

# FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

280-03041-077

Southbridge

STU.F

STU.54  
STU.259

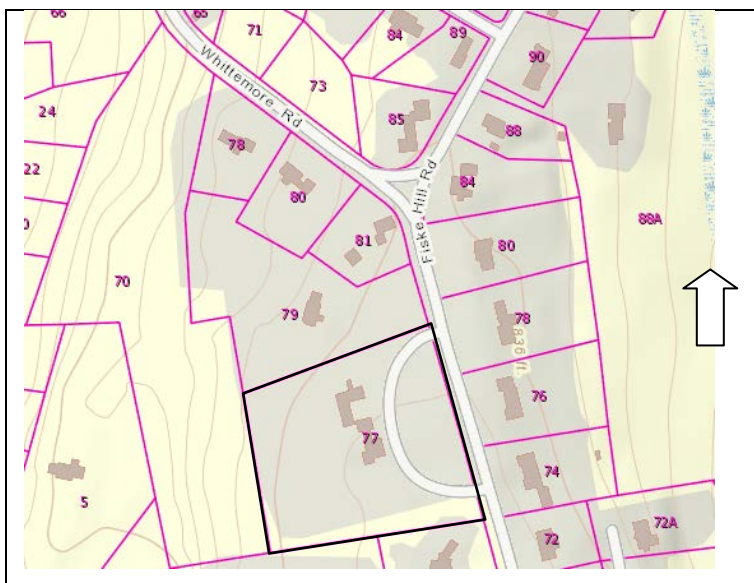
**Town/City:** Sturbridge

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

## Photograph



## Locus Map



**Address:** 77 Fiske Hill Road

**Historic Name:** Daniel Fiske III/Channing M. Wells House

**Uses:** Present: Single Family Dwelling

Original: Single Family Dwelling and Agricultural

**Date of Construction:** ca. 1832, 1937 additions

**Source:** Agnes W. Wilkin STU.54, 1973

**Style/Form:** Federal to Colonial Revival

**Architect/Builder:** Perry, Shaw and Hepburn (1937)

### Exterior Material:

Foundation: Not visible

Wall/Trim: Clapboard/Wood

Roof: Asphalt Shingle

### Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

Barn

Well (STU.xxx)

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

Altered from Federal to Colonial Revival (1930s)

**Condition:** Appears Good

**Moved:** no ☐ yes ☒ **Date:**

**Acreage:** 4.61 acres

**Setting:** Large lot with the residence facing east along Fiske Hill Road. Between the intersections of Fiske Hill with Whittemore Road and Fox Run Road.

**Recorded by:** Shannon Walsh, PVPC

**Organization:** Sturbridge Historical Commission

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

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77 FISKE HILL 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.*

The Daniel Fiske III/Channing M. Wells House, at 77 Fiske Hill Road, is an example of a Colonial residence with later alterations, which provides evidence of nineteenth century residential and agricultural growth in the Fiske Hill area, with later, twentieth century upscale residential growth, connected to the building's current design. The residence is accessed by a semi-circular drive and is set back considerably far from Fiske Hill Road, making it challenging to properly assess the architecture. This multi-wing residential building has a clapboard exterior and wood trim. Cross gable, asphalt shingle rooflines are steeply pitched with slightly overhanging eaves. There are four visible brick chimneys, with two prominent chimneys set west of the roof ridge on the central section of the building.

The central section (and apparently oldest part) of the building is positioned at the northwest corner of the related sections. It is two and a half stories high with a north/south aligned rectangular plan. It is five bays wide by three bays deep and has a steeply pitched, side gable roof with overhanging eaves and trim forming pediments at the gable ends. Other trim includes corner boards and a central entry with a surround which includes pilasters and a crown, as well as a divided transom and side lights. Windows on the main façade of this western facing section are 6/6. A semi-circular fan light is set within the gable on the side, southern elevation and a one story, shed roof ell is positioned towards this section's southwestern corner.

