**HISTORIC RESOURCES**

**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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Building Name (Common)</th>
<th>Ashlawn Farm</th>
<th>Record No. 153</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Building Name (Historic)</td>
<td>Bill, Captain James A., Farmstead / Ashlawn Farm / Harding Farm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street Address or Location</td>
<td>78 Bill Hill Road</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town/City</td>
<td>Lyme</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Village</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County</td>
<td>New London</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owner(s)</td>
<td>Glenn and Carol Dahlke, 78 Bill Hill Road, Lyme CT 06371</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessibility to public: Exterior visible from public road?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interior accessible?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If yes, explain</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style of building</td>
<td>English bank, Ground level stable barns, Vernacular style</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date of Construction</td>
<td>19th, 20th c.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### PROPERTY INFORMATION

Present Use: Agricultural/Subsistence: agricultural outbuilding; Domestic: single dwelling

Historic Use: Agricultural/Subsistence: agricultural outbuilding; Domestic: single dwelling

### STYLE OF BUILDING

- **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 block masonry)
  - ☐ Cut Stone (Type)
  - ☑️ Other Vertical wood siding

- **Structural System**
  - ☑️ Wood Frame
  - ☑️ Post & Beam
  - ☑️ Balloon
  - ☑️ Load bearing masonry
  - ☐ Structural iron or steel
  - ☐ Other Laminated wood arches

- **Roof** (Type)
  - ☑️ Gable
  - ☐ Flat
  - ☐ Mansard
  - ☐ Monitor
  - ☐ Sawtooth
  - ☐ Gambrel
  - ☐ Shed
  - ☐ Hip
  - ☑️ Round
  - ☐ Other Gothic arch

- **Roof** (Material)
  - ☑️ Wood Shingle
  - ☑️ Roll Asphalt
  - ☑️ Tin
  - ☐ Slate
  - ☑️ Asphalt Shingle

- **Built up**
  - ☐ Tile
  - ☐ Other

- **Number of Stories**: 1 1/2, B

- **Approximate Dimensions**: Barn I: 30' x 40', Barn II: 32' x 56'

### STRUCTURAL CONDITION

- **Excellent**
- **Good**
- **Fair**
- **Deteriorated**

### EXTERIOR CONDITION

- **Excellent**
- **Good**
- **Fair**
- **Deteriorated**

### LOCATION INTEGRITY

- **On original site**
- **Moved**

### ALTERATIONS

- **Yes**
- **No**

- **If yes, explain**: Milk house converted to cafe

### 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: Home office, stone walls, silo

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 Repair/restoration 1998: Don Sweeney

- Historical or Architectural importance:

See continuation sheet.

- Sources:


See continuation sheet.

Photographer Charlotte Hitchcock Date 8/01/2013

View Multiple Views Negative on File CTHP

Name Charlotte Hitchcock Date 8/20/2013

Organization Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation

Address 940 Whitney Avenue, Hamden CT 06517

- Subsequent field evaluations:

Latitude, Longitude: 41.361306, -72.335251

Threats to the building or site:

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

Ashlawn Farm occupies 74.64 acres along Bill Hill Road, a road which curves to the east of Hamburg Road (Route 156). Bill Hill Road intersects Hamburg Road at both the south and north ends. Bill Hill Road crosses the town line into Old Lyme at its south end. The farm buildings are on the west side of the road on the crest of a ridge that extends from Lord Hill to the west, to Bill's Hill to the northeast. The area is a mix of rocky outcroppings and coastal salt marshes along the east bank of the Connecticut River. It is about six miles north of the center of Old Lyme, where the Old Lyme Historic District is a Local and National Register District. The town center of Lyme is at Hamburg, two miles north along Route 156, and approximately six miles to the northwest of Hamburg is the Hadlyme Local and National Register Historic District, a small district encompassing a village with a historic ferry crossing of the Connecticut River.

The c. 1730 Farmhouse faces the road across a lawn and, along the south side, an unpaved drive enters the site, paralleling a massive dry laid stone wall of partially-dressed stone blocks and fieldstone. A distinctive set of these walls frame the pastures south of the Farmhouse and across the road to the east.

