

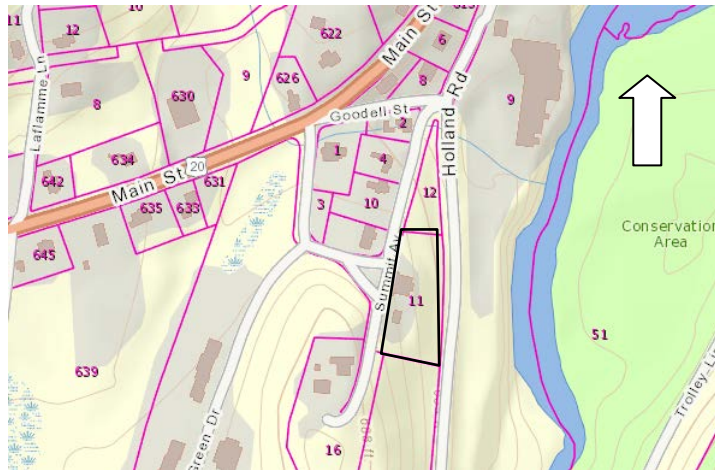
FORM B – BUILDING

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

Photograph



Locus Map



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

618-02347-011

Southbridge

STU.E

STU.306
STU.307

Town/City: Sturbridge

Place: (*neighborhood or village*): Fiskdale

Address: 11 Summit Avenue

Historic Name: Fiskdale Mills Agent's Residence

Uses: Present: Single Family Dwelling

Original: Single Family Dwelling

Date of Construction: Between 1870-1898

Source: 1870, 1898 Maps

Style/Form: Queen Anne

Architect/Builder: Unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: Brick

Wall/Trim: Clapboard, Brick/Wood

Roof: Asphalt Shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

Garage (after 1926)

Major Alterations (*with dates*):

Unknown

Condition: Good

Moved: no ☒ yes ☐ **Date:**

Acreage: .88 acres

Setting: Residence is set on a rectangular shaped parcel with the main façade facing west along Summit Avenue. Parcel is between Summit Avenue and Holland Road and in proximity to Main Street (Route 20).

Recorded by: Shannon Walsh, PVPC

Organization: Sturbridge Historical Commission

Date (*month / year*): March 2017

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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 Fiskdale Mills Agent's Residence, at 11 Summit Avenue, is an example of a late nineteenth century Queen Anne style building, constructed for the mill agent and representative of the area's residential growth and development. It is also connected to local industrial growth. This three story single family dwelling is set on a hill and faces west along Summit Avenue. It is three bays wide by three bays deep with a generally square plan. It has a brick foundation and a clapboard exterior with wood trim. The hipped, asphalt shingle roof has multiple levels and dormers, with bracketed cornices, and overhanging eaves. There are two, symmetrical interior, brick chimneys on either side of the northern and southern downslope of the roof.

The most prominent feature on this building is the porch which runs along the length of the western façade to extend beyond the foundation lines. It has gazebo style, rounded sections with conical roofs at the northwestern and southwestern corners, providing tower-style features which are common to Queen Anne style. Also on this façade, there are turned balusters which form the porch railing, and finials on the tops of the gazebo style roofs. The main entry on this façade has sidelights and a transom light, and there is a single, large 2/2 window on either side of the entry. The upper story has two single hipped dormers, each with one 2/2 window, and a larger hipped dormer, centered over the first story entry, with paired 2/2 windows.

The northern and southern side elevations provide a good perspective of the full height of the building. The first story of the northern elevation has a single and paired 2/2 windows, with arched lintels. There is also a secondary entrance on this side, with the upper half of the door divided into four lights. There are two, 2/2 second story windows and 2/2 third story windows set within hipped dormers. The southern elevation has 2/2 first story windows, with arched surrounds; two, 2/2 second story windows with arched lintels; and two, 2/2 windows set within hipped dormers. Stairs leading down from the western façade front porch provide access to the southern side yard.

A garage outbuilding (STU.311) is to the south of the residence and was constructed after 1926 as it is not on a land plan from that time period. (Figure 3)

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.

