**GENERAL INFORMATION**

Building Name (Common)  Pinney Farm
Building Name (Historic)  Gowdy Farmstead
Street Address or Location  214 Maple Street
Town/City  Somers  Village  Somersville  County  Hartford
Owner(s)  David Pinney, 214 Maple Street, Somers, CT 06071

**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 & New England bank barns, vernacular style
Date of Construction  c. 1830, 1880

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Material(s) (Indicate use or location when appropriate):</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clapboard  ○ Asbestos Siding  ○ Brick  ○ Wood Shingle  ○ Asphalt Siding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fieldstone  ○ Board &amp; Batten  ○ Stucco  ○ Cobblestone  ○ Aluminum Siding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concrete (Type ______________)  ○ Cut Stone (Type ______________)  ○ Other  Vertical wood siding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structural System</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wood Frame  ○ Post &amp; Beam  ○ Balloon  ○ Load bearing masonry  ○ Structural iron or steel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other ________________</td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Roof (Type)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gable  ○ Flat  ○ Mansard  ○ Monitor  ○ Sawtooth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gambrel  ○ Shed  ○ Hip  ○ Round  ○ Other ________________</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Material</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wood Shingle  ○ Roll Asphalt  ○ Tin  ○ Slate  ○ Asphalt Shingle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Built up  ○ Tile  ○ Other ________________</td>
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</tbody>
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Number of Stories: 1 1/2, B  Approximate Dimensions: Barn I: 40' x 32'; Barn II: 50' x 50'

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:  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: Greenhouses

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  Todd Levine ________________________________ Date 5/01/2012
View  Multiple Views  Negative on File  CTHP
Name  Todd Levine ________________________________ Date 6/04/2012
Organization  Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation
Address  940 Whitney Avenue, Hamden CT 06517

• Subsequent field evaluations:

  Latitude, Longitude: 41.972239, -72.494036

Threats to the building or site:
- ✔ None known  □ Highways  □ Vandalism  □ Developers  □ Renewal  □ Private
- □ Deterioration  □ Zoning  □ Other __________________  □ Explanation __________________
Interrelationship of building and surroundings:

There is a scribe rule English bank barn with an attached New England barn and Carriage barn at the heart of this small farm. The 18-acre farm includes the barns, a shed/garage now used as a pool house, the ruins of a chicken coop, a series of greenhouses, and the mid-19th century Gowdy House with which they are associated. The ridge-line of the English bank barn (Barn I) is roughly parallel with Maple Street, which runs approximately northeast-southwest. For this description, consider the ridge-line of Barn I to run north-south. The ridge-line of the attached New England barn (Barn II) is perpendicular to the ridge-line of Barn I. The ridge-line of the 20' x 55' Carriage barn attached to Barn II is parallel to the ridge-line of Barn II, as are the ridge-lines of the pool house, chicken coop and the main block of the c.1866 Farmhouse. The house is 22' x 36' with a 12' x 16' cross-gabled north wing and a series of additions to the west.

The two-story house is built in a transitional Greek Revival/Italianate-style. It is covered with clapboard painted white and rests on a cut granite foundation. Its shallow cross-gable plan presents a two-bay gable-to-street facade with an intersecting wing on the north side. A one-story porch, which shelters the main entrance, connects the two wings. The gables are adorned by small brackets with pendant drops inside the peak and along the full pediments. These brackets are continued along the eaves of the house and spandrel of the porch. The Italianate-style porch, with flat roof, has square molded posts and a simple balustrade. Also typical of the Italianate style, the main block has floor-to-ceiling windows on the first story, and a circular window is located in the second story of the north elevation (Warner).

The site is mostly flat, although the grade declines to the west where Barn I is located then flattens out again further west. Barn I is behind and to the west of the Gowdy House; a courtyard is formed by the house to the east, Barn I & II to the west, and the Carriage barn attached to Barn II to the north. To the south of Barn I is the pool house with an in-ground pool adjacent to the south. To the west of the pool house are the ruins of the chicken coop. To the north of the barns is a series of greenhouses.

To the south and west of the buildings are woodland. To the north and across the road to the east are tracts of open space. The site is demarcated to the east by Maple Street and just to the west is the town line with Enfield. The area surrounding the site is open land used for active agriculture, woodland and scattered residential. The Somersville Historic District is located one mile to the north along Main Street, School Street, and Maple Street.

