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Weir Farm

Suitability/ Feasibility Study

National Park Service
North Atlantic Region
Boston, Massachusetts

Color Scans
1/8/2004

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Weir Farm Suitability/Feasibility Study

National Park Service/North Atlantic Regional Office

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Boston, MA 02109

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WEIR FARM HISTORIC SITE

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

SUITABILITY/FEASIBILITY STUDY

1989

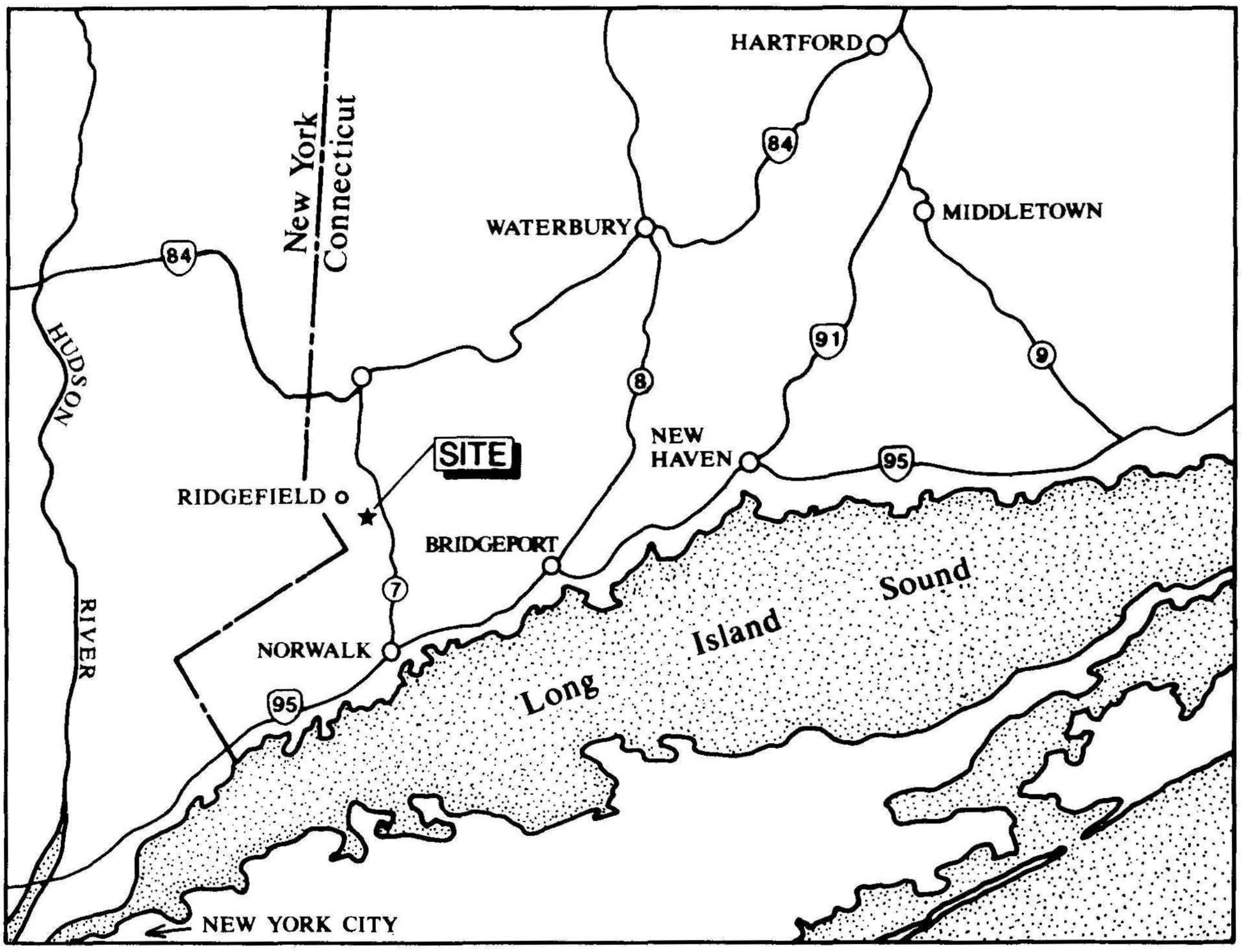


Figure 1. Vicinity Map

Part I: Introduction

Arriving at Weir Farm on a crisp fall day is like entering a time warp. The busy world of the 1980s fades from mind and from view as one climbs twisty Nod Hill Road to be greeted by a cheerful cluster of red clapboard buildings with white trim including "the quiet, plain little house among the rocks"[1] that J. Alden Weir (1852-1919) longed for while traveling abroad a century ago. The home and workplace of one of America's most significant artists for 37 years, one can almost feel the presence of the large Weir family and its many welcome friends as they enjoy the quiet beauty of this very special place. Stone walls and rustic picket fences still define the fields and lanes and fine old maple trees shade the main house and studios which contain many of the artist's favorite things. One almost feels the Weirs have simply gone off for an afternoon outing and that they might return any moment.

Weir Farm remains as it does today, not by accident, but because of the concerted efforts of a local group of neighbors who would not accept the loss of this important historic site to suburban development. Brought to their attention during a survey of local historic resources, the site was in danger of being developed to satisfy a seemingly insatiable demand for single family houses in this pleasant area close to growing employment centers in Stamford and along the Connecticut Route 7 corridor. Since Weir's tenure the farm was owned and smpathetically managed by Mr. and Mrs. Sperry Andrews, artists, who had purchased it from the estate of Weir's son-in-law, the noted sculptor Mahonri M. Young (1877-1957), who also created important works on the site. Through perseverance, research, and political action a somewhat expanded group has been able to obtain state acquisition funds in the amount of $4.25 million to protect the historic structures and some 62 acres of surrounding land originally owned by Weir that was in imminent danger of being sold off for house lots.

The recent land protection initiative was led by the Trust for Public Land (TPL), a national land conservation organization brought in by the original group of preservationists to secure the land temporarily until a permanent management framework could be put in place. TPL bought and held key acreage at the heart of the site until it was purchased by the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection. TPL now owns the Weir House and Studios and 9.4 acres of land in the Weir Farm National Register District. A 1989 vote of the Connecticut Bond Commission authorized acquisition of 7.4 acres from TPL plus an additional 7.5 acres under negotiation, assuring that the entire 62 acre proposed historic site will be forever protected from suburban development. With the adjacent Weir Preserve owned by The Nature Conservancy, a national land stewardship organization, and a sizeable open

[1]Letter from J. Alden Weir to his mother-in-law while on his honeymoon in Venice, 1883.

space tract owned by the town of Ridgefield, close to 175 contiguous acres are now protected. (See Figure 2.)

Study Area

Proposed Historic Site

Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)	45.8
DEP Acquisition in Process	14.3
Trust for Public Land	2
	62.1 acres

Contiguous Open Space

Nature Conservancy	90
Town of Ridgefield Conservation Land	23
	113 acres

The Trust for Public Land is not a park management agency but an entity that acquires and holds property for short periods of time until it can be purchased by public agencies or land trusts. TPL typically acquires and conveys property but with this project has chosen to play a more active role, assisting with long-range planning due to the farm's unique status as the nation's only intact, well-documented home and workplace of a major American Impressionist painter.

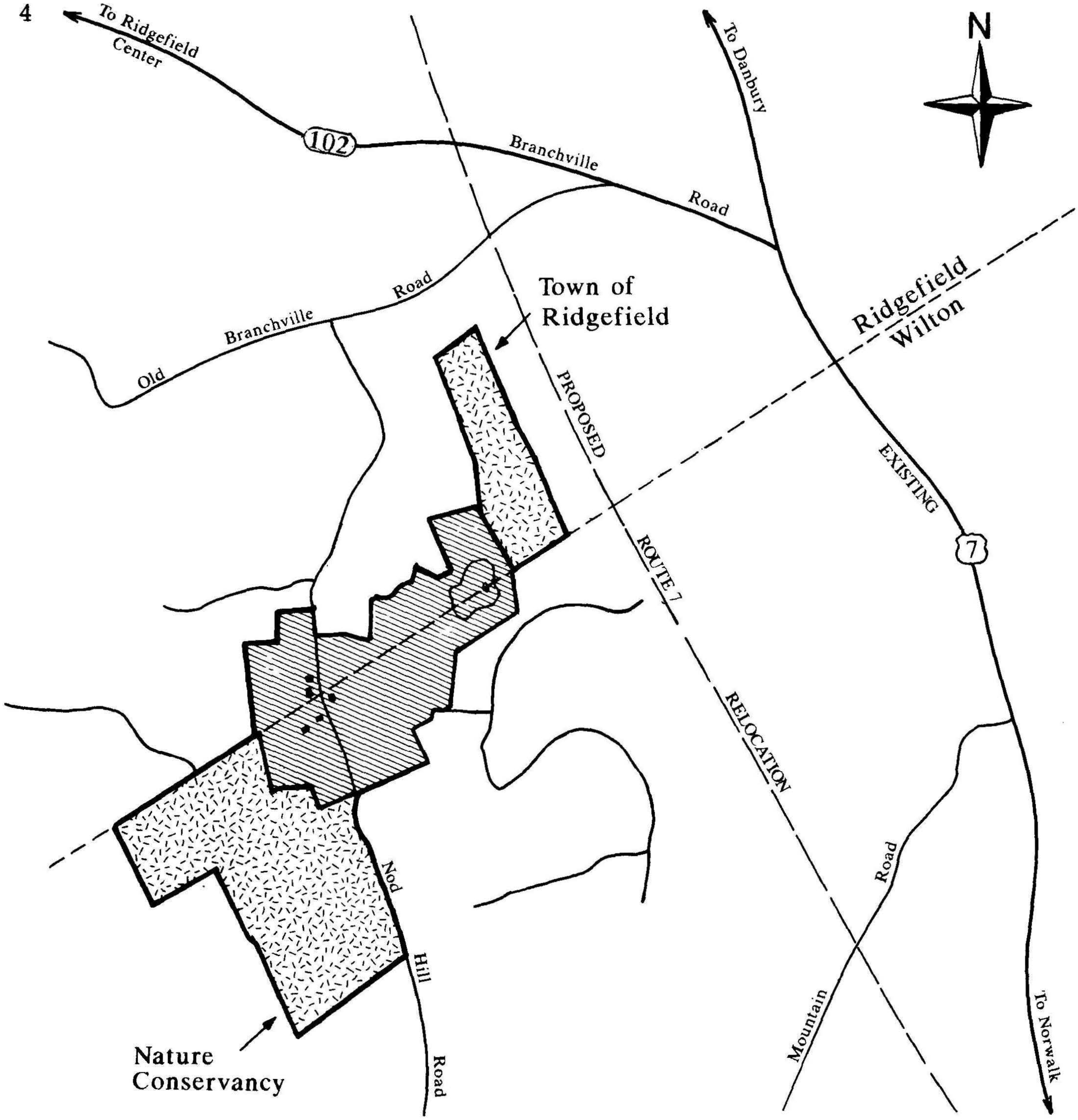
After exploring many local and state avenues, TPL approached the National Park Service, North Atlantic Region, in 1988 for technical advice on the long-term future of Weir Farm. When a preliminary reconnaissance suggested that the property might be found to be nationally significant, it was recommended that a suitability/feasibility study be carried out to examine the site and explore various alternatives for its permanent management.

A recent congressional hearing on the need for additional parks, recreation areas, and open space in Connecticut revealed that there was a great deal of public concern over the loss of historic resources and open space that contribute to the state's character. According to Congressman Sam Gejdenson of the House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, the state lags far behind other northeastern states in the amount of land set aside for public recreation, with less than 100 acres of public land per thousand residents while the others

average 294 per thousand. Connecticut does not contain any National Parks or National Historic Sites despite a great demand for "close-to-home" recreational options as described in the 1986 report *Americans Outdoors* prepared by the President's Commission on Americans Outdoors. Gejdenson noted at the hearing that "Connecticut ranks dead last among the fifty States in the amount of Federal land, such as national parks, forests or national recreation areas, within its borders." [2] Except for a small portion of the Appalachian Trail which passes through the state, there are no federal park lands in Connecticut.

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[2]Statement of Congressman Sam Gejdenson at Oversight Hearing *Connecticut's Need for Additional Park and Recreation Areas,* Subcommittee on General Oversight and Investigations of the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, House of Representatives, Hartford, CT, April 11, 1988.



Legend

Proposed Historic Site

Adjacent Open Space

SCALE FEET

1250 625 0 1250 2500

Weir Farm Study Area

Ridgefield/Wilton, Connecticut

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

North Atlantic Region

Figure 2.

Part II: Executive Summary

Weir Farm, in Wilton and Ridgefield, Connecticut, is the nation's only intact, publicly accessible, home and workplace of a major American Impressionist painter. [3] Located approximately 45 miles from New York City, it is a 175-acre refuge in an area called "Branchville" that preserves a way of life once shared by many important figures in American arts and letters. Acquired by J. Alden Weir in 1882, the farm has been continuously occupied by working artists and their families since that time. Barely altered since Weir's tenure, it is set in a landscape of rolling hills with fields defined by well-crafted and preserved stone walls. The Weir house is a red clapboard Greek revival home surrounded by a cluster of studios and barns. The farm is buffered from its surrounding suburban neighbors by a hardwood forest. Familiar scenes from Weir's paintings abound and include views of the pond he built and the rock outcroppings and rustic fences against which his daughters posed for such memorable works as *On the Shore* (Plate III.), *The Donkey Ride* (Plate IV.), and *In the Dooryard* (c. 1894, private collection).

Weir lived and worked at the farm for 37 years, spending less and less time as the years went on in New York City , where he and his family resided in winter. A founding member of The Ten American Painters, the preeminent group of American Impressionists, Weir was president of the National Academy of Design and highly regarded as an artist, teacher, and cultural leader during his lifetime. His works are represented in the nation's major museums including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Phillips Collection and National Museum of American Art at the Smithsonian, although a great number of his paintings remain in private ownership.

This study was prepared by staff of the North Atlantic Regional Office of the National Park Service in cooperation with the Trust for Public Land, a national land conservation organization based in San Francisco. The study team, made up of experienced park planners, art historians, and historic preservation experts consulted with many local and state groups during the course of the project. Among the most important was the Weir Farm Heritage Trust, an organization representing scholars, preservationists, abutters, Weir family members, and others seeking to preserve the farm and promote its use for educational and cultural purposes.

The study assesses the significance of J. Alden Weir and the importance of the site to his artistic development. It also looks at the current condition of the farm and evaluates various ways that it might be preserved and presented to the public.

[3] See Appendix A. *Comparisons with Other Sites* and Appendix B. *The Importance of Weir Farm,* prepared by Doreen Bolger for the National Park Service, 1989

The study concludes that Weir Farm meets the National Historic Landmark criteria, as well as the criteria for suitablity and feasiblity as a unit of the National Park System as defined in the NPS Management Policies.. The study shows that: 1) It is an outstanding example of a home, workplace, and landscape associated with a major American artist. 2) It possesses exceptional value and quality in illustrating and interpreting important cultural themes of our nation's heritage. 3) It offers superlative opportunities for recreation, public use and enjoyment. 4) It retains a high degree of integrity as a true, accurate, and relatively unspoiled example of a resource. The study also demonstrates that the site represents a cultural theme not adequately represented in the National Park System, and that it is of sufficient size and appropriate configuration to ensure long-term protection of resources. It can accommodate public use and has the potential for efficient administration at a reasonable cost.

The farm currently consists of some 62 acres within a boundary that adequately defines the proposed National Historic Site. Most of the land is owned by the State of Connecticut, representing a public investment to date of $2.7 million. The State Bond Commission recently voted to allocate an additional $1.552 million to buy the remaining acres still in private or Trust for Public Land ownership, assuring that all but the two-acre Weir House complex will be publically owned. The Weir House was acquired by TPL, which is committed to holding it until a suitable public or nonprofit entity can take it over.

Weir Farm itself includes the home and studio of J. Alden Weir, barns and outbuildings dating from his era, a 4-acre pond built by the artist, and a studio built c.1934 by Weir's son-in-law Mahonri M. Young where he sculpted his *This is the Place Monument*. Also part of the site are the home, gardens, and barns of Cora Weir Burlingham, the artist's daughter, and the fields and woodlands depicted by Weir and his colleagues in many important paintings. Contiguous open space totalling 113 acres owned by the Nature Conservancy and the Town of Ridgefield surrounds the main historic zone.

An on-site collection of art works by Weir is of utmost importance if this nationally significant site is to be understood in its proper context. The collection will provide the basis for interpretive and research programs. The study team found that sizeable collections exist of Weir's paintings, drawings, and prints, owned by family members and others interested in the preservation of Weir Farm. Several owners have indicated their willingness to sell or donate paintings which might include works by major figures such as Childe Hassam, John Twachtman, John Singer Sargent, and Albert Pinkham Ryder who visited and worked at the site, as well as pictures by Weir, Young and Andrews, a contemporary landscape painter who now lives there. The Weir Farm Heritage Trust has offered to hold and conserve art acquired before the permanent management mechanisms are in place. The collections are further discussed in Part V of the report.

During the study process a series of goals for Weir Farm were identified by representatives of the National Park Service, TPL, and Weir Farm Heritage Trust. Three management alternatives were then developed to carry out the goals. Primary goals were to preserve, protect, and interpret the site to tell the story of J. Alden Weir and his colleagues while maintaining its rural character as a place of continuing inspiration to working artists. Additional goals stressed the importance of exhibiting works of art near the sources of their inspiration, for research and interpretive purposes, and the creation of active programs to promote contemporary artistic expression.

