

United States Department of the Interior
 National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Dr. Henry M. Knight House

Other names/site number: Dr. George H. Knight House, The Knight House

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

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

2. Location

Street & number: 67 Sharon Road

City or town: Salisbury State: Connecticut County: Litchfield

Not For Publication: Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this ___ nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide ___ local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

___A ___B ___C ___D

<p>_____ Signature of certifying official/Title:</p>	<p>_____ Date</p>
<p>_____ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</p>	

<p>In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.</p>	
<p>_____ Signature of commenting official:</p>	<p>_____ Date</p>
<p>_____ Title :</p>	<p>_____ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</p>

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE VICTORIAN/Stick Style

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: WOOD/Weatherboard, shingle; STONE/Granite, Limestone. ; ASPHALT

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Knight House is a two-and-one-half-story, nineteenth-century dwelling located in a rural section of northwestern Connecticut. The house was built for Dr. Henry Martyn Knight and his wife, Mary Phelps Knight, circa 1853¹. It could have been originally in the Gothic Revival style, as it features front-facing gables with decorative trim, porches with turned posts, and a steeply pitched roof. Dr. Henry M. Knight founded the Connecticut School for Imbeciles while living in the house, which was the first school in Connecticut and the fourth in the United States established specifically for children with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The original school buildings constructed on the adjacent parcel in 1861 and subsequently are not extant. Circa 1890, a son, Dr. George Henry Knight, and his wife, Katherine “Kate” Brannon Knight completed updates to modify the house to a Stick Style architectural design and to expand the house. The house has a wood-frame, wood clapboard and shingled walls, and a fieldstone foundation. It has a modified rectangular plan, a complex roof of intersecting gables and dormers, and a hexagonal

¹ The footprint of the house at its current location is shown on a map of Lakeville dated 1853 (Fagan, 1853) (Figure 3).

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tower. Stick Style elements are visible in the building's form, varied surface treatments, decorative horizontal and vertical bands, and curved brackets. The house retains the majority of its historic design features, materials, and workmanship. The property includes 3 contributing resources, including the house, a granite hitching post, and a garage built circa 1910.

Narrative Description

Setting

The Knight House is located in the Village of Lakeville, within the Town of Salisbury in Litchfield County (Figure 1). Salisbury is the northwestern-most town in Connecticut and is part of the Northwest Highlands eco-region, which is known for its undulating stony terrain, iron deposits, many lakes and ponds, and the Housatonic River. When the historic Connecticut Western Railroad opened a through-route from Millerton, New York to Hartford, Connecticut, Lakeville was added as an important stop. The arrival of the railroad allowed Lakeville to emerge as an important summer resort community. The railroad station is located about ¼ mile from the Knight House.

The house is located about ¼ mile south of the Lakeville Historic District (NR Listed 1996), which is bounded by Millerton Road, Sharon Road, Allen Street, and Holley Street. It is sited on a 0.83-acre lot at the top of a hill near the intersection of Sharon Road² and Wells Hill Road, across from the historic St. Mary's Church and faces roughly east (Figure 2). The house is set back from the street with a flat front lawn, which slopes slightly toward the street and overlooks the banks of Lake Wononscopomuc to the west (Photograph 1).

A driveway on the north side of the house extends from Sharon Road to the garage at the northwestern corner of the property. A **granite hitching post (contributing object)** with a wrought iron ring, stands on the north edge of the driveway, halfway between Sharon Road and the garage (Photograph). An in-ground pool, installed circa 1960, is situated perpendicular to the house with its longest side parallel with the back half of the driveway (Photograph 15). It is surrounded by bluestone slabs and further surrounded by ornamental grasses on three sides. The backyard has mature pine and cedar trees lining both the north and south sides of the property and three mature tamarack trees on two sides of the pool (Photograph 11). A gravel and bluestone path runs along the west side of the house, connecting the wood steps leading from the kitchen door to the bluestone steps leading from the dining room door. The path continues around the sunroom and along the south side of the house.

The south side of the front lawn is shaded by a large copper beech tree. An adjacent lot on the south side of the property has sidewalk slabs shaded by mature trees that lead from southeast corner of the Knight house parcel toward where the former Connecticut School for Imbeciles³ used to be (Photograph 7 of 23).

² Formerly, Sharon Road, which is also known as Connecticut Route 41, in Lakeville, Connecticut was called Montgomery Street or Trunkline Highway 41.

³ The name was changed in 1915 to the Connecticut Training School for the Feeble-Minded (*Biennial Report of the Connecticut Training School for the Feeble-Minded, Lakeville, Connecticut, for the two years ended 1915/1916*). It

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There is a municipal sidewalk on the east edge of the property that leads to the Village center. The surrounding residential neighborhood is comprised primarily of similarly sized and smaller homes from the late 1800s to early 1900s, predominantly in the Federal and Colonial Revival styles.

Exterior

The Stick Style Knight House has asymmetrical massing and varied exterior surfaces. It consists of a side-gabled main block with a hexagonal tower and one-story entrance porch. Intersecting gables and dormers, and stickwork break up each elevation. A portion of the south porch was partially enclosed in the 1890's to accommodate a library and sitting area inside, when the house was updated by Dr. and Mrs. George H. Knight. The west side of the house, which overlooks the banks of Lake Wononscopomuc, was expanded to the west by approximately 10 feet in the 1890's to add more living space on all three levels.

