



**Final Report**  
**Sturbridge Community-wide**  
**Historic Properties Survey**  
**Update Phase II**  
Sturbridge, Massachusetts

*Phase IV*

*October 11, 2018*  
PAL PN 3427

Submitted to:

**Town of Sturbridge**

Office of the Town Administrator

308 Main Street

Sturbridge, Massachusetts 01566

*and*

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**Abstract**

The Public Archaeology Laboratory, Inc. (PAL) undertook the Sturbridge Community-wide Historic Properties Survey Update Phase II (the “Project”) for the Town of Sturbridge’s Historical Commission (SHC) and the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) to document approximately 90 historic resources around Sturbridge Common and in the villages of Snellville and Fiskdale. PAL has completed documentation for the historic resources and identified contexts for National Register of Historic Places (National Register) evaluation and properties eligible for listing in the National Register. The results of the survey are discussed in this report and the accompanying MHC inventory forms. Copies of the completed survey documentation and final report will be on file with the MHC and the SHC.

Sturbridge was settled by a group of proprietors from Medfield about 1725, and Sturbridge Center began to develop by 1733. Development was slow through the end of the eighteenth century, but the construction of the Worcester-Stafford Turnpike through the center of town in 1810 spurred a rapid shift from a dispersed agricultural settlement into a defined town with a concentration of residential buildings around the Common and small mills along the Quinebaug River. In the late eighteenth century, auger manufacturing began southwest of Cedar Street and influenced the development of the village of Snellville. Textile manufacturing began about 1827 to the west in what became the village of Fiskdale. A third population node centered around the Common included civic and commercial buildings such as the meetinghouse, town hall, schools, and stores.

Fiskdale and Snellville expanded through the end of the nineteenth century with schools, a small number of commercial buildings, and numerous residences constructed for private owners and mill workers. The mill villages continued production of cotton and augers through the early twentieth

century, but by the mid-twentieth century, the overall complexion of Sturbridge changed due to an increase in tourist traffic and tourist-driven businesses. The development of the open-air, living history museum Old Sturbridge Village created a strong tourist economy in the town that supported hotels, restaurants, and antique shops. Sturbridge remains largely tourist-oriented, and Massachusetts Route 20, which runs through the center of town, is a heavily traveled tourist corridor (MHC 1984).

The identification of significant cultural and architectural resources in Sturbridge has taken place through community-wide surveys and National Register nominations. This project, which constitutes the second phase of updating the survey in Sturbridge, focused primarily on industrial mill villages and residential areas that developed in the early-to-mid-nineteenth through early twentieth centuries.

## **Methodology**

### **Survey Objectives**

The objectives of this Project were to survey and comprehensively document approximately 90 historic properties, as selected by the SHC and confirmed by PAL. These properties were documented to better understand the historic development of Sturbridge, particularly in the mill villages of Fiskdale and Snellville.

### **Assessment of Existing Documentation and Research**

Much of Sturbridge was documented in the 1970s by the SHC. The inventory forms are primarily from 1972 with black and white or non-existent photographs and little documentation. In total, more than 328 areas and individual resources in Sturbridge have been assigned inventory numbers in the Massachusetts Cultural Resources Inventory System (MACRIS). The only National Register-listed district in Sturbridge is the Sturbridge Common National Register Historic District (STU.A), listed on November 9, 1977, with 51 properties included within its boundaries. One individual property, the Tantiusques Reservation Site (STU.909), was listed individually in the National Register on October 6, 1983.

Research was conducted at the Massachusetts State Archives, the Joshua Hyde Public Library, and the Old Sturbridge Village Research Library. Resources on the overall history and development of Sturbridge, including historic maps and atlases, town records, local histories, and unpublished materials, are contained in local archives. Online resources consulted included City Directories and US Census reports available through Ancestry.com and other online repositories. Selected property ownership research was conducted online through the Worcester County Registry of Deeds. PAL staff examined a number of historic maps and atlases, local records, and town histories. Historic maps and atlases examined included the *1857 Map of Worcester County, Massachusetts* (Walling 1857); *1870 Atlas of Worcester County, Massachusetts* (Beers 1870); *1892 bird's-eye of Sturbridge and Fiskdale, Massachusetts* (Bailey 1892); *1898 Topographical Atlas of Worcester County* (Richards 1898), and Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps from 1894 to 1948. Local records examined include Southbridge and Sturbridge directories from 1870 to 1965 and the 1984 *Massachusetts Historical Commission Reconnaissance Survey Report for Sturbridge*.

