

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

NAUMKEAG

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: Naumkeag

Other Name/Site Number: N/A

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: 5 Prospect Hill Road

Not for publication:

City/Town: Stockbridge

Vicinity:

State: MA County: Berkshire Code: 003

Zip Code: 01262

3. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property

Private: X

Public-Local: ___

Public-State: ___

Public-Federal: ___

Category of Property

Building(s): ___

District: X

Site: ___

Structure: ___

Object: ___

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing

10

11

2

23

Noncontributing

___ buildings

___ sites

___ structures

___ objects

___ Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: 1

Name of Related Multiple Property Listing:

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4. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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.

Signature of Certifying Official

Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

In my opinion, the property ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register criteria.

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
- Determined eligible for the National Register
- Determined not eligible for the National Register
- Removed from the National Register
- Other (explain): _____

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

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6. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic:	Domestic	Sub:	Single dwelling
	Landscape		Secondary structure
			Garden
Current:	Recreation and Culture	Sub:	Museum
	Landscape		Garden

7. DESCRIPTION

ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION: Late Victorian: Shingle style

MATERIALS:

Foundation: Stone
Walls: Wood, Brick, stone
Roof: Asphalt
Other: Glass (shards embedded in brick walls)

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Summary

Naumkeag is a quintessential country estate of the Gilded Age; it is an architectural masterpiece from the transitional second period of the work of McKim, Mead & White that retains many of its original furnishings. Constructed in 1885-1886, Naumkeag represents the period when Charles McKim, Stanford White, and William Mead were consolidating their practice as the most prestigious architects in the country. Naumkeag is equally significant for its designed landscapes including some of the most important surviving landscapes of Fletcher Steele. Steele is an important figure in the history of American landscape architecture as a transitional figure between the classical Beaux-Arts and modern twentieth century practice. At Naumkeag, Steele achieved the most unusual and original marriage of architecture and landscape architecture in New England. It is a family home reflecting the rich lives of two generations of one of America's oldest families.

Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.

Naumkeag consists of forty-six acres between Prospect Hill Road and Church Street in Stockbridge, Massachusetts, with sweeping views of the Housatonic River Valley and the southern Berkshire Hills. The shingle style residence is perched near the top of the hill and is surrounded by formal gardens and designed landscapes that fall away to a pasture, orchard, and a barn at the base of the hill.

Description of Individual Resources

The resources can be grouped into the following categories:

- The main house and its support buildings including the carriage house, the woodshed, garage and workshop, the gardener's house, the dairy barn, and the potting shed;
- The formal landscaped areas, gardens, and garden outdoor rooms and structures including the Summer House and the Chinese Temple.

THE MAIN HOUSE AND ITS SUPPORT BUILDINGS**Main House (Contributing Building)****Exterior Architectural Features**

Naumkeag (Number 1 on the site plan) is a rambling, forty-four-room, L-shaped, three and one-half story house located on the west side of Prospect Hill. It is a house greatly affected by its natural surrounding and the precipitous hill on which it was built. It was designed by the firm of McKim, Mead & White in 1885 and completed in 1886. Architectural treatments vary with each façade and reflect a variety of building materials. The house has masonry construction with walls of exposed brick and fieldstone on the east and south facades and unpainted wood shingle on the north and west facades.

The east façade has two-story round towers in the northeast and southeast corners. The center block of the house is entered through a porte cochere with flared eaves. The front entrance is set within a brick arch. The oversize paneled door is of quartered oak and is flanked by sidelights. The center block has a gabled roof at the north and south ends. There is a hip roof at the east end of the northeast wing. Hip roof dormers are placed along the roof slope on the east façade. Some of the stone work appears to be random and some of the brick has a diaper pattern. Together, these suggest an antique look for the house. There are five, paneled brick chimneys.

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There is a sculpture niche to the right of the main entrance. The sculpture, "Boy with Heron" by Frederick MacMonnies, was commissioned for this niche but was removed to the Afternoon Garden by Fletcher Steele. The windows are wood, double hung sash that vary in size. Some sashes are glazed with curved muntins, a significant architectural feature of the building. The windows, with the exception of those in the stair hall, have flat arch lintels. The brick lintels are set with shards of colored glass for a decorative effect. Copper downspouts have ornamental collector boxes.

The south elevation has a continuation of the masonry elements. However, the fieldstone is restricted to the foundation and the belt course. This elevation includes a second story porch at the southwest corner. Ionic columns support an entablature. There is a railing with turned balusters. Above is the wood shingle gable end of the roof with a Palladian window. Iron numerals, "1885" and monogram "JHC" are placed on the brick wall at the second floor level.

The west façade is dominated by wood shingling including two gable-roof dormers with decorative carved shells above the windows. A second story bay window and a small porch at the intersection of the main block of the house and the north wing are also shingled. Extending along the dining room and hall windows of the first story is a stone verandah with simple Romanesque style brick piers. To the right is a bay window extending from the library with wood paneling and a hip roof. Above the second floor is a wood cornice supported on modillions that extends the length of the main block of the house and continues around beneath the gable end of the south elevation.

The north elevation is without ornamentation. The east end of the northeast wing is terminated by one of the two towers, which has a stone first story and a brick second story. The wall of the north elevation is sheathed in wood shingles. There is a partially enclosed shingle porch. There is no symmetry to the window placement. Projecting from the first story is a one-story brick wing with a hip roof and a stone basement above grade. The extension to the service wing forms a partial courtyard with flanking stone walls. Fletcher Steele designed this service courtyard in 1926.¹

Interior plan of Naumkeag

The interior plan of Naumkeag is characteristic of an informal summer house of the period. In this way, the interior, like the exterior, contrasts with the great palatial summer homes erected in the Berkshires in the late nineteenth century. In the center of Naumkeag is a large hall combined with a stair hall. It includes a fireplace, a typical feature of what was then called a "living hall," and extends the width of the house so that upon arriving one sees directly through to the view of the hills on the other side of the valley. Historian Richard Guy Wilson comments: "the living hall is a spectacular space that draws one into the house and then out again through the broad glass window capturing majestic views of the Berkshire Hills. This treatment reflects great sensitivity to the setting and the integration of building and landscape."²

Immediately to the left is the drawing room, the principal family room where guests would first gather. In the southwest corner is the library, and opposite in the northeast corner is the dining room. The latter two rooms have views of the hills to the west. All three rooms and the hall and stair hall constitute the main block of the house. The north wing contains the most surprising feature of the room layout. While the butler's pantry and back stairs are in this wing, and adjacent to the dining room, which is typical, the south end of this wing contains a secluded study for Mr. Choate and a schoolroom for the children and for Mrs. Choate's painting.

¹ Much of the main house's physical description has been drawn from the following: Finch and Rose, *Naumkeag: Historic Structures Report, Architectural Significance and Historical Development*, A report for The Trustees of Reservations, 2000, 10-14.

² Richard Guy Wilson, conversation with author, July 19, 2006.

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Clearly, the location of these rooms in the “business wing” of the house indicated that Choate desired a sanctuary for his legal practice, and that the children would be expected to treat their time learning in the same serious fashion as adopted by their father toward his work. The location of the kitchen and laundry in the basement was not unusual, particularly where the slope of the terrain allowed for much of it to be constructed above grade.

The second floor holds no surprises in terms of room layout, as it is what would be expected of a house in the country. The second floor hall runs perpendicular to the first floor, allowing the placement of three bedrooms along the west side of the house. Two bedrooms in the southeast and northeast corners are compensated for the lack of a direct view by having corner towers with partial views toward the hills and the landscaped grounds. There are more bedrooms for family and guests on the third floor. These rooms tend to be smaller and less well lighted, but the woodwork in the rooms in the main block of the house, as opposed to the north wing, make it clear that these were not reserved for servants.³

Interior Architectural Features

The first floor consists of a core of formal living and entertaining rooms clustered around a large entry hall that functioned as a circulation and living space, limited service spaces in the northwest portion of the building, and more private family spaces including Mr. Choate’s study and a schoolroom in the northeast wing. The steep and difficult site, in part, dictated the floor plan of the house. The primary interior architectural character of the house is defined in the floor plan and the detailing of the formal core rooms. The other rooms, both in the northeast wing and the original service spaces, are more ordinarily detailed according to the standards of the period but remain important for their high degree of physical integrity and clear evocation of the family’s usage of the house. Because of the importance and relative uniqueness of the first floor spaces, each room is treated individually in the descriptions of architectural features as follows.

Drawing Room

The Drawing Room is finished in white pine embellished with cast composition ornament. Originally painted an off white, it is now a darker golden buff color (ca. 1915-1925). The style of this room, which centers on the mantel and over-mantel, is eighteenth century neo-classical after the work of the Adam Brothers in England. Adamesque ornament is also used for the wood wainscot and cornice. The applied ornamentation is picked out with off-white highlights. The walls above the chair rail are finished with a gold damask fabric. Marble is used for the hearth and fireplace facing. The floor consists of 3 ½”-wide maple in the center portion of the room with a border of 2 ½” -wide quartered oak. The maple portion was intended for carpeting.

Library

The library is paneled floor to ceiling with California redwood. Although a dark stained wood, the style, like the drawing room, is Adamesque. The fireplace surround features carved wood colonettes supporting a frieze embellished with oval and round patera and a simple shelf with dentils. The over-mantel is paneled with no ornament. Flanking the fireplace is a round arched doorway on one side and a pair of round arched display cabinets on the other. The spandrels for these arches are embellished with intricate wood carvings in an Arabesque pattern. The arches for the display cabinets are formed with finely detailed shell carving. Hand-made brass hinges on the cabinet are important decorative details. Built-in bookcases fill the remaining wall space on the fireplace wall as well as the north and south walls. On the west wall there is a bay window framed with floor to ceiling fluted pilasters supporting an entablature. The frieze contains several large rosettes. The

³ Finch and Rose, *Naumkeag*, 6-7.

entire room is finished with a denticulated cornice. The floor follows the design of the drawing room with a combination of maple and quartered oak.

Hall and Stair Hall

The hall and stair hall are ornamented with varnished quarter-sawn oak woodwork. The paneling rises from floor to ceiling on all walls of the hall and at the first floor portion of the staircase. The paneling of the stair hall west and north walls is limited to wainscot height with the upper surface being painted plaster entirely covered with a hanging tapestry. The floor of the hall is 12" square red tiles, while the floor of the stair hall is 2 1/2" wide boards of dark stained quarter oak. The ceiling of both spaces is articulated with shallow decorative beams finished with varnished oak casings. Plaster panels between the beams are painted a dull yellow with a single narrow golden brown line of banding about 2" out from the beams.

The style of the hall is Jacobean, which derives from the English Renaissance. The predominant feature in the hall is the Renaissance style wood over-mantel. This is bow-shaped in the form of a chimney hood and is supported on carved grey marble brackets. The fireplace itself is a yellow brick referred to as "Tiffany brick" in a contemporary newspaper account. The entry wall includes decorative wrought iron grills over the windows and raised stars on the door to reinforce the theme of an antique fortress established by the Norman detailing of the exterior east facade. The English Renaissance period theme continues in the elliptic arch that separates the hall from the stair hall, as well as the balustrade and staircase windows. The latter includes wide circular muntins that are characteristic of the Jacobean style. The delineation between the hall and stair hall is further reinforced by the change in flooring material from tile to wood.

The Dining Room

The dining room, a very good example of the Aesthetic Movement, is finished with varnished mahogany woodwork including a five foot high wainscot with raised and fielded panels, mantelpiece, and a wood cornice with dentils. The fireplace surround is relatively ornate. Carved colonettes support a high shelf in the form of an entablature. The frieze of this entablature features three panels with intricately hand carved Renaissance period designs. The use of the mahogany extends to the veneer on the pocket doors that separate the dining room from the hall. The door to the butler's pantry is finished with reddish brown leather. The ceiling is plaster finished with a tin leaf foil paper. Floors are hardwood. The focal point of the room is a wide bay with three windows that look out through the west porch over the Housatonic River Valley to the mountains.

Northeast Wing Corridor

The corridor has dark stained yellow pine woodwork including vertical four panel doors, reeded architrave trim with symmetrical corner blocks and molded baseboards and hardwood floors. The corridor leads to private family living spaces and is separated from the more formal living spaces and the rear service spaces by conventional doors.

The Study

The study is a small room with 8'-high bookcases that line the walls and extend into the tower section of the room. Like all principal rooms, there is a fireplace with a mantelpiece. It is a simple Adamesque classical design with paneled pilasters supporting a shelf with dentils and carved oak panels. The firebox jambs are brick. There is a wood cove cornice along the ceiling, and panels under the windows. All the wood is stained and varnished yellow pine. Walls not covered by woodwork or bookcases are plaster with a hand-painted

pressed paper meant to resemble leather wallpaper.

