**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>Thistledown Farm</th>
<th>Record No. 45410</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Building Name (Historic)</td>
<td>Botsford Farmstead / Golden Harvest Farm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Street Address or Location | 119 Botsford Hill Road |

| Town/City | Roxbury |
| Village | Roxbury Station |
| County | Litchfield |

| Owner(s) | Mr. & Mrs. Franklin W. McCann, 119 Botsford Hill Rd., Bridgewater, CT 06752 |
| 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:** English, extended English bank, dairy barns; vernacular

**Date of Construction:** 19th & 20th c.

### 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 _________________

### 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:** See continuation sheet.

### 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:** See continuation sheet.

### 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>
PROPERTY INFORMATION (CONT’D)

Related outbuildings or landscape features:

- Barn
- Shed
- Garage
- Carriage House
- Shop
- Garden
- Other landscape features or buildings: Multiple structures, driveways, open fields, scattered trees.

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 10/26/2011

View ________________________________ Negative on File CTHP

Name ________________________________ Date 12/21/2011

Organization The Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation

Address 940 Whitney Avenue, Hamden CT 06517

• Subsequent field evaluations:

Latitude, Longitude:
41.532676, -73.334577

Threats to the building or site:

- None known
- Highways
- Vandalism
- Developers
- Renewal
- Private
- Deterioration
- Zoning
- Other ________________________________ Explanation 104 Botsford Hill Rd.
• Interrelationship of building and surroundings:

Botsford Hill Road extends south from Baker Road (CT Route 67) near the western boundary of Roxbury. The road runs along the east slope of a hill at a level slightly below the crest. Downslope to the east is the course of the Shepaug River, winding south through a valley before plunging down a falls into the Housatonic River (at Lake Lillinonah). The present No. 97, 104, and 119 Botsford Hill Road properties were all part of the Botsford Homestead in the early 19th century. The structures at 97 Botsford Hill Road are briefly described (see nomination for 104 Botsford Hill Road).

Two historic houses are at 97 and 119 Botsford Hill Road, both on the west side of the road. 97 Botsford Hill Road is a 1 ½-story vernacular Cape-style house with an entrance in the south-facing eave-side. The east gable-end faces the road and also has an entry door. The structure is of a high-plate Cape type which is locally common. A wrap-around porch on the south and east sides was added in the early 20th century (Cunningham, Inventory No. 18).

To the south, the house at 119 Botsford Hill Road is also of the high-plate Cape type:

a large center-chimney Colonial built about 1790. Instead of the usual full two stories, it has a tall Cape form, with a half-story attic illuminated with 10-pane horizontal windows under the caves of the facade. Additions to the main block include a rear kitchen ell, which is attached to an extended wing on the right elevation. There are gabled dormers and a recessed porch on the right side of the ell. It is probable that the present five-bay facade was originally three bays with single, rather than double windows on either side of the central doorway. Its Federal or neo-Federal surround is exceptional, with fluted pilasters with incised rosettes on the capitals and a narrow overlight in the frieze. The cornice is capped by a narrow pent roof. Most of the windows in the main part of the house have 12-over-12 sash (Cunningham, Inventory No. 19).

To the northwest and north of the house at 119 Botsford Hill Road there are barns and sheds used for equestrian stables and hay storage (Barns I-VI). The property includes 14.6 acres to the west of the road and 16 acres east of the road. An entrance driveway passes on the north side of the house and continues west to run on the south side of the barns. Paddocks are located to the north. Landscaping around the house includes lawn and gardens, tennis and paddle tennis courts, and pool to the southwest.

On the east side of Botsford Hill Road at No. 104 is a property now belonging to a fox-hunting club. An extended English bank barn (Barn VII) with a silo, is located parallel to the road. A former heifer barn and bull barn have been converted for club uses. At the center of the grouping is a small 1 ½-story cape-style house. The 16-acre property has pastures and hay fields extending to the north and east of the cluster of structures.

To the north and west of the house at 97 Botsford Hill Road there are barns, sheds, and hoop houses used by a landscape business. A hay barn is located west of the house, a Quonset hut is to the northwest, and another extended barn is to the north. The 15-acre property has cultivated fields extending westward.

