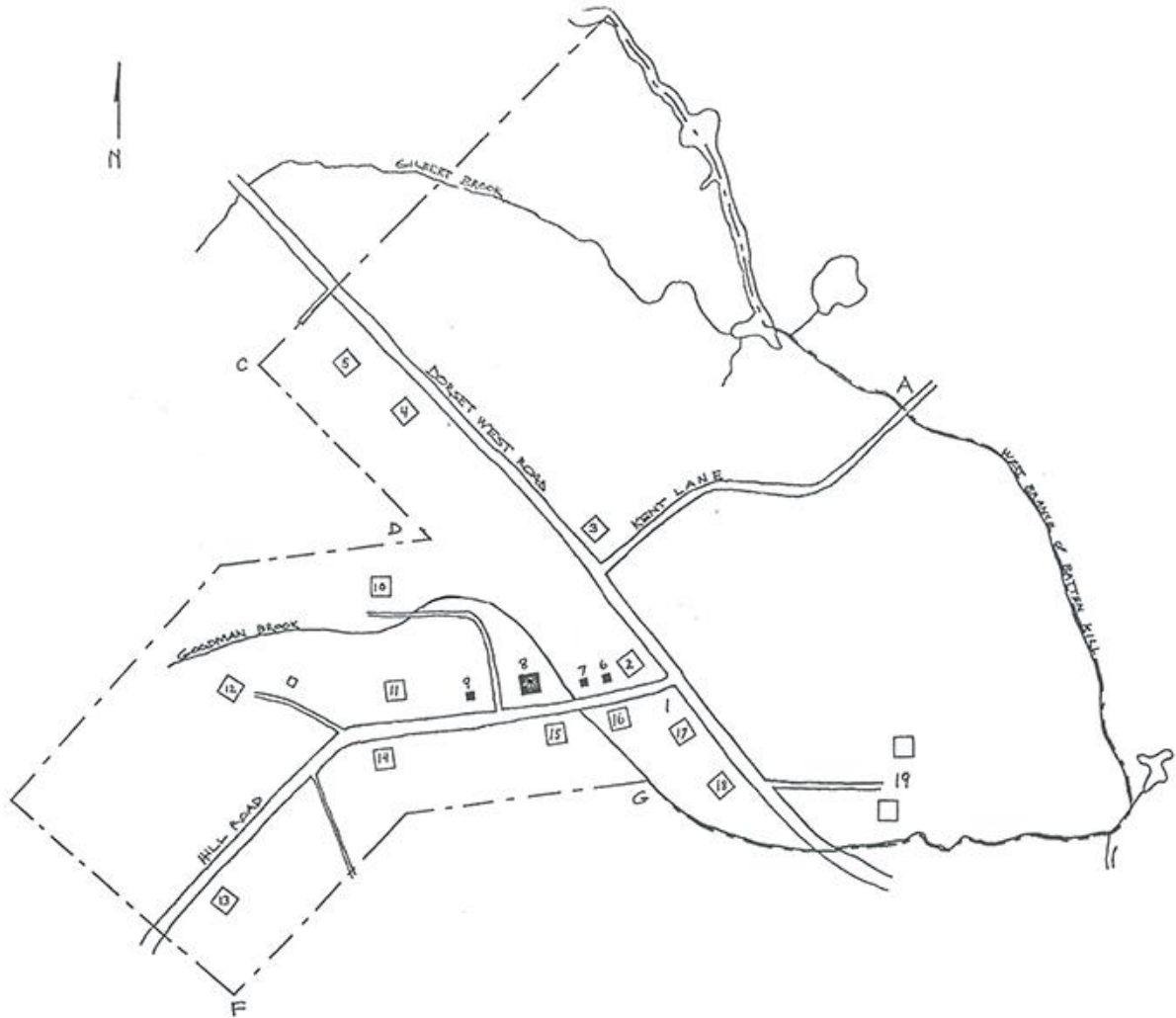


Dorset Historical Society

The Collection Notebook

Kent Neighborhood Historic District

In 1978, after several years of work, the Kent Neighborhood Historic District became part of the National Register of Historic Places, the first section of Dorset to be so designated.



The Neighborhood includes thirteen houses, and a historic marker, all along a section of the Dorset West Road, as well as a portion of Nichols Hill Road.

Some houses within the Neighborhood boundaries are not included in the Historic District because they were built too recently.



This is a copy of the map submitted with the original Historic District application. What then was “Hill Road is now “Nichols Hill Road, and what was then “Kent Lane” is now “Lane Road.” Also, the buildings 6 -9 and 16 were not listed as a part of the historic district.

