

FORM B – BUILDING

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

Photograph



Locus Map



Recorded by: Bonnie Parsons

Organization: Pioneer Valley Planning Commission

Date (month / year): October, 2017

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

415-
02421-
538

Southbridge

STU.E

STU.141;STU.282

Town/City: Sturbridge

Place: (*neighborhood or village*): Fiskdale

Address: 538 Main Street

Historic Name: Fiskdale House

Uses: Present: Retail Stores

Original: Hotel/Store

Date of Construction: pre-1857

Source: H. F. Walling Map of Worcester County

Style/Form: Greek Revival

Architect/Builder: unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: stone

Wall/Trim: clapboard, stucco

Roof: asphalt shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

Barn building 538 A Built 1988

Major Alterations (*with dates*):

Stucco applied ca. 1920; two-story porch added ca. 1880; converted from hotel to stores, ca. 1900

Condition: fair to good

Moved: no ☒ yes ☐ **Date:**

Acreage: .77 acres

Setting: Faces south along Main Street (Route 20), on a lot that slopes upward to the north. Aligned with other buildings on the street.

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

STURBRIDGE

538 MAIN STREET

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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.

Fiskdale House is a two-and-a-half story building with its roof gable to the street. The south-facing building consists of a main block three bays wide and six bays long followed by two ells of six and three bays in length. The main block is clapboard sided at the second story and attic levels of the façade but the remainder has been stuccoed and scored to appear as if it were a masonry building. The ells retain their clapboards. A front-gable dormer is located on the roof of the main block centered on the east elevation. A stacked porch extends across the façade supported on four columns. At second story the porch is screened in, but turned, Queen Anne style balusters make up the railing. The center entry to the building is the one identifying stylistic feature from the period of the building's construction. It is a wide, Greek Revival, recessed entry with paneled intrados and paneled ceiling.

North of the building is a one-story store built to resemble a barn. Built ca. 2000 it contains a series of shops.

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.

According to an inventory form for this building dating from 1973, Fiskdale House was built by the Quinebaug Manufacturing Company (previously known as the Fiskdale Mills) ca. 1826. By 1857 it was called a hotel but was serving more like a rooming house, than as a room for an overnight or two, occupied by workers from most of the industries Sturbridge offered. In 1857, the building is noted on the atlas of that year as owned by J. Squires, who does not appear in the 1850 or 1860 federal censuses or the 1855 state census as living in Sturbridge. In 1870, James F. and Lucy Parker owned the Fiskdale House and ran it with the help of their son Frank, 19. The hotel housed and employed George White, 24, a hosteler, to take care of horses either at a local livery or at the hotel; and two Irish servants, Mary Fox, 40 and Rose Bryant 50. The nine remaining occupants worked in a variety of occupations including employment at a grocery and dry goods store, as carpenters, at Snell auger works, as a clergyman, a brick mason, and a painter. All the paying occupants were male.

By 1880, the Parkers are listed in the Southbridge census running a much larger hotel, and living in their place in 1880 at the Fiskdale House were John and Sarah Bacon, their two children, three hotel workers, and twelve boarders - again all male - suggesting that one or both of the ells may have been added to accommodate more people. The Bacons did not last long, however. They moved out in 1882, when John Bacon sold the hotel to John Kremmens who turned around and sold it in 1883 to George and Adalade Sikes. George Sikes had been working in a restaurant at the time of the 1880 census, so it may have been he who added the restaurant function to the hotel. By 1892 when the bird's-eye-view map was published, Albert Webster was named as this establishment's proprietor. Albert and Mary Webster left the hotel by 1900 and Albert took a job at the Snell Auger and Bit works in Sturbridge.

By the early twentieth century, tourist traffic had begun in Sturbridge and a location on the main street was a good investment. John S. Hubbard bought the business at this location after George Sikes' death and in 1900, John and Catherine Hubbard were living in and running the hotel with their two young daughters. Living with them was the staff for the hotel including a porter, a clerk, a chambermaid, kitchen girl, and cook. There were only two boarders. With this staff it is evident that the hotel was beginning to take temporary guests rather than boarders. Within the decade, the Hubbards had moved on to Sterling to run another hotel and from where John Hubbard became one of Worcester County's largest real estate investors.

By the 1920s, business had increased due to automobile tourism and Morris Marcy, an insurance agent from Southbridge, bought the property as an investment in 1923. He turned it over to Arthur and Albina Martel who used the building as their residence and business location for Arthur's insurance agency. Albina Martel, widowed, kept the building through 1968,

Continuation sheet 1

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transforming it from a hotel to an apartment building when she rented to Emile and Blanche Le Blanc, retired; Germaine Lataille, widow of Romeo, teller S.B. co-op; Aime and Sarah Carpentier. Aime was a worker at Stafford Painters.

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.

Thomas A Wright book 09953 page 282 1986

Roms Restaurant book 04903 page 0132

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.

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



Photo 1: Secondary commercial building