• 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>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>House</td>
<td>c. 1790</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barn I – Extended English</td>
<td>19th &amp; 20th c.</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barn II – Poultry/Bull</td>
<td>c. 1940</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barn III – Stable</td>
<td>c. 1960</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barn IV – Root cellar</td>
<td>20th c.</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barn V – Pony stable</td>
<td>1985</td>
<td>NC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barn VI – Tractor garage</td>
<td>1980s</td>
<td>NC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Barns at 119 Botsford Hill Road:

Barn I:

Barn I, the hay and livestock barn at 119 Botsford Hill Road, is the oldest barn in a group that includes six outbuildings on the west side of the road. The barn’s main block is a 1 ½-story gable-roofed structure with its ridge-line oriented east-west, 20 x 52 feet. Barn doors are located in the south eave-side. A 1-story gable-roofed wing, 16 x 36 feet, originally occupied by dairy cows, extends north from the west corner of the north eave-side. A small greenhouse addition is attached to the west side of the wing. A 1-story shed-roofed addition, 18 x 20 feet, is located off the north eave-side in the corner formed by the main block and wing.

Exterior:

The south eave-side faces the main driveway. At the left (west) are two bays constructed with timber framing. The western bay has a six-pane stable window near the left corner. The right of the two bays has a full-height pair of exterior-mounted sliding barn doors. To the right (east) is a portion constructed with balloon framing, which has a pair of out-swinging hinged doors and at the right (east) corner a pair of six-pane stable windows.

The west gable-end has a pair of six-pane stable windows. The north wing is set back toward the east. In the corner formed by the main block and wing, a small shed addition is attached to the north wall of the main block, and a greenhouse addition is attached to the west wall of the wing. At the north corner of the wing’s west wall, a pass-through door with a projecting roof hood provides access to the interior. The north gable-end of the wing appears to have formerly had a door opening at the center of the ground floor, now closed in. Three stable windows are located in the ground floor wall. Above is a double hinged hay door with a projecting hay hood roof extension. The east gable-end of the main block has a triple group of stable windows.

The northern shed addition has its east wall flush with the main block, and has three short double-hung windows. The north wall of the addition has a pass-through door flanked by a single double-hung window to the left (east) and a pair to the right (west). This addition abuts the northward wing, which has a single and a pair of stable windows in the east eave-side wall. Walls are vertical flush boards painted red with white trim; roof is wood shingles.

Interior:

The main block is configured with horse stalls at both ends and access in the center via either the tall sliding barn doors or the shorter pair of hinged doors. There is a hayloft level over the east portion. The two western bays have circular-sawn timber frames with pegged mortise and tenon joinery, while the eastern portion is balloon-framed with dimension lumber and has collar ties near the ridge-line instead of diagonal bracing. Some empty mortises are visible adjacent to the tall barn doors, indicating that some cross members were removed during the alteration.

The north wing has a single row of stalls along the east wall and a clear aisle along the west wall, with door openings to the greenhouse. The hopper stable windows have side panels to support the open sash, and the walls and ceiling are finished and painted, characteristics typical of a 20th-century hygienic dairy operation. The shed-roofed addition houses an office, toilet room, and storage.

Barn II – Poultry or Bull Barn, c. 1940

This 18 x 30-foot barn at 119 Botsford Hill Road, located northwest of Barn I, forming a barnyard along with Barns I and V, is thought to have originated as a poultry house or bull barn, and was later altered to its present appearance. The 1-story gable-roofed structure has walls constructed of concrete block masonry up to the eave line, with wood clapboards on wood-framed infill in the gable. The south eave-side has three panels of large windows, each consisting of four four-paneled sash extending up to the roof. The upper sash are hoppers, with side panels to support the sash when open. Between the left (west) and center windows are two additional single paneled lights of fixed glazing, located at the level of the upper sash in the groups of four. The two gable-ends have a door near the south corner, giving access to a hallway at the interior, and a pair of six-paneled stable windows lighting stalls at the interior. The north wall has two Dutch stable doors for horses to go out to the paddock beyond. The ample south-facing fenestration supports the presumed origin as a poultry house. The walls are of concrete block masonry, painted red with white window trim. The gable roof is asphalt shingles.
Barn III – Stable, c. 1960

This is a 14 x 30-foot 1-story gable-roofed structure at 119 Botsford Hill Road, located north of Barns II and V. It is constructed of concrete block masonry up to the window sill line, approximately four feet above grade, and wood-framed upper walls and roof. In the south wall there are two Dutch stable doors with a stable window toward the corners on each side. The gable-ends have two stable windows in the east and a window and pass-through door in the west. The north wall has two stable windows. The roof has unequal pitches, with the south slope steeper than the north. The south roof overhangs forming a hood over the doors. Upper walls are horizontal lap siding painted red with white trim, and the roof is asphalt shingles. The building is currently used for hay storage, although it contains two horse stalls, and was used for pigs in the 1960s.

Barn IV – Root Cellar, 20th c.

