

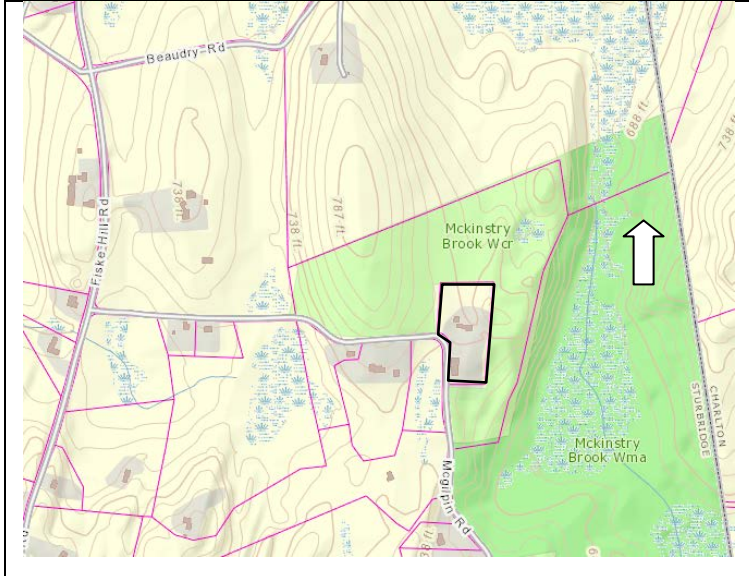
FORM B – BUILDING

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

Photograph



Locus Map



Recorded by: Shannon Walsh, PVPC

Organization: Sturbridge Historical Commission

Date (month / year): March 2017

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

432-02627-138

Southbridge

STU.F

STU.59
STU.288
STU.289

Town/City: Sturbridge

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

Address: 138 McGilpin Road (STU.59 as 122 McGilpin Rd)

Historic Name: John Smith House

Uses: Present: Single Family Dwelling

Original: Single Family Dwelling and Agricultural

Date of Construction: Built by 1857

Source: Deeds, 1857 Map, Previous Research

Style/Form: Federal with (earlier and/or later) related additions

Architect/Builder: Unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: Brick and possibly concrete

Wall/Trim: Brick, Clapboard/Wood

Roof: Slate

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

Barns (appear on 1898 map)

Major Alterations (*with dates*):

A two story and a one story wing off of the western elevation (construction dates unknown, at least one is potentially older than the brick residence)

Condition: Appears Good

Moved: no ☒ yes ☐ **Date:**

Acreage: 3.05 acres

Setting: Large, irregularly shaped parcel set along a bend of McGilpin Road, which connects to Fiske Hill Road. Residential building faces south, and is positioned towards the center of the parcel. Main barn outbuilding is aligned north to south and located at the southwestern corner of the parcel. Site is in proximity to the McKinstry Brook Wildlife Management Area.

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

STURBRIDGE

138 MCGILPIN ROAD

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

STU.F

STU.59
STU.288-289

☒ 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 John Smith House, at 138 McGilpin Road, is an example of early to mid-nineteenth century Federal style architecture with smaller connecting wings and related agricultural outbuildings. This building also represents the growth and agricultural development of what was to become McGilpin Road in the Fiske Hill area of Sturbridge. The masonry section of the residence was probably constructed prior to 1857 based on the architectural style.¹ This is presumably the primary residence and is two and a half stories high and five bays wide by at least two bays deep with an east/west aligned rectangular plan. There are also two smaller related wings with asymmetrical fenestrations. The masonry section has a brick foundation, a brick exterior with wood trim, and a side gable slate roof with two, interior brick chimneys at the roof ridge. Windows are 6/6 with wood sills and first floor flat, brick lintels. The main, board and batten entry (out of character for a Federal style building) has an elliptical fanlight and sidelights.