The house has a foundation built of limestone and granite topped with granite block and a full cellar. Under the enclosed porch, the foundation is brick with no cellar. The exterior walls are sheathed with wood clapboards with horizontal and vertical wood trim-stickwork. The roof, originally covered with wood shakes, is currently covered with asphalt shingles, cement tile shingles, asphalt rolled roofing and metal welded seam roofing. The fenestration pattern throughout the house is balanced, but asymmetrical. The openings are mostly rectangular, in single, paired, or tripled arrangements. Most sashes are wood and include double-hung 1/1, 2/2, and 2/1 windows; and casement windows with diagonal muntins. There are a few replacement windows that were added in the 1980s. The overhanging eaves have exposed rafters, although the current K-style gutters block the rafter tails from view. The two corbelled chimneys, one situated in the center at a 45-degree angle to the base, and the other on the north side, are built of brick and mortar.

On the façade (east elevation), the hexagonal tower comprises the north corner of the house. It features an open third-floor balcony with plain, square balusters. Its tympanum is decorated with vertical wood trim over clapboards, and its bargeboards are further decorated with wood trim-stickwork. The front porch, with curved braces and turned, round posts with chamfered edges, is partially enclosed with mullioned panels. Its tympanum is decorated with vertical wood trim over clapboards, and its bargeboards are further decorated with wood trim-stickwork, similar in design to the tower gable. Inside the removable glass enclosure panels, the solid oak door is angled to face southeast. Above the porch, the second story has casement windows and more decorative stickwork. Above it is the side of the steep pitched third-story gable (Photograph 1).

The south (side) elevation features the porch, which is enclosed with removable glass panels. Above the enclosure is a second-story bay with a balcony that can be accessed from the master

was merged with The Connecticut Colony for Epileptics to become the Mansfield Training School and Hospital, located in Hamden, CT. (*Report of the State Board of Charities to the Governor for the two years ended September 30, 1917 and 1918, 1918*).

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bedroom. The third story is gabled with wood stickwork bargeboard. There is also horizontal and vertical wood trim-stickwork above the third-story casement windows. The side veranda, also with curved braces and turned, round posts with chamfered edges, is fully enclosed with mullioned panels and a door. Its roof is currently covered with asphalt shingle and asphalt rolled roofing. There is a bay on the second floor with casement windows and above it, a third-story single dormer (Photograph 5).

The west (rear) elevation faces Lake Wononscopomuc (Photograph 3). From this angle, the house is comprised mainly of the circa 1890 addition. Dual gables, with bargeboards decorated with stickwork to match the front of the house, are connected with a flat roof from an early addition to add a third-floor bathroom. In the late 1960's, the first floor west-facing side was further modified to add a bluestone steps leading to a triple glass-paneled wall with a door to a dining room entrance and bluestone steps leading from the dining room to the backyard, and to add wooden steps leading to a French-style door to a kitchen entrance (Photograph 14).

The north (side) elevation has two gabled sections, each with bargeboards decorated with stickwork. The northwest gable has a second story lunette window facing east. The northeast gable has a third story lunette window facing north and an arched-top landing window with carved sunray design in the wood trim. Above the side entrance to the front porch is an open-timbered end gable with more Stick Style ornamentation (Photograph 4).

Interior

The Knight House contains 4,768 square feet and a total of 15 rooms (including 7 bedrooms), 5 bathrooms, and 2 enclosed three-season porches on three floors. The recessed, five-panel front door leads to a reception hall that contains the main, U-shaped staircase and a diagonal fireplace. To the south, there is a parlor with another diagonal fireplace, plus an 1890's extension⁴ that created a library nook and a sitting area. The parlor extends west into a dining room, which faces west. The dining room also has a diagonal fireplace. All three fireplaces (in the reception hall, parlor and dining room) are made of brick and connect to the same central chimney. A door on the south wall of the dining room leads to an enclosed three-season sunporch overlooking the banks of Lake Wononscopomuc to the west. There is a half-bath off the southwest corner of the dining room. A doorway on the north side of the dining room leads past a pantry and cellar door, into the kitchen. The kitchen has a French-style door leading west toward the back patio and pool (Photograph 14). The kitchen also has an east-facing doorway, which connects to a back staircase and a door that leads back into the reception hall. The floors are oak. The reception hall is the most ornate room in the house and features walnut wood trim and a coffered ceiling. The main staircase is oak with walnut balusters, raised paneling, fluted pilasters and a built-in bench on the first landing⁵. The dual newel posts have a quatrefoil design, fluted detailing and chamfered edges.

⁴ This was a wrap-around porch prior to modification in the 1890's.

⁵ Although the architect is unknown, the design of the reception hall and staircase closely mimics those shown in house plans by architect R. W. Shoppell from the late 1800's. (*Victorian Architecture: Original Plans for Cottages, Small Estates, and Commerce*, 2004)

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There is a rectangular window at the stair landing, topped with an arched window, with a carved sunray design in the wood trim (Photograph 18).

The second floor begins with a central hallway at the top of the main staircase. A master bathroom is located on the east side, within the hexagon shaped tower. It connects to a dressing room on the east side, then into a master bedroom. The master bedroom was expanded in the 1890s to include a balcony on the south side of the house. It features a corner fireplace made of brick, which is covered with a green and white neo-classical tile, featuring Grecian heads and chrysanthemums. The master bedroom connects to an adjoining bedroom on the south side, which has pocket doors leading to a smaller bedroom facing west. At the end of the center hall, a remodeled bathroom with a west-facing window was recently converted into a laundry room. A fourth bedroom and an adjoining room without a closet face north and northwest, respectively. A vintage bathroom featuring a J.L. Mott sink with double legs and backsplash and a J.L. Mott Iron Works "Corinthian" model clawfoot tub is situated facing north (Photograph 22). The back staircase continues to the third floor with a set of winders. The floors are old-growth pine, with the exception of the master bath, which is cherry, and the laundry room, which is black and white hexagon tile. The windows and recessed five-panel doors have fluted wood molding and rosette corner blocks. All wood trim has been painted, with the exception of the wood trim in the reception hall. The doors have black porcelain knobs and either Eastlake or Oriental style hardware. The windows have similar matching hardware, except for nine replacement windows on east and west sides, which have new hardware.

