Leavenworth Tree Farm, Record No. 2382

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

**Building Name (Common)** Leavenworth Tree Farm  
**Building Name (Historic)** Hunt, Joel, Farmstead  
**Street Address or Location** 749 Coleman Road  
**Town/City** Cheshire  
**Village**  
**County** New Haven  
**Owner(s)** Leavenworth Estate, 749 Coleman Road, Cheshire, CT 06410  

**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** English bank barn, Vernacular style  
**Date of Construction** 18th Century  

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

- Clapboard
- Asbestos Siding
- Brick
- Wood Shingle
- Asphalt Siding
- Fieldstone
- Board & Batten
- Stucco
- Cobblestone
- Aluminum Siding
- Concrete (Type ______________)
- Cut Stone (Type ______________)
- **✓ Other** Vertical wood siding

**Structural System**

- **✓ Wood Frame**
- **✓ Post & Beam**
- **✓** Load bearing masonry
- **✓** Structural iron or steel
- **✓** Other Scribe rule framing

**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:** 30' x 42'

**Structural Condition:** **✓ Excellent**  
**Exterior Condition:** **✓ Excellent**

**Location Integrity:** On original site Moved When? c. 1840

**Alterations?** Yes No  
**If yes, explain:** Cow stanchions removed in basement

**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: Stone walls

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 ___________________________ Date 7/19/2012

View Multiple Views ___________________________ Negative on File CTHP

Name Kristen Young and Todd Levine ___________________________ Date 7/25/2012

Organization Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation

Address 940 Whitney Avenue, Hamden CT 06517

- Subsequent field evaluations:

Latitude, Longitude: 41.483656, -72.884361

- Threats to the building or site:

- ☐ None known
- ☐ Highways
- ☐ Vandalism
- ✔ Developers
- ☐ Renewal
- ☐ Private
- ☐ Deterioration
- ☐ Zoning
- ☐ Other ___________________________
- ☐ Explanation ___________________________
• Interrelationship of building and surroundings:

The Leavenworth Tree Farm and Joel Hunt house are located on 41.40 acres of land on the west side of Coleman Road between Ashley Court and Philson Court. The main driveway extends to the west heading north of the English bank barn and continuing to the west, stopping at a field. Just before the barn, a small portion of the driveway branches off and extends to the northeast, leading to the house. A secondary driveway is located to the north of the farmhouse, and it extends past the house to the southwest off Coleman Road. Situated on a knoll near the southeast corner of the property is the farmhouse. To the southwest of the house is the English bank barn with a tool shed and chicken coop directly to the south of it. Directly to the west of the English bank barn is a small shed, and to the west of the chicken coop are two car ports. To the northwest of the farmhouse is a three-hole privy. Near the northwest corner of the property, surrounded by trees and at the bottom of a hill, is a small spring house with a cabin directly to the west. A stone wall borders the west boundary of the property. Christmas trees are planted on the east half of the property with additional plantings in the west half and in the southwest corner. The west half of the property consists of forested land.

The main gable-façade of the 2 ½-story farmhouse faces east with the ridge-line running east-west, and the house sits atop a small incline. The vernacular style farmhouse was built c. 1840 and includes a Greek Revival-style surround around what was once the main door. The door is located on the south corner of the three-bay east façade, flanked by pilasters with an entablature located above. To the north are two, six-over-six double-hung windows with trim, and just above the door and windows are three, six-over-six double-hung windows with trim. Located in the attic is a small six-over-six double hung window with trim. Attached to the west gable-end of the farmhouse is a small carriage house that is now used as a garage, and extending off the south eave-side is a gable-roofed addition. Gardens and trees surround the exterior of the house.

Coleman Road is located to the east of South Main Street (Route 10), which runs through the center of Cheshire, and to the west of the border of Wallingford, which is not far from the property. Directly to the east of the property, located on the east side of Coleman Road, appears to be open land and a farm. Directly to the north of the property is a 20th-century residential development located on Ashley Court with another 20th-century development on the west side of the property on Radmere Road. Directly to the south is a large farm with numerous greenhouses. A small body of water is located to the northwest of the property just past Ashley Court and Radmere Road. The whole property is surrounded by wooded areas and denser neighborhoods.