The drive ends at a turnaround southwest of the house in a barnyard area sheltered by a complex of barns. The west edge is enclosed by a home office in a newly-built 1-story structure, 30’ x 45’, that replaced a shed/garage structure on the same footprint. The north edge is lined by a rear ell of the house and a small shed or coop. On the south side is the eave-side of an English bank barn (Barn I) which connects in a linear fashion with two later barn structures, a Gothic-roofed dairy barn (Barn II) and a free-stall pole barn (Barn III). A concrete tile silo without a roof sits north of Barn II. North of the barns along the north property line is a four-bay balloon-framed Wagon shed, 25’ x 50’, with its south side open and the other sides solid. South of the barns is a modern metal-clad building (Barn IV) and a livestock shelter in the paddock adjacent to the road. Another small 2-story gable-roofed barn was recently removed; this stood south of Barn IV at the edge of a stone-walled pasture area, and can be seen in aerial views and historic photographs. Throughout the site, the open pastures reveal slabs of bedrock visible at the surface, indicating the thin and rocky soil of this area.

The Farmhouse is a 2½-story gable-roofed structure with its ridge-line oriented north-south. The main block is approximately 30’ x 40’. Its east eave-side is the principal façade and has a projecting hip-roofed entry porch in the center of five bays, flanked by pairs of four-over-four double-hung windows on both sides. The second floor has pairs of similar windows and a single four-over-four double-hung window in the center above the porch. The porch has square piers and lintel in a Greek Revival style, and appears to have been enclosed with infilled walls at a later time. The siding is narrow clapboards with wide classical pilasters at the corners. A wide entablature along the eaves is broken by the window heads which extend up to the eaves. The east and west gable-ends have two bays with windows matching the east front, under a full pediment with segmental fan lights and flush board siding. The cornice and rakes project slightly beyond the wall plane; it appears as if a Colonial-period structure may have been renovated and given added detailing in the Federal and Greek Revival styles. Two chimneys are visible above the roof-line. Roofing is asphalt shingles and the foundation is cut granite blocks.

At the west side of the house, offset toward the north, a 2½-story wing projects west, then turns north with a partial hip roof. The north gable-end of this wing has details to match the main block, except that the windows are six-over-six and have larger openings. A full-width hip-roofed porch is located on the east eave-side of this wing where it extends beyond the main block. A 1-story ell extends west from the west side of the wing. This has a full-width porch along its south eave-side.

The surrounding area is lightly developed due to the rocky and marshy terrain, with a mix of historic farmsteads, mostly residential today, and 20th-century residential structures. US Route 1 and the Interstate 95 highway are major east-west routes located about three miles to the south.
• 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>Type</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Farmhouse</td>
<td>c. 1730</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>20th c.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barn I, Milk room</td>
<td>Early- to mid-19th c.</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Office/garage 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barn II</td>
<td>c. 1945</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Barn IV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wagon shed</td>
<td>20th c.</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Barn I:**

The easternmost structure is a 1 ½-story, three-bay English bank barn, 30’ x 40’, with its ridge-line oriented east-west. The north eave-side has a grade-level entry in the center bay. The south eave-side has a fully-exposed basement level open to the lower grade level to the south. A milk room addition is attached at the east gable-end. Barn II is attached at the west end. The arched profile of Barn II sits slightly higher than the gable roof of Barn I, although its slope declines more steeply, resulting in an awkward connection. Roofing is asphalt shingles and siding is vertical boards painted red with white trim. Part of the north wall has been replaced with concrete block masonry, painted red.

**Exterior:**

The three-bay structure has a 17-foot wide eastern bay in which the lower north wall has been replaced with concrete block masonry containing two 15-pane windows with concrete sills. The north wall’s center 12-foot bay has a pair of hinged full-height barn doors with iron strap hinges. Above the door is a 13-pane horizontal transom. The western bay, 9’-6” wide, also has a concrete block masonry base, with a six-pane metal sash window matching the adjacent windows of Barn II.