The third floor begins with a central hallway at the top of the back staircase. A large billiard room is located to the east, within the hexagon shaped tower. It has a door that leads to an open balcony facing east toward Sharon Road. Two interior doors lead to a large south-facing bedroom and a northeast-facing full bathroom with a J.L. Mott Iron Works clawfoot tub and a skylight that opens with a long hand-crank (Photograph 20). A walk-in attic storage area is accessible via a door from the full bathroom and also a door from the central hallway. A second third-floor bedroom is located on the south side and has an adjoining door to a third, smaller third-floor bedroom. At the end of a center hall, there is another full bathroom with a west-facing window, a clawfoot tub and beadboard covered walls (Photograph 21). The floors are pine, but most are covered with cork tiles. The bathroom floors are covered with black and white linoleum tiles. The windows and doors have plain, painted trim. The doors have black porcelain knobs and Eastlake or Oriental style hardware. The windows in the billiard room and adjacent bedroom open by swinging inward. The center hallway features a gilded E.F. Caldwell chandelier, shaped like a basket with hand-blown, satin etched "rose petal" shades (Photograph 19).

Outbuilding

A **garage (contributing building, circa 1910)**, echoes the house in materials is set at the northwest corner of the lot (Photograph 16). It is approximately 18' wide by 20' deep and 13' high. It has a stick frame construction with a foundation of cement block and a poured cement floor. The windows consist of two 2/2 single pane windows. The roof is asphalt shingle over cedar shake. The siding is painted 7" wood clapboard. An open, wooden addition to the garage houses the pool

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heater and additional storage (Photograph 17). It is accessed via a straight unpaved driveway from the street.

Integrity

The Knight House retains its association with the Knight family who founded the Connecticut School for Imbeciles and its feeling as a spacious late-nineteenth century dwelling. It remains on its original site, set at the top of a hill, overlooking Lake Wononscopomuc to the west. The rural setting is intact with its lakeside views and the property retains mature trees, although there are more along the shoreline now than in the late 1890's. Garden plantings and shrubbery have changed over time and an in-ground pool installed in the 1960's, does not detract from the understanding of the house. A single-family house is located on the adjacent parcel where the Connecticut School for Imbeciles stood, but views of it from the property are obscured by mature trees. A sidewalk that connected the Knight House and the school still extends from the northeast corner of the house through the adjacent property.

The house possesses its design, workmanship and materials dating to the 1890s update. The building's massing, structural system and historic exterior materials are intact, with the exception of the replacement of cedar roof shakes and enclosure of the front porch with glass panels. Decorative trimwork, round chamfered posts, and curved braces remain. Most of the windows are original, but some windows on the second floor have been replaced with newer 2/2 windows. On the interior, the historic floor plan is intact, along with the majority of the historic materials, original hardware, and fixtures. The back stairs and door to the kitchen have been added along with an additional door to the dining room.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

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

Criteria Considerations

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

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Architecture

Social History

Health/Medicine

Period of Significance

1856-1913

Significant Dates

1858: Dr. Henry M. Knight founded school imbecile children in his house

1861: Connecticut School for Imbeciles is incorporated and established on adjacent land

ca. 1890: House updated in Stick Style

1912: Connecticut School for Imbeciles transferred to state after death of Dr. George Knight

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Knight, Dr. Henry M.

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Knight House is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places at the state level under Criteria A, B, and C in the categories of Social History, Health/Medicine, and Architecture. Under Criterion B, the property possesses significance for its association with Dr. Henry M. Knight who made advancements in the care of intellectually and developmentally disabled children, while residing in the house. Dr. Henry M. Knight, a prominent doctor, founded a private institution for disabled children in his home in 1858, after the idea to create such a facility was rejected by the state legislature. Three years later, he constructed the Connecticut School for Imbeciles on the adjacent property. The property additionally meets Criterion A for Social History for its association with mid-nineteenth through early twentieth century lifeways, for the presence of freeperson Charlotte Mars in the household, and Dr. Knight's son's controversial views regarding the treatment of disabled people. Under Criterion C, the property is significant for its expression of the Stick Style and turn-of-the-twentieth-century design features, fostered by Dr. Knight's daughter-in-law, Katherine Myra Brannon Knight. She contributed to the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago as the President/Secretary of the Connecticut Board of Lady Managers and the 1904 World's Louisiana Purchase Exposition (St. Louis World's Fair) as a member of the Connecticut Commission. The Knights updated the house, including the application of the exterior Stick Style design during the 1890s. The period of significance extends from 1853 when Dr. Henry M. Knight built the house to 1913, when the Connecticut School for Imbeciles in Lakeville was transferred to the State of Connecticut.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Criterion B: Dr. Henry M. Knight, Health/Medicine and Social History

The Knight House derives significance under Criterion B for its association with Dr. Henry Martyn Knight (August 11, 1827 - January 22, 1880) who made achievements in the categories of Health/Medicine and Social History for his advancements in the treatment of disabled children. Dr. Knight founded the Connecticut School for Imbeciles in his home with students boarding there and served as the school superintendent after constructing a purpose-built facility on the adjacent lot. Dr. Knight used the house as his primary residence and conducted work there while operating the school, which was ultimately purchased by the State of Connecticut and later incorporated into the Mansfield Training School. The Lakeville School building is not extant, leaving the family's primary residence as the only remaining portion of the facility.

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Henry M. Knight (*Figure 6*) studied medicine at the Berkshire Medical Institute and graduated with his M. D. degree in 1849. He married Mary Fitch Phelps in 1850 and moved to Lakeville, Connecticut. A beloved local physician, he decided to specialize in nervous diseases and, early in his career, became interested in children with intellectual and developmental disabilities (Wayland, 1916).

