

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED MAY 24 1978  
DATE ENTERED NOV 20 1978

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC  
Parker House  
AND/OR COMMON  
Same

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER  
680 Middlesex Turnpike  
CITY, TOWN  
Old Saybrook  
STATE  
Connecticut  
VICINITY OF  
Second - Christopher J. Dodd  
COUNTY  
Middlesex  
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT  
CODE  
A 1

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
			<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
			<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME  
Kimball S. Nickerson, Nickerson Properties  
STREET & NUMBER  
680 Middlesex Turnpike  
CITY, TOWN  
Old Saybrook  
STATE  
VICINITY OF  
CT 06475

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Town Hall  
STREET & NUMBER  
302 Main Street  
CITY, TOWN  
Old Saybrook  
STATE  
CT 06475

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE  
Works Progress Administration Census of Old Buildings  
DATE  
1930s  
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS  
Connecticut State Library  
CITY, TOWN  
Capitol Avenue, Hartford  
STATE  
CT 06106  
 FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

(cont.)

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Parker House with its distinctive gambrel roof is situated about half way between the center of Old Saybrook and the center of Essex, Connecticut, on the Middlesex Turnpike, an ancient toll road. The surrounding land is semi-rural in character, on the way to becoming suburbanized. The one and one-half story house, 30 x 30 feet square, faces south on a corner lot. There are two trees on the site but little else in the way of planting.

The principal building on this corner site is a modern red, one story structure in a commercial "colonial revival" style, which houses offices and a cabinet shop. The red building is behind and to the right (northeast) of the Parker House, separated by about 30 feet. Both are on the same parcel according to the town map. For the purpose of this nomination arbitrary lines 20 feet to the east and north of the house are established which together with the street lines to the west and south are considered the boundaries of the site.

Despite its address of 680 Middlesex Turnpike, the house faces the cross road, which is called Spring Brook Road Extension, and the ridge line of the house is parallel to this street. The roof from the ridge line forward is gambrel, while from the ridge line back it is a shed roof over the rear half of the house and the lean-to. The roof is covered with wood shingles.

In the front the lower section of the gambrel roof is steeply pitched, and flared at the eaves. At the west end the verge board has a groove along its lower edge. Across the front the roof has an overhang 13 inches, but no traces of drops can be found.

The exterior siding of the house is clapboards with four inches exposed to the weather, unpainted, and now a weathered grey in color. On the front, underneath the eaves on either side of the front door (which is not original), is a window with six-over-six sash. At the upper left of the door is a tiny two-pane window.

On the west facade, toward the front, is a second door. At the second floor level under the ridge line is a four-over-six window, and to the rear is a small two-over-two window. At first floor level are two six-over-six windows.

The rear (north) facade has a back door, a six-over-six window, and a modern picture window with small panes. The east facade is the plainest side of the house with three six-over-six sash.

The square chimney rises from the roof off center to the east and just behind the ridge line. Above the roof it is brick, with a cap of molded brick, while on the interior of the house the chimney is stone and is the chief feature of the interior arrangement.

The chimney's great square base in the cellar is ten and one-half feet square. The cellar itself is full size, running under the lean-to as well as the front section, indicating that the entire house was built at one time. Some of the first floor joists are undressed timbers.

In the south facade the front door is in front of the chimney but off center to the east, thereby indicating the arrangement of the interior floor plan. The west room is larger than the east room by a noticeable margin. The corner posts of the front section are cased.

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INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

Parker House  
Old Saybrook, CT

CONTINUATION SHEET Surveys

ITEM NUMBER 6

PAGE 1

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State Register of Historic Places  
1967 State  
Connecticut Historical Commission  
59 South Prospect St.  
Hartford, CT 06106

Connecticut Society of Colonial Dames in America Old  
Houses of Connecticut  
1933 State  
Connecticut State Library  
Capitol Avenue  
Hartford, CT 06106

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**CONTINUATION SHEET** Description ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 1

The chimney posts are not cased, and the rear corner posts in the lean-to are flared. The ceilings are low. The bottom edges of the ceiling joists are only an inch more than six feet from the floor. There are no summer beams, perhaps because the house is so small.

In the ceiling of the west room on the first floor are four hewn joists running from front to back between the end girt and the chimney girt. At the top of the joists the upstairs floorboards are visible. There is no plaster ceiling. The walls of this room on three sides are wide vertical boards. Between these interior boards and the exterior clapboards the space is filled with corn husks and hay. The fourth side of the room is occupied by the fireplace and two simple, paneled doors, one leading down to the cellar and the other to the front passageway. The fireplace is 47 inches high and 64 inches wide with a much charred wooden lintel. The fireplace is lined with stone and has a stone hearth. To the left, at lintel level, is an oven. Indication from earlier surveys is that at one time there was paneling over the fireplace but this area is now plastered.