The east gable-end has a vertically-oriented attic window. The lower wall has an attached 1-story addition. The northern gable-roofed portion of the addition is the former milk room, a concrete block masonry structure with two double-hung windows in the north side and two small square windows in the east gable-end. To the south is a shed-roofed portion which was added for the new café, and a deck for outside eating.

The south eave-side is blank at the main level and has an exposed open basement in the center and eastern bay, while the western bay has a fieldstone retaining wall and no basement.

**Interior:**

The interior reveals a hand hewn post and beam frame with hand hewn common rafters mortised into a hewn ridge pole. The typical bent has dropped tie girts, a single interior post below the tie girt, and vertical queen posts supporting longitudinal purlin plates. A hay track remains in place. Restoration work was done in 1998 including some timber replacement and new siding. The west end is open to Barn II which is attached and is approximately the same width. Some interior enclosed spaces have been constructed within this block and Barn II for storage of coffee and café supplies.

The basement level is accessible via a stair in the eastern bay. It has a concrete retaining wall along the north side and fieldstone end walls at the east and under the west side of the center bay. The western bay has no basement, most likely due to the presence of bedrock. The south side is open below the eastern and center bays, with monolithic granite posts supporting the interior bents of the upper level. Some interior posts are of concrete. A concrete floor has the remains of manure gutters and feed troughs oriented north-south across the width of the barn, indicating that there were stanchions for two lateral rows of cows facing west and east toward the center. The framing of the loft floor, visible from below, is a mix of some sash-sawn timbers and some circular-sawn, indications that the barn was altered over time, possibly the basement level added below the older barn frame to accommodate dairy cows.
Barn II:
This is a 1 ½-story barn, 32’ x 56’, with a ground level stable at the north side upper grade, and a hay loft above with its roof framed by glued laminated wood arch rafters, giving it a Gothic roof profile.

Exterior:
The north and south walls are constructed of concrete block masonry, set on a fieldstone foundation which is visible on the south side where the dropping grade exposes three to four feet of the wall. A row of seven metal-framed windows is in the south side wall; each is a four-pane hopper unit above a two-pane fixed element. The south side is unpainted masonry while the north side is painted red to match the adjacent Barn I. The north side has a pass-through door at the east corner, five similar windows, and a passage connecting to the Silo at the west corner. A historic photograph shows another silo formerly located at the east corner, connected to the still-extant door.

The west gable-end is partially covered by the attached Barn III. Above the gable roof of Barn III is a pair of trimmed window openings below a louvered vent. Siding is horizontal wood lap siding, unpainted.

Interior:
The ground level of the interior is a typical mid-20th-century dairy stable layout, with two rows of steel columns supporting longitudinal girders built up of sawn dimension lumber. Lateral joists are carried on these girders and support the loft floor planking. Two openings in the loft floor near the outer walls provide access for pitching hay down to the stable. The floor is a concrete slab and remnants of manure gutters and metal stanchions can be seen along with a modern enclosure for storage related to the café.

The upper level is a remarkably intact example of glued laminated arch rafters. These span from the plate to the ridge and each pair of half-arch rafters is pinned at the ridge by a connector plate. The rafter tails are shaped to form a slight bell similar to a Dutch gambrel at the exterior. Roof decking is horizontal boards butted, as a base for asphalt shingles.

The east end is open to the upper part of Barn I, though curtain by a tarp.

Barn III:
This is a 35’ x 110’ metal-clad and metal-roofed 1-story pole barn. It has a row of four-pane windows along both the south and north eave-sides. The west gable-end has an open wagon door with two stable windows to the north and one to the south. The roof is supported by wood trusses of sawn dimension lumber, spanning the full width, leaving the ground floor open as a free stall barn. It is currently used as shelter for beef cattle.

• 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.

Barn I represents an intact and well-preserved example of the English bank barn type. Barn II represents an experiment in cutting edge technology, use of glued laminated wood, of the early 1940s or after. Ashlawn Farm as a whole is highly significant for its 200-year history of ownership by the Bill and then the Harding families, both locally prominent and active in local and state politics. It is preserved and rejuvenated now as a working farm, coffee roasting business, café, and farmers market venue.

