

FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

280-03553-015

Southbridge

STU.F

STU.254

Town/City: Sturbridge

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

Photograph



Address: 15 Fiske Hill Road

Historic Name: Walter L. Fish, Jr. House

Uses: Present: Single Family Dwelling

Original: Single Family Dwelling

Date of Construction: Late 19th/Early 20th cent./Before 1944

Source: Appearance, Maps

Style/Form: Greek Revival or Classical Revival

Architect/Builder: Unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: Appears to be Concrete Block

Wall/Trim: Clapboard/Wood/Aluminum

Roof: Asphalt Shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

Attached garage

Major Alterations (*with dates*):

Replacement windows (date unknown)

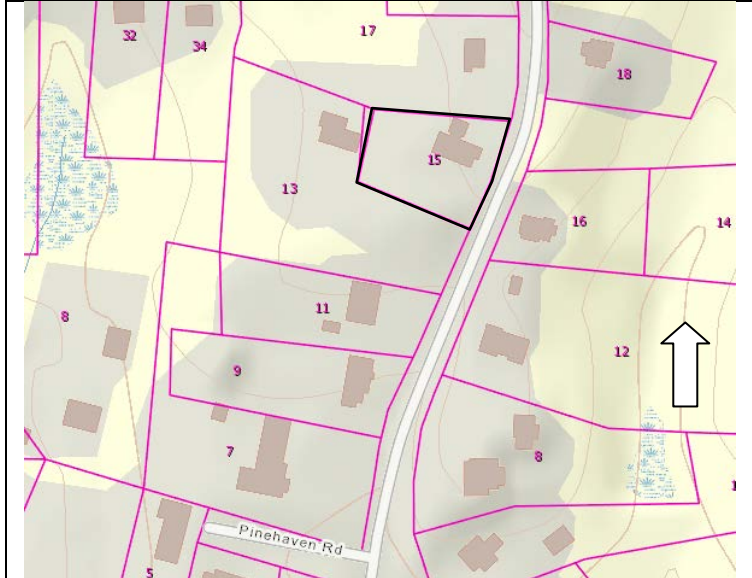
Condition: Fair

Moved: no ☒ yes ☐ **Date:**

Acreage: .33 acres

Setting: Building faces easterly along Fiske Hill Road, near the intersection with Pinehaven Road.

Locus Map



Recorded by: Shannon Walsh, PVPC

Organization: Sturbridge Historical Commission

Date (*month / year*): March 2017

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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.

The Walter L. Fish Jr. House, at 15 Fiske Hill Road, is a one and a half story single family dwelling, representative of the late nineteenth to mid-twentieth century change from agricultural to residential growth and development in the Fiske Hill Road area of Sturbridge. This residence is three bays wide by three bays deep, with a rectangular plan and a front gable, asphalt shingle roof with overhanging eaves and eave returns at the gable ends. The foundation appears to be painted concrete blocks, the exterior is clapboard and there is wood and aluminum trim on the visible main façade and side exteriors. Windows are replacements of the originals and are generally 6/6.

The main, eastern facing façade has concrete steps which lead to a one story projecting gabled vestibule, with overhanging eaves, eave returns and corner boards similar to the main portion of the residence. The first story has paired 6/6 windows to the south of the entry and a single, 6/6 window to the west of the entry. A second story 6/6 window is set within the gable. The northern side exterior of this portion of the building has two visible 6/6 windows and a secondary entrance.

A one story, cross gable portico connector is between the residence and a one and a half story gambrel roof outbuilding with exterior clapboard and wood trim to include corner boards. There is a double garage door and what appears to be a hayloft door set within the gambrel and two, 1/1 windows on the northern side exterior.

The southern side exterior has three, paired, 6/6 windows and exterior wood stairs which lead to a deck at the rear, southwestern corner of the building.

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.

