

FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

415-02432-514 Southbridge STU.E STU.136

Town/City: Sturbridge

Place: (*neighborhood or village*): Fiskdale

Photograph



Address: 514 Main Street

Historic Name: Truman Charles House

Uses: Present: Bank

Original: Single Family Dwelling

Date of Construction: ca. 1841

Source: WCRD 388/490 (1841)

Style/Form: Greek Revival

Architect/Builder: Unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: Concrete

Wall/Trim: Brick/ Wood Trim

Roof: Asphalt Shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures: None

Major Alterations (*with dates*): entry vestibule, 1985; vinyl windows, late 20th century

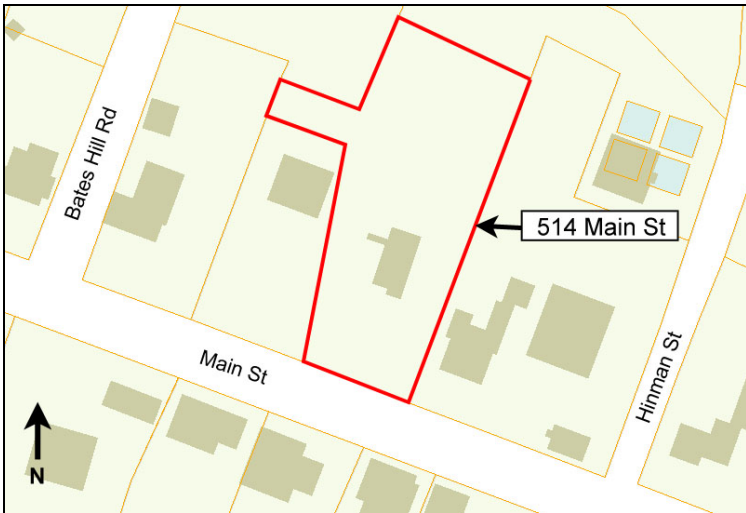
Condition: Good

Moved: no yes **Date:** ca. 1985

Acreage: .78 acres

Setting: The building occupies a roughly rectangular lot on the north side of Main Street in the mixed-use neighborhood of Fiskdale. It is a south-facing building set far from the street edge. The parcel slopes up toward the north and contains a U-shaped parking lot/driveway around and behind the building.

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

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

STURBRIDGE

514 MAIN STREET

Area(s) Form No.

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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 Truman Charles House (ca. 1841, STU.136) is a Greek Revival-style, two-and-one-half-story, three-bay-by-four-bay, brick building with a two-story rear ell on the north elevation, a concrete foundation, and an end-gable roof. The roof is covered in asphalt shingles, and the ell has a brick chimney piercing its roof. The walls of the main building have a raised brick cornice and corner pilasters, while the walls of the ell are clad in wood drop boards. The end gable is pedimented and has brick corbelling below the gable eaves on the south (facade) elevation. An enclosed, one-story entrance bay, constructed ca. 1985, encloses the southeast corner of the building. The entrance bay is clad in wood drop boards and has a molded cornice above flat pilasters alternating with multi-paned windows and a door. The main entrance, sheltered by the entry bay, is in the east bay of the south elevation and is filled with a four-light door. Fenestration consists of six-over-six, vinyl replacement sash.

The building was moved back on its lot ca. 1985, after it was acquired by the Southbridge Credit Union, and the entrance bay was constructed at that time. The windows were replaced with vinyl in the late twentieth century.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

The Truman Charles House (ca. 1841, STU.136) is near the center of the village of Fiskdale in the town of Sturbridge. Sturbridge was settled ca. 1725 by residents of Medfield and was incorporated as a town in 1738 (MHC 1984:3–4).

In 1841, Brimfield, Massachusetts, native Truman Charles (1804–1881) purchased four lots of land from Linus Child and Ezra Wilkinson, the executors of Josiah Fiske's estate. Three of the lots were on the south side of Main Street, on either side of the Quinebaug River, and the fourth was the subject property on the north side of Main Street, east of the Baptist Meetinghouse (WCRD 388/490, 388/500). Charles was a merchant who made and sold shoes. He and his wife, Mary C. Allen (1804–1899), also from Brimfield, were married in 1830. Their first two children (Jane, b. 1832, and Mary, b. 1839) were born in Spencer, Massachusetts, while their third child (Sarah, b. 1841) was born in Sturbridge, suggesting the family moved to Fiskdale at that time. In 1854, Charles purchased the Brimfield Congregational Church Conference Hall (ca. 1820, STU.187) in Brimfield from Alfred Hitchcock and moved it to his property on the south side of Main Street in Sturbridge, where it functioned as a shoe shop until at least 1870 (Hyde 1879:130; Walling 1857; Beers 1870). He was active in the local government, serving as Town Clerk in 1842 and 1843, Town Treasurer in 1842 and 1844, and Town Moderator in 1851 and 1852. Charles and his family resided at the subject property with an Irish servant, Margaret Morton (Find a Grave 2014; Chase 1889:111; US Census 1860). After his death in 1881, the property was transferred to his daughters Mary and Sarah, who sold it in 1884 to Canadian immigrants John B. and Mary Houde (WCRD 1208/427).

In 1900, John and Mary lived with their daughter Selina; widowed daughter Julia Lovely and her daughter Leona; and son John L., his wife Nellie, and their daughter May. John B. Houde worked as a stable keeper, and John L. was a barber (US Census 1900). The property remained in the Houde family until 1928, when John L. Houde sold it to Franklin and Gertrude Kimball (WCRD 2473/481). Franklin Kimball was a grinder in a knife shop and lived with Gertrude and their two children, Judith and Richard. The Kimballs sold the property in 1937 to Burton D. and Lucinda Webber (WCRD 2707/94). Burton was a finisher at the Fiskdale Finishing Company, and he and Lucinda lived with their children Burton and Julia (US Census 1940). In 1985, Lucinda sold the property to the current owner, the Southbridge Credit Union (WCRD 9009/390). After purchasing the property, the bank had the building moved back on the lot and constructed a new entry vestibule. The building is currently in use as a bank.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

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