Historical background:
The Ashlawn farmhouse was built in 1730 for Joseph Sill, and subsequently farmed by the Sill, Lord, Bill, and Harding families prior to the present owners, Carol and Chip Dahlke.

In the mid- and late-19th century, Ashlawn was the home of Captain James A. Bill (1817-1900), well-known for his opposition to the Union’s role in the Civil War. He was the youngest of three brothers; the others were John Wight
Bill and Benehah Park Bill. All were neighbors on this road and lived into their 80s. James was a Captain in the Connecticut state militia during the 1830s, hence the title. He was active in politics both local and as a state representative and state senator, also as President of the State Agricultural Society and a Commissioner of the State Board of Fisheries and Game. James A. Bill became wealthy from his innovative farming practices including raising Angora goats and Cashmere sheep, which must have been able to thrive on the rocky soil of Lyme. He also introduced Devon cattle and Merino sheep to the area. John Wight Bill hosted the first public library in town at his home across the road from James.

James A. Bill and his wife Ann, who had three daughters and five sons, named the sons Kansas Nebraska, Lecompton Constitution, and Jefferson Davis, as testament to their political sympathies with the South. Following Captain James’s death in 1909, the farmstead was sold, by Kansas Nebraska Bill, to Ray L. Harding. The farm then included 357 acres on Bill Hill, Calves Island, and other areas in Lyme.

Ray Harding (b. 1886) ran a dairy farm here, and also served in the State Senate. He and his wife Helen (b. 1894) were among the last to farm entirely with draft horses. They had four children; a son, James Ely (Sam) Harding (1915-2001) took over the farm along with his wife Margaret. In 1996 Sam’s nephew (son of Sam’s sister Daphne) Chip Dahlke and his wife Carol, with a family partnership, purchased the farm and Sam was able to live with them for the remainder of his life. Carol developed a new business, Ashlawn Farm Coffee, run out of the farm, with a café in a renovated milk room. Chip built a new office structure for his financial planning work on the footprint of a shed that was torn down in 2007. The family also hosts a seasonal Lyme Farmers Market on the property.

Architectural significance:

These barns have multiple levels of significance. Barn I represents an intact and well-preserved example of the English bank barn type. Family tradition suggests that it may date to the 1780s, though much of the extant framing is typical of square rule framing of the post-1820 period. The house appears to have undergone extensive modernizing in the Greek Revival style, so probably in the second quarter of the 19th century or later, during the Captain James A. Bill ownership. The barn, or at least its bank barn configuration, could date from that time as well.

In 1934, the state-wide Fairchild aerial photography project documented the entire landscape of Connecticut. The view from the air shows that besides the Farmhouse, only Barn I and a shed to the northwest (now the site of the Office/garage) were in place at that time.

Barn II represents an experiment with a new technology of the early 1940s, the use of glued laminated wood. The ground level stable barn, usually with a trussed and braced balloon framed roof structure, was well-established as the standard for dairy farming by about 1920, and continued to be built through the Depression period and beyond World War II through the 1940s. Concrete block masonry was a common material for the lower walls. For the roof structure, the technology of the glued laminated arch was developed in Europe by 1920 but began to appear in the United States in the late 1930s. It was of interest to structural engineers and to the U.S. Forest Service and Department of Agriculture as an innovative way of using smaller sizes of dimension lumber in very economical but strong structural members built up of glued laminated wood. Both straight girders and curved arches were fabricated in this way. A few wood product manufacturers began to design and market thin glued laminated arch rafters for use in barns and other clear span structures; these included the Unadilla Silo Company, and Rock Island Lumber Company (RILCO), a Weyerhaeuser company. During World War II, shortages of materials appear to have made laminated arches appealing (see 131 South Street, Morris). This barn at Ashlawn appears likely to date from the 1940s or shortly after, a period of prosperity for the Hardings and their dairy operation.
Sources (continuation):

Photographs and field notes by Charlotte Hitchcock, 8/20/2013.