• 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>Building</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>House</td>
<td>c. 1840</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English bank barn</td>
<td>18th c.</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicken coop</td>
<td>Mid 20th c.</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shed</td>
<td>19th c.</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tool shed</td>
<td>c. 1840</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Privy</td>
<td>c. 1840</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring house</td>
<td>19th c.</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabin</td>
<td>Mid 20th c.</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stone walls</td>
<td>19th c.</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

English Bank Barn:

This barn is a 2 ½-story, 30’ x 42’ English bank barn with its ridge-line oriented east-west and its main entry in the north eave-side.
Exterior:
The main entry is found on the north eave-side in the middle bay of this three-bay barn. Each bay is approximately 14 feet in length. The barn is accessed at grade by a concrete ramp leading to a set of double-height sliding doors which hang from a hooded exterior track. The un-mortared fieldstone foundation is visible along the outside bays with the grade slightly dropping towards the west.

The west gable-end of the barn has two, three-pane windows with trim set within the fieldstone foundation. Also seen on this side is the girt line siding divide. Extending from the south corner of the west gable-end of the barn is a fieldstone retaining wall. This extends towards the west about six feet before forming an L-shape and turning towards the south for an additional six feet.

The grade drops significantly along the south eave-side of the barn, revealing a basement level. A concrete foundation is seen along this side. Two entries are found at grade along this side, each in the outer bays. The west bay contains a sliding door which hangs from a hooded exterior track while the east bay consists of a hooded exterior track with no door. There are three, three-pane windows with trim located in the middle between both entries, and a three-pane window with trim near the east corner of the south eave-side of the barn. Found in the middle bay above the windows is a sliding hay door hanging on a hooded exterior track. Located at the east corner of the south eave-side of the barn is a fieldstone retaining wall, extending towards the south for about six feet.

The grade rises along the east side of the barn, although the fieldstone foundation is still visible along this gable-end. A small one-pane window with trim is set within the foundation.

The gable roof is clad in asphalt shingles, and the barn is sheathed in vertical board siding painted red with white trim.

Interior:
The set of sliding doors located in the center bay enters into the interior of the main level of the barn, which is a typical English style layout consisting of three bays and four bents. The flooring is of wood planks.

The scribe-rule method used to build this barn can be seen in the semi-circular stamps and scribe lines used to identify and line-up the timbers during construction. This dates the barn frame, most likely, to the mid to late 18th-century. [Sowyrda]

The end girts are sitting on top of the plate, further indicating that this barn is of 18th-century construction. Found in the gable ends are a double girt system with five vertical support braces between the two girts.

All the posts and tie beams are squared hand hewn timbers with an overhead mid rafter purlin system. The surrounding girt system of the barn is also hand hewn to accept the exterior sheathing. Each end of girts have been squared and mortised into the standing posts and secured with trunnels (tree nails). The knee braces in some areas appear to be newer as they show signs of 1880’s era mill sawing. They may have been replaced when the barn was moved. The roof sheathing runs vertical from ridge to top plate and a wood shingle roof with furring strips are still visible between the sheathing. [Kronenberger]

A staircase along the north wall located within the west bay leads down to the basement of the barn. In the basement, there are fieldstone walls and a dirt floor.

It (the barn) was moved to its current site in the 1840s from an unknown location, most likely for the purpose of building it on a bank, creating a lower level that could be used for dairy cows. This is evidenced by property records as well as by the diagonal braces which are the only pieces of the frame that are pit-sawn and not hand-hewn. The original braces were most likely cut out to facilitate disassembly of the structure and the new (c. 1840) pit-sawn braces used to reconstruct it. The rest of the frame appears to be original (mid-late 18th century), featuring eight beautifully preserved English typing joints set on jeweled (gunstocked) posts. [Sowyrda]
Historical or Architectural importance:

Applicable Connecticut State Register Criterion:
2. Embodying the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction.

This farmstead and barn are significant a rare and outstanding example of a scribe rule barn constructed in the 18th century. Additional significance is gained by the history of the farm through more than two centuries during which it has been a subsistence farm, a gentleman farm/country estate, dairy farm, orchard, and tree farm, thus illustrating the typical evolution of Connecticut farmland over the years.

Historical background:
Cheshire was founded in 1694 by settlers from Wallingford. They settled in the area known as “ye old meadows” which was situated to the west of Wallingford, across the Quinnipiac River at the base of the Blue Hills (Cunningham). The Leavenworth Tree Farm is located about two miles from the border of Wallingford. During the late 1700s, this site was part of a much larger farm called the Bristol Farm which was owned by Ezra Bristol. The Bristol Farm was bounded by Coleman Road, Wallingford Road, Jinney Hill and South Main Street (Route 10). At some point in the early 1800s, Ezra Bristol sold 28 acres of his farm to his son Amos, just to the south of the Leavenworth Tree Farm property. By 1840, Joel Hunt, owner of the Cheshire Mining Company, had acquired the property and built a farmhouse on the site. He also moved the English barn to the site in order to create the extant bank barn. It appears that Joel Hunt had two sons, Ashael and Joel, Jr. Ashael Hunt lived with Joel Hunt, Sr. until sometime before 1900 when the ownership of the farm appears to have passed into Joel Hunt, Jr.’s hands. Hunt, Jr. lived on the farm with his daughter Lucy A. and son-in-law Jossiah L. Talmadge. By 1920, it appears the property was passed to the Talmadges who owned the land until the late 1930s when the farm was sold to the Tingles.

