## Historic Resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Building Name (Common)</th>
<th>Urda Farmstead</th>
<th>Record No. 13292</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Building Name (Historic)</td>
<td>Urda Farmstead</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street Address or Location</td>
<td>197 Turnpike Road</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town/City</td>
<td>Ashford</td>
<td>Village Westford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owner(s)</td>
<td>Evelyn Urda, 197 Turnpike Road, Ashford CT 06278</td>
<td>☐ Public ☑ Private</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## 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:
Wood stave silo, English barn, Vernacular style

### Date of Construction:
Early 20th c.

### Material(s):
- ☑ Clapboard
- ☐ Asbestos Siding
- ☐ Brick
- ☑ Wood Shingle
- ☐ Asphalt Siding
- ☑ Fieldstone
- ☐ Board & Batten
- ☐ Stucco
- ☑ Cobblestone
- ☐ Aluminum Siding
- ☐ Concrete (Type ______________)
- ☐ Cut Stone (Type ______________)
- ☑ Other ______________

### Structural System:
- ☑ Wood Frame
- ☑ Post & Beam
- ☐ Balloon
- ☐ Load bearing masonry
- ☐ Structural iron or steel
- ☐ Other ______________

### Roof:
- ☑ Gable
- ☐ Flat
- ☐ Mansard
- ☑ Monitor
- ☐ Sawtooth
- ☑ Gambrel
- ☐ Shed
- ☑ Hip
- ☐ Round
- ☐ Other ______________

### Number of Stories:
1 1/2

### Approximate Dimensions:
Silo: 12' diam., Barn: 20' x 56', Toll house: 16' x '20'

### 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Town #</th>
<th>Site #</th>
<th>UTM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>District: ☐ S ☑ NR</td>
<td>If NR, Specify: ☑ Actual ☐ Potential</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Please attach any additional or expanded information on a separate sheet.*
PROPERTY INFORMATION (CONT’D)

Related outbuildings or landscape features:
✓ Barn  ✓ Shed  □ Garage  □ Carriage House  □ Shop  ✓ Garden
✓ Other landscape features or buildings: Pond with dam, stream, icehouse, toll house

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:

See continuation sheet.

Photographer  Charlotte Hitchcock _____________________________ Date 8/02/2012

View  Multiple Views _____________________________ Negative on File CTHP

Name  Charlotte Hitchcock _____________________________ Date 8/03/2012

Organization  Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation

Address  940 Whitney Avenue, Hamden CT 06517

• Subsequent field evaluations:
Latitude, Longitude:
41.916916, -72.190545

Threats to the building or site:
□ None known  □ Highways  □ Vandalism  □ Developers  □ Renewal  □ Private
✓ Deterioration  □ Zoning  □ Other ______________________  □ Explanation ____________________
• Interrelationship of building and surroundings:

The site consists of two parcels totaling 14.4 acres, at the southeast corner of Turnpike Road, Ference Road, and Westford Hill Road, in the Westford section of Ashford. The Urda family at one time owned additional land at this intersection – as much as 79 acres in the 1970s. A small stream, Urda Brook, runs southward to join the Mount Hope River. A stone and earth dam slightly southeast of the road intersection, forms a pond which was formerly the millpond for a tannery at this site. The area, fully cleared for agriculture in the 19th century, retains some open land along with second-growth woodlands and scattered houses. The village center of Westford is to the east and Westford Hill is to the south, each having a historic church and cluster of homes.

The farm complex includes a series of buildings clustered along the south edge of Turnpike Road east of the pond. A 1 ½-story cape-style center-chimney Farmhouse is the westernmost structure, 26' x 32'. It has its ridge-line oriented north-south and its front entry is in the west eave-side. A rear door in the south corner of the east eave-side is the commonly used entry, as it faces the barnyard and other structures which are located further east. The ground floor has primarily two-over-two double-hung windows – three in the west side with a center door, three in each of the gable-ends with two windows in the attic, and four in the east side with a door at the left corner. One window in the south gable-end near the right (east) corner retains its original nine-over-six sash. A concrete foundation or parging has largely concealed the original stone. Siding is wood clapboards with simple corner boards and window casings. Roofing is asphalt shingles with a brick chimney above the roof.