## **Selection Criteria**

The criteria for property selection for Sturbridge were derived from the Request for Proposals (RFP); a discussion at the project startup meeting among representatives of the Town, the MHC, and PAL; and a list of properties included in the RFP. The list of properties predominantly consisted of previously documented residential and commercial buildings in need of updated documentation.

## **Survey Procedures**

The Project used current MHC criteria and methodology as defined in MHC’s *Historic Properties Survey Manual: Guidelines for the Identification of Historic and Archaeological Resources in Massachusetts* (1992), *Survey Technical Bulletin #1* (1993), *MHC Interim Survey Guidelines* (March 1999, et seq.), *MHC Interim Guidelines for Inventory Form Photographs* (2009), and MHC’s *Guidelines for Inventory Form Locational Information* (2013). The MHC survey guidelines and the tasks and products of the survey Scope of Work meet the Secretary of the Interior’s *Standards and Guidelines for Identification* (1983).

PAL prepared and submitted an *Interim Report, Sturbridge Community-wide Historic Properties Survey Update Phase II, Sturbridge, MA, Phase I Methodology Statement* in December 2017 that outlined the methodology. As part of Phase II of the Project, a preliminary list of resources to document was submitted in December 2017 and confirmed with the Town and the MHC in February 2018.

A walking survey of Sturbridge was undertaken to assess and document the previously selected properties. The properties surveyed were commercial, civic, and residential buildings dating primarily from the mid-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century. PAL used a mobile GIS map for research, data collection, and survey refinement, accessed via the ArcGIS Collector application on a 3G-enabled iPad tablet as well as from desktop web browsers at the office. Staff used the data collection functionality to record the attributes of pre-determined survey properties in the field via the iPad tablet, as well as with a paper survey matrix. Resources were photographically documented using a high-resolution digital SLR camera.

## **National Register Eligibility**

The National Register eligibility recommendations for the resources included in this survey update were based on analysis of the background information available for each property, including the general context of the historic development of Sturbridge and the villages of Snellville and Fiskdale, and the visual data collected during fieldwork against the National Register criteria (36 CFR 60). These criteria are the standards for evaluating the significance of resources as established by the National Park Service, Department of the Interior. The criteria are designed to guide the evaluation of potential entries for the National Register. The National Register criteria state that, “the quality of significance in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association and:

- A. that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or

- B. that are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or
- C. that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose component may lack individual distinction; or
- D. that have yielded, or may be likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

## Results

MHC Area Form A, Building Form B, or Parks and Landscapes Form H inventory forms were completed for each of the 95 surveyed properties on the final list. Each form includes an architectural description of the resource(s) and immediate setting, discussion of the historic context, locus map, and digital image of the resource(s). Some forms include historic maps and images. MHC National Register Criteria Eligibility forms were completed for 11 individual properties. See “Recommendations” below for details on these evaluations.

### Inventoried Properties

#### Areas

| MHC No. | Area Name                      |
|---------|--------------------------------|
| STU.M   | Fiskdale Mill Area             |
| STU.N   | Wight-Snell Manufacturing Area |
| STU.O   | Publick House Area             |

#### Individual Properties

| MHC No.     | Address             | Property Name                     |
|-------------|---------------------|-----------------------------------|
| STU.14      | 2–8 Chamberlain Ave | Jared Lamb Building               |
| STU.13      | 10 Chamberlain Ave  | Simeon Allen House                |
| STU.12      | 12 Chamberlain Ave  | Allen-Bachelor House              |
| STU.25      | 4 Charlton St       | James Bachelor House              |
| STU.15      | 5–7 Charlton St     | Jared Lamb House                  |
| STU.24, 337 | 6 Charlton St       | Alvan Bond House and Gifford Barn |
| STU.16, 336 | 9 Charlton St       | Merrick House and Cooper Barn     |
| STU.23, 335 | 10 Charlton St      | George Davis House and Barn       |
| STU.21      | 16 Charlton St      | Otis Warner Shop                  |
| STU.18, 334 | 17 Charlton St      | Roswell Warner House and Barn     |
| STU.20      | 18 Charlton St      | Lewis Pelton House                |
| STU.46      | 20 Charlton St      | Albert Freeman House              |
| STU.30      | 260 Main St         | Dr. Jacob Corey House             |
| STU.29      | 262 Main St         | Deacon George Davis House         |
| STU.31      | 265 Main St         | East Schoolhouse                  |

