HISTORIC RESOURCES

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) Witik Farmstead Barn

Building Name (Historic) Keefe, Thomas and Margaret / Witik, Mikhail and Anna, Farmstead

Street Address or Location 348 Washington Road

Town/City Plymouth Village Terryville County Litchfield

Owner(s) Philip Wegh, 420 Washington Road, Plymouth CT 06786 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? ☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, explain

Interior accessible? ☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, explain

Style of building English bank barn, Vernacular style Date of Construction 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 cast-in-place) ☐ Cut Stone (Type) ☐ Other Vertical wood siding

Structural System

☐ Wood Frame ☐ Post & Beam ☐ Balloon ☐ Load bearing masonry ☐ Structural iron or steel

✔ Other Square rule framing

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, B Approximate Dimensions 26' x 38'

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
Property Information (Cont'd)

Related outbuildings or landscape features:

- Barn  
- [ ] Shed  
- [ ] Garage  
- [ ] Carriage House  
- [ ] Shop  
- [✓] Garden  
- [✓] Other landscape features or buildings: **Wagon shed, Summer kitchen, Outhouse**

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: Charlotte Hitchcock  
Date 3/27/2013  
View: Multiple Views  
Negative on File: CTHP

Name: Charlotte Hitchcock  
Date 6/16/2013

Organization: Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation

Address: 940 Whitney Avenue, Hamden CT 06517

- Subsequent field evaluations:

  Latitude, Longitude:
  41.668095, -73.01706

Threats to the building or site:

- [✓] None known  
- [ ] Highways  
- [ ] Vandalism  
- [ ] Developers  
- [ ] Renewal  
- [ ] Private  
- [ ] Deterioration  
- [ ] Zoning  
- [ ] Other: ________________  
- [ ] Explanation: ________________
The town of Plymouth is situated north of Waterbury; its main road is US Route 6/202, which runs east-west over a high plateau between the Naugatuck River to the west and the Farmington-Pequabuck River watershed to the east. Washington Road is parallel and to the south of Route 6. It traverses a height of land known as Town Hill, intersecting the north-south Town Hill Road at the highest elevation. Here the Terryville Fairground is located, and a short distance east, on the down-slope of the hill, is 398 Washington Road, the Witik Farmstead.

The road continues downhill to intersect South Eagle Street which runs north to the village center of Terryville where an industrial center was established in the 19th century utilizing water power from the Pequabuck River. There the Terryville Waterwheel is preserved and is the most nearly intact of the three known 19th-century wooden waterwheels remaining in Connecticut. The Waterwheel is a Local Historic Property and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It marks the location of the Eli Terry, Jr. clock factory and later, Eagle Lock Company, important local water-powered industries in the mid- to late-19th century. Also on the National Register, the Plymouth Center Historic District is situated on the western edge of town about a half mile from the Naugatuck River and extends for about three-quarters of a mile along Main Street (US Route 6), with the Green and over 100 structures contributing to the district. This is located just a mile north of the Washington Road site. Another small National Register district is the East Plymouth Historic District on East Plymouth and Marsh Roads, approximately 3 miles northeast of the site. This includes an 18th-century Anglican (Episcopal) church and village with surrounding homes, several with barns.

The Witik Farmstead occupies a small terrace in the rather steep eastern slope of the hillside, on the south side of Washington Road. The farmstead includes a farmhouse, summer kitchen, barn, and wagon shed, all 19th-century structures. Two modern houses belonging to family members are located on parcels to the north and south of the farmstead complex, at 390 and 420 Washington Road. The total of the three parcels was at one time over 20 acres, with 398 Washington Road retaining a 7.25-acre parcel.

