

CT Trust Resource ID: 2598

HISTORIC RESOURCE INVENTORY – BUILDING AND STRUCTURES

State Historic Preservation Office, DECD, One Constitution Plaza, 2nd Floor, Hartford, CT 06103

*Note: Please attach any additional or expanded information on a separate sheet.

Inventory form modified for the Creative Places - Arts & Letters Project

GENERAL INFORMATION

Building Name (Common): Olmstead-Lathrop; Gilman, Charlotte Perkins & George Houghton, House

Other Name(s) (Historic): Olmstead-Lathrop; Gilman, Charlotte Perkins & George Houghton, House/ Gilman, Charlotte Perkins & George Houghton, House

Street Address or Location: 380 Washington Street, Norwich

Town/City: Norwich Village: Norwichtown County: New London Designation(s): SRHD, NRHD, LHD

Owner(s): Springer, Sheryl A.; Lathrop Manor B&B Public/Private: Private

Latitude: 41.5467 Longitude: -72.0882

PROPERTY INFORMATION

Present Use:

Historic Use: Domestic: single dwelling

Accessibility to public: No Exterior visible from public road? No

Interior accessible? If yes, explain: NA

Style of building: Date of Construction: c. 1765

Material(s) (Indicate use or location when appropriate) Clapboard, Fieldstone

Structural Systems(s): Wood Frame, Post & Beam

Roof(Type): Mansard (Material): Wood Shingle

Number of Stories: 2 1/2 Approximate Dimensions: 39' x 46', 24' x 25'

Structural Condition: Excellent

Exterior Condition: Excellent

Locational Integrity: On original site Moved, When: NA

Alterations?: No If yes, explain: NA

Related outbuildings or landscape features: Shed

Surrounding Environment: Residential

Interrelationship of building and surroundings:

This is a 1.68-acre property on the west side of Washington Street. It is a contributing resource in the Norwichtown National Register and Local Historic District. To the north and west, are the Lowthorpe Meadows, a 15-acre open space conserved by donors Emily Serena Gilman and Louisa Gilman Lane, in 1907.

Other notable features of building or site:

This house is a 2 1/2-story gambrel-roofed center hall Colonial with its east façade facing Washington Street, and measures 39' x 46'. It has a five-bay façade with a central entry flanked by twelve-over-twelve double-hung windows on the first and second floors. The attic gables overhang the second floor level. An attic shed dormer is centered above the entrance. Four end chimneys project through the upper pitch of the roof. Siding is wood clapboard with corner board trim. Roofing is wood shingles. At the north end, and attached 25' x 24' two-story addition is stepped back toward the west and has a bay window projecting from the north wall. The building was restored in the late 20th century, with 19th-century windows and a front porch (visible in a 1930s WPA photograph) removed and restored.

Architect: Unknown Builder/Maker: Unknown

Historical or Architectural importance:

John Olmstead, Norwich's first physician, originally settled on this lot and then sold his home to Samuel Lathrop, whose family owned it for many generations. It burned in 1745 and Dr. Daniel Lathrop rebuilt. Lathrop operated the first apothecary shop in Connecticut. He and his wife, Jerusha Talcott, of Hartford, were known for their gardens. Poetess Lydia Huntley Sigourney (1791–1865), for whom Sigourney Street in Hartford is named, lived here while her father was a gardener for the Lathrops. Another notable resident was Daniel Coit Gilman (1831–1908), educator and college president. His nephew, George Houghton Gilman (1867–1934) lived in the house after his marriage with Charlotte Perkins Gilman.

Charlotte Perkins Gilman (1860–1935) was internationally known in her lifetime as a feminist, socialist, and author of non-fiction, fiction, and poetry. Now she is best known for her fiction, including 'the Yellow Wallpaper,' and 'Herland,' but in the early twentieth century she was the leading public intellectual of the women's movement. She was a member of the Beecher family, experienced a difficult first marriage and post-partum depression after the birth of her daughter. She separated from her husband and divorced, supporting his second marriage to a friend and giving up custody of her daughter. Recovering her health, Charlotte Perkins moved to California, wrote poetry and fiction, and lectured to support herself. Her second marriage in 1900 to her cousin George Houghton Gilman, a lawyer, brought her happiness and stability. The couple lived briefly in New York City before moving to the house at 380 Washington Street in Norwich. 'Charlotte Perkins Gilman did not consider herself a feminist, preferring to call herself a humanist or sociologist because her vision was not for women alone Her vision of women and men emancipated from outmoded conventions and her strong focus on the human necessity of creative work still make compelling contributions to feminist thought' (Ware, Schlesinger Library).

Sources:

Interview by C. Hitchcock with Vivian Zoe at the Slater Memorial Museum, 10/24/2014.
 Norwich Tax Assessors Records and GIS Viewer. Accessed at: <http://gis.vgsi.com/NorwichCT/Parcel.aspx?Pid=8749> .
 Bixby, Susan B. 1973. Norwichtown Historic District National Register Nomination No. 73001951. National Park Service.
 Gilman, Charlotte Perkins, Papers, 1846-1961. Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America Collections #177, #588. Introduction by Susan Ware. Accessed as digital collections at: <http://schlesinger.radcliffe.harvard.edu/onlinecollections/gilman/> .
 Lathrop Manor Bed & Breakfast web site. Accessed at: <http://www.lathropmanor.com/> .
 Norwichtown Walking Tour Guide. 1995. Norwich: Society of the Founders of Norwich & Norwich Tourism Commission. Accessed at: <http://www.asknccdc.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Norwichtown.pdf> .
 Sigourney, Lydia Huntley, biography. Poetry Foundation web site. Accessed at: <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poets/detail/lydia-huntley-sigourney> .
 WPA Architectural Survey: Norwich historic building 048. Accessed at: <http://cslib.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/singleitem/collection/p4005coll7/id/4794/rec/13> .
 Zoe, Vivian. Winter, 2011. 'The Slater Museum and Connecticut Artists: Unbreakable Bonds, Part II.' The Muse: Newsletter of the Slater Memorial Museum. Norwich: Slater Memorial Museum.

Photographer: Charlotte Hitchcock Date: 10/21/2014

View: Northeast view

Form completed by: Charlotte Hitchcock Printed On: May 19, 2016

Organization: Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation

Address: 940 Whitney Avenue, Hamden CT 06517-4002

Threats: None known

Subsequent field evaluations:



380 Washington St. - Olmsted-Lathrop House

FOR OFFICE USE:

Town # _____ Site# _____ UTM _____
 District ☐ S ☐ NR If NR, specify: ☐ Actual ☐ Potential