

Hebron Historic Properties Commission

REPORT FOR DESIGNATING A HEBRON RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY AS A HISTORIC PROPERTY

The Hebron Historic Properties Commission (HHPC) proposes that the Town of Hebron designate a residence, previously a blacksmith shop, as a local Historic Property. The 1789 Blacksmith Shop is located at the southern end of Fane Hill in the Gilead part of Hebron, just north of the previously designated old Gilead Hill School. The building holds great historical significance for the community; the structure provides excellent educational opportunities for current and future generations of Hebronians as well as others interested in the early life of our area.

Historical Significance: Gilead had several established families when the town of Hebron was incorporated, but it didn't have its own distinction until the Second Society, or Gilead Ecclesiastical Society, was approved in 1748 and construction began on its meeting house soon thereafter. Some of Gilead's early settlers were named Brown, Bushnell, Dunham, Ellis, Hutchinson, Gilbert, Mack, Phelps, Post, Root, Talcott, and Welles. Although Hooker and Porter weren't among early surnames in Gilead, they were certainly recognized in the State of Connecticut. Written and oral histories provide evidence regarding the significance of Hebron's farming and manufacturing activities. Gilead had its share of mills and shops required to support its extensive farming industry. To run a successful farming operation, access to a blacksmith was vital. Not only did the "smith" make tools, wheels, shoes for horses & oxen, and hardware, but he also constantly made repairs to same.

44 Porter Road, Hebron, CT

The building now proposed for designation as a historic property is located at 44 Porter Road, and has been the home of Doug and Mary Porter since 1980. Architecturally, this was shed built to be utilized as a blacksmith shop. The building retains much of its original structure elements, and the rest were either restored or replicated, as noted in the old and new photographs. The property is located in the village of Gilead, just north of the old Gilead Hill School which received its own Hebron Historic Property designation in 2007.



Figure 1 - 44 Porter Road in 2008



Figure 2 - Historic Photograph of 44 Porter Road (undated)

Research conducted by Joan M. Rowley in 2008, on behalf of the Historic Properties Commission and supported by the State of Connecticut through a Historic Preservation Enhancement Grant (HPEG), and further researched by Mary Ann Foote, a member of the Hebron Historic Properties Commission. Original property description was converted to a drawing by Bryan Tarbell, another member of the HHPC, indicates:

The Blacksmith Shop

1789-1819

On November 14, 1789, Simeon Dunham sold Samuel Gear one acre of land, for “Six Pounds Lawfull Money”, ”...one certain piece of land lying at the Northwest corner of my farm containing one Acre and is butted or bounded as follows [viz] Beginning at a Stone which stands at my Northwest Corner Running by the Highway South thirty Degrees East five chains and thirty three links to a stake and stones then North seventy two degrees East one chain seventy five links to stake and stones then North Twenty Degrees West four chains and twelve links to a stake and stones by the highway then by said highway East six chains and eighty three links to the first boundary” [HLR v. 8, p. 200]. He had previously purchased 10 acres [v. 7, p. 53] and 30 acres [v. 7, p. 5] from Daniel Talcott in 1781 and 1782, for home and farm use .

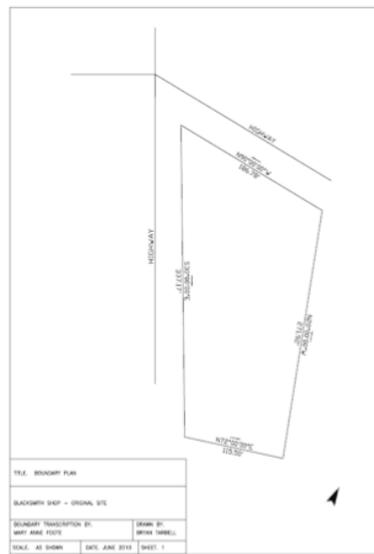


Figure 3 - Title Boundary Plan as derived from HLR v. 8, p. 200

From the Barbour Collection of Hebron’s Vital Records, it was learned that Samuel Gear and his wife Hannah (Phelps) were both born in Hebron. Following their marriage in 1777, they had a daughter, Hannah, in 1779; and a son, Samuel E. (“Epaphras”) in 1780.

