

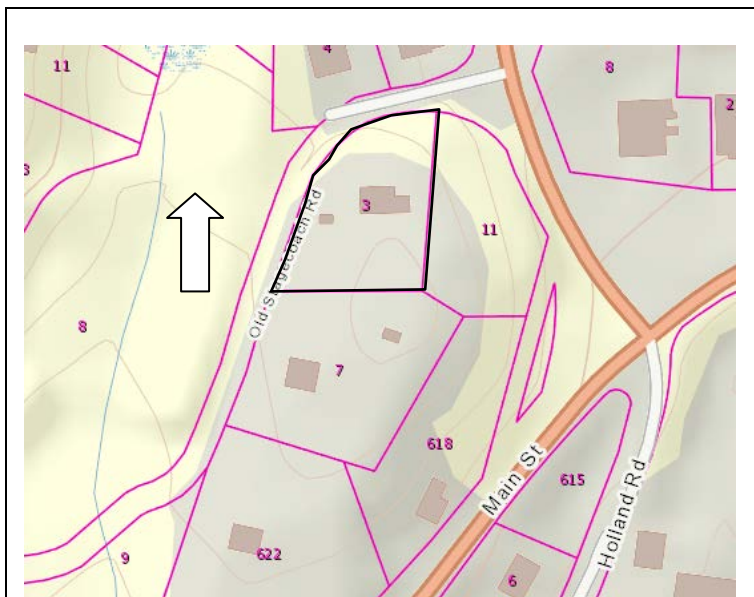
FORM B – BUILDING

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

487-02337-003

Southbridge

STU.E

STU.292

Town/City: Sturbridge

Place: (*neighborhood or village*): Fiskdale

Address: 3 Old Stagecoach Road

Historic Name: Abner Allen House

Uses: Present: Single Family Dwelling

Original: Single Family Dwelling, Agricultural

Date of Construction: between 1735 and 1772

Source: Various sources (see footnotes)

Style/Form: Colonial

Architect/Builder: Unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: Appears to be concrete

Wall/Trim: Clapboard/Wood, Vinyl or Aluminum

Roof: Asphalt Shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

Shed (not visible from street)

Major Alterations (*with dates*):

Side wing (probably post-1967)

Replacement windows (date unknown)

Condition: Fair due to alterations

Moved: no ☒ yes ☐ **Date:**

Acreage: .52 acres

Setting: Irregularly shaped parcel on Stagecoach Road, off of Brookfield Road and near the intersection of Brookfield with Main Street (Route 20). Building is towards the center of the parcel and the main façade faces north towards Old Stagecoach Rd.

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

STURBRIDGE

3 OLD STAGECOACH ROAD

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

STU.E

STU.292

☒ 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 Abner Allen House, located at 3 Old Stagecoach Road, relates to the agricultural origins of Fiskdale, prior to the area's late eighteenth to mid-nineteenth century pronounced growth and development along the Main Street thoroughway. This one and a half story building is five bays wide by three bays deep and has an extremely steeply pitched, side gable, asphalt shingle roof with a slight eave return. The foundation appears to be concrete and the exterior is wood clapboard siding with some wood trim. The majority of visible replacement windows are 8/12 and appear to have vinyl or aluminum trim.

Set up on a hill and partially obscured by trees, the building's northern facing main façade is symmetrically designed, with a central wood paneled door with upper divided lights, flanked by pairs of 8/12 windows. The visible western side elevation first story has a similar 8/12 window towards the northwestern corner, and two additional windows which are smaller and narrow with eight divided lights. The upper story on this elevation has an 8/12 window set within the gable.

There is a barely visible, one story, rectangular plan side wing off of the main residence eastern elevation. It has a steeply pitched, side gable roof and an exterior chimney on its eastern side. A wooden, circular sign is to the north of the residence, within the tree line, and says *Woolens* in the center, and *Allen Homestead Country Antiques* around the perimeter.

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 Allen family is noted to have had extensive colonial-era land holdings which stretched down to Fiskdale.¹ Abner Allen (1746-1830) was probably the first resident on this property along Old Stagecoach Road, formerly called Old Brookfield Road. (Figures 4 and 5) Abner established the "Old Tannery" at Fiskdale circa 1780 and operated the facility for approximately fifty years.² He was a descendant of settler Moses Allen (1709-1796), who built the first gristmill in the village.³ Abner married Marcy Marsh (1751-1802) in 1772, which correlates with one proposed construction date of this residence.⁴ Another reference dates its construction to be 1735.⁵

