

HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY - BUILDING AND STRUCTURES

Please send completed form to: Stacey Vairo, National Register and State Register Coordinator,
State Historic Preservation Office, Department of Economic and Community Development,
One Constitution Plaza, 2nd Floor, Hartford CT 06103

* Note: Please attach any additional or expanded information on a separate sheet.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Building Name (Common) Ames, Fredrick, Farmstead Record No. 33600
 Building Name (Historic) Ames, Fredrick, Farmstead
 Street Address or Location 157 Ames Hollow Road
 Town/City Portland Village _____ County Middlesex
 Owner(s) Judy and John Harper, 157 Ames Hollow Road, Portland CT 06480 Public Private

PROPERTY INFORMATION

Present Use: Agriculture/Subsistence: agricultural outbuilding; Domestic: single dwelling
 Historic Use: Agriculture/Subsistence: agricultural outbuilding; Domestic: single dwelling
 Accessibility to public: Exterior visible from public road? Yes No
 Interior accessible? Yes No If yes, explain _____
 Style of building Tobacco shed bank barn, Vernacular style Date of Construction c. 1880

Material(s) (Indicate use or location when appropriate):

- | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Clapboard | <input type="checkbox"/> Asbestos Siding | <input type="checkbox"/> Brick | <input type="checkbox"/> Wood Shingle | <input type="checkbox"/> Asphalt Siding |
| <input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> Cut Stone (Type _____) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other <u>Vertical wood siding</u> | | |

Structural System

- Wood Frame Post & Beam Balloon Load bearing masonry Structural iron or steel
 Other _____

Roof (Type)

- Gable Flat Mansard Monitor Sawtooth
 Gambrel Shed Hip Round Other _____

(Material)

- Wood Shingle Roll Asphalt Tin Slate Asphalt Shingle
 Built up Tile Other _____

Number of Stories: 1 1/2, B Approximate Dimensions 24' x 48'

Structural Condition: Excellent Good Fair Deteriorated

Exterior Condition: Excellent Good Fair Deteriorated

Location Integrity: On original site Moved When? _____

Alterations? Yes No If yes, explain: _____

FOR OFFICE USE: Town # _____ Site # _____ UTM _____

District: S NR If NR, Specify: Actual Potential

PROPERTY INFORMATION (CONT'D)

Related outbuildings or landscape features:

- Barn Shed Garage Carriage House Shop Garden
- Other landscape features or buildings: _____

Surrounding Environment:

- Open land Woodland Residential Commercial Industrial Rural
- High building density Scattered buildings visible from site

• Interrelationship of building and surroundings:

See continuation sheet.

• Other notable features of building or site (*Interior and/or Exterior*)

See continuation sheet.

Architect _____ Builder _____

• Historical or Architectural importance:

See continuation sheet.

• Sources:

Cunningham, Jan, Connecticut's Agricultural Heritage: an Architectural and Historical Overview, Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation & State Historic Preservation Office, 2012.

See continuation sheet.

Photographer Todd Levine Date 5/1/2012

View Multiple Views Negative on File CTHP

Name Todd Levine Date 5/10/2012

Organization Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation

Address 940 Whitney Avenue, Hamden CT 06517

• Subsequent field evaluations:

Latitude, Longitude:
41.581074, -72.598179

Threats to the building or site:

- None known Highways Vandalism Developers Renewal Private
- Deterioration Zoning Other _____ Explanation _____

• Interrelationship of building and surroundings:

The tobacco shed is one of several buildings on this 50-acre site on the south side of Ames Hollow Road, which runs roughly eastward from its intersection with Gospel Lane (Route 17) a short distance east of the town center of Portland.

