

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. Name of Property

historic name: Hoppin, Hamilton, House

other name/site number: "Villalon," "Montpellier", or "Shadowlawn"

2. Location

street & number: 120 Miantonomi Avenue

not for publication: N/A

city/town: Middletown vicinity: N/A

state: RI county: Newport code: 005 zip code: 02842

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: Private

Category of Property: Building

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u> </u>	buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: N/A

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

Property name Hoppin, Hamilton, House, Newport County, Middletown, RI

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. See continuation sheet.

Fredrick C. Williams
Signature of certifying official

11 July 1996
Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- ___ entered in the National Register
___ See continuation sheet.
 - ___ determined eligible for the National Register
___ See continuation sheet.
 - ___ determined not eligible for the National Register
 - ___ removed from the National Register
 - ___ other (explain): _____
- _____
Signature of Keeper
- _____
Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic: DOMESTIC Sub: single family

Current: DOMESTIC Sub: single family

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7. Description

Architectural Classification:

Late Victorian
Italianate

Other Description: _____

Materials: foundation BRICK roof ASPHALT
walls WOOD other _____

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

X See continuation sheet.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: locally

Applicable National Register Criteria: C

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): _____

Areas of Significance: ARCHITECTURE

Period(s) of Significance: 1856-1857

Significant Dates: 1856 1857

Significant Person(s): N/A

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: A Upjohn, Richard

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

X See continuation sheet.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

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

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other state agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other -- Specify Repository: Avery Library, Columbia University, New York

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: 1.56 acres

UTM References:	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
A	<u>19</u>	<u>308220</u>	<u>4597320</u>	B	_____	_____
C	_____	_____	_____	D	_____	_____

See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description: See continuation sheet.

Boundary Justification: See continuation sheet.

11. Form Prepared By

Name/Title: Ronald M. Wood, Vice President/Wm McKenzie Woodward

Organization: Urban Design Group/RIHP&HC Date: 11-95/5-96

Street & Number: 68 So. Main St./150 Benefit St. Telephone: 401-521-0096/277-2678

City or Town: Providence State: RI ZIP: 02903

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Description

The Hamilton Hoppin House, also known as "Villalon," is a substantial three-story, wood framed building designed in a transitional Italianate-Stick style by the noted 19th-century architect Richard Upjohn. Built in 1856 as a summer residence for Hamilton Hoppin of New York, a businessman and member of a prominent Rhode Island political family, Upjohn also designed a companion house, "Restemere," on adjacent property for Hoppin's brother-in-law, Alexander van Rensselaer.

Converted to an Inn in 1984 by its previous owners and now known as the "Inn at Shadowlawn," it is located just off one of the primary roads serving Aquidneck Island. On a corner lot, edged with mature trees and plantings, the house is set back but visible from the street in spite of being surrounded by recent subdivision development. Substantial in scale and Italianate in form, its 49' x 52' structure with a full basement is capped by a low hipped roof with three interior chimneys.

The main three-bay facade with central entry is overlaid by an Italianate arcaded open porch with spooled railing, raised some 30" above grade. Two symmetrical one-story bow-fronted window bays with central stained glass panels flank either side of the main elevation. Like the porch, these window bays are capped by wood spool balustrades of a later date to match the porch railing. Original architectural drawings and early photographs show a diagonal cross braced handrail with infill panels of wood filigree to both the porch and its roof and the window bays. First the porch railing then the upper roof balustrades were replaced sometime in the 1890s.

To the rear is a one-story 19' x 34' addition, which, although appears to be of a alter date, is shown in the original plans. A open wood fire stair built in the 1890s occurs on the rear of the building, while a sunken lean-to greenhouse, now in disuse but with access to the basement, occupies a portion of the east elevation.

