**GENERAL INFORMATION**

**Building Name (Common)** Phenix Farm  
**Record No.** 6064

**Building Name (Historic)** Old Parsonage, Parker Homestead

**Street Address or Location** 53 Old Turnpike Road

**Town/City** Mansfield  
**Village** Mansfield Four Corners  
**County** Tolland

**Owner(s)** Gregory & Emine Cichowski, 53 Old Turnpike Road, Mansfield CT 06268  
- Public  
- Private

**PROPERTY INFORMATION**

**Present Use:** Agriculture/Subsistence: agricultural outbuilding; 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:** Extended English bank barn, Vernacular style  
**Date of Construction:** Early 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

**Roof (Material)**

- ☑️ Wood Shingle
- ☑️ Roll Asphalt
- ☑️ Tin
- ☑️ Slate
- ☑️ Asphalt Shingle
- ☑️ Built up
- ☑️ Tile
- ☑️ Other

**Number of Stories:** 1 1/2, B  
**Approximate Dimensions:** 57' x 25'

**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: Fourth bay added c.1906, repairs

**FOR OFFICE USE:**

- Town #_______  
- Site #_______  
- UTM ________

- District: S  
- NR  
- If NR, Specify: Actual  
- Potential
PROPERTY INFORMATION (CONT’D)

Related outbuildings or landscape features:
- Barn
- Shed
- Garage
- Carriage House
- Shop
- Garden
- Other landscape features or buildings: Privy, sugar house, stone walls, pastures

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 3/21/2013
View Multiple Views Negative on File CTHP
Name Lucas A. Karmazinas Date 3/21/2013
Organization Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation
Address 940 Whitney Avenue, Hamden CT 06517

- Subsequent field evaluations:
  Latitude, Longitude: 41.831475, -72.25197

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

The Old Parsonage-Parker Homestead, also known as Phenix Farm, is located on the north side of Old Turnpike Road, which runs roughly east-west, and forms a crescent-shape intersecting at both ends with the modern shortened route of Middle Turnpike (US Route 44) in Mansfield. The western end is also a junction with Daleville and Moulton Roads. The barn, farmhouse, and associated outbuildings are sited 0.8 miles east of Middle Turnpike’s intersection with Storrs Road (Route 195), an area historically known as Mansfield Four Corners, and approximately 5.0 miles southeast of Interstate 84. Mason’s Brook intersects Old Turnpike Road some 440’ west of the property, while the Fenton River does the same 0.6 miles to the east. The latter is the site of the historic Gurley-Mason Mill and the Mason-Knowlton Place. Other sites included in the current thematic nomination of Agricultural Heritage resources to the State Register of Historic Places are: the Moulton Farmstead Barn at 55 Moulton Road; the Mason-Knowlton Place Farmstead at 185 Old Turnpike Road; the Hanks-Johnson Farmstead at 435 Storrs Road; and the Atwood Farm at 624 Wormwood Hill Road.

The Parker Homestead Barn, an English bank barn, is located near the center of the western half of the property and is sited some 200’ northwest of Old Turnpike Road and roughly 130’ northwest of the farmhouse. The Farmhouse is a 2-story Federal-style frame residence erected in 1812 after a fire destroyed the original house (built in 1756). The house has a low-pitch hipped roof oriented east-west and its façade, the south eave-side, faces Old Turnpike Road. The main block measures roughly 43’ x 31’ and there is a one-story, cross-gable ell, measuring 18’ x 16’, adjacent to the eastern end of the north eave-side. The house has a symmetrical five-bay façade, square-cut stone foundation, horizontal cement board siding (non-original), wood corner boards and window trim, metal roof, and central red-brick masonry chimney. The primary entry is centered on the south eave-side and has a pedimented frame surround with an arched fanlight. Fenestration primarily consists of twelve-over-twelve double-hung sash, however, twelve-over-eight double-hung arrangements are present in the rear ell. A hand-dug well with frame surround is located near the southwest corner of the house.