When Samuel Gear died in 1805, his will provided:

“1- to Hannah 1/3 real estate and horse to ride, 1/2 house to use

2- to son Samuel Epaphras, all real estate & cattle, farm tensils (sic) & blacksmith tools

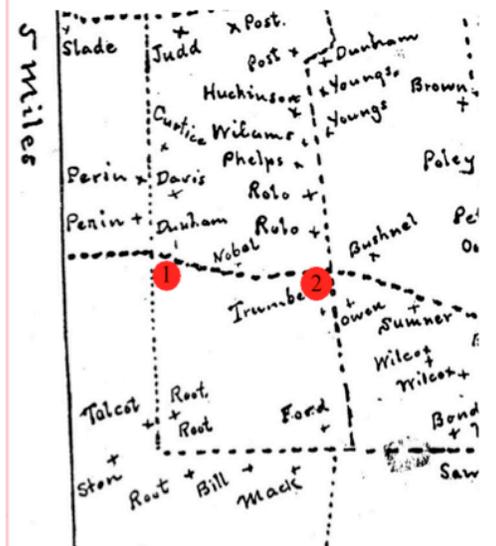
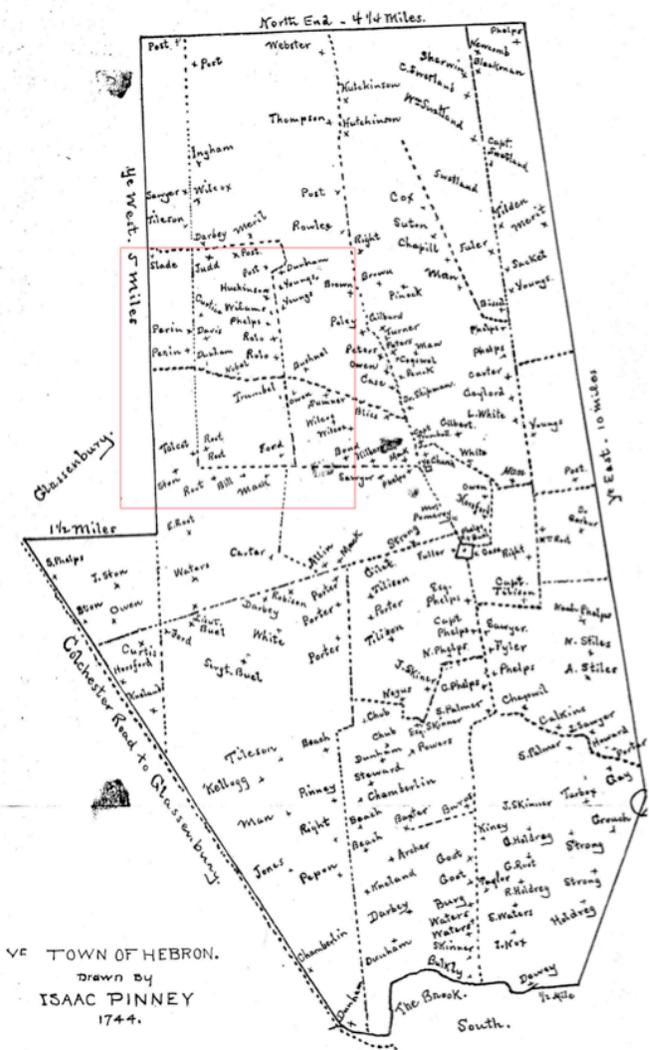
3- to daughter Hannah, £ 50 to be paid her by Epaphras --1/2 in 1 year and other half in 2 years

4- son Epaphras pays debts and provides Edmund C. Gear, the boy who lives with me, should continue to live with son Samuel Epaphras until age 21 then Epaphras shall pay him \$100.00, to be paid in horse & cattle”.

The will was dated 13 November 1804 [v. 3, p. 158 Probate Records in Bolton, CT]. The Real Estate included Skinner Lots in Glastonbury, Perrin Lot in Marlborough, Home Lot by then situated in Marlborough since Marlborough had been granted incorporation in 1803 and assumed property previously a part of Hebron. The real estate also included his “Shop and Cole house Lot”.