This 18 x 20-foot structure at 119 Botsford Hill Road is banked almost fully into hillside and is located to the east of the other structures, close to the road and separated from the other barns by a fenced horse paddock. Its gable roof is oriented with the ridge-line east-west and the exposed east gable-end facing the road. A narrow areaway with stone masonry retaining walls cuts through the slope to a single pass-through door in the east side near the left (south) corner. A loft-type door is in the west gable-end. Roofing is wood shingles. Exposed walls are painted red with white trim. The building was used to store apples and potatoes.

Barn V – Stable, 1985  NC

This stable at 119 Botsford Hill Road was built for miniature horses. It is a 20 x 14; gable-roofed barn with gable ends to the north and south; unequal roof pitches creates saltbox-like profile to the east. The primary elevation faces west; where an overhanging porch eave is supported on four bracketed posts creating a porch. The central door is flanked by four-pane windows, the south gable-end has three four-pane windows, a loft door is topped by an arched vent located at the roof peak. There is a central cupola with a four-sided hip roof and arched louvered vents, and a small horse weathervane. Siding is vertical tongue and groove barn board painted red with white trim. Roofing is asphalt shingles.

Barn VI – Equipment garage, c. 1980  NC

This shed at 119 Botsford Hill Road is a 42 x 46-foot tall gable-roofed shelter for tractors and other equipment. The ridge-line is oriented east-west. Large sliding doors open on the south side facing the driveway. There is an open shed with standing seam roof at the west gable-end. Construction is pre-fabricated trusses with vertical tongue-and-groove barn board painted red with white trim.

- Historical or Architectural importance:

Applicable Connecticut State Register Criteria:

1. Associated with events that have made a significant contribution to our history and the lives of persons significant in our past; or
2. Embodying the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction.

Historical background:

The farmstead that is now 119 Botsford Hill Road belonged to the Glover Botsford family in the late 1800s. The Botsfords were local farmers for whom this road is named. Identified in *Homes of Old Woodbury* as the Charles Botsford House, the Colonial Cape at 119 Botsford Hill Road first belonged to his father, Glover Botsford (b. 1795 - c. 1852). The Botsfords do not appear in the Roxbury census until 1850. At that time 19-year-old Charles was living at home with his parents. Also in the house were his George (15), who later lived next door at No. 97, and Mary (11). A 65-year-old laborer also boarded here and worked on the farm. Charles, who is identified here on the Roxbury map in the c. 1855 county atlas, may have inherited the house, but by 1870 he had left Roxbury, leaving the property to his 73-year-old widowed mother, Mary A. Botsford (Cunningham, Inventory No. 19).

A subsequent owner, Charles Palmer, ran a dairy farm at 119 Botsford Hill Road before and after 1920. The expansion of Barn I with the northern dairy wing, likely dates from Palmer’s ownership.
The property now 97 Botsford Hill Road is known as the Isaac & George Botsford House. The history of this property illustrates the depressed state of the farm economy in Connecticut's uplands in the last half of the nineteenth century. Farm credit from banks was not yet available, and tenant farming had become a way of life for many. A series of farmers tried and failed to make a living here from a dairy farm that once encompassed 160 acres in Roxbury and Bridgewater. Originally owned by Isaac Botsford, it was inherited by George Botsford (b. 1835). He sold the then 42-acrc farm to James H. Keeler of Bridgewater in 1864 but continued to live here as a tenant, according to the 1870 census. Keeler never lived here but held onto the farm by leasing it out to tenants. Leander Palmer took over in 1901. The next owners were John and Mary Pokrywka, Polish immigrants who first came to Roxbury in 1904. They farmed here for 17 years.

The property at 104 Botsford Hill Road on the east side was once part of the old Botsford farm across the road to the west at No. 97. Prior to the mid-1930s, both were owned by the Pokrywka family, who used the barn on the east side of the road for their dairy operation. The conversion of the main barn (Barn VII) from a typical 19th-century English bank barn to a ground level stable barn with 20th-century features including a dedicated milk room, would likely date from the Pokrywka period of ownership.

By the mid-1930s all three properties and additional acreage as well, had been purchased by Frasier McCann, the grandson of Frank Winfield Woolworth, founder of the F.W. Woolworth retail chain. McCann, a gentleman farmer, began assembling parcels of land around 1936 to create Golden Harvest Farm, where he maintained a herd of about 100 head of Golden Guernsey cattle. In the 1970s McCann switched to the higher-yielding Holsteins and also raised shorthorn steers for beef.

Numerous building projects can be attributed to the Golden Harvest period: at 119 Botsford Hill Road, the small concrete masonry stables (Barn II & III), the pony stable (Barn V), the root cellar (Barn IV), and modifications to Barn I are attributable to the McCanns’ Golden Harvest management.

