

FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

415-02531-366

Southbridge

STU.B

STU.187

Town/City: Sturbridge

Place: (*neighborhood or village*):

Photograph



Address: 366 Main Street

Historic Name: Brimfield Congregational Church
Conference Hall

Uses: Present: Restaurant

Original: Church Hall, Clubhouse, Shoe Factory,
Tavern, Parochial School, Other
Religious

Date of Construction: ca. 1820

Source: Holley 1973

Style/Form: Greek Revival

Architect/Builder: Unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: Concrete Block

Wall/Trim: Wood Clapboard, Stone/ Wood Trim

Roof: Asphalt Shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures: Sturbridge Host
Hotel and Conference Center (1981)

Major Alterations (*with dates*): conversion to
pub/restaurant, mid-20th c.; southwest and northwest
additions and exterior chimney, after 1973

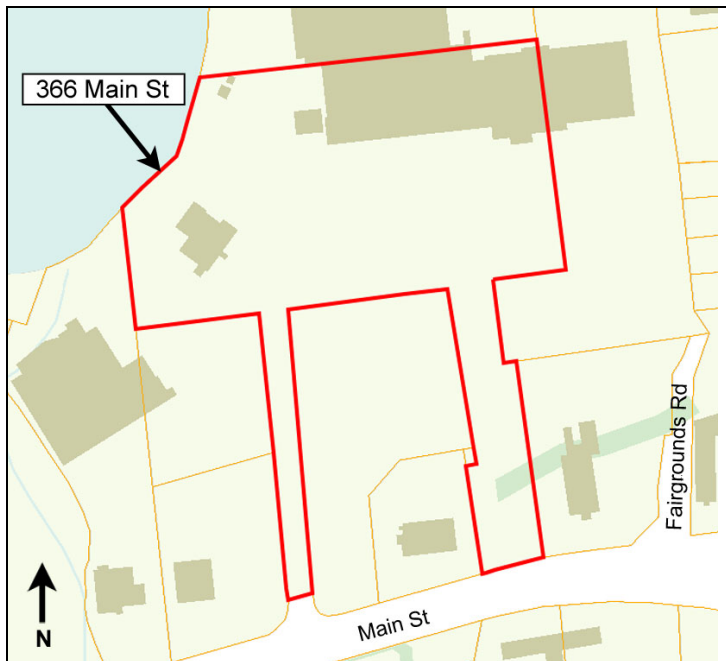
Condition: Good

Moved: no yes **Date:** moved from Brimfield to
Fiskdale ca. 1854; moved from Fiskdale to present location
in 1973

Acreage: 6.84 acres

Setting: The building occupies a large parcel of land on the
south shore of Cedar Pond that also contains a portion of
the non-historic Sturbridge Host Hotel and Conference
Center. It is set well back from Main Street and accessed
via the hotel's driveway running north from the road.

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 Brimfield Congregational Church Conference Hall (ca. 1820, STU.187) is a southeast-facing, Greek Revival-style, two-story, five-bay-by-two-bay, wood-frame building with a side-gable roof and a concrete block foundation. It has a one-story, stone-clad addition with a shed roof on the southwest elevation. A one-story, wood-frame addition projects from the southwest corner of the stone addition. The northeast corner of the stone addition connects to an enclosed porch northwest of the original building. A stone end-wall chimney is centered on the northeast elevation of the original building. With the exception of the stone addition, the walls are clad with wood clapboards. All roof surfaces are covered with asphalt shingles. The entrance to the original building was likely centered in the southeast elevation and later infilled with a window. The current main entrance is in the east bay of the stone addition's southeast elevation and consists of a six-paneled wood door sheltered by a long arched fabric awning on narrow metal poles. Fenestration consists of regularly spaced, six-over-six, double-hung wood sash.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

The Brimfield Congregational Church Conference Hall (ca. 1820, STU.187), originally located in the town of Brimfield, is on the north side of Main Street on the shore of Cedar Pond, just east of the Sturbridge village of Snellville. Sturbridge was settled ca. 1725 by residents of Medfield and incorporated as a town in 1738 (MHC 1984:3–4). Brimfield, to the west, was settled as part of Wales beginning ca. 1720, and the first meetinghouse there was constructed ca. 1760 (MHC 1982:3–4).

The conference hall was constructed in the early nineteenth century as a result of the Second Great Awakening, a Protestant religious revival during which church membership grew significantly. Before 1818–1820, members of the Brimfield Congregational Church met in private homes or other halls in town. In 1818–1820, the members created a formal association and obtained the rights to construct a meeting hall on the northwest corner of a lot owned by Jesse Hitchcock, subject to certain provisions (Hyde 1879:130).¹ The two-story building had a center entrance, a hall on the second story, and two rooms on the first story. The first-story rooms were variously used as a tailor shop, a private school, and a storeroom for a local independent rifle company (Hyde 1879:130).

In 1854, after Hitchcock's death, the provisions under which the church society was permitted to occupy the conference hall were apparently violated. Hitchcock's son Alfred acquired the property and sold the church building to Truman Charles (1804–1881), a merchant from Sturbridge. Charles had the building moved to the south side of Main Street in Fiskdale (Sturbridge), east of the mills (Hyde 1879:130). He owned it and used it as a shoe shop until at least 1870 (Walling 1857; Beers 1870). Local Irish Catholics may have used the second-story hall for church services until St. Patrick's Church (no longer extant) was built in 1872 (Chase 1889:117).

By 1894, one half of the first story housed a fish market, the other half had been converted into a two-room residence, and the second story was used as a hall (Sanborn 1894). In 1898, the Fiskdale Mills Company owned the building (Richards 1898). From 1899 through 1904, the storefront was unoccupied. By 1918, however, the interior had been reconfigured, a grocery store occupied the first story, and the second story housed a two-bedroom apartment (Sanborn 1899, 1904, 1918). In the mid-twentieth century, the building was converted into a restaurant, which was known as Turner's Club by about 1970 (Briere 1995). Kenneth and Richard Boland purchased the building in 1973 and had it loaded onto a truck and moved to the former Worcester South Agricultural Grounds in Sturbridge, on the north side of Main Street, just east of Snellville. The building became the Oxhead Tavern and continues to be used as a restaurant (Oxhead Tavern 2018). The adjacent Sturbridge Host Hotel and Conference Center was built by the Bolands in the early 1970s as the Sheraton Sturbridge Motor Inn (Search 2018).

¹ These provisions were not listed in Hyde 1879.

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PHOTOGRAPHS



Photo 2. Brimfield Congregational Church Conference Hall, looking southwest.

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Photo 3. Sturbridge Host Hotel and Conference Center, looking northeast.