The Schoolroom

This room has a relatively modest Colonial Revival fireplace surrounded with brick jambs. Unlike the other first floor rooms, the woodwork is painted white. The bay in the north wall is a rectangular projection with three leaded glass casement windows set beneath three leaded glass fixed transom sash. In the southwest corner there is a round arched Federal style cupboard with H-shaped hinges. Originally there were two double hung windows evenly spaced across the north wall. These were replaced by the current bay window when the north service wing was added 1908-1910.

Rear Hall

The rear hall provides circulation for the first floor service components of the house. It is finished with plain painted plaster walls and ceiling. Wood trim is limited to a molded baseboard, door casings, and matched boarding enclosing the service stair, all with a stained and varnished finish. The service stair rises within this space. Most of the door trim consists of reeded architraves and turned corner blocks. The floor is covered with a geometric pattern, inlaid linoleum that extends into the service ell addition. It is believed to date to the construction of the ell between 1908 and 1910.

The Butler's Pantry

The butler's pantry is lined with wood cabinets that are glazed above paneled doors or drawers. Wall surfaces not covered with cabinets are painted plaster above a 4'-high wainscot of vertical matched boards with a double bead. The sink is German silver with a wood washboard grooved on one side. There is a dumbwaiter from the basement kitchen adjacent to the dining room door. Other equipment in the pantry includes a servant's call box, an electric "Simplex" food warmer, a knife cleaner, and an early-twentieth century "Refrigidaire." The floor is yellow pine covered with marbled green linoleum.

Other rooms in the service wing include a bathroom and slop closet, and after the expansion of the ell in 1908-1910, two bedrooms with original trim and fixtures.⁴

Second Floor

All seven bedrooms on the second floor are similarly finished with varnished yellow pine trim including baseboards, door and window casings, and coved ceiling cornices with the exception of the principal guest room where the woodwork is painted white instead of being varnished. Doors all have two columns of small square panels above a single large panel below the lock rail. All the doors from the hallway into the bedrooms include operable glazed transom sash above the doors, and are also all fitted with louver outer doors that open into the hallway. All the bedrooms on the second floor are papered-over plaster walls. Each have individually designed fireplace mantels and surrounds, some more elaborate than others.

Third Floor

There are three family/guest rooms, five servant rooms, and two bathrooms on the third floor. All eight bedrooms are finished with plain painted plaster walls with varnished yellow pine trim and doors but the family area is distinguished from the service area by variations in detailing and the size of the rooms. Like the second

⁴ Much of the detailed description is taken from the Finch and Rose report for The Trustees of Reservations, 2000.

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floor, all doors leading to the hall have operable transom and louvered doors. Each bedroom has a varnished yellow pine mantel in a colonial revival style with red brick fireplace jambs and hearths. There are no period photographs or other descriptions of the third floor rooms although the original floor plan does exist.

The Carriage House (Contributing Building)

This three-level building (Number 17 on the site plan) on the northern property line, was designed as a carriage house and later converted to a motor vehicle garage. Vehicles were stored and maintained on the first two levels; a staff apartment and storage took up the third floor. Almost certainly designed by McKim, Mead & White, this building was built between 1886 and 1894. A reference in a 1973 letter from Richard Guy Wilson of the University of Virginia, School of Architecture states that a McKim, Mead & White bill-book calls out the "stable" in their billing of April 1887 for Naumkeag construction. A Berkshire Courier article about Naumkeag's construction of October 27, 1886, states: "The barn that is now building... will not be done until Christmas." With its wood shingle siding and decorative elements, the carriage barn is consistent with the design of the main house. The cross gabled roof is shingled with slate.

In the early twentieth century, the building was converted for use as an automobile garage in keeping with the family's changing transportation needs. A February 1917 letter from Joseph Choate to a Mr. Knowles who was to carry out renovations and add an additional room to the apartment occupied by the chauffeur's family, includes a discussion of adding a work pit in the floor of the garage to accommodate heavy engine repair. There were two chauffeurs, one a family man and the other a retired, single man, G. B. Smith, Sr. They remember the garage from the 1920s as housing Mabel Choate's Cadillac Roadster, a Ford Model-T station wagon, a REO Speedwagon truck, and two carriages remaining from the horse-drawn days. The building has been well maintained and is in remarkably original condition on its exterior.

The Wood Shed (Contributing Building)

The Wood Shed (Number 18), located just west of the Carriage House across a courtyard, has been identified as one of the buildings constructed in the 1884-1894 period. It is an approximately 12' x 36' wood-framed, gable-roofed building with three open bays for storage. It has wood shingle siding and a wood shingle roof. According to a Cultural Landscape Assessment by Copley, Wolff and Associates, site maps indicate that the building was originally constructed directly behind the carriage barn and then moved to the north to accommodate the construction of the garage and workshop building. The building, as a part of the service area, is still utilized for firewood storage.

Garage and Workshop (Contributing Building)

The garage and workshop (Number 19) is a wood-framed, gable-roofed utility building sited directly behind the carriage house and south of the wood shed. Like the wood shed, it is sided and roofed with wood shingles. The current wood roof shingles replaced composite asbestos/cement shingles. It is believed to have been built between 1895 and 1925. The southern side of the upper level contains two rooms once used by single men working on the estate. The rooms have been converted to storage. The northern side is a one-car garage for the use of the current property Superintendent. The lower level has a workroom, paint storage locker, and a room for wintering over plants. The lower level is heated with a woodstove. It is a fully enclosed building measuring approximately 16' x 38'.

Gardener's House (Contributing Building)

This gable roof, shingle-sided building (Number 20) was constructed as a gardener's residence sometime between 1895 and 1925. The building identified in the 1930s tax rolls as the gardener's house is presumed to

be this present day building. It is located west of the wood shed and the garage and workshop further down the slope and below the carriage barn service area, and to the north of the former kitchen garden terraces. Its lower level was used as the dairy for the estate's farm operation.

The Dairy Barn (The Farm Barn) (Contributing Building)

The Dairy Barn (Number 21) built for Naumkeag in 1928 is a "Jamesway" barn built from plans provided by that company and equipped with the stalls and other hardware supplied by the James Manufacturing Company. It is an excellent example of a gentleman farmer's barn of the era. Measuring 36' x 60', it is a framed building with wood siding, a gambrel-trussed roof and a tiled silo attached at one end. The opposite end has a drive entry to accommodate hay wagons for the filling of the spacious loft created by the bow roof building. This style is often referred to as a Wisconsin barn presumably after a State of Wisconsin Agriculture School's "modern" design of the early twentieth century for a dairy barn that could be built with light framing and provides a large hay loft area. The main floor was reserved for the milking parlor which retains its Jamesway-supplied equipment in remarkably original condition.

Potting Shed (Contributing Building)

The Potting Shed (Number 10) is located down the slope from the Rose Garden and east of the service road. It is the sole remaining building from the greenhouse complex originally constructed in 1886. The potting shed is a framed building with wood shingle siding and roofing material. It is a one-story building approximately 8' x 20' with a hipped roof with two cross-gables.

Farm Equipment Shed (Contributing Building)

The farm equipment shed (Number 22) is an open-front, timber framed 3-bay building measuring 20' x 50'. It was one of the outbuildings that supported the dairy farm operation. A map, drawn from memory in 1986 by a farm worker, identifies it as a "wagon shed" and dates it to before 1925. Now in danger of collapse, its integrity is very low because of its poor structural condition.

Greenhouse Ruins (Contributing Site)

A large greenhouse (Number 11) was built in 1886 on the north side of the potting shed, and expanded to include two additional greenhouse buildings between 1895 and 1925. The stone foundations remain from these two major greenhouse buildings that were removed from the site in the 1970s.

THE ESTATE GROUNDS AND GARDEN ELEMENTS

Joseph Hodges Choate began vacationing in the Berkshire Hills with his family in the 1870s. The land acquired in 1884 had been a favorite picnicking spot for the family for several years. Daughter Mabel Choate described it as "a pasture with close clipped grass and occasional boulders scattered about and bare of trees except for one large oak and a few thorn-apple trees."⁵ When the Choates decided to build, the design for the estate was offered to Frederick Law Olmsted. The firm insisted that the house be constructed halfway down the hill near the oak tree. Mr. and Mrs. Choate could not agree. Nathan Barrett of Boston approved of the Choate's preference near the top of the hill where they had often picnicked. The entrance to the property is on Prospect Hill Road. Today, one approaches the estate from the north through a stone gate known as the Willow Gate. This was formerly the service drive. Heading down the service drive is the brick summer house with stone icehouse beneath. Below it to the west is the Evergreen garden and pool, and to the east is the entrance to the

⁵ Mabel Choate, "Memoirs", unpublished, 1958.

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Chinese Garden, formerly the lower flower garden and the upper flower garden, respectively. Traveling along the driveway, southeast, one comes to the forecourt and the entrance to the house.

Continuing along the drive, the west edge is bordered by a double hemlock hedge. One exits the drive at the south end of the property through a similar stone gate. The south gate was originally the principal entrance to the property. The estate is flanked by woodland at its northern and southern boundaries. On the east it is bordered by Prospect Hill Road. On the west are the designed and cultural landscapes that slope down to the western boundary at Church Street. Also to the west and hidden from direct view, are the service buildings including the carriage house and stable, woodshed, gardener's house, garage and workshop, and dairy barn. The service drive slopes down the hill in a number of switchbacks and eventually exits on Church Street. Landscape architect Fletcher Steele designed the majority of the landscapes and gardens immediately surrounding the house between 1926 and 1958.

For an estate that began in 1884 on a landscape that began much earlier, Naumkeag today features a horticultural collection chosen by those that shaped its most recent past. The only exceptions are the oldest and largest trees that grace the entry drive and street edges. Here, large copper beeches (*Fagus sylvatica purpurea*) shade the main house and garden entries. Large European beeches (*Fagus sylvatica*) shade the corners of the Chinese garden. The other patriarch of the garden, the Swamp White Oak (*Quercus bicolor*) shades a broad terraced lawn southwest of the main house. Young to middle aged maples, pines, and oaks mark the hedgerows delineating field boundaries, fill the woods on either side of the Linden Walk, and thicken the buffers along the property edges. A long allée of Norway spruce (*Picea abies*) grace the back entrance road and effectively screen the view to the town cemetery from the main house.

Most of the plant collection, however, dates from the Mabel Choate/ Fletcher Steele collaborations after 1929. Though young in the eyes of New England estate landscapes, the collection is as horticulturally diverse and as carefully considered as the horticultural collections on much earlier estates.

Most think of Naumkeag for its remarkable designed landscape, however, it is the carefully selected plant palette that creates some of Naumkeag's most effective design arrangements. The most photographed of these, the birch walk, would be nothing without its massive white trunks of Paper Birch (*Betula papyrifera*). The Arborvitae Walk and Linden Walk carry the names of their featured plantings (*Thuja occidentalis* and *Tilia cordata*). Though these garden features date to the 1890s, they have been rejuvenated more recently with replacement plantings, part of the continuing process of good horticultural stewardship.

On the west side of the house, Steele redesigned the terrace. This work occurred between 1928 and 1935 and 1954. New features included the Great Seat, re-framing of the Perugino View, and a bank that had a succession of plantings and eventually, tree peonies.

Between 1933 and 1937, Steele worked to improve the South Lawn resulting in an abstract form with swinging curves and slopes that echoed the silhouette of the distant hills. During the same period, Steele revised the flower garden to the north of the house. The lower garden became the Evergreen Garden and the upper garden, referred to as the Experimental Garden, eventually became the Chinese Garden (1937) after Choate's 1935 trip to Japan, Korea and China. Steele described its origin as follows: "The Chinese Garden was built to bring a recollection of the atmosphere and appearance of places seen in China." In addition, it incorporated Miss Choate's extensive collection of Chinese statues and sacred rocks. Barrett's original brick viewing terrace at the top of the garden became Steele's Chinese temple. The wall features a baffled doorway called a devil's screen on the west, and a circular moon gate (1955) on the south. The garden includes Oriental ornaments,

ginkgo trees, and a thin channel of running water. As in the Afternoon Garden, color is important. The garden walls are painted red, the roof tiles are cobalt blue, and there were yellow Father Hugo roses.