Although Italianate in basic form, Upjohn's treatment of the building's exterior skin digresses in style, echoing in part the half-timbered houses of his native England. The skeletonization of the exterior wall surfaces with timbering, however, was not reflective of the structural framing within, but rather a device to reduce its scale and marry the house more appropriately to its rural setting. Heavy vertical chamfered timbering and corner posts articulates the three bay form of the building. Secondary vertical timbering frames each window bay. Horizontal string

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courses of timbering occurring at window heads and sills and expressing each floor level further divide the wall surfaces into a series of smaller wall surfaces. On the first two floors, these wall panels are infilled with clapboard. On the third floor, the skeletonization is further broken down with the introduction of a continuous panel of diagonal cross timbering occurring between the bracketed horizontal floor member to the string course timbering at the sill. Between the windows, the wall surfaces are clad with board and batten panels. The building is terminated by a bracketed cornice and deep roof overhang.

Fenestration of the main facade is symmetrical. On the ground floor, two long 6-over-6 windows with louvered shutters extend almost to the floor and flank the main entry. The building's central bay frames the entrance with its pair of paneled doors with leaded glass inserts. A stained glass panel also occurs over the transom. On the upper floors, the declining proportions of the windows further define the scale of the building. The small windows on the third floor were replaced by casement windows c. 1984.

The interior of the Hoppin House follows a symmetrical plan with a central hallway and stair. The hall with a mahogany paneled wainscot of a later date has been recently renovated to show its original plaster walls, upper stenciled frieze and deep scalloped cove molding. Early photographs indicated a companion frieze on the ceiling return around the perimeter of the room. The hallway is terminated by the main stair with a split landing leading to the second floor bedrooms. The stair is treated as the major design element within the space with its sculptural treatment in wood. Here the wainscoting follows the stair run and its other side is complemented by a wood balustrade of turned spindles, fluted newel posts and heavy cap rail. The underside of the stair run is further paneled in wood, reinforcing the overall theme. At the half landing, a stained glass window is set in a wood paneled return. The stained glass panel has an oriental motif and appears to be dated later than the other stained glass panels in the house. The flooring has a checkered design with white oak in a basketweave pattern, inset with squares of red oak.

The first sequence of rooms off the hall is the library and dining room. Access to both rooms is gained by a pair of tall arched paneled doors framed with a heavy molding. These doors have been modified and inset with half panels of glass. Both rooms are axially terminated by an arched window bay with built-in cabinets and containing a central panel of stained glass. In the library, built-in cabinets with paneled and glass fronts occupy either side of the arched entryway, returning into the fireplace on the north side and the window on the south wall. The

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fireplace is framed by a heavy articulated Italianate wood frame and mantle. The fireplace surround and hearth are marble. The dining room is similar in form but simpler in treatment. Here the fireplace is framed by a simple arched surround and mantle of pink marble. Similarly, built-ins are confined to the window alcove. Both rooms have oak strip flooring edged with a geometric pattern in contrasting red oak.