The site also includes a c. 1865 farmhouse, carriage barn, gable-roofed workshop, pool house, and modern sheds. The Farmhouse is set back to the south on a hill overlooking Ames Hollow Road. To the west and down the hill from the house is the Tobacco shed, with a gable-roofed workshop to the north close to the road. The Carriage barn is to the east of the house. Further east is a small shed-roofed structure. Adjacent to the farmhouse to the southeast is a gable-roofed shed. Downslope to the south of the farmhouse is an in-ground pool with a shed-roofed pool house further south. The ridge-lines of the tobacco shed, house, and carriage barn are perpendicular to the road and run roughly north-south. The ridge-line of the workshop is parallel to the road and runs east-west.

The 2 ½-story, three-bay, center chimney, side hall plan Farmhouse is an example of vernacular Greek Revival style. This wood-framed house has its north gable-end as the main façade; it rests on a granite block foundation and is sided in clapboards painted white. The building exhibits typical Greek Revival-style details including pilasters and high entablature around the front door, and pedimented gable-ends lit by small rectangular attic windows. A single story ell extends to the west of the house. The late 19th-century Carriage house is 24' x 30' and made of square rule, wood pegged mortise and tenon joinery of chestnut and oak. It originally had three horse stalls for plow horses for the farm. The gable-roofed workshop was used as a blacksmith shop, complete with forge and brick chimney. The pool house and modern sheds were built in the mid-20th century.

The site is surrounded by woodlands with scattered modern residential development. To the west of the site is a tract of open space that runs roughly north-south. To the south is the former Air Line railroad bed and Route 66; this area is called The Hollow. The Connecticut River forms a semicircular bend around the town of Portland, to the west, and then crosses out of the Central Valley through the Connecticut River “Narrows” on its way southeast to Long Island Sound.

Approximately three miles to the west of the property in the town center of Portland is the Marlborough Street Historic District, including the Williams and Stancliff Octagon houses, listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Indian Hill Avenue Historic District and the Portland Brownstone Quarries are also National Register-listed historic resources in the central area of Portland. Additional farmstead sites included in the current thematic Agricultural Heritage nomination to the State Register of Historic Places are: the Hurlburt Farmstead at 193 Great Hill Road, the Chatham Alms House Farmstead at 186 Jobs Pond Road, and the Hubbard Farmstead at 332 Middle Haddam Road.

• Other notable features of building or site (*Interior and/ or Exterior*):

Architectural description:

Inventory of structures (C – contributing, NC – non-contributing):

Farmhouse	Late 19 th c.	C	Shed-roofed structure	Mid-20 th c.	NC
Tobacco shed	Late 19 th c.	C	Gable-roofed structure	Mid-20 th c.	NC
Carriage barn	Late 19 th c.	C	Pool house	Mid-20 th c.	NC
Workshop	Late 19 th c.	C			

Tobacco shed:

This is a 1 ½-story eave-entry bank barn tobacco shed. The shed has five bents, four bays and two aisles. The principal eave-side facade faces west and the ridgeline of the shed runs north-south.

Exterior:

The main entries of the shed are on the east eave-side façade and consists of two pairs of Z-braced wagon doors in the center two bays. The rest of the facade is blank and there is no evidence of alternate venting other than the

doors. The grade at the north gable-end of the shed declines from east to west, revealing a foundation and basement level. The western half of the basement level has a pair of hinged doors and the eastern half is the mortared fieldstone foundation. The main level of the north gable-end of the shed has a series of vertical wood board side-hinged vents, used for the curing of tobacco. The gable attic is separated from the main level by a dropped girt line siding divide. The gable attic has two side hinged vents.

The west eave-side of the shed has a pair of bay-wide overlapping exterior sliding doors in the basement level, slightly off-center to the south. North of the doors is blank. South of the doors is a pass-through door and a fixed six-pane window. The main level of the west eave-side of the shed has a series of vertical wood board side-hinged vents. The grade at the south gable-end of the shed inclines sharply to the east and a stone retaining wall extends to the south from the southwest corner of the shed. The main level of the south gable-end of the shed has a pair of hinged doors in the east half. The rest of the gable-end is blank, although it originally had side-hinged vents. The shed was restored in 2010.

The roof of the shed has a slight overhang and is covered with asphalt shingles.