The Farmhouse, c. 1850 or earlier, is a 20' x 38' 1 ½-story raised-plate Cape-style building. The ridge-line is oriented east-west and the front eave-side façade faces north toward the road. The building appears to consist of two blocks butted together, and there is some historical evidence of the eastern portion having been moved from a location further east. The western three bays include a centered doorway flanked by six-over-six double-hung windows. The eastern two-bay portion has two smaller six-over-six double-hung windows. Eyebrow attic windows, visible in the attic interior, have been covered by aluminum siding. The gable-ends have two windows on the ground floor and two in the attic; the roofline has moldings at the rake and eaves, and short cornice returns. The basement reveals post and beam framing, here consisting of un-planed log joists with a fieldstone foundation topped with a few courses of brick. A 1-story ell extends south off the western block and contains the kitchen. A porch along the east side of the ell has an entry door flanked by six-over-six windows. An Assessor's photo shows that there were formerly two chimneys near the ends of the front block, where only the eastern is extant. A third chimney is in the ell. Roofing is asphalt shingles and siding is 20th-century aluminum, over the original clapboard siding.

Southeast of the Farmhouse is the Summer kitchen, a 1-story gable-roofed frame building, 12' x 20'. Its ridge-line is oriented north-south, and a door is located in the west eave-side near the north corner. Each eave-side has two six-over-six double-hung windows, and in the north gable-end there is an arch-topped window near the peak. The interior is a simple hybrid frame with some post and beam timbers and some balloon framing. A chimney with a thimble opening for a stove pipe, is supported by two collar ties and extends through the roof near the south wall. Siding is vertical tongue-and-groove wood, and roofing is asphalt shingles. Adjacent to the kitchen is a small gable-roofed well-house on a stone slab with a hole in its center for access to the well below.

Further south is the Barn, and to its east is a two-bay 14’ x 20’ Wagon shed with an open west side. It has an unequal-pitch gable roof with the west pitch forming a hood over the open side. Framing is primarily balloon, with sawn dimension lumber. South of the shed is an Outhouse, gable-roofed, with its south gable-end having an ornamental saw-tooth pattern at the eave level.
• Other notable features of building or site (Interior and/or Exterior):

Architectural description:

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

- Farmhouse  c. 1820  C
- Barn  19th c.  C
- Wagon shed  1909  C
- Summer kitchen 19th c.  C
- Outhouse  19-20th c.  C

Barn:

The Barn is a 1 ½-story, gable-roofed, eave-entry bank barn, 26’ x 38’, with its ridge-line oriented east-west. The barn has three bays. The original barn had two bays and a banked basement partially under what is now the center bay. The third, eastern, bay is an addition (1909), with its basement fully exposed at the down-slope grade level on the east gable-end.

Exterior:

The north eave-side has a sliding barn door at the right (west) corner, with a shallow hood protecting the track; the door is half-height, with its head at the level of an interior upper loft, and slides to the left (east). The remainder of the north elevation is blank. Grade slopes down toward the east, partially exposing a concrete foundation wall installed in 1970. A twelve-pane stable window, giving light into the basement, is visible at the right end of the concrete foundation.

There is a 1-story 8’ x 26’ shed-roofed (lean-to) addition attached on the full width of the west gable-end of the barn; the shed is of balloon-framed construction without a foundation. A narrow hinged pass-through door is located on the north gable-end of the main barn has an eight-pane attic window. The south gable-end of the addition has a full-width hinged door whose head is beveled to follow the roof-line of the structure.

The south eave-side of the Barn has in the first (western) bay, a twelve-pane stable window, a pass-through door to its right, and a hay door above. The second bay (the center) has a full-height sliding door the full width of the bay, on overhead tracks, sliding to the right (east). A fieldstone retaining wall running south creates a level access drive to the main floor level at this doorway. Immediately to the east, grade drops to the basement level. The rightmost (eastern) bay has a small hay door in the upper part of the main level wall, and an opening at the basement level for livestock to enter.

The east gable-end has an eight-pane attic window near the peak, and at the basement level two louvered openings which may have originally been stable windows.