By 1811 Samuel Epaphras Gear had been assigned a conservator, Gad Talcott. Samuel E. Gear had many debts and was served with legal action by his brother-in-law, Ezekiel Augustus Post, Epaphras’ sister Hannah’s husband. The court ruled against Samuel Epaphras Gear in all cases, and ordered that portions of Samuel E. Gear’s real estate be sold to pay off debt. The portion regarding the blacksmith shop found that Ezekiel A. Post of Hebron recovered judgment against Samuel E. Gear of Hebron on the 27th day of September 1811 which included and is described as follows: “one other piece of land with the sd BlackSmith shop, bounded as follows (viz) south & east on land of Simeon Dunham, North & West on highway, containing one acre with the sd shop” [v. 12, p. 224]

Although neither the shop nor Samuel Gear existed when the 1744 Isaac Pinney map was drawn, the sites of his original land purchases and site location shall be noted by the names “Dunham”, “Talcot”, and then “Trumbul”. The original site, as located by description from deeds as being North and West on highways, is presumably at the intersection both south of the highway and of “Dunham”. The present site of the shop is found near “Trumbul” on the portion of Isaac Pinney’s 1744 map of Hebron as shown.



- 1 - Original site of shop as determined from deed
- 2 - Present location of shop

Figure 4 - Locations of the Blacksmith Shop on 1744 Isaac Pinney Map

When Samuel Epaphras Gear died on February 4th 1812, there wasn't too much left in Real Estate other than the 1/3 that had legally been encumbered by Epaphras' mother, the Widow Hannah Gear. Due to the insolvency of the estate, the court ordered that all personal property and real estate be sold to cover debts. The blacksmith shop had previously transferred ownership to E.A.Post. Other than household items, the rest were blacksmith-connected like a blacksmith's vise, 5 pr. blacksmith tongs, 4 small iron hammers, 1 blacksmith stake wt. 14#, 1 pr. blacksmith pincers, a sadlers hammer, 3 rasps, hoop nails, a draw shave, a coal basket, an ox sling -- also a fiddle & bow. [Probate v. 5, pp. 172, 207, 209, 343,] Creditors ended up being paid \$.33 & 5 mills on the dollar.

Samuel & Hannah Gear's daughter, Hannah (Gear) Post, died on October 13th 1815. Within 10 months, her husband Ezekiel Augustus Post had both a new wife and a new child born on August 1st 1816! Around that time, E.A. Post mortgaged or sold most of his local real estate. On 11th October 1816, Ezekiel Augustus Post

sold the 1 acre piece including blacksmith shop to Edmund Conwell Gear for \$150, described as follows: “...piece of land...containing one acre together with a blacksmith shop & coal house & a frame to [contain] oxen standing thereon opposite Duff-corner commonly called Gear’s Shepherd lot & bounded N. & W. on the highway, S. & E. on land of Capt. Simeon Dunham”. [v. 13, p. 58]

What follows most probably ties the blacksmith shop to its present location.

On the 7th of April 1819, for \$80.00, Edmund C. Gear sold to Samuel C. Horton the 1 acre tract he had purchased from Ezekiel A. Post just 2 1/2 years earlier. *However*, in the deed for the parcel from E.C. Gear to S.C. Horton, Gear sold the land described as “one certain piece of land...containing one acre, bounded as follows [viz] North & West on Highways, South and East on land of Isaac Dunham...**“Excepting and reserving a Blacksmith Shop and Coal-house which are now thereon standing”**”. [v. 14, p. 17]

What is particularly noteworthy is that E.C.Gear both sold the West Street-area property and purchased the Porter Road property on the same day! The hypothesis is that E.C.Gear either moved, or dismantled and moved the shop to its new location where he continued his trade. A search of both the Census and Tax Lists between 1810 - 1830 was undertaken to see if there was any indication of existing shops, perhaps 0, 1, or 2 on the tax rolls for Edmund Conwell Gear and/or Samuel C. Horton. Unfortunately, when the search of shops was made, the tax lists for those years did not include a column for “businesses”. On the 1857 map there is no evidence of a shop building remaining at the original site.