Interior:

The shed is built with square rule construction mortise and tenon joinery using primarily chestnut interspersed with oak posts and beams, queen trusses, oak pegs with hemlock diagonal bracing and dropped girts. The post and beams are hand-hewn except for the vertically sawn rafters, diagonal braces and nailing girts. The post and beams measure 7" x 7", the nailing girts measure 4" x 6", and the gable-ends dropped girts measure 6" x 6". The two main entries open into the middle two bays (of four). Each bay is 12' wide and 24' deep. The rafters are butted at the ridge without a ridge board. Original roof boards are evident, with new plywood over them. In 2010, renovations occurred that included resheathing the entire south gable-end, resulting in the removal of the original side-hinged vents. Other renovations include principal post repair, foundation repair and sheathing replacement where rotted.

The basement level of the barn has unfinished square rule constructed ceiling beams, a concrete basement floor and exposed fieldstone foundation.

- Historical or Architectural importance:

Applicable Connecticut State Register Criterion:

2. Embodying the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction.

The Ames Tobacco shed is significant because it is an excellent example of an early side-hinged vented bank barn purpose-built for curing tobacco. This a rare example of a tobacco shed built into a hill and providing an added basement level. The configuration with eave entries, hand hewn frame, and banked basement places this as an early example of the tobacco shed, before the type became fully standardized.

Historical background:

The Tobacco shed was once part of a larger site that included the c. 1796 Nicholas Ames house across the street to the northwest, located at 115 Ames Hollow Road. Nicholas Ames was a sergeant in the Continental Army during the Revolution and originally acquired the site in 1771. By the 1860s, the site was owned by Fredrick Ames. Ames owned an adjoining 57-acre site with his father Charles and appears to have been a farmer. Local tradition asserts that Fredrick built the Greek Revival house that now stands at 157 Ames Hollow Road in c. 1865 across the street from his father's home because Fredrick's wife was not allowed to eat at the same table as her in-laws. When Fredrick Ames died, his property was devised to his father's estate and subsequently granted to Fredrick's heirs, who held it until the present owners bought it in 1945. The site was wired for electricity in 1946.

Most of the site was clear cut and nearly all of it was used in agriculture in the early 19th century. Uses included dairy cows, sheep, potatoes, bees and possibly apple orchards (a cider press was found in the basement of the tobacco shed). Today, only one tract of land is still used. This tract of land is to the west of the house and runs north-south. The tract was originally used for potatoes, then tobacco from the 1880s up until the 1970s, and today for sheep. The tobacco fields and sheds were rented out to Consolidated Cigars from 1948 to the 1970s. The shed was used for

storage from the 1970s to the present. The site also has a large personal garden to the east of the house. Bees are still bred onsite in hives to the south of the tobacco shed.

The current site of 157 Ames Hollow Road originally had more outbuildings than today. A second tobacco shed was torn down in 1957. It was a contemporary of the extant shed and was to the west of it, near the road. A large English barn was disassembled in 1970s and some of the chestnut was used in the restoration of both the tobacco shed and the carriage barn. It was to the southwest of extant shed. Its unmortared fieldstone foundation can still be seen. There was originally a sheep barn to the south of the English barn, now gone as well.

The site originally had three acres on the Connecticut River in the “Meadows” flood plain, off to the southwest near Pecausett Pond. In 1995 this land was donated to the Middlesex Land Trust.

Architectural significance:

The tobacco shed is significant because it is an excellent example of a side-hinged vented bank barn purpose-built for curing tobacco. Most tobacco sheds are built on a flat open space, but this is a rare example of a tobacco shed built into a hill and providing an added basement level. The configuration with eave entries, hand hewn frame, and banked basement places this as an early example of the tobacco shed, before the type became fully standardized with pier foundation, dirt floor, and drive-through gable entries.

• Sources (*continuation*):

Photographs and field notes by Todd Levine, 5/08/2012.

Interview with John, Judy, and Lisa Harper 5/08/2012, 146 Ames Hollow Road, Portland, CT.