The property was later owned by Abner's son, farmer and pump maker Henry Allen (1777-1849).⁶ By 1857, Abner's grandson and Henry's son, Liberty Allen (1809-1901), is documented as the owner. (Figures 1, 2 and 3) Liberty operated his grandfather Abner's tannery from 1830 through the late nineteenth century.⁷ In the 1870 census, Liberty was working as a farmer and currier and his obituary notes that he previously owned a tannery and was said to have "learned the harness trade when he was a young man."^{8 9} He was remembered upon his death as "an old and lifelong citizen of the town" and noted to have passed away at his late home in Fiskdale, "after having "lived nearly all his life and died on the same spot that his father and grandfather did before him."¹⁰

¹ Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, "Sturbridge Reconnaissance Report, 2007" *Mass.gov* (site). Accessed on-line July, 2017, <http://www.mass.gov/eea/docs/dcr/stewardship/histland/recon-reports/sturbridge-with-map.pdf>

² Duane Hamilton Hurd, *History of Worcester County, Massachusetts, with Biographical Sketches of Many of the Pioneers and Prominent Men, Volume 1*. Philadelphia: J. W. Lewis & Co., 1889. *Archive.org*, accessed on-line November 2017, <https://archive.org/details/historyofworcest01hurdd>

³ Frederick W. Cooke and the Federal Project of the Works Progress Administration of Massachusetts, *Massachusetts: A Guide to the Bay State*, (The American Guide Series) Cambridge: The Riverside Press, 1937. *Archive.org* <https://archive.org/details/massachusettsgui00federich>

⁴ "Abner Allen," *Massachusetts, Town Marriage Records*, July 19, 1772. *Ancestry.com*

⁵ Frederick W. Cooke and the Federal Project of the Works Progress Administration of Massachusetts, *Ibid*.

⁶ Duane Hamilton Hurd, *Ibid*.

⁷ *Ibid*.

⁸ "Liberty Allen," *Worcester Daily Spy*, May 28, 1901, *Genealogybank.com*

⁹ "Liberty Allen," *United States Federal Census*, 1870. *Ancestry.com*

¹⁰ "Liberty Allen," *Worcester Daily Spy*, May 28, 1901, *Genealogybank.com*

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

STURBRIDGE

3 OLD STAGECOACH ROAD

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

STU.E

STU.292

General deed research for this property indicates that by the mid-nineteenth century, the land was subdivided but remained in the ownership of the Allen family.¹¹ By the late 1800s, the Fiskdale area had developed as an institutional and commercial center, due to the presence of the Fiskdale mills and the Snell Manufacturing Company. (note nineteenth century growth: Figures 1, 2, and 3) Main Street and related development continued with further expansion into that area from the center of Sturbridge, as well as into the neighboring area of Southbridge.

By 1923, the property was still known as Allen Farm.¹² (Figure 4) A 1967 plan shows a further reduction of land as well as more clearly defined building footprints, indicating that the existing one story wing may be a later addition. (Figure 5) It is unknown if a current outbuilding, barely visible from the street, relates to an earlier barn noted on the 1898 map. (Figures 3 and 5)

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Ancestry.com (see footnotes)

Cooke, Frederick W. and the Federal Project of the Works Progress Administration of Massachusetts, *Massachusetts: A Guide to the Bay State*, (The American Guide Series) Cambridge: The Riverside Press, 1937. *Archive.org*
<https://archive.org/details/massachusettsgui00federich>

Davis, George. *A Historical Sketch of Sturbridge and Southbridge*. West Brookfield: Power Press of O.S. Cooke and Co., 1856. *Archive.org*, <https://archive.org/details/historicalskech00davisgeo>, accessed November, 2017.

FindaGrave.com

Genealogybank.com (see footnotes)

Hurd, Duane Hamilton. *History of Worcester County, Massachusetts, with Biographical Sketches of Many of the Pioneers and Prominent Men, Volume 1*. Philadelphia: J. W. Lewis & Co., 1889. *Archive.org*, accessed on-line November 2017,
<https://archive.org/details/historyofworcest01hurdd>

Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, "Sturbridge Reconnaissance Report, 2007" *Mass.gov* (site). Accessed on-line July, 2017, <http://www.mass.gov/eea/docs/dcr/stewardship/histland/recon-reports/sturbridge-with-map.pdf>

Worcester District Registry of Deeds (see footnotes)

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

Figure 2: Atlas of Worcester County, F. W. Beers & Co. 1870,
<https://www.digitalcommonwealth.org/search/commonwealth:x059cb92c>

Figure 3: L. J. Richards & Co. "Charlton & Dudley & Southbridge & Sturbridge." Plate 021, *New Topographical Atlas of Worcester County Massachusetts*. 1898. *Ward Maps LLC* (site). Accessed July 2017,
<http://www.wardmaps.com/viewasset.php?aid=12391>

