

= Smith @-@ Harris House (East Lyme , Connecticut) =

The Smith @-@ Harris House , listed on the National Register of Historic Places as the Thomas Avery House , is a two @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half story clapboarded Greek Revival home on Society Road in East Lyme , Connecticut . It is believed that the farmhouse was built in 1845 @-@ 1846 as a wedding gift for Thomas Avery and Elizabeth Griswold . It remained in the Avery family until 1877 when it was purchased by William H. Smith . By the 1890s , the farm was managed by Smith 's younger brother , Herman W. Smith and nephew , Frank A. Harris . In 1900 , the two married Lula and Florence Munger , sisters , and both resided in the house . In 1955 , the house was sold to the Town of East Lyme and the sisters continued to live in the house until requiring a nursing home . The house was saved from demolition by citizens and restored . It opened on July 3 , 1976 , as a historic house museum , operated and maintained by the Smith @-@ Harris House Commission and the Friends of Smith @-@ Harris House . It is open from June through August and throughout the year by appointment . The Smith @-@ Harris house was added to the National Historic Register of Places on August 22 , 1979 .

= = History = =

The Smith @-@ Harris House is believed to have been preceded by another dwelling that was used in the original construction . The Avery family was originally in the area from at least 1751 and the property and the surrounding farm was consolidated under Jonathan Avery 's son , Abraham Avery . It is believed , through a newspaper discovered in the wall and other records that the house was built in 1845 @-@ 1846 as a wedding gift for Thomas Avery and Elizabeth Griswold . The house remained in the Avery family until 1877 when it was sold to William H. Smith .

By the 1890s , the farm was managed by Smith 's younger brother , Herman W. Smith and nephew , Frank A. Harris . In 1900 , the two married Lula and Florence Munger , sisters , and both resided in the house . William H. Smith deeded the house to his brother and nephew in 1921 . Smith died in 1951 and his widow and Frank Harris , shortly before his death , sold the house and the 103 acres (41 @.@ 6 hectare) of land to the Town of East Lyme for \$ 34 @,@ 000 . The two widows continued to live in the house until they went to a nursing home . The land served as a farm under the Avery family including a dairy and cattle farm ; the dairy farm would continue to operate under the Harris family . Portions of the land were later used for the construction of Interstate 95 and two East Lyme schools . The two schools are the East Lyme Junior High School (East Lyme Middle School) and Lillie B. Haines Elementary School .

= = Design = =

The Smith @-@ Harris House is a two @-@ and @-@ one @-@ half story clapboarded Greek Revival house with a pedimented gable on the front facade . The house is composed of a two @-@ and @-@ one half story 23 feet (7 @.@ 0 m) by 45 feet (14 m) block and a single @-@ story 10 feet (3 @.@ 0 m) kitchen wing . It retains the original clapboarding with horizontal flush on the facade . The front facade has a typical three @-@ bay design with the entrance supported by pilasters with squared , recessed panels for the main door frame and frieze . The entrance porch is not original , it was replaced as part of the restoration effort and its design originates from previous photographs . The foundation is made of locally @-@ sourced granite slabs and includes a full basement . The square gable windows feature small panes in wooden muntins . All windows retain their original double @-@ hung sash with 6 @-@ over @-@ 6 windows , except for the rear windows on the second floor . The one @-@ story kitchen wing has a pitched lean @-@ to roof . Another part of the restoration was the open porch that replaced an ell . At the time of its National Historic Register of Places nomination , the gable roof was covered with cedar shingles as part of the restoration effort .

Passing through the entrance leads to the stairhall , with the on the right stairs side and a doorway leading to the parlor on the left . The back of the stairwell leads to another room that connects to a

side @-@ room on the left and into the kitchen . The kitchen features access to the other rooms , a back entrance , a back stairway and a separate kitchen pantry in the rear wing . The interior is designed with the lines and moldings of the Greek Revival styling . The fireplace has a simple projecting mantel and the walls are plain with plastered walls and cornice moldings . In adherence to fire code standards , the rear chimney was rebuilt , yet " accurately reproduces the large bake oven . " The second floor is similar to the first floor except the rear rooms have been converted to bedrooms . Cleary believes that the boards used to finish the attic stairway and part of the attic may come from the replaced ell , which possibly was from a previous house on the site .

= = Operation as a museum = =

After the deaths of the widows , the house was boarded up and repeatedly vandalized . The Town of East Lyme considered destroying the house for municipal purposes , but citizens successfully petitioned and restored it . The Smith @-@ Harris House opened as a historic house museum on July 3 , 1976 . The restoration the addition of murals painted by the Connecticut Society of Decorative Painters in the style of Rufus Porter . The website notes that " [t] hese murals are meant to show visitors a decorative style that was available in the mid 19th century and not meant to be exactly what was in this house at that time . " Currently , the Smith @-@ Harris House Commission , created by the town to maintain the property , has incorporated the Friends of Smith @-@ Harris House into the care of the property . The house is open from June through August and throughout the year by appointment . The Smith @-@ Harris House was added to the National Historic Register of Places on August 22 , 1979 .

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