Map resources:

Town of Portland assessor: <http://www.portlandct.org/assessor.htm> and

http://portland.univers-ct.com/view_property_R.php?account_no=00224300&series_card=1
Map-Block-Lot 041/0020.

Portland GIS Viewer: eQuality Valuation Services, LLC <http://www.equalitycama.com/>

Aerial views from:

<http://maps.google.com/> and <http://www.bing.com/maps/> accessed 5/08/2012.

Historical aerial photography and maps accessed 7/9/2013 at UConn MAGIC:

http://magic.lib.uconn.edu/mash_up/1934.html

http://magic.lib.uconn.edu/historical_maps_connecticut_towns.html .

USGS Historical Maps accessed 7/9/2013 at <http://historical.mytopo.com/> .

UTM coordinates accessed 7/9/2013: <http://itouchmap.com/latlong.html> .

Print and internet resources:

Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation, Historic Barns of Connecticut Resource Inventory, 2010,

<http://www.connecticutbarns.org/33600> .

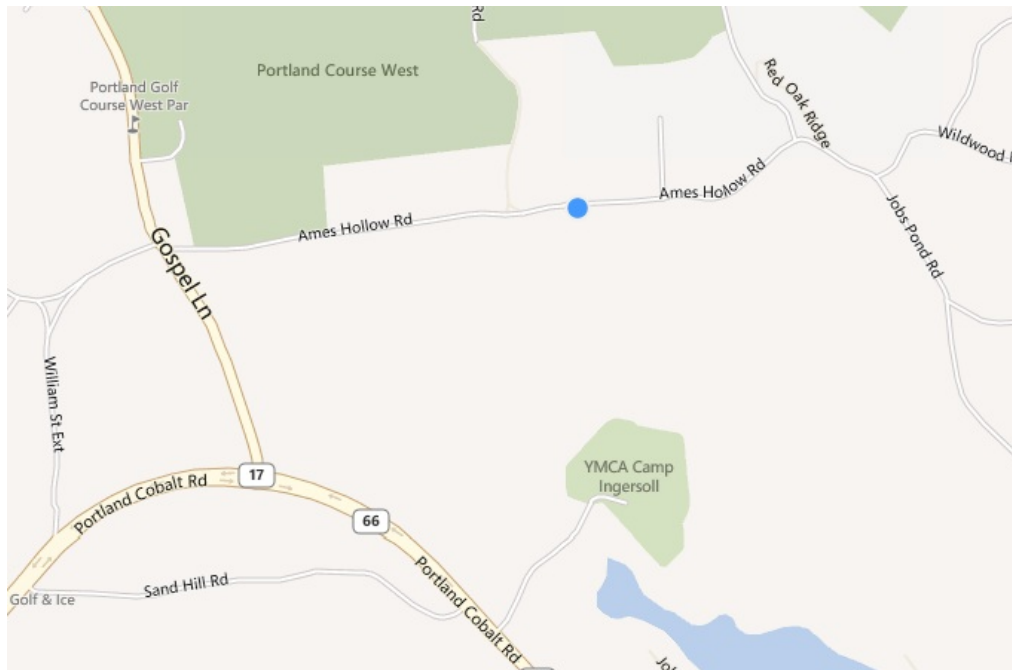
Porteus, G. L., Connecticut Historic Resource Inventory, The Greater Middletown Preservation Trust, 1980.

Sexton, James, PhD; Survey Narrative of the Connecticut Barn, Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation, Hamden, CT, 2005, <http://www.connecticutbarns.org/history>.

