**HISTORIC RESOURCES**

Litchfield

**BUILDING AND STRUCTURES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>NR</th>
<th>If NR, Specify:</th>
<th>Actual</th>
<th>Potential</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

Building Name (Common) Minor, Wait, Farmstead

Building Name (Historic) Minor, Wait, Farmstead

Street Address or Location 136 Sycamore Avenue

Town/City Woodbury Village Litchfield

Owner(s) Thomas Paron, Ann Hertberg, 136 Sycamore Ave., Woodbury CT 06798

**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 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

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 Approximate Dimensions 24' x 34' (barn), 14' x 20' (shed), 20' x 26' (carriage)

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: Terrace, trellis, pool, conversion of shed to office space.

FOR OFFICE USE:

Town # Site # UTM

District: S NR If NR, Specify: Actual Potential

* Note: Please attach any additional or expanded information on a separate sheet.
Related outbuildings or landscape features:

- Barn
- Shed
- Garage
- Carriage House
- Shop
- Garden
- Other landscape features or buildings: Open fields, river bank, fencing, pool, tennis court, driveway

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 2/07/2012

View Multiple Views Negative on File CTHP

Name Charlotte Hitchcock Date 3/09/2012

Organization Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation

Address 940 Whitney Avenue, Hamden CT 06517

- Subsequent field evaluations:

Latitude, Longitude:
41.541209, -73.218432

Threats to the building or site:

- None known
- Highways
- Vandalism
- Developers
- Renewal
- Private
- Deterioration
- Zoning
- Other __________________________
- Explanation __________________________
• Interrelationship of building and surroundings:

The site is located on the north side of Sycamore Avenue (Route 317) which runs in a westerly direction from Woodbury to the town of Roxbury; its name changes to Good Hill Road a short distance to the west. The 30-acre parcel extends north from the road to the Pomperaug River which at this point curves eastward and then southward, forming the north and east boundaries of the property. The river flood plain is a band of agricultural and wooded land that remains undeveloped. Several large residential parcels abut the property on both sides of Sycamore Avenue. Further west and east, the land has been subdivided into house lots with single family residences ranging in age from the 19th to the late 20th century.

A tributary stream, flowing east to meet the Pomperaug River, crosses the center of the site. To the north of the stream the site is wooded, while to the south is a large hayfield. The buildings are located on an area of higher ground at the southwest corner of the site, close to the road. They include the farmhouse, a carriage house/garage west of the house, the main barn, and a small shed, both located northeast of the house. The barn is used for storage of lawn and recreational equipment and a home workshop. The shed is finished as a home office. A pool and its fenced enclosure are located on the north side of the barn. Use of the outbuildings is primarily accessory to the residence, though the hayfield is still mowed for hay.

The house at 136 Sycamore Avenue is a Greek Revival-style farmhouse built or remodeled about 1845. It has a broad three-bay, ridge-to-street façade, which is flushboarded at the first story. The side-hall entrance, with a transom and sidelights, is sheltered within an open one-story porch, which has a nearly flat roof supported by chamfered posts. The wide frieze board under the eaves is repeated on the main block. It extends across the façade and wraps around onto the porch, an indication that the porch is original construction. The rest of the windows have six-over-six sash. A one-story wing set back on the east side has identical detailing on its porch, which has been screened [subsequently enclosed with windows]. Several small additions extend from the rear of the house (Cunningham).

The three-bay side-hall plan combined with an eave-entry façade seems to be an unusual plan layout for a Greek Revival-style house, with the side-hall layout more typically being associated with a gable-front façade, and the eave-entry façade more commonly having a centered doorway as the colonial style.

