

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED JAN 27 1982
FEB 25 1982
DATE ENTERED

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

Ezekiel Phelps House

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

38 Holcomb Street

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

East Granby

VICINITY OF

6th

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Connecticut

CODE

09

COUNTY

Hartford

CODE

003

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

OWNERSHIP

STATUS

PRESENT USE

DISTRICT

PUBLIC

OCCUPIED

AGRICULTURE

MUSEUM

BUILDING(S)

PRIVATE

UNOCCUPIED

COMMERCIAL

PARK

STRUCTURE

BOTH

WORK IN PROGRESS

EDUCATIONAL

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

SITE

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

ACCESSIBLE

ENTERTAINMENT

RELIGIOUS

OBJECT

IN PROCESS

YES: RESTRICTED

GOVERNMENT

SCIENTIFIC

BEING CONSIDERED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

INDUSTRIAL

TRANSPORTATION

NO

MILITARY

OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

G. Winthrop & Ethel H. Wilson

STREET & NUMBER

38 Holcomb Street

CITY, TOWN

East Granby

VICINITY OF

STATE

CT

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

East Granby Town Clerk

STREET & NUMBER

Town Hall - Center Street.

CITY, TOWN

East Granby

STATE

Connecticut

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

State Register of Historic Places

DATE

1975

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Connecticut Historical Commission

CITY, TOWN

Hartford

STATE

Connecticut

7 DESCRIPTION

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Ezekiel Phelps House had undergone many changes since it was raised around 1744, but today, through careful restoration and preservation, much of its early appearance has come to light again. The house is a 2½ story, center chimney dwelling. It sits quite far back from the road on a terraced knoll, and the setting is an isolated one: there are 50 acres of meadow, marsh and woods surrounding the house. Three old barns share the lot, and these along with 5 acres of adjacent surrounding land were included in the nominated property. Except for tall shade trees in front, the land immediately adjacent to the house is open and kept closely mowed.

The main part of the house has a five-bay main facade with a double door central entrance. The windows are paired rather than evenly spaced, and are fitted with reproduction twelve-over-twelve sash. The doorframe is Federal-period and has fluted pilasters and an elaborate cornice. Like the panelled doors, which have three round-arched lights built into them, the entranceway was taken from a Litchfield house. The proportions of the doorway are essentially correct, as the original interior framing for the doors is visible. The roof dates from about 1900: it is covered with rectangular slates and extends outward over the gables. The original cornice treatment was undoubtedly altered, as presently the rafters are simply boxed in. Above the roof, the stack has been rebuilt in brick to its proper proportions. The fieldstone underpinning is faced above grade with red sandstone blocks. The exterior of the house, including two small 19th-century wings, one on the south side and another to the west or rear, is clapboarded and treated with a dark brown stain.

The house-frame is very substantial but deviates from usual Connecticut practice in several respects. The posts and girts are of ample proportion and project considerably into the rooms, but though there are summer beams visible in each of the upper rooms, there are none beneath the first and second floors. The joists are visible in the south front and rear room or kitchen; they are planed with bevelled edges and run parallel to the front of the house. The roof is framed with four pairs of principal rafters located above the end and chimney posts. These are joined by collarbeams with half-dovetail joints. The small rafters forming the roof are carried on large purlins which run between the larger rafters.

The interior has the usual plan but the kitchen has been made larger by incorporating one of the small rear rooms. Throughout the house are wide-board floors, old hardware including strap hinges, and plain and beaded casings around the major framing members. The walls of the kitchen are finished with horizontal and vertical wainscots of wide beaded boards which retain their original deep red stain. The fireplace is large, 6½' wide, with brick sides and stone back wall and lintel, and an oven set into the back wall. The north front room has a raised-panel fireplace wall, and a dado around the room. Above the mantelshelf is a single panel measuring 4 x 2½', held in place by a bolection molding and projecting beyond the other woodwork. Bed moldings beneath the girts form a modest room cornice. The room opposite was formerly plastered with an early Federal mantel. Beneath this material was discovered horizontal and vertical wainscotting, which has now been uncovered. The hall between the two rooms contains an early dog-leg stairway removed from another Connecticut house. The chambers above are plain, but the north chamber has a small fireplace with some wainscotting around it.