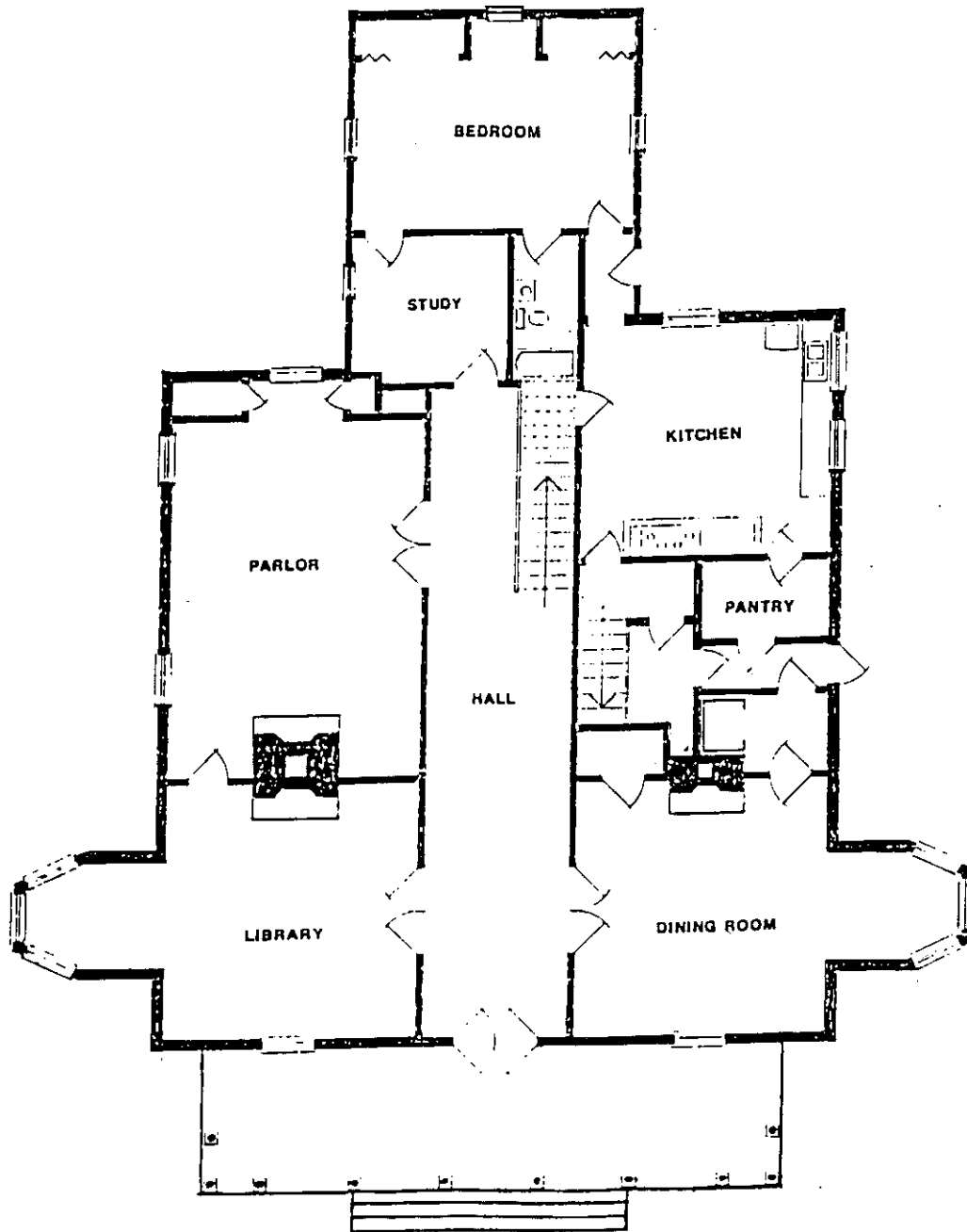
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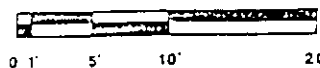
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FIRST FLOOR PLAN



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Photographs

3. Photographer:
4. Date: August, 1995
5. Negative: RIHP&HC
(Above information applies to photos 1 through 8)

6. View: Façade, view from south-southwest
7. Photo #1

6. View: Façade detail, view from south
7. Photo #2

6. View: Façade detail, view from southeast
7. Photo #3

6. View: North elevation, view from west-northwest
7. Photo #4

6. View: General view from southwest
7. Photo #5

6. View: Main hall, view from south
7. Photo #6

6. View: Main stair detail, view from south
7. Photo #7

6. View: Southwest parlor, view from east
7. Photo #8

3. Photographer:
4. Date: September, 1978
5. Negative:
(The above information applies to photos 9 and 10)

6. View: Dining room, view from west-southwest
7. Photo #9

6. View: Northwest parlor, view from north
7. Photo #10
7. Photo #9

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Significance

Designed by nationally prominent architect Richard Upjohn (1802-1878) and built as a summer retreat for a New York family, the Louisa Howland and Hamilton Hoppin House is a key monument in nineteenth-century American domestic wood-frame architecture.

Hamilton Hoppin (1821-1885), scion of a Providence China Trade-fortune family, left the family business to work in New York, where he met and married Louisa Howland (182?-18??). Louisa's father, Samuel Shaw Howland, was a highly successful New York merchant; her mother, Joanna Esther Hone, was a niece of New York mayor Philip Hone. The Howlands lived on Washington Square in New York and were known in literary and artistic circles.