Alternative I: Status Quo outlines how the site would fare if its current management system were to continue. Established as an interim solution only and run primarily by the Trust for Public Land (TPL) which is not a park management entity, the existing system was not judged adequate for permanent protection of Weir Farm. TPL exists to acquire critical lands and properties for preservation, and typically does this by purchasing private land and then selling it to public agencies or private land trusts as funds become available. The State of Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has been able to acquire most of Weir Farm from TPL. While the State is expected to continue as a full partner in the project, it cannot preserve and protect the site nor operate the interpretive and educational programs called for in the goals statement. The State provided land acquisition monies with the proviso that permanent management of the site would be performed by others. Estimated costs for Alternative I are:

Land Acquisition:	$800,000
Collections	0
Development:	150,000
Planning:	50,000
	$1,000,000
Annual Operating:	$142,500

Alternative II: Local Historic Site shows how the Weir Farm Heritage Trust might operate the site and carry out many of the programs identified as critical to its preservation and interpretation. The focus would be more for local and regional users. It was assumed that DEP would continue to own most of the land, but not the Weir house or studios. The most important characteristic of this alternative would be a heavy reliance on revenue-producing programs and activities such as bus tours, gift shop sales, and facilities for private functions. This would be necessary to raise the operating budget. Scholarship and educational programs might need to be sacrificed for those of a more commercial nature if there were no public agency involved in management. Physically Alternative II is similar to Alternative III but has more on-site parking and no permanent gallery to exhibit or store works of art. Some paintings could be displayed in the houses or studios, but the permanent collection would not be comprehensive due to security and space constraints. All costs are for the Weir Farm Heritage Trust to raise, with the Trust for Public Land at the outset. Funds would be sought from private sources, except it is assumed that the State would complete land acquisition now in process. Estimated costs for Alternative II are:

Land Acquisition:	$800,000
Collections:	1,000,000
Planning:	300,000
Development:	1,500,000
	$3,600,000
Annual Operating:	300,000

Alternative III: National Historic Site shows how the site could be operated as a National Historic Site through a partnership in which the National Park Service, State of Connecticut, and Weir Farm Heritage Trust would each play active roles. Most land acquisition would continue to be the responsibility of the State. NPS would acquire and maintain the historic buildings, furnishings and art, and operate basic interpretive and research programs. The Weir Farm Heritage Trust would operate special programs like art classes and sponsor artists-in-residence, and would raise substantial private funds to provide exhibition space for works of art. It might also establish an endowment to assist in acquiring or caring for art works. This is the only alternative judged capable of meeting the stated goals. Estimated costs for Alternative III are:

	NPS	Heritage Trust
Acquisition:	800,000	--
Collections:	3,500,000	--
Planning	500,000	
Development:	1,200,000	3,600,000
	$6,000,000	$3,600,000
Annual Operating:	$500,000	$100,000

The National Park System does not currently include a single site that tells the story of the life and work of an American painter, although *Painting and Sculpture* is a stated theme. This is certainly a "type of recreational resource that is not already adequately represented in the National Park System."[4] Evidence suggests that there is great public interest in sites like Claude Monet's house at Giverny and Frederic Church's Olana that reveal the places that inspired these great artists. Weir Farm has all the physical ingredients needed for a successful site and a capable body of supporters eager to see it come to fruition.

Once the information in this study is evaluated and refined, efforts can begin to implement the selected management alternative. If designation as a National Historic Site is desired, legislation must be introduced in Congress requesting the necessary legislative authorities and funding authorizations to establish and operate the site. If not, the Weir Farm Heritage Trust should begin negotiations to acquire the Weir House and Studios from the Trust for Public Land, and generally assume TPL's planning and management functions. In either case, project proponents must continue to work with the State of Connecticut to ensure completion of the recently authorized land acquisition.

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[4]U. S. Deparment of the Interior, National Park Service, *Management Policies*,1978.

WEIR FARM
MANAGEMENT ALTERNATIVES COMPARED

	ALTERNATIVE I: STATUS QUO	ALT. II: LOCAL HISTORIC SITE	ALT.III: NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE
Land Ownership	State DEP and TPL	State DEP and WFHT	NPS and State DEP
Site Management	WFHT	State DEP and WFHT	NPS w/WFHT help
Preservation	Emergency Stabilization	Major Structures Preserved	All Structures Preserved
Visitor Center/Offices	Burlingham House	Burlingham House	Burlingham House
Interpretive & Educational Programs	WFHT, Minimal Programs	WFHT, Moderate Level of Programs	NPS lead w/WFHT help
Research Programs	None	Unlikely	Good
Passive Recreation	Self-guided; maintenance by volunteers	Self-guided;maintenance by volunteers	NPS lead; professional site maintenance
Art Collection	None	Small Collection Possible	Ability to Obtain Suitable Collection
Art Gallery	None	None; Exhibition in Weir House or Visitor Center	New gallery by WFHT; private funds
Artist-in-Residence	None	Possible; Dependent on Source of Funding	Likely
Parking	In Fields	Lots Along Nod Hill Road for cars and buses	Along Nod Hill Rd.:cars; buses off-site
Land Acquisition Cost	$800,000	$800,000	$800,000
Collections Cost	0	$1,000,000	$3,500,000 (NPS)
Development Cost	$150,000	$1,500,000	$1,200,000 (NPS) $3,600,000 (WFHT/TPL)
Planning Cost	$50,000	$300,000	$500,000 (NPS)
Annual Operating Cost	$142,500	$300,000	$500,000 (NPS) $100,000 (WFHT)

Abbreviations: DEP: Department of Environmental Protection, State of Connecticut; TPL: Trust for Public Land; WFHT: Weir Farm Heritage Trust; NPS: National Park Service.

Part III: Significance of Site and Artists

To evaluate the national significance of a site, the National Park Service applies criteria established for the National Historic Landmarks program. The NPS Management Policies state that a natural, cultural, or recreational resource will be considered nationally significant if it meets all of the criteria listed below. The study team found that Weir Farm meets all the criteria, and the Chief Historian concurred that the site is a strong candidate for National Historic Landmark status and should be nominated as such.

1. It is an outstanding example of a particular type of resource.

2. It possesses exceptional value or quality in illustrating or interpreting the natural or cultural themes of our nation's heritage.

3. It offers superlative opportunities for recreation, public use, and enjoyment or for scientific study.

4. It retains a high degree of integrity as a true, accurate, and relatively unspoiled example of a resource.

Criterion 1. An Outstanding Example of a Particular Type of Resource

Weir Farm is a fine example of a home and workplace of an important American artist. It retains all the characteristics the artist valued, from the gently rolling pastures and rustic fences, to the pond he built and loved to paint. Weir made many changes to the property which are well documented in letters and documents. He made major additions to the house, furnished it with objects brought back from his travels in Europe, and shaped the landscape to create a rural retreat where he, his family, and his friends could pursue a life centered around artistic expression.

Julian Alden Weir was born in 1852 at West Point, NY, where his father, Robert Walter Weir was a professor of drawing. The youngest of sixteen children, Julian grew up in an atmosphere where his artistic talents were encouraged. He studied first at the National Academy of Design in New York and entered the atelier of Jean-Léon Gérôme in Paris in 1873. While in Europe Weir visited Belgium, the Netherlands, and Spain and wrote many letters home which chronicle his artistic development. These were compiled by his biographer and daughter Dorothy Weir Young, who used them as the basis for *The Life and Letters of J. Alden Weir* (1960, Yale University Press). The letters provide extremely detailed

documentation of the artist's early years and show the importance of encouragement from his elder brother, John Ferguson Weir, the first director of the School of Fine Arts at Yale University where he taught for 47 years (1866-1913).[5]

J. Alden Weir returned to New York in 1877 and embarked upon a distinguished artistic career during which he was instrumental in founding, in 1898, The Ten American Painters, a group which included John Twachtman, Childe Hassam, William Merritt Chase, the leading American Impressionists. Doreen Bolger, the foremost contemporary authority on Weir, points out that his settling at Branchville in 1882 coincides with a larger development in American art -- the growing popularity of painting out-of-doors. She also notes that the country retreats popularized during the 1880s and 90s reflect a change in attitude toward subject matter as well.

> *Weir and his Impressionist friends often chose familiar, even beloved, landscape subjects. These were sites of personal, not topographical significance -- their own farms and homes and the surrounding countryside, coastal villages and shore resorts where they taught plein-air painting or simply vacationed. These artists were preoccupied with the unremarkable aspects of a landscape that had been tamed and cultivated by man, not the wilderness or the natural wonders that earlier had captivated the Hudson River School.*[6]

Weir married Anna Dwight Baker in 1883, by whom he had three daughters, Caroline, Dorothy, and Cora and a son Julian who lived only to the age of two. When his beloved and often painted wife died shortly after the birth of the youngest child, her sister, Ella Baker came to look after the children and help in the management of his household. She later became his second wife.

J. Alden Weir is considered to be the best documented of the American Impressionist artists, and many letters, documents, photographs, and preliminary sketches are available for further scholarly research. A good deal of this information is owned by Weir's heirs who have demonstrated their willingness to help assemble it for an on-site collection.

Criterion 2. Exceptional Value or Quality in Illustrating or Interpreting the Cultural Themes of Our Nation's Heritage

The most productive period of Weir's career coincided with the years he spent at the Branchville farm. It was during this time that he created paintings like *Idle Hours* (1888),

[5]See *Dictionary of American Biography* entries on John Ferguson Weir, J. Alden Weir, and Robert Walter Weir.
[6]Doreen Bolger, *Op.Cit.*

acquired that same year by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and *Midday Rest* (1897), in the collection of the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts (see Plate I.), superb examples of subject matter favored by the American Impressionists -- family life and the dignity of workers in the rural landscape. Many fine paintings done at the farm, as well as preliminary sketches are available for a permanent on-site collection. The interpretive opportunities are very rich.

Weir was a versatile artist who worked in a variety of media -- oil, water color, pastel, and etching. His subject matter included portraits, still life, *genre*, and landscapes. He helped establish a uniquely American form of Impressionism which could celebrate a particular place while capturing its essence through the representation of light with pure color. Unlike works by French Impressionists like Claude Monet which became increasingly abstract, Weir's paintings are more closely associated with actual places. This does not mean, however, that they are exact representations of his surroundings, although many settings in and around Branchville are recognizable.

Weir Farm provides an excellent opportunity to interpret the sub-theme of American Impressionism, 1876-1920, which is currently unrepresented in the National Park System although it appears under Theme XXIV. Painting and Sculpture in the 1987 thematic framework.[7] The list of National Historic Landmarks includes 19 homes of painters, but there are no American Impressionists so recognized in this group of privately owned properties.

There are currently no units of the National Park System dedicated to American painting, despite its strong association with the birth of the conservation movement in the United States. Landscape painters like Thomas Cole (1801-1848) and Thomas Moran (1837-1926) were among the first Americans to understand and depict nature as a resource to be protected rather than an enemy to be conquered. In an era before television and film, American painters were the main chroniclers of the nation's physical character; their images were reproduced widely in the popular press and were instrumental in shaping late 19th century perceptions. The American Impressionists shared in this tradition, although their subject matter concentrated more on the local and the domestic rather than on the majestic Western scenes painted by earlier generations.

American Impressionism was once considered a somewhat derivative and less important form of French Impressionism.[8] Recent scholarship and public opinion have dispelled this notion, recognizing the American Impressionists for their originality and use of Impressionist techniques in distinctive, uniquely American ways. Still, the American and

[7]*History and Prehistory in the National Park System and the National Historic Landmarks Program*, History Division, National Park Service, Washington, D.C., 1987.

[8]See Appendix A for a discussion of American Impressionism and other sites where artists are intepreted.

French Impressionists share many common elements, such as painting out-of-doors, and the use of pure unmixed colors applied adjacent to each other to convey light and form when seen at a distance by the viewer.

Weir did more than just depict the landscape around him on paper and canvas -- he shaped his surroundings to suit his esthetic sense. Every physical change, from paint color to the construction of the rather large 4-acre pond, was studied and planned as carefully as if it were an artistic composition. His hand is evident still at the farm, and much can be learned about his art by experiencing the place that he created.

Criterion 3. Superlative Opportunities for Recreation, Public Use, and Enjoyment

Bolger states that Weir Farm is perhaps the best preserved example of a turn-of-the-century painters' retreat. It is certainly the only such place where significant works of art created at the site are still privately owned and available for display there. Interpretive opportunities are strong, and could allow works of art to be enjoyed in the actual settings where they were created. Many traditional museums do not offer this experience and, according to Kenneth Hudson "...contrive to make the average visitor feel very small, ignorant and inferior, and to frighten off people who sense that they will be put in this situation and are unwilling to subject themselves to the indignity." Instead, he recommends that works of art be shown in their original surroundings, where the tools and technology of the artist can be shown as well, with the overall goal of allowing people to respond to the art with their feelings and not just through their brains.[9] Weir Farm could use this model to interpret our nation's cultural heritage.

Weir Farm is located near enough to major population centers to make it readily accessible to visitors, yet has been protected from suburban encroachment through timely intervention by concerned individuals.

Criterion 4. A High Degree of Integrity as a True, Accurate, and Relatively Unspoiled Example of a Resource

The physical surroundings at Weir Farm -- the houses, barns, studios, stone walls, and fields -- are very much intact. Though the vegetation is a bit overgrown and the buildings in need of some rehabilitation, the farm has a high degree of historic integrity. It has been maintained rather than altered over the years, and is well documented in photographs, plans and town records as well as in paintings by Weir and others. Part V of this report, The Site, provides a more complete description of the landscape and buildings as they exist today.

[9]Kenneth Hudson, *Museums of Influence*, p. 175.

Weir Farm has been continuously occupied by working artists since 1882. In addition to the important artistic figures who visited and painted there during Weir's lifetime (Albert Pinkham Ryder, John Twachtman, Childe Hassam, John Singer Sargent) it later became the home of sculptor Mahonri M. Young who married Weir's daughter Dorothy. Young built a studio building next to Weir's shortly after he moved to the farm in 1931. Though less well documented than Weir, Young's work at the farm is also of significance as it was here that he sculpted the figures for his important *This is the Place Monument* in Utah (see Figure 9.). This tradition of maintaining the farm as an artists' retreat continued when the property was acquired by Young's friend and colleague Sperry Andrews in 1957. The studios at Weir Farm still look very much as they did during the Weir and Young eras. They contain the materials and tools used by the artists, making it easy to imagine them at work.



Figure 3. Interior Of The Weir Studio Today.

Part IV. Goals for Weir Farm

After conducting interviews with concerned individuals and institutions and evaluating site conditions, the study team assembled a list of goals to guide the future of Weir Farm. The goals summarize ideas that emerged from the preliminary reconnaissance phase of the study and address issues identified by team members and those consulted. The goals were reviewed, discussed, revised, and endorsed by the *ad hoc* planning committee which later became the Weir Farm Heritage Trust. They were also reviewed by the Trust for Public Land and National Park Service team before taking the form in which they appear below.

It is important to understand that the management alternatives in Part VI were developed to respond to the goals as stated here. If different or additional goals had been established, the management alternatives would have changed accordingly. It is very likely that the goals will change somewhat over time once a permanent management structure has been selected and begins operation. Until that time the following goals can serve as a broad statement of what Weir Farm should be.

Weir Farm would be a peaceful but lively place where J. Alden Weir might still feel at home. The historic houses, barns, and studios would be well maintained but retain their casual, lived-in feeling. The formal house museum approach would be avoided, with emphasis placed on the people who lived, worked, and visited at the farm rather than on objects for their own sake. The buildings and restored landscape would serve as a backdrop for year-round activities involving children and adults of all ages. Programs would be scaled so as not to overwhelm the site -- on a given day one might encounter a visiting pre-school class learning about wildflowers by touching and drawing them, a guide showing a school-age group where and how Weir sketched and painted, and a neighbor taking a quiet walk through the woods to the pond. Places of interest would be found throughout the site and new facilities accommodated in existing structures whenever possible, to avoid the need for large new buildings or parking lots at any one location.

Visitors might arrive by car and park in one of the gravelled lots which could be tucked behind the stone walls along Nod Hill Road opposite the Burlingham house. Class participants could also take advantage of the Weir Farm shuttle -- a mini-van service to nearby schools with a stop at an information kiosk on Route 7 used for overflow and bus parking.

Visitors would be encouraged to come to the site more than once. Changing exhibits of art by Weir and Young and their colleagues would be offered along with shows of contemporary works created at the farm. Works would be displayed in a small new gallery building similar in scale to the barns and studios, but with state-of-the-art security and climate control systems. Lectures and scholarly symposia might be held in a lecture room at the farm

itself or at nearby halls in Wilton and Ridgefield. Research by Weir Farm staff and scholars from other institutions might take the participants to nearby libraries and museums. People might come to enjoy seasonal nature programs offered by the Nature Conservancy such as bird walks or winter habitat tours, while others might enjoy showing their small children how cows and donkeys live on a farm. Special events might be held each year like picnics with hay rides and visiting "Figures of American Art" to recognize volunteers and draw local residents to the site, but these would not be major festivals designed to attract large crowds.

An artist-in-residence, funded by the Heritage Trust, would be hard at work in a new studio in the converted caretaker's barn while a local high school student might be listening to an oral history tape of her grandfather for a school project. Garden club volunteers might be working with a Boy Scout troop to keep the formal gardens looking their best. Weir Farm would once again be "The Great Good Place" as Mahonri S. Young described it, recalling the Henry James short story.

