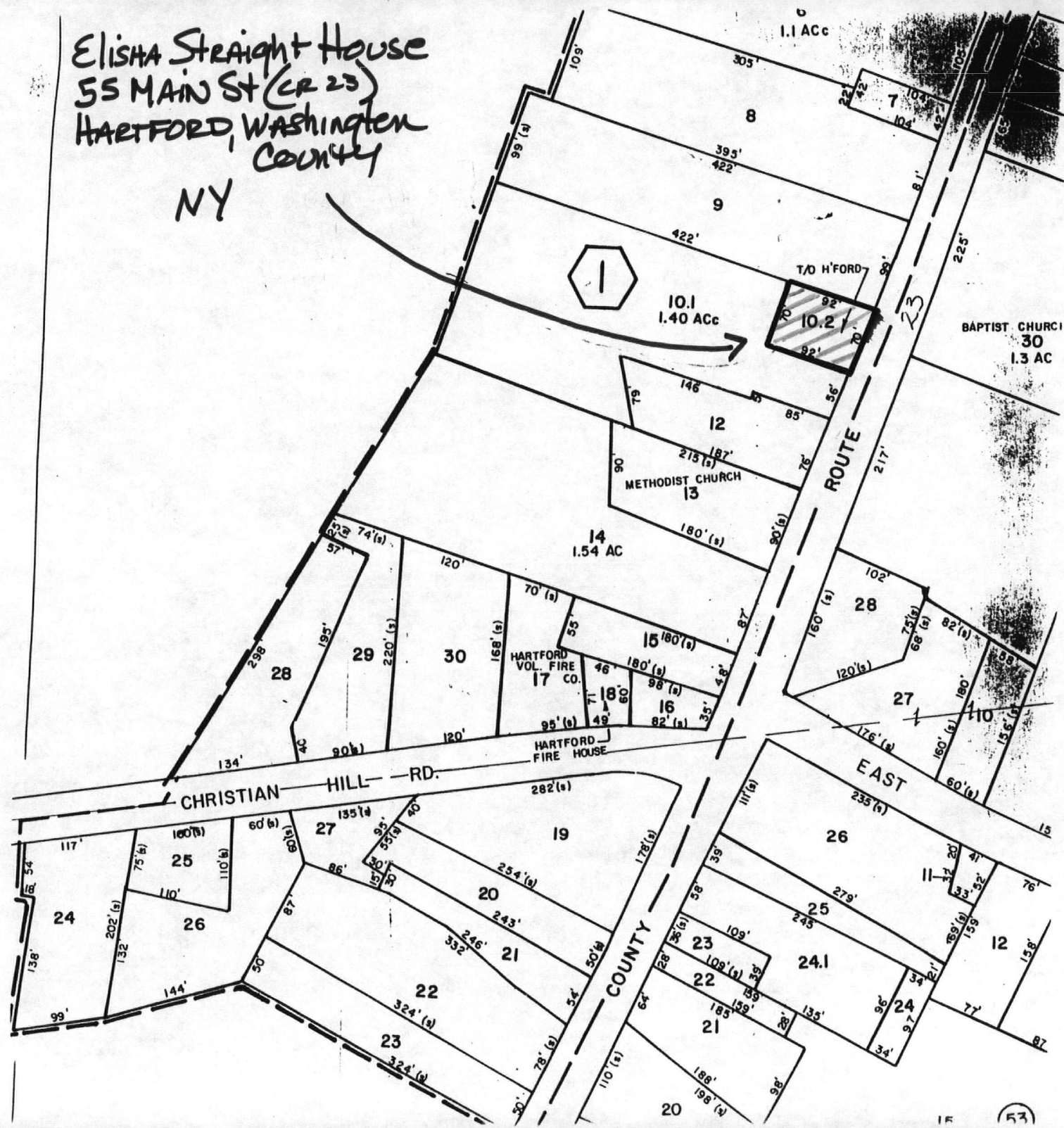
name Town of Hartford  
street & number 165 County Route 23, P.O. Box 214 telephone 518-632-9151  
city or town Hartford state New York zip code 12838

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.470 *et seq.*)

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

Elisha Straight House  
55 MAIN ST (CR 23)  
HARTFORD, WASHINGTON  
COUNTY

NY



TOWN OF HARTFORD TAX MAP

#132.15-1-10.2

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Straight, Elisha, House

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: NEW YORK, Washington

DATE RECEIVED: 8/02/04      DATE OF PENDING LIST: 8/26/04  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 9/10/04      DATE OF 45TH DAY: 9/15/04  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 04000986

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N    DATA PROBLEM: N    LANDSCAPE: N    LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N  
OTHER: N    PDIL: N    PERIOD: N    PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N  
REQUEST: N    SAMPLE: N    SLR DRAFT: N    NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT     RETURN     REJECT    9/15/04 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in the  
National Register