Other notable features of building or site (Interior and/or Exterior):

Architectural description:

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

- Farmhouse  c. 1866  C
- Barn I  c. 1830  C
- Barn II  c. 1880  C
- Carriage barn  Late 19th c.  C
- Shed/Pool house  Early 20th c.  C
- Coop  Early 20th c.  NC
- Greenhouses  20th c.  NC

Barn I:

This is a 1 ½-story eave-entry four-bay extended English bank barn, 32’ x 40’, with a 15’-deep shed-roofed addition to the west across the entire west eave-side. A smaller shed-roofed addition extends to the south from the first addition. Attached to its north gable-end of Barn I is a New England barn, Barn II, 50’ x 50’, with its ridgeline perpendicular to the ridgeline of Barn I. The east eave-side of Barn I and the east gable-end of Barn II are flush. The grade declines from east to west, resulting in the bank of the barn. The main entry faces east.
Exterior:
The main entry of Barn I is a double-height interior sliding door in the third of four bays from the south corner. The sliding door is made up of diagonal wood boards attached to a frame. The northernmost bay has a fixed six-pane window and pass-through door with wrought iron hardware. The two bays south of the main entry are blank. A slight earthen ramp accesses the main entry. The grade declines to the south, revealing an un-mortared fieldstone foundation.

The grade declines further at the south gable-end of Barn I to the west, revealing an open basement. The basement level of the south gable-end of Barn I has two bays. The barn is supported by a large single wood post in the center and un-mortared fieldstone foundation walls at the eave-sides. The floor supports are large unfinished timbers. There is a girt line siding divide at the eave level of the north gable-end of Barn I and a centered open window space in the gable attic.

Extending west from the west eave-side of Barn I is a shed-roofed addition that gives the barn a saltbox roof appearance. The addition encompasses the entire west eave-side of Barn I. The west end of the addition is flush with the west gable-end of Barn II. Extending to the south of the saltbox addition is a smaller shed-roof addition, partially in ruin.

The north gable-end of Barn I is entirely encompassed by the south eave-side of Barn II.

Barn I has weathered vertical tongue-and-groove wood siding which appears to have been painted yellow with white trim, now faded. The roof is covered with asphalt shingles and has a projecting overhang. The foundation is un-mortared fieldstone.

Interior:
The main entry on the east eave-side of Barn I opens into a bay 11 feet wide by 32 feet deep. The main entry bay is open on the west eave-side of Barn I and accesses the saltbox addition. To the south is an 18 inch riser which encompasses both south bays, each measuring 9 feet wide by 32 feet deep. The bay immediately to the south of the main entry has a bay-wide pocket for the sliding main entry door. The bay north of the main entry has a 5-foot high wall with three rows of top-hinged feed chutes and measures 11 feet wide by 32 feet deep. Above the wall is a bay-wide floor for hay. The north eave-side gable attic of Barn I is open to Barn II.

The barn is constructed with scribe rule pegged mortise and tenon joinery. The interior is made up of hand hewn 7” x 7” post and beams, 6” x 6” wall girts and circular sawn 4” x 4” diagonals. The corner joints at the plate level use an English tying joint, where both plates and the corner post intersect in a single complicated mortise and tenon joint. Barn I has 4” x 4” common rafters with a ridge board, queen posts supporting purlin plates and wide irregular ceiling boards.

Barn II:
This is a 1 ½-story gable-entry New England bank barn with a shed-roofed addition to the north. Extending to the east from the shed-roofed addition is a gable-roofed carriage barn. Attached to the south eave-side of Barn II is the north gable-end of Barn I. The main entry faces east.

Exterior:
The centered main entry to Barn II is a pair of double-height exterior sliding doors with diagonal wood boards attached to a frame. To the south of the main entry is a pass-through door with wrought iron hinges. Directly above the pass-through door is a set of two six-over-six windows with trim. To the north of the main entry is a fixed six-pane window. Centered in the gable attic above the dropped girt line siding divide is a set of two vertical windows with trim; the south window has six panes and the north window two panes.

The south eave-side of Barn II is encompassed by the north gable-end of Barn I.

The west gable-end of Barn II has a centered pair of double-height swinging hinged Z-braced doors. Centered in the gable attic above the dropped girt line siding divide is a nine-pane window.
The north eave-side of the barn is encompassed by a shed-roof addition. Extending to the east from the shed-roof addition is a carriage barn. The south eave-side of the carriage barn has three bays in the east half and two pass-through doors and a six-pane window in the west half.

Barn II and its additions, including the carriage barn, have vertical board painted yellow with white trim, now faded. The roofs are covered with asphalt shingles and have projecting overhangs.

**Interior:**

The main entry of Barn II leads into the middle of three aisles. The south portion of the barn is intersected by Barn I; the raised level of Barn I's north bay takes up the south portion of Barn II, up to the main entry. The barn is constructed with square rule pegged mortise and tenon joinery. The interior is made up of hand hewn and circular sawn 7” x 7” post and beams, 6” x 6” wall girts and 4” x 4” diagonals. The gable-ends have dropped girts.

**• 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 is the most significant of the outbuildings on the site because it is an excellent intact example of a scribe rule English bank barn. Barn II is an excellent example of a New England barn built using square rule timber frame construction. It gains significance from its association with early families of Somers, the Pease and Gowdy families.