Fiske Hill refers to the "first permanent European agricultural settlement after circa 1725" which was established in the Eastern Upland area of Sturbridge.¹ In 1731, brothers Henry and Daniel Fiske settled on the hill, prior to the 1738 incorporation of the town of Sturbridge. These men and their descendants "were important not only on the hill as farmers and founders of the Baptist church there, but also in town government and, by the 1800s, in industrial enterprises in Globe Village, Westville, and Fiskdale."² Fertile soil made this area ideal for agriculture and by the late eighteenth century, Fiske Hill had also developed as a stagecoach road with a Baptist Meeting House, School, and Inn. By the early to mid-twentieth century, development shifted from agricultural towards higher-end residential growth.

This building could have been related to buildings noted on an 1898 map, across Fiske Hill Road from property owned by the Simson family. (Figure 1)

The parcel was originally part of a larger property and early deeds reference it as "the Newell Place."³ In 1912, the property was transferred from Canadian immigrants, Augustine Simpson, (ca. 1876-1911) and his mother, Philomene Simpson (born ca.

¹ Massachusetts Historical Commission. "MHC Reconnaissance Survey Town Report: Sturbridge." 1984.

² Agnes S. Wilkins, "Fiske Hill, STU.F." Massachusetts Historical Commission, 1973. MACRIS (site). Accessed on-line October 2017, <http://mhc-macris.net/Details.aspx?MhclId=STU.F>

³ Land from George A. Dresser (1880 bk 1074 page 401) to Samuel and Ellen M. Hartwell Book 1244 Page 641(1880) (land was about 50 acres and known as "the Newell Place" maybe for Hon. Timothy Newell, Esq. 1742-1819 "became owner of a handsome estate, one of the most considerable in town.") according to Simpson deed

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1840) to John B. L'Homme (born 1872) and Georgianna Simpson L'Homme (born 1870), who married in 1893.⁴ In the 1920s through the late 1930s, John was employed with the American Optical Company and the L'Hommes lived on Mechanic Street, in Southbridge.⁵

By 1919, Fiske Hill resident Otis Leach (1865-1940) held mortgages for the land of farmer, (and brother of Augustine and Georgianna Simpson L'Homme) Napoleon Simpson (born ca. 1871) and his wife, Georgiana Raymond Simpson (born ca. 1871) who had married in 1908.⁶ (Figure 2)

In 1944, Maggie J. Leach (1888-1973), wife of Otis, sold land with buildings on the "new location of Fiske Hill Road and this property is noted to be "a portion of the premises" conveyed by that deed."^{7 8}

Salesman and town selectman Walter L. Fish, Jr. (1914- 2005) and his wife, Marion S. Fish (1914-1991), were residents of this house on Fiske Hill Road by 1949.⁹ They sold the property in 1966.¹⁰

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Ancestry.com (see footnotes)

Clark, Joseph Sylvester. *An Historical Sketch of Sturbridge, Mass: From its Settlement to the Present.* Brookfield: E. and L. Merriam, 1838.

Genealogybank.com (see footnotes)

Massachusetts Historical Commission. "MHC Reconnaissance Survey Town Report: Sturbridge." 1984. *Secretary of the Commonwealth* (site). Accessed July 2017, <https://www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc/mhcpdf/townreports/Cent-Mass/stu.pdf>

McAlester, Virginia Savage. *A Field Guide to American Houses.* New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2013.

Wilkins, Agnes S. "Fiske Hill, STU.F." Massachusetts Historical Commission, 1973. *MACRIS* (site). Accessed on-line October 2017, <http://mhc-macris.net/Details.aspx?MhclD=STU.F>

Worcester District Registry of Deeds (see footnotes)

Figure 1: Richards, L.J. "Charlton, Sturbridge, Southbridge, Dudley Towns." *Worcester County, 1898.* *HistoricMapWorks.Com* <http://www.historicmapworks.com/Map/US/6730/Charlton+++Sturbridge+++Southbridge+++Dudley+Towns/Worcester+County+1898/Massachusetts/>

Figure 2: *Worcester District Registry of Deeds*, Book 4657, Page 101 and plan of lots on Bellevue Plat, Eagle Realty Company 1919 Plan Book 33 Plan 15

