

STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
 CONNECTICUT HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
 59 SOUTH PROSPECT STREET, HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106  
 (203) 566-3005

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Town No.: \_\_\_\_\_ Site No. 61

UTM : | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

QUAD: \_\_\_\_\_

DISTRICT  S  NR IF NR SPECIFY  Actual  Potential

IDENTIFICATION	1. BUILDING NAME (Common) <i>(Historic)</i>		The Samuel Fenn Parsons House		Parsons, Samuel Fenn, House		
	2. TOWN CITY		VILLAGE		COUNTY		
	Durham				Middlesex		
	3. STREET AND NUMBER (and or location)						
	120 Main Street						
	4. OWNER(S)						
	Adams, Allen E. <input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private						
	5. USE (Present)		<i>(Historic)</i>				
	Residence		Residence and shoeshop				
	6. ACCESSIBILITY TO PUBLIC:		EXTERIOR VISIBLE FROM PUBLIC ROAD		INTERIOR ACCESSIBLE		IF YES, EXPLAIN
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		with permission			
7. STYLE OF BUILDING					DATE OF CONSTRUCTION		
Colonial					between 1708 and 1714		
8. MATERIAL(S) (Indicate use or location when appropriate)							
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Clapboard <input type="checkbox"/> Asbestos Siding <input type="checkbox"/> Brick <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____							
<input type="checkbox"/> Wood Shingle <input type="checkbox"/> Asphalt Siding <input type="checkbox"/> Fieldstone							
<input type="checkbox"/> Board & Batten <input type="checkbox"/> Stucco <input type="checkbox"/> Cobblestone							
<input type="checkbox"/> Aluminum Siding <input type="checkbox"/> Concrete Type: _____ <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cut stone Type: sandstone foundation							
9. STRUCTURAL SYSTEM							
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wood frame <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Post and beam <input type="checkbox"/> balloon <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____							
<input type="checkbox"/> Load bearing masonry <input type="checkbox"/> Structural iron or steel							
10. ROOF (Type)							
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gable <input type="checkbox"/> Flat <input type="checkbox"/> Mansard <input type="checkbox"/> Monitor <input type="checkbox"/> sawtooth							
<input type="checkbox"/> Gambrel <input type="checkbox"/> Shed <input type="checkbox"/> Hip <input type="checkbox"/> Round <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____							
<i>(Material)</i>							
<input type="checkbox"/> Wood Shingle <input type="checkbox"/> Roll Asphalt <input type="checkbox"/> Tin <input type="checkbox"/> Slate							
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Asphalt shingle <input type="checkbox"/> Built up <input type="checkbox"/> Tile <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____							
11. NUMBER OF STORIES		APPROXIMATE DIMENSIONS					
2½		main block 36' x 30' ; north add. 26' x 18' ; east add. 16' x 10'					
12. CONDITION (Structural)				<i>(Exterior)</i>			
<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated				<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated			
13. INTEGRITY (Location)		WHEN ?		<i>(Alterations)</i>		IF YES, EXPLAIN	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On original site <input type="checkbox"/> Moved				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		Additions made to north and east sides	
14. RELATED OUTBUILDINGS OR LANDSCAPE FEATURES							
<input type="checkbox"/> Barn <input type="checkbox"/> Shed <input type="checkbox"/> Garage <input type="checkbox"/> Other landscape features or buildings (Specify) _____							
<input type="checkbox"/> Carriage house <input type="checkbox"/> Shop <input type="checkbox"/> Garden							
15. SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT							
<input type="checkbox"/> Open land <input type="checkbox"/> Wood-land <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Residential <input type="checkbox"/> Scattered buildings visible from site							
<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Rural <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> High building density							
16. INTERRELATIONSHIP OF BUILDING AND SURROUNDINGS							
This house stands at the front of a deep 4 acre cleared lot on Durham's Main Street. It is immediately adjacent to the Merriam Manufacturing Company's complex of factory buildings.							