Figure 4: "Book 40, Page 67," 1923. *Worcester District Registry of Deeds*, (*Masslandrecords.com*) Accessed on-line November 2017, <http://www.masslandrecords.com/worcester/>

Figure 5: "Book 313, Page 52," 1967. *Worcester District Registry of Deeds* (*Masslandrecords.com*) Accessed on-line November 2017, <http://www.masslandrecords.com/worcester/>

¹¹ "Liberty Allen (executor) to Judeon Smith" 1850 Book 459 Page 329 (portion of estate was conveyed to Salem Charles...) *Worcester District Registry of Deeds*

¹² "313 Plan 52" (Parcel within land of George R. and Pauline B. Suprenant (former Allen Homestead), *Worcester District Registry of Deeds*

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

STURBRIDGE

3 OLD STAGECOACH ROAD

Area(s) Form No.

STU.E	STU.292
-------	---------



Photo 1: Northern facing main façade, closer perspective



Photo 2: Eastern side elevation and eastern wing

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

STURBRIDGE

3 OLD STAGECOACH ROAD

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s)	Form No.
STU.E	STU.292



Figure 1: 1857 Map showing Liberty Allen property



Figure 2: 1870 Atlas of Worcester County

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

STURBRIDGE

3 OLD STAGECOACH ROAD

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

STU.E

STU.292

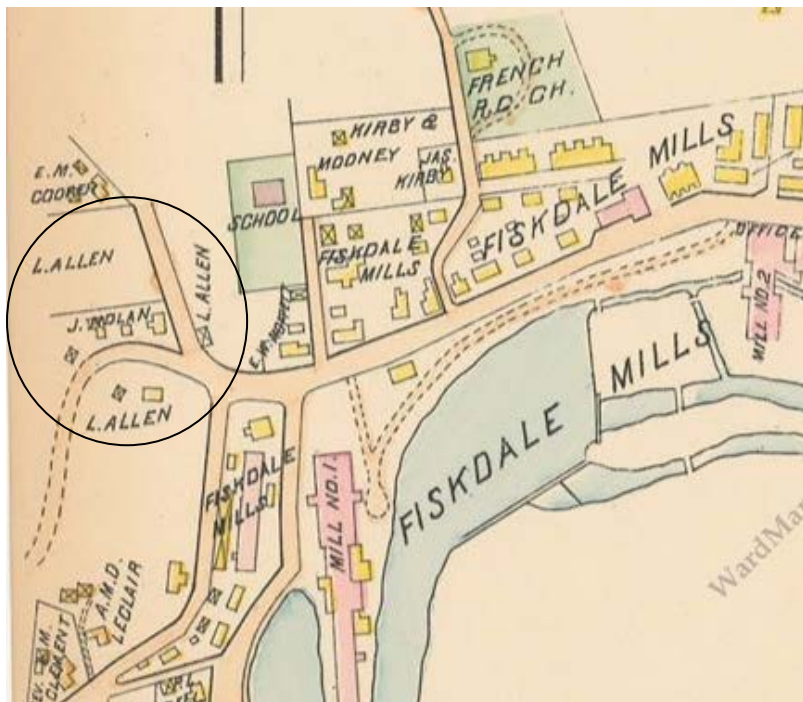


Figure 3: 1898 Map showing increased landholdings of Liberty Allen

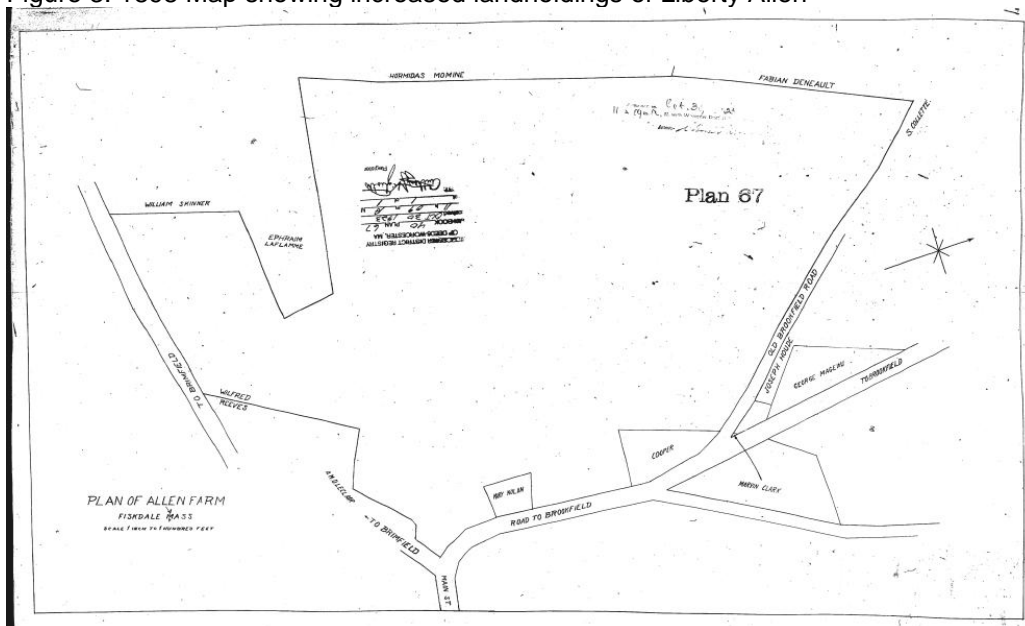


Figure 4: 1923 Plan of Allen Farm

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

STU.E	STU.292
-------	---------

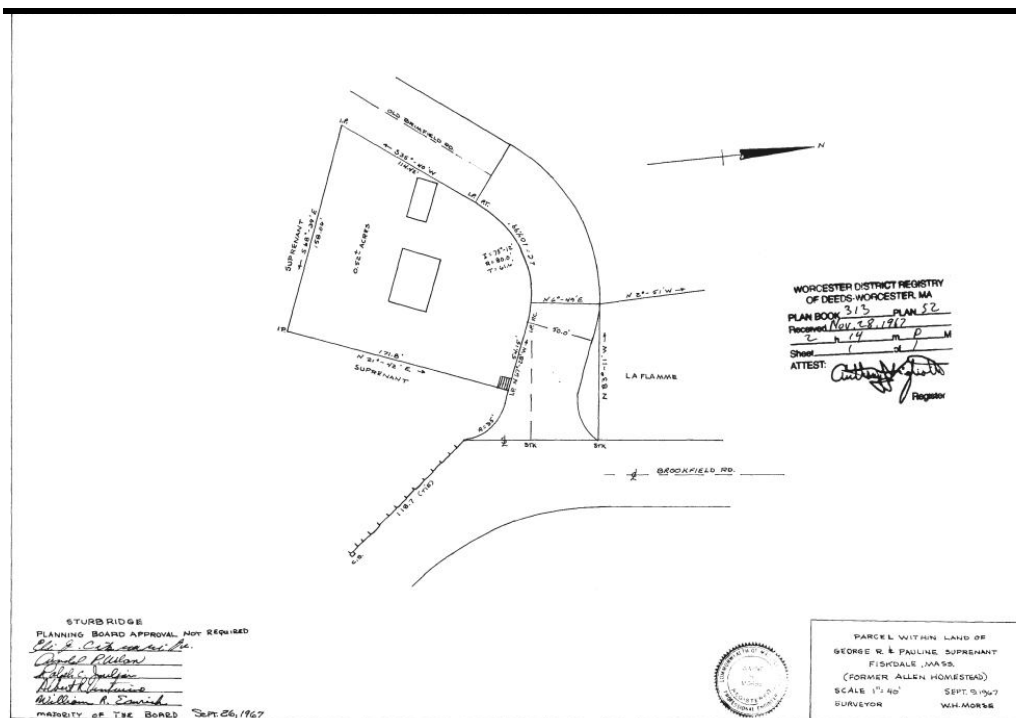


Figure 5: 1967 Land Plan showing building footprints

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

STURBRIDGE

3 OLD STAGECOACH ROAD

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

STU.E

STU.292