Looking to the northwest towards the entire building, a two and a half story, east/west aligned wing is visible off of the western side of the main section, with a brick, interior chimney at the roof ridge. There is also a one and a half story connector wing (with three dormers) off of the northern side of the main section, and a one and a half story east/west aligned front gable wing to form the building's northern section. This section also has a pronounced pediment at the gable end, with a semi-circular fan light set within the gable. A one story, side gable, north/south aligned wing has a paneled garage door and an interior chimney, set at the roof ridge.

A multi-level, side gable outbuilding, possibly a barn or a garage, is east/west aligned and faces the residence, forming an L shaped configuration between these functionally related buildings. It has a stone foundation or façade on the lower section, and clapboard siding with wood trim. There is a louvered cupola on the roof ridge of the tallest section, and gabled dormers on the northern facing elevation.

The 1930s alterations, which incorporated Colonial Revival style architecture into the building's design, were prepared by the Boston-based firm, Perry, Hepburn and Shaw (founded in 1922). This firm had previously been hired to work on the restoration and reconstruction of Colonial Williamsburg.<sup>1 2</sup>

### 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.<sup>3</sup> In 1731, brothers Henry (1707-1790) and Daniel Fiske (1709-1778) 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."<sup>4</sup> Fertile soil made this area ideal for agriculture and by the late eighteenth century, Fiske Hill

<sup>1</sup> Agnes S. Wilkin, "77 Fiske Hill Road." (MHC Inventory Form #STU.54), 1973. <http://mhc-macris.net/Details.aspx?MhclId=STU.54>, accessed October 2017.

<sup>2</sup> "Perry Dean Rogers Partners Architects, Office History." [perrydean.com](http://perrydean.com) (site). Accessed on-line October 2017, <http://perrydean.com/office-history/>.

<sup>3</sup> Massachusetts Historical Commission. "MHC Reconnaissance Survey Town Report: Sturbridge." 1984.

<sup>4</sup> Agnes S. Wilkin, "Fiske Hill," (MHC Inventory Form STU.F, 1973), <http://mhc-macris.net/Details.aspx?MhclId=STU.F>, accessed October 2017.

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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.

Daniel Fiske III (1786-1859) is documented as the original owner of the older section of this building, which, according to his diary, was raised on June 28<sup>th</sup> of 1832.<sup>5</sup> (Figure 1) In 1855, he is noted to be a farmer, and besides his wife Ann (born 1786), there are five other residents on his property, to include his son, Henry M. Fiske (1818-1896), who is also a farmer.<sup>6</sup>

By 1898, farmer Arthur P. Plimpton (1871-1967) was a later owner of the original section of the house on its original parcel, according to previous research and corroborated on a map of the time period.<sup>7 8</sup> (Figure 2)

Richard Lennihan (born 1893), treasurer of Hamilton Woolen Mills, had the building moved to present site.<sup>9</sup> The property was next purchased by Channing M. Wells (1871-1959), son of one of the co-founders of the American Optical Company, George W. Wells (1847-1912), who became the company president after his father's death.<sup>10</sup> Channing is attributed with having the extensive alterations made to the building, using the architectural firm Perry, Shaw and Hepburn. This firm is still in practice today as Perry Dean Rogers and is noted to have planned residential and institutional designs throughout the state in the twentieth century, such as the mid-twentieth century John A. Bishop School in Arlington (ARL.24) and Harvard Business School in Cambridge, 1955.<sup>11</sup> Fritz Brown of Dudley was hired by Channing to design the landscape for 77 Fiske Hill Road.<sup>12</sup>

This property is also related to the Fiske Hill Well, (1731) STU.902, as the well is in front of the residence, close to Fiske Hill Road.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Massachusetts Historical Commission. "MHC Reconnaissance Survey Town Report: Sturbridge." 1984. <https://www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc/mhcpdf/townreports/Cent-Mass/stu.pdf> , accessed October 2017.