With the creation of redesigned garden spaces, Steele moved plant materials to other parts of the property. Flowering perennials were moved to a new cutting garden below the Greenhouse. The cutting garden was conceived in conjunction with the Blue Steps (1938-1940) designed for negotiating the steep slope between the cutting garden and the house. Inspired by the water staircases of sixteenth-century Italian gardens, the Blue Steps consist of four separate flights of steps connected by landings, each with a pool and a fountain recessed into the uphill side. The steps were inter-planted with a grove of native paper birches. The concrete pools and fountains were painted bright blue to match the Venetian-style posts in the Afternoon Garden. The curved railings along the steps were painted white to match the birch bark. Linking the blue steps with the house is a straight sloping walk with brick treads laid across the slope corduroy-fashion for better traction. Down the center of the walk, Steele inserted a narrow channel or water runnel providing a transitional element that carried water from the Afternoon Garden on the east, to the Blue Steps on the west. The Blue Steps have achieved stature as an iconic example of American garden design. Marc Treib describes the Blue Steps as a success as both landscape and sculpture. The image has been widely published in the U.S. and abroad and has been featured in countless books and exhibitions.⁶

Steele's last major garden at Naumkeag, the Rose Garden, was designed between 1952 and 1955 on a grassy terrace west of the Arborvitae Walk. In 1936 and 1941, recessed tool houses were built in the north wall of the terrace below the arborvitae walk. A flight of quarter-round stone steps descended from the northeast corner. The proposed Rose Garden close to the house was meant to provide a picturesque setting. Steele strove to relate its forms to the Chinese Garden and the hills beyond. This resulted in an abstract parterre featuring ribbons of pink gravel connecting knots of floribunda roses. The undulating pattern was anchored at the northwest corner by a mature elm tree. The achievement of the garden can be judged most successfully from the northwest second floor bedroom and dressing room porch.⁷

In addition to these garden spaces and owing to its state of preservation and influence on later landscape architects of note (including Daniel Urban Kiley, who visited there in 1932), Naumkeag figures among the most important residential landscapes of the first half of the twentieth century.

Naumkeag's grounds consist of a series of individual garden spaces, carefully interconnected to each other and always designed with respect to the larger landscape beyond. As such, these individual garden spaces feature a plant palette that is as unique as its spatial design. It seems most appropriate, therefore, that this discussion of horticultural diversity at Naumkeag be categorized by garden space.⁸

The Afternoon Garden (1928) (Contributing Site)

Why not put Venetian gondola posts, rising out of the sea, up on the top of a hill? Why not follow the color of the trappings seen in medieval manuscripts, which are both strong and gay? The oak piles were gilded and reddened and greened and blued. By now they have faded so their color is felt without being particularly noticed.⁹

⁶ Marc Treib, ed., "Axioms for a Modern Landscape Architecture", in *Modern Landscape Architecture: A Critical Review* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1993), 39. The Blue Steps are featured on the cover of the *Oxford Companion to Gardens*, 2006.

⁷ Much of the garden description was taken from the Copley, Wolff report for The Trustees of Reservations, 1998.

⁸ Horticultural information has been provided by Lucinda Brockway of Past Designs, Inc. Garden descriptions are based on Charles Birnbaum's review comments, memo to Patty Henry, Re: Draft Naumkeag NHL Nomination, June 20, 2006.

⁹ Fletcher Steele, *House and Garden* (July 1947).

The Afternoon Garden (Number 2 on the site plan) is the first garden area designed by Fletcher Steele (1928). It was inspired by Mabel Choate's request for an outdoor room. She had taken part in the historic Garden Club of America tour of California gardens, and when she met Steele in July 1926, she asked him specifically to design a feature like those she had just seen in California. He drew inspiration from the modernist experiments at the Exposition Internationale des Arts Decoratifs et Industriels Modernes he had seen in Paris in 1925, and designed the outdoor room as a well-composed "volume of air", with transparent walls made from a colonnade that framed and appropriated the mountain views. The design process is well documented through several articles by Steele and was nationally influential. The bronze statue, "Boy with Heron," by the American sculptor Frederick MacMonnies, was created in France in 1887. It was originally sited in the niche in the east façade of the main house.

Rich in its decorative arts, the plantings in this room offer a simple palette of clipped Boxwood hedge (*Buxus sp.*) and pergola-supported grape (*Vitis sp.*). One of the old copper beeches shades the garden, though its presence is subjugated by the ornate details of the garden.

The Perugino View (1934) (Contributing Site)

This vista (number 3), south west from the west terrace to the gentle Berkshires beyond, was named by the Choate family who felt the landscape was reminiscent of those created by the fifteenth century Italian Renaissance artist, Pietro Vannucci. Vannucci, who used landscapes as backdrops to many of his religious paintings, was nicknamed Perugino because he was active in the region of Perugia in Umbria. In 1934, Fletcher Steele enhanced the so-called Perugino view by framing the different vistas of Tom Ball, Monument, and Beartown Mountains with plantings of arborvitae specimens, which imitate the cypress of Tuscany. The goal of relating foreground to important views through such methods is based on the picturesque approach of Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr.

Steele and Choate used a carefully selected collection of mid-size ornamental trees to frame this important viewing spot. To the right, a multi-leadered Umbrella Magnolia (*Magnolia tripetala*) spreads its massive leaflets against the sky. To the left, a multi-stemmed thicket of Cucumber Magnolia (*Magnolia acuminata*) offers the same service. This tree, however, is equally important when viewed from across the south lawn. Its broad, pyramidal shape and heavy foliage partially mask the view to the house and the top lawn. Just beyond the Umbrella Magnolia, sits the stump of a large arborvitae – the remains of a partnered evergreen at the other end of the peony terrace that offered a horticultural reference to the Italian cypresses of Vannucci's paintings.

Top Lawn 1932 (Contributing Site)

The Top Lawn (Number 4) serves as an extension of the house and provides panoramic, westerly views to the hills. The "Great Seat" on the western edge of the terrace, was created in 1932 so that guests could sit and enjoy the view of the setting sun beyond Tom Ball Mountain. Steele's design uses many of the same materials found throughout the garden and is structured by a planting of *Aralia spinosa* on the right and a group of large-leaved trees (including *Magnolia tripetalata*, Russian olive, and buckthorn) on the right. Steele used plants and architectural elements to frame important views throughout the garden, effectively appropriating the larger setting as part of the garden experience.

Instead of a fence, Steele and Choate selected cordoned espalier apple trees (*Malus sp.*) to protect the top of the slope to the peony terrace. This planting effectively screens the colorful tree peonies from view and allows the view from the top lawn to capture only the beauty of the agricultural landscape and the Berkshire Hills beyond. With the Umbrella Magnolia on the southwest corner dividing the view corridors and framing key views, a

stand of Devil's Walking Stick (*Aralia spinosa*) and the large arborvitae beyond (*Thuja occidentalis*), frame the northwest corner of the terrace. The heavy foliage of both species offers an exotic grace note to the cool green of the terrace and the dramatic views beyond its borders.

The South Lawn (1933-35) (Contributing Site)

Mabel Choate was instrumental in creating this aspect of the landscape (Number 5). One day in the early 1930s, a fleet of trucks carrying dirt to the Stockbridge dump passed by Naumkeag. Choate flagged them down, purchased the cargo for fifty cents a load, and had it deposited on the rough terrain that would become a sweeping lawn with bold flowing curves (1933-1935).¹⁰ Here, Steele was inspired by the shape of distant mountain silhouettes and by the experiments of modern sculptors such as Brancusi. It was the earliest modern "earthwork" recorded in this country and the progenitor of many later experiments with abstract modeling of earth forms. Steele wrote, "So far as I know it was the first attempt that has ever been made to incorporate the form of background topography into foreground details in a unified design. (Steele to Esther September 24, 1950). He recorded an extensive account of this experiment in "Naumkeag Gardens Develop" (unpublished narrative), where he explained his goal: "to create an abstract form in the manner of modern sculpture, with swinging curves and slopes which would aim to make their impression directly, without calling on the help of associated ideas, whether in nature or art." Earth artist Robert Smithson and landscape architects such as A. E. Bye, Rich Haag, and George Hargreaves, later adopted this approach.

The undulating edges of this lower lawn are reinforced by a selection of carefully chosen plantings. On the west side, the rhythmic globular forms of the Locusts (*Robinia pseudoacacia* "*Umbraculifera*") march along the sweeping curve of the lawn edge. On the east side, the thick tightly needled double Hemlock hedge (*Tsuga canadensis*) rolls along the edge of the slope like a thick ribbon of green. At the end of the lawn, the more naturalized forms of the Japanese maples (*Acer palmatum cv*) follow the sweeping line of the lawn edge. Here the ornamental aspects of plant form and foliage reinforce the sweeping, sculptural quality of the land form.

The Chinese-style temple punctuates the south lawn. It was designed to enshrine a sacred fingered-rock from the Summer Palace at Peking. The stone, a souvenir from Mabel Choate's 1935 trip to Asia, is set on a Ming pedestal. The temple was fashioned from a cast iron verandah support salvaged from a home in Washington, D.C. and, like the iron benches in the Afternoon Garden, was painted in the same gaudy and bold fashion.

The Linden Walk (1890) (Contributing Site)

Mrs. Caroline Choate had this wide path (Number 6) planted in 1890 after strolling the linden allées of Berlin, Germany. Cool and inviting on a warm summer day, the mossy walk penetrates deep into the shade of maple, pine, and spruce. A statue of Diana provides a focal point at the end of the walk.

There [in Germany] Mother admired greatly the beauty of the trees and their planting in long alleys, so much so that as soon as she got home she announced "I am going to make a 'Linden Walk' at Stockbridge." This she did and it is still considered, even by severe critics, one of the most beautiful features of Naumkeag.¹¹

This allée sits counterpoint to the naturalized, wooded hillside at the south end of the property. Though it appears as a natural stand of New England woods, the plant palette to each side of the allée has been carefully selected and manicured as an American bosquet. As Choate and Steele were selecting their plantings, they

¹⁰ The Trustees of Reservations archives, Stockbridge, Massachusetts.

¹¹ Choate, "Memoirs."

divided the entire property into eighteen Cantons – lettered subdivisions of the property that allowed them to discuss plant locations when they were not at the property. The Linden Walk area was identified as three distinct parts: Cantons KB (the walk itself), KF (the western half of the wooded hillside, and KE (the eastern half of the wooded hillside). The Linden Walk itself is horticulturally the most simplistic: a monoculture of *Tilia cordata* that still shows the remains of the tightly-controlled pruning practices that once shaped its linear hedge-like canopy. To each side, the woodlands have been manipulated to create a high-mixed canopy of evergreen and deciduous plants that shades a floor of carefully selected plant communities offering a diversity of textured greens. Lindens (*Tilia cordata*), Norway Spruce (*Picea abies*), Hemlock (*Tsuga Canadensis*), and three species of maples (*Acer saccharum*, *Acer platanoides*, and *Acer saccharinum*) provide the overhead canopy. At their base, a thick palette of native and introduced species of groundcovers and shade-tolerant ferns and perennials, offer their own subtle shades of green up to the sun and shadow patterns of light that flicker with the movement of the canopy. In the evening, the raking light of the setting sun offers an entirely different display of light and shadow. The lack of mid-story plantings, more typical of the ever-evolving New England woodland, creates an aboriginal quality to the bosquet.

In December 1939, Mabel Choate offered a lecture to the Lenox Garden Club which encouraged club members to think of groundcovers as a suitable choice for increasing their own plant palette and offering a better covering than grass in areas of little or no sunlight. Here she described her use of groundcovers still featured in the Linden Walk woodlands. These plants include Bishop’s Weed (*Agopodium podagraria*), Ferns (*Adiantum pedatum*, *Dennstaedtia punctiloba*, and *Matteuccia struthiopteris*), Vinca (*Vinca minor*), and American ginger (*Asarum canadense*). Other woodland wildflowers may be visible in the spring. Miss Choate’s article described other featured plantings here whose tenacity is not as hardy as those which remain. “...Jack-in-the Pulpit, Wood-lilies, Wild Geranium, cyperpedium...Auratum-lily and pink Speciosum [lily], and they have grown magnificently, and where there is some sun, the *Taxus canadensis*.”

Ronde Point (1940) (Contributing Site)

In the early 1930s Steele and Choate conceived the Ronde Point near the entrances to the Linden Walk and the Woodland Walk, inspired by the Place d’Etoile in Paris. The brightly colored wrought iron pagoda was added in 1935 to house artifacts Miss Choate had acquired in China.

“A gathering of paths,” the Ronde Point (Number 7) is enclosed by a low hedge of clipped arborvitae (*Thuja occidentalis*) and a long teak bench. The French spatial form is derived from the intersection of boulevards. Fletcher Steele and Mabel Choate met in Paris in 1932. One of Steele’s photographs records the busy intersection at the Place d’Etoile that inspired the area at the entrance to the Linden Walk. The area was used as a setting for musical and dramatic performances, of which there were many at Naumkeag, in the fashion of the time. Accounts of these appear in Steele’s letters.

