**Echo Farm Calving barn/Horse barn**

**Record No. 11498**

**43 East Litchfield Road**

**Litchfield**

**Litchfield**

**Litchfield**

**Litchfield**

**Owner(s):** Raymond J. & Frances B. Devlin, Jr., 43 E. Litchfield Rd., Litchfield CT 06759

**Public □ Private □**

**Property Information**

**Present Use:** Domestic: secondary structure; 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 _______________________________________________________

**Accessibility to Public:** Exterior visible from public road? Yes □ No □

**Exterior Condition:** Excellent □ Good □ Fair □ Deteriorated

**Interior Condition:**

**Excellent □ Good □ Fair □ Deteriorated**

**Structural Condition:**

**Excellent □ Good □ Fair □ Deteriorated**

**Location Integrity:**

**On original site □ Moved □ When? ________________**

**Alterations?** Yes □ No □ If yes, explain: **Kennels at north side**

**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: Wood rail fencing, stone walls, orchard

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 8/21/2012

View Multiple Views Negative on File CTHP

Name _________________________________ Date 8/25/2012

Organization Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation

Address 940 Whitney Avenue, Hamden CT 06517

• Subsequent field evaluations:

Latitude, Longitude: 41.74746, -73.168067

Threats to the building or site:

- [ ] None known
- [ ] Highways
- [ ] Vandalism
- [ ] Developers
- [ ] Renewal
- [ ] Private
- [ ] Deterioration
- [ ] Zoning
- [ ] Other __________________________
- [ ] Explanation __________________________
• Interrelationship of building and surroundings:

This site is located east of the center of Litchfield. East Litchfield Road was formerly known also as Connecticut State Route 116, and was the main road continuing eastward from the green and town center. The road became a local access route after 1967 when a new road, today’s Route 118, was constructed, bypassing this site. Most traffic for Litchfield now follows Route 118. The intersection of East Litchfield Road and Fern Road has a cluster of historic homes dating from the 18th century. This house was formerly part of that cluster.

The c. 1737 house at this property stands on the northeast corner of Fern Road and East Litchfield Road. Originally located close to the street, it has been moved to a rocky ledge about 100 yards back from road. A large stone retaining wall in front (north) provides a narrow terraced garden overlooking the north hay field from an elevated viewpoint. There is a stone well head near the road where the house formerly stood. A driveway enters from East Litchfield Road, runs north, and terminates in a circle, with the garage to the northeast. The house is to the west, with its north side close to a massive rock outcropping.

The Calving barn stands to the southeast of the garage, adjacent to the Lee’s Riding Stable property next door at 57 East Litchfield Road. 57 East Litchfield Road was the site of the main barn complex of Echo Farm from its construction in the 1870s until its demolition in the 1950s-60s.

The house is:

- a traditional five-bay center-chimney colonial house set on a fieldstone foundation and oriented with the gables to the northeast and northwest. A two-story wing telescopes to the west, and a 1 ½ story ell extends from the east gable end. On the main section of the house, a handsome course of modillion bocks runs under the cornice. The central front entry features a classically inspired pedimented portico with a triangular pediment (modillioned cornice and shallow barrel vault). Two extremely slender colonettes support the pediment. Fluted pilasters flank the door, which is crowned by a rectangular transom with a fanlike pattern of muntins. Another noteworthy feature is the small, truncated Palladian window above the entry; a pair of fluted pilasters crowned by deep entablature cornices flank louvers on either side of a 6-over-6 double-hung window. The window is crowned by a carved wooden fan. The interior is particularly noteworthy for the paneling: fluted pilasters carved with florets flank an overmantel in the east parlor; upstairs chambers and other rooms also contain fielded paneling and carved wainscoting. A three-bay fieldstone garage banked into the hillside stands to the northeast of the house (Carley, 2007).