RECOM./CRITERIA \_\_\_\_\_

REVIEWER \_\_\_\_\_ DISCIPLINE \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



Elisha Straight House

55 MAIN ST. (CR 23)

HARTFORD, WASHINGTON COUNTY,

NY

PHOTO: K. KONRAD ALVAREZ, 2004

NORTH (SIDE) + EAST (FRONT) ELEVATIONS



Elisha Straight House

55 MAIN ST (CR 23)

Hartford, Washington County, NY

PHOTO: K. KENNEDY ALVAREZ, 2004

REAR (WEST) ELEVATION



Elisha Straight House

55 MAIN ST. (CR 23)

HARTFORD, WASHINGTON COUNTY, NY

PHOTO: K. KONRAD ALVAREZ, 2004

MAIN HOUSE INTERIOR - N/E FRONT  
ROOM



Elisha Straight House

55 Main St. (C223)

Hartford, Washington County, NY

Photo: K. Konrad Alvarez, 2004

INTERIOR - ANNEX) CIVIL WAR  
ENLISTMENT  
CENTER



~~120~~ Elisha Straight House  
55 MAIN St. (CR23)  
HARTFORD, Washington County  
NY

PHOTO: K. KONRAD ALVAREZ, 2004

MAIN HOUSE - N/E FRONT ROOM



Elisha Straight House

55 MAIN ST. (CR 23)

HARTFORD, WASHINGTON COUNTY

114

PHOTO: K. KONEAD ALVAREZ, 2004

MAIN HOUSE - S/E FRONT ROOM



Elisha Straight House

55 MAIN St (CR 23)

HARTFORD, Washington County, NY

PHOTO: K. KONRAD ALVAREZ, 2004

ANNEX/ENLISTMENT CENTER

EAST ELEVATION



Elisha Straight House  
55 MAIN St. (CR 23)  
HARTFORD, Washington County  
NY

PHOTO: K. KENNEDY ALVAREZ, 2004

view looking n/w

(Glenn Falls)  
6270 I  
1:25,000

(Salem)  
6370 II  
1:25,000



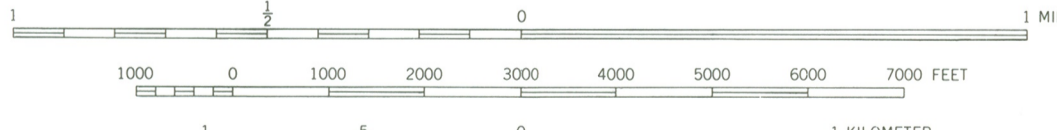
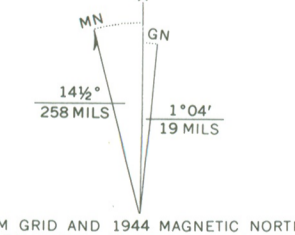
Elisha Straight House  
55 MAIN ST.  
HARTFORD WASHINGTON  
County  
NY  
Zone: 18  
E: 630150  
N: 4802360

Maped by the Geological Survey  
1944

SCALE 1:24000

Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum  
10,000-foot grid based on New York (East)  
rectangular coordinate system  
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,  
zone 18, shown in blue WEST HEBRON 1.5 MI.  
SALEM 3 MI.

ROAD CLASSIFICATION  
Heavy-duty ——— Light-duty ———  
Medium-duty - - - - - Unimproved dirt - - - - -  
○ State Route



CONTOUR INTERVAL 20 FEET  
DATUM IS MEAN SEA LEVEL

Map photinspected 1976  
No major culture or drainage changes observed

HARTFORD, N. Y.  
N4315-W7322.5/7.5  
PHOTOINSPECTED 1976  
1944



**TOWN OF HARTFORD**  
**PO Box 214**  
**165 County Route 23**  
**Hartford NY 12838**  
**Town Phone # (518)-632-9151**  
**Town Fax # (518)-632-9280**  
**Town Web Site-[www.hartfordny.com](http://www.hartfordny.com)**

June 16, 2004

Ms. Kimberly Konrad Alvaraz  
Landmark Consulting  
83 Grove Avenue  
Albany, NY 12208

Dear Ms. Konrad Alvaraz:

In regards to your request for a letter of consent for the Hartford Museum (Straight House) to be including on the National Historic Register, the Town of Hartford is the owner of the property. I am the Town Supervisor and I have been working closely with Mr. Peter Swano as well as Mrs. Sylvia VanAnden to get this project completed.

Please consider this a letter of consent supporting the Hartford Museum's nomination and to go forth with the project. My apologies if my tardiness in this matter has caused any problem.

Sincerely,



Henry Gallinari  
Supervisor Town of Hartford

cc: Ms. Lynn Garofalini