The smaller, two and a half story wing is set back from the foundation line of the main residence and attached to the western side elevation. It is three bays wide by two bays deep and has what appears to be a concrete foundation (possibly a parge coat) and a clapboard exterior with wood trim. There is also a side gable, slate roof, and an interior brick chimney positioned towards the northwestern corner, set near the roof ridge. Windows are 6/6 and have wood sills and lintels. A board and batten door is at the first story, southeastern corner and has a large, stone slab as an entry step.

A one and a half story wing is attached to the western, side elevation of the larger wing. It is four bays wide by two bays deep and has a similar foundation to the adjacent wing and a clapboard exterior with wood trim. The side gable, slate roof has a brick chimney rising from the northern facing downward slope of the roof. Windows are 6/6 with wood sills and lintels and there is a board and batten door similar to the two other exterior doors on the southern facing façade.

The main barn on the property is comprised of three sections, with the most visually dominant architecture being the two and a half story high, Gable Barn. This section has an east/west alignment and is perpendicular to McGilpin Road. The exterior is vertically laid wide, wood planks and the steeply pitched roof is asphalt shingle. The western facing elevation has a simple wooden entry door, but a transom with (probably 20) divided lights, set much higher up on this elevation, indicates that the door configuration may have been altered. A first story window with six divided lights is to the south of the entry.

The second largest section appears to be of Prairie Barn style, is five bays wide by three bays deep, and is connected as a perpendicular wing off of the main barn. The most significant character defining feature is the Gambrel style roof and projecting peak off of the southern elevation. There is a stone foundation, best viewed on the southern elevation and the first story exterior appears to be of concrete block. The southern elevation upper story is covered with asphalt shingle siding and has a large hay loft door. Windows, including four along the western elevation and two on the southern elevation, have six divided lights and appear to tilt inward. An open, gabled dormer is set on western side of the downward sloping roof.

The smallest barn section, approximately one story high and one bay wide by two bays deep, also has a gambrel roof and is positioned as an ell off of the main Gable Barn. Exterior wood planks, visible within the western elevation front gambrel, are covered on the northern and lower western elevations by a type of metal cladding. The southern facing elevation exterior has concrete blocks, similar to the Prairie Barn section. Three windows have six divided lights and there is a wood hayloft door within the gambrel. A door with upper divided lights marks the entrance of this building, at the southwestern corner.

There is an additional small barn or outbuilding to the northwest of the residence with a vertically laid wood exterior and a side gabled roof which appears to be covered in slate. It has one visible window with ten divided lights on the western side elevation.

¹ Virginia S. McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2013.

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

STURBRIDGE

138 MCGILPIN ROAD

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

STU.F

STU.59
STU.288-289

A low, stone wall borders the property on either side of the gravel drive.

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.

The area in proximity to McGilpin Road has connections to pre-Colonial Native American transportation routes dating back to the sixteenth century.^{2 3} This residence is also related to early agricultural development in Sturbridge, particularly during the Federal Period (1775-1830).⁴ McGilpin Road connects on either end to Fiske Hill Road, which was the "first permanent European agricultural settlement after circa 1725," established in the Eastern Upland area of Sturbridge.⁵ Fertile soil made the 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. This road was formerly known as Prouty Road, which led to neighboring Charlton.⁶ By the early to mid-twentieth century, general development in the area shifted from agricultural pursuits towards higher-end residential growth and, post-World War II, further development threatened to significantly alter the area's historic landscape.

Nineteenth century owners of this land and buildings were descended from Joseph Smith (1709-1782), documented as the "first settler to winter over in Sturbridge proper" and this was originally the residence and farm of John Smith (1794-1876), and was later owned by his youngest son, Solon Smith (1845-1925).⁷ (Figures 1 and 2) The buildings are representative of nineteenth century and later residential and agricultural architecture in Sturbridge and the residence and barns continue to provide a sense of the historic streetscape along McGilpin.

Earlier documentation speculates that at least one of the residential wings (said to have a pegged attic and hand-hewn beams) may be older than the main, brick residence.⁸ The 1898 map is the first to show the brick residence and an attached wing, along with the related barns, but the configuration of the residential buildings does not match the current configuration. (Figure 3) Further investigation would be needed to inspect building interiors and better determine age.