GOAL #1

To tell the story of Weir Farm and the people who made it what it is today. Some or all of the following should be included as high quality interpretive and educational programs are developed:

a. J. Alden Weir and family
b. Mahonri M. Young and family
c. The Andrews family
d. The relationship between landscape and art
e. Artists who visited and worked at Branchville
f. American art at the turn of the century
g. Artists and the places and people that influence them
h. Leisure time/family life from 1882 to the present
i. How the farm was created by the people who lived there
j. How the farm was saved

GOAL #2

To preserve and protect the landscape, structures, artifacts, and archeological remains necessary to tell the story of Weir Farm.

a. Landscape as depicted in paintings
b. Homes and studios of artists and resident families
c. Furnishings and objects depicted in paintings or associated with site
d. Farm buildings

e. Caretaker's house
f. Stone walls and other built features

GOAL #3
To show works of art created at Weir Farm near the subject matter which inspired them.

a. Identify works created by Weir and others at site or with strong site associations
b. Exhibit a selected group of works at Weir Farm
c. Obtain a permanent collection for display at the site
d. Arrange to borrow works of art from others for display at site

GOAL #4
To ensure that Weir Farm continues to be a place where artists live and work and where there is a continuing tradition of artistic expression.

a. Explore artist-in-residence program
b. Encourage art classes
c. Develop affiliations with existing teaching and learning programs

GOAL #5
To provide passive recreational and educational opportunities for the open space associated with Weir Farm that complement its historical significance.

a. Continue to maintain walking trails
b. Encourage modest expansion of nature education programs
c. Promote programs to research and restore the historic landscape including garden restorations
d. Explore the feasibility of reintroducing farm animals

GOAL #6
To encourage further scholarly research on Weir, Young, and their colleagues in order to contribute to the body of knowledge on American artists and their sources of inspiration.

a. Support research programs including historical and archeological investigations of site as well as research on works of art created by artists associated with the site.
b. Ensure that archival material associated with the site is properly stored and conserved.

c. Develop an oral history program to record interviews with people associated with Weir Farm.

GOAL #7
To provide facilities for visitors to Weir Farm.

a. Parking
b. Orientation center
c. Program facilities for art classes, artist-in-residence, interpretive programs

GOAL #8
To ensure that all programs established at Weir Farm are financially feasible.

a. Educational, recreational, artistic and other programs
b. Physical structures for programs



Figure 4. Dorothy Weir Young in the garden at Weir Farm.

Part V: The Site

Land Ownership

When J. Alden Weir acquired the farm at Branchville in 1882 it comprised 153 acres, 20 in Ridgefield and 133 in Wilton.[10] Land records show the acquisition price to have been $10. In fact, Weir traded one of his fine still life paintings for the property to his friend and patron Erwin Davis, an important art collector. Weir later acquired several additional parcels of land, until the farm comprised 238 acres. His friend de Raasloff remembered a visit to the farm during which Weir commented: "Those are my trees. I bought them because the farmers do not, as a rule, appreciate such trees and are quite liable to sell them for lumber."[11]

The Weir Farm National Register District, listed January 5, 1984, comprises approximately 193 acres. It should be proposed as a National Historic Landmark, as it meets existing criteria. A certain amount of the district was developed for single-family residential use in the 1970s and 80s and is not shown as part of the proposed 62-acre historic site. A 37-acre portion of the district was donated to the Nature Conservancy by Cora Weir Burlingham, daughter of the artist, and is maintained as open space. The Nature Conservancy property, which totals 90 acres and is called the Weir Preserve, lies to the south and west of the proposed Weir Farm Historic Site. An additional 23-acre open space parcel north of the site, is owned by the town of Ridgefield, helps screen the historic property, although it was never owned by Weir.

The proposed Weir Farm Historic Site is a 62-acre area at the heart of the district and includes the original farm house (Weir home) and outbuildings, the Weir and Young studios, the pond, and most of the painting sites which Weir and his friends depicted in their works. It also includes the adjoining Burlingham house and barns and a caretaker's house. (See Figure 2.) This is the land identified as critical to the preservation of Weir Farm as a natural, cultural, and heritage site by Terry J. Tondro in his 1986 report to the Connecticut Commissioner of Environmental Protection.

The two primary landowners of the proposed Weir Farm Historic Site, as shown on the maps, are the State of Connecticut, Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the Trust for Public Land (TPL). DEP owns the Burlingham and caretaker houses and much of the historic landscape (± 46 acres total). TPL owns the Weir house, studios, and barns and owns

[10]Weir Farm Historic District National Register Nomination Form, 1983 from Ridgefield Land Records 28/597, July 27, 1882.

[11]H. de Raasloff, *J. Alden Weir, An Appreciation*, p. 90.

or holds options on five of the seven open space parcels needed to control the entire site. TPL and DEP are negotiating with the owners of lots "18" and "19" the remaining parcels needed to complete the site. Negotiations are also in process with DEP for the State to purchase TPL's open space parcels. A recent approval by the State Bond Commission made available $1.552 million for the purpose of acquiring TPL's holdings as well as the remaining privately-owned parcels needed to protect the site. Summaries of land ownership are listed below and shown on the map (Figure 5.).

Ownership Status of Weir Farm Land

Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)

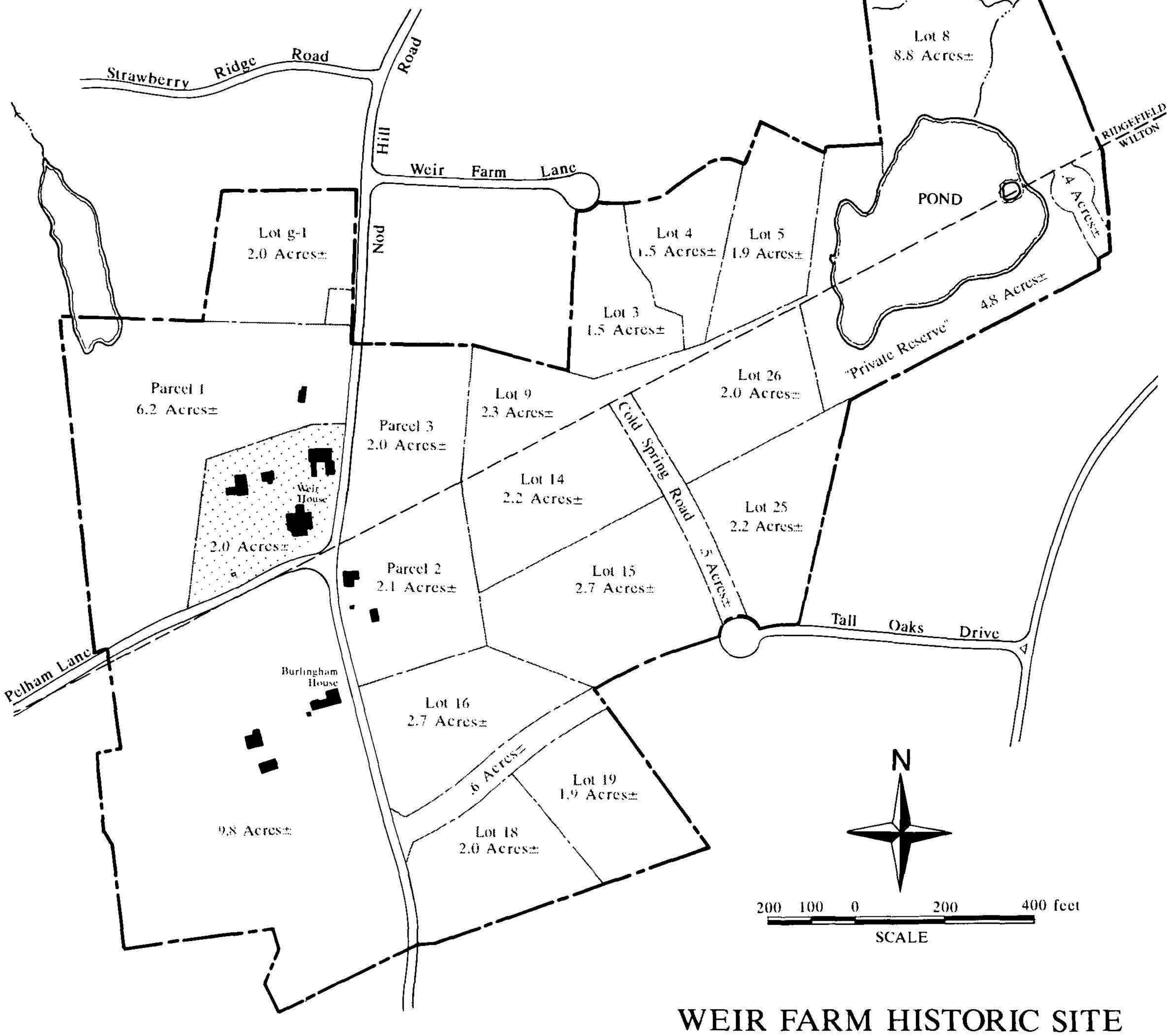
Burlingham property	9.8 acres
Parcel 1	6 .2
Parcel 2	2.1
Parcel 3	2.0
Lot 5	1.9
Lot 8	8.8
Lot 9	2.3
Cold Spring Rd. (paper)	.5
Lot 14	2.2
Lot 25	2.2
Lot 26	2.0
Paper streets	1:0
"Private Reserve"	4.8
TOTAL DEP	45.8

DEP Acquisition In Process

Lot G-1 (from TPL)	2.0
Lot 3 (TPL has option)	1.5
Lot 4 (TPL has option)	1.5
Lot 15 (from TPL)	2.7
Lot 16 (from TPL)	2.7
Lot 18 (from private owner)	2.0
Lot 19 (from private owner)	1.9
TOTAL DEP IN PROCESS	14.3

Trust for Public Land (TPL)

Weir House	2.0 acres
TOTAL TPL	2.0
SITE GRAND TOTAL	62.1 acres



LEGEND

TPL Ownership	
DEP Ownership/Acquisition in Process	
Proposed Site Boundary	
Existing Parcel Boundaries	

October, 1989

Figure 5.

WEIR FARM HISTORIC SITE

Ridgefield/Wilton, Connecticut

Land Ownership Map

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

North Atlantic Region

Boston, Massachusetts

SUITABILITY/FEASIBILITY STUDY

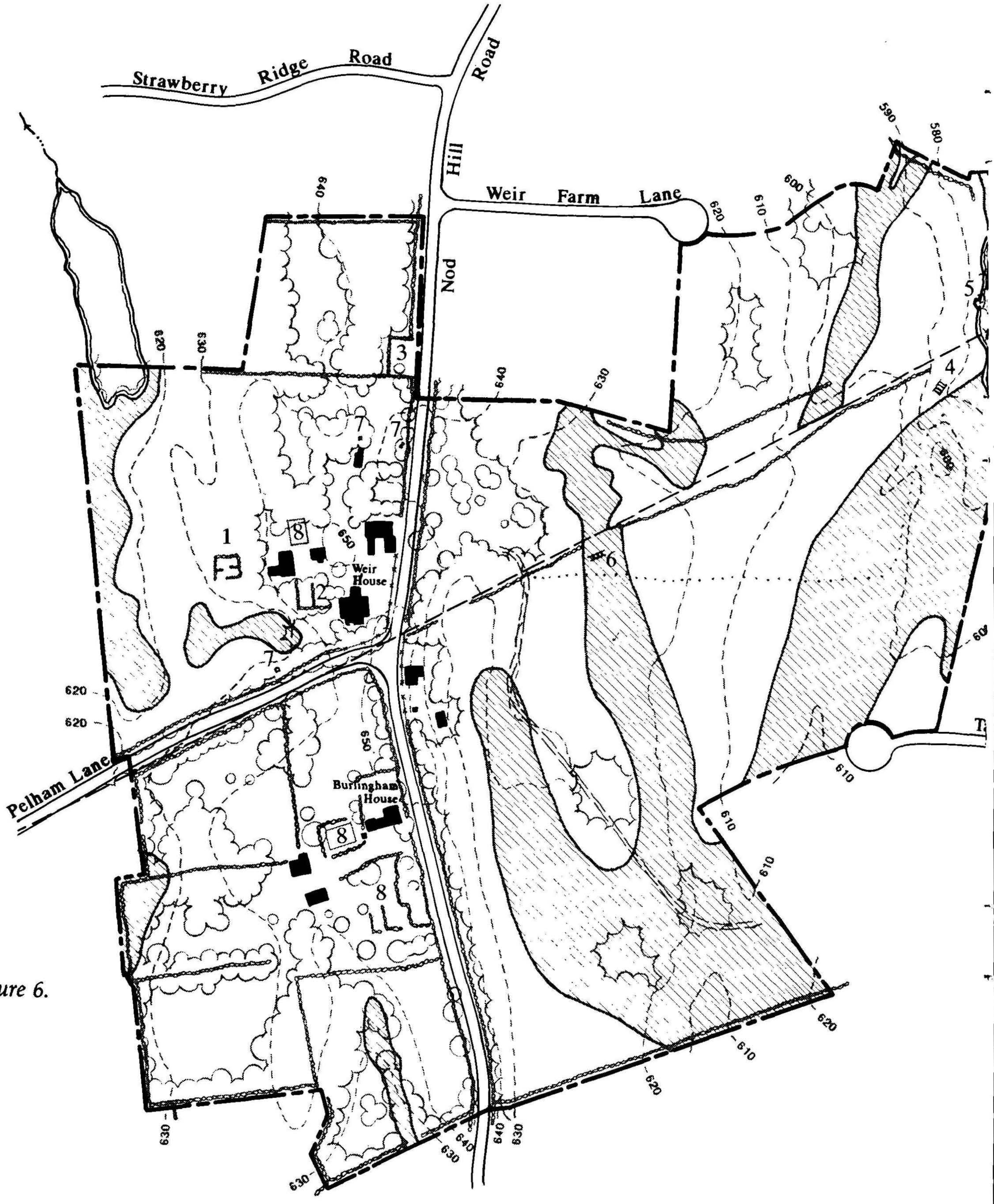

Strawberry Ridge Road
Road
Hill
Weir Farm Lane
Nod
Pelham Lane
Weir House
Burlingham House
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
640
630
620
650
610
600
590
580

Figure 6.

WEIR FARM HISTORIC SITE

Ridgefield/Wilton, Connecticut

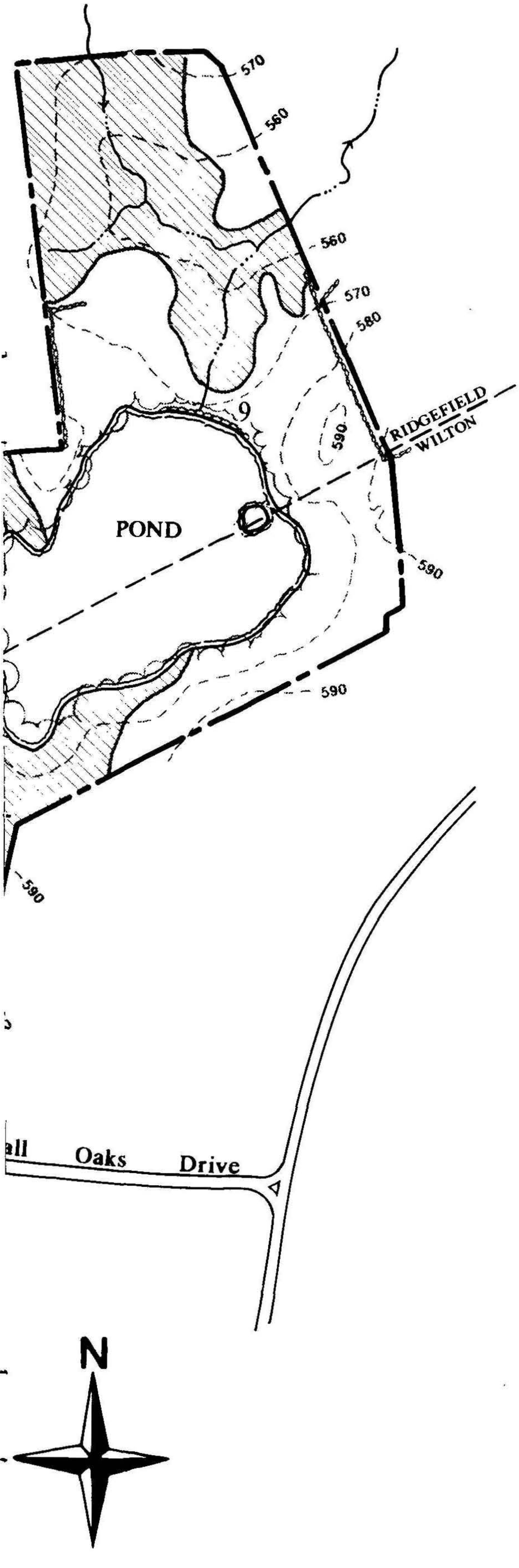
Existing Conditions Map

Natural & Cultural Features

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

North Atlantic Region

Boston, Massachusetts



Legend

Water Bodies	
Wetland Area	
Fences	
Forest Cover	
Contours	620
Stone Walls	
Foot Path Remnants	
Wagon Road Remnants	
Proposed Site Boundary	
Significant Structures	
Stone Pig Pen	1
Stone Terraces	2
Beers Cemetery	3
Stone Steps	4
Dock and Boathouse Remnants	5
Bridge Remnants	6
Wells	7
Garden Remnants	8
Stone Dam	9

200 100 0 200 400

SCALE IN FEET

SUITABILITY/FEASIBILITY STUDY

1989

Existing Conditions

Landscape

The bucolic character of the landscape at Branchville drew J. Alden Weir to the site. As he shaped the landscape with the addition of stone walls and steps, the pond, and a few modest building additions, he was careful not to alter that character. The places he painted in such works as *Midday Rest* (Plate I.) or *On the Shore* (Plate III.) can still be experienced today and provide rich evidence to guide future researchers and site managers.

In assessing the historic landscape, both the proposed Weir Farm Historic Site and the Nature Conservancy's Weir Preserve were evaluated, as they are managed cooperatively and perceived by the public as part of the same place. The Existing Conditions map (Figure 6.) shows detailed information for the proposed Historic Site. Special conditions noted in the Preserve are so noted in the text.

