

# FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

315-02917-023

Southbridge

STU.48;  
STU.263-  
264

## Photograph



## Locus Map



**Town/City:** Sturbridge

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

**Address:** 23 Hall Road

**Historic Name:** Samuel and Lucy Hobbs House

**Uses:** Present: single-family dwelling

Original: single-family dwelling

**Date of Construction:** ca. 1775

**Source:** Izard. Old Houses of Sturbridge

**Style/Form:** Georgian

**Architect/Builder:** unknown

**Exterior Material:**

Foundation: granite

Wall/Trim: clapboard

Roof: wood shingle

**Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:**  
two barns

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

Carriage house added; window enlarged in kitchen portion of wing. (both dates unknown)

**Condition:** good

**Moved:** no ☒ yes ☐ **Date:**

**Acreage:** 6.43 acres

**Setting:** Set at the edge of a stream-crossed wetland below the level of the road. Stone walls extend across front and sides of property. Drive lined with three ancient maples.

**Recorded by:** Bonnie Parsons, PVPC

**Organization:** Sturbridge Historical Commission

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

# INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

STURBRIDGE

23 HALL ROAD

## MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

	STU.48;STU. 263-264
--	------------------------

☒ 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 Samuel and Lucy Hobbs House is one of Sturbridge's finest Georgian buildings and in its original and unchanged setting represents a prosperous, late 18<sup>th</sup> century New England farm. The south-facing house is two-and-a-half stories and has a center chimney on its side-gabled roof. The roof is wood-shingled, the siding is clapboards, and granite blocks make up the house's foundations. Attached to the east elevation of the house is a kitchen and carriage house wing and north of the house are two barns. The generously proportioned central block of the house is five bays wide and four deep. Windows have Georgian period sash with 12/12 configuration. Windows at first floor level on the façade achieve Georgian relief with crown molded lintels while second floor windows are placed close to the eaves as was the common practice during the Georgian period in central and western Massachusetts. Windows at both stories on remaining elevations have crown molded lintels. Architecturally outstanding is the center entry's trabeated surround. Standing in high relief from the plane of the façade in Georgian fashion, the surround consists of wide, fluted pilasters on high plinths. Pilasters support a full entablature whose frieze contains a band of triglyphs and metopes. Guttae are clearly carved beneath each metope. The surround is topped by a full cornice. Within the opening is a raised, eight-panel door in a cross-and-bible pattern.

The single-story east wing consists of a three bay section with a tall chimney followed by a four-bay carriage house. A change in the roofline at the location of the chimney suggests it had been an end-wall chimney that was later enfolded into the wing by the addition of the carriage house, which has a single window, a pedestrian door and four arched carriage openings ornamented with keystones. The carriage house is flushboard-sided to set off its arches and function from the clapboard-sided, kitchen section of the wing.

The land north of the house slopes down to the wetlands so that the two barns have exposed foundations on three sides. The first barn north of the house is a small, east-facing, eaves-front barn dating perhaps to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. It is vertically sided, has boxed eaves and an oculus in its gable end above two 6/6 sash windows. The larger, all-purpose barn is New England form barn with its prime entry in the south gable end. It is built into the slope as a side-hill barn so that its fieldstone foundations are visible in the transition to the full basement story. The center entry to the barn is made up of a pair of doors sliding on an interior track. Each leaf has a row of four panels below an upper of 16-lights. As decorative as they are functional, the doors are likely a later alteration. The barn dates post-1830.

### 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.*

Samuel Hobbs (1752-1823) who built this house was a tanner as well as farmer. The selection of the site next to Hobbs Brook made sense for a tannery that depended on the flow of water but it would also have served the family for farming, which they would have pursued along with the tanning business. Married in 1774 to Lucy Monroe in Weston, Massachusetts, Hobbs built this house around the date of his marriage, as was common. Prior to his marriage, he is credited with having taken part in the Boston Tea Party that took place in 1773 in Boston. In Sturbridge, Samuel Hobbs was active in town government as office-holder for many years.