Interview with Carol Dahlke, 8/20/2013, at the site.

Town of Lyme Assessors Office, Town Hall, 480 Hamburg Road, Lyme, CT.

Map resources:

Aerial views from:

Historical aerial photography and maps accessed at UConn MAGIC:
  http://magic.lib.uconn.edu/mash_up/1934.html
  http://magic.lib.uconn.edu/historical_maps_connecticut_towns.html.


Print and internet resources:


Lyme Public Library Archives:
  Lyme Heritage News, Lyme Town Historian Hiram Maxim, Editor, various issues;
  Main Street News, Autumn 1993 2002;


Unadilla Silo Company, historic brochure c. 1960, courtesy of South Farms, 131 South Street, Morris CT.


3. Southeast context view of Ashlawn Farm, 78 Bill Hill Road, Lyme CT.
4. Site Plan Sketch showing identified resources – base image from Google Maps.

5. East view of Farmhouse with Milk room/Cafe and Barn I at left rear, camera facing west.

7. West view of Farmhouse and modern chicken coop, camera facing east.
8. West view: rear of small shed and coop, camera facing east.


9b. Former Shed/barn demolished and replaced by Office/garage. Camera facing northwest.
10. Southeast view of Wagon shed, camera facing northwest. Note Sam Harding’s 1964 Cadillac.

11. Northwest view of (left to right) Office/garage, Silo, Barn II (behind Silo), and Barn III (at right), camera facing southeast.

13. North view of Barn I center bay and doors, with Barn II attached at right, camera facing southwest.
14. North view of Milk room/café and Barn I, camera facing southeast. Note lower section of barn wall replaced with concrete masonry. This matches the walls of Barn II.

15. North view of Milk room/café, Barn I, Barn II, camera facing southeast. Note lower section of barn wall replaced with concrete masonry. This matches the walls of Barn II, including the rightmost window in Barn I. Pass-through door in foreground marks the former location of a silo.
16. South view of Barn I showing the banked basement under the two eastern bays, with granite piers. Café deck is at right; Barn II is at left. Camera faces northeast.

17. Interior view of Barn I, camera facing southwest. Note post and beam frame with dropped tie-girt and queen posts, ridge-pole, and hay track.

19. North view of Barn II with Silo at right, camera facing southwest.
20. Southwest view of barns, camera facing northeast. From left to right: Barn III, Barn II, Barn I, café deck.

21. Interior detail view of Barn II loft level, camera facing east, showing the glued laminated arch rafters.
22. Interior detail view of Barn II loft level, camera facing west, showing the glued laminated arch rafters.

23. Interior detail view of Barn II/Barn III ground level, camera facing north, showing at right the steel column and wood girder system supporting the loft above, and at left the typical clear span wood roof truss of Barn III.
24. Portrait of Captain James A. Bill, from death notice in Third Biennial Report of the State Commissioners of Fisheries and Game for the Years 1899-1900.

25. Northeast historic view of Farmhouse and stone wall, camera facing southwest; historic photographs courtesy of Ashlawn Farm.
26. Southwest historic view of Farmhouse with Devon cattle, early 1900s, camera facing northeast; historic photographs courtesy of Ashlawn Farm.

26a. Historic photograph of Ray Harding. 26b. Historic photograph of Helen Harding
27a. Historic photograph of Margaret Harding.  

27b. Historic photograph of Sam Harding.  

28a. Historic photograph of Milk house construction, camera facing south.  

28b. Historic photograph of Milk house.  

29. Historic photograph of Milk house, Barn I, and former silo, camera facing west.
30. Image of the site from 1934 Fairchild aerial photograph, compared with Google Map view today; [http://magic.lib.uconn.edu/mash_up/1934.html](http://magic.lib.uconn.edu/mash_up/1934.html). In 1934, the area was more open than today, and only the Farmhouse, Barn I and the shed north of the barns (now the Office/garage) were on the site.