Figure 5 - Original Site of Blacksmith Shop and Present Sites of Blacksmith shop and old Gilead Hill School

44 Porter Road, Hebron Connecticut

1819-1864

Asaph Trumbull sold Edmund C. Gear one acre of land for \$100.00 on April 7, 1819. (v. 13 p. 172). The description of the property begins: “at the N.W. corner of my land opposite the dwelling house of Ralph R. Rollo”, who lived at today’s 20 Porter Road. Edmund Gear built a house on the property and had a blacksmith shop and coal house prior to 1836. The blacksmith shop exists today as 44 Porter Road. Mr. Gear was married to Betsy E. Gear and they had eight children: Edmund S. Gear, Frances E. Gear, Harriet J. Gear, Emily M. Gear, Hannah M. Gear, Charles G. Gear, Olive Gear, and Esther C. Gear. Mr. Gear died on May 4, 1836. The Probate Court for Hebron [Probate v.12, p. 43, 147] ordered that part of his estate be sold to satisfy debts. Among items in the inventory were: an anvil, a vice (sic), bick? iron, crowbars, steelyards, other tools in shop including the sling to ox frame & chain. The Administrator of the Estate sold a small piece of property (which was part of the original acre) to Nathaniel White of Columbia for \$175.00 on November 23, 1837. [v. 17, p. 267] The property was described: as “a certain tract of land situated in Gilead Society with a blacksmith shop and coal house standing thereon” Shortly thereafter, Hannah M. Gear, daughter of Edmund and Betsey, married David Ticknor on 24 December 1837. Nathaniel White sold the same property with the blacksmith shop and coal house to David Ticknor on February 2, 1838 for \$175.00 [v. 17 p..243]. David Ticknor also acquired two other pieces of land that adjoined the Gear one acre piece. He purchased one piece in 1838 for \$175.00 which abutted to the west [v. 18, p. 3], and one piece in 1848 abutting to the south [v. 19, p. 151] both from William Hutchinson. The chances are pretty good that Hannah & David Ticknor and Betsey Gear, as well as many of her other children lived in the house while David ran the Blacksmith Shop. Betsey Gear married Abieser Porter of East Windsor on March 18, 1848. By then, some of her other children had also married and/or moved away as is evident from various property deed exchanges. Betsey’s daughter Emily had died in 1843. The next record of transfer, after 45 years, occurs following the death of Betsey Gear (Porter).

1864-1872

Edmund S. Gear of South Windsor, Charles G. Gear of Hartford, Harriet E. Sparks wife of George W. Sparks of Vernon, Mrs. Frances E. Pease widow of Edwin T. Pease of Hartford, and Esther C. Gates wife of Alpheus Gates” “heirs of the late Edmund C. Gear and Betsy E. Gear, his wife both late of said Hebron deceased” sold the one acre property to Hannah M. Ticknor, wife of David W. Ticknor of Hebron for \$300.00 in 1864 [v. 24, p. 21] Again, Hannah and David had probably been living there since their marriage in 1837.

1872-1875

Eight years after taking title to the house lot, on August 5, 1872, Hannah Ticknor sold “the estate lately occupied by David W. Ticknor late of Hebron, deceased” to Squire G. Wood of Kent, Rhode Island for \$1,000.00. The Gear and Ticknor properties were now combined. The property was described as “containing 6 acres more or less with a dwelling house, blacksmith shop and other buildings thereon” [v. 22, p.. 460]. Mrs. Ticknor reserved the right to live in the house until October 1, 1872 and the right to use the barn and wood shed until April 1, 1873.

1875-1918

It would appear that Squire G. Wood never lived in the house since, when he sold the property three years later to Carey L. Perry, he was living in Coventry, Rhode Island. [v. 22, p. 535] Mr. Perry purchased the property, described as 6 acres with “the buildings thereon standing”, for \$1,000.00. The following is excerpted from Annie Hutchinson Foote’s book “In Gilead” published in 1970.