| MHC No.           | Address     | Property Name   |
|-------------------|-------------|---|
| STU.28, 333       | 266 Main St | Roswell Warner House and Barn                                   |
| STU.32            | 267 Main St |   |
| STU.33            | 269 Main St | John and Sally Payne House                                      |
| STU.34            | 271 Main St | Fayette A. Eldridge House                                       |
| STU.27            | 272 Main St | Benjamin D. Hyde House  |
| STU.26, 339       | 274 Main St | John Coburn House, Barn   |
| STU.35            | 275 Main St | Chamberlain House   |
| STU.921, 922      | 278 Main St | Sturbridge Town Common and Bandstand                            |
| STU.38            | 283 Main St | Wheelock-Champion-Bachelor House                                |
| STU.39            | 301 Main St | Sturbridge Center School  |
| STU.11, 910       | 306 Main St | Joshua Hyde Public Library, Sturbridge Soldiers Monument        |
| STU.4, 923        | 308 Main St | Sturbridge Town Hall, Sturbridge Honor Roll Memorial            |
| STU.3             | 310 Main St | Oliver B. Wight House   |
| STU.72            | 331 Main St | Southbridge and Sturbridge Street Railway Substation            |
| STU.187           | 366 Main St | Brimfield Congregational Church Conference Hall                 |
| STU.124, 332      | 407 Main St | George E. Richards House and Barn                               |
| STU.84, 85        | 408 Main St | J. Dwight Underwood House, Sturbridge Coach Motor Lodge         |
| STU.80            | 413 Main St | George E. Richards Rental House                                 |
| STU.106           | 454 Main St | Livingston Shumway House  |
| STU.110, 330      | 468 Main St | Martin L. Phillips House and Barn                               |
| STU.115, 329      | 473 Main St | John and Lizzie Hooker House and Barn                           |
| STU.128, 328      | 484 Main St | Jabez Westgate House and Barn                                   |
| STU.178, 326, 327 | 501 Main St | Moses and Lucy Morris House, Pink Haven Motel Buildings 1 and 2 |
| STU.130, 331      | 502 Main St | Emory L. Bates House and Barn                                   |
| STU.131           | 504 Main St | David and Rebecca Atherton House                                |
| STU.180           | 507 Main St | Sturbridge Second Adventist Church                              |
| STU.181, 182      | 509 Main St | Hiram and Seraph Hayward House and Barn                         |
| STU.183           | 511 Main St | Hiram and Seraph Hayward House                                  |
| STU.136           | 514 Main St | Truman Charles House  |
| STU.137           | 518 Main St | Fiskdale Baptist Church Vestry                                  |
| STU.138           | 524 Main St | Horatio N. Drake House  |
| STU.188           | 531 Main St | Fiskdale Mill Blacksmith Shop                                   |
| STU.142           | 544 Main St | Lemuel Lumbar Building  |
| STU.143           | 546 Main St | Timothy Maloney Tenement  |
| STU.144           | 548 Main St | Wheaton Knight House  |
| STU.145           | 552 Main St | Josiah J. Fiske Building  |

| MHC No.    | Address     | Property Name                               |
|------------|-------------|---|
| STU.10     | 8 Maple St  | Federated Church of Sturbridge and Fiskdale |
| STU.6, 338 | 17 Maple St | Benjamin C. Weld House and Barn             |
| STU.19     | 24 Taft St  | Isaac Child Jr. House                       |

## Recommendations

National Register of Historic Places evaluation criteria were applied to all properties included in the survey effort. Of these, 11 properties were assessed as being eligible for individual listing in the National Register. The Fiskdale Mill and Wight-Snell Manufacturing areas are not eligible for listing in the National Register as historic districts, but 8 of the 11 eligible properties are within those areas.

### National Register Eligibility

The following five properties in the Fiskdale Mill Area were assessed as eligible for individual listing in the National Register: the Josiah Fiske House, 530 Main Street (STU.140); James Johnson Double House, 533–535 Main Street (STU.189); Sturbridge Cotton Mills Office, 541 Main Street (STU.191); Fiskdale Lower Mill (Mill No. 2), 559 Main Street (STU.193); and Otis Block, 572 Main Street (STU.151). The following three properties in the Wight-Snell Manufacturing Area were assessed as eligible for individual listing in the National Register: the Alpheus Wight House, 420 Main Street (STU.89); Winthrop Wight House, 420 Main Street (STU.88); and Daniel Wight House and Barn, 472 Main Street (STU.111 and STU.319). Three additional properties assessed as eligible for individual listing in the National Register are the Martin L. Phillips House and Barn, 468 Main Street (STU.110 and STU.330); John and Lizzie Hooker House and Barn, 473 Main Street (STU.115 and STU.329); and George E. Richards House and Barn, 407 Main Street (STU.124 and STU.332).