Weir Farm and Preserve contain a variety of vegetative communities: deciduous forest (both mature and newer growth), wetlands, and open fields that were once cultivated. Some abandoned fields are now forested but could be returned to their earlier state if desired for interpretive purposes. Physical and documentary evidence exists to develop a detailed historic landscape restoration plan, and oral history interviews are being carried out to record early memories of the site on the part of family members who note that the site remained virtually unchanged in the 1920s and 30s when their "Aunt Dorothy" (Young) took it over after her father's death in 1919.

The dominant forest vegetation includes beech, oak, and hickory trees with some sugar maples. Tulip trees, red maples, black cherry, and striped maple are also found. The landscape is punctuated by old oaks among the newer woodland growth and several large specimen trees along the stone walls and hedgerows that date to Weir's tenure. Generally the woodlands contain indigenous species and are not overrun with aggressively propagating non-indigenous species. The dominant understory species are mountain laurel, maple-leaved viburnum, sassafras, and blueberry.

Wetlands are shown on the map and are characterized by skunk cabbage, blue-flag iris, marsh fern, and red maple with some blueberry, spicebush, and witch hazel. Open fields exist near the houses due to annual mowing. They consist mostly of broomsedge grass with wildflowers such as black-eyed susans, asters, and goldenrod. Some junipers, grey birch, and locusts have begun to take hold.

The area is a typical New England glacial landscape, with sculpted ridges and gentle rolling hills. Large granitic rock outcroppings occur throughout the site. The largest slope on the site is parallel to Nod Hill Road, with the steepest portion across from the Burlingham house. The site has a high elevation in relation to the surrounding landscape; its high point is about 650 feet and its low point about 550 feet above sea level.

One major water body exists on the site -- the pond Weir had built with prize monies he won from an art competition in 1896. It is roughly 4 acres in size and drains to the north. The pond has remained free of siltation and is fed by several intermittent streams. It was stocked with largemouth bass by Weir, who was as passionate about fishing as he was about art. Remains of a dock and boathouse can be seen, and the old rowboat depicted in several paintings can be found in the barn. The pond is reached by a fine set of stone steps carved into the rockface during Weir's time.

Remnants of paths the Weirs used still exist and are reached through gates and openings in the stone walls and fences that once controlled livestock. Wooden gate posts with horseshoe latches are common. Evidence exists of wagon roads used to bring ice from the pond and for horse-drawn carriages carrying visiting guests that Weir speaks of in his letters. Remains of the footbridge depicted in *The Fishing Party* (c. 1915, Phillips Collection) exist where it crossed a stream and are documented in photographs and drawings by family members.

Weir Farm is home to pileated woodpeckers, eastern bluebirds, warblers, nuthatches, and chickadees as well as spring peepers, squirrels, chipmunks, and deer. Farm animals no longer are kept, but included horses, cows, oxen, sheep, donkeys, chickens, rabbits, and ducks.

Structures

Two main developed areas exist at the site -- the Weir house complex and the Burlingham house complex (Figure 10.). Each is arranged in a cluster pattern and includes buildings, fences, gardens, and driveways. Both are reached from Nod Hill Road which descends into the village of Branchville and runs in a north-south direction. The narrower, east-west Pelham Lane separates the two properties and is bordered by 600 feet of beautifully constructed stone wall built for Cora Weir Burlingham which the family calls "the great wall of Cora." A rustic wood, stick-type fence lines the perimeter of the Weir house complex along Nod Hill Road and Pelham Lane and is easily identified in such paintings as *Visiting Neighbors* (c. 1903, Phillips Collection).

Both properties are characterized by distinctive stone elements carved out of the native granite, some of it coming from quarry sites within the Weir Preserve. Though made of the local material and in some ways typical of the region, there is something special -- an artist's touch -- about these walls, terraces, animal pens, and even a stone picnic table where the names of the artist and his three daughters, Cora, Caro and Dorothy, can be seen roughly gouged into the rock. Most of the stonework was done by members of the Knoche family, some of whom still live in Ridgefield. Sperry Andrews recalls Mahonri Young sketching the workers at their labors.

Both houses had gardens -- Weir's a relatively small, formal, italianate garden typical of its early 20th century construction date, and the Burlingham property a large vegetable garden and a formal sunken garden. The Weir garden had a low perimeter wall, edged planting beds, boxwood partarres, and a birdbath at its focal point. Plants remaining include the hedges, daylillies, peonies, roses, and lilacs. Photographs and paintings of the site show a trellis and more extensive plantings that need further study for accurate documentation. Cora Weir Burlingham was an accomplished amateur horticulturalist, and active on the board of the New York Botanical Gardens. Her gardens, though overgrown, still show evidence of her skills. The vegetable garden has fruit trees, raspberries, forsythia, and some grape vine remaining, although barberry is overgrowing the planted species. Her sunken garden has a stone retaining wall lined with serpentine box partarres punctuated by six pyramidal spruce trees with an urn as a rear focal point. A gardener employed at the site for 16 years resides in the area and can provide information about specific plantings, as can the Weir grandchildren who have distinct memories of the gardens.

The Weir house was built c. 1830 in the Greek Revival style. Weir made two major additions to the two and a half story house, the first around 1900 when his friend, architect Charles Adams Platt prepared plans to replace a small porch at the southwest corner with the present columned porch on the south elevation that became the principal entrance. Also added at that time were a new front door and a one-story shed-roofed section the length of the north elevation, increasing the width of the first story from 28 feet to 37 feet.[12] A subsequent addition shown in plans dated 1911 by McKim, Mead and White, added a 12 x 16 foot extension of the dining room to the north.

The house is sheathed with red painted wooden clapboards and the gable roof with wooden shingles. The stone foundations are faced with granite ashlar in an unusual pattern of large and small pieces, possibly the work of Platt. Over the main entrance on Pelham Lane, Stanford White, a good friend, painted the words "Here shall we rest and call *content* our home," a phrase heading a letter to J. Alden from his brother John Ferguson Weir who

[12]National Register Nomination Form, 1983.

occupied the house in his absence for a time.[13] The house is painted the same red color with white trim as in Weir's day, as are the two studio buildings, one built by Weir some time after 1882 and the other by Young c. 1934.



Figure 7. The Weir House In 1989.

The interior of the house is depicted in several of Weir's paintings, *Idle Hours* (1888, Metropolitan Museum of Art), *My Own Fireside* (1886, San Diego Museum of Art), and *In the Livingroom* (c. 1890, private collection), to name just a few. It appears today much as in the paintings, the space not having been altered and many of the furnishings still extant. Its leaded small paned windows were brought from Europe by Weir and are easily recognizable in the paintings. The rooms are spacious yet intimate, their large fireplaces recalling cozy evenings when the family would gather around to fend off the chill of an early spring. The house was not centrally heated until after Weir's tenure. Photographs exist of the rooms during the Weir time and would provide guidance in reassembling furnishings and paintings, many of which are still in family hands.

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[13]Dorothy Weir Young, *The Life and Letters of J. Alden Weir,* p. 161.

The ground floor also contains a library fitted out by the three Weir daughters in the original entrance hall on Nod Hill Road, and a bedroom off it where the artist Albert Pinkham Ryder stayed on his visits to Branchville. Known to have been ill at ease in social settings, Ryder is said to have preferred this room because it had its own egress to the out of doors and allowed him to come and go as he pleased without having to encounter other guests.

In general the house and two studios are in good condition with no obvious areas of excessive deterioration. The studios, still in use by resident artist Sperry Andrews, appear barely altered since the Weir and Young eras. With minimal rehabilitation they could be opened for interpretation.

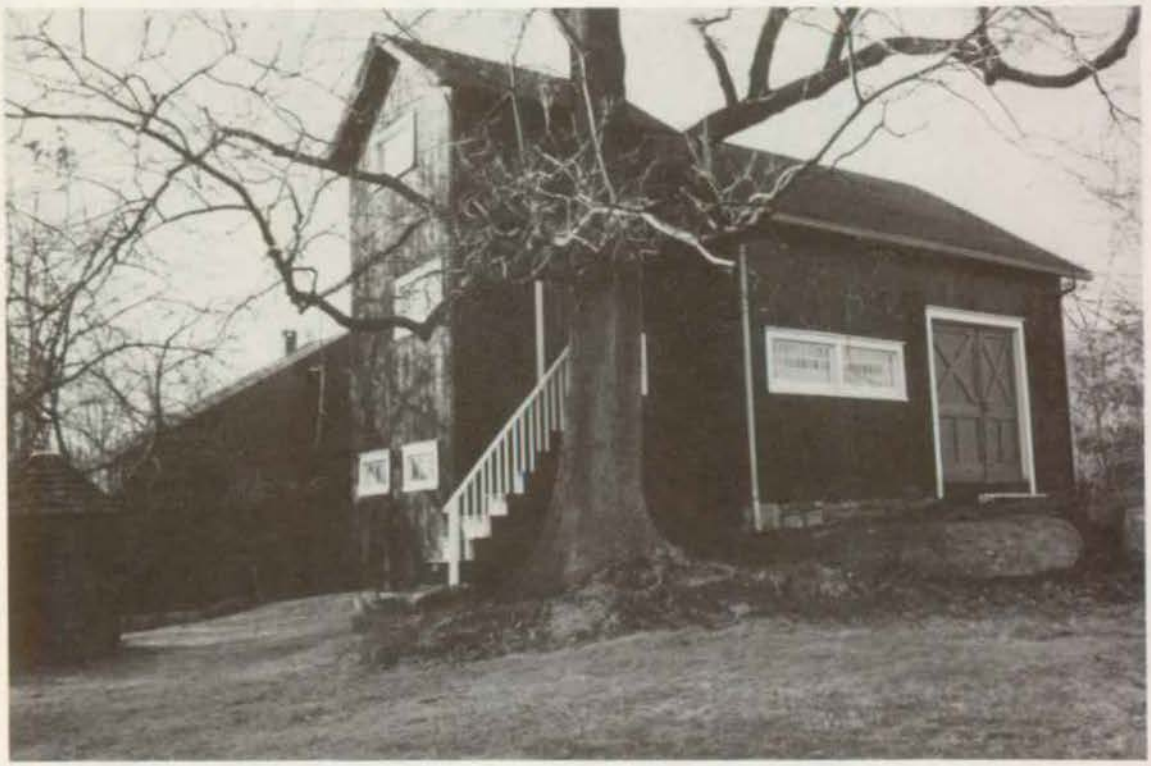


Figure 8. Exterior Of Weir's Studio Today.

The Weir barns and outbuildings are not in as good repair as the house and studios. Important to the site's integrity, these small structures include a two-story barn complex and an icehouse which were depicted in several of Weir's paintings. They once housed cows, chickens, and donkeys and still contain farming equipment. The stalls that once housed *Dolly* and *Billy,* the two donkeys in *The Donkey Ride* (Plate IV.) bear their names and contain their saddles and tack. The barns will need some early attention if they are to remain available for future use.

Across Nod Hill Road is a house where Weir's caretakers and their families lived. It was built c. 1850 and is a two-story, wood-frame building with a gable roof. It also has a small barn. Both the house and barn are in a relatively good state of repair.

The Weir house, barns, and studios are currently owned by the Trust for Public Land. Mr. and Mrs. Sperry Andrews reside in the main house and may continue to do so under the terms of a life tenancy. Having taken care of the property for so many years, and being active in the cause to preserve Weir Farm, they are the best possible interim managers of the property. They have been extremely helpful and accommodating to the study team and will continue to offer informal tours of the house and site upon request.

The Burlingham house is said to have been constructed c.1725, although physical evidence suggests a somewhat later date. Known as the Foster-Webb house, it was built as a one story structure with attic but was extensively remodeled in the 1930s. It is a gable-roofed frame building with red-painted clapboarding and white trim like the Weir house, and now has a usable second floor with five bedrooms and several baths. The first floor is currently being used for visitor reception and offices and the second for summer staff quarters. In general the house is in good condition, but does require attention to several items where deferred maintenance could cause more serious deterioration. Owned by the State of Connecticut, the house is now being maintained by the Trust for Public Land and Weir Farm Heritage Trust.

Also part of the Burlingham complex are a large barn, a stone woodshed, and a stone potting shed. All are in a reasonably good state of repair, having been built or renovated in the 1930s and maintained by the family until Mrs. Burlingham's death in 1986 when TPL acquired the property for preservation and open space purposes. These were among the first group of properties acquired by the State at Weir Farm.

The proposed Weir Farm Historic Site is zoned for two-acre residential development, as is the surrounding land. Existing land use controls appear to be adequate to regulate future development as most of the house lots around the perimeter of the site are already built upon with relatively unobtrusive large single-family structures. Should stronger controls than existing zoning and inland wetlands review be desired, special state legislation would be advisable due to the site's location in two municipalities. There is currently only informal design review, and this might not be adequate over the long term, especially to control future additions to existing houses or replacements in the event of fire.

Access

Weir Farm is approximately 45 miles from New York City and is easily accessible from the Connecticut Turnpike (I-95) and the Merritt Parkway via Connecticut Route 7, a two-lane highway in process of being widened and relocated in some areas. From Route 7 the site is reached from Route 102 (Branchville Road) and Nod Hill Road. While these are relatively narrow and steep, they are well maintained by the towns of Wilton and Ridgefield and passable in winter. There is concern locally that increased visitation to Weir Farm would require road widenings or relocations. The study team feels that proper site management and planning will make such changes unnecessary. This may mean provision of off-site parking, a shuttle service, dispersing programs throughout the year, and the like, to avoid traffic congestion that would be detrimental to the historic integrity of the site.

It should be emphasized that none of the alternatives presented in this study would necessitate the relocation of Route 7 or the creation of better access from it than currently exists. If the highway is to be relocated closer to Weir Farm impacts will have to be evaluated closely under the "Section 4f" reviews due to the site's National Register status. Critical concerns are potential highway noise and any adverse effects to the historic property. Fortunately, the proposed route (see Figure 2.) is separated from the proposed historic site by a significant grade change of some 500 feet in elevation.

Collections

One of Weir Farm's greatest strengths is that important paintings created at the site are still in private ownership and available for exhibition and study there. While many of Weir's works have been acquired by the nation's major museums, family members have kept together significant collections which they have most graciously allowed the study team to inspect. These include paintings as well as works on paper such as etchings, pastels, and early sketches. Also available both at the site and in family hands are furniture and objects owned by Weir and shown in paintings and photographs of the site. There is great potential for assembling a fine art collection for the site at reasonable cost -- if timely action is taken to acquire it.

While detailed reports were not prepared on all the available collections, samplings were made so as to judge the range and general condition of the art. It was established that many appropriate works are available and that they are generally in good condition, although some conservation might be necessary.

During the course of this study, participating art historians and collections specialists met with current owners of works under consideration for exhibition at Weir Farm to explore various alternative means of acquiring a permanent collection for the site. Since they agree that having a permanent art collection at the site is of critical importance, family members have stated that they will make every effort to make their holdings available for this purpose. This may mean that some works are donated while others are offered for sale to the site management entity. The Weir Farm Heritage Trust and Trust for Public Land are making interim arrangements to provide safe and secure storage for art works that might be donated, and are exploring various means of assembling collections. Any donations made at this time will be made with the proviso that they are for exhibition at Weir Farm, and will be offered to the permanent management entity when it has been designated.

An important task to be done, is to identify those works considered critical for a permanent art collection if Weir Farm is designated a National Historic Site. It must be recognized that NPS interpretive and research goals might dictate somewhat different selection criteria than those another organization might use. Priorities must be set to ensure that the most appropriate collection is acquired within funding constraints. This could be done with the help of a panel of experts who would evaluate available works and select those most appropriate for the site, taking into consideration both interpretive goals as well as condition of paintings, future storage and exhibition space, and other criteria. The panel would also be asked to identify selection criteria for works done by other artists associated with the site -- Mahonri Young, John Twachtman, Childe Hassam, Albert Pinkham Ryder, Emile Carlson, Dorothy Weir Young, and Sperry Andrews. Panelists would include experts on J. Alden Weir and American art, collections management, and conservation and would have no financial interest in any of the works under discussion.

The National Park Service maintains a wide variety of collections at its sites. The study team looked closely at Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site to see how it cares for and uses its extensive collections of the sculptor's works. The only other site in the National Park System dedicated to interpreting the workplace of an American artist, Saint-Gaudens NHS adheres to professionally accepted standards and maintains its collections largely with NPS-trained museum technicians. The superintendent is a nationally recognized art historian who specializes in the study of Augustus Saint-Gaudens. On-site expertise is supplemented, when necessary, with specialized services from nearby institutions such as Dartmouth College. The Saint-Gaudens Memorial, a park cooperator, acquires art for the site when it becomes available through sale or donation.

The Saint-Gaudens model is quite applicable to Weir Farm. Knowledgeable expertise exists near the site for consultation when necessary, but most curatorial and interpretive

functions could be carried out by NPS personnel. It should also be noted that volunteer docents are often very effective in creating and operating interpretive programs at sites such as this. The Weir Farm Heritage Trust membership includes well-qualified people interested in helping with interpretive programs.

The Management Alternatives describe several approaches to exhibiting and caring for works of art at Weir Farm. The Weir Farm Heritage Trust can be expected to play an important role in determining which approach is to be pursued, and in helping to raise private funds to assist in this purpose.



Figure 9. This Is The Place Monument, Mahonri M. Young, Pioneer Monument State Park, Utah, 1947. Cast from the artist's plasters which he created at Weir Farm.

Part VI: Management Alternatives

The management alternatives described here were developed by the study team to carry out the vision for Weir Farm embodied in the agreed-upon goals listed in Part IV of this report. Visits and detailed interviews were conducted with managers of other sites dedicated to interpreting the homes and workplaces of important artists, in order to explore various approaches to site management. Sites examined included Saint- Gaudens National Historical Site, Cornish, NH (National Park Service); Chesterwood, Stockbridge, MA (National Trust for Historic Preservation); Olana, Hudson, NY (New York State Historic Site), and Monet's house at Giverny in France (Musée Claude Monet). These visits provided a wealth of practical information on costs and programs as well as a better understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the different approaches. See Appendix A for more information on comparable sites.