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 Abner Allen House, at 3 Old Stagecoach Road, is recommended for individual listing on the National Register of Historic Places, with local significance, and a period of significance from at least 1772 through 1967 (arbitrary fifty-year threshold).

This eighteenth century single family dwelling meets National Register Criteria A for Community Planning and Development, as it represents that time period's early residential and agricultural settlement and growth and is located just off of the main thoroughway which runs through Fiskdale and in proximity to what would become the Fiskdale mill area.

This residence is also connected to the area's Social History, as it was home to multiple generations of the Allen family, and was still referred to as "Allen Farm" by the twentieth century. Moses (1709-1796), Abner (1746-1830), Henry (1777-1849), and Liberty Allen (1809-1901), were all involved with local industrial or commercial pursuits.

This building is additionally eligible under Criteria C for Architecture as it remains a good example of eighteenth century Colonial style. Alterations from original construction need to be further researched but exterior work to date appears to have been sensitive to the historic design and materials.

In conclusion, the Abner Allen House provides evidence of early community planning and residential growth and development in the Fiskdale section of Sturbridge, and relates to local social history as it was previously the home of members of the Allen family, tied to local eighteenth and nineteenth century industry and commerce. The residence maintains the appearance of early American architecture and is a good example of construction and style from that period. Overall, it retains a good degree of integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association.