Siding is vertical boards, tongue-and-groove in some areas, possibly installed when the added eastern bay was erected. Foundations are a mix of fieldstone and concrete, and roofing is asphalt shingles, new in 2010.

Interior:

The frame of the barn is of post and beam construction. The three bents forming the two-bay original barn have predominantly hand hewn timbers with square rule joinery. All three bents have a center post under the tie-girt. The tie-girts are dropped, queen posts support longitudinal purlin plates, and the roof frame is of square-section hewn common rafters mortised into a five-sided ridge-pole. Roof decking is of very wide random boards. In general, the roof framing with a ridge-pole suggest an early construction date while the square rule framing places the barn after about 1820 when that framing technique became widespread.

The added eastern bay has circular sawn timbers and rafters of sawn dimension lumber, characteristics of the later 19th century, 1870 or after. Flooring in the main level is wood planks. A work room, enclosed below the upper loft in the western bay, is wall-papered with old posters from circus and vaudeville shows.
At the basement level, the westernmost bay sits on a shallow crawl space, the center bay has mortared fieldstone walls in need of repair, and the eastern bay has concrete foundations. Framing overhead in the center bay consists of round log joists and wood stanchions and pens remain as evidence of use for a dairy stable. A partition between the center and east bays appears to have been the original exterior wall; it has a sliding door near the south wall and a strip of several multi-pane stable windows toward the north wall. Overhead framing for the main level floor in the east bay is sawn dimension lumber joists supported on an intermediate north-south wood girder. The basement floor is earth.

- Historical or Architectural importance:

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

The Witik Farmstead is significant because the house and barn form an intact grouping of contemporary structures from the period c. 1850 or before. The small Cape-style house and English bank barn, with associated Wagon shed and Summer kitchen, provide a sense of the agricultural landscape of the time. In addition, the site exemplifies the life of ethnic immigrant farmers, in this case first from Ireland and then Russia, who combined factory work with a farmstead home. The barn is an excellent example of square rule post and beam framing, with intact roof framing including a rare hewn five-sided ridge-pole.

Historical background:

The owner’s family history is that Mikhail Witik purchased the farmstead in 1898 from a Mr. Keefe, who, like Witik, worked at the Eagle Lock Company in Terryville. The 1874 Beers map of Terryville shows Keefe as resident at the appropriate location. The 1880 census shows Thomas Keefe of Town Hill, a farmer, age 50, and his wife Margaret, also 50. Their children Timothy, Thomas, Jeremiah, Mary, and John N., ranging from age 28 to 17, worked in the clock shop, while son Aaron worked in a foundry. The parents were natives of Ireland and all the children were born in Connecticut. Most of the neighbors were similarly of Irish origin.

The 1910 census records the Witik Family as Austrian-Russian (born in Austria, from Russia). Michael [sic] Witik, age 44, immigrated in 1894, is listed as a farmer. The rest of the family arrived in 1899 – wife Anna, 42; son-in-law and daughter John and Eva Muchka, lock and key makers; Mary, John, and Carrie, ages 18, 17, and 16, lock makers, and four younger children, Annie, George, Margaret, and Sadie. According to Philip Wegh, the current owner, the family farmed for their own use. Evidently the lock factory was their main means of financial support.

The Eagle Lock Company was located in Terryville, just north of the Witik Farmstead. Eli Terry, Jr.’s clock factory on the site had been constructed there in 1824, making use of the power of the Pequabuck River. That factory, then in the ownership of the Lewis Lock Company, was completely destroyed by fire on September 21, 1851, and immediately rebuilt. Two years later, in January of 1854, the Lewis Lock Company was merged with the James Terry & Company lock company to become the Eagle Lock Company, which remained a major employer in Terryville for more than a century (Clouette). This was the employer of the Witik family members during their early years in the United States.