Both the Hone and Howland families came to summer in Newport by the 1850s. The Hamilton Hoppins followed. In the fall of 1855 Hamilton Hoppin bought approximately five-and-a-quarter acres of land, just east of One Mile Corner on the Newport-Middletown line, at the top of a hill overlooking Easton's Pond and the Atlantic Ocean beyond. Shortly thereafter, Hoppin sold the eastern half of the parcel to his brother-in-law Alexander van Rensselaer. The Hoppins engaged Upjohn to design the house, a task completed in early 1856. Construction began that same spring, and the Hoppins first occupied the house during the 1857 summer season. The following year, the Rensselaers built a nearly identical house on their adjacent property (still standing). By 1870, when Jacob Weidenmann published them in Beautifying Country Homes, both properties were handsomely landscaped by Michael Butler. Both families remained here until late in the century; Mrs Hoppin sold her house after her husband's death in 1885. In the twentieth century, the gardens to the north, west, and east of the house were sold and subdivided into small residential lots, and the physical and visual connections between the Hoppin and Rensselaer houses were lost.

Richard Upjohn is a key figure in mid-nineteenth-century American architecture. His Trinity Church (1839-46, NHL), Broadway at Wall, New York, introduced Puginesque Gothic Revival to the United States, and he remained an important ecclesiastical architect throughout his career. "Upjohn also had a significant impact on residential architecture, with Newport [and adjacent Middletown] serving as the setting for several new

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developments."¹ These include the Gothic Revival George Noble Jones House (1839-41, pending NHL), the Italianate Edward King Villa (1845-47), and the Alexander van Rensselaer and Hamilton Hoppin Houses.

Upjohn's selection as architect was almost predictable. Louisa Howland Hoppin's and Mary Howland van Rensselaer's elder sister Caroline Howland Russell and her husband, Charles H. Russell, had employed Upjohn to design their Newport summer house, "Oaklawn," at the corner of Bellevue and Narragansett Avenues, in the mid-1850s (demolished). The Howland family, moreover, worshipped in New York at Upjohn's Church of the Ascension (1841, NHL), at the corner of 10th Street and Fifth Avenue, where the youngest Howland daughter married architect Richard Morris Hunt in April of 1861.

The Hoppin House is the earliest and best extant example of the picturesque half-timbered house that became popular in the 1860s and 1870s. Leopold Eidlitz (1823-1908) had designed and built at least one half-timber Swiss-chalet-inspired example, the Hamilton Ferry House (ca. 1853) in Brooklyn, New York. Upjohn's own George M. Atwater House (1854-55) in Springfield, Massachusetts, is more timid than the Hoppin House: it includes posts, studs, plates, and bressumers but no cross bracing; its siding, moreover, is limited to clapboard. Similarly, Upjohn's nearby contemporary Mary and Alexander van Rensselaer House uses half-timbering with some cross bracing, but without board-and-batten trim.

Marking an important step in the introduction of picturesque imagery and foreign sources into American domestic architecture, the Hoppin House has received considerable scholarly attention for more than fifty years. It was first analyzed in 1939, when Everard M. Upjohn illustrated it and noted its "...exceptionally quiet design."² It captured the attention of Vincent J. Scully in the late 1940s, when he first cited the influence of its half timbering on Hunt's domestic work of the early 1860s in nearby

¹William H. Jordy and Christopher P. Monkhouse, Buildings on Paper: Rhode Island Architectural Drawings, 1825-1945 (Providence, 1982), p. 236.

²Everard M. Upjohn, Richard Upjohn: Architect and Churchman (New York, 1939), p. 125 and fig. 77.

