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Cory House: National Register of Historic Places Eligibility

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The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
William Francis Galvin, Secretary of the Commonwealth
Massachusetts Historical Commission

January 27, 2005

Peggi Medeiros
Director of Education & Preservation Services
WHALE
13 Hamilton Street
New Bedford, MA 02740

Dear Ms. Medeiros,

On the basis of additional photographs and a site plan that Anne Baker submitted in response to our letter of January 7, 2005, the staff of the Massachusetts Historical Commission has completed its review of the eligibility of 212 Cornell Road, Westport, for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

It is the opinion of MHC staff that the Cory – Cornell Farmstead, 212 Cornell Road, Westport, is a historically significant complex of buildings and surrounding landscape features. The property as a whole is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under criteria A and C as a representative and well-preserved 18th through 20th century farmstead that has associations with the Corey, Cornell and Pierce families and with the history of Westport's agricultural economy.

Given the above finding, relative to the Historic Buildings section of the State Building Code (780 CMR 3409.0), the Cory – Cornell House satisfies the State Building Code definition of historic building and therefore is considered to be a Partially Preserved Building and should qualify for all of the provisions of Partially preserved buildings (780 CMR 3409.3) including State Building Code exceptions (780 CMR 3409.3.2) 1-7.

The 6.3 acre property includes a plank-construction residence (currently undergoing restoration efforts) with a main block dating to the 2nd or 3rd quarter of the 18th century with a mid-19th century wing. The main block of the house is a 2-1/2 story, 5-bay, double-pile, side-gable, timber frame structure, originally built with a massive central chimney stack that was subsequently removed. A large cistern survives in the basement of the main block. Although interior renovations initiated in 2000 but never fully executed removed many interior elements, the 18th century, house core retains its floor plan, partition walls, stairwells and framing, and some of the removed elements remain on the property. Current restoration efforts have revealed evidence of unusual, original semi-elliptical pediments over the door and windows of the main façade.

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The surviving farmstead complex also includes a 19th century barn, an intact system of stone walls that define agricultural landscapes of surrounding fields, and the foundation remains of several historic outbuildings. The property has 18th century associations with the Cory family, owners of a 214 acre parcel, and the existing building is thought to have been constructed for Thomas Corey by ca. 1780. By the 1840s, the parcel associated with this house had been reduced to 60 acres. In 1848 the property was purchased by Joshua Cornell, and remained in the Cornell family to 1920. From 1938 through 2003 the Pierce family owned the property.

If you have any questions related to the above comments regarding the National Register eligibility of this property, please feel free to contact Betsy Friedberg, MHC National Register Director, or me. State Building Code questions can be addressed to Paul Holtz, MHC staff architect.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael Steinitz', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Michael Steinitz
Director
Preservation Planning Division
Massachusetts Historical Commission
Cc: Anne Baker