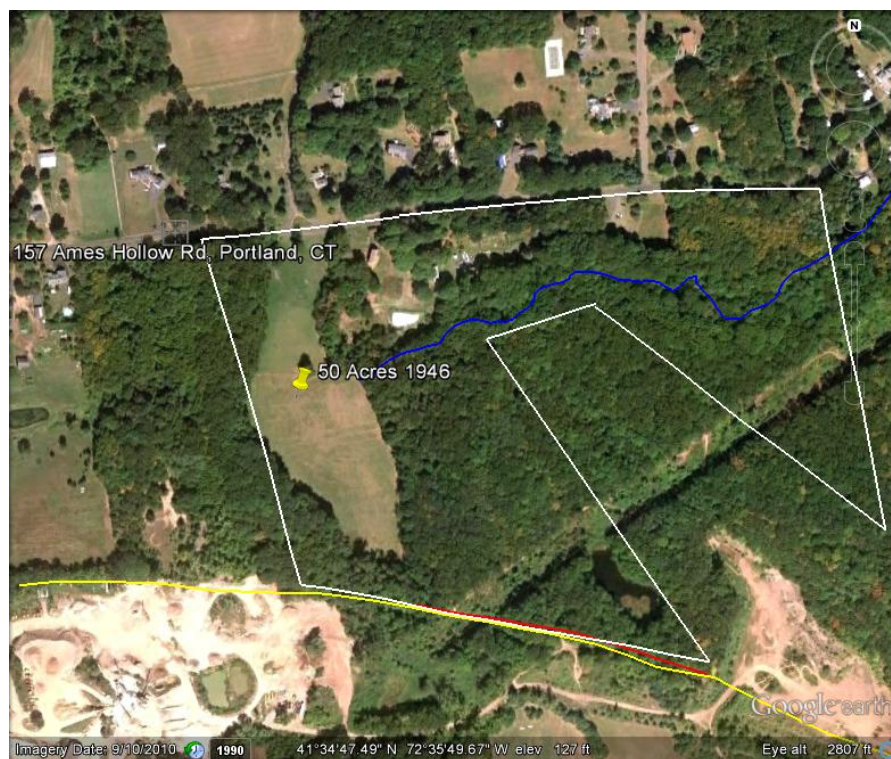
U.S. Federal Census, accessed 7/9/2013 at

<http://persi.heritagequestonline.com/hqoweb/library/do/census/search/basic> .

Visser, Thomas D., Field Guide to New England Barns & Farm Buildings, University Press of New England, 1997.



1. Location map of 157 Ames Hollow Road, Portland, CT – from <http://www.bing.com/maps/> accessed 5/08/2012.



2. Parcel map of 157 Ames Hollow Road, Portland, CT – base image from Google Earth, <http://www.google.com/earth> accessed 9/10/2010.



3. South view – aerial “bird’s-eye” map of 157 Ames Hollow Road, Portland, CT – <http://www.bing.com/maps> accessed 5/08/2012, showing contributing resources.



4. Northwest view of carriage barn, camera facing southeast.



5. Northeast view of c. 1865 Greek Revival-style Farmhouse, camera facing southwest.



6. North view of workshop, camera facing south. Tobacco shed is to right and Farmhouse to left up the hill.



7. Northeast view of Tobacco shed, camera facing southwest.



8. East view of Tobacco shed, camera facing west.



9. South view of Tobacco shed, camera facing north. Workshop is at left rear.



10. Southeast view of tobacco shed, camera facing northeast. Note farmhouse up the hill on the right.



11. Northwest view of tobacco shed, camera facing southwest.



12. Detail of basement level north gable-end of tobacco shed and diminishing retaining wall, camera facing south.



13. Interior view of Tobacco shed, camera facing south. Note new sheathing on the south gable-end.



14. Detail of north gable-end of tobacco shed, side-hinged vents, camera facing south.



15. Interior basement detail of tobacco shed, camera facing east.



16. South view of 115 Ames Hollow Road, the c. 1796 Nicholas Ames house, camera facing north.



17. Historic photo from the 1950s of the southeast side of the tobacco shed, camera facing northwest. Note gable-end of English bank barn (hay barn) to the left (now gone) and workshop to right.



18. Historic photo from the 1950s of the English bank barn (hay barn), now gone.



19. Historic photo from the 1950s of the second tobacco shed on the site, now gone.