A former Toll house for the turnpike, which dates from about 1826, is located east of the Farmhouse and is 20' x 28'. It is a 1 1/2-story gable-roofed building with its ridge line perpendicular to the road and its eave entry side facing west toward the farmhouse. It has a plank door in the left (north) corner and a nine-over-six window to the right. The north gable-end has two similar windows, missing many of the muntins, and a brick chimney rises inside the righthand window, partially blocking the opening. A shed addition covers the east side. The south gable-end is partially enclosed and partially open, with a well located in a roofed porch area. A wooden spool with rope for the well, is hung under the attic joists. Attic framing can be glimpsed above and consists of un-shaped round log rafters. Siding is unpainted clapboards on the west and north, unpainted vertical boards on the east and south. Roofing is asphalt shingles.

East of the Toll house are three barns. Barn I is the main barn, with a wood stave silo at the east end. Barn II is a four-bay wagon shed structure, 18' x 40' with its ridge-line oriented east-west and openings to the north, with four pairs of doors in the openings and a 12’ deep full-width shed addition on the east gable-end. A gable-roofed wall dormer approximately centered in the north side has a hay door. Siding is vertical wood and roofing is asphalt shingles. The interior is framed with a mix of re-used timbers and sawn dimension lumber, and appears to be used as garage space.

Barn III is a 10’ x 26’ calf barn. The interior is whitewashed and built with a mix of re-used timbers and sawn dimension lumber.

The Icehouse is a one-story gable-roofed building, approximately 20’ x26’, on a concrete foundation, located to the south at a lower elevation near the dam and outlet of a small pond. The Icehouse has its ridge-line oriented east-west and its north and west sides banked into the slope. The south and east sides have exposed basement walls. A door in the west side provides access to an interior space which has no floor; a single 2-story-high volume of space extends from the basement floor to the rafters. The western portion is partitioned from the main room and has three stable-type windows below the eave level, an attic window opening, and a basement door to the lower grade level. The exterior has clapboard siding, and wood shingles in the attic gable on the east. The roof is asphalt shingles.
• Other notable features of building or site (Interior and/or Exterior):

Architectural description:

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structure</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Farmhouse</td>
<td>1790 c.</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toll house</td>
<td>c. 1826</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barn I</td>
<td>Early 20th c.</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silo</td>
<td>Early 20th c.</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barn II</td>
<td>Early 20th c.</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barn III</td>
<td>Early 20th c.</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Icehouse</td>
<td>20th c.</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Barn I:

Barn I, with a wood stave silo at the east end, is located close to the road, with its ridge-line oriented east-west parallel to the road. It is a 1 ½-story five-bay gable-roofed eave-entry barn. The dimensions are approximately 18’ x 56’. Grade slopes down gently toward the east, exposing several courses of fieldstone foundation at the east end.

Exterior:

In the north eave-side, facing the road, there is a sliding door in each of the second and fourth bays from the left (east). The west gable-end façade has a hay door in the attic gable. The east gable-end abuts the silo, and is connected by a shed connector which bridges across at the main floor level, with no foundation. The south side, facing Barn II across a narrow yard, has a pair of hinged doors in the left (west) bay, a single pass-through door with a hay door above, another pass-through door and two six-pane windows in the second bay, a pair of hinged doors in the third bay, and a stable window without glazing and a single door in the right (east) bay. A concrete landing with fieldstone retaining walls provides access to the rightmost door; grade at this point is below the main floor level.

The barn roof is asphalt shingles and the wood board vertical siding is painted a faded red. Toward the east end several courses of fieldstone foundation wall are visible.

Interior:

The interior is constructed with a mix of old hand hewn timbers and more recent circular sawn dimension lumber. The framing resembles post and beam in its layout, but the material is evidently recycled from a variety of sources and most joints are nailed. The easternmost bay adjacent to the silo has the remains of wood cow stanchions, a concrete slab floor with manure gutter, and the whitewash finish typical of dairy barns. A door in the east wall connects to the silo via a passageway whose floor has decayed. The remaining bays are used for hay storage.