Tree Peony Terrace (1935) (Contributing Site)

The Tree Peony Terrace (Number 8) is a cascade of color during late May and early June when the tree peonies are in bloom. This garden element was introduced in 1935 shortly after Mabel Choate’s return from China where she developed a passion for tree peonies. Steele constructed three fieldstone terraces to showcase Choate’s extensive collection of *Paeonia suffruticosa*. Over sixty specimens soften the steep hillside. At the east end of the terrace, an umbrella magnolia anchors an old stone path. Choate’s travel memories would continue to influence the design of the gardens at Naumkeag.

Perhaps one of the most important aspects of Naumkeag's horticultural collection is its archives –heavy with carefully organized notebooks which detail the purchase, selection, and installation of plants and records their performance over a period from 1929 to the 1950s. Notes concerning plant habit, growth, location, pest and disease problems, winter hardiness, and quantity of bloom are all carefully recorded by year. Office files for Fletcher Steele organize correspondence, plant orders, directions for plant care, and other documentation. In 1937, for example, plants were obtained from no less than forty-five different nurseries.

Miss Choate's files include plant catalogs, notes on soil conditioning and gardening techniques, and articles (sometimes entire plant society journals) on unusual or new plants. Here are the files of an avid horticulturist, interested in experimenting with unknown or little used varieties of plants in the harsh Berkshire climate. Trees, shrubs, perennials and other plants are carefully documented, and the potential for these archives when married to the plant collection itself, has yet to be tapped. Featured in all of this documentation are the careful selection, success, and failure of innumerable cultivars of tree and herbaceous peonies. The plantings in the Peony terrace reflect only a small percentage of the peonies that Miss Choate tried at Naumkeag.

The Blue Steps (1938) (Contributing Structure)

This signature garden (Number 9) of Fletcher Steele's was created in 1938 at the request of Mabel Choate so that she could gain easy and safe access to her cutting garden at the base of the hill. Another purpose of this landscape structure was, in part, to channel the water from the upper gardens through brick runnels and down to the cutting garden. The double stairs provided an easy ascent and descent on the steep hillside. Today, the significance of the feature as a leading icon of garden art is recognized throughout the world. (For example, Steele's design is featured on the cover of the Oxford Companion to Gardens, 2006.) For it, Steele combined the traditional form of the water staircase with modern materials (industrial pipe and concrete). The resulting feature juxtaposes the mechanical curves of Art Deco with the lithe forms of white birch, one of the most recognizable American species. Steele's design wittily addressed the tension between art and nature that had preoccupied landscape architects for the first half of the twentieth century.

The simplistic plant palette heightens the drama of the architectural design of the Blue Steps, and its most serious threat, perhaps is the success or failure of this monoculture for its future preservation. It is the paper birches (*Betula papyrifera*) that provide the framework for the intricate stair rails and blue arched pools in the garden. Thick bands of Yew hedges (*Taxus cv*) provide the backdrop for the white rails, heightening their delicacy. A heavy planting of Pachysandra (*Pachysandra terminalis*), sometimes broken by ferns, provides the quiet green groundcover at its base.

The elements of the paper birches with the white pipe rails, the deep green yews, and the brightly painted arches, combine to make a bold and visually stunning statement. This vaulted, Art Deco design is considered one of the most famous twentieth-century designed landscapes in the world.

The Rose Garden (1953-55) (Contributing Site)

This garden (Number 12), introduced in 1953, was designed to be viewed from Miss Choate's bedroom as well as from the terrace of the house. This was the last garden designed at Naumkeag, completed just two years before Miss Choate's death. The parterre combines Art Deco-inspired lines with an adaptation of the Chinese sacred mushroom to form serpentine paths of pink gravel that link sixteen-scalloped beds of floribunda roses. The paths and the deep purple color of the railings were added in 1956. The tool sheds for all the gardens had been incorporated into the retaining wall a decade earlier.

Like the peony collection, the selection of tea roses chosen for this garden was carefully documented. Miss Choate's plant notebooks include annual orders of floribunda roses from Jackson & Perkins and Bay State Nursery. Between 1953 and 1958, annual rose orders included such cultivars as Ms. Perkins, Permanent Wave, Vogue, Pinocchio Red, Pinocchio Salmon Pink, Fashion, Geranium Red and Goldilocks – bold colors that accented the sixteen beds when seen from above.

In 1940, Fletcher Steele was asked to write about the horticultural collections at Naumkeag for the Horticultural Society Prize Committee. In this short piece, Steele writes, “she [Mabel Choate] enjoys, analyses [sic], and understands beauty in landscape, in detail as in larger aspects.... Planting is always done with an eye to improving the landscape composition, either now or in the future.”

Given the harsh winter climate of the Berkshires, Miss Choate continually experimented with plants until she found something that would serve the aesthetic, horticultural, and hardiness purposes of the property. “This summer she put out twenty kinds of *Hedera helix* after finding that three varieties lived well through the winters.” Steele lists some of the quantities of her experimentation: 8 *Callunas* and *Ericas*, 13 varieties of evergreen barberries (“of which nine are succeeding”), 6 kinds of *Box*, 29 varieties of tree peonies, 42 Chinese peonies, 55 *Clematis*, and so on.

Similar experimentation extended to the container plants for Naumkeag. “She has tried 51 varieties of fuchsias, all of which have done well after two or three years of experiment. After trying 19 varieties of zonal and other local pelargoniums [sic] and 20 from England, she is cutting down to a quarter of the whole as being suitable to her needs.” Groundcovers, interesting to Miss Choate as a replacement for lawns, were a constant interest to her. “she had tried 42 things and now has large areas covered with *convallaria* (4 varieties), *Vinca* (3 varieties), *Yucca* (6 varieties plus 31 unknown kinds from a friend), *Helianthemum* (5 varieties), fragrant violets (7 vars.), *Hosta* (5 vars.), *Asarum europium*, *Teuchrium chamaedrys*, *Fragaria indica*. Where others are found to succeed, their numbers will be increased.”

Often trees and shrubs were purchased and planted in trial beds before using them in the broader landscape. This list, like the others, reflects her broad interests in unusual plants. *Evodia*, *Stewartia*, *Deutzia*, *Cytisus*, *Caragana*, *Tamarix*, and many others were purchased from nurseries and plant specialists whose nurseries were located in New England, across the United States, and in Europe.

Experiments for alpine lawns, plants for the cutting garden, Chinese varieties for the Chinese garden, and careful supervision of the topiary trimming in the evergreen garden and linden walk, were all of interest to Miss Choate, an astute and passionate horticulturist and gardener.

Evergreen Garden (1890-1948) (Contributing Site)

The Evergreen Garden (Number 13) includes the best of two designers from two different eras (1890-1949). Barrett's Victorian “Lower Garden” (as it was originally named) had an elaborate floral scheme defined by a pool and a double row of clipped arborvitae. Steele kept some elements when he modified the design in the 1930s and conceived a garden that would provide strong structure throughout four seasons with minimum upkeep. The marble steps were installed in 1948.

A circular pool surrounded by a boxwood hedge forms the focal point of this garden. The arborvitae allée containing twenty-four clipped arborvitae, links the Evergreen Garden to the southwestern corner of the main house.

This garden space is one of the oldest designed spaces at the property. Its rich palette of evergreen shrubs reflects the late nineteenth century interest in Italian garden design and the simplistic yet complex modernistic approach to landscape design experienced here in the mid-twentieth century. Today, the garden is framed by hemlock hedges (*Tsuga canadensis*) bisected by the approach of the arborvitae walk (a double row of *Thuja occidentalis*). Against the hill below the driveway, the slope is peppered with banks of cotoneaster (*Cotoneaster sp.*), Yucca (*Yucca filamentosa*), orange Daylily (*Hemerocallis fulva*), and two specimen weeping Spruce (*Picea glauca pendula*). Boxwood hedges (*Buxus sp.*) frame the edge of the hillside garden and the circular central fountain at the heart of the garden. The edges of the garden are softened by stands of tall white pine (*Pinus strobes*), and a featured Dawn Redwood (*Metasequoia glyptostroboides*), one of the first grown in the United States, under-planted with banks of Snakeroot (*Cimicifuga racemosa*). Just beyond the Evergreen Garden, the service road winds its way down the hill from the house, flanked by heavy stands of Spruce hedge (*Picea glauca*), and a dramatic stand of Yucca (*Yucca filamentosa*) in the crux of the road to the potting shed and greenhouse area.

At the top of the garden, the service road is hidden by a low brick wall, heavily laden with deciduous vines (*Vitis sp.*, *Parthenocissus quinquefolia*, *Akebia quinata*, *Partenocissus tricuspidata*) and small groupings of Kenilworth ivy (*Cymbalaria muralis*).

The Summer House/Ice House (1885) (Contributing Structure)

Entering the property from the northern entrance off Prospect Hill Road, the Summer House/Ice House (Number 14) is the first building on the right. It was part of the original construction of the Naumkeag estate, along with the main residence, the stable, potting shed, and first greenhouse. The upper portion is an open, gazebo-like building with octagonal brick corner posts and a cedar shingle roof. It provides a vista across the Evergreen Garden to the Berkshire Mountains beyond. The lower, stone portion of the building was enclosed and housed the ice that was cut each winter from a nearby lake.

The Summer House was part of McKim, Mead & White's original design. On the upper level was a pleasant open room for the family to sit and enjoy the views. On the lower level, built into the hillside, was the ice storage room, part of the working estate before mechanical refrigeration.

The Chinese Garden, Devil's Screen and Moon Gate (1936-55) (Contributing Site and Contributing Structure)

The Chinese Garden (Number 15) was the inspiration of architect and friend, Ralph Adams Cram (1863-1943), who felt that Mabel Choate needed a backdrop for the many ornaments she had acquired on trips to the Orient. (Cram, an important and well-known force in American culture was featured on the cover of *Time* magazine in 1926.) Foo dogs, lions, a marble Emperor's stone from the Old Summer Palace at Peking and plantings were all incorporated into the Chinese Garden (1936-1955) providing a spiritual oasis. Numerous Oriental trees and plants, including nine ginkgo trees, enhance the garden. Red brick walls, reminiscent of those in the Forbidden City, surround the garden. There is a zig-zag Devil's screen providing an entrance from the Evergreen Garden. In addition to being symbolically significant, the angled gate corrects an axis problem between the temple in the Chinese Garden and the fountain in the Evergreen Garden. The temple in the Chinese Garden was constructed in 1937, two years after the original concept for the garden. Esteemed architect Geoffrey Platt, a nephew by marriage to Mabel Choate, was a regular visitor to Naumkeag. Steele's ingenious design attracted Platt's admiration who considered it a "masterpiece."

The spatial configuration of the garden provides a sense of enclosure and, ingeniously, also sets up a view from inside the temple, which is at a higher elevation than the rest of the garden. This is one of the most dramatic

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vistas at Naumkeag, framed by towering evergreens. The strength of this garden is rooted in its dramatic architectural and decorative arts collections. The horticultural contents reflect this focus on Chinese introductions and feature such oriental plantings as a grove of Ginkgo (*Ginkgo biloba*), *Pinus bungeana*, *Sophora japonica*, *Cornus kousa*, *Thuja occidentalis*, *Prunus sp.* and stands of herbaceous perennials and groundcovers from both sides of the Pacific, such as *Darmera (Darmera peltata)*, yucca, tree peonies, pinks (*Dianthus sp.*), and shrub roses.

The circular Moon Gate was the final element of the Chinese Garden completed in 1955. The design was based on one that Steele had seen in China twenty years before. With the Moon Gate in place, both Steele and Choate felt that the Naumkeag gardens were truly complete.

The Chinese Garden Temple (1937) (Contributing Building)

Behind the high brick and stone walls of the Chinese Garden is a small Temple (Number 16) open to the west. Built in 1937 on an existing viewing platform, the open west side of the building offers views of the Berkshires, over the Evergreen Garden. The temple was based on Korean temples seen by Miss Choate on her travels to that country in 1935. It was built of concrete and teak with cobalt-glazed roof tiles from Peking and sited to provide a magnificent mountain view. Due to extreme deterioration, the tiles were replaced with matching tiles in 1998.

Historic Integrity of Naumkeag

Naumkeag possesses an extraordinarily high degree of historic integrity. Alterations made to the exterior during the residency of the Choate family have been documented using historic photographs and family memoirs in the trustees' archives. Changes reflecting the entire building are summarized below.

Roof: The original wood shingle roof was replaced with an asphalt shingle roof in 1925. A double row of wood shingles was placed under the asphalt shingles at every third course to create strong shadow lines on the roof surface. The present roof was installed in 1978 as a copy of the 1925 roof.

