

**HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY**  
**BUILDING AND STRUCTURES**  
 HIST-6 NEW 5 77

STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
**CONNECTICUT HISTORICAL COMMISSION**  
 59 SOUTH PROSPECT STREET, HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106  
 (203) 566-3005

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY	
Town No.:	Site No.:
UTM:	
QUAD:	
DISTRICT <input type="checkbox"/> S <input type="checkbox"/> NR	IF NR, SPECIFY <input type="checkbox"/> Actual <input type="checkbox"/> Potential

IDENTIFICATION	1. BUILDING NAME (Common) <span style="float: right;">(Historic)</span> Curtis, John, House	
	2. TOWN CITY Durham	VILLAGE Middlesex
	3. STREET AND NUMBER (and or location) Brick Lane, east side	
	4. OWNER(S) Griggs, Donald J. <span style="float: right;"><input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private</span>	
	5. USE (Present) <span style="float: right;">(Historic)</span> Convalescent Home <span style="float: right;">Residence</span>	
	6. ACCESSIBILITY TO PUBLIC: EXTERIOR VISIBLE FROM PUBLIC ROAD <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No INTERIOR ACCESSIBLE <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No IF YES, EXPLAIN	
	7. STYLE OF BUILDING Center-chimney Colonial	
	DATE OF CONSTRUCTION ca. 1770	
	8. MATERIAL(S) (Indicate use or location when appropriate)	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Clapboard <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Asbestos Siding <input type="checkbox"/> Brick <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Wood Shingle <input type="checkbox"/> Asphalt Siding <input type="checkbox"/> Fieldstone <input type="checkbox"/> Board & Batten <input type="checkbox"/> Stucco <input type="checkbox"/> Cobblestone <input type="checkbox"/> Aluminum Siding <input type="checkbox"/> Concrete Type: _____ <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cut stone Type: Sandstone	
DESCRIPTION	9. STRUCTURAL SYSTEM	
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wood frame <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Post and beam <input type="checkbox"/> balloon <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Load bearing masonry <input type="checkbox"/> Structural iron or steel	
	10. ROOF (Type)	
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gable <input type="checkbox"/> Flat <input type="checkbox"/> Mansard <input type="checkbox"/> Monitor <input type="checkbox"/> sawtooth <input type="checkbox"/> Gambrel <input type="checkbox"/> Shed <input type="checkbox"/> Hip <input type="checkbox"/> Round <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ (Material)	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Wood Shingle <input type="checkbox"/> Roll Asphalt <input type="checkbox"/> Tin <input type="checkbox"/> Slate <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Asphalt shingle <input type="checkbox"/> Built up <input type="checkbox"/> Tile <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____	
	11. NUMBER OF STORIES 2 1/2	
	APPROXIMATE DIMENSIONS 40x44; 30x20; 12x51	
	12. CONDITION (Structural) <span style="float: right;">(Exterior)</span>	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	
	13. INTEGRITY (Location) <span style="float: right;">WHEN ?</span> <span style="float: right;">(Alterations)</span> <span style="float: right;">IF YES EXPLAIN</span>	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On original site <input type="checkbox"/> Moved <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No many large additions to south, east & north elevations		
14. RELATED OUTBUILDINGS OR LANDSCAPE FEATURES		
<input type="checkbox"/> Barn <input type="checkbox"/> Shed <input type="checkbox"/> Garage <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other landscape features or buildings (Specify) _____		
<input type="checkbox"/> Carriage house <input type="checkbox"/> Shop <input type="checkbox"/> Garden		
15. SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Open land <input type="checkbox"/> Wood-land <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Residential <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Scattered buildings visible from site <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Indus-trial <input type="checkbox"/> Rural <input type="checkbox"/> High building density		
16. INTERRELATIONSHIP OF BUILDING AND SURROUNDINGS		

Surrounded by overgrown fields on the east side of Brick Lane, the John Curtis House is set in a residential neighborhood just to the east of Durham's commercial center.