1) The Marble Monument 1912, 1982

This historic marker has been moved twice since it was first erected by the Vermont Colonial Dames in 1912. Originally in a triangular center island at the intersection,, it was moved in 1932 to the southwest corner of Nichols Hill Road by Lincoln Isham, owner of the Martin Kent house, when the town eliminated the island. In 1982, in a highly controversial move, artist Dean Fausett organized efforts to shift the marker to its current location. New bronze plaques of questionable accuracy were added.

Where was the Tavern?

The Kent Neighborhood Historic District, which runs up part of Nichols Hill Road and includes a section of the Dorset West Road, was settled in 1773 by the Kent family. Father Cephas Kent built a house and tavern on the southwest corner of those two roads, which hosted four meeting of delegates from various southern Vermont towns in 1775 and 1776 to determine how to act together against New York claims to their lands. Other houses in the area were built by Kent’s sons.

The original house and tavern no longer exists. Over time, some people have argued that the meetings were held in a building which does remain standing.



2) Kent-Isham House

c. 1800-1810

Located at the principal intersection in the district, this building is the visual anchor for its surroundings. A typical framed early -19th - century Vermont house, it is sheathed in clapboards, has five bays, two stories, a central entrance, a slate gabled roof , and two exterior end chimneys. All windows are six-over-six sashes, and have slightly peaked lintels. The central window on the second floor has been altered to resemble casements.

The house was probably remodeled in the mid-19th -century, which would account for the classical entry porch, with square piers, large entablature, and paneled parapet. Together with the peaked lintels, these are the only classical details on the exterior of the building. To the rear (west) an ell has been added, probably still later in the 19th century. It includes porches with sawn brackets in the Italianate style.

In the early 19th century this house was home to Martin Kent, a son of Cephas. Other owners have included historian and novelist Zephine Humphrey, her artist husband, Wallace Fahnestock, and Lincoln Isham, Abraham Lincoln's great-grandson.

The current owners have performed considerable restoration work on the house.



3) John Kent-Juba Kent House

Ell c. 1775; main block, c. 1850

Like many of the buildings in the district, this house had two distinct periods of building. The main section is Greek Revival, and its 2 ½ story gable end faces the road. Clapboarded, it is three bays wide, and three deep, clapboarded, with the entry in the right bay. The entry has paneled pilasters supporting a full entablature with partial returns. The windows are six-over-six, and there is an underscaled louvered triangular vent in the pediment.

Attached to this building is the earlier dwelling, built by John Kent, son of Cephas, c. 1775. This section is also frame, gabled with slate, and two stories. Its ridge runs at right angles to that of the main house. Windows are smaller and abut the plain fascia above the second floor. A porch, which probably dates from the period of the main house, runs across the front of this section and is supported by paneled posts identical to the pilasters at the entrance.

The main section of the house was built by Juba Kent, John's son, around 1850.

During the 1920s and '30s, the building was a summer hotel, The Gilbert House, and remained in the Gilbert family through the 20th century.



4) John Kent Hired -Help House c. 1850

This structure is a very small, 1 ½- story frame house, with a gabled end that faces the road, giving it a vaguely classical feel. The first story is three bays wide, with a plain entrance in the center. Above the entrance a single window is in the peak of the gable. A small cornice runs along the front and side eaves.

This house was part of the John Kent–Juba Kent property (#3) for many years, and housed the farm’s hired man and his family. Its ownership is now separate from that of the former Kent farm, and it has been little changed through the last 150 years.



5) Schoolhouse c. 1834

The northernmost structure in the district, this residence was built as a school for the neighboring farms. The 1 ½-story gable end contains a door and a window. There is an entablature at the eave line, but no returns. A group of three nine-over-six windows, commonly seen in early Vermont schools, are at the rear of the left elevation. The left portion is the original schoolhouse. The addition was made in the mid-20th century.

Another schoolhouse was previously on this site, as early as 1814.

10) Dr. Otto Pickhardt House



This house is said to have been moved at least once. It is frame with clapboards, two stories, five bays with a central entrance, and a gabled roof. It has been extensively remodeled and its location removes it from the immediate streetscape of Nichols Hill Road.

Dr. Otto Pickhardt lived here for some time. A physician in New York City, he once treated Winston Churchill after an accident, and they remained friends afterwards.



11) Cheese Factory



In the late 1930s, artists Norman and Silvia Wright turned a former cheese factory, originally located in East Dorset, into their home. It is frame, 1 ½ stories, with clapboard siding and a slate gabled roof. The tall vernacular central door is surrounded by pilasters, with a transom light and entablature. An exterior chimney is at each end of the house. The

four first-floor windows are twelve-over-eight, while three six-light, fixed sash windows are evenly spaced along the eaves. A small gabled roof dormer and the side and rear ells were probably later 19th -and -20th century additions.