Silo:

The silo is a 12-foot diameter wood-stave type with iron hoop reinforcing and an unusual segmented cone mansard-type roof with wood shingles, in deteriorated condition. The silo sits on a concrete foundation and has a shed connector to the main barn’s east wall. The top of the silo foundation is below the main floor elevation of the barn, due to the downward slope of the grade. Historic photographs show the construction of the silo and painted signage “Rockford Alfalfa Farm Westford.”

• Historical or Architectural importance:

Applicable Connecticut State Register Criterion:

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

The visibility of the site in its cross-roads setting, and the complex of extant buildings, and the rural agricultural landscape, give the Urda Farmstead particular significance. With its wood stave and iron hoop construction and unique multi-faceted mansard-like roof, and its status as apparently the only extant wood silo in Ashford, the silo is particularly important. The Tollhouse building is another rare survivor of its type. The farmstead as a whole is
historically significant, as it tells a story beginning in the mid- to late-1700s of farming, tanning industry, construction of the turnpike system, and then of the arrival of a new wave of migrants to replace the English-based families with Eastern European ethnicities.

**Historical background:**

The town of Ashford was incorporated in 1714 and for its first century saw typical scattered settlement on upland ridges. The economy was subsistence agriculture. Industry was limited to the mills of the agricultural economy – grist, saw, and fulling mills. The house at the Urda Farmstead dates from before 1800, possibly from the mid-18th century, according to deed research by family members. The west-facing orientation of the house appears to predate the layout of Turnpike Road along the north side of the house.

Beginning in the early years of the 19th century, two turnpikes ran through Ashford, with the Middle Turnpike becoming today’s US Route 44. The Center Turnpike connected already-developed portions of a route from Boston to Hartford; the Center Turnpike Company was chartered in 1826 to build a turnpike between Tolland and the Massachusetts border. This seems to have duplicated other routes, but it remained a toll route until 1853. Today much of the route consists of local roads, as with Turnpike Road in Westford. One of the few remaining toll houses is extant as an outbuilding in the barnyard.

In the early 19th century, the turnpikes and improved roads, along with limited market-oriented agriculture, resulted in some local wealth and settlement nuclei at the major crossroads. Ashford Center, Westford, and Warrenville date from this period. There existed a short-lived glass factory at Westford. Ultimately, the lack of significant waterpower and railroad connections led to stagnation.

At this site on Turnpike Road, a dam and mill pond supported a tannery operated first by 19th-century owners, George Lincoln (b. 1796) and his son Dwight Lincoln (b. 1827). They are listed in the 1860-1880 census lists and appear on the 1869 Gray map of Ashford, with George’s wife Laura and their daughter, Dwight’s sister, Laura E. By 1900 Dwight was head of the household and living with his sister Laura E., so apparently there were no descendants to take over the farm or the tannery.

In the early 20th century, the declining farms of Ashford were abandoned by their Yankee owners and sold to Eastern European immigrants, notably Slovaks, Bohemians, and Hungarians (Magyars). The census records are inexact, often listing a family with different nationalities from one decade to the next. The Urdas, George Urda (1866-1937), his wife Susan, and five sons appear first in the 1910 census as residents in Ashford. The older sons moved elsewhere, but Paul and two others remained in Ashford working with their father. Paul (1907-2000) took over the farm. He worked for the State of Connecticut Department of Transportation, often as a snow plow driver, while also operating a small dairy farm. He gave up the dairy cows in the 1950s when new regulations requiring bulk tanks made his small operation uneconomical, and raised beef cattle until shortly before his death in 2000. His widow Evelyn still lives on the farmstead.

The transformation of the rural countryside through this wave of migration is one of the important stories of Connecticut history. Today a large portion of the town of Ashford is descended from these families and roads are named for them – Tremko, Ference, Hnath, to name a few.

During the years the Urdas were farming, they converted the tannery to an icehouse. The barns appear to have been constructed and remodeled with material repeatedly recycled, as there are some hand hewn beams in Barn I, but the joinery is simple nailed joints. The silo appears to be one of the more sturdy structures in the complex, with the group of outbuildings together forming an important historical record.