Chimneys: After 1900, all photographs show the flue openings bricked-up with chimney pots installed.

Siding: The majority of original cypress wood shingles have been replaced with red cedar shingles on all sides. The Trustees did this work in phases in 1969, 1978, and 1998.

Paint and stain: Although the shingle siding was originally left without oil or stain to weather, a greenish gray stain was applied sometime between 1906 and 1908. Some traces of the stain remain.

East Elevation:

- Addition of a dormer to light a third floor bathroom.
- The roof of the porte-cochere was raised approximately one foot to accommodate an additional second floor bathroom.
- The central dormer was modified by the removal of the multi-pane sash and the installation of French doors and a small shingled balcony with a fire escape ladder. These changes were made between 1906 and 1925.
- As noted above, Fletcher Steele removed the bronze statue by Frederick MacMonnies to the Afternoon Garden between 1926 and 1929. The stone flooring of the porte-cochere was paved to function as the

main entry when Steele reconfigured the driveway about 1930. Steele designed the bronze center medallion "Winds of the World" in the floor.

South Elevation:

- The first floor south porch was enclosed with brick to extend the library between 1895 and 1898.
- The right hand bay of the upper porch was filled-in to construct a bathroom between 1906 and 1925, probably after ca. 1915.
- New windows were installed in the blank wall at both floors (Drawing Room and Guest Bedroom) between 1906 and 1925 in conjunction with the installation of the adjacent bathroom on the second floor. The iron letters and date on the upper wall were relocated on the same wall when the windows were installed.
- A pair of French doors replaced the second floor porch window, probably in the late 1920s.
- The construction of the Afternoon Garden (1926-1929), substantially changed the setting of the south façade and added the high masonry wall connected to the south tower.

West Elevation:

- The first floor of the south porch was filled-in to extend and remodel the Library between 1895 and 1898. At the same time, a pair of circular windows on the west wall of the Library was replaced with the three-sided bay window that remains today.
- A projecting polygonal porch was added to the second floor dressing room between 1906 and 1908.
- Three third-floor double hung windows were changed to casement windows between 1898 and 1925.
- The west-facing window of the guest room was removed when a bathroom was added to fill in the easternmost bay of the south porch between 1910 and 1925.
- The redesign of the lawn and the west porch by Fletcher Steele ca. 1930-1933, resulted in changes including: 1) the removal of the stairs to the upper lawn; 2) enclosing the west kitchen window in a light well; 3) alterations to the west porch wall, floor and column spacing.

North Elevation:

- The second floor was expanded with a cantilevered porch added between 1886 and 1898. The outline of the porch is sketched onto the McKim elevation drawing in pencil, but the porch does not appear to have been a change made during construction.
- A brick service ell was added to the basement and first floors between 1908 and 1910. This provided a servants' dining room in the basement and two servants' bedrooms and a bathroom on the first floor.
- Two windows in the schoolroom were replaced with a bay window having three leaded casement sash under three leaded transoms. This was done in conjunction with the construction of the service ell between 1908 and 1910.
- A pair of casement windows was added to light a new bathroom between 1910 and 1925.
- A roof dormer was added to light a third floor service room between 1910 and 1925.
- A masonry service court was attached to the service ell in 1926. Fletcher Steele designed the court.

The first change to the interior was the enlargement of the library, which was done by the summer of 1897 prior to a visit by President William McKinley. Alterations consisted of pushing out the south wall to add the space originally occupied by the south porch. At the same time, twin oriel windows in the west wall were replaced with a single large bay window and the adjoining raised and fielded paneling that exists today. Original low

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bookcases were replaced with the current floor to ceiling bookcases on the north, south, and southerly end of the fireplace wall.

Joseph Choate was appointed Ambassador to Great Britain in 1899 and it was after his return in 1905 that the enlargement to the north service wing was made. According to Mabel Choate's memoirs, George de Gersdorff, a nephew of the Choates and a New York architect, designed these changes. Although Mabel Choate indicates in her memoirs that this addition was made in 1905 when they returned from Europe, photo documentation establishes that the work dates from between 1908 and 1910. Miss Choate also mentions that four bathrooms were added to the original three for the Choate family. The original three family bathrooms were probably the one behind the pantry on the first floor, the one in the northwest corner of the second floor, and the completely modernized one off Miss Choate's room. The four family bathrooms added after their return from Europe were the three that open into bedrooms on the second floor and the one off the hall on the third floor. These bathrooms actually appear to have been added gradually over a number of years rather than immediately following 1905.

The additional bathrooms included a new window on the second floor, north side, and a new dormer on the third floor, east side. The second floor porch for the master bedroom on the west facade appears to have been added prior to 1908. However, it is unlikely to have been made while the family was in Europe, and therefore it probably dates from 1906 or 1907. Presumably George de Gersdorff also designed these exterior changes. George de Gersdorff (1866-1964) graduated from Harvard in 1888 and attended the School of Architecture at M.I.T. until 1890. He studied at the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris from 1890-1894, then returned to this country to work for McKim, Mead & White. In 1902, he established his own practice in New York, which lasted until the early 1930s. In 1939, de Gersdorff retired to Stockbridge, where his wife owned property, and lived there until his death.

The major changes made by Mabel Choate in the 1920s and 1930s included some modifications to the house as well as the grounds. Under her direction the doors to the drawing room and library off the hall were changed. She may also have added a window to the Drawing Room and the bedroom above, although these changes could have been done earlier. Changes to the kitchen, and her own bathroom on the second floor, along with the elevator, were certainly done by Miss Choate during her long residence. Late in life, she consulted the architect Geoffrey Platt, son of the famous New York architect Charles Adams Platt. Geoffrey Platt was married to Helen Choate Platt, one of Miss Choate's nieces. Like George de Gersdorff, Geoffrey Platt served as a family architect. Apart from plans for remodeling the basement kitchen, however, it is unlikely that Platt played a significant role in changes to Naumkeag.¹²

The interiors of Naumkeag represent the collecting tastes of two generations of the Choate family and are original to the period of significance. Nothing has been altered since the death of Mabel Choate in 1958, thereby giving the interior of the house high integrity.

According to Mabel Choate's memoirs, Stanford White went on several shopping expeditions with Mrs. Joseph Choate to select furnishings for the house. These included overstuffed furniture for the drawing room as well as European antiques for the formal rooms of the house. Because this was a summer home, more formal furnishings were interspersed with popular Morris chairs and occasional wicker pieces. The dining room table and chairs were made for the house by an accomplished cabinet maker and included eighteen chairs. Portraits in the house include two made by John Singer Sargent (Joseph Choate and Mabel Choate) and two by artist Ellen Emmet Rand. Caroline Sterling Choate was an accomplished artist in her own right and several of her paintings hang in the house.

¹² Finch and Rose, Report for The Trustees of Reservations, 2000.

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Between 1927 and her death, Mabel Choate, an avid collector of American antiques, added such pieces as an early eighteenth-century Hadley chest purchased from Wallace Nutting, Shaker chairs and tables, and several fine pieces of Chippendale and Sheraton furniture. She amassed an extensive set of Currier and Ives lithographs, eighteenth-century bandboxes, Staffordshire china, and Oriental rugs. Her most remarkable collection is that of Chinese export porcelain which is displayed throughout the first and second floors of the house. In addition, she acquired several very early pieces of Chinese pottery which she used to embellish the already eclectic interiors of Naumkeag.

Primary changes to the landscape were the addition of a circular fountain and pool in the lower flower garden, re-grading the sloping lawn west of the residence into architectonic terraces, and planting arborvitaes along the path between the flower garden and the new terraces. At the southern end of the estate, a Linden Walk was created near the entrance to the woodland walk. Inspiration for the Linden Walk has been attributed to Mrs. Choate who had seen similar features on visits to Europe. The evergreen garden, with its summer house and ice house, was restored between 2002 and 2005, and was awarded a Landscape Preservation Award from the Massachusetts Historical Commission in 2005.

The farm equipment shed is in very poor condition, it is supported on temporary concrete footings and cross-braces. Now in danger of collapse, it has lost integrity because of its poor structural condition.

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Contributing ResourcesBuildings:

Main House (previously listed in the National Register)
Carriage House
Wood Shed
Garage and Workshop
Gardener's House
Dairy Barn
Potting Shed
The Summer House/Ice House
The Chinese Garden Temple
Farm Equipment Shed

Structures:

Blue Steps
Devil's Screen and Moon Gate

Sites:

Afternoon Garden
Perugino View
Top Lawn
South Lawn
Linden Walk
Ronde Point
Tree Peony Terrace
Greenhouse site
Rose Garden
Evergreen Garden
Chinese Garden

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8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

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

Nationally: X Statewide: Locally:

Applicable National Register Criteria: A B C X D

Criteria Considerations

(Exceptions): A B C D E F G

NHL Criteria: 4

NHL Theme(s): III. Expressing Cultural Values
5. Architecture, landscape architecture, urban design

Areas of Significance: Architecture
Landscape architecture

Period(s) of Significance: 1885–1958

Significant Dates: 1885, 1899-1905, 1908-1910, 1917, 1929, 1926-1956, 1958

Significant Person(s): N/A

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: McKim, Charles Follen; White, Stanford; Barrett, Nathan; Steele, Fletcher

Historic Contexts: XVI. Architecture
L. Shingle Style
XVII. Landscape Architecture

State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.

Naumkeag is nationally significant as an outstanding example of a late nineteenth century country estate with original furnishings, and a series of designed landscapes and formal gardens. The house, built for noted attorney Joseph Hodges Choate, is a major surviving early work by the New York architectural firm of McKim, Mead & White. Constructed in 1885-1886 during the transitional second period of the firm's practice, Naumkeag represents the period of consolidation when Charles McKim, Stanford White, and William Mead were establishing themselves as the most prestigious designers in the country.¹³ Both the interior and the exterior survive largely as the architects designed them, with only minor changes being made by Joseph Choate and his daughter Mabel. The house also contains furniture representing the occupancy of two generations of Choates from 1885-1958. Several of the first floor reception rooms still reflect the results of Stanford White's shopping expeditions with Mrs. Choate. Mabel Choate recalls Stanford White taking her mother on shopping trips for the house. "...They went all over New York and visited every antique, decorator and kindred shops. Often as I look affectionately at some choice piece of furniture or china that they discovered, I think what fun they must have had on those expeditions."¹⁴

Equally significant are the grounds of the property that largely reflect the collaboration of twentieth-century landscape architect Fletcher Steele and Mabel Choate. The work of this nationally important landscape architect resulted in the most unusual and original marriage of architecture and landscape architecture in New England. As a designed historic landscape, Naumkeag is one of America's most significant country estates not only for the brilliance of its design but for the beauty of its Berkshire setting. It exemplifies the sentiments of a whole generation of nineteenth-century Americans who left the country to make their fortunes in the city but longed to return to their rural roots.

From the house's back porch there are commanding views of the southern Berkshire Hills. The Berkshires in western Massachusetts have been described as the American Lake District and for generations, artists, authors, poets, and performers have derived inspiration from the landscape. They were joined in the latter half of the nineteenth century by wealthy industrialists and others seeking refuge from city life. Stockbridge and neighboring Lenox, like Newport, Rhode Island, soon boasted a large number of European-style country estates. Stockbridge's summer population read like the New York Social Register and many wealthy families enjoyed tennis, bicycling, swimming in Stockbridge Bowl, taking carriage rides along pastoral country lanes, and learning the relatively new game of golf. This was the Gilded Age – halcyon days that bred luxury and leisure. Naumkeag is a work of art -- a unique response to the style and taste of the period, the scenic beauty of the area, and the personality of the clients.¹⁵

Building Naumkeag

Joseph Hodges Choate began taking his family to Stockbridge in 1874. Stockbridge was a natural choice. It was the home of Choate's law partners Butler and Southmayd, and it was easily accessible from New York City while at the same time providing a rural retreat. For nearly a decade, the Choate family picnicked and watched the sunsets on a grassy hillside overlooking Monument Mountain and the southern Berkshires. Their favorite spot was halfway down the hill under a magnificent oak tree. In 1884, Choate persuaded David Dudley Field,

¹³ Richard Guy Wilson, *McKim, Mead, & White, Architects* (New York: Rizzoli, 1983).

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ John Copley & Associates, Lynn Wolff & Associates, *Cultural Landscape Assessment for Naumkeag*, Report for The Trustees of Reservations, 1998, p. 15.

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his opponent in the much publicized Boss Tweed affair, to sell him about forty acres on the hill on which to build his summer home. The name of the estate came from Choate's birthplace – the Indian name for Salem, Massachusetts.