In 1920 Mikhail Witik was still a farmer; George, Margaret, and Sadie were in the household and working at factory jobs. By 1930, Sadie (1904-1991) lived with her older brother John (1891-1974), who was a gardener for a private family property, while she was a typist. The 1940 census showed the two of them still noted as living on Washington Road, and Sadie, age 35, as a stenographer. Margaret Witik (1901-1981) married Philip Gabor and had two daughters. The younger, Vera, later married Emery Wegh, and built the house at 420 Washington Road where they live today.

After the death of Sadie Witik in 1991, the farm passed to her niece Vera Wegh, who in 1993 divided the farm and passed the western parcel to her son, George Wegh, who built a house and lives today at 390 Washington Road. The remaining 7.25 acres which includes the original farmstead was passed to her son, Philip Wegh, the current owner. Thus the Witik Farmstead has been passed down to the great grandson of Mikhail Witik.
Architectural significance:
The Witik Farmstead is significant because the house and barn form an intact grouping of contemporary structures from the period c. 1850 or before. The small Cape-style house and English bank barn, with associated Wagon shed and Summer kitchen, provide a sense of the agricultural landscape of the time. In addition, the site exemplifies the life of the ethnic immigrant farmer, first Irish and then Russian, who combined factory work with a farmstead home. The many water-powered mills that arose in Connecticut's upland areas, were closely located to rural farming areas. This led to a common occurrence of immigrant workers working in the mills and factories, but aspiring to purchase farmsteads, often to supplement their income with dairy farming. The Witik Farmstead still remains under the ownership and care of the descendants of Mikhail Witik.

The barn is an excellent example of square rule post and beam framing, with intact roof framing including a rare hewn five-sided ridge-pole. The additions and alterations, including the third bay, basement dairy stable, and added sheds, exemplify the evolution of farming from subsistence to the 20th-century ground level stable. The summer kitchen is an extant example of a characteristic farmstead function. The Farmhouse remains little-altered, having still its original window sash, although the original siding has been concealed under aluminum for the last 50 years.

• Sources (continuation):
Interview with Philip Wegh 3/27/2013, at the site; additional photography by Philip Wegh.

Map resources:
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
Beers County Atlas of Litchfield, New York, F.W. Beers, 1874
Clark-Hopkins Map of Litchfield County, 1854.

Print and internet resources:
Clouette, Bruce,
Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation, Historic Barns of Connecticut Resource Inventory, 2010,
GDA Architects, Bristol, CT, Capital Needs Assessment: Wegh Barn, May 2012.
Giguere, Judith, History of Plymouth on the Town website:  http://www.plymouthct.us/history.htm

3. Site plan detail indicating contributing resources, base image from Google Maps.

4. Northwest view of the Farmhouse showing the north eave-side façade, west gable-end, and rear (south) ell. The Barn is visible at the right rear.
5. Southeast view of the Summer kitchen, foreground, and Farmhouse, rear; camera facing northwest.

6. Northwest view of the Summer kitchen, foreground, and Barn, rear; camera facing southeast.
7. Detail view of Summer kitchen interior, camera facing northeast. Note post and beam framed wall, dimension lumber rafters.

8. Northwest view of the Wagon shed; camera facing southeast.
9. Southwest view of the Wagon shed and Outhouse; camera facing north. Barn is at left and Summer kitchen and Farmhouse are at center rear.

11. West view of the Barn showing the shed addition, camera facing east.


14. Interior view of the Barn, camera facing west, showing the interior bent between the west and center bays.
15. Interior view of the west gable-end bent from the loft level; camera facing west.

16. Interior view of the Barn; camera facing northeast. Note the bent, formerly the end bent, with queen posts and purling plates above. Note also the change in rafter framing at the added bay, seen at rear.
17. Interior view of the Barn roof framing, camera facing northeast. Note the five-sided hewn ridge-pole with rafters mortised into it, and at the right, the change to sawn rafters in the added bay. The random-width deck boards in the left, older bay contrasts with the narrower spaced boards at right.

18. Interior view of the west bay workshop in the Barn, with event posters as wallpaper, camera facing west.