The site includes 19 acres, with a hay field occupying the area north of East Litchfield Road, west of Fern Road, and to the south of the house. North of the barn is an area of lawn and orchard trees, and the northern portion of the site is wooded with outcroppings of bedrock.

Two Local and National Register Historic Districts are located in Litchfield as are several other individually-listed sites. The Milton Center Historic District is in the northwest corner of the town and includes the village center of Milton with its common, a bridge crossing the Shepaug River, a historic water power site, and approximately 150 surrounding 18th- and 19th-century buildings (the LHD boundary is more inclusive than the NR district). The Borough of Litchfield Historic District, the first historic district established in Connecticut (in 1959) is one mile to the west of the site, and focuses on the town green and approximately 475 surrounding structures dating from the 18th century onward. It is a Local and National Historic Landmark district. Other farmstead sites included in the current State Register of Historic Places thematic nomination represent the agricultural areas surrounding the Borough of Litchfield: Kar-Mic Dairy at 68 Prospect Mountain Road in Bantam; Bunnell Farm at 498 Maple Street in Milton; two sites formerly making up Toll Gate Farms on Chestnut Hill Road; the Iffland Farmstead at 374 East Litchfield Road, also in East Litchfield; and the Curtiss-Goodwin Farmstead at 34 Goodwin Hill Road in the village of Northfield.
• 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>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>House</td>
<td>c. 1737, moved c. 1935</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calving Barn</td>
<td>c. 1910</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garage</td>
<td>1920s</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Calving Barn:

This elongated 30’ x 80’ gable-roofed barn is oriented with its ridge-line east-west. Grade declines from east to west so that the structure has a lower floor elevation at the west end where an area of box stalls for horses is located. The eastern portion, making up the majority of the barn has a higher floor elevation. A hay loft level occupies the attic above the entire barn.

Exterior:

The west gable-end has a Dutch stable door off-center toward the left (north) with x-bracing in the upper and lower panels. This is flanked by two six-pane stable windows with trim. The mortared fieldstone foundation wall forms an approximately three-foot-high base to the wall, above which vertical wood siding is painted yellow with white trim. Above in the attic a pair of large hinged hay doors have sloped heads following the pitch of the roof. These have x-braced lower panels and louvered openings in the upper parts. A small projecting hay hood at the roof-line shelters a hay track which extends out beyond the wall.

The south eave-side appears in the form of five bays. From left (west) to right, the first bay is the horse stable with the dropped floor, accessed from the west gable-end. There are two six-pane stable windows with trim in the south side of this bay. At the second bay, the foundation steps up about three feet along the rising grade. This bay has a slightly deeper roof overhand at the eaves, and high in the wall below the projecting eave is a panel of six six-pane windows with trim. The third bay has a solid interior sliding door, full height, and to its right two tall six-over-six double-hung windows with trim. The fourth bay is filled by a wide and tall opening with a pair of interior sliding doors with twelve-pane glazing above x-braced lower panels. The fifth, righthand, bay has a single double-hung window matching the third bay and an area of solid wall at the right corner.

The east gable-end, abutting the eastern property line, appears to be blank. The north eave-side, a rear exposure, has a sliding door corresponding to the double pair in the south side. To the right (east) of this there is a section with a deeper eave overhang, beneath which are several small high windows. A small shed-roofed concrete block masonry addition is attached near the center and a fenced dog kennel with openings to the interior is to its left (east). In the rightmost bay near the west end, a six-pane stable window lights the horse stall area, and a hinged hay door is above. The fieldstone foundation continues at the upper grade level to approximately two feet from the east corner, where it steps down to the level of the west end. Siding is vertical boards painted yellow with white trim.

The roof is asphalt shingles. Two metal ventilators rise from the roof ridge.