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Figure 1: Walling, H.F. *Map of Worcester County*, Boston: Wm. E. Baker, 1857, <https://www.loc.gov/resource/g3763w.la000320/>

Figure 2: L. J. Richards & Co. "Charlton & Dudley & Southbridge & Sturbridge." *New Topographical Atlas of Worcester County Massachusetts*.1898. *HistoricMapWorks.com* (site). Accessed on-line October 2017. <http://www.historicmapworks.com/Atlas.php?cat=Maps&c=US&a=6717>

<sup>5</sup> Agnes S. Wilkin, "77 Fiske Hill Road." (MHC Inventory Form #STU.54), 1973. <http://mhc-macris.net/Details.aspx?MhclId=STU.54> , accessed October 2017.

<sup>6</sup> "Daniel Fiske." *Massachusetts State Census*, 1855. *Ancestry.com*

<sup>7</sup> Agnes S. Wilkin, "77 Fiske Hill Road." Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> "Arthur P. Plimpton," *United States Federal Census*, 1900. *Ancestry.com*

<sup>9</sup> Agnes S. Wilkin, "77 Fiske Hill Road." Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> "Wells, Channing M." *Southbridge, Massachusetts City Directory*, 1936. *Ancestry.com*

<sup>11</sup> "Perry Dean Rogers Partners Architects, Office History." *Perrydean.com* (site). Accessed on-line October 2017, <http://perrydean.com/office-history/> .

<sup>12</sup> Agnes S. Wilkin, "77 Fiske Hill Road." Ibid.



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Photo 1: Eastern facing main façade, showing older portion of the building



Photo 2: Eastern facing main façade



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Photo 3: Eastern facing main façade, camera facing southwest



Photo 4: Southern facing outbuilding, view of eastern side elevation



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Figure 1: 1857 Map

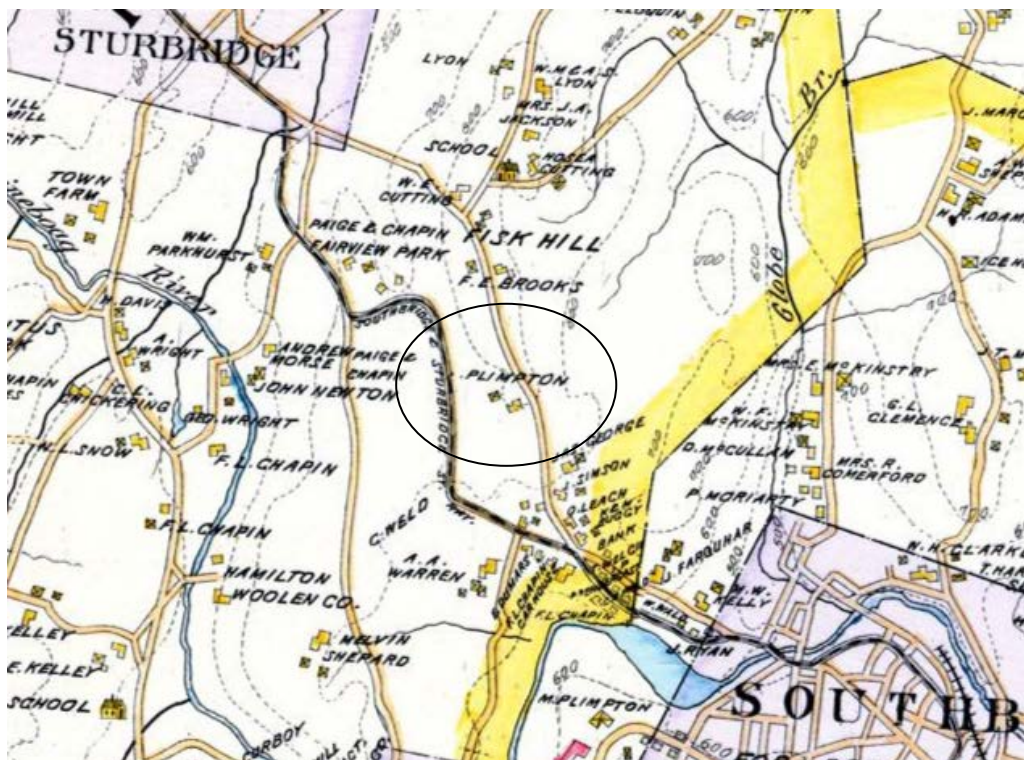


Figure 2: 1898 Map