The Tingles were from New York City and used the property as their summer home. However, they ran a farm all year round. The farm had a few dairy cows in the English bank barn, they built the chicken coop on the property, grew fruit, and had an apple orchard. Also during this time, their son built a cabin, which was constructed of redwood trees from California, on the site in the northwest corner of the property. In 1952, the Tingles moved to South Carolina and sold the property to John Leavenworth. At this time, the property was mainly an apple orchard, with a large hayfield on the east side of the property. Leavenworth started planting Christmas trees, as he was a man who worked in Forestry. This is when the Christmas Tree farm got started, and it still functions as such today.

The English bank barn on the site was originally built in the late 1700s and moved to the site in 1840 by Joel Hunt. The bottom portion was used to house dairy cows and the middle pen functioned as a bull pen. Sheep were kept in the bottom between 1952 and c. 1960. Horses occupied this space between c. 1960 and c. 2000. The top part of the barn was used to store hay and starting in 1976 also housed farm equipment. Currently, both the top and bottom of the barn are used for storage.

Architectural significance:
The English bank barn on the Leavenworth Tree Farm is significant for a number of reasons; one being that it is rare a scribe rule barn would survive to see the 21st-century. However, this barn is an outstanding example of this construction technique, and embodies exceptional craftsmanship in the framing. The girt sits atop the plate, which indicates not only an older construction technique but also a technique typically found in the northern states of New England. The scribe rule framing and gunstock posts also show the age of the barn, which to this day has been well preserved, and adds to the exceptional integrity of the barn. Starting out as the Bristol Farm in the late 1700s, this land is still used for agricultural purposes which have allowed the barn to retain its original agricultural usage. This also helps to show its association with historical trends, that being the shift from a dairy farm, to an orchard to a tree farm.
Sources (continuation):

Photographs and field notes by Kristen Young 7/19/2012.

Additional photographs in 2012 Barns Grant Application, housed at the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation.

Interview with Paul, Sue and Justin Knickerbocker 7/18/2012, 749 Coleman Road, Cheshire, CT.

Map resources:


Aerial views from:


Print and internet resources:


Cunningham, Jan, Cheshire Historic District National Register Nomination No. 86002793, National Park Service, 1986.


Kronenberger, Thomas J., Conditions Assessment of English bank barn located at 749 Coleman Road, Cheshire, CT, April 6, 2010. Information from CT Trust Barns Grant application, 2011.


Sowyrda, Sam, Conditions Assessment of English bank barn located at 749 Coleman Road, Cheshire, CT, Feb. 24, 2011. Information from CT Trust Barns Grant application, 2011.


1. Location map of 749 Coleman Road, Cheshire, CT - from https://maps.google.com/ - accessed 7/26/2012.


4. Site map of 749 Coleman Road, Cheshire, CT. Not drawn to scale.
5. East gable-end of Joel Hunt farmhouse (main façade), camera facing west.

6. West context view of English bank barn, shed, and farmhouse to the left, camera facing east.
7. Northwest context view (from left to right) of shed, English bank barn, stone walls, tool shed, and chicken coop, camera facing southeast.

8. East side of tool shed, camera facing west.
9. East and north sides of chicken coop, camera facing southwest.

10. West side of three-hole privy, camera facing east.
11. Southwest view of spring house, camera facing northeast.

13. Context view of Christmas trees located on the east half of the property, camera facing northwest.

15. West gable-end of English bank barn, camera facing east. Note shed to the left and the stone walls to the right.

17. East gable-end of English bank barn, camera facing west.

18. Interior of English bank barn, through the north façade main entry, camera facing south. Note the girt in the upper right hand corner resting on top of the plate. Photo courtesy of Justin Knickerbocker.
18. Detail view of the English tie girt resting on the plate and the gunstock corner post, camera facing southwest. Photo courtesy of Justin Knickerbocker.

19. Interior view of west gable-end of English bank barn, camera facing east. Note the vertical support braces between the two girts. Photo courtesy of Justin Knickerbocker.
20. Interior view of post-and-beam framing with scribe rule marks and tree nail. Photo courtesy of Justin Knickerbocker.

21. Interior view of staircase leading from the main floor to the basement, camera facing north. Photo courtesy of Justin Knickerbocker.