**Historical background:**

At the intersection where several cart paths radiated, “the road to the Gowdys” (Maple Street), “the road to Ellington (Pinney Road), “the road to Somers” (School Street and Route 190 East), and what later became “the road to the Shakers (Shaker Road) all converged, now the Somersville Historic District. Samuel Billings came here from England via Enfield in the 1730s at about the same time Somers was incorporated. Here he found the ideal place on the Scantic River for a sawmill, gristmill, and later a fulling or textile mill. This area was known as Billings Mill before the Revolutionary War and was later called Somersville (DeBell).

The 214 Maple Street property is associated with a larger site that appears to have been originally owned by Robert Gowdy in the 18th century. Robert’s mother, Abiah Pease, was one of Somers’ founding families. In the 1830s, Robert appears to have sold a portion of this larger site to his son Tudor Gowdy, who was listed in an early census as a farmer. This could be the period when the English barn was erected, although its scribe rule framing suggests a somewhat earlier date. Tudor divided the estate into three parts when one of his sons, Myron Gowdy, married Harriet Thrall in the mid-19th century. Tudor Gowdy subsequently sold the parcel to his son Myron Gowdy “for a fair but nominal price.” The house on this site was built in the transitional Greek Revival/Italianate style in 1866. It was described as “a stately mansion composed of the best materials, finished without and within by the best workmen.” The 18-acre site of 214 Maple Street was sub-divided from a lot across the road, now 183 Maple Street (see State Register nomination), in 2006.

The Pinney family, who acquired the site in 1972, came to Somers from Ellington in the 1890s and also were a prominent family.

**Architectural significance:**

Barn I is the most significant of the outbuildings on the site because of the building technique used in the joining of the timbers and because it is an excellent example of an English bank barn. The oldest construction technique used in Connecticut to build wood frame structures is called scribe rule construction and is based on the colonists’ timber framing technique of their homelands. The intersection of the mortise and tenons are unique at each joint, resulting in a perfect fit of the tenon in the mortise. Its hallmark is Roman numeral marriage marks. In this case, the marriage marks include circles with one or more lines running across them. Another interesting factor is the use of very
heavy beams in the building support structure. Stylistically, the use of the diagonal boards in the main entry of Barn I is uncommon.

Barn II is an excellent example of a New England barn built using square rule timber frame construction, which is the standardization of timber frame construction, widely recognized to be introduced in Connecticut in the 1830s.

The site is also significant as a site of over a century of continuous active agriculture. Both 214 and 183 Maple Street have been in agricultural use since the mid-19th century. Another factor in its significance is the families associated with the site. The original owner appears to be one of the town’s founding families, the Peases. Abiah Pease married Robert Gowdy in the mid-18th century and their relatives who subsequently owned the site include Louis Alvah Gowdy, who acquired the site in 1899 and served a state representative. Yet another factor is that the current owners, the Pinneys, have been and continue to be another prominent family in town. The east border of the site is named for the Pinneys.

• Sources (continuation):

Photographs and field notes by Todd Levine 5/01/2012.
Interview with David Pinney, 5/01/2012, at 214 Maple Street, Somers, CT.

Map resources:
Somers Assessor’s Record: http://www.visionappraisal.com/databases/ct/index.htm
UTM coordinates: http://itouchmap.com/latlong.html
41.971771,-72.49319
Print and internet resources:
Cunningham, Janice, Somersville Historic District, National Register of Historic Places, Item No.:95000401 NRI5 (National Register Information System), Record Number:422850, 1995.


5. East gable-end of the Gowdy House and east eave-side of Barn I behind and to the left, camera facing west.

6. View of the east eave-side of Barn I and the east gable-end of Barn II, camera facing west.
7. Detail of the main entry of Barn I, camera facing west.

8. South gable-end of Barn I, camera facing north. Note the remains of shed roof addition to the left extending south from saltbox roof.


12. Northeast corner of the Gowdy House and east gable-end of Barn II behind and to the right, camera facing west.
13. East gable-end of Barn II to the left and greenhouse in the center, camera facing west.

14. North eave-side of the pool house, camera facing south. Note a portion of the chicken coop to the right behind the pool house.
15. Remains of the chicken coop, camera facing south. Note a portion of the pool house to the left.

16. Detail of scribe marriage marks in the interior of Barn 1, bent directly north of main entry, camera facing south.
17. Detail of scribe markings in the interior of Barn I, bent directly north of main entry, camera facing south.

18. Detail of interior of Barn I, camera facing north.
19. Detail of southwest interior corner of Barn I, English tying joint with end tie-girt meeting the plate and post, camera facing southwest.

20. Detail of Barn I basement level, un-mortared fieldstone foundation, camera facing east. Note the two spaces built in the foundation, use unknown and the large size of the timbers.