In 1855, Dr. Knight became a member of the Connecticut General Assembly from the town of Salisbury. He was appointed as one of three Commissioners on Idiocy to the General Assembly by the Governor of Connecticut to conduct an investigation on the number and condition of “idiot”⁶ children in the State. In 1856, the Commissioners on Idiocy reported 330 idiotic children in the State, recommended the establishment of an institute for their instruction and requested a State appropriation of \$20,000. (Report of the Commissioners on Idiocy to the General Assembly of Connecticut, May Session, 1856). The bill making an appropriation for this purpose passed the House in 1856, but it failed in the Senate by the casting vote of the Lieutenant-Governor. In 1857, it passed in the Senate, but failed in the House (McKean, 1864).

The knowledge acquired in his role as a commissioner solidified Dr. Knight’s view that action on behalf of such children was a necessity. In 1858, Dr. Knight founded a private school for the instruction of imbecile⁷ children. The school began with one pupil, whom Dr. Knight took into his family (Randall, 1971). According to the federal census, eight students (William T. Wash, age 17, William Kellogg, 16, Edward J. Lawrence, 24, J.M.L. Scoville, 10, Rosa M. Roberts, 11, James E. Kelly, 3, Charles S. Burns, 11, and Albert Judd, 15) lived in the house with Dr. and Mary Knight and their two sons, Robert and George in 1860. Dr. Knight continued the private instruction and boarding students at his home until 1861, when he incorporated it as the Connecticut School for Imbeciles and received an appropriation from the State. With an appropriation for the school from the Governor, land was purchased in 1861 adjacent to the Knight House and a school with dormitories was constructed.

The progressive, private institution led by Dr. Knight continued to thrive. It was the first of its kind in Connecticut and the fourth such institute in the nation. Dr. Knight’s achievements were recognized in the 1916 American Cyclopaedia of American Biography, which included a statement about the school: “It became known far and wide for its efficiency and home-like atmosphere, in which the patients were always known as ‘children’, never ‘cases’.” (Wayland, 1916). The text included the following tribute to Dr. Knight:

A man of boundless energy, strong in his convictions, resolute in action, and with the rarest personal charm, the enthusiasm with which Dr. Knight devoted himself to the cause of these most helpless members of the human family revolutionized public sentiment toward them whenever and wherever he had an opportunity to present their claims. He was well known and constantly consulted by men of his

⁶ The term “idiot” was formerly a technical term used in legal and psychiatric contexts for certain types of profound intellectual disability where the intelligence quotient is 0-20. (M. Afzal, 2008).

⁷ The term “imbecile” was formerly a technical term used in legal and psychiatric contexts for certain types of profound intellectual disability where the intelligence quotient is 20-49. (M. Afzal, 2008).

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own specialty in other lands, and at home other states turned to him for both precept and example in their foundation work. (Wayland, 1916).

In 1876, Dr. Knight co-founded the Association of Medical Officers of American Institutions for Idiots and Feeble-Minded⁸ Persons with five other medical professionals. Today, this organization is known as The American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD), the oldest and largest interdisciplinary association of professionals and others concerned about intellectual and developmental disabilities. (Mental Retardation: Past and Present by the President's Committee on Mental Retardation, 1977). According to the 1916 biography:

In 1879, he spent the summer in Minnesota, assisting by personal direction and advice the creation of the Minnesota Institution for the Feeble-Minded [in Faribault], which is today one of the leading institutions of its kind. He was a fellow of the Connecticut Medical Society, an honorary member of the medical societies of New York and California. He was a medical visitor to the Retreat for the Insane at Hartford and was the author of "Hallucinations of Childhood" (1870). (Wayland, 1916).

Dr. Knight served as President of the AAIDD from 1879 until his untimely death in 1880. (Mental Retardation: Past and Present by the President's Committee on Mental Retardation, 1977). Dr. Henry M. Knight was a pioneer in social welfare reform, who fought to stir public interest on behalf of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and to establish institutions for their care, training and assimilation.

After Dr. Knight's death, his son Dr. George Henry Knight (November 24, 1855- March 4, 1914) continued his work, returning to Lakeville to serve as superintendent of the school in 1884 (Figure 7).⁹ His brother, Dr. Robert P. Knight ran the school in the interim from 1880 to 1884. Dr. George H. Knight specialized in the study of epilepsy and tuberculosis; however, having been raised in doctor's household living with imbeciles, he was most regarded for his expertise with the mentally disabled. He served on the executive committee of the Conference of Charities and Corrections, (Wayland, 1916) and as president of the AAIDD from 1887-1888. (Mental Retardation: Past and Present by the President's Committee on Mental Retardation, 1977) .

⁸ The term "feeble-minded" was formerly a technical term used in legal and psychiatric contexts for certain types of profound intellectual disability where the intelligence quotient is 0-70. (M. Afzal, 2008).

⁹ Dr. George Henry Knight attended Yale University, class of 1877, but left to study medicine the College of Physicians and Surgeons in New York, from which he received his M. D. degree. Yale later conferred upon him an honorary degree. At age 24, he became Superintendent of the Minnesota Institution for the Feeble-Minded at Faribault. (Wayland, 1916).

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Criterion A: Social History

The property derives significance under Criterion A in the category of Social History for its association with the treatment of disabled and free black people during the late nineteenth through early twentieth century. Occupants of the Knight household demonstrated beliefs and lifeways that both broke with societal norms for the time and upheld them. While Dr. Henry Martyn Knight practiced social reform by advocating that disabled children be cared for in a family environment, his son advocated for the separation of mentally disabled people from the general population. The house is the only portion of the Knight school facility that is extant. An additional juxtaposition in the treatment of people is the presence of Charlotte Mars, a free black person who lived in the house, employed as a domestic helper.