• 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>Type</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Farmhouse</td>
<td>c. 1845</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barn</td>
<td>19th c.</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shed</td>
<td>19th c.</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carriage house/garage</td>
<td>Late 19th c</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Barn:

This is a 1 ½-story three-bay eave-entry English barn, 24 feet wide x 34 feet long, with its ridge-line oriented east-west parallel to the street, located on a high point of the property and set back to the rear of the farmhouse. The main entry is a pair of barn doors in the south eave-side. The gable roof has asphalt shingles and a hip-roofed cupola with a whale weathervane at the center of the ridge-line. Siding is vertical boards painted red. A few courses of the fieldstone foundation are visible along the east and west gable-ends. Grade slopes down from the east and west sides.

Exterior:

The south eave-side has a pair of double-height exterior-mounted sliding barn doors the full height of the center bay. Above the door track and hardware is a shallow hood. The side bays have no openings.
The east gable-end has a single exterior-mounted sliding door in the left (south) bay, accessing the interior of the main level. The door has a shallow hood over the track and hardware. To the right (north) is an eight-pane stable window with trim including a beveled lintel; the trim is painted white. There is a single-pane attic window; and dropped girt-line siding divide.

The north eave-side has no windows, and a pair of single-height sliding doors, with a shallow hood above the track. Along the north side is a modern flag-stone terrace with fieldstone retaining walls and wide steps. A heavy timber trellis built from recycled barn beams is attached to the barn wall above the doors and extends over the terrace.

A six-pane attic window is the only opening in the west gable-end. The roof has no overhangs, and a simple trim board at the rake and eaves. The cupola has glazing installed in the openings on all four sides.

**Interior:**

At the interior, framing is square rule post and beam, with four lateral bents comprised of hand-hewn beams and sawn braces. The interior post has been removed from the bent east of the center bay, and the common rafters have been reinforced by collar ties. The end- and tie- girts are dropped approximately two feet below the plate; all the posts are in good condition, with no visible splitting or failure. The roof framing is common rafters of sawn lumber. The floor is wood planking showing circular saw marks. The owner has installed a storage loft above the girt-line in the west bay, and a stair for access along the west wall.

**Shed:**

This is a 1-story gable-roofed structure, 14 feet x 20 feet, enclosing a single space which has been renovated into a home office. The ridge-line is oriented north-south, and the northeast corner closely abuts the southwest corner of the main barn, forming a sheltered area which may have formerly been the barnyard.

The exterior has vertical wood siding with a dark stain. The east eave-side has from left (south) to right (north), two four-pane stable-type windows with square trim painted gray, a pass-through door, and a third window. The south and north gable-ends each have a six-pane window located high in the wall. The west eave-side has four four-pane windows. The configuration of windows appears to have been altered by the renovation, with the addition of at least one opening on the east side. Grade declines toward the west, exposing approximately four feet of the rubble fieldstone masonry foundation on the west side. Roofing is asphalt shingles.

The interior has finished walls between exposed elements of the timber frame, revealing a two-bay structure of sawn members with square rule framing, a dropped cross-tie girt at the center of the space, and a ridge beam at the peak of the cathedral-style ceiling. Empty mortises in the girt suggest a former loft floor, no longer in place.

**Carriage house:**

This is a 1 1/2-story gable-roofed carriage house, now a garage, approximately 20’x 26’. The ridge-line is oriented north-south perpendicular to the road, and the roof is asymmetrical, forming a salt-box profile with the west eave line lower than the east. The south gable-end has a pair of overhead garage doors at ground level and a two-over-two double-hung window with trim in the attic level. The west eave side has a similar window in the ground level. The north gable-end has a pass-through door near the left (east) corner and another two-over-two double-hung window to the right. The attic has a two-over-two double-hung window. The east eave-side has a pass-through door near the right (north) corner and another two-over-two double-hung window near the center of the ground floor wall. Siding is horizontal clapboards with corner boards and square window trim. The roof has overhangs at the eaves and rakes with sloped soffits.

The interior of the ground floor is finished with narrow wood bead-board paneling and the windows are trimmed with square casings, aprons, and sills. A wood step ladder along the north wall accesses the loft level. The floor is concrete.