“Carey Perry had a blacksmith shop near the little schoolhouse of the eighth district. The two buildings are quiet companions today; but Mr. Perry and his assistant were busily shoeing horses and oxen, and resetting tires on wagon wheels on many yesterdays. They welded lengths of old lightning rod while children, each tightly holding a dime for the transaction, waited to receive hoops for rolling enjoyment” Mr. Perry was married to Fannie M. Perry and they had a son, Clifford Rollo Perry.

1918-1978

Carey L. Perry died in 1918 and left all of his estate to his wife, Fannie M. Perry. [v. 30, p. 391] Mrs. Perry did not outlive her husband by long since her property was soon devised to her only heir, Clifford Rollo Perry.

Following Carey Perry's retirement, Will and Fred Brehant were the last smiths to run the Gilead shop, which they did until leaving to serve in World War I. Fred Brehant and Dottie (Brehant) Taggart confirmed that their Uncle Will and Father Fred opened their own blacksmith shop in Amston in 1918 after the Armistice.



Figure 6 - Blacksmith Shop Circa 1978 with old Gilead Hill School to the South

1978-2010

Clifford R. Perry died July 4, 1978. Glastonbury Bank and Trust executed a fiduciary's deed July 19, 1978 which sold the property to Douglas Porter and Richard L. and Judith P. Weiner. [v.94, p. 205] The property was described as 6 acres (with a partly erroneous description) and there was no mention of buildings. The property was then divided into two parcels, as it exists today with 30 Porter Road containing one acre, and 44 Porter Road the remaining 5 acres. The five acre portion, now known as 44 Porter Road, was then deeded by Richard L. and Judith P. Weiner to Douglas Porter [v. 95, p 207]. Douglas Porter changed ownership to be shared by Douglas Porter and Mary H. Porter [v. 130, p, 182]. The most recent deed, from January 2008, is from Douglas Porter and Mary H. Porter to Janice (Porter) Tarbell [v. 432, p. 443]

The Assessor's aerial and property maps place the location of the Blacksmith Shop at 44 Porter Road as follows:



Figure 7 - Recent Aerial Map of 44 Porter Road



Figure 8 - Recent Assessor's Map of 44 Porter Road



Figure 9 - Old picture of the Blacksmith Shop, during some of its active years (probably taken in the late 1800-early 1900's)

Silsbee, Conn., 18

No. _____

To C. L. PERRY, Dr.

GENERAL BLACKSMITH, AND AGENT FOR THE NEVERSLIP HORSE-SHOE.

1892				
March 8	Manure and Mash	25	00	42
"	"		42	70
"	fare Hartford & Ballou		x	112
"	my own fare & dinner	1	28	
"	Horse keep		36	2500
"	Doc Pendleton - attendance	4	00	160
"	charge of time		20	4600
"	23- sulphur & oil of lime		70	
"	26 Mr. Benard Hill	10	00	15
"	" Doc Pendleton	2	00	
		46	92	
		1	12	8000

Figure 10 - Page from Blacksmith Carey L. Perry's ledger dated March 1892

Note this portion of a page from Blacksmith Carey L. Perry's ledger dated March 1892. Doc Pendleton was called twice that month

From W.H.Taylor's 1912 Legislative History & Souvenir of Connecticut, it states that "Carey Latham Perry, of Hebron, was born in Colchester, October 8, 1851. He is the son of Roland and Mary E. (Latham) Perry, and was educated in the district school. On November 18, 1883, he married Frances M., daughter of Abel P. and Sarah A. Post. They have one son, Clifford Rollo, born August 25, 1890. Mr. Perry was formerly a blacksmith, but later engaged in farming, a staunch Republican and has had the honor to represent his town in the Legislature two sessions, 1891 and 1911, and has been an Assessor and Constable of the town. He is a highly respected member of the Grange. He faithfully served on two committees: Labor and New Towns and Probate Districts.

CALICO BALL !

The Annual Calico Ball

WILL BE GIVEN AT

GILEAD HALL

ON

Wed'y Eve, Apr. 10, 1907

A Prize will be given for the Plainest Calico Costume worn by any Lady.

The one thinking she is the Plainest Dressed to claim the Prize.

If more than one claimant, the General Manager, Mr. C. L. Perry, will decide which is entitled to the prize.