Interior:

The large eastern portion is a single space, with plastered interior wall and ceiling finishes at the western half, and a concrete slab floor. An area near the south wall in the western corner has a floor of end-grain wood block paving. The eastern area between the large door openings has a grooved dropped concrete floor surface, apparently for a specialized function. An opening above this area permits viewing of the roof structure above. The walls of this area eastward are unfinished studs with diagonal sheathing on the east end wall and horizontal sheathing on the north wall. Exterior walls are balloon-framed, while a longitudinal girder and a series of timber posts support the loft floor, of dimension lumber framing. The roof is common rafters with a ridge-board and narrow spaced slats for decking, recently re-roofed with a plywood underlayment.
At the western stable area, the interior wall separating the stable from the upper level area to the east, is constructed of large white structural tiles. This suggests that the stable could have been a subsequent addition to the main structure, or that a fire-proof separation was desired for the equine area. The south foundation wall steps at this point, while the north foundation carries across with only hairline cracks in the mortar. The change in eave overhang depth corresponds to the location of this partition as well, suggesting construction at different times. The stable retains the original box stalls with gates and hardware.

• Historical or Architectural importance:

Applicable Connecticut State Register Criteria:
1. Associated with the lives of persons significant in our past;
2. Embodying the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction.

This barn is significant as the last surviving outbuilding from the assemblage of structures that made up F. Ratchford Starr's Echo Farm. It represents the era of gentleman farming in the late 19th and early 20th century. Starr also participated in a popular literary genre in writing a memoir of his farm life.

**Historical background:**

According to the 1874 Beers map, the house at this site belonged to William Norton, a farmer who with his wife Susan had two daughters. Frederick Ratchford Starr (1821-1889) was already purchasing nearby property, as his name appears on three sites nearby. Starr, a Philadelphia insurance executive, came to Litchfield in 1869 in search of a country home to improve his health and began assembling parcels of land and old farms. He soon became fascinated by dairy farming and proceeded to educate himself and to recount his experiences in the memoir, *Farm Echoes*, published in 1881. Starr ultimately used this house as his home and built his barn complex on adjacent land to the east. He spent much effort improving the rocky and swampy soil to make it pasture and hay land. He raised Jersey cattle and had a prize-winning bull named Litchfield.

This house is significant as an early example of Litchfield's colonial-era architecture and as part of the extensive Victorian-era gentleman's farm known as Echo Farm, once a prominent East Litchfield landmark. Tradition holds that the house dates to 1737, but the date is difficult to determine, partly because the house has been moved back from the road; the fracturing of the Echo Farm property in the 1900s and the insertion of Rte. 118 also makes title searches extremely challenging. The beautiful interior paneling dates from the 1700s, but the transom and portico treatment appear to be later—perhaps Federal-period renovations of the early 1800s. The small size and slightly awkward placement of the small Palladian window, crowded under the cornice, is of note. The 20th c. stonework is by the DeRoss family, local masons of considerable reputation and talent.

The house, originally sited tight at the northeast corner of Fern and East Litchfield Roads, was one of several in the large complex of buildings and early farm parcels assembled beginning in 1869 for Echo Farm, which consisted of about 400 acres and numerous barns and outbuildings. The farm is believed to be the first in the country to distribute bottled milk commercially. Starr shipped butter and milk to New York by train from the Bantam Depot.

In 1910, the farm passed to the Chase family of the Chase Brass industries in Waterbury, and this house is labeled on a map as belonging to C. H. Chase, who owned three of the four houses at the crossroads here… In the late 1920s [sic], subsequent owners, the Bakers, moved the house at the northeast corner back from the road using rail tracks and a team of oxen. At that time, the east ell with dormer was added, originally fronted by an open porch with arched openings. The last owner to run the farm as a dairy was Cecil Boling, who sold the property piecemeal. This parcel still includes the Echo Farm calf barn (Carley, 2007).