The building may have had another use before it became a cheese factory, because the original date of construction was probably before the middle of the 19th century.



12) Grover Jones House

Like the Dr. Otto Pickhardt house, this building has been moved several times. This 2 ½- story frame house is of undetermined date. Clapboarded, it has a central chimney, is two large bays wide , and has a with a smaller side ell. Massing and fenestration suggest a recent date of

construction.

The accompanying barn was originally part of Cephas Kent Jr.'s farm, and has long been the studio and residence of prominent Dorset famed artist Arthur Jones.



13) Alexander Kent House
c. 1783



The westernmost building in the district, is a two-story frame house sheathed in clapboards. It is a five-bay "I" house, with central entry and two exterior end chimneys. It was built by Alexander Kent, son of Cephas. Additions in the late 19th century. Include changed windows and numerous ells and appendages added at the rear.

14) Kent-Stone-Fausett House c.1773



was the dwelling of Cephas Kent Jr.

It is generally agreed by historians that a portion of this house, built in two sections, consists of an earlier structure moved to the site from another location. Artist Dean Fausett claimed that the moved structure was the dwelling house of Cephas Kent Sr. Historians believe that the moved portion

The present appearance of the house is of a gable front, 2 ½ -story Greek Revival main block and side ell. The main block, which is three bays-wide, has its entry in the left bay. The entry consists of pilasters supporting a heavy entablature, and incorporates sidelights. The building has a large cornice, with returns on the gable end. There are no corner pilasters.

The second floor of the main block contains a large neo-Palladian window in the gable end, which was added mid-20th-century. It replaced two symmetrically placed windows. Probably at the same time, all windows were changed from Victorian-style two-over-two to nine-over-six, and the proportions of the first floor windows were changed.

The ell is two bays wide, two stories high, and has a slate gabled roof. Its ridge is at right angles to the main block. It has one exterior end chimney, probably added; plain cornerboards, and a small box cornice with partial returns. Second-floor window lintels are flush against the fascia of the eaves, indicating a possible construction date of the late 18th century.

15) Brookside

This 1 ½ -story frame house probably dates from around the middle of the 19th century. Its gable end faces the road, but the entrance is in the side (west) façade. The door is framed by a narrow surround with an entablature.



The house has had numerous additions, not all of which have been in keeping with its architectural character. These include an exterior chimney, front-and rear shed dormers, rear ells, and a projecting bay window.

17) U.S. Kent House



This large frame house is 2 ½ stories, its gable front three-bays wide. The side elevations contain three very broad bays, and the principal entrance is in the center bay of the left (south) façade.

There is a wide entablature, with small returns, above colossal paneled pilasters. On the side facades, the second-story windows are small, six-pane, fixed sash. The entry is relatively simple, with attenuated pilasters supporting an entablature.

Although the house presents a classical appearance, its massing suggests an earlier building that was remodeled in mid-19th -century. It was built by Uriel S. Kent, son of Martin and grandson of Cephas Sr.

18) George Brainsford Holley House c. 1840



Holley was married to Eliza Kent, one of Martin Kent's daughters; her brother Uriel lived next door (#17).

This house is very similar to the John Kent-Juba Kent House (#3). A gable-front Greek Revival frame house, it is sheathed in clapboards, is three-bays wide, and has its entrance in the left bay. The entry, under a one-story porch, consists of paneled pilasters supporting a full entablature. The recessed door is flanked by full-height sidelights.

Perhaps the most unusual feature of the house is the porch on the main façade, which spans the full width of the house and is supported on marble piers similar to the entry pilasters.

The main section of this house is so similar in detailing to the John Kent-Juba Kent House that one suspects they were built by the same person, or perhaps within a short time span. Juba and Eliza Kent were cousins, and each married a member of the Holley family.

George B. Holley was a major figure in the development of marble quarries in the Dorset-Danby area. His daughter married marble entrepreneur Spafford West. Their son, Ernest West, managed the Norcross-West quarry from 1906 to 1915. The house was still owned by Holley's descendants late in the 20th century, and was known as the Marble West Inn from 1985-2013.

19) Kinnie House



A two-building farm complex, these structures are apparently unrelated to the Kent family. The main house, which is frame, 1 ½ stories, with gabled roof, is oriented towards the main road. A smaller, 1 ½ -story house has an upper level lit by a wide shed dormer. Both buildings appear to date from relatively late in the 19th century.



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