In 1860, when eight students resided in the Knight House, Mary Knight's sister, Sara Phelps and two domestic helpers, including Charlotte Mars (1799-1875), also lived there helped care for the students (United States Census, 1860). Charlotte Mars was the sister of James Mars (1790-1880) of Norfolk, who wrote an autobiography in 1864 about being a slave in Connecticut. After becoming a free person in 1815, James Mars served as a leading activist for abolition and voting rights. Their mother Fanny Mars went to live with Mary Phelps' father, Darius Phelps, when his first wife died in 1823. When Fanny passed away, her daughter Charlotte took her place. Mary and her husband Dr. Henry Knight moved to Lakeville in 1850, and when Dr. Knight opened the School for Imbeciles in 1861, Charlotte moved there to help them; Charlotte Mars resided there until her death in 1875 (Crissey, 1900).¹⁰

During the late 1800's, mentally disabled individuals placed in care in the United States were frequently children of immigrants or came from generations of poverty and oppression. They were viewed as a burden in the home and the community. In his speeches and written annual reports to the State, Dr. George H. Knight shared stories of imbecile women working as household helpers who had been raped, stories of incest within their families, and of promiscuous imbeciles being "taken advantage of". Simultaneously, publicized violent acts committed by mentally disabled persons were causing a shift in the public view of the disadvantaged as a population to be ignored to a population that should be feared and incarcerated. Thus, many mentally disabled adults, particularly in states that did not yet have mental institutions, were prison inmates, although they may not have committed any crimes. The scientific word "imbecile" was widely becoming an insult.

Serving as the Superintendent of the Connecticut School for Imbeciles since 1885 and as Connecticut's Surgeon General from 1890-1891 (Legislative History and Souvenir of Connecticut, 1912), Dr. George H. Knight became a recognized leader in his field. He presented

¹⁰ No photograph was found of Charlotte Mars. She was "born free" according to *African American Historic Burial Grounds and Gravesites of New England*, p.150, and was listed in the 1860 census as 'domestic'. She is buried in the Salisbury Cemetery, as are the Knights. Her brother was a deacon, and Henry Knight's father was a reverend. Henry Knight went to seminary school. Mary Knight's father Darius Phelps was also a Deacon. James Mars and his family escaped from Canaan. Their 'master' offered his parents and his sister freedom in exchange for James and his brother, but they refused. The people of Norfolk helped to hide the two brothers.

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at the National Conference of Charities and Correction in June 1892, “The Colony Plan for All Grades of Feeble-minded”, where he advocated for segregation of the feeble-minded for their own protection as well as protection of the public, a shift from his father’s emphasis of education and assimilation of imbecile children. (Barrows, 1892). Three years later, Dr. Knight presented his paper, “The Feeble-Minded,” at the National Conference of Charities and Correction in New Haven, Connecticut, reiterating his views of colonization and protection of adult imbeciles to other doctors and school superintendents trying to solve the controversial and international social dilemma of how to care for the mentally disadvantaged. (Knight, 1895).

According to Dr. Knight’s cited statistics from 1890, there were 96,000 people identified as feeble-minded persons in the United States, but only 6,500 were cared for in public or private institutions. At the time, only 17 states had provisions for the feeble-minded. Dr. Knight urged upon participants the pressing need to have provision made for them “in every State of the Union.” His argument was that colonization at large institutions would not only provide for “companionship, instruction and amusement” of imbeciles, but also for the employment and guardianship of adults. (Knight, 1895).

In his 1895 speech, Dr. Knight cited a report from the New York State Asylum for Feeble-Minded Women that 20 percent of their inmates had borne illegitimate children. With mental disability believed to be hereditary by the medical community since at least 1850¹¹, Dr. Knight appealed to his peers to call for guardianship and supervision of those of child-bearing age in an effort to reduce the population of those needing to be institutionalized: “...the number of children borne by the imbecile women among the 90,000 who are without the constant supervision of an institution home would horrify the respectable community supporting them.” (Knight, 1895). Shortly thereafter, on July 4, 1895, Connecticut became the first state in the United States to adopt legislation making it a punishable crime for imbeciles to marry. (Annual Report of Connecticut School for Imbeciles, Lakeville, Connecticut, 1899).

In 1899, Dr. Knight urged “prevention from a legal and moral standpoint”. He cautioned “what is considered the sacred law of individual right places within it a power of a large percent of these to marry, and inevitably to reproduce their own kind.” He advocated for eugenics, particularly the controversial view that female imbeciles should be sterilized to prevent the population from growing. In his Annual Report of the Connecticut School for Imbeciles to the Connecticut General Assembly he stated: “I am well aware that this suggestion carried out would strike a blow directly at the root of what is called the law of individual right, but I claim that the mentally unfit have no individual right to reproduce themselves.”

Dr. Knight called for action from the legislature, saying “That which they will not, cannot do for themselves, the law of the land must do for them.” (Annual Report of Connecticut School for Imbeciles, Lakeville, Connecticut, 1899). In 1909, Connecticut became the second state to pass

¹¹ The Journal of Psychological Medicine and Mental Pathology, Volume 3 (1850) included discussion of a high correlation between ‘idiots’ and having at least one parent who is an ‘idiot’ [people classified as intellectually disabled at the time].

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the sterilization law, allowing for the sterilization of certain patients in certain state hospitals. (Wayland, 1916).

From 1906 – 1912, Dr. George H. Knight served “the Connecticut legislature as the chairman of the committees on public health and safety, humane institutions and appropriations, and influenced important legislation for the betterment of existing conditions in charitable and reformatory work, such as compulsory vaccination, public sanitation, meat inspection, the establishment of a colony for epileptics and a reformatory for boys and, in particular, the acceptance of responsibility by the state for its tubercular poor.” (Wayland, 1916).