Figure 3: "Fiske Hill, Book 68, Page 31, 1931" *MassLandRecords.com*, (site). Accessed October, 2017, <http://www.masslandrecords.com/worcester/>

⁴ 1912 Book 1993 Page 468; "John B. L'Homme." Massachusetts Marriage Records, 1893, *Ancestry.com*

⁵ 1930 United States Federal Census, *Southbridge Directories*, 1928, 1930, 1936,

⁶ *Worcester District Registry of Deeds*, (from Eagle Realty Company, Central Falls, Rhode Island) lot number 323 1924 Book 2357 Page 215 and 1919 Book 2199 Page 169

⁷ *Worcester District Registry of Deeds*, August 31, 1944, Book 2926, 471

⁸ *Worcester District Registry of Deeds*, Book 4657, Page 101 and plan of lots on Bellevue Plat, Eagle Realty Company 1919 Plan Book 33 Plan 15

⁹ "Walter L. Fish." *Southbridge Massachusetts City Directory*. 1949. *Ancestry.com* and *Worcester District Registry of Deeds*, March 28, 1966, Book 4657, Page

101

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

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Photo 1: Eastern facing main facade



Photo 2: Eastern façade and southern side elevation

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Photo 3: Eastern façade and northern side elevation

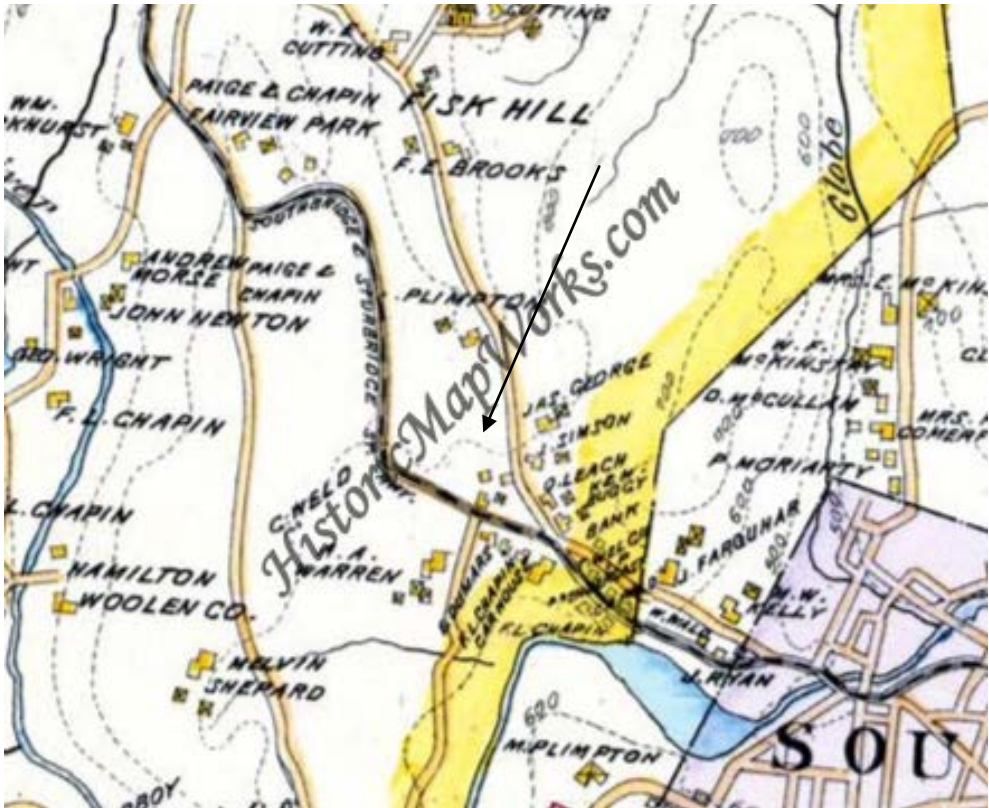


Figure 1: 1898, showing that the western side of Fiske Hill Road was not developed by the late nineteenth century and showing property across Fiske Hill owned by “Simson”