- Historical or Architectural importance:

Applicable Connecticut State Register Criterion:

2. Embodying the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction.
This complex is significant as a well-preserved example of a prosperous mid-19th-century farmstead on the outskirts of the village of Woodbury. The English barn has fine integrity of materials and finishes and a well-preserved intact timber frame. The surrounding landscape remains open fields extending to the river, with hay harvesting activity still perpetuating some active agriculture and providing a sense of the historical landscape.

**Historical background:**

The first documented mention of structures on this site came from 1815 at the time of Judson Minor’s marriage, when his father Adoniram Minor transferred it to him. In 1819 Judson Minor sold a one-acre parcel to his uncle Wait Minor (1780-1863) including the house where Wait was living. Wait Minor, a farmer, had married Susanna Judson in 1801. The house must have been either remodeled or rebuilt to its Greek Revival appearance during the second quarter of the 19th century. Wait transferred ownership to his eldest son Israel Minor (then resident in New York City) in 1860 and reserved life use of half of the house for himself, his wife, and two other adult offspring. After Wait’s death, the property was sold in 1864 to Oliver B. Cowles, who is shown (spelled “Coles”) as the owner on the Beers map of 1874. In the late years of the century until 1915 it was owned by Calvin Lines of Bridgeport.

**Architectural significance:**

This complex is significant as a well-preserved example of a prosperous mid-19th-century farmstead on the outskirts of the village of Woodbury. The river bottom land provided fertile soil while the siting of the house and barns on a knoll provided safety from flooding. Although little evidence remains of the agricultural activities that were its original purpose, this English barn has fine integrity of materials and finishes. Its timber frame is in unusually good condition with little evidence of deformation and only minor deterioration of the wood members. The surrounding landscape remains open fields extending to the river, with hay harvesting activity still perpetuating some active agriculture and providing a sense of the historical landscape. The farmhouse itself combines an elegance of detail with an additive quality in its northward extensions that is characteristic of the working farms of the 19th century. The carriage house with its Italianate style two-over-two window sash and the bead-board interior that is characteristic of many carriage houses of the late 19th century, may have been added during the Lines ownership.

**Sources (continuation):**

Photographs and field notes by Charlotte Hitchcock 2/07/2012.
Interview with Thomas Paron, homeowner, 2/07/2012.

**Map resources:**

Beers, F. W., Map of Litchfield County, 1874.
Parcel ID: Map 036/Lot 037
Aerial views from:
accessed 3/04/2012.

**UTM coordinates:** [http://itouchmap.com/latlong.html](http://itouchmap.com/latlong.html)

**Print and internet resources:**

Federal Census, 1860.

4. Southeast view of Farmhouse, camera facing northwest; carriage house at left.

5. Southwest view of Farmhouse, camera facing northeast.
6. South view of Barn and Shed, camera facing north.

7. Southeast view of Barn and Shed, camera facing northwest.
8. Northwest view of Barn and Shed, camera facing southeast.

9. North view of Barn with terrace and trellis, shed, north (rear) of Farmhouse, Carriage house at right; camera facing south.
10. Southwest view of Shed, camera facing northeast.

11. Southwest view of Carriage house/garage, camera facing northeast.


15. Barn interior view – dropped end girt at west wall, angle brace for center post – showing hand hewn tie girt and straight saw marks on the angle brace, camera facing southwest.

16. Barn interior view of roof framing, camera facing northwest. Note sawn common rafters with no ridgeboard, and later reinforcing with collar ties.
17. Barn interior view detail of Figure 13 showing wall girt at north wall, joint with interior post. Note cut nail at upper corner of the girt.

18. Interior view of center post and girt at east wall of Barn, showing square rule framing, camera facing east.
19. Interior view of Shed, re-used as home office, camera facing southwest.

20. Interior of Shed/home office, camera facing north.