17 OTHER NOTABLE FEATURES OF BUILDING OR SITE (interior and/or exterior)

DESCR: Overhangs on first and second stories  
Mortared foundation of pecked sandstone

18 ARCHITECT \_\_\_\_\_ BUILDER \_\_\_\_\_

19 HISTORICAL OR ARCHITECTURAL IMPORTANCE

SIGNIFICANCE The Samuel Fenn Parsons House is a 2½ story, three bay, colonial structure with overhangs on its first and second stories. It stands on a mortared foundation of pecked sandstone. Its entry contains a turn of the century panel and glass door. All of the original windows have been replaced by 2-over-2 sash. Two 1 story, shed-roofed additions have been added to the east side of the building. A large 2½ story addition stands at the north end. The house contains three chimneys and four fireplaces. In 1708, Joseph Gaylord purchased 7½ acres from Hezekiah Talcott. In 1714, he sold the property with a house for £ 110 to Abraham Jelit of Farmington. The property changed hands every two years between 1714 and 1730, when it was purchased by Samuel Fenn, and there is evidence that even at this early date it was used for commercial purposes -- for a 1721 deed mentions a "house, barn, and shop" on the premises. Tradition suggests that Samuel Fenn built the present structure in the 1740's -- and the sign on the structure states that it was built by Samuel Fenn Parsons in 1745. There is no evidence, however, to support these assertions, indeed, the attribution to Samuel Fenn Parsons is patently incorrect, since he was a child in 1745. Both documentary and structural evidence point to a much earlier date -- as early as 1708-1714. In 1771, Samuel Fenn gave the house to his grandson, Samuel Fenn Parsons, one of Durham's early shoemakers. He sold June of 1822 to Isaac Newton of Lenox, Massachusetts. He sold it one month later to John White, a Durham shoemaker, who in 1831 sold half the structure to his younger brother Seymour. The Whites lived and made shoes in the house, but not very profitably, for the property was continuously encumbered by mortgages, (CONTINUED)

SOURCES Durham Land Records; Durham Vital Records; Middletown Probate Records; Federal Census of 1820, 1850, 1880; Beers, J.B. History of Middlesex County, Connecticut (New York: J.B. Beers & Co., 1884); Durham Historic Committee Durham, CT, 1866-1980: Century of Change (Durham: 1980); Fowler, William C. History of Durham (Durham: W.C. Fowler, 1866); Whited, Milton Durham's Heritage (Durham: 1976); 1859 Walling Map; 1874 Beers Atlas.

PHOTO	PHOTOGRAPHER Hall, P.D.	DATE 10 JUN 1983
	VIEW S&W elevations	NEGATIVE ON FILE 1:34
COMPILED BY	NAME Hall, P.D.	DATE 20 AUG 1983
	ORGANIZATION Greater Middletown Preservation Trust	
	ADDRESS 27 Washington Street, Middletown, Conn., 06457	



20 SUBSEQUENT FIELD EVALUATIONS

THREATS TO BUILDING OR SITE

None knowr.  Highways  Vandalism  Developers  Other \_\_\_\_\_

Renewal  Private  Deterioration  Zoning  Explanaton \_\_\_\_\_

STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
CONNECTICUT HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
59 South Prospect Street, Hartford, Connecticut 06106  
HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY FORM  
For Buildings and Structures

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

TOWN NO.: \_\_\_\_\_ SITE NO.: \_\_\_\_\_  
UTM: 18/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ 61/\_\_\_\_  
QUAD:  
DISTRICT: S NR: ACTUAL  
POTENTIAL

CONTINUATION SHEET

Item number: 19 Date: 9/27/83

SAMUEL FENN PARSONS HOUSE, Durham

19 (cont'd)

most of them extended by other shoemakers. The Whites finally failed in 1837 and turned the property over to their creditors. Seymour, being the more seriously indebted, lost his share entirely and died shortly thereafter. John managed to retain his portion, sharing ownership with Asher Robinson. He died in 1847 and his share passed to his widow Sally (1788-1862) and his daughter Betsey, wife of wagon-maker Henry Canfield (1792-1863). In 1866 the house was purchased by the Merriam Manufacturing Company and was used as worker housing. The house remained in the company's hands--or in those of its chief proprietors, the Francis--until 1963, when it was sold to George D. Weipert. He sold it to Allen E. Adams in 1974.

Architecturally this three-bay structure is distinctive, the only house of its type still standing in Durham. If the documentary and structural evidence can be trusted, this is one of the oldest structures in the town. It is remarkable for having survived with so few major alterations. Historically it is significant not only for its great age, but also for its long association (from the 1700s on) with Durham's industrial growth, first with the shoe industry and later with metal fabricating.