

FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

209-02914-010

Southbridge

STU.A

STU.23
STU.335

NRDIS 11/9/1977

Town/City: Sturbridge

Place: (*neighborhood or village*): Sturbridge Center

Photograph



Address: 10 Charlton Street

Historic Name: George Davis House and Barn

Uses: Present: Single Family Dwelling

Original: Single Family Dwelling

Date of Construction: ca. 1812

Source: Marriage record (Town and City Clerks of MA); Levine 1971; visual inspection

Style/Form: Greek Revival

Architect/Builder: Unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: Stone

Wall/Trim: Wood Clapboard/Wood Trim

Roof: Asphalt Shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures: Barn

Major Alterations (*with dates*): enclosed porch addition, 1925–1948; vinyl siding and windows, late 20th century

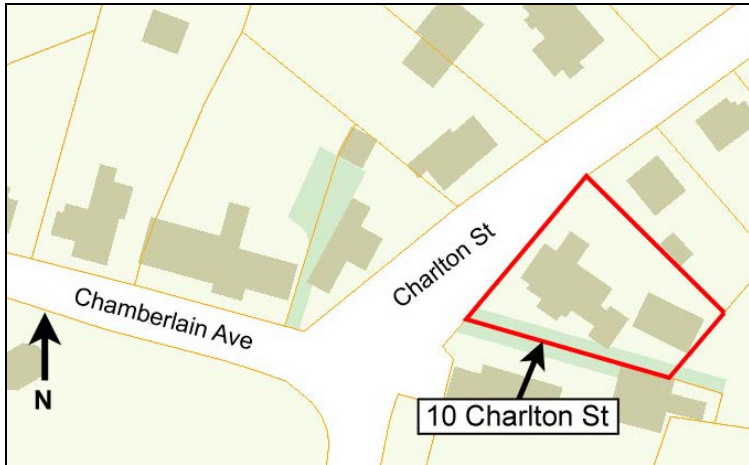
Condition: Fair

Moved: no yes **Date:**

Acreage: .35 acres

Setting: The building occupies a trapezoidal lot on the east side of Charlton Street in a residential neighborhood adjacent to the Sturbridge Town Common. The house is set back from the street at the top of a small incline.

Locus Map



Recorded by: L. Kline, G. Pineo, E. Giacomarra; PAL

Organization: Sturbridge Historical Commission

Date (*month / year*): May 2018

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

STURBRIDGE

10 CHARLTON 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.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

The George Davis House (ca. 1812, STU.23) is a west-facing, Greek Revival-style, wood-frame, three-bay-by-three-bay building with a one-and-one-half-story, three-bay ell projecting from the north elevation. A one-story, hip-roof, one-bay-by-one-bay addition projects from the south elevation, and a two-story addition with a one-story east addition extends from the east elevation. The house has a granite foundation and an asphalt-shingled, pedimented end-gable roof with a brick chimney in the center of its ridgeline and is clad with vinyl siding. A one-story, hip-roof, enclosed porch with six-over-six wood windows spans the west (facade) elevation and obscures the main entrance. The gable peak contains a circular louvered vent, and fenestration consists of three-over-three and six-over-six, double-hung vinyl replacement sash. The vinyl siding and vinyl windows were installed in the late twentieth century.

The George Davis Barn (1870–1898, STU.335) is northeast of the house and mostly obscured by a fence. It is one-and-one-half stories and has a gambrel roof clad in asphalt shingles. The walls are clad with wood clapboards.

The George Davis House is a well-preserved example of a Greek Revival-style house in Sturbridge.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

The George Davis House (ca. 1812, STU.23) is in the center of Sturbridge and faces west toward Sturbridge Town Common. The area was settled ca. 1725 by residents of Medfield, and Sturbridge was incorporated as a town in 1738 (MHC 1984:3–4). Charlton Street runs northeast from the Common to the town of Charlton and was built in 1810 as part of the Worcester-Stafford Turnpike. The routing of the turnpike through the center of Sturbridge, near the meetinghouse (no longer extant), was an important stimulus for the nineteenth-century growth of the town as it was part of a major overland stage route from Boston to New York.

The Davis House was constructed for lawyer George Davis (b. ca. 1782) about 1812, when he married Sophia Hitchcock (b. 1785) (Town and City Clerks of MA, n.d.; Levine 1971). By 1825, George and Sophia had moved into a larger house at 262 Main Street (STU.29), facing the Common and immediately east of George's law office, and may have rented out the house at 10 Charlton Street. By 1836, the house was owned by Deacon Joseph S. Clark, who sold it to Lawson Blood (1807–1881), a wheelwright who lived in the house by 1850 with his wife, three children, and two female lodgers ((WCRD 531/366; US Census 1850).

Elisha Southwick and Elisha F. Shaw acquired the property from Lawson Blood in 1853 and sold it to Robert G. Taft (1799–1862) in 1854 (WCRD 531/368). Taft married Julia Ann Roberts in 1826, and the couple had three children: Susan Margery, Abba Caroline, and Augustus Cheselden (Find a Grave 2012). Abba Caroline Taft (1833–1863) married Charles Varney (1825–1898) in 1850 and by 1860, the Varneys lived with their three children and Abba's parents in Sturbridge. Varney took over a shoemaking tool business from Sumner Packard in 1855; he made awls and general shoe-kit tools and started manufacturing dies and cutters in 1857. After the death of his wife and in-laws, he sold the business in 1863 and the house in 1864, remarried, and moved to East Brimfield. By 1878, he had moved to Nebraska (Davis 1856:41; US Census 1860; Find a Grave 2014; Hurd 1889:118).

In 1864, Cyrus Fay (1793–1876) purchased the property from Charles Varney (acting as administrator of Robert Taft's estate) and married his third wife, Brooksey W. Gibbs (WCRD 686/404). At the time of his marriage, Fay's occupation was a mechanic. Brooksey Fay lived at the house after Cyrus' death until 1886, when she sold it to Alpheus Wright of Warren (Find a Grave 2014; Ancestry.com 2013; WCRD 1223/576).

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Alpheus Wright (1836–1899), a wheelwright, was married to Lydia Sanger Wright. The couple had one daughter, Harriet Meline Sanger (1853–1938), who married George L. Butler (1846–1920), a town employee who repaired roads (Find a Grave 2013; US Census 1910). Harriet Butler inherited the property after her father's death and lived there with her husband in 1910. The Butlers also rented part of the house to the Bagley family. In 1921, Harriet Butler sold the house to Claribel A. Plimpton but retained a life residency in the north ell, where she required Plimpton to add a bathroom and electric lights and repair the doors and windows (WCRD 2240/15). In 1930, Claribel Plimpton (b. 1877) and her husband, Arthur P. Plimpton (b. 1875), owner of an ice business, lived at the house with their two grandchildren and Butler lived in the north ell (US Census 1930).

The property is currently owned by Vernon L. Jackson, who purchased it from Claribel Plimpton in 1965 (WCRD 463/536).

The George Davis House and Barn were listed in the National Register of Historic Places on November 9, 1977, as part of the Sturbridge Common Historic District.

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PHOTOGRAPH



Photo 2. George Davis Barn, 10 Charlton Street, looking southeast.