In 1912, Dr. George H. Knight was nominated as a candidate for Congress from the Fifth District. On the evening he was to accept his nomination, Dr. Knight died on the stage of Roberts Hall in Lakeville, Connecticut, twelve words into a speech to his political supporters. At the time of his death, the Connecticut School for Imbeciles had approximately 340 students, and thus the school was a large employer at the time and significant to the local economy. (Biennial Report of Connecticut School for Imbeciles for Two Years Ending September 30, 1911-1912, 1913).

His wife, Kate Brannon Knight, served as the Superintendent of the Connecticut School for Imbeciles from the date of her husband’s death in 1912 until the following year, when the five acres and the buildings the school was situated on were purchased by the State by an Act of Legislature. (Biennial Report of Connecticut School for Imbeciles for Two Years Ending September 30, 1911-1912, 1913). In 1915, the name of the School was changed to the Connecticut Training School for the Feeble-Minded (Biennial Report of the Connecticut Training School for the Feeble-Minded, Lakeville, Connecticut) for the two years. By the provisions of Chapter 417 of the Public Acts of 1917, the Connecticut Training School for Feeble-Minded was merged with The Connecticut Colony for Epileptics to become the Mansfield Training School and Hospital, located in Hamden, Connecticut. (Report of the State Board of Charities to the Governor for the two years ended September 30, 1917 and 1918, 1918).

During his lifetime, Dr. George H. Knight was active in social welfare reform, but he advocated for segregation and institutionalization of those with intellectual and developmental disabilities. He was also a vocal advocate for eugenics, thus shaping Connecticut’s controversial marriage ban (1895) and sterilization law (1909).

Criterion C: Architecture

Under Criterion C, the Knight House derives architectural significance from Katherine Brannon Knight’s influence on the design features dating from the 1890s through early twentieth century. Her exposure to exhibitors, designers and decorating trends showcased at the 1893 and 1904 World Fairs during the time her husband was gaining prominence in politics and within the medical community, influenced the updates Dr. and Mrs. Knight made to the house. The exterior was modified to the Stick Style, which for this northwestern area of rural Connecticut in the 1890’s, was not prominent.

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Katherine Myra Brannon Knight (November 25, 1855 to March 16, 1928) (*Figure 8*) moved to the Knight House in Lakeville with her husband in 1885. (Wayland, 1916). In 1892, Mrs. Knight was appointed to the Board of Lady Managers of Connecticut for the World's Columbian Exposition by Governor Bulkeley. This appointment may be resultant from the Knights' political affiliations.¹² At the first meeting of the Board, Mrs. Bulkeley was elected President and Mrs. Knight was elected Secretary. However, Mrs. Bulkeley resigned in January 1893 (when her husband lost reelection) and Mrs. Knight was elected president, while continuing her role as secretary. The World's Fair began in May and she continued in both roles until the close of the World's Fair in October. (Knight, 1893).

In her role as President of the Board of Lady Managers of Connecticut, Mrs. Knight took the lead in managing a State budget for the curation of both the Connecticut Room in the Women's Building, the Connecticut Building and was involved in the development of the Children's Building at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893. Mrs. Knight and her Board coordinated borrowing collections of antiques from the citizens of Connecticut for display. Mrs. Knight also contributed antiques from her own personal collection. The exhibits and the interior decoration of the Connecticut Building were viewed as an important opportunity, for women in particular, to give the world a sense of Connecticut's vibrant history, of the accomplishments of women, and of the contribution of both to the nation. (Knight, 1893).

Mrs. Knight was the author of *History of the Work of Connecticut Women at the World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago, 1893*, which was published by Hartford Press in 1898. (Knight, 1893). This important work, which is a detailed account of the artifacts obtained and displayed to represent Connecticut at the World's Fair Columbian Exposition is still in print today. Mrs. Knight authored this book while residing at the Knight House in Lakeville.

Subsequently, based on her experience with the 1893 World's Fair, Mrs. Knight was nominated by Connecticut Governor Chamberlain to serve as one of three women on an 11-member Commission representing the State. She accepted the nomination and served on the Connecticut Commission for the World's Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St. Louis in 1904. (Wilcox, 1906).

In the northwestern corner of Connecticut, in what is now the historic district, there are examples of Federal-style buildings from the early 1800's, and the Gothic Revival and Italianate styles that were prevalent during the mid-nineteenth century. The Knight House may have originally been designed in the Gothic Revival style, as it features front-facing gables with decorative trim, porches with turned posts, and a steeply pitched roof. A notable Gothic Revival home was erected in 1852 in Lakeville close by, on the same eastern shore of Lake Wononscopomuc, by Canaan builder Gilbert Richardson. (Rossano, 1997).

¹² Dr. Henry Knight's friendship with Governor Holley (1857-1858), engineer and inventor, who was also from Lakeville, led to Dr. Henry Knight's, and then later his son's appointment in legislature. Mr. Holley later served on the Board of the Connecticut School for Imbeciles for many years. It wasn't until Governor Bulkeley (1889-1893) that Kate Brannon Knight was appointed to the Board of Lady Managers. Her husband was later Connecticut's Surgeon General from 1901 - 1902 under Governor McLean (1901 - 1903).

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During the 1890's, as Mrs. Knight was involved with the Columbian Exposition, her husband, Dr. George H. Knight, was growing more prominent, both in politics, and internationally for his experience in how to care for the mentally disabled. During this time, Dr. and Mrs. Knight remodeled the house to reflect popular late-Victorian aesthetics. They enclosed the porch and made additions to add more rooms, including a library, and added indoor plumbing and bathrooms to promote good hygiene.