Connecticut’s statewide aerial photography project of 1934 reveals the house still in its location near the road; hence the move must have come shortly after that date. Starr died in 1889; Henrietta Starr (b. 1821) and her daughter Maria (b. 1844) were living at the property in 1890. It is unclear whether this calving barn was constructed during Starr's lifetime or subsequently. The stable area could have been installed for the later residents after the house was moved.
The adjacent property to the east at 57 East Litchfield Road was the site of Echo Farm’s main barn complex. The barns were dismantled in the 1950s or 1960s. Some of the foundation walls remain and have been incorporated into the modern riding stable on the site. Cecil Boling continued a dairy farm operation into the 1960s; the concrete stave silo on the adjacent property would have been constructed during his time.

This site was purchased in 1969 by the current owners, the Devlins. They have had horses but none currently. The lower field between the house and East Litchfield Road is still hayed and the site of the main Echo Farm barn is a riding stable.

**Architectural significance:**

This Calving barn is significant as the last surviving outbuilding from the assemblage of structures that made up F. Ratchford Starr’s Echo Farm. It represents the era of gentleman farming in the late 19th and early 20th century, when wealthy people turned to country life, with some individuals taking farming seriously and investing in the most current scientific agricultural facilities and techniques for breeding and dairy management. Starr participated in a popular literary genre in writing a memoir of his farm life (see also the nomination of 125 Berkshire Road, Newtown). The building represents the time when timber framing was giving way to the use of circular-sawn standard dimension lumber. The fieldstone foundation exhibits a high level of craftsmanship and the horse stable retains period stall details.

**Sources (continuation):**

Photographs and field notes by Charlotte Hitchcock, 8/21/2012.

Interview with Fran Devlin 8/21/2012, at the site; historic photographs courtesy of Fran Devlin.

**Map resources:**

Litchfield Tax Assessor’s Records.


Historical aerial photography and maps accessed at UConn MAGIC:

[http://magic.lib.uconn.edu/mash_up/1934.html](http://magic.lib.uconn.edu/mash_up/1934.html)

[http://magic.lib.uconn.edu/historical_maps_connecticut_towns.html](http://magic.lib.uconn.edu/historical_maps_connecticut_towns.html)

Beers, F.W., Atlas of Litchfield County, F.W. Beers & Co., 1874

Hopkins, G.M., Jr., Clark’s Map of Litchfield County, Richard Clark, Philadelphia PA, 1859.


**Print and internet resources:**

Carley, Rachel,


Interview with Fran Devlin, 4/2007;


3. Parcel map (approximate) of 43 East Litchfield Road, Litchfield CT – base image from http://maps.google.com/.

4. Southeast view of house in its current location – see below for historic photographs. Camera facing northwest.
5. West view of Barn, camera facing east.

7. North view of Barn, camera facing southwest.

8. North view of Barn’s western bays, camera facing south.
9. Interior view of Barn, camera facing west.

10. Interior view of stable area, camera facing north.  
11. Interior view of the east wall of the stable area.
12. Southwest view of modern pole barn structure and concrete stave silo at 57 East Litchfield Road, former site of Echo Farm barn complex.

13. Interior view of fieldstone retaining walls at 57 East Litchfield Road, remnants of Echo Farm barn foundations, camera facing north.

15. House during the moving process, Calving barn visible at right rear; photograph courtesy of Fran Devlin.
16. Detail of title page of *Farm Echoes*, F. R. Starr’s memoir of his farm years, showing the farm in 1881. The U-shaped barn is at left, with a ramped entrance to the hay mow. At the far right is a 2½-story center chimney farmhouse (in its original position) matching the appearance of the present house.

17. Echo Farm milk bottle and cover of F.R. Starr’s *Farm Echoes*, courtesy of Fran Devlin.
18. 1934 Aerial photograph compared with current, showing the house at 43 East Litchfield Road prior to moving on the left, and in its current position, right. In the left photograph most of the main barn of Echo Farm is extant to the right (east) of the house – an L-shape with the tall main block at the north and a lower wing extending south – “mash-up” from http://magic.lib.uconn.edu/mash_up/1934.html.

19. Southwest view of Barn with hay field, camera facing northeast.