Frederick Law Olmsted was commissioned to site the house but was released when he insisted upon placing it on the site of the oak tree. The Choates then engaged landscape architect Nathan Barrett to site the house and design the gardens on the difficult slope of land, thus saving the ancient oak that still stands today.

In 1885, Choate sought the advice of his friend Charles McKim in planning a country house. McKim, involved with two other Berkshire commissions, recommended his partner Stanford White for the project. Traditionally, White was the partner responsible for most of the firm's residential commissions and his services included interior decoration, art, and antiques.¹⁶ In selecting McKim, Mead & White, Choate was working with the most important architectural firm in the United States if not in the world – a firm that was creating houses for the American landscape.¹⁷

In 1861, Choate had married 24 year-old Caroline Dutcher Sterling of Cleveland, Ohio. She was a promising artist studying in New York, and although she gave up her career to raise a family, she instilled the love of art in her children and gave lessons to them and neighboring children in Stockbridge during the summers. Caroline Choate, a strong believer in education for women, was instrumental in the founding of the Brearley School and Barnard College. Caroline Choate bore five children, three sons and two daughters, two of whom were to suffer untimely deaths. The eldest son, Ruluff, was a freshman at Harvard in 1884 when he died suddenly one summer evening in New York City. Naumkeag had not yet been built. His sister Mabel Choate recalled, "Strange that Naumkeag, a happy house and one which has given pleasure to so many people, should have been conceived and born in sorrow." A second son, George, entered the freshman class at Williams College in 1887 but returned to Naumkeag shortly thereafter after suffering a nervous collapse. Much of the remainder of his life was spent in a private sanitarium. A daughter, Josephine, died in the summer of 1896 as a result of a lingering illness. Mabel and her youngest brother, Joseph Hodges Choate, Jr., continued to summer in Stockbridge with their parents, cousins, and friends for many years with Mabel eventually inheriting the family estate in 1929 upon the death of her mother.

Mabel Choate had perhaps the greatest influence on the estate – both on the interior decorations and the gardens. A horticulturalist, an avid collector of antiques, and a well-seasoned traveler to Europe and Asia, Miss Choate was responsible for amassing a large collection of Chinese export porcelain and Oriental rugs. Apart from these and some modern conveniences, she made few changes to the family home thus retaining the gracious and intimate lifestyle that the family had enjoyed. Mabel Choate died in 1958 at the age of eighty-seven. She bequeathed Naumkeag to the Trustees of Reservations, a private, non-profit land conservation and historic preservation organization with the hope that the estate would be maintained and made available for the use and pleasure of the public. She wanted Naumkeag to be "an authentic representation of the times and manner of living which it now [1958] reflects." The Trustees accepted the property in 1959 and maintain the Naumkeag buildings, gardens, and designed landscapes as a country house museum, as stipulated in Mabel Choate's will. Naumkeag's character-defining features have remained remarkably intact under the Trustees' stewardship.

¹⁶ Samuel G. White, *The Houses of McKim, Mead & White* (New York: Rizzoli, 1998), 12.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 10.

McKim, Mead & White Architects

As an important surviving work by McKim, Mead & White, Naumkeag is in a remarkable state of preservation. Because it remained in the Choate family until it was bequeathed to the Trustees of Reservations in 1958, the house largely reflects the design intent of the original architects. Either Joseph Choate or his daughter Mabel, were responsible for the minor modifications made to Naumkeag. Joseph Choate came to know Charles McKim as a fellow Harvard alumni and through his law partners Charles and Prescott Hall Butler, for whom McKim provided architectural services. Choate was a life-long friend of McKim and spoke at his memorial in 1909. However, the architect principally in charge of the design for Naumkeag was McKim's new partner, Stanford White. Although the family was able to occupy the house by October 1886, the furnishings were not complete until June 1887. According to the McKim, Mead & White account books the cost of the shell of the house was \$29,159.50, plus a 5 percent commission for the firm. James Clifford was the contractor. The interior cost \$4,500 for Clifford, plus \$203 for cabinetmaker R. C. Fisher, and \$85.98 for cabinetmaker Joseph Cabus, plus a 10% commission on this work for the architects. The contributions of Fisher and Cabus have not been documented, but may have been for work on the carved woodwork in the living hall, dining room, and library.¹⁸ At the time of its completion in 1887, Naumkeag was included in George Sheldon's publication of *Artistic Country Seats*, an indication of its prominence.

Recognized by historians as one of the most important architectural firms in American history, McKim, Mead & White designed a broad range of work that included over three hundred commissions for single-family residences between 1879 and 1912. Approximately one third of these houses survive, and among these Naumkeag occupies an important place in the firm's work due to its high degree of integrity and its distinct personality. The partnership of Charles F. McKim, William R. Mead, and Stanford White, was established in 1879 at a point in American architectural history when house design was becoming more innovative, both in terms of room arrangements and exterior ornamentation. This was especially true of the summer homes where the less stringent demands of fashions and society allowed for greater flexibility in terms of how a house was designed and the manner in which it related to the surrounding landscape. The first period of their practice was characterized by the success of their Shingle Style houses, such as the Isaac Bell House (NHL, 1997) in Newport, Rhode Island, with its free style open plan and light wood-frame construction. The second period of their work consolidated the success of their early Shingle Style and Queen Anne Revival style. They moved toward the high classicism of their third period, with more regular geometry and solidity. Masonry materials took on a lighter color palette, along with more recognizable historical references. Naumkeag is commonly credited entirely as the design of Stanford White, the most flamboyant of the three partners. While he was clearly the principal in charge, the design for the house, as with all the firm's work, should be considered as the work of the McKim, Mead & White partnership as the three men collaborated closely on all their projects.¹⁹ McKim's drawing for the elevations of the house are preserved in Naumkeag's archives.

According to architectural historian Richard Guy Wilson, Naumkeag, with its combination of materials and styles, is a rare example of the collaboration between Charles McKim and Stanford White -- McKim on the west facade and White on the east facade. Naumkeag reflects the firm's greatest creativity at a turning point in their career when they were searching for more formality than the rambling shingle style houses of the early 1880s. This transitional period indicates a summer place but with a different air -- one veering toward the baronial. Naumkeag is a house that proclaims itself giving the visitor the sense that one is arriving at some place important.²⁰

¹⁸ Finch and Rose, Report for The Trustees of Reservations, 4.

¹⁹ Ibid., 4.

²⁰ Richard Guy Wilson, conversation with author, July 19, 2006.

Relation of Naumkeag to Other Houses by McKim, Mead & White

Begun in 1885, Naumkeag occupies a critical transitional period in the work of McKim, Mead & White between the early Shingle Style designs and the large formal Colonial Revival and Renaissance style mansions of the late nineteenth century. During the first half of the decade of the 1880s, the firm designed several important examples of the Shingle Style, a term used to describe free-flowing architecture in which the exterior roofs and walls were covered in wood shingles. The cladding of buildings in this material was an offshoot of the growing interest in the vernacular architecture of the American colonial period. The Shingle Style, however, can be distinguished from the Colonial Revival style primarily in that it does not rely on eighteenth century Georgian ornament for its primary architectural effect. Important Shingle Style houses by McKim, Mead & White included the Cyrus R. McCormick House in Richfield Springs, New York (1882-84, demolished), the H. Victor Newcomb House in Elberon, New Jersey (1880, demolished); the Isaac Bell House in Newport (1881-83) and the Robert Goelet House in Newport (1882-84). The culmination of the architects' work in terms of the Shingle Style was one of the firm's great masterpieces, the Edward Low House in Bristol, Rhode Island (1886-87, demolished). With the Bell and Goelet Houses—the two most important survivors of this group—the characteristic features of the-Shingle Style are evident: shingled roofs and walls encompassing a variety of porches, gables and dormers in which ornament is secondary to the materials and massing of the house.

Contrasting with McKim, Mead & White's Shingle Style work are Colonial Revival style designs, such as the Julia Appleton House in Lenox (1884, demolished), the William Edgar House in Newport (1886, demolished), the Henry A. C. Taylor House in Newport (1886, demolished); and the Edwin Dennison Morgan House in Newport (1888-91). With these houses, and later designs for freestanding dwellings in the 1890s, the classical formality of eighteenth century architecture with opulent Georgian period ornament, is characteristic of both the interiors and the exteriors.

Naumkeag, built mid-way into the decade of the 1880s, combines both the Shingle Style and the French Norman style, a position it shared with at least one other major house by McKim, Mead & White, the now demolished Charles J. Osborn residence in Mamaroneck, New York, of 1883-85. While the Osborn House was a grand mansion in the French Norman style, Naumkeag is more stylistically ambitious. This is evident in the contrast between the east and west elevations. The east elevation, which is the formal side of the house that visitors would see as they approached in their carriage, derives from the architecture of Normandy and recalls White's European sketch books. This is expressed through the combination of salmon-colored water struck brick laid in a diaper pattern, and randomly laid fieldstone. The design intent behind this choice of materials was probably to suggest the appearance of an old French manor house constructed over a period of years. The stone suggests a first period of construction for a house that was destroyed or had been rebuilt using brick. The stone round arch with brick in-fill, where the niche is located, is another element of this attempt to "antique" the house. The round towers with their conical roofs are the most obvious elements that derive from the vernacular architecture of Normandy.

Another important decorative feature is the porte cochere. Normally the grand formal entry to a country house, here it conveys the appearance of a small appendage. For example, the east end of the porte cochere has a fieldstone wall suggesting an old foundation supporting an arch rather than being open-ended, as was more typical. In the gable end above is a diamond-shaped window of the type usually found on the kitchen wing of vernacular farmhouses. Inside the porte cochere the roof framing is exposed hand-hewn beams in the style of a medieval building. Other details are simply fashionable artistic effects, characteristic of the period. For example, between the vertical joints of the brick window arches are pieces of dark broken glass. Many of these

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features are less evident today with the growth of ivy on the lower portions of the east facade, but are clear in the original drawings as well as in a photograph of the house taken shortly after construction. The west facade is the side of the house primarily viewed while walking the grounds and enjoying views of the Berkshire countryside. Consequently, this elevation is intended to blend more with the landscape and is less formal in terms of architectural style. Although the first floor is brick construction, the west facade is characteristic of the Shingle Style. The walls and gable ends are covered with shingles, as were the roofs as originally built, and the use of historical ornament is clearly a secondary design feature. Except for the corner of the south porches, the only ornament with classical detailing on the west facade consisted of a round-arched fan over one attic window and modillions under the cornice. The verandah columns are brick with cushion capitals, a translation into brick of vernacular post and beam construction.

The south elevation attempts to unify the disparate stylistic features of the east and west elevations. Originally, there was a ground story porch with brick-clustered columns supporting a full entablature with triglyphs, paterae and dentils. The second story of this two-tiered porch had Ionic columns, turned balusters and an entablature with more classical detailing. To the right of the porch the wall is brick with a continuation of the stone belt course from the east facade. The gable end of the roof is shingled, but includes a large Palladian window. That this shingled neo-classically detailed end of the house is engaged to one of the Norman towers of the east elevation, is part of the playful charm of Naumkeag. With the original entrance to the house via the present exit drive, the South elevation would have been an important factor in what was seen as one approached the house. This perception has been lost with the changes to that side of the house in the landscape design of Fletcher Steele, as well as the entrance to the estate from the road below the hill.

The north elevation, devoted mostly to the servants' wing, was the only side of the house without ornamentation. It is also the facade that has been the most heavily altered. As originally designed with no ornament and irregular fenestration, this side was characteristic of the Shingle Style. However, since it was not intended that the north elevation would be highly visible, the architectural treatment was also characteristic of nineteenth century service wings. It was only with the changes in the landscaping by Mabel Choate and Fletcher Steele in the 1920s that the house began to be viewed more from the northwest, and it is from this angle that most pictures are now made of the downhill side of the house.

The exterior design for Naumkeag is unusual in McKim, Mead & White's work for its playfulness and lack of grand pretension. Even many of the early Shingle Style designs by the firm, such as the Golet House, have an almost monumental character. The George Cresson House in Narragansett Pier, Rhode Island (1884), has many of the fanciful architectural details but they are expressed in a very bold and aggressive manner. Naumkeag is one of their most accessible designs. The more formal east facade was designed to call to mind an old Norman manor house without attempting historically correct replication. The opposite side of the house is brick and shingles with ornamentation that is almost casual in its application thereby not conflicting with the landscape or the beauty of the scenery. Naumkeag is a house that has a strong architectural presence but fits comfortably within its surroundings.²¹

Other major surviving summer houses in the Berkshires

In Stockbridge, where historically there were fewer large summer houses than in Lenox, there are three noteworthy nineteenth century examples that survive. Elm Court (NR) is a massive Shingle Style house begun in 1886-1887 and enlarged over a fourteen-year period, entirely by Peabody and Stearns. The scale of this house greatly surpasses Naumkeag. Wheatleigh (NR), also by Peabody and Stearns, dates from 1892-1893 and is in the Italian Renaissance mode, an historical style that typically replaced the less conventional architecture

²¹ Finch and Rose, *Naumkeag*, 5-6.

of the 1880s. A third house, Oronoque, is near Naumkeag at Eleven Prospect Hill Road. Erected in 1892 for Birdseye Blakeman, this Queen Anne style house was designed by Ithaca, New York, architect William Henry Miller. Although similar in scale to Naumkeag, it is a more conventional interpretation of late nineteenth century picturesque design.

