

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____


SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 910001846 Date Listed: 12/27/91

Pistol Factory Building New Haven CT
Property Name County State

N/A
Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.


Signature of the Keeper

12/27/91
Date of Action

=====
Amended Items in Nomination:

3. Classification: Category

Building(s) is the most appropriate category for this property.

This information was discussed with John Herzan, National Register Coordinator, CTSHPO, by telephone.

DISTRIBUTION:

National Register property file
Nominating Authority (without attachment)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Pistol Factory Dwelling
other names/site number Whitney, Eli II, House

2. Location

street & number 1322 Whitney Avenue NA not for publication
city, town Hamden NA vicinity
state Connecticut code CT county New Haven code 009 zip code 06517

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	_____ structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	_____	_____ objects
		<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official *[Signature]* Date 11/7/91
State or Federal agency and bureau Director, Connecticut Historical Commission

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official _____ Date _____
State or Federal agency and bureau _____

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:) _____

[Signature] 12-27-91
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/multiple dwelling

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

MID-19TH CENTURY/Greek Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation brick

walls weatherboard

roof asphalt

other _____

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Pistol Factory Dwelling is a Greek Revival-style gable-roofed building, with a small twentieth-century one-story ell at the rear on the southwest corner (Photograph #s 1, 2, 3, 4, 5). The house was moved about 1935 from its original location approximately 150 feet to the south onto a brick-over-rubblestone foundation. At that time a large flat-roofed entrance portico was removed, but the same ridge-to-street orientation of the house and its siting above Whitney Avenue were maintained.¹ A rear partially enclosed porch across the northern two-thirds of the rear elevation also was discarded in the move.

The asymmetry of the five-bay facade is just one of the features which indicates that the house was altered in the nineteenth century. The irregular spacing of the facade fenestration and the differing placement of the two chimney stacks suggest that the house was built in two stages.² It was built about 1845 as a three-bay side-hall Greek Revival-style house with a kitchen wing, probably one-story, on the left side (Exhibit A). The present massing was achieved by widening the wing and raising it a full two stories by about 1860.

The facade is highlighted by a modified Greek Revival doorway (Photograph #6). It has a partial surround, with fluted boards, corner blocks, and flanking pilasters but part of the molded entablature is missing, presumably removed when the fanlight with key block was installed about 1940. The sidelights on either side of the old, possibly original, panelled door have wide and narrow panes, a common pattern for this style in Hamden, which is repeated in the large rectangular windows in the gable peaks. Instead of a full end pediment, the heavy cornice molding ends with a short return. There is a wide frieze board below the boxed cornice of the front and rear elevations. The walls are clapboarded with a watertable. There are two brick end chimneys; the one on the north end of the ridge is closer to the outside wall. Most of the windows have six-over-six sash except for a smaller rear window which has twelve-over-twelve. They are framed with plain board surrounds and have slightly projecting caps.

The simply detailed interior has retained most of its finishes: plastered walls and plain trim. The original hardware remains throughout.³ The only change in the floorplan is the possible reversal of the staircase direction. It now rises from the rear of the hall instead of the front, apparently to accommodate modern

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bathrooms on both the first and second floors. Two rooms on the north side, a parlor and a smaller room behind it, are connected by a large open doorway which is framed with plain trim boards and cornerblocks. The fireplace has a plain surround with a high entablature, detailed by a single horizontal molding (Photograph #7). The chimney breast projects into the room and is flanked by bookcases. The dining room on the south side has a similar smaller fireplace which is blocked in. On the second floor there are four bedrooms and a modern bathroom, opening off a large center hall. The parlor chamber is quite plain and typical of the rooms on the second floor (Photograph #8). There are two attic rooms which have plastered walls and sloping ceilings. Both brick chimney stacks are exposed; the one on the north end is set against the window in that wall (Photograph #9). The south chimney is stuccoed and located about four feet into the room.

1. The portico is in place in a photograph taken prior to the move, which is in the possession of the Hamden Historical Society. It was centered on the facade, rather than the doorway, accentuating the asymmetry.

