

Simon C. Sherwood House
67 Westway Road
Southport
Fairfield County
Connecticut

HABS No. CONN-296

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20243

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. CONN-296

SIMON C. SHERWOOD HOUSE

Location: 67 Westway Road, Southport, Fairfield County,
Connecticut.

USGS Westport Quadrangle Map; Universal Transverse
Mercator Coordinates: 18.643840.4554600.

Present Owner
and Occupant: H. Boone and Violet M. Porter.

Present Use: Residence.

Statement of
Significance: The Simon C. Sherwood house, built 1884, is a fine
late nineteenth-century eclectic composition.
Borrowing from a variety of antiquarian styles,
the design's intricate detailing emphasizes contrasts
and irregularities while achieving a sense of unity.
Particularly interesting are the broken roof lines,
a polygonal bay and rounded turret, the low, protective
Neo-Classical veranda with Eastlarkian spindled posts,
and the texture contrasts of the clapboard, paneled
and scalloped shingle surfaces. The interplay between
vertical and horizontal members creates, in this
case, a design which is active and viable while also
projecting a sense of orderly stability. Sherwood
was the son of a wealthy Southport shipping merchant;
he inherited and perpetuated his father's standing
throughout his life in the village.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1884. The Fairfield "Advertiser" closely followed the progress of the building of Sherwood's house during the year.

April 24 "The frame for a new residence for Mr. Samuel [sic] Sherwood, on Main Street, is up. The plans present a very handsome architecture, with gable, broken roofs, tower, and ornamental trimmings. The main building is 38 x 36 feet with an L 20 x 26 feet. Mr. D.F. Hemson is the contractor. The new house will be a decided ornament to the lower part of Main Street."

- May 22 "The main roof of Mr. Simon Sherwood's new house, on [Westway] Street, is completed, the bay windows are in and the tower will be finished this week. The work is being done by the well-known builder Mr. F. Hemson."
- August 7 "Mr. Simon Sherwood's new house is rapidly approaching completion. The vividly contrasting colors of paint throw into bold relief the minor architectural beauties."
- November 13 "Mr. S.C. Sherwood's house is completed and is one of the finest in the place."

2. Architect, builder: F. Hemson, builder.

3. Original and subsequent owners: References to the chain of title to the land upon which the structure stands are in the Office of the Recorder of Deeds, Fairfield Town Hall, Fairfield, Connecticut.

- 1824 Deed, February 7, 1824, recorded in Volume 39, page 224. Simon Sherwood to Simon Sherwood and David Jennings.
- 1883 Deed, February 10, 1883, recorded in Volume 63, page 4. Estate of Simon Sherwood to Simon C. Sherwood.
- 1906 Deed, December 3, 1906, recorded in Volume 87, page 628. Estate of Simon C. Sherwood to Matilda M. Sherwood.
- 1916 Deed, May 13, 1916, recorded in Volume 87, page 663. S. Wakeman Sherwood, son to Conservator of Estate of Richard S. Sherwood, half interest.
- 1920 Deed, October 13, 1920, recorded in Volume 100, page 568. Conservator of R.S. Wherwood's Estate to Arthur M. Marsh.
- 1943 Deed, January 13, 1943, recorded in Book 194, page 598. Executor of Arthur M. Marsh Estate to Edward Van V. Sands.
- 1965 Deed, August 6, 1965, recorded in Volume 487, page 404. Estate of Anne F. Sands to Walter S. and Deborah J. Hoyt.
- 1966 Deed, Walter S. and Deborah J. Hoyt to H. Boone and Violet M. Porter.

4. Original plan and construction: No original plans or prints of the 1884 structure are known to exist. However, additions to the original fabric were noted in the local newspaper and are recorded below in "Alterations and additions." A detailed architectural description of the house as it presently stands is in Part II, Architectural Information.
5. Alterations and addition: The following items appeared between 1888 and 1901 in Southport's two local newspapers, the Fairfield "Advertiser" and the Southport "Chronicle."
 - May 11, 1888 "Carpenters are at work putting a bay window in Mr. S.C. Sherwood's house."
 - May 7, 1891 "Southport's preoccupation with property-owners' fences was captured by the following brief item in the "Chronicle": "Simon C. Sherwood is removing his front fence."
 - April 7, 1892 The "Chronicle" reported: "Simon C. Sherwood is making improvements on his house, including a large new cistern, the addition of a butler's pantry, etc. The carpenter and mason work is being done by Northrop Brothers, the plumbing by C.A. Wheeler."
 - April 18, 1901 "Simon C. Sherwood is having a new fence built on the tennis court in front of his residence," the "Chronicle" reported.

A porch was added to the front southeast facade around the turn of the century.

B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:

Simon C. Sherwood was born in Southport on June 10, 1840, the son of Edwin Sherwood. Edwin Sherwood owned two schooners, and was principally involved in the trade between New York and Savannah.