The larger barn has had significant alterations, the extent of which is unclear. It is recommended that this contributing outbuilding be inventoried in greater detail, possibly as part of a local barn inventory.

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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> . <https://www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc/mhcpdf/townreports/Cent-Mass/stu.pdf>

² Agnes S. Wilkin, "104 McGilpin Road," (MHC Inventory Form #STU.60), 1973. <http://mhc-macris.net/Details.aspx?MhclId=STU.60>, accessed November 2017.

³ 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> . <https://www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc/mhcpdf/townreports/Cent-Mass/stu.pdf>

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Reference is made to the documentation of this road on an 1831 map

⁷ Jerome Smith et al 1889 Book 1309 Page 70; Solon Smith (1845-1925) 1899 Book 1613 Page 15 (farm and buildings). Also note deed reference to a related Land Plan by George A. Craig and son Civil Engineers, August 6, 1889.

⁸ Agnes S. Wilkin, "122 McGilpin Road," (MHC Inventory Form # STU.59), 1973. <http://mhc-macris.net/Details.aspx?MhclId=STU.59> , accessed November, 2017.

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

STURBRIDGE

138 MCGILPIN ROAD

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

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STU.F

STU.59
STU.288-289

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Figure 1: Walling, Henry Francis. "Map of Worcester County." Boston and New York: Wm. E. Baker & Co., 1857. *Library of Congress.org* <https://www.loc.gov/resource/g3763w.la000320/>

Figure 2: F. W. Beers, "Sturbridge." *Atlas of Worcester County, Massachusetts*. New York: F.W. Beers & Co. 1870. *Mass.gov* (site). Accessed on-line October 2017, <http://www.mass.gov/anf/research-and-tech/oversight-agencies/lib/massachusetts-real-estate-atlases.html>

Figure 3: 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/>



Photo 1: Southern main façade and western side elevations of residence

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

STURBRIDGE

138 MCGILPIN ROAD

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

STU.F	STU.59
	STU.288-289



Photo 2: Western side elevations of residence



Photo 3: Streetscape, camera facing north towards residence and single barn outbuilding, along McGilpin Road

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

STURBRIDGE

138 MCGILPIN ROAD

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

STU.F	STU.59
	STU.288-289



Photo 4: Southern and western elevations of outbuilding to the northwest of the main residence



Photo 5: Northern and western elevations of the barn along McGilpin Road

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

STURBRIDGE

138 MCGILPIN ROAD

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

STU.F	STU.59
	STU.288-289



Photo 6: Western and Southern elevations of the barn along McGilpin Road

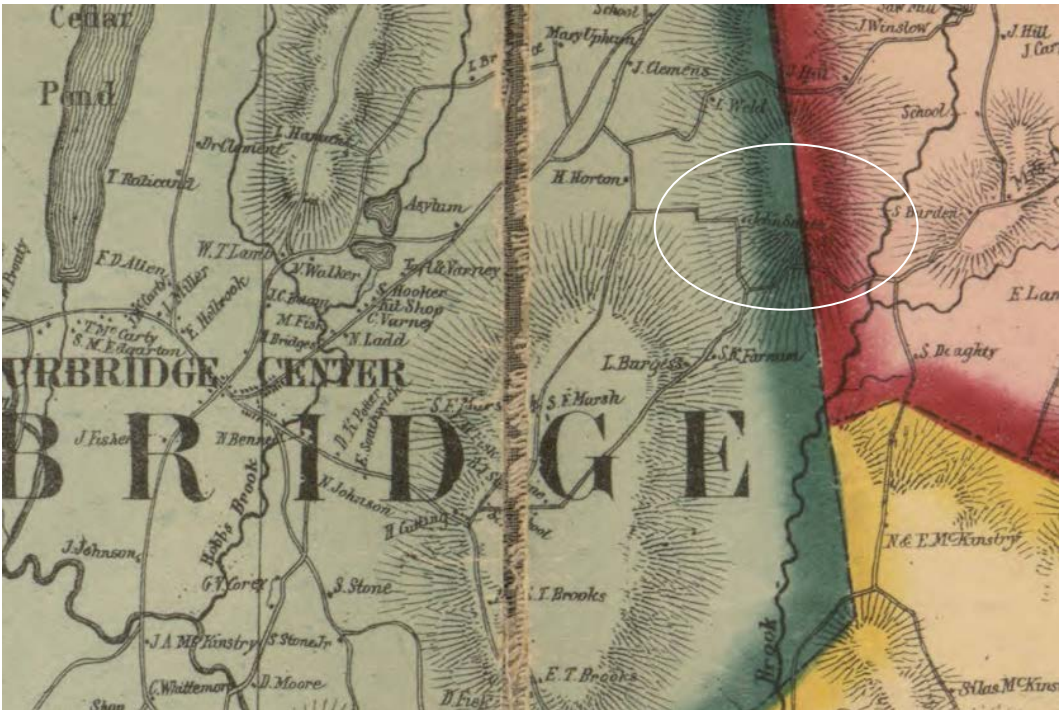


Figure 1: John Smith Property, 1857 Map

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Area(s) Form No.

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

STU.F

STU.59
STU.288-289

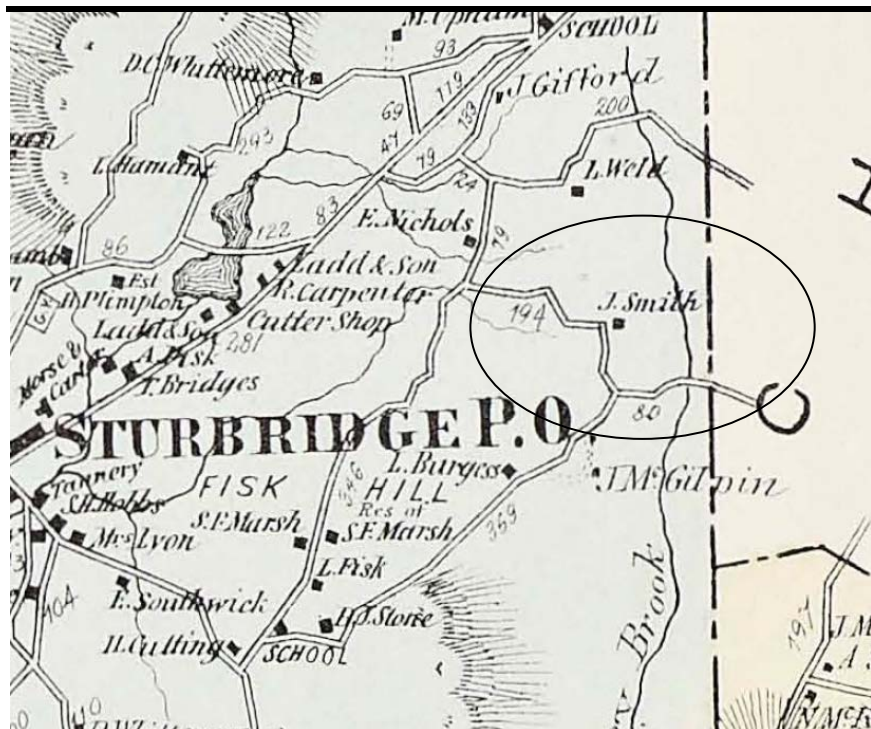


Figure 2: J. Smith property along what was to become McGilpin Road, 1870 Map

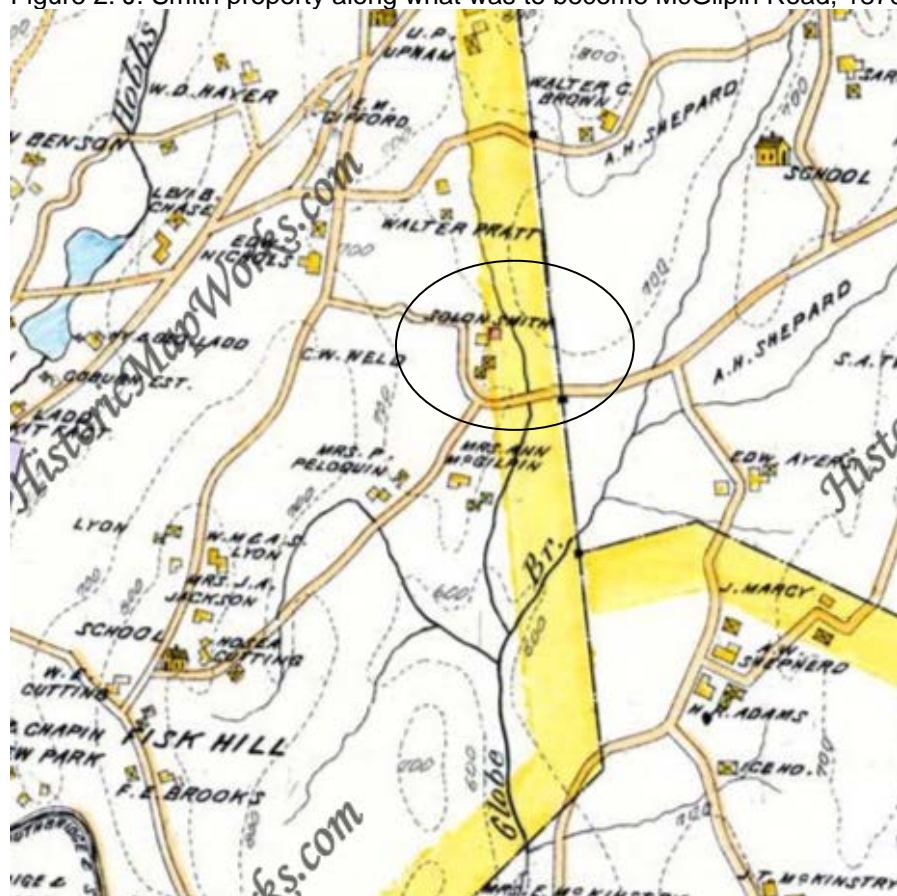


Figure 3: Solon Smith Property, 1898 Map

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

STURBRIDGE

138 MCGILPIN ROAD

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Area(s) Form No.

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

STU.F	STU.59
	STU.288-289

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 Shannon Walsh, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission

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

The John Smith House, at 138 McGilpin Road, is recommended for individual listing on the National Register of Historic Places with a period of significance of 1857 (or earlier) through 1967 (arbitrary fifty-year threshold), with significance on a local level.

This single family dwelling and related agricultural outbuildings meet National Register Criteria A in the category of Community Planning and Development, as they are representative of the early settlement and growth of McGilpin Road in the Fiske Hill area of Sturbridge, and are furthermore remaining examples of the town's nineteenth century rural and agricultural landscape.

These buildings and site further support a greater understanding of Sturbridge social history, as they are related to the Smith family, who were descended from one of the first proprietors, Joseph Smith (1709-1782), and this property is documented to have been developed in the nineteenth century by his great grandson, John Smith (1794-1876) and great great grandson, Solon Smith (1845-1925).

The residence is also eligible and locally significant under Criteria C for Architecture, as it maintains integrity as a mid-nineteenth century Federal style building with related additions, some of which may pre-date the main residential section. Barn outbuildings, including one which appears on a map by the late nineteenth century, are important as evidence of agricultural construction during the period of significance.

In conclusion, the John Smith House is eligible for National Register listing under both Criteria A and C, with local significance, as it offers a glimpse into early community planning and development in the Fiske Hill area, along McGilpin Road, beginning around the nineteenth century. This residence connects to the social history of Sturbridge through the Smith family and their relationship to one of the early proprietors of Sturbridge. It is also a good example of nineteenth century Federal style architecture, related additions, and agricultural outbuildings, which may provide evidence into an even older use of this property. Overall, the buildings maintain a good degree of integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.