A number of possible management entities were considered but not recommended here as they were not able to meet the Weir Farm goals. These included full operation of the site by the State of Connecticut (as New York State does at Olana) and management by the National Trust modeled after Chesterwood. While both these sites are of very high quality and offer many lessons, their management entities were not judged feasible for Weir Farm. Neither the State nor the National Trust has the capability or the desire to manage Weir Farm at present.

The alternatives are summarized on the chart and discussed in the text which follows.

WEIR FARM
MANAGEMENT ALTERNATIVES COMPARED

	ALTERNATIVE I: STATUS QUO	ALT. II: LOCAL HISTORIC SITE	ALT.III: NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE
Land Ownership	State DEP and TPL	State DEP and WFHT	NPS and State DEP
Site Management	WFHT	State DEP and WFHT	NPS w/WFHT help
Preservation	Emergency Stabilization	Major Structures Preserved	All Structures Preserved
Visitor Center/Offices	Burlingham House	Burlingham House	Burlingham House
Interpretive & Educational Programs	WFHT, Minimal Programs	WFHT, Moderate Level of Programs	NPS lead w/WFHT help
Research Programs	None	Unlikely	Good
Passive Recreation	Self-guided; maintenance by volunteers	Self-guided;maintenance by volunteers	NPS lead; professional site maintenance
Art Collection	None	Small Collection Possible	Ability to Obtain Suitable Collection
Art Gallery	None	None; Exhibition in Weir House or Visitor Center	New gallery by WFHT; private funds
Artist-in-Residence	None	Possible; Dependent on Source of Funding	Likely
Parking	In Fields	Lots Along Nod Hill Road for cars and buses	Along Nod Hill Rd.:cars; buses off-site
Land Acquisition Cost	$800,000	$800,000	$800,000
Collections Cost	0	$1,000,000	$3,500,000 (NPS)
Development Cost	$150,000	$1,500,000	$1,200,000 (NPS) $3,600,000 (WFHT/TPL)
Planning Cost	$50,000	$300,000	$500,000 (NPS)
Annual Operating Cost	$142,500	$300,000	$500,000 (NPS) $100,000 (WFHT)

Abbreviations: DEP: Department of Environmental Protection, State of Connecticut; TPL: Trust for Public Land; WFHT: Weir Farm Heritage Trust; NPS: National Park Service.

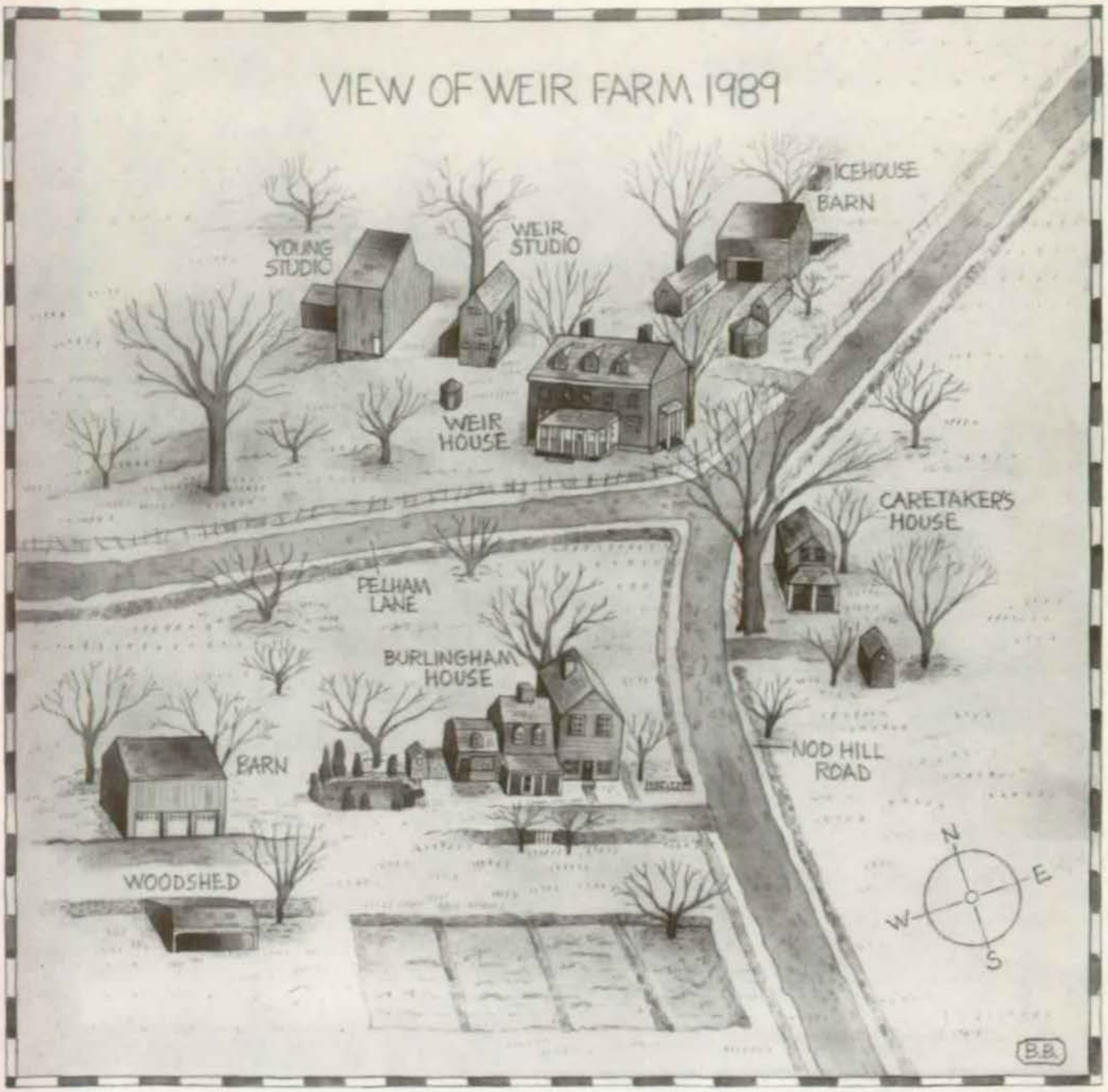

VIEW OF WEIR FARM 1989
ICEHOUSE
BARN
YOUNG STUDIO
WEIR STUDIO
WEIR HOUSE
CARETAKER'S HOUSE
PELHAM LANE
BURLINGHAM HOUSE
BARN
NOD HILL ROAD
WOODSHED
N
E
W
S
B.B.

Figure 10.

ALTERNATIVE I: STATUS QUO

General Description

This alternative assumes that things stay as they are now at Weir Farm. The heaviest reliance would be on the State of Connecticut, Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to protect, manage, and interpret Weir Farm although it has expressed serious reservations about its ability to perform these functions under existing funding constraints. Additional land acquisition monies (state or local) would be needed to purchase those properties being held on an interim basis by Trust for Public Land (TPL). Unless purchased from TPL within the next few years, the Weir house and several key parcels will be in jeopardy. Only basic maintenance is assumed for the most important historic structures and landscape. Some farm buildings might be allowed to collapse and the landscape would generally return to forest. Visitor services, interpretative, and art programs would be extremely limited and provided by the Weir Farm Heritage Trust (HT) and possibly the Nature Conservancy. The site would be open to the public, but only for nature walks and viewing the exteriors of the houses and studios. Parking would be permitted in open pastures beyond the Burlingham house or along roads approaching the site.

Ownership of Historic Site

Weir House/Studios/Barns: TPL for short term; property might have to be sold for development if no permanent acquisition funding mechanism identified.

Burlingham House/Barns: DEP

Caretaker's House: DEP

Historic Landscape: DEP and TPL (short term only)

Management

Visitor Facilities: Heritage Trust

Parking: In Burlingham pastures, along Nod Hill Road.

Maintenance: Largely by volunteers

Interpretive Programs: Heritage Trust, minimal programs.

Art Exhibition/Permanent Collection: None, due to inadequate security and staff.

Living Art Programs: Site available for use by existing local art classes. No artist-in-residence possible due to lack of staff for administration.

Open Space/Passive Recreation/Education Programs: Self-guided nature trail similar to program offered now by Nature Conservancy. No garden restoration. No farm animals.

Archives and Research: None sponsored by site.

Availability of Expertise: Heavy reliance on volunteerism. Limited access to experts in historic preservation, art history, cultural programming; Adequate in natural resource management.

Ability to Obtain Other Support: Limited.

Financial Viability of Programs: Dependent on strong volunteerism, Heritage Trust; income potential negligible.

Costs

Land Acquisition	$800,000
Development	150,000
Planning	50,000
	$1,000,000
Annual Operating	$142,500

ALTERNATIVE II: LOCAL HISTORIC SITE

General Description

Under this scenario the Weir Farm Heritage Trust would expand itself into an active management entity to preserve, protect and offer programs at Weir Farm. It would seek designation of the the site as a National Historic Landmark in order to make use of technical assistance from the National Park Service, and would enter into cooperative agreements with various nonprofit and governmental agencies in Connecticut to offer a moderate level of interpretation and programming. The Trust for Public Land might need to stay involved with the project for some time, until sufficient funds were raised to purchase the Weir House complex, the only part of the site not currently slated for public acquisition.

In order to generate income for the site WFHT will have to encourage high visitation and provide plenty of bus parking, gift shop, restaurant, and other fee-producing facilities. The site could be expected to draw 150,000 - 200,000 people per year with peak visitation in the summer months, although only a small percentage of these would be able to participate in interpretive programs. (Olana, for example, has an annual visitation of some 160,000 to its grounds; the house has accommodated up to 40,000 annual visitors in recent years but this number has been restricted to 21,000 to protect the historic fabric of the building.)

Physically this alternative is almost the same as Alternative III but with more parking and without a gallery for the exhibition of works of art.

The site could have the major problems associated with Monet's house at Giverny without providing enough of a draw to cover costs (over use; many site buildings closed to the general public). Inclusion might be sought in the state museum system with a line item budget request for maintenance and operation, but this could prove difficult due to recent state funds obtained for land acquisition with the proviso that site management would be performed by others. At best, the site could be a good house museum next to a nature preserve, with a few art classes, but probably not much more.

Ownership of Historic Site

Weir House/Studios/Barns: Heritage Trust

Burlingham House/Barns: DEP



Plate I. *Midday Rest in New England*, J. Alden Weir, 1897, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia. Gift of Issac H. Clothier, Edward H. Coates, Dr. Francis W. Lewis, Robert C. Ogden, and Joseph G. Rosengarten.



Plate II. *Road To The Land Of Nod,* Childe Hassam, 1910, Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection.



Plate III. *On the Shore*, J. Alden Weir, c. 1909, Collection IBM Corporation, Armonk, NY.





Above: Plate IV. *The Donkey Ride*, J. Alden Weir, c. 1900, Private Collection.

Below: Plate V. *Portrait Of J. Alden Weir*, John Singer Sargent, Private Collection.

Caretaker's House: DEP

Historic Landscape: DEP / Heritage Trust

Management

Visitor Facilities: Heritage Trust would operate from Burlingham house.

Parking: Several lots along Nod Hill Road; would have to accommodate bus parking.

Maintenance: Small staff, continuing dependence on volunteers. DEP would be responsible for maintenance but likely to be constrained by lack of funds.

Interpretive Programs: Moderate. Content would be dependent on need for income. Staff would have to be assigned to income-generating activities as highest priority. Weir house would need to be available for private functions and so might be closed to the public.

Art Exhibition/Permanent Collection: Possible, although difficult to see where funding would come from to create safe and secure exhibition space and to operate it once built. Limited exhibition of paintings possible in Weir House and studios.

Living Art Programs: Possible, although probably limited to classes for people in immediate area. Burlingham barn might need to be used for higher revenue-producing uses such as restaurant, shops, function rooms instead of art classes. Artist-in-residence in Caretaker's house with selection criteria based on ability to bring in revenues, i.e., artist with own fellowship or ability to pay rent.

Open Space/Passive Recreation/Education Programs: Adequate. Heavily reliance on existing Nature Conservancy self-guided tour approach. Limited garden restoration. No farm animals.

Archives and Research: Unlikely to be sponsored by site except under unusual circumstances. Dependent upon financial support.

Availability of Expertise: Moderate. Dependent on public appropriations and continued private financial support. On-site expertise in historic preservation, art history, park management, curatorial services, and interpretation would depend on ability to raise annual operating budget.

Ability to Obtain Other Support: Moderate.

Financial Viability of Programs: Dependent on fees, earned income, and funds raised by Heritage Trust. Need for strong fund raising staff may limit resources for other programs.

Costs

Land Acquisition	$800,000
Collections	1,000,000
Planning	300,000
Development	1,500,000
	$3,600,000
Annual Operating	$300,000

ALTERNATIVE III: NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

General Description

This alternative would be realized if Weir Farm were designated a National Historic Site by Congress. The National Park Service would play a major role in preserving, interpreting, and managing the site although the Weir Farm Heritage Trust and State DEP would remain involved in key ways. Primary NPS responsibilities would be ownership and preservation of the historic structures, maintenance of landscape and buildings, and operation of interpretive programs. DEP would continue to own the open space acquired in 1988 and would acquire the few remaining parcels now being held or under negotiation by TPL. DEP would donate or lease the Burlingham and Caretaker's houses to NPS, and grant conservation easements over the historic landscape to allow for Service maintenance and protection personnel to operate at the site.

NPS could also own and take care of all or part of the art collection, in cooperation with the Heritage Trust and nearby institutions such as the Wadsworth Atheneum and Yale University. The Heritage Trust would take the lead in creating suitable exhibition space for the permanent art collection, establishing facilities for on-site art classes, fund raising, and generally working with NPS as does the St. Gaudens Memorial to respond when a flexible nonprofit organization is needed. The only new structure would be the art gallery which could be located west of the Burlingham house, sited against the hillside so as to appear no larger than the nearby small barns and farm buildings.

As the level of visitation will be affected by site management, emphasis will be placed on programs which are spread out over the year rather than concentrated only during the peak summer months. Annual visitation similar to Saint-Gaudens NHS (40,000) or Chesterwood (34,000) is envisioned. Weir Farm's location just beyond the New York metropolitan area, provides ample opportunities to co-sponsor programs at nearby cultural facilities.

This is the only alternative that meets the goals established by the study team and endorsed by TPL and the Heritage Trust. National Park recognition would enable the Heritage Trust to raise significant private funds and would bring a much higher degree of cooperation from cultural institutions such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art or College Art Association which have a national focus.

Ownership and Maintenance of Historic Site

Weir House/Studios/Barns: National Park Service (NPS)

Burlingham House/Barns: NPS

Caretaker's House: NPS

Historic Landscape: DEP owned, NPS easement to allow for maintenance, protection

Management

Visitor Facilities: NPS and Heritage Trust

Parking: Small lots behind stone walls along Nod Hill Road. Bus parking off site at Route 7 kiosk.

Maintenance: NPS

Interpretive Programs: NPS lead with HT support; cooperative agreements likely with major museums and university art history departments.

Art Exhibition/Permanent Collection: Heritage Trust would build gallery west of the Burlingham barns, to be managed with NPS.

Living Art Programs: Heritage Trust lead in conjunction with NPS. Classes with local groups as well as with Lyme Art Academy. Artist-in-residence potential through private endowment.

Open Space/Passive Recreation/Education Programs: NPS lead in conjunction with Nature Conservancy and Heritage Trust. Garden restorations, reintroduction of farm animals, guided walks programs could occur.

Archives and Research: NPS lead with Heritage Trust help; potential for significant cooperative agreements with major museums and universities as well as Library of Congress and Archives of American Art.

Availability of Expertise: Excellent. On-site staff would include park manager, curator, art historian, interpretive specialist. Experts available from the North Atlantic Regional Office of the NPS in historic preservation, landscape architecture, collections management, and park planning.

Ability to Obtain Other Support: Excellent.

Financial viability of Programs: Excellent.

Costs	**NPS**	**WFHT**
Land Acquisition	800,000	--
Collections	3,500,000	--
Planning	500,000	--
Development	1,200,000	$3,600,000
	$6,000,000	$3,600,000
Annual Operating	$500,000	$100,000

Part VII: Next Steps and Future Research

Public Review

The findings of this suitability/feasibility study have been presented to and reviewed by the Weir Farm Heritage Trust, the private nonprofit group most concerned with the preservation of Weir Farm. The Trust is expected to be a key partner in creating a permanent management structure for the site.

As mentioned earlier, several public information meetings were held in the spring of 1989 to inform town residents and officials about the study, and to solicit their ideas. Attendees were invited to attend meetings of the Weir Farm Heritage Trust if they wished to participate further in the project. All meetings of the Trust are open to the public and are well attended by people with statewide and local concerns.

Other public informational meetings will be held in the coming year, to review the information included in the suitability/feasibility study. Participants will be invited to submit comments, which will help guide the Heritage Trust and National Park Service as they evaluate management alternatives for Weir Farm.

Continuing community involvement will be important to Weir Farm's future. Located in a region with strong town and state government, there is much interest in how the property is managed. The permanent management entity will find much support and assistance if it is open and forthright in its dealings with community representatives. Weir Farm will be successful if its advocates can institutionalize the informal partnerships that have brought it so far already.

Interim Management Actions

In order to guide the Trust for Public Land and Weir Farm Heritage Trust which are now managing Weir Farm, the study team was asked for help in identifying actions which could be accomplished while the parties are deliberating on the permanent structure. The intent was to highlight projects that could be undertaken that would not damage the site, or adversely affect its integrity should it be acquired by the National Park Service in the future. Appropriate Interim Management Actions are summarized in Appendix H. of this report.

Research Needs

The suitability/feasibility study uncovered several areas where further research is needed for the preservation and interpretation of Weir Farm. This information should be gathered regardless of which management entity operates the site over the long term, and includes the following:

1. Identification of selection criteria, a selection process and available works of art for a core collection to be exhibited at Weir Farm.