Much of Golden Harvest was eventually sold to a partnership which subdivided the land in the mid-1980s. Some of the property to the east along the Shepaug River now belongs to the Roxbury Land Trust. 119 Botsford Hill Road is Thistledown Farm, still owned by the McCann family (Franklin McCann) and now home to a number of horses. The 104 Botsford Hill Road parcel belongs to Fairfield Hounds, a hunt club. 97 Botsford Hill Road is Burton Landscaping.

Architectural significance:

These farm properties, with multiple barns, are significant because of the integrity of the structures on their original sites in an intact rural community (Criterion 2). The history of use represents historical trends in regional agricultural practice affecting the community of Roxbury from the 1860s to the present, involving locally-significant historical figures (Criterion 1).

The Botsford farmsteads represent the 19th-century farming period when local farming was subsistence-based and either owner-occupied, or as at 97 Botsford Hill, farmed by tenants renting from an absentee owner.

The Palmer and Pokrywka farms illustrate the movement toward a larger-scale commercial business model, providing goods to urban markets, that arose in the early 1900s. Many farmers at this time were Eastern European immigrants, taking up land from earlier generations who had moved west out of state or out of farming altogether. In Roxbury, a number of immigrant families such as the Pokrywkas, Voytersharks, and Orzechs settled during the early years of the 20th century.

Both Barn I and Barn VII exhibit the characteristics of increasing requirements for hygienic conditions in the production of milk: The stanchion arrangement in aisles with concrete floors channeled for cleaning of waste, the finished wall and ceiling surfaces, the ganged hopper windows for ventilation and to light the work area during milking time, are a few of the typical features of this period. Barn VII exhibits an ingenious effort to turn a bank barn into a well-lighted ground level stable barn by cutting clerestory windows and light wells into the level above where the old timber-framed barn has been set atop the new modern basement layout.

Next, the consolidation of land into Golden Harvest, with major land purchases by a wealthy business family, the McCanns, during the late years of the Depression era, represents the gentleman farming trend. This occurred in
several other instances in Roxbury, for instance on Painter Hill Road (Toplands – see 102 Painter Hill Road) and Judds Bridge Road (Judds Bridge Dairy). The gentleman farmers, although they had sufficient financial means to support capital improvements on a large scale, took dairying seriously and operated until the mid- to late-1980s when economic conditions drove many farmers out of business. Roxbury and some other nearby communities experienced this development particularly because of their proximity to New York City. The area was within a convenient distance such that the farm owners could travel to and from the city to oversee the business, generally with the help of experienced local farm managers. The co-existence of gentleman farmers such as the McCanns with immigrant families – the Pokrywkas and others – was a significant historical trend that has strongly influenced the demographics of Roxbury.

The final stage in the evolution of Roxbury’s farms can be seen in the current uses of the land – a mix of the country estate use at Thistledown Farm, with the recreational use under the Fairfield Hounds ownership, and a scattering of owners still making a living from the land, as the Burton Landscaping business does.

The extant structures on these properties represent the range of building types over nearly two centuries of continuous use. Barns I and VII are 19th-century English barns with post and beam frames and the characteristic center-bay barn doors. Each has been extensively modified. As a result, both illustrate the design features and technology of early 20th century scientific dairy farming. Particular features such as the enameled steel silo and the milk room at Barn VII, and the attention to daylighting that can be seen in the arrangement of windows for the dairy cattle facilities, are surviving remnants of functional building types that have become obsolete. The mid-20th century buildings include concrete block masonry stables, a steel Quonset hut, and an enameled steel silo.
Sources (continuation):

   Parcel ID: 06-028, Parcel ID: 06-005, Parcel ID: 06-013.

Interview with Franklin McCann and Jim Conway, 10/25/2011, at 119 Botsford Hill Road, Roxbury.

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.


UTM coordinates: http://itouchmap.com/latlong.html

Print and internet resources:

Connecticut State Library online: iconn.org or http://www.cslib.org/iconnsitemap/staff/SiteIndex.aspx#directories

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


Harvestore Silos – company web sites:


4. Site Plan sketch of 119 Botsford Hill Road.
5. West view of 119 Botsford Hill Road, house at left, Barn I at right rear, camera facing west.

6. Southeast view of Barn I at 119 Botsford Hill Road, camera facing northwest.
7. Southwest view of Barn I, camera facing northeast.

8. Northwest view of Barn I, camera facing southeast.

10. South view of Barn II at left, Barn V at right, camera facing north.

11. Southwest view of Barn III, camera facing east. Barn II corner is at right; Barn VII at 104 Botsford Hill Road is at far left rear.
12. East view of Barn IV, camera facing west.

13. Interior view of Barn I, camera facing west, showing timber framing and rafters.

14. Interior view of Barn II, camera facing south, showing lower fixed and upper hopper windows.