Agricultural Heritage Multiple Property Submission - State Register

HISTORIC RESOURCES | BUILDING AND STRUCTURES

Please send completed form to: Stacey Vairo, National Register and State Register Coordinator, State Historic Preservation Office, Department of Economic and Community Development, One Constitution Plaza, 2nd Floor, Hartford CT 06103

* Note: Please attach any additional or expanded information on a separate sheet.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Building Name (Common) Brett, George Platt, Pinetum
Building Name (Historic) Brett, George Platt, Sr. and Marie Louise Tosteven, Pinetum / Estate
Street Address or Location 253 Brett Road
Town/City Fairfield Village Greenfield Hill County Fairfield
Owner(s) Sylvia and Barry Tarasoff, 253 Brett Rd, Fairfield 06824

PROPERTY INFORMATION

Present Use: Domestic: secondary structure; Domestic: single dwelling
Historic Use: Agriculture/Subsistence: agricultural outbuilding; Domestic: single dwelling

Accessibility to public: Exterior visible from public road? Yes No
Interior accessible? Yes No If yes, explain
Style of building English barn, Vernacular style Date of Construction Late 19th c.

Material(s) (Indicate use or location when appropriate):
- Clapboard
- Asbestos Siding
- Brick
- Wood Shingle
- Asphalt Siding
- Fieldstone
- Board & Batten
- Stucco
- Cobblestone
- Aluminum Siding
- Concrete (Type poured)
- Cut Stone (Type)
- Other

Structural System
- Wood Frame
- Post & Beam
- Balloon
- Load bearing masonry
- Structural iron or steel
- Other

Roof (Type)
- Gable
- Flat
- Mansard
- Monitor
- Sawtooth
- Gambrel
- Shed
- Hip
- Round
- Other

(Material)
- Wood Shingle
- Roll Asphalt
- Tin
- Slate
- Asphalt Shingle
- Built up
- Tile
- Other

Number of Stories: 1 1/2 Approximate Dimensions 30' x 40'

Structural Condition: Excellent Good Fair Deteriorated
Exterior Condition: Excellent Good Fair Deteriorated

Location Integrity: On original site Moved When? ____________
Alterations? Yes No If yes, explain:

FOR OFFICE USE:

Town # Site # UTM

District: S NR If NR, Specify: Actual Potential

-1-
PROPERTY INFORMATION (CONT’D)

Related outbuildings or landscape features:
- [✓] Barn
- [ ] Shed
- [ ] Garage
- [ ] Carriage House
- [ ] Shop
- [ ] Garden
- [✓] Other landscape features or buildings: Icehouse, stone walls

Surrounding Environment:
- [ ] Open land
- [✓] Woodland
- [✓] Residential
- [ ] Commercial
- [ ] Industrial
- [✓] Rural
- [ ] High building density
- [ ] Scattered buildings visible from site

- Interrelationship of building and surroundings:

See continuation sheet.

- Other notable features of building or site (Interior and/or Exterior)

See continuation sheet.

Architect _________________________________ Builder _________________________________

- Historical or Architectural importance:

See continuation sheet.

- Sources:


See continuation sheet.

Photographer _________________________________ Date 3/28/2013

View Multiple Views _________________________________ Negative on File CTHP

Name Kristen Young _________________________________ Date 6/26/2013

Organization Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation

Address 940 Whitney Avenue, Hamden CT 06517

Subsequent field evaluations:

- Latitude, Longitude: 41.196171, -73.308098

Threats to the building or site:
- [✓] None known
- [ ] Highways
- [ ] Vandalism
- [ ] Developers
- [ ] Renewal
- [ ] Private
- [ ] Deterioration
- [ ] Zoning
- [ ] Other _________________________________ Explanation _________________________________
• Interrelationship of building and surroundings:

This barn is located on two acres of land on the south side of Brett Road. A driveway extends to the south off the road and forms a circle on the north and east sides of the house. The barn is positioned very close to the roadway on the east side of the driveway and to the northeast of the house, which is set back behind a landscaped area. On the west side of the driveway, to the west of the barn, is an icehouse, also close to the road. Stone walls line the east, west, and north borders of the property, and large conifer trees are found on the south and east sides.

