This building is sited on the north side of Farmington Avenue. It sits close to the street. To the west and north are other historic buildings used for commercial purposes. On its eastern property line are tall trees.
This building probably once served as a house and workshop, the latter occupying either the first floor or basement space. Although it has been modernized since the early 1900s, it still retains its three-bay facade and pedimented gable end. Twelve-over-eight sash are found throughout. Note the Italianate-style attic window and shed-roofed porches on the south and west elevations.

In 1841 Eunice J. Woodruff, the daughter of Noadiah Woodruff (son of Capt. Judah Woodruff, the architect), sold Daniel Buck a quarter acre of land with buildings "being the southeast corner of the homelot of the late Seth Lewis" (FLR 48:233) for $675. Eunice had inherited the Lewis Place (Elm Tree Inn) and its adjoining eight acres of which this building is a part. Daniel Buck (1805-1858) was a wheelwright born in Plymouth, Connecticut, and probably built this building to house his family and his workshop. After his early death, his homestead and personal property including "grindstone, paint, and brushes" (FPR 12:169) passed to his sons, Charles H. and George D. Little is known about these men; however, in 1869 Charles sold his interest in the property to his brother for $800 (FLR 60:578). When George died in 1875, his business declared bankruptcy (FLR 62:329). In 1896 the house was sold to James L. Byington and William H. Bronson (FLR 71:38) who sold it to Julia M. Gaylord (FLR 71:349). She and her husband William E. Gaylord retained possession of the building, using it as a tenement until 1901 when it was sold to Alfred A. Pope and later to Lizzie J. Parker (FLR 71:474; 77:37).

Today it remains historically significant due to its associations with the Buck family and the commercial development of Farmington Avenue.

This building is pictured on page 179 of the Farmington Book as "The residence and store of Mr. A. J. Parker, formerly the store of Elijah Lewis". Mr. Parker's sign reads "Plumbing, Heating". Baker and Tilden's 1869 Atlas shows Charles Buck here.

The library card shows no record of when it was built, merely contains the statement that Julius Gay had said that Elijah Lewis had a store here back to 1780. This latter statement came from an article on page 179 of the Farmington Book. That article reads, in part:

"The recent unearthing of an old day book of Elijah Lewis, the great-grandfather of Mr. Charles Lewis, brings to light the nearly forgotten fact that, shortly after the Revolutionary War, he kept a 'general store' in the building that is now the store and residence of Mr. A. J. Parker. Many items in the book are charges for brandy and philp, which were probably the products of a still kept by Mr. Lewis, the foundation walls of which are still plainly discernable in the rear of Mr. Charles Lewis' residence. To give just an insight into the sort of goods kept for sale, and the prices for which they were sold, some of the entries in 'the old store:book' are quoted just as written, the quaint spelling of the original being preserved. The amounts are in pounds, shillings and pence."

Many entries from the day book are quoted in the article, too many to mention here, but worth reading. The earliest entry shown was dated in April 1780, and the latest was June 1798, but this does not suggest that these two dates denote the beginning and ending of his business.

A public notice which Elijah Lewis had published in the Connecticut Courant of February 10, 1777, might indicate however, that he did not have a place of business of his own on that date. The notice reads:

"The ration and sauce money due to the late Colonel Gay's Regiment, is now in the hands of the subscriber, who is ready to pay the same. He will attend upon the business at the house of Landlord Lewis at Farmington, till the whole is settled. Signed Elijah Lewis, Quartermaster".

The first title transfer recorded on the card in the library is "Eunice Woodruff from the estate of Noadiah Woodruff, 1837". This entry is not at all clear to the writer. According to information known to the writer, Noadiah Woodruff married in 1789, and his daughter Eunice died in her teens. His daughter Sarah, born 1807, married in 1830. Noadiah Woodruff did die in 1835 however, so the date of 1837 seems authentic.

The next transfer reads: Daniel Buck from Eunice Woodruff 1841.

In 1859 the property, except for dower rights to widow Mary Z. Buck, passed to Charles H. and George D. Buck, sons.

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This confirms Baker and Tilden's notation that Charles Buck was an owner in 1869.

Russell Lee Jones came to Farmington as a young boy, in the summer of 1876, and his family at that time took up residence in the Norton house, later the Barney house, renting from the Nortons. During three summers prior to that his family had rented other houses in Farmington, but for summers only. The residence in the Norton house continued until at least 1890.

Mr. Jones wrote up in the 1940's some of his earlier memories of boyhood in Farmington. Regarding this house he wrote:

"In the house where A. J. Parker now lives, lived a Mr. Frost, and he had a paint shop in the basement for several years after we came to Farmington. Mr. Frost always wore a stovepipe hat and about all the painting he did in his little shop was for Miss Sarah Porter who, after the school girls had left for the summer vacation, sent all the metal water cans and slop jars to Mr. Frost for a new coat of paint. It was in this shop that Cousin Elijah's father kept a store about 1770".

"Cousin Elijah" was the elderly gentleman pictured on page 8 of the Farmington Book, who died in 1896, and who lived in the house now known as 738 Farmington Avenue.

James L. Byington and William H. Bronson purchased from the Buck estate in 1896.

Charles Wesley Ruic and his wife lived upstairs in this house for a while, Mr. Ruic being school principal here for a time. Their son Kenneth Ruic, much later to live at 126 Main Street, was born in this house in 1896. Shortly after this the Ruics moved to the Harry Loomis house off Farmington Avenue.