Large summer houses survive in Lenox as well, but also differ from Naumkeag in scale and in reliance on often conventional interpretations of historical styles. Ventfort Hall (1892-1893, Rotch & Tilden), Wyndhurst (1894, Peabody & Stearns), and Overleigh (1902-1903, Adams & Warren), are large Jacobean style mansions built of masonry. Blantyre (1901-1904, Robert W. Robertson) is in the Romanesque style and Springlawn (1904, Guy Lowell) is Italian Renaissance.²²

All of the above houses in both Stockbridge and Lenox have been significantly altered and adaptively re-used.

Historic Development of Naumkeag's Landscape and Periods of Significance

Like the people who created it, Naumkeag has a fascinating and complex character. Although a work of art, it did not spring full-blown from the consciousness of a single individual. It evolved incrementally with each successive designer incorporating elements from the past with exciting new features to create compositions that spoke of their own time and place. This is particularly true of the designed landscapes. The Naumkeag of today is not the Naumkeag of Joseph or Mabel Choate, or Nathan Barrett, or Fletcher Steele. It is all these things and more. There are three periods for Naumkeag that outline the evolution of the property from 1884 to 1958. Naumkeag is the sum of its parts and was created over a seventy-four-year period.

The first period is from 1884–1894 when the Joseph Choate family first developed the estate. In addition to the flower gardens at the northwest end of the property, other garden features included broad lawns to the west and the south below which were the tennis court and orchard. A woodland walk was created to the south. To the north of the orchard was a green house and kitchen garden. This first period was the result of Stanford White and Nathan Barrett laying out the fundamental visual and structural relationships among the residence, ornamental grounds, and service areas. Views of the Housatonic Valley and the southern Berkshire Hills were organized along a north/south axis. Naumkeag occupies a west-facing slope that drops more than 100 feet in elevation from the entrance on Prospect Hill Road to Church Street. During initial development, the slope was terraced to accommodate the residence and related outdoor functions. The flower garden to the north of the house was the principal ornamental feature during the first period. It was designed by Nathan Barrett and occupied two terraces. Barrett describes the garden as follows: “The formal garden is a gem, therefore should be an attachment, a pendant, to the house: - away from the house, an area you enter and pass through, but never a part of the general scene.” Barrett also planted the steep bank at the end of the lawn to provide a foreground in views from the house and terraces and to screen the service areas further down the slope.

The second period was a transitional one from 1895-1925 during which the Choates continued to develop the estate and one in which they traveled and lived abroad. During this period, Joseph Choate died and Mabel Choate began to make design decisions for the estate. The fundamental design of the estate remained intact with the landscape continuing to evolve. Some of these changes were the work of master designers. Marian Coffin and Percival Gallagher were active during this period and were involved with perennial plantings in the flower garden, changes in plantings below the south lawn, and planting recommendations for the Choate cemetery plot adjacent to the lower end of the estate.

²² Ibid., 8.

In 1899, Joseph Choate was named as Ambassador to the Court of St. James, a post he held until 1905. Upon the family's return from England, Choate chose semi-retirement and was able to spend more time in Stockbridge with his family. Joseph Choate died in 1917, his wife in 1929. Thus this period also saw their daughter Mabel's increasing responsibility for the property ending in her full management by 1929.

In 1908-1910, the Choates added a service wing to the north end of the house with an adjacent service area and laundry yard. At the same time, a wall replaced the hedge along the east front of the property. The tennis court was moved below the entrance to the woodland walk and a tennis house with arched roof and birdhouse finials was erected. The latter two features no longer exist. During this period, sculpture and other artistic objects punctuated the flower garden, linden walk, and woodland walk. Changes to the property at this time are well documented in the Choate family photograph albums.

The third period, 1926-1958, reflects a thirty-two-year collaboration between Mabel Choate and landscape architect Fletcher Steele. Choate and Steele met at a meeting of the Lenox Garden Club in 1926. At the time, Steele had just published *Design in the Little Garden* and had also published articles in *House Beautiful* and *Country Life in America*. Steele had distinguished himself as a residential landscape designer with particular abilities in estate design. The significance of Naumkeag's landscape architecture exceeds the great majority of other surviving American country place estates of the period, owing primarily to the remarkable designs of Fletcher Steele, who worked under the patronage of Mabel Choate and used the estate as a design laboratory for his innovative, modernist experiments. Naumkeag and the Camden Amphitheatre in Maine are considered by leading landscape historians to be the most important surviving works by landscape architect Fletcher Steele. In addition, the two projects are representative of the origins of the Modern landscape architecture movement in America.

Steele created numerous landscape features, largely within the context of Barrett's earlier designs. He redesigned the service yard and the forecourt, the house terraces including the Great Seat, Perugino View and the Peony Terraces, the entrance to the south woods at the Ronde Point, the flower garden including the Evergreen Garden and the Chinese Garden, and the South Lawn. However, Steele didn't change the scenery at Naumkeag, rather he created new points of view with the design of each new garden and the re-design of existing gardens and landscapes. Steele transformed Naumkeag into a landscape of garden rooms – each with its own character, definition, sense of enclosure or view, and garden ornament. The major new gardens that represent the work of Steele are the Afternoon Garden, the Blue Steps and cutting garden, the Chinese Garden, and the Rose Garden.

The first garden that Steele undertook was the Afternoon Garden built on the south side of the house next to the library. This garden promoted a new approach to spatial composition. The design was based on Steele's response to the 1925 Paris Exposition. It should also be noted that the Paris Exposition also led to Steele's use of the bent axis at the Camden Amphitheatre, Camden, Maine - perhaps the first public, modernist garden in America. On the west, or driveway side, the Afternoon Garden has a high stonewall. Carved posts and rope garlands create "windows" and there is a colorful carpet of water, gravel, and creeping plants. In the center is a black glass Vitrolite reflecting pool approximately 2 inches in depth. Steele moved Frederic MacMonnies' sculpture, "Boy with Heron", from the forecourt niche to the southwest corner of the Afternoon Garden, thus creating a focal point and a foreground to the views beyond.

Landscape Architects and the Significance of their work at Naumkeag

Naumkeag's significance is heightened by its association with several prominent landscape artists; most importantly Nathan Barrett, a pioneer in the profession, and Fletcher Steele, a recognized master in the art of

garden making. Each represents a distinct era in American landscape design. In the tradition of Downing, Olmsted, and others, Barrett used the site's awe-inspiring views and vistas to create the context for the estate and establish its fundamental organization. Steele's sumptuous garden rooms and unconventional use of materials, brought Naumkeag squarely into the modern era. The genius of Naumkeag, however, is how seamlessly the contributions of these two masters were woven together over a period of more than seventy years.

Naumkeag's landscape results from decisions and cumulative contributions of several important designers, principally Nathan Barrett and Fletcher Steele, but to a lesser degree Frederick Law Olmsted, Marian Coffin, and Percival Gallagher.

Nathan Barrett

Nathan Barrett was one of America's earliest practitioners of landscape architecture. He was largely self-taught, first by apprenticing himself at his brother's nursery, then by studying books and visiting examples of notable designed landscapes. Published works from this period include Andrew Jackson Downing's *Treatise on the Theory of Landscape Architecture* (1841) and the *Greensward Plan* for Central Park (1858) by Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux.

Barrett is best known for his work in town planning beginning in 1872 in Pullman, Illinois. Other commissions included Birmingham, Alabama; Fort Worth, Texas; and Chevy Chase, Maryland. In 1895, he served as landscape architect for Essex (New Jersey) County Park Commission and from 1900 to 1915 he was a member of the Palisades Interstate Park Commission. Both commissions were the first of their kind in this country. Barrett was one of eleven founding members of the American Society of Landscape Architecture in 1899, and served as its president in 1903.

Barrett's obituary in *Landscape Architecture* magazine states that "his individuality was best expressed in the country estates he designed." He can be credited with establishing the fundamental relationships at Naumkeag; the siting of buildings, circulation, landscape and garden features. He established the scenic views as the organizing principle for the house and grounds, and used the steep slope of Prospect Hill to separate the ornamental portions of the site from the utilitarian areas. Years later, Fletcher Steele commented on Barrett's skill by saying that "he had vision at a time when most landscape designers merely fumbled." Fletcher Steele reflecting on the development of Naumkeag in 1947 said: "Together [Miss Choate and I] agreed that the bones of what had first been done were good and should not only be preserved where possible but that the old spirit should be followed in all that was to come. The 'feeling' of Victorian elaboration must be continued. ..." Thus, the initial design of Naumkeag, as Nathan Barrett and others had created it, was reinforced and elaborated on to suit the character and ideas of Mabel Choate.

Barrett also claimed to be the earliest proponent of the formal garden in America. His design for the flower garden at Naumkeag appears to be a unique adaptation of an accepted form for a challenging site.

In addition to Naumkeag, Barrett designed country places in New York state for H. O. Havemeyer (Islip), Stanley Mortimor (Wheatley Hills), C. B. Alexander (Tuxedo), and Elliott F. Shepard (Scarborough); in New Jersey for Martin Maloney (Spring Lake), W. F. Havemeyer and F. D. Adams (Seabright). He also designed the estate of H. D. Auchincloss in Newport, Rhode Island, and other estates in Pennsylvania and Connecticut.

Following Barrett's involvement with Naumkeag, Mabel Choate sought the services of at least two other landscape architects before she settled on Fletcher Steele. Between 1917 and 1921, she engaged Marian Cruger

Coffin of New York.

Marian C. Coffin

Marian C. Coffin was one of a handful of women landscape architects who practiced during the first half of the twentieth century. Coffin had chosen a career in landscape architecture, but her lack of formal education and the prejudice at the time against women in the professional world presented considerable obstacles. After some preparatory tutoring, she entered the Massachusetts Institute of Technology which at that time had one of the nation's best landscape courses. Although women could not be candidates for degrees, Coffin entered as a special student and completed her studies in 1904 under Guy Lowell whose 1902 book, *American Gardens*, contributed to a revival of taste for formal gardens and geometric design. She established her own independent offices in New York City. As Marian Coffin's reputation grew, so did her offices and the demand for her services. Among her better known clients were Mr. and Mrs. Lamot Du Pont, Mr. and Mrs. Henry F. Du Pont, Sen. H. Alexander Smith, Mr. and Mrs. H. Rodney Sharp, Mr. and Mrs. Marshall Field, Mr. and Mrs. Edward Hutton, the Vanderbilts and Hattie Carnegie. Coffin is best known for her nearly thirty-year design collaboration with Henry Francis Du Pont at his Wilmington, Delaware, estate. Coffin's work at Naumkeag focused on the re-design of plantings in Barrett's flower garden.

The other designer associated with Naumkeag was Percival Gallagher, a principal in the firm of the Olmsted Brothers. His work focused on replanting the bank below the west side of the house.

Fletcher Steele

Fletcher Steele (1885-1971) is recognized internationally as a master in the art of garden making and as one of the leading and most imaginative twentieth-century practitioners in the genre of estate design. He created over 700 gardens between 1915 and his death in 1971, and provides a primary link between two design eras – that of Beaux-Arts formalism and modern landscape design.

As Steele's biographer Robin Karson states: "For sixty years Fletcher Steele practiced landscape architecture as a fine art. His commitment to the notion that gardens are works of art as surely as paintings or music informed every decision he made. Steele's gardens reflect a deep, continuing interest in experimentation."²³

Steele was a member of the first generation of landscape architects that were educated in the profession. In 1907, he entered Harvard for a program in Landscape Architecture but never finished, instead apprenticing in the firm of Warren Manning. In 1913, Steele took a leave of absence to take a four-month tour of Europe which provided a classical background as he toured the famous gardens and recorded them in his sketchbooks. In 1914, Steele opened his own office in Boston and remained its sole principal for nearly fifty years. He was elected a Fellow of the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA), its highest honor, in 1918. As a member of the Boston Chapter of the ASLA, he associated with other leaders of his profession including Charles Platt, Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., and Henry Vincent Hubbard.