2. There is another indicator of the building's two-stage history in the slight change in level of the window sills of the facade at the second story. The limited time frame for the alteration is consistent with the similarity of materials and tool marks throughout the house, including the windows, which have the same muntin profile on all the six-over-six sash. Also as expected the boards and framing lumber throughout reflect the standardization of lumber sizes in the c. 1840-1860 period as well as the full mechanization of sawmills. The moving of the building eliminated evidence of an addition to the foundation. See also note #3 below.

3. The report of the hardware analysis is in the house file of the Hamden Historical Society's archives. There was no attempt in the report to compare hardware in different parts of the house. Provenance of the various locks and hinges does little more than confirm a terminus ante quem for the date of construction of 1843 and that all of the hardware examined is consistent with the period of the house.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

INDUSTRY

Period of Significance

c. 1845 - c. 1860

c. 1845 - c. 1860

Significant Dates

c. 1845

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

Eli Whitney II (a.k.a. Eli Whitney, Jr.)

Architect/Builder

Unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Pistol Factory Dwelling is a well-preserved vernacular Greek Revival-style boarding house and a relatively rare example of its type in Hamden. It derives further significance from its association with the Eli Whitney II and its use as a dwelling for his skilled employees. It is the last remaining building associated with arms production at the upper Mill River dam in Whitneyville, a lesser known nineteenth-century Whitney armory site which was limited to the manufacture of handguns.

Architectural Significance

On its elevated site, the Pistol Factory Dwelling appears much as it did in the nineteenth century. Its basic architectural and historical integrity was not compromised by moving the building in the twentieth century. An obvious effort was made to maintain the historic appearance of its setting and the building's relative orientation to its site and to the highway.

The combination of the formality of the classical elements with the asymmetrical design created by the addition to the building has produced a very unusual example of mid-nineteenth-century domestic architecture. Stylistic detail is executed very simply, as might be expected in a building of this type, but it is used correctly to embellish what is otherwise a very plain structure. Most of the detail is limited to the exterior and is based on locally characteristic Greek Revival-style elements, such as the rectangular multi-paned windows in the pediments. The modification of the doorway does detract from the boldness of its Greek Revival style, but it is a reversible alteration. The typical sidelights, pilasters, and probable original door remain in place. Except for modern amenities, the interior is mostly intact. Its simplicity reflects its historic function as a boarding house, one of few surviving examples of this type in the community and the only example with this level of preservation.

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

Yale University, New Haven, CT
Hamden Historical Society, Hamden, CT

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property less than one acre

UTM References

A

1	8
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6	7	4	5	0	0
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4	5	7	9	4	2	0
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Zone Easting Northing

C

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B

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Zone Easting Northing

D

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property is described in the Hamden Land Records, Vol. 1085, page 40, located in the Town Clerk's Office in the Hamden Town Hall.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The nominated site includes the dwelling and its lot, all the remaining property historically associated with the Whitney Pistol Works.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By Reviewed by John Herzan, National Register Coordinator

name/title Jan Cunningham, National Register Consultant

organization Cunningham Associates Ltd. date 4/2/91

street & number 37 Orange Road telephone (203) 347 4072

city or town Middletown, state CT zip code 06457

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Section number 8 Page 2Historical Significance

Eli Whitney II (1820-) was the son of Eli Whitney (1765-1825), the famous inventor and arms manufacturer.¹ Eli II graduated from Princeton in 1841 and legally assumed control of his father's estate the following year. His inheritance included two mill sites with factory buildings on the Mill River and an extensive amount of developed and undeveloped land in the Whitneyville section of Hamden. The lower site on the Mill River at the foot of East Rock was the original 1798 Whitney Armory and mill village developed by his father. The upper site contained buildings on both sides of the river, including a paper mill, which Eli II later converted to a pistol factory. He purchased several lots to consolidate his control of the latter site on the west side of Whitney Avenue, one of which later contained this house.

Eli Whitney II proved to be even more of a capitalist entrepreneur than his father. Although the armory had suffered under the stewardship of estate trustees, by 1888 when he retired and sold out to Winchester Repeating Arms Company, Eli II had dramatically expanded the business through the manufacture of handguns and became noted for his successes in the fields of metallurgy and hydropower.