The house with which this barn was once associated is located at 91 Brett Road and was built in 1906. This Colonial Revival house is said to have been a compilation of two old farmhouses that were moved to this site and put together with a new central section (Bedford and Lucas). The house with which the barn is now associated was constructed in 1987.

The Icehouse is a 1 ½-story gable-roofed structure with its ridge-line oriented north-south. A 1-story ell extends eastward from the east eave-side. The north gable-end faces the road and is blank except for an pair of twelve-pane windows in the attic. The south gable-end has a hinged door at grade, another above, and a 20-pane window in the attic. There are several small six-pane windows irregularly spaced at the grade level. The south eave-side of the ell has a pass-through door at the left (west) and a pair of wide hinged doors to the right, possibly as a former wagon shed. Siding is vertical boards painted gray, and the foundation is mortared fieldstone. Roofing is asphalt shingles; there is a gable-roofed cupola on the ridge, with louvered openings.

Located in the northern part of Fairfield, this property is within a mile to the south of the border of Easton. Brett Road runs east-west between Redding Road and Congress Street. The Merritt Parkway (Route 15) is .8 mile south of the site. The village of Greenfield Hill, where the Greenfield Hill Local and National Register Historic District is located, is approximately two miles to the south of the property. Approximately a mile to the northwest is Brett Woods Open Space, and Connecticut Audubon Society at Larsen Sanctuary is half a mile to the east of the property. Surrounding the barn and property are residential areas and forested land.

• Other notable features of building or site (Interior and/or Exterior):

Architectural description:

Inventory of structures (C – contributing, NC – non-contributing):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structure</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>House</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>NC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barn</td>
<td>Late 19th c.</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Icehouse</td>
<td>Late 19th c.</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Barn:

This is a 1 ½-story, approximately 30’ x 40,’ three-bay, four-bent, gambrel-roofed English barn. The ridge-line runs approximately east-west, parallel with Brett Road. It is sheathed in clapboard siding with wood shingles in the gable attics, and painted blue-grey. The roof is covered in asphalt shingles and the barn has a concrete foundation.

Exterior:

The north eave-side of the barn faces Brett Road and has a pair of double-height, exterior-hung sliding doors that are reached by a short ramp. Flanking the entry are two six-pane windows. Near the east corner of the north eave-side of the barn is a sign that reads “George P. Brett Pinetum, School of Forestry, Yale University.”

The gable attic of the east gable-end of the barn has wood shingles and cornice returns. A six-pane window is in the attic gable, just below the peak. There are no other features on this side of the barn. A pair of double-height side-hinged doors with iron strap hinges is centered on the south eave-side of the barn, and is flanked by six-pane window on each side. In the west corner is a side-hinged pass-through door. There are no other openings on this side of the barn. Two six-pane windows are on the west gable-end of the barn. In the gable attic are wood shingles and cornice returns. A six-pane window is located in the attic gable, just below the peak.
Interior:
The interior of the barn is accessed by each of the entries found on the north and south eave-sides of the barn. The floor is of concrete and the walls are of wood planks. The square rule post and beam frame is joined together by mortise and tenon joints with tree nails. The typical bent has a single interior post below the dropped tie-girt and queen posts support purlin plates at the mid-span of the rafters, where the rafters change pitch. A built-in ladder is found in the westernmost bay of the barn. The rafters meet at the peak with no ridge-board or pole but with a short collar tie near the ridge. Hand hewn and sawn marks are visible on the timbers throughout the barn. In a 1992 restoration, many modern replacement timbers were added to stabilize the barn. Iron brackets were added to joints to increase support and tension cables are in place at the plate elevation. A series of cartoon paintings were painted on the interior of the east gable-end of the barn during the 1940s (see Fig. 15).

• Historical or Architectural importance:

Applicable Connecticut State Register Criteria:
1. Associated with the lives of persons significant in our past;
2. Embodying the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction.