2. Identification and cataloging of archival material -- letters, documents, photographs -- much of which is known to be in major university and museum collections, some of which is still in family hands.

3. Historic landscape report -- to provide definitive documentary and physical evidence to guide in the restoration of the historic landscape and gardens to the Weir/Young era.

4. Historic structures reports on the houses, barns, and farm buildings -- to identify and document original historic fabric and changes over time.

Preliminary work on these four items began during the suitability/feasibility study and could continue while management options are being considered, to avoid a prolonged study period after the management entity begins operations. If research results are not available, it would be irresponsible for site managers to make physical changes to the historic structures or landscape even though public expectations might cause them to want to show tangible progress at the site. The tasks could be performed under the current memorandum of understanding between the Trust for Public Land and NPS North Atlantic Region, providing adequate funding is available.

In addition to the above, several areas require additional work if the site is to become part of the National Park System and carry out the programs described in Management Alternative III. These might be incorporated into the basic NPS planning documents (statement for management, general management plan, etc.) and are critical if the site is to meet its goal of exhibiting works of art in the location which inspired them. The tasks are grouped more or less in priority order, and are:

1. Completion of the catalogue raisonné documenting and locating the works of J. Alden Weir.

2. Further development of guidelines for programs based on analysis of site's carrying capacity.

3. Continuing research on artists who visited, worked at, or were inspired by Weir Farm (Weir, Ryder, Twachtman, Hassam, Carlsen, Young, Andrews).

Appendix A: Comparisons with Other Sites

At the start of the suitability/feasibility study, team members investigated several historic sites which interpret the life and work of visual artists. Visits were arranged where possible, and site managers interviewed to obtain a base of information on the issues associated with this special type of historic property. This information was used to develop management models for such sites, which were then examined in light of National Park Service management policies. As mentioned in the body of the report, emphasis was placed on sites open to the public and managed as such, including Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site in Cornish, NH (home/studio of August Saint-Gaudens); Olana in Hudson, New York (home/studio of Frederic Church), Chesterwood in Stockbridge, MA (home/studio of Daniel Chester French) and the home and studio of Claude Monet at Giverny, France. A copy of the site visit report to Giverny may be found at the end of this appendix.

The National Park System does not include any sites whose primary purpose is to preserve the homes or workplaces of American painters. This made direct comparisons with existing NPS sites impossible. There are, however, a number painters' homes on the list of National Historic Landmarks (NHL) and several of these were examined in order to provide a better frame of reference for looking at Weir Farm. NHL sites visited included the houses of: Frederic E. Church (1826-1900), Thomas Cole (1801-1848), and Thomas Moran (1837-1926), all in New York State. The Church, Cole and Moran sites show the broad range of properties meeting NHL criteria. At one extreme is Church's Olana, a 126-acre estate with an elaborate Persian-influenced house and extensive collections of the artist's work and belongings and at the other is the Moran property, a relatively modest shingled house on two acres close to where East Hampton's Main Street intersects Route 27. It includes no furnishings or paintings by Moran, and was altered quite a bit after his lifetime, although probably not irreversibly.

Weir Farm has more in common with Olana than with the Moran House. Though the workplaces of two very different painters, the landscapes of both Weir Farm and Olana exerted strong influences on their owners. Even more significant, is that those influences can be seen clearly today if the artists' work is examined in the context of the landscapes which they selected and ultimately shaped for themselves. One gains a deeper understanding of both the paintings and the subject landscape, for example, when one examines works such as *Autumn View from Olana* or *Winter Landscape from Olana* [14] that Church painted from his hilltop retreat high above the Hudson. Learning more about the artist, one discovers that he sited the house carefully to take best advantage of the views he valued, and that he planned

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[14]Olana collection, Hudson, NY. Illustrated in John K. Howat, *The Hudson River and Its Painters*, New York, American Legacy Press, 1983.

certain windows to "frame" pictures his trained eye saw in the picturesque river valley around his home.

The entire property can be seen as a work of art by Church, as he took over the architectural design of the house and grounds from Calvert Vaux before Vaux had completed it, and transformed the project into a personal expression of his own esthetic. The result is highly idiosyncratic and provides a rich experience for those who wish to understand this artist and American perceptions of nature of his era. As one of the few artist's homes open to the public in the United States, it gives however, a somewhat misleading view of the style of living to which mid-19th century artists were accustomed. The scion of a wealthy family, Church also achieved an unusually high level of financial success from his work and could afford to live in luxury. Still, the site's completeness provides its managers with excellent opportunities to interpret an artist who successfully combined "...a scientific interest in geology and the history of the earth with a theological belief that the best avenue for an approach to God could be found through the most dramatic natural phenomena of the earth itself."[15]

The Moran house, on the other hand, is much less directly associated with this artist's subject matter. While it is no doubt interesting to stand in the actual studio where great works of art were created, Moran's canvases realistically depict the Grand Canyon and the Yellowstone Valley, not the shingled houses of his neighbors in the village of East Hampton. One can perhaps learn something about Moran, the man, by walking in his footsteps, but the interpretive connections with his art are not strong.

Weir Farm is rich in interpretive potential, because it enables the visitor to comprehend the sea change in American views towards nature that occurred at the end of the 19th century. His choice of location and technique of capturing it on canvas, no longer emphasize the spiritual, but instead the physical reality of daily life in the natural light of Branchville, Connecticut.

It is important to note that there are no NHL sites listed under the sub-category of American Impressionism, 1876-1920. This represents one of the serious gaps in the information about sites associated with American artists, and would be rectified with the preparation of a theme study. In the absence of a theme study, the authors of this report reviewed the literature on American Impressionism and investigated several sites which could be expected to emerge as NHL candidates in the course of such a study.

Much of the serious scholarship in American art is of fairly recent vintage. The past 20-25 years have produced many thorough critical analyses of American artists, resulting in

[15]Jules David Prown, *American Painting*, New York, Skira/Rizzoli, 1987.

greater recognition for some who might otherwise have been forgotten. This has been true for individual artists like Albert Pinkham Ryder and Thomas Cole, as well as for artistic movements such as the Hudson River School or American Impressionism. The American impressionists, wrote Boyle in 1974 "have been overlooked and their rediscovery has not only added to the knowledge of a particularly interesting era in American life, but the sheer good painting, *the intrinsic quality* of much of their work, has expanded the experience and enriched the lives of those who acknowledge the merit of a superb painting regardless of the artist or his nationality." [16]

A group of artists began exhibiting together in 1897 and became known as the Ten American Painters or "The Ten." Generally considered to have included the leading figures of American Impressionism (although not every American artist painting in the impressionist style belonged to the organization)[17] these accomplished painters seceded from the Society of American Artists in order to have more control over how their work was selected and exhibited to the New York public. The Ten was considered "a kind of academy of American Impressionism" [18] and is clearly the most reasonable place to look for artists to represent this movement in American art.

The founders of The Ten were Childe Hassam (1859-1935), J. Alden Weir and John H. Twachtman (1853-1902). Other members included Edward Simmons, Abbott H. Thayer, Robert Reid, Willard Metcalf, Thomas Dewing, Joseph DeCamp, Frank Benson, Edmund Tarbell, and William Merritt Chase who joined several years after Twachtman's death. The group held annual shows from 1898-1917 and developed a distinctively American style which shared many common elements with French Impressionism. The Americans, like the French, painted out-of-doors and used pure unmixed colors adjacent to each other to convey light and form when seen at a distance by the viewer. But the Americans typically used quieter tones and were more interested in the specific place than their French colleagues who became increasingly abstract in their landscape paintings. For this reason, actual places where the Americans painted are of greater importance to an understanding of the work than are many of the French locations which have been so generalized as to be unrecognizable.

For the sake of comparison, the study team looked at the homes and studios of the three founders: Hassam, Weir and Twachtman. Neither the Hassam nor the Twachtman site is on the National Register, so documentation was somewhat difficult to obtain. The locations

[16]Richard J. Boyle, *American Impressionism,* Boston, New York Graphic Society,1987 edition.

[17] The most important non-members were the expatriate Mary Cassatt, who is usually considered part of the French Impressionist movement., and Theodore Robinson who died before The Ten was founded although he was close to Weir and would certainly have been a member.

[18]E.P. Richardson, *Painting in America,* New York, Thomas Y. Crowell, 1965.

were discovered from recent exhibition catalogues, the Hassam house from "En Plein Air: The Art Colonies at East Hampton and Old Lyme, 1880-1930"[19] and the Twachtman house from "John Twachtman, Connecticut Landscapes."[20]

The Hassam house is a two-story timber frame structure built in the early 19th century and substantially altered in 1904 with the addition of a two-story porch and gambrel roofed kitchen wing. It was purchased by Hassam in 1919[21] and he lived there until his death in 1935. He is said to have bought the house after its enlargement by Ruger Donoho, a friend and fellow artist.

The most significant changes since Hassam's tenure appear to be in the landscape immediately surrounding the house, and in the adjacent neighborhood. Once the only homestead on a rural country lane, the house is now part of a contemporary suburban resort neighborhood. House lots are roughly two acres. The Hassam house itself is well maintained and visible from the road, but its original circular driveway has been replaced with one that borders the south side of the house. Hassam's studio in the barn at the rear of the property has been converted into an apartment and a swimming pool has been installed adjacent to it.

This property should be evaluated further against National Register and National Historic Landmark criteria as it appears to have some degree of significance, but it does not have the same level of integrity as Weir Farm. More important, is the very minor role of this site in Hassam's painting -- he retired here late in a distinguished career, and did not paint any of his notable works on the site or during this time in his life. He is far better appreciated, for example, for his flag paintings set in New York and Paris, or his colorful sunny views of Appledore in the Isles of Shoals off the New Hampshire coast.

The house, which he called "Willow Bend" was the only home he is known to have owned. The property does not include any works of art or personal possessions of the artist which, according to the current owner, were willed to the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters to be sold for the establishment of a scholarship fund for artists.

John H. Twachtman purchased a 17-acre farm in Cos Cob, Connecticut in 1890-91[22] where he lived and worked until his death in 1902. He first came to the area to visit his close friend Weir in nearby Branchville, and eventually found this similar but much smaller property. Twachtman painted many of his well-known winter landscapes at this site, and

[19]Florence Griswold Museum, Old Lyme, CT and Guild Hall Museum, East Hampton, NY, 1989.

[20]Deborah Chotner, Lisa N. Peters and Kathleen A. Pyne, National Gallery of Art, 1989.

[21]Robert Hefner, *East Hampton Heritage*, Norton, NY, 1982.

[22]Lisa N. Peters, *Op. Cit.*, p. 13.

some of their features are still recognizable. The property includes a former mid-19th century farm house to which the artist is said to have made several additions to accommodate his growing family. The most notable of these additions is a classical portico attributed to Stanford White, who also designed an addition to the Weir House at Branchville. An adjacent barn has been renovated recently[23] and the wooden footbridge which appears in several Twachtman paintings appears to have been replaced by a contemporary structure.

While the exterior of the Twachtman house resembles photographs taken during the artist's lifetime, the surrounding area has changed dramatically. Instead of a rural landscape, the house looks out into a neighborhood of estate-like suburban homes, evenly dispersed on lots which appear to range between 2 and 5 acres. Round Hill Road, a few feet from the Twachtman front door, is a major paved route from the Merritt Parkway to downtown Greenwich.

While the stream and waterfall Twachtman painted so often still exist, one can only imagine how the setting would have felt before all the encroaching new construction. One can no longer perceive the broad expanses of snowy hillside most characteristic of his work. This, and the overall size of the site, appear to make it unsuitable for interpretation or operation as a public destination. Published sources do not indicate that any significant collections of paintings, furnishings or archival material are included in the property.

In conclusion, Impressionism was an important movement in American art and its most intact sites should be recognized by the NHL program and included in the National Park System if they are "of sufficient size and appropriate configuration ... to ensure long- term protection of resources and to accommodate public use ..."[24] While both the Hassam and the Twachtman houses are well-preserved and certainly have some level of historical significance, they do not appear likely candidates for full-scale suitability/feasibility assessment as potential National Park sites. It should also be noted that both houses are occupied as private residences, and there is no indication that the owners wish to open them to the public.

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[23]*Ibid.*, p.16.

[24]U. S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *Management Policies*, 1978.

MEMORANDUM

TO: Charles Clapper, Associate Regional Director, Planning and Resource Preservation
Terry Savage, Chief, Planning and Design
Catherine Barner, Trust for Public Land

FROM: Sarah Peskin, Planner / Legislative Specialist

DATE: April 29, 1989

SUBJECT: GIVERNY SITE VISIT REPORT

I was able to arrange the trip to the Musée Monet at Giverny thanks to information provided by Susan Ball of the College Art Association, and Frances Chaves of the Reader's Digest. Charles Burlingham had referred me to them. Because I had only a couple of weeks to arrange the trip, I probably was more like a typical visitor than is usually the case when we perform a site inspection of a park. In the brief comments which follow, I have attempted to record my impressions from both perspectives: 1) those of a park planning professional and 2) those of a casual visitor.

I arrived in Paris on March 8 and made final arrangements to travel to Giverny on the following day. Although I had some basic information about how to get there, I did spend a rather frustrating half hour standing in a variety of different information lines before I obtained a train schedule and the name of the correct station from which to depart. I started my day at L'Orangerie where several of Monet's great Water Lilies are displayed in a gallery built expressly for them. This would have been a good place for some simple directions to Giverny, but none were offered here or at the Musée d'Orsay which also has major Monet works in the permanent collection.

The train ride to Vernon, the nearest town to Giverny, is just under an hour. The Musée Monet is about 3 miles from Vernon and easily reached by taxi. I was very surprised to discover that the main road from Vernon actually goes right through the site -- Monet's house and flower gardens are on one side of it and the Japanese-style Water garden on the other. The entire site is very much a part of the village of Giverny, which appears little changed since the artist lived there. The main house and its garden walls form one edge of the town's main thoroughfare, now named the Rue Claude Monet. See diagrams. Even during the winter

when the site is closed to the public, it is very visible from the main roads rather than being hidden away like a private estate.

Opposite the entrance on the Rue Claude Monet is a small, attractively landscaped parking lot with spaces for 80 cars and 10 buses. The original farm buildings are on this side of the street and they have been renovated to accommodate a restaurant/cafe, a shop selling flowers and plants, and housing and studios for the artist in residence program. The artist in residence facilities face their own private courtyard -- the original farmyard -- and are not perceived by the public as part of the visitor offerings. The artists (3 at a time) each have newly renovated, fully furnished, one-bedroom apartments in what was once a stone barn. They share a skylit studio of modest size (maybe 300-400 sq. ft.) on the top floor of the same building.

One enters the site through a new addition built onto the Water Lilies studio, Monet's third and last studio at the farm. Admission is about $5 to the museum and gardens, $3 for the gardens only with reduced rates for children. A large gift shop occupies about a third of the studio space, which also includes reproductions of original furnishings, cases holding photographs and memorabilia, and full scale reproductions of the Water Lilies canvases which are now at L'Orangerie. After seeing the studio, the visitor exits into the Clos Normand, or native flower garden of Normandy. One is immediately struck by the compactness and intensity of this place Monet created. He treated the garden much as he did his canvases, using every detail to create a whole much greater than the sum of its parts.

His house is normally visited next, and has been accurately and beautifully restored to appear as it would have during the artist's lifetime. It offers wonderful interpretive opportunities, and one can see how he and his large family lived and what was important to them -- light, air, food, flowers, bright colors, books, Japanese prints, well made and designed pottery and furniture. An interesting feature is an entirely hidden modern kitchen, recessed into a wall of the otherwise accurately restored original kitchen. This allows the house to be used for contemporary functions without spoiling the historic furnishings. The restoration work for the house and gardens was done mostly between 1977 and 1985.

An interesting issue is that of the reproductions which hang in the first studio which adjoins Monet's bedroom. These are full scale replicas of the paintings Monet lived with, favorites painted by his friends and colleagues as well as by himself. Madame Claudette Lindsay, the Assistant Director and my host, reports that the museum has been criticized by other museum professionals for showing replicas that are so like the originals as to confuse viewers. They have responded by adding large labels to the reproductions that clearly identify where the originals can be seen. She and the director feel that it is important to show

this room as Monet would have used it and that the replicas do a good job of this. She added that it would be much better, of course, if the originals were available for use in this way but that the collections were sent elsewhere before the future of the house was determined. Many of the paintings are displayed at the Marmottan in Paris, a museum in a recently renovated town house that is owned by the Académie des Beaux-Arts which also was willed the land and buildings at Giverny at the death of Monet's son Michel in the 1940s. The original argument for sending the paintings to the Marmottan was that they would be safer there, but ironically that museum was the victim of a major art theft several years ago and many of the works which once hung at Giverny are now lost.

After visiting the house, the typical visitor can stroll the garden paths, have lunch or tea at the cafe across the street (the house closes for two hours at midday), or proceed through a small tunnel at one edge of the Clos Normand to reach the Water Garden. Here the landscape is entirely different from the native gardens, with lovely willow trees, rhododendron and wisteria creating an intimate woodland scene surrounding the famous water lily pond with its distinctive footbridges. It is very interesting to see how small this place is when it has taken on a larger-than-life scale in the iconography of 19th century art. One has the sense of a miniature world created by the artist just for the sake of stimulating his artistic expression. As carefully restored by the museum's horticulturalist, it offers continually changing compositions of water, light, and vegetation that inspire and delight the contemporary visitor much as they did Monet.

The Musée Monet is visited by 280,000 people per year. Its operations are entirely supported by admissions, rents and gift shop sales. A summer staff of approximately 25 people operates the site, but most of these are college student volunteers. Although some $7-8 million has been raised privately to rehabilitate the house and gardens, the annual operating budget is very tight. The year-round staff is limited to the Assistant Director, her secretary, and the horticulturalist. Director Gerald Van der Kemp is on site for part of the year, with the remainder spent representing the museum's interests in New York and Paris.