This area was formerly the heart of Sturbridge industry. The Fiskdale Mills Agent's House Property, constructed between 1870 and 1898, is in close proximity to the former location of mill operations. The area was initially the site of an early grist mill, which was developed by Captain Jacob Allen, descendent of first settler Moses Allen, and his progeny, and further advanced by the Hon. Josiah.J. Fiske (1786-1838), and later members of the Fiske family. A new, brick cotton mill was finished by 1829 and a stone mill was added by 1835, along with the formal incorporation of the Sturbridge Cotton Mills.¹ A post office was opened in 1842 and the village was named Fiskdale.² (Figures 1 and 2)

¹ George Davis. *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.

² Helen G. Holley, "Fiskdale," (MHC Inventory AREA STU.E), 1973. <http://mhc-macris.net/Details.aspx?Mhclid=STU.E>, accessed November 2017.

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Harvey Hartshorn (1795-1866), of Wrentham, was the first mill agent, and held the position until 1832. Simeon A. Drake, Esq. (1806-1863) was agent until 1854 and William B. Whiting (1818-1894) was his successor.³ The next agent was named Mr. Kehew (not researched).⁴

James C. Fisk (1825-1885), of Cambridge, was chosen treasurer of the Sturbridge Cotton Mills in 1859 (a position he held until his death), and Bowers S. Chase (born ca.1822) was the agent, and may have lived at 11 Summit Avenue as it was constructed around the time period of his employment.⁵ During his time as treasurer, Fisk is credited with revitalizing the Fiskdale area by transforming the "run-down and worn-out" village with new mills, new machinery, and remodeled houses, so that by the end of the nineteenth century, it was a "model village," and had become "as pretty, healthy, and successful a factory village as can be found."⁶ In 1869, the Sturbridge Cotton Mills were formally renamed the Fiskdale Mills.⁷ (Figure 2)

Between 1880 and 1885, production at the mills fell from \$470,000 worth of goods to \$290,000, particularly due to the 1885 depression.⁸ Production stabilized by the end of the decade, with more than 10 million yards of print cloth manufactured each year by 286 employees, and was maintained until the mill was closed in 1914.⁹ By 1888, O.B. Truesdell (dates unknown) was the mill agent. He resigned in 1899, after holding the position for thirteen years.^{10 11}

Post World War I, the mills were transferred to the Fiskdale Finishing Company, and later used by the Bellefont Dyeing Company.^{12 13} The former Fiskdale Mills were vacated after World War II and since then, some buildings have been demolished and others have been adaptively reused.^{14 15}

By 1928, the Fiskdale Mills Agent's House was purchased by shoe retail merchant William J. Hamel (1884-1956) and Norma B. Hamel (born ca.1891).^{16 17}

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"Globe Village, Mass." *Fibre and Fabric: A Record of American Textile Industries in the Cotton and Woolen Trade, Volume 29, No. 729*. Boston: 1899. (Note about O.B. Truesdell of Fiskdale Mills Co.) [Books.google.com/books](https://books.google.com/books?id=HQ4AAAAAMAAJ&pg=PA293&lpg=PA293&dq=Truesdell+fiskdale+mill+agent&source=bl&ots=eWEL7vS5rU&sig=lnrdlt46o3pYvChcrtZQhTMT0rk&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiYldWK7JjYAhVIViYKHbTgAyEQ6AEILDAB#v=onepage&q=Truesdell%20fiskdale%20mill%20agent&f=false).
<https://books.google.com/books?id=HQ4AAAAAMAAJ&pg=PA293&lpg=PA293&dq=Truesdell+fiskdale+mill+agent&source=bl&ots=eWEL7vS5rU&sig=lnrdlt46o3pYvChcrtZQhTMT0rk&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiYldWK7JjYAhVIViYKHbTgAyEQ6AEILDAB#v=onepage&q=Truesdell%20fiskdale%20mill%20agent&f=false>, accessed November 2017.