**Architectural significance:**

The silo is the most significant agricultural outbuilding, with its wood stave and iron hoop construction and unique multi-faceted mansard-like roof. Its status as apparently the only extant wood silo in Ashford, gives it particular significance. The farmstead as a whole is historically significant, as it tells a story beginning in the mid- to late-1700s of farming, tanning industry, construction of the turnpike system, and then of the arrival of a new wave of migrants to replace the English-based families with Eastern European ethnicities. The juxtaposition of an 18th-century cape-
style center-chimney house with a c. 1826 toll house, and a barnyard complex with an early 20th-century silo, makes up a locally-important historical sequence. Each significant period is marked by a structure at this site. The visibility of the site in its cross-roads setting, adds to its significance.

- Sources (continuation):


Map resources:

Town of Ashford Assessor's Record
http://data.visionappraisal.com/AshfordCT/findpid.asp?iTable=pid&pid=1923
Parcel IDs: 12/ H/ 1, 12/1/1.


Aerial views from:

Historical aerial photography and maps accessed at UConn MAGIC web site 8/03/2012:
Gray, O.W., Atlas of Windham County, Keeney, C.J., Hartford, 1869
http://magic.lib.uconn.edu/mash_up/1934.html
http://magic.lib.uconn.edu/historical_maps_connecticut_towns.html


Print and internet resources:


Clouette, Bruce, Church Farm National Register of Historic Places Nomination No. 88002650, National Park Service, 1988.

Clouette, Bruce, Ashford Township Survey, handwritten manuscript, Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation, 1990s.

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


Laberge, Alfred, He knew he'd never be rich, Willimantic Chronicle, September 21, 1976.


1. Location map of 197 Turnpike Road, Ashford CT – from http://maps.google.com/ accessed 8/01/2012.

2. Southwest view – aerial “bird’s-eye” map of 197 Turnpike Road, Ashford CT – http://www.bing.com/maps accessed 8/03/2012. The site is at the southeast corner (lower right) of the road intersection, and includes the small point and buildings to the east along the road.
3. Site Plan Detail showing contributing resources identified.

4. Northwest view of Farmhouse with Toll house at rear, Barn I and Silo beyond; camera facing east.
5. Northwest view of Farmhouse, camera facing southeast. Toll house is at left rear.

6. Southeast view, camera facing northwest; Farmhouse at left rear, Barn II at right.
7. South detail view, camera facing north, showing the only remaining original nine-over-six sash.

8. Interior view of Farmhouse kitchen (southwest room) showing fireplace surround and oven door.

10. South view of Toll house, camera facing north; Farmhouse at left, Barn II at right.

11. Toll house, interior view in south porch, camera facing northwest, showing well hoist and framing.
12. Northwest view of Barn I, camera facing southeast, with silo at the far end beyond.

13. South view of Barn I, camera facing northwest; opening at right leads to cow stable area.
14. Northeast view of Silo and Barn I, camera facing southwest. Barn III is at left, Barn II beyond, and Toll house at right rear.

15. Southeast view of Silo and Barn I, camera facing northwest. Photograph of Urda family taken during construction of the Silo in the 1930s, courtesy of Evelyn Urda.
16. North view of Silo, camera facing south. Note the connecting shed bridge to Barn I.

17. Interior view of the east bay of Barn I, camera facing northwest. Note stanchions for one row of five cows.
18. Interior view of Silo from east bay of Barn I, camera facing east. Note vertical slot which would have been filled with removable doors, vertical staves and roof framing seen in the silo.

20. Interior view of west bays of Barn I, camera facing north. Note hewn timber posts and girt combined with sawn lumber in the plate and rafters.

21. Northwest view of Barn II, camera facing southeast; Barn III at left rear.
22. Interior view of Barn II dormer, camera facing northeast.

23. Northwest view of Barn III, camera facing southeast.
24. Southwest view of Icehouse, camera facing northeast from the dam.

25. Northwest view of Icehouse, camera facing southeast.
26. Northeast view of Icehouse, camera facing southwest. The pond is beyond at right rear.

27. View of Silo with Paul Urda and his niece, c. 1960, camera facing southwest, courtesy of Evelyn Urda.