The manufacture of handguns was a departure for the Whitney Armory, which under Eli Whitney, had been noted for its mass production of muskets and later rifles.² Rifles continued to be made at the original armory at the lower dam but the first contracts for revolvers and pistols were completed at the pistol factory in the converted paper mill. Eli II provided housing to attract the necessary skilled machinists and mechanics to retool for this new product. In 1850 this house was one in a series of four boarding houses owned by Whitney but the only one at the pistol works site. There the boarders listed in the federal census of that year included James Horgill, a mechanic, and his wife and daughter, two unmarried mechanics, George and Harvey Moulton, and Esther Hartley, an 18-year-old Irish girl.

It soon became evident that the armories at both sites needed to be consolidated at the one site that had the greatest waterpower potential.³ To this end Whitney made plans for the New Haven Water Power Company, which would have a high dam and reservoir in Whitneyville at the lower site and provide the water supply for the City of New Haven. Whitney, president of the company in 1849, planned to sell his water rights to the city and remain a major stockholder. Not coincidentally, the new dam would also provide more power for his armory there. Assured of the backing of the City of New Haven, by 1854 Whitney had initiated his master plan by laying the foundation for the water company dam, but was unable to complete it at that time due to lack of capital. Having invested heavily in the power company, he was deeply in debt when New Haven reneged on its contract. Whitney even contemplated selling some of his residential property, including his home Ivy Nook.⁴

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Whitney did sell this boarding house, then called the "Pistol Factory Dwelling," to one of the former boarders, Harvey Moulton, a gunsmith who had become one of his chief machinists and model makers (HLR 25:188). Moulton had married Esther Hartley and they had two children by 1860. Thomas Hartley, presumably Esther's younger brother, and his wife Eeron (sic), both from Ireland, also lived in the house. It is possible that Moulton added on to the house to provide more space for the two families.

The dam was completed in 1861, flooding out the upper pistol works site and requiring the relocation of Whitney Avenue. In 1860 Moulton received payment from Whitney for land in front of the house taken for the highway.⁵ It bordered the new reservoir, known as Lake Whitney, which began supplying water to the City of New Haven in 1862.

The remaining property stayed in the Moulton family until 1929. It was inherited by Carrie Moulton from her father in 1898. At her death it passed to her daughter Mildred, who sold off several lots carved out of the north and west side of the property. The large corner lot with this building was sold and resold several times in 1929 before being purchased that year by Shell Eastern Petroleum, which built a gas station at the southern corner (HLR 150:483). A 50' x 100' parcel to the north, which had been part of the original boarding house property, had been purchased by Olive Head in 1934. Head moved this house onto her lot sometime between 1934 and 1944, when the Head lot was sold with buildings (HLR 234:214).

1. Technically Eli Whitney II was Eli, Jr. The current designation has come into use to avoid confusion since both his father and one of his sons were juniors.

2. The full story of the small arms business and Eli II's contribution is covered in detail in Karyl Lee Kibler Hall and Caroline Cooper, Windows on The Works (Eli Whitney Museum: n.d.). His initial ventures are of interest since they took place at the pistol works and capitalized on the growing popularity of handguns on the frontier. His first involvement in their manufacture was the assumption of Samuel Colt's contract to manufacture 1000 pistols in 1847 for the Texas Rangers. Production, including setting up machinery and retooling, took only seven months. Although Colt eventually established his Hartford Armory and reclaimed the machinery he had loaned for the completion of the Texas Ranger contract, Whitney soon improved the original design and manufactured 33,000 guns on his own account for the United States Navy.

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3. Frequent references were made to combining the two armories in his record book. See Yale University Library, Eli Whitney, Jr., Papers, MS, cited in "Chronology" in house file, Hamden Historical Society.

4. Ibid., June 1854.

5. Ibid., October 23, 1860.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

Becker, Martha May and Sasche, Nancy Davis. Hamden: Our Architectural Heritage. Hamden, Connecticut: Whitney Press, 1986 (for the Hamden Historical Society).

Blake, William P. History of the Town of Hamden, Connecticut with an Account of the Centennial Celebration June 15th 1886. New Haven: Price, Lee & Co., 1888.

Dickerman, J. H. "Hamden." Connecticut Quarterly Vol IV. (January to December, 1898): 377-390.

Hall, Karyl Lee Kibler and Cooper, Carolyn. Windows on the Works: Industry on the Eli Whitney Site 1798-1979. Hamden, Connecticut: Eli Whitney Museum, n.d.