In the smaller, east room is a small brick fireplace with a brick arch, built into the stone chimney. This room has plastered walls and ceiling.

Between the two rooms, in front of the chimney, the stairway rises from right to left from the front passageway. The front of the stairway has been closed in and covered with plaster; there is no railing. The chimney is not covered; the stairs simply run up along the exposed stone.

Upstairs the two rooms and hallway have the same floor plan as downstairs. The larger, west room has a brick fireplace and plastered walls. There is no structural ceiling, just 20th century wall board between the joists. The hallway has no ceiling at all, being open to the chimney and the roof framing. The east room has no fireplace, but the walls and ceiling are plastered. The gambrel roof gives these rooms considerably more headroom than would the conventional gable roof, which is an important consideration in so small a house. The upstairs is not now in use.

The lean-to is now a modern kitchen and dining area.

Having at one time in recent years served as a real estate office, the house is now once again used as a residence, leased by the owner to the present occupant.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1679

BUILDER/ARCHITECT William Parker

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The importance of the Parker House is two fold. First, it is thought on good authority to have been built in 1679, making it one of the oldest houses in the state. Second, its gambrel roof, unaltered for 300 years, is one of the very few of its type which have come down from the 17th century.

The authority for the 1679 date is Elmer D. Keith.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Keith supervised the Works Progress Administration Census of Old Buildings in Connecticut, edited the series of reports on old houses prepared by the Connecticut Society of the Colonial Dames in America, was a founder of the Antiquarian and Landmarks Society, Inc., of Connecticut and of the Connecticut League of Historical Societies, was a consultant to Old Sturbridge Village and Mystic Seaport, and wrote several monographs in the field.

Other early gambrel roof houses are known in Connecticut. One of them is the Glebe House in Woodbury. Another is the Webb House in Wethersfield. But both of these are larger and more elaborate structures dating from the mid-18th century.

William Parker, who built the house, is thought to have come to Connecticut by way of the West Indies. He was one of the original proprietors of Hartford with Rev. Thomas Hooker in 1636. Within several years he moved to the mouth of the Connecticut River to the area then called Saybrook Colony, where he later built this house (perhaps for his son, Joseph) before his death in 1686. Across the street from the house he operated a shop in which he made barrels for packing the shad caught each spring in the river.

After William Parker's death the house descended from generation to generation in his family until the 1960's. This continuous family ownership probably was helpful in preventing changes and alterations damaging to the house's historic character. Very little has changed structurally over the years and the original interior arrangement continues as well, with some modifications of trim and fireplaces. The Parker House is an unusually early example of a small, gambrel roof house, intact, and unique in this area.

1. Anna D. Sheffield, comp., "William Parker House," in Old Houses of Connecticut series by the Connecticut Society of Colonial Dames in America, March 15, 1933, no pagination.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one acre

UTM REFERENCES

A	13	719	790	45	77	690	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C							D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated property is bounded on the north by a line 20 feet from and parallel to the house, on the east by a line 20 feet from and parallel to the house, on the south by Spring Brook Road Extension, and on the west by the Middlesex Turnpike, this plot being the south-west corner section of lot 63-1-1 on the town map which is an irregular quadrilateral of 0.52 acre measuring 171 feet on Springbook Road Extension and 154 feet on the Middlesex Turnpike.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

David F. Ransom, Consultant

ORGANIZATION

Connecticut Historical Commission

DATE

22 November 1977

STREET & NUMBER

59 South Prospect Street

TELEPHONE

203 566-3005

CITY OR TOWN

Hartford

STATE

Connecticut 06106

## 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

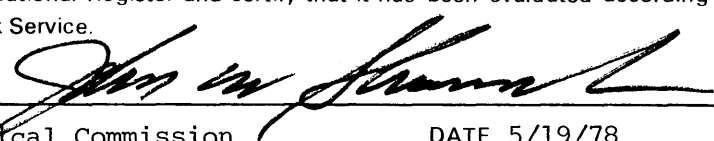
NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

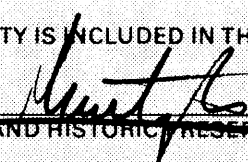


TITLE Director, Connecticut Historical Commission

DATE 5/19/78

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER



DATE

11/29/78

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST: William Bolmarich

DATE Nov 27, 1978

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER