

FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

209-02914-004 Southbridge STU.A STU.25
NRDIS 11/9/1977

Town/City: Sturbridge

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

Photograph



Address: 4 Charlton Street

Historic Name: James Bachellor House

Uses: Present: Single Family Dwelling
Original: Single Family Dwelling

Date of Construction: 1836

Source: Riznik 1970; Levine 1971

Style/Form: Greek Revival

Architect/Builder: Unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: Stone

Wall/Trim: Wood Clapboard/ Wood Trim

Roof: Slate Shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures: Barn (ca. 1840) located southeast of the house and accessed via a driveway on the south side of the house (the south half of the barn belongs to the adjacent property at 274 Main Street)

Major Alterations (*with dates*): None

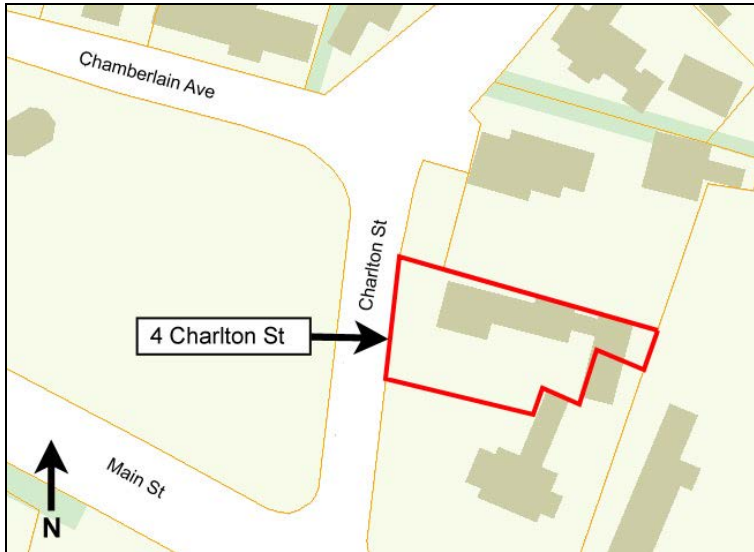
Condition: Good

Moved: no yes **Date:**

Acreage: .31 acres

Setting: The building occupies a roughly rectangular lot on the east side of Charlton Street across from the Sturbridge Town Common. The house occupies most of the parcel and is set slightly back from the road. A barn is southeast of the house.

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

4 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 James Bachellor House (1836, STU.25) is a west-facing, Greek Revival-style, one-and-one-half-story, three-bay-by-three-bay, wood-frame building with an end-gable roof and a stone foundation. The building has a three-bay, side-hall plan. Two one-story, end-gable additions extend east from the east (rear) elevation to connect with a barn, forming the typical New England configuration of “big house, little house, back house, barn.” Three brick chimneys pierce the ridgeline of the main house and each of the additions. The west (facade) elevation of the house is clad with horizontal planks, and the other walls are clad in wood clapboards. The roof is covered with slate shingles. The main entrance is sheltered by a full-width, wrap-around, engaged porch that spans the facade elevation and the west bays of the north and south elevations. The porch is supported by wood columns under a wide entablature. The entrance consists of a six-panel wood door flanked by sidelights and has a molded door surround. A one-story, enclosed porch spans the south elevation of the easternmost addition. Fenestration consists of two tripartite, six-light, wood windows in the two bays north of the entrance and replacement six-over-six, double-hung vinyl sash.

Southeast of the house is the James Bachellor Barn (ca. 1840), a one-and-one-half story, side-gable building accessed via a driveway on the south side of the house. It has a vertical-board door in the west elevation and is clad in vinyl siding. The parcel line cuts east to west through the barn, and the southern half of the barn is located on the parcel for 274 Main Street, and owned by the owner of 274 Main Street.

The James Bachellor House is an interesting, and rare, example of a Greek Revival-style country building and one of the earliest examples in Massachusetts with recessed porches, French windows, and the “cottage” house form. The majority of small houses of this form date to the 1840s. As of 1970, the interior was largely unchanged and retained all original wood moldings, plaster, and floors (Riznik 1970).

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

The James Bachellor House (ca. 1836, STU.25) is in the center of Sturbridge and faces the 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 Bachellor House was constructed in 1836, according to a note inscribed on the plaster wall of the second-floor closet that reads, “Built in 1836 by James Bacheller [*sic*]” (Riznik 1970). James Bachellor (1807–1892) operated a carriage and wagonmaking shop in Sturbridge, possibly at 12 Chamberlain Avenue (STU.12) or on a site south of the Bachellor House, as indicated by a “C. Shop” located immediately south of the property on the 1857 map. He was married to Clarinda Walker, and they had three children (Riznik 1970; Walling 1857; Find a Grave 2014b).

By 1860, James Bachellor had moved to Southbridge and Charles N. Allen (1815–1892) lived at 4 Charlton Street. Allen was a shoemaker who learned the trade from his father, Captain Simeon Allen. Captain Allen, who lived at 10 Chamberlain Avenue (STU.13), is believed to have been a cordwainer but may have also known how to make shoes (Levine 1971). Charles Allen worked as a manager for the shoe factory on the Town Common owned by Elisha Southwick; however, by 1870, he had opened a shoe shop of his own, likely located at the present 16 Charlton Street (STU.21), which had the initials CNA on the 1870 Beers map. Allen’s first wife was Elizabeth Hooker (1816–1859); by 1860, he was married to Fidelia Maria White (1828–1903) (US Census 1860; Corey 1910:231-233; Find a Grave 2014a; Beers 1870).

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Fidelia Allen lived at the property until her death in 1903. The house was later owned by Ernest G. Barnes (1876–1964), who owned Barnes and Chamberlain, a general store on the south side of the Common, and was a postmaster for the town. He gave the property to his daughter, Esther Thorburn, in 1949 but retained a life use for himself and his wife, Elizabeth, of the apartment in the back of the house (Richards 1898; US Census 1940; Riznik 1970; WCRD 1949; Find a Grave 2013).

In 1968, Barnes Riznik, a vice president of Old Sturbridge Village in 1970, purchased the property from Esther Thorburn (Riznik 1970; WCRD 1968). In 1975, Riznik sold the property to well-known preservationists Jane and Richard Nylander. At the time of purchase, Jane was a curator at Old Sturbridge Village. Richard later worked at the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities (SPNEA, now Historic New England). The property is currently owned through a realty trust by Jody M. Young, who purchased the property from Richard C. Nylander in 1987, when the Nylanders moved to Portsmouth, New Hampshire, and Jane took a job at Strawberry Banke (Sturbridge Assessor 2013; *Antiques and the Arts* 2005).

The James Bachellor House was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on November 9, 1977, as part of the Sturbridge Common Historic District.

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PHOTOGRAPHS



Photo 2. James Bachellor House, 4 Charlton Street, looking southeast.



Photo 3. Barn, 4 Charlton Street, looking east.