This is an outstanding example of an English type barn from the late 19th-century that is still sited in its original location. Much of the original frame is still intact while restoration work has replaced some material. The gambrel roof and returning cornices are unique features to an English type barn. The property also gains significance due to its association with George P. Brett, Sr., the head of Macmillan Publishing Company during the early 20th-century.

Historical background:
This property was originally part of a much larger 260-acre estate owned by George P. Brett Sr. (1859-1936), who was the head of the American branch of Macmillan Company in the late 19th- and early 20th-century period. The Macmillan Company, a publishing house, was founded in England during the 1840s by Scottish brothers Daniel and Alexander Macmillan. In 1867, they requested that George E. Brett, father of George P. Brett, Sr., not only create but also manage an American branch in New York City. In 1890, after George E. Brett's death, George P. Brett, Sr. took over management of the office. In 1896, the Macmillan brothers made George P. Brett, Sr. a partner in the business. Often described as hard working and a “genius in publishing,” he helped Macmillan Company become one of the most renowned publishing houses of its time. His son, George P. Brett Jr. (1893-1984), succeeded him at Macmillan.

In 1906, George P. Brett Sr. and his wife, Marie Louise Tostevin Brett, commissioned construction of his house (now 91 Brett Road). A hobby of his was collecting different types of coniferous trees, and he planted numerous species throughout his estate. He created a “pinetum,” an arboretum of coniferous trees, which Yale University's School of Forestry acquired after his death in 1936. The Brett family also donated land to the Town of Fairfield in 1941, which during the 1970s became a hiking and open space area named Brett Woods.

In the 1980s, the land along what is now Brett Road was sold to a developer. The house with which the barn is now associated was built in 1987, and the current owners, the Tarasoff family, purchased the property in 1991. In 1992, extensive work was done to the barn to stabilize it. Originally, the barn was used for agricultural purposes, but today it is used for storage.

Architectural significance:
This is an outstanding example of an English type barn from the late-19th century that is still sited in its original location. Much of the original frame is still intact while restoration work has replaced some material. The square rule timber frame is of a traditional construction typical of the mid-19th century, while the gambrel roof and cornice returns are unusual features in an English type barn. These returning cornices as well as the wood shingles found in the gable-ends of the barn suggest decorative features of the turn-of-the-century period of construction. Although the surrounding land has been developed over time, the barn stands as an example of a time when agriculture was the main occupation of this area.
The site gains significance due to its association with George P. Brett, Sr., a prominent man of his time. He was the head of Macmillan Publishing Company and was highly esteemed in the publishing world during the early 20th century. George P. Brett, Sr. owned many acres of land in the Town of Fairfield, and the road the barn is located on bears his name as does the open space, Brett Woods. When Yale maintained and had ownership of this property, it named the area George P. Brett Pinetum.

• Sources (continuation)
Photographs and field notes by Kristen Young - 3/28/2013.
Interview with Barry Tarasoff - 3/28/2013, 253 Brett Road, Fairfield, CT.

Map resources:
Parcel ID: 168/ 33/A
Aerial views from:
Historical aerial photography and maps accessed 6/26/2013 at UConn MAGIC:
http://magic.lib.uconn.edu/mash_up/1934.html
http://magic.lib.uconn.edu/historical_maps_connecticut_towns.html.

Print and internet resources:
Connecticut State Library online accessed 6/26/2013: iconn.org or http://www.cslib.org/iconnsitemap/staff/SiteIndex.aspx#directories


5. Southeast context view of the house (on the left) and the Icehouse (on the right). Camera facing northwest.

6. Southwest context view of the Icehouse (on the left) and the Barn (on the right). Camera facing northeast.
7. North side of the house with which the barn is now associated. Camera facing south.


15. Interior view of the east gable-end of the Barn. Camera facing east.

17. Interior view of the northeast corner of the east gable-end of the Barn. Note the post-and-beam frame.

18. Interior view of the roof of the Barn. Note the rafters changing pitch at the purlin plates and the rafters meeting at the peak with no ridge-board or pole. Camera facing west.