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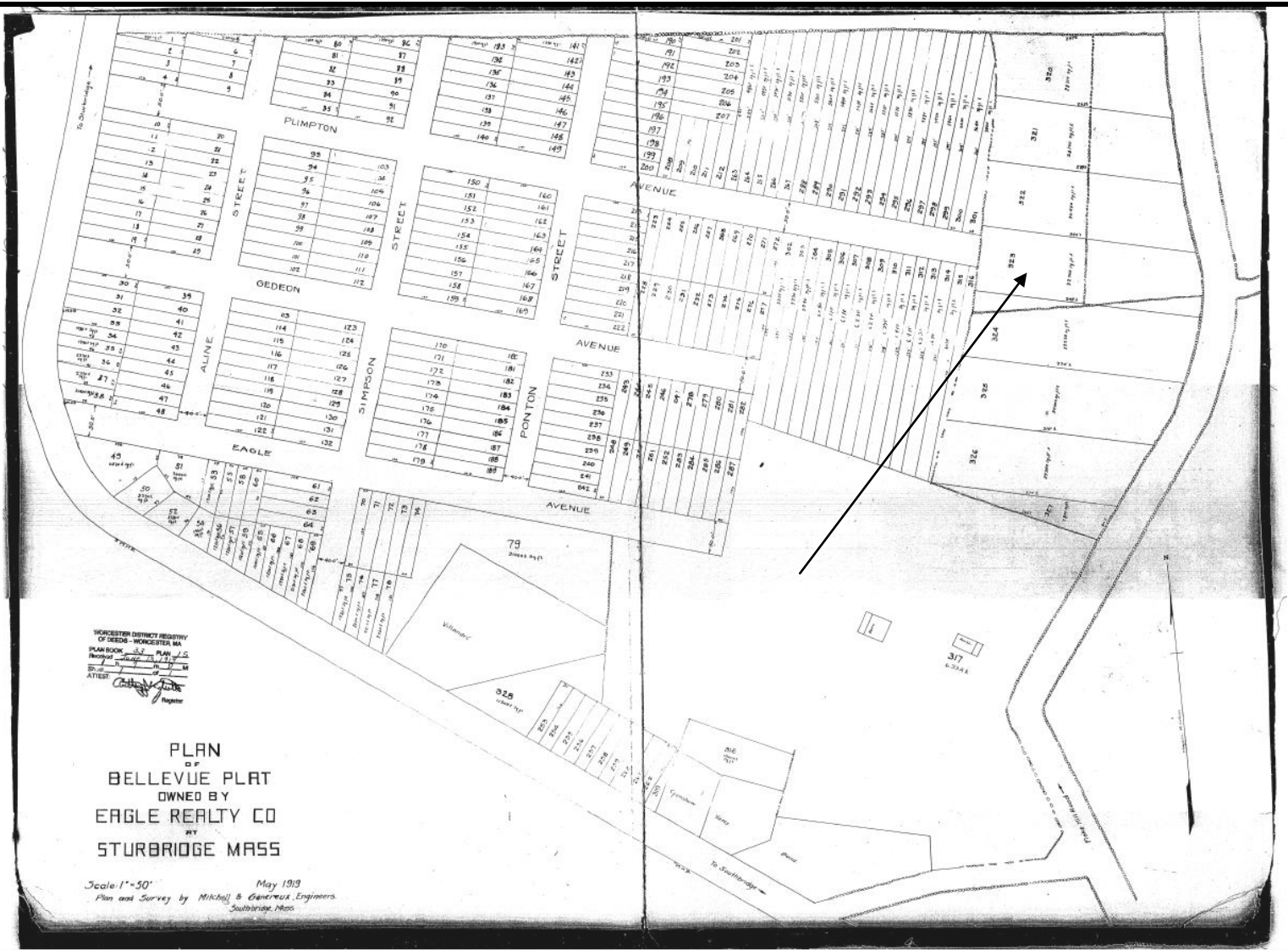


Figure 2: 1919 Plan showing Lot 323, referred to on deed

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