There is a modern 1-story frame Workshop with attached cross-gable 2-bay garage 40’ west of the farmhouse and 100’ southwest of the barn. The Workshop’s main block measures 50’ x 28’ and the garage ell measures 28’ x 22’. The 1-story building has a poured concrete foundation, vertical wood board siding, and side-gabled roof, this oriented northwest-southeast perpendicular to this stretch of Old Turnpike Road. The building, built as a pottery studio, sits on the site of the original wagon shed and shop that had approximately the same footprint as the new pottery, studio and garage.

An unpaved driveway runs north from Old Turnpike Road west of the Farmhouse and east of the Workshop/pottery studio. A frame Privy with dry-laid fieldstone foundation, horizontal board siding, and front-gabled roof – this oriented east-west – stands roughly 25’ north of the Workshop/pottery studio. A 1-story Sugar house is located some 200’ east of the Privy, 100’ northeast of the Farmhouse, and 180’ southeast of the Barn. The Sugar house, built in the mid-20th century, measures approximately 16’ x 20’ and has vertical board siding, a front-gabled roof oriented west-east, asphalt shingles, and a ventilation monitor. There is an open shed-roof bay on its south eave-side. The collapsed remains of a frame shed and chicken coop can also be found on the property, these located between the Barn and Farmhouse.

The aforementioned resources stand on the southwestern portion of a 10.0-acre irregularly-shaped parcel extending north from Old Turnpike Road. The overall property has a rolling topography; however, to the east the landscape drops steeply as it approaches the Fenton River. Lawn surrounds the Farmhouse, Workshop/pottery studio, and Privy, and open fields flank the Barn and Sugar house. Historic stone walls cross and surround the property. The area was generally cleared for farmland during the 18th and 19th centuries. While many of the surrounding fields have since reverted to second-growth forest, such is not the case of the former Parker Homestead. The large fields surrounding the Barn help to preserve the area’s historic and agricultural character. East of the Old Parsonage-Parker Homestead, an almost 1.0-mile stretch of Old Turnpike Road (an original portion of the old Boston Turnpike) has never been paved and Old Turnpike Road has been designated as a Local Scenic Road by the Town.
of Mansfield due to its rich history and surviving historical resources. The UConn Forest occupies an area south of Old Turnpike Road extending southward to Gurleyville Road and east to the Fenton River.

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

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>Farmhouse</td>
<td>1813</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barn</td>
<td>Early 19th c.</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Privy</td>
<td>Early 19th c.</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugar House</td>
<td>Mid-20th c.</td>
<td>NC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshop/pottery studio</td>
<td>Late 20th c.</td>
<td>NC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Barn:**

This is a 1 ½-story extended English bank barn, measuring 57’ x 25’. Its ridge-line is oriented north-south roughly perpendicular to this section of Old Turnpike Road. The main entry is located on the west eave-side in the center of the three bays of the original structure. A fourth bay was added to the south gable-end c. 1906 when the Parker family purchased the farm. A portion of the slope into which the barn is built has been removed on the eastern side of the building, thus leaving the basement level of the east eave-side and part of both the north and south gable-ends exposed. This provides for lower grade-level access to the banked basement on the east side. The barn’s siding consists of vertical wood boards, these painted dark red, and the foundation is a combination of mortared fieldstone and poured concrete. The roof is sheathed in wide rough-sawn horizontal boards, plywood, and asphalt shingles.

**Exterior:**

The main entry consists of a pair of double-height, hooded, exterior sliding doors. The doors slide away from each other, opening towards the north and south. The north bay of the west eave-side is blank.

The south bay of the original structure has a centered six-pane window. The additional (southernmost) bay has a smaller, centered exterior sliding door. The track extends on a diagonally-braced beam past the gable-end of the building to the south. The grade at the south gable-end of the barn slopes down slightly to the east, revealing a partial basement level. The partial basement level of the south gable-end of the barn has, off-center to the west, three evenly-spaced windows with fixed eight-pane sash. The rest of the south gable-end is blank except for a vent just beneath the apex of the roof and a series of decorative saw-cut drop motifs cut into the tails of the siding boards extending along the dropped girt line siding divide.