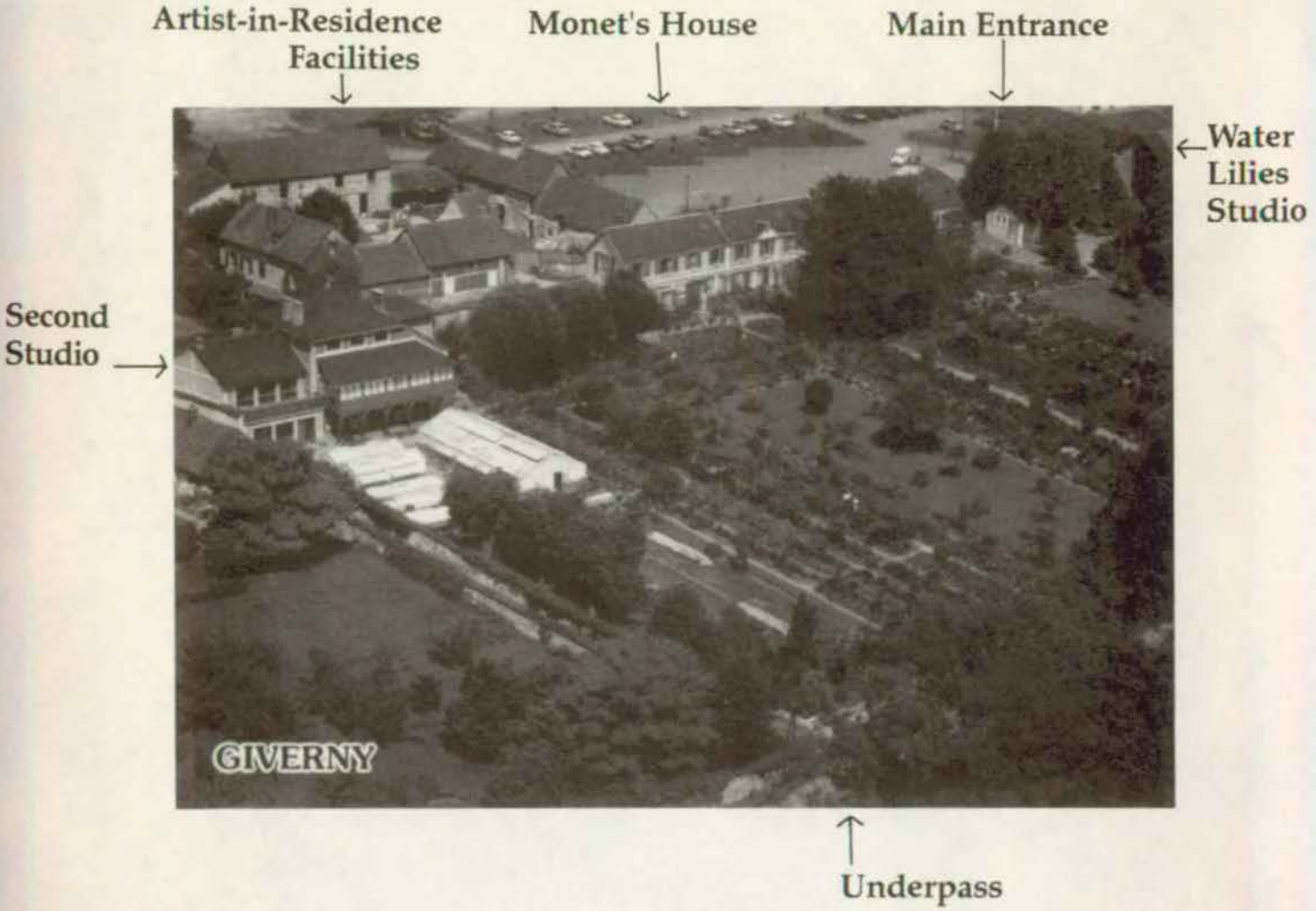
The financial structure of the Musée Monet at Giverny has several serious negative impacts on the preservation and interpretation of the site. To begin with, the site seems to be physically overburdened by the level of visitation which reaches several thousand visitors per day during the peak season. The secretary described the paths like the Métro at rush hour. Still, fiscal constraints make the managers reluctant to limit admissions.

Another serious issue is that there is much the visitor cannot see, because facilities are needed to entertain and house the "benefactors" who have contributed the funds to preserve the site. The most unfortunate case is with the second studio, a free-standing building

bordering the Clos Normand and where Monet created most of his work at the site, which is now used as an apartment for the Director and his guests. It contains Monet's personal library and is a major piece of the story if one wants to understand how the artist lived and grew professionally at Giverny.

Other site issues are not unique to the Musée and are noted only in passing. These include: lack of a protected buffer zone around the site to prevent incompatible development in the historic landscape, inadequate parking that could be distributed better so as to be less intrusive to neighbors, minimal interpretive or directional signage.

Overall, the Musée Monet at Giverny is a tremendously impressive, important, and popular site. It has been meticulously restored and preserved and is well maintained today, despite financial constraints. Its strong visitation figures demonstrate that there is a great deal of interest in sites of this kind and that people will go to some trouble to reach them. It offers many lessons for those concerned about preserving the places and stories associated with the world's great artists, and bears closer examination as it proceeds with its long-range plans. Madame Lindsay was most cordial and helpful, and has offered to stay in touch with the Weir Farm project and to assist in any way she might in the future. This could include a site visit to Giverny, with which she would help.


Artist-in-Residence Facilities
Monet's House
Main Entrance
Water Lilies Studio
Second Studio
GIVERNY
Underpass

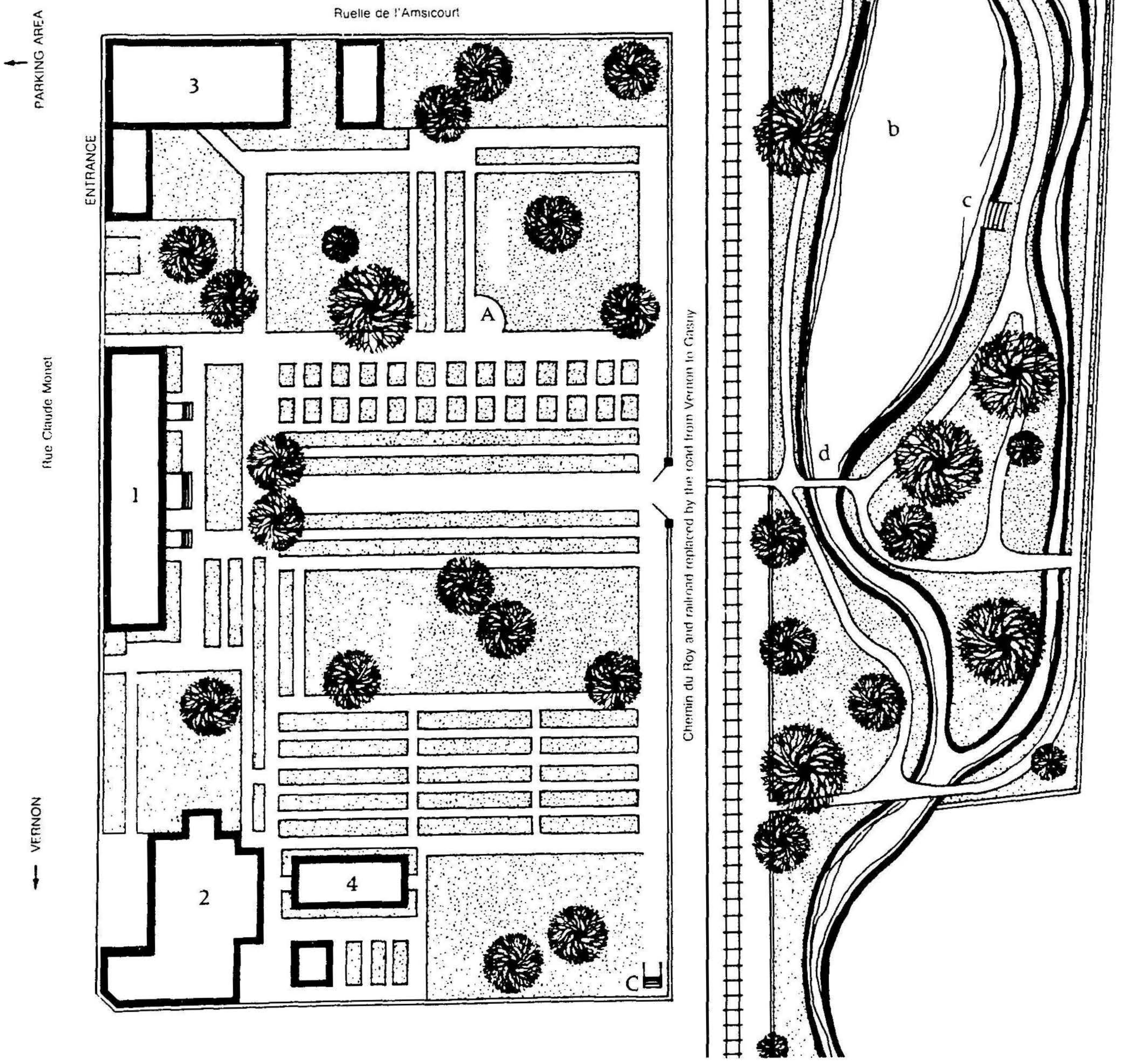
The Gardens

Georges Clemenceau, speaking of his friend Claude Monet, used to say that "his garden was his studio". Monet was indeed very fondly attached to it, and during his last moments the garden alone filled his thoughts. In fact, the garden features two aspects of Monet's taste : on one side, what he called the Clos Normand, on the other the Water Garden surrounding the pools.

A the Clos Normand
1 The house
2 The second studio
3 The Water Lily studio
4 The green houses

B The Water Garden
a Water inlet to the pool
b Water Lily pool
c Landing stage
d Japanese Bridge

C Underpass connecting the gardens



Appendix B: The Importance of Weir Farm

Prepared by Dr. Doreen Bolger, Curator of American Painting
Metropolitan Museum of Art[25]

J. Alden Weir acquired his farm at Branchville, Connecticut, in 1882, in exchange for one of the still-life paintings that were then his specialty. From then on, inspired by the rustic beauty of the land around him, he devoted more and more time to landscape painting, eventually becoming one of the principal exponents of American Impressionism.

Weir was so entranced with Branchville that when he made a honeymoon trip to Europe with his wife Anna in 1883, his letters home are filled with references to the farm and, in fact, he was so anxious to return to it that he telescoped a planned three-year European sojourn into five short months. "I have often thought while over here this year that Europe has lost most of its charms, or that I have become a better American," he wrote to his parents, "In fact Anna and I have both often wished to be at Old Branchville." Shortly thereafter he confessed: "We long for the quiet plain little house among the rocks." The Weirs soon established a pattern of life that continued for decades; they spent their winters in New York, at the hub of artistic life, and their long summers at Branchville, making occasional visits to Windham, Connecticut, where Anna's family maintained a home. Weir loved every tree and rock on his farm at Branchville. Henry de Raasloff, a fishing companion at the farm, described Weir's interest in its landscape features:

> *The country around Branchville is very "paintable," and on the way to the fishing place Weir was all "artist," pointing out to me the manifold beauties of the landscape. When I called his attention to some stately trees, he said with that smile of his, "Those are my trees. I bought them because the farmers do not, as a rule, appreciate such trees and are quite liable to sell them for lumber.*

The beauty of this site and Weir's kindness drew many visitors to Branchville, some to paint and draw, and others to share in his warm family life. John Ferguson Weir, a painter who taught for many years at Yale University, commented on the impact of his younger brother and his country home:

> *I always feel when I am with you a wonderful sense of the nearness of higher influences, for your whole nature is intuitional, or inspirational, in there is no hard repellent shell to be broken through [to] ... approach you ... I would like to*

[25]Dr. Bolger is now Curator of American Art and Sculpture at the Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth, Texas, but prepared this essay while in her previous position.

go with you to your rookery at Branchville: just to stroll over the place and then site before a fire in the big fireplace and talk. I always feel happy when I am with you.

John H. Twachtman, the American Impressionist who later purchased a country home in nearby Cos Cob, rented a house in Branchville for the summer of 1888. He and Weir etched together out-of-doors and enjoyed the use of a new printing press set up in Weir's studio. Some of Twachtman's etchings, such as *Branchville, Connecticut,* and his painting *Branchville Lane* date from this period. Once Twachtman was settled in Cos Cob, in the 1890s, the two artists saw each other often in the country. Theodore Robinson was a frequent visitor to both the Weir and the Twachtman homes. Weir encouraged Robinson to find a country retreat of his own. "He thinks I ought to have a place of my own and get acquainted with it -- grow up with it. I must think of this," Robinson wrote in his diary on April 11, 1895, the year before his untimely death.

Childe Hassam, another New York Impressionist, visited Branchville often. By his own admission, he "saw a great deal of Weir in town and country." A number of his paintings and lithographs show subjects that are almost certainly of Branchville. One of the most beautiful is *Road to the Land of Nod,* done in 1910 (see Plate II.) and until recent years in the collection of the Beinicke Library at Yale, the gift of Sinclair Lewis, the American novelist and playwright. Perhaps a depiction of one of the paths to Weir's home on Nod Hill Road, it shares some compositional features with *Upland Pasture,* 1905 (National Museum of American Art).

Hassam was an outdoorsman, like Weir, but did not quite share his friend's enthusiasm for fishing, and, in fact, preferred to paint while in Branchville. During one of Hassam's visits to Branchville, Weir lent him a fishing rod and some bait and sent him out to a favorable fishing location on a brook in Branchville. Returning to see what kind of luck his friend had, Weir discovered that Hassam was painting the brook, not fishing in it. As Hassam's biographer Adeline Adams put it, "His catch was nil, his canvas well along."

Albert Pinkham Ryder, the eccentric painter of romantic marines, was even less enthusiastic about fishing. In response to one invitation to Branchville he answered: "Catching mice is more in my line and they are shivery looking enough for me." Even Ryder, however, succumbed to the charms of Branchville. He visited in 1897 to convalesce from a long illness, painted *Weir's Orchard* (Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford), and afterwards wrote appreciatively to Weir:

I have never seen the beauty of spring before; which is something to have lived and suffered for. The landscape and the air are full of promise. That eloquent

little fruit tree that we looked at together, like a spirit among more earthy colors, is already losing its fairy blossoms, showing the lesson of life; how alert we must be if we would have its gifts and values.

Weir's settling in Branchville coincides with a larger development in American Art -- the growing popularity of *plein-air* painting. Earlier in the century American landscape painters had sketched out-of-doors, gathering motifs from nature, but they returned to their studios to compose their paintings, using their sketches synthetically, as raw material, to assemble ambitious exhibition pieces. During the 1880s and 1890s, American painters, inspired by the French Impressionists, actually painted outdoors; in a sense, the countryside *was* their studio. When Weir and his friends painted at Branchville, they did so in natural light, bringing paintings from conception to completion out-of-doors. Works such as *The Donkey Ride* (Plate IV.) by Weir do not merely represent Branchville, they were painted there with the artist in direct confrontation with his models and their natural surroundings. Branchville is not the only locale that attracted artists during this period -- certainly William Merritt Chase's activity at Shinnecock, New York, or John H. Twachtman's at Cos Cob, Connecticut, are better known -- but Branchville is perhaps the best preserved example of the country retreat favored by turn-of-the-century painters.

The country retreats popularized during this period reflect a change in attitude toward subject matter as well as a change in working method. Weir and his Impressionist friends often chose familiar, even beloved, landscape subjects. These were sites of personal, not topographical significance -- their own farms and homes and the surrounding countryside, coastal villages and shore resorts where they taught plein-air painting or simply vacationed. These artists were preoccupied with the unremarkable aspects of a landscape that had been tamed and cultivated by man, not the wilderness or the natural wonders that earlier had captivated the Hudson River School. Theodore Robinson, who records his visit to Branchville in his diary entry for June 9, 1894, took the trouble to describe the seemingly simple landscape elements that pleased him and Weir: "Sunday we drove and saw some lovely country toward Norwalk ... long stretches of hill-side, looking old and well-trimmed -- trees massy and in clumps and old farm-houses."

There is a modernity in the presumption of universality in such personal subjects. The artist's presence, the physicality of his touch and expression of his mind and emotions takes precedence over the need for readily recognizable landmarks. Weir's paintings of Branchville capture the essence of his land and the disappearing rural life he enjoyed; they are not intended merely to record the specific appearance of the place, but to suggest its beauty and tranquility. The Weir home and its surrounding property, including the pond he created during the late 1890s, still inspire a similar aesthetic response. In spite of encroaching development, business and residential, it is remarkably as it must have been a hundred years ago.

Appendix C:
Organizations and Individuals Consulted

Although readily accessible to the New York metropolitan area, the preservation of Weir Farm is still seen as very much a local effort by the residents of Wilton and Ridgefield, Connecticut, where it is located. The project has several important constituencies, all of which were consulted in the course of this study. Though their interests overlap into many areas of common concern, they can be grouped loosely into three major categories: 1) The Art World -- scholars, collectors, museums, local, and regional art schools; 2) Preservationists -- statewide historic preservation organizations and prominent individual leaders; and 3) Open Space Advocates -- local conservationists, regional and national groups interested in passive recreational opportunities.

In addition to encouraging local and regional press coverage, TPL opened a site office at the farm early in 1989. Once basic land control had been achieved, all concerned agreed that program ideas and future uses for Weir Farm should be solicited from a wide array of interested people. TPL let people know about Weir Farm through a series of well-publicized events such as guided walks, weekly art classes, brush-clearing parties, and a slide lecture presented by the leading expert on J. Alden Weir, Doreen Bolger of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, which was attended by more than 200 people. These initial programs were very popular and have swelled the ranks of supporters considerably.