DESCRIPTION (Continued)

Additions include a 2½ story, single-bay, ridge-to-street ell added to the south elevation giving the facade a four-bay appearance. A 2½ story, ridge-to-street ell has been added to the rear portion of the north elevation and a single story, two-bay shed-roofed ell has been added to the front portion of the same elevation. Another large, single story ell has been added to the eastern elevation. All the additions are supported by concrete foundations. The facade entryway is concealed by a small, single-bay, single story enclosed entry porch which features an eight-paned glass door flanked by two long single-paned sidelights and surmounted by a two-paned overlight. A small decorative dentil course trims the eaves of the porch. Six-over-six and six-over-one sash are exhibited throughout the house. (cont)

18 ARCHITECT

BUILDER

19 HISTORICAL OR ARCHITECTURAL IMPORTANCE

SIGNIFICANCE

This 2½ story, three-bay, center-chimney Colonial-period house has been significantly altered since it was erected by John Curtis ca. 1770. Capped with a ridge-to-street gable roof, the original block utilizes a post-and-beam framing system which rests on a sandstone foundation. The major alterations to the building are the many twentieth-century, balloon-framed additions that have been superimposed on the north, east and south elevations when the building was enlarged as a convalescent home. The entire house is asbestos-sided and all the roofs are asphalt-shingled.

John Curtis (1721-1800) erected this house ca. 1770 on a nine-acre lot he purchased from Samuel Fairchild. Curtis, who represented Durham at the General Court in 1755, was the son of James Curtis, an original proprietor of Durham. A farmer, Curtis married Dinah Norton (1723-1800) in 1747. In 1778 John sold the property with a dwelling house to his eldest son Abijah (1750-1825). Abijah, married to Ann (Bishop), enlisted as a private in Captain Stephen Norton's Company soon after the confrontation at Lexington. In 1817 Abijah sold the homestead to his son Samuel (1787-1846), who ran a cider mill and distillery at the corner of Brick and Maiden lanes. Samuel and his wife Lucretia (Brooks) migrated to western New York in the early nineteenth century when the depletion of farmland forced many new families to move westward. In 1829 brothers Miles and Noah Merwin purchased the property. Miles (1795-1879) was instrumental in the organization of the Merriam Manufacturing Company which produced japanned and stamped tinware. Miles and Noah (1807-1849) (cont)

SOURCES

Durham Land Records; Durham Vital Records; Middletown Probate Records; Federal Census of 1820, 1850, 1880; Beers, J.B., History of Middlesex County, Connecticut (New York: J.B. Beers & Co., 1884); Durham History Committee, Durham, CT, 1866-1980: Century of Change (Durham: 1980); Fowler, William C., History of Durham (Durham: W.C. Fowler, 1866); Whited, Milton, Durham's Heritage (Durham: 1976); 1859 Walling Map; 1874 Beers Atlas.

PHOTO	PHOTOGRAPHER P.D. Hall		DATE 6/83
	VIEW Southeast	NEGATIVE ON FILE 5:26	
COMPILED BY	NAME E.R. Hart		DATE 11/83
	ORGANIZATION Greater Middletown Preservation Trust		
	ADDRESS 27 Washington St., Middletown, Conn. 06457		



20 SUBSEQUENT FIELD EVALUATIONS

THREATS TO BUILDING OR SITE

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None known	<input type="checkbox"/> Highways	<input type="checkbox"/> Vandalism	<input type="checkbox"/> Developers	<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Renewal	<input type="checkbox"/> Private	<input type="checkbox"/> Deterioration	<input type="checkbox"/> Zoning	<input type="checkbox"/> Explanation _____

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

CONNECTICUT HISTORICAL COMMISSION

59 South Prospect Street, Hartford, Connecticut 06106

HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY FORM

For Buildings and Structures

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY			
TOWN NO.:		SITE NO.:	
UTM: 18	/	/	/ 1 /
QUAD:			
DISTRICT:	S	NR:	ACTUAL POTENTIAL

CONTINUATION SHEET

Item number: 17,19 Date: 4/13/84

THE JOHN CURTIS HOUSE, Brick Lane, Durham

- 17) Outbuildings include a 2½ story, gable-to-street, twentieth-century Domestic style house located to the southeast of the main house and two small single story sheds located to the east and north.
  
- 19) were both farmers and were well-known for driving large herds of cattle from northern New York to Durham. The Merwin brothers also operated a successful sawmill on Mill Road in the center of town. In 1835 Miles quit-claimed "the Curtis Place" to his brother, who resided there until his death in 1849. Noah's widow, Olive (Stowe) Merwin (1809-1872), occupied the farmhouse until 1872, when she quit-claimed the property to her three children, Edward Payson, Lucy Stowe, and Charles Baldwin Merwin. German immigrants, Emil (1820-1907) and Leuchen (1836-1827) Klein purchased the property from Noah's heirs in 1872. In the middle of the twentieth century, the house was enlarged and transformed into a convalescent home and is still active today as the Dogwood Acres.

Although significantly altered from its original appearance, the John Curtis house is noteworthy for its long association with the Curtises, one of Durham's founding families.