Hamden Historical Society, Eli Whitney II Boarding House File.

Hartley, Rachel M. The History of Hamden, Connecticut, 1786-1936. Hamden, 1943.

Pierce, Frederick Clifton. Whitney: The Descendants of John Whitney who came from London, England, to Watertown, Massachusetts in 1635. Chicago: Frederick Clifton Pierce, 1895.

Maps

Beers, F. W. Atlas of New Haven County, Connecticut. New York: Beers, Soule, & Ellis, 1868.

Map of the New Haven Water Supply. New York: Endicott & Co., 1849.

Whiteford, R., surveyor. Map of the County of New Haven Conn. New Haven: A. Budington and R. Whiteford, 1852.

5

4

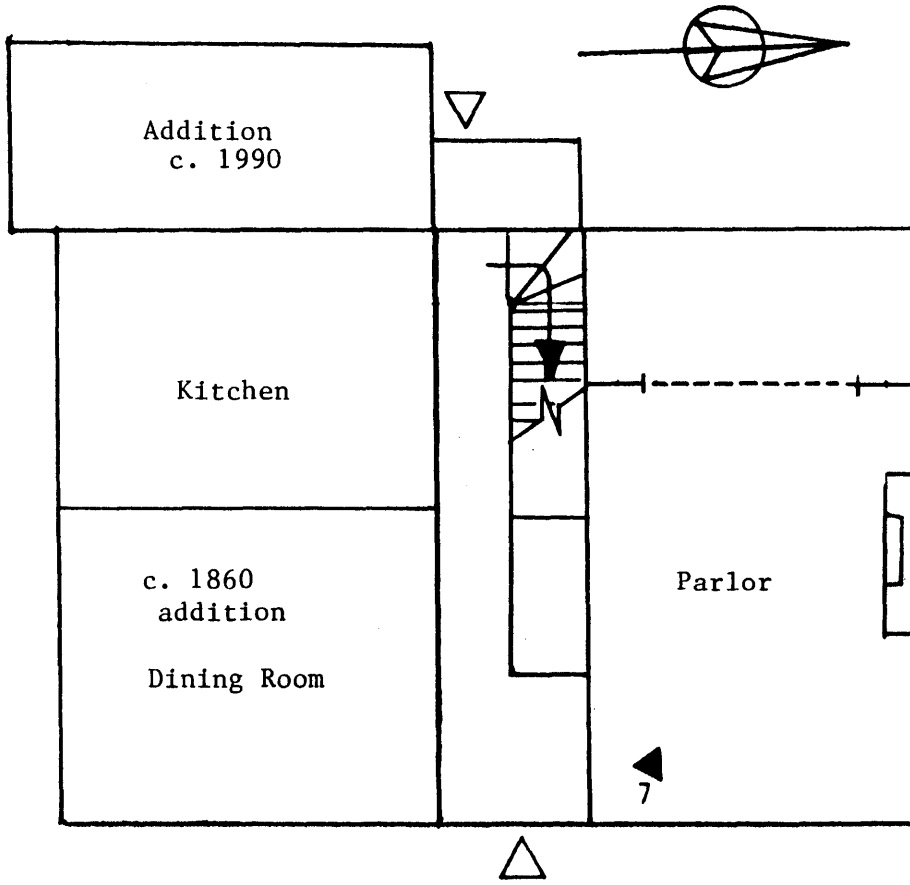


Exhibit A

Eli Whitney II Boarding House
Hamden, Connecticut

Schematic diagram first floor
Photograph views numbered

Cunningham Associates 3/91

2

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1

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List of Photographs

Property: Eli Whitney II House, Hamden, Connecticut, a.k.a. Pistol Factory Dwelling

Photographer: Cunningham Associates Ltd.

Date: 3/91

Negatives on File: Connecticut Historical Commission

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. House and Site
Facing: W | 2. Facade
Facing: NW |
| 3. Facade and north elevation
Facing: S | 4. North and rear elevations
Facing: SE |
| 5. Rear and south elevations
Facing: NE | 6. Facade doorway
Facing: W |
| 7. Parlor
Facing: NW | 8. Parlor chamber (2nd floor)
Facing: N |
| 9. North room in attic
Facing: N | |