The grade at the east eave-side of the barn declines further, revealing a full basement level. A mortared stone retaining wall reinforced with poured concrete extends to the south at the southeast corner. There are two open doorways on the basement level of the east eave-side of the barn’s southern half. A milk house was also once present near the southern end of the east eave-side, the only remnant being its poured concrete foundation. There is a series of five windows and a pass-through door towards the northern side of the basement level on the east eave-side of the barn. In the 1930s, a second barn was constructed on the site at a right angle to the northern end of the east eave-side. However, this was destroyed in a storm in the 1980s. Like the milk house, its foundation is all that survives.

The main level of the east eave-side of the barn is blank except for a 12-pane window centered in the middle bay of the original structure. The north gable-end of the barn is also blank except for a vent centered beneath the apex of the roof and a smaller vent just below it and to the west. The girt line siding divide is straight; there are no motifs on this elevation.

**Interior:**

The interior of the main level consists of a 5-bent, 4-bay, square rule post and beam frame with diagonal bracing and a single post at the center of each bent. The original framing of the northern three bays consists of hand-hewn primary timbers, these with pegged mortise and tenon joinery. The dropped tie-girts are atypical in their location
immediately below the plates, unlike the more common Connecticut practice of dropping the connection as much as two feet lower. This may possibly be an indication of an early square rule construction, transitioning from the earlier tradition of the English tying joint with its tie-girt lapping over the top of the plates. The hand-hewn posts, plates, tie- and wall-girts are reinforced with historic sash-sawn and some modern fabric. The common rafters are a mix of heavy half-round and squared timbers, these span clear from plate to ridge, meeting at the ridge where the joints have been reinforced with rafter ties. A hay track with intact fork is suspended from the rafter ties and runs the length of the building. The framing of the additional (south) bay is similar to that of the original structure and shows similar instances of having been recently straightened and stabilized with added surface-mounted braces. A frame ventilator is centered on the north gable-end wall and a frame enclosure with board floor above is located on the western side of the original southern bay. The majority of the interior framing throughout the building appears to be of original construction, however, open mortise pockets present in several of the tie-beams and in the front post on the north side of the drive bay suggest these timbers may have been recycled from an earlier structure or that there may have been joists for an upper loft.

The basement level extends under all four bays of the barn. A mix of hand-hewn and sawn posts support six lateral (east-west) girders running in the plane of the main bents at the upper level (two of these paired at the junction of the original barn and south bay addition). Heavy floor joists run longitudinally (north-south) across and resting on the girders. These consist of a mix of half-round and squared timbers, many showing evidence of having been repurposed from an earlier structure.

The basement level, used as a ground-level dairy stable, has mortared fieldstone walls on its north, west, and south elevations. Poured concrete stabilizing walls, these likely historic (early 20th-century), are present under the north and south gable-ends. The floor is poured concrete, this accommodating manure gutters running north-south along the east and west eave-sides of the barn and including a feeding trough running north-south down the center of the building. The foundation walls, posts, floor joists, and underside of the main level flooring are whitewashed. A central passageway flanked by stanchion rows runs north-south for the most of the length of the basement level. At the northern end of this passageway there is a frame enclosure, this likely used as a calving stall. A mix of frame and metal stanchions are still intact in some areas of the dairy area and a hay door located at the center of the passageway leads to the original center drive bay above.

**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.

The Old Parsonage-Parker Homestead is significant for its intact English bank barn as well for its 19th-century Federal-style farmhouse, which was built by the Reverend Moses Welch, a pastor at the Storrs Congregational Church, and which was subsequently held by several long-tenured residents including the Parkers. The barn is significant for its use of hand-hewn structural timbers and evidence of basement level dairy use.

**Historical background:**

Old Turnpike Road derives its name from the fact that it was the original route of the Boston Turnpike as it passed through this section of Mansfield up until 1928 when the road was regraded and widened on the current path of Middle Turnpike. The later title was adopted as the highway was central among three primary routes between New York and Boston during the 18th and 19th centuries. The turnpike was established in 1797 by an act of the Connecticut General Assembly which granted the Boston Turnpike Company, “franchise over the roads from Hartford, through East Hartford, Bolton, Coventry, Mansfield, Ashford, Pomfret, Thompson, to the Massachusetts line” (Favretti). Tolls were collected on the Turnpike up until 1845, when the tollgate in Pomfret was closed.