The façade of the house was modified to a variation or possible local interpretation of the Stick Style, which was popularized through pattern books in New England starting in the early 1860's. Although the architect or carpenter is unknown, the design of the reception hall and staircase closely mimics those shown in house plans by architect R. W. Shoppell from the late 1800's. (Victorian Architecture: Original Plans for Cottages, Small Estates, and Commerce, 2004). This style was less common in the rural northwestern corner of Connecticut at the time and demonstrates the influence participation in the World Fairs had on Dr. and Mrs. Knight.

Mrs. Knight's involvement with the Columbian Exposition in 1891-1893 and the Louisiana Purchase Exposition in 1902-1904 also influenced some of the modifications that were made to the interior of the house. This exposure and appreciation for modern design is evident in the house's fixtures. For example, the Neoclassical style was showcased in buildings at the 1893 Columbian Exposition. (Corn, 2011). The master bedroom in the Knight House has a corner fireplace covered with a green and white Neoclassical tile, featuring Grecian heads and chrysanthemums (Photo 23 of 23).

Although lighting had been introduced years before, the general public was still cautious about using it in their homes. One of the most well-known exhibits at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition was the electricity building, which included ornate electric lighting to entice the public to use it in their homes. E.F. Caldwell, one of the premier designers and manufacturers of electric light fixtures, was commissioned to custom design lighting for the New York State Building. (*The Popular Electrical Journal, Illustrated, Volume II, January 20 - July 13, 1892, 1892*). The third-floor center hallway in the Knight House has a gilded E.F. Caldwell chandelier, shaped like a basket with hand-blown, satin etched "rose petal" shades (Photo 19 of 23).

J. L. Mott Iron Works of New York was provider of plumbing fixtures for several buildings at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St. Louis. (*The Metal Worker, Plumber and Steam Fitter, Volume LXII, July to December 1904, 1904*). The second-floor north bathroom in Knight House has a J.L. Mott sink with double legs and backsplash and "Corinthian" model clawfoot tub. (Photo 22 of 23). Another J.L. Mott tub is located on the third-floor northeast-facing bathroom. (Photo 20 of 23).

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register

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designated a National Historic Landmark
 recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
 recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
 recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

State Historic Preservation Office
 Other State agency
 Federal agency
 Local government
 University
 Other
Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property 0.83

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|--------------|------------|
| 1. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

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NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

- | | | |
|----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 2. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundary of the nominated property is consistent with the property identified as Parcel ID 2373, Map 47, Lot 18 in the Town of Salisbury's assessment data (Figures 2 and 3).

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary includes the residential portion of the Knight family property in Lakeville. The school building was constructed on a separate, adjacent parcel, but is not extant.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Heidi M. Hoeller Edits/additions by Jenny F. Scofield, CT SHPO
organization: Property owner
street & number: 67 Sharon Road
city or town: Salisbury state: CT zip code: 06039
e-mail heidi.m.hoeller@gmail.com
telephone: _____
date: July 2021

Additional Documentation

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Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

GRAPHICS



Figure 1. Location of the Knight House, 67 Sharon Rd, Salisbury, CT (Base map: Google Earth, 2021).

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Figure 2. Site plan of 67 Sharon Road, Salisbury showing boundary of nominated property (Base Map: Google Earth, 2021).

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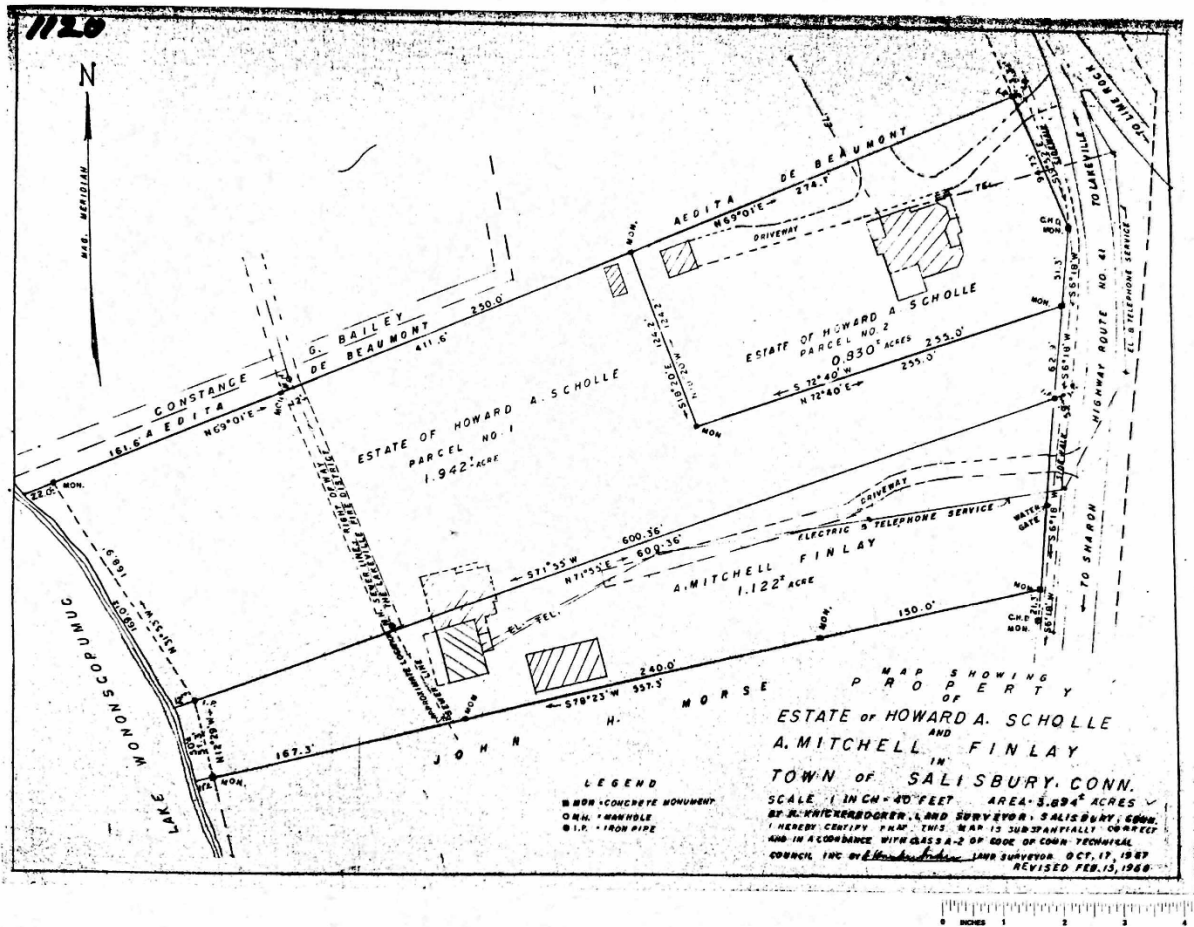