The Josiah Fiske House, 530 Main Street (STU.140), is recommended eligible for listing at the local level under Criterion A in the areas of Industry and Community Planning and Development and under Criterion C in the area of Architecture. Under Criterion A, the building is eligible for the association of Josiah Fiske with the development of the Fiskdale cotton mills and the subsequent development of the surrounding mill village. Under Criterion C, the building is eligible as a generally intact example of a rare temple-front Greek Revival-style house in Sturbridge.

The James Johnson Double House, 533–535 Main Street (STU.189), is recommended eligible for listing at the local level under Criterion A in the area of Community Planning and Development and under Criterion C in the area of Architecture. Under Criterion A, the building is eligible for its association with the development of Fiskdale as a mill village in the early to mid-nineteenth century. Under Criterion C, the building is eligible as a generally intact example of a double house, which was a common building type in the village.

The Sturbridge Cotton Mills Office, 541 Main Street (STU.191), is recommended eligible for listing at the local level under Criterion A in the area of Community Planning and Development and under Criterion C in the area of Architecture. Under Criterion A, the building is eligible for its association with the development of Fiskdale in the early to mid-nineteenth century. Under Criterion C, the building is eligible as an unusual example of a Greek Revival-style brick building constructed in the village.



The Fiskdale Lower Mill (Mill No. 2), 559 Main Street (STU.193), is recommended eligible for listing at the local level under Criterion A in the areas of Industry and Community Planning and Development and under Criterion C in the area of Architecture. Under Criterion A, the building is eligible for its association with the development of the cotton fabric industry in Sturbridge and the subsequent development of the surrounding mill village. Under Criterion C, the building is eligible as a generally intact example of a nineteenth-century mill building in Sturbridge.

The Otis Block, 572 Main Street (STU.151), was recommended eligible for listing at the local level by the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) in 2017 under Criterion A in the area of Community Planning and Development and under Criterion C in the area of Architecture (Walsh 2017). PAL concurs with PVPC's assessment. Under Criterion A, the building is significant for its association with the development of Fiskdale and function as a central meeting hall and commercial building within the village. Under Criterion C, the building is eligible as a rare example of a Gothic Revival-style building in Sturbridge.

The Alpheus Wight House, 420 Main Street (STU.89), is eligible under Criterion A in the area of Community Planning and Development for its association with the early development of the village node later known as Snellville and under Criterion C in the area of Architecture as a good example of an eighteenth-century Federal-style building in Sturbridge.

The Winthrop Wight House, 420 Main Street (STU.88), is eligible under Criterion A in the area of Community Planning and Development for its association with the early development of the village node later known as Snellville and under Criterion C in the area of Architecture as a good example of an early nineteenth-century residential building in Sturbridge.

The Daniel Wight House and Barn, 472 Main Street (STU.111 and STU.319), are eligible under Criterion A in the area of Community Planning and Development for their association with the growth of the Snellville mill village in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and under Criterion C in the area of Architecture as relatively intact examples of a nineteenth-century Italianate-style house and barn in Sturbridge.

The Martin L. Phillips House and Barn, 468 Main Street (STU.110 and STU.330), are eligible under Criterion A and C. Under Criterion A, the property is eligible in the area of Community Planning and Development for its association with the late nineteenth-century residential development of the Snellville area. Under Criterion C, the property is eligible in the area of Architecture as an intact example of a three-bay, side-hall plan, Queen Anne-style house in Sturbridge.

The John and Lizzie Hooker House and Barn, 473 Main Street (STU.115 and STU.329), are eligible under Criterion A and C. Under Criterion A, the property is eligible in the area of Community Planning and Development for its association with the late nineteenth-century residential development of the Snellville area. Under Criterion C, the property is eligible in the area of Architecture as an intact example of a Queen Anne-style house in Sturbridge.

The George E. Richards House and Barn, 407 Main Street (STU.124 and STU.332), are eligible under Criterion A and C. Under Criterion A, the property is eligible in the area of Community Planning and Development for its association with the residential development of the Snellville area in the late nineteenth century. Under Criterion C, the property is eligible in the area of Architecture as an intact example of a three-bay, side-hall plan, Italianate-style house.

### **Further Study Recommendations**

PAL recommends that National Register documentation be undertaken for the above properties evaluated as eligible for listing. PAL also recommends a comprehensive update of the 1977 National Register nomination for the Sturbridge Common Historic District to potentially expand areas and periods of significance, as well as provide updated information about the buildings and district as a whole. Additionally, PAL recommends a study of the mid-twentieth-century automobile tourist culture that had a significant impact on Sturbridge, particularly along Route 20, in conjunction with the establishment of Old Sturbridge Village.

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