The Weir Farm Heritage Trust evolved out of these efforts and has board members and advisors representing all the major interest groups and including site abutters, Weir, Young and Andrews family members, and well-known local and statewide leaders in several key fields. A critical player in the future of Weir Farm, its capabilities are discussed further in the section entitled *Management Alternatives.*

Team members met with and interviewed representatives of more than 20 organizations to learn more about the local cultural and recreational environment and to listen to their ideas for programs that might occur at Weir Farm. Listed in the appendix of this report, they included the Wilton and Ridgefield garden clubs, historical societies, park and recreation departments and libraries, as well as the Aldrich Museum, Woodcock Nature Center, and adult education programs. Many of the ideas suggested were incorporated into the goals upon which the management alternatives were based.

Another important resource were museum professionals at small and large institutions in the region: the Wadsworth Atheneum in Hartford, Florence Griswold Museum in Old

Lyme, Yale University Museum in New Haven, Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, and the Stamford Museum, a new organization in nearby Stamford, Connecticut, all were contacted. Also interviewed were Heritage Trust committee members knowledgeable about other nearby museums like the University of Connecticut's Benton Museum and the Bush-Holley Museum in Greenwich. The study team sought to determine which of these institutions might be interested in future cooperative ventures with Weir Farm, and whether they saw a need for a specialized site to interpret the work of J. Alden Weir and his colleagues.

The response from those consulted was overwhelmingly positive . Virtually all felt that a site that could show both the art itself and the places that inspired it would be of great interest to the public. It was not considered duplicative of existing institutions which tend to focus on more traditional exhibitions. The notion of having a core collection of authentic art works at the site was also considered extremely important, provided that facilities could be created to take proper care of them. Adequate security, climate control, and display conditions were also a concern if any of those interviewed were to agree to lend works to the site.

Results were less conclusive on the issue of whether or not the site should be a repository for archival material -- letters, documents, photographs, and the like. Art historians tended to prefer having access to the material in a major university collection, while National Park Service cultural resource experts thought having archives at the site would be preferable. Much of the archival material on Weir is already in major university repositories -- Brigham Young University primarily with some at Yale's Sterling Library -- so it would appear that a microfilm capability might be the best approach. This issue should be pursued further.

Art teachers interviewed were very enthusiastic about the opportunity to conduct classes *en plein air* or in the open air at such a peaceful and beautiful site. In fact, several such classes met at the farm weekly in 1989, and will continue to be offered for both children and adults by the Ridgefield recreation department. Students also visited from the Art Students League in New York. It was concluded that a new institution did not need to be created to teach classes, but some limited indoor facilities and a scheduler would be key to a successful long-term program.

Director Charles Granquist and Assistant Director Catherine Lynn of the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation were especially helpful in providing information and guidance about preservation issues in Connecticut. Their familiarity with the operation of house museums and historic sites in the state was of help in formulating the management alternatives.

Also of great help was Jared Edwards, an experienced preservation architect based in Hartford who serves as a board member for Strawbery Banke, the highly regarded historic site in Portsmouth, NH. These individuals will continue their involvement with Weir Farm as members of the Weir Farm Heritage Trust.

The Nature Conservancy has managed part of Weir Farm since accepting it as part of the Weir Preserve in the 1960s. Their trails and self-guided interpretive brochures are of high quality and contribute much to the appeal of the site. As participants in the Weir Farm Heritage Trust activities, they can be counted on to continue their existing programs and might take part in modest expansions of these. Other active conservation/open space organizations include the garden clubs and conservation commissions of Wilton and Ridgefield and the Woodcock Nature Center. The garden clubs are extremely interested in seeing the original Weir and Burlingham gardens restored and are working with family members to help document the site. Professor Terry Tondro of the University of Connecticut School of Law and Chairman of the Weir Farm Heritage Trust has been an invaluable resource and will continue to lend his expertise as a leading authority on land use and conservation law.

Finally, it should be noted that town officials in both Wilton and Ridgefield are supportive of the efforts to save Weir Farm and are ready to work with its future management entity on such issues as signage, access, and design review around the site's periphery.

The following organizations provided background information to members of the study team. The authors would like to thank them for their willingness to share their expertise and views on how best to preserve and interpret such a special place as Weir Farm. Interviews usually took place in person, although a few were conducted by telephone. The individuals listed were our contact people and were asked to provide both their personal and professional opinions. This report should not be considered the official position of any of the organizations listed here.

Ridgefield

Aldrich Museum: Jill Clapes
Community Center
Garden Club: Carol Stoddard, Lillian Willis
Guild of Artists: Susie Munger
Library: Joan Valencourt
Keeler Tavern: Jean Timpanelli
Parks and Recreation: Paul Roach

Selectmen: Sue Manning
Town Planner: Oswald Inglese

Wilton

Adult Education and After-School: Karen Johnson
Conservation Commission: Penny Sharp
Garden Club: Jane Herzog
Historical Society: Marilyn Gould (also Tourism Board, Planning Commission)
Library: Michael Golrick
Parks and Recreation: Ruth Dyer
Selectmen: Edward Desmond, Russell Patrick (staff)
Woodcock Nature Center: Bob Ayote

State Officials

Department of Environmental Protection: Richard Clifford, Joseph Hickey
State Representatives: Margaret Gill (142nd District), Barbara Ireland (111th District)
State Senator: Judith Freedman (143rd District)
State Historic Preservation Officer: John Shannahan

Statewide Organizations

Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation: Charles Granquist, Catherine Lynn
Lyme Academy of Art: Rebecca Bugbee, Nancy Heilman, Ann Ely Smith
Nature Conservancy: Randolph Byers, Jeffrey Baker, Nancy Faesy

Museums

Brandywine Museum, Chadds Ford, PA: James Duff
Florence Griswold Museum: Jeffrey Andersen
Metropolitan Museum of Art: Doreen Bolger
Stamford Museum: Renee Kahn, Tracy Atkinson
Wadsworth Atheneum: Elizabeth Kornhauser
Yale University Art Gallery: Janet Dickson

Artists' Sites

Chesterwood, Stockbridge, MA: Paul Ivory
Thomas Cole House, Catskill, NY: Donelson Hoopes
Musée Claude Monet, Giverny, France: Claudette Lindsay
Olana, Hudson, New York: James Ryan
Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site: John Dryfhout

Archives

Yale University Library: Judith Schiff, Sterling Library
Brigham Young University: Virgie Day, College of Fine Arts

Appendix D: Weir Farm Heritage Trust Information

Board of Directors
Terry J. Tondro (President)
William B. Carlin (Secretary)
Gordon Fairburn
Charles Burlingham (Ex-officio)
Margaret S. Gill
Charles Granquist
Judith Harris Hochroth
Barbara Ireland
Ellin London
Ruth Smithers
Carol Stoddard

Board of Overseers
Sperry Andrews
Doris Andrews
Doreen Bolger
Charles Burlingham (Chair)
Adair Burlingham
Randolph K. Byers
Mrs. Colin Campbell
Elizabeth Anne Carlin
Peter H. Davidson
Jared I. Edwards
Robert Faesy
Mimi Findlay
Helen Fusscas
Renee Kahn
Charles Lay
James Lyon
John G. Matthews
Heidi Riggs
Ann Ely Smith
Harold Spencer
Lillian Willis
Mahonri Sharpe Young
Leslie T. Young

Appendix E: Background on Budget Assumptions

This section contains the estimated project costs used to formulate the budgets for the management alternatives. The estimates were prepared by the project team after site visits and inspections, and are based on current costs for similar projects at other historic sites. It should be noted that these estimates are comparisons only and not to be used for budget purposes. They will be refined as the components are investigated more fully. Land values were provided by Trust for Public Land (TPL) based on recent acquisitions in the area. Operating costs were based on Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site, but increased to reflect a year-round as opposed to a seasonal (open 6 months of the year) operation.

NOTE: All project estimates include architectural/engineering fees and project supervision costs. Where work is proposed to be perfomed by the National Park Service, costs shown were estimated using standard NPS (gross) percentages.

ALTERNATIVE I: STATUS QUO

ACQUISITION AND DEVELOPMENT

Land and Building Acquisition

Weir House, Barns, Studios and 2-acre parcel of land	$800,000

Collections

None

Historic Structures - Weir Farm Heritage Trust or Trust for Public Land

Stabilize Burlingham House	42,000
Weir Barns/Studios stabilization	108,000

PLANNING AND RESEARCH

Planning

Master Plan	50,000

ANNUAL OPERATING BUDGET

Staff	75,000
Emergency maintenance of grounds and Burlingham house	7,000
Holding costs (legal, insurance, interest)	35,000
Events, promotion, meetings, travel	23,000
Supplies, material, printing	2,500
	$142,500

SUMMARY OF ALTERNATIVE I: STATUS QUO

Land Acquisition	$800,000
Collections	0
Development	150,000
Planning	50,000
	$1,000,000
Annual Operating	$142,500

ALTERNATIVE II: LOCAL HISTORIC SITE

ACQUISITION AND DEVELOPMENT

Land and Building Acquisition

Weir House, Barns, Studios and 2-acre parcel of land	$800,000

Collections

Small art collection and some furnishings	1,000,000

Historic Structures/Site Facilities - Weir Farm Heritage Trust

Burlingham House Stabilization and Adaptation for Visitor Center	120,750
Weir Barns and Studios Stabilization	242,500
Weir House Rehabilitation	402,500
Burlingham Barn and Woodshed Adapted for Art Center/Lecture Room or Revenue-Producing Facilities	390,000
Parking (50 spaces)	129,000
Landscape Restoration	161,000
Caretaker's House Rehabilitation for Artist-in-Residence	80,500
DEVELOPMENT SUB-TOTAL	$1,526,250 say $1,500,000

PLANNING AND RESEARCH

Planning

Master Plan	75,000
Historic Landscape Report	50,000
Historic Structures Report	150,000
National Historic Landmark Nomination	25,000

ANNUAL OPERATING BUDGET

Weir Farm Heritage Trust and Department of Environmental Protection

Personnel (10 positions, similar to Alternative III except fewer museum positions because no new gallery, fewer rangers)	245,000
Utilities, communications	20,000
Events, other services	15,000
Supplies, materials, printing	20,000
	$300,000

SUMMARY OF ALTERNATIVE II: LOCAL HISTORIC SITE

Land Acquisition	$800,000
Collections	1,000,000
Development	300,000
	$3,600,000

Annual Operating	$300,000

ALTERNATIVE III: NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

ACQUISITION AND DEVELOPMENT

Land and Building Acquisition

Weir House, Barns, Studios and 2-acre parcel of land	800,000

Collections

Art collection suitable for research and interpretation; available furnishings and archival material	3,500,000

Historic Structures/Site Facilities - National Park Service

Burlingham House Rehabilitation (Visitor Center)	120,750
Weir House Rehabilitation	402,500
Weir Studio Rehabilitation	161,000
Young Studio Rehabilitation	241,500
Weir Barns and Outbuildings Rehabilitation Completion	120,750
Caretaker's House Rehabilitation	80,500
Landscape Restoration	161,000
Parking (50 spaces)	129,000
NPS DEVELOPMENT SUB-TOTAL	$1,175,500 say $1,200,000

Historic Structures/Site Facilities - Trust for Public Land and Weir Farm Heritage Trust

Interim Visitor Center at Stabilized Burlingham House	120,750
Art Center and Lecture Room in Rehabilitated Burlingham Barn	390,000
Weir Barns Stabilization	120,750
Art gallery (new construction)	$2.5 - 3 million
TPL/WFHT DEVELOPMENT SUB-TOTAL	$3,600,000

Planning/Research

Historic structures reports	150,000
Historic landscape report	50,000
General management plan	200,000
Co-sponsorship of catalogue raisonné to complete inventory of Weir's work	100,000

Annual Operating Budget

National Park Service

Personnel (see position descriptions below)	418,000
Utilities, communications	25,000
Events, other services	25,000
Supplies, materials, printing	32,000
	$500,000

NPS Position Descriptions

Position	Grade	Salary/Benefits
Superintendent	GS12	47,500
Administrative Officer	GS9	33,000
Secretary	GS5	22,000
Maintenance Foreman	WG11	40,000
Maintenance Workers (2)	WG7	55,000
Gardener	GM7	27,500
Supervisory Ranger	GS9	33,000
Park Rangers (1 perm.; 4 seasonal)	GS5	65,000
Museum Technician	GS11	40,000
Museum Technician	GS9	33,000
Museum Secretary	GS5	22,000
		$418,000

Weir Farm Heritage Trust

Position	**Salary/Benefits**
Executive Director	34,500
Volunteer Coordinator	23,000
Events, promotion, meeting	22,500
Supplies, materials, printing	2,500
TOTAL	$100,000

SUMMARY OF ALTERNATIVE III: NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

Land Acquisition	$800,000
Collections	3,500,000
Development (NPS)	1,200,000
Planning	500,000
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE PROJECTS	$6,000,000
WEIR FARM HERITAGE TRUST AND TRUST FOR PUBLIC LAND PROJECTS	$3,600,000
Annual Operating: National Park Service	$500,000
Annual Operating: Weir Farm Heritage Trust	$100,000

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Appendix G: Study Team

This suitability/feasibility report was prepared by the Division of Planning and Design, North Atlantic Regional Office (NARO) of the National Park Service in cooperation with the Trust for Public Land. The study team was led by Sarah Peskin, former director of planning for the Lowell Historic Preservation Commission, a federal agency established to facilitate the development of Lowell National Historical Park, a model of innovative NPS park development based on public/private partnerships. Ms. Peskin's degrees in urban planning and art history were both invaluable in coordinating the project. Other team principals from NARO included E. Blaine Cliver, Director of the Historic Preservation Center, a leading expert in historic preservation, and Chief of Planning and Design Terry Savage, who supervised the project and provided technical expertise in the areas of park design and management. The team was assisted by experts in art history, collections management, museum design and public programming.

Staff members from the Trust for Public Land were most helpful in providing information and handling many of the administrative details for the study. Weir Farm Project Manager Catherine Barner coordinated this effort with able assistance from Alicia Lay, Heather Lehman, and Nancy Faesy. Overall supervision and guidance came from TPL Vice Presidents Ernest Cook and Lisa Cashdan.

The Weir Farm Heritage Trust, chaired by Mr. Terry Tondro of the University of Connecticut School of Law, provided much valuable expertise and guidance in identifying issues and data. Special thanks go to Charles Burlingham who chairs the Weir Farm Heritage Trust Overseers and to committee chairs William Carlin, Ruth Smithers and Carol Stoddard.

Finally, the authors would like to extend their sincere thanks to the citizens and public officials of Wilton, Ridgefield and the State of Connecticut for the useful information they provided and for their active participation in the study process.

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Consulting services were provided by the Trust for Public Land under the terms of a memorandum of agreement between TPL and the National Park Service, North Atlantic Region. TPL's participation was coordinated by Weir Farm Project Manager Catherine Barner and Vice President Ernest Cook.

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Appendix H. Interim Management Actions

A memorandum of agreement between TPL and the North Atlantic Region permits National Park staff to provide technical assistance to Weir Farm during the suitability/feasibility study process. It is proposed that staff time be made available under the terms of the agreement, to review work items listed below. Some of the projects may also be undertaken directly by the Service, such as research and stabilization work on the Weir barns which could be done by the Historic Preservation Center.

Without going into great detail, the projects listed below were identified by the team as necessary or desirable under either Alternative II or Alternative III. If implemented within the next year, after consultation with the Park Service, these projects could be incorporated into the general management plan that would provide the permanent structure for the proposed National Historic Site. If an activity is not listed below, Park Service planning and design staff should be contacted to determine possible legislative or site impacts before going further.

Programs

1. Art classes
2. Lectures
3. Walking tours

Site Work and Buildings

1. Completion of land acquisition by TPL/DEP within the proposed site boundary.
2. Acquisition of open space parcels by State DEP from TPL.
3. General building and grounds maintenance (no alteration of historic fabric)
4. Stabilization of Burlingham house and Weir barns (in consultation with Historic Preservation Center)
5. Restoration research and design for Burlingham gardens
6. Trail maintenance and clearing of underbrush in designated areas
7. Interim use of Burlingham house for offices, visitor reception, staff quarters
8. Preservation and adaptive reuse of Burlingham barn and woodshed for art classes and related programs
9. Preliminary design for proposed gallery building

Appendix I. List of Illustrations

Color Plates

Cover — *The Laundry, Branchville,* J. Alden Weir, c. 1894, Private Collection.

Plate I. — *Midday Rest in New England,* J. Alden Weir, 1897, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, Gift of Isaac H. Clothier, Edward H. Coates, Dr. Francis W. Lewis, Robert C. Ogden, and Joseph G. Rosengarten.

Plate II. — *Road to the Land of Nod,* Childe Hassam, 1910, Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, the Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection.

Plate III. — *On the Shore,* J. Alden Weir, c. 1909, IBM Corporation, Armonk, NY.

Plate IV. — *The Donkey Ride,* J. Alden Weir, c. 1900, Private Collection.

Plate V. — *Portrait of J. Alden Weir,* John Singer Sargent, Private Collection.

Figures

Figure 1. — Vicinity Map

Figure 2. — Study Area Map

Figure 3. — Interior of the Weir Studio at Weir Farm, 1989.

Figure 4. — Dorothy Weir Young in the garden at Weir Farm.

Figure 5. — Land Ownership Map

Figure 6. — Existing Conditions Map

Figure 7. — The Weir House, 1989.

Figure 8. — Exterior of the Weir Studio at Weir Farm, 1989.

Figure 9. — *This is the Place Monument,* 1947, Pioneer Monument State Park, Utah, by Mahonri M. Young.

Figure 10. — View of Weir Farm 1989, by Bob Barner.