FHR-8-300A
(11/78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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East Granby, CT

CONTINUATION SHEET

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Immediately behind the house is a long one-story outbuilding, now used as a workshop, which served as a cart shed, milk room, and ice house. To the north is a very large two-story barn built into the side of a hill. There are doors at each gable end, with those on the north side giving direct entrance to the barn's second level. At right angles is a smaller and later one-story barn. Although not as old as the house, the outbuildings date back at least into the 19th century.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

The house was built about 1744 for Ezekiel Phelps (1723-1781) by his father, Joseph. The elder Phelps was a farmer and large landowner, one of the first settlers in this area of Simsbury (later East Granby) known as Turkey Hills. Ezekiel Phelps held a number of minor town offices, received a commission as a lieutenant in the Simsbury militia, and served on the local Committee of Correspondence just prior to the Revolution. His house, while in no way elegant, reflects the better-than-average social standing of the Phelps family: such details as the panelled dado or the cornice moldings in the parlor are refinements often absent from colonial homes.

6 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
__PREHISTORIC	__ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	__COMMUNITY PLANNING	__LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	__RELIGION
__1400-1499	__ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	__CONSERVATION	__LAW	__SCIENCE
__1500-1599	__AGRICULTURE	__ECONOMICS	__LITERATURE	__SCULPTURE
__1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	__EDUCATION	__MILITARY	__SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	__ART	__ENGINEERING	__MUSIC	__THEATER
__1800-1899	__COMMERCE	__EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	__PHILOSOPHY	__TRANSPORTATION
__1900-	__COMMUNICATIONS	__INDUSTRY	__POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	__OTHER (SPECIFY)
		__INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1744 - built

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Ezekiel Phelps House is significant for everyone interested in 18th-century Connecticut houses: its many well-preserved features, some rather uncommon, provide an opportunity to compare this house with other examples, thereby expanding one's appreciation of the diversity of pre-Revolutionary building practices (Criterion C). Several years ago the house underwent considerable restoration. With the removal of a later porch, the rebuilding of the stack to its proper proportions, and the installation of appropriate windows, the exterior of the house has had returned much of its early appearance.

It is in the interior, however, that the greater amount of significant material has been preserved. The wideboard floors, old hardware, beam casings, and north room panelling are typical features which together form a representative collection of 18th-century interior conventions. Several features are much less common, however. The original red stain found on the kitchen wainscoting is unusual in that 18th-century woodwork nearly invariably has been painted over at least once. Only lath marks and a few bare spots (now retouched) show the effects of later remodelling of this room. Similarly, another common feature rarely found undisturbed today is the south front room wainscot. The use of such wide beaded or featheredged boards was the usual way of finishing interior walls before plastering and panelling became common, after which its use was confined to the back rooms or upstairs chambers. The decorative planing of the joists is also part of this early treatment. It is quite rare to find exposed joists and completely wainscotted walls in a front room. The date of the house, 1744, seems to be just at the point of transition between the two types of interiors. The panelling in the north room is likely later than the house itself, but it is very representative and offers an interesting contrast to the wainscotted room opposite. The projecting panel above the fireplace is an uncommon feature which in some other houses has been found to have a landscape painted on it.

The framing of the house offers no real surprises, but it does diverge from the norm in several respects. The use of the four major rafter system rather than the usual common rafters shows that 18th-century builders knew more than one way to frame a roof. The lack of summer beams in any but the attic floor in a house this early is also of interest, especially since the house does not seem very advanced in any other respect. The usual understanding is that the disappearance of the summer (c. 1780) is associated with lighter overall framing, more formal interiors, and plaster ceilings, but here is a 1744 house with no summers, but which has very stout corner posts and girts, and carved joists. The value of the Ezekiel Phelps House, then, is that it preserves several features which are unusual, either because, like the framing or the projecting panel, they are variants from the norm, or because, like the planed and beveled joists, the wainscotted front room, or the original stain on the kitchen woodwork, they are rarely found intact today.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Hooker, Elaine. "Restoring Colonial Requires Research," Hartford Courant, December 3, 1972, p. 1-D.

Phelps, Oliver S. and Andrew T. Seavin. The Phelps Family. Pittsfield, Mass: Eagle Publishing Co., 1899.

"Restoring 235 Years of History," Newgate Script (East Granby), V, No. 7, March, 1979, 11-12.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 5



QUADRANGLE NAME Windsor Locks

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24 000

UTM REFERENCES

A 18 686820 4645740

B

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C

D

E

F

G

H

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated property is part of Lot 21, as shown on East Granby Assessor's Map 11, and includes all of the buildings and immediately adjacent land. It extends for 700' of frontage and 325' of depth on the west side of the road, beginning from

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
		the southeast corner of the lot.	
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Bruce Clouette, Consultant

ORGANIZATION

Connecticut Historical Commission

DATE

August 13, 1979

STREET & NUMBER

59 South Prospect Street

TELEPHONE

(203) 566-3005

CITY OR TOWN

Hartford

STATE

CT

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE X

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 January 18, 1982

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

Entered in the
National Register

DATE 2/25/82

Delores Byers
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST:
CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

DATE