³ George Davis, Ibid. (184); 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>

⁴ A.C.Morse, Esq. *History of Worcester County, Massachusetts, Embracing a Comprehensive History of the County from its First Settlement to the Present Time, with a History and Description of its Cities and Towns, Volume 2*. Page 369, Boston: C.F. Jewett and Company, 1879. Archive.org, <https://archive.org/details/historyofworcest04marv>, Accessed November 2017.

⁵ Duane Hamilton Hurd, Ibid. (Page 120), "Bowers S. Chase," *United States Federal Census*, 1870. Ancestry.com

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ 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/mhpdf/townreports/Cent-Mass/stu.pdf>

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ "Globe Village, Mass." *Fibre and Fabric: A Record of American Textile Industries in the Cotton and Woolen Trade, Volume 29, No. 729*. Boston: 1899. [Books.google.com/books](https://books.google.com/books). (see Bibliography)

¹² Deed of Fiskdale Mills to the Fiskdale Finishing Company 1917 Book 2122 Page 441;

¹³ Helen G. Holley, Ibid.

¹⁴ 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>

¹⁵ Helen G. Holley, Ibid.

¹⁶ Book 2480 Page 87, *Masslandrecords.com*

¹⁷ "William J. Hamel," *United States Federal Census*, 1920, Ancestry.com

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Figure 1: Atlas of Worcester County, F. W. Beers & Co. 1870, <https://www.digitalcommonwealth.org/search/commonwealth:x059cb92c>

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

Figure 3: *Worcester District Registry of Deeds*, 1926 Plan Book 47, Plan 44, *Masslandrecords.com*



Photo 1: Western facing main façade

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Photo 2:Western façade and northern side elevation



Photo 3:Northern side elevation

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Photo 4: Western façade and southern side elevation



Figure 1: 1870 Map showing future area of Fiskdale Agent's Residence

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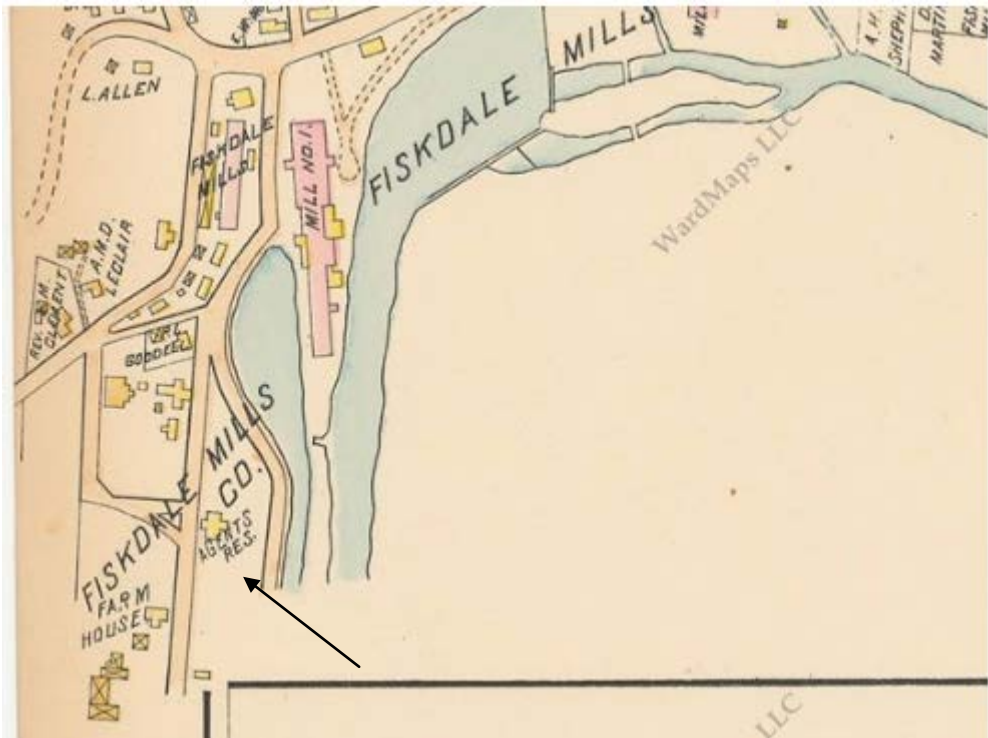