The Federal-style house at 53 Old Turnpike Road, often referred to as the “Old Parsonage,” replaced an earlier residence erected during the middle of the 18th century. As Rudy Favretti notes in his history of the area, “Mansfield Four Corners: What it Used to be & George Washington Didn’t See,”
This large, foursquare house was built by Rev. Daniel Welch who was minister of the North Society Church, now known as the Storrs Congregational Church. He was the pastor there from 1751 to 1782. After his death, his son, Rev. Moses Cook Welch, replaced him and took over occupancy of the house as well. The house belonged to the Welch family and was never the property of the Church.

Rev. Daniel Welch acquired the property in 1755. There is no mention of buildings upon it in the deed. When he died, his will split up the house and land amongst his heirs, but eventually they conveyed their inheritance to their brother, Rev. Moses Welch. It was during his tenure that the house burned to the ground in 1812, but during the summer of that year ‘...a large two-story house was speedily erected on the old site, rising Phenix-like [sic] from the ashes of the old.’

Rev. Moses Welch died in 1825. His son, the well-known Dr. Archibald Welch of Wethersfield sold the place to Marcus and John Barrows of Mansfield. Over the years, the Welches added seventy acres to the twenty original, thus creating a substantial farm, and like the Freeman Farm, it stretched all the way to the Willington line and extended south of the Turnpike as well (Favretti).

The farmstead passed out of the hands of the Welch family in 1833, and was subsequently sold two more times before being acquired by Nathan Southwick in 1836. By 1860, the Federal census identifies the 62-year old Southwick as a farmer residing with his 50-year old wife, Clarissa; 25-year old daughter, Maria; 17-year old son, Gilbert; and 11-year old son, Nathan. By 1900, both Nathan and Clarissa Southwick had passed away and the property passed to Gilbert, also a farmer. The 1900 Federal census shows the 57-year old Gilbert Southwick residing with his 42-year old wife, Fanniet; 18-year old son, Walter; and 15-year old daughter, Clara. The union between Gilbert and Fanniet is notable as it was a mixed-race marriage. The Federal census notes that Gilbert was white and Fanniet was black. As was typical of the time, the children of the marriage were simply classified as black in the census records.

In 1906, the Southwick property was put up for public sale and purchased by (Martin) Hibbard Parker. Parker was born in Coventry, Connecticut and graduated from the Connecticut Agricultural College in 1894. He served as a foreman at the College for a number of years, as well as superintendent of a number of farms in New Jersey and Connecticut. Parker moved to Mansfield after marrying Edna Mason, daughter of Charles and Cordelia Mason, residents of 185 Old Turnpike Road. In addition to helping Edna Mason’s parents operate their saw mill along the Fenton River, Parker farmed the property at 53 Old Turnpike Road for over 30 years.

It was during Hibbard Parker’s tenure, likely shortly following his purchase of the farm, that the Barn was raised up and a new concrete foundation and basement-level dairy area constructed beneath it. Oral histories and a previously-completed survey of the barn suggest that the building was moved from the south side of Old Turnpike Road to its current location around the time of the alterations. However, no definitive evidence has been found to confirm this theory. It is also likely that the three-bay barn was enlarged at the time of these alterations, this through the addition of the new fourth bay on its south gable-end. Hibbard Parker resided on and worked the farm until his death in June 1939.

Hibbard Parker’s eldest son, Mason, eventually assumed the property and subsequently farmed it into the late 1980s. Mason Parker’s wife, Hazel McDaniels, died in 1997, while Mason had passed away in 1989. The current owners, Gregory and Emine Cichowski, had acquired the farm, giving the Parkers life use. The farmhouse and barn had fallen into serious disrepair. The Cichowskis have carefully restored the house and stabilized, straightened, reinforced, and re-sided the barn.

