

Charles E. Beach House (1900)



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On Brightwood Lane in West Hartford is a [Shingle-style](#) house, built in 1900-1901. It was once part of the extensive agricultural estate of the Beach family, known as Vine Hill Farm. The farm was begun by [Charles Mason Beach](#), who had earlier established with his two brothers the Hartford firm of [Beach & Co.](#), dealers in paints, [aniline dyes](#) and other chemicals. Beach settled in the area of South Main Street in West Hartford in 1859, purchasing a farm house. He began buying land for a dairy farm, which soon gained a reputation in the area for its high-quality milk, cream and butter. Beach's son, [Charles Edward Beach](#), managed [Vine Hill Farm](#) for many years and became a prominent citizen of West Hartford, serving on the town Board of Selectmen and being elected to the Connecticut General Assembly in 1907. In the 1860s, Charles E. Beach's father had hired a German immigrant named Louis Stadtmueller, who planted the vines on the property which gave [Vine Hill Farm its name](#). His son, Frank Stadtmueller, developed the farm's process of producing infant milk formula that would keep for two to three weeks. Stadtmueller was later appointed Connecticut's State Dairy Commissioner.

The house that [Charles E. Beach built](#) on Vine Hill Farm has [an asymmetrical exterior covered with wood shingles](#), while the interior has rich architectural details. Parcels of Vine Hill Farm land began to be sold to developers in the 1920s, with the last piece of farmland being sold in 1948 by Charles Frederick Beach, grandson of [Charles M. Beach](#). Smaller houses, built on the subdivided land, now surround the Beach House. The home's original cobblestone port-cochere is now to the rear of the house, because the laying out of Brightwood Lane led to the entrance being shifted from South Main Street to the newer road.