Julia M. Gaylord purchased from James L. Byington in 1898.

Julia Gaylord, the former Julia Hurlburt, was the wife of William E. Gaylord, a plumber, who lived at 4 Waterville Road. It was he who set up the first plumbing shop in this house. It is not known when he had come to Farmington, but town records show that he did plumbing work for the Town during the 12-month period from September 1884 until September 1885.

Alfred A. Pope, who was then in the process of planning for the construction of Hillstead, purchased this shop on November 10, 1900, for the use of Arthur Joseph Parker, a plumber whom Mr. Pope was planning to use to install the plumbing and heating in his new house.

Arthur J. Parker, born in Granby, Quebec, in 1863, had been living in Andover, Massachusetts. Mrs. Parker was the former Elizabeth Thayer, daughter of John Thayer and Ellen West.

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Mr. Parker advertised in the Farmington Magazine of 1900 and 1901 stating that he had just bought the Gaylord plumbing business.

The Parkers lived upstairs and used the ground floor for the shop and supply room, much of the supplies however being stored in the barn to the rear of the house. He is said to have been a very nice gentleman, and that the Hillstead job had given him a very good business start here. He was soon able to purchase this building from Mr. Pope, and did so on January 10, 1906.

The Parkers had two daughters, Maude and Elizabeth. Maude was fourteen when she came to Farmington. She and Bessie Tillotson and Edward H. Deming, Jr., were classmates at high school, then in Unionville, and were said to have been the only ones from Farmington in their graduating class.

Maude A. Parker was married in 1910 to Sheard Newsome, son of Joseph Newsome and Martha Proctor. He was an account collector for the Adams Company, an installment sales business.

Elizabeth A. Parker was married in 1911 to Arthur A. Horn (or was it Raymond Horn?). They lived here for a time, having two or three children.

Mrs. Parker died in 1915.

Mrs. Newsome inherited the house upon the death of her father in 1948, and lived here after that time. She was organist in the Congregational Church for some years.

Raymond A. Sperry purchased from Maude Parker Newsome on June 11, 1956, some of the land to the rear of this house, behind the Parker barn. Mr. Sperry's agreement with Mrs. Newsome contained also an option to purchase the house and lot and barn after her death. This occurred in 1958 and the purchase of the house and lot was then made.

The Parker barn had not been used for some time, Mr. Parker having retired from active business some years before his death, and the building had been neglected and become an eyesore. Mr. Sperry spruced it up considerably. He converted part of it to serve as his plumbing shop, and one section was rented out to a dealer in pumps. This was the Aetna Engineering Company of Ashaway, Rhode Island, managed by a Ray Bera (whose wife was Victoria M. Bera), who lived on Two Mile Road, and died suddenly in 1971.

Raymond Sperry was publicly commended, and given the Gold Seal Award by the Farmington Garden Club on November 20, 1958, for "the improvement of the Parker barn", which greatly enhanced the appearance of the area. This building is known as 780 Farmington Avenue.

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* John Douglass uses all of the space in the old Parker Barn, and has done so since the death of Mr. Bera in 1971.
After Mr. Sperry's purchase of this building he converted it into six separate rental units. On the top floor were two residential apartments. On the main floor a large section for a business or a store, and a smaller section to the rear for a studio apartment or small office space. The ground floor, which is actually a little below street level, was in two sections, front and rear, for business, although at present these two sections are combined. Tenants in the various sections have been the following:

Mr. and Mrs. Stanley Przech, see Neuhauser house, Scott Swamp Road;
Mr. and Mrs. Edward Anderson,
Morton Jones,
Christopher Montjoy and his mother Ada, who later became an MPS housemother. Christopher was in the army in Africa, later married the daughter of David Douglass,
Donald Adams and his wife, the former Karin Sperry, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Raymond Sperry,
Mr. and Mrs. Wayne P. Fleming, she the former Marcia Lund of 28 Main Street,
K. K. Schaper,
Mrs. Charlotte Sherrill, manager of Sage-Allen's West Hartford branch store,
Mrs. Allen I. Balch,
Alice Martin had a dress shop here. She and her husband John M. later built a house on Church St.,
Helen Winter had an art gallery and antique shop here, later moved to the Grist Mill on Mill Road. She and her husband John K. Winter live at 36 High Street,
Phoenix-Apollo Gallery,
Joseph Wei Gallery,
Jean Crosby, schoolteacher,
Margaret Obert,
Alex Kolman, shoe repairs, died 1961,
Henry D'Onofrio, shoe repairs,
Thelma Long, the Parker Beauty Shop,
Charles Doten,
Mrs. Nello Trevison, dress alterations, moved to Waterville Road,
Mrs. Mimi Upson, dress alterations,
Vito Gugliotti,
Swiss Hamlet Coiffeurs.

Raymond Sperry sold his plumbing business in November 1969 to John Douglass, who had been working with him. The only real estate included in the sale was the former home of Mr. Sperry's parents, at 1169 Farmington Avenue, including the land there. Mr. Douglass leases the former Parker barn, now known as 780 Farmington Avenue, using this as the plumbing shop and headquarters of the business, which he has now expanded somewhat, to include some carpentry and carpentry repairs. It is still listed, as of the 1972 directory, as Douglass and Sperry Company.

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