After his death in November 1906, Sherwood's widow and son S. Wakeman, a bookkeeper at the Southport Savings Bank, lived in the house until 1916.

C. Bibliography:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

Fairfield County Deed Records, Office of the Recorder, Fairfield Town Hall, Fairfield, Connecticut.

2. Secondary and published sources:

The Fairfield "Advertiser," May 22, 1884; August 7, 1884;
November 13, 1884; May 11, 1884.

The Southport "Chronicle," April 7, 1892; May 7, 1891;
April 18, 1901.

Prepared by Jan E. Cigliano
Staff Historian
Historic American
Buildings Survey
January 1979

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: This 1884 structure is a fine late nineteenth-century composition. Of particular interest are the broken roof lines, polygonal bay and rounded turret, the low, protective Neo-Classical veranda with Eastlavian spindled posts, and the texture contrasts of the clapboard, scalloped shingle and paneled surfaces. The interplay between vertical and horizontal members creates a design which emphasizes irregular massing while also projecting a sense of unified stability.
2. Condition of fabric: Very good.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: The irregular L-shaped structure is two-and-a-half stories with partially exposed basement and measures 35' (northeast front facade) x 65' deep.
2. Foundations: Brick covered with stucco which is scored to imitate stone.
3. Wall construction, finish, color: The main block is covered with horizontal clapboarding. An apron of scalloped shingles defines the division between the first and second floors. A decorative bracketed corbel projection on the main block's front facade defines the principal roof line.
4. Structural system, framing: Timber balloon-frame construction.
5. Porches, porticos, stoops: One-story veranda with projecting central gable extends across the northeast (front) facade. The cornice of the roof and gable pediment, suggestive of early twentieth century Neo-Classical design, is simply molded and articulated with a clean dentil course.

Ornamental turned wooden posts, patterned by the power lathe in the Eastlake mode, span between the spindled balusters and support a row of spindles forming an openwork fascia. Extending beyond the main block of the house, the veranda is enclosed with full-length windows.

6. Chimneys: Three tall brick stacks rise above the central house mass.
7. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: The original single-pane front door with plain surround is in place.
 - b. Windows: One-over-one double-hung sash windows on first and second stories of main block. Slender three-paned full-length windows with a leaded glass panel overhead enclose the veranda extension. Third-story windows in the main gable, roof dormers and corner tower are double-hung sash with a Tiffany design glass window on the upper half and two-light window on the lower half.
8. Roof:
 - a. Shape, covering: Broken gable roof surfaces on the principal mass covered with asphalt shingles. A conical roof crowned with a copper pinnacle caps the three-story octagonal corner tower.
 - b. Cornice, eaves: Deep eaves supported by simple brackets. Various stylized classical cornice motifs ornament the many gable pediments.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:
 - a. First floor: Corner hall plan. A parlor opens at the right through a wide doorway; a side parlor opens at the right of the front corner parlor and extends the full length of this section. The dining room abutts the rear of the front corner parlor. An ell addition extends at the rear.
 - b. Second floor: An L-shaped corridor is across the front and extends to the ell. Bedrooms are to each side.
2. Flooring: The original four-inch boarding is in the front parlor; a parquet floor is in the dining room.

3. Wall and ceiling finish: Plaster walls and ceilings. The front parlor's walls are trimmed with "Rococo" style motifs.
4. Doorways and doors: The original six-paneled doors with brass fittings, richly ornamented, are in place. A variety of delicate moldings surround the doorways. Between the stair hall and two parlors, the original sliding doors with corner block surrounds remain.
5. Decorative features and trim: The cabinets and fireplace in the front parlor have delicately scaled fluted elements, very simple in design. A fireplace in the dining room is framed with carved Adamesque details.
6. Mechanical equipment:
 - a. Heating: Central steam heating system.
 - b. Lighting: Electrical wiring system.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The house faces northeast and is erected upon a slightly rising slope.
2. Outbuildings: A garage of recent date.

Prepared by David T. Van Zanten
Team Historian
Historic American
Buildings Survey
September 1966

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey in cooperation with the Southport Historic District Commission, several members of whom provided the necessary funds. The project was completed in the summer of 1966 under the general direction of James C. Massey, then the Chief of HABS; Ralph Schwarz of the Ford Foundation; and Architect John C. Waite (Columbia University); with assistant architects Christopher Benninger (Harvard University), Richard Haines (University of Kentucky) and Andrew Craig Morrison (University of Michigan), and architectural historian David T. Van Zanten (Harvard University), at the HABS Field Office in Southport, Connecticut. The data was prepared and edited in HABS Washington office in January 1979 by Jan E. Cigliano, staff historian. Photographs were taken by HABS staff photographer Jack E. Boucher in September 1966.