

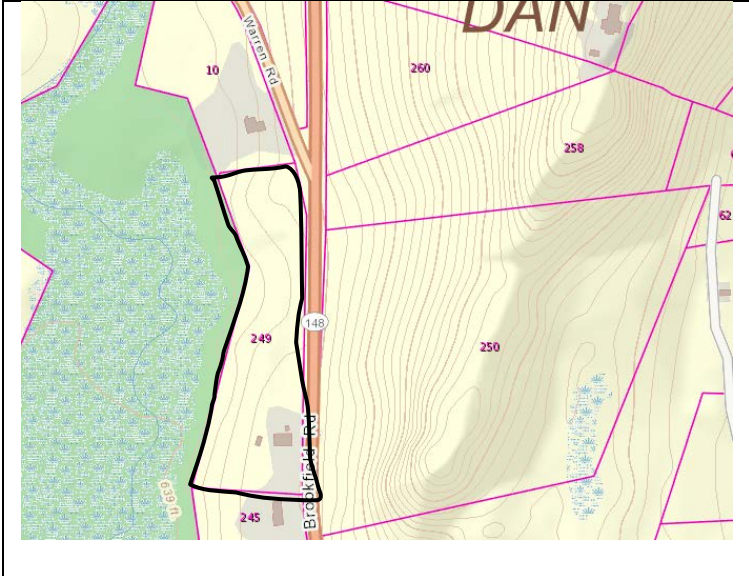
FORM B – BUILDING

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

Photograph



Locus Map



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

173-00953-249

Warren

STU.238

Town/City: Sturbridge

Place: (*neighborhood or village*): Fiskdale

Address: 249 Brookfield Road

Historic Name: George Griswold Speculation House

Uses: Present: single-family dwelling

Original: single-family dwelling

Date of Construction: ca. 1913

Source: Registry of Deeds

Style/Form: Craftsman

Architect/Builder: unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: fieldstone

Wall/Trim: wood shingles/fieldstone

Roof: asphalt shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

None

Major Alterations (*with dates*):

Garage added, ca. 2015

Condition: fair-good

Moved: no ☒ yes ☐ **Date:**

Acreage: 4.85 acres

Setting: This house is set on a large, elongated parcel with the residential building facing north along Brookfield Road. Woods lie to the west.

Recorded by: Bonnie Parsons, PVPC

Organization: Sturbridge Historical Commission

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

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

STURBRIDGE

249 BROOKFIELD ROAD

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

STU.238

☐ 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.

The George Griswold Speculation House is a Craftsman style house of one-and-a-half stories. It is east-facing and is set close to the road. The roof is front-gabled and on its façade is a full-width and front-gabled porch whose ridge is just slightly lower than the ridge of the main roof. In the gable field of the porch is a lunette window. Fieldstone posts support the outer corners of the porch roof and fieldstone bases support slender columns at the center stair to the porch. Fieldstone was used for the building's high foundations as well as for a through-cornice chimney on the south elevation of the house. The use of fieldstone and wood shingles is consistent with the Craftsman style's advocacy of natural and local materials to blend the building with its landscape. Within the porch a center entry is flanked on the north and south by two pairs of windows with 1/1 sash. A shingled garage wing with poured concrete base and shingled upper third extends from the northeast corner to the house.

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.

When the western section of Sturbridge was settled in the mid-1700s, it was divided into large farms and the area remained farmland even after the Fiskdale mills were established after 1827. As the mills grew and Fiskdale became a village center strung out along on Main Street, workers' housing was constructed close to the mills on new and often short streets leading north and south of Main Street. But the farmland north of the center was not divided until the early 20th century when smaller farms were carved out of the larger ones as they could with less acreage operate as small dairy farms, poultry farms, and orchards. The George Griswold Speculation House was built about 1913 on the land of what had been the George and Hannah Adams farm in Sturbridge. The Adams began selling off some of the land of their farm in the 1910s and moved to Sterling, Massachusetts. George Adams was 79 in 1910 and Hannah 65, so they were retiring from farming. George died before this land was sold to George Griswold in 1913 with buildings on it. It is likely that though there were buildings on the lot, Griswold bought the land and built this house on speculation, as he turned around in the same year selling to James S. Hannah. Hannah remained in the house farming about 15 acres of land until after nine years he sold to Albert and Blanche Senecal. The Senecals were also farmers but they kept the house only 2 years, likely as an investment for a rental house, and sold in 1924 to Nellie and Edward St. John. The St. Johns were poultry farmers who lived here for about seven years. They sold the house to William J. King in 1931, but King died after a few years, and the property was sold to Louis and Anita Serleto in 1934. The Serletos were from Southbridge and in 1930 Louis was not employed but Anita worked as a milliner in a downtown store. The couple remained here until 1946 when they mortgaged the property to Stanley Harwood and divided it into two lots, ultimately selling one of the lots to Harwood and the other, with the house, to Esther Hogan. Esther was a private secretary in a Southbridge law office. The division and sale of the small farm into two lots represents both the decline of agriculture in Sturbridge that had begun in the 1870s and the post-World War II suburban development of the town. Some of their land was taken in 1959 by the US government to create the East Brimfield dam and reservoir. In that year the house and a smaller lot became home to Jesse and Elinor Blackburn. The Blackburns were among the house's longest residents. By 2008, however, each had died and the house was once again sold.

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

Chase, Nelly M. Photograph Album, Joshua Hyde Public Library.

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

STURBRIDGE

249 BROOKFIELD ROAD

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

STU.238

Thomas A Wright book 09953 page 282 1986

Secondary Sources

Burns, Brian. *Sturbridge: A Pictorial History*, Norfolk, 1988.

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 for federal censuses 1790-1940 and Massachusetts State Censuses 1855, 1865.

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

www.masslandrecords.com for deeds