Preston-Keyes House

Town: Farmington  
Village: Unionville  
County: Hartford

Owner(s): Tenan, Richard D. & Clancy, Bridget A.  
USE: Residence  

STYLE OF BUILDING: Greek Revival  
DATE OF CONSTRUCTION: 1840-43

MATERIALS:  
- Clapboard
- Wood Shingle
- Board & Batten
- Aluminum Siding
- Wood frame
- Load bearing masonry

ROOF:  
- Gable
- Gambrel
- Asbestos Siding
- Roll Shingle
- Asphalt
- Tin

NUMBER OF STORIES: 2
APPROXIMATE DIMENSIONS: 51 x 22; 14 x 23

CONDITION:  
- Excellent
- Good
- Fair
- Deteriorated

INTEGRITY:  
- Original
- Moved
- 2 bay addition and attached garage

RELATED OUTBUILDINGS OR LANDSCAPE FEATURES:  
- Barn
- Carriage house
- Shed
- Shop
- Garage

SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT:  
- Open land
- Woodland
- Residential
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Rural
- High building density

Facing south onto Keyes Street, the Preston-Keyes House stands in a growing residential neighborhood dominated by twentieth-century domestic architecture. Dense woodland abuts the property to the rear.
Oriented ridge-to-street, the Preston-Keyes House exhibits a seven-bay facade. The house, however was originally constructed as a five-bay dwelling. The eastern two-bay addition was added in later years. The original Greek Revival-style entry door features flanking pilasters supporting a heavy entablature with projecting cornice, and four-paned sidelights. The entry on the two-bay addition exhibits fluted pilasters with projecting cornice enhanced by dentils. Both the east and west elevations feature fully pedimented gable-ends. A large, rectangular, multi-paned window is found in the western gable. Six-over-six sash are displayed throughout the rest of the house. Other additions include a small, single-story garage which extends from the east elevation.

This house was erected by Noah Preston between 1840 and 1843 on a twenty acre parcel of land that he and his brother, Eli D. Preston, and Cornelius Williams purchased from Timothy Cowles (FLR 47:290-291). In 1843 Cornelius Williams and Eli D. quit-claimed to Noah their interest in "one acre with buildings along the avenue in front of the two yellow houses" (FLR 45:468). The two "yellow" dwellings mentioned were the two large rental homes standing along the northside of Keyes Street (See 7-9 Keyes Street and 3 Norton Lane.) A clockmaker by trade, Noah Preston (1800-1845) was born in Harwinton to John S. and Aurelia (Dewey) Preston. In 1828 he married Lucy Marsh (1801-1841), daughter of James and Ursula (Hayden) Marsh of Litchfield. Noah and his brother, Eli D. Preston worked for the firm of Williams, Orton and Preston, which started manufacturing clocks in Farmington about 1820 and later moved to Unionville. The house was sold to George Barber in July of 1843 (FLR 48:433). David Abbott Keyes acquired the property from Barber in 1848 (FLR 49:424). Born in Haverhill, New Hampshire, Keyes was the son of Jeduthan and Susanna Keyes. In 1836 he married Julia S. Gridley (1815-1855) of Unionville and raised ten children. Keyes owned and operated a successful cutlery factory which produced the country's first mincing knives. In 1883 Keyes sold the house to his four daughters; Mary Elizabeth, Julia M., Cynthia, and Martha Jane Cowles (FLR 68:74) Edgar and Julia Case purchased the house in 1897 and it remained in the Case family until 1941. The Preston-Keyes House is historically significant for its association with early Unionville manufacturing.


Photographer: Alex Paredes
Date: 5/85
View: NE
Negative on file: 5:2A
Photographed by: Elizabeth R. Hart
Date: 8/85
Organization: Greater Middletown Preservation Trust
Address: 27 Washington Street, Middletown, CT

Potential threats to building or site:
- None known
- Highways
- Vandalism
- Developers
- Other
- Renewal
- Private
- Deterioration
- Zoning
- Explanation