Figure 2: Fiskdale Mills Agent's Residence, 1898

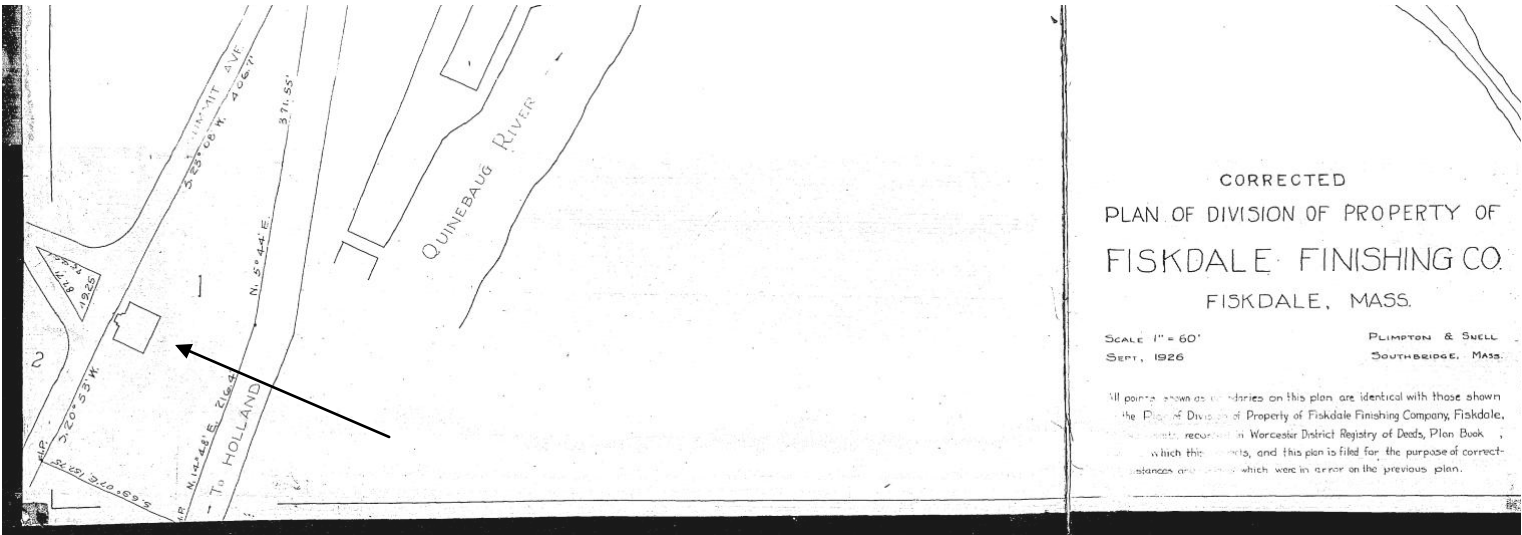


Figure 3: Lot 1 on Summit Avenue. Plan Book 47, Plan 44, 1926

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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 Fiskdale Mills Agent's Residence, at 11 Summit Avenue, constructed by the late nineteenth century, is recommended for individual listing on the National Register of Historic Places, with a local level of significance and a period of significance between 1898 (or earlier) to 1967 (arbitrary fifty year threshold).

This single family dwelling meets National Register Criteria A in the category of Community Planning and Development, as a late nineteenth century residence, constructed in the growing area of Fiskdale during a period of the area's revitalization. It is also connected to local Industry as it was built for the agent of the Fiskdale Mills, which provided employment and economic stability to the area while they were operational.

The building is also significant under Criteria C, for Architecture, as a good example of late nineteenth century Queen Anne style design, with elements to include a hipped roof with cross gables and dormers, spindlework and finials, variations in wall texture, and an extensive porch with tower style detailing.

In conclusion, the Fiskdale Mills Agent's Residence is eligible for National Register listing as it relates to community planning and development of Fiskdale, industry through its connection to the Fiskdale Mills, and architecture as it provides evidence of the time period's popular Queen Anne style. It retains a good degree of integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association.