Steele specialized in estate design and was extremely successful and personally popular with his clients. He described his relationship with Mabel Choate as that between an artist and his patron. She was his most important client and his commission at Naumkeag was the longest of his career. Naumkeag is extremely important because it reflects Steele's emerging interest in the art moderne style as applied to garden design, which he saw while visiting the Paris Exposition in 1925. Throughout his thirty-year involvement with

²³ Robin Karson, *Fletcher Steele, Landscape Architect: An Account of the Gardener's Life, 1885-1971*, rev. ed. (Amherst, MA: Library of American Landscape History, 2003), XI.

Naumkeag, he experimented with many of these modernist principles and incorporated their stylized features into the gardens and landscapes. For example, Steele borrowed historical forms but added boldness and color such as the carved Venetian-style posts and Pompeian polychrome furniture in the Afternoon Garden; he explored the shaping of abstract space by sculpting the South Lawn; and he organized movement around new structural and axial principles, especially the Blue Steps.

Although the gardens around the main house were altered over the decades, they were always designed with the views in mind. As Robin Karson observed: “For more than thirty years, Steele’s work at Naumkeag focused on the task of introducing curves to Nathan Barrett’s rectilinear plan, largely in response to the challenge of relating the designed landscape to its mountain context.”²⁴ Fletcher Steele’s interventions transformed the entire landscape. In time, each of the individual garden spaces also related to the comprehensive whole and the setting beyond. He believed that he was achieving his aim to make it a comprehensive design: “the secret of the whole valley and surrounding hills as seen from this place will be clarified and reduced to one continuous curve. All of Naumkeag and the landscape beyond will be like the unfolding of a seashell whose nucleus is the Chinese Garden.”²⁵

More than a century after it was created, the historic landscape at Naumkeag still conveys its character as a Berkshire Hills country estate. All of the principal elements still remain – the gracious and comfortable residence, the eclectic assemblage of gardens and landscape features, and the stunning mountain scenery.

Estates of the Gilded Age: Historic Context and Significance of Naumkeag

The sympathetic combination of the McKim, Mead & White residence and the innovative landscape design, contributes to the importance of this estate spanning the Gilded Age and American Country Place Era, one of the very few of the period to survive intact and with a high degree of integrity. In this regard, Naumkeag ranks high among other examples of its type, including Dumbarton Oaks (Washington, D.C.), Gwinn (Cleveland, OH), Stan Hywet Hall (Akron, OH) (NHL, 1981), Winterthur (Wilmington, DE), Cheekwood (Nashville, TN), Val Verde (Santa Barbara, CA), Longue Vue (New Orleans, LA) (NHL, 2005), Oldfields (Indianapolis, IN) (NHL, 2003), and the earliest and best-known example from the American Country Place Era, Biltmore (Asheville, NC) (NHL, 1963). The landscape architecture lineage between Naumkeag and this last example is strong as Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr. was mentor to Warren H. Manning, who was, in turn, mentor to Fletcher Steele.

Joseph Choate and his family maintained their primary residence in New York City and purchased land in Stockbridge to build a summer retreat. After the Civil War, a new prosperity came with the growth of industry that led to more time for leisure pursuits. The wealthy spent weekends and summers away from urban life and stress and sought recreation, respite from life, and pastoral pleasures in the mountains and on the coast. No area had more of these than the Berkshire Hills of western Massachusetts; the scenery was beyond compare and the railroad provided easy access to New York City. Both Lenox and Stockbridge became hubs for the wealthy elite to establish grand country houses and estates. What was coined as the Gilded Age by Mark Twain, evolved into the American Country Place era after the turn of the twentieth century and did not begin a decline until the decades between World War I and World War II. Naumkeag was unique in that it remained in the ownership of the Choate family until 1958, and continued as a beloved paradise and working estate. Curiously, one of the things that contributed to the demise of the great American estates was the revision of tax policies, one of the issues that Joseph Choate was successful in staving off for two decades during his lifetime.

²⁴ Ibid., 260.

²⁵ Fletcher Steele to Esther Steele, September 24, 1950.

The Berkshires also had a reputation as being a vacation spot for the intellectual. The literary and artistic tone set by residents Nathaniel Hawthorne, Herman Melville, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Henry James, Edith Wharton, and Daniel Chester French, contrasted sharply with places like Newport, Rhode Island, where the emphasis was mostly on wealth, opulence, and social life. Even in the microcosm that was the Berkshires, however, there were subtle distinctions between Lenox and Stockbridge. The appeal of the latter was its history including the Stockbridge Indians and the frontier mission that flourished there in the 1730s and 1740s. In the words of Joseph Choate, "In Lenox you are estimated; in Stockbridge you are esteemed."

Summer estates in the Berkshires ran the gamut from unpretentious to ostentatious. Naumkeag with its commodious house and comfortable furnishings designed by the most important architectural firm of the day, its pastoral views and its designed landscapes, was more modest than some of the grand mansions and had all the elements of a country estate: ample acreage, subsidiary buildings, gardens and grounds that were both ornamental and utilitarian. Joseph Choate, perhaps because of his New England upbringing and his Brahmin roots, chose the more restrained Stockbridge and did not seek to compete with the extraordinary opulence of his Lenox neighbors. Naumkeag with its free flowing and expansive architecture is not pretentious and reflects a sense of aristocracy, antiquity, and stability mirroring the country estates of England and Europe but suitable for the landed gentry of America.

According to Clive Aslet, the Berkshires promoted the best image of country life and the pastoral pleasures to be enjoyed there, including the fruits of the farm operation as part of the estate. Joseph Choate in his letters wrote: "What a luxury it will be to escape from the city, and to roll on the grass, ride over the hills, and float in Stockbridge Bowl,"²⁶ "I do miss Stockbridge and every dear thing in it -- wife, children, friends, houses, garden, lands, horses, cows, pigs, not to speak of the donkey."²⁷

According to landscape historian Norman T. Newton, estates of this period were characterized by meticulous attention to detail, proportion, and scale; simple clarity of spatial structure; clarity of circulation that was basic; rightness of relation between form and material; and understatement and reserve rather than exaggeration.

The Honorable Joseph Hodges Choate

The story of Naumkeag is inextricably linked with the story of Joseph Hodges Choate, who was born in Salem, Massachusetts, in 1832. He descended from one of America's founding families who settled in the Ipswich Bay area in the 1630s. Choate graduated from Harvard Law School in 1854 and was admitted to the Massachusetts bar in 1855 and to the New York bar in 1856. By 1860, he was a partner in the New York firm of Butler, Evarts and Southmayd at the time the firm's business was national and international in scope. Commanding national attention, Choate's law cases were tried in local, state, and federal courts, many times in the Supreme Court, and often before international tribunals. Choate was the founder of the New York Bar Association and served as President of the New York State Constitutional Convention.

Choate defended the interests of the Metropolitan and the Natural History Museums, being an incorporator of both. At the same time, he was prosecutor for the Committee of the Seventy that ended the Tammany scandals and the Boss Tweed Ring that had appropriated 45 million dollars in direct spoils and caused a tax loss of 200 million.

²⁶ Edward Sanford Martin, *The Life of Joseph Hodges Choate*, vol. 1 (New York: Charles Scribner's, 1920), 375-376; Joseph Choate to daughter Josephine, July 6, 1883. Josephine was in Europe at the time of the letter.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 465; Joseph Choate to wife Caroline, August 24, 1894. Joseph was in Albany and Caroline was at Naumkeag when the letter was written.

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The New York Aqueduct case coincided with the Tilden will and the Vanderbilt divorce cases, followed by the trial of *Laidlaw v. Russell Sage* involving dynamiting assault and trespass. Choate dealt with the quite novel questions of anti-trust law for the Standard Oil Company and other large corporations with attendant congressional investigations. Canadian Railway and Brooklyn Bridge cases tested in the Supreme Court followed landlord and tenant cases for the Astor estates. In the same court he recovered 15 million dollars for the Stanford endowment fund thus guaranteeing the future of a great university. He preserved the Bell telephone patent in its entirety.

His portfolio also included the Pullman Car leases, Southern Pacific Land Grants comprising vast areas of western territory, the Chinese Exclusion Acts, the Alcohol-in-the-Arts Case, involving rebates in the millions under tariff law, the Massachusetts Fisheries Case, and the controversial cup race between *Defender and Valkyrie III*.

Many of his cases, such as *Hutchinson v. the New York Stock Exchange*, were legal pioneering or precedent making, such as the great building contract case initiating the law of arbitration.

Choate's greatest feat of jurisprudence was the 1894 Income Tax Case involving every American and his way of life. For nearly two decades he held back the inevitable, graduated taxation introduced by the 16th Amendment. He accomplished this almost impossible task by overthrowing on constitutional grounds the entire scheme of the income tax enacted by Congress, and by persuading the august Supreme Court to reverse its previous decision.

The Choates entertained president and Mrs. William McKinley at Naumkeag in September 1897. Two years later, the President appointed Choate to succeed John Hay as the Ambassador to the Court of St. James, a post that Choate held for six years under two presidents and two reigns. His accomplishments between 1899 and 1905 included securing the international Samoan Trade Agreements; he won British accord in the Open-Door Policy toward China; he helped settle the Alaskan boundary dispute with Canada; he arranged the Hay-Pauncefote Treaty giving the U.S. broad jurisdiction over the Panama Canal; and he was elected 'Master of the Bench of the Middle Temple', the highest legal honor that could be bestowed on an outsider, and one that had not been granted except to five signers of the Declaration of Independence.²⁸ 1907 found the family back in Europe when Theodore Roosevelt asked Choate, an old friend, to serve as the head of the American delegation to the Second International Peace Conference at the Hague. During the last years of his life, Choate advocated for the United States to support the Allied effort. His final duty as leading citizen of New York was to greet the leaders of the French and English Missions when they visited this country. Shortly thereafter, in May 1917, he died peacefully at his New York City home.

Conclusion

Naumkeag is nationally significant as an exceptionally good example of a Gilded Age estate. It is a large house (44 rooms) on a sizeable tract of rural land (46 acres) whose owner was a wealthy New York attorney of international stature. It is situated near a large urban social center (New York City) where its setting is a desirable area of pastoral landscape in a region renowned for its elaborate country estates. The estate was intended as a summer retreat, purely for leisure pursuits such as entertaining, tennis, golfing, and swimming. The house is made of expensive materials with elaborate carving and details. The house retains all of its original furnishings including those purchased by Stanford White with Mrs. Choate. It is set in a formal

²⁸ The detailed account of Joseph Choate's career is taken from Morgan Bulkeley, *The Choates at Naumkeag* (Privately printed, 1968).

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landscape and engages its setting to an extraordinary degree. This is especially true of the siting of the house, which is surrounded by terraces and formal gardens with framed vistas of the southern Berkshire Hills. In addition to the house and gardens, the estate includes a full complement of support buildings such as service and farm buildings. The gardens include recreation spaces such as the temple in the Chinese Garden, the Summer House, and the Ronde Point. Quality and workmanship were outstanding evidenced by the involvement of nationally prominent architects (McKim, Mead & White) and landscape architects (Frederick Law Olmsted, Nathan Barrett, Marion Coffin, Fletcher Steele). There is extensive archival material documenting the history of the estate, the development of the designed landscapes, and the family.

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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. NR # 75000264, 11/03/1975
 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): The Trustees of Reservations archival collections located at 1 Sergeant Street, Stockbridge, MA 01262.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreage of Property: 46 acres

UTM References: **Zone Easting Northing**

A	18	638815	4683433
B	18	638970	4683112
C	18	638838	4682829
D	18	638476	4682958
E	18	638430	4683359
F	18	638736	4683425

Verbal Boundary Description:

The property of Naumkeag on the east runs approximately 600 feet along Prospect Hill Road. The northern boundary runs approximately 650 feet along private property lines and a 1.7 acre parcel given to the Trustees of Reservations in 1985. To the west, the property parallels Church Street 100-150 feet from the road, with the exception of three portions that extend out to the road. The southwest boundary runs along the Stockbridge Cemetery approximately 620 feet, and on the southeast, it runs along private property 450 feet until it joins Prospect Hill Road. The boundary is marked on the attached map entitled "Naumkeag – NHL Nominated Area" produced by the Trustees of Reservations, April 2006.

Boundary Justification:

The boundary encompasses 46 of the original 49 acres of the Naumkeag Estate, as purchased by the Choates. The Trustees of Reservations sold the other three acres at the southwest base of the property to the Stockbridge

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Cemetery Association in 1961. The 46 acres encompass the resources that have historically been associated with the Naumkeag Estate and the Choates and which maintain integrity.

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March 29, 2007