

FORM B – BUILDING

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

415-02925-272 Southbridge STU.A STU.27
NRDIS 11/9/1977

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

Town/City: Sturbridge

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

Photograph



Address: 272 Main Street

Historic Name: Benjamin D. Hyde House

Uses: Present: Single Family Dwelling

Original: Single Family Dwelling

Date of Construction: ca. 1843

Source: WCRD 380/51 (1843), Levine 1971

Style/Form: Gothic Revival

Architect/Builder: Unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: Stone

Wall/Trim: Wood Clapboard, Flushboard/Wood Trim

Roof: Asphalt Shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures: None

Major Alterations (*with dates*): ogee windows on facade infilled, unknown

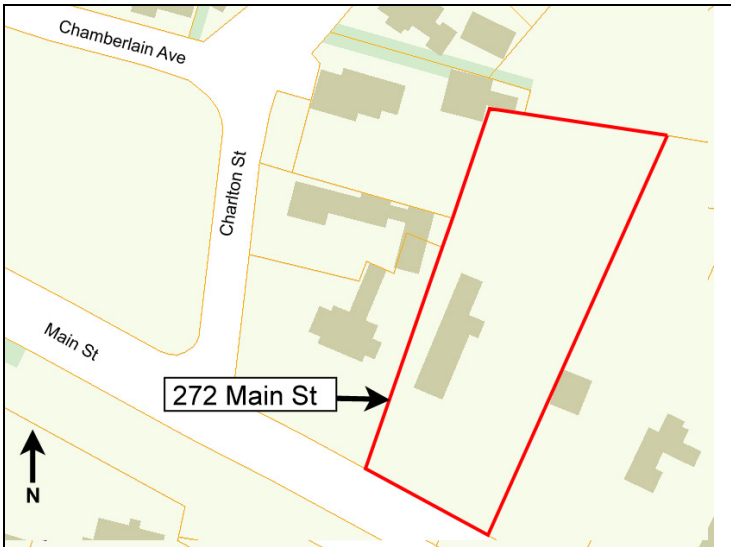
Condition: Good

Moved: no yes **Date:**

Acreage: 1.23 acres

Setting: The building occupies a long rectangular lot on the north side of Main Street in a mostly residential neighborhood east of the Sturbridge Town Common. It is at the bottom of a sand bluff overlooking Main Street and is set slightly back from an unpaved private road that runs parallel to the north side of Main Street between 260 and 274 Main Street.

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

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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 Benjamin D. Hyde House (ca. 1843, STU.27) is a south-facing, Greek Revival-style, one-and-one-half-story, three-bay-side-hall plan, wood-frame building with a one-story ell projecting from the north elevation. The house has a brick foundation and an end-gable roof. The walls are clad with wood clapboard and flushboard siding, and the roof is covered in asphalt shingles. The roof is pierced by two gable dormers in the west slope, four gable dormers in the east slope, and three brick chimneys near the ridge line. A one-story engaged porch supported by fluted Ionic columns beneath a wide entablature with a dentiled cornice spans the facade (south) elevation. The entrance is in the west bay of the facade and consists of a multi-panel wood door flanked by sidelights with a multi-panel wood surround. The other two facade bays contain Gothic Revival-style ogee window openings filled with six-over-six, double-hung wood sash beneath louvered panels. A recessed, wood-paneled, round-arched opening in the gable peak above the porch has a molded surround with engaged pilasters and a wood balustrade and contains two ogee windows identical to those on the first story. A bay window projects from the center of the house's west elevation. The rest of the fenestration consists of six-over-six, double-hung wood sash; four-over-four, double-hung wood sash in the dormers; a multi-light casement window in the center bay of the ell's west elevation; and a large, multi-light picture window supported by brackets that projects from the ell's east elevation.

The Benjamin D. Hyde House is an unusual example of a Gothic Revival-style house in Sturbridge, and the only building of this style near the Town Common.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

The Benjamin D. Hyde House (ca. 1843, STU.27) is in the center of Sturbridge, east of 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).

In 1801, Dr. Jacob A. Corey purchased approximately 23 acres of vacant land, including the site of 272 Main Street, from three Roxbury, Massachusetts, men: Joseph and Nathaniel Ruggles and Benjamin Quick (see Dr. Jacob Corey House, 260 Main Street [1805-1815, STU.30]) (WCRD 143/171). In 1843, Sturbridge lawyer Benjamin D. Hyde purchased the property from Dr. Corey's son George V. Corey, a proprietor of the Wheelock and Corey Store (STU.33), which was moved ca. 1840 from the current site of 272 Main Street across the street to 269 Main Street (Levine 1971). The 272 Main Street property also contained a law office for George Davis, who resided at 262 Main Street (STU.29); the law office was moved to the rear of the barn at 266 Main Street (STU.28) by 1900 (Levine 1971).

Benjamin Dwight Hyde (1803-1869) was born in Sturbridge to farmer and Revolutionary War veteran Joshua Hyde. Benjamin worked on the farm and taught school during the winters before attending Northampton Law School in Northampton, Massachusetts. While at school, he worked for the Northampton law firm of Bates and Dewey. After he was admitted to the bar in March 1831, he returned to Sturbridge and opened a law office in Southbridge. In 1840, he moved his office to Sturbridge. Benjamin Hyde married Evelina Wight (1804-1886) in 1833, and the couple had two daughters, Sarah Elizabeth Hyde (1836-1920) and Julia Evelina Hyde (1840-1917), and a son, Henry Hyde, who practiced law in Boston (Wilkin 1970; Find a Grave 2010; Ammidown 1874:68-69; Ammidown 1877:68).

After Benjamin Hyde's death, his family remained at the subject property, with Mrs. Hyde indicated on the 1870 Beers map and the Misses Hydes on the 1898 Richards map (Beers 1870; Richards 1898). Benjamin's brother, George B. Hyde (1811-1899), donated the funds for the Joshua Hyde Public Library, 306 Main Street (1896, STU.11), where Benjamin's daughters may have worked (Wilkin 1970; US Census 1900). When Sarah Hyde died in 1920, her heirs Louvan W., Alice C., Benjamin D., and Henry Webb Hyde, all of whom lived in Cohasset, Massachusetts, sold the property to Fayette and Bernice Eldridge (WCRD 2231/252). The Eldridges sold the property to Charles Sheard in 1921 (SCRD 2244/538).

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Samuel T. Sheard (1893–1980) acquired the house from his brother Charles in 1924 (WCRD 2352/209). Samuel was a foreman at the American Optical Company in Southbridge and a town selectman and moderator who was instrumental in securing federal funding for dam construction in Sturbridge after a 1955 flood (Wilkin 1970). His wife, Elfreda Beck Sheard (b. 1897), and her siblings Charles W., Frederic C., and Winifred W. Beck owned a business called Weld and Beck in Southbridge that sold flour, feed, hay and grains, paints, roofing materials, and agricultural implements (Ancestry.com 2011; US Census 1940; Manning 1936, 1949).

Nancy L. Brunell of Sturbridge purchased the property from the Sheards in 1989. The current owners, Kevin and Jennifer Thomas, purchased the property from Brunell in 2017 (Sturbridge Assessor 2018).

The Benjamin D. Hyde 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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PHOTOGRAPH



Photo 2. Benjamin D. Hyde House, looking northwest.