**Architectural significance:**

The barn is significant as an intact example of an English bank barn and because of its early-19th-century framing, which is a good example of square rule post and beam construction comprised of hand-hewn timbers. The barn is notable for evidence of basement level dairy use, which include a whitewashed interior, cattle stanchions, concrete manure gutter and feeding trough, and milking apparatus. The 19th century saw the introduction of the bank barn, which is characterized by the location of its main floor above grade, either through building into a hillside or by...
raising the building on a foundation. This innovation, aided by the introduction of windows for light and ventilation, introduced space to shelter animals under the main floor of the barn, as is the case with the Phenix Farm Barn.

The barn gains further significance for its association with a 19th-century Federal farmstead house, which was built as a parsonage for the Reverend Moses Welch, a pastor at the Storrs Congregational Church. The house was subsequently held by several members of the Welch family, as well as other long-tenured residents, including the Southwick and Parker Families, who occupied the house from 1836 to 1906, and 1906 to 1989, respectively.

* Sources (continuation):


Interview with Gregory and Emine Cichowski, owners, 3/17/2013, at the site.

Map resources:

Town of Mansfield Assessor's Records  http://www.mainstreetmaps.com/CT/Mansfield/
Parcel ID: Map 3/10/11

Town of Mansfield GIS Viewer http://www.mainstreetmaps.com/CT/Mansfield/

Aerial views from:


Historical aerial photography and maps accessed at UConn MAGIC:

  http://magic.lib.uconn.edu/mash_up/1934.html
  http://magic.lib.uconn.edu/historical_maps_connecticut_towns.html


UTM coordinates:  http://itouchmap.com/latlong.html

Print and internet resources:

Connecticut State Library online: iconn.org or http://www.cslib.org/iconnsitemap/staff/SiteIndex.aspx#directories


*The Hartford Courant*, “Obituary 1 – No Title,” June 16, 1939, pg. 4.


3. Parcel map of 53 Old Turnpike Road, Mansfield, CT – from Mansfield, CT GIS Viewer
   http://www.mainstreetmaps.com/CT/Mansfield/#

4. Detail Site Plan Sketch showing contributing and non-contributing resources. Note: North is to the right.
5. South context view of 53 Old Turnpike Road, Mansfield, CT, camera facing north. From left to right, Pottery studio, Barn, Farmhouse.

6. East context view of 53 Old Turnpike Road, Mansfield, CT, camera facing west. From left to right, Sugar House, Farmhouse, Workshop/pottery studio, Privy, Barn.
7. South context view of 53 Old Turnpike Road, Mansfield, CT, camera facing north. From left to right, Barn, Farmhouse.

8. South and west eave-sides of Farmhouse, camera facing northeast. Note Barn at rear left, well at lower left.

11. North and west eave-sides of Farmhouse, camera facing southeast. Note Pottery studio at rear right, Privy at right foreground.

13. East gable-end and north eave-side of Privy, camera facing southwest. Workshop/pottery studio is at left rear.

15. West eave-side and north gable-end of Barn, camera facing southeast.


18. East eave-side of Barn, camera facing west.
19. Interior view of Barn main level, showing framing detail, camera facing north. Note hand-hewn posts and girts, open mortise pockets in girts.

20. Interior view of Barn main level, showing framing detail, camera facing northeast. Note hand-hewn posts and girts, open mortise pockets in girts, later stabilizing bracing and reinforcement at upper right.
21. Interior view of Barn main level northern bay, showing framing and roof detail, camera facing north. Note hand-hewn girts, ventilator, hand-hewn and sawn pole rafters, hay track, and hay fork.

22. Interior view of Barn main level southern bay, showing framing detail, camera facing north. Note hand-hewn posts and girts, stabilizing bracing and reinforcement at upper right.
23. Interior view of Barn main level south bays, showing framing detail, camera facing southeast. Note hand-hewn posts and girts, frame enclosure.

24. Interior view of Barn lower level, showing framing detail, camera facing north.
25. Interior view of Barn lower level, showing framing and stanchion details, camera facing south. Note passageway flanked by stanchion rows, concrete feeding trough at lower left.

26. Interior view of Barn lower level, showing western stanchion row, camera facing south. Note passageway at left.
27. Interior view of Barn lower level, showing frame stall details, camera facing west.

28. Circa 1920 photograph of Farmhouse. Note well with sweep pole at left (Favretti).