Figure 3. Property Survey Map, 1958.

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Figure 4: 1853 map of Lakeville, showing footprint of the Knight house (at blue arrow)
Source: Fagan, L. (1853) Map of the town of Salisbury, Litchfield Co., Connecticut.
[?][Map] Retrieved from the Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2011589306/>.

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Figure 5: Undated photo of the Knight House, probably c. 1915, courtesy of Salisbury Association.

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Figure 6: Undated photo of Dr. Henry M. Knight, courtesy of Salisbury Association.

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Figure 7: Undated photo of Dr. George H. Knight, courtesy of Salisbury Association.

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Figure 8: Undated photo of Kate Brannon Knight, courtesy of Salisbury Association.

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Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Knight House

City or Vicinity: Lakeville

County: Litchfield

State: Connecticut

Photographer: Brian Wilcox (Photos 1-5), Heidi Hoeller (Photos 6-23)

Date Photographed: August 10, 2021 (Photos 1-5), August 2, 2021 (Photos 6-23)

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

Photo 1 of 23. Façade (east elevation), camera facing west.

Photo 2 of 23. Aerial view of east façade, camera facing west.

Photo 3 of 23. West elevation, camera facing east.

Photo 4 of 23. Northeast elevation, camera facing southwest.

Photo 5 of 23. South elevation, camera facing

Photo 6 of 23. Façade (east elevation), camera facing west.

Photo 7 of 23. Southeast elevation and walkway (foreground) to site of former school on adjacent property, camera facing northwest.

Photo 8 of 23. South elevation, camera facing north.

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Photo 9 of 23. View of banks of Lake Wonoscopomuc (background) from south west elevation, camera facing west.

Photo 10 of 23. West elevation, camera facing east.

Photo 11 of 23. View of in-ground pool and backyard from northwest elevation, camera facing southwest.

Photo 12 of 23. Northeast elevation, camera facing southwest.

Photo 13 of 23. Hitching post on north side of driveway, camera facing northeast.

Photo 14 of 23. Northwest elevation, camera facing southeast.

Photo 15 of 23. West elevation and in-ground pool, camera facing east.

Photo 16 of 23. Northwest elevation of garage, camera facing southeast.

Photo 17 of 23. West elevation of garage, camera facing east.

Photo 18 of 23. Reception hall interior on first floor, camera facing west.

Photo 19 of 23. E.F. Caldwell chandelier on third floor, camera facing northwest.

Photo 20 of 23. Northeast bathroom interior with J. L. Mott clawfoot tub on third floor, camera facing northwest.

Photo 21 of 23. West bathroom interior with clawfoot tub on third floor, camera facing northwest.

Photo 22 of 23. North bathroom interior with J. L. Mott sink and clawfoot tub on second floor, camera facing north.

Photo 23 of 23. Master bedroom fireplace with details of neoclassical tile, camera facing northwest.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for nominations to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

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- Tier 1 – 60-100 hours
- Tier 2 – 120 hours
- Tier 3 – 230 hours
- Tier 4 – 280 hours

The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525.

Knight House National Register Nomination Photographs



Photo 1 of 23: East façade, camera facing west.



Photo 2 of 23: Aerial view of east façade, camera facing west.



Photo 3 of 23: West elevation, camera facing east.



Photo 4 of 23: Northeast elevation, camera facing southwest.



Photo 5 of 23: South elevation, camera facing north.



Photo 6 of 23: East façade, camera facing west.



Photo 7 of 23: Southeast elevation and walkway (foreground) to site of former school on adjacent property, camera facing northwest.



Photo 8 of 23: South elevation, camera facing north.



Photo 9 of 23: View of banks of Lake Wonoscopomuc (background) from southwest elevation, camera facing west.



Photo 10 of 23: West elevation, camera facing east.



Photo 11 of 23: View of in-ground pool and backyard from north west elevation, camera facing southwest.



Photo 12 of 23: Northeast elevation, camera facing southwest.



Photo 13 of 23: Hitching post on north side of driveway, camera facing northeast.



Photo 14 of 23: Northwest elevation, camera facing southeast



Photo 15 of 23: West elevation and in-ground pool, camera facing east.



Photo 16 of 23: Northwest elevation of garage, camera facing southeast.



Photo 17 of 23: West elevation of garage, camera facing east.



Photo 18 of 23: Reception hall interior on first floor, camera facing west.



Photo 19 of 23: E.F. Caldwell chandelier on third floor, camera facing northwest.



Photo 20 of 23: Northeast bathroom interior with J.L. Mott clawfoot tub on third floor, camera facing northwest.



Photo 21 of 23: West bathroom interior with clawfoot tub on third floor, camera facing northwest.



Photo 22 of 23: North bathroom interior with J. L. Mott sink and clawfoot tub on second floor, camera facing north.



Photo 23 of 23: Master bedroom fireplace with details of neoclassical tile, camera facing northwest.