SUPPER AND ICE-CREAM
Will be Served.

Admission, 25 cents. Dancing, 25 cents.

Ladies wearing Calico Dresses Free.

E. H. COOK, PRINTER, ANDOVER, CONN.

Postponed to Apr 15 07

Figure 11 - Early Gilead Advertising

Note that Carey L. Perry, Blacksmith, was the "General Manager" for this social event held at the newly-built Gilead Hall.



Figure 12 - Iron Hardware fabricated in this Blacksmith Shop



Figure 13 - Blacksmith's Toolbox and Tool Collection from Gilead



Figure 14 - Restored Forge with Bellows in foreground

Note: This bellows was one of a pair and was located in the lean-to attached on the North end of the Shop as shown in Figure 4.

THEREFORE, the Hebron Historic Properties Commission recommends that the Hebron Board of Selectmen designate this an historic property by amending Ordinance 94-1, *“An Ordinance Establishing a Local Historic Properties Commission and Designating an Historic Property,”* with the following description from Hebron Land Records, and as shown on the maps in *Figure 7 - Recent Aerial Map of 44 Porter Road* and *Figure 8 - Recent Assessor's Map of 44 Porter Road* of this report:

Section 7 – Designation of Historic Properties shall be amended to include:

next: The property restored by Douglas & Mary (Hooker) Porter, and owned by Janice (Porter) Tarbell, 44 Porter Road, Hebron (Gilead), CT, and as described below, is hereby designated an historic property.

“A certain parcel of land beginning at an iron pipe set in the southerly line of Martin Road so-called and at the northerly end of a stone wall, the northwestern corner of the herein described premises; said point also being the northeast corner of land now or formerly of Porter Farm, Inc.; thence S 81°36' 00" E 244.26 feet to an iron pipe set in the westerly line of Gilead Street, the last two courses bounding easterly and northerly on other land now or formerly of the Estate of Clifford Rollo Perry; thence S 1° 38' 10" W 197.30 feet to a stone fencepost; thence S 0° 23' 25" W 63.13 feet to an iron pipe set at a stone wall to an iron pipe set at the end of the wall; thence N 81° 34' 00" W 234.36 feet along a wire fence to an iron pipe set in the line of a stone wall; thence N 15° 01' 05" E 279.53 feet to a drill hole in a rock at an angle in the wall; thence N 9° 33' 40" E 218.68 feet along a stone wall to an iron pipe the place of beginning the last four course bounding southerly and westerly on land belonging to Porter Farm, Inc.”

(As described in v. 432, p. 443, Warranty Deed of 17th January 2008, from Douglas & Mary H. Porter to Janice Tarbell)

Appendix A

Please note that Doug & Mary Porter and Janice (Porter) Tarbell, restorers and owners of the property at 44 Porter Road, are in favor of historic designation of their property, as evidenced by their June 10, 2010 letter written to the Hebron Historic Properties Commission, and shown here:

June 10, 2010

Deena Watson, Chair
Hebron Historic Properties Commission
15 Gilead Street
Hebron, CT 06248

Dear Ms. Watson,

We have shared the information regarding our Blacksmith Shop home and property at 44 Porter Road, and are pleased that it's being considered for local historic designation.

We are very much interested in proceeding with this process.

Thank you for your time and efforts on our behalf.

Sincerely,

Douglas and Mary Porter
Janice Tarbell
44 Porter Road
Hebron, CT 06248

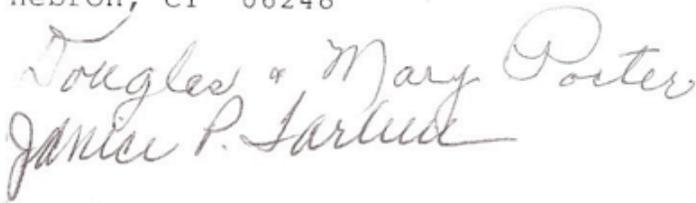
Handwritten signatures of Douglas & Mary Porter and Janice P. Tarbell. The signatures are written in cursive and are positioned below the typed names and address.