His sons followed their father's engagement in political affairs. Samuel, Jr. was a selectman in Sturbridge in 1829 and 1845 and as a member of the Board of Directors of the Second Agricultural Society of Sturbridge, a group that eventually founded the Sturbridge Agricultural Fair. Meanwhile Samuel, Jr. and his brother Josiah Hobbs continued to run the family tanning business after their father's death. Samuel Hobbs, Jr. and the tannery appear on the map of 1857 on Main Street. The third generation of Hobbs, Samuel Harrison Hobbs, the son of Samuel, Jr. and Polly Hobbs appears as early as 1850 on the federal non-population schedule for agriculture with 117 improved acres. In the 1880 federal non-population schedule Samuel H. Hobbs was again

*Continuation sheet 1*

# INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

STURBRIDGE

23 HALL ROAD

## MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

	STU.48;STU. 263-264
--	------------------------

listed as a farmer and from the livestock and crops he grew, it is clear that he and his wife Hannah were dairy farmers and among the most well-to-do in Sturbridge. Josiah Hobbs, meanwhile, continued working as a tanner and from deeds it seems that for part of the time Josiah's family resided in the house rather than Samuel's.

The property remained in the Hobbs family for two more generations. Josiah Hobbs (1786-1845) and his wife Luranne had a son George Hobbs (1828-1889) who maintained and added considerably to the property. A blacksmith and farmer in the 1860s, George and his wife Juliette Brown were married in 1853 and lived on the farm at the time of the 1855 census. Their second daughter, Charlotte remained single and worked as a dressmaker from the house. After Juliette Hobbs died, George moved to Marlborough where he was living in 1880. Charlotte left Sturbridge for Marlborough as well, where, in 1900, she was living with her married sister Gertrude and working as a dressmaker. In 1908 Charlotte bought Gertrude's share of the farm but remained living in Marlborough through 1920. She likely rented the house and land to others as she didn't sell the property until 1915 when it went to Nellie and Ralph Weston and out of the Hobbs family. The Westons came from Southbridge where Ralph worked as a machinist at American Optical in the 1910s. From 1915 to 1943 the Westons ran a general farm, though during the Depression Ralph again worked off the farm as a machinist in a Sturbridge shop. In their mid-60s the Westons sold the farm. Ernest and Jennie Hall were the next owners from 1943. Ernest worked as a printer at American Optical Company in Southbridge in 1940 and remained there after buying the farm, but once they owned the farm they added land having in 1949 a total of 90 acres. Ernest then worked as a teacher at the Cole Trade High School in Southbridge in the 1950s. The Halls were in the house until Jenny died in 1978.

The house and all-purpose barn appear on the panoramic map of 1892. The kitchen wing appears on the map but the carriage house section of the wing had not yet been added.

## 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*, 1857.

### Primary Sources

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

### 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 collection.

### 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.



INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

STURBRIDGE

23 HALL ROAD

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s)	Form No.
	STU.48;STU. 263-264



Photo 1: Barns north of the house.

# INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

STURBRIDGE

23 HALL ROAD

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

	STU.48;STU. 263-264
--	------------------------

## National Register of Historic Places Criteria Statement Form

Check all that apply:

- ☒ Individually eligible      ☐ Eligible **only** in a historic district
- ☐ Contributing to a potential historic district      ☐ Potential historic district

Criteria:    ☒ **A**    ☐ **B**    ☒ **C**    ☐ **D**

Criteria Considerations:    ☐ **A**    ☐ **B**    ☐ **C**    ☐ **D**    ☐ **E**    ☐ **F**    ☐ **G**

Statement of Significance by Bonnie Parsons

*The criteria that are checked in the above sections must be justified here.*

The Samuel and Lucy Hobbs House meets criteria A and C and is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

Built ca. 1775 in Sturbridge, the history of this property makes up a significant part of the town's history, thereby meeting criterion A. Four generations of the Hobbs family lived here and took part in the economy and government of the town. From ca. 1775 to 1915 the Hobbs family members cared for the house and farm while several of them also carried on other trades such as tanning, blacksmithing and dressmaking. Until 1908 they were the farmers and between 1908 and 1915 the land and farmhouse were leased to other farmers but ownership kept in the family. The Hobbs were active in town government as selectmen and took part in forming an agricultural society. Although the property continued to be farmed after 1915, its owners reflected economic changes in Sturbridge as owners coupled the farming with working in Southbridge industry. The gradual transformation of neighborhoods of Sturbridge into suburbs of Southbridge was a significant change that took place from the 1920s and one in which this property took part.

Meeting criterion C this house is an immaculately preserved Georgian house with outbuildings in its unspoiled, rural, agricultural setting. Its architecture represents the building of prosperous Sturbridge residents of the last quarter of the 18<sup>th</sup> century who were informed of high style urban architecture and managed to create it in their central Massachusetts communities. It is significant for the side hill and eaves front barns that remain and are in fine condition. The Samuel and Lucy Hobbs House has local significance. It has integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association.