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Newport, notably the John N. A. Griswold House.³ A later generation of scholars placed it into the broader context of American architecture, especially as it emerged on the international scene. Christopher Monkhouse cited the importance of the house's picturesque use of half timbering "...not as a visual metaphor for the timber framing inside but as a means of reducing the impact [of the broad, flat wall surfaces] by breaking them down into a series of smaller surface units."⁴ Sarah Bradford Landau remarked on Upjohn's association with Vienna-trained émigré architect Leopold Eidlitz, who began his career in Upjohn's office between 1843 and 1845, and emphasized Upjohn's trip in 1850 to Germany, Switzerland, and the Tyrolean Alps, where he saw first-hand examples of mid-European vernacular architecture. Landau placed the house's overall form and proportions in "...a long established American tradition..." but notes its remarkable similarity to examples of "... Tirolerhäuschen with similar half-timber paneling and cross braces and even with vertical board-and-batten siding under the eaves..."⁵ Similarly detailed houses had been published in early volumes of the Architektonisches Skizzen-Buch, published in Berlin from 1852 to 1886 and in circulation in New York beginning at the latest in the mid-1850s.⁶

The presence in New York and Newport of Ecole des Beaux-Arts-trained architect Richard Morris Hunt dramatically affected the course of American architecture. After his marriage into the Howland family, Richard Morris Hunt knew the Hoppin House intimately. Twentieth-century scholars—including Scully, Landau, and Paul Baker, Hunt's biographer,⁷—consistently invoke the Hoppin House as a precedent for the Griswold House (1862-63)

³Vincent J. Scully, Jr., "The Cottage Style," (Ph.D. thesis, Yale University, 1949) and The Shingle Style and the Stick Style (New Haven, 1971), p. liv.

⁴Jordy and Monkhouse, p. 184.

⁵Sarah Bradford Landau, "Richard Morris Hunt, the Continental Picturesque, and the 'Stick Style'," Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians 42 (October 1983), p. 275.

⁶Ibid., pp. 273-274.

⁷Paul R. Baker, Richard Morris Hunt (Cambridge & London, 1980), pp. 489-490.

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and, further, for the development of the mature Modern Gothic style of the 1860s and 1870s.

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Major Bibliographical References

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- Chapin, William W. The Hoppin Family.
- Hoppin, Augustus. Recollections of Autun House. Providence, 1943.
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- Landau, Sarah Bradford. "Richard Morris Hunt, the Continental Picturesque, and the 'Stick Style.'" Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians. 42 (October 1983): 272-289.
- Scully, Vincent J. The Shingle Style and the Stick Style. New Haven, 1971.
- Weidenmann, Jacob. Beautifying Country Homes. New York, 1870.

Maps and Atlases

- Beers, D.G. and Company, Atlas of Rhode Island: Middletown, Philadelphia, 1870. (NHSL)
- Everts and Richards, Topographical Atlas of Southern Rhode Island, Springfield, MA, 1895. (NHSL)
- Hopkins, G.M., Atlas of the City of Newport, Rhode Island, Philadelphia, 1876 and 1883.
- Richards, L.G. and Company, Atlas of the City of Newport, and the Towns of Middletown and Portsmouth, Rhode Island, Springfield, MA, 1907.
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Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description and Justification

Plate 108SE Lots #53, #54, #55, #56 and #57.*
Recorded in Book of Deeds 342, page 2, Town Clerk's Office.

*Tax Assessors Office, Middletown Town Hall, East Main Road, Middletown, RI



Hamilton Haggin House
Newport County, Middletown, R.I.
Photo #1 of 10



Hamilton Hopkin House
Newport County, Middletown, A.I.

Photo # 2 of 10



Hamilton Hoppin House
Newport County, Middletown, N.H.
Photo #3 of 10



Hamilton Hoppin House
Newport County, Middletown, RI
Photo # 4 of 10



Hamilton Hoppin House
Newport County, Middletown, N.I.
Photo # 5 of 10



Hamilton Hoppin House
Newport County, Middletown, RI



Hamilton Hoppin House
Newport County, Middletown, RI

Photo # 7 of 10



Hamilton Hoppin House
Newport County, Middletown, RI
Photo # 8 of 10



Hamilton Hoppin House
Newport County, Middletown, RI
Photo #9 of 10



Hamilton Hoppin House
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