Figure 15 - Owner Support Letter

Appendix B

Supplementary materials required by Connecticut state statutes for the local historic designation of 44 Porter Road:



Connecticut Commission on Culture & Tourism

August 5, 2010

Historic Preservation
and Museum Division

Ms. Deena Watson
Chair, Hebron Historic Properties Commission
130 Charles Lane
Hebron, CT 06248

One Constitution Plaza
Second Floor
Hartford, Connecticut
06103

Re: Proposed Historic Properties:
80 Hardy Road, Hebron, CT
44 Porter Road, Hebron, CT
780 Gilead Street, Hebron, CT

860.256.2800
860.256.2763 (f)

Dear Ms. Watson:

On behalf of the Historic Preservation Council, I am pleased to inform you that the study report submitted by the Hebron Historic Properties Commission for the proposed historic properties: 80 Hardy Road; 44 Porter Road; and 780 Gilead St. in Hebron, CT, was recommended for approval at the August 4, 2010 Council meeting.

The Council had the following comments and requested that these suggestions be incorporated into the final study report:

While the title research is thorough and interesting, the date of the property should be listed sooner and more prominently in the report, in the architectural or historical significance statement.

Study reports require an architectural significance statement which should include an architectural description of the property, and the Council asked that one be included with each property report.

The Council commends the ongoing efforts of the Hebron Historic Properties Commission to protect and preserve the Town of Hebron's irreplaceable historic and architectural heritage.

Please keep me informed of the progress of these designations. In the meantime if you have any questions regarding this notification, please feel free to contact me at (860) 256-2756.

Sincerely,

Mary Dunne
Local Government Grants Coordinator

CONNECTICUT
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TOWN OF HEBRON

15 Gilead Street, Hebron, CT 06248

TEL (860) 228-5971 FAX (860) 228-5980

Planning/Zoning

Building

Health

Conservation

August 25, 2010

Deena Watson
Chairman, Historic Properties Commission
130 Charles Lane
Hebron, CT 06248

Re: Designation of Historic Properties

Dear Ms. Watson,

At its meeting of August 24, 2010, the Hebron Planning and Zoning Commission reviewed three reports from the Hebron Historic Properties Commission for the purpose of designating three properties as "Historic Properties" as defined in Section 7-147q of the Connecticut General Statutes. You had asked that these reports be forwarded to the Planning and Zoning Commission for their review and recommendation. The three properties are known as:

- 780 Gilead Street
- 80 Hardy Road
- 44 Porter Road

Section 7-147q of the Connecticut General Statutes sets forth a procedure for designation of "Historic Properties". Said procedure requires the submission of a report to the Planning and Zoning Commission for their comments and recommendations. Said comments and recommendations are made a part of the subsequent public hearing and final submission to the Hebron Board of Selectmen for action on the proposal.

Following the review of your reports, the Planning and Zoning Commission made the following findings:

- the proposal is consistent with the Town's adopted Plan of Conservation and Development, in particular with the Objectives of Section 1, "The Preservation of Unique Assets", Subsection H. "Areas of Historical Heritage", which states in part that the Town should "facilitate the designation of...historic properties where appropriate to assure preservation of historic assets", and also that

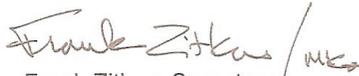
the Town should "work with the Hebron Historic Properties Commission...to keep Hebron's legacy alive for all of its citizens";

- all three properties are historic Hebron homesteads, and one property was previously a blacksmith shop, that if preserved, help to tell an important story of the Town's history to existing and future residents, and which collectively are important elements of the Town's rich historic character, an important element of Hebron's quality of life; and,
- all current property owners are in favor of the Historic Property designation.

Therefore, the Planning and Zoning Commission at their meeting of August 24, 2010 approved the following motion:

Moved that the Hebron Planning and Zoning Commission supports the Hebron Historic Properties Commission effort to designate 780 Gilead Street, 80 Hardy Road, and 44 Porter Road as Historic Properties as per Section 7-147q of the Connecticut General Statutes based on the findings as specified herein.

Sincerely,



Frank Zitkus, Secretary
Hebron Planning and Zoning Commission

cc: Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager
MaryAnn Foote, Historic Properties Commission