

# FORM B – BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING  
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD  
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Assessor's Number USGS Quad Area(s) Form Number

110-00644-026

East  
Brookfield

STU.217  
STU.218

**Town/City:** Sturbridge

**Place:** (*neighborhood or village*):

**Address:** 26 Allen Road

**Historic Name:** Joel and Martha Plimpton House

**Uses:** Present: single-family residence

Original: single-family residence

**Date of Construction:** ca .1786

**Source:** Registry of Deeds

**Style/Form:** Cape form

**Architect/Builder:** unknown

**Exterior Material:**

Foundation: stone

Wall/Trim: clapboard

Roof: asphalt shingle

**Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:**

Barn

**Major Alterations** (*with dates*):

Façade entry moved to side elevation (unknown); ell extended, ca. 1920; exterior chimney added, ca. 1920;

**Condition:** Fair

**Moved:** no ☒ yes ☐ **Date:**

**Acreage:** 6.55 acres

**Setting:** Large, irregularly shaped lot with house facing south with its western elevation along Allen Road near the intersection with Sidney Road.

## Photograph



## Locus Map



**Recorded by:** Bonnie Parsons, PVPC

**Organization:** Sturbridge Historical Commission

**Date** (*month / year*): October, 2017

# INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

STURBRIDGE

26 ALLEN ROAD

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☐ Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

*If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.*

*Use as much space as necessary to complete the following entries, allowing text to flow onto additional continuation sheets.*

### ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

*Describe architectural features. Evaluate the characteristics of this building in terms of other buildings within the community.*

26 Allen Road is one of Sturbridge's several remaining center chimney houses in Cape form. Of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century houses included within the existing town inventory, only the **Isaac Childs, Jr. House of 1792 on Taft Street (STU.19)** represents a similar, 18<sup>th</sup> century house scale, though it has a gambrel roof. Others include the **Truman and Mary Charles House at 10 Bates Hill Road, ca. 1780** and the **Cyrus and Bathsheba Fay House at 285 Brookfield Road, 1784-95**. Set close to the road, the Plimpton House consists of a one-and-a-half story main block with a single story ell on the north. The clapboard-sided house sits on low, stone foundations. Entry to the house is on the gabled south elevation, rather than on the much more common eaves elevation, which in this case would have been on the west. Opinions vary on this unusual layout. According to Holly Izard of Old Sturbridge Village, this is the building's original layout and in fact it could have been an early one-room house with an end wall chimney. She cites another example of this layout in Brookfield, the Jesse Rice House built in 1780s. Another option is that the house's original center entry on the west has been enclosed as a window and the entry shifted to the south elevation. Investigation of its framing might clarify its history. Both the west elevation and the south façade are three bays wide. The entry surround on the south is slightly pedimented, as was popular during the Greek Revival and Italianate stylistic periods, and it is entered over two large granite stepping stones. The ell on the east elevation is four bays long and is one bay wide. On its south, a portion of the ell has an added shed roof porch on mortared fieldstone foundations. The porch roof is supported on slender posts. There is also a large exterior wall, mortared fieldstone chimney that has been added to the ell east of the porch. There is an entry in the south elevation of the ell set between a pair of windows with 6/6 sash on one side and a single window of 6/6 sash on the other side. The west elevation of the main block of the house has three windows – two with 1/1 replacement sash and the third with what appears to be an early, 6/6 sash.

North of the house is a two-and-a-half story, eaves-front, carriage barn. In fair to poor condition, the clapboard-sided barn has an entry door on the eaves side hung on an exterior track. Above the sliding door is a short transom consisting of three, triple, vertical-light windows. There are two horse stall windows on the first story of the south elevation. Retention of the carriage barn is another important feature of this property.

### HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

*Discuss the history of the building. Explain its associations with local (or state) history. Include uses of the building, and the role(s) the owners/occupants played within the community.*

The Plimpton House was built prior to Joel Plimpton's marriage to Martha Morse in 1797. Joel was the son of James and Esther Plimpton early settlers of Sturbridge from Medfield, Massachusetts. Born in 1771 he married in 1797 and after two subsequent marriages died in 1849. The 1798 Direct Tax census records that Joel Plimpton owned a house that was valued at \$102 and that the farm had 100 acres valued at \$840. <sup>1</sup> Joel's son James (b. 1813) and his wife Julia took over the farm by 1830, and in 1850 James listed himself on the census as a farmer and elsewhere as a tanner. At that point the property was valued at \$2,000. It remained in the Plimpton family until 1907 when Fred A. Plimpton sold it to John H. Brown from Rhode Island. By then it was a 14 acre farm that John Brown worked until he died in 1926. His estate sold the farm to Henry and Dorothy Shaw who were sold Brown's farming equipment as well as the property in 1928. During this early modern period (1915-1940) a large amount of farmland reverted to woodland as the number of farmers declined. The Plimpton farm was among them as farming the property effectively stopped in 1928. The Shaws may have lived in the house, though they do not appear in the census of 1930, but only for a few years before selling it to Harold and Ruth Moulton. By 1930 the land was no longer farmed by the Moultons as Harold was an optical chemist. The shift from the late 1920s to early 1930s of Sturbridge from a farming community to a suburban community is reflected in the history of the house at this period. It remained in the Moulton ownership until 1956 when Arthur and Phyllis Sandole became its owners. Arthur (1928-1997) represents a second generation of immigrants who

<sup>1</sup> Holly Izard, Old Houses of Sturbridge, scrapbook, n.d.

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remained in the area and moved into work that reflected the changed demographics of Sturbridge. Born in Massachusetts, in 1940 when he was twelve, he lived in Southbridge with his mother Rose, who was an Italian immigrant working as a winder in a woolen mill. Rose owned the home and earned \$350 a year with which to support her three children, all of whom were in school. Arthur as an adult remained in the South Worcester County area, living in Southbridge, Sturbridge and Brookfield during his life. In his case, he adapted to Sturbridge's popularity as a tourist destination by working as a taxi cab driver in 1952. By 1969 the house changed hands three more times.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

### Maps

Bailey, O. H. & Co. Bird's eye view *Sturbridge and Fiskdale*, Massachusetts, 1892.

Beers, F. W. *Plan of Towns of Sturbridge and Southbridge*, 1870.

Walling, H. F. *Map of Worcester County*, Wm. E. Baker, Boston, 1857.

### Primary Sources

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Thomas A Wright book 09953 page 282 1986

### Secondary Sources

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Corey, Charles F. "Old Houses in Sturbridge" Quinebaug Historical Society Leaflets, vol.1, no. 5, 1900.

Clark, Joseph. *Historical Sketch of Sturbridge, Massachusetts*, Brookfield, Massachusetts, 1838.

Davis, George. *A Historical Sketch of Sturbridge and Southbridge*, West Brookfield, 1856.

Hurd, D. Hamilton. *History of Worcester County, Massachusetts*, vol. 1, Philadelphia, 1889.

Izard, Holly. *Old Houses of Sturbridge*, scrapbook, Joshua Hyde Library, Sturbridge.

### Digital Resources

[www.Ancestry.com](http://www.Ancestry.com) for federal censuses 1790-1940 and Massachusetts State Censuses 1855, 1865.

<https://dp.la/> Digital Public Library of America

[www.masslandrecords.com](http://www.masslandrecords.com) for deeds: Robert H. Menard Book 04919 Page 0390 1969

4620 307; 4557 246; 4357 533.



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Photo 1: Southwestern corner



Photo 2: Northwestern corner



Photo 3: Northern elevation



Photo 4: Barn to the southeast of the building